

P 084- Addressing the complex interplay between mental health, substance use, and sexual behavior among MSM in HIV care

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BACKGROUND

- Sexualized drug use (SDU) or chemsex is common among HIV infected MSM.
- There is an association between SDU and high-risk sexual behaviors & STIs and between SDU and mental health, which is not clear if it is cause or consequence.
- There is limited data on the use of mental health scales and their association with high-risk sexual behaviors, STIs, and drug consumption.

AIMS and METHODS

- To examine the interplay between mental health, substance use, and sexual behavior among HIV positive men who have sex with men (MSM).
- Cross-sectional description of MSM in HIV care enrolled between 2022 and 2023 in the ATHENS study, a prospective multicenter (N=13) cohort study designed to investigate the incidence of acute hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among MSM in Madrid.
- Comprehensive data collection was performed at baseline, including questionnaires to assess sexual behavior and drug use in the previous two months before enrollment and validated scales to evaluate anxiety/depression (HADS), impulsivity (Barrat scale), and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD scale).

Tabla 1: Baseline characteristics

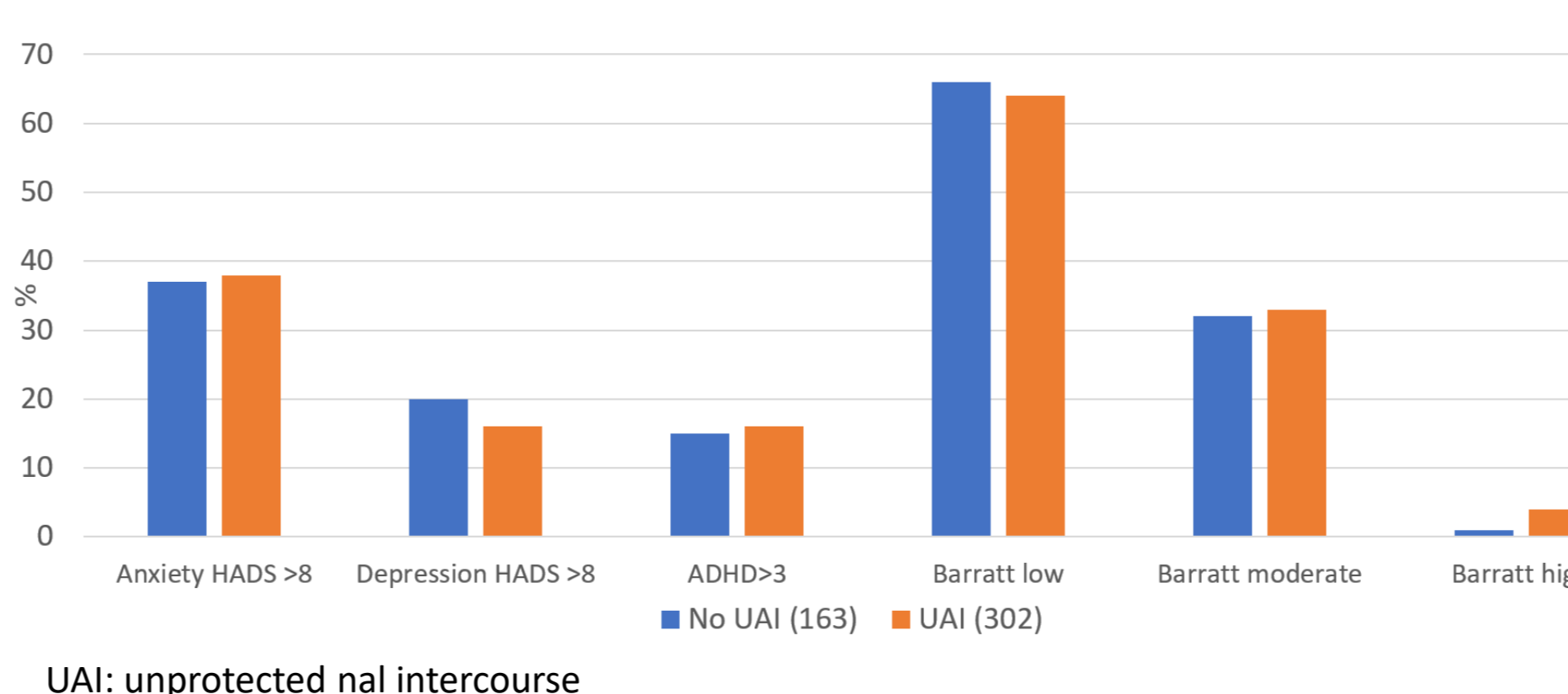
	HIV-positive MSM (n=467)
Age (years)	41(33-49)
Ethnicity(white self-identified)	420(90)
Nationality (Spanish)	288(67)
Educational level (university)	252(54)
ART treatment(%)	462(99)
Drug use	205(44)
Cathinones	186(40)
Marijuana	163(35)
Cocaine	121(26)
Methamphetamine	107(23)
Chemsex	154(33)
Slamsex	32(7)
Risky Sexual Behaviour	
UAI	303(65)
Fisting	56(12)

UAI: Unprotected anal intercourse, median 3 sexual acts in the last 2 months
ART: antiretroviral treatment
N(median/percentage)

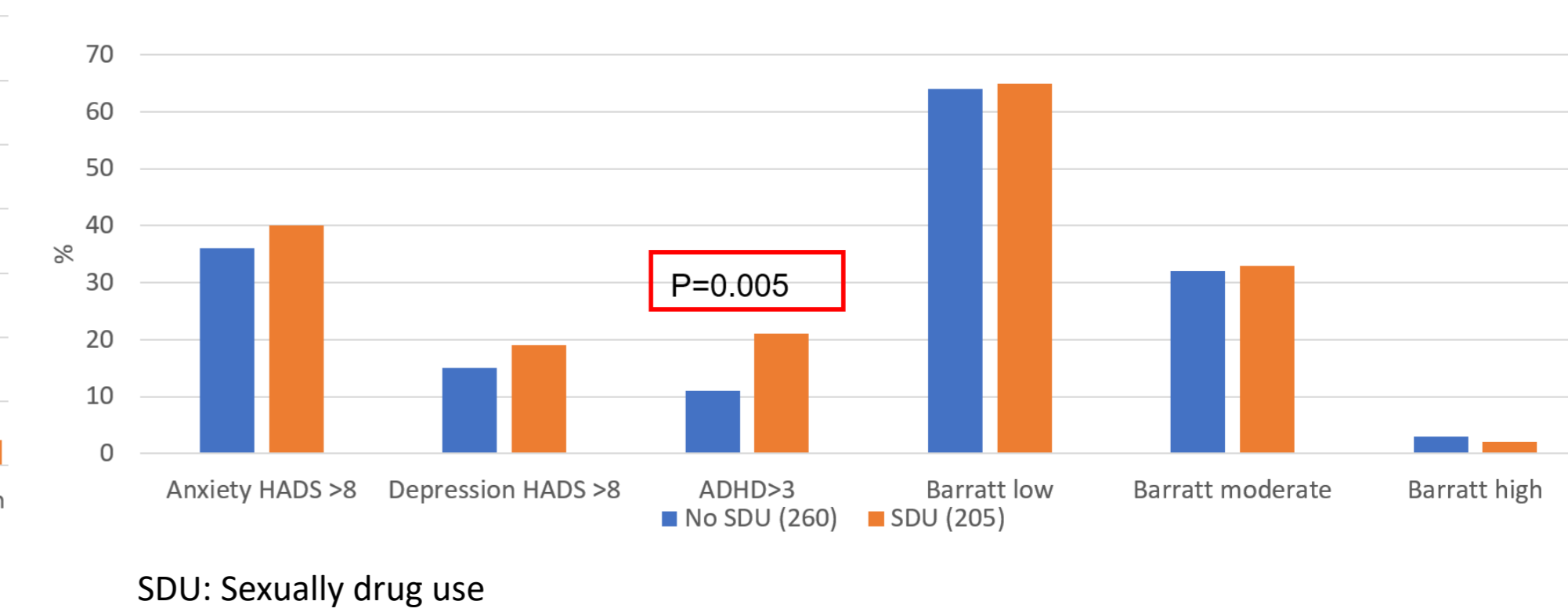
RESULTS

Figure 1. Scales score

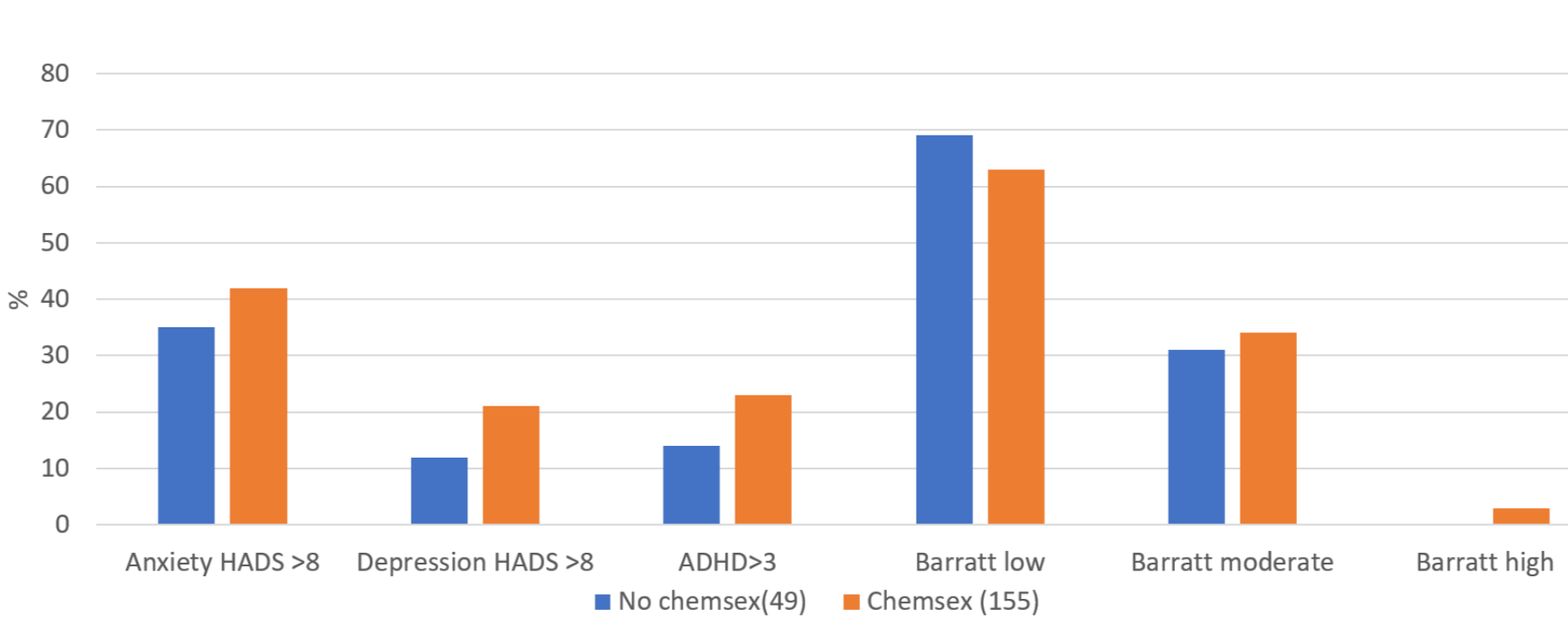
No UAI vs UAI



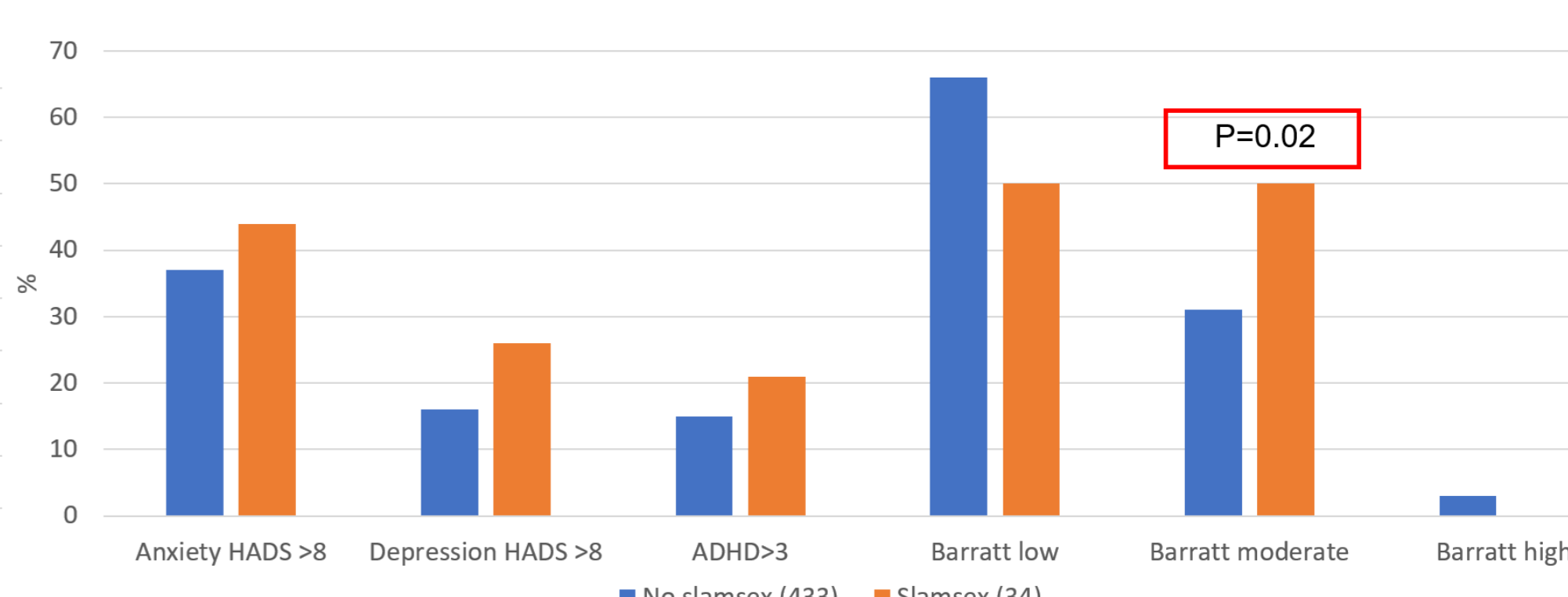
No SDU vs SDU



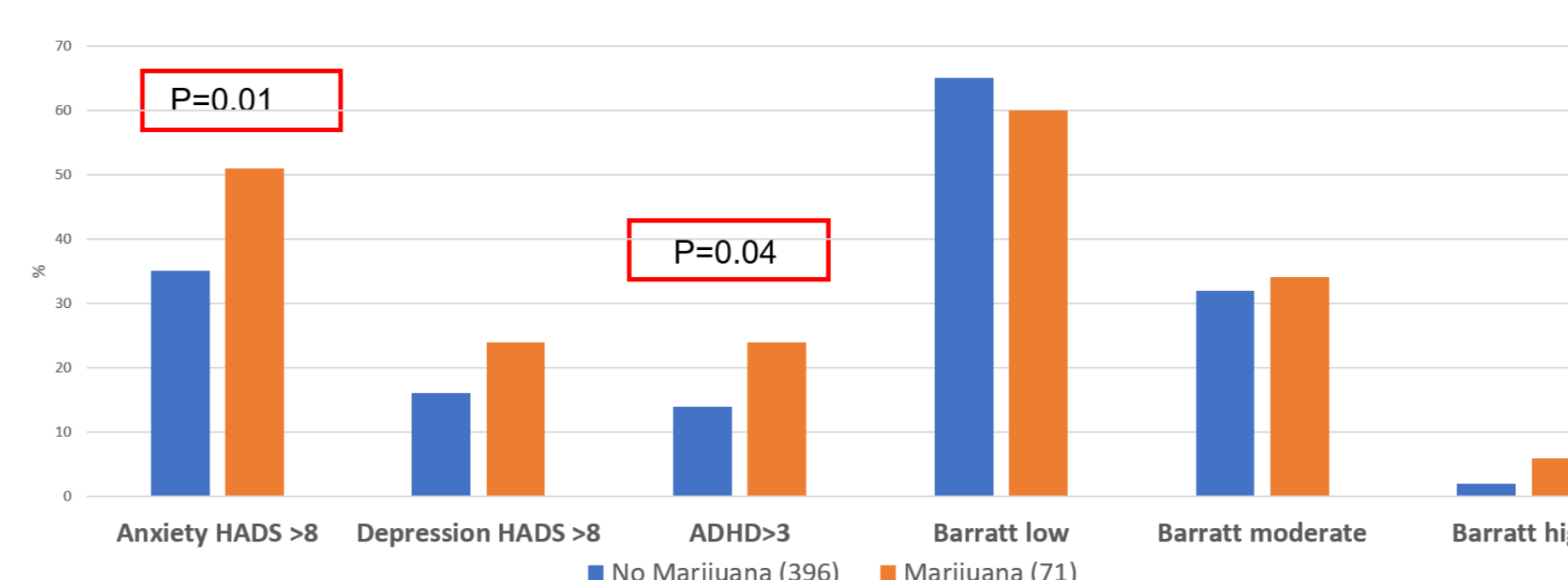
No chemsex vs chemsex



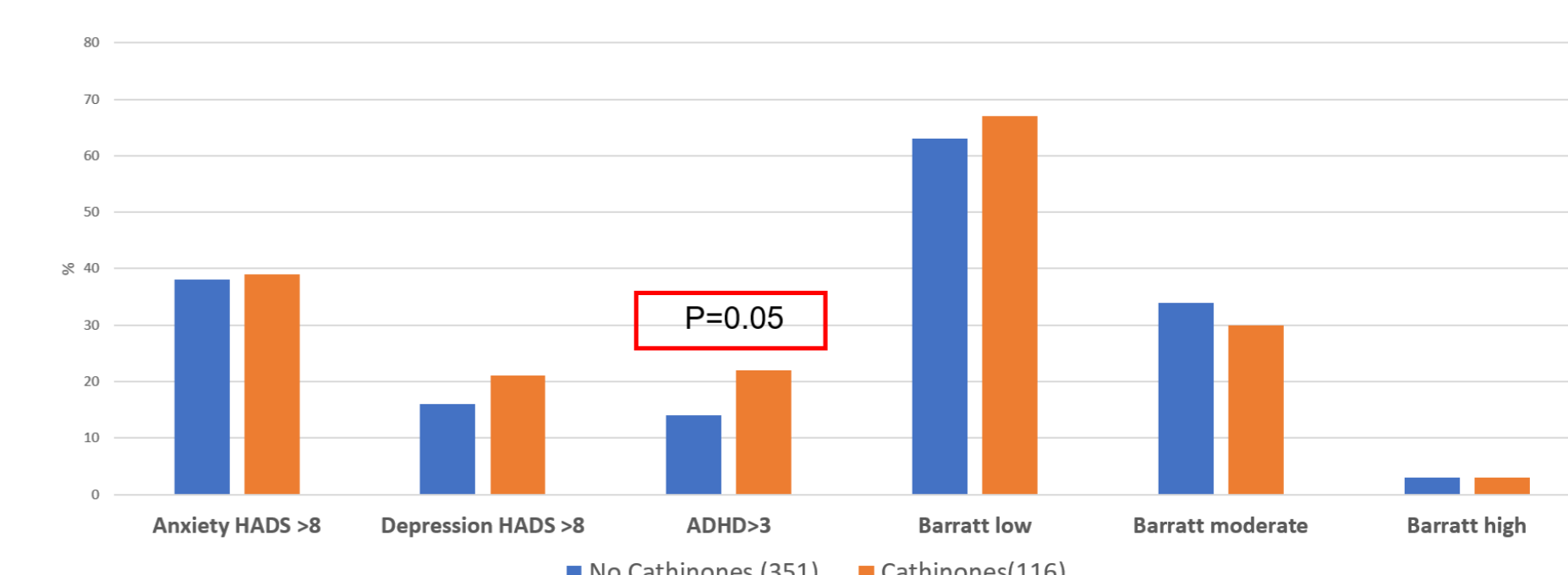
No slamsex vs slamsex



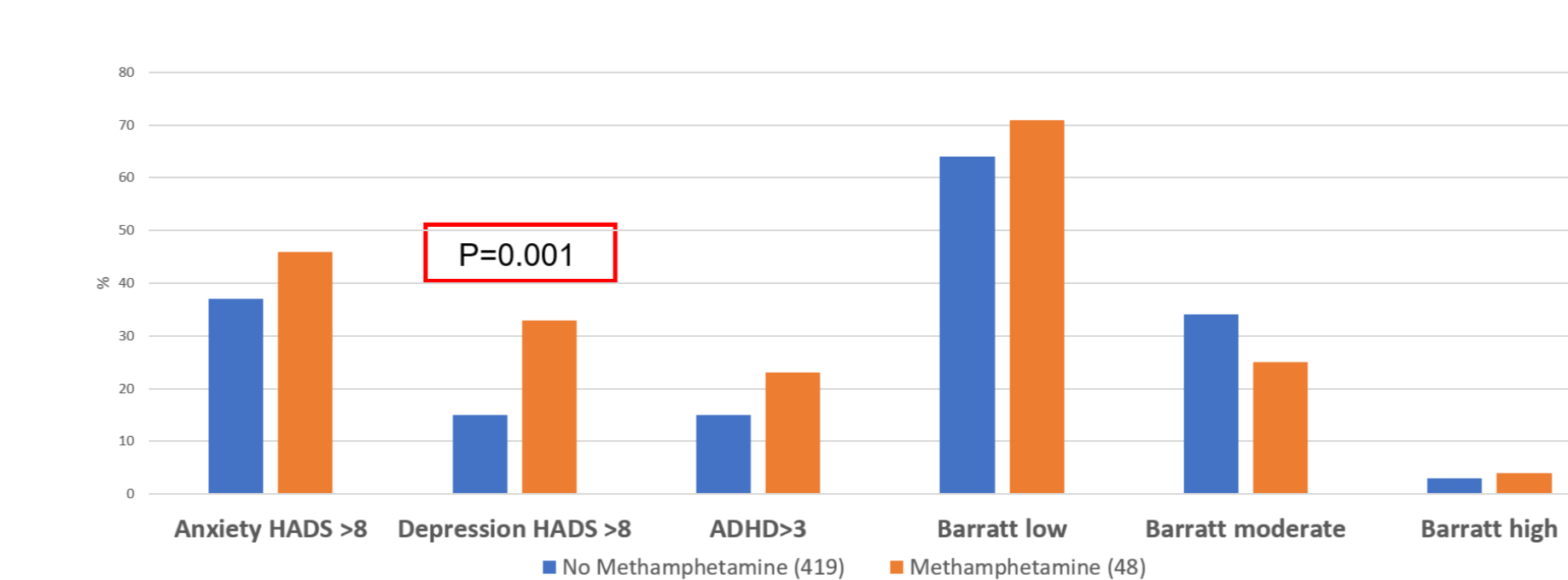
No Marijuana vs Marijuana



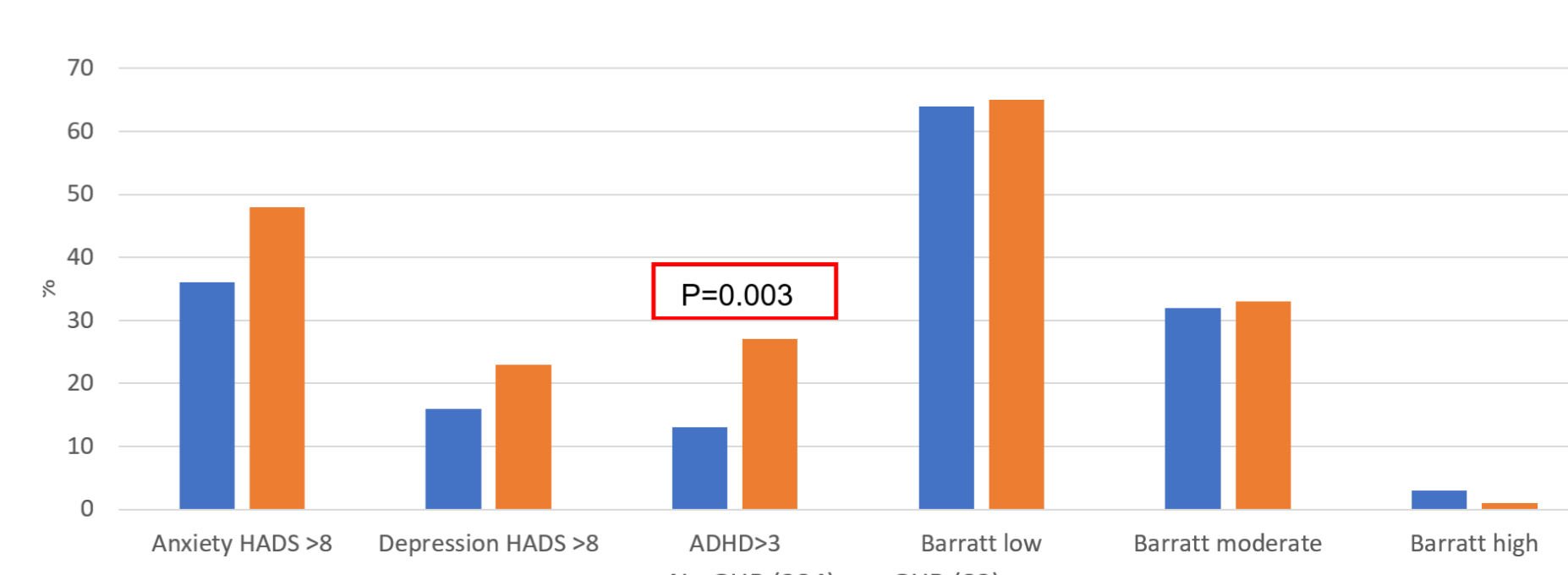
No Cathinones vs Cathinones



No Methamphetamine vs Methamphetamine



No GHB vs GHB



- 467 participants responded to the questionnaire. Baseline characteristics are shown in Table 1. Participants had a median age of 41 years, the majority were white of Spanish nationality, 50% had a university education and 99% were on ART.
- Participants reported substance use in 44%, 33% in the context of chemsex, and 7% in the context of slamsex. Additionally, 65% reported risky sexual practices: unprotected anal sex or fisting.
- The number of participants who obtained a clinically significant score on the different scales were as follows:
 - Anxiety (HADS)>8 177 (38%)
 - Depression (HADS)>8 80 (17%)
 - ADHD>3 74 (16%)

CONCLUSIONS

- Scores on different scales among drug users were higher, both for general use as well as for chemsex and slamsex.
- This trend is reflected when comparing by different substances: marijuana, GHB, methamphetamine, cathinones; being in some cases statistically significant.
- Slamsex use was significantly associated with a higher score on the Barratt score, which measures impulsivity

- UNPROTECTED ANAL INTERCOURSE AND DRUG USE ARE HIGHLY PREVALENT AMONG MSM IN HIV CARE.
- THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ADHD SYMPTOMS AND DRUG USE UNDERSCORES THE NEED FOR SPECIFIC PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE USE AMONG MSM.