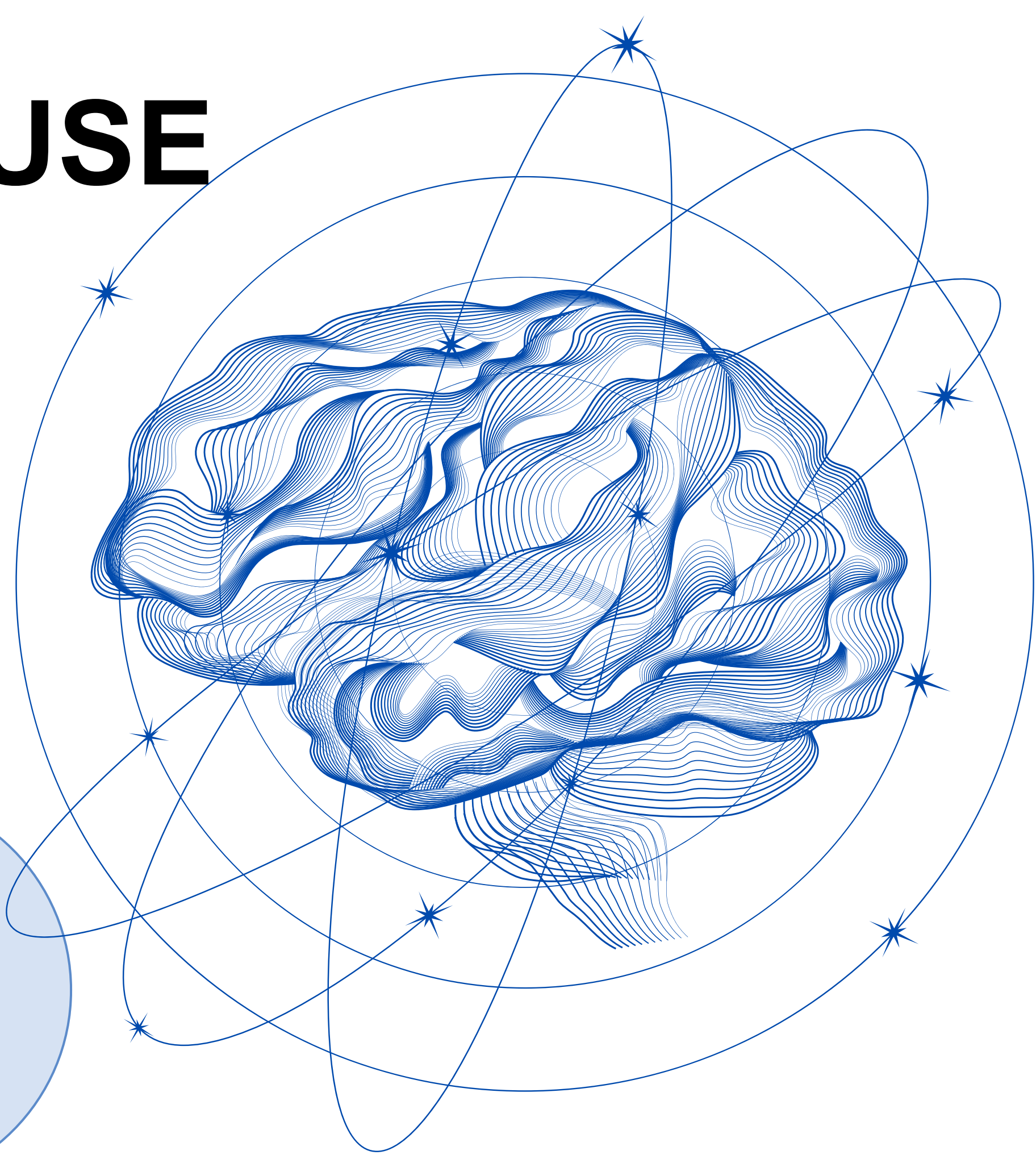


COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN PEOPLE WITH SEVERE SUBSTANCE USE

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The results reflect real-world clinical, social, and welfare challenges, with high external validity.
- 75% of participants score below the cut-off for mild cognitive impairment in their habitual state. This affects treatment trajectories, compliance, and outcome.
- This should be accounted for in planning services and follow-up for people with ongoing drug use.

AIMS AND BACKGROUND

Studies report 21-80% cognitive impairment in populations that use drugs. Most studies report on people with substance use admitted to treatment and/or incarceration. The present study sought to investigate cognitive function in a population with severe ongoing substance use.

Aim: Investigate cognitive function in a population with severe ongoing substance use and association between severity of substance use and cognitive function
Novelty: Participants are people with ongoing severe substance use.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- **Cross-sectional study design**
- Participants recruited from low threshold housing facilities for homeless people who use drugs (**municipal cohort**) and substance use treatment at hospital (**hospital cohort**)
- Demographic questionnaire
- Montreal Cognitive Assessment 8.1. (MoCA)
- Substance use questionnaire

RESULTS

PARTICIPANTS

Demographic information for the participating cohorts of people who use drugs			
	Total (N = 171)	Municipal cohort (n = 130)	Hospital cohort (n = 41)
Age (years)	M (SD) 39.9 (10.5)	M (SD) 39.9 (10.3)	M (SD) 39.7 (11.1)
Sex (male)	n (%) 120 (70.2)	n (%) 93 (71.5)	n (%) 27 (65.9)
Highest obtained level of education	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
≤ 10 years ¹	89 (52.0)	71 (54.6)	17 (41.5)
High school / vocational diploma	71 (41.5)	52 (40.0)	19 (46.3)
University degree	11 (6.4)	7 (5.4)	4 (9.8)
Main source of income past four weeks	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Work assessment allowance	41 (24.0)	32 (24.6)	9 (22.0)
Disability benefits	74 (43.3)	59 (45.4)	15 (36.6)
Welfare/social benefits	38 (22.2)	35 (26.9)	3 (7.3)
Paid work	3 (1.8)	0 (0)	3 (7.3)
Other ²	15 (8.8)	4 (3.1)	11 (26.8)***
Previous substance use treatment	n (%) 156 (91.2)	n (%) 115 (88.5)	n (%) 41 (100)*
Unstable housing past four weeks	n (%) 89 (52.0)	n (%) 76 (58.5)	n (%) 13 (31.7)**

Note. M = mean, SD = standard deviation

¹ Compulsory primary and secondary school in Norway.

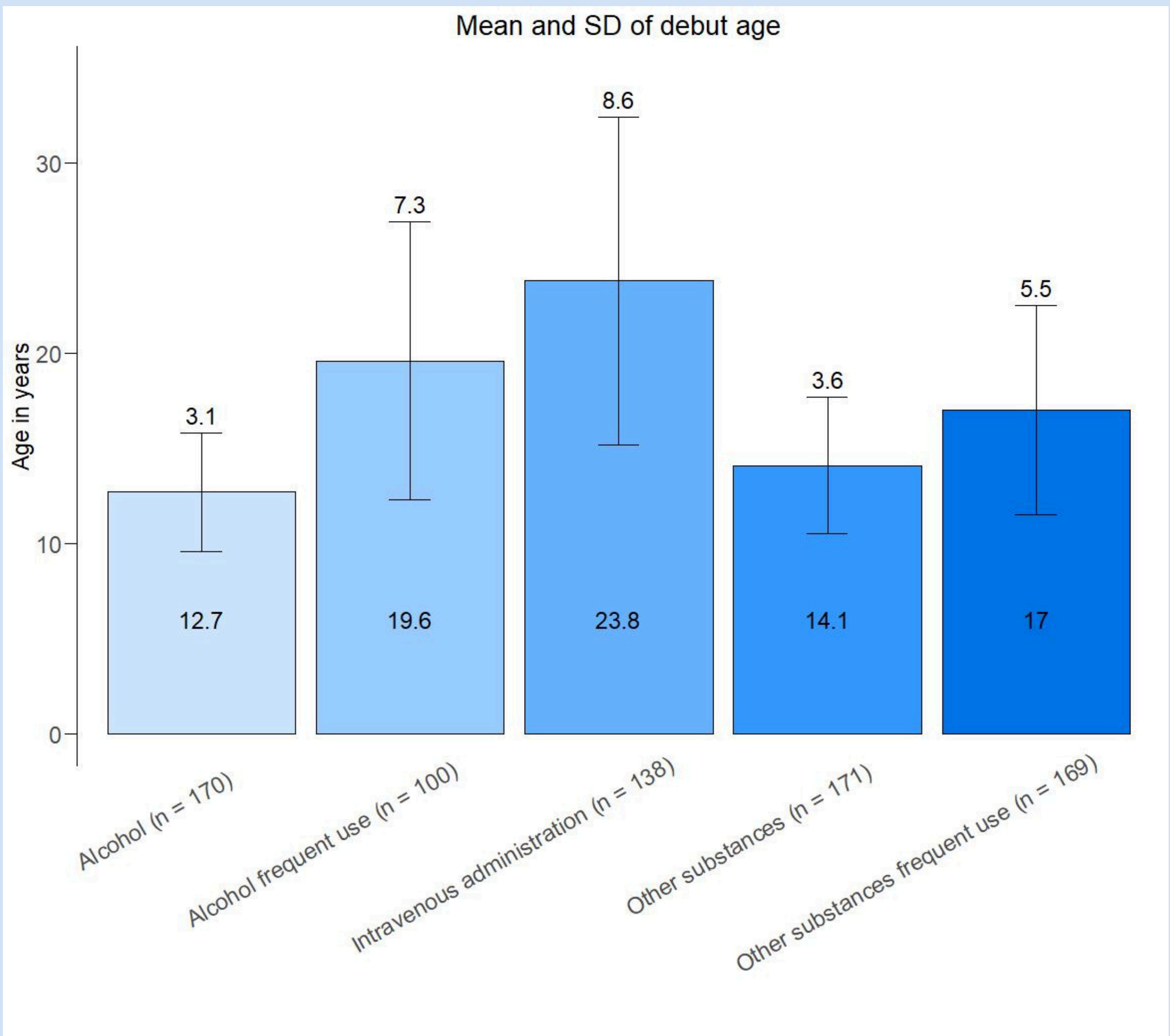
² Includes sick pay, pension, student finances, and "other".

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Statistically sig. difference in the cohorts in income status, substance use treatment, and housing situation.

SUBSTANCE USE

- Mean number of substances ever used: 12.0 ± 4.0
- Mean number of substances used frequently (min 3 days/week): 5.5 ± 2.6



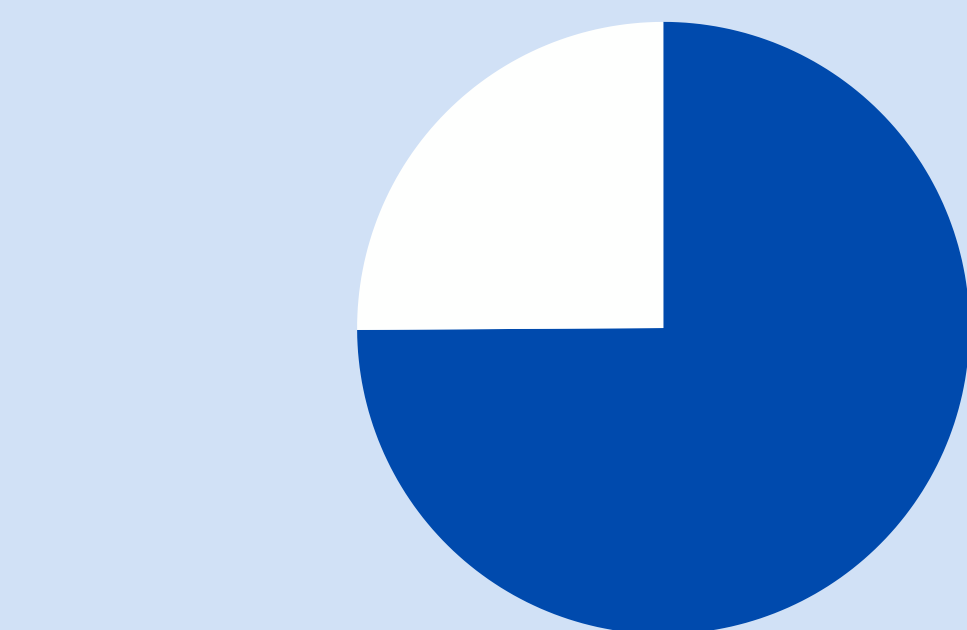
No statistically sig. difference in substance use between the two cohorts.

COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT



- Participants from hospital cohort less likely to score under the cut-off for cognitive impairment (X²(1) = 5.52, p = 0.019), and had a higher mean score (t (88.1) = 3.6, p < .001, Cohen's d = .55).
- No statistically sig. associations between substance use specific variables and cognitive impairment.

No cognitive impairment (n = 43)
25.1%



Scored under the cut-off for mild cognitive impairment (n = 128)
74.9%

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