

**ASSESSING THE VULNERABILITIES OF
FEMALE MASSAGE
WORKERS**
in Phnom Penh

Research Results
August 2014

LOVE146
END CHILD TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION

Protecting Children

OUTLINE

- Introduction & Purpose
- Methods
- Sample
- Entry Factors
- Income & Financial Obligations
- Relationships
- Vulnerabilities
- Work Satisfaction
- Existential Wellbeing
- Discussion



Introduction & Purpose

- Research about the vulnerability of female massage parlor workers in Phnom Penh
- Team of 9: Love146, Destiny Rescue, Precious Women, XP Missions
 - 4 Khmer researchers
 - 5 researchers from the UK, USA, Germany and Canada



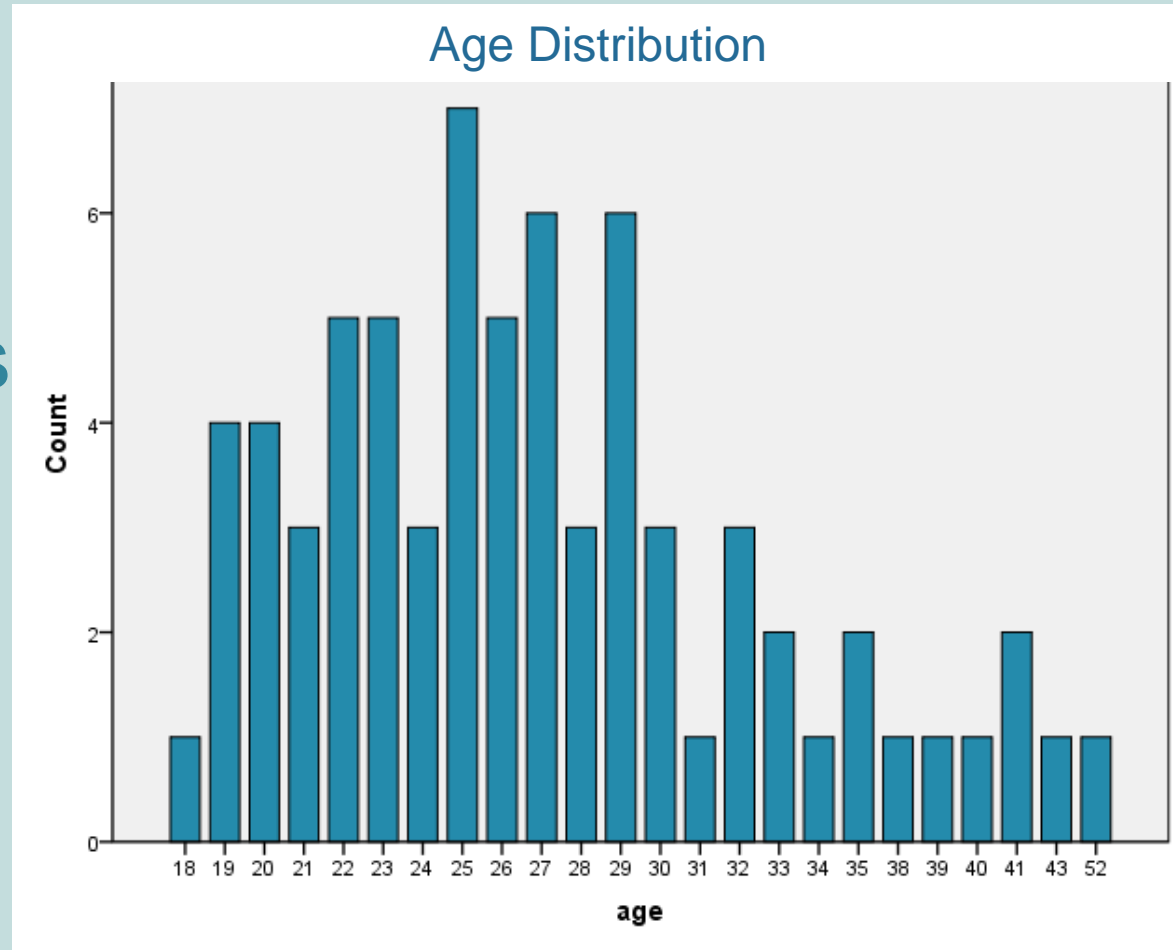
METHODS

- Structured interviews:
 - data gathering: 3 weeks
 - 10,000R massage parlors
- Location: Phnom Penh



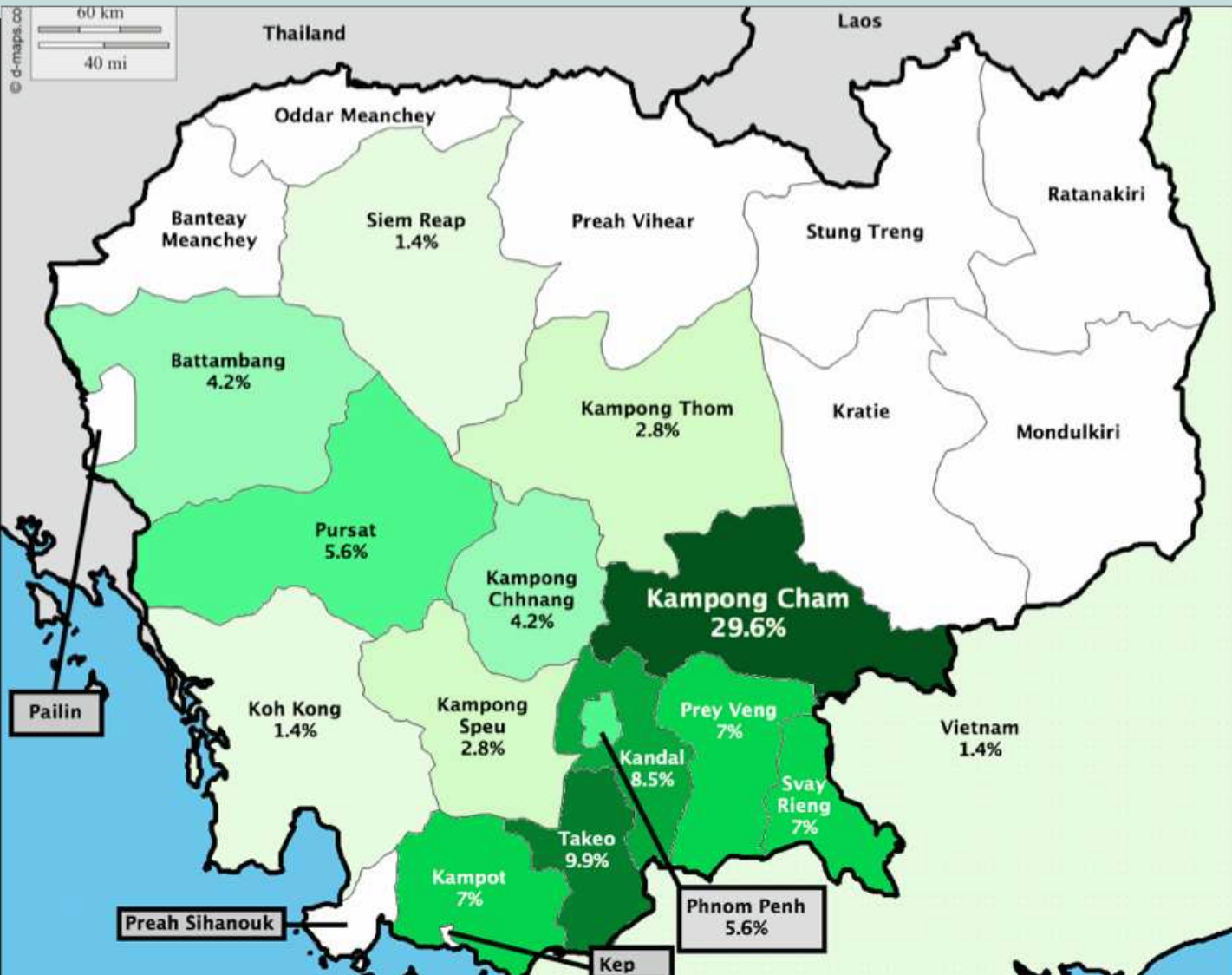
OUR SAMPLE

- 71 respondents
- Age range:
18-52 years old



OUR SAMPLE

origin & migration



WHY THEY CHOSE THIS JOB AS OPPOSED TO ANOTHER

20% good money

17% no choice

16% easy work

OTHER INTERESTING REASONS:

3% job pays for accommodations/food

6% physical limitations

ENTRY FACTORS

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED

- 24% had no schooling at all
- Only 3% achieved past 9th Grade

“I do not like my job because I have no education.”

“I have to study more.”

“Girls should try to study hard to have a nice job. I do not want them to have a job like mine.”

ENTRY FACTORS

PREVIOUS WORK

24% never worked before

51% worked in a garment factory at some point

39% worked in garment factory immediately prior to entering the massage industry

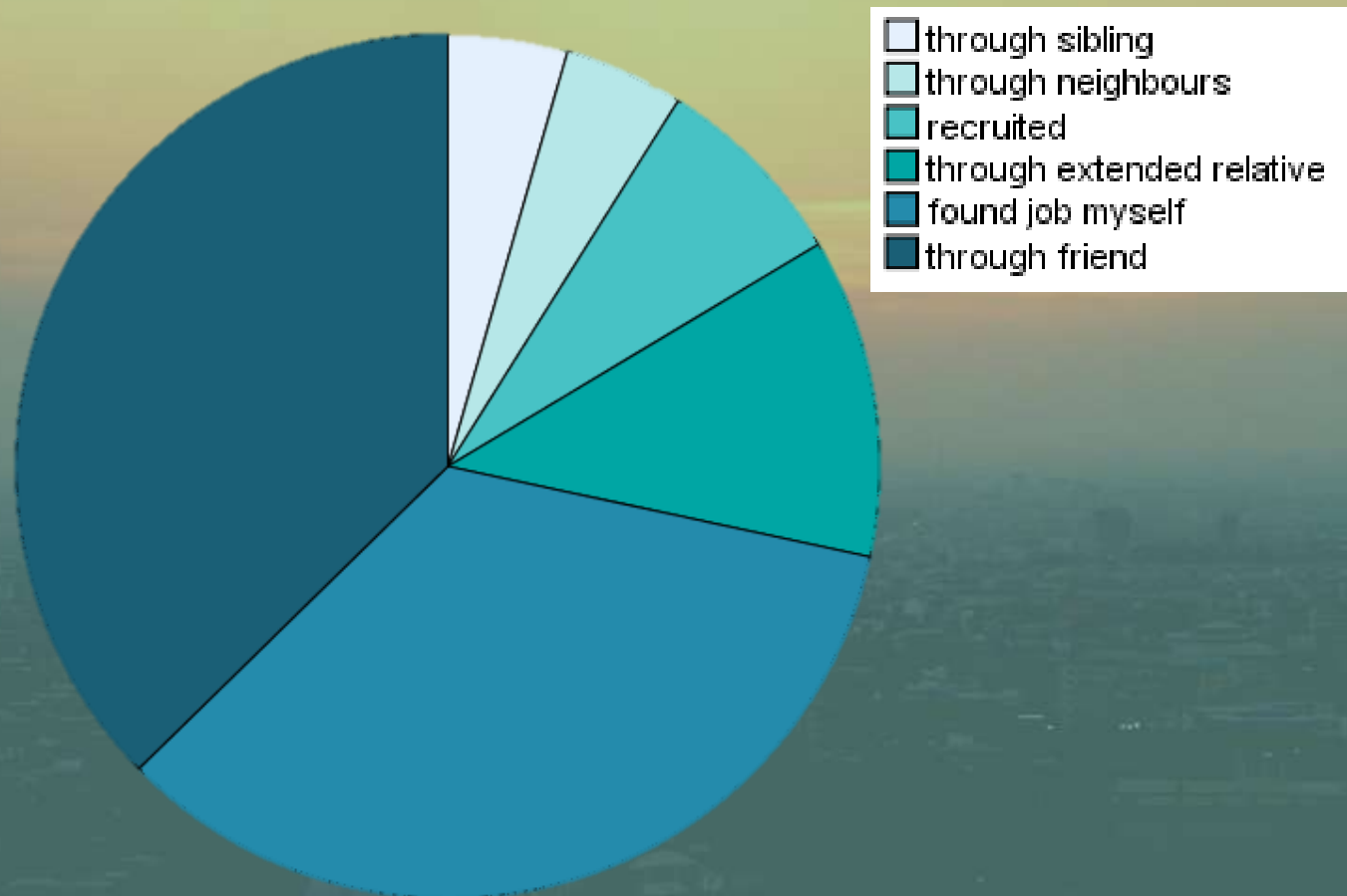
Why they left the garment industry:

13% needed greater income

11% got sick, became unfit to work in garment industry

ENTRY FACTORS

HOW THEY CAME TO BE IN THIS TYPE OF WORK



ENTRY FACTORS

INCOME

- 82% do not receive all the money they earn
- Receiving 30% of money earned appeared as the standard wage for the majority

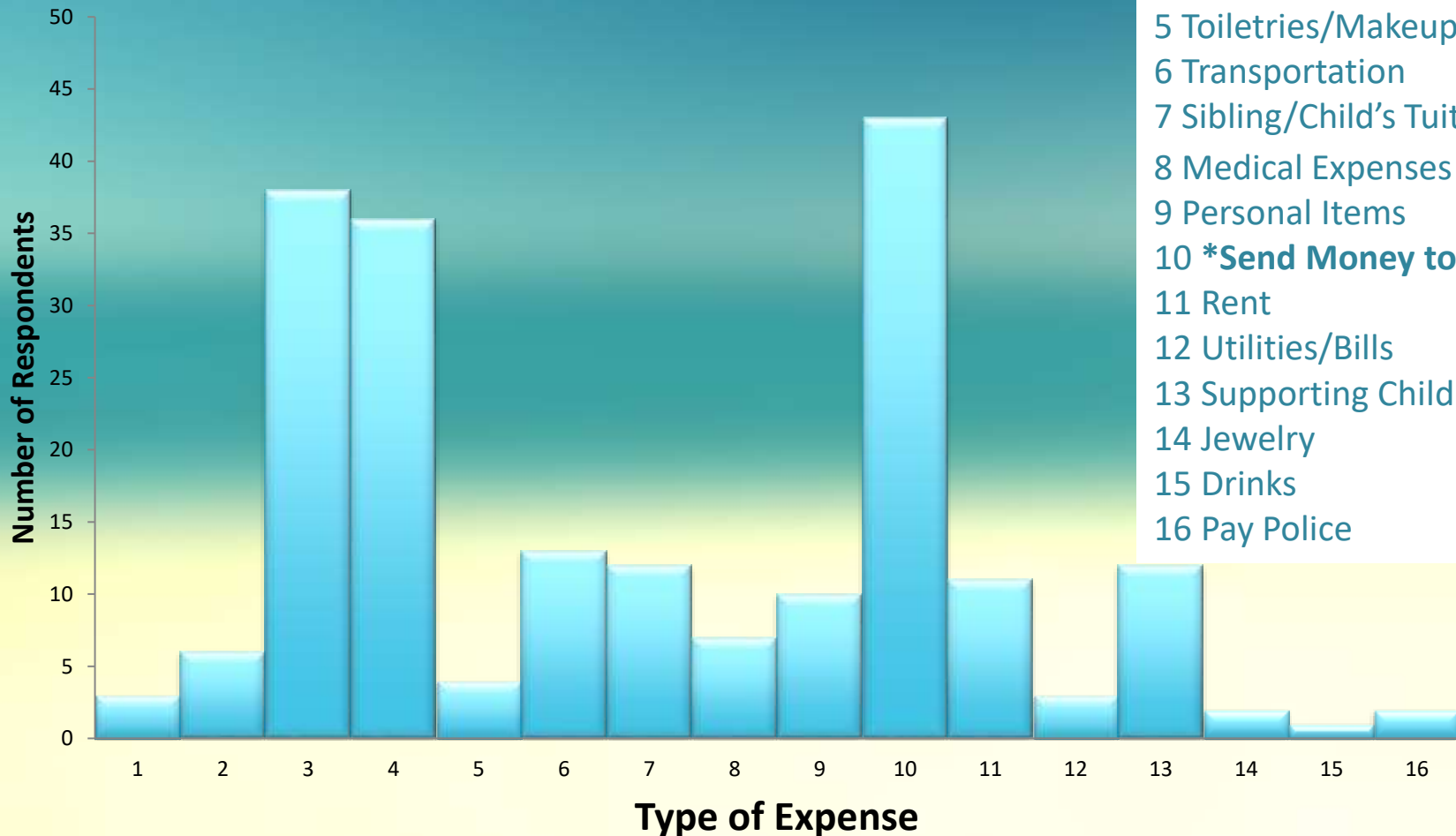
FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- Note: 89 % live inside vs. 11% outside the massage parlor

Types of Expense

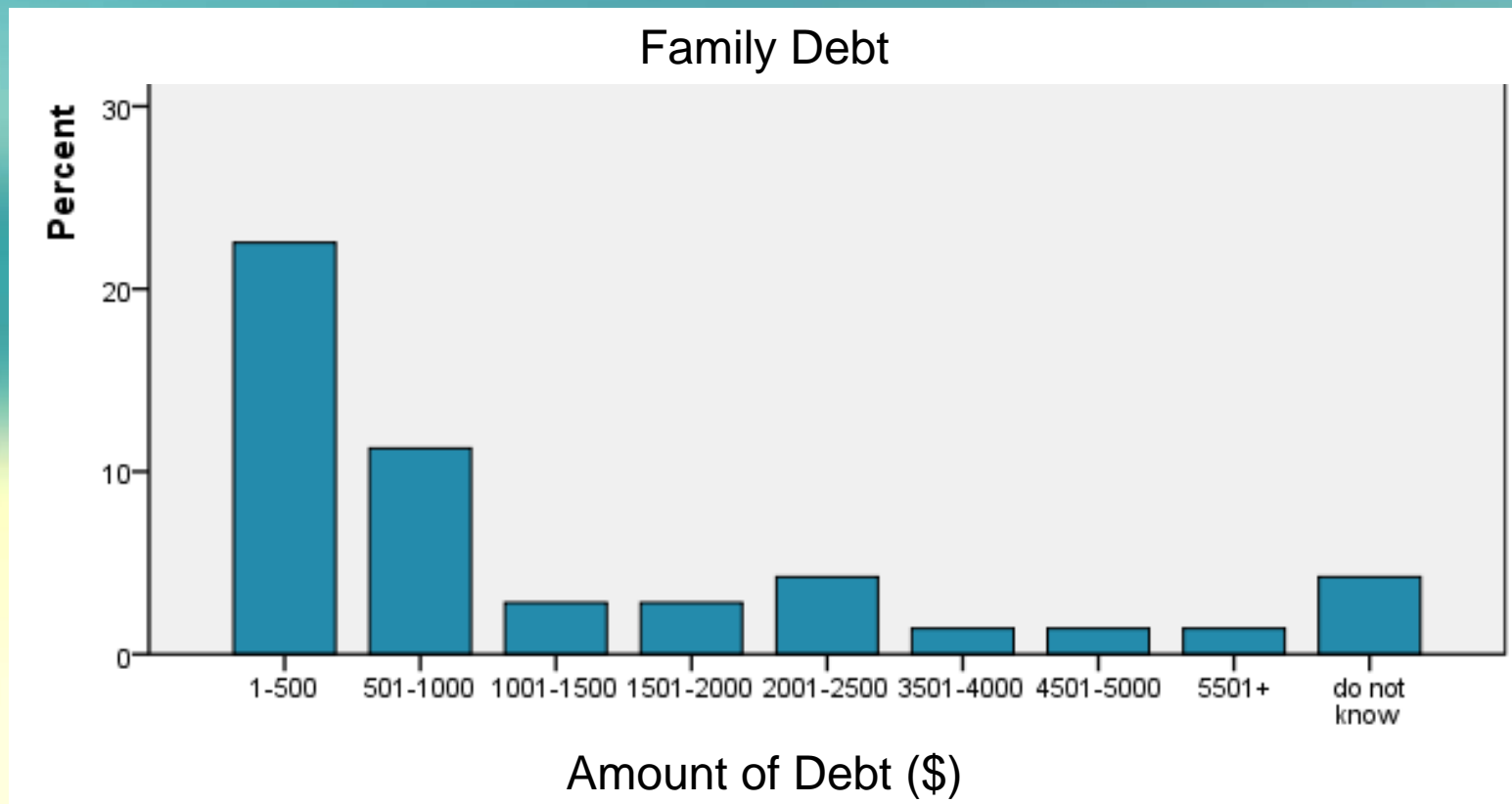
- 1 "Go for a Walk"/Leisure
- 2 Pay Back Debt
- 3 *Food
- 4 *Clothes
- 5 Toiletries/Makeup/Perfume
- 6 Transportation
- 7 Sibling/Child's Tuition
- 8 Medical Expenses
- 9 Personal Items
- 10 *Send Money to Family
- 11 Rent
- 12 Utilities/Bills
- 13 Supporting Children
- 14 Jewelry
- 15 Drinks
- 16 Pay Police

Greatest Expenses



FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- 80% send money to their family (i.e. support children and/or parents)
- Roughly 50% of their families owe some kind of debt



RELATIONSHIPS

- Are you currently in a committed relationship?

37% divorced

28% boyfriend

24% single

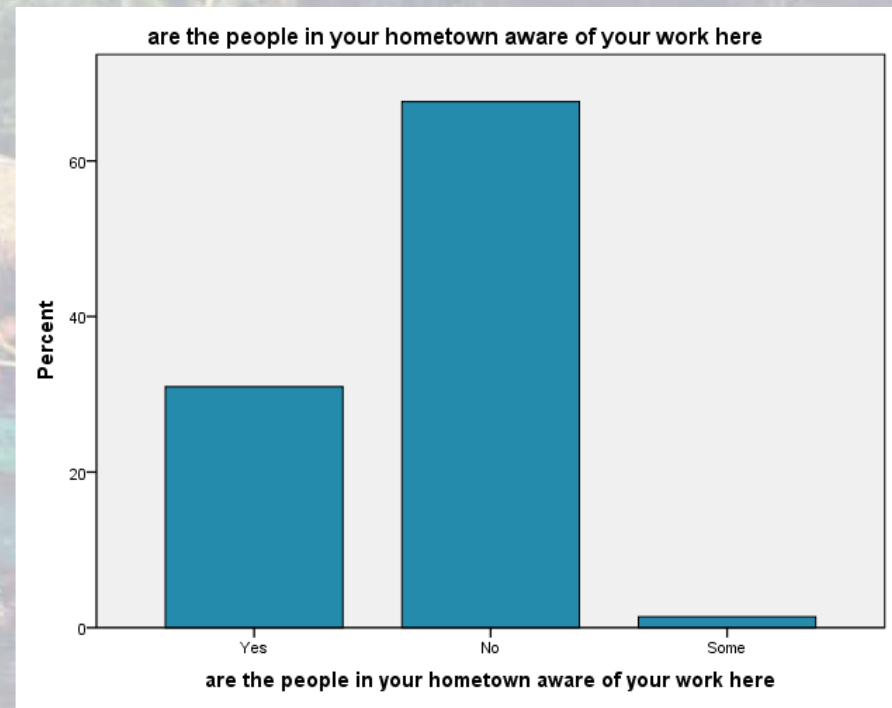
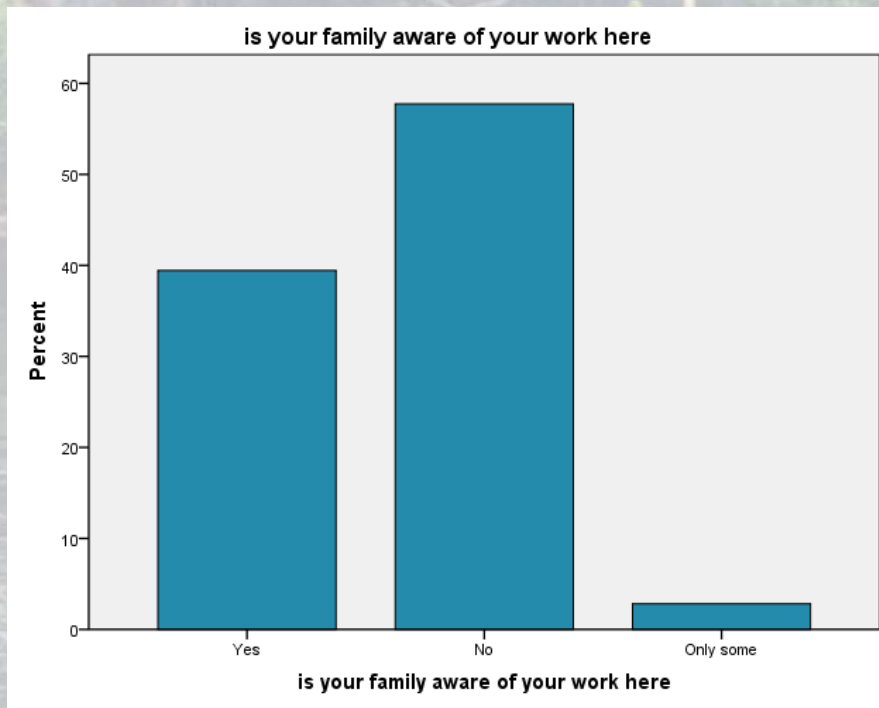
8% married

3% widowed

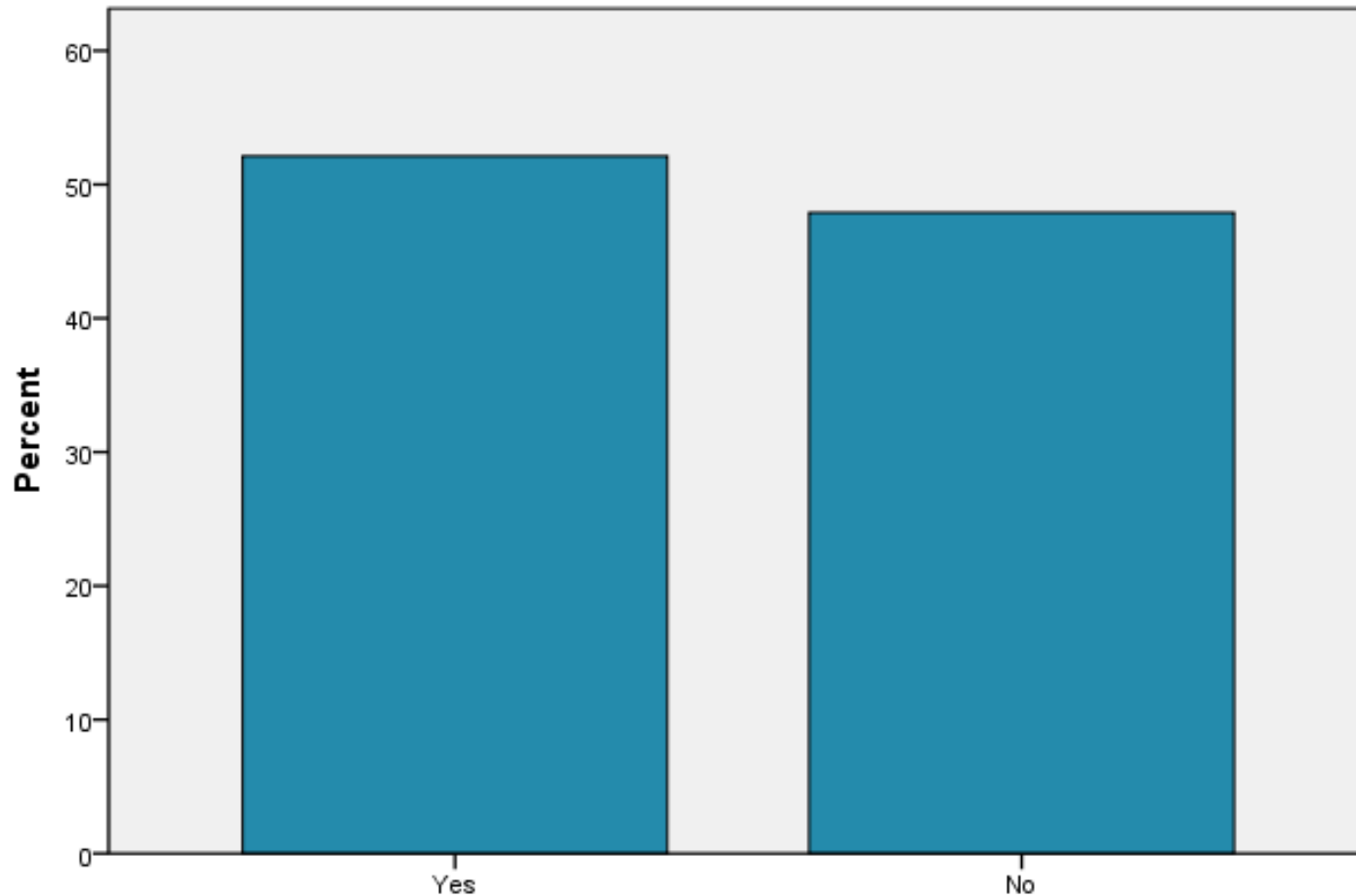


RELATIONSHIPS

- 58% of their families were NOT aware of them working in a massage parlor
- 48% did not tell the people in their hometown about their work



have you experienced stigma or discrimination because of working in this line of work



VULNERABILITIES | WORK

A young boy in a brown tank top and dark shorts is riding a bicycle on a paved street. He has a white and green bag hanging from the handlebars. In the background, other people and bicycles are visible, slightly out of focus. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text and a list.

“From whom do you
experience
stigma/discrimination?”

- Clients
- Friends
- Neighbors

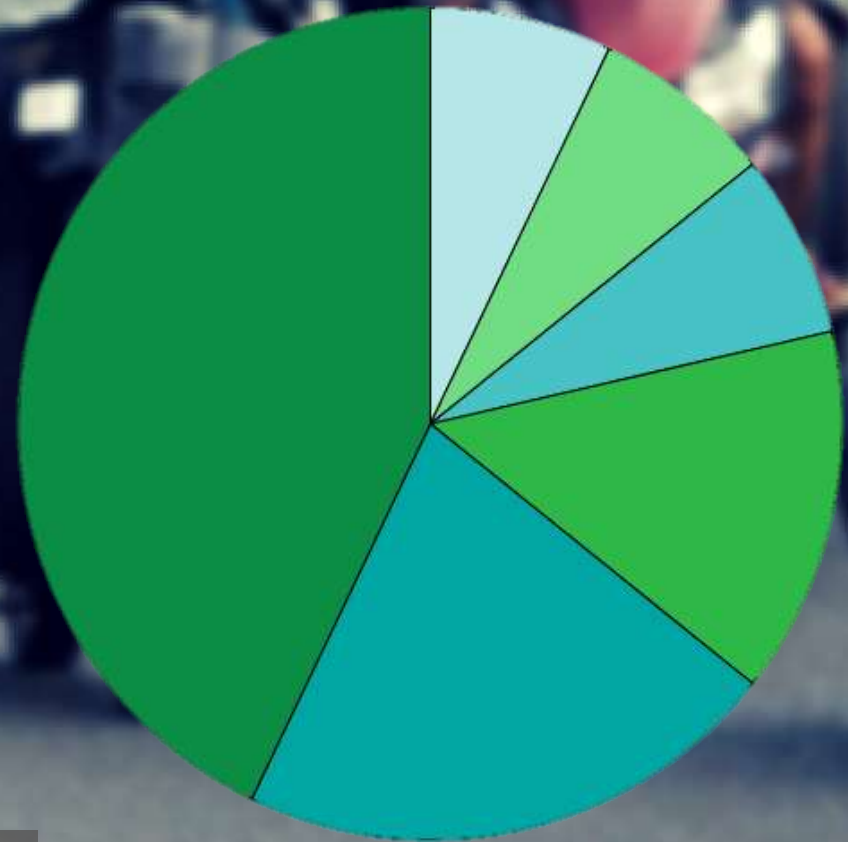
VULNERABILITIES | WORK

20%

had experienced physical violence as result of work

Who was violent towards you?

“The clients who come here to do massage, some of them are soldiers or policemen with guns, they talk rudely to me and threaten me and they don't want to pay me.”

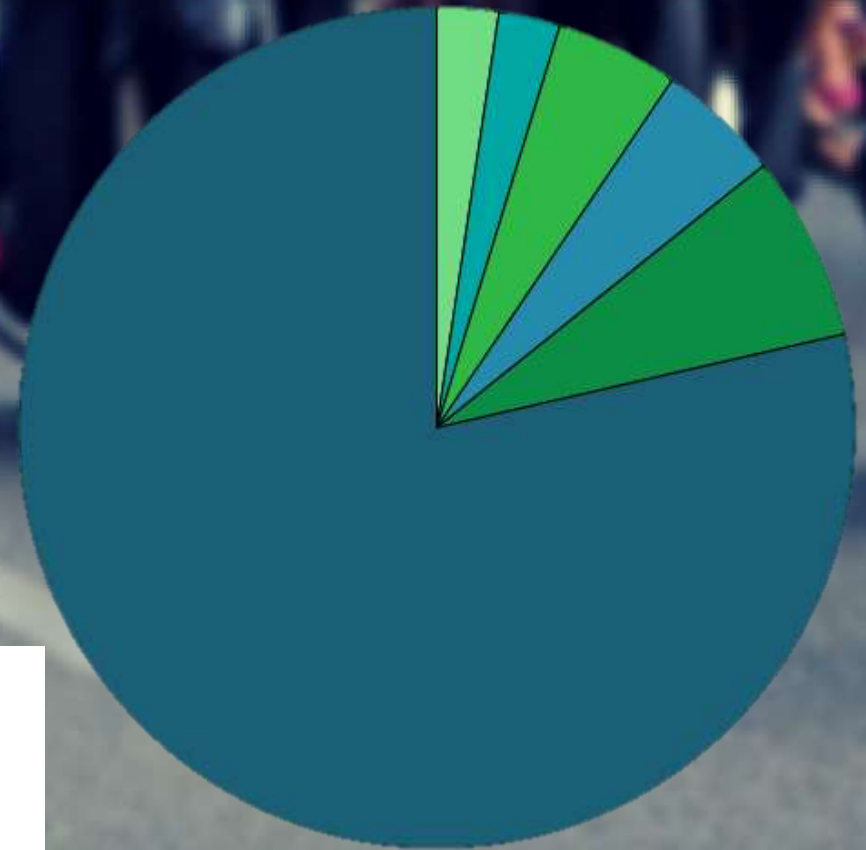


- coworkers
- family member
- boyfriend
- police
- husband
- clients

VULNERABILITIES | WORK

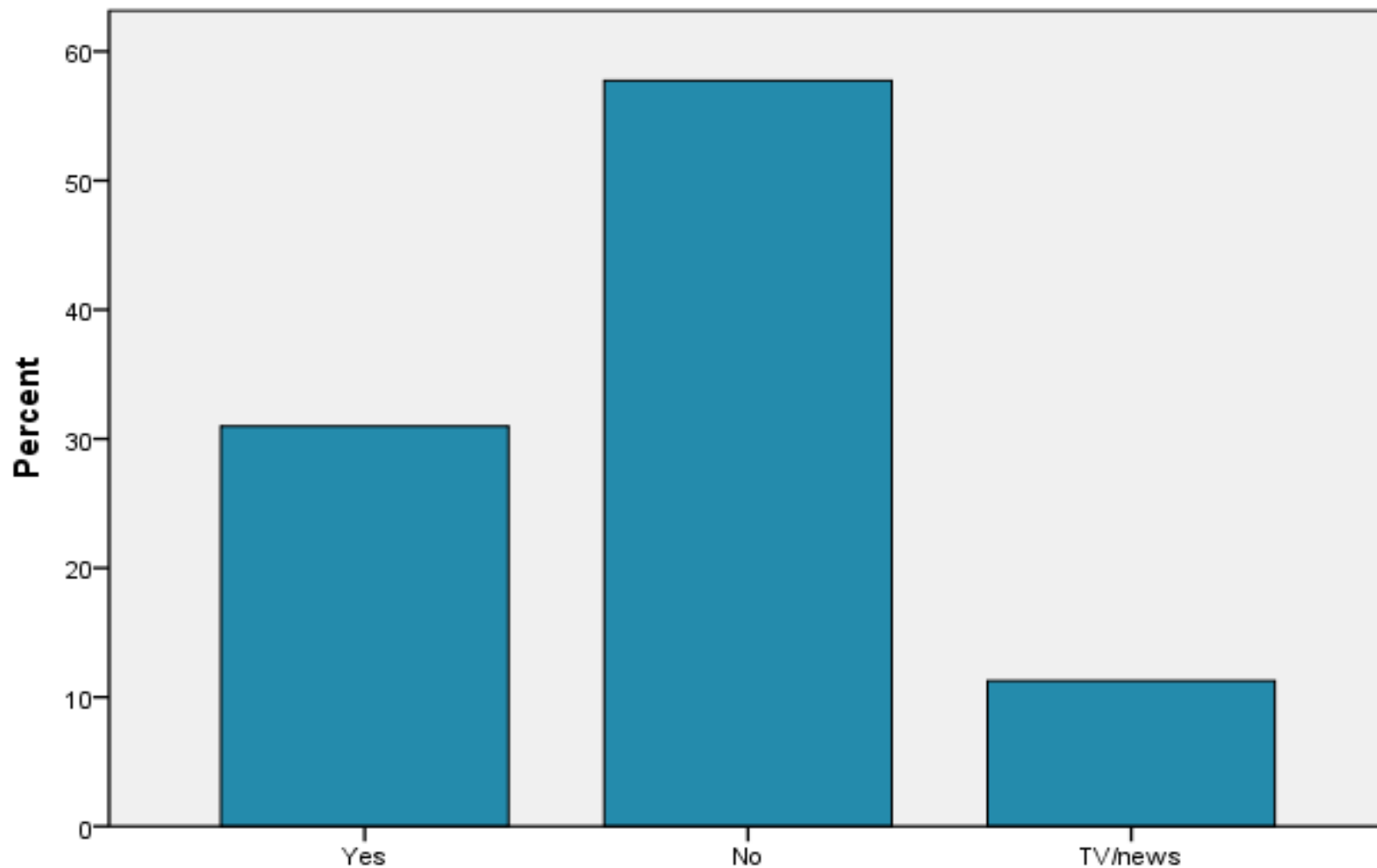
From whom did you experience sexual violence/abuse

- Unwanted sexual touching: 24%
- Harassment: 52%
- Attempted rape: 23%
- Rape: 6%



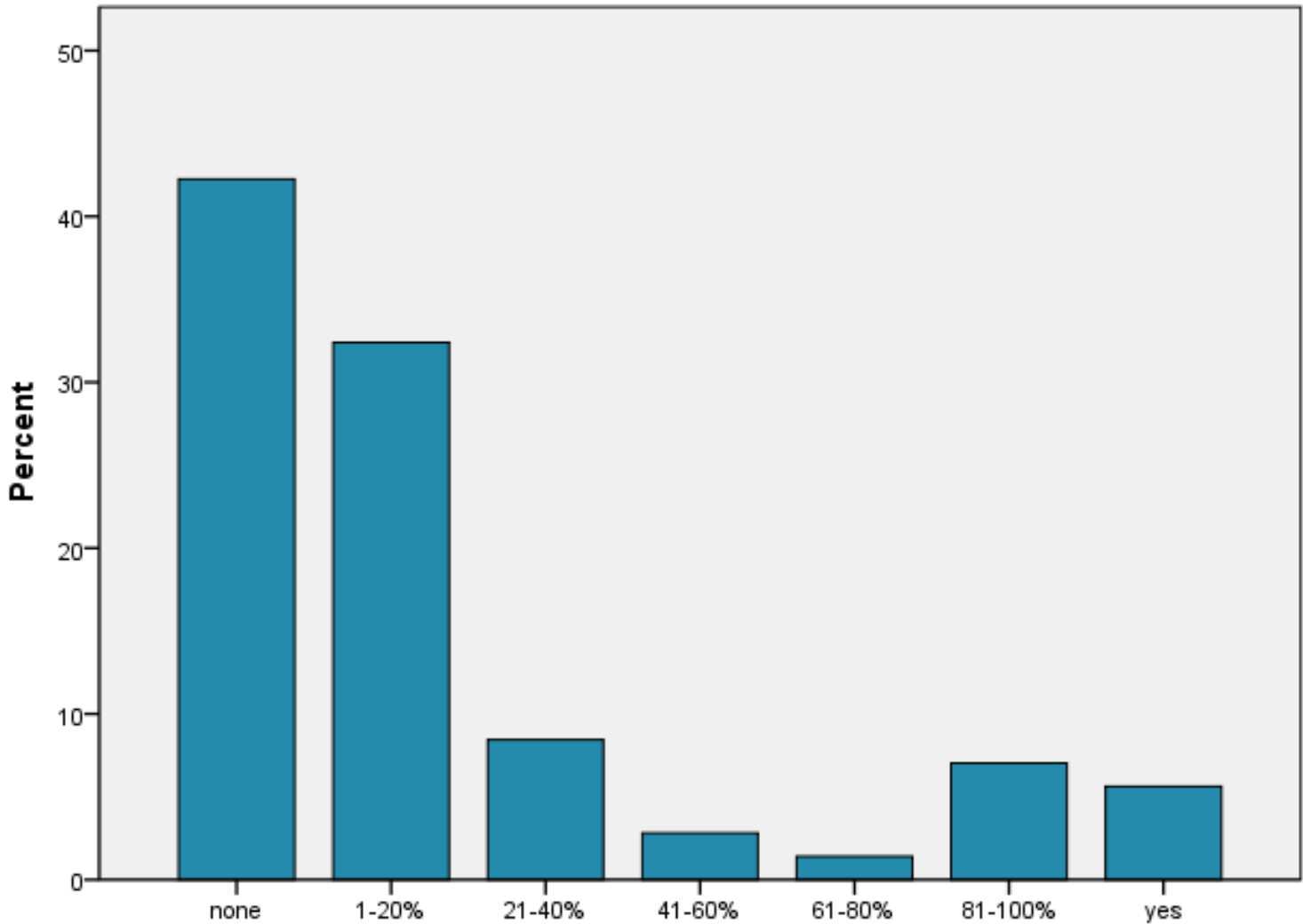
- friends
- everyone
- police
- coworkers
- police and clients
- clients

are you aware of other young women being forced to have sex against their wishes



VULNERABILITIES | PRIVATE

How many require Sexual Intercourse?



Percent of clients who require sexual intercourse

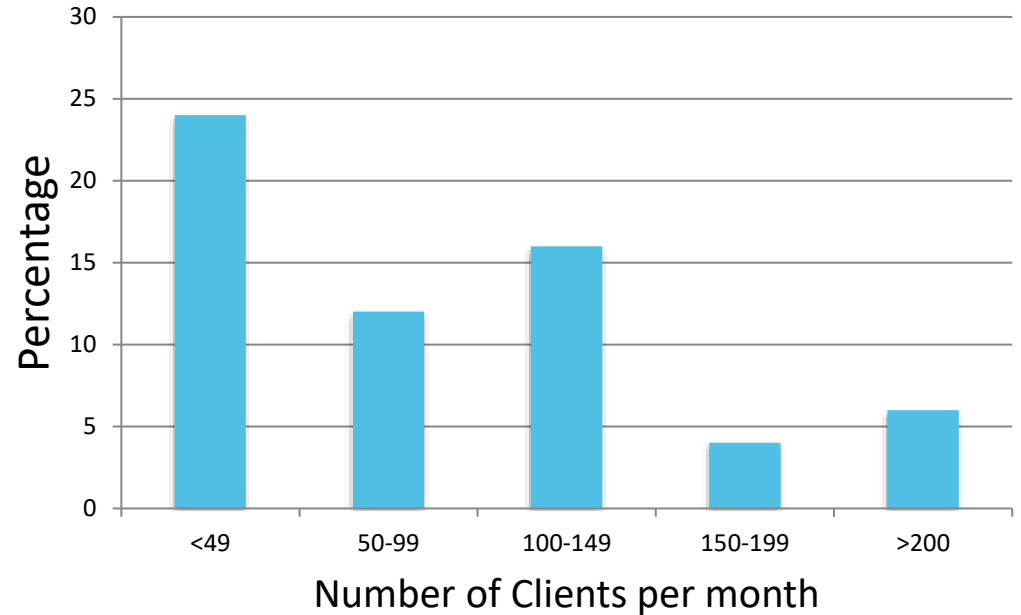
Location of sexual encounters

Guesthouse: 30
Massage parlor: 3
Both: 2

Age range: 16-87

30% of respondents who have sex with clients have foreign clients

Number of Clients per Month



Majority of foreign clients are Chinese and “Barang”

Awareness of sex work prior to entry

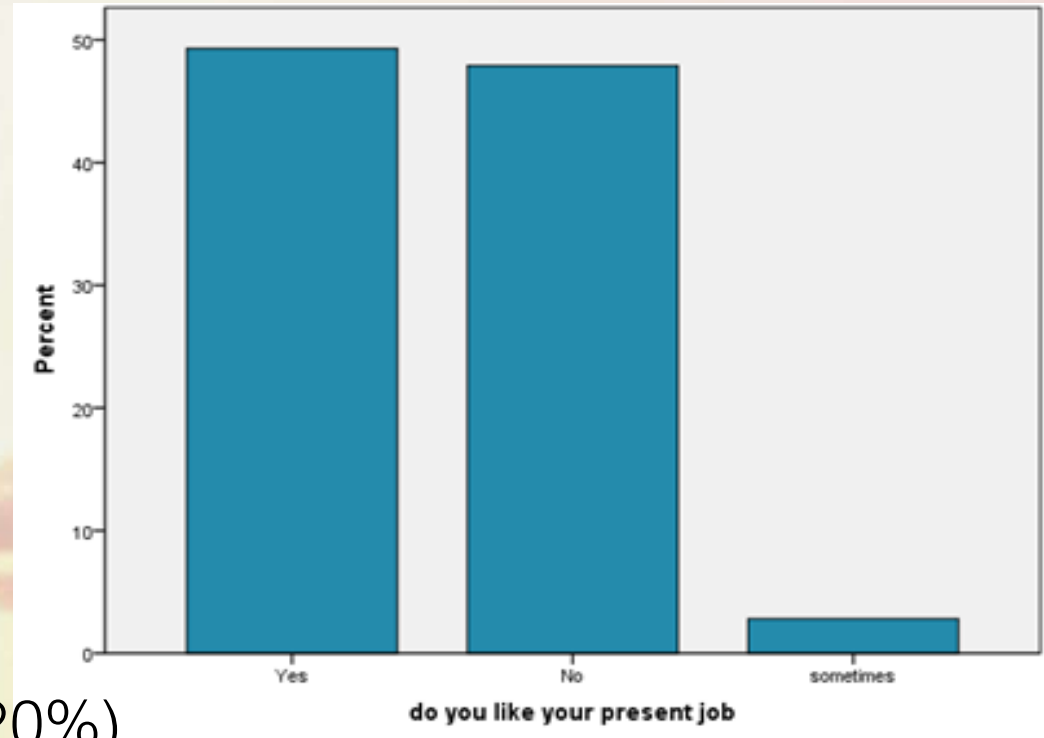
“People brought me here, just told me I work only to do massage. But it was not what they said, it is massage with sex in the working place. I normally have sex with clients at the guest house, not at my working place, but I do not like it.”

“Before I came to work here, I did not know that I would be required to do sexual services; now I know.”

(14/98 respondents had similar quotes)

WORK SATISFACTION

Do you like your present job?



Those who **DO NOT**:

- “I don’t have a choice” (20%)
- “People think we are not good girls” (20%)

Those who **DO**:

- “It is easy and relatively more money”, “It isn’t tiring” (28%)

WORK SATISFACTION

Would you recommend this job to a sister or friend?

- **89%** of respondents answered that they **would not recommend massage work** for these (top 3) reasons:



- Not a good job
- Not wanting others to have the same experiences as they have
- Not wanting others to know that they work there

“I only want to be wrong alone.”

“I chose the wrong job already...I do not want anyone to imitate me.”

“No one gives us value.”

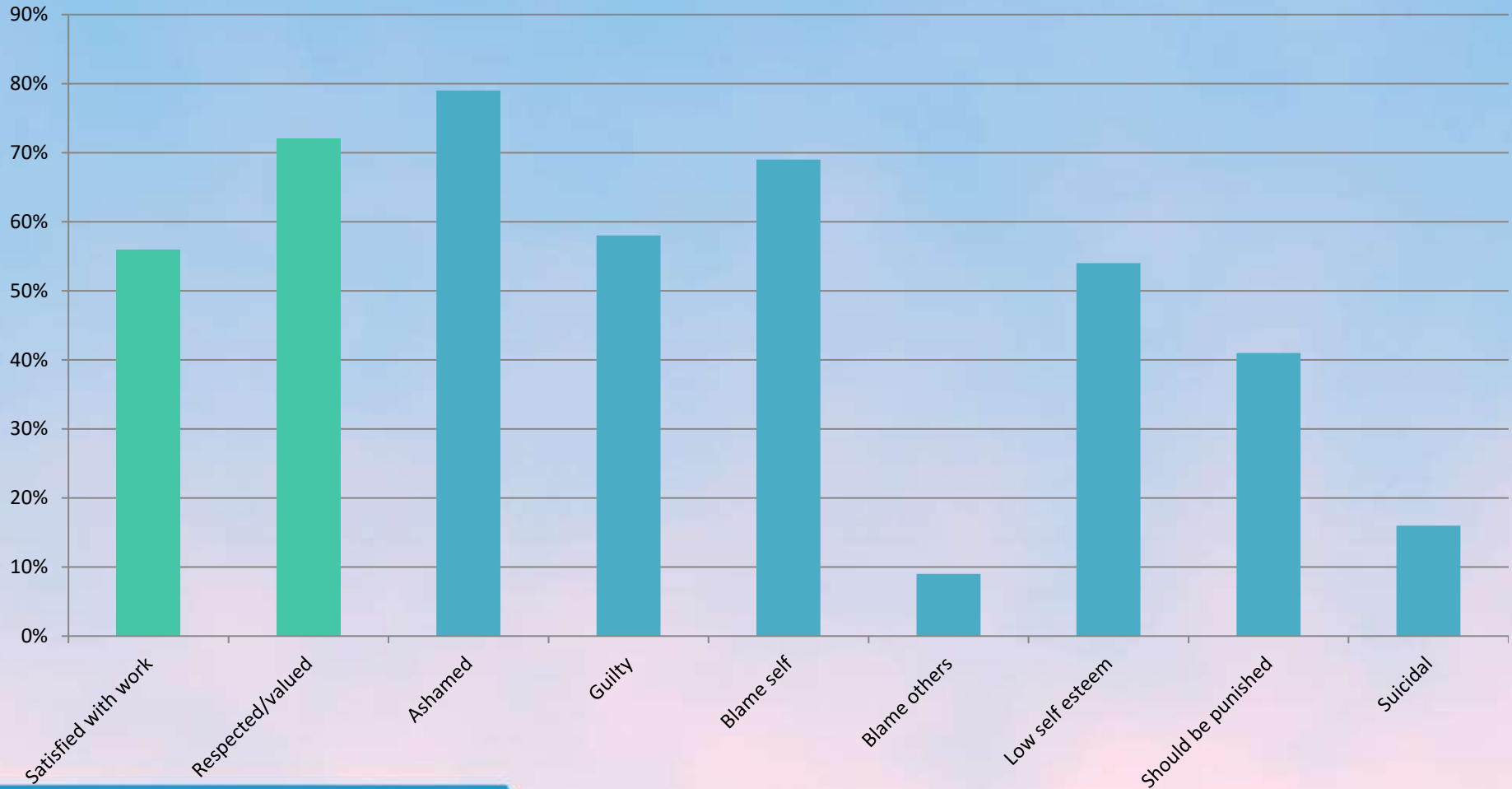
39% of respondents had been referred to the job by a friend (35%) or sibling (4%)

WORK SATISFACTION

Would you recommend this job to a sister or friend?

- 10% would recommend because:
 - lack of choice and/or poverty (6 women)
 - It is “easy/good” (2 women)
 - One respondent was involved in sex work and experiences sexual/physical violence

"OVER THE PAST YEAR, HAVE YOU FELT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK?"



EXISTENTIAL WELLBEING

"WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN TWO YEARS TIME?"

- 82% do not see themselves working in massage
- 35% have a vision for their future, with a specific job industry in mind.

Examples:

- Beauty salon, Restaurant industry, Tailoring
- 1 planned to still be working in massage
- 2 want to run their own massage parlors

"Since working here, I feel like I don't have a future."



EXISTENTIAL WELLBEING

ADVICE TO OTHER GIRLS

ENTERING THE MASSAGE INDUSTRY

DON'T!

"Do not come to work here, people around us do not value us. Please find another job instead." (21)

GENERAL LIFE ADVICE

"Every work is valuable, it depends on us. So we are the ones who make ourselves valuable, we help ourselves" (15)

"I want to share my idea to every girl and boy, go away from drugs." (10)

"I don't want to give them advice. I'd rather they decide by themselves."

WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

"I want them to know how to protect themselves from HIV when they have sex with clients."

"Girls should not drink alcohol and know how to protect themselves if they go with out customers." (12)

"I have to endure no matter what. Get up and stop trusting men from now on. Although men hurt you, you have to get up." (8)

"If I would give advice, I would advise that they should learn specific skills. As long as we have our own skill no one can look down on us." (6)

MESSAGES TO NGO COMMUNITY

Thank you! (25%)

“I want to say thank you very much for asking and knowing about my situation. It makes me happy that someone cares about me.”

Help!

“Can an NGO help me to find another job?”

“Please educate all the girls who work in the massage places about healthy and safe sex.”

“Please help the women who suffer.”

No more discrimination

“No girl wants this job. Don’t look down on us.”

“I want Cambodian men to value and respect massage girls.”

“Please do not discriminate against massage girls because we are not all bad.”

សូមអរគុណអ្នក

Thank You!