

Abuse of Prescription Pain Medicine in Massachusetts:

*Attitudes and Behavior Among
Parents of Teens*

October, 2011

THE PARTNERSHIP™
AT DRUGFREE.ORG

Background and Methodology

Overview

- The Partnership at Drugfree.org conducted an online study to understand parents' behaviors and perceptions about prescription pain medication in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Interviews were conducted from September 19, 2011 – September 22, 2011.

Methodology

- Ten minute online quantitative survey
- Respondents recruited via national panel sample

Sample

- 305 Total Respondents
- All respondents are primary caregivers of children 12-25 years living at home

Key Findings

- Over half of Parents (56%) say their children have access to their prescription pain medication.
- Currently, the kitchen (36%) is the top storage location for prescription pain medications, followed by the bathroom (31%) and bedroom (25%).
- A third (30%) of those who still have pain relievers at home keep them in case someone in their family needs them in the future.
- Nearly half of Parents (45%) say they have taken pain relievers without a prescription at some point. Nearly all have used them for physical pain.
 - 14% say they have ever given their children pain medications without a prescription.
- Only 4% of Parents believe their children have used prescription pain relievers without their knowledge and 13% say they believe their children's friends use pain killers to get high.
- According to Parents, teens get pain killers from friends (86%) or by taking them from their own homes (75%).

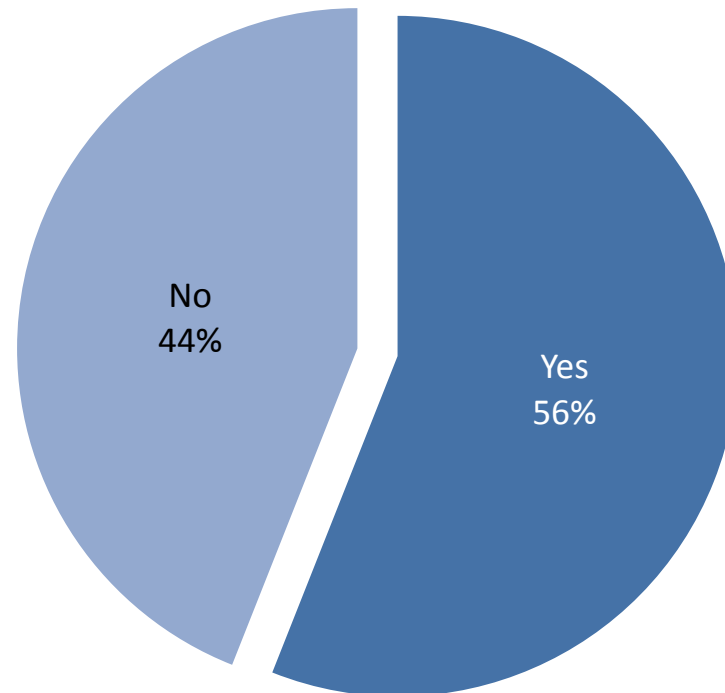
Key Findings

- A third (34%) of respondents say that their own parents use prescription pain relievers, but only 19% have spoken to grandparents about safeguarding their medications.
- Almost everyone (94%) acknowledges that, if abused, prescription pain relievers can be as addictive as heroin. However, only 30% are certain that the active ingredient in pain killers is similar to heroin.
- All Parents (97%) say they have discussed the dangers of alcohol and street drugs with their children but only three-quarters (76%) have specifically discussed prescription pain killers.
- 87% of Caregivers say they would know what to do if their child was abusing pain killers. Three-quarters (74%) would first call their pediatrician and two out of five (43%) would call a treatment center.
- Only two-thirds (67%) of Parents express having concerns over their child using any type of substance. Alcohol (33%) is the top substance that worries them, followed by marijuana (11%).

DETAILED FINDINGS

Do Children Have Access to Medications?

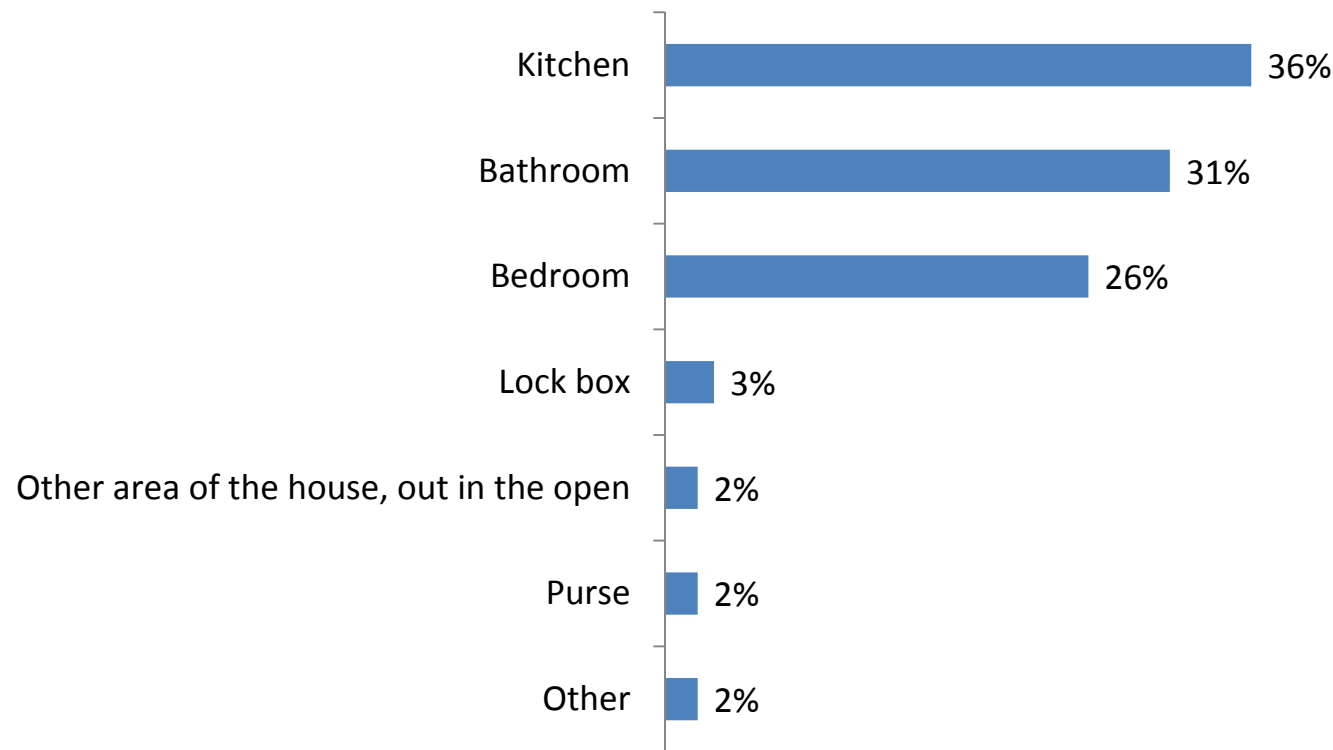
Over half of Parents say that their children have easy access to the prescription medicine kept in the house.



Q7a. Do your children have easy access to the prescription medication you keep at home?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Primary Storage Locations for Medication

The kitchen is the most popular location to store medications, followed by the bathroom and bedroom.

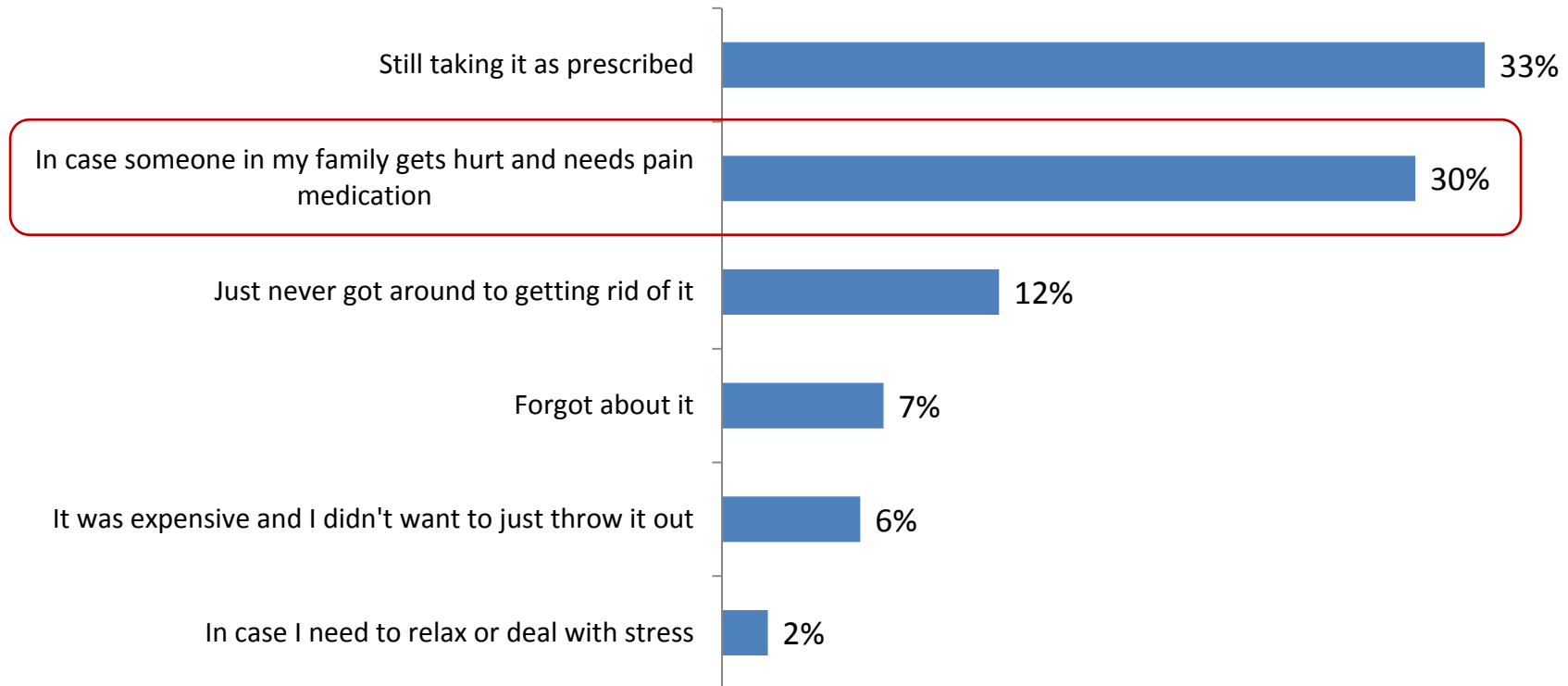


Q7, Where do/did you primarily keep these medication(s)?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Reasons Why Still Have Medication at Home

Nearly a third of Caregivers who still have prescriptions at home are holding onto them in case someone else in their household needs pain medication.

Among 56% of respondents who still have medications at home



Q8. Do you still have any prescription pain medication in your home?

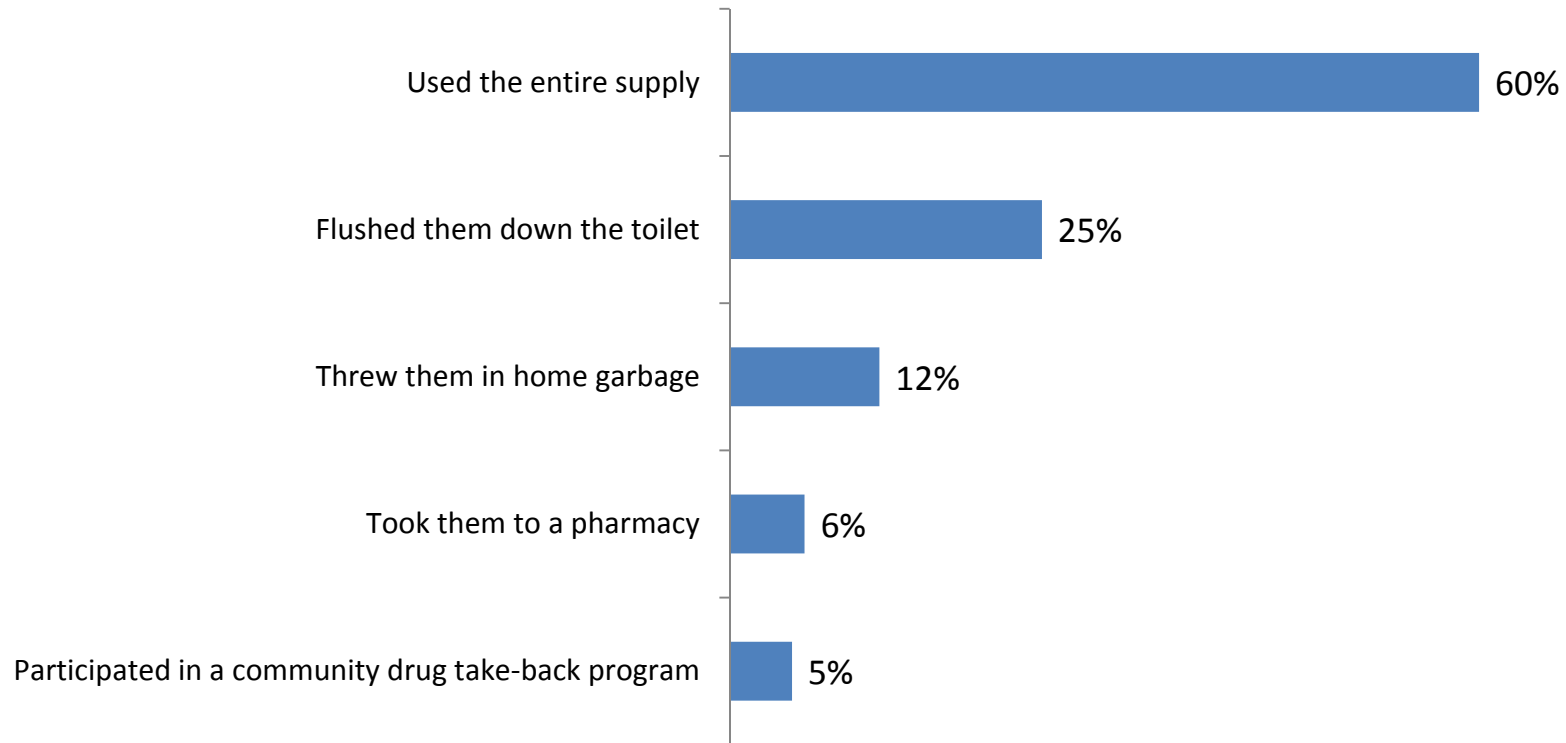
Q9. What is the main reason you still have it.?

Base: Total Respondents (n=305), Still have RX (n=171)

Ways of Disposing of Prescription Medication

A quarter of caregivers who no longer have medications opted to flush any leftovers down the toilet. Only 5% participated in a drug take-back program.

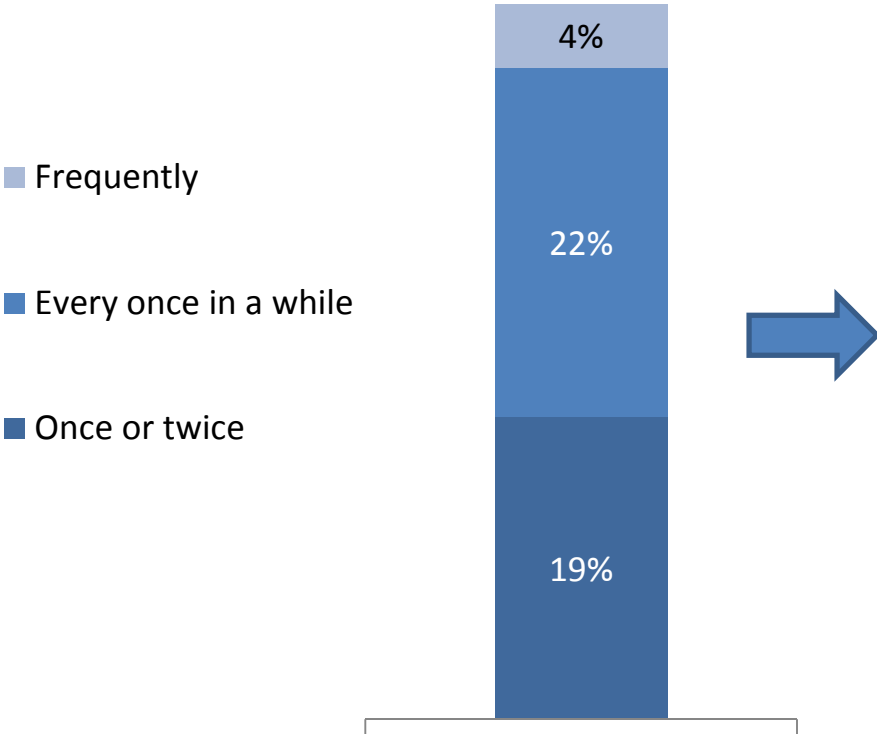
Among 44% of Respondents who no longer have medications at home



Q8. Do you still have any prescription pain medication in your home?
Q10. How did you dispose of your prescription medications?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305), Do not have RX (n=134)

Frequency of Using Pain Relievers without a Prescription

Nearly half of Parents have taken a pain reliever without a prescription and almost all of them did it to treat physical pain.



	Total
Treat physical pain	92%
To help deal with stress / anxiety	4%
To treat insomnia	2%
To help deal with depression	1%
To feel good / party / get high	1%

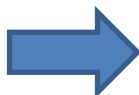
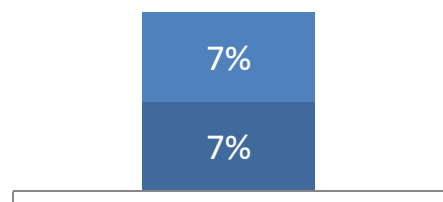
Q11. How often do you take prescription pain relievers without a prescription?
 Q12. What was the reason you used a prescription pain reliever without a prescription?
 Base: Total Respondents (n=305), Taken RX w/o prescription (n=139)

Frequency of Giving Children Pain Relievers without a Prescription

Only 14% of Caregivers admit giving their children pain relievers that were not specifically prescribed to them. Nearly all say it was to treat physical pain.

■ Every once in a while

■ Once or twice



	Total
Treat physical pain	91%
Other	9%

Q13. How often do you give your child a prescription pain reliever without a prescription?

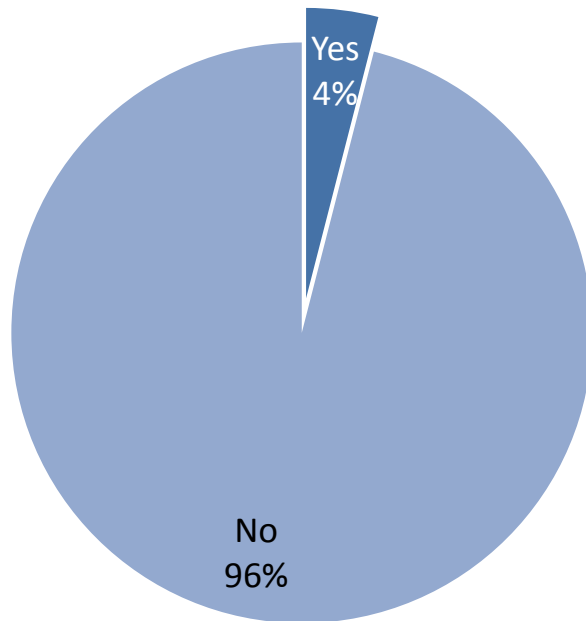
Q14. What was the reason why you recently gave your child a prescription pain reliever without a prescription?

Base: Total Respondents (n=305), Gave RX to Child (n=44)

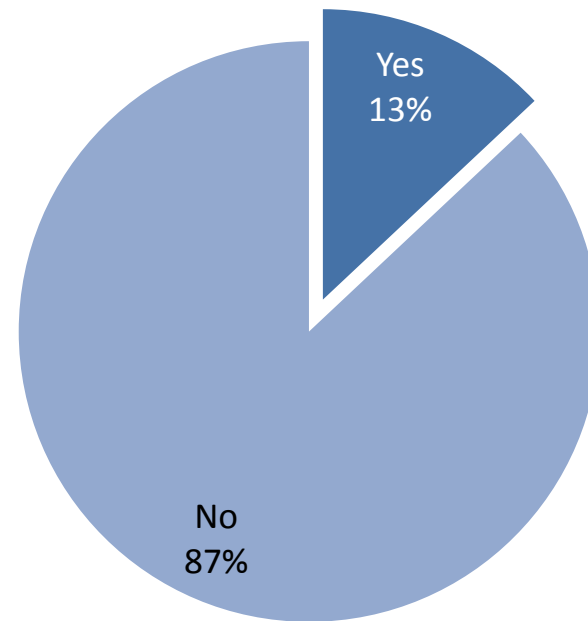
Has Your Child Used Pain Relievers You Have Not Provided to Them without a Prescription?

Only 4% of Parents believe their child may have taken pain relievers and 13% believe their children's friends use pain relievers to get high.

My Child Has Used Pain Relievers



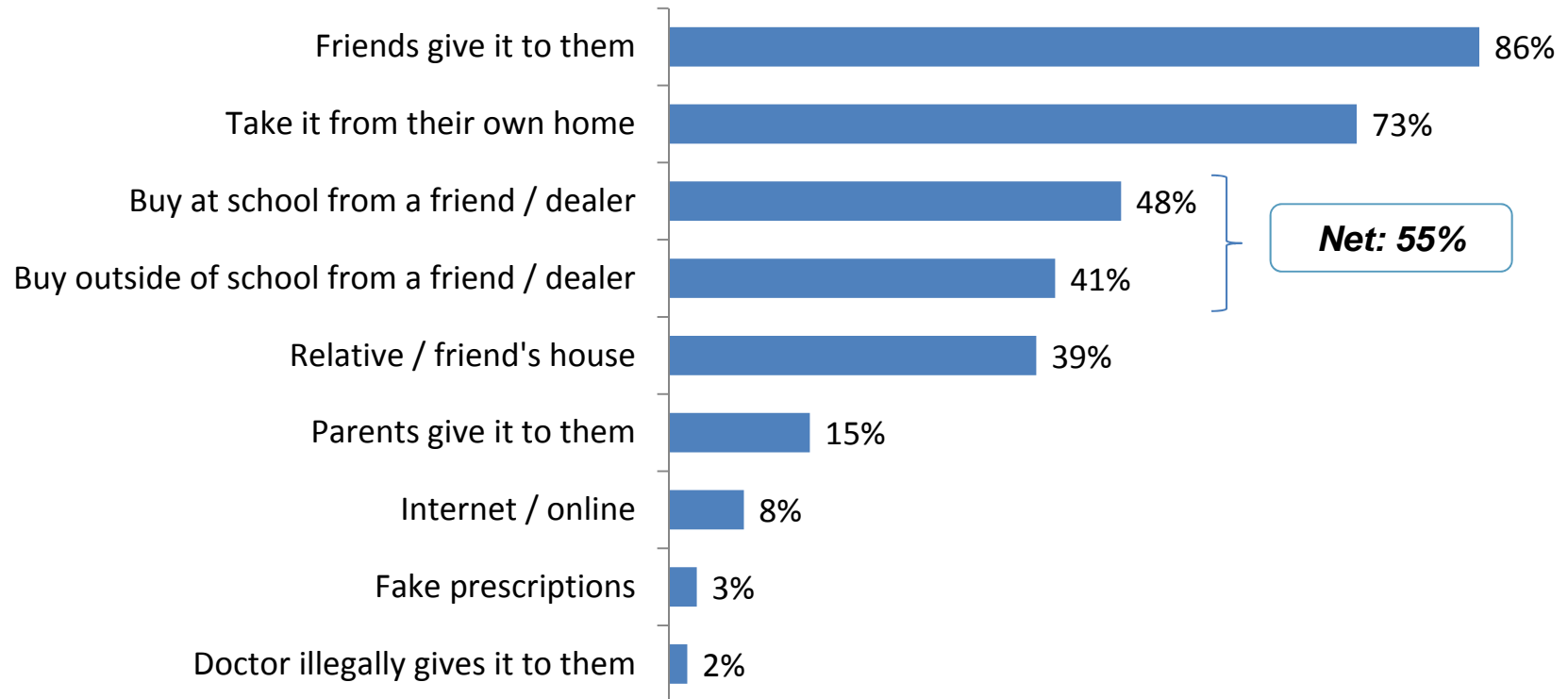
My Child's Friends Have Used Pain Relievers to Get High



Q15. To your knowledge has your child/children ever used a prescription pain reliever – that you have not given him/her – without a prescription? Q21. Are you aware of any of your child's/children's friends using prescription pain killers to get high?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Who Provides Pain Killers to Teens?

Parents believe most teenagers get pain killers from friends or their own homes. Over half also say teens are buying them from friends or drug dealers.

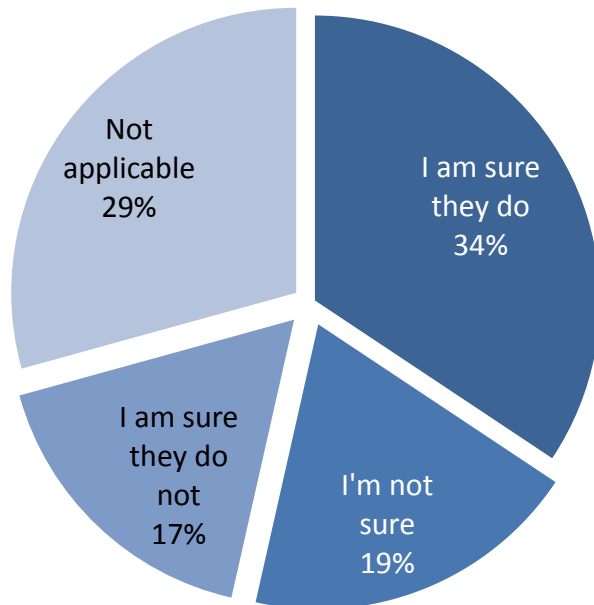


Q16. How do you think most teens get prescription pain killers not prescribed to them by a doctor?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

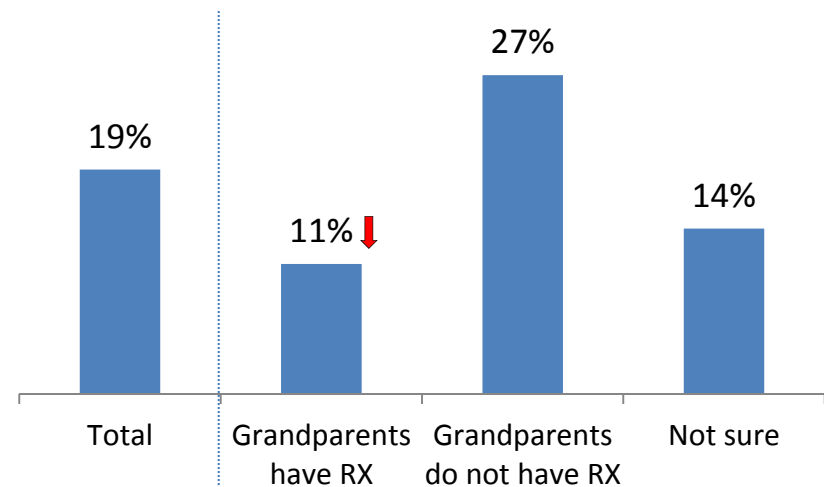
Grandparents and Pain Medication

A third of parents know that their own parents use prescription pain relievers. However, they are less likely to speak to them about safeguarding medication – only 1 in 10 have discussed it.

Do grandparents have prescription pain relievers?



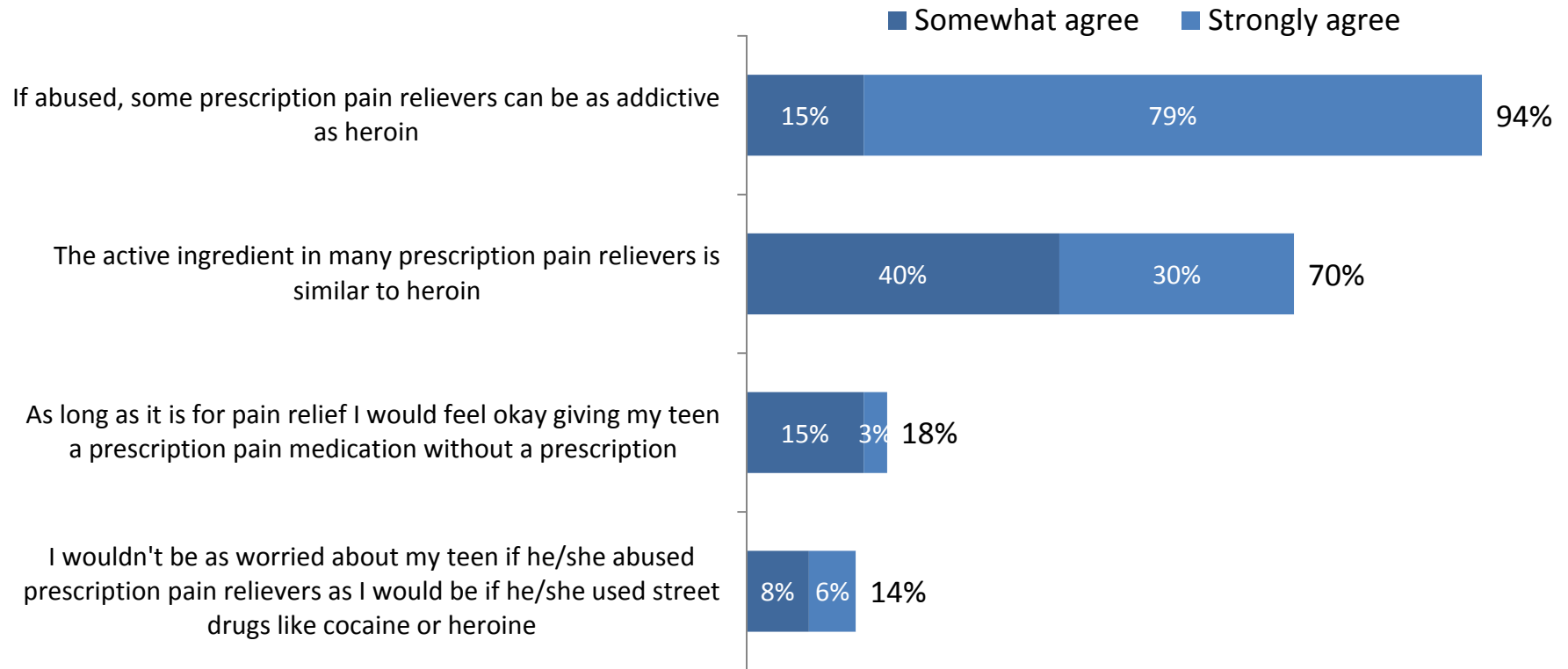
Have spoken to grandparents about safeguarding medication



Q17. Does your child's grandparents keep prescription pain relievers where your child could access them when he/she visits or when they visit you? Q24. Have you spoken with your children's grandparents specifically about hiding potentially addictive medications when your children come to visit or when they visit you? Base: Total Respondents (n=305), Grandparents keep RX (n=216)

Beliefs About Pain Medication

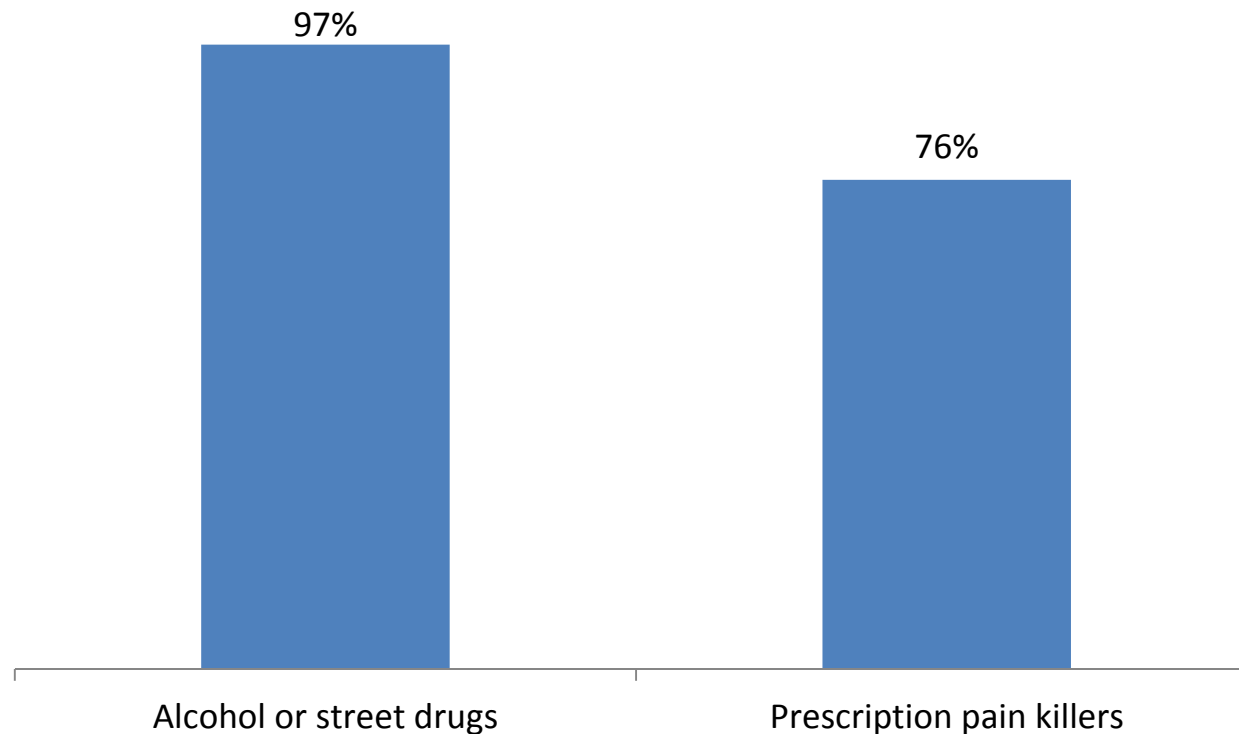
Nearly all parents agree that pain relievers can be as addictive as heroin. However, less than a third fully understand that the active ingredient in pain relievers is similar to heroin.



Q18. Please let us know how much you agree with the following statements.
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Are Parents Talking to Their Children About Drugs?

All parents say they have spoken to their children about the dangers of alcohol and/or street drugs. However, only three-quarters have specifically discussed prescription pain killers with their kids.



Q19. Have you spoken with your child about the dangers of using alcohol or street drugs like heroin or cocaine?

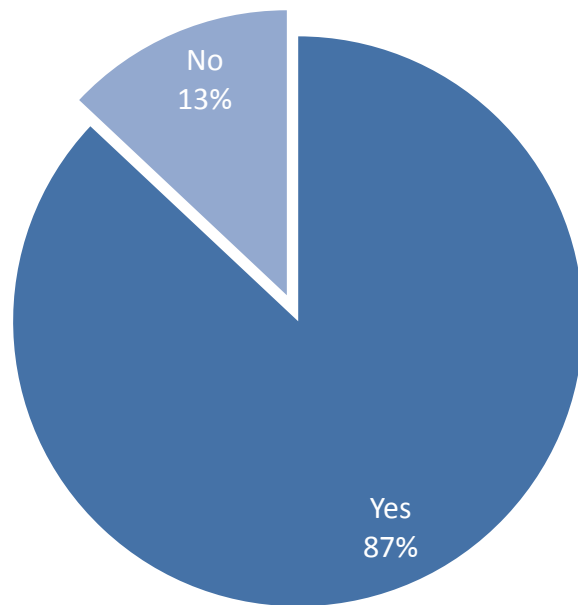
Q20. Have you spoken with your child specifically about the dangers of using prescription pain killers without a doctor's prescription?

Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

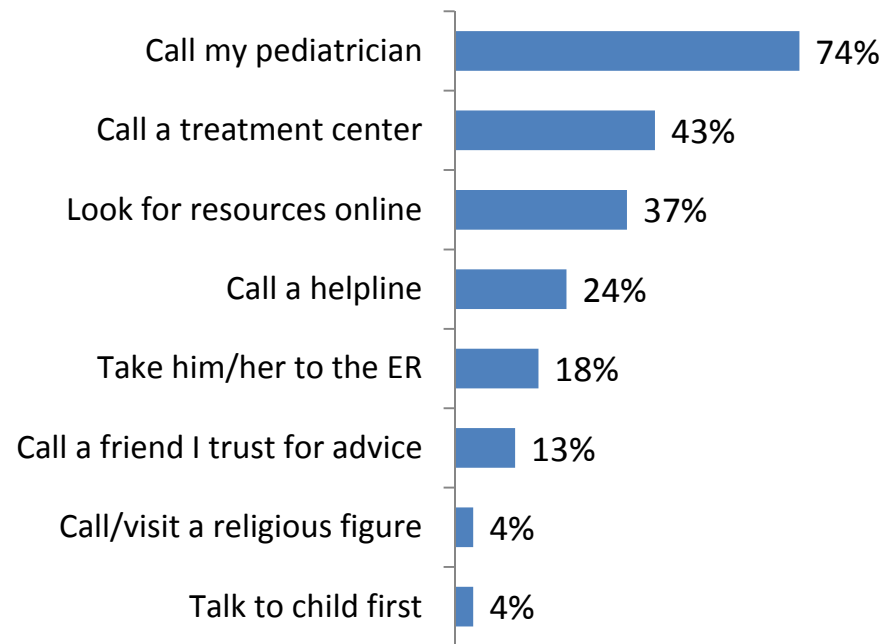
Do Parents Know What to Do If Their Child Was Abusing Prescription Pain Medication?

Approximately 9 out of 10 parents say they would know what to do if their child was abusing pain relievers. Three-quarters would talk to their pediatrician first and nearly half would call a treatment center.

Do parents know what to do?



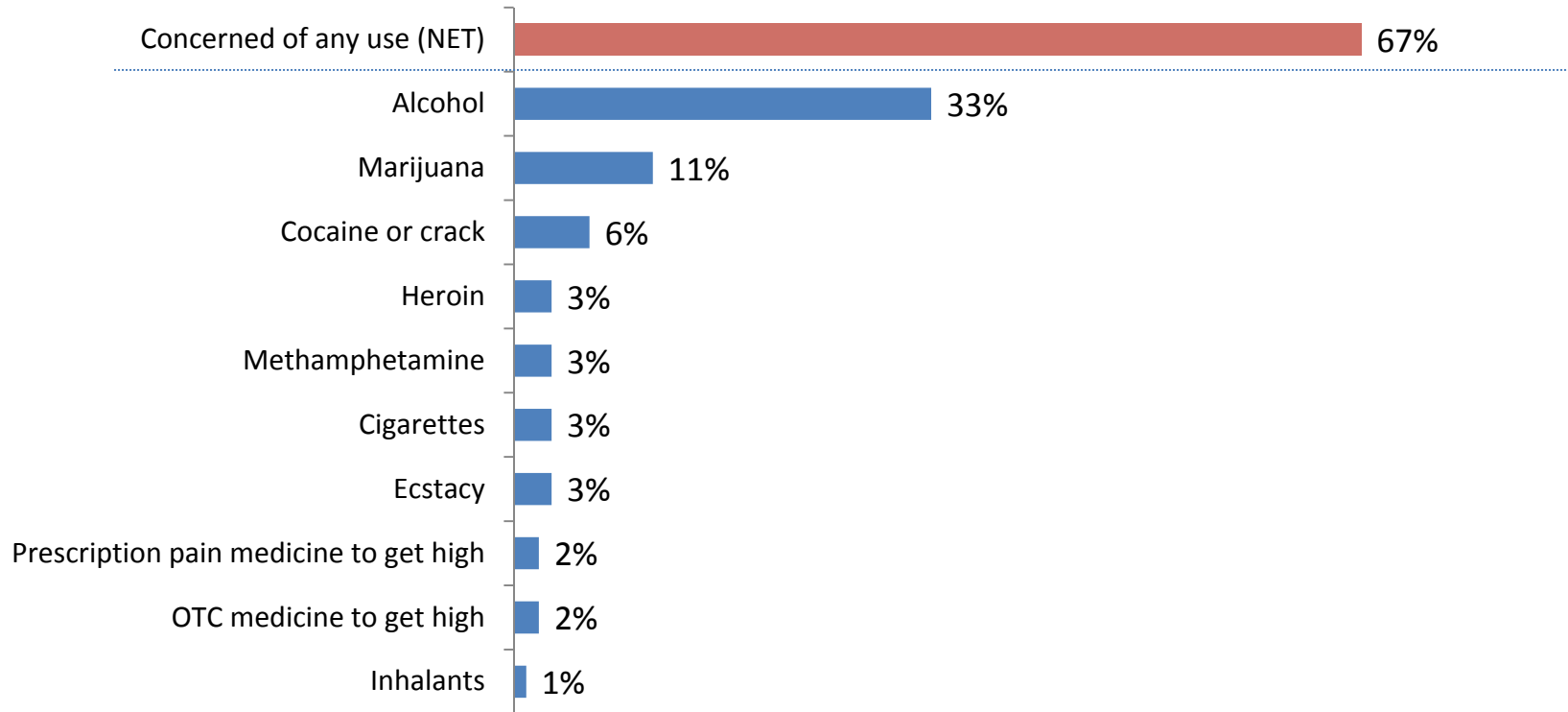
What would they do?



Q22. If you knew your child was abusing prescription pain killers would you know what to do?
Q23. If you knew your child was abusing prescription pain killers, what would you be most likely to do?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Drugs of Most Concern Among Parents

A third of parents do not believe their children will try any drugs. Alcohol is the substance parents are most worried about their child using.

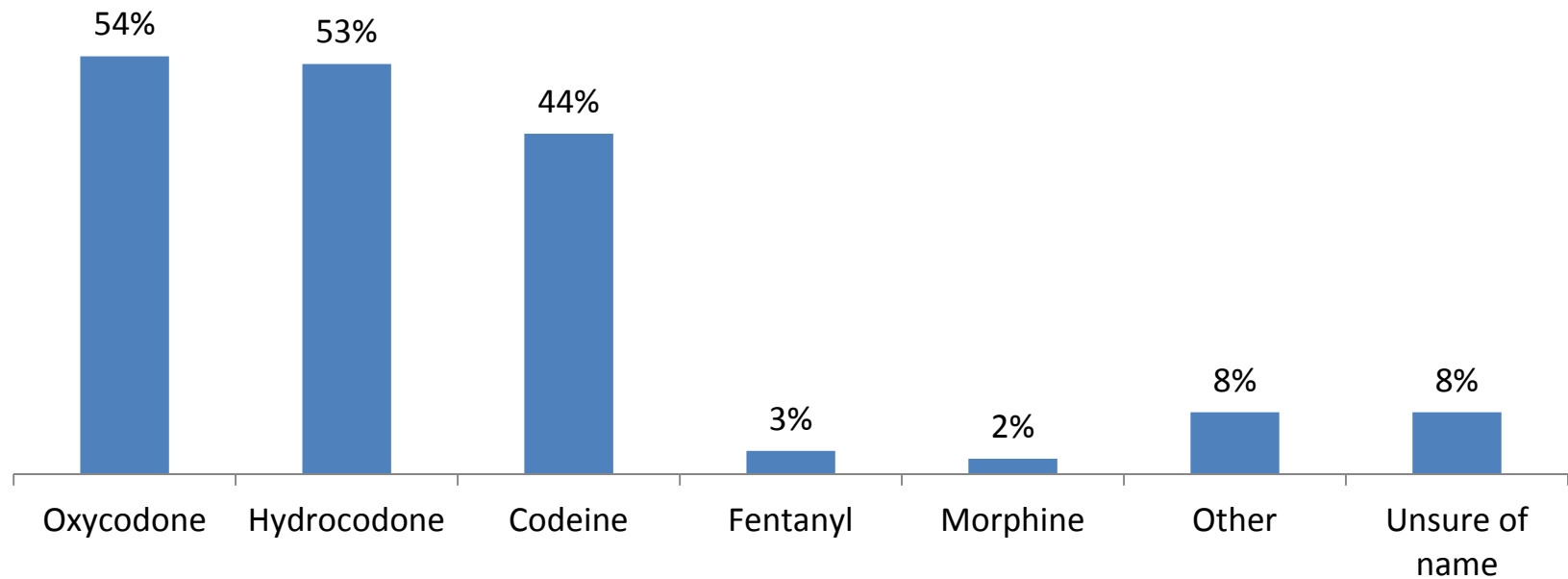


Q26. Which substance below are you most concerned that your child MIGHT use?
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

SAMPLE PROFILE

Types of Prescription Drugs Used in Past 2 Years

Oxycodone and Hydrocodone are the top prescribed medications used by parents with children living at home.

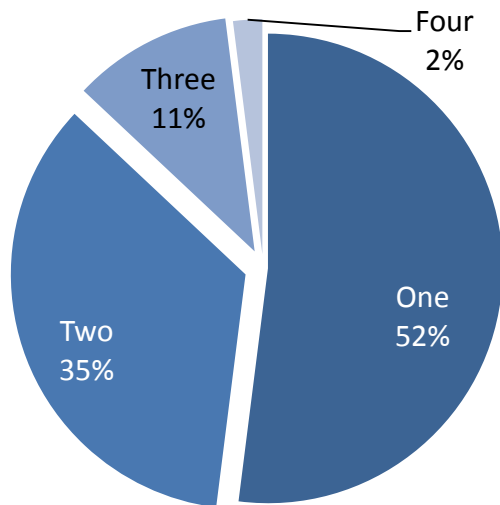


Q5. In the last 2 years, which of the following prescription pain relievers have you been prescribed or had in your home even if it is not prescribed for you?

Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Children Age and Gender

**Number of children
Ages 12-25**

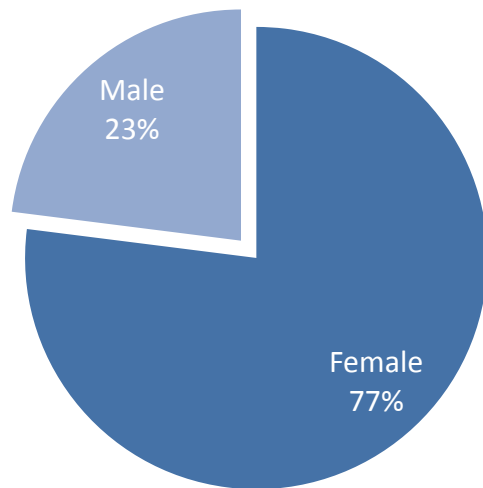


	Average Age	Male	Female
First child	18	53%	47%
Second child	17	52%	48%
Third child	17	41%	59%
Fourth child	14	71%	29%

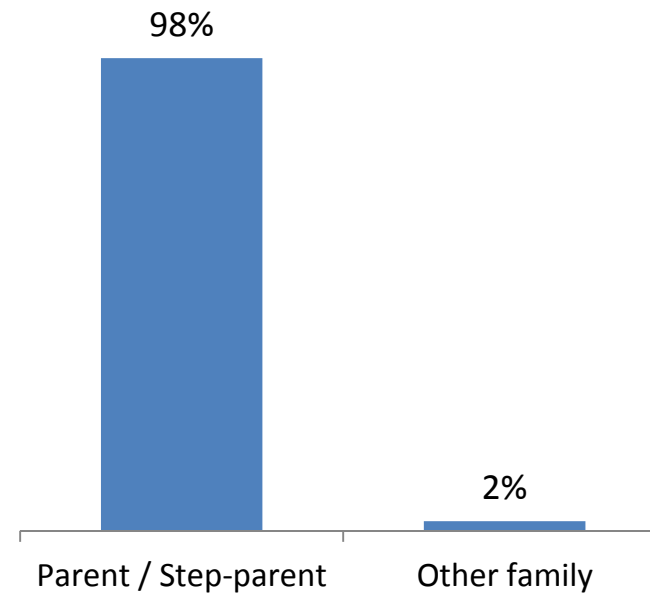
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Gender, Age, Relationship to Children

**Average Age:
49**

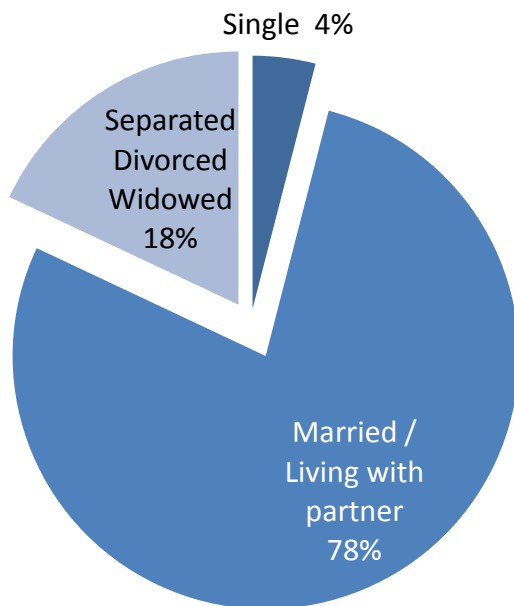


Relationship to Child

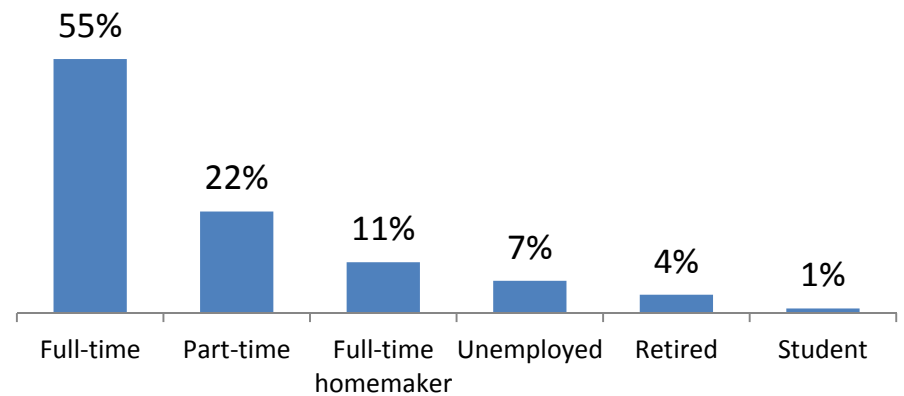


Marital and Employment Status

Marital Status

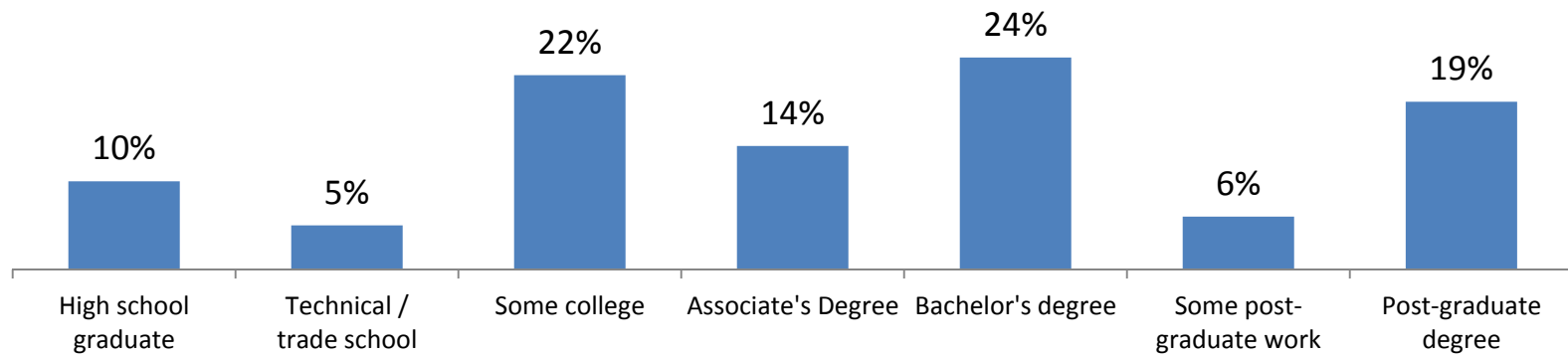


Employment Status



Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

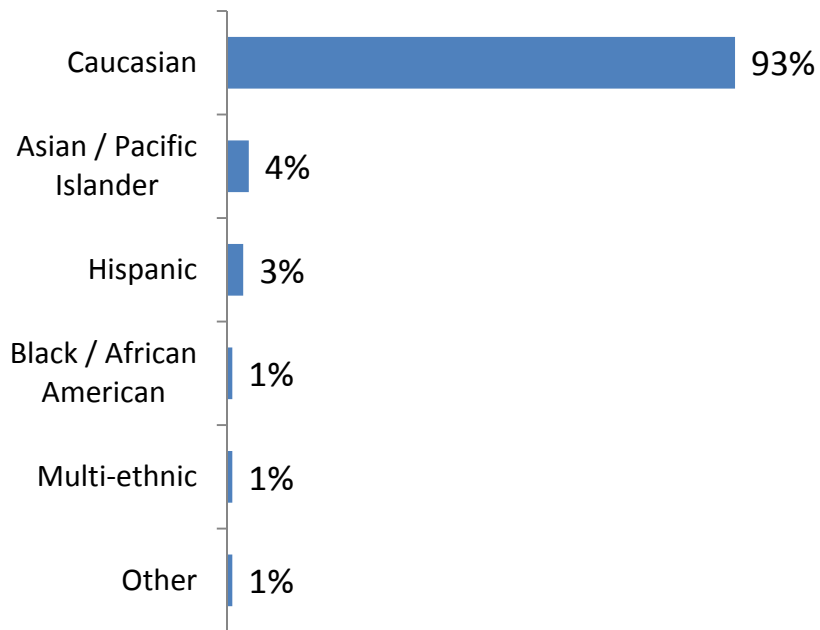
Highest Level of Education



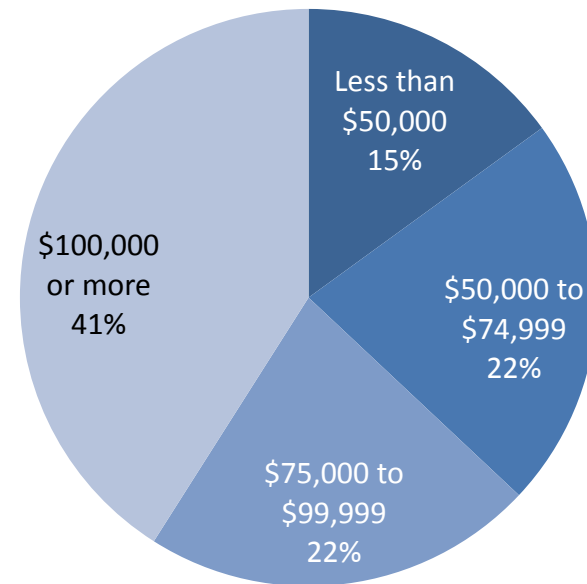
Base: Total Respondents (n=305)

Race / Ethnicity and Household Income

Race / Ethnicity



Household Income



Base: Total Respondents (n=305)