

*A Place To Call Home: A Longitudinal, Mixed Methods Evaluation of Two Housing First Programs for Individuals with Homelessness and Substance Use Histories in Sydney, Australia*

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## Introduction

There is a heightened prevalence of substance use disorders in homeless populations worldwide.

Two housing initiatives based on the Housing First principles have been implemented in Sydney to provide long-term housing to chronically homeless individuals:

1. **Scatter site** (private rental apartments; **SS**)
2. **Congregated site** (apartments in the one building; **CS**).

No study has compared SS and CS housing models in terms of individual outcomes.

## Aim

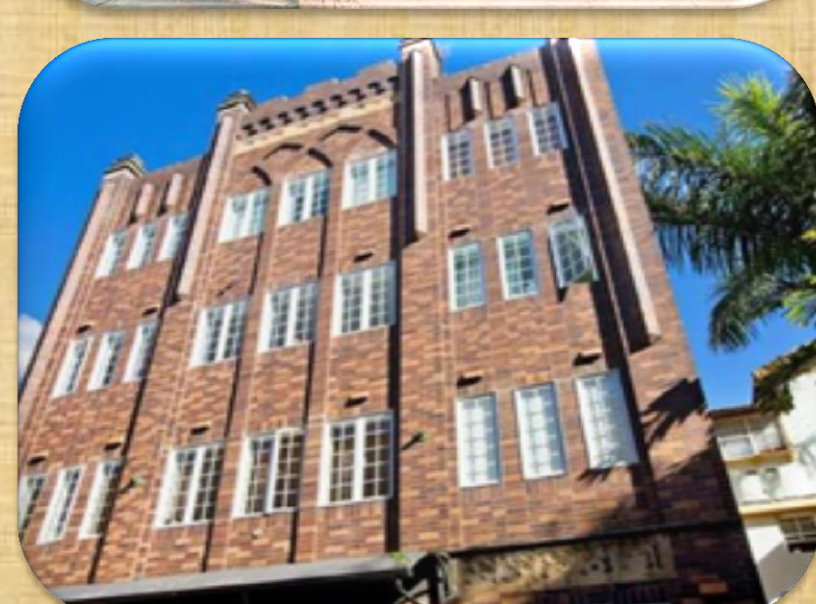
Identify changes to clients' substance use and utilisation of health and criminal justice systems over 12 months upon being housed.

## Methodology

Longitudinal, mixed-methods design comparing measures at baseline and 12 months follow-up. Results shown here are from the quantitative component.

## Similarities between the Housing Models

- ✓ Both provide housing and support services to chronically homeless persons
- ✓ Both promote independent living (to different degrees)
- ✓ Both are based on Housing First principles



Scatter site (SS; N=38)



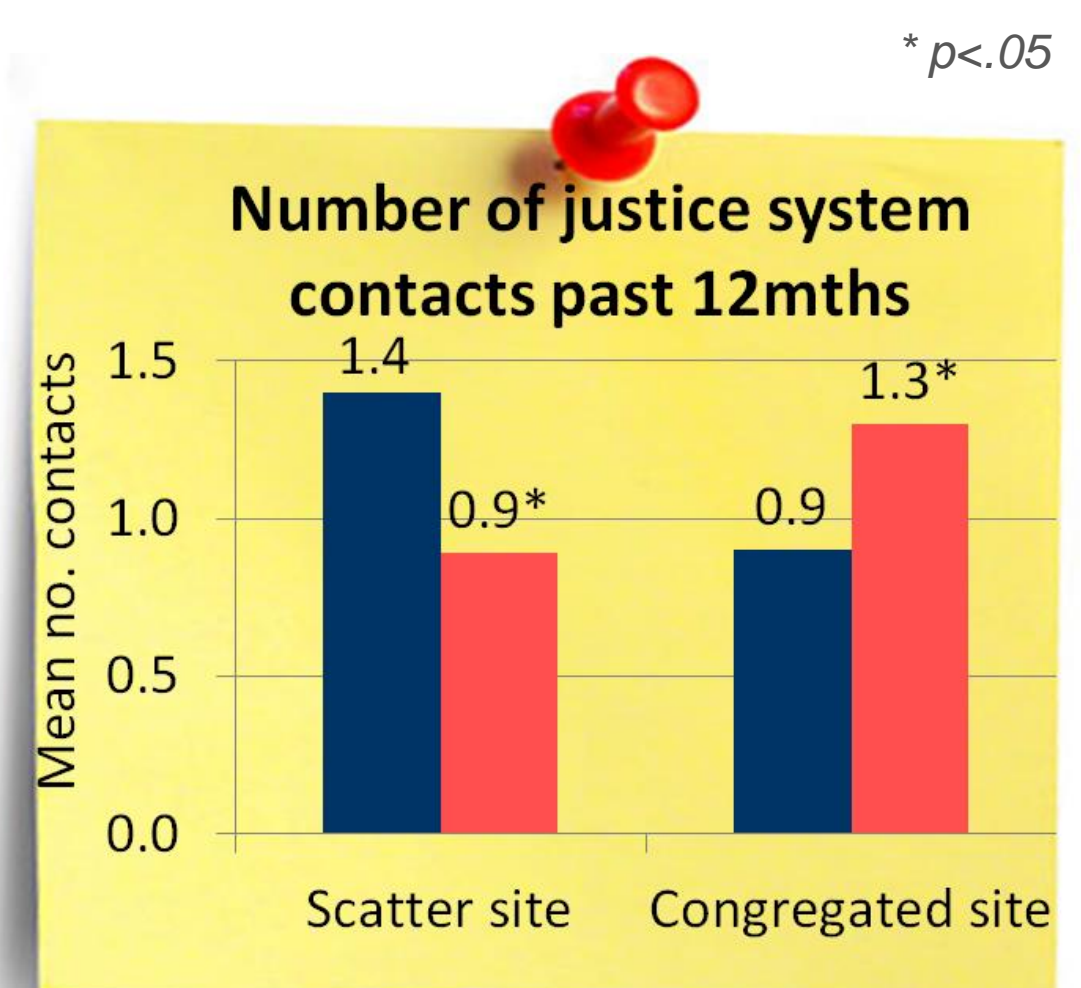
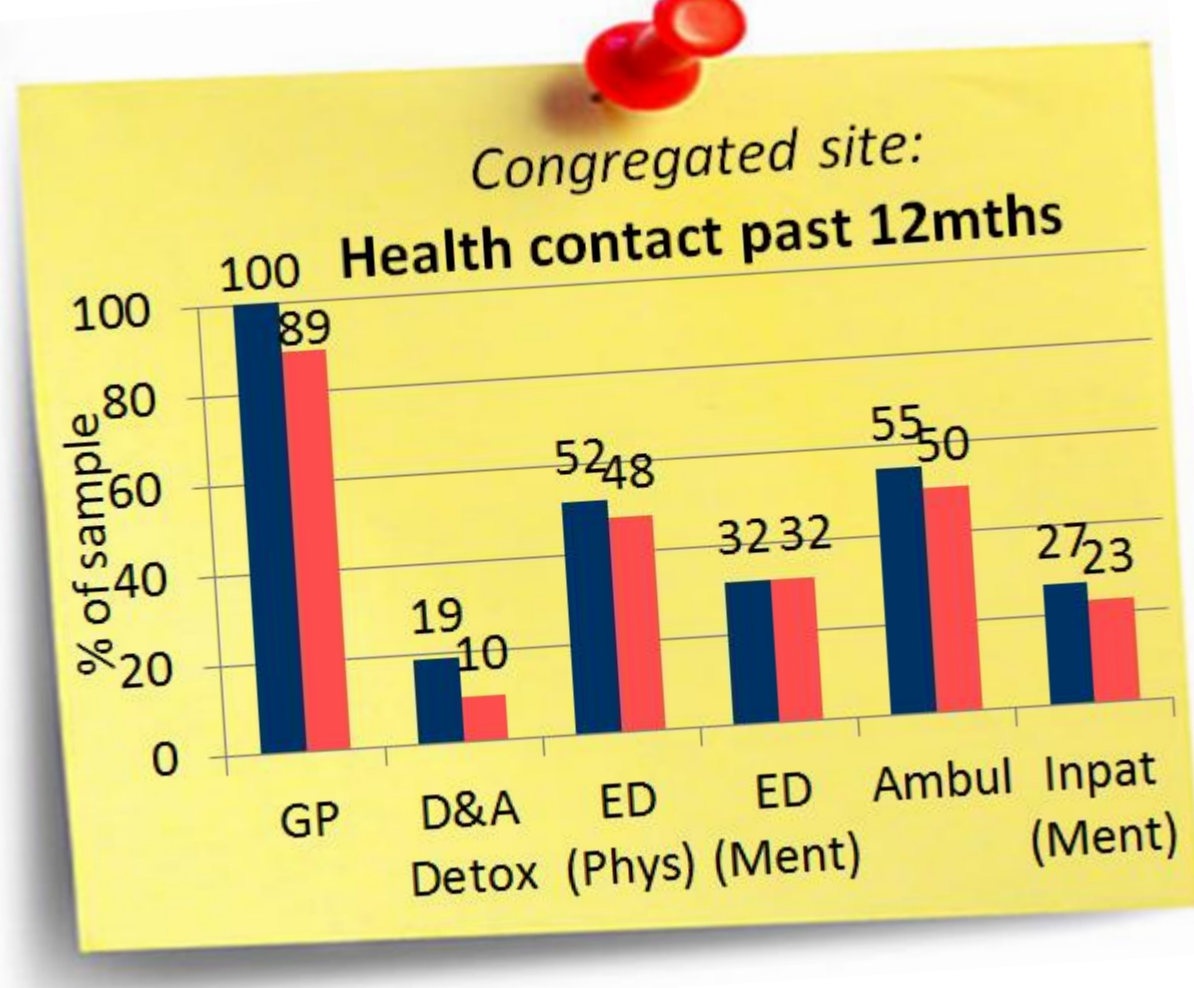
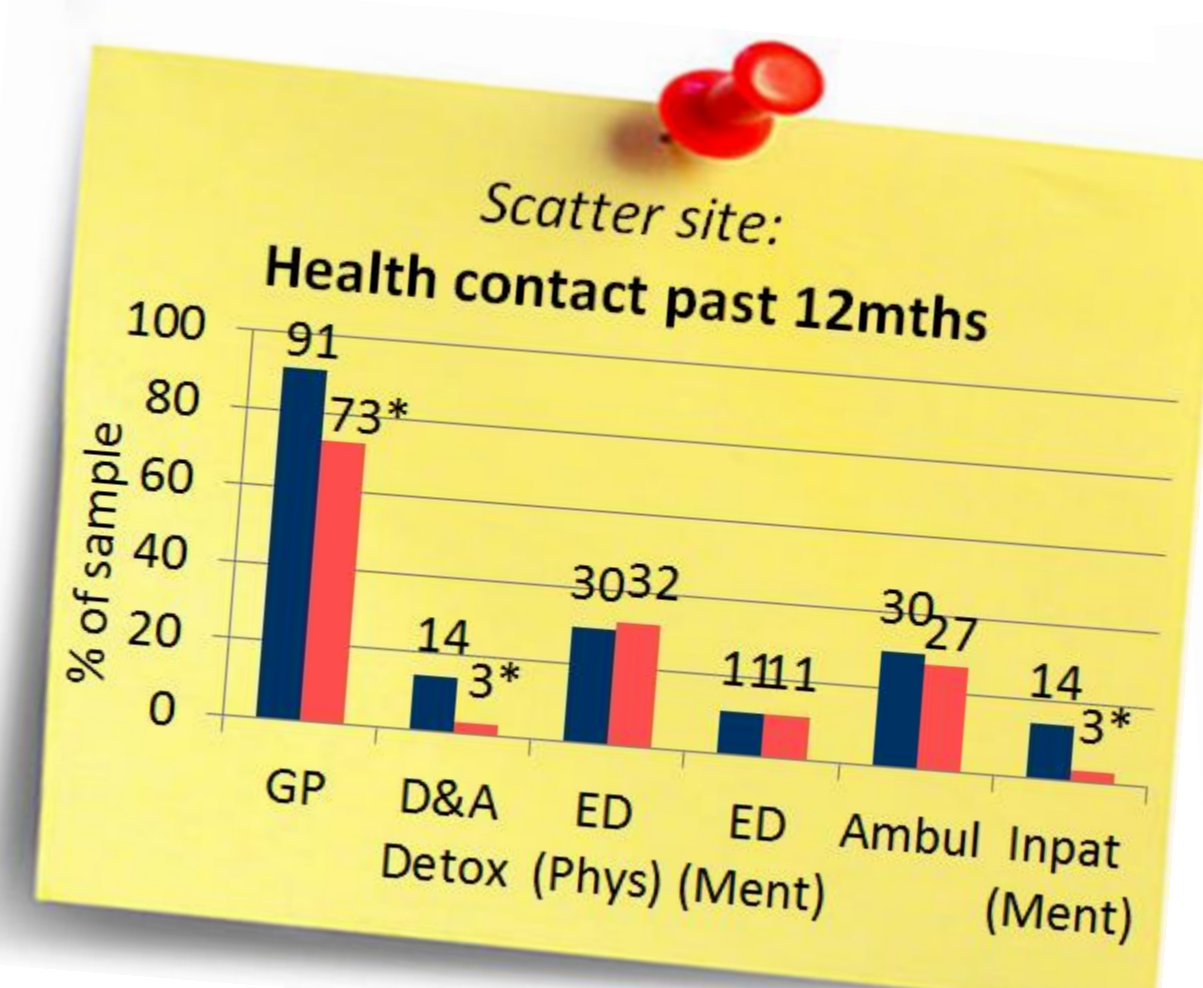
Congregated site (CS; N=26)

## Differences between the Housing Models

- + more independence
- + consumer choice e.g. suburb
- reliant on availability of private rental housing stock
- prices of private rental

- + 24 hour support / security
- + on-site services
- limited number of apartments
- risk of feeling institutional

## Results: Service Utilisation



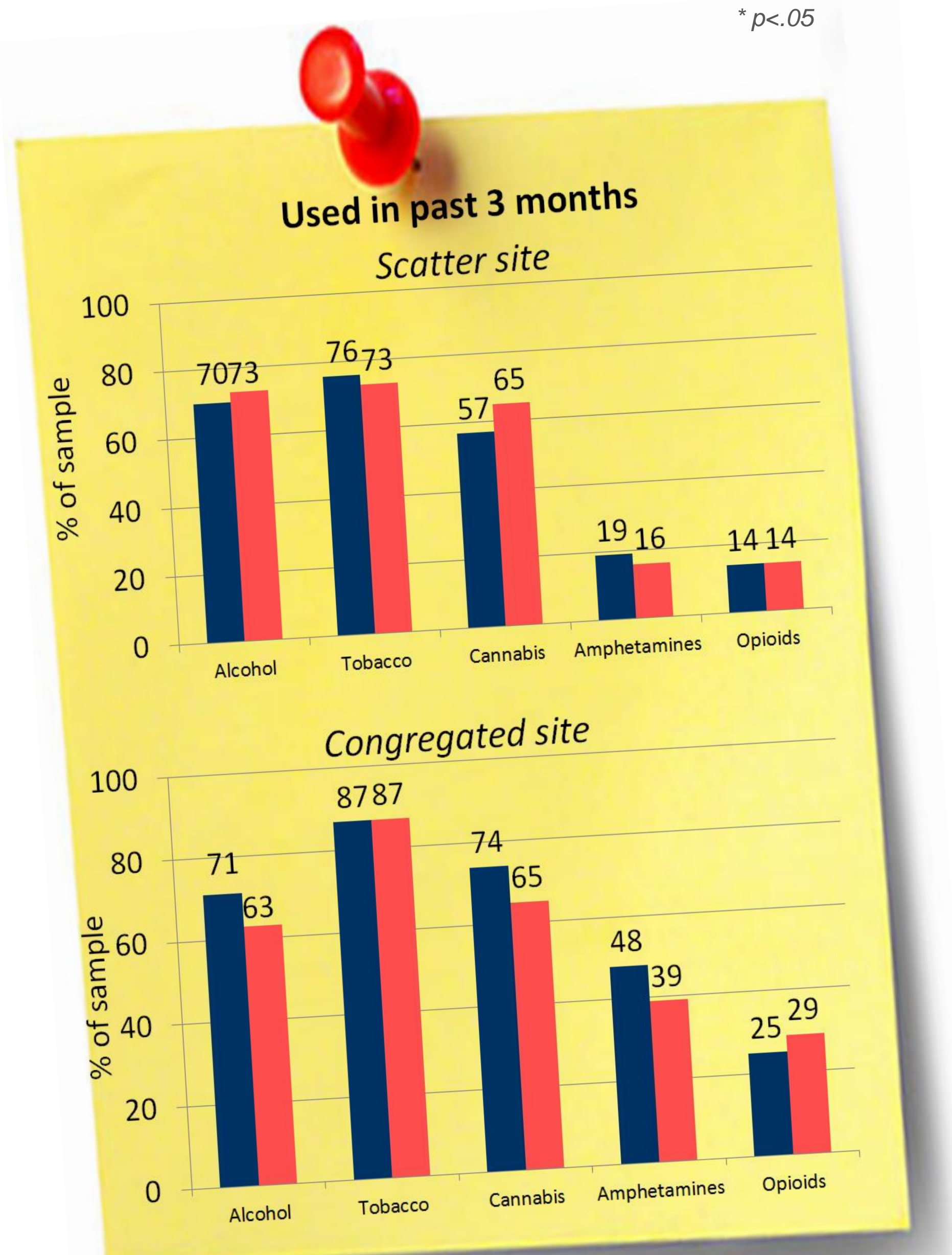
Within groups differences are indicated in graphs above with asterisks.

For between groups differences, CS reported higher:

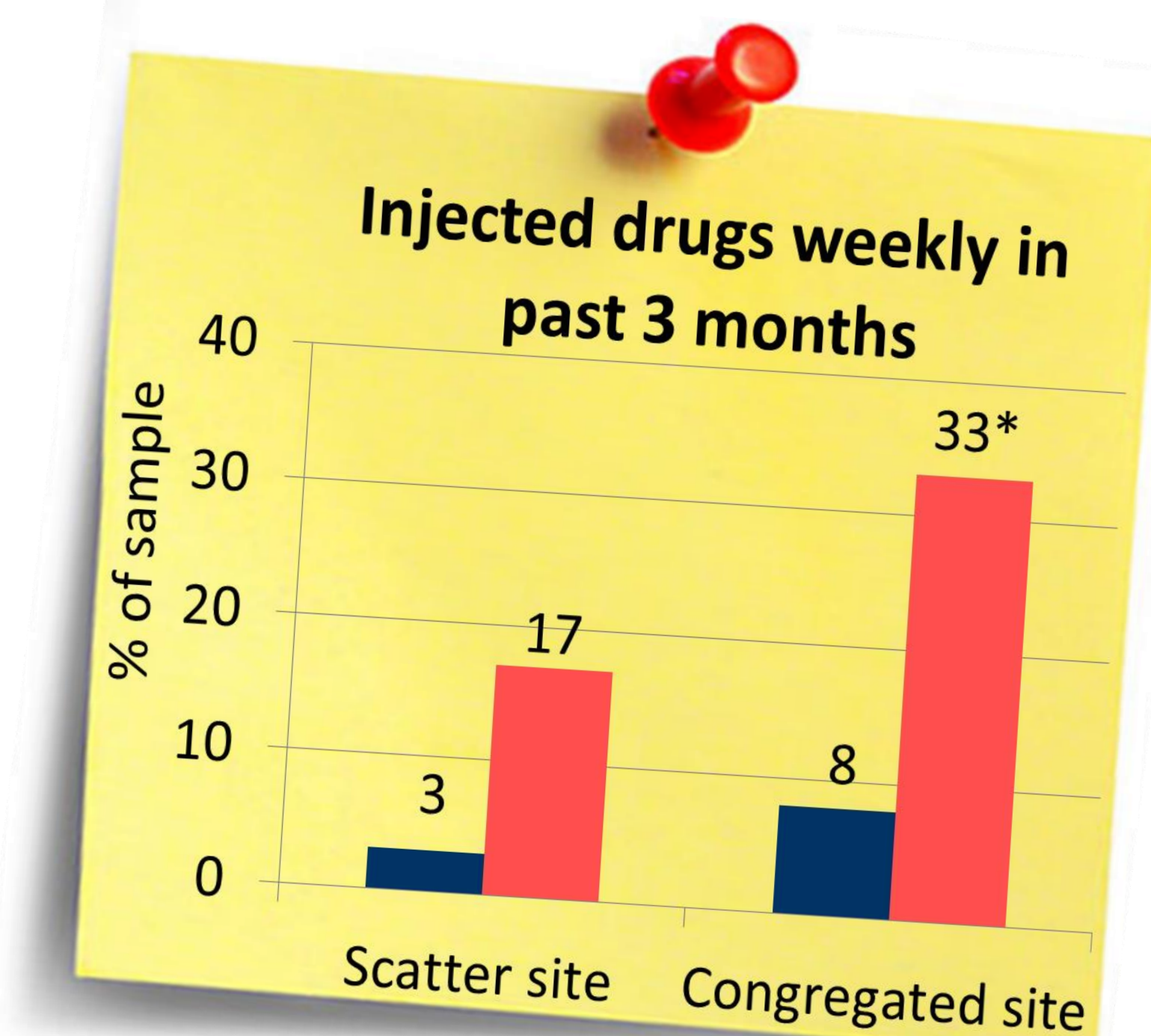
- a) inpatient hospital admissions for mental health ( $p=.008$ )
- b) overall justice system contact ( $p=.002$ ).

## The Difference is Research

## Results: Substance Use



There were no significant differences in substances used between the models.



A greater increase in the proportion of individuals who injected weekly at CS housing compared to SS ( $p=.049$ ).

## Take home messages

- While both models showed similar changes in most health service and substance use variables, the congregated site model had significantly more justice system contact and a higher proportion injecting weekly at follow-up than the scatter site model.
- Further research on what specific housing and support configuration is best for certain individuals is warranted, particularly with larger sample sizes.

## Acknowledgements and more information

The evaluations were funded by NSW Housing. The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW, is funded by the Australian Government under the Substance Misuse Prevention and Service Improvement Grants Fund.

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