

NPS use as a survival strategy among marginalised groups in villages and cities in Hungary

*Róbert Csák, Ferenc Márványkövi,
Szilvia Kassai, Judit Szécsi, József Rácz*

Hungarian Association on Addictions

Introduction

- NPS use became a widespread phenomenon among marginalised groups in Hungary.
- First groups affected were PWID in big cities:
heroin and amphetamine **2009=95% → 2016=16%**
- Since 2010 a growing number of reports on NPS use of previously not affected groups
people living in villages, homeless shelters
- We aimed to explore NPS use among these groups.



Introduction

- Previous researches in Budapest 8th district with PWID
- Talking about substance use and marginalized people:
 - Culture of poverty (Lewis)
 - Underclass (Wilson)
 - Habitus, culture capital (Bourdieu)
 - Disaffiliation (Castel)
- Philippe Bourgois ethnographic work
- Tim Rhodes Risk environment



Methods

- Target group: people living in segregated communities
(Hungarian Central Statistical Office definition)
- Privileged access (Griffiths et al, 1993)
Respondent Driven Sampling (Bell et al., 2017)
- I. study: **Villages in 2 regions** in Hungary
18+ years old, NPS use
150 questionnaire, 50 interviews
- II. study: **3 cities in Hungary**
18+y.o., NPS use - 21 interviews
-18 y.o. in rehab centers - 9 interviews
Professionals: 36 interviews,
+ Delphi method: quest. on health and social responses (N=91)

Results

- What do we know about NPS users in villages?
- What have we learnt about their motives?
- What responses would be effective according to professionals working in the field?



Results – Quantitative

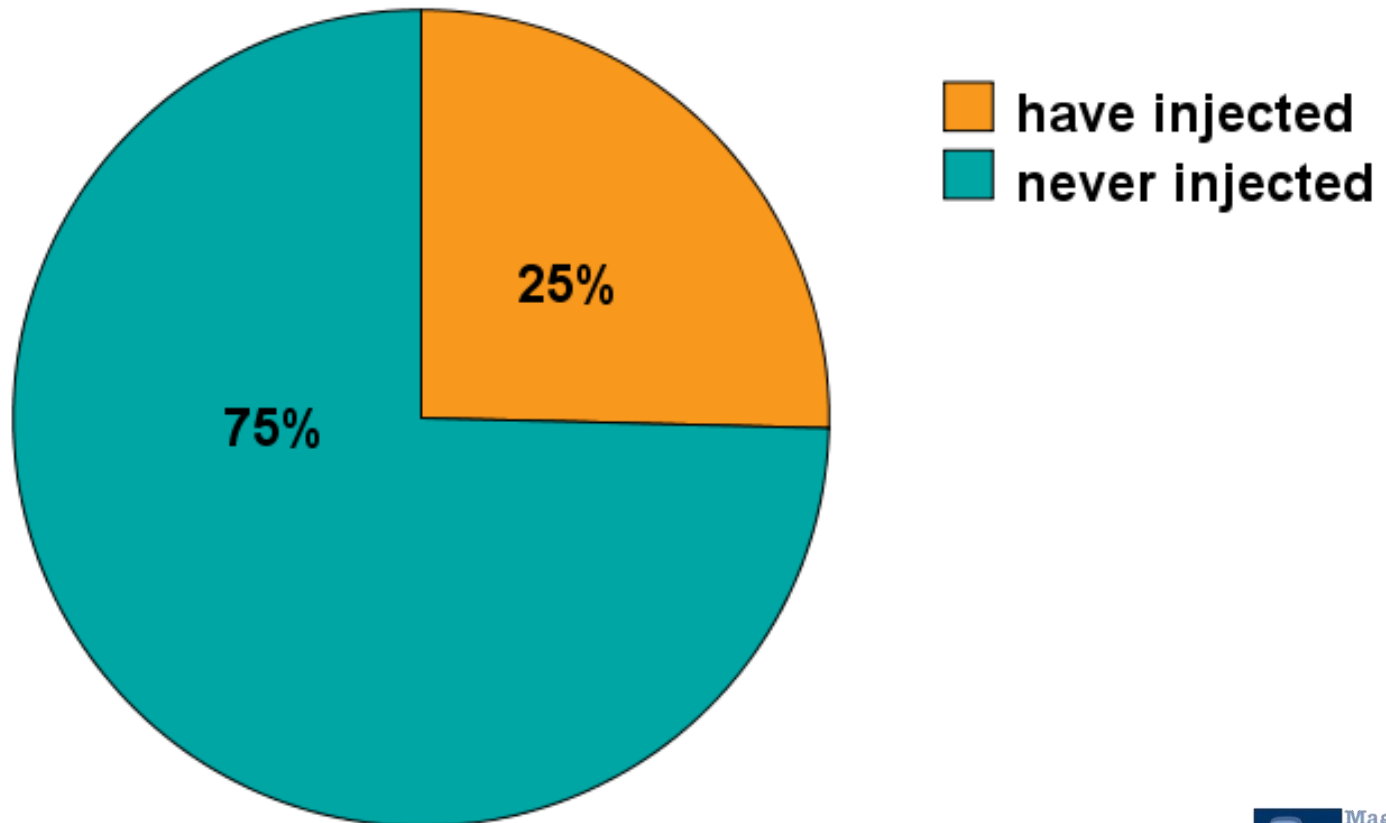
- 79% male
- Age: 25,8 yrs; eldest: 67 yrs
- Low educational attainment :
60% primary school or less
- Poor labor market situation:
27% had full time employment
- ...similar to PWID in Budapest 8th district



Results – Quantitative

- At risk population

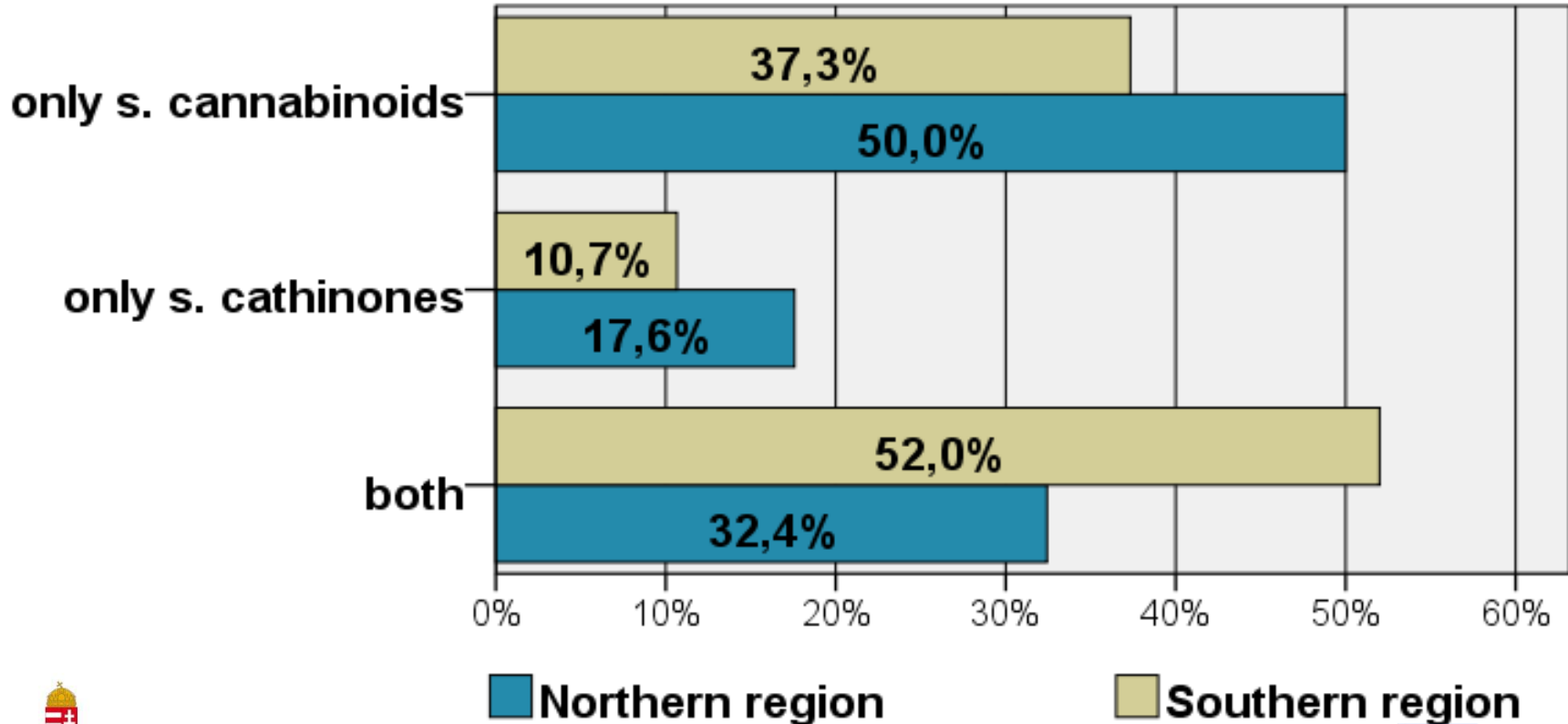
Lifetime prevalence of injecting substance use



Results – Quantitative

- Different substance use patterns

Last 30 days use of NPS by region (N=149, p=0,05)



Results – Quantitative

- Different substance use patterns

Frequency of use in the last 30 days

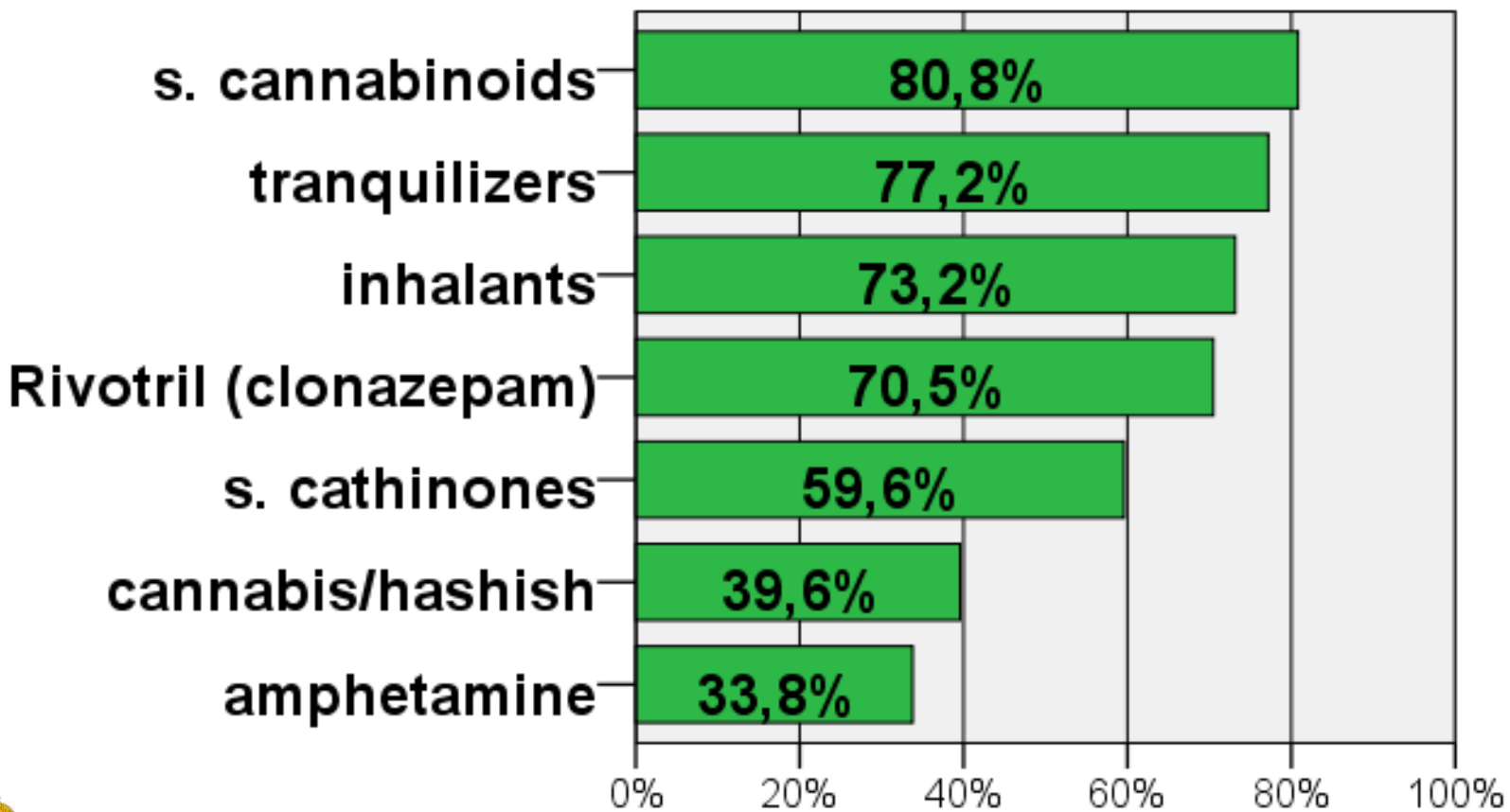
	s. cannabinoids		s. cathinones		spirits	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
none	8	5,9	17	16,8	44	29,9
1-2 times	50	36,8	47	46,5	47	32,0
1-2 times/week	22	16,2	13	12,9	23	15,6
3-4 times/week	21	15,4	16	15,8	14	9,5
Almost every day	35	25,7	8	7,9	19	12,9
Total	136	100,0	101	100,0	148	100,0



Results – Quantitative

- Good access to substances

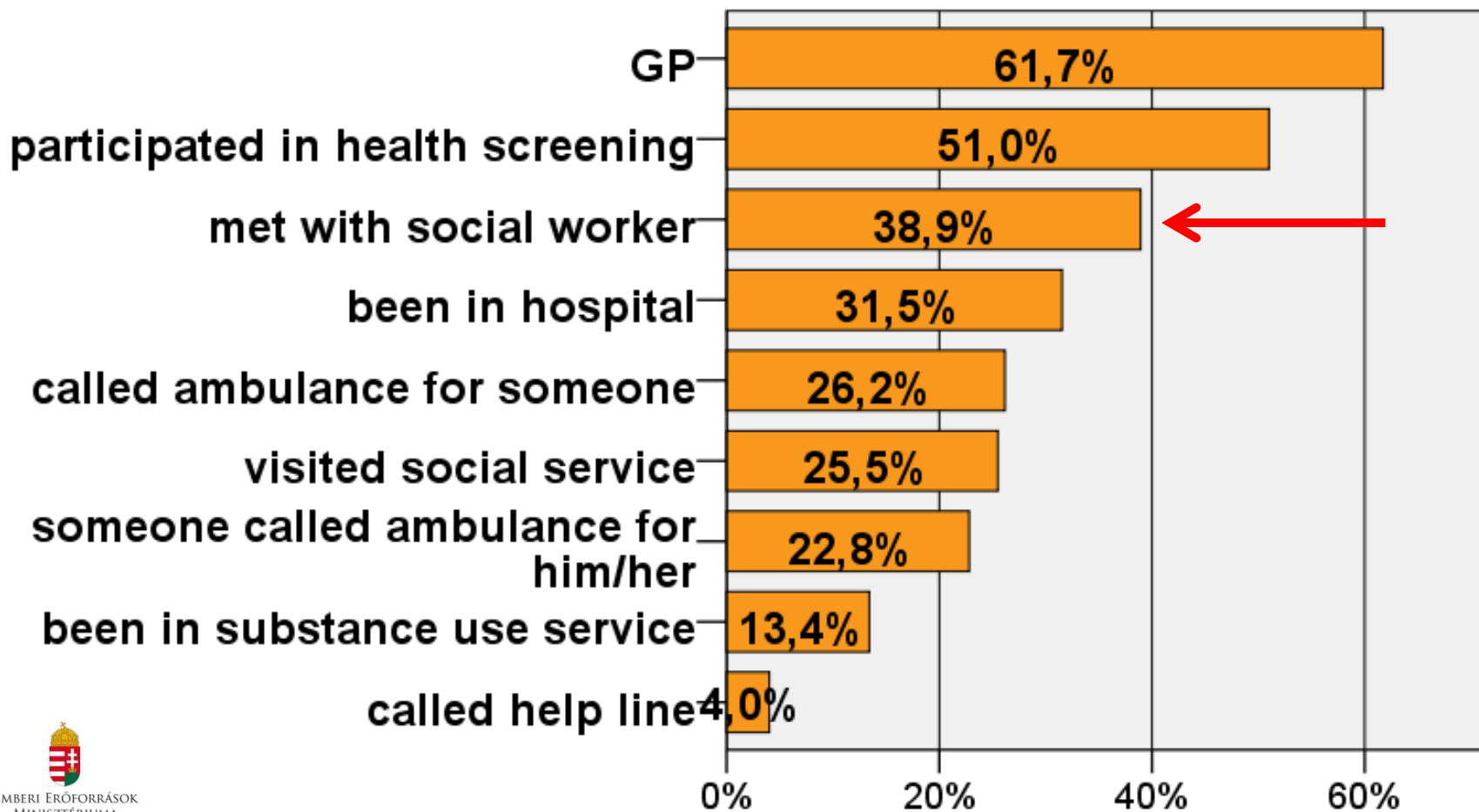
It would be easy to get... (N=149)



Results – Quantitative

- Poor access to services

Social, health services used in the last 12 months (N=149)



Results – Qualitative

- 50 interviews with **NPS users** in **segregated communities** in villages
- **Thematic analysis** (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- Both **inductive and deductive** ways – thematic analysis in Hungarian research reports on poverty, segregated communities:



Results – Qualitative

- **Buying**

Closed relationships, local

- **Location of use**

Closed, private locations

Alone, hiding

Public places

Together, company

- **Reasons for use**

Boredom – escape

Psychological problems – escape

Poverty – escape

Desire to belong, community

(having fun – in the past)

- **Experience of use**

Unpredictable, out of hand

Extremely negative: panic,

aggression paranoia, hallucinations

Remedy to be able to survive the everyday life

Positive: joy, increased energy

- **Stigmatization**

Results – Qualitative

- Reasons for use: psychological problems and escaping from it

„To be honest they don't have any money, they don't have a proper job, they don't have a family. Maybe they had in the past, but it turned bad, and that's it. They have no prospect in life, so they do drugs, get high, piss themselves, and just exist.”



Results – Qualitative

- Most themes are linked to surviving **stress, crisis, anxiety**:
substance use is a mean to escape:
poverty, boredom & psych. problems
and to **escape insecurity and chaotic life**
→ to be present oriented is a survival strategy
- Positive effects (community, joy, energy) are rarely present
passive enduring, no euphoria
→ it would compromise the survival strategy
- Substance use can be **productive**:
it helps to survive the everyday life in a segregated comm.
it helps to be able to carry out everyday tasks

Results – Qualitative

- Example: **Calmness, tranquility as a survival strategy**

In the interviews the experiences of calmness and tranquility appear in the context of stress, crisis, anxiety

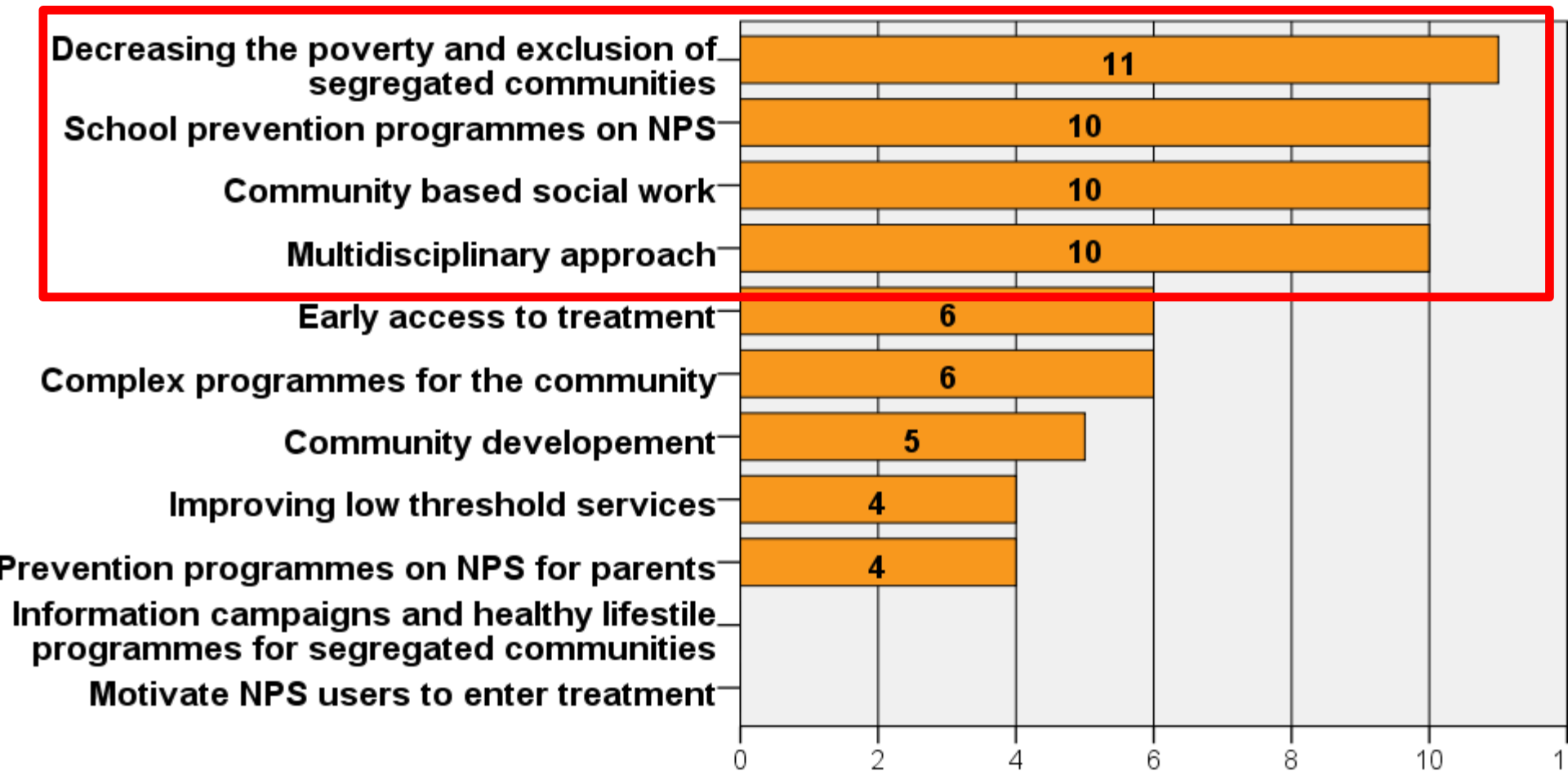
„You can enjoy something extra, you can feel yourself in a relaxed world. There is tranquility, peace and happiness. That’s why we use it, or at least I’m using it because of this.”

„Somehow I can put my brain to a more relaxed state... to be honest, in that moment I can forget about everything, I’m alone in my calmness” ,

Results – Professionals

Most urgent interventions to implement

Delphi 2nd wave – number of first places for each intervention



Conclusions

- NPS use is present in segregated communities, NPS users are **a high risk group** - NPS, alcohol, prescription drugs are present in these communities
- NPS use is characterised by attributions of marginalised groups, like disaffiliation (Castel), NPS use is a survival strategy to **escape insecurity and chaotic life**, stress management
- Effective responses have to be **complex interventions** addressing structural factors to create enabling environm.
 - substance use related interventions alone would fail
 - labour market integration, skills and employability development, crisis management, harm reduction, outreach work, etc.

Thank you for your attention

csakrobert@gmail.com

