



CANADIAN FEDERATION
OF NURSES UNIONS
LA FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS

CFNU Member Survey Report

March 2024

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions | nursesunions.ca



Key findings

Summary





CANADIAN FEDERATION
OF NURSES UNIONS
LA FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS

Overview

On behalf of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), Viewpoints Research conducted an online survey of 5,595 practicing nurses. This is the third time in 4 years this research was conducted, with many of the same questions asked in all years.

This national survey represents nurses participating from all regions proportionately.



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Methodology

- In early 2024, an online survey was conducted with 5,595 nurses practicing in Canada.
- The sample reflects the Canadian nurse population and includes nurses from every province and Yukon, part-time and full-time nurses, as well as those working in a variety of facilities.
- Final data was weighted by region to more closely reflect actual known population proportions of nurses.



Patient care

- A majority of nurses said their workplace and unit are regularly overcapacity.
- 1 in 3 nurses grade the quality of care in their workplace as poor or fair.
- A majority of nurses (56%) said the quality of care at their workplace deteriorated over the last year.
- In the past 6 months, 1 in 2 nurses have experienced a near miss or patient safety concern due to understaffing.



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Burnout

- 9 in 10 nurses registered some amount of burnout, up from 2023.
- 4 in 10 took half or less of their allotted vacation last year, including 16% who did not take vacation.
- Sick leave is used in lieu of vacation among 30% of nurses.
- 2 in 3 nurses feel their relationships with friends and family have been negatively impacted because of the number of hours they work.



Intention to leave

- 4 in 10 nurses intend to leave the profession, leave their job or retire within the next year.
- Staffing levels, workload and a lack of work-life balance significantly impact nurses when considering whether to leave.
- Guaranteed days off, more flexibility in scheduling, and lower taxes would encourage nurses to stay in their role for longer.
- 1 in 3 nurses are interested in agency work or increasing the agency work they already do.
- Nearly half (48.3%) of new grads are interested in agency work.
- Better pay is the primary reason nurses say they are interested in agency work.

Key findings

Work situation





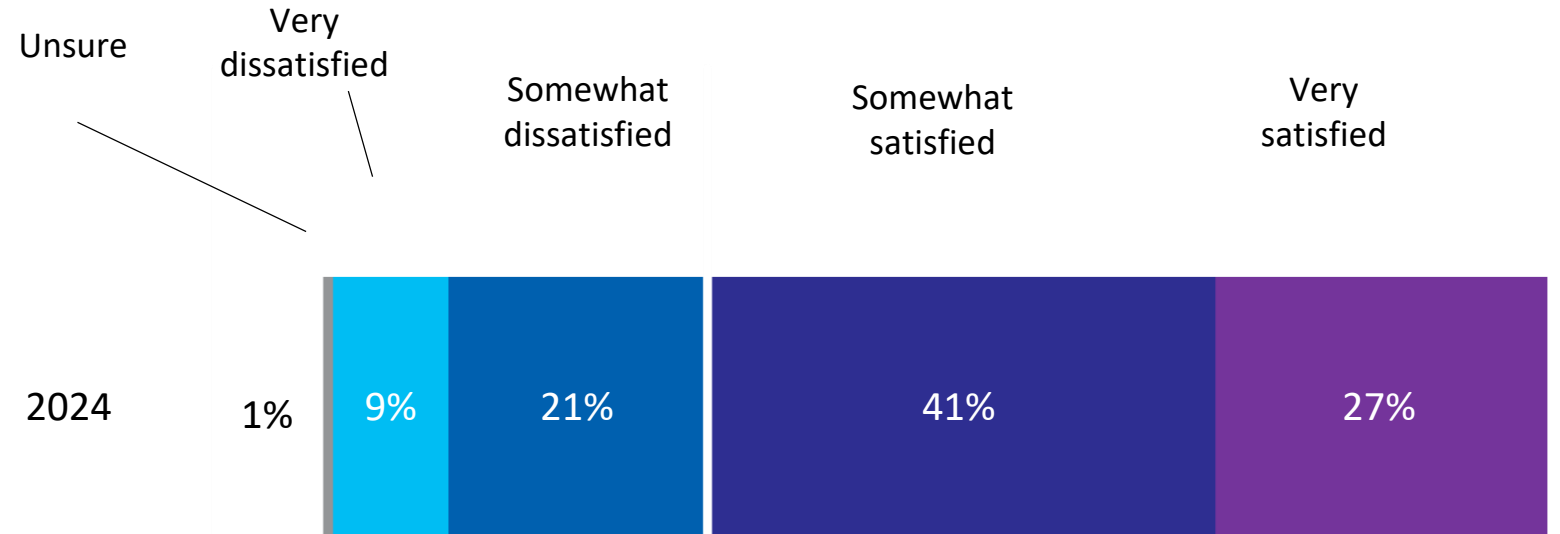
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Overview

- 3 in 10 nurses are dissatisfied with their career choice.
- 1 in 3 nurses are interested in agency work, or increasing the agency work they already do, and, for most, because it pays well.
- Nearly half (48.3%) of new grads are interested in agency work.
- Better pay is the primary reason nurses say they are interested in agency work.



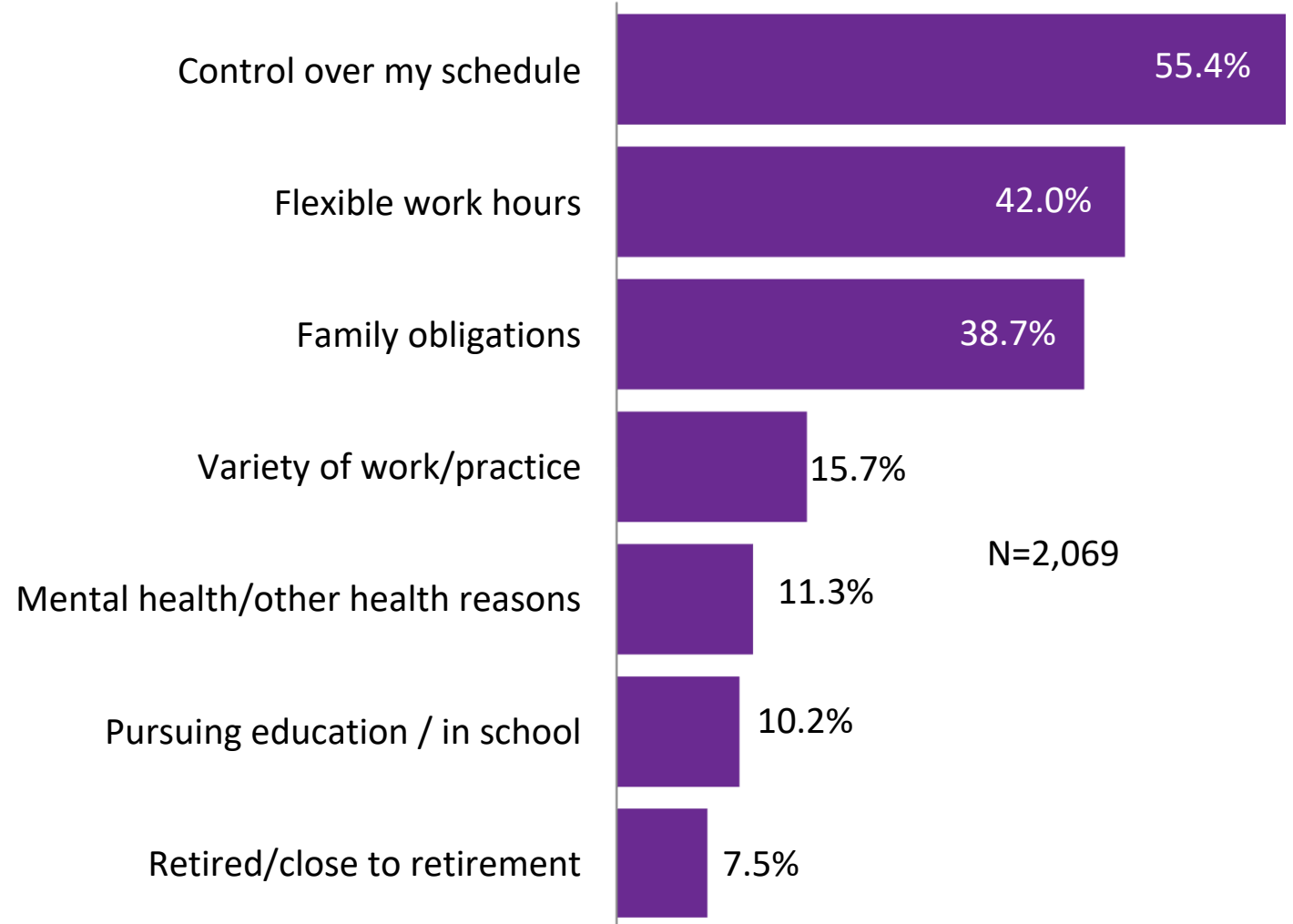
3 in 10 nurses are
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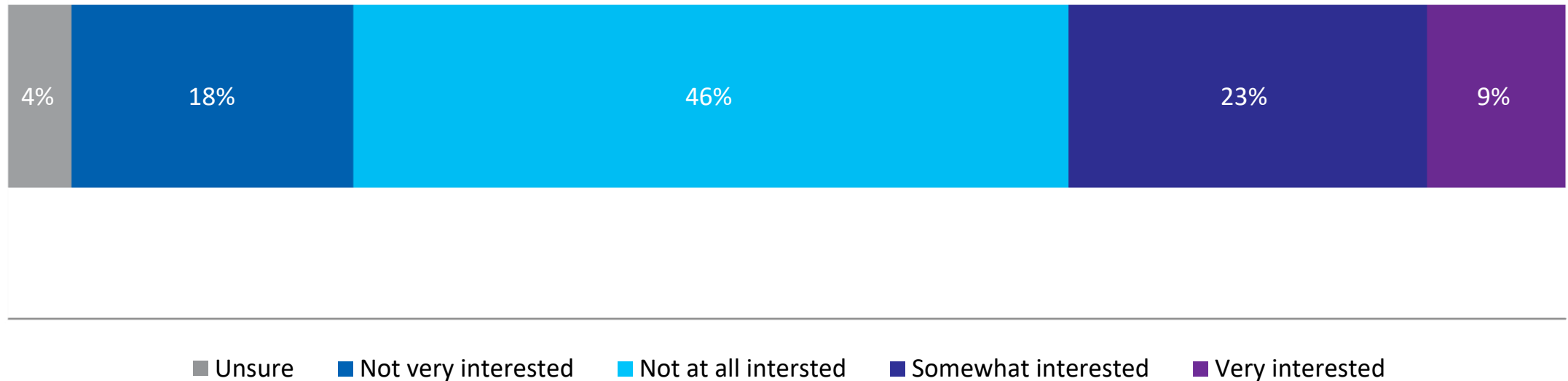
Reasons nurses choose to work part-time or casual include:

- Control over their schedule (55%)
- Flexible hours (42%)
- Family obligations (39%).





1 in 3 nurses are interested in agency work or increasing the agency work they already do.





Significant Differences

- Ontario nurses are most likely to say they are not at all interested in agency work (50%) compared to Atlantic (45%), Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. nurses (each 43%).
- Men (17%) and early-career nurses (15%) are more likely to be very interested than women (8%) and mid (8%) or late-career nurses (4%).
- Hospital nurses are more likely to be somewhat interested in agency work (26%) than LTC (17%) and community health nurses (20%).
- Casual (11%) and full-time nurses (10%) are more likely to say they are very interested than part-time nurses (8%).

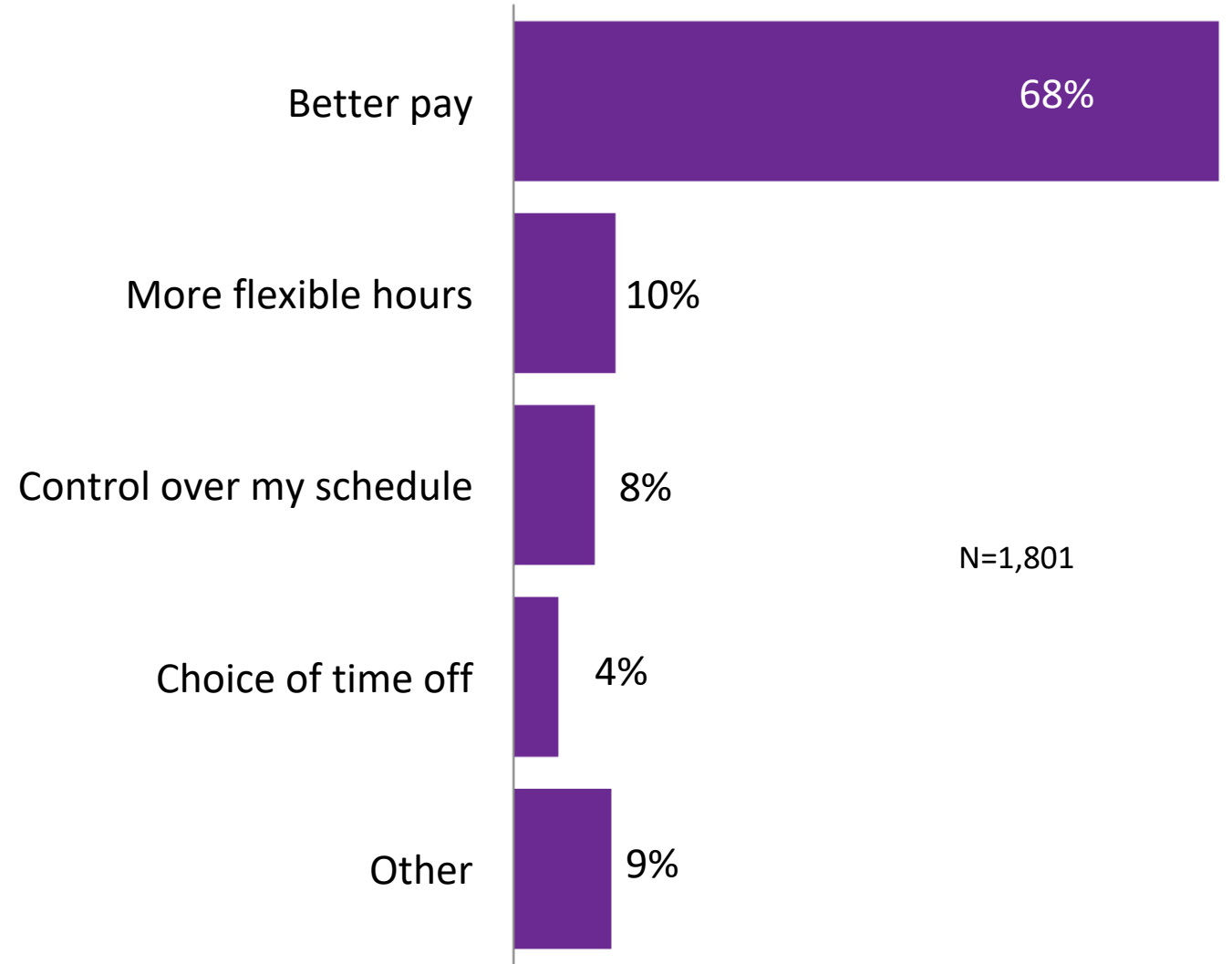


Significant Differences cont'd

- Nurses who are most likely to say they are not at all interested in agency work include those from units that are not overcapacity (53%), have no burnout symptoms (67%), no anxiety (49%) and no depression (48%).
- Nurses who have experienced more than one form of violence are more likely to be somewhat interested (24%) than those who experienced one form (61%) or no violence (62%).
- Nurses who say they will leave their current job are more likely to be somewhat interested in agency work (32%) than nurses overall (23%).



Better pay is mentioned by 7 in 10 nurses as the main reason they are interested in agency work.



Key findings



Overcapacity



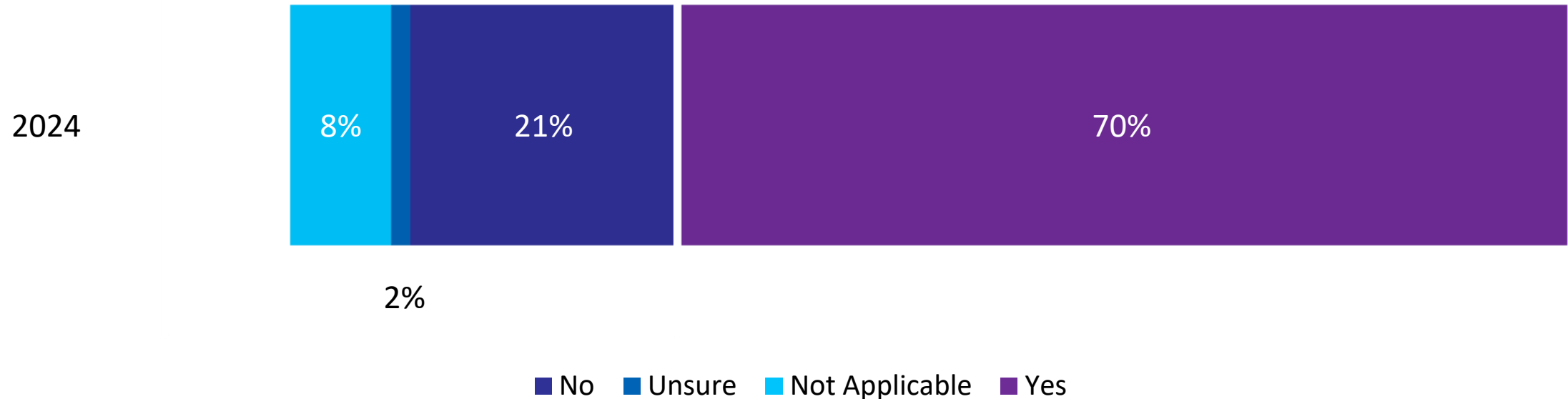
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Overview

- A quarter of nurses in overcapacity worksites are considering leaving their jobs.
- 7 in 10 nurses said their workplace is regularly overcapacity.
- 4 in 10 nurses are displaced to another unit or reassigned at least once over the course of a year (42%).
- More than 1 in 2 said the quality of care in their workplace has deteriorated in the last year (56%).



7 in 10 nurses said their workplace is regularly overcapacity.



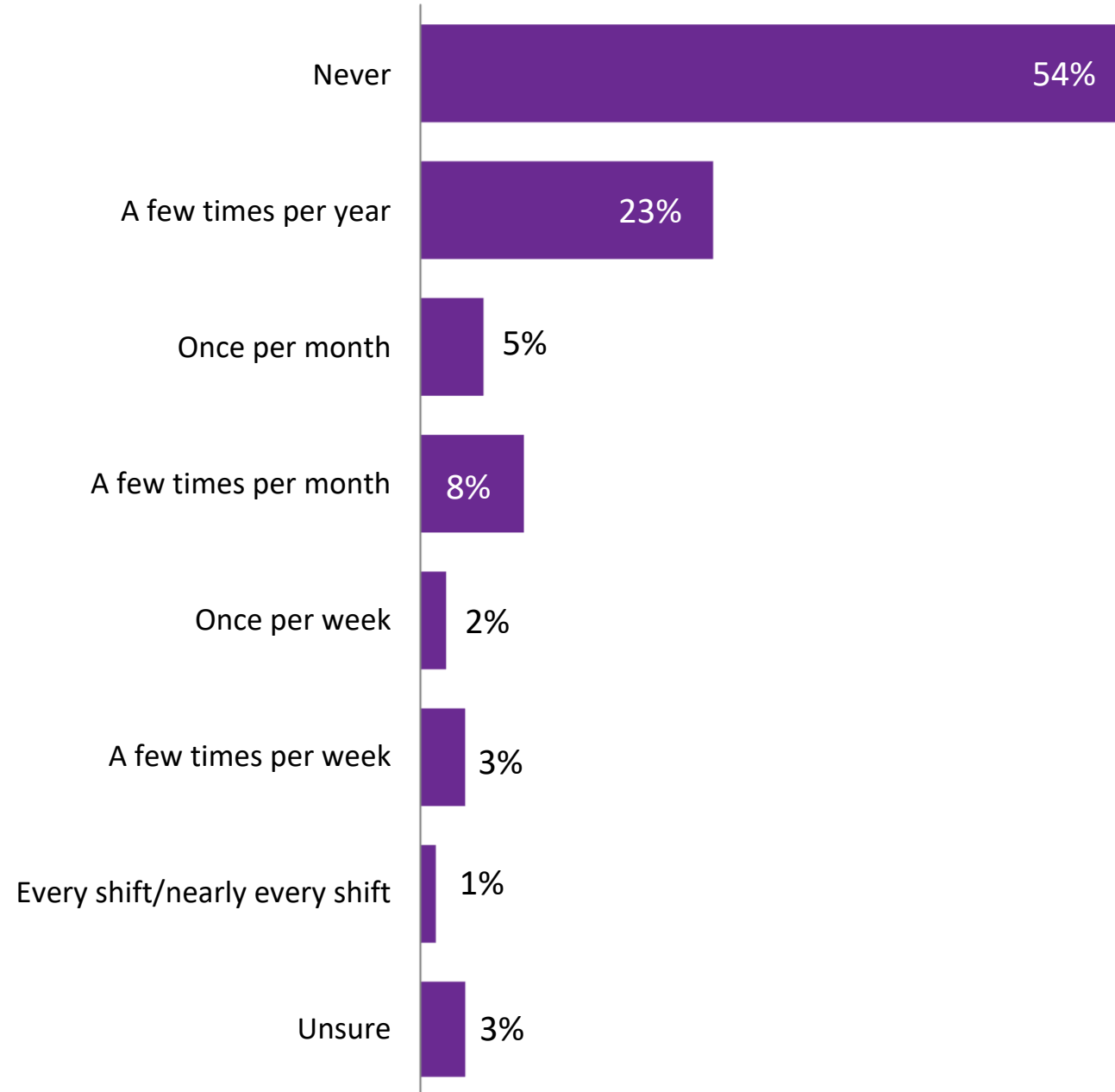


Significant differences

- Nurses with clinical symptoms of burnout (79%), anxiety (78%) and depression (77%) are most likely to say their facility or workplace is regularly overcapacity.
- Nurses who have experienced more than one form of violence are more likely to say their workplace is overcapacity (73%).
- Nurses who said they will leave their current job (78%) or the profession (76%) and are interested in agency work (75%) are more likely to be in an overcapacity workplace than those planning to continue in their job (63%) and those not interested in agency work (67%).

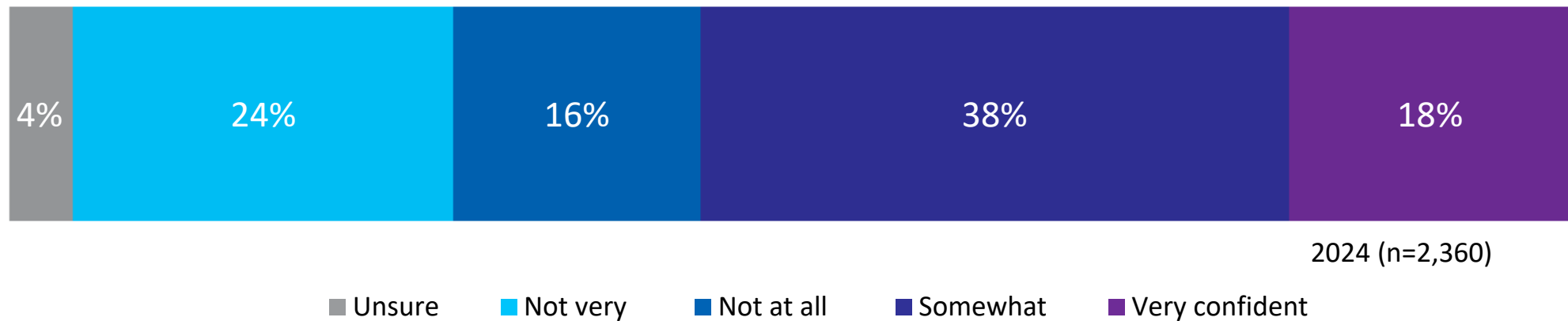


4 in 10 nurses are displaced to another unit or reassigned at least once over the course of a year (42%). For 20%, this can happen once a month or more.



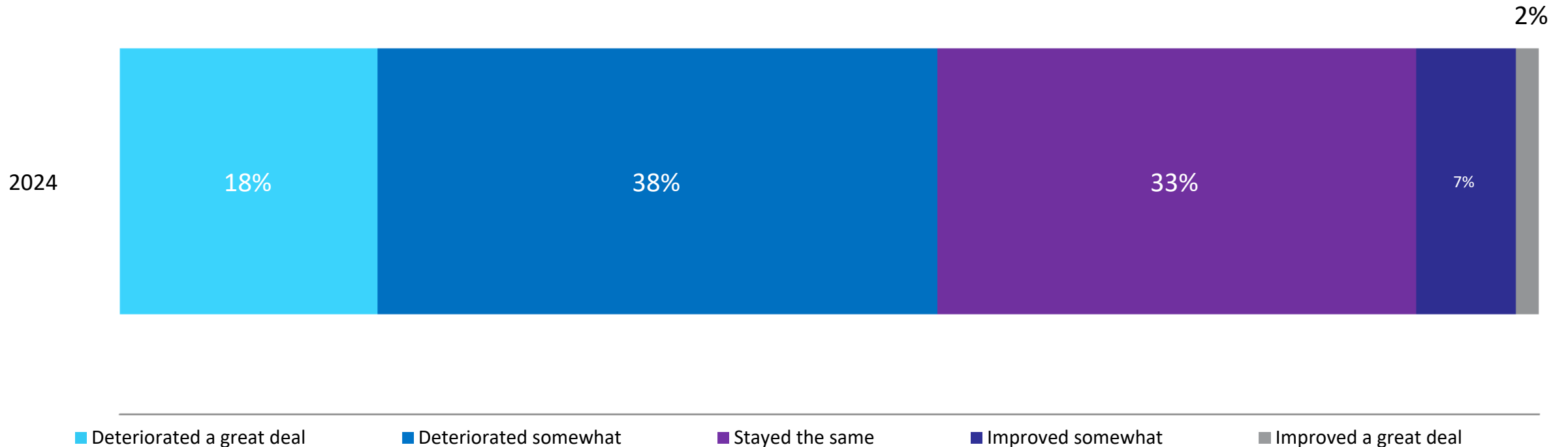


Nearly half of reassigned or displaced nurses are not confident in their training and experience for their new role (40%).





More than half of all nurses said the quality of health care in their workplace has deteriorated in the last year (56%).





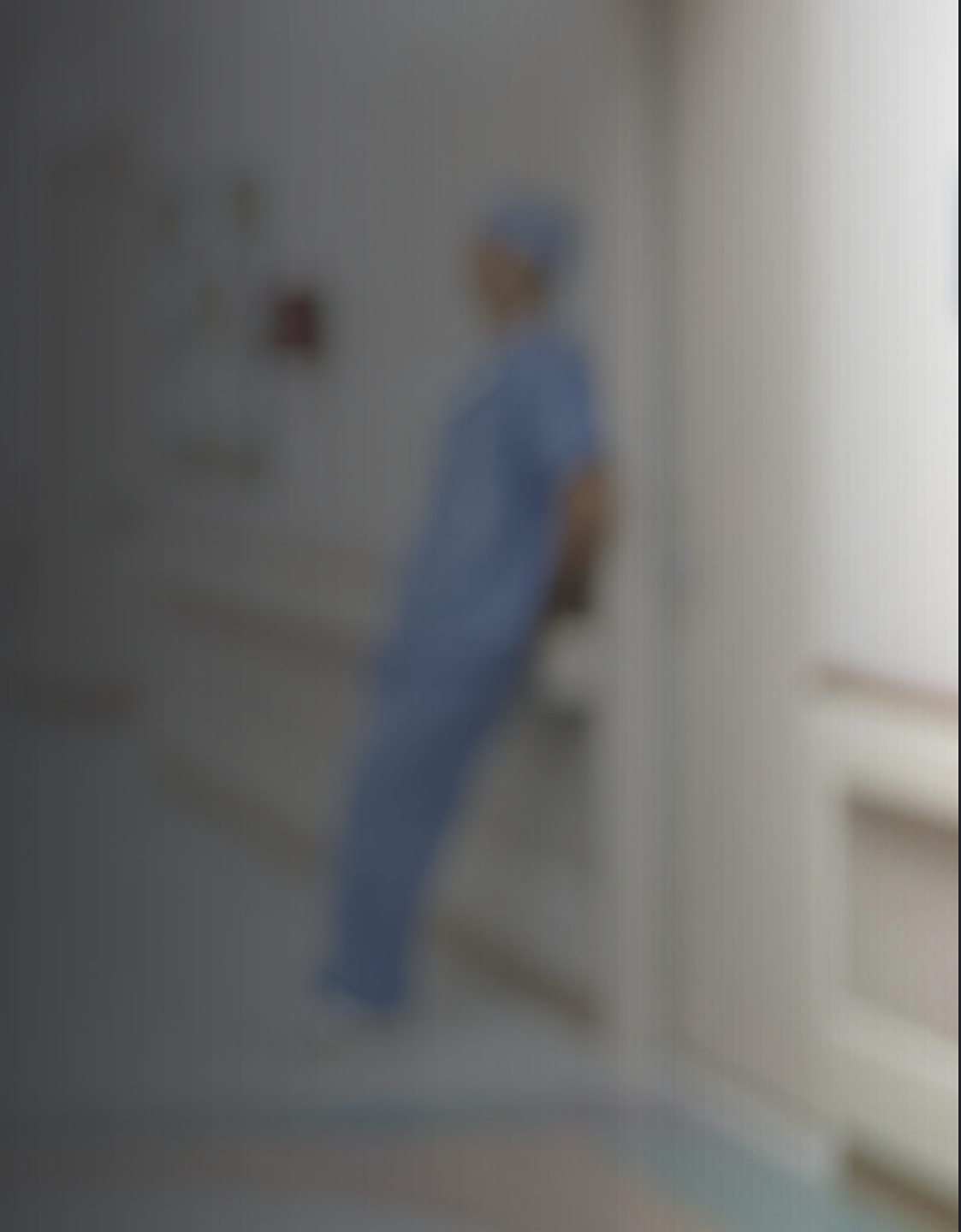
Significant differences

Quality has deteriorated for:

- Nurses working in overcapacity worksites (63%).
- Nurses experiencing clinical symptoms of burnout (71%).
- Nurses who have experienced more than one form of violence (58%).
- Nurses who intend to leave the profession (72%).
- Nurses interested in agency work (58%).

Key findings

Workplace violence





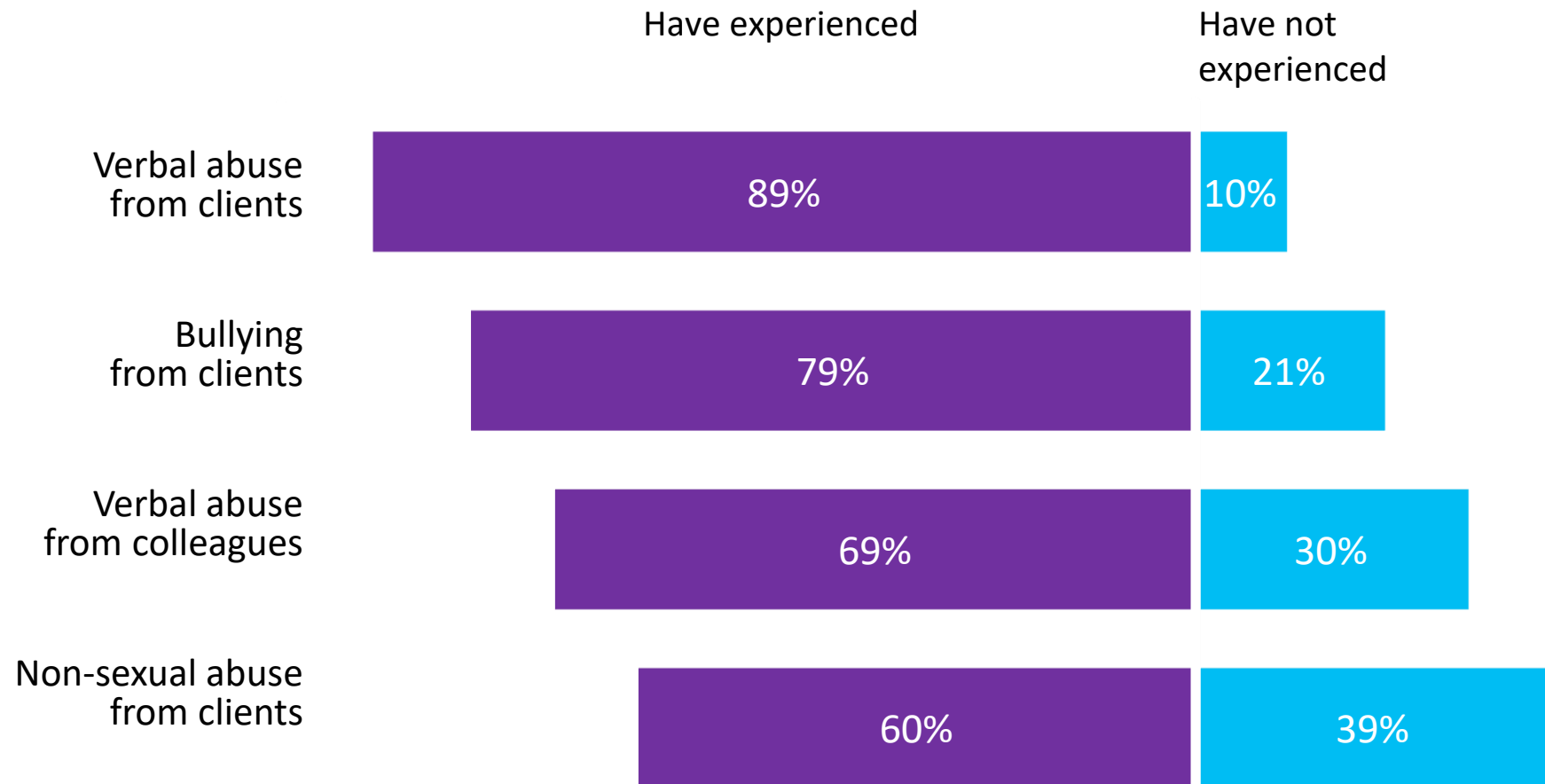
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Overview

- 9 in 10 nurses experienced some form of abuse last year, which is unchanged from previous years.

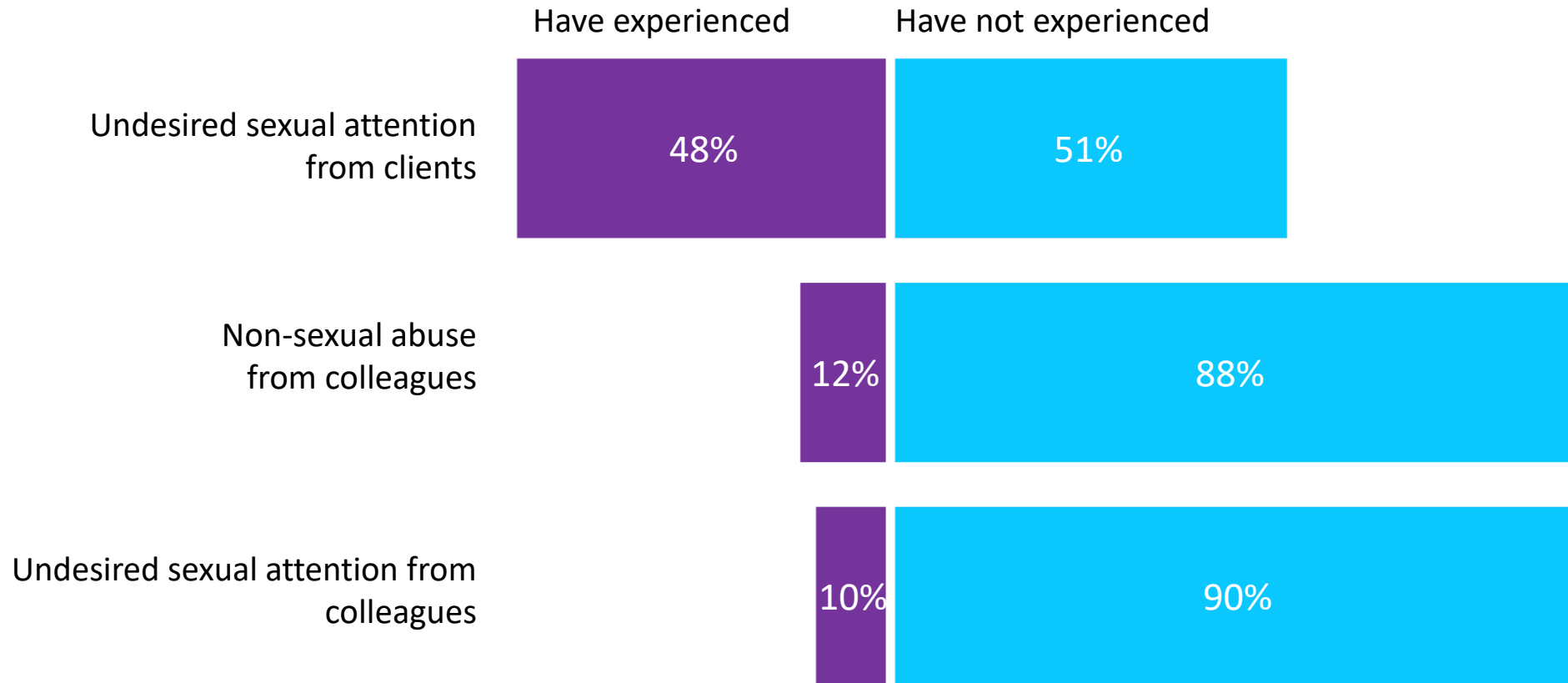


More than 6 in 10 nurses experienced some form of verbal or non-sexual abuse from clients and colleagues in the last year.



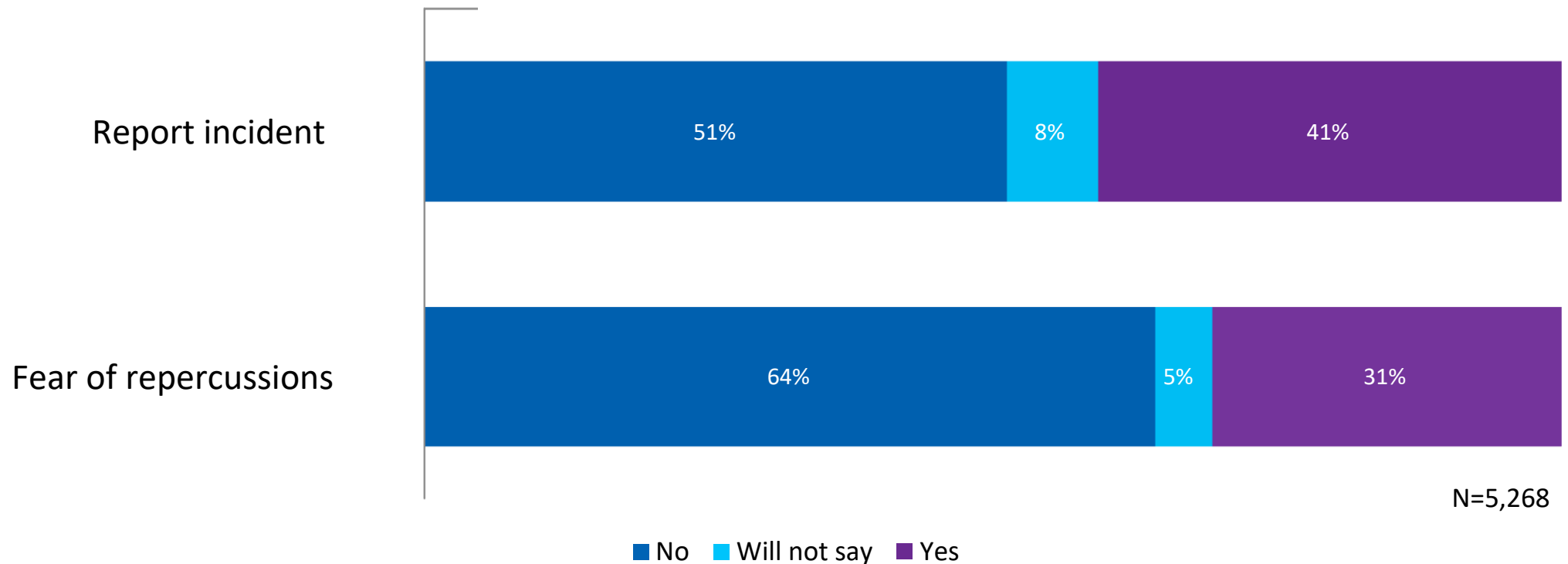


1 in 10 nurses experienced non-sexual and undesired sexual abuse from colleagues last year.





Only 4 in 10 nurses reported an incident of abuse and 3 in 10 fear repercussions if they report OH&S concerns.



Key findings

Vacation and leave



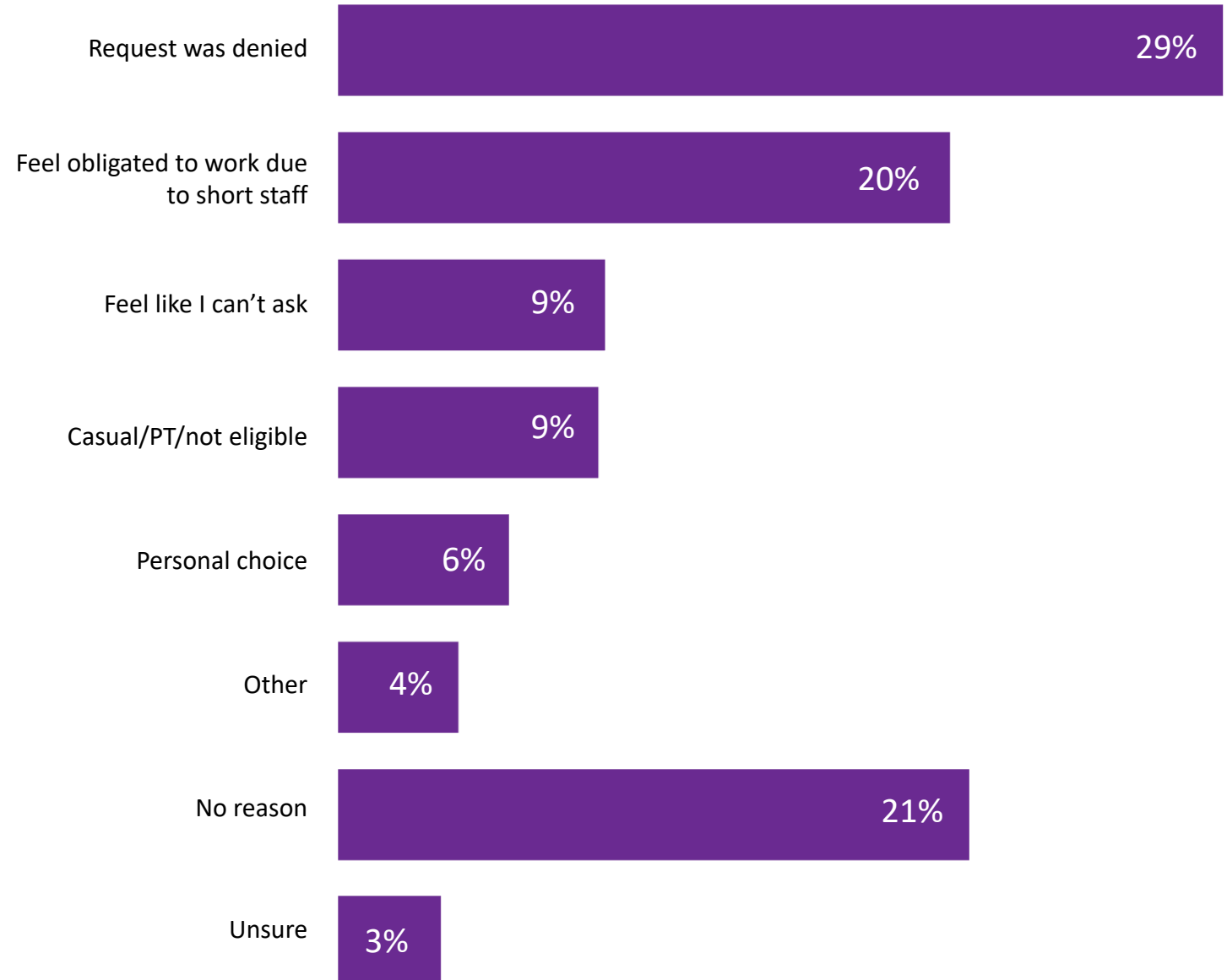


Overview

- 1 in 5 nurses were unable to work for 2+ weeks due to a physical health issue.
- Only 1 in 3 nurses took all of their allotted vacation in the past year, while 16% took none of their allotted time.
- 4 in 10 nurses were denied vacation and 3 in 10 used sick leave when they could not access vacation.



Having their request denied and feeling obliged to work due to staffing issues are two reasons mentioned most for not taking allotted vacation.



Key findings

Shift length and safety



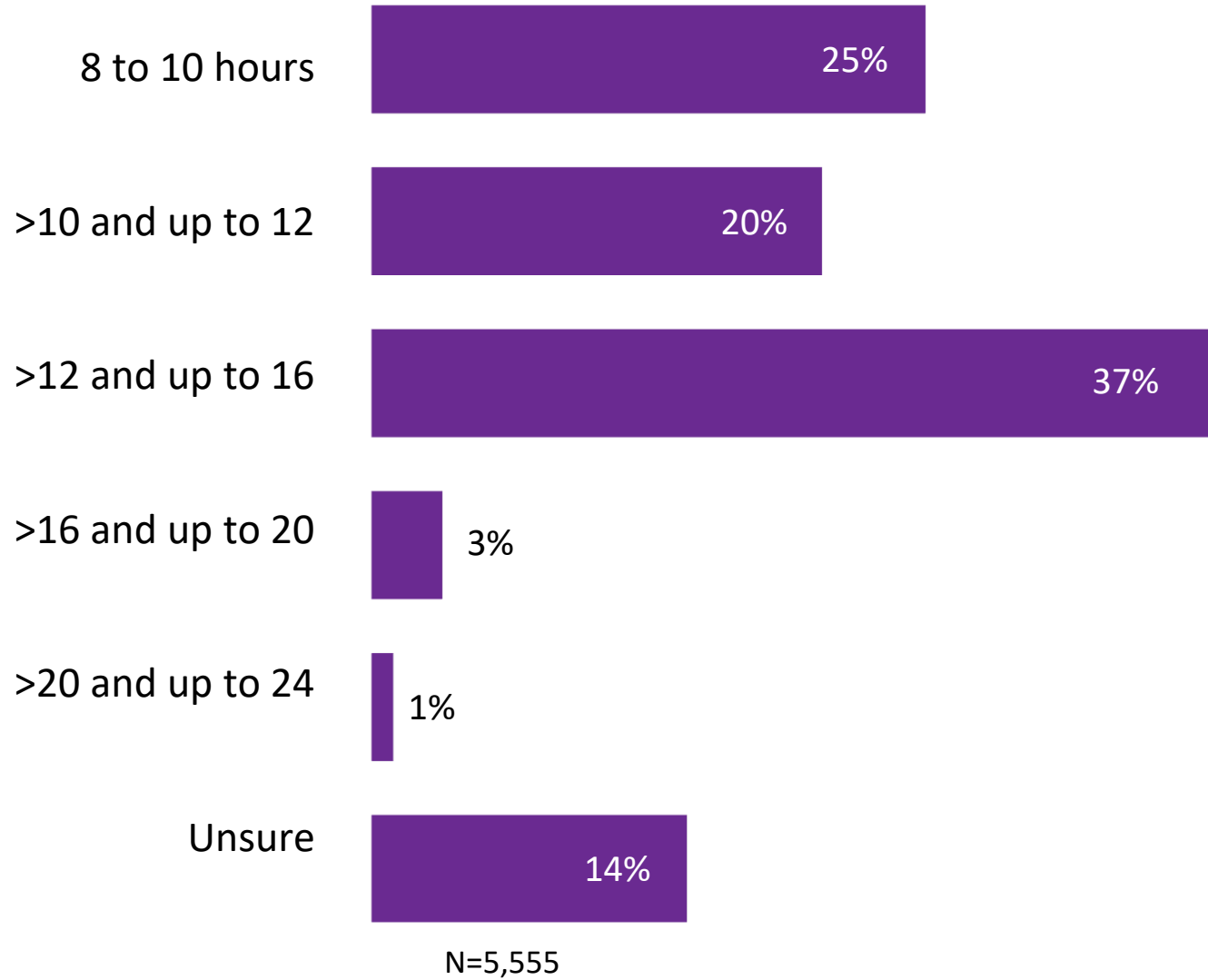


Overview

- 7 in 8 nurses have worked overtime throughout the past year.
- A majority of nurses (57%) begin to feel their safety is at risk after working for longer than 12 hours.
- When working extended shifts, a majority of nurses work up to 12 hours (20%) or up to 16 hours per shift (37%).
- In the past 6 months, 1 in 2 nurses have experienced a near miss or patient safety incident due to understaffing and high patient loads.

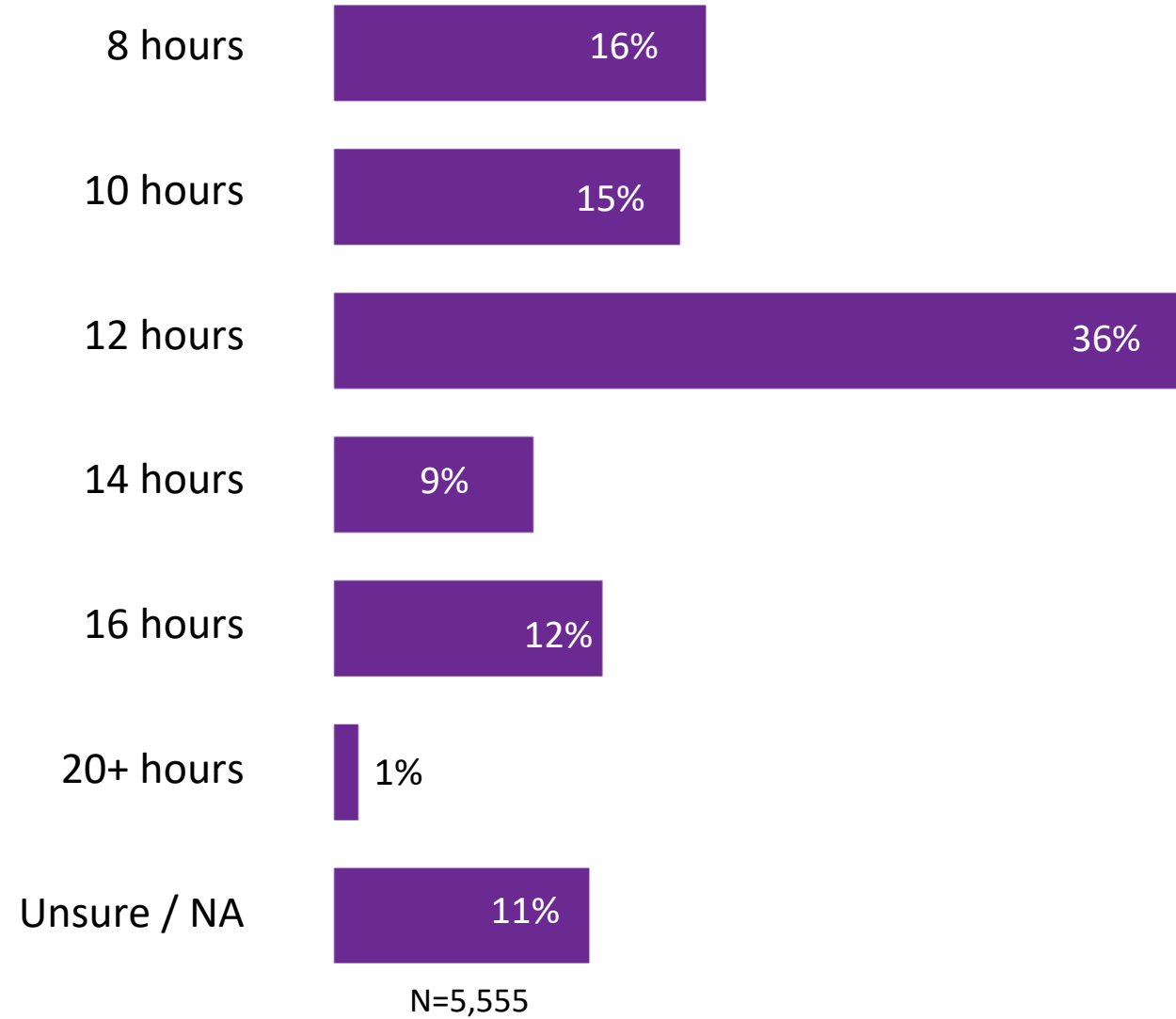


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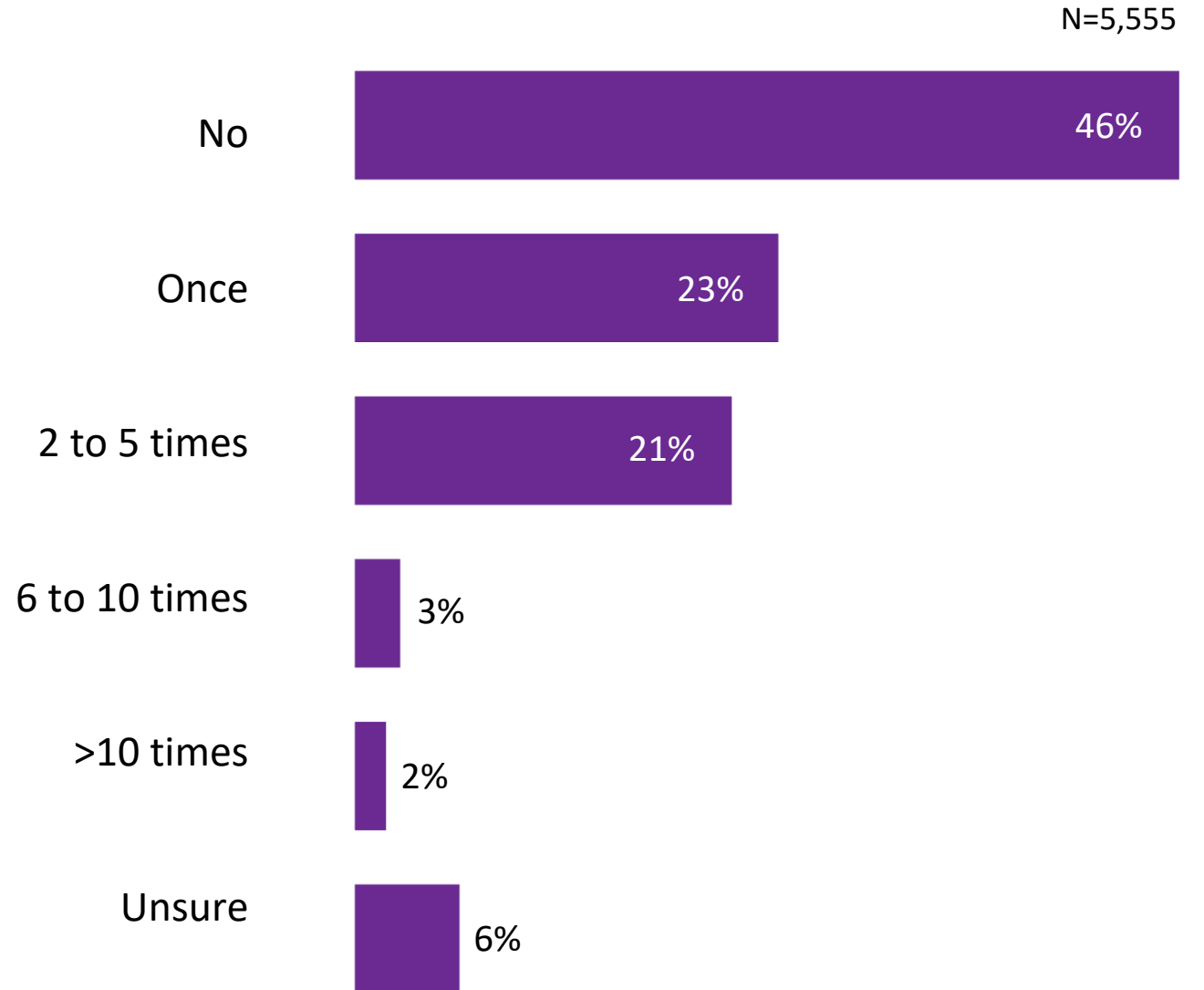


A majority of nurses begin to feel their safety, or the safety of their clients, is at risk after working for longer than 12 hours (57%).



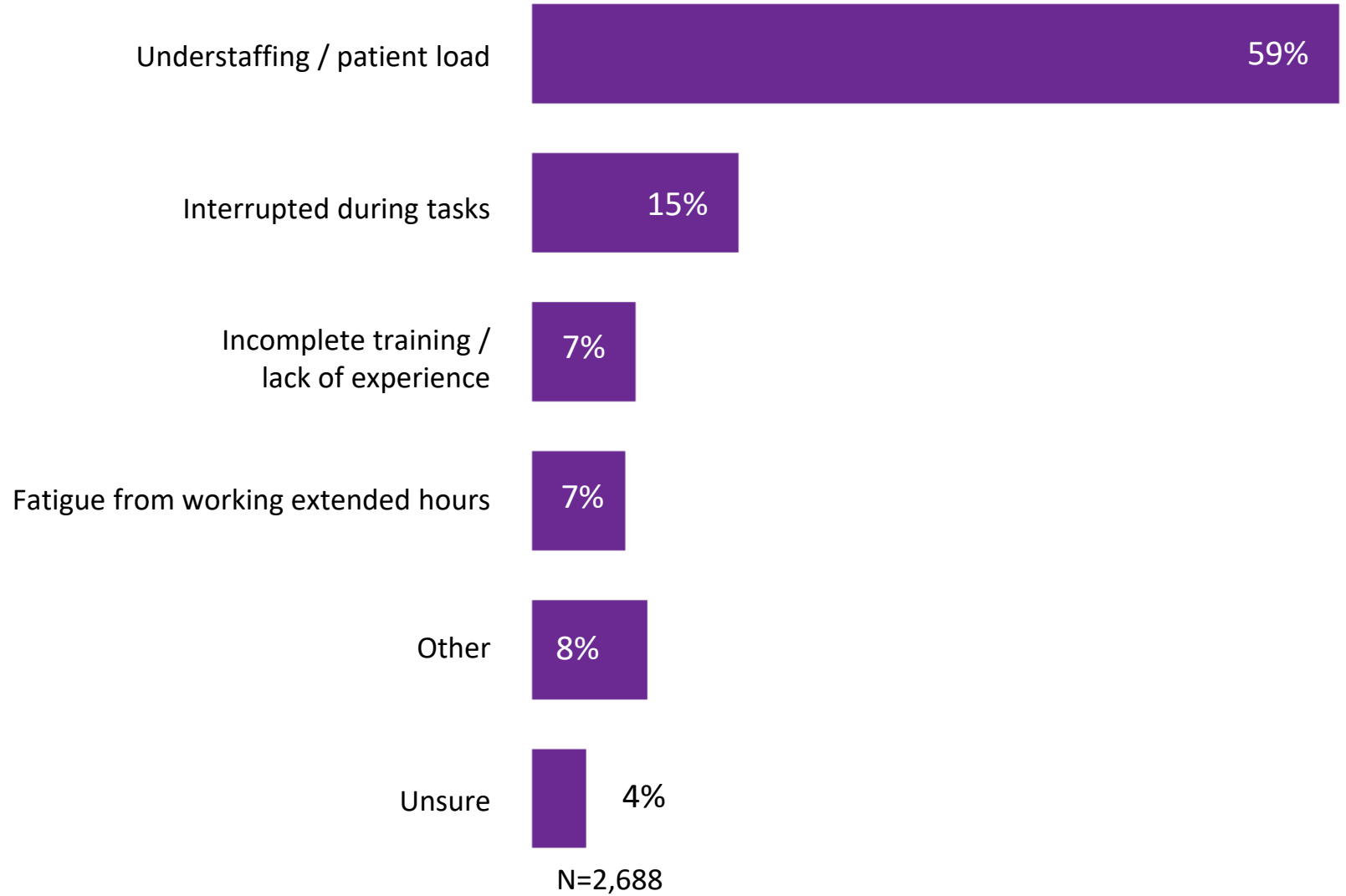


In the past 6 months,
1 in 2 nurses have experienced a
near miss or patient safety incident
(49%).





Understaffing/high patient load is the most cited reason to explain what lead to a near miss or patient safety incident.



Key findings

Overtime





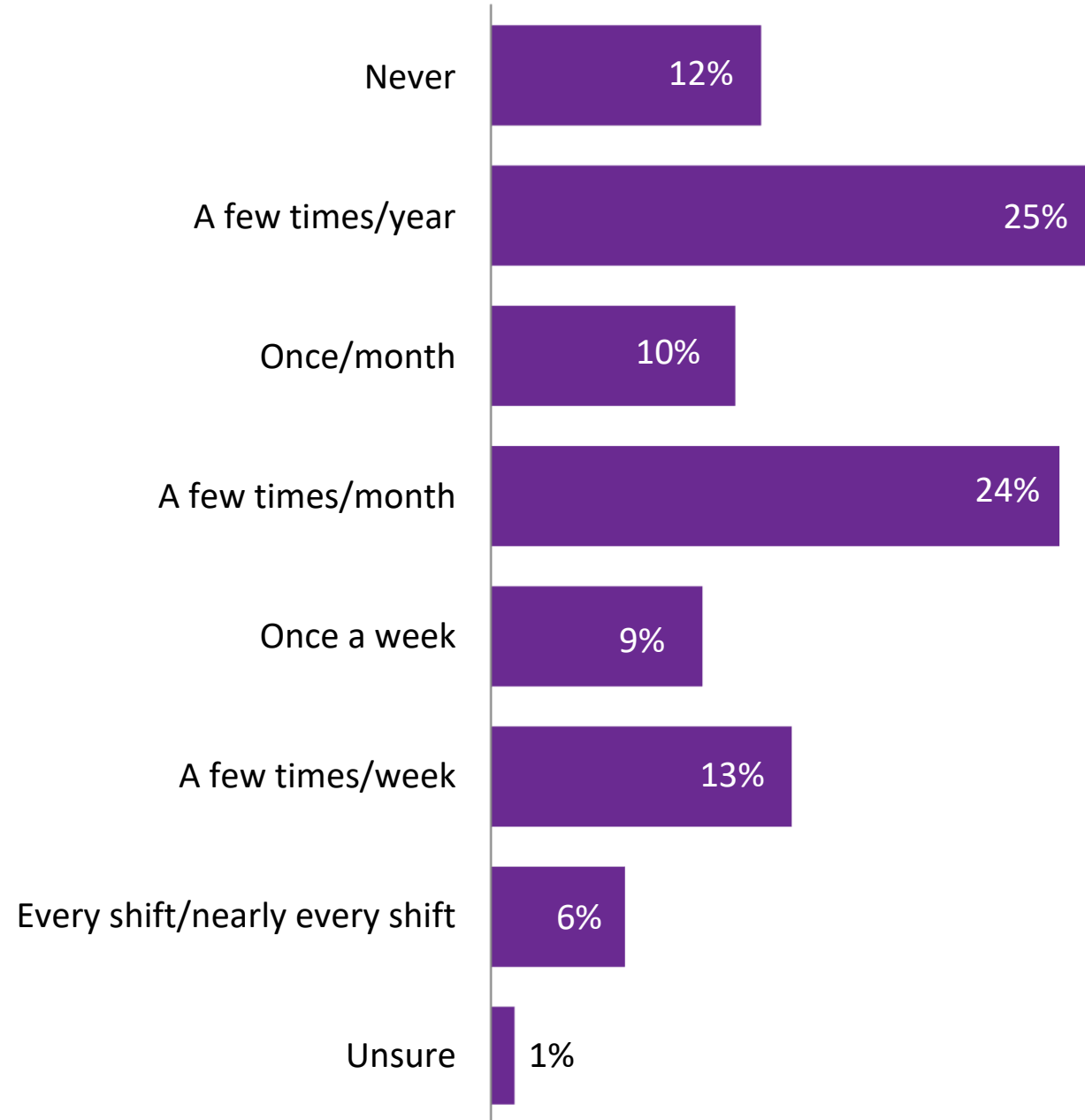
Overview

- 7 in 8 nurses have worked paid or unpaid overtime.
- 7 in 10 nurses work overtime out of obligation or to earn extra income.
- 2 in 3 nurses feel their relationships with family and friends have been negatively impacted because of the number of hours they work.



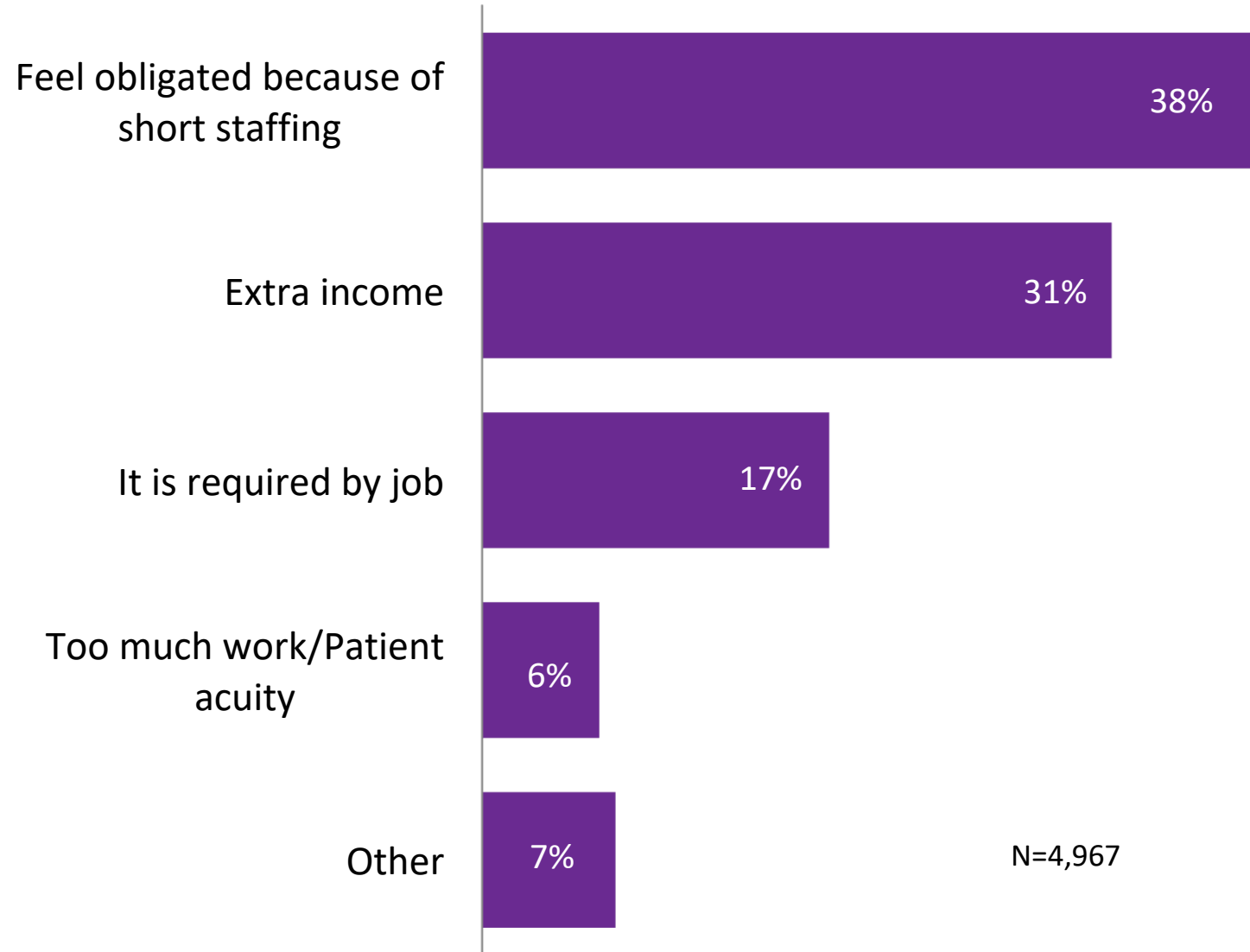
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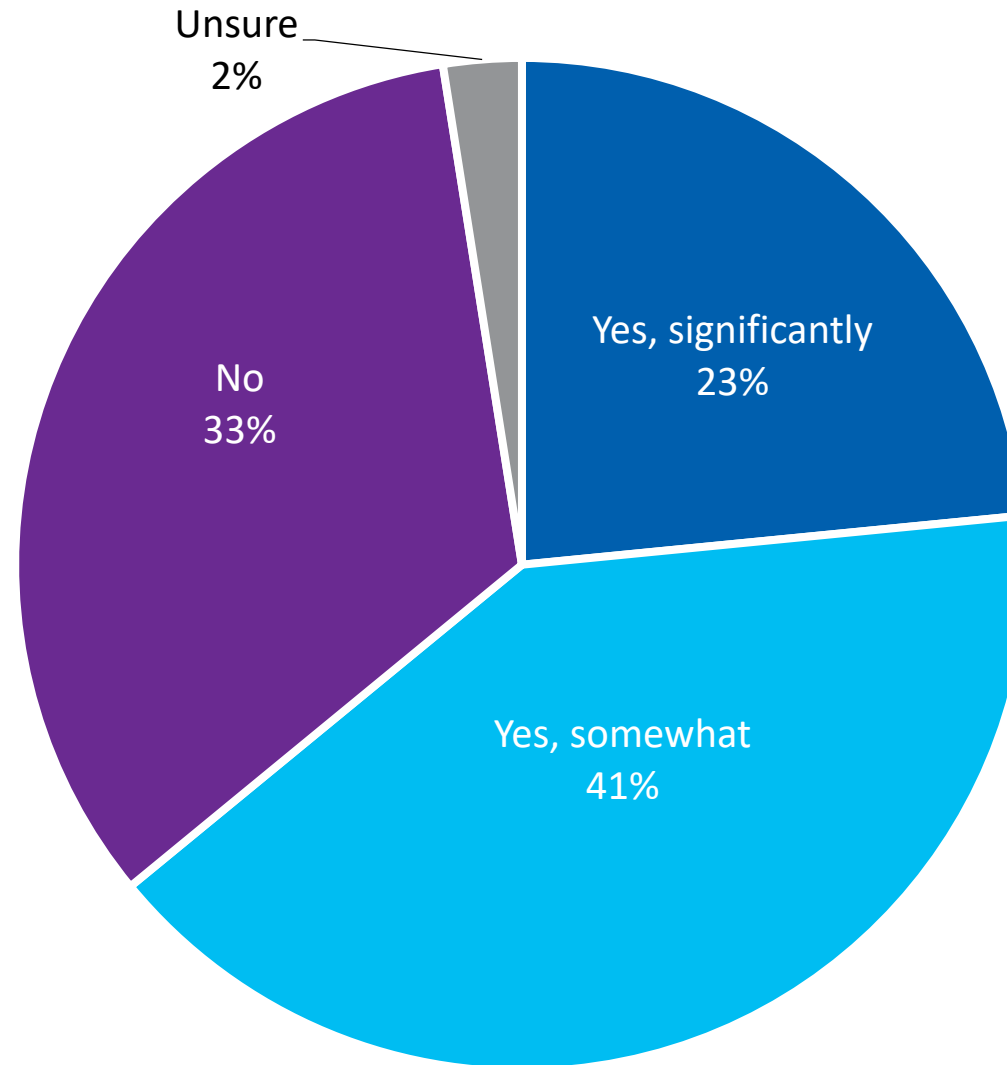


7 in 10 nurses work overtime out of obligation or to earn extra income.





2 in 3 nurses feel their relationships with family and friends have been negatively impacted because of the number of hours they work.



Key findings

Mental health





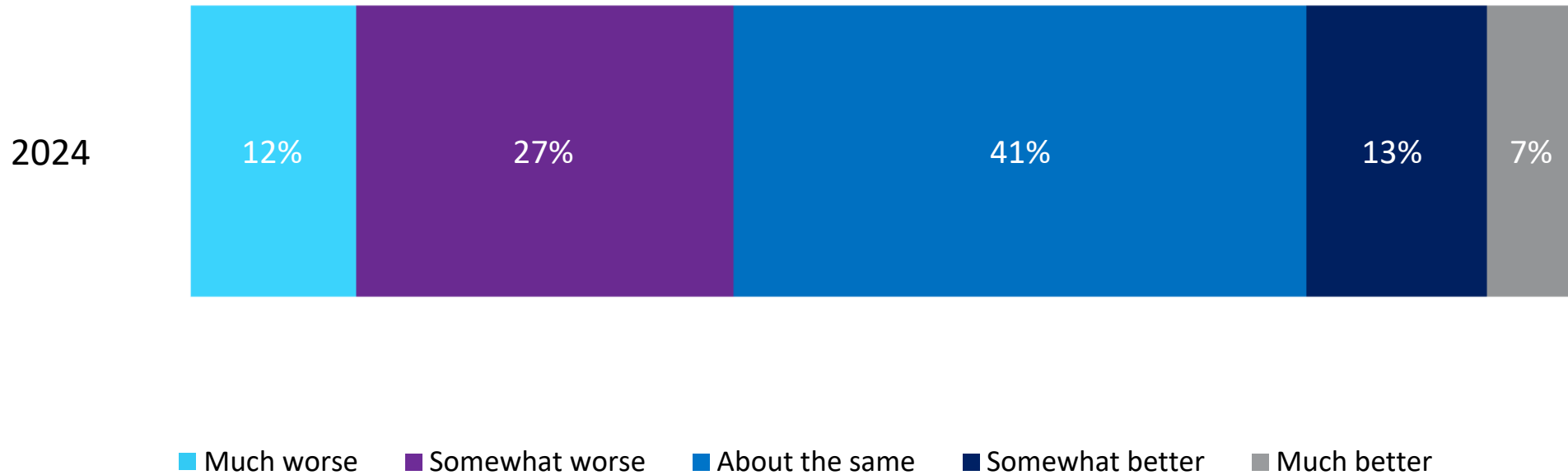
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Overview

- Early and mid-career nurses are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout compared to late-career nurses.



Over the last year, 4 in 10 nurses said their mental health is worse (39%). Only 2 in 10 nurses said it was better (20%).





Significant differences

- Casual nurses are most likely to rate their mental health as good (46%) or excellent (16%).
- Nurses with clinical symptoms of burnout are more likely to rate their mental health as poor (27%) than those with some (5%) or no symptoms (<1%).
- Nurses who have not experienced violence are more likely to rate their mental health as excellent (19%) than those who have experienced more than one form (6%).

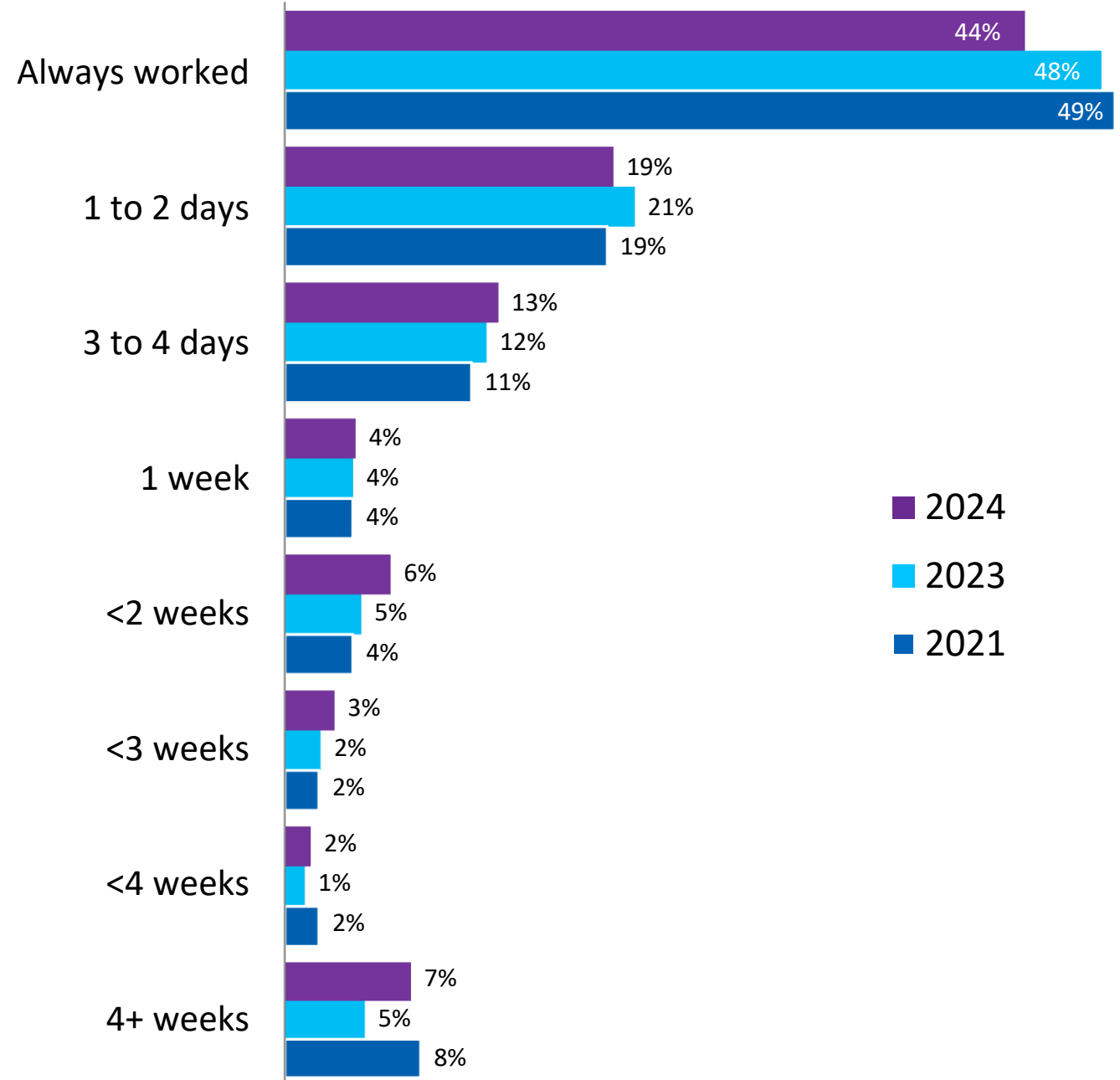


Significant differences cont'd

- Those who say they will leave the profession are more likely to rate their mental health as poor (22%), or very poor (11%) than those who say they will continue working or retire (both 6% poor).
- Nurses who are interested in agency work are most likely to rate their mental health as poor (16%) or very poor (4%).

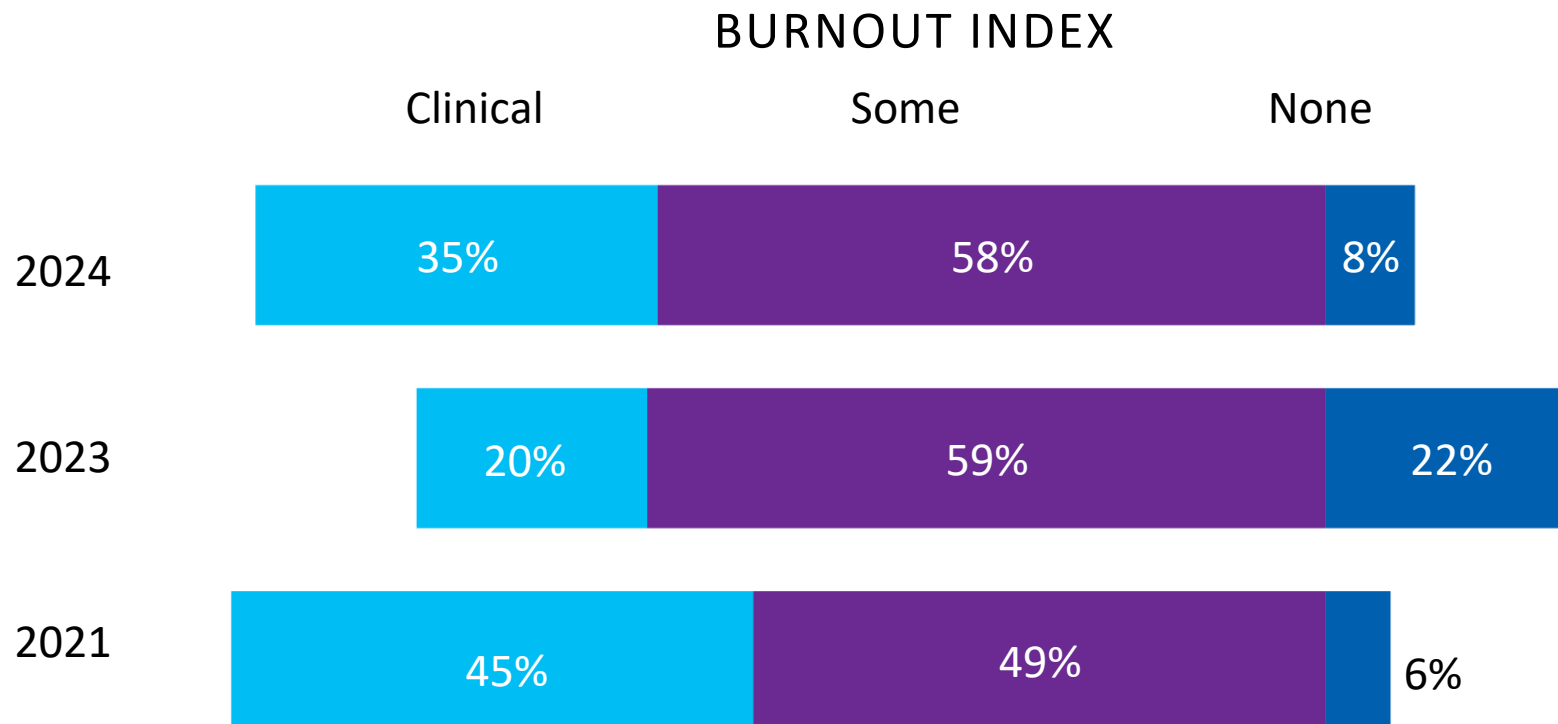


1 in 3 nurses were unable to work 1 to 4 days due to a mental health issue (32%).



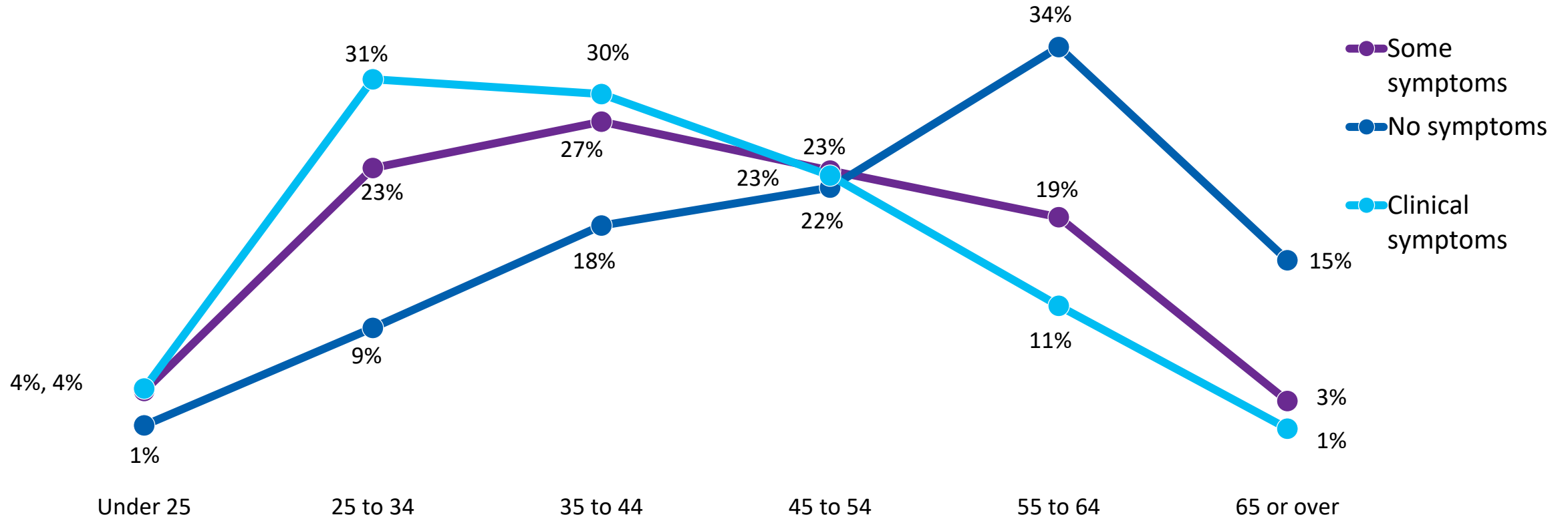


Nurses register more symptoms of burnout this year compared to 2023.



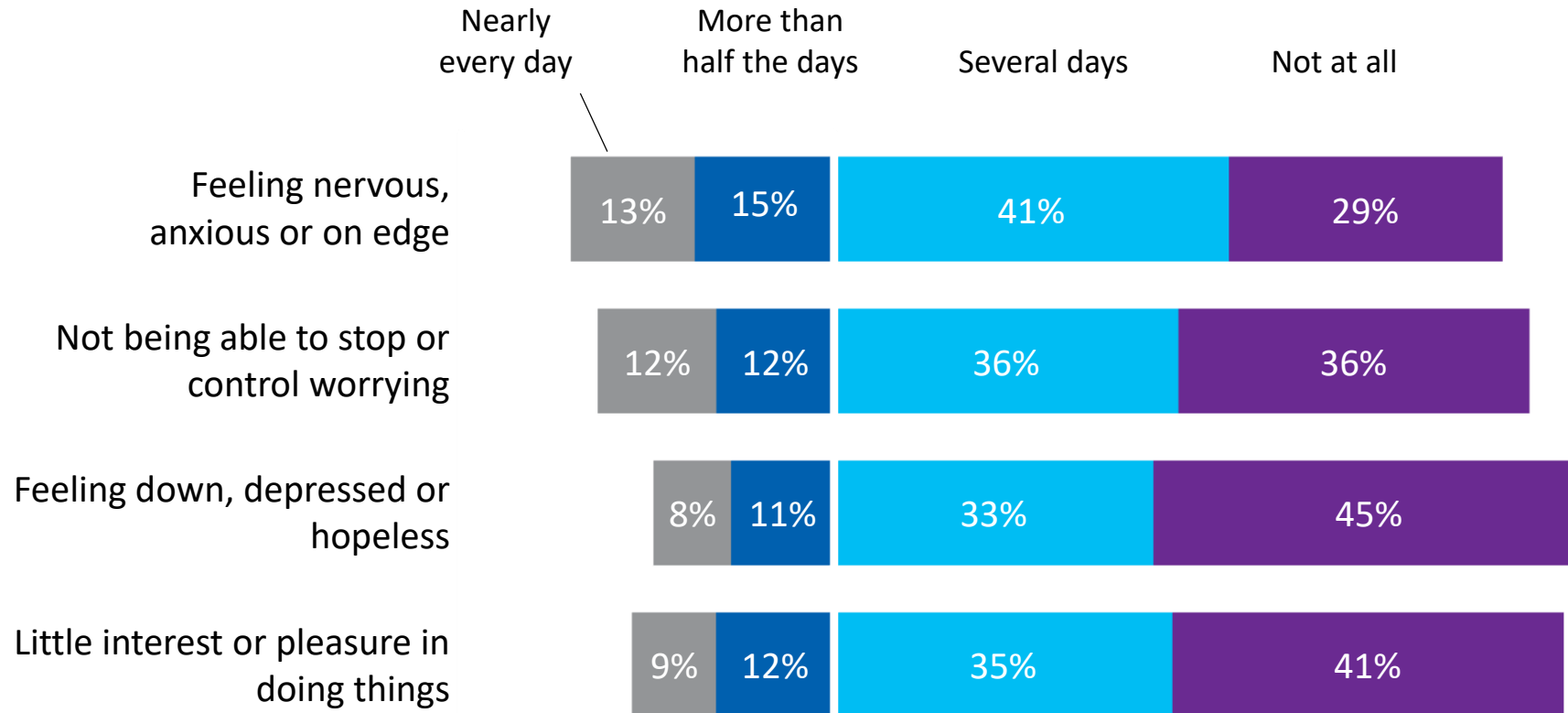


Early and mid-career nurses are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout compared to late-career nurses.



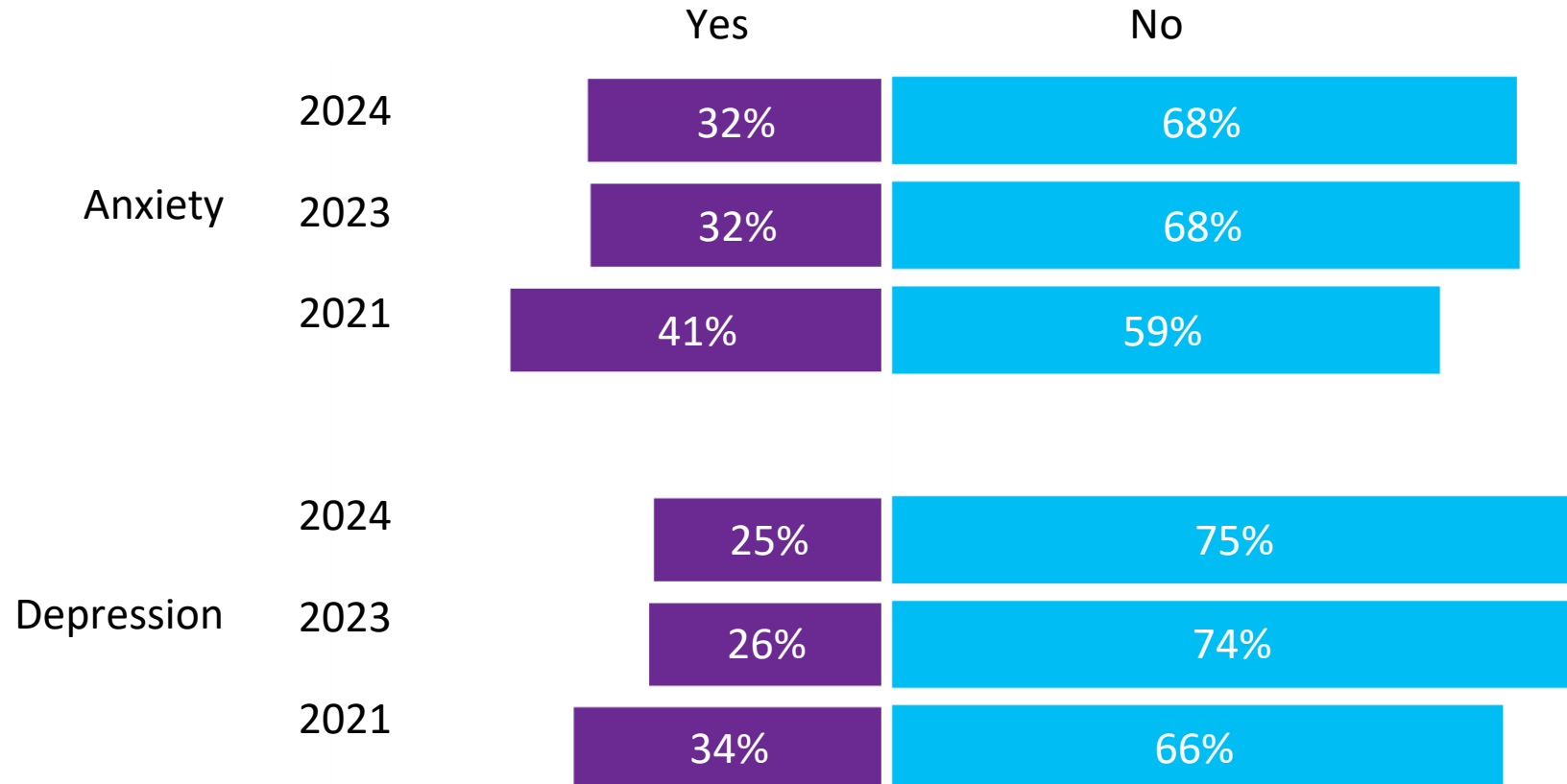


In a 2-week span, a majority of nurses feel symptoms of anxiety and depression on some or all days.





32% of nurses experience anxiety and 25% experience depression.



Key findings

Intention to leave





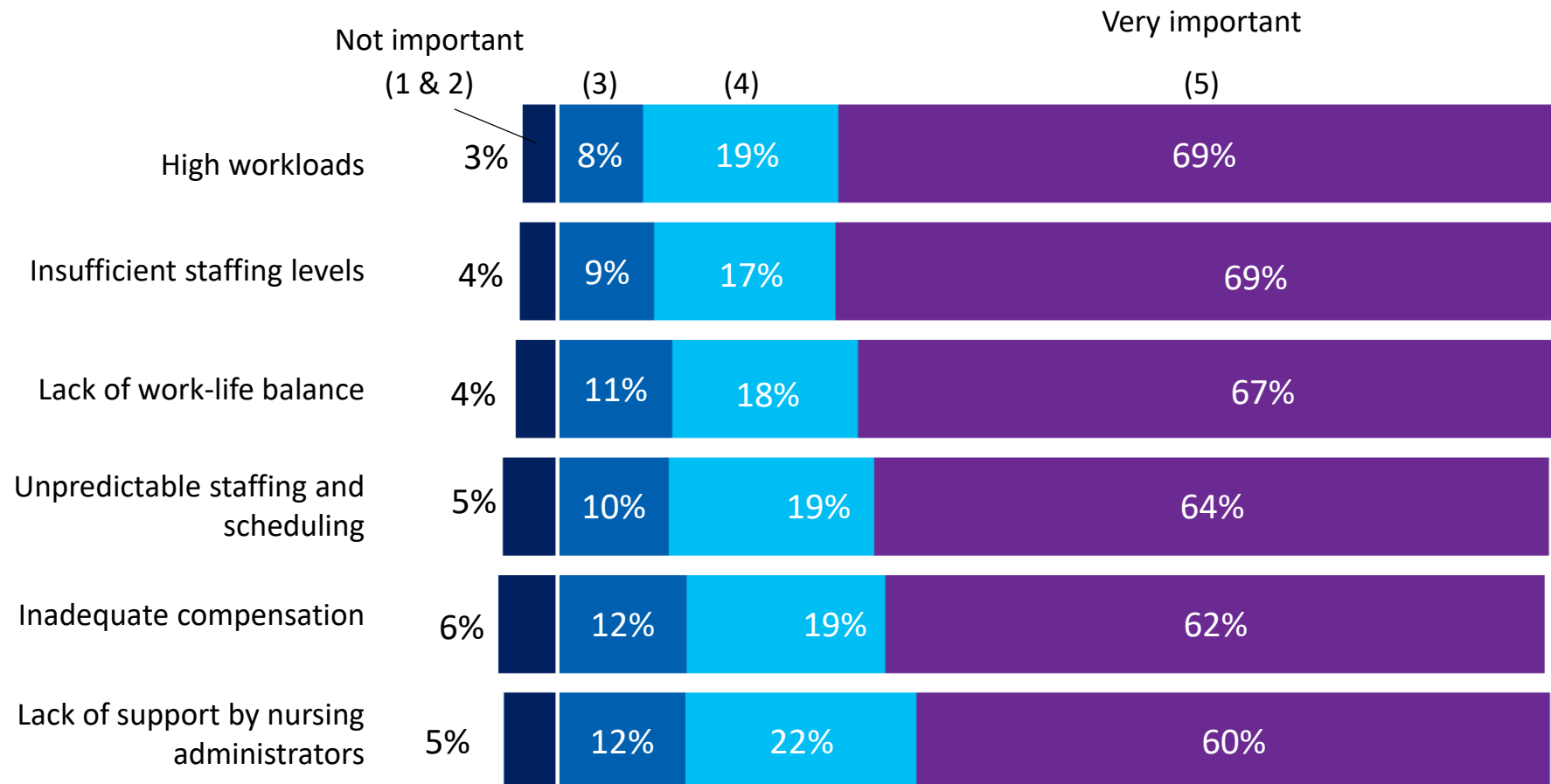
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Overview

- 7 in 10 nurses mentioned staffing, workload and lack of work-life balance as extremely important to them in considering leaving.
- Since 2021, intention to retire and movement between jobs has increased slightly.
- More than 2 in 5 nurses would consider staying in their role for scheduling flexibility, days off and lower taxes.
- Nearly half (48.3%) of new grads are interested in agency work.
- Better pay is the primary reason nurses say they are interested in agency work.

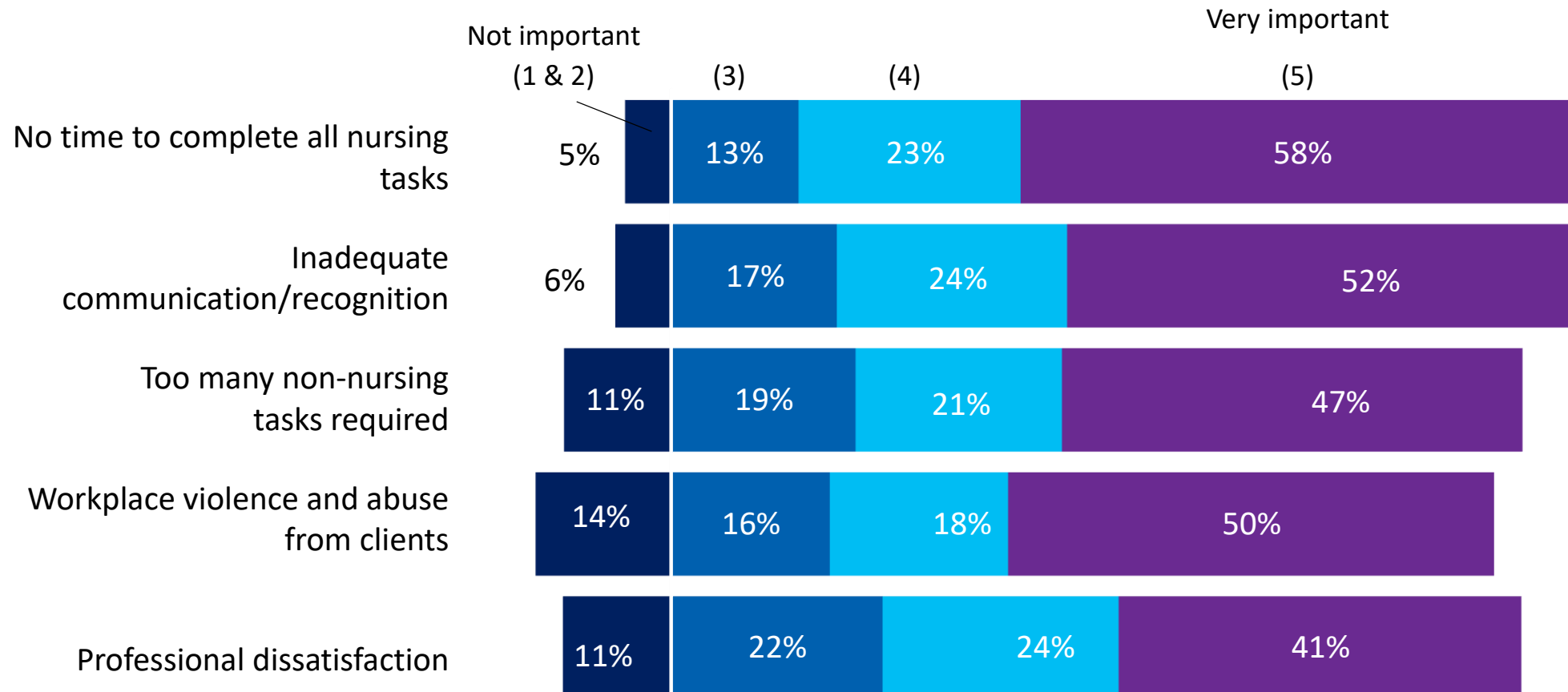


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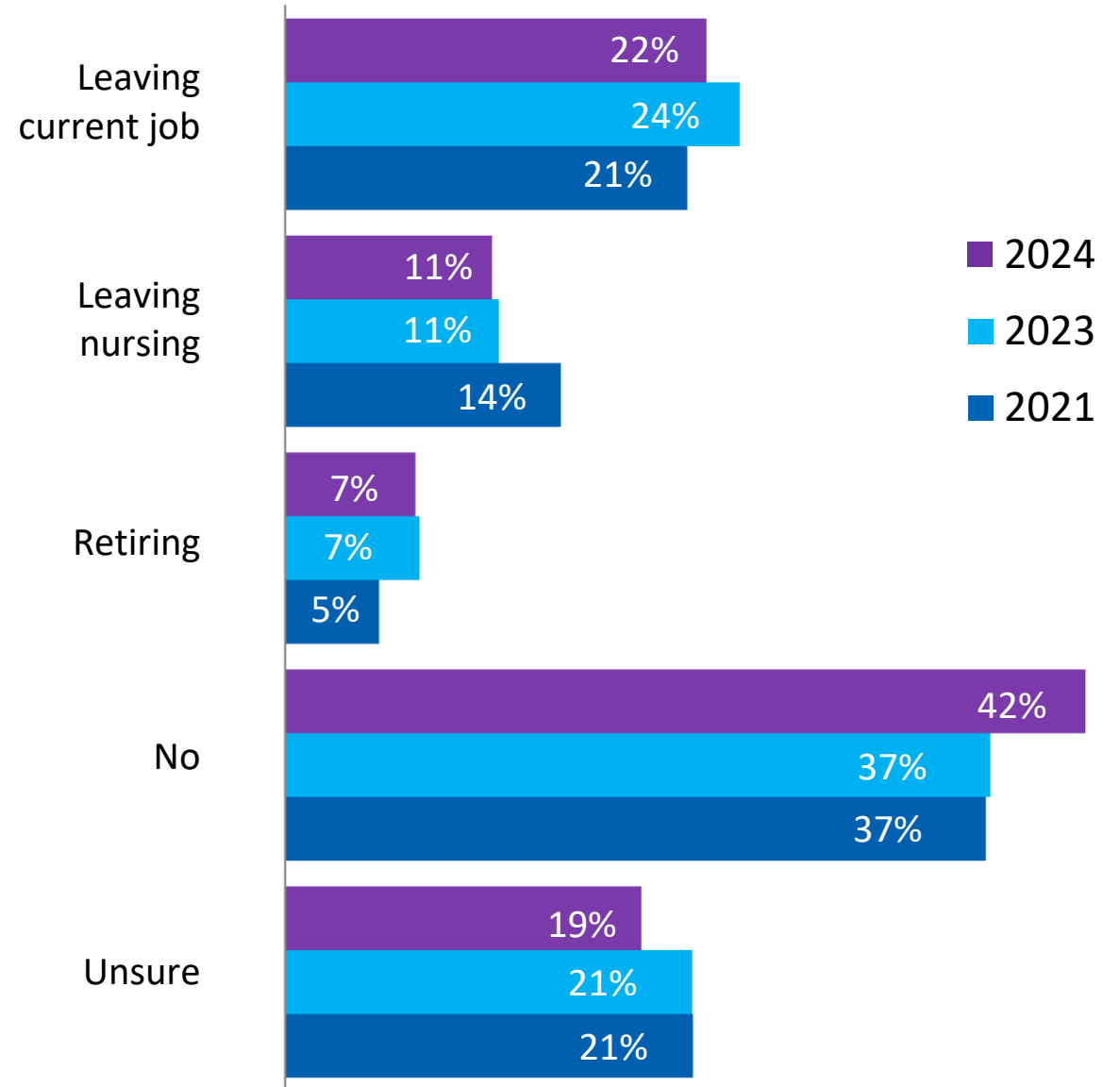


More than 1 in 2 nurses mention not enough time for tasks and inadequate communication as extremely important to them in considering leaving.





Since 2021, intention to retire (7% vs. 5%) and movement between jobs (24% vs. 21%) has increased while leaving the profession has declined (11% vs. 14%).



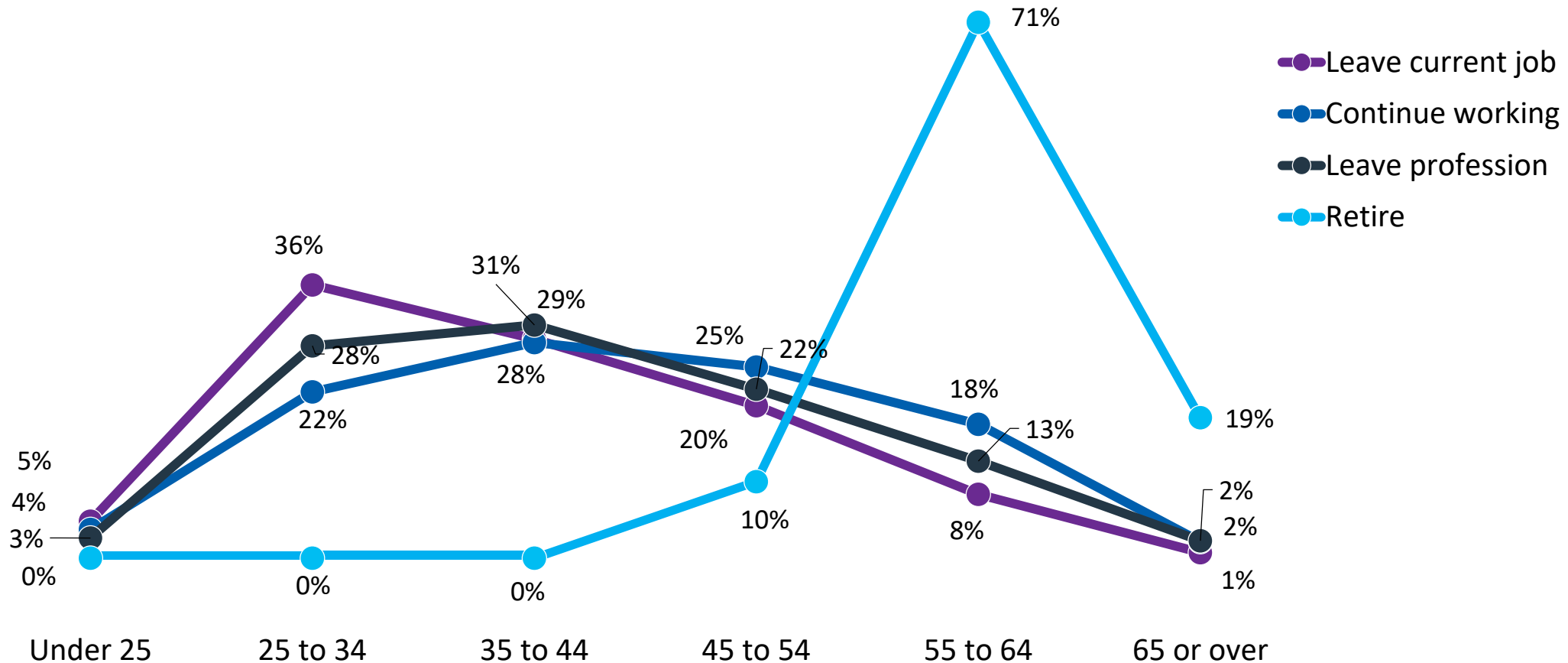


Significant differences

- Early (32%) and mid-career nurses (22%) are more likely to leave their current job than late-career nurses (10%).
- Leaving their current job is more likely among full-time (22%) and part-time nurses (23%), those in overcapacity worksites (25%) and nurses who have experienced more than one form of violence (24%).

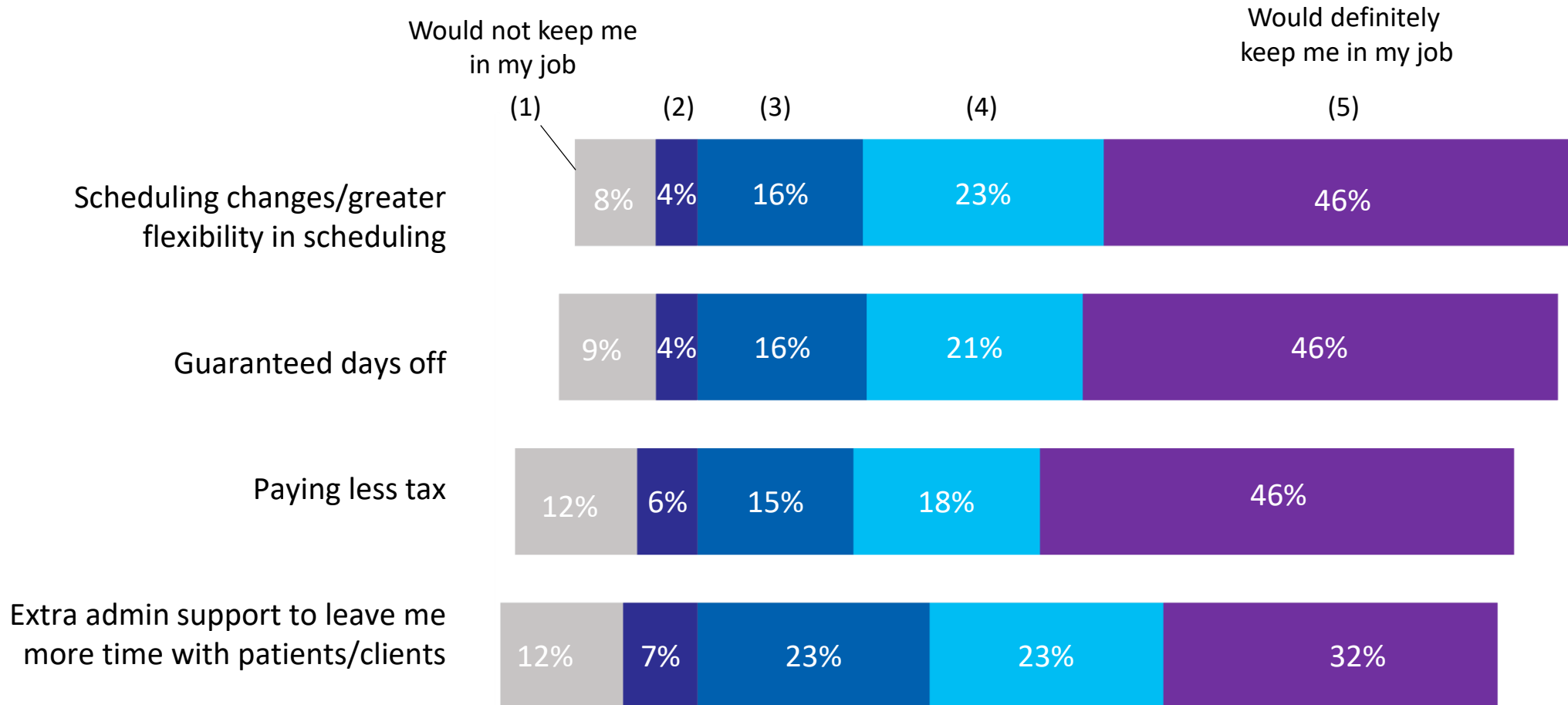


Nurses 25 to 34 are more likely to leave the profession or their current job than continue working.



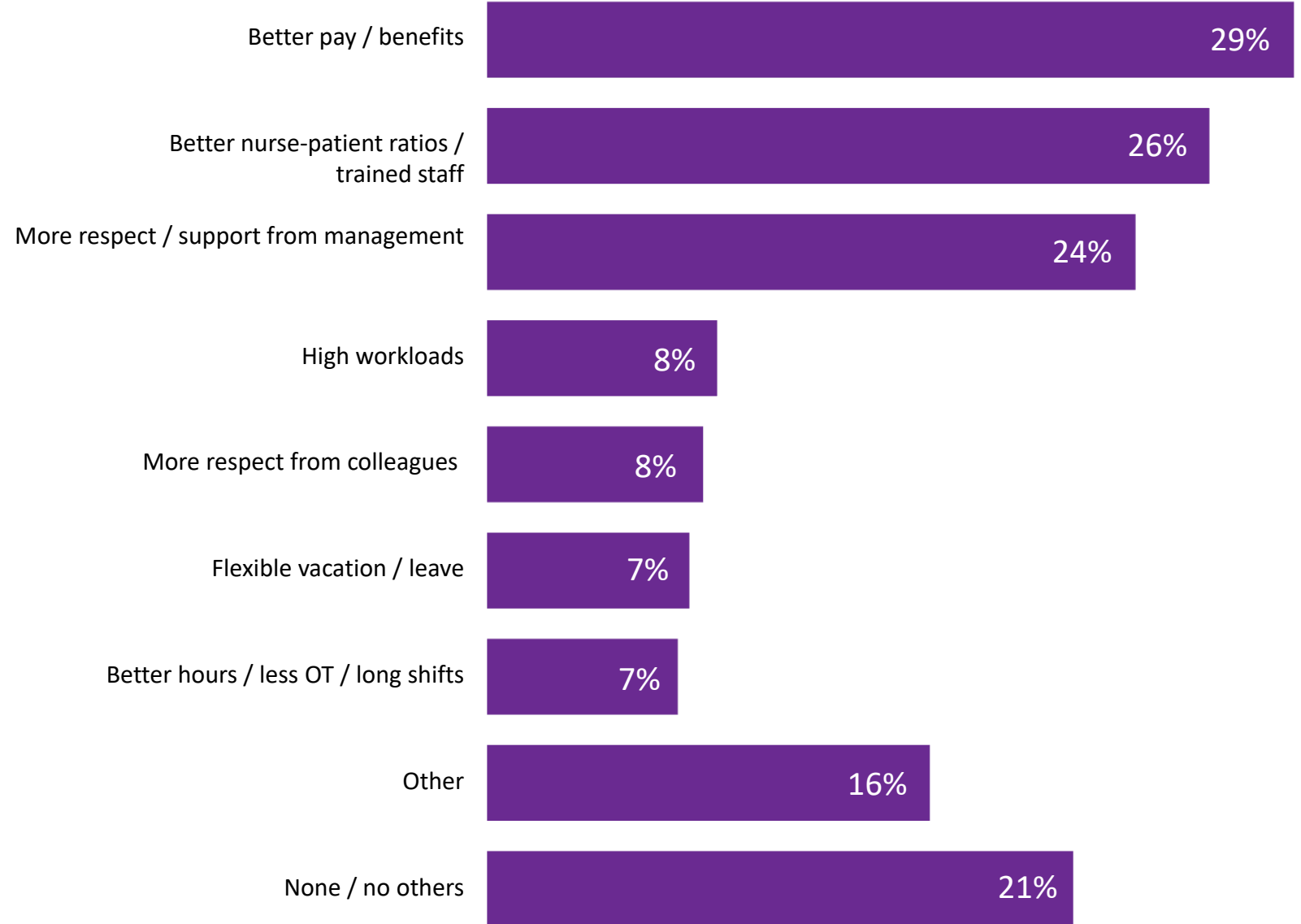


More than 2 in 5 nurses would consider staying in their role for scheduling flexibility, days off, and lower taxes.





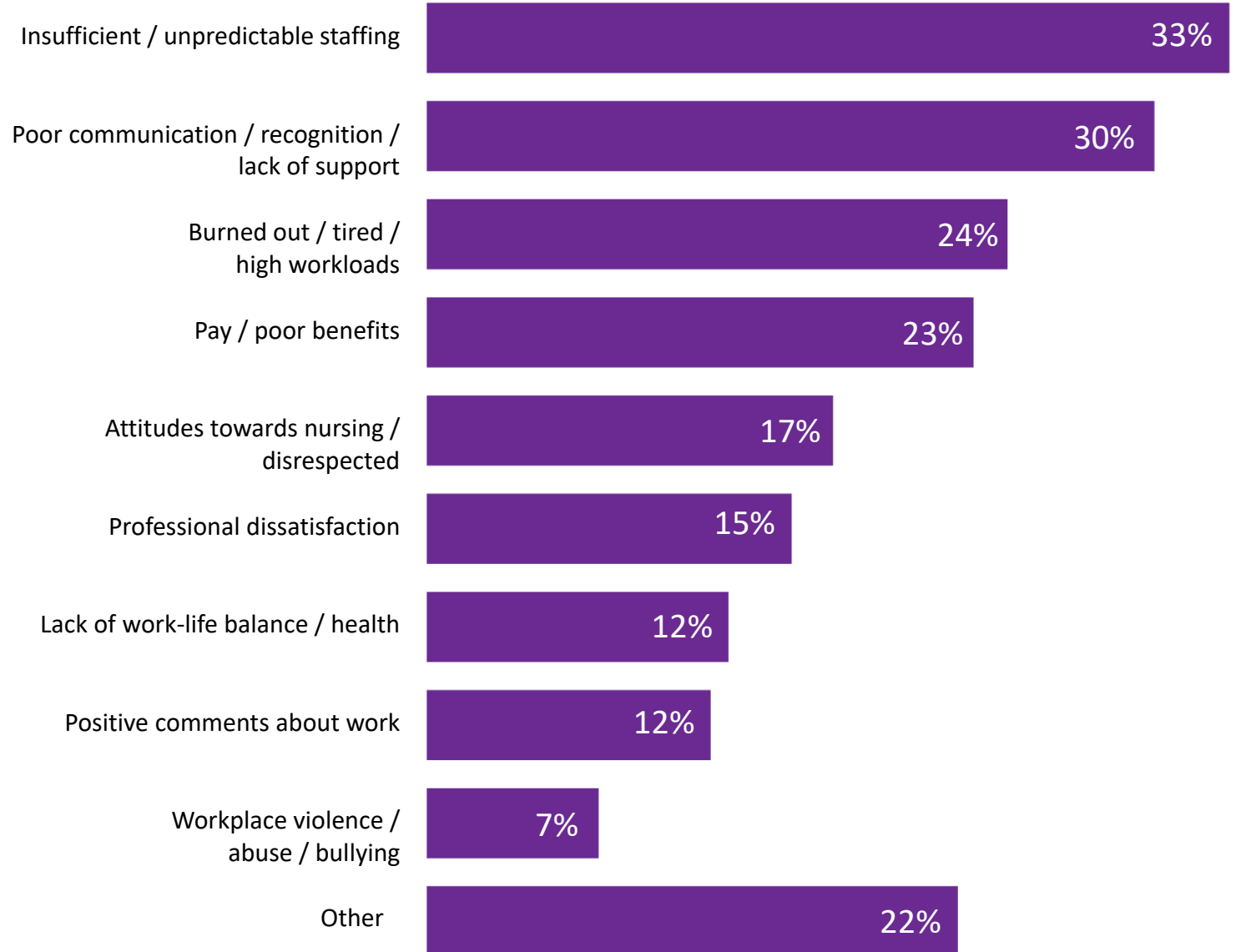
When asked what else might improve and prolong their work life, nurses' responses focused on pay, staffing respect and workload.



Respondents could give more than one response so % may add up to more than 100%



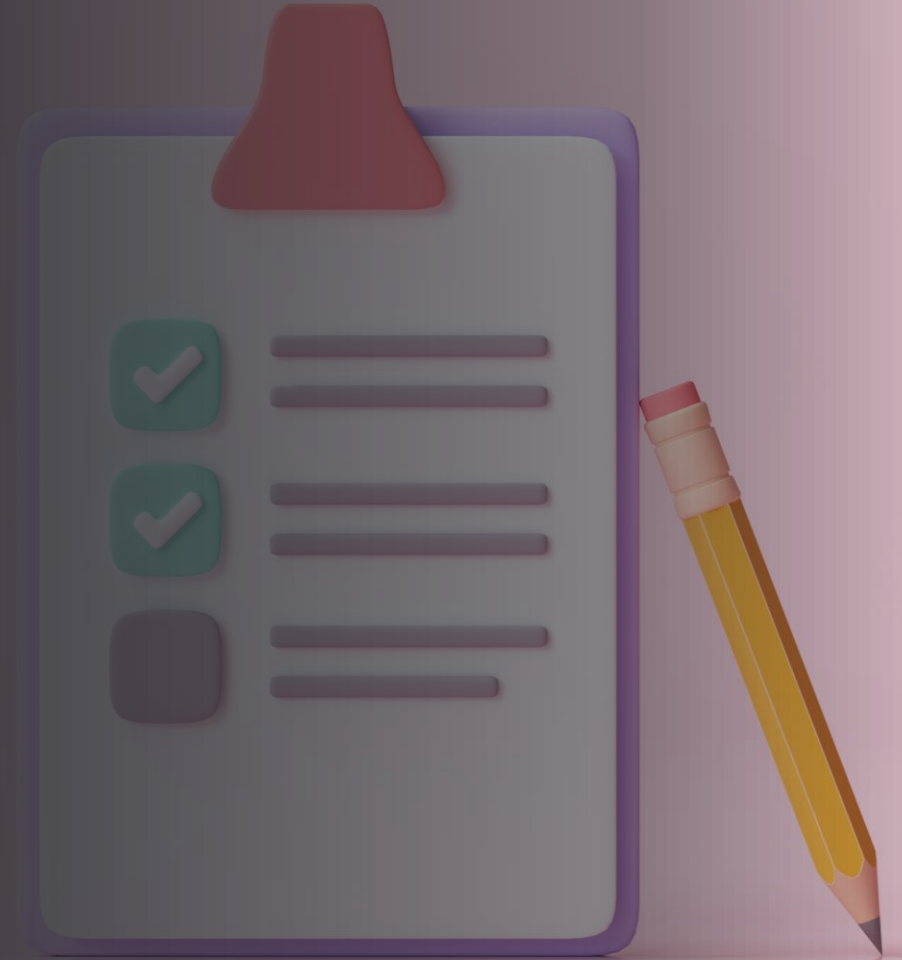
When asked for any other comments, 808 nurses offered responses focused on staffing, recognition and support, being burned out and pay.



Respondents could give more than one response so % may add up to more than 100%

Key findings

Methodology





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Methodology

- 5,595 Canadian nurses were surveyed online between January 16 and February 9.
- Nurses from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland were randomly selected to participate in this research by direct email invitation.
- Nurses from Quebec and the Territories were encouraged to participate in this research by their local organizations and via CFNU social media posts.



Methodology cont'd

- Nurses who had not responded or completed a survey were sent reminders before new members were invited to participate.
- With good representation from all regions, small weights have been applied to all regions, so national data can be analyzed as representative.
- The margin of error on a random sample of 5,595 is $\pm 1.3\%$, nineteen times out of twenty.
- The survey consisted of 107 questions and the average time to complete the survey was 16 minutes.



Methodology cont'd

- 56% of emails received, including invitations and reminders, were opened. This compares to 51% in 2023.
- Respondents logged into the survey using smartphones (67%), computers (23%) and tablets (2%).
- Completion rates were highest on tablets (86%), and computers (89%) and slightly lower on smartphones (84%).