



# The structures of services and the availability of gambling disorder

Results from Finland

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15/09/2022

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# Outline

- Substance use and addiction treatment system in Finland
- Gambling treatment and rehabilitation: triangulation with different data sets
  - Questionnaires to municipalities (2020 & 2022)
  - Questionnaire to inpatient treatment units (2020)
  - Client satisfaction questionnaire (2022)
  - Nationwide survey on intoxicant-related cases (2019)
  - National Healthcare Register
  - Qualitative interviews
- Conclusions

# Substance use and addiction service system

- It is on the responsibility of every municipality to organize social and health care to their residents, including addiction treatment and other support
  - Public provision and for-profit private providers
- Third sector organisations (non-governmental organisations, church) have a role in, for example, mutual support and low-threshold help
  - In gambling problems, the NGO's have taken a substantial role as the public services are developing slowly
- The Act on Welfare for Substance Abusers
- The Act on Mental Health
- Substance use services have a tradition in social care; treatment and rehabilitation both in social and health care
- Services for gambling disorder and gambling problems are in substance use and mental health services → gambling has a stronger need for financial and legal services as well

# The structures are changing

- From the beginning of 2023 the responsibility to organise social and health care shifts to 22 larger, autonomous counties
- A proposal: The Act on Welfare for Substance abusers and the Act on Mental Health would be moved to general social and health care legislation
  - The obligation to organise treatment also to gambling disorder strenghtens
  - The proposal recognizes the strenghts of both and the need for a variety of services in addictions, and tries to clear the roles – concerns expressed about the role of social care in addiction treatment (rehabilitation?) in the future

# Questions

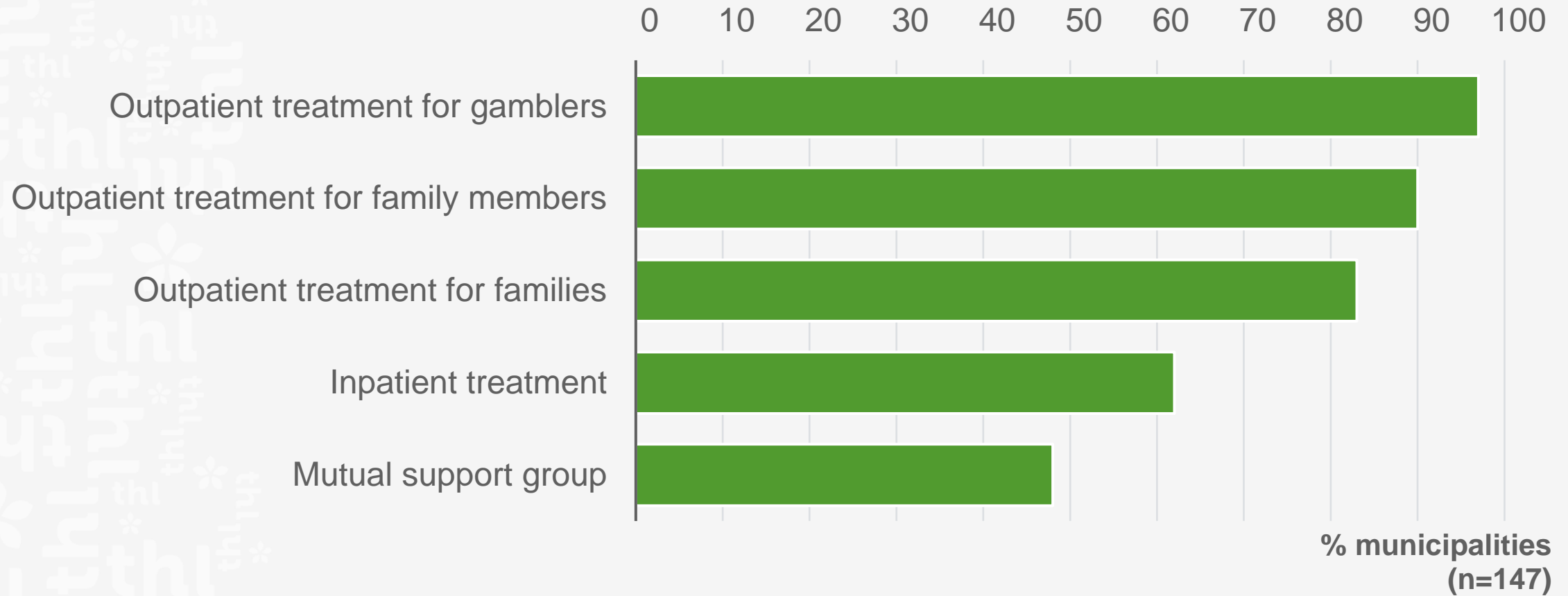
- What kinds of services are available in gambling disorder?
- How are the services for gambling disorder structured?
- Which services are used because of gambling disorder, problems and harm?
- Building a picture from small pieces of information in different studies



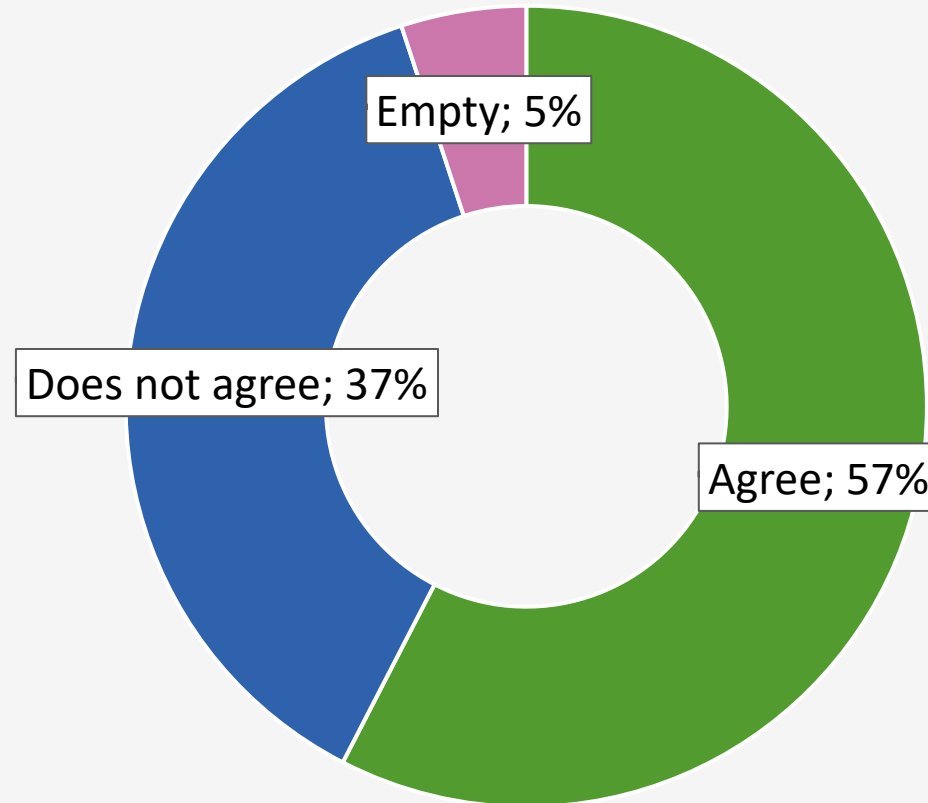
# Gambling treatment and rehabilitation: triangulation with different data sets



# Questionnaire to municipalities: 2020 / gambling-specific



# ”The municipality has enough treatment available for gambling problems” (n=147)



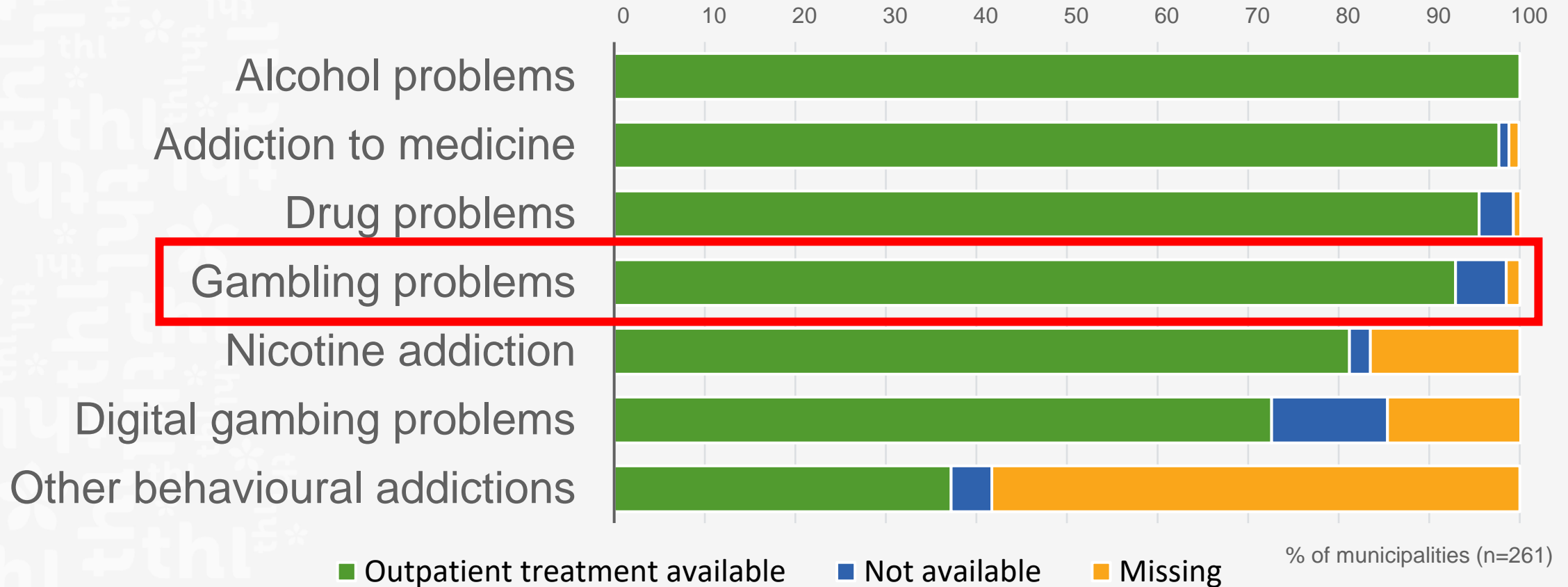


# Accessibility and quality

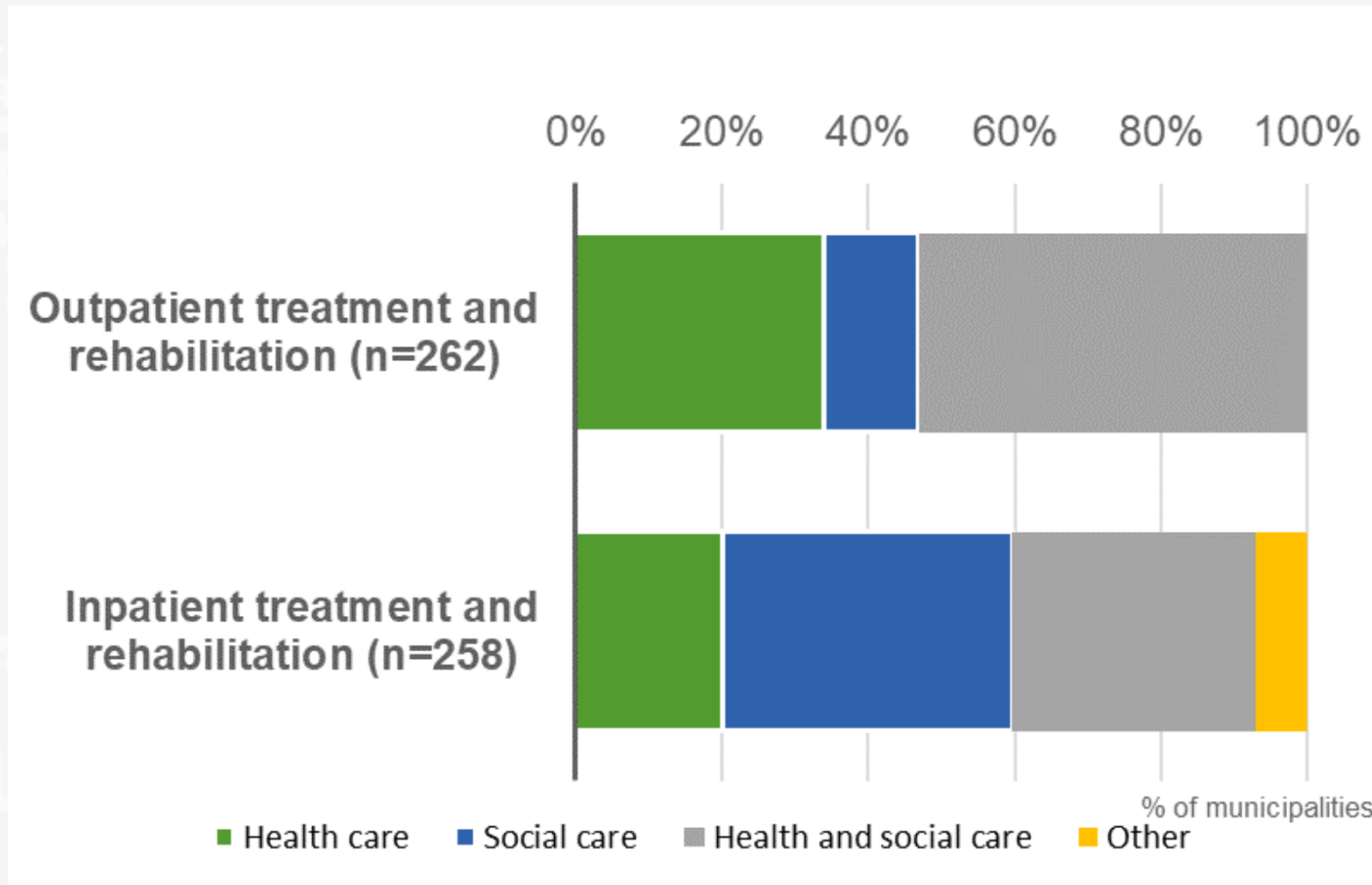
- ”It is easy to find information about gambling treatment services from, for example, the website of the municipality”: 74 % disagree
- ”The employees need more training in gambling disorder treatment”: 90 % agree



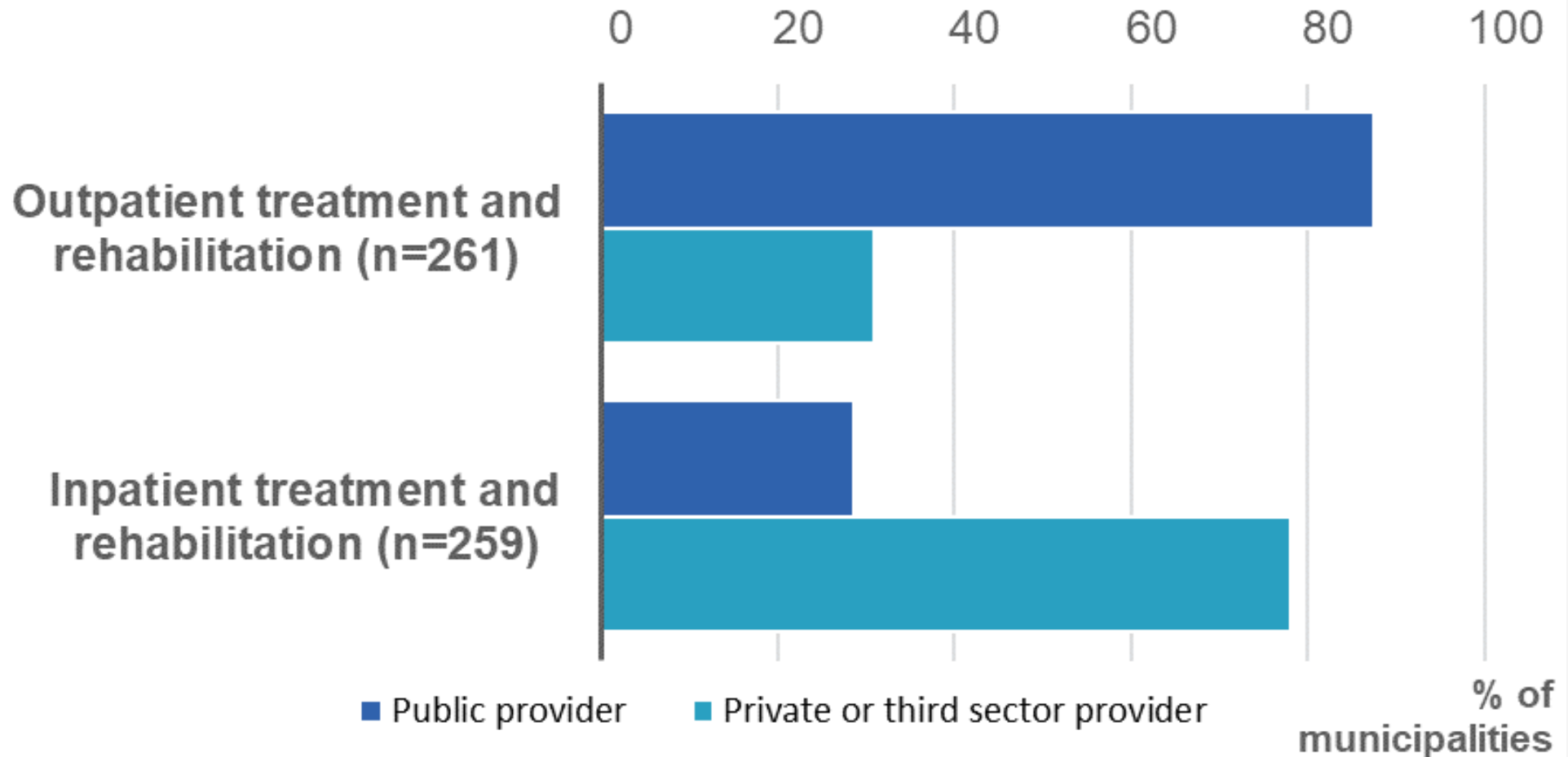
# Questionnaire to municipalities: 2022 / substance use and addiction services



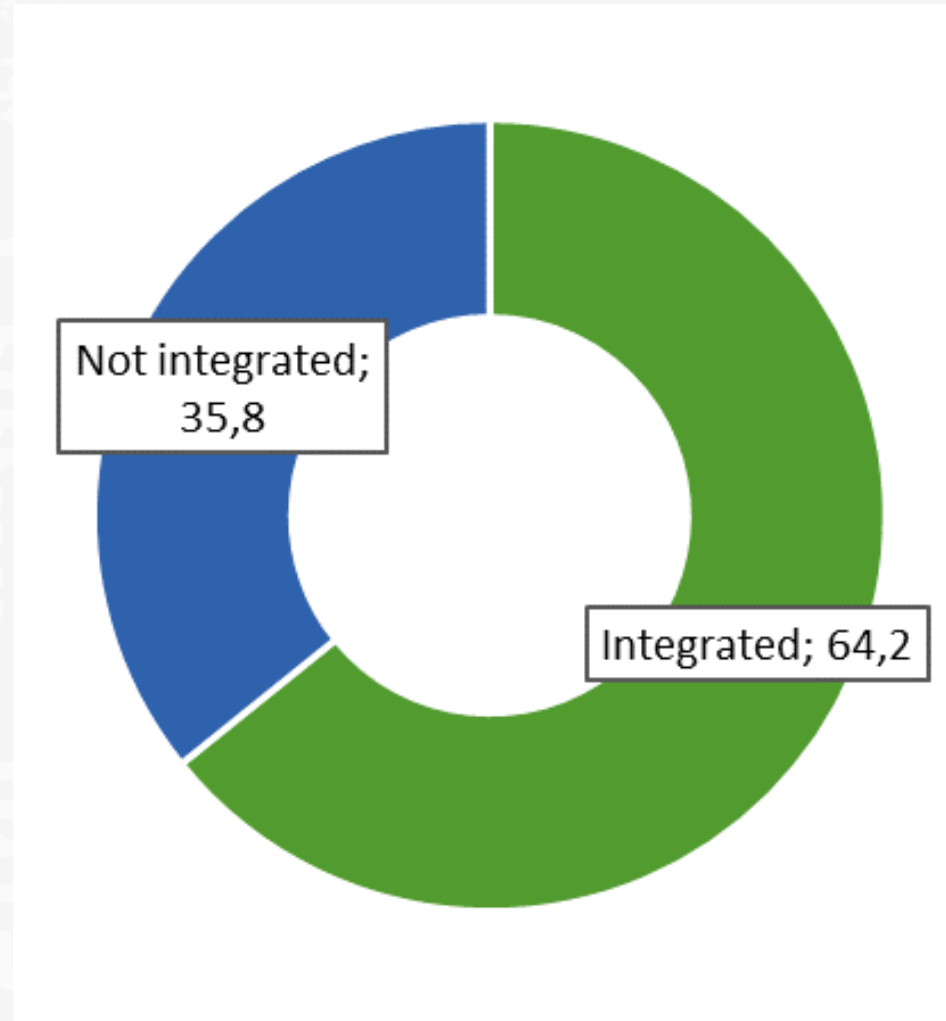
# Substance use and addiction services organized in social / health care (2022)



# Providers of substance use and addiction services (2022)

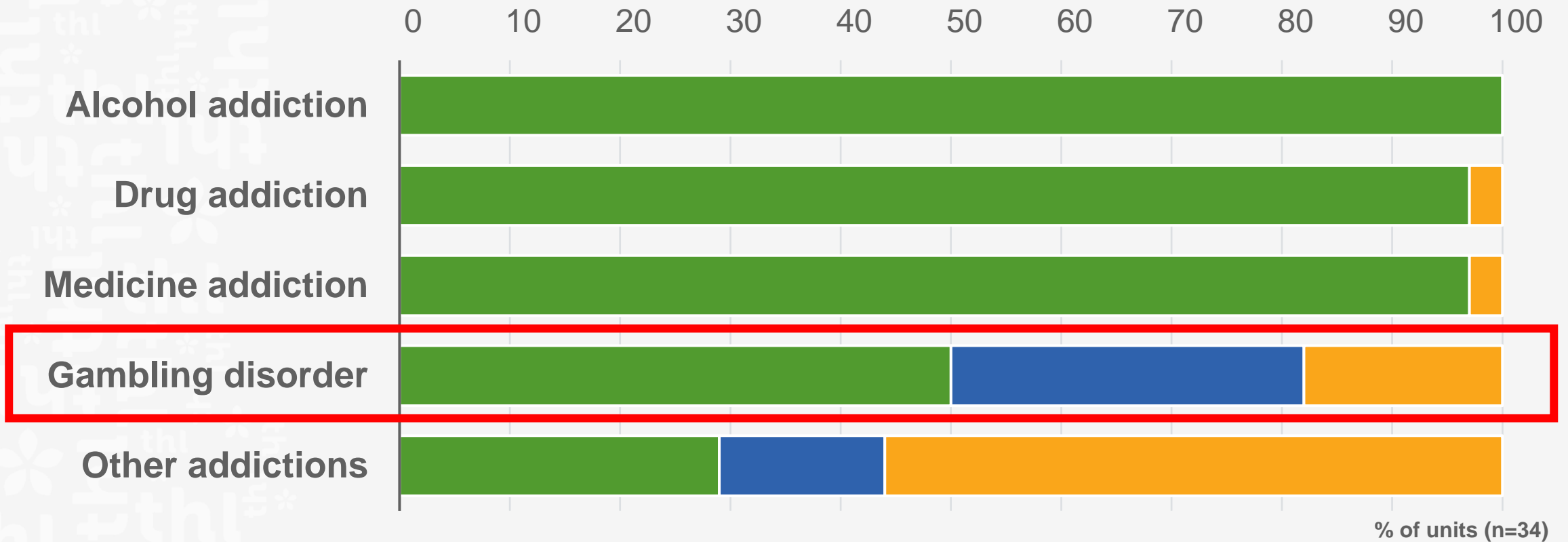


# Integration of substance use and addiction services to other services



In 52 % of the municipalities the substance use and addiction services are integrated with mental health services

# Questionnaire to inpatient treatment and rehabilitation units (2021)



# Operation codes in the Register for Primary Health Care Visits

Operation	2019-2022 operations together	
Structured mapping of gambling problem	689	Males: 55 % Substance abuse work: 40 % Mental health work: 59 % Done by nurses: 79 %
Structured mapping of alcohol abuse	11303	Males: 50 % Substance abuse work: 13 % Mental health work: 8 % Outpatient nursing: 54 %

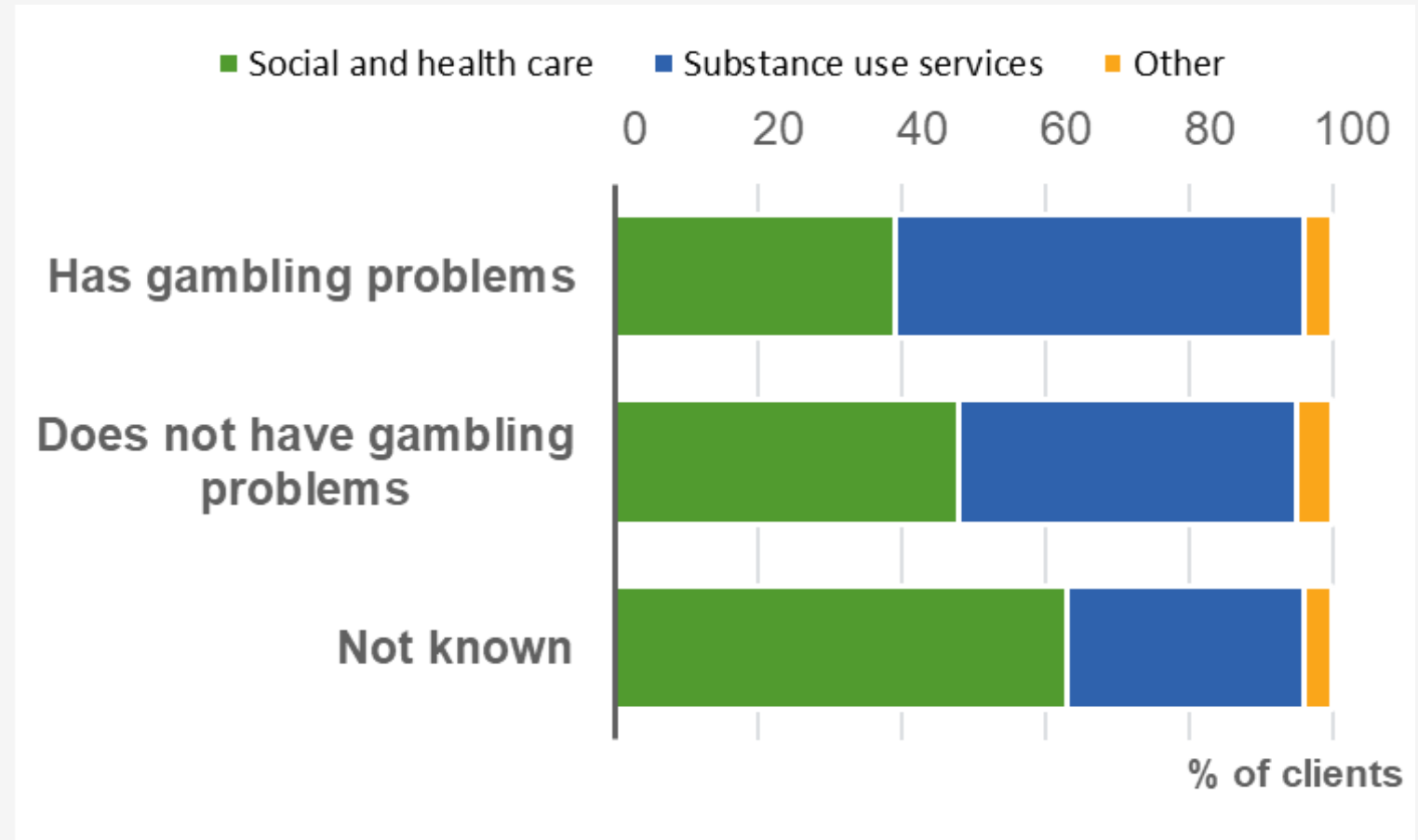
# National customer feedback survey in mental health and substance use services

- 1360 answers in substance use services
- Overall clients were quite satisfied for the service
  - I got help when I needed: 80 % agree
  - I got a feeling that I was comprehensively cared for: 80,4 % agree
  - I have been met with respect: 83,8 % agree



# Gambling problems in substance-related service use

- 7 % of substance-related cases (n=4842) in the studied day had gambling problems
- Substance-related cases: Has problems with substances / is under the influence of substances / has had a substance-related injury

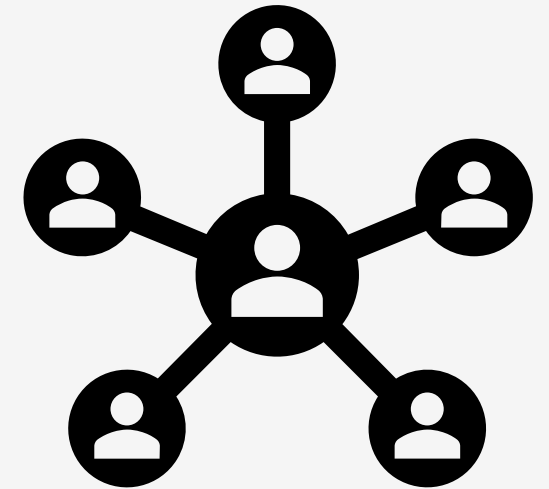


# Services given in substance-related cases

	Has gambling problems (%)	Does not have gambling problems (%)
Therapeutic conversation	32,8	25,4
Guidance on financial issues	30,7	24,1
Somatic examination or treatment	11,6	17,9

# How the services are used?

- 16 interviews with people who have themselves experienced gambling problems, used services and trained as people with lived experience
- Encounters with many professionals in social and health care as well as in financial and legal services
  - Health and mental health services
  - Substance use and addiction services
  - Social services: e.g. social work, family work, child welfare services, housing services
  - Non-governmental organisations and church: mutual support, food aid, crisis work
  - Financial and legal services: financial and debt advising, legal help, police, prison and probation services, bank, district courts, enforcement authority etc.



# Services responding to the needs in gambling disorder

- Many kinds of service needs during the recovery in gambling disorder
- Timeline of the recovery is not straightforward and the services should respond to this
- The nature and length of the client relationships vary from longer relationships (e.g. psychotherapy, addiction worker) to single or few encounters (e.g. financial and debt advising)

# Conclusions

- Outpatient and inpatient gambling treatment is available in Finnish municipalities
- Accessibility and quality needs more understanding
- Needs to be recognized better especially in general social and health care
- Social – health care & mental health services: treatment / rehabilitation?
- Many professionals and services needed: being careful of over-medicalizing the service system for addictions
  - Including the financial and legal support in the service system
- Reducing the stigma and encourage people to seek help



**Thank you!**  
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