

PARENTING LEAVE IN SINGAPORE

**AWARE survey
& recommendations**

9 February 2011

AWARE's Position

- **AWARE's Position: Gender Equality**
 - enables individuals to develop their full potential
 - strengthens families and provides a healthier environment for families
 - leads to a fairer and better society
- Current parenting leave policies (4 months for mums, none for dads) reinforce gender stereotypes of women as caregivers and men as providers. They entrench gender inequality.

AWARE's Position

- **TFR and Gender Equality**
 - There are many factors that affect TFR
 - Quality of life is a crucial factor affecting TFR
 - Also, studies have shown a direct correlation between TFR and the level of gender equality
 - Policies that promote gender inequality and place unequal childcare burdens on women disincentivise women from having babies

AWARE's Position

- **Paid parenting leave improves quality of life because:**
 - **Parents have time to take care of their children**
 - **They have financial support during this leave**
- **Leave policies that are focussed primarily on mothers:**
 - **increase the childcare burden on mothers**
 - **reduce their long term earnings relative to fathers (women earn 73% of men's wages)**

AWARE's Position

- **increase workplace discrimination against women (pregnant mothers are still being terminated; recent poll showed that only 49% of companies would hire working mothers in 2011)**
- **enable women to achieve senior management positions in organisations (72 out of 100 public listed company boards have no female non-executive directors)**
- **deprive fathers of the chance to participate actively in parenting (they want to – MCYS Fatherhood Perception Survey 2009 showed that 96% want to spend more time with their children)**

Survey of Singapore parents

To determine:

- a) Usage and adequacy of the existing parenting leave (maternity, paternity, child care and infant care leave)
- b) Attitudes and behaviours of mothers and fathers in relation to their roles at home and the workplace
- c) Employers' attitudes in relation to employees with children

Survey Details

Target Group: Working Singaporeans and PRs with at least one child aged 7 years and below

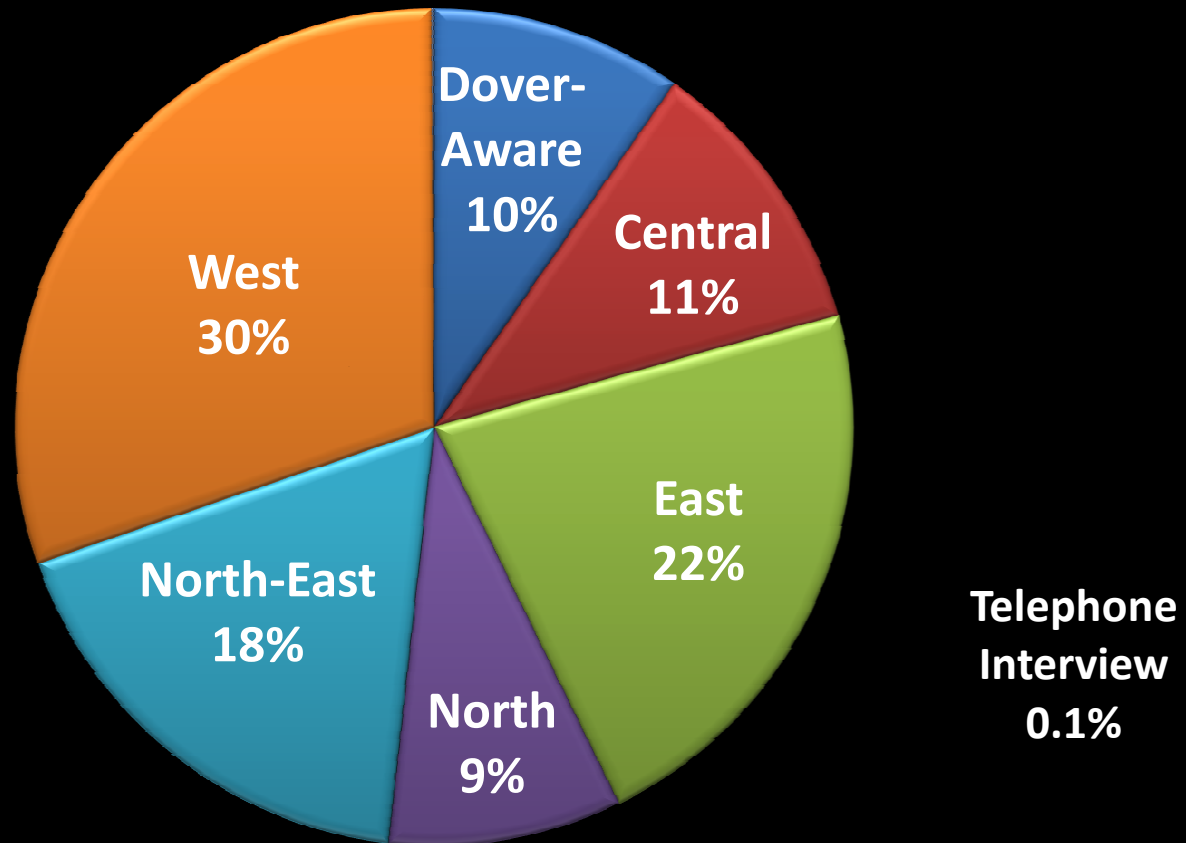
When: Oct 2010 - Jan 2011

Where: Childcare centres across Singapore

Mode: Face to face Interviews

Conducted by: Final year business students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Business & Accountancy

Location of interviews

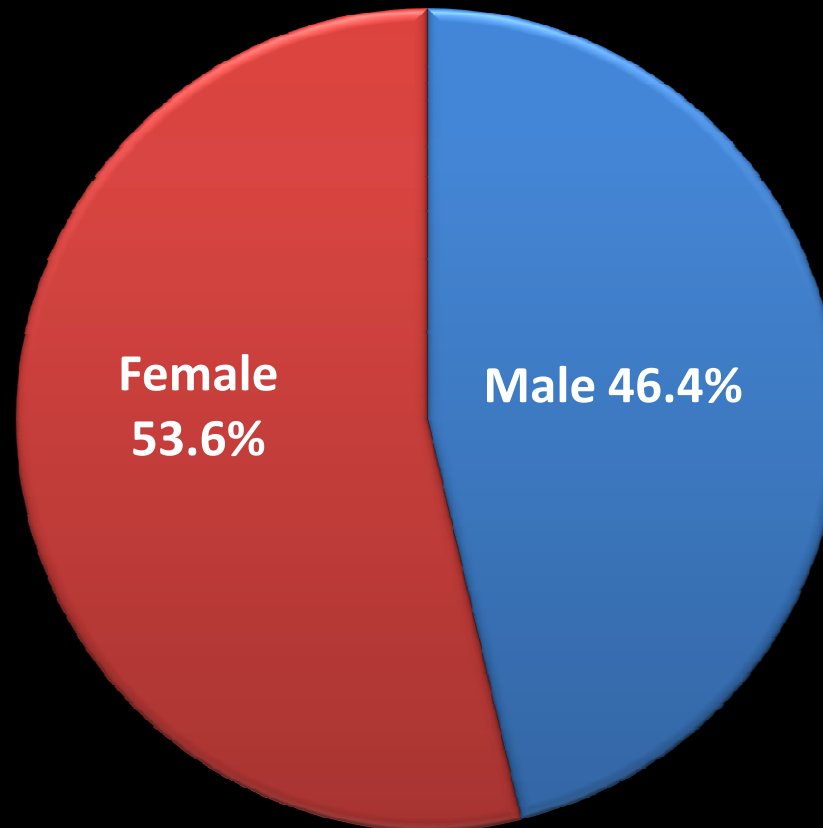


n = 1001

Survey Demographics

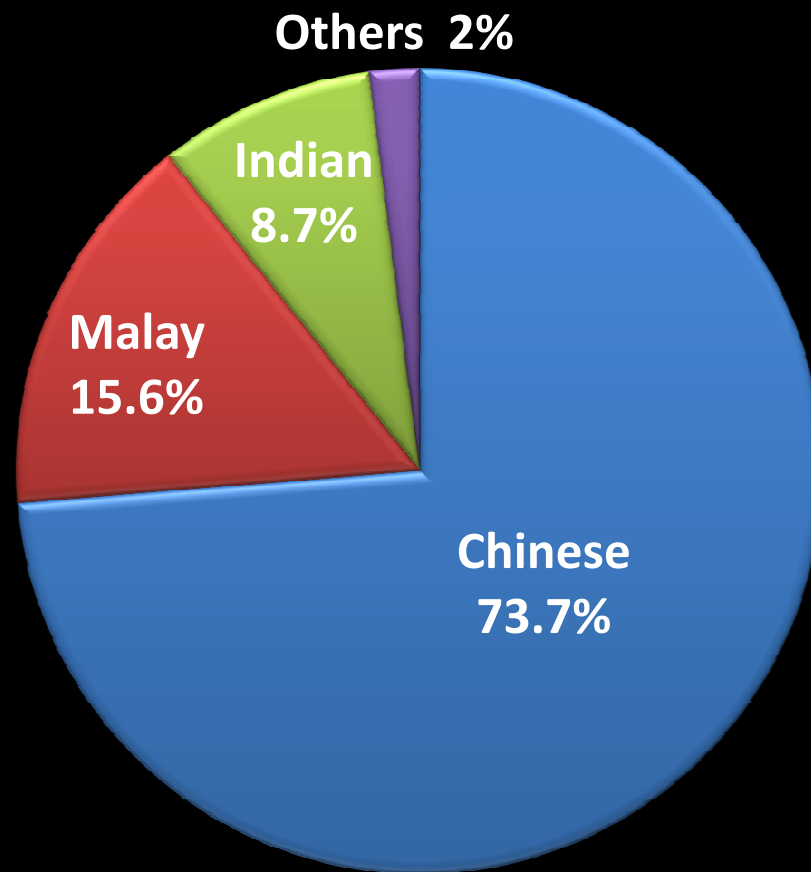
- 54% females, 46% males
- 73.7% Chinese, 15.6% Malays, 8.7% Indians, 2% others
- 98% married, 2% divorced/widowed
- 63% Singapore employers, 20% US/Europe Co, 8% Asian, 9% Others
- 53.8% large companies; 43.6% SMEs; 2.6% others
- 82% dual income
- 75% live in 3 – 5 room HDBs
- \$4,000 median income

Respondents - Gender



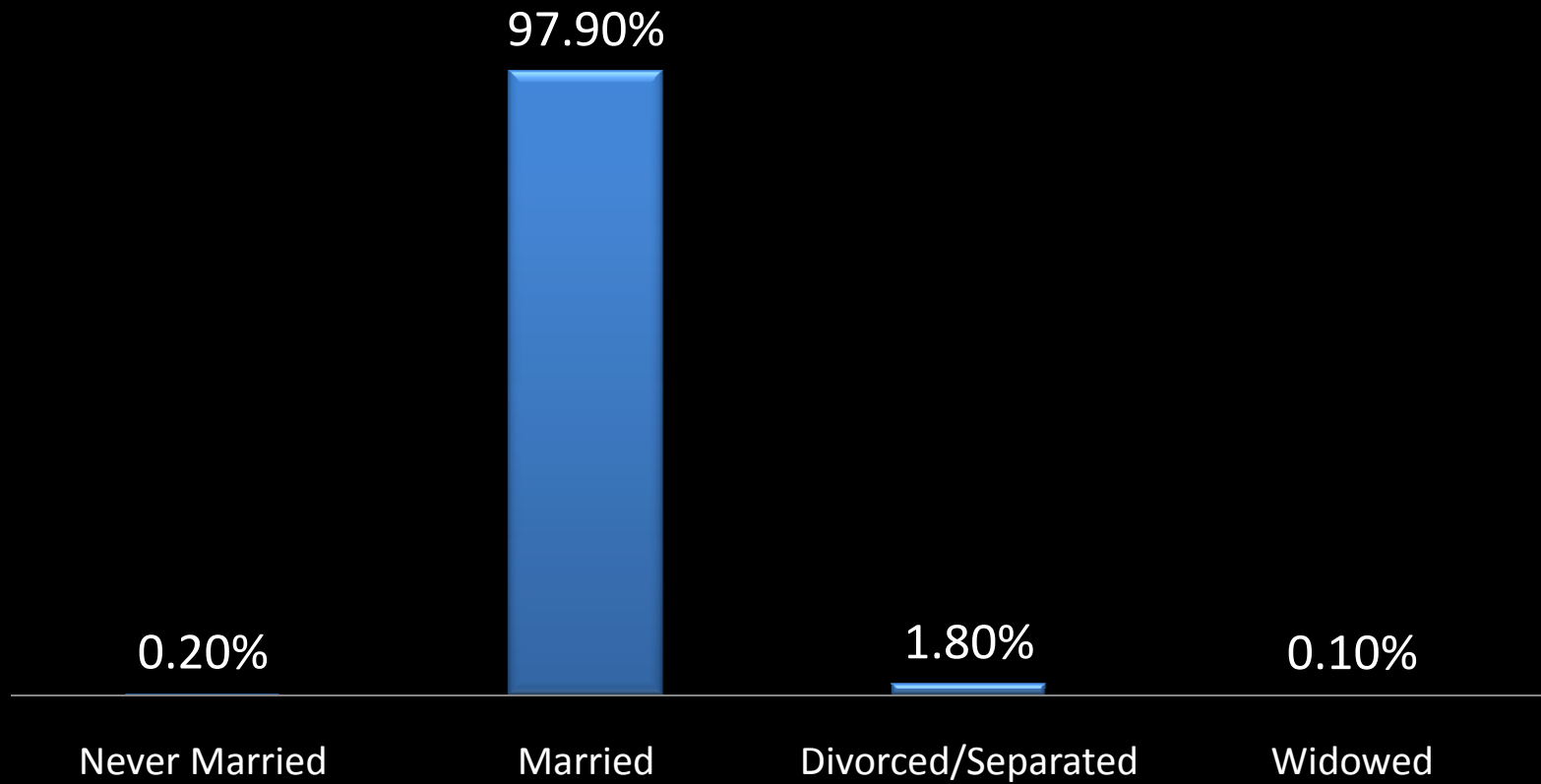
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Respondents - Race



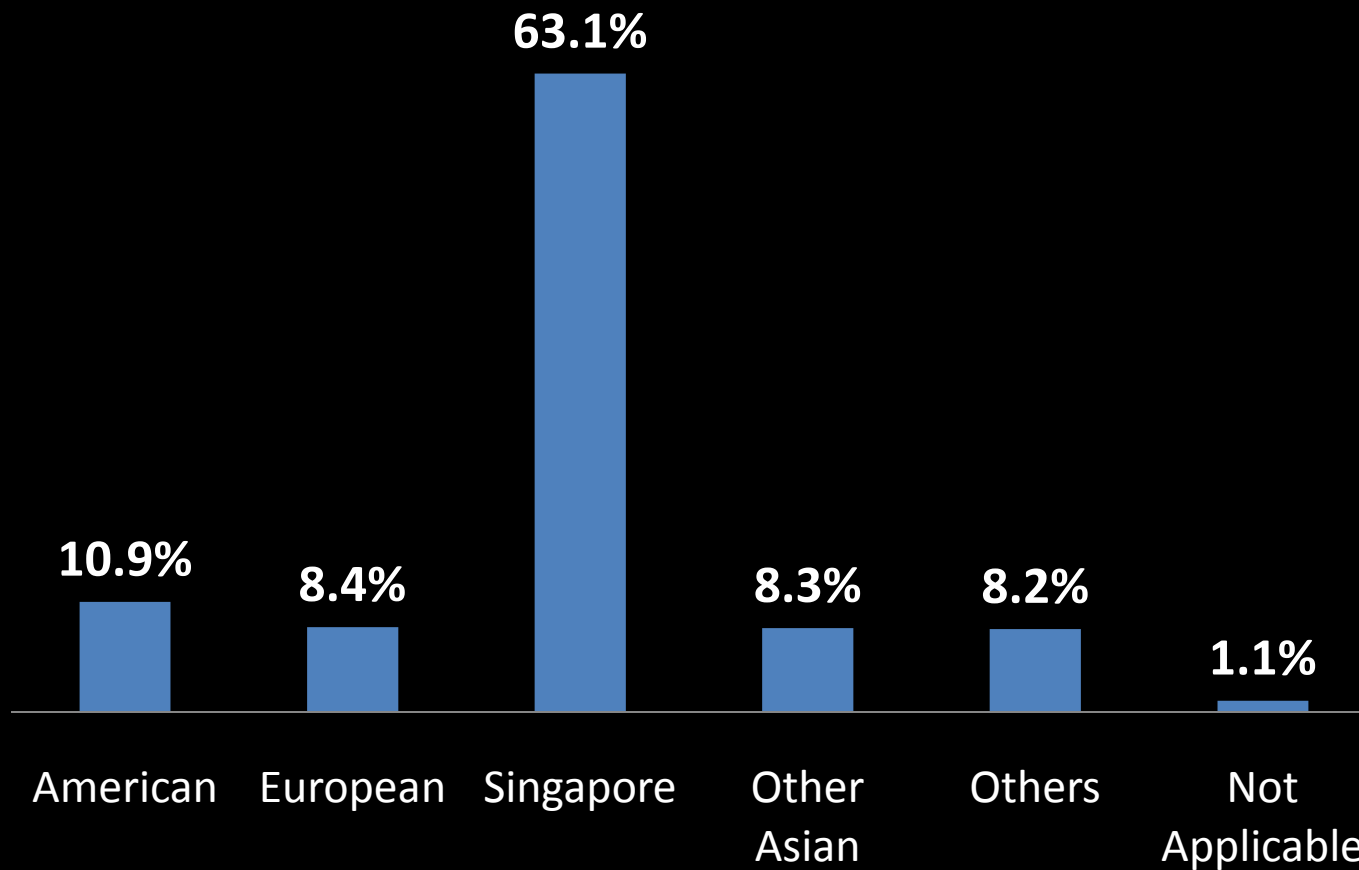
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Respondents – Marital status



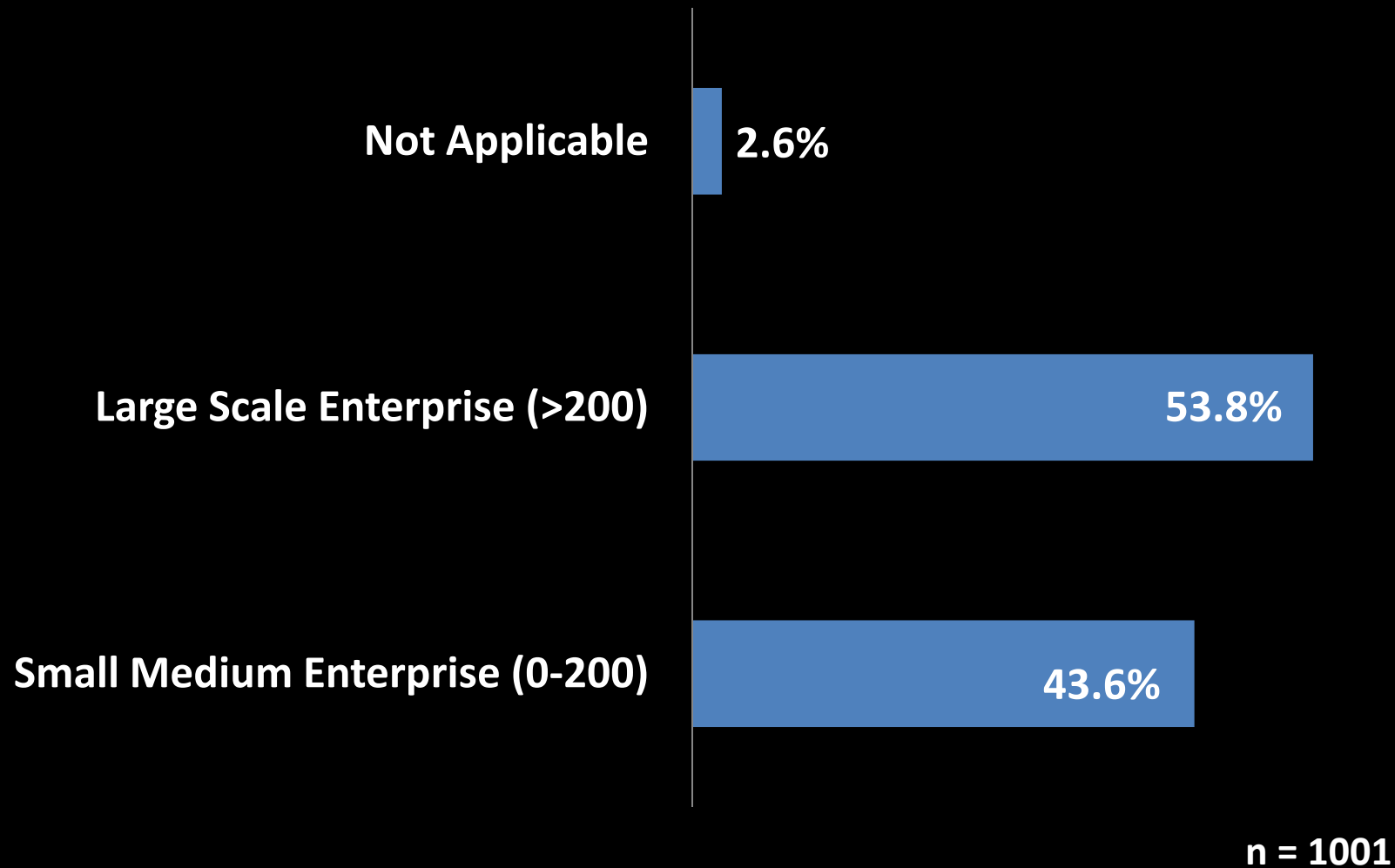
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Employment – Company type

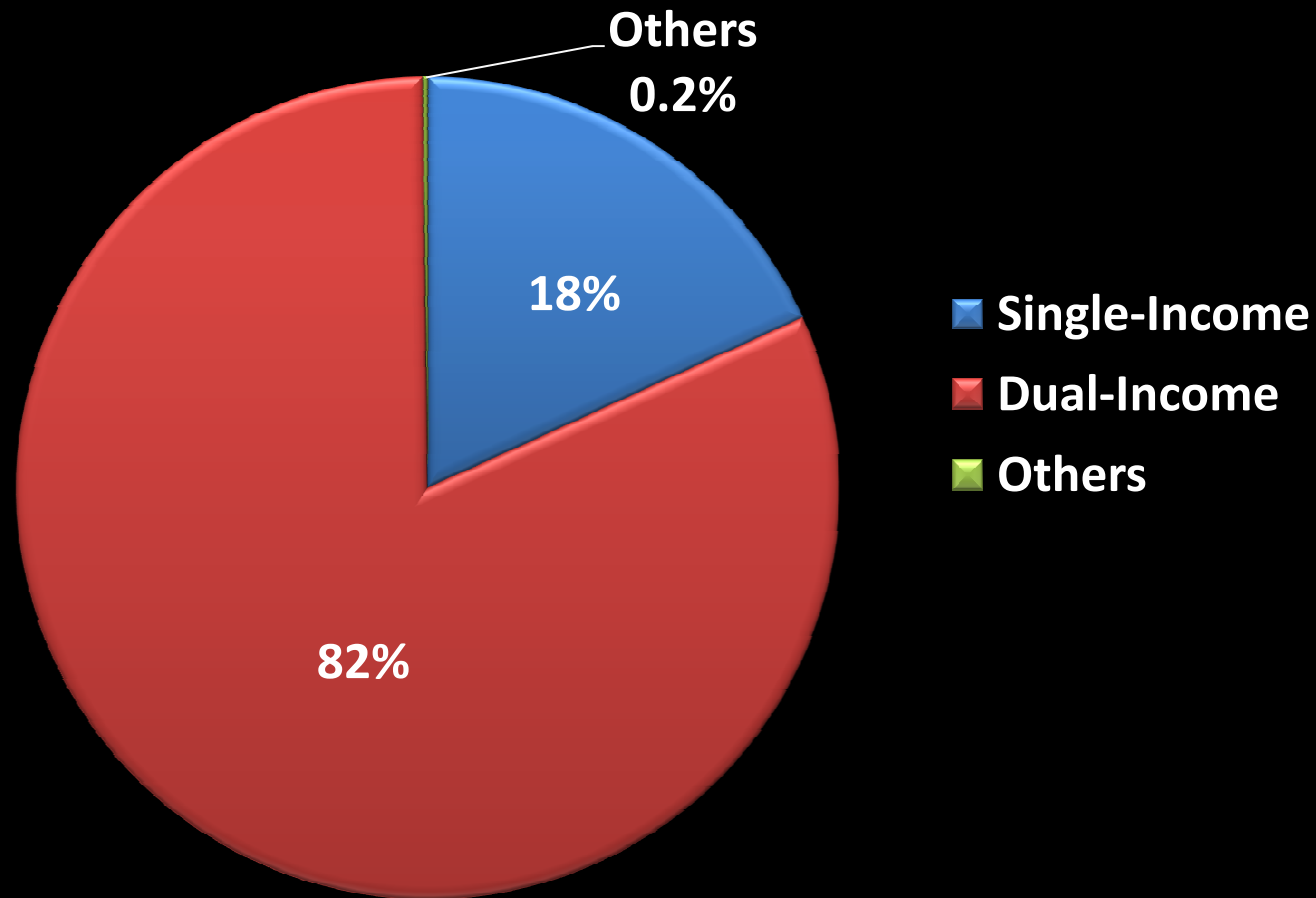


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Employment – Company size

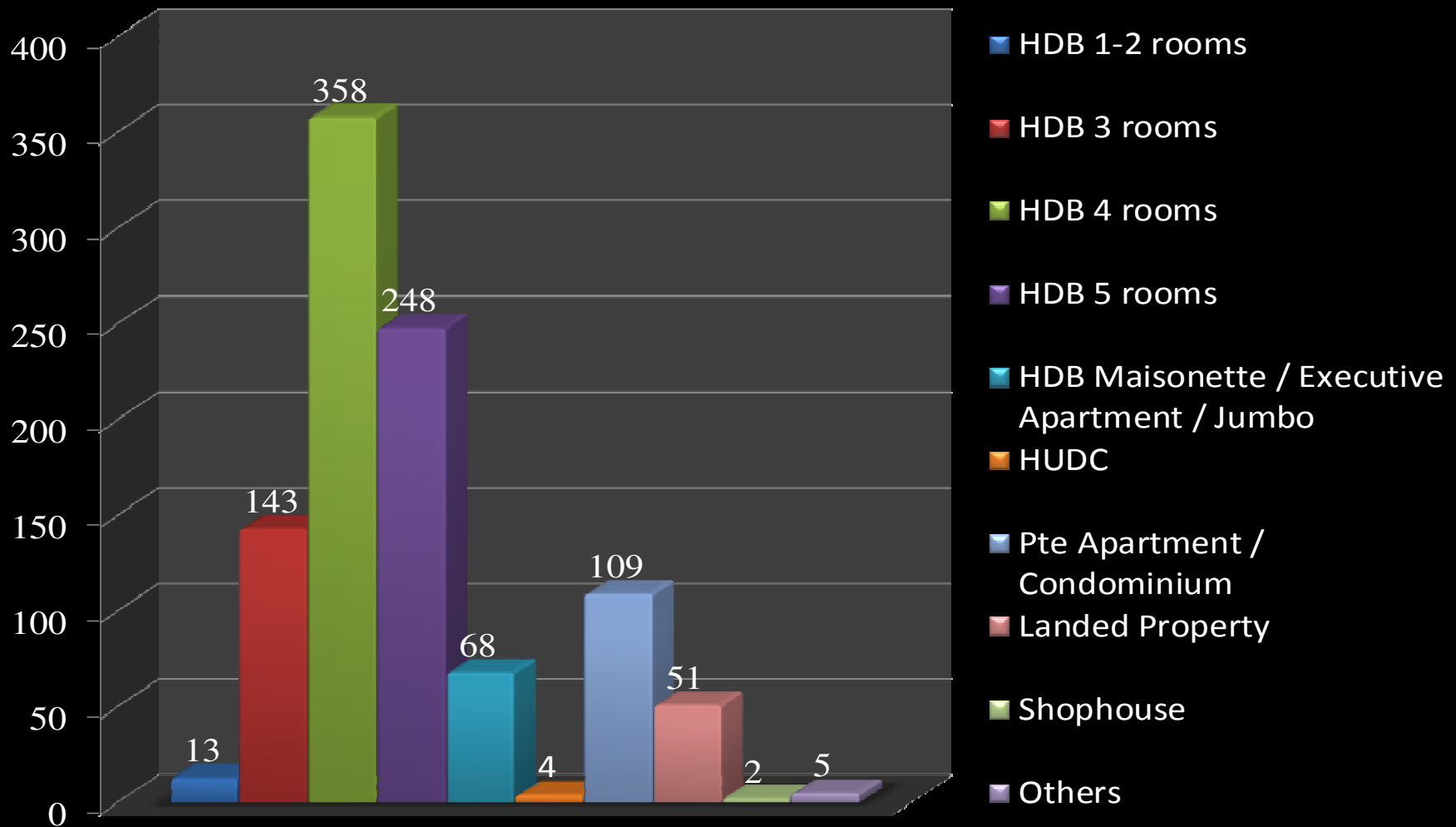


Household income

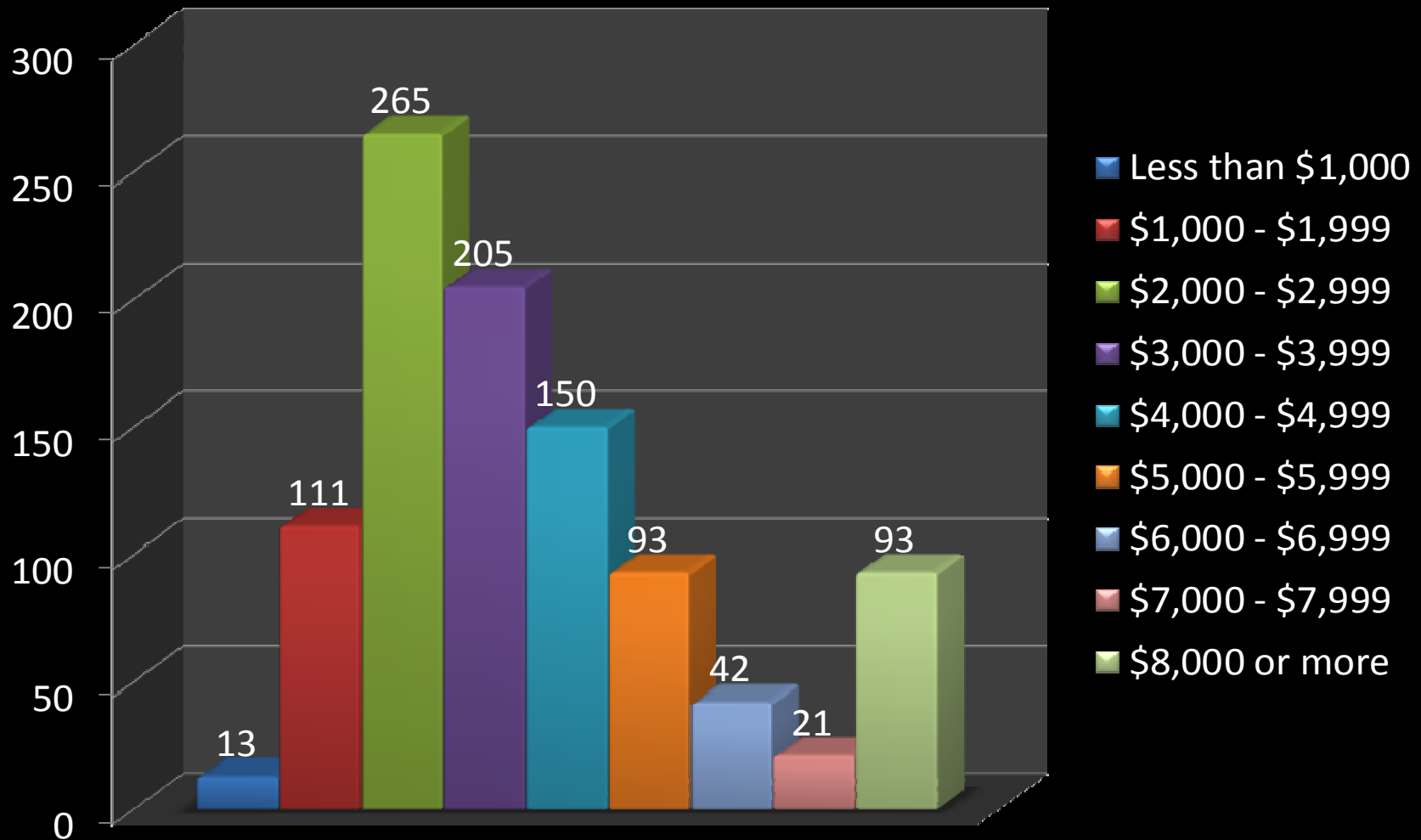


n = 1001

Housing type



Personal monthly income



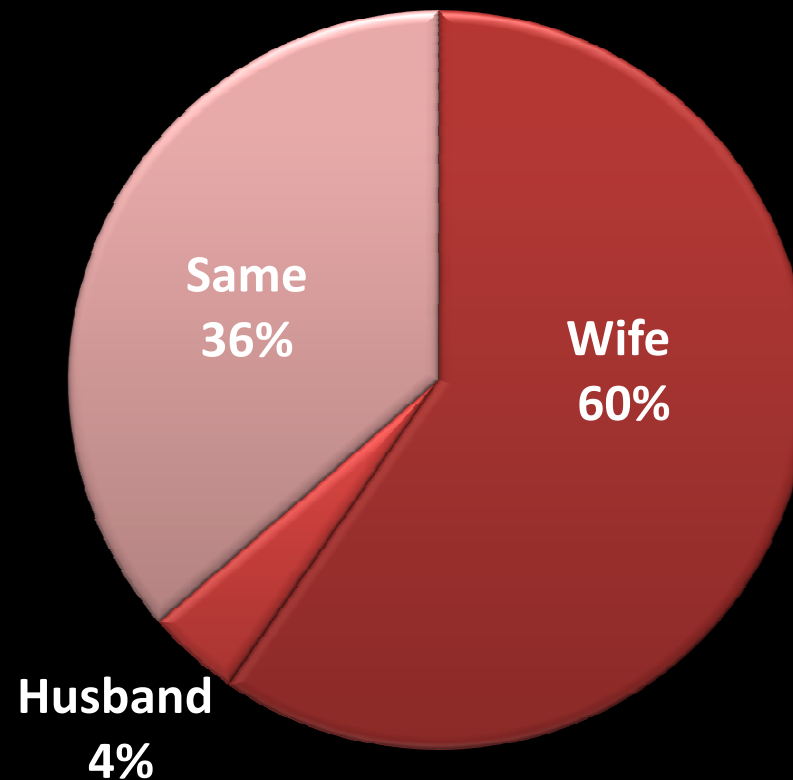
Survey Findings

Household Roles

Household roles: Key points

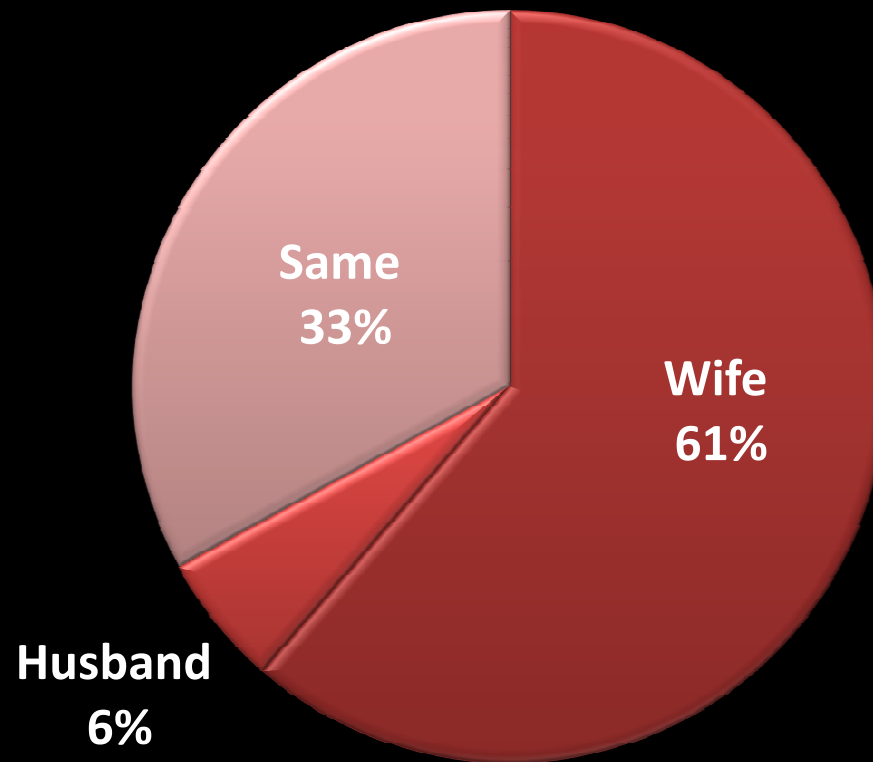
1. **Wives spend more time taking care of children and doing housework than their husbands (60%)**
2. **A significant number of husbands and wives share their childrearing (36%) and household duties equally (33%)**

Who spends more time with your child or children?



n = 991

Who takes most responsibility for housework?



n = 881

Survey Findings

Paternity Leave

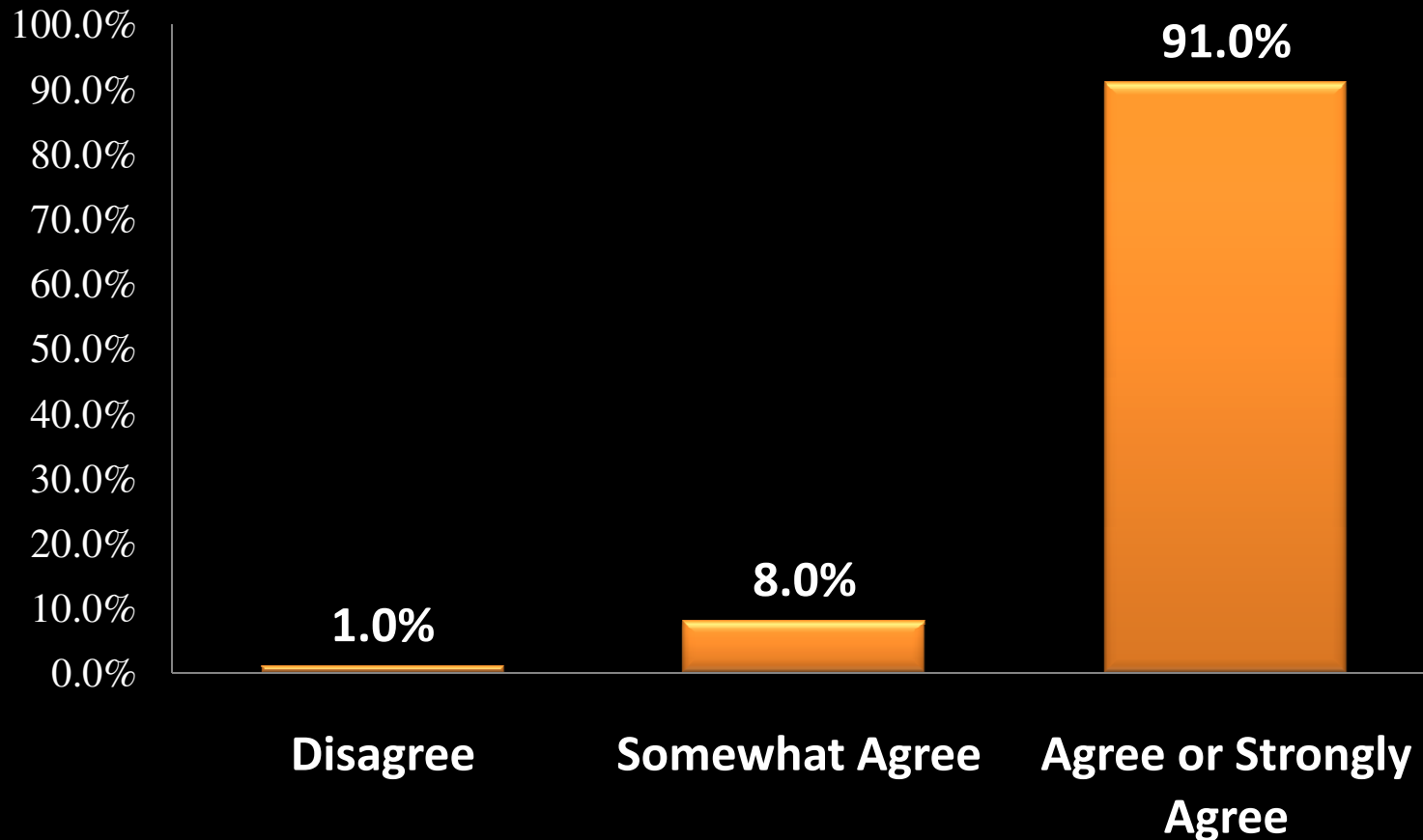
Paternity Leave: Key Responses

- 1. Paternity leave should be mandated (91%)**
- 2. Paternity leave will enable fathers to be more involved in parenting (93%)**
- 3. Paternity leave should be at least 6 days (79.7%, with 44.2% opting for more than 11 days)**
- 4. About 50% of companies currently offer paternity leave, mostly 1 – 3 days.**
- 5. When it is available, paternity leave is utilised by most fathers (75%)**

AWARE recommends

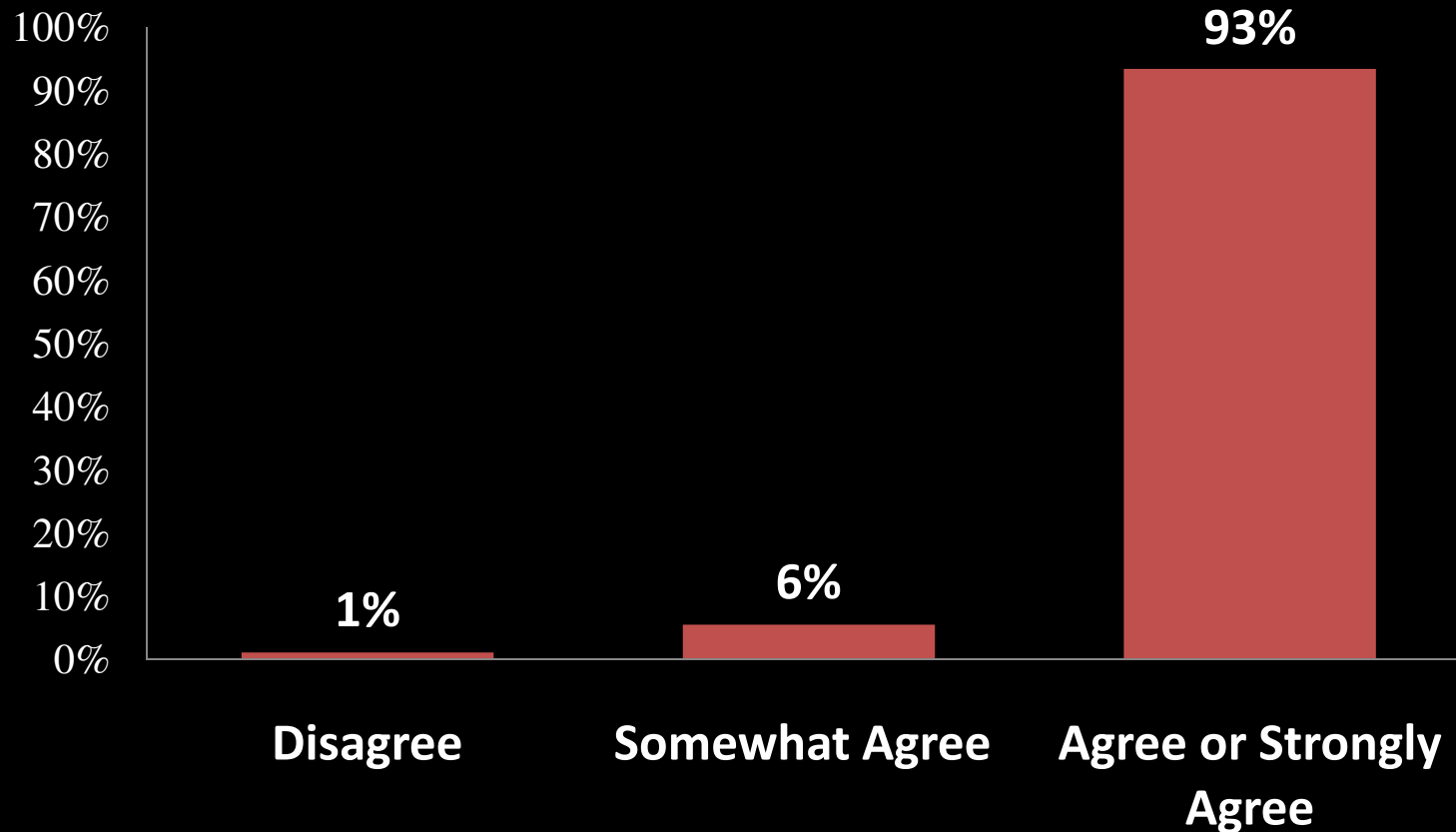
1. **Implement mandatory paid paternity leave of 2 weeks**
2. **Employer and state should share the cost of paternity leave**
3. **State to fund its share by reducing amount of tax credits given as this benefits only a small number. It appears that tax credits of \$800 million were expected for 2010.**
4. **Encourage employers to be more supportive of male employees' parenting duties**

Should paid paternity leave be required by the law?



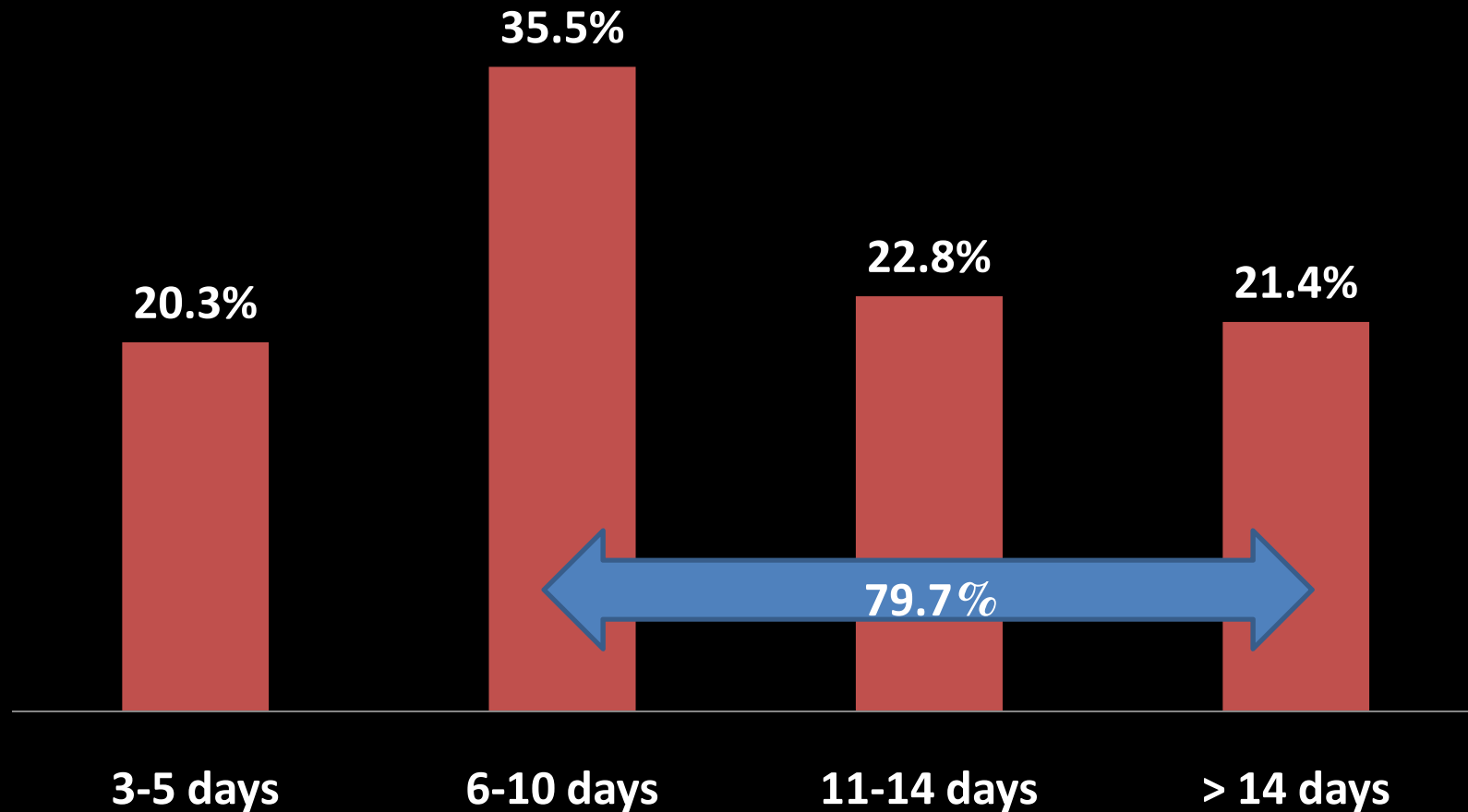
n = 999

Would paternity leave allow you/your spouse to play a greater role in parenting?



n = 999

How many days of paternity leave would you like?



Current norm for paternity leave is 1-3 days

n = 990

What parents have said

Willy Teo Zixiang, 13 Jun 10, 17:30 PM (www.reach.gov.sg)

Fathers do play extremely important role in the child's upbringing. We should also recognise the fact that mothers have to recuperate their health during after delivery. Meanwhile they have to take care of their new borns.

Please recognise what a tedious affair that is going to be. **Fathers had to help especially for cesarean cases. Nowadays, giving birth comes along with numerous types of pregnancy complications. Fathers play an important role to help their wives recover while taking care of the new born. Not all mother-in-laws or father-in-laws are willing to provide help during this period.**

Do a more complete job at encouraging couples to give birth? Please recognise a more complete picture. Everyone are appreciative of the help that are in place, I hope by giving feedbacks, it would enhance the level of commitment to boost birth rates in Singapore.

Mothers have already put in enormous efforts, please allow fathers more time to play a part to share the load.

What parents have said

Clayton T, 15 Jul 10 , 12:48 PM (www.reach.gov.sg)

When my wife gave birth, we could not afford to employ a confinement lady, so I took nearly 4 weeks of leave (paid and unpaid) to stay at home to look after both my wife and my new born baby.

Having a baby is financially stressful and to take no pay leave worsen the financial situation. Singapore is a develop country but has an undevelop mentality when it comes to granting leaves or benefits but still expect their people to have more babies.

I think it's time for the government to take appropriate actions and show the people that they are listening and will change their policy in granting mandatory 1 month paternity leave. By doing so, I believe more people is willing to consider having more babies as the government appreciate the effort of the father.

What parents have said

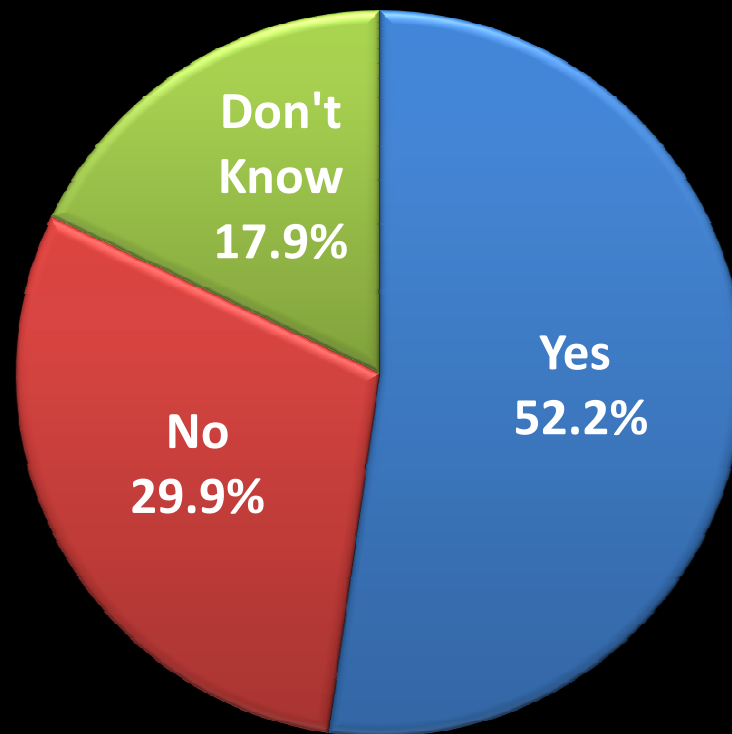
Ane, 26 Jun 09 , 12:51 PM (www.reach.org.sg)

I had a c-section and still walked like a limping old lady 2 weeks after birth. The walk from HDB to multi-storey car park left me breathless, 4 weeks after birth. We don't have the luxury of grandparents help due to old age or no longer with us. ..

Hubby took one week off from work and stay home to help and support. I had to admit if not for him I could have got depression due to all the changes, demands, emotion and frustrating environment and a tiny life on my hand that keeps me wonder if anything is wrong every half a second.

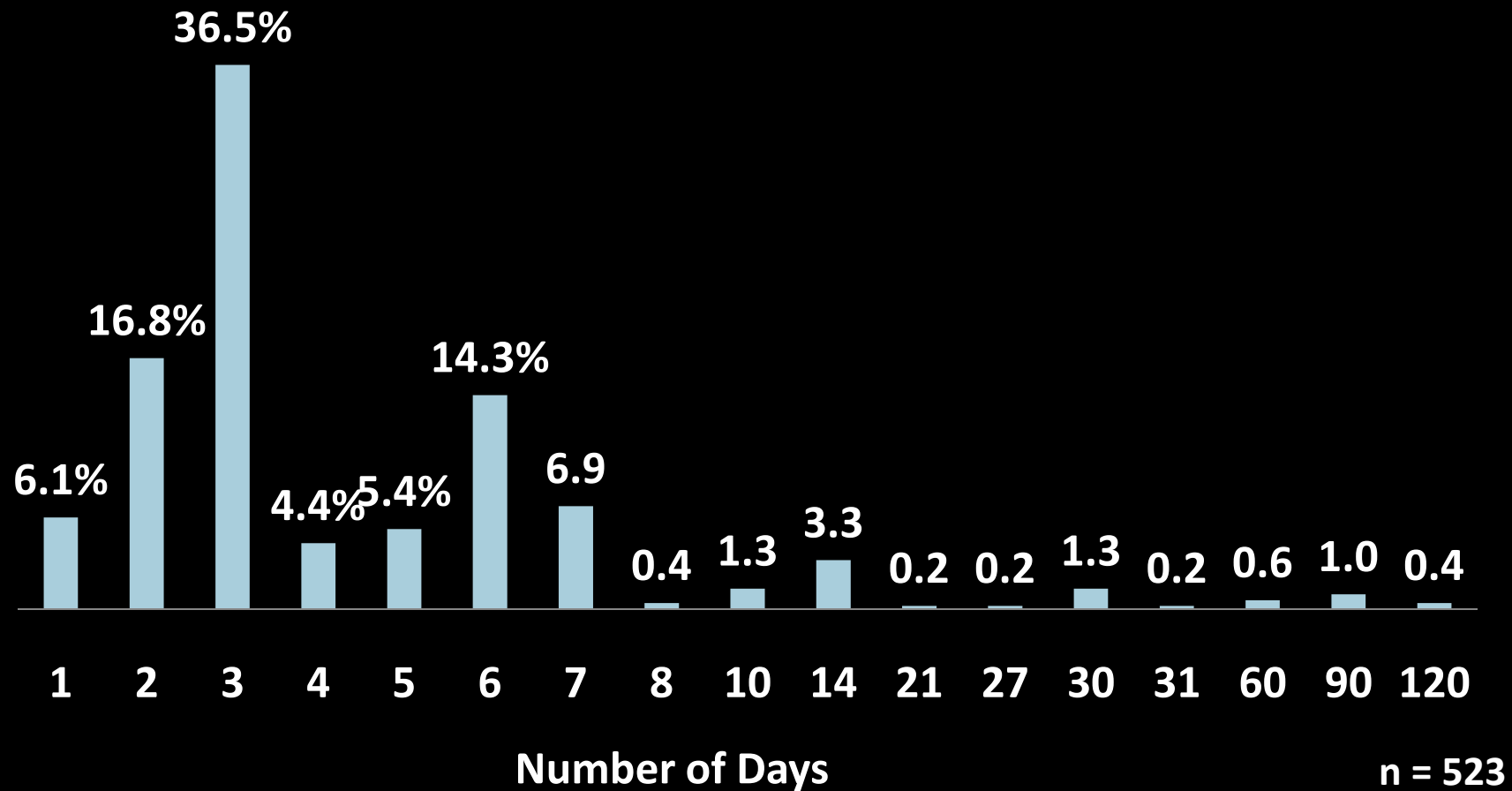
One week is a good suggestion, as baby tends to develop jaundice in that period, mother to adapt with father and not full responsibility on her shoulder while expecting her to recover under stress all by herself?

Does employer offer paid paternity leave?

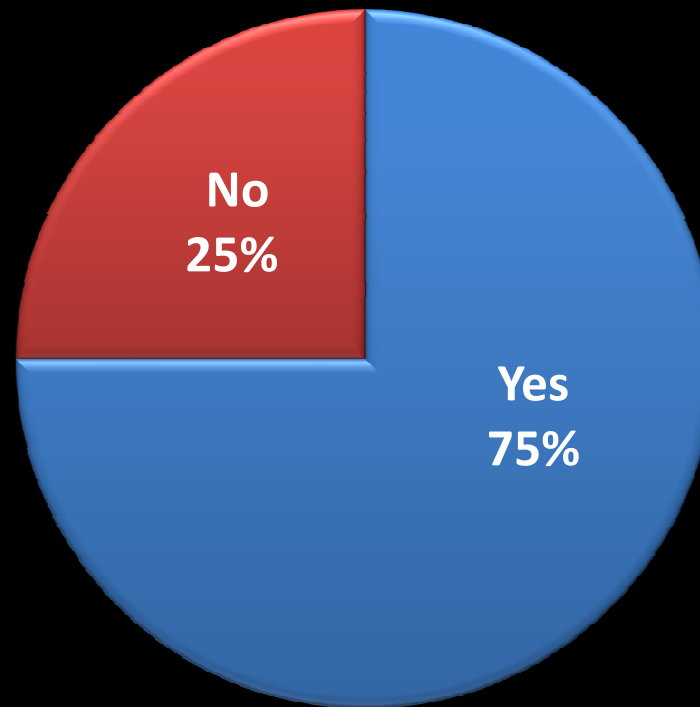


n = 1001

If offered, how many days paid paternity leave?



Have you used your paternity leave?



n = 252

Survey Findings

Maternity Leave

Maternity Leave: Key responses

- 1. The last month of maternity leave should be converted to parental leave that can be taken by the father or the mother (57% agreed, 19% disagreed)**
- 2. Provide flexible options, e.g. having longer maternity leave at lower pay (61%)**

AWARE recommends

1. **Convert the 4th month of maternity leave to paid parental leave to be taken by either party**
2. **Offer a 'parenting present' of \$4,000 to couple where father takes the leave.**

Convert last 4 weeks of maternity leave into parental leave?

Agree or Strongly Agree

57.0%

Somewhat Agree

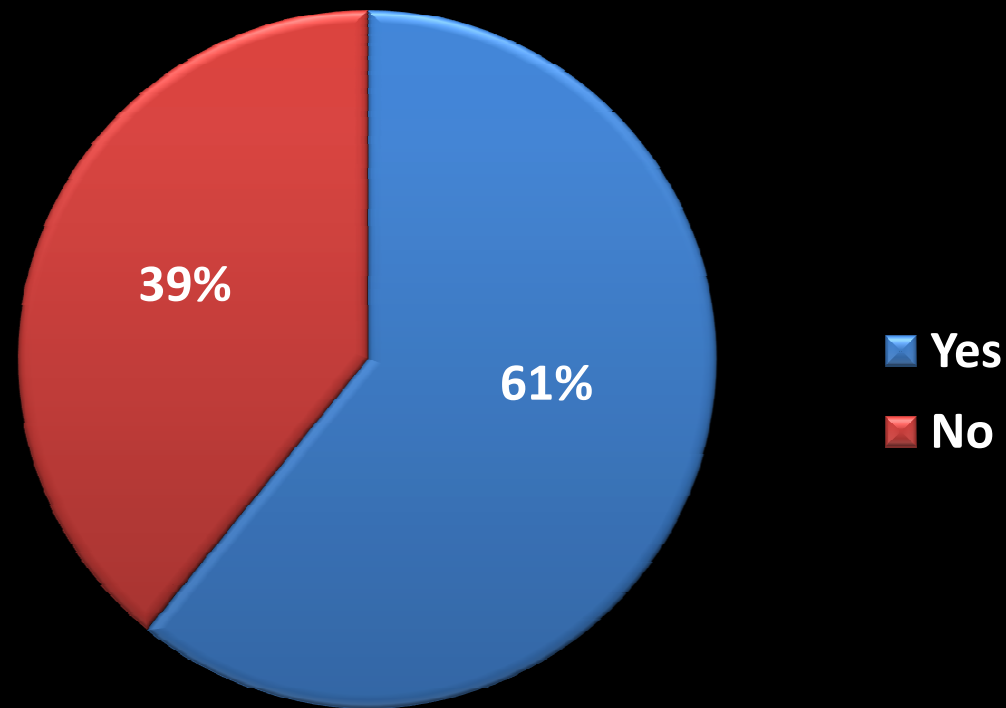
24.0%

Disagree

19.0%

n = 968

Would you like longer maternity leave with lower pay?



n = 534

Survey Findings

Child & Infant Care Leave

Child & Infant Care: Key Responses

PAID CHILDCARE LEAVE

1. About 50% felt that 6 days paid childcare leave was not sufficient
2. 61% took all their childcare leave, 26% did not
3. More women (66%) than men (53%) used up their childcare leave

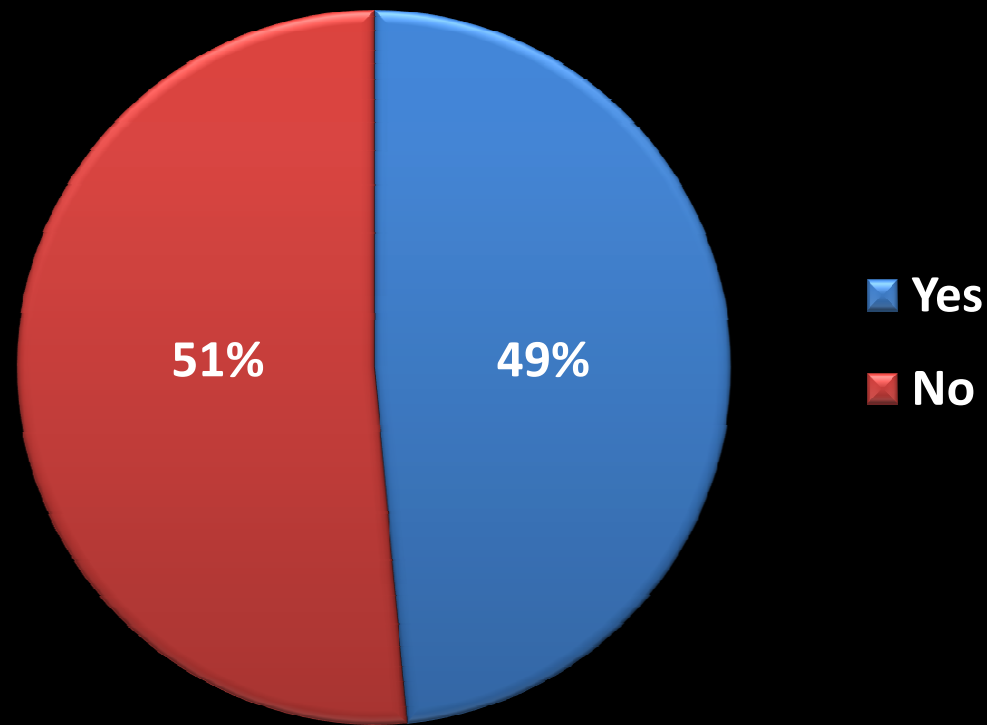
UNPAID CHILDCARE LEAVE

4. 31% of eligible respondents took all their unpaid infant care leave, 48% did not
5. Many use their paid annual leave for parenting

AWARE recommends

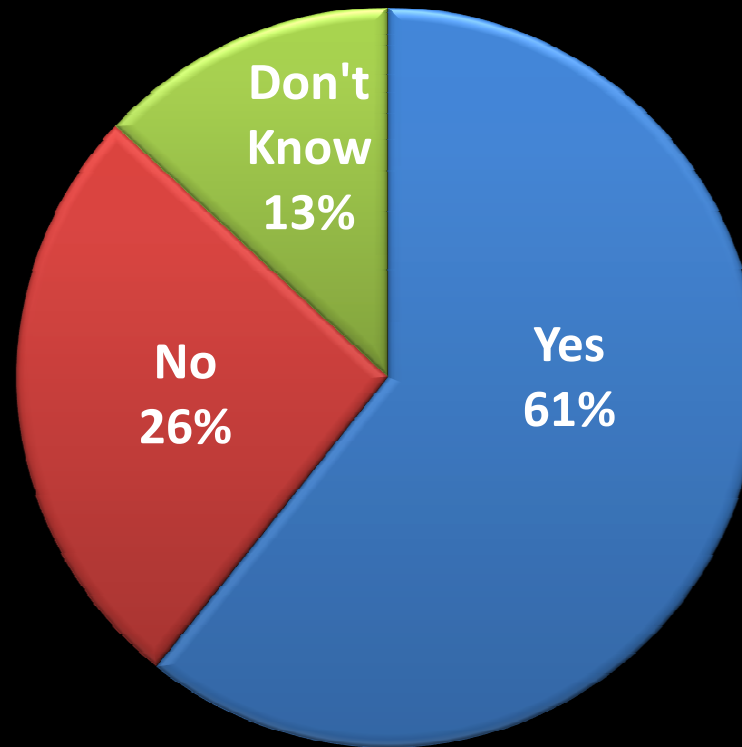
1. Convert paid childcare leave of 6 days to 'dependents' leave'. Dependents will include older children and parents.
2. Maintain unpaid infant care leave at 6 days

Is current mandated child care leave entitlement sufficient?



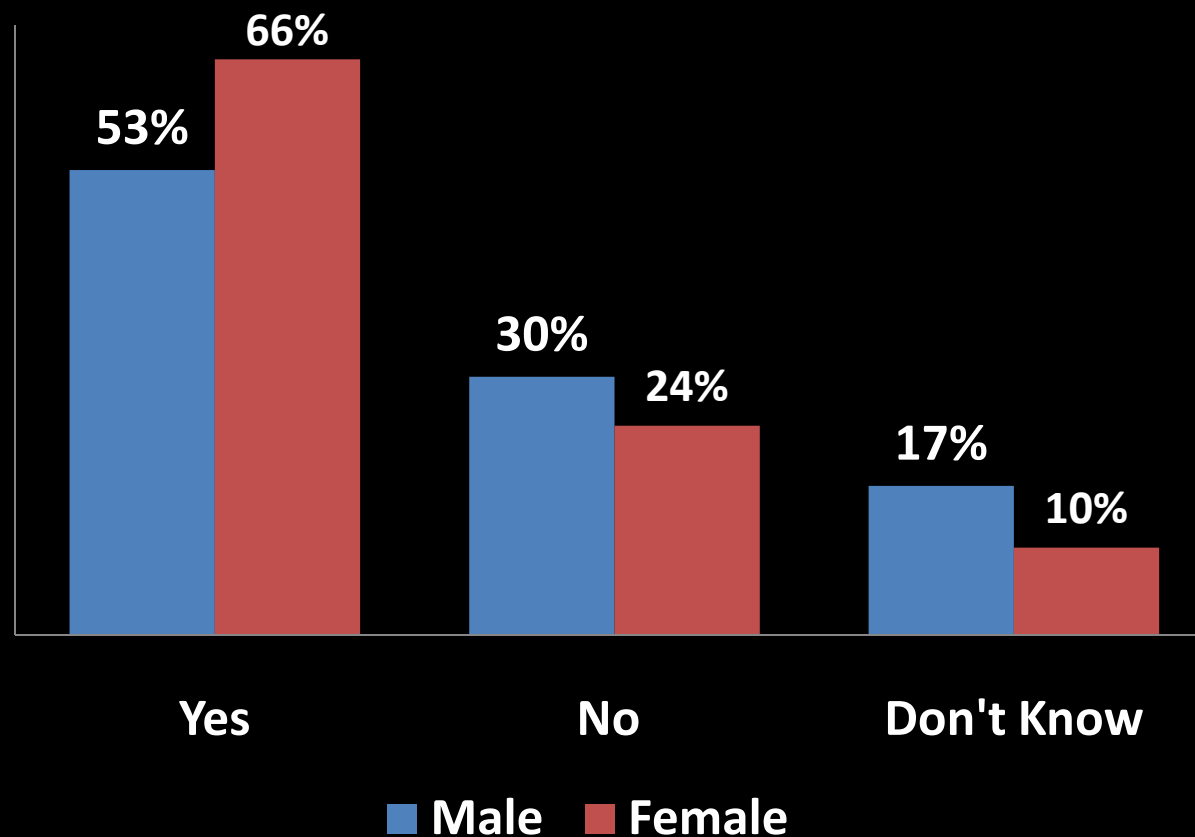
n = 1001

Did you use all your child care leave days last year?

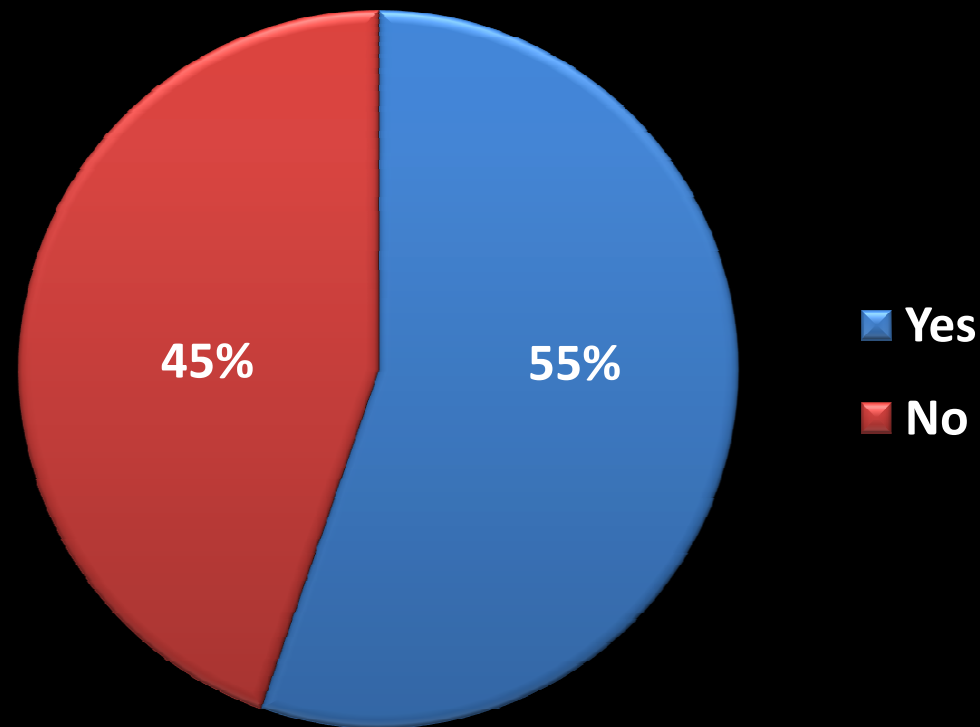


n = 840

Percentage of men and women who used up their child care leave

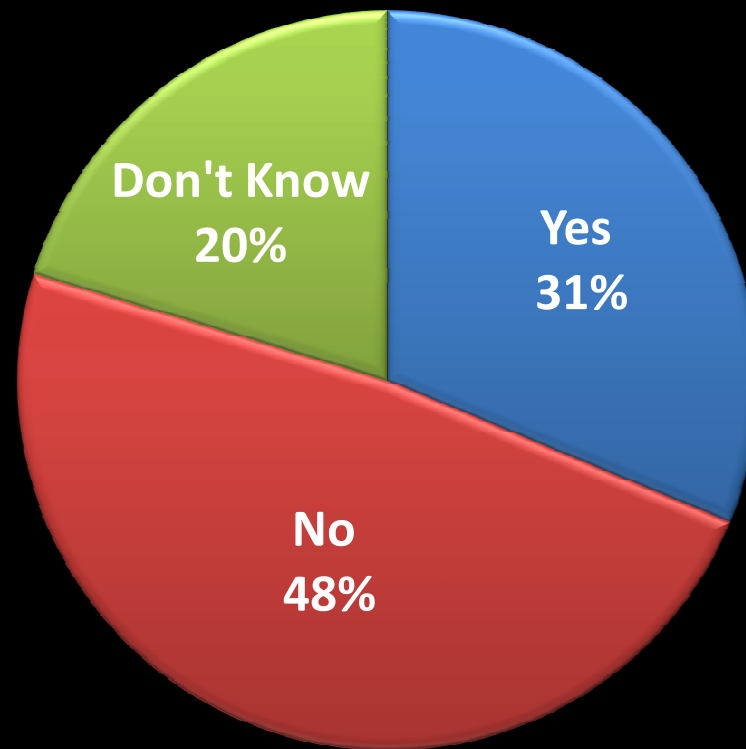


Is current mandated infant care leave entitlement sufficient?



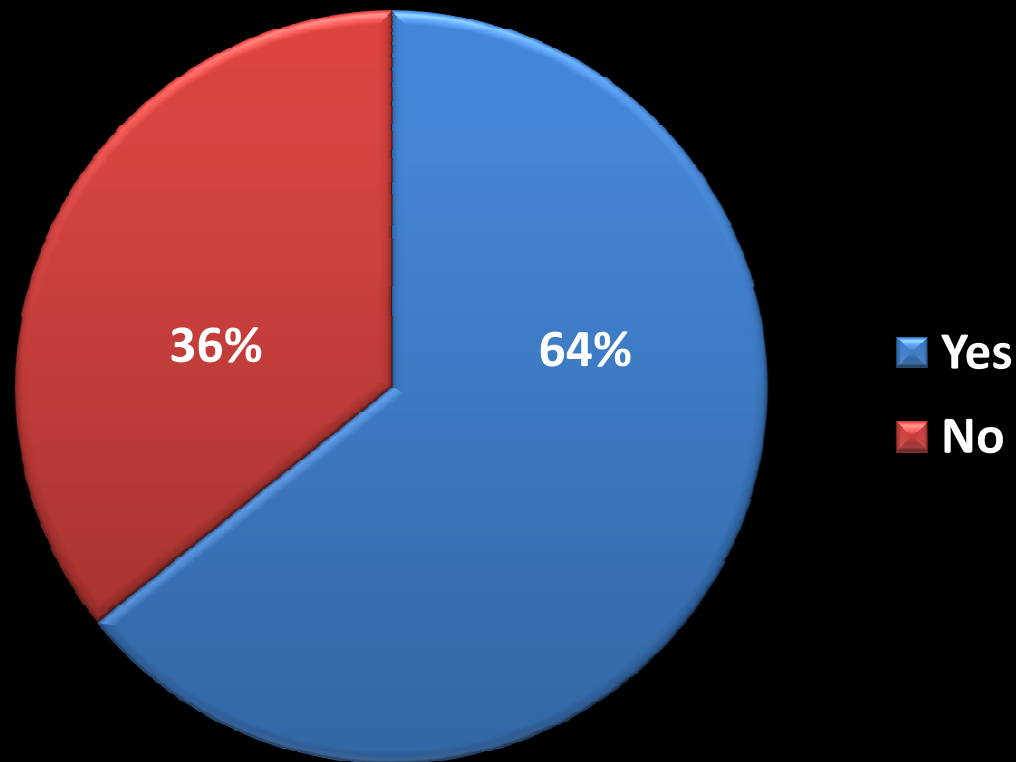
n = 1000

Did you use all your infant care leave days last year?



n = 641

Did you use your own annual/unpaid leave for parenting last year?



n = 982

Survey Findings

Unwed Parents

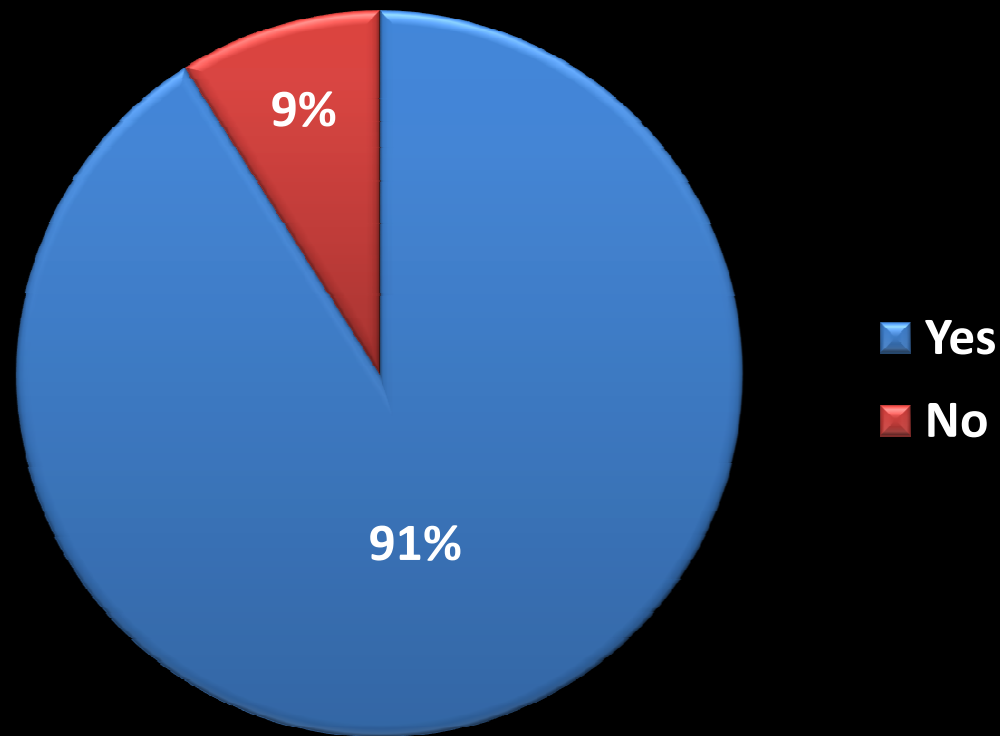
Unwed parents: Key response

Unwed parents should have the same leave benefits as married parents (91%)

AWARE recommends

Extend all parenting leave benefits to unwed parents.

Should unmarried parents be entitled to the same leave benefits?



n = 1001

Survey Findings

Employers and parenting leave

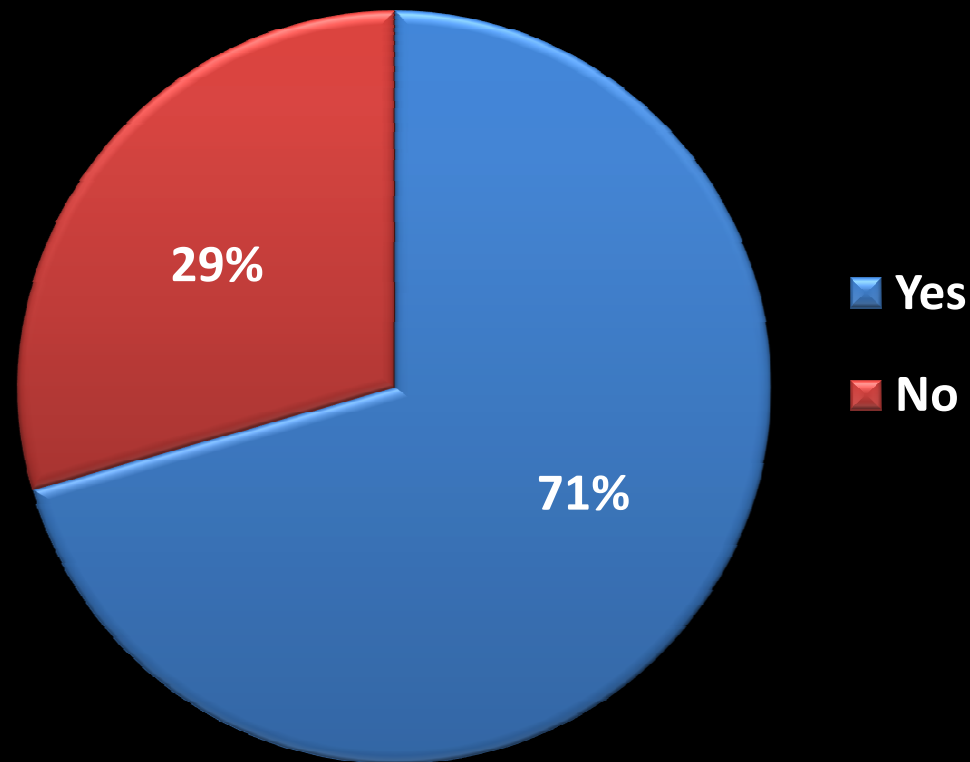
Employers & parenting leave: Key points

1. Employers are more understanding when female employees apply for parenting leave (71%)
2. Some employees experience difficulties applying for parenting leave (20%)

AWARE recommends

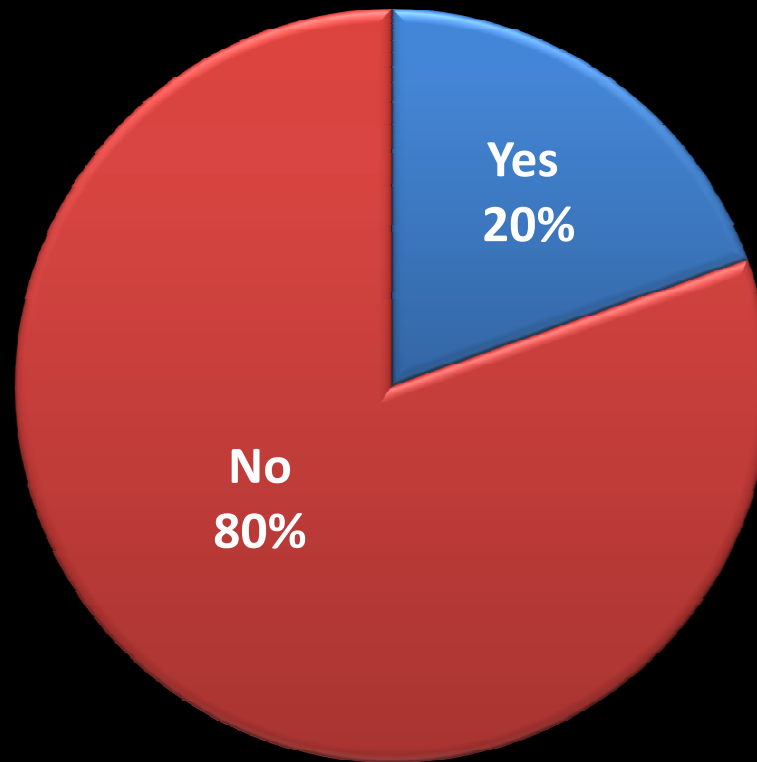
- Educate and encourage employers to be more supportive of employees' parenting duties
- Encourage employers to recognise that male employees have parenting responsibilities too

Easier for women to apply for child/infant care leave?



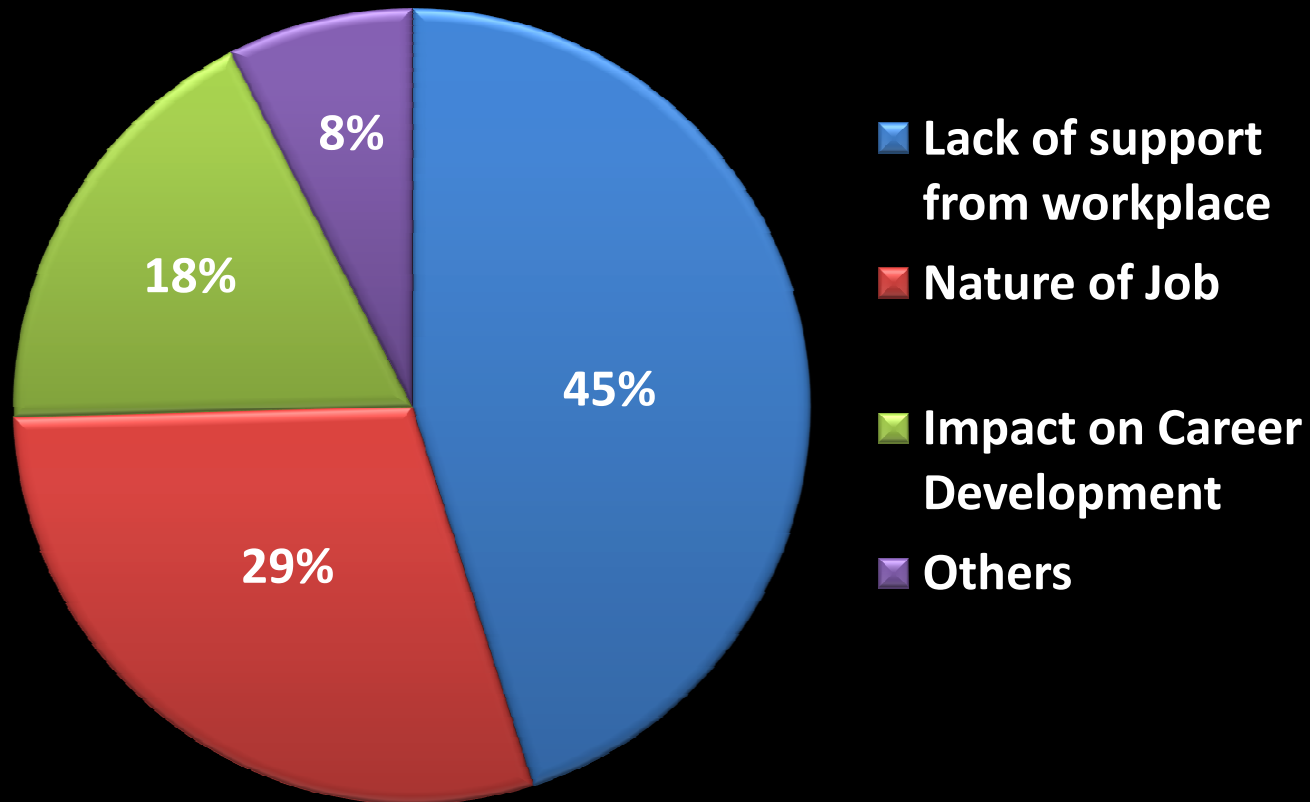
n = 1000

Do you face any problems applying for parenting leave?



n = 870

If yes, what problems?



n = 169

THANK YOU

Q&A
