

2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Among the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Some Other Term (LGB+) Population 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 8,630 LGB+ people)

Comparing Data Across Years

- Beginning in 2023, questions about sexual identity were asked of all respondents.
- Before 2023, these questions were asked only of adults aged 18 or older. The question about sexual identity was also revised to be more inclusive.
 - Additional response choices were provided, and respondents could specify other terms that they use to describe their sexual identity.
- Estimates of sexual identity among adults should not be compared between 2023 and prior years.

About This Presentation

- Statistical testing was performed for comparisons of estimates across age groups and sexual identity groups according to procedures described in the 2023 Methodological Summary and Definitions report.¹ For consistency with the typical criteria for statistical testing in NSDUH, age group 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.
- Because of differences in the age distributions for sexual identity groups in the NSDUH sample, estimates used for comparison were age adjusted to the adult age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population in accordance with federal agency best practices.² Figures in this presentation present both the unadjusted and age-adjusted estimates; the unadjusted estimates indicate the actual prevalence estimates among sexual identity groups before differences in age distributions were taken into account.

¹ See Section 3.2.3 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>.

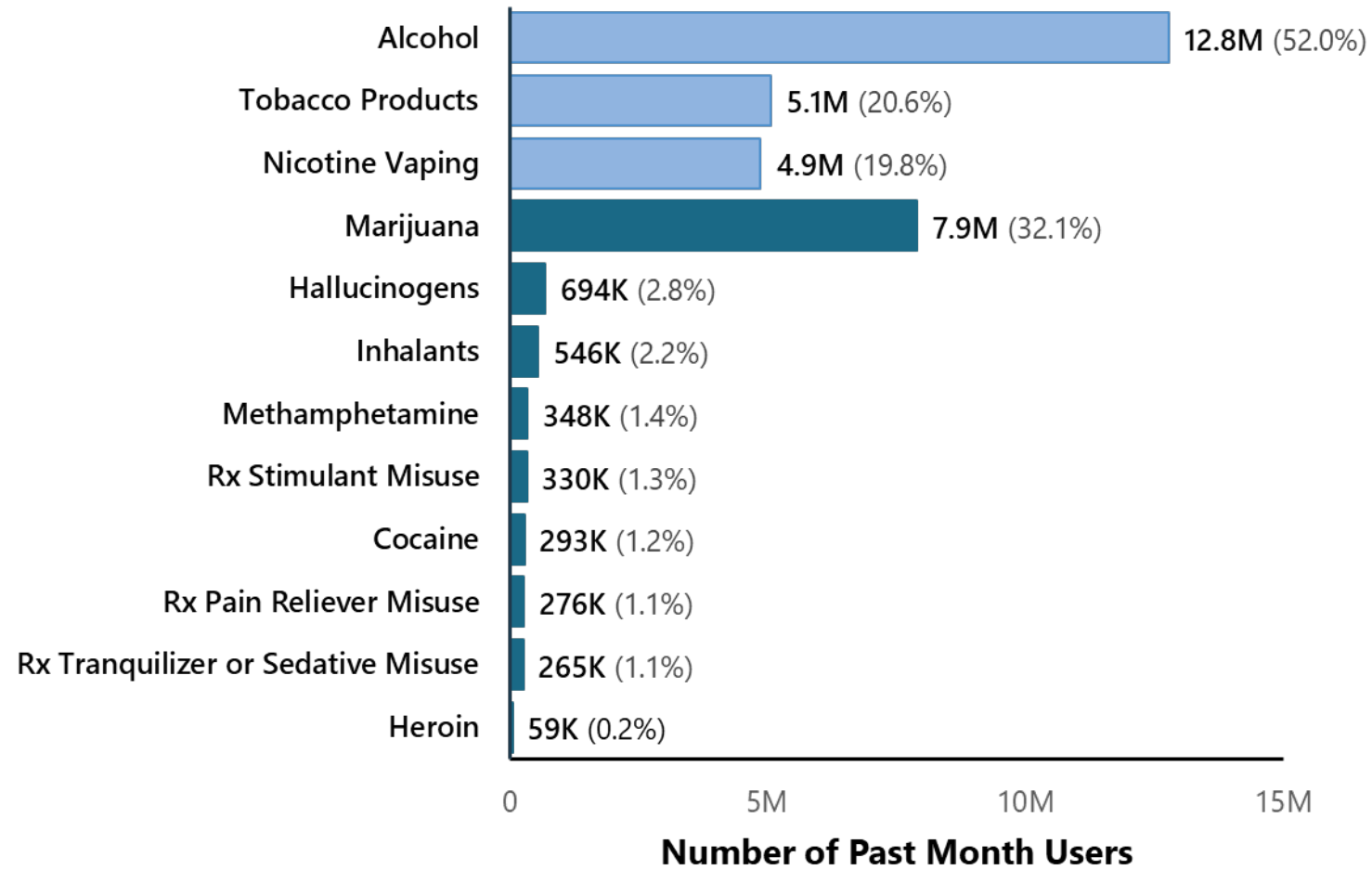
² Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program. (n.d.). *Use of the 2000 U.S. standard population for age-adjustment*. National Cancer Institute. <https://seer.cancer.gov/stdpopulations/2000stdpop-use.html>.

Suppression Due to Low Precision

- The following estimates for LGB+ people are not presented due to low precision:
 - Substance use disorder by severity level
 - Pain reliever use disorder by severity level

Substance Use in the Past Month

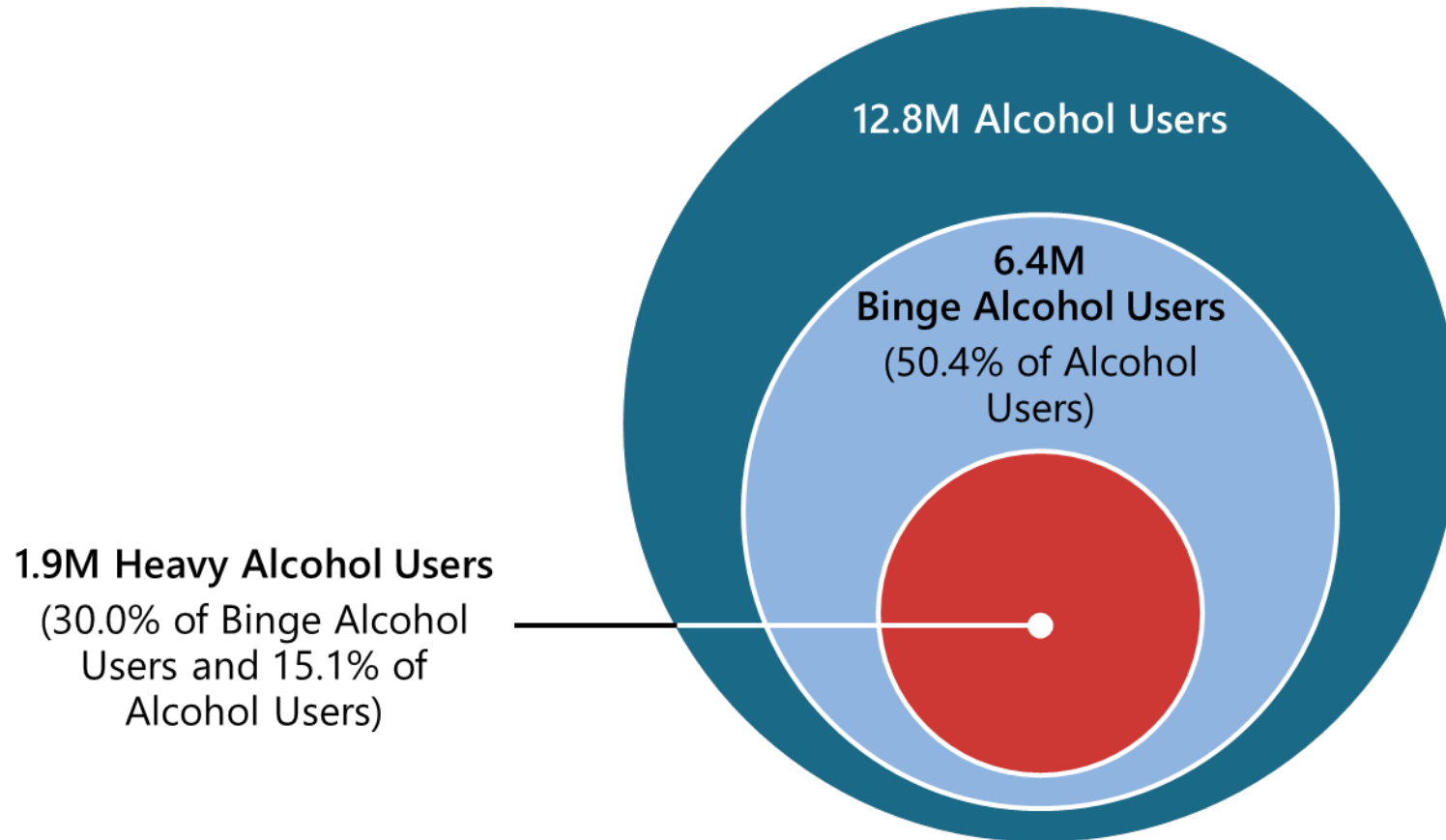
Past Month Substance Use: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



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.

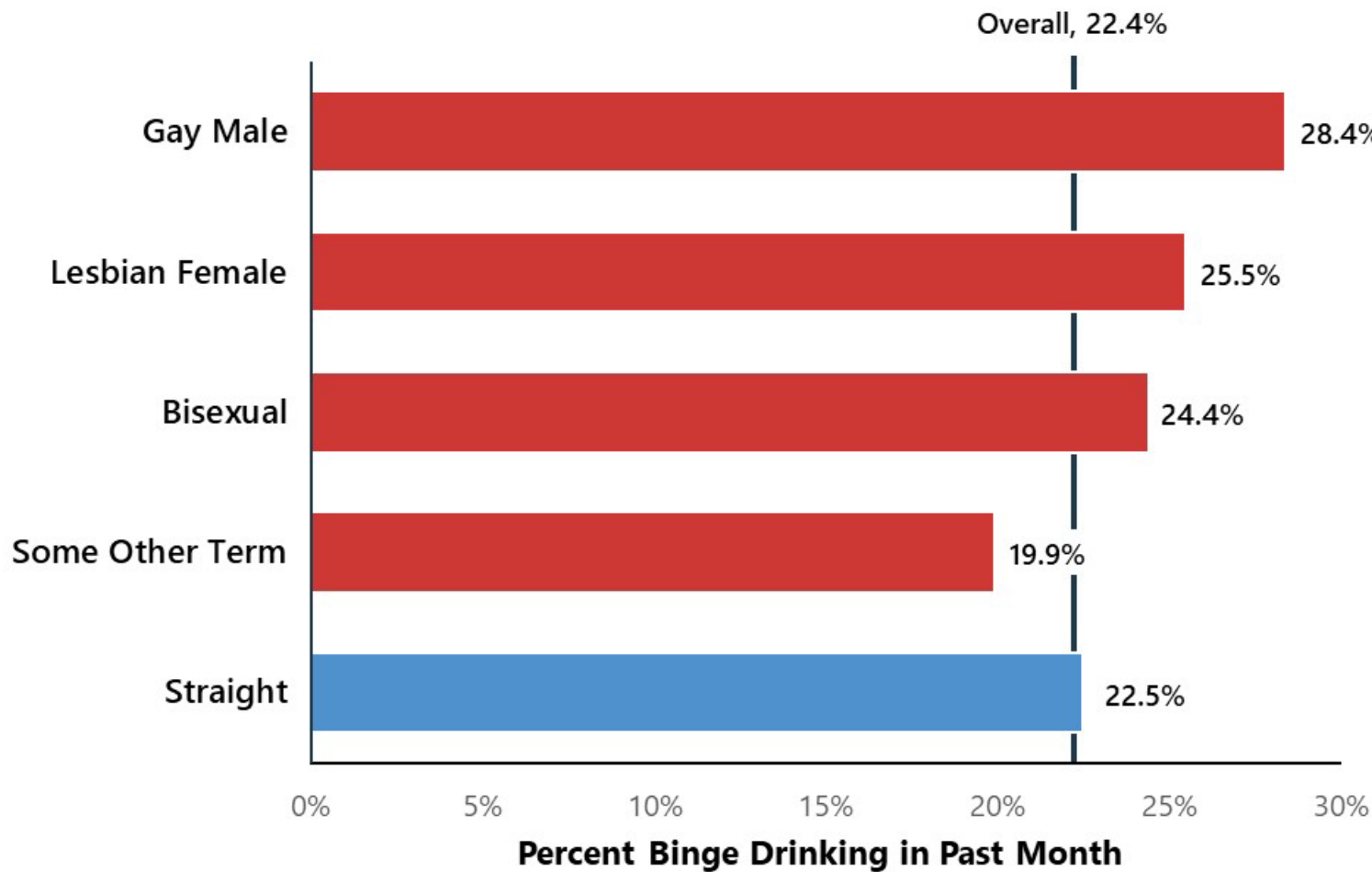
Past Month Alcohol Use, Binge Alcohol Use, and Heavy Alcohol Use: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



- **More than half** of past month LGB+ 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 Sexual Identity: Among People Aged 12 or Older



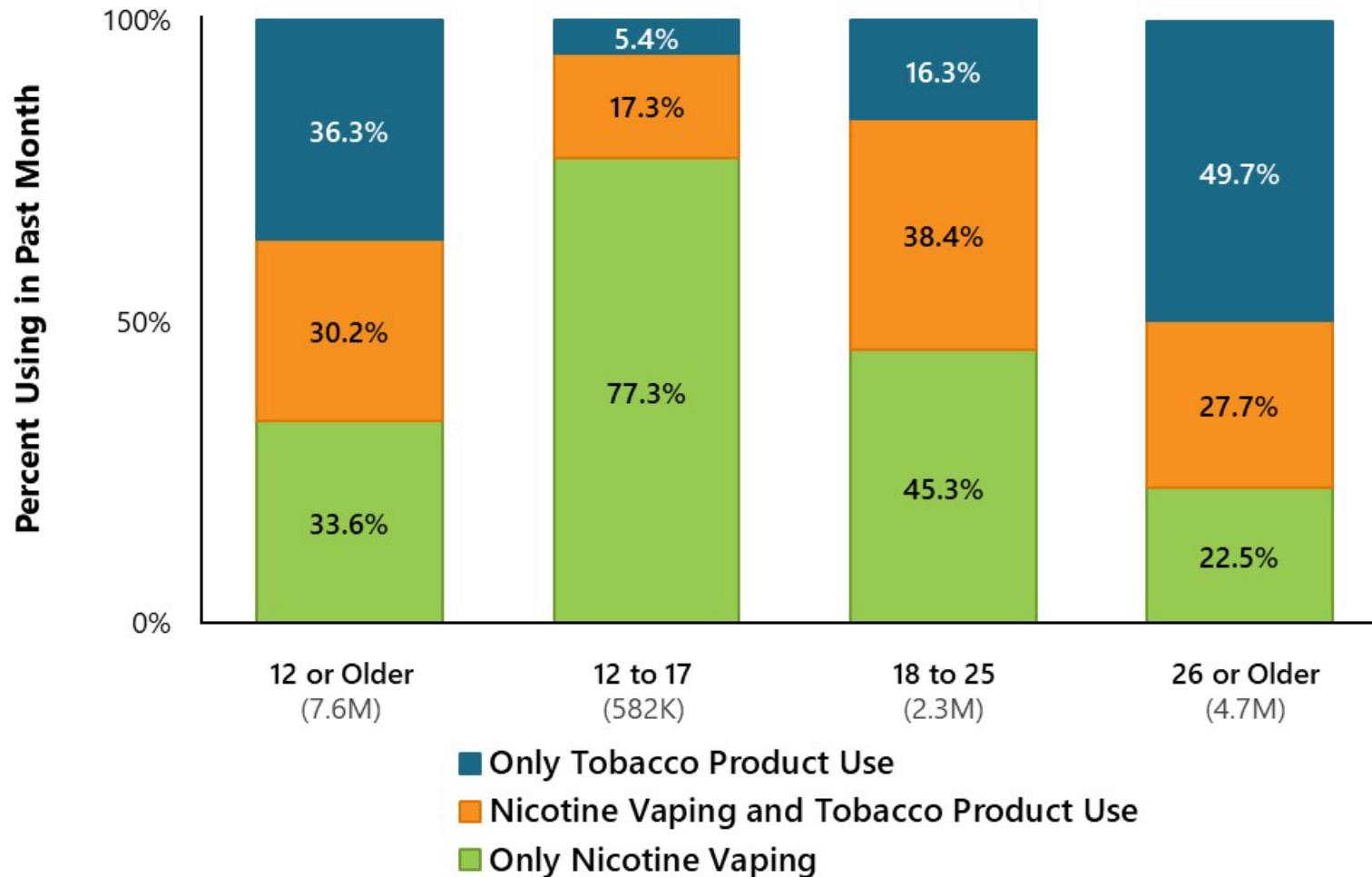
- **LGB+** people were **just as likely** to binge drink as straight people

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 12 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

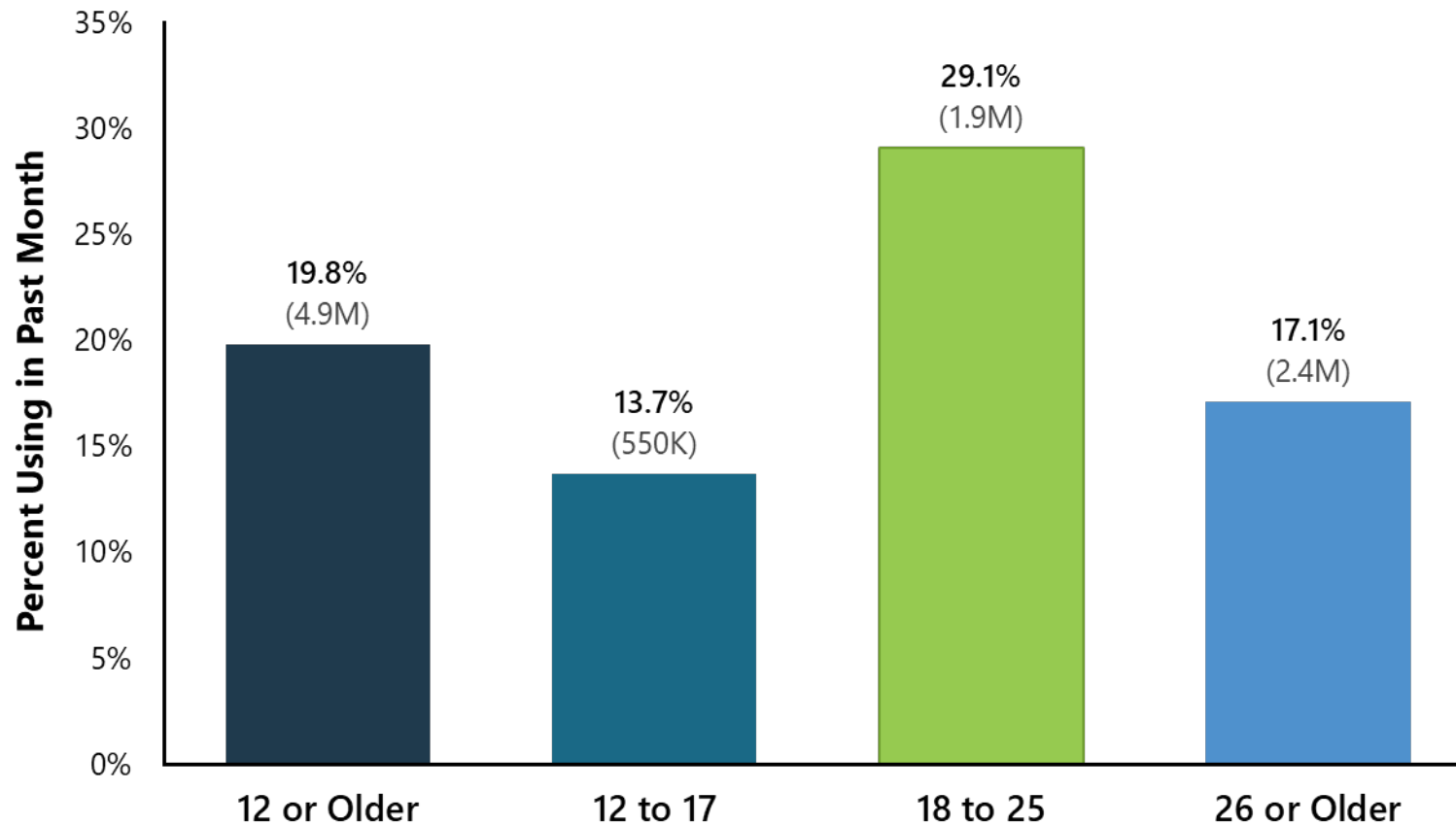
Note: Binge Alcohol Use is defined as drinking five or more drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

Type of Tobacco Product Use and Nicotine Vaping: Among LGB+ People 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 **77.3% of LGB+ adolescents aged 12 to 17** who used nicotine products in the past month only vaped nicotine products compared with **22.5% of LGB+ adults aged 26 or older**

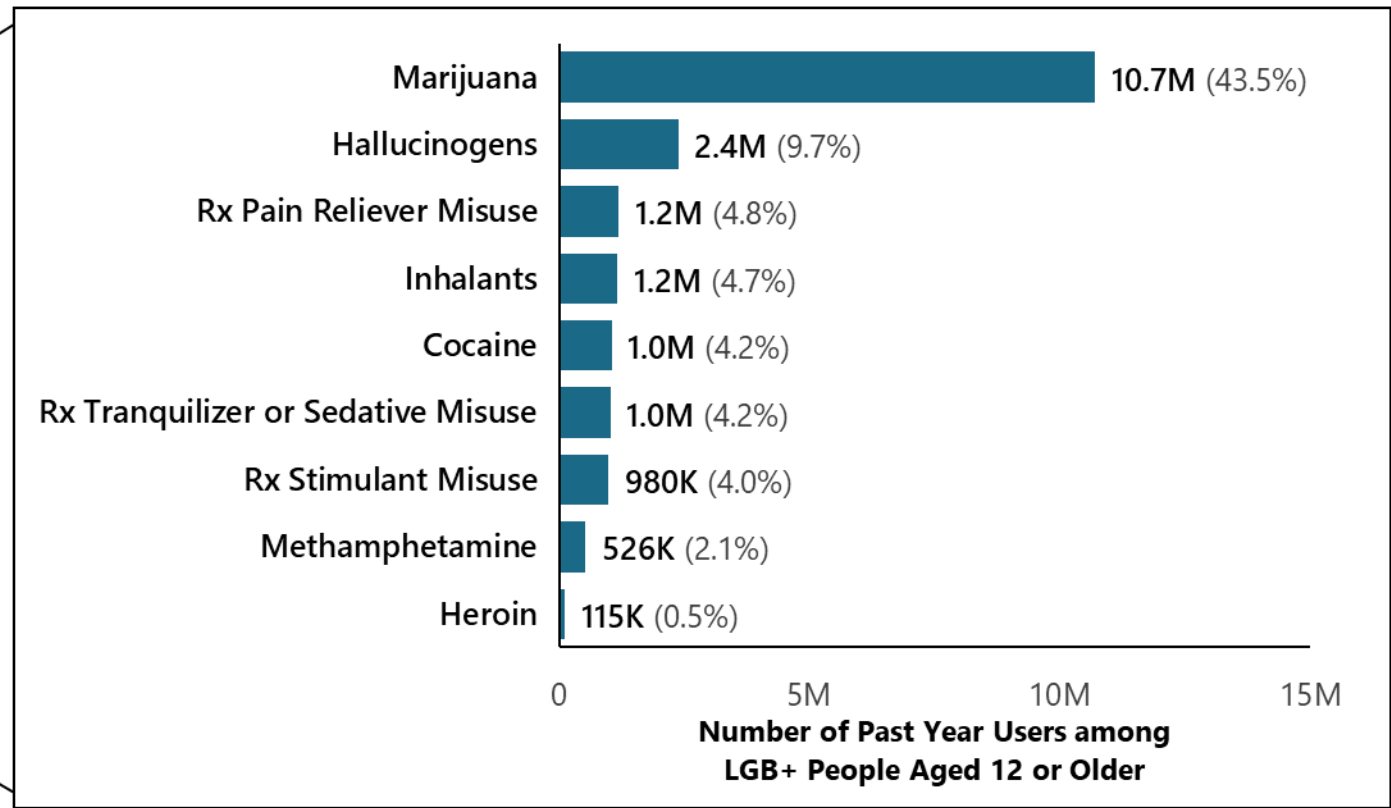
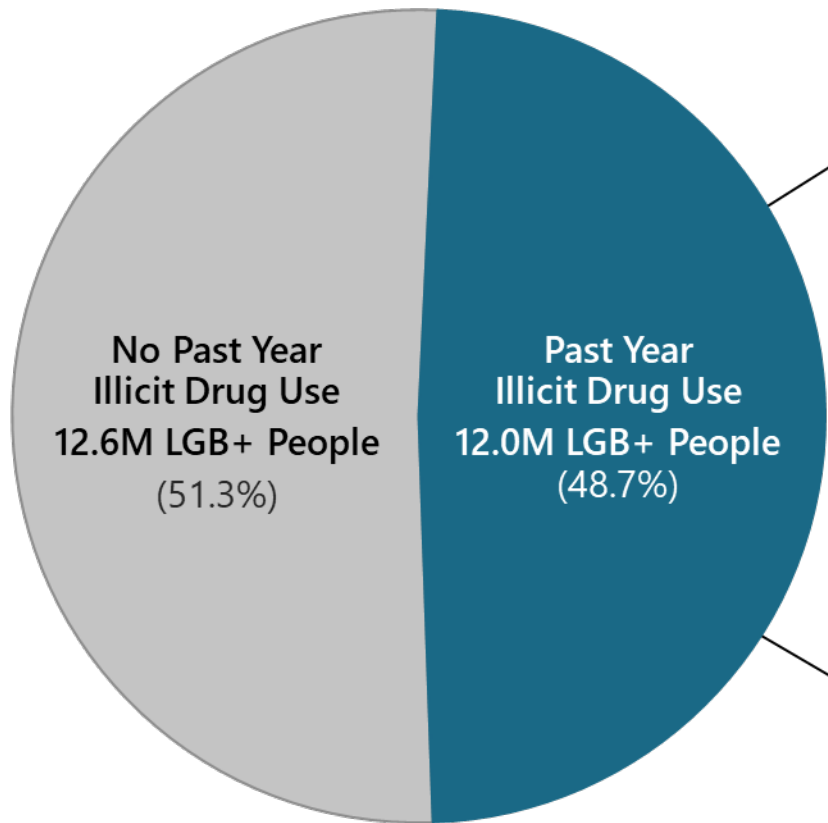
Past Month Nicotine Vaping: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



- The percentage of people who vaped nicotine was **higher** among LGB+ young adults aged **18 to 25** than among LGB+ adults aged 26 or older

Past Year and Past Month Illicit Drug Use

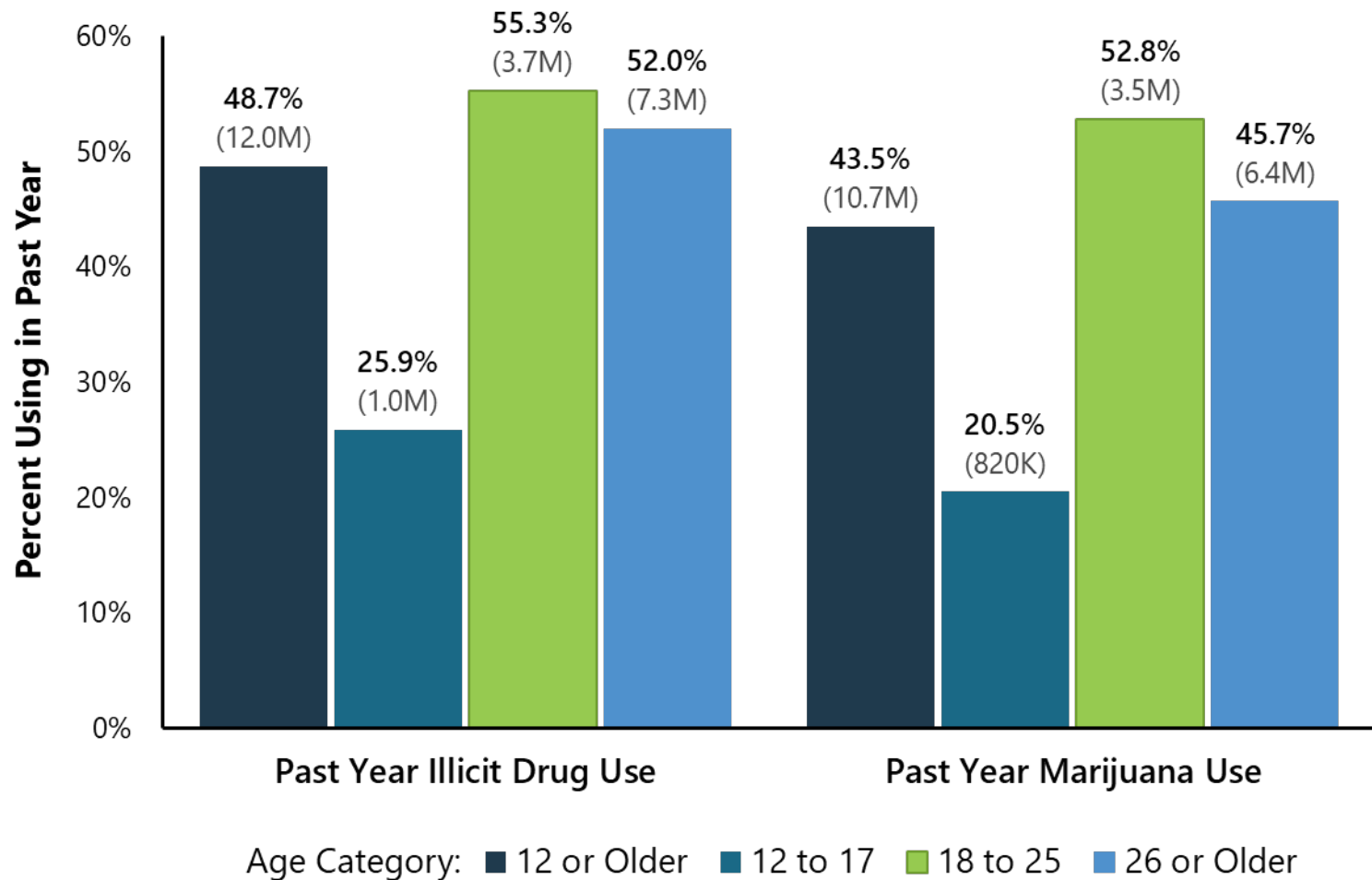
Past Year Illicit Drug Use: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



Rx = prescription.

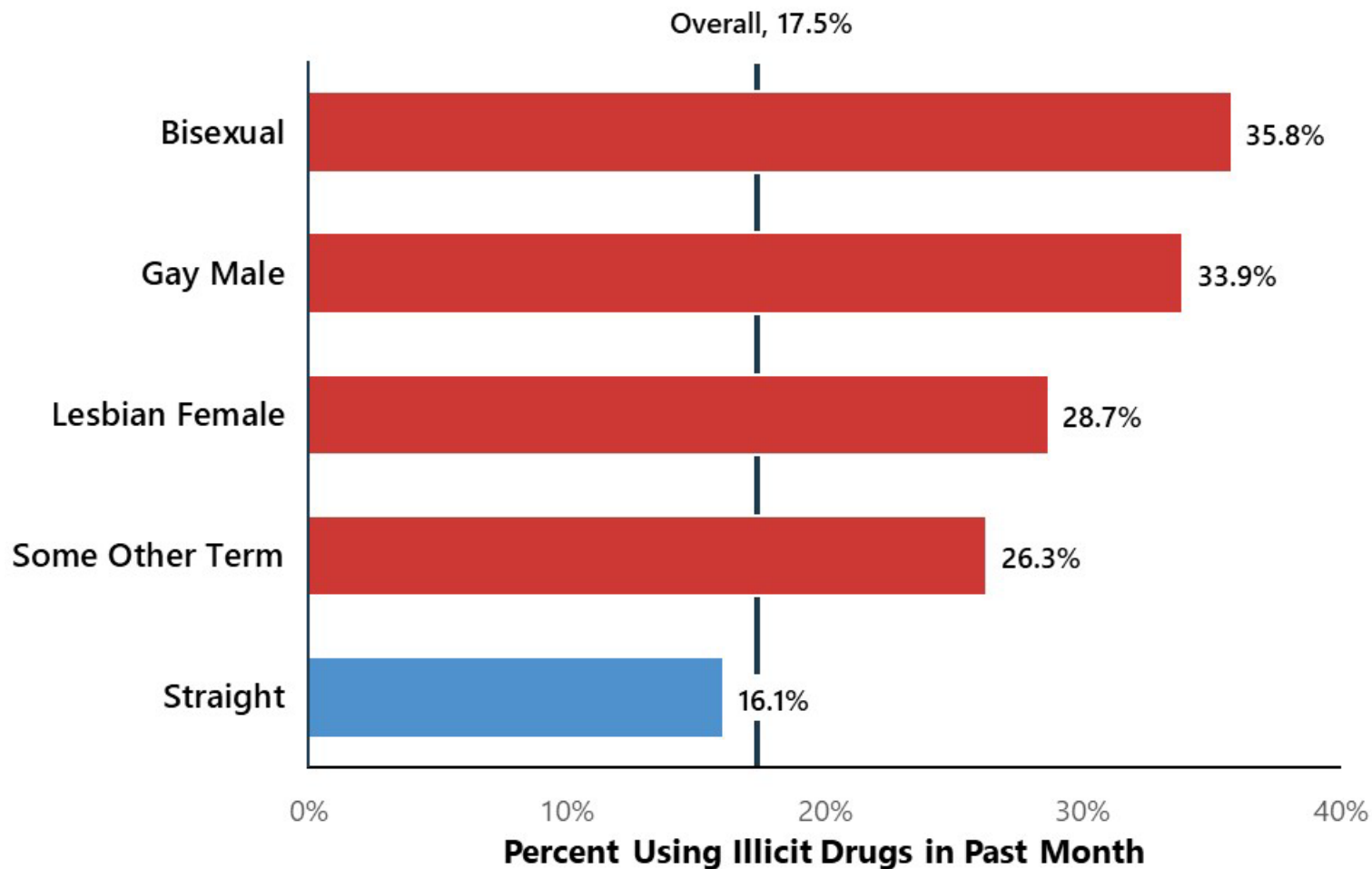
Note: The estimated numbers of past year users of different illicit drugs are not mutually exclusive because people could have used more than one type of illicit drug in the past year.

Past Year Illicit Drug Use and Marijuana Use: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



- Among LGB+ young adults aged 18 to 25, 55.3% used illicit drugs and 52.8% used marijuana in the past year

Illicit Drug Use in the Past Month by Sexual Identity: Among People Aged 12 or Older

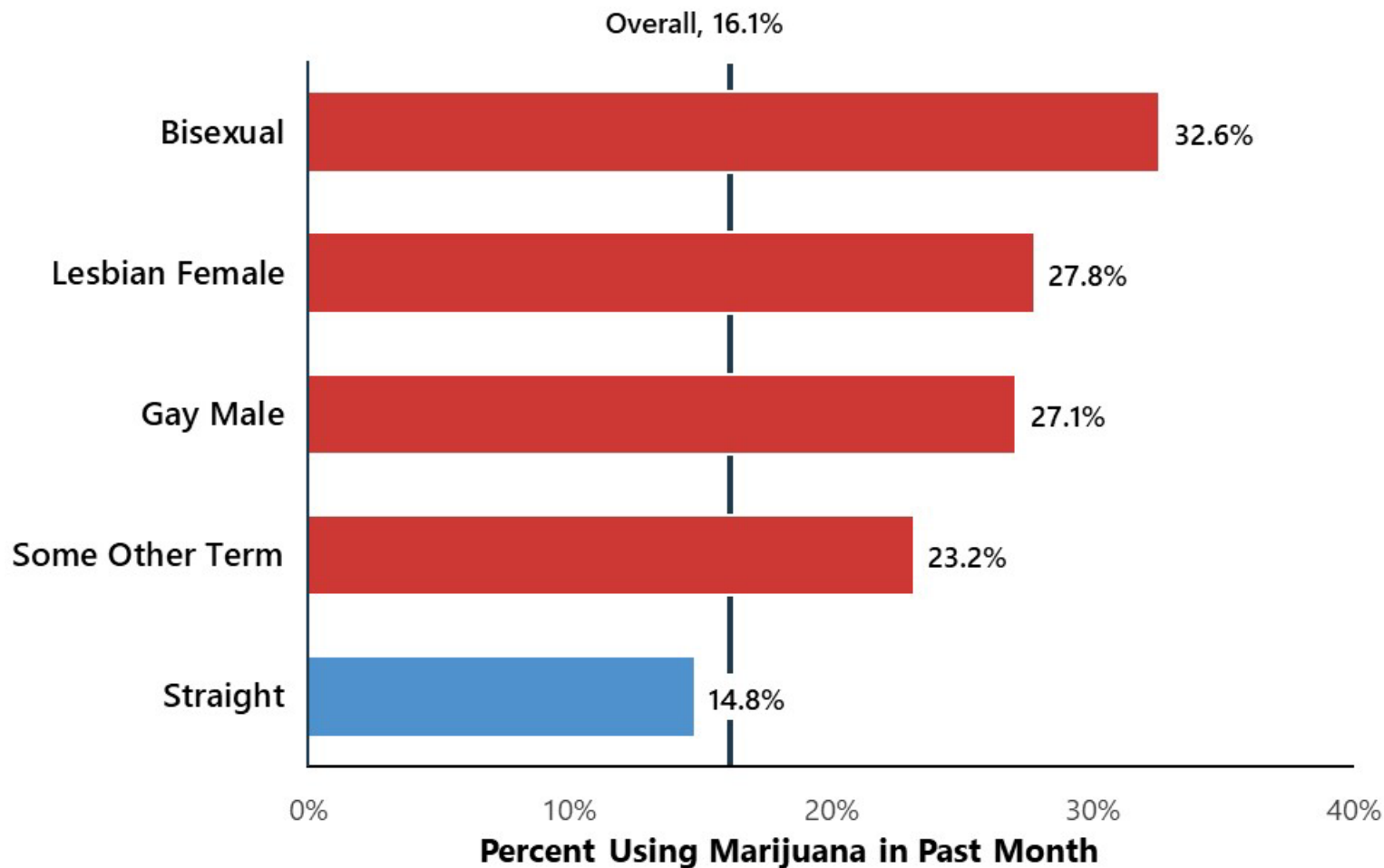


- **LGB+** people were **more likely** to use illicit drugs than straight people

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 12 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Marijuana Use in the Past Month by Sexual Identity: Among People Aged 12 or Older

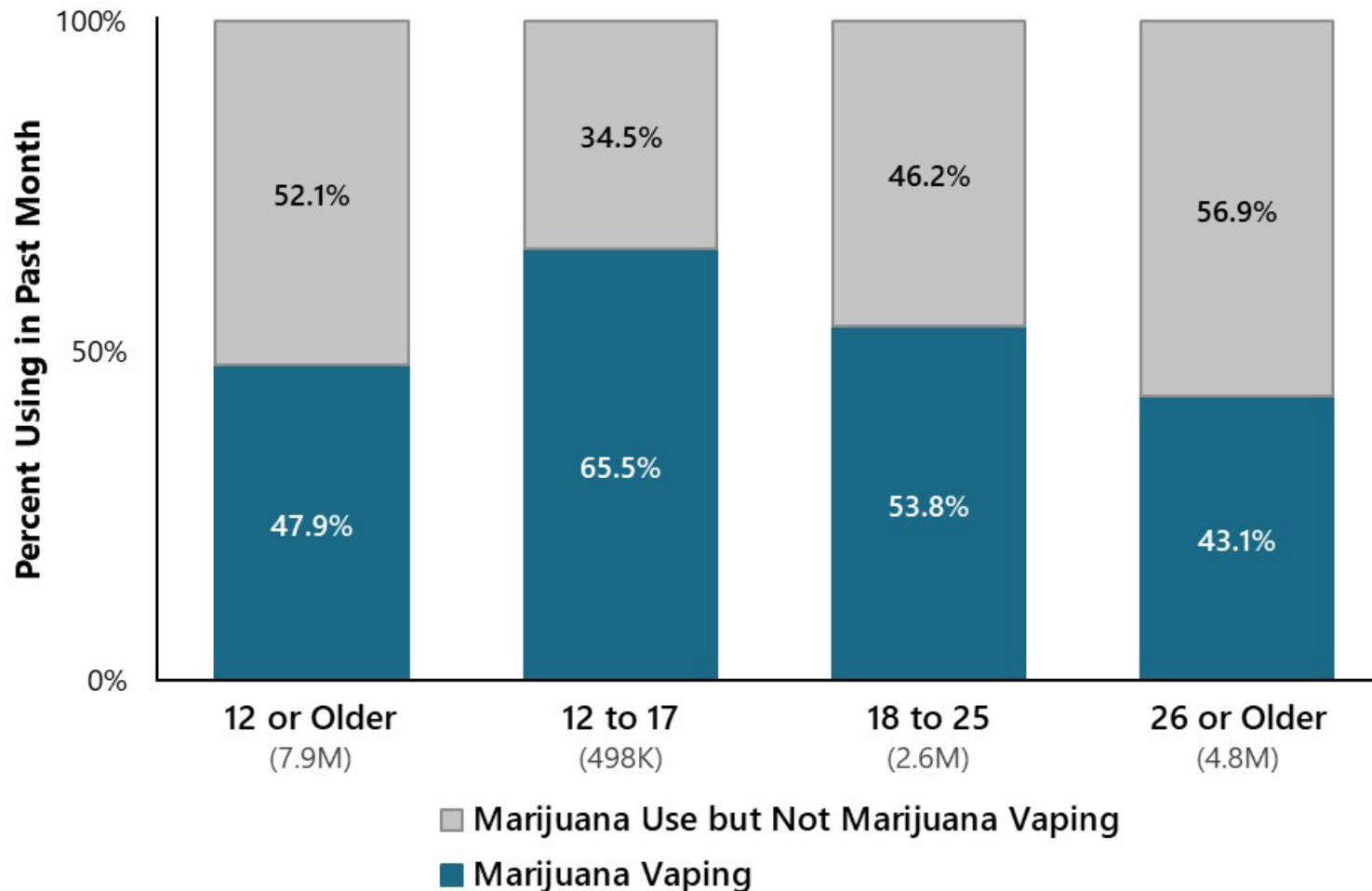


- **LGB+** people were **more likely** to use marijuana than straight people

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

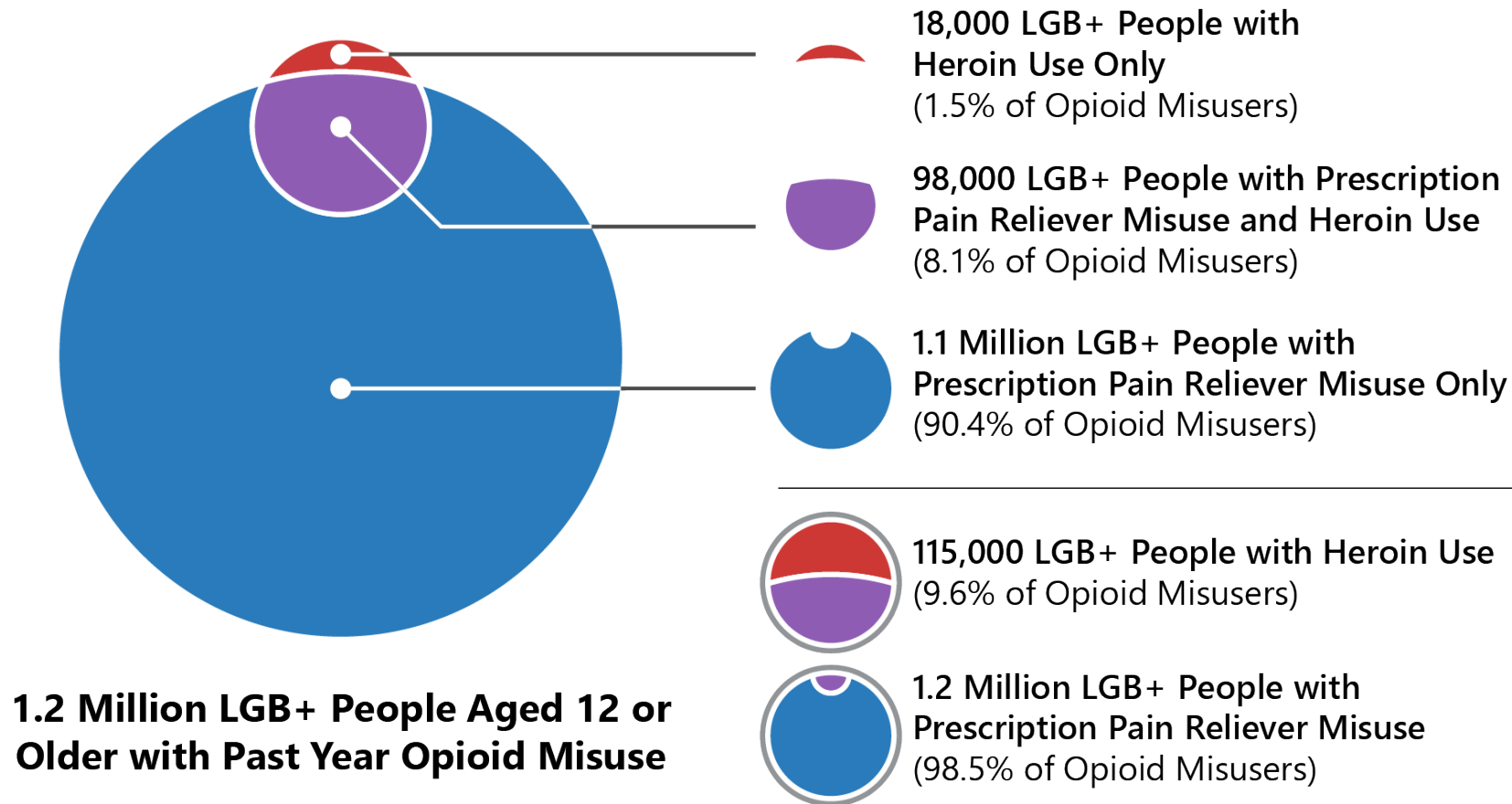
Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 12 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Type of Marijuana Use: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older Who Used Marijuana in the Past Month

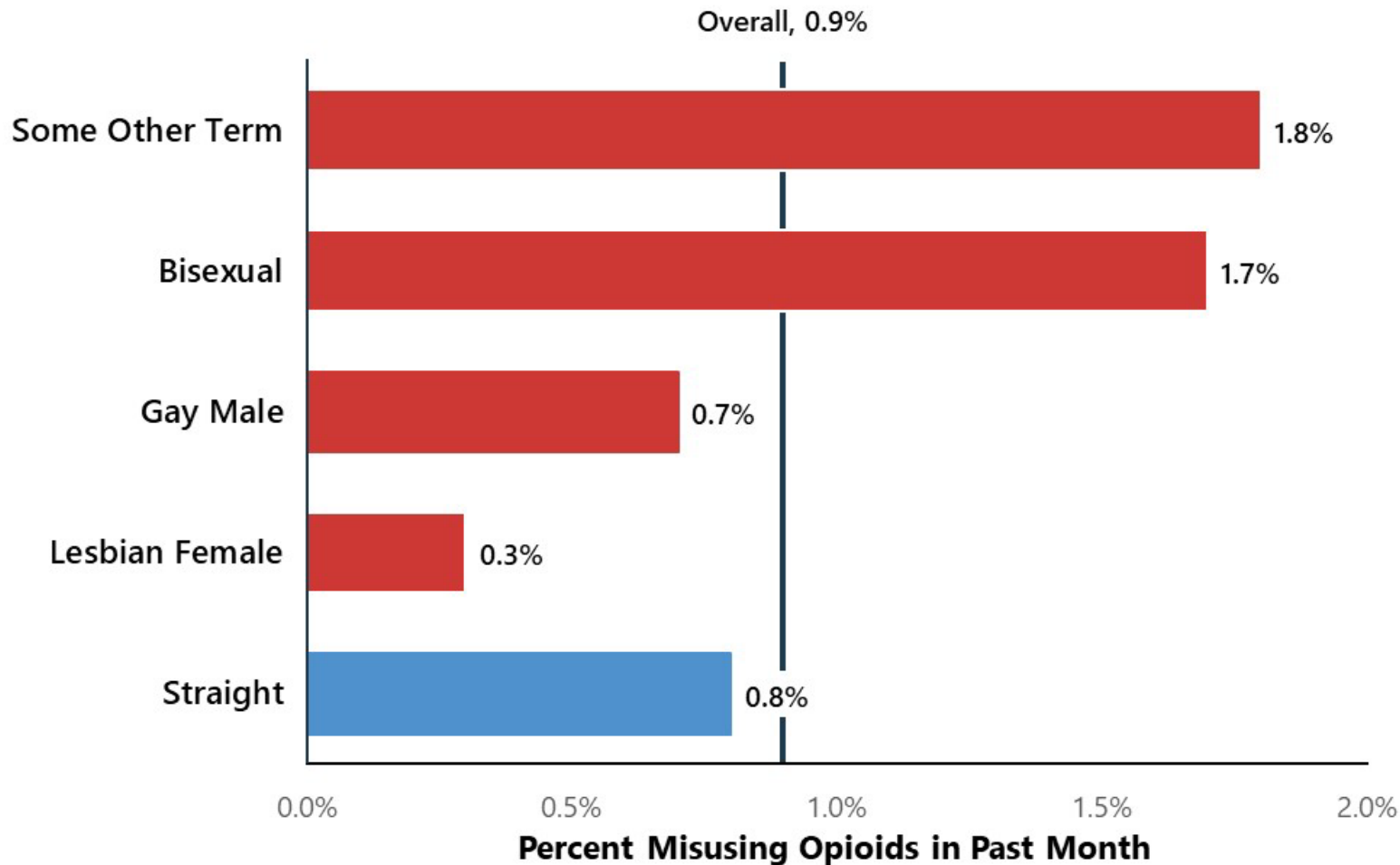


- **Nearly 1 in 2** current LGB+ marijuana users aged 12 or older **vaped marijuana** in the past month

Past Year Opioid Misuse: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



Opioid Misuse in the Past Month by Sexual Identity: Among People Aged 12 or Older

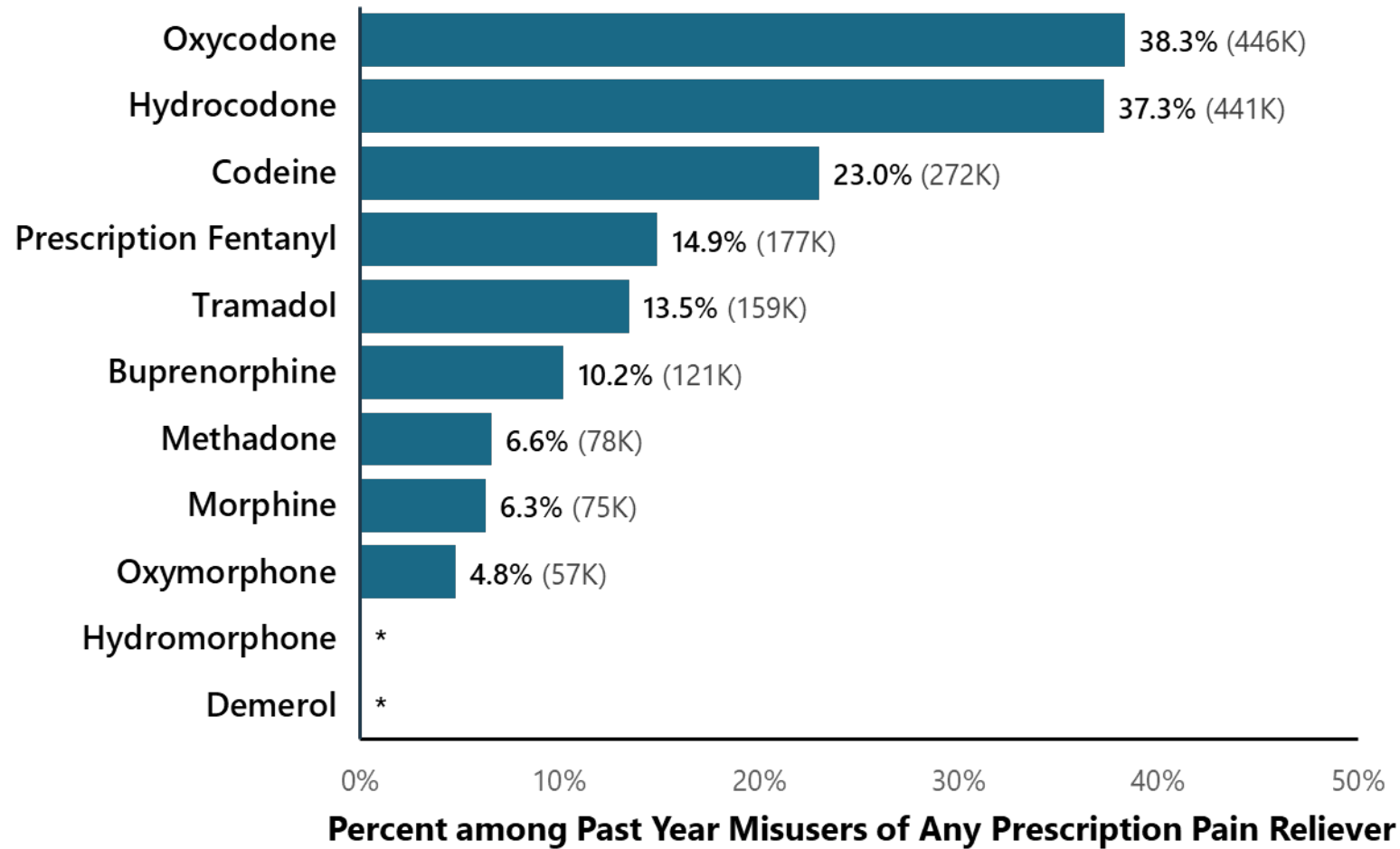


- **LGB+** people were **just as likely** to misuse opioids as straight people

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

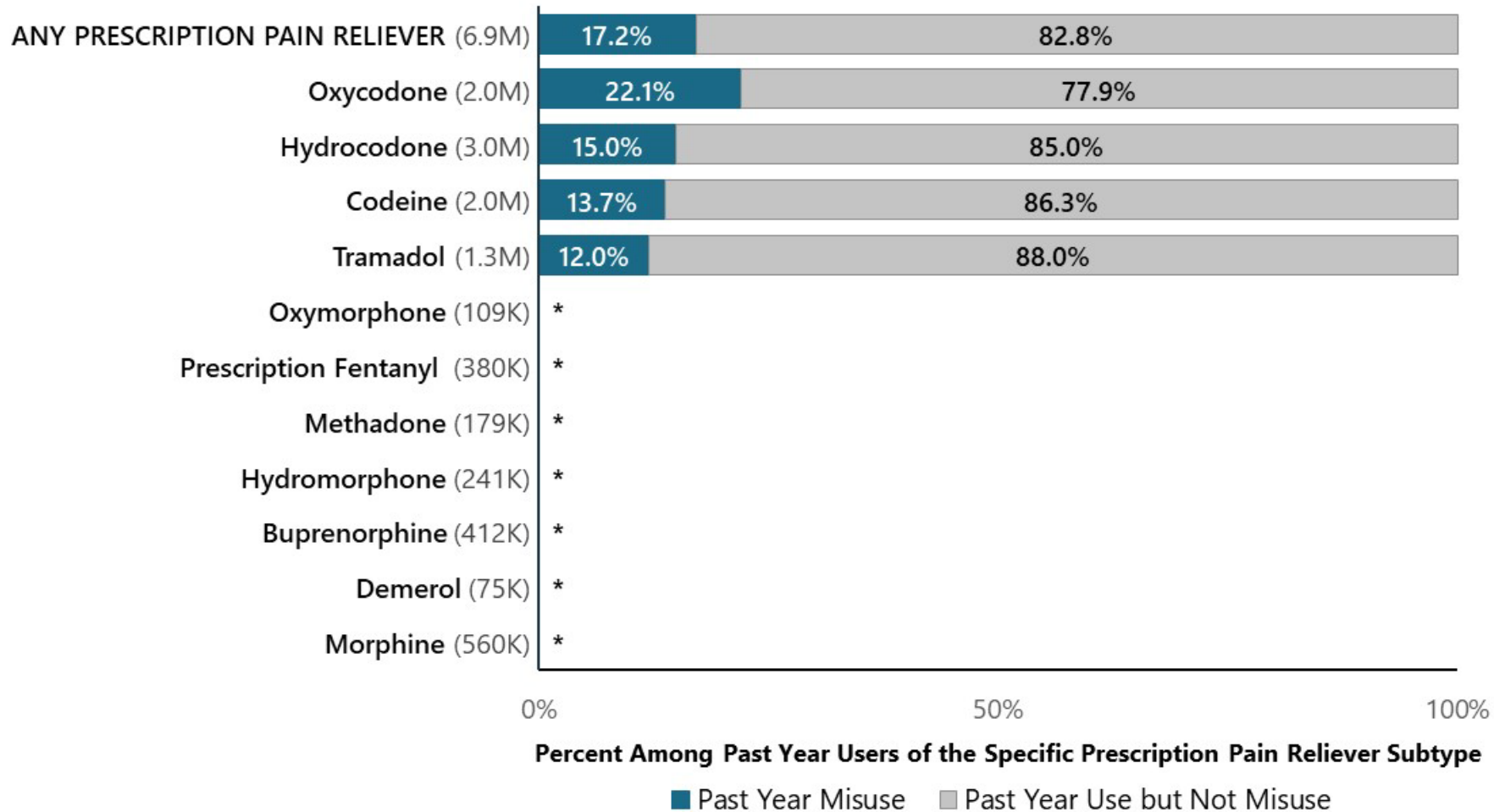
Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 12 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Past Year Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older Who Misused Any Prescription Pain Reliever



* Low precision; no estimate reported.

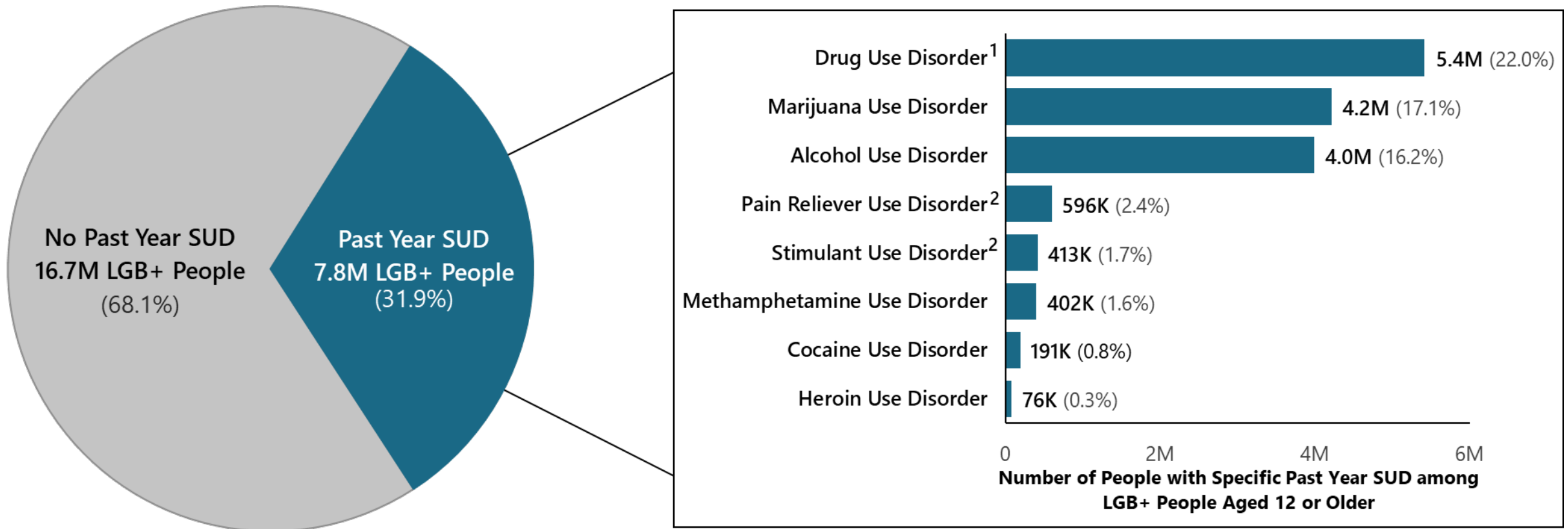
Past Year Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older Who Used the Specific Prescription Pain Reliever Subtype in the Past Year



* Low precision; no estimate reported.

Substance Use Disorder

Past Year Substance Use Disorder (SUD): Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older

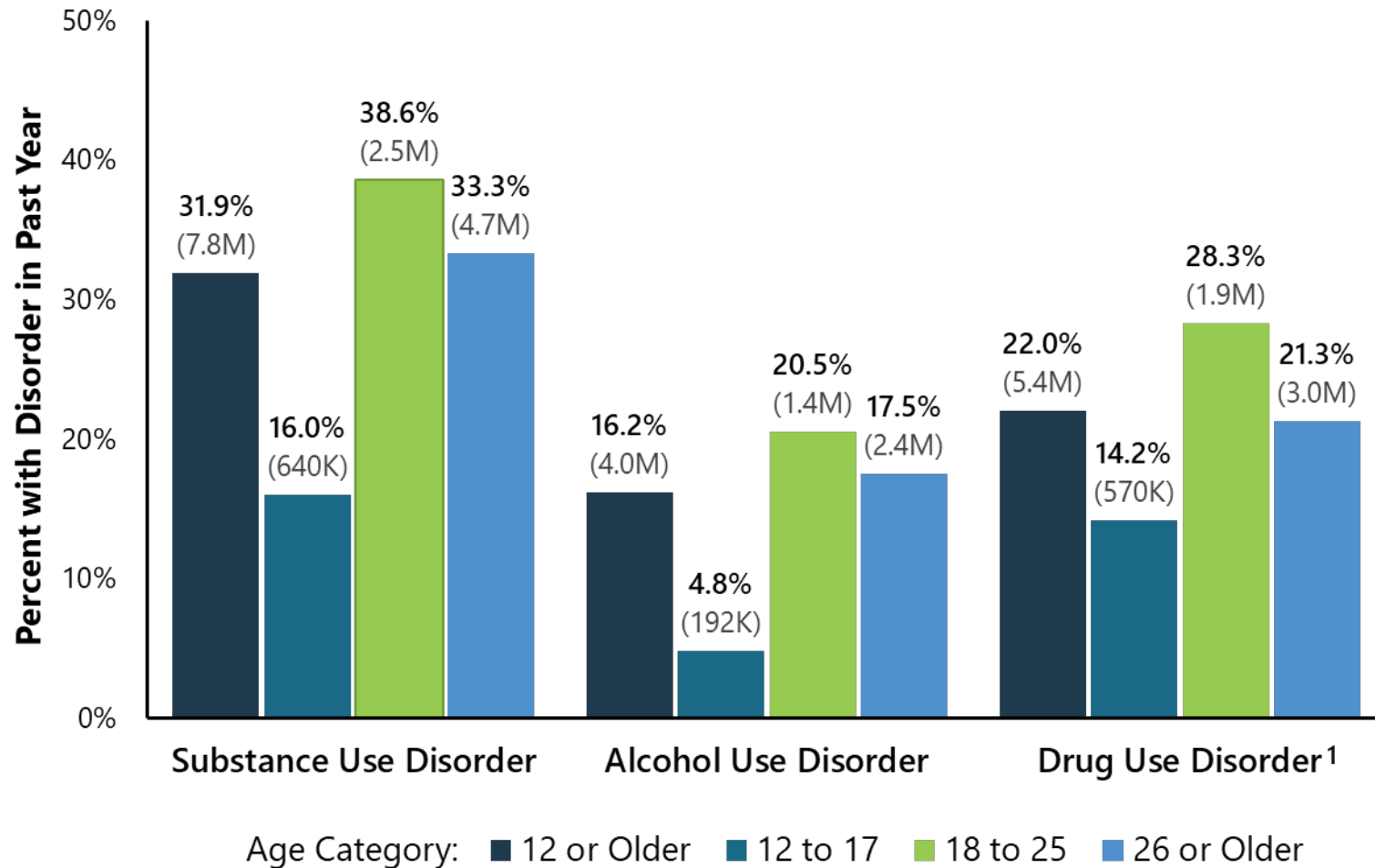


Note: The estimated numbers of people with substance use disorders are not mutually exclusive because people could have use disorders for more than one substance.

¹ 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).

² Includes data from all past year users of the specific prescription drug.

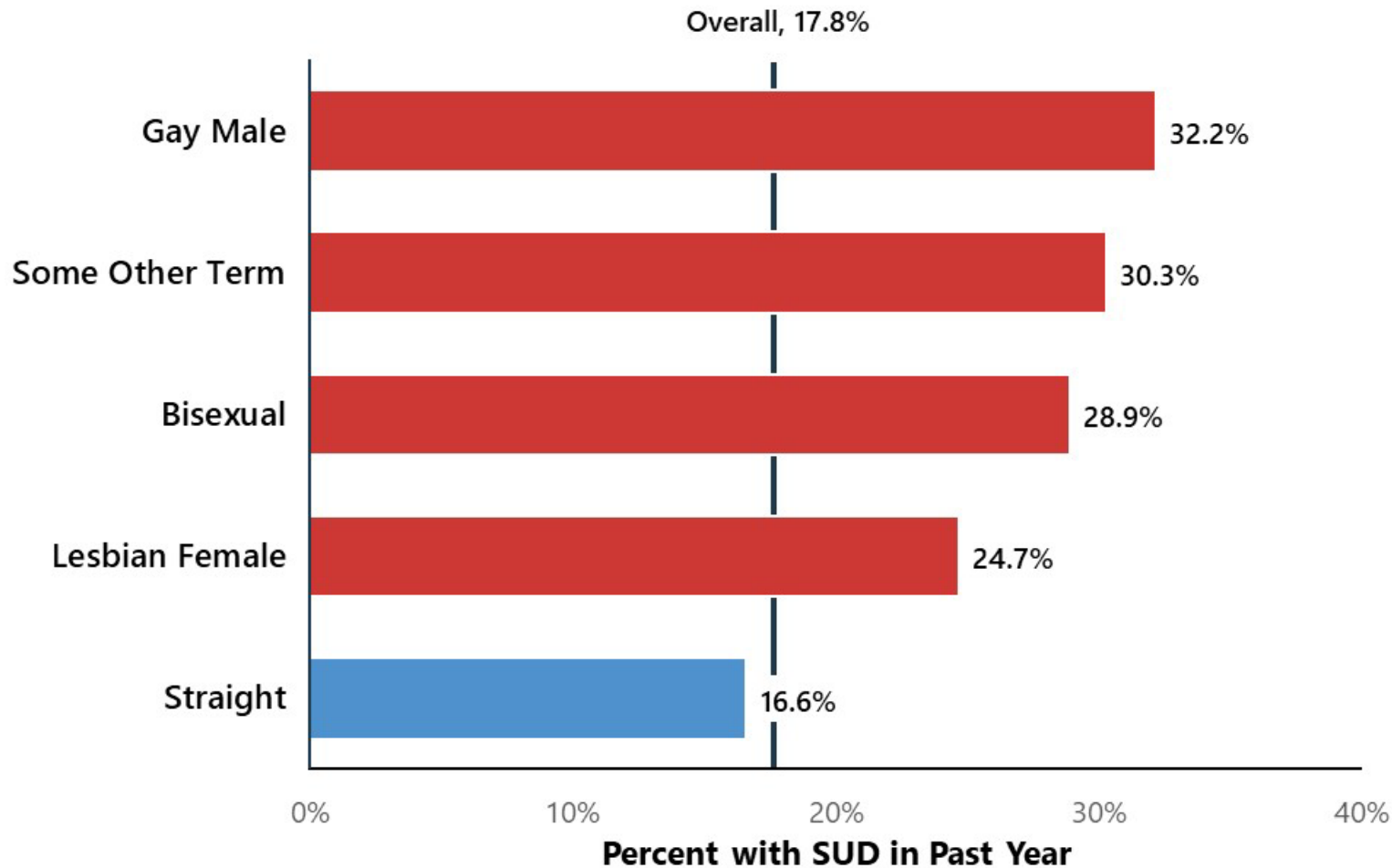
Past Year Substance Use Disorder: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



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

¹ 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 Sexual Identity: Among People Aged 12 or Older

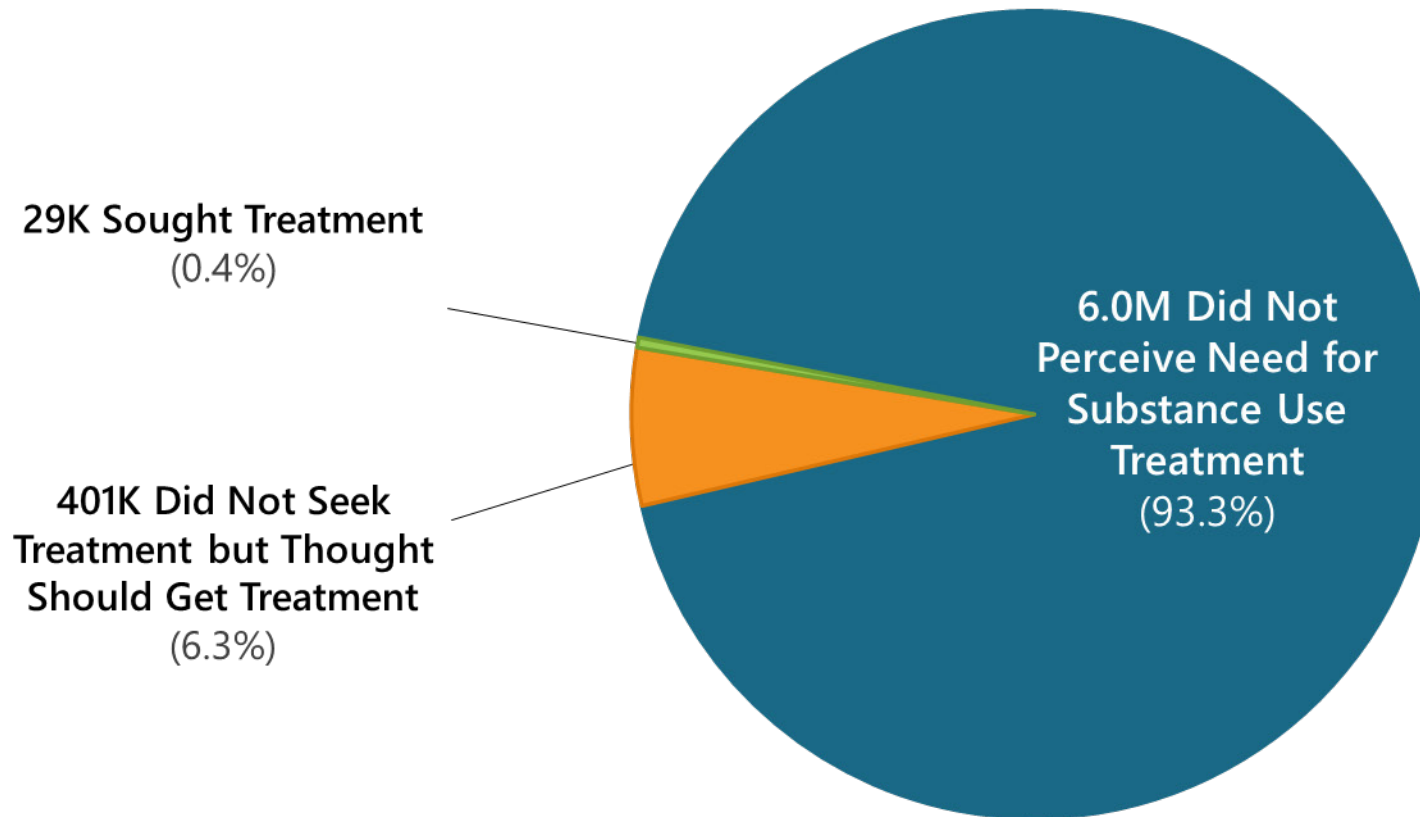


- **LGB+** people were **more likely** to have an SUD than straight people

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 12 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Perceived Need for Substance Use Treatment: Among LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older with a Past Year Substance Use Disorder Who Did Not Receive Substance Use Treatment in the Past Year



- Nearly all LGB+ people with a substance use disorder who did not receive substance use treatment **did not think they needed treatment**

6.4 Million LGB+ People with a Substance Use Disorder Who Did Not Receive Substance Use Treatment

Note: Respondents with unknown 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 LGB+ Adolescents Aged 12 to 17



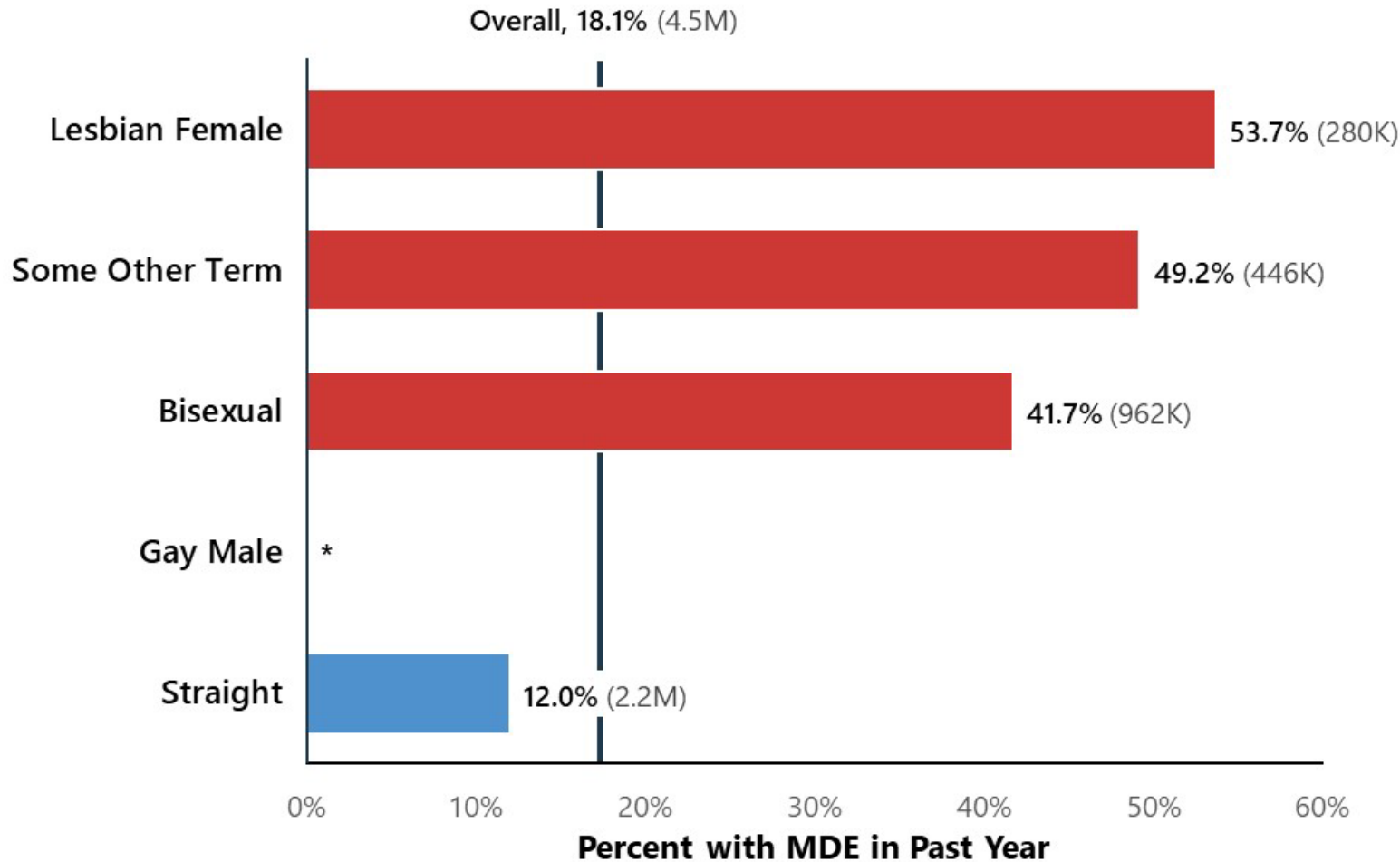
- In 2023, **2 in 5 (44.6%) LGB+ adolescents** had an MDE in the past year



- **3 in 4 (76.3%) LGB+ adolescents with MDE** had severe impairment

Note: Adolescent respondents with unknown MDE data were excluded.

Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year by Sexual Identity: Among Adolescents Aged 12 to 17



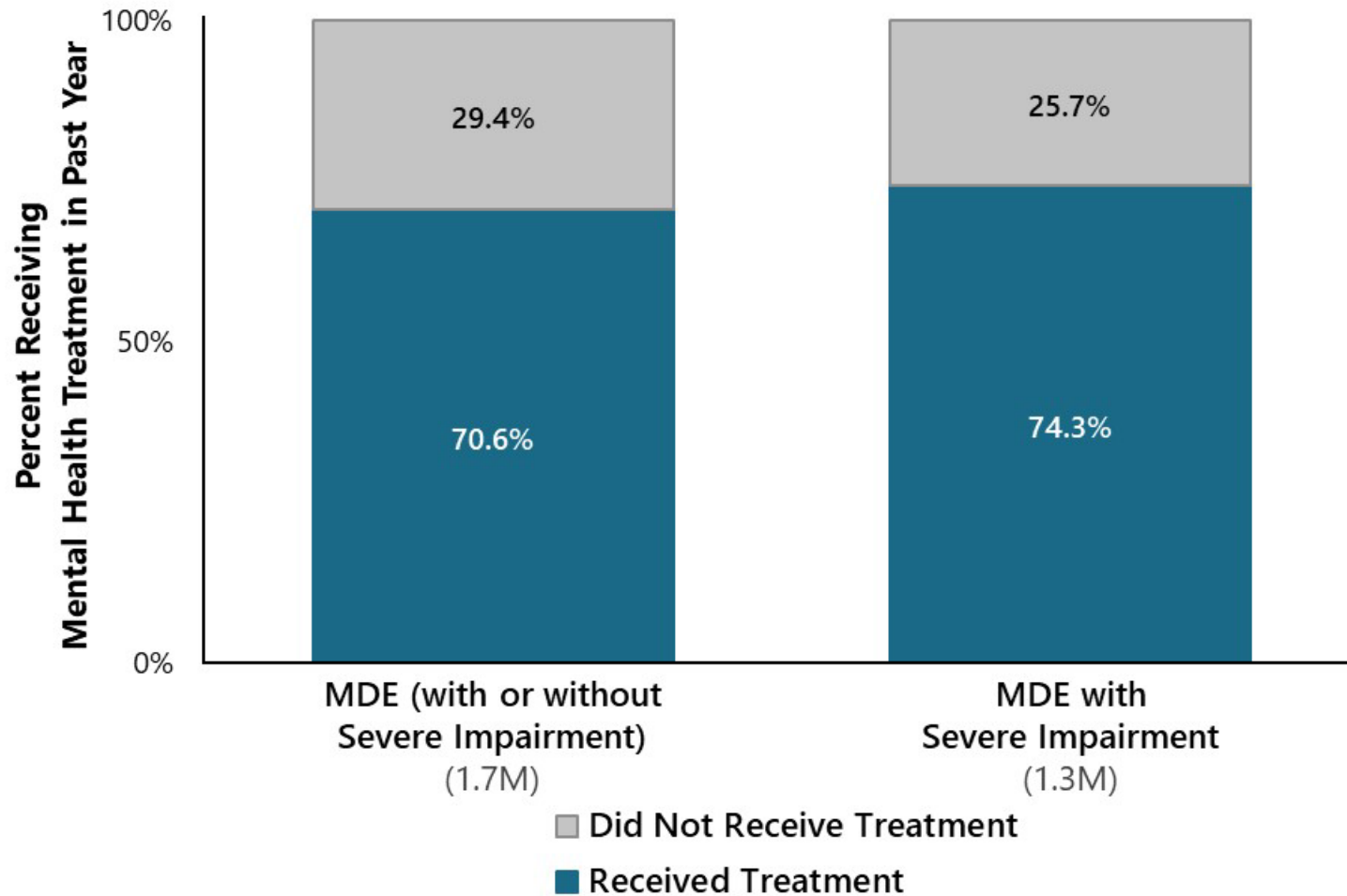
- Adolescent **lesbian females**, **bisexual** adolescents, and adolescents **who use some other term** were **more likely** to have an MDE than straight adolescents

* Low precision; no estimate reported.

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

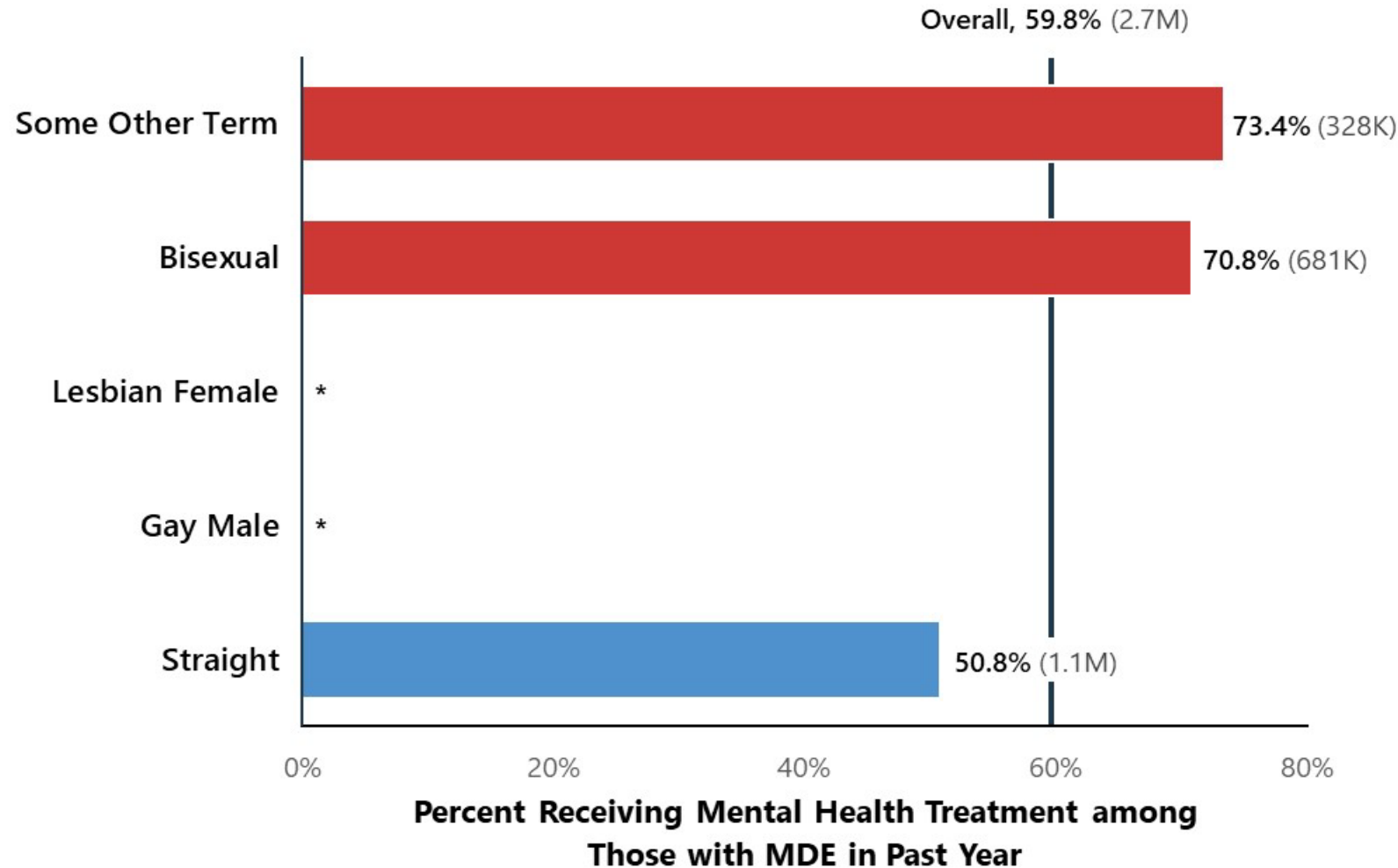
Note: Estimates are not age adjusted.

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



- Among the 1.3 million LGB+ adolescents in 2023 who had a past year MDE with severe impairment, **nearly 75% received mental health treatment** in the past year

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



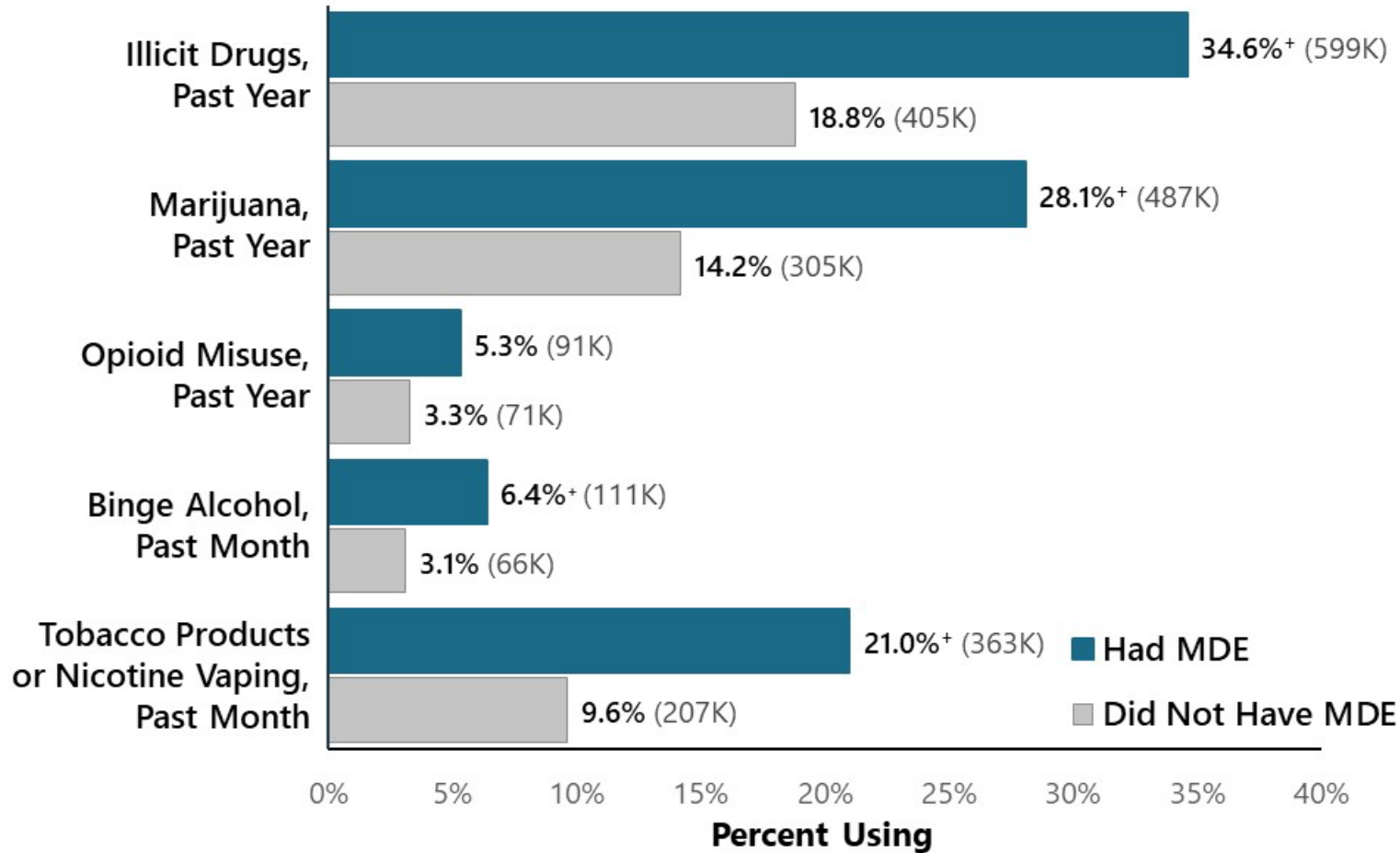
- **Bisexual** adolescents **and** adolescents **who use some other term** who had an MDE were **more likely** to receive mental health treatment than straight adolescents

* Low precision; no estimate reported.

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates are not age adjusted.

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



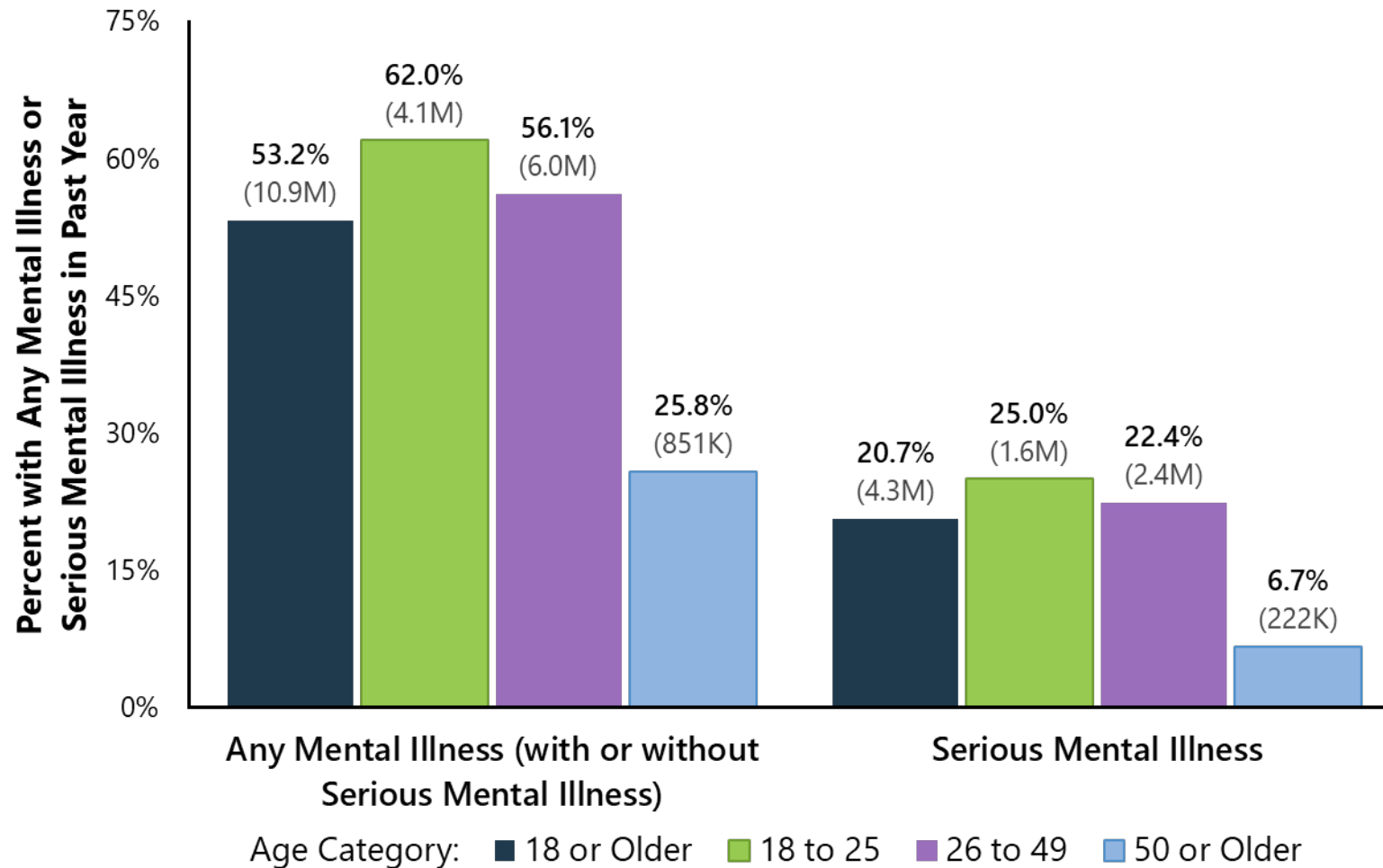
- Compared to LGB+ adolescents who did not have an MDE in the past year, those who did have an MDE were **more likely** to have:
 - Used illicit drugs in the past year
 - Used marijuana in the past year
 - Binge drank alcohol in the past month
 - Used tobacco products or vaped nicotine in the past month

+ 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.

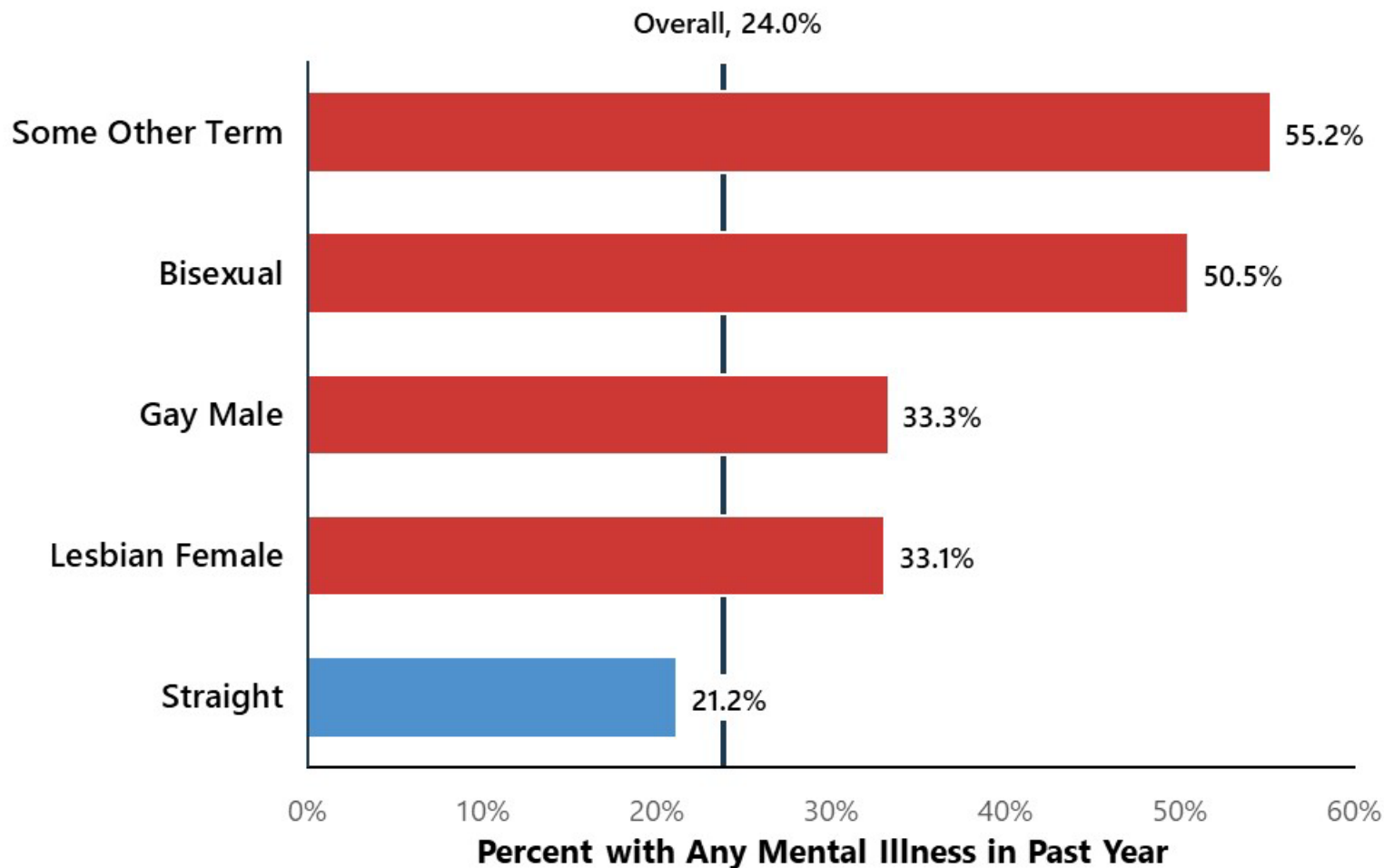
Any or Serious Mental Illness: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older

Past Year Mental Illness: Among LGB+ Adults Aged 18 or Older



- The prevalence of any mental illness was **highest** among LGB+ young adults aged **18 to 25**

Any Mental Illness in the Past Year by Sexual Identity: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older

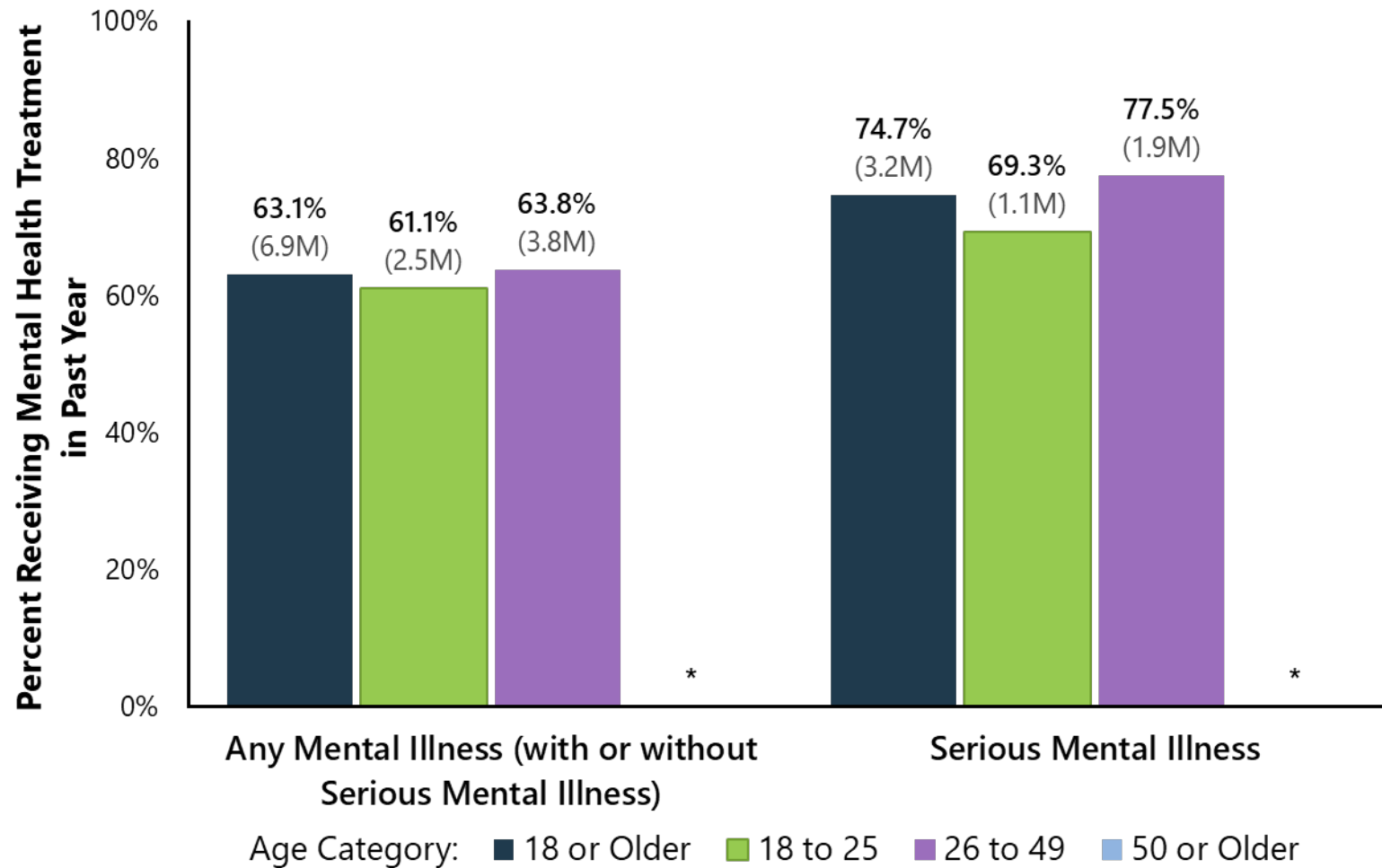


- **LGB+** adults were **more likely** to have any mental illness than straight adults

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 18 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

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



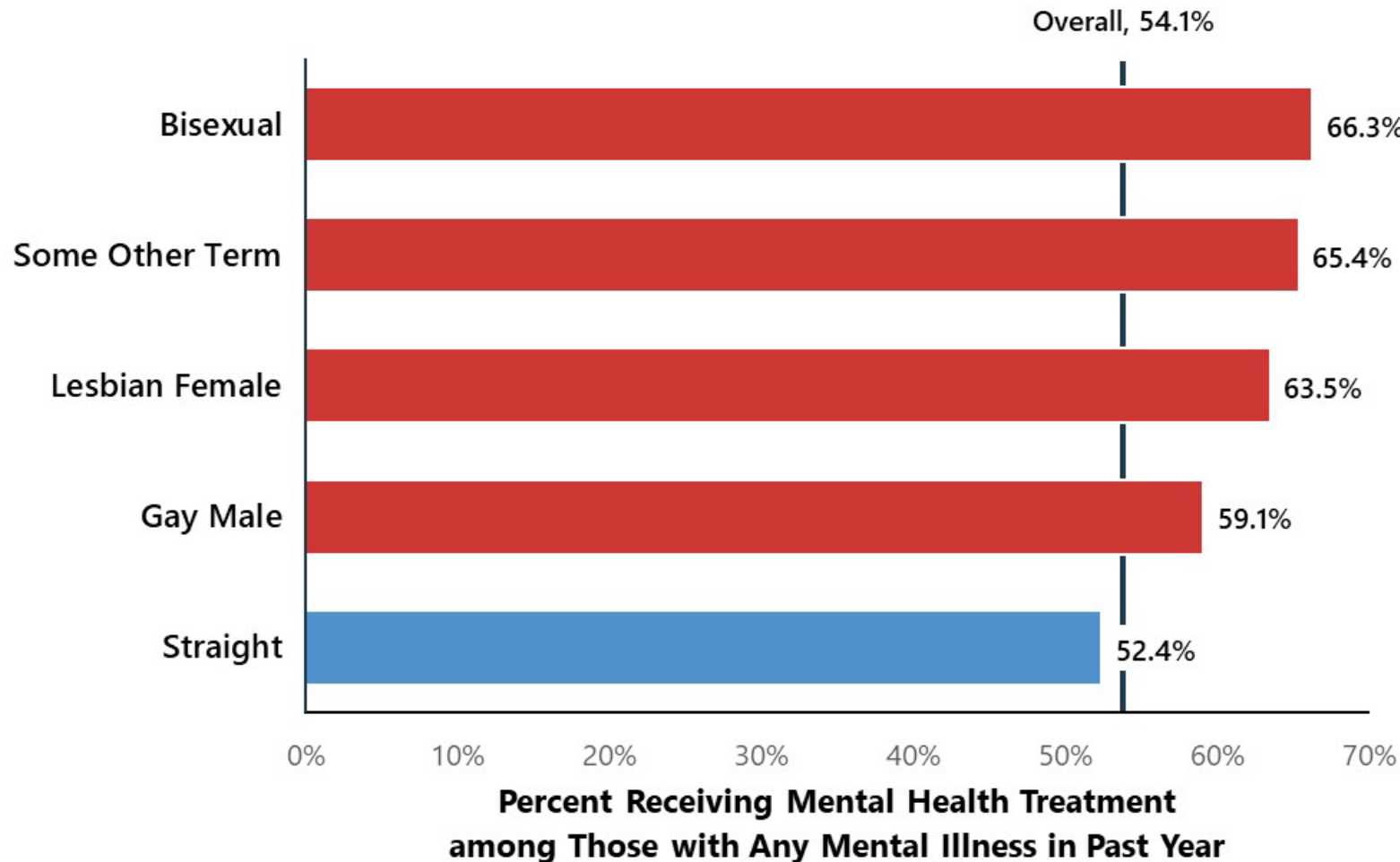
- **About 3 in 4** LGB+ adults with SMI received mental health treatment in the past year

* 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 Sexual Identity: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older with a Past Year Mental Illness



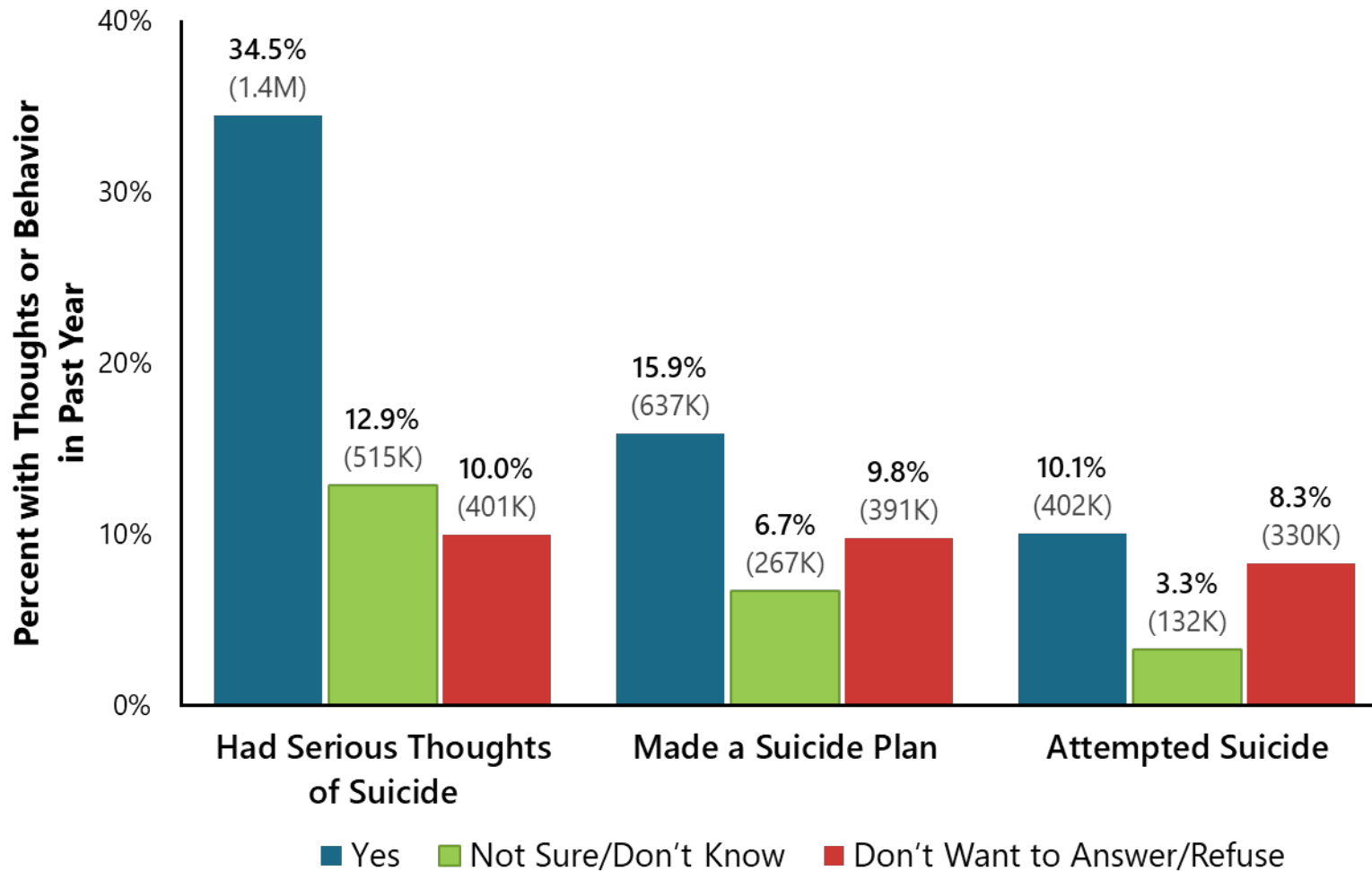
- **Bisexual** adults, adults **who use some other term**, and adult **lesbian females** with mental illness were **more likely** to have received mental health treatment than straight adults

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 18 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

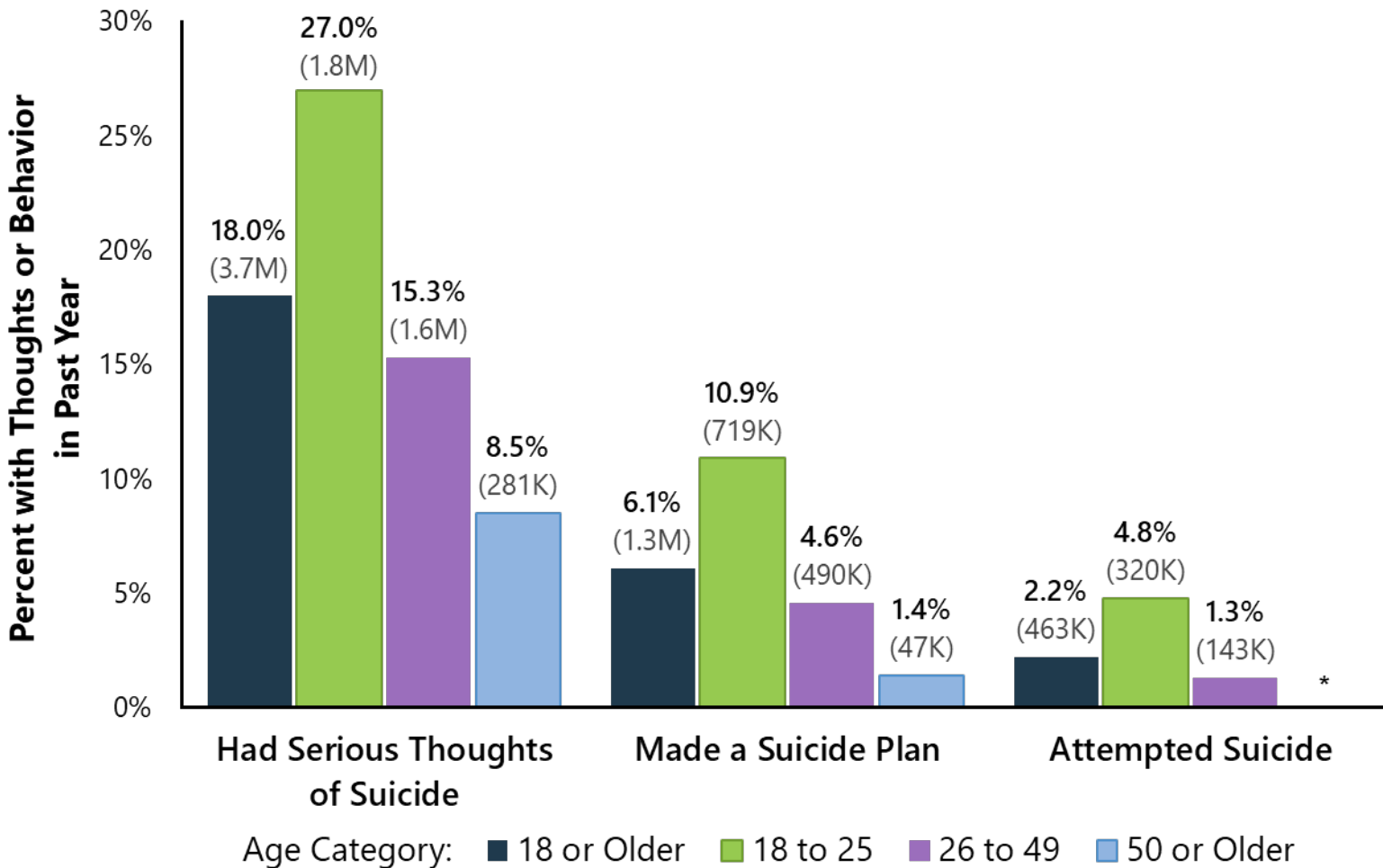
Serious Thoughts of Suicide, Suicide Plans, and Suicide Attempts

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



- 34.5% of LGB+ adolescents had thoughts of suicide
- 15.9% made a suicide plan
- 10.1% 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

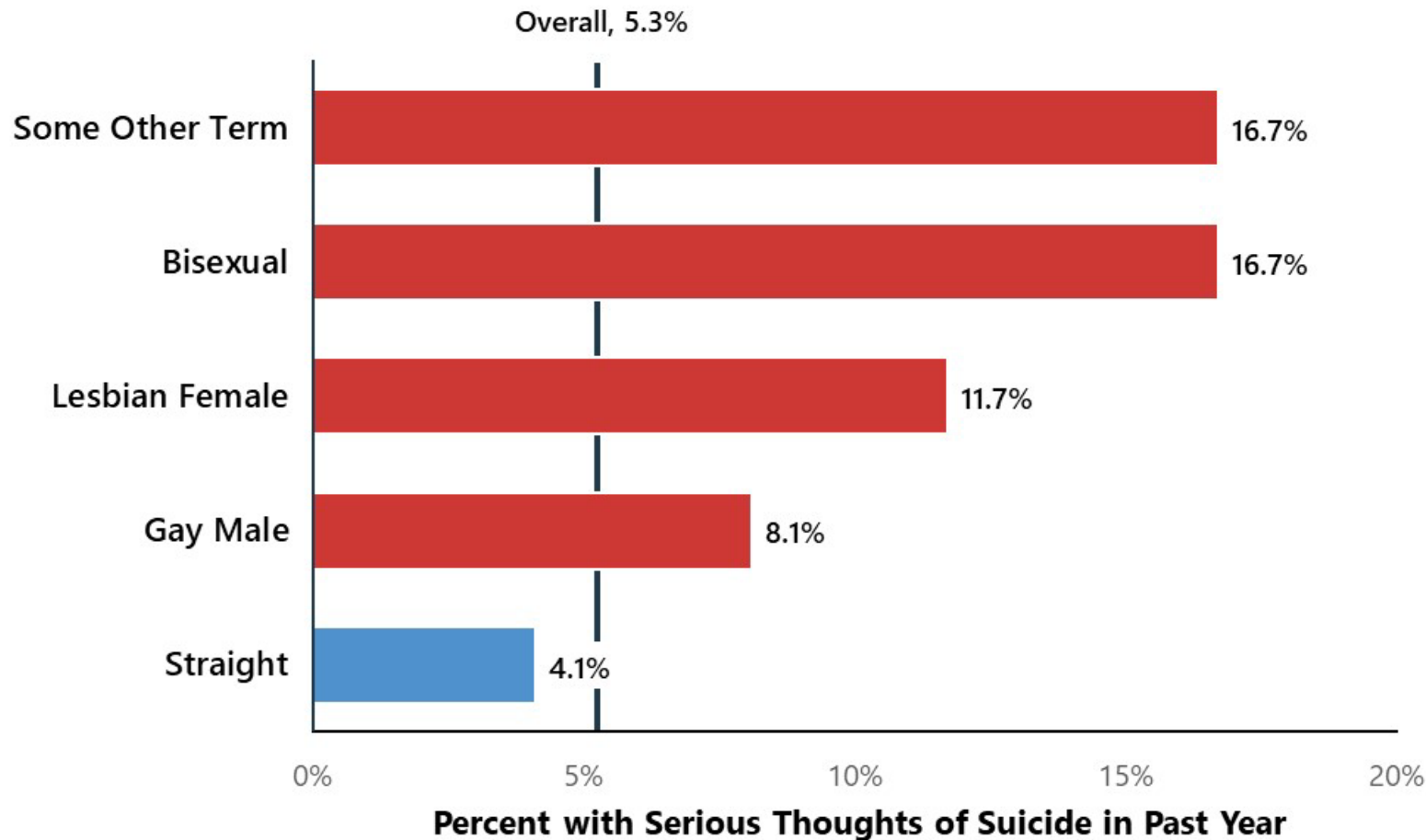
Past Year Serious Thoughts of Suicide, Suicide Plans, or Suicide Attempts: Among LGB+ Adults Aged 18 or Older



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

* Low precision; no estimate reported.

Serious Thoughts of Suicide in the Past Year by Sexual Identity: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older

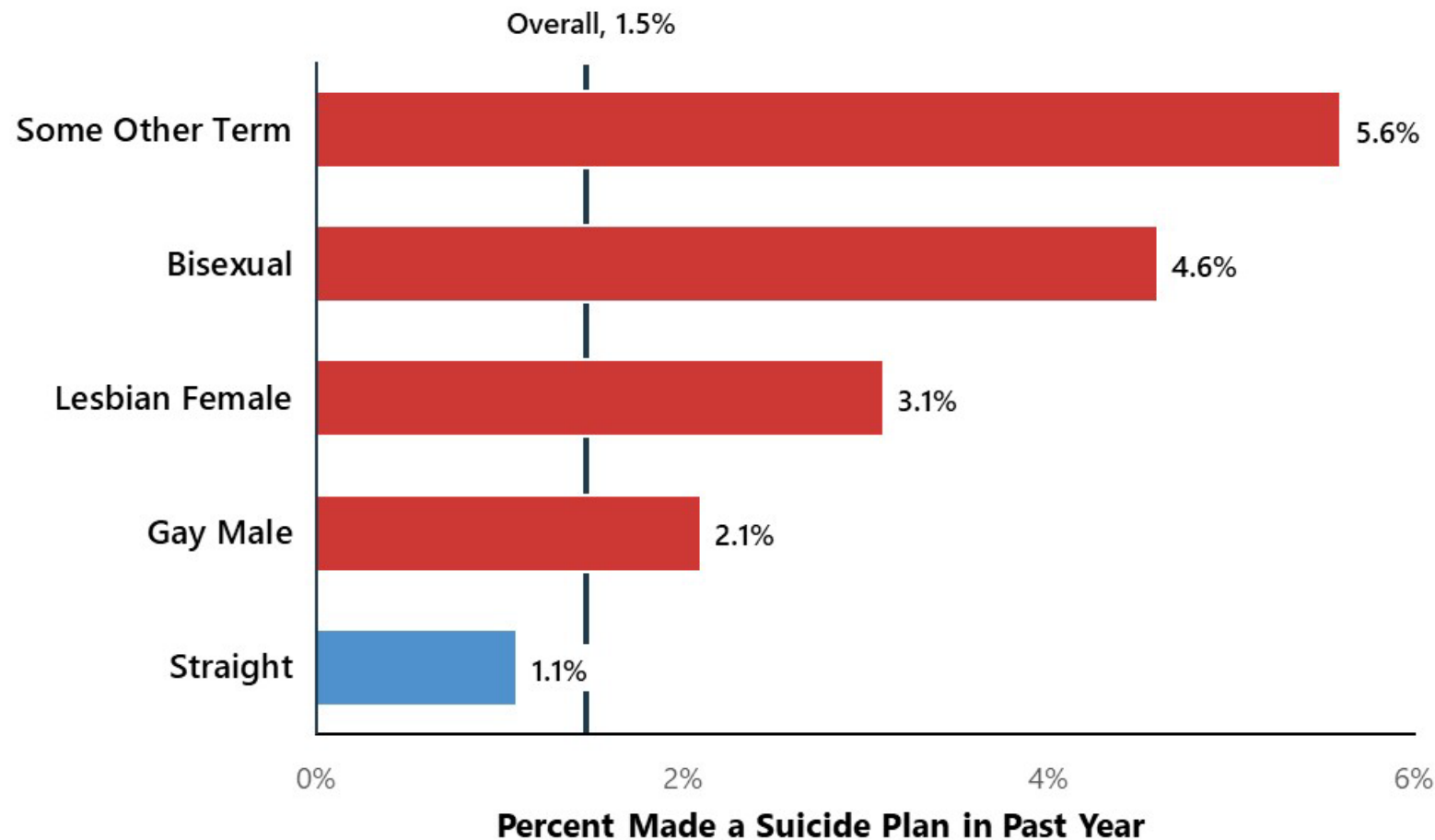


- **LGB+** adults were **more likely** to have serious thoughts of suicide than straight adults

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 18 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Made a Suicide Plan in the Past Year by Sexual Identity: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older

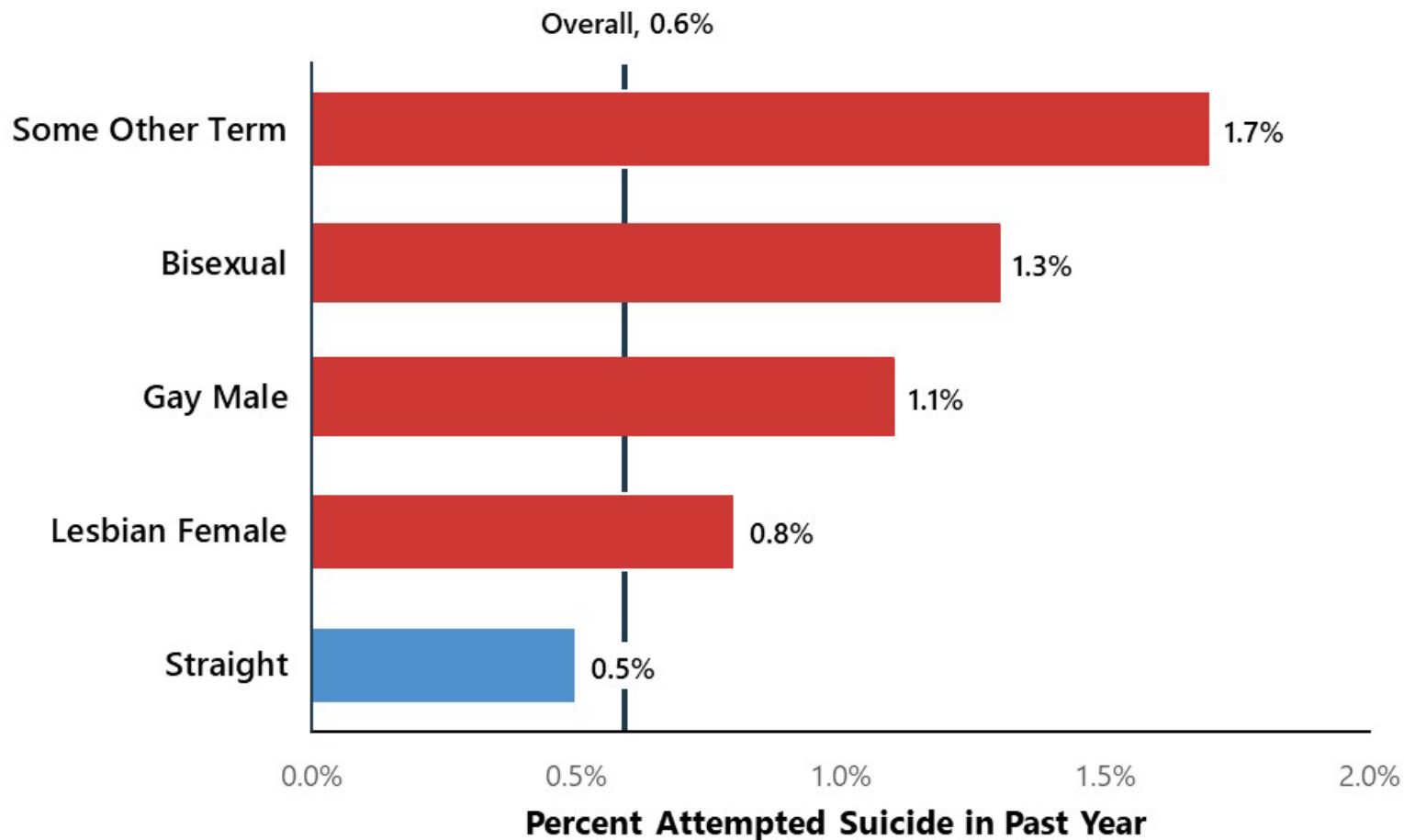


- Adults who use some other term, bisexual adults, and adult lesbian females were more likely to have made a suicide plan than straight adults

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 18 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

Attempted Suicide in the Past Year by Sexual Identity: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older



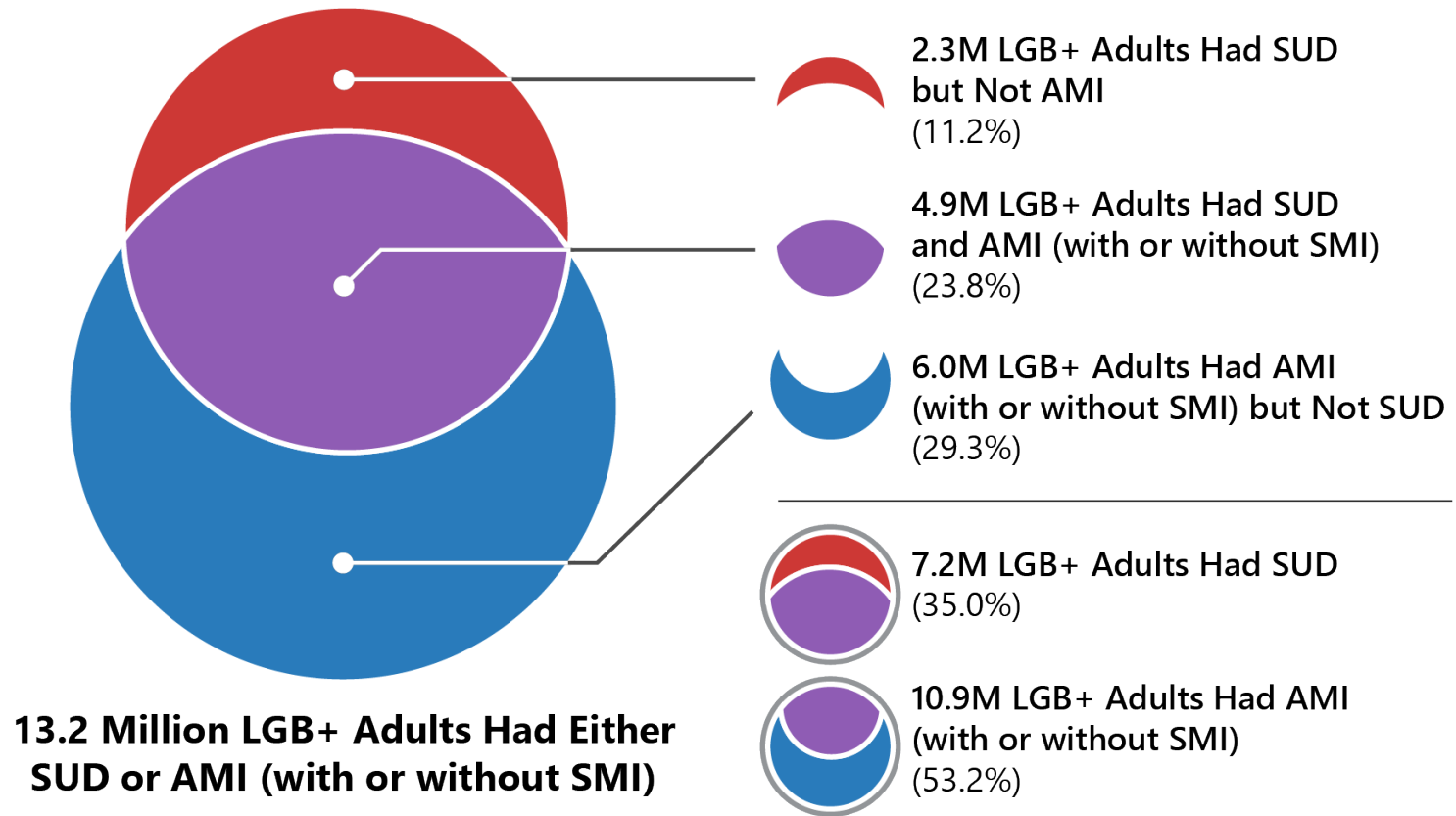
- **LGB+** adults were **just as likely** to have attempted suicide as straight adults

Straight = straight or heterosexual.

Note: Estimates were age adjusted to the 18 or older age distribution of the 2000 U.S. standard population.

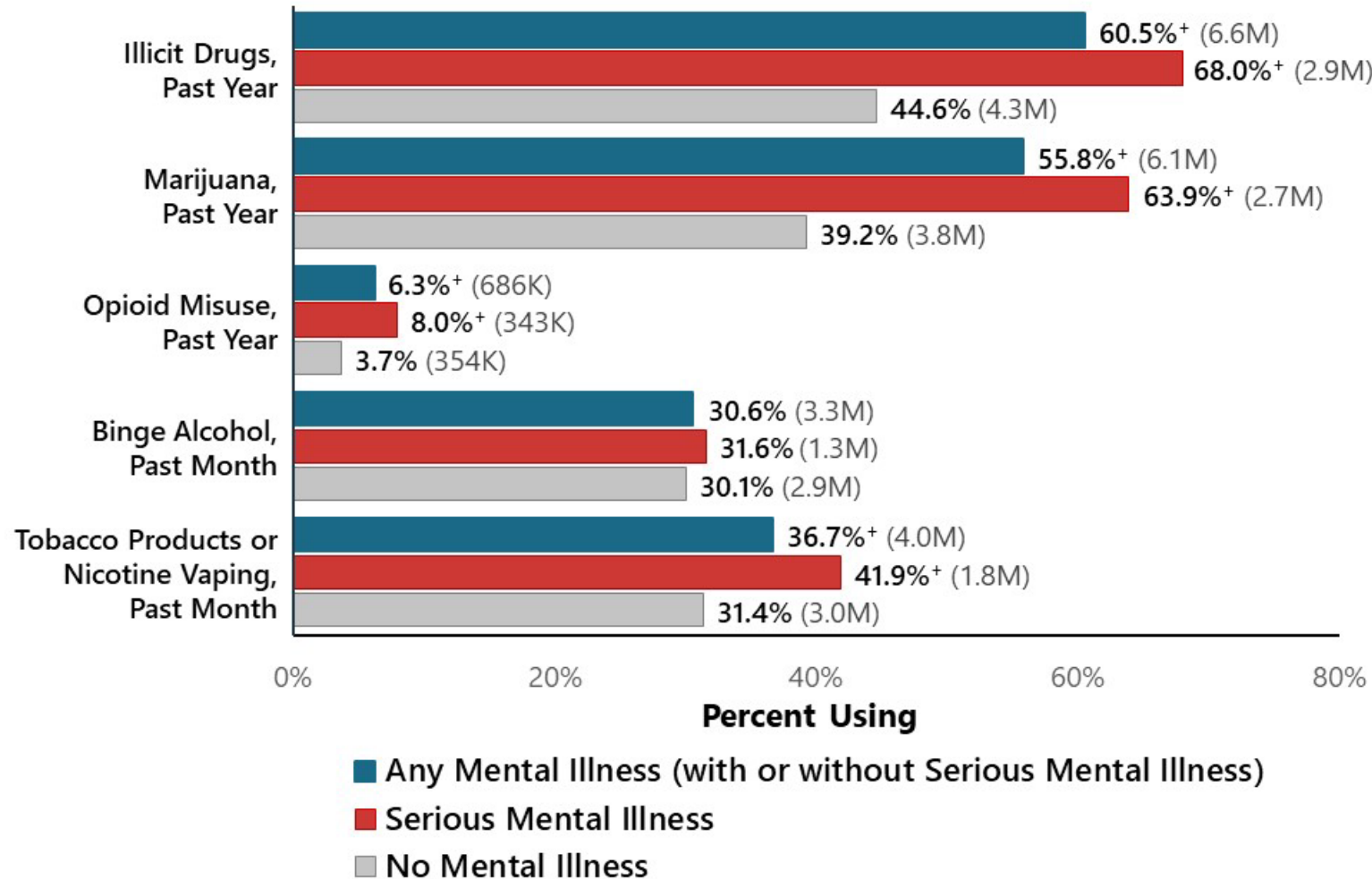
Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health

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



- **4.9 million (23.8%)** LGB+ adults aged 18 or older had **co-occurring SUD and AMI**
- **72.1%** of all LGB+ young adults aged **18 to 25** had **SUD or AMI**

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

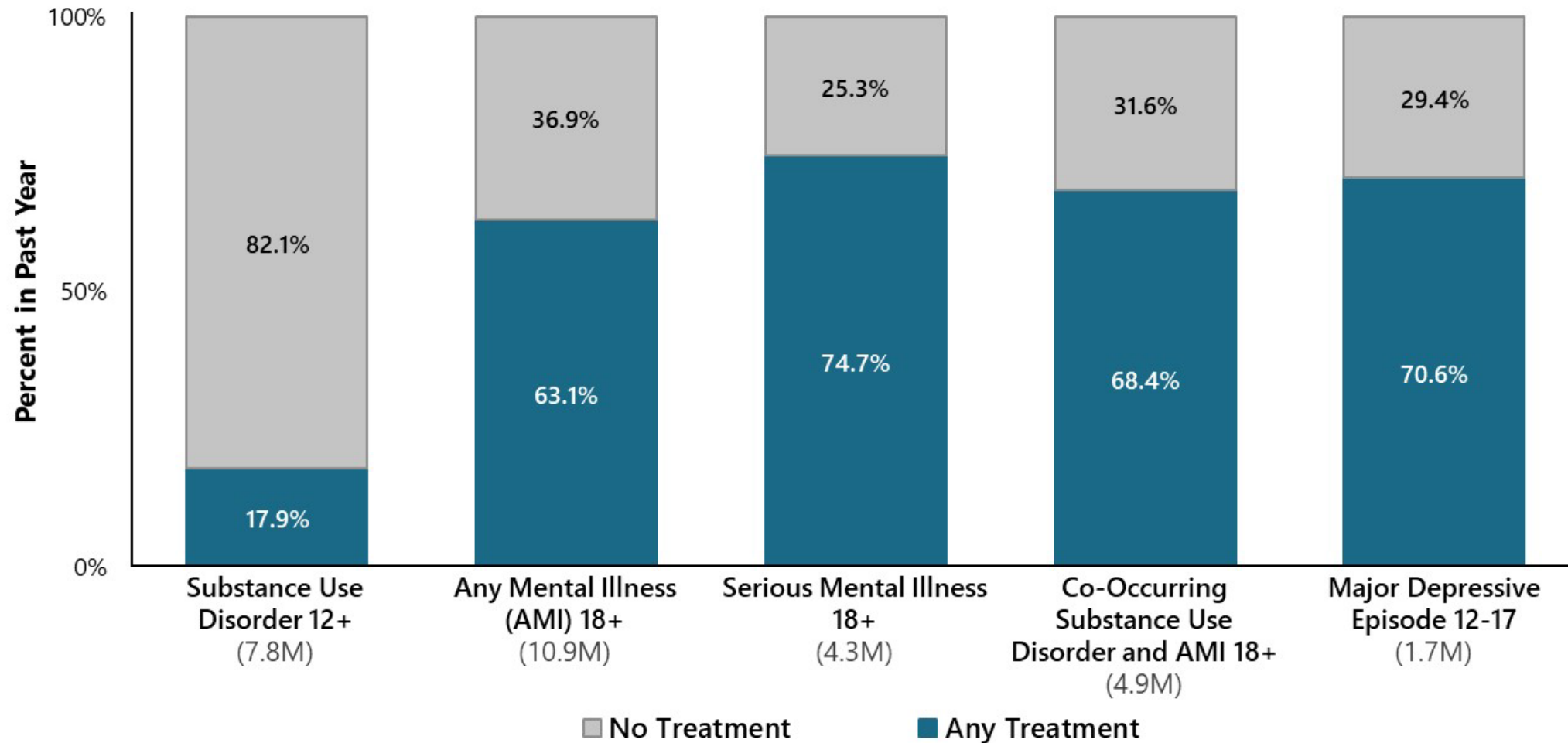


- LGB+ adults with SMI or AMI in the past year were **more likely** to have used or misused these substances (except binge alcohol use) than those without mental illness

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 LGB+ People Aged 12 or Older



Recovery: Among LGB+ Adults Aged 18 or Older



- **7 in 10 (70.4%)** LGB+ adults who thought they ever had a **substance use problem** considered themselves to be **recovering or in recovery**



- **3 in 5 (60.8%)** LGB+ adults who thought they ever had a **mental health issue** considered themselves to be **recovering or in recovery**