

A photograph of a dirt road in Kinngait (Cape Dorset) with buildings and hills in the background. The road is unpaved and has several puddles. On the left, there are several buildings, including a large dark one and a smaller one with a flag. On the right, there are more buildings, including a two-story one with a green staircase. The background shows hills under a clear blue sky.

INUIT HOUSING: the personal and social dimensions of a chronic housing shortage and overcrowding

Kinngait (Cape Dorset) as a case study

Participatory Action Research as a Method



- This study was conducted using a participatory action research methodology
- The research instrument was developed in a collaborative process between the researcher and the community, with 7 youth hired as trainees and research assistants
- Youth were trained in a two week workshop where they developed:
 - (1) skills in designing a questionnaire;
 - (2) an understanding of archival documents and how to access and use them;
 - (3) interviewing skills;
 - (4) knowledge of ethical issues in the conduct of research;
 - (5) the use of photographs and audio recordings.

The Use of Popular Education Methods

- Games, drawings, scenarios and acting to illustrate problems and challenges associated with the conduct of research.
- Students working in pairs, teams and the group as a whole, depending on the exercise.



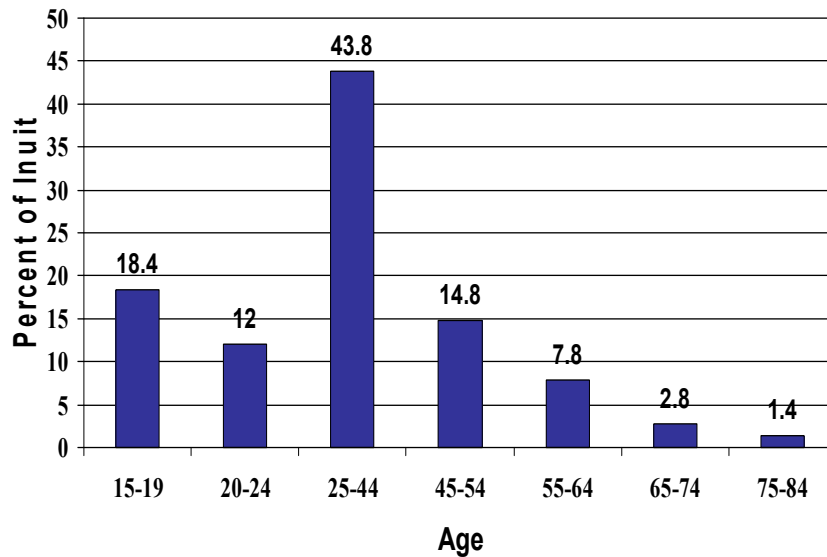
What is the relationship between social indicators for Nunavut and the current housing situation?

What is the current housing situation, and how does it compare with Canadian standards and norms?

Criminal Code Offenses	Canada	Nunavut
Rates per 100,000 population		
All incidents	8,834.9	38,493.5
Criminal Code offenses (excluding traffic offenses)	8,050.6	36,685.3
Crimes of violence	946.1	7,883.6
Homicide	2.0	13.5
Attempted murder	2.2	23.6
Assaults (level 1 to 3) ¹	731.8	6,628.7
Sexual assault	73.1	941.2
Other sexual offenses	8.2	40.5
Robbery	86.0	10.1
Other crimes of violence ²	42.3	226.0
Property Crimes	3,990.9	6,959.3
Breaking and entering	859.9	3,548.8
Motor vehicle theft	530.7	786.0
Theft over \$5,000	54.1	43.9
Theft \$5,000 and under	2,131.3	2,229.8
Possession of stolen goods	110.8	108.0
Frauds	303.9	242.9
Other Criminal Code offenses	3,113.6	21,842.5
Criminal Code offenses (traffic offenses)	124.9	155.2
Impaired driving	247.2	580.2
Other Criminal Code traffic offenses ³		
Federal statutes	412.3	1,072.7
Drugs	304.1	914.2
Other federal statutes	108.2	158.6

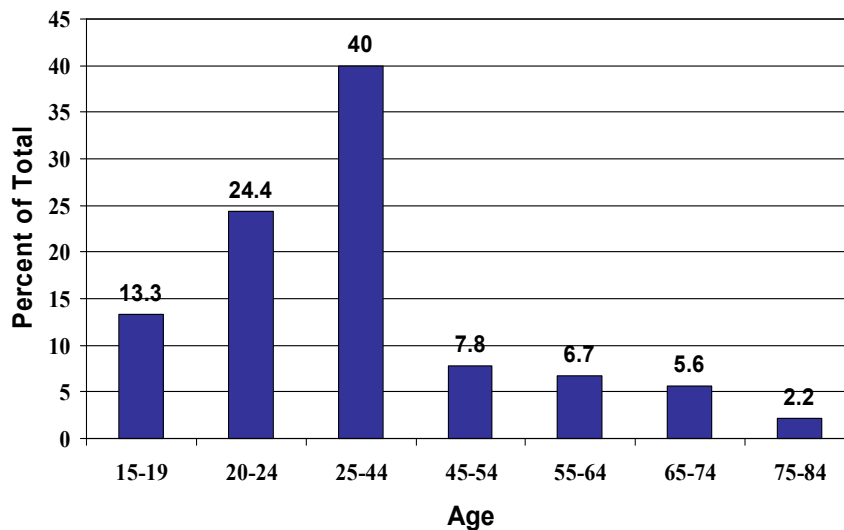
A Comparison of the Kinngait Population by Age Categories with the Age of the Population sampled for the Community Survey

Age Structure of Population



The bar chart to the left shows the percentage of Inuit in the Kinngait population 15 years of age and older as of the last census (2001) taken from Statistics Canada data. The categories are those used by Statistics Canada.

Age Structure of Sample



The bar chart to the right shows the percentage of Inuit in the sample used for the community survey. The age categories used are the same as those used by Statistics Canada, for comparative purposes.

The Sample

- 91 households
- Population of Kinngait estimated at 1179 (2005)
- Stratified to reflect the demographic structure of the community to the greatest extent possible
- Sampling without replacement (91 separate households)
- Age range: 15 years and older
- Gender – balanced in the community
- Sample consists of 44 males and 47 female residents
- Sampled using house numbers, elders lists and the housing waiting list until categories (age and status) were filled

The Sample

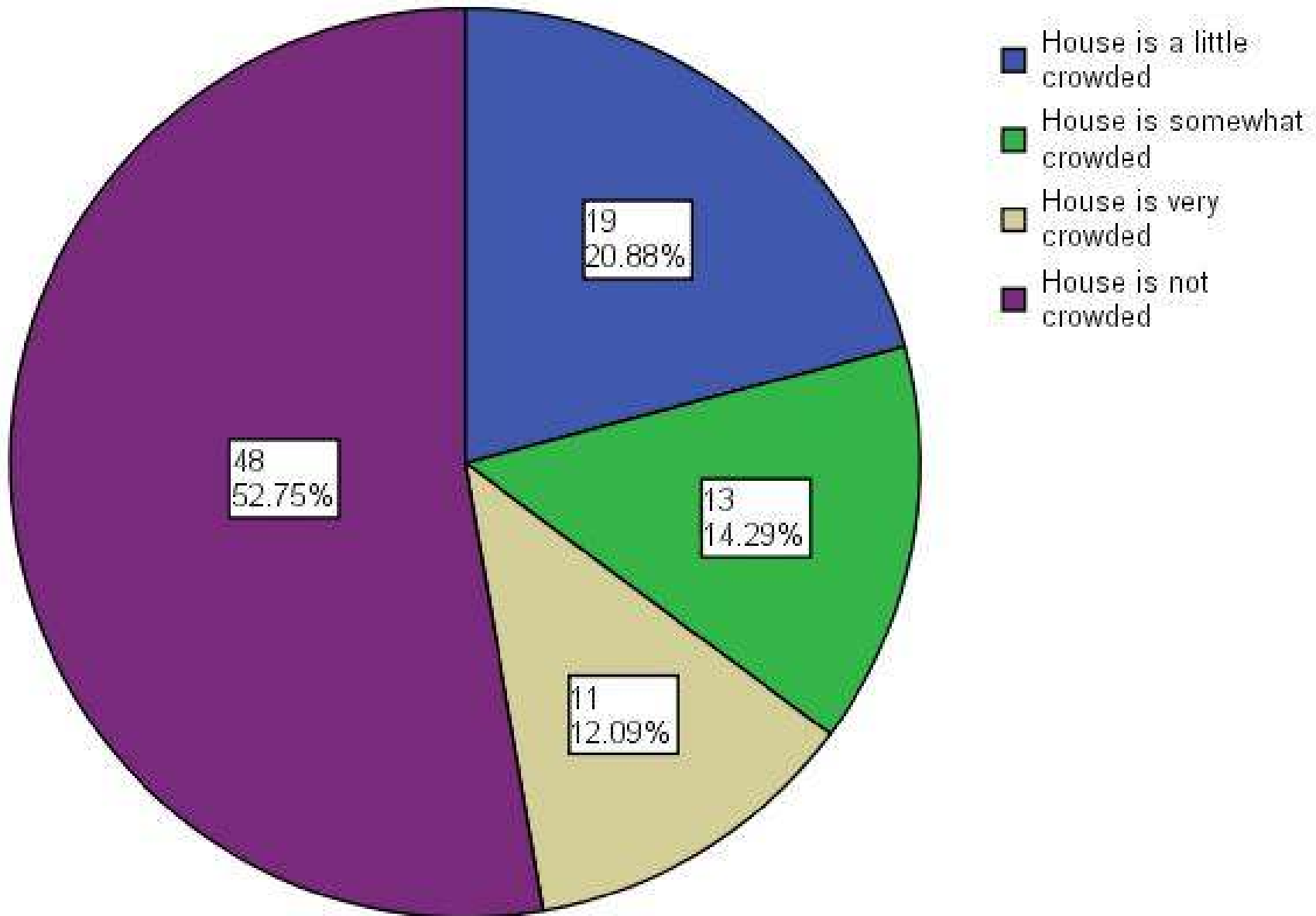
Number of Subjects to be Interviewed	Actual Number In Sample	Category and Definition by Age	Status	Gender
5	6	Elders (55 +)	single	female
		Elders (55 +)	single	male
10	8	Elders (55 +)	coupled	female
		Elders (55 +)	coupled	male
20	20	Parental generation (25-54)	coupled	female
		Parental generation (25-54)	coupled	male
10	11	Parental generation (25-54)	single	female
		Parental generation (25-54)	single	male
20	19	Young couple (17-24)	coupled	female
		Young couple (17-24)	coupled	male
10	14	Youth (15-24)	single	female
		Youth (15-24)	single	male
25	14	Housing waiting list -all ages	coupled or single	male
		Housing waiting list -all ages		female

The Extent of the Problem

- Using National Occupancy Standards (CMHC) and the CCSD formula, the results are similar. 47% of homes in the sample were overcrowded, the worst case being 13 people living in a two-bedroom house.
- This compares with a national rate of overcrowding of 7%.
- The best predictor of overcrowding in Kinngait is a home with one or more children under 5 years of age.



Respondents' Perceptions Of The Severity Of Overcrowding In Their House (47.26% reported their home being overcrowded)



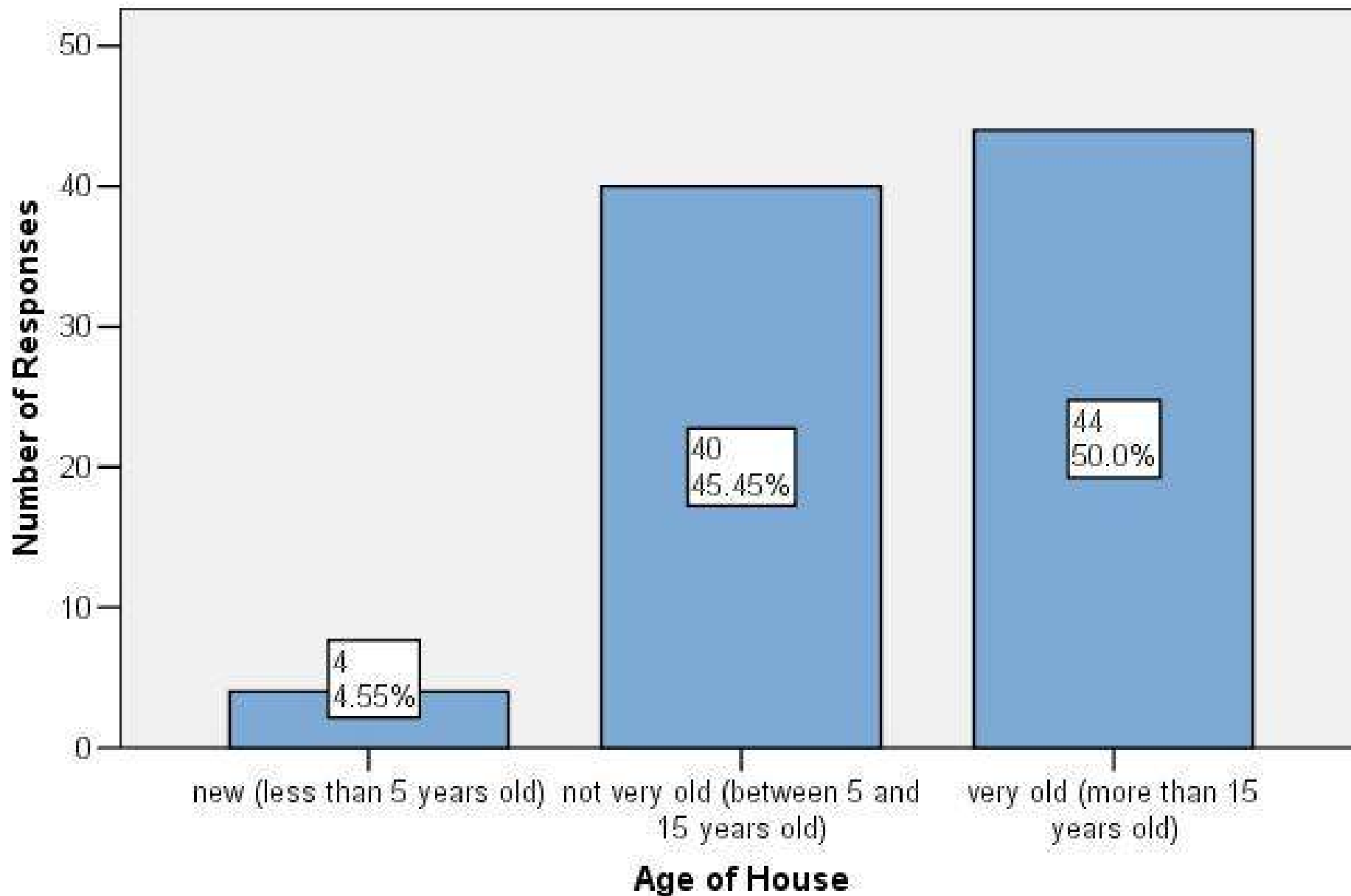
N=91.

Things Seldom Considered



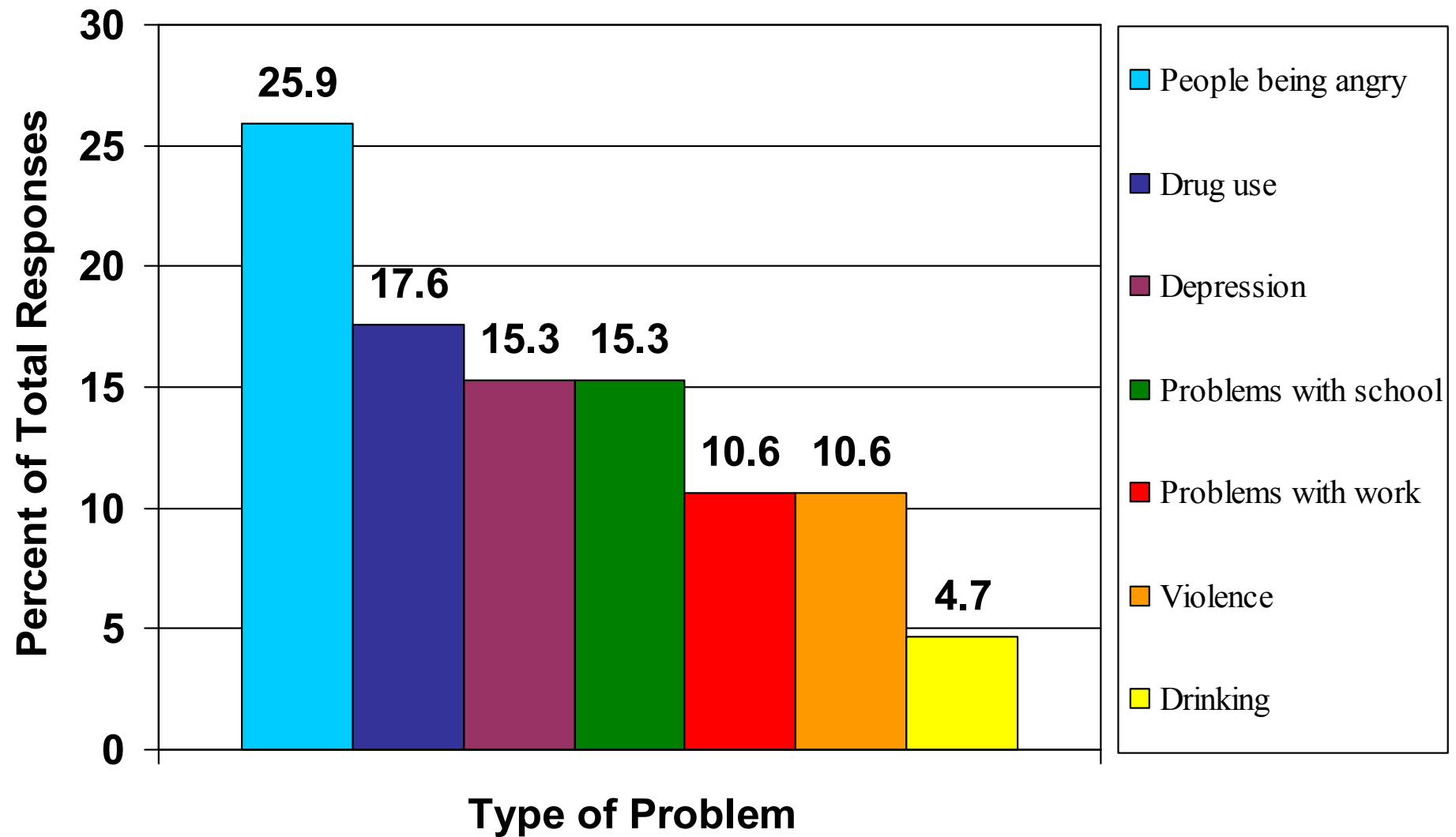
- People spend an inordinate and unusual amount of time indoors because of the climate.
- The result, combined with overcrowding, is severe wear and tear on homes.
- Weather conditions are such that homes age far more rapidly than in more temperate climates.

Age Of Respondent's House



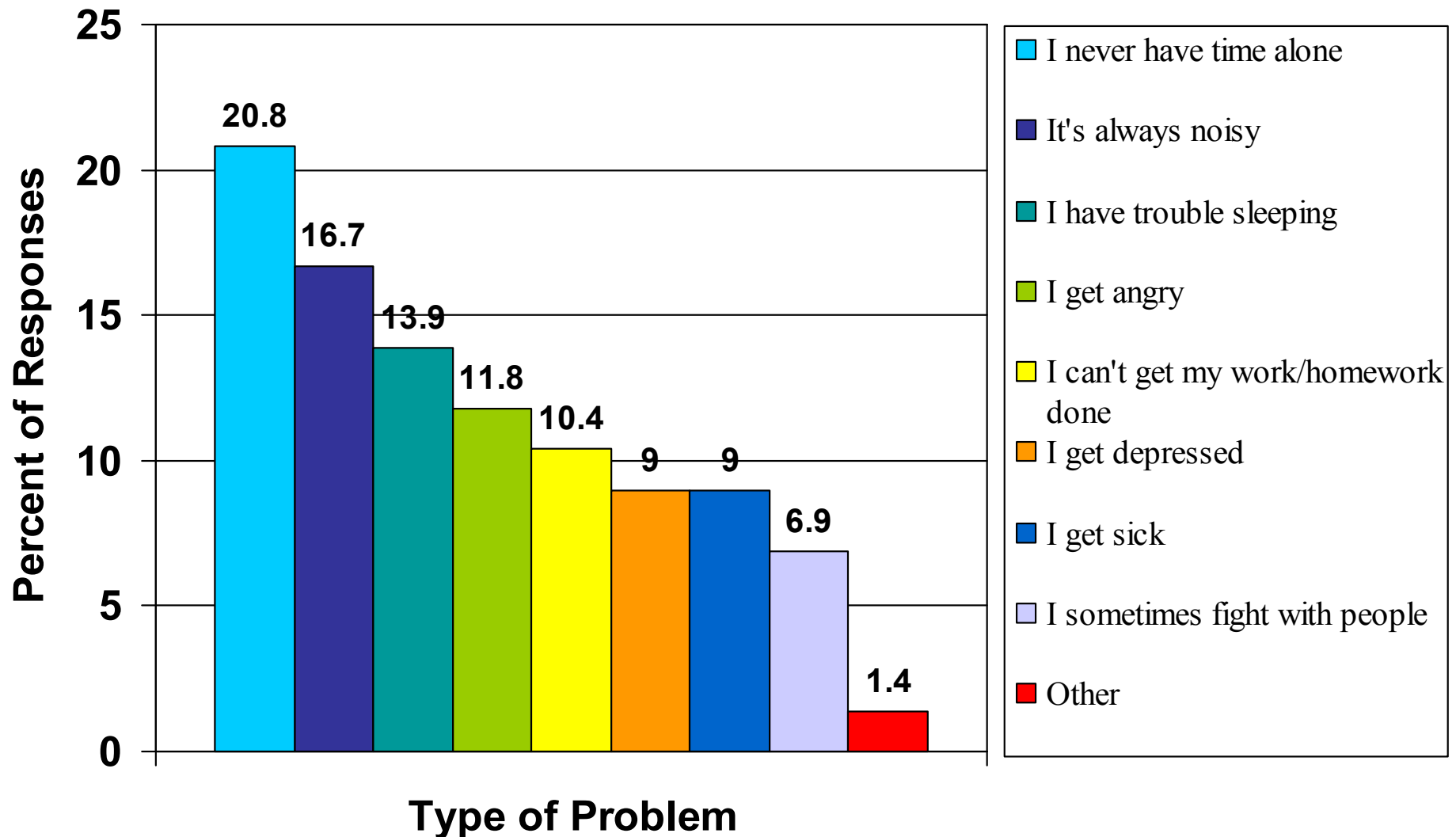
N=91. Three Inuit did not answer the question.

Personal and Social Problems Faced By Inuit In Kinngait



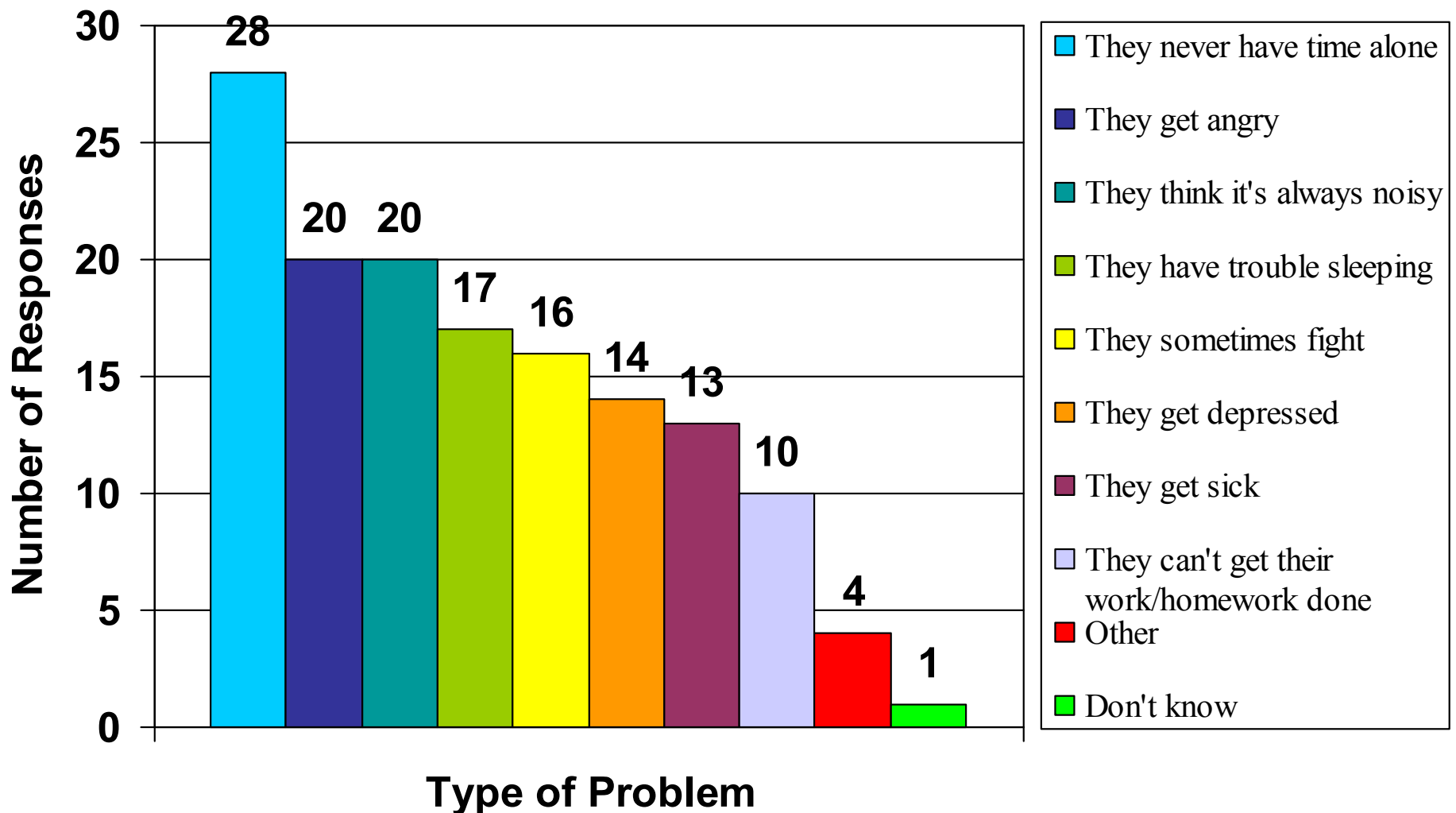
N=91.

The Following Problems Were Attributed to Overcrowding By Inuit Who Reported That Their House Was Sometimes Or Always Overcrowded (N=43):



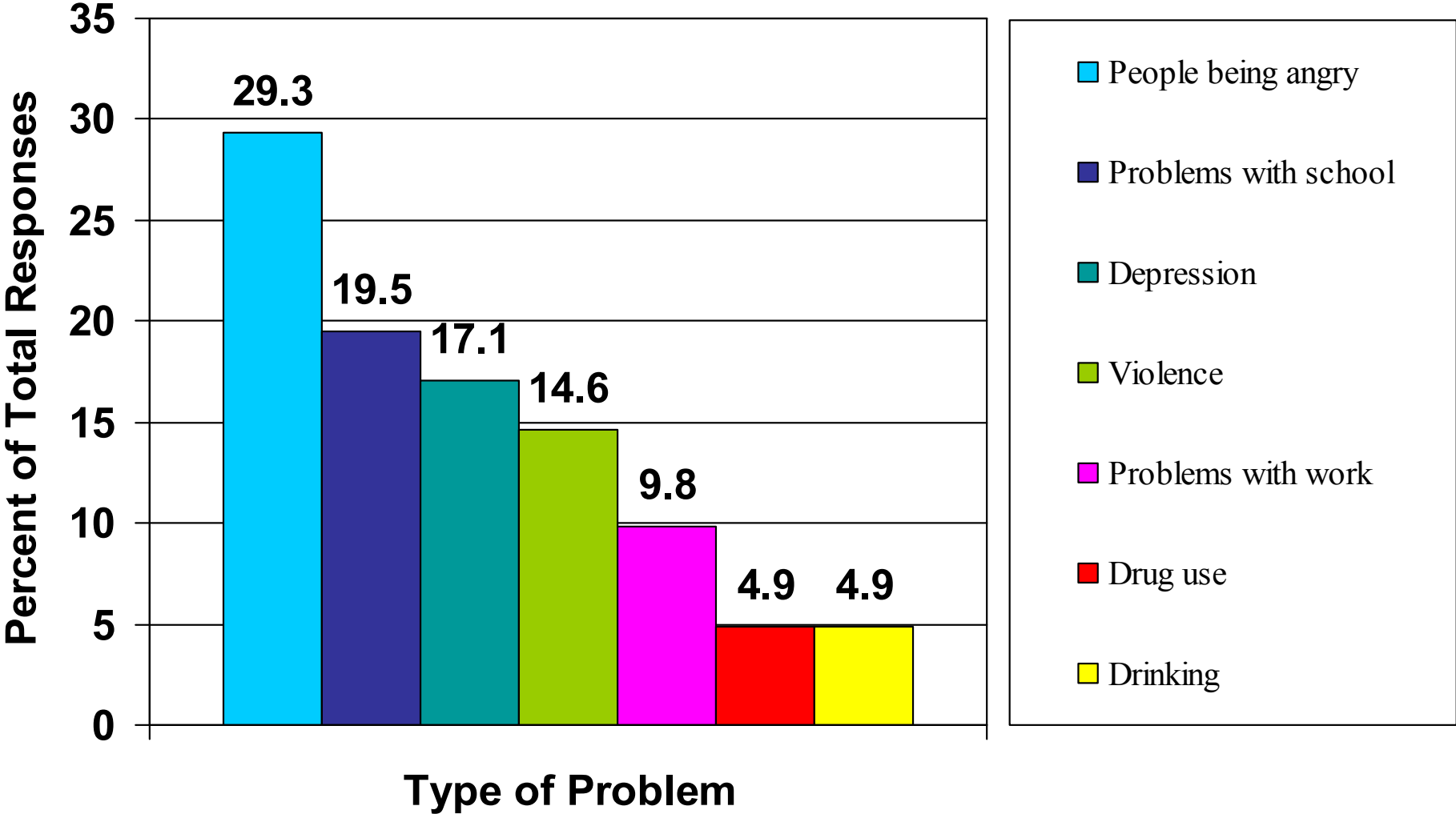
N=43. Thirty-one Inuit indicated that their house was always crowded, while twelve reported that it was sometimes crowded. Some respondents listed more than one problem. The total number of responses was 144.

The Following Problems Experienced By Others In the Respondent's Household Were Attributed To Housing:



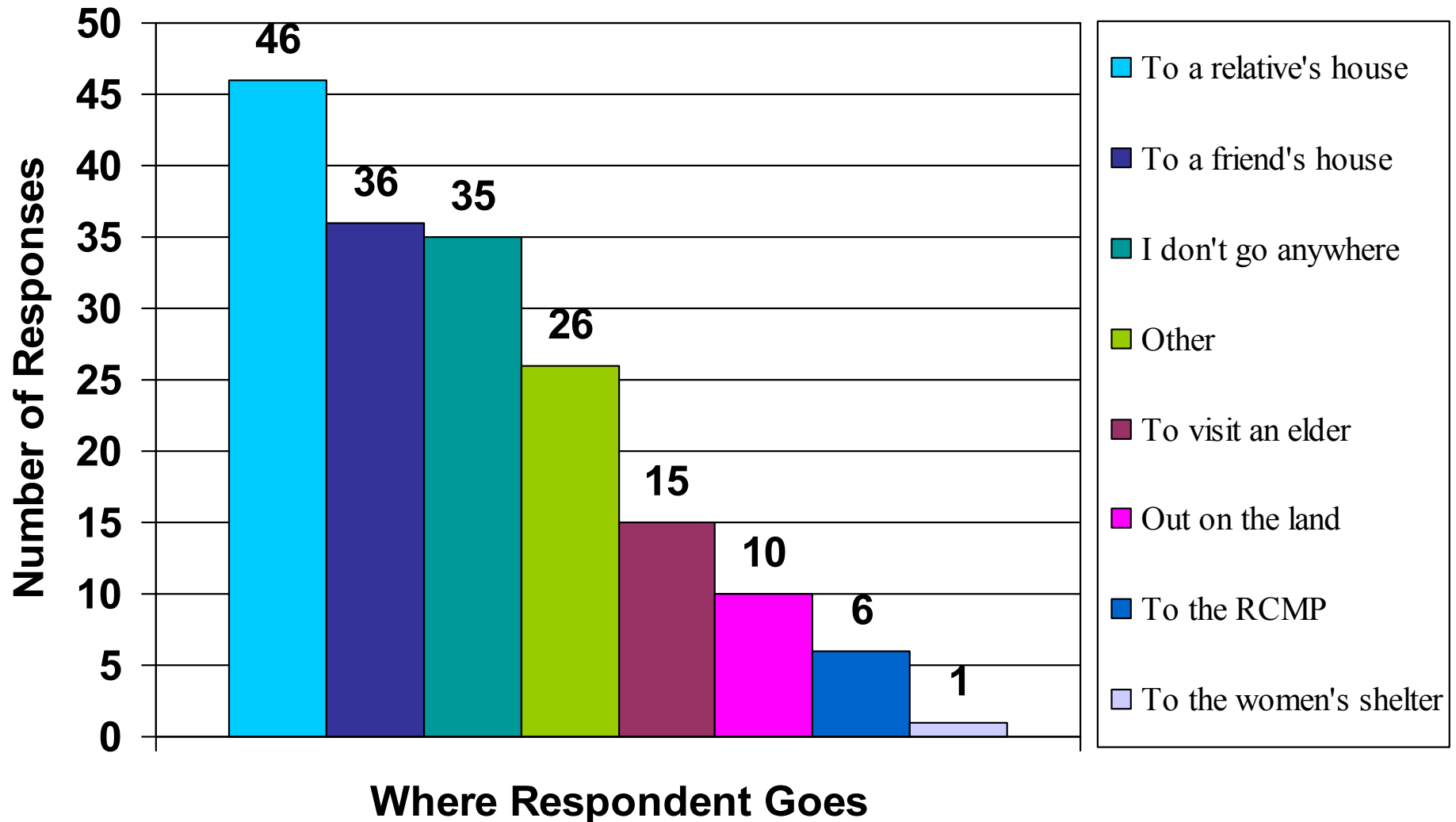
N=43. Thirty-one Inuit (34%) reported that their house was always crowded, while twelve (13.1%) reported that it was sometimes crowded. Inuit indicated more than one response to the question.

Number Of Inuit Who Think That Having Fewer People In Their House Would Help With Personal Problems



N=91. The total number of responses was 41.

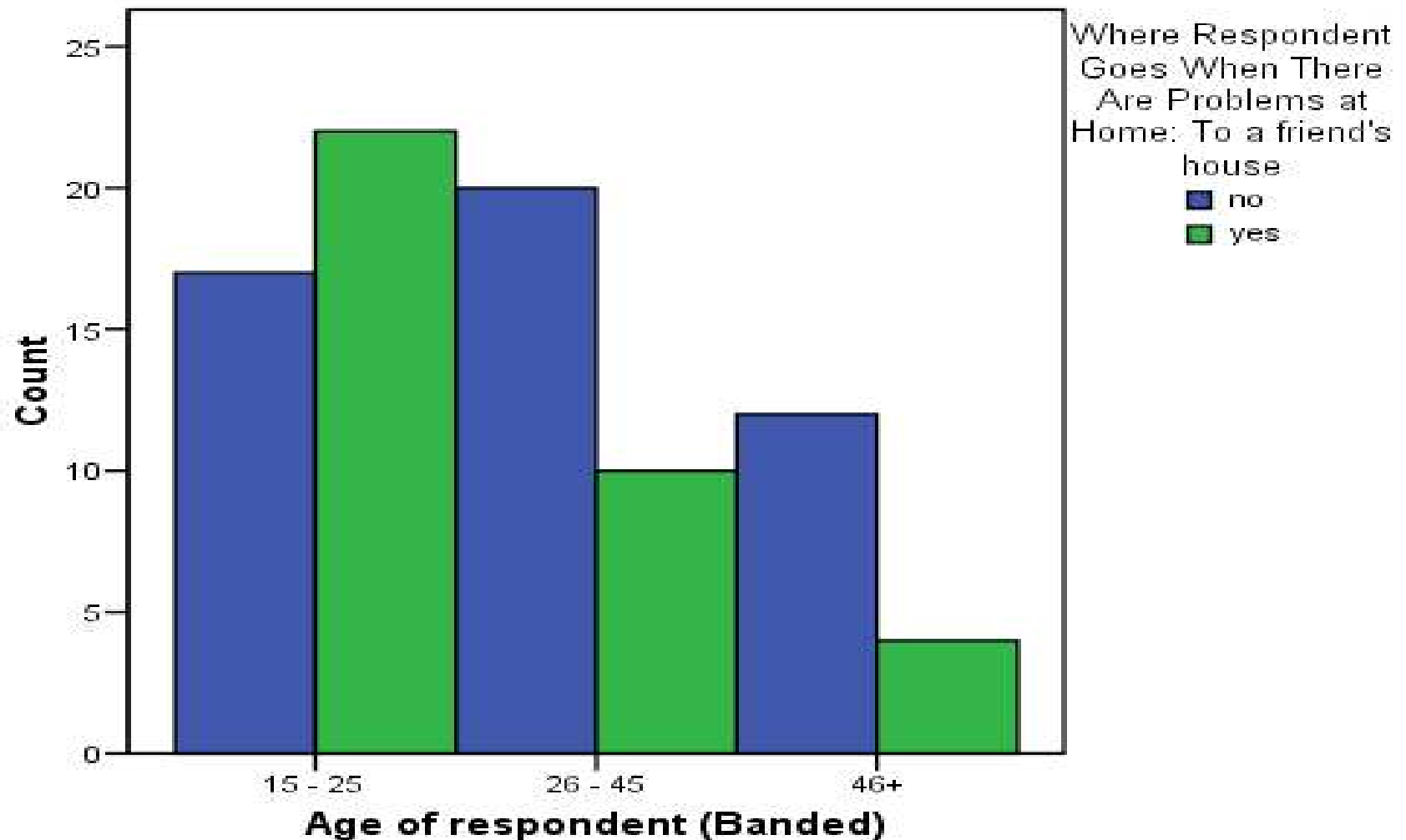
Where Respondent Goes When There Are Problems At Home



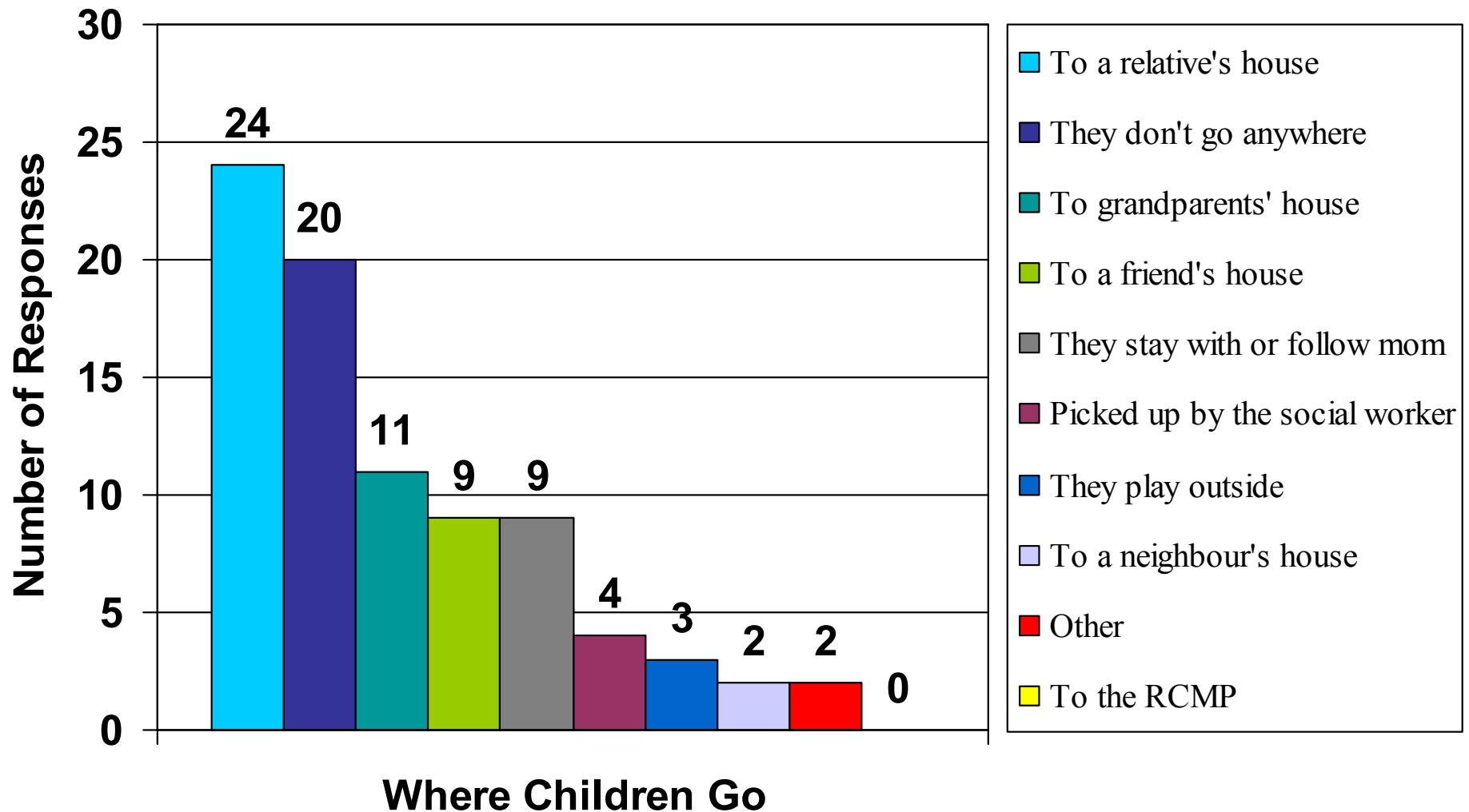
N=91. Some Inuit indicated more than one response. Young people (aged 15-25) are more likely than people in other age groups to go to a relative's or a friend's house when there are problems at home. Women are more likely than men to go a relative's house or to visit an elder when there are problems at home.

Relationship Between Age and Whether or Not Individual Goes to a Friend's Home When There are Problems at Home

Bar Chart

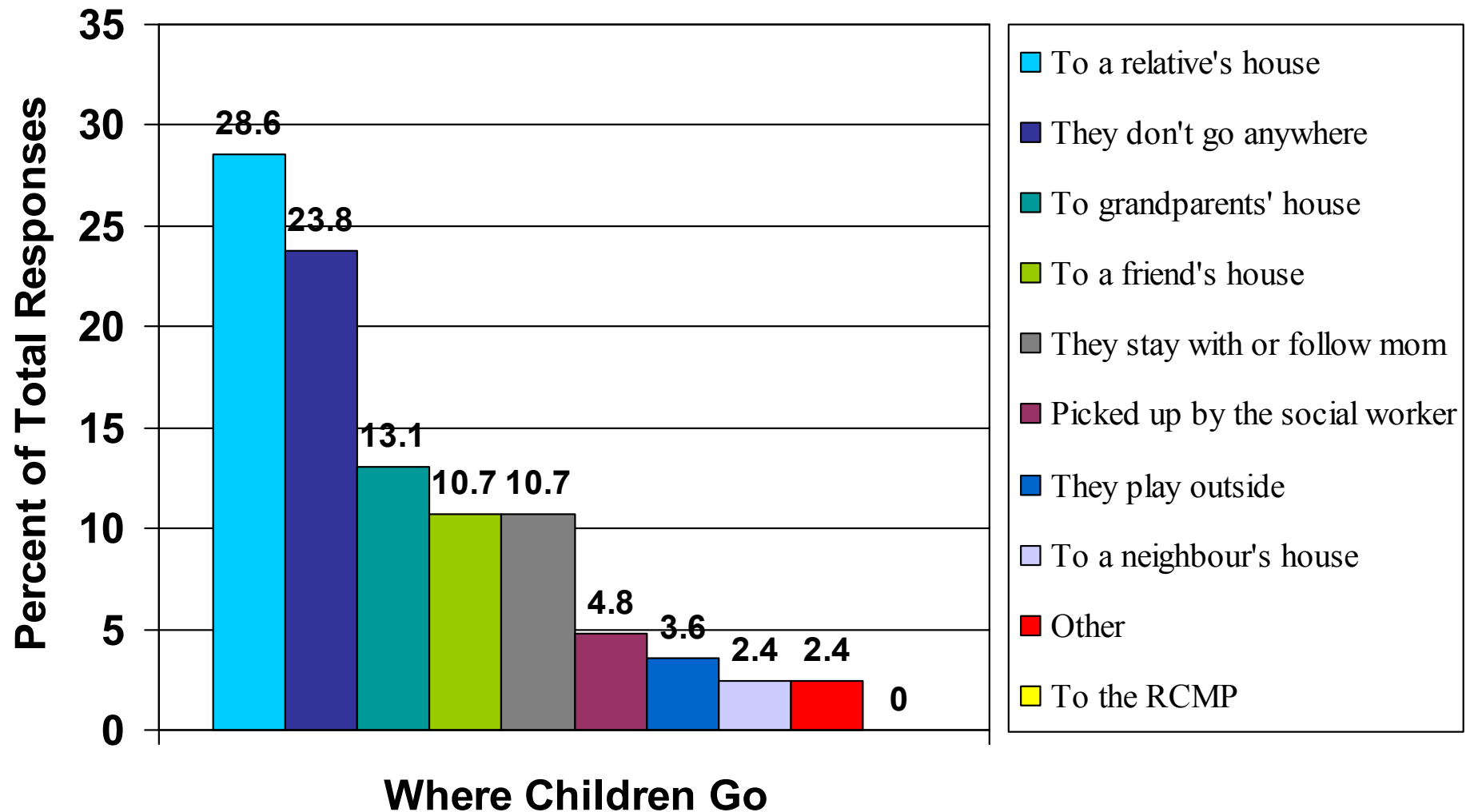


Respondent's Children Go To The Following Places When There Are Problems At Home:



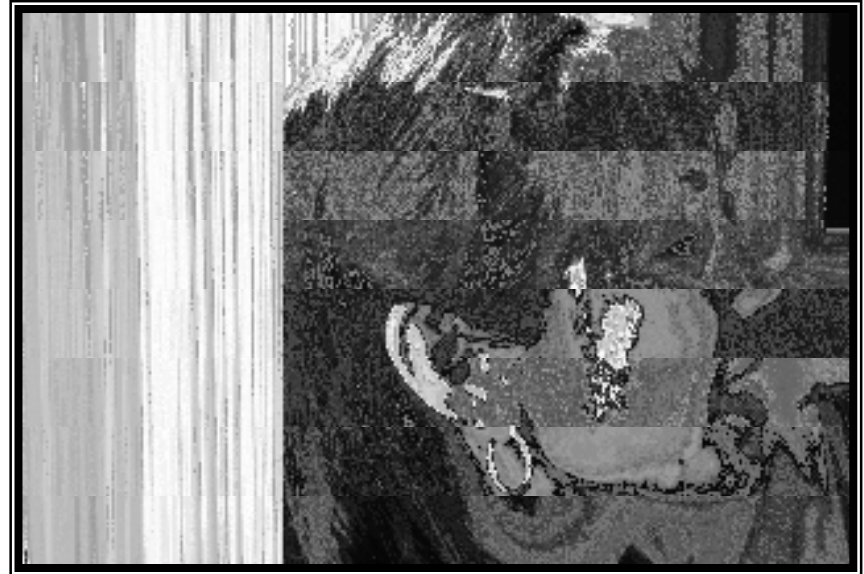
N= 66. Twenty-three Inuit reported that they do not have children; two did not answer the question.

Respondent's Children Go To The Following Places When There Are Problems At Home:

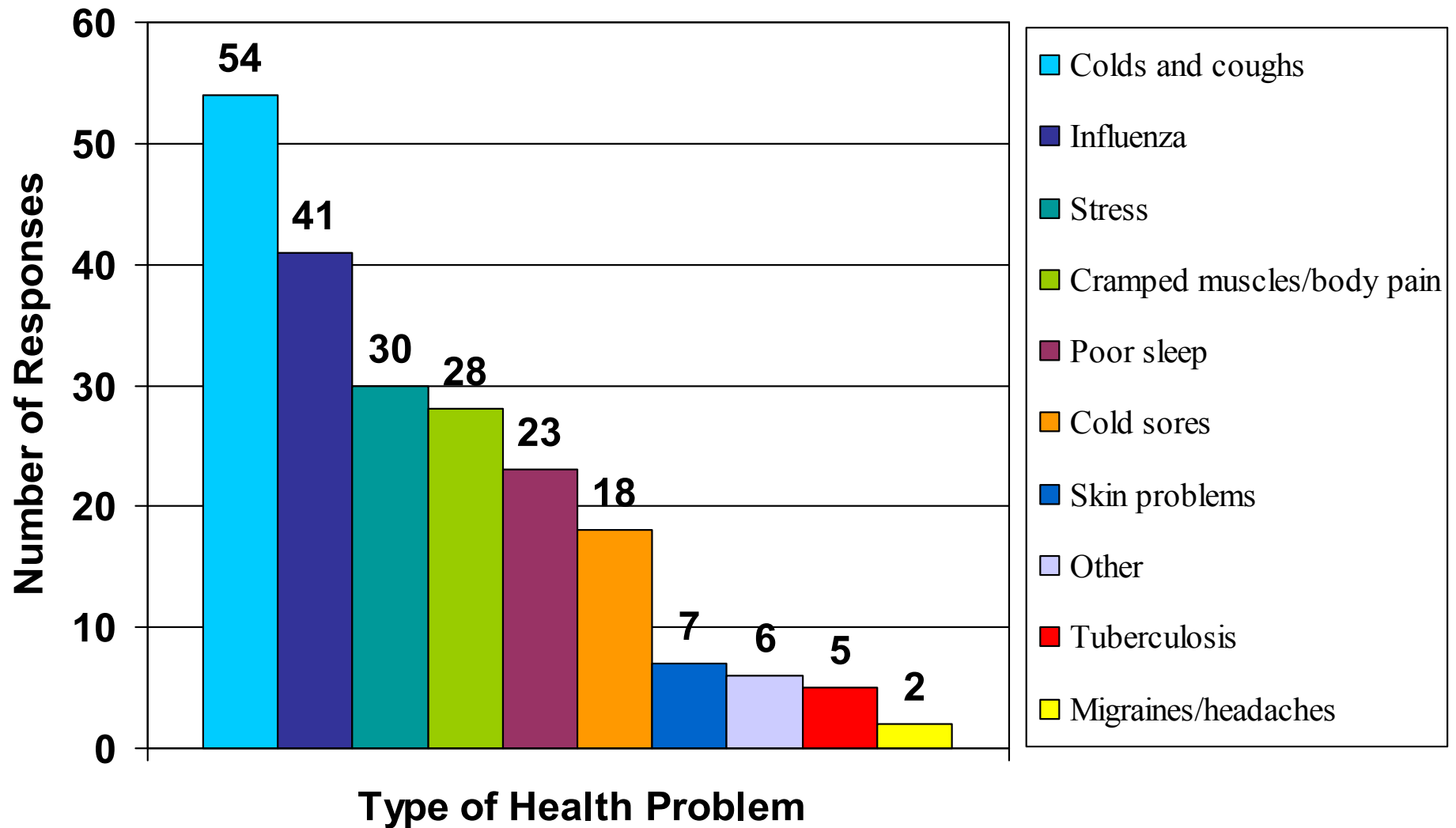


N= 66. Twenty-three Inuit reported that they do not have children; two did not answer the question. The total number of responses was 84.

People – their Health, Happiness and Well-Being - are Important

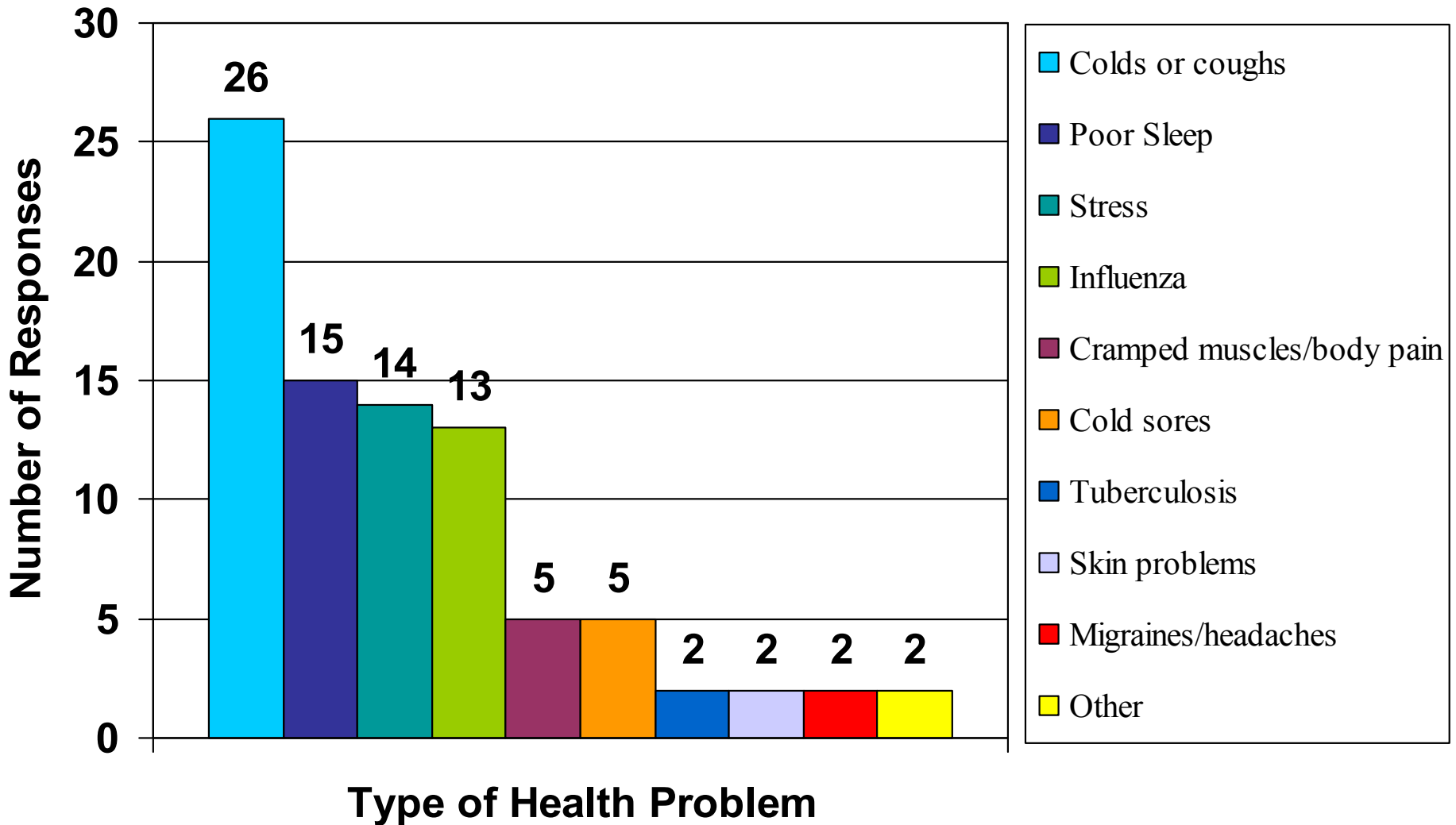


Health Problems Experienced By Respondents



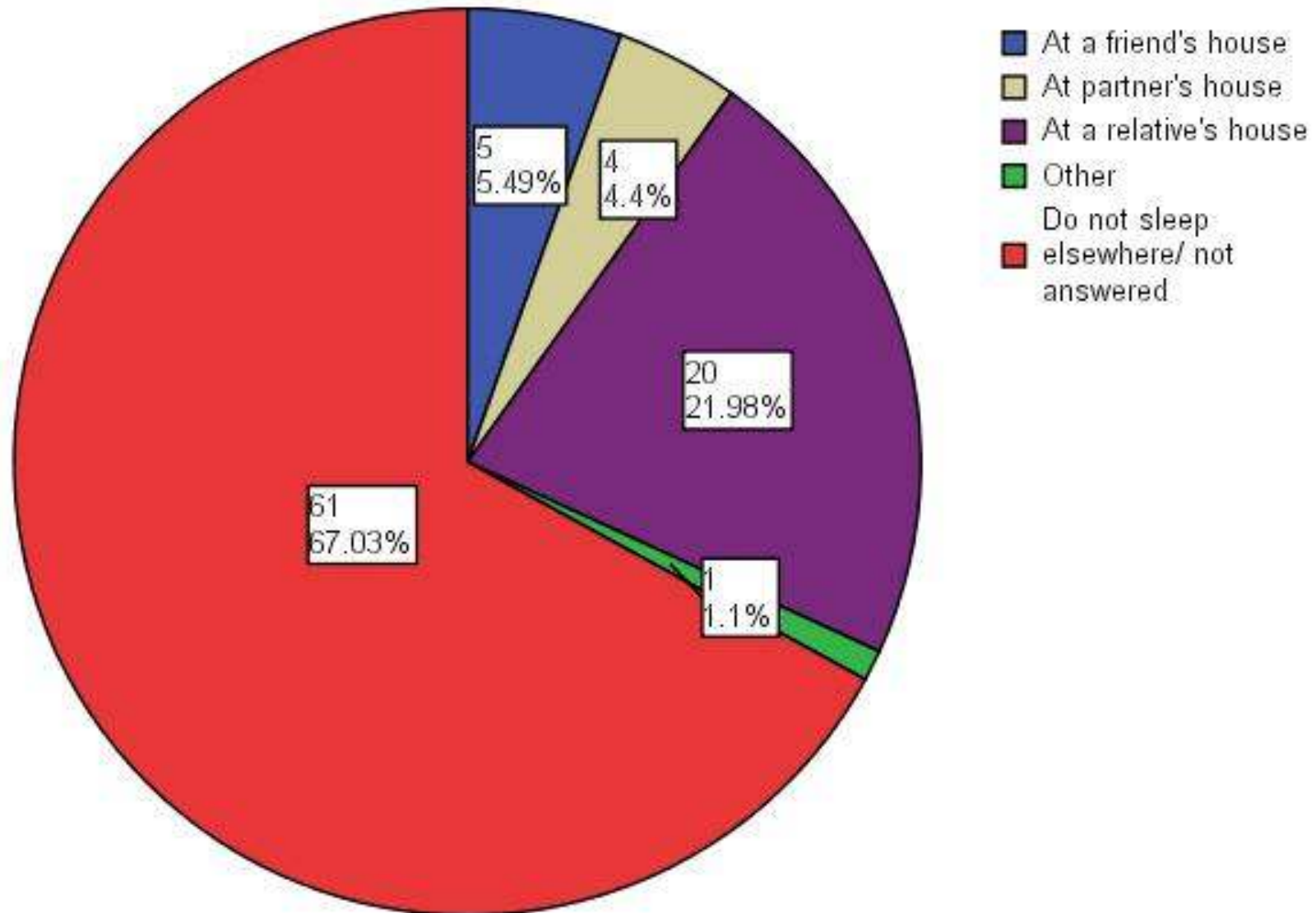
N=91. Some respondents indicated that they suffered from more than one health problem.

Whether Respondents Think Their Health Problems Occur Because Of Their Housing Situation



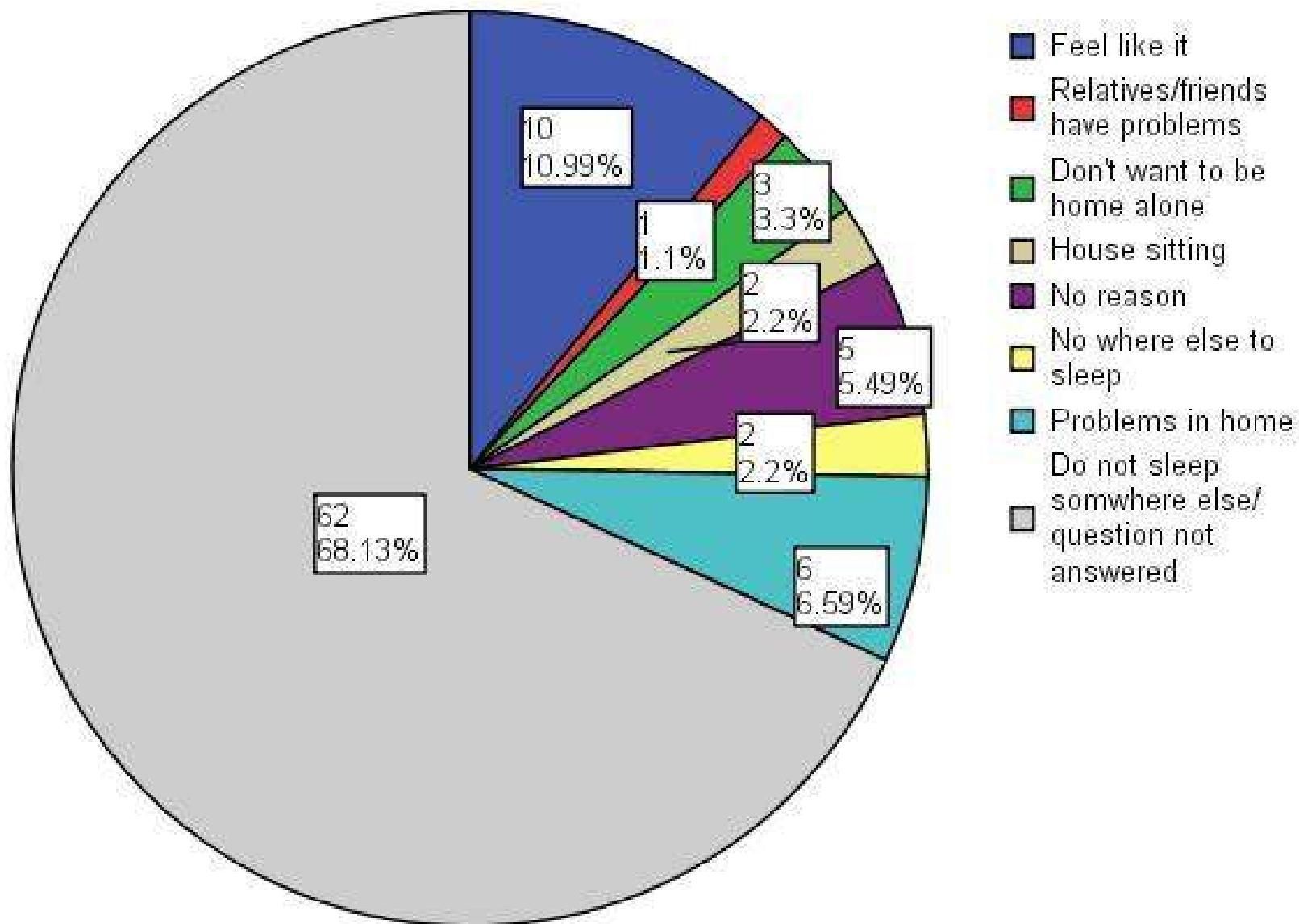
N=91. 49 Inuit (53.8%) said they thought people in their house would be healthier if they had more space.

Inuit Who Do Not Sleep At Their Own House Sleep At The Following Places



N=91. 16 Inuit (17.6%) reported that they always sleep somewhere besides their house, and 14 Inuit (15.4%) reported that they sometimes sleep somewhere else. 7 Inuit (7.7%) did not answer the question.

Reasons For Sleeping Somewhere Other Than The Respondent's Own House



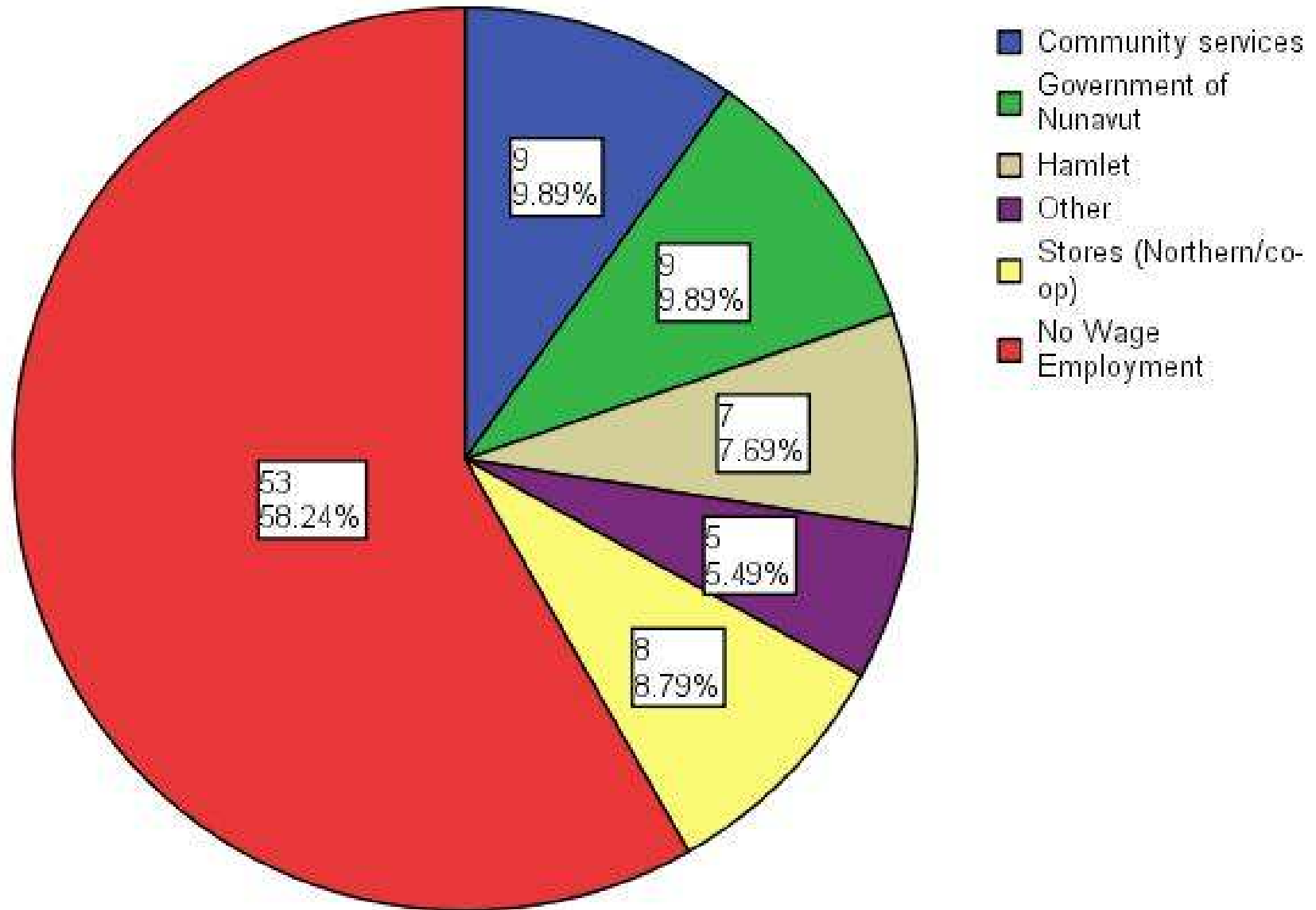
N=91. Rather than being given a list of possible reasons, respondents were asked to write in their own reasons for sleeping somewhere else.

Economic Well-Being and Housing



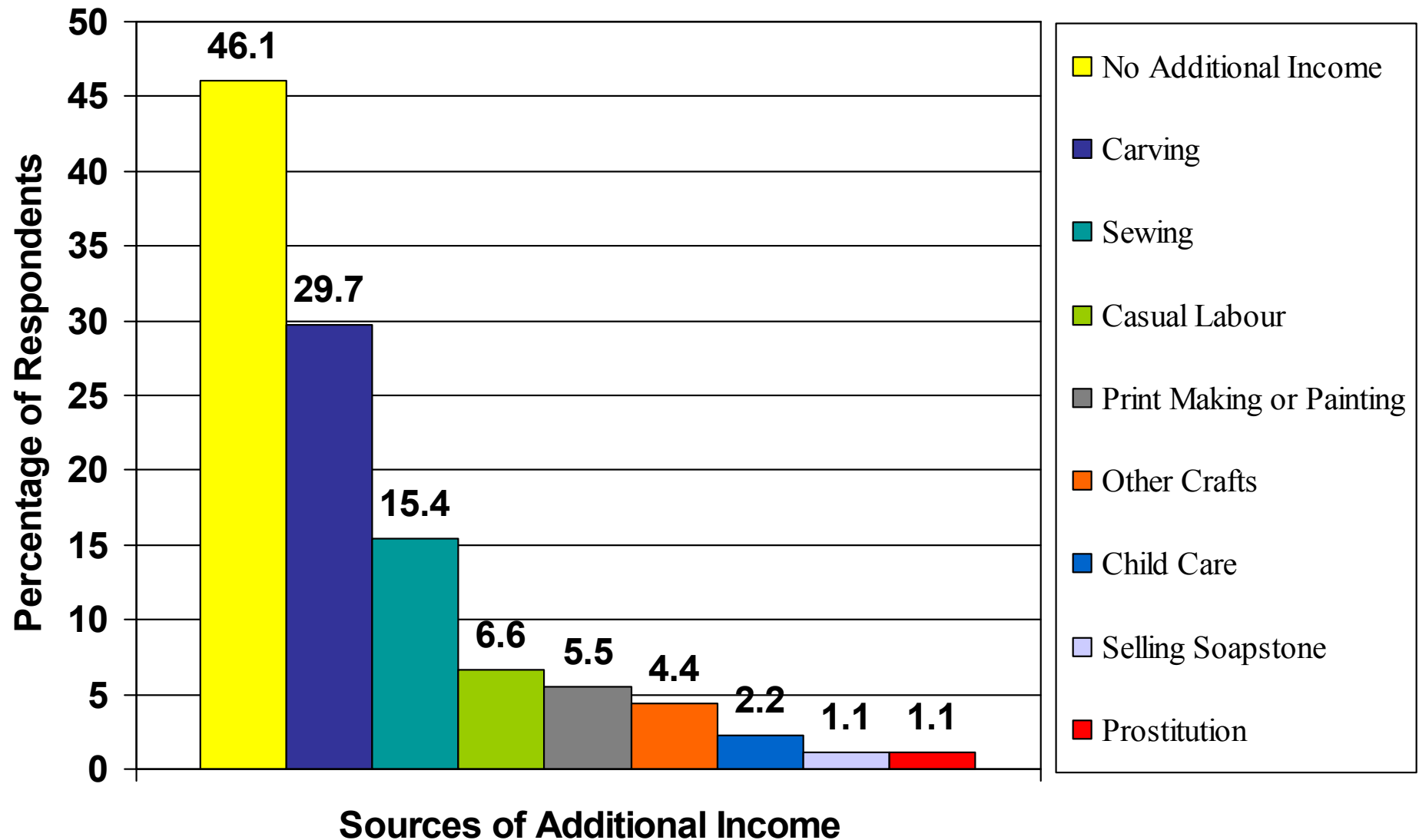
- 74% of Inuit are renters
- 50% of Inuit are living in social housing
- Inuit incomes are 18% below the national average
- Nunavut experienced an 8.1% increase in population between 1996 and 2001
- 50% of the population is < 20 years of age

Sources of Earned Income: Wage Employment



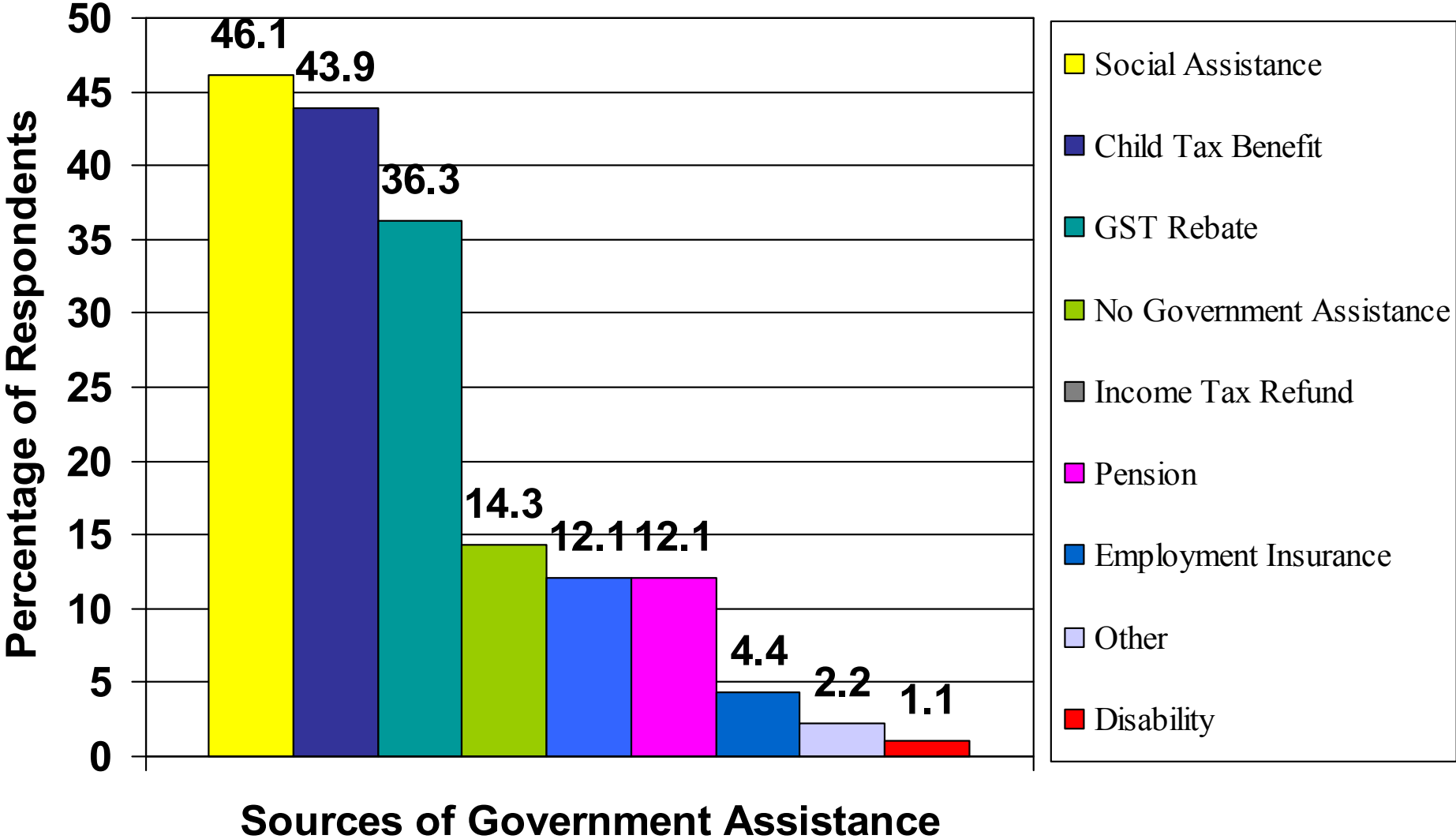
N=91. Thirty-eight Inuit (41.8%) reported that they were employed in one of the above jobs.

Sources Of Earned Income Other Than Full-Time Employment



N=91. Some Inuit indicated more than one source of additional income. This chart shows the percentage of respondents who answered yes to each category.

Non-Earned Sources of Government Income



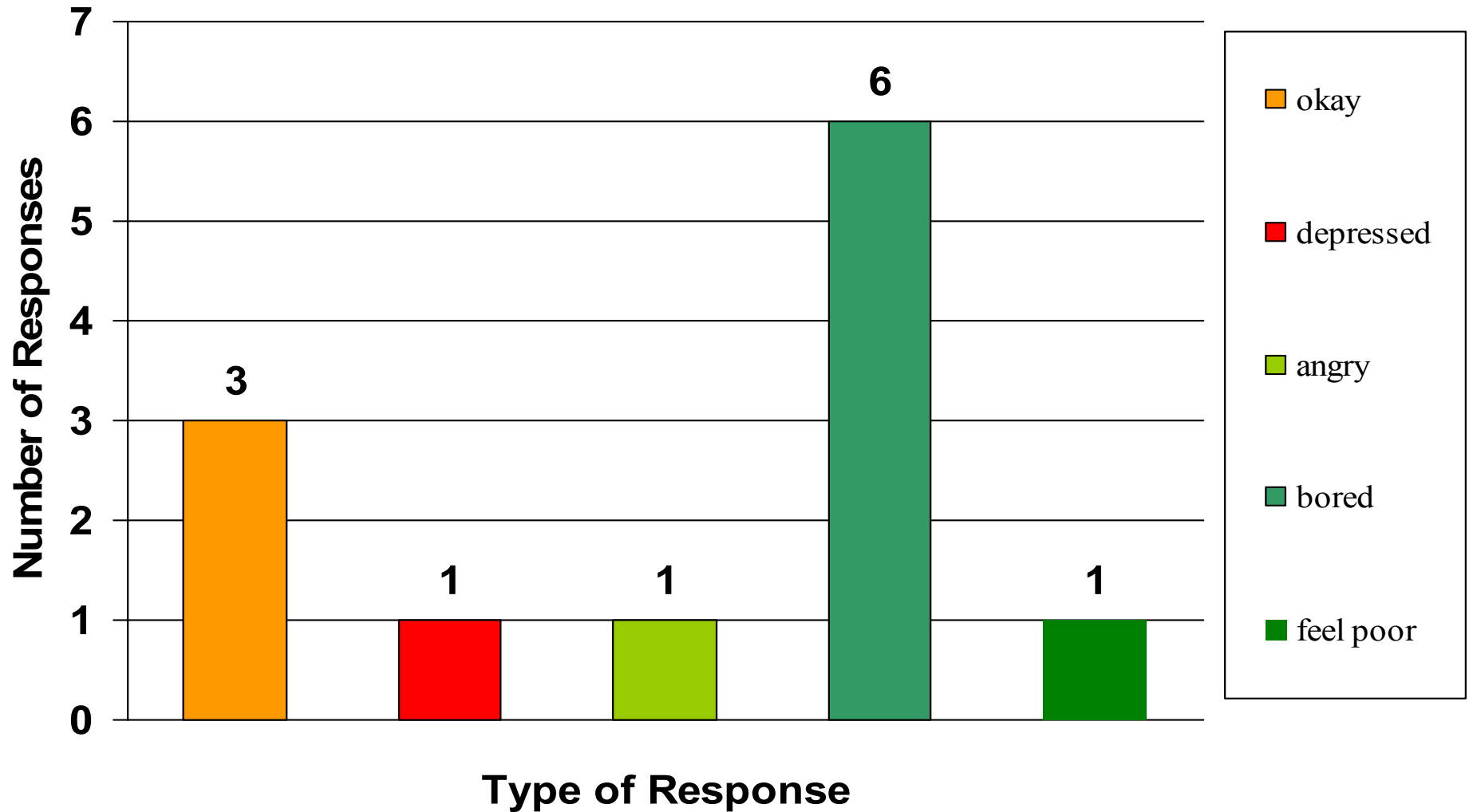
N=91. The above table shows the percent of Inuit who receive income from one or more of the above sources.

Multiple relationships between lack of income and conditions at home

- Lack of resources necessary to access the land (to relieve tensions and pressures at home)
- Selling of household furniture and appliances for food
- Anger, anxiety and other emotions associated with not being able to 'get out of town' and onto the land

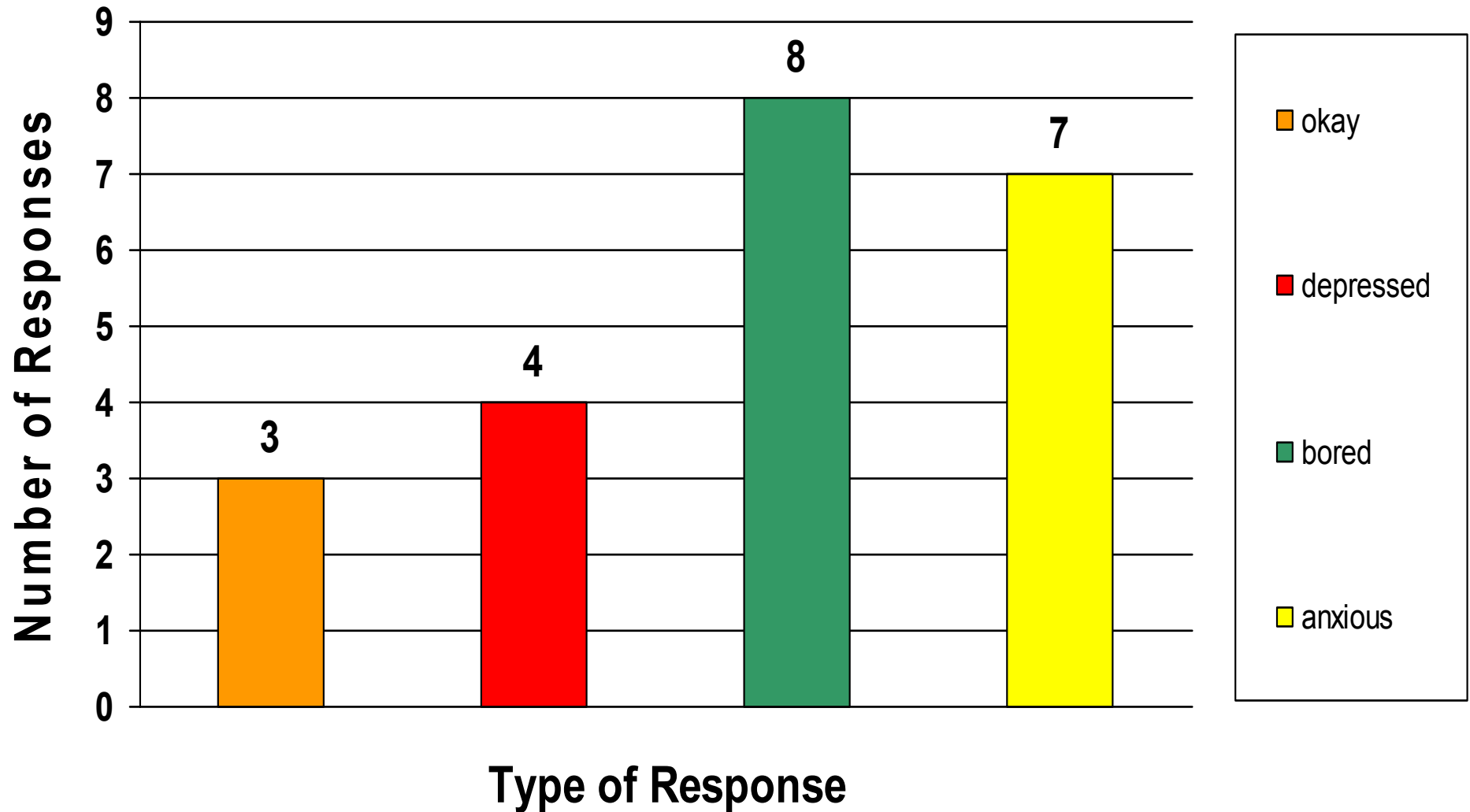


Impact of Not Being Able to Get Out Onto the Land – Males (N=12)



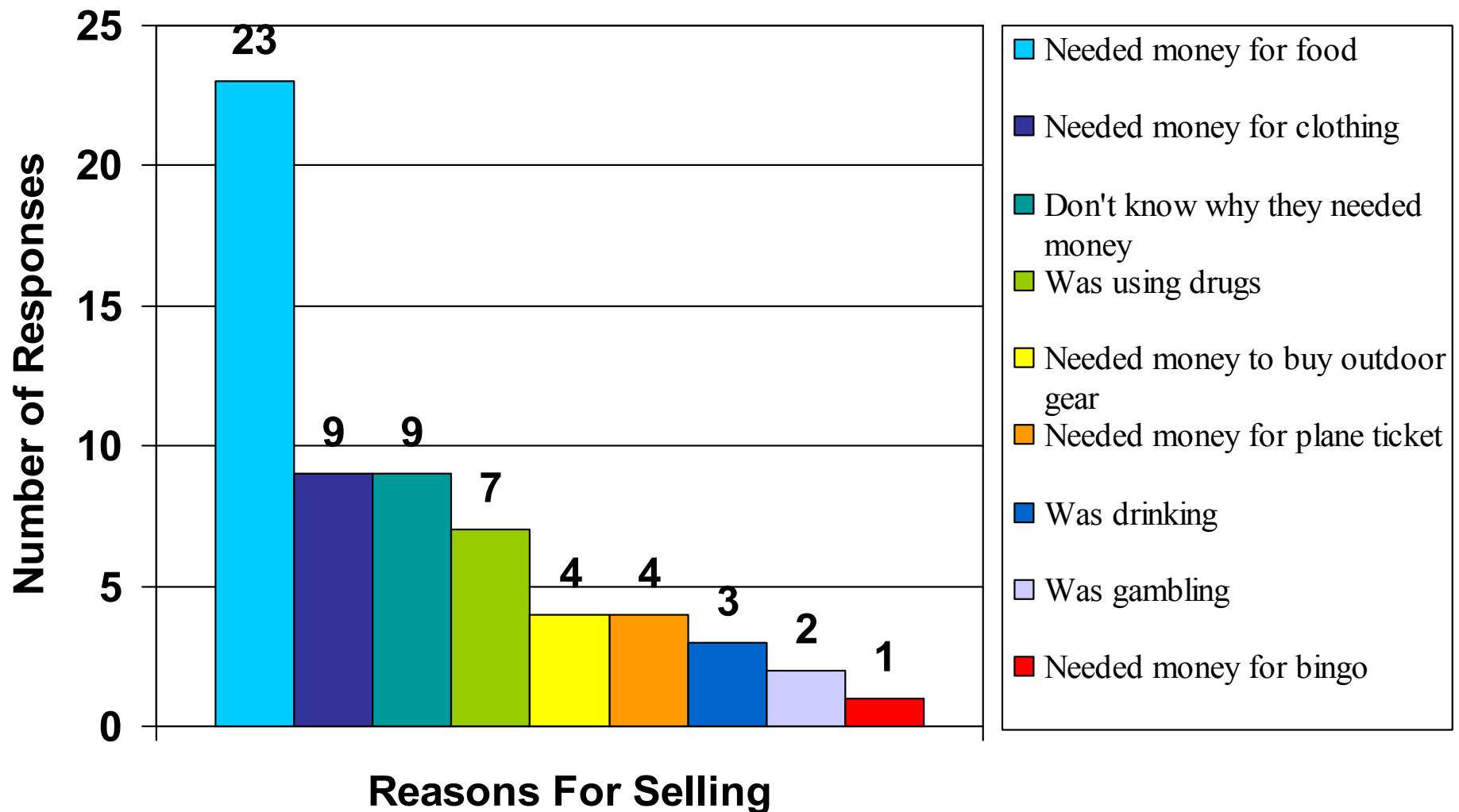
- There were 44 males in the sample (N=91). Thirty two indicated they had the equipment necessary to get out onto the land and 12 indicated they did not. This included 3 who were part of a couple and 9 who were single. The average age was 30.6.

Impact of Not Being Able to Get out Onto the Land – Females (N=22)



- There were 47 women in the sample. Twenty-five indicated they had the equipment necessary to go onto the land and 22 did not. Ten of these women were coupled and 12 were singles. That average age was 31.4.

Reasons Why Someone Has Sold Furniture, Appliances Or Equipment From Respondent's House



N=91. Note that this question refers to reasons why anyone, not just the respondent, may have sold furniture, appliances or equipment from the respondent's house. Sixty-three Inuit (69%) answered no to all of the above questions. In other words 28 Inuit (30.7% of the sample) had sold items for one or more of these reasons and

Food Security: a current and growing problem



Food Price Comparison

Iqaluit

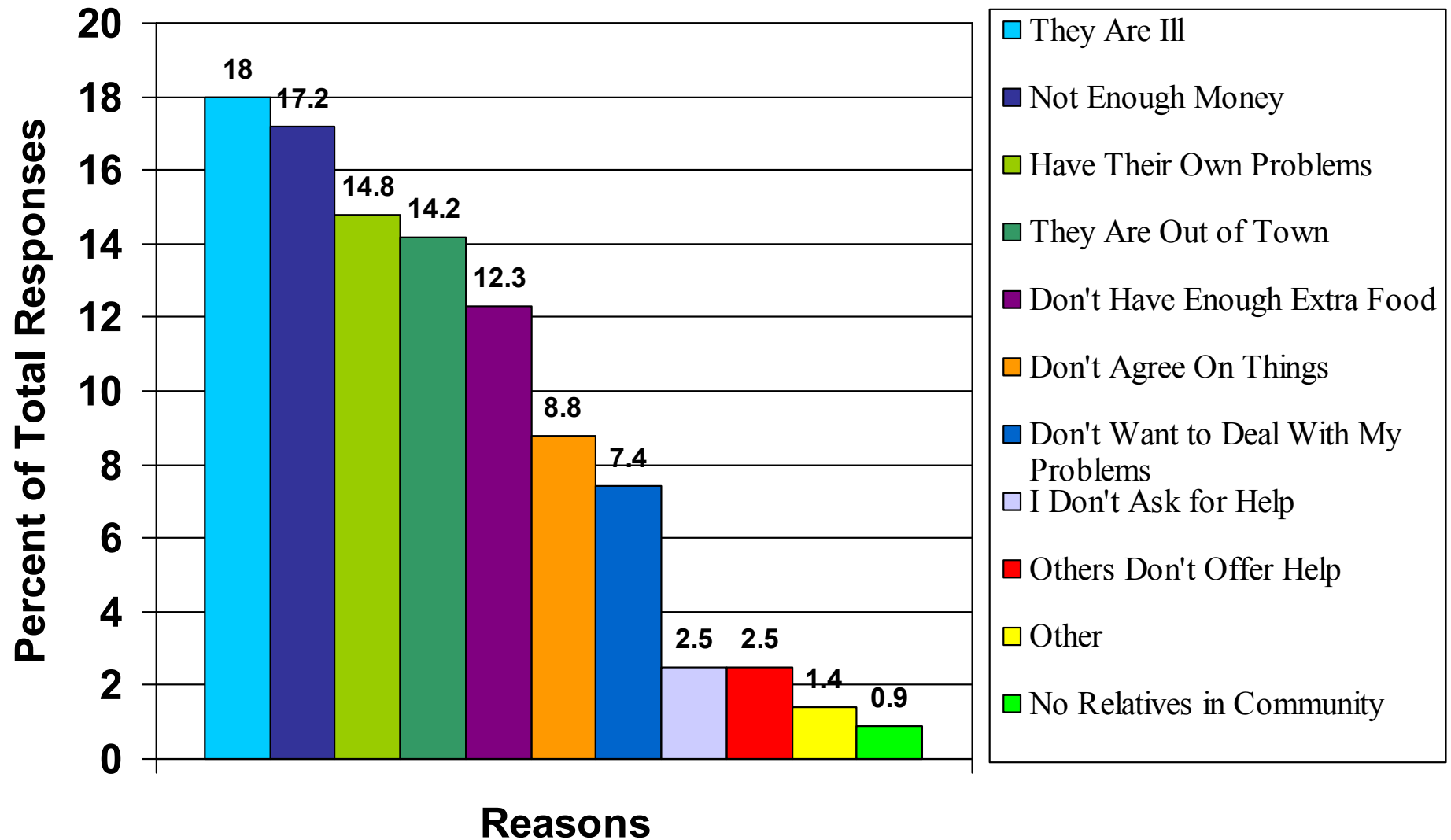
Vancouver

• Apples all kinds *	4.99 kg	1.52
• Best Value Bread *	2.79	1.26
• Oranges *	6.49 kg	2.49
• Sunny delight orange juice 2.8L	16.99	7.49
• Pork Chops, family pack *	11.99 per kg	7.29
• Hamburger Reg family pack *	7.89 kg	3.51
• Striploin steak *	28.99 kg	
• T-Bone Steak *	26.99 kg	
• Chicken, whole *	9.99 kg	5.59
• Milk 2Litre, all kinds *	6.99	2.98
• Sunlight Laundry Det 3.3 kg	21.99	8.49
• Sugar 2 kgs *	5.49	2.49
• Flour 2.5 kg *	9.79	2.69
• Frosted Flakes 1.02 kg, sale	13.79	6.99
• Rolled Oats 1 kg *	4.99	2.49

- * these items are subsidized by Federal Food Mail (through the post)

The high cost is offset to some extent by differences in rates for social assistance. A single person in Ontario is entitled to \$6,240 / year. In Nunavut the figure is \$10, 148. For a couple with two children, the comparable figures are \$12,223 and \$28,431 respectively. Nevertheless, as can be seen, costs for most food items are more than double what they are in the south and the same applies to clothing, fuel and other necessities.

When Relatives Can't Offer Help, It Is For The Following Reasons



N=91. Most Inuit gave more than one reason why relatives sometimes can't help. The total number of responses to the question was 225.

Policy and Programme Responses



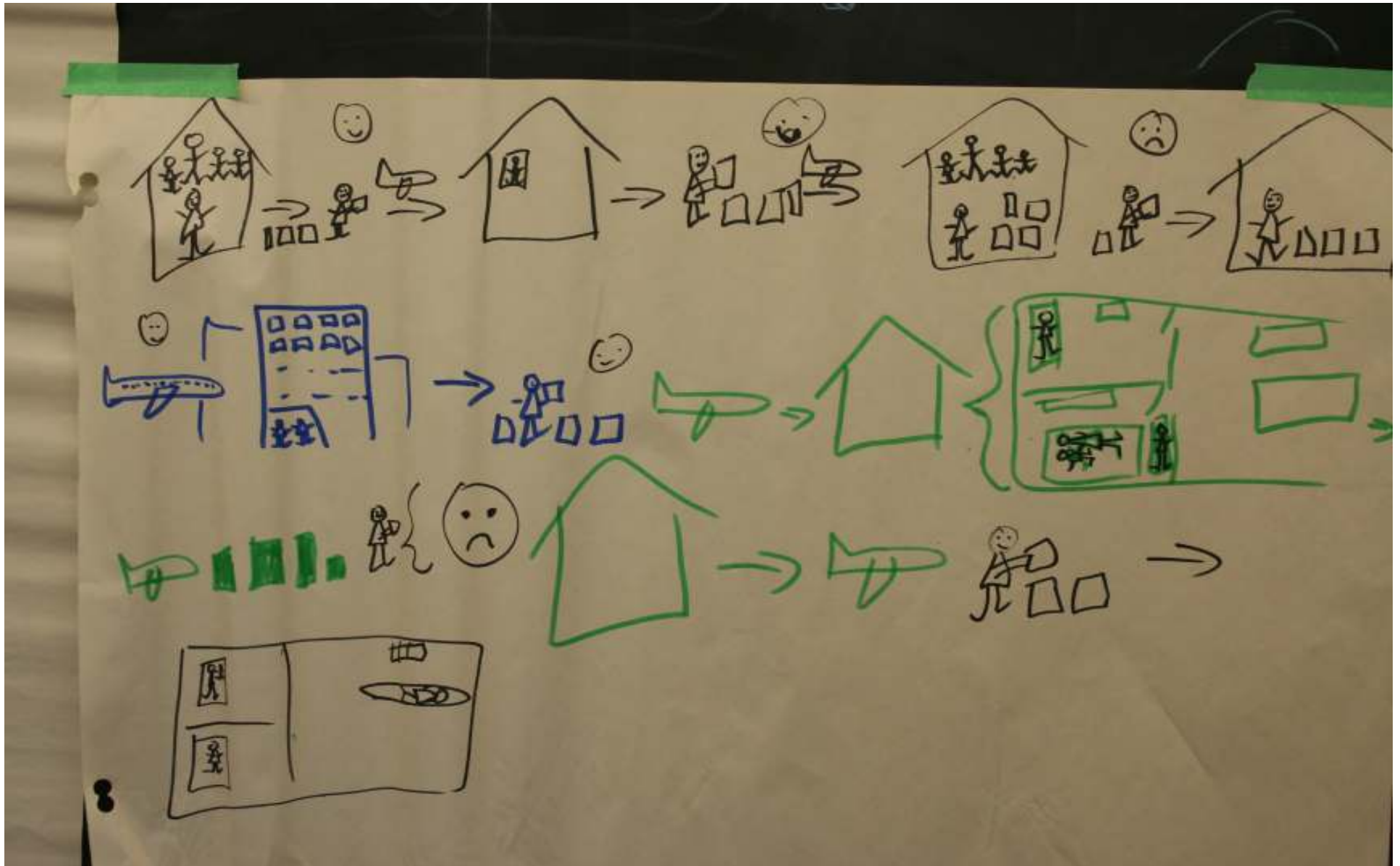
Participation





Imagination

What we need in working with Inuit youth on problems like housing, climate change and economic development is creative imagination that respects Inuit ways of thinking, communicating and conceptualizing problems



Making Research Effective

- Address paternalism and neo-colonialism (both are problems).
- Work with communities (empower and help develop the skills of local residents).
- Consult. Connect policy problems to lived realities and everyday experience. (What rules or programmes are needed to help solve a problem?)



Community Involvement



- Members of local housing committees need training to help them become more effective in exercising their responsibilities.
- Members need resources, recognition and encouragement to do their jobs and to make variations in housing allocations based on community needs.

Funding and Full Accounting

- An interdepartmental committee of the Nunavut government, including elders and youth, is needed to ensure that the social costs associated with inadequate housing, and the implications for a wide range of departmental budgets, in addressing the problems, get full recognition and consideration.



Inuit Rights and the Constitution

- The *Nunavut Agreement* [2.7.3 (b)] states that government programmes “for Aboriginal people generally” will be available to Inuit.
- Housing programmes available to First Nations are not available to Inuit.
- Section 36 (1) of the Constitution commits the federal government to promoting **equal** opportunities for the well-being of Inuit as Canadian citizens.
- These suggest realities for negotiation, and legal action in relation to housing assistance is not an impossibility.



Economic Development and Housing



- The Nunavut Government should consider transferring resources from its current social assistance programme, to wages associated with subsidized and meaningful employment. This should not be a form of 'workfare', but should involve Inuit in the production of goods and services that draw upon cultural, and other strengths.

Design Considerations

- There are many design considerations that need to be incorporated into Inuit housing (see recommendations made by Peter Dawson in CMHC report, October, 2003).
- All fixtures should be of industrial quality, open floor plans are required, kitchens and living rooms should be one space, sinks need to be larger, more storage solutions are needed, designs must consider children, etc.



Space for Women to Earn Income



- A crafts centre is needed in Kinngait where women can have the equipment and space they need to take better advantage of opportunities that are important to earning income, but that are inadequately recognized and supported.

Reunification and Accommodation for Men



- While women often need shelter, men returning from a jail sentence served in Iqaluit or the south often need some degree of separation from family while they re-establish themselves. A facility is needed to accommodate this.
- Family reunification programmes based on Inuit cultural practices are needed to assist women and men who have their children removed due to family breakdown. If adequate housing is not provided, the need for services that address the systemic social implications of overcrowding is more critical than would otherwise be the case.

Safety and Security Measures



- A programme needs to be initiated that identifies one or two members of extended families who are in a position to play a role in mediating and preventing problems of anger and violence that may arise in the homes of extended family members. They should receive support and training.

Access to the Land

- Access to the land is very important to Inuit mental health and social well-being in isolated, 'fly-in' communities
- A programme needs to be developed that increases the access Inuit have to the resources necessary to using the land for recreation (social and mental health) purposes and not just hunter support.



Cooperative Housing

- A persistent problem with Inuit housing is common to all situations where people have no personal investment or commitment to the units in which they live.
- Given the realities of Inuit incomes, cultural considerations, demographics, etc., considerable innovation and creativity is required to create a successful cooperative programme to deliver housing to both Inuit and non-Inuit residents of Nunavut.
- We recommend that the Nunavut Government work with the Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada, NTI and the Canadian Cooperative Association to develop an unique cooperative housing programme tailored to the needs of Nunavummiut.

