

Working in intellectual Disability Services in New Zealand: An overview of current research

**A paper presented to the NZASID Conference,
August 26-27, Hamilton, 2009**

**Nancy Higgins, Teresa Evans-Turner, Paul Milner,
Brigit Mirfin-Vietch, Sue Gates, & Adelaide Collins.**

Outline of presentation about Phase One of our Project (50 minutes)

- **Introduction (Nancy - 15min)**
- **Staff Demographics (Teresa - 20min)**
- **Job Satisfaction and Staff Characteristics/Job Characteristics (Paul - 20min)**
- **Questions (Team, including Brigit & Adelaide)**

Working in intellectual disability services: Staff retention and turnover.

- **Our project (2007-2010):**

Working in intellectual disability services: Staff retention and turnover

- **Research Questions**

1. What are the workforce issues for support staff, and how can staff turnover rates and retention be improved?
2. What are residential support staff characteristics, employment conditions, job coping strategies, stressors, and job satisfaction levels?

Working in intellectual disability services: Staff retention and turnover.

Phase I

- A demographic, working conditions, and job satisfaction survey for support staff in ten participating services.
- A national survey of all residential service agencies about the working conditions of residential support staff.
- Policy and document collection/analysis in the ten participating services.

Working in intellectual disability services: Staff retention and turnover.

Phase II

- Case studies of 3 support staff in each of participating services, interviewed 4 times a year.
- Key informant interviews in services. These 'key informants' will be interviewed one to two times for one hour.

Working in intellectual disability services: Staff retention and turnover

Phase III

- Analyse Information from the first two phases
- Report to 32 focus groups and discuss
- Write final report

Introduction

Project's roots:

- **High turnover of frontline support staff around the world (for decades! (Lakin & Bruninks, 1981)**
- **Increasing number of service users, and decreasing pool of workers (USA: about 530, 750 Support Workers, 900,000 additional needed each year by 2020) (Hewitt & Larson, 2007)**
- **Research says support staff may experience inadequate recognition, high stress, limited support and training, and then burnout (Skirrow & Hatton, 2007)**
- **Independent, contextual, multi-method and in-depth research needed (Hatton, Rose & Rose, 2004)**

But some support staff are happy in, and stay in their jobs, why?

Could it be because of their:

- Characteristics**
- Their coping strategies**
- Training**
- The Agency**

What does the International Research say?:

Larson & Lakin (1999) (USA) (Longitudinal study): Four factors associated with turnover (43%/48%)

- 1. Length of time that home has been in operation (or is it the clarity of the service's goals and objectives)**
- 1. Service user characteristics (Later studies state that coping strategies and the support which staff receive may be more important (Mitchell & Hastings, 2001; Robertson, 2005))**
- 1. Supervisor's experience (or is it the type and availability of the relationship/supervision)**
- 1. Pay, Benefits, Leave, and Promotional opportunities**

What does the International Research say?:

Hatton et al (2001) (UK) (n=450)

What's the priority for those who intend to leave their job?

4 Factors for intended turnover

- 1. Work satisfaction**
- 2. Job strain**
- 3. Younger staff**
- 4. Easier subjective labour conditions**

Job Strain

Hatton et al. (1999a): found that job strain was due to:

- **Work-Home conflict (e.g. hours of work)**
- **Lack of staff support and resources (e.g. supervision)**
- **Bureaucracy (e.g. small versus large agencies)**
- **Role ambiguity**
- **Wishful thinking versus practical coping strategies (Hatton et al, 1999)**

Annual turnover Rates in NZ agencies, 2007

Ranged from 0% - 50%
Overall Mean was 17.8%

Micro Agencies (less than 20) = 16.9%

Small Agencies (21-100) = 15.9%

Medium Agencies (101-500) = 22.9%

Large Agencies (500+) = 18.2%

(Higgins et al, 2008)

Some New Zealand Research

- **Commissioned Surveys (e.g. NRID)**
- **Parsons et al (2004a, b, c): survey of support workers in disability services in general.**
- **Low pay, training issues, recruitment and retention issues. Affecting service quality**
- **Bennie (1993) identified critical issue that staff need support, supervision, and training**
- **O'Brien & Thesling (1999). Study of de-institutionalisation of 54 people. Staff training needed.**

Participants commented that turnover disadvantage to community living

What's good about the job?

Nankerviss (2006) need to build staff's

- **Empowerment**
- **Feelings of Choice**
- **Feelings of Competence**
- **Feelings of Meaningfulness**
- **Feelings of Progress**

What's good about the job?

Social support from colleagues and this predicted greater satisfaction with life & less stress (Hatton & Emerson, 1993)

Working with people with an intellectual disability:

- **Increased social life**
- **Personal growth**
- **Positive Relationships with people with an intellectual disability**
- **Raised sensitivity to others**

(Hastings & Horne, 2004)

What's good about the job

Marquis & Jackson (2000): Quality of life for service users is dependent upon quality relationships with staff, which may not be emphasized in job descriptions, which instead emphasize tasks and not relationships

**Human Service work is more than doing a job
Humanitarian values important: Caring,
enthusiasm, positive, interested in interacting
with people**

Who are the stayers: Getting rewards from social relationships

Adams Equity Theory=

A type of justice based on individuals trying to “maintain fairness in their social relationships” .. In that their perceived inputs equal the rewards.

(Disley, Hatton, & Dagnan, 2009)

***Working in Intellectual Disability Services in
New Zealand.
An overview of current research.***

Part Two: Staff Demographics

**Presentation to the NZASID Conference
August 26-27th, 2009, Hamilton.**

Teresa Evans-Turner

Outline of presentation

- **Background Information**
 - 1) **Basic Staff Demographics**
 - 2) **The Understanding Staff Have of their Role**
 - 3) **Staff Work Hours**
 - 4) **Staff Training and Qualifications**
 - 5) **Staff Work History**
 - 6) **The Worksite**
 - 7) **Sources of Support**
 - 8) **Verbal and Physical Abuse Experienced by Staff**

Agency Survey Results

- **33 agencies completed an agency questionnaire - 33% response rate**
- **Participating agencies supported approximately 4168 service users and employed a total of 6067 staff**

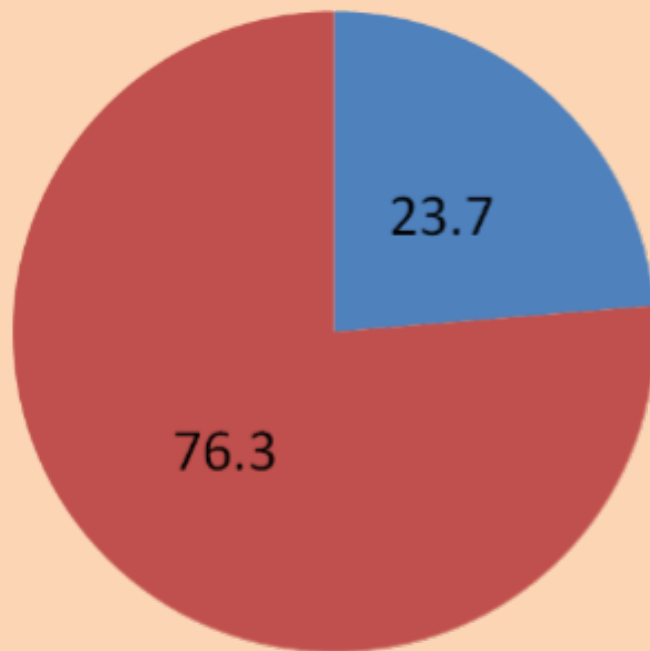
Staff Survey Results

- **6133 questionnaires distributed to staff in 10 participating services**
- **1267 questionnaires returned by staff from the 10 agencies**
- **20.65 % response rate**

Basic Staff Demographics

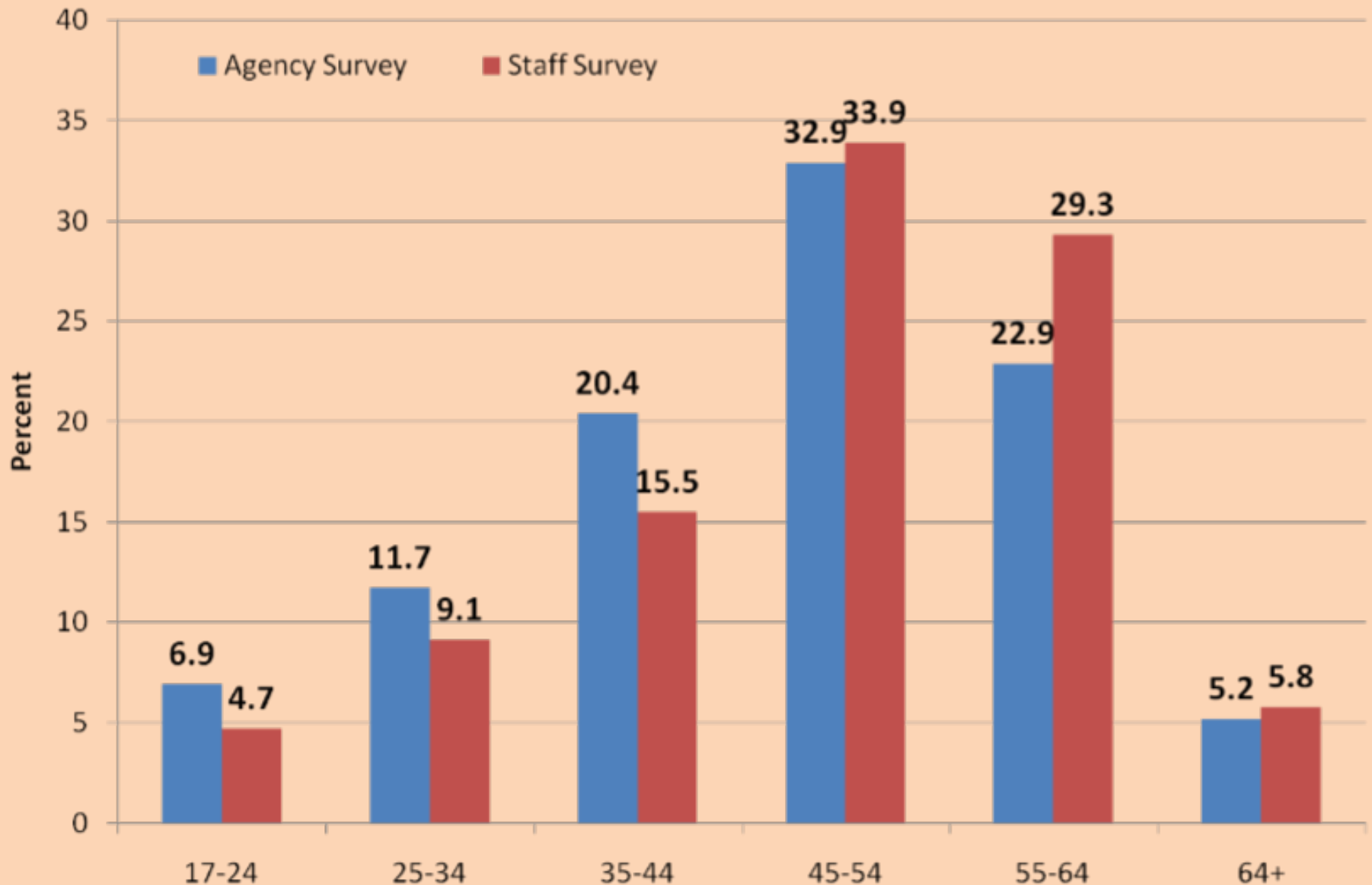
Staff Survey Results - Sex

Sex of residential support staff
n=1267 in 10 services

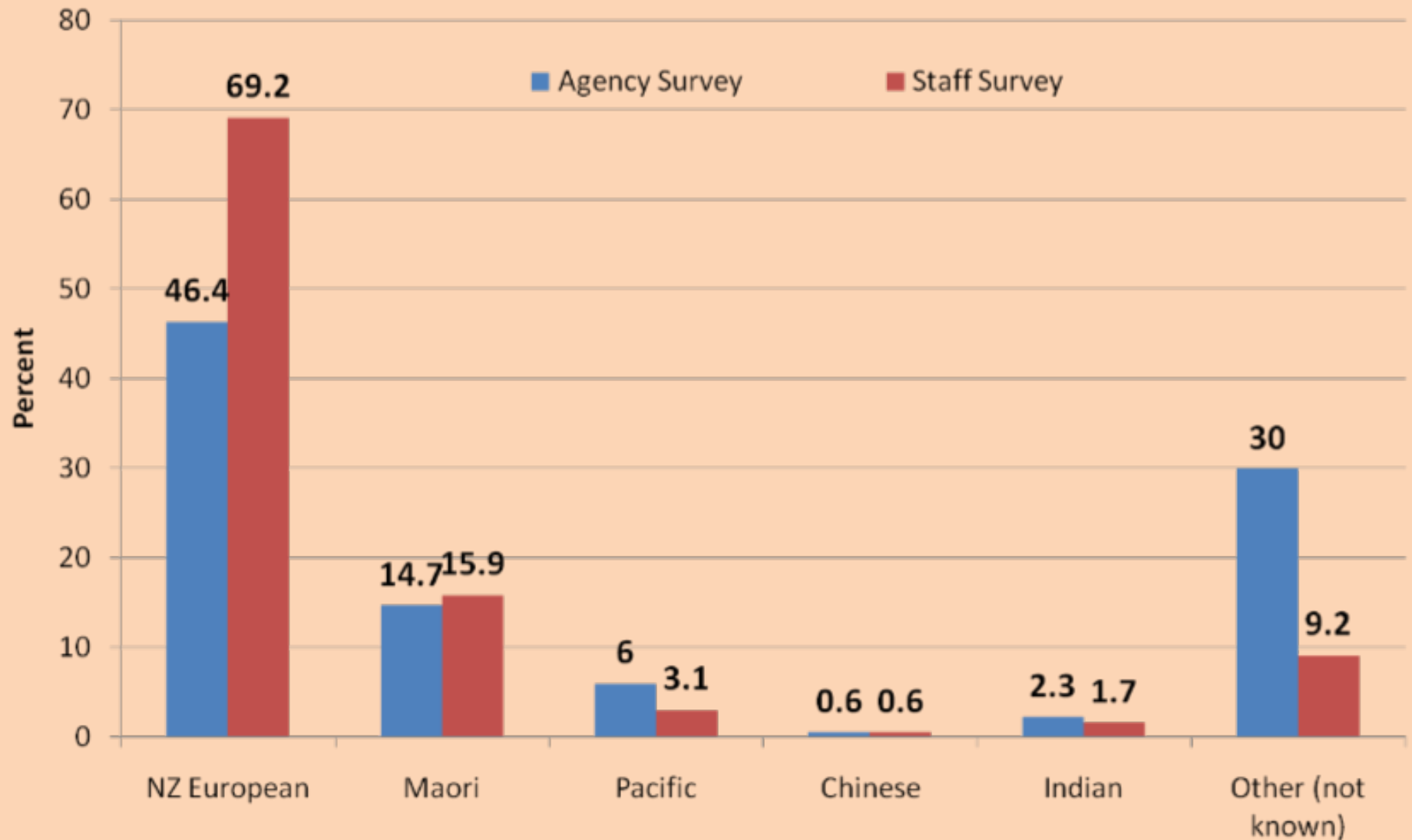


Male	300 (23.7%)
Female	967 (76.3%)
M/F Ratio	0.32

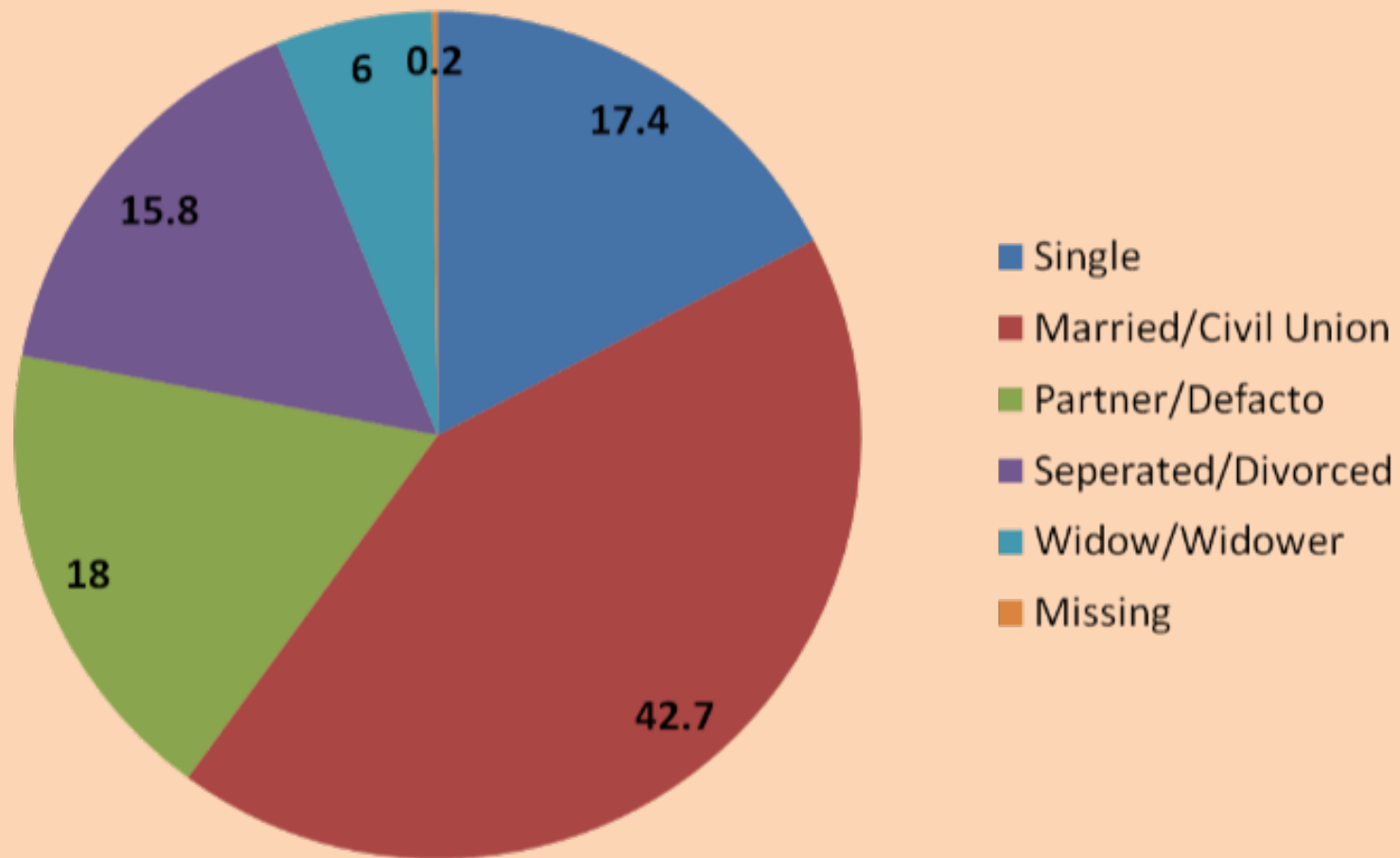
Age of Support Workers



Ethnicity of Support Workers

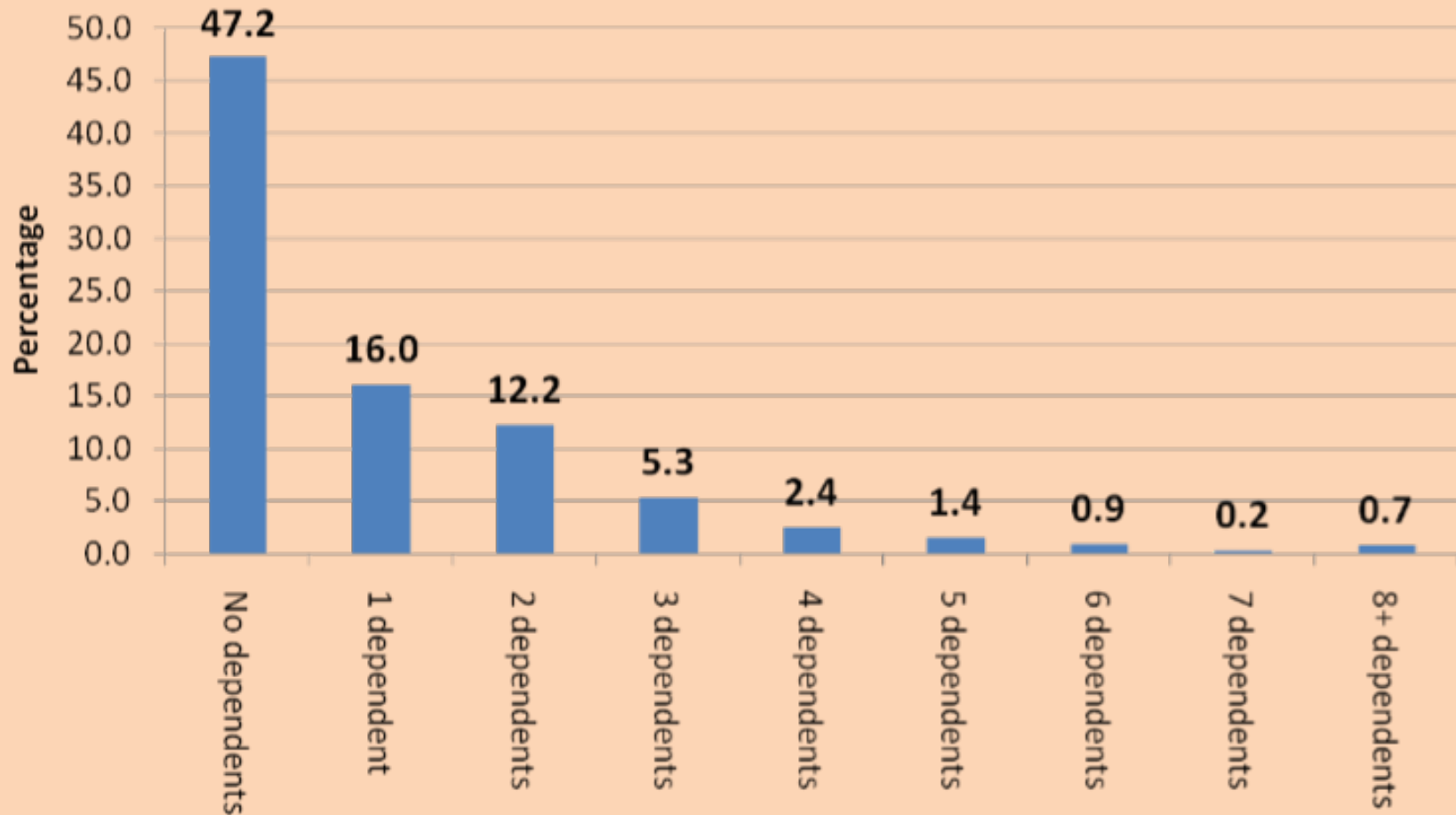


Relationship Status of Support Staff (n=1267)

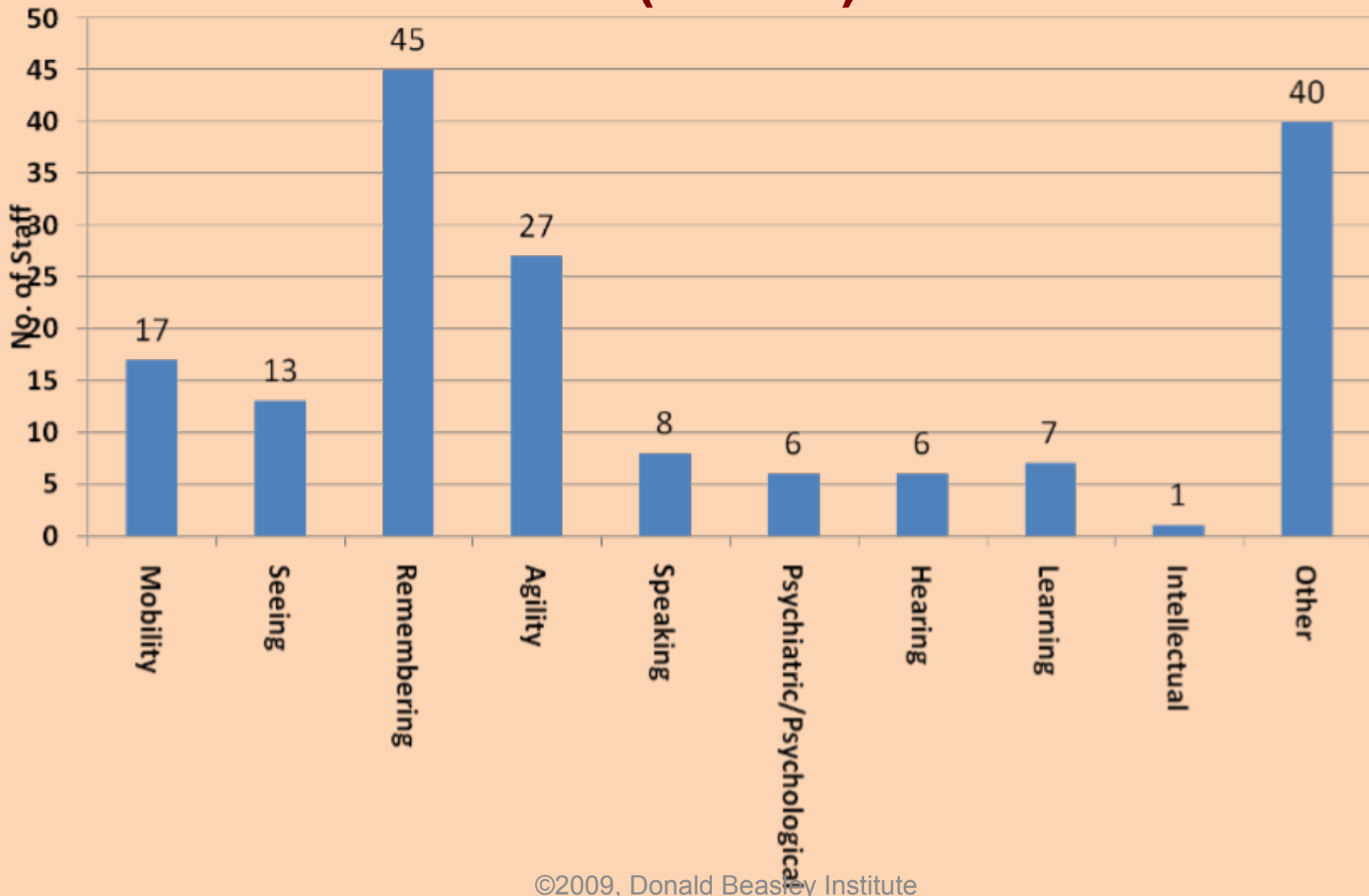


Number of Dependents

On average, staff supported about one dependent
($M=1.00$; $SD=1.53$) ($n=1095$)

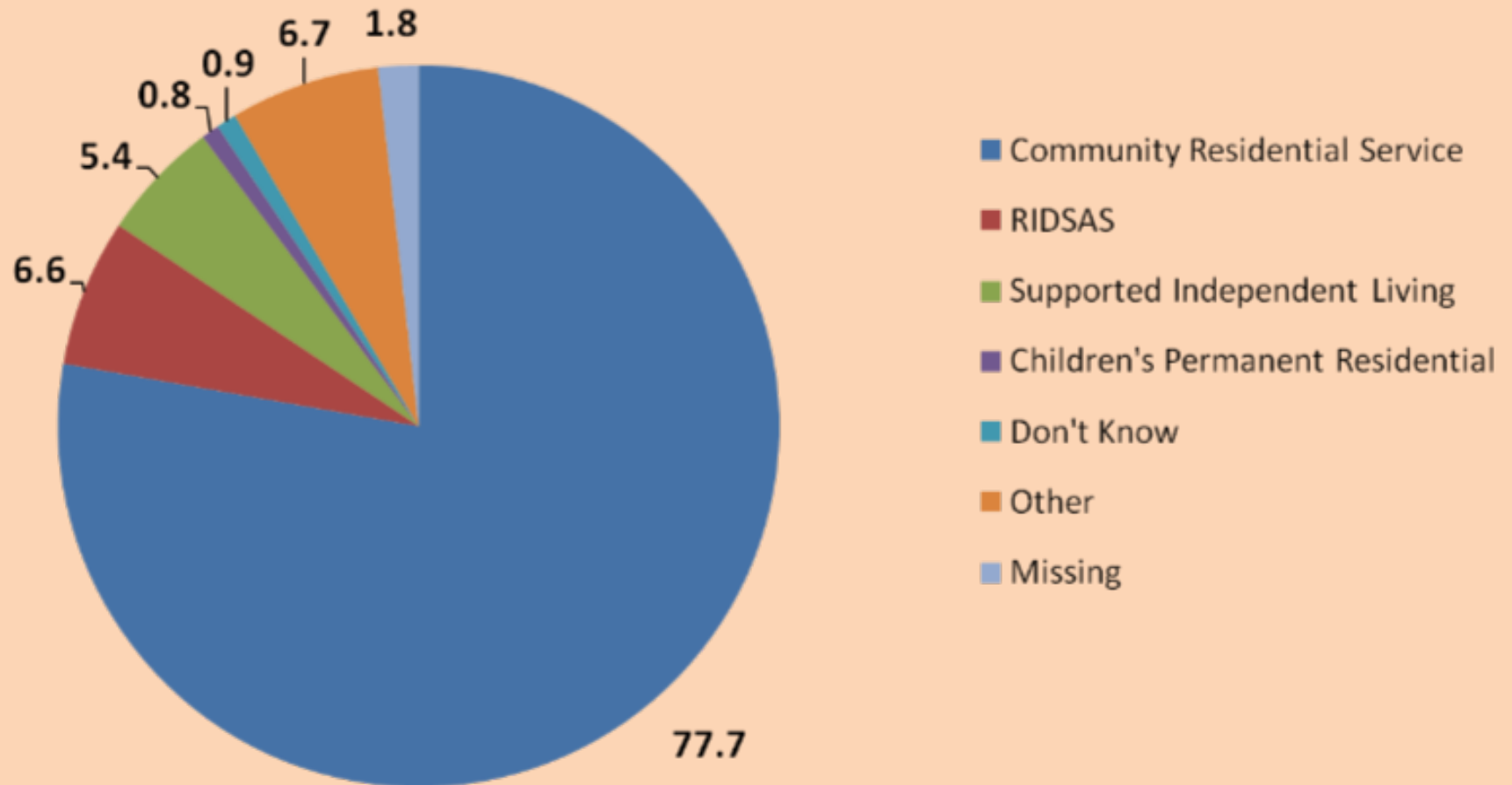


Disability Status of Support Staff (n=170)

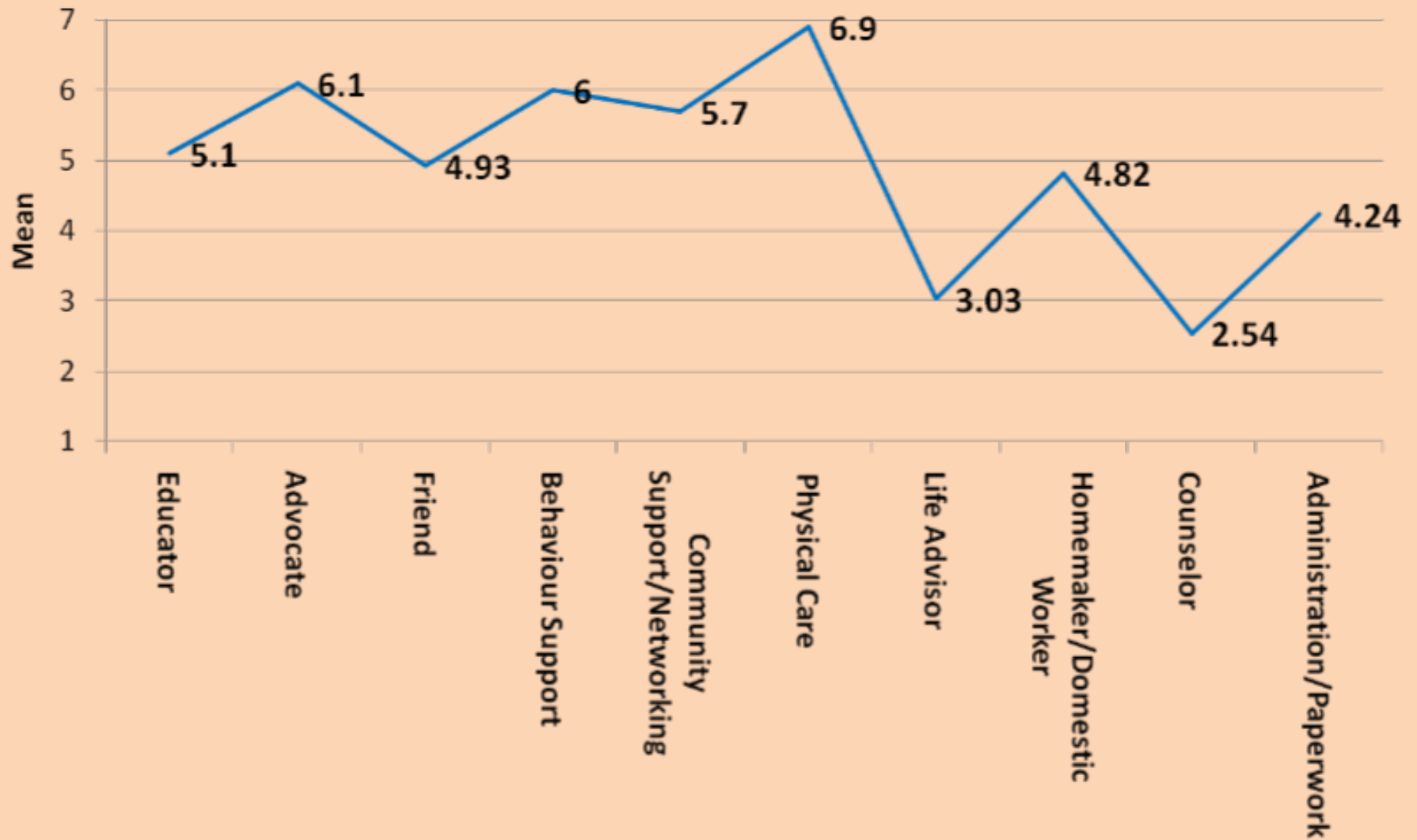


The Understanding Staff Have of their Role

What type of service is your main job?



Most Important Support Roles

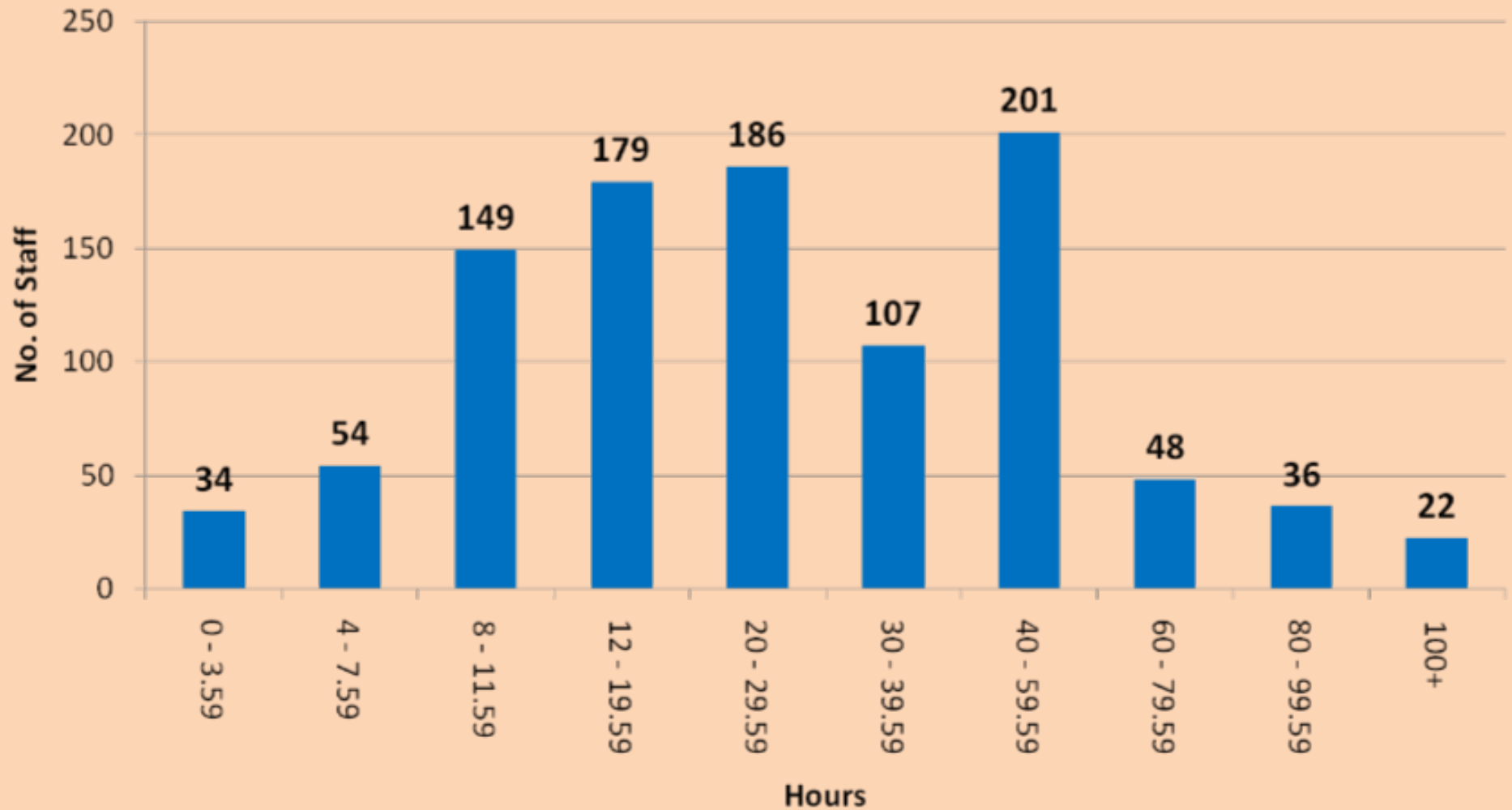


Staff Work Hours

Contracted vs Actual Hours Worked

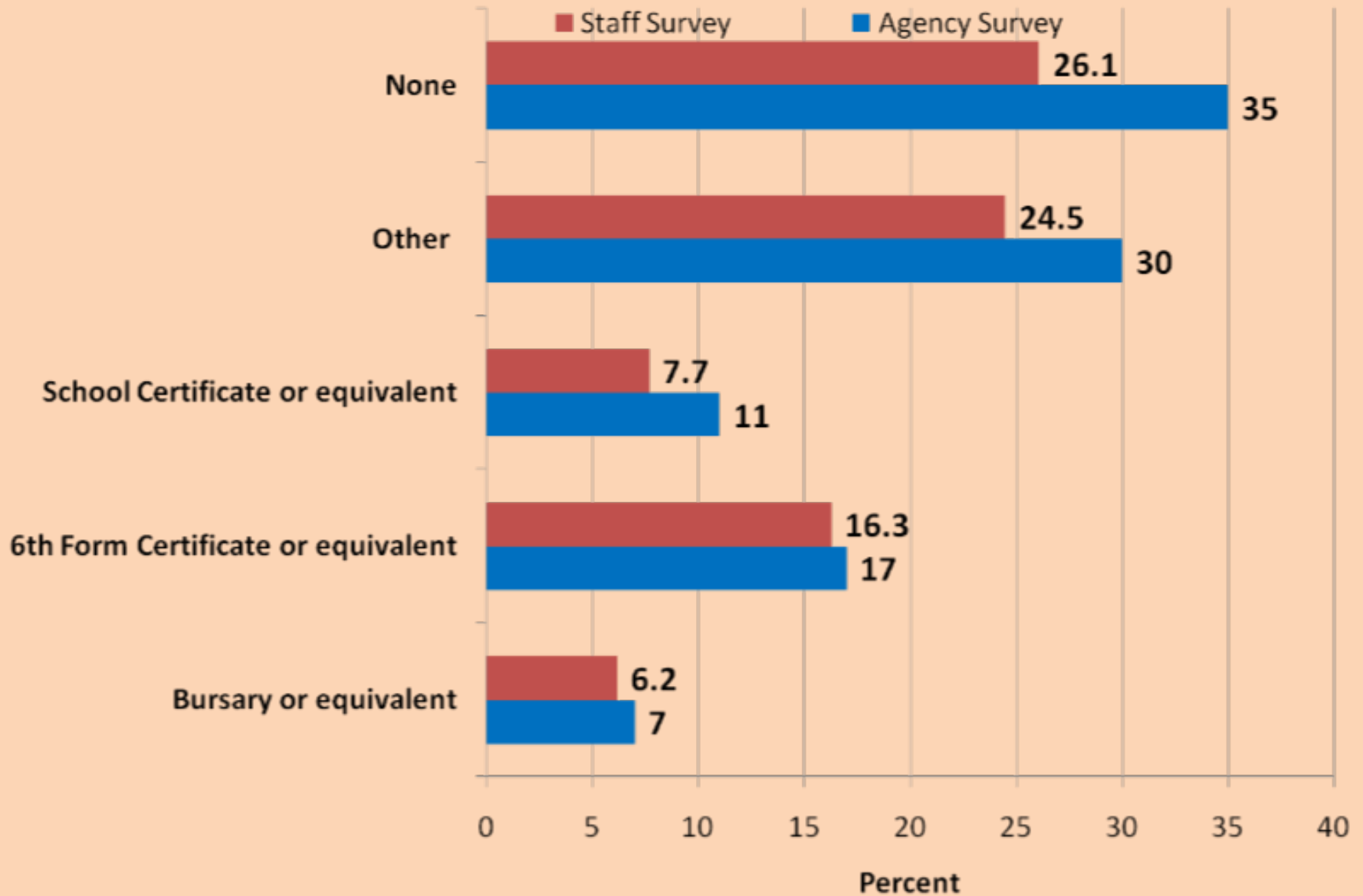
	Contracted to work		Actually worked last week	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
How many awake hours you are...	30.6	20.6	34.2	22.5
How many sleepovers you are...	3.5	13.0	3.2	3.8
How many split shifts you are...	2.6	17.8	2.2	2.9
How many days in a row are you...	4.3	2.4	4.9	3.4

Number of Hours Worked Last Week (n=1061)

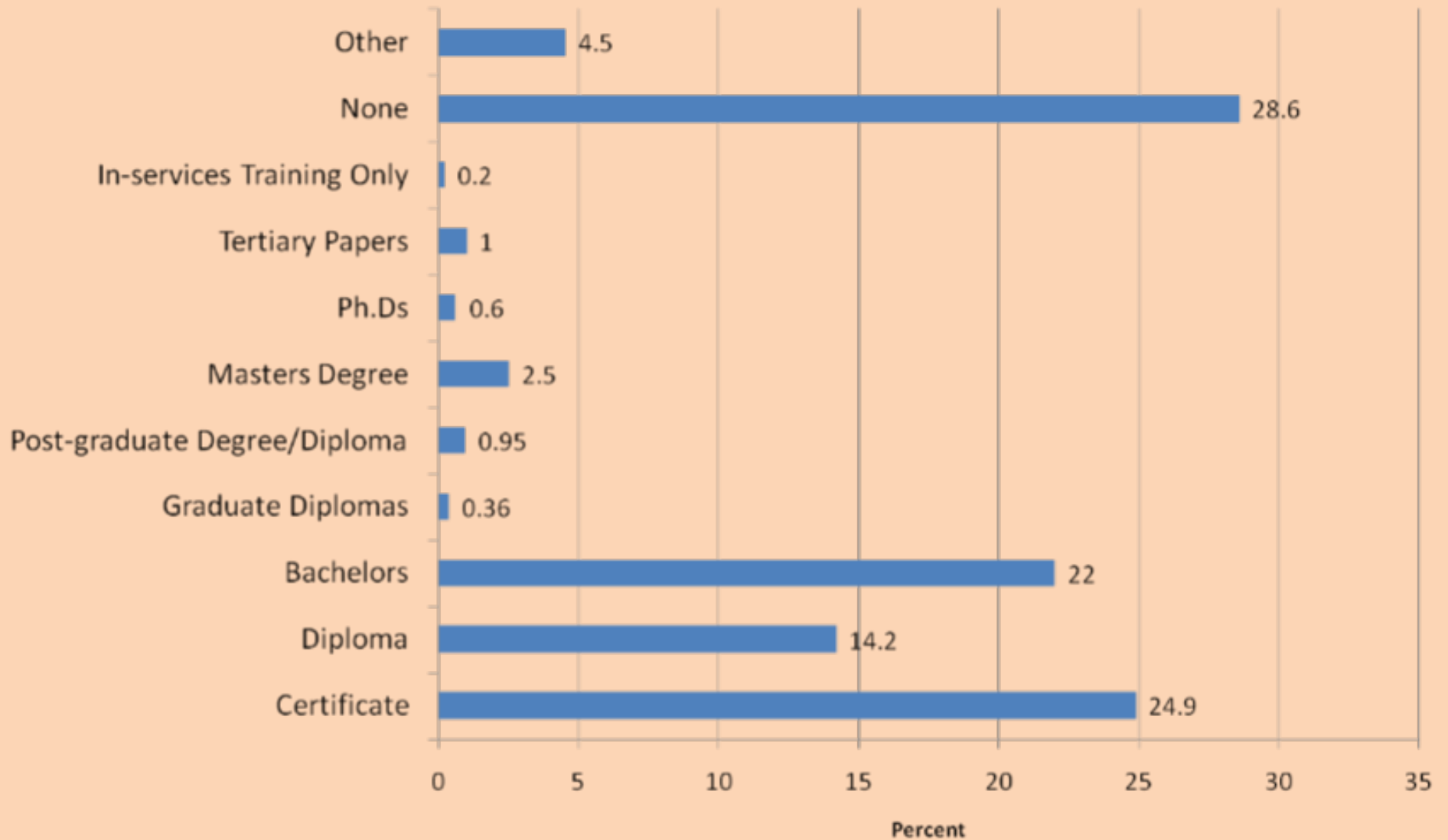


Staff Training and Qualifications

Secondary Qualifications

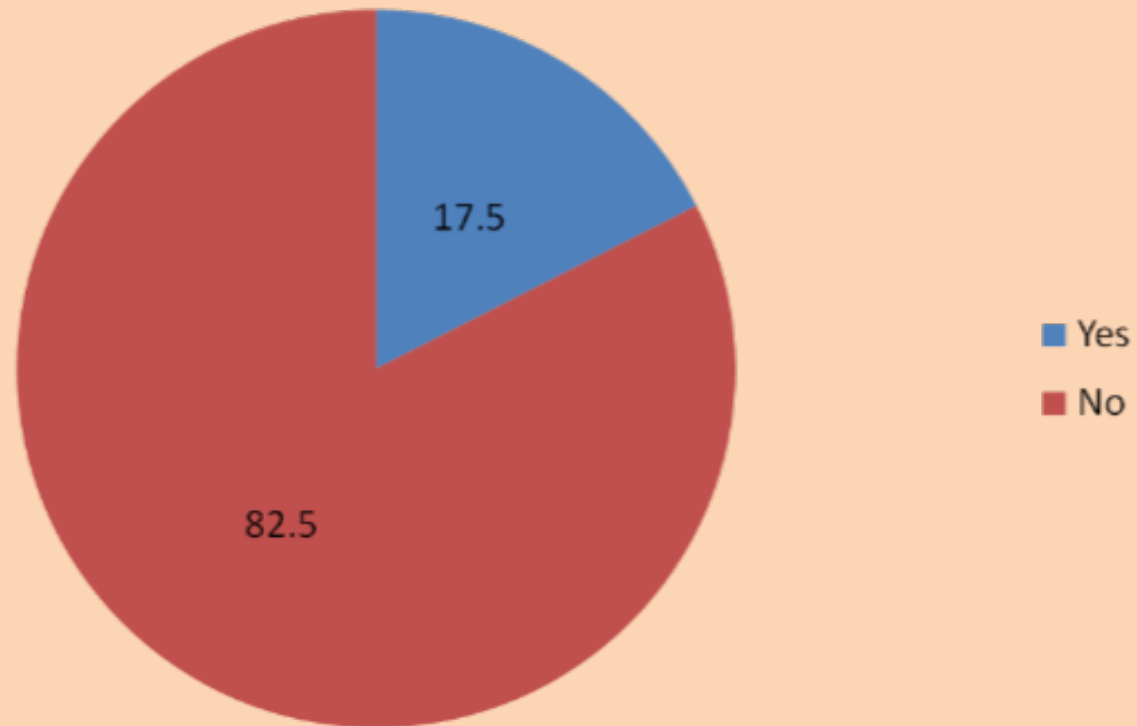


Tertiary Qualifications



Human Services Diploma or Certificate

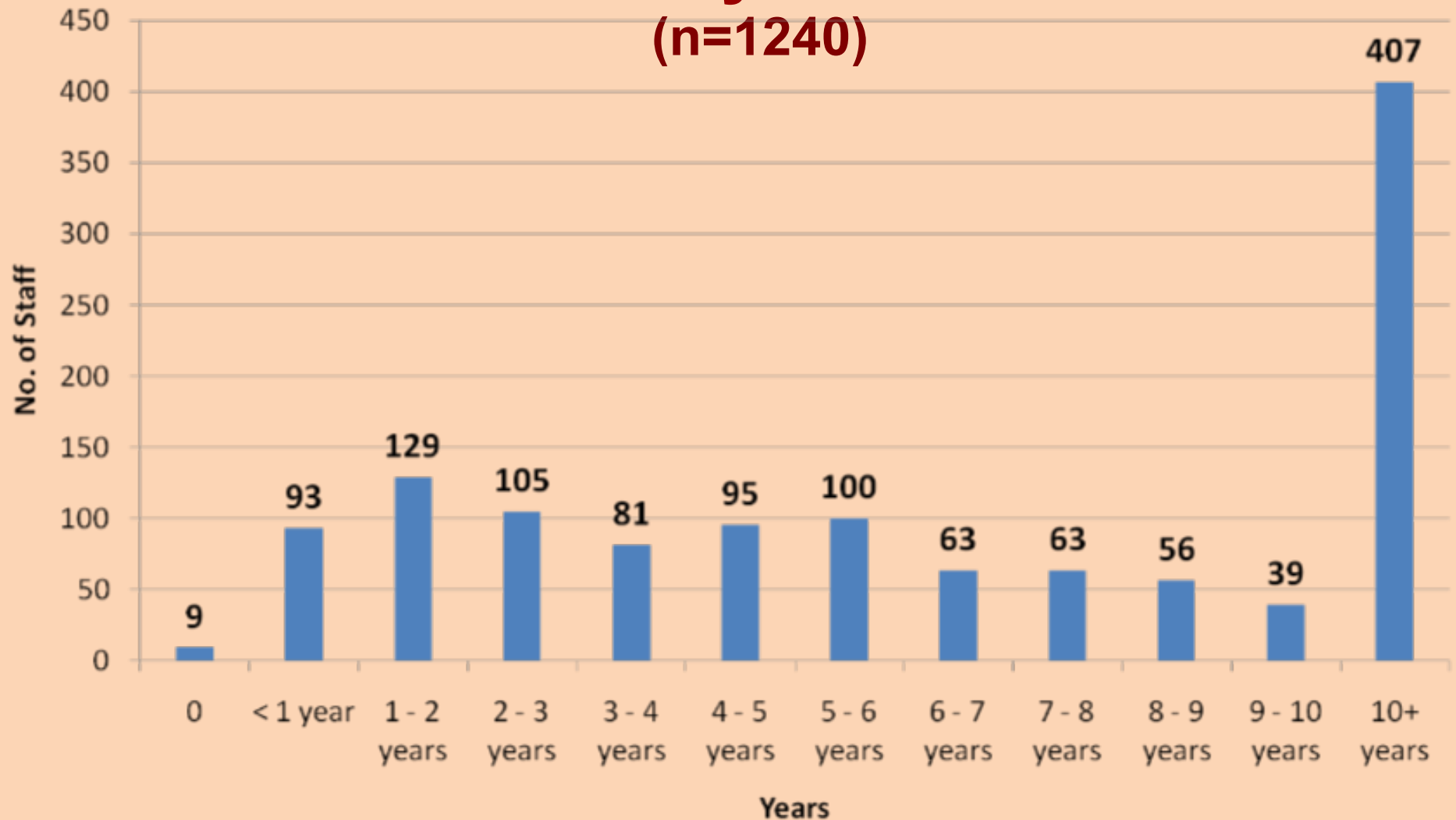
**17.5% of respondents had a
Human Services Diploma or Certificate**



Staff Work History

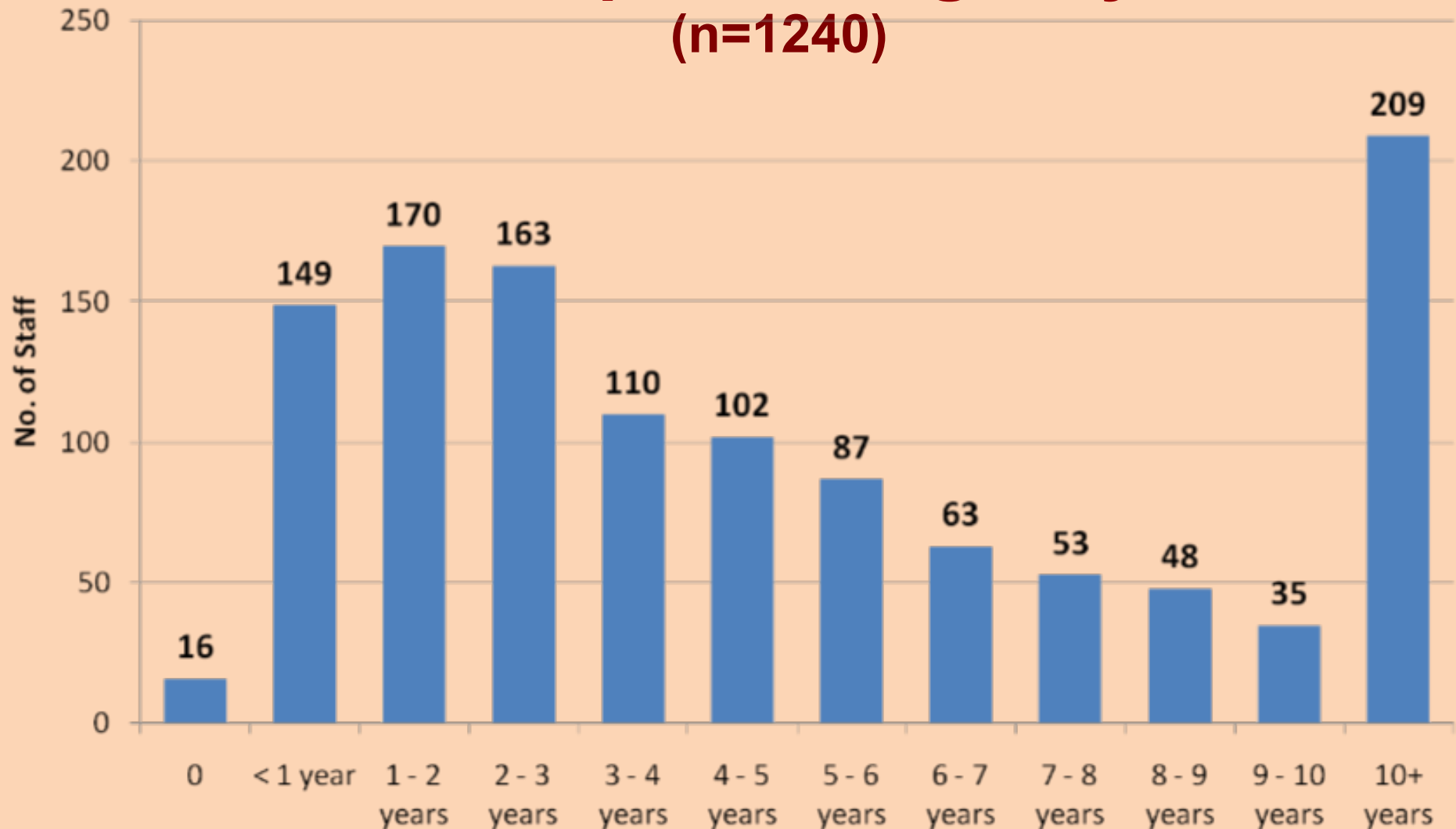
Number of years staff had worked in disability services

(n=1240)



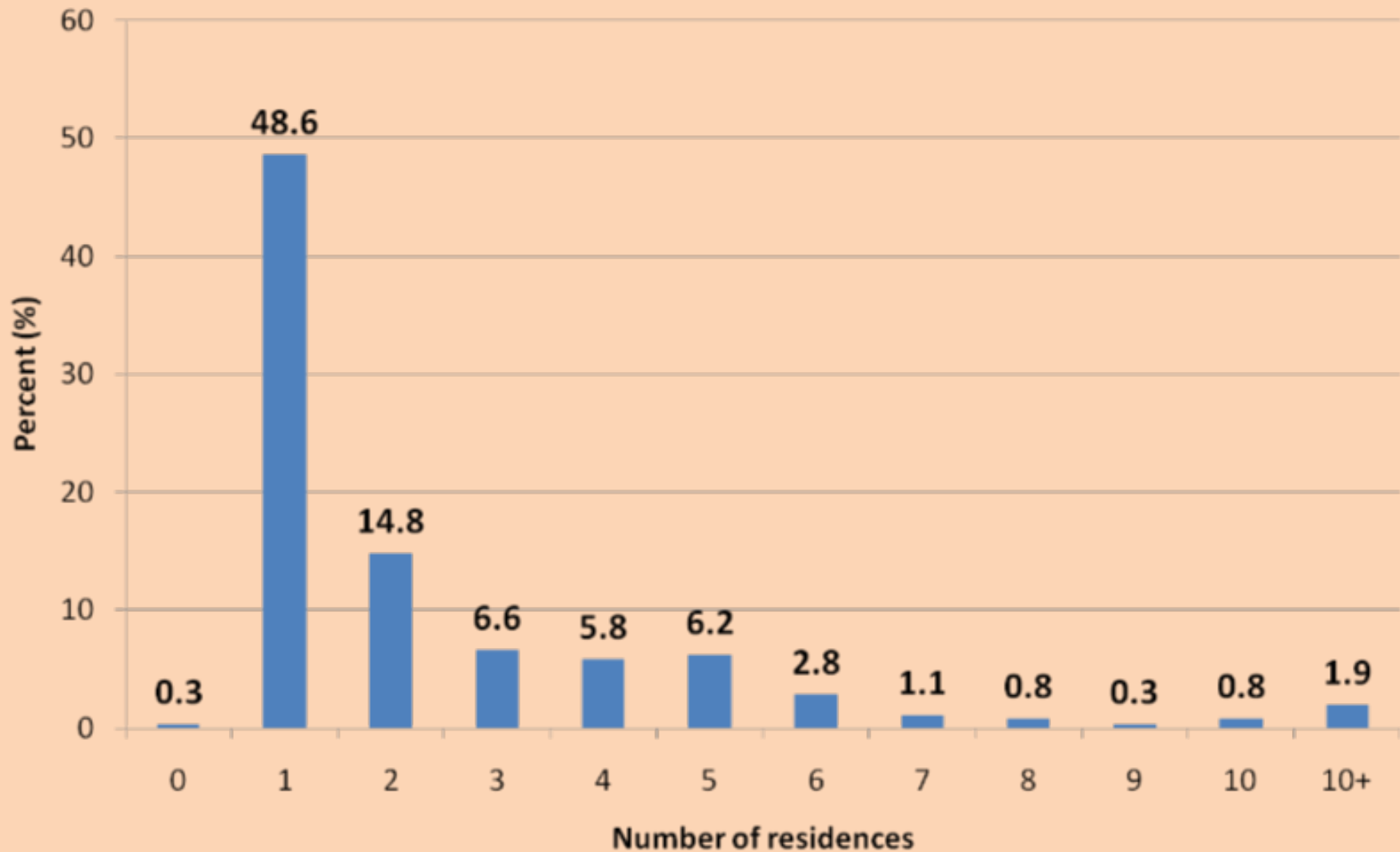
Number of years staff had worked at their present agency

(n=1240)

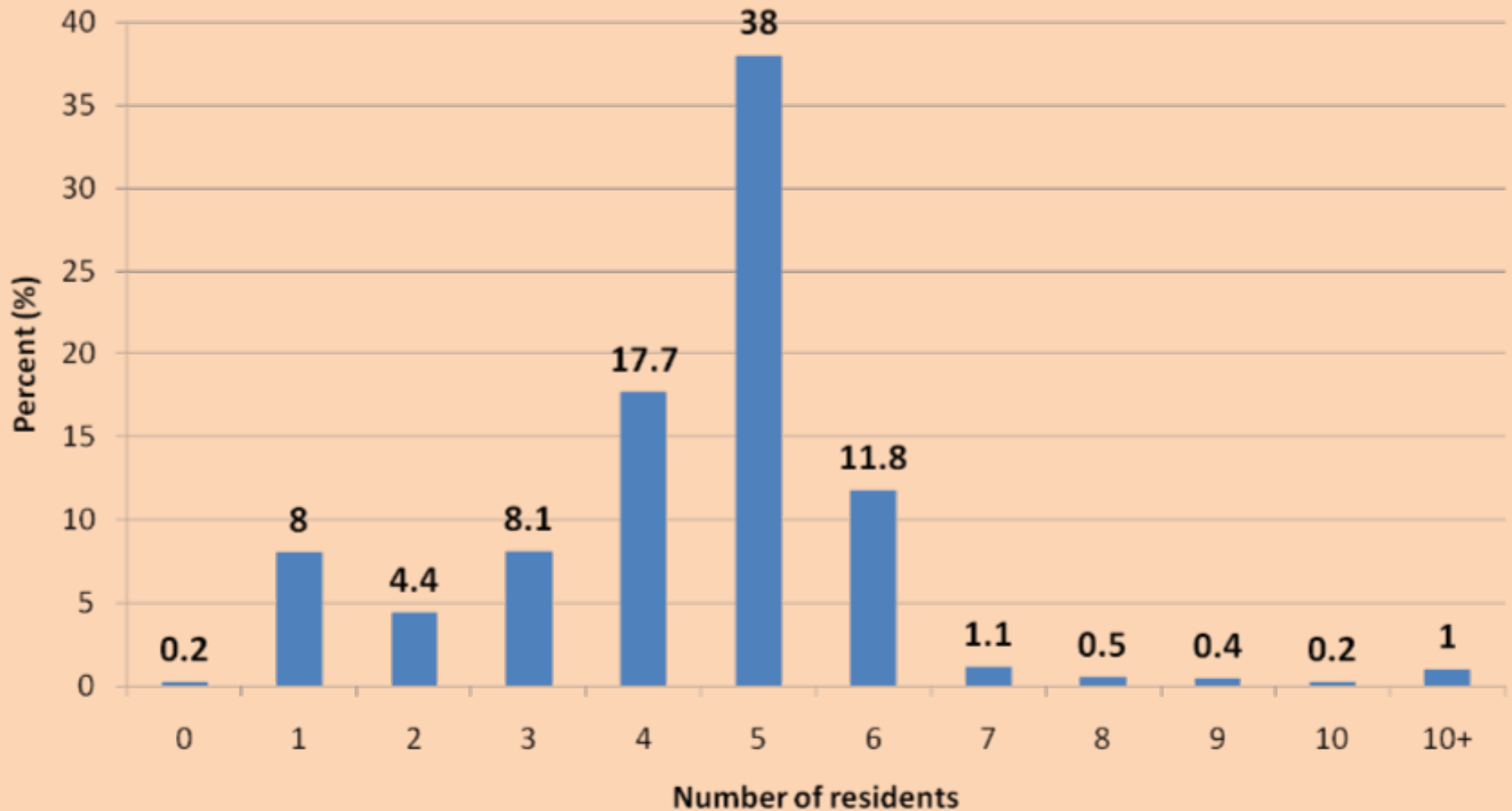


The Work Site

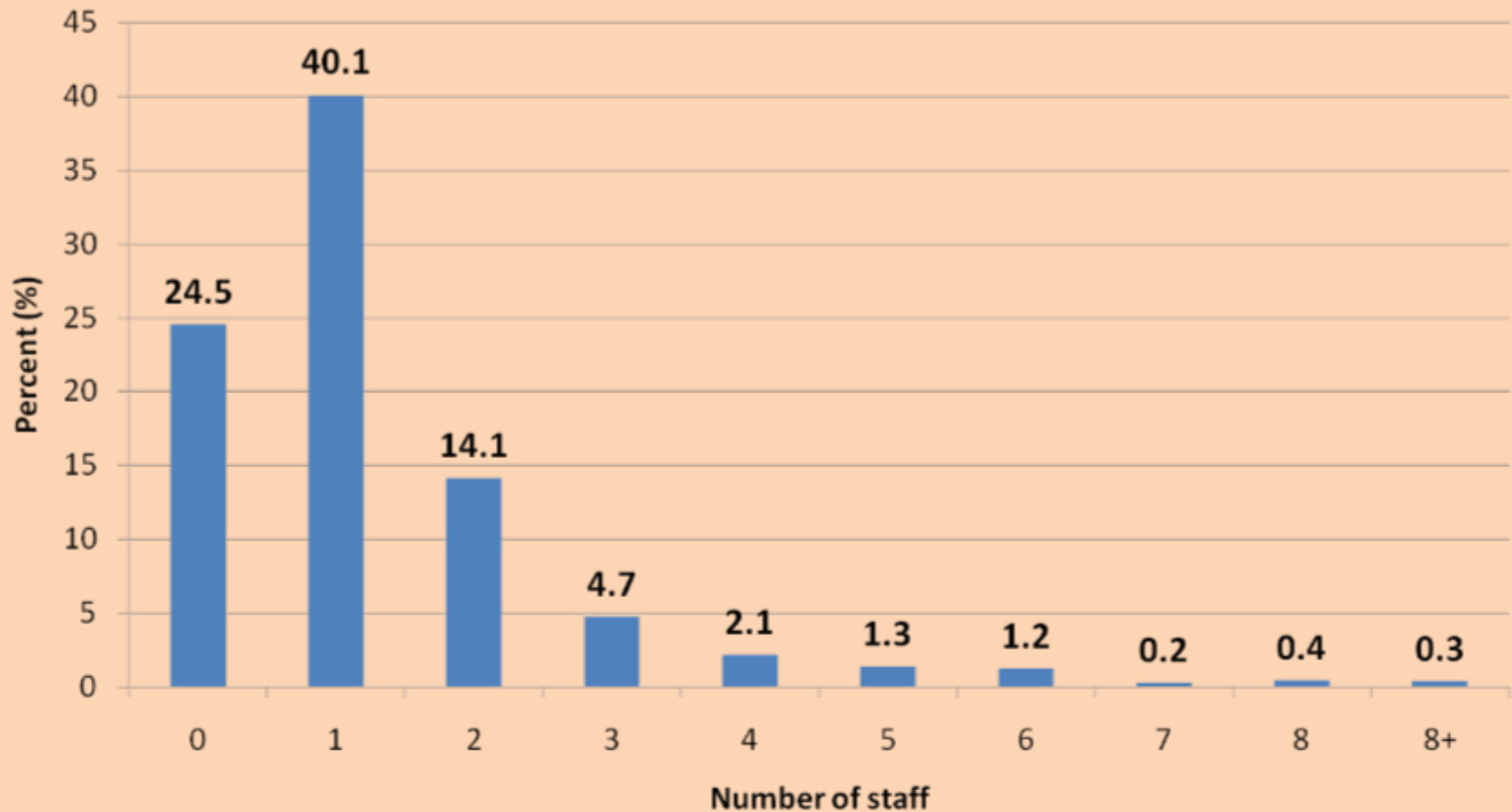
Number of residences staff work in



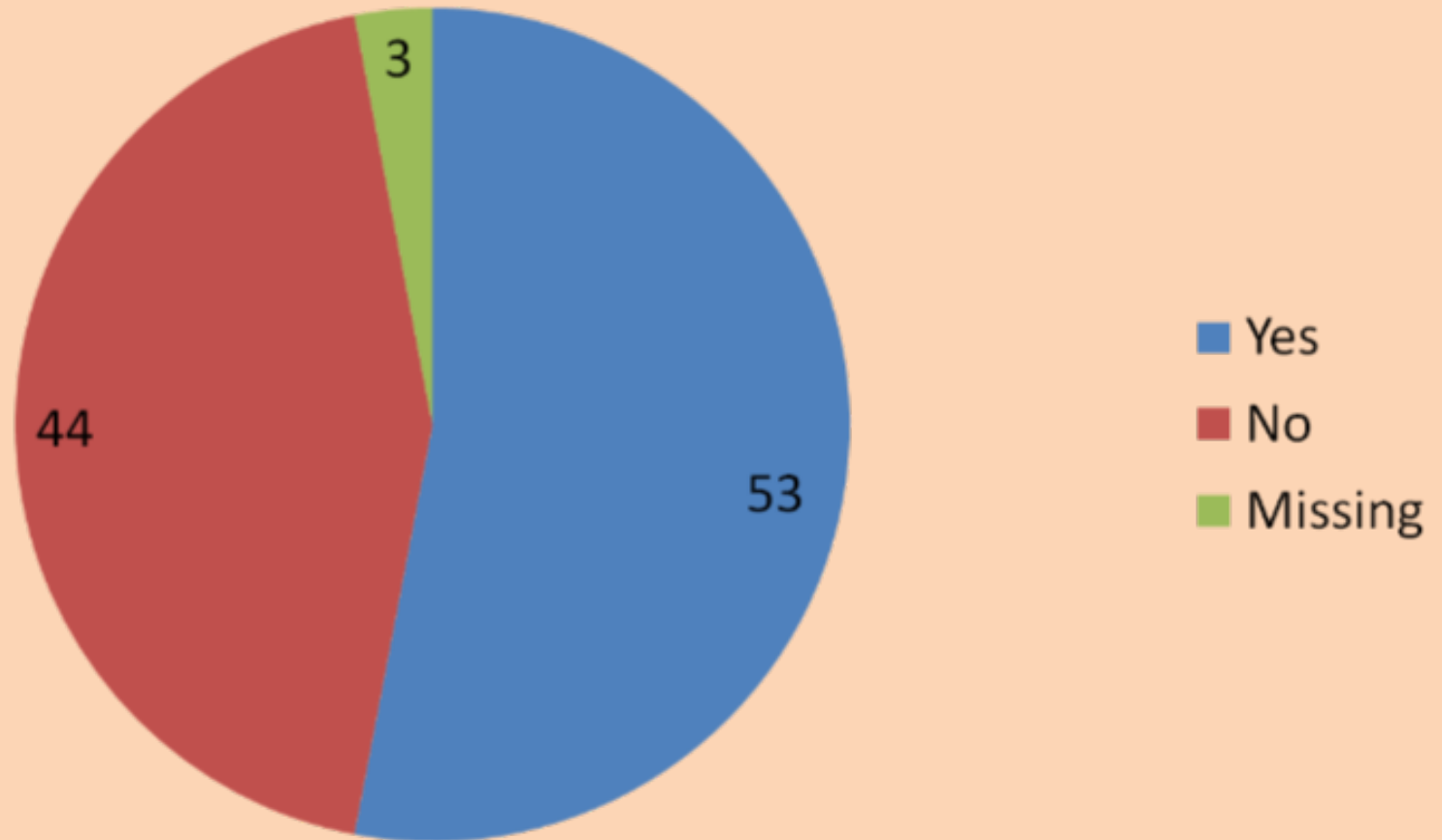
The number of residents staff supported



The number of other staff respondents worked with

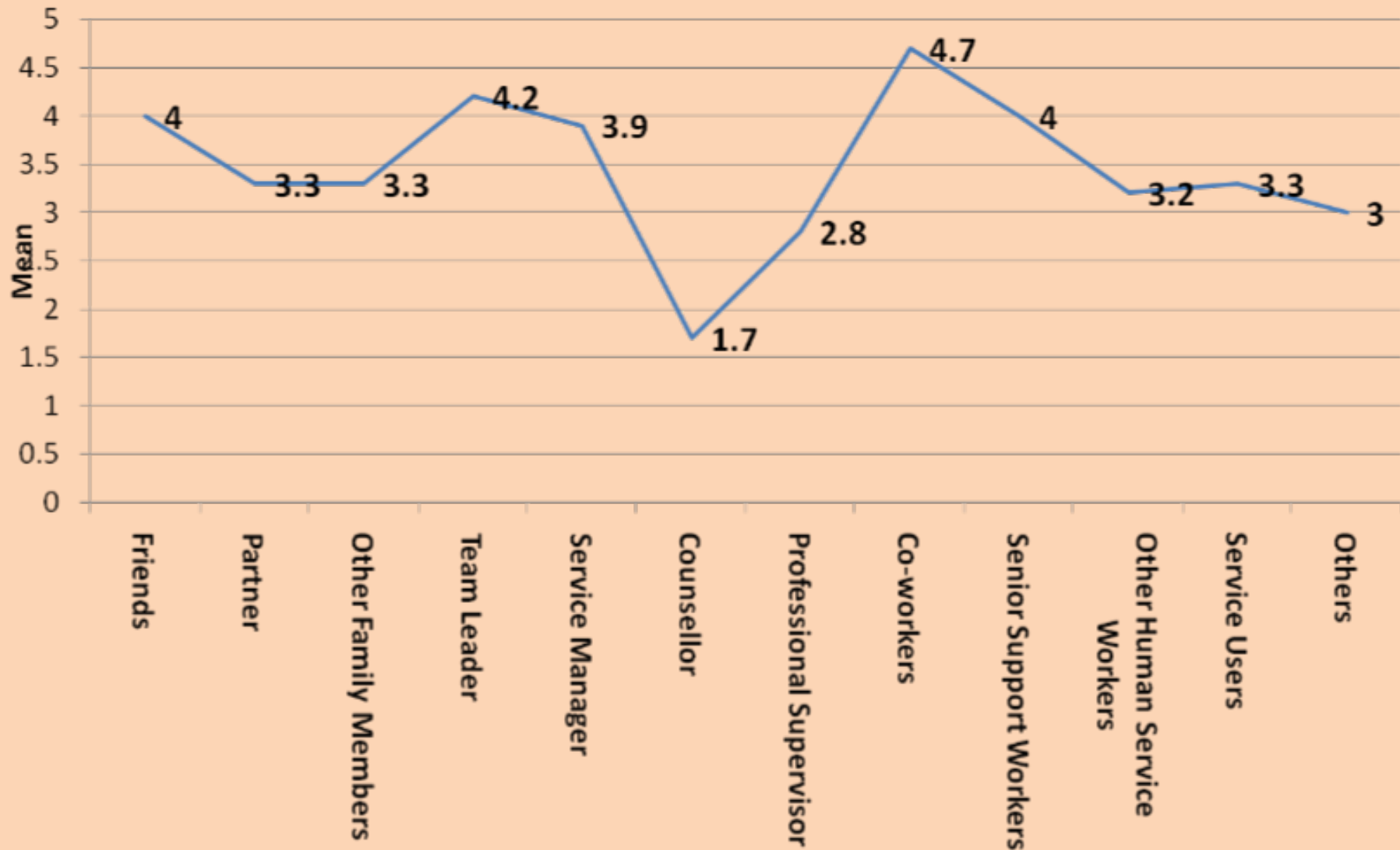


Relieving work in other residences



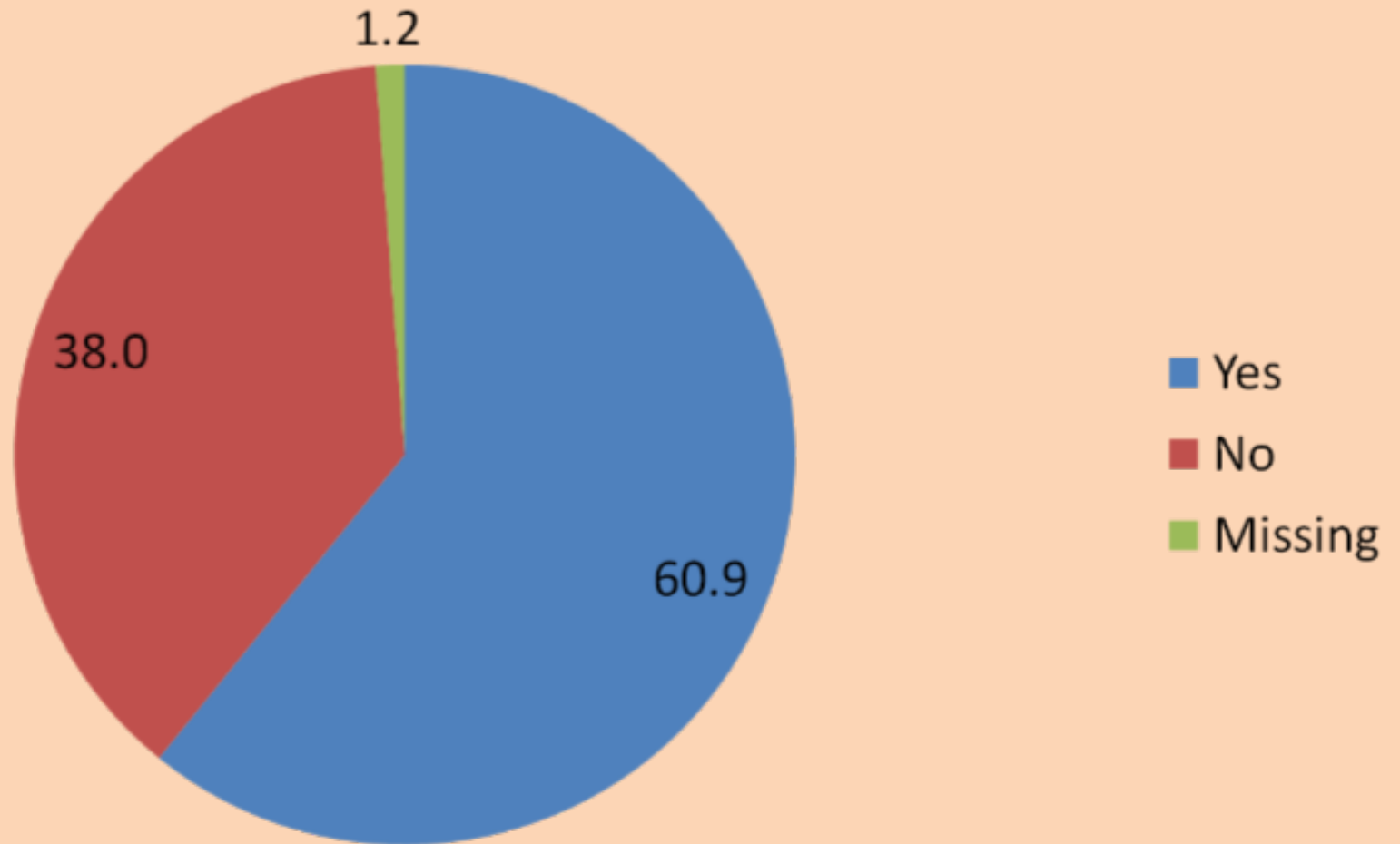
Sources of Support

Who helps support staff cope?



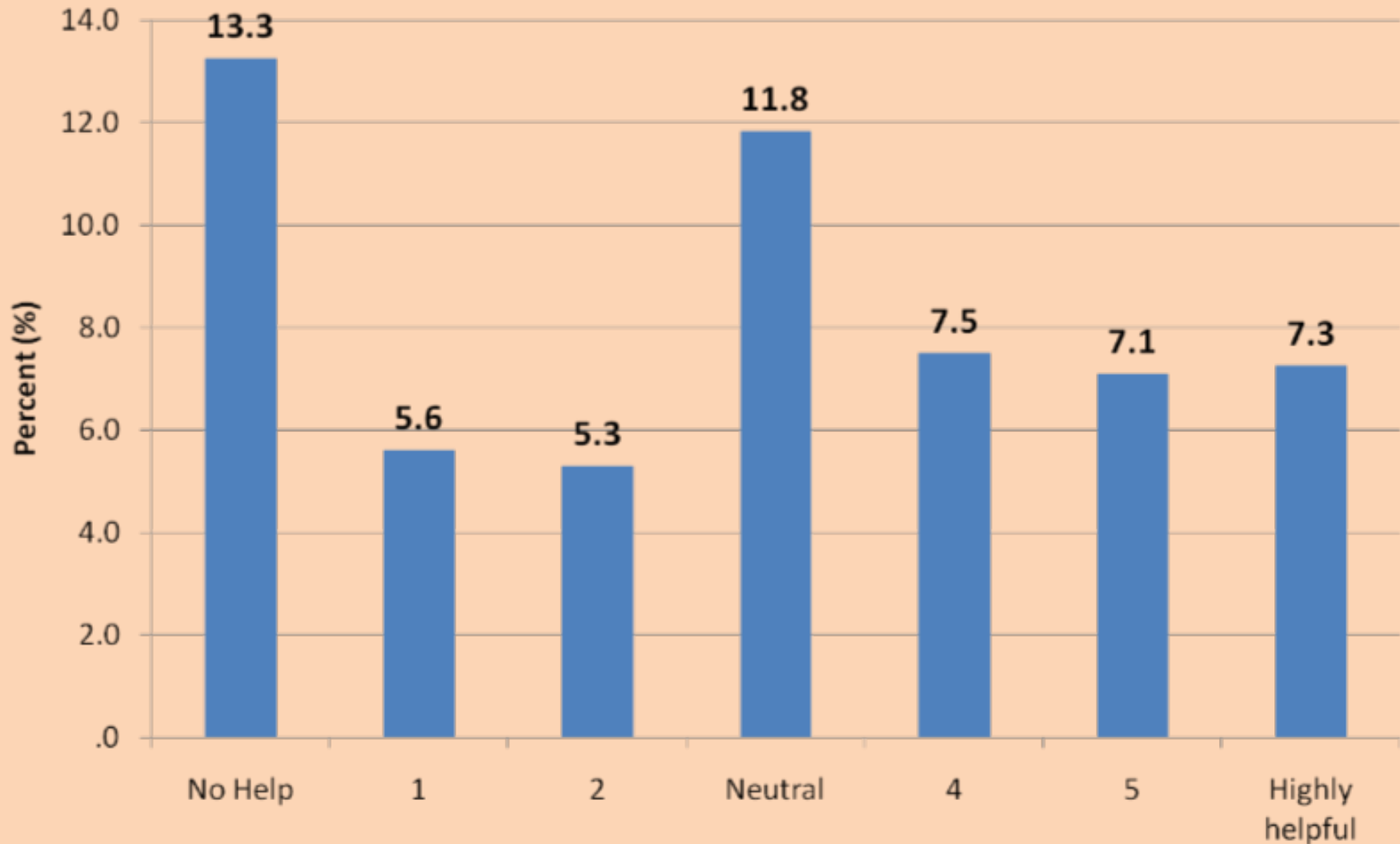
Verbal and Physical Abuse Experienced by Staff

Have you ever been verbally abused in your present agency

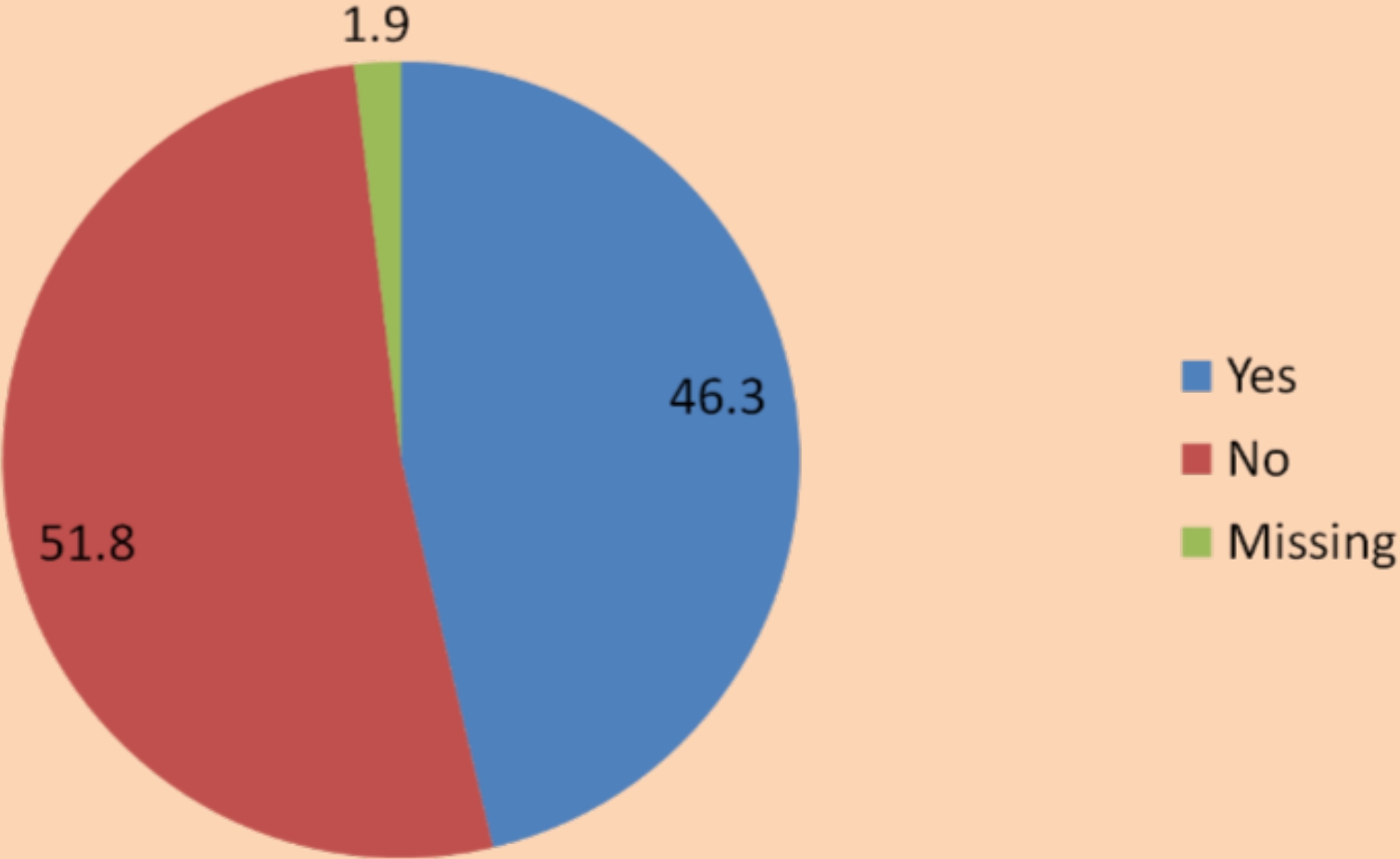


Staff's assessment of the support given to them by their service after incidents of verbal abuse.

(n=733)

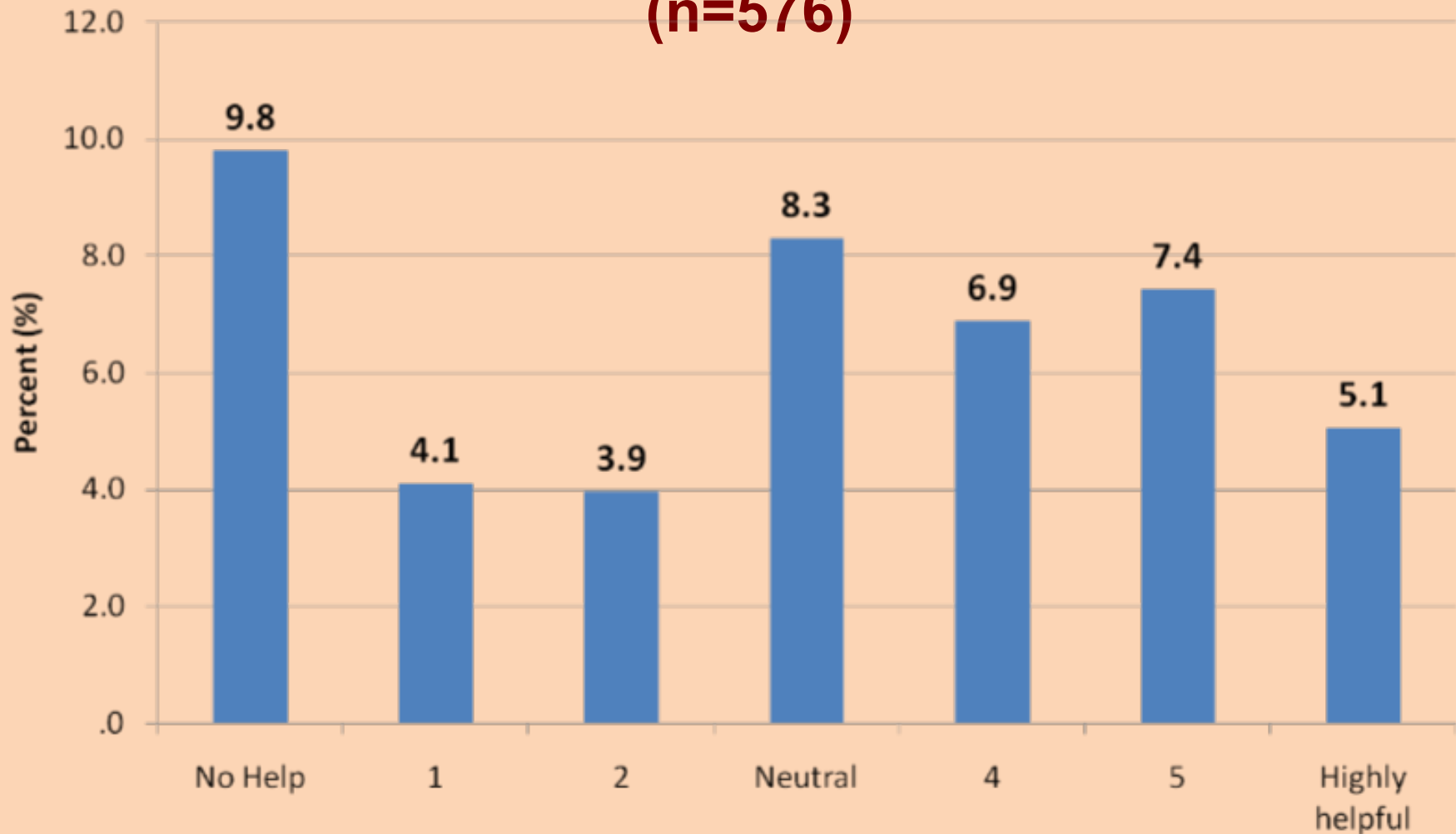


Have you ever been physically abused in your present agency



Staff's assessment of the support given to them by their service after incidents of physical abuse.

(n=576)

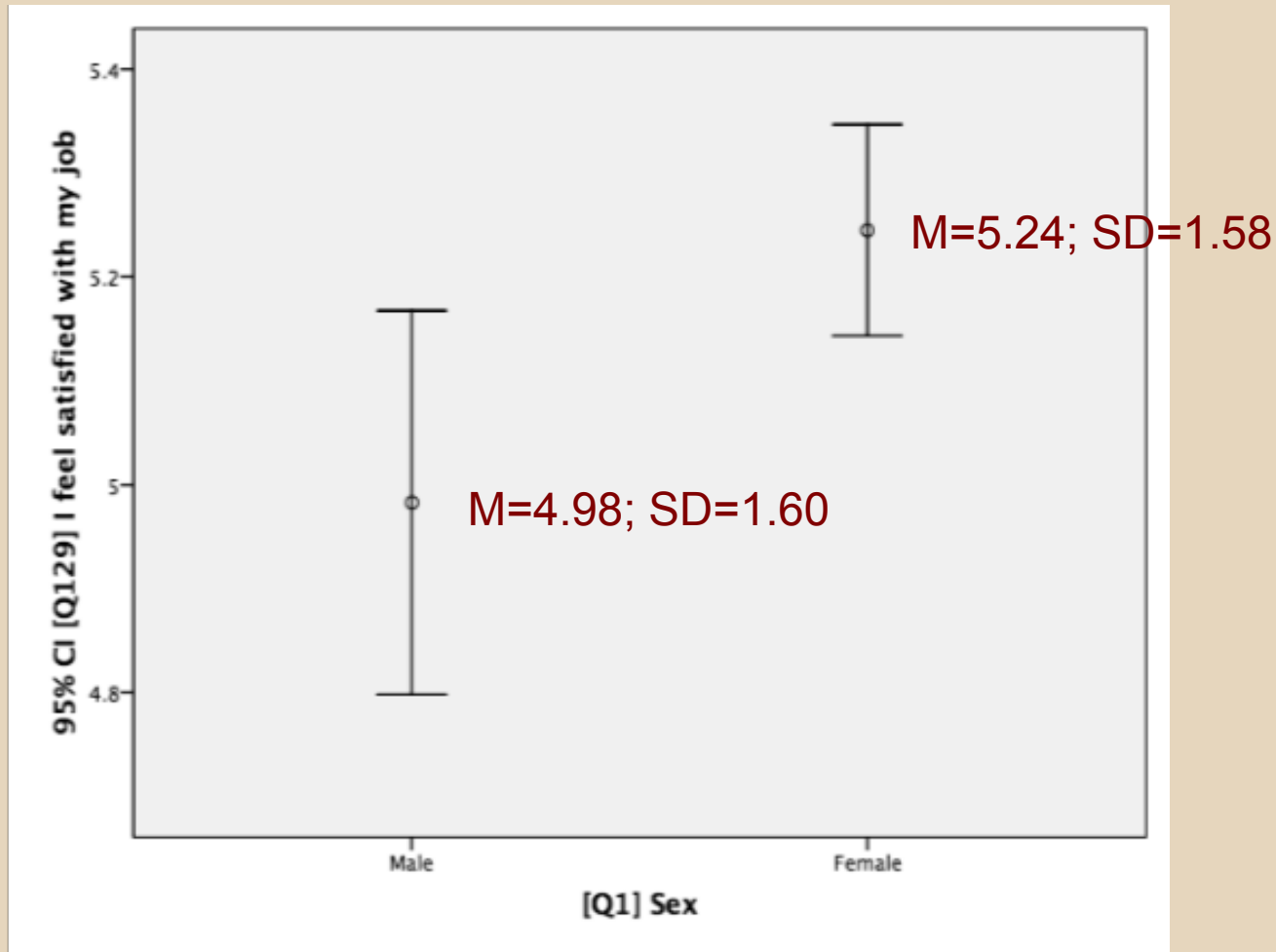


**If you're happy and you know it.....
Anticipating the job satisfaction of 1267
New Zealand residential support workers**

Potential Predictors		Dependent Variable
Staff Attributes	Sex	Q129 I feel satisfied with my job
	Age	
	Years in disability services	
	Tertiary training	
	Certificate in human services	
Work attributes	Hourly pay	
	Employment contract	
	Prevalence & responsiveness to physical assault	
	Prevalence & responsiveness to verbal abuse	

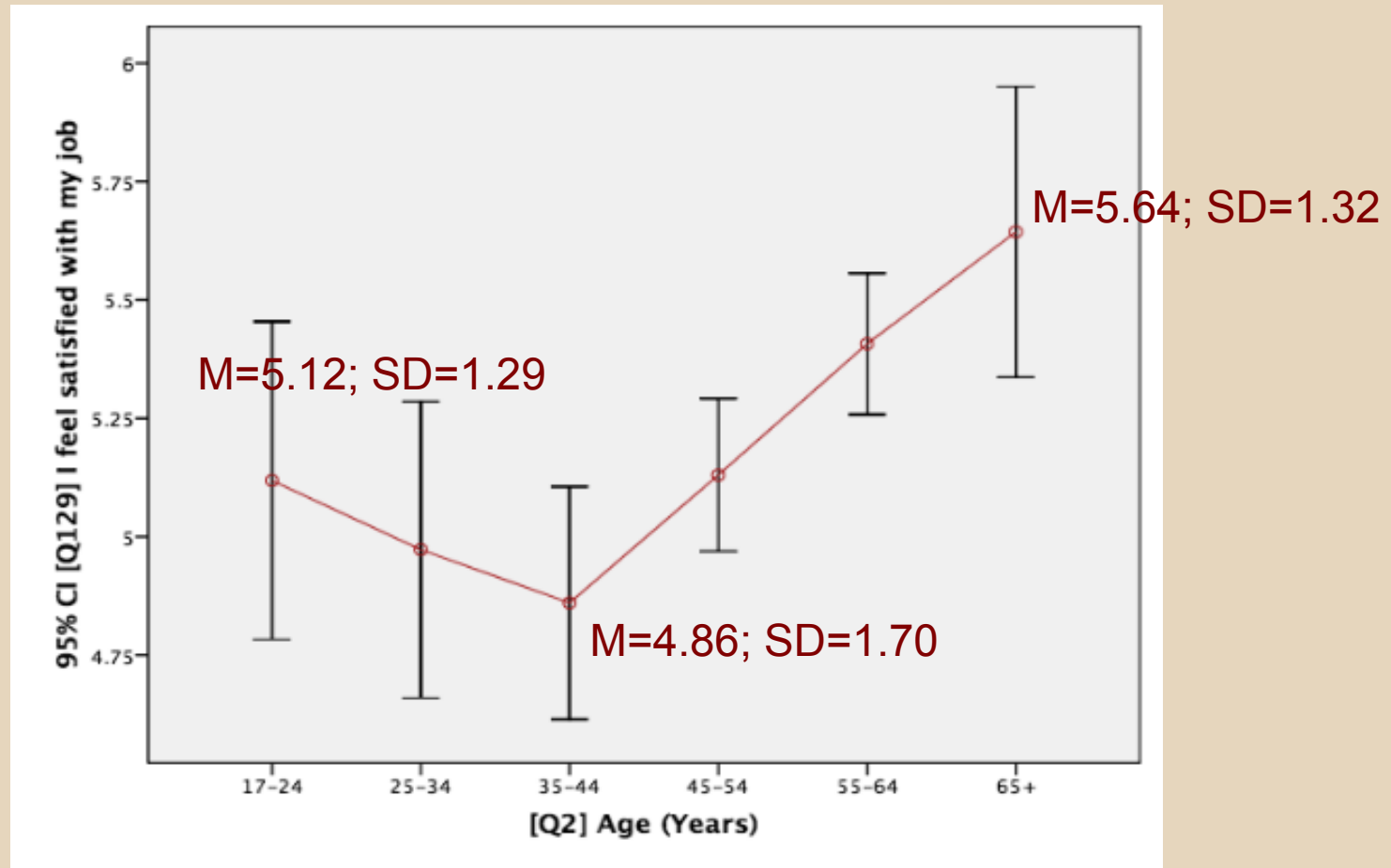
The association between staff attributes and self-reported job satisfaction

Sex and job satisfaction



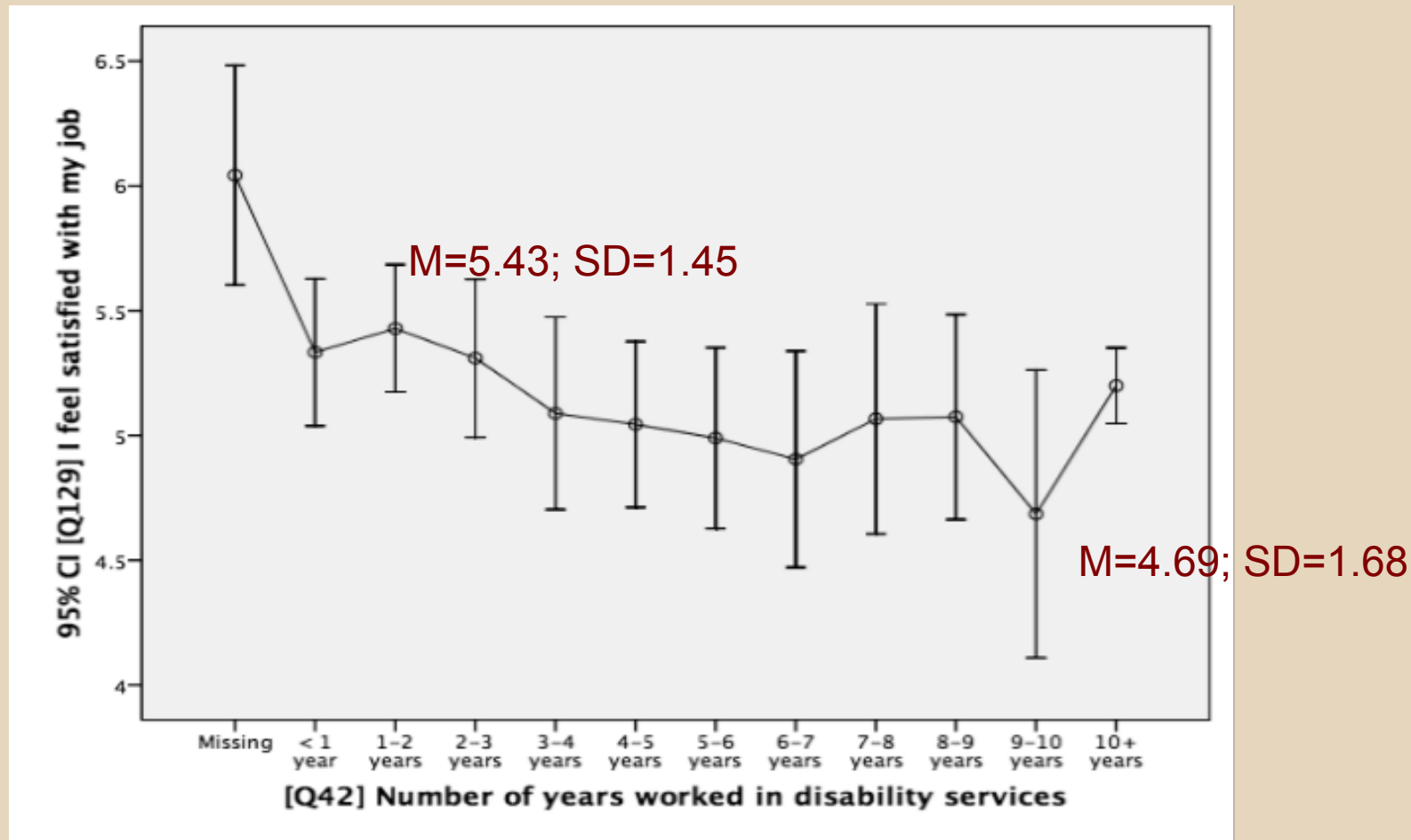
(F=6.07; p=0.01)

Age and job satisfaction



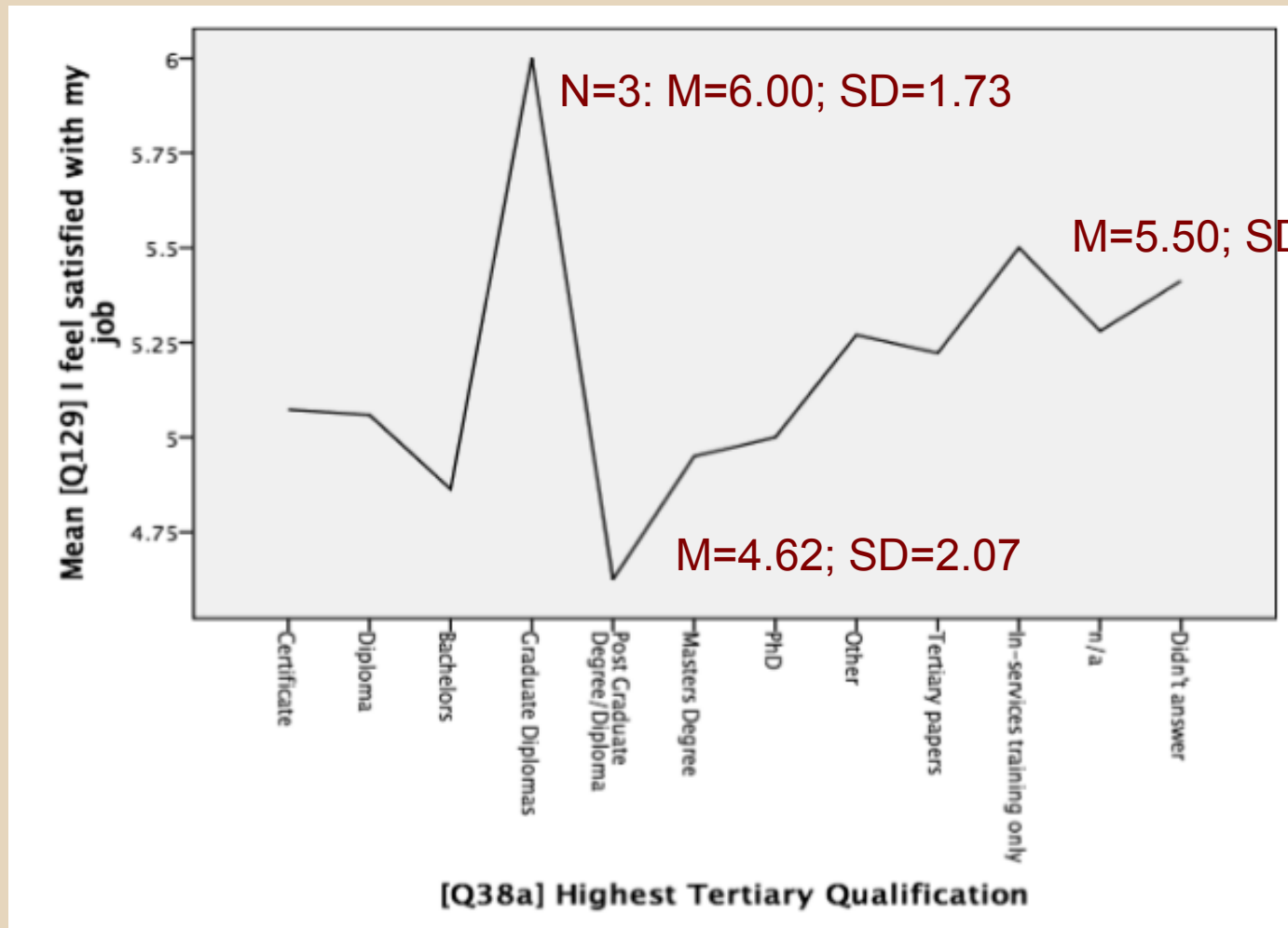
($F=4.80$; $p<0.01$)

Years in disability services and job satisfaction



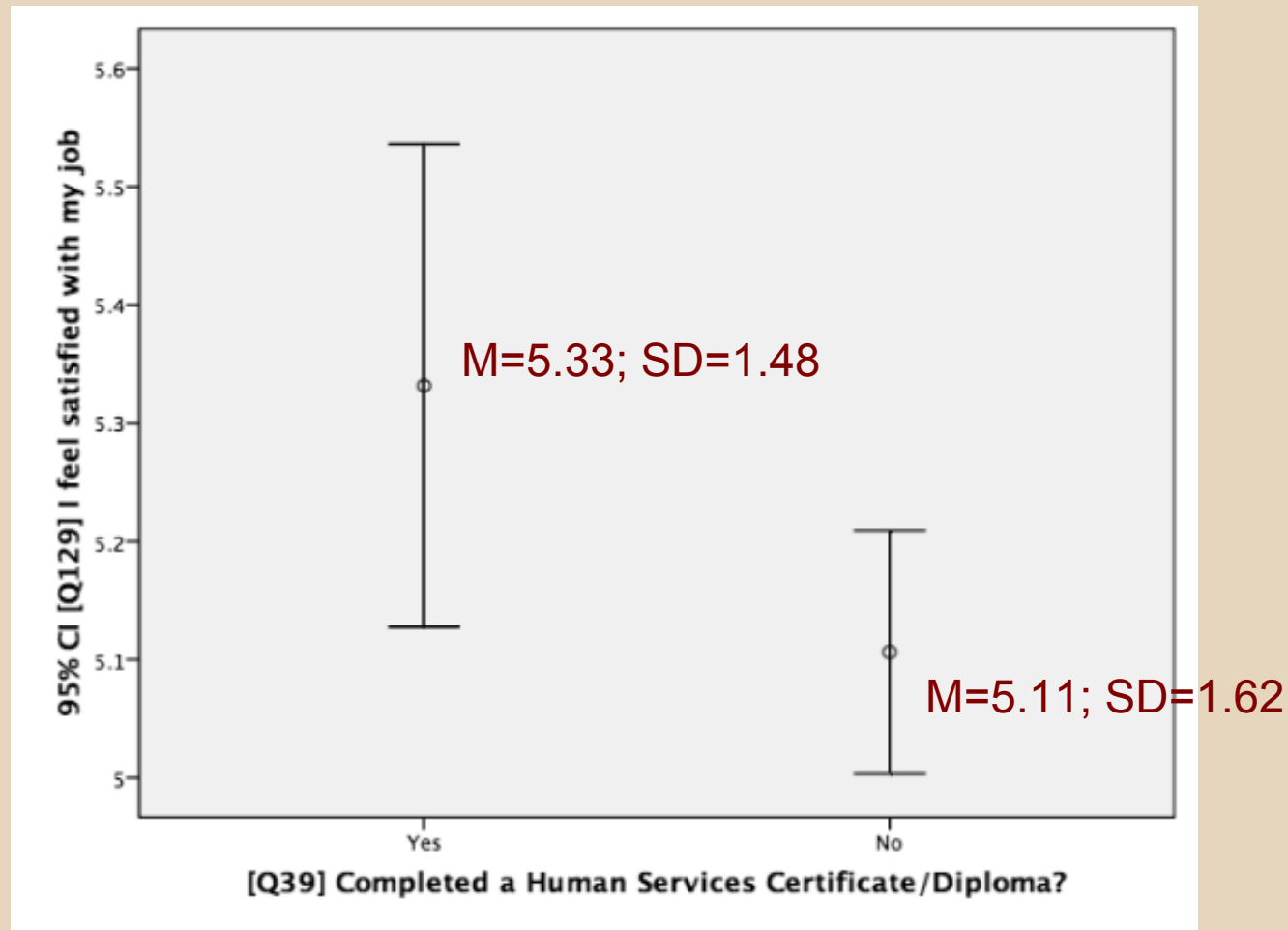
(F=1.83; p=0.04)

Highest tertiary qualification and job satisfaction



(F=1.89; p=0.04)

Certificate in human services and job satisfaction



($t=1.94$; $p=0.05$)

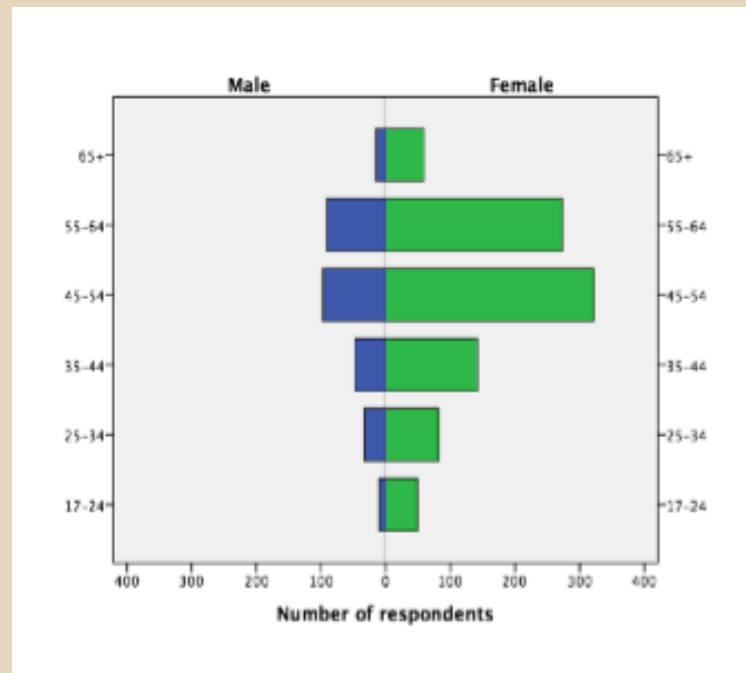
Modeling associations using Multiple Linear Regressions

Staff attributes	Comparison of means (p-value)	Remained in regression model ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Sex	0.01	✓
Age	0.00	✓
Relationship status	0.35	✓
Years in disability services	0.04	✓
Years at present agency	0.41	✓
Certificate in human services	0.05	✓
Educational qualification	0.04	✓
Personal income	0.42	✓

Most dissatisfied residential support worker

Most satisfied residential support worker

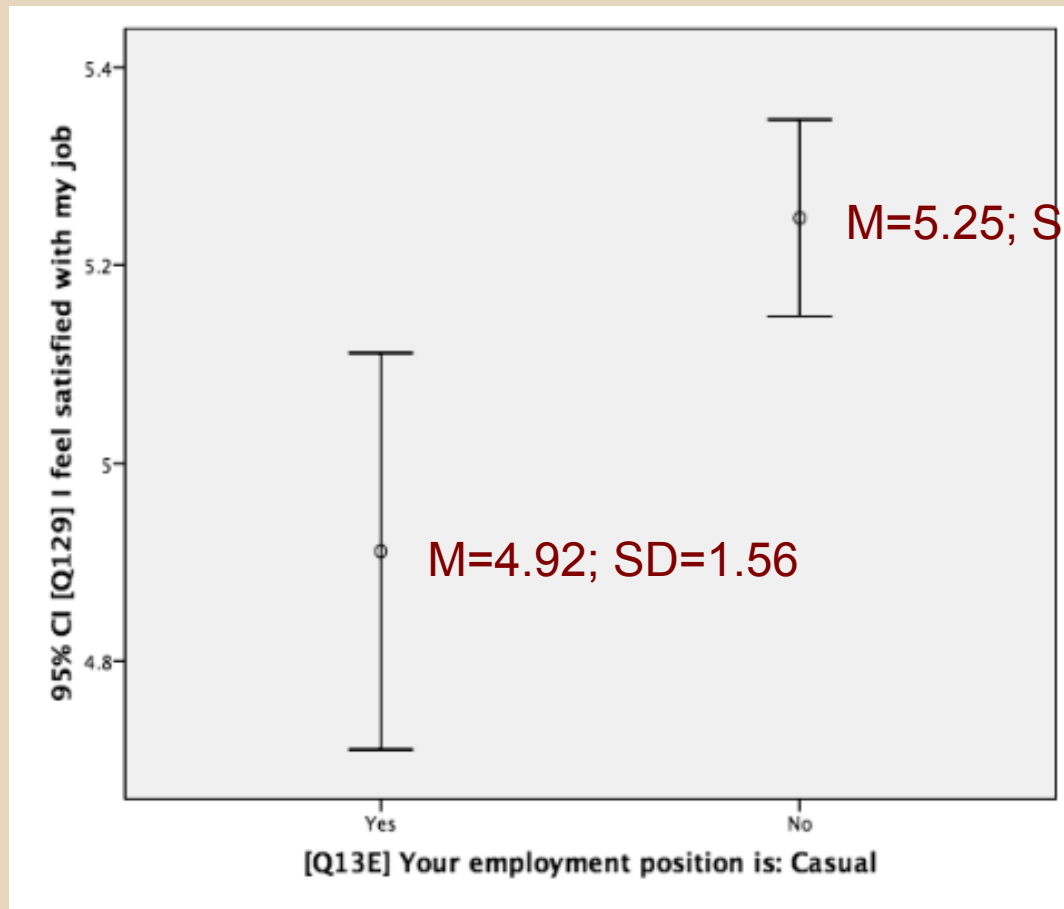
- *Male*
- *35 -45 years*
- *Separated*
- *Post-grad. degree*
- *Worked 9-10 years in sector*



- *Female*
- *Over 65 years*
- *Widowed*
- *No tertiary qualification*
- *New to disability support*

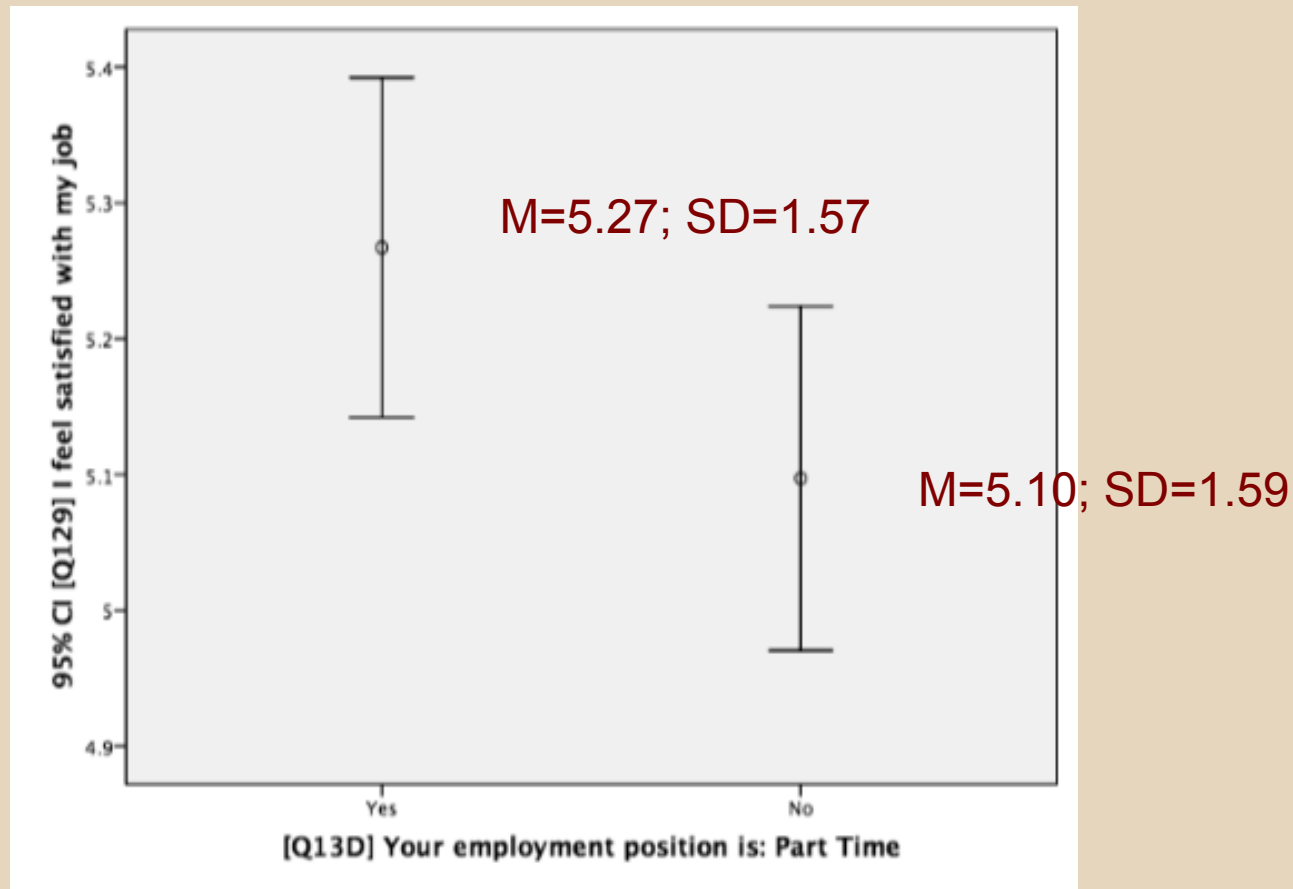
The association between work attributes and self-reported job satisfaction

Employment contract (Casual) and job satisfaction



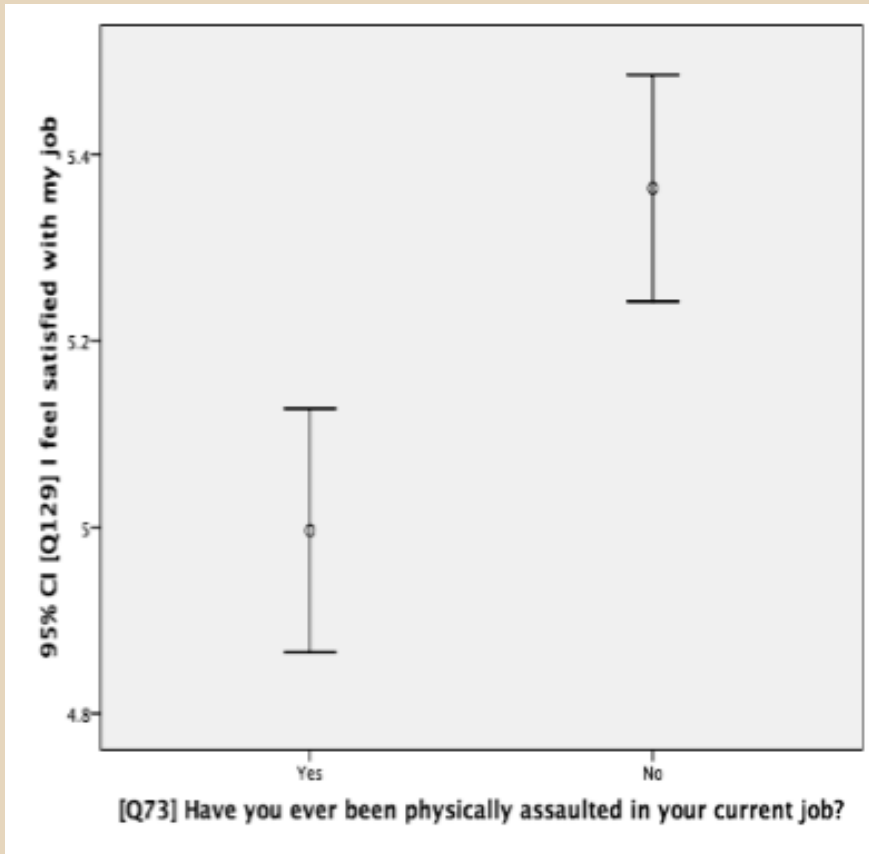
($F=8.35$; $p<0.01$)

Employment contract (Part time) and job satisfaction

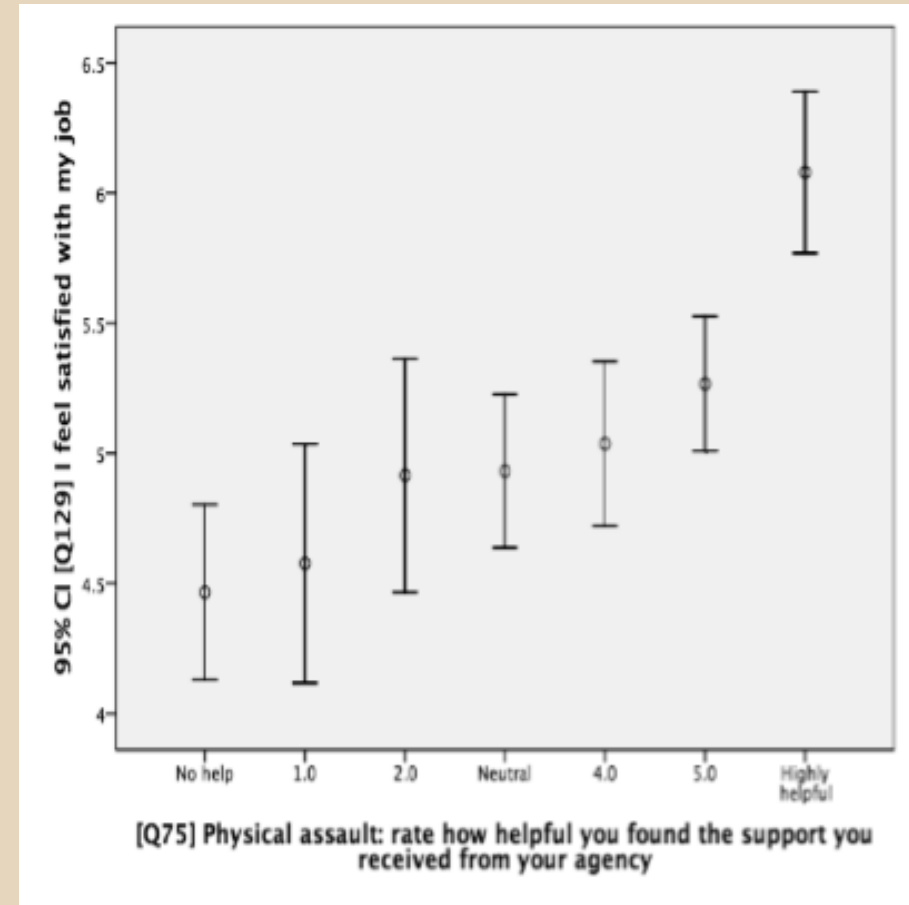


($F=3.51$; $p=0.06$)

Prevalence of physical assault and job satisfaction

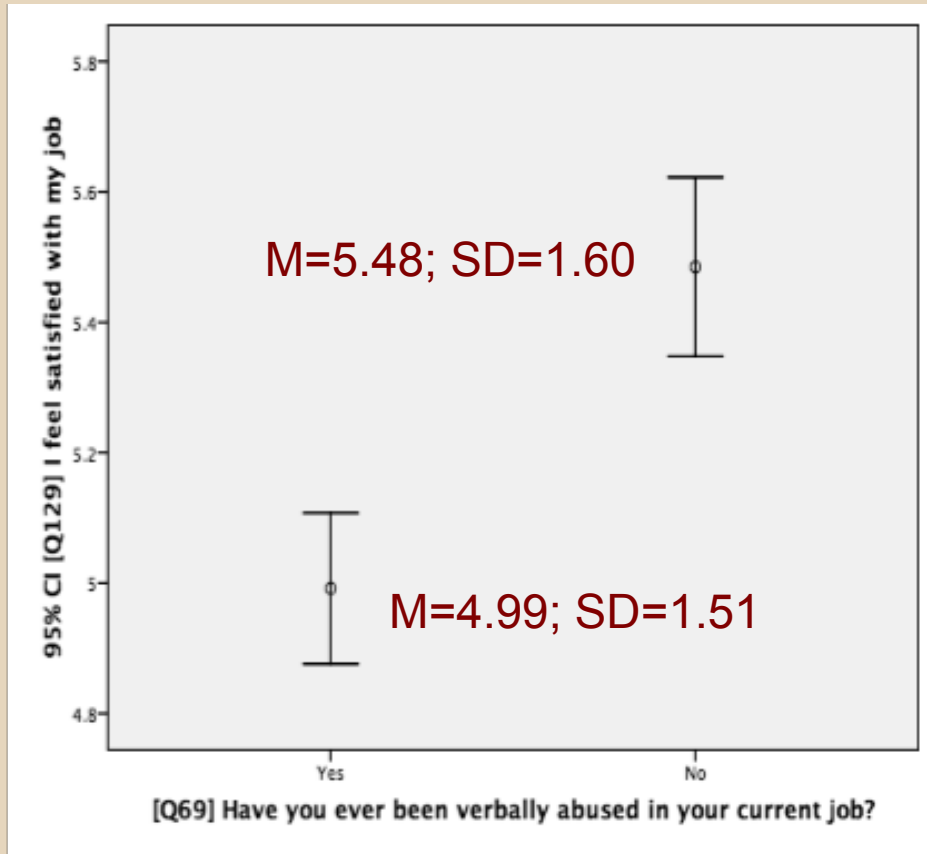


(F=16.36; p<0.01)

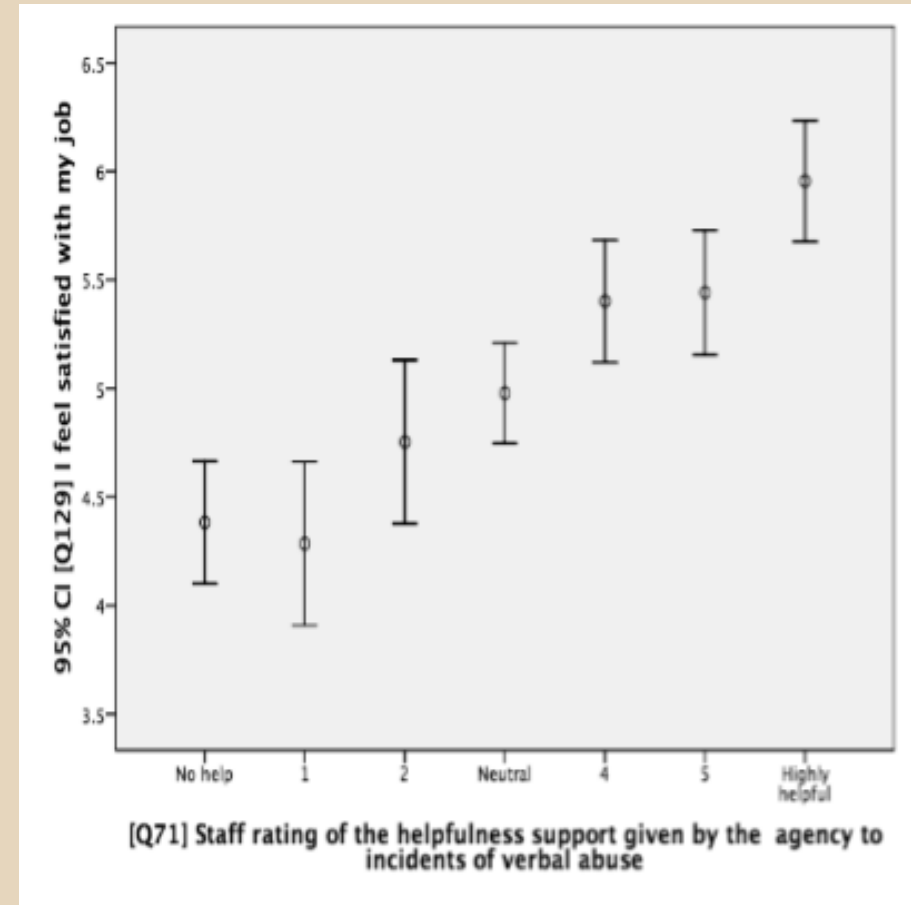


(F=8.80; p<0.01)

Prevalence of verbal abuse and job satisfaction

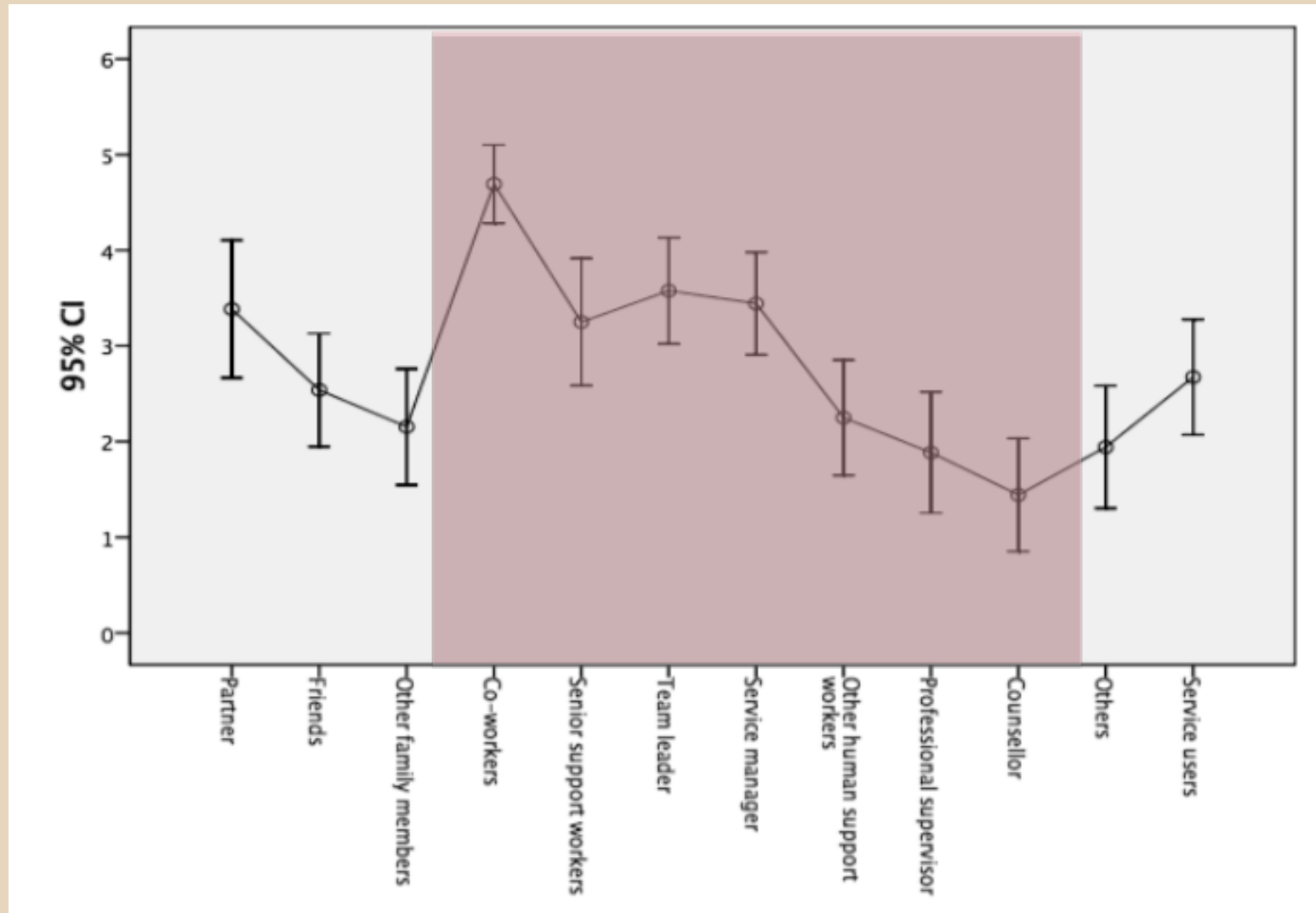


(F=28.25; p<0.01)

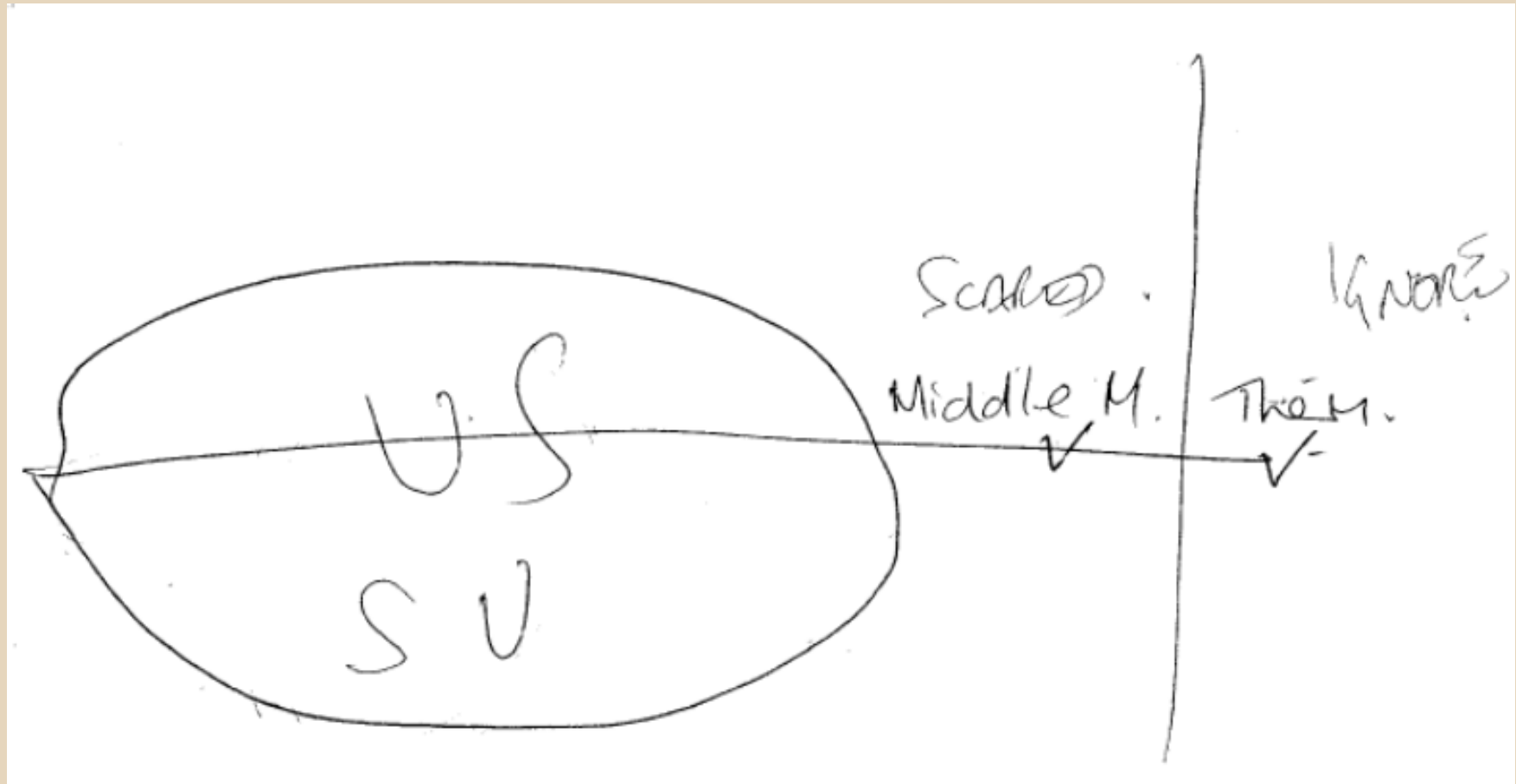


(F=15.59; p<0.01)

Ratings staff gave of help given to cope with their job



Drawing the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'

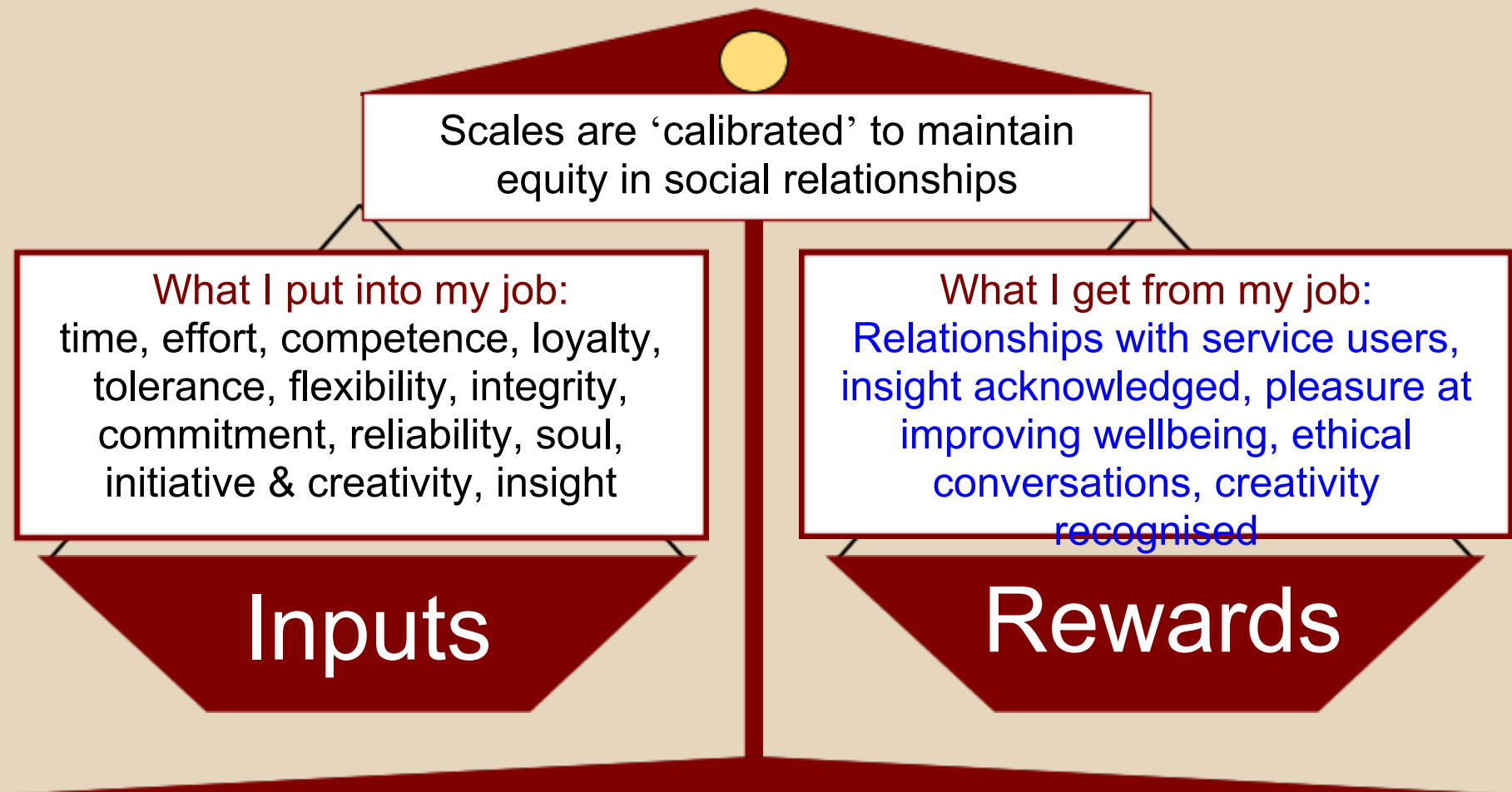


Staff person: *I was feeling sick, I was getting headaches, I didn't know which way to turn. I wanted to support the guys because that's what it is all about for me.....I left on that Sunday very, very upset. Still am. You can't make relationships with these guys unless you give of yourself.*

Researcher: *Well the opposite of that is that you walk away from yourself when you leave*

Staff person: *The biggest mistake I made was resigning but I've come to realize that I didn't have a lot of choice.*

Adams' Equity Theory



Inequity is experienced if a mismatch between the two ratios is perceived in relation to 'comparison others'. Staff act to resolve the tension created by feeling 'under benefited' by altering their own inputs, altering their comparison of inputs, rewards or referents, or by leaving the role

Male
45 years
Educated
Experienced
2 years at agency

Agency relationship markers

- insight acknowledged through consultation
- trusted to innovate
- stepping beyond formal aspects of role visible & acknowledged
- Accessibility of ethical conversations



Service user relationship markers

- liking
- feeling like contribute to life quality



Feeling under-benefited associated with agency

- Higher levels of Emotional Exhaustion
- Lower levels of Personal Accomplishment
- Greater intention to leave

(Van Yperen et al, 1995)

Feeling over-benefited associated with service users

- Higher levels of Emotional Exhaustion
- Higher levels of Burnout

(Van Dierendonck et al, 1996)

“I feel like without even trying to I have discovered the most meaningful work I have ever had.”

Quoted in Leidy (2004)

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