NIH Workplace Climate and Harassment Survey Results

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National Institutes of Health
Office of the Director
Scientific Workforce Diversity

Background

Harassment is bad for science, public health, and the NIH

"The cumulative effect of sexual harassment is a significant and costly loss of talent in academic science, engineering, and medicine, which has consequences for advancing the nation's economic and social well-being and its overall public health."
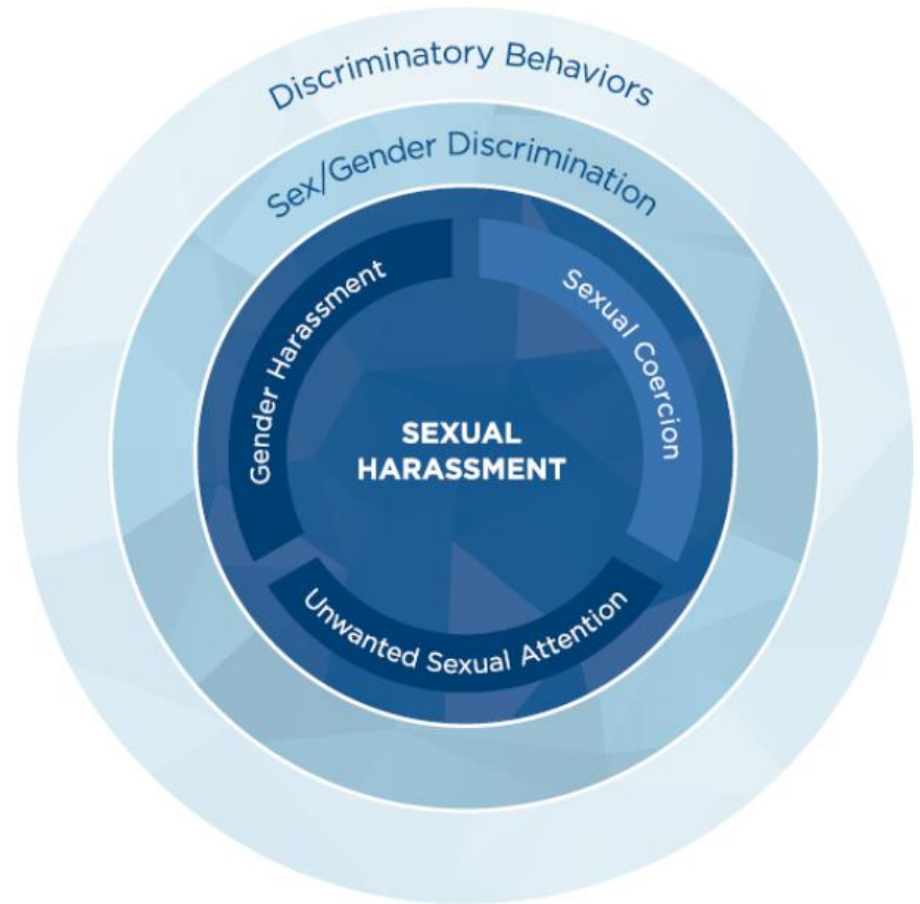
SOURCE: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018. Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24994.

Survey Goals

1. Prevalence of harassment

2. NIH workplace climate associated with harassment

3. Impact of harassment on psychological and physical health

4. Perspectives on reporting harassment

Survey Development

- Conceptual model based on literature review and expert panel input

- Items based on existing validated survey items (e.g. Sexual Experiences Questionnaire - SEQ*) when available

- Items refined based on cognitive testing and in a pilot study with 5,000 general population participants

SOURCE: Fitzgerald, Louise F., Vicki J. Magley, Fritz Drasgow, and Craig R. Waldo. "Measuring sexual harassment in the military: the sexual experiences questionnaire (SEQ—DoD)." *Military Psychology* 11, no. 3 (1999): 243-263.

Survey Results Timeline

➢ January to March 2019: Survey administered

➢ May 2019: Preliminary findings provided to NIH

➢ October & November 2019: Analyses provided to NIH

➢ January 2020: Interactive data visualizations draft provided

➢ Findings by IC in progress

➢ Final report and final visualizations planned for Spring 2020

➢ Process for requesting further analyses in development

Note: To protect respondent privacy and confidentiality, NIH has no access to individual-level data – NIH relies on the contractor for all analyses

Respondent Characteristics

- Invited NIH employees, trainees (per training database), and contractors (as permitted by their companies)

- 44% response rate (15,794 of 36,228 valid email addresses)

- Comparison of percent of NIH employee respondents to percent of NIH employee population:
  - Women more likely to respond (62% vs. 58%)
  - Age group of 18–34 more likely to respond (18% vs. 10%)
  - Respondents by IC were within 1% of the distribution of NIH employees by IC, except:
    - Clinical Center: 8% of respondents but 12% of NIH employees
    - NCI: 16% of respondents but 18% of NIH employees

- Decided not to weight responses to population of NIH employees
  - Limited number of population variables available for weighting
  - No population data available for trainees and contractors

- Caution should be exercised in generalizing results to all NIH employees, trainees, and contractors

Incidence of Sexual Harassment Experience among Respondents

- Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) used as an indicator of sexual harassment experiences
- SEQ describes 25 experiences in three subcategories: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion
- For the survey, SEQ was scored based on an incident count:
  - Any Harassment (1 or more experiences for any of the 25 questions)
  - Any Gender Harassment (1 or more experiences for any of the gender harassment questions)
  - Any Unwanted Sexual Attention (1 or more experiences for any of the unwanted sexual harassment questions)
  - Any Sexual Coercion (1 or more experiences for any of the sexual coercion questions)

Key Finding 1

- One in five respondents indicated at least one sexual harassment experience in the past 12 months
- Higher incidence rates for women, trainees (fellows and students), younger individuals, sexual and gender minorities, and individuals with disabilities

Key Finding 2

- Over half of the respondents who experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months did not talk to anyone about their experience

- Their primary reasons were that they did not think it was serious enough or they were concerned that their career might suffer

- Of the respondents who talked to someone about their experience, one-third felt their complaint was not taken seriously

Key Finding 3

- Respondents experiencing sexual harassment were less likely to indicate that supervisors value their work, are fair, and consider their opinions

Key Finding 4

- More than one-quarter of the respondents experiencing sexual harassment indicated experiencing bullying in the workplace

- Incivility and bullying in the workplace was associated with higher rates of sexual harassment and job dissatisfaction

Types of Sexual Harassment Identified
1 in 5 survey respondents indicated at least one sexual harassment experience in the past 12 months
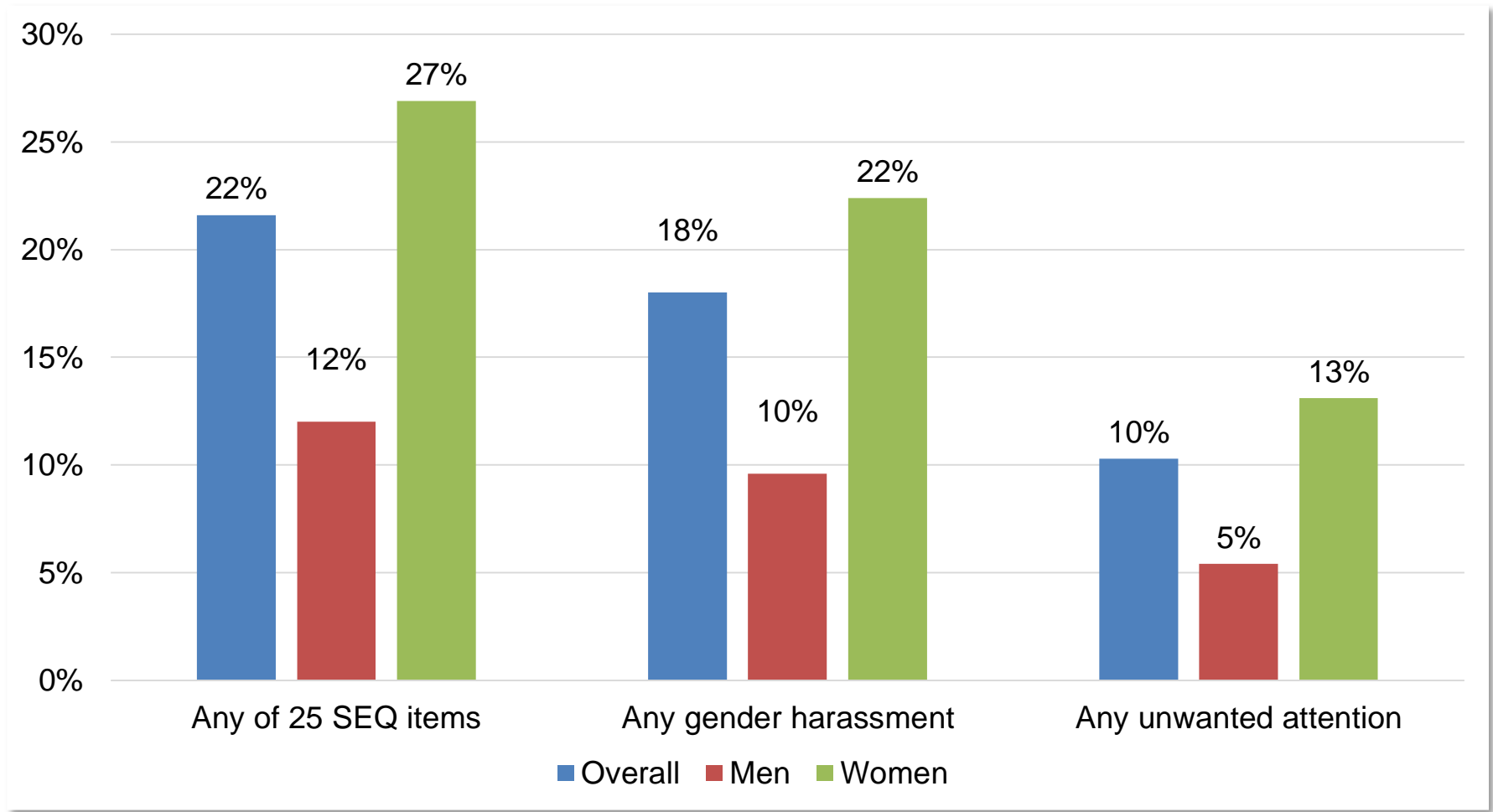
*Respondents could report more than one subcategory of sexual harassment

*67 respondents indicated a gender identity other than man or woman – not represented on this slide
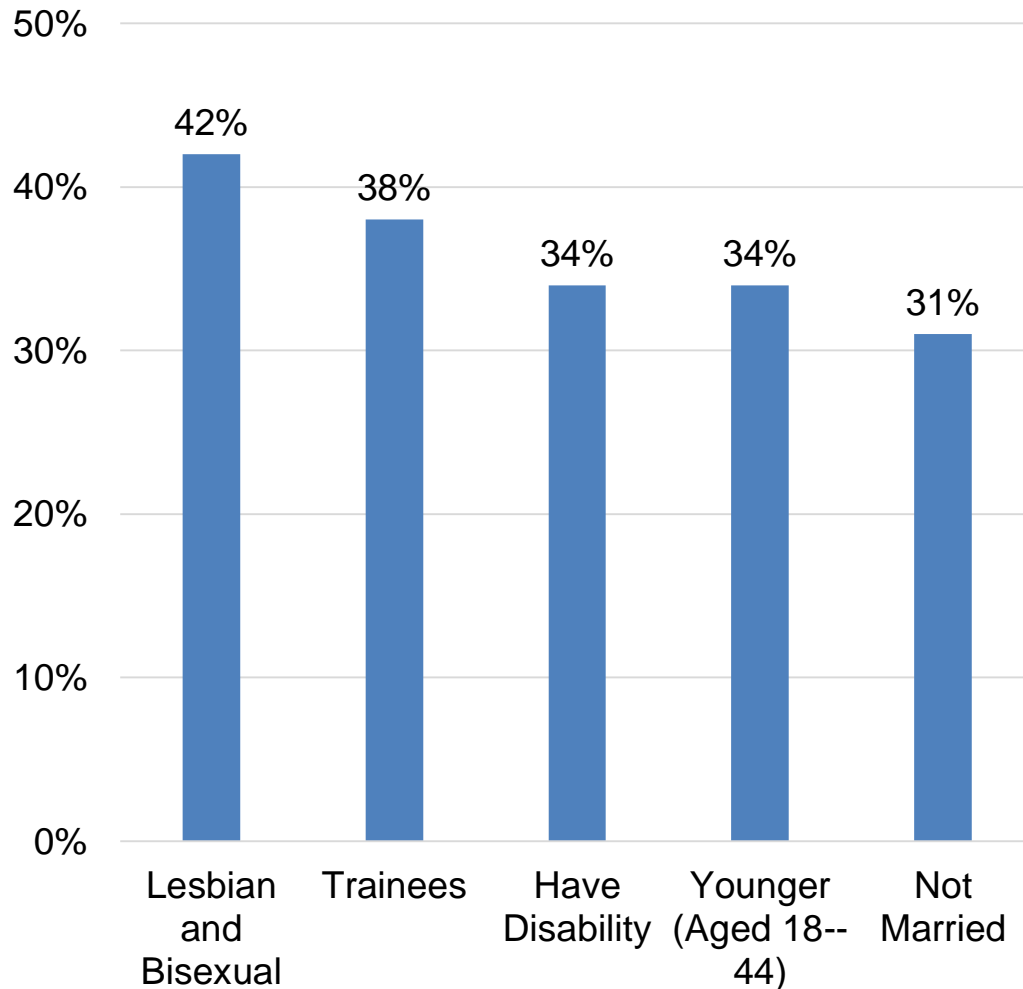
Implications

- Incidence of sexual harassment found from this survey was less than found in other surveys of academic institutions*
  - NIH survey asked about incidence only in the past 12 months (for repeated survey purposes); other surveys typically use longer periods

- Given NIH's zero tolerance policy, our goal is to <u>work to get these incidence rates to 0</u>, whether or not NIH staff have less harassment experiences compared to other organizations

- Small number of sexual coercion experiences (41) precludes further breakdowns without violating commitment not to display cells < 15 for confidentiality reasons
  - Experiences of this type will require serious prevention efforts and perpetrator consequences

WHO IS MORE VULNERABLE TO HARASSMENT?

Women Are More Vulnerable to Harassment

- Overall rate for women was 27%

- Although a small sample, 30 of 67 (44.8%) of those indicating a gender identity other than man or woman experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months

Implications

- Need to focus efforts to prevent harassment to protect vulnerable populations particularly among:
  - Trainees and younger employees
  - Sexual and Gender Minorities
  - Disabled

Workplace Climate Factors Associated with Harassment
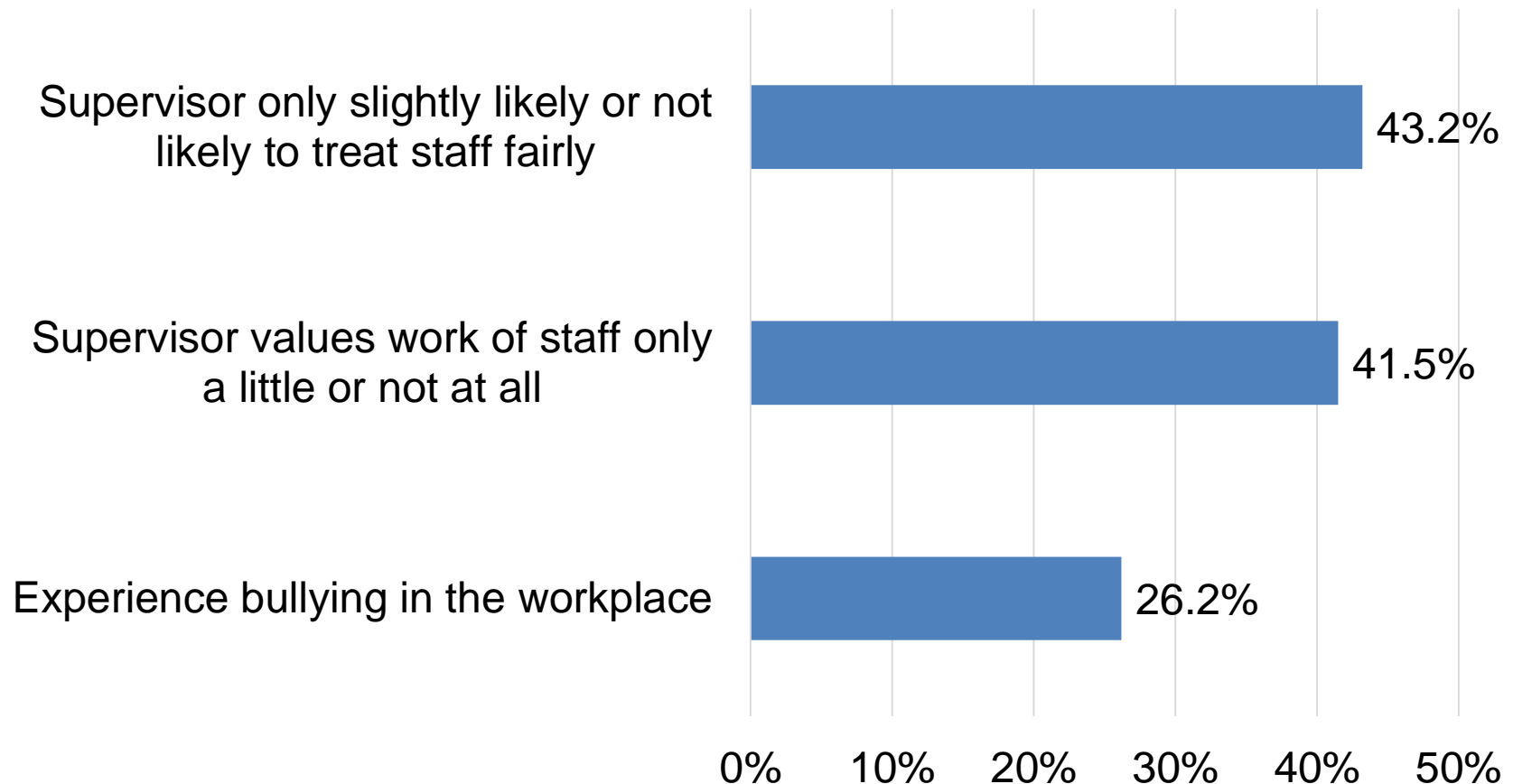
Note: Percent of those experiencing any sexual harassment based on the specified responses to these workplace climate questions

Implications

- <u>Supervisors who are perceived as less supportive</u> are associated with higher percentages of staff who have experienced harassment

- <u>Bullying and other forms of incivility</u> in the workplace are associated with higher percentages of staff who have experienced harassment

Specifics of the Sexual Harassment Experience

- The following results are only from those who reported any sexual harassment in the past 12 months

- If respondents had more than one experience, they were asked to respond based on the experience that had the greatest effect on them

Where Harassment Occurred

- Primarily occurred in a building owned or leased by NIH: **88%**

- Occurred during a conference: **5.4%**

- Occurred at a NIH-related social event : **12.5%**

Implications

- Anecdotally, sexual harassment is believed to occur at social gatherings and at conferences where interpersonal boundaries are less clear, but the survey data show that most experiences of harassment occur in the workplace
  - This finding may be due to opportunity – staff spend most of their work-related activities at their workplace, not outside of it
- NIH should continue to address maintaining appropriate interpersonal boundaries outside of the workplace, but appropriate interpersonal boundaries also need to be reinforced in the workplace

Who Are the Perpetrators?
Most sexual harassment perpetrators were men and NIH employees

Category	Percentage
NIH employee	78%
Man	72%
Same work unit as the respondent	57%
Supervising/managing the respondent	35%
Could influence respondent's NIH work opportunities	25%
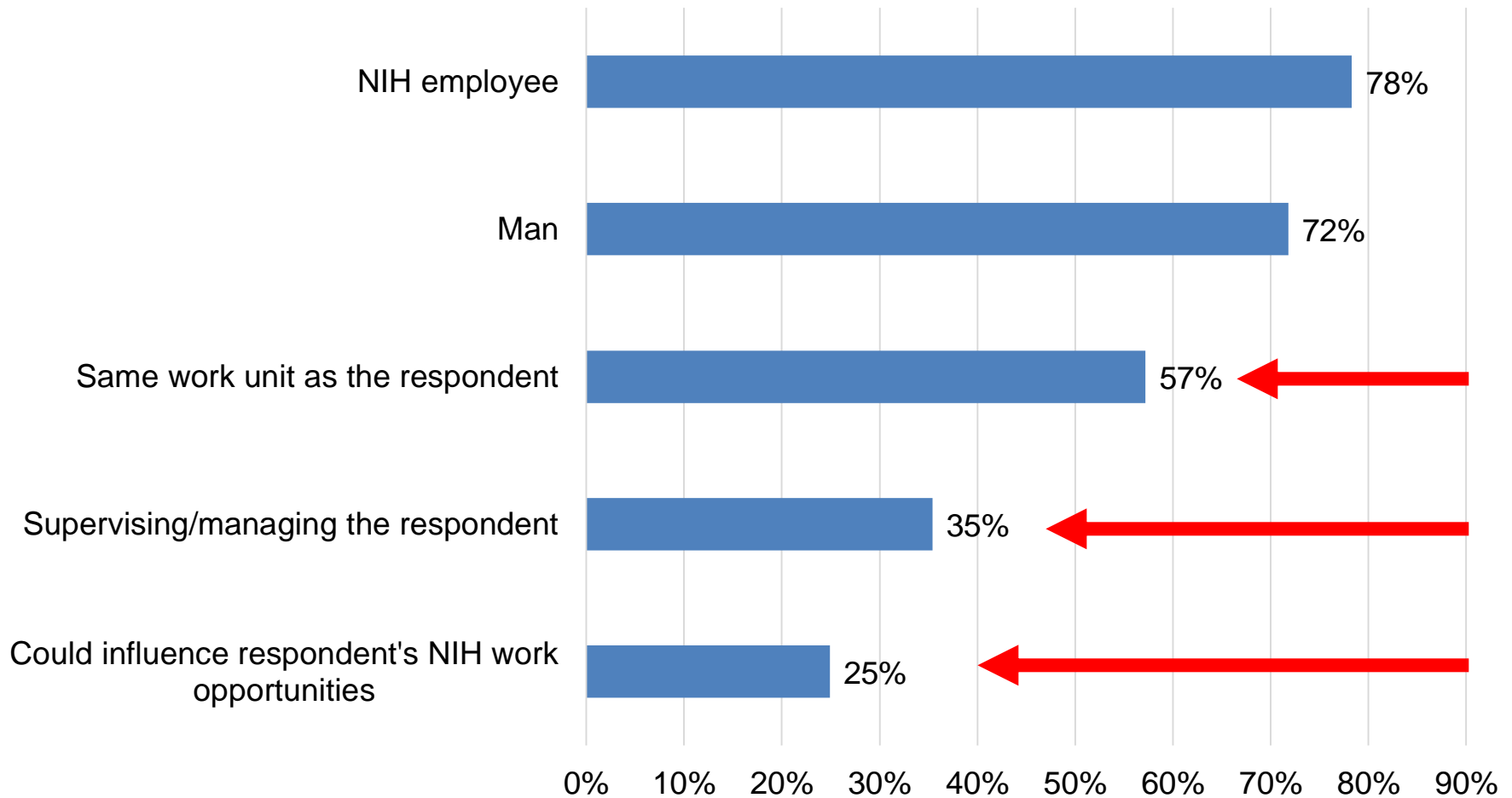
Note: Respondents were asked about the sexual harassment experience that had the most impact on them

Who Do Those Who Have Been Sexually Harassed Talk to About Their Experience?

- 54% of those who were harassed did not talk about the experience to anyone

- Of those who did talk to someone (could choose more than one):
  - 61.7% talked to a co-worker
  - 24.0% talked to supervisor or manager
  - 7.3% talked to to CIVIL or EDI
  - 3.5% talked to someone at the Ombudsman office
  - 3.4% talked to someone in an outside organization or agency

Why Not?

Many respondents believed it was <u>not serious enough</u> and/or that <u>their career might suffer</u> if they did report

Category	Percentage
Didn't think the experience was serious enough to report	78%
Career might suffer if you reported	65%
Didn't think anything helpful would come from reporting	38%
Concern that co-workers would be angry with you if you reported	38%
Afraid to report the experience	30%
Concern that someone would try to hurt you to get back at you	27%
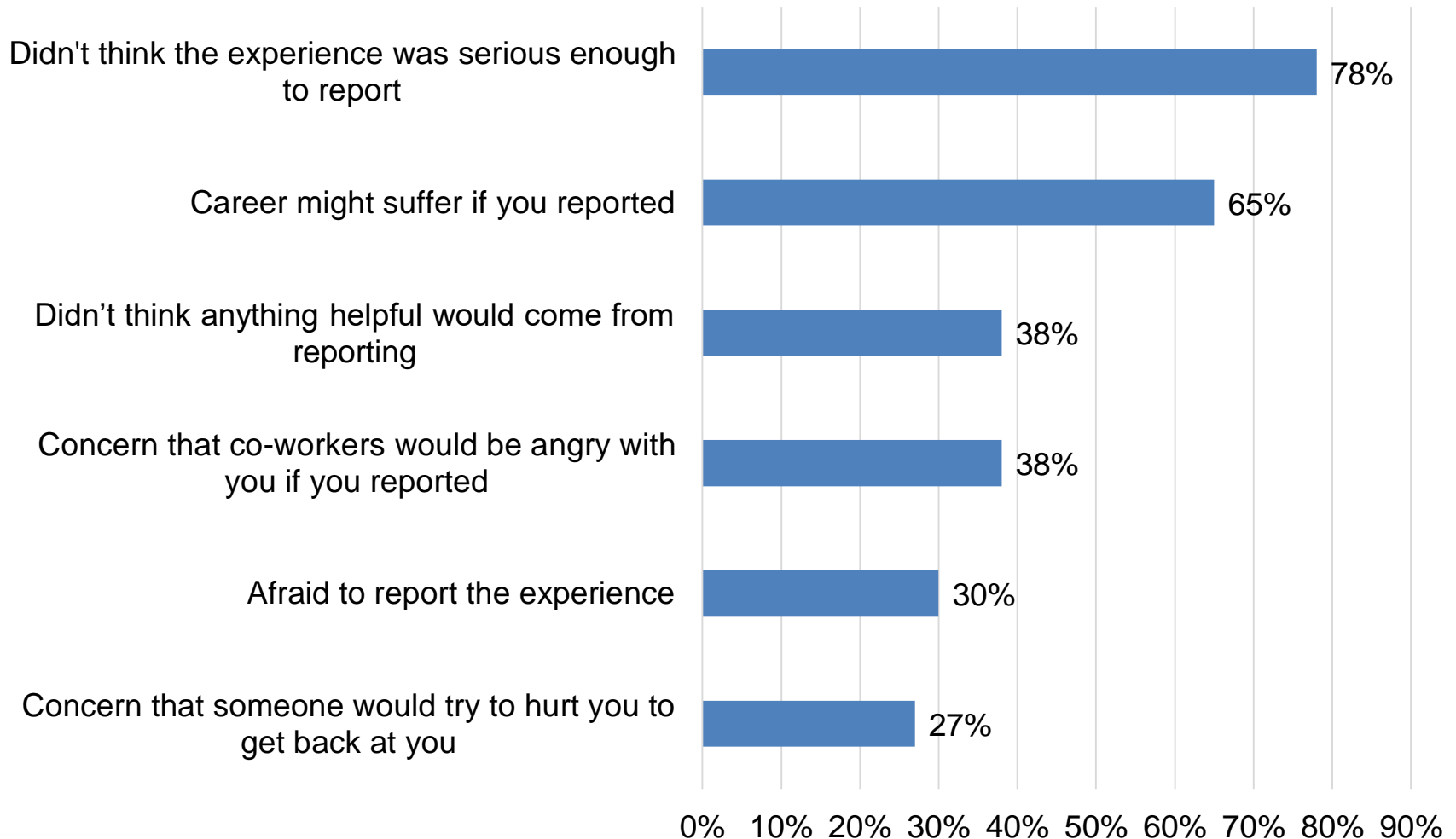
Note: Respondents could select more than one response

Are Reports of Sexual Harassment Taken Seriously?

Of respondents who reported their sexual harassment experiences, up to one-third felt their complaint was <u>not taken seriously</u> by the entity to whom they reported or talked

Category	Percentage
Supervisor did not take complaint seriously	34%
NIH Ombudsman Office did not take complaint seriously	32%
NIH HR or Civil Program did not take complain seriously	29%
Coworker did not take complaint seriously	18%
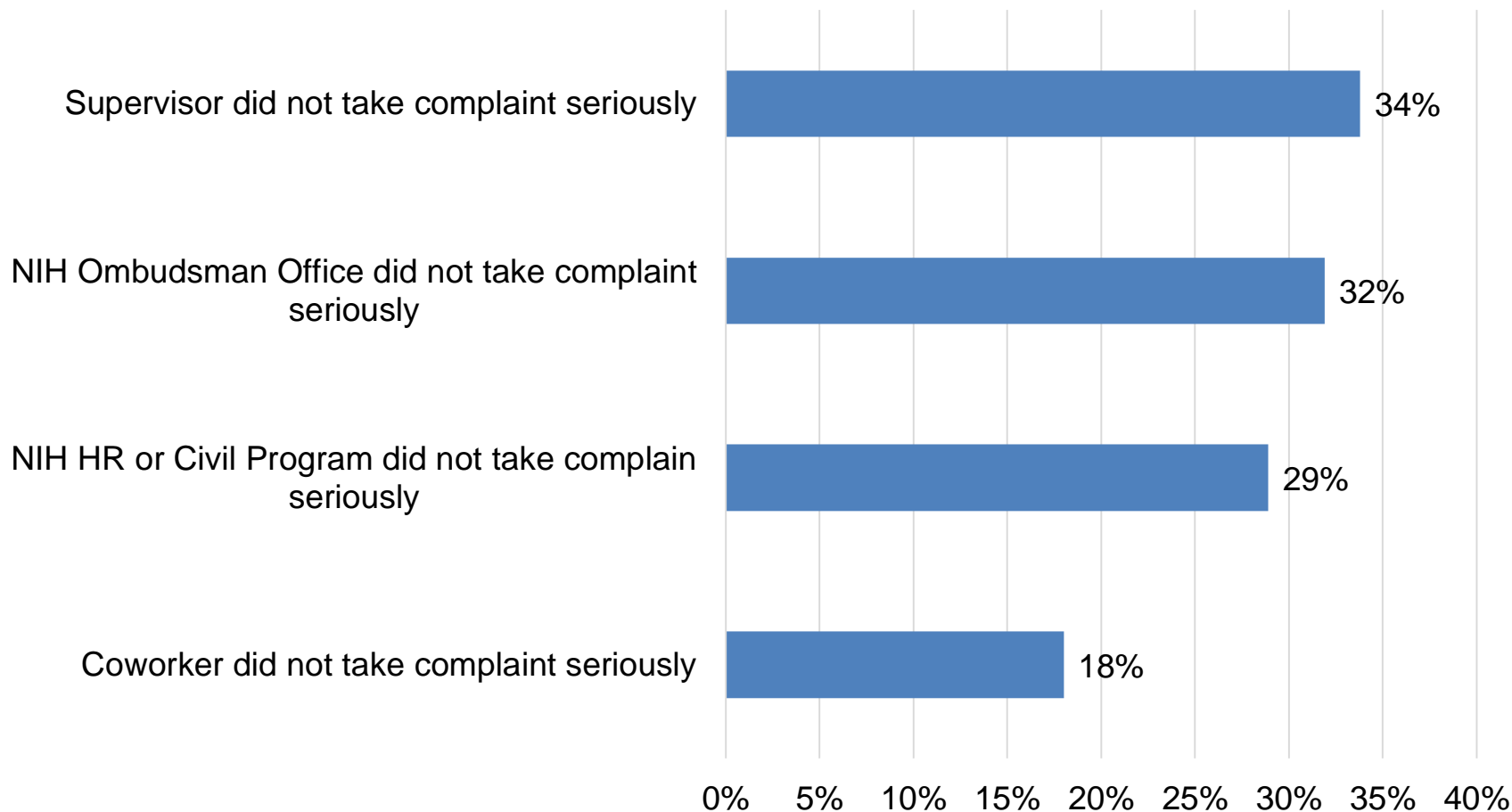
Workplace Outcomes of Reporting
Of respondents who talked to someone about their sexual harassment experiences, many experienced negative workplace outcomes

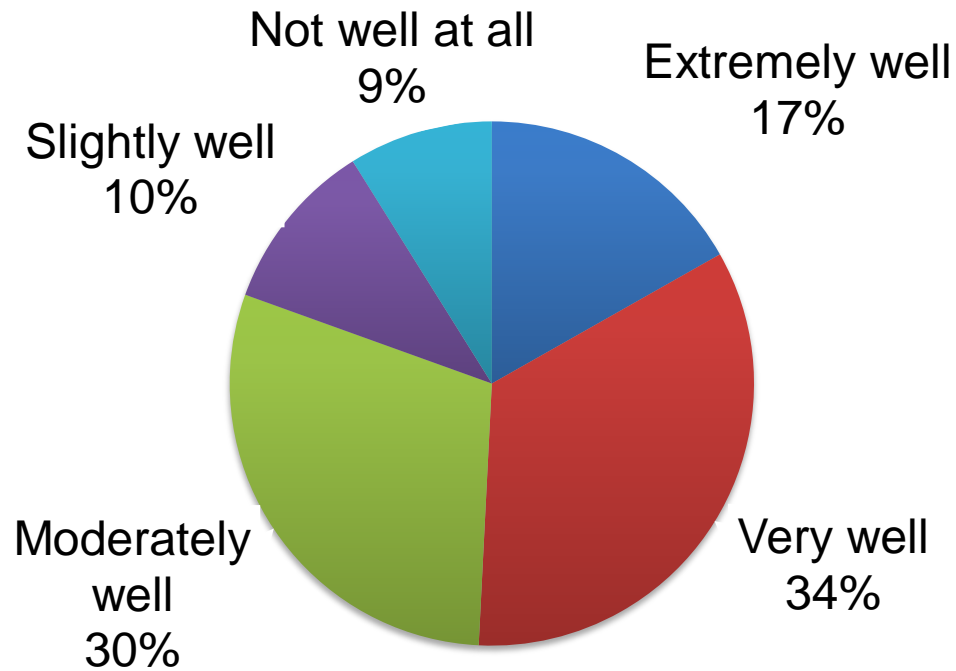| Outcome	Percentage
No longer feel a part of work unit	52%
Overall working conditions got worse	50%
Coworkers gossip about me in an unkind way	43%
Slighted, ignored, or ridiculed by others at work	39%
Considered a troublemaker at work	32%
Work performance evaluated unfairly	30%
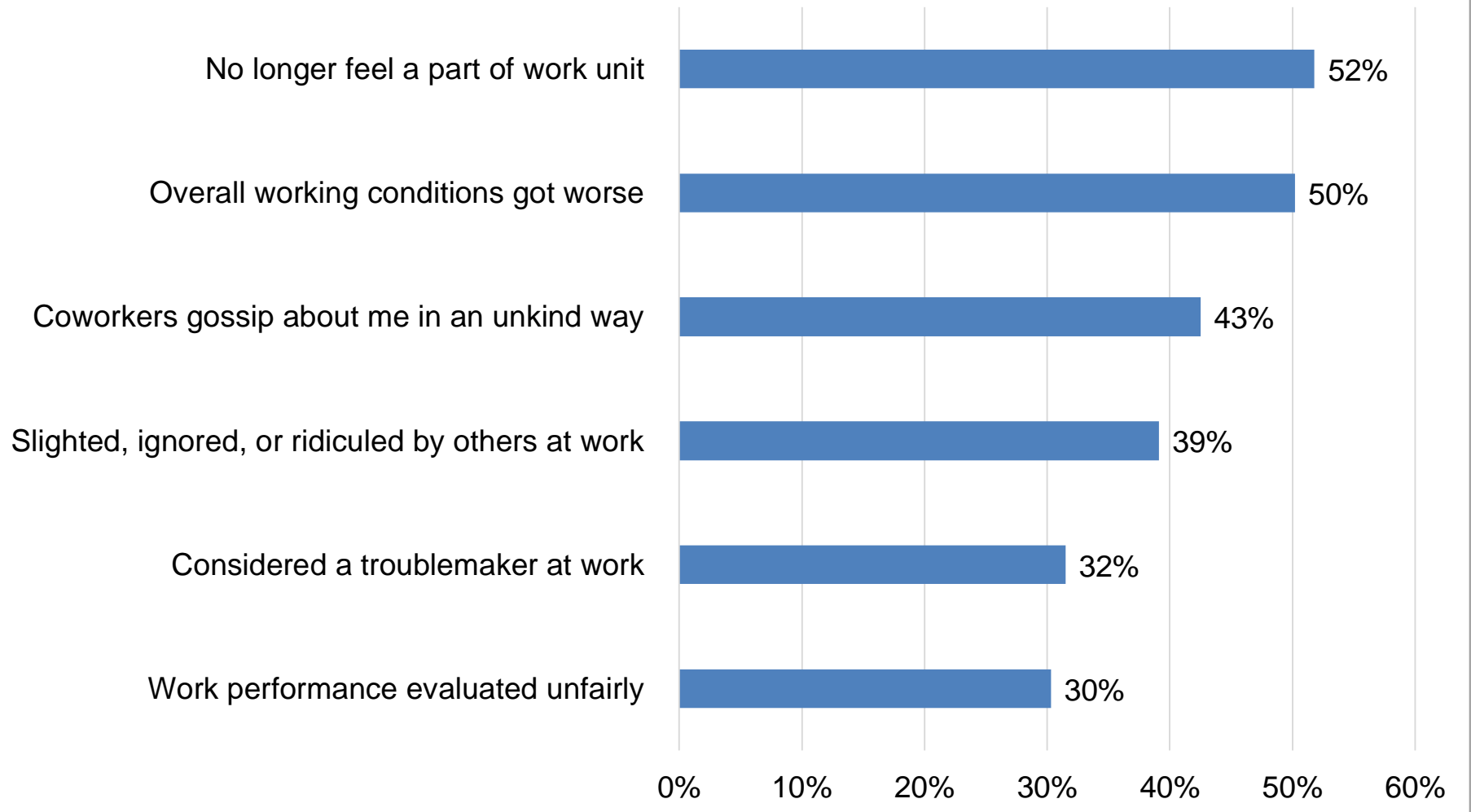
Note: Respondents could select more than one response

Implications

- Encourage greater reporting of harassment experience, particularly dispelling concern that it might not be serious enough* or that career might suffer

- Address concern, real or perceived, that about one-third of respondents do not think their report was taken seriously

- Better educate NIH workforce regarding how to treat someone who has reported harassment

*Option to talk to co-worker, Ombudsman or EAP confidentially if not sure if it is serious enough

Understanding of NIH Policies

Pie chart showing Understanding of NIH Policies:
- Extremely well 17%
- Very well 34%
- Moderately well 30%
- Slightly well 10%
- Not well at all 9%

Potential Consequences of Sexual Harassment

- **Physical health:** 5.3% of those experiencing any harassment indicate being in poor or very poor health, vs 2.4% of those not experiencing harassment

- **Mental Health:** 15.4% of those experiencing any harassment scored 7 or higher on PROMIS GMH (mental health measures), vs. 7.2% of those not experiencing harassment

- **Job Satisfaction:** 19.5% of those experiencing any harassment scored 4 or less on the Michigan Job Satisfaction scale, vs. 9.1% of those not experiencing harassment

Implications

- Those who have experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months also experience worse physical and mental health, and lower job satisfaction.

- Cannot infer causality

NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

Workplace Climate and Harassment Survey Next Steps

- Executive report

- Data visualizations

- Share with NIH workforce

- Further analyses – Data Access Committee

- Explore plans for follow-up survey

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION
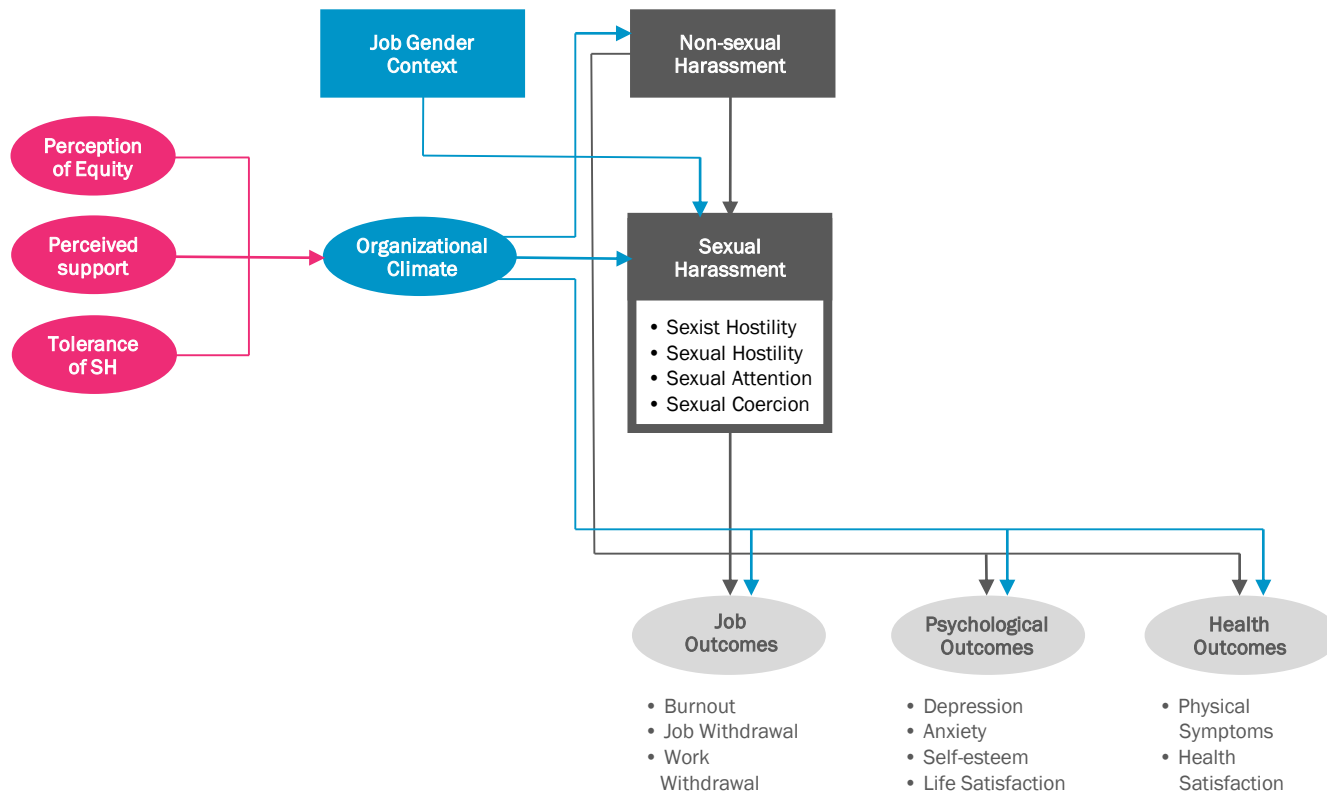
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Scientific Workforce Diversity

APPENDIX

NIH Workplace Climate and Harassment Survey:
Supplementary Data for Discussion

Appendix Contents

NIH Conceptual Model of Harassment

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	# of Survey Respondents	% of Survey Respondents	% of All NIH Federal Employees
Gender			
Men	3,875	**38%**	42%
Women	6,291	**62%**	58%
Age			
18–24	484	**5%**	1%
25–34	1,270	**13%**	9%
35–44	2,227	**22%**	22%
45–54	3,175	**31%**	29%
55–64	2,100	**21%**	28%
65 or older	871	**9%**	10%

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment, by Gender Identity
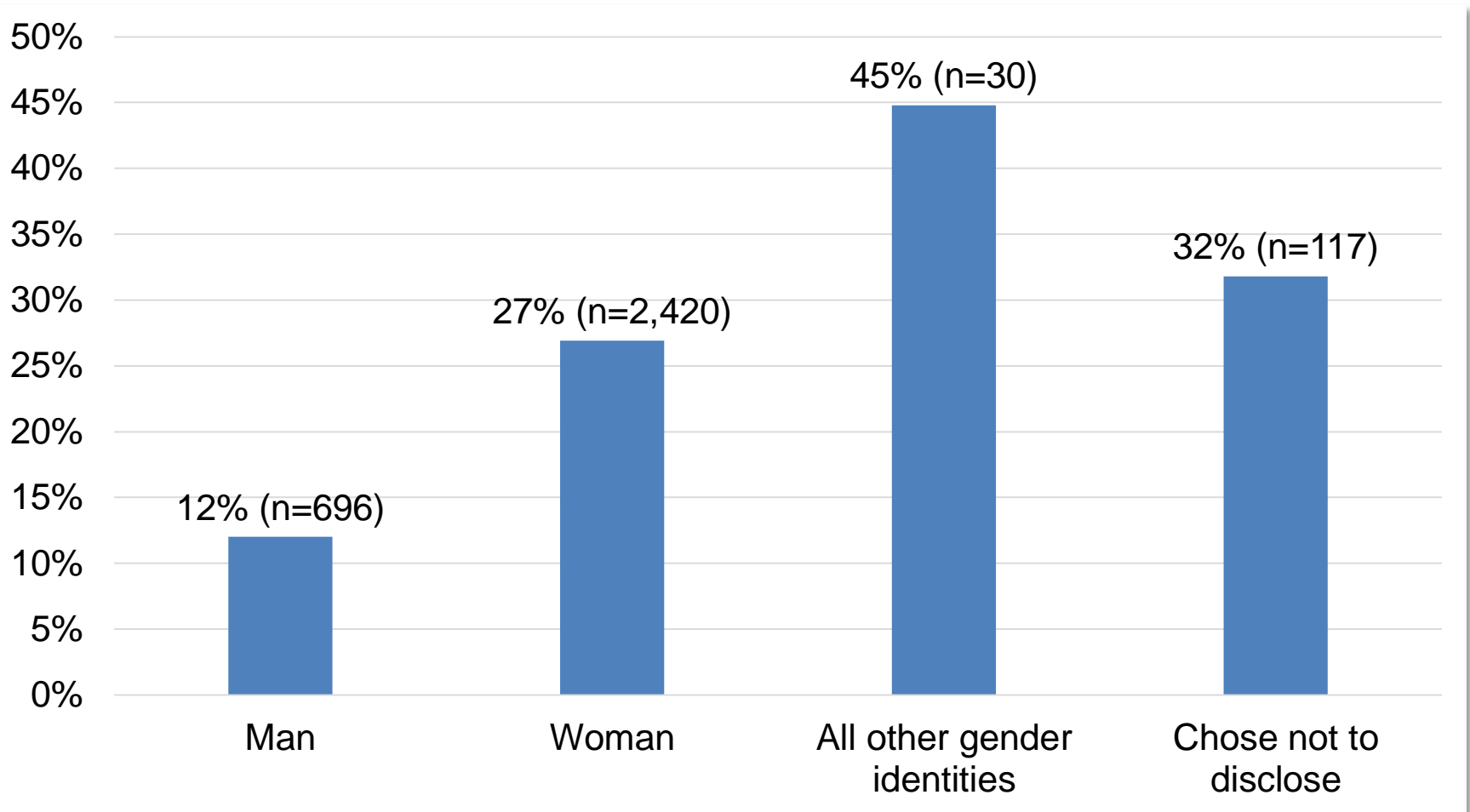
Prevalence of Sexual Harassment, by Sexual Orientation
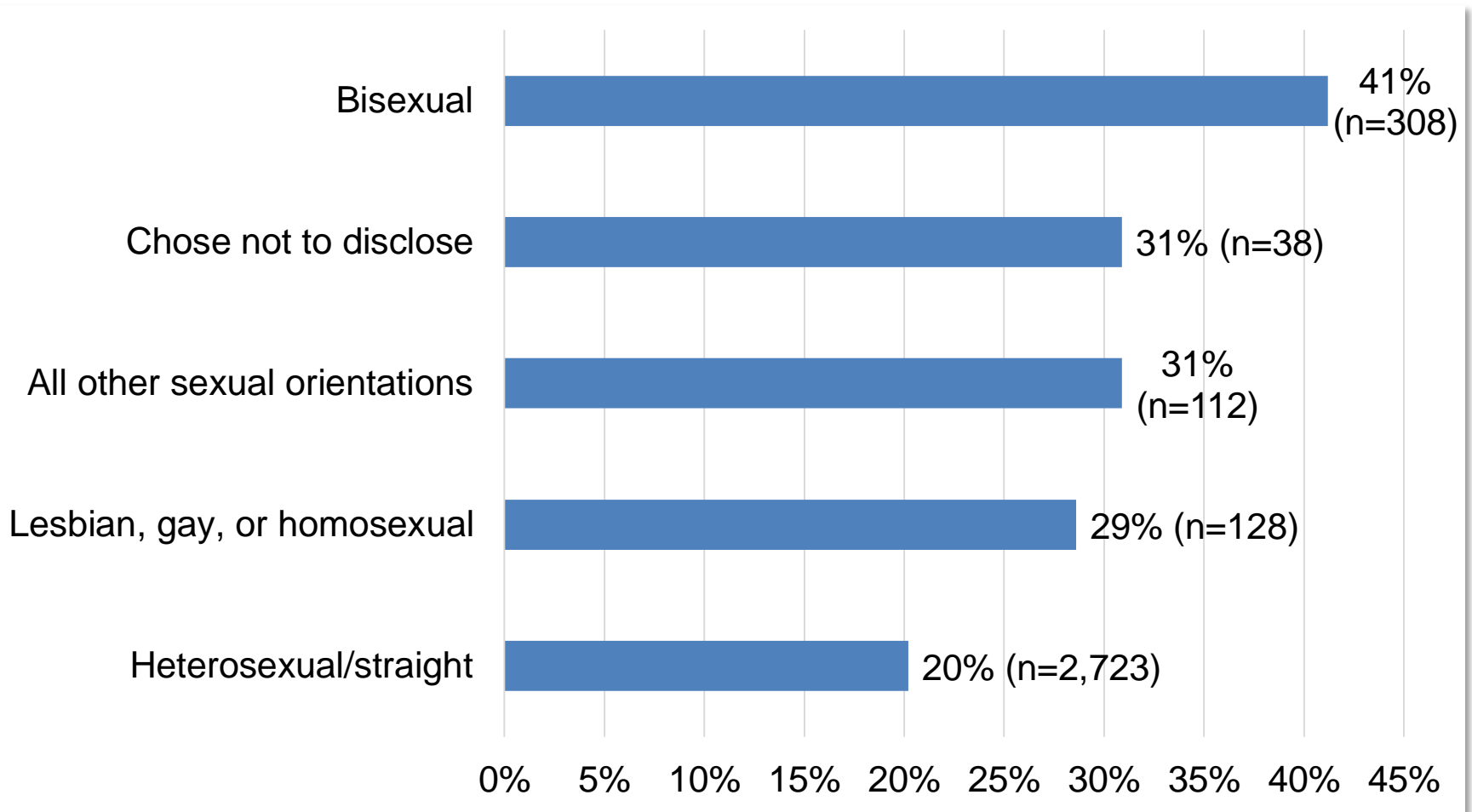
Prevalence of Sexual Harassment, by Age and NIH Experience
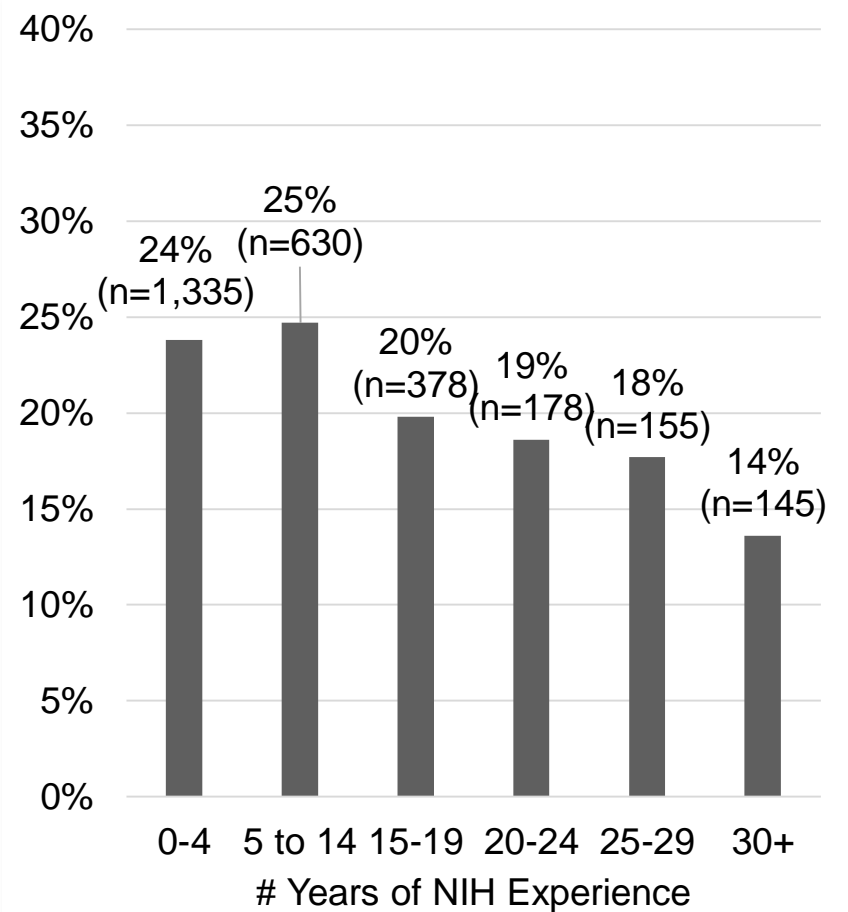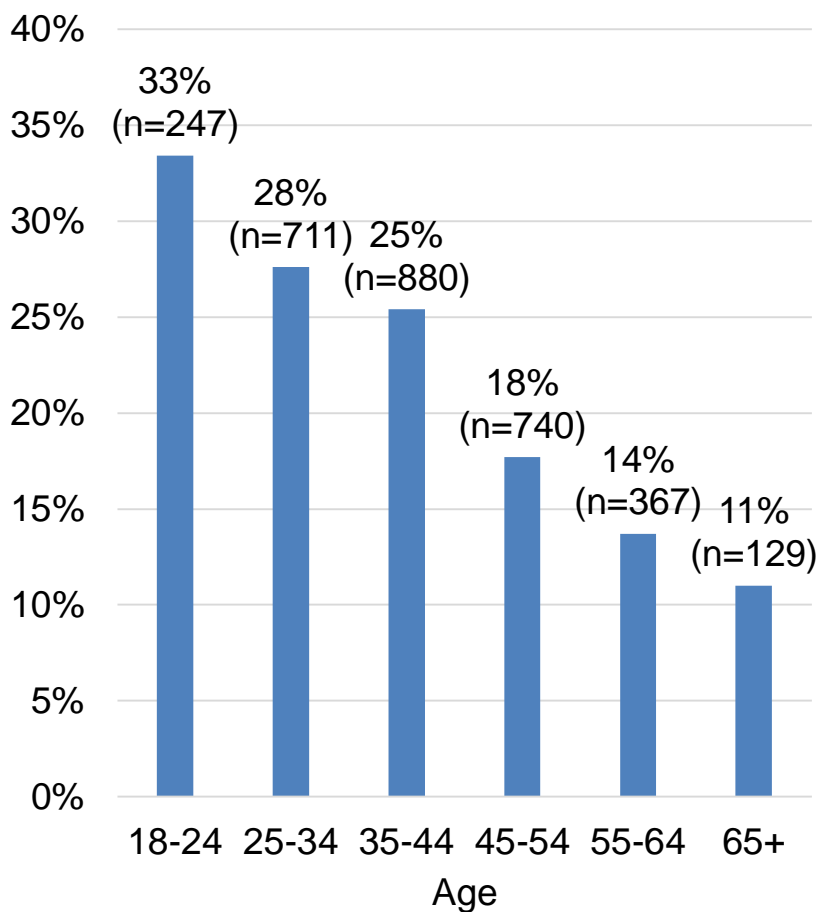
Prevalence of Sexual Harassment, by Education/Degrees Received
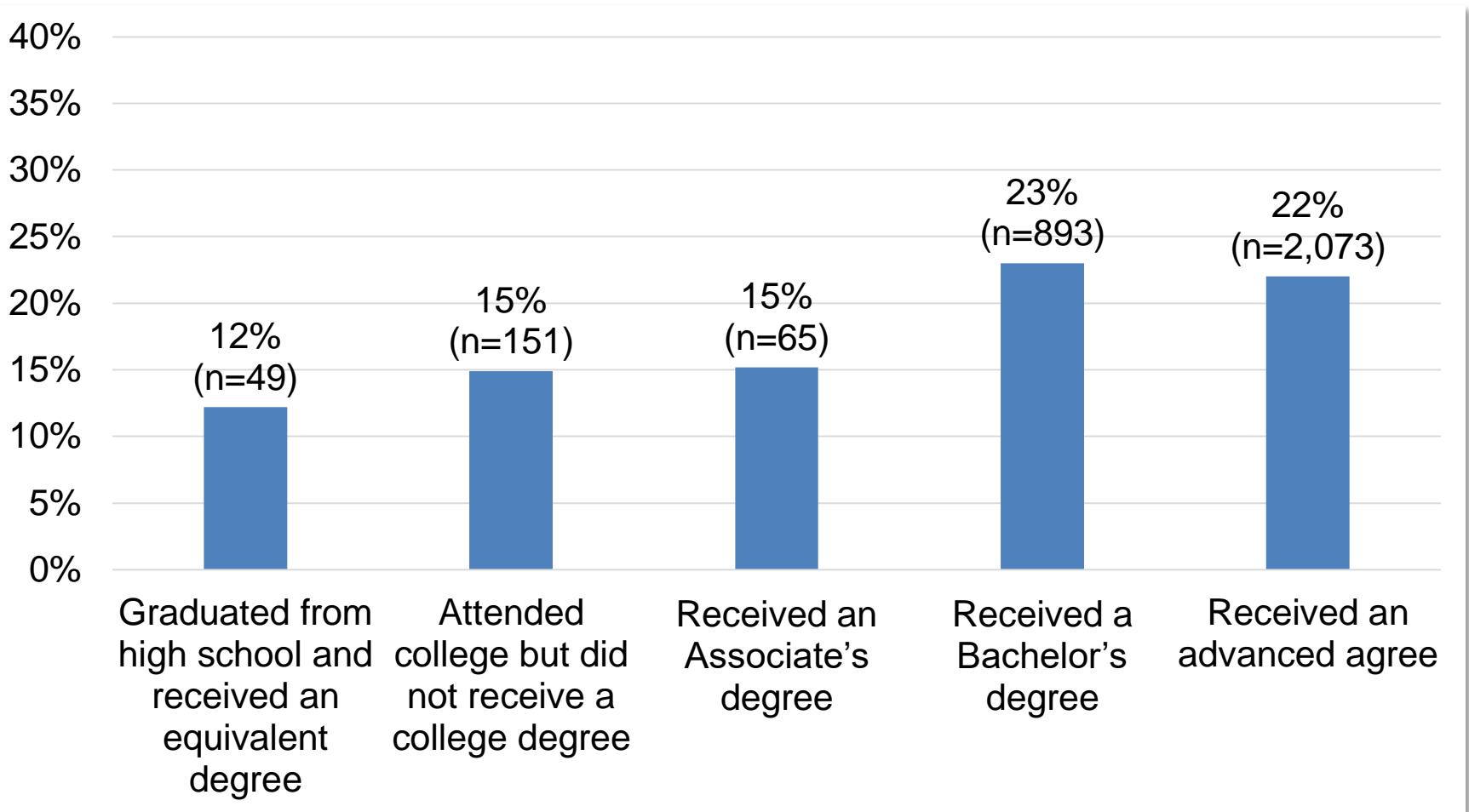
Outcomes of Reporting Sexual Harassment, by Person Reported to
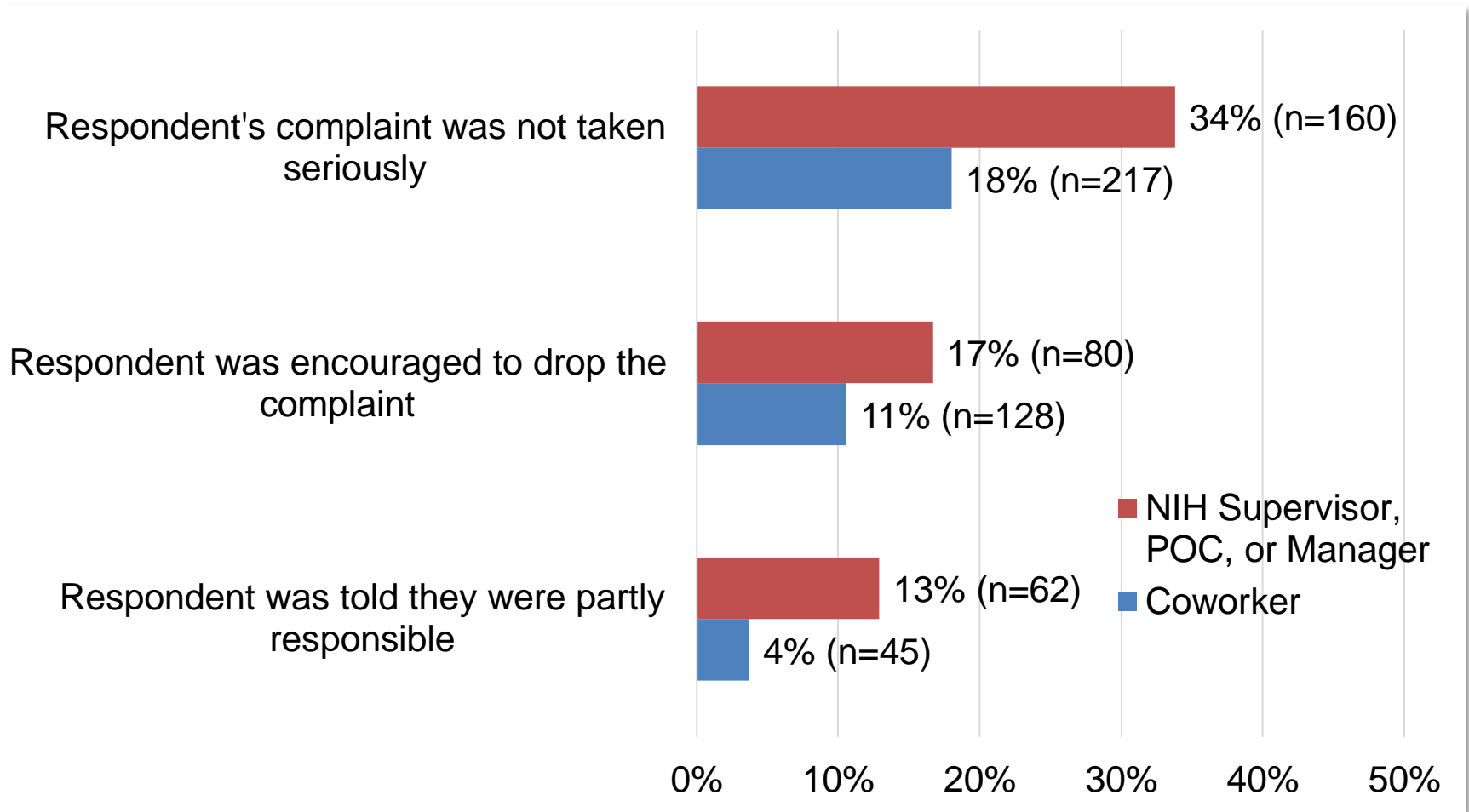
Respondent Understanding of NIH Policies and Procedures

Not well at all
9% (n=1,356)

Extremely well
17% (n=2,554)

Slightly well
10% (n=1,617)

Very well
34% (n=5,171)

Moderately well
30% (n=4,517)
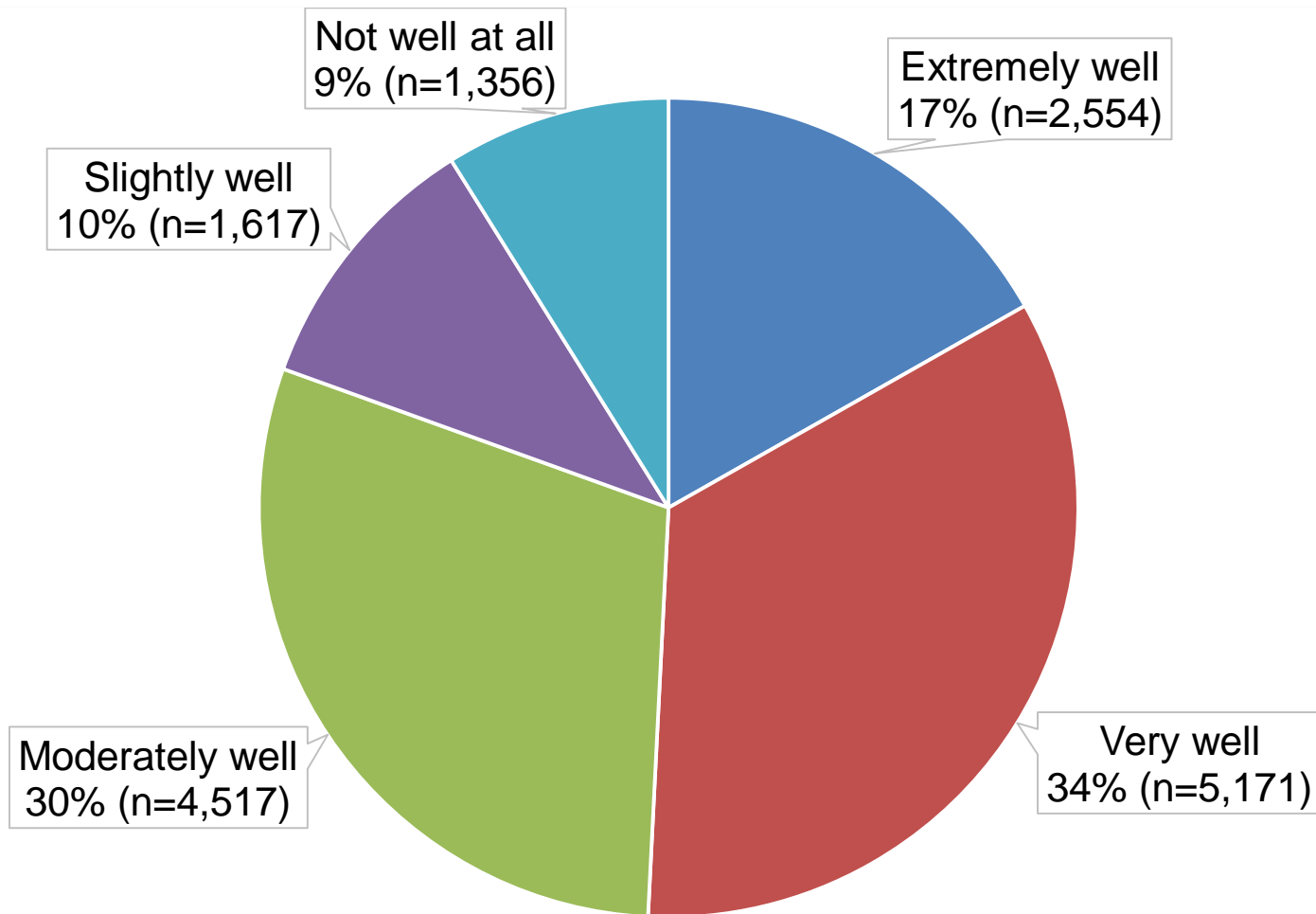
Respondent Understanding of How NIH Employees Can Report Harassment

Not well at all 6% (n=901)

Slightly well 10% (n=1,492)

Moderately well 27% (n=4,114)

Extremely well 22% (n=3,412)

Very well 35% (n=5,402)
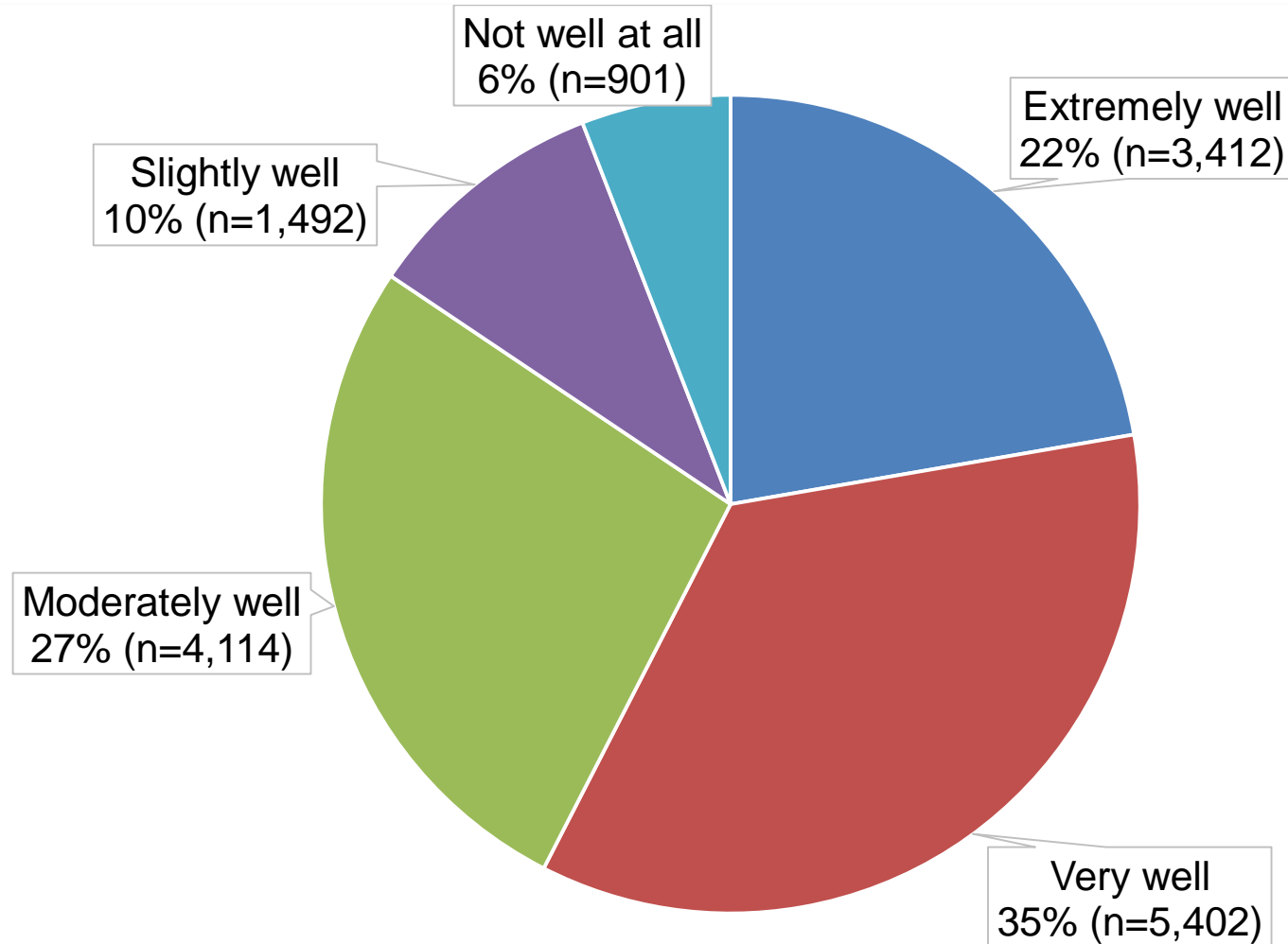
Respondent Evaluation of NIH Encouragement of Harassment Reporting

Poor
3% (n=546)

Very poor
2% (n=252)

Fair
17% (n=2,621)

Excellent
34% (n=5,158)

Good
44% (n=6,639)
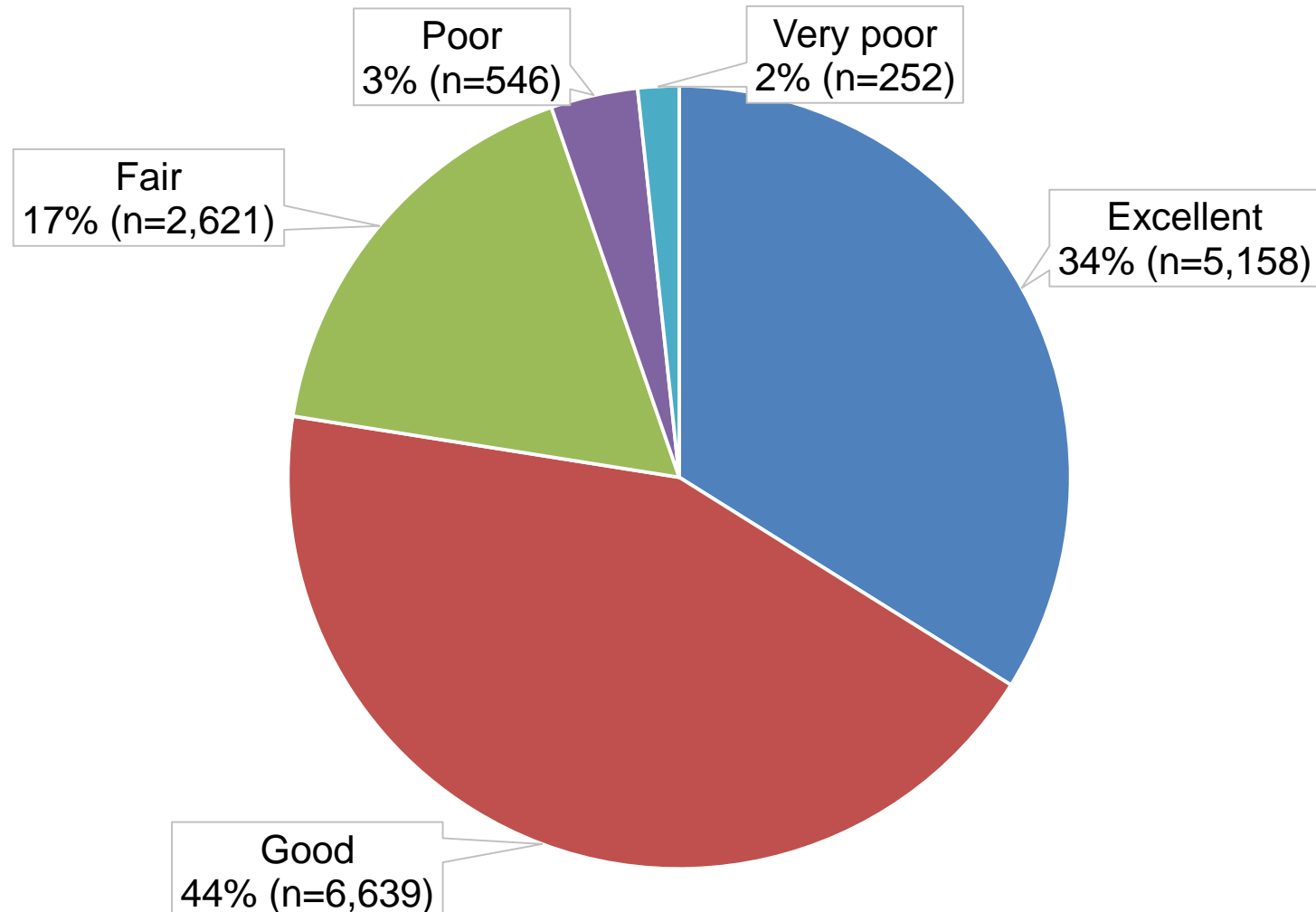
Job Gender Context

Respondents experiencing sexual harassment were more likely to report a higher proportion of men in their work unit ($\chi2=18.8$, $p<0.01$).

Mostly women
- 13% (n=1,556)
- 16% (n=536)

More women than men
- 32% (n=3,791)
- 31% (n=1,038)

About the same number of men and women
- 35% (n=4,155)
- 29% (n=973)

More men than women
- 14% (n=1,729)
- 15% (n=487)

Mostly men
- 7% (n=781)
- 8% (n=280)

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%

■ No Sexual Harassment Experiences   ■ One or More Sexual Harassment Experience

Survey Response Rate by ICO

ICO	Survey Response Rate
NIMHD	78% (n=69)
NCATS	70% (n=330)
NCCIH	69% (n=86)
NINR	64% (n=100)
FIC	64% (n=51)
NIDCD	62% (n=152)
NIGMS	62% (n=151)
NIDA	60% (n=421)
CSR	60% (n=315)
NLM	53% (n=820)
NIAAA	52% (n=205)
NIMH	52% (n=593)
NHGRI	51% (n=392)
NIAMS	50% (n=204)
OD	50% (n=1,355)
NEI	50% (n=269)
NINDS	48% (n=573)
NIDCR	46% (n=199)
NIDDK	45% (n=552)
NIBIB	45% (n=93)
NIEHS	44% (n=733)
CC	43% (n=1,177)
NICHD	43% (n=519)
NIAID	41% (n=1,873)
NHLBI	39% (n=698)
NIA	39% (n=358)
ORS	37% (n=361)
NCI	36% (n=2,771)
ORF	35% (n=297)
CIT	32% (n=222)

Survey Response Rate

Workplace Incivility

Over 40% of respondents experienced at least one incident of workplace incivility in the past 12 months.

"During the past 12 months while working at the NIH, how many times did someone in your work unit…

- Ignore you or exclude you from work activities that you should have been involved in?
- Doubt your judgment on a matter for which you have responsibility?
- Put you down or was condescending to you?
- Pay little attention to what you said or showed little interest in your opinion?
- Make demeaning or derogatory remarks about you?
- Make unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters?
- Threaten to hurt you physically?
- Display intimidating behaviors such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, or blocking your way?"*

Workplace Incivility Score

Score	Percentage
0	58% (n=6,854)
1 to 4	25% (n=2,907)
5 or more	17% (n=1,981)
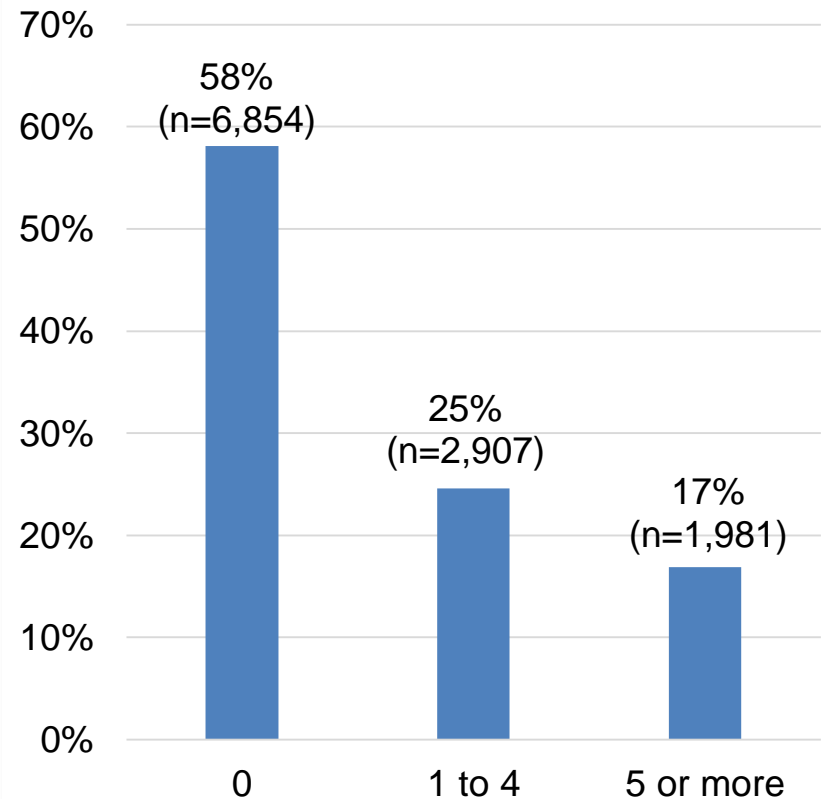
*Adapted from Estes, Brad, and Jia Wang. "Workplace incivility: impacts on individual and organizational performance." *Human Resource Development Review* 7, no 2 (2008): 218-240.

Bullying
Over 10% of respondents experienced <u>at least one</u> incident of bullying in the past 12 months.

One bullying experience — 4% (n=613)

2 to 4 bullying experiences — 4% (n=573)

5 or more bullying experiences — 3% (n=460)

0.0% 0.5% 1.0% 1.5% 2.0% 2.5% 3.0% 3.5% 4.0% 4.5%
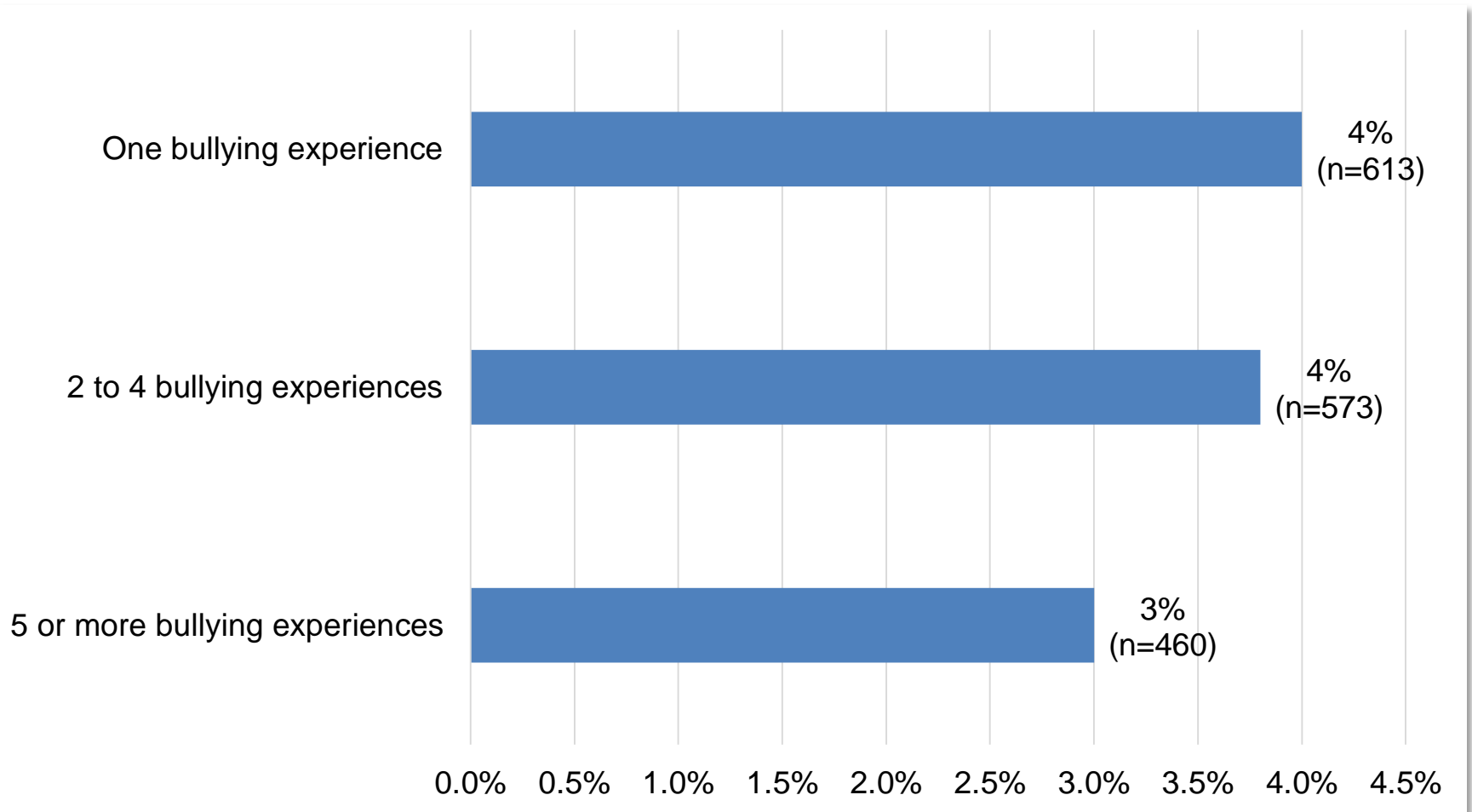
Bullying & Sexual Harassment
Respondents experiencing any sexual harassment also experienced <u>higher rates</u> of bullying in the past 12 months.

No bullying experiences
- 93% (n=11,136)
- 74% (n=2,426)

One bullying experience
- 3% (n=317)
- 9% (n=296)

2 to 4 bullying experiences
- 2% (n=279)
- 9% (n=294)

5 or more bullying experiences
- 2% (n=188)
- 8% (n=272)

Legend:
- ■ No Sexual Harassment Experience
- ■ One or More Sexual Harassment Experience

X-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
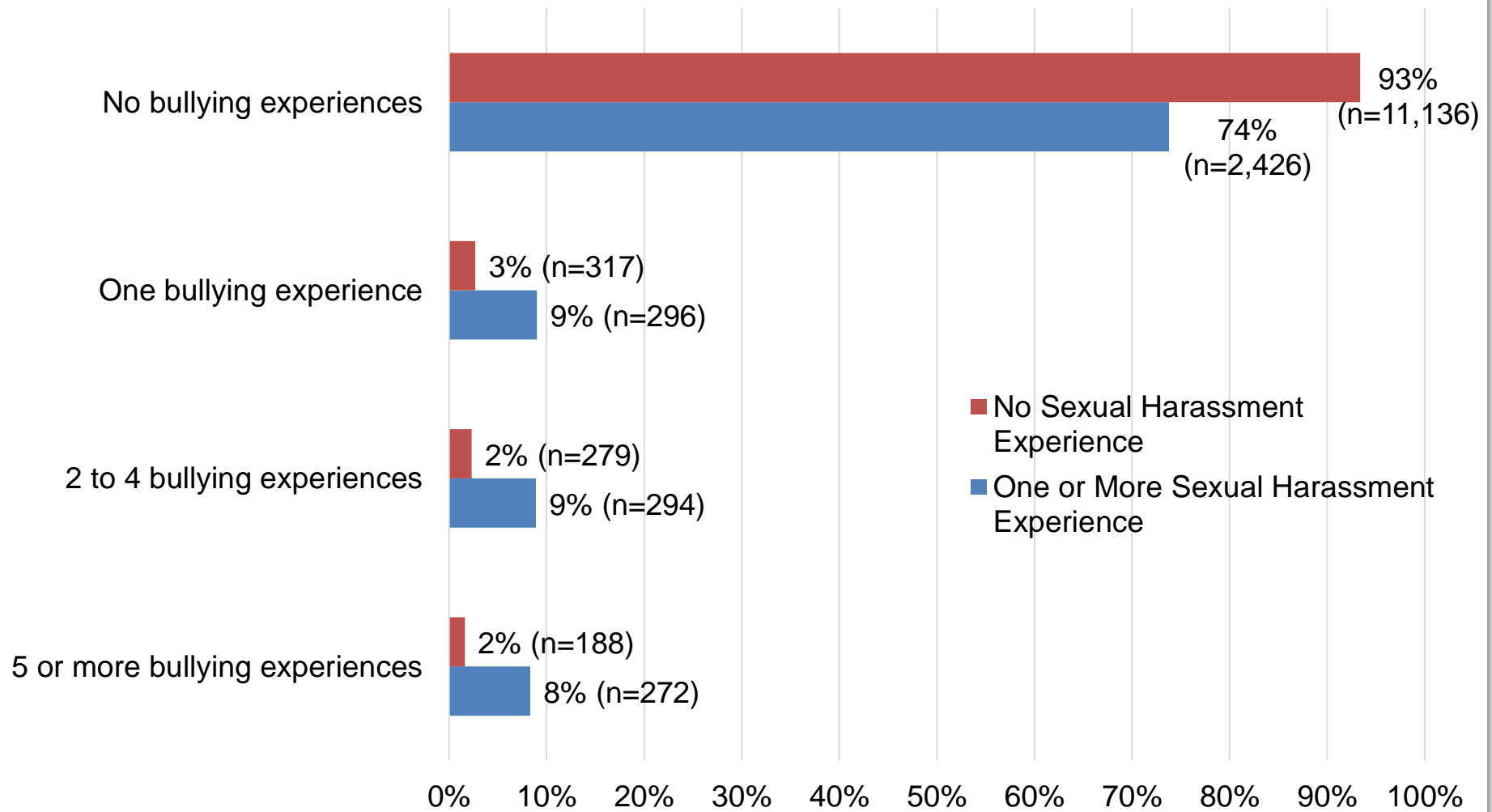
Intimidating Behaviors & Sexual Harassment
*Respondents experiencing any sexual harassment also experienced <u>more</u> intimidating behaviors in the past 12 months.**

No Experiences
- 97% (n=11,530)
- 83% (n=2,735)

One Experience
- 2% (n=213)
- 7% (n=235)

Two or More Experiences
- 2% (n=115)
- 7% (n=118)

Five or More Experiences
- 2% (n=213)
- 7% (n=235)

Legend:
- ■ No Sexual Harassment Experiences
- ■ One or More Sexual Harassment Experiences

X-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100% 120%
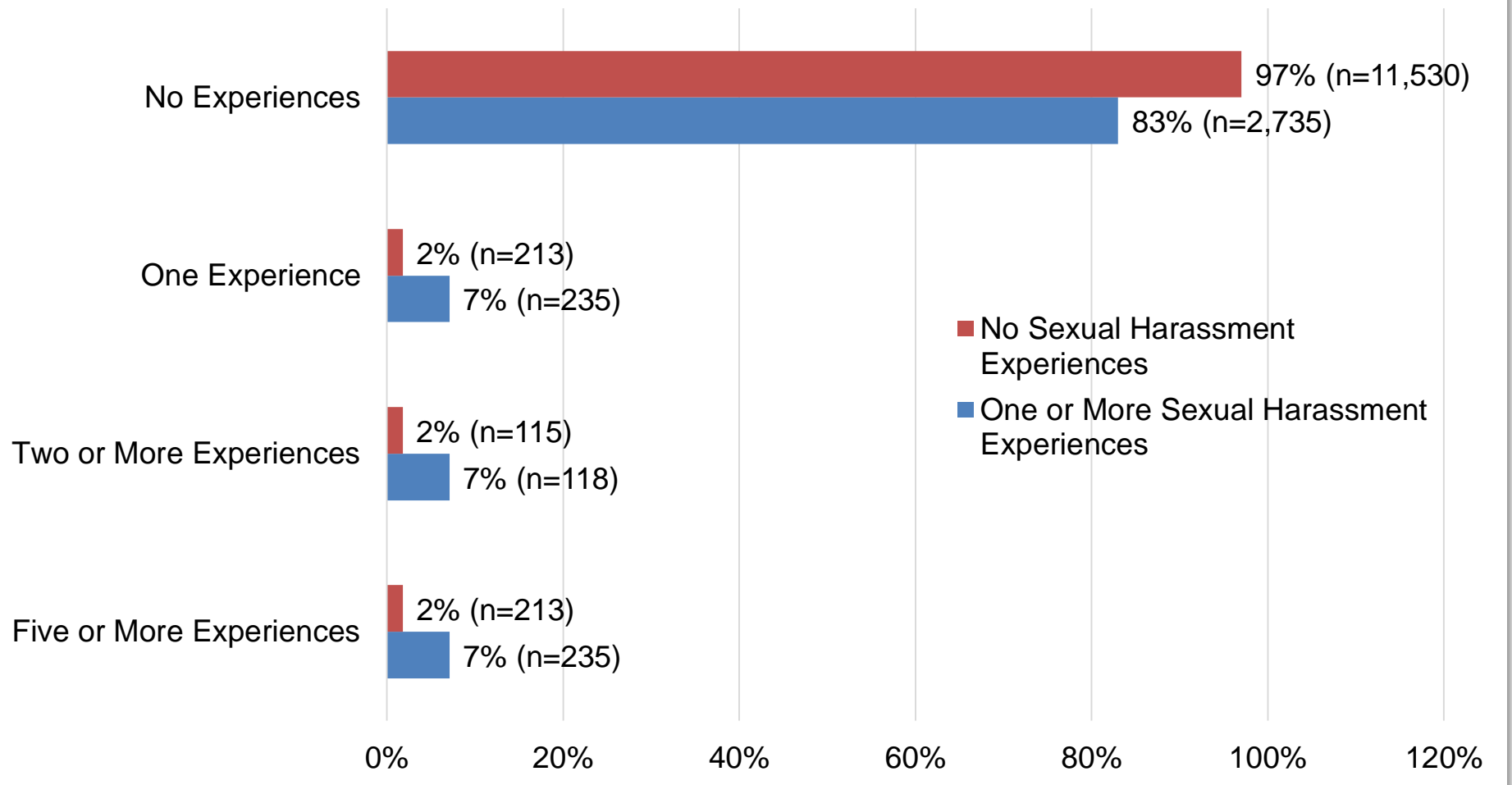
*Behaviors such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, or blocking someone's way.

Supervisor Follow-up Activities to Address Harassment

Supervisors are <u>infrequently</u> taking direct action to address harassment.

Activity	Percentage
Not aware of any harassment in the past 12 months in work unit	70% (n=10,364)
Encouraged employees to take the NIH anti-harassment training	32% (n=4,767)
Served as an example of how to treat coworkers respectfully without harassment	28% (n=4,224)
Provided information on the NIH anti-harassment program	23% (n=3,411)
Provided work time to review NIH anti-harassment policies	19% (n=2,840)
Convened meeting to discuss NIH anti-harassment program	12% (n=1,803)

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%

Job Gender Context

Respondents reporting one or more sexual harassment experiences were more likely to work in jobs they consider traditionally more for men than women or mostly for men.

Legend:
- ■ No Sexual Harassment Experiences
- ■ One or More Sexual Harassment Experience

Traditionally mostly women
- 6% (n=712)
- 8% (n=255)

Traditionally more women than men
- 19% (n=2,299)
- 22% (n=709)

Traditionally equally men and women
- 48% (n=5,776)
- 32% (n=1,046)

Traditionally more men than women
- 21% (n=2,476)
- 28% (n=919)

Traditionally mostly men
- 6% (n=692)
- 11% (n=364)

X-axis: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%
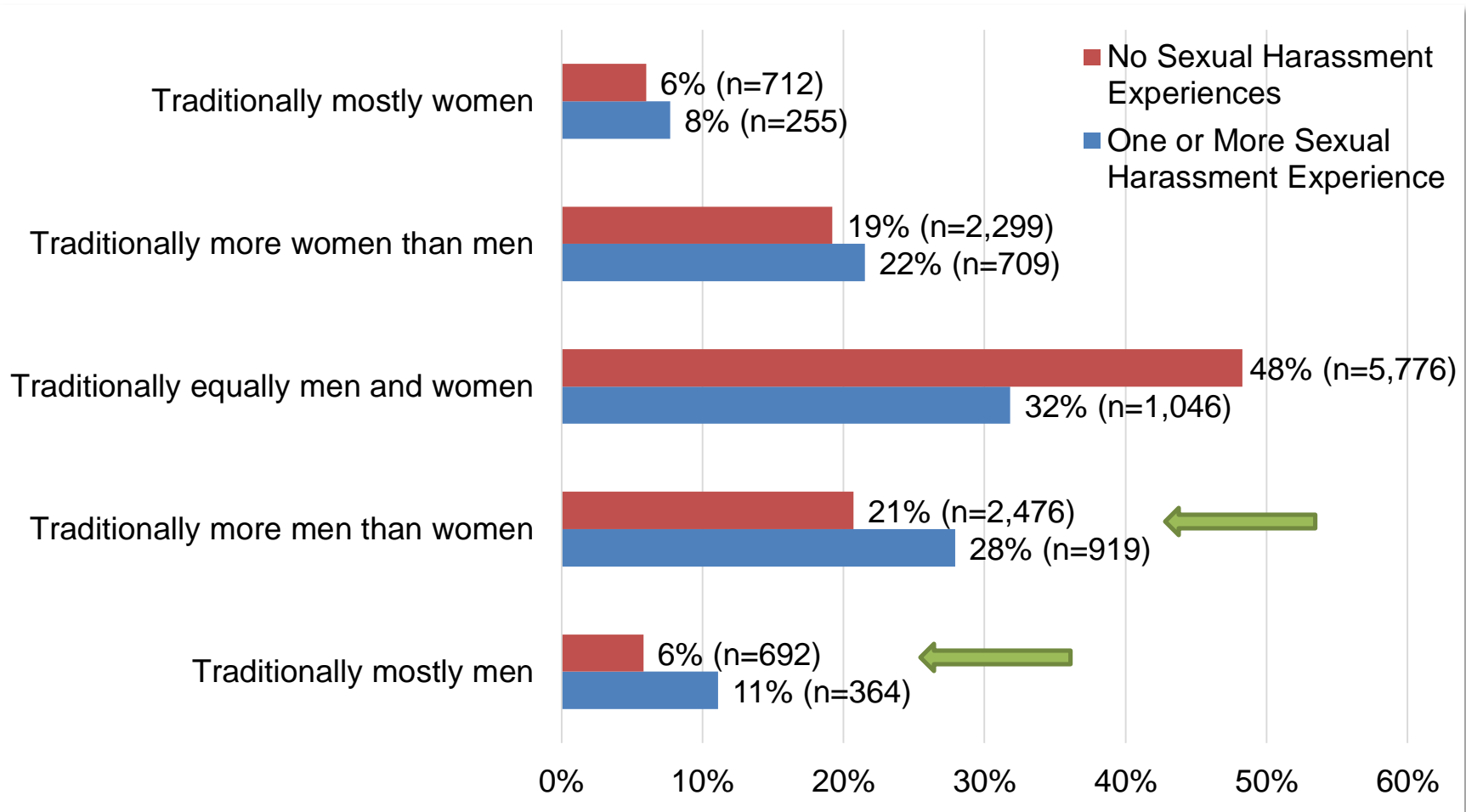
*Multivariate regression analysis: $\chi^2 = 198$, $p < 0.01$

Perceived Equity

Respondents experiencing sexual harassment were <u>less likely</u> to indicate supervisors <u>valued</u> their work, <u>were fair</u>, and <u>considered their opinions</u>.*

Supervisor values work a great deal — 38% (n=4,633); 27% (n=882)

Supervisor is extremely fair — 20% (n=2,418); 11% (n=351)

Supervisor takes opinions into account a great deal — 16% (n=1,892); 10% (n=315)

6% (n=655); 12% (n=405)

3% (n=392); 11% (n=350)

2% (n=208); 6% (n=182)

Legend:
- No Sexual Harassment Experiences
- One or More Sexual Harassment Experiences

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%
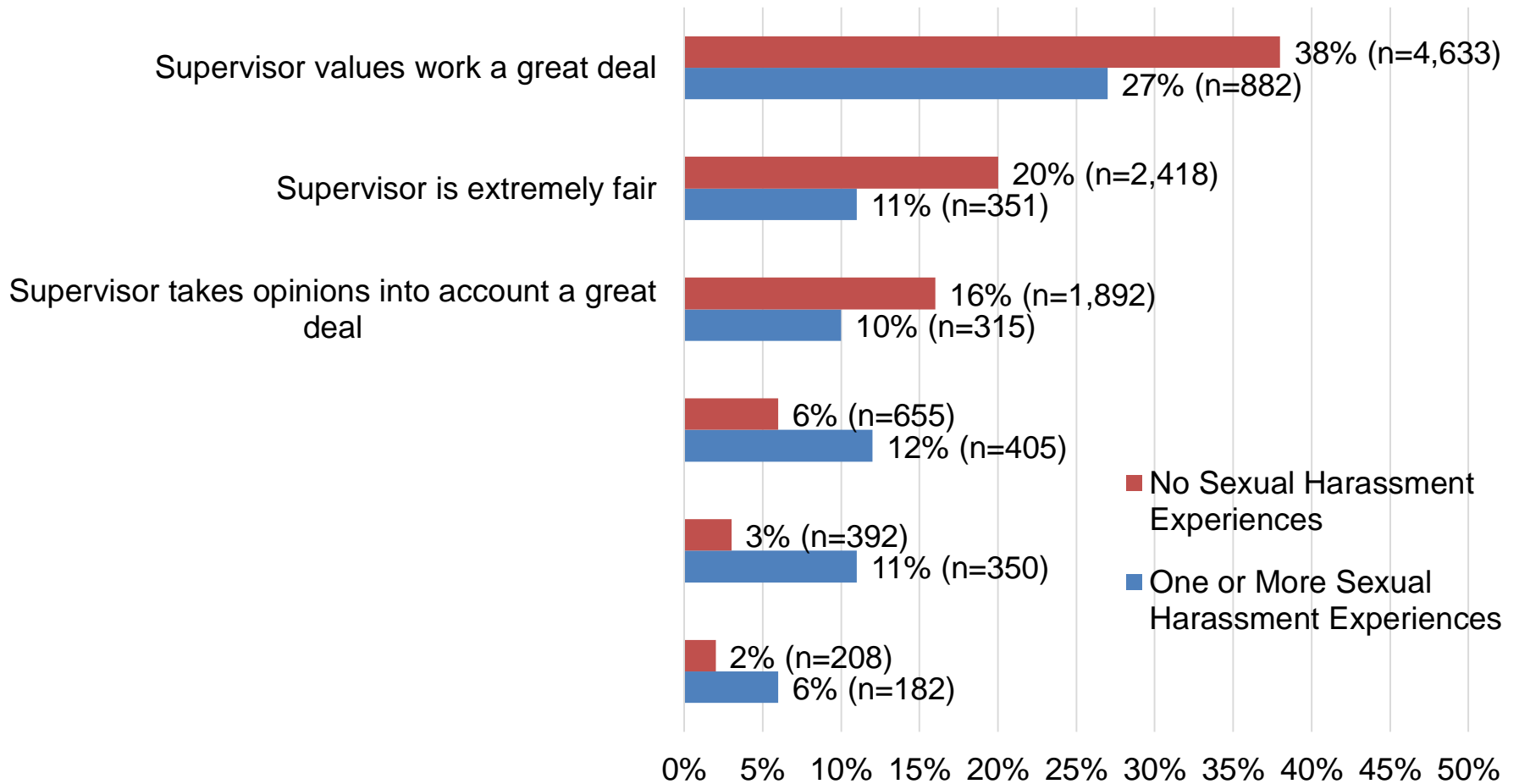
Multivariate regression analysis: $\chi^2 = 89.3$, $p < 0.01$; $\chi^2 = 25.1$, $p<0.01$; and $\chi^2 = 16.4$, $p < 0.01$, respectively.

Perceived Support

Respondents experiencing sexual harassment were <u>more likely</u> to believe that NIH <u>will not intervene</u> to stop a supervisor telling individuals that the way to get ahead is to date him/her.

I don't know
- 19%(n=738)
- 20% (n=164)

Not likely at all
- 3% (n=395)
- 7% (n=236)

Slightly likely
- 2% (n=188)
- 7% (n=231)

Moderately likely
- 4% (n=519)
- 12% (n=400)

Very likely
- 23% (n=2,771)
- 24% (n=791)

Extremely likely
- 48% (n=5,852)
- 29% (n=994)

Legend:
- No Sexual Harassment Experiences
- One or More Sexual Harassment Experience
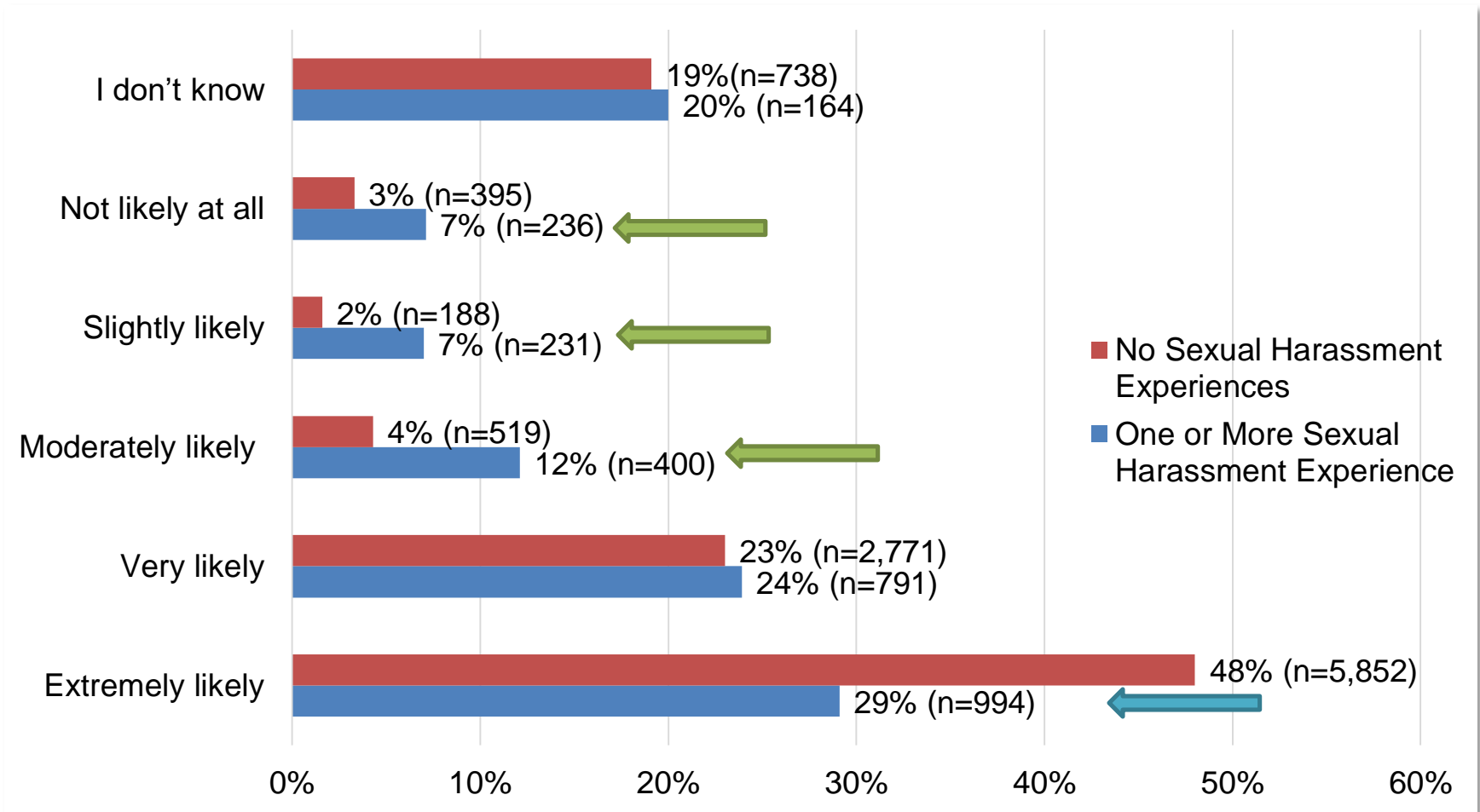
Multivariate regression analysis: $\chi^2 = 43$, $p < 0.01$

Perceived Support

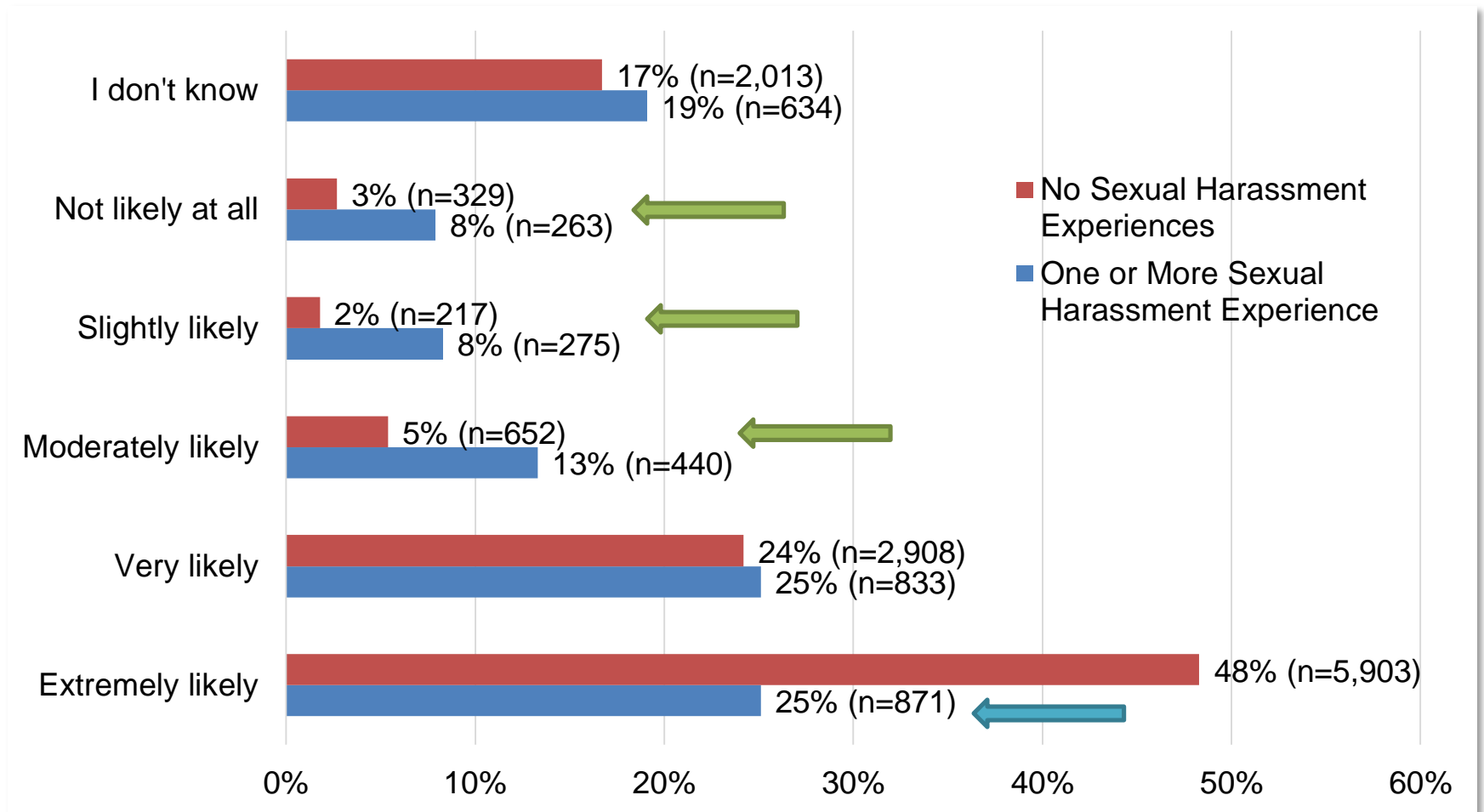*Respondents experiencing sexual harassment were <u>more likely</u> to believe that NIH <u>would not intervene</u> to stop a supervisor from talking about their sex lives.*

I don't know
- 17% (n=2,013)
- 19% (n=634)

Not likely at all
- 3% (n=329)
- 8% (n=263)

Slightly likely
- 2% (n=217)
- 8% (n=275)

Moderately likely
- 5% (n=652)
- 13% (n=440)

Very likely
- 24% (n=2,908)
- 25% (n=833)

Extremely likely
- 48% (n=5,903)
- 25% (n=871)

Legend:
- ■ No Sexual Harassment Experiences
- ■ One or More Sexual Harassment Experience

X-axis: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%

Multivariate regression analysis: $\chi^2 = 54.8$, $p < 0.01$

Structural Equation Model: Organizational Climate Elements

Job Gender Context

If the job is traditionally done by men or by women.

The proportion of men to women in an individual's work unit.

Perceived Support

Perceived likelihood that NIH would intervene to stop a supervisor from talking about their sex life or telling them that the way to get ahead is to date him or her.
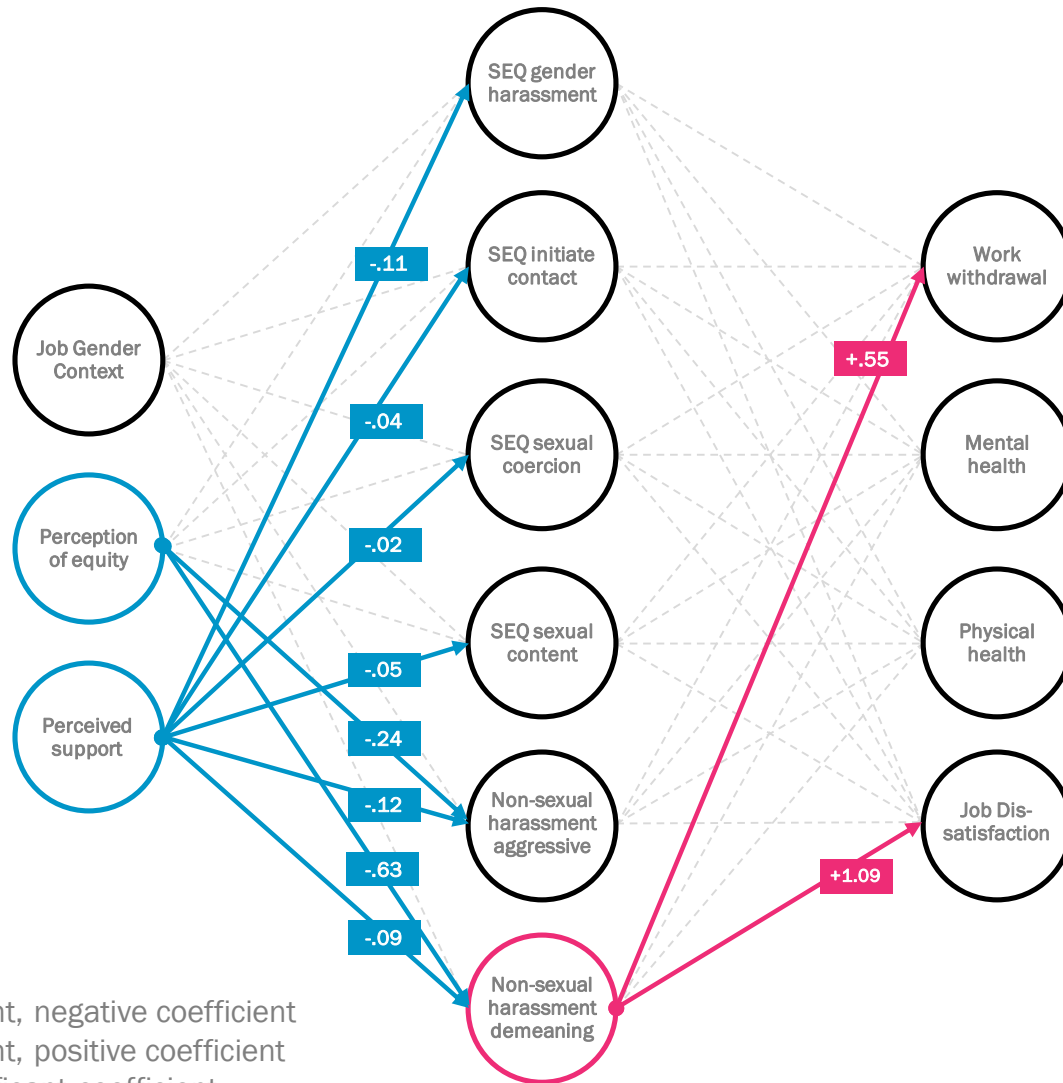
Perception that NIH encourages people to report harassment.

Perception of Equity

Belief that individual's supervisor...

- Takes into account opinions of people in the work unit.

- Is fair in decisions regarding the work unit (e.g., salary).

- Values their work.

Structural Equation Model: Harassment at NIH

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Structural Equation Model Results
Factors inversely associated with harassment experiences

- Respondents with lower levels of perceived support at work experienced significantly more instances of all types of harassment.[1]

- Respondents with lower levels of perception of equity experienced significantly more instances of non-sexual harassment.[2]

[1]***Structural Equation Model:*** *Gender harassment (β = -0.11, p = 0.00); sexual coercion (β = -0.02, p = 0.03); initiate contact (β = -0.04, p = 0.00); sexual content (β = -0.05, p = 0.00); aggressive non-sexual harassment (β = -0.12, p = 0.00); demeaning non-sexual harassment (β = -0.09, p = 0.00)*

[2]***Structural Equation Model:*** *Aggressive non-sexual harassment (β = -0.24, p = 0.00); demeaning non-sexual harassment (β = -0.63, p = 0.00)*

Structural Equation Model Results
Factors associated with work and health outcomes

- Respondents with more instances of demeaning non-sexual harassment had significantly higher levels of withdrawal from work.[1]

- Respondents with more instances of demeaning non-sexual harassment had significantly higher levels of job dissatisfaction.[2]

- Harassment experiences not associated with mental and physical health outcomes.

[1]*Structural Equation Model:* ($\beta = 0.55$, $p = 0.00$)
[2]*Structural Equation Model:* ($\beta = 1.09$, $p = 0.00$)

Potential Target Audience: Supervisors/Managers

Question   What audiences should NIH prioritize in its outreach efforts to prevent and address harassment?

Finding   Supervisors are a key channel through which reports of sexual harassment are voiced (15%). **Perception of equity** (e.g., supervisor fairness) was a significant predictor of non-sexual harassment. Of supervisors observed dealing with a sexist or racist remark (n = 2,483), 59.5% of respondents indicated that the supervisor did not speak up.

Recommendation   **NIH supervisors/managers could be a primary audience for intervention.**

Potential Target Audience: NIH Leadership

Question   What audiences should NIH prioritize in its outreach efforts to prevent and address harassment?

Finding   **Perception of support** was a significant predictor of harassment. Respondents experiencing sexual harassment were less likely to believe that NIH would intervene to stop a supervisor from talking about his/her sex life or telling employees that the way to get ahead is to date him/her.

Recommendation   **NIH leadership could be a primary audience for intervention.**

Potential Target Audience: Coworkers/Bystanders

Question   What audiences should NIH prioritize in its outreach efforts to prevent and address harassment?
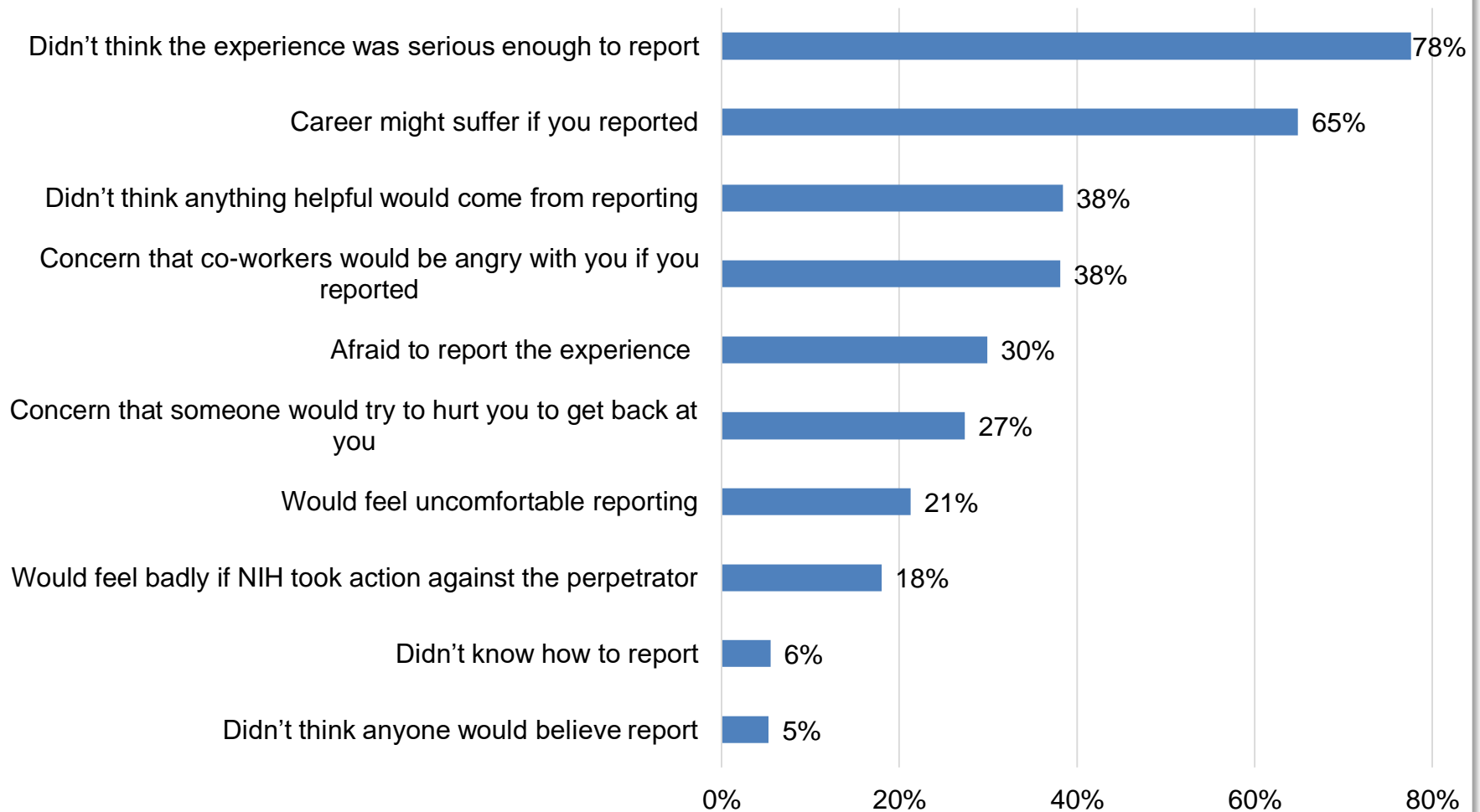
Finding   Coworkers most frequently hear reports of harassment from other coworkers. Individuals reporting harassment may no longer feel a part of the work unit, experience worse work conditions, or have coworkers gossip about them in an unkind way. Also, **perceived support** is a significant predictor of all types of harassment; this climate factor may be substantially driven by individual-level social interactions.*

Recommendation   **NIH coworkers/bystanders could be a primary audience for intervention.**

*SOURCE: Cantisano, Gabriela Topa, JF Morales Domínguez, and Marco Depolo. "Perceived sexual harassment at work: meta-analysis and structural model of antecedents and consequences." *The Spanish Journal of Psychology* 11, no. 1 (2008): 207-218.

Expanded List: Why Is Sexual Harassment Not Reported?

Many respondents did not report sexual harassment because they believed it was <u>not serious enough</u>; 65% cited concerns about <u>career repercussions</u>.

Reason	Percentage
Didn't think the experience was serious enough to report	78%
Career might suffer if you reported	65%
Didn't think anything helpful would come from reporting	38%
Concern that co-workers would be angry with you if you reported	38%
Afraid to report the experience	30%
Concern that someone would try to hurt you to get back at you	27%
Would feel uncomfortable reporting	21%
Would feel badly if NIH took action against the perpetrator	18%
Didn't know how to report	6%
Didn't think anyone would believe report	5%

NOTE: Respondents could select more than one response