

# IMPACT OF HURRICANE SANDY ON HEALTHCARE WORKERS

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# HURRICANE SANDY

- October 29, 2012
- Category 1 hurricane
- Estimated \$19 billion in losses in NYC
- Major flooding and fires

Hurricane devastation in Far Rockaway. Two of the facilities we visited were in this area.



# THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

- Fastest growing industry in the United States
  - Over 18 million workers
  - 80% are female
- Rate of 5.2 reportable injuries or illnesses per 100 workers (2010)
- All industries had a rate of 3.8
- Costs to employer and society





# HAZARDS



- Needle sticks
- Assault / Violence
- Ergonomic hazards
- Occupational stress
- Biological and chemical hazards
- Bloodborne and airborne pathogens
- Slips and falls



Unsafe patient handling is a major ergonomic hazard for healthcare workers.

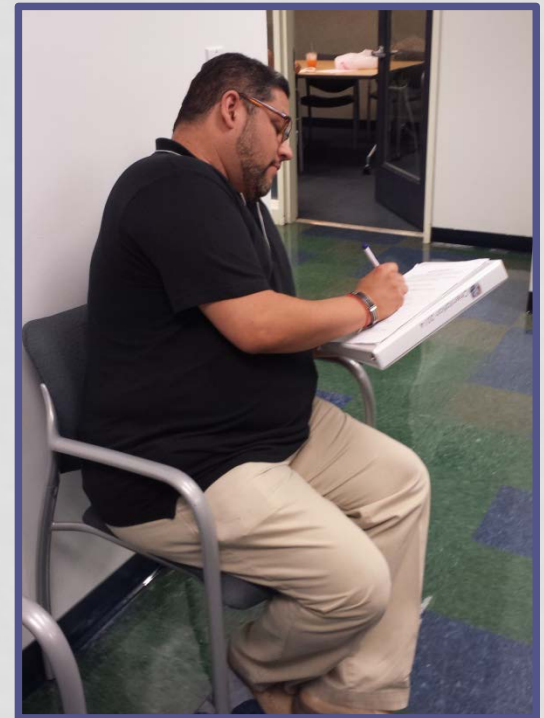
# OBJECTIVES

Goal: Identify and evaluate health and safety hazards before, during, and after Hurricane Sandy

- Literature review
- Worksite visits to 7 facilities (3 nursing homes, 4 hospitals)
- Obtain OSHA 300 and 301 logs from each identified facility
- One-on-one interviews and surveys with workers

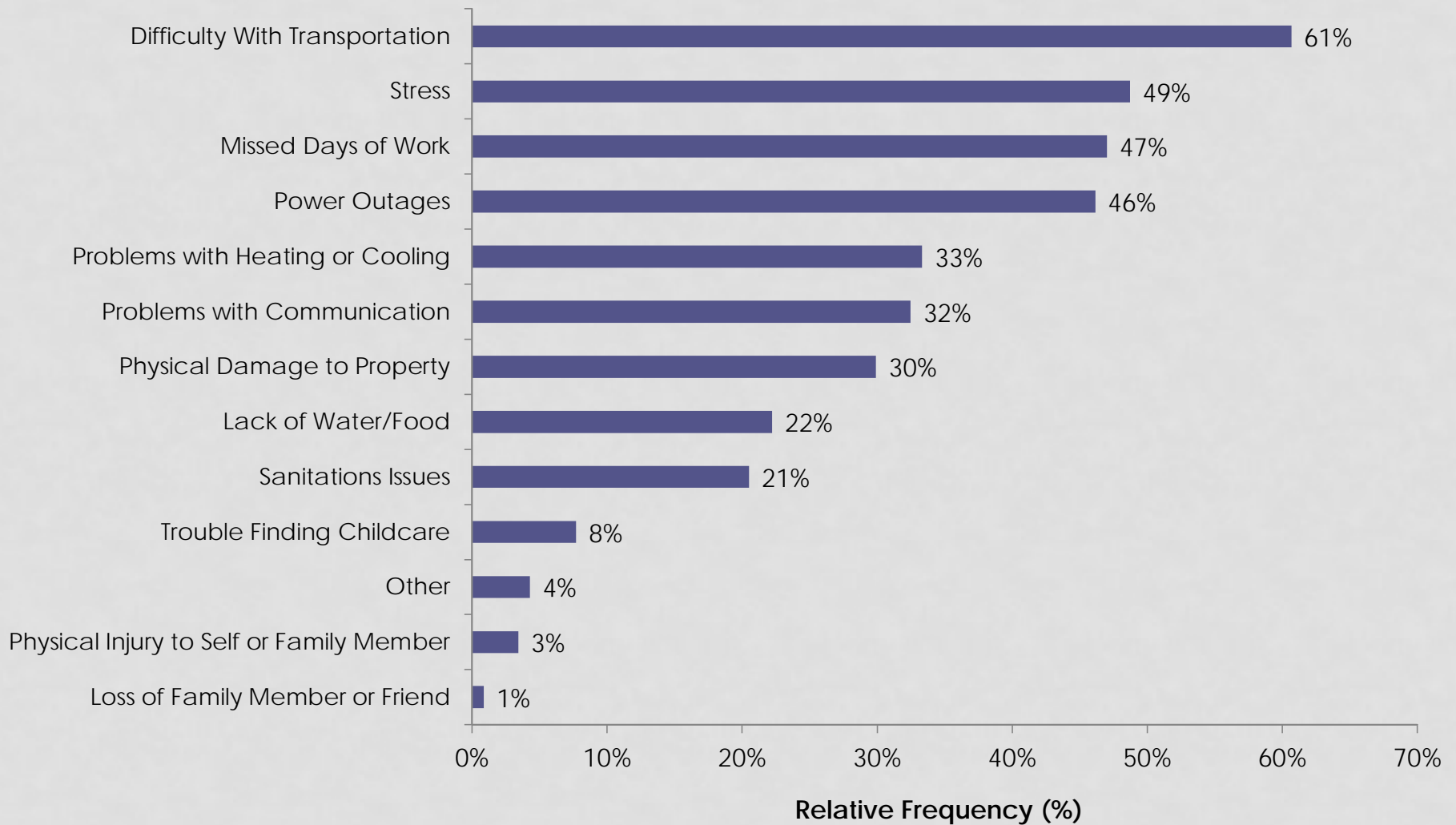
# METHODS

- Develop a survey tool
- Pilot the survey with workers
- Utilize union organizers and delegates to set up interviews and distribute surveys
- Submit formal requests, and visit administrators to obtain OSHA 300 and 301 logs



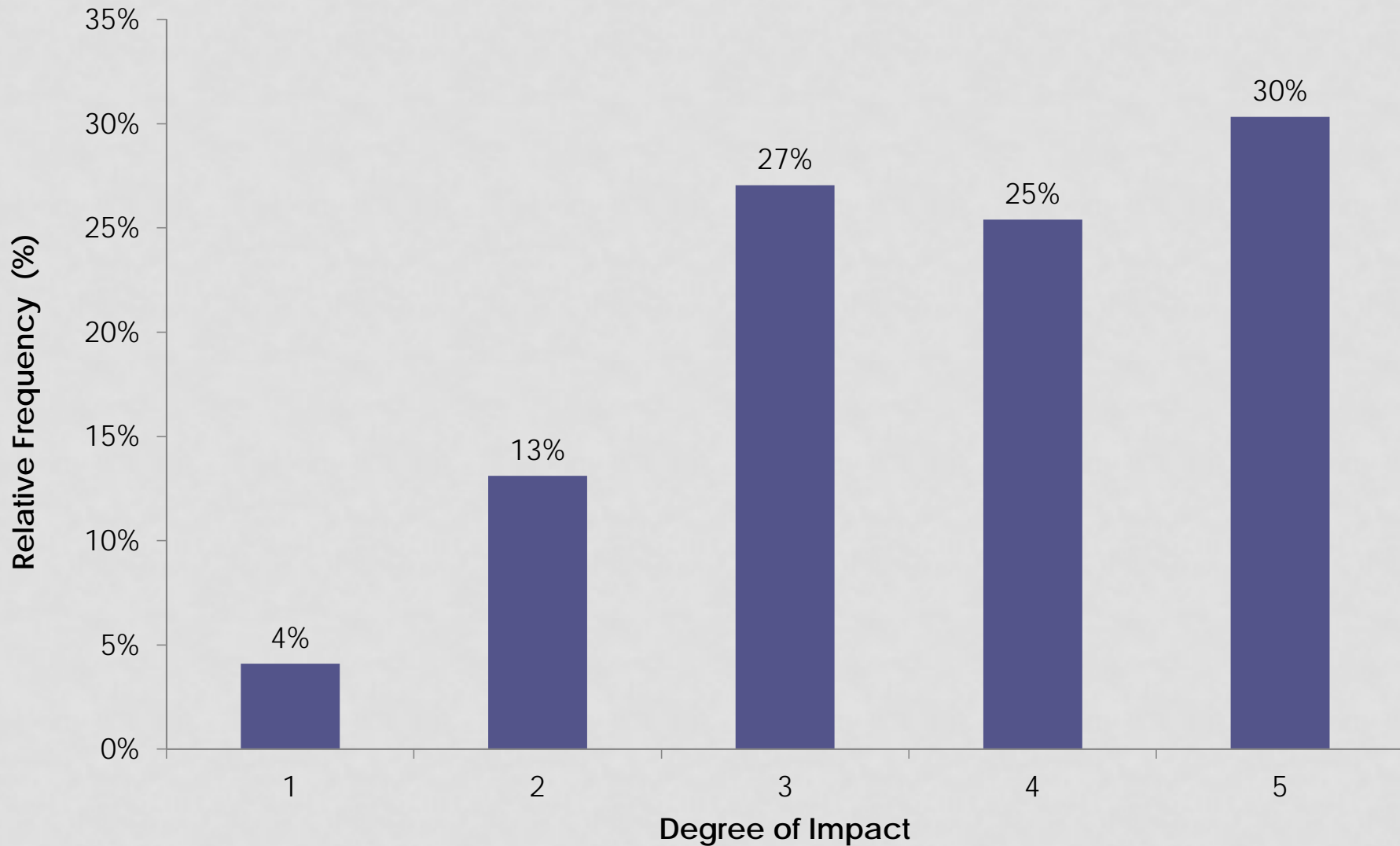
A worker taking a survey.

# Healthcare Workers' Self-Identified Impact of Hurricane Sandy on Themselves and their Families (n=117)





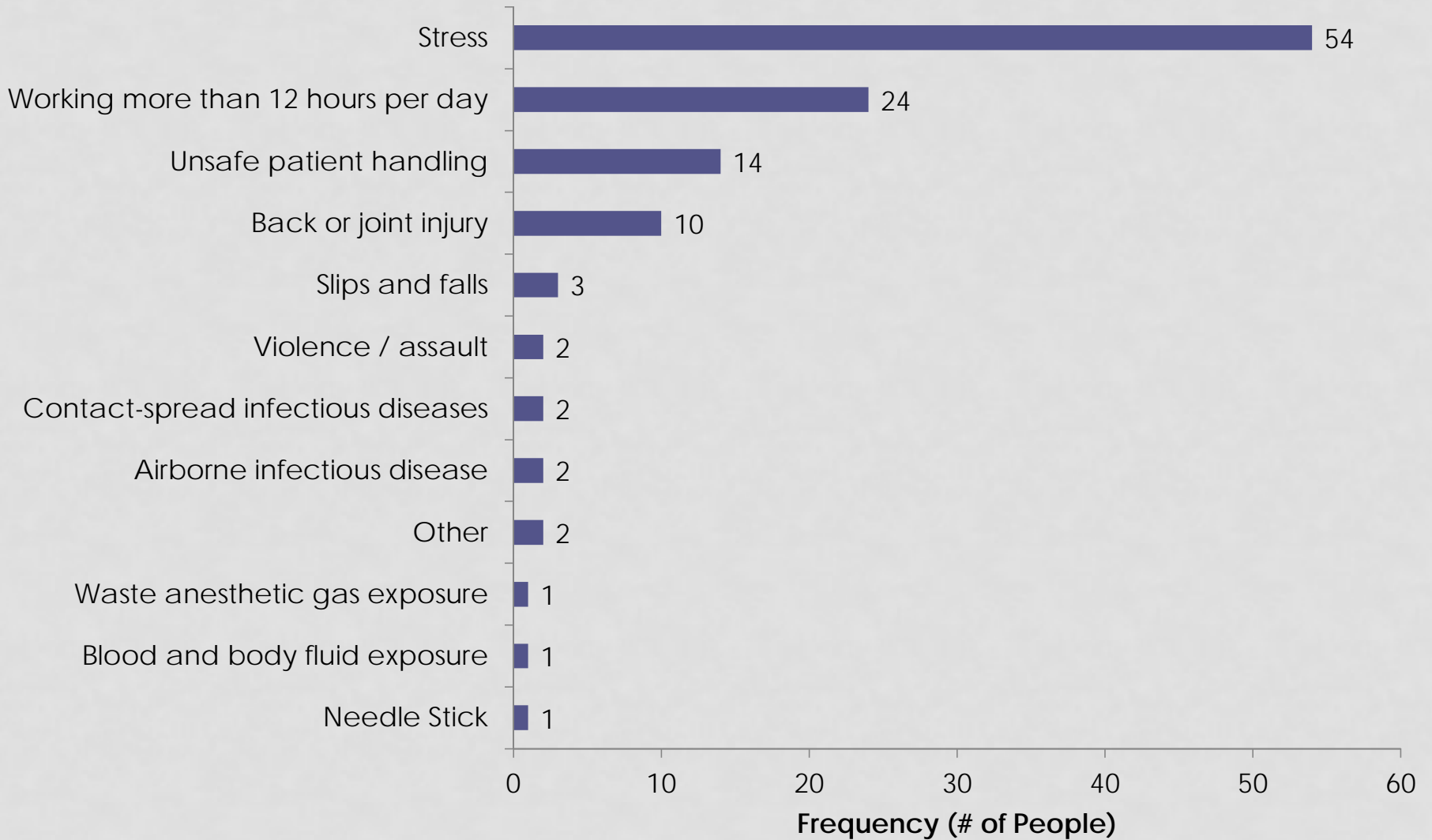
## Degree to which Hurricane Sandy Affected Workers and their Families (n=122)



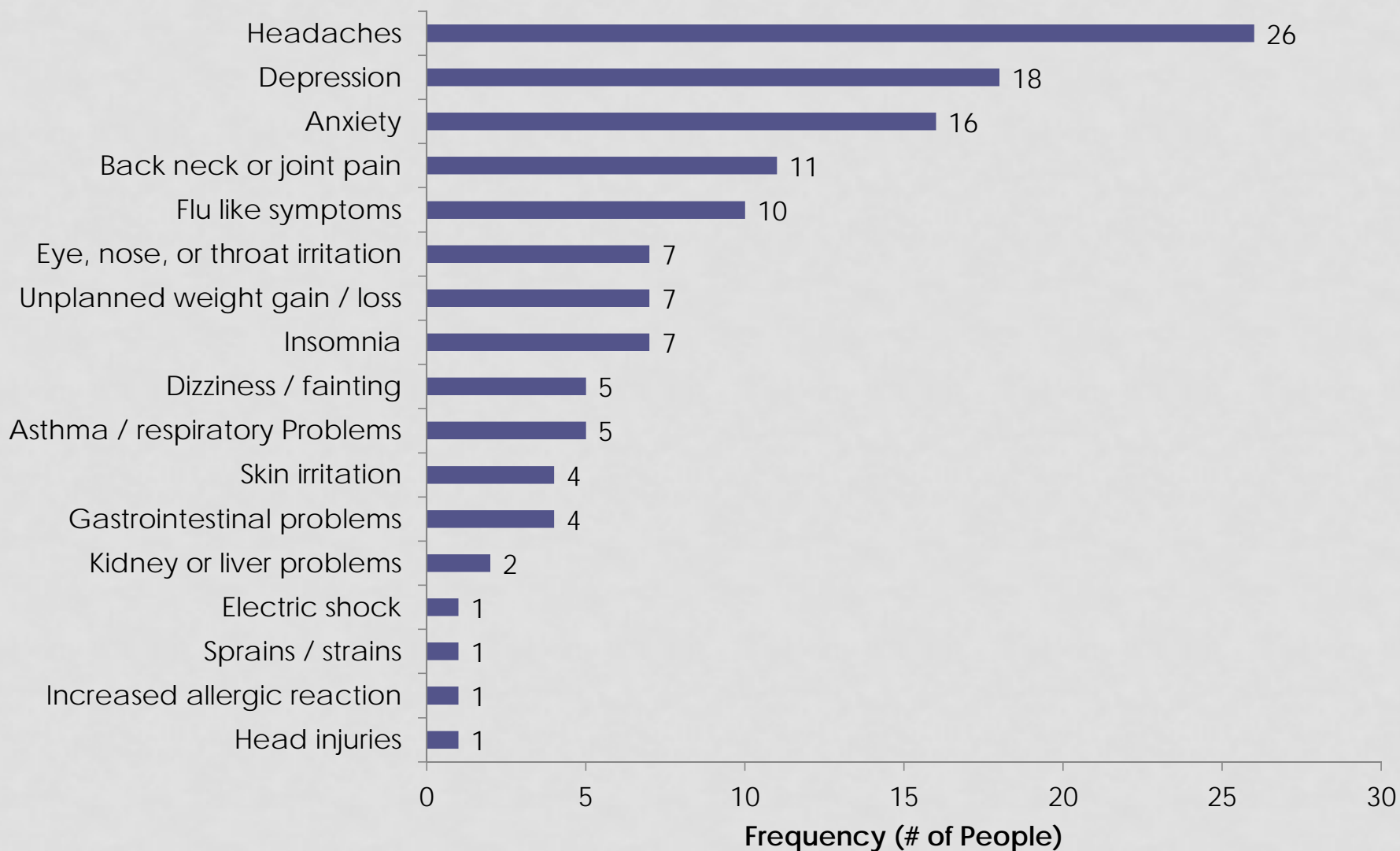
Where 1 = "made no difference" and 5 = "had a very large impact"



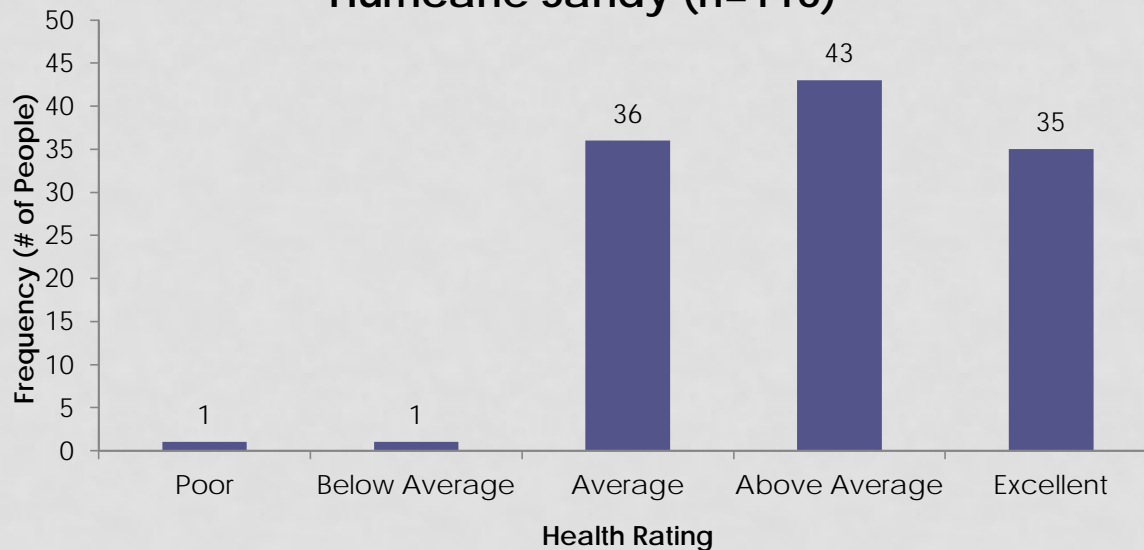
# Workplace Hazards that Healthcare Workers Reported Experiencing During or After Hurricane Sandy (n=124)



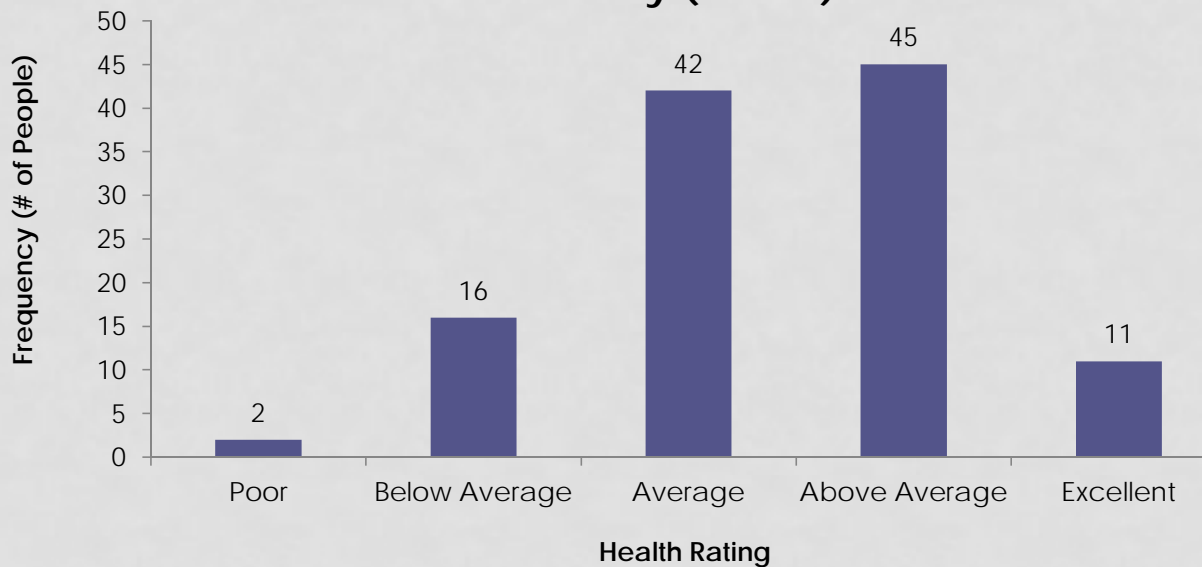
## Health Problems that Healthcare Workers Reported Experiencing During or After Hurricane Sandy (n=124)



### Overall Health Rating for the Year Before Hurricane Sandy (n=116)



### Overall Health Rating for the Year After Hurricane Sandy (n=116)



# CHALLENGES

- Cooperation with administrators in obtaining the OSHA 300 and 301 logs
- Setting up meetings with delegates and organizers
- Working within a large union
  - Resistance from administrators
  - Admittance to facilities
- Access to facilities
  - Physically and logistically
- Limited literature



One of the three nursing homes. Sea Crest is located on Coney Island.

# SUCCESSSES

- Access to workers allowed for in-depth interviews
- Assisted during contract negotiations
- 6 worksite visits
- Interviews/focus groups within 4 facilities
- Collected surveys from 127 workers
- Obtained OSHA 300 and 301 logs from 6 facilities



A successful trip to Sea Crest nursing home!



# PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



- Inner workings of unions
- Workers want better training in the workplace, but they don't know what their resources are
- Healthcare workers are passionate about their jobs
- Heroes during Hurricane Sandy
- Most healthcare workers go unseen



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