


A person is standing in a narrow wooden boat on a river, using a long pole to navigate. The background shows a wide river and a forested bank.

Bridging the gulf

How traditional healers interact
with their patients

A wooden boat is partially submerged in a river, with tall green reeds in the foreground. The boat is simple and appears to be made of local materials.

Niklaus D Labhardt, Sabine M Aboa,
Engelbert Manga, Wolf Langewitz

Traditional medicine in Cameroon

Very heterogeneous group:

- Traditional birth attendants
- Traditional drug sellers
- Self-medication with traditional drugs
- Traditional healers
 - Herbs
 - Animals
 - Prayers and exorcism, etc.





ANGINE
VERTIGE

DEMANGEAISON
VAG-IMALE

RHUMA
TISME

PALLIDISME

EJACULATION
PRÉCOCE

SYPHILIS

FAIBLESSE
SEXUELLE

MAUX de dent
PROSTATE

PERTE
BLANCHE

MAUX de
VENTRE

GONOCOCIE

MAL de dos
et REINS

AMIBES

CONSTI
PATION

CONTRE
POISON

DIABÈTE

SIMUSITE

FILAIRE

ESTOMAC

STÉRILITÉ

MANQUE
de SPERM

RÈGLES
douLEUREU

HEMORROI

TYPHOÏD

FIEV



Purpose of the Study

- To compare Traditional Healers and Western providers on:
 - Patient-characteristics
 - Interaction patterns during the consultations

Traditional providers in Mfou

102 traditional providers in
2008

- 20 traditional birth attendants
- 70 traditional drug sellers
- 12 traditional healers who perform consultations







Study design

- 5 patients per provider
 - Socio-demographic indicators
 - Recording of the consultation
 - Analysis with the Roter Interaction Analysis System
- Measured variables
 - Facilitative provider communication
 - Active patient communication
 - Discussion of concept of illness/diagnosis



Providers



	Traditional Healer (7)	Health Center (8)
Sex	3 female	4 female
Age	49 years (32-63)	45 years (38-59)
Professional Education	4 acquired 3 born with it	5 Registered nurses 3 Staff nurses
Professional Experience	31 years	18 years
Visits per month	26	89



Patients...

- Similar on
 - Education
 - Income
 - Living standard
 - Level of urbanization

Access to Care



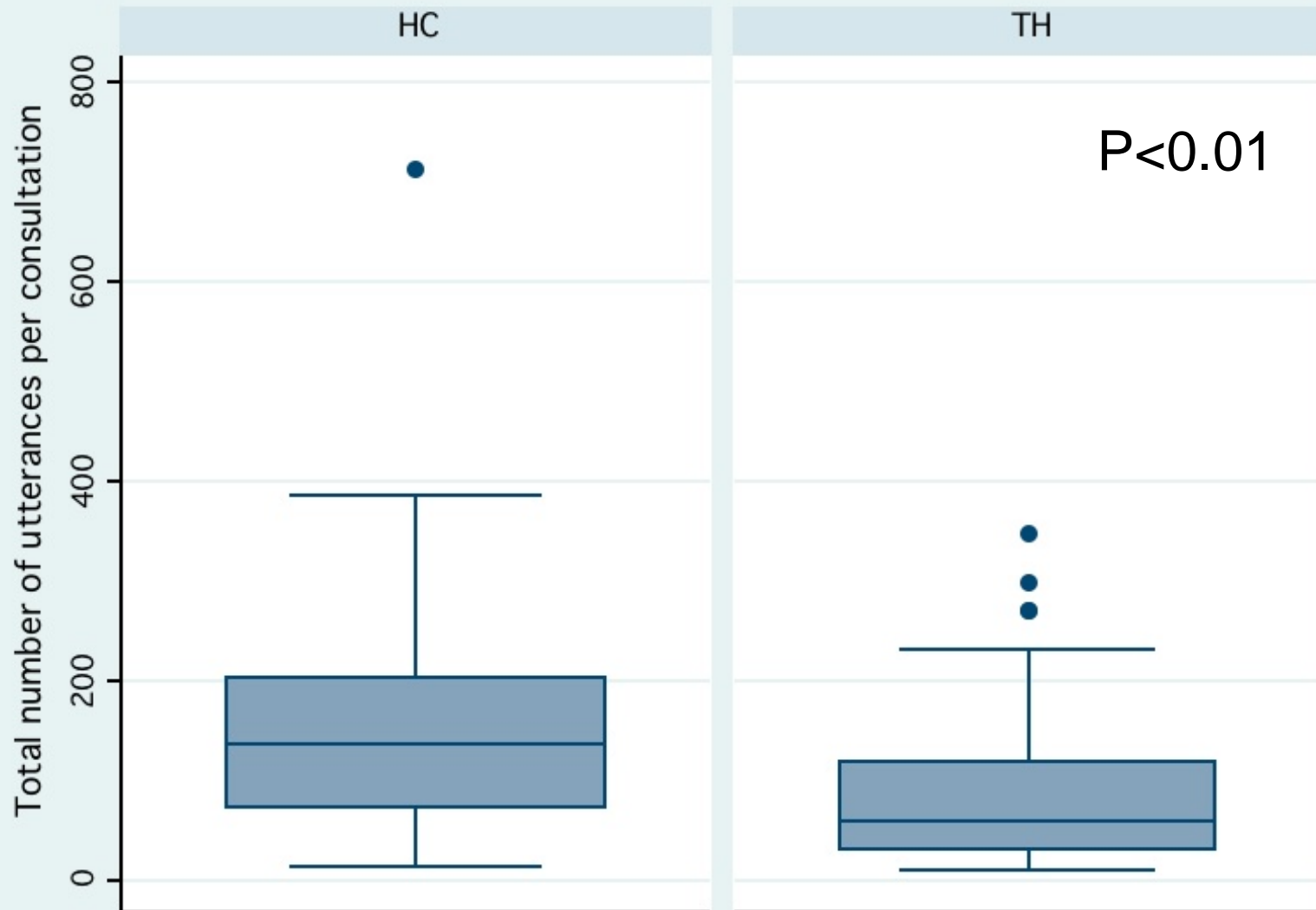
	TH (n=35)	HC (n=40)	
Nearest Health Center	7.7km	9.2km	n.s.
Nearest Hospital	13km	17km	n.s.
Distance to the current Healer/Health Center	79km	32km	(CI: 9-85km, p=0.0166)

Cost of care

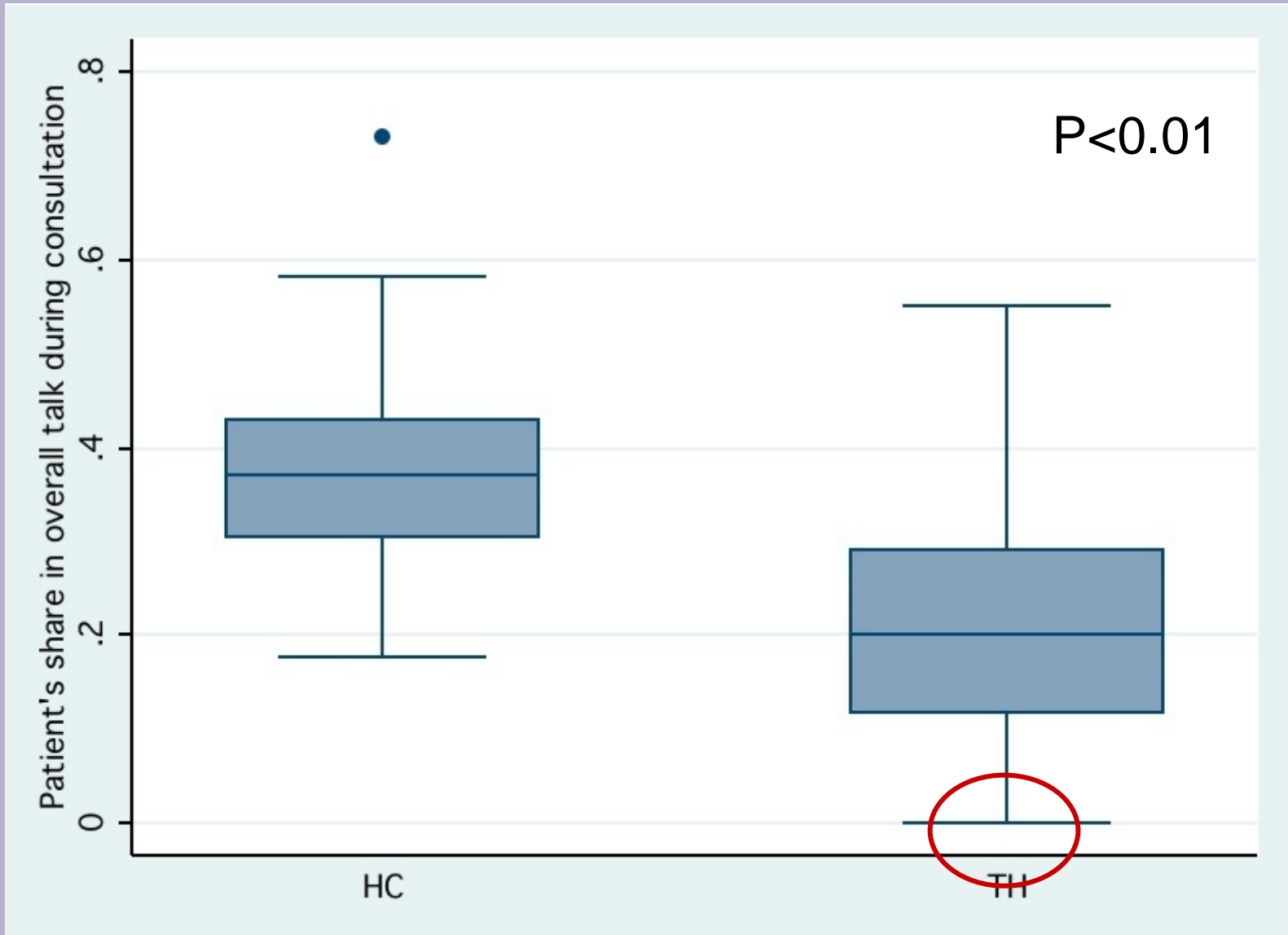


	TH (n=35)	HC (n=40)	
Cost of treatment (650 CFA=1 Euro)	80'000	6'000	(CI:127'000 - 20'000, p=0.0074)
Duration of treatment	56 days	9 days	(CI: 74-20, p<0.001)
Inpatient treatment	69%	21%	p<0.001

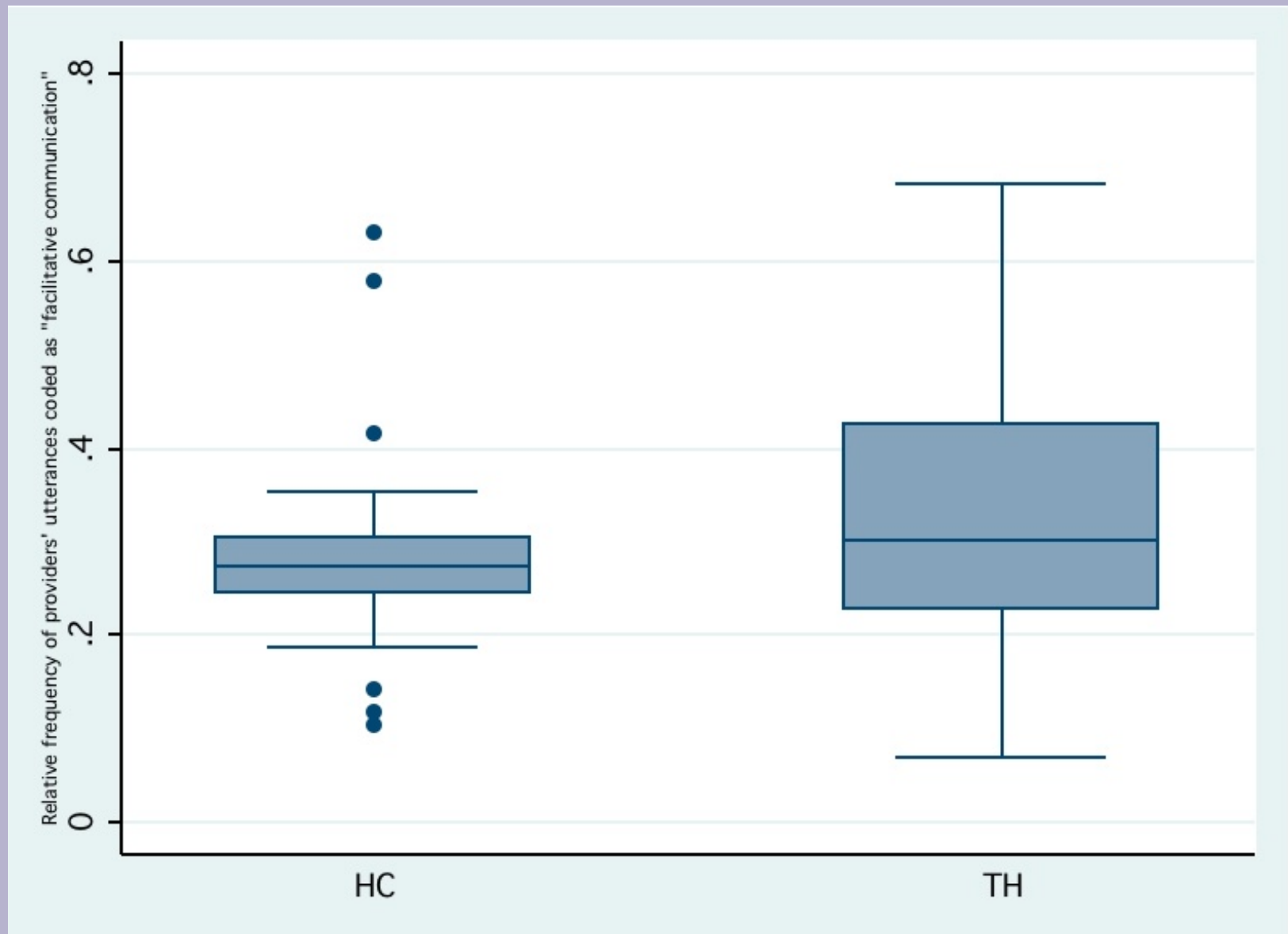
Number of utterances per consultation



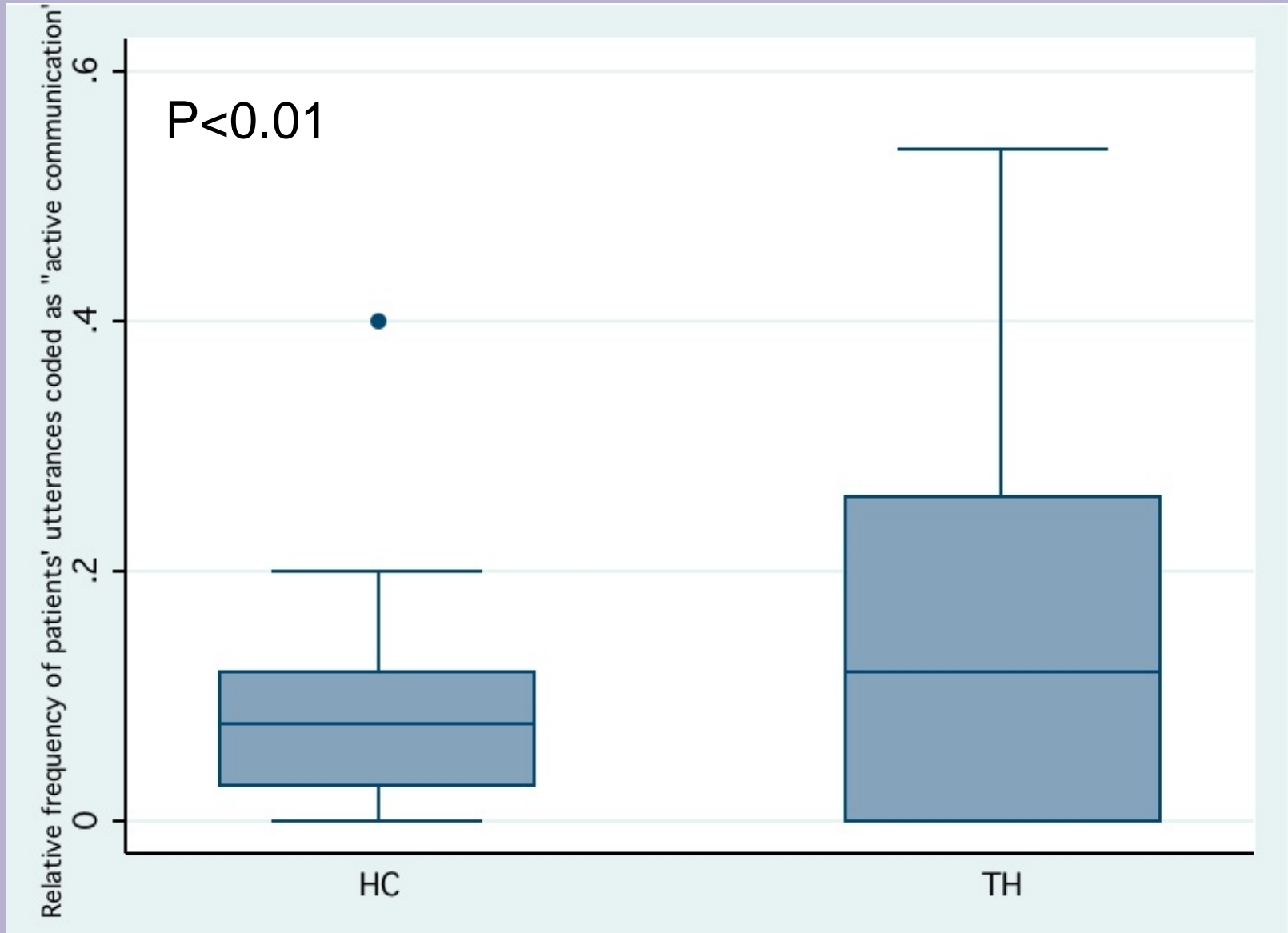
Patients' share in the conversation



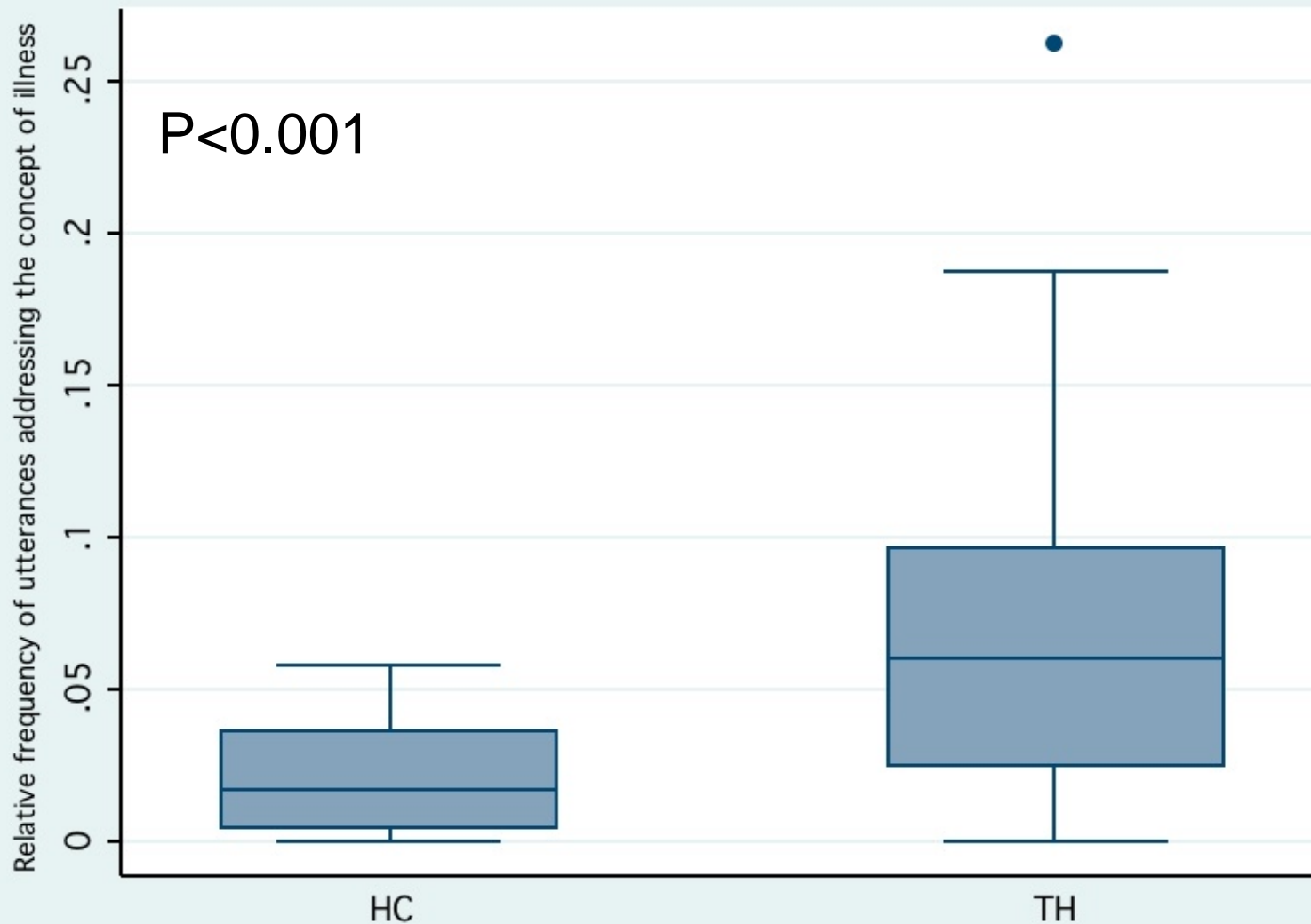
Providers' facilitative communication



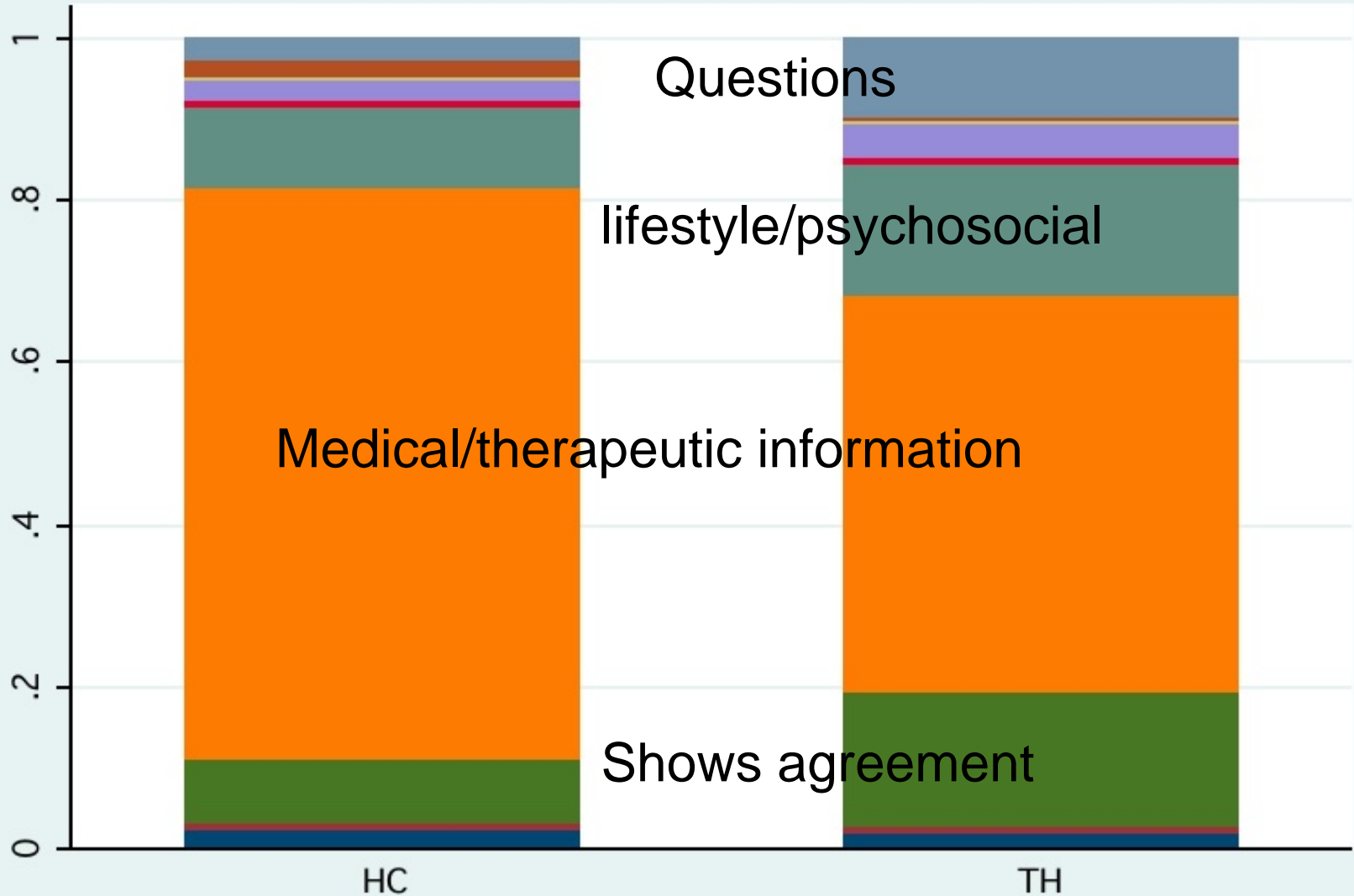
Patients' active communication



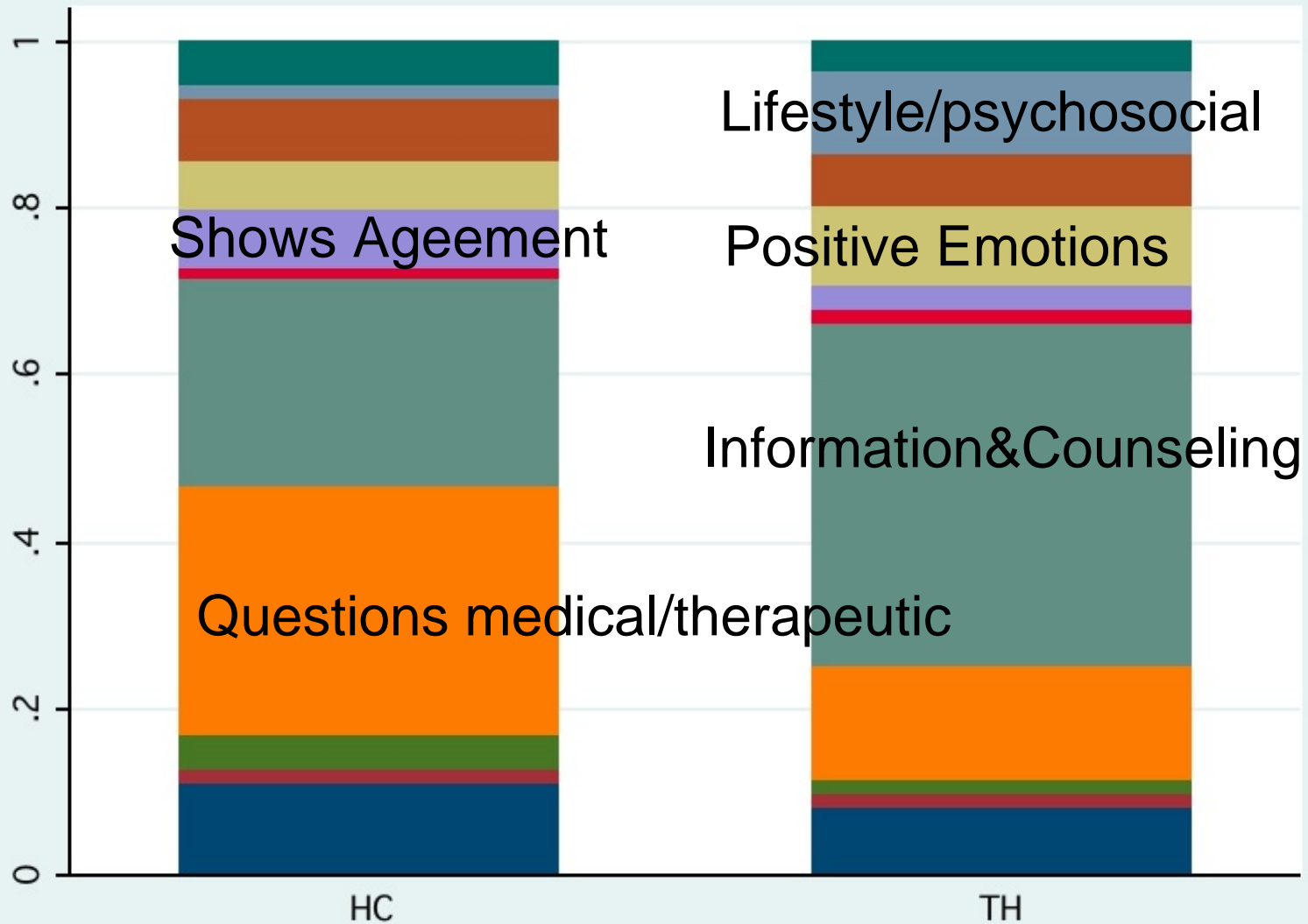
Discussing the concept of illness/diagnosis



Distribution of patients' talk



Distribution of providers' talk



„Tell me about your
life – and I will tell
you about your
illness“

Versus

„Do you sweat at
night?“

