

Gay men, HIV and employment in the UK: a national study

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Background

- Improved medical treatment means that people living with HIV in the UK are able to remain in the workforce.
- There has been little research into the employment experiences of HIV positive people who are working.

Method

- Anonymous online survey on the gay social networking website Gaydar, November to December 2008.
- Eligibility – men who were:
 - Gay or bisexual
 - Over 18 years old
 - In work
 - Living in the UK
 - Had had an HIV test.
- Sample:
 - HIV positive men (n=1830)
 - HIV negative men (n=6539).

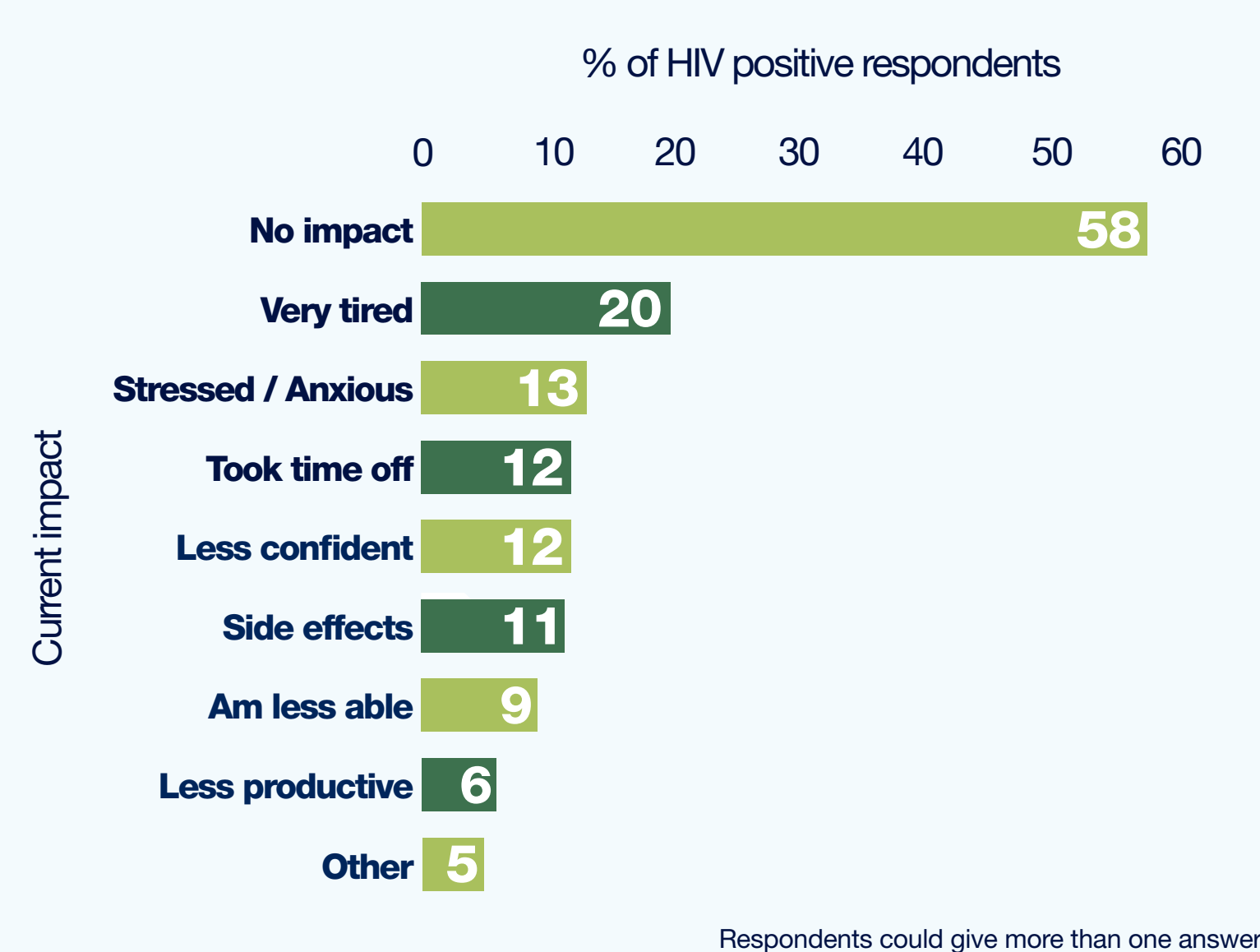
Conclusions

- Many gay men living with HIV can work without difficulty.
- Nonetheless, there are real opportunities to improve the employment experiences of people living with HIV.
- NAT has used these findings to develop policy recommendations for employers, trade unions and HIV support organisations.

Results

IMPACT

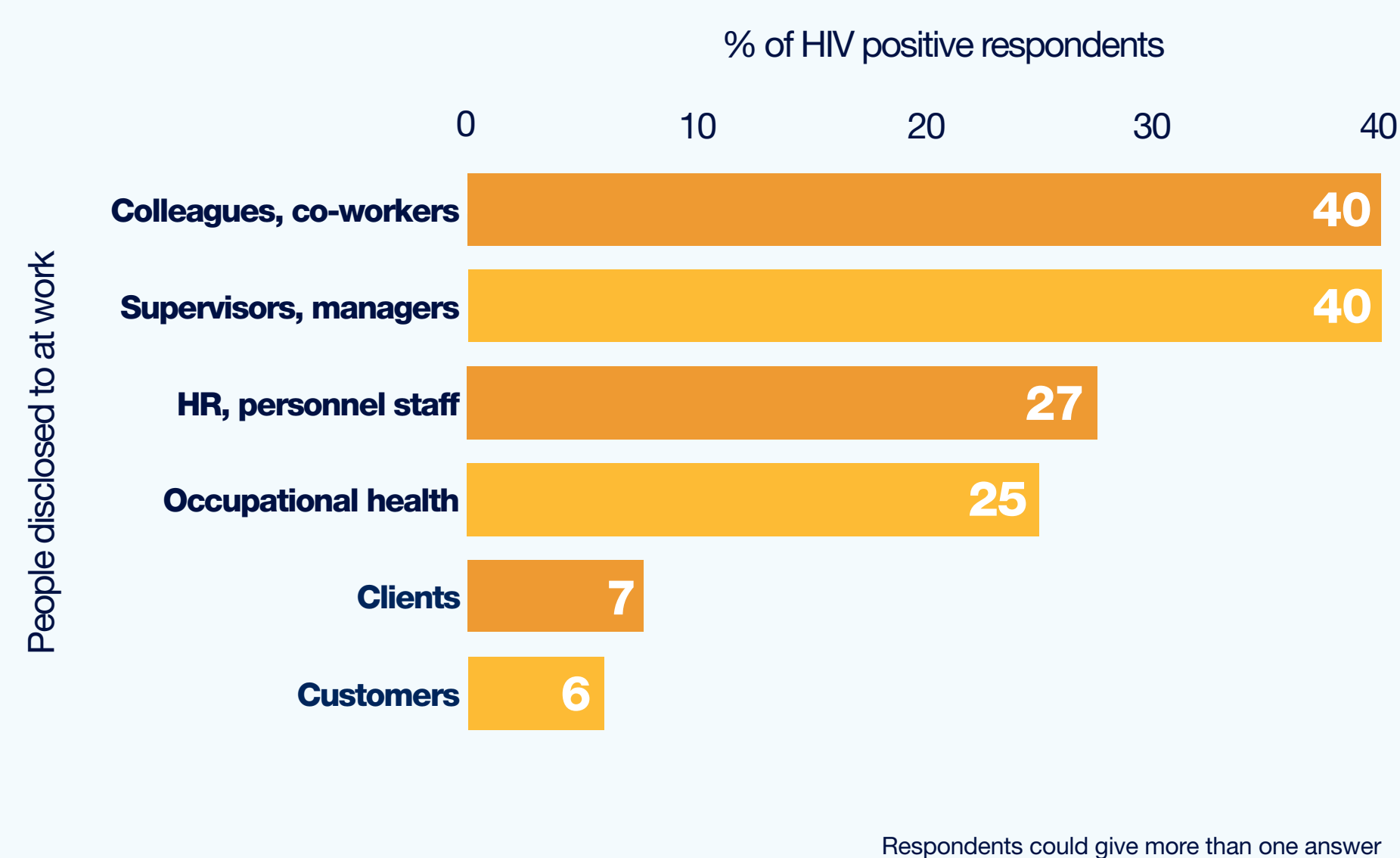
Current impact of HIV diagnosis on working life



- Over half the HIV positive men (58%) said that HIV had no impact on their working lives.
- Nearly three-quarters (70%) had taken no HIV-related sickness days in the last year.
- There was **no significant difference** between HIV positive and HIV negative men in the number of days sick leave they had taken in the last year for non-HIV related illness (**mean 8.3 v 7.3 days, p=0.1**).

DISCLOSURE

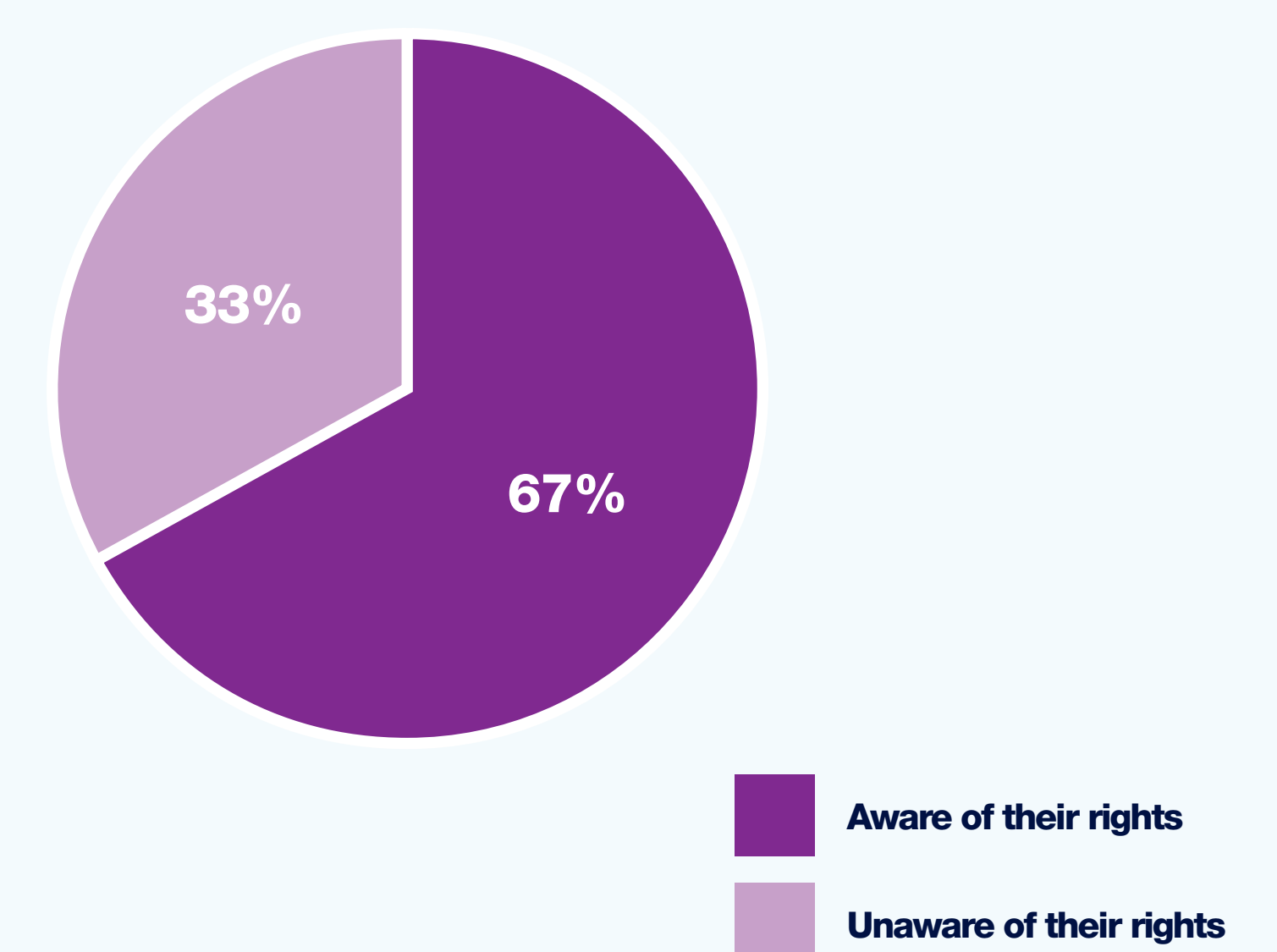
Reported disclosure of HIV status at work



- Nearly two thirds (62%) of the HIV positive men had disclosed their status to one or more person at work.
- Over a fifth of men who had disclosed their HIV positive status at work had experienced discrimination in their current or previous job.
- Of those who had not disclosed, **more than half** feared poor treatment at work or a breach of confidentiality if they did disclose.

RIGHTS

Awareness of rights under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amongst HIV positive respondents



- Two thirds of HIV positive respondents were aware that the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 includes protection from discrimination at work for people living with HIV.
- However, of these, **almost a third (30%)** were unaware of their right to “reasonable adjustments” (e.g. flexible working arrangements).
- Awareness of rights to protection from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation was higher (85%).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NAT RESEARCH REPORT

- Employers should show that they are aware of the needs of people living with HIV at work and respond appropriately to disclosure.
- Employers and trade unions must take steps to end HIV-related discrimination at work.
- Workers and employers need to be better informed about the rights of HIV positive people to fair treatment at work.

Read the reports

Douglas, N. (2009) *I just get on with it: A study of the employment experiences of gay and bisexual men and black African men and women living with HIV in the UK*, www.nat.org.uk

NAT, *Working with HIV: A summary of NAT's employment research*, www.nat.org.uk

About NAT

NAT (National AIDS Trust) is the UK's leading charity dedicated to transforming society's response to HIV. We provide fresh thinking, expert advice and practical resources. We campaign for change.

Shaping attitudes. Challenging injustice. Changing lives.

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