

# PATH conference

PATH

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- Introduction
- Mental health?
- PATH

# Mental health?

- Mental health is the ability of each of us to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and to meet the challenges we face.

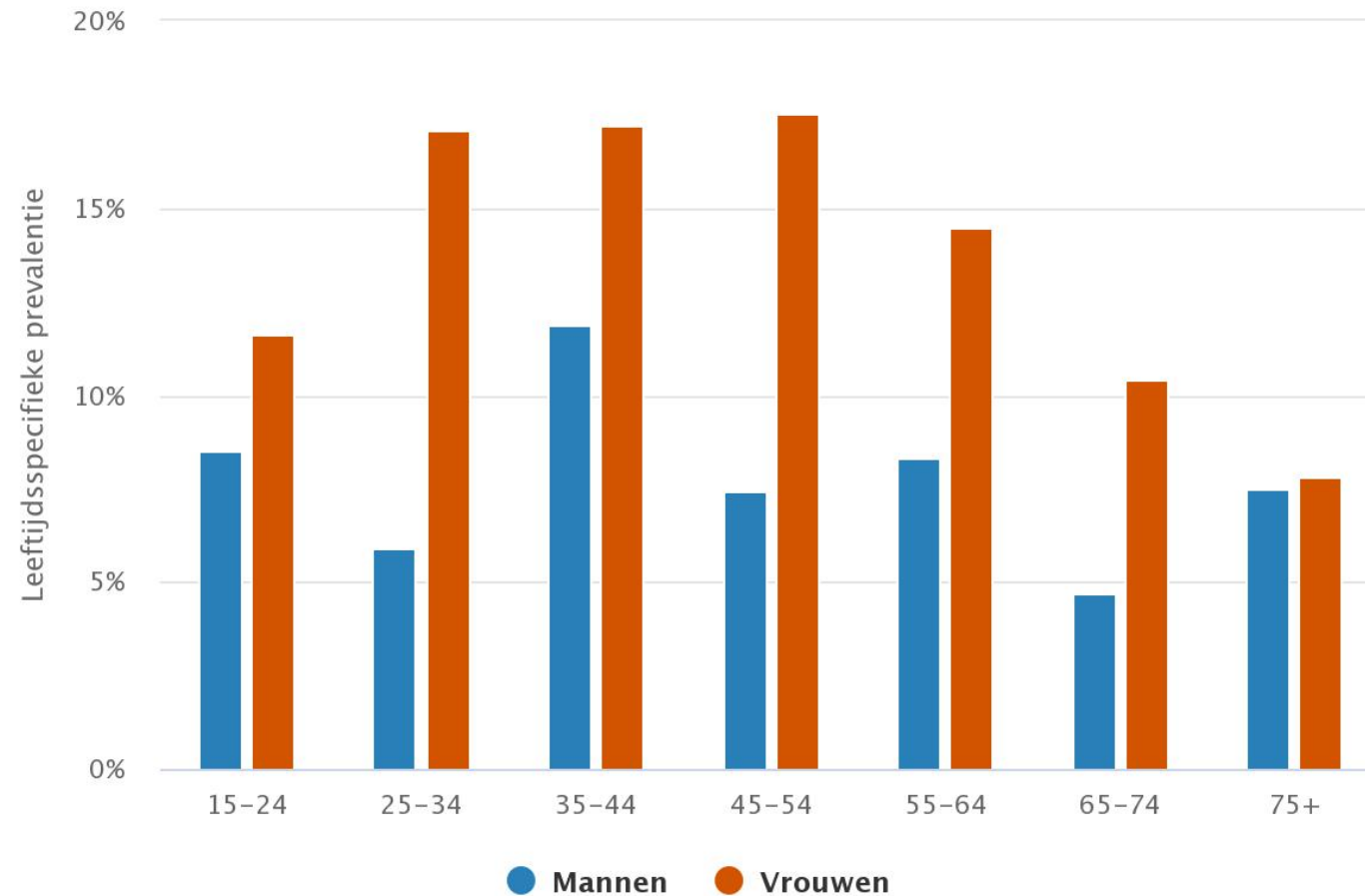


- **Mental health**

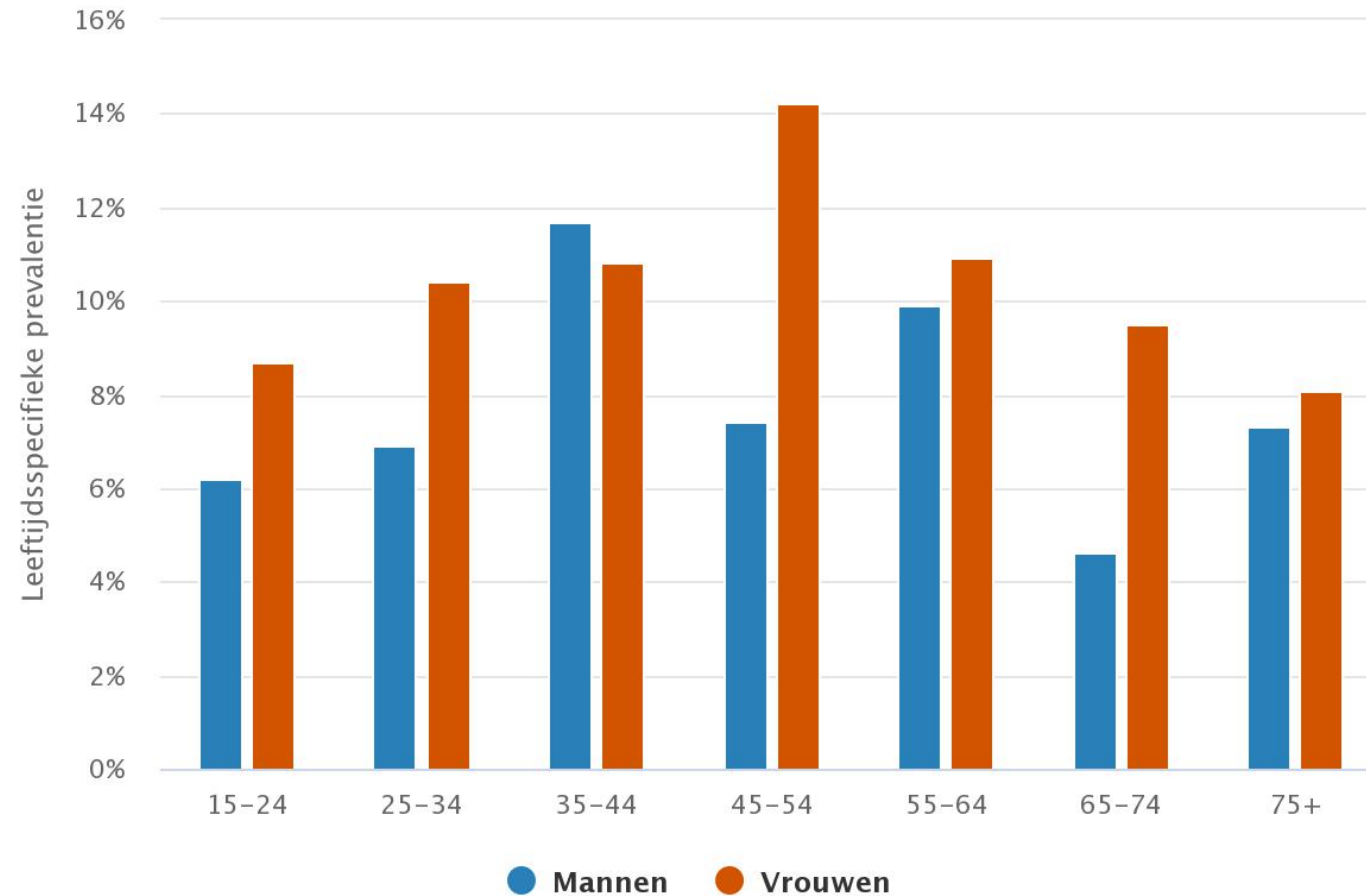
- **Some data**

- In March 2022, about one in four people had an anxiety disorder and/or depressive disorder. In 2018, it was one in 10.
    - The proportion of people with an anxiety disorder and/or depressive disorder has increased.
    - Women are more likely to have anxiety disorders than men, regardless of age.

# Prevalentie van angststoornissen volgens leeftijd en geslacht, België, 2018



# Prevalentie van depressieve stoornissen volgens leeftijd en geslacht, België, 201



# Perinatal Mental health?

- The World Health Organization defines maternal mental health as a state of well-being in which a mother realises her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and contribute to the community' (W.H.O., 2016).
- Mental health problems are one of the major complications during the perinatal period.



# Mental health during peripartum

- One in five women experience mental health problems during peripartum (National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, 2018).
- These mental health problems can have a significant impact on the (expectant) mother, the (unborn) child and her environment as well as on the society,
- Prevention, early detection and early intervention are fundamental for all stakeholders. It is therefore not surprising that (maternal) mental health is a global priority for the 'World Health Organization' (WHO).



- The most effective and efficient investment a government can make is in the prenatal and postnatal period (Heckman, 2013).
- Commitment to early detection and early intervention among young mothers and their families directly affects the outcome in their infants and will have a positive impact on numerous outcomes such as health, education and economy.
- Investing in this early period thus provides the greatest return on investment....

- During peripartum, we find the whole spectrum of psychiatric disorders
  - Contrary to previous assumptions, pregnancy is not protective against psychological suffering.
- As already indicated, one in five (expectant) mothers may face mental vulnerability in peripartum
- An estimated 3-5% will present severe problems for which specialised care is necessary
- Four in 1000 will need an admission because of postpartum psychosis and any severe, complex state symptoms that necessitate admission.

- In addition, around 15% will have moderate severe problems (mainly moderate severe anxiety and depressive disorders).
- In addition, an estimated 15-30% (average 22.5%) will have mild problems under the form of distress and adjustment disorders

# What does this means for Flanders?

- Translated to Flanders, this means that for a birth rate of 68,000 deliveries:
  - about 15,640 (expectant) mothers will experience mild perinatal psychological problems,
  - 10,880 moderate problems
  - 2,720 severe problems

# Meanwhile in Flanders

- the Flemish government invested in:
  - the roll-out in Flanders of the guideline developed in 2018 for the screening and detection of perinatal mental problems.
  - the development of regional care pathways on perinatal mental health care (PMG).
    - These care pathways mainly focus on the development of a stepped care system, where specialised partners provide PMG seamlessly to the 0th and 1st line. The regional care pathways provide a good basis for engaging in expertise sharing and content alignment on care provision.
  - Development of online self-help tools for (1) perinatal depression and (2) postnatal depression, anxiety and postnatal loss experiences.
  - establishment of the Flemish Expertise Network for Perinatal Mental Health (VEN PMG). This brought together the existing expertise on PMG in Flanders.

- In cooperation with the VEN PMG and the involved partners from (mental) perinatal healthcare and addiction care, a Flemish vision with priorities to support PMG has been worked on in 2021,
- Flanders wants to work towards an integrated response to perinatal mental health care needs of (expecting) parents and their children.

# Is this sufficient?

- Hands-on tools
- Cooperation
- Cross borders
- Good practices

# PATH



- is a EU-funded project which will enable women, families and healthcare professionals to prevent, diagnose and successfully manage mild to moderate perinatal mental health issues.



- This cross-border initiative involves thirteen partners from France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK.
- PATH will prepare parents pre-birth for their new role and help them avoid PMI.
- The project will improve the skills of healthcare professionals equipping them to address PMI confidently and effectively.



- Today...