Validation of a screening tool to detect in the community and refer young methamphetamine users suffering from mental health disorders

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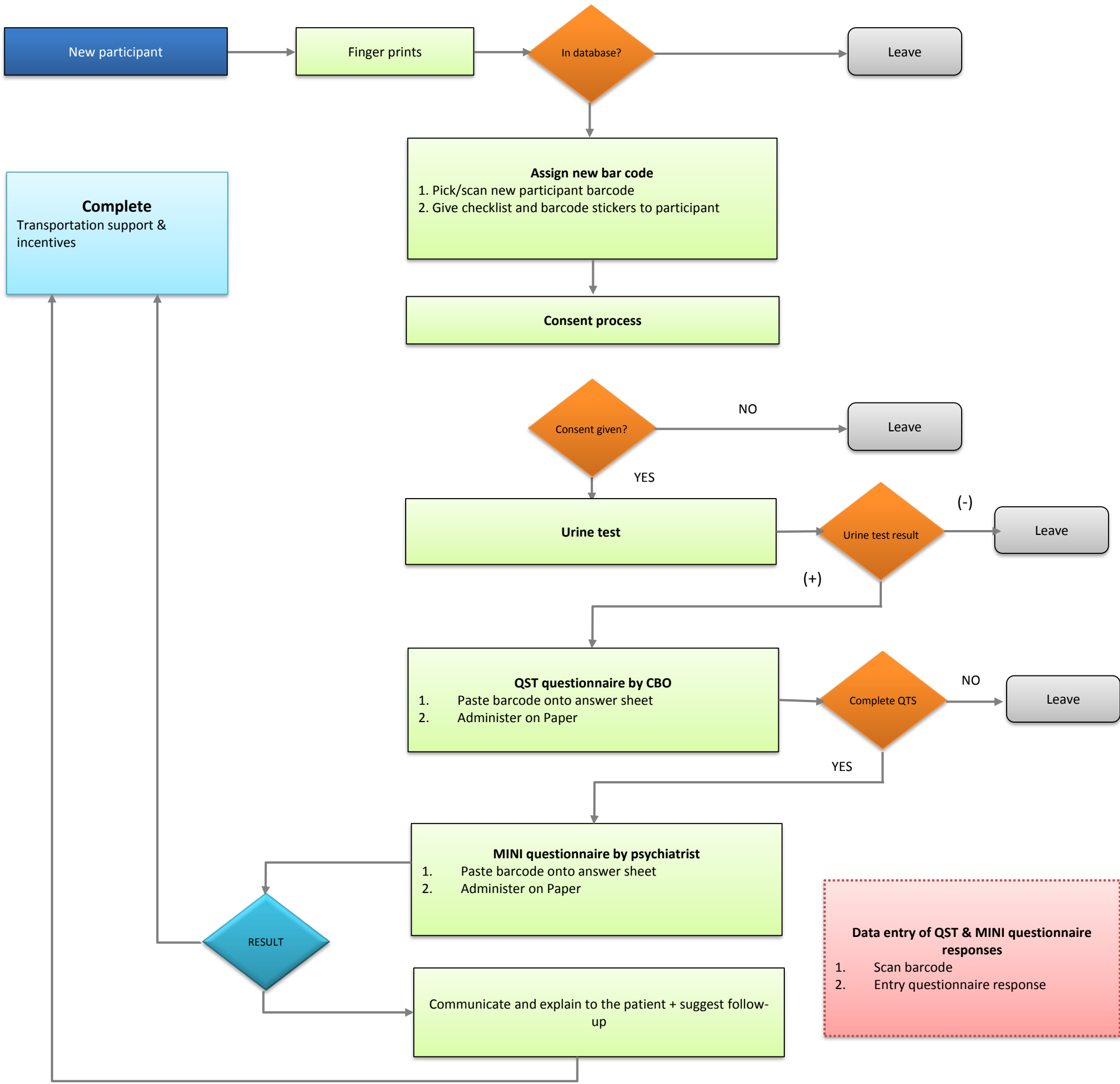
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BACKGROUND

- Psychiatric comorbidities are very common among people who use drugs and are associated with poorer outcomes on several dimensions. Increase of methamphetamine use observed among young people who use drugs (YPUD) in Vietnam is a major concern, as in several countries around world, due to the association with frequent psychiatric complications, particularly psychotic episodes, and the vulnerability of this population.
- Detecting mental disorders in this population is very important, while the psychiatrists are always not enough, so the application of the screening tools that can be used by peer groups is significant.
- The aim of this study is to develop and validate a quick screening tool to be used in the community by peers in order to detect and appropriately refer as early as possible YPUD suffering from psychiatric disorders.

METHOD

- YPUD aged 16-24 years were recruited through peer network in the city of Hanoi, Vietnam. They were eligible if they reported drug use subsequently confirmed by urine test.
- The QST questionnaire is designed to screen common mental health disorders, which was developed in 2018, including 9 questions under 4 categories: PHQ4 on depression and anxiety + 2 questions on suicide + 3 questions on psychotic symptoms extracted from the MINI.
- The questionnaire has been used on 1,500 injecting drug users in Haiphong, Vietnam.

RESULTS

Baseline characteristics		n = 319	%
Gender:	Male	251	78.7
	Transgender	11	3.4
Age (mean, SD)		20.2 ± 2.4	
Single		251	78.7
Student		93	29.2
Antecedent of suicide attempt		71	22.3
Antecedent of Sexual abuse		66	20.7
Meth use		259	81.2
ACE*score (WHO) ≥ 4		182	57.1

* Adverse Childhood Experience

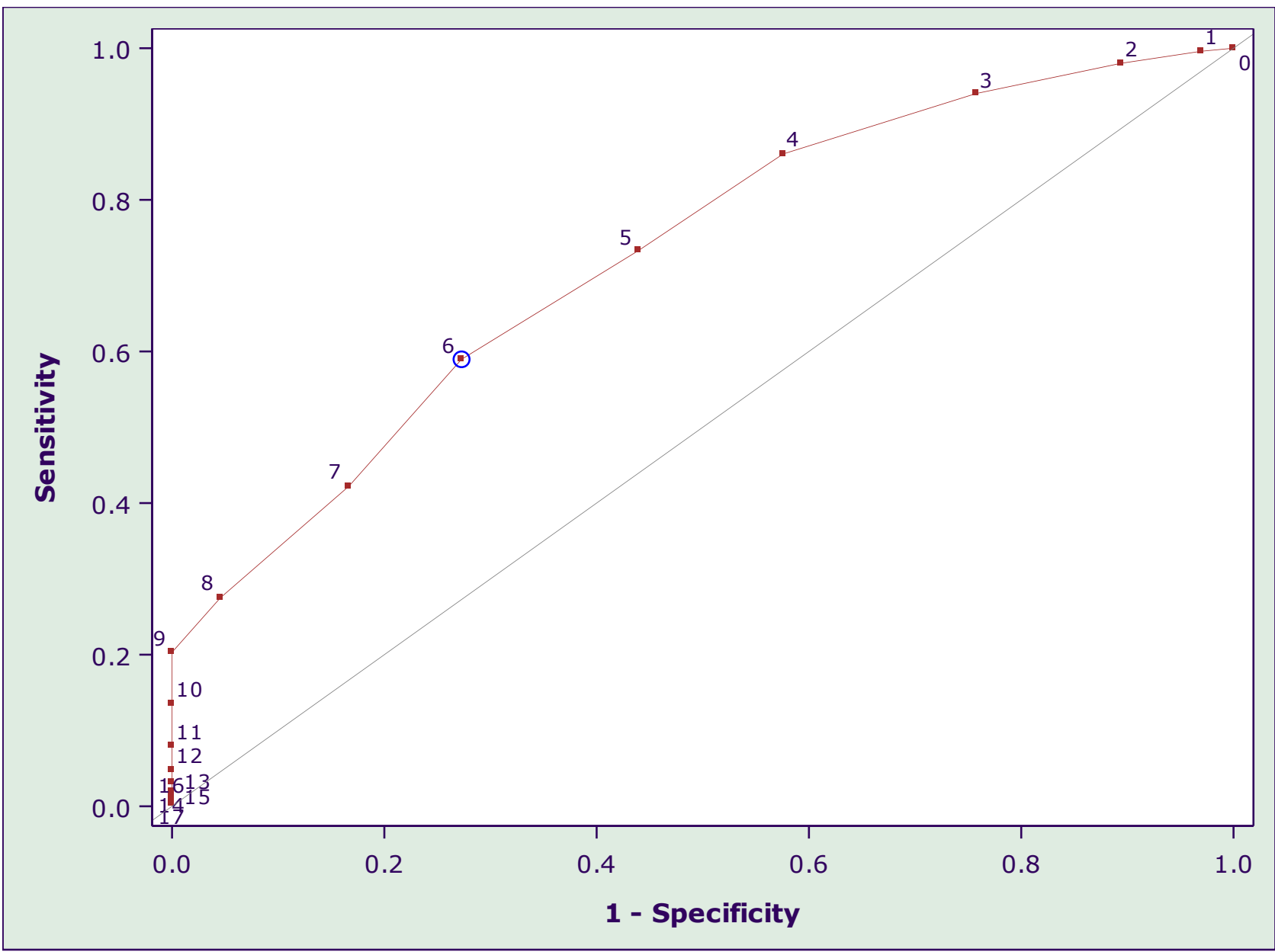| Patterns of psychiatric disorders (MINI)	n = 319	%
Major Depressive Disorder	185	57.9
Psychotic symptoms (delusion or hallucination)	164	51.1
Suicidal risk	84	26.3

Figure 1: ROC Curve: QST sensitivity and 1-Specificity for different cut-off points

Total QST score cut off	N	%	Sensitivity (%)	Spcecificity (%)	Positive predictive value (%)	Negative predictive value (%)
5	213	67.2	73.3	56.1	86.4	35.6
6	166	52.4	59.0	72.7	89.2	31.8

CONCLUSION

- In our population sample, rate of psychiatric disorders is dramatically high and emphasizes the need for interventions targeting mental health.
- The characteristics of this screening tool appear to be acceptable for use in the community to detect mental health disorders among YPUD. The tool was well accepted by peers and YPUD, and constitute a convenient support to introduce mental health concern in this highly exposed and vulnerable population.
- In the second phase, a large-scale intervention targeting YPUD suffering from mental health disorders will be implemented in different provinces of Vietnam.

CONTACT

Conflict of interest statement: None