

---

Summary and Chartpack



# **2006 Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans* *on HIV/AIDS***

## **Additional Findings: Opinions and Experiences of 18-25 Year-Olds**

May 2006

---

## Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. Interviews were conducted by telephone between March 24 and April 18, 2006, among a nationally representative random sample of 2,517 respondents 18 years of age and older, including 278 respondents between the ages of 18 and 25 years. The survey includes an oversample of African American and Latino respondents (a total of 378 African American and 447 Latino respondents were interviewed). Results for all groups have been weighted to reflect their actual distribution in the nation.

The margin of sampling error for the overall survey is plus or minus 2 percentage points. For respondents between the ages of 18-25 years it is plus or minus 7 percentage points. For results based on subsets of respondents the margin of error is higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Note: Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding. “Vol.” indicates that a response was volunteered by the respondent, and not offered as an explicit choice.

Telephone interviews were conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, International.

This is a supplemental report based on a subset of the full survey. A full survey report, including full question wording for results presented in this report can be found online at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/pomr050806pkg.cfm>.

# Summary

People who are between the ages of 18 and 25 years old in 2006 are the first generation of adults who have grown up in “the age of AIDS” (i.e. they were born after the first case of what was later determined to be AIDS was identified in the U.S.). These young adults were babies and toddlers when Rock Hudson died of AIDS; they were in elementary school when Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV-positive; and in junior high and high school when the first protease inhibitors were approved by the FDA.

Survey data for these young adults paint a somewhat cautionary picture. Despite being an age group at risk for HIV, and arguably being more likely to have been exposed to HIV information as they grew up, many young adults harbor misconceptions about the HIV epidemic, transmission, and treatment. Nearly six in ten are not aware that having another STD may increase a person’s risk of becoming infected with HIV, and nearly four in ten mistakenly think HIV might be spread through either kissing, sharing a drinking glass, or touching a toilet seat. One in five doesn’t know that there are drugs available to lengthen the lives of people with HIV. While more than half express personal concern about becoming infected and many say they want more information about various aspects of HIV testing, most have never talked to a doctor about HIV or been tested themselves.

The perceptions of young people about who is most affected by HIV/AIDS, and their opinions about HIV prevention are particularly important. Those who have grown up in this era have a somewhat different picture of the “face” of HIV than those who were alive before the first cases of AIDS were identified; they are less likely to name gay men and drug users as groups most likely to be infected, and more likely to identify African Americans and other minorities.

While their personal concern and action on HIV is mixed, 18-25 year-olds seem to be aware of HIV/AIDS as a problem for the nation and are supportive of action and funding to deal with the problem. More than a quarter name HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the country (ranking second behind cancer). Nearly three-quarters say the U.S. spends too little on HIV domestically, and two-thirds think that spending more on HIV prevention and testing will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic.

### ***Adults ages 25 and younger are relatively concerned about HIV/AIDS.***

- 18-25 year-olds are the age group most likely to express personal concern about becoming infected with HIV; more than half say they are very (22%) or somewhat (23%) concerned about personally becoming infected (Chart 1).
- More than a quarter (27%) name HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the nation (ranking second behind cancer at 35%) (Chart 2).
- More than four in ten (42%) name HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the world (ranking second just behind cancer at 43%) (Chart 3).
- A quarter (26%) say HIV is a more urgent problem for their local community than it was a few years ago, while 34% say the problem is about the same, and 6% say it is less urgent. However, another quarter (26%) say HIV has never been a problem for their local community (Chart 4).

### ***Many young adults harbor misconceptions about the HIV epidemic.***

- Significant shares of 18-25 year-olds say it is possible or they don't know if it is possible to transmit HIV through kissing (30%), sharing a drinking glass (17%), or touching a toilet seat (12%). Nearly four in ten (37%) hold at least one of these misconceptions (Chart 5).
- One in five young adults (21%) doesn't know that there are drugs available that can lengthen the lives of people with HIV, and half (51%) don't know that a pregnant woman with HIV can take certain drugs to reduce the risk of her baby being born infected. Nearly six in ten (57%) don't know that having another STD may increase your risk of getting HIV (Chart 6).
- Nearly six in ten (58%) think the number of new infections per year has increased over the last 10 years (Chart 7); in fact, the CDC estimates that new infections have remained about the same in that time. (However, it is important to note that many people may not understand the difference between HIV incidence – the rate of new infections – which has remained about the same, and HIV prevalence – the number of people living with HIV – which has in fact increased during this time period.)

***Most young adults say they have not talked with their doctor about HIV or AIDS. Many say they would like to have more information about various aspects of HIV testing, and about half say they have been tested themselves.***

- Fewer than half (45%) of young adults say they have talked with a doctor or other health care provider about HIV or AIDS (Chart 8).
- 18-25 year-olds are more likely than their older counterparts to say they want more information about HIV testing. Large shares say they would like to have more information about the different kinds of HIV tests available (60%); where to go to get tested (54%); how to protect their privacy when getting an HIV test (51%); and how to bring up the topic of getting tested with a partner (43%) (Chart 9).
- Nearly half (48%) of 18-25 year-olds say have been tested for HIV at some point (lower than the shares of those ages 26-39 and 40-59 who say they've ever been tested) (Chart 10). The share of young adults who say they've been tested has remained about the same since 1997.
- The most frequently cited reason for not getting tested is not feeling at risk (54%) (Chart 11).
- Stigma about HIV testing is not an issue for most young adults – 59% say if they were to be tested it would make no difference in how people they know think of them. Still, 25% say people they know would think less of them if they found out they had been tested (Chart 12).
- Two-thirds (67%) think HIV testing should be treated like routine screening for other diseases, while about three in ten (28%) say it should require special procedures such as written permission from the patient (Chart 13).
- Two-thirds (67%) think the rapid home HIV test is a good idea (Chart 14); however, 68% would prefer to have the test done in a doctor's office rather than at home if they were getting tested themselves (Chart 15).

***Young adults born in the age of HIV have a somewhat different picture than their older counterparts of the “face” of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States.***

- In an open-ended question, 18-25 year-olds are less likely to name gay men (29% vs. 45% for those ages 26 and over) and drug users (21% vs. 35%) as groups most likely to be infected with HIV; they are more likely to name African Americans (21% vs. 11%) and minorities in general (12% vs. 6%) (Chart 16).
- However, when asked directly whether African Americans are more or less likely than whites to be infected, three-quarters (74%) of 18-25 year-olds say that African Americans and whites are equally likely to be infected, while one in five (21%) know that African Americans are more likely to be infected.
- 18-25 year-olds are less likely than their older counterparts to personally know someone who has died of AIDS or is infected with HIV, although a third do report knowing someone (33% vs. 46% for those ages 26 and over) (Chart 17).

***Young adults are supportive of abstinence education, but they prefer a combined approach (abstinence, be faithful, use condoms) when it comes to HIV prevention programs for youth.***

- When asked about different priorities for HIV prevention in the U.S., large majorities of 18-25 year-olds say that increasing the use of condoms (90%), increasing the number of people who get tested (78%), and increasing education about abstinence for young people (73%) should be very important priorities. When asked to choose the most important priority, a plurality (41%) choose increasing abstinence education for young people, while 30% choose increasing use of condoms, and 13% choose increased testing (Chart 18).
- Three-quarters (75%) say a combined approach (abstinence, be faithful, use condoms) is best when it comes to HIV prevention programs for youth (Chart 19).
- Nearly half (45%) say condoms are very effective at preventing HIV/AIDS when used correctly; however, six in ten (62%) say condoms are used correctly only some or none of the time (Chart 20).

***18-25 year-olds are less likely than older adults to say they get most of their information about HIV/AIDS from the media (although it is their most cited source), and they are more likely to think that media attention to HIV/AIDS has increased in the last few years.***

- Sources of information about HIV/AIDS are somewhat different for 18-25 year-olds than for other age groups. Media is still the highest-ranked source of information (40%), but this is lower than for other age groups. They are more likely than other age groups to get their information from school/training (17%), their doctor or other health professionals (16%), and the Internet (8%) (Chart 21).
- Four in ten young adults (41%) say that media attention to HIV/AIDS has increased in the last few years, while 30% say it has stayed about the same, and 28% say it has decreased. 18-25 year-olds are more likely than adults in any other age group to say that media attention has increased (Chart 22).

***Majorities of 18-25 year-olds express personal comfort with people with HIV, yet a large share still feel there is discrimination against people with HIV in the U.S. today.***

- Eight in ten young adults say they would be very (48%) or somewhat (33%) comfortable working with someone who has HIV (Chart 23).
- Six in ten say they would be very (34%) or somewhat (26%) comfortable having a roommate who has HIV (Chart 24).
- Despite their own relative comfort, these young adults still perceive that there is discrimination against people with HIV – more than three-quarters say there is a lot (44%) or some (33%) discrimination against people with HIV in the U.S. today (Chart 25).

***In the eyes of young adults, HIV/AIDS has had a variety of effects on behavior, culture and society in the United States.***

- About six in ten adults ages 25 and under (59%) say the HIV/AIDS epidemic has made people more likely to practice safe sex (Chart 26).
- Nearly four in ten (38%) say the HIV/AIDS epidemic has made it easier for people to talk openly about sex, while 40% say it hasn't made much difference (Chart 26).
- More than half (53%) of 18-25 year-olds say the HIV/AIDS epidemic has made people more likely to discriminate against gays and lesbians (Chart 26).

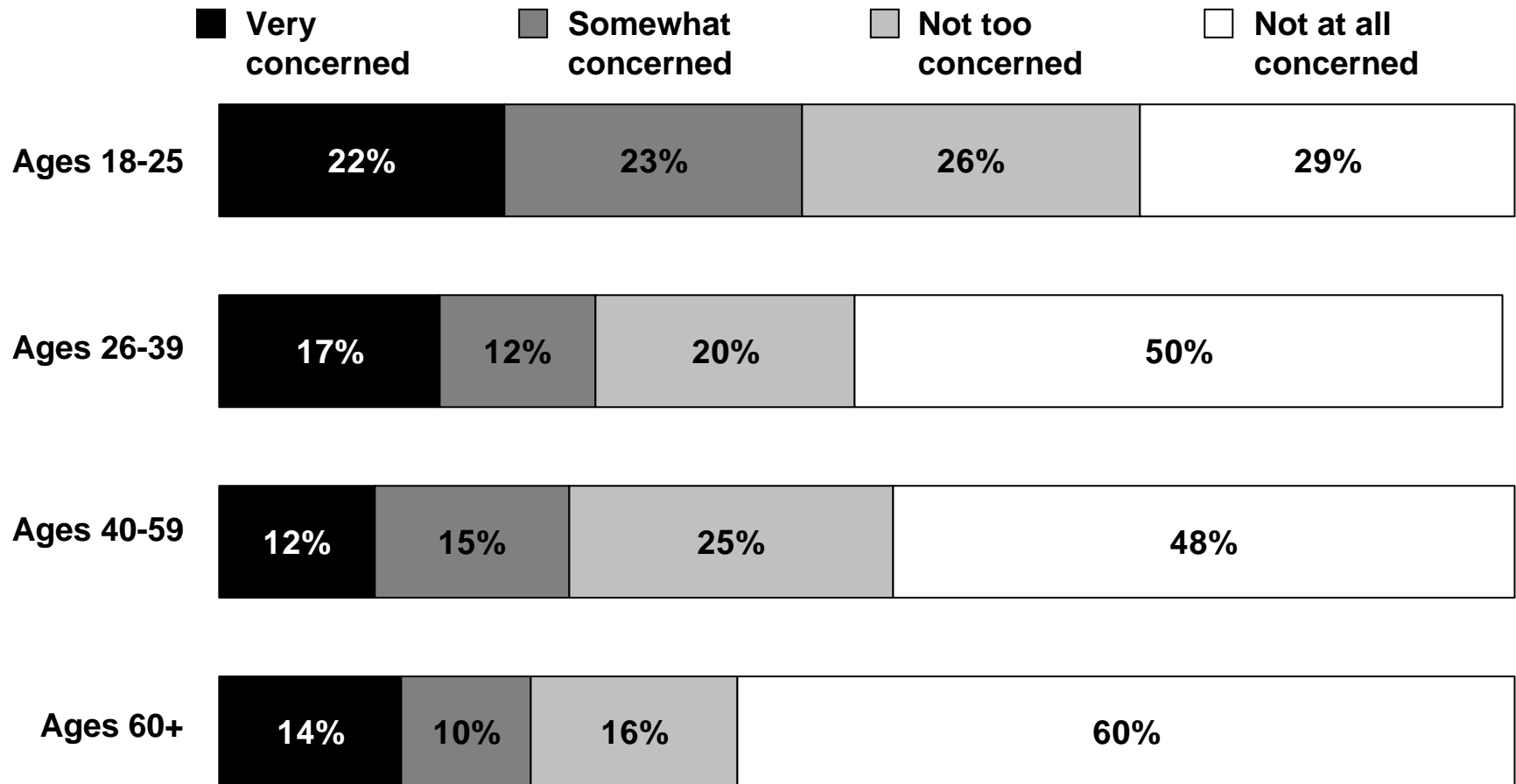
***Opinions about the country's progress on the HIV epidemic are somewhat mixed, with a plurality expressing optimism. Young adults perceive that better access to medication and prevention is needed in the U.S., and they are supportive of more funding for domestic HIV.***

- Nearly half (45%) of 18-25 year-olds say the U.S. is making progress on HIV, while three in ten (31%) say the country is losing ground, and 18% say the problem is about the same as it has been (Chart 27).
- About three-quarters (74%) think that most people with HIV in the United States do not get the medication they need, and more than four in ten (42%) say most people at high risk for HIV in the U.S. do not have access to needed prevention services.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) say the U.S. spends too little domestically on HIV/AIDS, and more than half (55%) say that compared with other diseases, federal spending on HIV/AIDS is too low.
- Two-thirds (65%) say spending more money on HIV prevention in the U.S. will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic, and the same share (65%) say the same about spending more money on HIV testing.



# Personal Concern About Becoming Infected by Age

Bearing in mind the different ways people can be infected with HIV, how concerned are you personally about becoming infected with HIV?



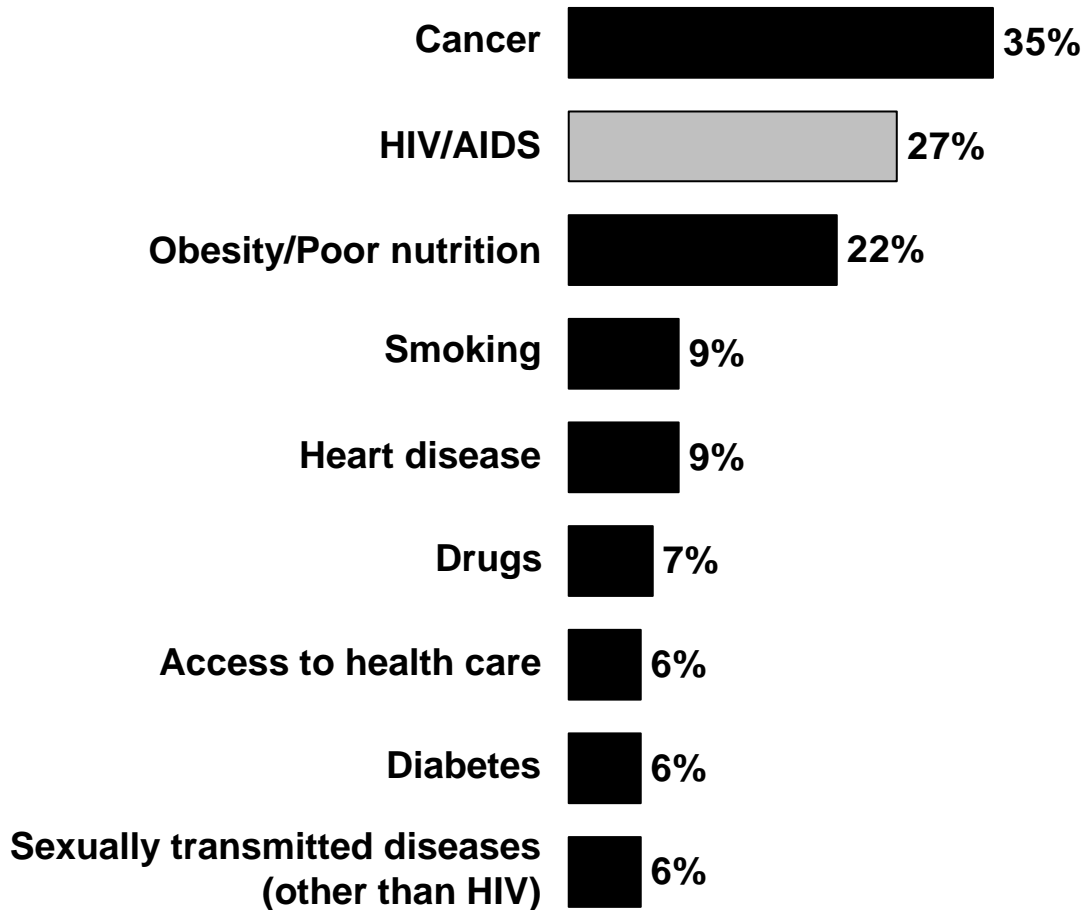
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the Nation (Ages 18-25)

---

Among those ages 18-25: What do you think is the MOST urgent health problem facing THIS NATION today? (Open-ended)\*



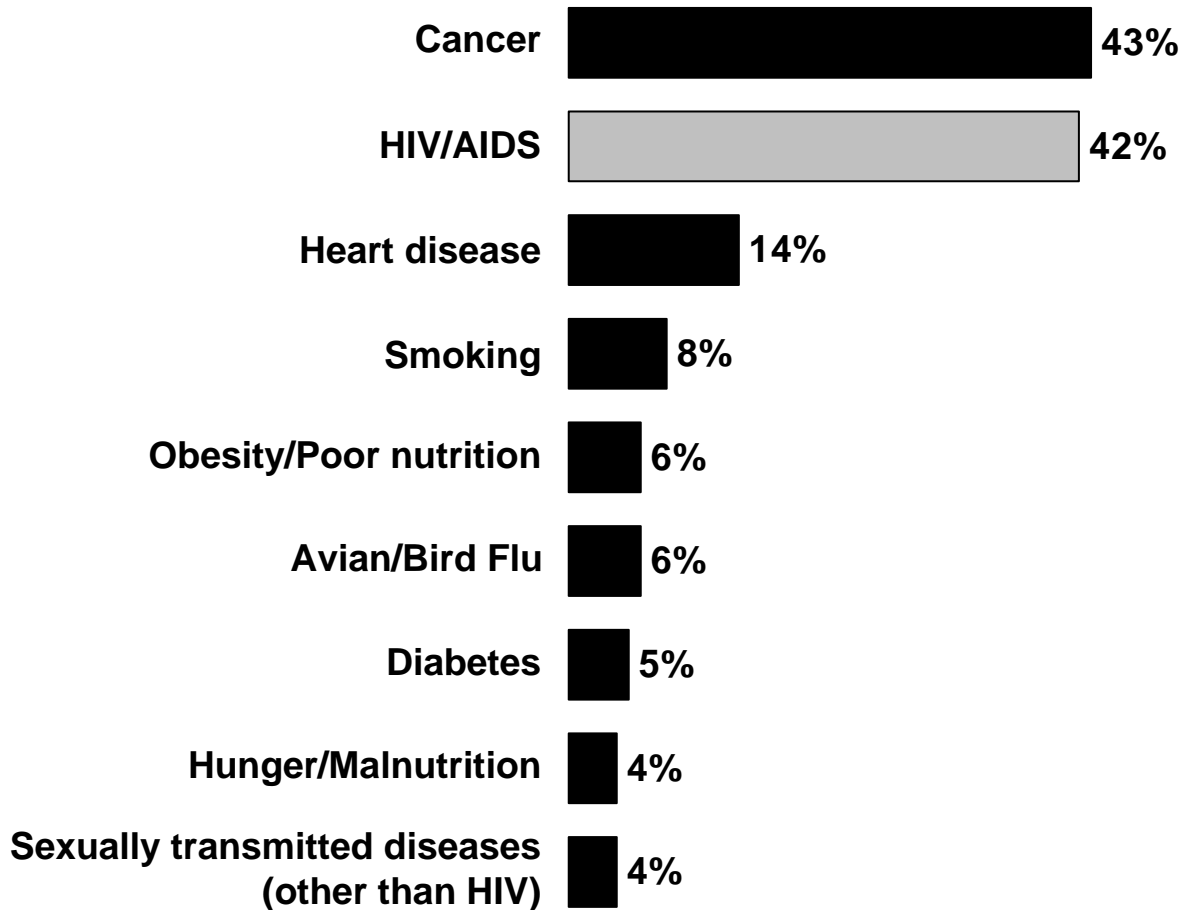
\* Note: Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the World (Ages 18-25)

---

Among those ages 18-25: What do you think is the MOST urgent health problem facing THE WORLD today? (Open-ended)\*

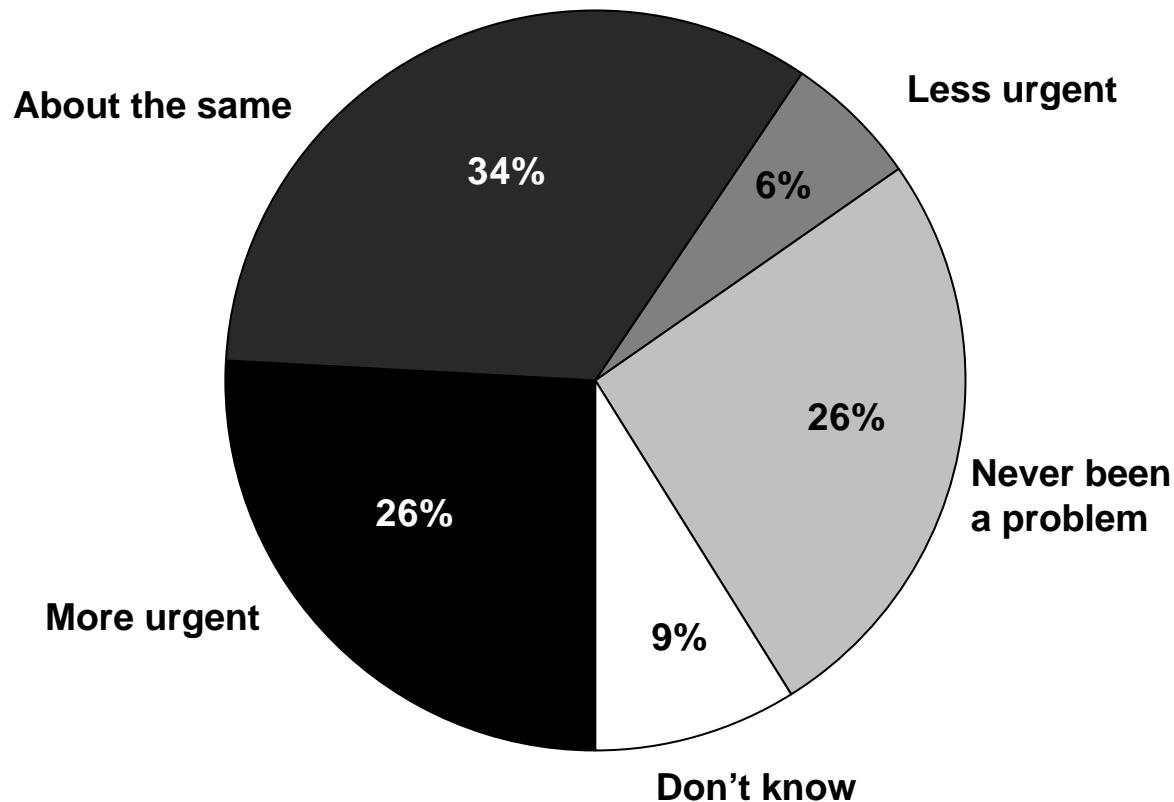


\* Note: Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# HIV/AIDS and Your Local Community (Ages 18-25)

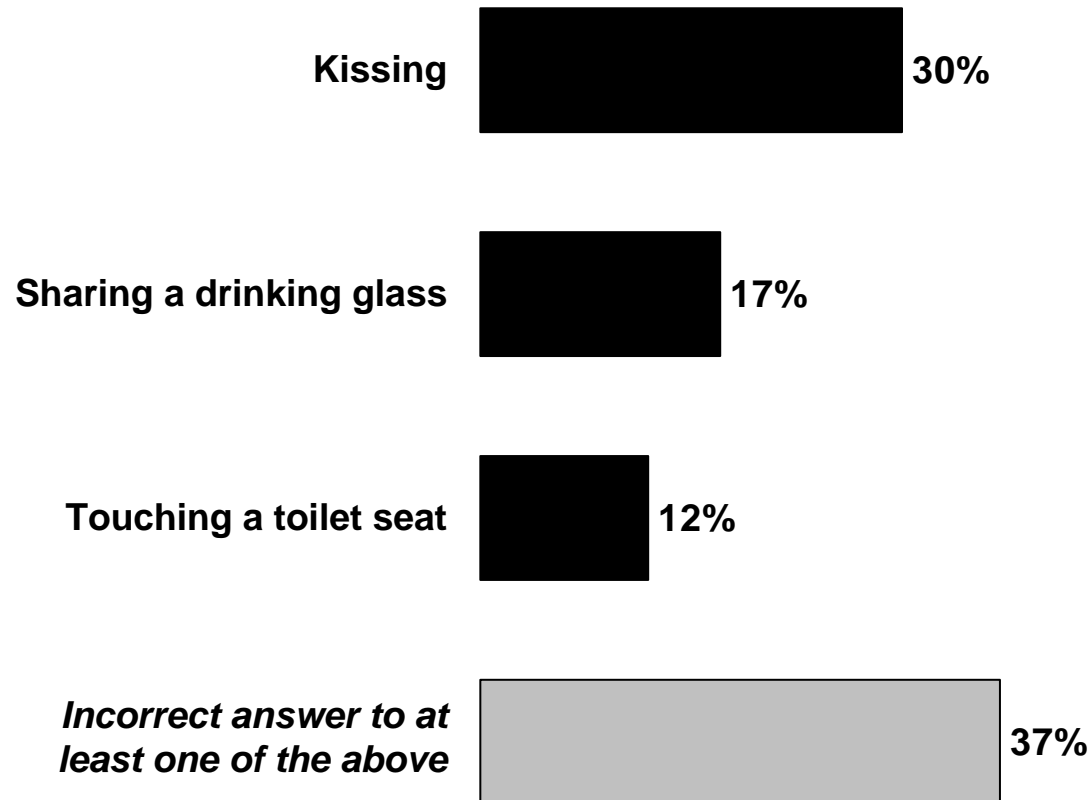
Among those ages 18-25: Thinking about the way the problem of AIDS is affecting YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY today, do you think AIDS is a more urgent problem for your community than it was a few years ago, a less urgent problem, is it about the same, or has AIDS never been a problem in your community?



# Misconceptions About HIV Transmission (Ages 18-25)

---

Among those ages 18-25: Percent who say that HIV can be transmitted in the following ways, or say they don't know... (Incorrect answers)



Note: Chart shows "Don't know" and "Yes" responses combined.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Misconceptions About HIV Prevention and Treatment (Ages 18-25)

---

Among those ages 18-25: Percent who say the following statements about HIV are false, or say they don't know... (Incorrect answers)

Having another sexually transmitted disease may increase a person's risk of getting HIV 57%

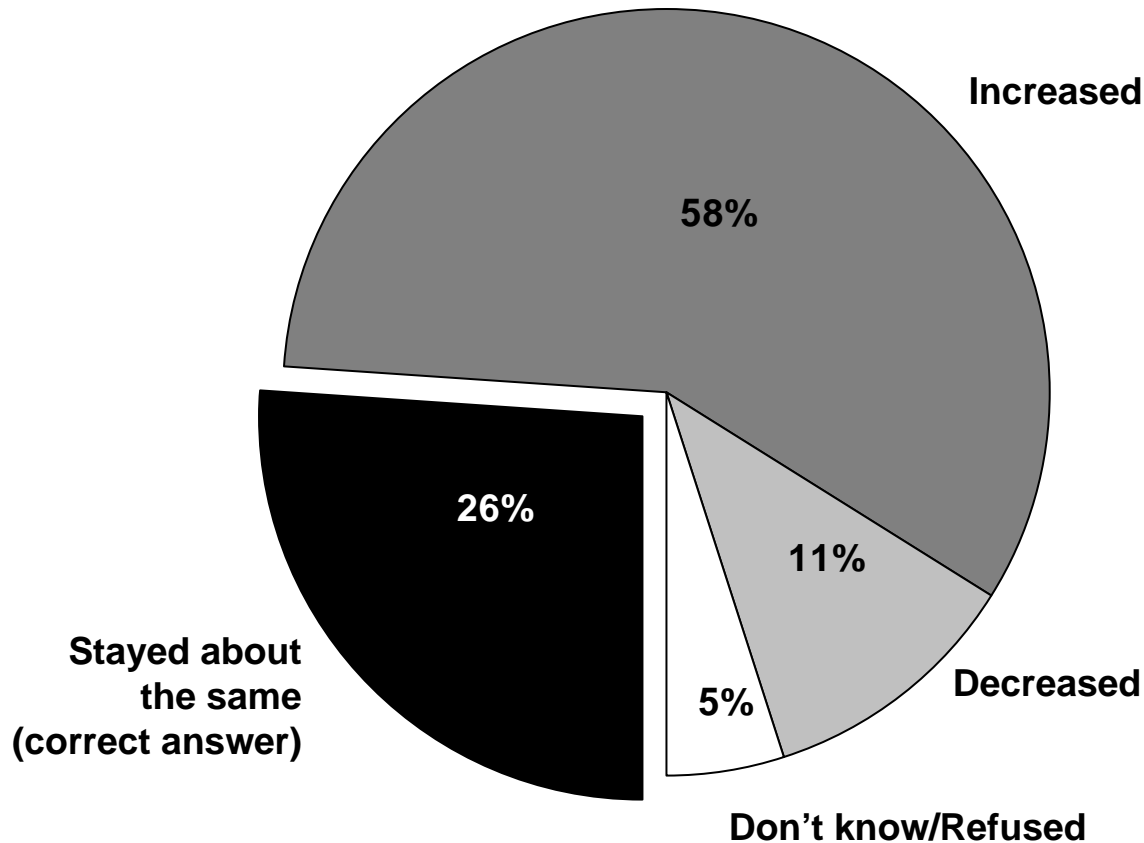
A pregnant woman with HIV can take drugs to reduce the risk of her baby being infected 51%

There are drugs that can lengthen the lives of people with HIV 21%

There is no cure for AIDS at present 12%

# Perceptions of Change in Number of New HIV Infections Per Year in the U.S. (Ages 18-25)

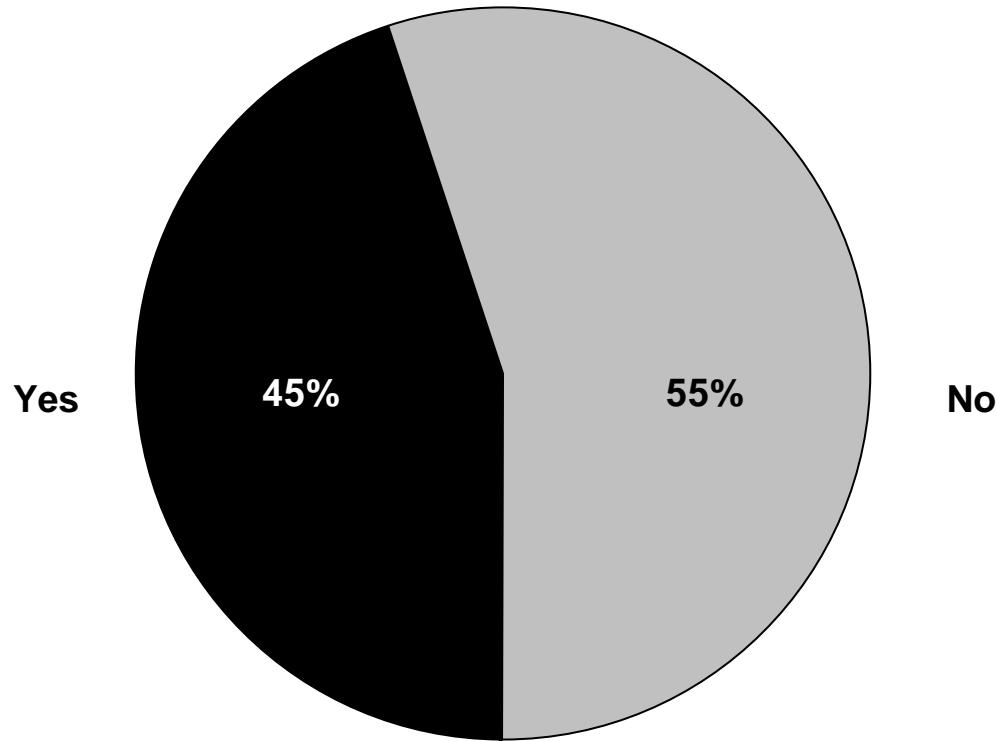
Among those ages 18-25: Over the last ten years, do you think the number of new HIV infections per year in the U.S. has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?



# Percent Who Have Talked to Their Doctor About HIV/AIDS (Ages 18-25)

---

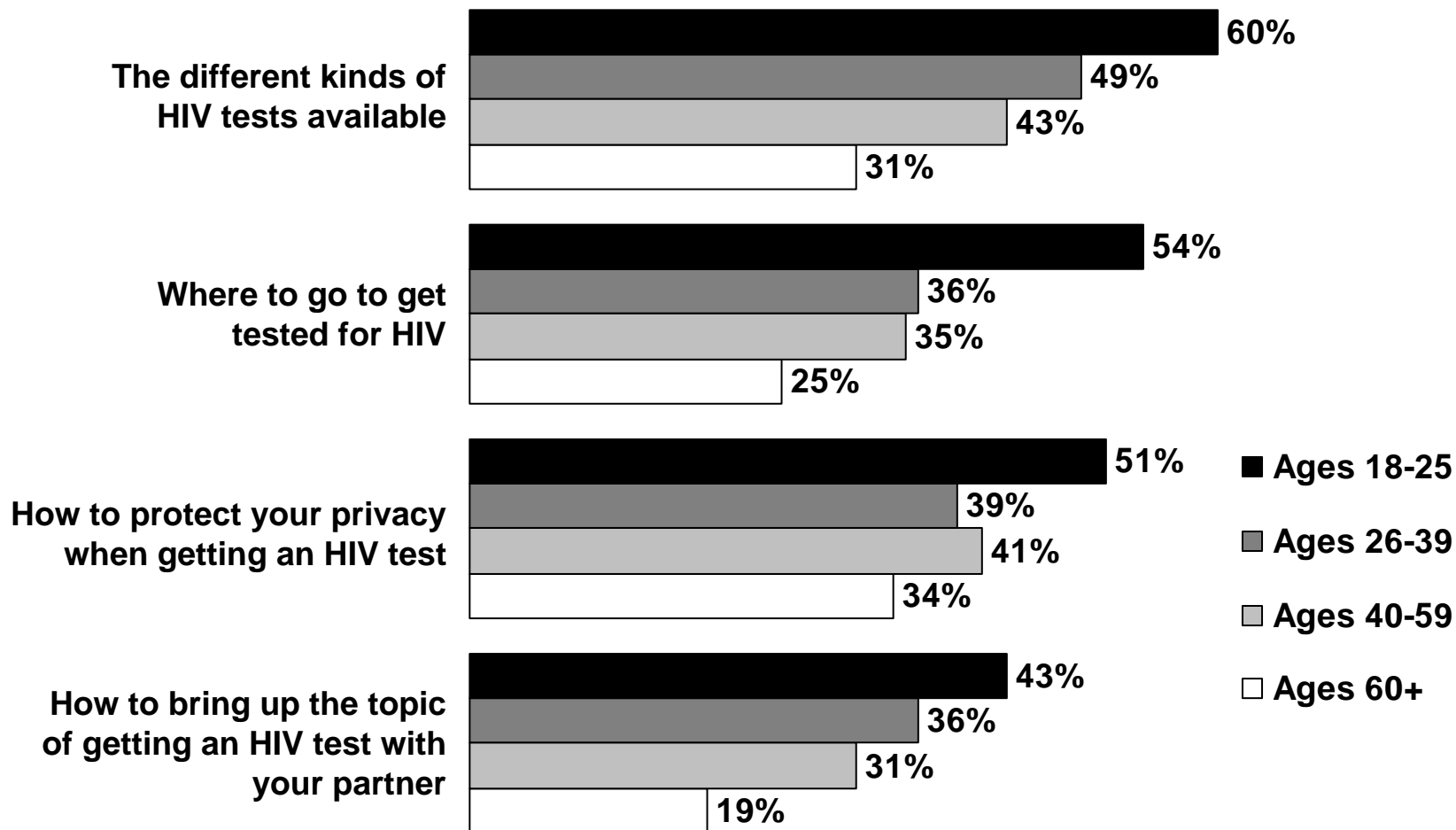
Among those ages 18-25: Have you ever talked with a doctor or health care provider about HIV or AIDS?





# Information People Would Like to Have About HIV Testing by Age

Percent who say they would like to have more information about the following...



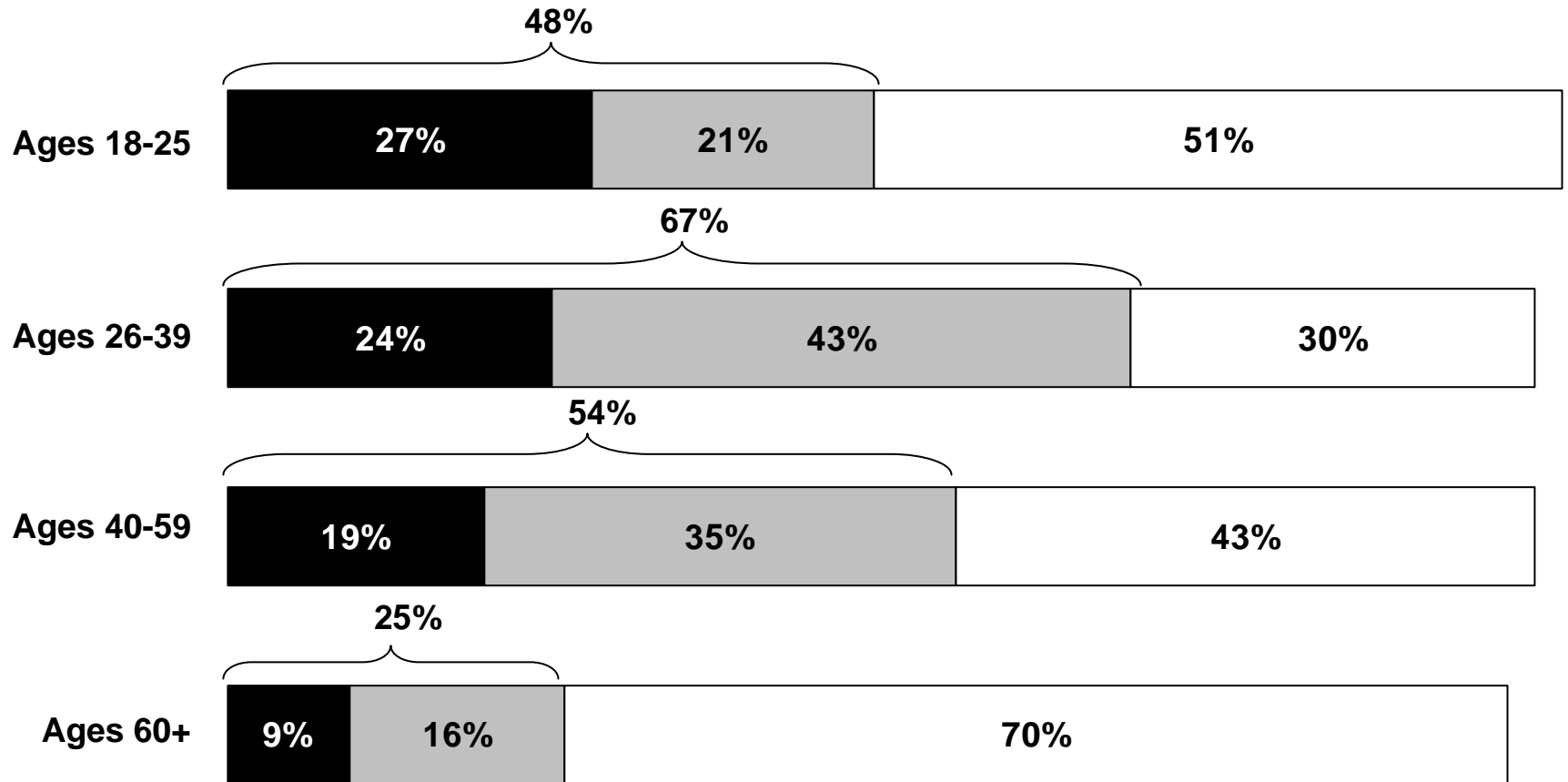
Note: Don't know and "Other" responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Percent Who Report Being Tested for HIV by Age

Percent saying they have ever been tested for HIV...

Yes, in last 12 months
  Yes, but not in last 12 months
  No, never tested



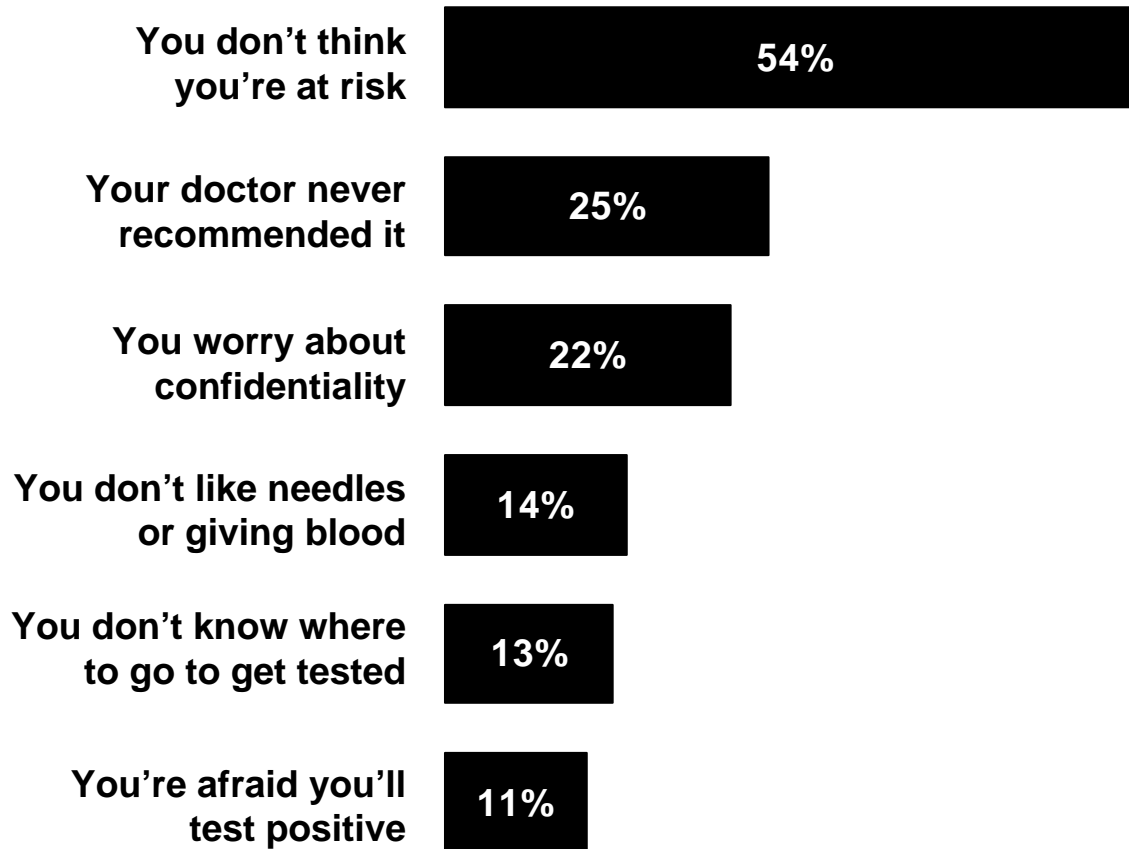
Note: Don't know responses not shown; Numbers may not add up exactly due to rounding.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Reported Reasons for Not Being Tested (Ages 18-25)

---

Among the 51% of those ages 18-25 who say they've never been tested for HIV, percent who say each of the following is a reason they haven't been tested...



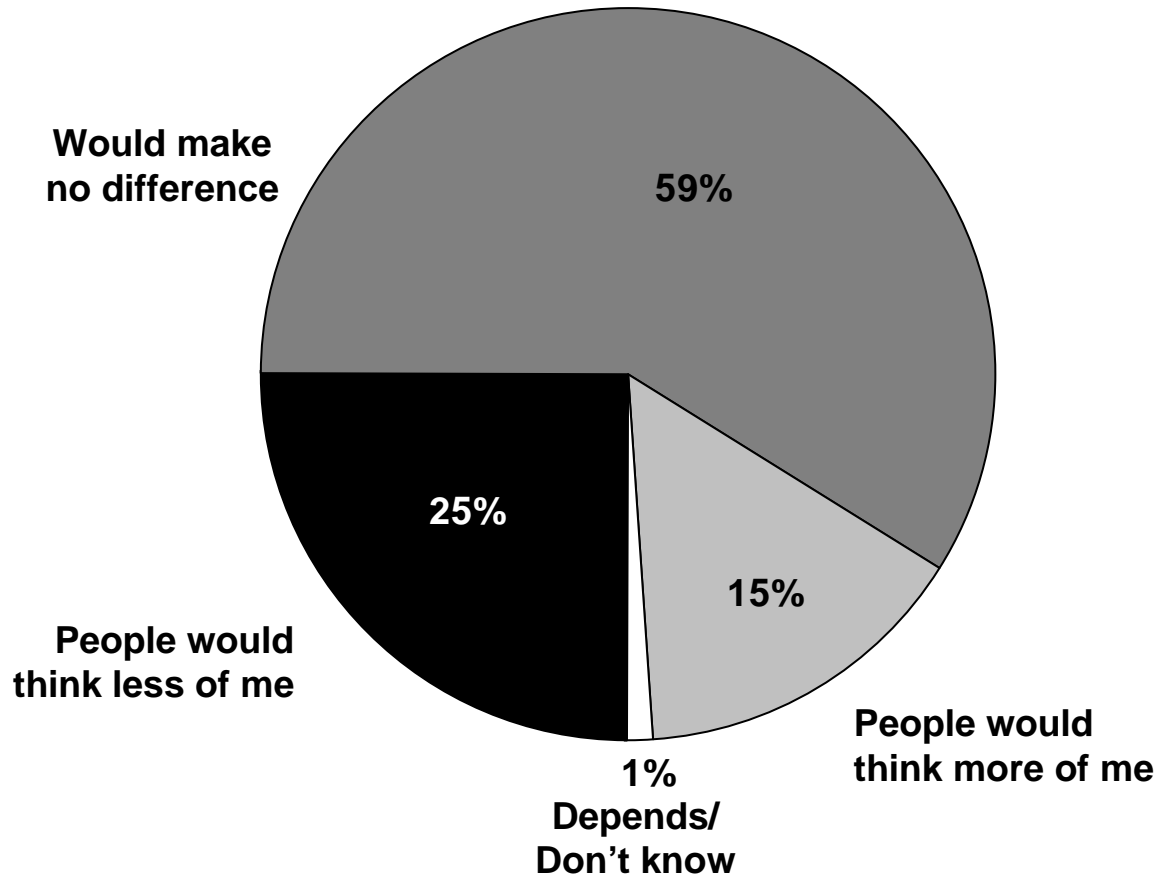
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Perceptions of Whether Stigma Follows Testing (Ages 18-25)

---

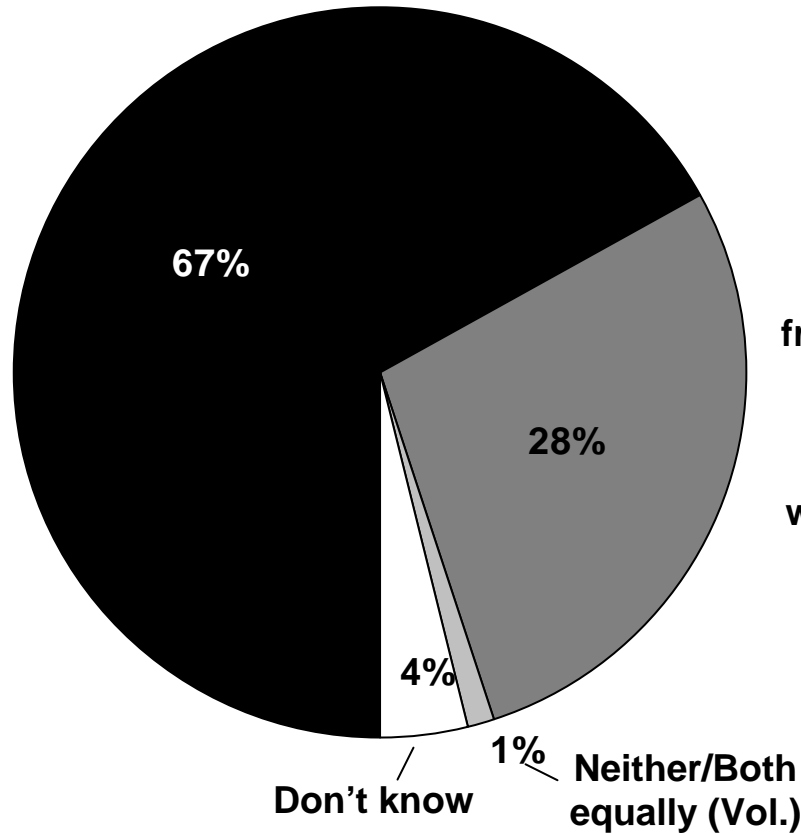
Among those ages 18-25: If you were to be tested for HIV, do you think it would make people you know think less of you, think more of you, or would it make no difference in how people you know think of you?



# Views on Routine HIV Testing (Ages 18-25)

Among those ages 18-25: Which comes closer to your opinion...

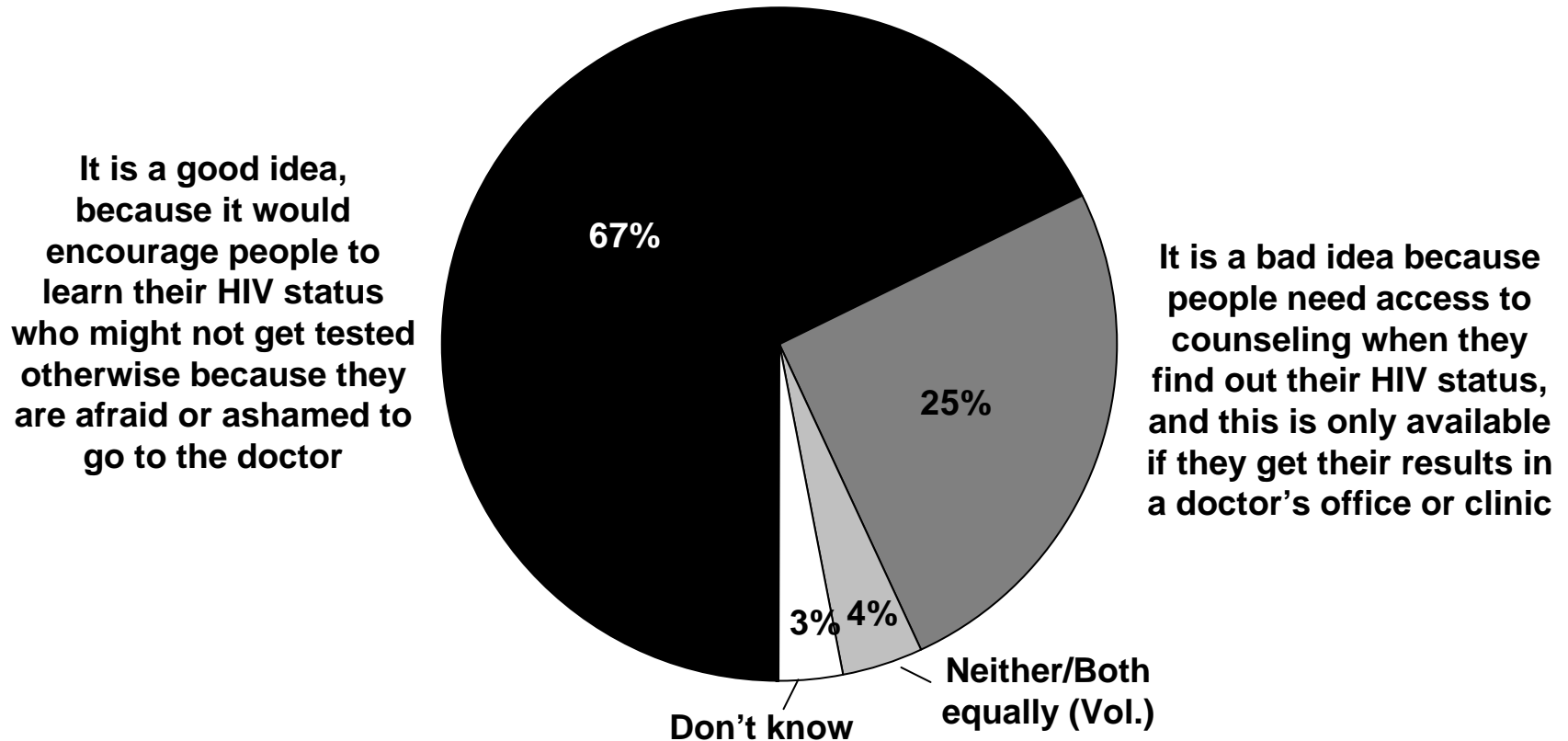
HIV testing should be treated just like routine screening for any other disease, and should be included as part of regular check-ups and exams



HIV testing is different from screening for other diseases, and should require special procedures, such as written permission from the patient in order to perform the test

## Views on Home HIV Test (Ages 18-25)

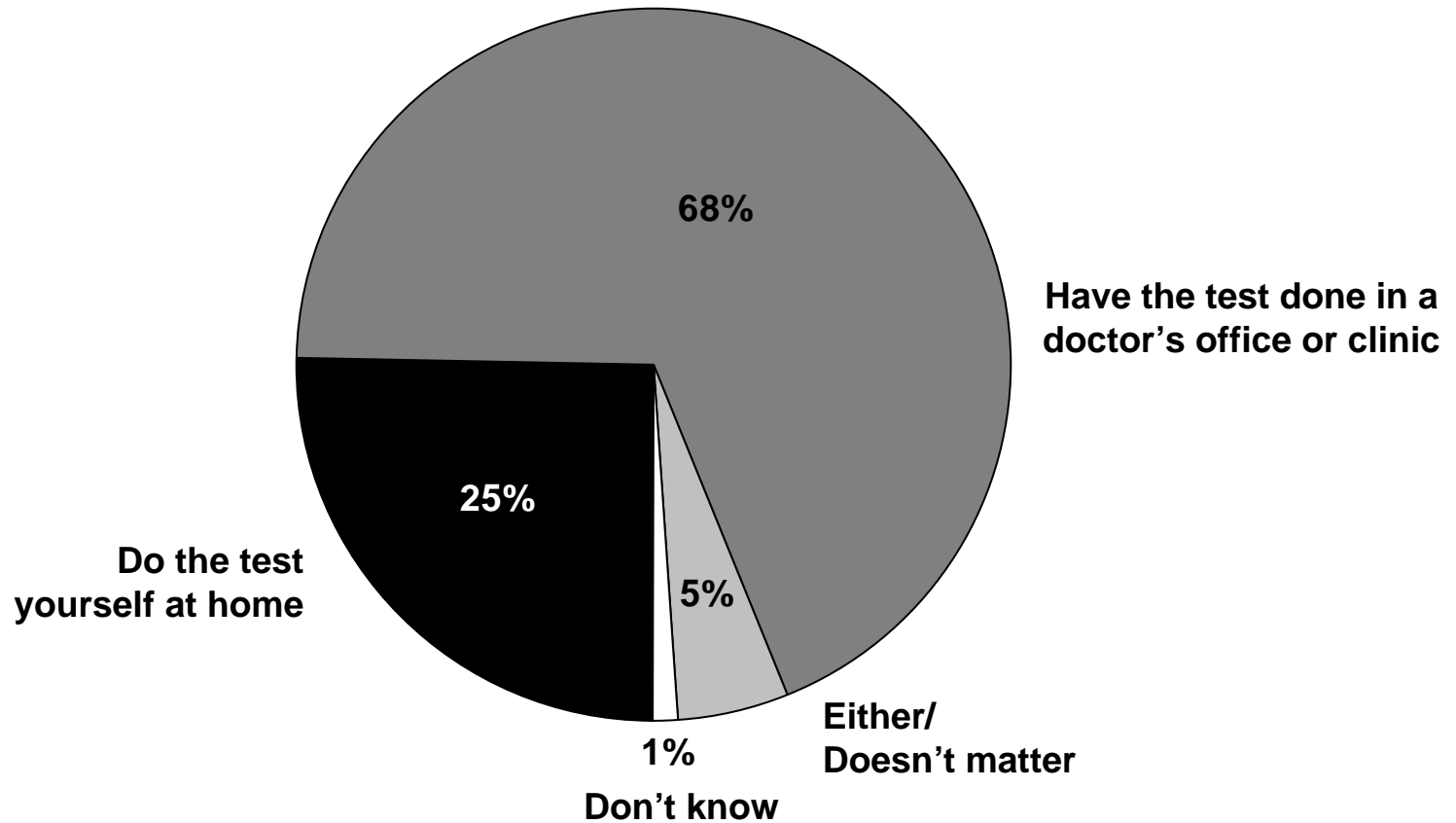
Among those ages 18-25: As you may know, the FDA has recently been discussing a new type of oral HIV test that people could buy over-the-counter and use at home to learn their HIV status within 20 minutes. Which of the following comes closest to your view about this type of test...



# Personal Preference for Home Testing vs. Doctor's Office (Ages 18-25)

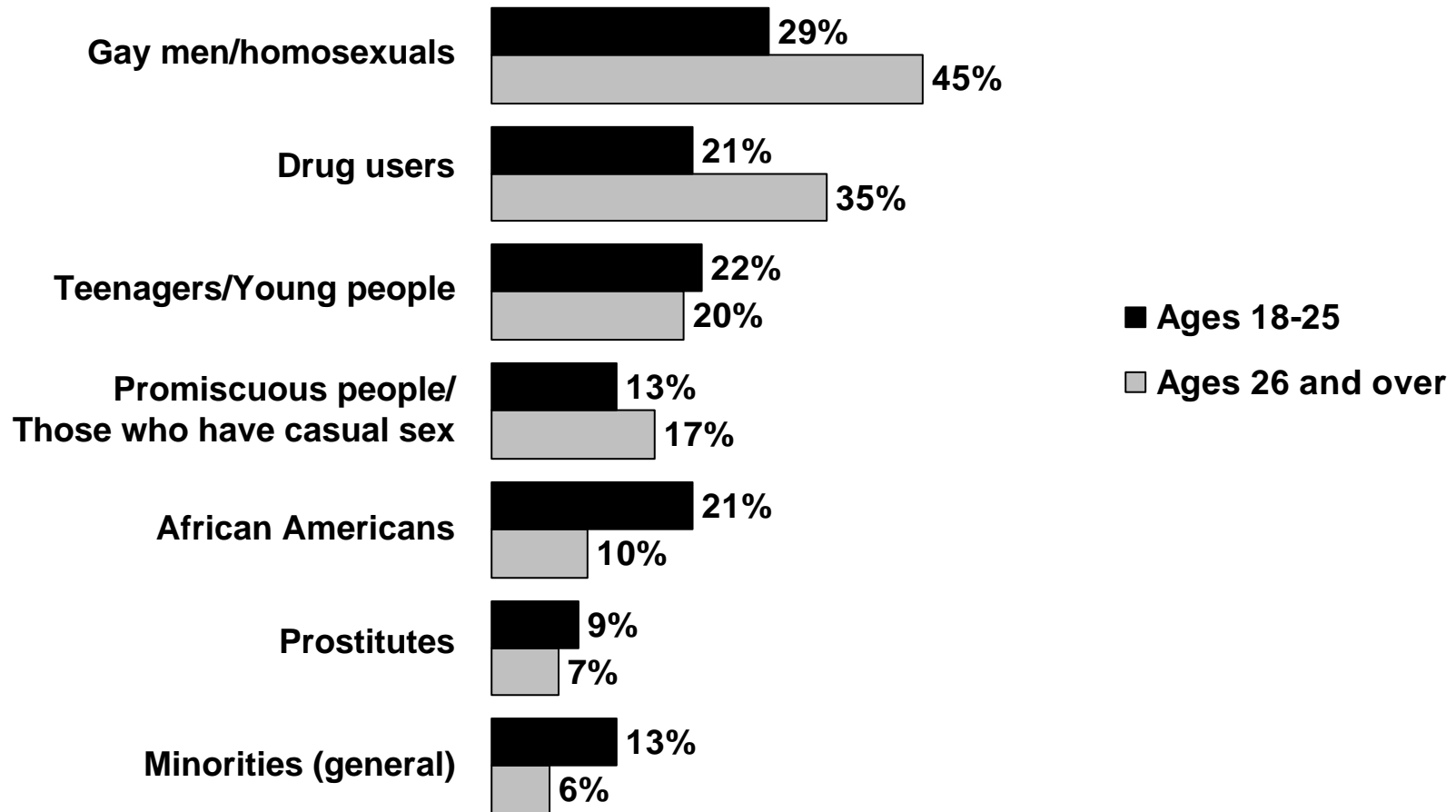
---

Among those ages 18-25: If you were to be tested for HIV, would you prefer to...



# Perception of Groups Most Likely to Be Infected by Age

When you think about HIV/AIDS, which group of people do you think of first as those who are most likely to be infected? (Open-ended)\*



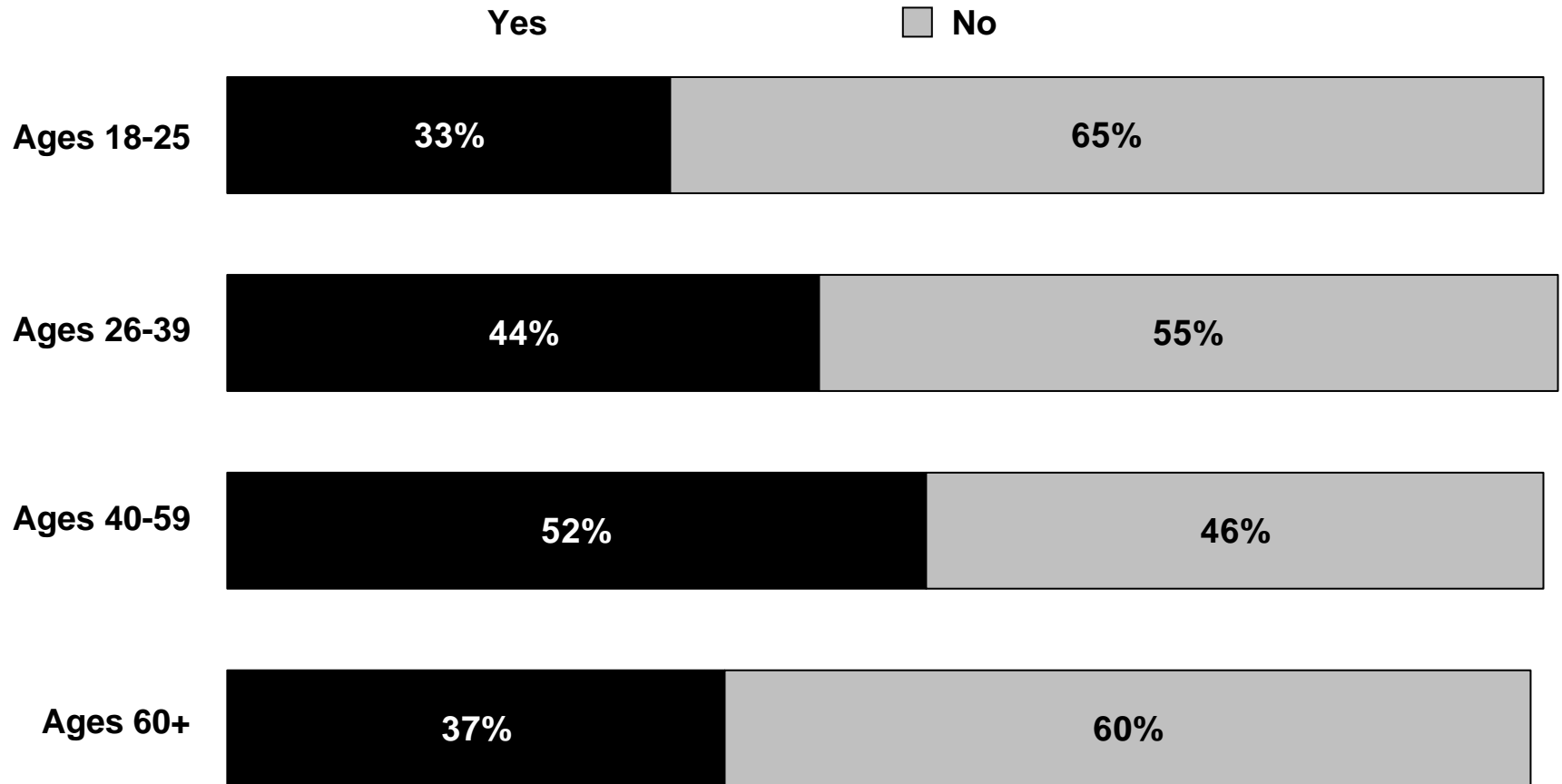
\* Note: Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)



# Percent Who Know Someone With HIV/AIDS by Age

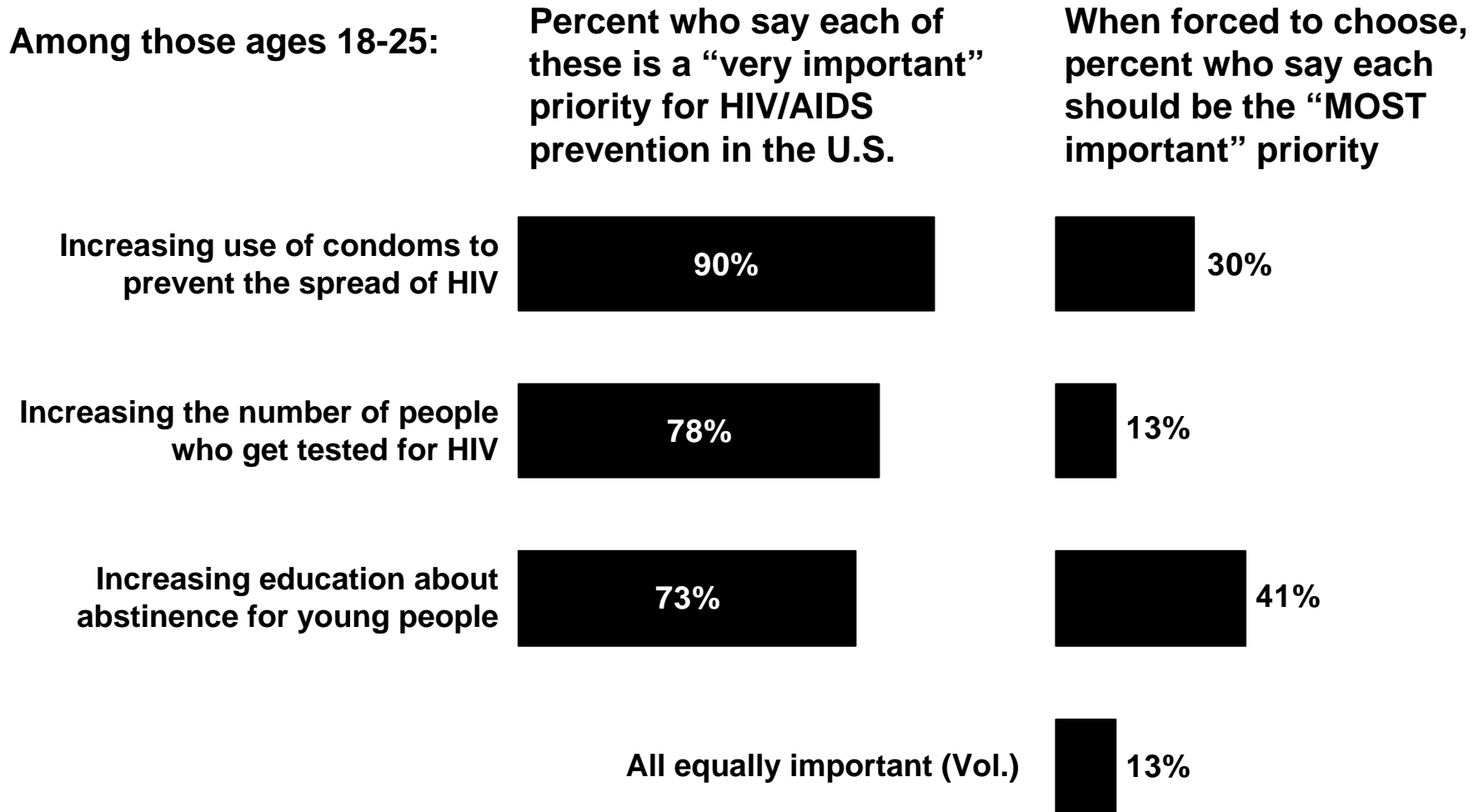
Do you personally know anyone who now has AIDS, has died from AIDS, or has tested positive for HIV?



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

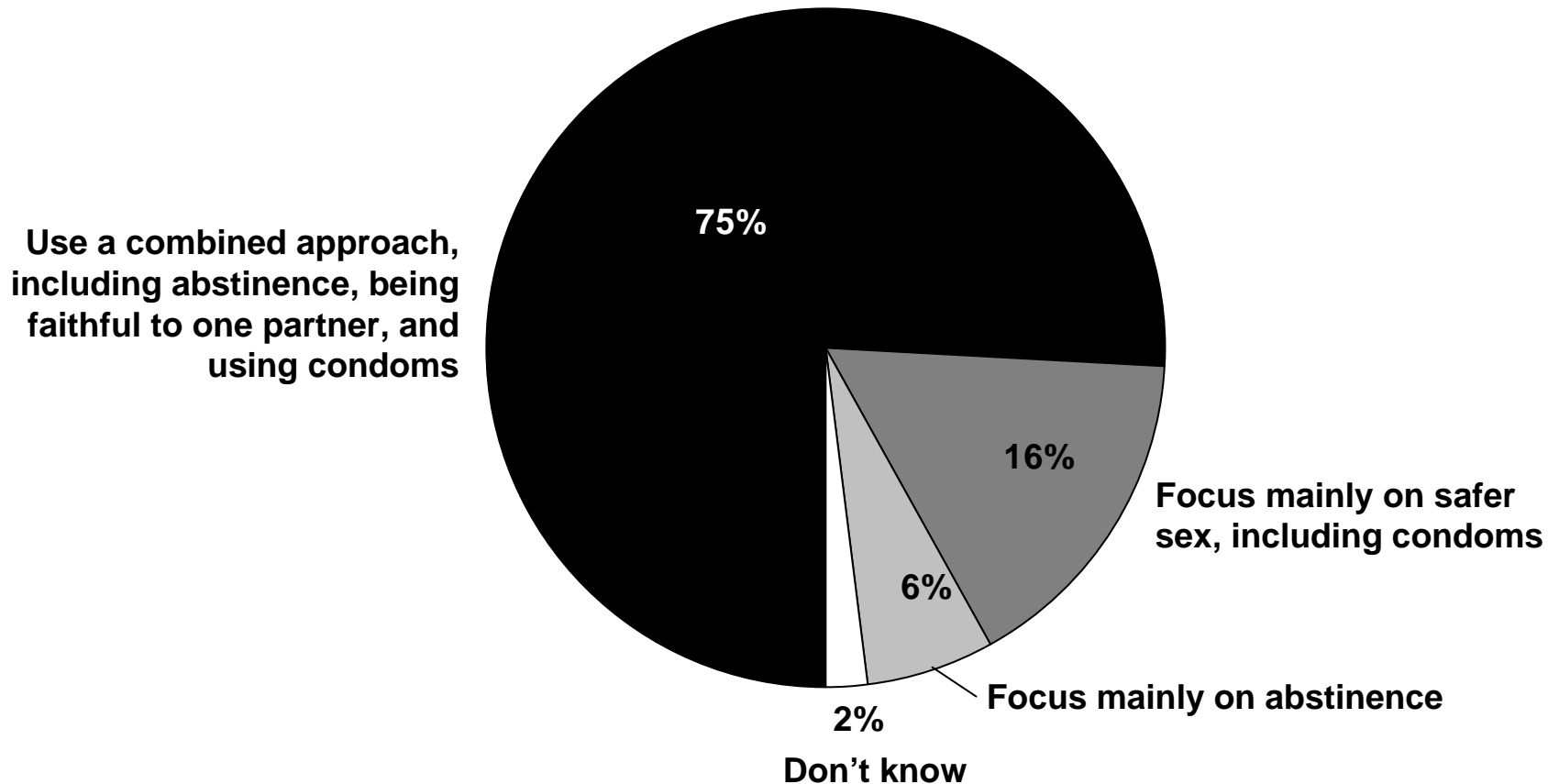
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Priorities for HIV Prevention in the U.S. (Ages 18-25)



# Views on HIV Prevention Programs for Youth (Ages 18-25)

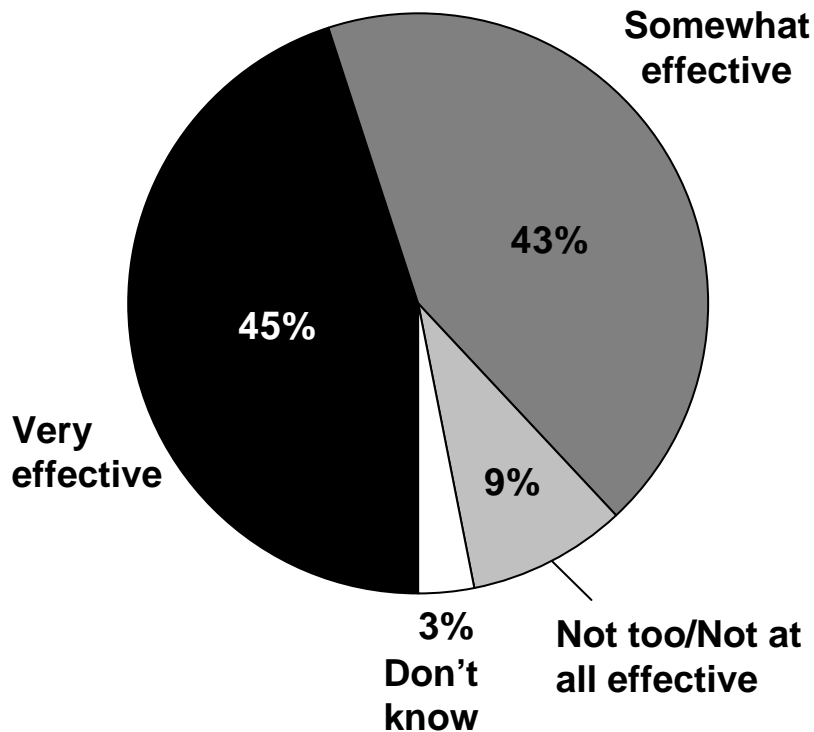
Among those ages 18-25: Thinking about HIV prevention programs for youth, which of the following comes closest to your view of what the focus of these programs should be? Should they...



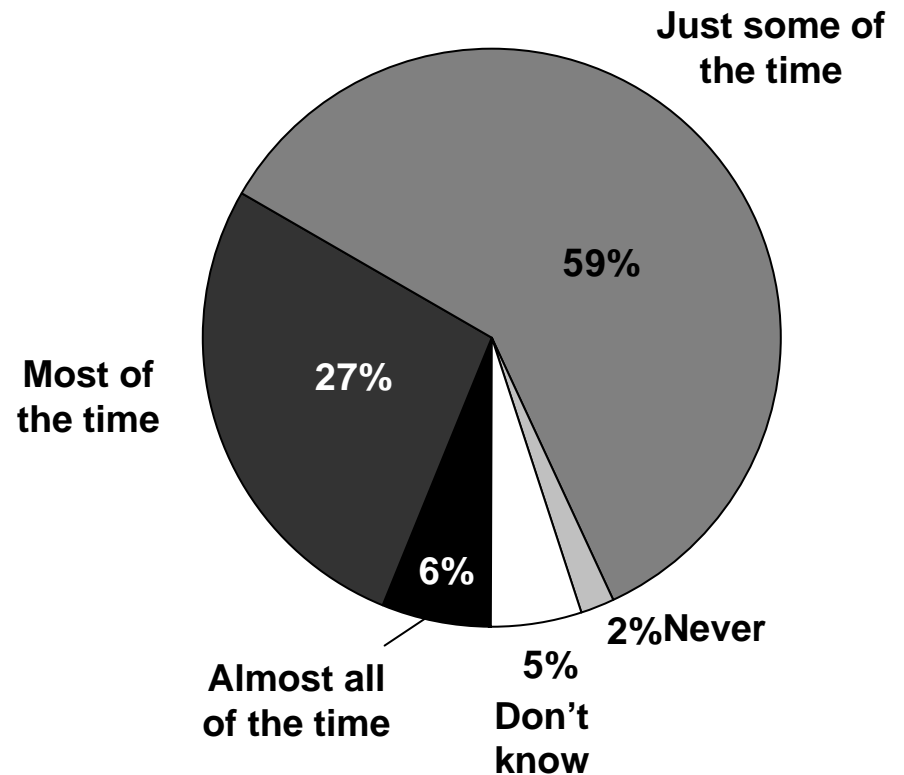
# Views on Effectiveness of Condoms to Prevent HIV (Ages 18-25)

Among those ages 18-25:

Now thinking about the effectiveness of condoms. In your opinion how effective are condoms, if used correctly, at preventing HIV/AIDS?

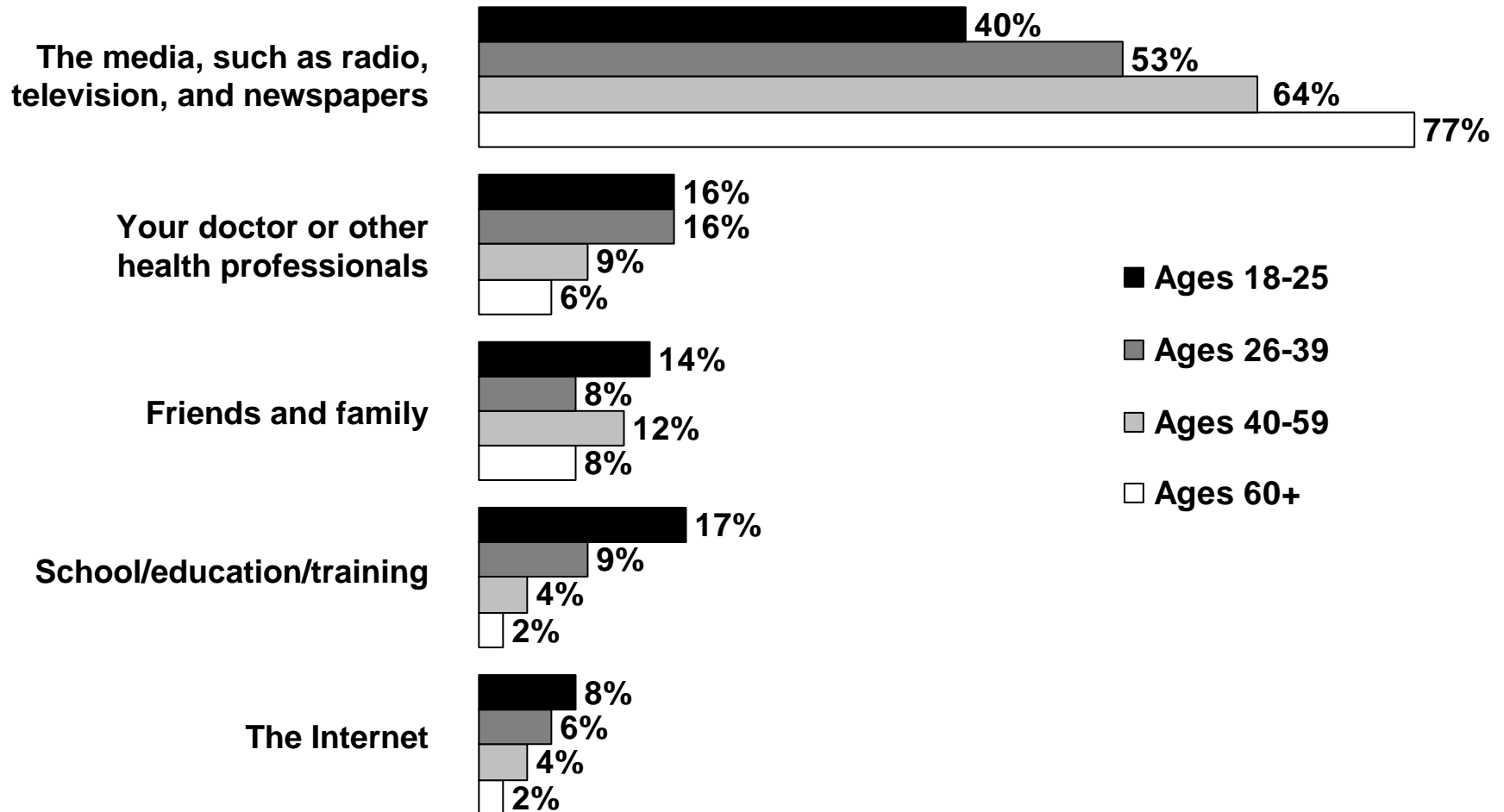


In general, how often do you think people use condoms correctly?



# Sources of Information About HIV/AIDS by Age

Thinking about everything you know about HIV/AIDS, does this information mainly come from things you've seen and heard from...

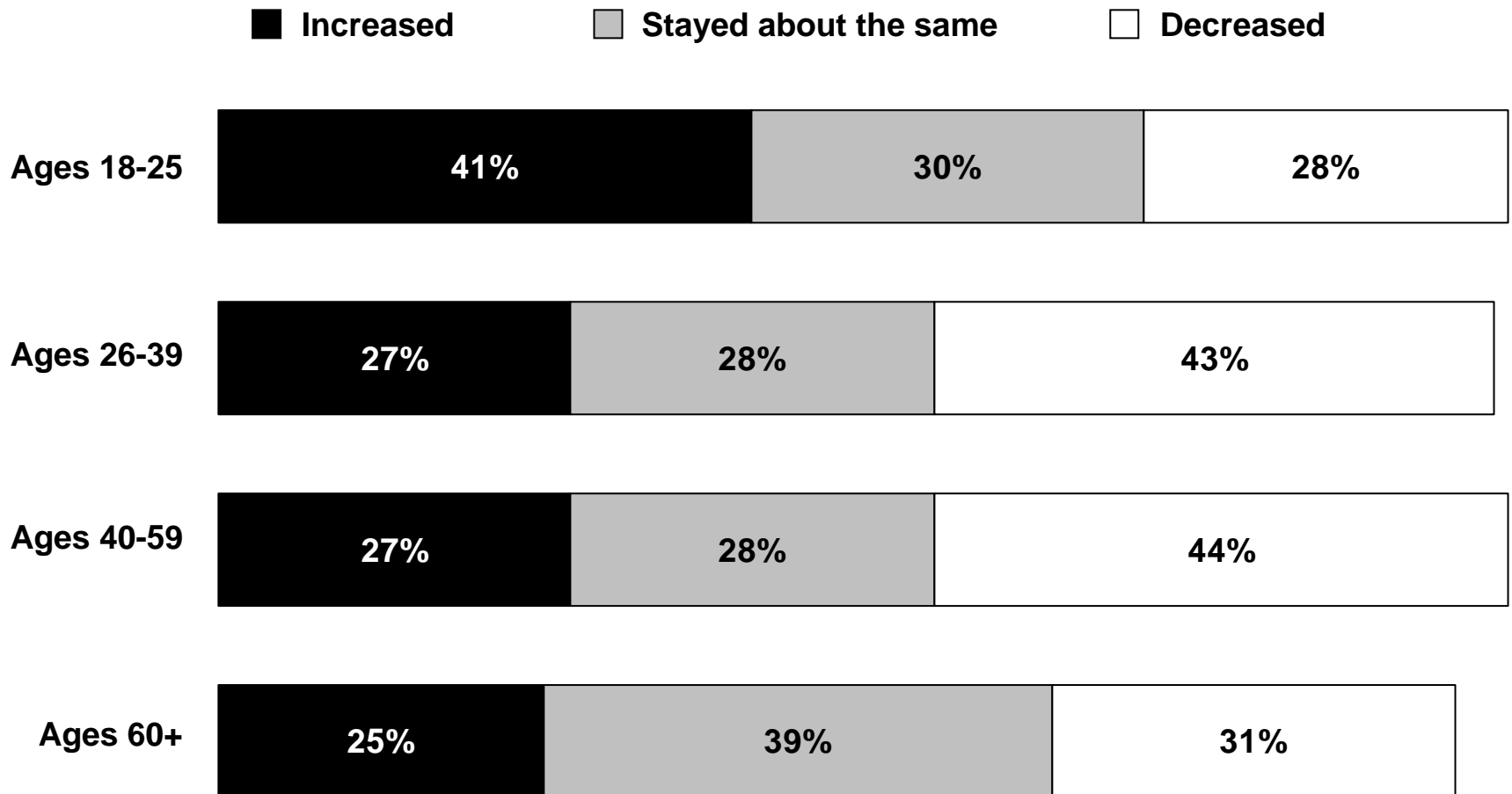


Note: Don't know and "Other" responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Perception of Media Attention to HIV/AIDS by Age

In the last few years, do you think that media attention to HIV/AIDS has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

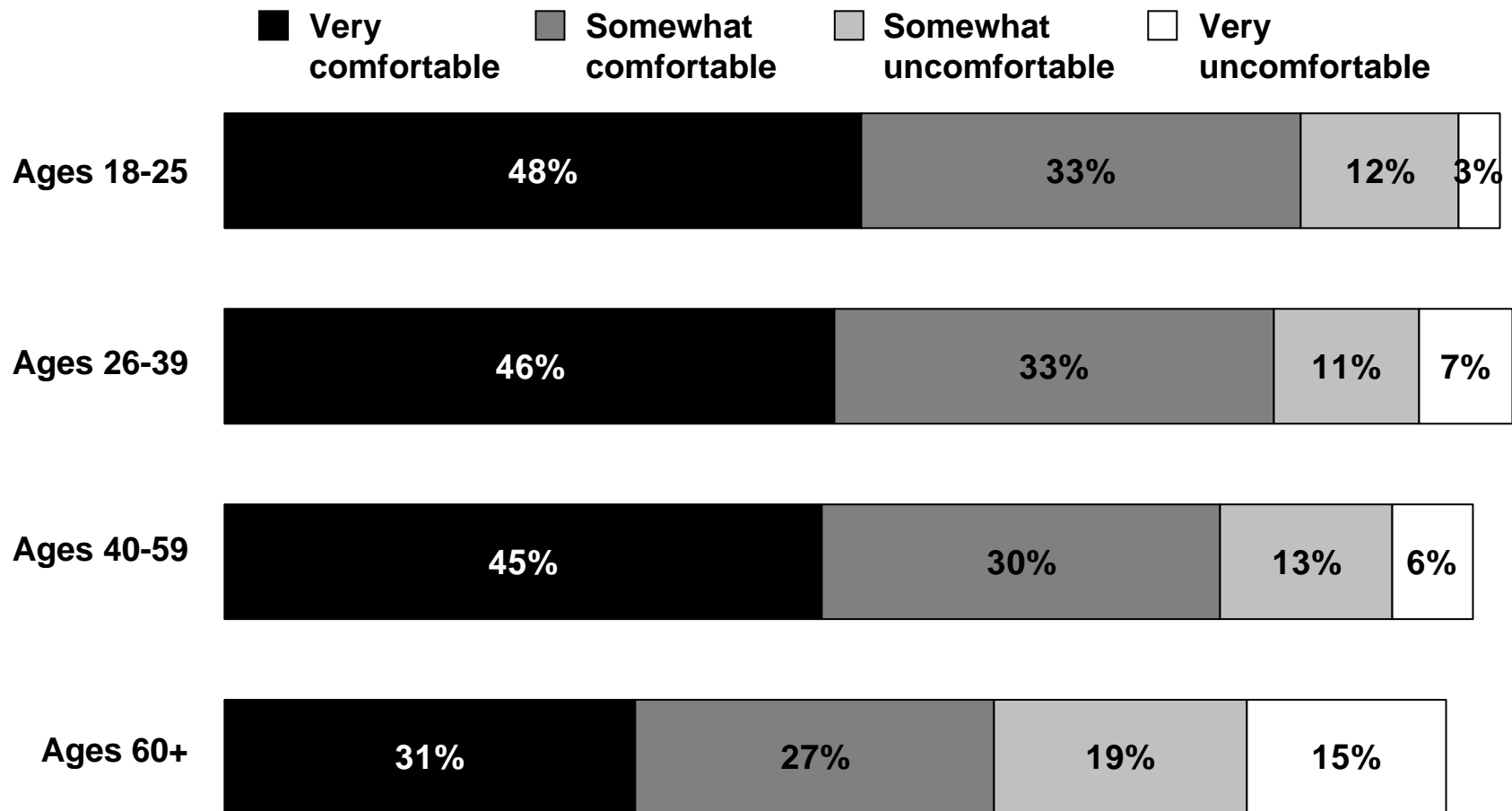


Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Reported Comfort Level Working With Someone Who Has HIV by Age

In general, how comfortable would you be, personally working with someone who has HIV or AIDS?

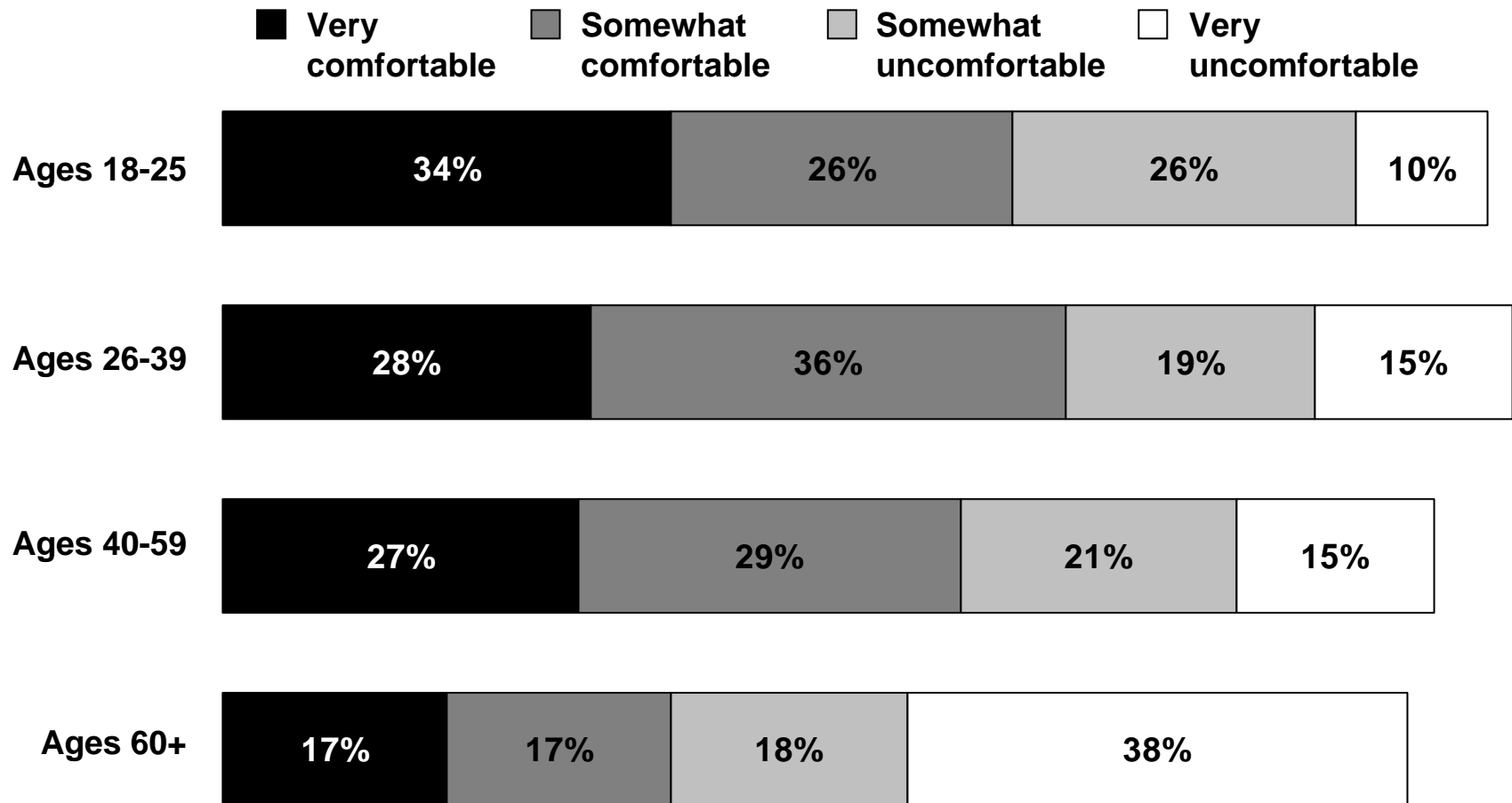


Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

# Reported Comfort Level Living With Someone Who Has HIV by Age

In general, how comfortable would you be, personally having a roommate who is HIV-positive?



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

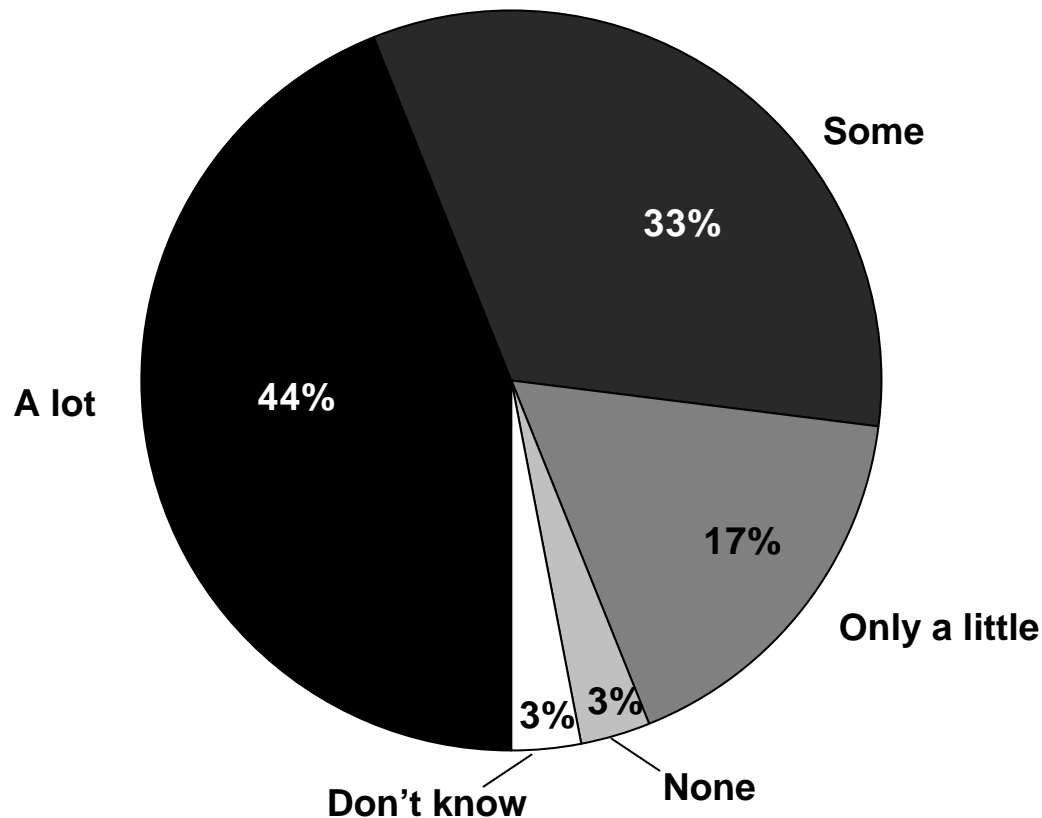
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)



# Perceptions of Prejudice and Discrimination Against People Living With HIV/AIDS in the U.S. (Ages 18-25)

---

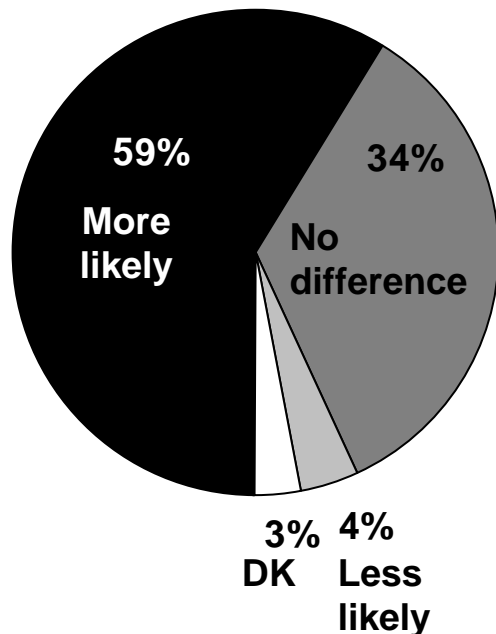
Among those ages 18-25: How much prejudice and discrimination do you think there is against people living with HIV and AIDS in this country today?



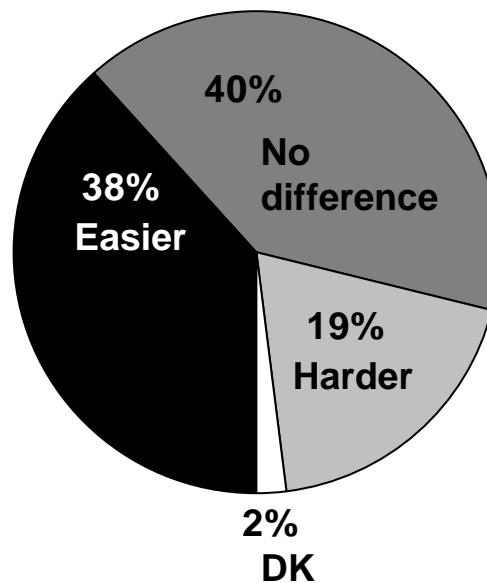
# Perceived Impact of HIV Epidemic on Culture (Ages 18-25)

Among those ages 18-25:

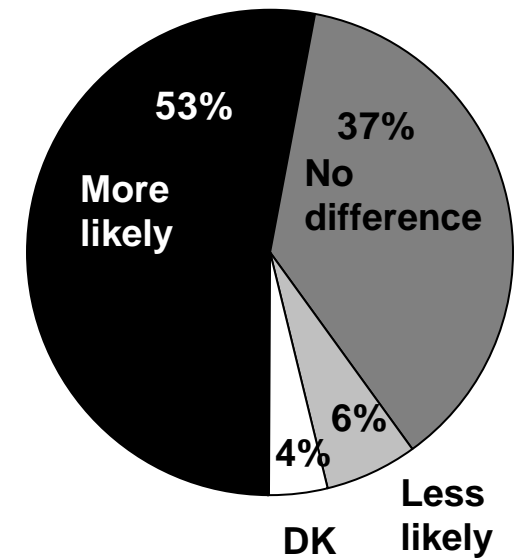
Do you think, in general, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has made people more likely or less likely to practice safe sex, or hasn't it made much difference?



Do you think, in general, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has made it easier or harder for people to talk openly about sex, or hasn't it made much difference?

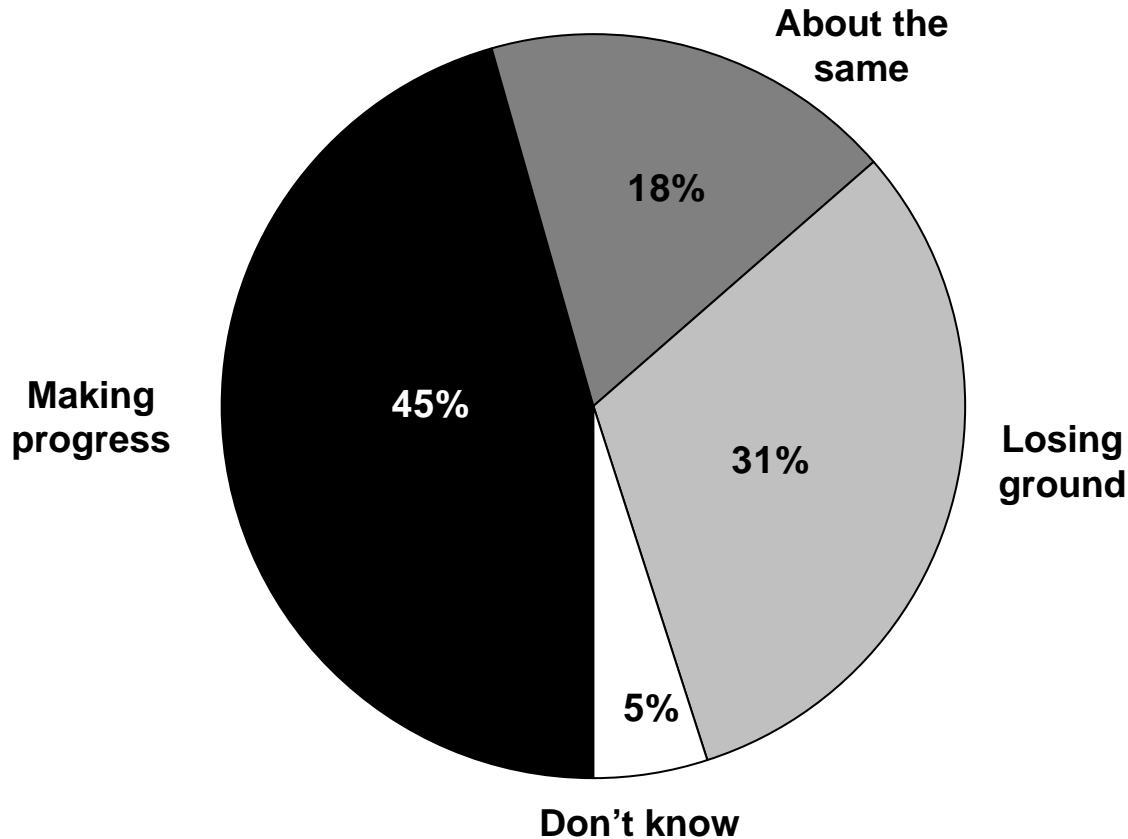


Do you think, in general, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has made people more likely or less likely to discriminate against gays and lesbians, or hasn't it made much difference?



# Perceptions of U.S. Progress on HIV/AIDS (Ages 18-25)

Among those ages 18-25: Thinking about the way the problem of HIV/AIDS affects the United States today, do you think the problem is **ABOUT THE SAME** as it has been, that the U.S. today is **MAKING PROGRESS** in this area, or that the U.S. today is **LOSING GROUND**?





**The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation**  
2400 Sand Hill Road  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Phone: (650) 854-9400 Fax: (650) 854-4800

Washington Office:  
1330 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 347-5270 Fax: (202) 347-5274

**[www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)**

Additional copies of this publication (#7522) are available on  
the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org).

*The Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit, private operating foundation dedicated to providing information and analysis on health care issues to policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.*