



# MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIORS FOR A MULTI-SITE SAMPLE OF YOUTH LIVING WITH HIV STARTING ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY (ART)

**WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY**

Angulique Y. Outlaw, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Madison J. Ford,<sup>1</sup> Monique Green-Jones, MPH<sup>1</sup>, and Sylvie Naar, PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, Wayne State University

<sup>2</sup>Center for Translational Behavioral Research, Florida State University

## INTRODUCTION

Youth living with HIV (YLWH), ages 15 to 24, represent approximately 21% of new HIV infections in the United States

Adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) is a significant predictor of viral suppression and is associated with dramatic reductions in mortality and morbidity

It is important to assess for the presence of mental health symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety) and substance use (e.g., alcohol, marijuana) for YLWH starting HIV medication to prevent ART non-adherence and poor health outcomes.

## METHODS

YLWH (recruited as part of a larger HIV medication adherence intervention trial) from six sites:

- Wayne State University (Detroit, MI)
- Children's National Medical Center (Washington, DC)
- Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)
- University of Miami (Miami, FL)
- University of Colorado (Aurora, CO)

YLWH were verbally recommended to begin ART within the previous 12 weeks, but had not been on ART for more than 30 days

Self-report measures were completed at baseline via Audio Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI)

- The Brief Symptom Inventory-18 (BSI-18), which assess three dimensions of physical and mental symptoms
- The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST), which assesses the frequency of use and associated problems for various substances



## PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Participants N=96 (88.5% Males)

Mean Age 20.2 years old (Range: 16 – 24 years)

Education 45.8% Completed High School/GED

Race/Ethnicity 74.0% Non-Hispanic Black/African American

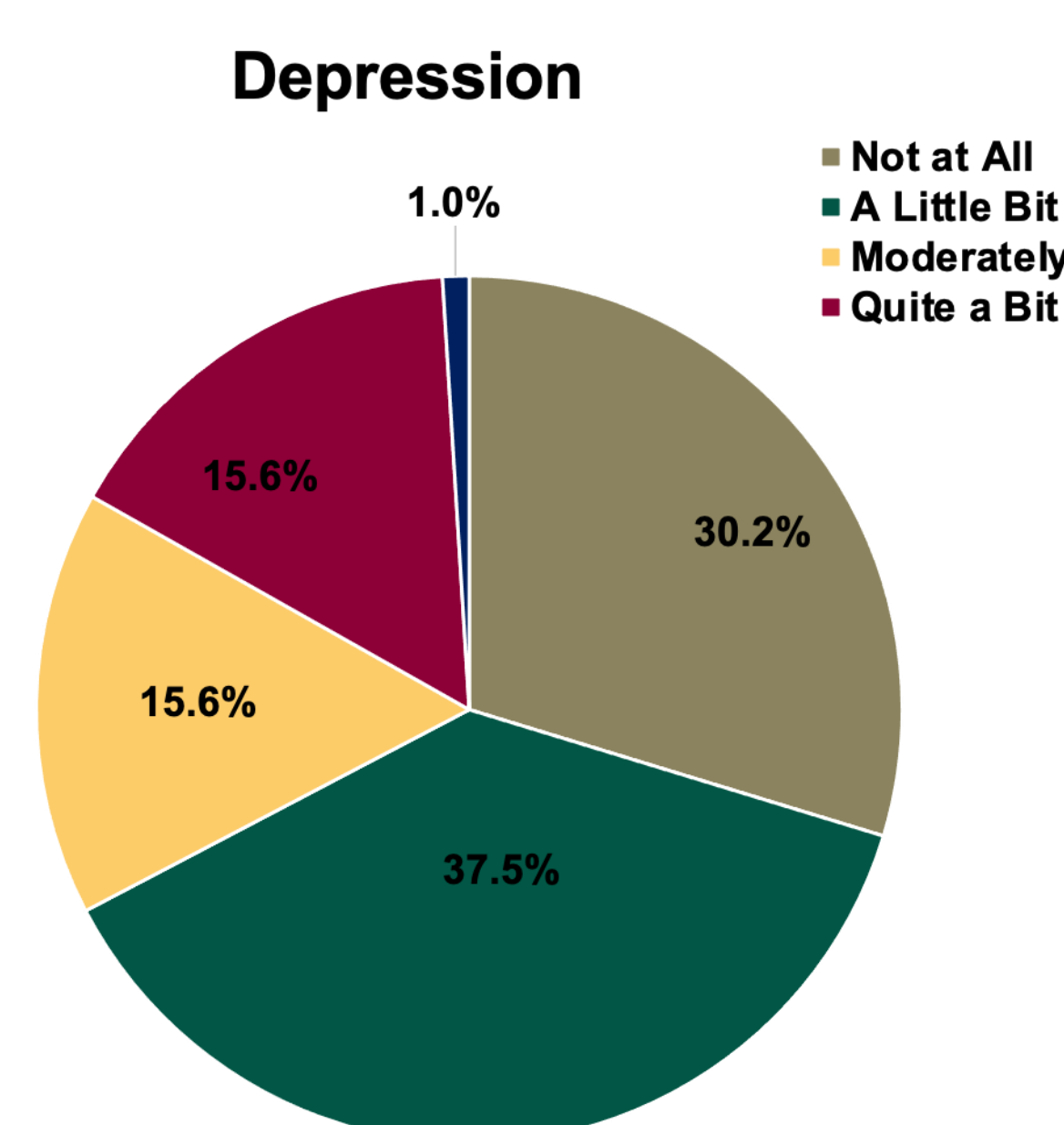
Self Identification 53.1% Gay/Lesbian  
25.0% Bisexual

Employment Status 44.8% Employed at least part-time

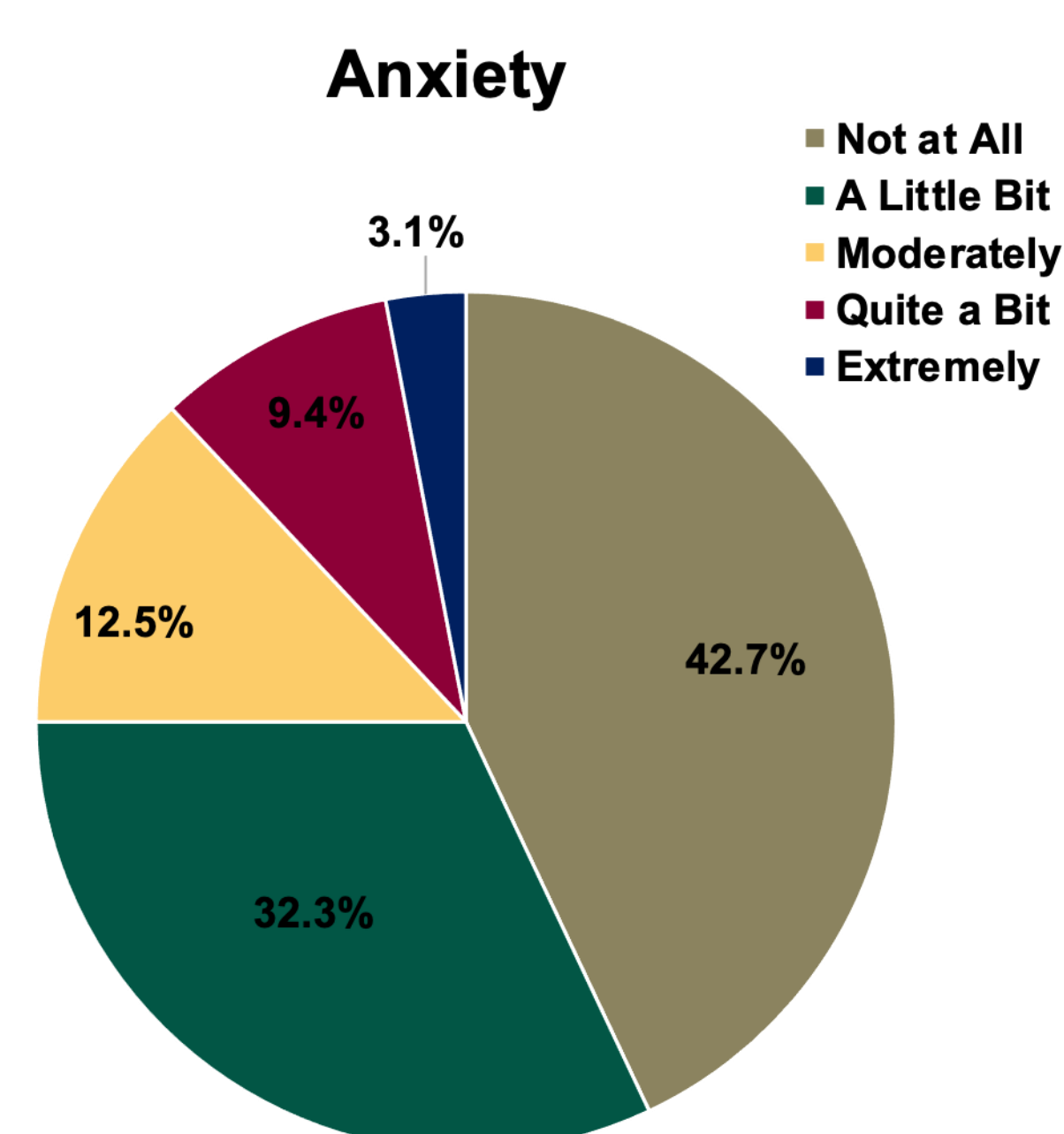
Housing 92.7% Lived with parents, other relatives, or friends

## RESULTS: MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS

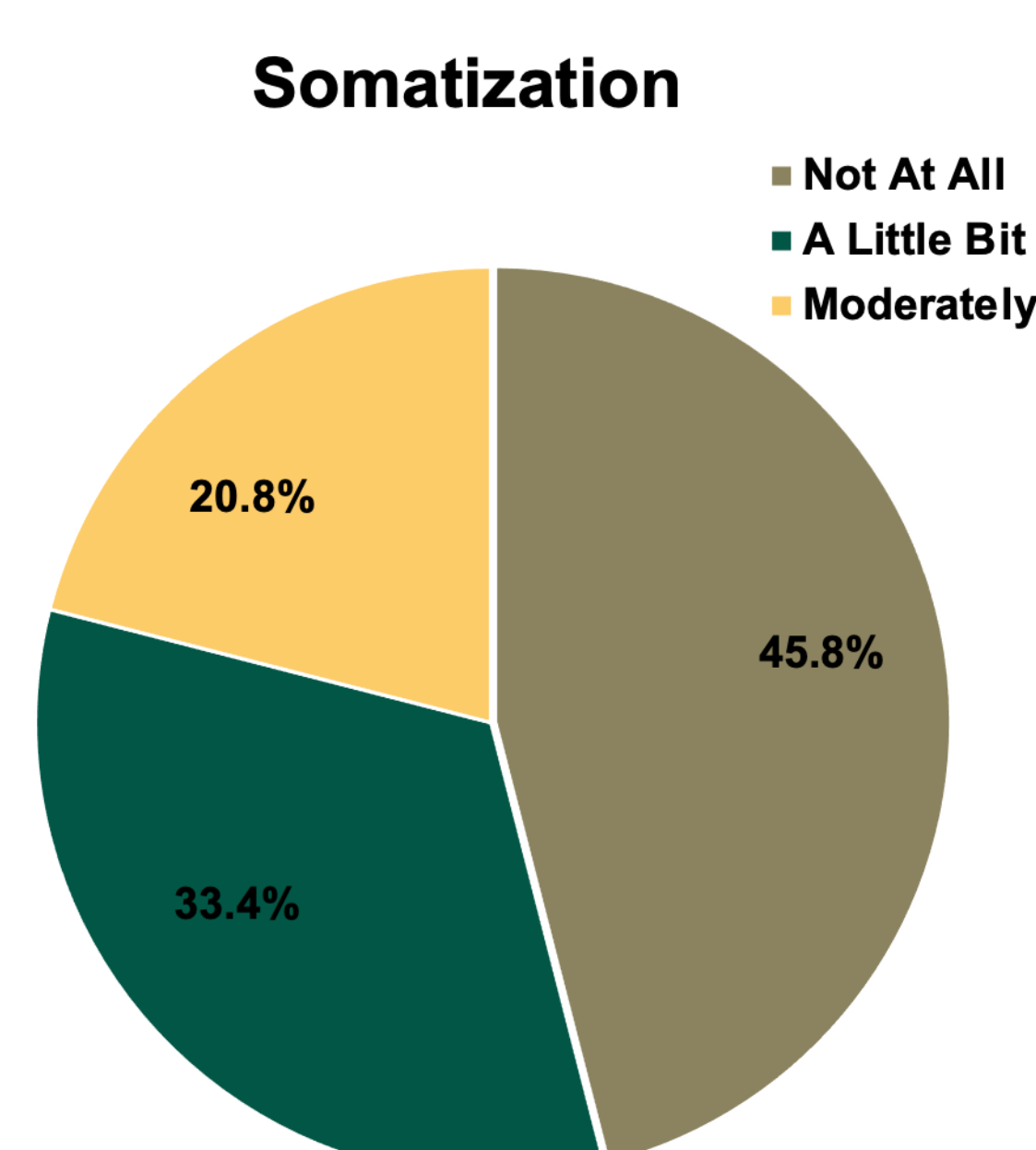
More than half of participants (69.8%) reported depressive symptomatology



A little more than half of participants (57.3%) reported anxiety



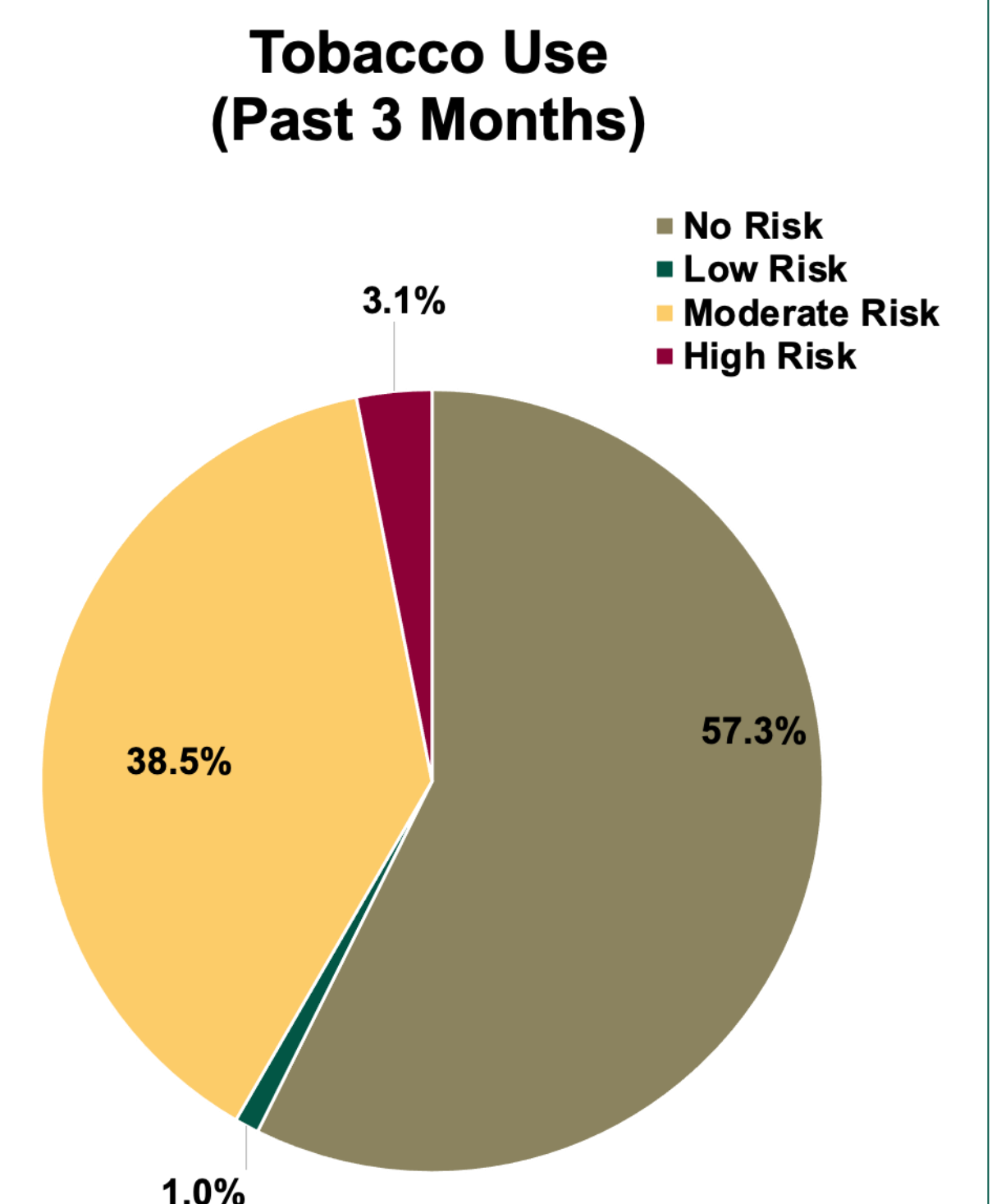
A little more than half of participants (54.2%) reported physical symptoms with no discernible organic cause



## RESULTS: SUBSTANCE USE

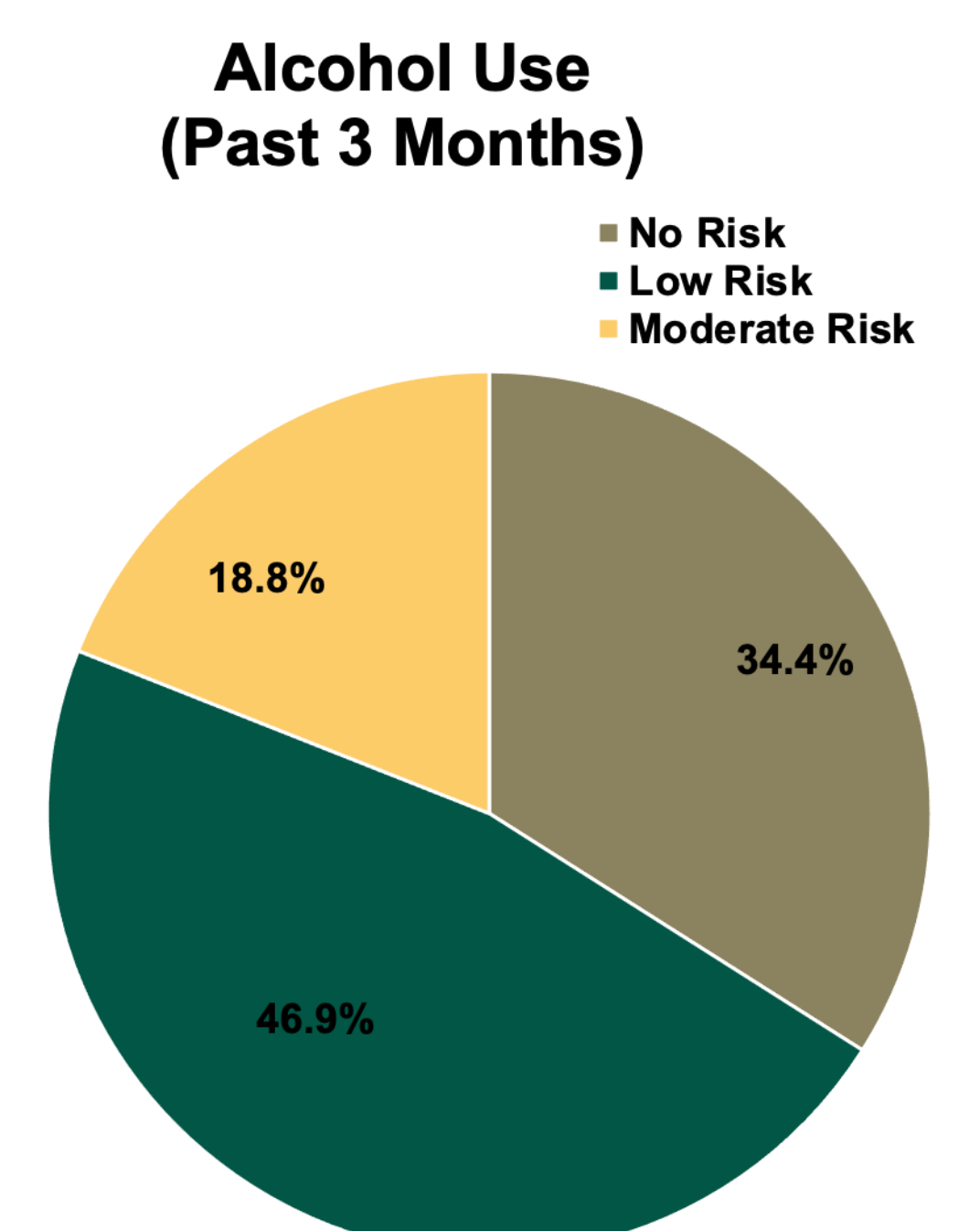
Less than half of participants (45.8%) reported tobacco use in their lifetime

41.6% reported current moderate to high risk-level use during the past 3 months



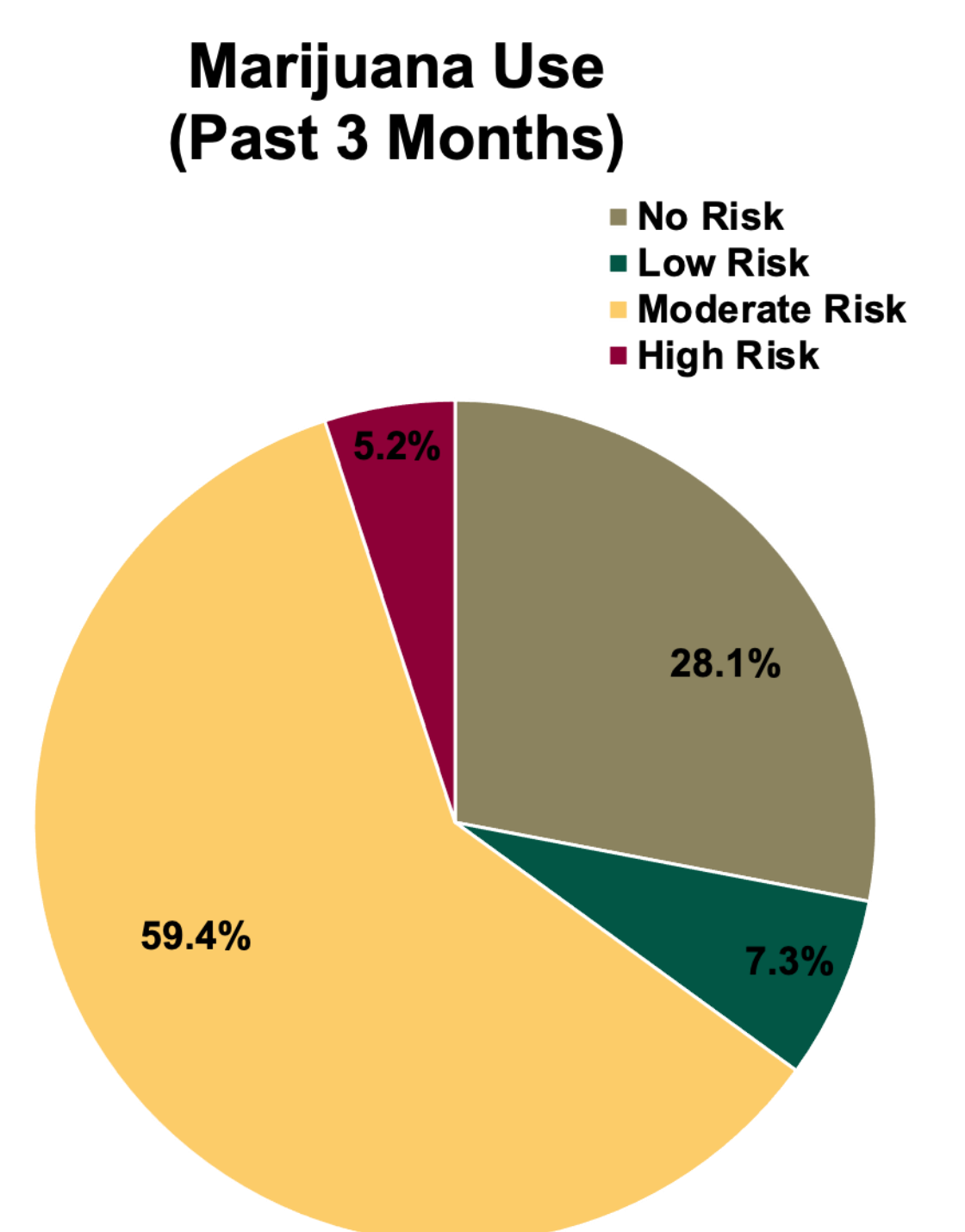
Almost three quarters of participants (74.0%) reported alcohol use in their lifetime

18.8% reported moderate risk-level use during the past 3 months



Over three quarters of participants (81.3%) reported marijuana use in their lifetime

64.6% reported moderate to high risk-level use during the past 3 months



## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Mental health symptoms and substance use can be barriers for YLWH starting ART.

It is important to assess and effectively address the impact of mental health and substance use prior to YLWH starting ART.

Effectively addressing the mental health needs and substance use issues for YLWH starting HIV medication removes a barrier to sustained HIV medication adherence, which is necessary to promote positive health outcomes.