

Patterns of Polysubstance Use and Associated Risk Factors Among People Who Use Heroin and Crack Residing on the US-Mexico Border

G. Perez¹, N. Ludwig-Barron², J. Puentes³, J. Salazar⁴, M.E. Ramos⁵, J. Saucedo², J. Lechuga¹, US-Mexico Border Research Collaborative Institutions

¹Hunter College, Psychology, New York, NY, United States, ²University of California San Francisco, Prevention Medicine, San Francisco, CA, United States, ³The University of Texas at El Paso, Psychology, El Paso, TX, United States, ⁴University of California San Francisco, Medicine, San Francisco, CA, United States, ⁵Programa Compañeros, Ciudad Juarez, CHIH Mexico

Problem Statement

Despite the high prevalence of polydrug use and associated HIV risk behaviors among ethnic and racial minorities in North America, particularly along the US-Mexico border, research on this issue remains limited.

Background

- People who use opiates in combination with stimulants are at greater risk of engagement in HIV risk behaviors.
- Research indicates that the proportion of individuals who utilize these drugs is higher among ethnic and racial minorities in North America.
- The US-Mexico border serves as a major corridor for the transshipment of cocaine and heroin destined for the United States.

Methods

- Respondent-driven sampling
- Cross-sectional survey assessed:
 - Demographic characteristics
 - Drug use
 - History of HIV testing.
- Indicators of a two-step cluster analysis:
 - Type of drug
 - Route of administration
 - Frequency (drug use frequency)

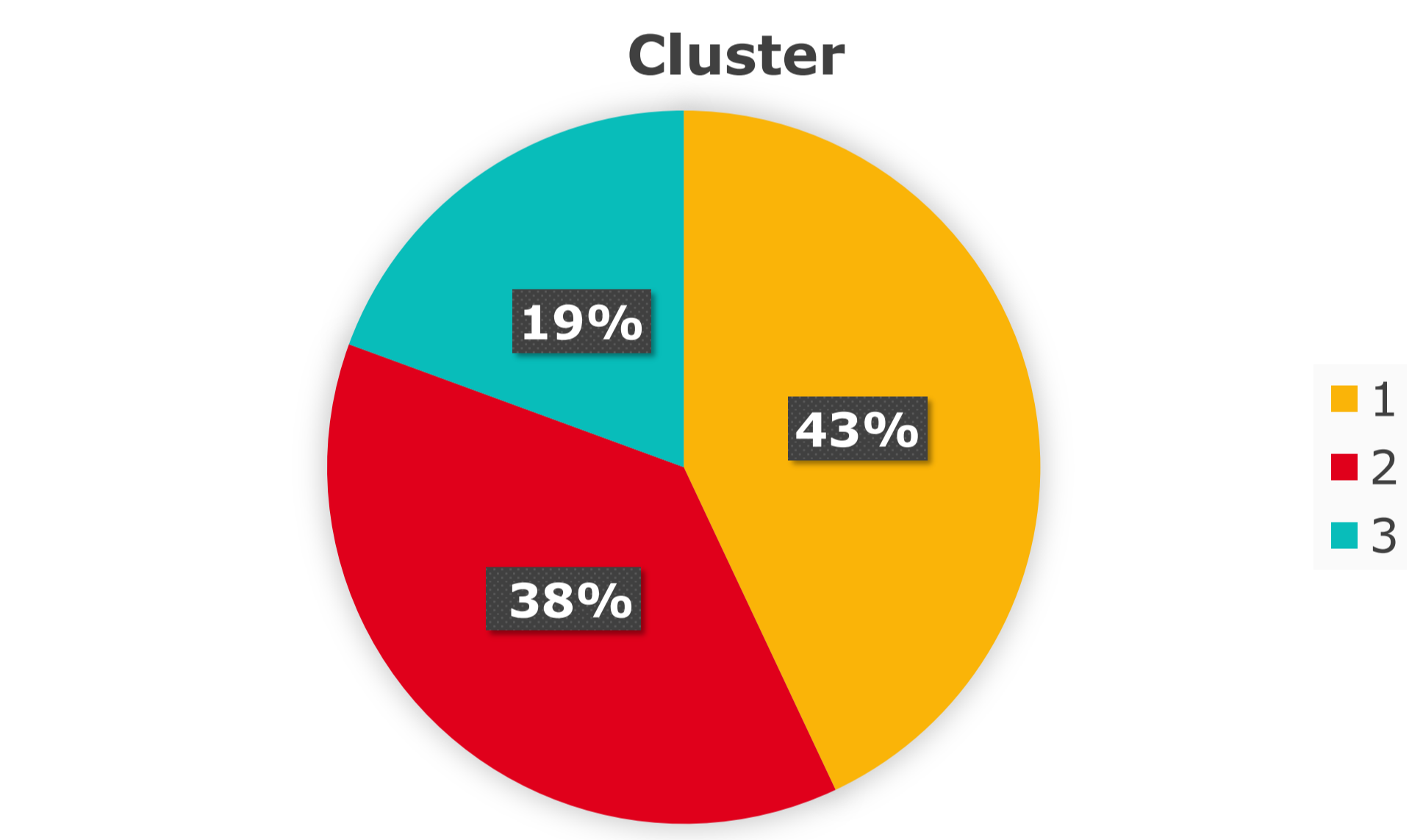
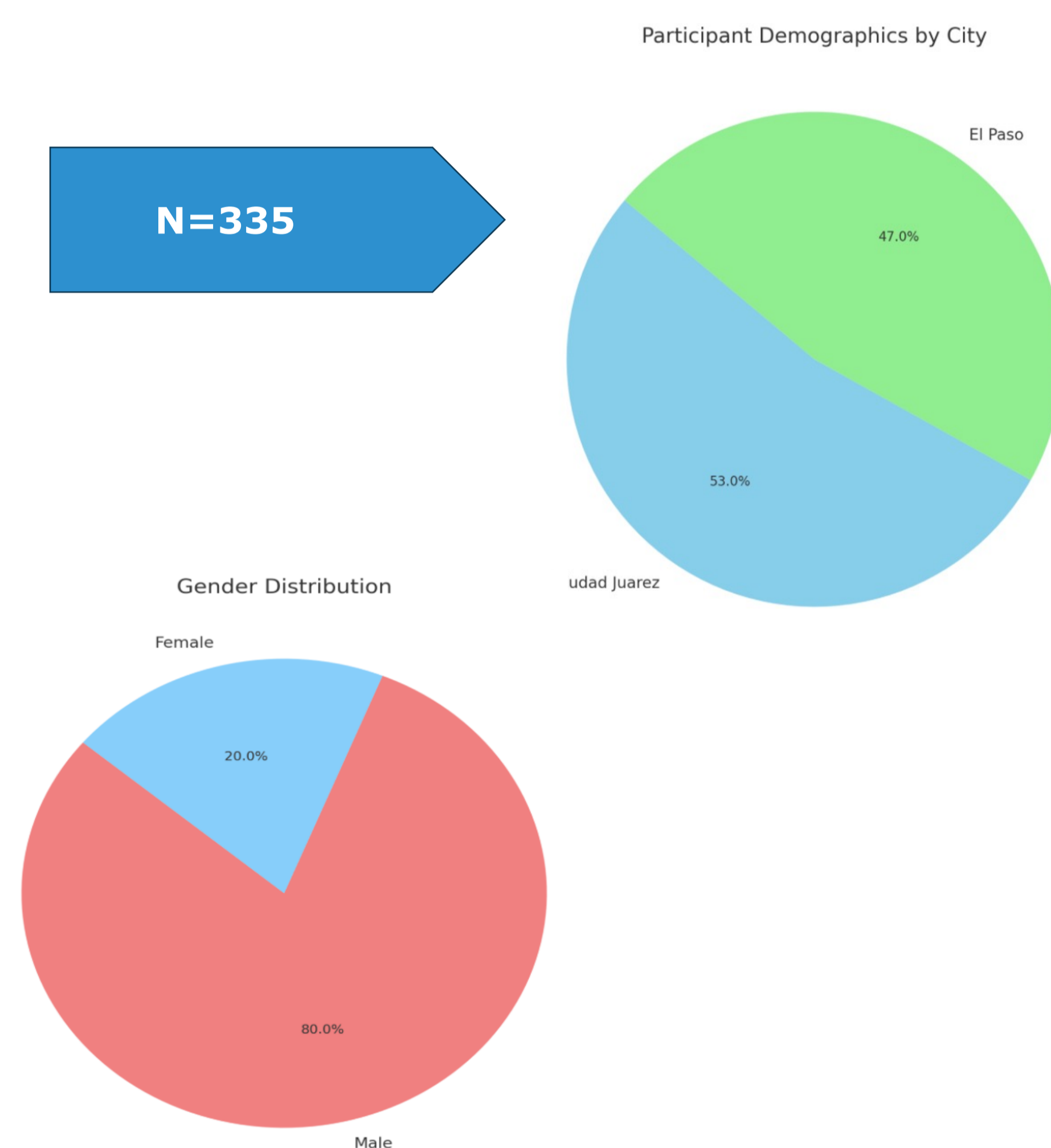
Analysis

- Two-step hierarchical cluster analysis
- Test of associations between class and demographic characteristics using the chi-square test

Results

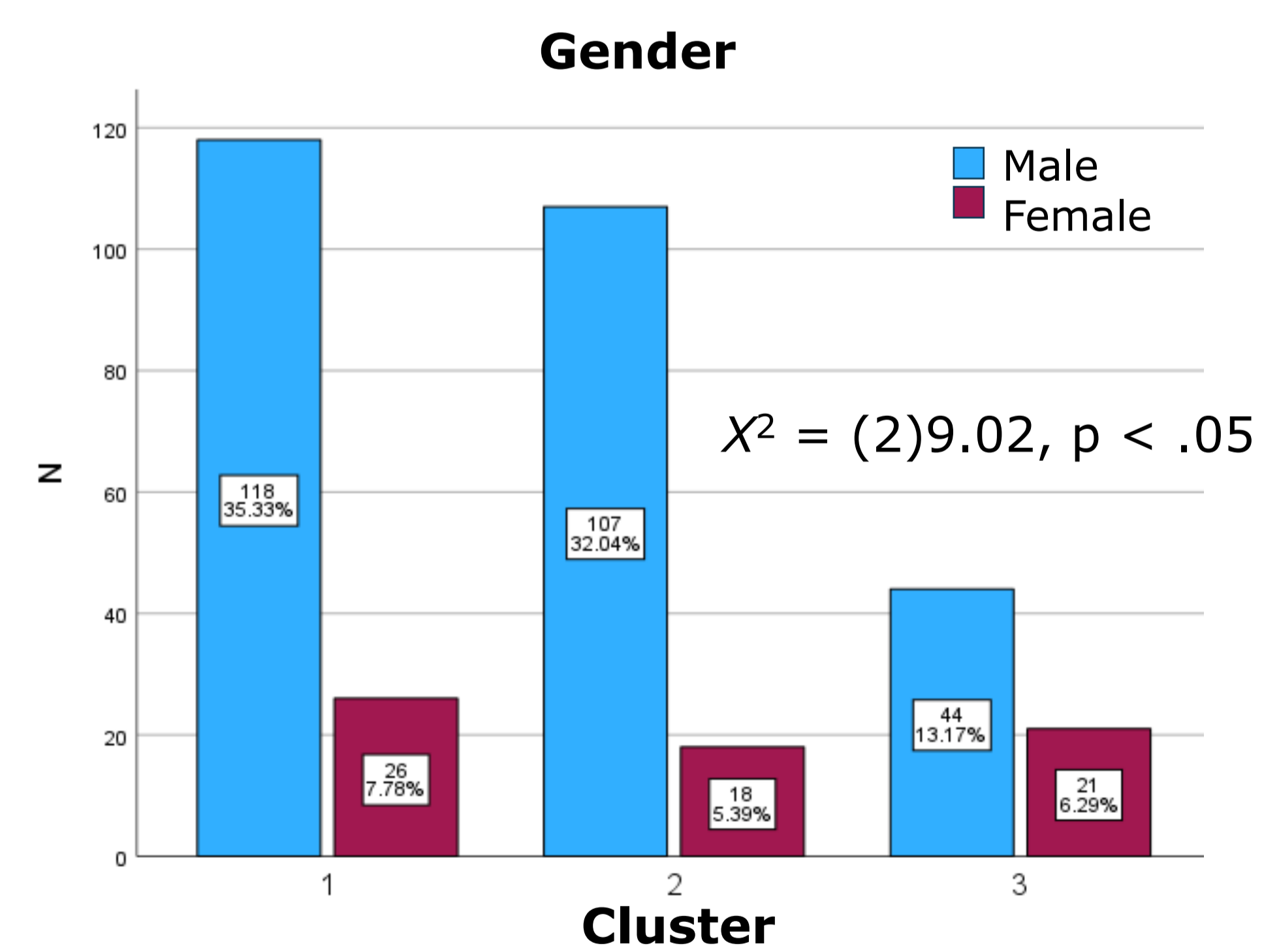
A three-class solution was selected as the most parsimonious.

Group	1	2	3
Number of Drugs	4 (43%)	5 (37.6%)	7 (19.4%)
Heroin-inhaled (1.0)	✓low		✓high
Heroin-injected (.96)		✓high	✓high
Cocaine-injected (.40)		✓low	✓moderate
Benzodiazepines (.27)	✓low	✓moderate	✓moderate
Crystal Meth (.25)			✓moderate
Cocaine-inhaled (.13)	✓low	✓low	✓moderate
Crack (.01)	✓high	✓high	✓high



Interpretation of Findings

- Investigating patterns of polydrug use in an under-resourced, binational setting is necessary to inform the tailoring of harm reduction behavioral interventions aimed at promoting HIV prevention.
- Understanding patterns of polydrug use, their associated risk behaviors, and demographic factors can provide critical insights for developing culturally and contextually appropriate interventions.
- Continued research in binational settings can contribute to a broader understanding of polydrug use dynamics, ultimately supporting more effective health policy formulation and resource allocation for harm reduction efforts.



Acknowledgments

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