

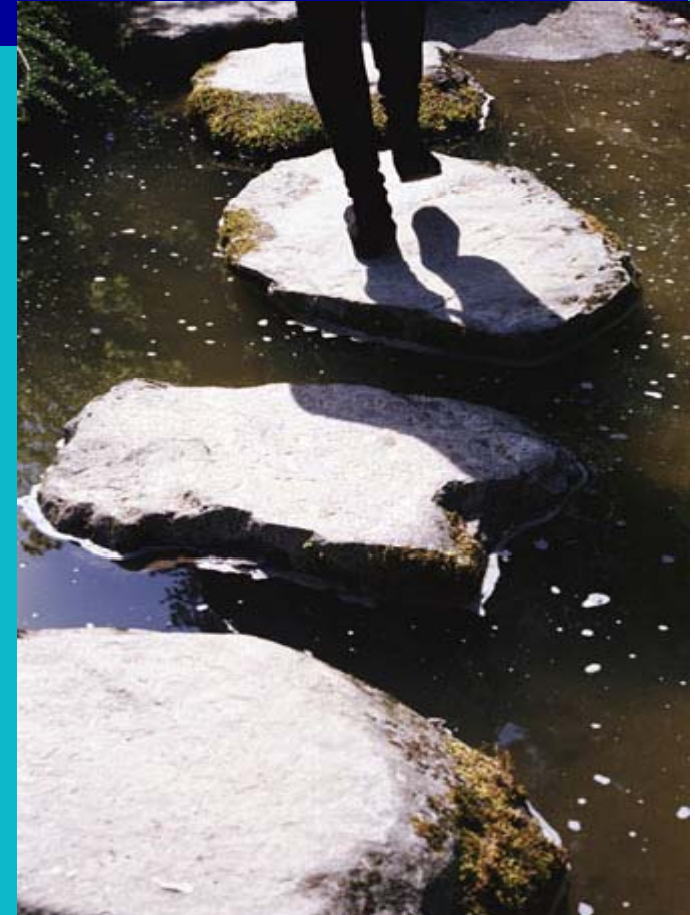


Die Drogenbeauftragte  
der Bundesregierung

## Heroin (diamorphine) supported treatment in Germany: Results and problems of implementation

**Dr. Ingo Ilja Michels**  
Head of the Office of the  
Federal Drug Commissioner  
Federal Ministry of Health  
Berlin, Germany

20th International Conference on  
the Reduction of Drug  
Related Harms  
Bangkok (Thailand), 20 April, 2009



# The German heroin-assisted treatment trial for Opioid dependents

Results of the scientific study  
Comparison of control groups  
Heroin- vs. Methadone Treatment

Scientific study group

Dr. Christian Haasen, Dr. Uwe Verthein, Dr. Peter Degkwitz, Prof.  
Dr. Dieter Naber

Center for Interdisciplinary Addiction Research

University of Hamburg



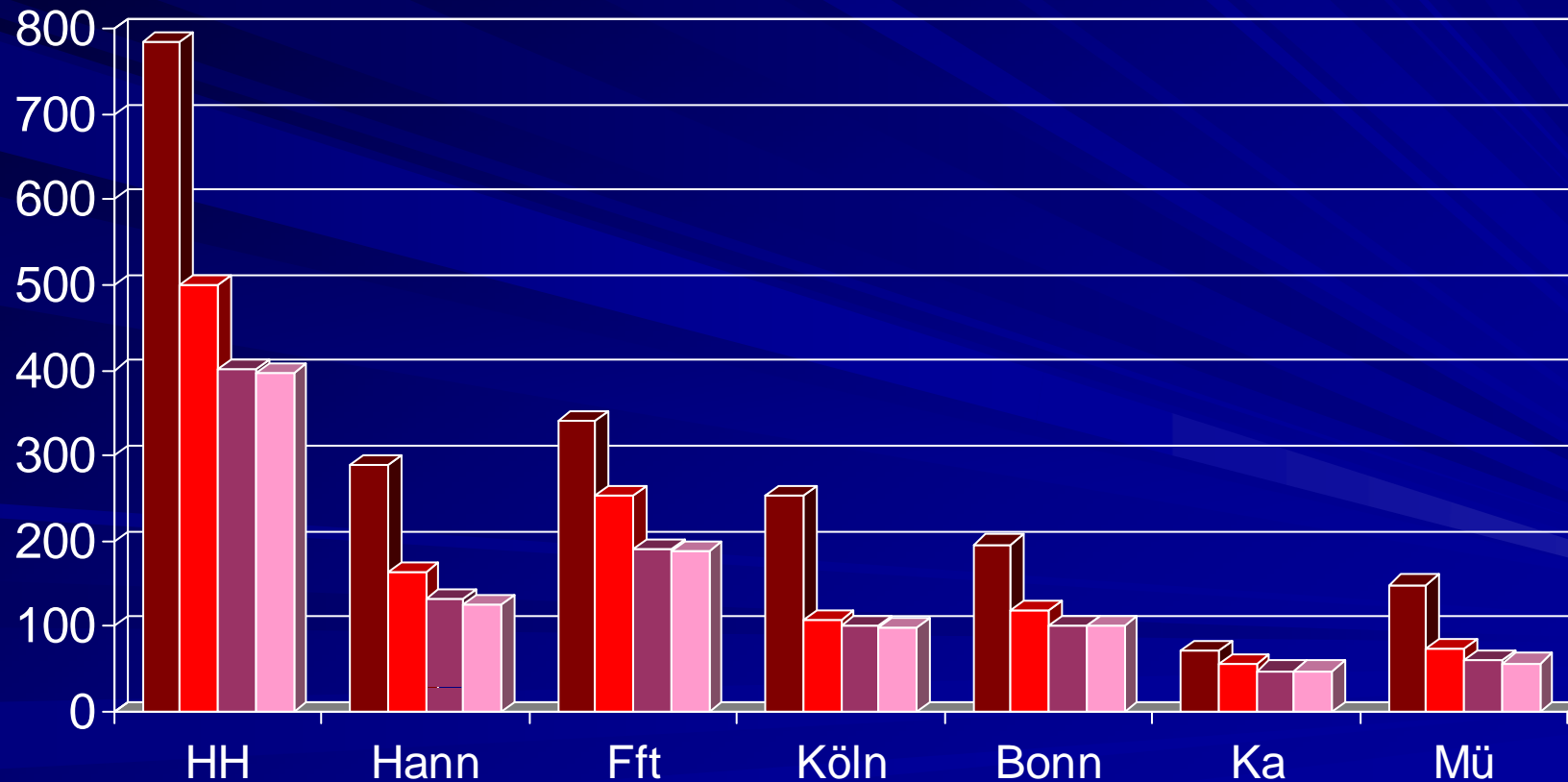
# Background information

- Estimated number of Opioid users: approx. 150.000
- Reached by drug free treatment: approx. 10.000
- Reached by Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST): approx. 75.000 (70% Methadone, 28 % Buprenorphin, 2% Codeine)
- Objective of the Diamorphine Study: to reach those who are not in treatment and those who are not benefitting from OST (low retention rate, high rate of additional substance use)

# Study Aims

- Positive Effects concerning:
  - improvement of physical and mental health
  - reduction of additional use of psychoactive drugs
  - reduction of delinquency
  - accessibility and retention in therapy
  - get-out of drug-related contacts
  - social stabilization: new drug-free contacts, improved skills for jobtaking, financial security, stabilization of housing
  - readiness for additional (psycho-) therapeutical treatment

# screening and study inclusion



# Target Group Characteristics

	Methadone Failures	Non-Reached
■ sex, percentage of men	78%	82%
■ mean age	36,9 y	35,9 y
■ age at first Heroin consumption	19,8 y	20,5 y
■ Hepatitis C / HIV +	84% / 11%	79% / 7%
■ stable housing situation	75%	64%
■ steady partnership	34%	30%
■ children	35%	40%
■ professional training completed	45%	44%
■ employment last 30 day	15%	11%
■ debts	85%	81%
■ ever convicted	97%	96%

# Target Group Characteristics

	Methadone Failures	Non-Reached
■ ever in custody or sentenced to prison	75%	74%
- for narcotics offences:	43%	36%
- for procuring offences:	33%	34%
■ years of heroin use	14.3	13
■ years of cocaine use	6.0	5.1
■ years of multiple use	14.2	12.8
■ intravenous use last 30 days	20.0	26.5
■ drug overdoses (average number)	5.9	5.6
■ money spent on drugs last 30 days (Euro)	810	1.324



# Additional psycho-social support

- **Case management with integrated motivational interviewing** (case management as structured, person-centred, follow-up care intervention)
- **Drug counselling with pschoeducation** (weekly group sessions – 12 - and subsequent refreshing sessions based on manualised treatment program, requiring patients' active involvement and learning appropriate coping strategies to improve social competency, quality of life, coping with illness related problems, compliance with treatment)



# primary outcome measures

- (A) improvement of health, both physical and mental health

*AND*

- (B) reduction of the consumption of street heroin **AND** no increase of cocaine consumption

# Heroin-supported treatment Heroin outpatient clinic in Hanover



Warteraum

Einlass

Gruppenraum

Applikationsraum

Waiting Room

Intake

Group Room

Application Room

# Model project Heroin-assisted treatment Study sites in Hamburg, Bonn, Karlsruhe



# Model project Heroin-assisted treatment Study site in Frankfurt a M

## Site of the heroin-assisted treatment center



Institute of Addictions Research Frankfurt

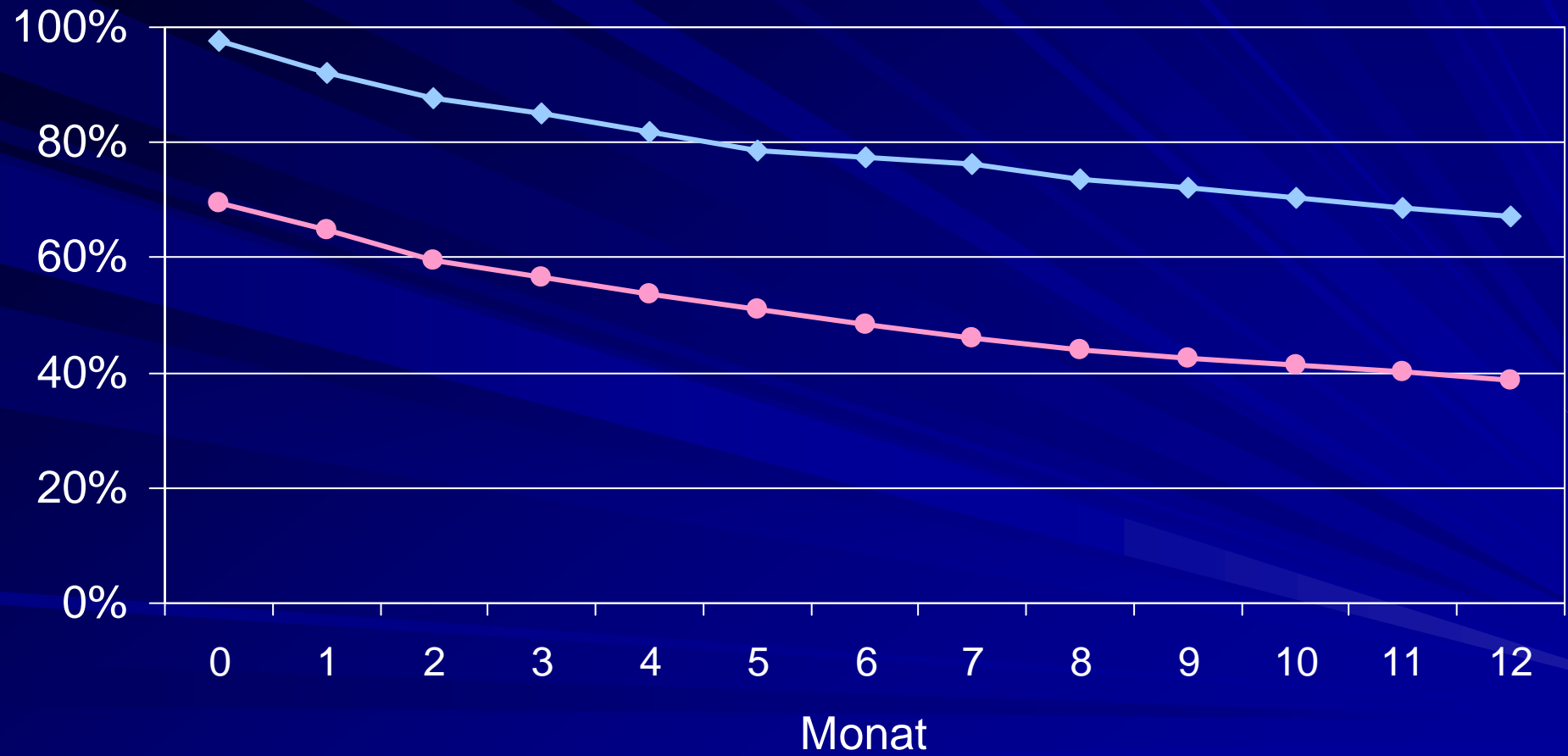


# Model project Heroin-assisted treatment Study site in Frankfurt a M

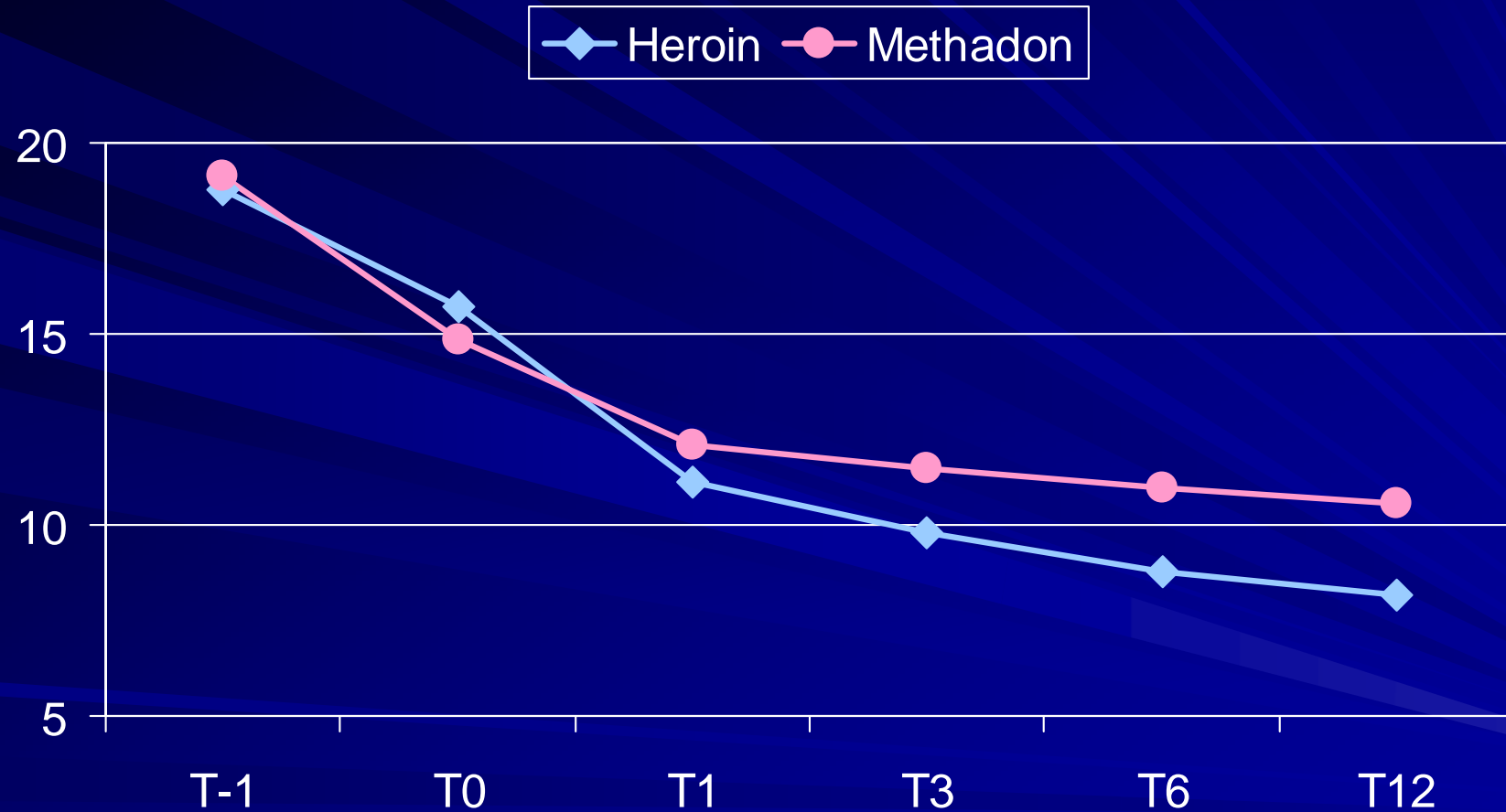


# retention rate

—◆— Heroin —●— Methadon



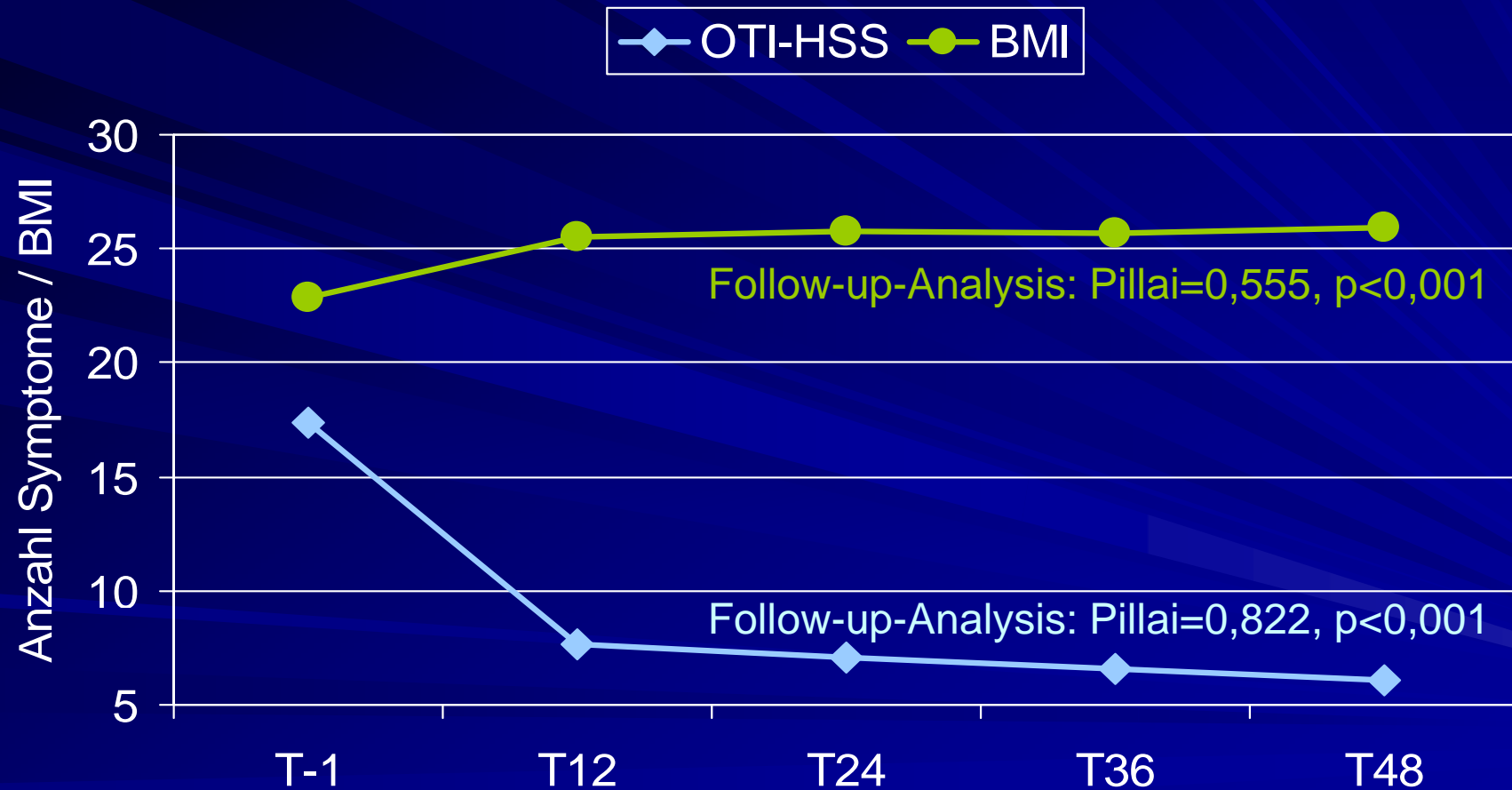
# Assessment of Physical Health (OTI)



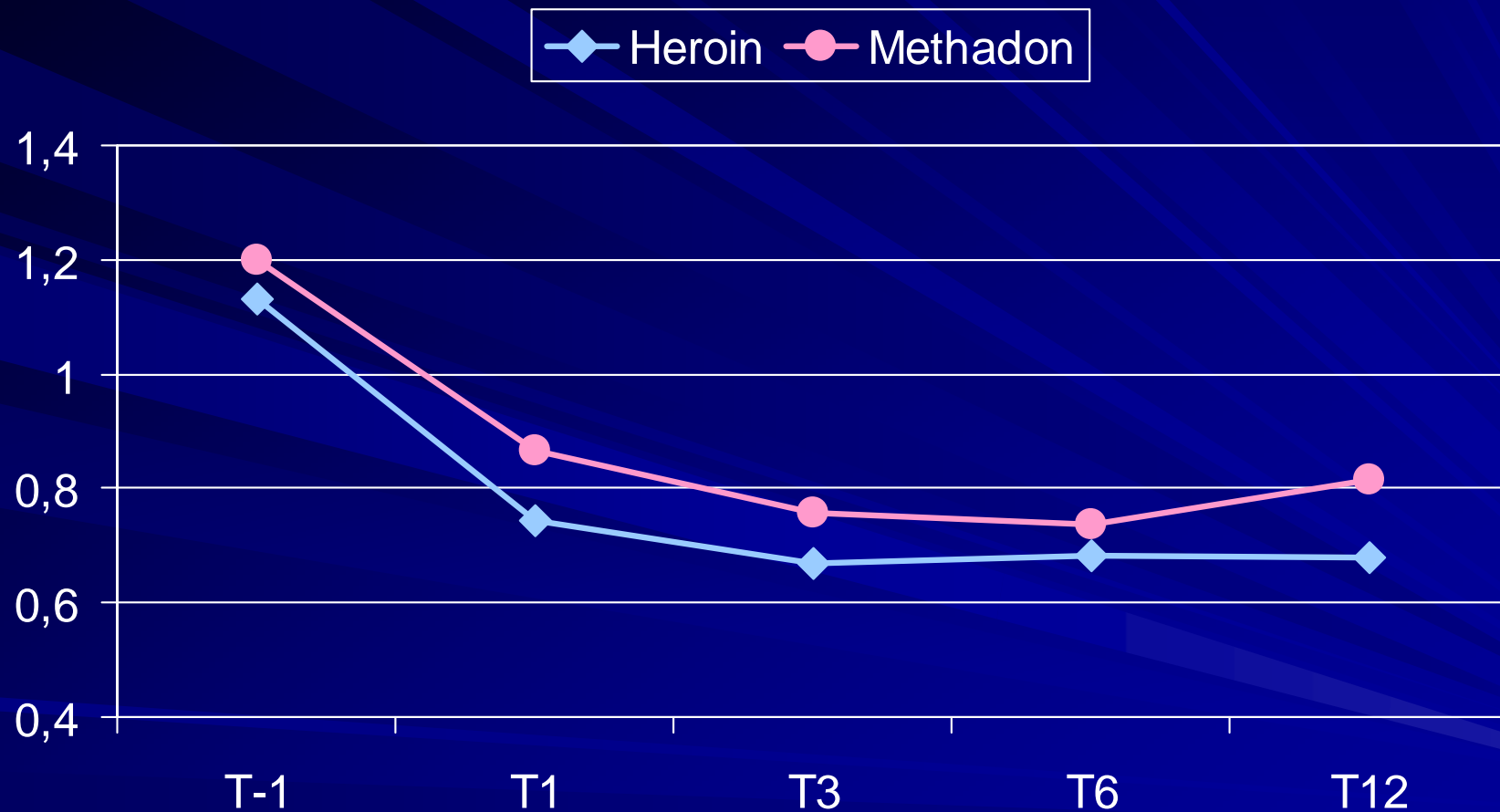
**Significant improvement of health,  
Slightly better in the Heroin group**



# Assessment of Physical Health (OTI) (BMI)(N=156)



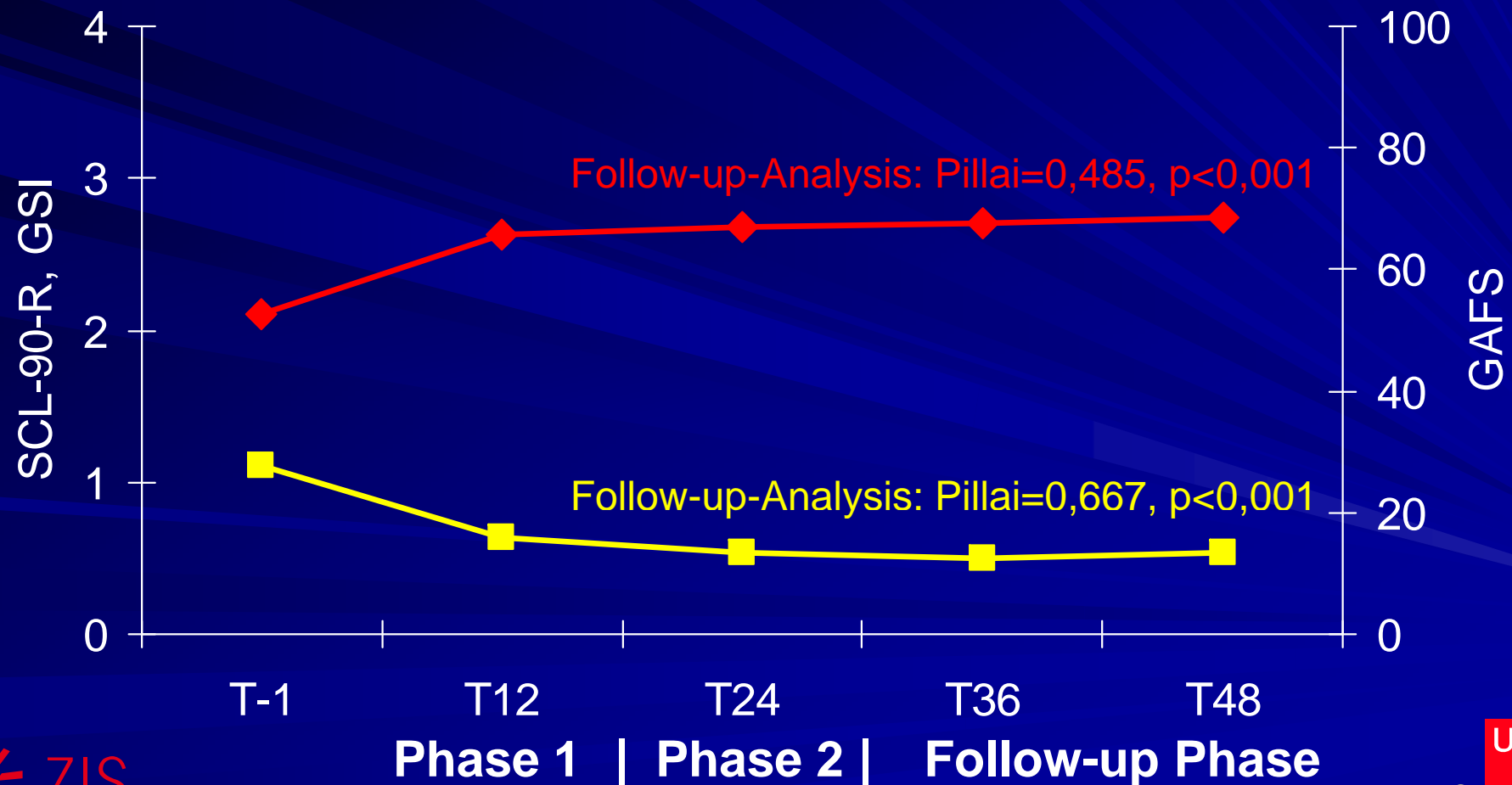
# Assessment of Mental Health (SCL-90-R)



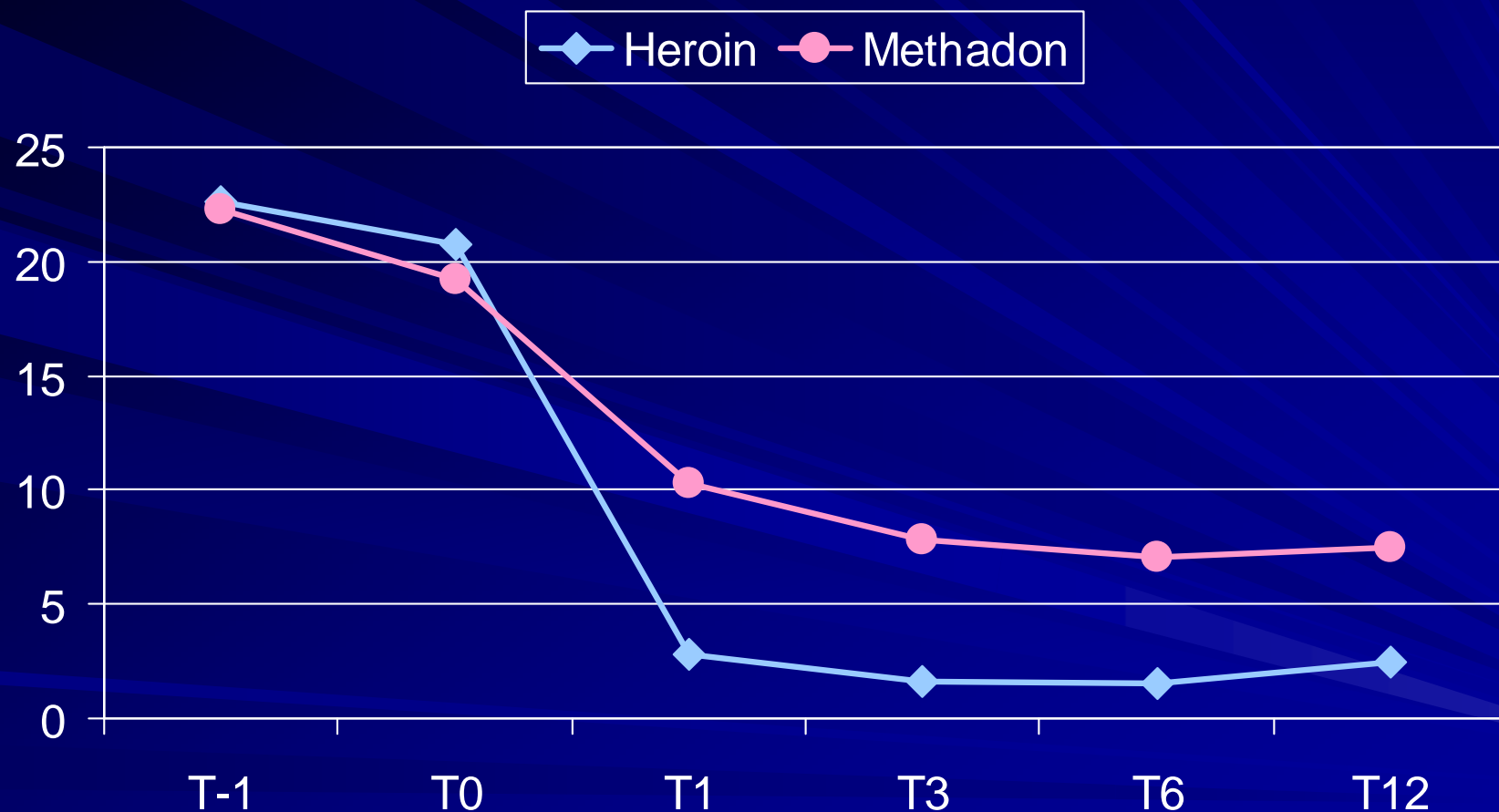
**Significant improvement in both groups,  
Slightly better in the Heroin group**

# Assessment of Mental Health (SCL-90-R)(GSI) (N=156)

■ SCL-90-R, GSI    ◆ GAFS

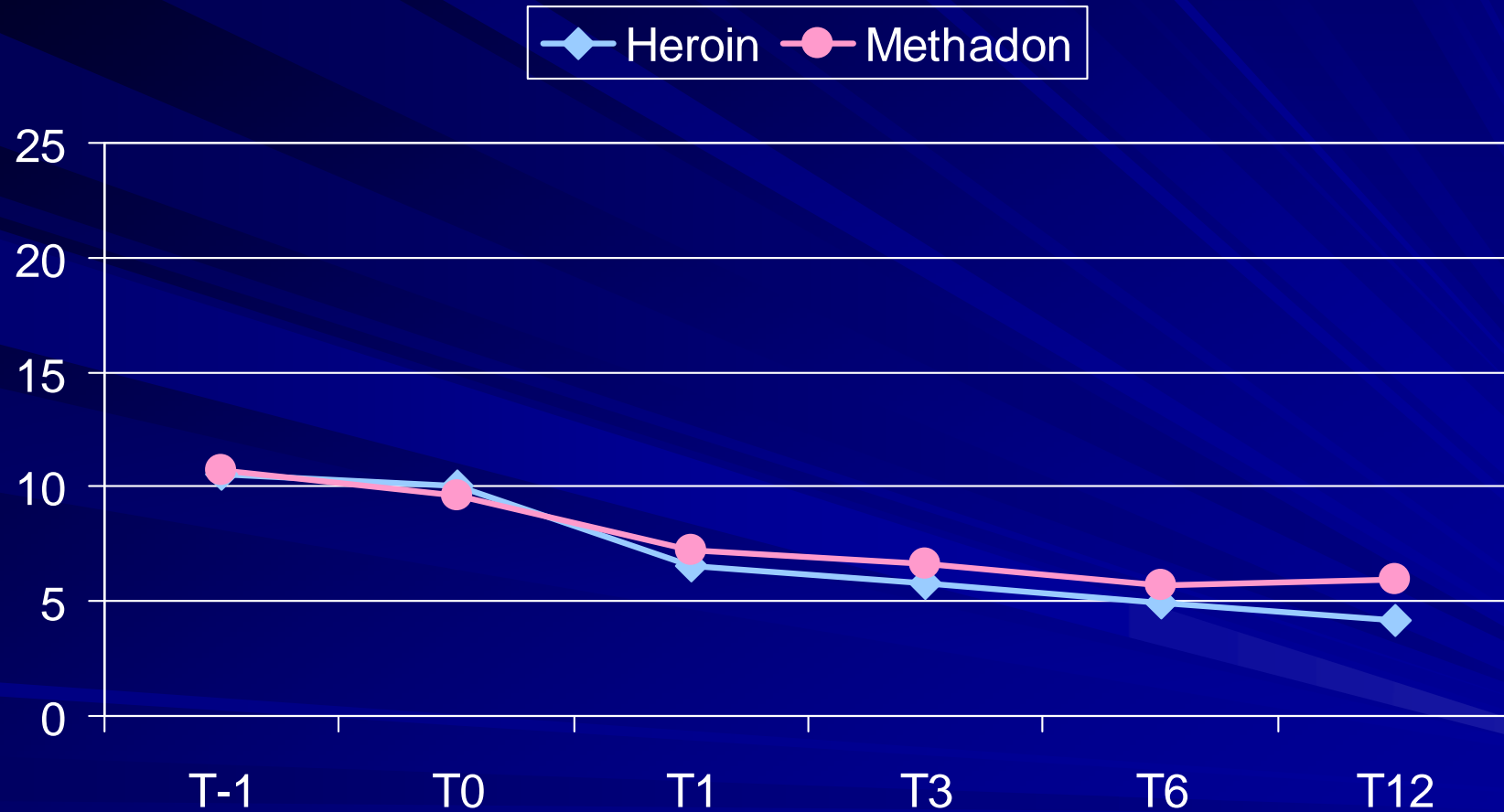


# Consumption of street heroin (last 30 days)



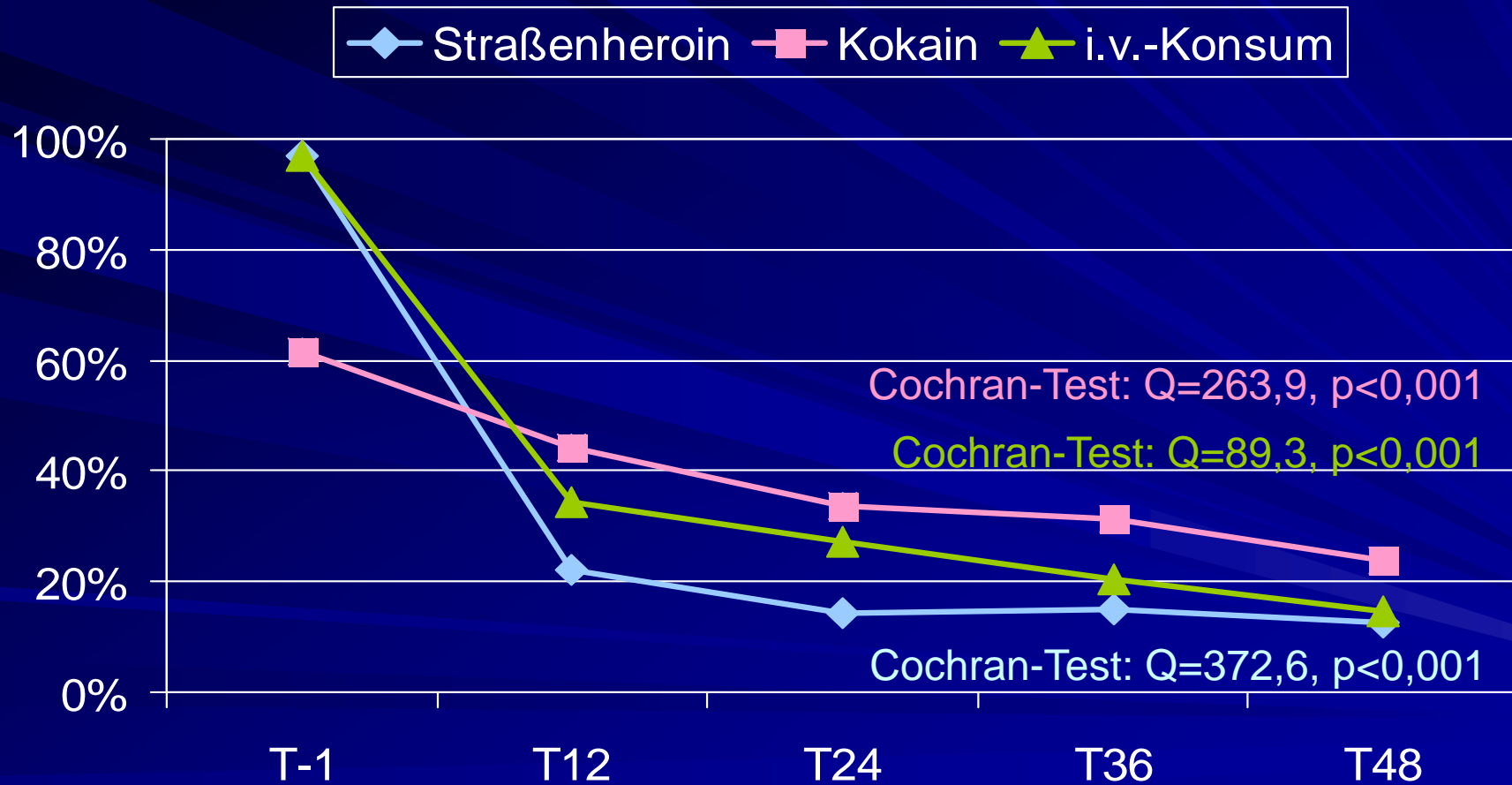
**Significant reduction of street heroin consumption, especially in the Heroin group**

# Consumption of cocaine (last 30 days)

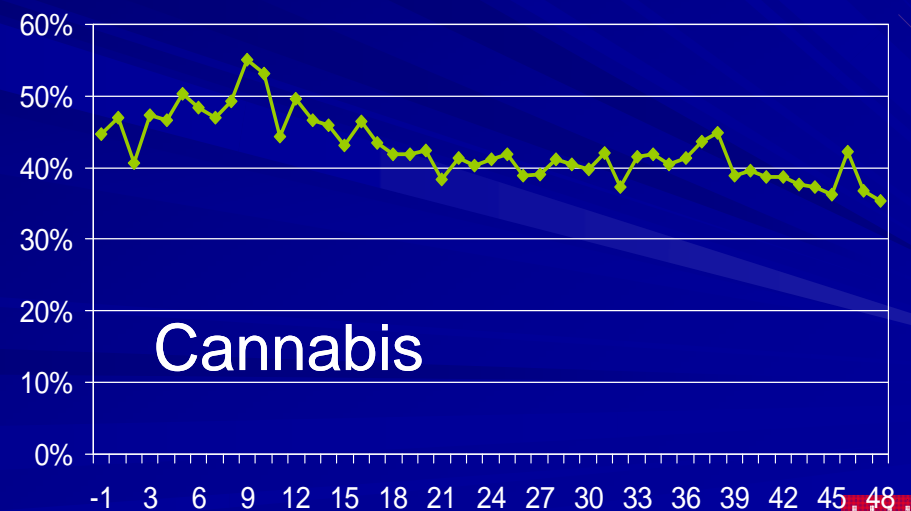
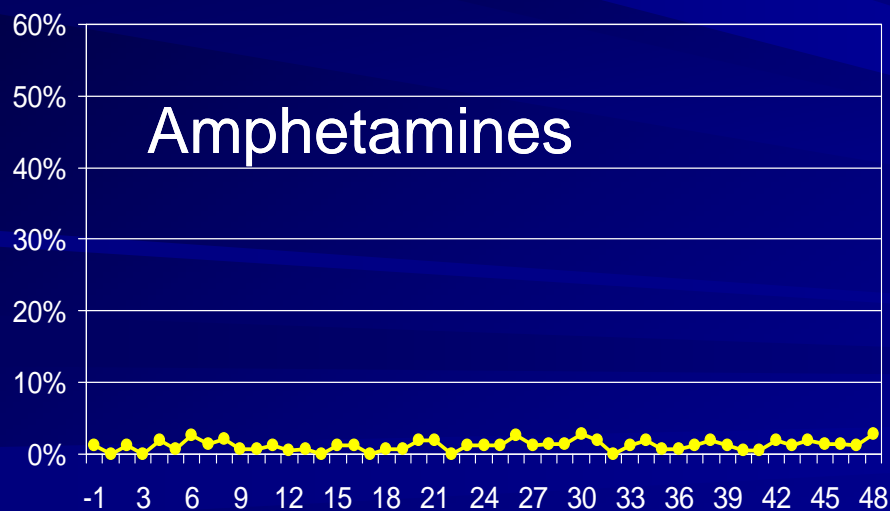
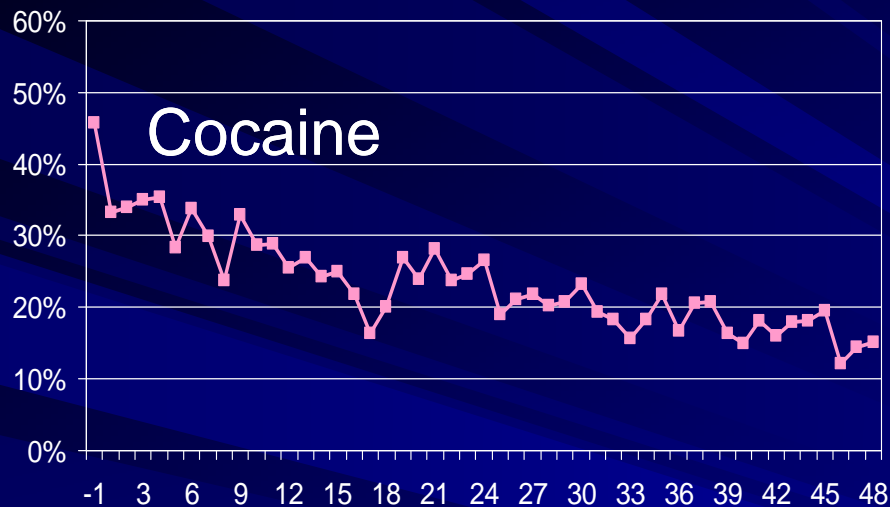


**Stable reduction of cocaine consumption in both groups**

# drugconsumption last 30 days (N=156)

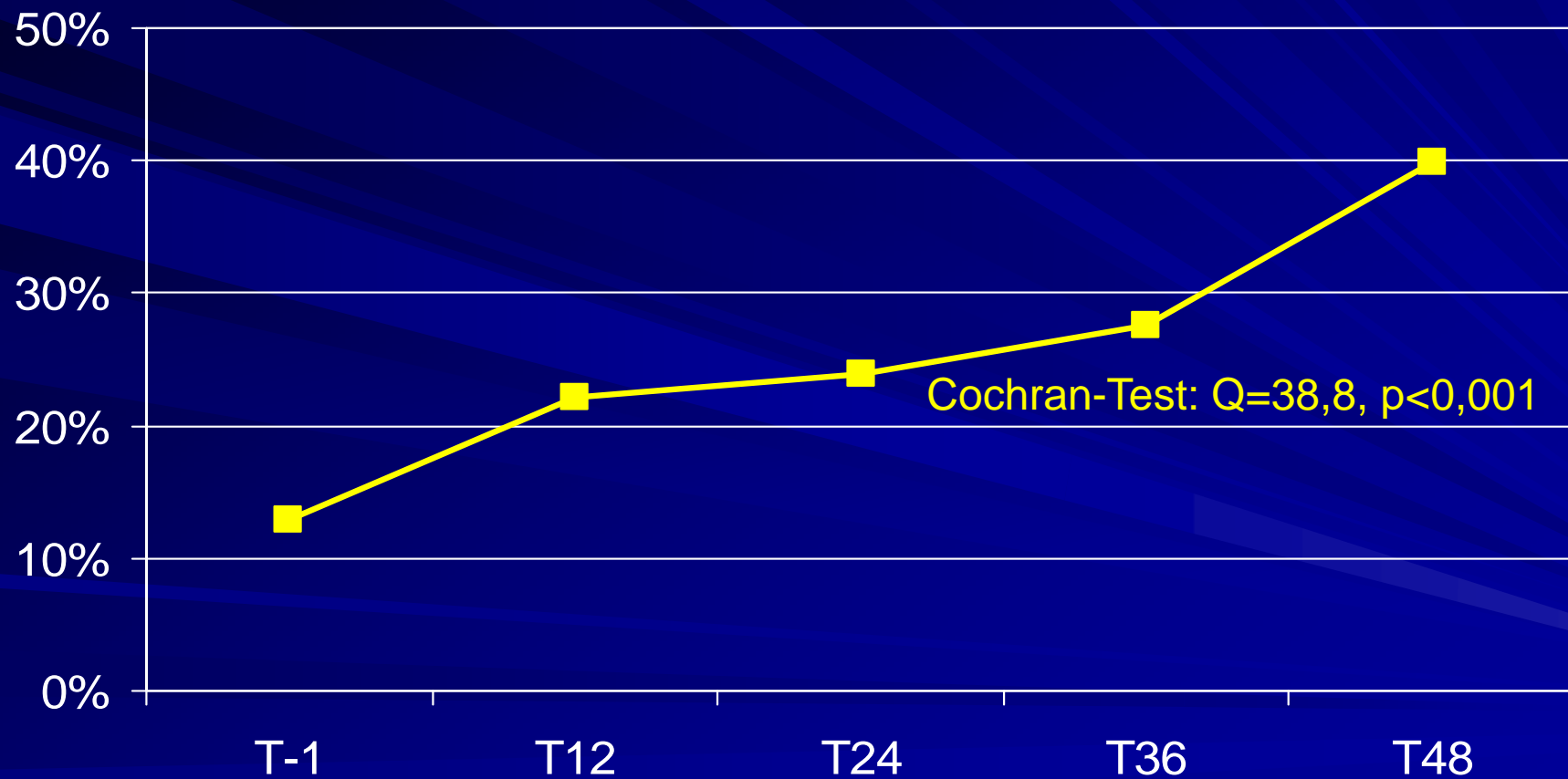


# drugconsumption, urine analysis (N=156)



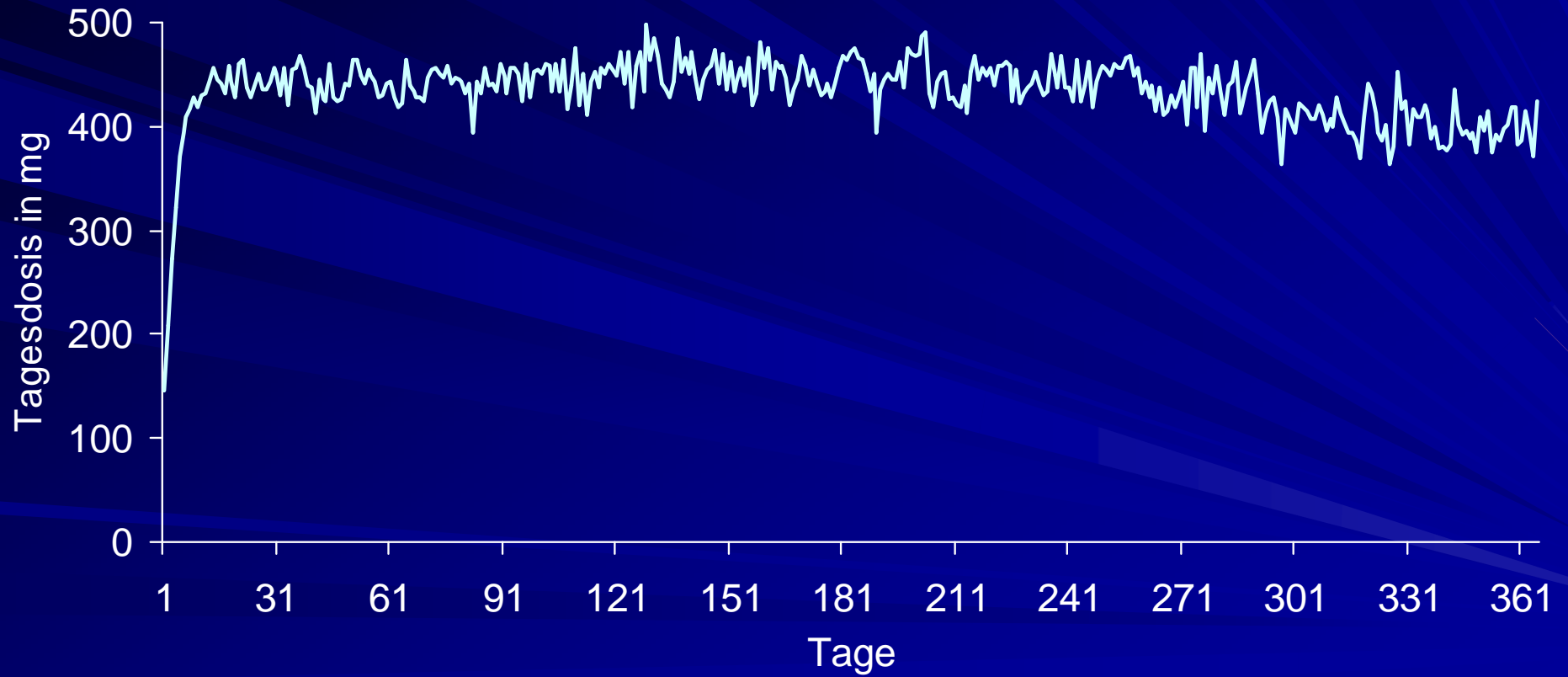


# actual in job (N=156)



# Dosage

— Heroin-Dosis



**Average: stable heroin dosage slightly decreasing**

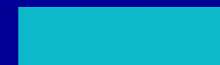
# medical safety

- Severe adverse events:  
Heroin: 58                      Methadon: 15                      (4:1)  
not unexpected: caused by intravenous application (cerebral convulsions, respiratory depressions)
- deaths (all without casual relationship to study treatment or study medication) :  
Heroin: 5                      Methadon: 7  
Mortality 1% (expected mortality >3%)
- Slightly higher safety risk is justifying:
  - Treatment only in specialized clinics, not by GP's
  - no take-home provision

# Main results of the model project of a heroin assisted treatment study

- the group of severely ill heroin addicts could be successfully recruited;
- the retention rate is higher in the heroin group;
- the heroin treatment group showed significantly better results with respect to improvement of health and reduction of illicit drug use;
- The effects are largely independent of the target group, psycho-social intervention form and study center;
- Heroin treatment is as effective for 'not-reached drug users' as for 'methadone treatment failures';
- Positive developments are also seen in other areas such as criminality and social contacts

# patients in Heroin treatment





# Possible scenarios for implementation

## Comprehensive treatment and long-term care concept

### Treatment Service Characteristics

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Patient inclusion criteria | ■ Severe problem profiles  |
| 2. Duration                   | ■ According to individual needs  |
| 3. Facility                   | ■ Highly specialized comprehensive treatment and care settings                         |
| 4. Medication                 | ■ Earlier MM/HT according to individual problem profile (limited or as long-term care) |
| 5. Psychological treatment    | ■ Individual need assessment   |
|                               | ■ Disorder specific behavior therapy components (with medication)                      |
| 6. Social support             | ■ Individual needs   |
| 7. Overall treatment concept  | ■ Long-term, proactive case management   |

# Final Decision of the Parliament

- Discussion on the implementation of the diamorphine-supported treatment in the German parliament between the partners of the „great coalition“ (christian democrats/social democrats), although most of the study cities are governed by the christian democrats (conservatives) the christian democrats in the national Parliament are against the implementation
- There will be a decision of the parliament soon, based by a common draft for an amendment of the narcotic law of the social democrats together with the „opposition parties“ - liberals, left, green (ecologists)