



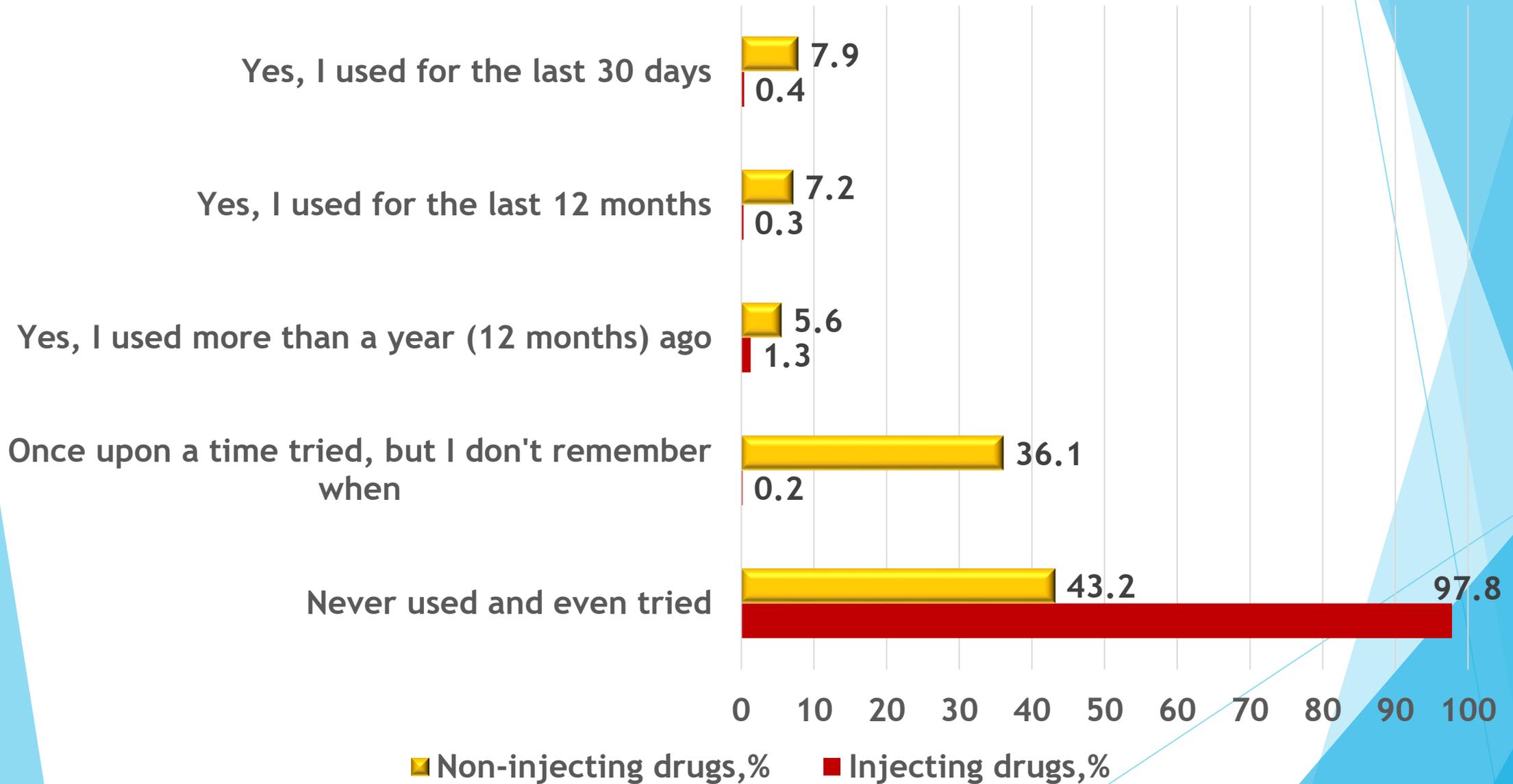
# Chemsex and drug use among MSM - results of behavioral research in Kyiv

7<sup>th</sup> International City Health Conference

«Developing healthy responses in a time of change»

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# Drug use among MSM - data of the bio-behavioral study 2017-18



# Research hypotheses

## Hypothesis 1:

- MSM who use chemical substances engage in sex without condoms.

## Hypothesis 2:

- Self-control is lost when one is under the influence of chemical substances, and therefore, the risk of infection by HIV, viral hepatitis, and other STIs is significantly higher.

## Hypothesis 3:

- Regular use of non-injecting drugs, psychotropic substances, and/or individual medicines, often leads to a transition to injecting drug use.

## Hypothesis 4:

- Problems related to depression, mental disorders, suicide, and sexual violence may appear or worsen among MSM using chemical substances.

# Target groups

- 100 MSM, using chemical substances who may have engaged in chemsex, to participate in a “face-to-face”, oral survey (quantitative study),
- 5 key informants (KI) to participate in in-depth interviews (IDI), and
- 10 MSM, using chemical substances and who may have engaged in chemsex, to participate in IDI (qualitative study).

# Criteria for inclusion

## **MSM:**

- Age: no less than 18 years old; - Resident of Kyiv or its suburbs;
- Use of chemical substances no less than 1 time every 6 months;
- Sexual contact with men in the last 6 months.

## **Key informants:**

- People with knowledge of or their own experience with chemsex, and who have a wide network of social contacts among other MSM.

# Recruiting respondents

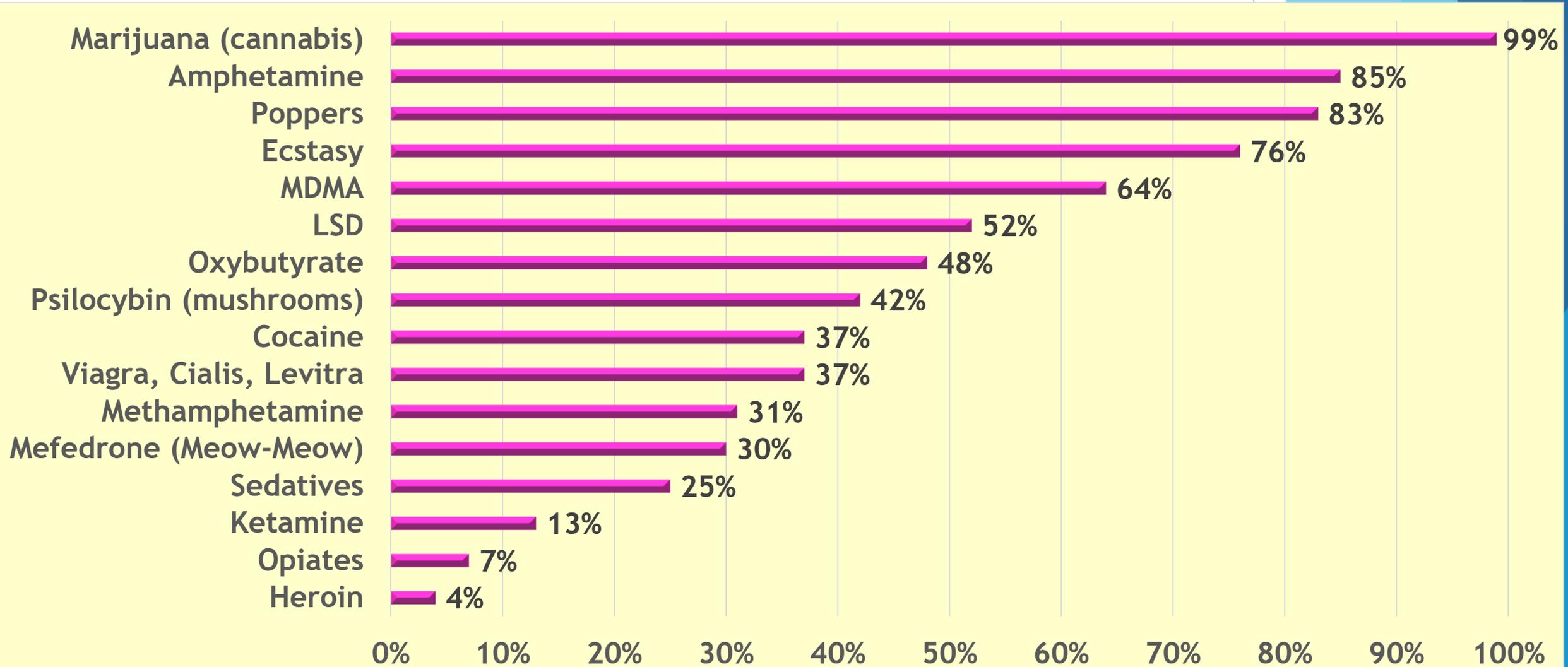
## 1. Through the Internet:

- on specialized dating sites: Qguys, Bluesystem, Gay Romeo;
- through social networks: Vkontakte and Facebook;
- through mobile applications for MSM: Hornet and Grindr.

2. Through the network of personal relationships of the interviewers and staff of the public organization “ALLIANCE.GLOBAL”.

# Main results.

Distribution of chemical substances by the proportion of respondents who used them at least once in their lifetime, n=100



## Main results (2)

- The overwhelming majority of respondents (88%, n = 100) never used injecting drugs;
- Chemsex often entails group sex or extreme sex as well;
- The simultaneous or sequential use of various types of chemical substances (87%) or the use of chemical substances with alcohol (91%) are common; 31% of respondents used chemical substances together with stimulant drugs;
- 46% of MSM respondents experienced overdoses;
- 31% of respondents experienced physical injuries as a result of chemsex (cuts, bruises, other wounds, anal trauma, burns of the mucous membranes, bites, and scratches) some of which may have also resulted from extreme sex;

## Main results (3)

- Chemsex is most often practiced at one's home (96%), or another's home (94%) and in night clubs (58%); consuming chemical substances in nature is also popular (55%), however, users generally go to a more comfortable place to actually have sex;
- During the last 6 months only 26% of MSM have always used a condom during chemsex;
- 24% of respondents have had problems at work, in business, at school, as well as financial problems, as a result of consuming chemical substances;
- The main side-effects of chemical substances include spatial or temporal prostration (46%), bouts of excessive arousal (41%), periods of aggression (31%).

# Recommendations for stakeholders (authorities, medical institutions, international donors, NGOs)

1. Take into account the specific needs of MSM who consume chemical substances and engage in chemsex, in the package of medical and social services for MSM and in other activities aimed at MSM, including:

- Preparation and dissemination of informational materials;
- Peer counseling;
- Medical, legal, and psychological support for MSM;
- Rapid testing of chemical substances before consumption;
- Provision of emergency medical care (including at home) for MSM in cases of overdoses.

## Recommendations for stakeholders (2)

2. Plan and implement an on-going advertising and informational campaign on prevention and on other aspects related to chemsex and the consumption of chemical substances among MSM.
3. Develop a national web resource dedicated to the issue of chemsex.
4. Conduct educational activities for peer counselors, employees of MSM-service NGOs, medical staff of institutions providing services to MSM, local authorities, law enforcement agencies, etc. in order to increase awareness about the phenomenon and practice of chemsex, and to prevent stigma and discrimination towards MSM using chemical substances.

## Recommendations for stakeholders (3)

5. Recommend HIV-negative MSM engaging in chemsex to join a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) program being piloted by the **Public Organization “ALLIANCE.GLOBAL”** since November 2017.
6. Become acquainted with best practices from around the world on working with MSM using chemical substances and engaging in chemsex.
7. Carry out advocacy work on revising the nomenclature and maximal permissible amounts of chemical substances, whose circulation is banned or restricted in Ukraine.
8. Conduct national research on the issue of chemsex among MSM in order to obtain information about the situation in other cities of Ukraine.

# Contact information

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