

THE KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION/*SELF* MAGAZINE

National Survey of Women About Their Sexual Health:

Take Charge of Your Sexual Health

Methodology

The *Kaiser Family Foundation/Self National Survey of Women on their Sexual Health* is a nationally representative survey of women ages 18 to 49. The survey was designed by staff at the Foundation, *Self*, and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and conducted by telephone by PSRA between December 10, 2002 and January 19, 2003. Interviews were conducted with 800 women ages 18 to 49. The sample was designed to generalize to all women in continental U.S. telephone households. Weighting was used to adjust for the effects of sample design as well to adjust for minor differences between the set of complete interviews and the populations they represent due to survey nonresponse. The demographic weighting parameters come from a special analysis of the March 2002 Current Population Survey. The response rate for this survey was 41 percent.

This analysis focuses on women attitudes, knowledge and experiences through key life stages – specifically by age and relationship status (single or married or living as married). Two-thirds of 18 to 49-year-old women surveyed are currently married or living with a partner (56% married; 10% living with a partner). A third are considered “single,” including 20 percent who have never been married, 10 percent who are divorced, 2 percent separated, and 1 percent widowed. Ninety-four percent of the women surveyed had ever had sexual intercourse, and 84 percent were currently in a sexual relationship. About half (52%) of single women interviewed are currently in a sexual relationship.

The margin of error for the total sample of women is plus or minus 3.6 percent and may be larger for certain subsets presented in this analysis.

The Kaiser Family Foundation, based in Menlo Park, California, is a nonprofit, independent national health care philanthropy and is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

Chart 1 PERSONAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Percent of women who are personally concerned about...

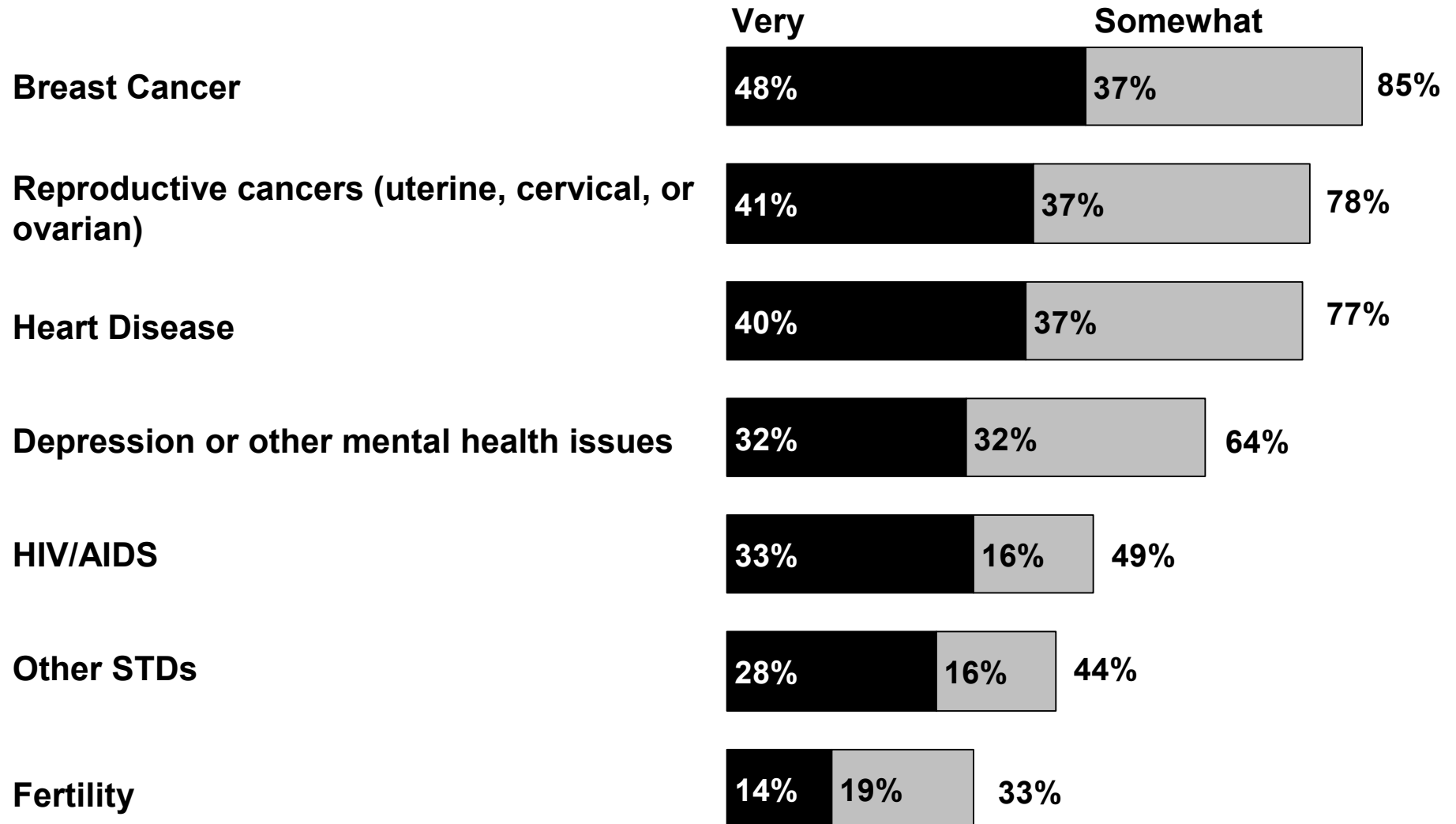


Chart 2 The Real Deal

Percent of women who underestimate or don't know that...

1 in 3 new HIV cases in the U.S. occur among women

82%

1 in 4 Americans will get an STD in their lifetime

81%

At least half of women will experience an unplanned pregnancy in their lifetime

55%

Chart 3 STD INFORMATION GAPS

Percent of women who do not know...

About STD Transmission

Women are more susceptible

60%

Infection is possible without intercourse

35%

It only takes one sexual partner to be at risk

27%

Infection possible without symptoms

15%

The pill doesn't protect against HIV/AIDS or other STDs

10%

About the Consequences of STDs

Liver damage

65%

Increased risk for HIV infection

48%

Some kinds of cancer

40%

Fertility problems

11%

Pregnancy/birth related complications

6%

Chart 4 SHAME AND BLAME

Percent of women who agree with the following...

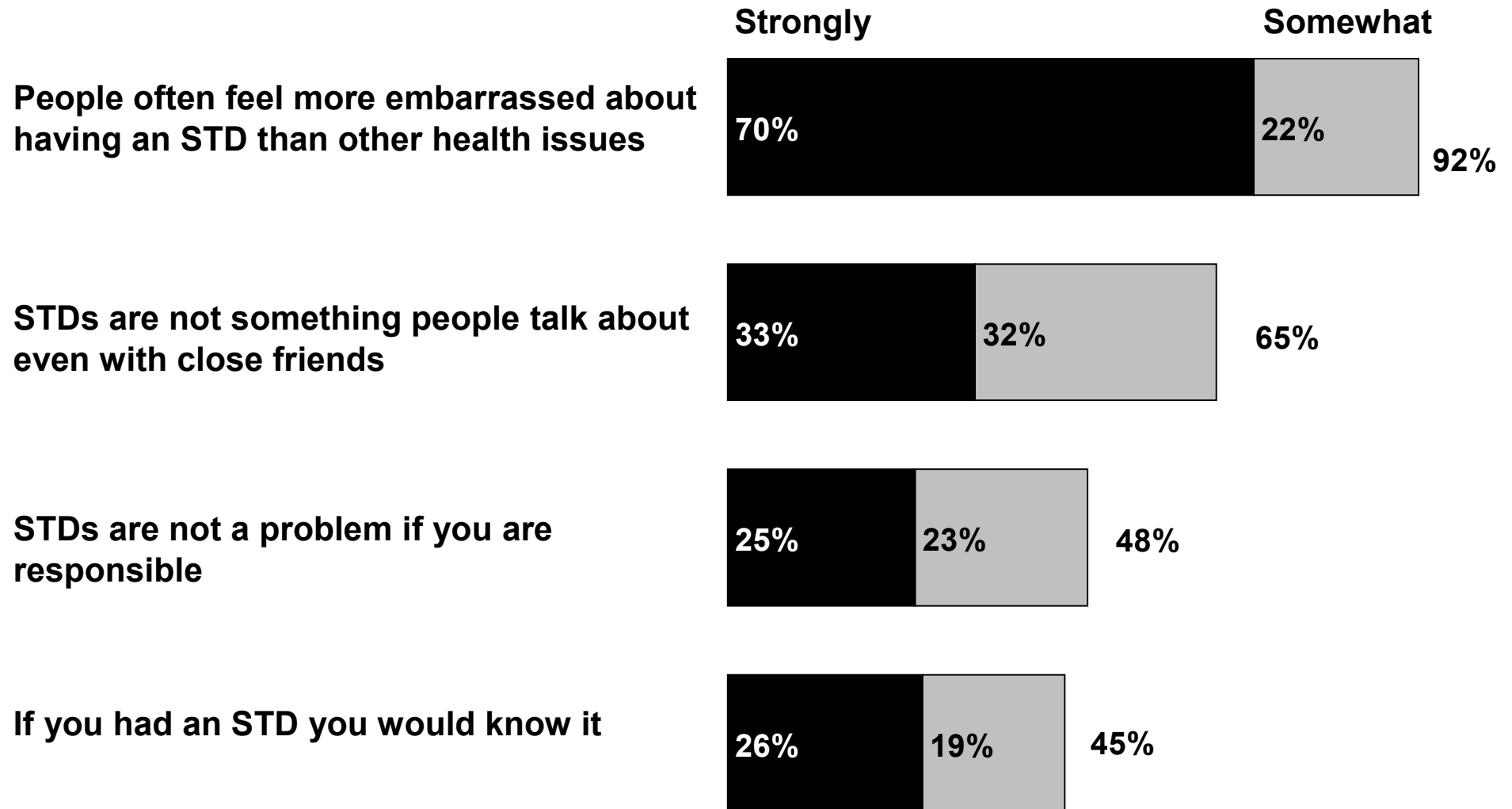


Chart 5 TALKING TO PROVIDERS

Percent of women who have ever discussed each with a provider...

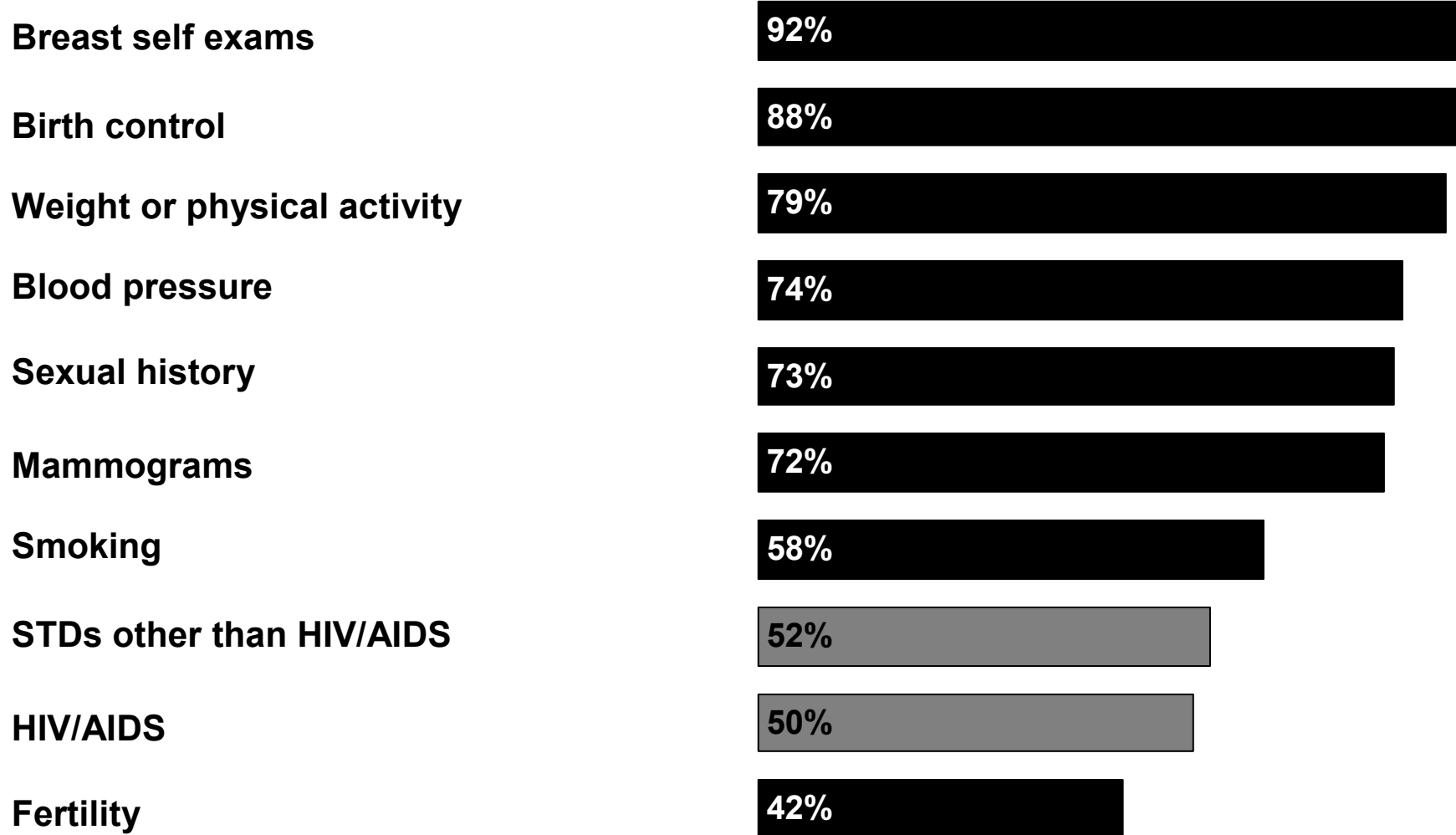


Chart 6

...AND WHY WOMEN DON'T

Percent of women who say they have kept information from a provider about a sexual health issue...



Percent of women who say they have had problems talking with their provider about their sexual health because of any of the following:

Embarrassment or thought provider might be judgmental

20%

Didn't know what to ask

17%

Didn't think provider needed to know

14%

Wasn't enough time

14%

Chart 7

TALKING WITH PARTNERS

Percent of women in relationships who have talked with their current partner about each of the following:

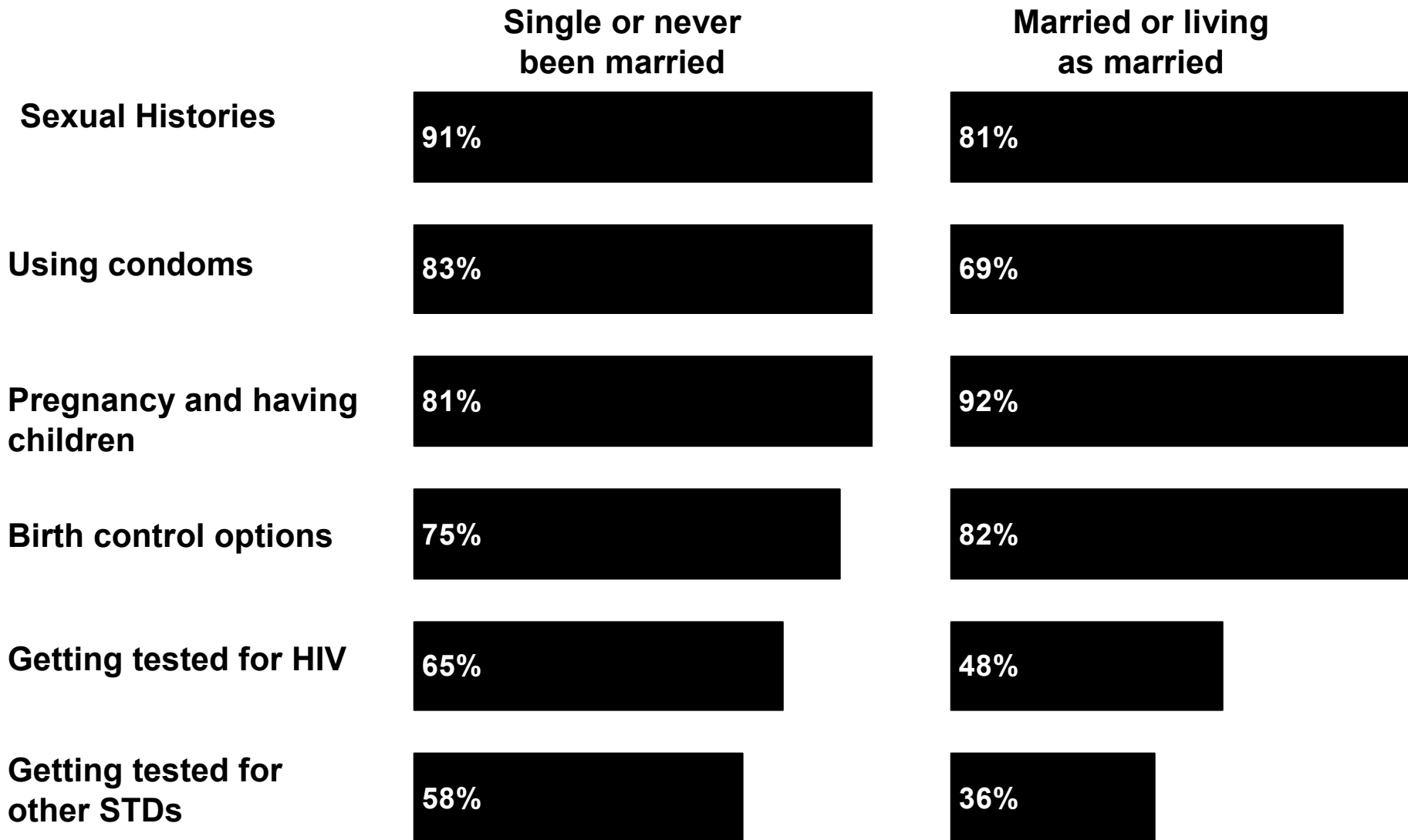


Chart 8

...AND WHY WOMEN DON'T

Percent of women who say the following are reasons why women do not talk to their partners about sexual health issues...

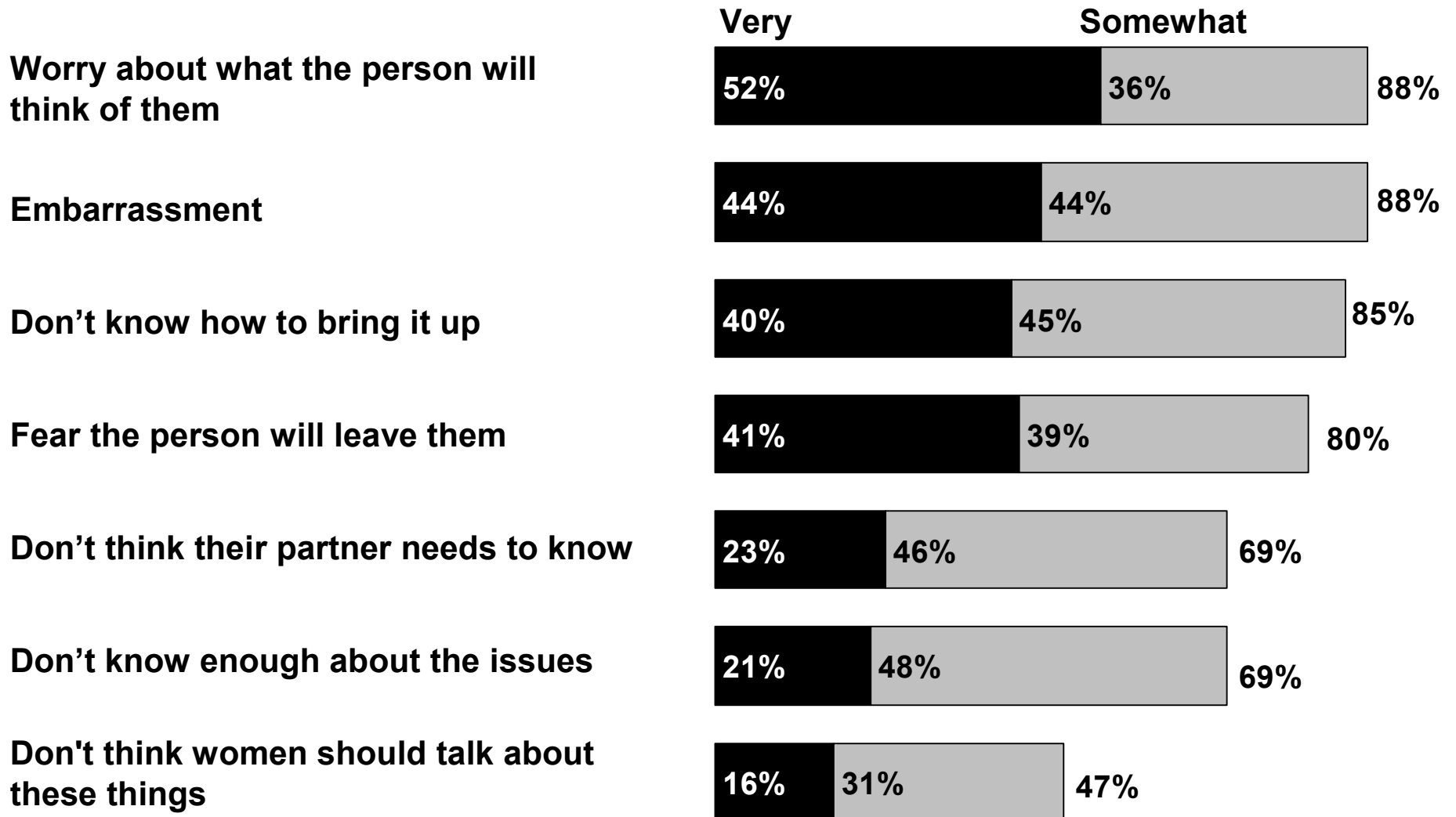


Chart 9 CONDOM EXPERIENCES

Percent of sexually active women who have ...

Single or never
been married

Married or living
as married

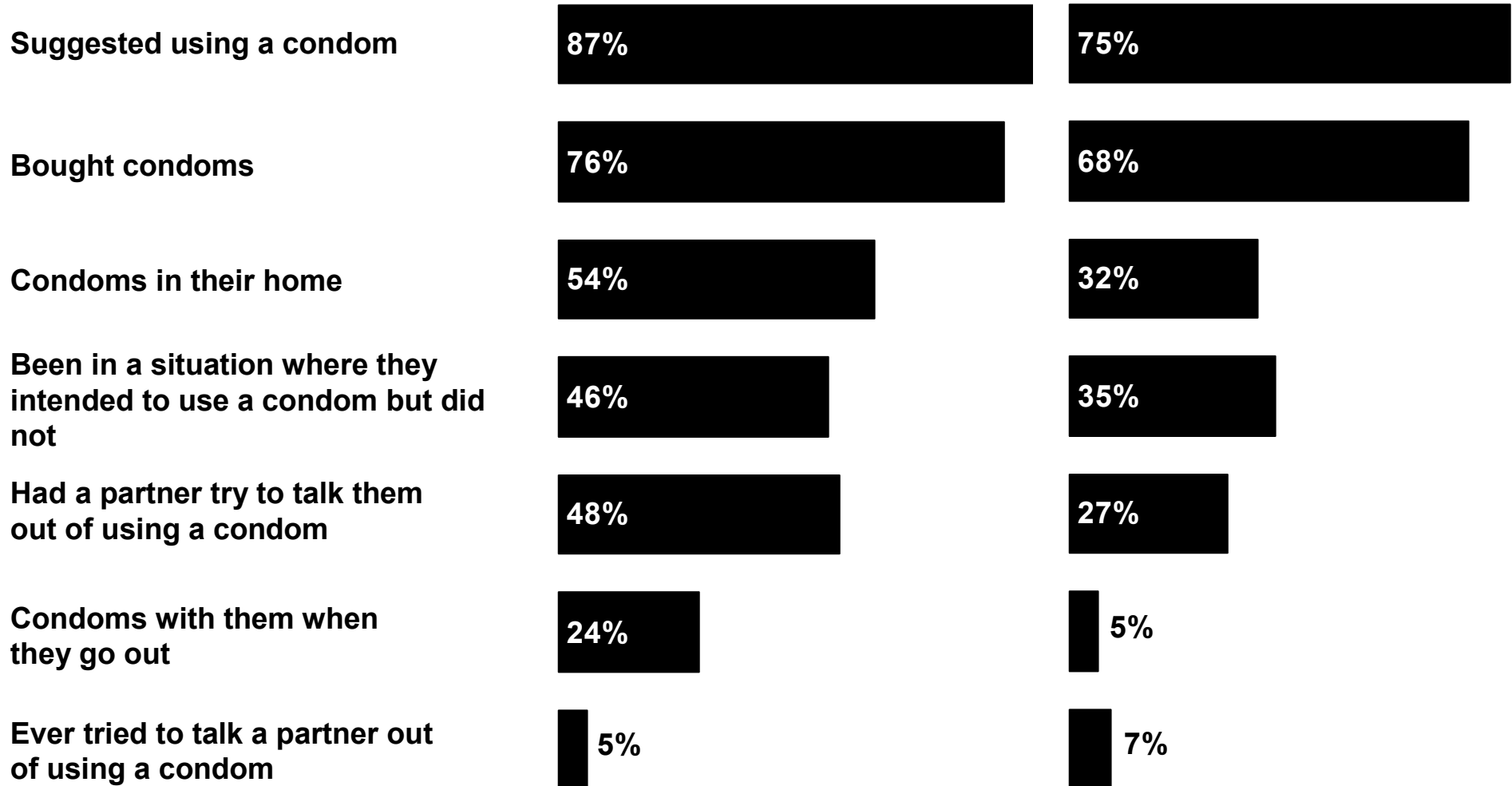


Chart 10 GETTING TESTED

Percent of women who report having ever been tested for HIV or other STDs, and why some may be mistaken...

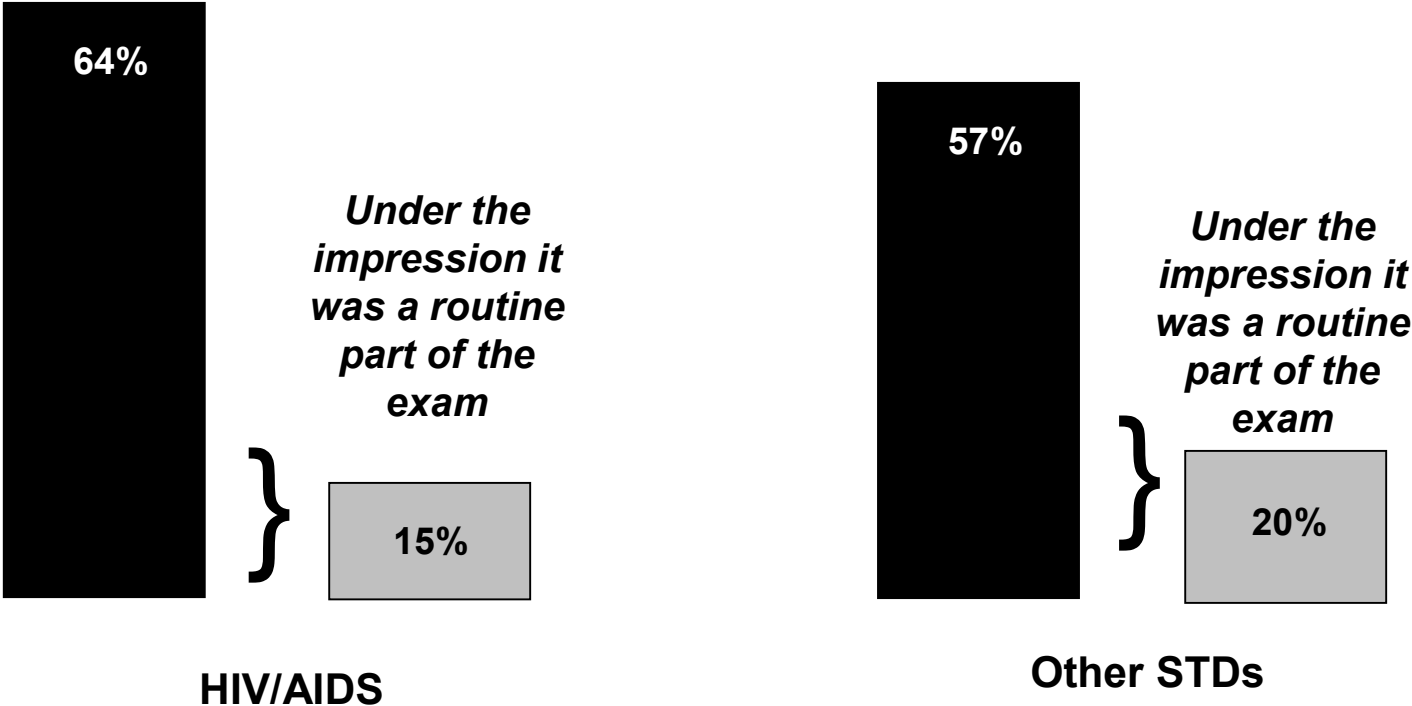


Chart 11

...AND WHY SOME WOMEN DON'T

Among women who have not been tested the reasons why not...



Chart 12

THE PAP TEST

Percent of women who say the pap smear is a test for...

Abnormal cells that can indicate cancer or pre-cancer

85%

STDs other than HIV/AIDS

40%

HIV/AIDS

9%

Pregnancy

8%

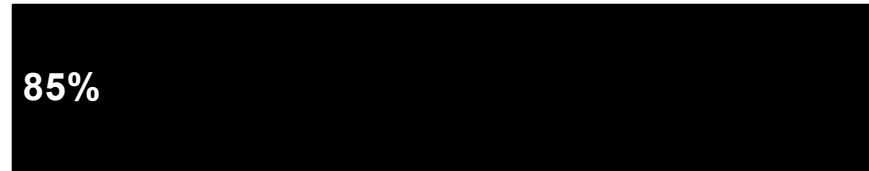
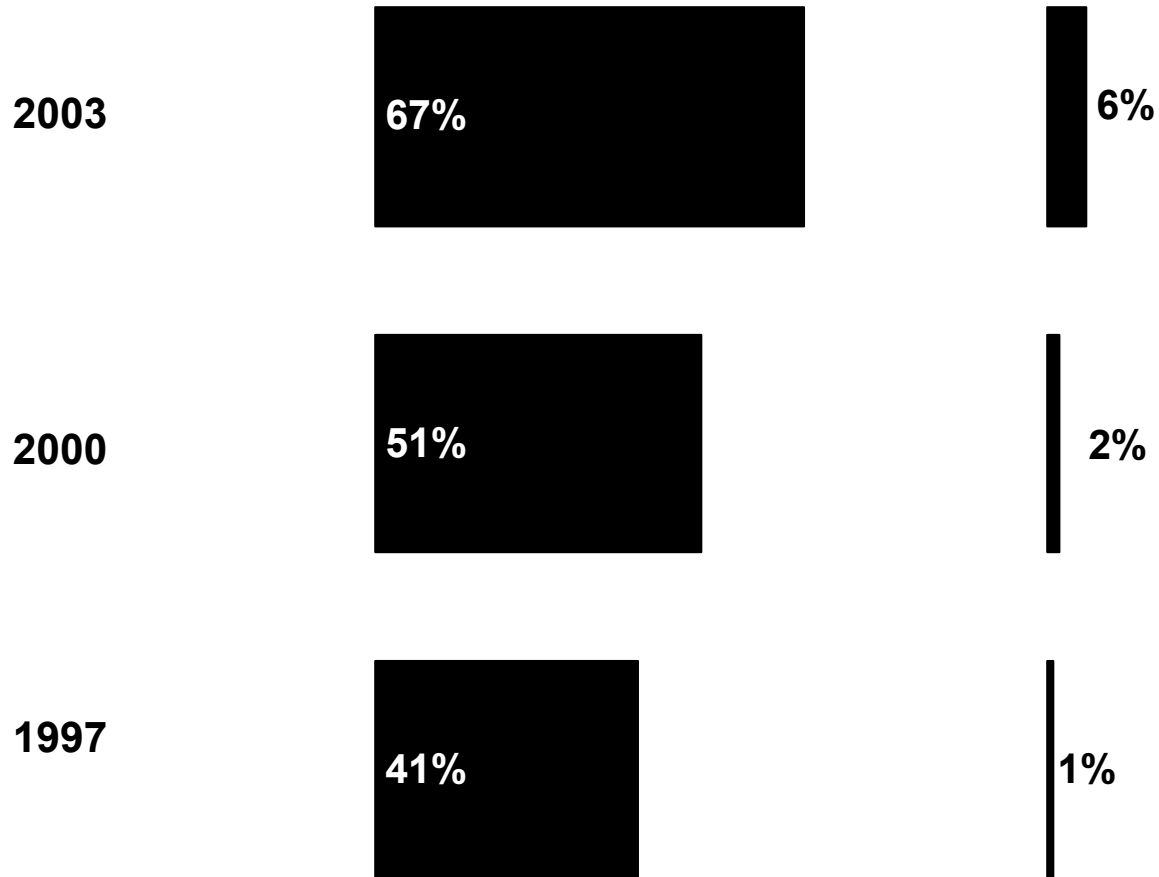


Chart 13

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Percent of women who know there is something a woman can do in the next few days to prevent pregnancy

Percent of women who have ever used emergency contraception



Data from 1997 and 2000 are among women ages 18-44. The 2000 data comes from a Vital Signs survey conducted by the Foundation with Lifetime Television and the 1997 data is from the National Survey of Americans on Emergency Contraception.



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