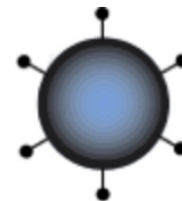


Chemsex in Belgium What do we know ?

Detandt Sandrine

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BREACH
BELGIAN RESEARCH AIDS&HIV CONSORTIUM

INTRODUCTION

Why do we all speak about it ?

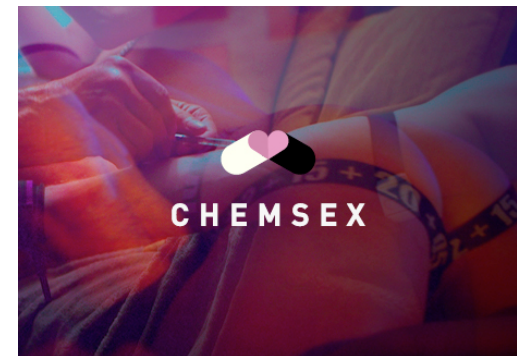
- The appearance of **practices of injection in networks where they used to be rare**
- **the traffic of certain products** (Crystal, Mephedrone, 3MMC) in connection with **intense sexual practices**
- these products are **regularly associated to problems** of health/mental health/ severe dependence which social networks contribute to mediatize.



CHEMSEX

WHICH DEFINITIONS

- **Problematic drug use in a sexual context**
- In the **UK**, chemsex strictly refers to the use of **crystallized meth, mephedrone, GHB or GBL**
- **In Belgium, no consensus**
- A **syndemic perspective** is needed to understand the phenomenon



« CHEMS » DRUGS

GHB/GBL

industrial solvents bought by users as clear, colourless liquid

CNS depressant

Enhances libido and facilitates sexual intercourse

MEPHEDRONE

A semi-synthetic stimulant drug cathinone derivative

Chemically similar to the amphetamine

Consumed by snorting, “bombing” or “slamming”

Effects include euphoria, sociability, intensification of sensory experiences, increased energy and sexual disinhibition



CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE

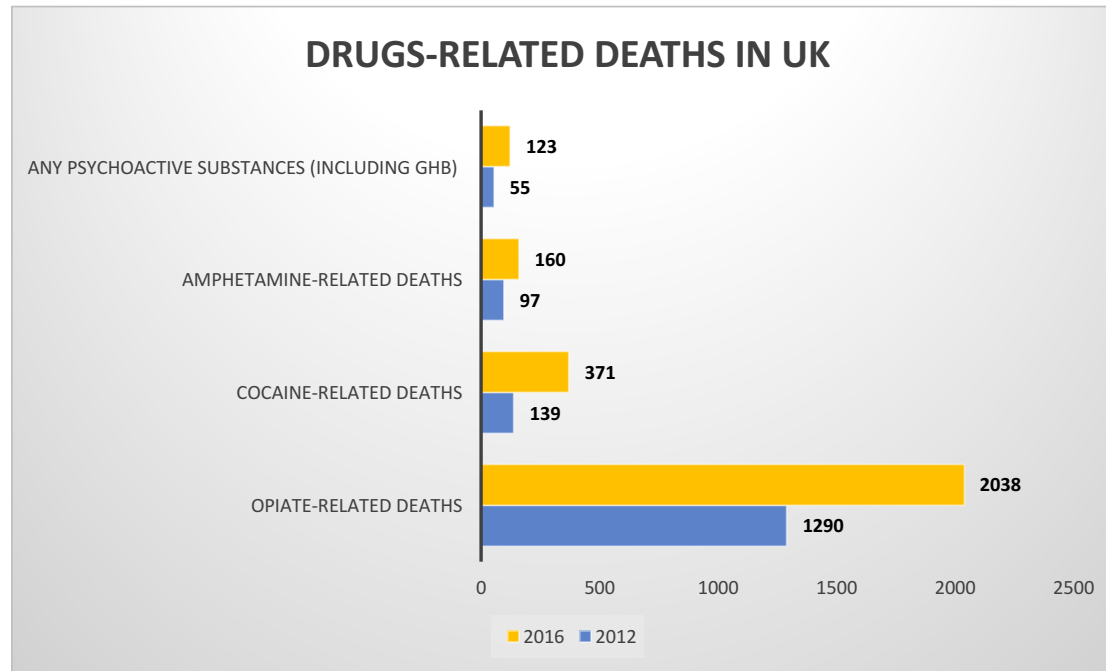
A potent psycho-stimulant of the phenethylamine / amphetamine class

Increased energy, elevated mood, confidence and libido



CHEMSEX

DATAS IN EUROPE



- Epidemiological situation in Belgium remains unclear



CHEMSEX

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICAL, BEHAVIOURAL AND RISKS PRACTICES CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMOSEXUALS ATTENDING AN HIV VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING AND TESTING CENTRE IN BRUSSELS

SOCIO DOMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

N= 761 of people defining themselves as homosexuals

Median age is 29 ranging from 15 to 85

53 % had a higher education (University diploma , 2% a low education (primary school diploma

29,4% were not working of whom 82,6% are students and 6% undocumented

40% reported Belgian origin, followed by 31% for West Europe

59% Are not in a relationship

The large majority (83%) had his last HIV-test negative.

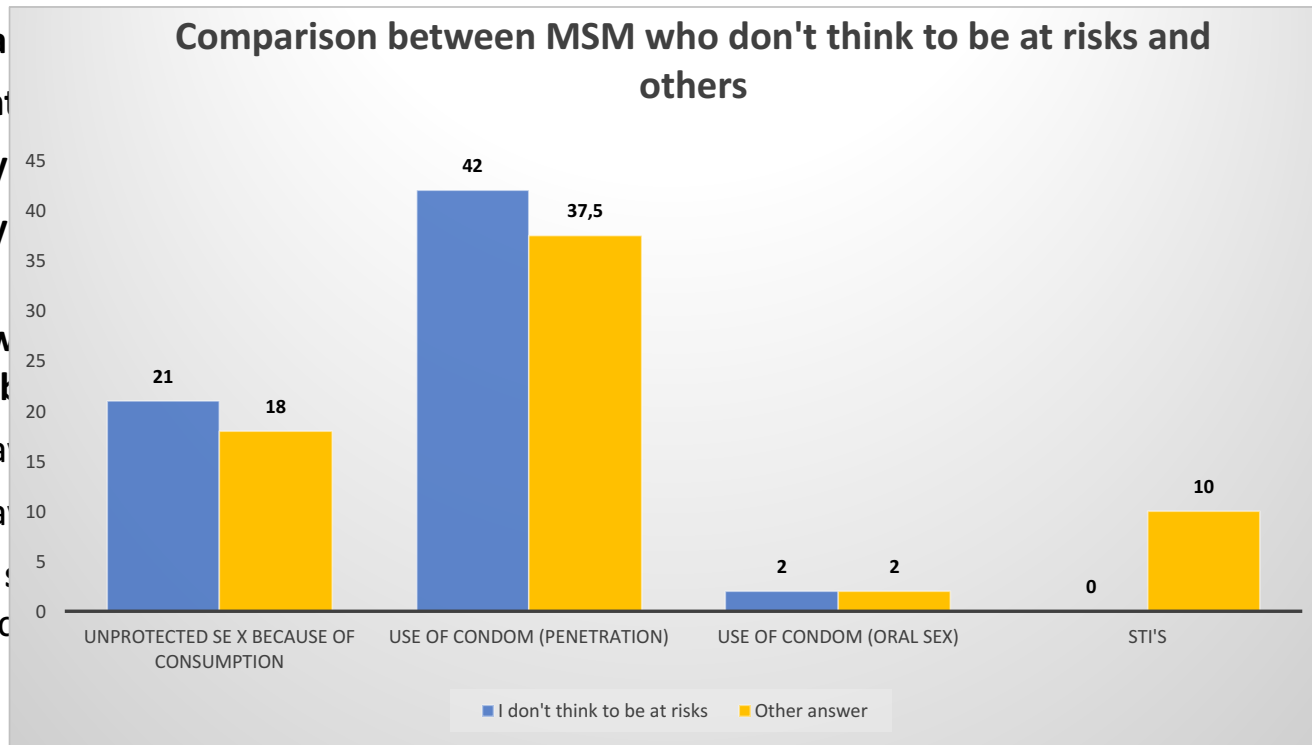
9,9 % without health insurance



CHEMSEX

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 46% are in a
 - 6% are client
 - 23% already
 - 84% already
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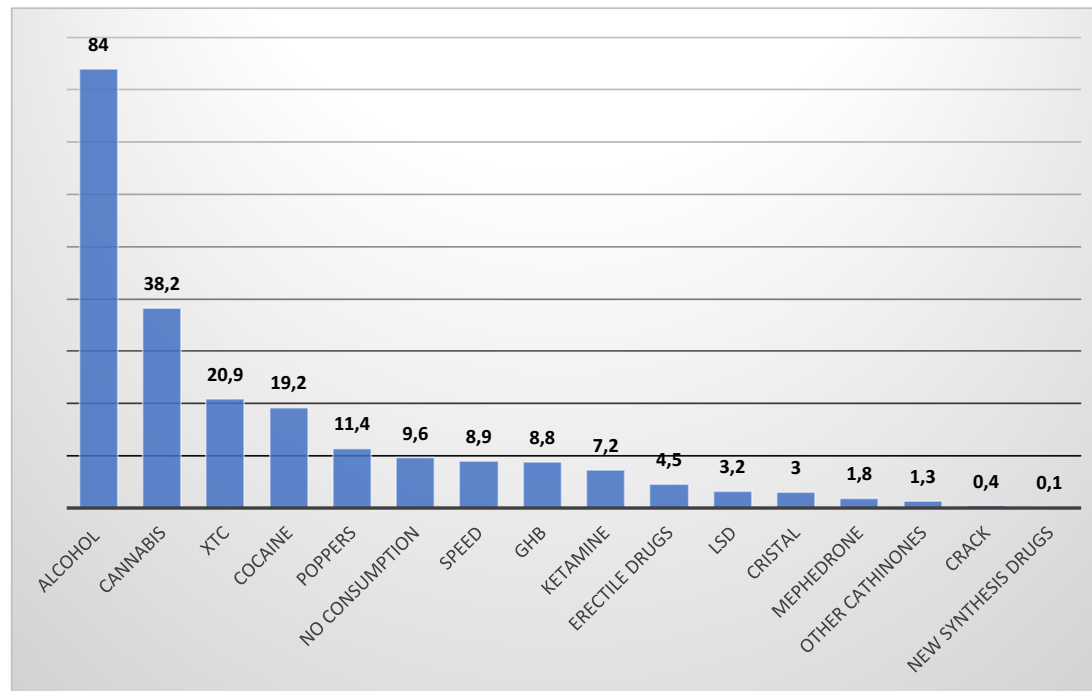
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CHEMSEX

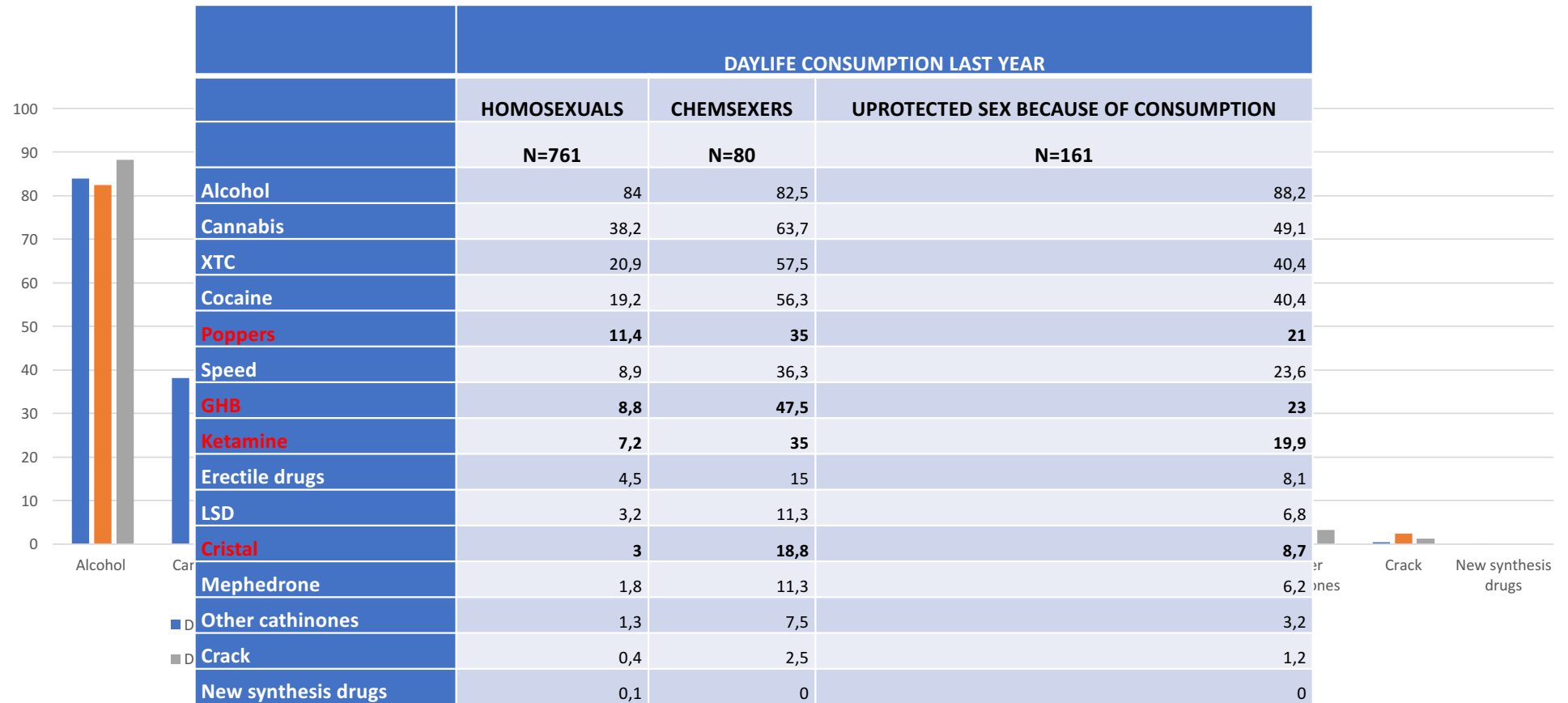
DAYLIFE CONSUMPTIONS

the proportions of consumption tend to be similar as those from 2014



CHEMSEX

DAYLIFE CONSUMPTIONS BY SUBGROUPS

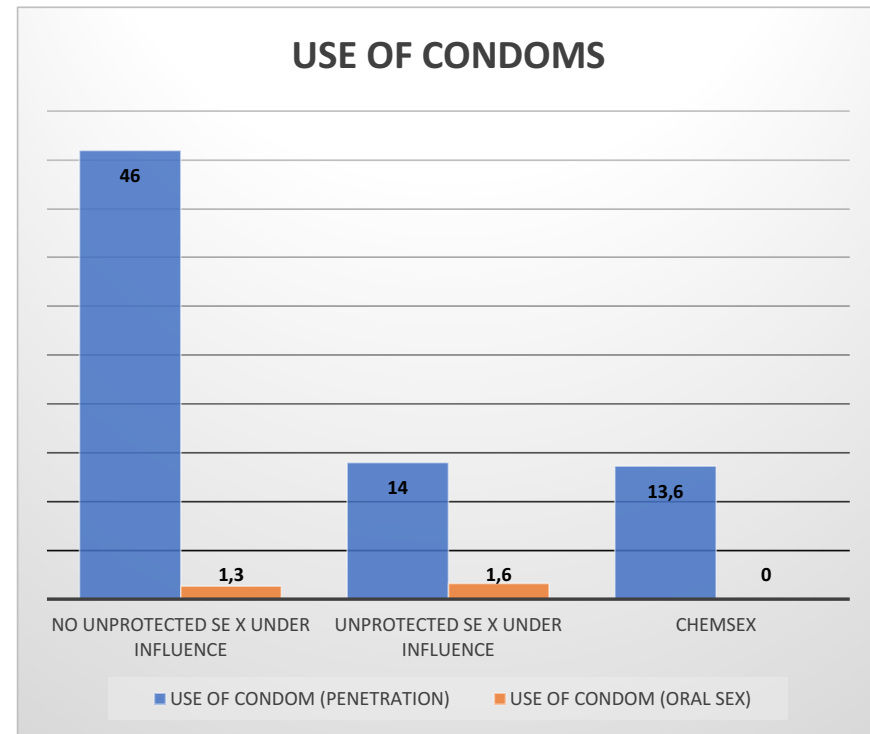
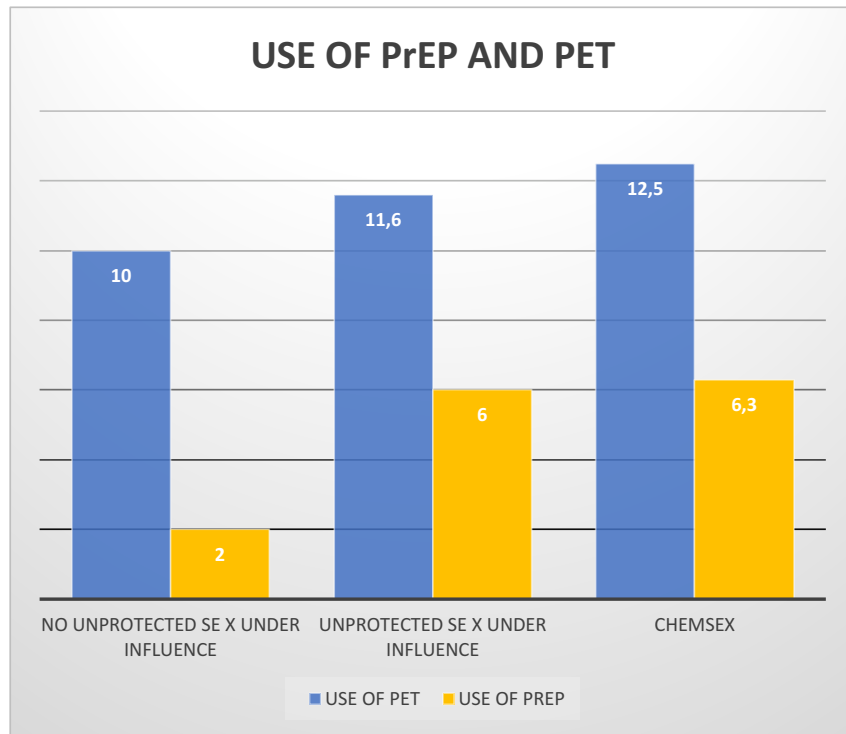


RISKS PRACTICES, CHEMSEX, PREVENTION AND STI's

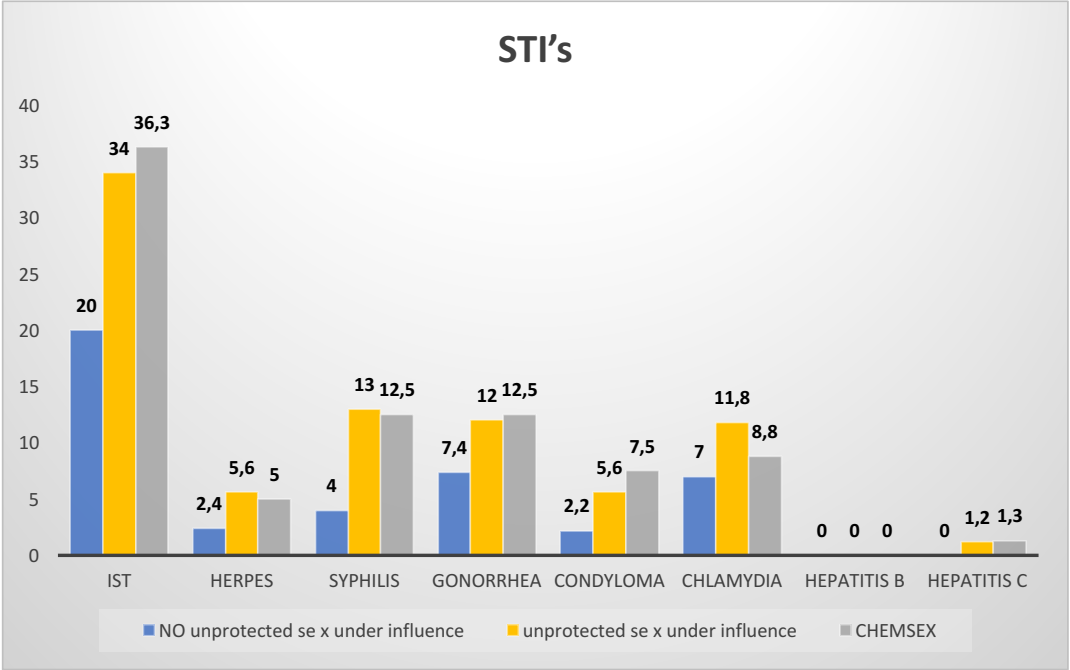
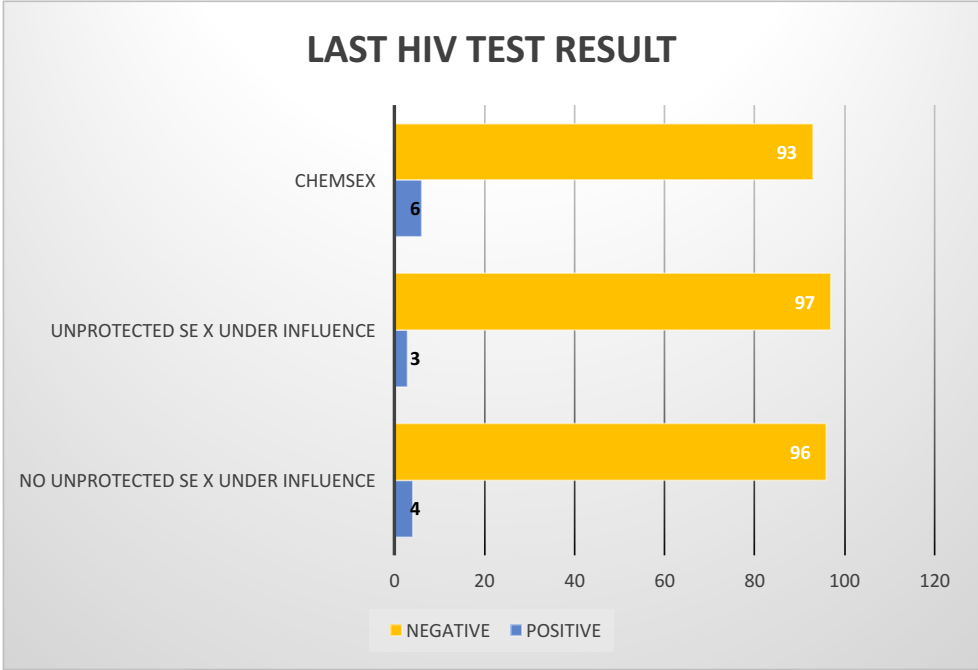
To the question "In the last 12 months, did you have unprotected sex because you had used alcohol and / or drugs?"

- 20,8 % (against 31,5% of MSM in 2014) answered yes if we include all types of substance. This figure drops out to half of it (9,8%) if we exclude alcohol and cannabis.
- Eventually, 4,6 % of individuals have unprotected sex if we only include the following substances: (GHB, GBL, cristal meth, ketamines, mephedron, NDS) (usually related to the definition of chemsex)

RISKS PRACTICES, CHEMSEX, PREVENTION AND STI's



RISKS PRACTICES, CHEMSEX, PREVENTION AND STI's



TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

These results confirm the international tendencies but have to be taken with caution.

- **Non representative sample**
- BUT MAINLY, questions on chemsex in this questionnaire have almost only been answered by people who also said they had had an unprotected sex relation because of consumption.

Therefore we need, as researchers, to think the way we investigate chemsex practice in order to avoid the stumbling block of a dramatic and evil vision of the practice, strengthened by alarming figures.



CHEMSEX

WHAT'S NEXT

Qualitative research based on semi-directive interviews

Recruitment

Two main hospitals : CHU Saint-Pierre and CHU Liège

Community associations : Ex Æquo, Sida Sol

Word of mouth

Outreach : events (Tea Dance, ...)

Objectives

Better seize the social and relational environments in whom these practices develop.

Understand the risk reductions practices among users



CHEMSEX