



Workplace Accommodations for Pregnant and Nursing Employees in Minnesota: *Findings from the WESA Survey*

Prepared by: Ender Kavas | Research and Statistics

WESA (Women's Economic and Security Act): Aims to strengthen workplace accommodations for pregnant and nursing employees in the workforce

Pregnancy Accommodations

- More frequent food, water, and bathroom breaks
- Seating accommodations
- Limits on lifting over 20 pounds
- Any other reasonable accommodation requested, such as transfer to a less strenuous or demanding position

Nursing Accommodations

- Enough unpaid break time to nurse or pump
- A private room to nurse or pump
- A room other than a bathroom or toilet stall
- A room close to the work area
- A room with access to an electrical outlet

WESA Survey

- DLI contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a statewide survey of mothers in Minnesota
- The **intent of the WESA survey** was to explore:
 - Awareness of Minnesota state laws designed to support pregnant and nursing employees in the workplace
 - The sources employees use to access information about workplace accommodations
 - The extent to which employees have received pregnancy and nursing accommodations in the workplace
 - Differences in awareness of law and workplace accommodations across socio-demographics groups and industries
- DLI plans to use this information to target **outreach and communication efforts** to increase awareness of the law and employees' access to these accommodations

WESA Survey

- Wilder and DLI explored several options for a survey:
 - Convenience or snowball sample
 - Sending out e-mails with a web survey link to be distributed through various “seeds”
 - Not selected because would not result in a representative sample
 - Web panel
 - Would use a national web panel firm to cultivate a somewhat more representative sample of women
 - Not selected because much more costly
 - Targeted sample for address-based push-to-web survey
 - More representative than snowball, but less representative than Office of Vital Records
 - Mailed survey (modified Dillman method)
 - More expensive due to costs of printing and postage
 - Address-based push-to-web survey using the Minnesota Department of Health Office of Vital Records sample
 - Selected option

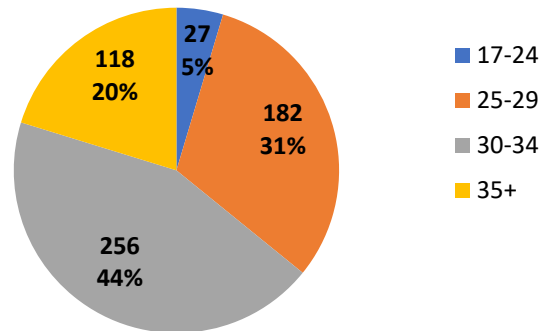
Survey Methodology and Analysis

- Survey was conducted by Wilder Research between November and December 2019.
 - **Sample:** Random sample of 8040 mothers who gave birth in Minnesota between January 2017 and August 31, 2019
 - **Source of Sample:** MN Department of Health Vital Records Office's publicly available birth records, which excludes records to unmarried mothers (per MN statute)
 - **Number Sampled:** 8040 / **Eligible Sample:** 7781
 - **Type of Survey:** Mail "push to web"
 - **Number who completed survey:** 583
 - **Number who completed survey with the monetary incentive:** 508
 - **Response Rate:** 7.5%
- **Data Analysis:**
 - Univariate and bivariate analyses, using SPSS statistical software
 - Crosstabs, chi-square tests, and Fisher's exact tests to assess associations between variables

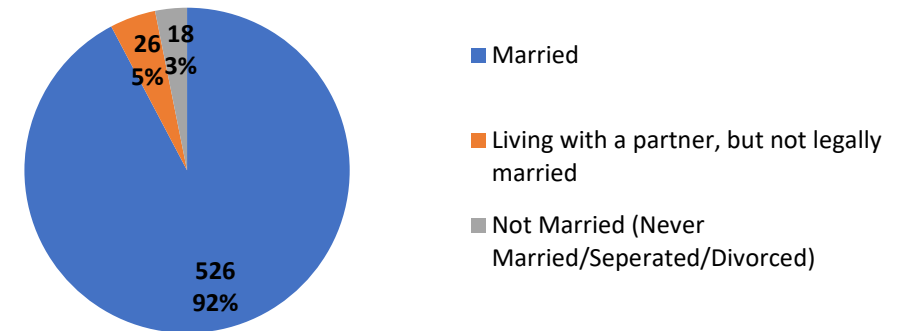
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (n=583)

64% were over the age of 30; 92% were married; 71% had a college degree or higher; 70% had a household income over \$65,000

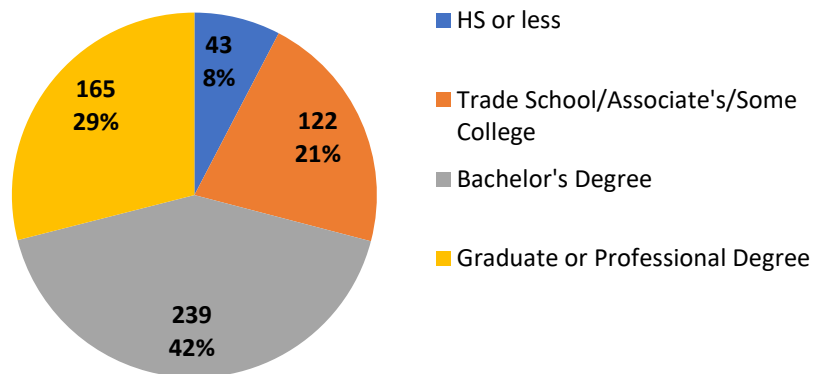
Age



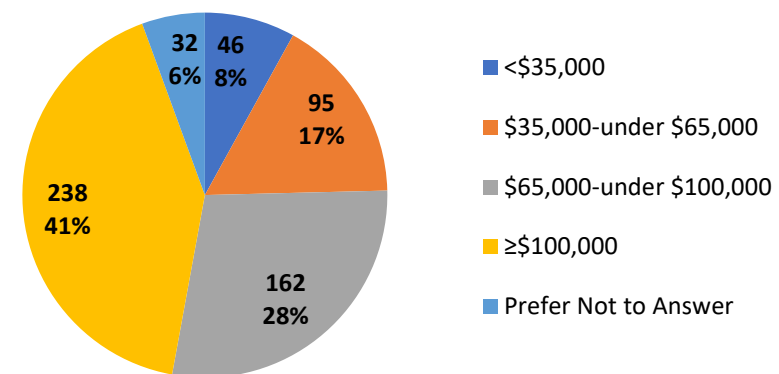
Marital Status



Education



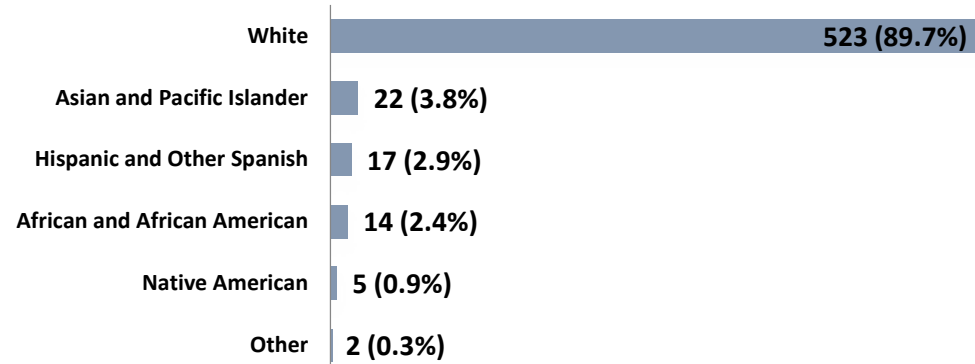
Household Income



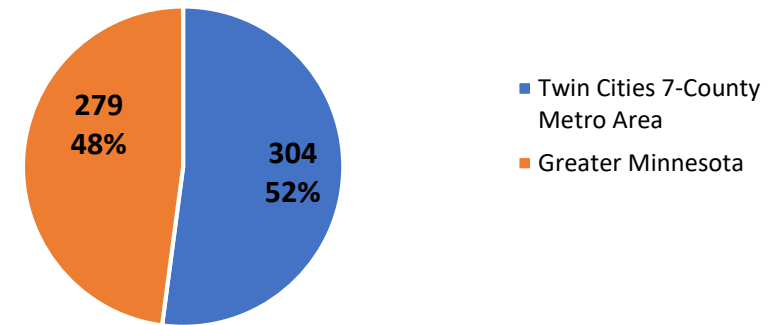
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (n=583)

90% were white; 52% were residing in the Twin Cities Metro Area; 77% were working full or part time outside the home; 68% were working for employers with more than 50 employees

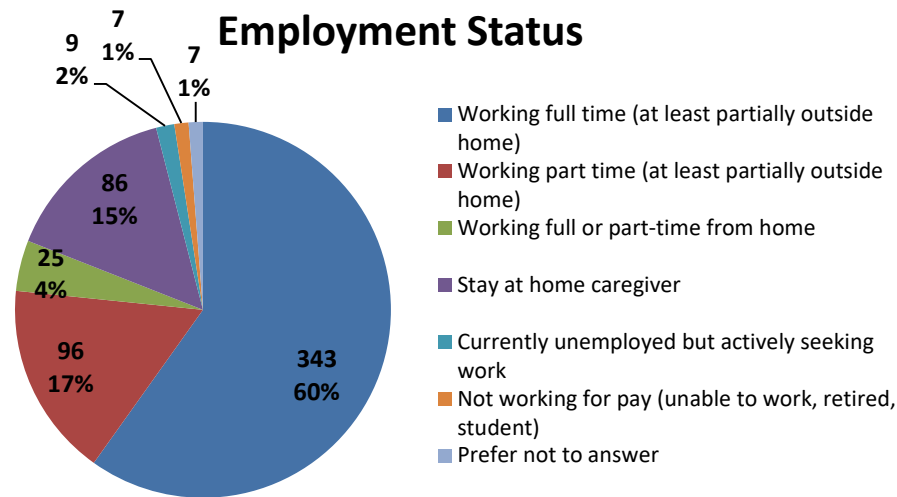
Race/Ethnicity



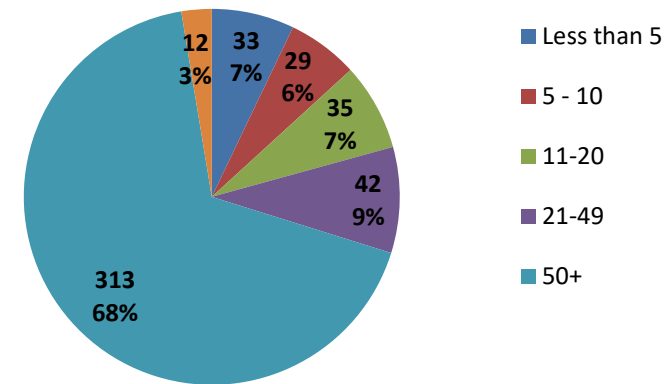
County of Residence



Employment Status



Employer Size



Distribution of Respondents by Industry (n=464)

	N	%
Health care and Social Assistance	181	39
Education	78	16.8
Professional, scientific, technical, management, administrative, support, waste management ¹	30	6.5
Finance and Insurance ¹	27	5.8
Public Administration ¹	10	2.2
Information ¹	5	1.1
Retail Trade ²	20	4.3
Accommodation and Food Services ²	8	1.7
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation ²	7	1.5
Construction ³	5	1.1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining ³	12	2.6
Manufacturing ⁴	14	3
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities ⁴	4	0.9
Other ⁵	45	9.7
Other Services ⁵	18	3.9
Total	464	100

***Note: Industries notated with the same numbers have been re-grouped into the following categories based on similar working conditions in order to increase the sample size for each category:**

1 Professional/Management/Office

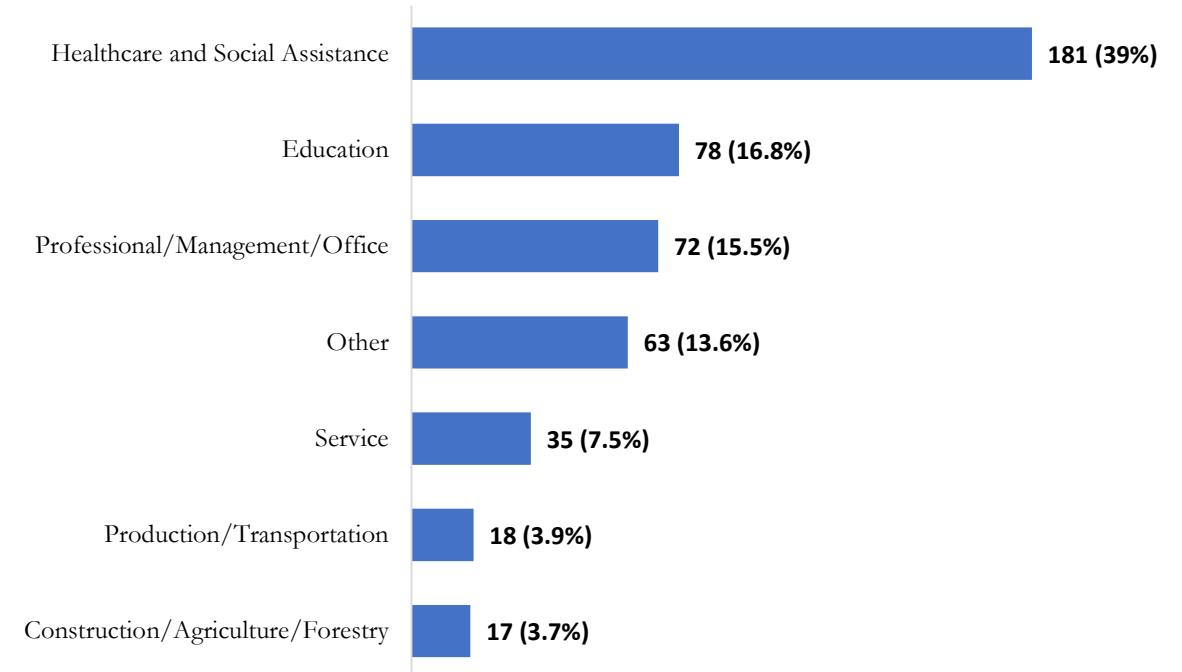
2 Service/Retail

3 Construction/Agriculture/Forestry

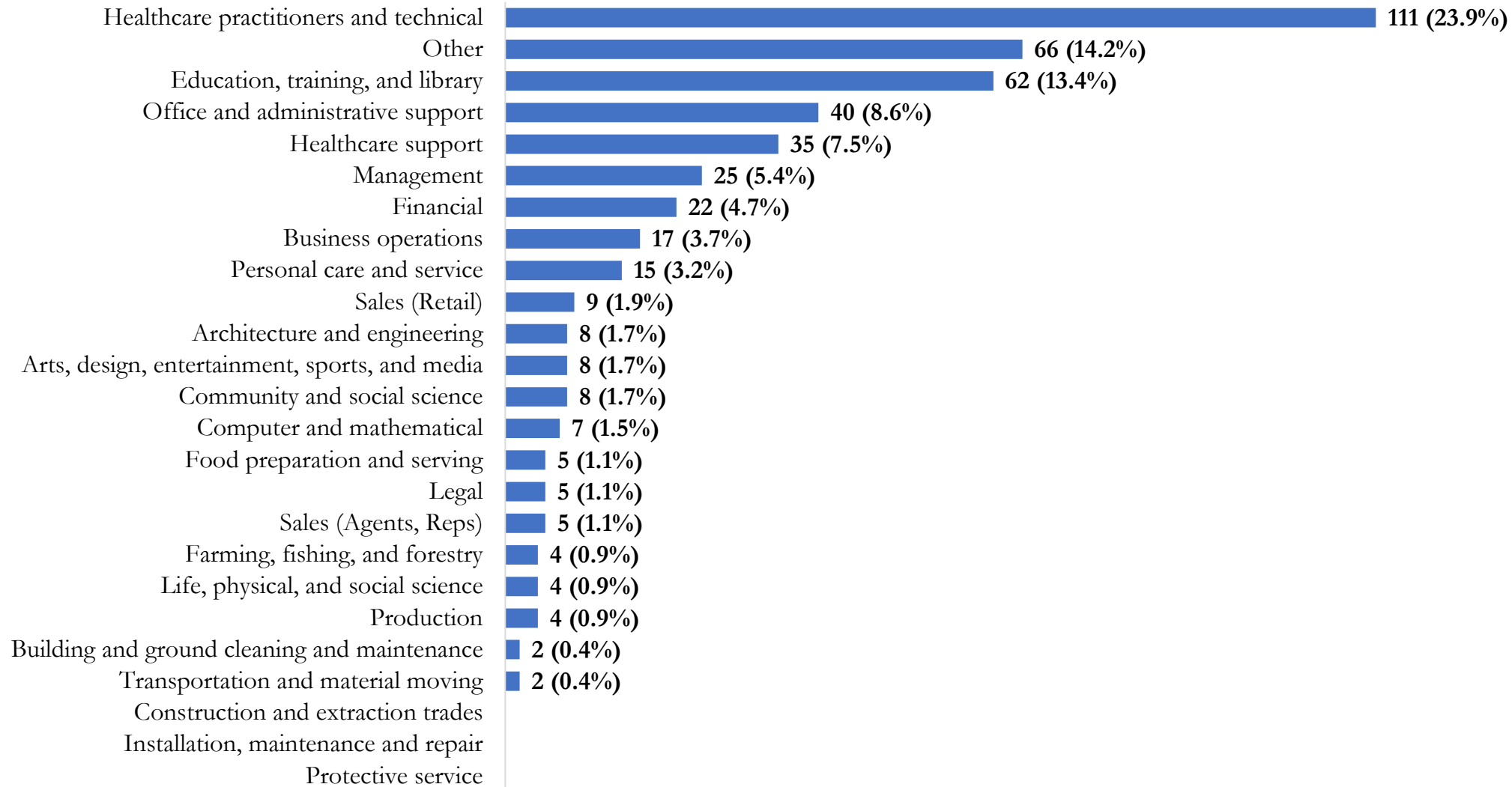
4 Production/Transportation

5 Other

Re-grouped Industry Categories



Distribution of Respondents by Occupation (n=464)



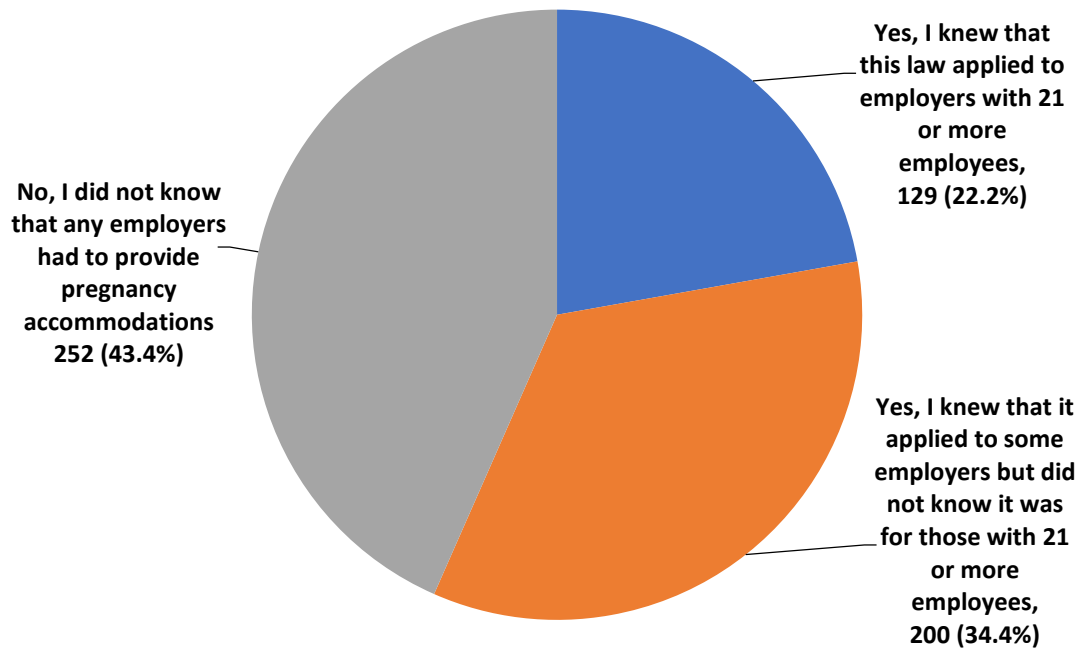
AWARENESS OF LAW

Pregnancy Accommodations

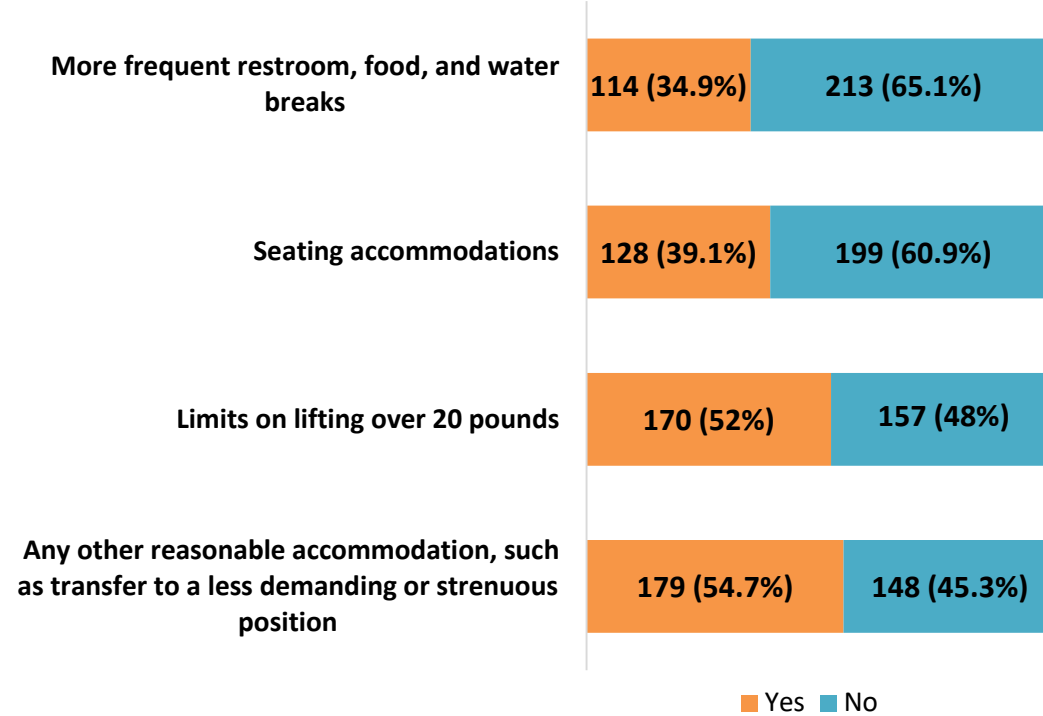
- 57% had full or some knowledge of the law

- Transfer to a less demanding position: 55%
- More frequent restroom, food, and water breaks: 35%

Knowledge of Pregnancy Accommodation Law (n=581)



Awareness of Legal Requirements (n = 327)

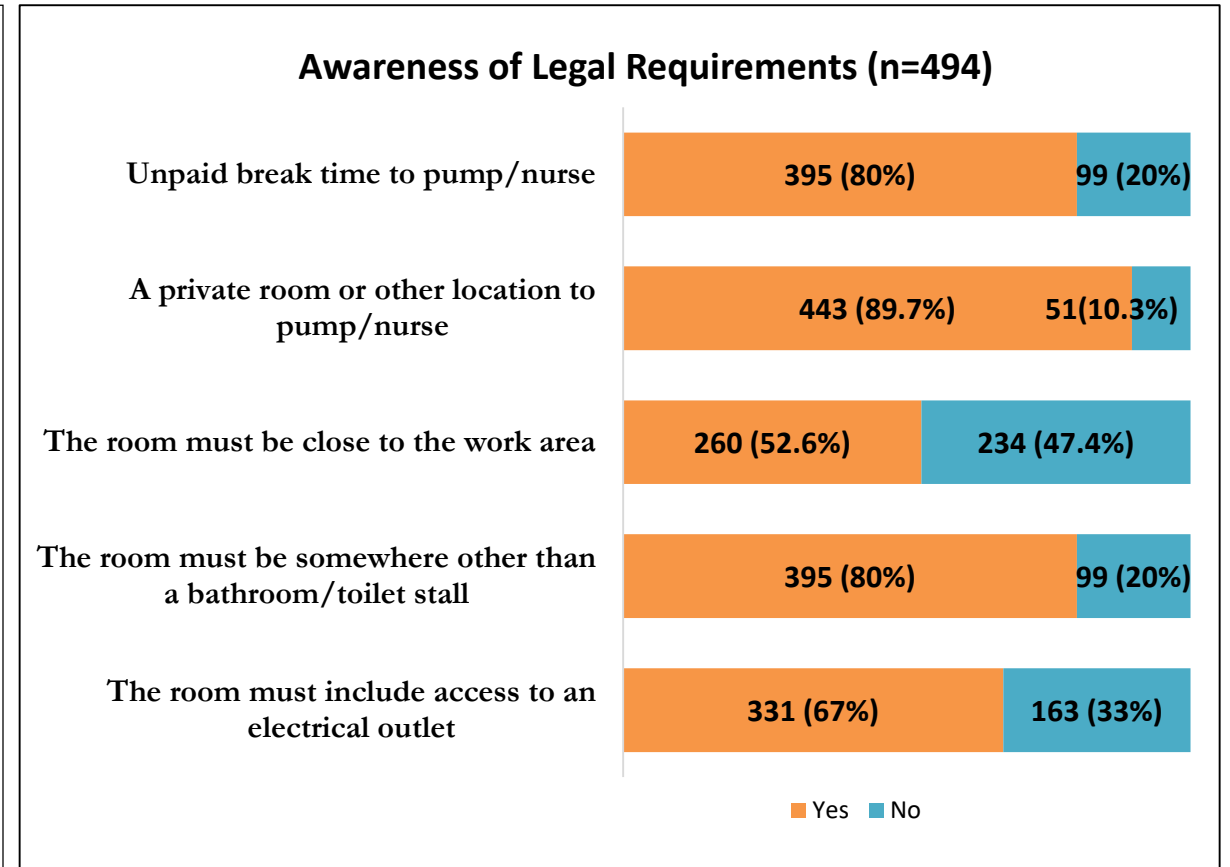
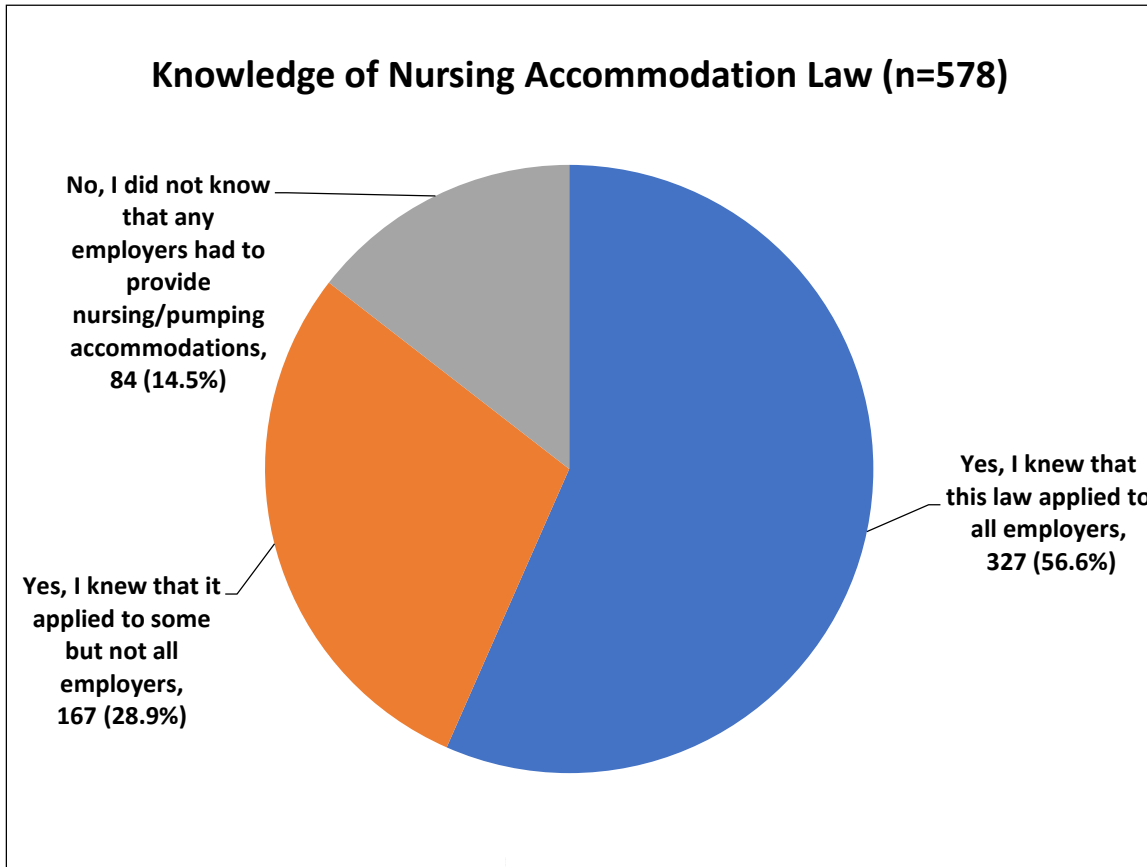


AWARENESS OF LAW

Nursing Accommodations

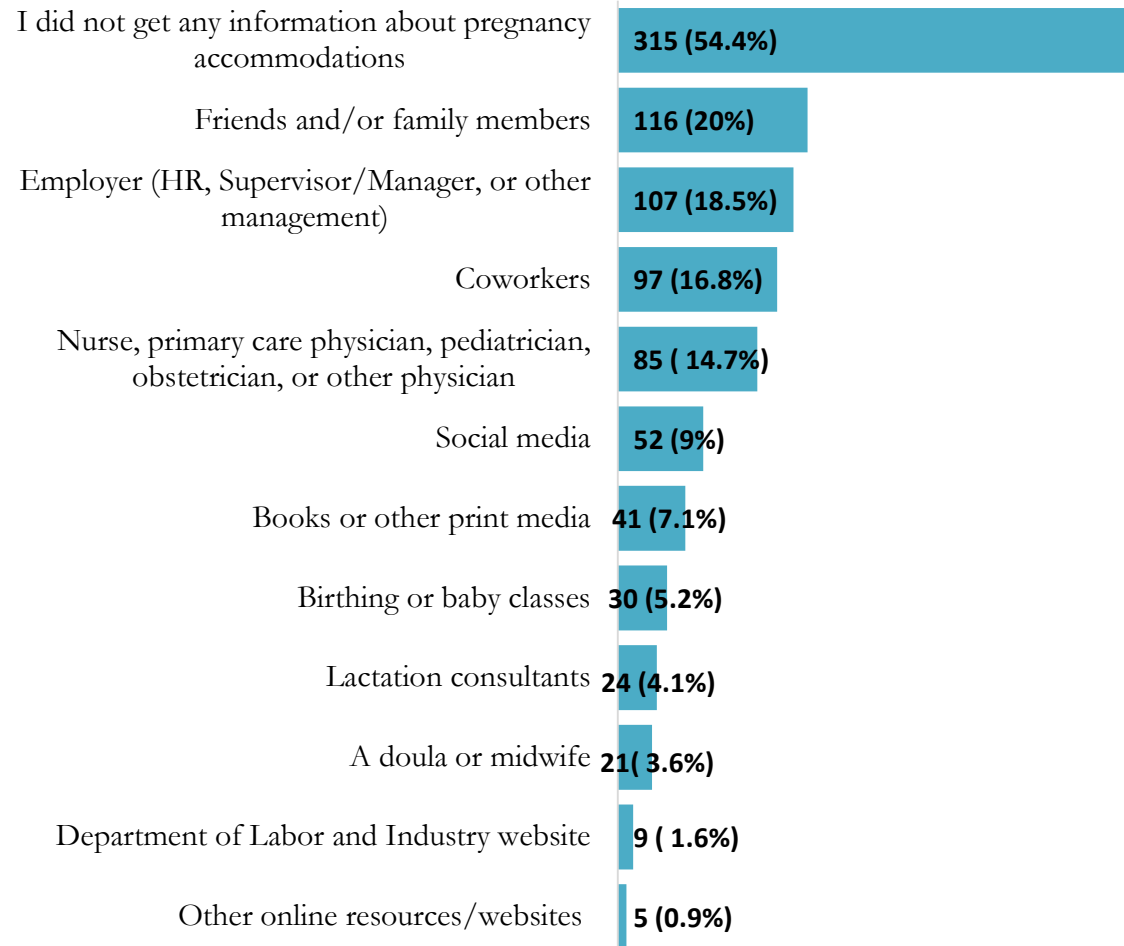
- 86% had full or some knowledge of the law

- A private room to nurse/pump: 90%
- A room close to the work area: 53%

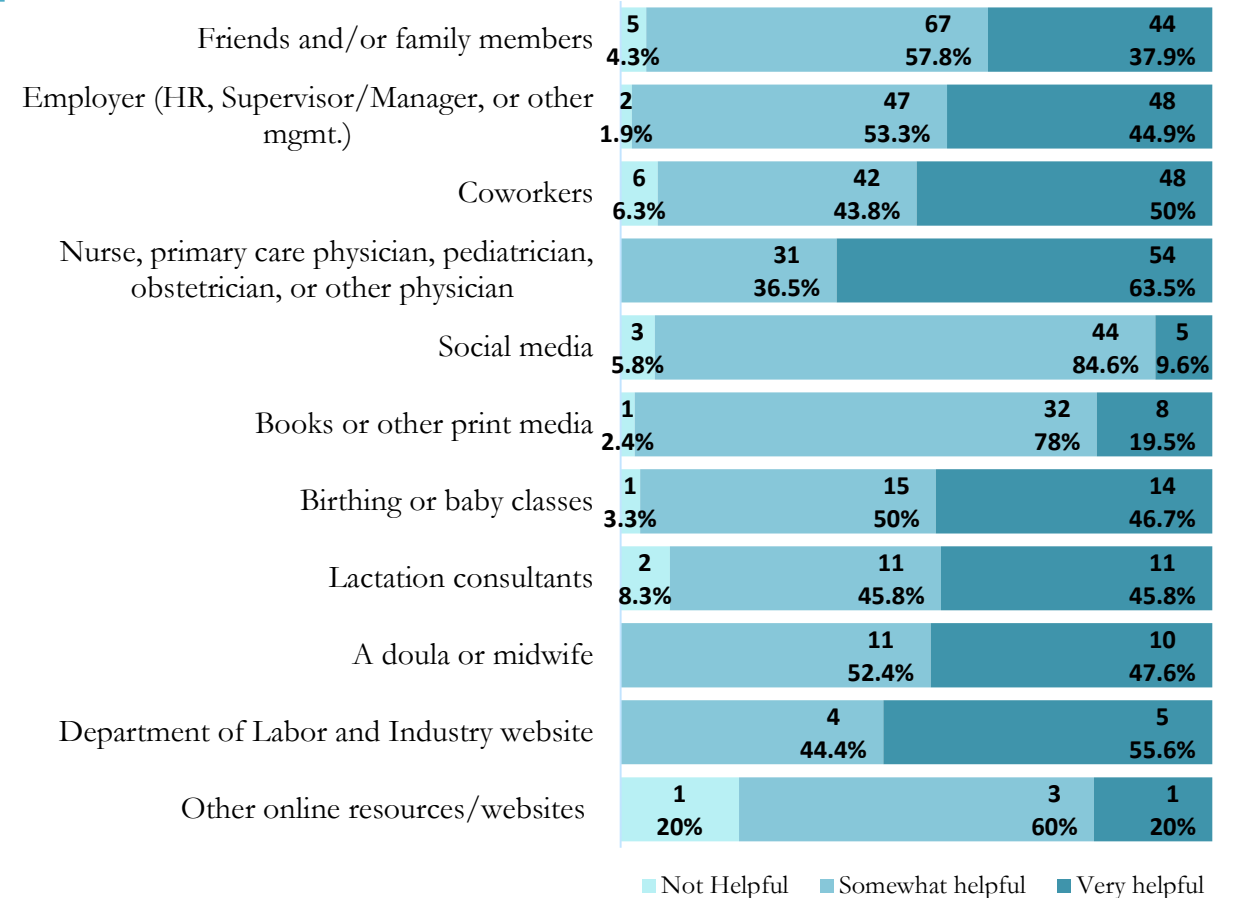


Sources of Information about Workplace Accommodations

Information Sources about Pregnancy Accommodations

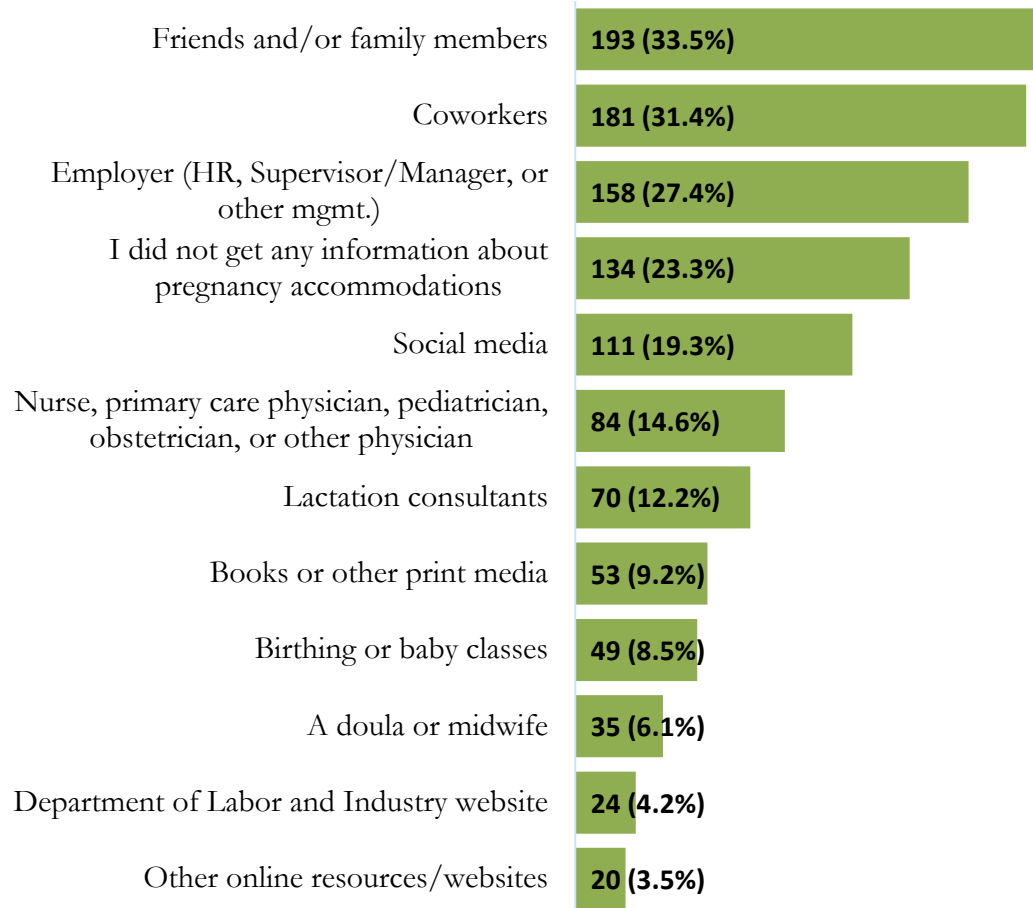


Helpfulness of Selected Information Sources

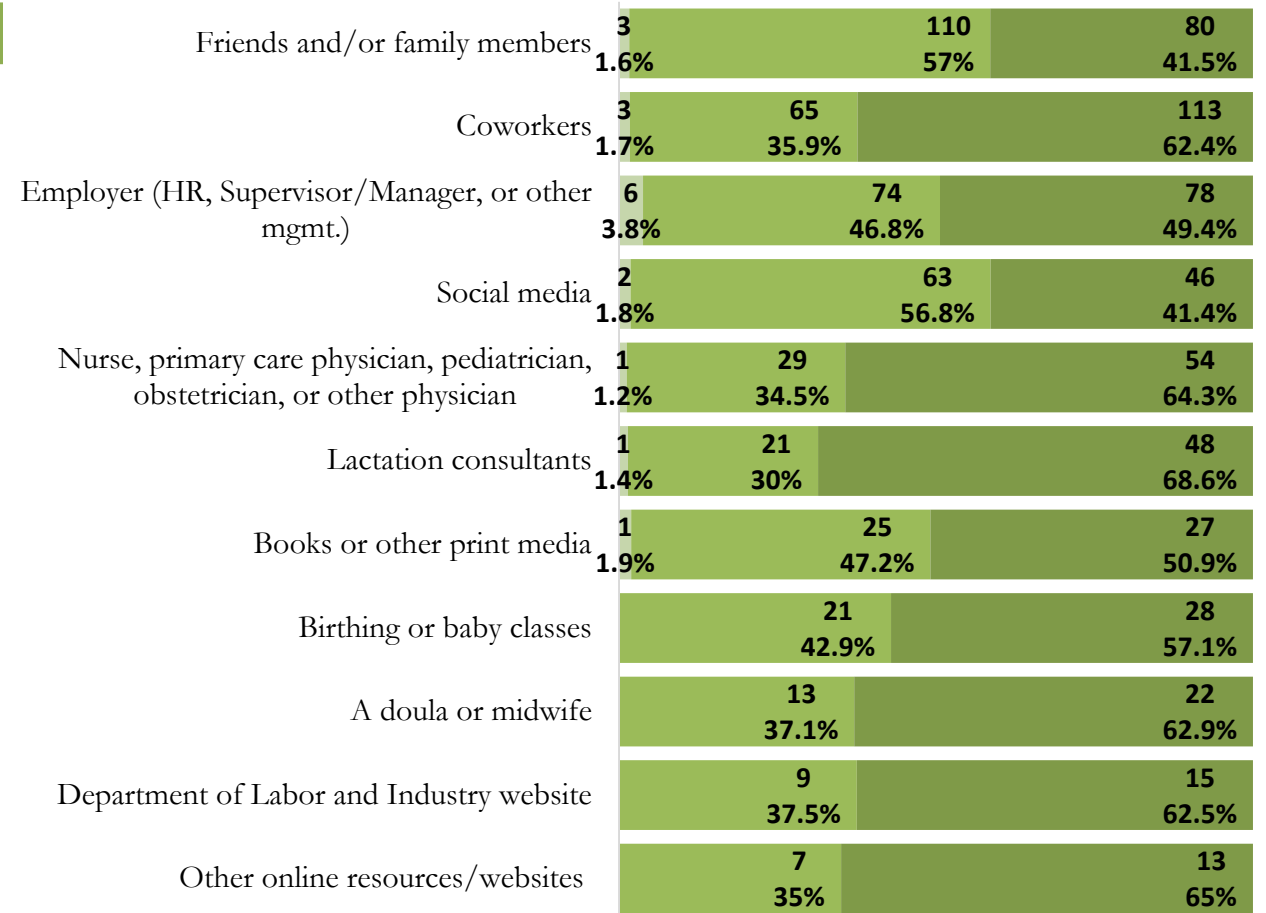


Sources of Information about Workplace Accommodations

Information Sources about Nursing Accommodations



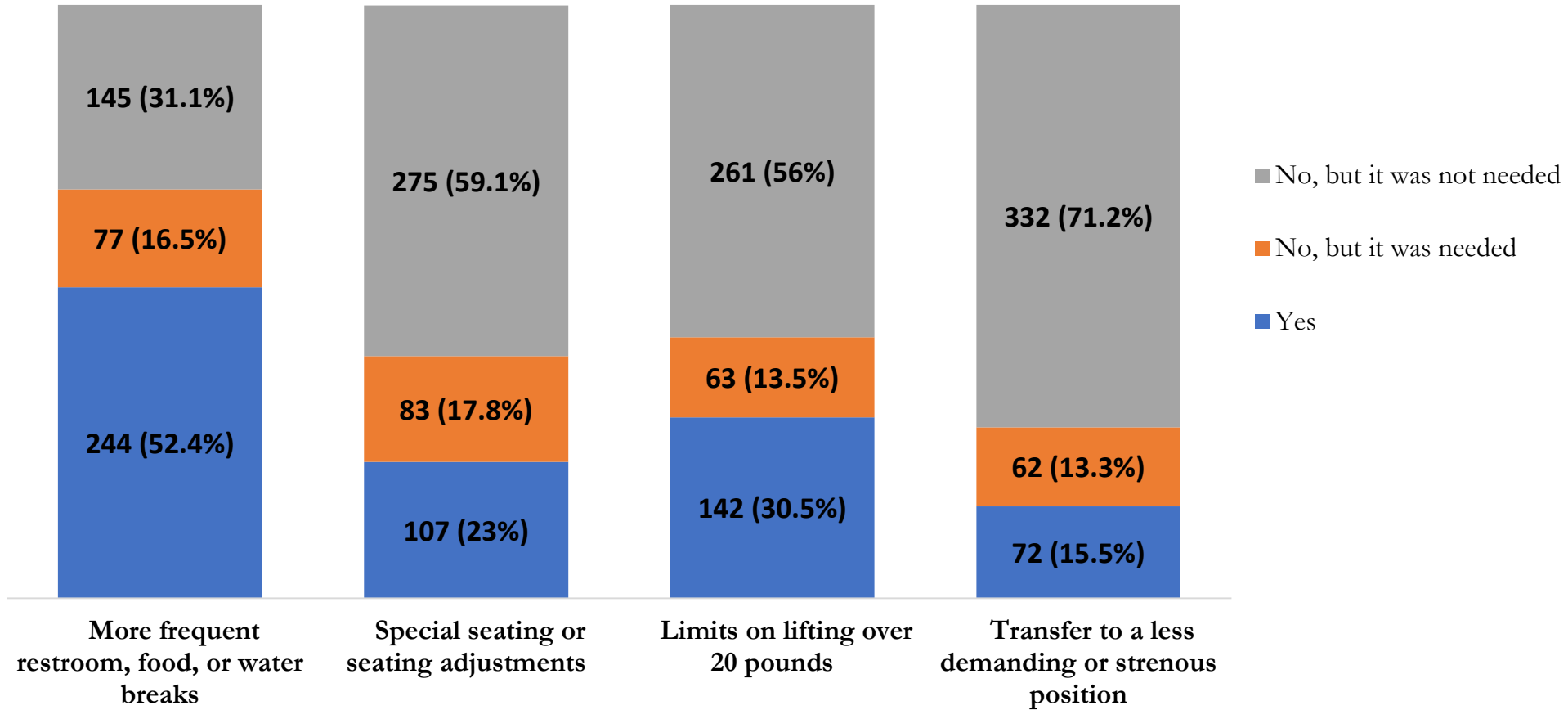
Helpfulness of Selected Information Sources



■ Not Helpful ■ Somewhat Helpful ■ Very helpful

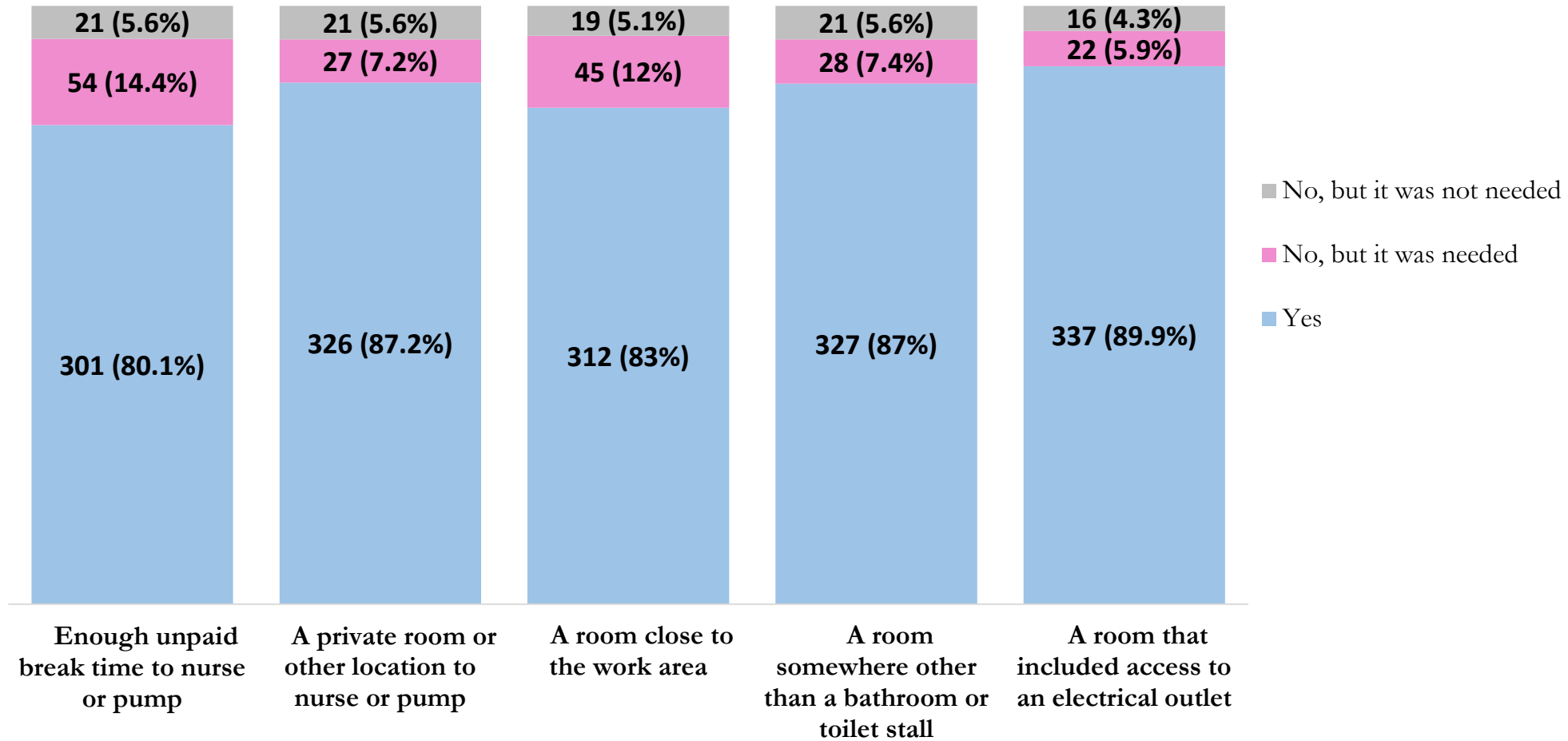
Accommodations at the Workplace

Pregnancy Accommodations Provided at the Workplace (n=466)



Accommodations at the Workplace

Nursing Accommodations Provided at the Workplace (n = 376)



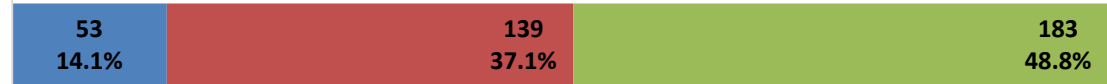
Issues Experienced by Nursing Mothers Upon Return to Work

Issues Experienced Upon Return to Work (n=375)

Dealing with the general hassle of nursing/pumping at work (including bringing or cleaning pumping equipment)



Not being able to take or schedule breaks when I needed



Not being comfortable/not feeling safe asking my employer for what I needed



Not having adequate accommodations (space) to pump/nurse



Having to stay late to make up for break time used



My employer or colleagues not being supportive of my nursing/pumping goals



Keeping or advancing in my job or being assigned to worse shifts/positions, if I nursed/pumped breastmilk at work



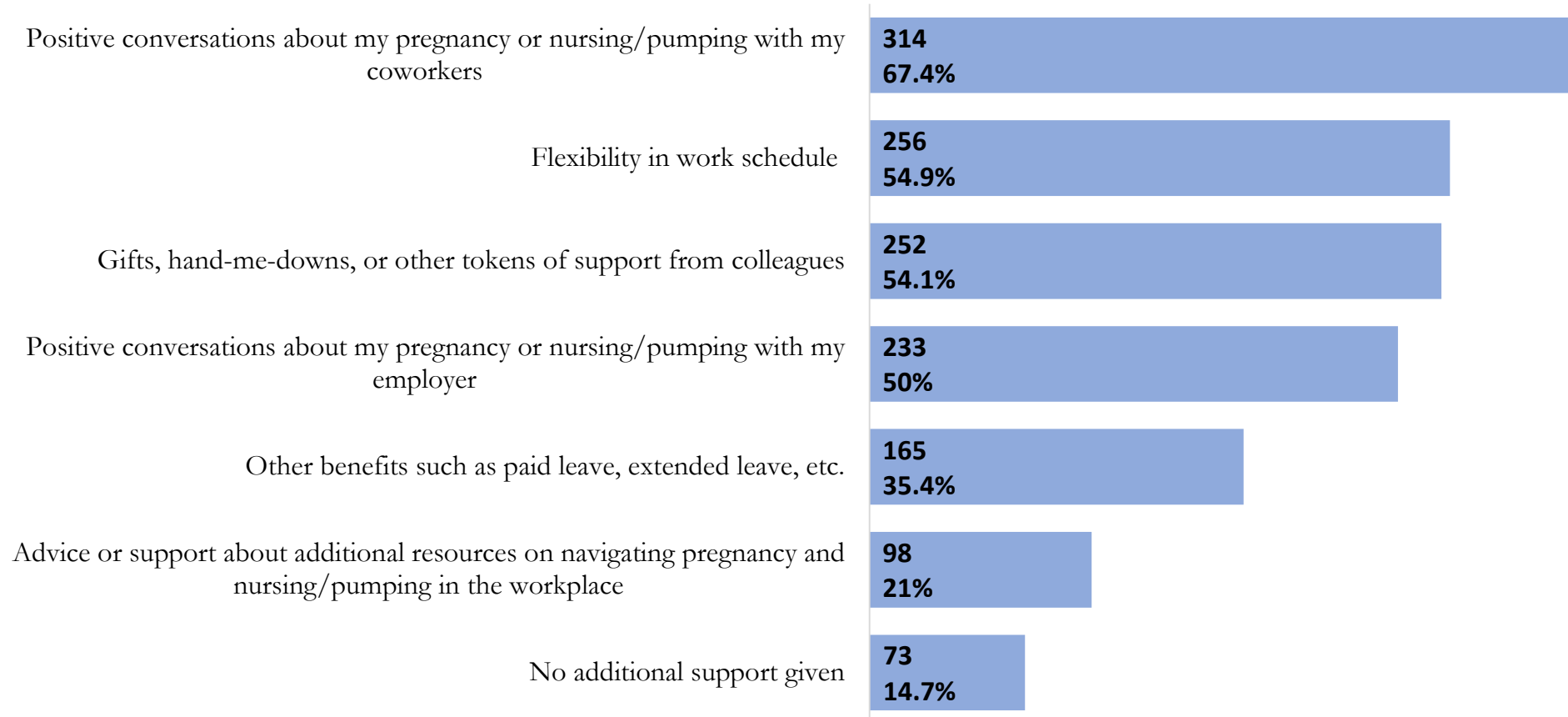
Not having a good place to store (refrigerate) breastmilk



■ Major issue ■ Minor issue ■ Not an issue

Informal Workplace Support for Pregnancy or Nursing

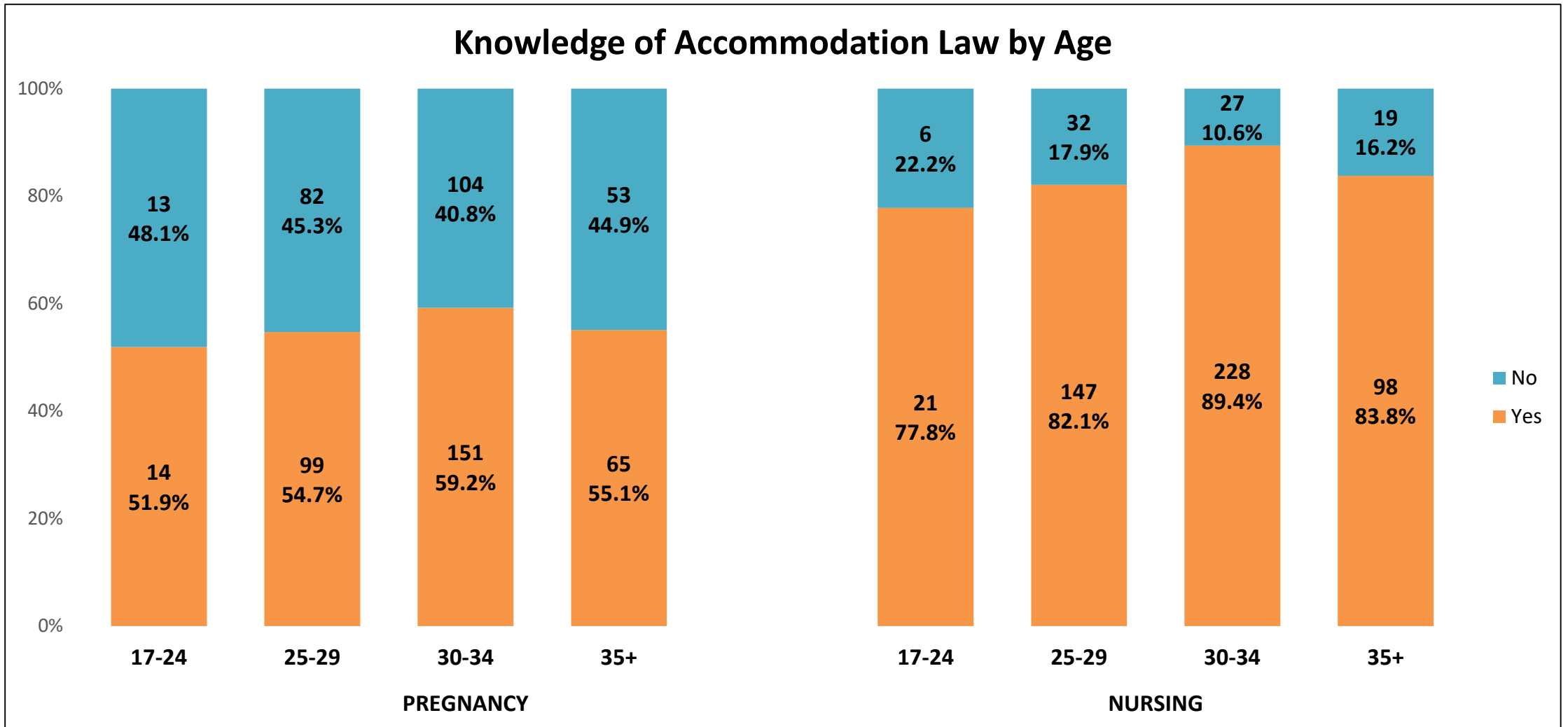
Informal Workplace Support for Pregnancy/Nursing Outside of Legal Accommodations (n = 466)



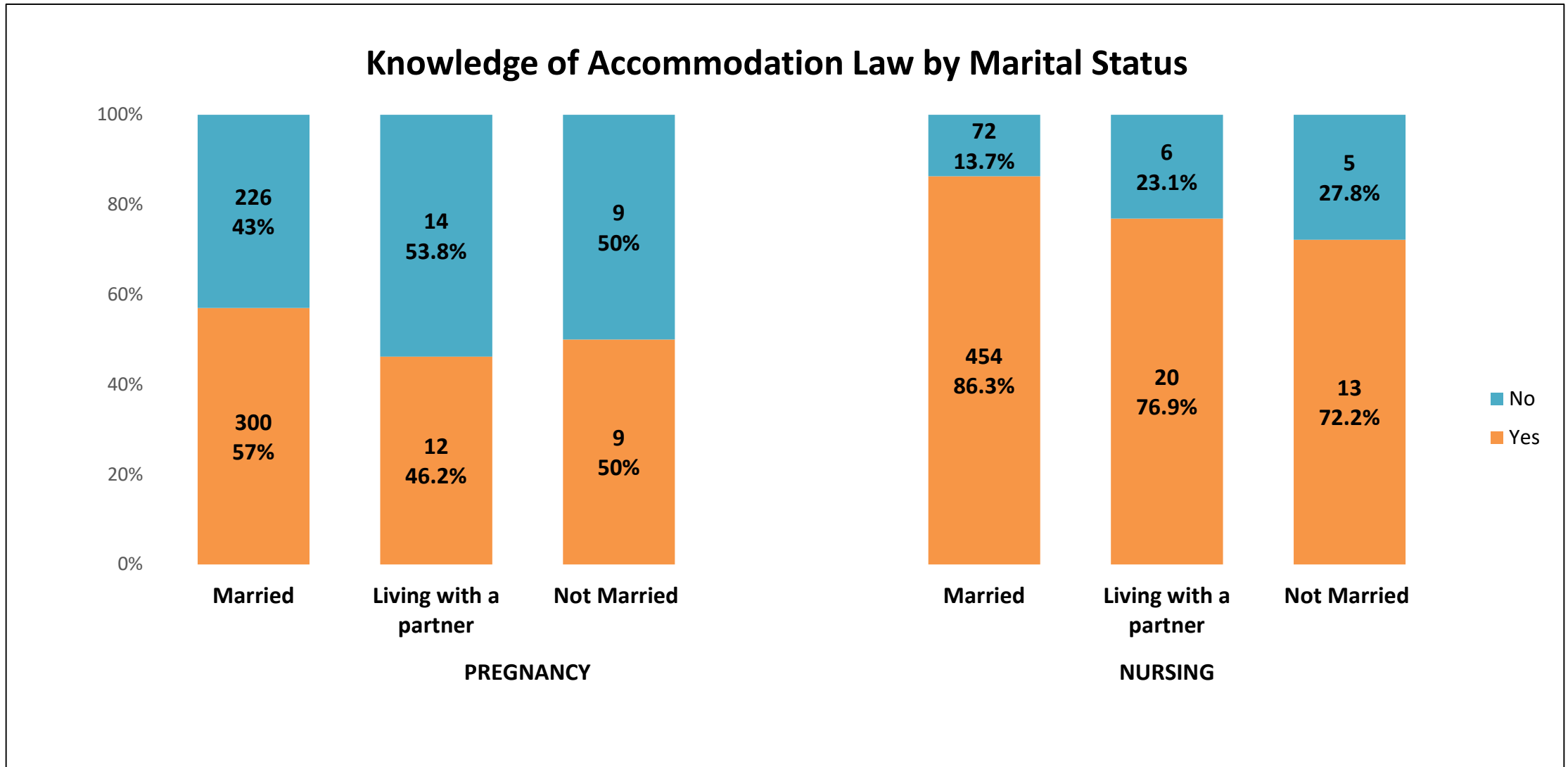
Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics

- Respondents who knew about pregnancy and nursing accommodation laws tended to have higher education and household income levels.
- In the case of nursing accommodation law, white respondents were more likely to know about the law than respondents of color.
- Knowledge of law did not vary significantly by age, marital status, region of the state, employer size, or industry type.

Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics

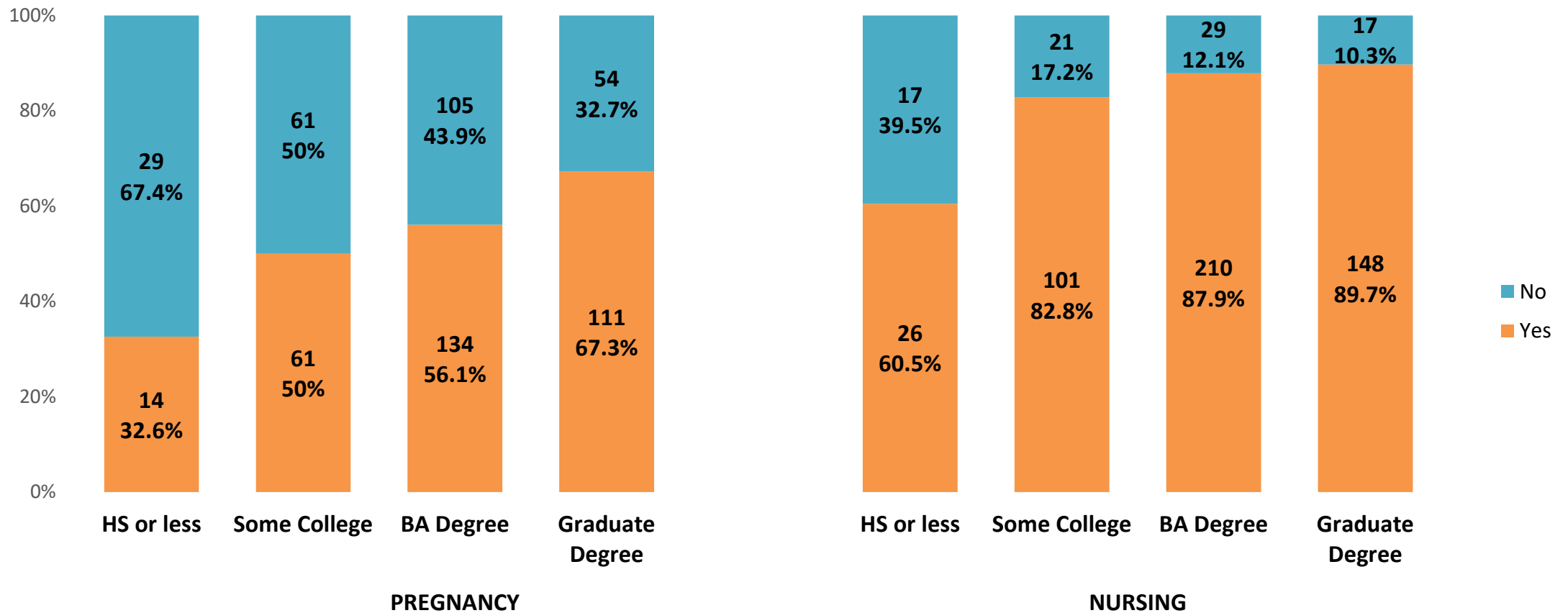


Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics

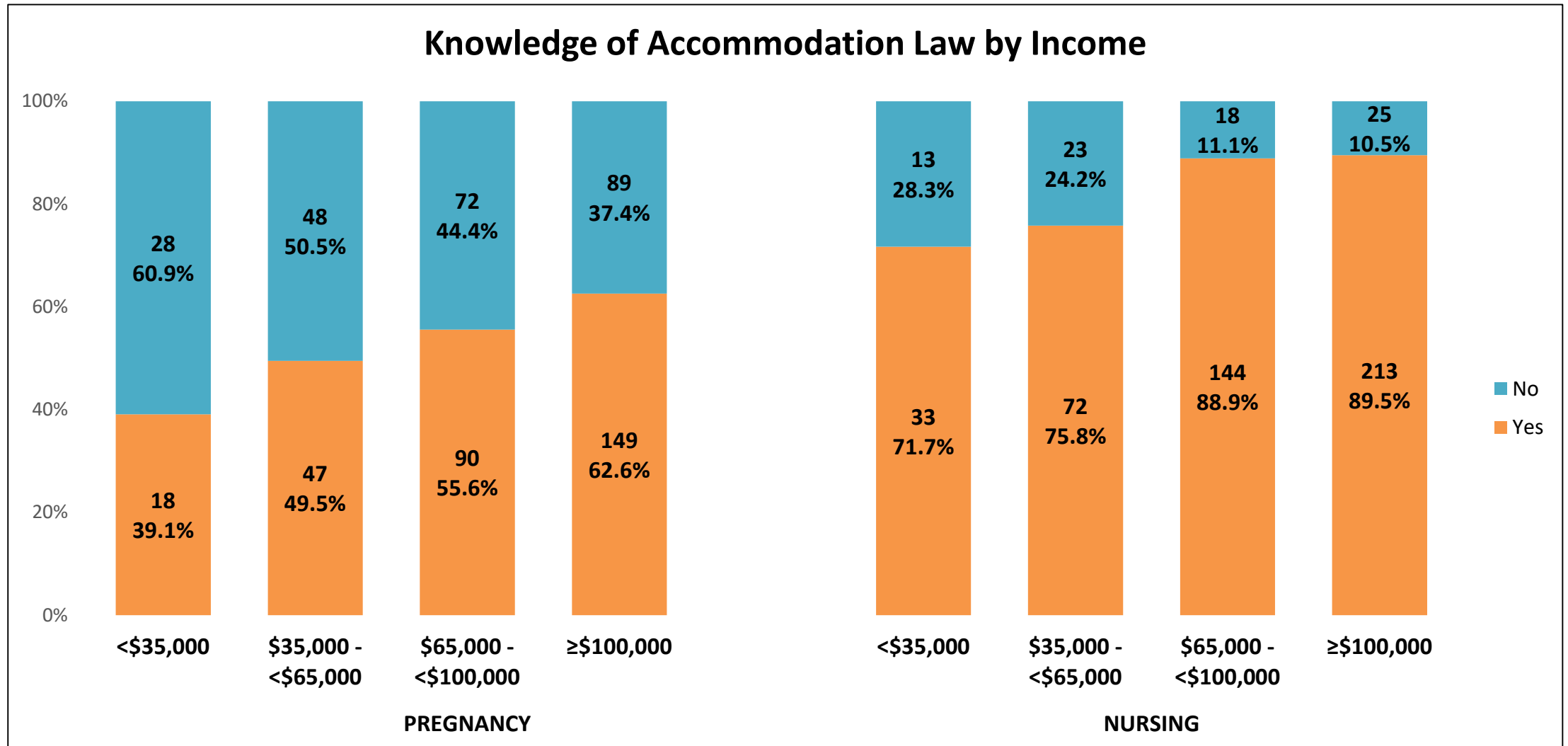


Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics

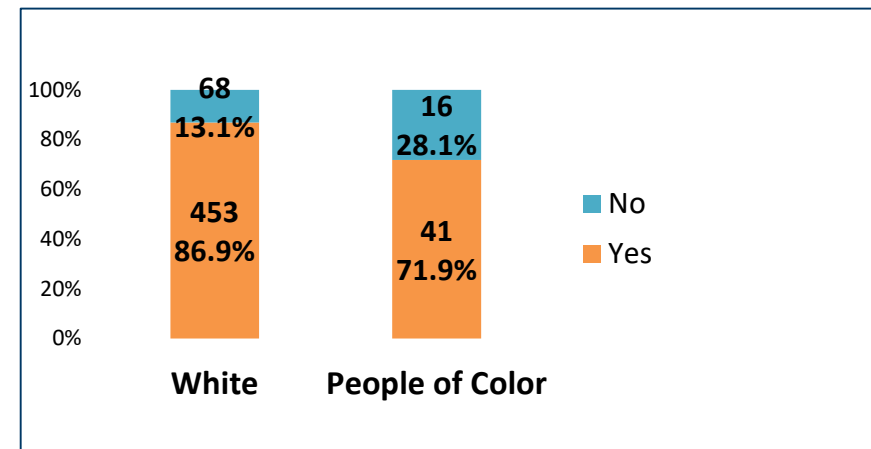
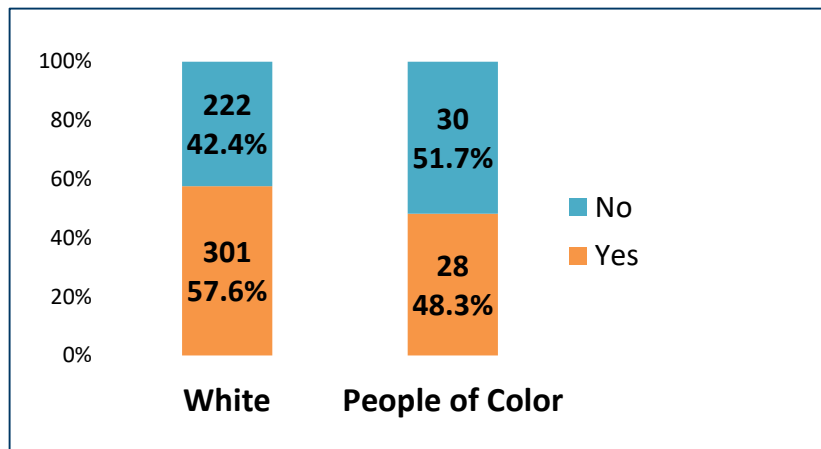
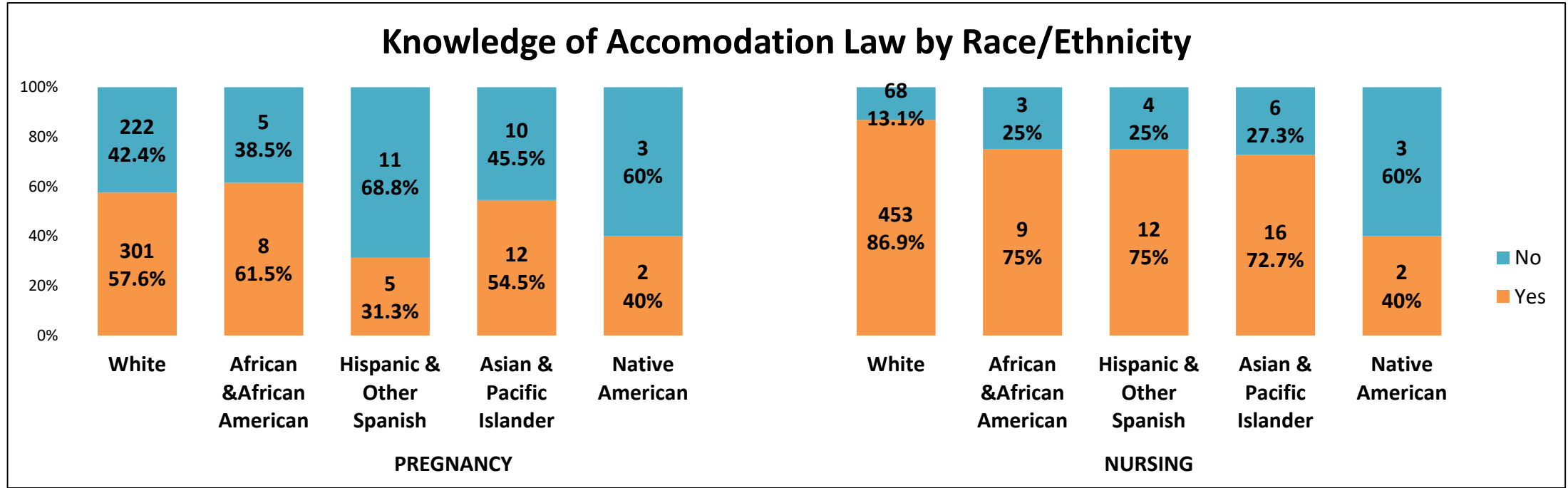
Knowledge of Accommodation Law by Education



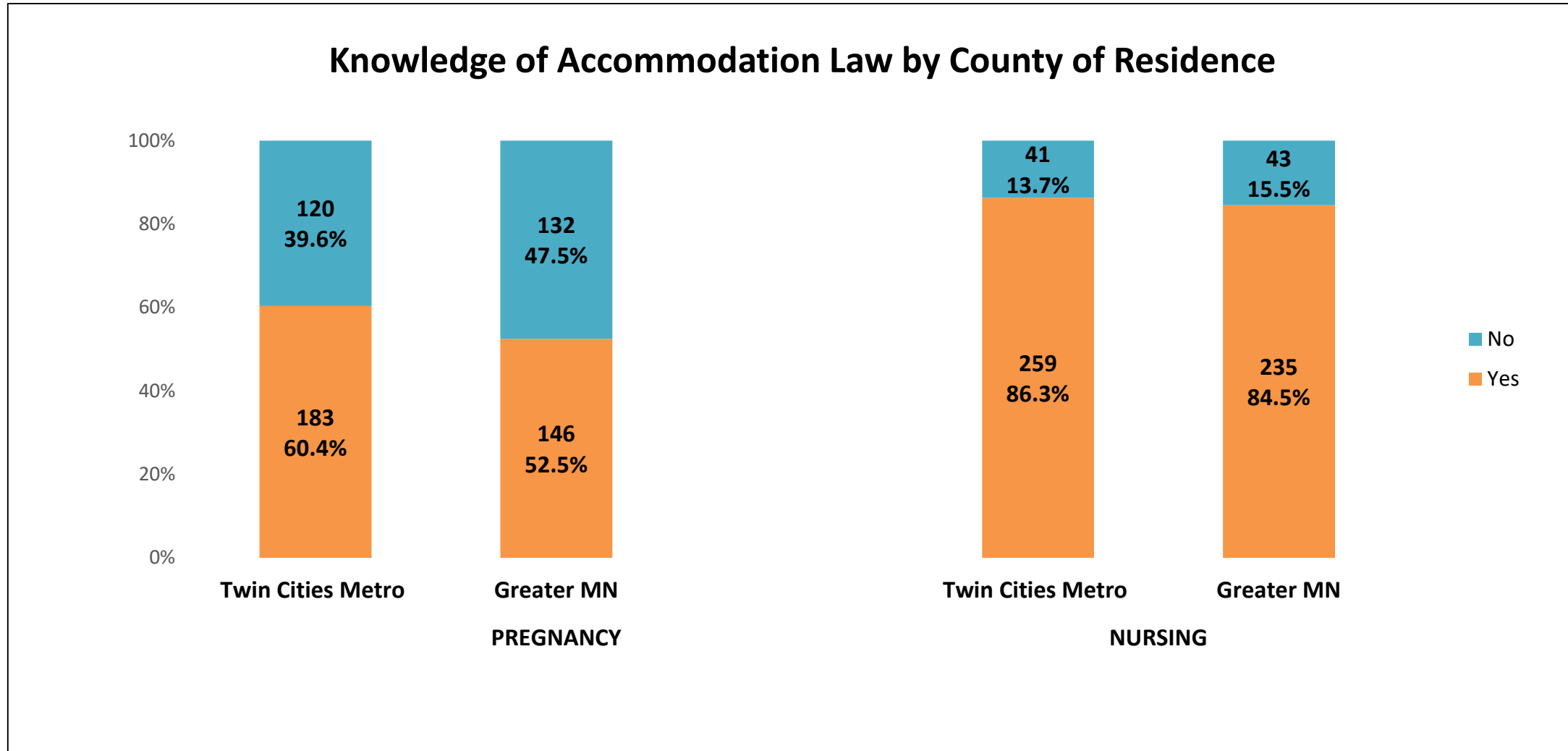
Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics



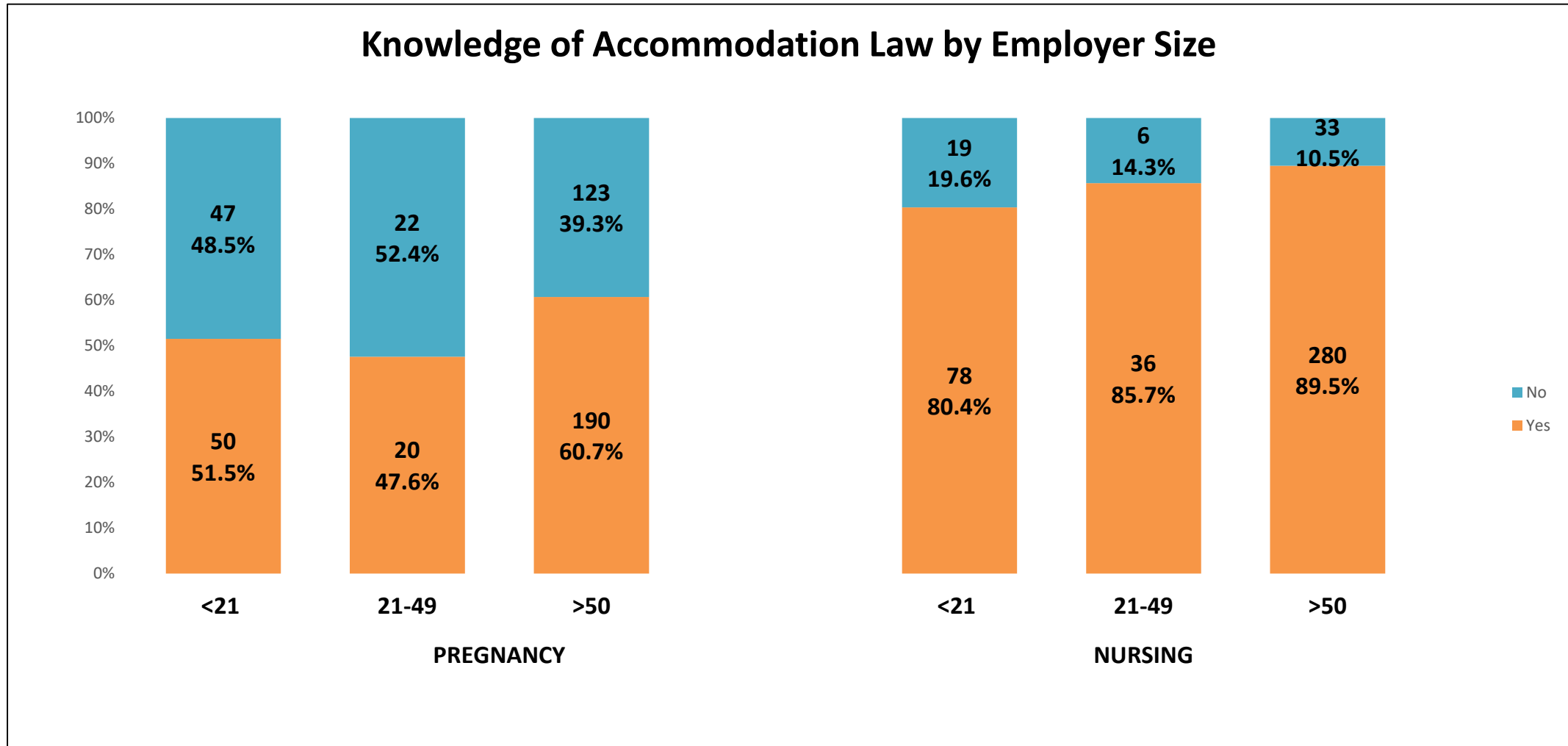
Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics



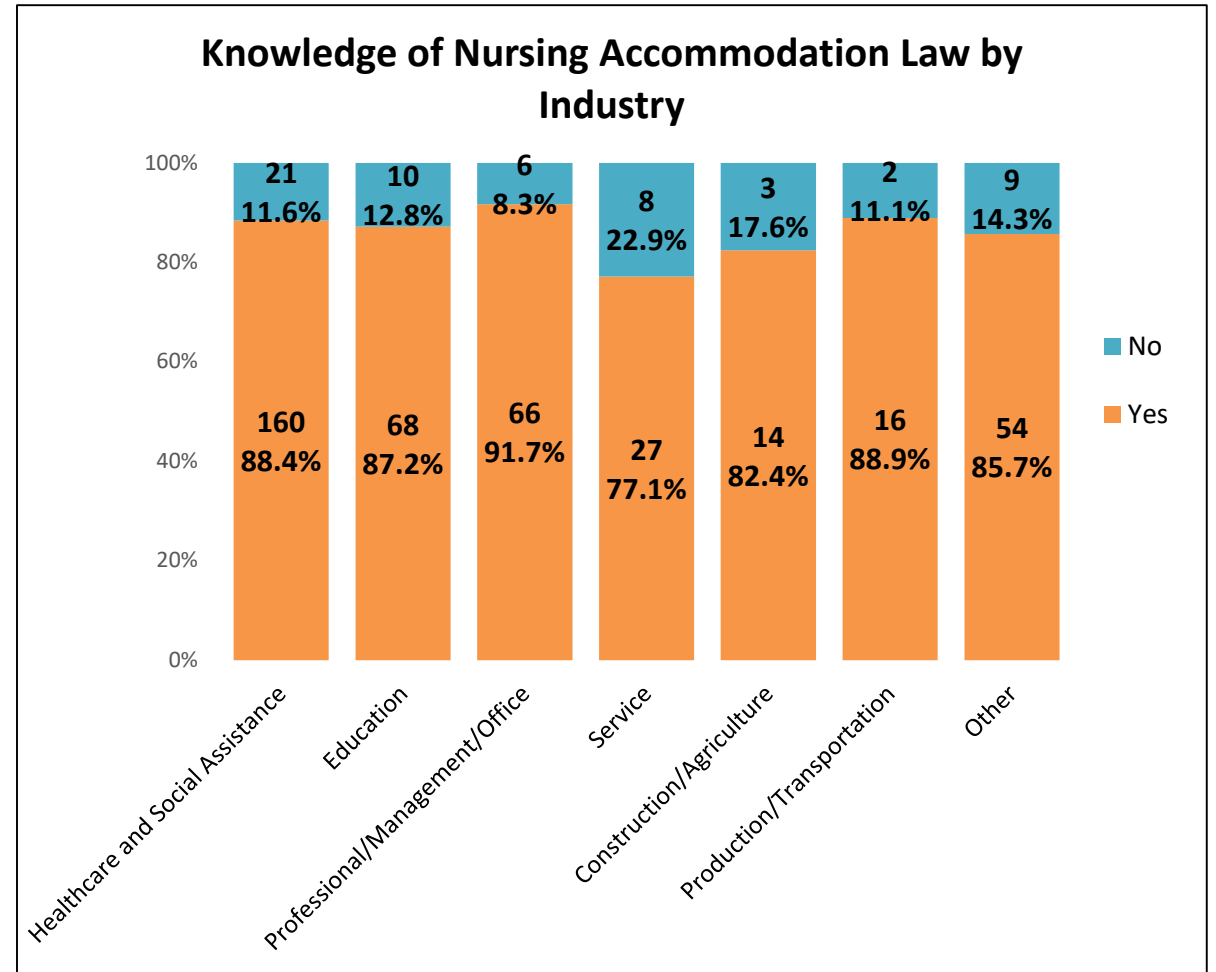
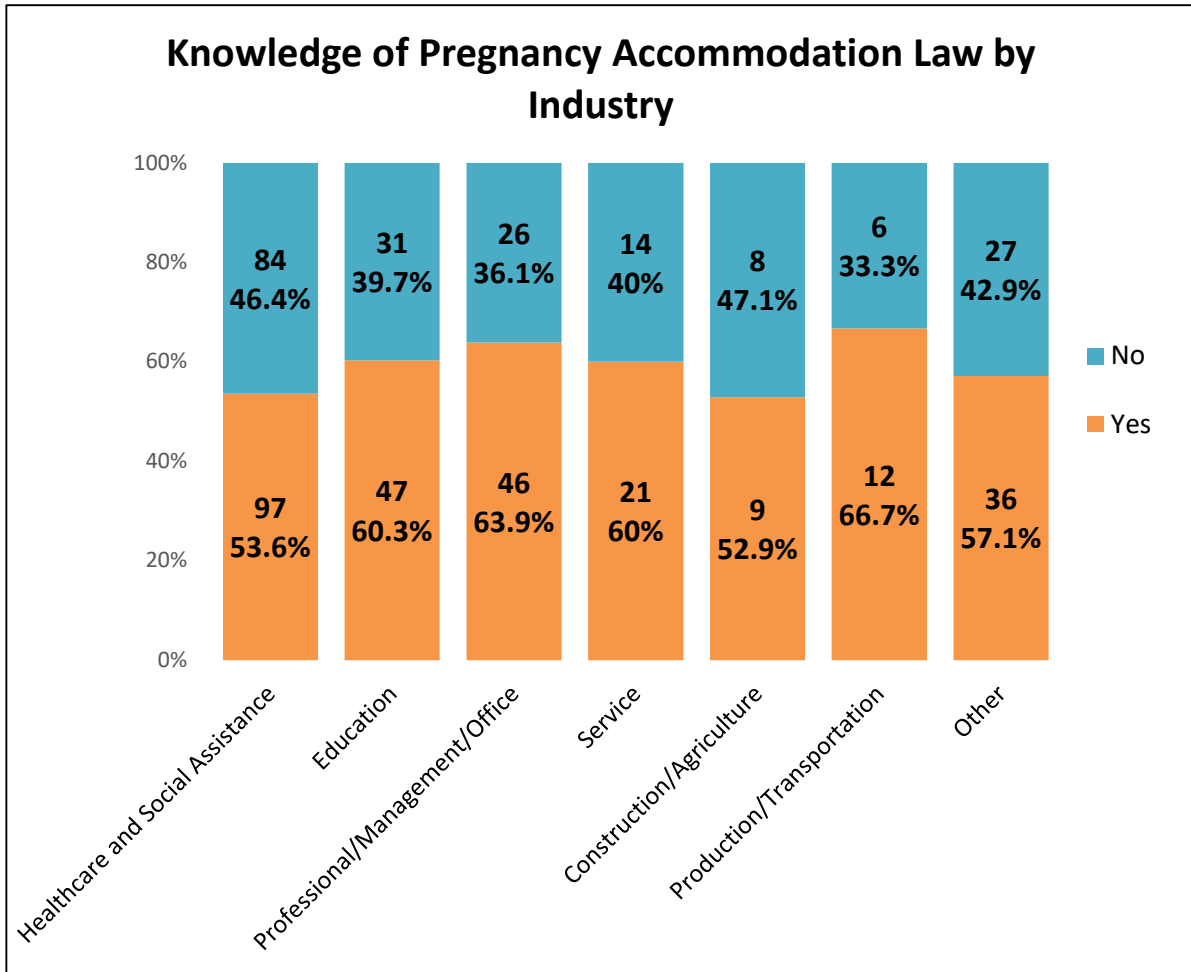
Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics



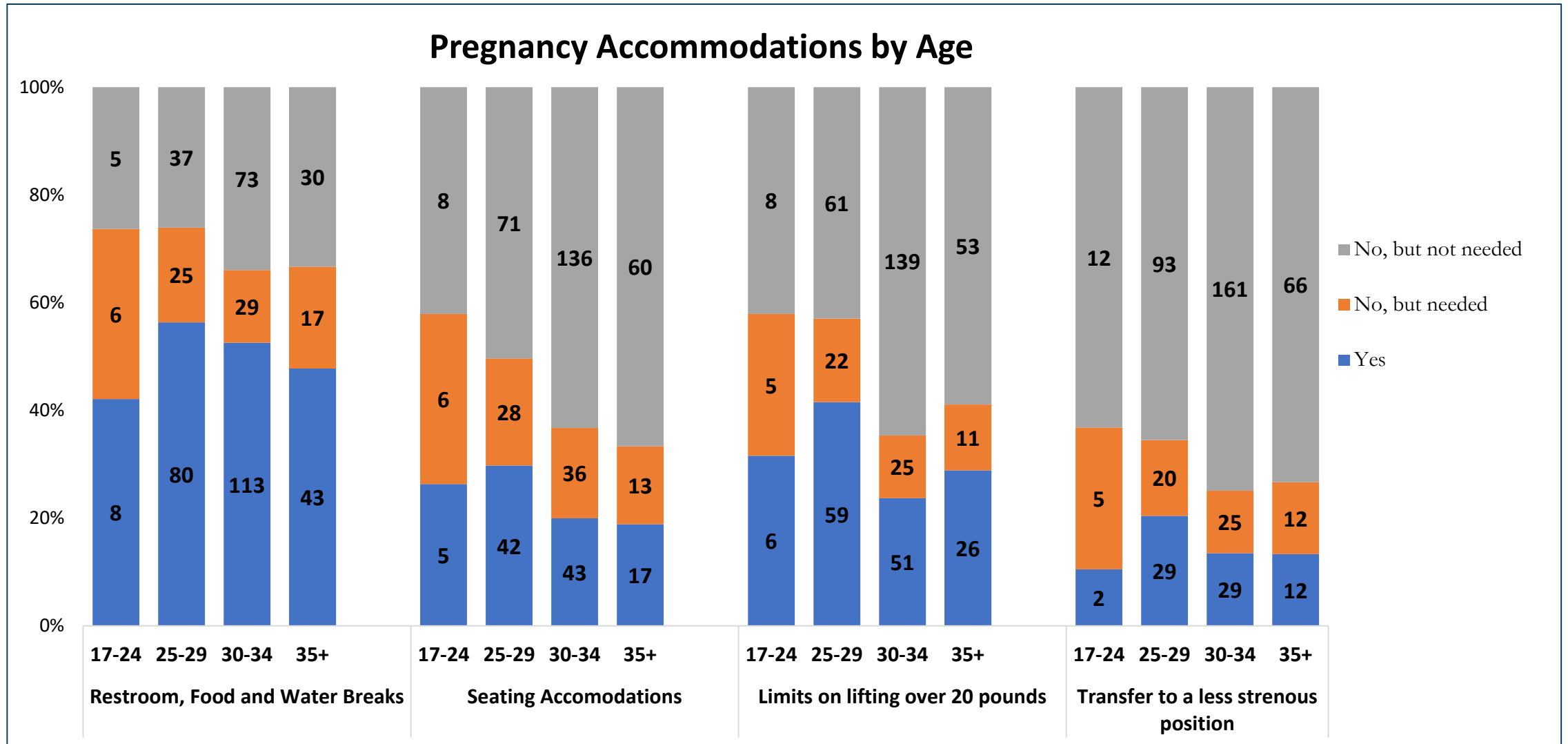
Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Demographics



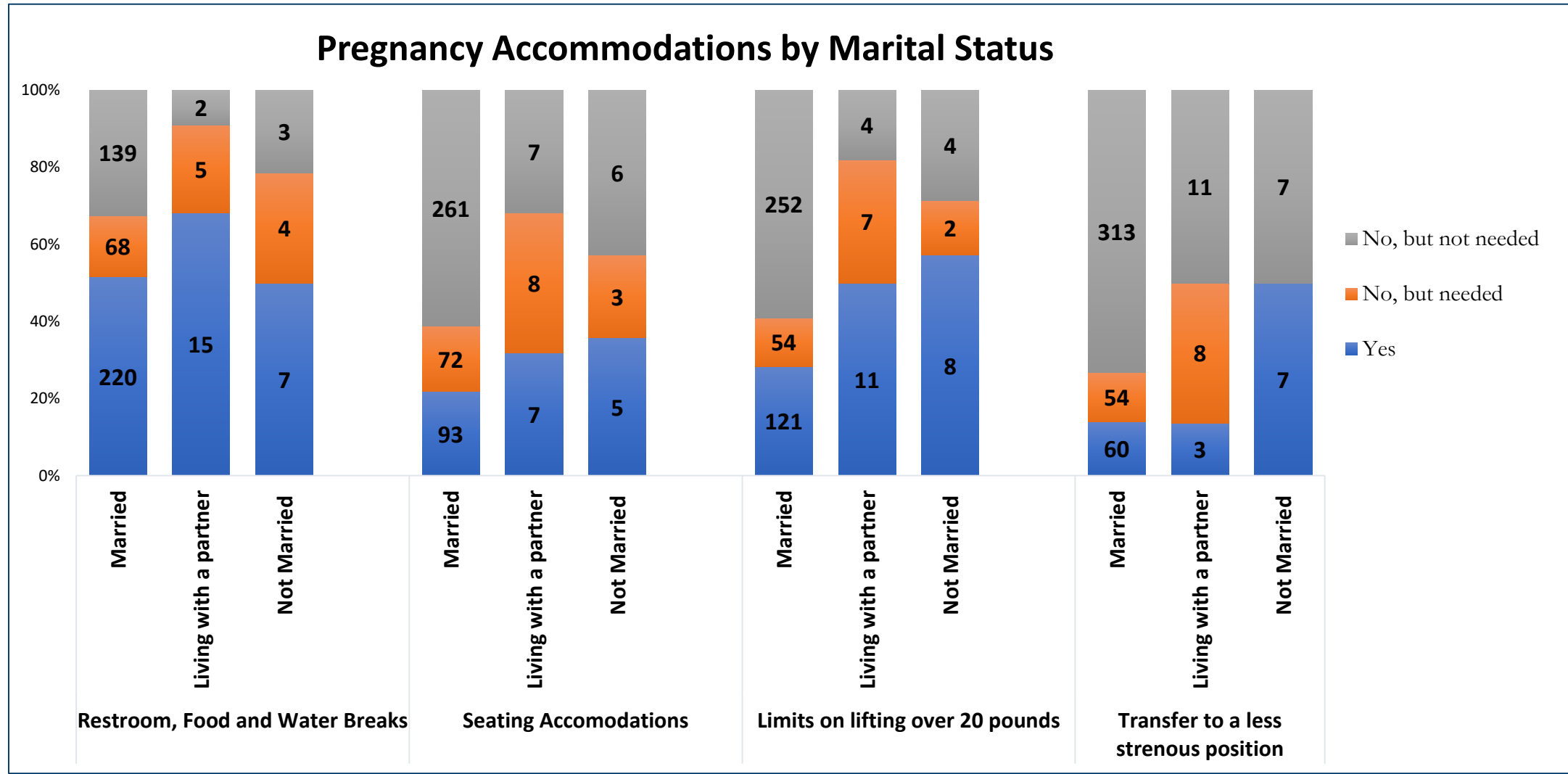
Knowledge of Accommodation Laws by Industry



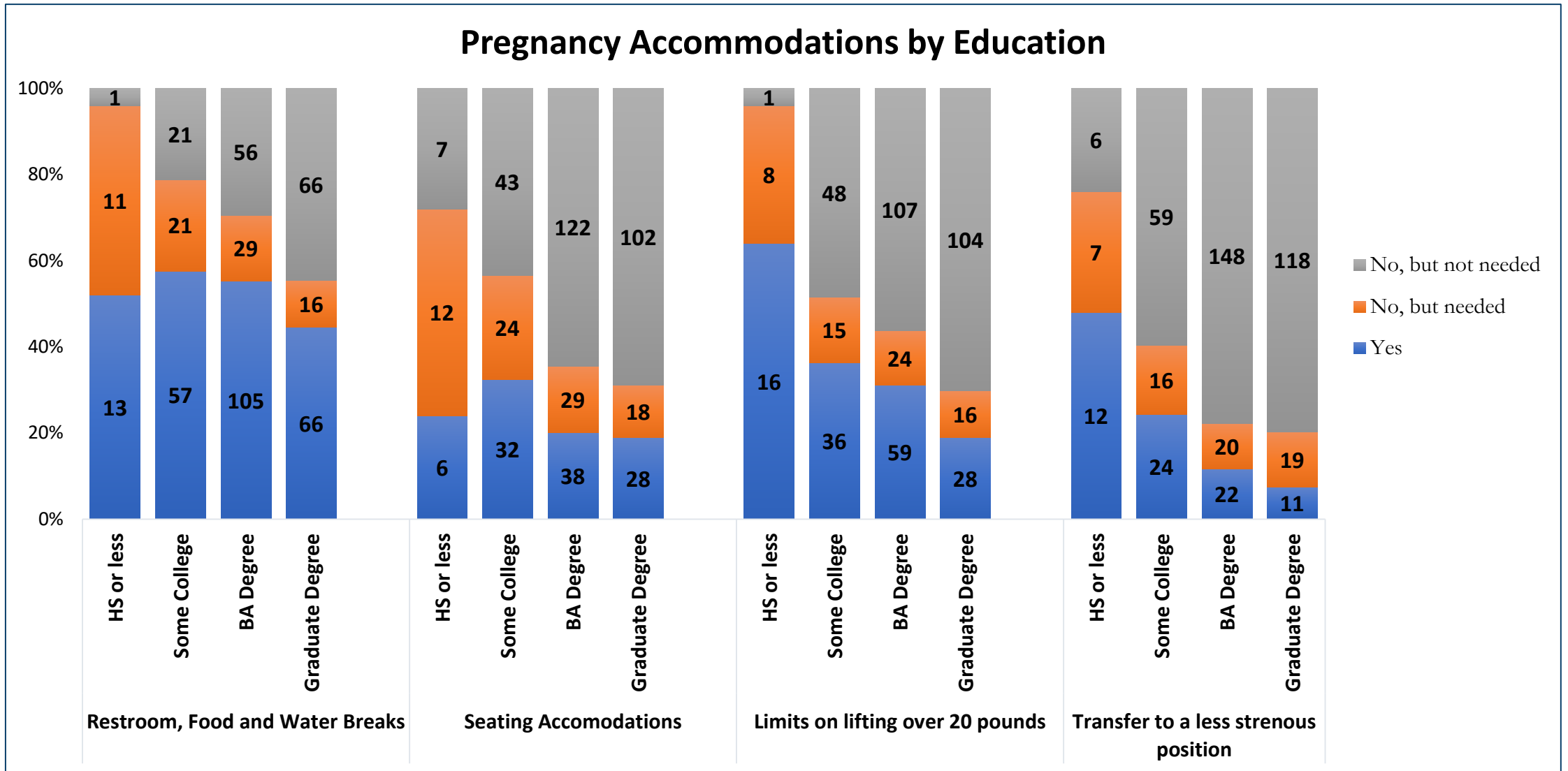
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



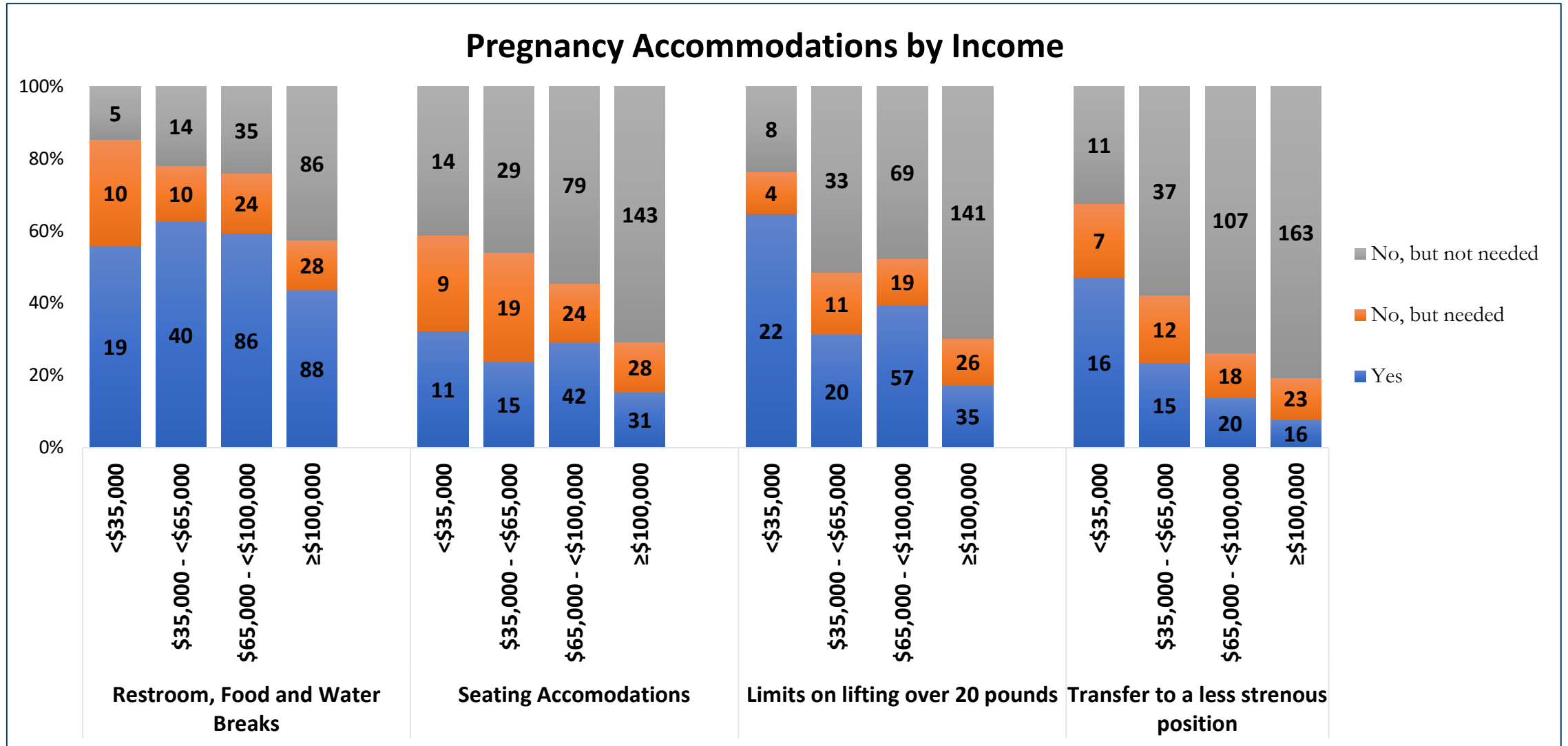
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



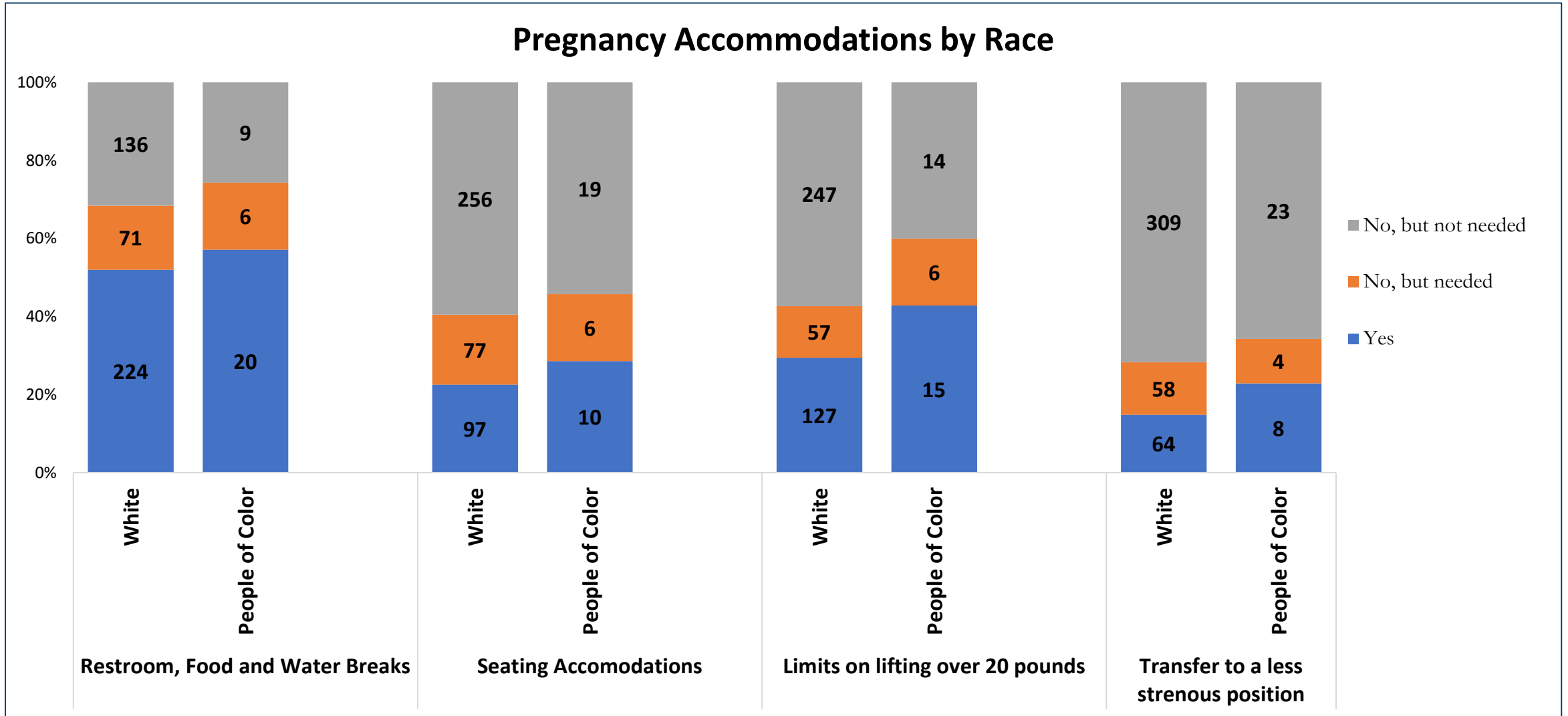
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



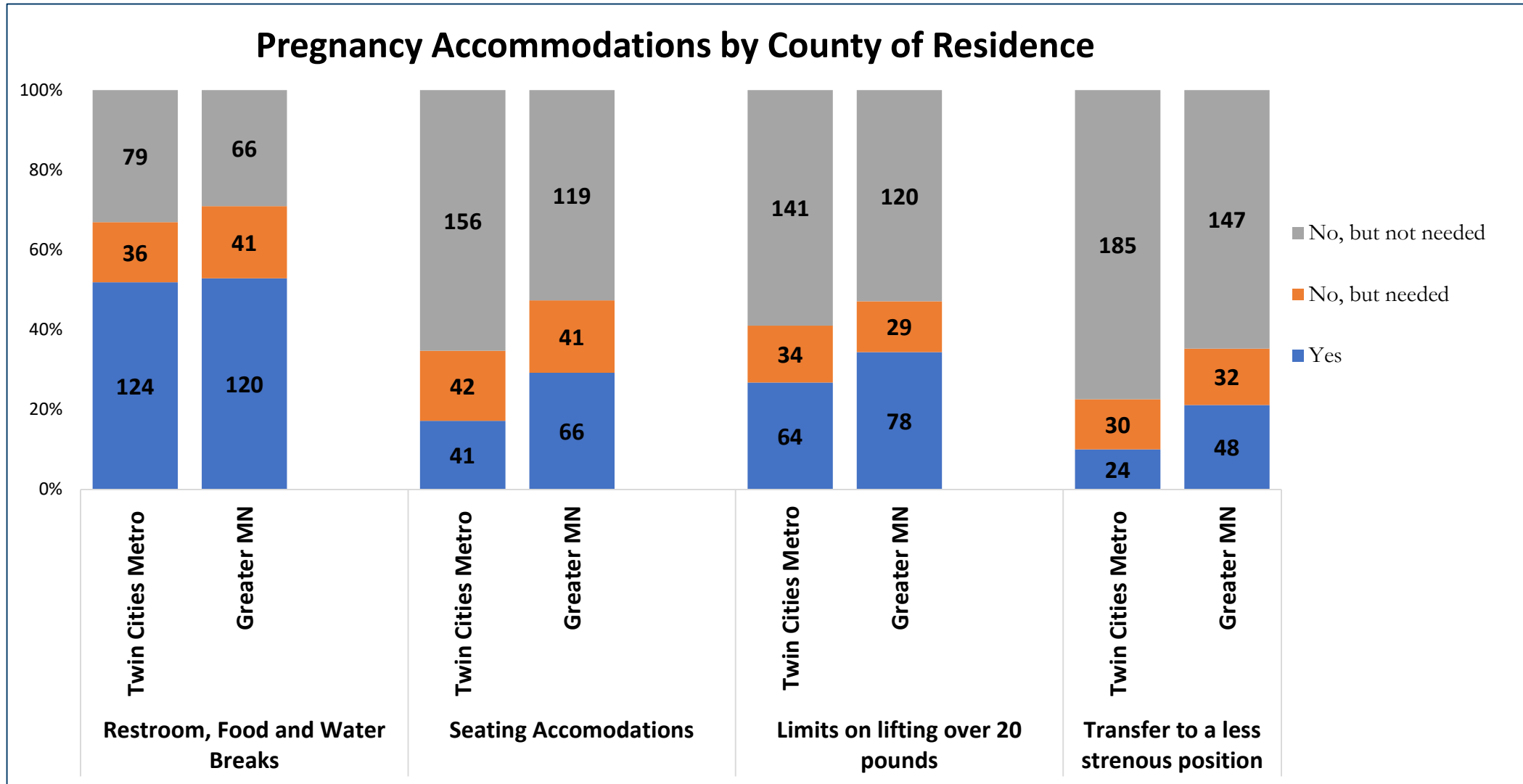
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



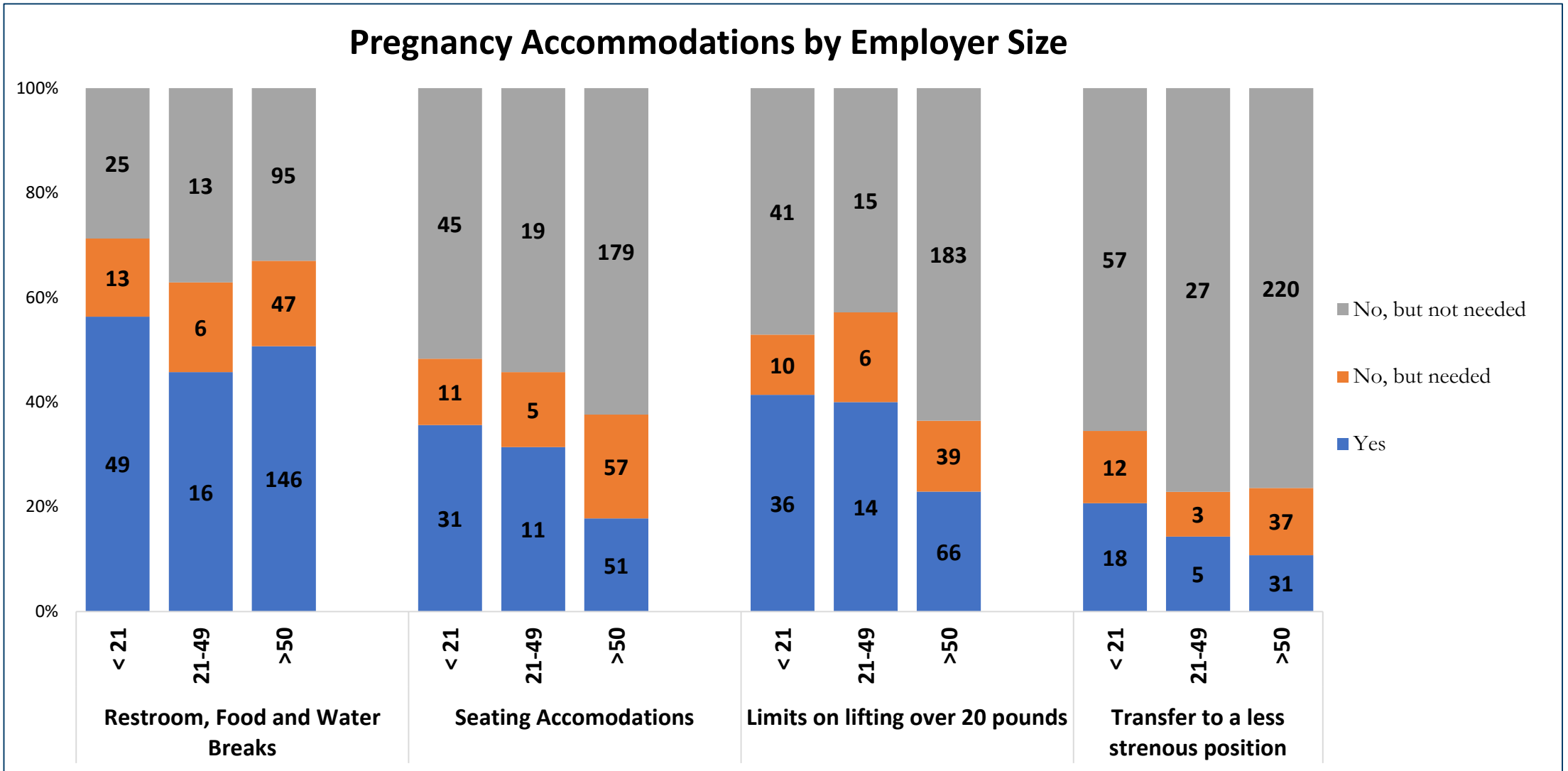
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



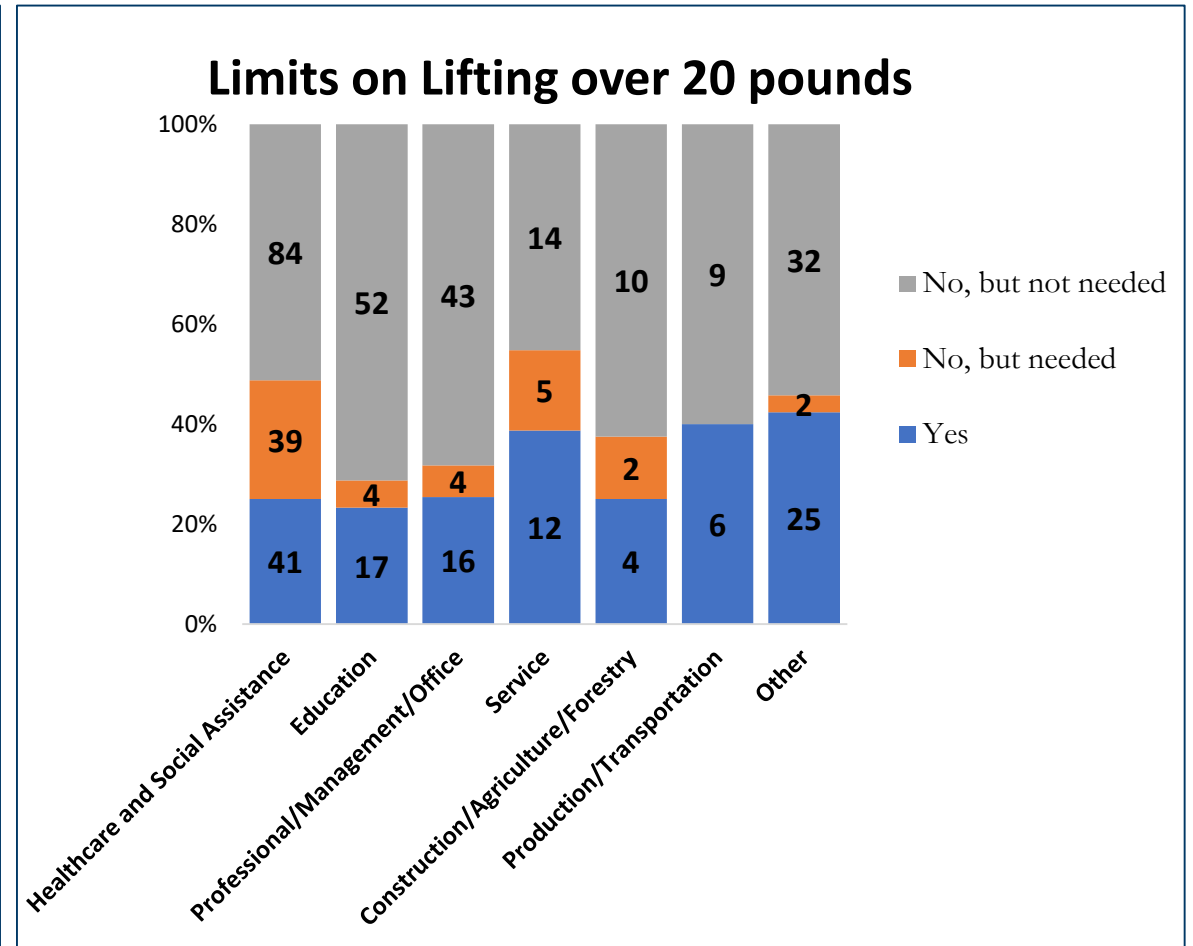
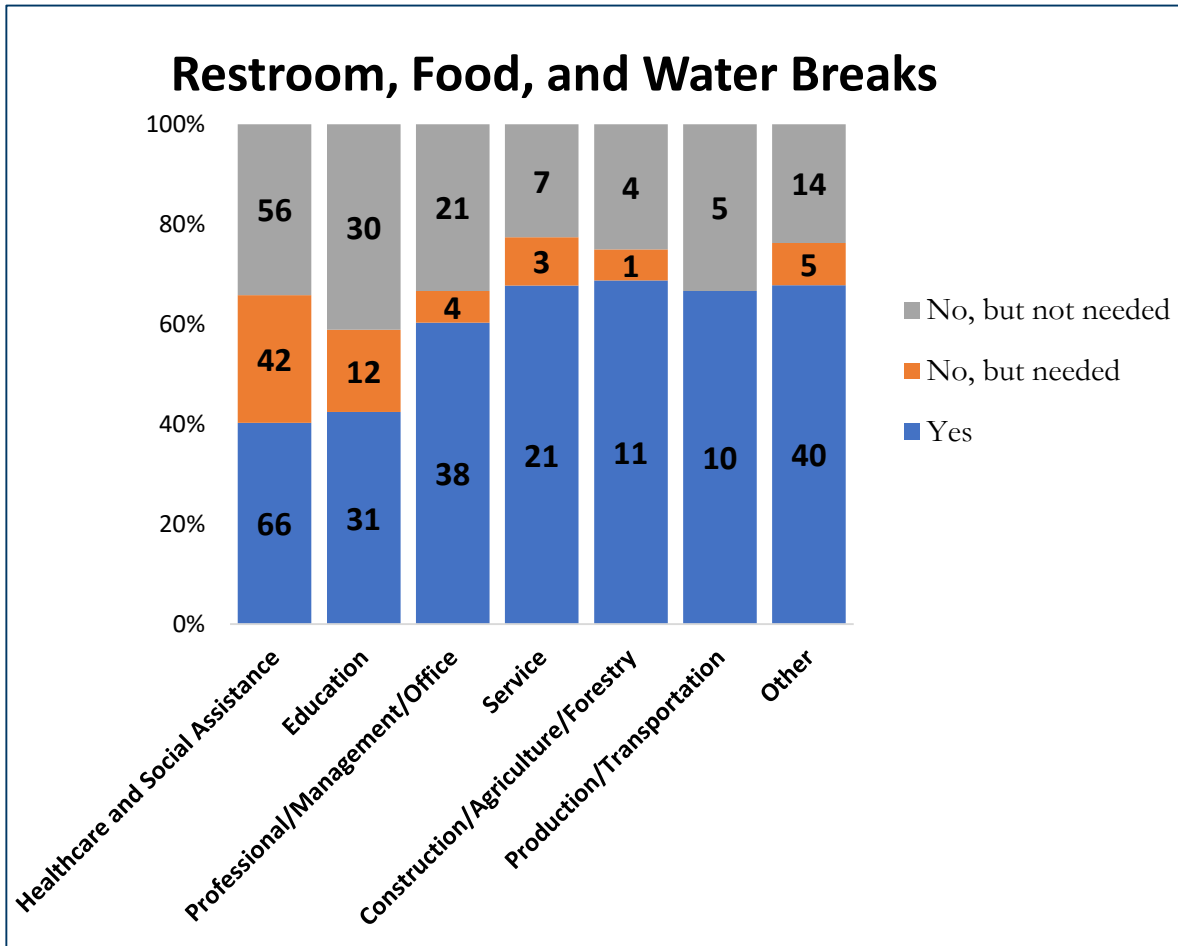
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



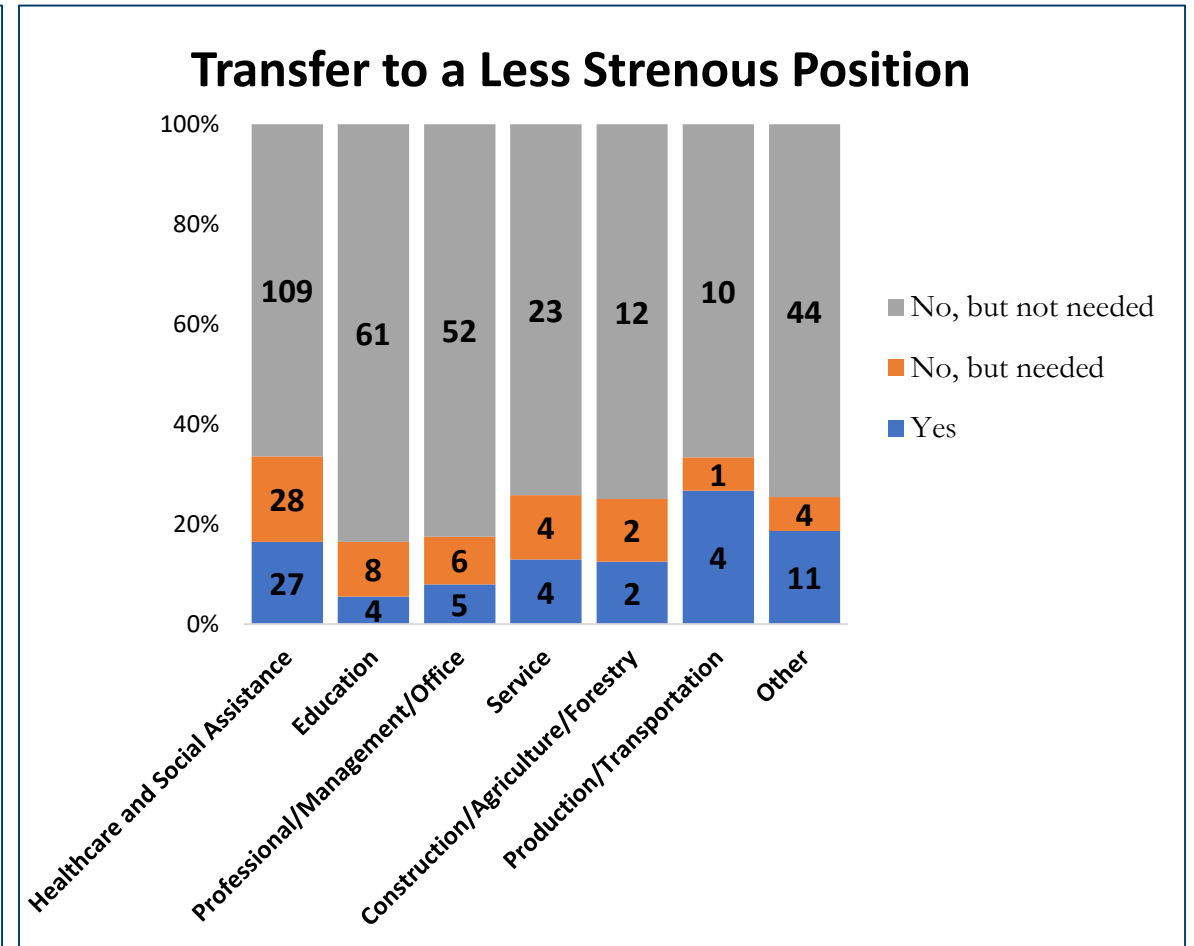
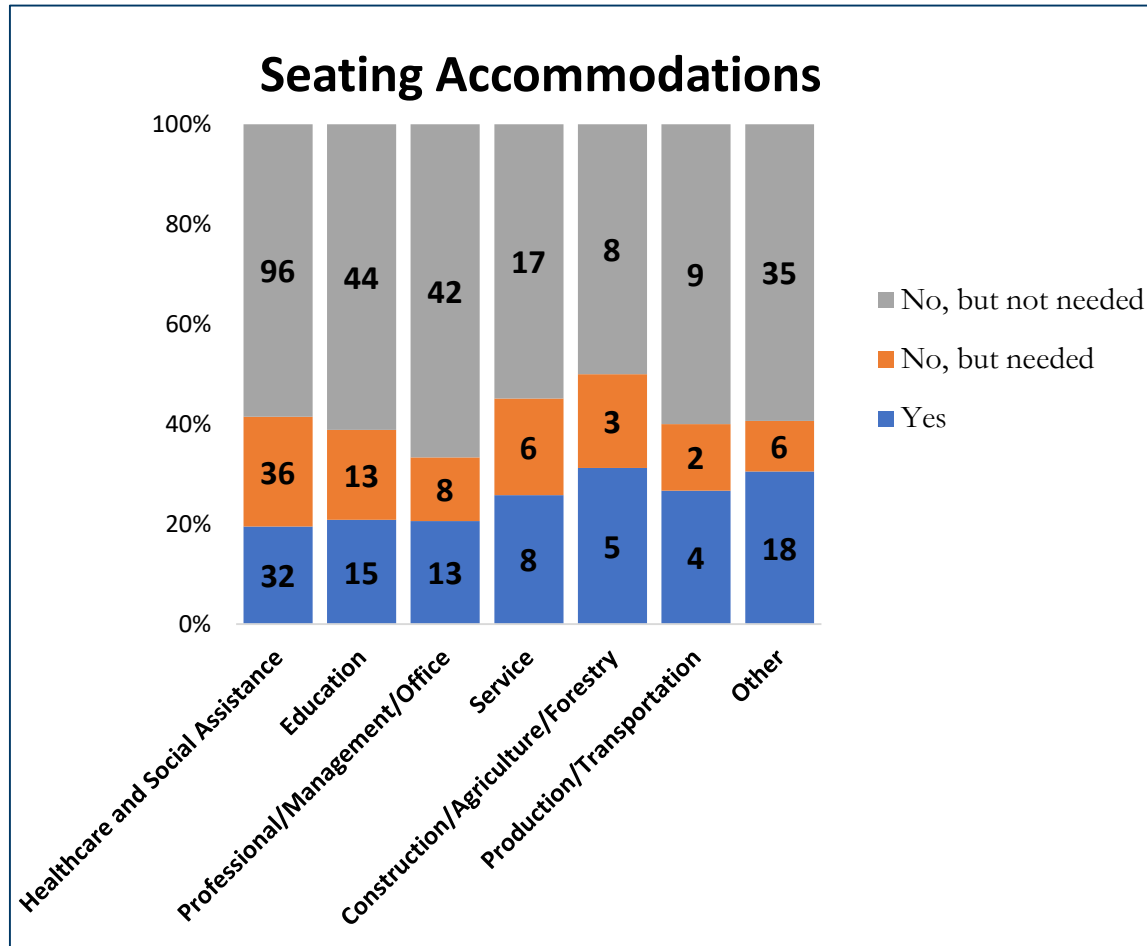
Pregnancy Accommodations by Demographics



Pregnancy Accommodations by Industry

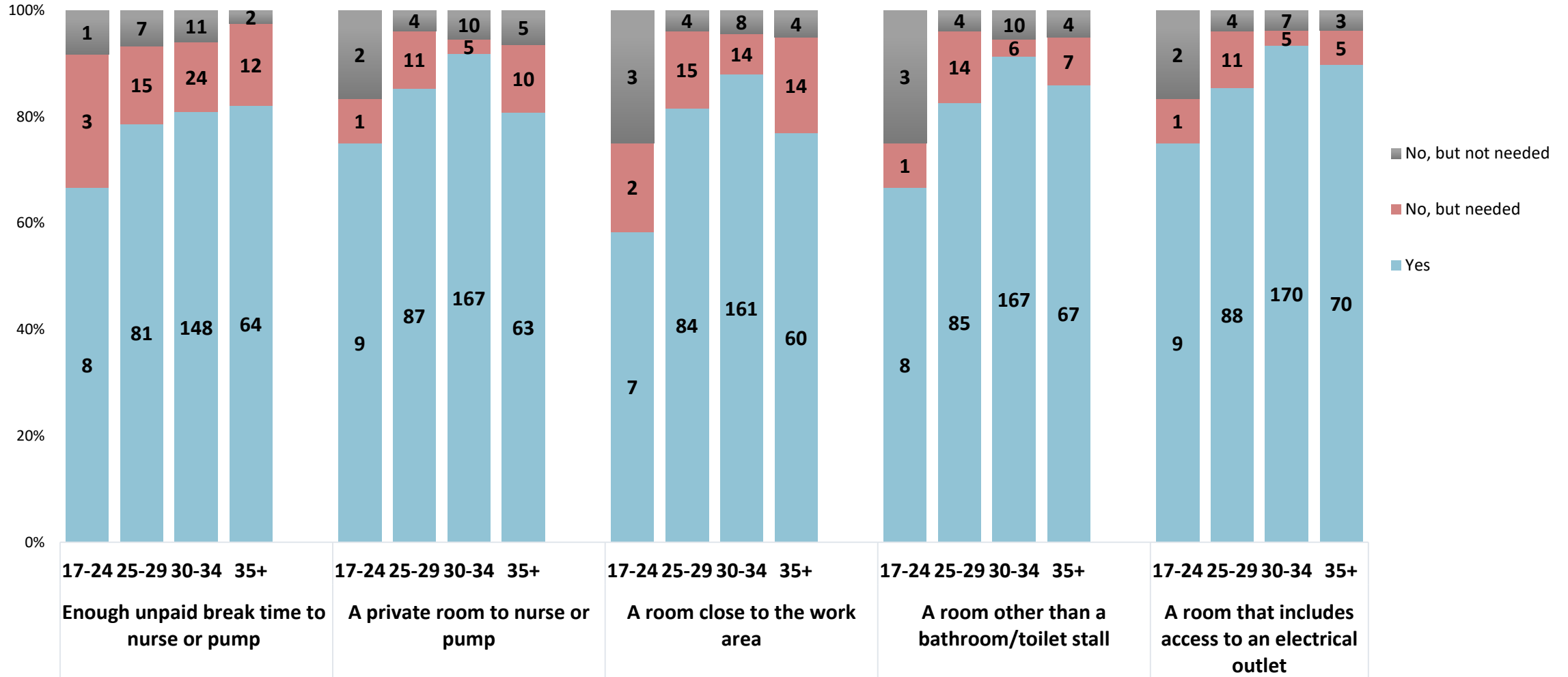


Pregnancy Accommodations by Industry

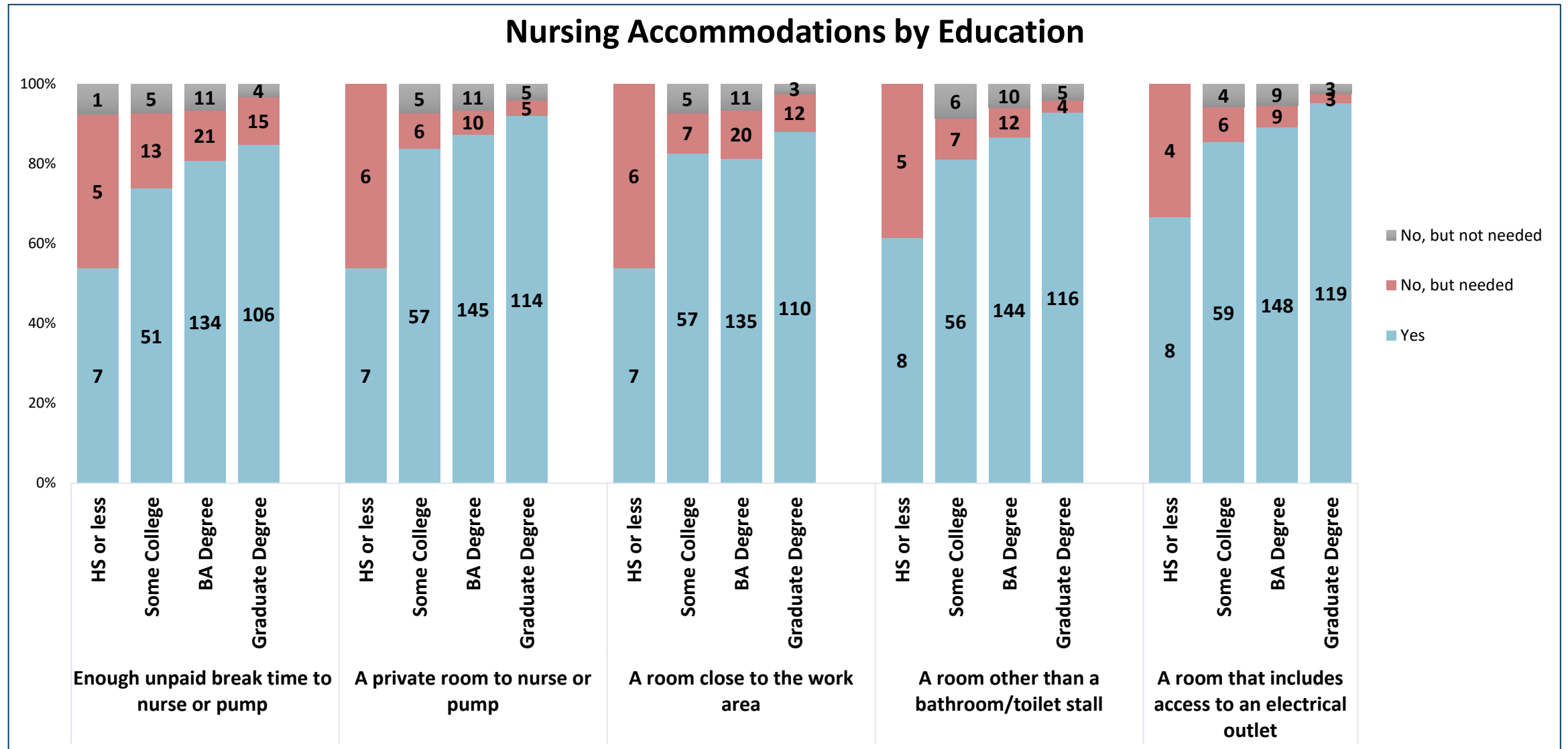


Nursing Accommodations by Demographics

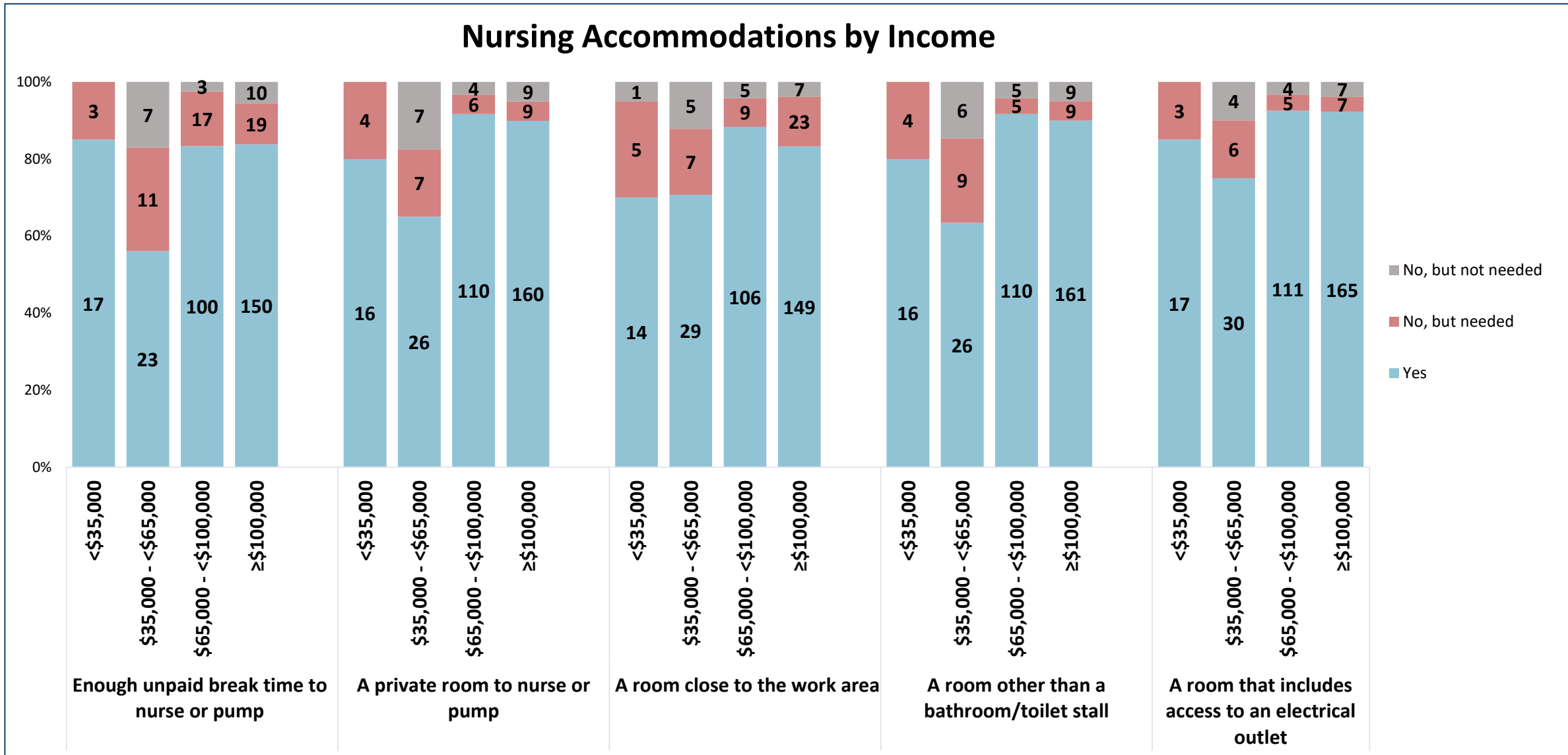
Nursing Accommodations by Age



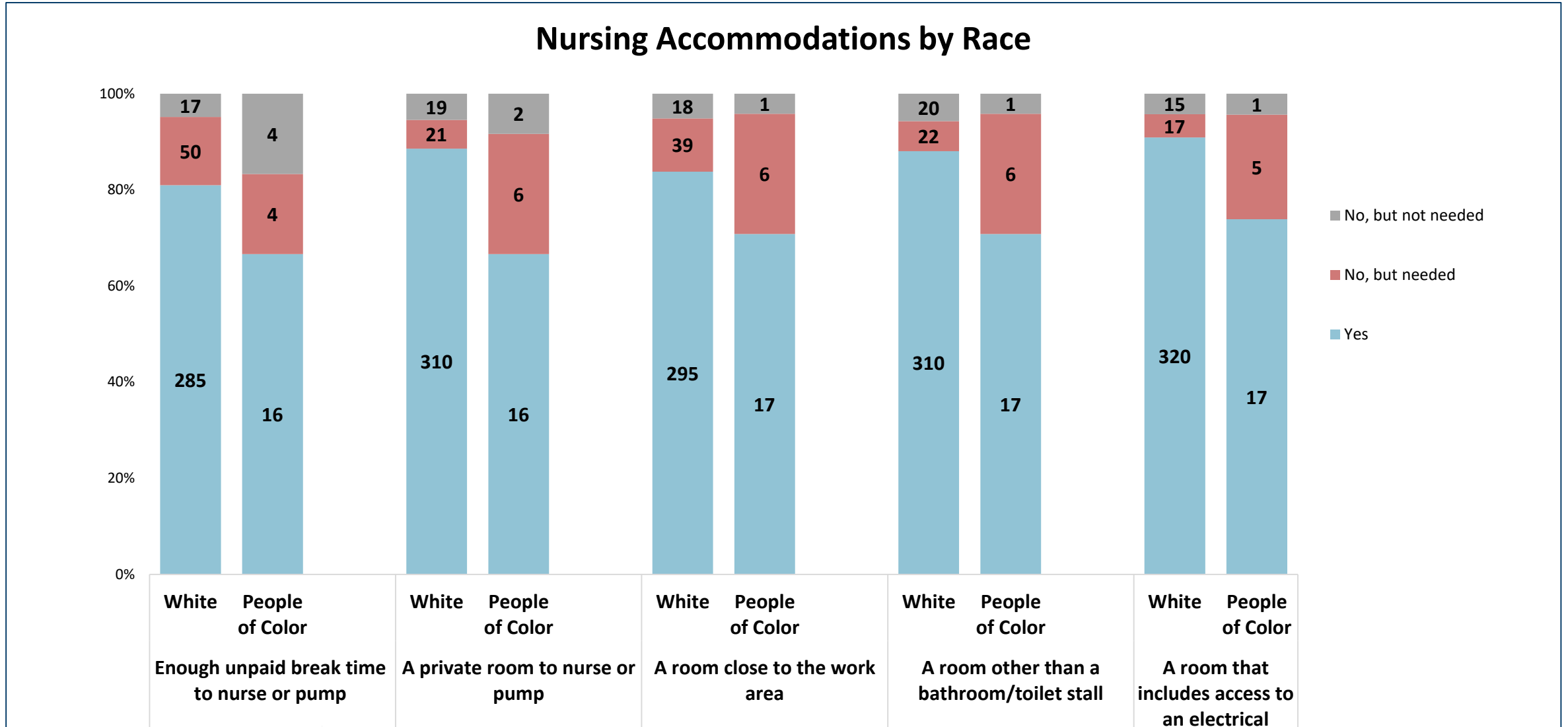
Nursing Accommodations by Demographics



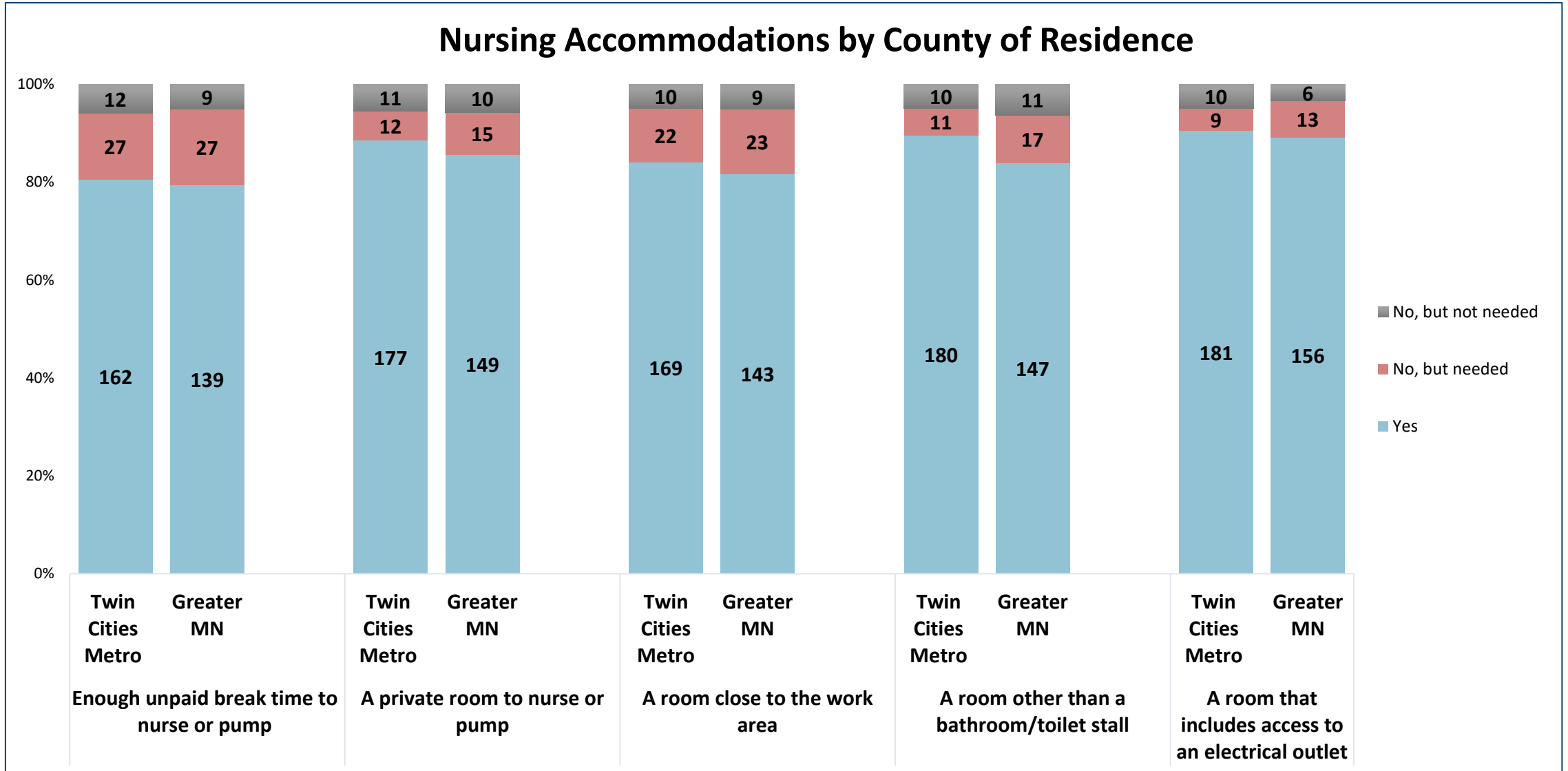
Nursing Accommodations by Demographics



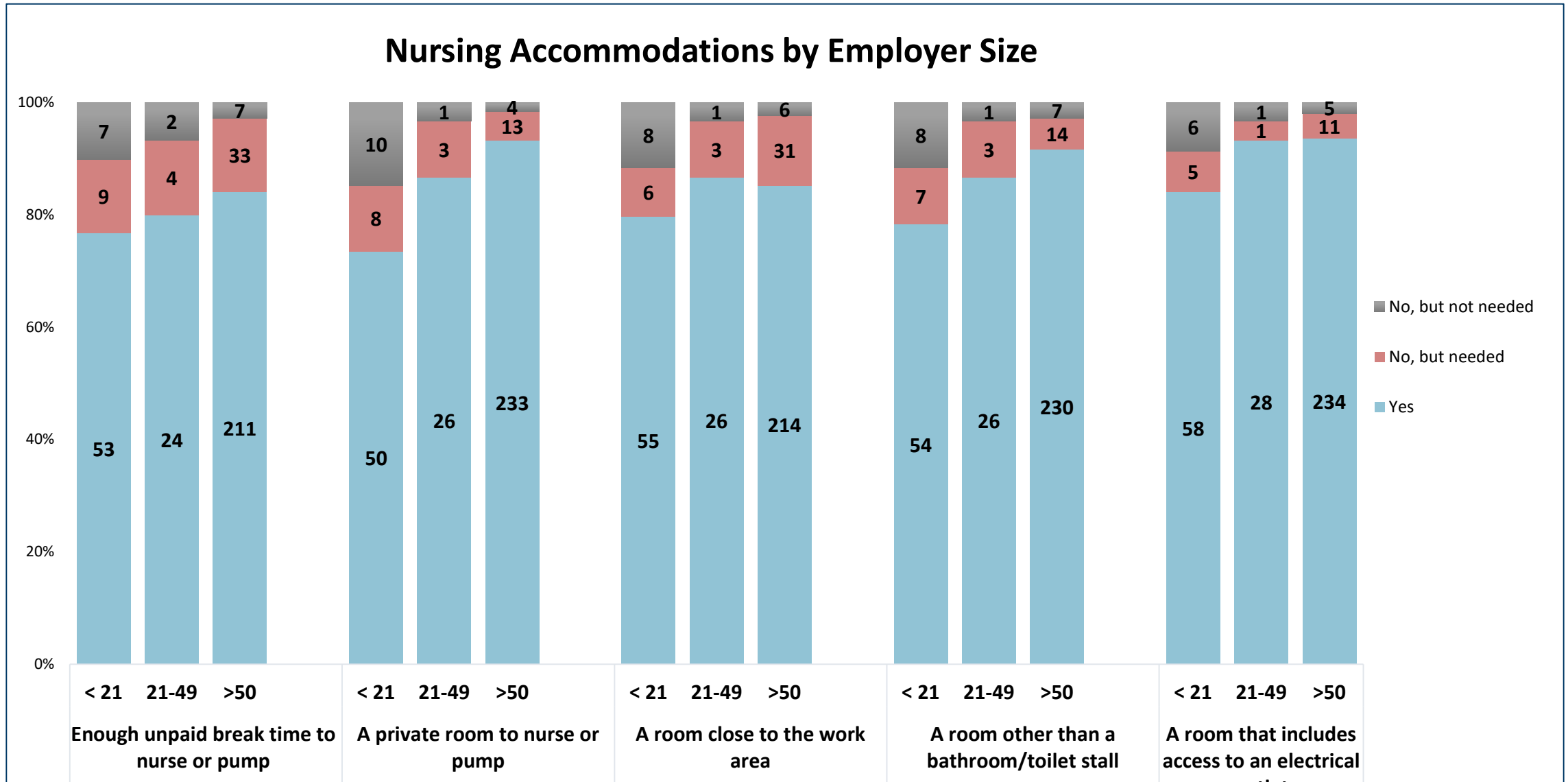
Nursing Accommodations by Demographics



Nursing Accommodations by Demographics

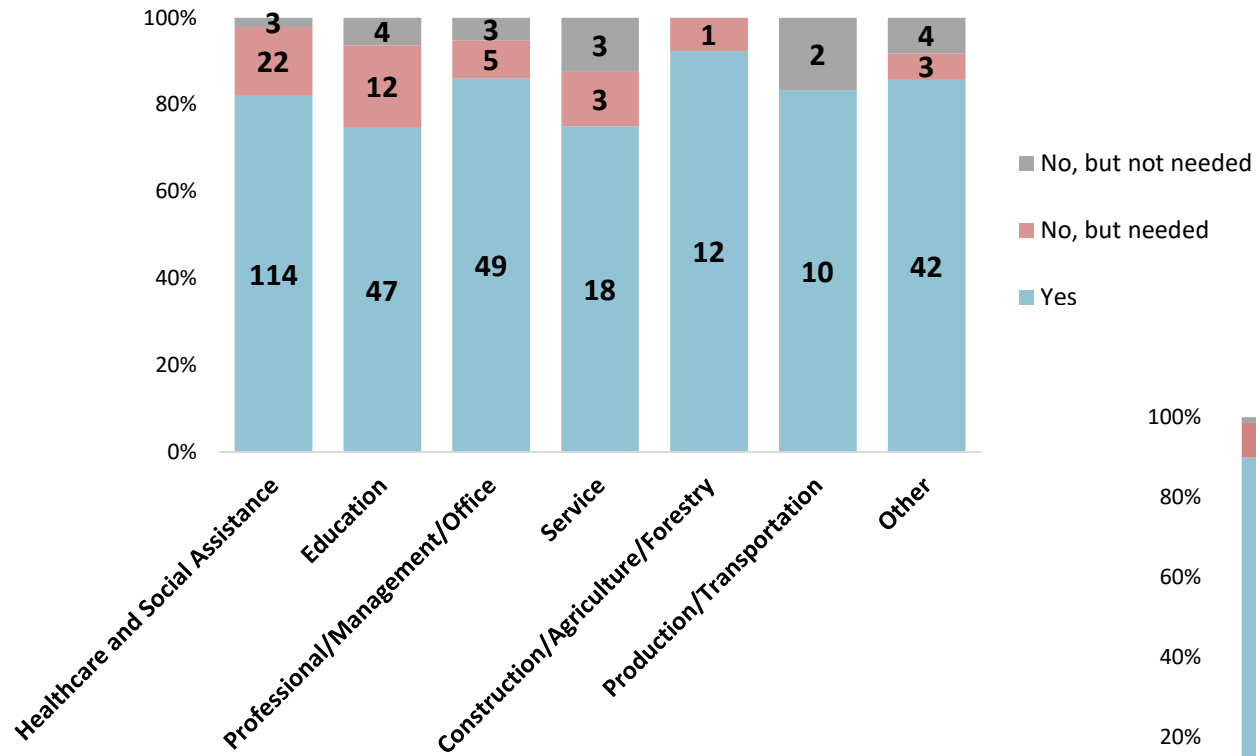


Nursing Accommodations by Demographics

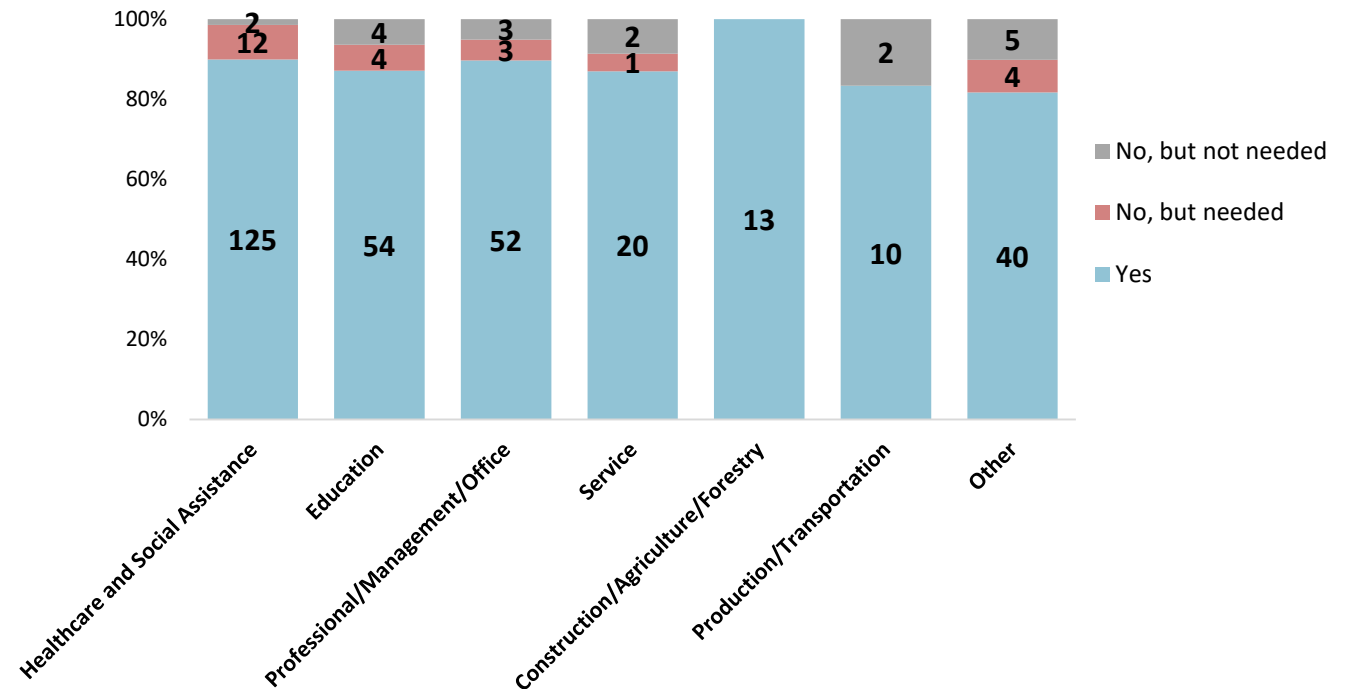


Nursing Accommodations by Industry

Enough unpaid break time to nurse or pump

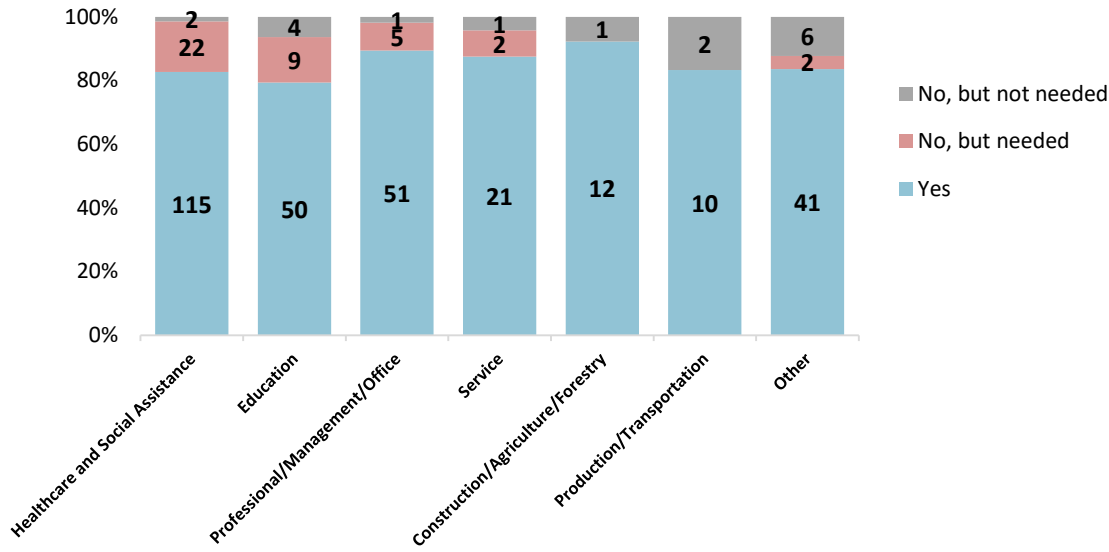


A private room to nurse or pump

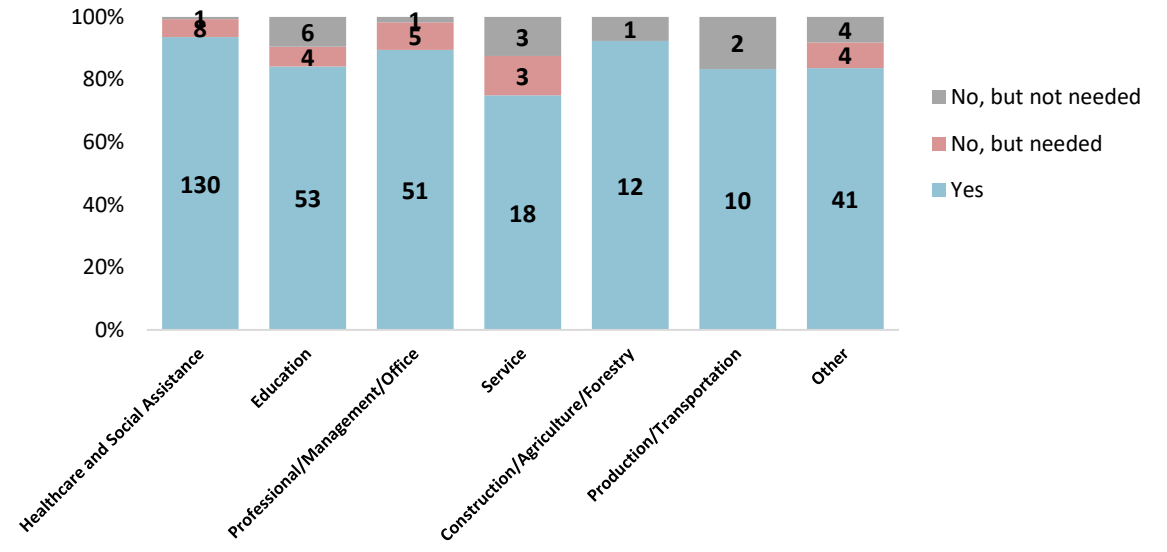


Nursing Accommodations by Industry

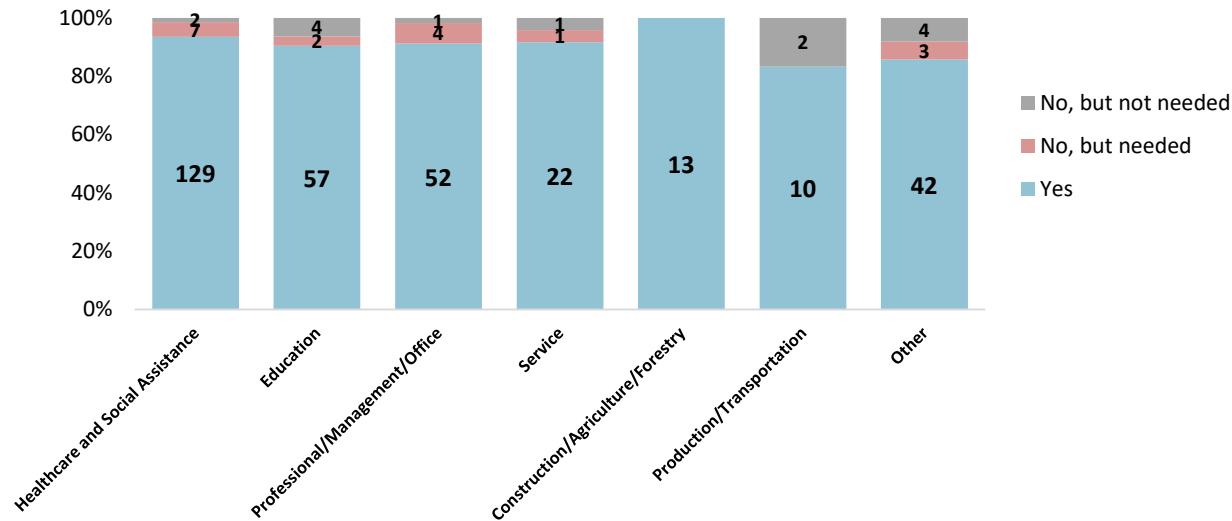
A room close to the work area



A room other than a bathroom/toilet stall

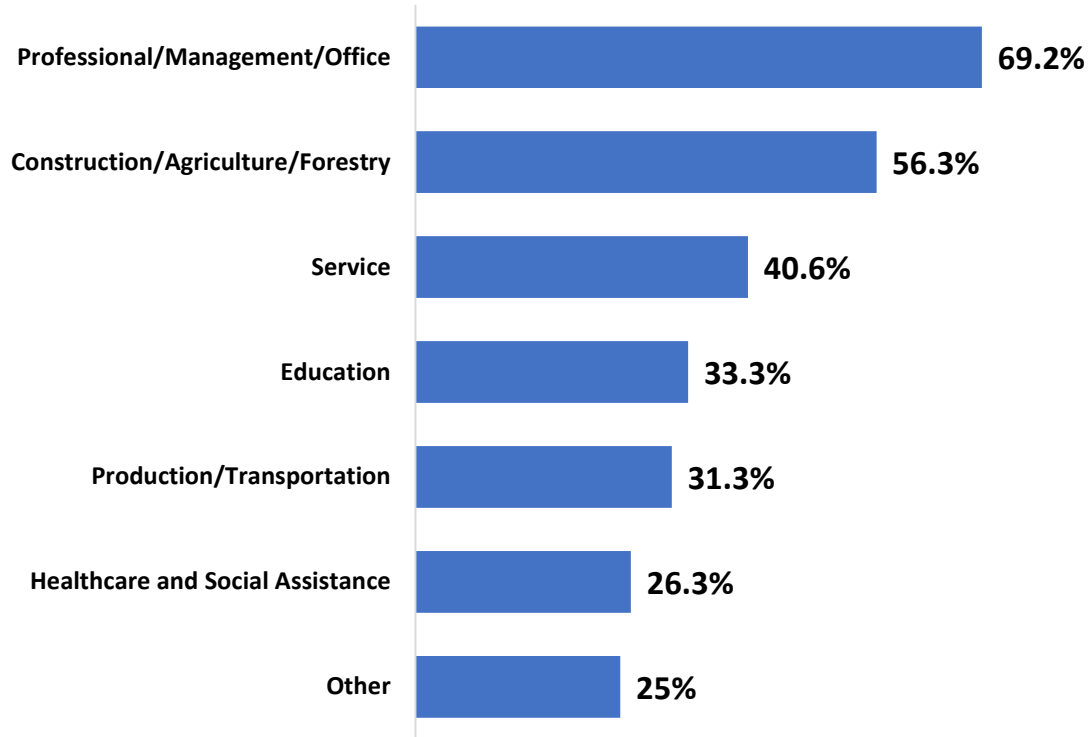


A room with access to an electrical outlet

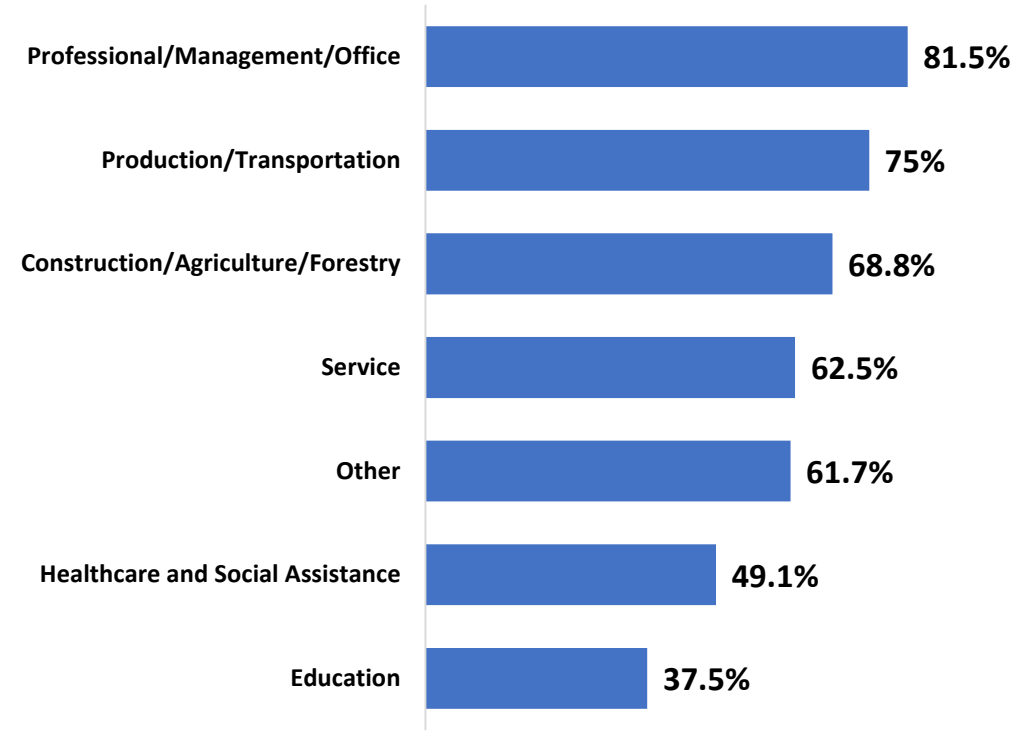


Informal Support from Employer for Pregnancy or Nursing by Industry

Paid or Extended Leave



Flexibility in Work Schedule



General Conclusions

- A higher percentage of respondents knew about nursing accommodation laws (86%) compared to pregnancy accommodation laws (57%).
 - 35% - 55% of respondents who knew about the pregnancy accommodation law were aware of the specific legal provisions pertaining to pregnancy accommodations in the workplace.
 - 53% - 90% of respondents who knew about the nursing accommodation law were aware of the specific legal provisions pertaining to nursing accommodations in the workplace.
 - Respondents were the least aware that workplaces are required to provide more frequent restroom, food, and water breaks for pregnant employees (35%), and a nursing room close to the work area for nursing employees (53%).
 - Respondents who knew about pregnancy and nursing accommodation laws tended to have higher education and income levels. In the case of nursing accommodation law, white respondents were also more likely to know about the law than respondents of color. Knowledge of law did not vary significantly by age, marital status, region of the state, or industry type.
- The most common sources employees used to access information about pregnancy and nursing accommodations in the workplace included their friends and family, employer, coworkers, nurse or physician, and social media.
 - Among these 5 most commonly used sources, nurse or physician was cited as the most helpful source, followed by coworkers.

General Conclusions

- **16%-52% of respondents who were employed during their pregnancy were provided pregnancy accommodations at their workplace.**
 - **52% were provided more frequent restroom, food, or water breaks, followed by limits on lifting (31%), special seating or seating adjustments (23%), and transfer to a less demanding position (16%). A majority did not need accommodations for limits on lifting (56%), seating (59%), and transfer to a less strenuous position (71%).**
 - **Pregnancy accommodations that were the most needed but not provided included seating accommodations (18%), and more frequent restroom, food, or water breaks (17%).**
- **80-90% of working and nursing mothers were provided nursing accommodations at their workplace.**
 - **The least provided accommodations were enough unpaid break time to nurse/pump (80%) and a room close to the work area (83%).**
 - **The biggest concerns for nursing mothers when they returned to work were dealing with the general hassle of pumping or nursing at work and not being able to take breaks when needed, followed by not having adequate space to nurse or pump and not feeling safe or comfortable asking employer for needs.**
- **Outside of the legal accommodations provided, respondents also received informal support for their pregnancy or nursing from their workplace.**
 - **The most common forms of workplace support included positive conversations with coworkers about pregnancy or nursing (67%); flexibility in work schedule (55%); gifts, hand-me-downs or other tokens of support from colleagues (54%); and positive conversations with their employer (50%).**

General Conclusions

- The extent to which respondents received pregnancy and nursing accommodations tended to vary by certain demographic characteristics and industry type:
 - Respondents who received or who reported not needing accommodations were more likely to have higher education and household income levels, and be married. Respondents of color were more likely to report needing but not receiving nursing accommodations than white respondents.
 - Overall, respondents working in the healthcare/social assistance, education, and service industries were more likely to report that they needed but did not receive certain workplace accommodations.
 - Respondents in the professional/management/office industry were the most likely to receive informal support from employers, such as paid or extended leave and flexibility in work schedule, while those in the education and healthcare/social assistance industries were the least likely to do so.
- Outreach efforts could be targeted towards:
 - 1) increasing awareness of law related to pregnancy accommodations
 - 2) increasing awareness of law and access to accommodations for pregnant and nursing employees with lower income and education levels
 - 3) Employees working in the healthcare/social assistance, education, and service industries

Limitations of Survey

- Respondents who completed the survey were predominantly older, married, white, and had higher education and household income levels.
- The number of respondents from more underrepresented groups, as well as certain target industries, were relatively small, which could hinder the generalizability and confidence of some of the findings. Therefore, caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions about groups and industries with a small number of respondents.

For all data analysis tables and more detailed information on the results of the survey, please refer to the PDF report.

Contributors to WESA Project (in alphabetical order)

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry:

- John Aiken, Director, Labor Standards and Registered Apprenticeship
- Nicole Blissenbach, Assistant Commissioner
- Sara Ellstra, Supervisor, Labor Standards
- Naheeda Hirji-Walji, Director, Public Engagement, Inclusion and Equity
- Ender Kavas, Research and Statistics
- Nancy Leppink, Commissioner
- Michael Muenster-Blakeley, Labor Standards
- Angelina Nguyen, Director, Research and Statistics
- Kate Perushek, Director, Government Affairs
- Roslyn Robertson, Deputy Commissioner
- Dave Skovholt, Labor and Standards
- Annie Welch, Director, Projects and Planning

Wilder Research:

- Jackie Aman
- Madeleine Hansen-Connell
- Monica Idzelis Rothe