



DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING, AND HAZING EXPERIENCES AMONG UNITED STATES MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY

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BACKGROUND

- ① Race- and gender-based discrimination and harassment have been reported by:
 - 1 in 5 (17.8%) active duty service members¹
 - 1 in 7 (14.8%) Reserve/National Guard service members²
- ① Hazing and bullying within the military have also been documented
 - In 2014, estimated prevalence of hazing ranged from 2–11% across service branches³
 - 12.2% of Army soldiers reported experiencing bullying and/or hazing during deployment⁴
- ① Certain populations may be more vulnerable to experiences of bullying, hazing, and discrimination^{1,2}
 - **Active duty service women** report more gender-based discrimination than active duty service men to (19% vs. 13%)³
 - 31% of **non-Hispanic Black service members** reported race-based discrimination compared with 23% of Asian American and 21% of Hispanic/Latino service members¹
- ① Self-reported assessments of hazing, bullying, and discrimination may help estimate the prevalence of these experiences within the military, since **these experiences are often not formally reported**

OBJECTIVES

- ① To disaggregate the prevalence and co-occurrence of bullying, hazing, and discrimination in a contemporary sample of U.S. service members
- ① To examine these experiences by specific sociodemographic (gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, pregnancy status) and military characteristics (pay grade, branch, component, combat/deployment)

METHODS

Data from the 2019-21 Millennium Cohort Study survey

- ① Largest and longest running military cohort study
 - 5 enrollment panels (2001, 2004, 2007, 2011, 2020)
 - >260,000 participants followed during and after military service
- ① Participants surveyed every 3–5 years on:
 - Mental and physical health, health behaviors, military exposures, and other experiences



Eligible participants for this study were currently serving (active duty, Reserve/National Guard) as of the 2019-21 survey cycle (n = 73,293)

Measures

In the last 3 years, how often have you experienced...

- ① **Discrimination?** (i.e., differential or unfair treatment based on your race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, or sexual orientation)
- ① **Hazing?** (i.e., acts of aggression with the intent of physically or psychologically harming a person)
- ① **Bullying?** (i.e., acts that physically or psychologically injure or create a risk of injury in order to humiliate or "toughen up" people to fit into a group)
- ① Follow-up questions for each item (e.g., Did this occur by any person(s) you have/had contact with *as part of your military duties?*)

Demographic and military characteristics

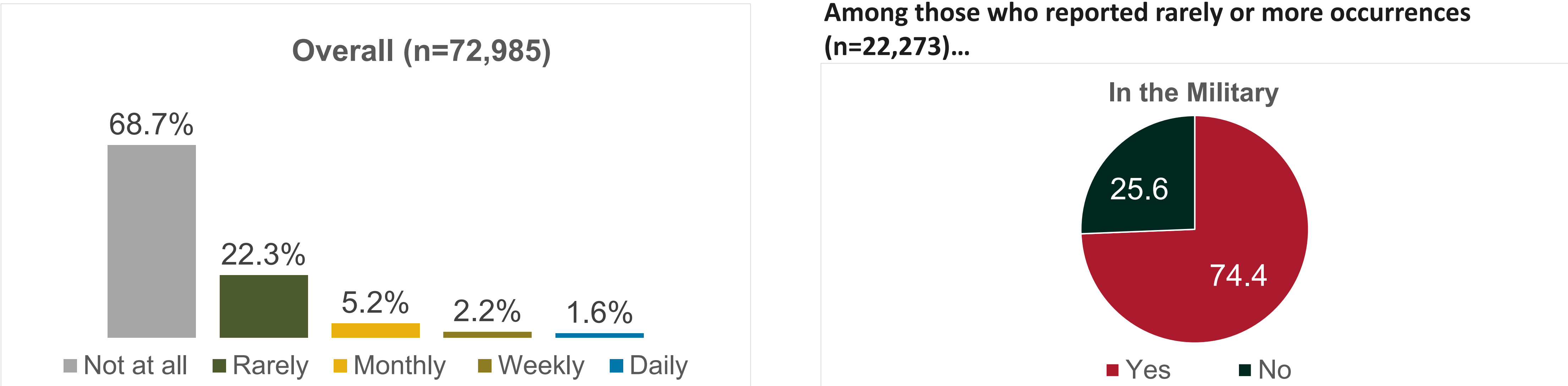
- ① Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, birth year, pregnancy status, service component, pay grade, service branch, and combat and deployment

Analysis

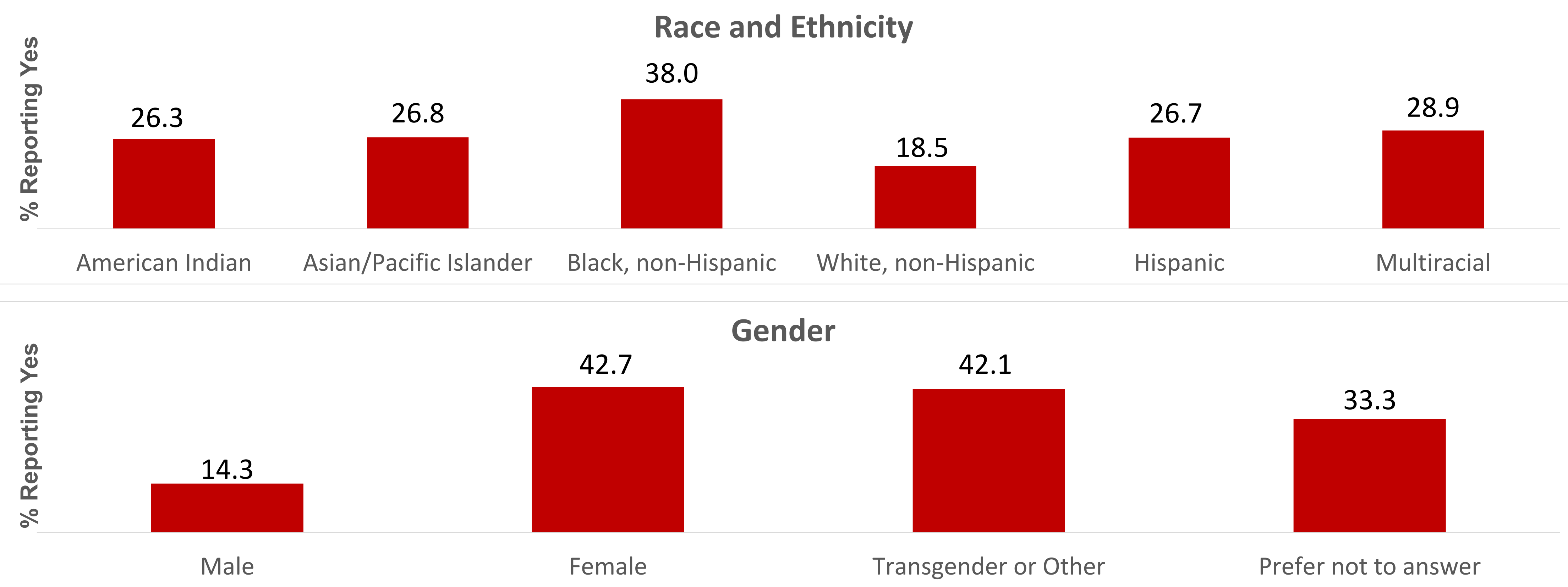
- ① Descriptive frequencies for overall and military-specific discrimination, hazing, and bullying reported across demographic and military characteristics

RESULTS

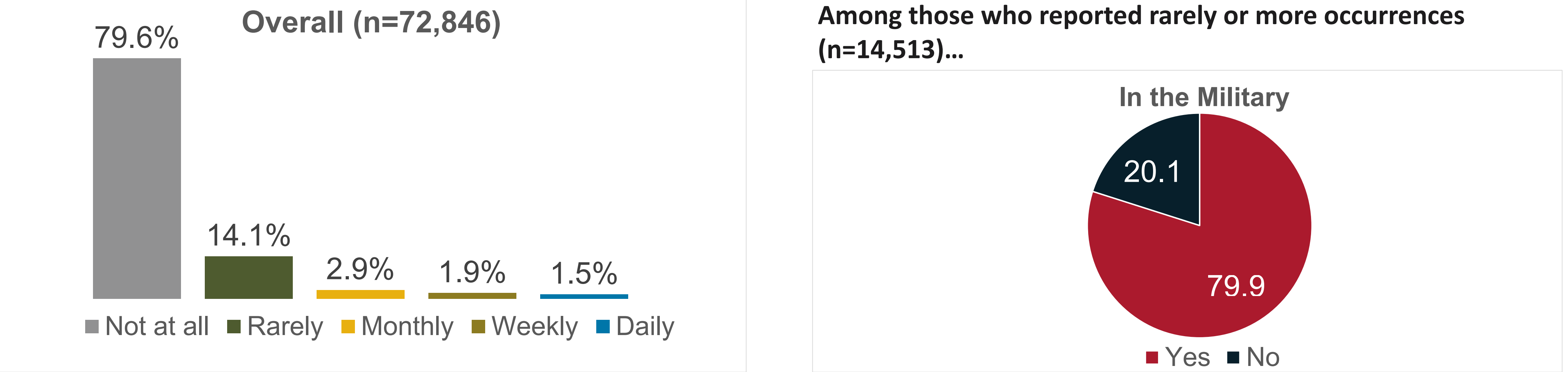
Discrimination



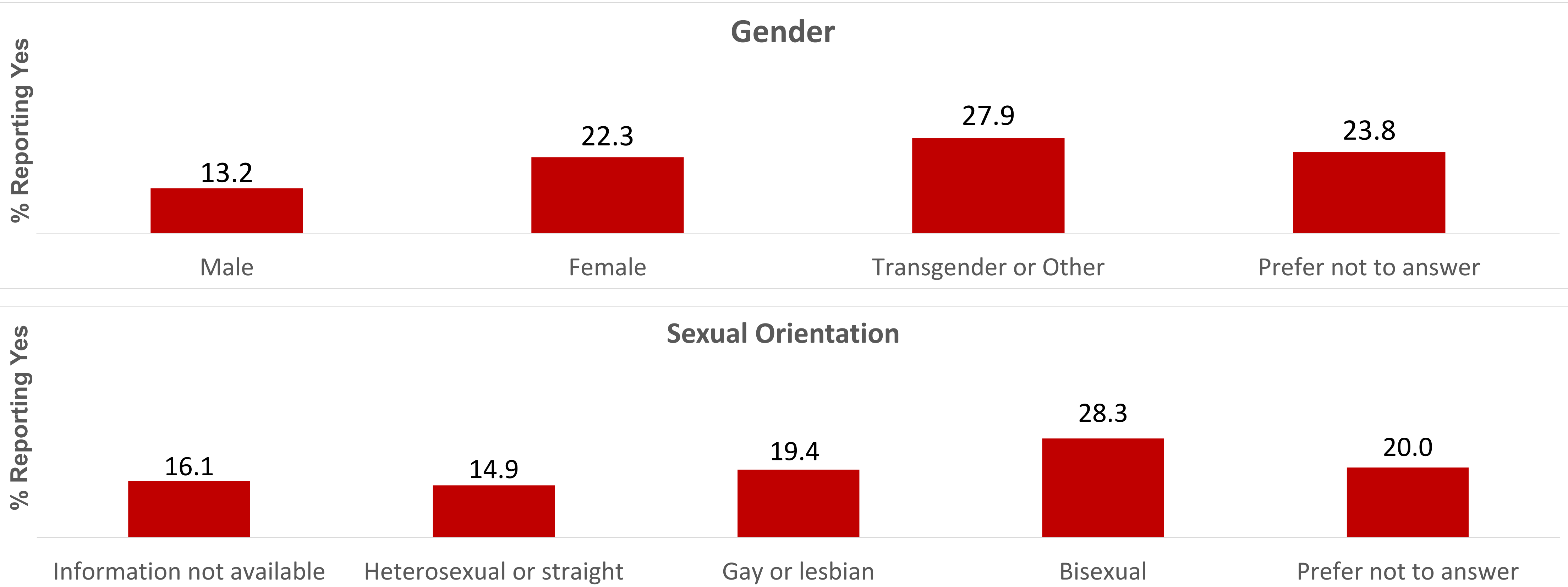
Discrimination in the Military (n=72,985)



Bullying

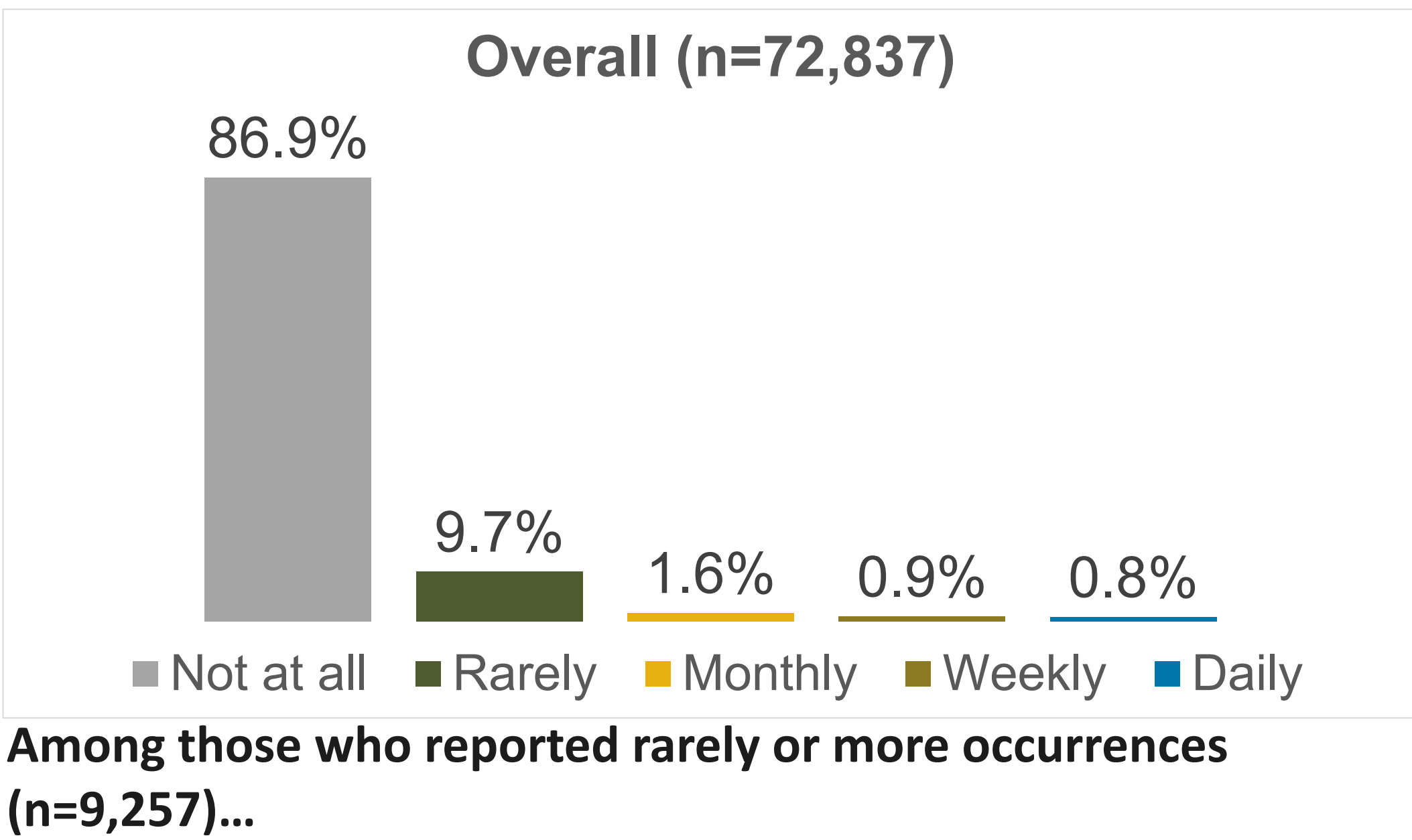


Bullying in the Military (n=72,846)

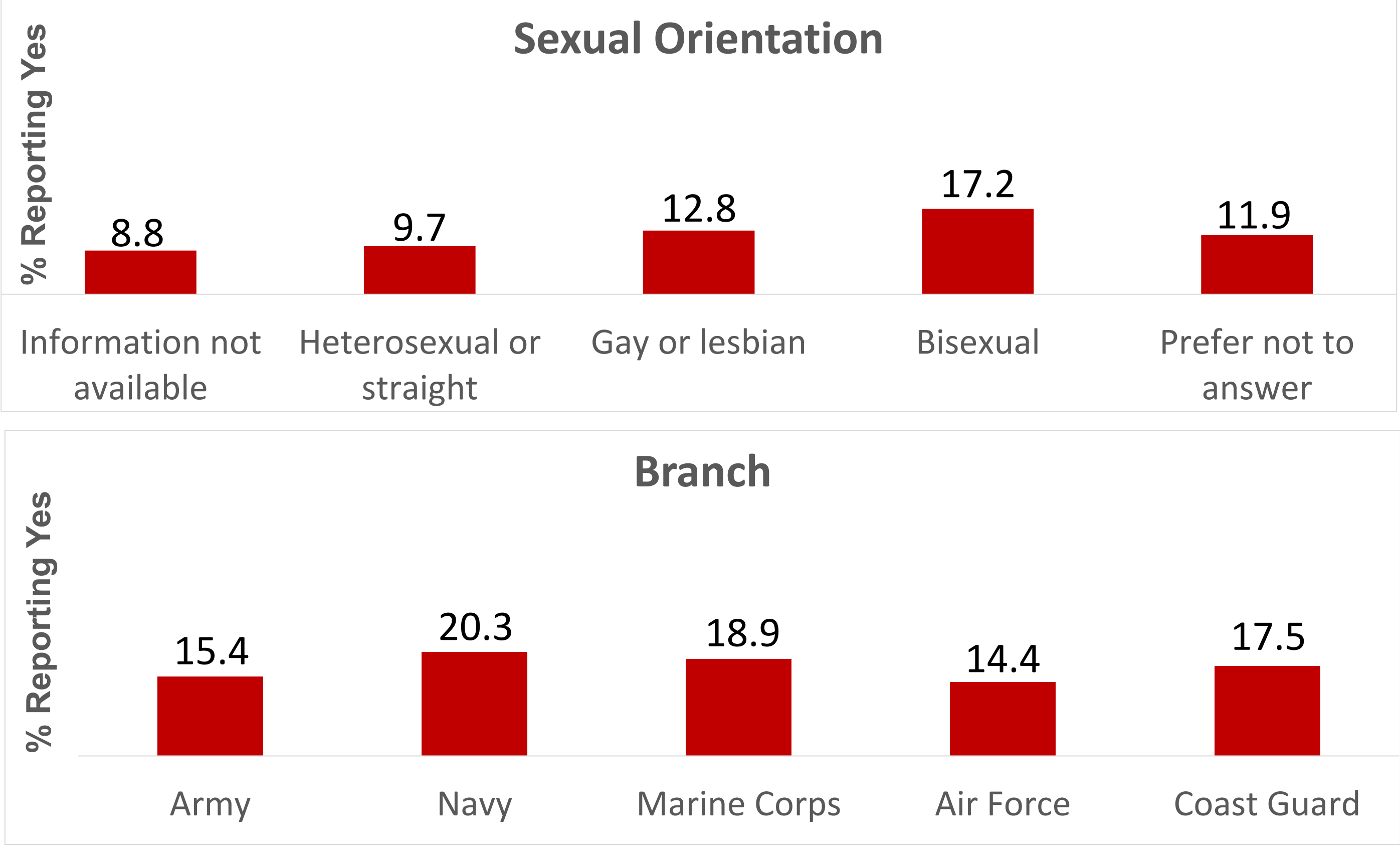


RESULTS

Hazing



Hazing in the Military (n=72,837)



DISCUSSION

- ① Most experiences of discrimination, bullying, and hazing reported in this population occurred **within the military context**
 - Notable differences by race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation
 - Self-report data may better capture discrimination, hazing, and bullying experiences that are not officially reported
 - ① Discrimination is a growing concern for Department of Defense leadership
 - Well-established sexual harassment reporting protocols exist
 - Policy and intervention efforts for other forms of harassment should consider equity and climate within military settings to promote well-being and readiness
- For the future:**
- ① Do these experiences affect health, well-being, and occupational readiness among service members?

REFERENCES

¹Daniel et al., 2019; ²Daniel et al., 2018; ³Kamarck, 2019; ⁴Campbell-Sills et al., 2023