

Opioids in Australia

THS Biarritz, France 2009



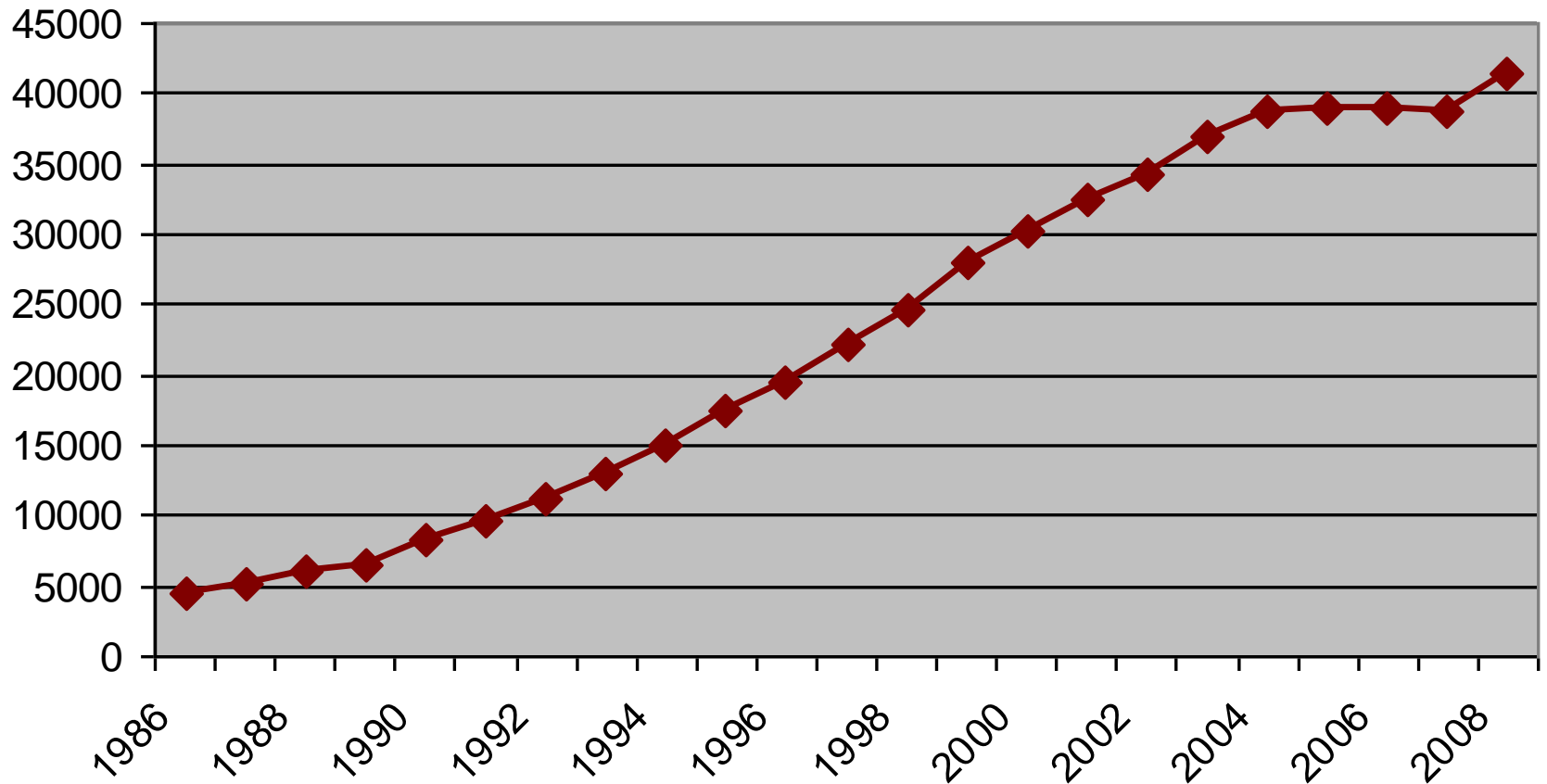
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Australian opiate treatment system



- ✓ Methadone 1970s, buprenorphine 2001
 - ✓ Buprenorphine-naloxone 2005
- ✓ Expanded to prevent HIV in IDU
- ✓ Relatively accessible
 - ✓ Relatively inexpensive
 - ✓ (~ €2400 pa, subsidised)

Number in methadone + buprenorphine treatment



Australian opiate treatment system



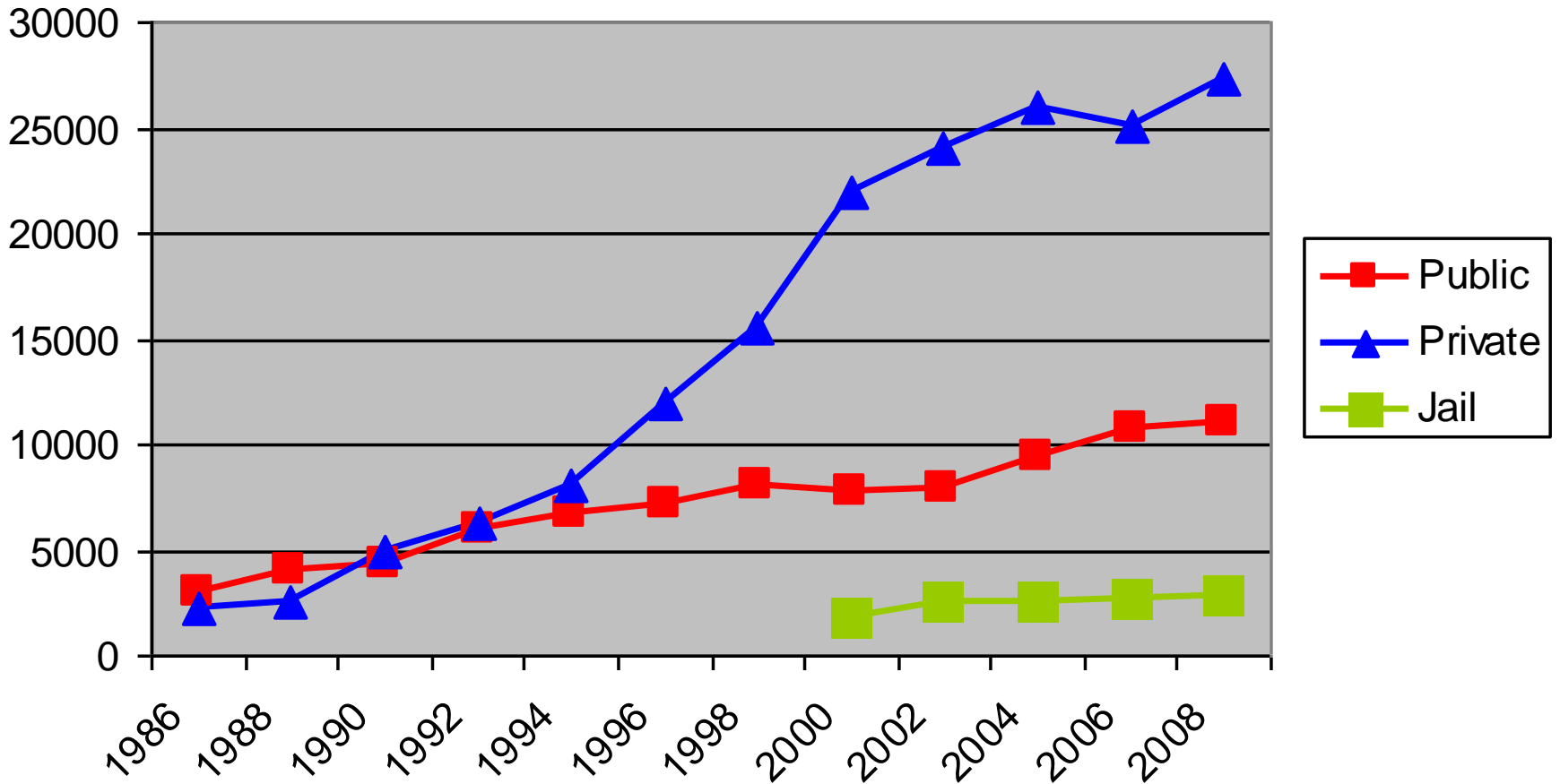
- ✓ ~41,000 patients in treatment
 - ✓ rate ~ France ~195/100,000 population
- ✓ Age ~ 20-50
- ✓ 2/3 men, 1/3 women
- ✓ HIV < 1%, HCV 60-70%
- ✓ Indigenous 8%

Treatment system



- ✓ Mix of public and private
 - ✓ GP (2/3), government clinics (1/3)
 - ✓ Despite poor involvement of GPs ~3%
 - ✓ Mandatory training for methadone, buprenorphine (not for other opioids!)
- ✓ Based on supervised dosing of most doses (methadone or buprenorphine)

Growth in treatment - GPs



Suboxone



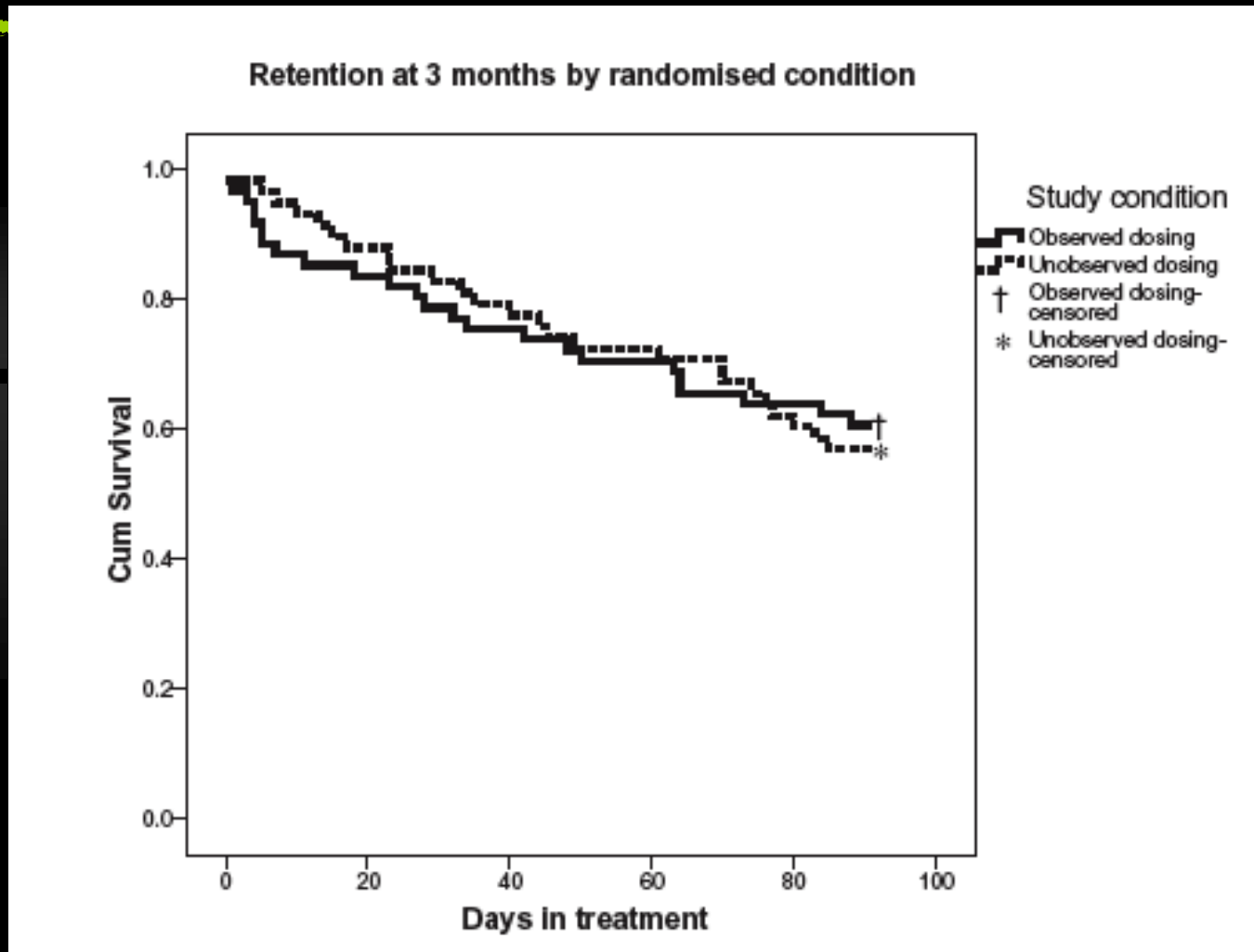
- ✓ Introduced after methadone, buprenorphine implemented
- ✓ 2 key issues
 1. Benefits for patients
 - ✓ Unsupervised dosing
 2. Concerns with injecting buprenorphine
 - ✓ Despite supervised dosing

Bell 2007

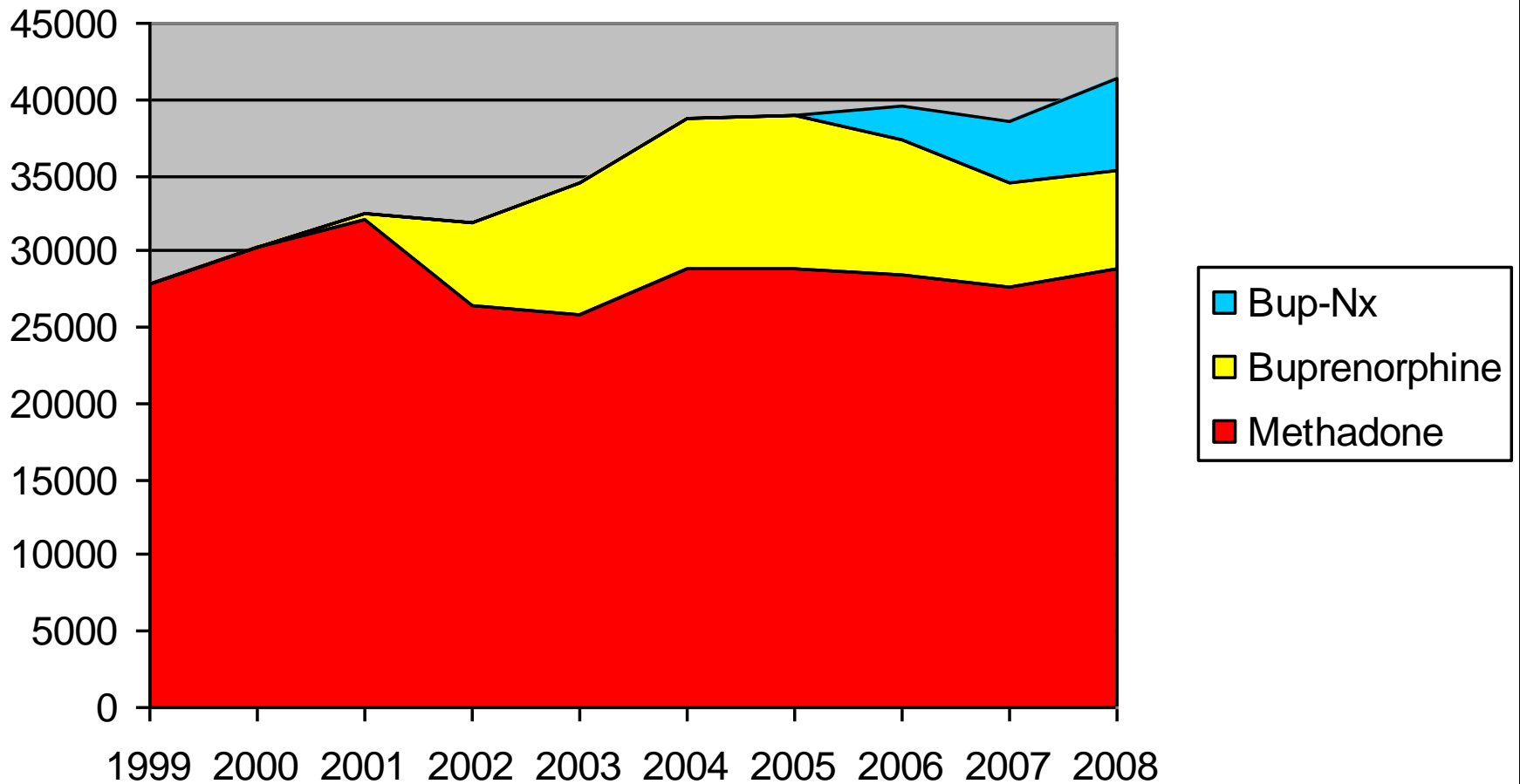


- ✓ Unsupervised dosing as effective as supervised
- ✓ Reduced heroin use
 - ✓ 20 days less/month
- ✓ Unsupervised treatment less expensive
 - ✓ ~ €300 (3/12), 30% reduction

Retention - identical



Uptake of Suboxone



Issues for patients



- ✓ Having a choice of medications important
- ✓ Concern regarding naloxone in medication
- ✓ Had very limited access to take away doses – very interested in unsupervised dosing

Issues for prescribers



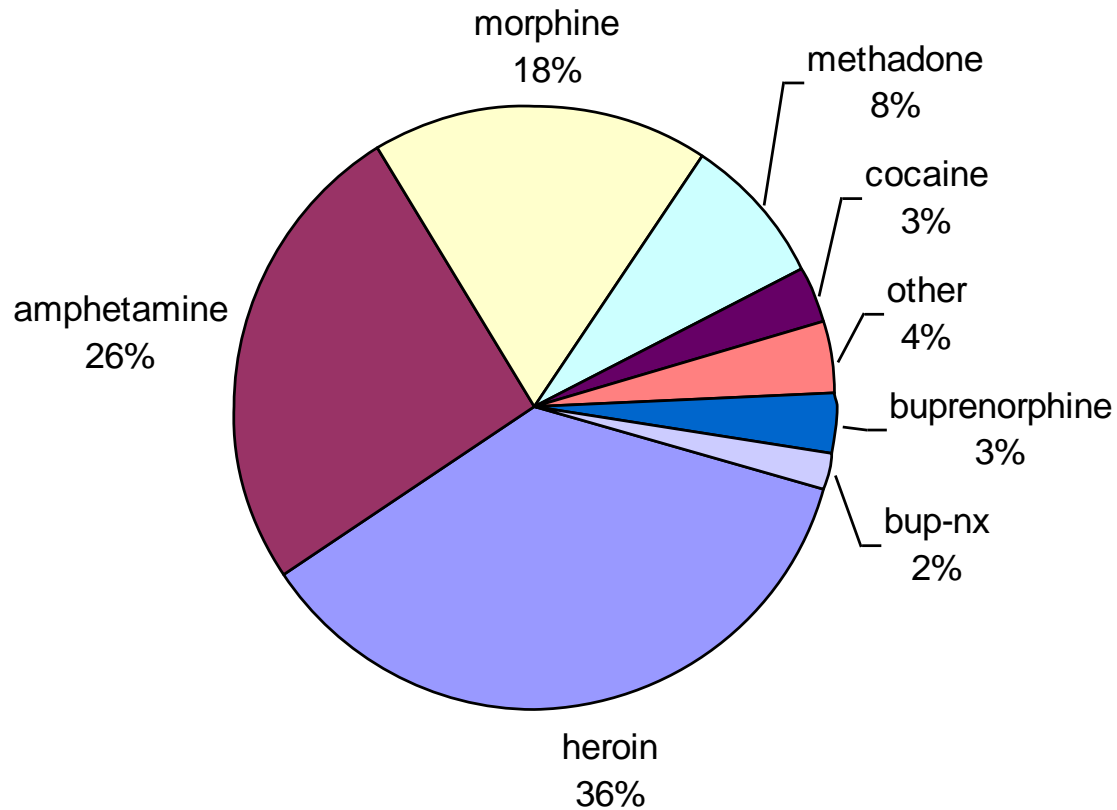
- ✓ Concern regarding injecting of buprenorphine
- ✓ Prescribers & pharmacists
 - ✓ shift to Suboxone
- ✓ Very little use of non supervised dosing
 - ✓ Policy and practice issues

Injecting opiates in Australia

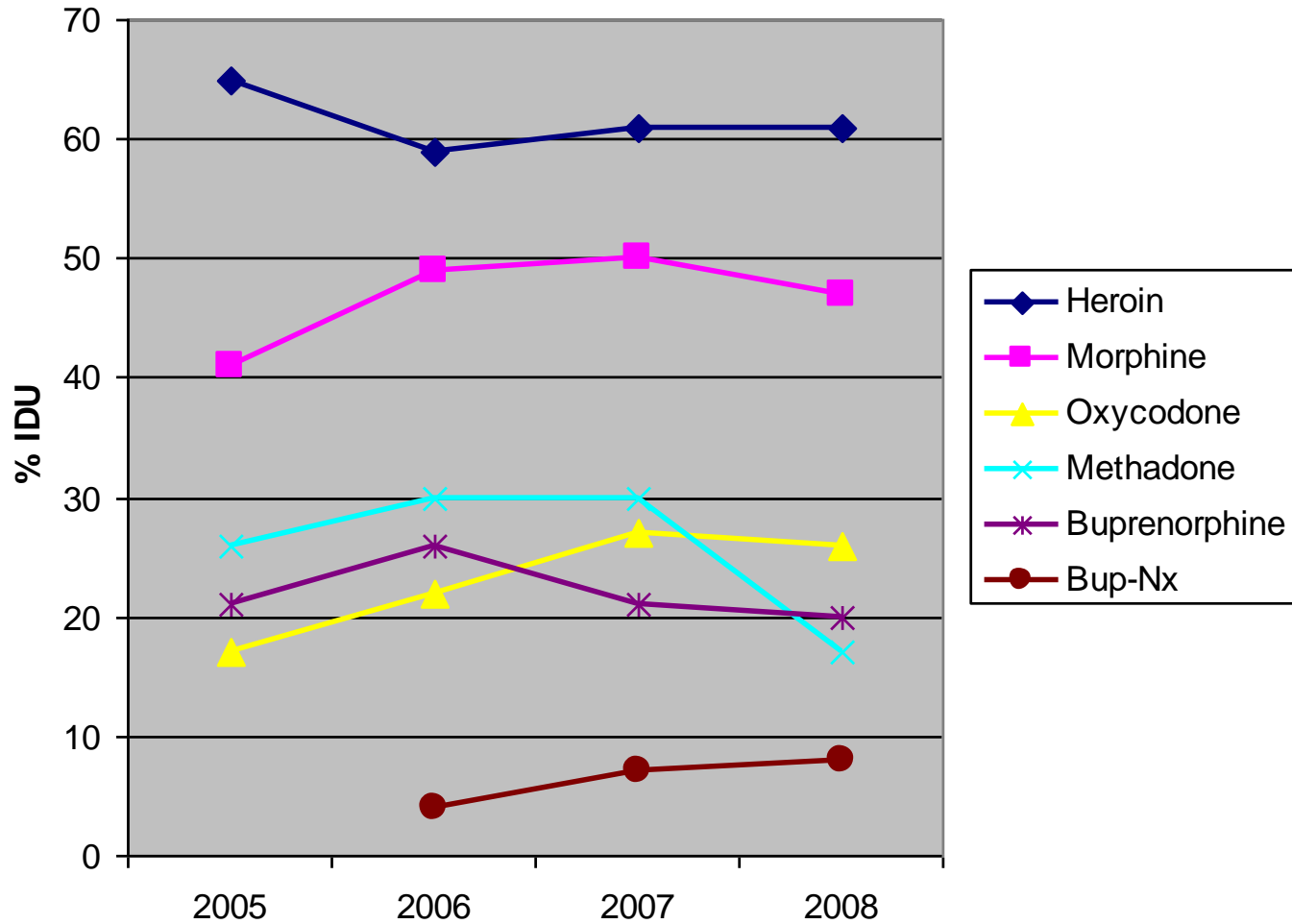


- ✓ Illicit Drug Reporting system
 - ✓ Sentinel survey of drug injecting in Australia
 - ✓ N~1000 IDU

IDRS – last drug injected

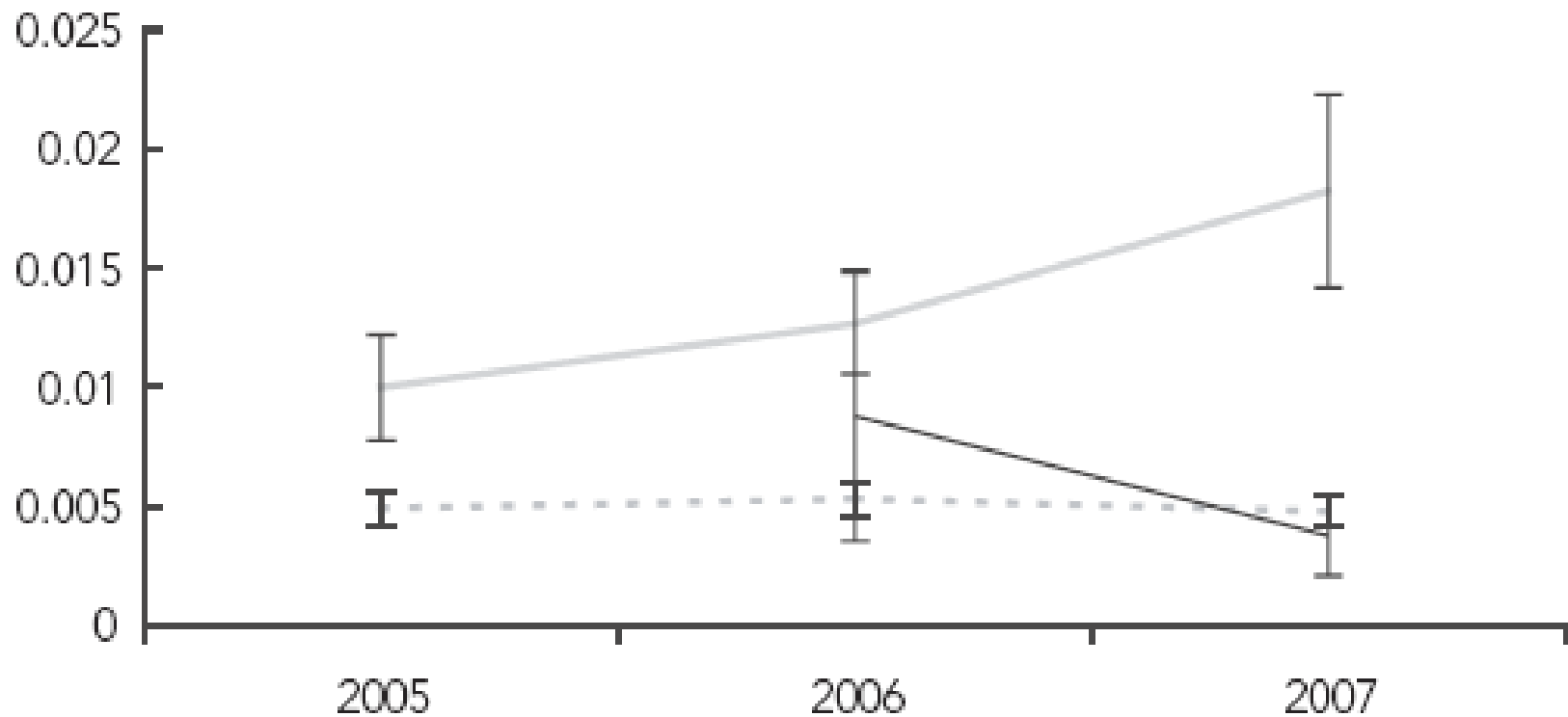


Injection – last 6 months



Buprenorphine injecting

B: More than weekly injection in previous 6 months*



Injecting buprenorphine Fra & Aus

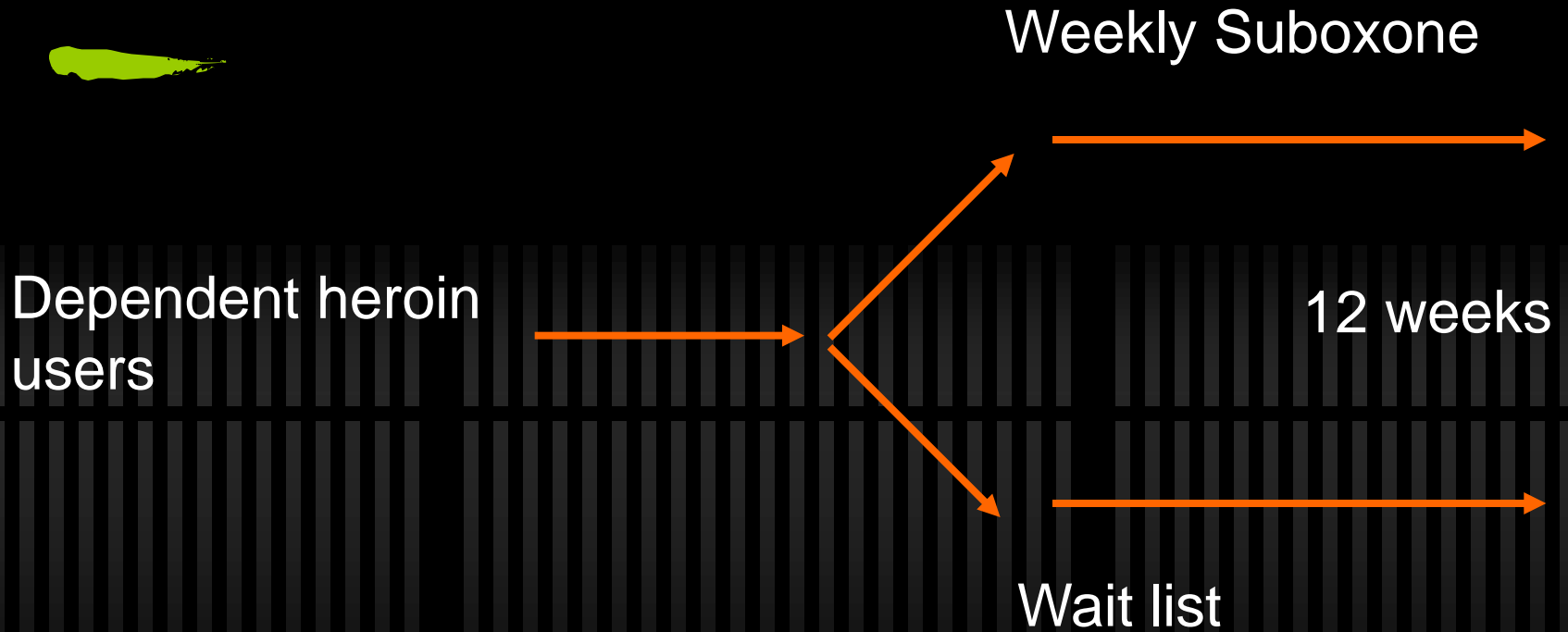
		% injecting	n
Roux 2008	France	32	111
Obadia 2001	France	24	343
Aitken 2008	Australia	32	316
Jenkinson 2005	Australia	33	156
Degenhardt 2009	Australia	23	513
		30	399

BPX waiting list study



- ✓ Newcastle
- ✓ Lack of methadone & buprenorphine
- ✓ Long waiting lists
 - ✓ 6 months or longer

Study design



Outcome measures



- ✓ Heroin use
- ✓ Other drug use
- ✓ Psychosocial state, quality of life, crime
- ✓ Costs of treatment vs no treatment

Thank you



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