

# More than meets the eye: Aspects of social, financial, and emotional impacts of work related injury and illness

Michael B Lax MD MPH  
Rosemary Klein MS C-ANP  
Central New York Occupational Health Clinical Center  
Syracuse, New York

# Purpose of the Study

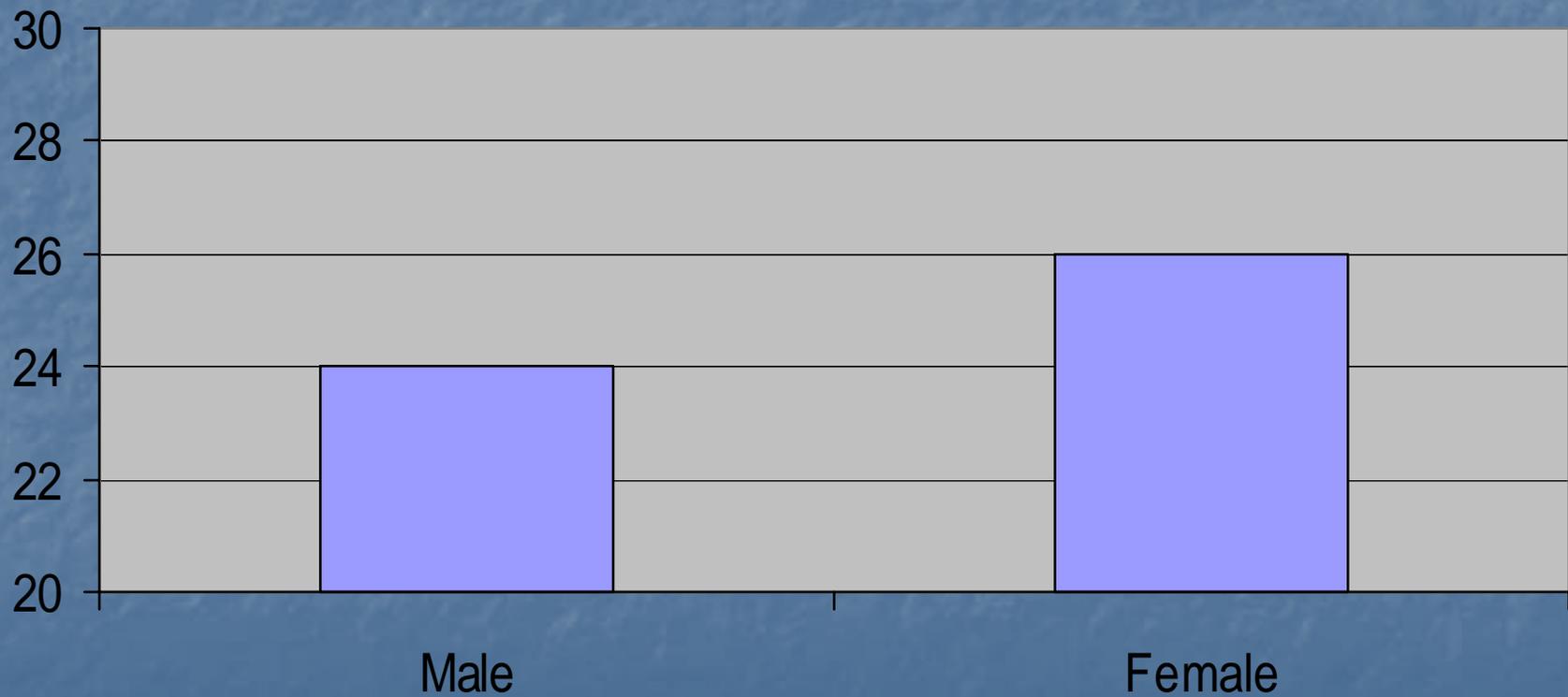
- Describe aspects of the impact of occupational disease on Injured Workers:
  - Barriers accessing medical care
  - Financial impact
  - Use and usefulness of legal resources
  - Overall life impact

# Methods

- Survey of patients at specialized Occupational Medicine Clinic
- Recruited from:
  - Meeting of Injured Workers
  - Selected from recent patients
- Telephone survey
- 50 responses- no one refused

# Results

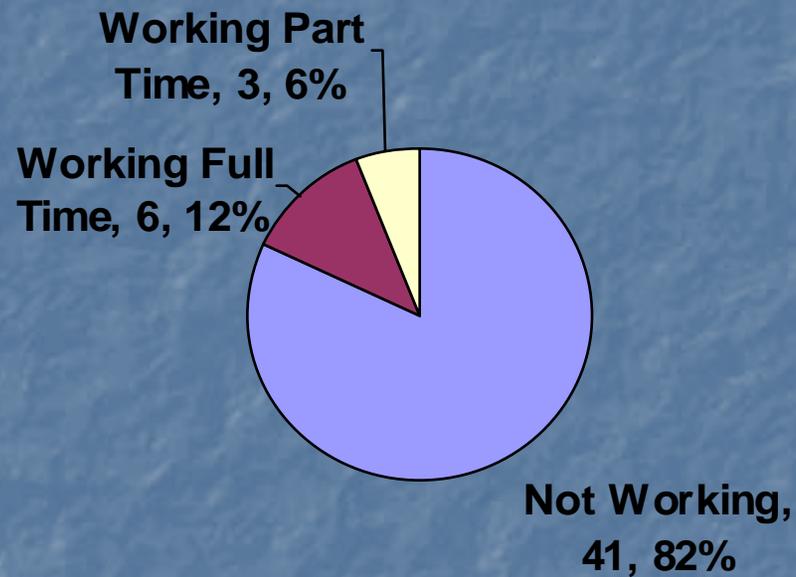
gender



# Results

- Occupation
  - Blue Collar 70%
  - White and Pink Collar 30%

# Results- Work Status



# Results- Diagnoses

Respiratory		Diagnosis 1	Diagnosis 2	Total
	Asthma	6	6	12
	Rhinosinusitis	4	1	5
	Pleural Plaques	2		2
	COPD	1		1
	Smoke inhalation	1		1
	Chemical injury	1		1
	Hard Metals Disease	1		1
	Sinus Infections	1		1
	Breathing		1	1
	Lungs	1	1	2
<b>Totals</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>27</b>

# Results- Diagnoses

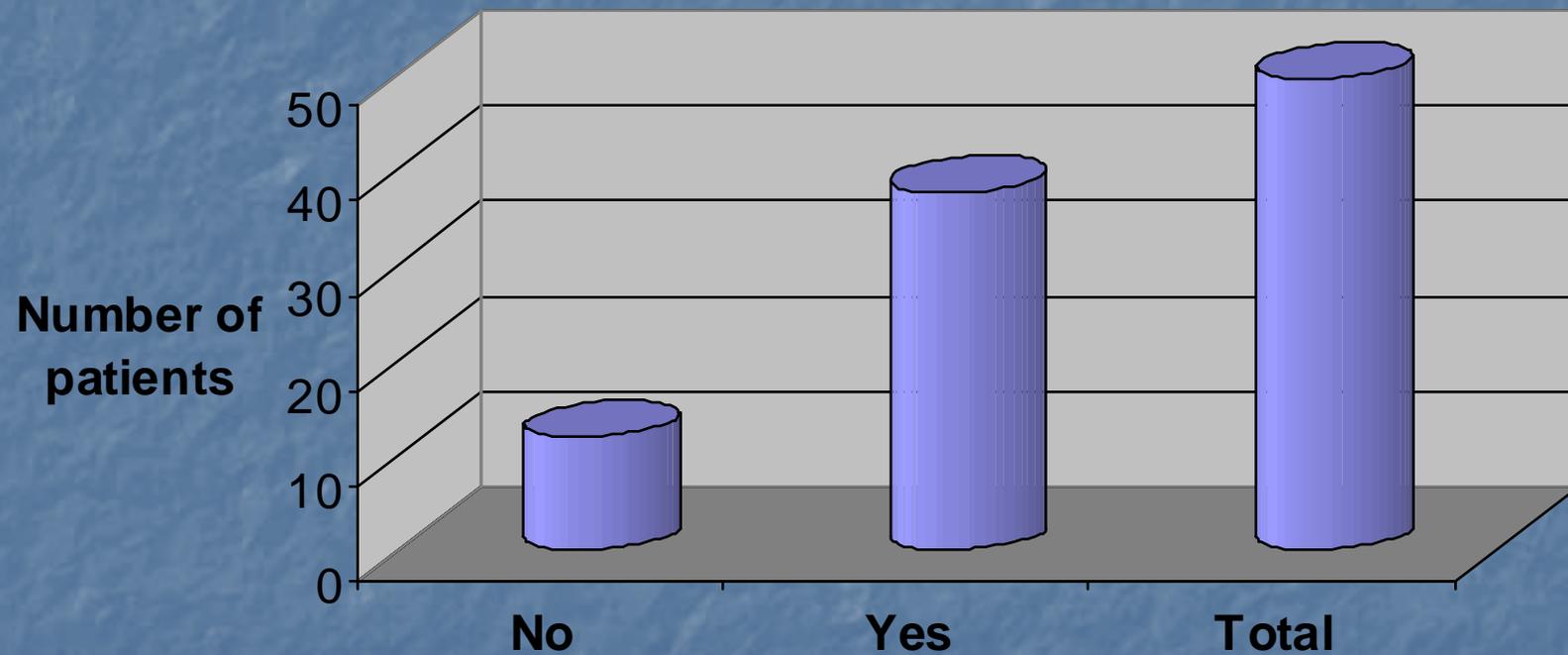
Musculoskeletal		Dx 1	Dx 2	Total
	Carpal tunnel syndrome	6	2	8
	Low Back Pain	4		4
	Impingement/ Rotator Cuff Tear	2	1	3
	Shoulders	1	1	2
	Shoulders, Arms, Low back	1		1
	Cervico Thoracic strain	1	1	2
	Cervical Disc Disease		3	3
<b>Totals</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>

# Results- Diagnoses

Other		Dx 1	Dx 2	Total
	Latex Allergy	2		2
	Contact Dermatitis	1		1
	Multiple Chemical Sensitivities	7	1	8
	Depression		1	1
	Bladder Cancer		1	1
	Toxic Encephalopathy		5	5
	Leg Edema		1	1
	Phlebitis		1	1
<b>Totals</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>

# Results

## Receiving Workers' Compensation Benefits



# Results- Health Insurance

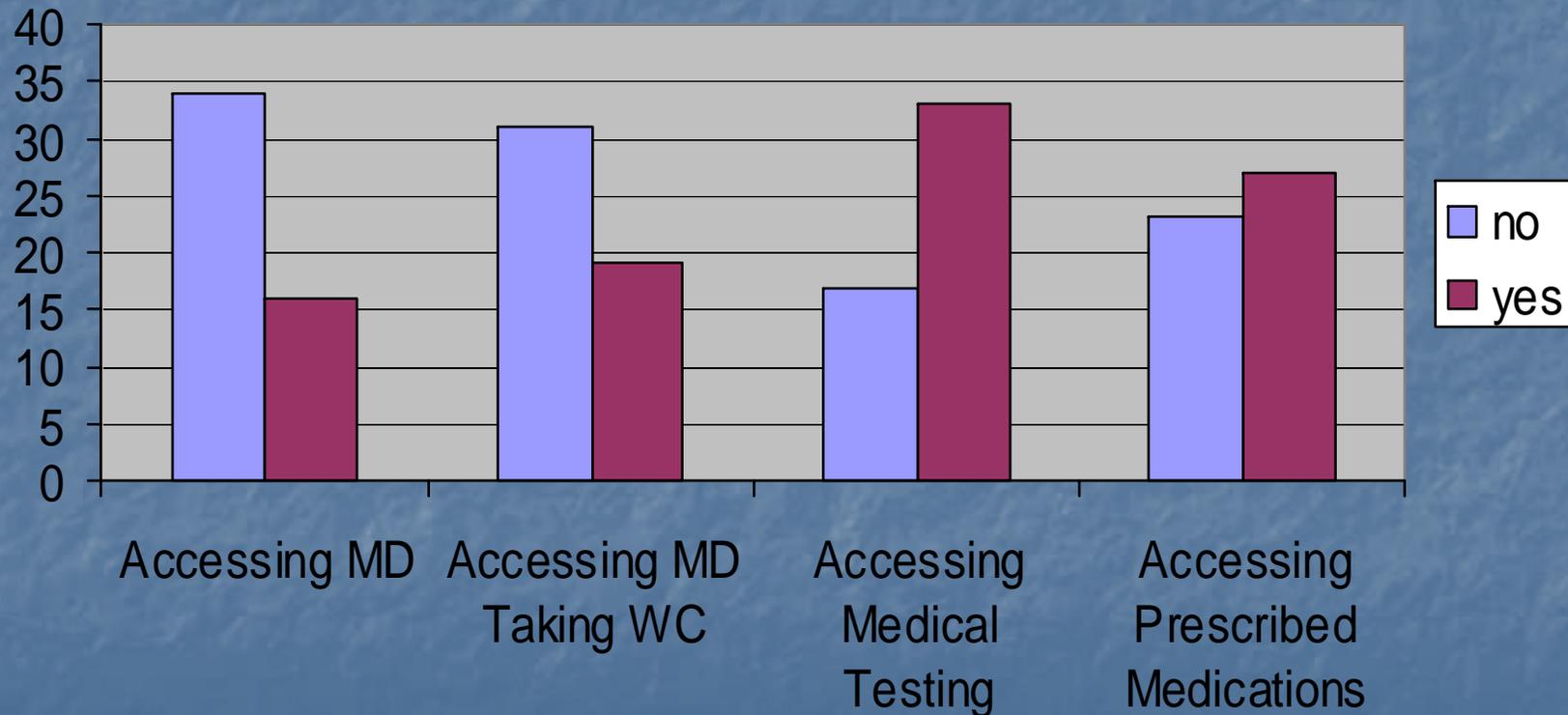
- Had health insurance pre Dx 84%
- Lost Health insurance post Dx 63%
- Lost >6 months 75%
- Lost > 1 year 60%

# Results- Work related diagnosis

- Felt MD thought work related but avoided addressing 54%
- Were told had work related Dx but WC billed 34%
- Told Dx not work related but MD notes suggest it is 12%

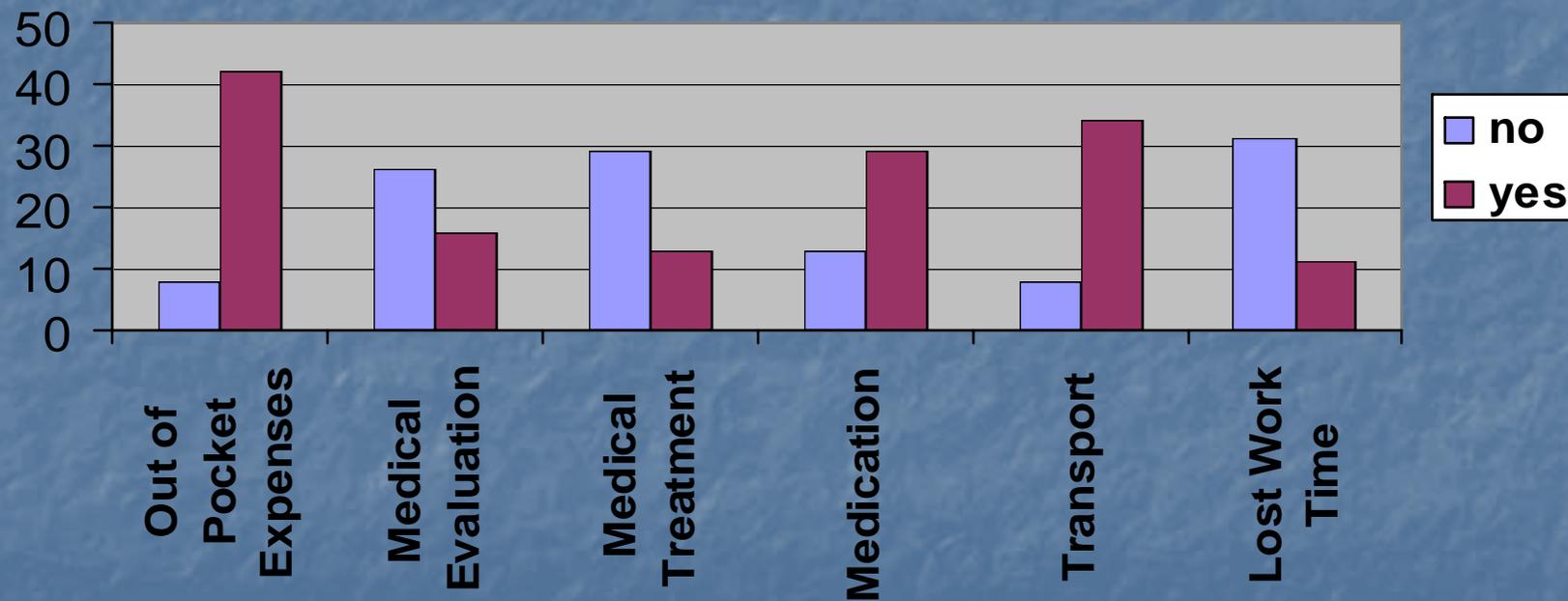
# Results- Accessing Medical Care

Table 1: Accessing Medical Care



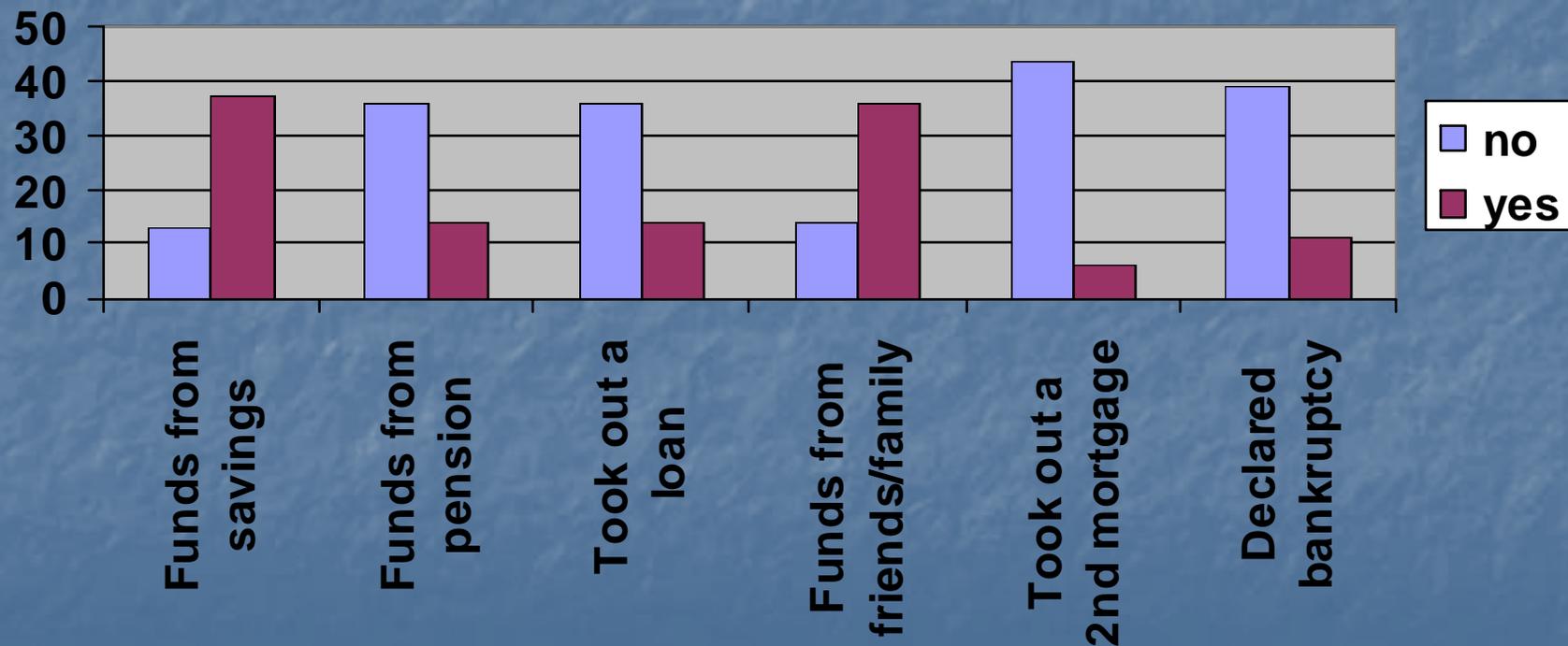
# Results- Out of Pocket Expenses

## Out of Pocket Expenses



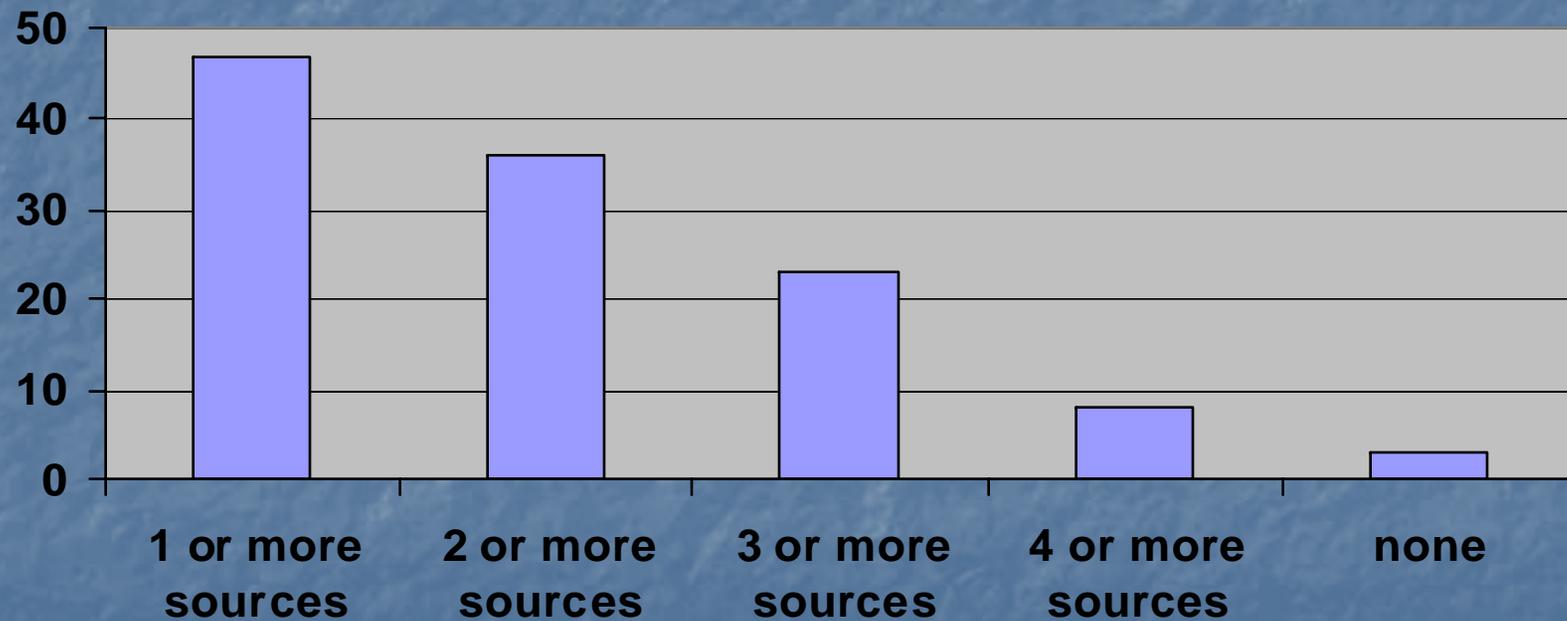
# Results- Financial Impacts

Table 4a: Financial Impact



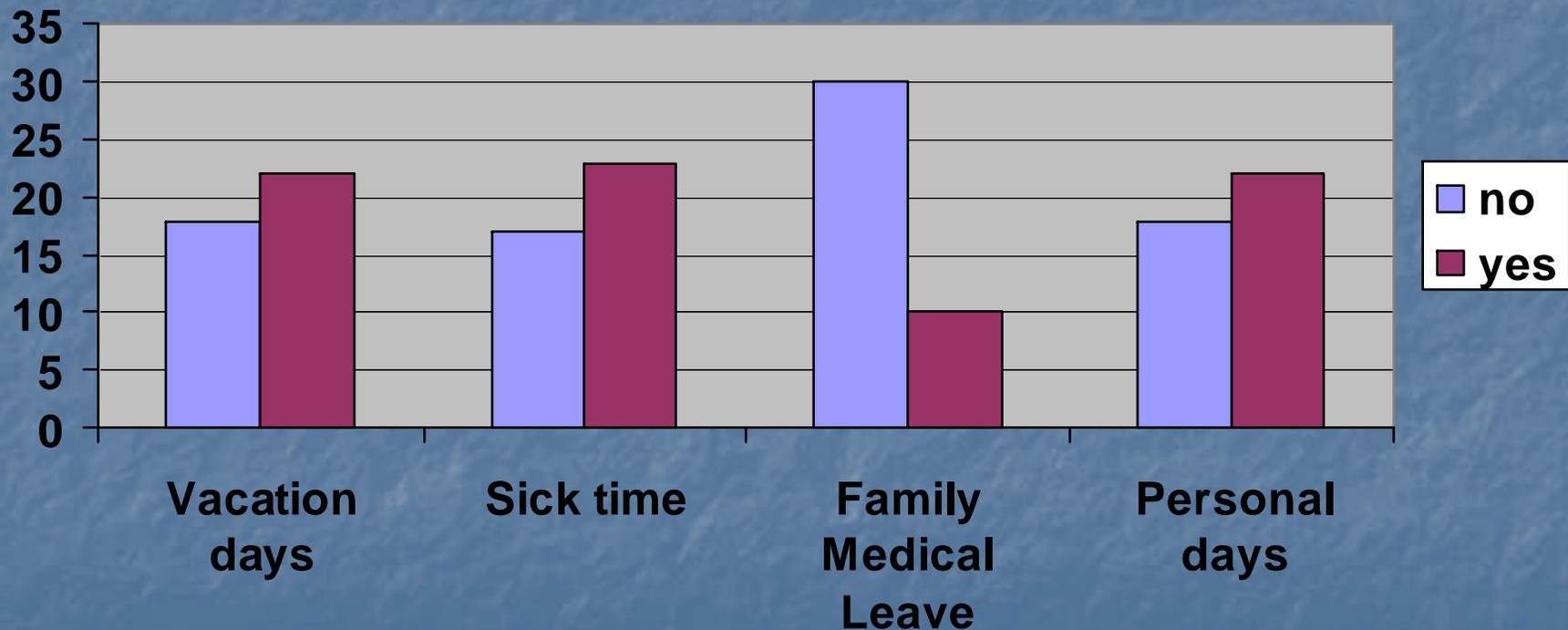
# Results

**Table 4b: Number of Financial Resources Used**



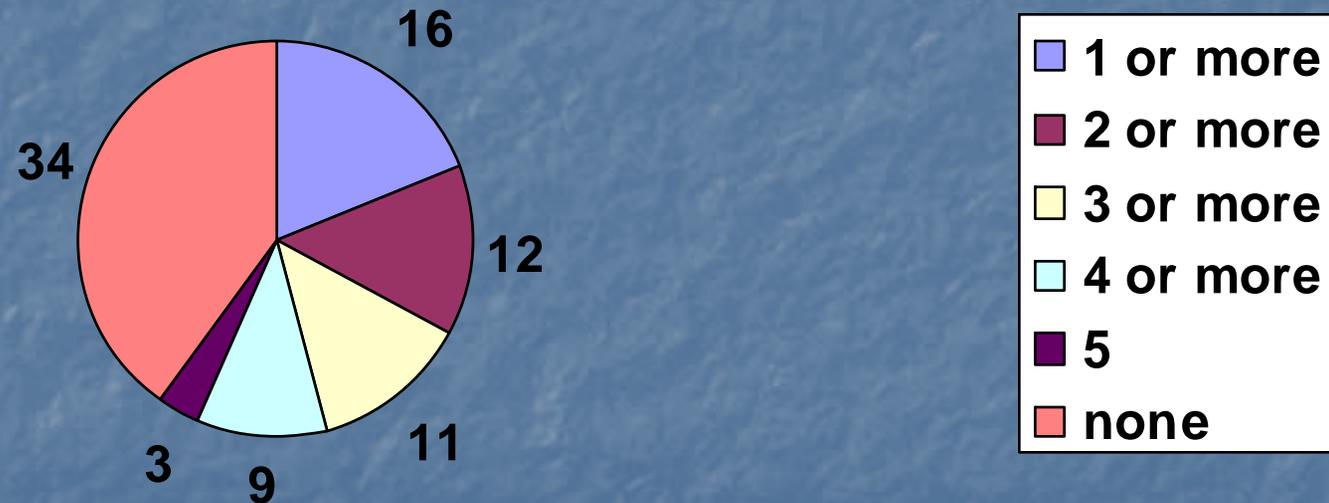
# Results- Off Work Time Used

Table 3 Off Work Time Used



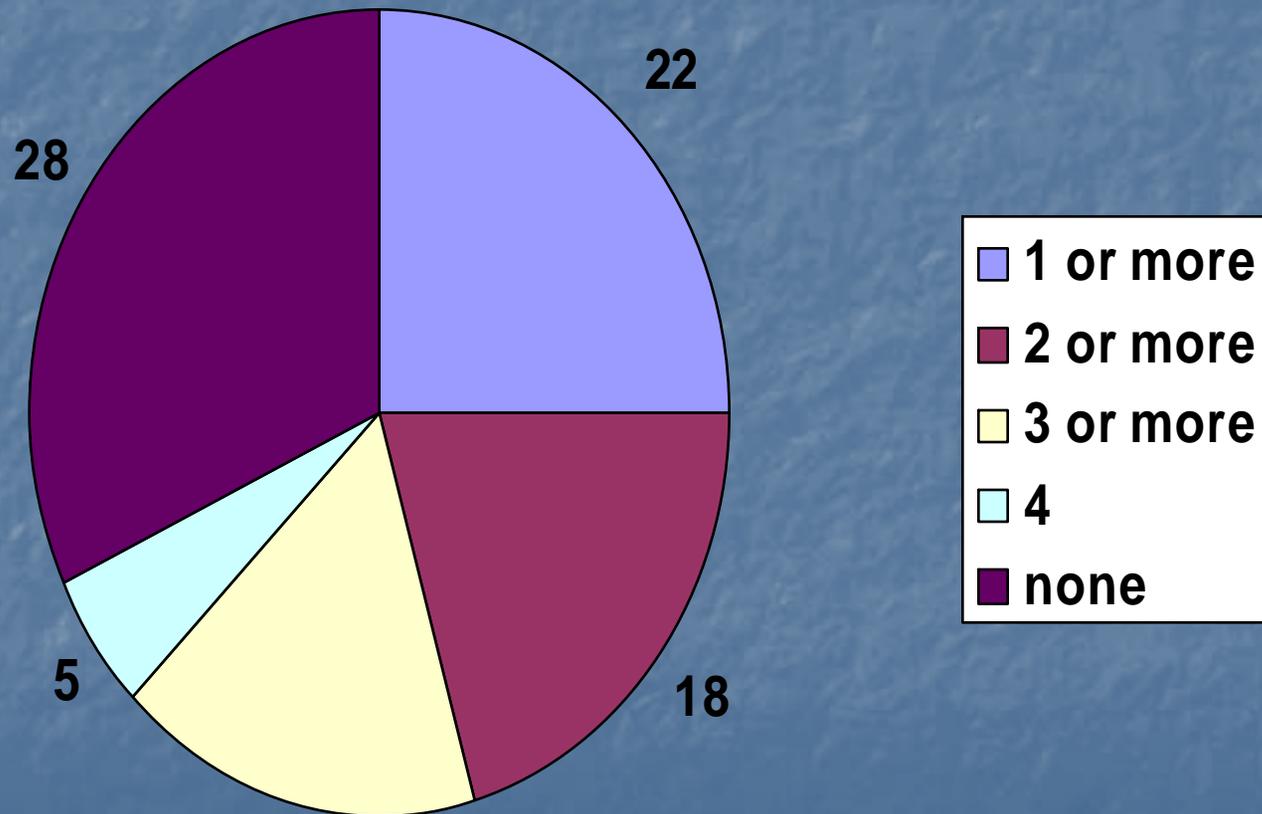
# Results

**Table 6b: Number of Necessities Medical Care Sacrificed For**



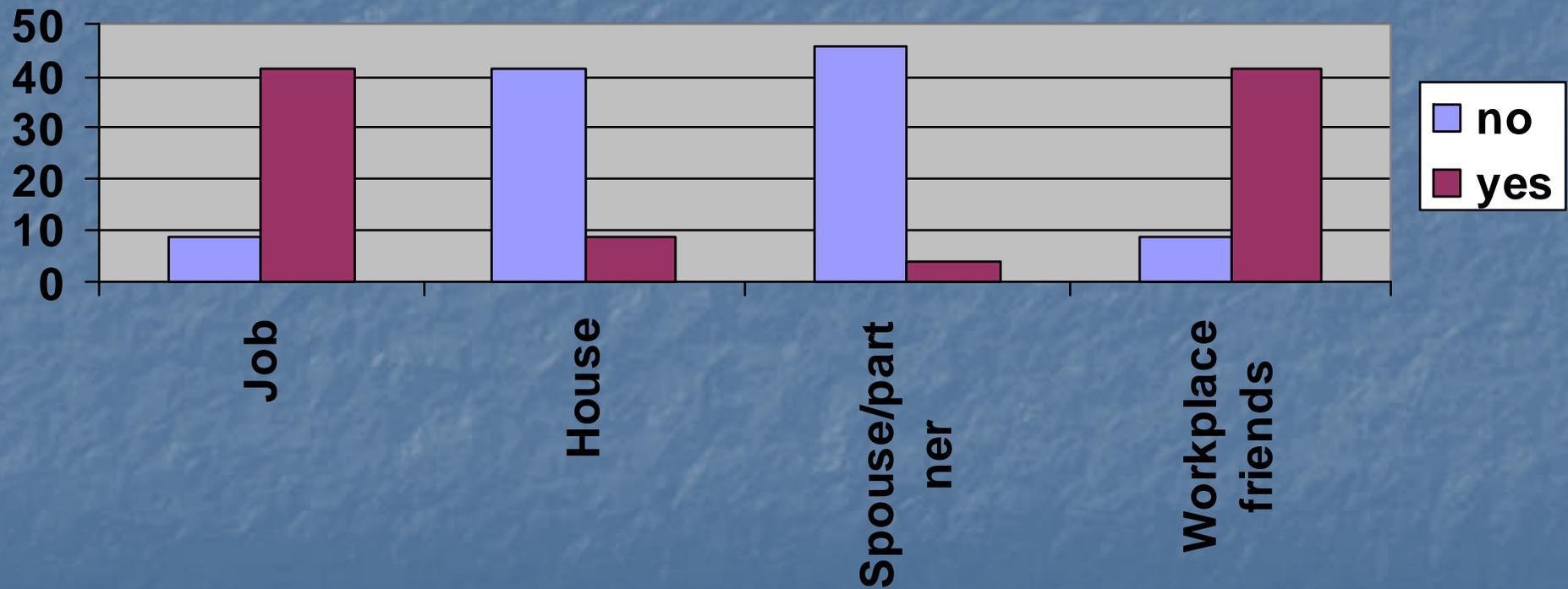
# Results

**Table 5b: Number of Necessities Sacrificed for Medical Care**



# Results

**Table 7a: Personal Losses After Diagnosis of Work Related Condition**



# Results-Overall Impact on Health

- 96% reported adverse impact on physical and/or mental health

## Impact on Health: Examples of Comments

Depressed, Stressful

Emotional and mental impact, more physical symptoms

Severely depressed, can't focus on work

Nerves shot to hell, stress is bad

Depressed, strained marriage, health worse

Set back mental and physical health

Destroyed whole life

Anxiety, Depression, Stress

Made me a nervous wreck

Frustrating

# Conclusions/Implications

- Occupational Disease- profound impact on fundamental aspects of life:
  - Health
  - Job
  - Finances
  - Social Supports
  - Identity

# Conclusions/Implications

- Health Care Providers
  - Participation in WC
  - Attitude change Re: WC
  - Anticipate emotional/mental health issues
  - Recognize these issues as part of the 'case'
  - Provide or refer for treatment for these issues
  - Provide information/referral to possible health insurance

# Conclusions/Implications

- Ties to 'other' issues
  - National health insurance
  - Serious re-training
  - Availability of jobs
  - Corporate externalizing of costs- injured workers bear heavy burden