

A Pilot Study Assessing Client Understanding and Use of Fentanyl Test Strips for Harm Reduction

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Background

- In the United States, more than half of the 100,000 drug overdose deaths in the last year involved illicitly manufactured fentanyls (IMFs).¹
- Federal funding may now be used to purchase fentanyl testing strips (FTS) to help prevent overdose deaths as of April 2021.²
- Recent pilot studies in Rhode Island have assessed perceptions and attitudes towards take-home FTS among young adults who use drugs.³
- This study is among the first in St. Louis, Missouri, to examine a person's knowledge and understanding of FTS.

Objectives

- To assess treatment-seeking service users' knowledge and understanding of IMFs and motivation to use FTS as a method of harm reduction to prevent opioid overdose.

Methods

Study Design:

- Interviewer-administered 20-item survey

Study Dissemination:

- Delivered verbally in-person and via phone
- Responses collected on the Qualtrics survey platform

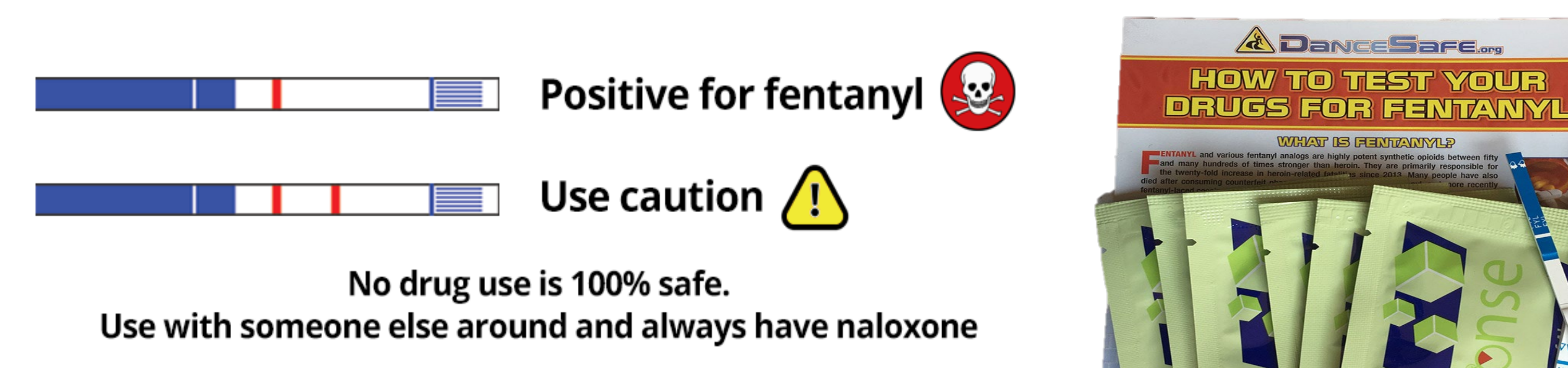
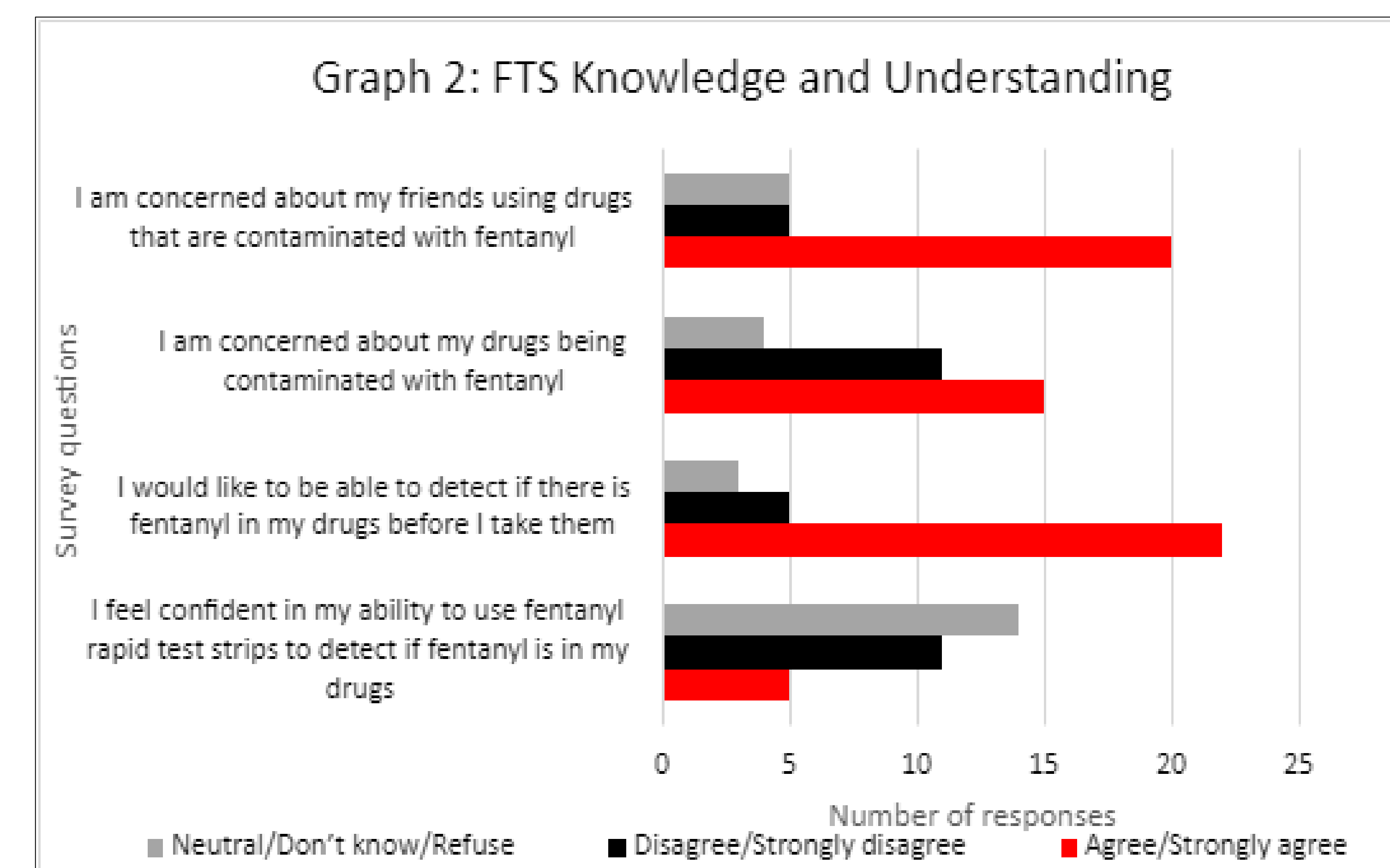
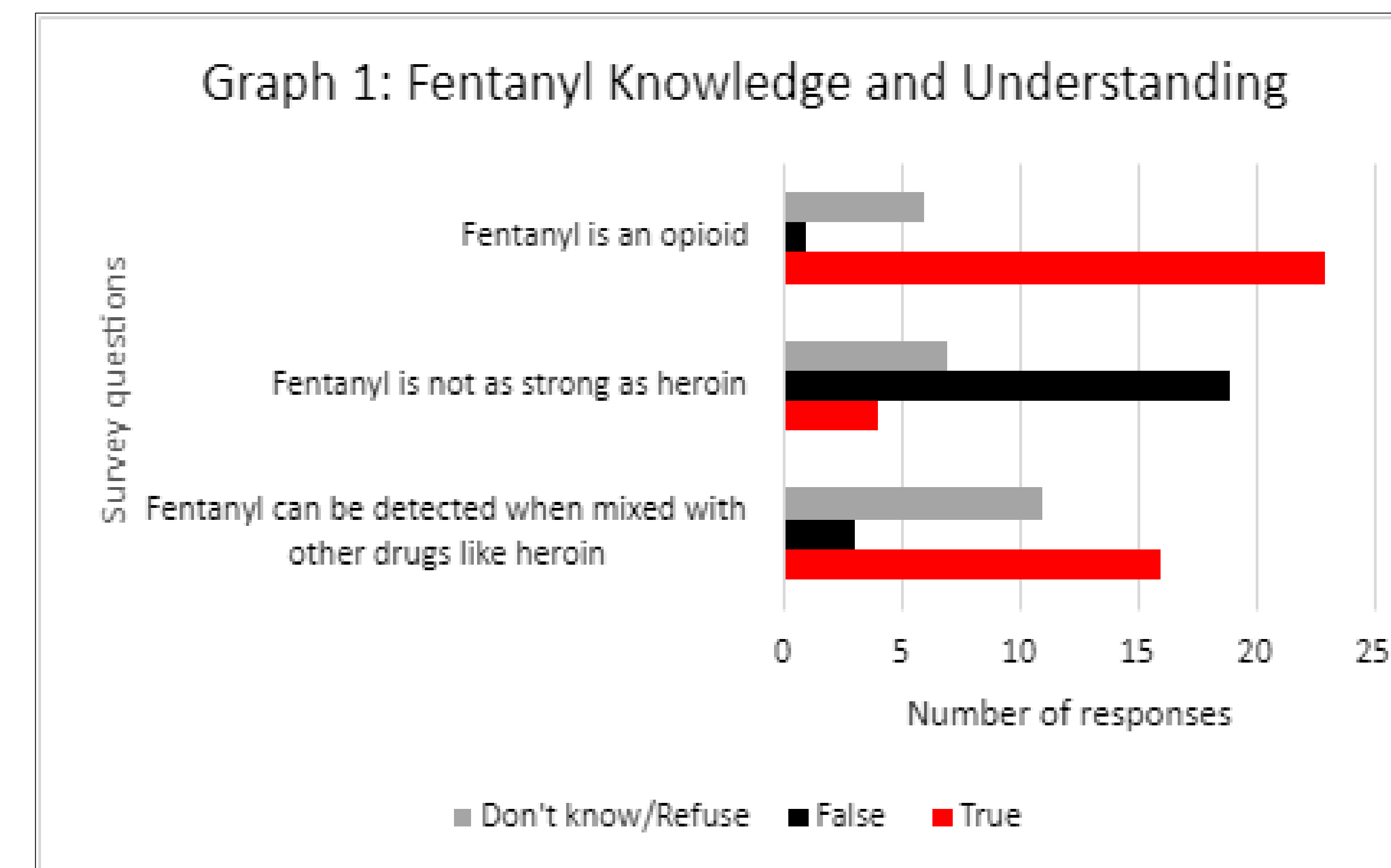
Study Population:

- Clients actively engaged in residential and office-based treatment for a substance use disorder at a community mental health center in St. Louis, Missouri

Study Measures:

- Responses to questions about fentanyl, attitudes toward fentanyl and overdosing, understanding and motivation to use fentanyl test strips

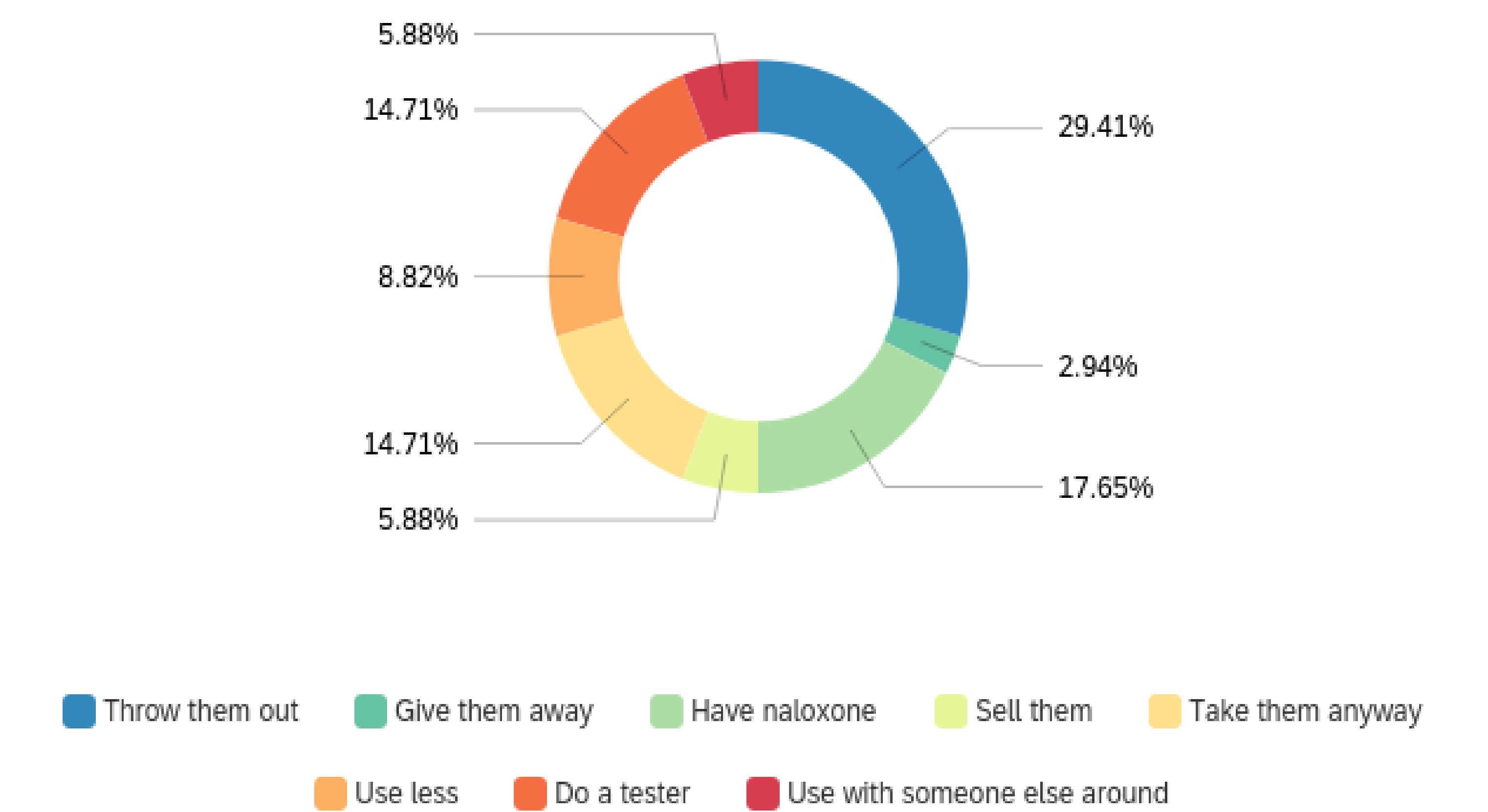
Results



Prevent Overdose RI. Fentanyl Test Strips. Photograph. Retrieved March 10, 2022, from <https://preventoverdose.org/fentanyl-test-strips/>.
 Dancesafe. Fentanyl Test Strips – Pack Of 10. Photograph. Retrieved March 17, 2022, from <https://dancesafe.org/product/fentanyl-test-strips-pack-of-10-free-shipping/>.

Results

Figure 1: What would you do if you had drugs laced with fentanyl? (Select all that apply)



Conclusion

- Most (73%) survey respondents would like to be able to detect if there is fentanyl in their drug before use, but only 17% indicated that they feel confident in their ability to use FTS.
- Respondents indicated greater concern for a friend overdosing compared to their own risk of overdose.
- People who primarily use non-opioid/stimulant drug products (methamphetamine, cocaine) are at even greater risk for IMF overdose and would likely benefit the most from increased access and education surrounding use of FTS.
- Our healthcare system must rapidly continue to explore and expand upon overdose prevention efforts, including access to FTS, as urgent action is needed to reduce the continued rise in overdose deaths in the US.

1. Federal Grantees May Now Use Funds to Purchase Fentanyl Test Strips | CDC Online Newsroom | CDC. Published April 12, 2021. Accessed July 8, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0407-fentanyl-test-strips.html>.
 2. O'Donnell J, Tanz LJ, et al. Trends in and Characteristics of Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Illicitly Manufactured Fentanyls - United States, 2019-2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2021; 70(50): 1740-1746. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/mmwr.mm7050a3>.
 3. Krieger MS, Goedel WC, Buxton JA, et al. Use of Rapid Fentanyl Test Strips Among Young Adults Who Use Drugs. *Int J Drug Policy*. 2018;61:52-58. doi:10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.09.009.