



NATIONAL
POSTDOCTORAL
ASSOCIATION

Results from Sexual Harassment Survey 2017

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*Providing a national voice and seeking positive change for
postdoctoral scholars*

An introduction to the definition of sexual harassment and the National Postdoctoral Association Survey

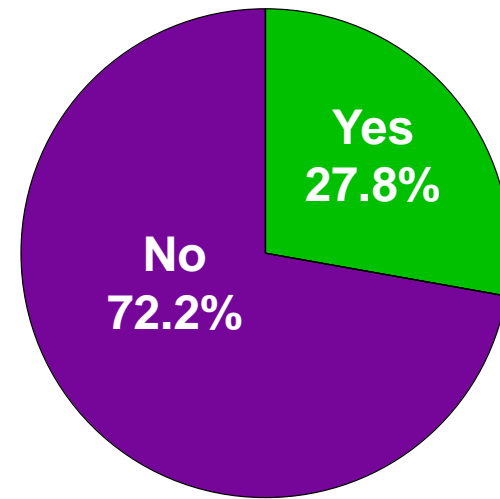
Per the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person's sex. Harassment can include "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex.

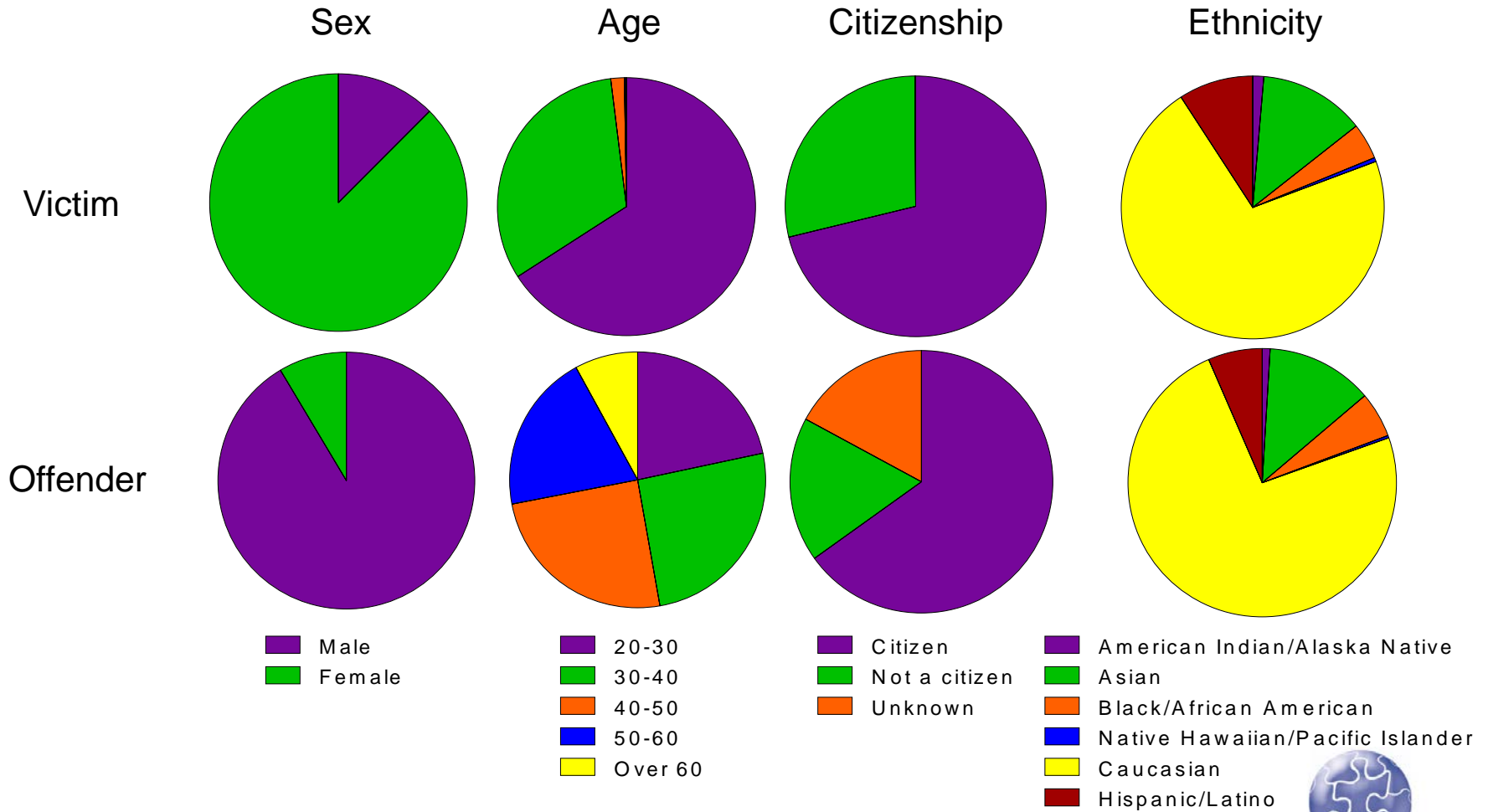
Have you been sexually harassed?



n=2,734

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What is the demographic breakdown of the victim and offender?



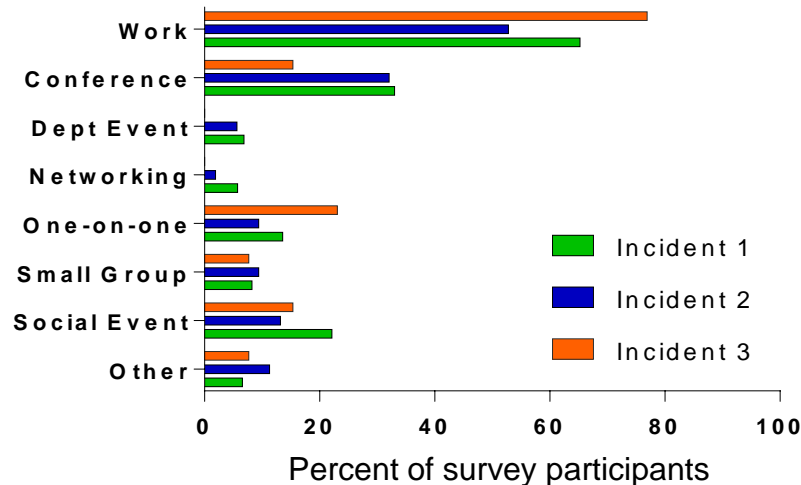
Types and location of sexual harassment

Types of sexual harassment

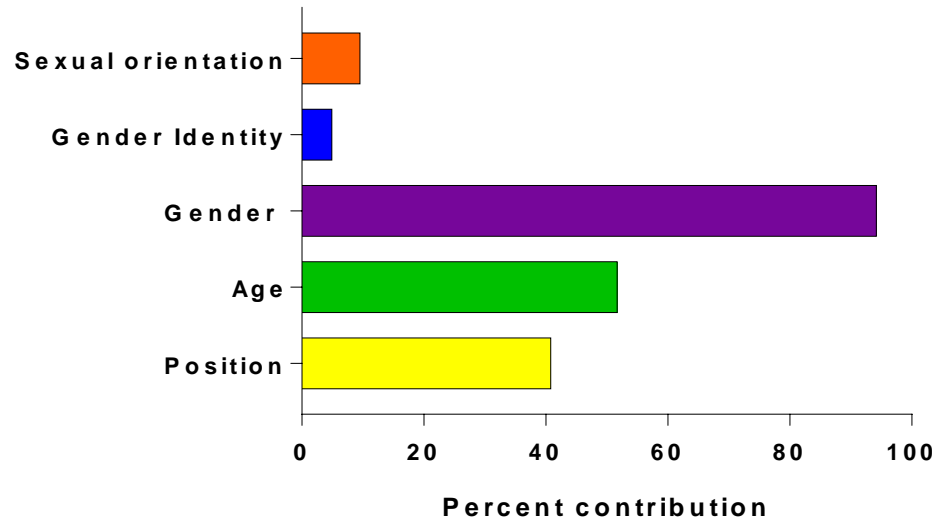
72.2% reported no sexual harassment, of the 27.8% that did report sexual harassment, the types were:



Location of sexual harassment

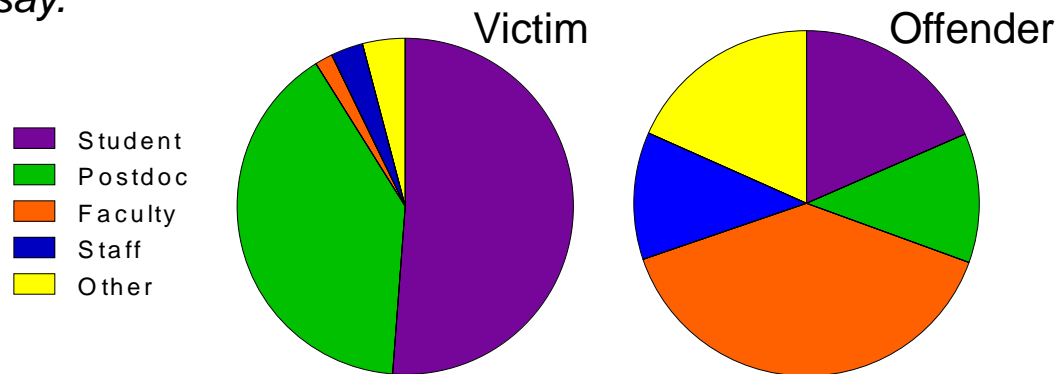


Victims reported gender, age and position as drivers of sexual harassment



Our data demonstrate that the victim was mostly in a position junior to the offender and personal accounts make references to this:

“As a female postdoctoral fellow that is junior to the head of the department, there wasn’t much I could say.”



A closer look at the male population

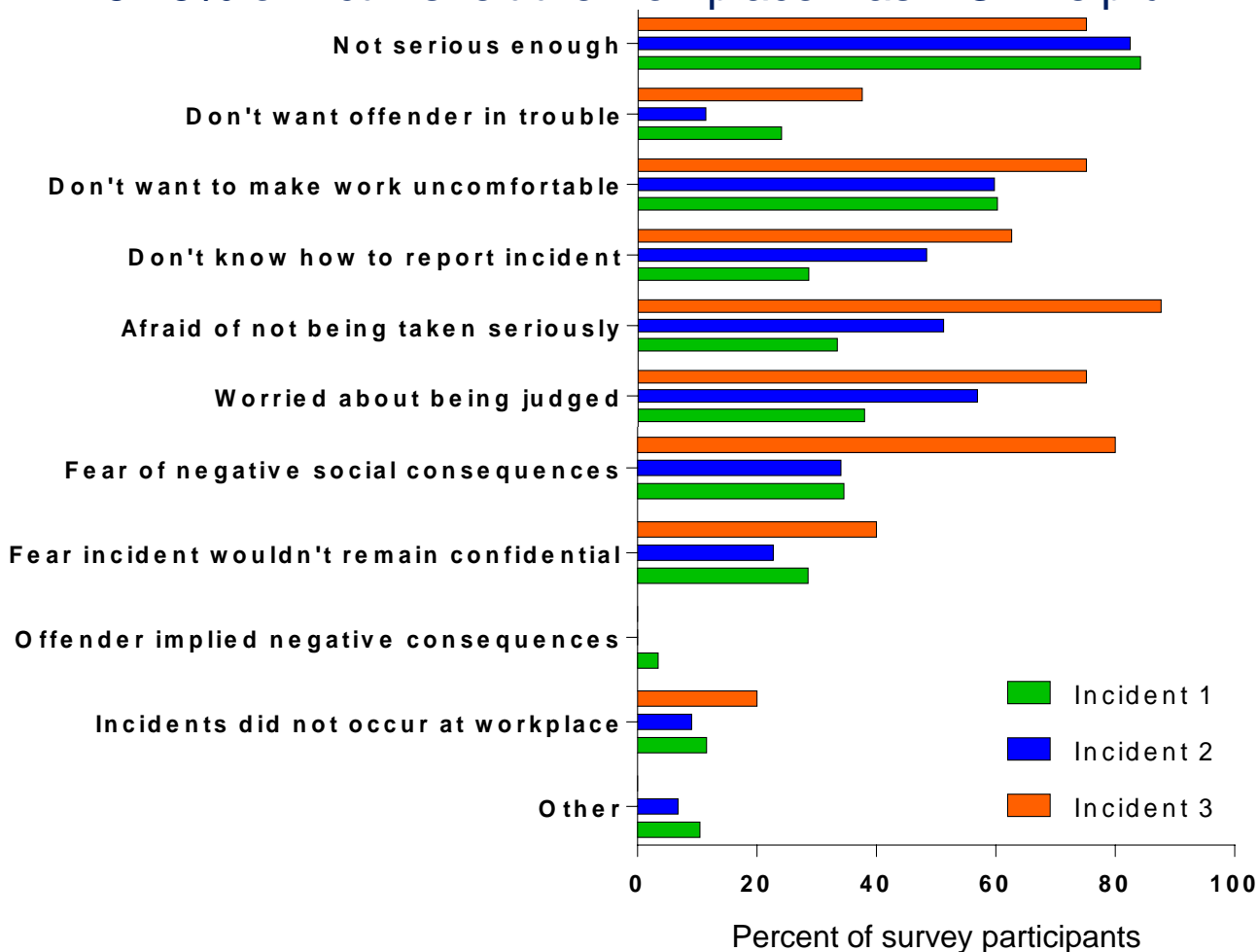
- 12.4% of victims were male
- 95.8% of male victims did not report the incident (in total, lack of reporting was always above 90% regardless of sex)
- **All other demographics seemed similar to female victims, except the sex of the offender**



Most victims did NOT report sexual harassment

Statistics on harassment reporting:

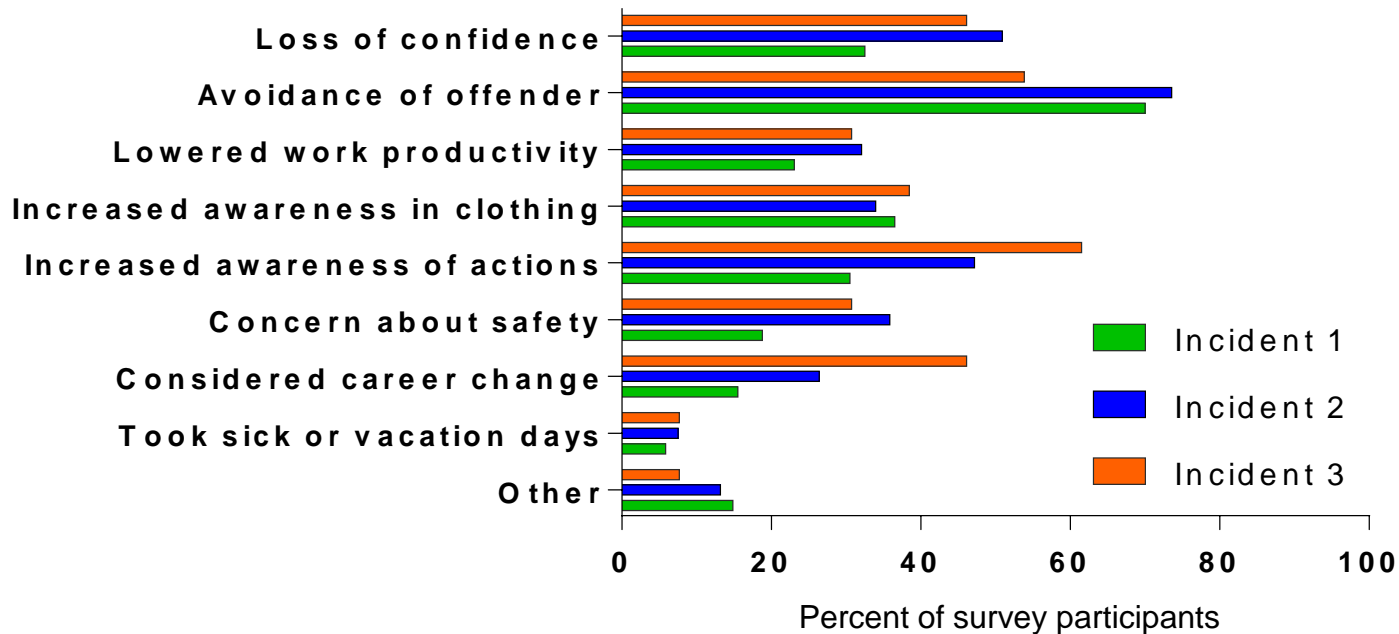
- 90.6% of victims did not report sexual harassment
- 43.4% of victims did not know how to report incidents
- 51.5% of victims felt the workplace was NOT helpful in reporting incidents



Lack of reporting continue to make individuals feel victimized

There are multiple reasons why individuals don't report incidents and it leads to the victim feeling unsafe and stressed about the work environment:

"When he got in trouble he repeatedly told me that "I didn't know my role" and retaliated by making the work environment even more uncomfortable and divided to the point that I sought psychiatric and medical assistance and almost quit my graduate program."



Comments

“He made clear sexual advances, like commenting on me being "not only beautiful, but also smart" and suggesting we should go to his hotel room (in the conference hotel) to "discuss".”

“I'm a woman in a field that is ~90% male”

“He would do this when we were one-on-one in a small lab space, and I was made to feel very uncomfortable, but he also knew that I was powerless to do much about it given age, training status/student position, and couldn't prove it.”

“There is definitely an uncomfortable hierarchical power differential. I need a recommendation from this person for my career to move forward. Avoidance of this person is not an option. Nor is it an option to simply start over in a different lab.”

“My position and gender contribute to this because I literally feel like I can't do or say anything about it. Science is too competitive right now to risk damage to the letter of support/recommendation that I will eventually need from my PI.”

“I have not revealed my sexual orientation at my workplace since it does not feel safe letting people know that I am gay.”



How can we help?

- From the comments it is clear that there is an element of fear of reporting and doubt that anything will happen

“...investigations take a long time, and cause a lot of collateral damage. There have been numerous Professors accused of impropriety, but few are fired, this is the greater scandal.”

- 44% of individuals who reported sexual harassment indicated they were unaware of how to report it in their workplace
- 52% of individuals who reported sexual harassment felt that the workplace was helpful in dealing with the incident
- We need a clear and concrete policy for prevention, reporting, investigation and punishment of sexual harassment in the workplace that is easily accessible to employees

Acknowledgments

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