



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



# CFNU National Nurses Survey

**March 2025**

Prepared by Viewpoints Research on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions





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# Methodology

On behalf of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), Viewpoints Research conducted an online survey of 4,736 practicing nurses in early 2025. The margin of error is +/- 1.4%.

Nurses from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador were randomly selected to participate in this research by direct email invitation from their respective nurses' union.

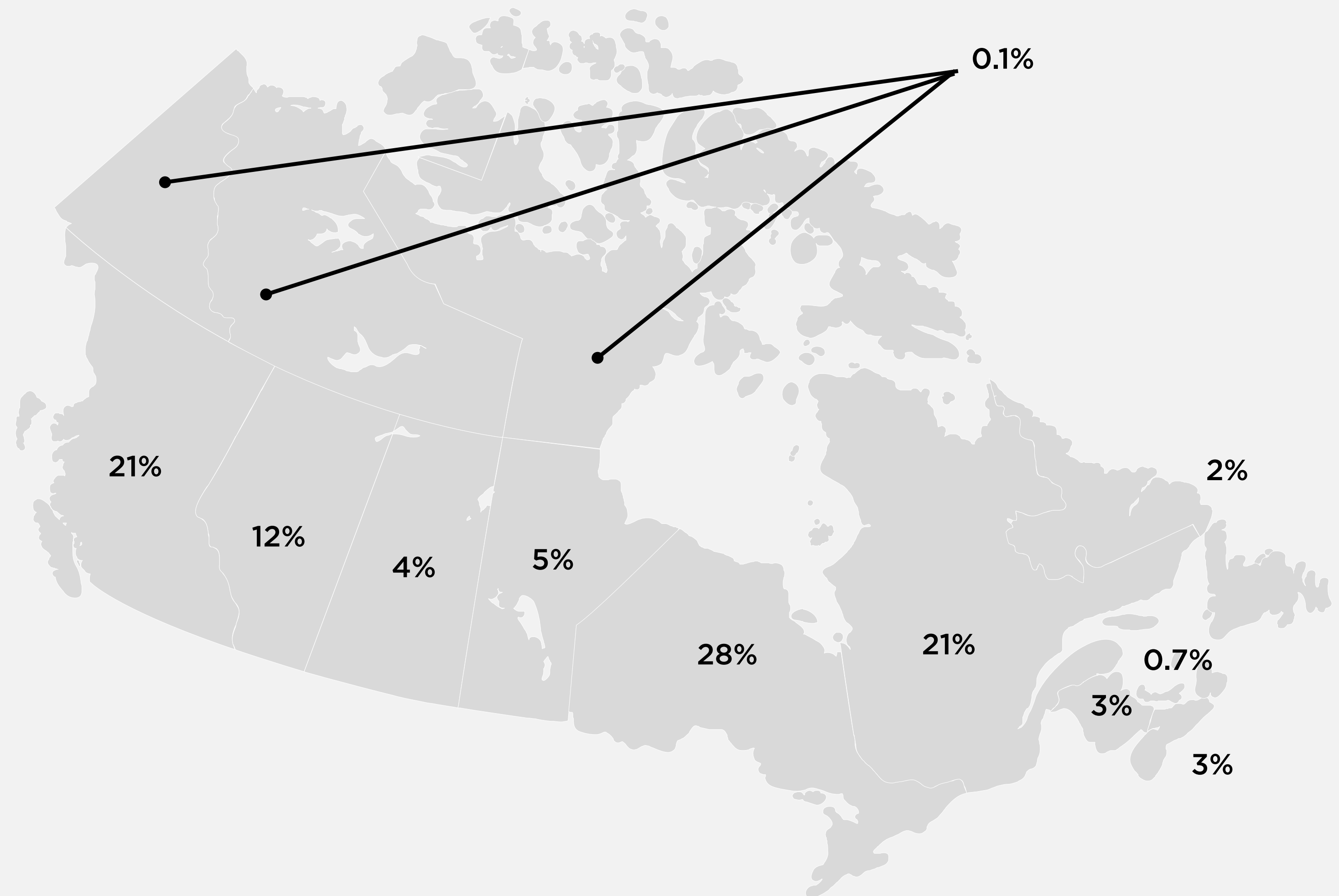
Nurses from Quebec and the Territories were encouraged to participate in this research by their respective unions.

Bases for reported findings are 4,736 unless otherwise specified.

# We received responses from nurses across Canada.

The survey received responses from over 4,700 nurses across the country.

This national survey represents nurses participating from all regions. With good representation from all regions, small weights have been applied so national data can be analyzed as representative.





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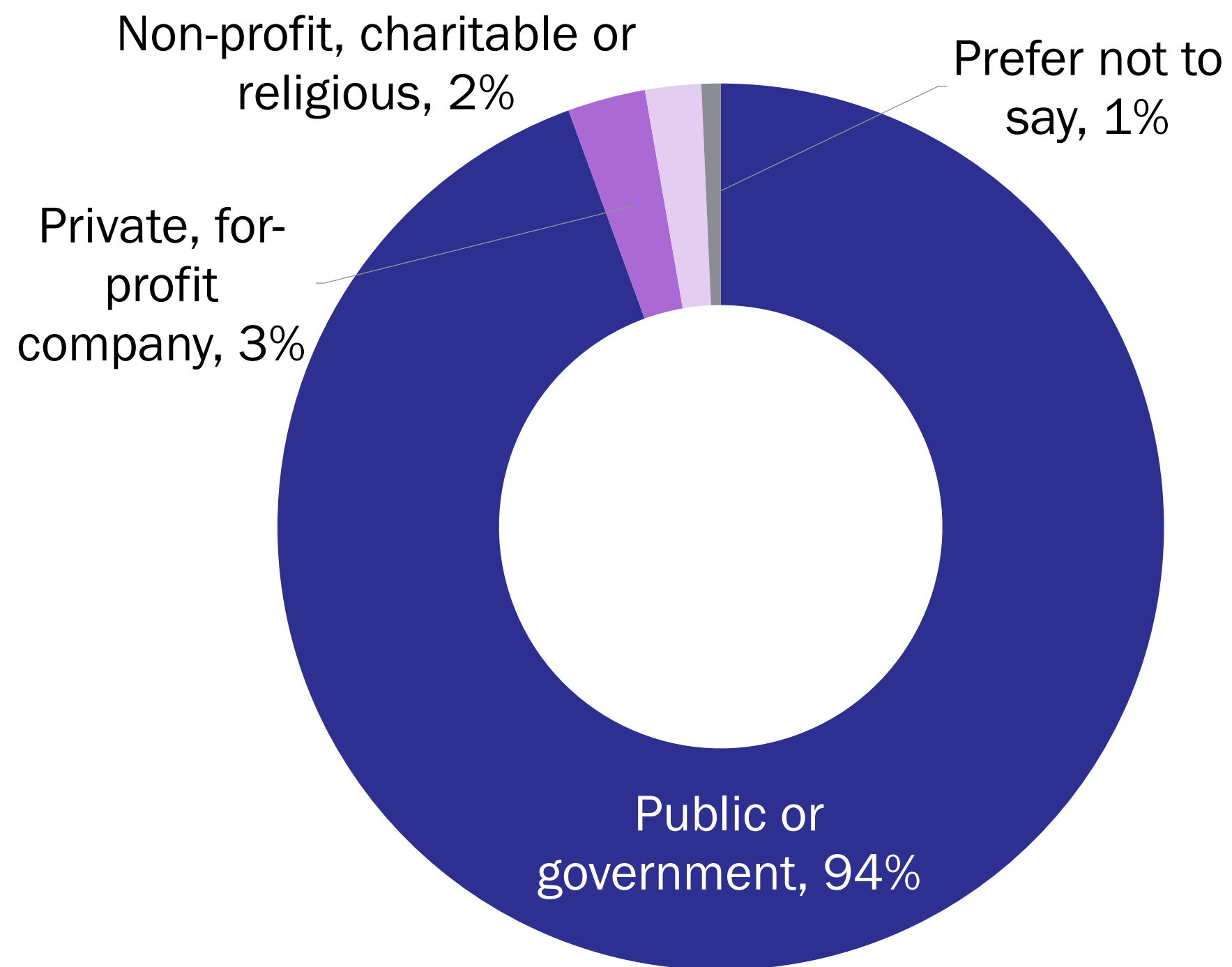
Findings

# Work Experiences & Quality of Care



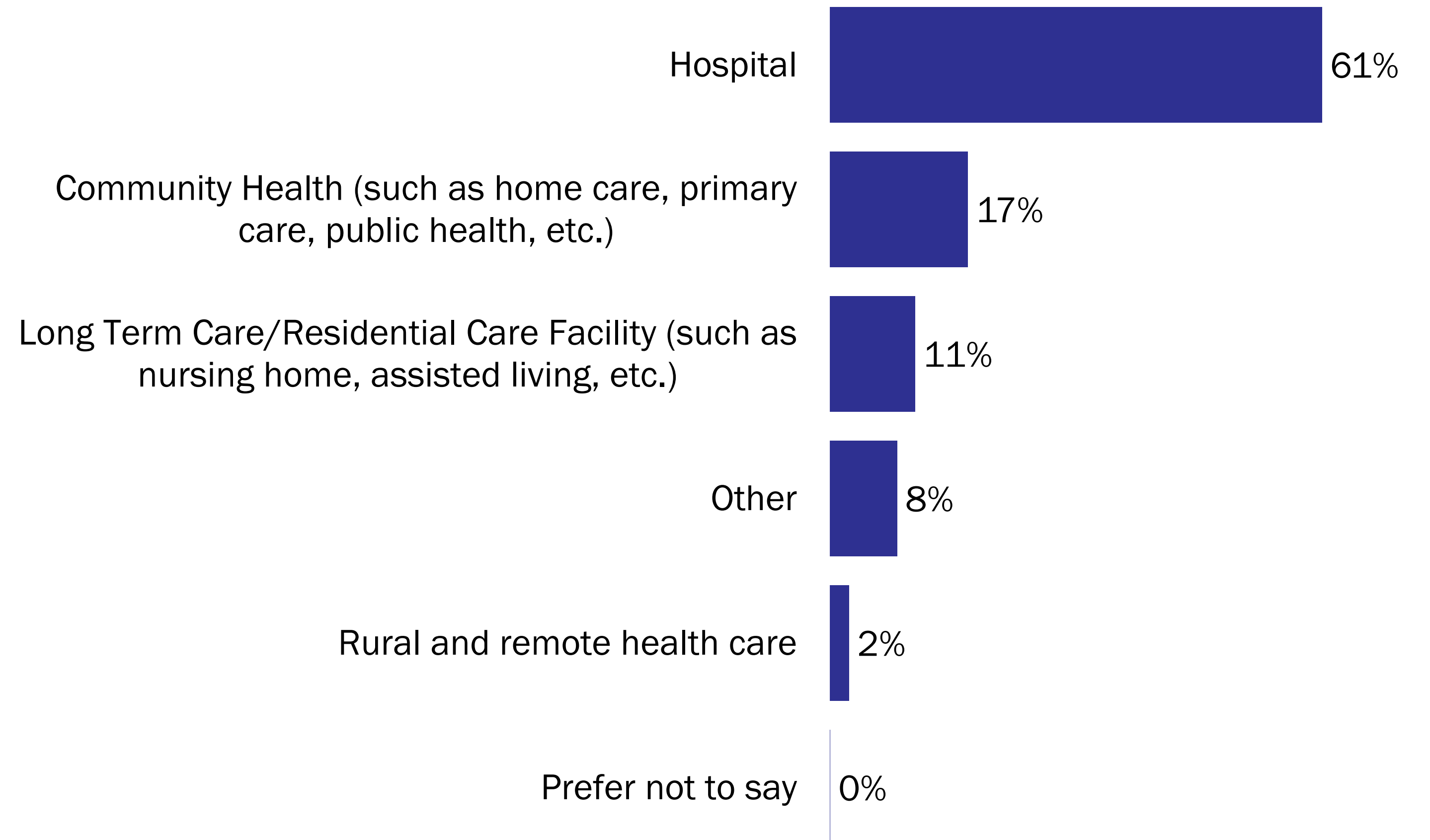
# Most respondents work in public or government organizations, and in hospital settings.

Which of the following best describes the type of organization you work for?



Thinking about your main job, in what sector are you currently employed?

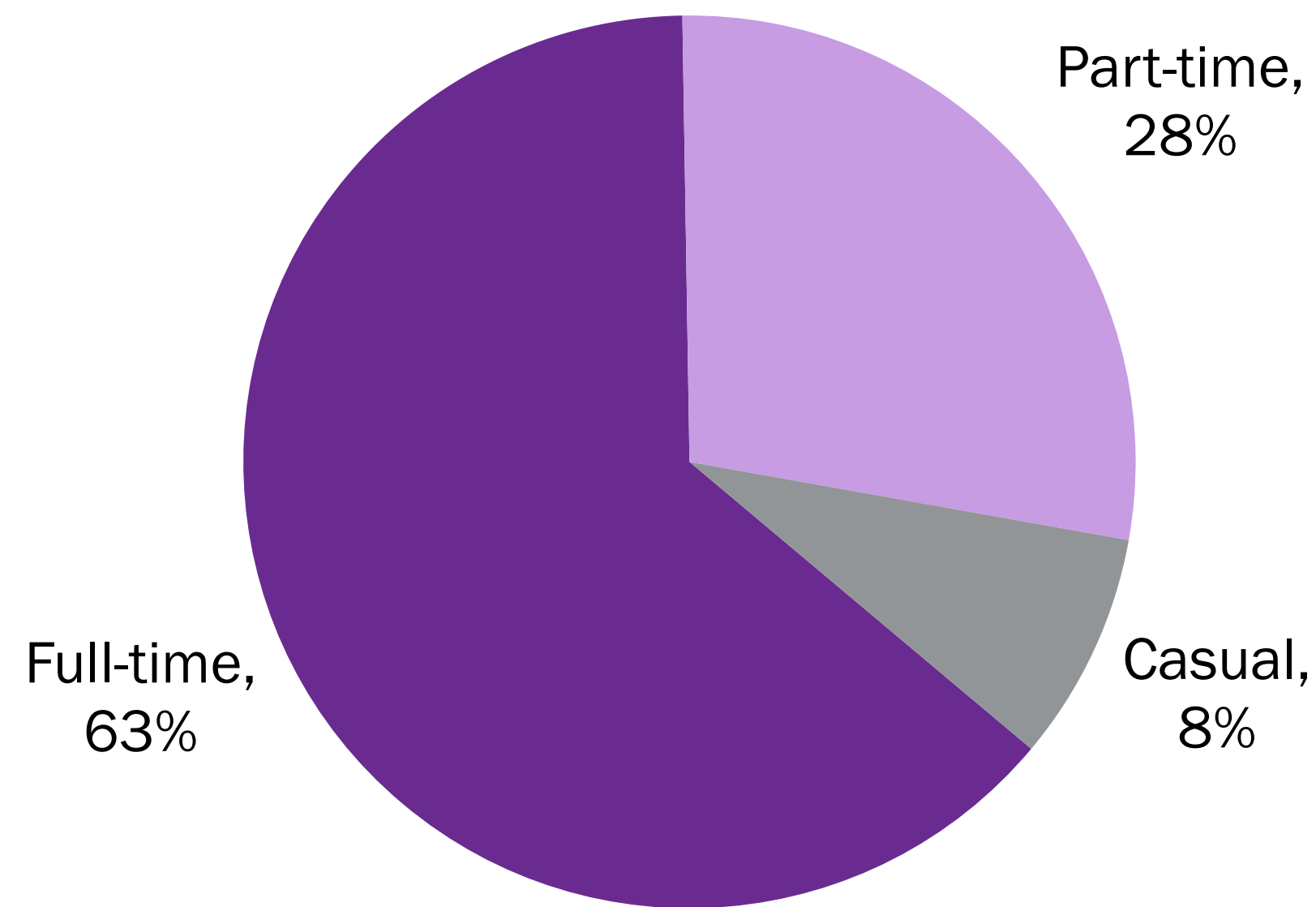
If you have more than one job, please answer in terms of your main or primary job, where you regularly work the most hours





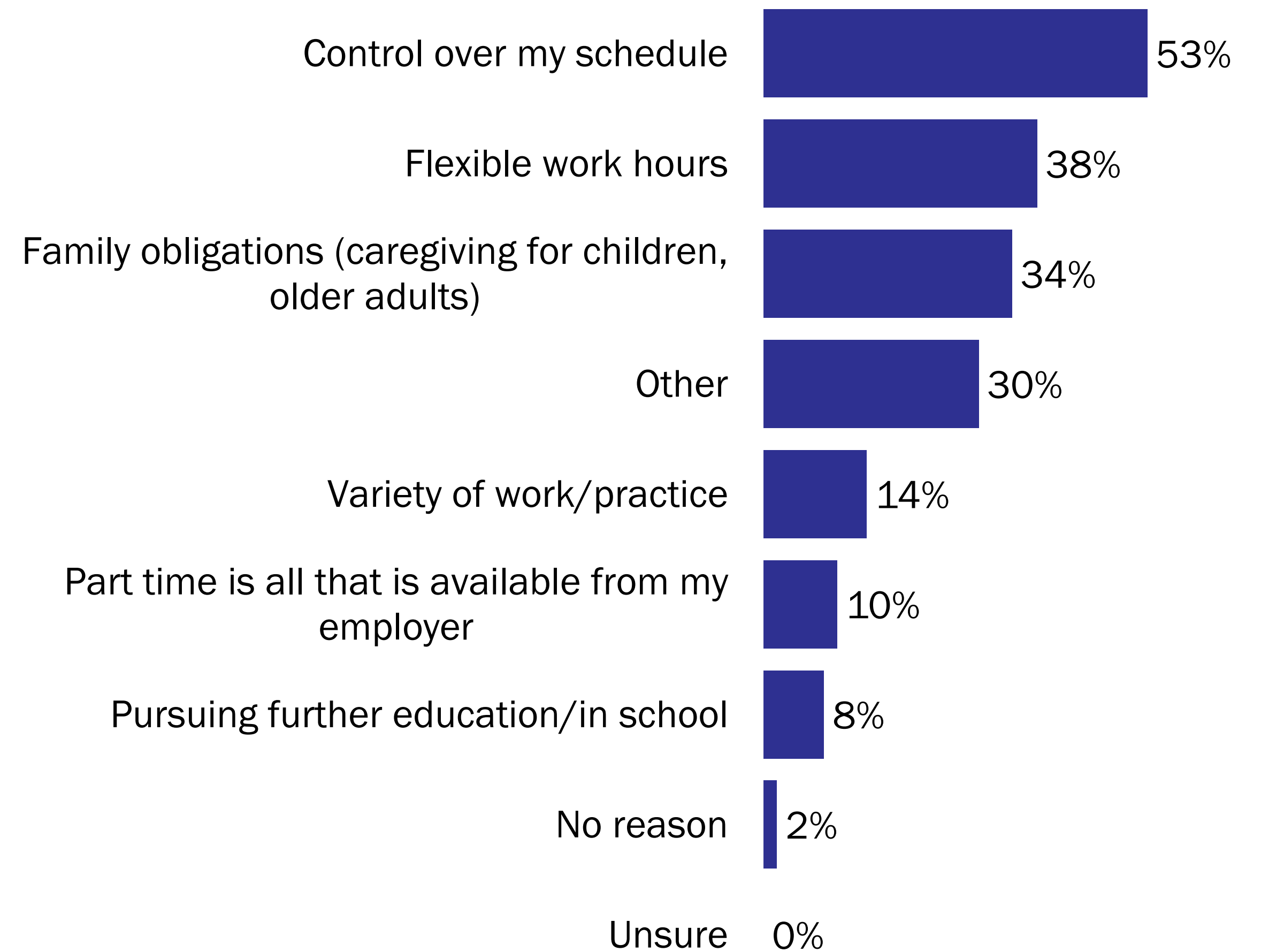
# Most respondents have full-time jobs; those who don't say it's mostly for control over their schedule, flexible work hours, and family obligations.

Which one of the following best describes your current job status?



**Overall, nurses work 1.4 jobs on average.**

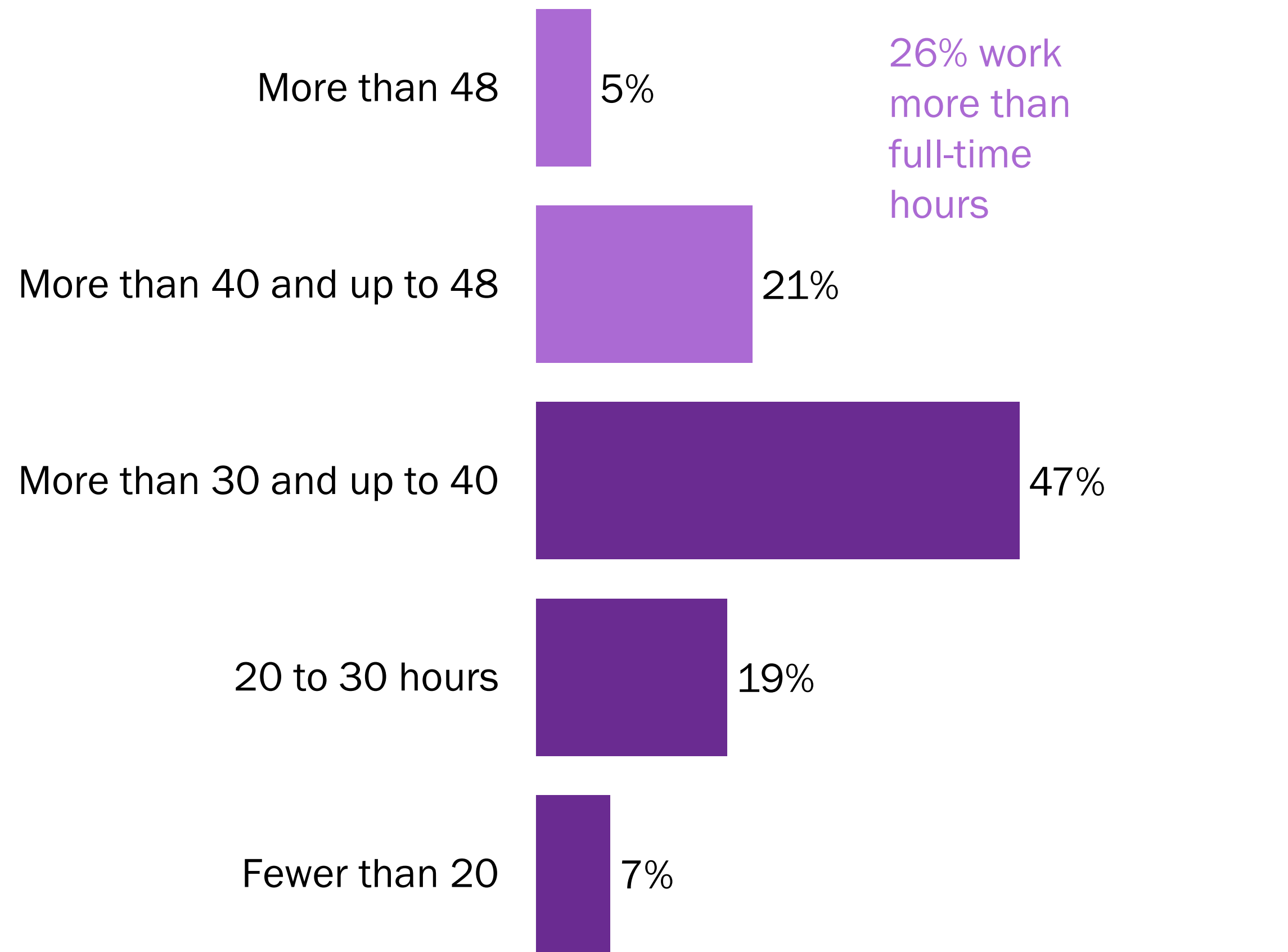
How many nursing jobs do you work?



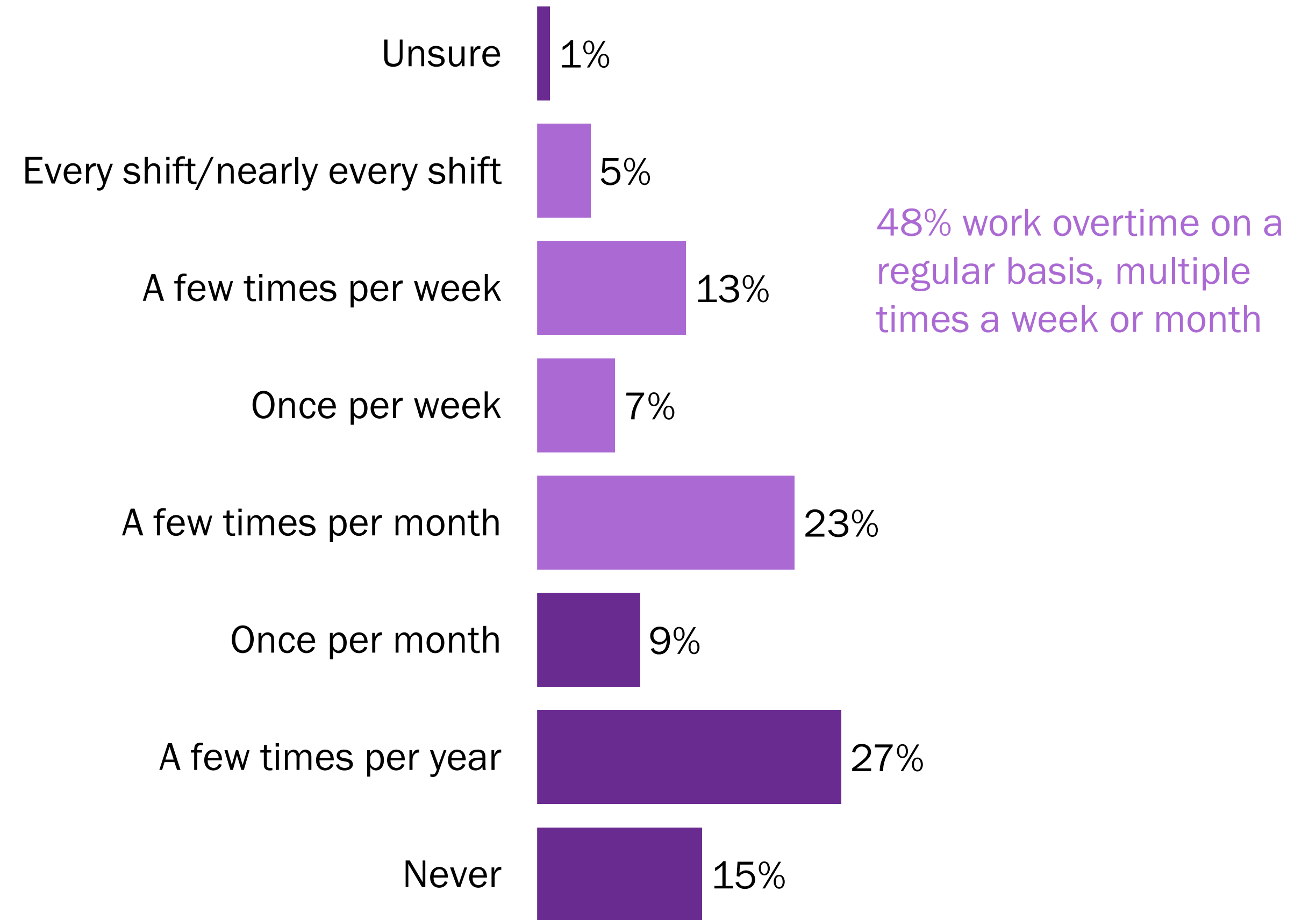
Why do you work part time or casual hours?

**Base: 1,866**

# 26% of respondents regularly work more than full-time hours; nearly half work overtime on a regular basis.

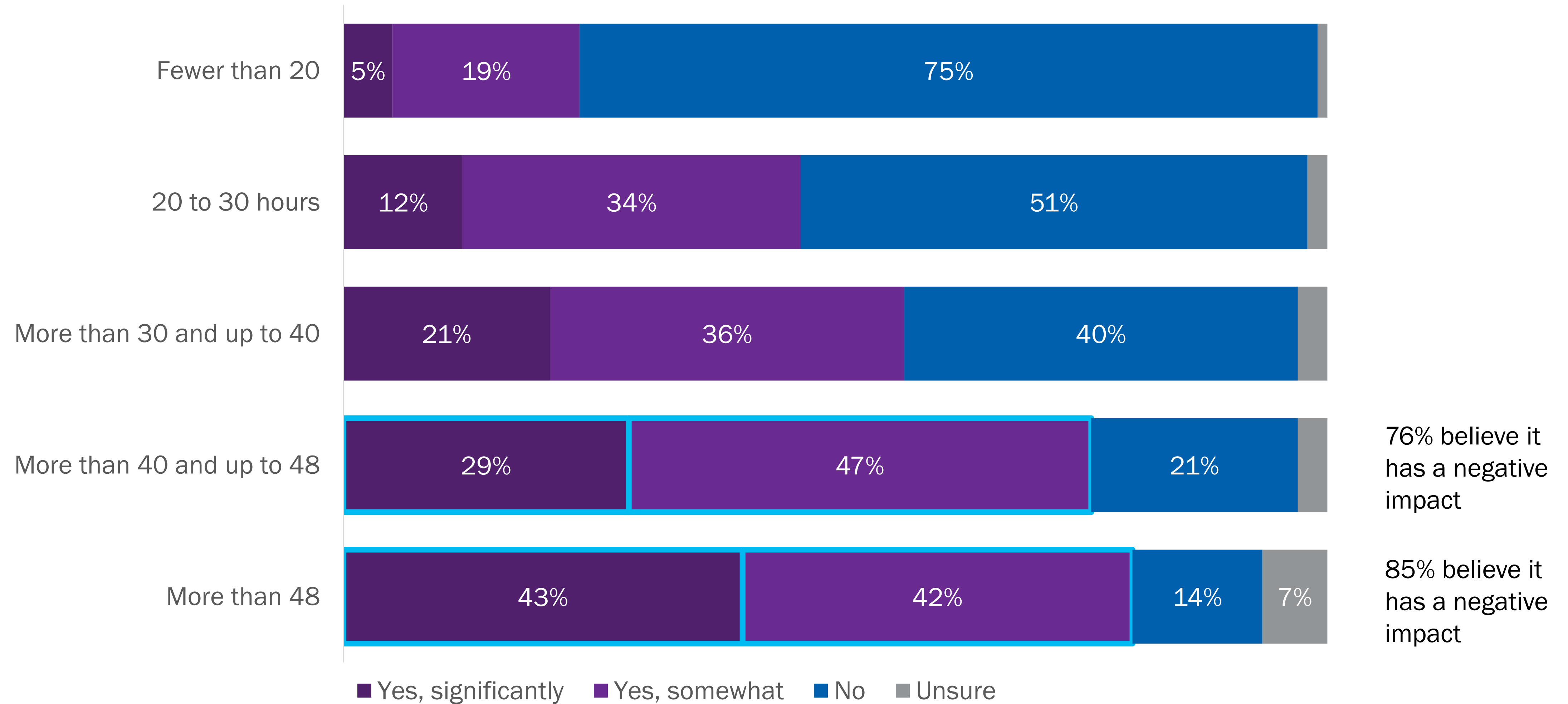


On average, how many hours do you usually work per week?



How often do you work overtime including paid and unpaid?

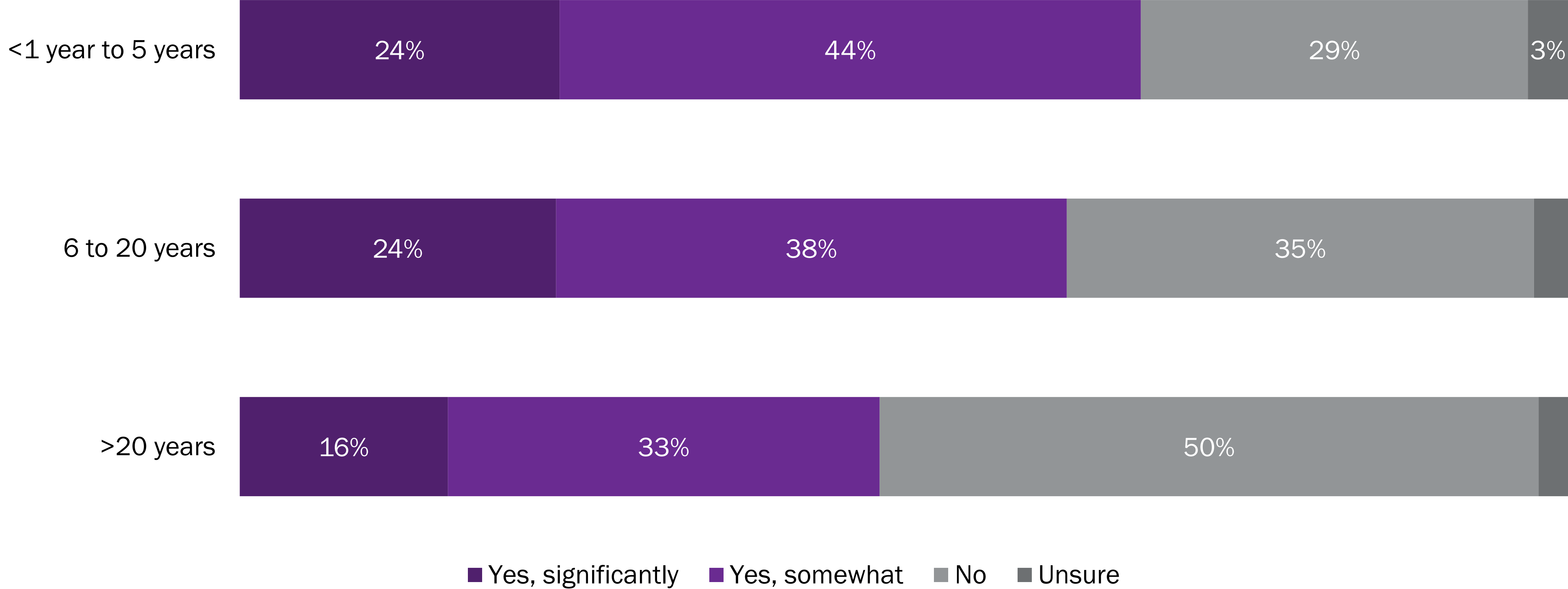
# Most respondents who work more than 40 hours feel that the hours they work negatively impacts their relationships with family and friends.



**Based on the number of hours you work, do you feel that your relationships with family and/or friends have been negatively impacted?**



# Early-career respondents are more likely to say that they feel their relationships with family and friends have been negatively impacted based on the number of hours they work.

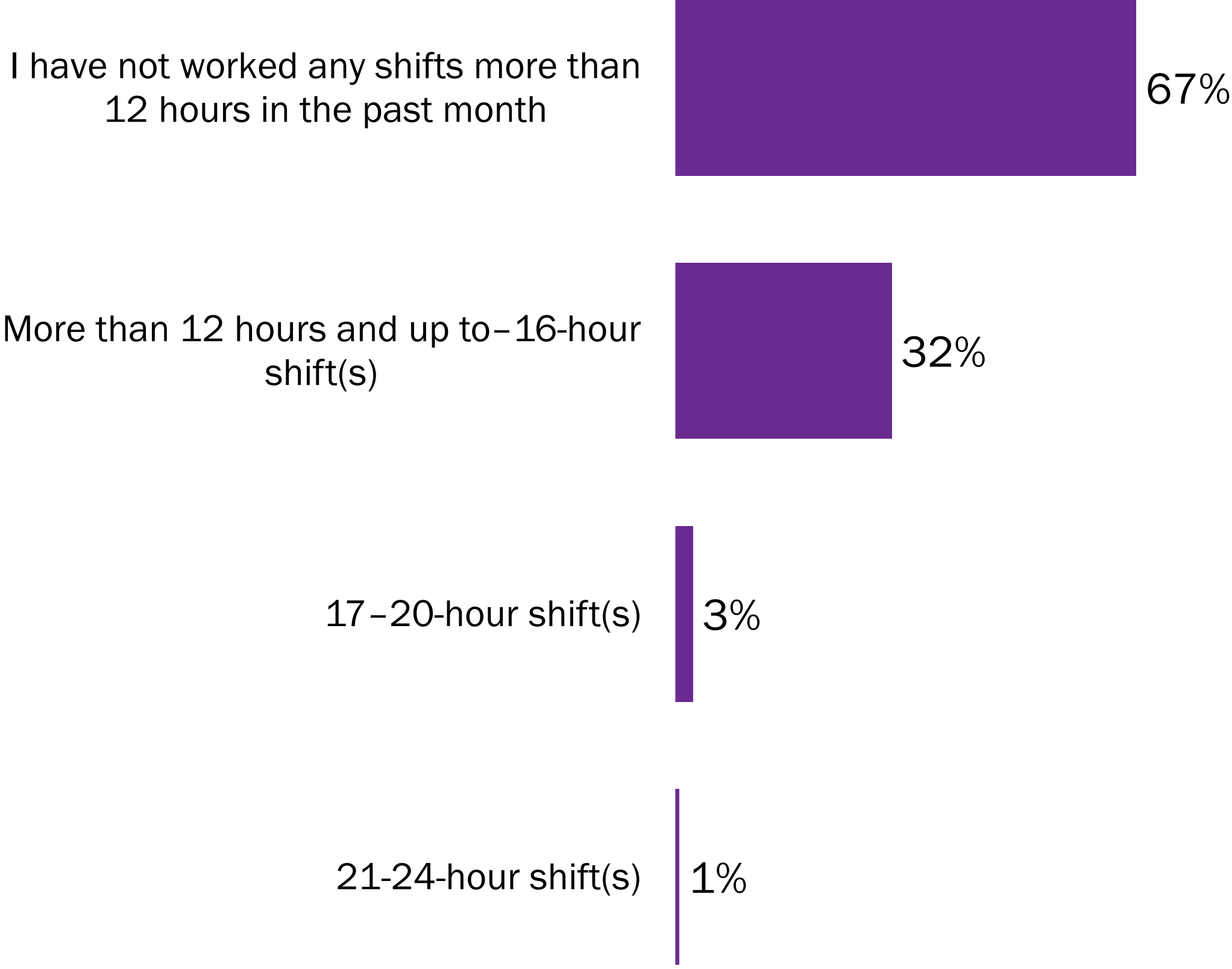
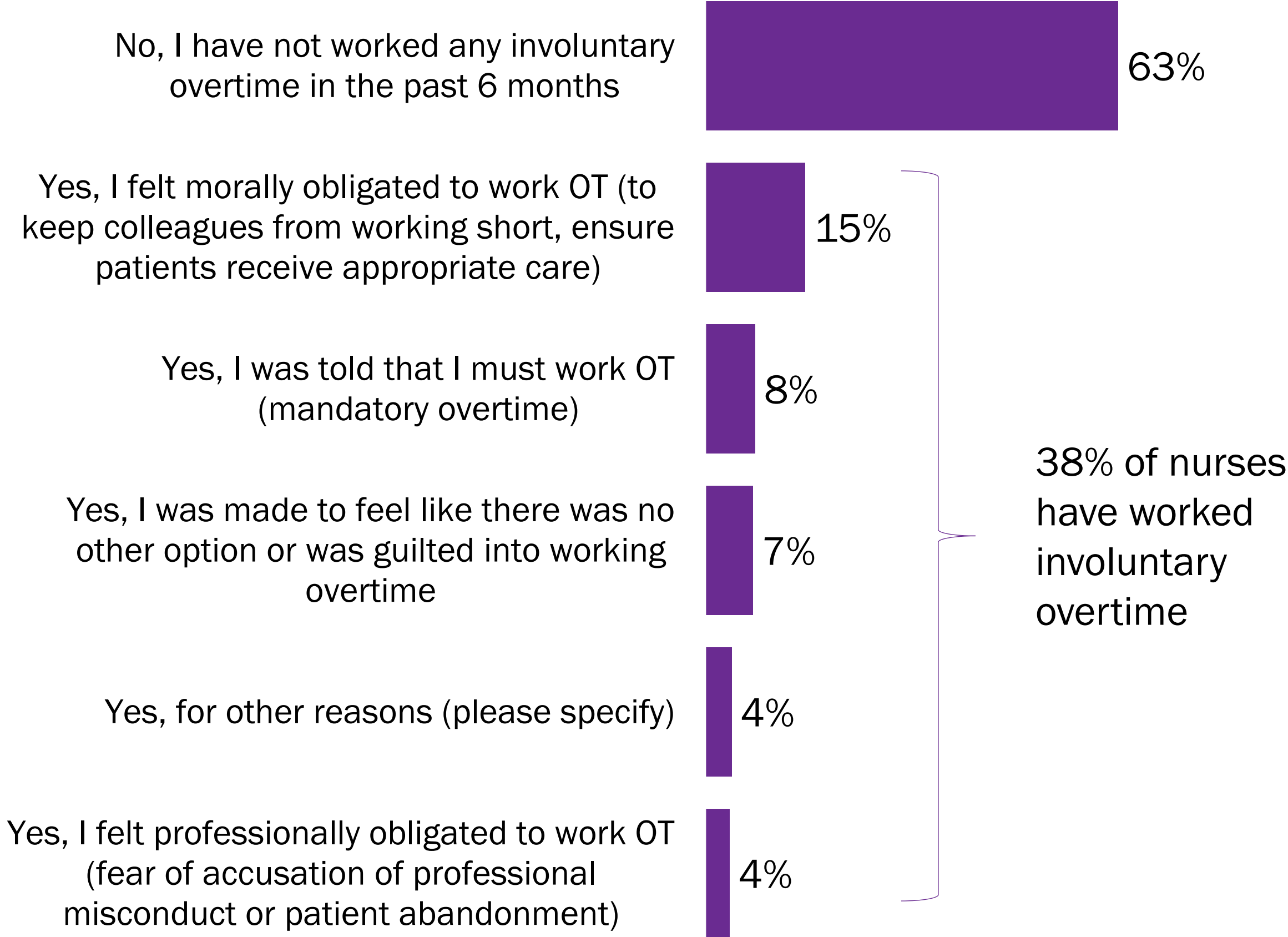


Based on the number of hours you work, do you feel that your relationships with family and/or friends have been negatively impacted?

# Over a third of respondents have recently worked involuntary overtime. Over a third have worked shifts over 12 hours long in the past month.

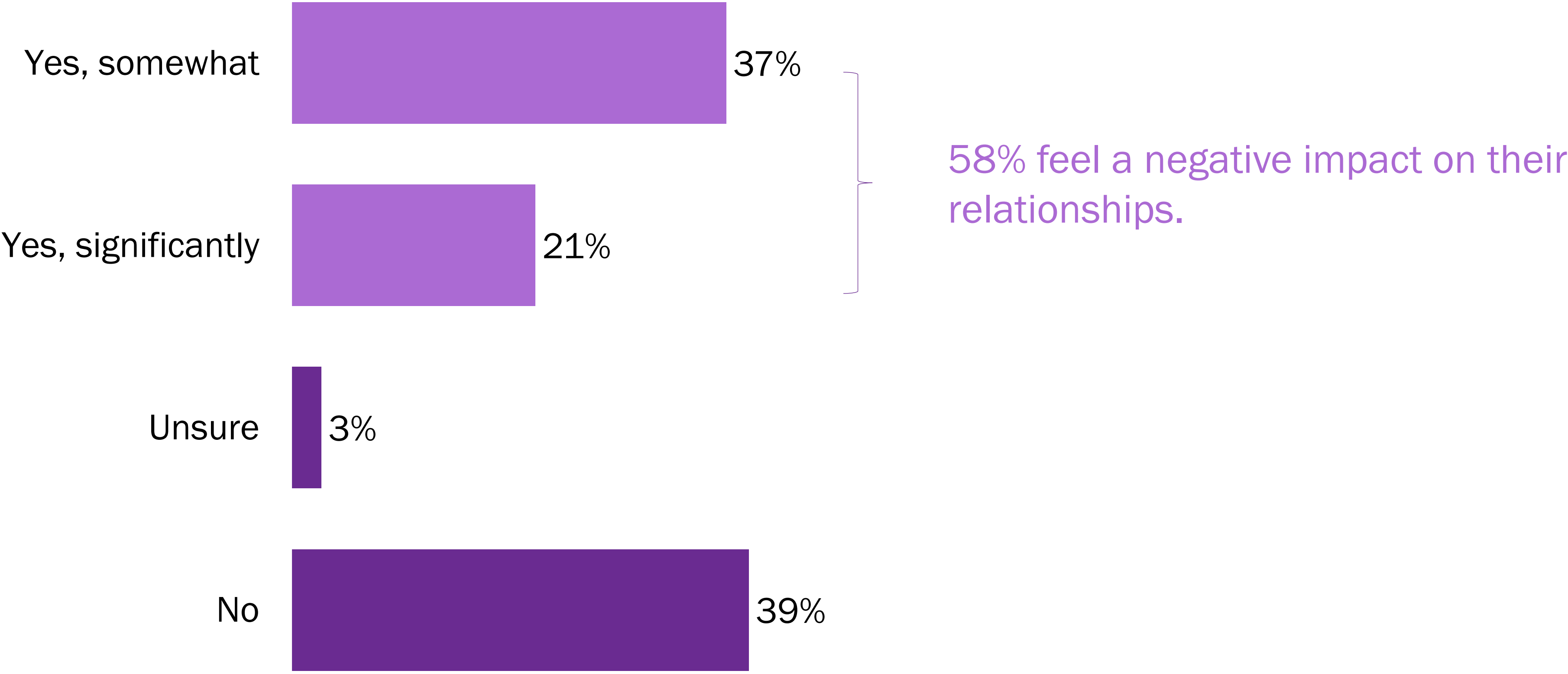
Have you worked involuntary overtime in the last six months?

In the past month, have you worked 1 or more shifts of the following lengths? All times below include breaks and meal times.



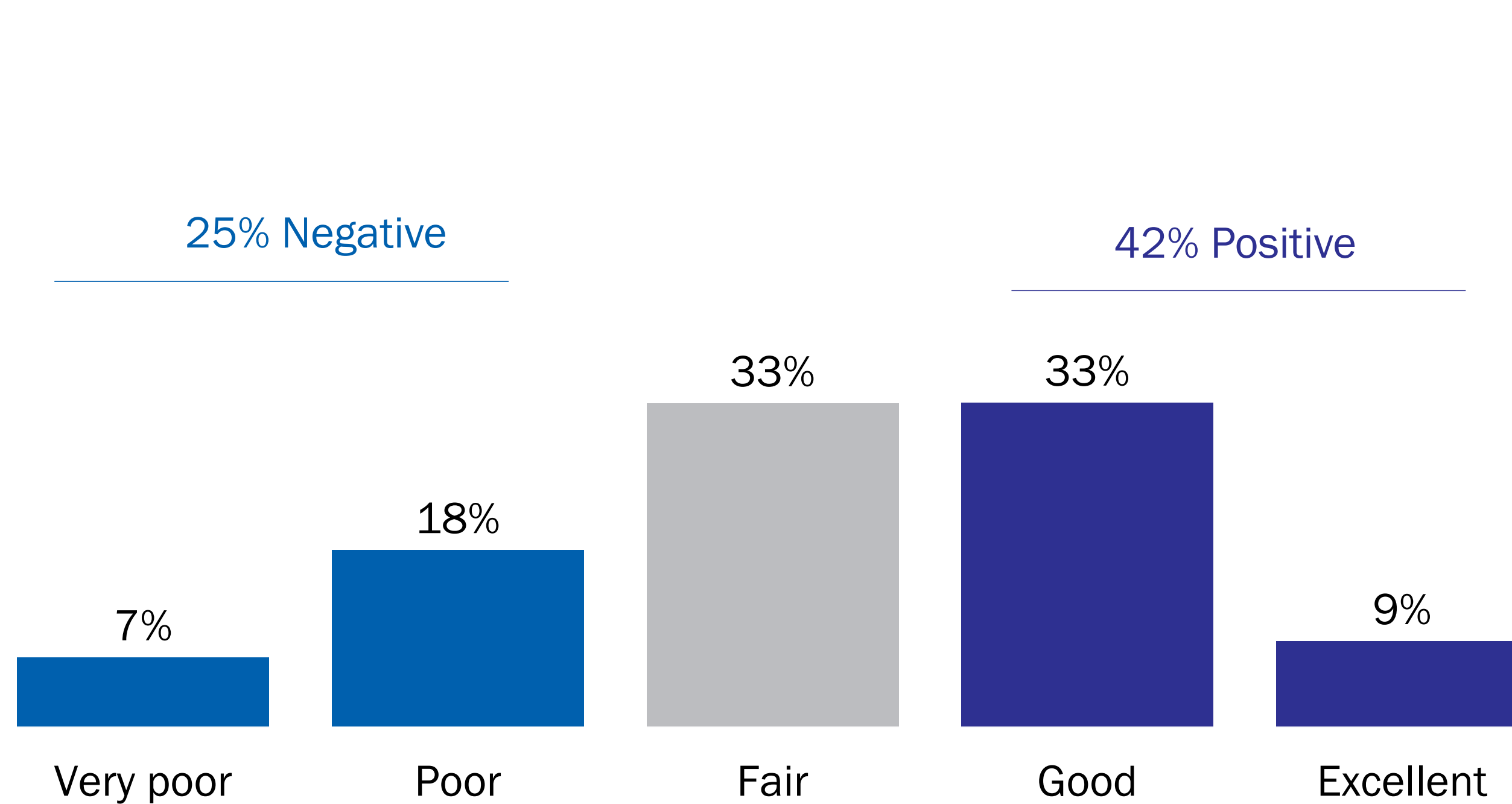


# Over half of respondents feel their relationships have been negatively impacted due to the hours they work.

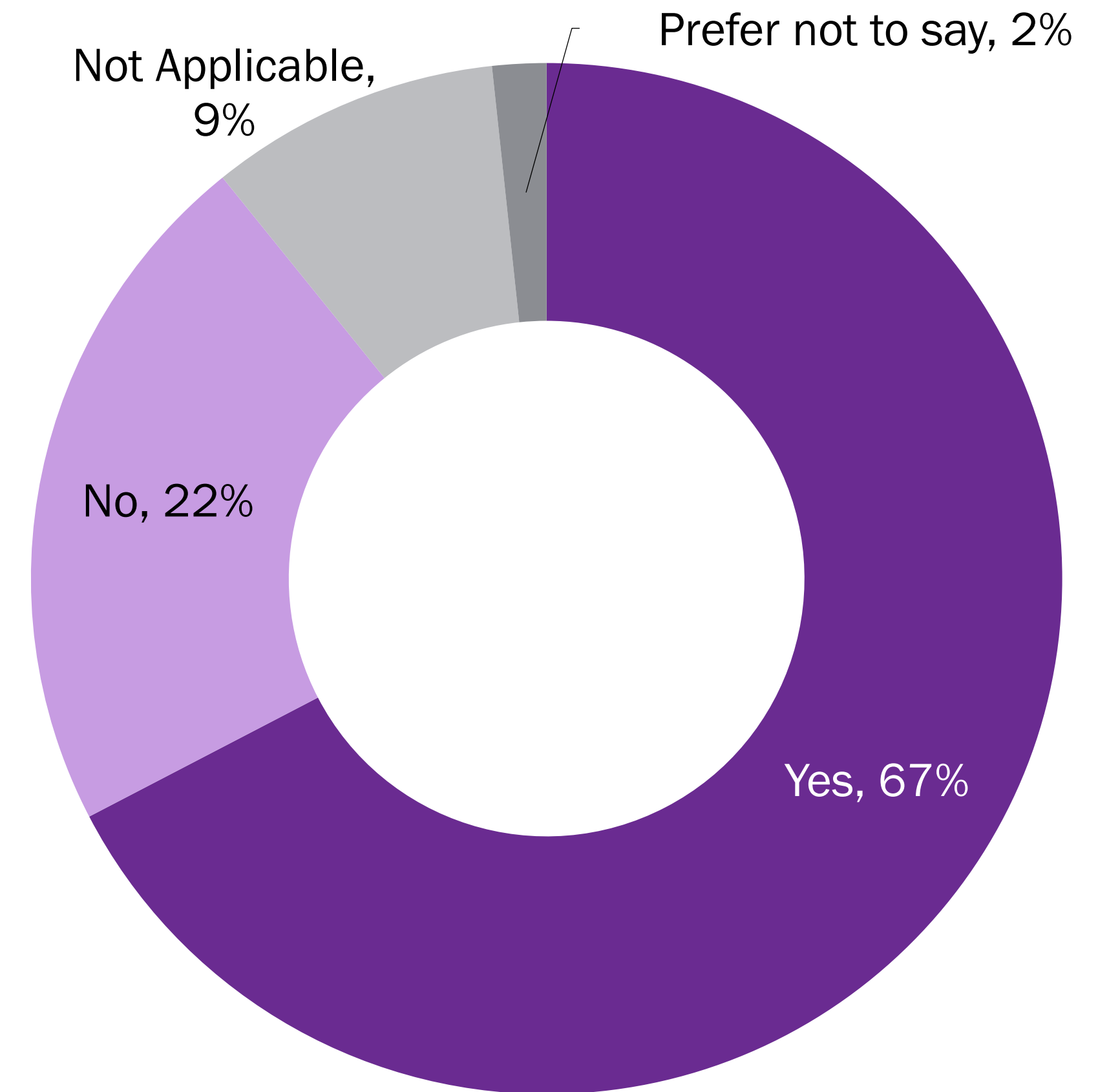


Based on the number of hours you work, do you feel that your relationships with family and/or friends have been negatively impacted?

# 1 in 4 respondents rate their work environment negatively. 2 in 3 say their workplace is regularly over capacity.



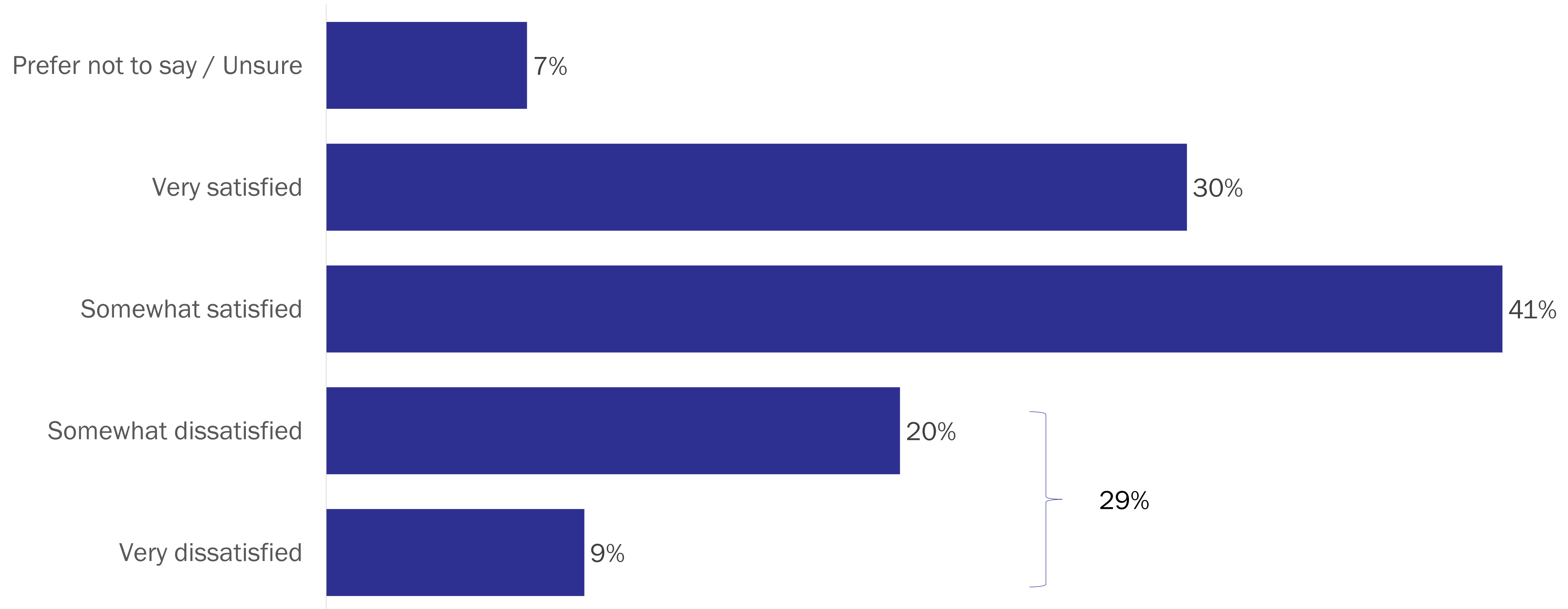
**How would you rate the work environment at your current job in this workplace? Please consider adequacy of resources, relations with coworkers, and support from supervisors.**



**In your opinion, is your workplace regularly over capacity?**



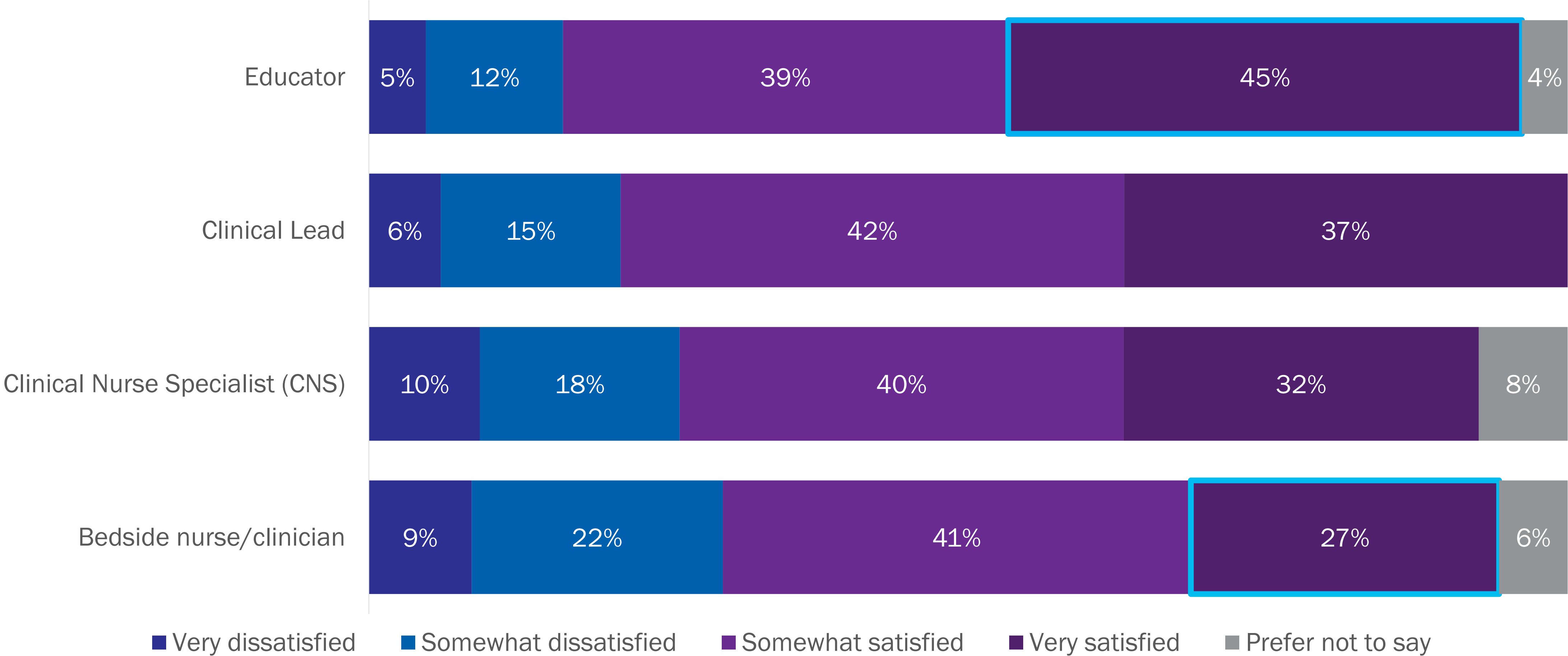
# A third of respondents are somewhat or very dissatisfied with their choice of nursing as a career.



How satisfied are you with your choice of nursing as a career?

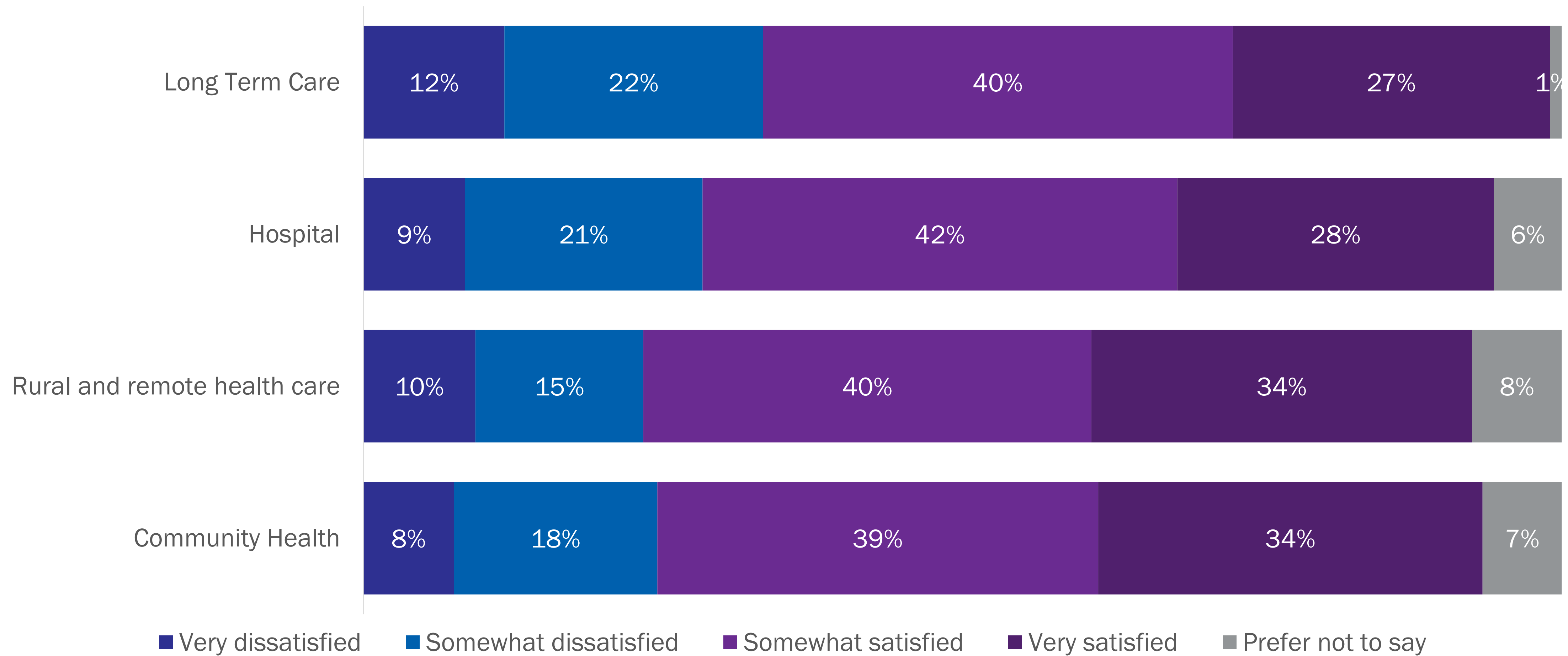
# Respondents who are educators are more likely to be very satisfied than bedside clinicians.

How satisfied are you with your choice of nursing as a career?  
In your main job, which of the following would you use to describe your role?



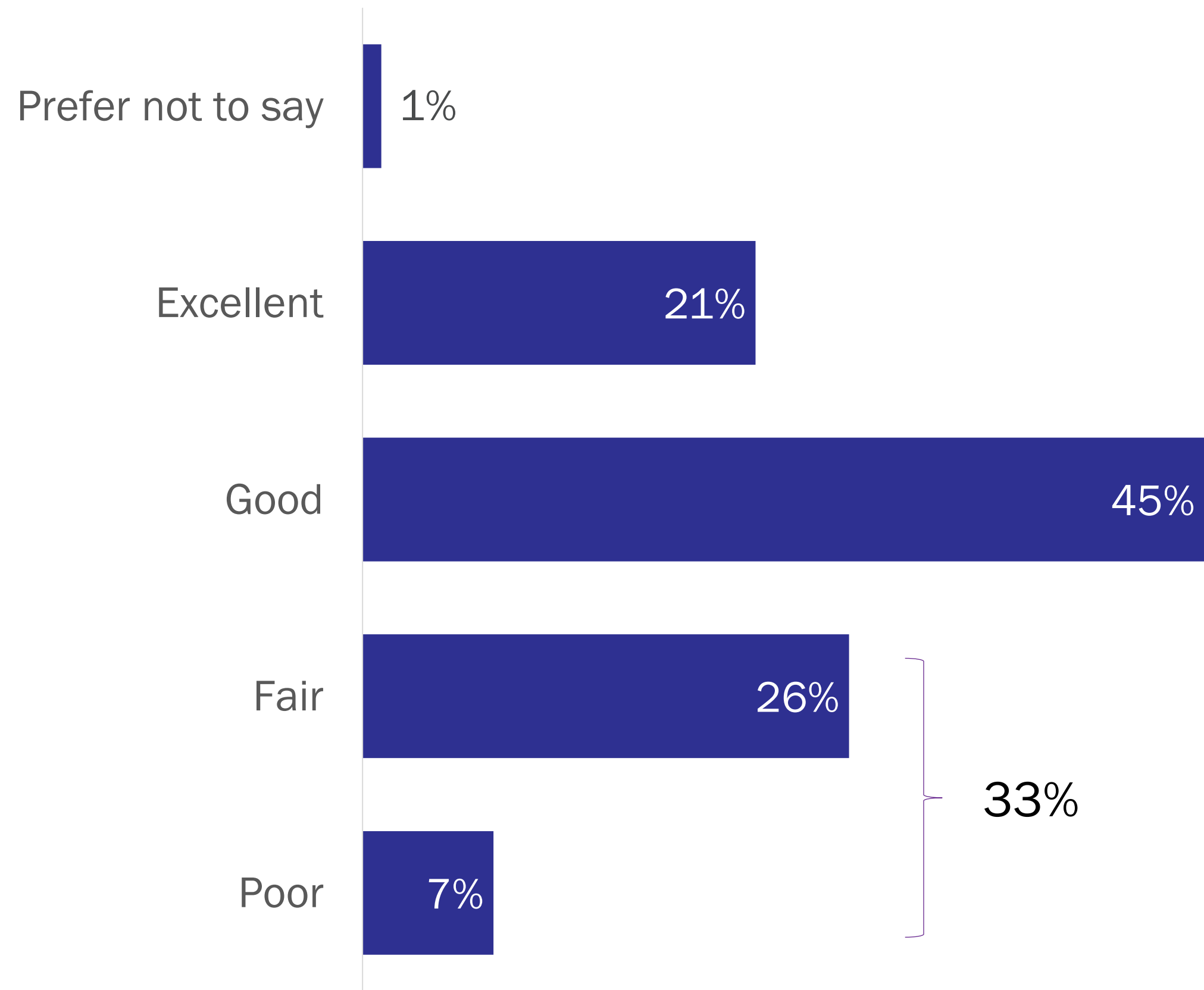


# Respondents working in long term care and hospitals are more likely to be dissatisfied. Those in community health and rural and remote healthcare are more likely to be very satisfied.

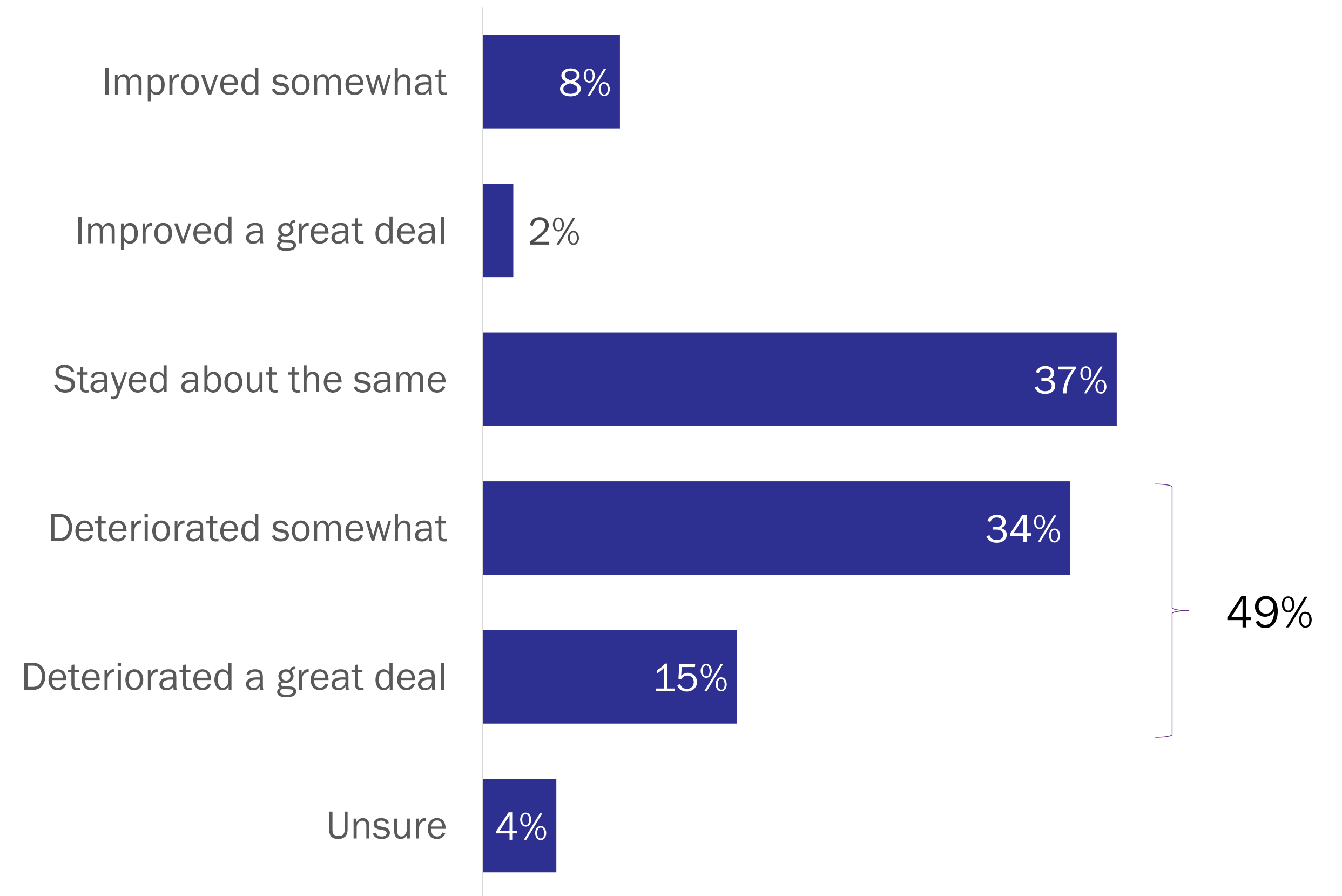


**How satisfied are you with your choice of nursing as a career?  
Thinking about your main job, in what sector are you currently employed?**

# 1 in 3 respondents describe the quality of care in their workplaces as poor or fair. Half feel it has deteriorated over the past year.



**In general, how would you describe the quality of nursing care delivered to patients/residents/clients at your workplace?**



**Over the past year, has the quality of care available in your workplace changed?**

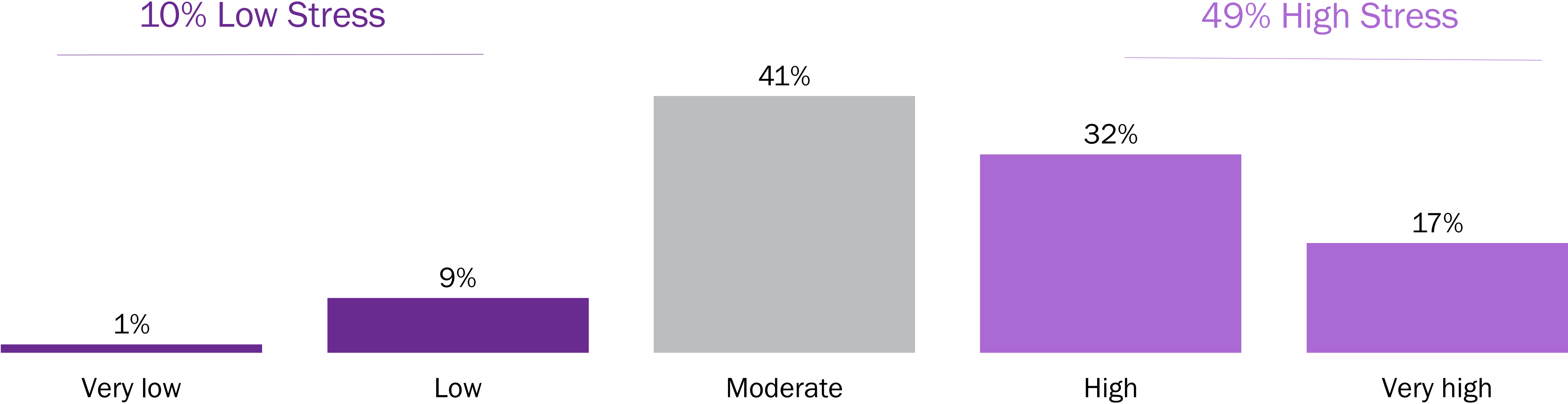
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Findings

# Well-being



# Half of respondents rate the stress they experience in their job as high or very high.

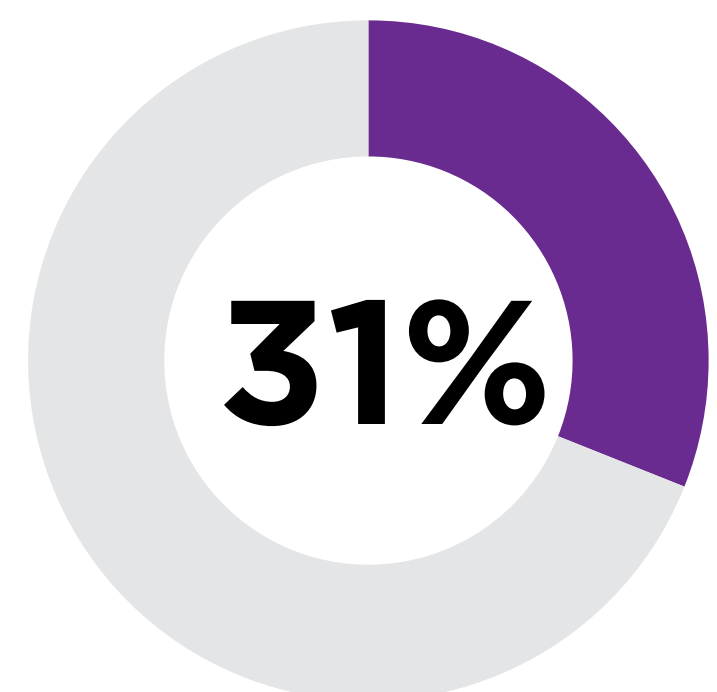
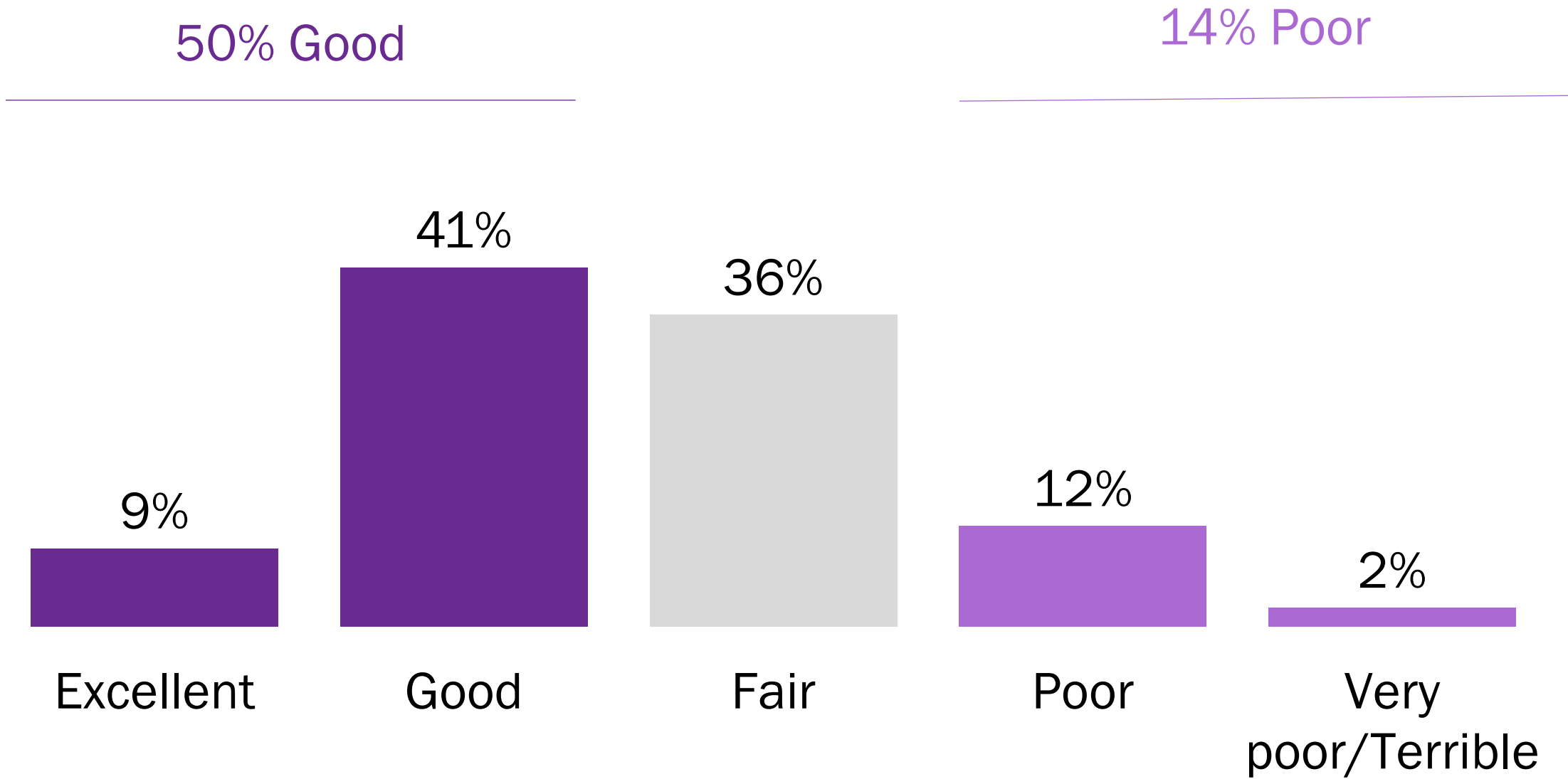


Generally, how would you rate the stress you experience in your job?

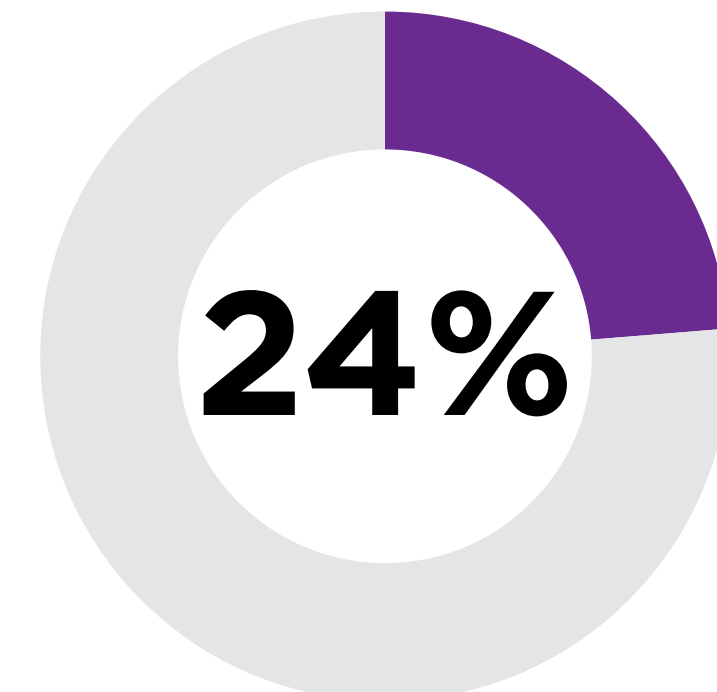


# While most respondents rate their mental health as good or fair, around a quarter meet clinical thresholds for anxiety, depression, and burnout.

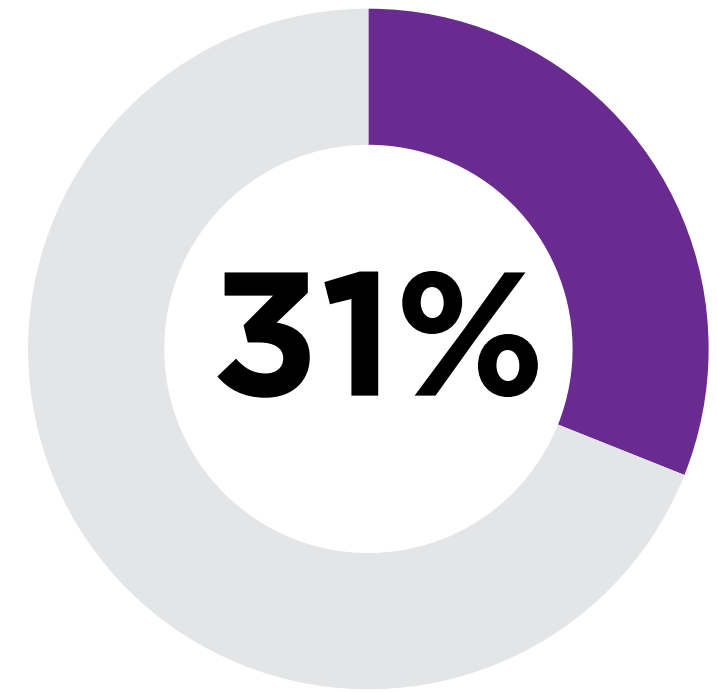
In general, would you say your mental health is...



meet clinical thresholds for anxiety.



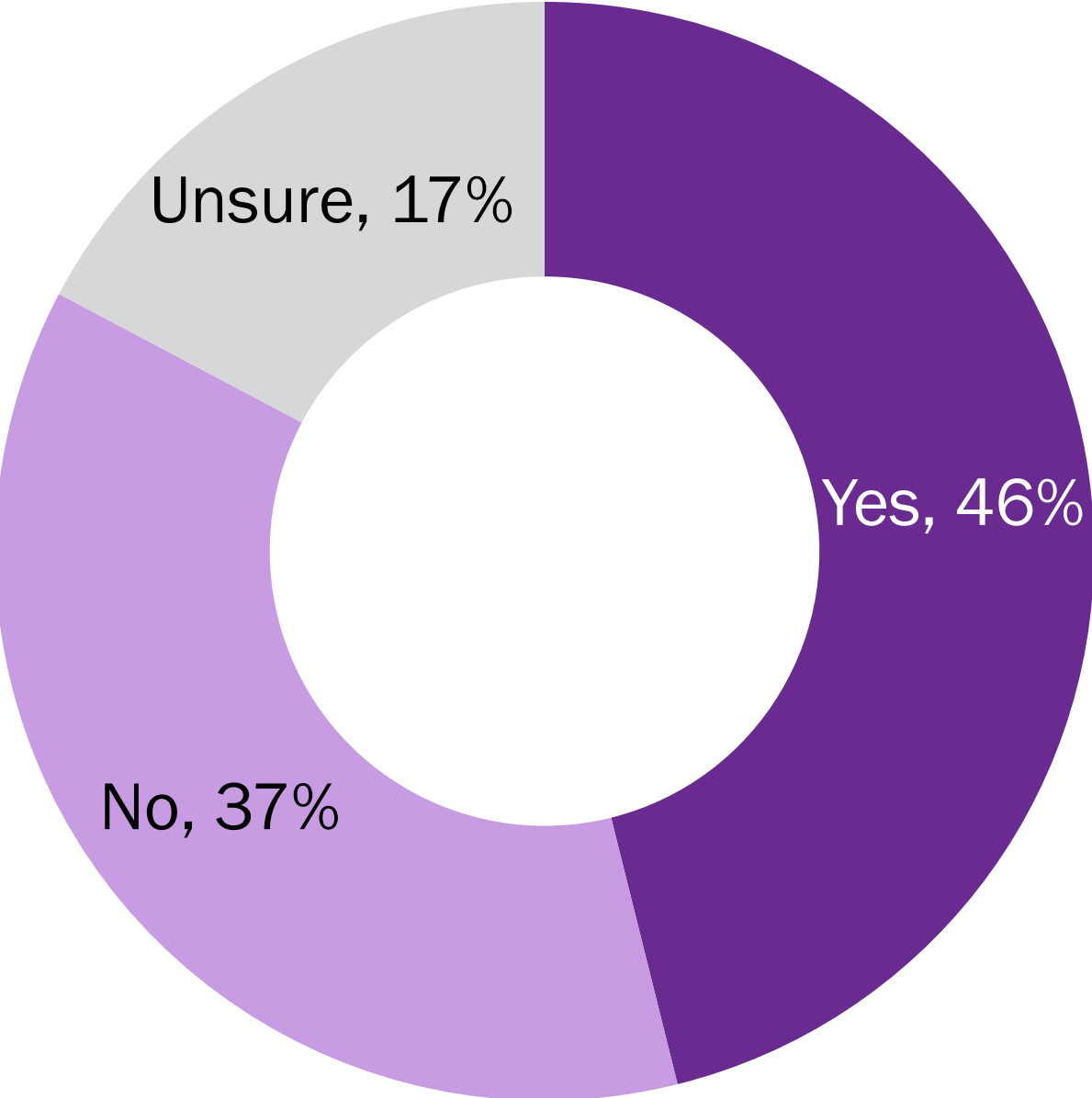
meet clinical thresholds for depression.



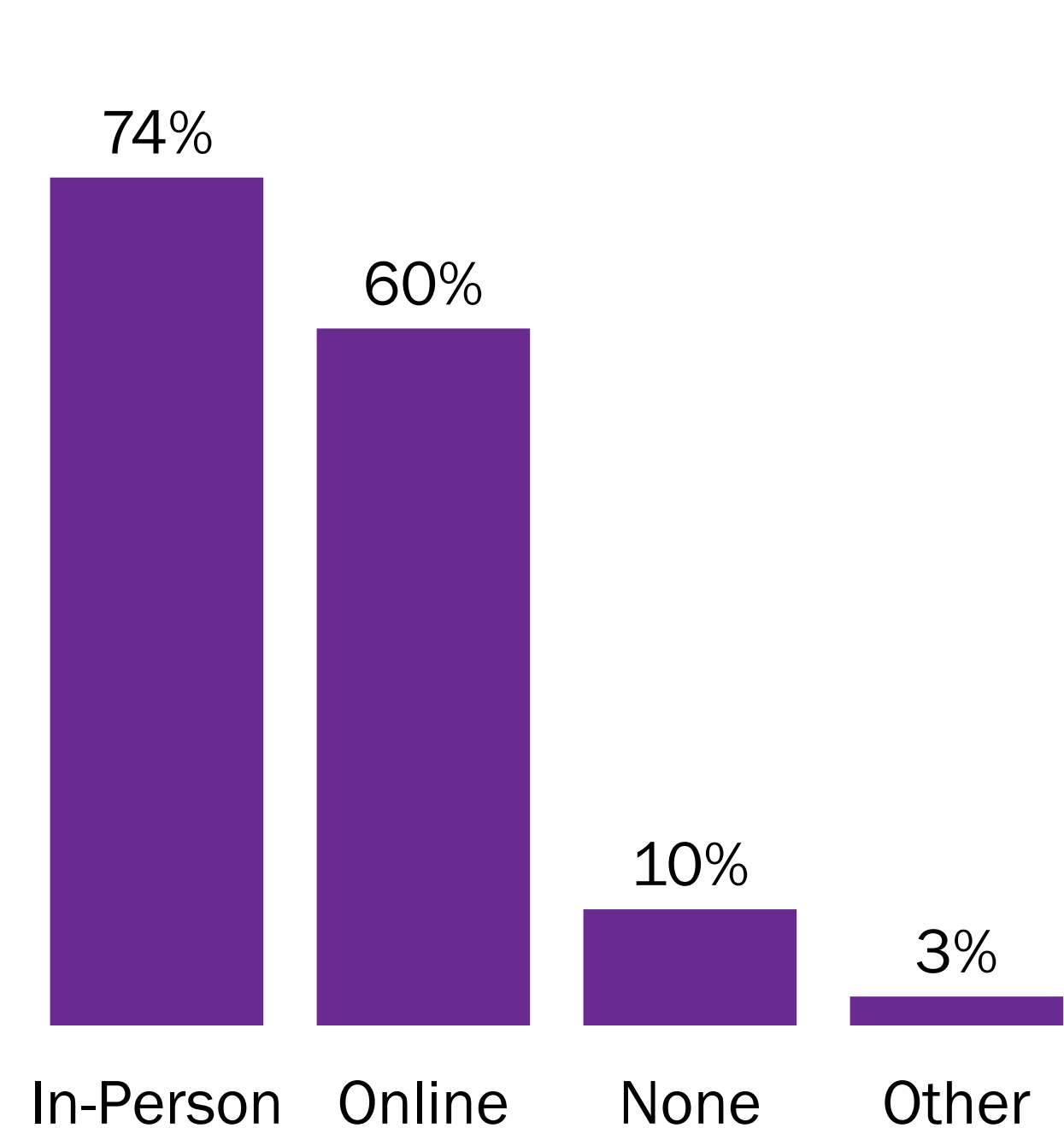
meet clinical thresholds for burnout.

# Over a third of respondents feel they don't have access to sufficient mental health supports. Many are open to accessing support, both in-person and online. They're particularly open to individual counseling.

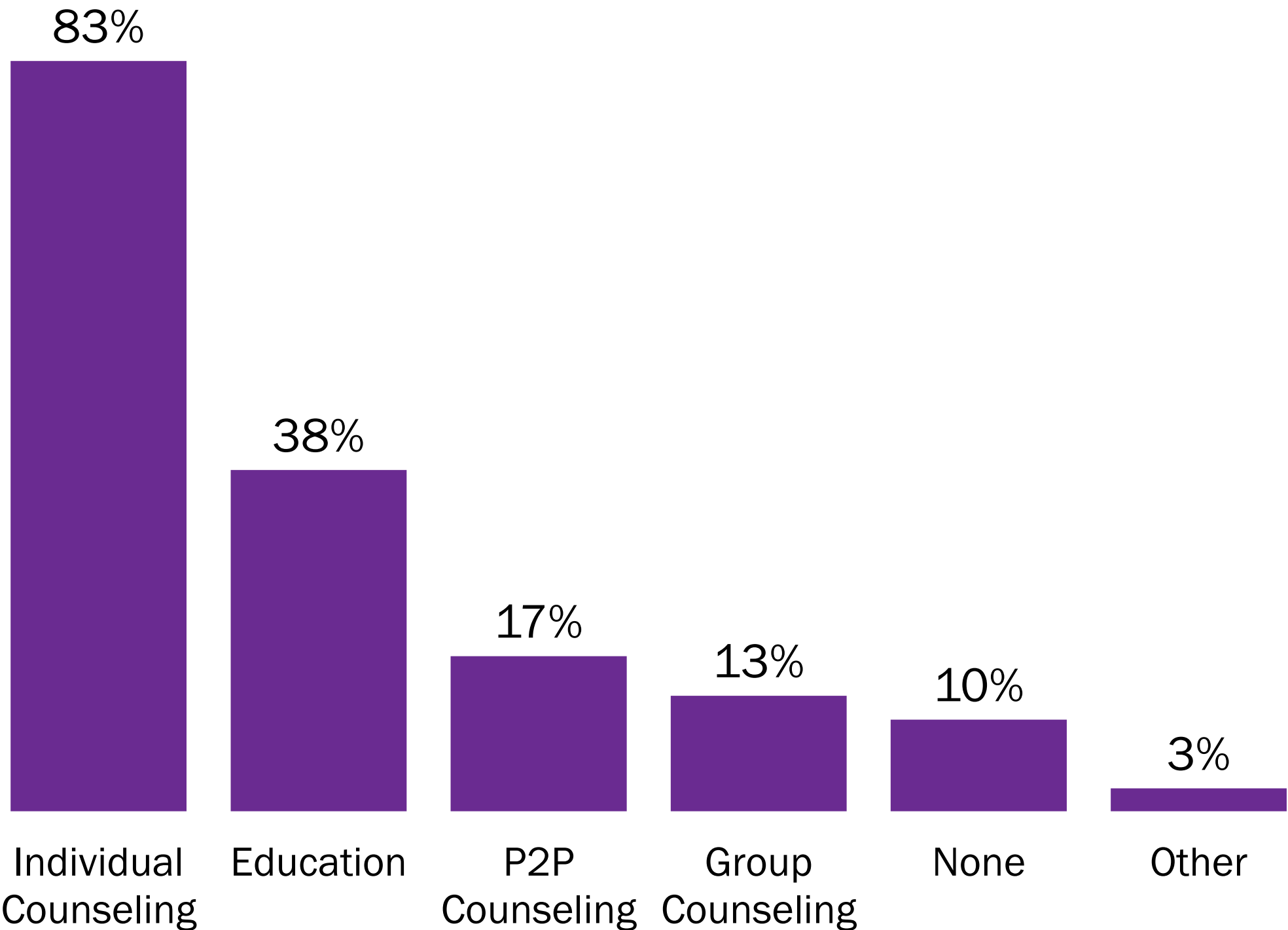
In general, do you feel you have access to sufficient mental health supports?



Which of the following mental health supports would you consider using if they were available to you? [type only]

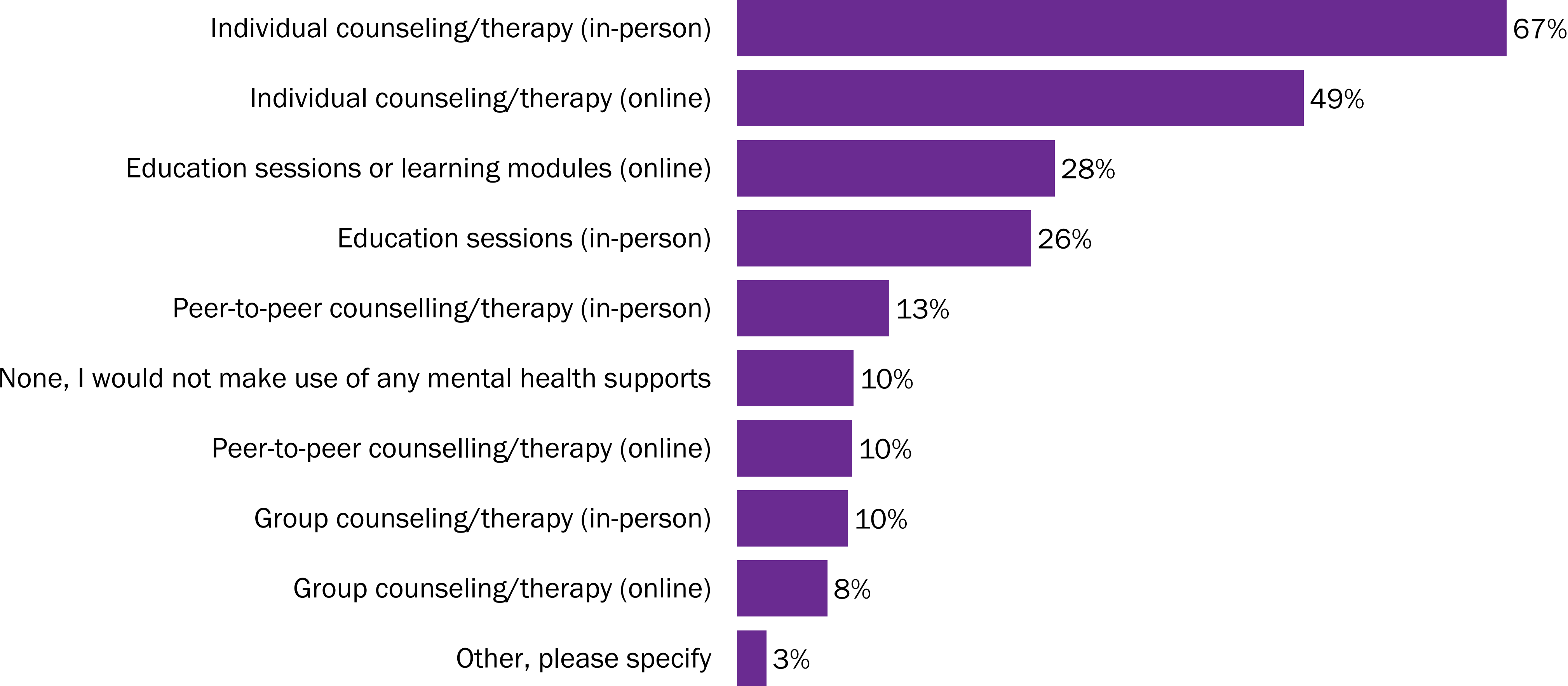


Which of the following mental health supports would you consider using if they were available to you? [support only]

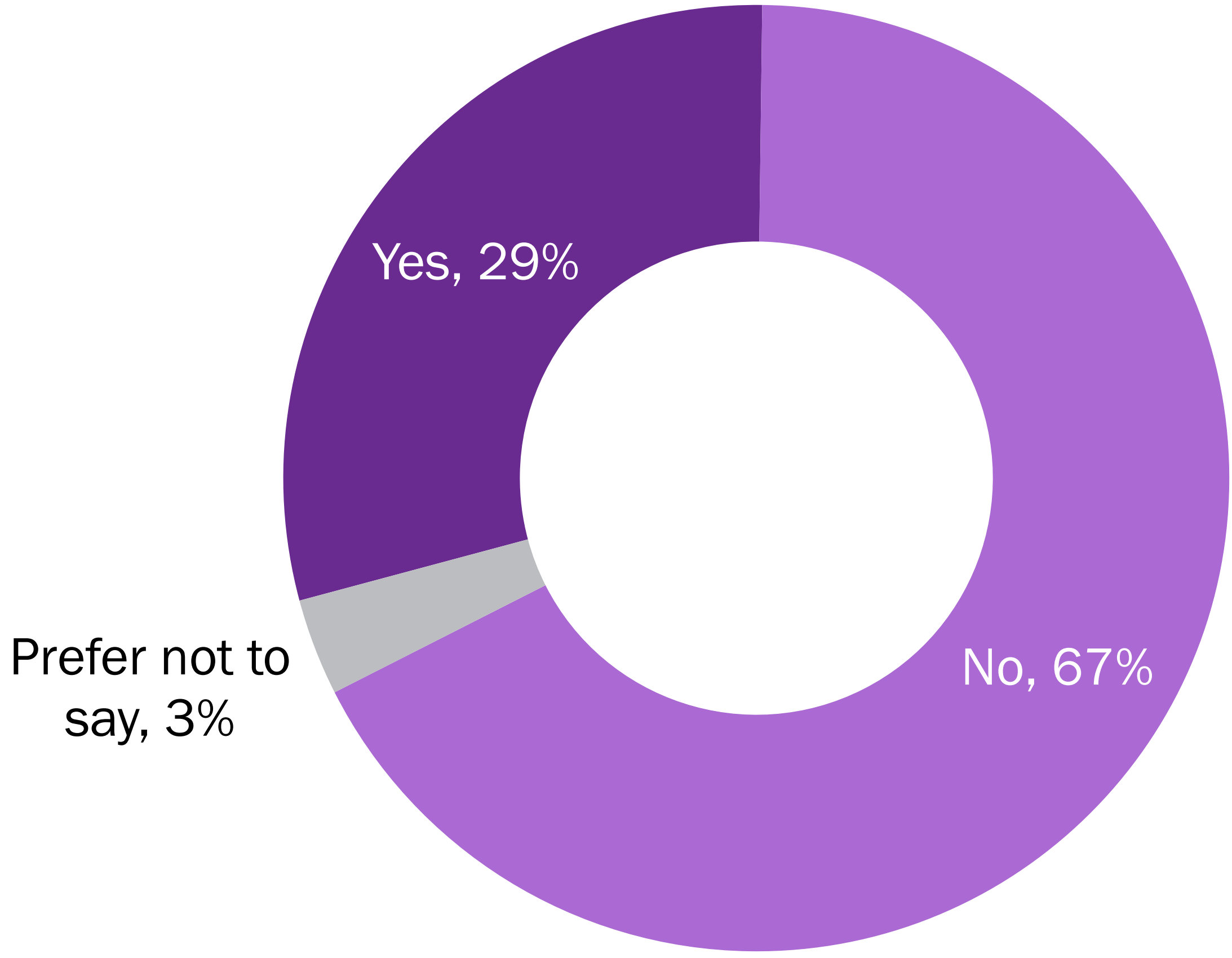


# Respondents are particularly open to in-person and online individual counseling.

Which of the following mental health supports would you consider using if they were available to you? [support and type]



# Over a quarter of respondents have taken sick leave because they couldn't access vacation or other leaves.



During the past year, have you taken sick leave because you were unable to access vacation or other leaves?



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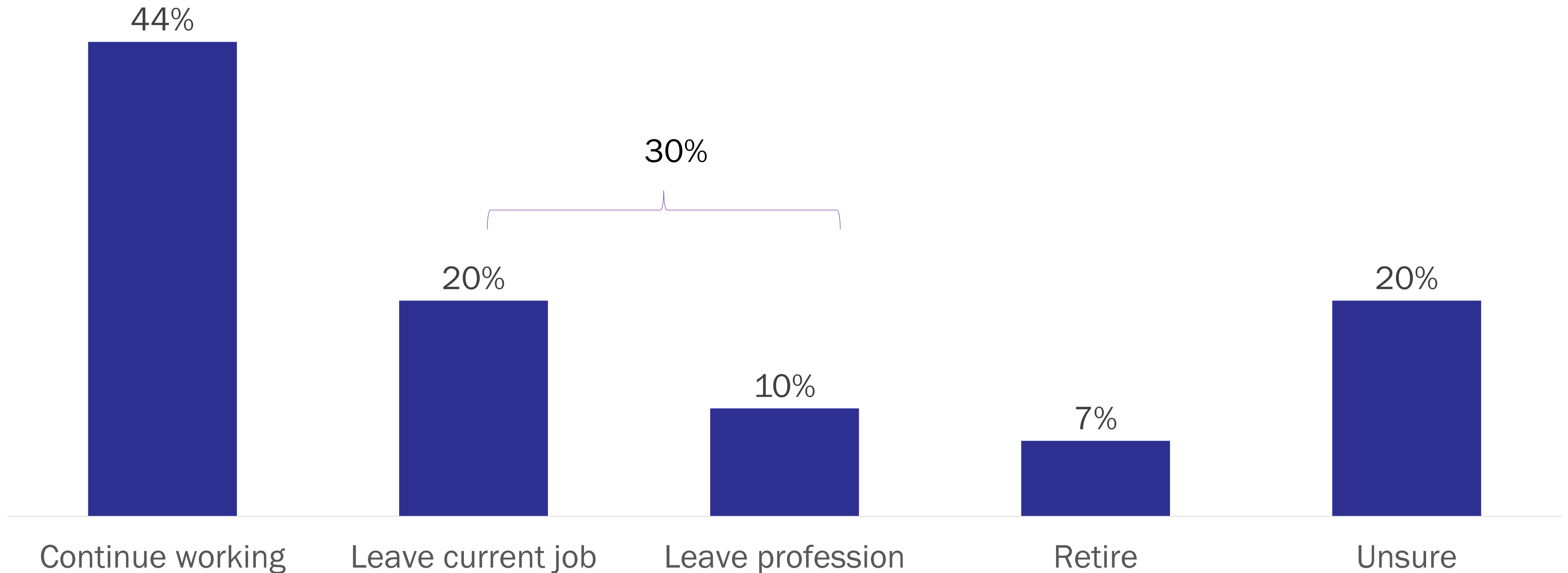
Findings

# Intention to Leave





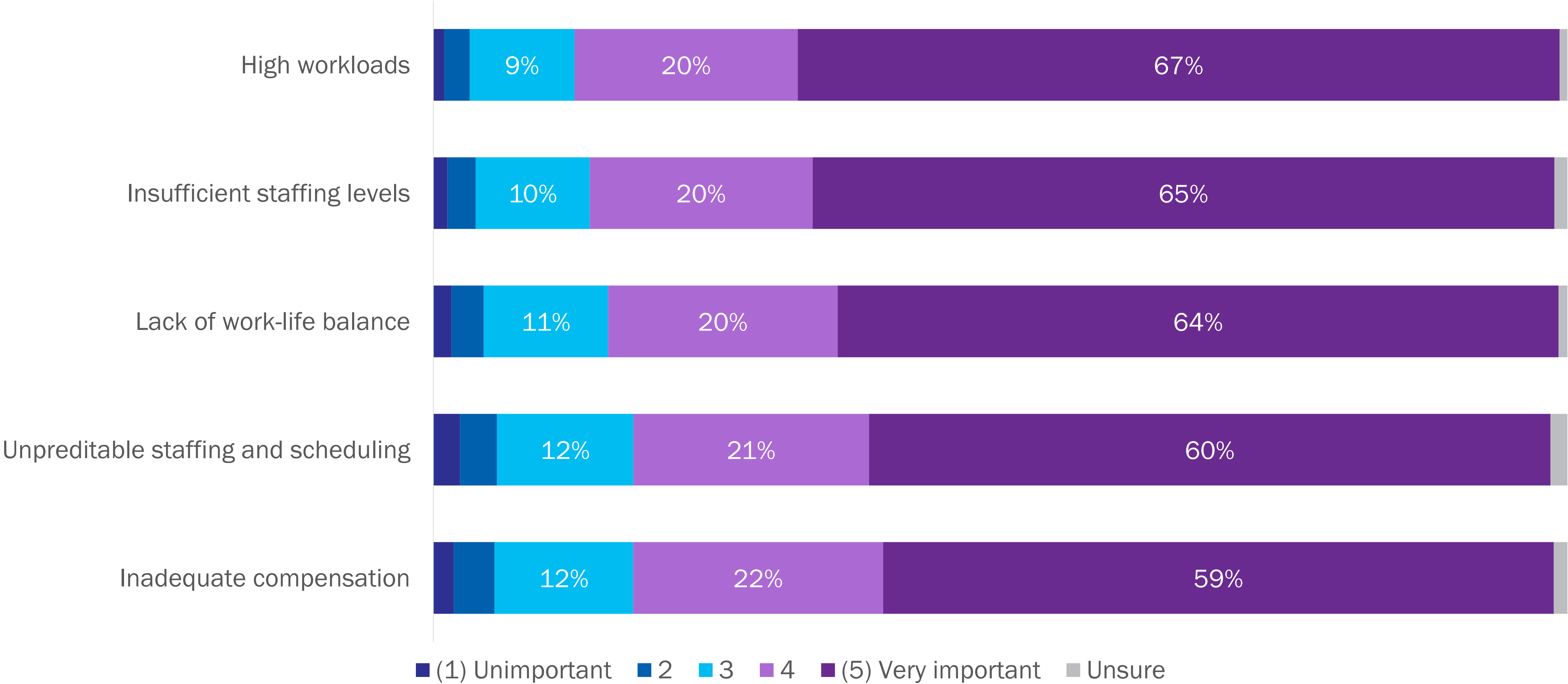
# Over a quarter of respondents are considering leaving their current job or the profession entirely.



**Are you considering leaving your current workplace within the next year?**

# Respondents say high workloads, insufficient staffing levels, and lack of work-life balance are most important for them to consider when leaving a job.

Below is a list of factors others have said are important for them to consider when leaving a job. Please rate the following factors on their importance to you personally as a consideration for leaving your current job.



# Respondents consistently say that high workloads, insufficient staffing levels, and lack of work-life balance are very important factors for them to consider when leaving a job.

Below is a list of factors others have said are important for them to consider when leaving a job. Please rate the following factors on their importance to you personally as a consideration for leaving your current job.

*Blank cells are years where that option was not provided to respondents.*

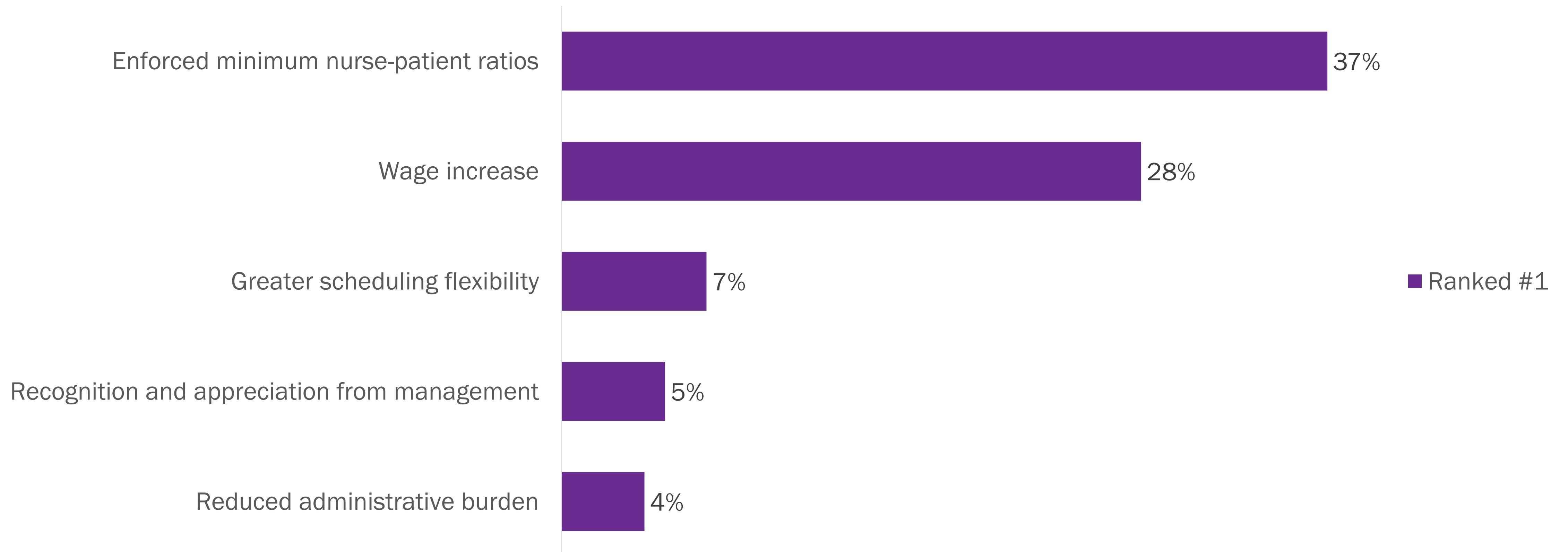
Reason	% “Very important” in 2023	...in 2024	... in 2025
High workloads	70%	69%	67%
Insufficient staffing levels	73%	69%	65%
Lack of work-life balance	-	67%	64%



# Nurse-patient ratios ranked most often the number one issue to influence nurses to stay in their job.

How influential would each of the following be in keeping your job or staying in the nursing profession? Please rank in order of most influential to least influential.

*Less than 4% of nurses ranked other options provided as most influential.*



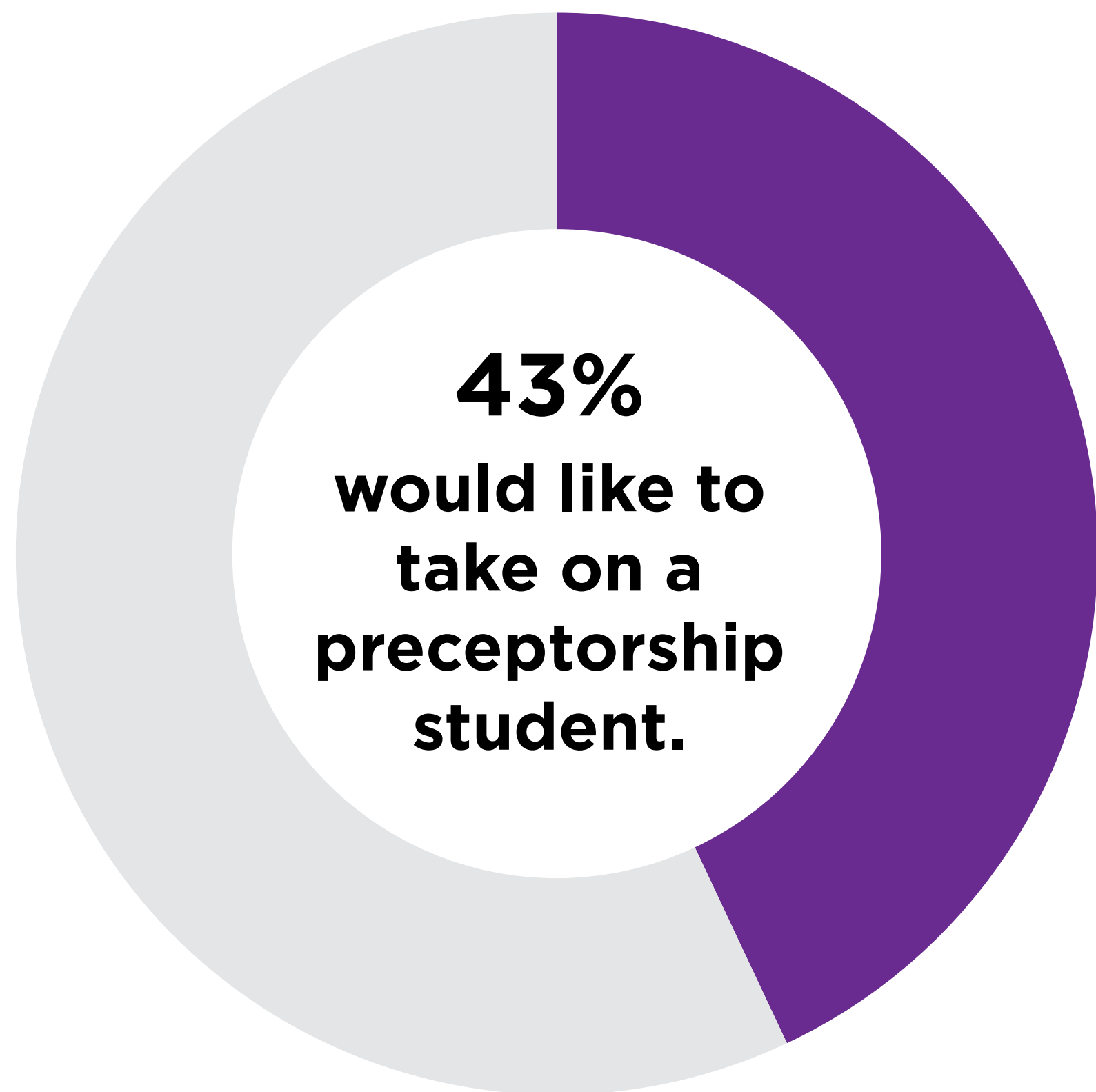
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Findings

# Preceptorships

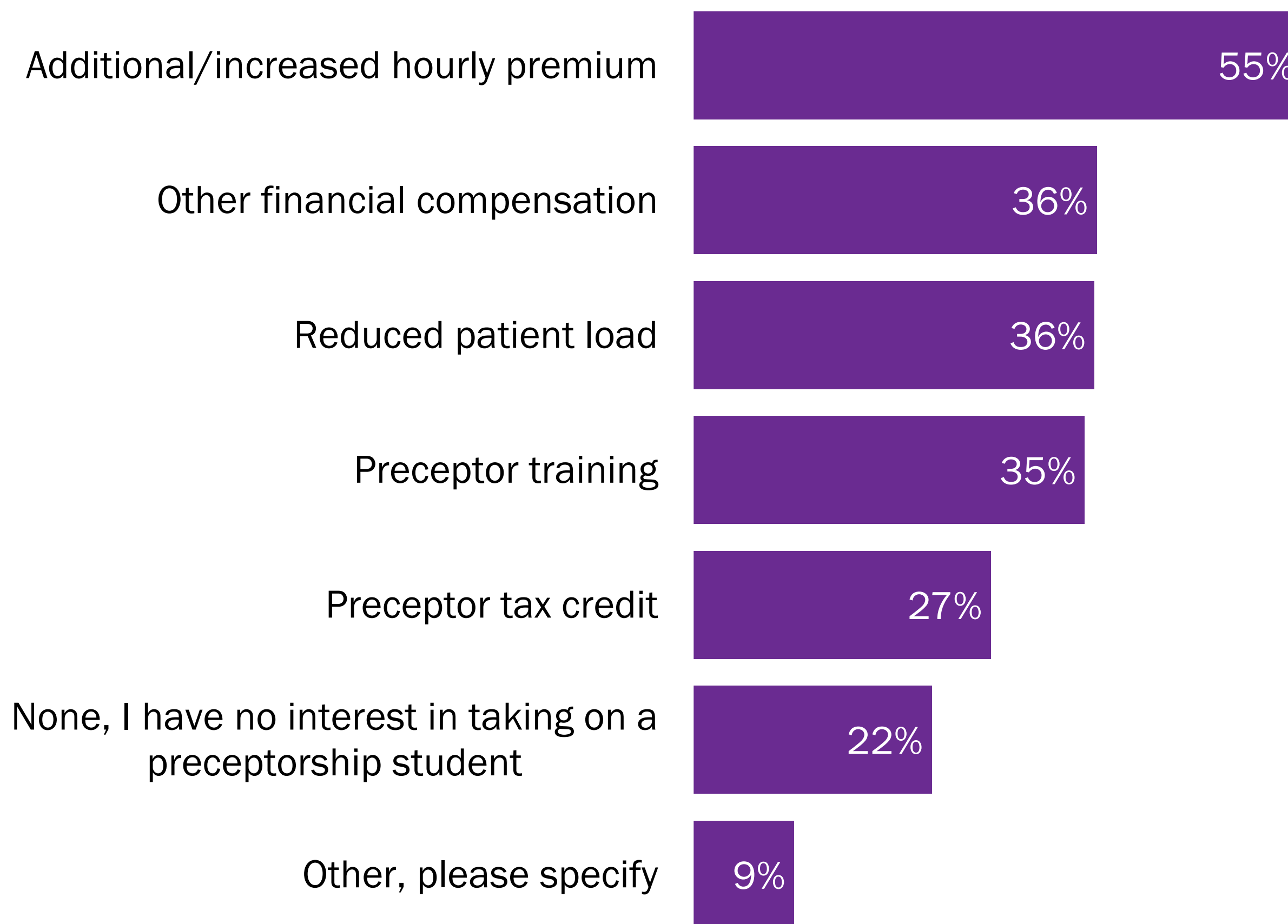


# Nearly half of respondents are open to taking on a preceptorship student. Financial compensation or reduced patient load would motivate nurses to take on preceptorship students.

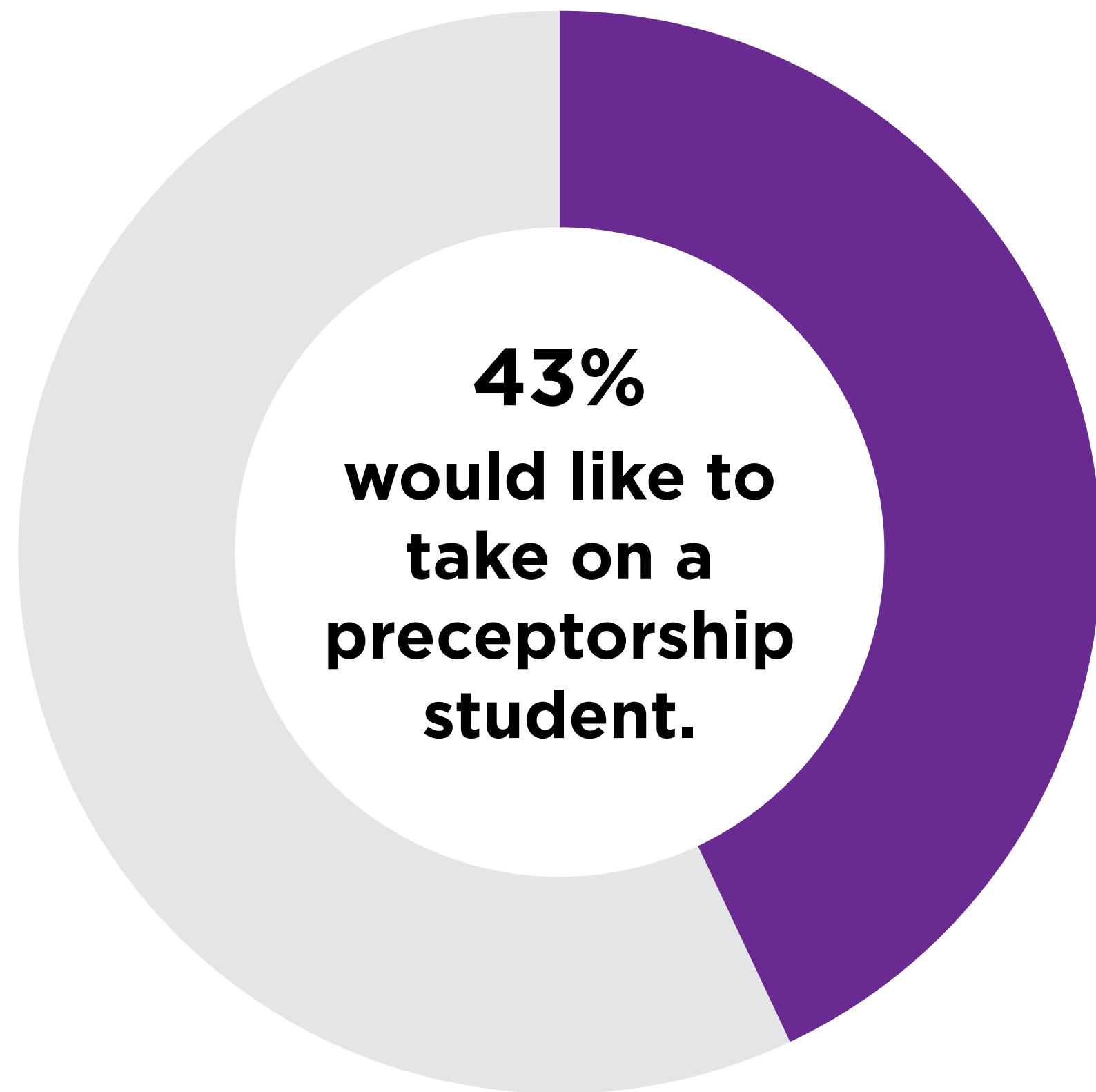


Would you like to take on a preceptorship student at your current job?

Which of the following (if any) would positively influence your decision to become a preceptor? *(All respondents, including those who said they would not like to take on a student)*

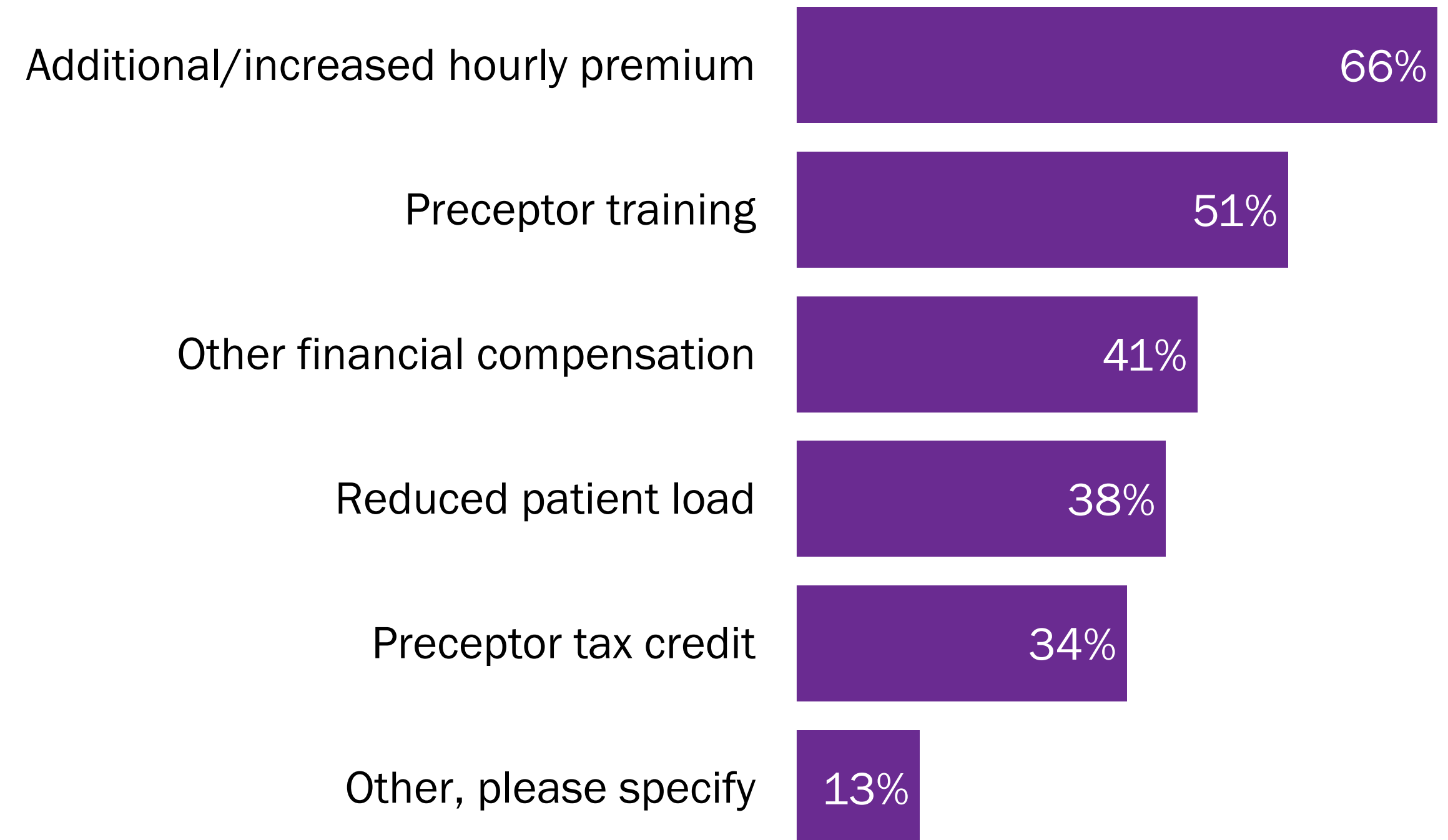


# Those who are already interested in taking on a preceptorship student are most motivated by an increased hourly premium and preceptor training.



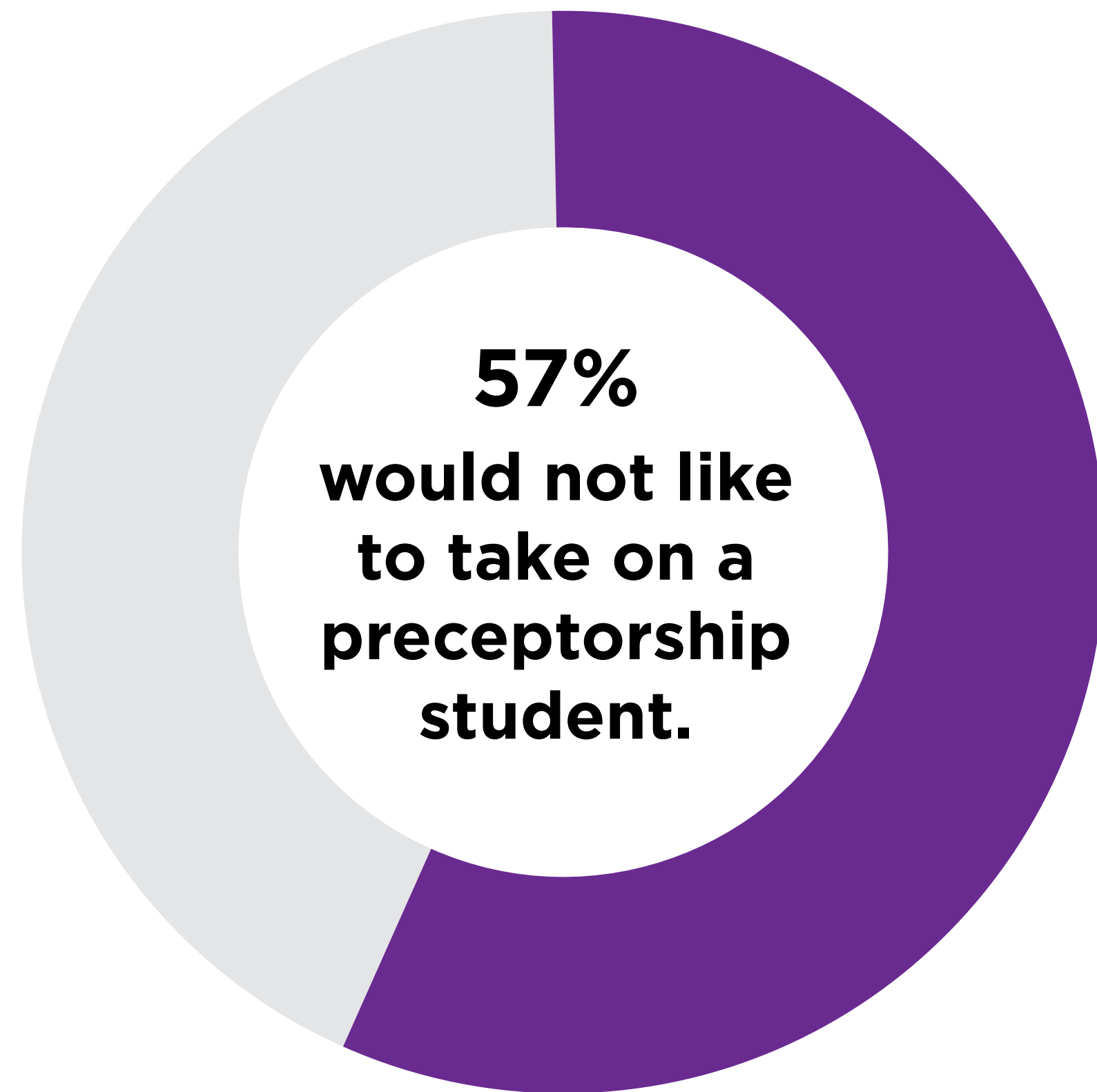
Would you like to take on a preceptorship student at your current job?

Which of the following (if any) would positively influence your decision to become a preceptor? *Base: 2,040 (only those interested in taking on a student)*



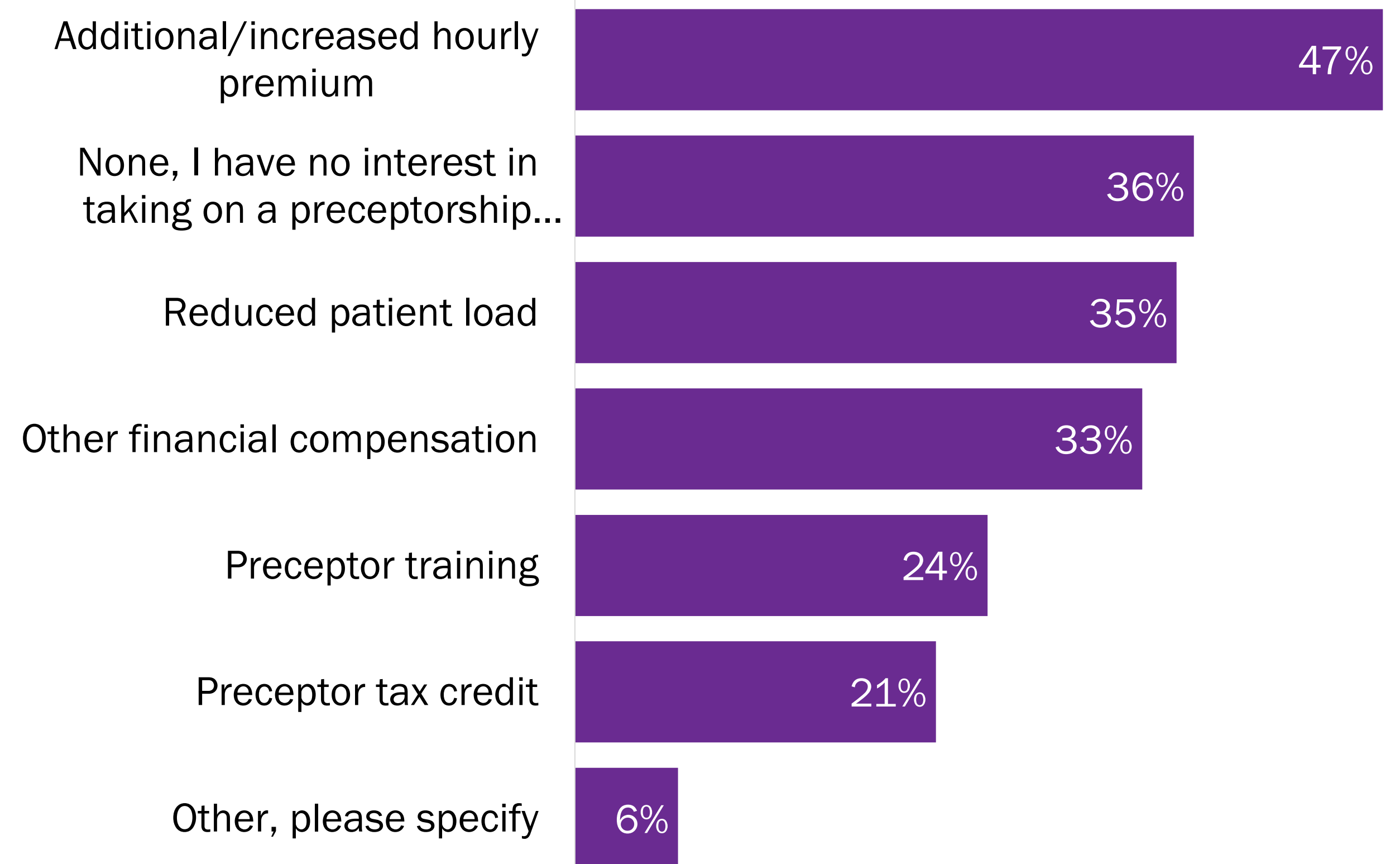


# Those who are not interested in taking on a preceptorship student are most motivated by additional compensation and reduced patient load.



Would you like to take on a preceptorship student at your current job?

Which of the following (if any) would positively influence your decision to become a preceptor? *Base: 2,696 (only those who are not interested in taking on a student)*





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Findings

# Federal Patient Bill of Rights

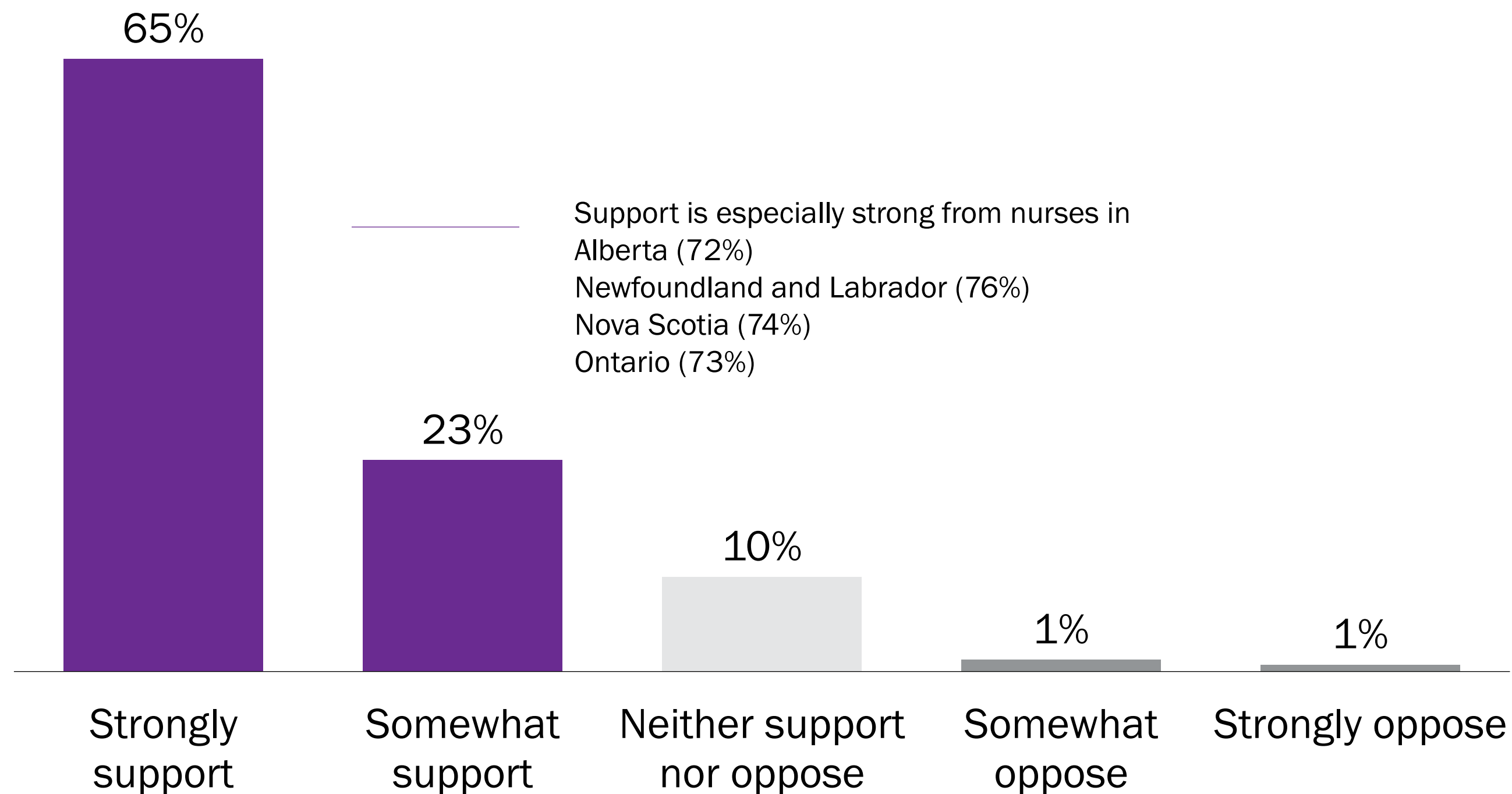




# Respondents support a Federal Patient Bill of Rights; many would vote for a party committed to adopting it.

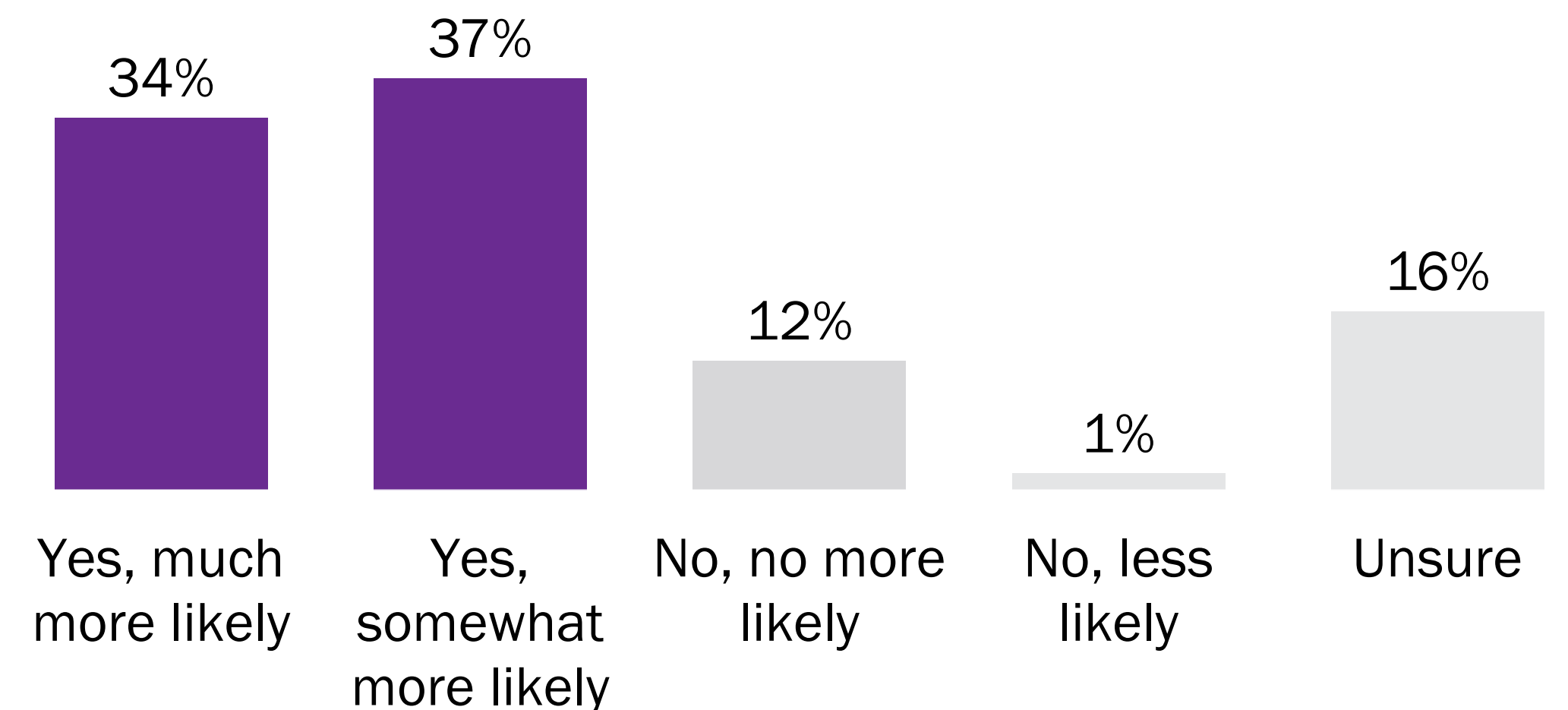
CFNU and other health advocates are pushing for the creation of a Federal Patient Bill of Rights to ensure high-quality, equitable health care across Canada. This proposed bill would include key measures such as implementing minimum nurse-patient ratios to reduce workloads, setting limits on consecutive hours nurses can work to improve safety, and mandating a minimum of 4.5 hours of direct care per patient in long-term care homes.

88% support



**How strongly would you support a patient bill of rights that includes the above provisions?**

71% would vote



**If a political party committed to adopting a Federal Patient Bill of Rights as described in the previous question, would you be more likely to vote for them?**

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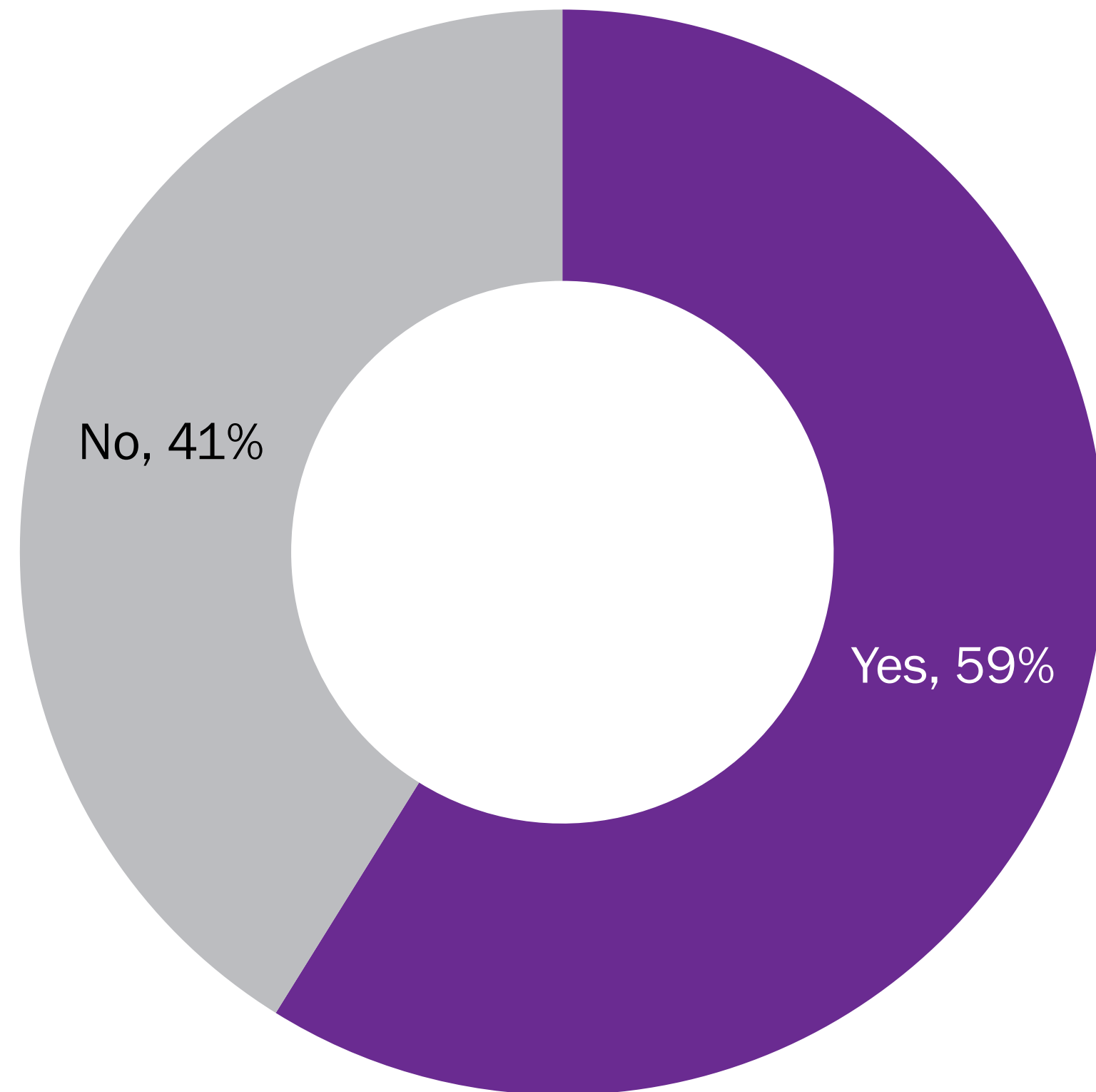
Findings

# Health, Safety & Discrimination

A healthcare worker in blue scrubs and a light blue surgical mask is holding a tablet. Another person's face, also wearing a mask, is partially visible in the background.



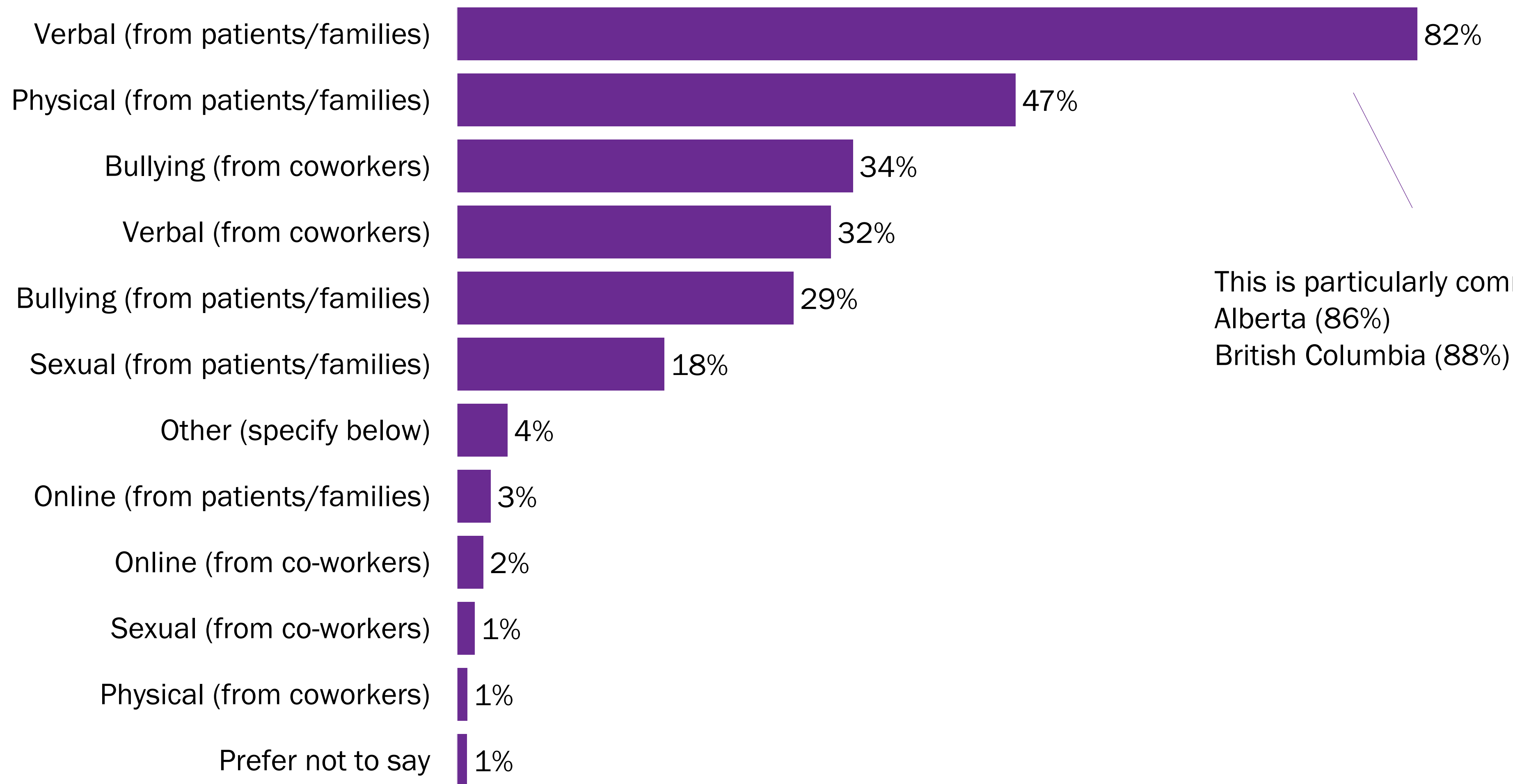
# Over half of respondents have experienced some type of violence or abuse related to their job.



This is particularly common among nurses in:  
Alberta (63%)  
British Columbia (65%)  
Manitoba (68%)  
Saskatchewan (68%)

**In the past year, have you experienced any type of violence or abuse related to your job (verbal, physical, bullying, sexual, online)?**

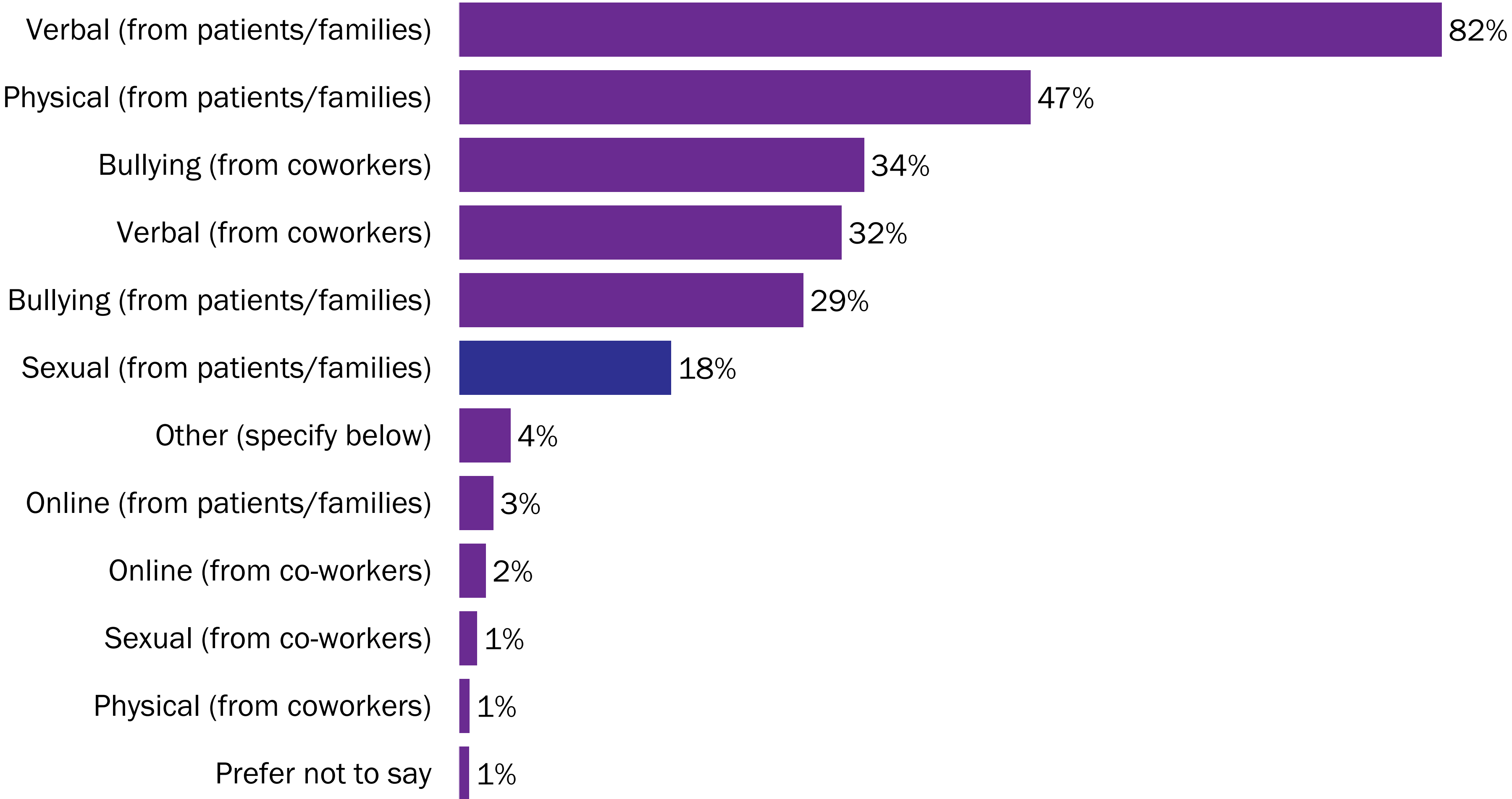
# The most common types of violence respondents experience are verbal and physical violence from patients and families.



This is particularly common among nurses in:  
Alberta (86%)  
British Columbia (88%)

**In the past year, what type of violence or abuse have you experienced?**  
*Base: 2,856, only those who reported experiencing violence.*

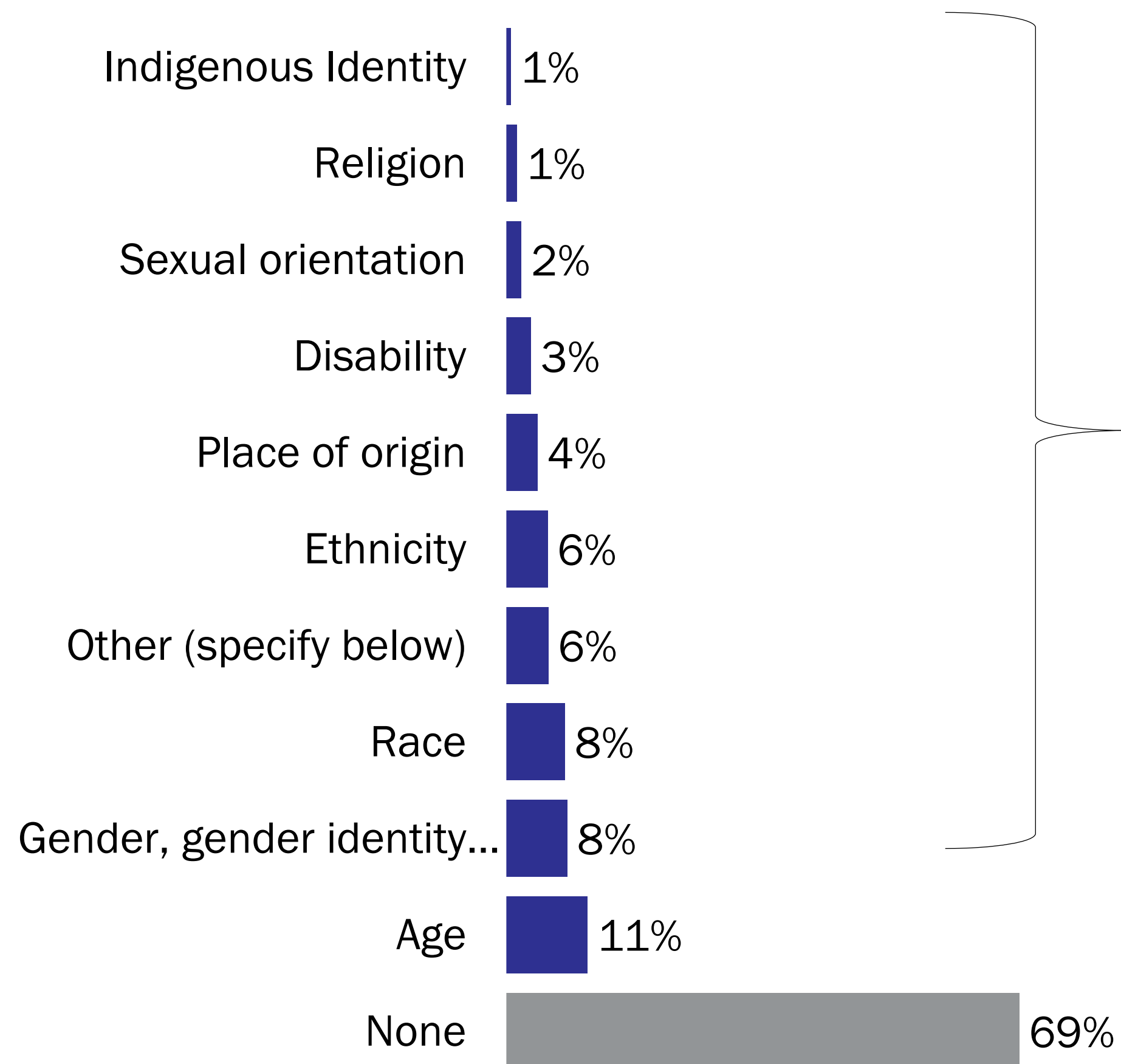
# Nearly 1 in 5 respondents report experiencing sexual violence from patients or their families in the past year.



**In the past year, what type of violence or abuse have you experienced?**  
*Base: 2,856, only those who reported experiencing violence.*

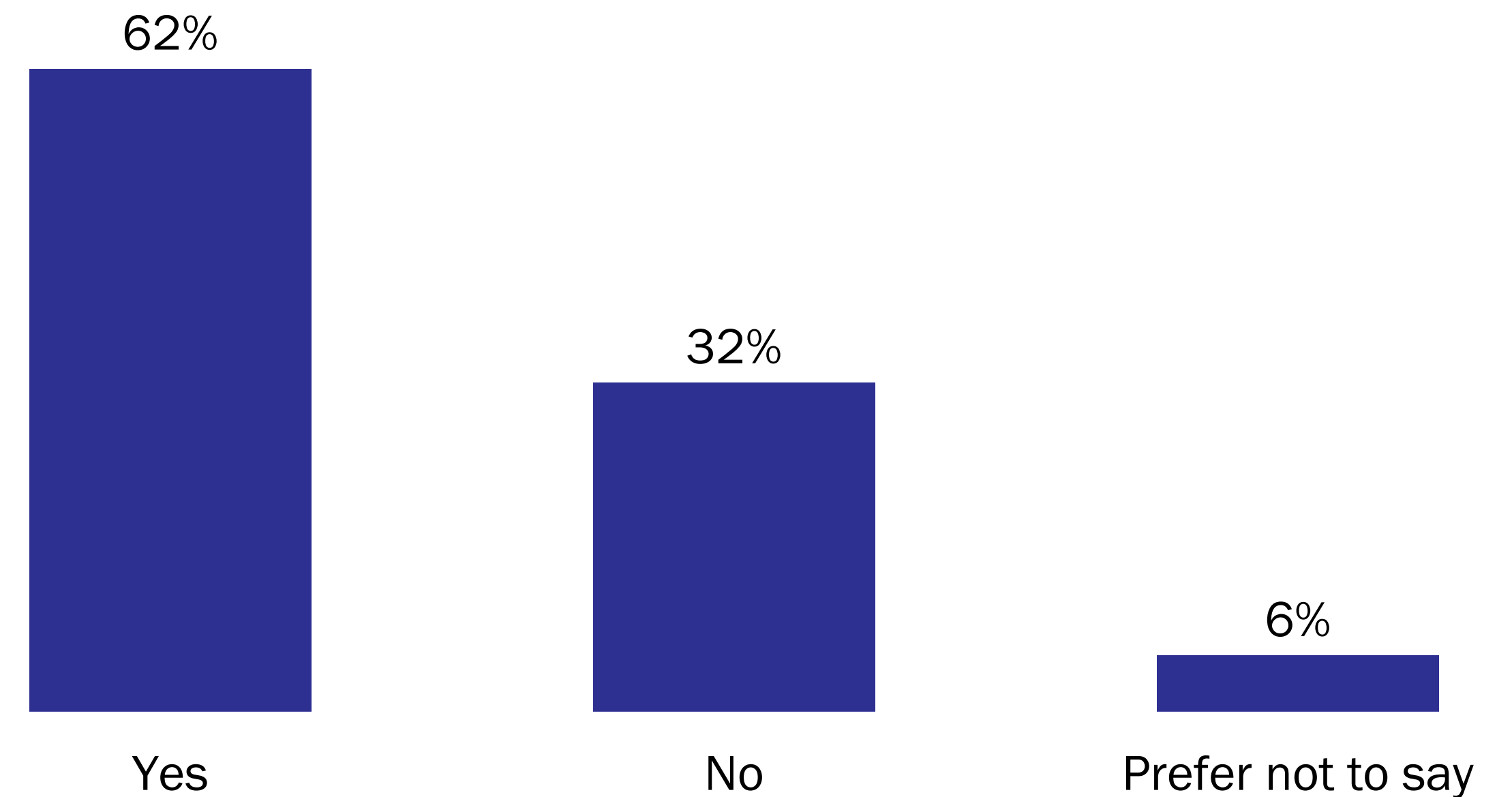
# Most have not faced discrimination at work. Over half of those who have say that they reported these incidents.

In the past year, have you experienced discrimination at work based on any of the following?



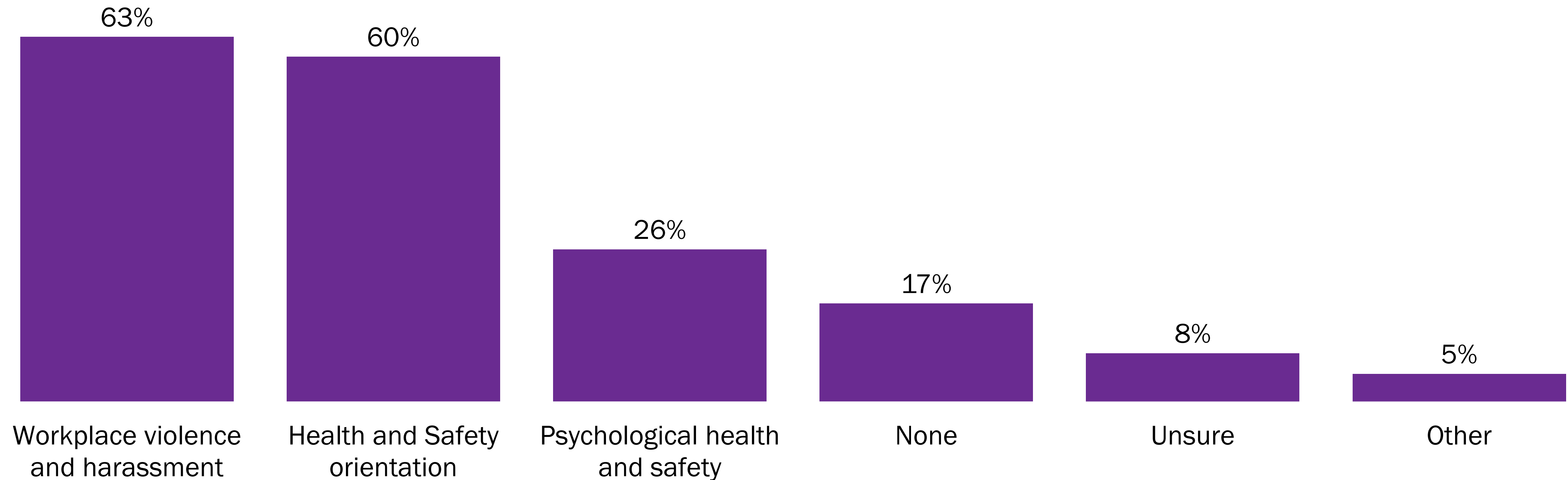
Did you report experiencing any of these incidents?

*Base: 2,844*



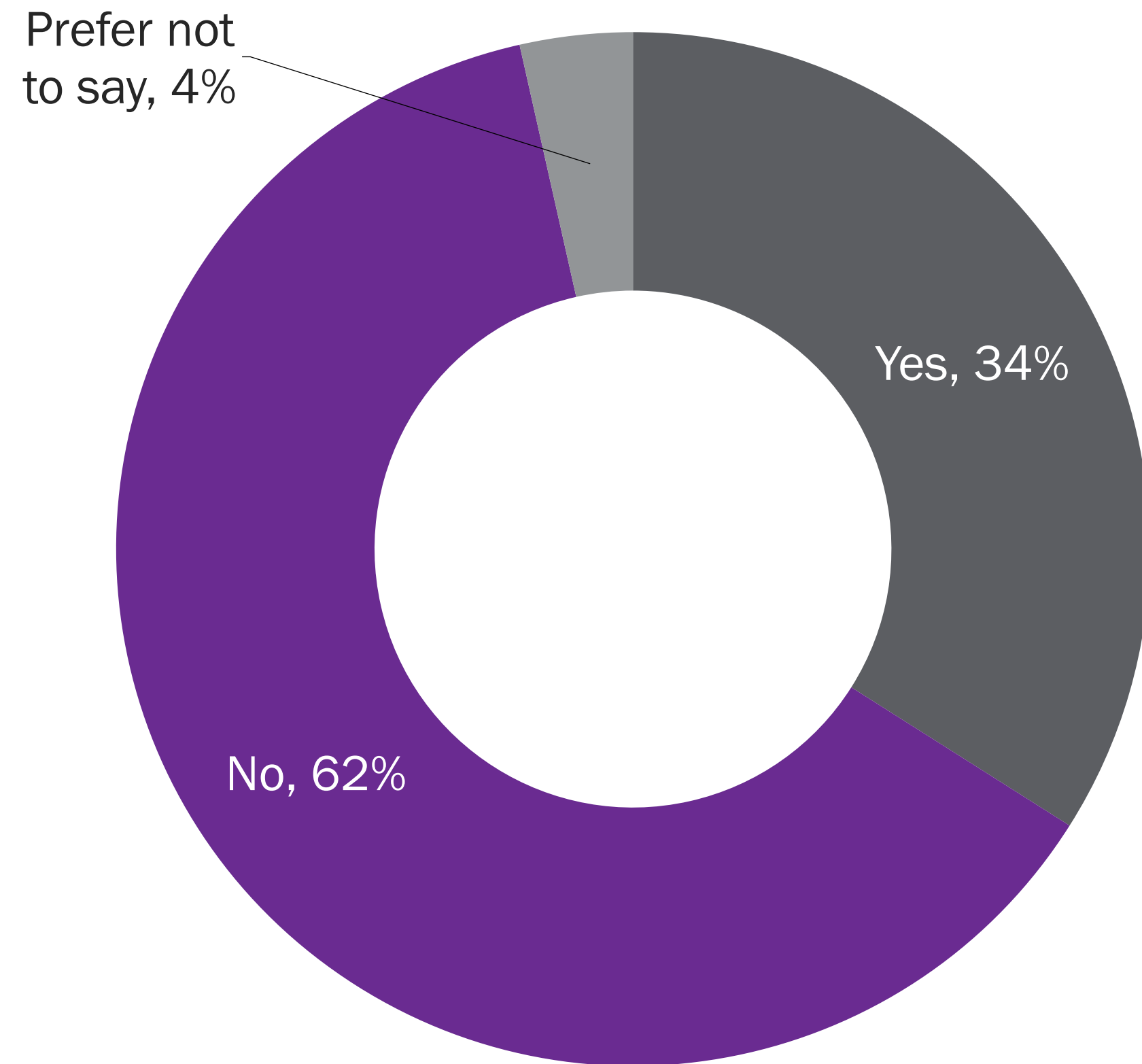


**37% aren't receiving workplace violence and harassment training, and 40% aren't receiving a health and safety orientation. Only 1 in 4 (26%) are receiving psychological health and safety training.**

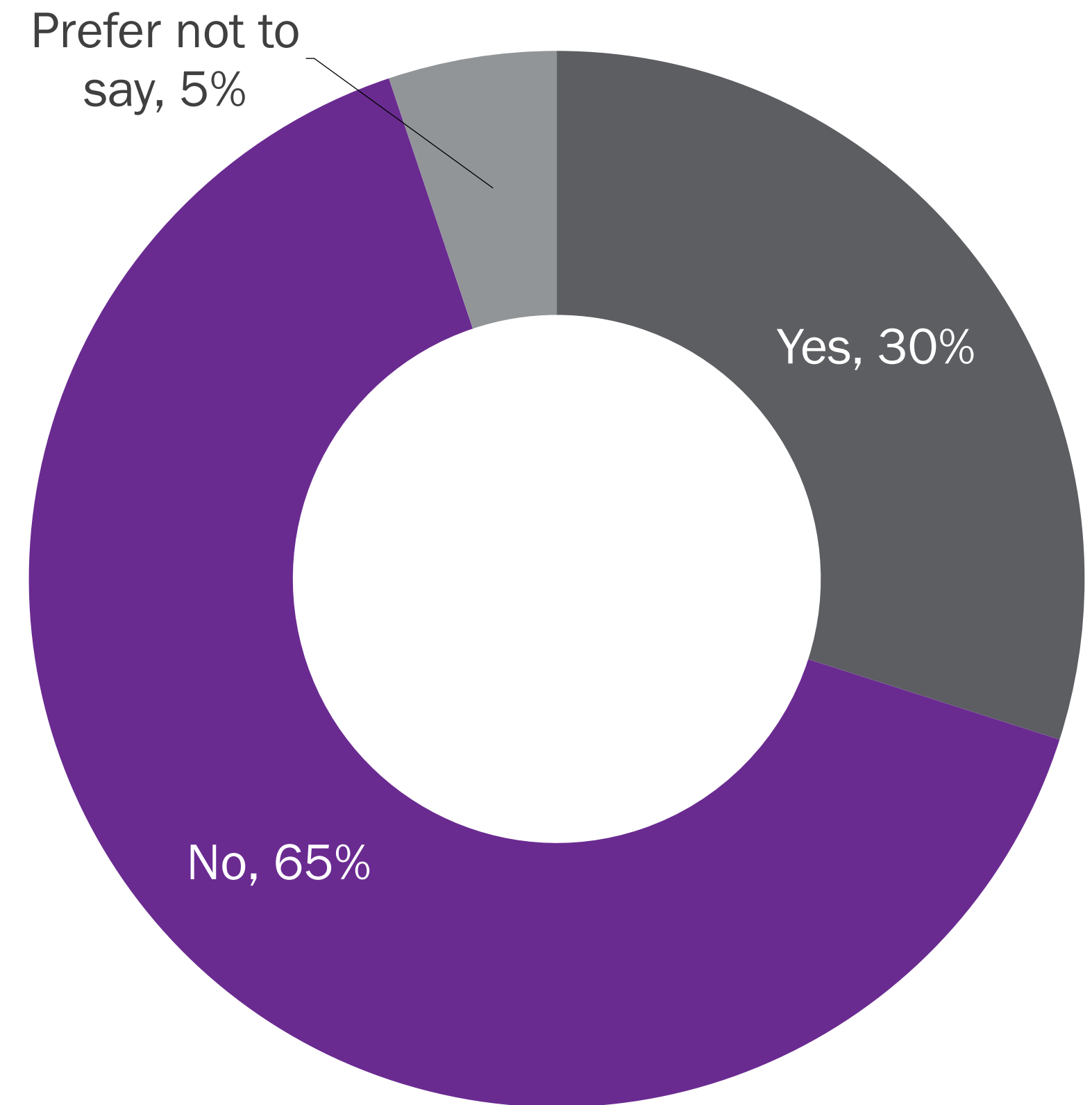


**What kind of training on occupational health and safety do you receive from your employer?**

# 1 in 3 respondents fear repercussions for reporting OH&S concerns or work-related violence and abuse.

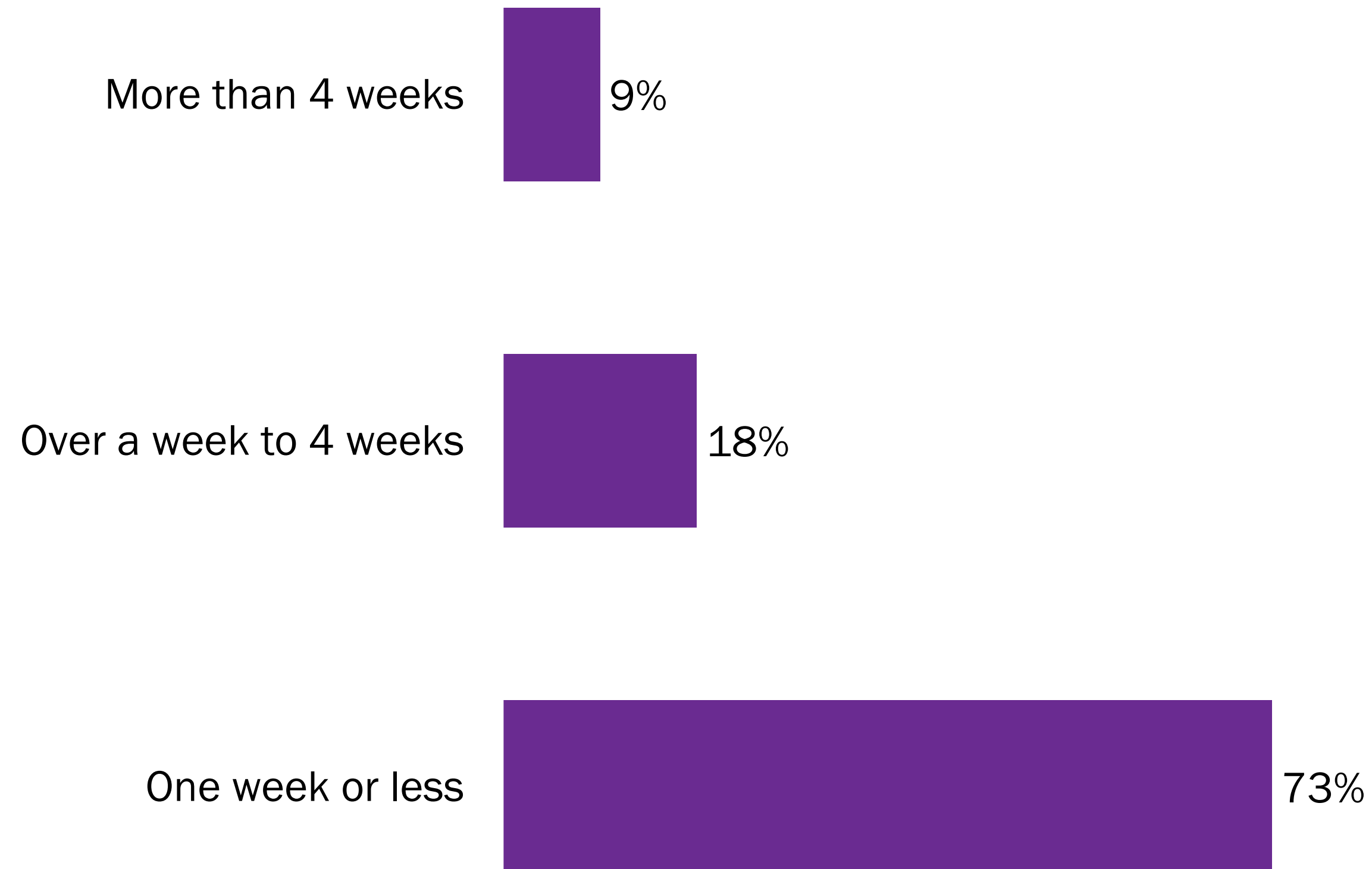


**Do you fear repercussions if you report workplace occupational health and safety concerns (for example, unsafe work conditions, incidents, inadequate resources to maintain personal safety, etc.?)**



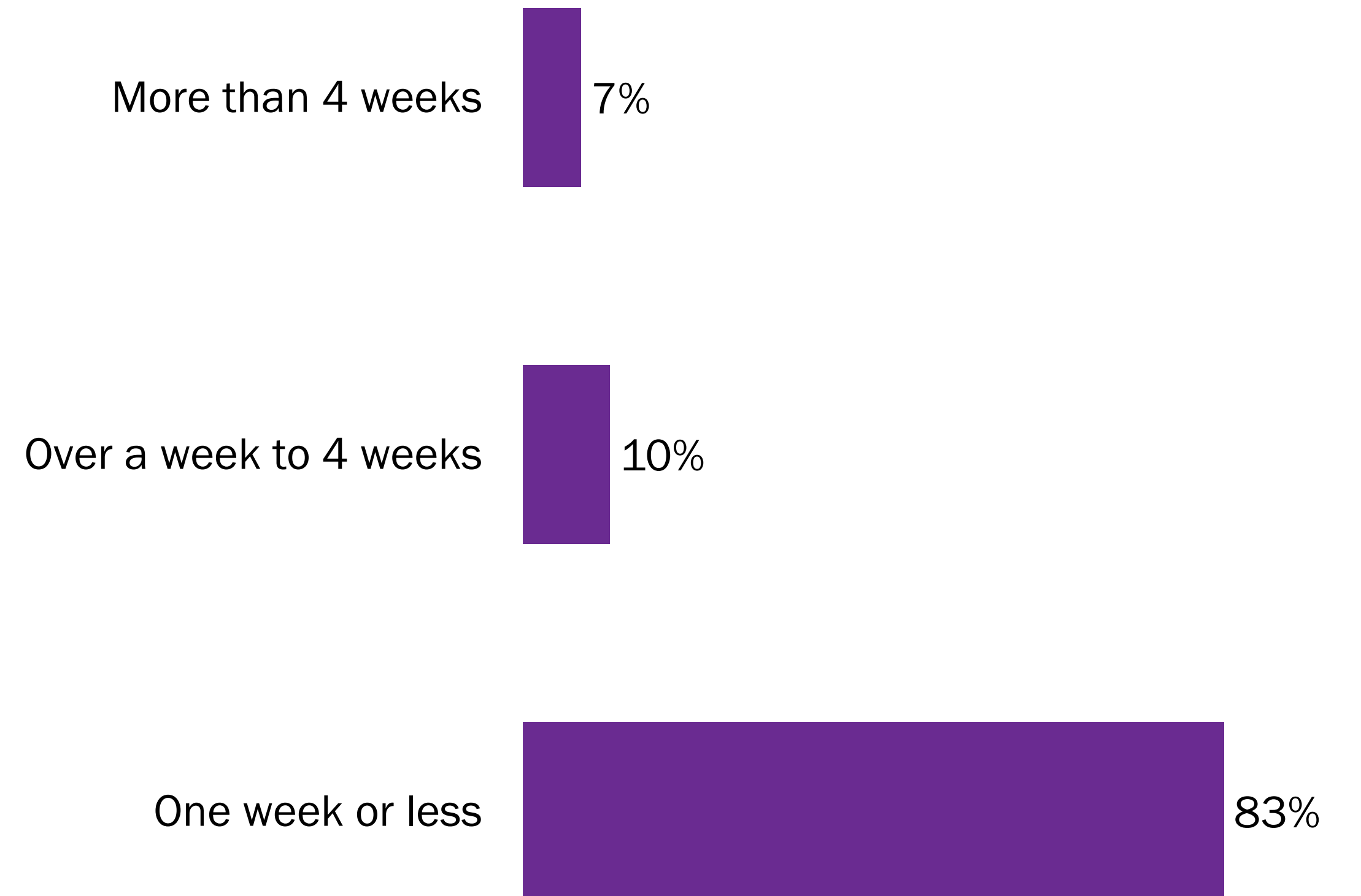
**Do you fear repercussions if you report work-related violence or abuse?**

**27% of respondents were unable to work for more than one week in the past year due to physical health issues.**



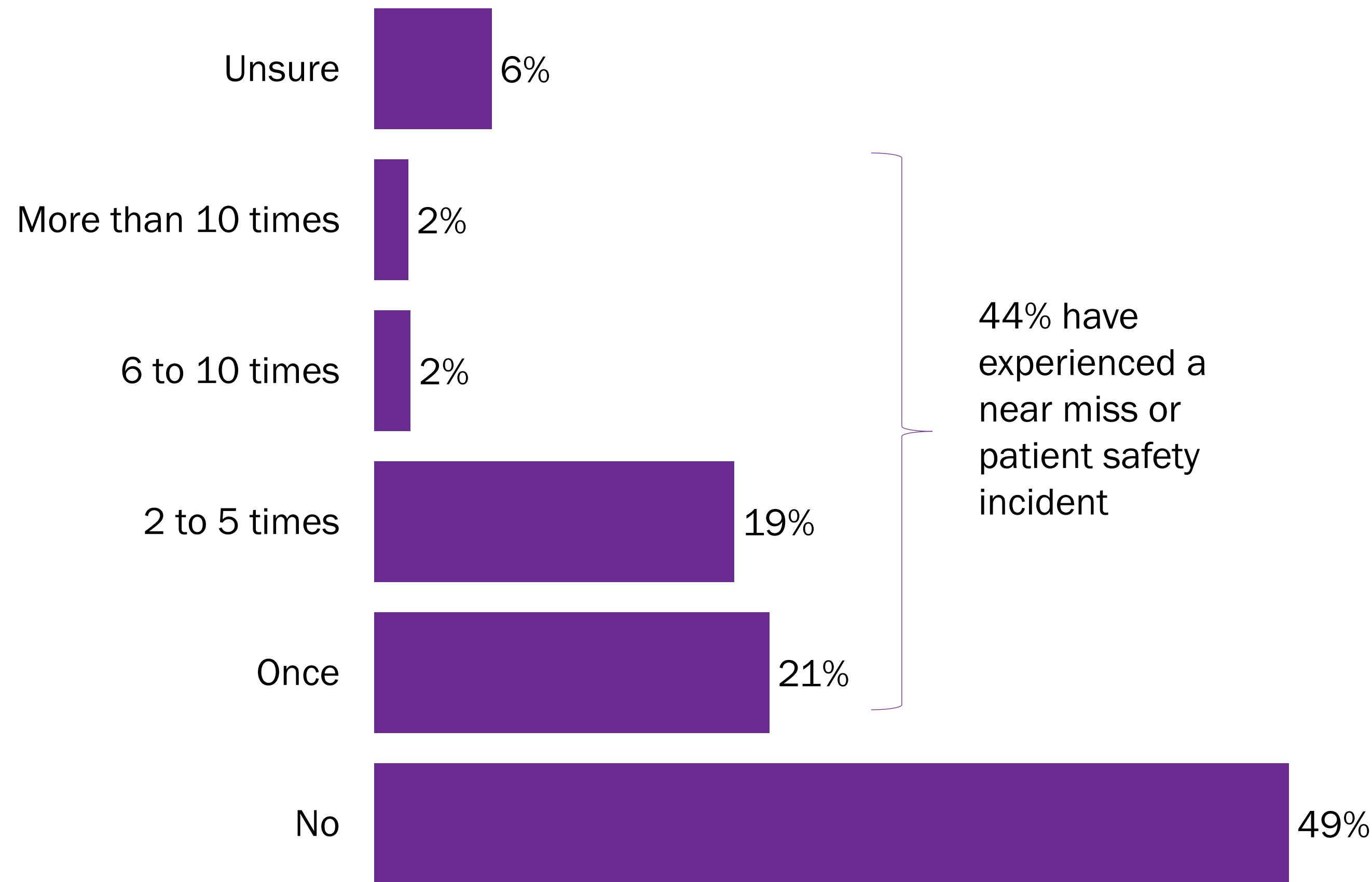
**In the past year, approximately how often were you unable to work due to a physical health issue?**

**17% of respondents were unable to work for more than one week in the past year due to mental health issues.**

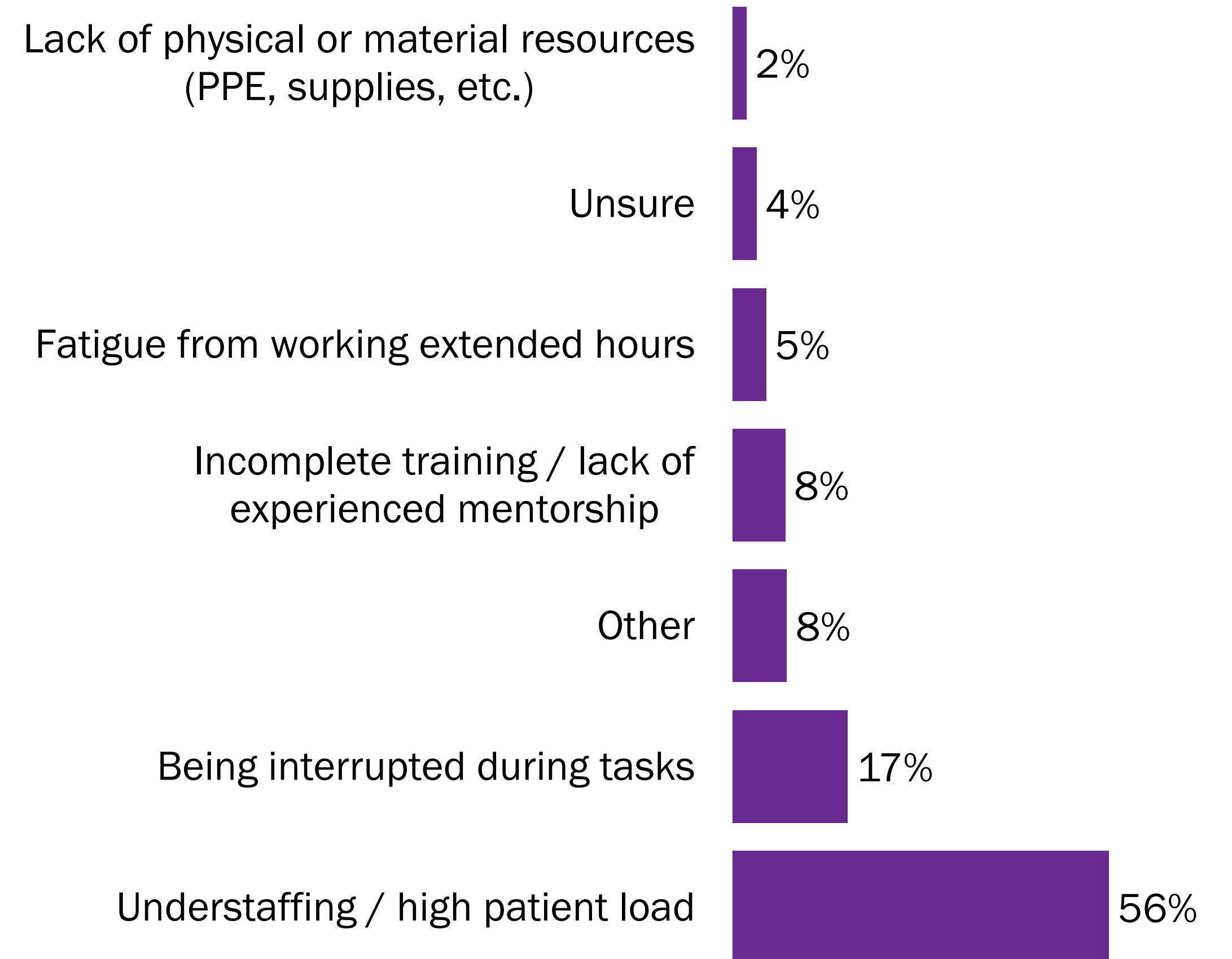


**In the past year, approximately how often were you unable to work due to a mental health issue?**

# Nearly half of respondents have experienced a near miss or patient safety incident. Over half say it was due to understaffing / high patient load.



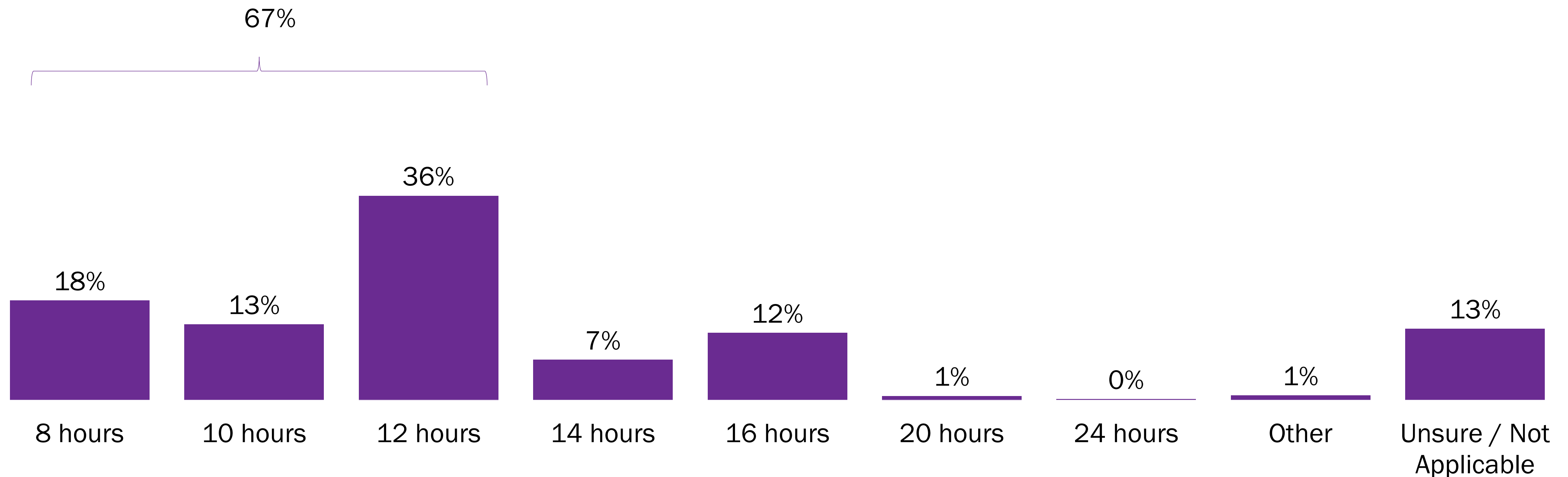
**In the past six months, have you experienced a near miss or patient safety incident?**



**What was the situation that led to the near miss or patient safety incident(s)?**



# Most respondents think safety is at risk due to fatigue-related errors after working for longer than 12 hours. Over a quarter have worked shifts over 12 hours long.



**I begin to feel that my safety and/or my patient/client/resident's safety is at risk due to fatigue-related errors after working for longer than... *All times include breaks and mealtimes.***

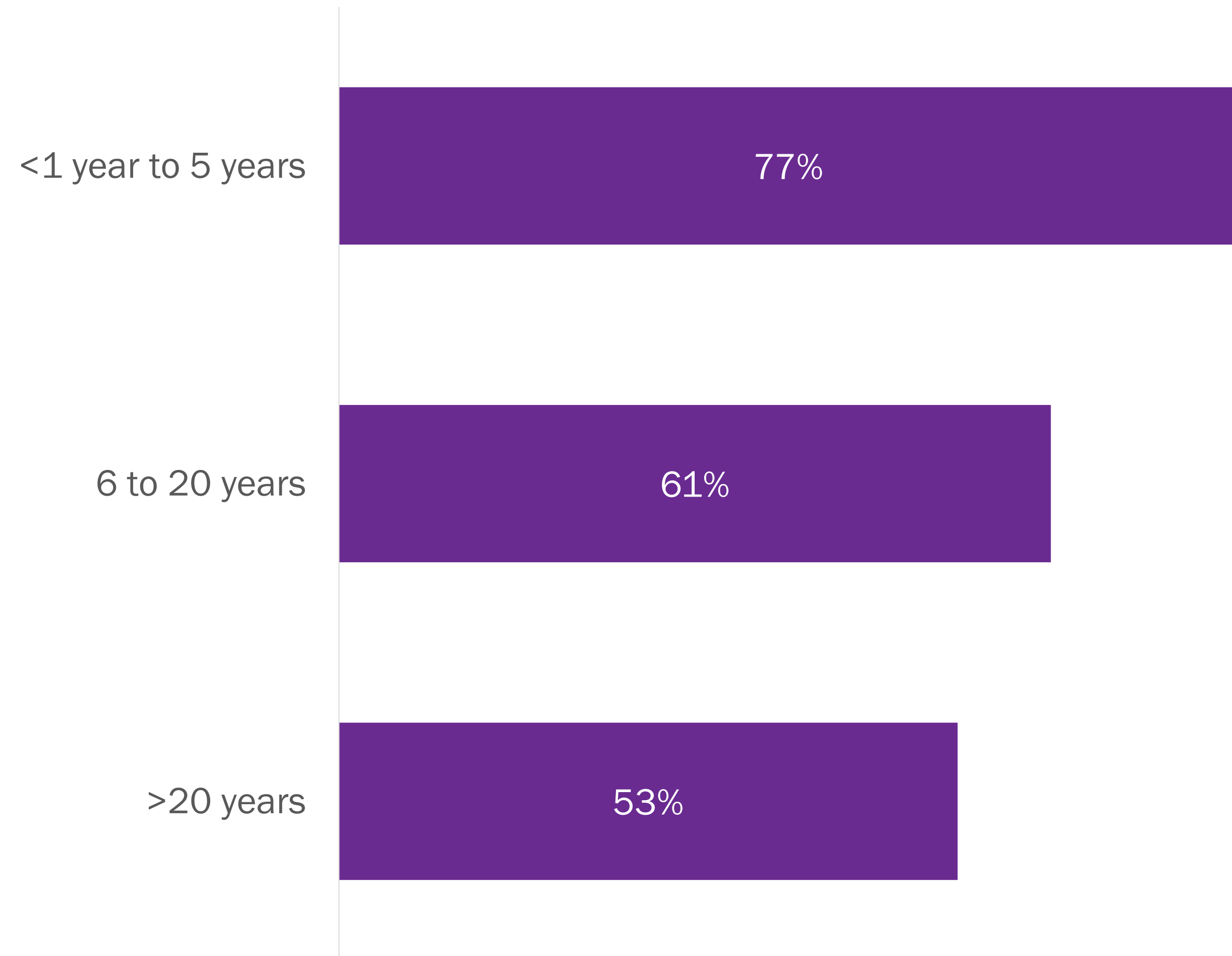
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Findings

# Experiences of Early Career Nurses

A photograph of a female nurse in teal scrubs and a blue bouffant cap, sitting in an operating room. She is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing surgical equipment and another person in scrubs.

# Early-career respondents are more likely to work in hospitals than their later-career counterparts.



Thinking about your main job, in what sector are you currently employed?  
*Hospital only.*

**Early-career respondents are especially likely to experience verbal, physical, and sexual abuse from patients and families.**

**In the past year, what type of violence or abuse have you experienced?**

	<b>&lt;1 year to 5 years (Early Career)</b>	<b>6 to 20 years (Mid-Career)</b>	<b>&gt;20 years (Late Career)</b>
Verbal (from patients/families)	<b>87%</b>	82%	78%
Physical (from patients/families)	<b>62%</b>	49%	36%
Sexual (from patients/families)	<b>26%</b>	20%	9%

**They're also more likely to work shifts that are more than 12 hours and up to 16 hours.**

**In the past month, have you worked 1 or more shifts of the following lengths? All times below include breaks and meal times.**

	<b>Early Career</b>	<b>Mid Career</b>	<b>Late Career</b>
I have not worked any shifts more than 12 hours in the past month	51%	67%	77%
More than 12 hours and up to-16-hour shift(s)	<b>49%</b>	32%	<b>22%</b>
17-20-hour shift(s)	3%	3%	2%
21-24-hour shift(s)	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
More than 24-hour shift(s)	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%

***Purple figures indicate cells that are statistically significant compared to other categories combined.***



**On average, early career respondents take much less of their vacation. They're more likely than late-career nurses to say the main reason they've not taken all their vacation is due to their request being denied or feeling like they can't ask.**

**What percentage of your allotted vacation did you take in 2024, not including weekend days and statutory holidays?**

Please enter the approximate percentage. If none, please enter '0'

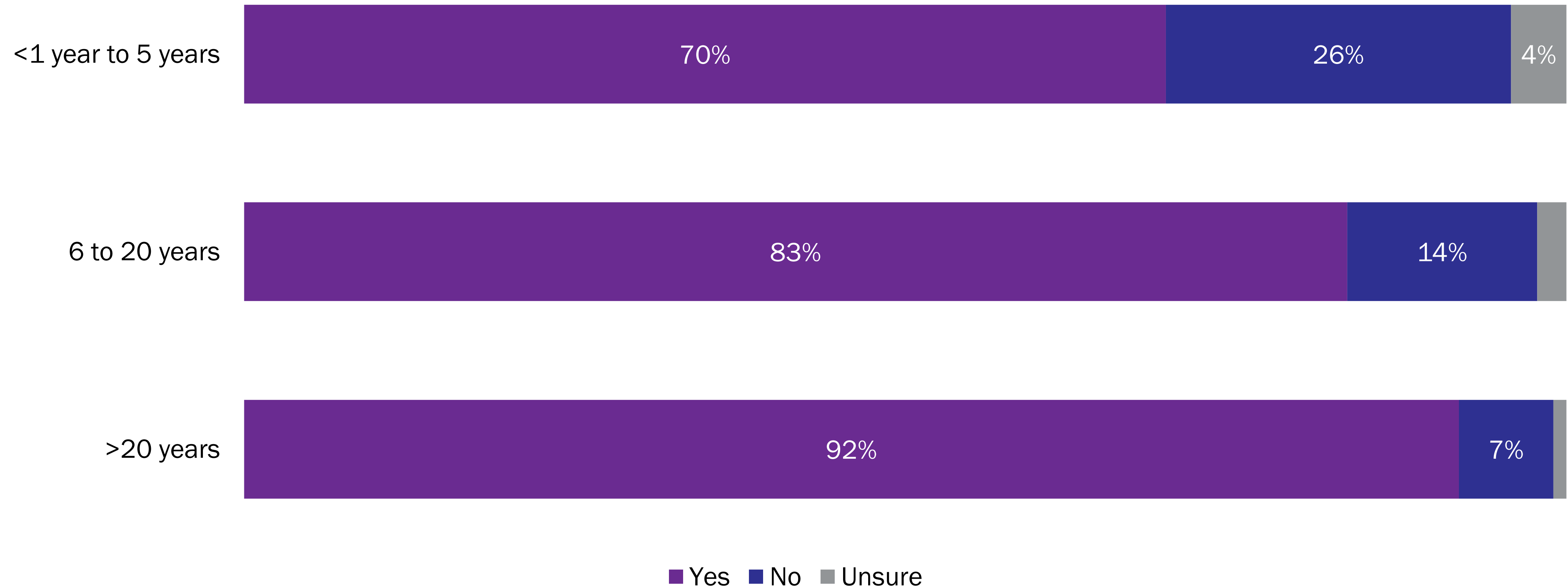
	Early Career	Mid Career	Late Career
Median	50%	87%	90%
Mean	52%	71%	75%

**What is the main reason you have not taken all of your vacation?**

	Early Career	Late Career
My request was denied	27%	17%
Feel like I can't ask as I will be denied	11%	4%
Feel obligated to work because of short staffing	10%	21%
Other	27%	27%
No reason	21%	27%
Unsure	5%	3%

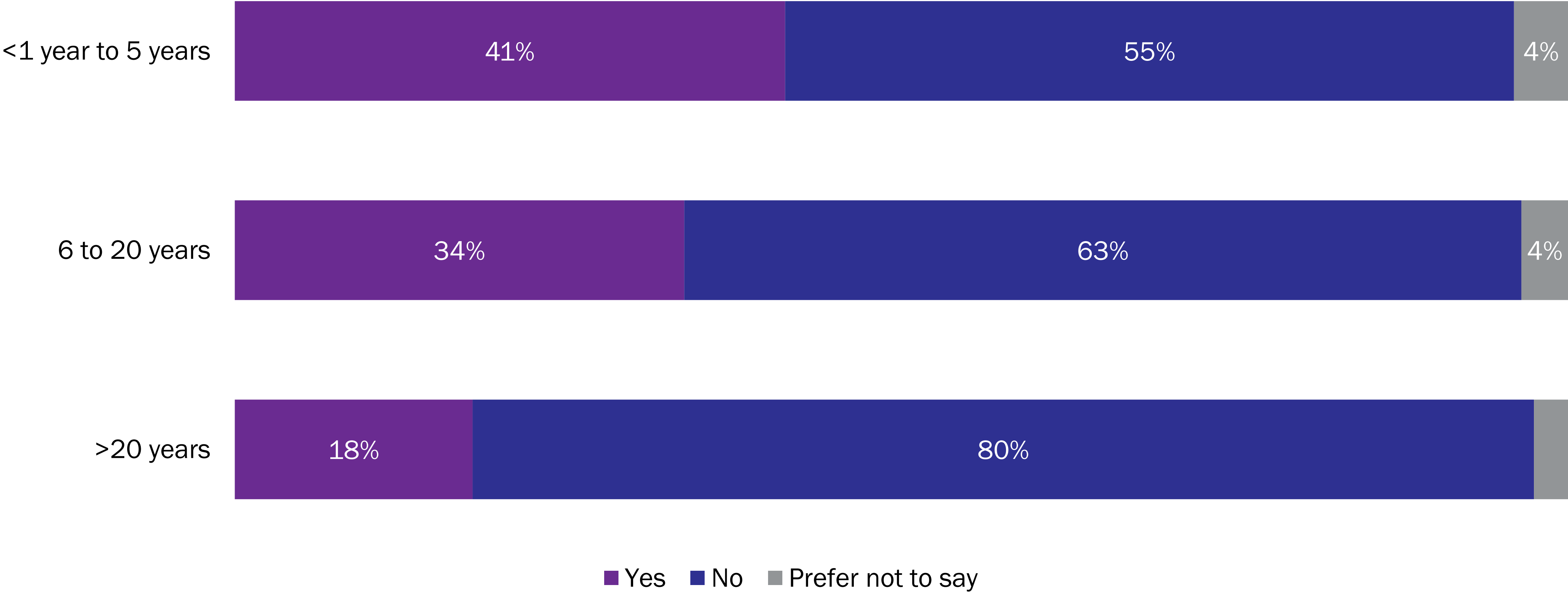
*Purple figures indicate cells that are statistically significant compared to other categories combined.*

# Early career respondents are less likely to be able to take one week or more of consecutive vacation days.



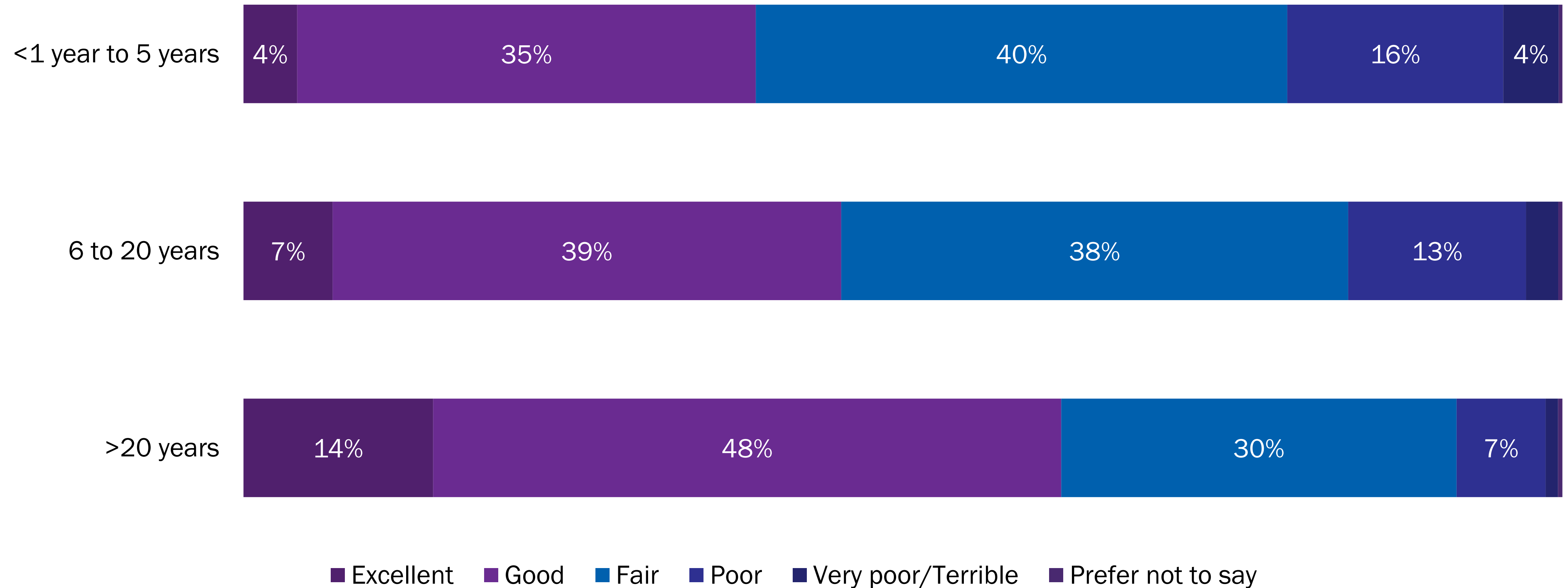
Were you able to take one week or more of consecutive vacation days?

# Early career respondents are more likely to have taken sick leave because they were unable to access vacation or other leaves.



During the past year, have you taken sick leave because you were unable to access vacation or other leaves?

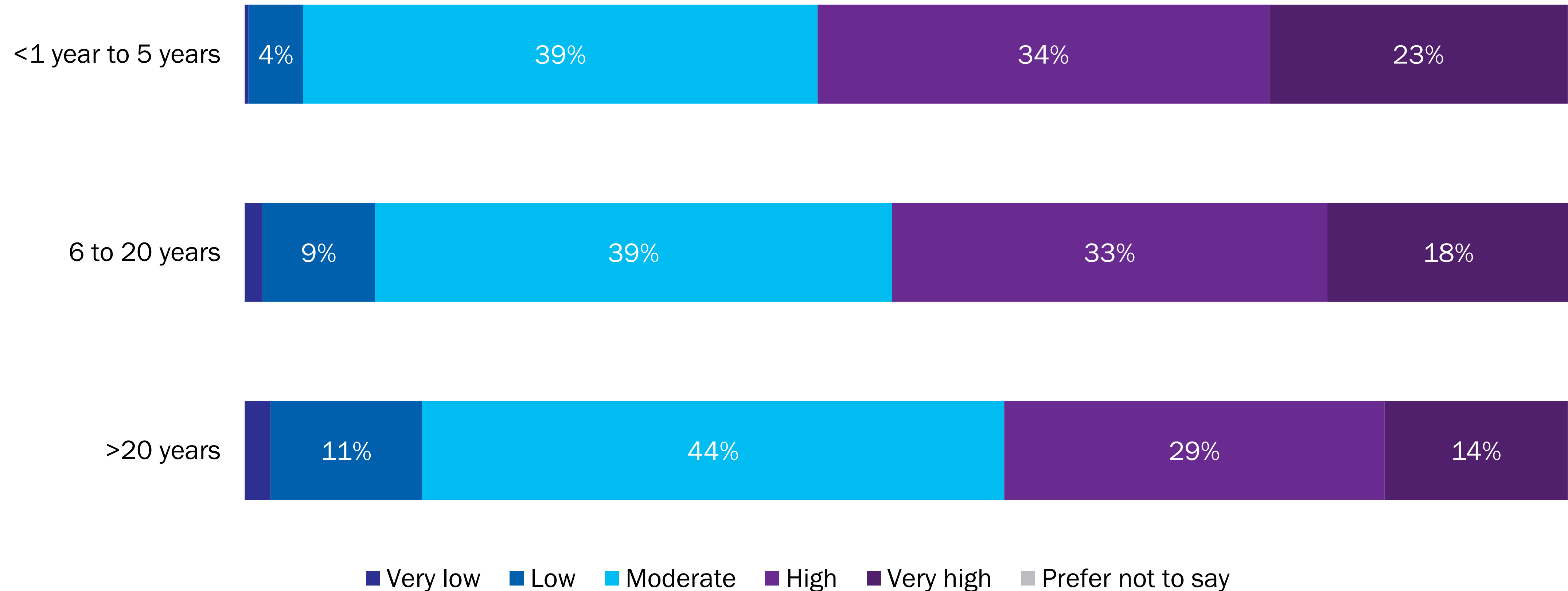
# 1 in 5 early career respondents characterize their mental health as poor or very poor/terrible.



In general, would you say your mental health is...

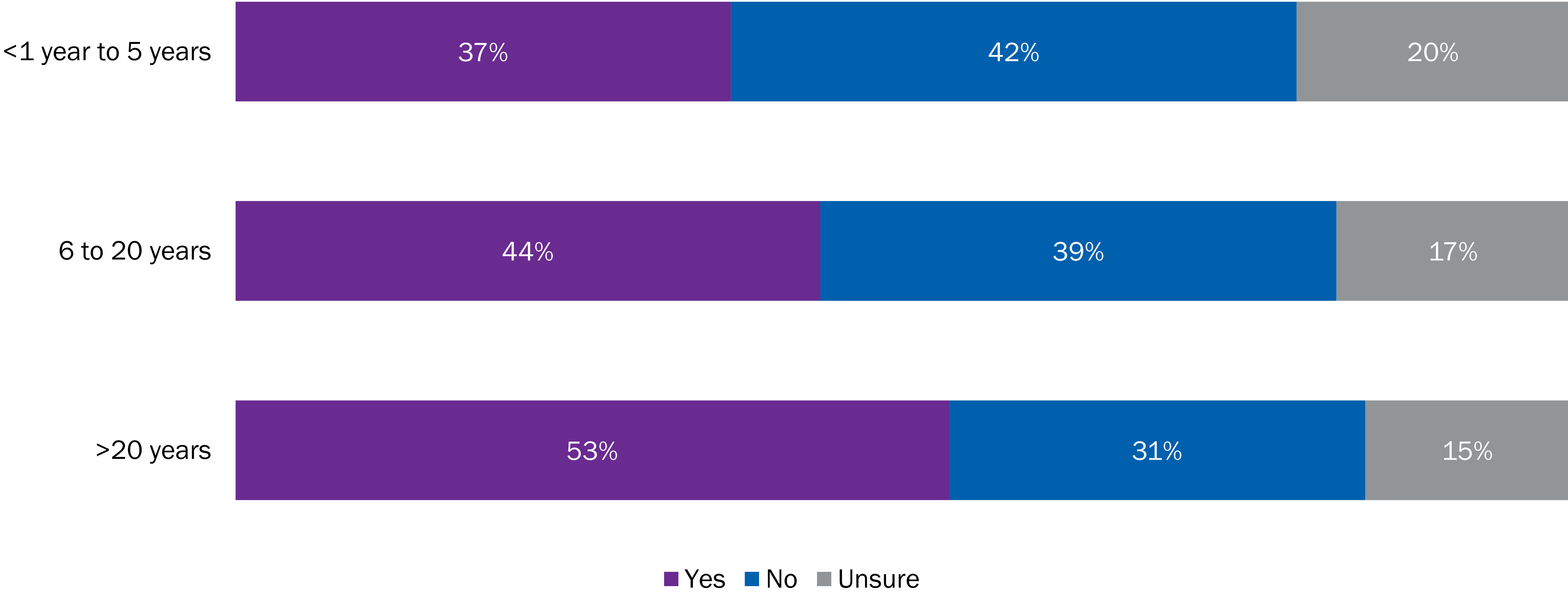


# Early career respondents are more likely to rate the level of stress they experience at their job as very high.



Generally, how would you rate the level of stress you experience at your job?

# Early career respondents are less likely to say that they have access to sufficient mental health supports.



In general, do you feel you have access to sufficient mental health supports?

# 1 in 3 early career respondents (32%) are considering leaving their current job within the next year.

Are you considering leaving your current workplace within the next year?			
	Early Career	Mid-Career	Late Career
Yes, leaving my current job	32%	22%	12%
Yes, leaving the nursing profession	10%	12%	7%
Yes, retiring	0%	1%	17%
No	39%	44%	47%
Unsure	21%	21%	18%

*Purple figures indicate cells that are statistically significant compared to other categories combined.*

## Early career respondents are more likely than late career respondents to meet clinical thresholds for anxiety, depression, and burnout.

	Early Career	Mid-Career	Late Career
Anxiety – Clinical Threshold	41%	32%	24%
Depression – Clinical Threshold	29%	25%	20%
Burnout – Clinical Symptoms	38%	34%	24%

*Purple figures indicate cells that are statistically significant compared to other categories combined.*



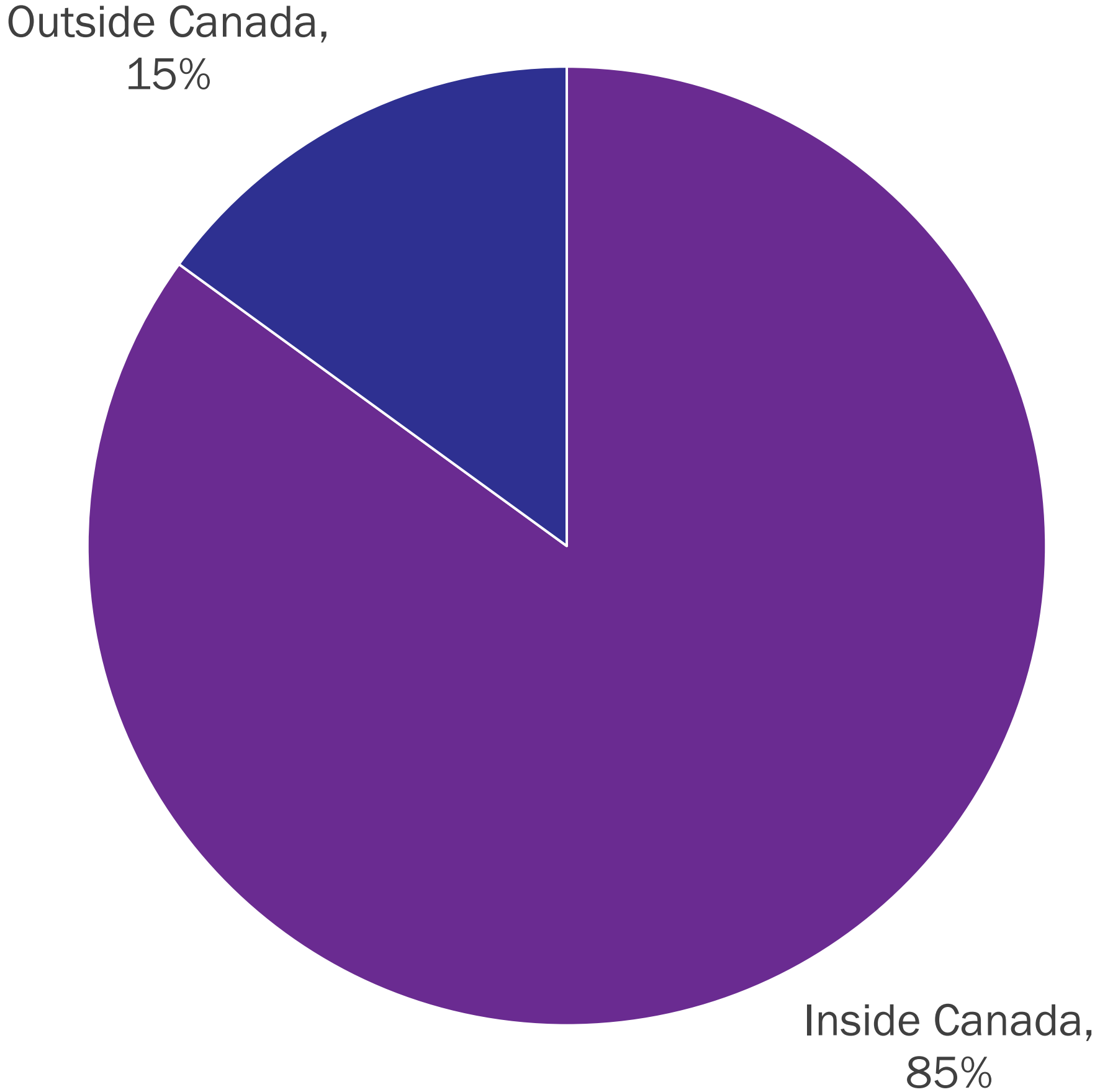
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Findings

# Experiences of Internationally Educated Nurses



# 15% of respondents received their nursing education outside of Canada.



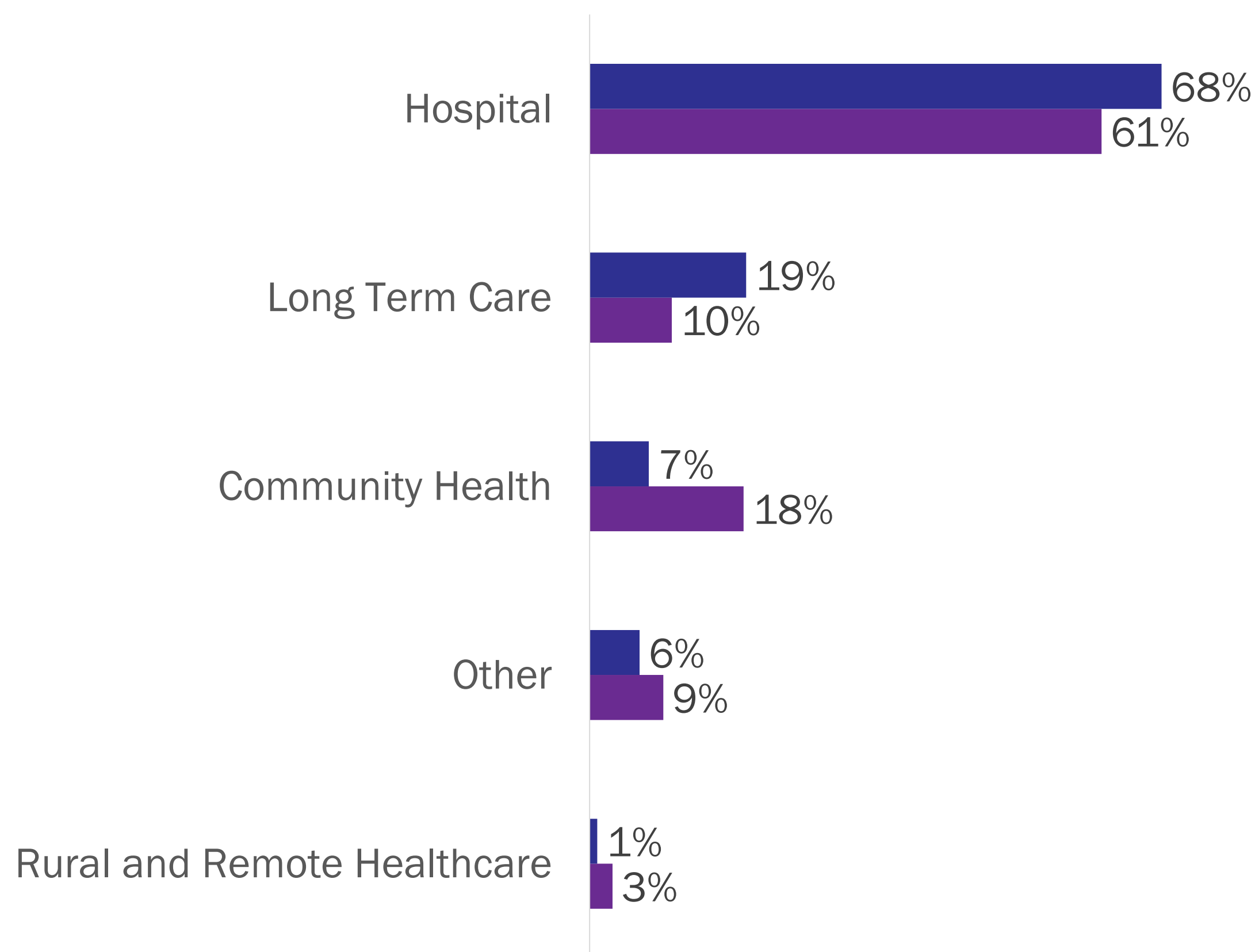
Canadian-educated: 4,225  
Internationally-educated: 480

**Did you receive your initial nursing education in Canada?**

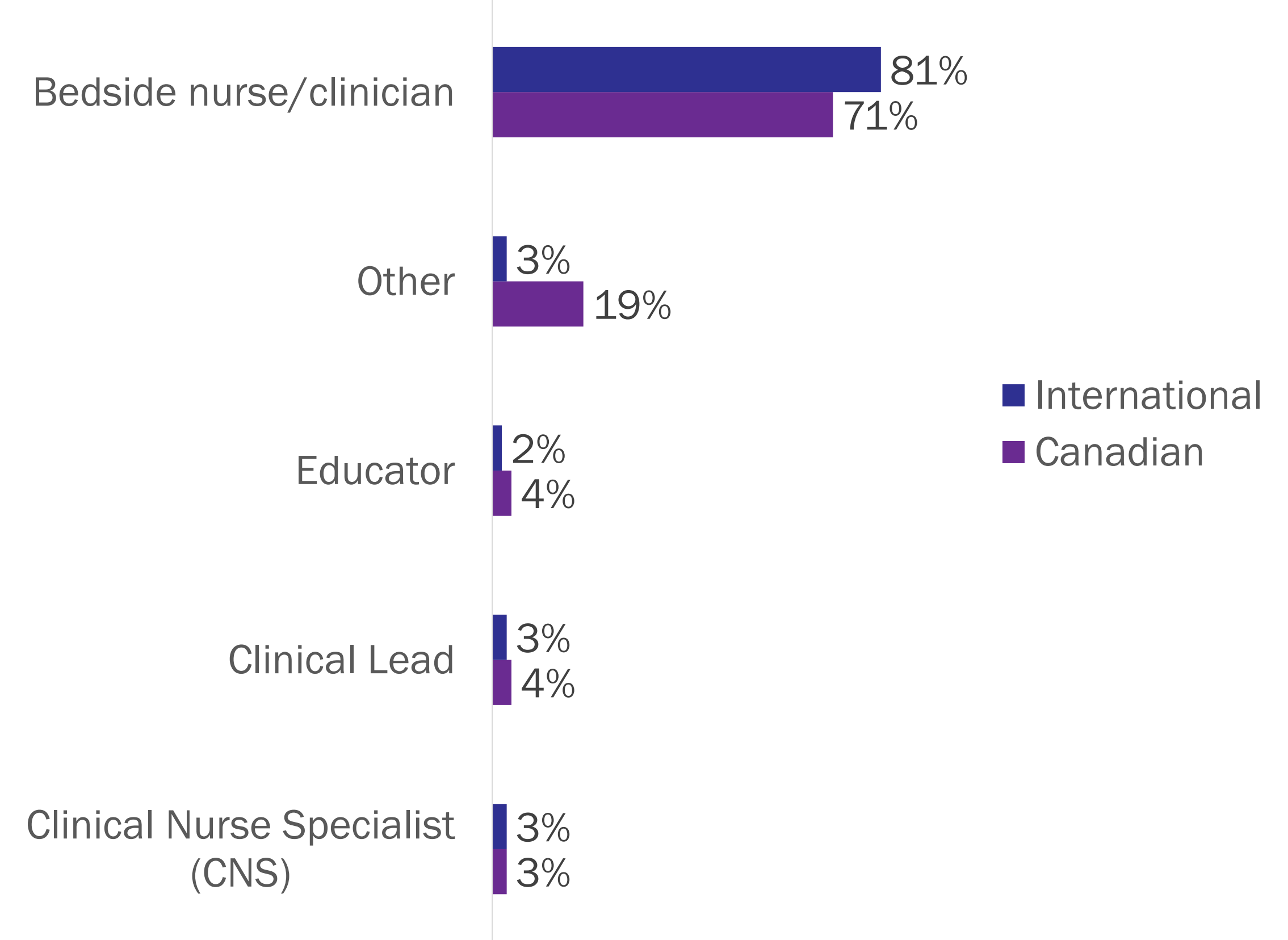
# Internationally educated nurses are more likely to work in hospitals and long-term care facilities, and to be bedside nurses / clinicians.

**71% work full-time, compared to 63% of Canadian-educated nurses.**

**Thinking about your main job, in what sector are you currently employed?**



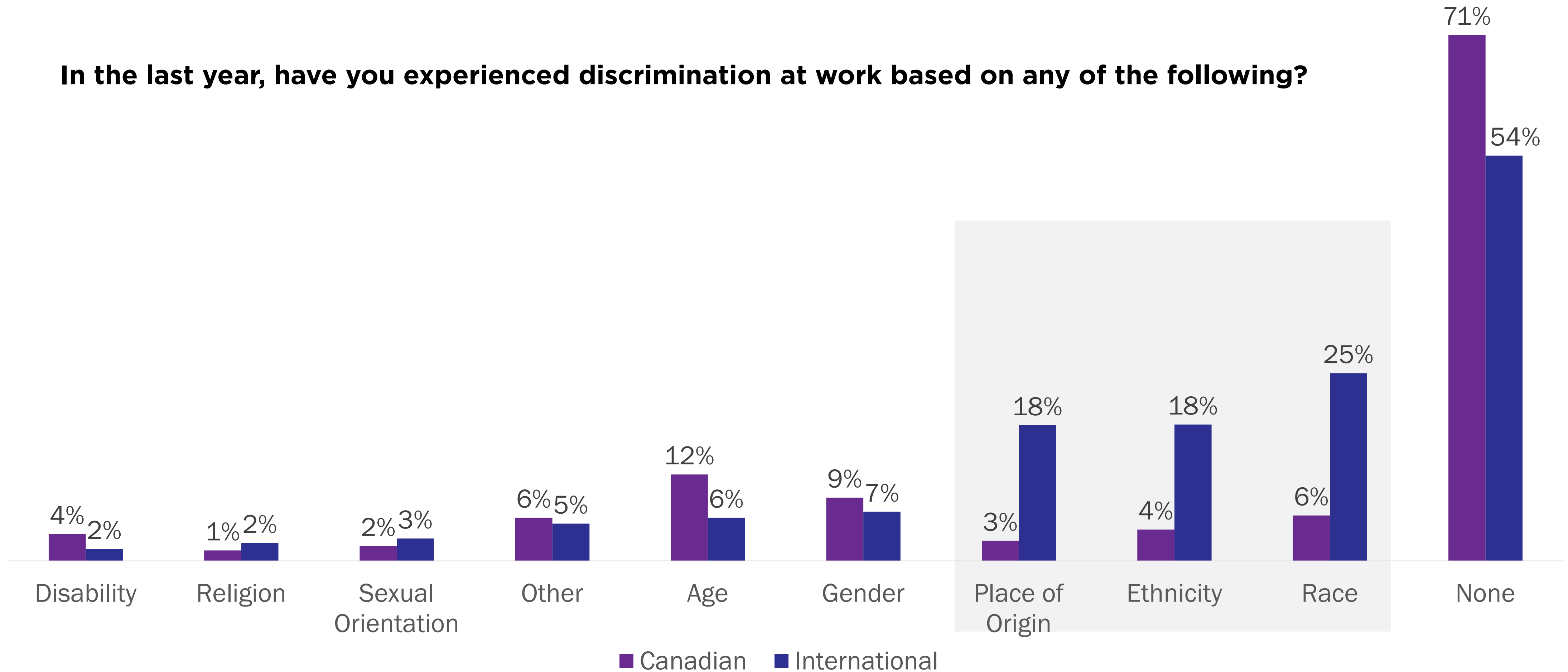
**In your main job, which of the following would you use to describe your role?**



# 1 in 4 IENs experienced racial discrimination in the last year, which is four times the rate of Canadian-educated nurses.

Internationally educated nurses are particularly likely to face discrimination due to race, ethnicity, and place of origin.

In the last year, have you experienced discrimination at work based on any of the following?





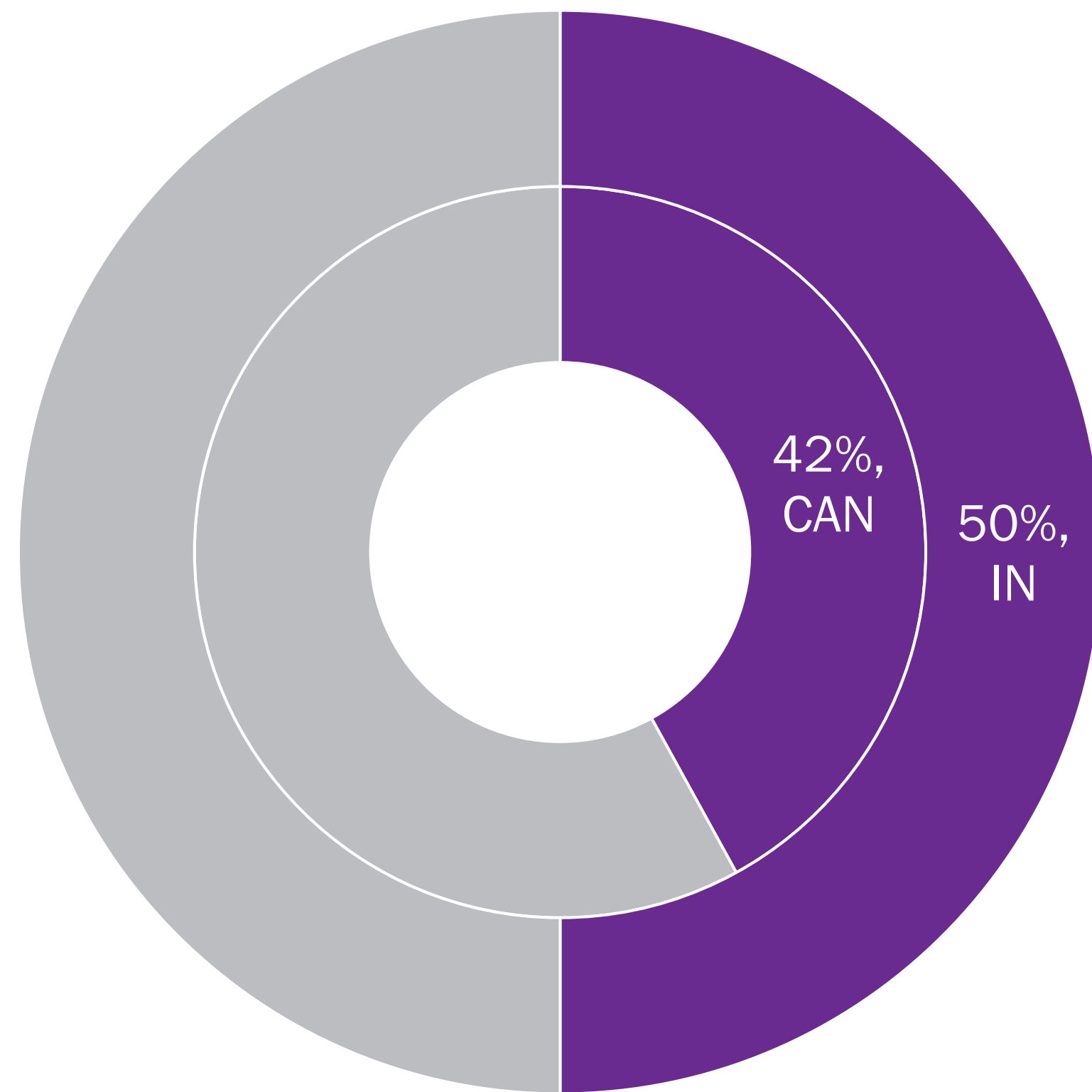
**Internationally educated nurses report taking 10% less vacation time than Canadian-trained nurses.**

**On average, Canadian-educated nurses report taking 69% of their vacation.**

**This is 10% lower on average for internationally educated nurses – they report taking 59% of their vacation.**

**What percentage of your allotted vacation did you take in 2024, not including weekend days and statutory holidays?**

# Internationally educated nurses are more likely to be open to taking on a preceptorship student and are more motivated by preceptor training.



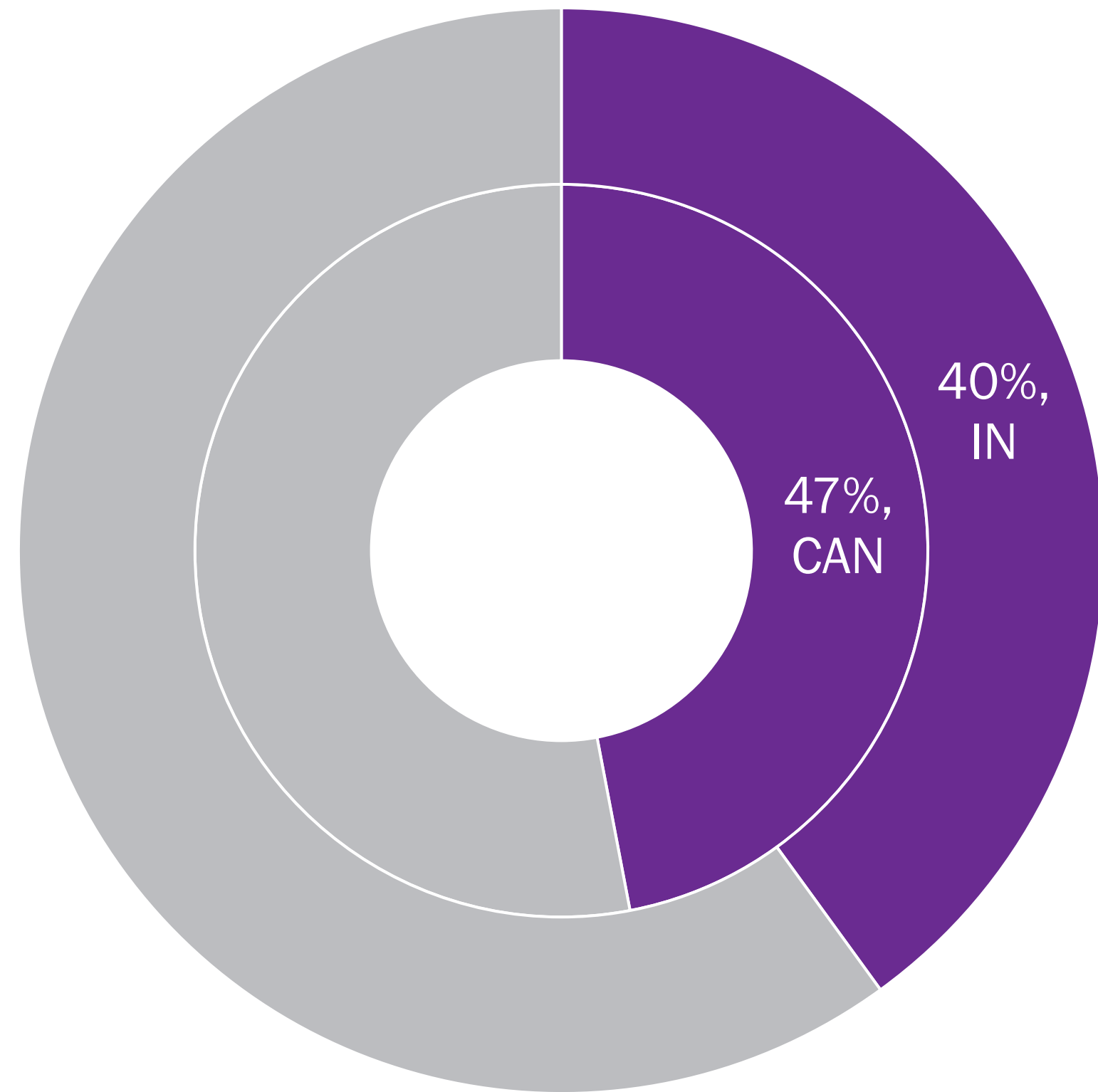
Would you like to take on a preceptorship student at your current job?

% responded "Yes"

Which of the following (if any) would positively influence your decision to become a preceptor?

Option	Canadian-educated	Internationally educated
Additional or increased hourly premium	56%	49%
Preceptor training	34%	49%

# Internationally educated nurses are less likely to feel they have access to sufficient mental health supports, and less likely to consider using counselling.



In general, do you feel you have access to sufficient mental health supports?

% responded "Yes"

Which of the following mental health supports would you consider using if they were available to you?

Option	Canadian-educated	Internationally educated
Individual counseling / therapy (online)	50%	41%
Individual counseling / therapy (in-person)	68%	55%

*Purple figures indicate cells that are statistically significant.*

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Findings

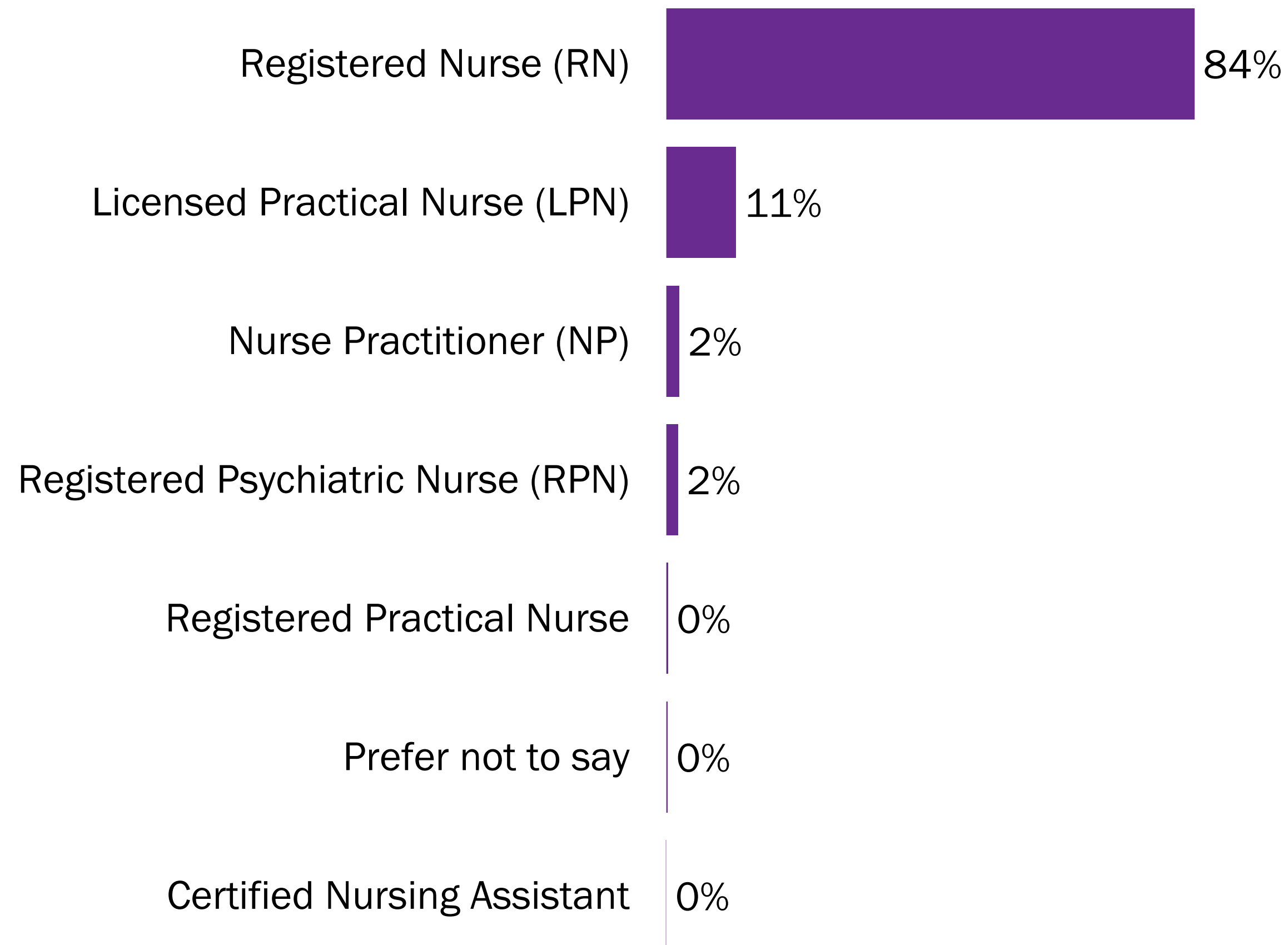
# Sample Characteristics



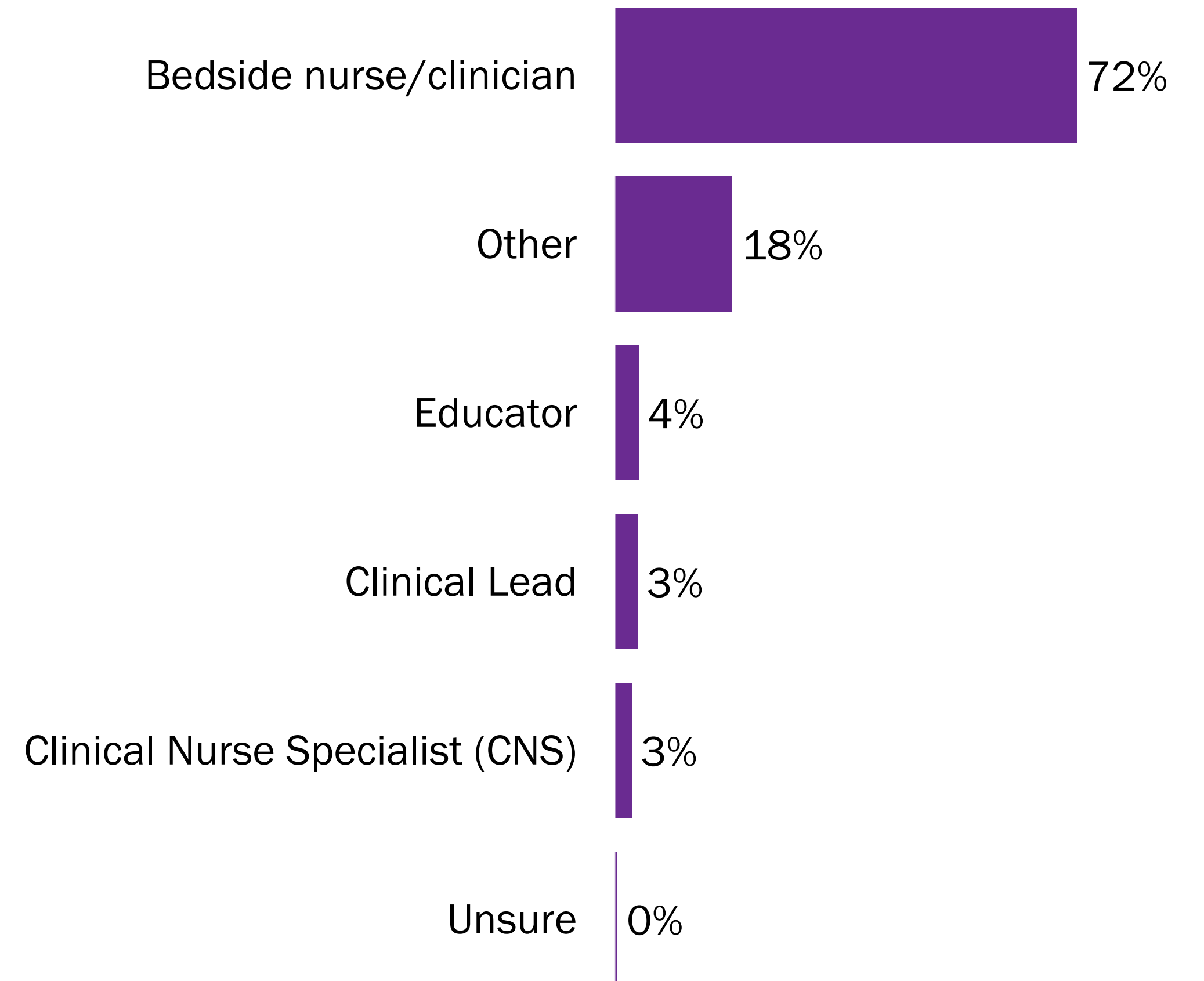


# Most respondents in the sample practice under the RN designation and work in bedside nurse / clinician roles.

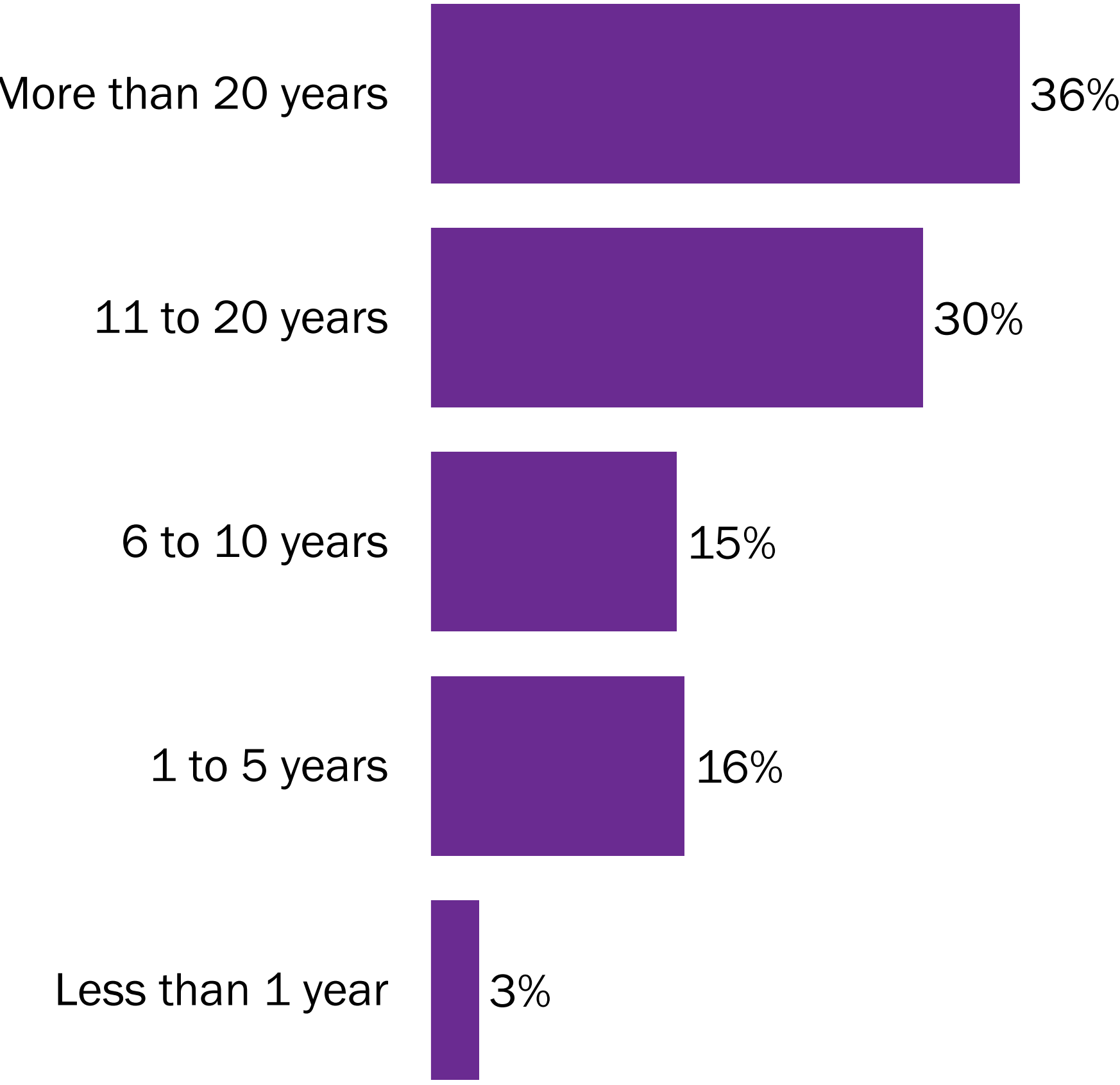
Please indicate the current nurse designation you are practicing under.



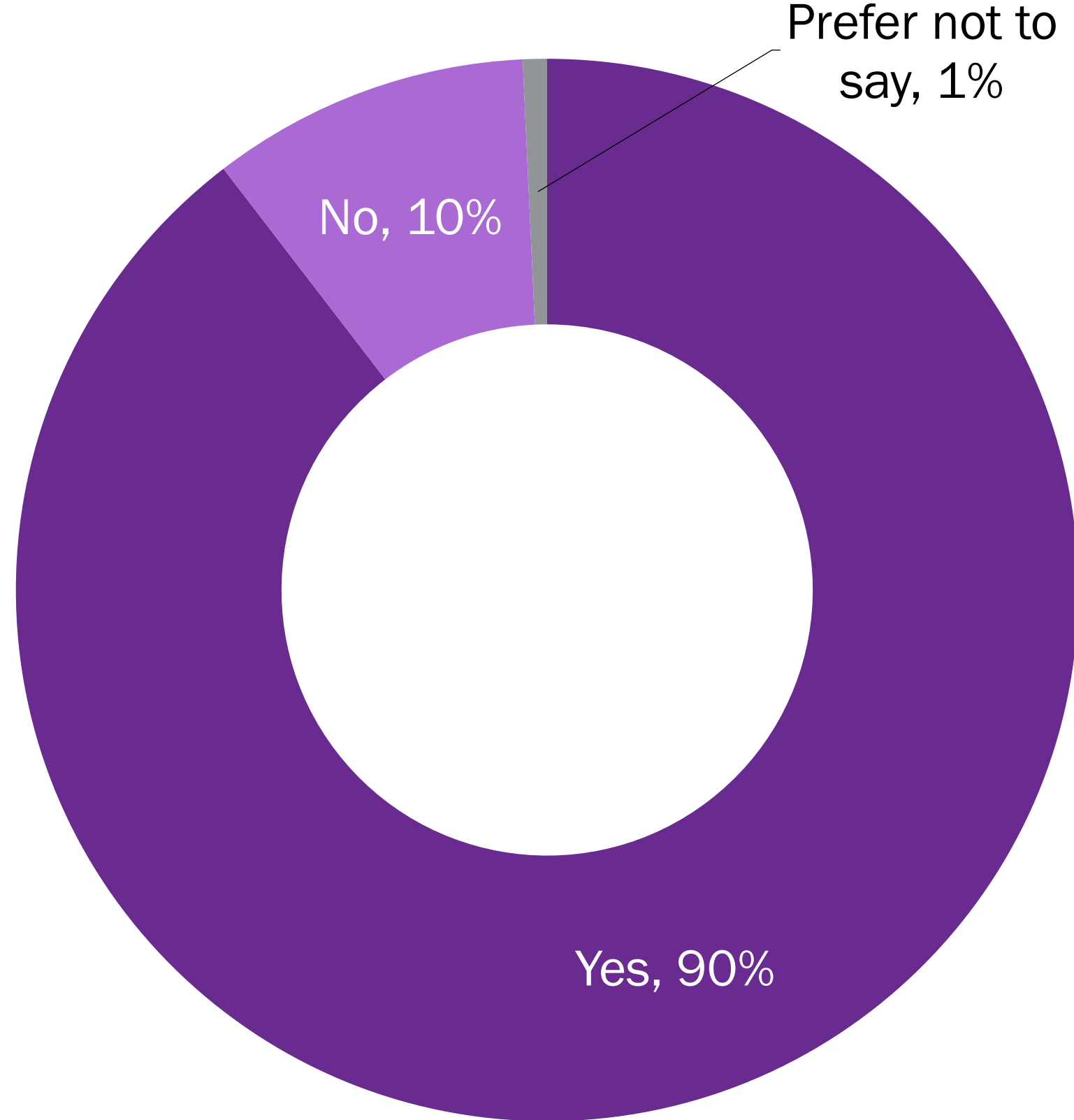
In your main job, which of the following would you use to describe your role?



# Most respondents in the sample have been working as a nurse for more than 11 years. Nearly all received their initial nursing education in Canada.

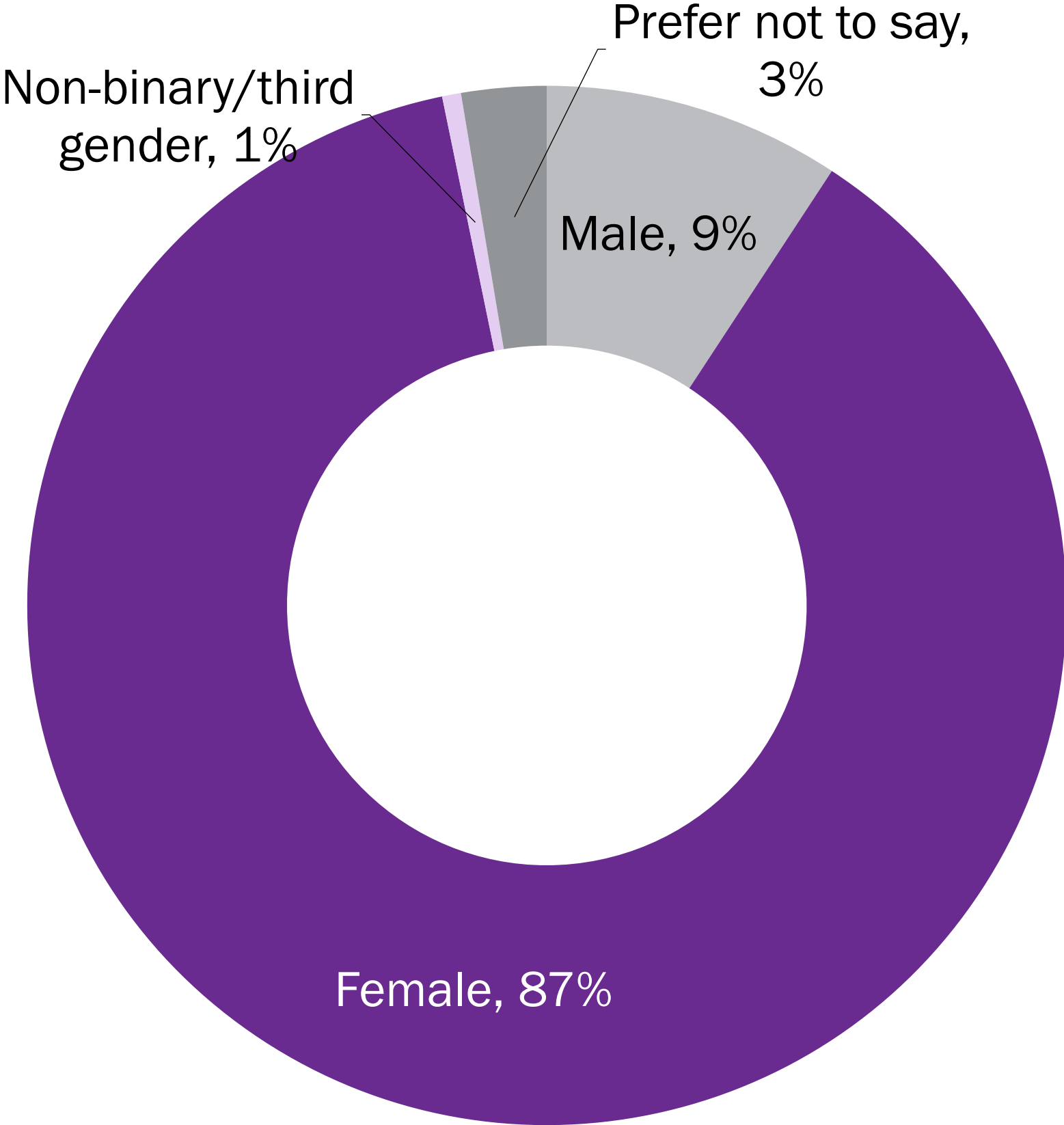


How long have you been working as a nurse?

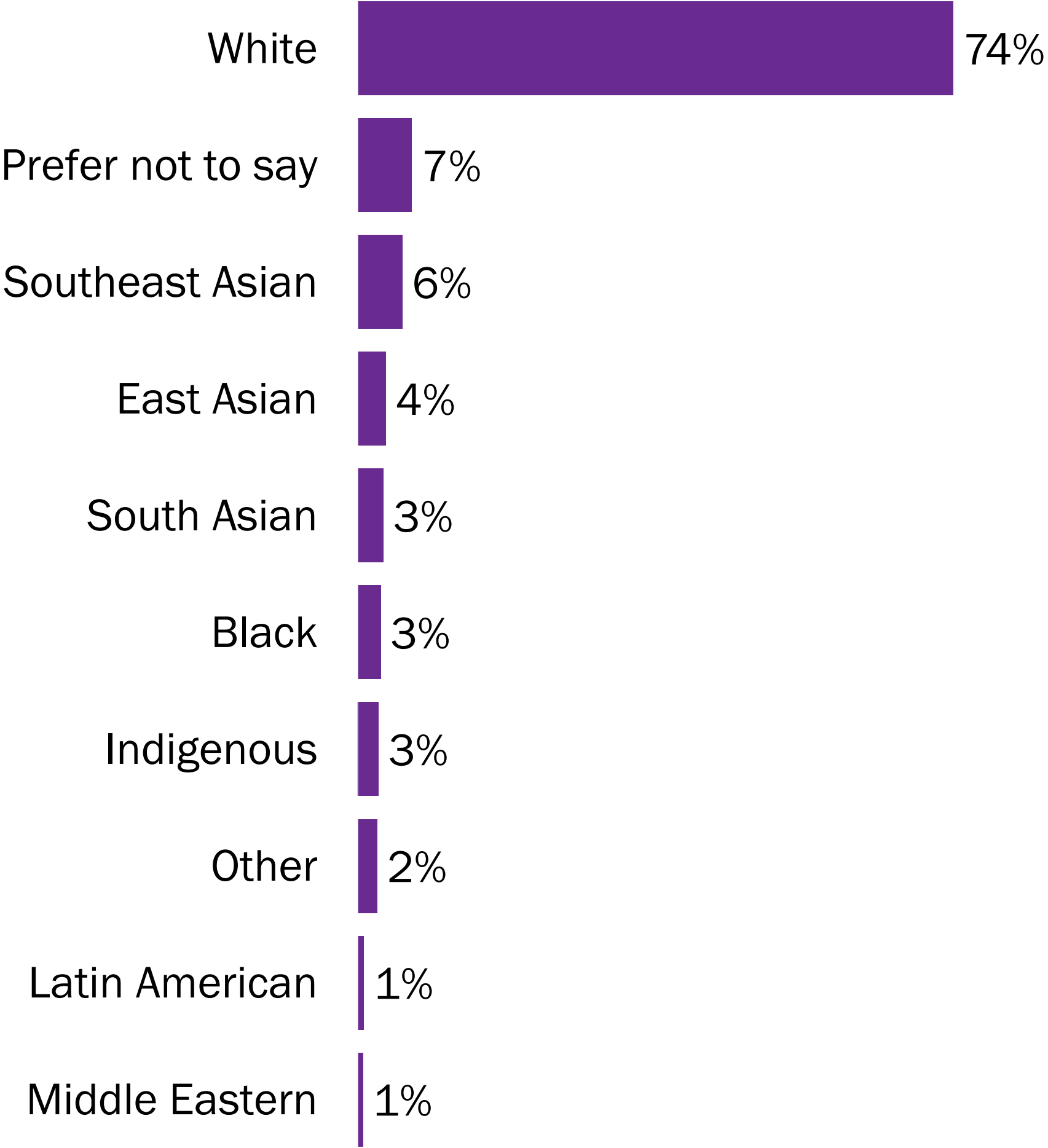


Did you receive your initial nursing education in Canada?

# Most respondents in the sample identify as female and as white.



**How do you identify?**



**In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background and our race may influence the way we are treated by individuals and institutions. Which category(ies) best describes you?**