

# 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Among Females Aged 12 or Older

Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

2024



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# NSDUH Scope and Target Population

- Conducted by the Federal Government since 1971
- Comprehensive household interview survey of substance use, substance use disorders, mental health, and the receipt of treatment services for these disorders in the United States
- Produces estimates representative of the population at national and state levels
- Covers the civilian, noninstitutionalized population aged 12 or older in all 50 states and Washington, DC:
  - Includes households, college dorms, homeless in shelters, civilians on military bases
  - Excludes active military, long-term hospital residents, prison populations, homeless not in shelters
- NSDUH 2023 sample included 67,679 people (including 36,360 females)

# Comparing Data Year to Year

- A new trend line began in 2021 due to NSDUH data collection changing to a multimode design (web and in-person).
  - Do not compare 2021-2023 data with data from prior years.
- In 2022, weighting procedures were updated to stabilize the effect of mode on estimates across years.<sup>1</sup>
  - These procedures also were applied to the 2021 analysis weights.
  - Updated 2021 estimates were generated for the 2022 Detailed Tables to facilitate comparisons with 2022 estimates.
  - These updated 2021 estimates should be used for comparison with 2022 and 2023 estimates.

<sup>1</sup> See Section 3.3.3 in the following reference: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2023). *2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): Methodological Summary and Definitions*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2022-methodological-summary-and-definitions>.

# About This Presentation

- Statistical testing was performed for comparisons of estimates across age groups and by sex according to procedures described in the 2023 Methodological Summary and Definitions report.<sup>2</sup> Differences were considered statistically significant at the .05 level of significance. Statistically significant differences resulting from these testing procedures are described using terms such as “higher,” “lower,” “more likely,” or “less likely.” Statements use terms such as “similar” or “the same” when a difference was not statistically significant. When estimates are presented without reference to differences across groups, statistical significance is not implied.

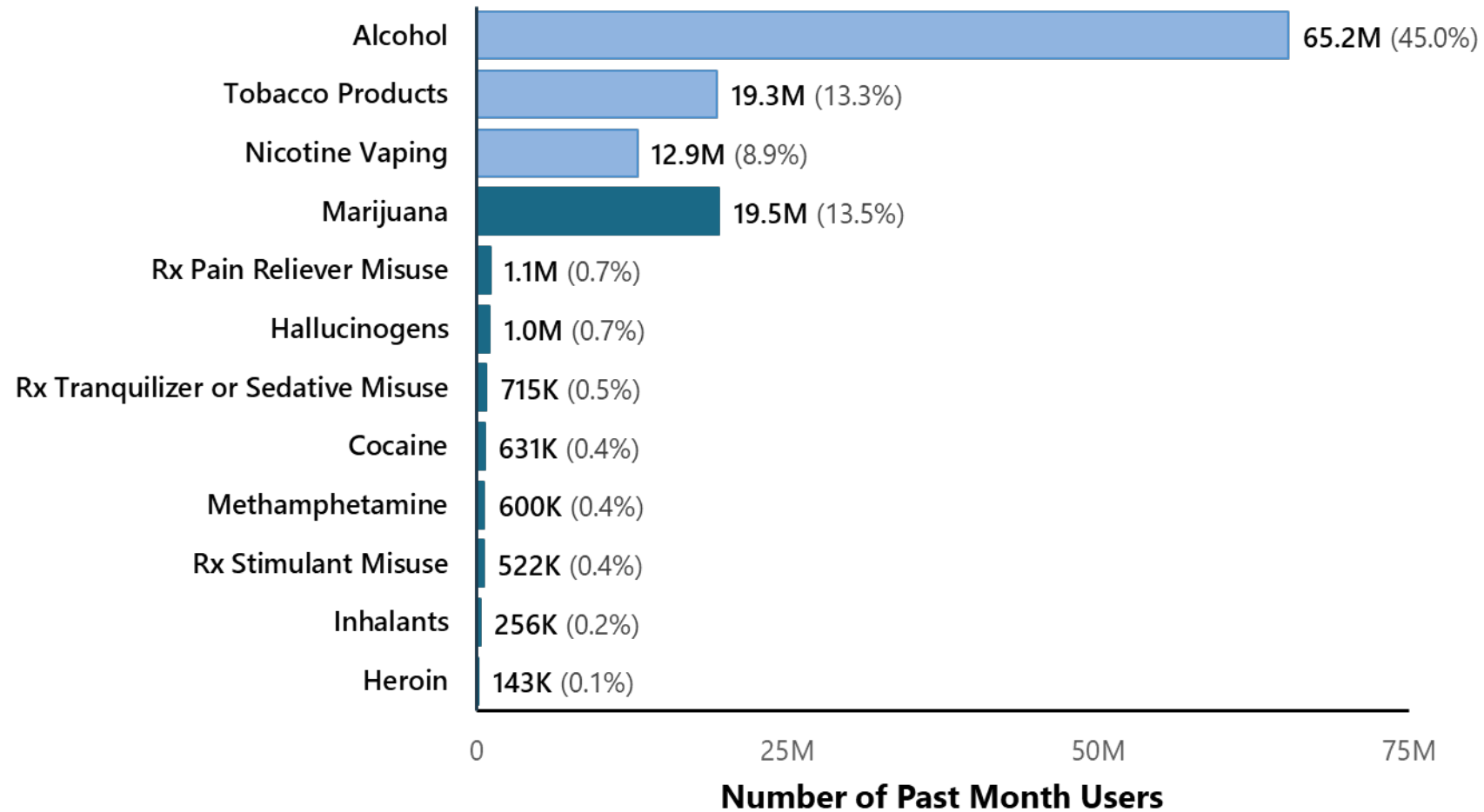
<sup>2</sup> See Section 3.3.3 in the following reference: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2024). *2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): Methodological Summary and Definitions*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2023-methodological-summary-and-definitions>.

# Suppression Due to Low Precision

- The following estimates for females are not presented due to low precision:
  - Substance use disorder by severity level

# Substance Use in the Past Month

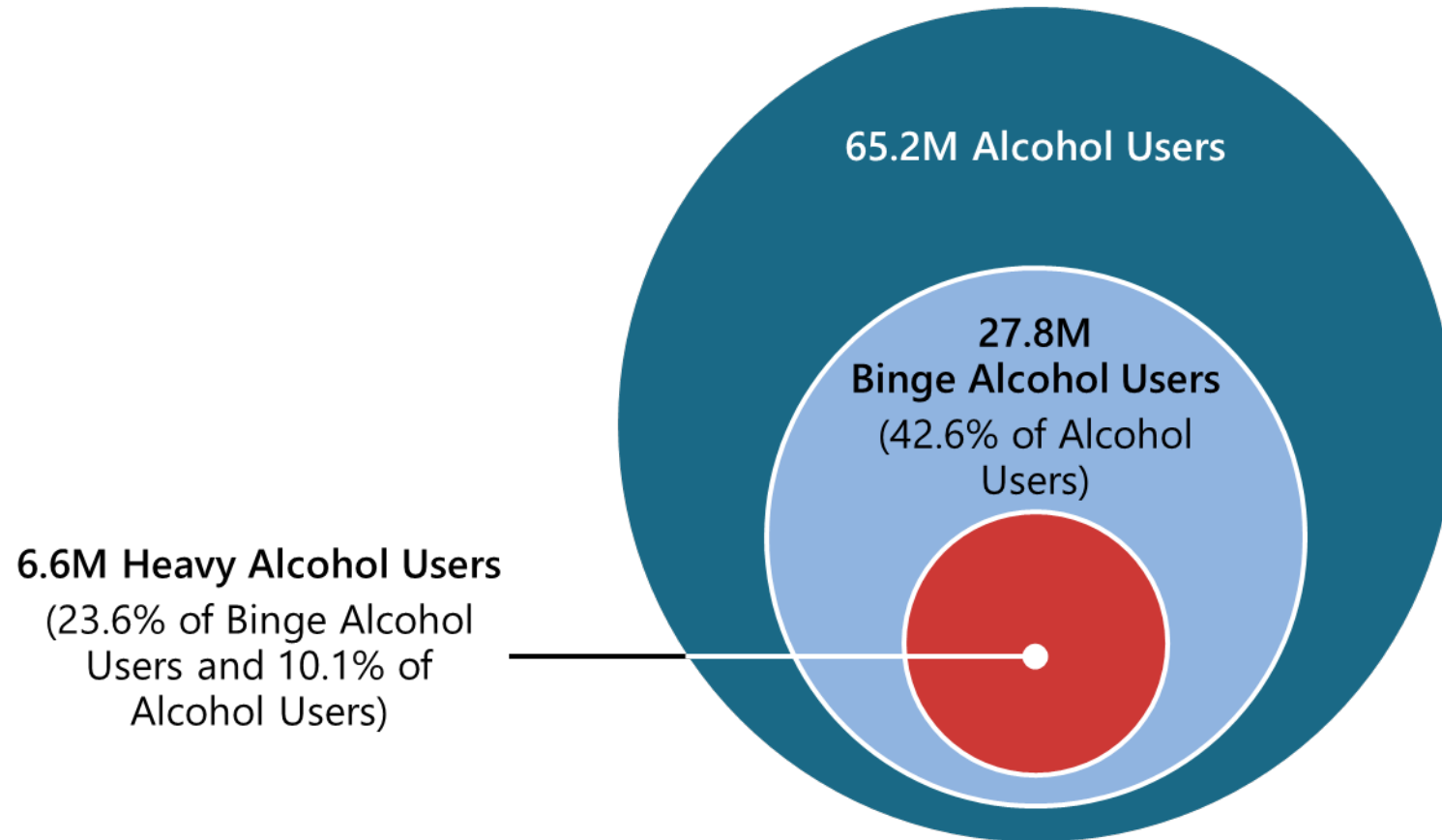
# Past Month Substance Use: Among Females Aged 12 or Older



Rx = prescription.

Note: The estimated numbers of current users of different substances are not mutually exclusive because people could have used more than one type of substance in the past month.

# Past Month Alcohol Use, Binge Alcohol Use, and Heavy Alcohol Use: Among Females Aged 12 or Older

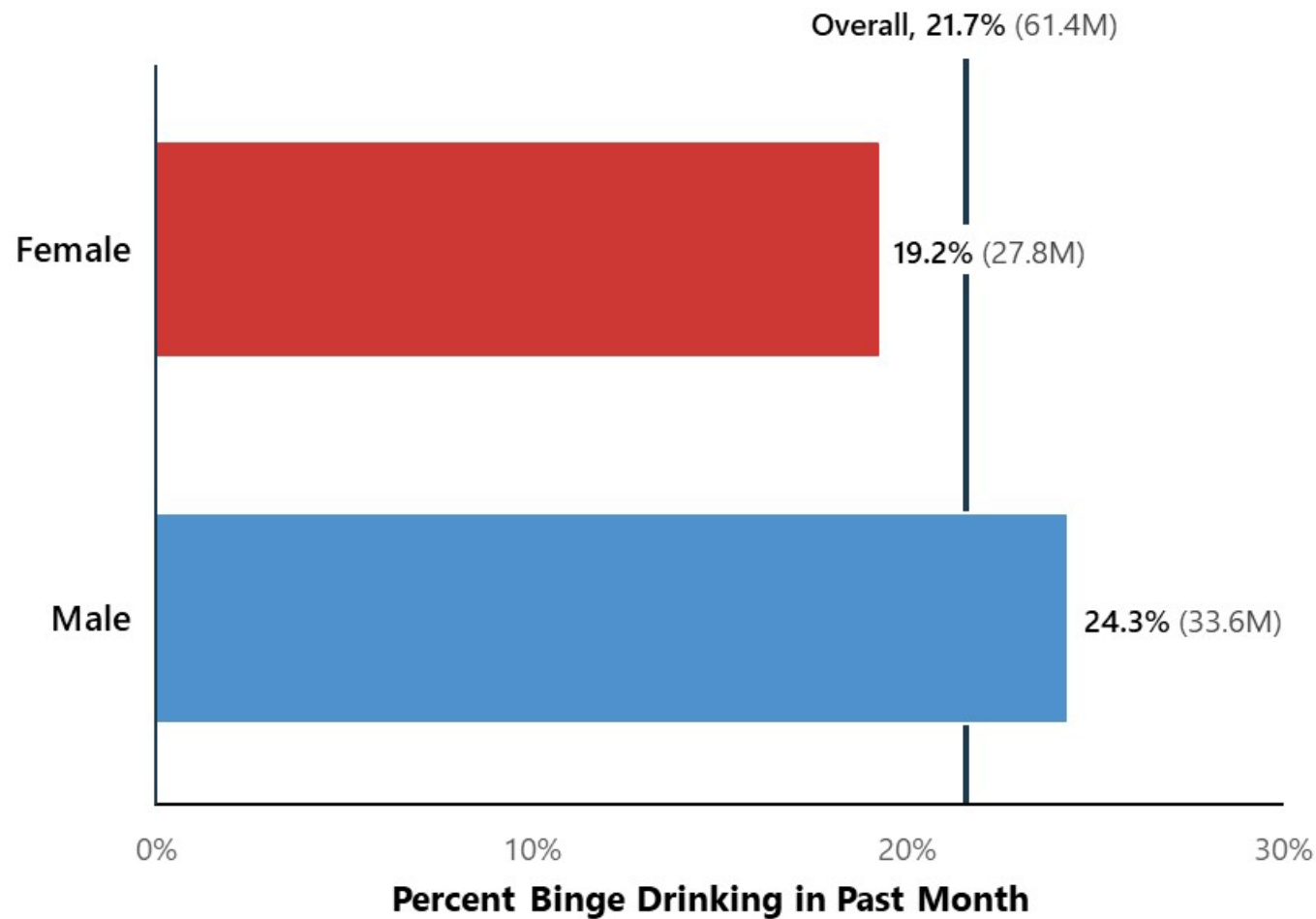


- **More than 40%** of past month female alcohol users were binge drinkers

Note: Binge Alcohol Use is defined as drinking five or more drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days. Heavy Alcohol Use is defined as binge drinking on the same occasion on 5 or more days in the past 30 days; all heavy alcohol users are also binge alcohol users.



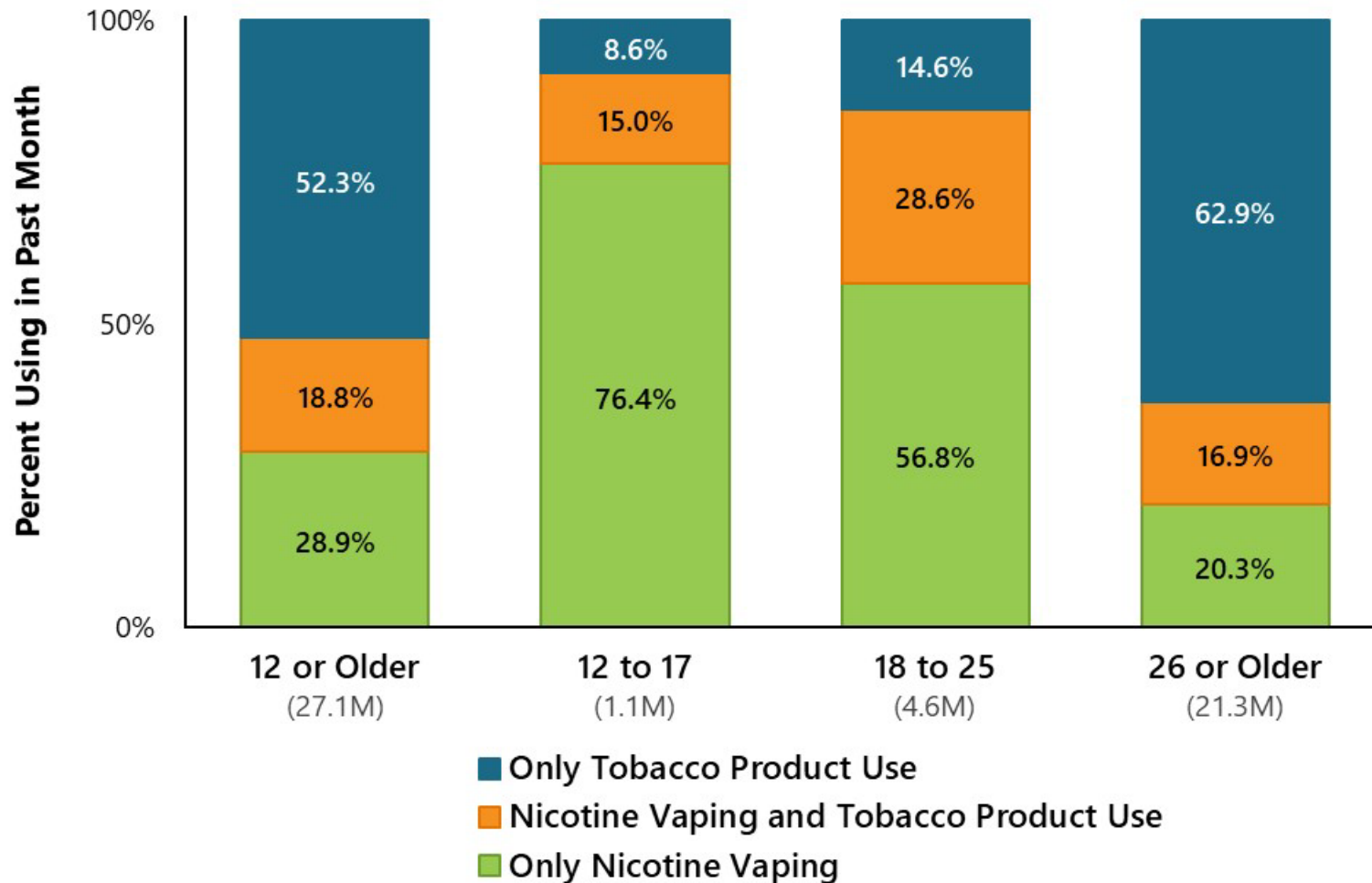
# Binge Alcohol Use in the Past Month by Sex at Birth: Among People Aged 12 or Older



- **Females** were **less likely** to binge drink than males

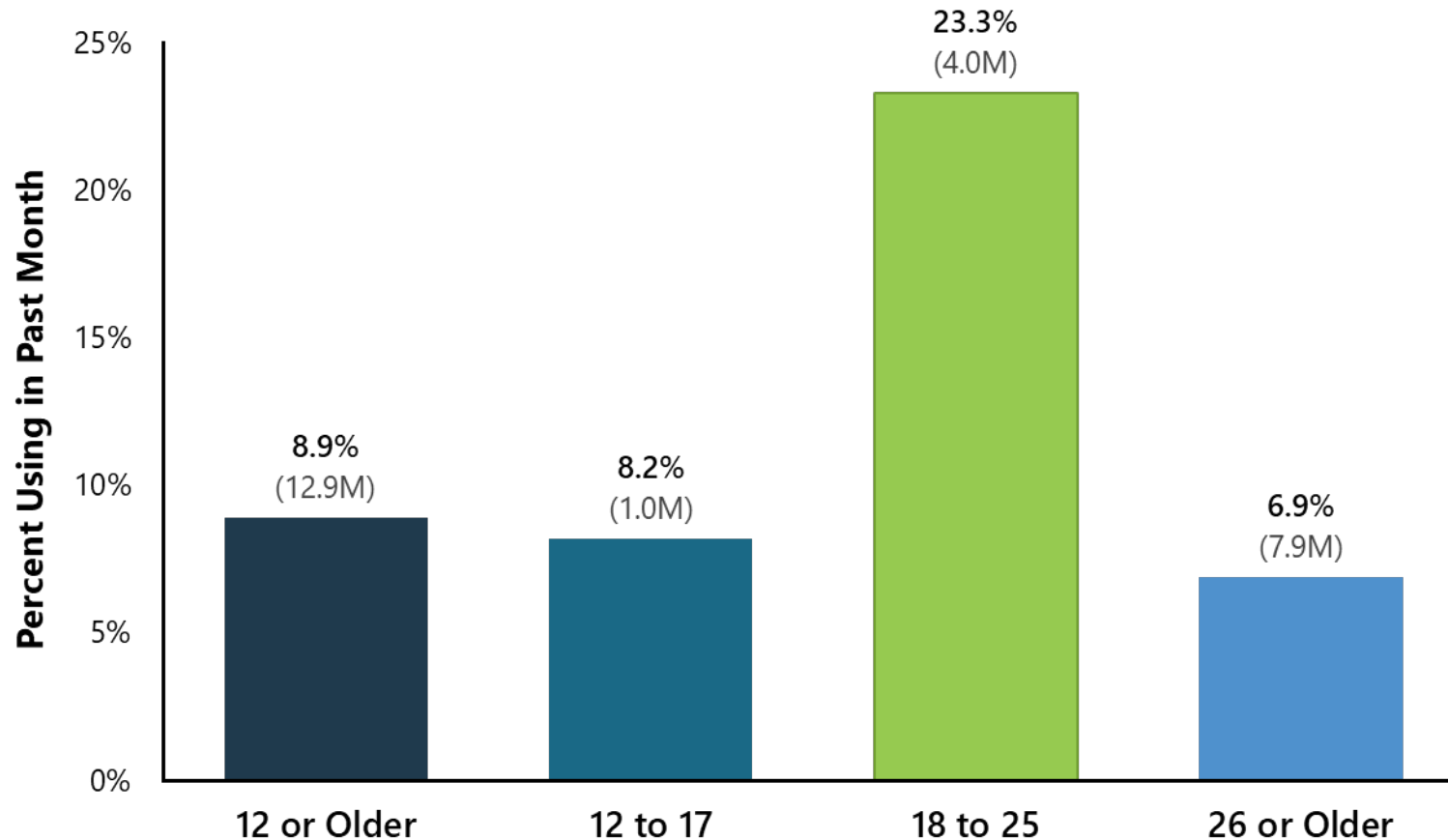
Note: Binge Alcohol Use is defined as drinking five or more drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

# Type of Tobacco Product Use and Nicotine Vaping: Among Females Aged 12 or Older Who Used Nicotine Products in the Past Month



- Among current nicotine product users, the **use of specific nicotine products varied by age group**
- An estimated **76.4% of female adolescents aged 12 to 17** who used nicotine products in the past month only vaped nicotine products compared with **20.3% of female adults aged 26 or older**

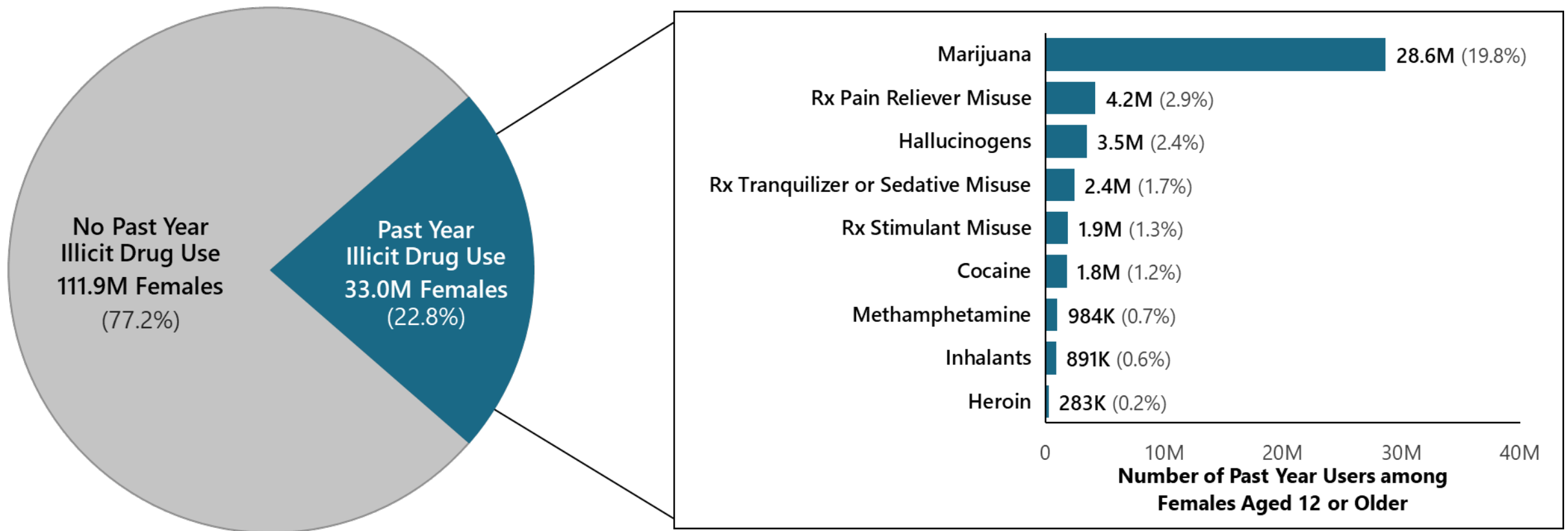
# Past Month Nicotine Vaping: Among Females Aged 12 or Older



- The percentage of people who vaped nicotine was **highest** among female young adults aged **18 to 25**

# Past Year and Past Month Illicit Drug Use

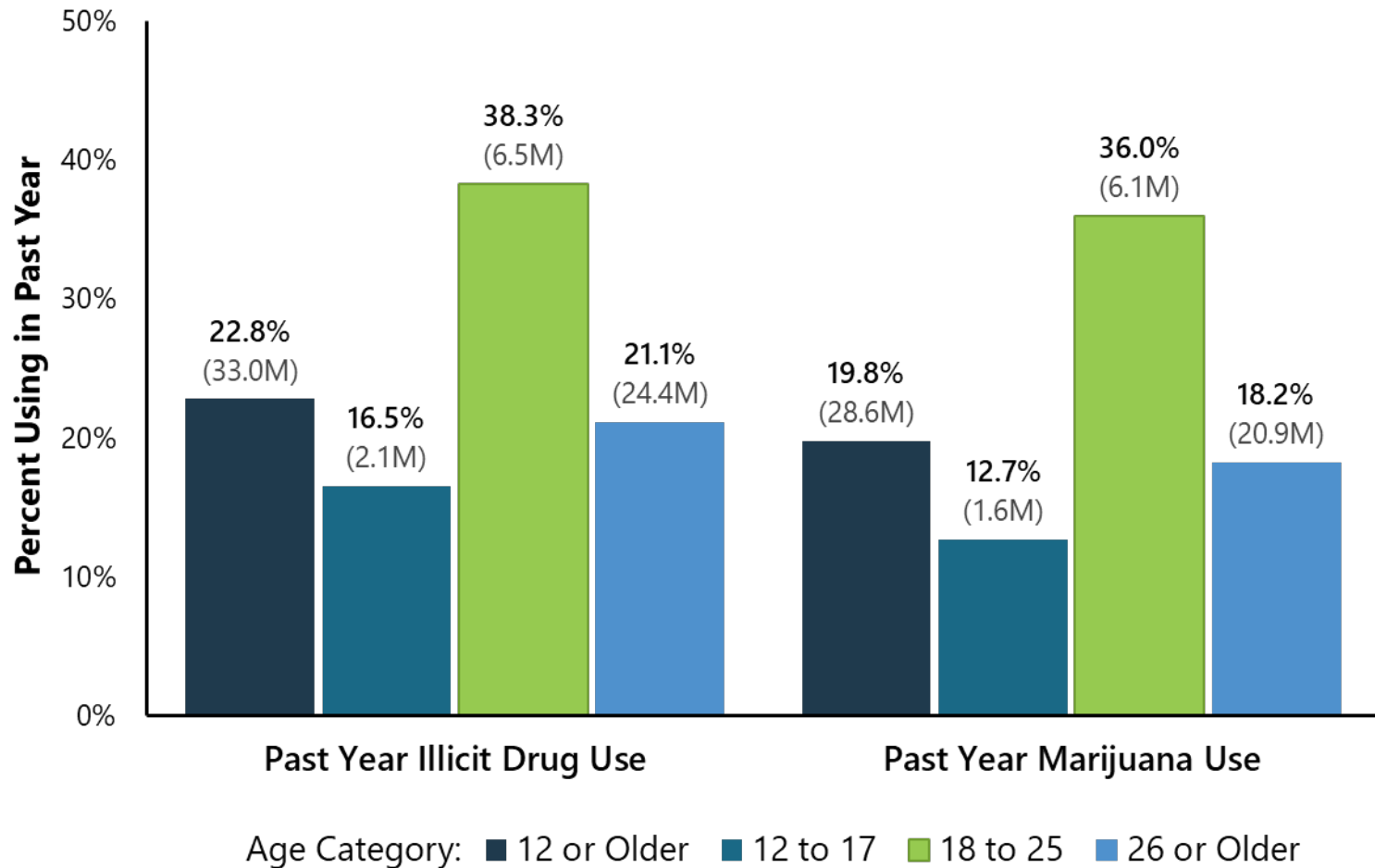
# Past Year Illicit Drug Use: Among Females Aged 12 or Older



Rx = prescription.

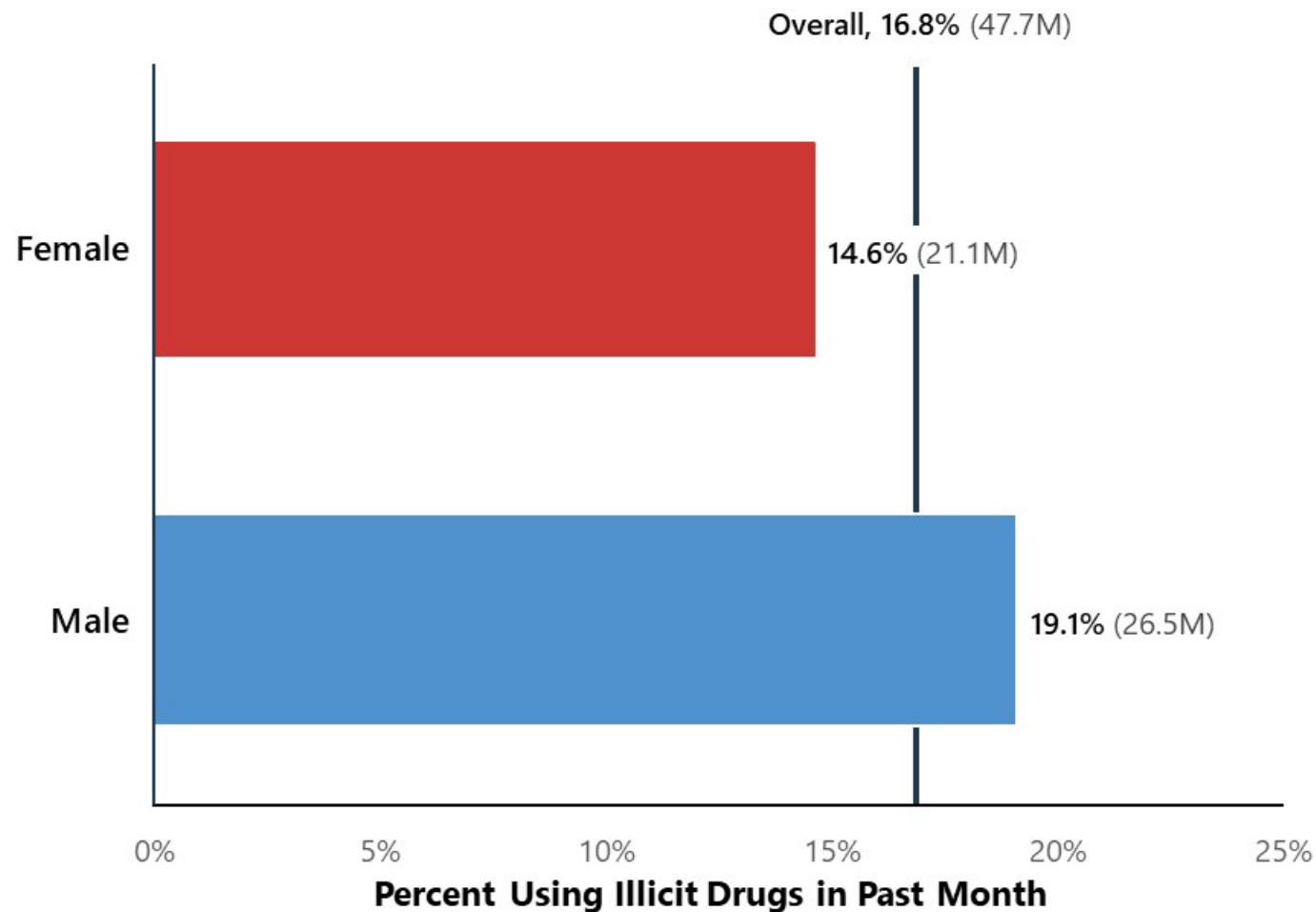
Note: The estimated numbers of past year users of different illicit drugs are not mutually exclusive because people could have used more than one type of illicit drug in the past year.

# Past Year Illicit Drug Use and Marijuana Use: Among Females Aged 12 or Older



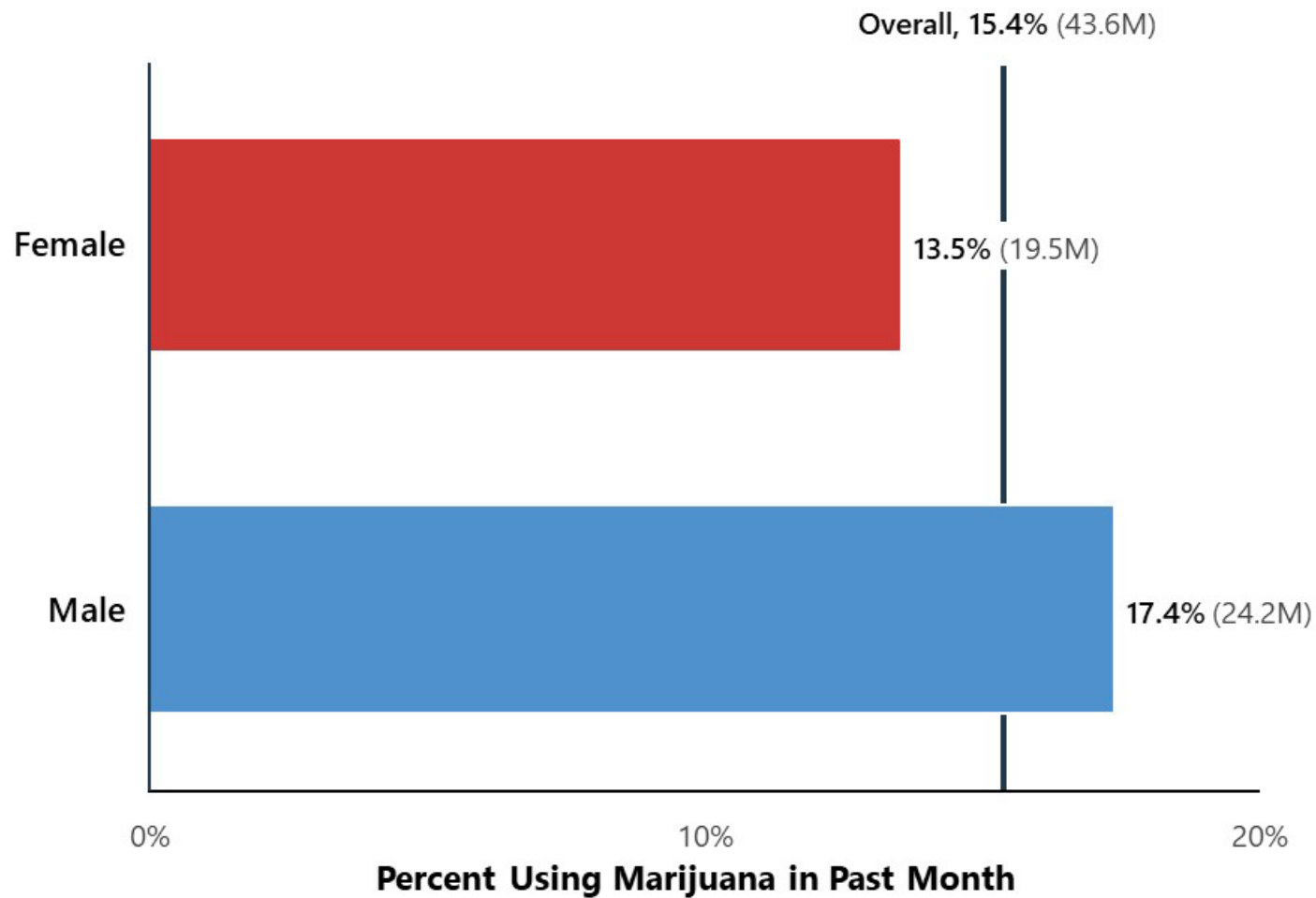
- Among female young adults aged 18 to 25, 38.3% used illicit drugs and 36.0% used marijuana in the past year

# Illicit Drug Use in the Past Month by Sex at Birth: Among People Aged 12 or Older



- **Females** were **less likely** to use illicit drugs than males

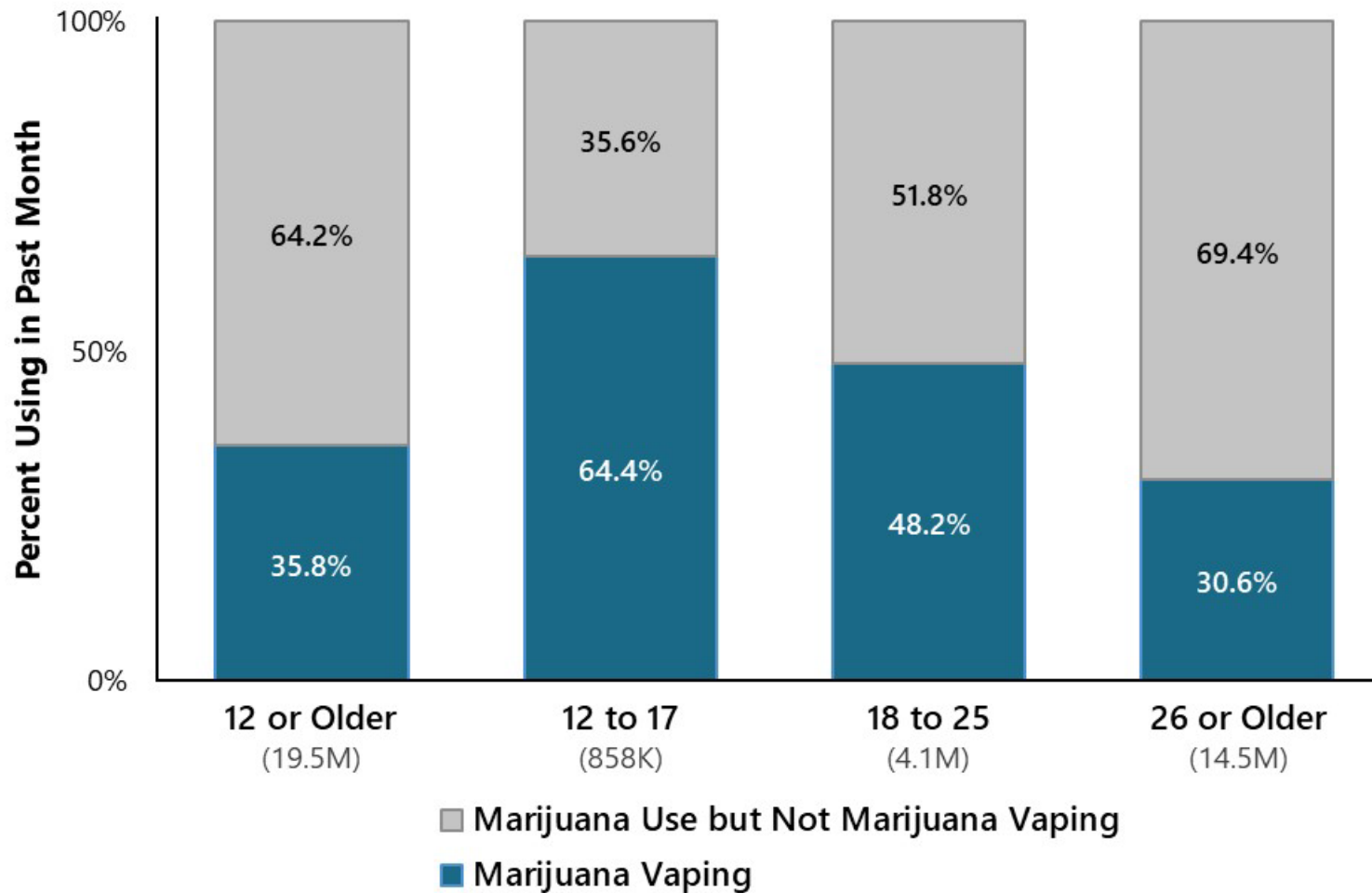
# Marijuana Use in the Past Month by Sex at Birth: Among People Aged 12 or Older



- **Females** were **less likely** to use marijuana than males

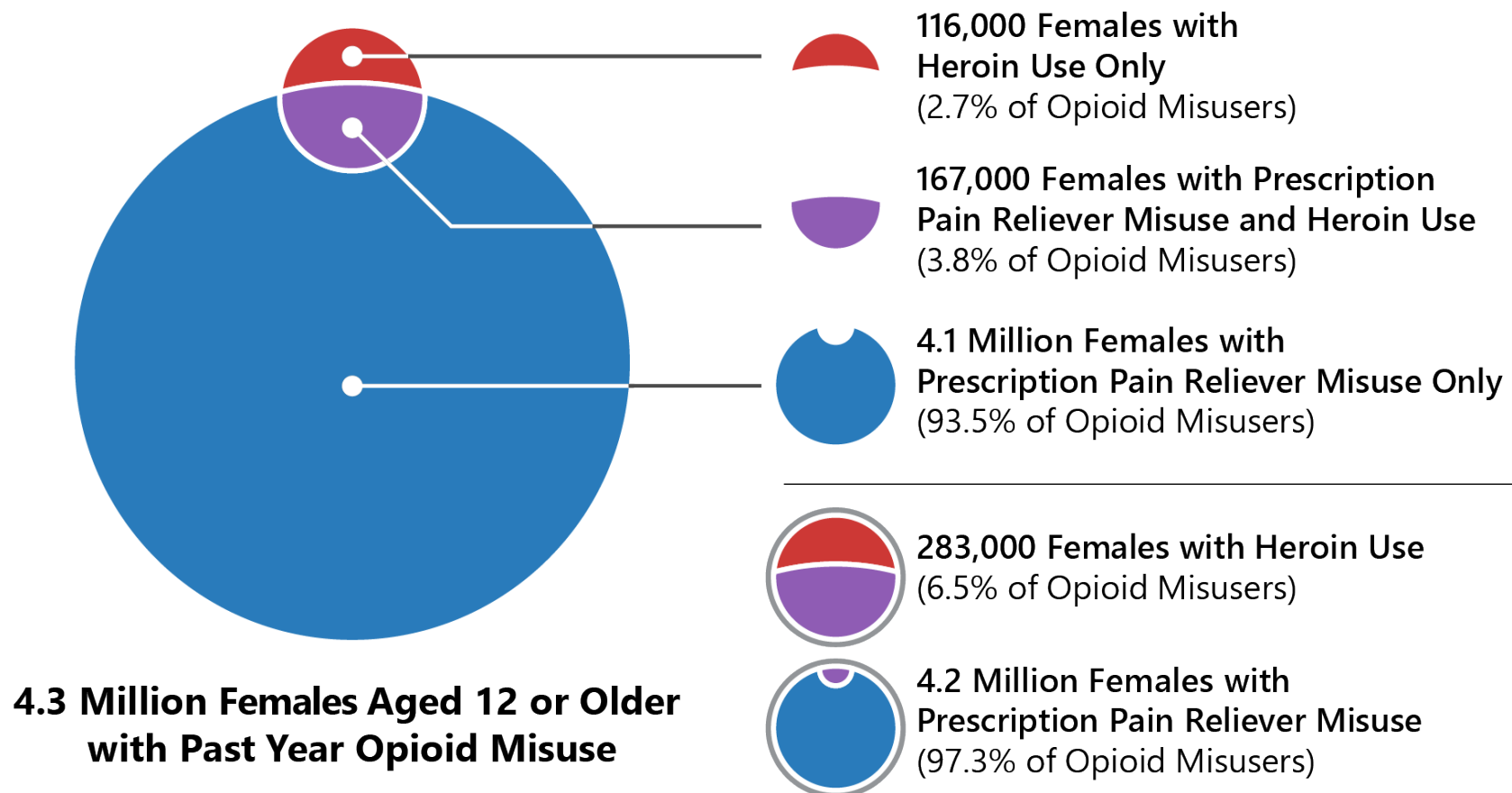


# Type of Marijuana Use: Among Females Aged 12 or Older Who Used Marijuana in the Past Month



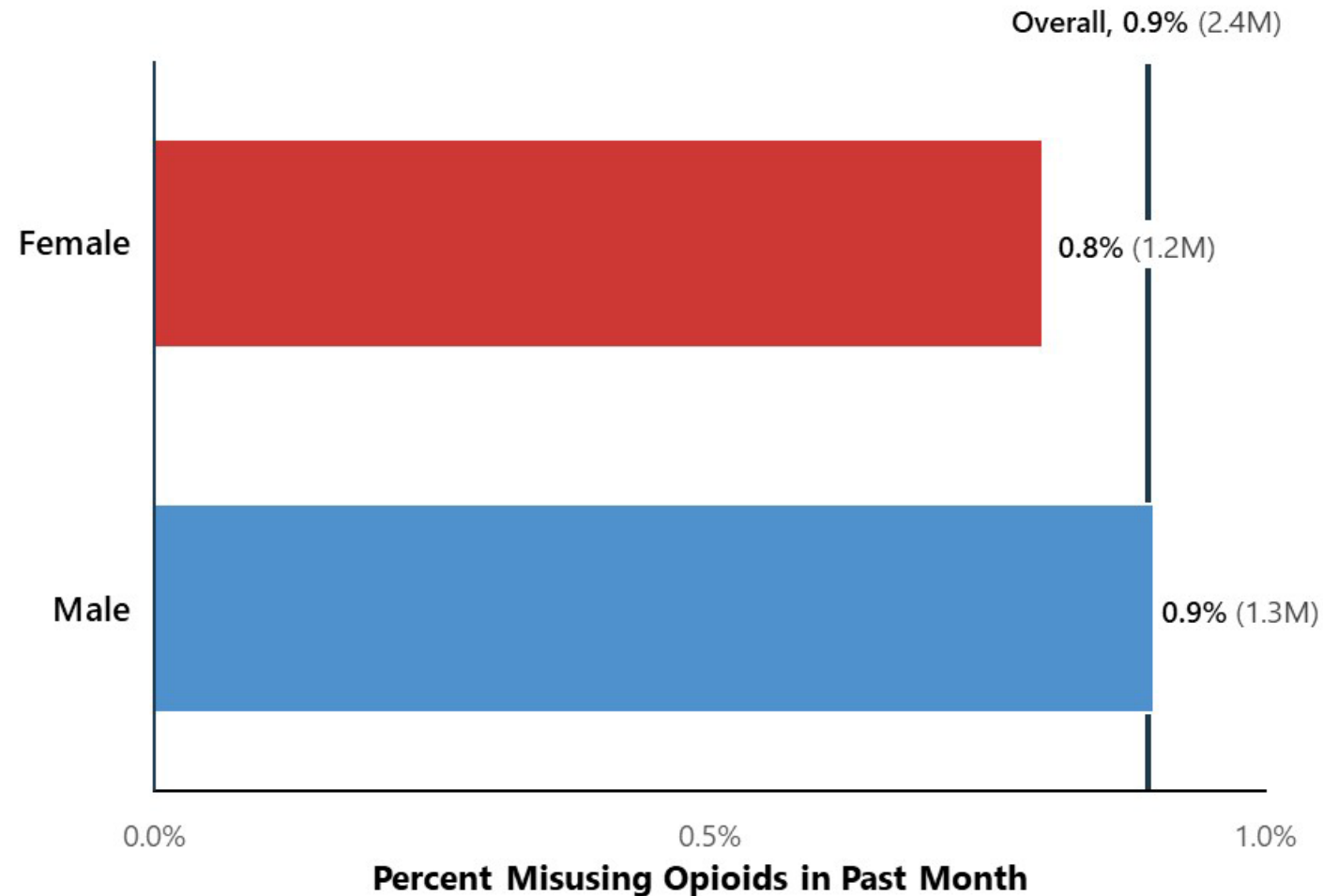
- **About 1 in 3** current female marijuana users aged 12 or older **vaped marijuana** in the past month

# Past Year Opioid Misuse: Among Females Aged 12 or Older



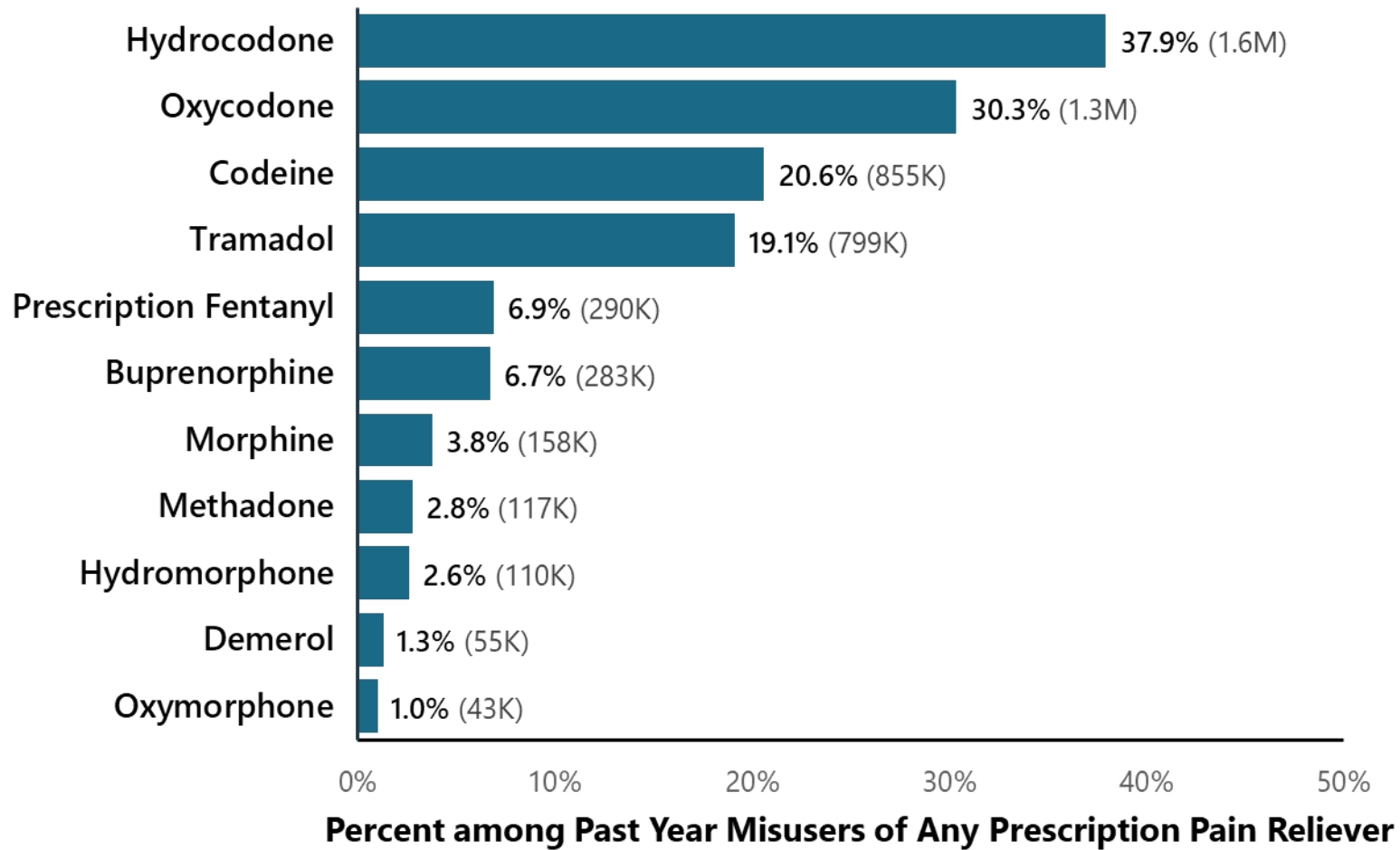
**4.3 Million Females Aged 12 or Older with Past Year Opioid Misuse**

# Opioid Misuse in the Past Month by Sex at Birth: Among People Aged 12 or Older



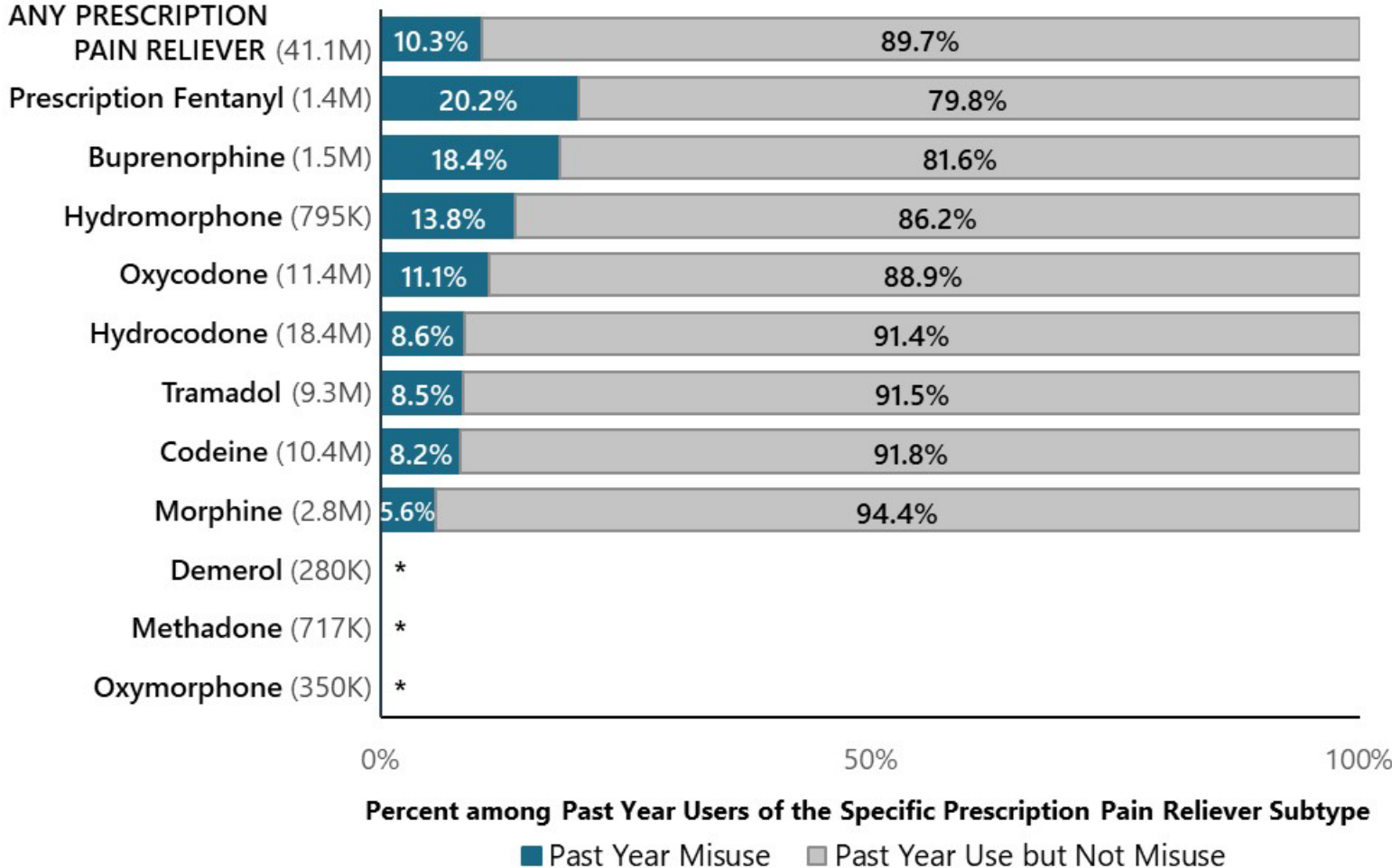
- **Females** were **just as likely** to misuse opioids as males

# Past Year Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse: Among Females Aged 12 or Older Who Misused Any Prescription Pain Reliever



- In 2023, **hydrocodone products** were the most commonly misused subtype of prescription pain relievers among females

# Past Year Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse: Among Females Aged 12 or Older Who Used the Specific Prescription Pain Reliever Subtype in the Past Year

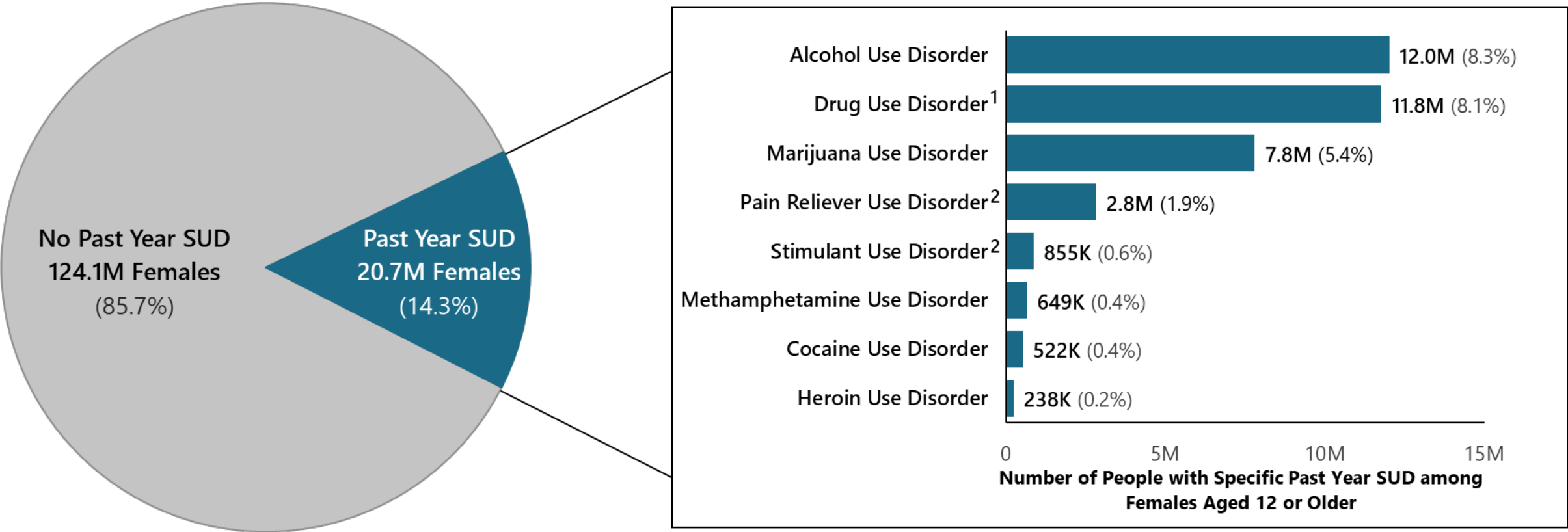


- Among females who used **prescription fentanyl products** for any reason in the past year, **20.2% misused them**
- Among females who used **buprenorphine products** for any reason in the past year, **18.4% misused them**

\* Low precision; no estimate reported.

# Substance Use Disorder

# Past Year Substance Use Disorder (SUD): Among Females Aged 12 or Older

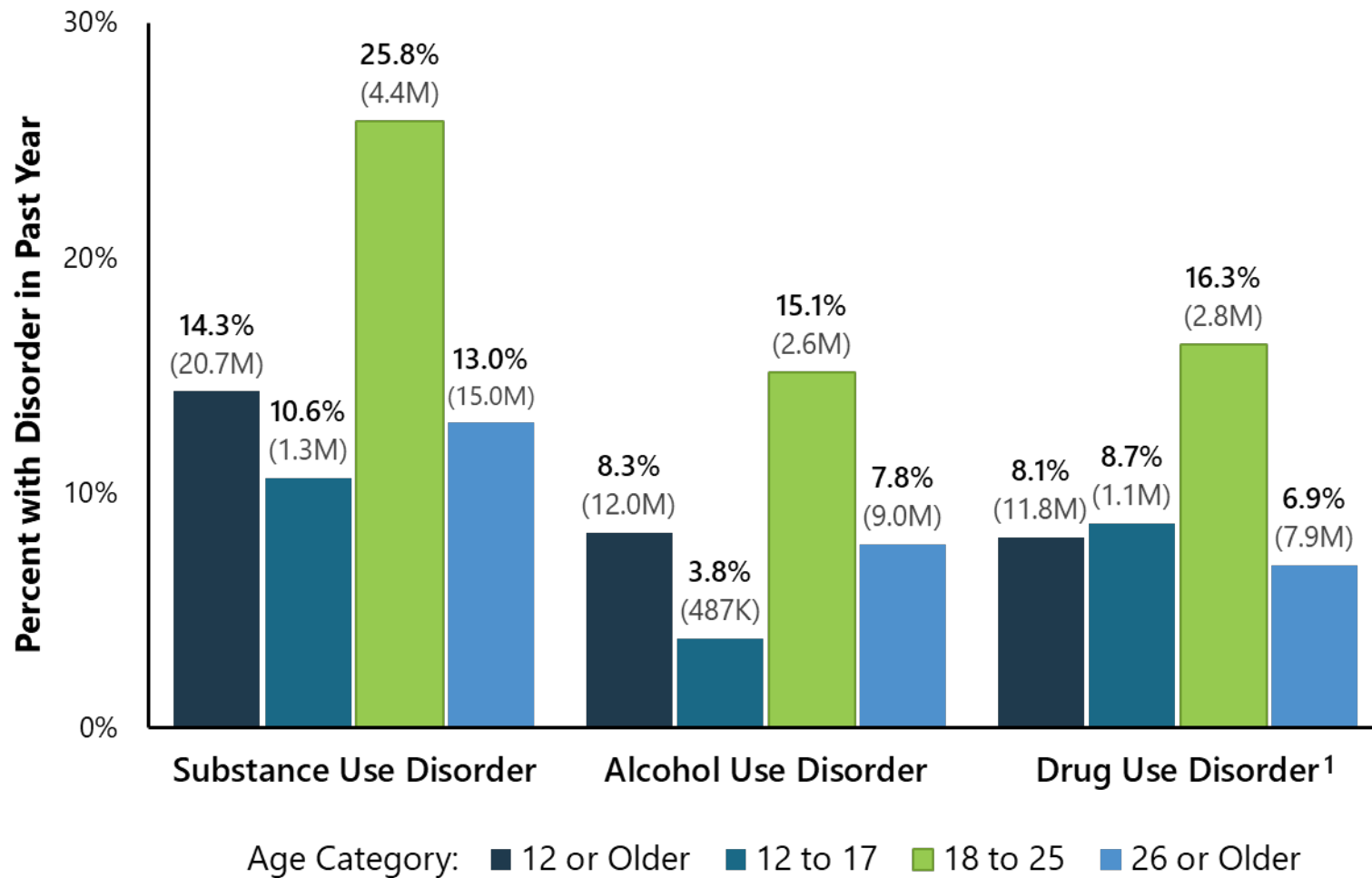


Note: The estimated numbers of people with substance use disorders are not mutually exclusive because people could have use disorders for more than one substance.

<sup>1</sup> Includes data from all past year users of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, methamphetamine, and prescription psychotherapeutic drugs (i.e., pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, or sedatives).

<sup>2</sup> Includes data from all past year users of the specific prescription drug.

# Past Year Substance Use Disorder: Among Females Aged 12 or Older

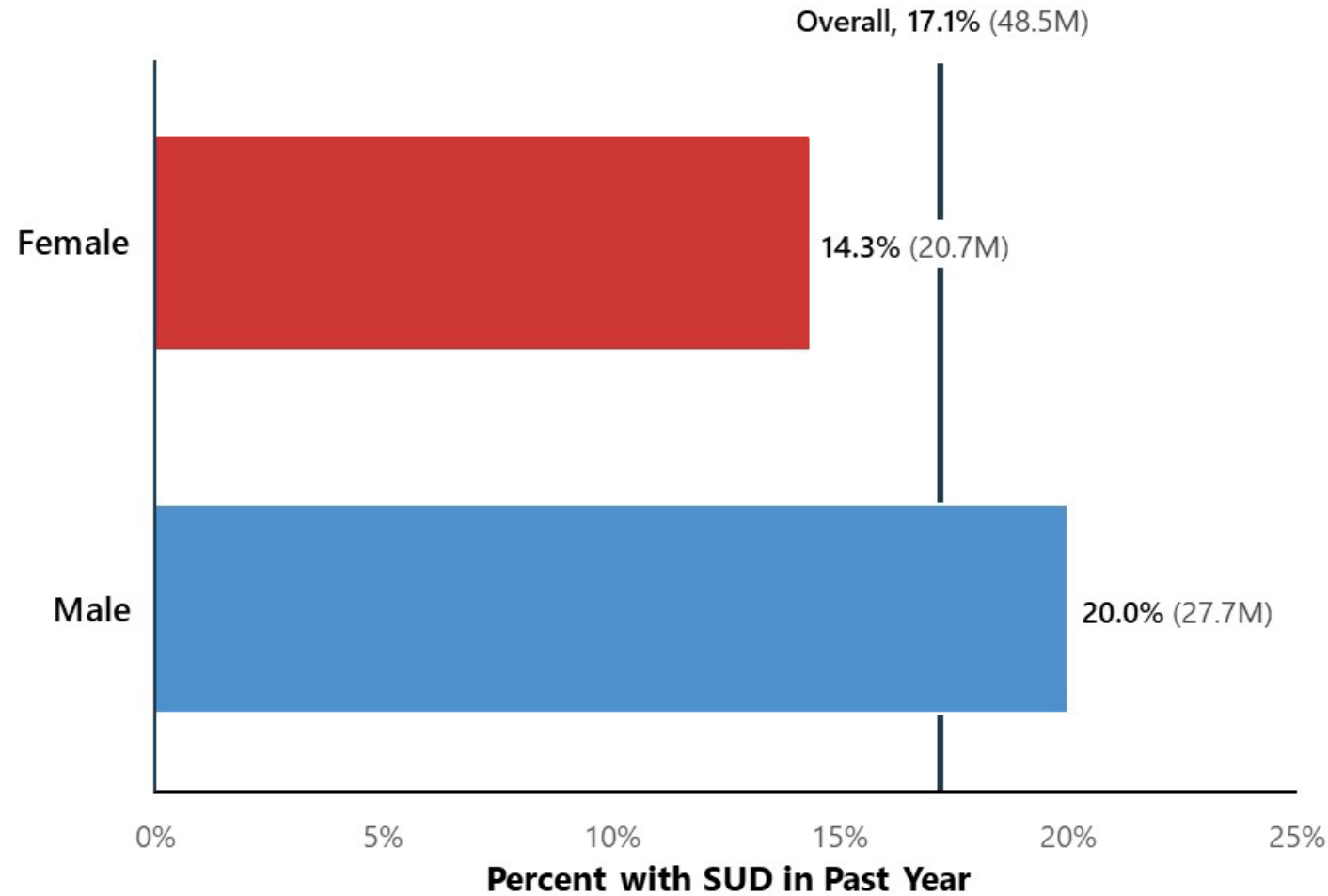


- Female young adults aged **18 to 25** were the **most likely** to have a past year substance use disorder, alcohol use disorder, or drug use disorder

<sup>1</sup> Includes data from all past year users of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, methamphetamine, and prescription psychotherapeutic drugs (i.e., pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, or sedatives).

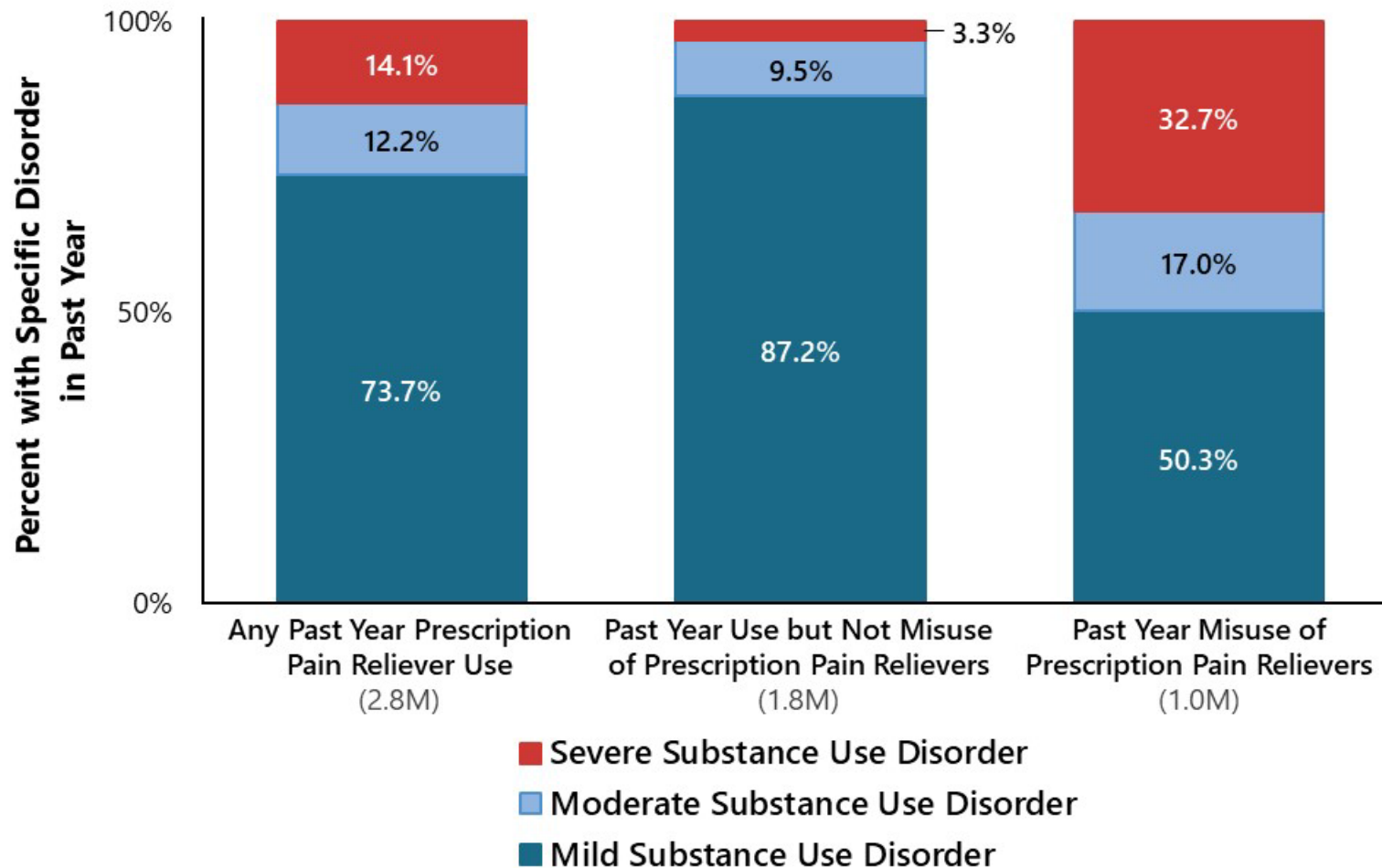


# Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among People Aged 12 or Older



- **Females** were **less likely** to have an SUD than males

# Prescription Pain Reliever Use Disorder Severity Level in the Past Year: Among Females Aged 12 or Older with a Prescription Pain Reliever Use Disorder

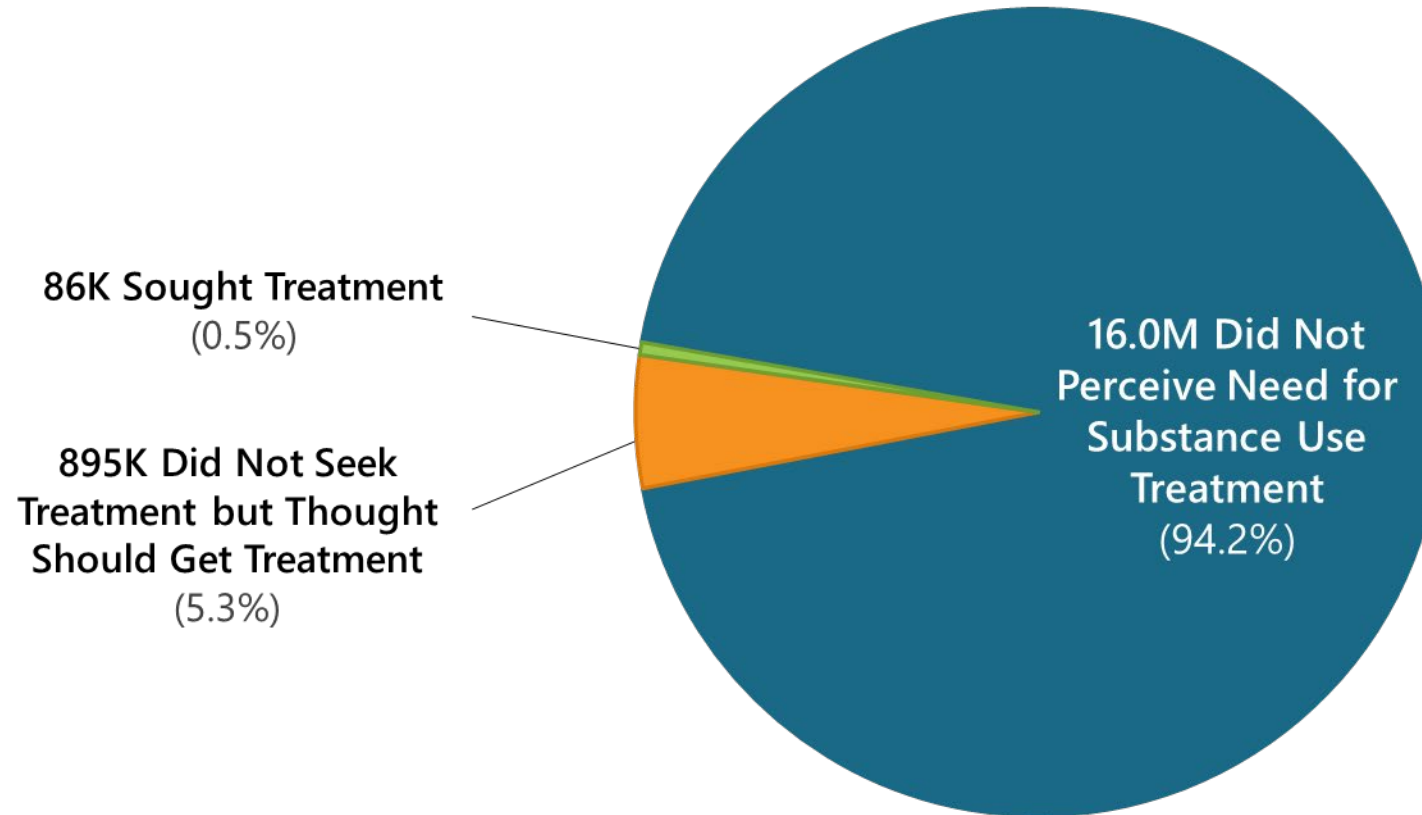


- Few **users but not misusers** of prescription pain relievers had a severe disorder among females
- Many more female **misusers** of prescription pain relievers had a severe disorder (32.7%)

Note: There are 11 criteria from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition, that apply to the pain reliever use disorder estimates for past year prescription pain reliever misuse and 9 criteria that apply to the pain reliever use disorder estimates for past year use but not misuse of prescription pain relievers. For the pain reliever use disorder estimates for any past year user of prescription pain relievers, the number of criteria depends on whether people misused prescription pain relievers (11 criteria) or used but did not misuse them (9 criteria). Regardless of the total number of criteria used for classifying people as having a pain reliever use disorder, people who meet two or three criteria are considered to have a "mild" disorder, those who meet four or five criteria are considered to have a "moderate" disorder, and those who meet six or more criteria are considered to have a "severe" disorder.

Note: The percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

# Perceptions of Need for Substance Use Treatment: Among Females Aged 12 or Older with a Past Year Substance Use Disorder Who Did Not Receive Substance Use Treatment in the Past Year



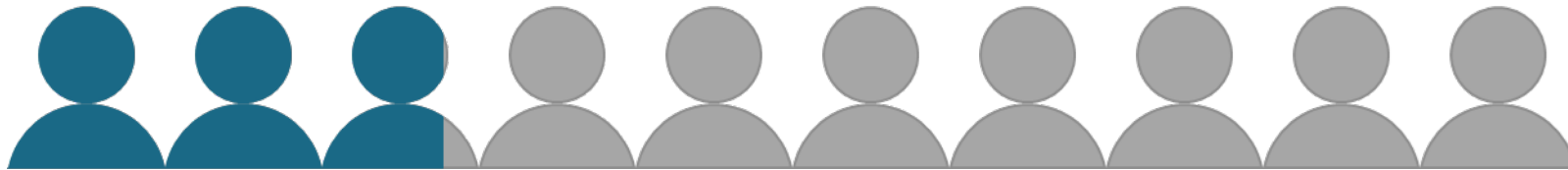
- Nearly all females with a substance use disorder who did not get substance use treatment **did not think they needed treatment**

**17.4 Million Females with a Substance Use Disorder Who Did Not Receive Substance Use Treatment**

Note: Respondents with unknown information for perceptions of need for substance use treatment were excluded from the analyses.

# Major Depressive Episode: Among Adolescents Aged 12 to 17

# Past Year Major Depressive Episode (MDE): Among Female Adolescents Aged 12 to 17



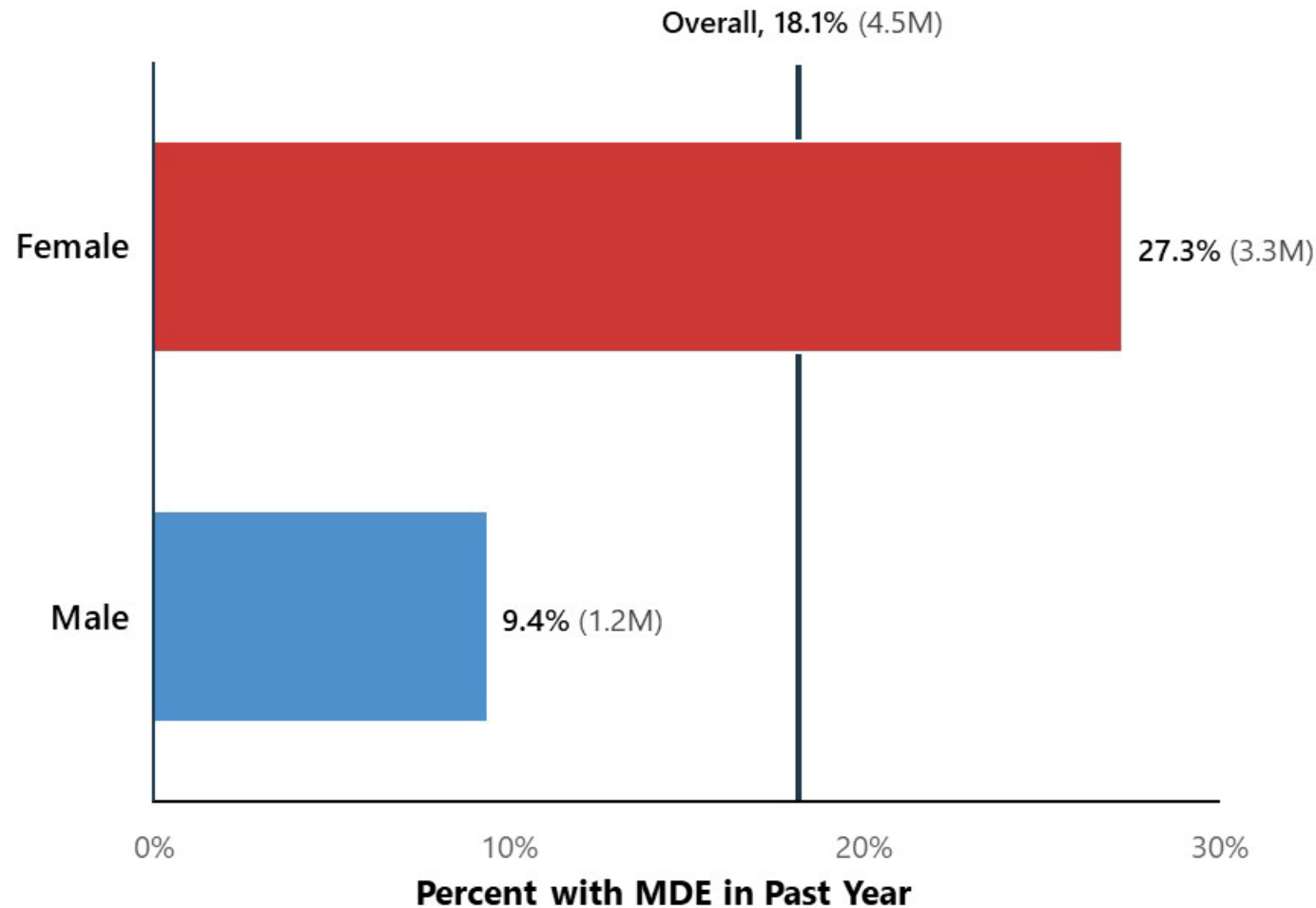
- In 2023, **nearly 3 in 10 (27.3%) female adolescents** had an MDE in the past year



- **3 in 4 (76.3%) female adolescents with an MDE** had severe impairment

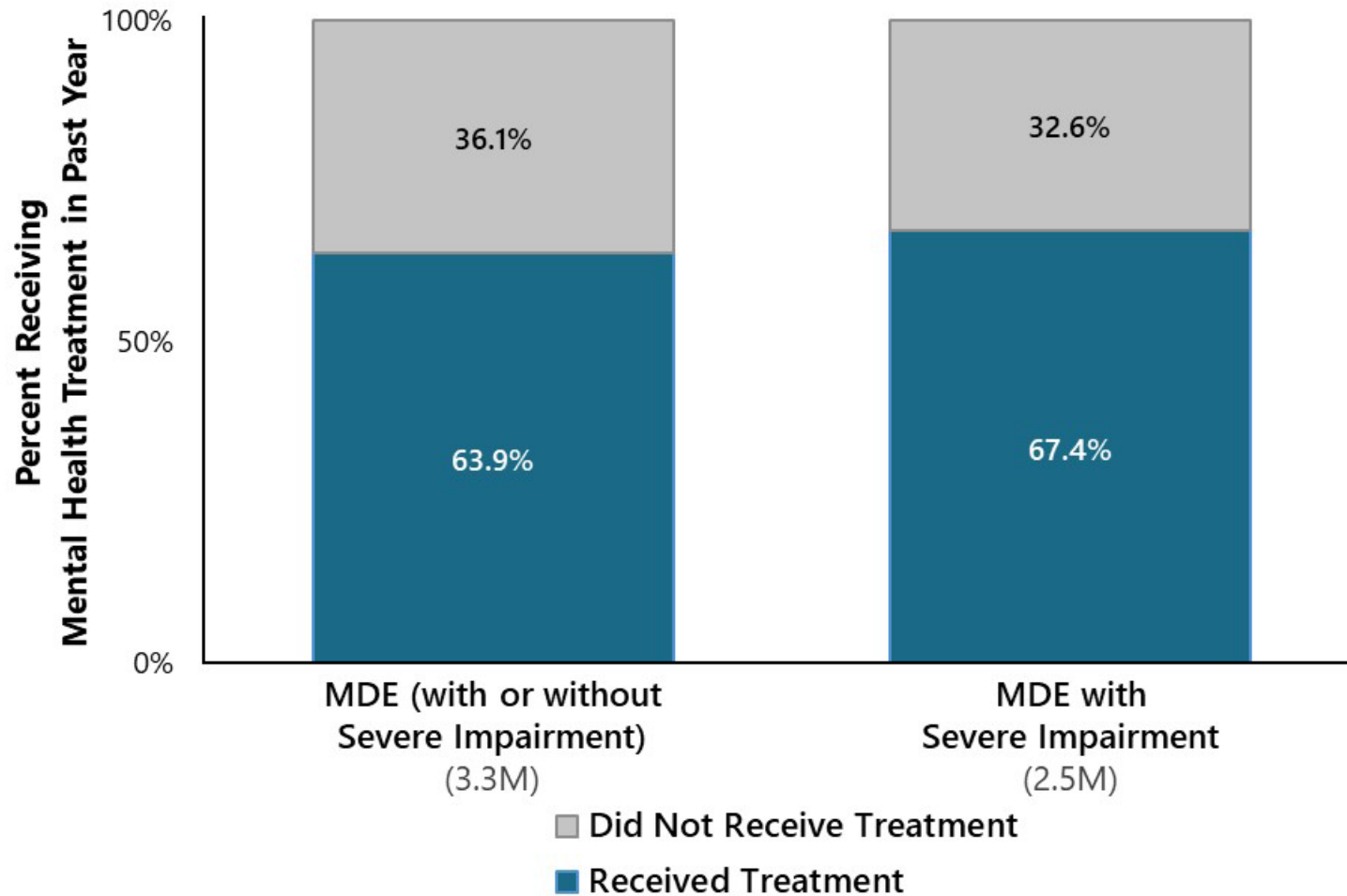
Note: Adolescent respondents with unknown MDE data were excluded.

# Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among Adolescents Aged 12 to 17



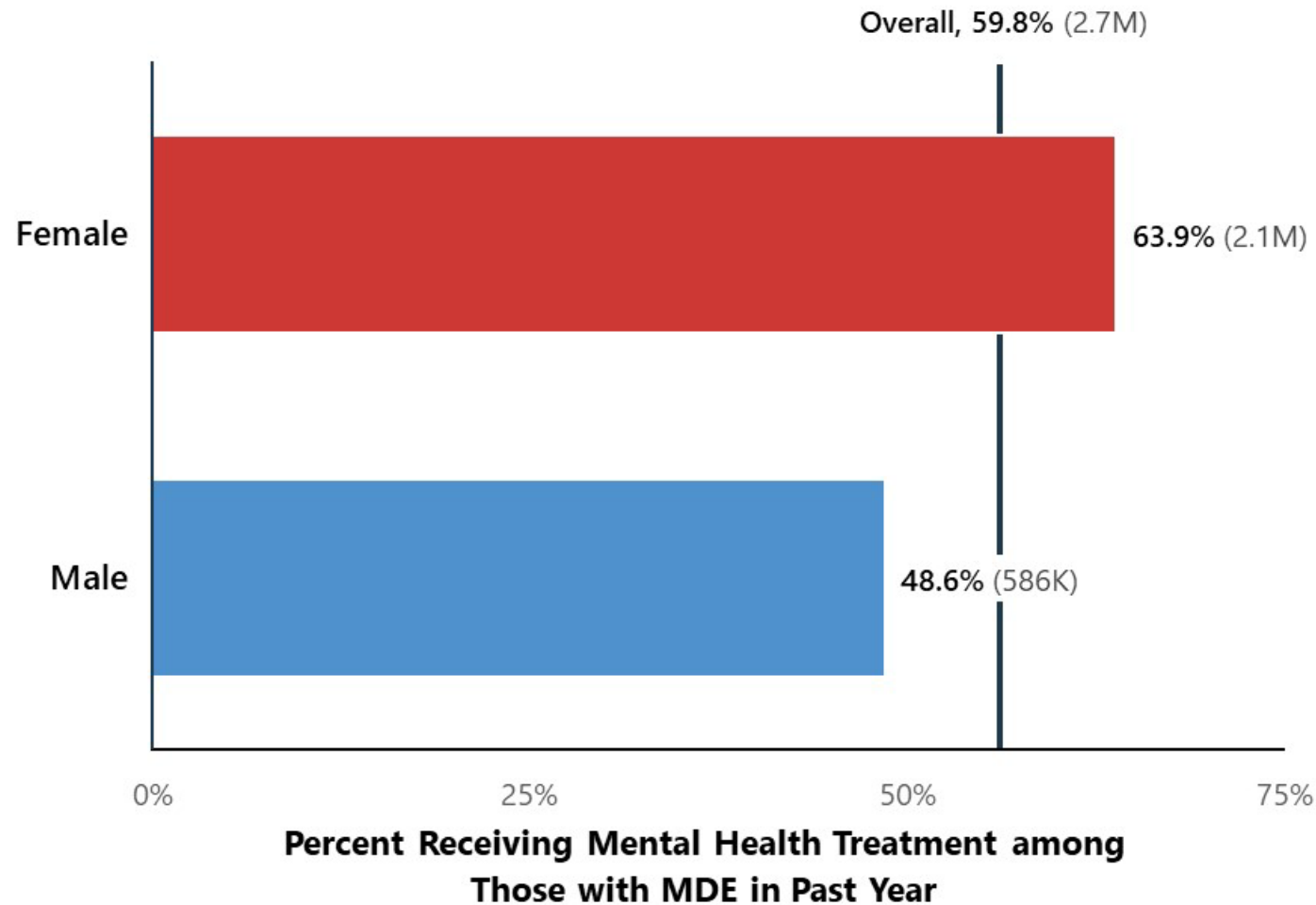
- **Female adolescents** were **more likely** to have an MDE than male adolescents

# Received Mental Health Treatment in the Past Year: Among Female Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 with a Past Year Major Depressive Episode (MDE)



- Among the 3.3 million female adolescents in 2023 who had a past year MDE, **1 in 3 did not receive mental health treatment** in the past year

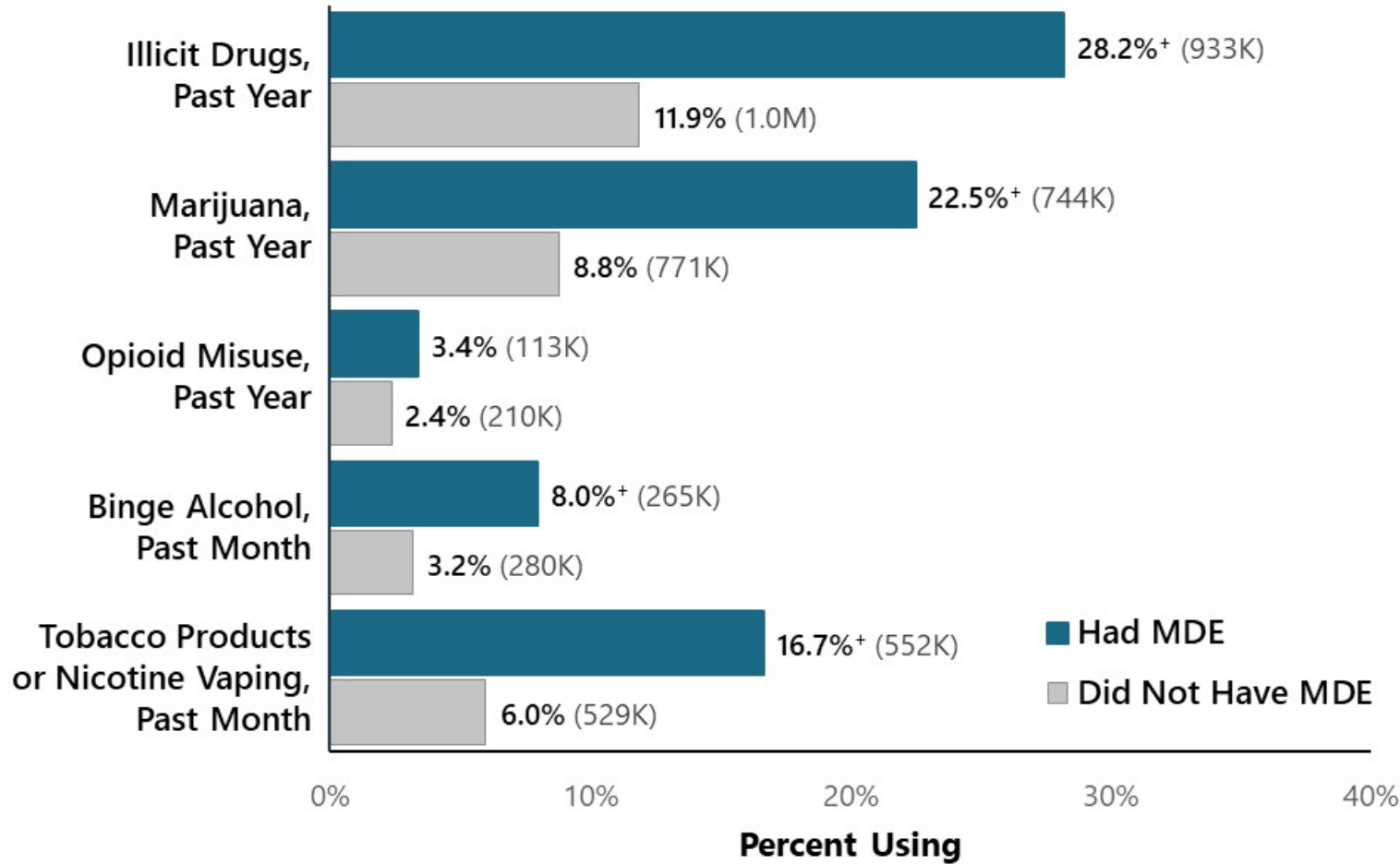
# Received Mental Health Treatment in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 with a Past Year Major Depressive Episode (MDE)



- **Female adolescents** who had an MDE were **more likely** to receive mental health treatment than male adolescents



# Substance Use by Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year: Among Female Adolescents Aged 12 to 17



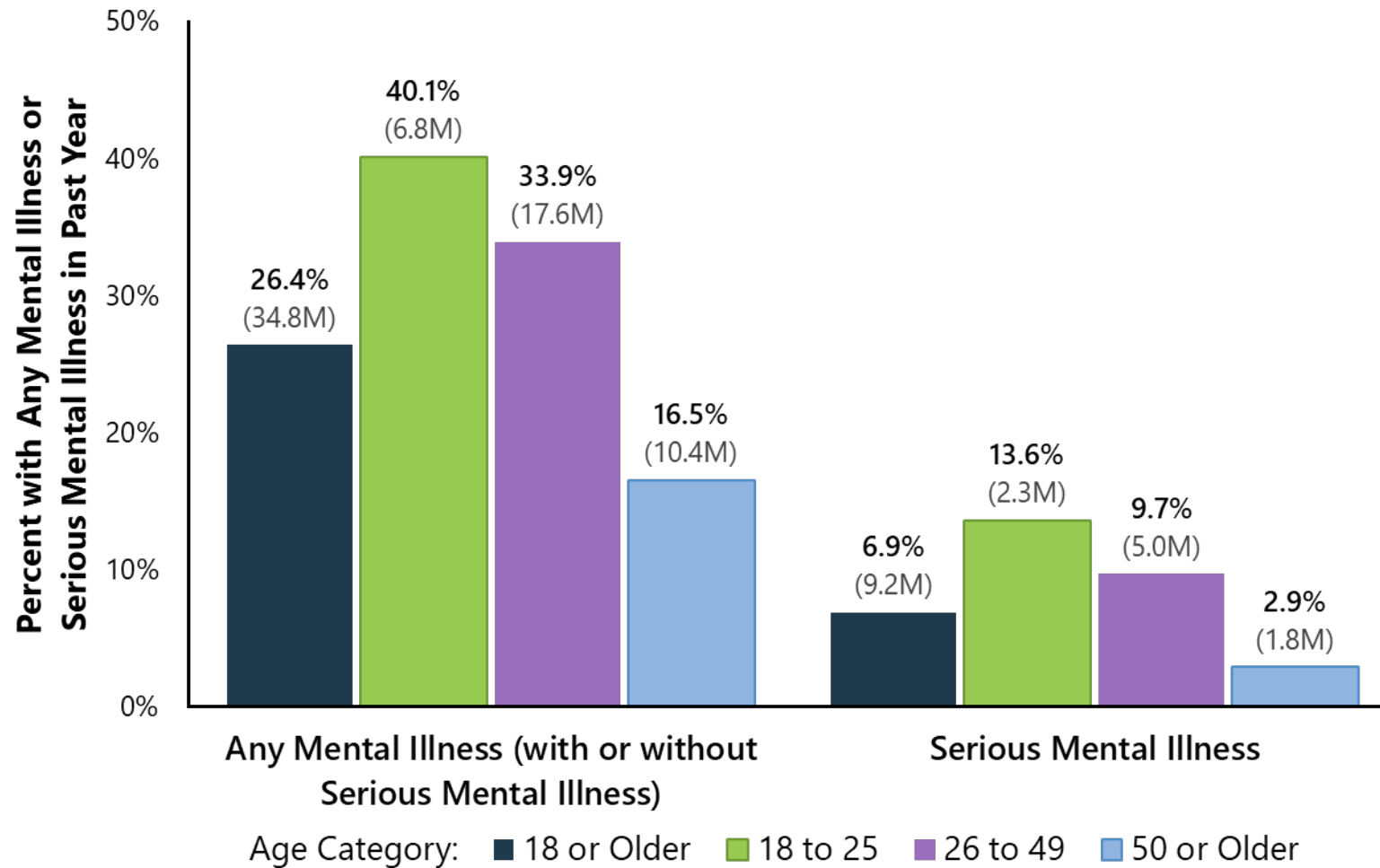
- Female adolescents who had an MDE in the past year were **more likely** to use these substances (except opioid misuse) in the past year or past month than female adolescents who did not have an MDE in the past year

+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for adolescents without MDE is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Note: Adolescent respondents with unknown MDE data were excluded.

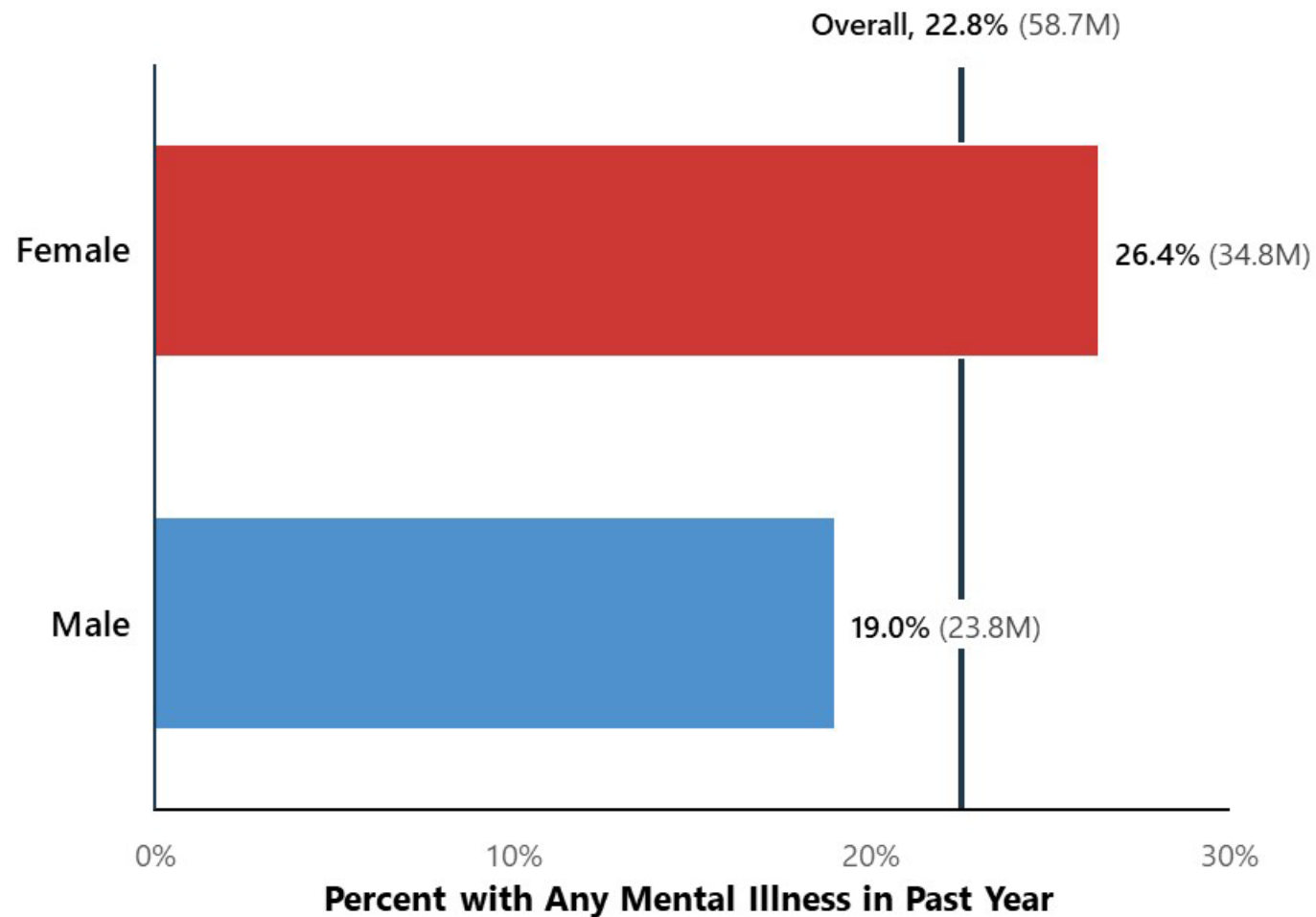
# Any or Serious Mental Illness: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older

# Past Year Mental Illness: Among Female Adults Aged 18 or Older



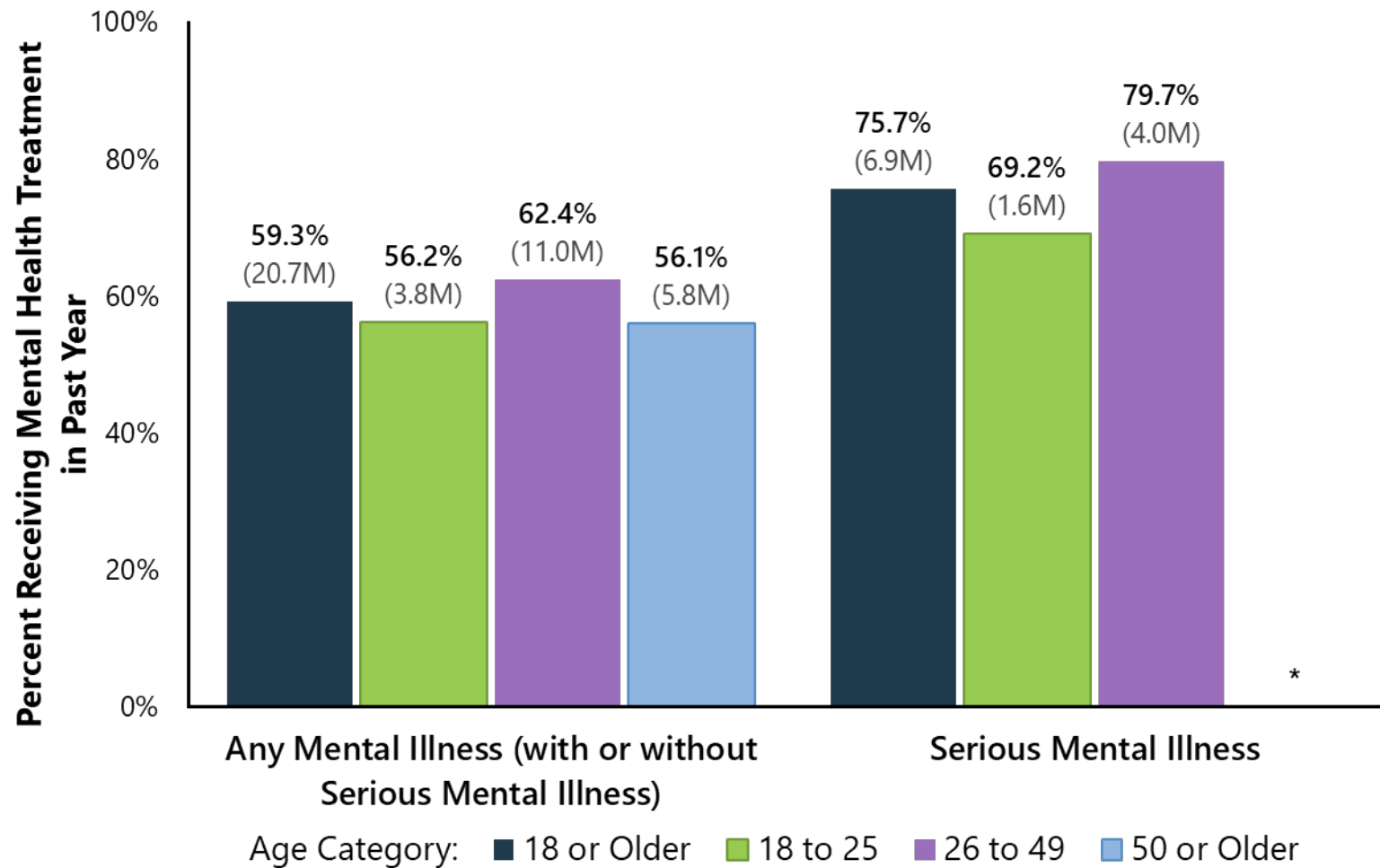
- The prevalence of mental illness was **highest** among female young adults aged **18 to 25** for both any mental illness and serious mental illness

# Any Mental Illness in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older



- **Female adults** were **more likely** to have any mental illness than male adults

# Receipt of Mental Health Treatment in the Past Year: Among Female Adults Aged 18 or Older with Mental Illness in the Past Year



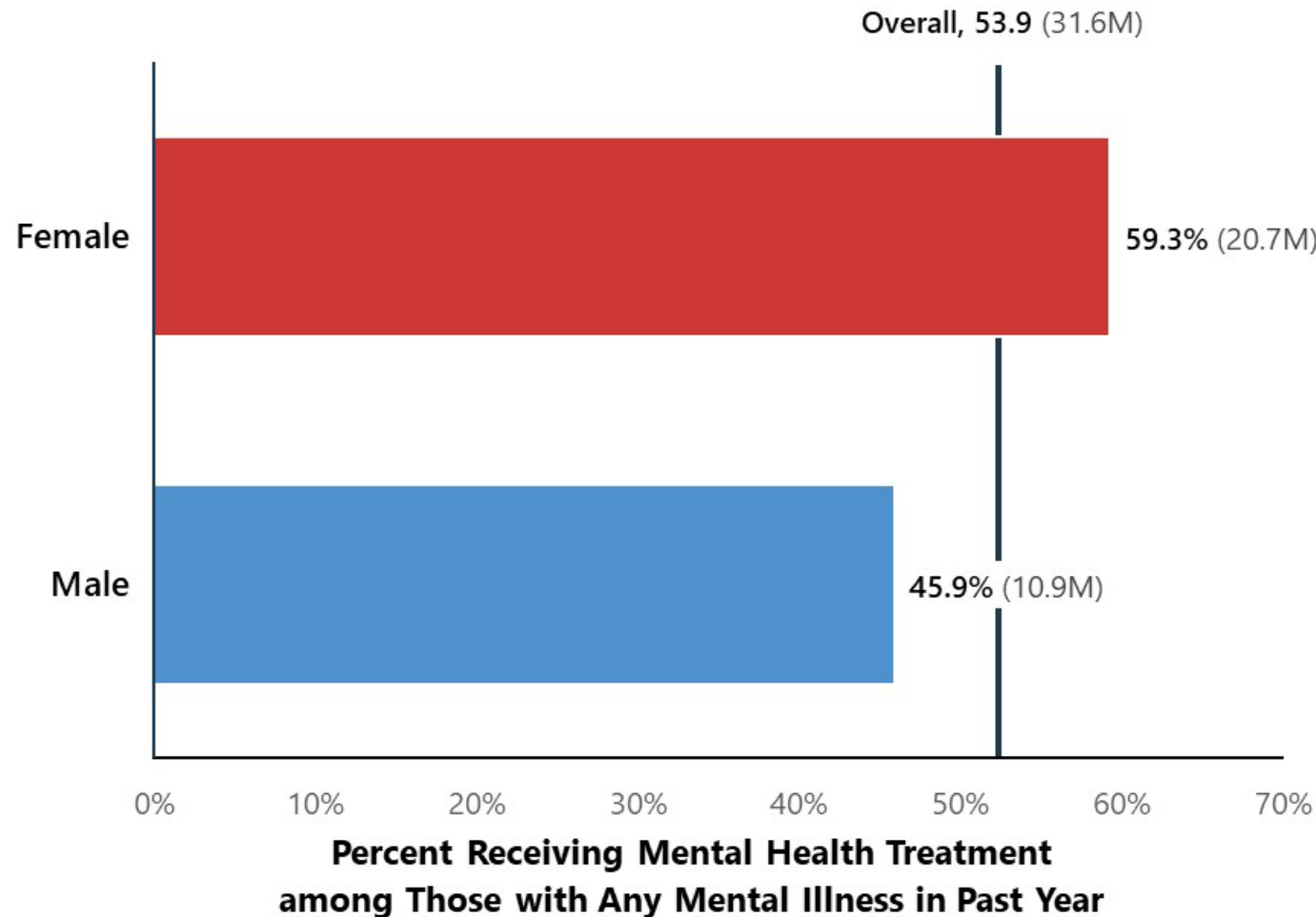
- **More than 3 in 4** female adults aged 18 or older with SMI received mental health treatment in the past year

\* Low precision; no estimate reported.

SMI = serious mental illness.

Note: Mental health treatment includes treatment/counseling received as an inpatient or as an outpatient; use of prescription medication to help with mental health; telehealth treatment; or treatment received in a prison, jail, or juvenile detention center.

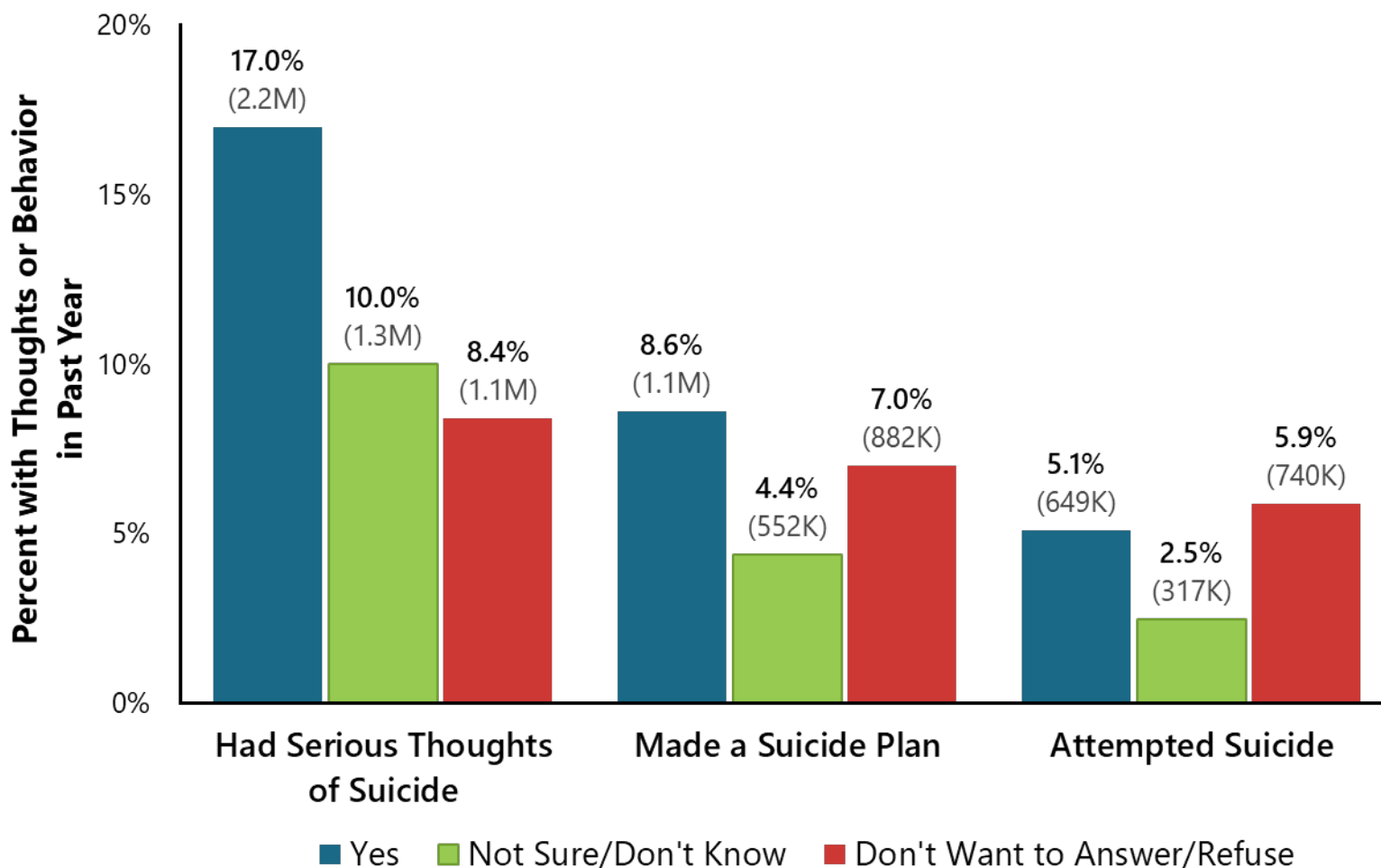
# Receipt of Mental Health Treatment by Sex at Birth: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older with a Past Year Mental Illness



- **Female adults** with mental illness were **more likely** to receive mental health treatment than male adults

# Serious Thoughts of Suicide, Suicide Plans, and Suicide Attempts

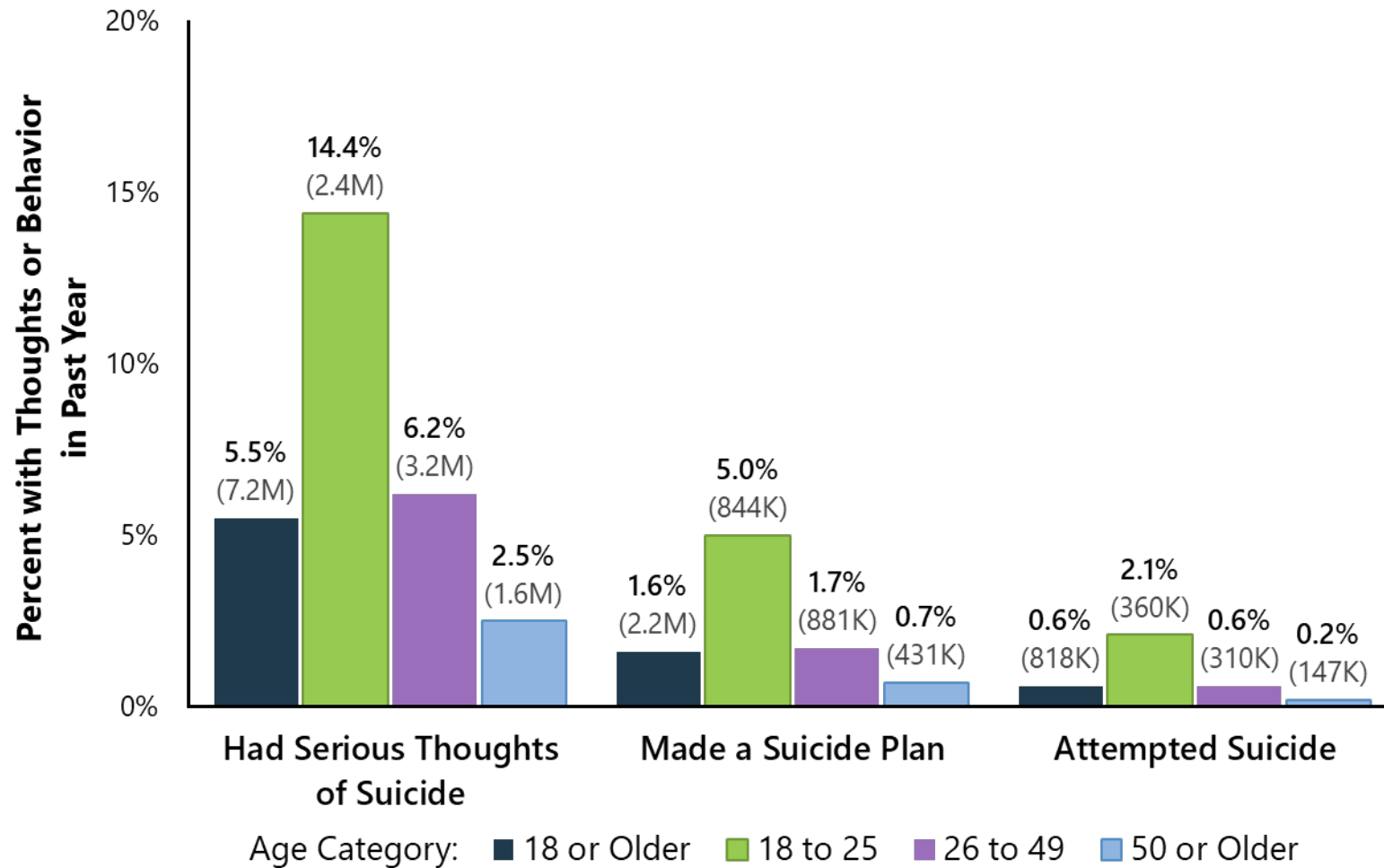
# Past Year Serious Thoughts of Suicide, Suicide Plans, or Suicide Attempts: Among Female Adolescents Aged 12 to 17



- 17.0% of female adolescents had thoughts of suicide
- 8.6% made a suicide plan
- 5.1% attempted suicide
- Many adolescents **did not want to answer questions about suicide**, which suggests that some adolescents could have had these thoughts but **did not feel comfortable disclosing** that information

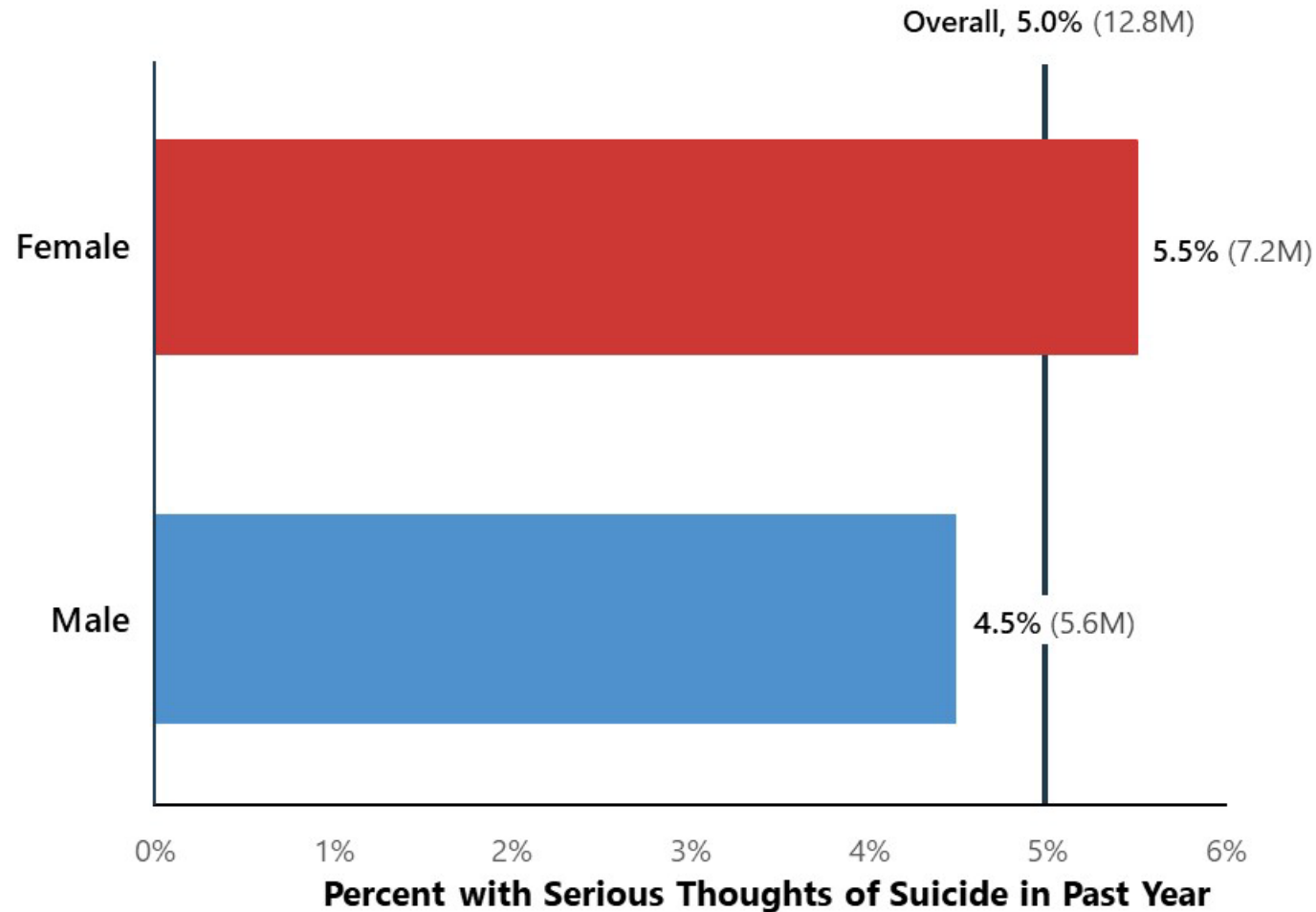


# Past Year Serious Thoughts of Suicide, Suicide Plans, or Suicide Attempts: Among Female Adults Aged 18 or Older



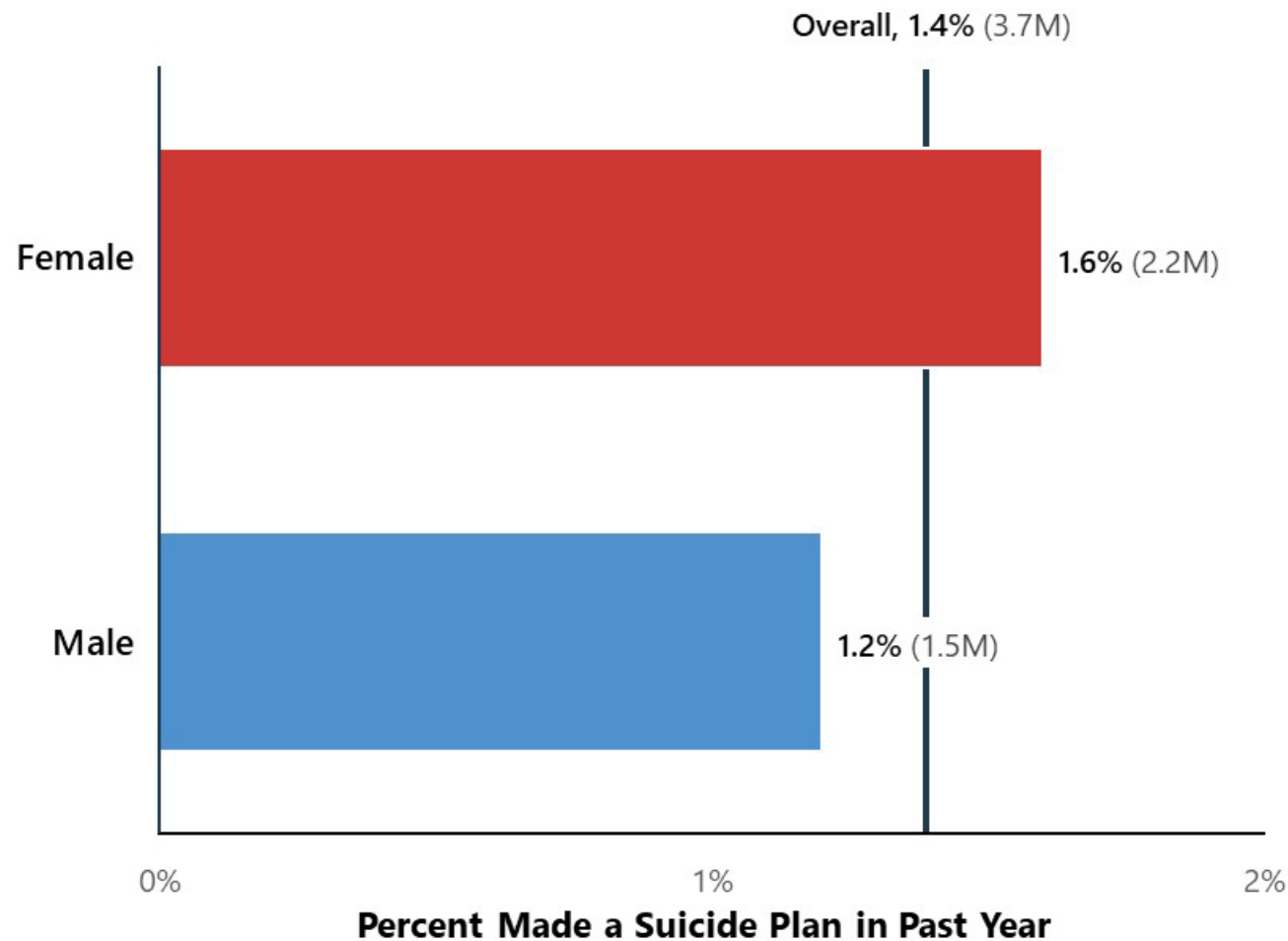
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide plans, and suicide attempts were **highest** among female young adults aged **18 to 25**

# Serious Thoughts of Suicide in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older



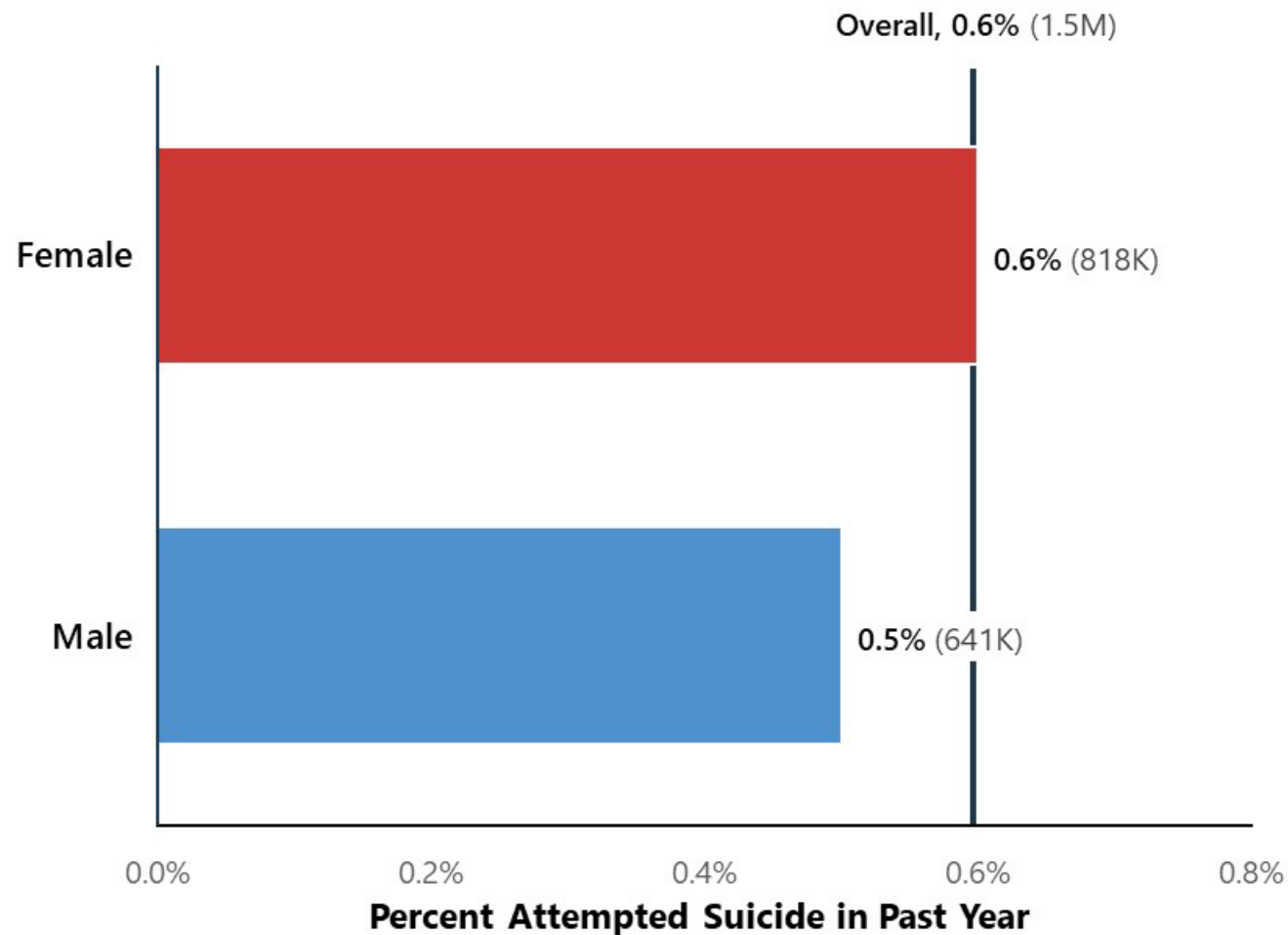
- **Female adults** were **more likely** to have serious thoughts of suicide than male adults

# Made a Suicide Plan in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older



- **Female adults** were **more likely** to have made a suicide plan than male adults

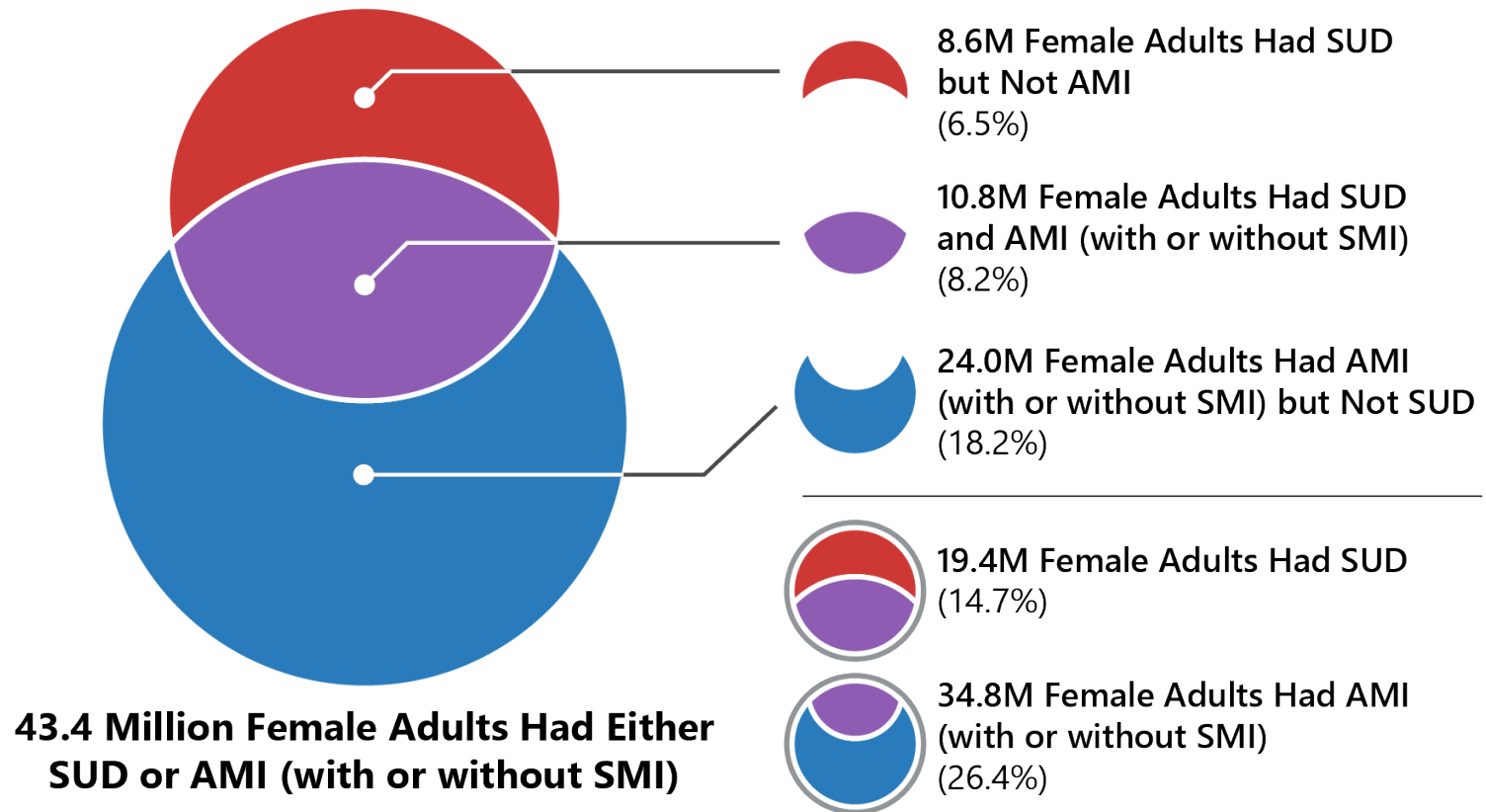
# Attempted Suicide in the Past Year by Sex at Birth: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older



- **Female adults** were **more likely** to have attempted suicide than male adults

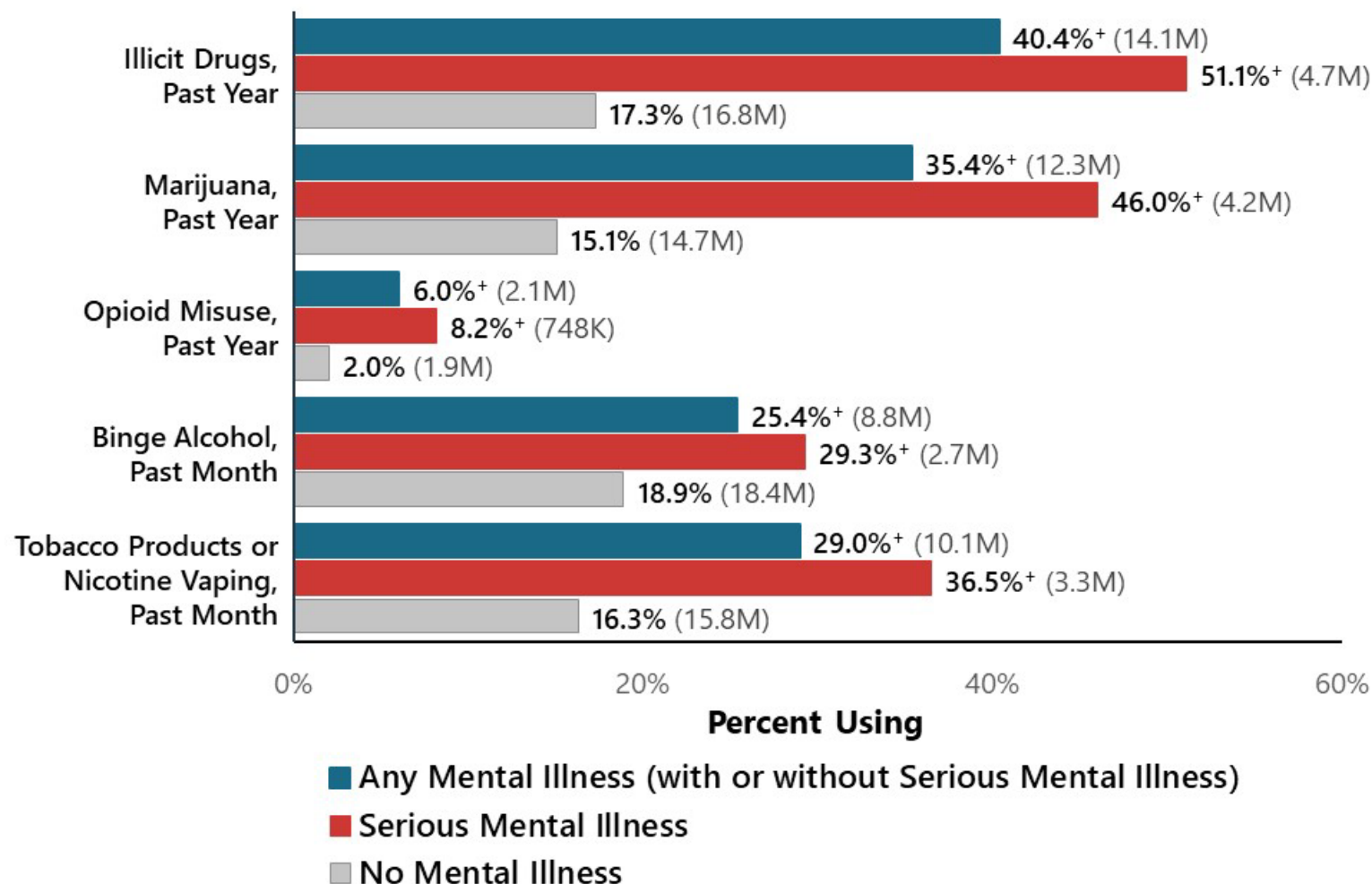
# Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health

# Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder and Any Mental Illness: Among Female Adults Aged 18 or Older



- **10.8 million** (8.2%) female adults aged 18 or older had **co-occurring SUD and AMI**
- **Half (50.0%)** of all female young adults aged **18 to 25** had **SUD or AMI**

# Substance Use by Mental Illness in the Past Year: Among Female Adults Aged 18 or Older

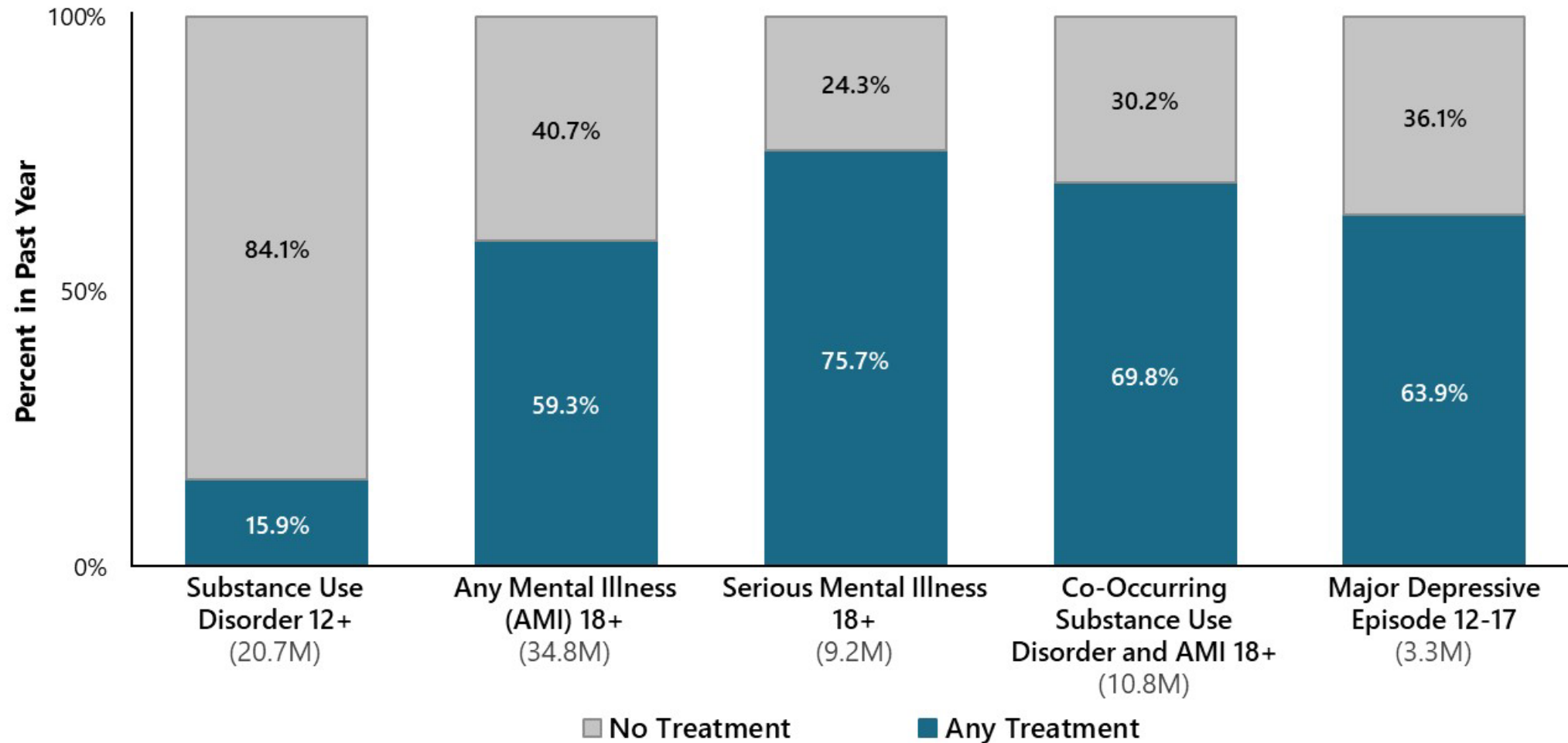


- Female adults with SMI or AMI in the past year were **more likely** to have used or misused these substances than those without mental illness

AMI = any mental illness; SMI = serious mental illness.

+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for adults aged 18 or older without mental illness is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Did Not Receive Substance Use Treatment or Mental Health Treatment in the Past Year: Among Females Aged 12 or Older





# Recovery: Among Female Adults Aged 18 or Older



- **7 in 10 (72.9%)** female adults who thought they ever had a **substance use problem** considered themselves to be **recovering or in recovery**



- **2 in 3 (67.2%)** female adults who thought they ever had a **mental health issue** considered themselves to be **recovering or in recovery**