

# Couples Seeking CCT Treatment for Alcohol and Gambling Problems in a Randomized Trial

Bonnie Lee, Yanjun Shi, Jessica Gaelzer,  
Olu Awosoga, Darren Christensen

CRISM Prairie Node  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gathering  
Calgary, November 15-16, 2017

# Background

AGRI Major Grant (2016-2018); CRISM Development Grant

Bonnie Lee (PI), Darren Christensen (Co-PI), Andrew Greenshaw, Katherine Aitchison, Olu Awosoga (Co-I)

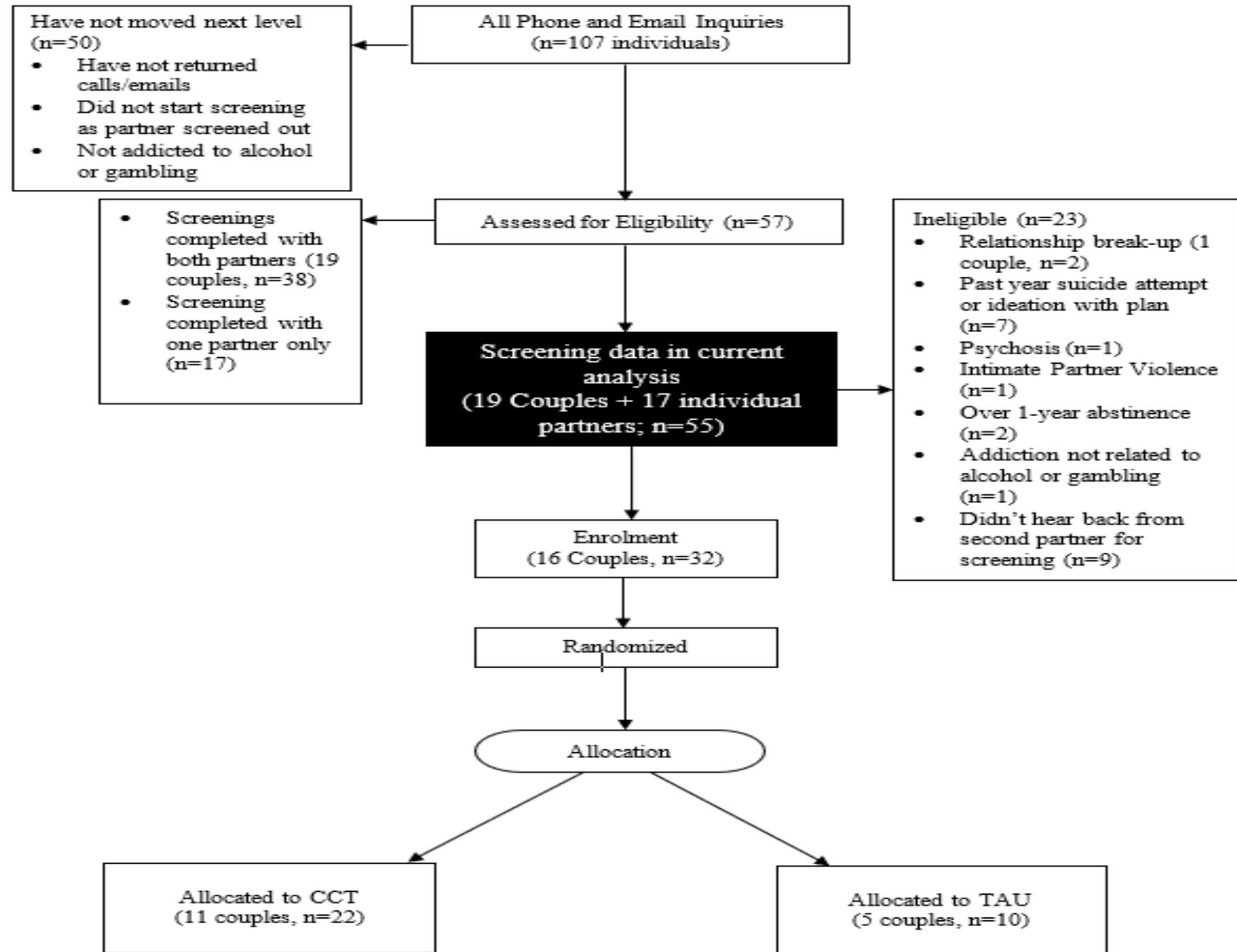
Comparing Treatment Outcomes in Alcohol and Gambling Disorders with  
Congruence Couple Therapy

- 3 Sites in AHS – Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Fort MacMurray
- Data collection: Baseline, Post-treatment (3 months), Follow-up (6 months)
- Screening
- Phase II Analysis of Screening data: 18 months into study

Figure 1. Alcohol vs Gambling Disorder CCT Treatment Study (July 13, 2017)

## Inclusion Criteria:

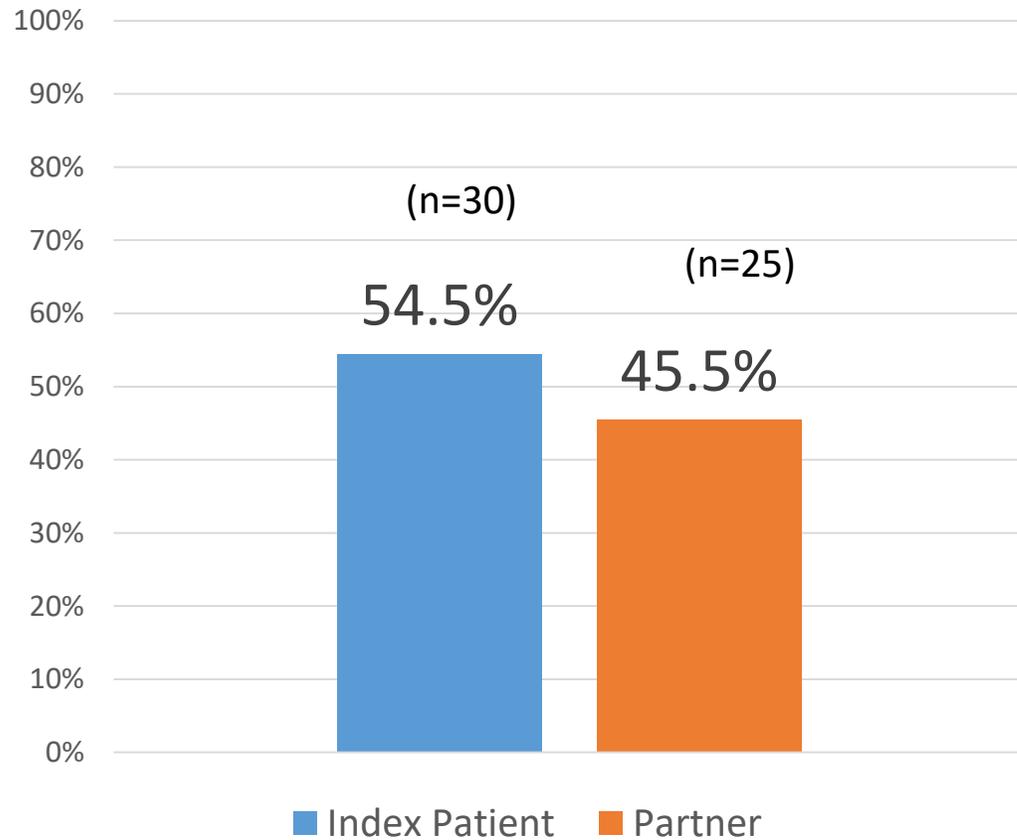
- One spouse must meet DSM-V cut-off score of endorsement (4 items gambling, 2 items alcohol use) in the past 12 months.
- 18 years or older
- Committed couple relationship (self-definition)



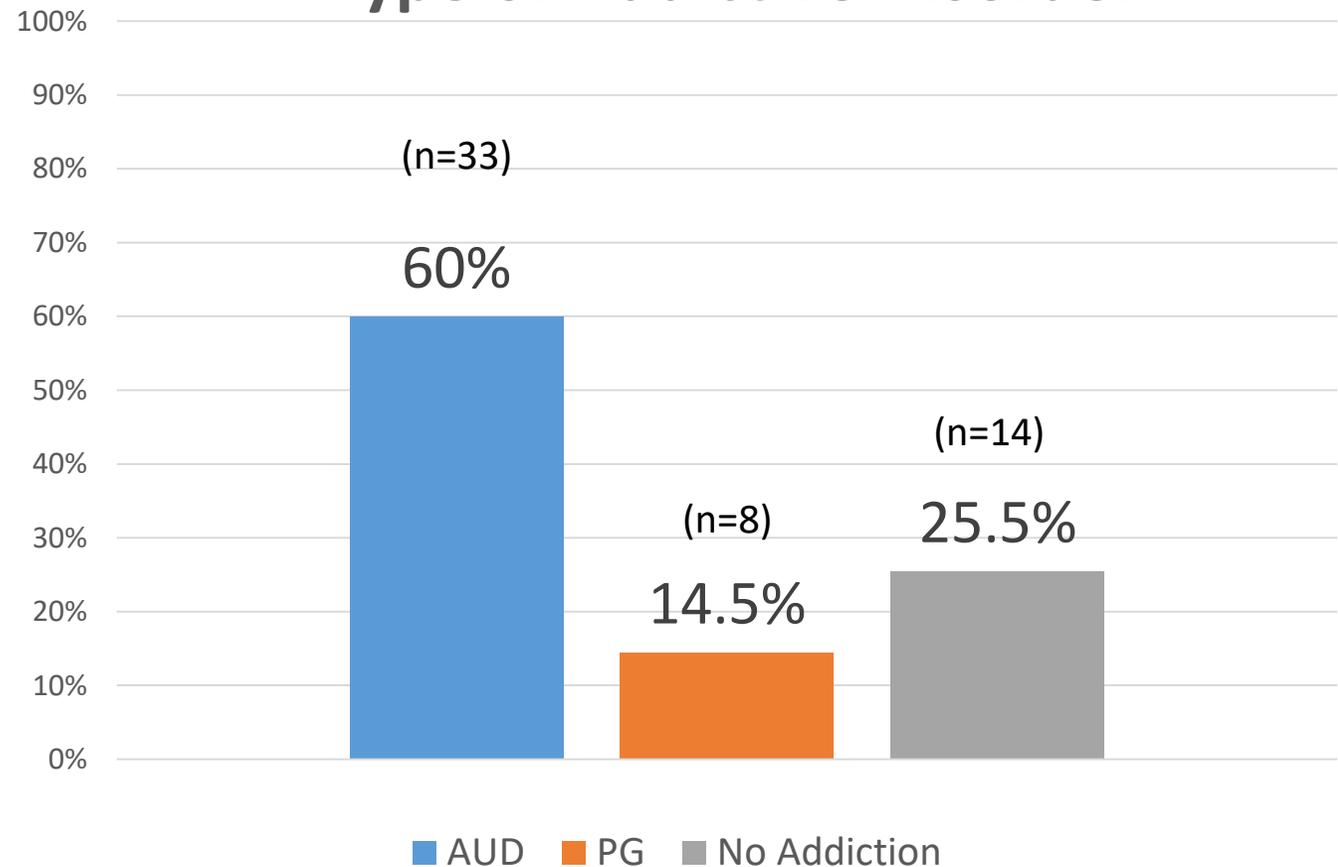
# Treatment Seekers (N=55)

60% Female & 40% Male

## Index Patient vs Partner

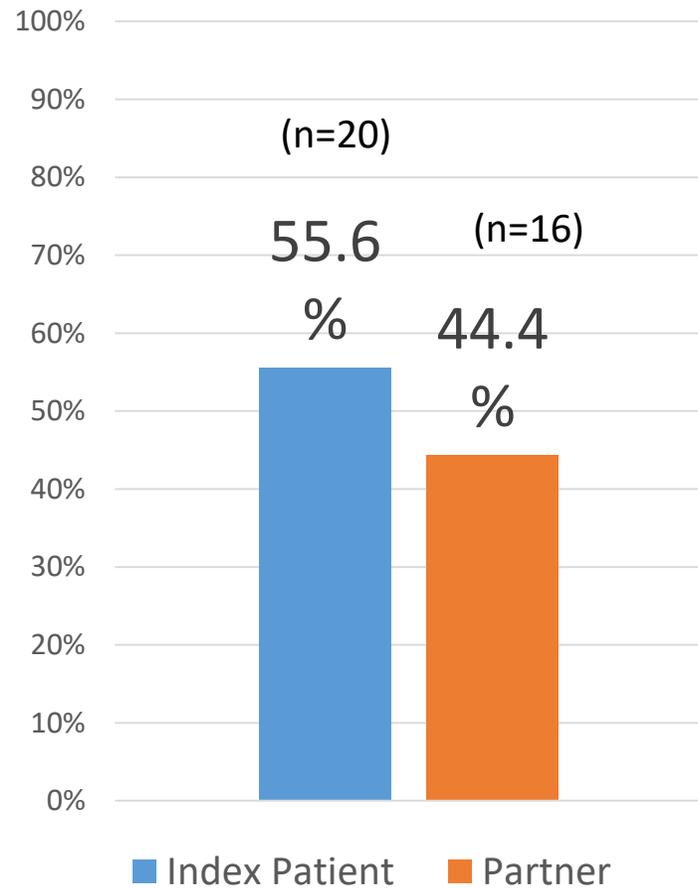


## Type of Addictive Disorder

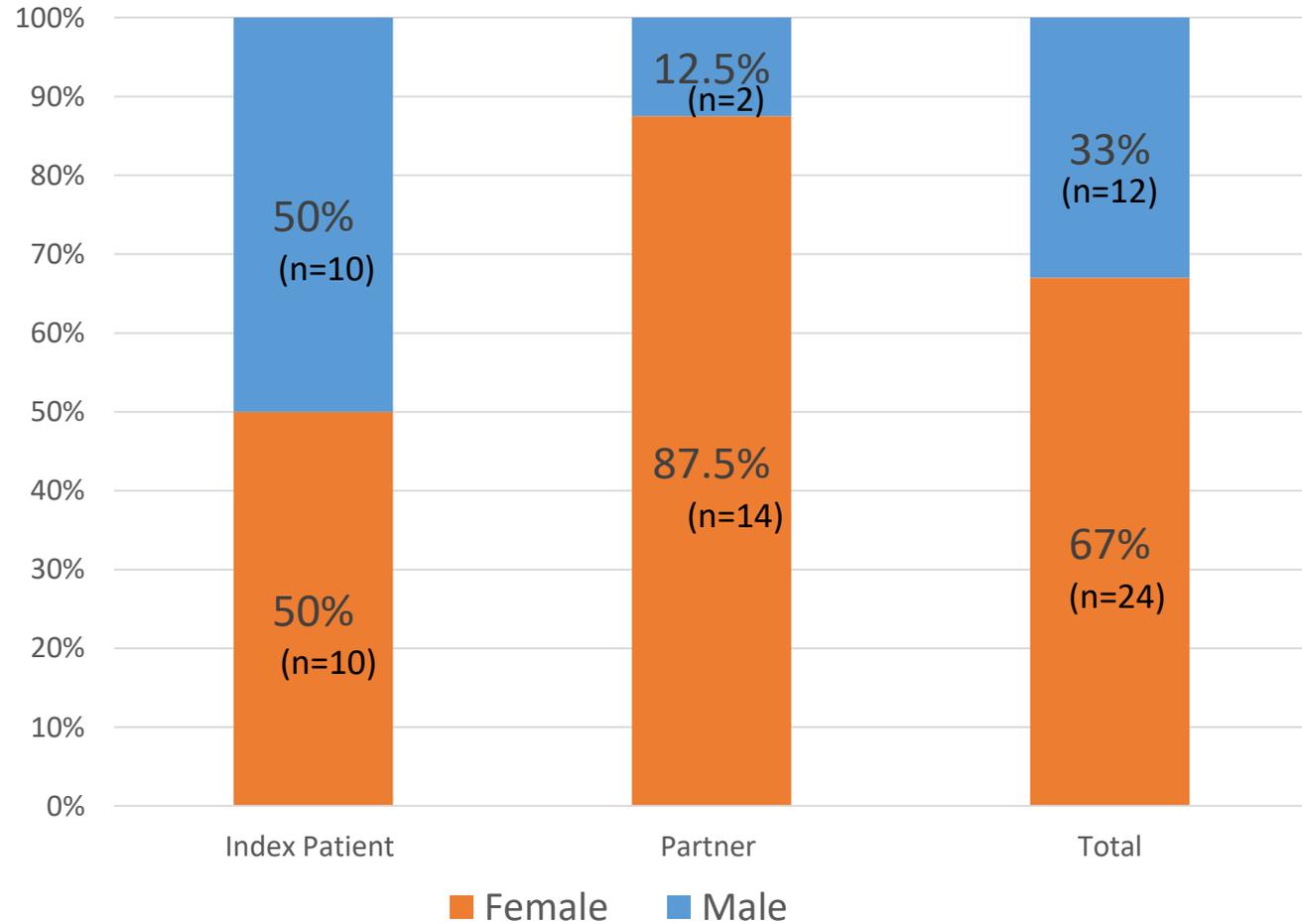


# Initiation (n=36)

## Index Patient vs Partner



## Index Patient vs Partner – by Gender



## Why couple therapy? – Themes

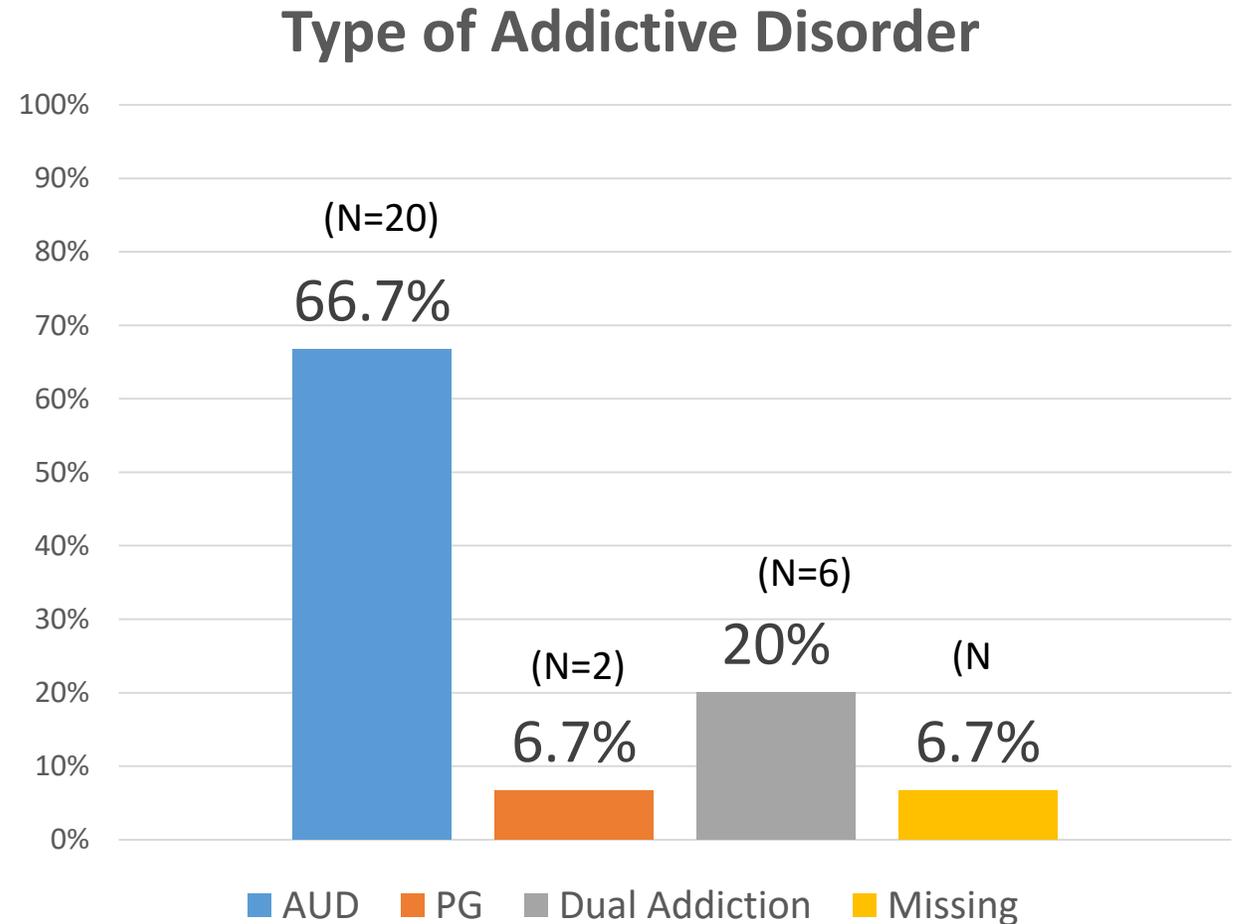
1. To save/improve the couple relationship—*communication, mutual understanding, partner's trust, and connection.*
2. To aid addiction recovery by working on couple relationship
3. To deal with relationship problems arose from addiction
4. To deal with dual-couple addiction and support dual-recovery.
5. Partner's desire to better cope with patient's addiction and mental health issues and to support the recovery.
6. For personal growth and well-being

## Why couple therapy? – Excerpts from Notes

- “Building ...a solid trusting, caring relationship, something we can move forward on”;
- “Being able to understand each other better and communicate with each other like using soft voices instead of yelling”;
- “I have work to do on re-gaining trust with my wife... Just to find a way to be closer to her or close again.”
- “had questions about his relationship after his last “binging experience”;
- “taking a course on addiction and a lot of stuff is based on my marriage”
- “Drinking leads to a rift in communication between my wife and I”
- “More we were wanting counselling to deal with problems that arose from my drinking”
- “when there's alcohol in the house we go on binges together”;
- “Preserve my own sobriety while supporting hers”
- “To work on self-awareness about co-dependence to remain sober”
- “To get over my anxiety about him drinking, and to learn how to not take it so personally and the best way to approach and support him”
- “Learning how to support each other with his anxiety and coping mechanisms to deal with it”
- “Live a more stable less stressful life and to have personal progress”

# Index Patients (n=30)

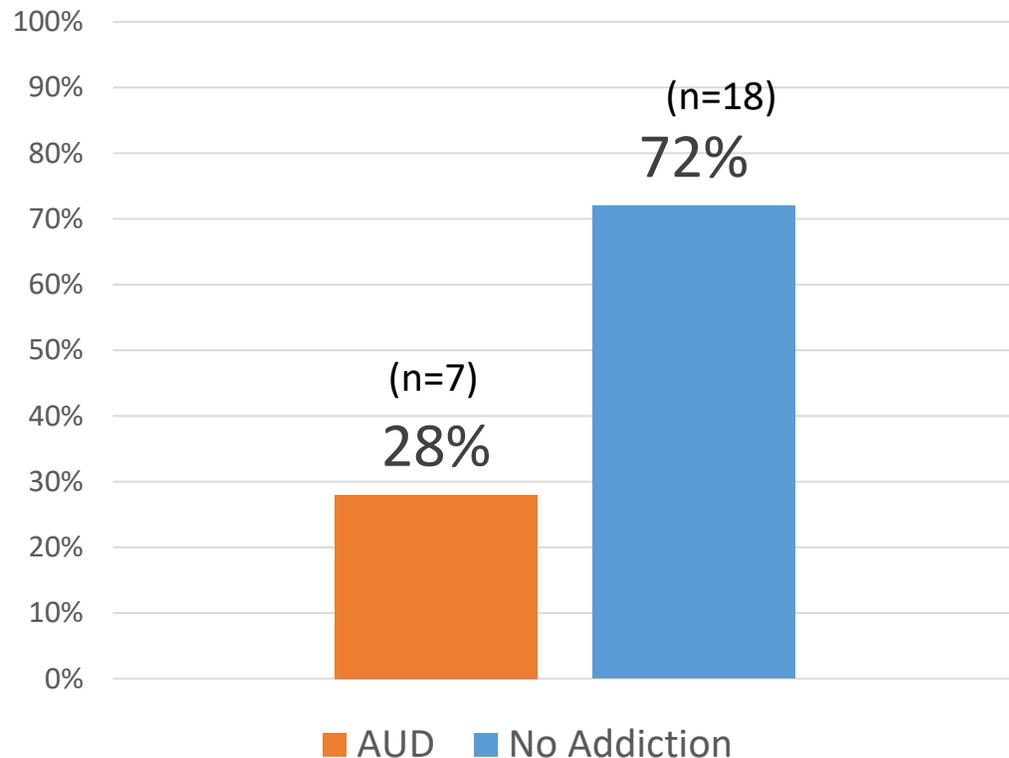
- Among Index Patients, there were 60% males and 40% females.
- **20% of Index patients** have dual addiction problem, which means that they are addicted to both alcohol and gambling.
  - **23% (6 out of 26)** of participants with AUD also have GD;
  - **75% (6 out of 8)** of participants with GD also have AUD;



# Partners (n=25)

84% females & 16% males

## Type of Addictive Disorder



# Dual-alcohol couples

- Among the 19 paired couples in the study, 7 are **Dual Alcohol Couples (36,8%)**.
- 5 out of 7 couples (**71,4%**) have **severe AUD**, which means that both partners were classified with a severe addiction problem (DSM-V score of 6 or higher);
- 2 out of 7 couples (**28,6%**), Index Patients have severe AUD and the partners have mild AUD (DSM-V scores 2-3);
- 2 out of 7 couples (**28,6%**) the **partner presented higher DSM-V score** than the Index Patient.

# AUD & GD Screening Results

- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) showed that 72.7% of all the participants are in **severe range of AUD** (zone IV);
- DSM-V AUD showed that 52.7% of the total sample are in the severe range and **87.8% of participants with AUD are in the severe range**;
- Problem gambling Severity Index (PGSI) showed that 14.5% of all the participants had score higher than 8, which falls in the category of “Problem Gambler”;
- DSM-V GD indicates that **9.1% of all the participants are in the most severe range** and **62.2% of the PGs are in the severe range**.

# Suicide Screening (N=54)

Male n=22, Female n=32; Index Patient n=29, Partner n=25.

- 31.5% of the treatment seekers reported **seriously thinking about killing oneself** in the past 12 months.
- 70.6% of them also reported their suicidal thought was **related to their own/partner's addiction**.
- The partners more often reported that their suicidal ideation was related to their own or their partner's addiction (83%) than the index patients (64%).
- Over half (59%) of those with past 12-month suicide ideation reported they had **a suicide plan**.

# Suicide Screening (N=54)

Male n=22, Female n=32; Index Patient n=29, Partner n=25.

- 11% of the treatment seekers reported **a suicide attempt** in the past 12 months.
- *\*Males showed greater incidence of suicide ideation, plan, and attempt in the past 12 months than females, and index patients higher than partners.*
- 28% of the treatment seekers reported **at least one suicide attempt in their life time.**
- *\*Males and females showed similar incidence of life-time suicide attempt (27% and 28%); Index patients showed a greater incidence of life-time suicide attempt (38%) than partners (16%).*

Intimate Partner Violence Screening: (N=54)

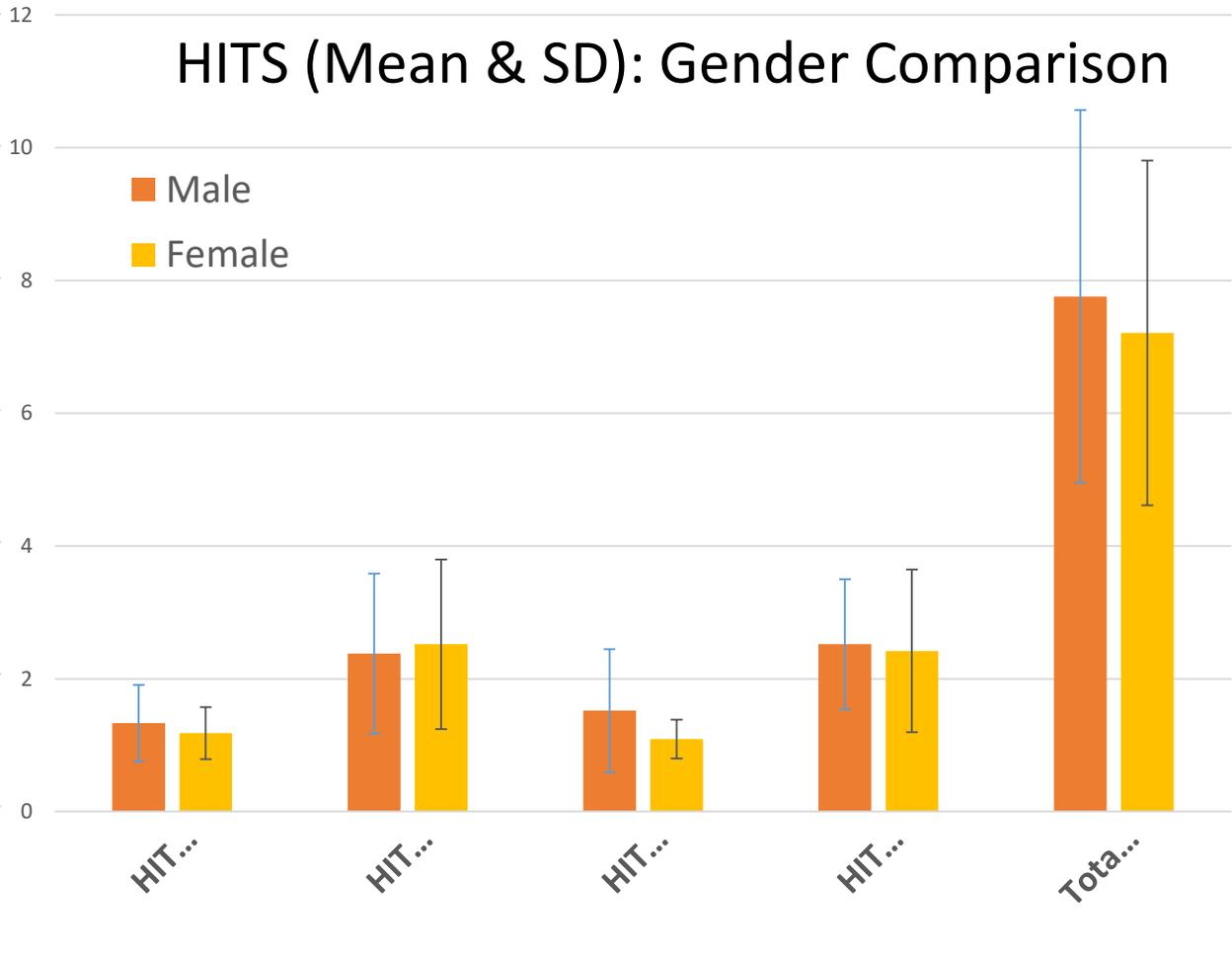
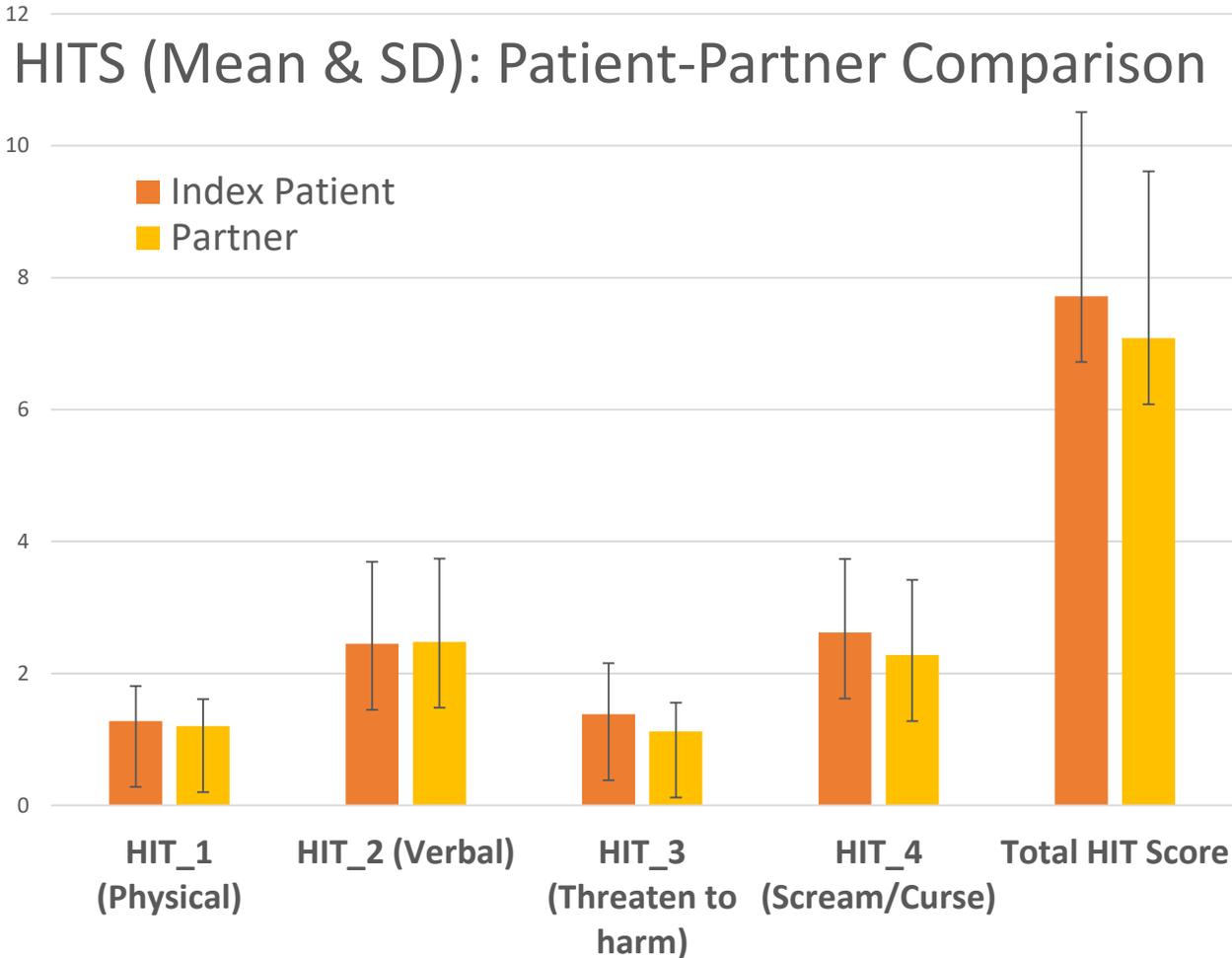
Screening tool:  
 Sherin, K. M., Sinacore, J. M., Li, X. Q., Zitter, R. E., & Shakil, A. (1998). HITS: A short domestic violence screening tool for use in a family practice setting. *Family Medicine*, 30 (7), 508-512.

<b><i>Intimate Partner Violence Frequency Table</i></b>	<b>Never 1</b>	<b>Rarely 2</b>	<b>Some- times 3</b>	<b>Fairly Frequently 4</b>	<b>Frequently 5</b>
<b>How often does your partner physically hurt you? (1)</b>	42	11	1	0	0
<b>How often does your partner insult you or talk you down? (2)</b>	12	22	8	7	5
<b>How often does your partner threaten you with harm? (3)</b>	45	5	3	1	0
<b>How often does your partner scream or curse at you? (4)</b>	9	24	13	3	5

# Intimate Partner Violence Screening (N=54)

**\*Male and female partners, index patients and partners are equally perpetrators and victims**

**\* Mostly verbal and psychological abuse**



# Conclusion – Why Couple Treatment?

- 40% of couples were dually-using couples (alcohol).
- Patients linked their addiction and couple relationship problems as reasons for seeking couple treatment.
- 71% of Partners and Patients with past 12-mo. suicidal ideation reported that their suicidal ideation was related to their own and their partners' addiction.
- Patients and Partners are equally victim and perpetrator in intimate partner violence.