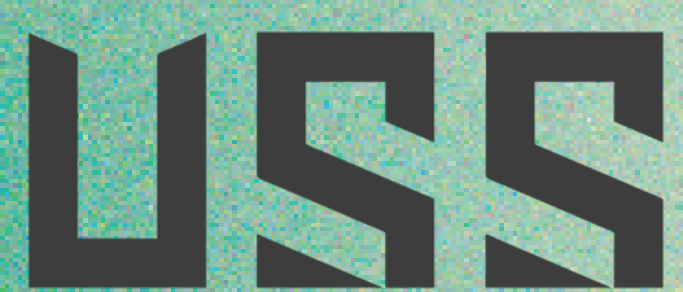


DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS IN CHICLAYO: A NETWORK ANALYSIS, 2025

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DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS IS ORGANIZED AS AN INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM. SUICIDAL THOUGHTS (I9), PSYCHOMOTOR CHANGES (I8), AND CONCENTRATION DIFFICULTIES (I7) ARE THE CENTRAL SYMPTOMS, AND THEIR EXPRESSION VARIES BY SEX, DEMANDING A GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACH.

INTRODUCTION

- In old age, depression constitutes one of the main mental health problems, associated with greater disability and functional decline.
- In Chiclayo, nearly 30.8% of older adults treated in primary care present depressive manifestations.
- The symptom network model conceives depression as a dynamic system where symptoms directly influence each other, mutually activating and intensifying without assuming a single underlying cause.
- **Objective:** To explore the relationships between depressive symptoms in older adults from Chiclayo during 2025, identify central symptoms, determine the strongest connections, and compare the network structure by sex.

METHODS

- **Design:** Associative research, with a non-experimental, cross-sectional, and descriptive design.
- **Participants:** Intentional sample of 300 older adults from Chiclayo (ages 60 to 97; Mean = 70.1). 66% were women and 34% were men.
- **Instrument:** The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) was used, assessing 9 symptoms using a 4-option Likert scale.
- **Analysis:** JASP software (Network Analysis) was used to estimate Spearman partial correlations. Centrality was evaluated using the strength index, and network stability via the Bootstrap method (1000 replications).

RESULTS

Figure 1: The strongest edges were loss of interest (I1) with depressed mood (I2) ($r = 0.31$); psychomotor changes (I8) with loss of interest (I1) ($r = 0.27$); and concentration difficulties (I7) with suicidal thoughts (I9) ($r = 0.23$).

Figure 2: Women presented a network with a more distributed pattern of connections (e.g., I1-I2 $r = .34$). In contrast, the men's network was more compact, with stronger and more concentrated edges (e.g., I9-I8 $r = .35$).

Figure 1:

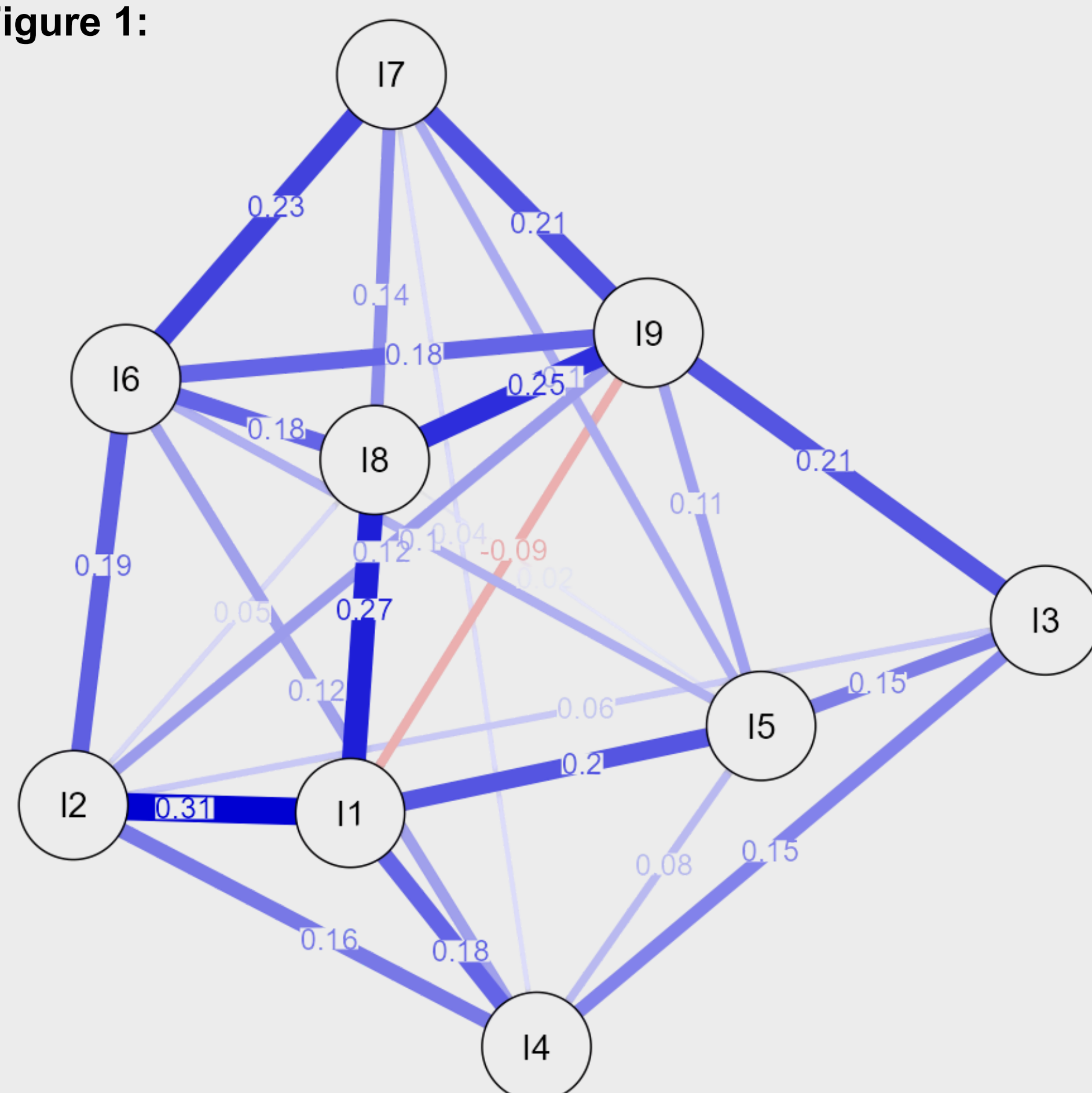
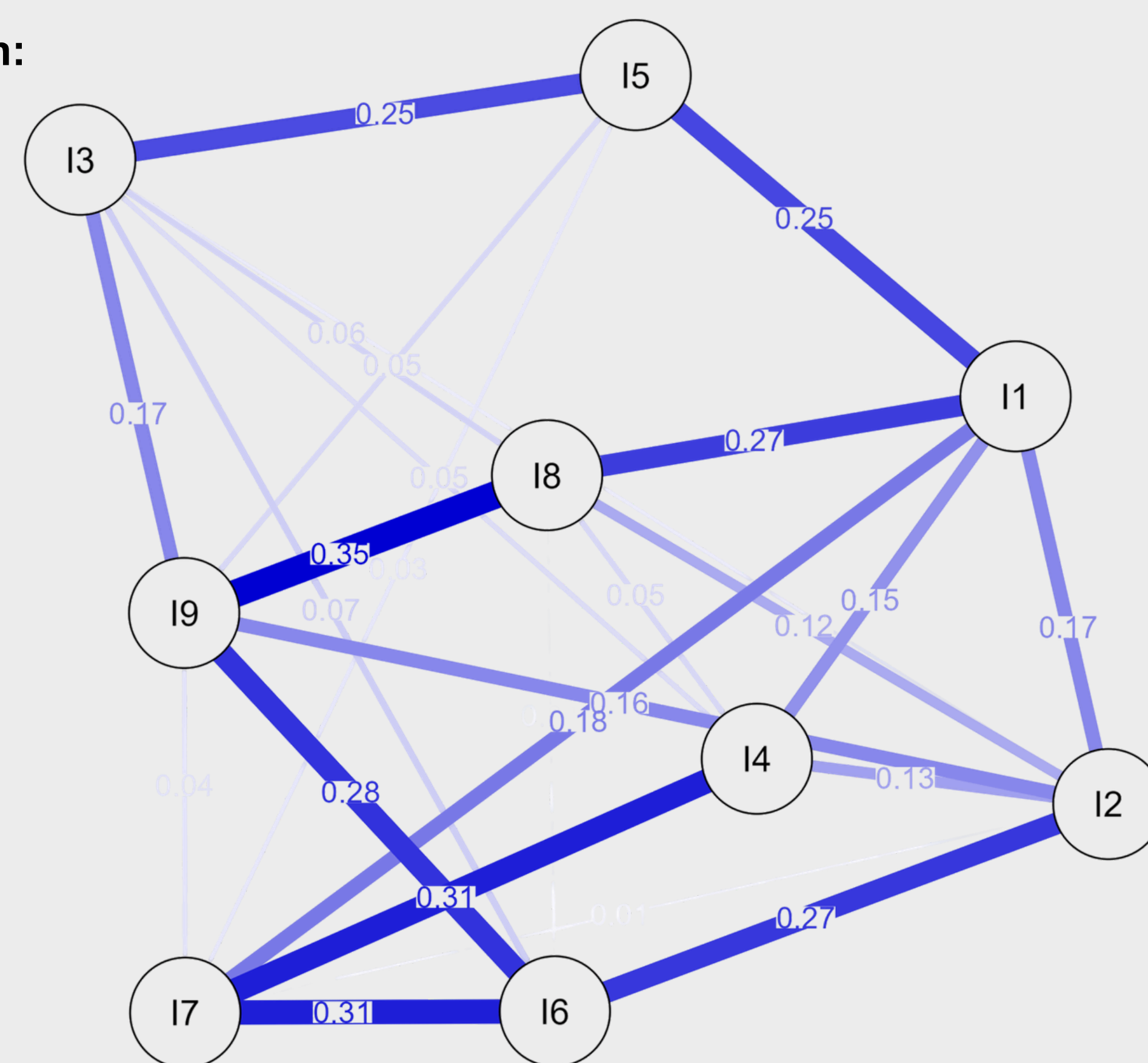
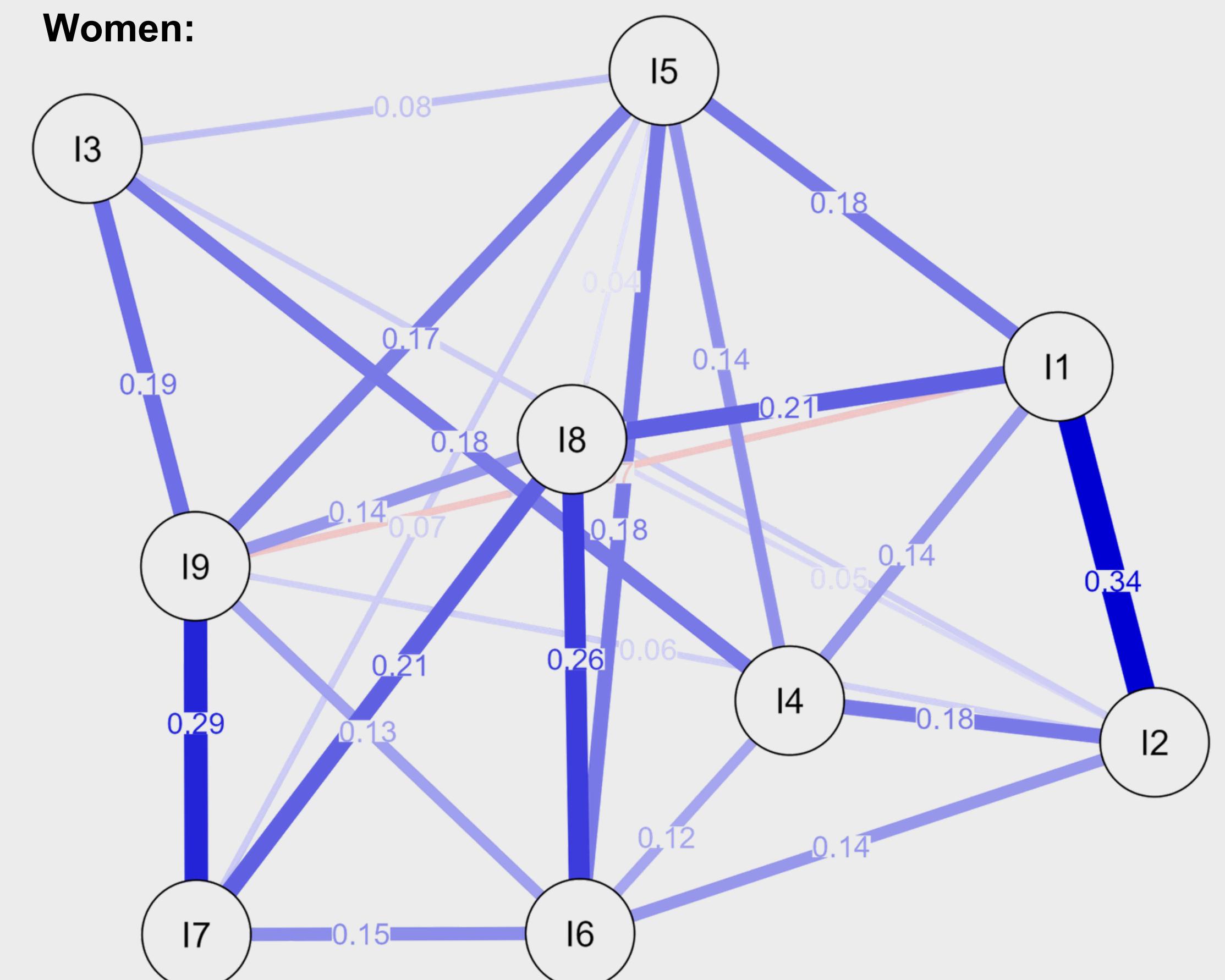


Figure 2:

Man:



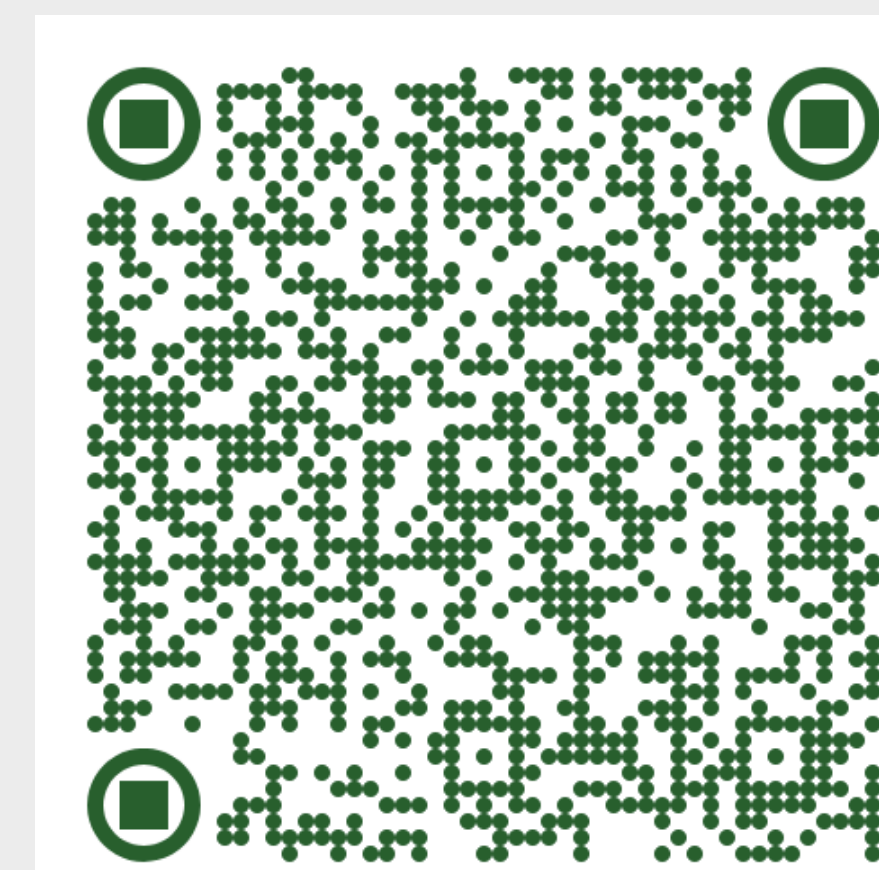
Women:



CONCLUSIONS

- Depression in older adults from Chiclayo is organized as an interconnected symptom system, not as isolated manifestations.
- Suicidal thoughts (I9), psychomotor changes (I8), and concentration difficulties (I7) are the central symptoms driving and maintaining the disorder.
- Although there is a shared general structure, differences in connection distribution and edge strength between men and women suggest the need to prioritize central symptoms through a gender-sensitive assessment and intervention approach.

REFERENCES



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