

Marion Fiorentino, Aissatou Faye, Marion Mora, Raymond Van Huizen, Michel Bourrelly, Gwenaëlle Maradan, Cyril Berenger, Florence Michard, Yazdan Yazdanpanah, Anaenza Freire Maresca, Elisabeth Rouveix, Liam Balhan, Marie Costa, David Michels, Laszlo Blanquart, Giovanna Rincon, Bruno Spire, Margot Annequin, and the ANRS-Trans&HIV study group



Sciences Economiques et Sociales de la Santé & Traitement de l'Information Médicale

Inserm / IRD / Aix-Marseille Université

Exposure to violence among transgender women living with HIV, engaged or not in transactional sex

Findings from a French national study
ANRS TRANS&HIV

Inserm



amU Aix
Marseille
Université



IAS 2025

17 July 2025

Session "I will not lower my voice": Experiences from trans and gender-diverse communities"

SESSTIM, Faculté des Sciences Médicales et Paramédicales, Aix-Marseille Université, Marseille, France
<https://sesstim.univ-amu.fr/>



QuanTIM



SanteRCom



CaLIPSo

Context

- Transgender women worldwide

- **Global high HIV burden**

- Prevalence: 20% (*Stutterheim et al. 2021*)

- Incidence: 0.43 per 100 person-years (*Korenromp et al. 2024*)

- **Intersecting vulnerability factors and exposure to stigma, discrimination, violence**

- Transgender identity, gender identity as women, HIV, substance use, mental health, migration trajectories, engagement in transactional sex (TS) (*Peitzmeier et al. 2020; Marrow et al. 2023; Poteat et al. 2016; Operario et al. 2010*)

- In France

- Among newly diagnosed HIV cases in transgender women

- ~80% are migrants

- ~30% report engagement in TS (*Cazein et al. 2021*)

- Limited data among **transgender women living with HIV (TWLH)**

- Violence**

- Related health and social vulnerabilities**

Study objectives

1) Identify **typologies of exposure to violence** among TWLH

- Separately for those **engaged in TS (TWLH-TS)** and **not (TWLH-nTS)**



- Based on **type & perpetrators** of recently experienced violence

2) Examine associated **health and social** factors

Study design & data collection

- The **ANRS Trans&HIV survey**
 - Community-based, cross-sectional, nationwide survey in TWLH (2020-2022)
 - To identify vulnerability factors, health needs, and barriers to care among transgender women living with HIV
- Recruitment from **36 HIV care services** across France
- Data collection
 - **Socio-behavioural questionnaire and life-event calendar** (face-to-face, trained community-based interviewers)
 - **Medical data** (health records)

Study population

- Participants with complete questionnaire on violence
- Sample characteristics (**n=501**)
 - 🕒 43 y (36-50)
 - 🛂 32% **undocumented migrants**
 - 🏠 24% **inadequate housing conditions**
 - € 70% **income <1,000 € / month** (i.e., 50% of the median income; poverty line in France = €1,288)
 - ☁️ 22% **moderate to severe depression**
 - 📄 28% **ART interruption** (≥ 2 days in previous month)
 - 👤 66% **TWLH-TS** (ie. engaged in **transactional sex** at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months)

Methods - Development of violence typologies

4 questions on
lifetime violence

Verbal harassment

Physical violence

**Sexual violence
involving
psychological
pressure or threats**

**Sexual violence
involving physical
force**

Methods - Development of violence typologies

4 questions on **lifetime violence**



For each "yes" response

Verbal harassment

Time-frame?

Physical violence

Perpetrator?

Sexual violence involving psychological pressure or threats

Sexual violence involving physical force

Methods - Development of violence typologies

4 questions on **lifetime violence**



For each "yes" response



24 binary variables of **recently** experienced violence by **type** and **perpetrator**

Verbal harassment

Time-frame?

« recent verbal harassment by **passersby** »

yes (ie. **Yes, in the previous 12 months**) vs.

no (ie. never or yes, more than 12 months ago)

Physical violence

Perpetrator?

Sexual violence involving psychological pressure or threats

Sexual violence involving physical force

Methods - Development of violence typologies

4 questions on **lifetime violence**



For each "yes" response



24 binary variables of **recently** experienced violence by **type and perpetrator**

Verbal harassment

Time-frame?

« recent verbal harassment by **passersby** »
yes (ie. **Yes, in the previous 12 months**) vs.
no (ie. never or yes, more than 12 months ago)

Physical violence

Perpetrator?

« recent physical violence by **police** »

Sexual violence involving psychological pressure or threats

« recent sexual violence involving psychological pressure or threats by **casual partners** »

Sexual violence involving physical force

« recent sexual violence involving physical force by **clients** »

Etc...



Methods - Development of violence typologies

4 questions on **lifetime violence**

For each "yes" response

24 binary variables of **recently** experienced violence by **type and perpetrator**

Verbal harassment

Time-frame?

« recent verbal harassment by **passersby** »

yes (ie. **Yes, in the previous 12 months**) vs.
no (ie. never or yes, more than 12 months ago)

Physical violence

Perpetrator?

« recent physical violence by **police** »

Sexual violence involving psychological pressure or threats

« recent sexual violence involving psychological pressure or threats by **casual partners** »

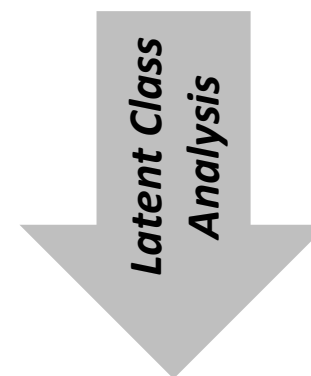
Sexual violence involving physical force

« recent sexual violence involving physical force by **clients** »

Etc...



Latent Class Analysis



Latent Class Analysis

Results

3 violence typologies
In **TWLH-TS**

2 violence typologies
In **TWLH-nTS**

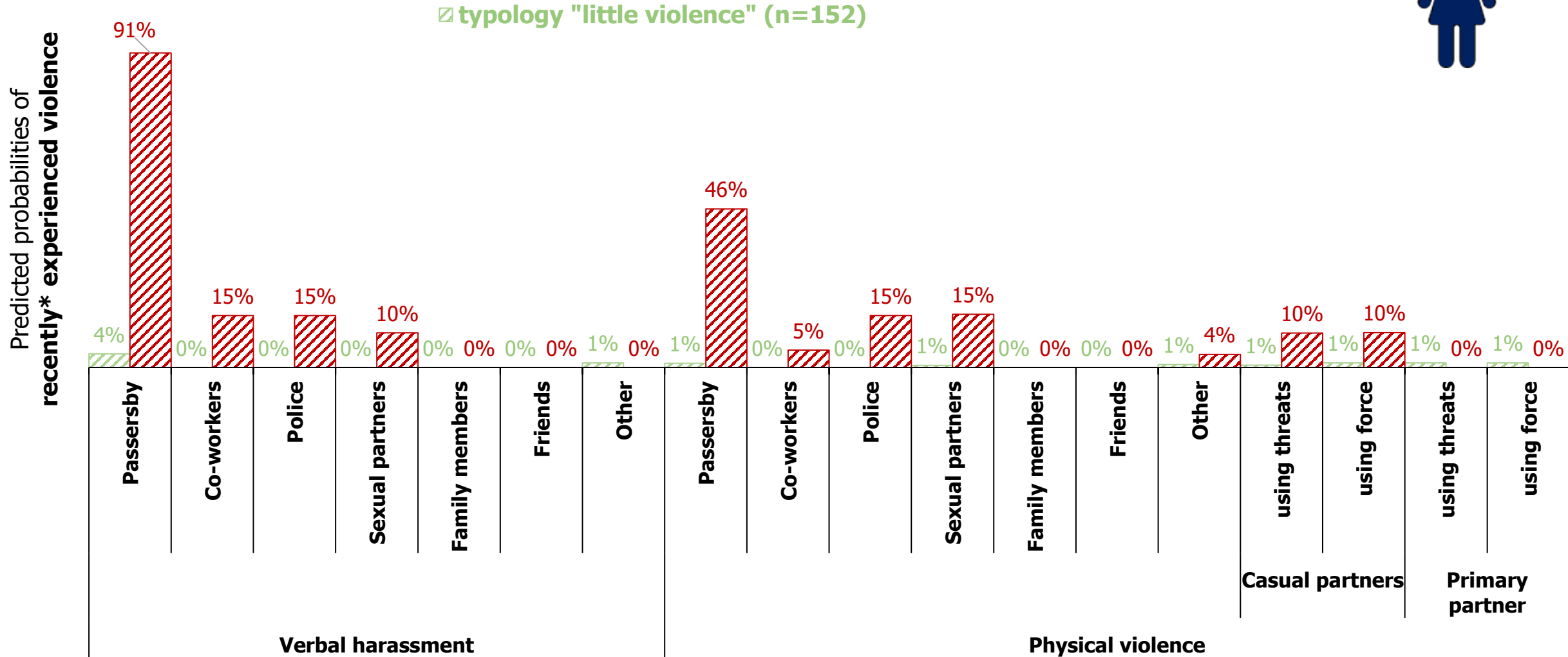
Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

In TWLH **not engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=168)**



Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

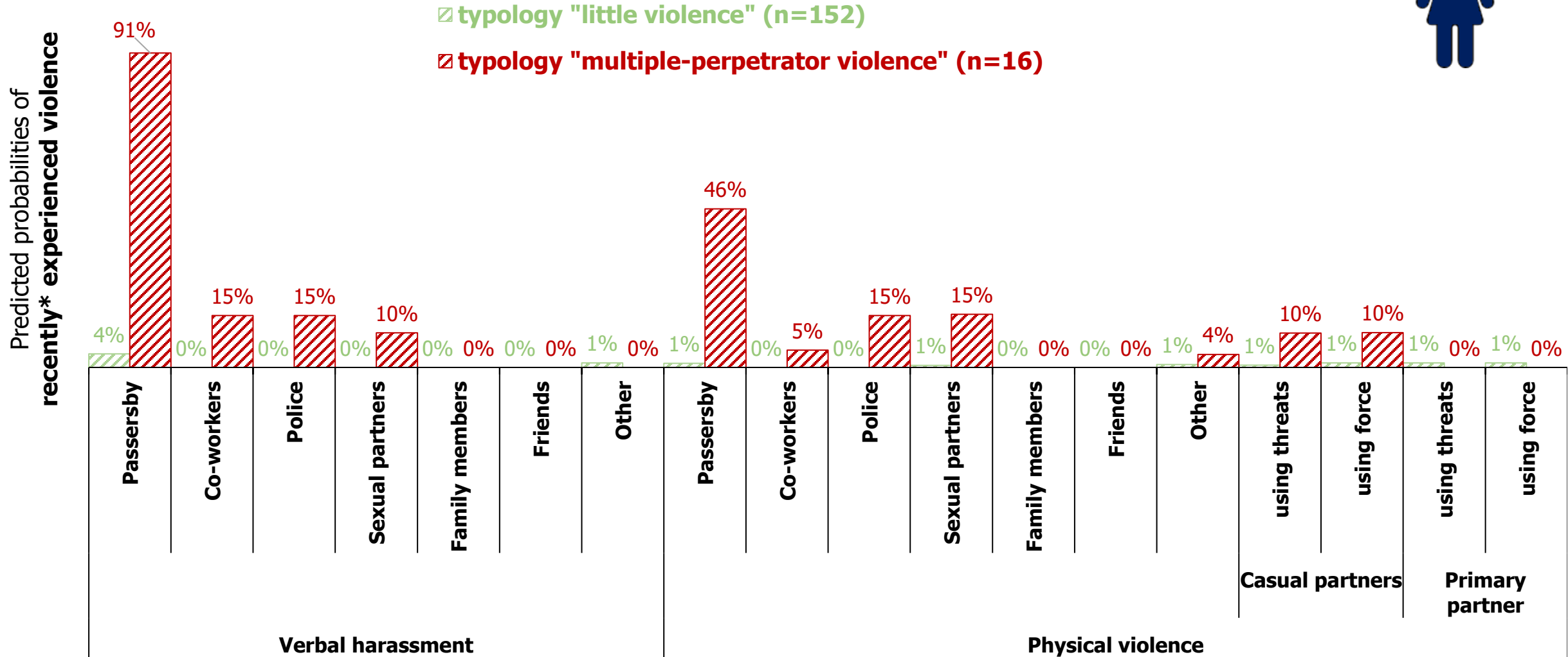
In TWLH **not engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=168)**



*at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months

Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

In TWLH **not engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=168)**



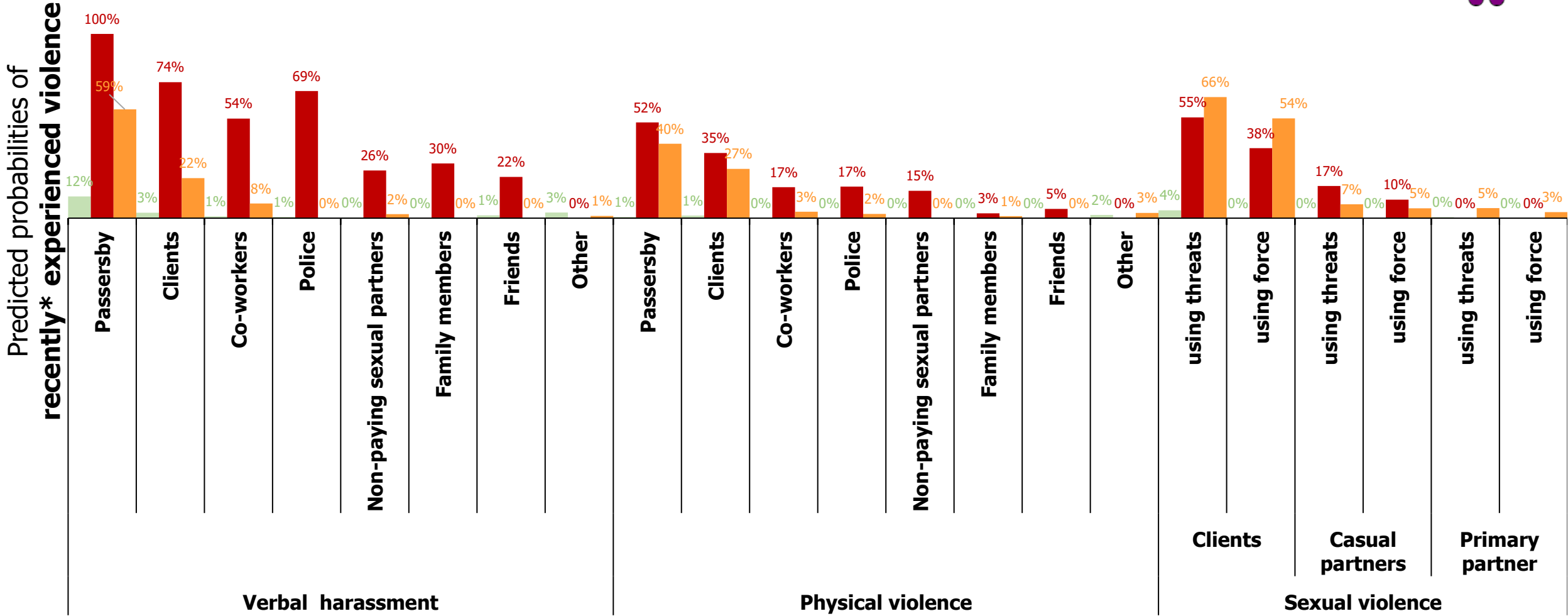
Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

in TWLH engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=333)



Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

in TWLH engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=333)



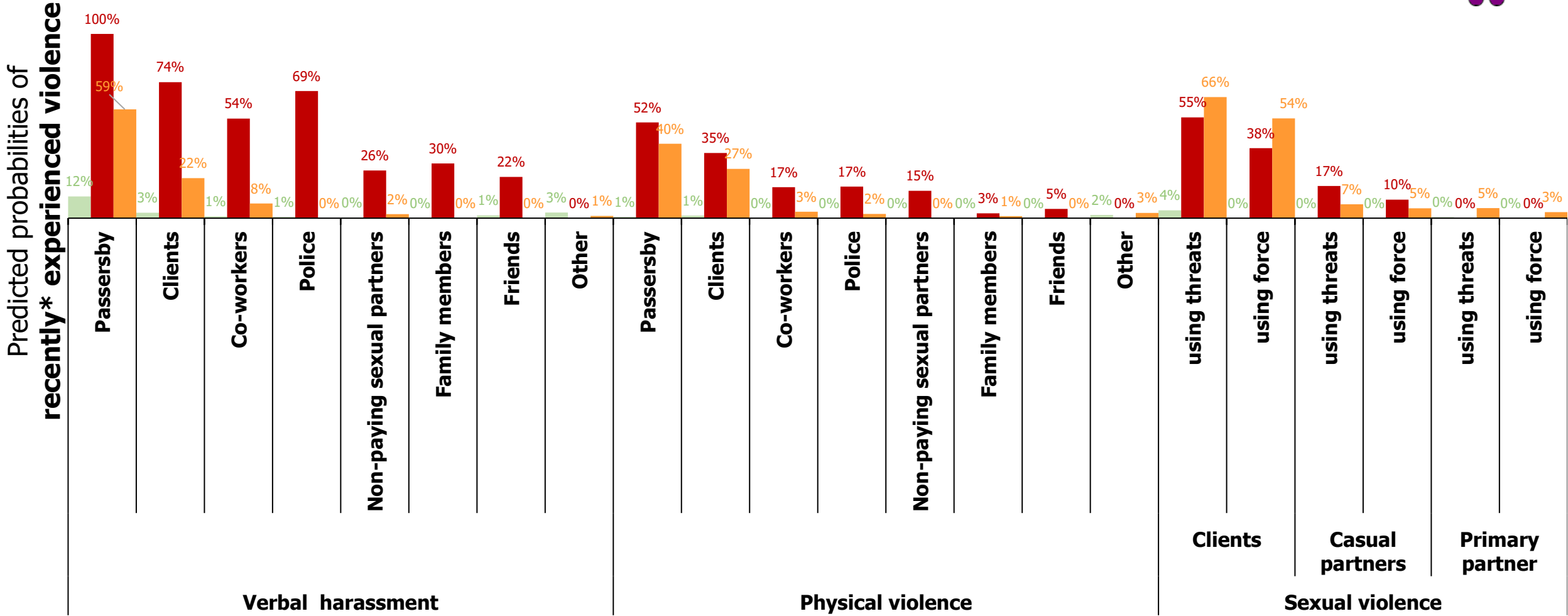
*at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months

Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

in TWLH engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=333)



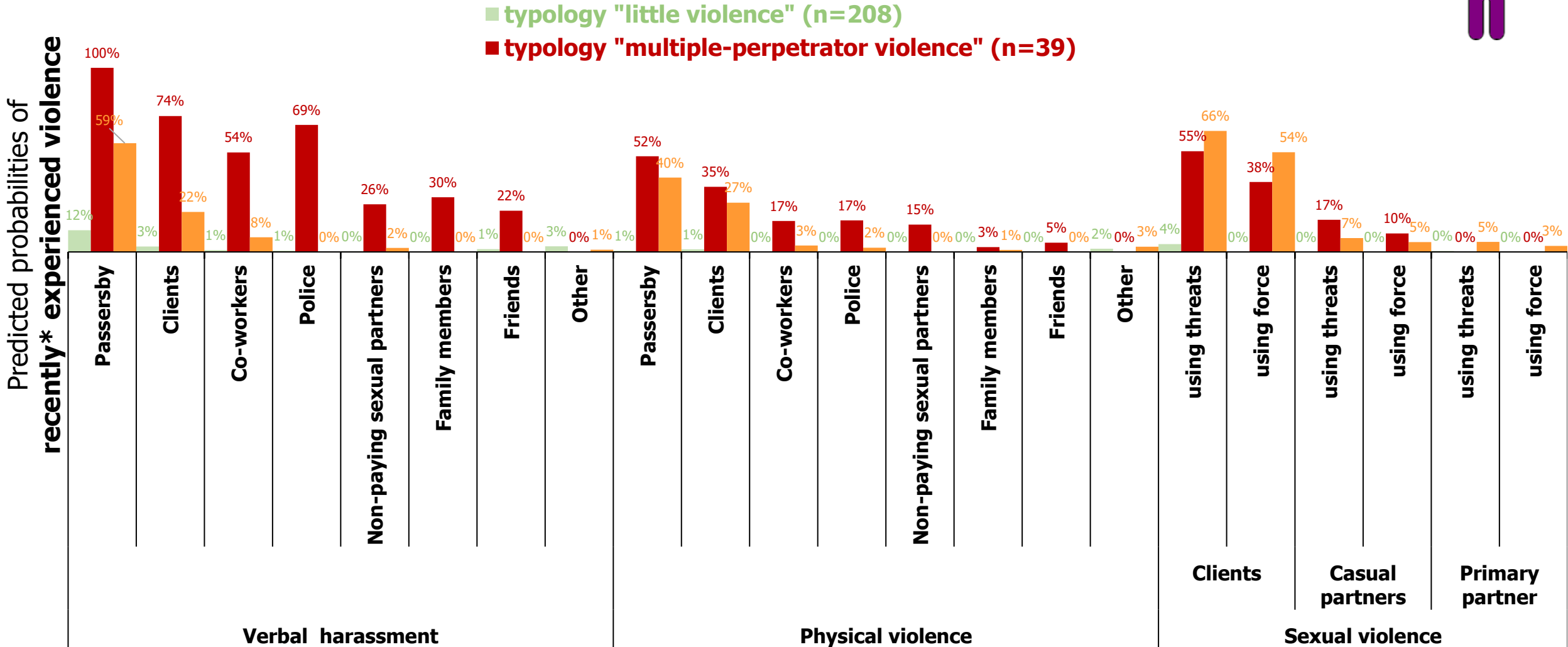
■ typology "little violence" (n=208)



*at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months

Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

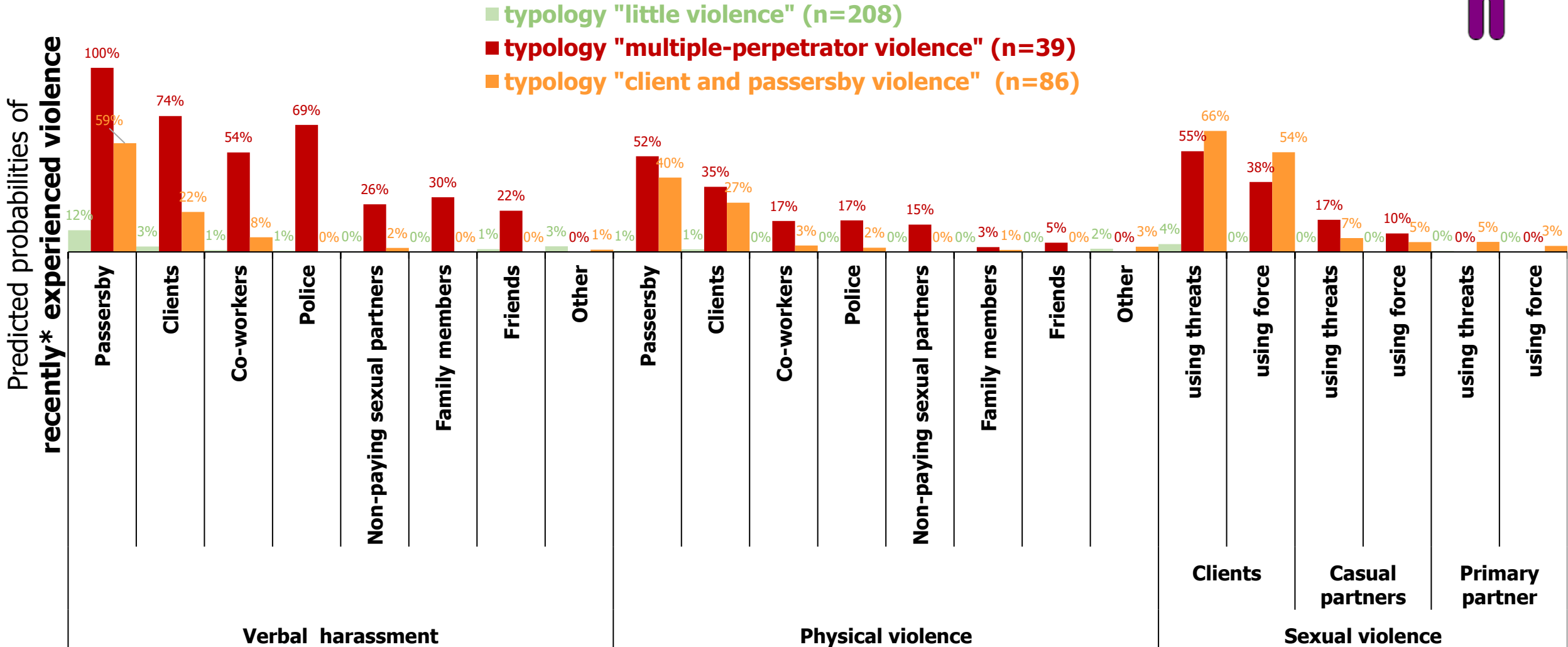
in TWLH engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=333)



*at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months

Results - Description of violence typologies, by type and perpetrator

in TWLH engaged in transactional sex (TWLH-nTS, n=333)

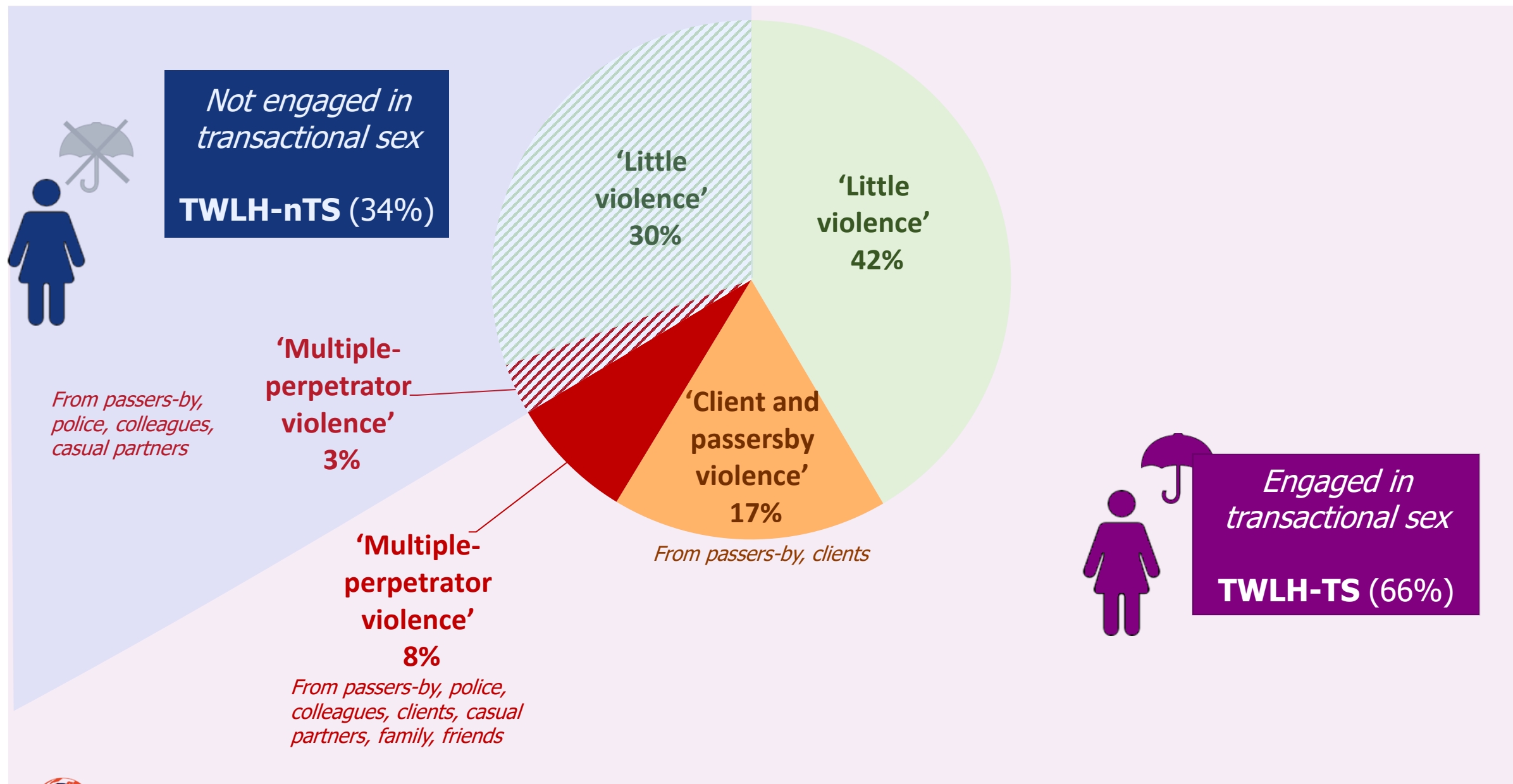


*at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months

Results – Distribution of the 5 violences typologies (n=501)



Results – Distribution of the 5 violence typologies (n=501)

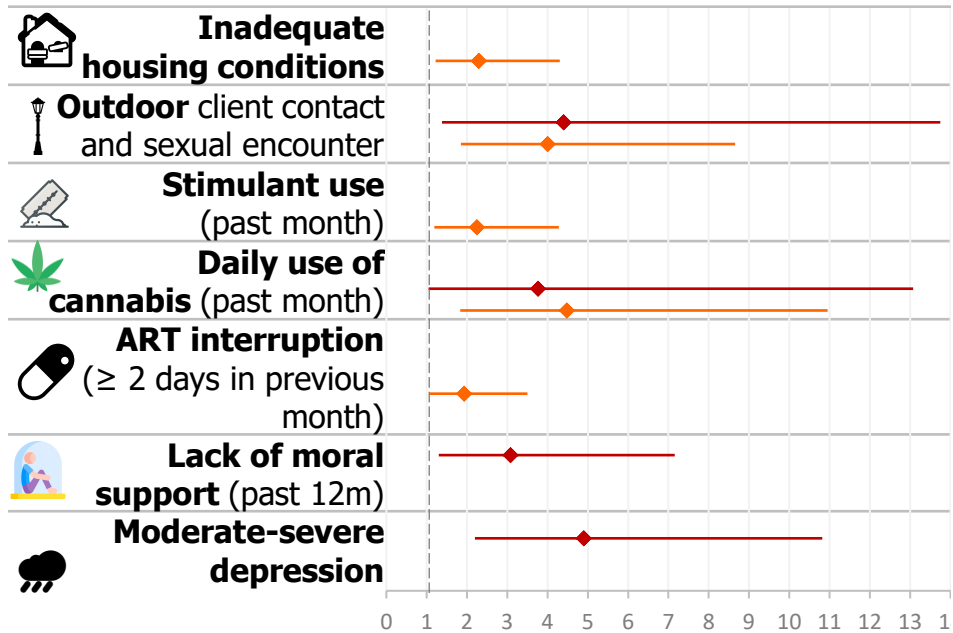




Results & Discussion- Factors associated with violence typologies in **TWLH-TS***

Multinomial logistic regression on a 3-category outcome (n=321, ref: typology « **little violence** »)

Independent variables

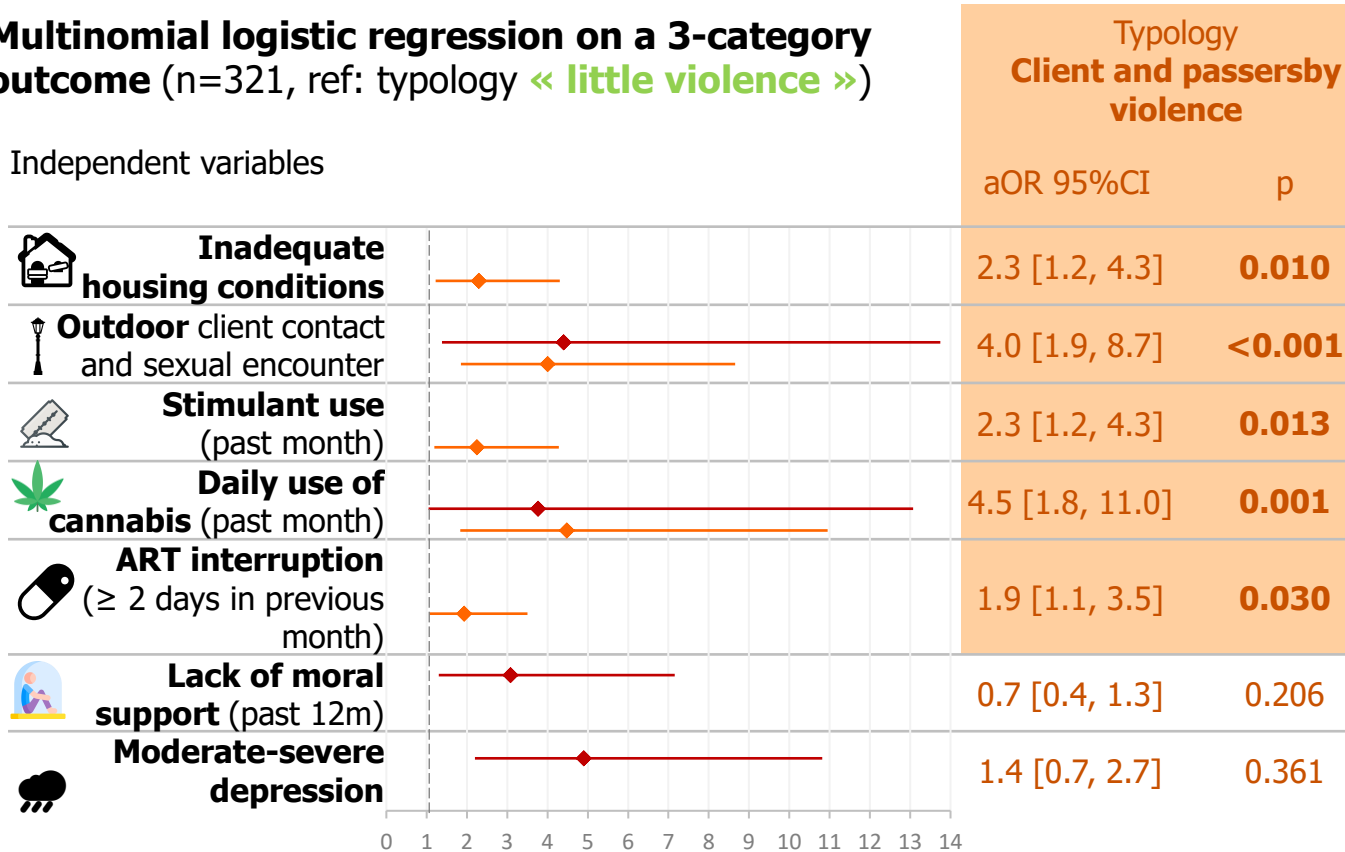




Results & Discussion- Factors associated with violence typologies in **TWLH-TS***

Multinomial logistic regression on a 3-category outcome (n=321, ref: typology « **little violence** »)

Independent variables



Precarious housing and working conditions
Limited ability to select clients or negotiate terms?

Higher stimulant and cannabis use
Coping strategy in violent work environments?

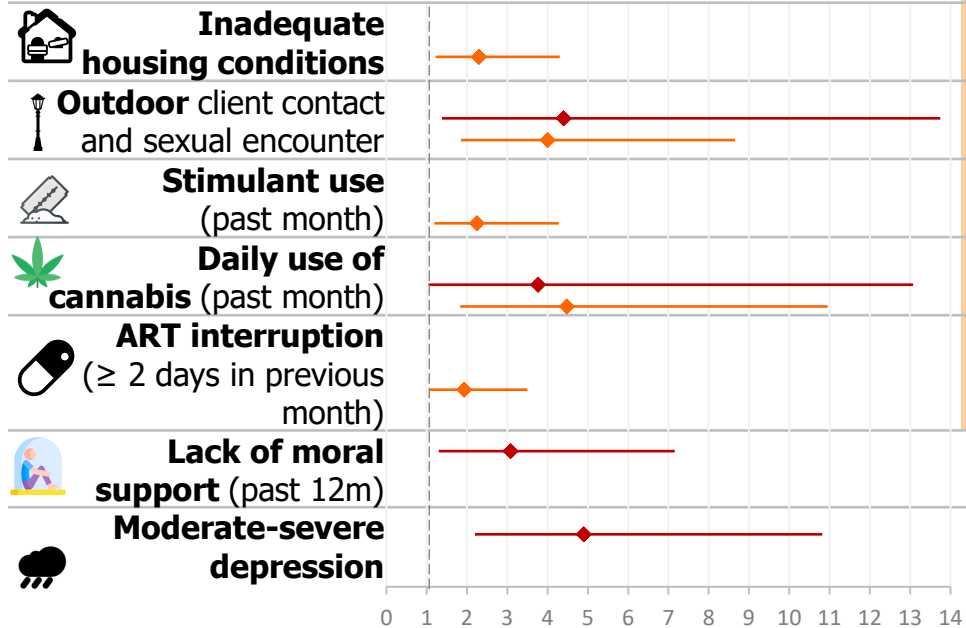
Impaired ART adherence
Insecurity, instability, psychological distress, disrupted daily organization?



Results & Discussion- Factors associated with violence typologies in **TWLH-TS***

Multinomial logistic regression on a 3-category outcome (n=321, ref: typology « little violence »)

Independent variables



Outdoor transactional sex

Increased visibility and interactions with co-workers, police?
Precarious working conditions → more dependent on non-paying partners?

Lack of moral support

Social isolation as a consequence of violence?
→ Direct: coercion by perpetrators
→ Indirect: distrust, insecurity, social withdrawal
Greater unmet need for moral support among victims of violence?

Increased depression & cannabis use

Cumulative distress and mental health effects of poly-victimization ?

Precarious housing and working conditions

Limited ability to select clients or negotiate terms?

Higher stimulant and cannabis use

Coping strategy in violent work environments?

Impaired ART adherence

Insecurity, instability, psychological distress, disrupted daily organization?

Conclusions

- Systemic violence towards transgender women and HIV syndemic
 - **Transactional sex-related (client/street) violence** : ~1 in 4 TWLH-TS
 - **Multiple type and perpetrators violence** : ~1 in 10 TWLH, whether engaged or not in transactional sex
 - **Intersecting vulnerabilities** : HIV care, mental health, violence, precariousness

Conclusions

- Systemic violence towards transgender women and HIV syndemic
 - **Transactional sex-related (client/street) violence** : ~1 in 4 TWLH-TS
 - **Multiple type and perpetrators violence** : ~1 in 10 TWLH, whether engaged or not in transactional sex
 - **Intersecting vulnerabilities** : HIV care, mental health, violence, precariousness
- Socio-political context
 - Shrinking rights for migrants
 - Abolitionist sex work laws
 - Weakening of public health services
 - Transgender identity and HIV-positive status: added layers of stigma and risk of violence?
- Improving health and the HIV care continuum for TWLH in France
 - Mental health, psychological support, harm reduction services related to drug use for survivors of violence, in HIV services and community settings
 - Structural policies: stable housing, legal and social protections, community-based support

Thanks to

The participants



The Trans&HIV Study Group

Participating hospitals

NICE - CHU de Nice - Hôpital de l'Archet 1 ; AIX EN PROVENCE - Centre Hospitalier du Pays d'Aix ; MARSEILLE - Hôpital Sainte Marguerite ; MARSEILLE - Hôpital Européen ; MARSEILLE - Institut Hospitalo-Universitaire Méditerranée Infection ; MARSEILLE - Hôpital Saint Joseph ; CAEN - CHU de Caen - Hôpital de la Côte de Nacre ; BOURGES - Centre Hospitalier Jacques Cœur ; CHARTRES LE COUDRAY - Centre Hospitalier de Chartres - Hôpital Louis Pasteur ; TOULOUSE - CHU de Toulouse - Hôpital Purpan ; BORDEAUX - CHU de Bordeaux - Hôpital Saint André ; NANTES - CHU de Nantes - Hôtel Dieu ; ANGERS - Centre Hospitalier Universitaire ; METZ - CHR METZ-Thionville ; TOURCOING - Centre Hospitalier Gustave Dron ; STRASBOURG - CHU de Strasbourg - Nouvel Hôpital Civil ; LYON - CHU de Lyon - Hôpital de la Croix-Rousse ; LE MANS - Centre Hospitalier ; PARIS - Hôtel Dieu ; PARIS - Hôpital Saint Louis ; PARIS - Hôpital Pitié Salpêtrière ; PARIS - Hôpital Européen Georges Pompidou ; PARIS - Hôpital Bichat-Claude Bernard ; PARIS - Hôpital Tenon ; PARIS - Le 190 ; PARIS - Hôpital Saint Antoine ; ROUEN - CHU de Rouen - Hôpital Charles Nicolle ; BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT - Hôpital Ambroise Paré ; SURESNES - Hôpital Foch ; PONTOISE - Centre Hospitalier René Dubois ; SAINT DENIS - CHU de La Réunion ; ST DENIS - Centre hospitalier de Saint Denis ; ALES - Centre hospitalier Alès Cévenne ; MONTPELLIER - CHU de Montpellier - Hôpital Gui de Chauliac ; BOBIGNY - CHU Avicenne ; QUIMPER - Centre Hospitalier de Cornouaille - Hôpital Laënnec

Appendix

Demographic, socioeconomic, psychosocial, HIV and transactional sex characteristics * of transgender women living with HIV, whether engaged or not in transactional sex (ANRS 14056 Trans&HIV)

	Total	TWLH-nTS	TWLH-TS
	N=501	n=168	n=333
	n (%), median (IQR)		
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics			
Age (years)	43 (36 – 50)	50 (43 – 56)	41 (34 – 47)
Education level			
Upper secondary school diploma or third level education	98 (20%)	49 (29%)	49 (15%)
No schooling/Primary/Lower secondary school	402 (80%)	118 (71%)	284 (85%)
Housing			
Stable (Owner or renter of own home)	328 (66%)	133 (80%)	195 (59%)
Unstable (Hosted/Hotel/Squat)	170 (34%)	34 (20%)	136 (41%)
Perceived housing conditions			
Adequate (i.e., responding Very satisfactory/Satisfactory/Acceptable)	387 (77%)	141 (84%)	246 (74%)
Inadequate (i.e., responding Unsatisfactory/Very unsatisfactory)	114 (23%)	27 (16%)	87 (26%)
Legal status in France			
Documented (European citizenship or resident permit)	338 (67%)	144 (87%)	194 (59%)
Undocumented	158 (32%)	22 (13%)	136 (41%)
Type of health insurance			
General public health insurance	347 (69%)	149 (89%)	198 (60%)
Medical state assistance for undocumented migrants	123 (25%)	12 (7%)	111 (33%)
No insurance	29 (6%)	6 (4%)	23 (7%)
Employment			
Declared employment	64 (13%)	50 (30%)	14 (4%)
Undeclared or informal employment	262 (52%)	17 (10%)	245 (74%)
Unemployed/inactive	175 (35%)	101 (60%)	74 (22%)
Estimated monthly net income			
≥1000€	152 (30%)	70 (42%)	82 (25%)
500-1000€	204 (41%)	67 (40%)	137 (41%)
<500€	145 (29%)	31 (19%)	114 (34%)
Psychosocial characteristics			
Typology of gender affirmation (GAF) dimensions **			
Comprehensive use of all GAF dimensions: medical, administrative, psychological, and social	63 (13%)	41 (24%)	22 (7%)
Predominant use of the medical dimension of GAF	327 (65%)	91 (54%)	236 (71%)
Sparse use of medical and administrative dimensions of GAF	111 (22%)	36 (21%)	75 (23%)
Living alone			
No	242 (48%)	60 (36%)	182 (55%)

Psychosocial characteristics	Total	TWLH-nTS	TWLH-TS
Typology of gender affirmation (GAF) dimensions **			
Comprehensive use of all GAF dimensions: medical, administrative, psychological, and social	63 (13%)	41 (24%)	22 (7%)
Predominant use of the medical dimension of GAF	327 (65%)	91 (54%)	236 (71%)
Sparse use of medical and administrative dimensions of GAF	111 (22%)	36 (21%)	75 (23%)
Living alone			
No	242 (48%)	60 (36%)	182 (55%)
Yes	259 (5%)	108 (64%)	151 (45%)
Had a primary partner			
Yes	192 (38%)	74 (45%)	118 (35%)
No	306 (61%)	91 (55%)	215 (65%)
Had someone to rely on for support when needed			
Yes	402 (80%)	146 (87%)	256 (77%)
No	99 (20%)	22 (13%)	77 (23%)
Received needed moral support (in previous 12 months)			
Yes/Did not need support	307 (61%)	115 (69%)	192 (58%)
No/Did not receive enough support	194 (39%)	53 (32%)	141 (42%)
Receive needed material help (in previous 12 months)			
Yes/Did not need material help	213 (43%)	88 (52%)	125 (38%)
No/Did not receive enough material help	288 (57%)	80 (48%)	208 (63%)
Depression			
None to mild	367 (73%)	131 (82%)	236 (72%)
Moderate to severe ***	120 (24%)	29 (18%)	91 (28%)
Use of stimulants (in previous month)			
No	366 (73%)	138 (82%)	228 (69%)
Yes	135 (27%)	30 (18%)	105 (32%)
Use of dissociative drugs (in previous month)			
No	482 (96%)	164 (98%)	318 (96%)
Yes	18 (4%)	3 (2%)	15 (5%)
Use of cannabis (in previous month)			
No use or not daily	458 (60%)	158 (94%)	300 (90%)
Daily	43 (38%)	10 (6%)	33 (10%)
Alcohol consumption			
No consumption or low risk	309 (38%)	120 (73%)	189 (57%)
At-risk consumption ****	186 (52%)	45 (27%)	141 (43%)
HIV-related outcomes			
ART interruption (≥ 2 days in previous month)			
No	356 (71%)	128 (78%)	228 (69%)
Yes	138 (28%)	37 (22%)	101 (31%)
ART treatment adherence			
Good adherence	289 (58%)	112 (68%)	177 (54%)
Poor to moderate adherence ****	206 (41%)	53 (32%)	153 (46%)
HIV viral load suppression (i.e., <50 copies/mL) at most recent visit			
Yes	429 (86.8%)	149 (89.8%)	280 (85.4%)
No	65 (13.2%)	17 (10.2%)	48 (14.6%)

Transactional sex conditions	TWLH-TS
Length of time engaging in transactional sex (years)	20 (13 – 26)
Contacting clients and locations for sexual encounters	
Meeting clients at participant's home after contacting them on the internet	90 (27%)
Meeting clients at participant's home after contacting them using other means	66 (20%)
Meeting clients in outdoor locations	135 (41%)
Meeting clients in other locations *****	39 (12%)
Transactional sex arrangement	
Self-employed, keeps all earnings	
Self-employed, pays someone for safety/transport	
Accountable to someone else	
Works in group, shares income and expenses with others	