

ACEP EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VIOLENCE POLL RESEARCH RESULTS

Prepared For:

American College of Emergency Physicians



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Project Background

ACEP engaged Marketing General Incorporated (MGI) to conduct a brief polling survey with its member physicians to understand emergency physicians' views on the level, type, frequency, and impact of violence experienced in the emergency department. This online survey consisted of approximately 20 closed-ended questions.

Research Methodology

Marketing General Incorporated (MGI) sent invitations to participate in the poll on August 21, 2018, to a list of 32,714 current ACEP members.

Of the 32,714 email invitations sent, 1,325 emails bounced or failed to send, resulting in a net total of 31,389 invitations sent. To boost response rates, MGI sent reminder emails to non-responders and non-completers on August 22 and August 24.

The poll officially closed on August 27 at 8:30 AM ET. A total of 3,539 responses were completed, providing a response rate of approximately 11% and a margin of error of +/- 1.6%. The margin of error, or standard of error, is a statistical term used to measure the random fluctuations inherent in samples—the smaller the standard of error, the more accurate the measurement of the population or universe.

This study's significance level of .05 carries with it a 95 percent confidence interval. The confidence interval is established as the likelihood that the same results would be achieved in a similar study, meaning that if we were to conduct this study 100 times, then the same results plus or minus the margin of error (1.6%) would occur 95 out of 100 times.

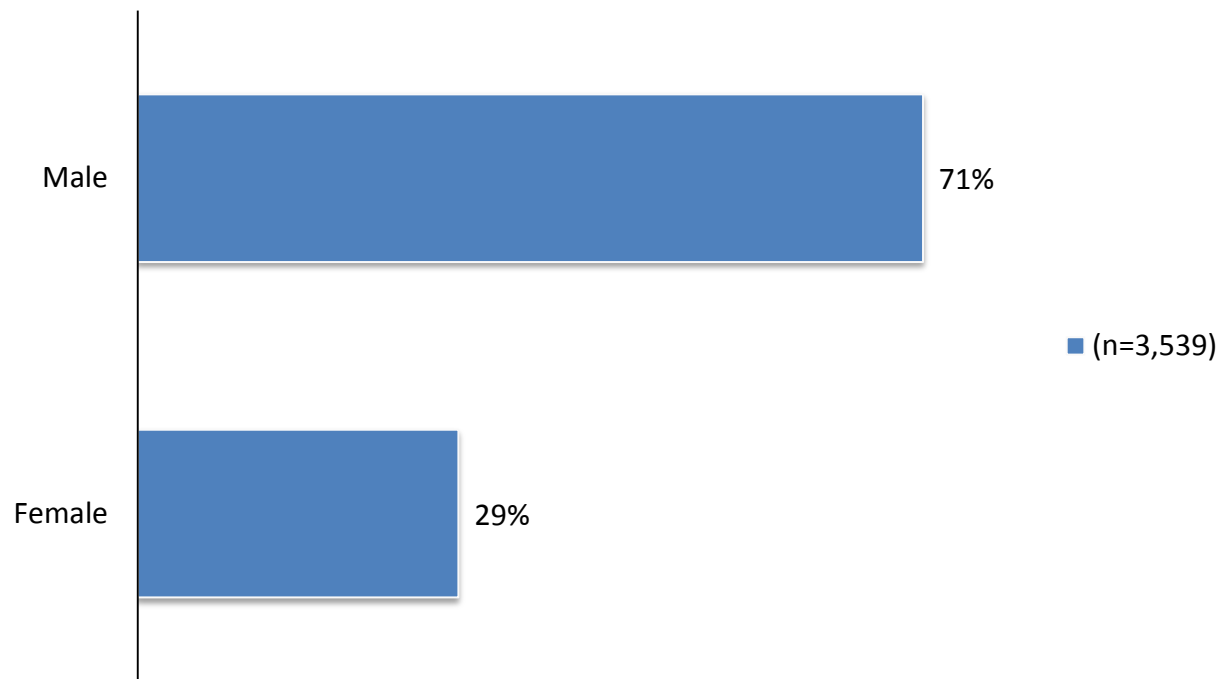
Sample Characteristics

| Number of Responses per State | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------|----------------|-------|---------|
| STATE | COUNT | PERCENT | STATE | COUNT | PERCENT |
| Alabama | 34 | 1% | Montana | 8 | 0% |
| Alaska | 16 | 0% | Nebraska | 27 | 1% |
| Arizona | 78 | 2% | Nevada | 32 | 1% |
| Arkansas | 14 | 0% | New Hampshire | 28 | 1% |
| California | 283 | 8% | New Jersey | 70 | 2% |
| Colorado | 91 | 3% | New Mexico | 21 | 1% |
| Connecticut | 53 | 1% | New York | 242 | 7% |
| Delaware | 25 | 1% | North Carolina | 94 | 3% |
| District of Columbia | 28 | 1% | North Dakota | 8 | 0% |
| Florida | 194 | 5% | Ohio | 168 | 5% |
| Georgia | 96 | 3% | Oklahoma | 33 | 1% |
| Hawaii | 12 | 0% | Oregon | 53 | 1% |
| Idaho | 13 | 0% | Pennsylvania | 175 | 5% |
| Illinois | 141 | 4% | Rhode Island | 27 | 1% |
| Indiana | 71 | 2% | South Carolina | 65 | 2% |
| Iowa | 28 | 1% | South Dakota | 11 | 0% |
| Kansas | 21 | 1% | Tennessee | 44 | 1% |
| Kentucky | 43 | 1% | Texas | 255 | 7% |
| Louisiana | 37 | 1% | Utah | 30 | 1% |
| Maine | 26 | 1% | Vermont | 8 | 0% |
| Maryland | 83 | 2% | Virginia | 107 | 3% |
| Massachusetts | 112 | 3% | Washington | 95 | 3% |
| Michigan | 154 | 4% | West Virginia | 24 | 1% |
| Minnesota | 82 | 2% | Wisconsin | 63 | 2% |
| Mississippi | 17 | 0% | Wyoming | 4 | 0% |
| Missouri | 87 | 2% | Puerto Rico | 8 | 0% |

The top 10 participating states include:

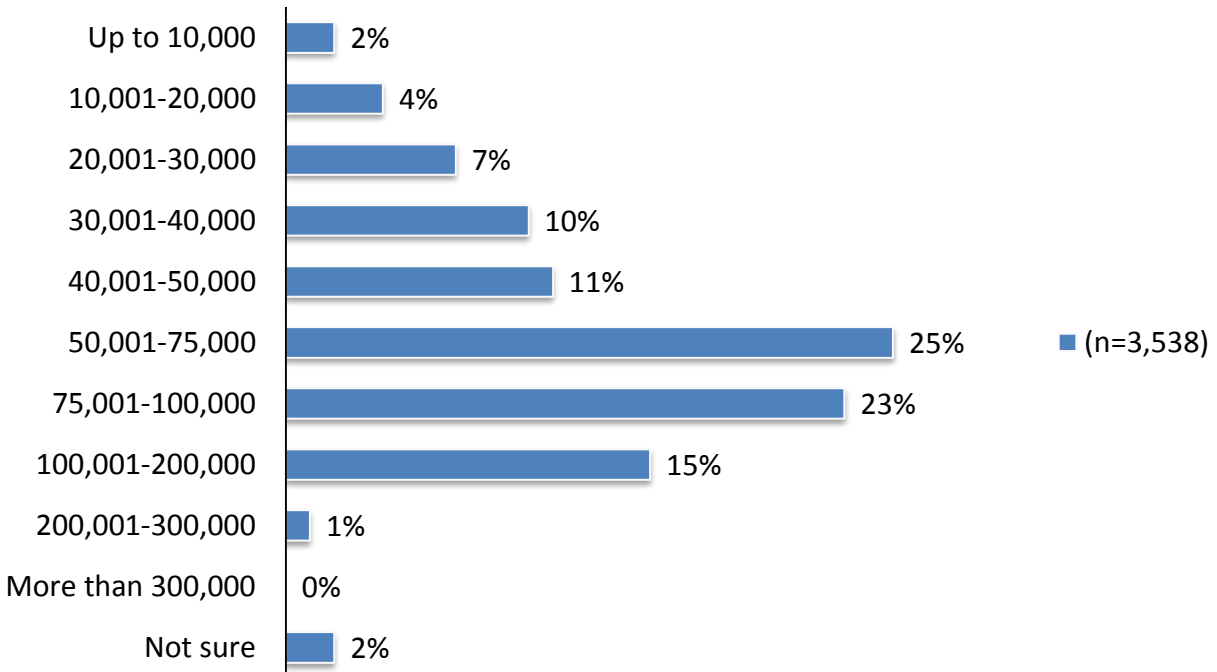
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| 1. California | 283—8% | 6. Ohio | 168—5% |
| 2. Texas | 255—7% | 7. Michigan | 154—4% |
| 3. New York | 242—7% | 8. Illinois | 141—4% |
| 4. Florida | 194—5% | 9. Massachusetts | 112—3% |
| 5. Pennsylvania | 175—5% | 10. Virginia | 107—3% |

Q2. What is your gender?



A majority of respondents are male.

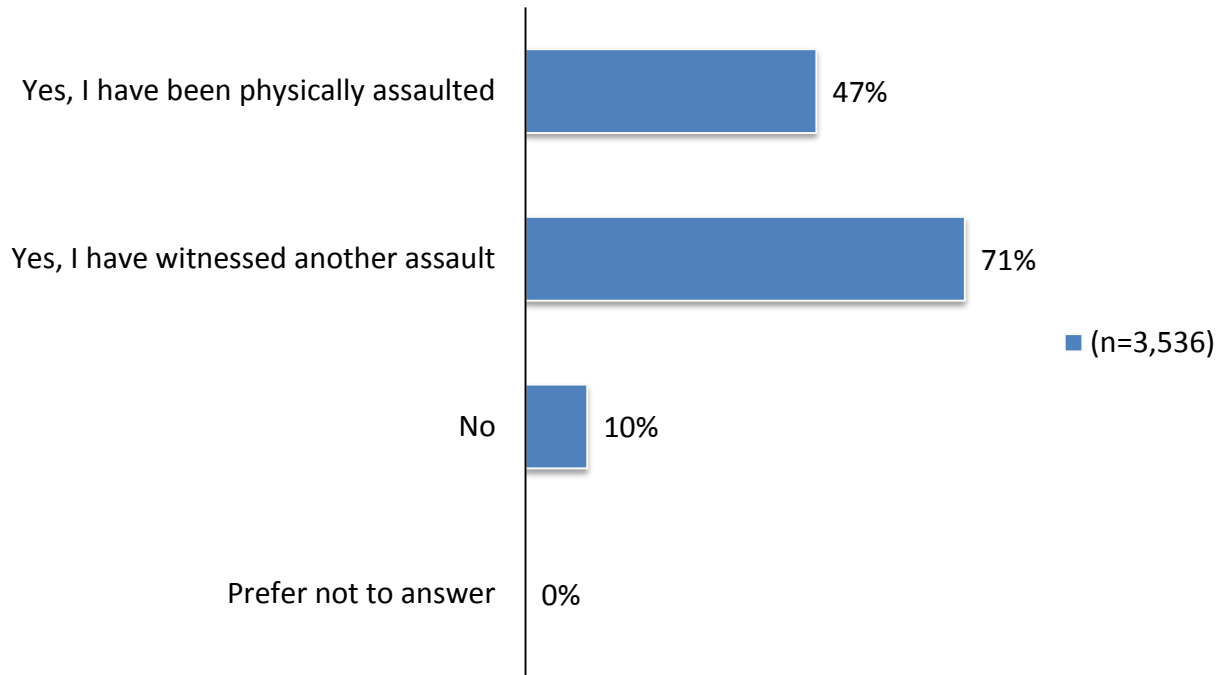
Q4. What is the annual emergency department patient volume where you work most of your time?



A quarter of emergency physicians primarily work for emergency departments with patient volumes between 50,001 and 75,000. Almost another 40% work for departments with even higher volumes.

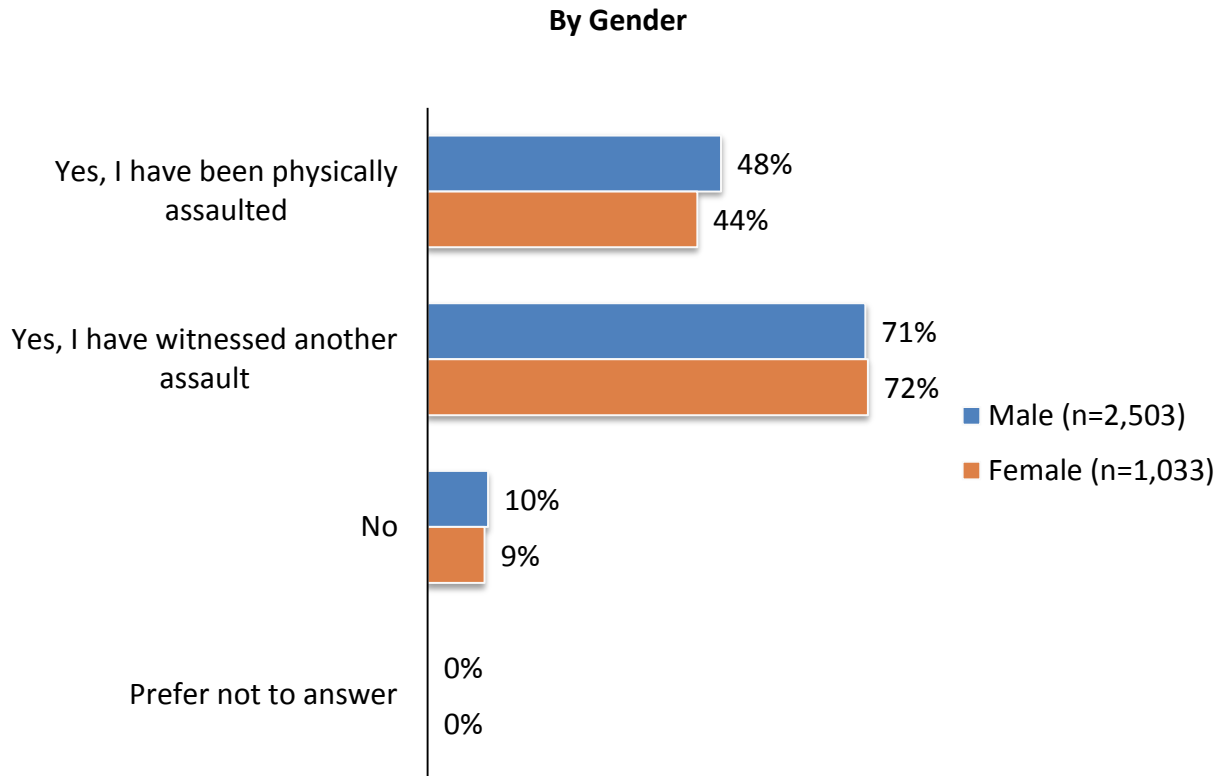
Findings

Q5. Have you ever been physically assaulted or witnessed another assault while at work in the emergency department? (Check all that apply.)



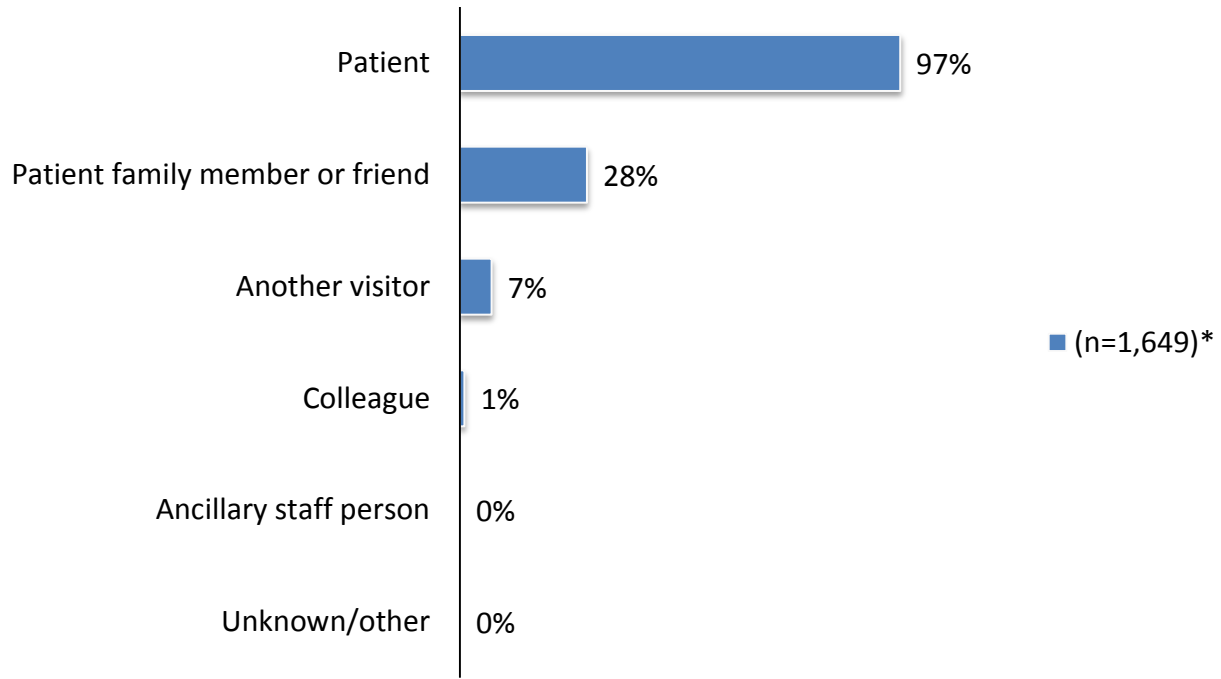
Nearly half of emergency physicians have been assaulted while at work in the emergency department, while over seventy percent have witnessed another assault. Only ten percent have experienced neither.

Q5. Have you ever been physically assaulted or witnessed another assault while at work in the emergency department? (Check all that apply.)



Men are significantly more likely than women to report having been physically assaulted while at work in the emergency department (48% vs. 44%).

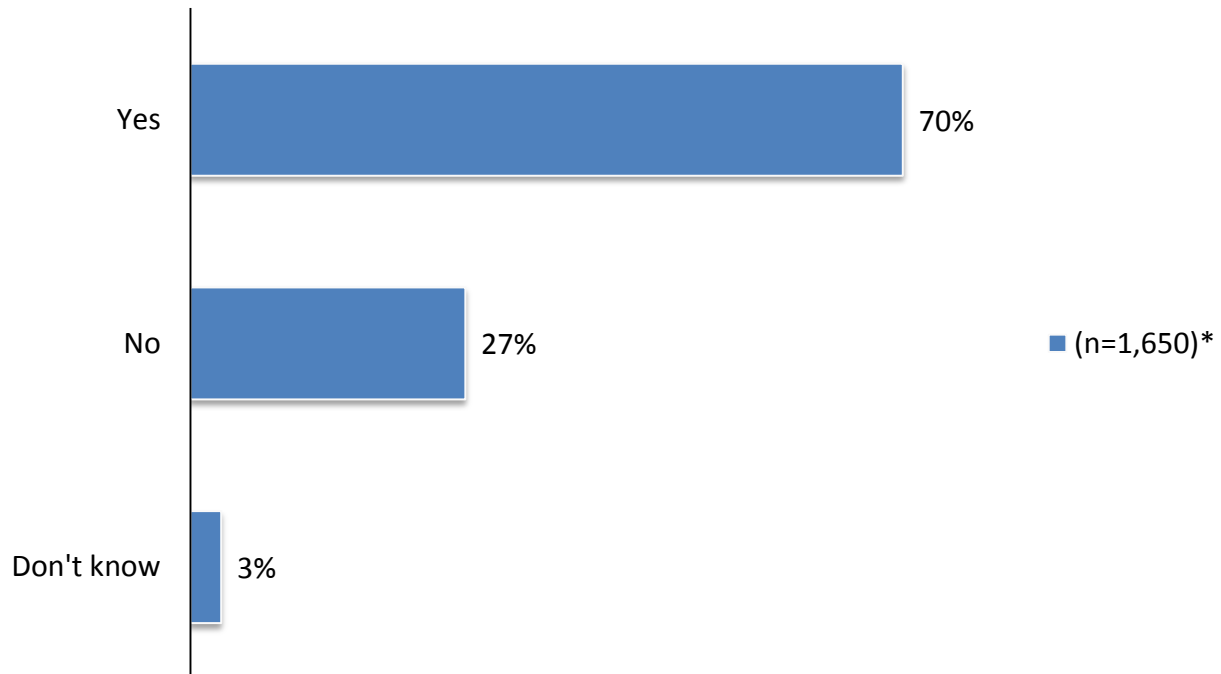
Q6. Who committed the assault? If more than one assault, please answer for the most recent incident. (Check all that apply.)



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

Almost all physical assaults against emergency physicians were committed by patients, though an additional 28% of assaults involved a patient’s family member or friend.

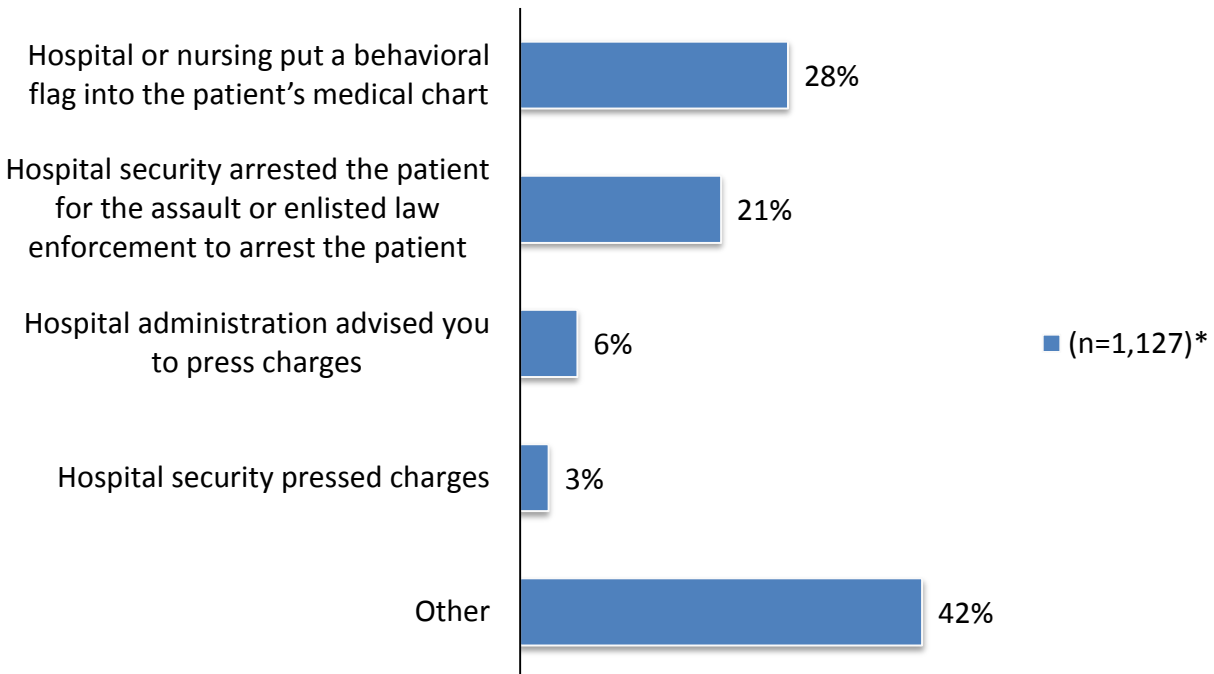
Q7. Did your hospital administration or hospital security respond to the assault?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

Among those physically assaulted, seventy percent of emergency physicians said that their hospital administration or security responded to the assault.

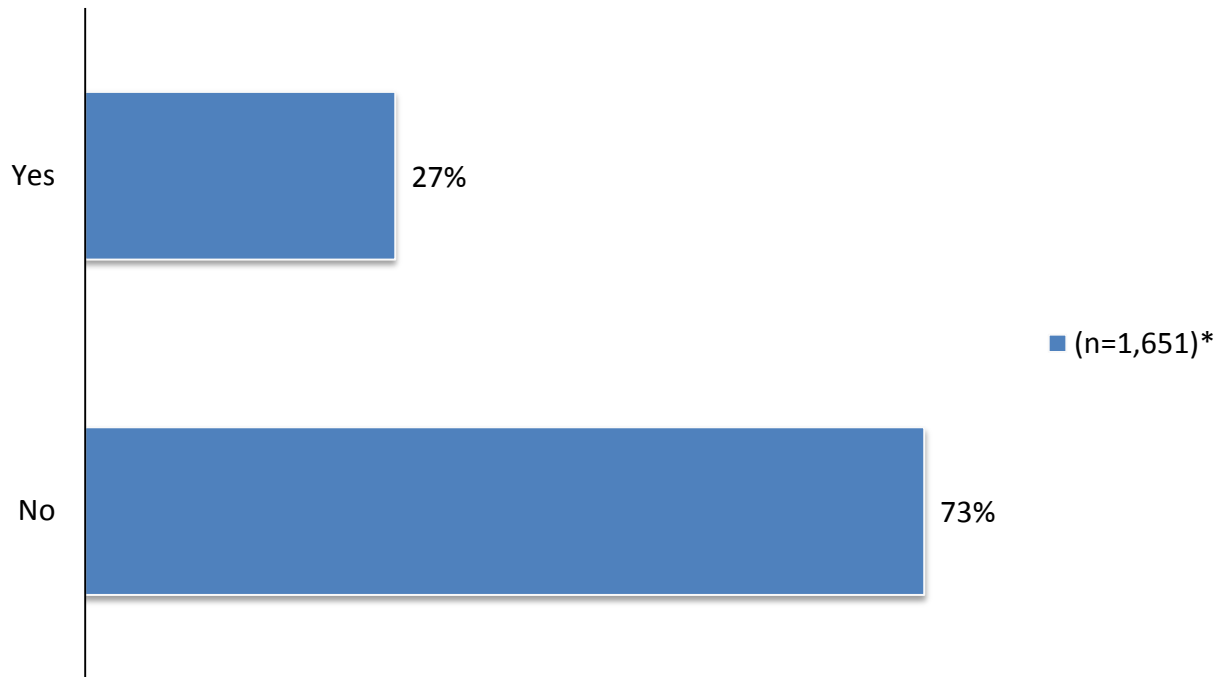
Q8. How did the hospital administration or hospital security respond to the assault?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted and whose hospital responded*

Administration and security's most common responses to physical assaults are to put a behavioral flag in the patient's medical chart (28%) or to have the patient arrested (21%). Among those who gave "other" responses (42%), many indicated that the hospital's reaction was simply to remove or restrain the individual. In some cases, the hospital responded to the assault, but did nothing at all.

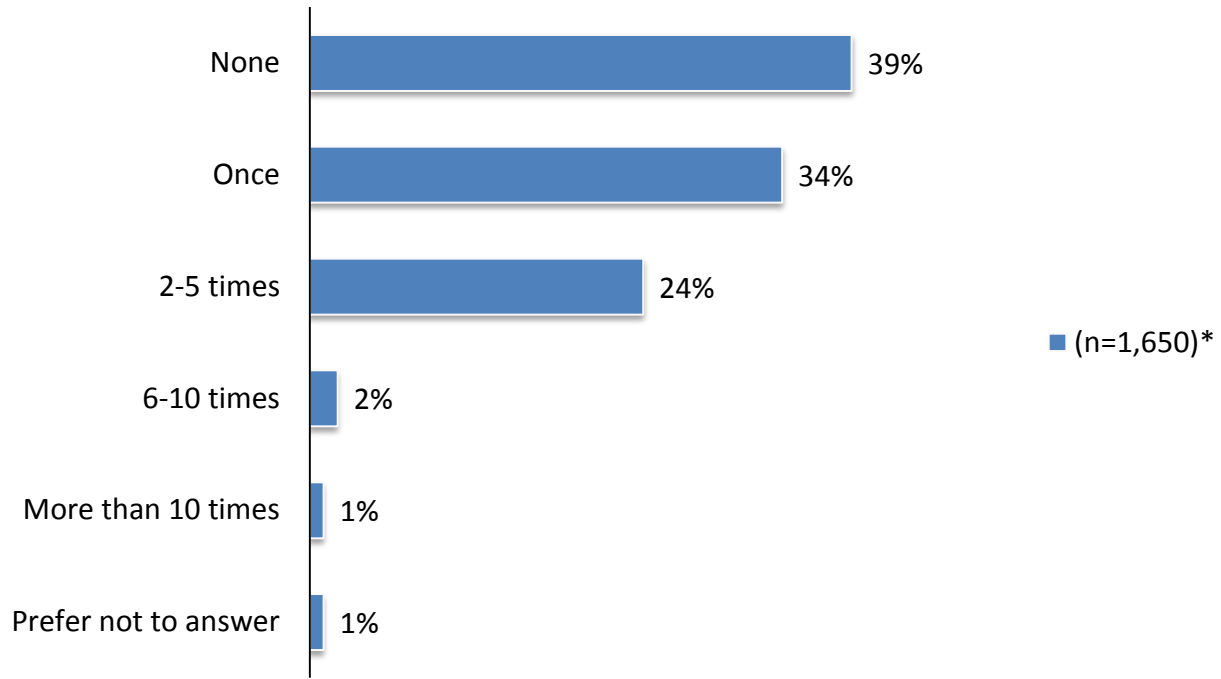
Q9. Have you ever been injured at work because of an assault?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

More than a quarter of those assaulted have been injured as a result.

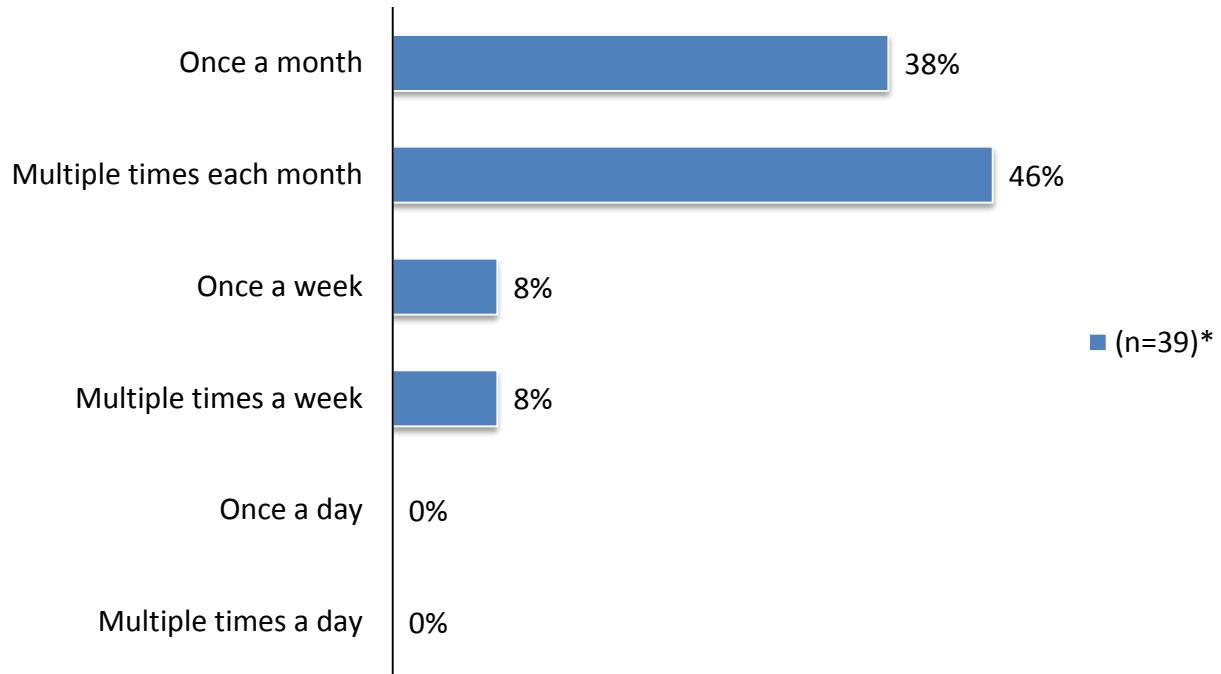
Q10. How many times have you been physically assaulted in the emergency department in the past year?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

Over sixty percent of those assaulted have been assaulted in the past year alone. More than a quarter of emergency physicians have been assaulted more than once during that time.

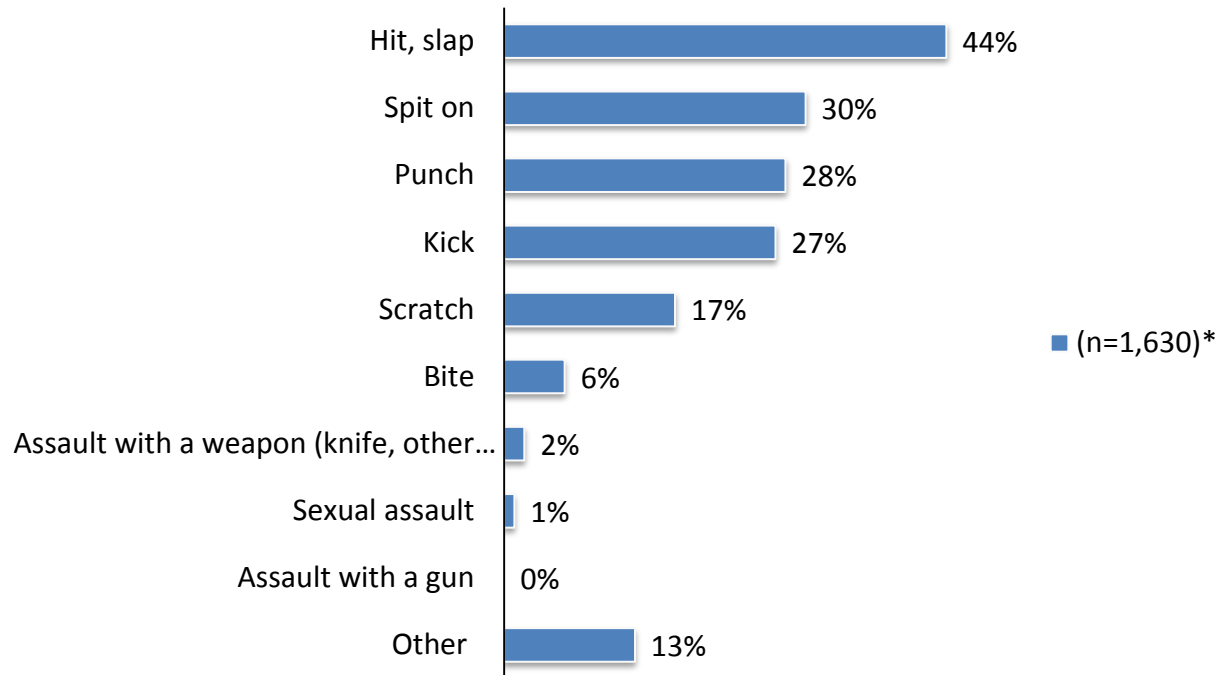
Q11. In a typical month, how frequently have you been physically assaulted in the emergency department?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted 6+ times in the past year*

Among emergency physicians who have been assaulted six or more times in the past year, almost half been assaulted several times each month.

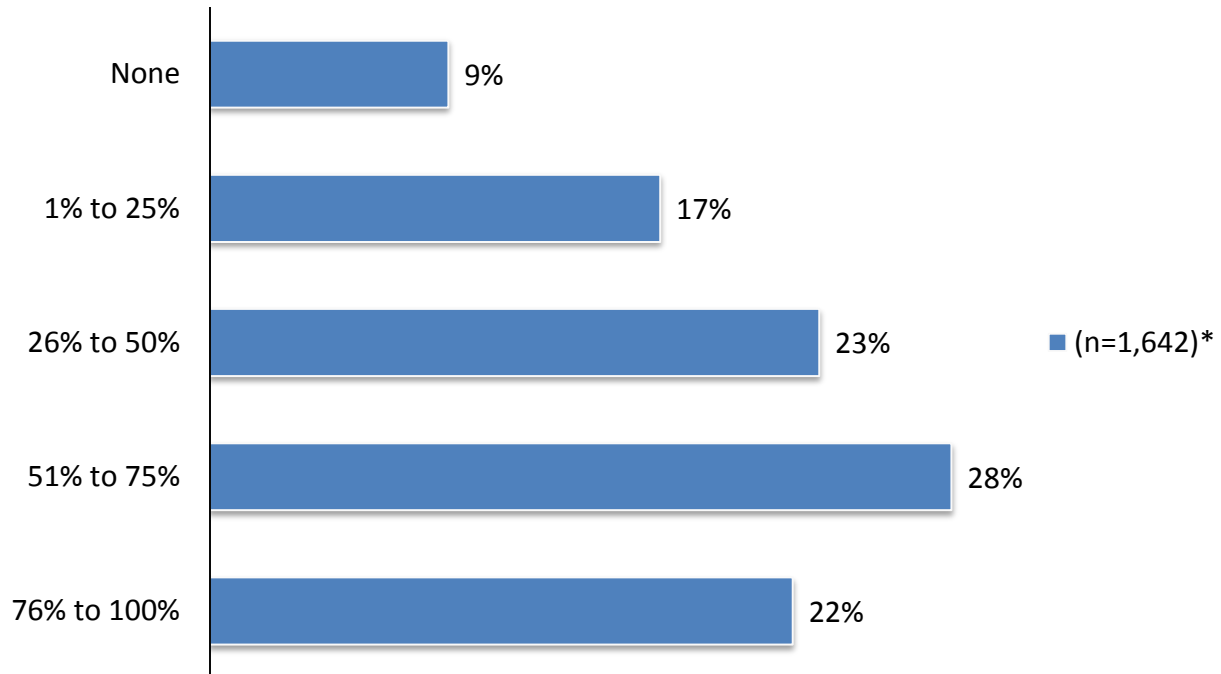
Q12. What was the nature of your most recent assault? (Check all that apply)



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

A hit or a slap is the most common form of assault (44%), though emergency physicians also report being spit on, punched, or kicked.

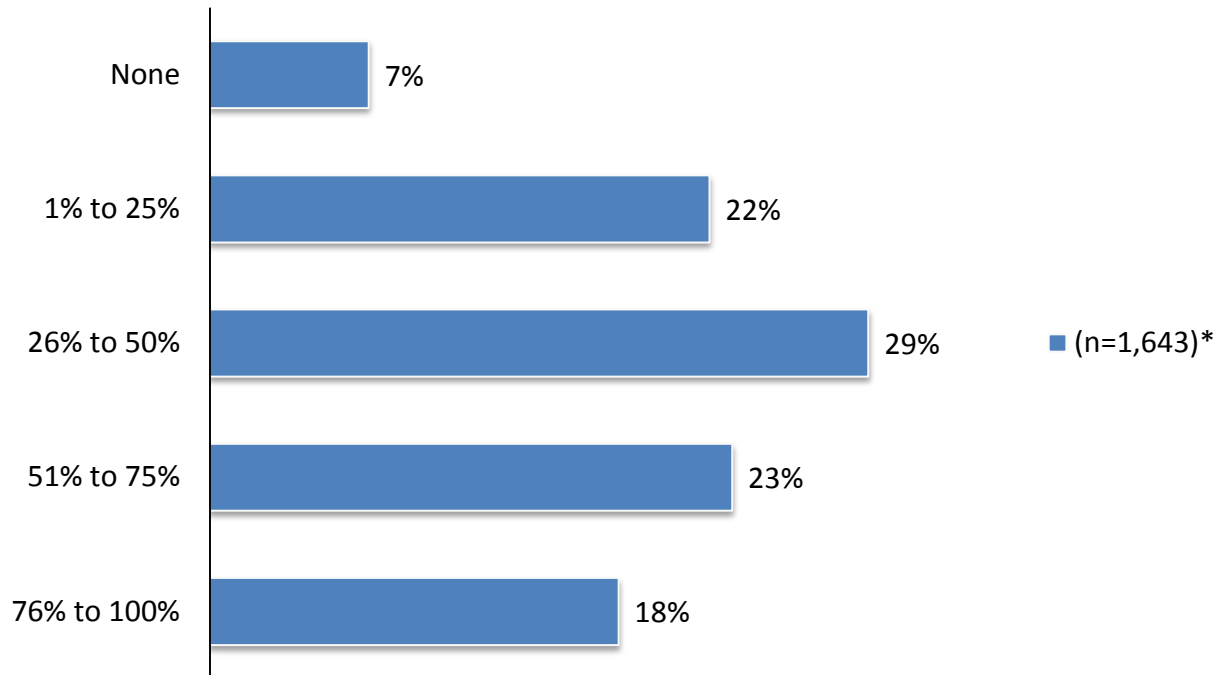
Q13. What percent of the attacks do you think were from people seeking drugs or under the influence of prescription or nonprescription drugs, or alcohol?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

Half of emergency physicians report that at least half of all assaults are committed by people believed to be seeking drugs or who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Q14. What percent of the attacks do you think were from psychiatric patients?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

More than forty percent of emergency physicians believe that more than half of assaults are committed by psychiatric patients.

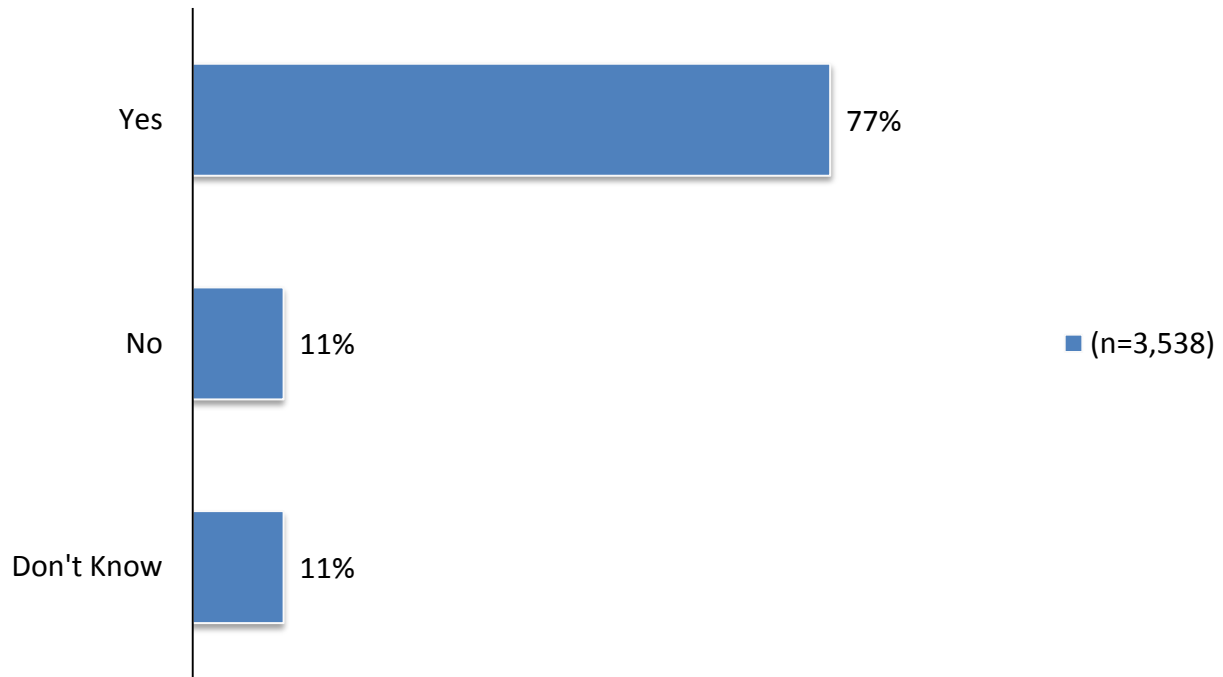
Q15. Have you ever missed part of or your entire shift due to an injury from an assault in the emergency department?



** Among those who have been physically assaulted*

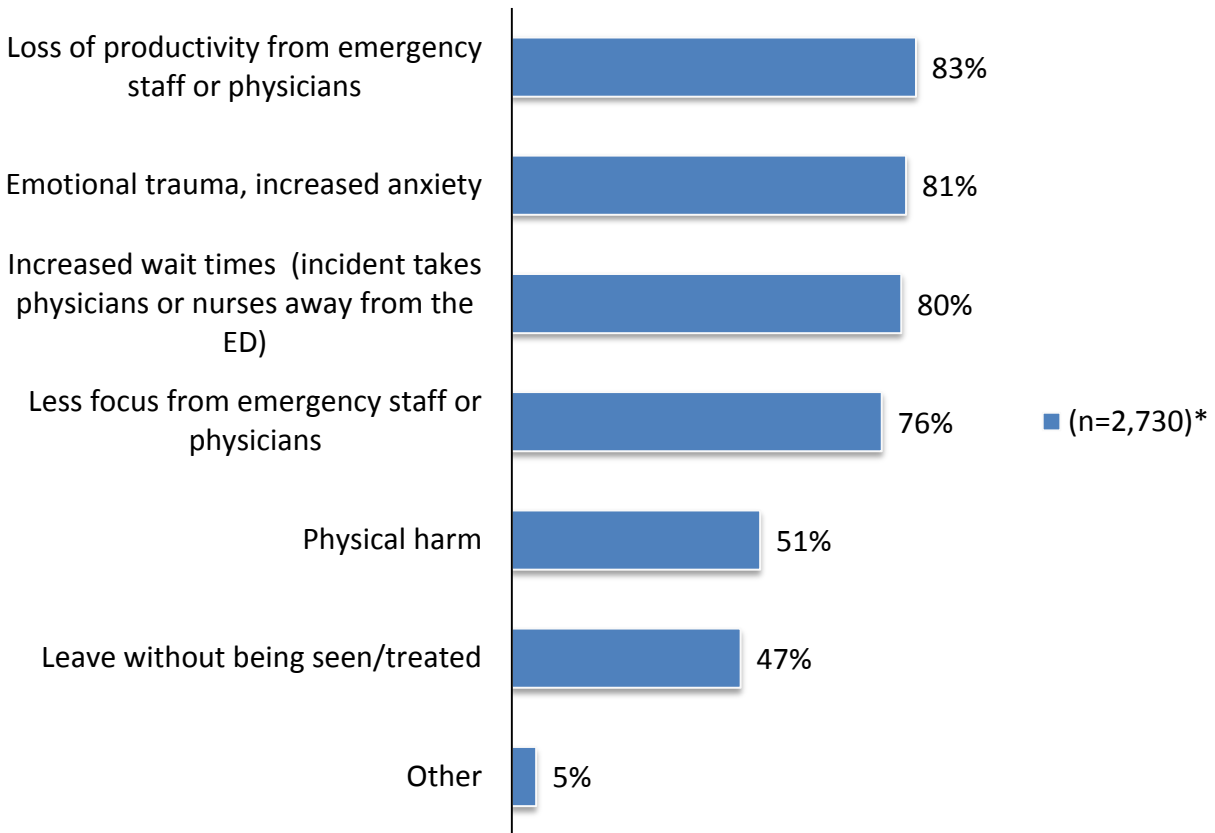
Very few (5%) of emergency physicians who have been assaulted have ever missed either a part or an entire shift due to an assault.

Q16. In your opinion, has violence in the emergency department harmed patient care?



Over three-quarters of emergency physicians believe that violence in the emergency department has harmed patient care.

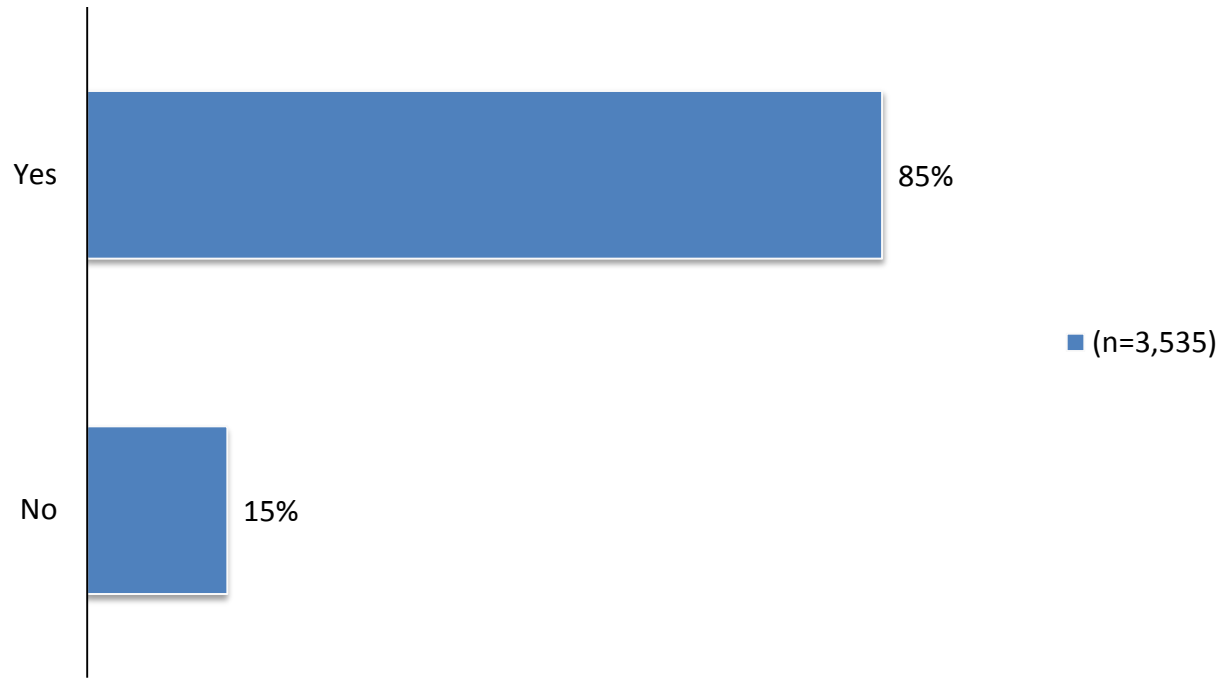
Q17. How have patients been adversely affected? (Check all that apply.)



** Among those who believe that violence in the emergency department has harmed patient care*

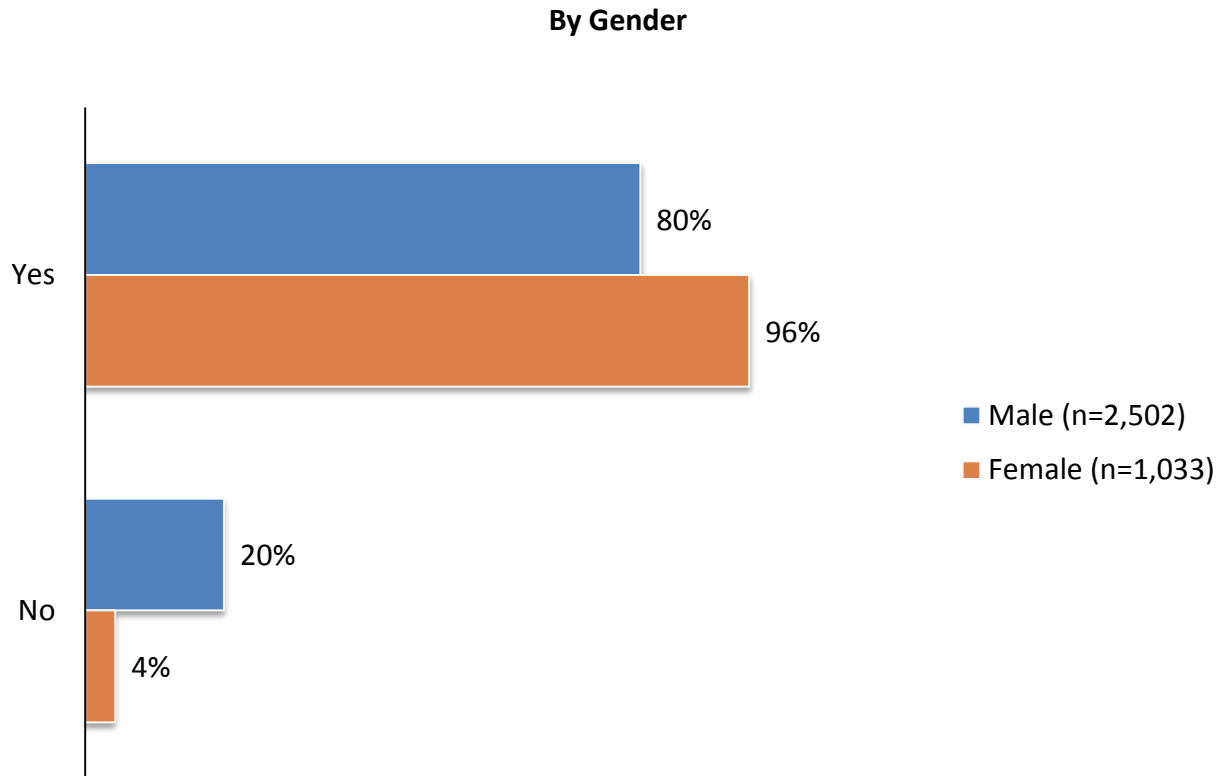
Loss of productivity, emotional trauma, increased wait time, and less focus are the most common ways in which patients have been adversely affected by emergency department violence.

Q18. Has a patient or visitor ever made inappropriate comments or unwanted advances to you?



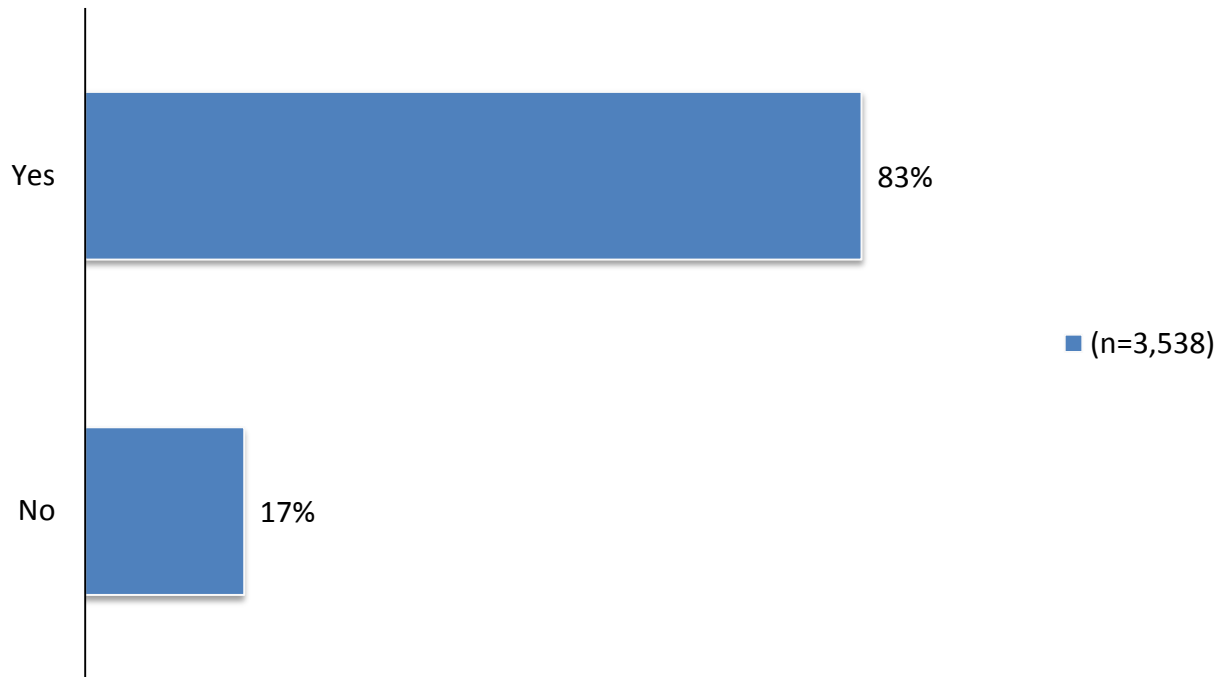
An overwhelming majority of emergency physicians report that patients and visitors have made inappropriate comments or advances toward them.

Q18. Has a patient or visitor ever made inappropriate comments or unwanted advances to you?



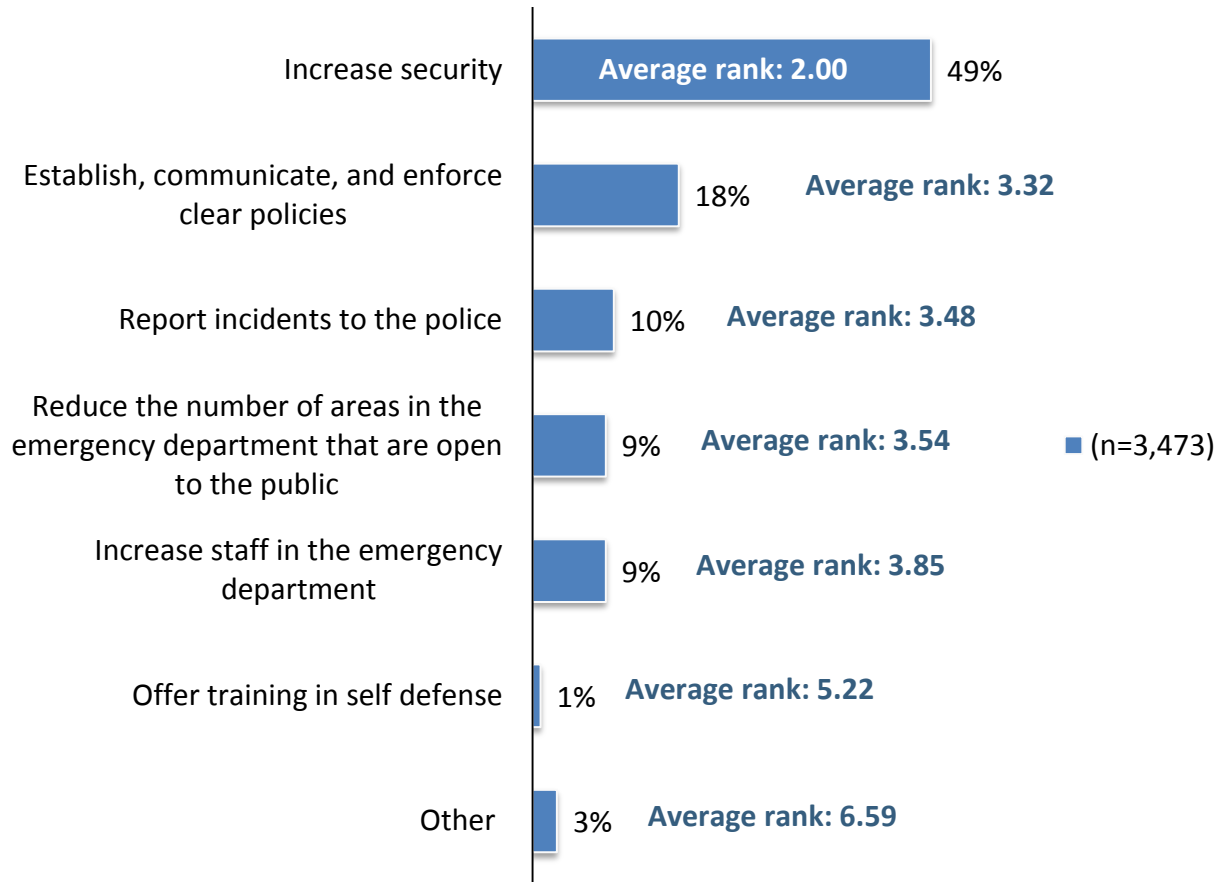
Female emergency physicians are significantly more likely to have been on the receiving end of inappropriate comments or unwanted advances in the emergency department (96% vs. 80%).

Q19. Has a patient ever threatened to return and harm you or emergency department staff?



More than eighty percent of emergency physicians report that a patient has threatened to return and harm them or emergency department staff.

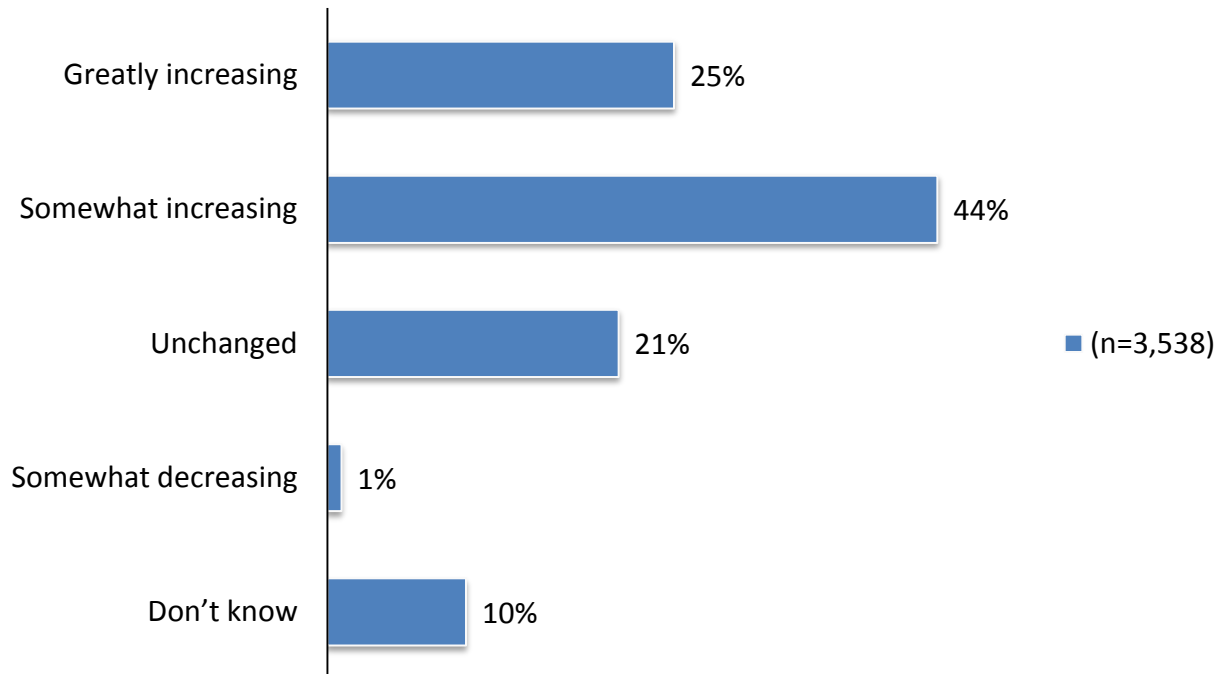
Q20. Rank the most important thing hospitals can do to increase safety in emergency departments. Drag each item below to your desired ranking.



Nearly half of all emergency physicians believe that increasing security is the most important thing hospitals can do to increase emergency department safety. Mean rankings correspond accordingly.¹

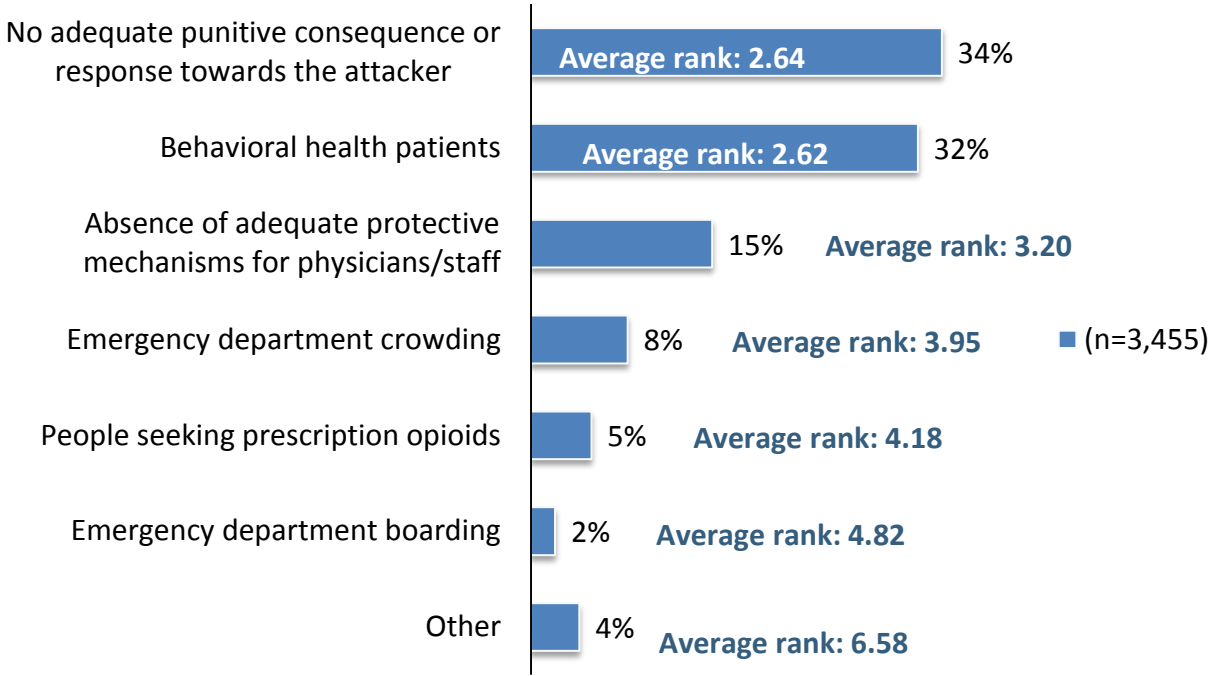
¹ A lower mean score is a higher ranking (1=most important factor; 7=least important factor).

Q21. In your experience, violence in the emergency department in the past five years is:



Almost seventy percent of emergency physicians believe that violence in the emergency department has increased in the past five years. Only one percent believes that violence has actually decreased.

Q22. Rank what you think are the biggest contributing factors to violence in the emergency department. Drag each item below to your desired ranking.



32% of emergency physicians believe that behavior health patients are a main contributing factor to violence in the emergency department. It also receives the highest ranking at a mean score of 2.62. Slightly more emergency physicians cite the lack of adequate punitive consequences as a main factor, but its mean ranking is slightly lower overall (2.64).²

² A lower mean score is a higher ranking (1=biggest factor; 7=least factor).