

Stigma as a main barrier to treatment

Markus Backmund

Munich

Outline

- Something about the meaning of the words
- Other Barriers
- Studies, publications
- Examples
- Conclusion, summary

Meaning of stigma

Book of Genesis Chapter 4.1 thru 4.16:

Definition of stigma

- A characteristic of persons that is contrary to a norm of a social unit
- Norm is defined as a „shared belief that a person ought to behave in certain ways at a certain time (Stafford and Scott 1986)

Definitions in 21th Century Dictionary

- Stigma: shame or social disgrace. A blemish or scar on the skin
- Disgrace: shame or loss of favour or respect
- Discriminate in favour of or against someone: to give different treatment to different people or groups in identical circumstances, especially without justification and on political or religious grounds.

Other Barriers

- Programmatic
 - Staff lacks knowledge
 - Referrals not available
- Medical
 - Mental Illness
 - Too sick
- Psychosocial
 - Financial
 - No insurance
 - No transportation
 - Unemployment
 - Legal
- Behavioral
 - Substance-related
 - Chaotic lifestyle
 - Active drug use
 - Active alcohol use
 - Indifference
 - Other priorities
 - Lack of interest
 - Refusal
- Educational
 - General
 - Client lacks knowledge
 - Unaware of Dx
 - Unaware of treatment
 - Perceptions
 - Fear of venipuncture
 - Fear of biopsy
 - Fear of treatment
 - Denial

Result: Top 5 Barriers

- 5. Active drug use**
- 4. Lack of client knowledge**
- 3. Fear of treatment**
- 2. Denial**
- 1. Chaotic lifestyle**

Studies, publications

Stigmatisation: direct detrimental influence on mental and physical health:

- Krieger 1999
- Link et al. 1997
- Minior et al. 2003
- Young et al. 2005

Studies, publications

Stigma has been identified as an important barrier:

- Cunningham et al. 1993
- Link et al. 1997
- Calsyn et al. 2004
- Reif et al. 2005
- Ojeda and McGuire 2006
- Miller et al. 2001: When illicit drug users do seek care, they often experience discrimination in the health care setting and receive lesser quality care

Stigma and mental health professionals

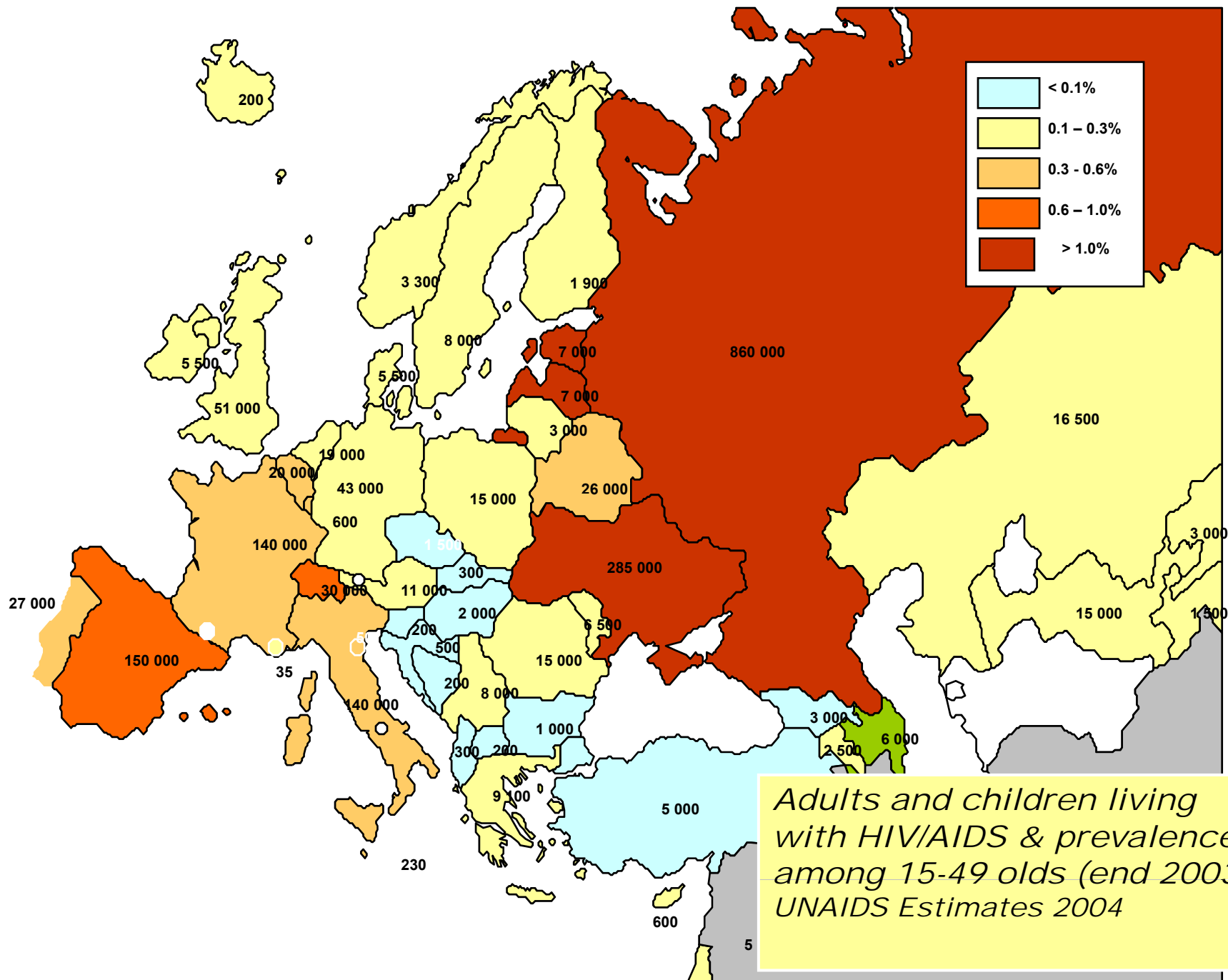
- Beate Schulze. International Review of Psychiatry 2007; 19: 137-155:
„Results revealed that exclusion and discrimination not only occurred in the context of social relationships with friends, relatives, colleagues or employers, but also in the contact with mental health professionals.“

Examples: 1) Chicken pox - case report

Backmund et al. Immun Infekt 1997; 2: 57-59

- Moreover, they may attempt to hide their drug use, the issue for which they may have the greatest need of care, in the health care setting (Kurtz et al. 2005)

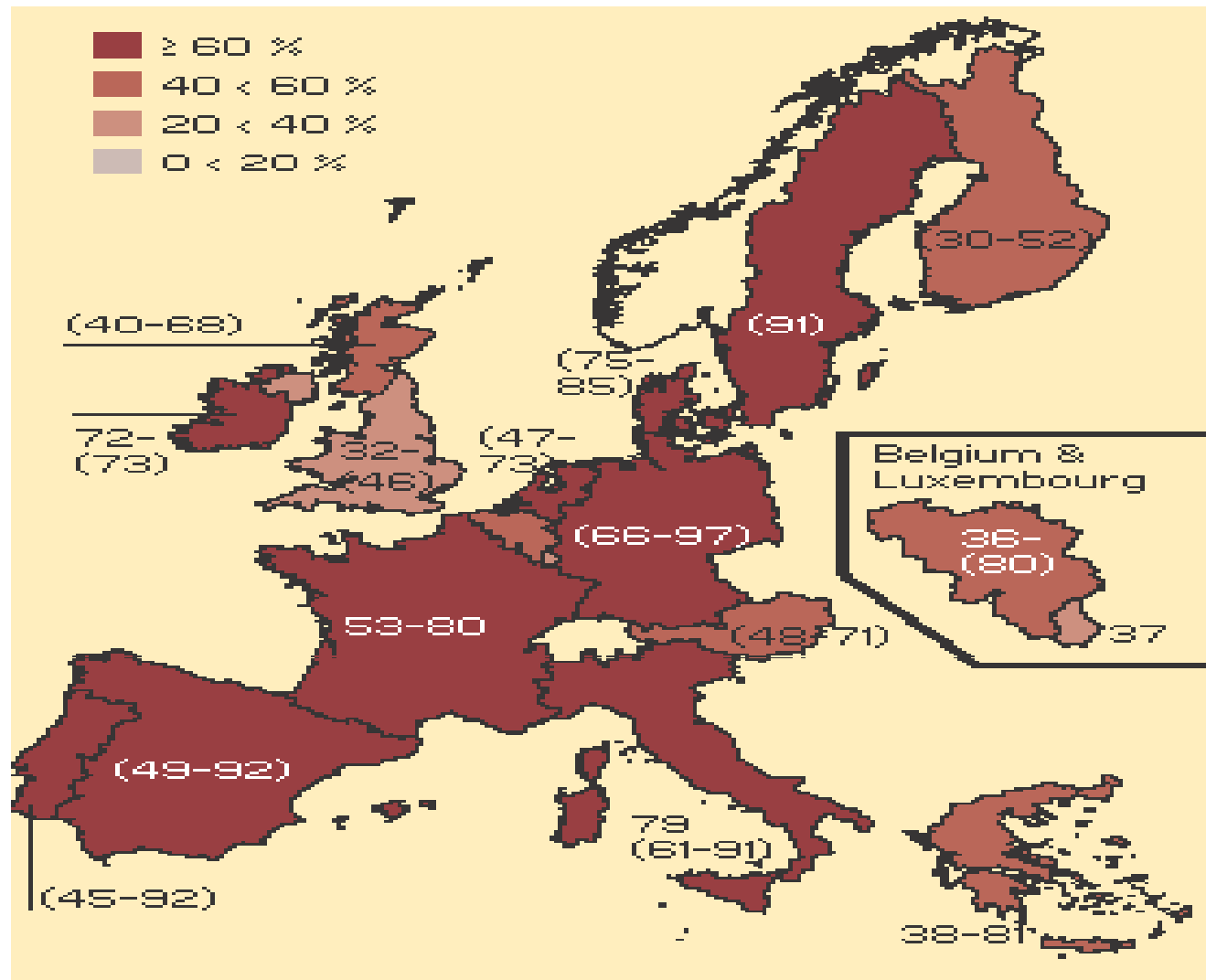
Examples: 2) HIV-epidemic in injection drug users



Adults and children living with HIV/AIDS & prevalence among 15-49 olds (end 2003) UNAIDS Estimates 2004

Examples: 3) HCV-treatment in injection drug users

HCV-prevalence in IDUs in Europe (Reimer et al. CID; 2005)



Development of the recommendations for the treatment of Hepatitis C in injection drug users

- USA, NIH - Consensus Development Conference Panel Statement (Hepatology **1997**;26(Suppl)), and
- Europe, EASL - International Consensus Conference on Hepatitis C. Consensus Statement (J Hepatol **1999**;30)

Both injecting illicit drugs and drinking excessive amounts of alcohol are exclusion criteria for the treatment of Hepatitis

C

What reasons were stated not to treat IDUs?

- Bad adherence
- High risk of reinfection
- High rate of psychiatric comorbidities

1998: Criticism of recommendations

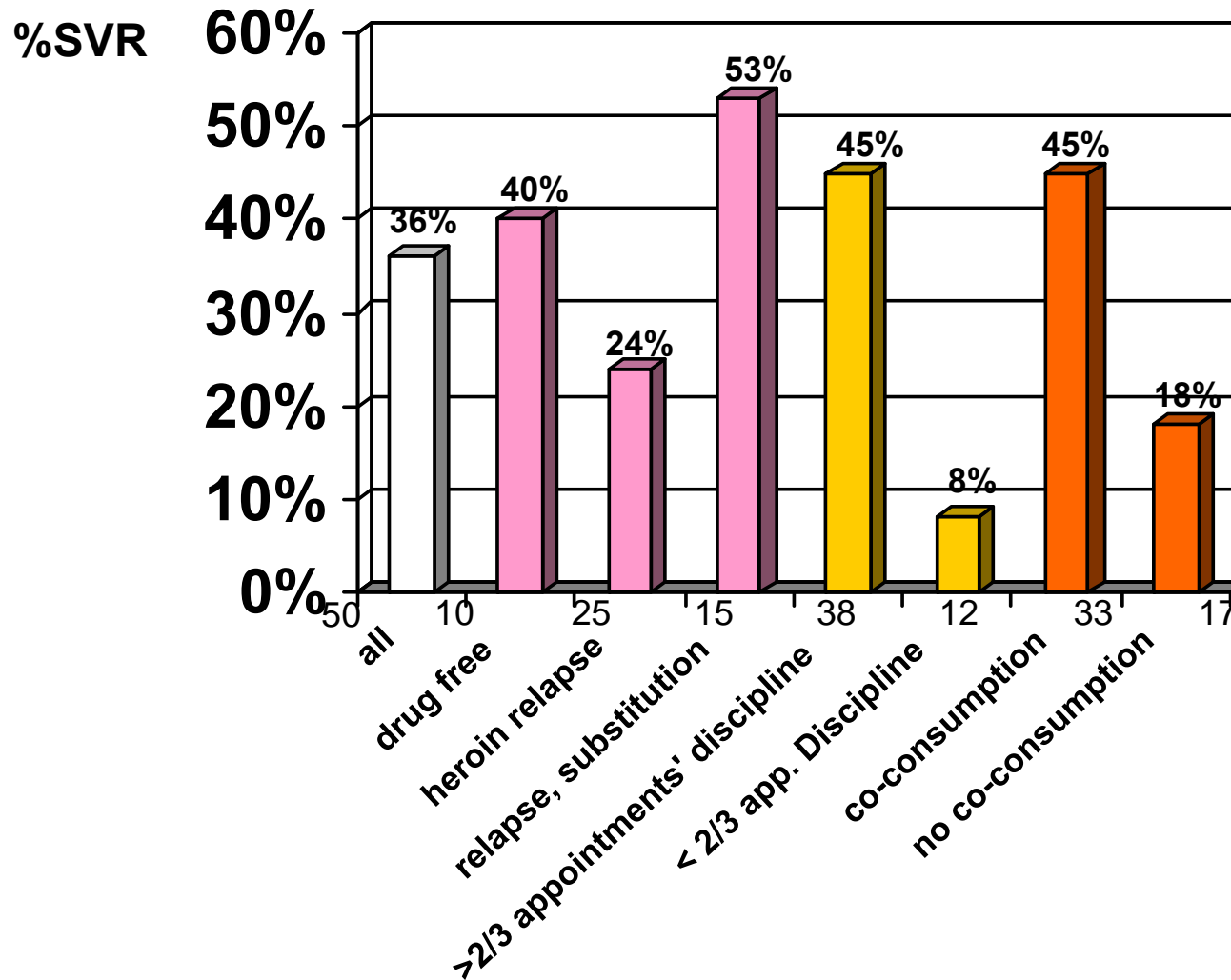
- No specialists in addiction medicine were asked
- There were no investigations conducted to determine whether HCV infected addicts have adhered to HCV treatment
- No investigation was conducted to clarify whether psychiatric disorders really increase risk for alpha-interferon-induced mental side effects and dropouts

The Munich Study

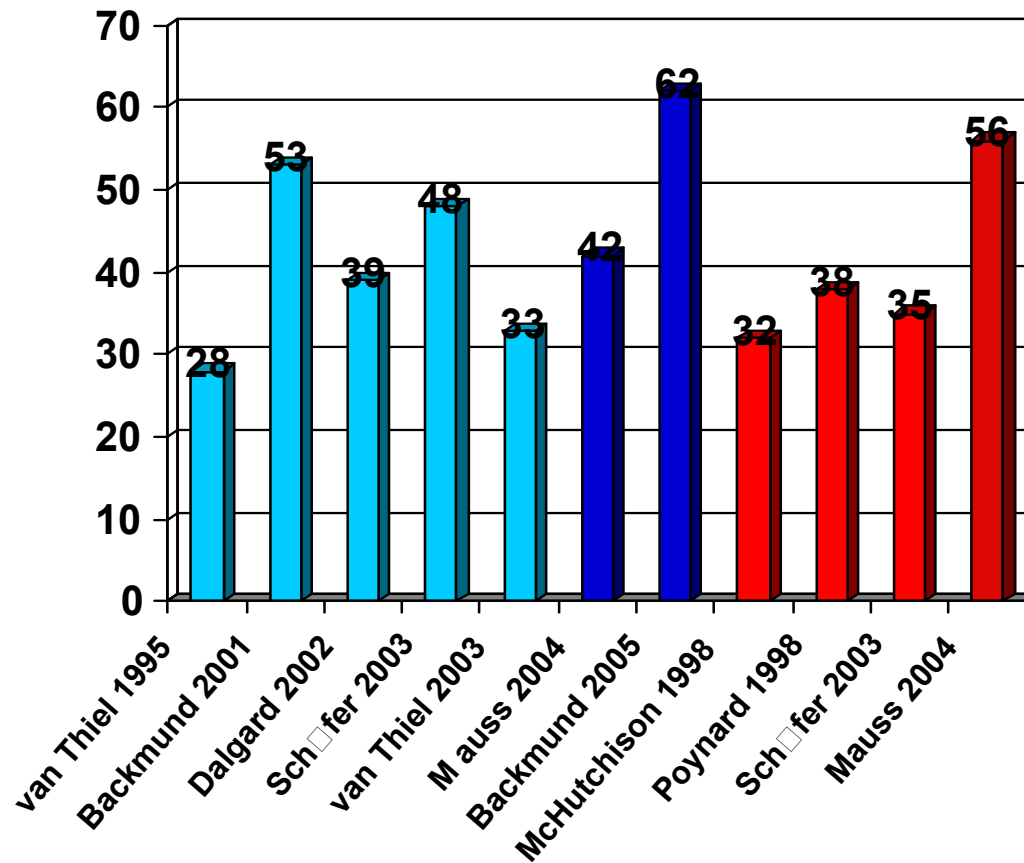
1997-1999

- Prospective trial
- Start HCV therapy during detoxification
- Patients
 - live drug-free
 - Have drug relapse
 - Substitution following drug relapse
- Treat side effects
- MDs were specialized in both hepatology and addiction medicine

Munich study: Sustained virological response (SVR)



SVR in Methadone substituted patients and controls

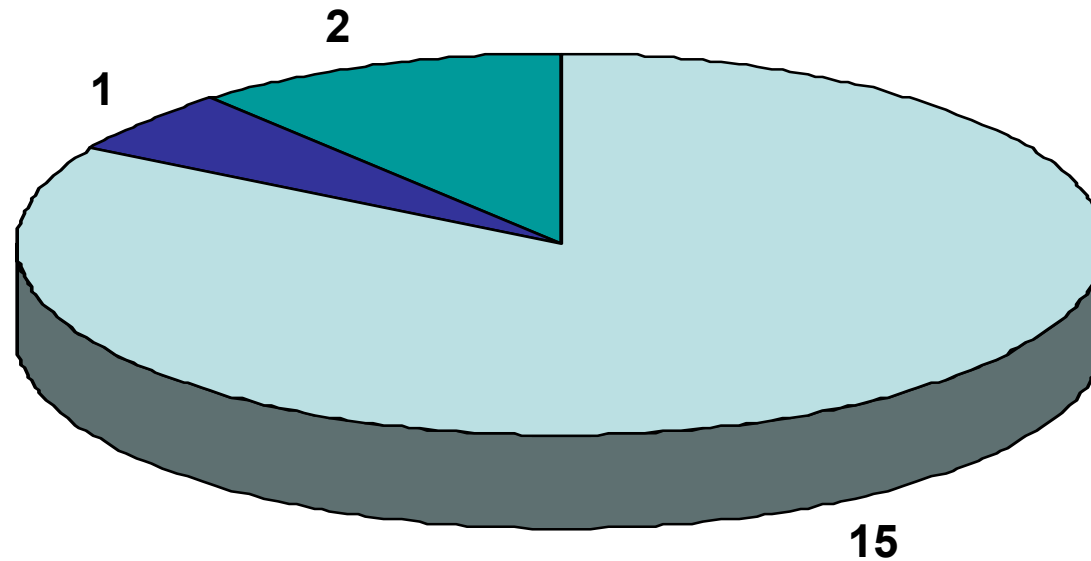


Studies with INF 3x/week + RBV

Studies with peg. INF

controls

The Munich study - 3,5 years follow up

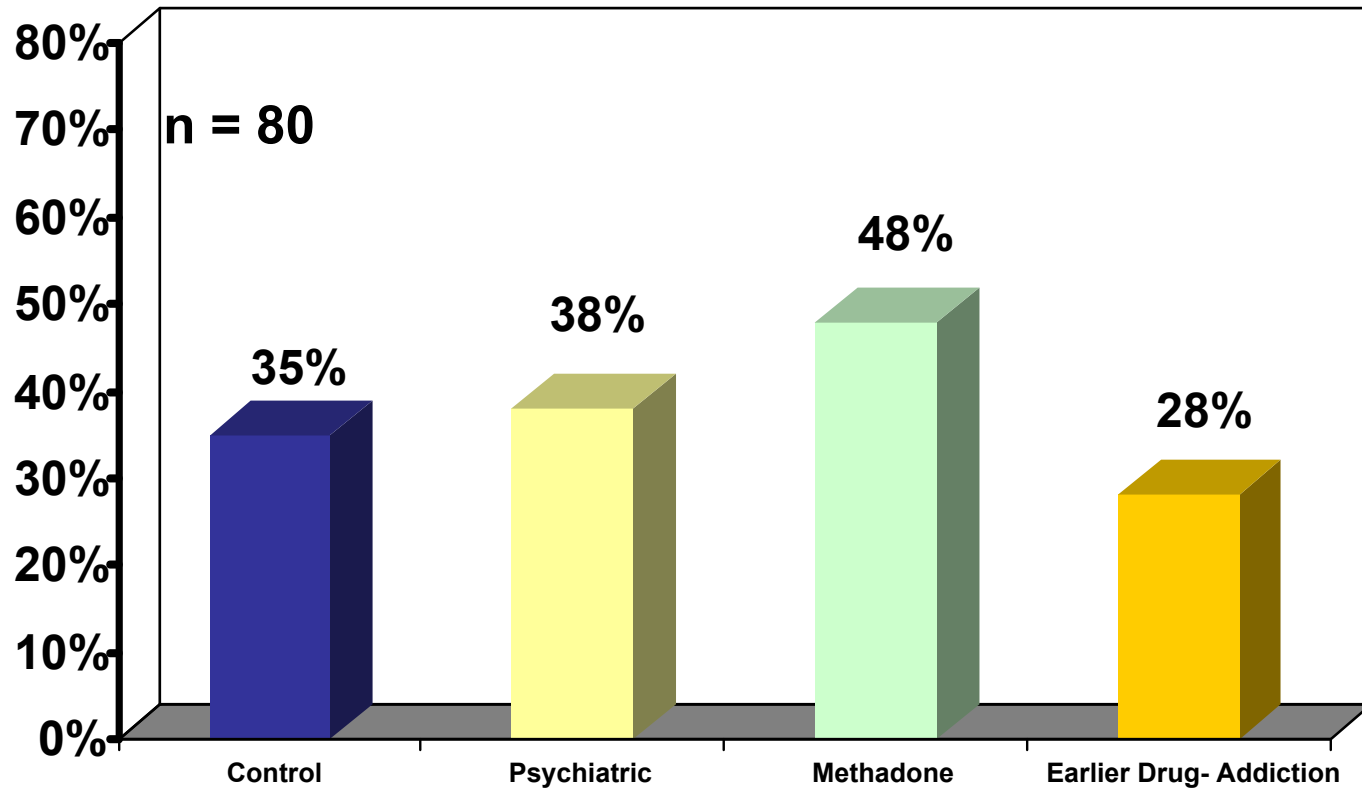


□ HCV-RNA negative

■ dead

■ HCV-RNA positive

Psychiatric patients



What could be the reasons for bad results of former IDUs?

- Withdrawal symptoms and side effects of interferon are rather similar
- If former addicts feel bad in either mind or body, they are in danger of having a drug relapse

New recommendations

- 2002 NIH: Treat HCV-infected IDUs - Recommended treatment decisions be made by patients and physicians on a case-by-case basis
- 2008 German Society: Treat HCV-infected IDUs during substitution treatment

Summary and conclusion

- Stigmatisation is one of the highest barriers for IDUs as far as receiving effective therapy is concerned.
- Stigmatisation and discrimination could lead to patients not receiving effective and successful therapy.
- We physicians can achieve change through effective scientific studies and thus reverse prejudiced opinions.

Thank you

AntiSTigma, AST e.V.

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