

The ALICE project – alcohol, mental health and health service usage

Alcohol and
Lesbian/bisexual women:
Insights into
Culture and
Emotions

National Women's Health Conference
May 2013



Alice in Wonderland
John Tenniel



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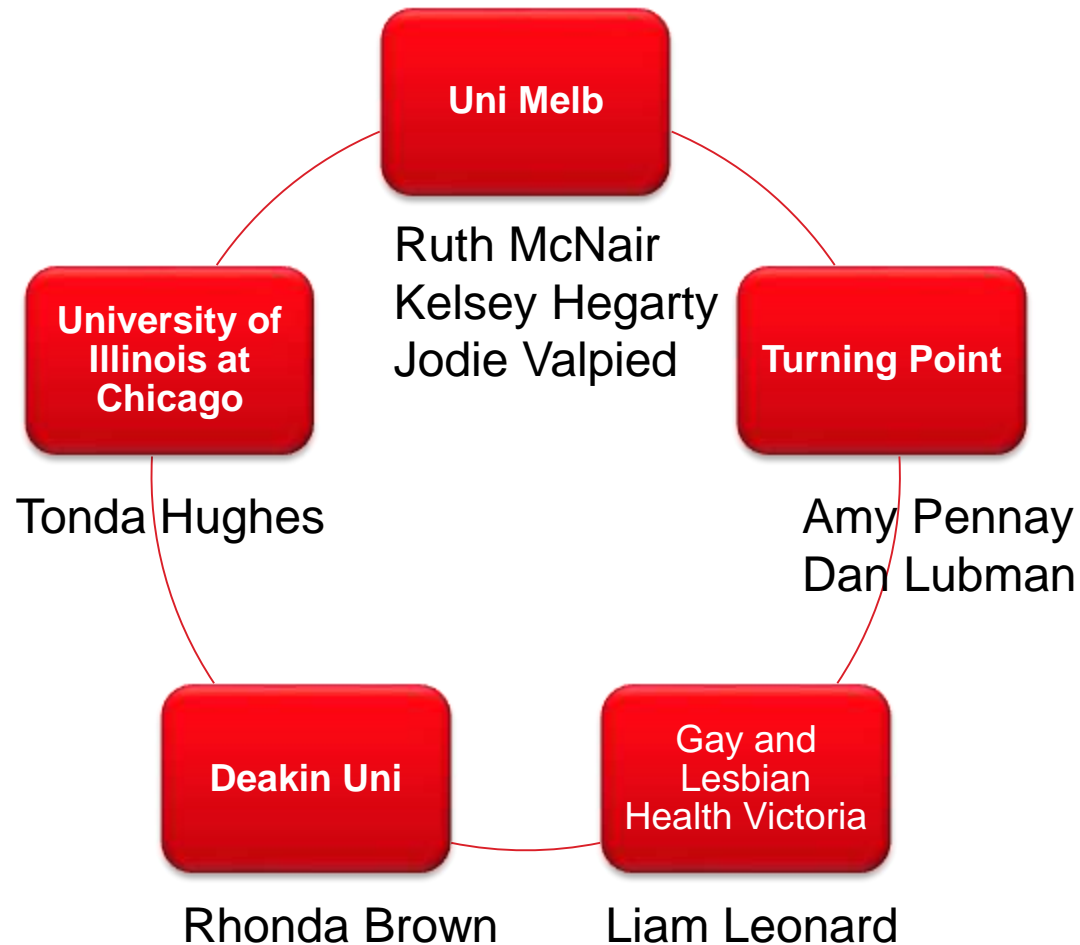


Turning Point
Alcohol & Drug Centre



beyondblue
the national depression initiative
www.beyondblue.org.au

Study team



Aims ALICE study

- 1. Explore relationships between hazardous drinking, and depression and anxiety in LB women**
2. Investigate influence of cultural norms and discrimination on drinking
- 3. Identify help-seeking patterns for hazardous drinking and/or depression/anxiety**
4. Develop training on LBW substance use for GP, AOD and mental health sectors



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ALICE Methods- ethnographic framework

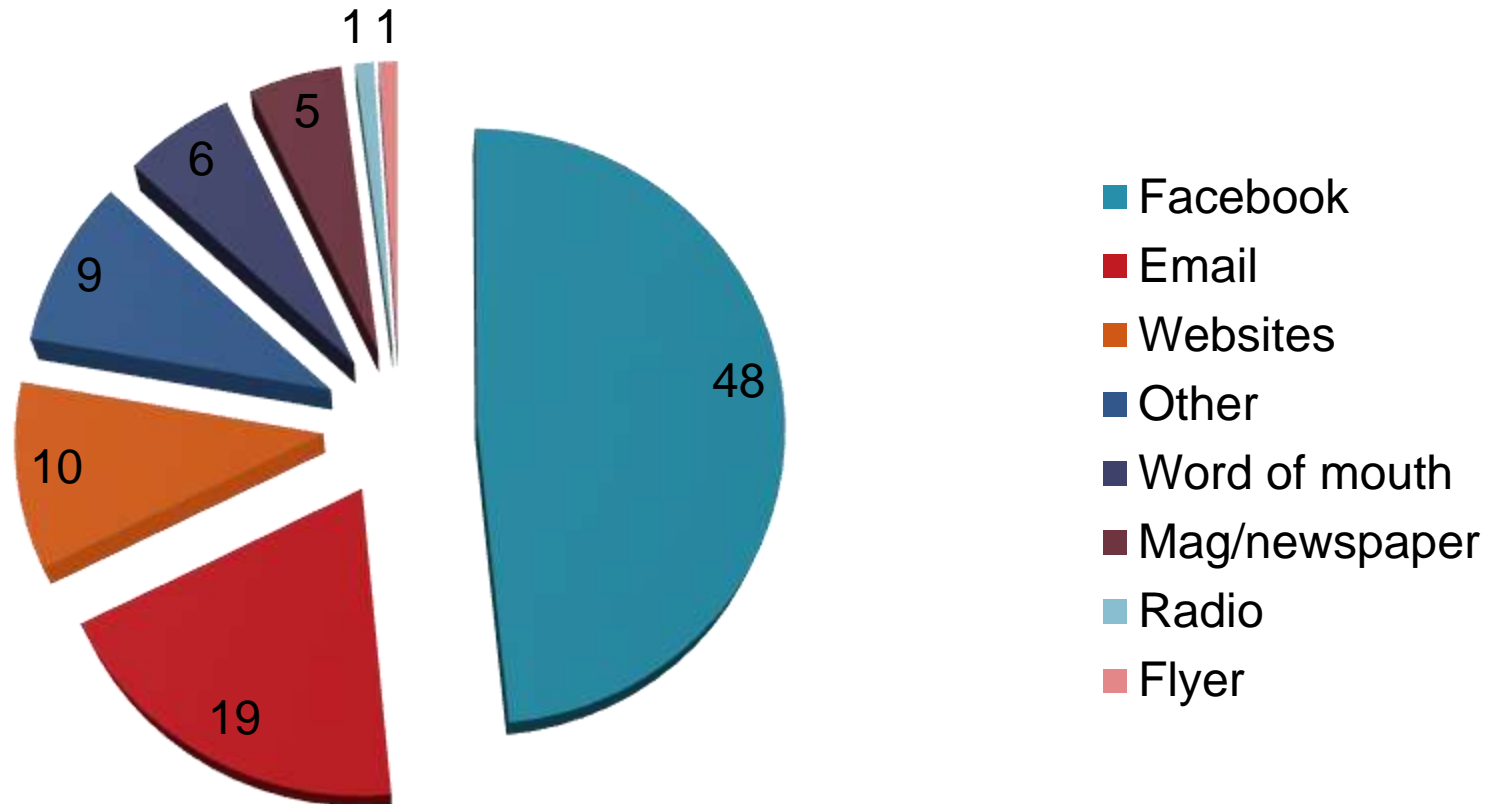
Online survey n = 521

In-depth interviews n~30

Participant observation n~5

Recruitment of same-sex attracted women >18yo, Australia-wide

Sources (%)



Survey respondent demographics n = 521

Age

mean 33.9 years old
range 18 to 73

Sexual orientation

lesbian	297	(57%)
bisexual	89	(17%)
queer	89	(17%)
other	19	(4%)
pansexual	10	(2%)
unsure	11	(2%)
heterosexual	6	(1%)

Gender identity

female	479	(92.0%)
gender queer	12	(2.3%)
trans male2fem	8	(1.5%)
trans fem2male	1	(0.2%)
other	18	(3.5%)

Relationship

with one person 52.8%
with >1 person 4.4%

Children

has children	100	(19.2%)
lives with “	55	(10.6%)

Alcohol use, smoking and other drugs

	Alcohol %	Smoking %	Illicit drugs %
ALICE Ever	98.8	65.9	71.3
ALICE Past 12 months	93.7	31.7	32.5
Population past 12 months*	77.5	16.3	22.7
Homosex/ Bi past 12 months**	n/a	32.9	35.7

Private	Lives 2
Alcohol 12 mths	Smoking 12 mths
92%	16.1%

*Women in National Household Drug Survey 2010

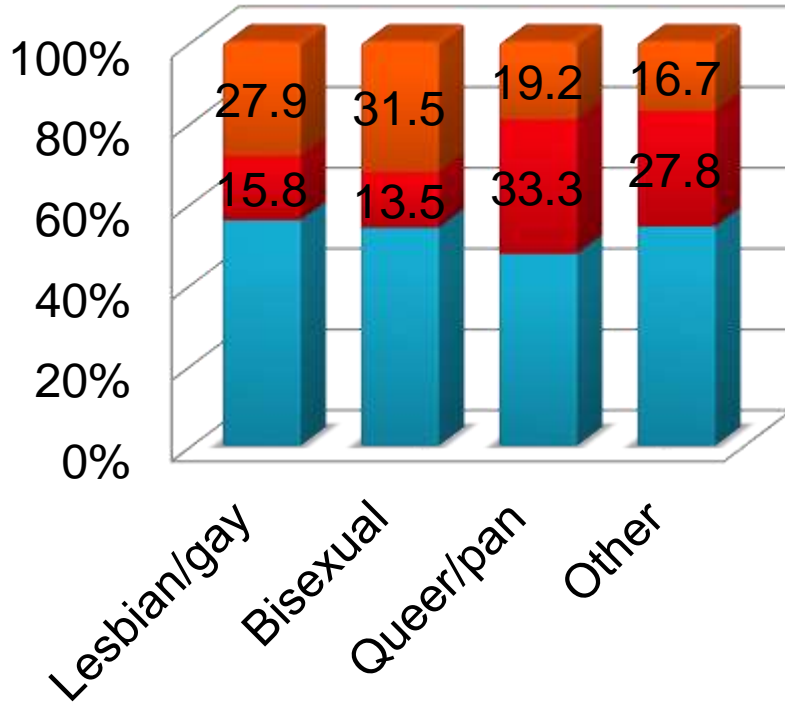
**all homosexual/bisexuals in National Drug Survey 2010

Alcohol use and smoking (%)

	Lesbian/gay	Bisexual	Queer/Pan	Other
Alcohol ever	98.7	100	98	100
Alcohol past 12 months	91.6	97.8	92.9	100
AUDIT > 7 harmful	38.7	38.2	45.5	44.4
Difficult to reduce/stop	14.8	14.6	15.0	25.0
Smoking past 12 months	29.3	25.8	45.0	38.8

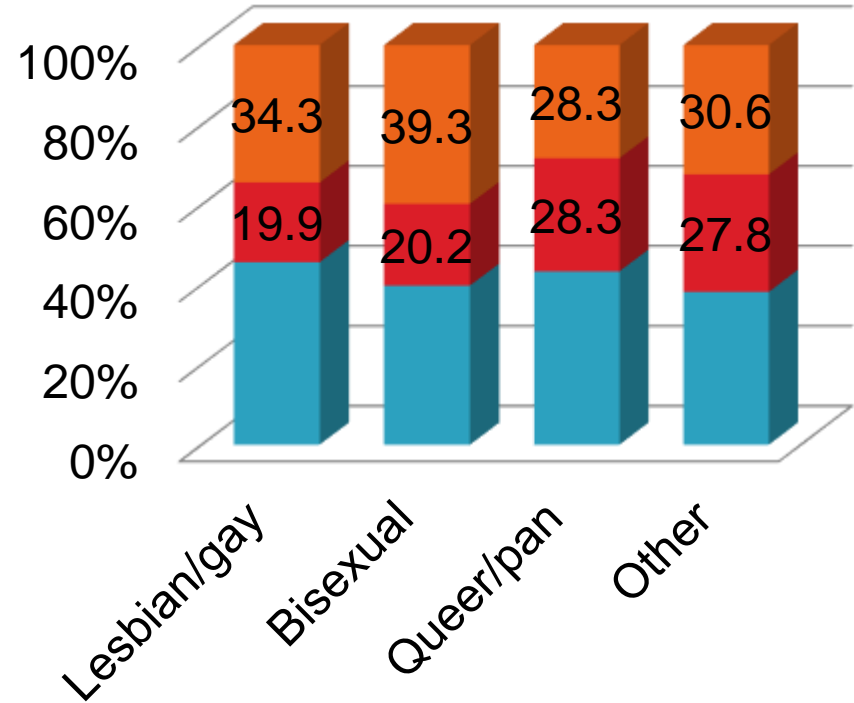
Mental health

Anxiety diagnosed %



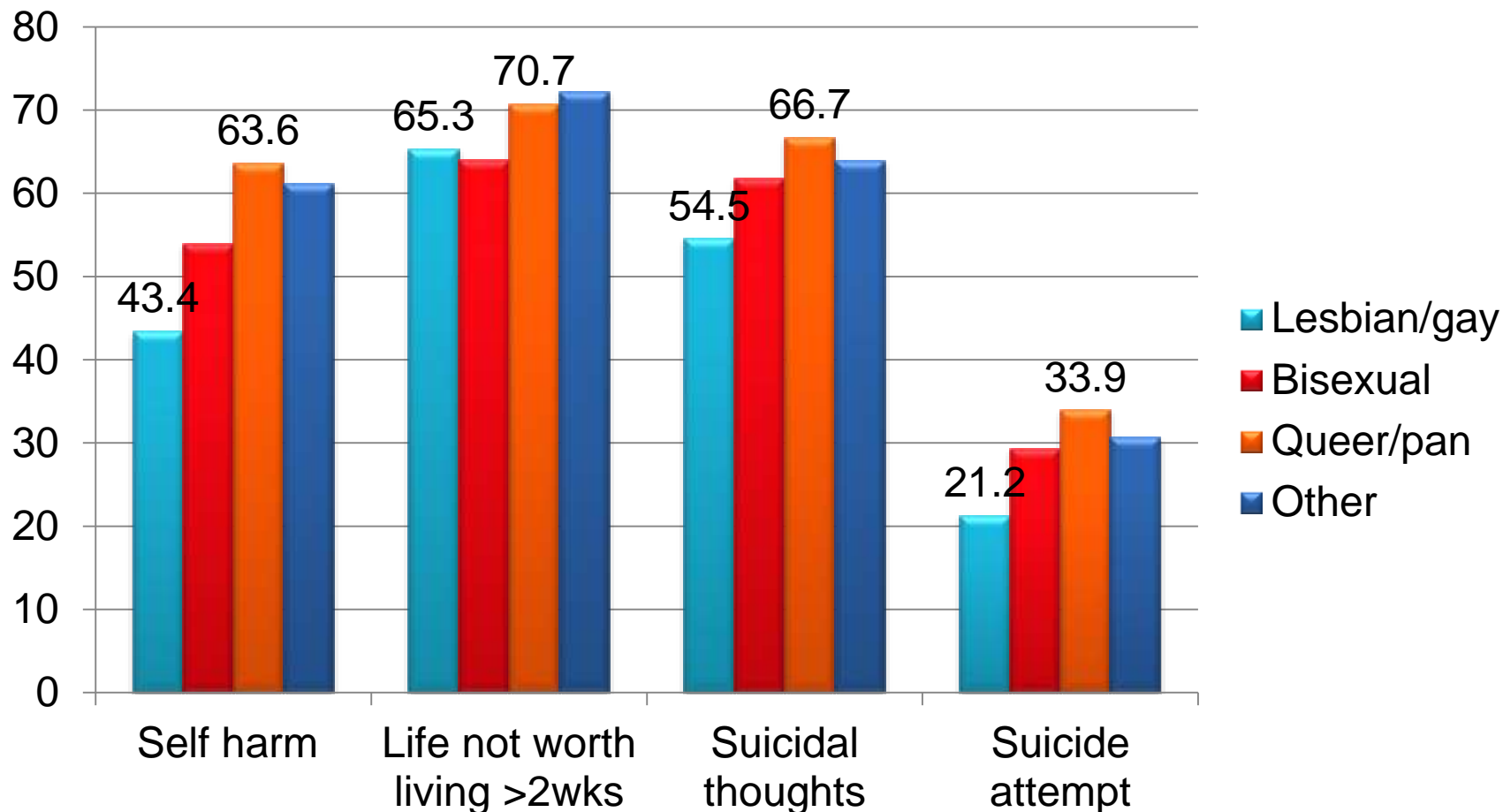
■ Never ■ last 12 mths ■ > 12 mths

Depression diagnosed %



■ Never ■ Last 12 mths ■ > 12 mths

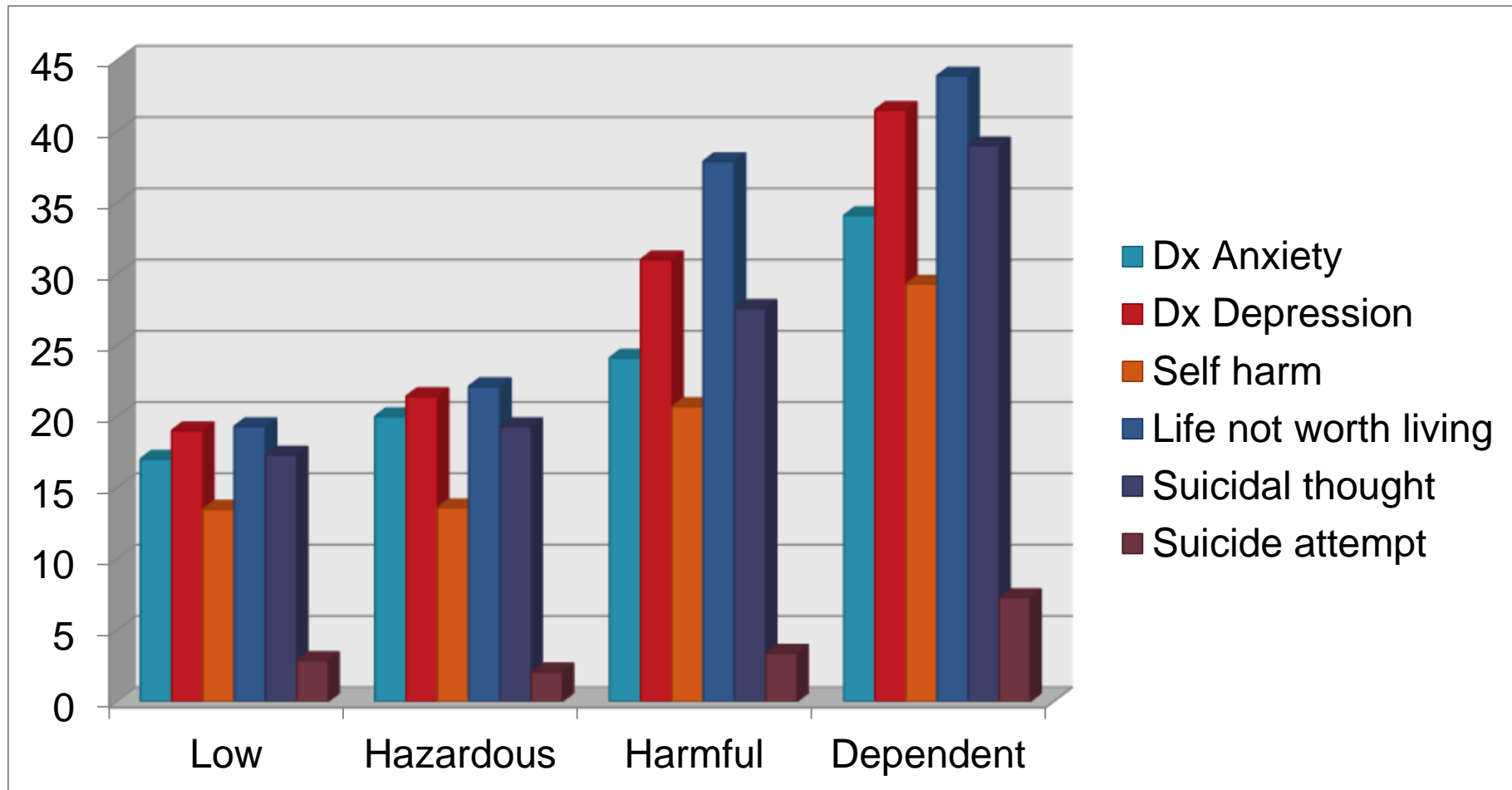
Self harm and suicide - ever (%)



Questions arising so far

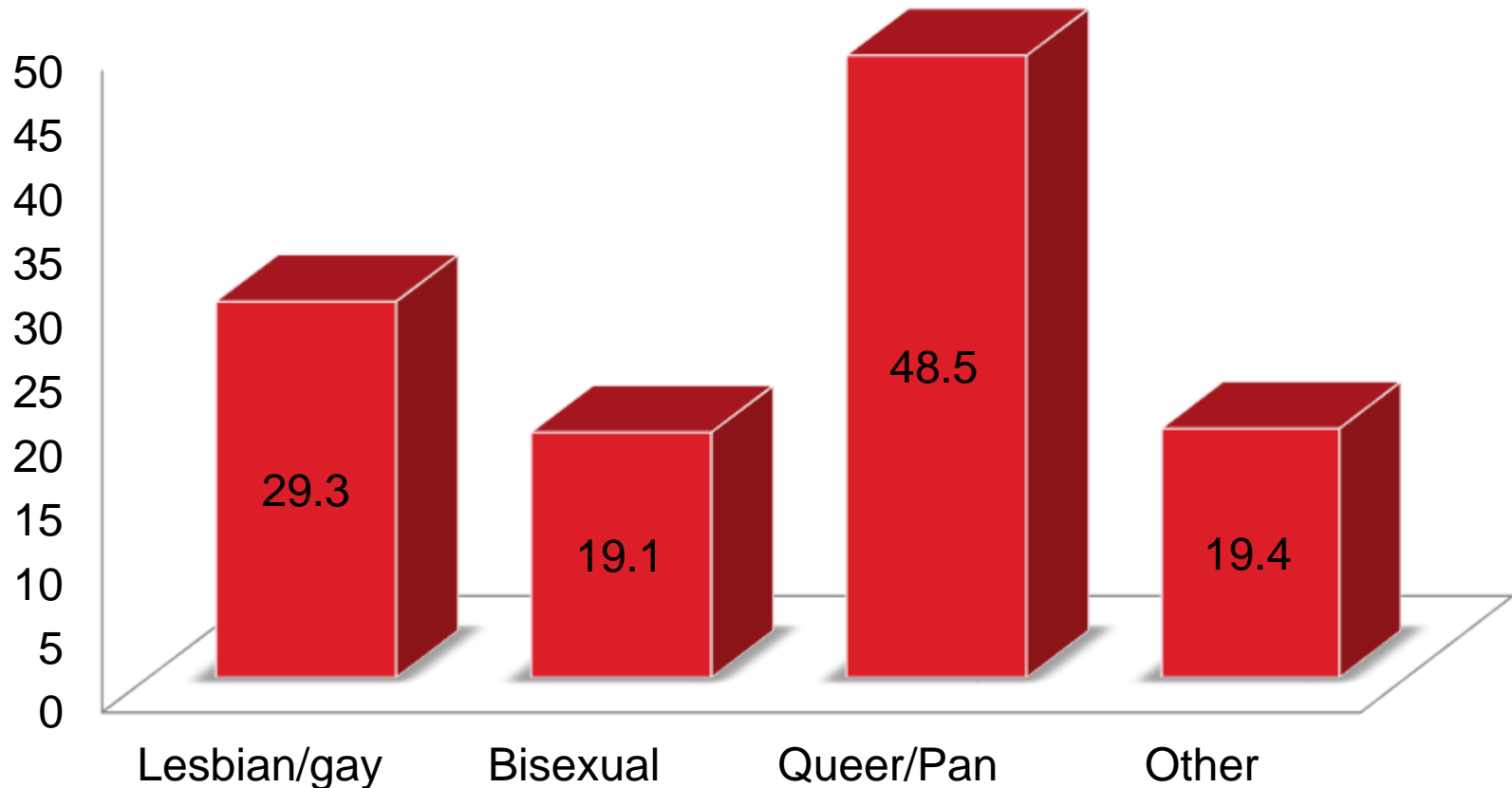
- Are alcohol intake and mental health connected?
- If so, ? Direction of the effect
- Why are depression, anxiety, self harm, and suicidality so prevalent?
 - Discrimination experiences?
 - Social marginalisation / lack social/family support?
- Are discrimination experiences influencing alcohol use?

AUDIT scores vs. depression and anxiety diagnoses and suicidality in the past year

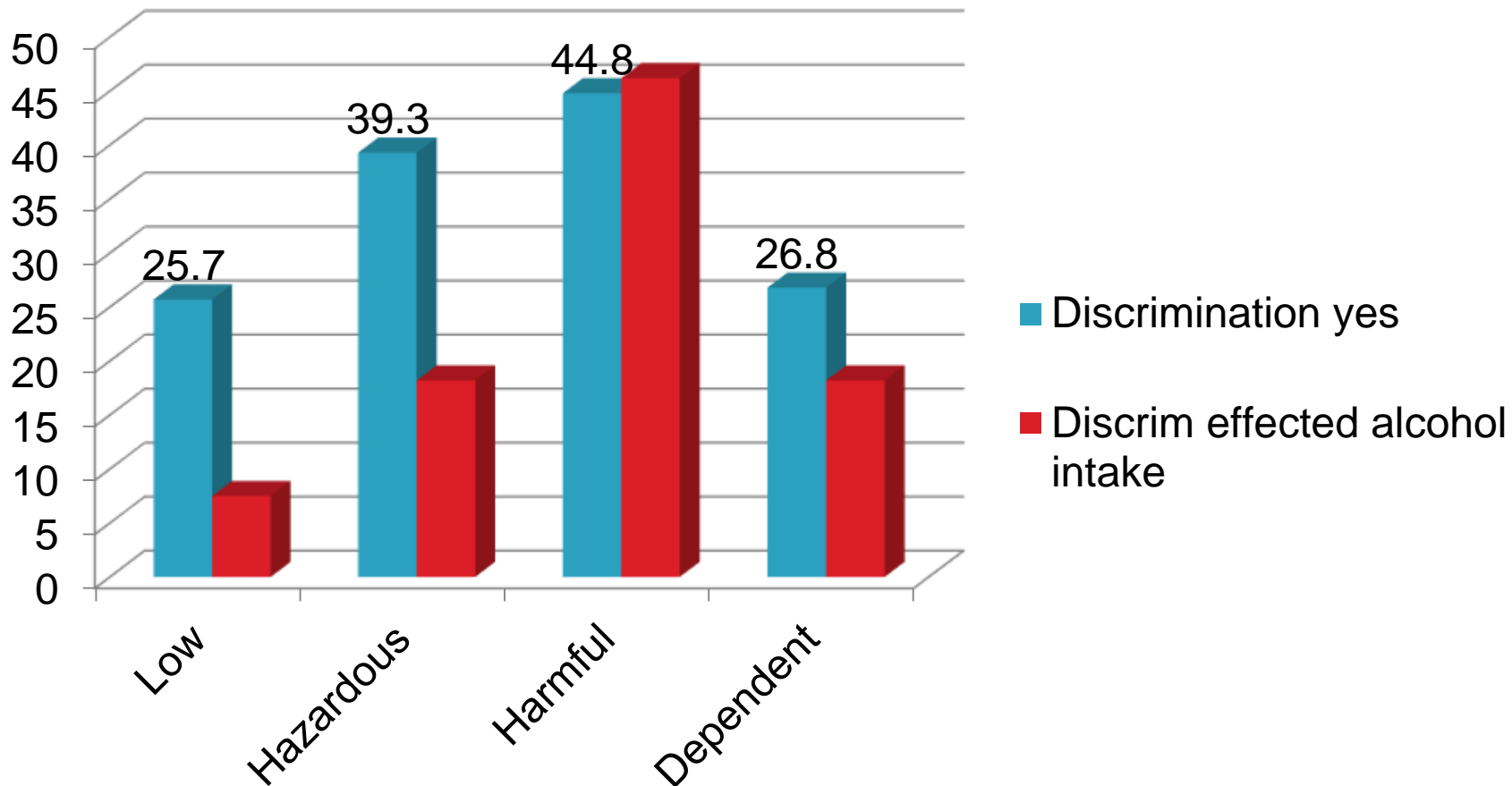


Experienced discrimination regarding sexual orientation/gender identity in past year (% yes)

159 women (30.5%) had experienced discrimination in the past year



Alcohol intake (AUDIT score), and discrimination – experiences and influence



Further questions arising?

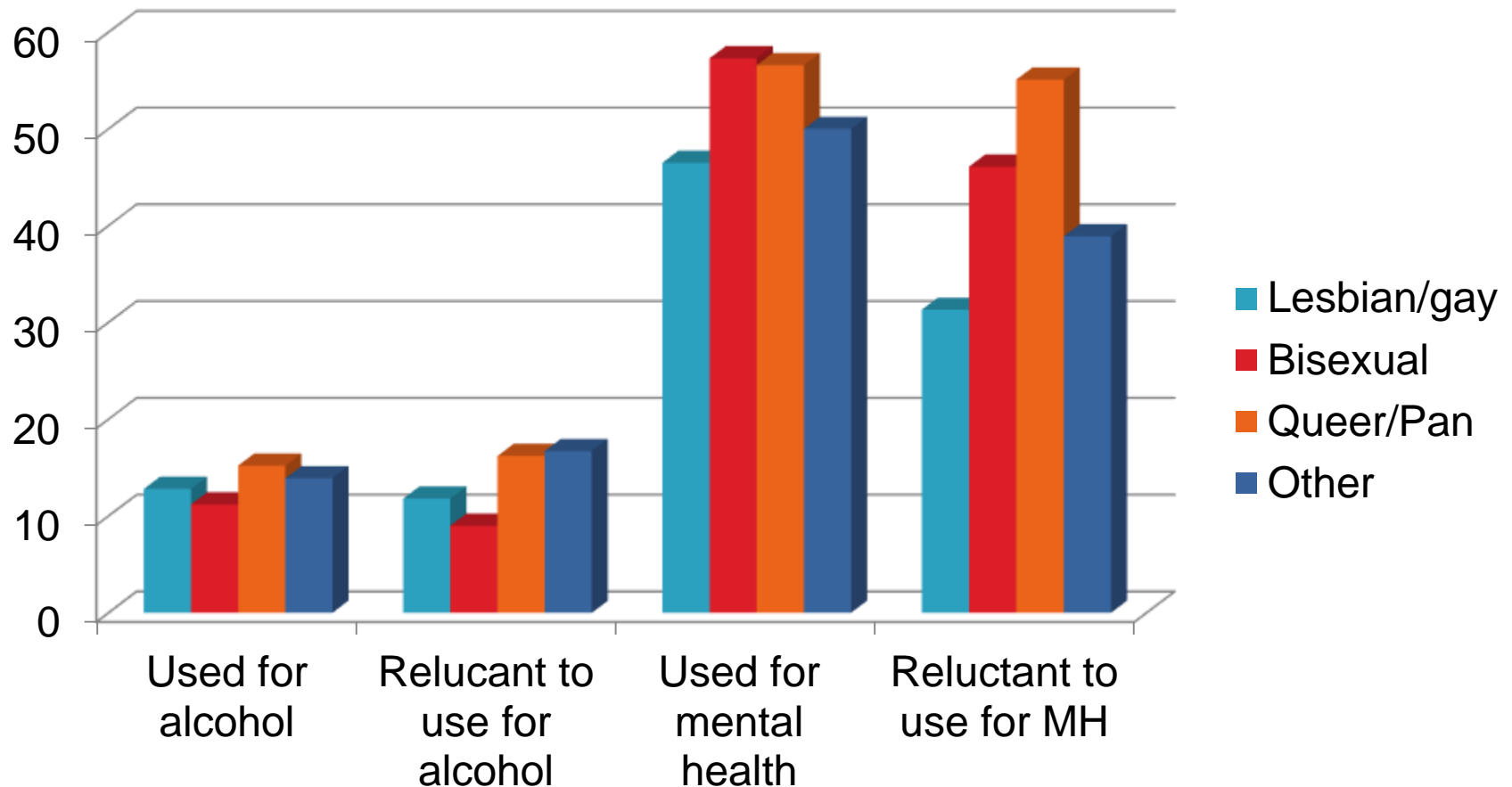
Given the high levels of depression, anxiety, self harm, suicidality and hazardous alcohol use

- Are women accessing health services?
 - General practice
 - Alcohol services
 - Mental health services
- Are there any barriers to access related to sexual orientation/gender identity?

General Practice use past 12 months and disclosure

% Yes	Lesbian	Bisexual	Pansexual	Queer	Unsure
Has a regular GP	78.8	68.5	80.0	61.8	36.4
Used at least once past 12 mth	94.3	94.4	90.0	92.1	100
Used re. alcohol	6.1	6.7	10.0	3.4	0
Used re mental health	12.8	7.9	30.0	21.3	0
GP aware of sexual orientation	69.4	36.0	20.0	68.5	18.2

Alcohol and mental health service use at least once in the past 12 months



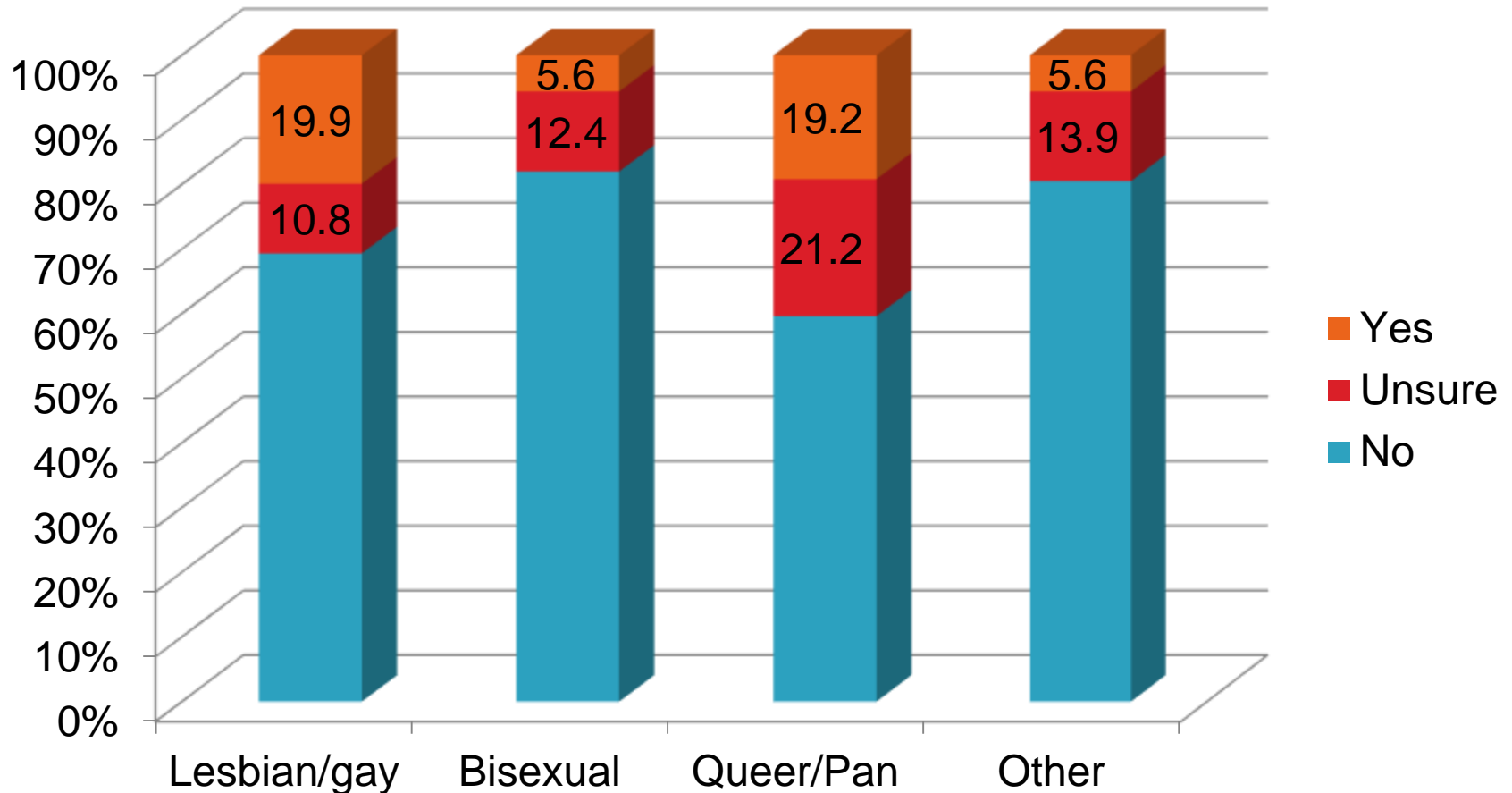
Range of barriers to service use for alcohol or mental health issues

- lack of information about services available
- inability to access services
- not ready to seek advice or help
- previous services used were not helpful
- **concerns about confidentiality**
- **concerns about being judged about alcohol/MH**
- **fear of discrimination based on SO/GI**
- **prior experiences of discrimination based on SO/GI**

Barriers to service access - % ever

Barrier	Services for Alcohol issues	Services for Mental health issues
Confidentiality	9.0	22.8
Fear about being judged	14.8	42.6
Fear of discrimination	7.6	24.4
Experience of discrimination	5.7	12.5

Experiences of discrimination in health services based on sexual orientation/ gender id



Take home messages - Convenience sample of non-heterosexual women with

high levels of mental health disturbance and suicidality

moderate levels of alcohol use, smoking and illicit drugs

discrimination a key association with MH disparities and harmful alcohol intake

service use is high, but barriers to use also high, especially for mental health

Next steps for ALICE project

