

Iceland  
Liechtenstein  
Norway grants



**NTTK**

*Vägivallast on  
väljapääs!*

  
ühendus  
vägivallavaba  
elu kaitseks



# The Root - Rótin

Gender and substance use.

Research on Women's Experience of Substance  
Use Treatment

“Trained specialists help to reduce domestic violence in Estonia”. –  
Tallinn, Estonia, 2 June 2022

Kristín I. Pálsdóttir and Þórunn Sif Böðvarsdóttir



# THE ROOT

- Founded March 8, 2013
- 550 members, women and trans only
- A gendered and feminist view on Problematic Substance Use (PSU)
- Promotes public discussion on women, addiction, trauma and violence
- Lobbies for better policy, professionalism and quality control
- Runs an emergency shelter for women
- Courses on trauma and trauma and addiction
- Cooperation
- Conferences
- Participant in European Projects on PSU and IPV



# Emphasis

- Evidence based practices
- Public health approach
- Opposes the narrow medical view, brain disease model, on PSU
- Education of treatment personnel
- Gender-informed services
- Trauma-informed services
- Gender specific treatment
- Quality control
- Best practice guidelines



# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

- **The Root** and **RIKK - Institute for Gender, Equality and Difference**, University of Iceland and Funded by the **Icelandic Equality Fund**
- **Aim:**
  - Get insight into women's experience of addiction treatment and their sense of well-being and security in treatment
  - Look into personal histories with special regard to adverse childhood experiences and interpersonal violence
- Little research, in the field, focusing on the women's experiences in Iceland



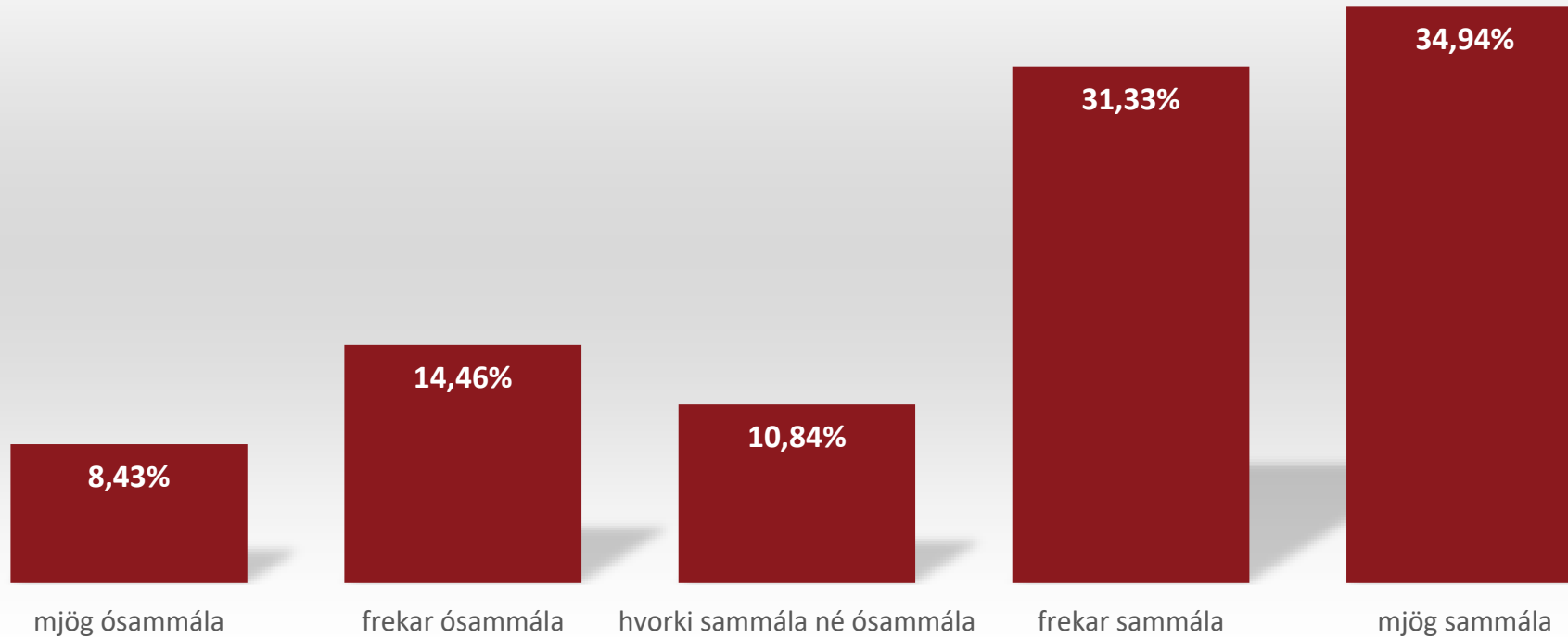
# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

- Mixed research methods, **questionnaire** and **qualitative interviews**
- Sent to **305 members of the ROOT**
- **110** answers, thereof **96** had addiction related problems
- High educational level, **67%** University degree, **17,2** vocational training
- **55%** paid job, **9,4%** self-employed, **24%** legally disabled
- Financial status is good, **23,9%** had financial difficulties



# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

The treatment was not sufficiently individualized

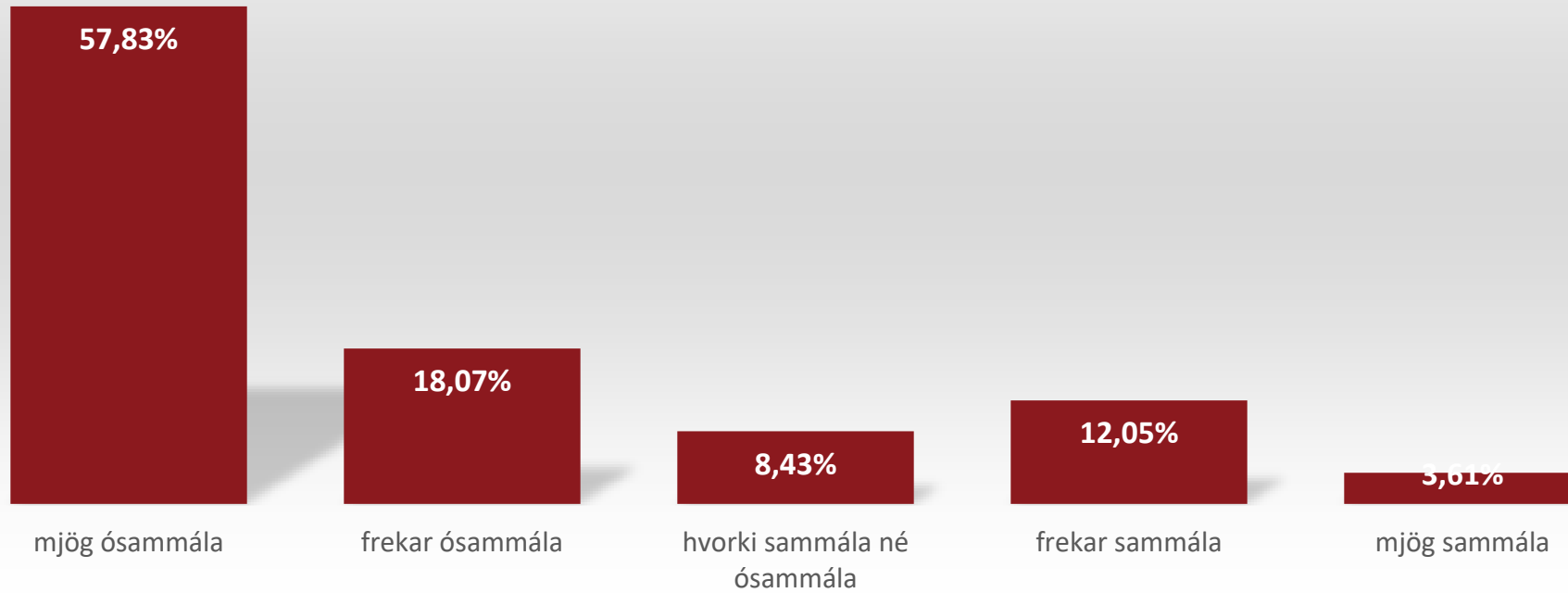


Strongly disagree or disagree **22,89%**, agree or strongly agree **66,27%**.



# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

The treatment involved work on trauma and other mental health issues

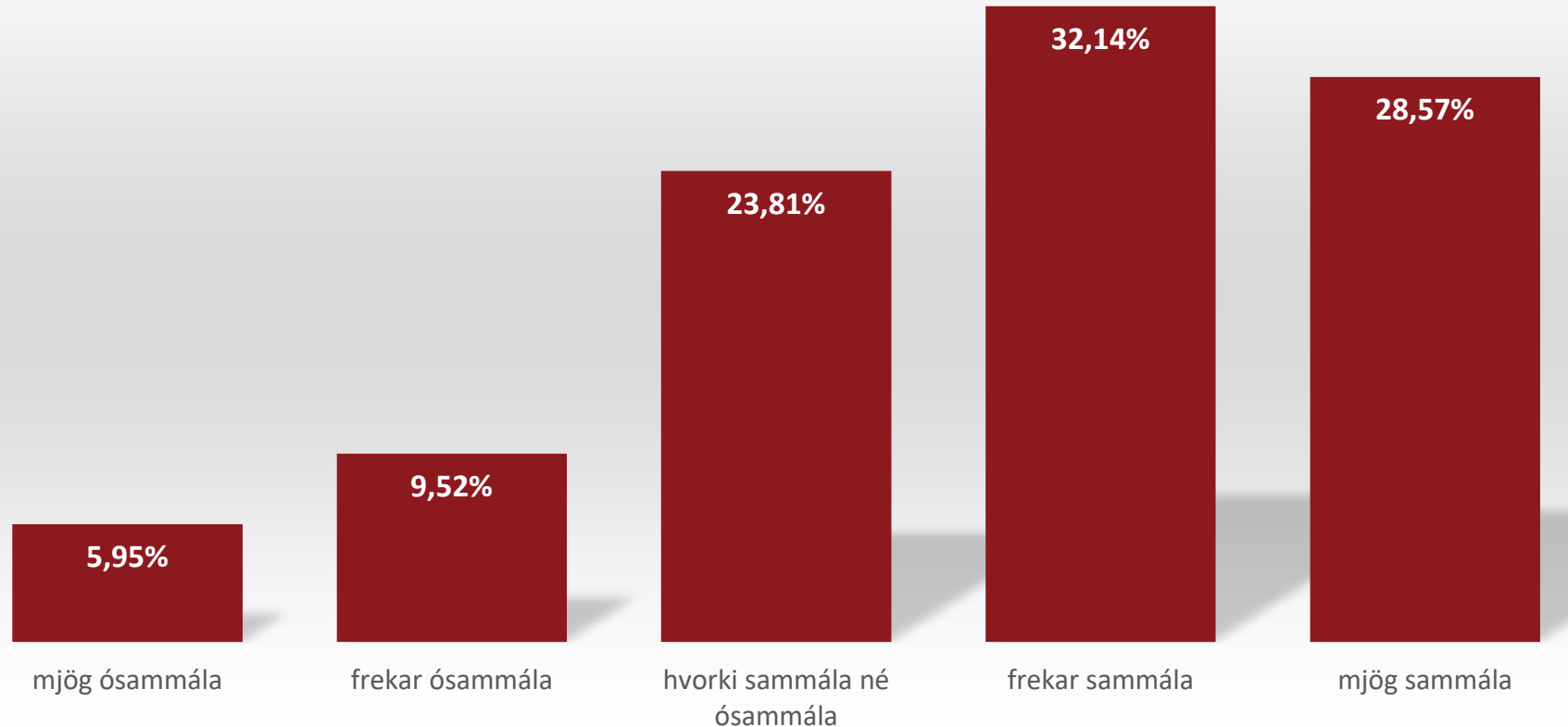


Strongly disagree or disagree **75,9%**, agree or strongly agree **16,11%**.



# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

The treatment was successful



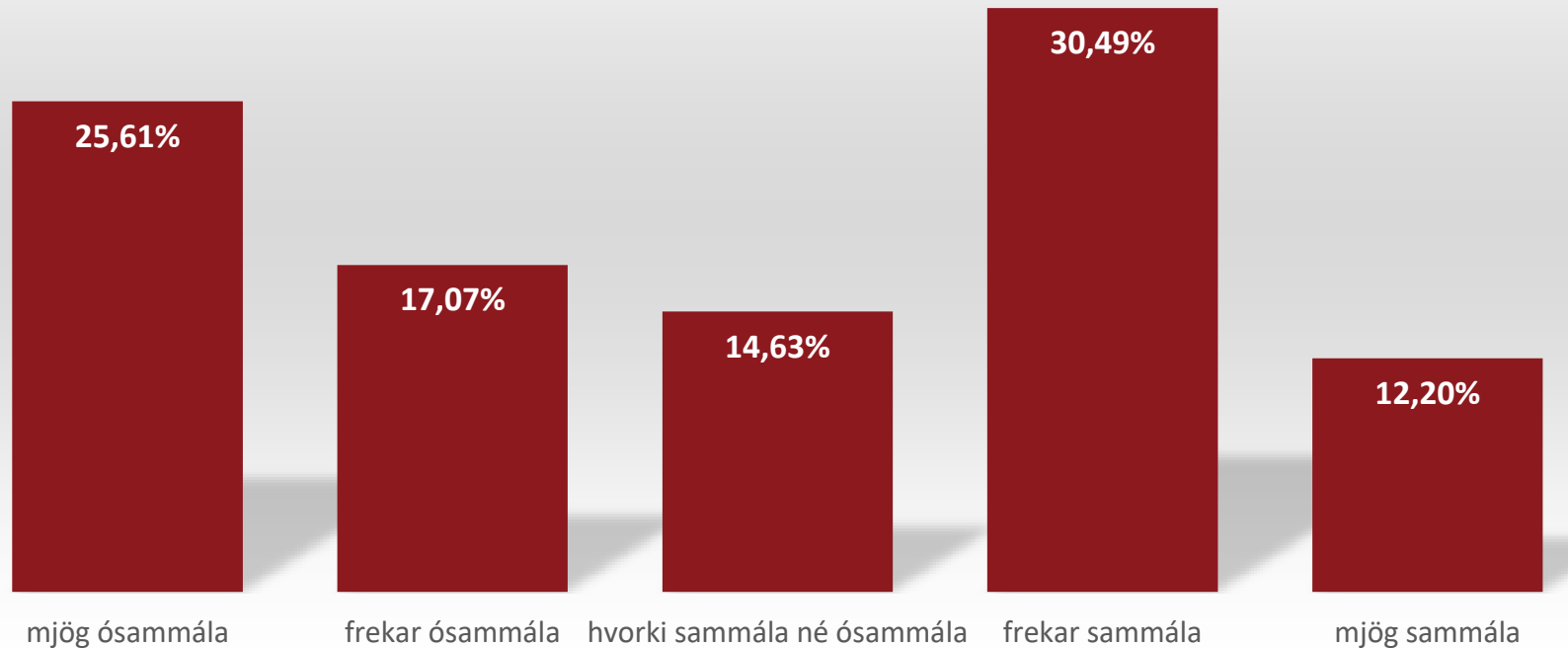
Strongly disagree or disagree **15,47%**, agree or strongly agree **60,71%**.





# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

I experienced lack of understanding in treatment



Strongly disagree or disagree **42,68%**, agree or strongly agree **42,69%**.



# WITNESS TO BAD TREATMENT OF OTHERS IN TREATMENT

In treatment you witnessed ...	Proportion (%)
Mobbing against a patient?	23,1
Unnecessary use of violence by staff?	21,3
Staff's violence against another patient?	7,4
Unprofessional and inappropriate comments from staff?	45,2
Violence against another patient perpetrated by another patient?	35,0
Forming of cliques in patients group?	61,7
Threats against a patient?	15,0



# EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN TREATMENT

	No (%)	Ones (%)	Twice or more often (%)	(Sum, once or more often%)
Sexual harassment	65,4	9,9	24,7	(34,6)
Sexual violence	87,7	3,7	8,6	(12,3)
Mobbing	86,3	6,3	7,5	(13,8)
Psychological violence	72,0	11,0	17,0	(28,0)
Psychical violence	93,8	4,9	1,20	(6,1)
Financial violence	96,3	2,5	1,20	(3,7)



# VIOLENCE IN ADULTHOOD (NOT RELATED TO TREATMENT)

<b>% of participants with experience of types of violence and harassment</b>	<b>No (%)</b>	<b>Ones (%)</b>	<b>Twice or more often (%)</b>	<b>(Sum, once or more often %)</b>
Sexual harassment	18,8	8,2	72,9	(81,1)
Sexual violence	25,6	15,1	59,3	(74,4)
Mobbing	53,8	11,5	34,6	(46,1)
Psychological violence	11,8	8,2	80	(88,2)
Psychical violence	44,3	7,6	48,1	(55,7)
Financial violence	53,8	16,3	30	(46,3)



# ACE QUESTIONNAIRE

## EXPERIENCE THE ADVERSITIES BEFORE 18 YEARS OF AGE

Type of experience	Yes (%)
Psychological violence	54,7
Psychical violence	33,7
Sexual violence	51,2
Lack of love and affection	69,8
Neclect	32,6
Parents separation	34,9
Psychical violence against a mother	19,8
Lived with a person with alcohol or drug problems	65,1
Lived with anyone with depression, mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?	59,8
Did a household member go to prison?	13,8

**Adverse  
Childhood  
Questionnaire -  
ACE Study**



# RESULTS

- **High education** and financial level
- Many **legally disabled**
- Very much **harassment (35%) and violence (12%)** in treatment
- A **severe history of violence and trauma** - both in young age and adulthood



# THANK YOU!

## Rótin – The Root

Kristín I. Pálsdóttir, MA Editorship and  
Theory of publication, Professional  
Certificate Women and Substance Use

[www.rotin.is](http://www.rotin.is)  
[rotin@rotin.is](mailto:rotin@rotin.is)  
[facebook.com/rotin.felag](https://facebook.com/rotin.felag)  
[twitter.com/rotin\\_felag](https://twitter.com/rotin_felag)  
[instagram.com/rotin\\_felag](https://instagram.com/rotin_felag)

