

Non-general practice versus general practice patients treated for substance use-related problems

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Introduction

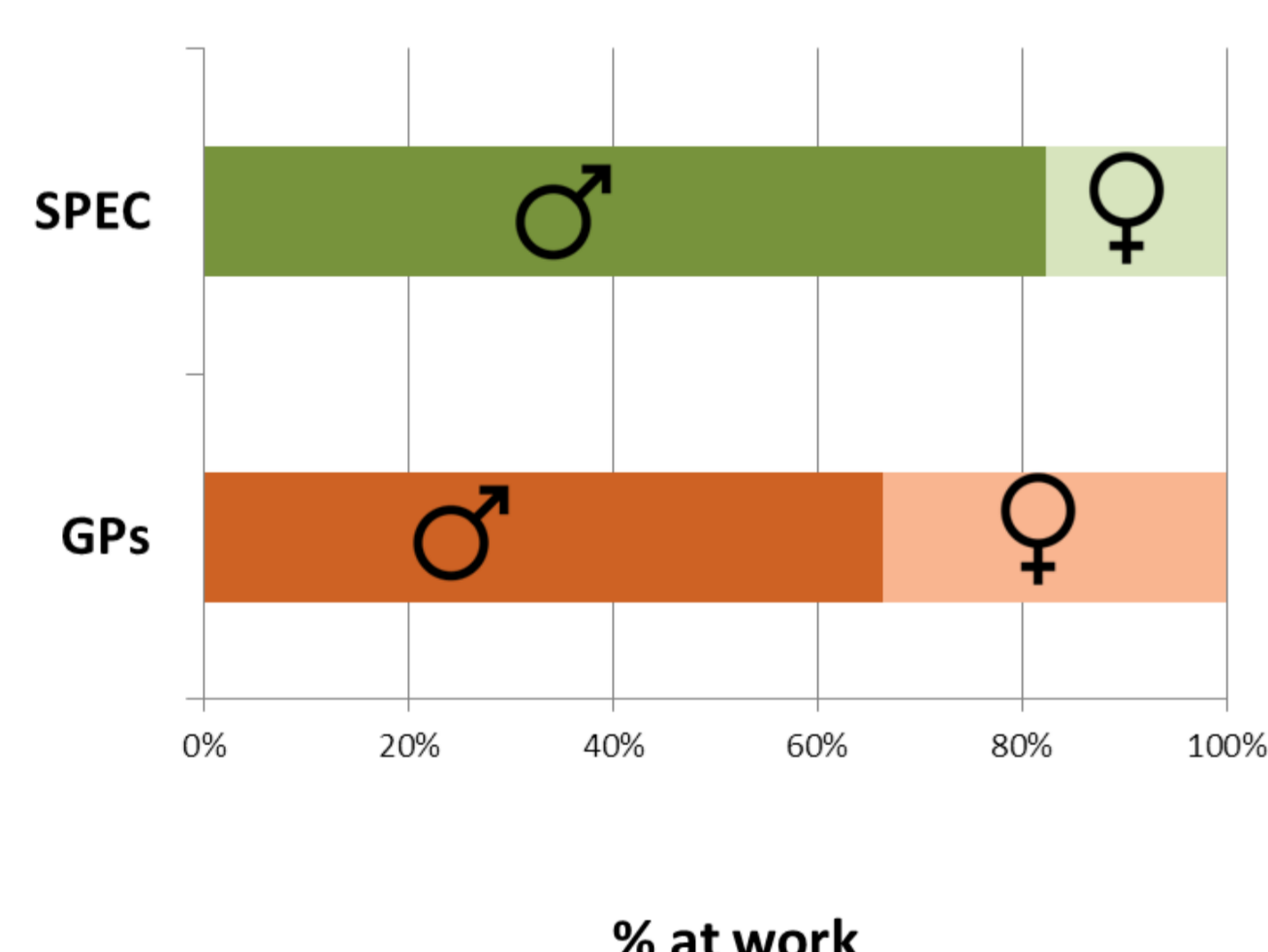
- The treatment demand indicator (TDI) is an European **key indicator** on treatment demands for substance use problems
- The indicator is collected in Belgium since 2011 mainly in specialized health care settings (**SPEC**) (outpatient or inpatient) but not by general practitioners (**GPs**)
- So far, little is known about the population with substance use problems (alcohol and illicit drug) in contact with GPs and the comparability with the patients in contact within specialized settings
- The objective is to analyse to what extent patients starting a treatment episode for substance use problems are comparable in general practice versus non-general practice

Material and Methods

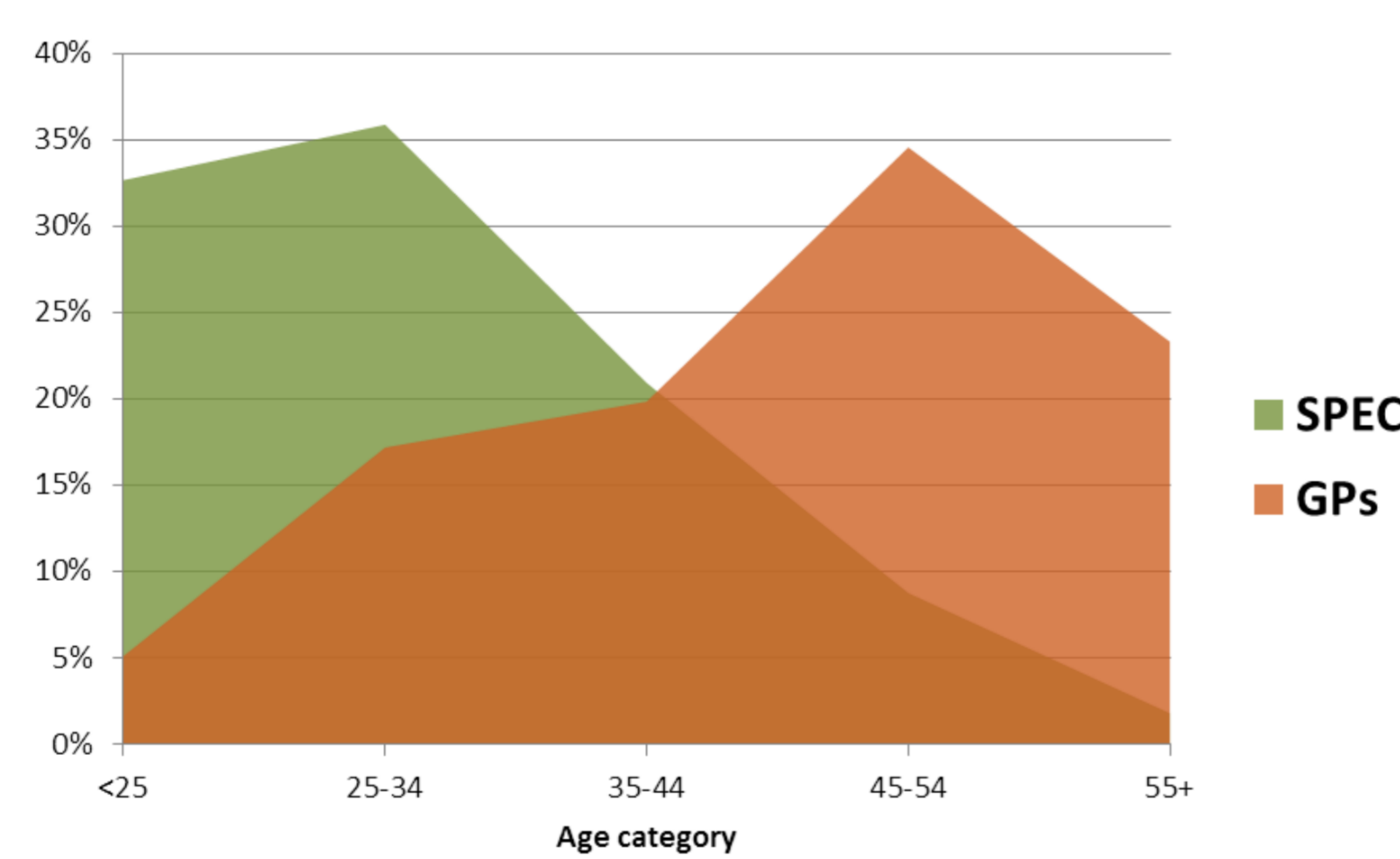
- This study pooled two **datasets** :
 - a dataset (N=489) on substance use patients in treatment in the sentinel general practices network (GPs) during 5 months in 2013
 - a dataset (N=1840) on patients starting a treatment episode for substance use during the same period in specialized settings (SPEC) participating in the TDI registration
- A limited common set of comparable **variables** was available between these two databases :
 - Sex
 - Age
 - Working status
 - First treatment ever for substance use
 - Substances used

Results

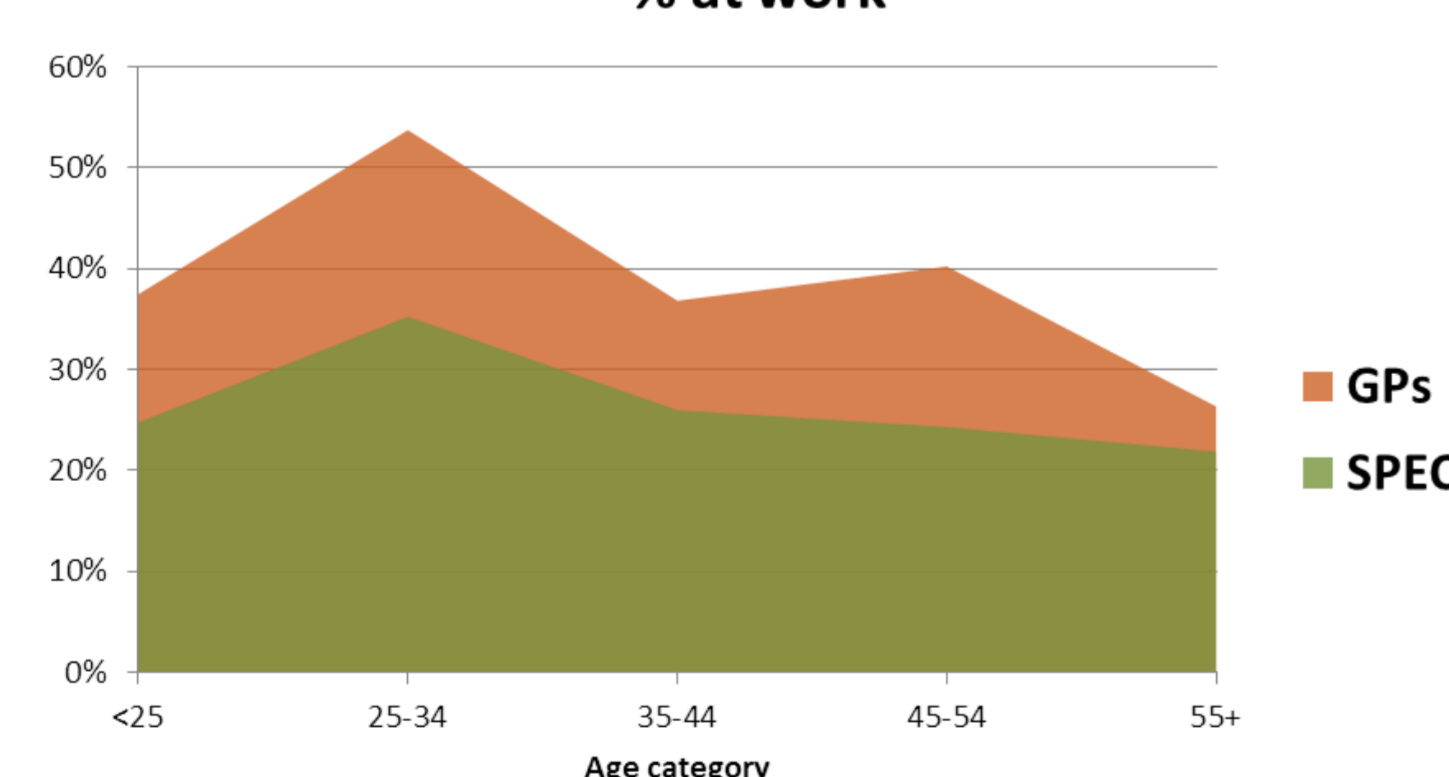
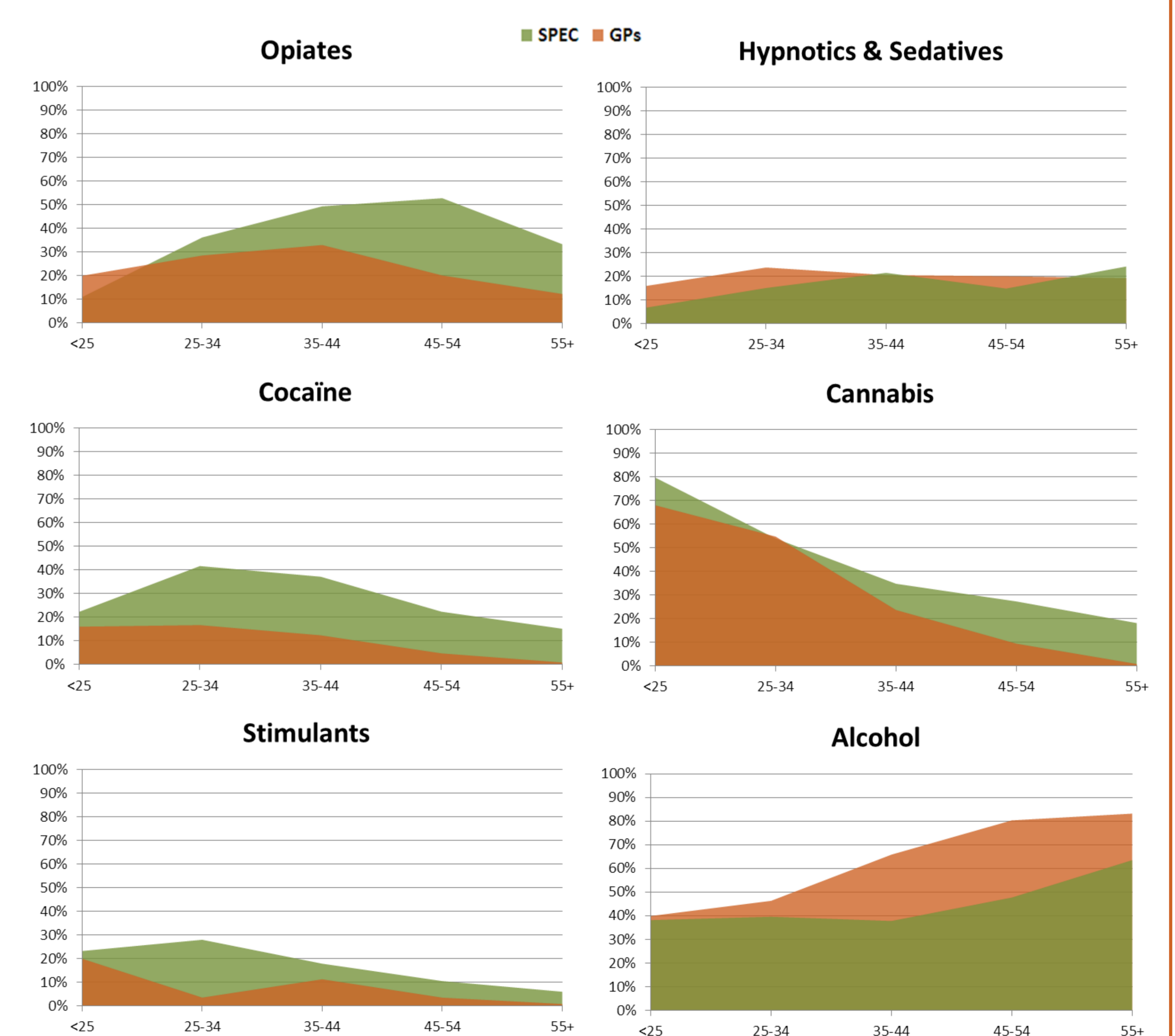
- GPs comprises a higher proportion of women in treatment for substance use than specialized settings



- Patients in treatment for substance use in general practice are older compared with those in specialized settings

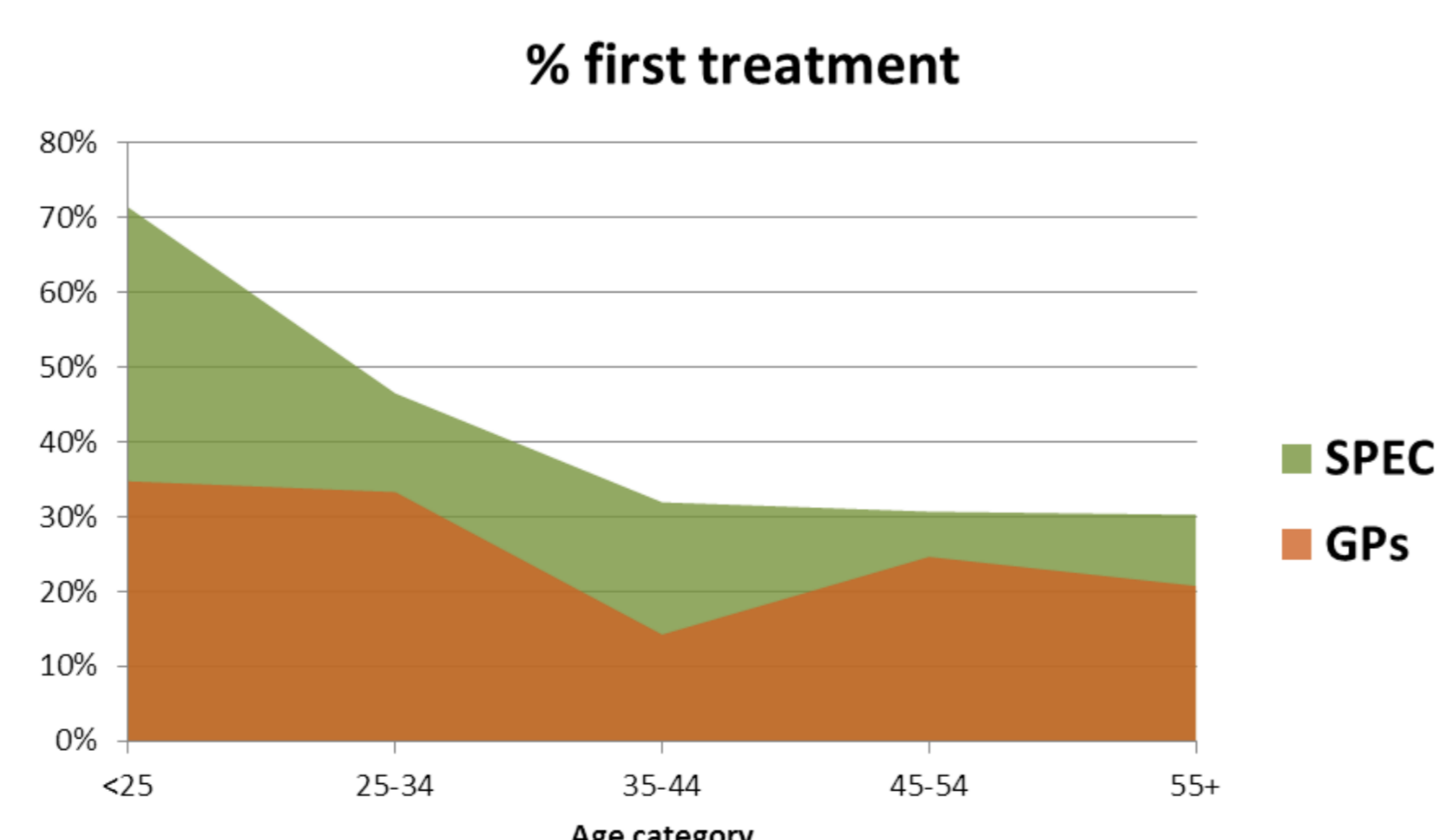


- The proportion of patients using illicit drugs (opiates, cocaine, other stimulants, cannabis) is always higher in specialized centres among all age groups. Whereas the proportion for alcohol and hypnotics and sedatives is higher in general practice.



- The proportion of patients at work is higher among all age categories in general practice

- The proportion of patients starting a treatment for substance use for the first time is significantly higher in specialized centers than in general practice



Conclusions

- In conclusion, patients in general practice treated for substance use problems are different from patients treated in non-general practice in terms of socio-demographic status, treatment history and consumption characteristics.
- Our findings support the necessity to take into account general practice to provide a representative indicator of treatment demand for substance use problems in Belgium.