SACENDU

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGY NETWORK ON DRUG USE

Treatment Demand Data • Service Quality Measures (SQM)
• Community-Based Harm Reduction Services

60TH SYMPOSIUM

WESTERN CAPE

TREATMENT DATA

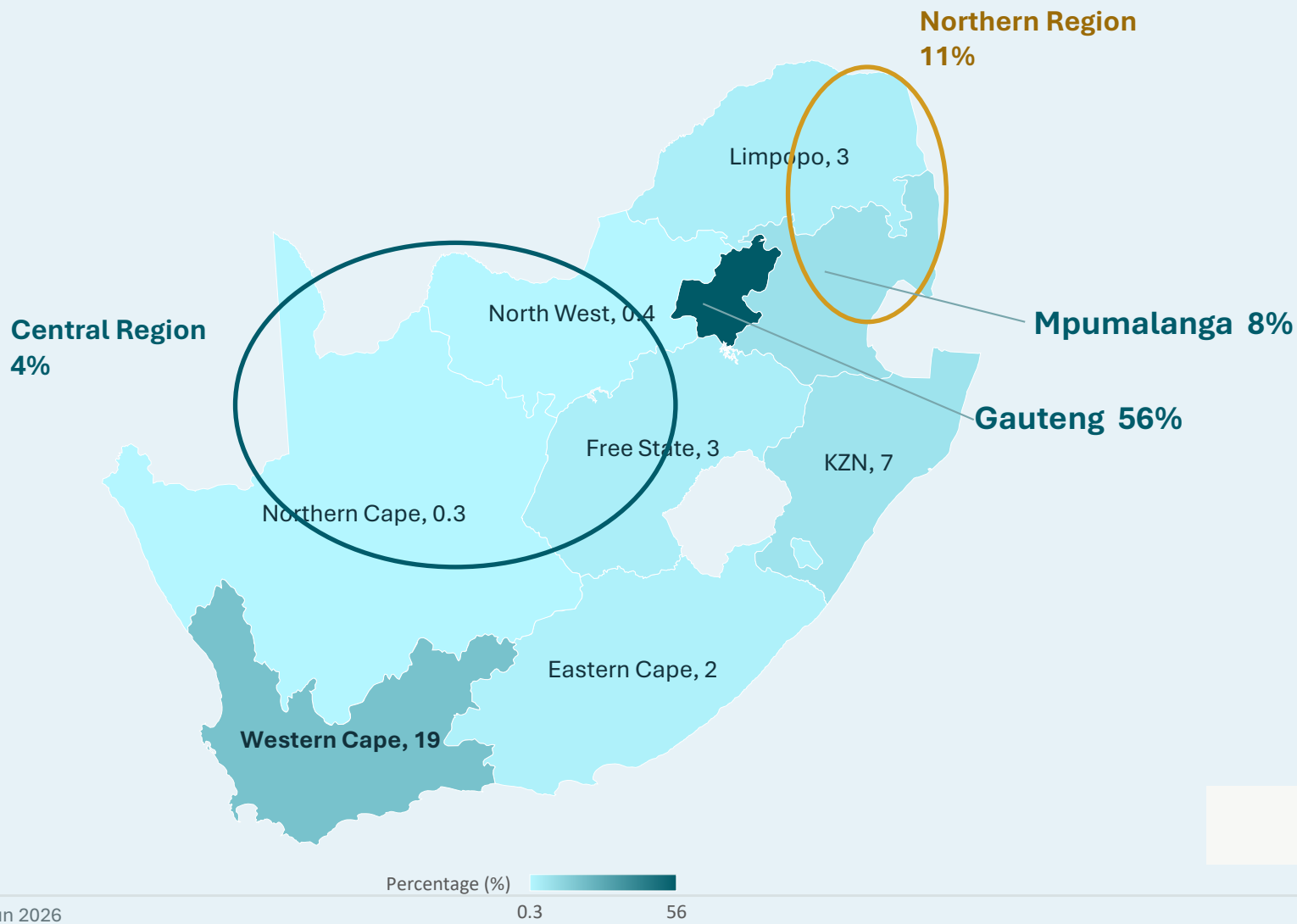
CELEBRATING OUR 60TH SACENDU SYMPOSIUM

MS NANCY HORNSBY & MS JODILEE ERASMUS

Phase 60 | Jan - Jun 2026

saMRC advancinglife

Western Cape represents 19% of the national total



Admissions rose to 1,798 in Jan–Jun 2026

OVERALL RELATIVE CHANGE

−5.0%

CI: -10.9 - 1.4

94 fewer admissions

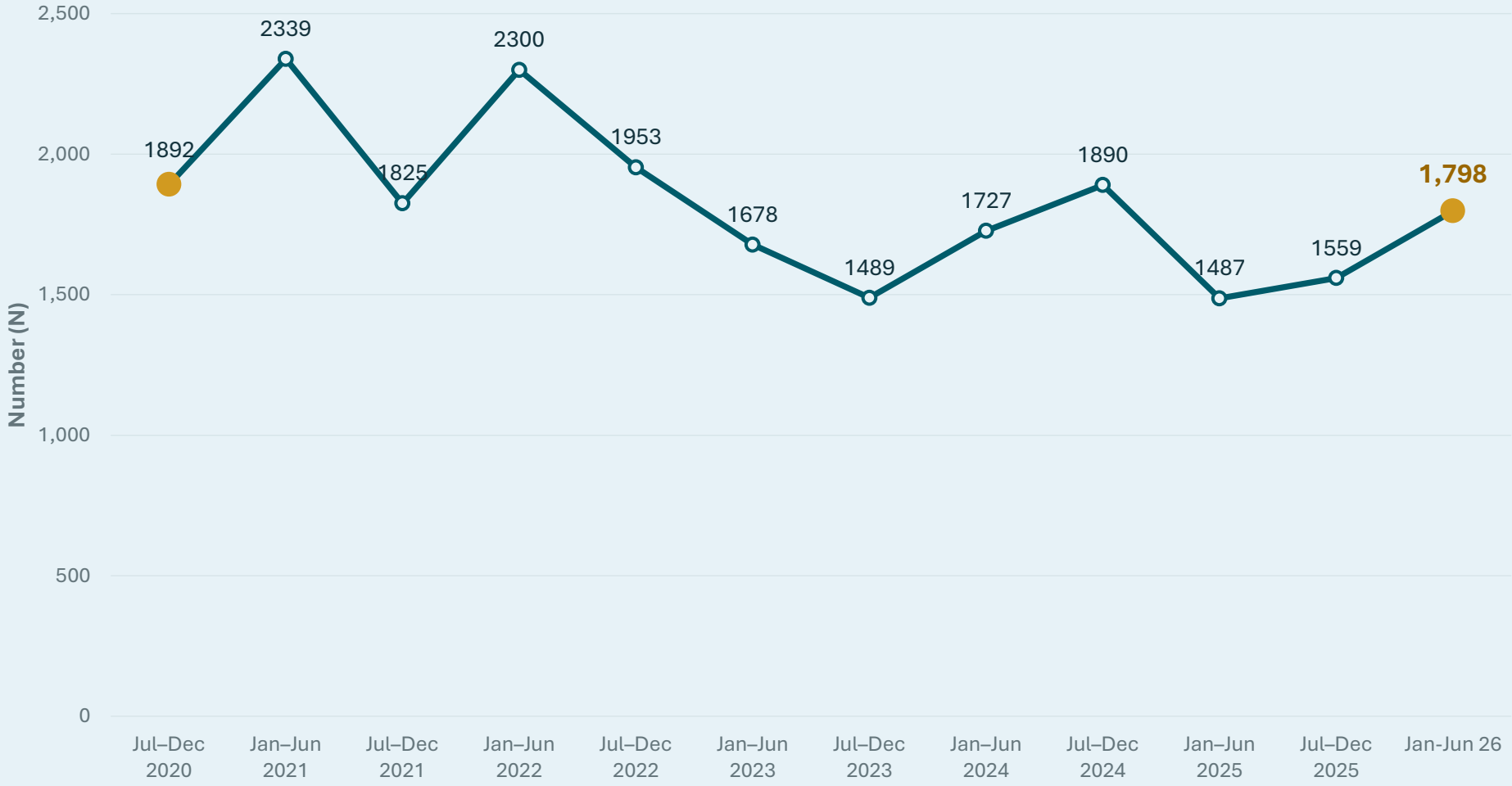
1,892 in Jul–Dec 2020
1,798 in Jan–Jun 2026

LAST 3 PERIODS

+20.9%

CI: 12.9 - 29.5

Jan–Jun 2025 to Jan–Jun 2026

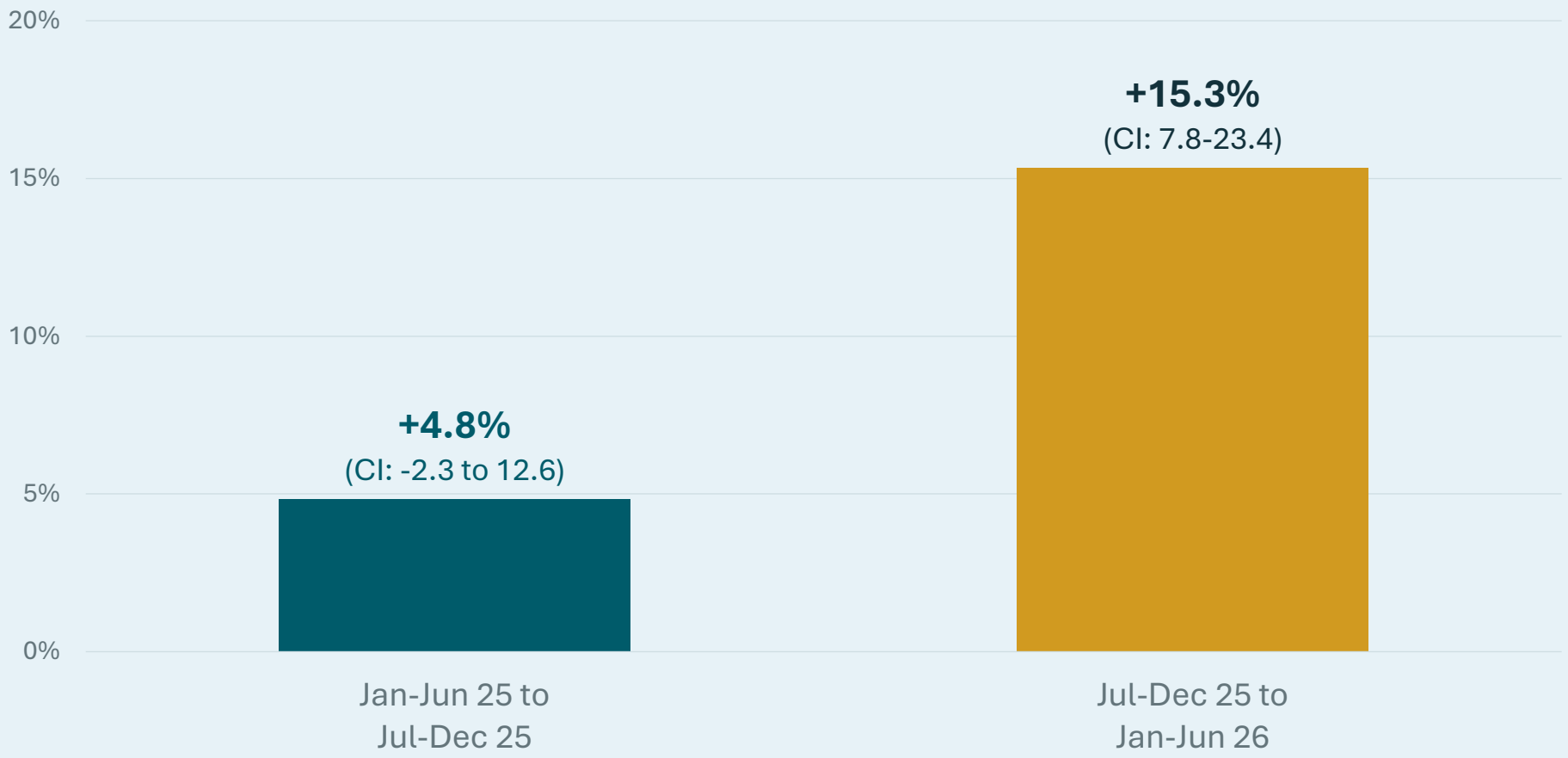


Admissions increased 20.9% over last three periods

+20.9%

(CI: 12.9-29.5)

overall increase Jan–Jun 2025 to Jan–Jun 2026



Admissions: 1,487 (Jan–Jun 2025), 1,559 (Jul–Dec 2025), 1,798 (Jan–Jun 2026)

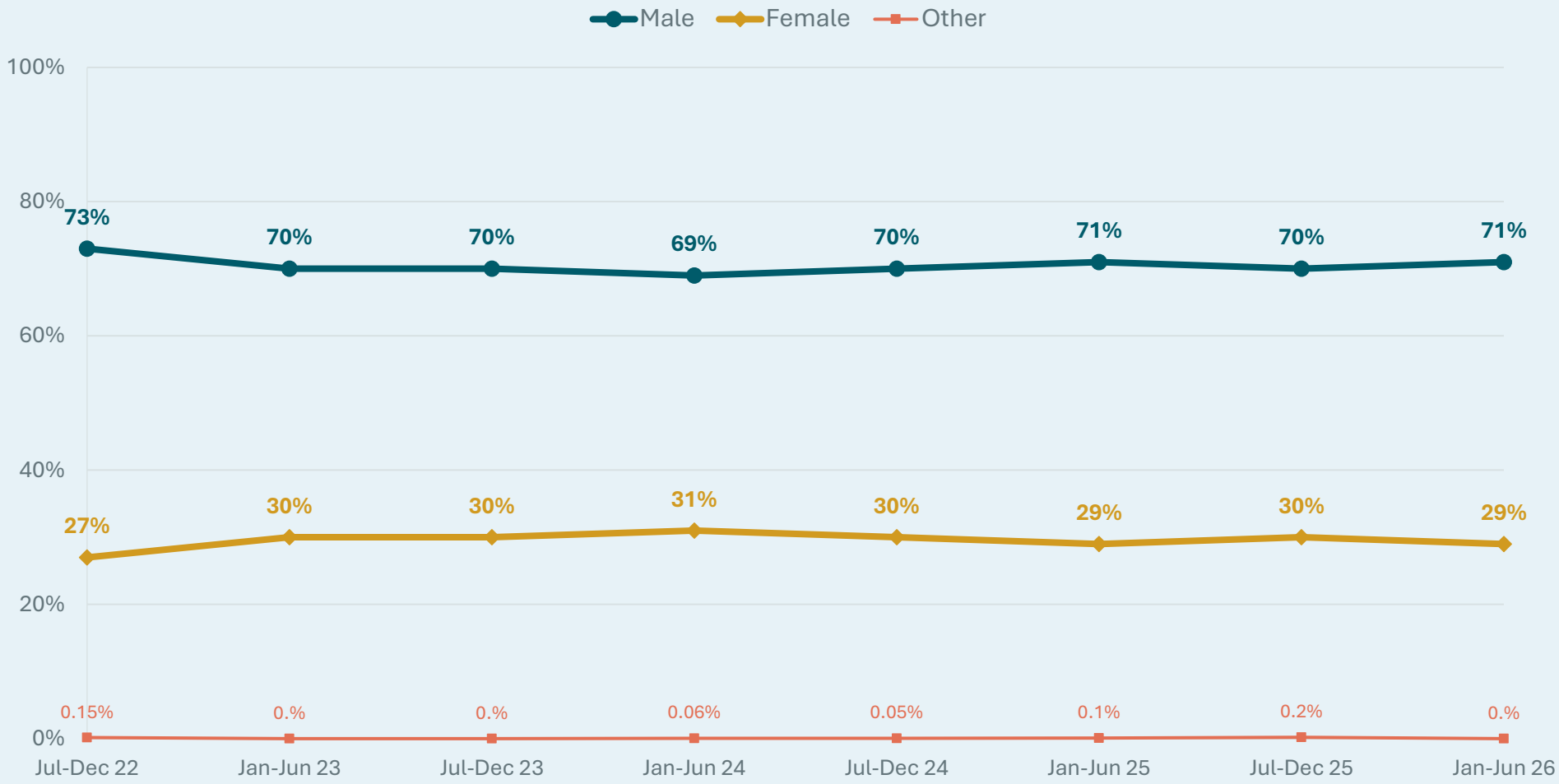
Men comprise 71% of treatment admissions

71% (CI: 69.2-73.4)

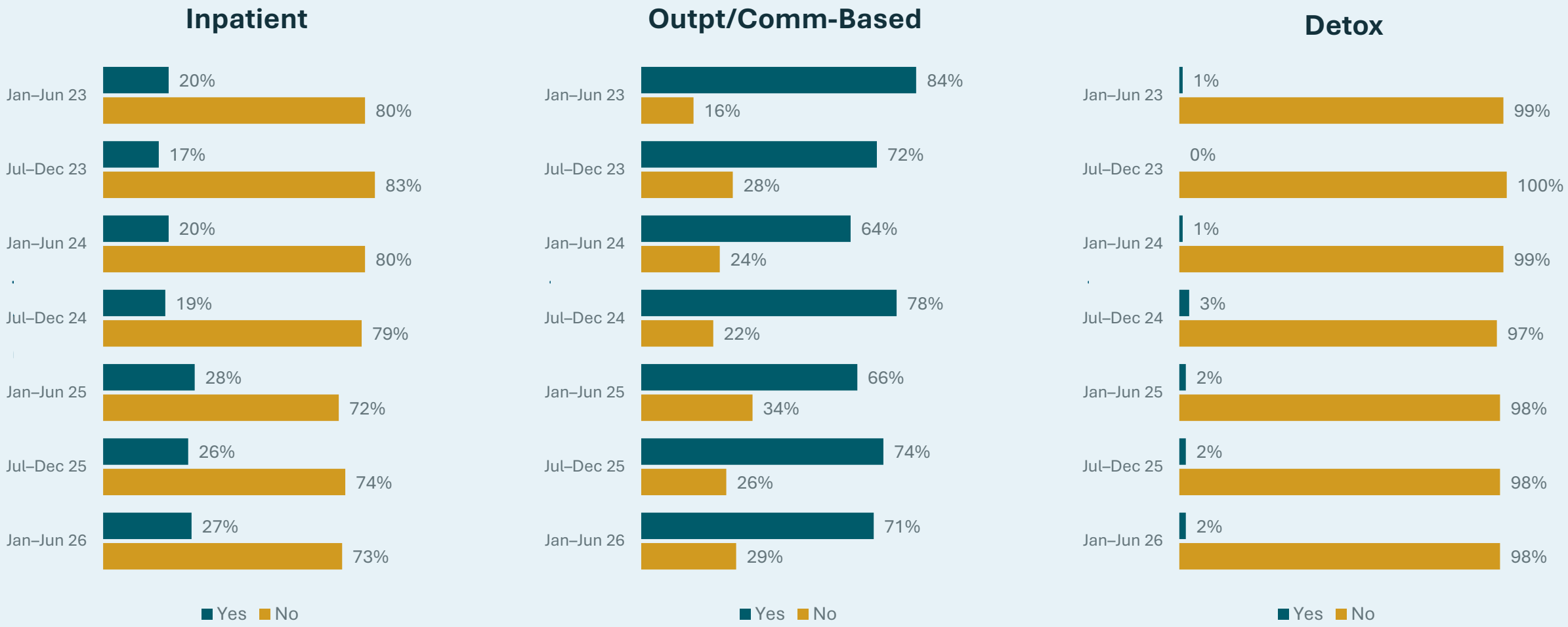
male service users

29% (CI: 26.4-30.6)

female service users



Outpatient/community-based treatment remains the most common setting



Grade 8–12 remains the highest attained education level

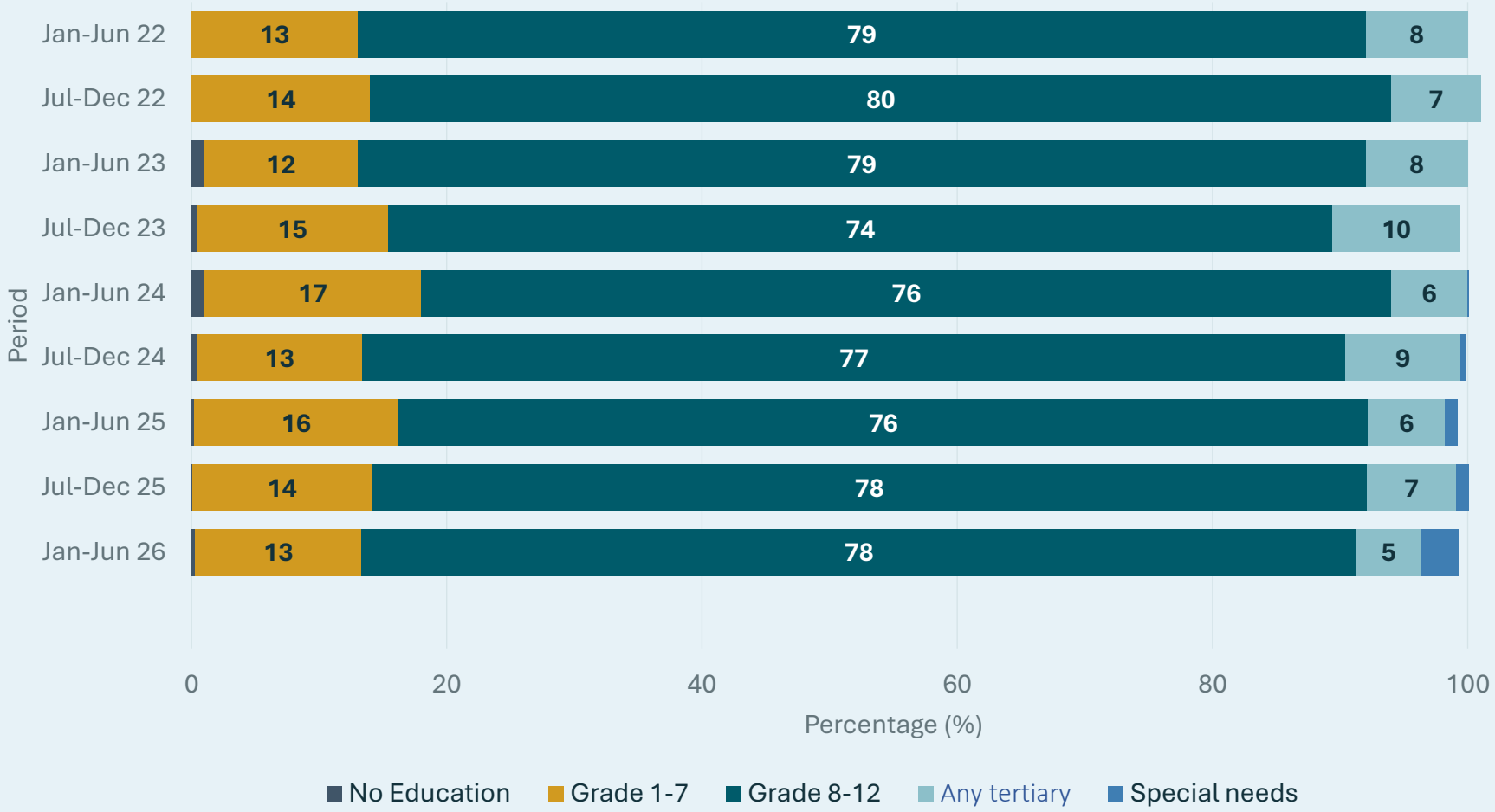
78%

CI: 76.3–80.1

Grade 8–12

KEY TAKEAWAY

Grade 8–12 accounts for 74–80% of service users in every period shown.

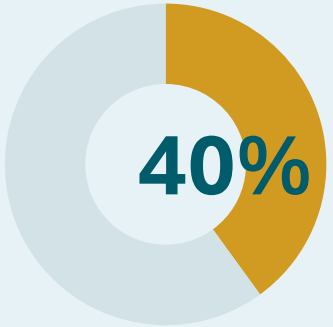


Unemployment remains high at 53%

53%

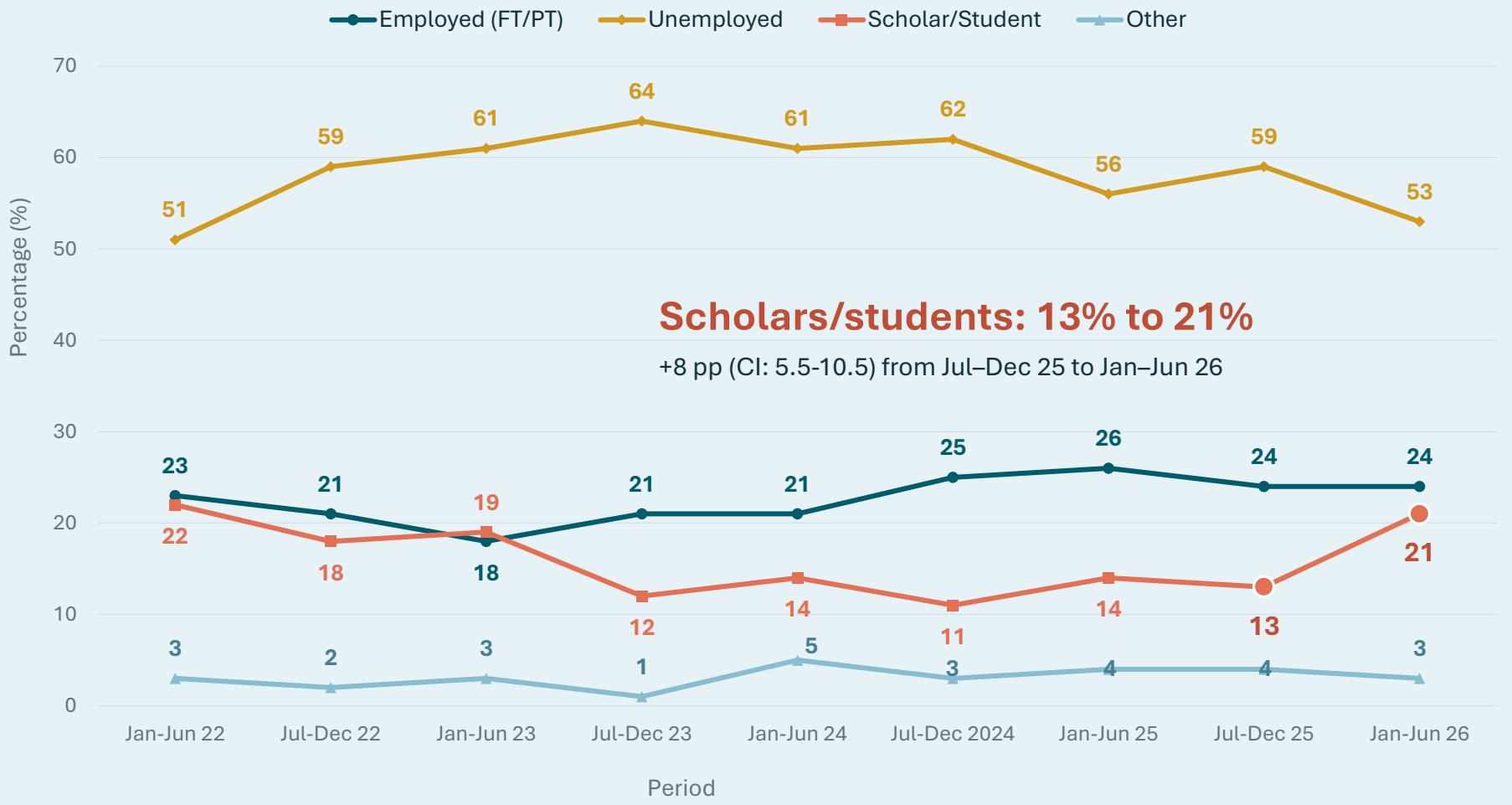
CI: 50.6–55.2

unemployed



Unemployed >6 months

Jan–Jun 2026



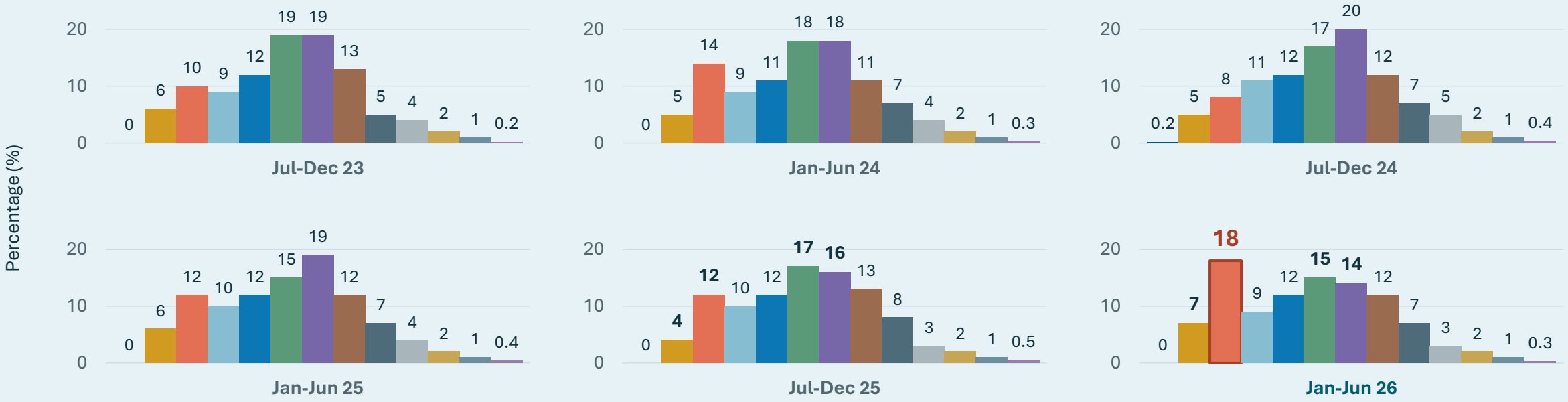
15–19 yrs lead at 18% in Jan–Jun 2026

Change from Jul–Dec 2025 to Jan–Jun 2026

Age group	Change	95% CI (pp)
15–19 years	+6 pp	3.60 - 8.40
10–14 years	+3 pp	1.47 - 4.53
30–34 years	−2 pp	−4.49 - 0.49
35–39 years	−2 pp	−4.43 - 0.43

pp change from Jul-Dec 2025 to Jan-Jul 2026

Approximate intervals use rounded percentages and n = 1,559 / 1,798.



pp = percentage points. Largest increases and declines shown above.

Mean age fell to 31 years in Jan–Jun 2026

MD: −3 yrs

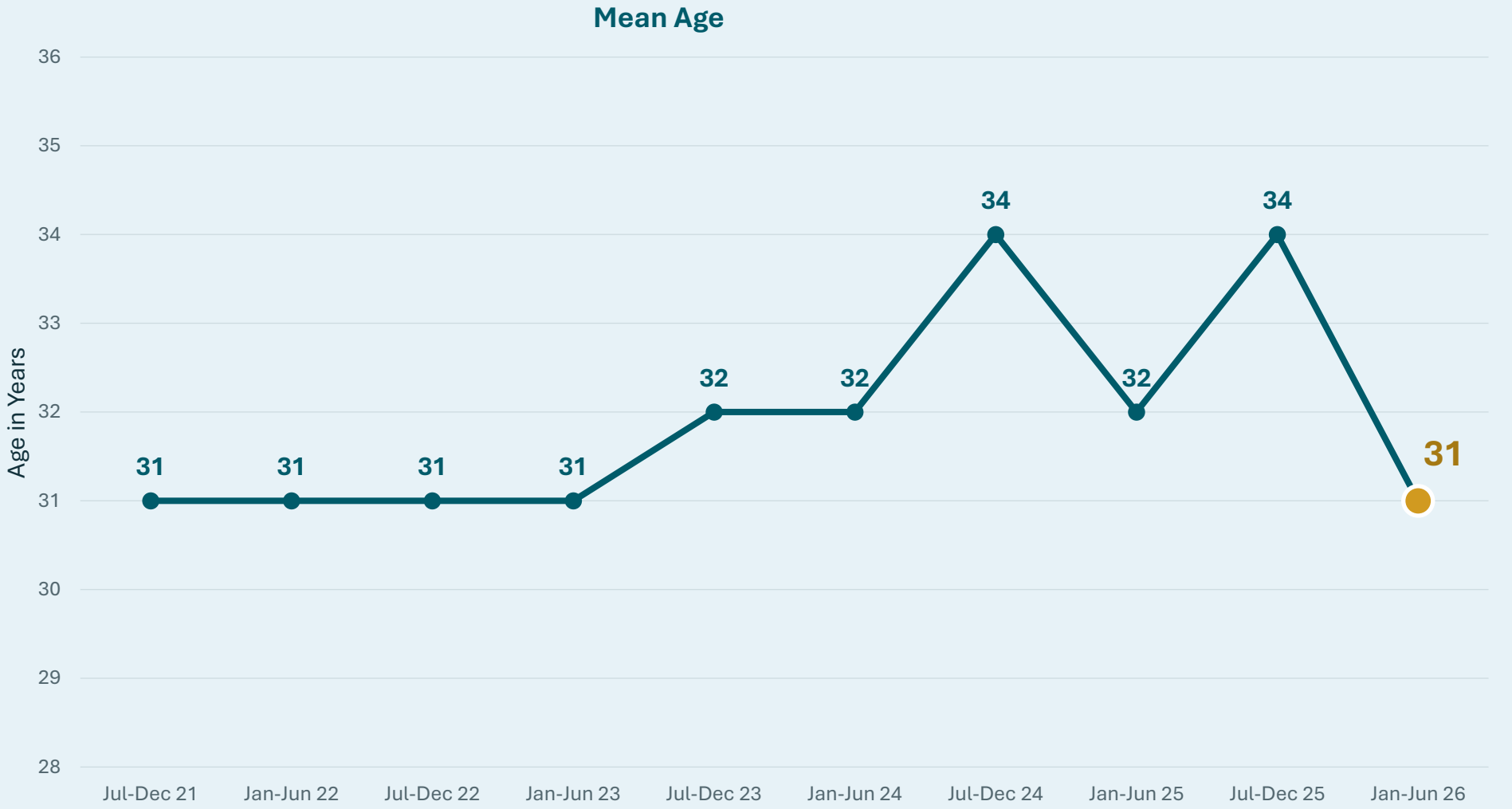
(CI: -3.82 to -2.18)

Welch's t = -7.17

df = 3.17

p < 0.001

Jul-Dec 2025 to Jan-Jun 2026



Self, family and friends remain the main referral route

Jul–Dec 2025 to Jan–Jun 2026

37% (CI: 35.0-39.5)

Self / family / friends

Still largest
39% to 37% (−2 pp)

+7 pp

School referrals

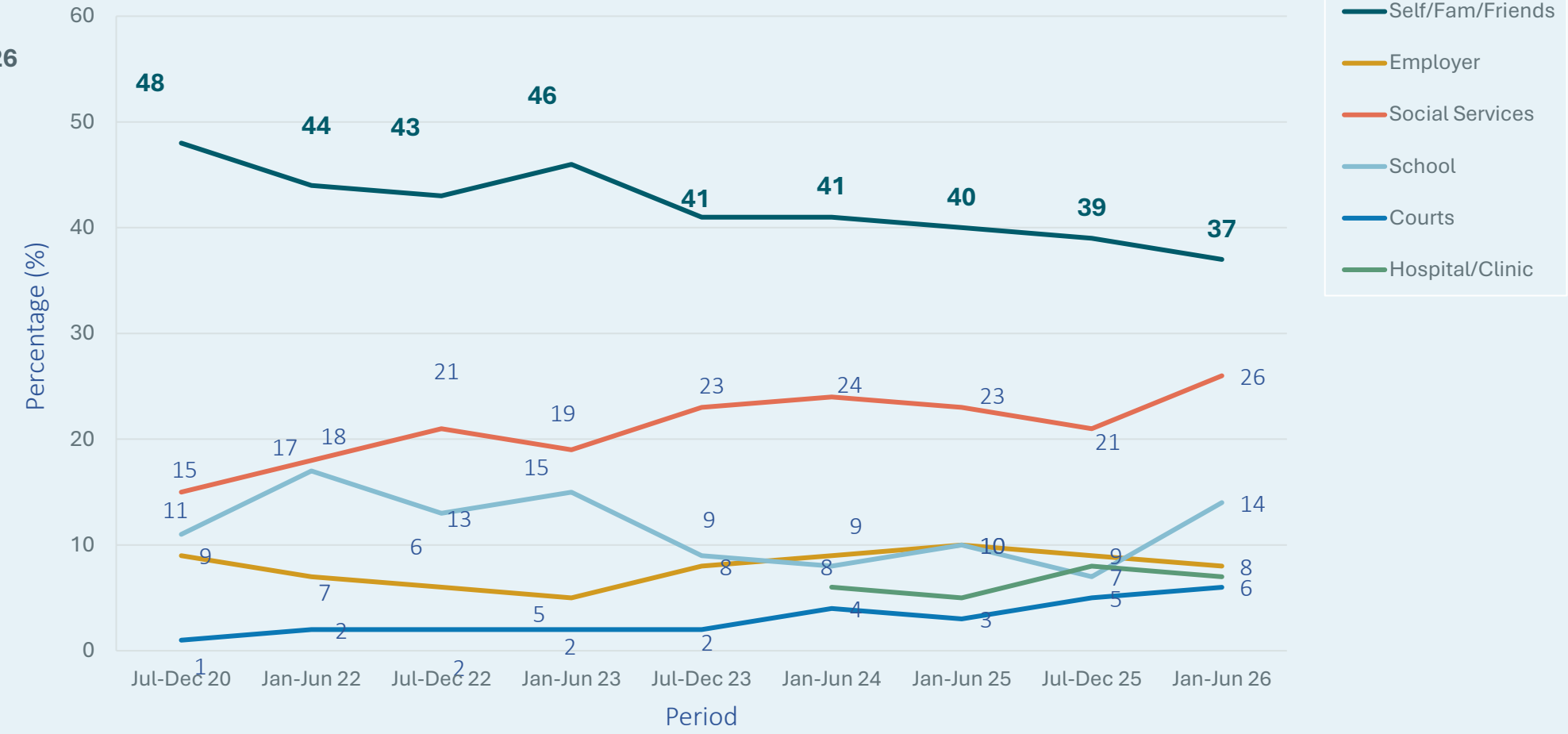
7% to 14%
Largest increase

+5 pp

Social services

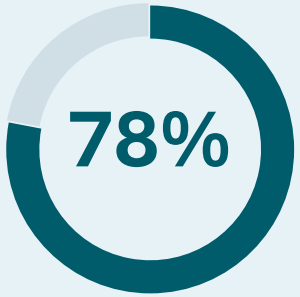
21% to 26%

pp = percentage points



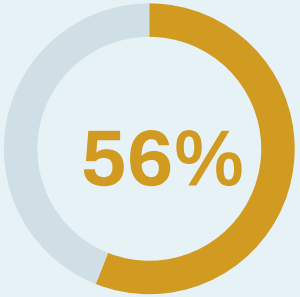
HIV testing history is high, but recency still matters

Previously tested for HIV

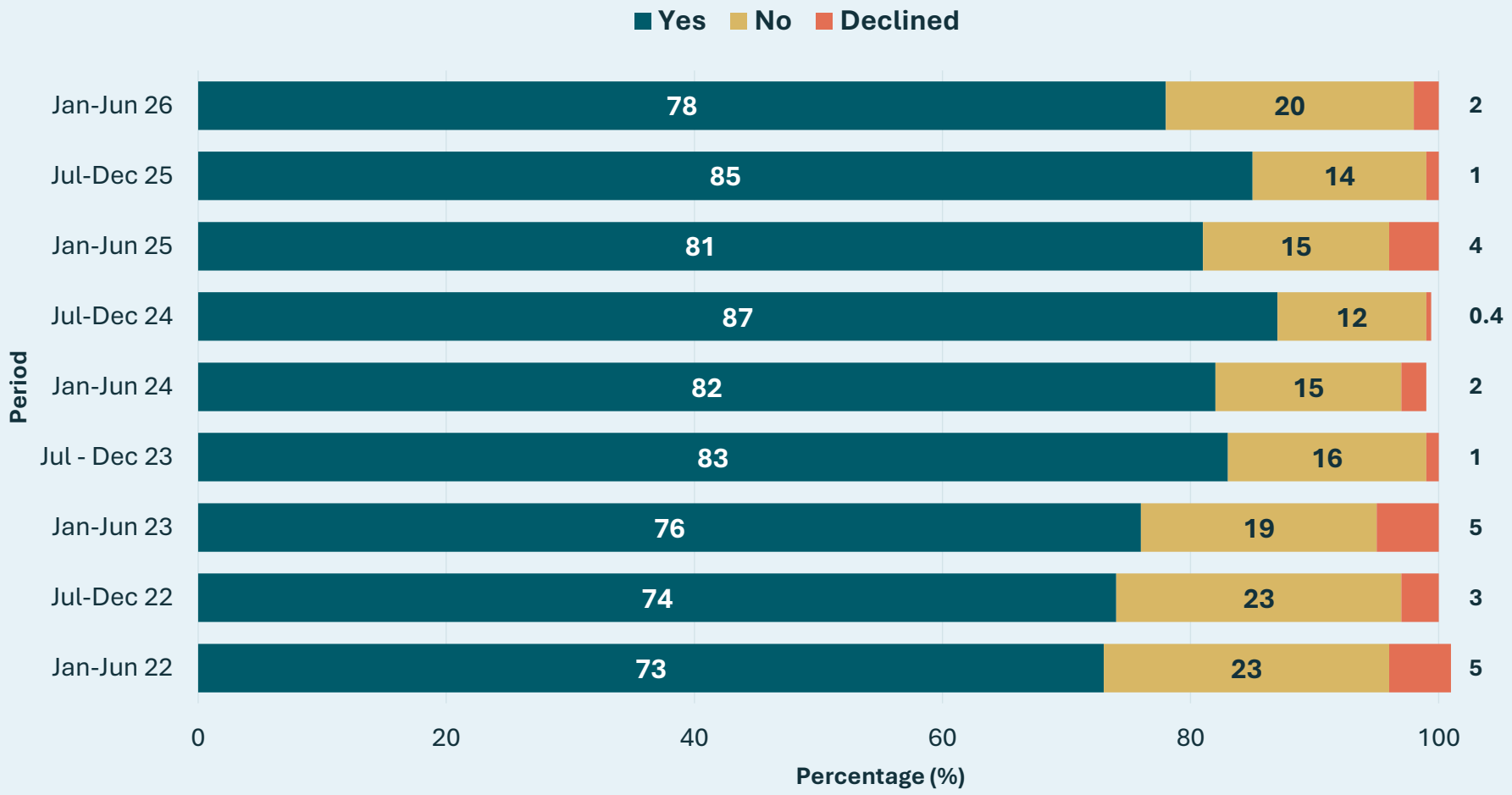


CI: 76.4–80.3

Tested within the past 12 months



CI: 54.0–58.6



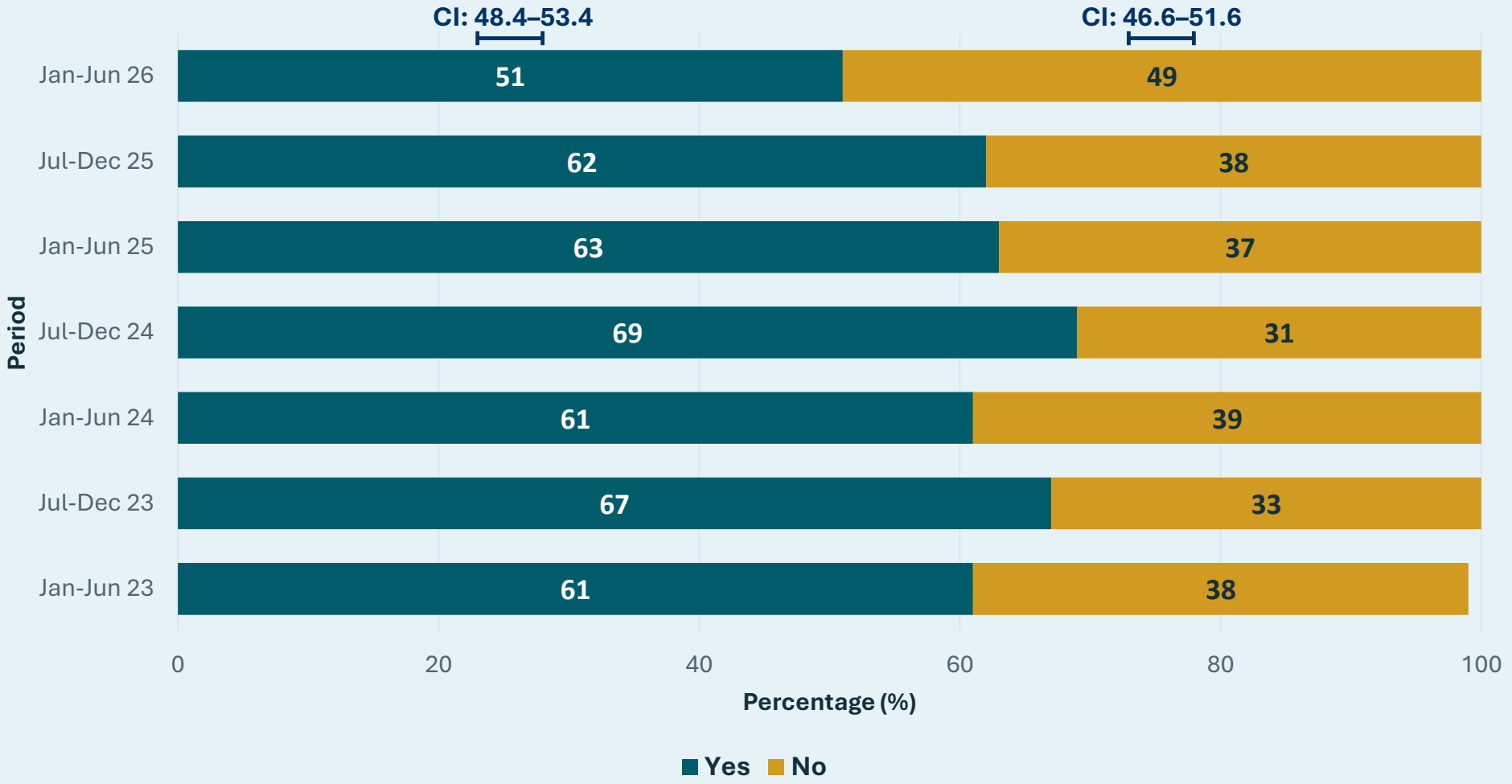
51% of service users indicate willingness for HIV testing

62%
Mean referral rate across 7 periods

Unweighted average

69% peak in Jul–Dec 24
51% latest, Jan–Jun 26

–10 pp
First to last period
61% to 51%



SACENDU
SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGY NETWORK ON DRUG USE
Treatment Demand Data + Service Quality Measures (SQM) + Community-Based Harm Reduction Services

77% of service users have a permanent abode

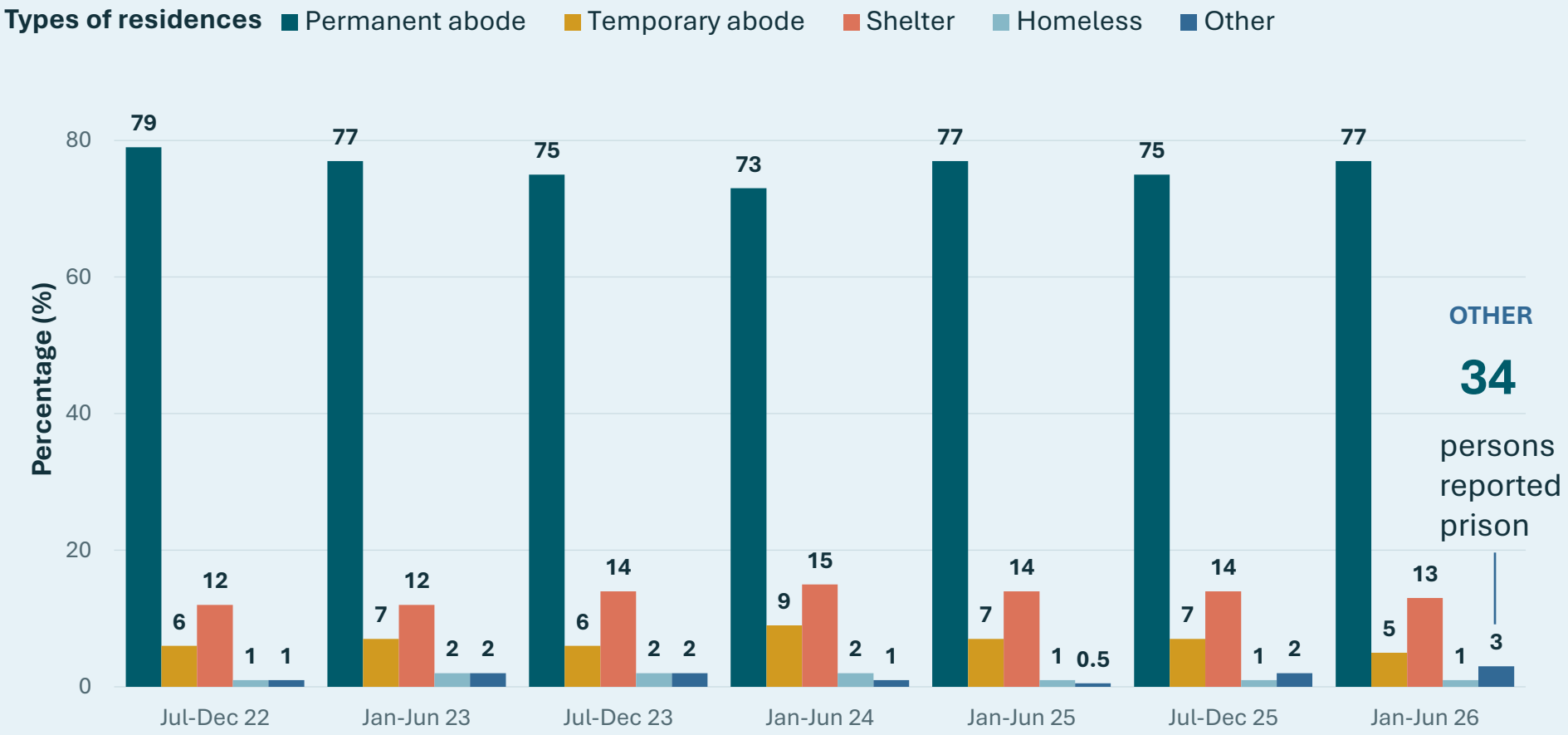
OVERALL TRENDS

73–79%
Permanent abode remains dominant

12–15%
Shelter consistently ranks second

5%
Temporary abode at its lowest, latest period

1–3%
Homeless throughout the reported periods

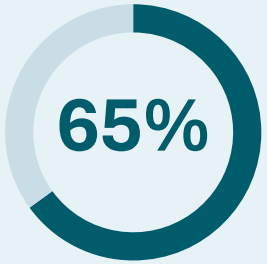


OTHER

34

persons reported prison

Service users' living arrangements



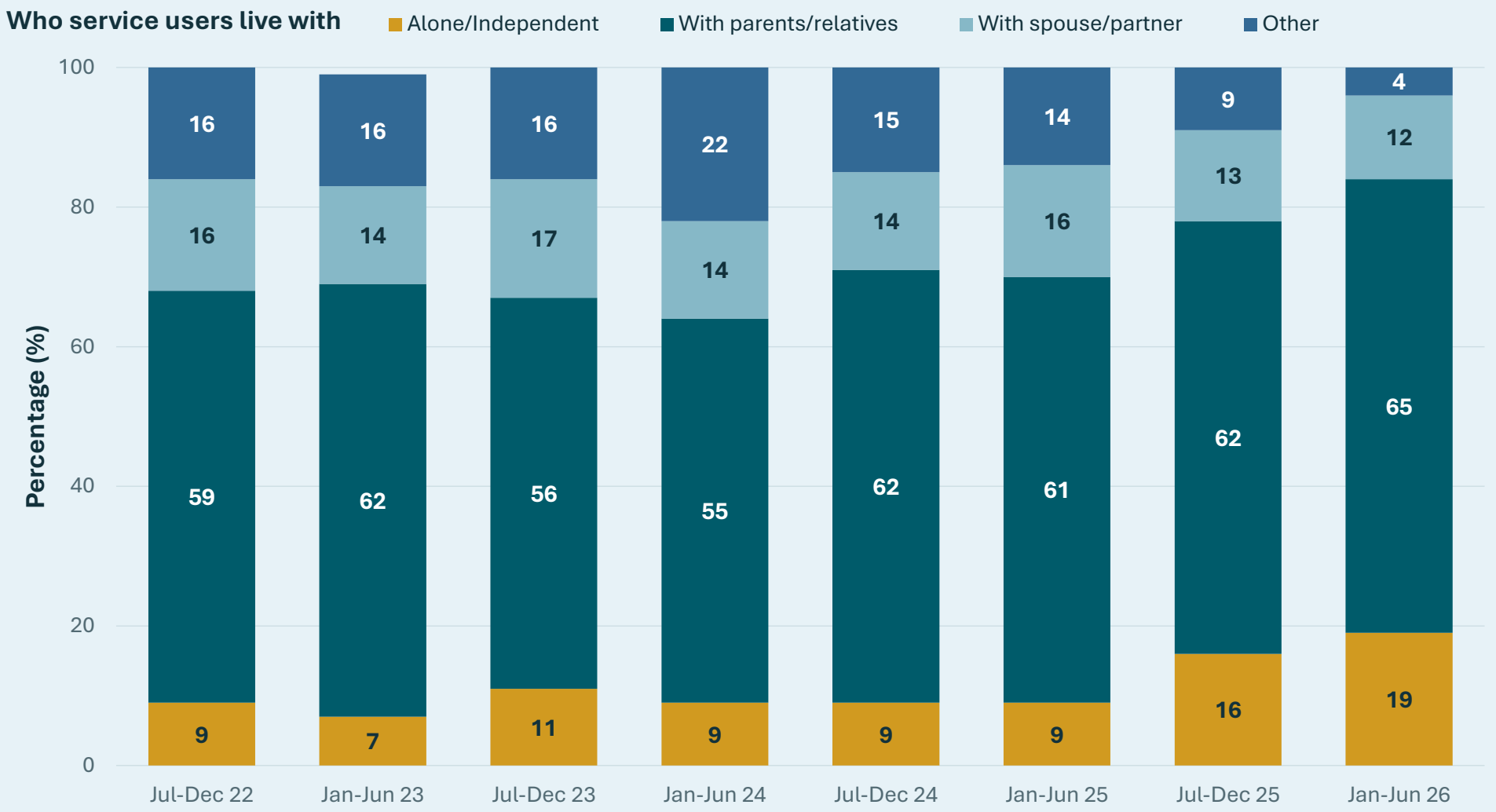
Most service users live with parents or relatives

Jan–Jun 2026

OVERALL TRENDS

Jul–Dec 2022 to Jan–Jun 2026
Percentage points (pp)

+6	Parents / relatives
+10	Alone / independent
–4	Spouse / partner
–12	Other



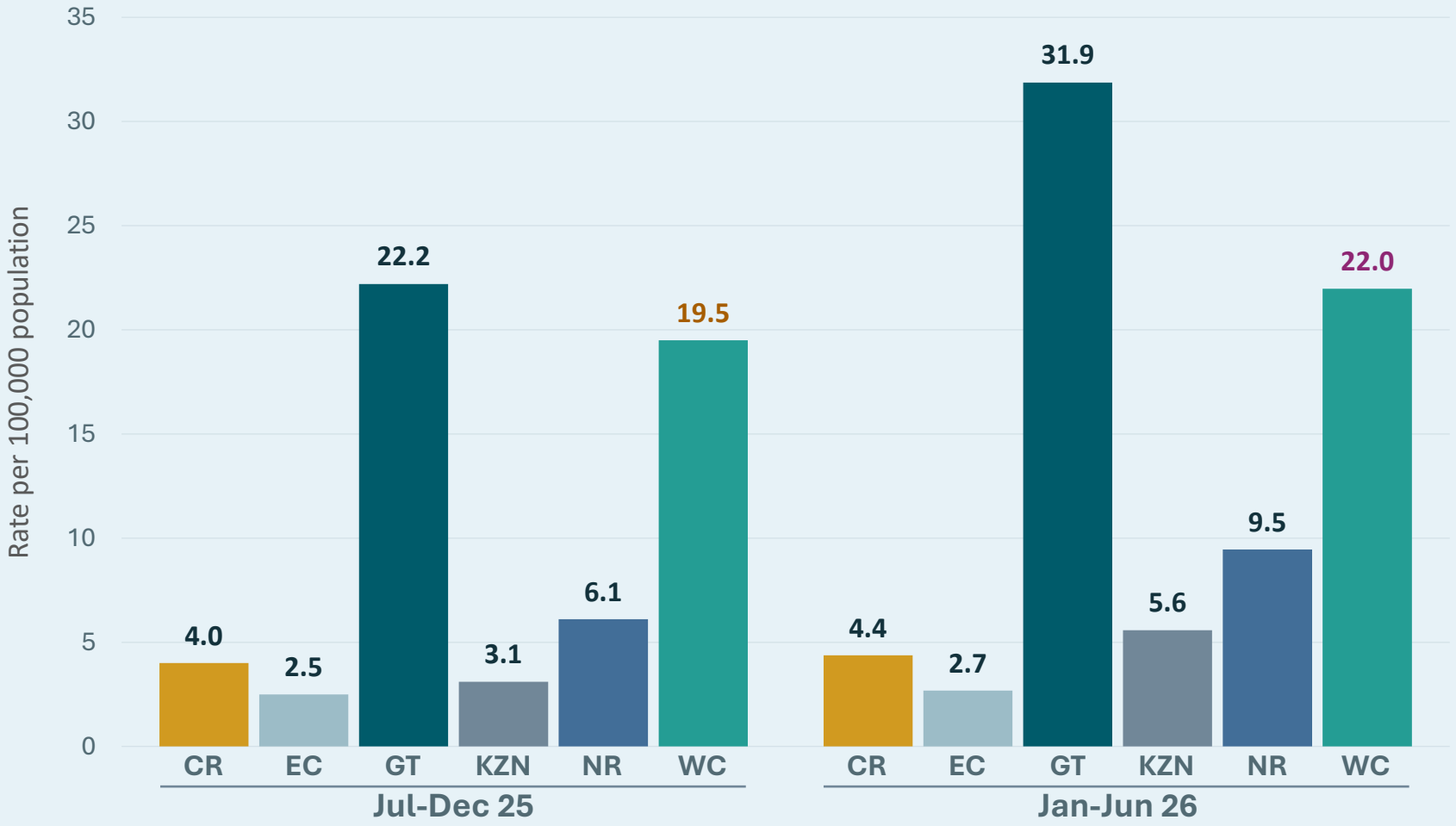
01

SECTION

Population-adjusted estimates

A comparable view of treatment demand across provinces

WC treatment rate rose from 19.5 to 22 per 100,000



WC ADMISSIONS

Jul–Dec 25 vs Jan–Jun 26

0.87

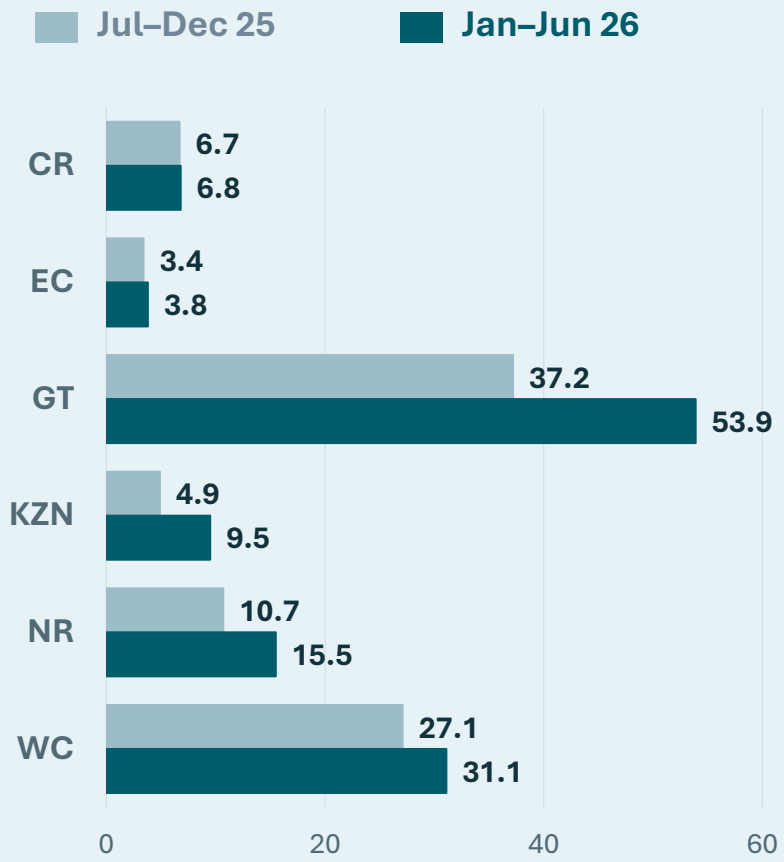
Rate ratio (RR)

CI: 0.81–0.93

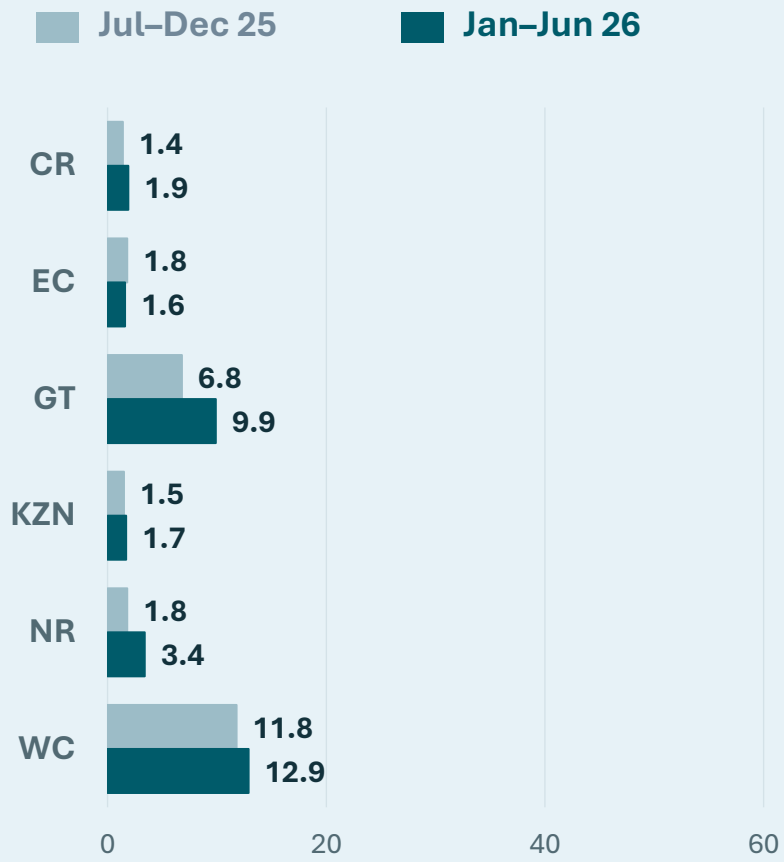
Admissions lower in Jul–Dec 25 vs Jan–Jun 26

Adjusted rates higher for men in every region

Male



Female



Both charts use the same scale for direct comparison

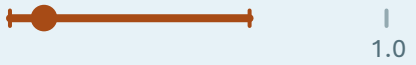
Adjusted rate per 100,000 population

WC: Increase in male admissions

Males

RR = 0.85

CI: 0.78–0.92



Females

RR = 0.92

CI: 0.81–1.0



02

SECTION

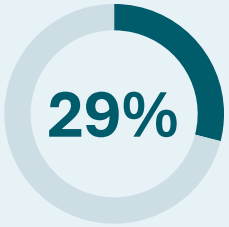
Substances of use

Patterns of primary and secondary substance use

SUBSTANCE PATTERNS

Methamphetamine remains the leading primary substance

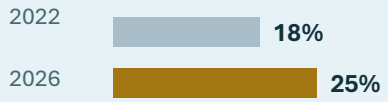
JAN–JUN 2026



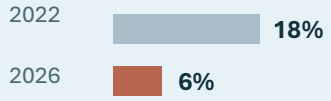
Methamphetamine / Tik

Leading primary substance
CI: 26.4–30.6

Alcohol **+7 pp**

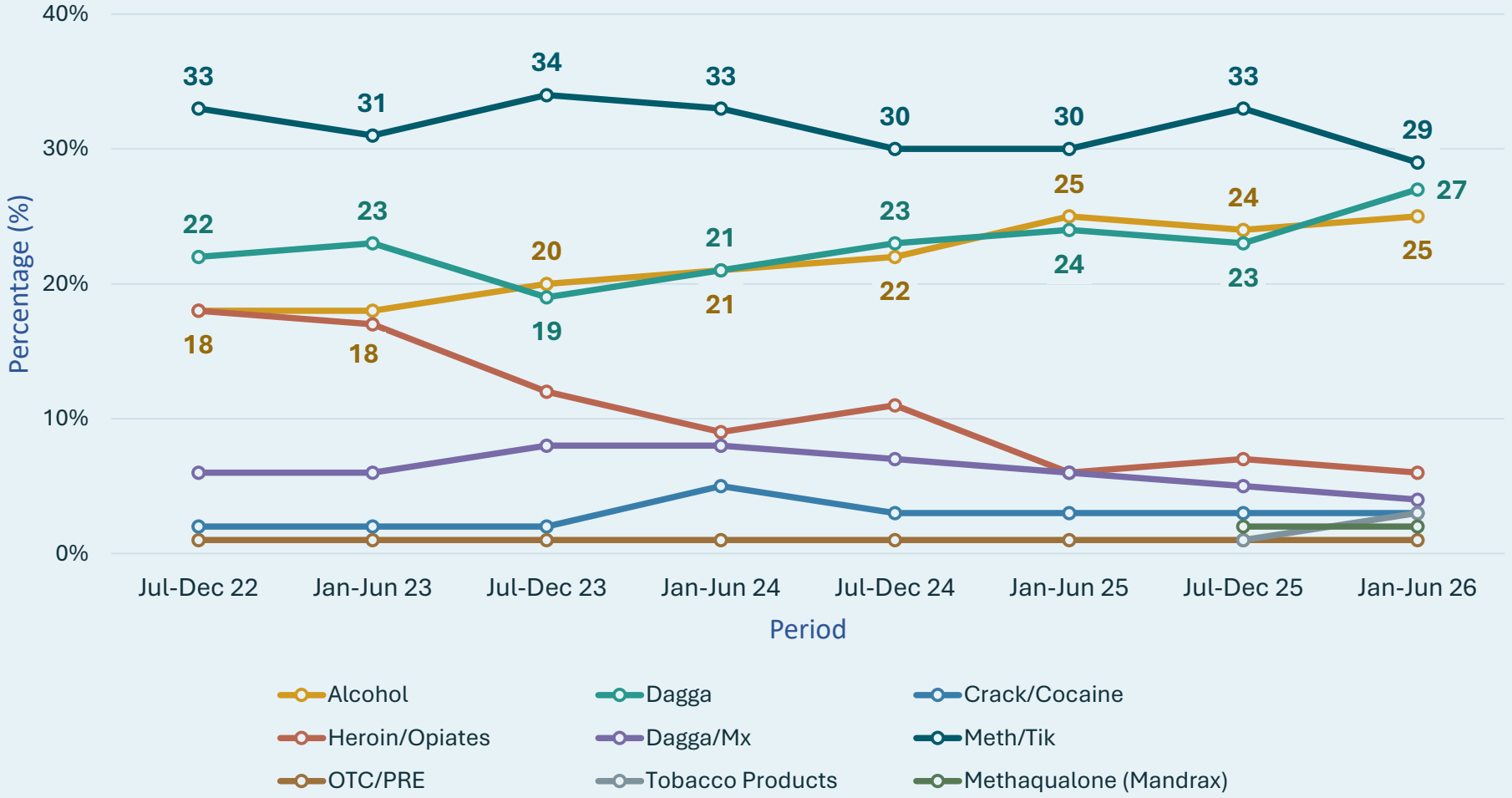


Heroin / opiates **–12 pp**



Jul–Dec 2022 vs Jan–Jun 2026
pp = percentage points

PP for Methamphetamine:
25b to 26a: - 4.0 (CI: −7.1 to −0.9)
Entire period: -4.0 (CI: -7.0 to -1.0)



Smoking remains dominant despite a gradual decline

67%

CI: 65.2–69.6

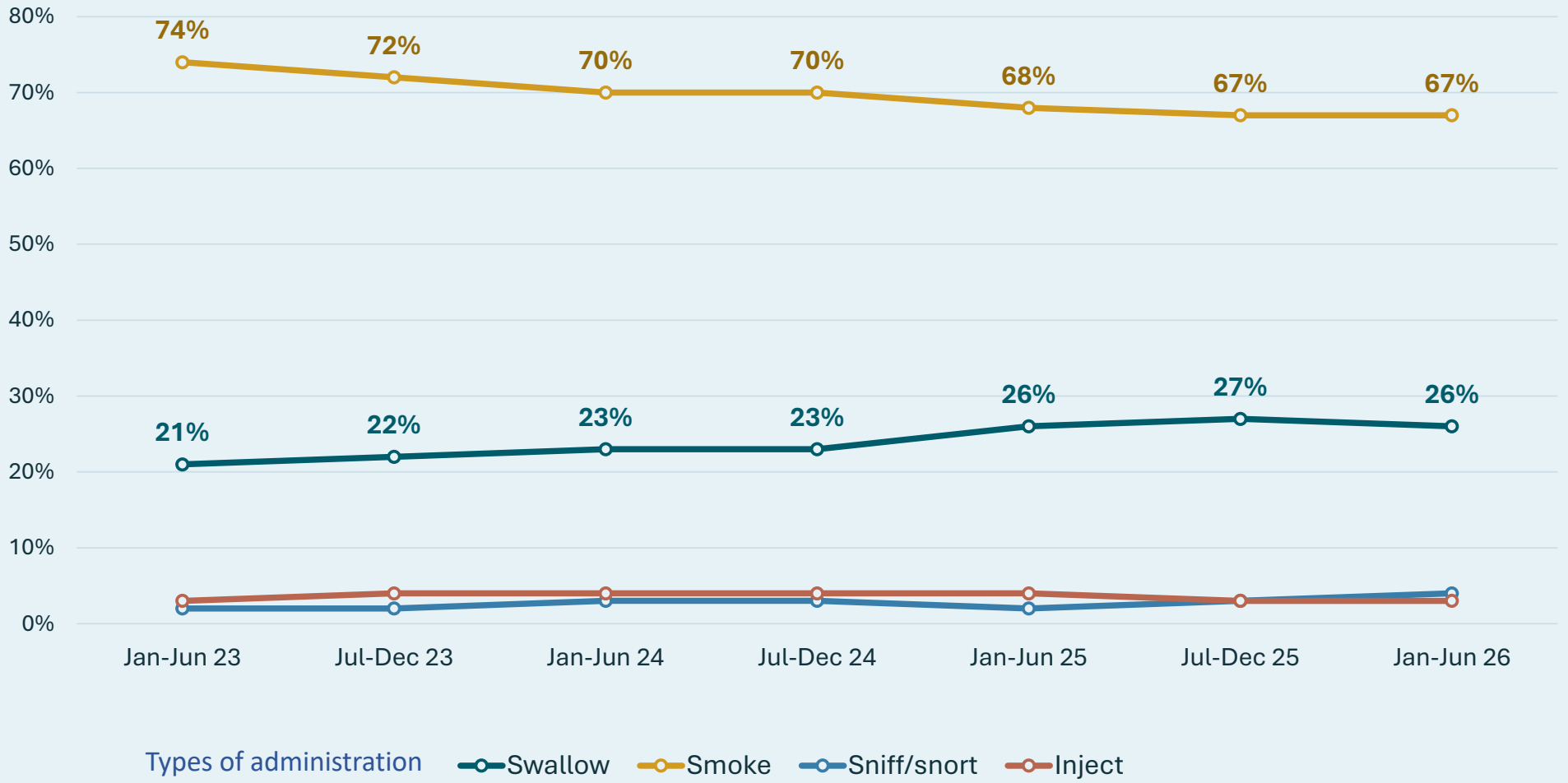
Smoking remains the main route of administration

–7 pp

CI: -10.0 to –4.0

Down from 74% to 67%
Jan–Jun 2023 to Jan–Jun 2026

Stable at 67% over the last two periods



Heroin and opiates account for majority of injected primary substances

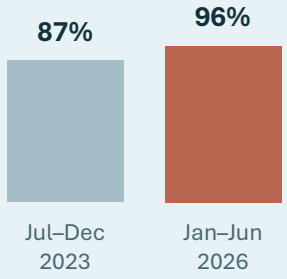
96%

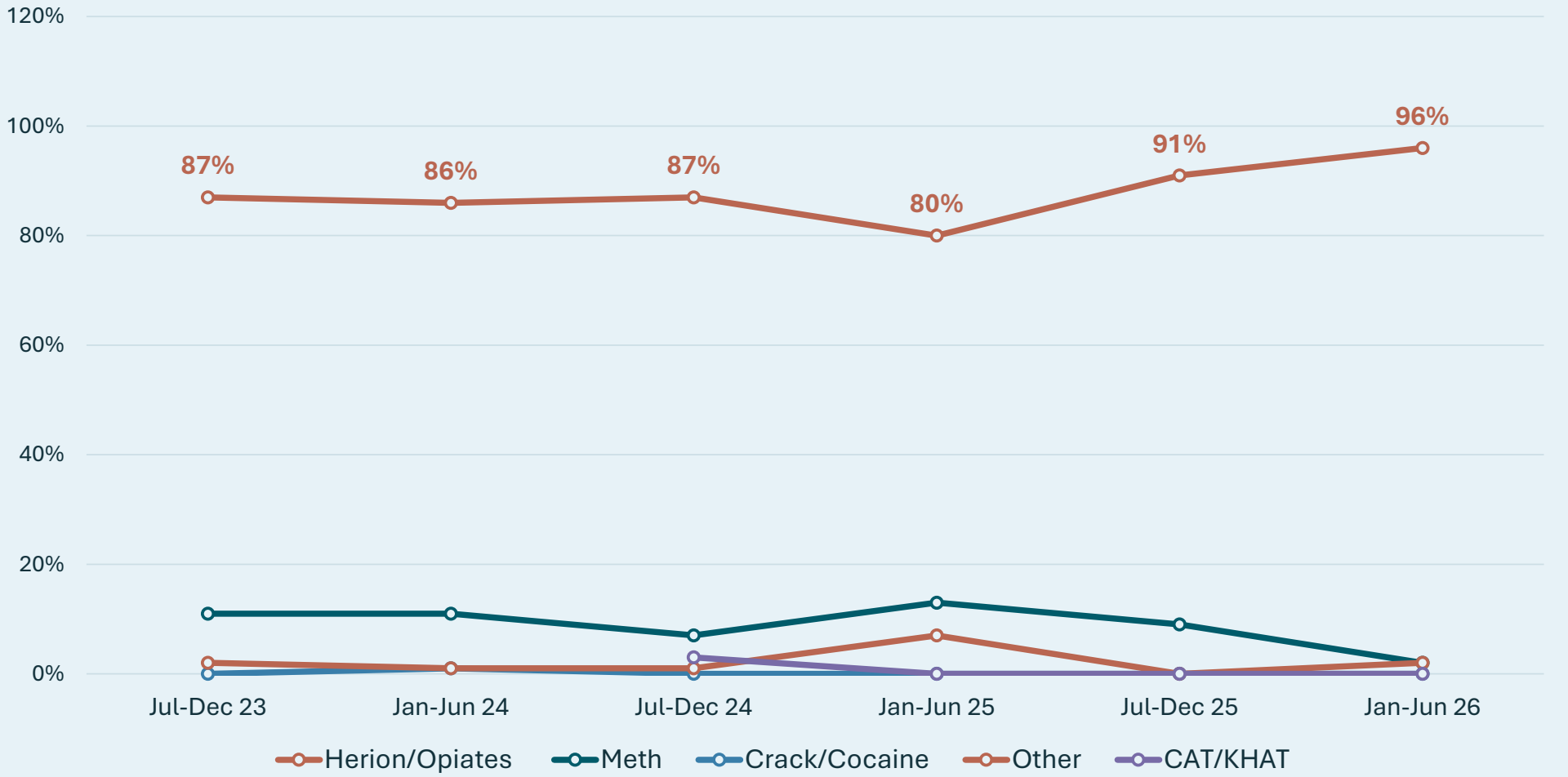
CI: 88.6–99.2

Heroin/Opiates

OVERALL CHANGE: HEROIN/OPIATES

+9 pp





Daily use declined as less-frequent use increased

52%

CI: 49.3–54.0

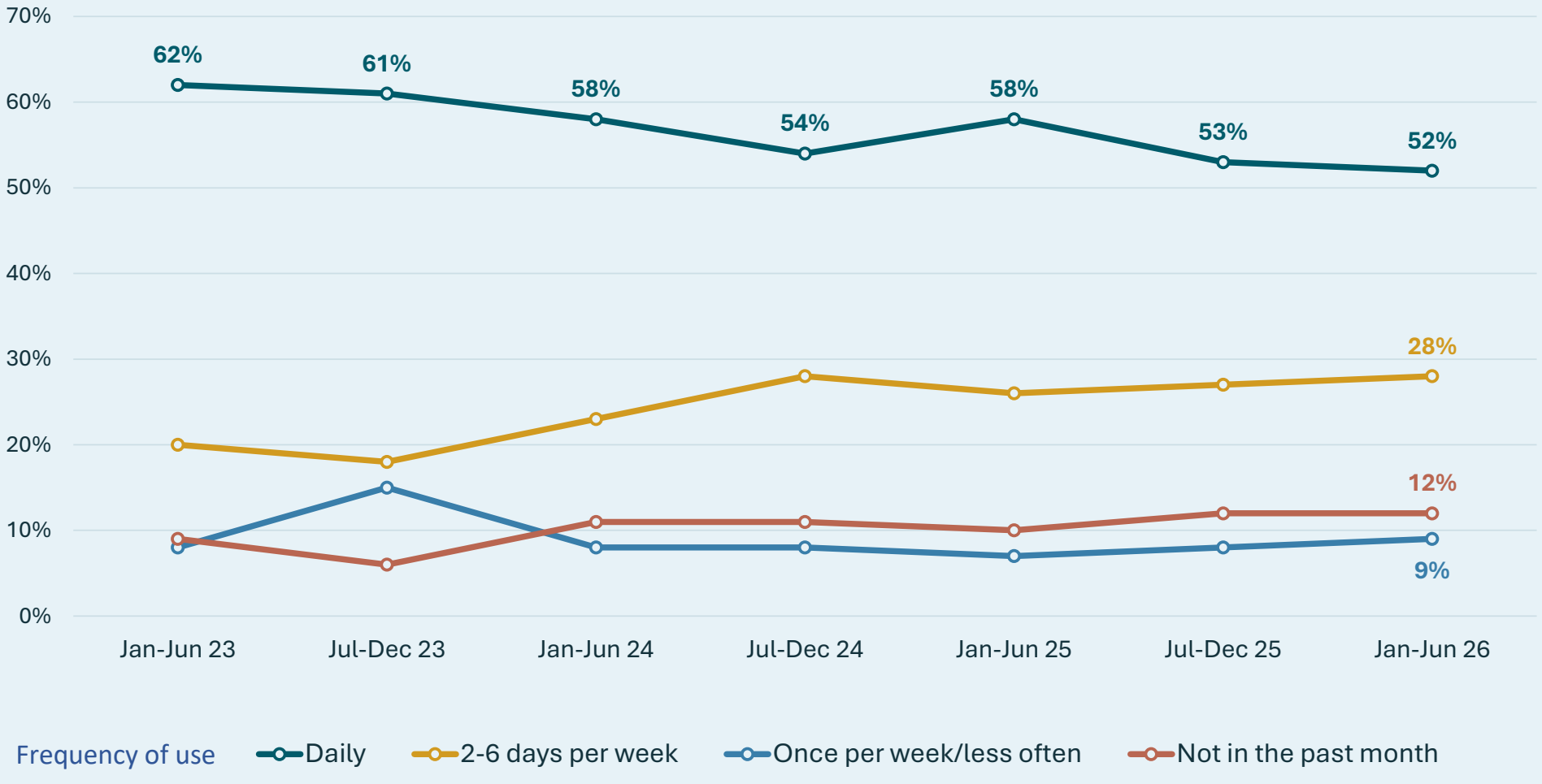
daily use
Jan–Jun 2026

–10 pp

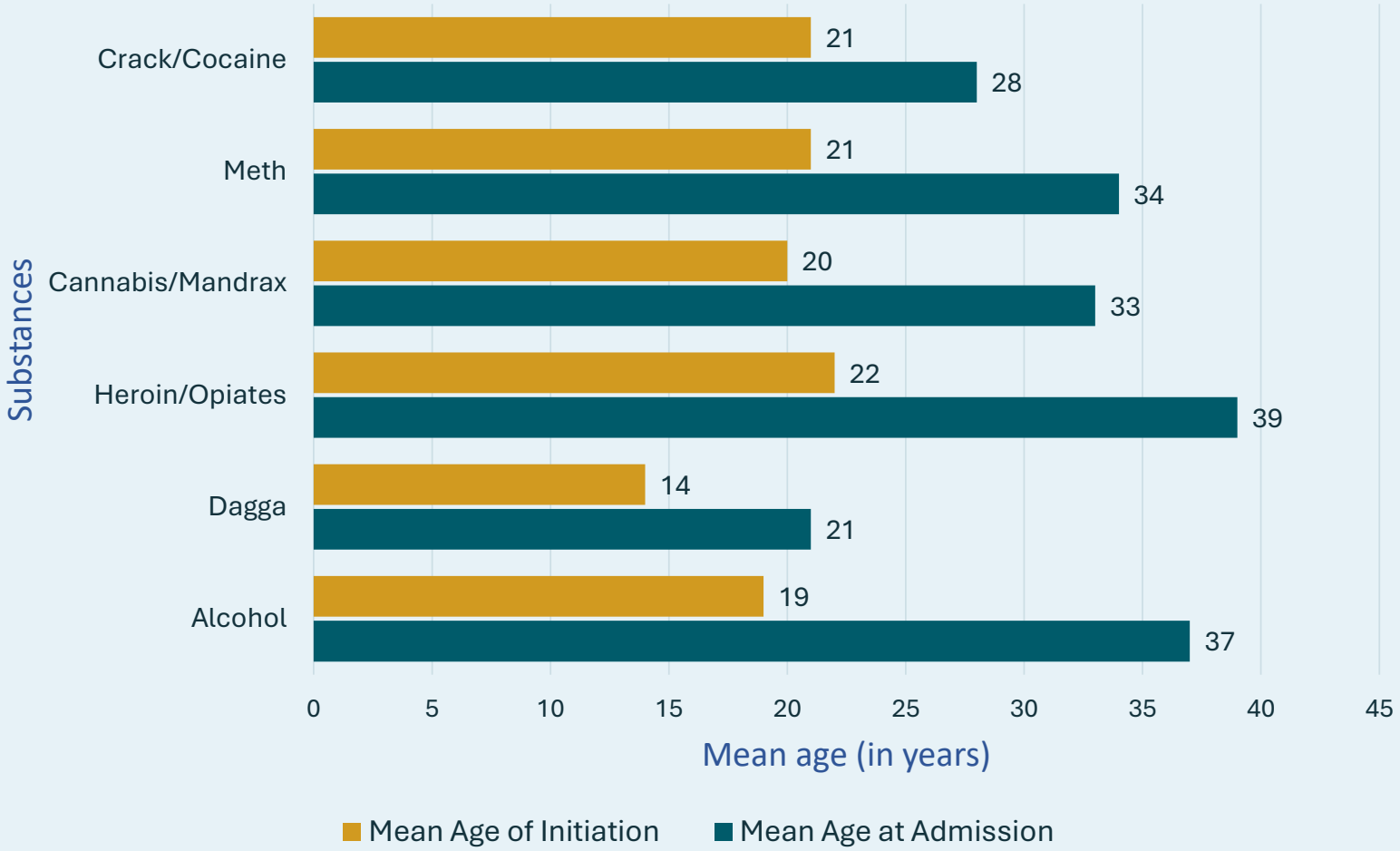
Across the entire period

Jan–Jun 2023 to Jan–Jun 2026

Decline slowed from 5pp to 1pp over last 3 periods

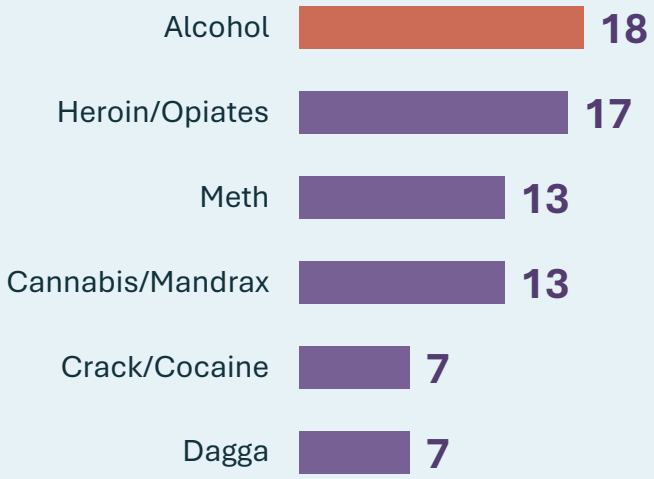


Cannabis use starts earliest, at a mean age of 14



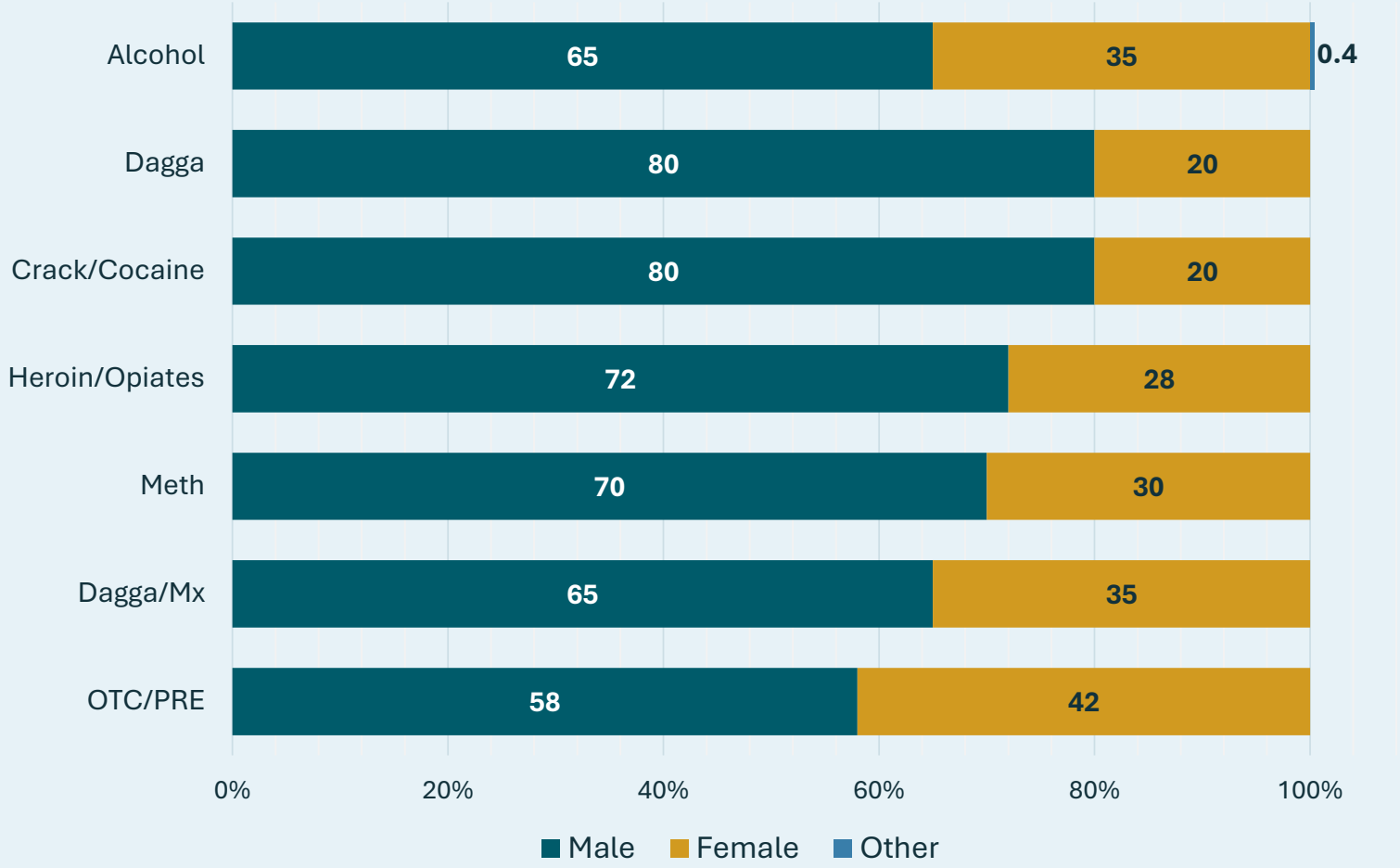
Treatment delay

Difference in years



Difference in group means; not a direct measure of time to first treatment.

Men comprise the majority across primary substances



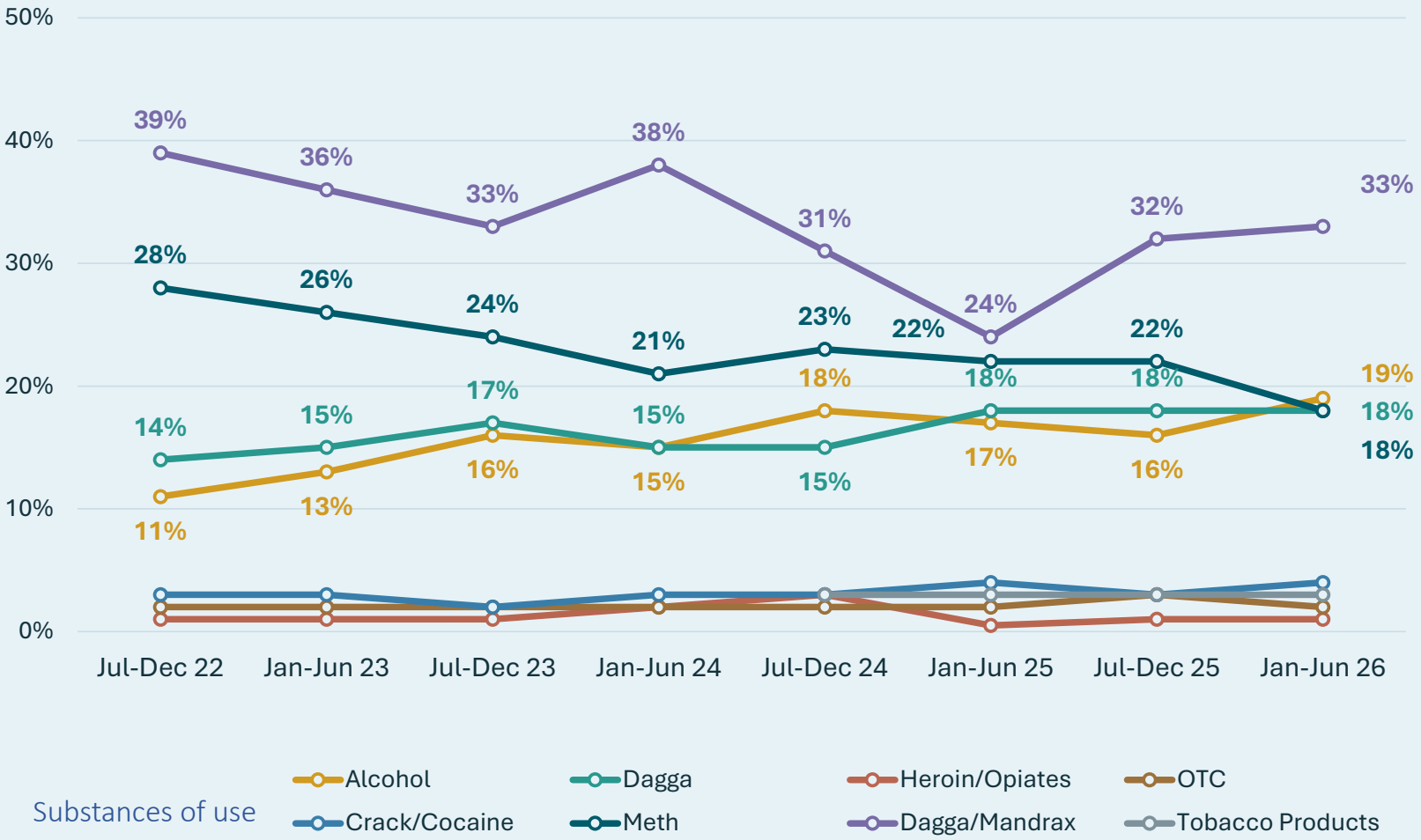
Males dominate across substance variants

$\chi^2 = 32.52$, df = 7, $p < 0.001$

OTC/PRE: smaller gender gap

58% male vs 42% female

Dagga/Mandrax the leading secondary substance



Polysubstance use:
57% (CI: 54.94-59.42)

Leading substances

Jan–Jun 2026

33% Dagga/Mandrax
19% Alcohol
18% Dagga and Meth (tied)

Full-period change

Jul–Dec 2022 to Jan–Jun 2026

Dagga/Mandrax: −6 pp, rebounding over last 3 periods

Alcohol: +8 pp

Dagga: +4 pp

Meth: −10 pp

SACENDU
SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGY NETWORK ON DRUG USE
Treatment Demand Data + Service Quality Measures (SQM) + Community-Based Harm Reduction Services

03

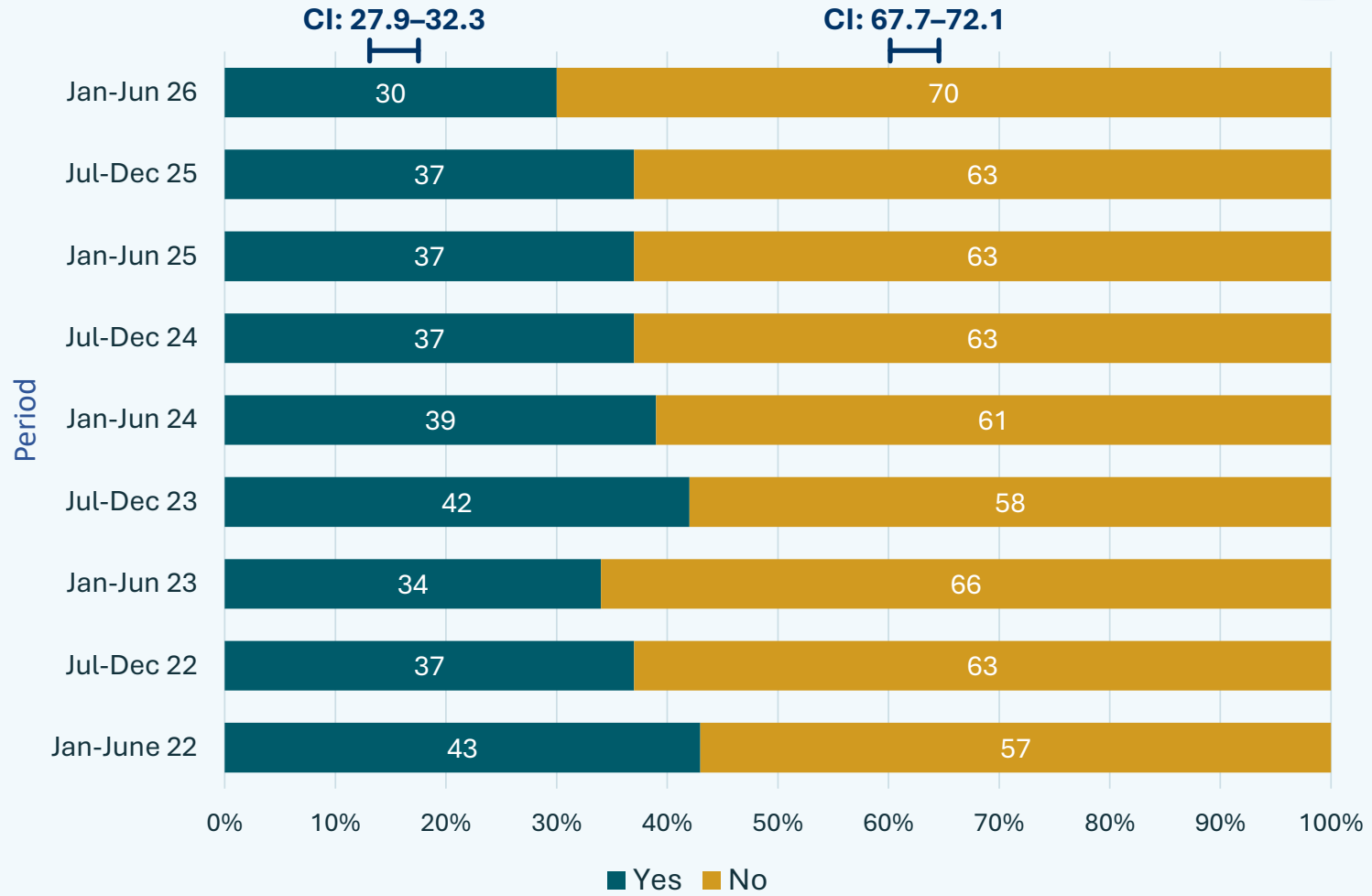
SECTION

Prior treatment

Readmission patterns and prior treatment exposure

Readmissions account for 30% of admissions

SACENDU
SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGY NETWORK ON DRUG USE
Treatment Demand Data • Service Quality Measures (SQM) • Community-Based Harm Reduction Services



2 Mean readmissions

Episodes	n
1	293
2	114
3 or more	88

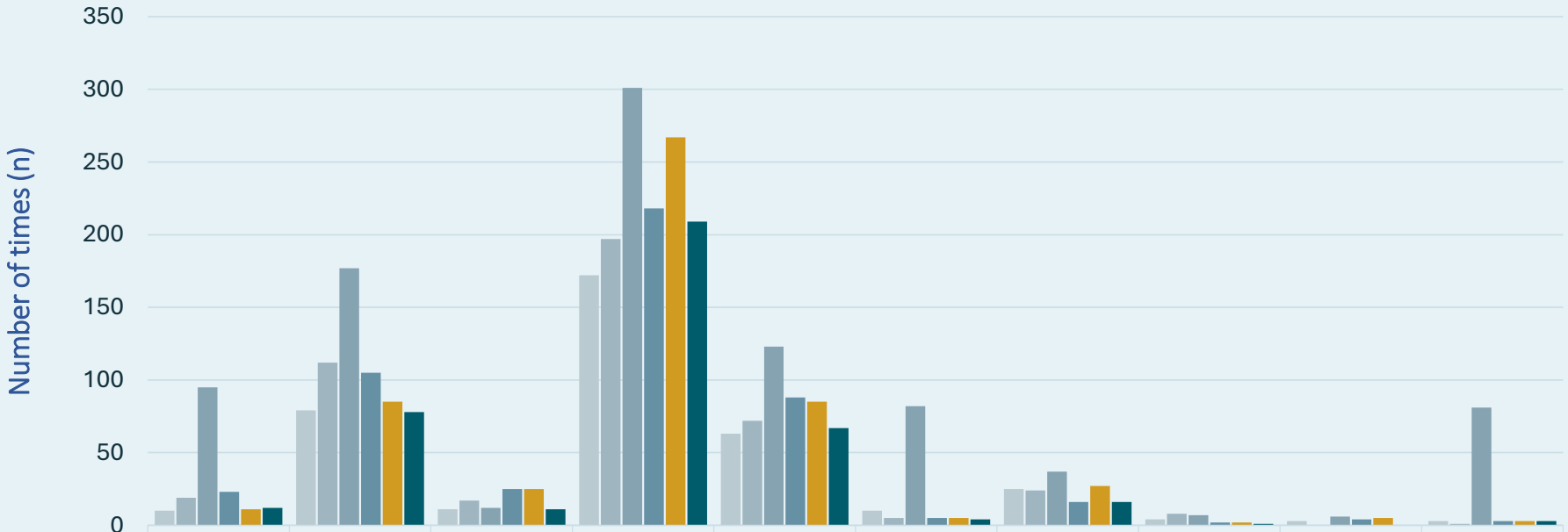
Tx Type

	n
Inpatient	271
Outpatient/Community-based	284
Detox	51

Codeine misuse concentrated among unemployed male youths

Profile of Individuals who use Codeine (n=50, 3%)	Percent (%)
Majority were males	**72**
Majority were aged: 15-19 yrs 30-34 yrs	 **25** **21**
Unemployed	**49**
Second product (n = 5)	**0.3**
Type of Codeine-containing medication misused	
Tablets: Adcodol; Stilpain; Painamol; Mybulen	
Cough mixture: Lean, Benylin, Broncleer	

Mental health is the most frequently reported NCD



	Cardiovascular	Respiratory diseases	Diabetes	Mental Health	Blood pressure problems	Liver Disease	GIT Disease	Neurological disorder	Hepatitis	Cancer
Jul-Dec 23	10	79	11	172	63	10	25	4	3	3
Jan-Jun 24	19	112	17	197	72	5	24	8	0	1
Jul-Dec 24	95	177	12	301	123	82	37	7	6	81
Jan-Jun 25	23	105	25	218	88	5	16	2	4	3
Jul-Dec 25	11	85	25	267	85	5	27	2	5	3
Jan-Jun 26	12	78	11	209	67	4	16	1	0	3

22%

(CI: 19.9-23.8)

reported an NCD upon admission

Last doctor visit

80%

<2 years ago



13%

2–5 years ago

7%

> 5 years ago

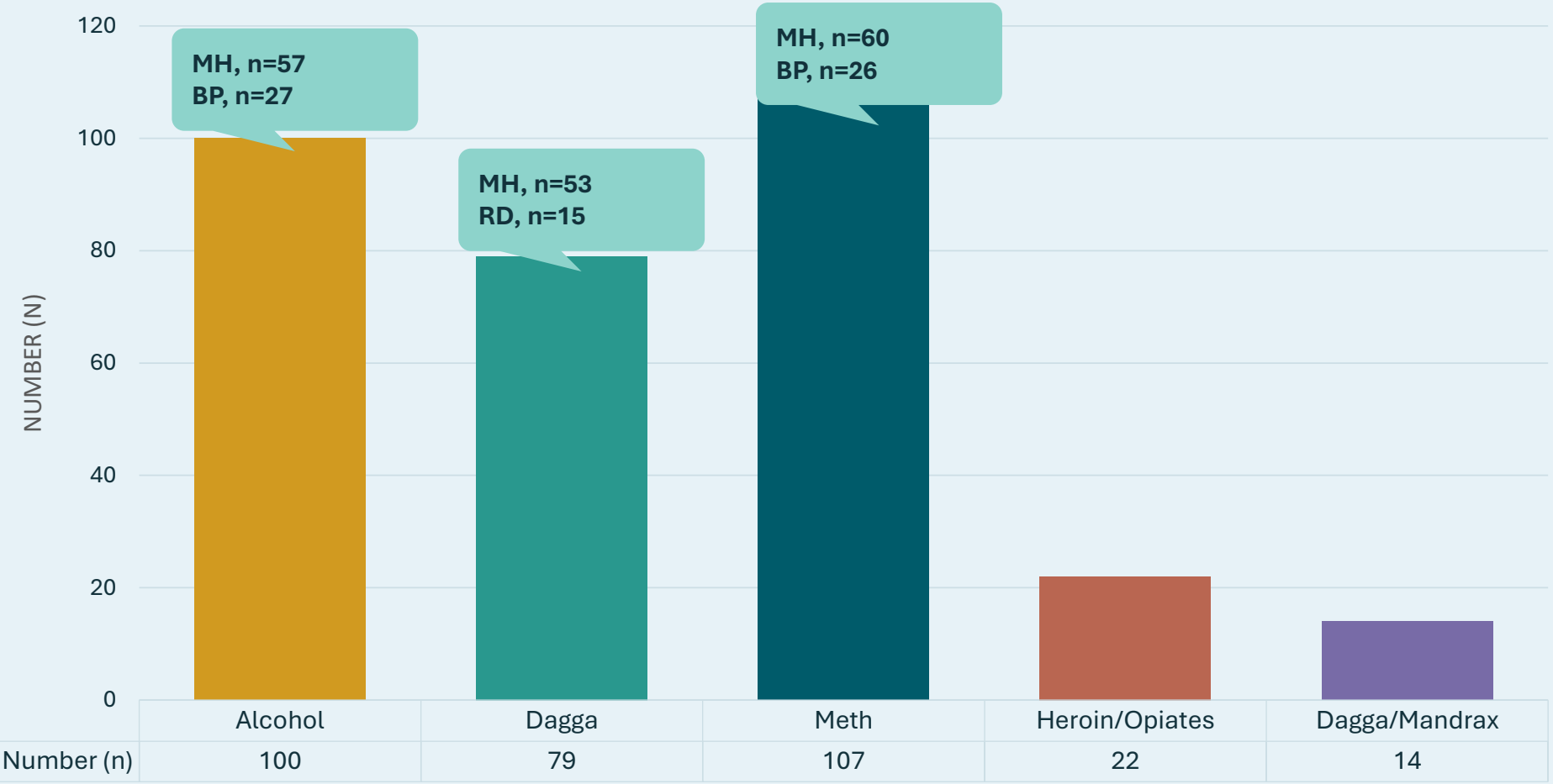
Methamphetamine shows the highest NCD count among selected substances

107

Methamphetamine + NCD

Mental health issues

most prominent by substance category



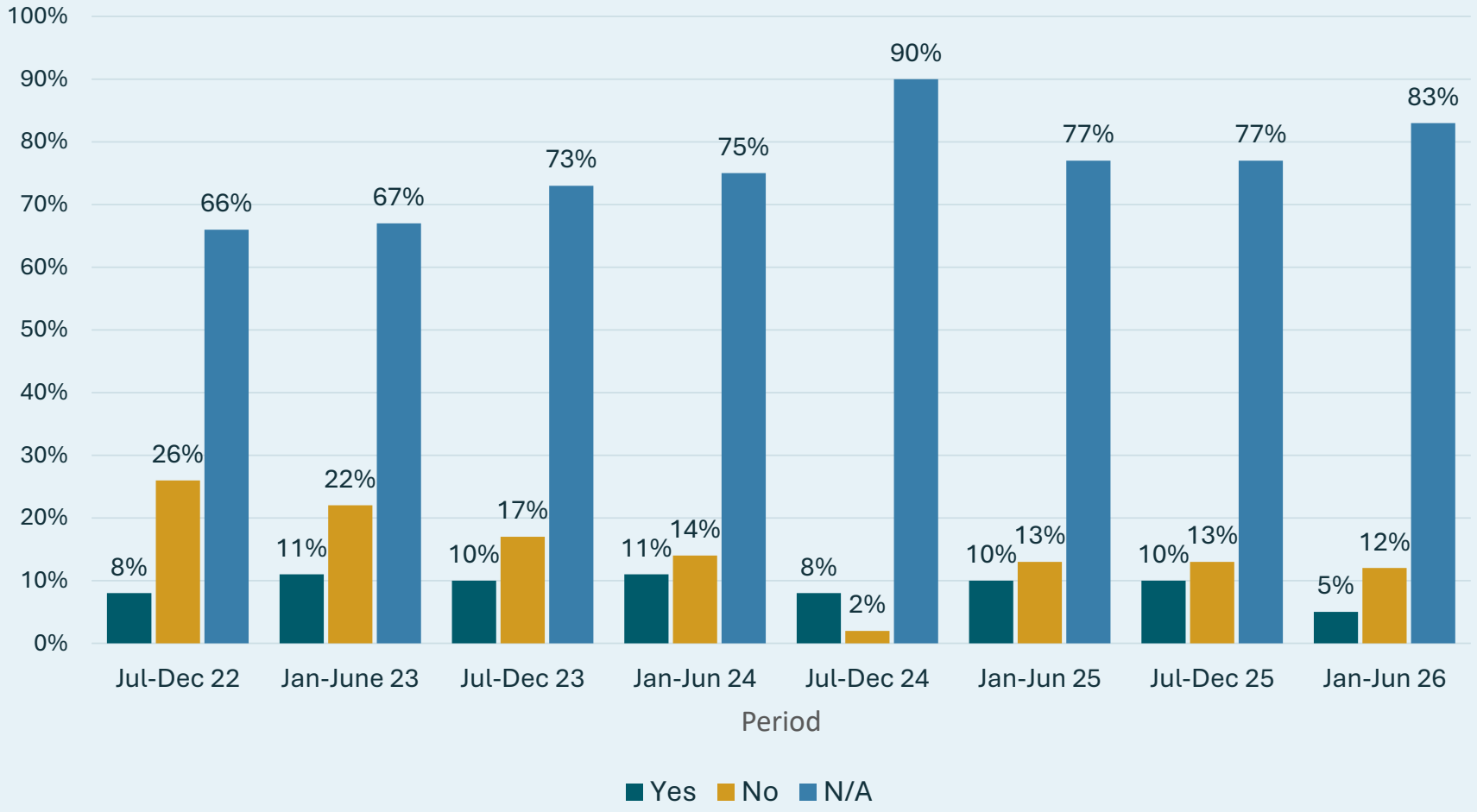
5% reported substance use during pregnancy

Substances used

N = 134

Alcohol	23
Meth	44
Dagga	11
Cannabis/Mandrax	4
Heroin/Opiates	3
OTC/PRE	2
Other	22
Crack/Cocaine	1

Numbers reported

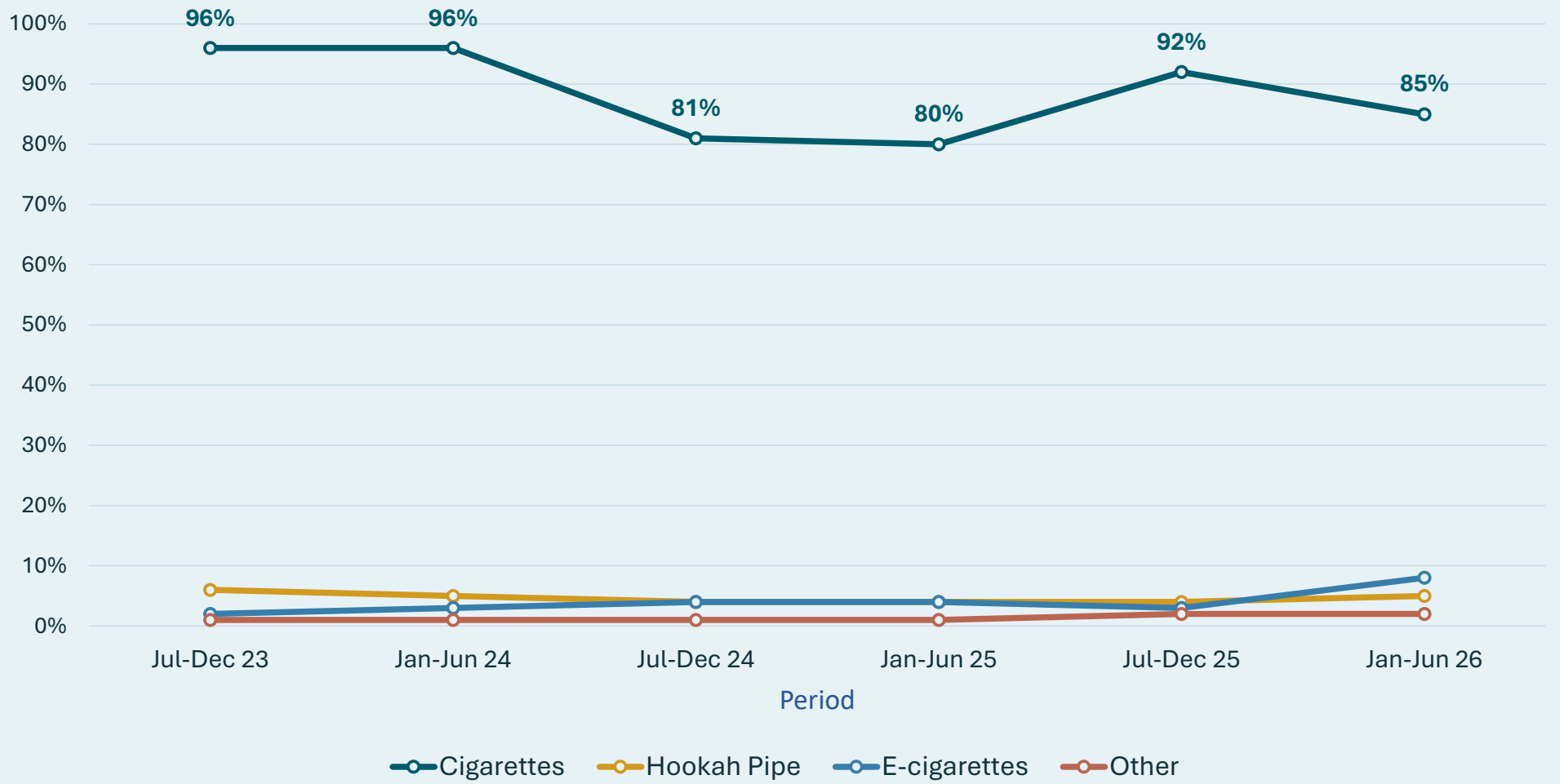


Tobacco use remains high and is led by cigarettes

80%

(CI: 77.7-81.4)

reported tobacco use



04

SECTION

18 and younger

Treatment demand among children and adolescents

18 AND UNDER

402 service users aged 18 and under entered treatment

22%

of all admissions were youths

Up from 14% in Jul-Dec 2025

OVERALL RELATIVE CHANGE

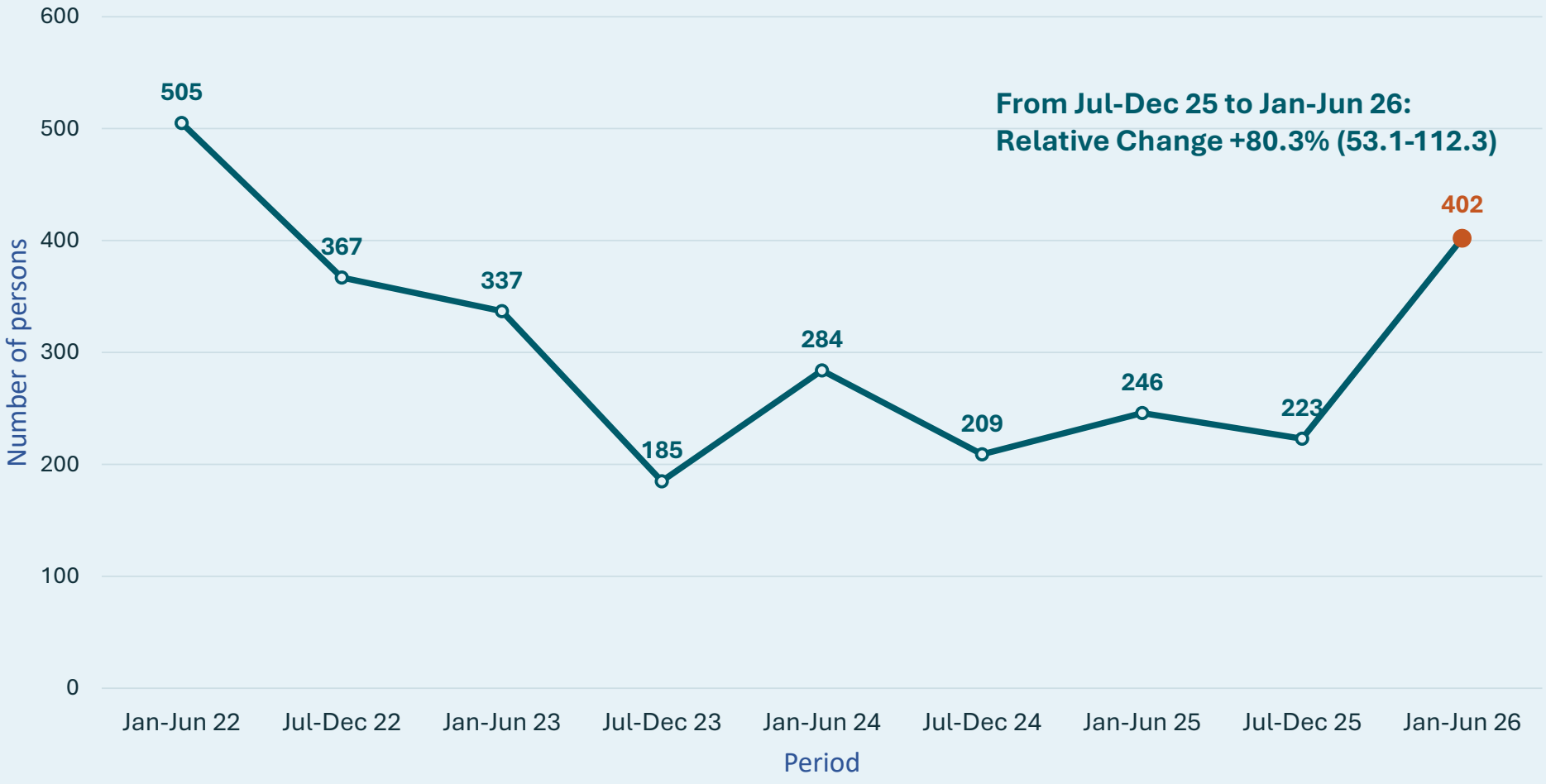
-20.4%

(CI: -30.2 to -9.3)

decrease

103 fewer service users

Jan–Jun 2022 to Jan–Jun 2026



Girls' share of 18 and under admissions fell to 30%

Males: 70%

CI: 65.7–74.6

Females: 30%

CI: 25.4–34.3

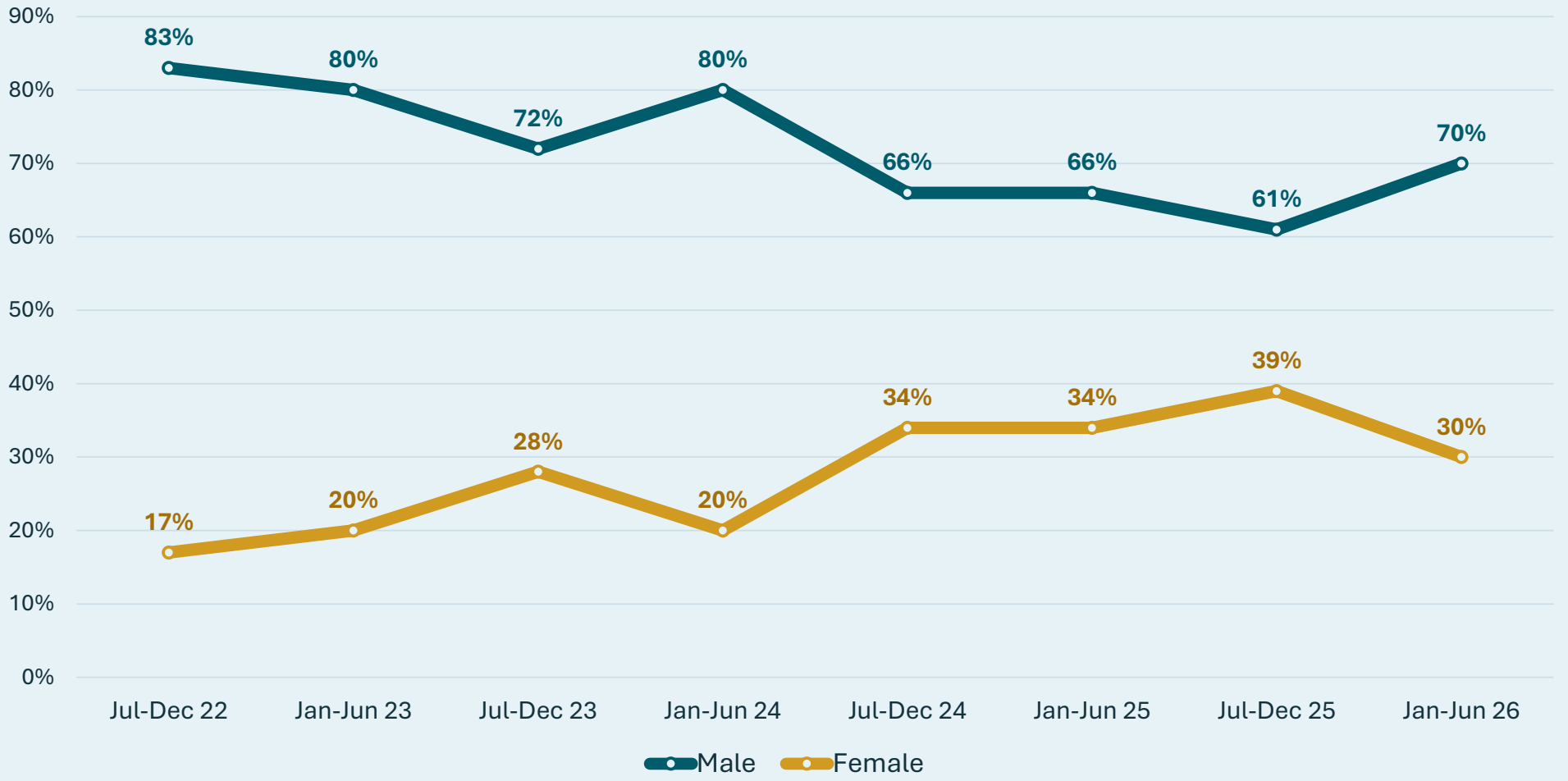
OVERALL CHANGE

Jul–Dec 2022 to Jan–Jun 2026

Males: - 13 pp (CI: -18.9 to -7.1)

Females: + 13 pp (CI: 7.1 to 18.9)

pp = percentage points



Cannabis remains the dominant primary substance among under 18s

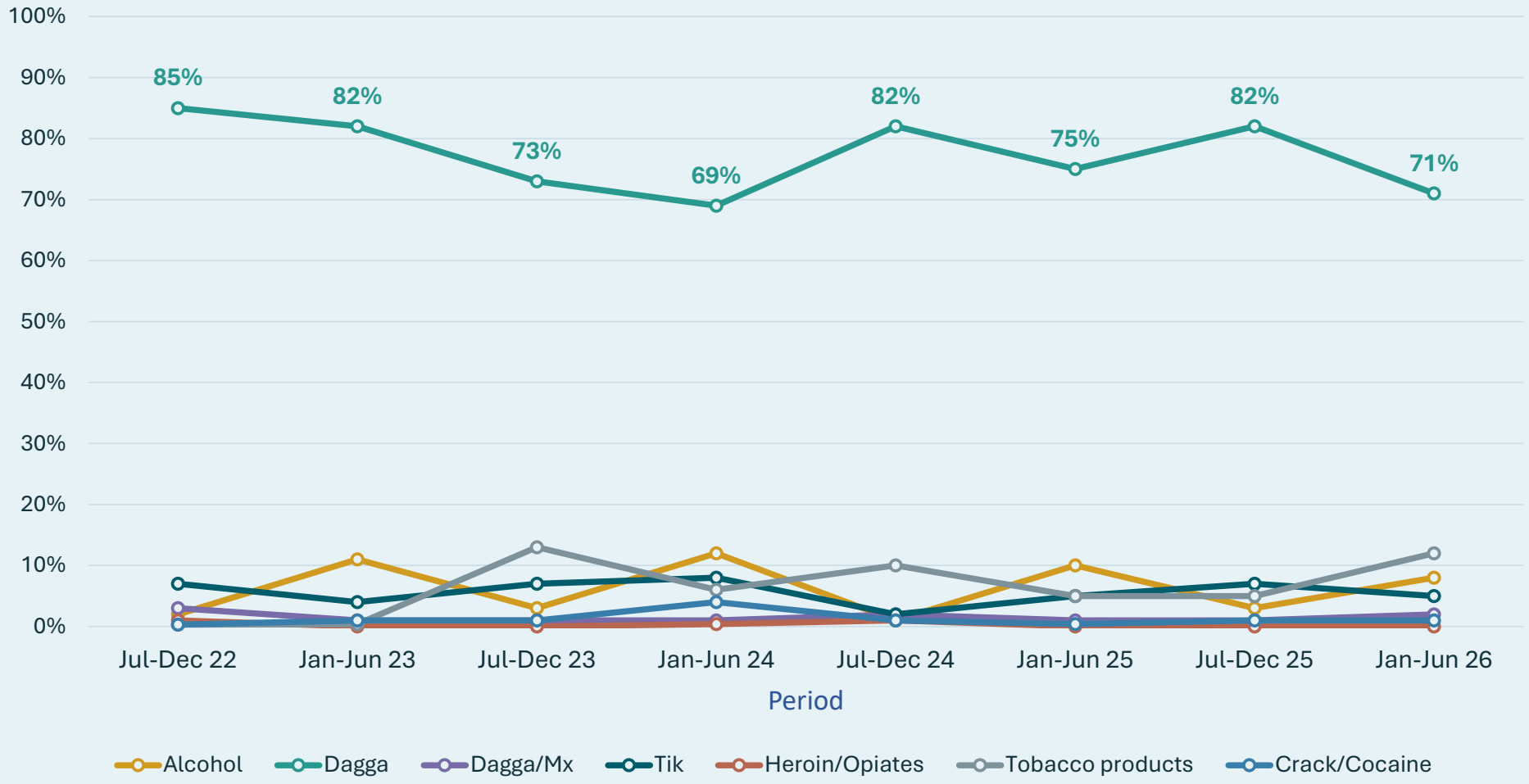
44%

(CI: 38.2-47.9

reported polysubstance use

Top 3 substances

Alcohol	**46%**
Dagga	**18%**
Tob Prods	**13%**



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Western Cape treatment demand reflects persistent structural and clinical risks

PROFILE & ACCESS

- Tx access still skewed towards males; WC has the highest female share nationally.
- 15-19 years age group accounted for majority tx access.
- Unemployment remains high.
- Readmissions relatively high at 30%.

CARE & TIMING

- HIV testing is highest nationally at 78% (but drop from 85% in 25b).
- Mean age at admission was 31 years; mean age of substance use initiation was 18 years.
- Ever-use during pregnancy at 5% but under-estimation.

SUBSTANCE PATTERNS

- MA, dagga and alcohol the most common primary substances.
- 57% reported a secondary substance. Can/Mx, alcohol and MA most common.
- Codeine misuse is concentrated among unemployed young males aged 15-19 years.

HEALTH & YOUTH

- Mental health (mainly depression) is the leading NCD, followed by psychosis and anxiety/panic disorder.
- Dagga is the most used substance among those aged 18 and younger.
- 44% of ≤18s reported a secondary substance.

Thank you

Baie dankie · Enkosi

Visit our website at

https://www.samrc.ac.za/intramural-research-units/MASTRU-sacendu

