

WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT ANYWAY? ADDRESSING ALCOHOL IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES TO AFFECT STIS

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Overview

- Acknowledgements
- Describing the problem
- Alcohol binge drinking and STIs
- Where do we go to from here

Alcohol use and Indigenous Australians

- Consistent evidence on alcohol use in Aboriginal communities:
- Greater number of Aboriginal people who are non drinkers (23%)compared with non Indigenous people (17%)
- Around 20% of non-Indigenous Australians consume alcohol in a manner that poses short-term risks to their health—usually in the form of ‘binge drinking’. In addition. A further 10% drink at levels which pose long-term health risks.

Alcohol Use and Indigenous Australians

- Heavy episodic drinking is more marked among Indigenous Australians, and that the prevalence of consumption that poses both short- and long-term risks to health is about double that of the non-Indigenous population (Gray et al. 2010).

Alcohol Use and Indigenous Australians

- Rates of risky consumption of alcohol among Indigenous Australians are generally twice those in the non-Indigenous population.
- High levels of alcohol related harm are both a consequence of, and contributor to the disparity in health and social gaps between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians

Alcohol consumption and STIs

- Suggested pathways for the link include the effect of alcohol on behaviour (number of partners, unsafe sex) and on sexual arousal or on the immune system.
- Alcohol consumption and STIs may be linked by a third factor, such as 'risk taking' or 'sensation seeking' behaviour.

Alcohol consumption and STIs

- Alternatively, the association may reflect the link between problem drinking and certain social and sexual networks or neighborhood characteristics.
- One study found a strong association between the number of sales outlets for alcohol and the rate of gonorrhoea.

Alcohol Use & Young People - Secondary School Surveys

- The proportion of Indigenous students aged 12 to 15 years who had never tried alcohol (27%), was higher than the proportion found for 12- to 15-year-olds (22%)
- 55% of Indigenous students consumed alcohol in the year prior to survey
- 35% consuming alcohol in the previous month
- The most common consumed drinks among Indigenous and non Indigenous students were spirits (44%) and premixed spirits (29%).

Australian Secondary Schools Survey

- Parents and friends were the main source of alcohol
- For all students, alcohol was mainly consumed at home (30%) or at a party (29%)

Comparison Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal Young people 16-30

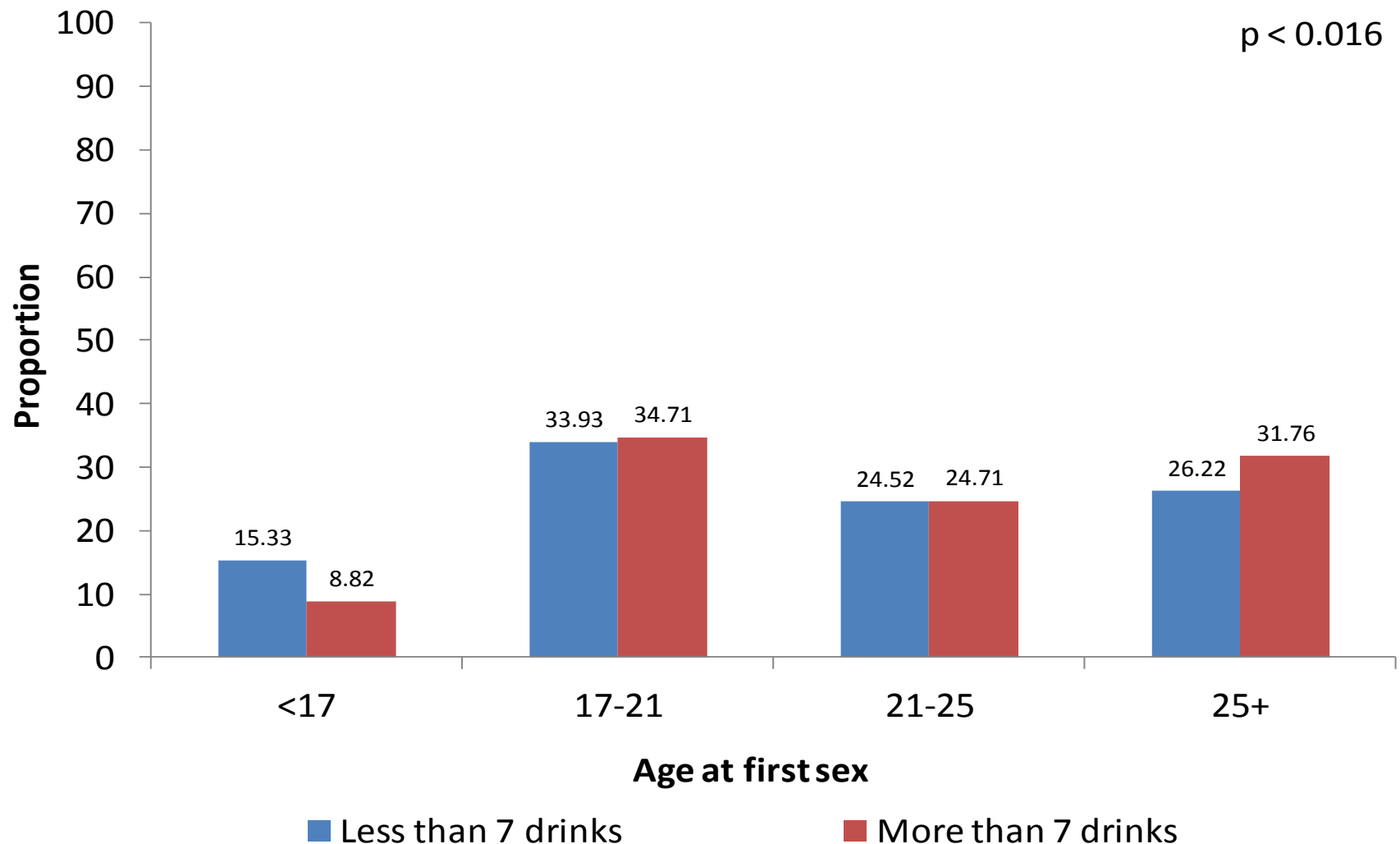
- Cross sectional surveys
- Aboriginal Community events
- Non Aboriginal- Big Day Out Music Festival

Alcohol use	Aboriginal	Non Aboriginal	95% CI	P
Low Risk	21	47	ref	
Risky	22	25	2.2 (1.3-3.6)	0.004
High Risk	41	24	3.4 (2.1-5.6)	<0.001
Abstain	16	4	7.6 (3.4-16.9)	<0.001

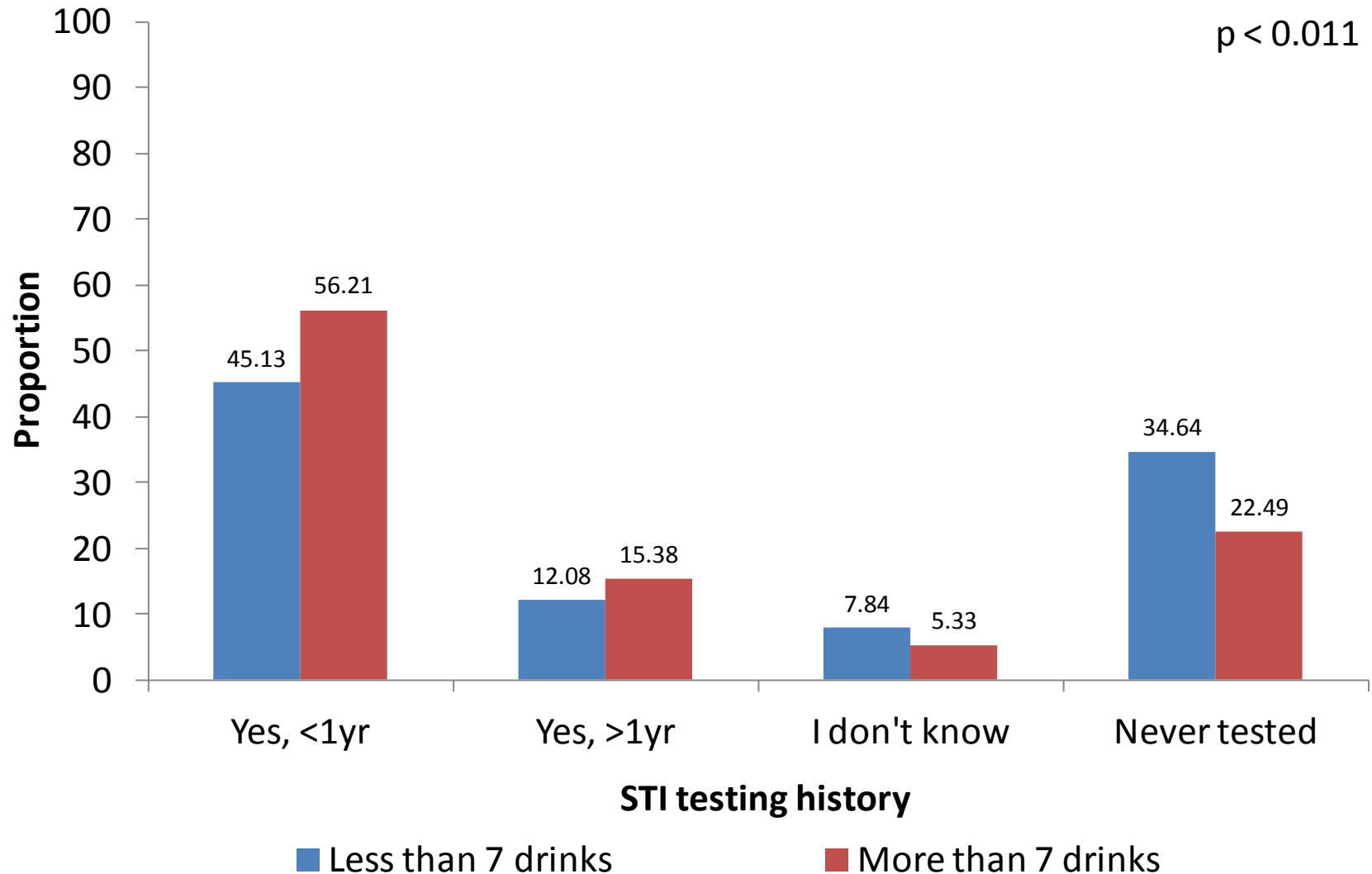
GOANNA Survey

- National Survey of young Indigenous people
- Cross sectional
- Every jurisdiction
- 16-30
- Knowledge risk behaviour and health service access
- N=1430
- Preliminary results

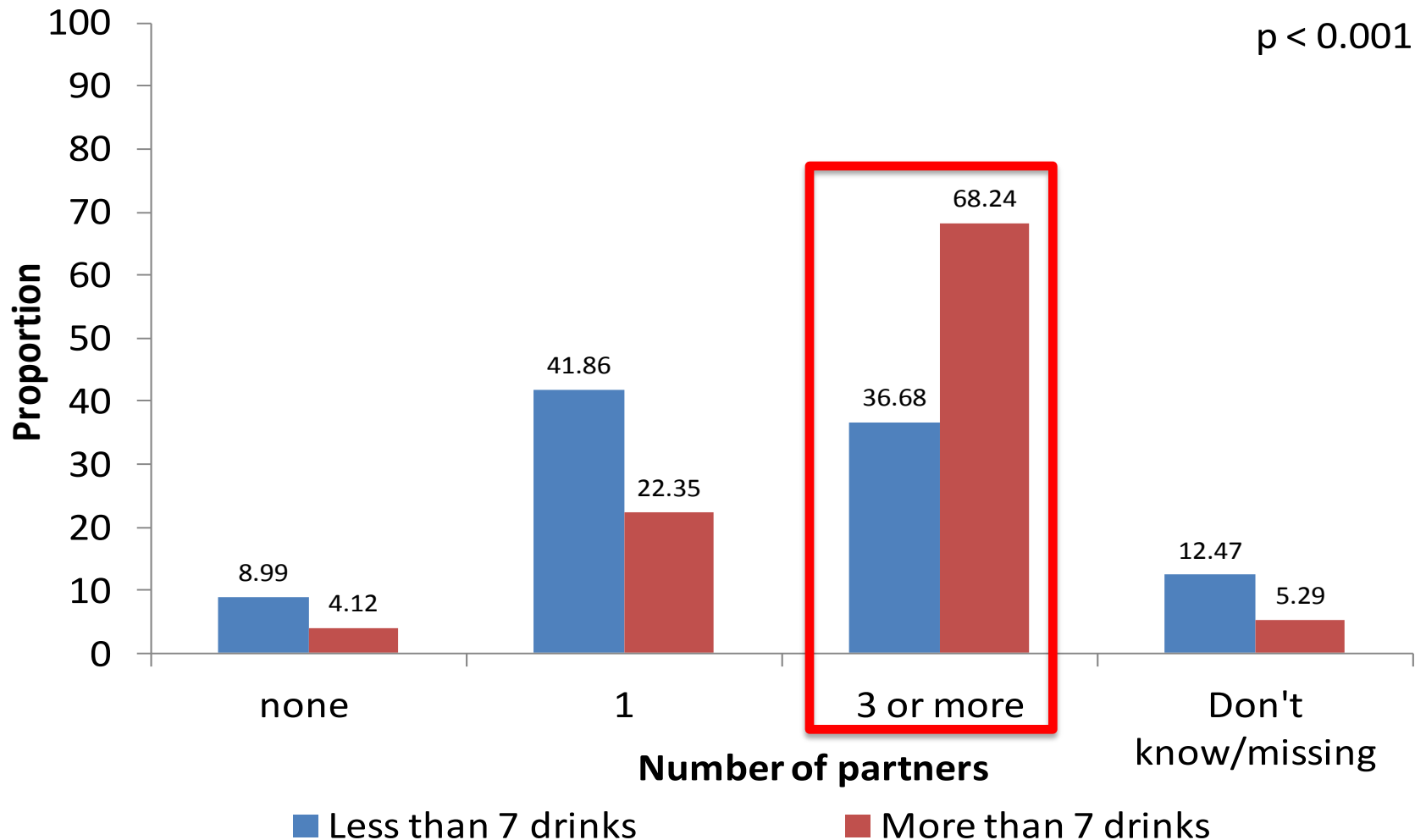
At what age did you first have sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal)?



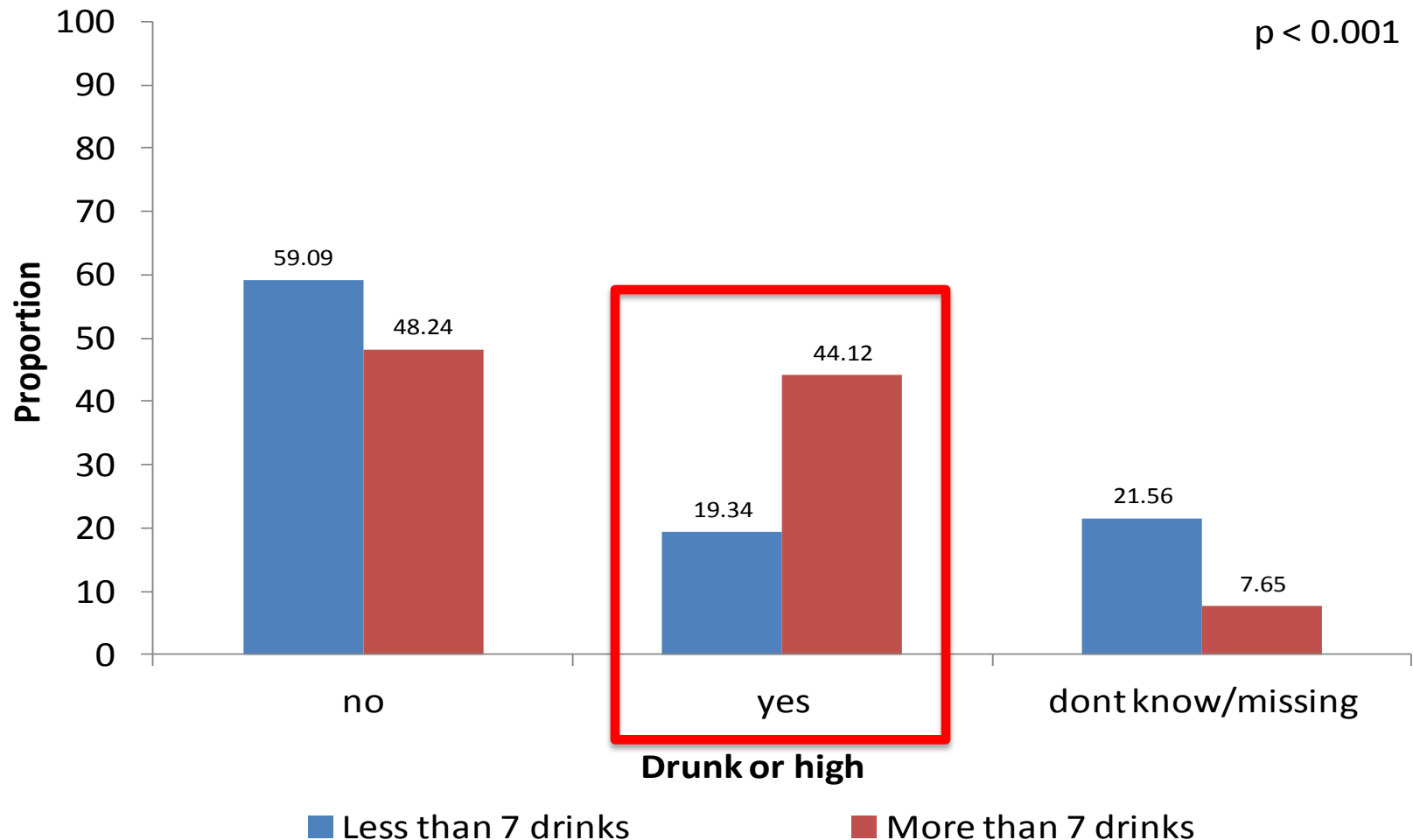
Have you ever been tested for an STI?



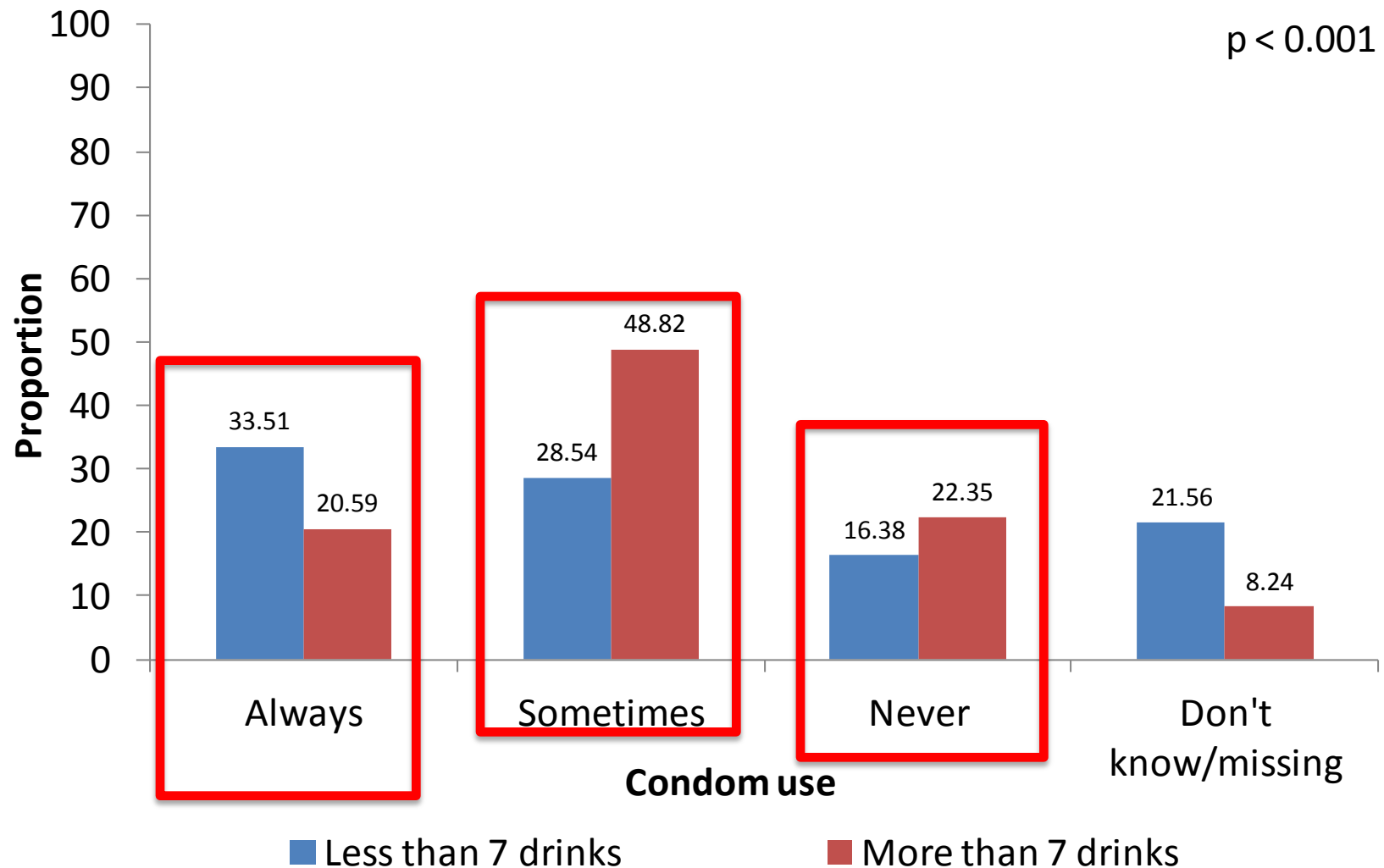
How many people have you had sex with in the previous 12 months?



Were you drunk or high last time you had sex?



How often did you use a condom when you had sex in the previous 12 months?



Alcohol reduction strategies

- Address the underlying social determinants
- Supply reduction
 - Price controls
 - Trading hours
 - Outlet density
 - Local dry areas and liquor accords
 - Dry Communities

Demand Reduction

- Early intervention
- Alternatives
- Education and persuasion
- Treatment
- Diversion to treatment

Alcohol strategies linked to STIs

- Will they have an impact?
- The Kimberley region in WA has some of the highest alcohol-related health and social problems in the country.
- In addition some of the highest rates of the highest rates of STIs in Western Australia (1,339 per 100,000 population for chlamydia, 1,689 per 100,000 for gonorrhoea, with a RR of 3:1 and 15:1 respectively

Alcohol Supply Reduction

- In 2007 and 2009 alcohol restrictions imposed
- 78% reduction in alcohol sales
- 50% reduction in NG and 30% reduction in Chlamydia post restrictions

Discussion and Summary

- Indigenous Australians higher risk and problem drinking
- Higher rates of STI in many areas
- High risk drinkers
 - STI testing no difference
 - Significant higher number of partners
 - Significant higher non condom use
 - Significant higher reported as drunk last sex episode

Summary

- A range of alcohol supply and demand reduction strategies are available
- Place and context specific
- Collaboration between two sectors is required particularly in communities with known problem drinking and high rates of STI
- Encouraging signs from WA
- We have a long way to go!

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