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Homelessness among alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment-seekers: Insights from the Patient Pathways National Project

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Prior research findings

- Prevalence of alcohol dependence estimated at 28-48%, and dependence on other drugs estimated at 13-36%, among people experiencing homelessness (Fazel et al., 2008; PLoS Medicine vol. 5, e225).
- Housing instability appears to lead to increased likelihood of alcohol-related problems (although this effect is moderated by level of social support from family) (Murphy, Zemore & Mulia, 2014).
- People experiencing both homelessness and substance use disorder (SUD) are less likely to achieve stable housing within 2 years than homeless people with no SUD (Urbanowski et al. (2018)).
- Providing housing to chronically homeless people with alcohol-related problems found to lead to increased number of “sober days” and reduced symptoms of severe alcohol dependence over a 2-year period (Collins et al., 2012).

Research questions

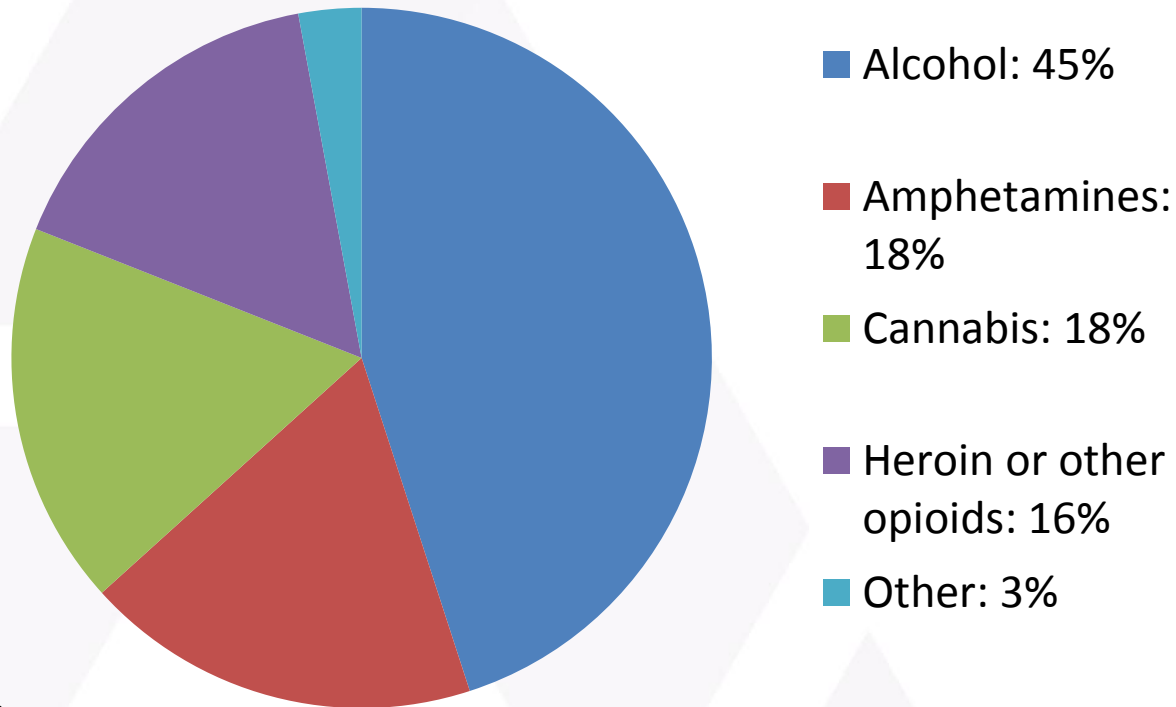
- What other factors (e.g. social, clinical) are associated with homelessness among people with SUD?
- Do rates of treatment completion and positive outcomes among people experiencing homelessness differ from clients with stable housing?
- Does AOD treatment also lead to reduced housing instability?
- Do any social, clinical, or treatment factors predict whether people will experience homelessness *after* completing AOD treatment?

Patient Pathways study



- Recruited 796 clients (404 Victorian, 392 Western Australia) new (past month) treatment entrants in 2012-2013 from 20 services, with a total of 37 sites:
 - 21 outpatient treatment sites
 - 8 inpatient withdrawal units
 - 6 residential rehabilitation/therapeutic community sites
 - 2 supported accommodation sites
- Inclusion criteria:
 - Age 18+
 - Did not participate in same type of treatment within 3 weeks prior to commencing current treatment

Primary drug of concern



- 60% male
- Aged 18-71 (Median age 36 years)
- 81% Australian-born
- 5% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

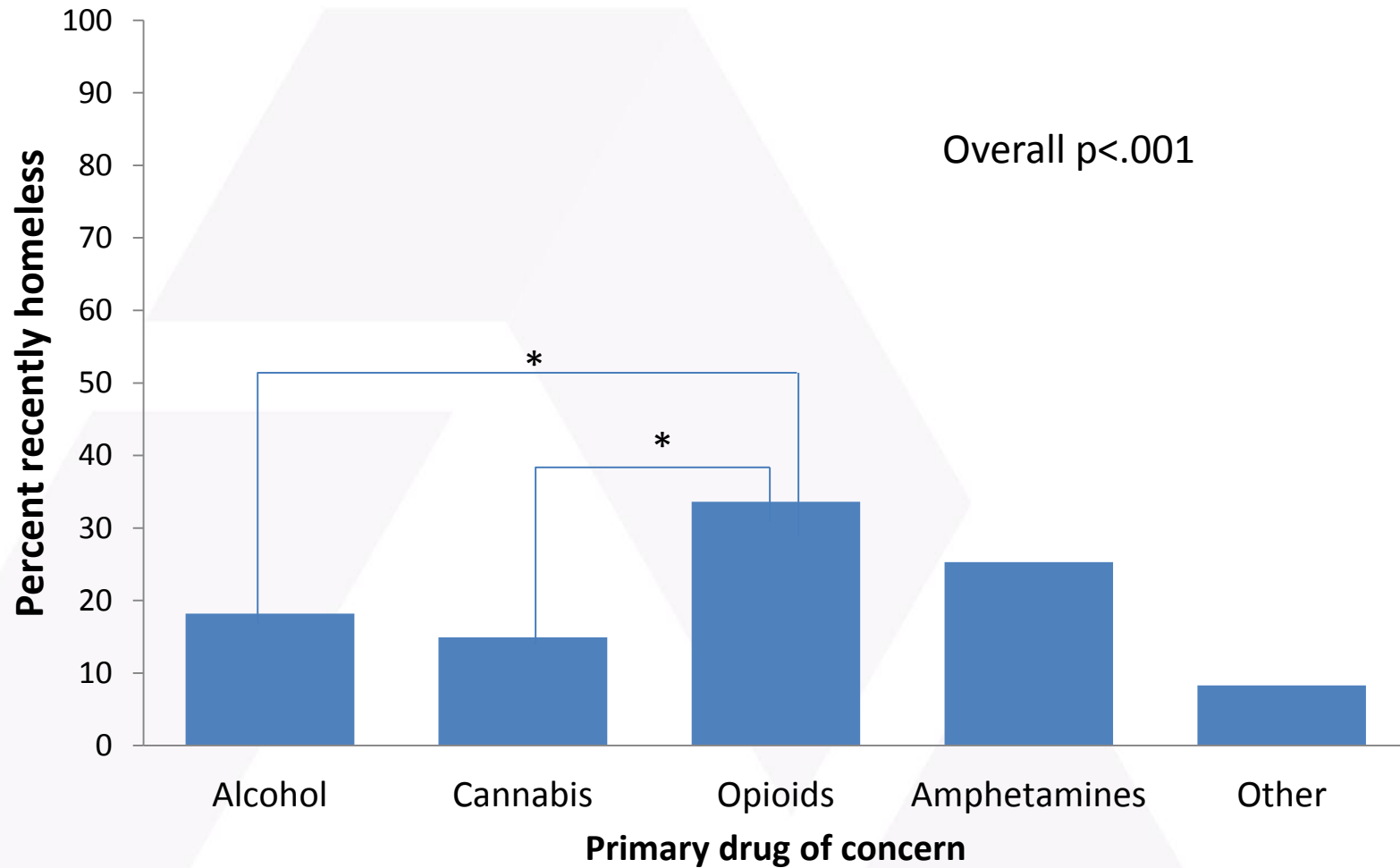
Housing instability and recent homelessness at baseline

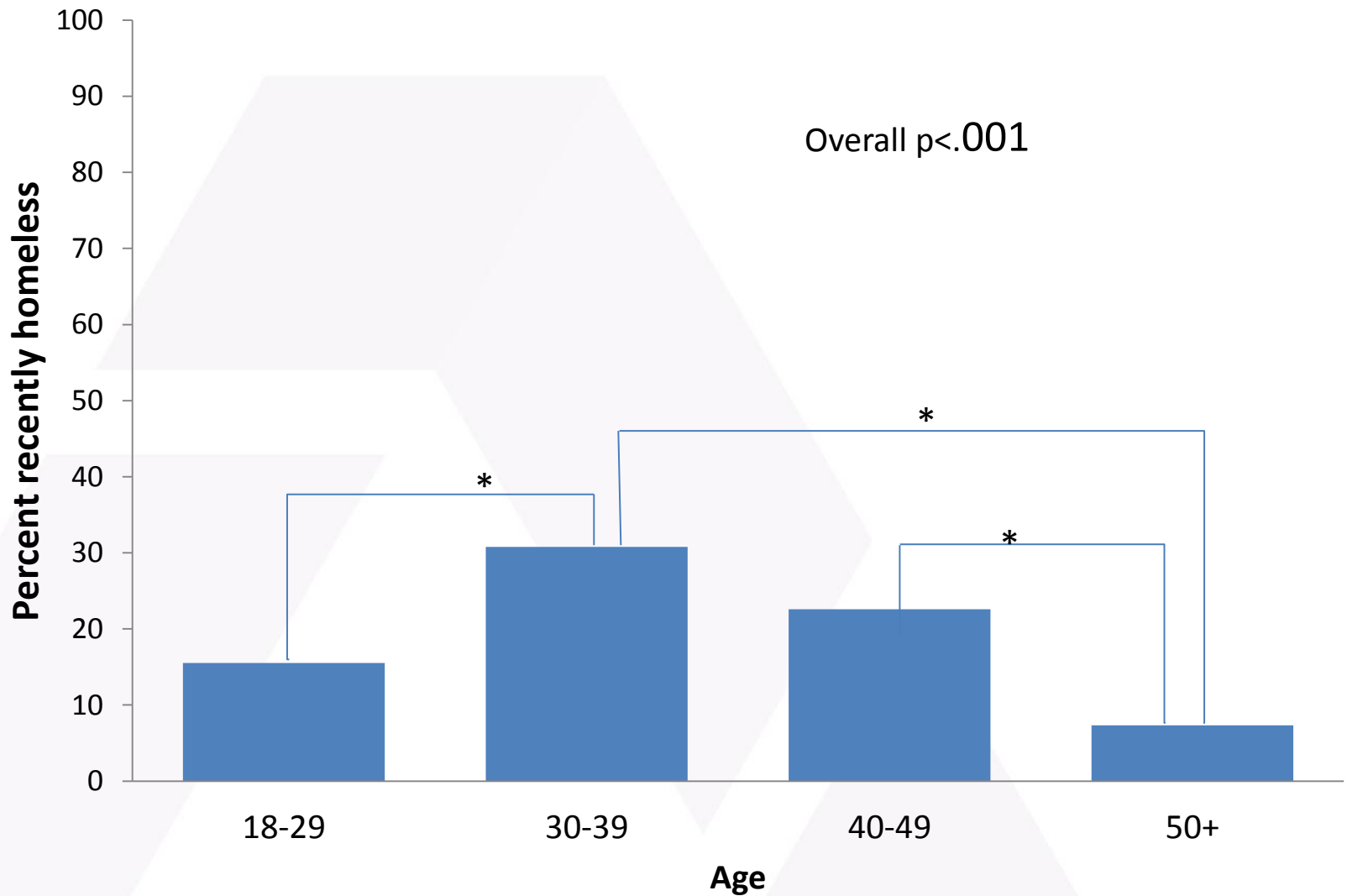
- “What type of accommodation do you live in”:

9% reported being currently either homeless or in unstable accommodation.

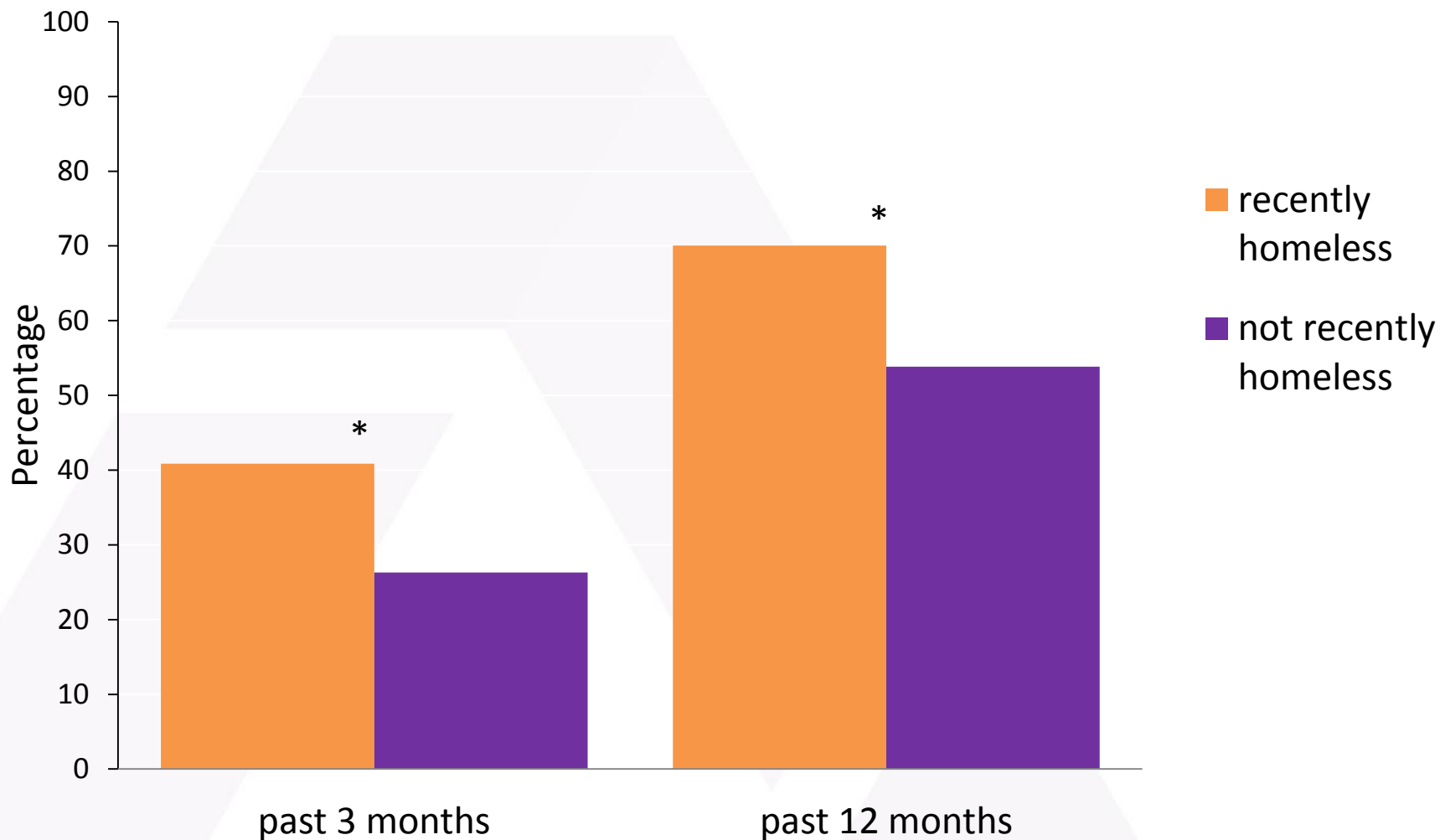
- “In the past 90 days have you experienced acute housing problems/homelessness (meaning you had no place of your own to stay so that you had to sleep rough on the streets, or stay at a night shelter or hostel, or sleep on different friends’ floors each night)?”:

21% reported recent homelessness

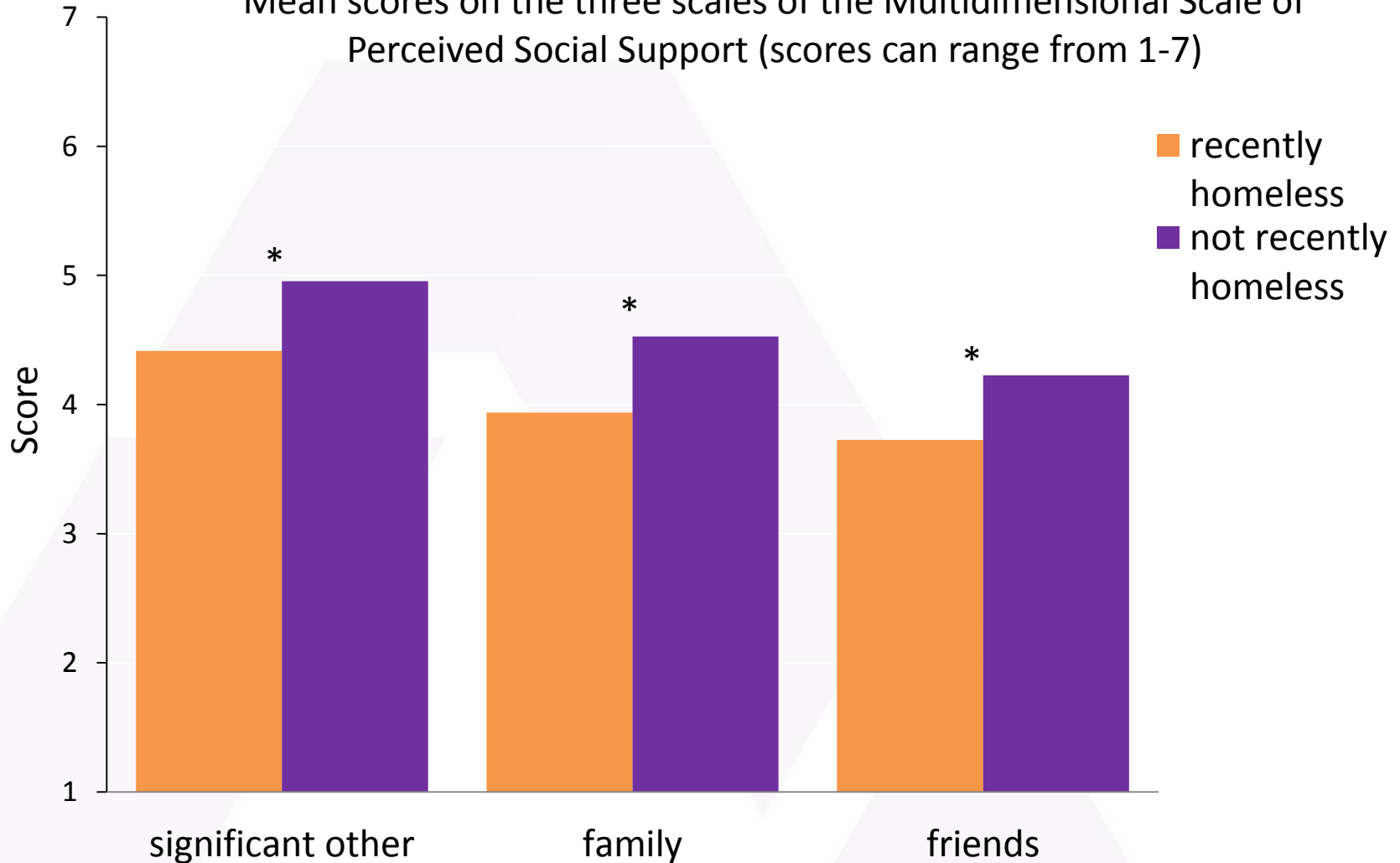




Percent who required ambulance, emergency department, or hospital inpatient admission.



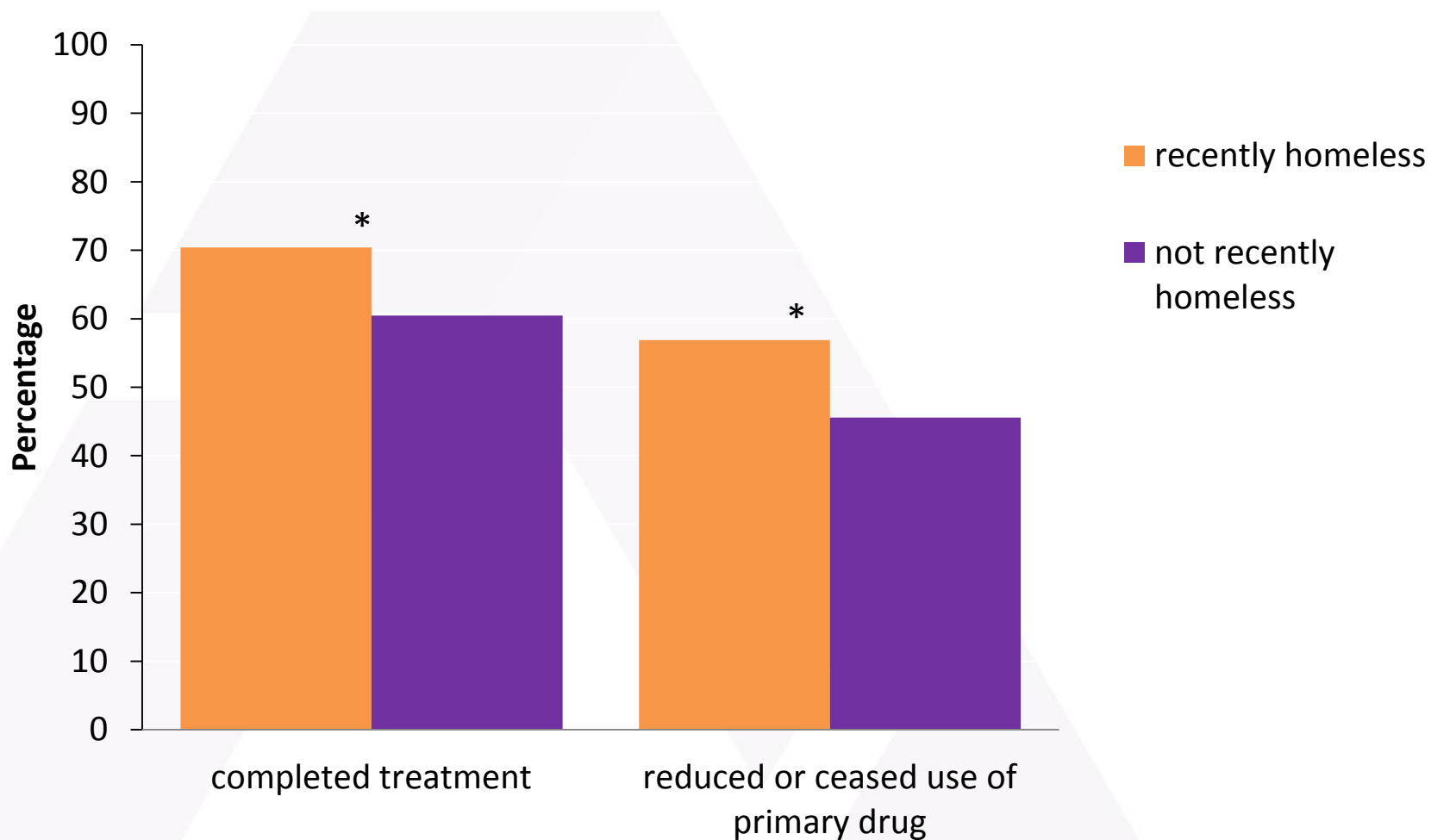
Mean scores on the three scales of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (scores can range from 1-7)



Multivariate modelling of associations with recent homelessness

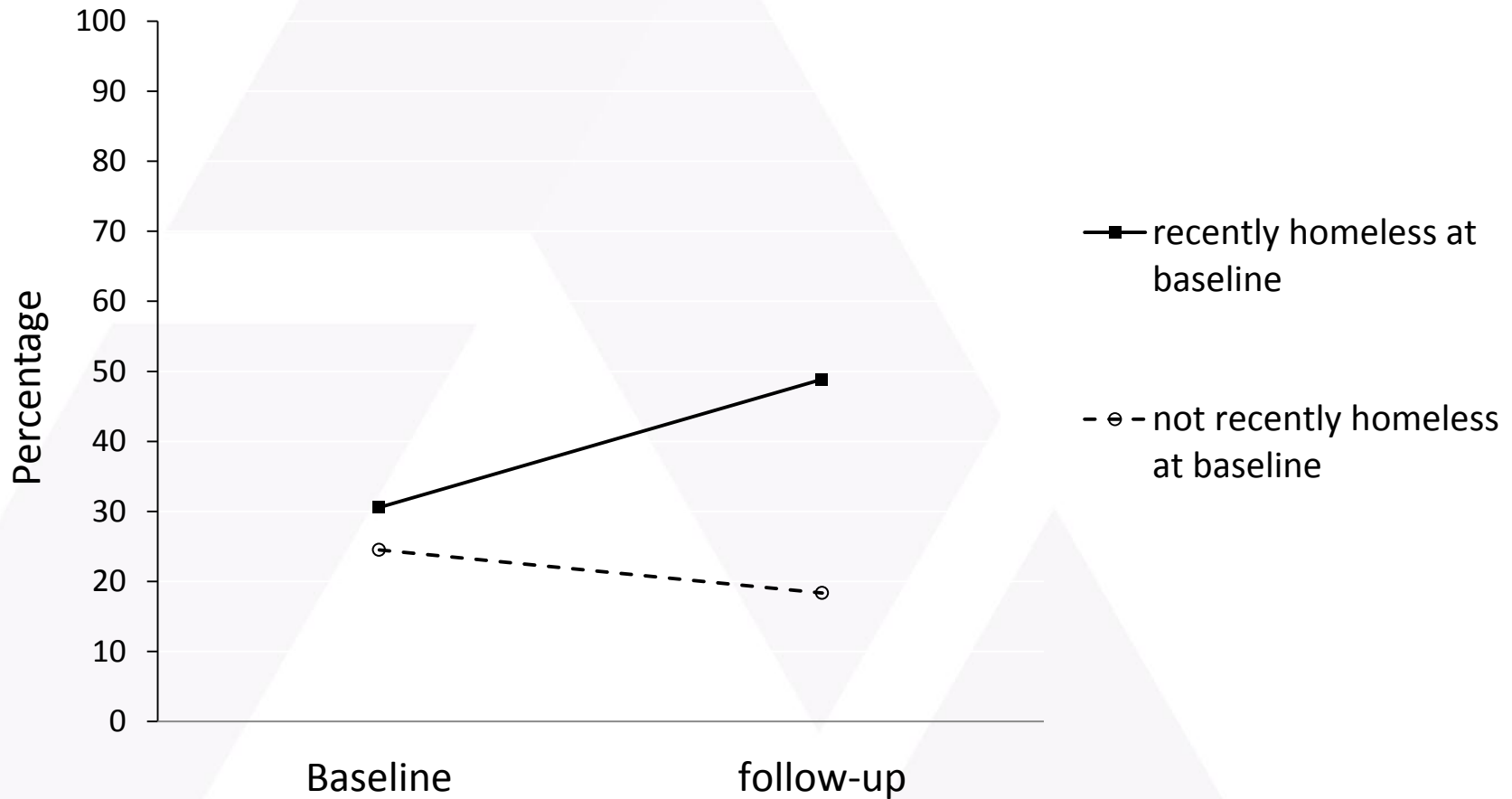
Variable	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval of odds ratio	p
Age	0.98	0.97-1.003	.092
Social support from significant other	0.91	0.81-1.02	.119
Social support from family	0.86	0.77-0.96	.008
Social support from friends	0.95	0.85-1.08	.441
Acute/emergency health service use in past 3 months	2.06	1.39-3.04	< .001
Current legal problems	1.52	1.02-2.27	.038
Primary drug of concern (overall)			.008
- Cannabis vs. alcohol	0.89	0.50-1.59	.698
- Opioids vs. alcohol	2.18	1.34-3.54	.002
- Amphetamines vs. alcohol	1.56	0.93-2.60	.089
- Other vs. alcohol	0.60	0.11-3.29	.559

Treatment completion and outcome



Increase in rate legal problems among those with recent homelessness at baseline

Percentage of clients experiencing current legal problems at baseline and follow-up



What predicts recent homelessness at follow-up?



Variable	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval of odds ratio	p
Recent homelessness at baseline	2.81	1.67-4.73	< .001
Age at baseline	0.99	0.97-1.02	.503
Time from baseline to follow-up	0.998	0.99-1.001	.164
Social support from significant other at baseline	1.09	0.93-1.26	.282
Social support from family at baseline	0.85	0.74-0.98	.022
Social support from friends at baseline	0.94	0.81-1.09	.417
Treatment completed (or still continuing)	1.03	0.63-1.69	.896
Continuity in AOD service referral pathway	1.43	0.88-2.33	.150
Current legal problems at baseline	0.71	0.40-1.26	.242
Primary drug of concern (overall)			.902
- Cannabis vs. alcohol	0.85	0.44-1.65	.635
- Opioids vs. alcohol	1.05	0.55-2.02	.886
- Amphetamines vs. alcohol	1.09	0.56-2.15	.796
- Other vs. alcohol	0.30	0.02-6.10	.435

Conclusions

- High rate of housing instability and homelessness among AOD treatment-seekers.
- Homelessness in AOD treatment-seekers is most strongly associated with
 - Emergency health service use
 - Legal problems
 - Lack of support from family
 - Opioid use problems
- People experiencing homelessness have high rates of AOD treatment completion and appear to benefit from AOD services, but housing and legal problems remain persistent despite this.
- Lack of support from family is one of the strongest predictors of later homelessness among AOD treatment-seekers.

Acknowledgements, publications, and contact details



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- Previous publications of findings from the Pathways study:
 - Lubman et al. (2014). A study of patient pathways in alcohol and other drug treatment. Turning Point, Fitzroy.
 - Berends et al. (2016). Social disadvantage and past treatment among clients entering public alcohol and drug services in two Australian states. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 29, 88-90.
 - Lubman et al. (2016). Characteristics of individuals presenting to treatment for primary alcohol problems versus other drug problems in the Australian Patient Pathways study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 16, 250.
 - Manning et al. (2017). Money well-spent: Further evidence of improved outcomes for methamphetamine users following treatment. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 36(2), E1-E3.
 - Manning et al. (2017). Substance use outcomes following treatment: findings from the Australian Patient Pathways Study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 51, 177-189.
 - Foulds et al. (2018). Prescribed sedative and other psychotropic medication use among clients attending alcohol and other drug treatment. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 37, 738-742.
 - Garfield, J. B. G. & Manning, V. (2018). Homelessness among substance use treatment-seekers: Insights from the Patient Pathways National Project. *Parity*, 31(6), 10-11.
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