Drugs & gender

SASO Glasgow 10/5/18

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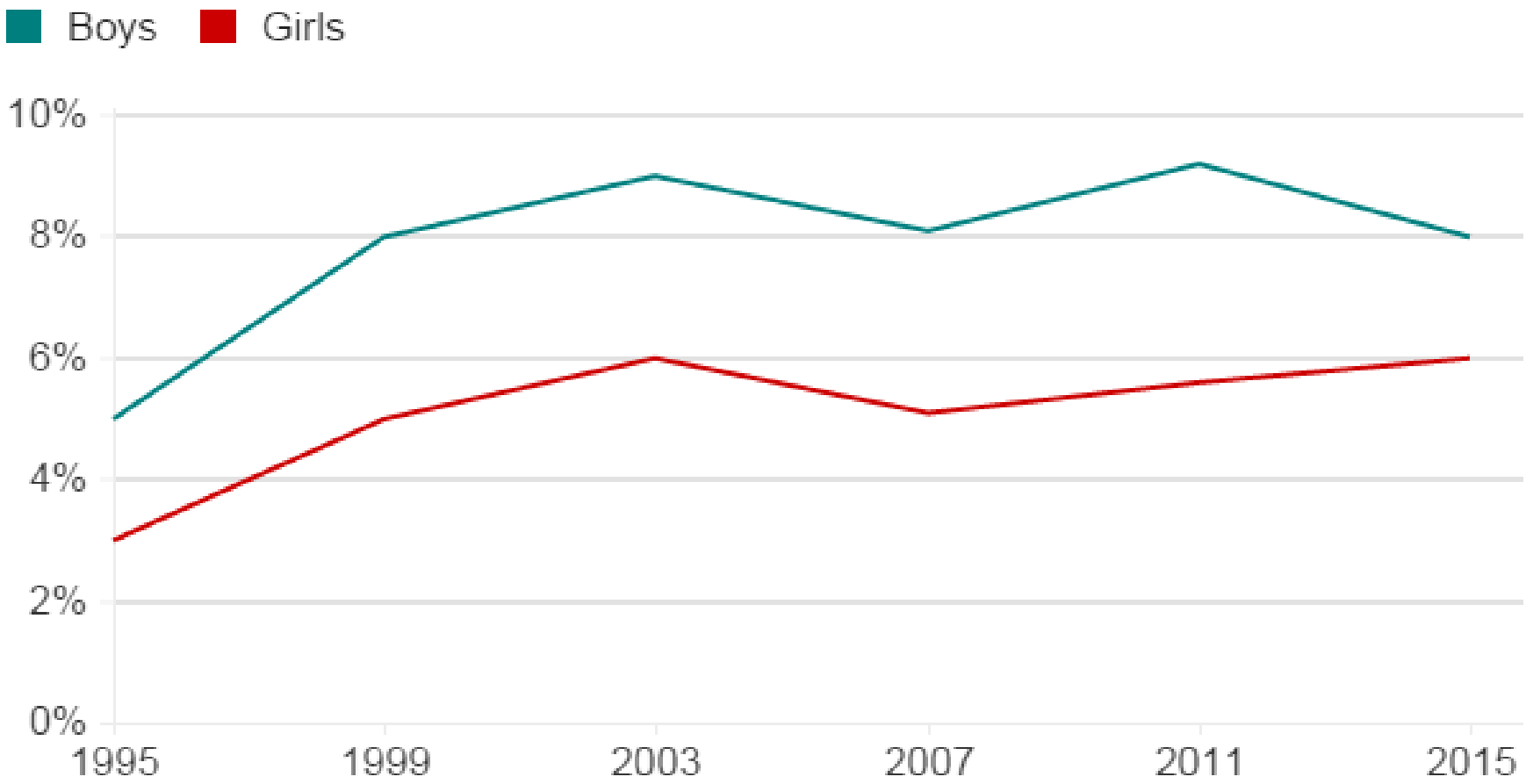
Cannabis use in the last 30 days by gender

25-country trend 1995-2015



Source: ESPAD

BBC

Figure 1 Cannabis use by gender (BCS)

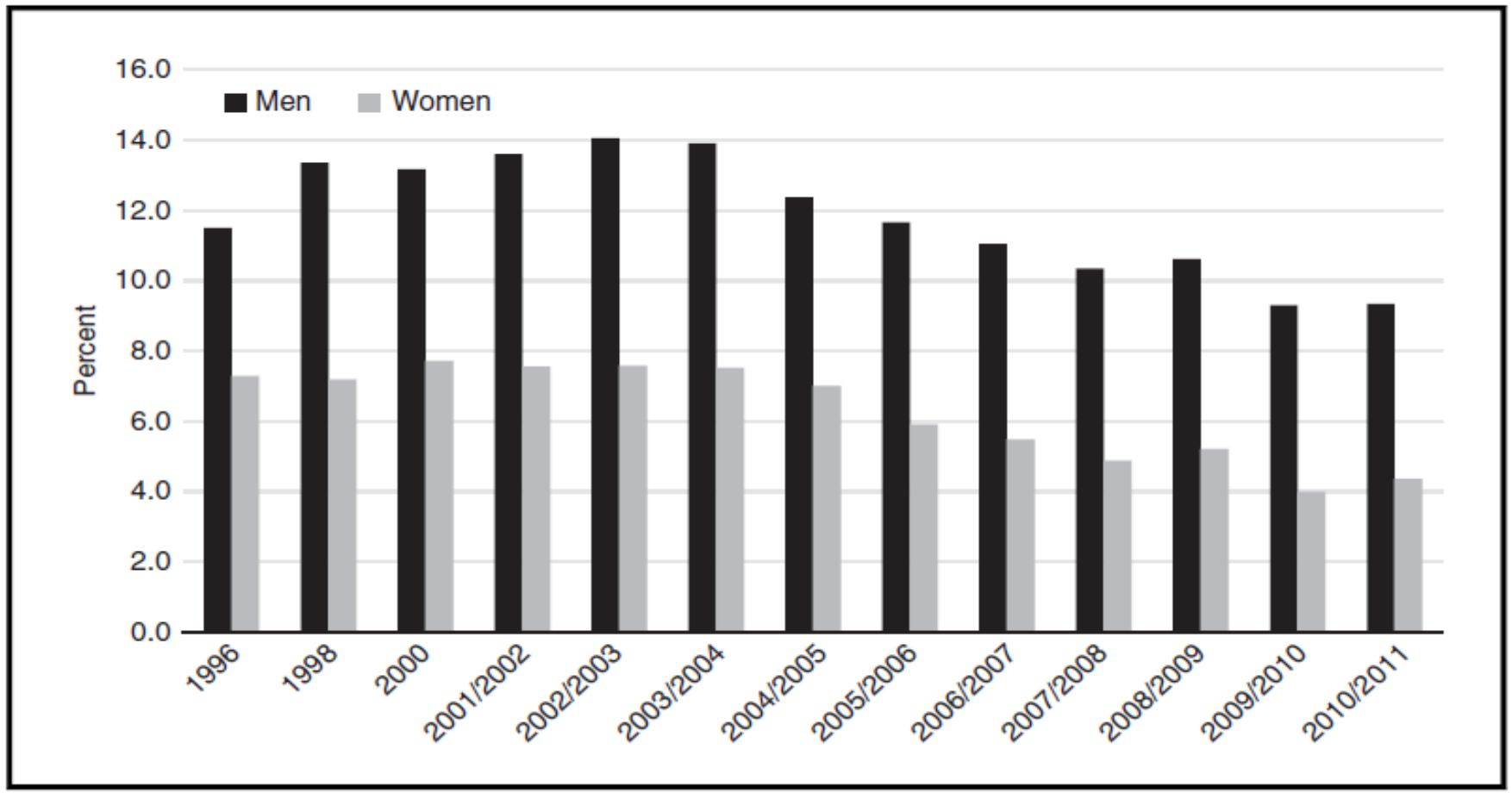


Figure 2 All psychosis/schizophrenia admissions 1999-2010

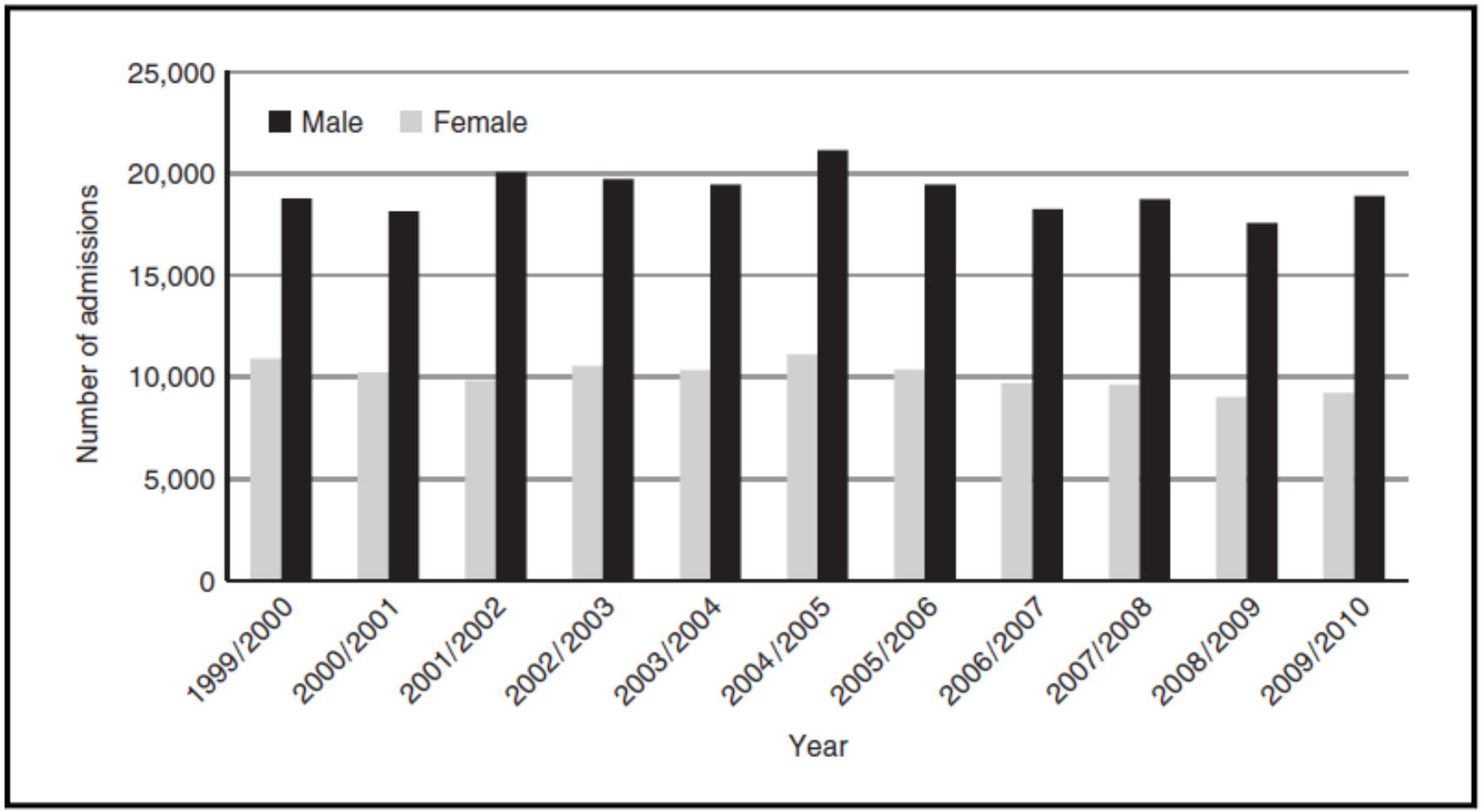
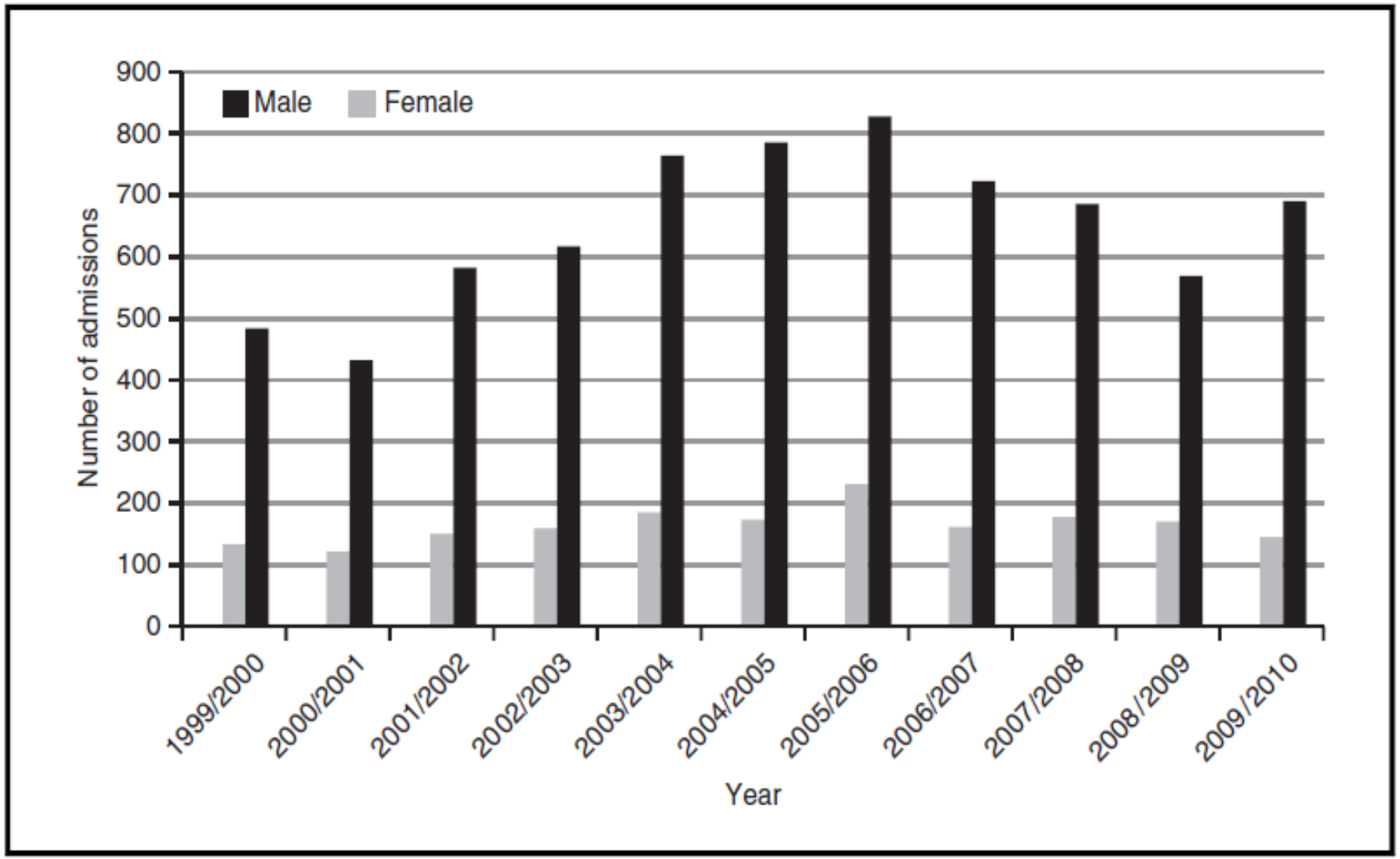


Figure 3 Cannabis psychosis admissions 1999-2010

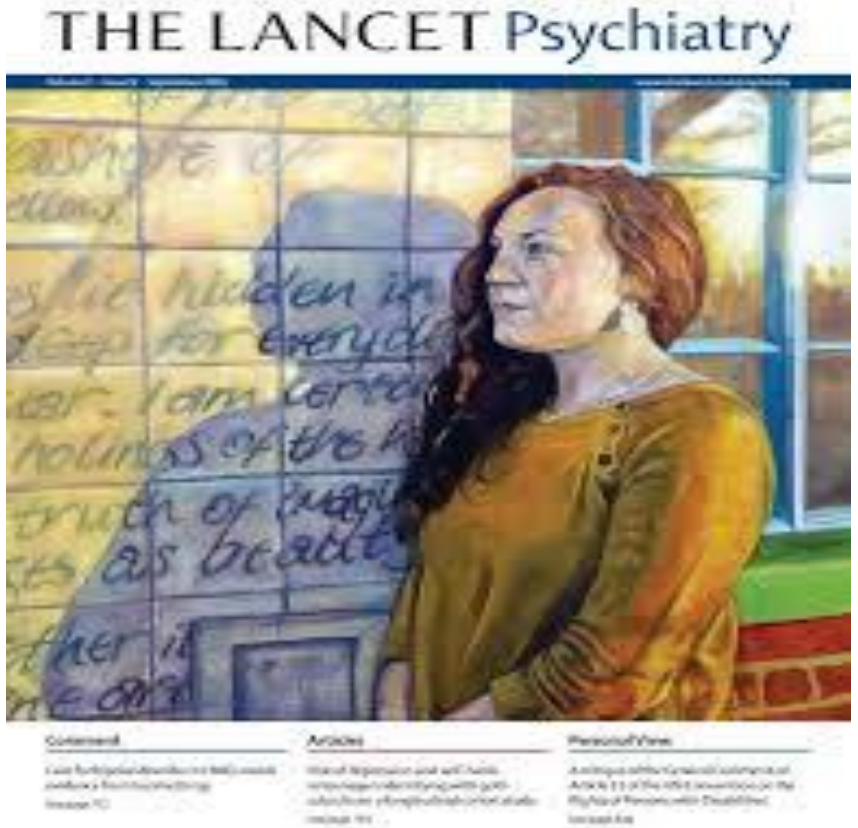


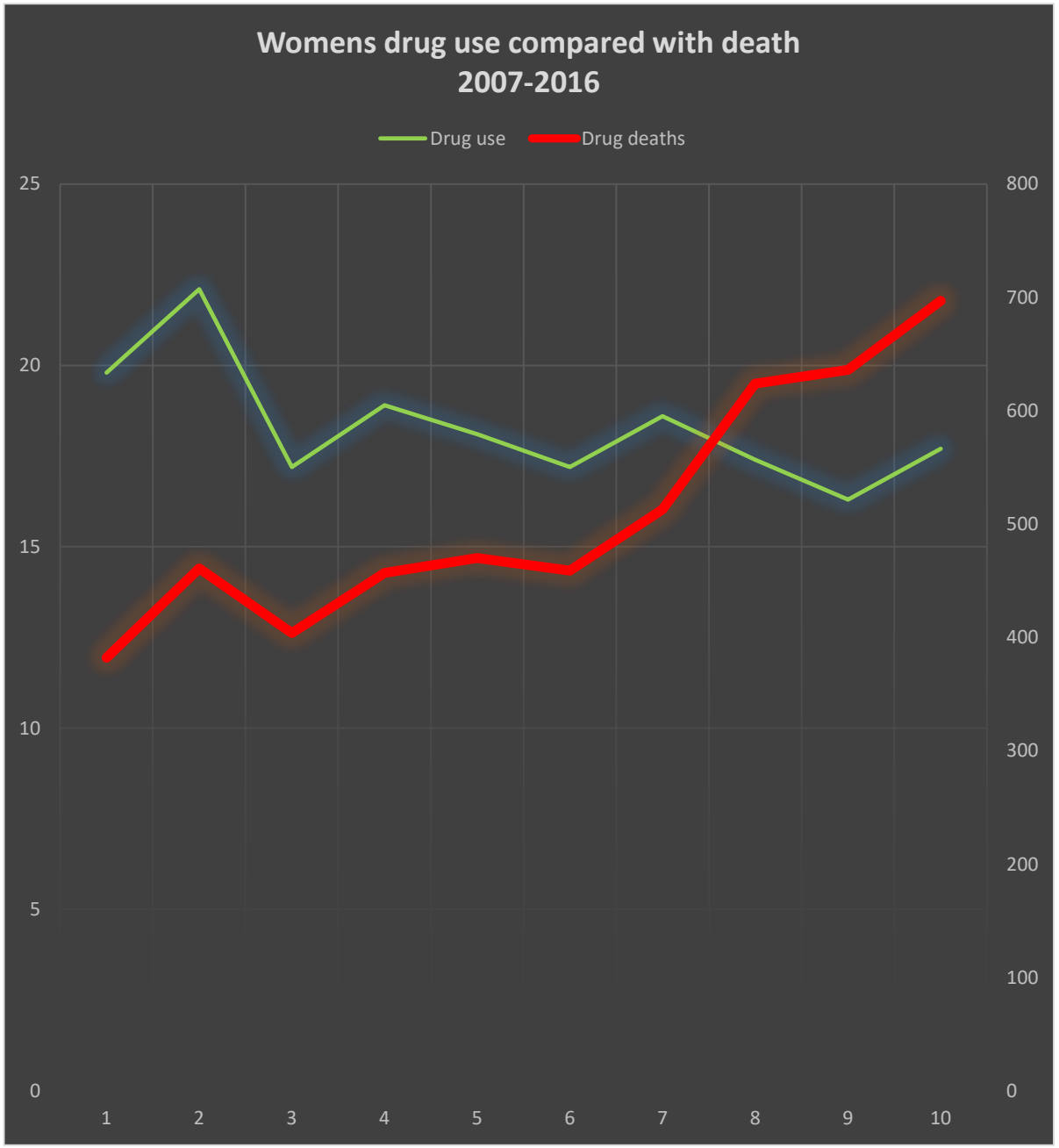
Swedish conscript study (Andreasson et al 1987)

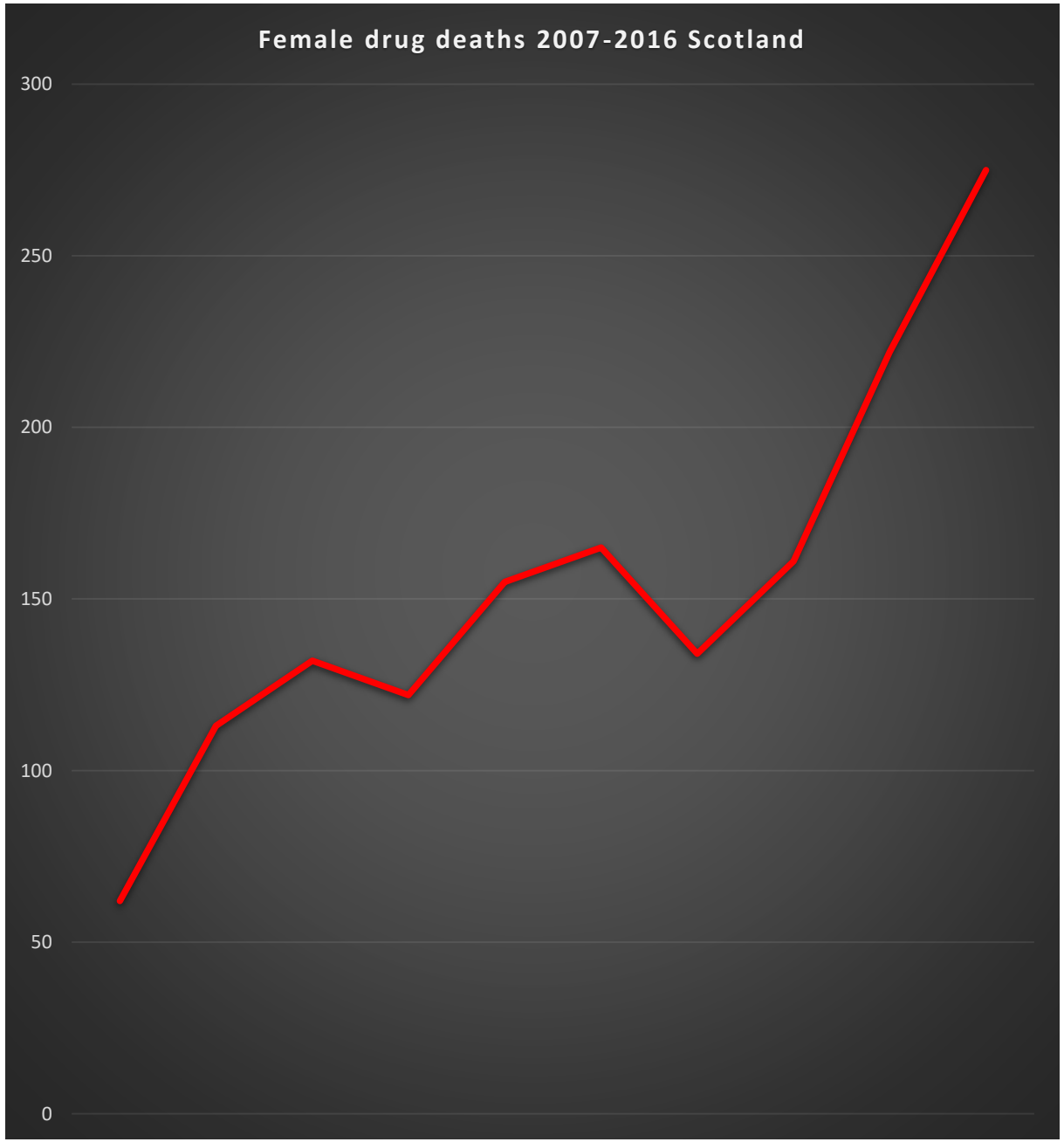
Two problems

- Female drug use missing in research
- Lack of senior female researchers / editors

Editorial prompts




Womens drug use compared with death 2007-2016
Drug use
Drug deaths
25
20
15
10
5
0
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10


Female drug deaths 2007-2016 Scotland
300
250
200
150
100
50
0

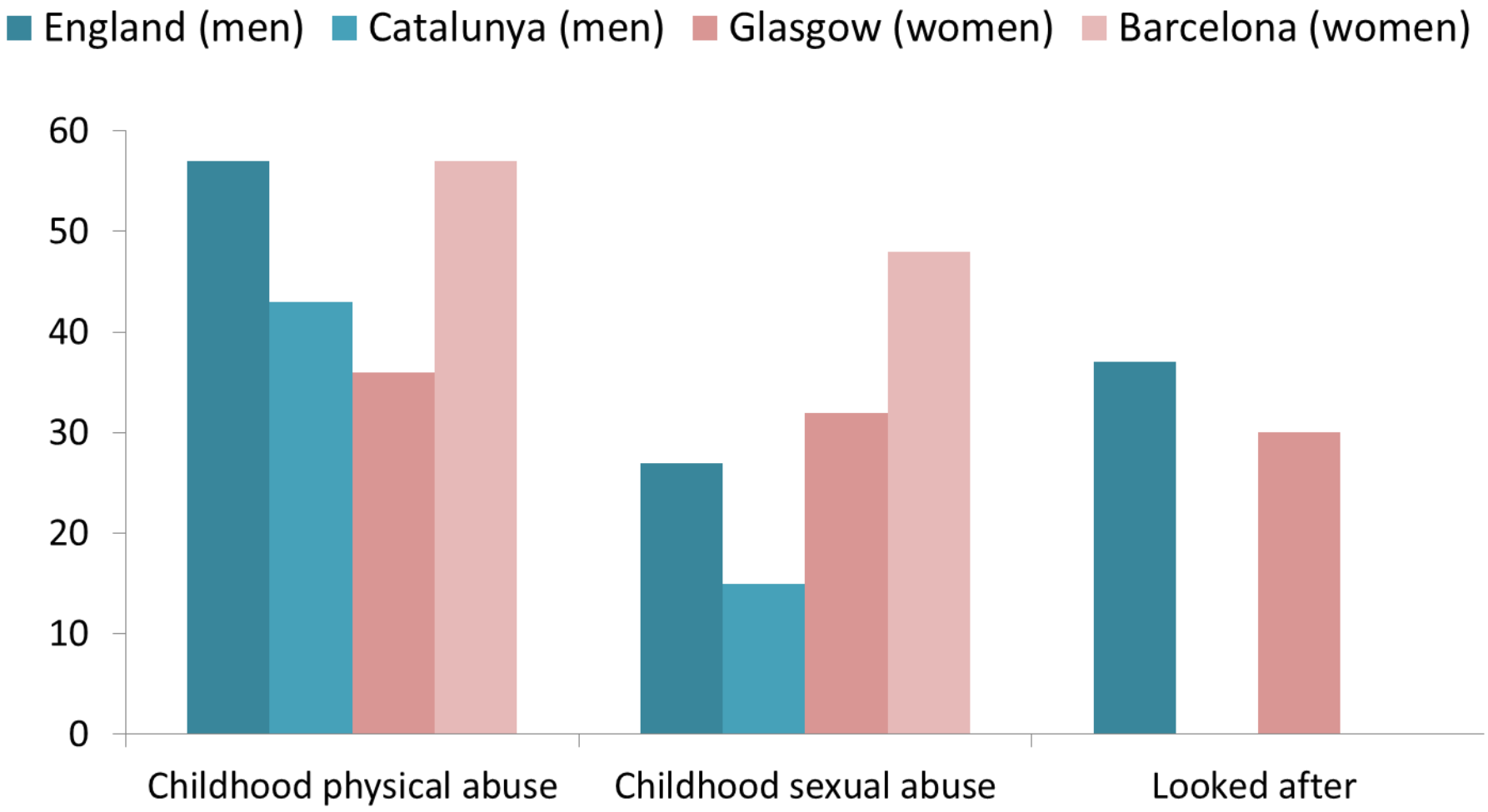
Telescoping

- Women are **more likely to cite stressful life experiences and interpersonal stressors** as reasons for substance use
- Women generally **progress from use to regular use and dependence to first treatment episode faster** than men do
- Women **enter treatment for substance use with more severe physical, psychological, and social problems** than men
- This "telescoping" of substance use disorders in women is likely **influenced by psychosocial factors**

Risk factors for substance use for women

- Childhood abuse
- Intimate partner violence
- Mental ill-health
- Biological and psychosocial differences between men and women influence the **“prevalence, presentation, comorbidity, and treatment of substance use disorders”**

Childhood abuse among men and women receiving treatment for substance use in UK and Spain (%)

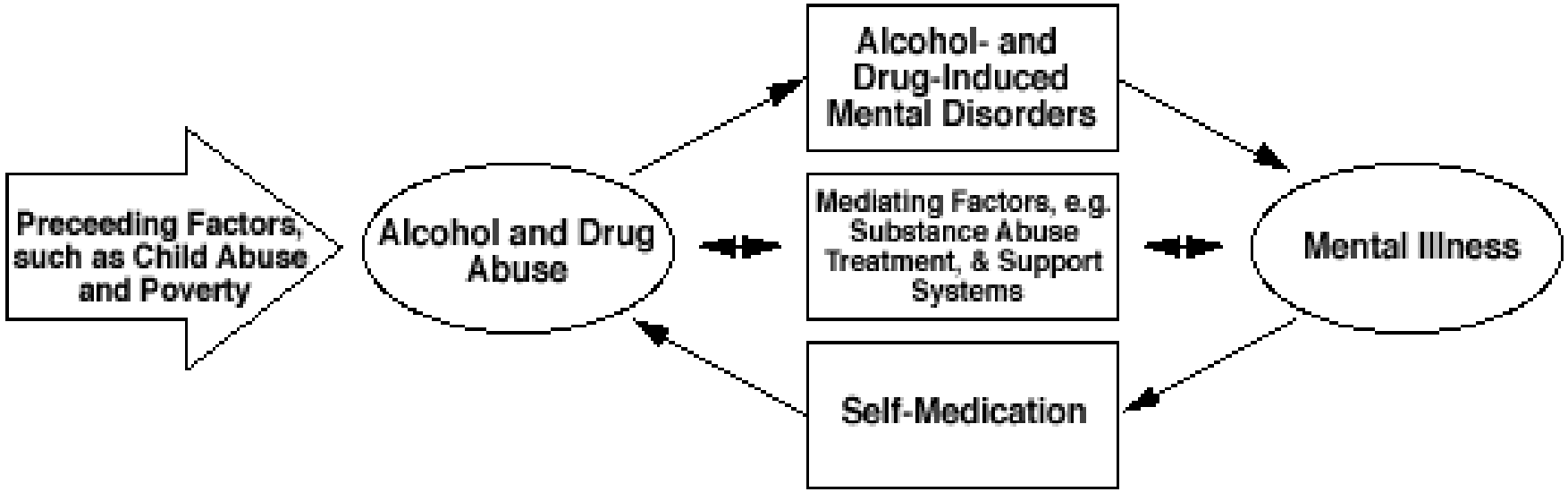


Gilchrist et al. (2017)

Associations between SUD and non-SUD disorders by gender
M = male; F = female

	Mood	Anxiety	Eating	Psychotic	Antisocial and/or borderline personality	Any substance induced
Alcohol	F			M	M	F
Opiates					M, F	
Cocaine	M	F			M, F	M, F
Sedatives				F	M	
Stimulants		M	M		M	F
Cannabis					M, F	F
Hallucinogens	F	F	M, F		M	M, F
Poly substance	M				M, F	F

Substance use and the self-medication theory



- Self medication theory suggests that substances are used to **cope** with mental health symptoms, including those resulting from the negative experiences of trauma

- Many studies have found that for women, the onset of the psychiatric disorder was more likely to **pre-date** the onset of the substance use disorder

Khantzian 1987

In **summary**

- Recognise male domination of treatment & research
- Mental health problems often precede drug use
- Gender & trauma informed services
- Perhaps improved attention to women might help men

References

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