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GALLUP®



► **Experiences of violence
and harassment at work:
A global first survey**

#RATIFY
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► Preface

Violence and harassment at work causes harm to individuals, families, businesses and societies. It affects people's lives, dignity, health and wellbeing. It also exacerbates inequality in societies and undermines business productivity. There should be no place for and no tolerance of violence and harassment at work – anywhere. To prevent and address it effectively, we need to know it better. We need to know which types of violence and harassment at work are more prevalent and where, and who is more exposed to it and why. Until now, there were no comparable global and regional data on this phenomenon. To fill this gap, the International Labour Organization joined forces with Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup to run a global survey on people's experiences of violence and harassment at work within the 2021 Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll, which in turn is fielded as part of the Gallup World Poll.

The results of this first-ever global picture are informative and revealing, and in some cases surprising. They help to get a sense of the magnitude of violence and harassment at work, including its different forms, and of the factors that may prevent people from even talking about it, be it shame and guilt, or lack of trust in institutions, or – perhaps even worse – because such unacceptable behaviours are regarded as “normal”.

We hope that this exploratory global account will shed further light on this scourge and pave the way for further in-depth research and analysis. Having a clearer picture of how violence and harassment affects the world of work is an important step towards its elimination, as called for by the international community when adopting the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206), 2019. Convention No. 190 is ground-breaking in many ways, including by codifying violence and harassment as both an issue of equality and of occupational safety and health. This message was reinforced in 2022 when the ILO's tripartite constituency elevated the right to a healthy and safe working environment to a fundamental principle and right at work.

This global survey is part of a broader effort to accelerate action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, through which the global community has committed to transforming our world by 2030. This objective includes creating a better world of work based on equity, sustainability and respect for rights.

This report was designed to catalyse action. Everyone has the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment.



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► Summary of results

The ILO-Lloyd's Register Foundation-Gallup survey¹ is the first attempt to provide a global overview of people's own experiences of violence and harassment at work. The results provide a first glance at the magnitude and frequency of violence and harassment at work, providing insights into the main forms of violence and harassment (that is, physical, psychological and sexual) and on the main barriers that prevent people from talking about it.

Violence and harassment at work is a widespread phenomenon around the world, with more than one in five (22.8 per cent or 743 million) persons in employment having experienced at least one form of violence and harassment at work during their working life. Among people who had experienced violence and harassment at work, about one-third (31.8 per cent) said they had experienced more than one form, with 6.3 per cent having faced all three forms in their working life:

- Nearly one in ten (8.5 per cent or 277 million) persons in employment has experienced **physical violence and harassment** at work in their working life. Men were more likely than women to report experiencing physical violence and harassment.
- **Psychological violence and harassment** was the most common form of violence and harassment reported by both men and women, with nearly one in five (17.9 per cent or 583 million) people in employment experiencing it in their working life.
- One in fifteen (6.3 per cent or 205 million) people in employment has experienced **sexual violence and harassment** at work in their working life. Women were particularly exposed to sexual violence and harassment at work. The data around sexual violence and harassment demonstrate the largest gender difference by far (8.2 per cent of women compared to 5.0 per cent of men) among the three forms of violence and harassment.

Violence and harassment at work is also a recurrent and persistent phenomenon. More than three in five victims of violence and harassment at work said it has happened to them multiple times, and for the majority of them, the last incident took place within the last five years.

The risk of experiencing violence and harassment at work is particularly pronounced across certain demographic groups. Youth, migrant, and wage and salaried² women and men were more likely to face violence and harassment at work, and this can be particularly true among women. For instance, survey results show that young women were twice as likely as young men to have experienced sexual violence and harassment, and migrant women were almost twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment.

Persons who have experienced discrimination at some point in their life on the basis of gender, disability status, nationality/ethnicity, skin colour and/or religion were more likely to have experienced violence and harassment at work than those who did not face such discrimination. Those facing gender-based discrimination have been particularly affected: Nearly five in ten people who have been victims of gender-based discrimination in their life have also faced violence and harassment at work, compared to two in ten of those who have not been discriminated against on the basis of gender.

Talking about personal experiences of violence and harassment is still challenging. Only slightly more than half (54.4 per cent) of victims have shared their experience with someone, and often only after they have experienced more than one form of violence and harassment. People were also more likely to tell friends or family, rather than using other informal or formal channels.

Multiple factors and barriers may prevent people from disclosing incidents of violence and harassment at work. Among survey respondents, "waste of time" and "fear for their reputation" were the most common barriers discouraging people from talking about their own experiences of violence and harassment at work.

1 Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set].

2 As opposed to self-employed.

► Introduction

Violence and harassment in the world of work is a pervasive and harmful phenomenon, with profound and costly effects ranging from severe physical and mental health consequences to lost earnings and destroyed career paths to economic losses for workplaces and societies. To address this scourge, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) in June 2019. These instruments recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, and for the first time, provided a common framework for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence and harassment.

To build a world of work free from violence and harassment, solid and comparable data are crucial. Yet statistics on violence and harassment in the world of work are sporadic and scarce. Comparability of data is problematic because different concepts, definitions and methods have been used. Statistics are often collected for a specific occupation, industry or group and may not be disaggregated by sex. Underreporting of violence and harassment in the world of work is also a problem, due to fear of victimization and retaliation as well as the lack of effective or accessible enforcement and monitoring systems in many countries.

To fill this evidence gap and to advance understanding of and action against violence and harassment in the world of work, the ILO has joined forces with Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup to carry out the first global exploratory exercise to measure people's own experiences of violence and harassment at work across the world.³ This survey aimed to explore the prevalence and frequency of violence and harassment at work, including its main different forms – be it physical, psychological or sexual – and respondents' experiences with disclosing such occurrences (see Annex 1).⁴ The ultimate goal is to raise awareness on a long-standing and highly complex issue rooted in wider economic, societal and cultural contexts, including those surrounding the world of work and entrenched gender roles.

Interviews were conducted in 2021 with nearly 125,000 individuals aged 15 years or older in 121 countries and territories using probability-based random sampling to ensure nationally representative data and results. However, the findings of this report focus exclusively on the 74,364 respondents who were in employment at the time of the interview.

The survey is likely to have been influenced by a range of macroenvironmental factors (national politics, institutional norms, historic traditions or cultural norms) and by microenvironmental factors (for instance, the location of the interview or the presence of others during the interview), as well as by individuals' willingness or reticence to reveal such information. For instance, some questions were not asked or were asked differently in a few countries due to political and cultural sensitivities (see the next section and the [Technical Note](#) for more details on the methodology). This should be taken into account when reading the global findings and comparing results across regions. In addition, cultural differences were noted when fielding the questionnaire, pointing to different definitions of what constitutes violence and harassment as well as different degrees of acceptance of such behaviours. Moreover, respondents' personal sensitivity may have also played a key role in deciding whether or not to disclose information on violence and harassment at work.

Caveats aside, this report presents the first-ever global account of people's own experiences of violence and harassment at work using common questions, thereby allowing for an initial measure of the prevalence and frequency of this phenomenon at the global level as well as allowing for comparability of results across regions. This study paves the way for further quantitative and qualitative research on violence and harassment at work. Ultimately, stronger evidence will help forge more effective legislation, policies and practices that promote prevention measures, tackle specific risk factors and root causes, and ensure that victims are not left alone in handling these unacceptable occurrences.

Legislators and policymakers, employers and workers and their respective organizations, as well as advocates all around the world can use the results of this study to shape inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive legislative and policy changes aimed at creating a world of work free from violence and harassment.

The report is structured in three chapters. The first provides an overview of the prevalence and frequency of violence and harassment in its different forms. The second identifies some of the key factors associated with a higher risk of violence and harassment, and the third focuses on people's willingness to disclose such occurrences and the barriers preventing them from doing so.

³ Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set].

⁴ In the survey and consequently this report, the phrase "at work" is synonymous with "in the world of work".

► How was the survey conducted?

The survey on violence and harassment at work was designed as a sub-module within the [2021 Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll](#), which in turn was fielded as part of the Gallup World Poll.⁵ In executing the 2021 World Risk Poll, Gallup conducted roughly 125,000 interviews in 121 countries and territories during 2021, gathering information regarding people's experiences on violence and harassment at work, as well as other risks ranging from climate change and disaster resilience to the use of personal data. Since the survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, most interviews were conducted by telephone, with face-to-face interviews conducted where possible (see [Technical Note](#)). Of the 121 countries, interviews were conducted by telephone in 69 (either landline, mobile or some combination thereof) and in person in 52.

In most countries and territories, the survey was conducted among 1,000 individuals using a standard set of questions that had been translated into the major languages of the respective country.⁶

All samples collected were probability-based and nationally representative of the resident adult population aged 15 and older to ensure nationally representative data.

The World Risk Poll was not asked exclusively to respondents who were currently in employment at the time of the interview. However, this report focuses exclusively on those survey respondents who were employed at the time of the interview, regardless of their employment status – be they self-employed or employees, full-time or part-time.⁷

It should also be noted that 2.7 per cent of survey respondents (or 2,091) indicated at the beginning of the World Risk Poll that they were employed, but then said that they had never worked when asked about experiences of violence and harassment at work, with women being more likely than men to respond this way (1.8 per cent versus 1.5 per cent).

This may indicate the respondents were unwilling or uncomfortable to discuss and disclose violence and harassment, especially in the context of work. These respondents were therefore removed from the overall sample, as they were asked no further questions from the violence and harassment at work sub-module.

Once the above exclusions were made, the final sample for the study came to 74,364 individuals, all of whom were employed at the time of the interview.

Below it will be seen that those respondents who reported experiencing violence and harassment at work have been broadly divided into two groups based on when they last experienced violence and harassment at work, namely “in the past five years” or “more than five years ago or not sure when”.⁸

All estimates presented in this report, unless otherwise noted, have been calculated using survey weights. Data weighting is used to ensure samples are nationally representative for each country and is intended to be used for generating estimates within a country. The weighting procedure consists of three major steps:

- First, the base or design weight is constructed to account for any disproportionality in the respondent selection process.
- Next, the base weights are post-stratified to adjust for non-response and to match the weighted sample totals to known target population totals obtained from country-level census data. Gallup makes non-response adjustments to gender, age and, where reliable data are available, education or socioeconomic status.
- Finally, approximate study design effect and margin of error are calculated. The design effect calculation reflects the influence of data weighting.

5 The 2021 World Risk poll covers a number of important topics about safety and risks. To learn more about the World Risk Poll, please visit the following website: <https://wrp.lrfoundation.org.uk/>, as well as the Gallup website for more information on methodology: <https://www.gallup.com/178667/gallup-world-poll-work.aspx>.

6 Notable exceptions include China and India, where at least 3,000 interviews were collected, and Russia, where 2,001 individuals participated. In only two countries did the sample size (that is, the number of people interviewed) dip below 1,000 – Jamaica and Iceland, where about 500 people were interviewed.

7 Granted that the Gallup World Poll survey was designed to be nationally representative, the sub-sample of those employed at the time of the interview should also constitute a representative sample.

8 Respondents were asked about whether they had experienced violence and harassment in the workplace, and if so, when they had last experienced it. Respondents who had experienced violence and harassment at work had four possible answers concerning when the experience last occurred: (i) “within the last year”; (ii) “two to five years ago”; (iii) “more than five years ago”; and (iv) “do not know”. In light of the stringency of COVID-19 containment measures, which determined work closures or working from home arrangements in many countries, as well as to maximize the underlying sample size and ensure robustness of the estimates, those respondents who reported incidents of violence and harassment that occurred “in the last year” and “two to five years ago” were combined together, and those respondents who did not know when the incident occurred were grouped with the “more than five years ago” respondents.

As the analysis in this report focuses on cross-country comparisons, the survey weights were scaled by the number of employed people aged 15 and older (as well as the number of employed women and men for analysis disaggregated by sex).⁹ Population scaling adjusts the data to give greater weight to more populous countries when calculating cross-country statistics.

Given the absence of an established standard statistical measurement framework on work-related violence and harassment – and the sensitivity of the topic – the survey encountered a few methodological challenges.

To minimize cultural differences in response styles and to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons, the survey questions were designed in a simple dichotomous (“yes” or “no”) manner, using wordings that were cognitively tested in a diverse group of nations. The study explores the prevalence and frequency of the following main forms of violence and harassment at work:

- ▶ *Physical violence and harassment*, such as hitting, restraining or spitting
- ▶ *Psychological violence and harassment*, such as insults, threats, bullying or intimidation
- ▶ *Sexual harassment and violence*, such as unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests

However, it should be noted that in some countries, some questions were not fielded or were reformulated. For instance, in China, the questions on experiences with physical violence and harassment were not asked and the question on psychological violence and harassment was slightly reformulated. Moreover, in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the questions on sexual violence and harassment were not asked, while in Algeria, China, Jordan, Morocco and Pakistan, they were reformulated.¹⁰ In addition, none of the questions related to whether individuals talked about their experience with violence and harassment at work were asked in China, and at least one of these questions was removed in Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates. These exceptions should be kept in mind when considering the overall results of the survey.

The survey on violence and harassment at work employed a “self-labelling” approach, meaning that the respondents were asked directly to assess whether they had experienced violence and harassment at work, and therefore an answer in the affirmative means that it is the respondents themselves who qualify the experiences as constituting violence and harassment.

The advantage of this approach is the fact that the questions provide “synthetic information” about the issue asked, without defining the issue or spelling out all the range of behaviours that could constitute violence and harassment.

The disadvantage is that the approach is dependent on a respondent’s interpretation as to what actions or behaviours fall under the broader concept, as well as being dependent on the respondent’s willingness to acknowledge such incidents.

Previous research suggests that it can be difficult for respondents to recognize their experiences as violence and harassment, and the definition provided may not resonate with their experiences (Nielsen, Matthiesen, and Einarsen, 2011). In other words, what constitutes violence and harassment in one country may be considered merely “bad” or “impolite” behaviour in others, as seen in the cognitive testing carried out to test the survey questions (see [Technical Note](#)). That subjectivity can only be controlled using precise “act or behaviour-based” questions that leave no room for interpretation; however, it was not possible to include such questions in this survey due to time and length limitations, but this will be implemented and considered in future ILO work. These are important matters to consider when interpreting the results of this survey, as well as when comparing data across regions or demographic groups.

Moreover, as with any self-reported data on an issue that is sensitive or even taboo to discuss in many societies, the results are subject to cultural influences and social norms, including varying levels of underreporting associated with discomfort or lack of familiarity with what constitutes unacceptable behaviour by employed people. The mode of interviewing – how an interview is conducted – can sometimes also have an effect on how individuals respond to a survey question. In this regard, it is worth noting that the majority of these surveys were implemented using telephone interviewing in light of COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore, the respondents in more than half of the countries were limited to men and women with access to landline and/or mobile phones. While the Gallup World Poll has extensive experience asking about sensitive topics in ways that aim to minimize this type of effect, it is not possible to eliminate it entirely (Andreenkova and Javeline, 2019).

⁹ These population-based weights were calculated on a country-by-country basis in the following manner: [Total number of employed individuals aged 15 and older in 2021 as reported by ILOSTAT] / [Weighted sample size of all respondents who said they were employed at the time of the survey].

¹⁰ The question was reformulated as follows: “Have you, personally, ever experienced any type of unwanted intimate physical contact at work and/or have you ever been exposed to unwanted vulgar comments, pictures, emails, or requests while at work, creating a hostile working environment?”



What is the state of violence and harassment at work?

Data on violence and harassment in the world of work are still sporadic and scarce. Moreover, comparability of such data is problematic because different concepts, definitions and methods are used. This chapter provides the first global and

regional account of the prevalence and frequency of violence and harassment in the world of work – including its different forms: physical, psychological and sexual – using consistent and common questions.

► 1.1. Violence and harassment at work: An overview

Globally, more than one in five persons in employment has experienced violence and harassment at work during their working life

In 2021, across the world, 22.8 per cent or 743 million persons in employment had experienced violence and harassment at work – whether physical, psychological or sexual – over their working life (figure 1.1).¹¹ For 79.4 per cent of these victims, the last occurrence was in the five years prior to completing the survey.

This is equivalent to 18.1 per cent or approximately 590 million persons in employment. Globally, women were slightly more likely than men to have experienced violence and harassment over their working life (by 0.8 percentage points).

The Americas registered the highest prevalence rate at 34.3 per cent, followed by Africa (25.7 per cent), Europe and Central Asia (25.5 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (19.2 per cent) and the Arab States (13.6 per cent).¹² When looking at gender differences, in the Americas, women were 8.2 percentage points more likely than men to have experienced violence and harassment in their working life (39.0 per cent versus 30.8 per cent), followed by Europe and Central Asia (8.0 percentage points) and the Arab States (5.9 percentage points). Conversely, in Asia and the Pacific and in Africa, men were more likely than women to have such an experience, both in their working life and within the past five years (by 3.2 percentage points and 2.2 percentage points, respectively).

Data also show that high income countries registered the highest prevalence, and low and lower-middle income countries the lowest prevalence, both over the entirety of working life and in the past five years.

When looking at gender differences in high income countries, women were more likely to experience violence and harassment over their working life at 38.7 per cent, compared to men at 26.3 per cent. By contrast, in both upper-middle income countries and low and lower-middle income countries, men were more likely than women to experience violence and harassment in their working life (by 5.9 percentage points and 1.0 percentage point, respectively).

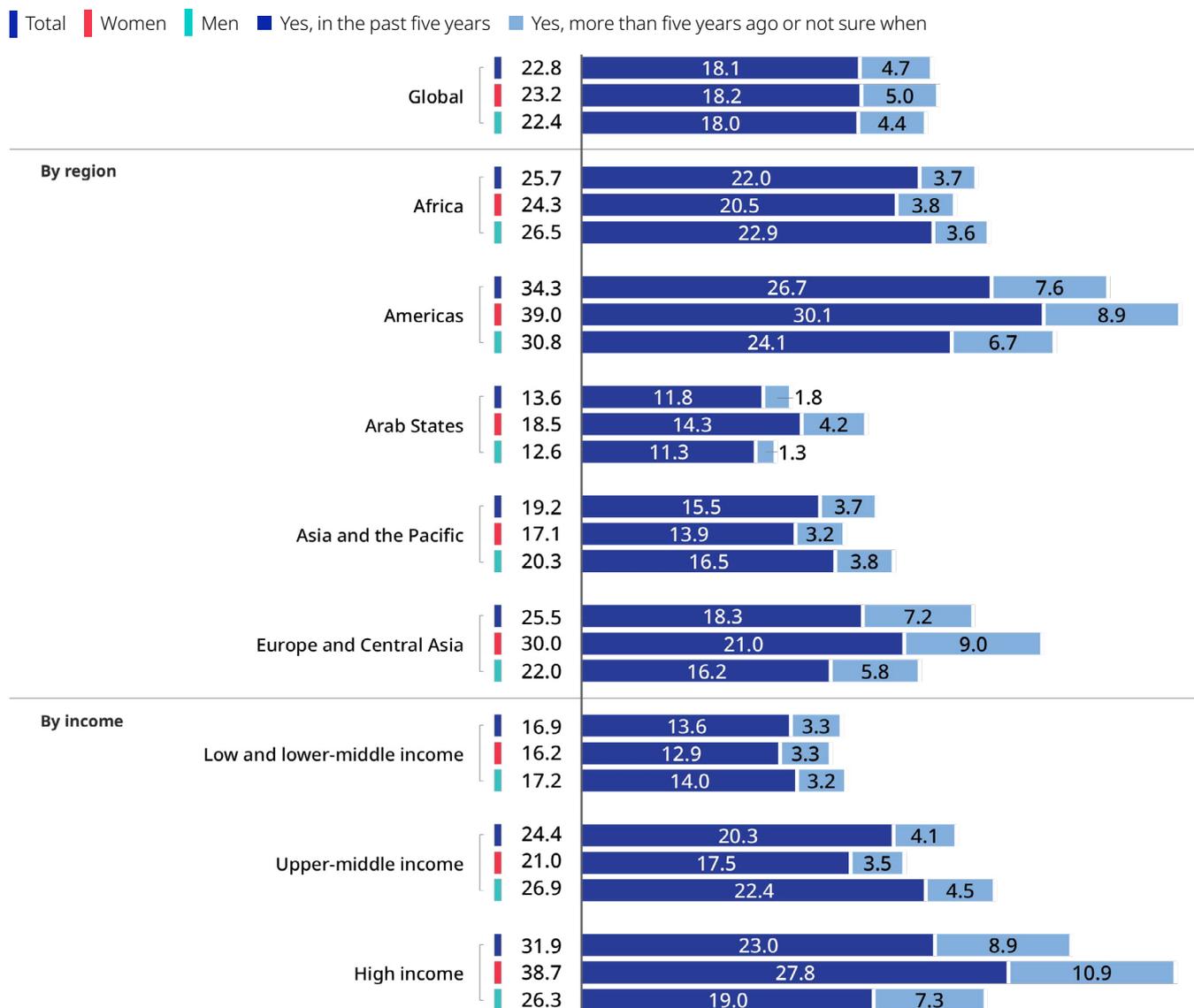
In addition, data show that there is a similar pattern when looking at the prevalence in the last five years, although to a different extent. In high income countries, women were more likely than men to experience violence and harassment (27.8 per cent versus 19.0 per cent). In both upper-middle income countries and low and lower-middle income countries, men were more likely than women to have experienced violence and harassment in the last five years (by 4.9 percentage points and 1.1 percentage points, respectively).

11 All cross-country percentage estimates are calculated using population-scaled weights, as discussed in the Introduction and in the Technical Note. Projections as to the number of persons in employment affected by violence and harassment at work are based off the total number of employed individuals globally in 2021, as reported in the ILO's ILOSTAT database.

12 In some countries, some questions were completely excluded or had to be slightly reworded due to cultural sensitivities. In China, the questions on experiences with physical violence and harassment were not asked, and in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the questions on sexual violence and harassment were not asked. Additionally, in Algeria, China, Jordan, Morocco and Pakistan, the questions about sexual violence or harassment were reformulated to refer to “unwanted intimate physical contact”.

► **Figure 1.1** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work and last time experienced, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced [physical/psychological/sexual] violence and/or harassment at work, such as [hitting, restraining, or spitting/insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation/unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests while at work]?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older. Global, regional and income group estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 92.4 per cent (121 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Arab States: 63.2 per cent (5 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 98.8 per cent (24 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 97.8 per cent (35 countries); high income countries: 98.1 per cent (42 countries).

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

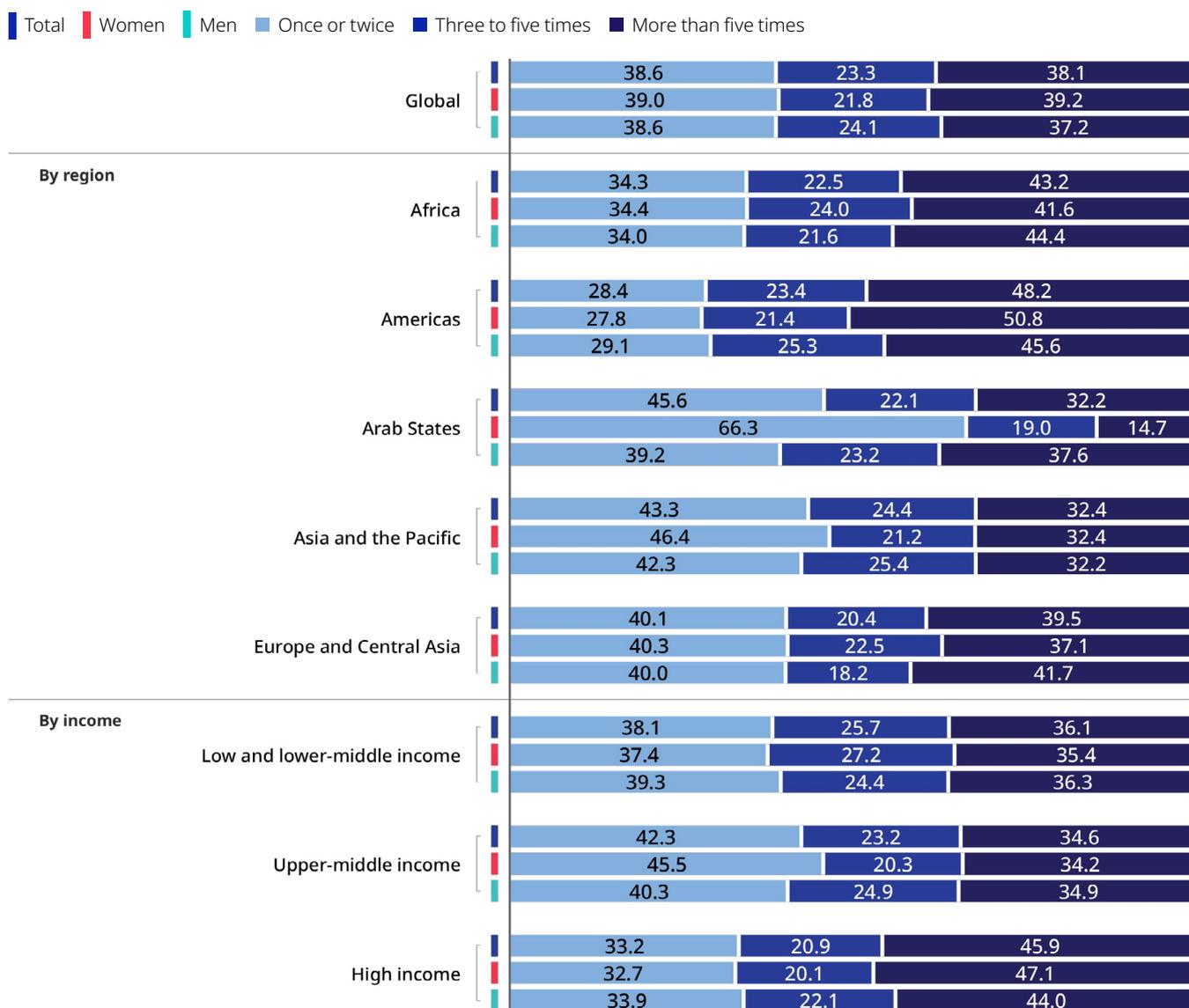
More than three in five victims have experienced violence and harassment at work multiple times

Survey respondents were asked how many times they have experienced any form of violence and harassment – once or twice, three to five times or more than five times. At the global level, 61.4 per cent of victims said that they had experienced violence and harassment more than three times during their working lives (figure 1.2).

Notably, the greatest share of this group (38.1 per cent) had experienced it more than five times. In the Americas, victims were more likely to say it had happened more than five times (48.2 per cent). Africa followed at 43.2 per cent and Europe and Central Asia at 39.5 per cent. Overall, 39.2 per cent of women victims, compared to 37.2 per cent of men victims, had experienced violence and harassment more than five times in their working life.

► **Figure 1.2** Frequency with which victims experienced violence and harassment at work, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: How many times have you experienced [physical/psychological/sexual violence and/or harassment at work]? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they have experienced any form of violence and harassment at work. Persons who were not sure how many times they experienced violence and harassment at work are excluded from these calculations. For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 1.1.

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► 1.2. Physical violence and harassment at work

Nearly one in ten persons in employment has experienced physical violence and harassment at work in their working life

Respondents were asked about their experience with physical violence and harassment at work, such as hitting, restraining or spitting, as well as the frequency of such experiences and how recently they had occurred. Worldwide, 8.5 per cent or 277 million persons in employment have experienced physical violence and harassment in their working life (figure 1.3). The vast majority of these incidents (71.8 per cent) last occurred within the previous five years – meaning that 6.1 per cent or 199 million people in employment have been recently exposed to this type of unacceptable behaviour. Disaggregation by sex shows that physical violence and harassment at work is more commonly faced by men than by women (9.0 per cent and 7.7 per cent, respectively).

From a regional perspective, Africa registered the highest prevalence at 12.5 per cent, followed by the Americas (9.0 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (7.9 per cent),¹³ the Arab States (7.2 per cent) and Europe and Central Asia (6.5 per cent).

To put this in perspective, persons in Africa were almost two times as likely to report experiencing physical violence and harassment in their working life as those in Europe and Central Asia. Looking only at recent experience with physical violence and harassment at work (last five years), Africa still had the highest prevalence at 10.1 per cent, followed by the Americas (6.5 per cent), the Arab States (5.8 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (5.4 per cent) and Europe and Central Asia (4.5 per cent).

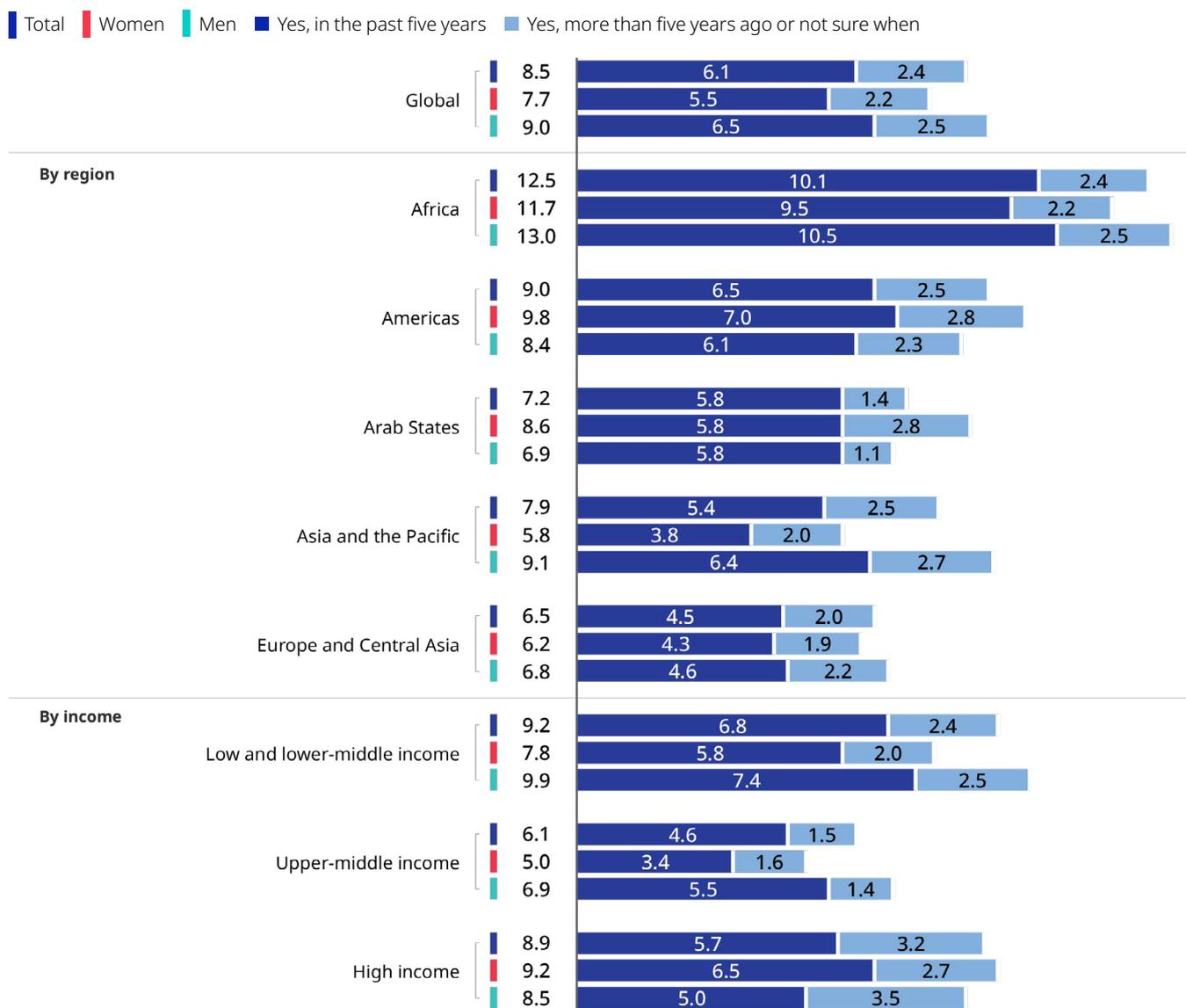
When considering differences by sex, regional variations can be found. For instance, in Asia and the Pacific, men were more likely than women to have experienced these unacceptable behaviours over the course of their working lives (9.1 per cent and 5.8 per cent, respectively). Similarly, men in Africa and in Europe and Central Asia were more at risk compared to women, although to a lesser extent. Conversely, in the Arab States and in the Americas, experiences of physical violence and harassment were more common among women than men.



¹³ Please note that the questions about physical violence and harassment were not asked in China.

► **Figure 1.3** Share of persons in employment who have experienced physical violence and harassment at work and last time experienced, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced physical violence and/or harassment at work, such as hitting, restraining, or spitting?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older. Global and regional estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 68.7 per cent (120 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Arab States: 63.2 per cent (5 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 57.8 per cent (23 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 35.6 per cent (34 countries); high income countries: 98.1 per cent (42 countries). Physical violence and harassment question was not asked in China.

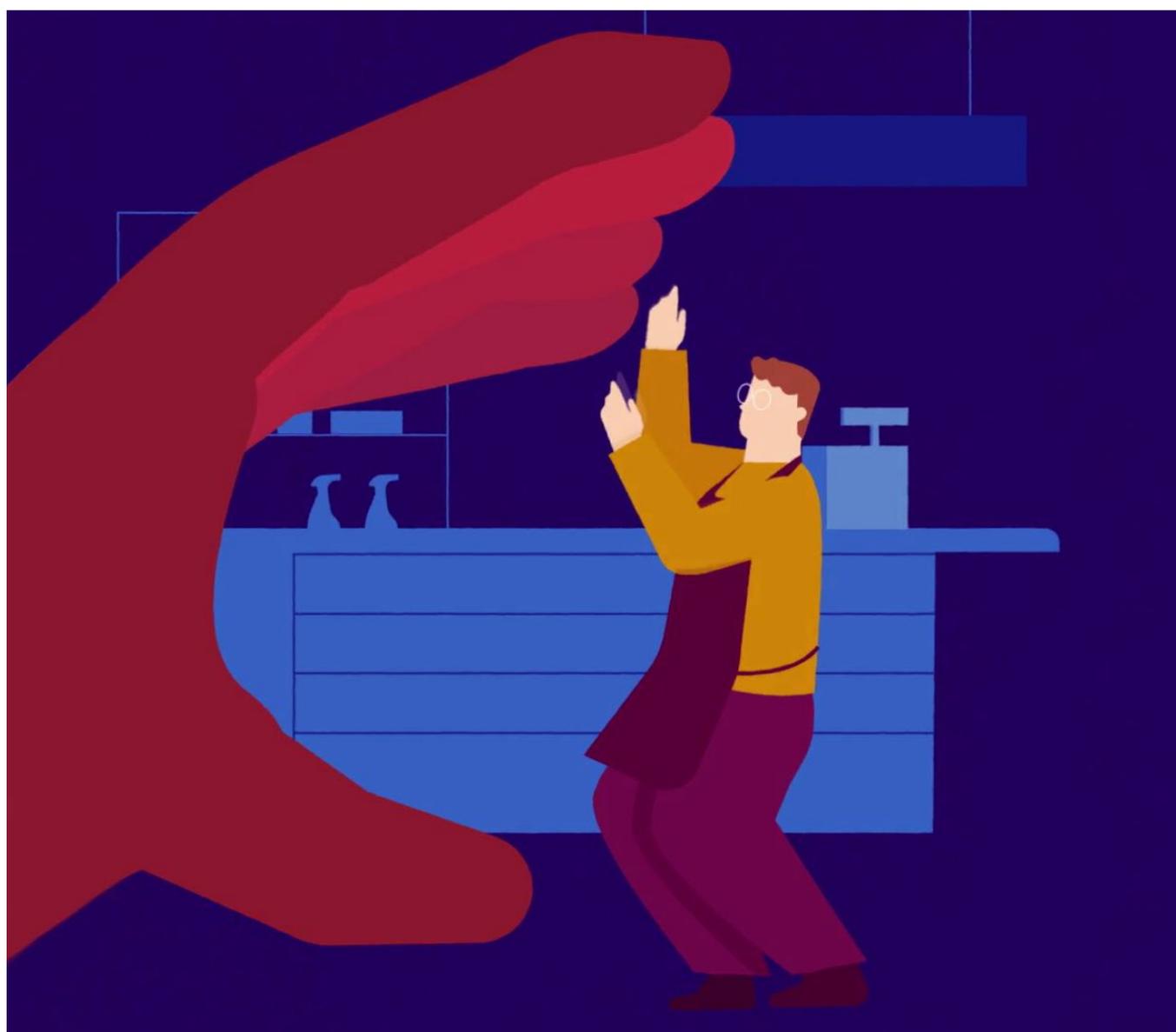
Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

Globally, men were more likely than women to have experienced recurrent incidents of physical violence and harassment at work

Physical violence and harassment was a recurrent event for the majority of those who have experienced it, with 55.3 per cent of victims worldwide saying they had faced it three or more times in their working life (figure 1.4). Men victims were more likely to say that they had faced physical violence and harassment multiple times (55.7 per cent) compared to women victims (52.2 per cent).

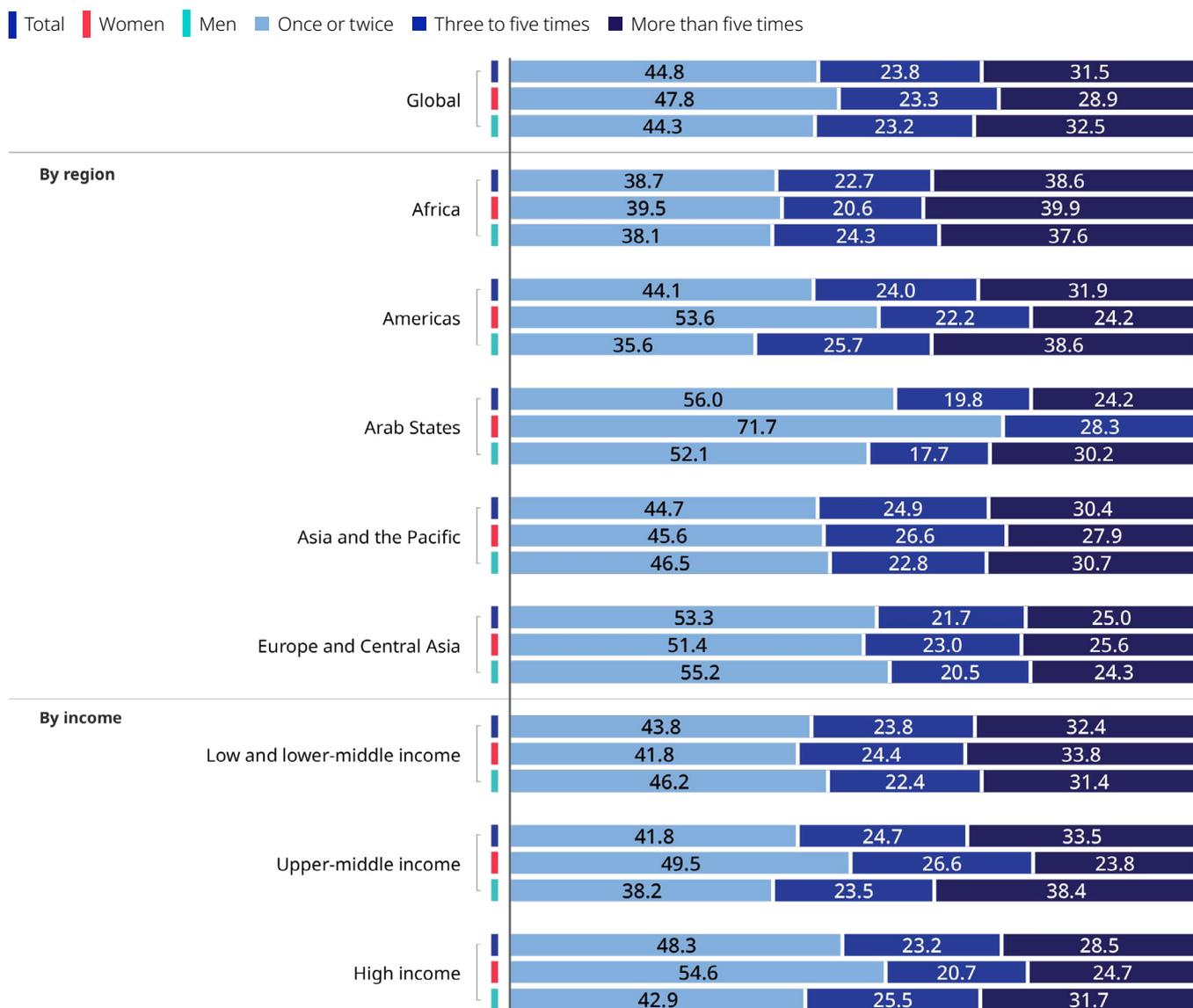
From a regional perspective, Africa displayed the highest frequency, with 61.3 per cent of victims experiencing physical violence and harassment at work more than three times in their working life, followed by the Americas (55.9 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (55.3 per cent), Europe and Central Asia (46.7 per cent) and the Arab States (44.0 per cent).

Disaggregation by sex shows that in the Americas, men victims were 17.9 percentage points more likely than women victims to have experienced three or more episodes of physical violence and harassment in their working lives. A similar picture was observed in Asia and the Pacific, although to a lesser extent. By contrast, in Africa and in Europe and Central Asia, women victims were slightly more likely than men victims to have had five or more such experiences, by 2.3 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively.



► **Figure 1.4** Frequency with which victims of physical violence and harassment at work experienced such behaviours, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: How many times have you experienced [physical violence and/or harassment at work]? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they have experienced any form of violence and harassment at work. Persons who said they have experienced physical violence and harassment but were not sure how many times they experienced it are excluded from these calculations. For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 1.3.

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► 1.3. Psychological violence and harassment at work

Nearly one in five people in employment has experienced psychological violence and harassment at work in their working life

The survey also asked respondents about their experience with psychological violence and harassment at work, such as insults, threats, bullying or intimidation, as well as its frequency and the last time it occurred.¹⁴ Globally, 17.9 per cent of persons or approximately 583 million people in employment have experienced such unacceptable behaviour in their working life (figure 1.5). For almost 80 per cent of victims or approximately 463 million people in employment, regardless of sex, the last occurrence happened within the past five years. Overall, women registered higher prevalence than men, both in their working life and in the past five years, although with modest differences (by 1.3 percentage points and 0.6 percentage points, respectively).

At the regional level, the Americas displayed the highest prevalence of psychological violence and harassment in working life (29.3 per cent), followed by Africa (20.2 per cent); while the Arab States reported the lowest prevalence (11.4 per cent). However, 86.0 per cent of victims in the Arab States declared that their last experience of psychological violence and harassment happened within the last five years, followed by 85.1 per cent in Africa and 81.4 per cent in Asia and the Pacific.

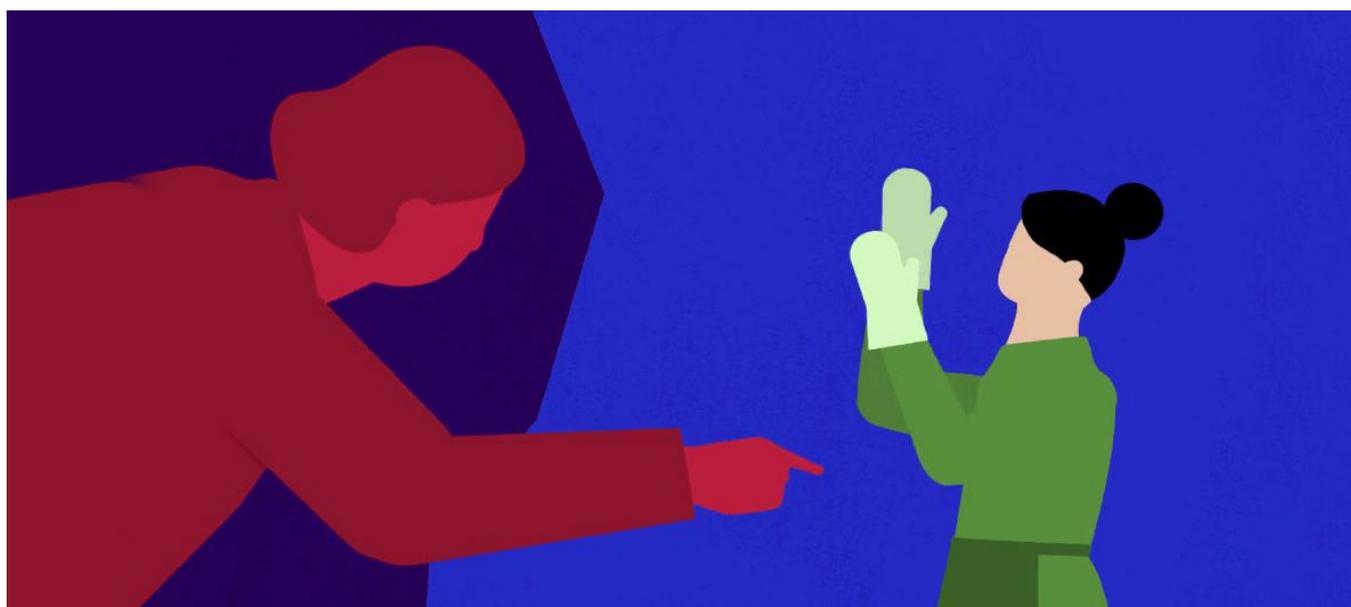
In Europe and Central Asia, psychological violence and harassment has been a reality in working life for 22.7 per cent of women, compared to 17.4 per cent of men. Women were more likely than men to experience it in the Arab States (15.0 per cent versus 10.7 per cent) and the Americas (31.5 per cent versus 27.6 per cent).

Conversely, in Africa, men reported higher rates of psychological violence and harassment compared to women (21.2 per cent versus 18.9 per cent), and so did men in Asia and the Pacific (14.6 per cent versus 13.9 per cent).

Employed individuals in high income countries were the most likely to say they have experienced psychological violence and harassment, both throughout their working life (25.5 per cent) and in the past five years (18.2 per cent).

Women's and men's experiences with this form of violence and harassment vary according to country income group. While women in both high income countries and low and lower-middle income countries reported higher incidence in their working life than men (by 8.0 percentage points and 1.0 percentage point, respectively); men in upper-middle income countries registered higher prevalence in their working life compared to women (by 4.9 percentage points).

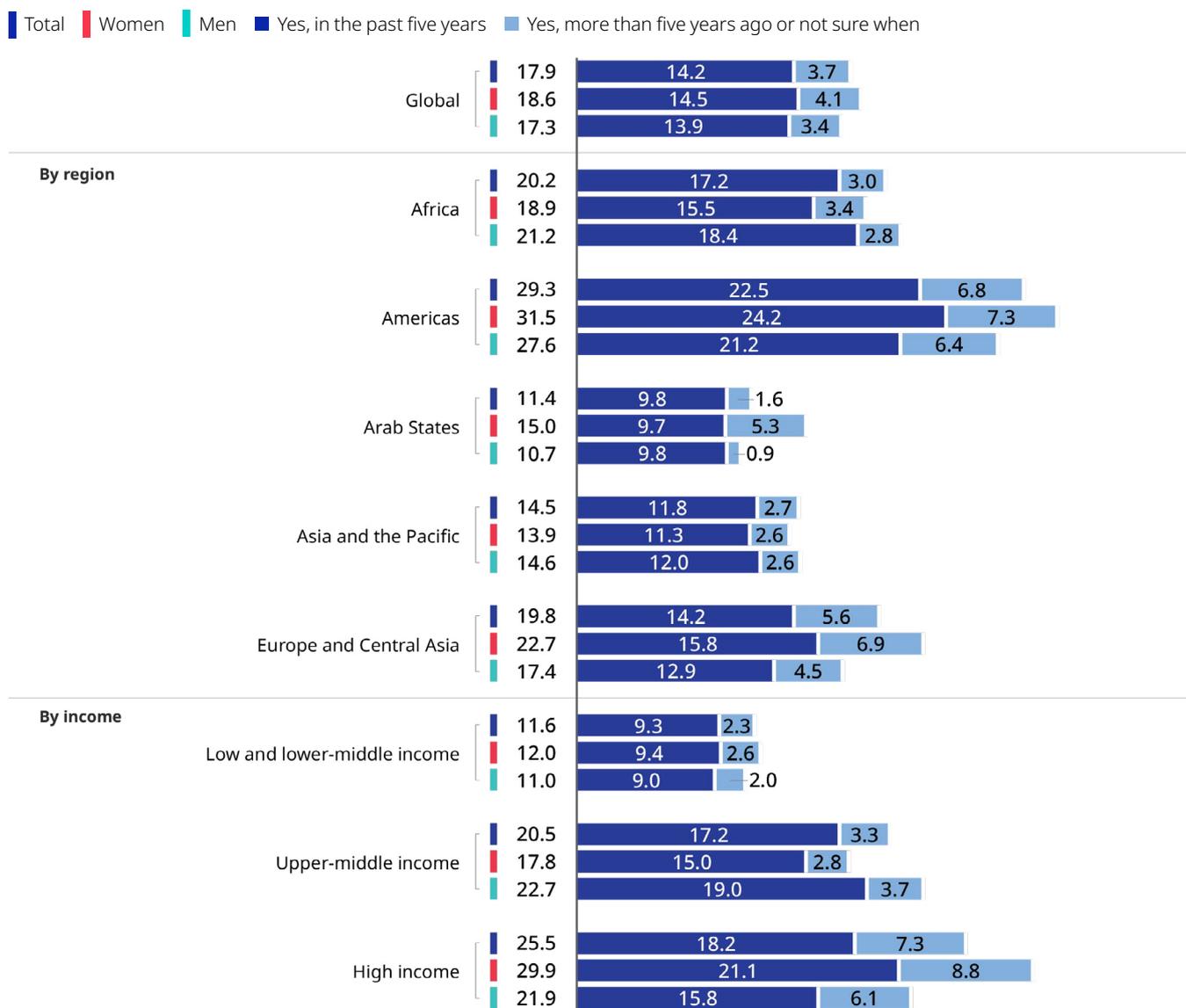
The prevalence of psychological violence and harassment in the last five years reflected the prevalence across the whole of working life, although the gender differences narrowed. Within the last five years, women were more likely than men to have experienced psychological violence and harassment in high income countries and low and lower-middle income countries, by 5.3 and 0.4 percentage points, respectively; while in upper-middle income countries, men were at a greater risk by 4.0 percentage points.



¹⁴ In China, the question wording read as follows: "Have you, personally, ever experienced someone psychologically hurting you at work, such as saying something to you that was hurtful or threatening?"

► **Figure 1.5** Share of persons in employment who have experienced psychological violence and harassment at work and last time experienced, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced psychological violence and/or harassment, such as insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation at work?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older. Global, regional and income group estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 92.4 per cent (121 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Arab States: 63.2 per cent (5 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 98.8 per cent (24 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 97.8 per cent (35 countries); high income countries: 98.1 per cent (42 countries).

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

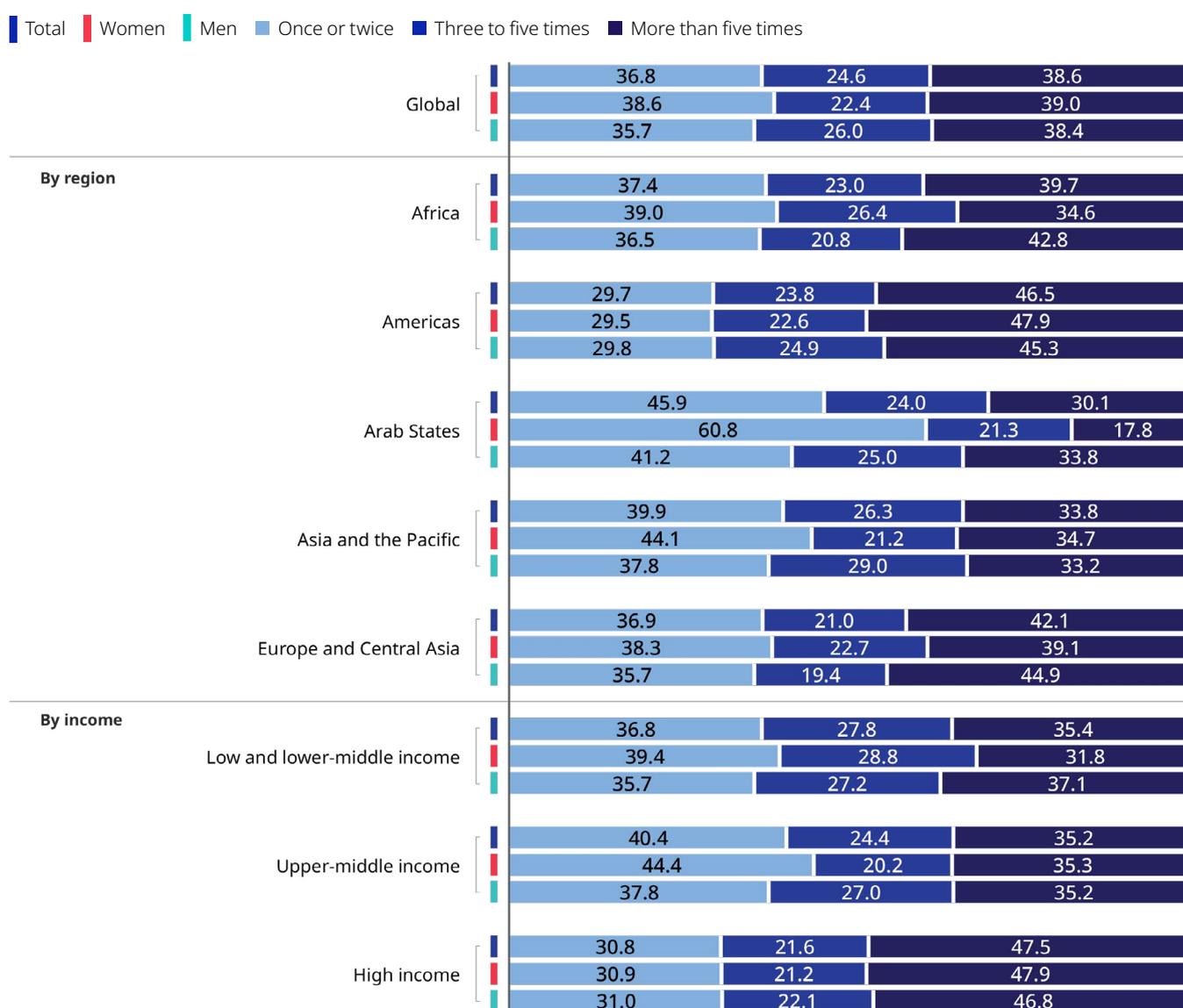
More than three in five victims have experienced psychological violence and harassment multiple times

Globally, more than three in five people in employment who have experienced psychological violence and harassment at work indicated that this had happened to them three or more times (63.2 per cent), with men slightly more likely than women to have faced recurrent episodes (figure 1.6). Further, almost two in five victims (38.6 per cent) said it had occurred more than five times over the course of their working life.

These results were relatively consistent across regions and income groups, with the exception that almost half of victims in the Americas saying it had happened more than five times, compared to less than one-third of those in the Arab States. When looking at gender differences, the frequency of psychological violence and harassment was higher for men victims than for women victims in almost all regions, except in the Americas and in Asia and the Pacific.

► **Figure 1.6** Frequency with which victims of psychological violence and harassment at work experienced such behaviours, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: How many times have you experienced [psychological violence and/or harassment at work]? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they have experienced any form of violence and harassment at work. Persons who said they have experienced psychological violence and harassment but were not sure how many times they experienced it are excluded from these calculations. For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 1.5.

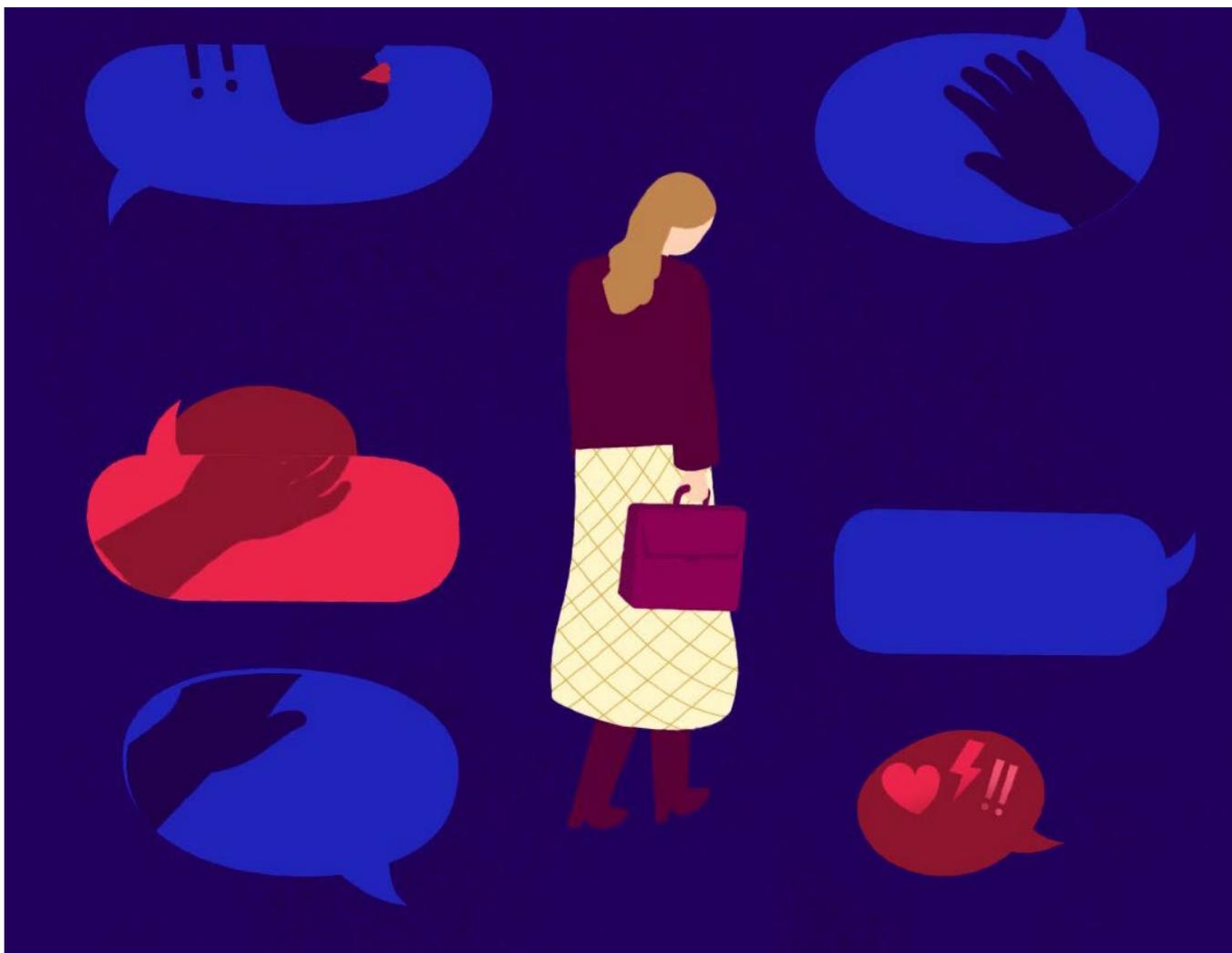
Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► 1.4. Sexual violence and harassment at work

One in 15 people in employment has experienced sexual violence and harassment at work in their working life

In addition to physical and psychological violence and harassment, respondents were asked about their experiences with sexual violence and harassment at work, such as unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests.¹⁵

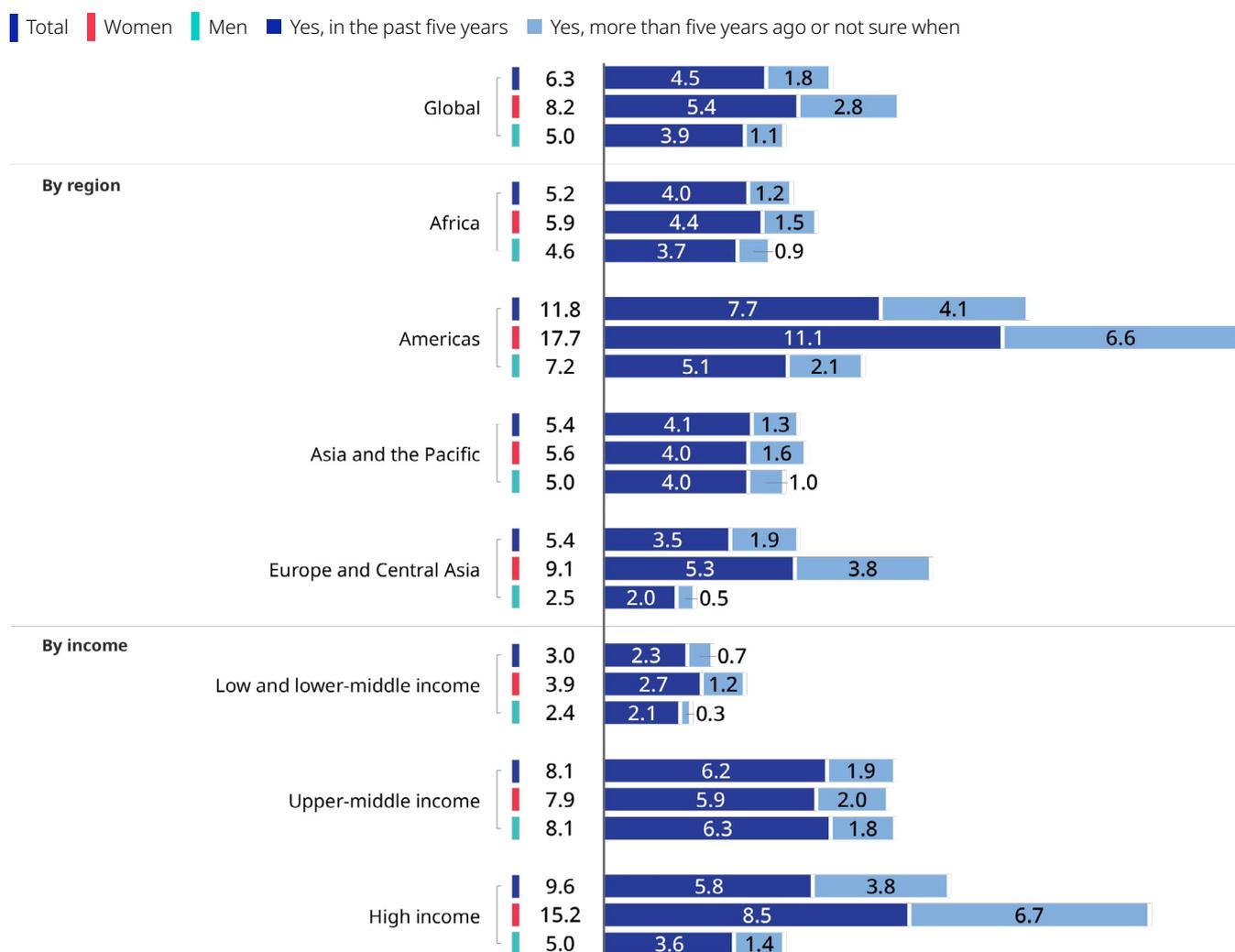
Globally, 6.3 per cent or approximately 205 million people in employment had experienced sexual violence and harassment in their working life (see figure 1.7). Of those, more than two-thirds (71.4 per cent) faced these incidents within the last five years – meaning that 4.5 per cent or approximately 147 million people in employment worldwide were recently exposed to this scourge.



¹⁵ In Algeria, China, Pakistan, Jordan and Morocco, this question was asked in a slightly different way due to cultural or political sensitivities: "Have you, personally, ever experienced any type of unwanted intimate physical contact at work and/or have you ever been exposed to unwanted vulgar comments, pictures, emails, or requests while at work, creating a hostile working environment?" In Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the questions about experience with sexual violence and harassment were not asked. Therefore, the regional results for the Arab States have been omitted due to insufficient country coverage. However, for those Arab States countries where there are data available for this question, these data were included in the calculation of the global and country income group results.

► **Figure 1.7** Share of persons in employment who have experienced sexual violence and harassment at work and last time experienced, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced any type of sexual violence and/or harassment at work, such as unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests while at work?

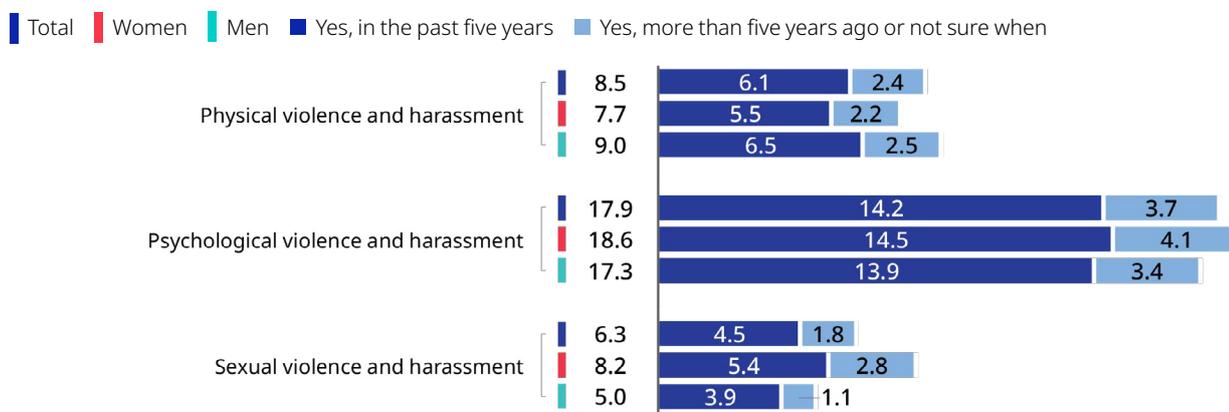


Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older. Global, regional and income group estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 91.4 per cent (118 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 98.8 per cent (24 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 97.0 per cent (34 countries); high income countries: 94.4 per cent (40 countries).

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► **Figure 1.8** Share of persons in employment who have experienced physical, psychological and/or sexual violence and harassment at work and last time experienced, global results, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you — was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?



Note: Global estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

Overall, 8.2 per cent of women in employment had experienced sexual violence and harassment over the course of their working life, compared to 5.0 per cent of men. This is by far the largest gender difference in experience of violence and harassment at work among the three forms of violence and harassment (see figure 1.8).

The Americas registered the highest prevalence of sexual violence and harassment over the course of working life at 11.8 per cent, compared to slightly more than 5 per cent on average in all other regions (figure 1.7). In other words, people in the Americas were twice as likely to say they had experienced sexual violence and harassment than those living in other regions. Looking only at those who have experienced sexual violence and harassment within the past five years, this figure was highest in the Americas (7.7 per cent), followed by Asia and the Pacific (4.1 per cent), Africa (4.0 per cent), and Europe and Central Asia (3.5 per cent).

Overall, in all regions, women reported higher exposure to sexual violence and harassment at work than men, both throughout their working life and in the past five years (figure 1.7), though rates vary by region. In the Americas, nearly two in ten women (17.7 per cent) reported such unacceptable behaviour in their working life, compared to less than one in ten men (7.2 per cent). Sizable differences were also registered in Europe and Central Asia, with 9.1 per cent of women being subjected to sexual violence and harassment in their working life, compared to 2.5 per cent of men. Africa and Asia and the Pacific follow with modest differences between women and men (1.3 percentage points and 0.6 percentage points, respectively).

Regarding country income level, data show that respondents in high income countries said they have experienced a higher prevalence of sexual violence and harassment throughout their working life (9.6 per cent) compared to those in upper-middle income (8.1 per cent) and low and lower-middle income countries (3.0 per cent). However, it is also interesting to see that while the latter two income groups may have lower rates of sexual violence and harassment over the course of working life, they have higher shares of victims reporting that such incidents last occurred in the past five years – 76.5 per cent in upper-middle income countries and 76.7 per cent in low and lower-middle income countries, compared to 60.4 per cent in high income countries. Among women victims in high income countries, this figure is 55.9 per cent.

Overall, women were more exposed to sexual violence and harassment during their working life compared to men in both high income countries and low and lower-middle income countries (by 10.2 percentage points and 1.5 percentage points, respectively). In upper-middle income countries the difference is minimal, with men slightly more likely to report experiencing sexual violence or harassment at work (by 0.2 percentage points). A similar pattern is observed when looking at the prevalence in the last five years, although to a smaller extent. Women victims were more likely than men victims to report such unacceptable behaviours in the last five years in both high income countries and in low and lower-middle income countries, by 4.9 percentage points and 0.6 percentage points, respectively. In upper-middle income countries, sexual violence and harassment in the last five years was reported more by women, although to a very modest extent (by 0.4 percentage points).

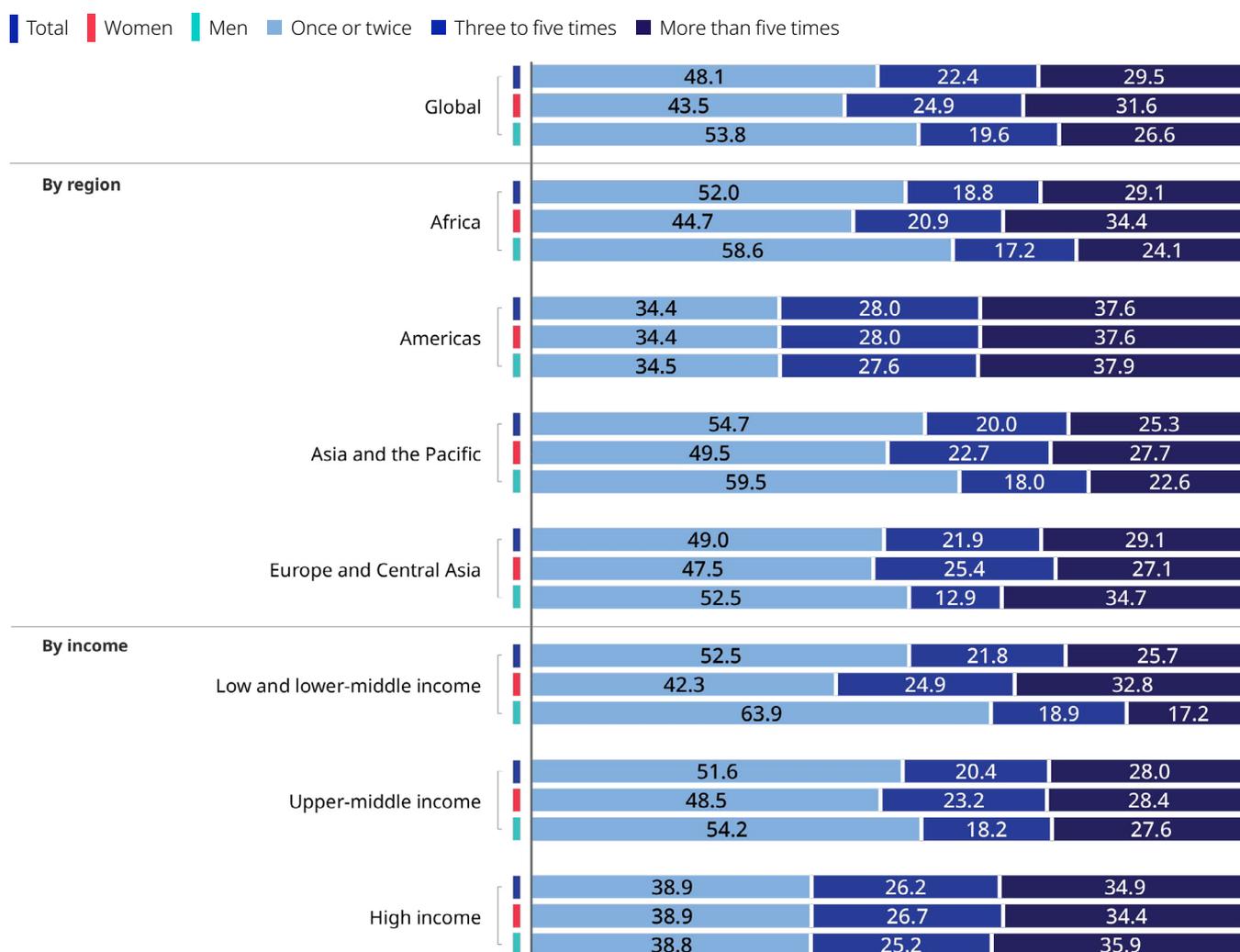
Women were more likely than men to have experienced recurrent sexual violence and harassment at work

Globally, more than half of respondents who have experienced sexual violence and harassment in their working life said they had faced it three or more times (51.9 per cent), and nearly three in ten said they had faced it more than five times (29.5 per cent) (figure 1.9). The likelihood of experiencing recurrent episodes of sexual violence and harassment was higher for women victims than for men victims (56.5 per cent versus 46.2 per cent).

Women victims in Africa reported the highest incidence of recurrent episodes, being 14.0 percentage points more likely than men victims to have experienced multiple occurrences of sexual violence and harassment. Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia follow with a difference of 9.8 percentage points and 4.9 percentage points, respectively; while in the Americas, the difference between women and men victims is not significant (0.1 percentage points).

► **Figure 1.9** Frequency with which victims of sexual violence and harassment at work experienced such behaviours, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: How many times have you experienced [any type of sexual violence and/or harassment at work]? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they have experienced any form of violence and harassment at work. Persons who said they have experienced sexual violence and harassment but were not sure how many times they experienced it are excluded from these calculations. For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 1.7.

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

Experiences of multiple forms of violence and harassment at work

Among people who had experienced violence and harassment at work, 31.8 per cent said they had experienced more than one form, with 6.3 per cent of victims having faced all three forms in their working life (figure 1.10). Women were more likely than men to say they had faced more than one form of violence and harassment in their working life (34.1 per cent versus 29.6 per cent). Overall, women victims were the most likely to have experienced both psychological and sexual violence and harassment (12.5 per cent); while men victims were the most likely to have experienced both physical and psychological violence and harassment (18.6 per cent).

► **Figure 1.10** **Overlap among experiences of different forms of violence and harassment at work, among employed individuals who reported ever experiencing any form of violence and harassment at work, 2021 (%)**

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced [physical/psychological/sexual] violence and/or harassment at work, such as [hitting, restraining, or spitting/insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation/unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests while at work]?

- Physical violence and harassment
- Psychological violence and harassment
- Sexual violence and harassment



Note: Individuals who were not asked at least one of the three questions were excluded from the above calculations, including respondents from countries where at least one of the three questions were not permitted. Global estimates are weighted by the overall population of employed individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 67.8 per cent (117 countries).

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]



▶ 2

Who is more at risk?

The risk of experiencing violence and harassment at work is not equally distributed across different demographic groups; instead, some individuals, especially those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, experience higher

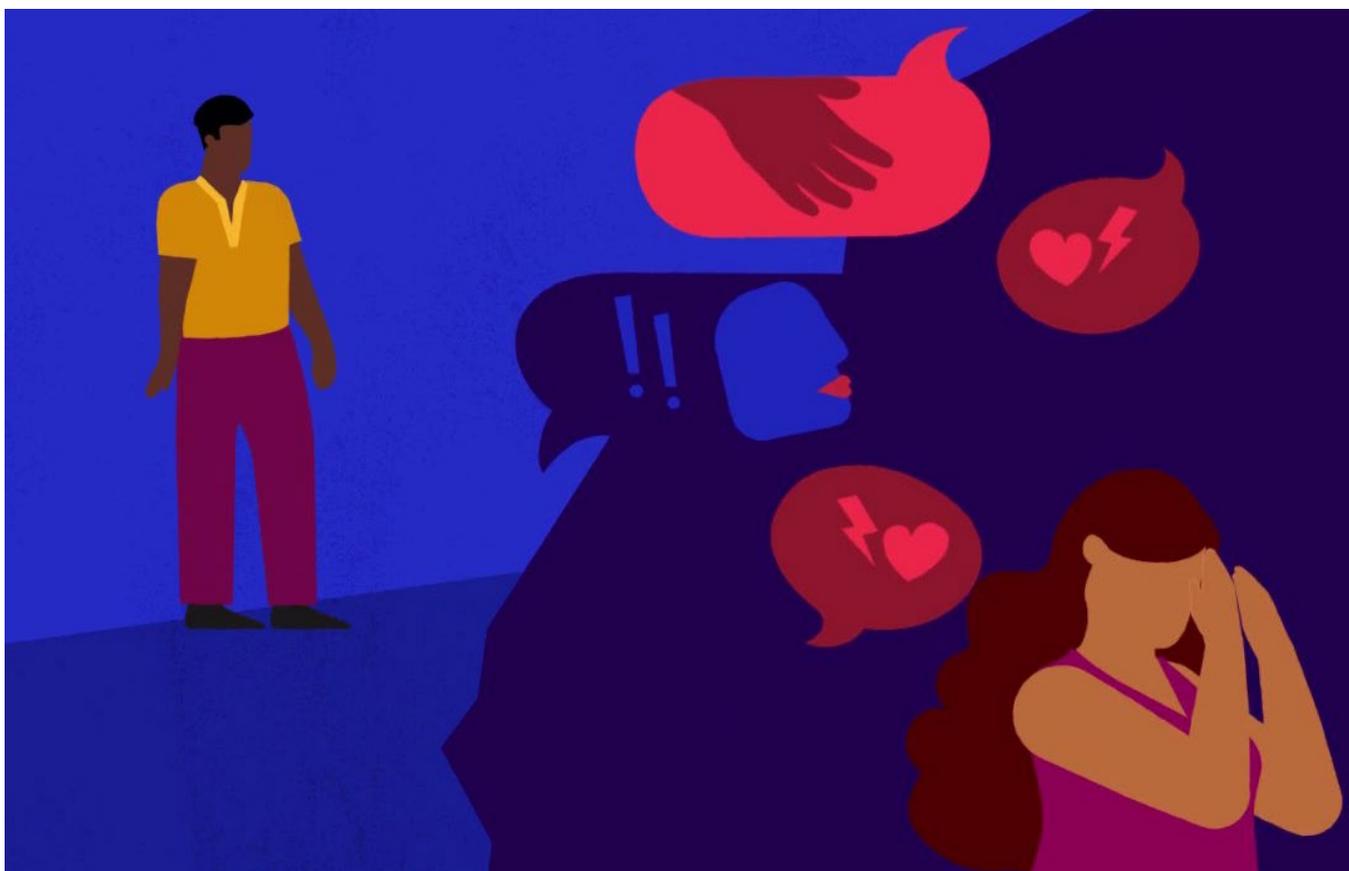
prevalence rates. The risk also changes based on other factors, such as, among others, employment status. Often within these groups, women are at greater risk than men.

▶ 2.1. Youth

Younger people were most likely to have faced violence and harassment

Worldwide, youth in employment (ages 15–24) were most likely to have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years, with a prevalence of 23.3 per cent. This figure decreases with age, from 20.2 per cent among employed persons aged 25–34 to 12.0 per cent for those aged 55 years and above (see figure 2.1). When looking at gender differences, young women were more likely than young men to have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years (26.8 per cent versus 20.8 per cent).

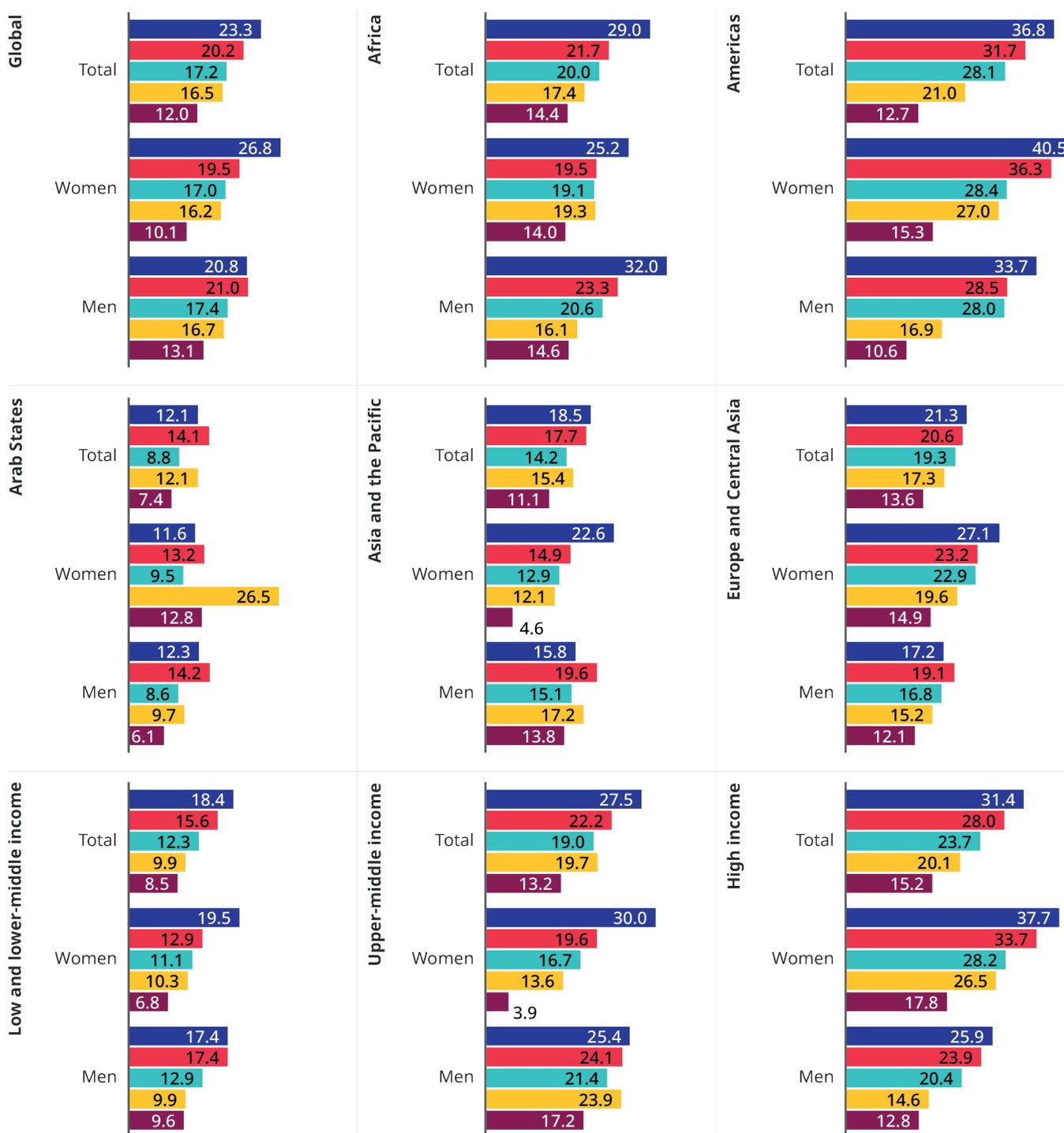
In addition, both younger women and men have reported higher prevalence compared to other age cohorts within the same sex. In other words, more than one in four young women has experienced violence and harassment at work in the last five years, compared to one in ten women aged 55 years or above, and two in ten young men reported such experiences in the last five years, compared to a little over one in ten men aged 55 years or above.



► **Figure 2.1** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years, by region, by income group, by age and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you — was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

■ 15–24 ■ 25–34 ■ 35–44 ■ 45–54 ■ 55+



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older. Global, regional and income group estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 92.4 per cent (121 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Arab States: 63.2 per cent (5 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 98.8 per cent (24 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 97.8 per cent (35 countries); high income countries: 98.1 per cent (42 countries).

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

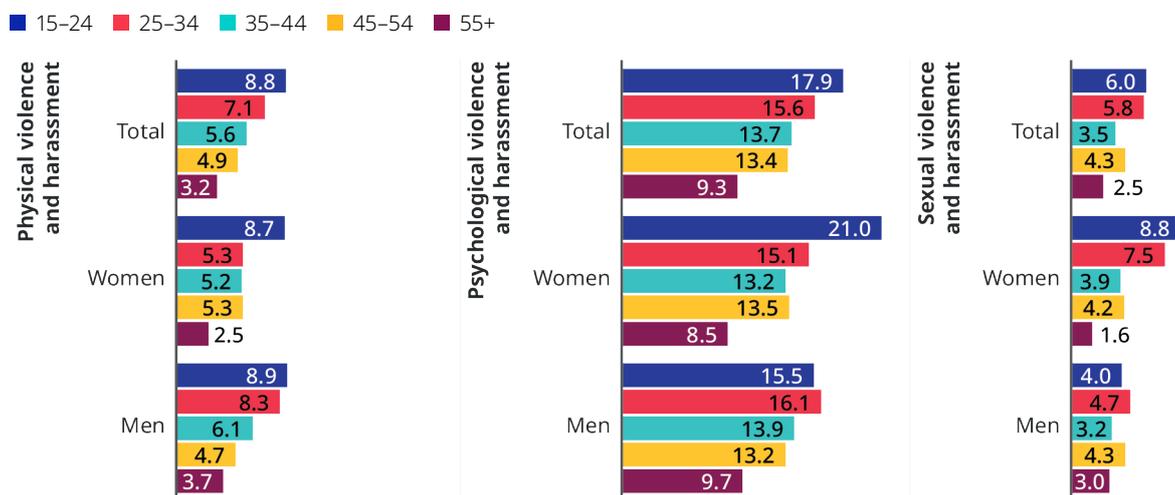
Young women were twice as likely as young men to have experienced sexual violence and harassment at work

When looking at the prevalence of the three different forms of violence and harassment, psychological violence and harassment was the most common form reported by young women and men in employment (figure 2.2). Altogether, 17.9 per cent or approximately 73 million youth in employment had faced psychological violence and harassment within the past five years, compared to 8.8 per cent or approximately 36 million who had faced physical violence and harassment and 6.0 per cent or approximately 24 million who had experienced sexual violence and harassment.¹⁶

While no notable gender differences were seen in relation to physical violence and harassment; young women were 5.5 percentage points more likely than young men to have experienced psychological violence and harassment, and more than twice as likely to have been victims of sexual violence and harassment.

► **Figure 2.2** Share of persons in employment globally who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years, by type of violence and harassment, by age and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you — was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 and older who said they have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence and harassment at work. Global estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► 2.2. Migrant women

Migrant women in employment have been especially at risk

Worldwide, employed migrants reported a higher prevalence of violence and harassment at work in the last five years (figure 2.3).¹⁷

Overall, migrants were 3.1 percentage points more likely to have experienced violence and harassment compared to non-migrants.

16 As discussed in the Introduction and several footnotes in Chapter 1, the question about physical violence and harassment was not asked in China, and the question about sexual violence and harassment was not asked in Iraq, Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates. A modified form of the question about sexual violence and harassment was asked in China, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Pakistan.

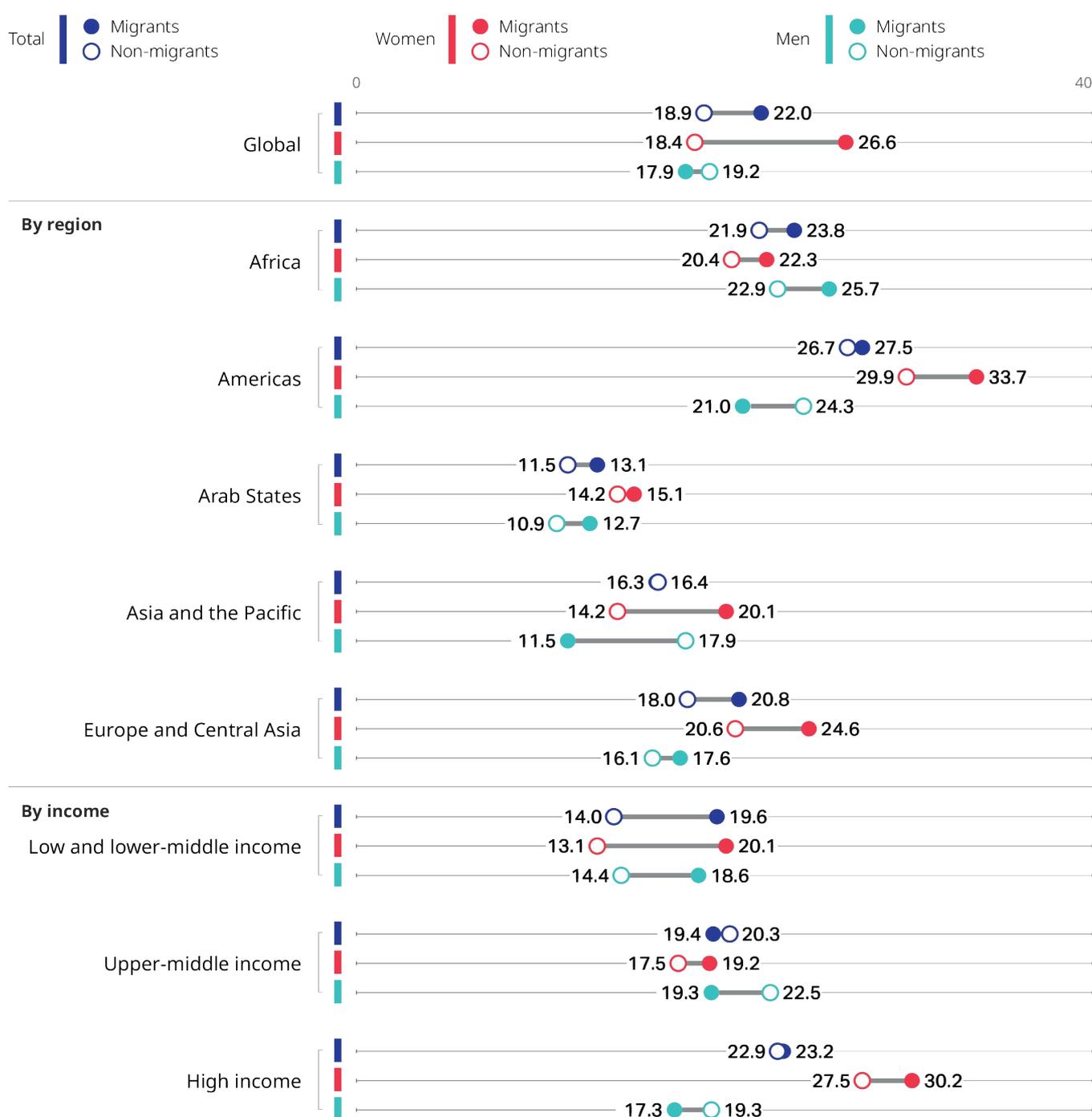
17 For the purpose of practical measurement and in line with United Nations recommendations, “international migrants” may be measured as “all persons who are usual residents of that country and [1] who are citizens of another country (foreign population) or [2] whose place of birth is located in another country (foreign-born population)” (ILO 2018a, para. 13). The Gallup World Poll used the criterion under number 2.

Migrant women were 8.7 percentage points more likely than migrant men to have experienced violence and harassment (26.6 per cent versus 17.9 per cent).

Migrant women were also more likely than non-migrant women to face any form of violence and harassment (26.6 per cent versus 18.4 per cent).

► **Figure 2.3** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years, by country of birth, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you — was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?



Note: For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 2.1. For this analysis, respondents who said they were born in another country are considered "migrants", while respondents who said they were born in the country are considered "non-migrants".

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

When looking at different forms of violence and harassment, migrant women were almost twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment (10.0 per cent versus 5.4 per cent) (figure 2.4).

Migrant women were also more at risk compared to non-migrant women in relation to psychological violence and harassment (20.4 per cent versus 14.8 per cent), and to a lesser extent, they were also more likely to experience physical violence and harassment (6.1 per cent versus 5.3 per cent).

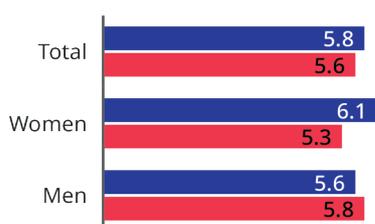
When looking at the intersection between sex, age and migration status (figure 2.5), the data show that 40.7 per cent of young migrant women have faced some form of violence and harassment at work in the past five years, compared to 26.8 per cent of young non-migrant women.

► **Figure 2.4** Share of persons in employment who have ever experienced physical, psychological and/or sexual violence and harassment at work, by type of violence and harassment experienced, by country of birth and by sex, 2021 (%)

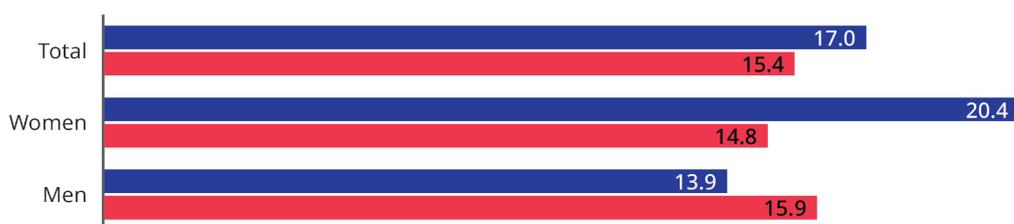
Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced [physical/psychological/sexual] violence and/or harassment at work, such as [hitting, restraining, or spitting/insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation/unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests while at work]?

■ Migrants ■ Non-migrants

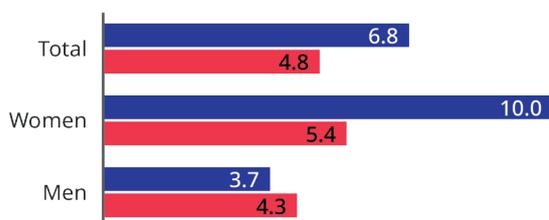
Physical violence and harassment



Psychological violence and harassment



Sexual violence and harassment



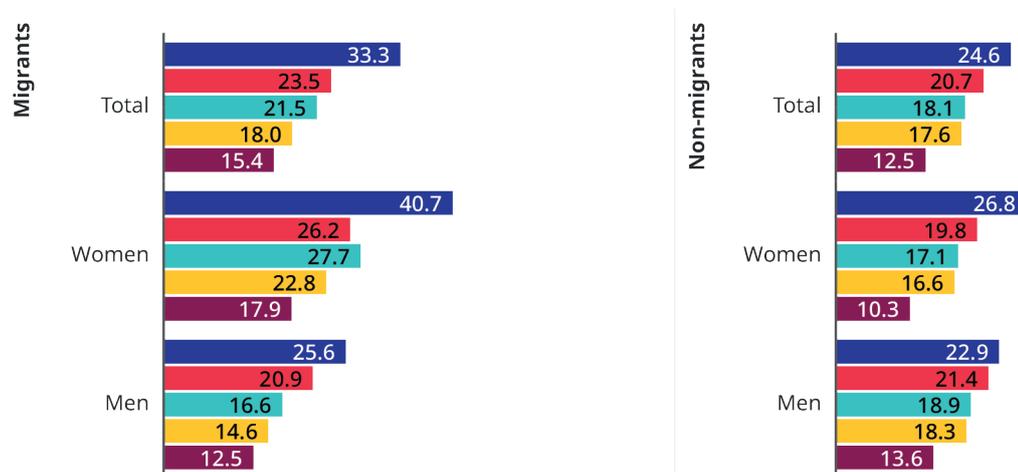
Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence and harassment at work. Global estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. For this analysis, respondents who said they were born in another country are considered “migrants”, while respondents who said they were born in the country are considered “non-migrants”.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► **Figure 2.5** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years, by country of birth, by age, and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you — was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

■ 15–24 ■ 25–34 ■ 35–44 ■ 45–54 ■ 55+



Note: For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 2.1. For this analysis, respondents who said they were born in another country are considered “migrants”, while respondents who said they were born in the country are considered “non-migrants”.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► 2.3. Women in wage and salaried work

Wage and salaried women were more at risk than self-employed women and men

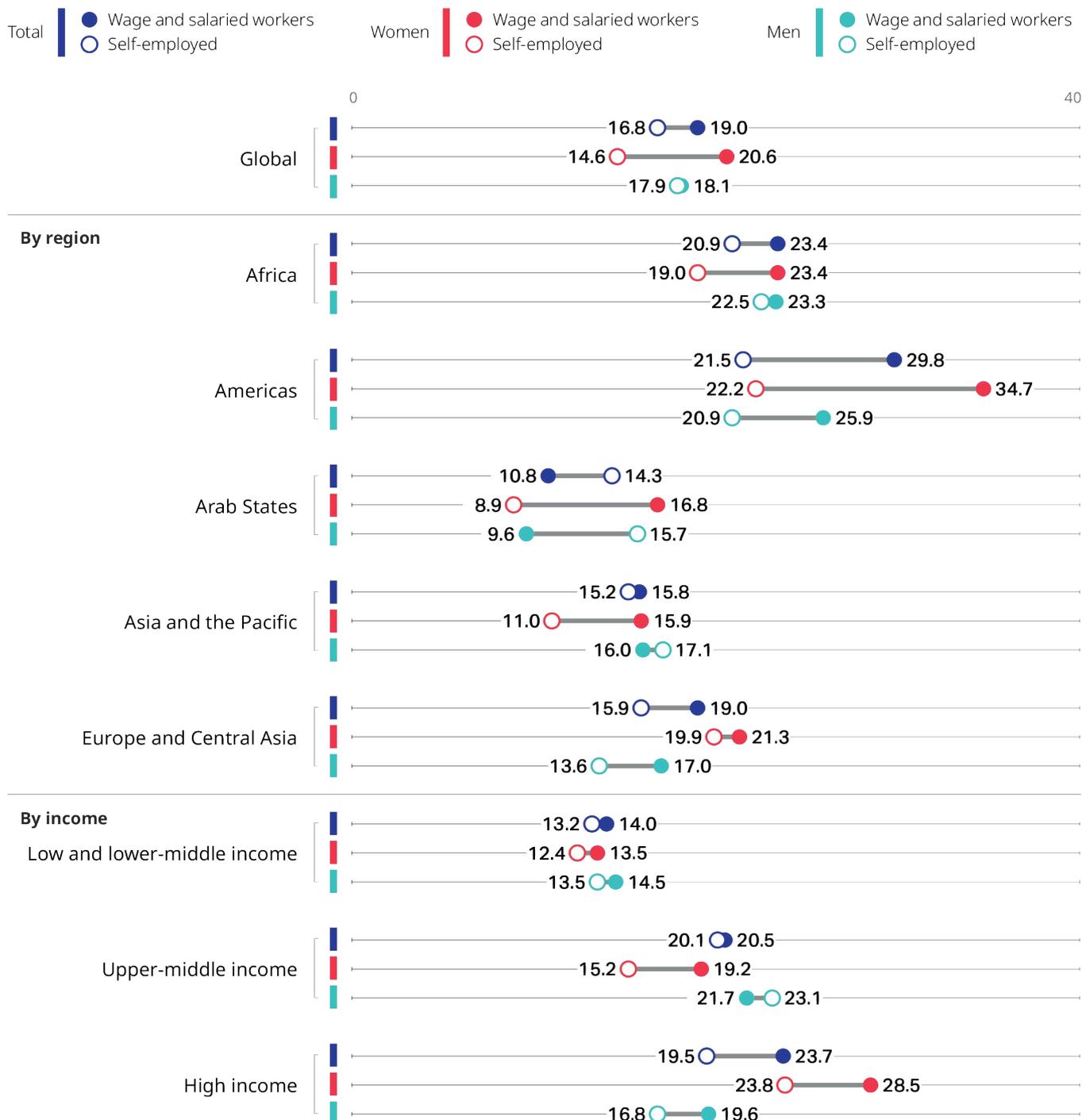
Wage and salaried workers were more likely than those who are self-employed to have experienced violence and harassment in the last five years (19.0 per cent versus 16.8 per cent) (figure 2.6). Among wage and salaried workers, women were 2.5 percentage points more at risk of violence and harassment than men. Moreover, wage and salaried women were also worse off than self-employed women, being 6.0 percentage points more likely to have experienced violence and harassment. By contrast, the difference between wage and salaried men and self-employed men was very minor.

There were notable regional variations in these results. The largest gap in experiences with violence and harassment was seen in the Americas, where wage and salaried workers were 8.3 percentage points more likely than self-employed workers to have faced violence and harassment in the past five years, followed by Europe and Central Asia (3.1 percentage points), Africa (2.5 percentage points) and Asia and the Pacific (0.6 percentage points). In the Arab States, however, self-employed workers were more at risk than wage and salaried workers (3.5 percentage points).

Among wage and salaried workers, the largest gender difference was seen in the Americas, where women were 8.8 percentage points more likely than their male counterparts to have experienced violence and harassment, followed by the Arab States (7.2 percentage points) and Europe and Central Asia (4.3 percentage points). Among self-employed people, the gender gaps vary by region. In Europe and Central Asia, self-employed women were 6.3 percentage points more likely than men to have experienced violence and harassment in the past five years. Conversely, self-employed men were more at risk in the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa, with the first two regions registering a 6.8 and 6.1 percentage-point gap, respectively, between self-employed men and women.

► **Figure 2.6** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years, by employment status, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you — was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?



Note: For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 2.1.

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

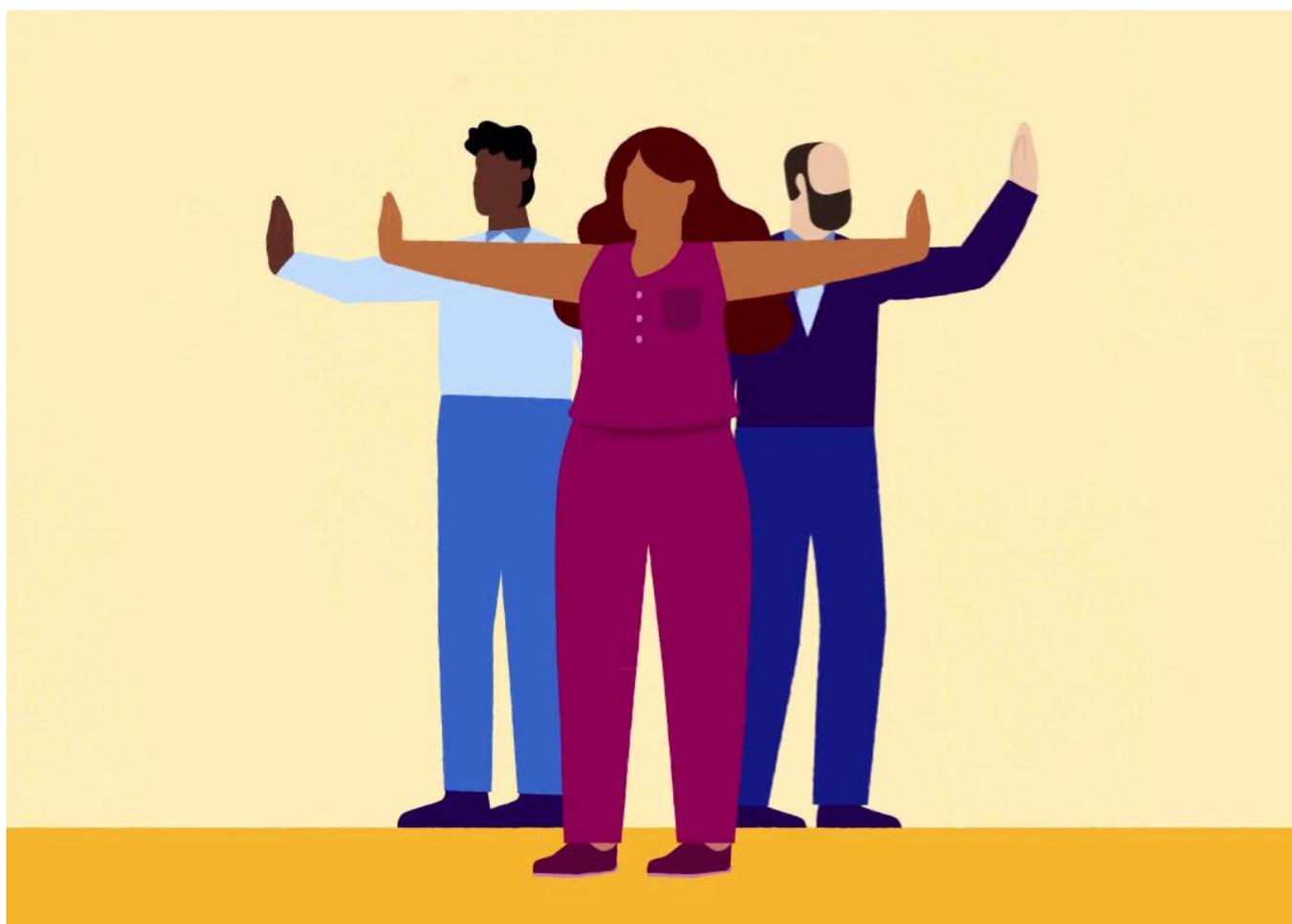
► 2.4. Persons affected by discrimination

Persons who have experienced discrimination in life were more likely to have experienced violence and harassment at work

The 2021 Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll included a series of questions about whether a person has ever been discriminated against based on five key characteristics: gender, nationality/race/ethnic group, skin colour, religion and disability status.¹⁸ The results help shed light on the relationship between people's overall vulnerability to discrimination in public and private life and their likelihood to face violence and harassment at work.

Globally, people who have been discriminated against based on at least one of the aforementioned grounds were nearly three times as likely as those who have not been discriminated against to say they have experienced violence and harassment during the course of their working lives (figure 2.7).

The gap was widest in the case of discrimination based on gender: Nearly five in ten people who have been victims of gender-based discrimination have also faced violence and harassment at work, compared to nearly two in ten of those who have not suffered discrimination based on gender. While women were almost twice as likely as men to say they had ever experienced gender-based discrimination (17.2 per cent and 9.0 per cent, respectively), the incidence of violence and harassment among women who had experienced gender-based discrimination was higher than for men (50.9 per cent and 46.8 per cent, respectively).



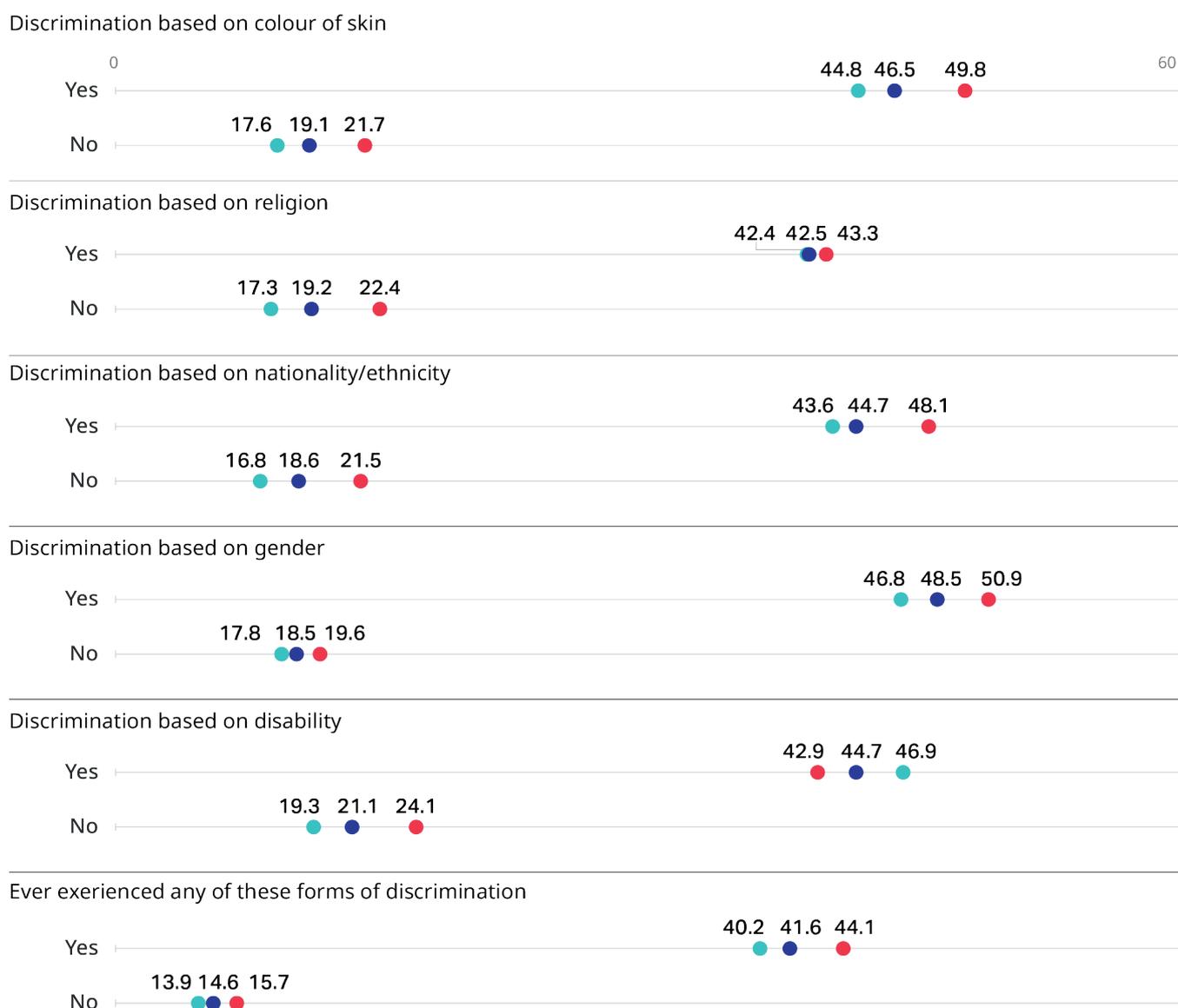
¹⁸ Results for the World Risk Poll questions on experiences with discrimination are analysed in Lloyd's Register Foundation, [World Risk Poll 2021: A Resilient World? – Understanding Vulnerability in a Changing Climate](#), 2021, 24.

► **Figure 2.7** Share of persons in employment who have ever experienced violence and harassment at work, by sex and by experiences of discrimination in life, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced [physical/psychological/sexual] violence and/or harassment at work, such as [hitting, restraining, or spitting/insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation/unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests while at work]?

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced any discrimination because of any of the following?

● Total ● Women ● Men



Note: None of the questions about discrimination were asked in China, Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates. In Tajikistan, the questions about discrimination based on religion and nationality/ethnicity were not asked. Global and regional estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 68.0 per cent (118 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Arab States: 24.2 per cent (3 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 57.8 per cent (23 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 35.6 per cent (34 countries); high income countries: 94.4 per cent (40 countries).

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

Discrimination based on the four other personal characteristics were almost as strongly related to reports of work-related violence and harassment as gender-based discrimination. More than two in five persons who had been discriminated against based on skin colour, race/ethnicity/nationality, religion or disability status had also experienced violence and harassment at work, compared to fewer than one in five of those who have not faced any discrimination in their working lives.

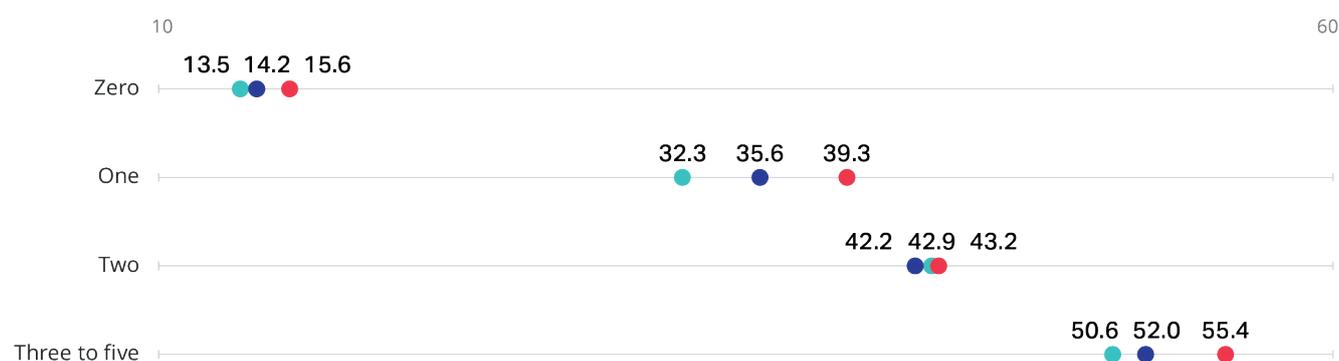
Disaggregation by sex shows that discrimination based on skin colour and race/ethnicity/nationality is more strongly associated with higher incidence of violence and harassment at work among women than among men; while discrimination based on disability status is more strongly associated with higher incidence of violence and harassment at work among men. Figure 2.8 further shows that the incidence of violence and harassment at work increases among people who have been discriminated against based on more than one personal characteristic.

► **Figure 2.8** Share of persons in employment who have ever experienced violence and harassment at work, by sex and by experiences with discrimination based on one or more personal characteristics, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced [physical/psychological/sexual] violence and/or harassment at work, such as [hitting, restraining, or spitting/insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation/unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails or sexual requests while at work]?

● Total ● Women ● Men

Number of reasons person has experienced discrimination



Note: None of the questions about discrimination were asked in China, Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates. In Tajikistan, the questions about discrimination based on religion and nationality/ethnicity were not asked. For global, regional and income group coverage see figure 2.7.

Source: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

▶ 3

Why is it so difficult to talk about violence and harassment at work?

It is well-known that talking about personal experiences of violence and harassment can be difficult and many factors might prevent people from doing so, including fear of stigmatization, lack of knowledge of reporting and monitoring systems, “normalization” of violence and

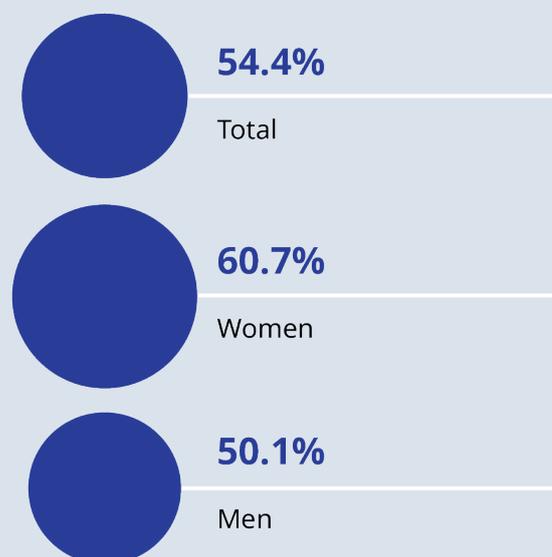
harassment, and re-victimization or retaliation risks (ILO 2018b). To dive deeper into the matter, the survey asked about people’s likelihood to share their experiences (and to whom), as well as the reasons for not sharing.¹⁹

▶ 3.1. Who and to whom: Disclosing experiences of violence and harassment at work

Only one in two people has shared their experience of violence and harassment at work with someone else

Worldwide, 54.4 per cent of people in employment who had experienced violence and harassment in the past five years said they had disclosed it to someone else, with women victims being more likely to share such harmful experiences with others (60.7 per cent, versus 50.1 per cent of men victims). This is the case in almost all regions (except Africa), although to different extents (figure 3.1).

Survey question: Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced at work? *Global results*

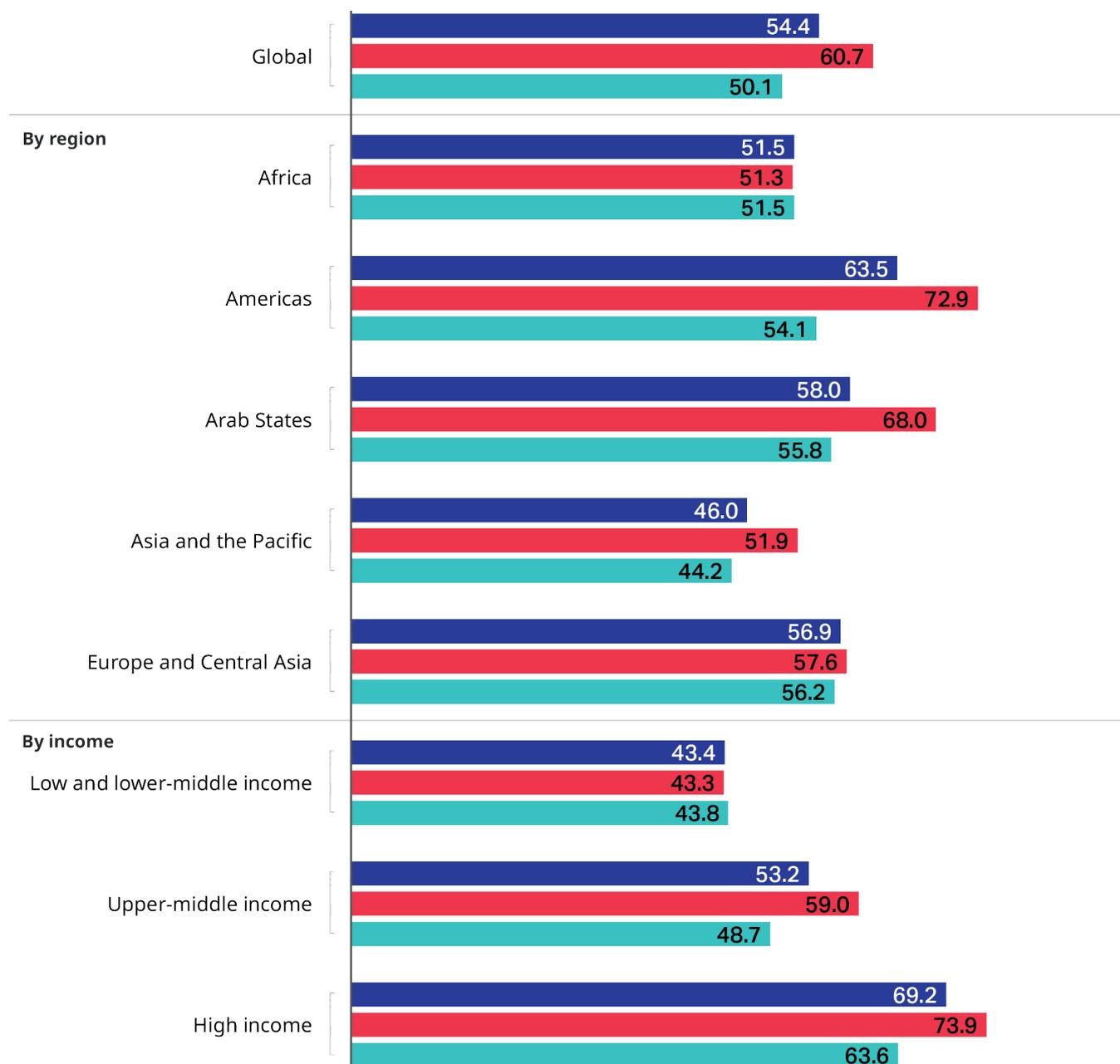


¹⁹ Only respondents who were employed at the time of the survey and said they had experienced at least one form of violence and harassment within the past five years were asked this question. The questions were not asked in China; while in other countries, including in Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates, Gallup was not able to ask at least one of the survey questions.

► **Figure 3.1** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years and told someone, by region, by income group and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced at work?

■ Total ■ Women ■ Men



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older. Global and regional estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 68.7 per cent (120 countries); Africa: 62.3 per cent (26 countries); Americas: 95.8 per cent (20 countries); Arab States: 63.2 per cent (5 countries); Asia and the Pacific: 57.8 per cent (23 countries); Europe and Central Asia: 97.1 per cent (46 countries); low and lower-middle income countries: 85.4 per cent (44 countries); upper-middle income countries: 35.6 per cent (34 countries); high income countries: 98.1 per cent (42 countries). The survey question “Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced at work” was not asked in China.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

People who have experienced more than one form of violence and harassment were more willing to talk about such occurrences

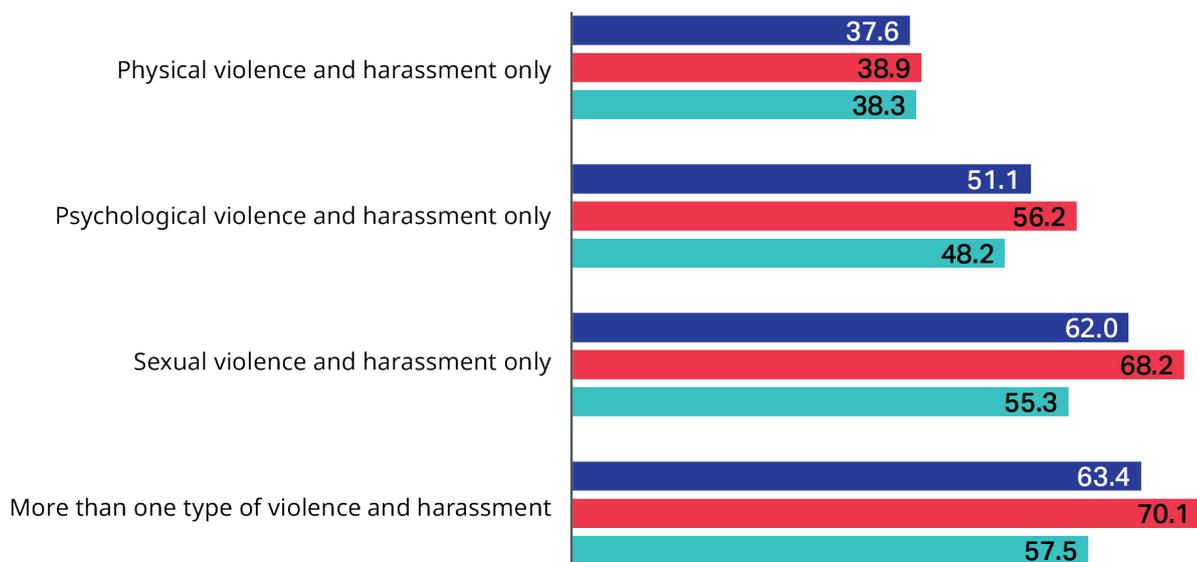
People’s decision to talk with others about their experiences of violence and harassment varied considerably by the form(s) of violence and harassment they were subjected to (see figure 3.2). Persons who had experienced only physical violence and harassment in the past five years were the least likely to reveal it, at 37.6 per cent. The disclosure rate was higher among those who had experienced only psychological violence and harassment, at 51.1 per cent, and higher still among those who had experienced only sexual violence and harassment, at 62.0 per cent.

The likelihood of talking about violence and harassment was highest among survey respondents who had experienced more than one form of violence and harassment (63.4 per cent). Disaggregation by sex shows that, overall, women victims were more likely than men victims to talk about their experience, regardless of the specific type of violence and harassment inflicted upon them. In the case of physical violence and harassment, this difference was minor (0.6 percentage points), but the gaps were considerable in the case of psychological violence and harassment (8.0 percentage points) and, particularly, sexual violence and harassment (12.9 percentage points).

► **Figure 3.2** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years and told someone, by type of violence and harassment experienced, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced at work?

■ Total ■ Women ■ Men



Note: Individuals who were not asked at least one of the three questions were excluded from the above calculations, including respondents from countries where at least one of the three questions were not permitted. Global estimates are weighted by the overall population of employed individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 67.8 per cent (117 countries).

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

People were more likely to have told friends or family rather than use other informal or formal channels

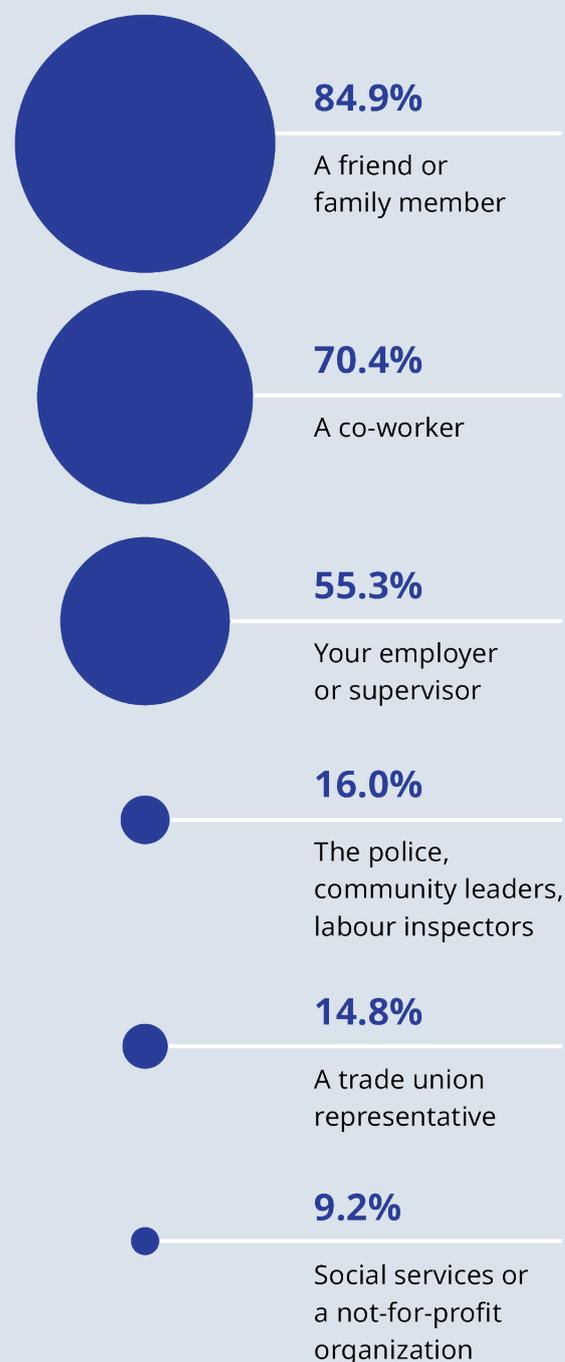
The survey asked victims who had shared their experiences of violence and harassment at work which of the following six channels they had used to share those experiences (figure 3.3):

- ▶ a friend or family member;
- ▶ a co-worker;
- ▶ their employer or supervisor;
- ▶ the police, a community leader or a labour inspector;
- ▶ a trade union representative; and
- ▶ social services or a not-for-profit organization.

Overall, victims who shared their experiences reported utilizing an average of 2.4 out of the 6 channels, with little difference between men and women, and were far more likely to confide in other individuals rather than use institutional channels.

For instance, victims of violence and harassment most commonly turned to friends or family members (84.9 per cent), with women being slightly more inclined than men to do so (86.6 per cent versus 83.3 per cent). Co-workers were the second-most common channel that people turned to, at 70.4 per cent, with this figure slightly higher among men than women (71.0 per cent versus 69.6 per cent). Employers and supervisors came next, with more than half of victims turning to them. Conversely, people who had experienced violence and harassment at work were much less likely to turn to institutions, such as police, community leaders or labour inspectors (16.0 per cent), trade unions or representatives (14.8 per cent), or social services or not-for-profit organizations (9.2 per cent).

Survey question: Whom did you tell about your experiences? Was it ...? *Global results*



► **Figure 3.3** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years and told someone, by whom they told, by region and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Whom did you tell about your experiences? Was it ...?

● Women ● Men



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they experienced any form of violence and harassment in the past five years and that they told somebody about their experience. More than one answer possible. Global and regional estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 68.7 per cent (120 countries). Questions about reporting experience of violence and harassment at work were not asked in China; the reply option “trade union representative” was omitted in the United Arab Emirates and “the police, community leader” was omitted in Saudi Arabia.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► 3.2. Barriers to disclosing experiences of violence and harassment

It being a “waste of time” was the major barrier to disclosing violence and harassment at work

Survey respondents who did not share their experiences of violence and harassment at work were asked to select their reason(s) for not doing so from the following seven options:²⁰

- thought it was a waste of time;
- fear for their reputation;
- procedures at work were unclear;
- lack of trust in the police, community leaders or labour inspectors;
- worried people would find out about it at work;
- did not know what to do; and
- fear of punishment.

More than half, 55.0 per cent, believed that talking about it would have been a “waste of time”, with very little difference between men and women (figure 3.4). The second-most common response, given by 44.5 per cent, was “fear for one’s reputation”. However, many survey respondents who did not share their experience of violence and harassment said it because “procedures at work were unclear” (43.1 per cent) or due to “lack of trust in police, community leaders or labour inspectors” (42.5 per cent). In addition, 40.8 per cent were “worried people would find out about it at work”, and many “did not know what to do” (38.3 per cent) or they feared punishment (33.2 per cent).

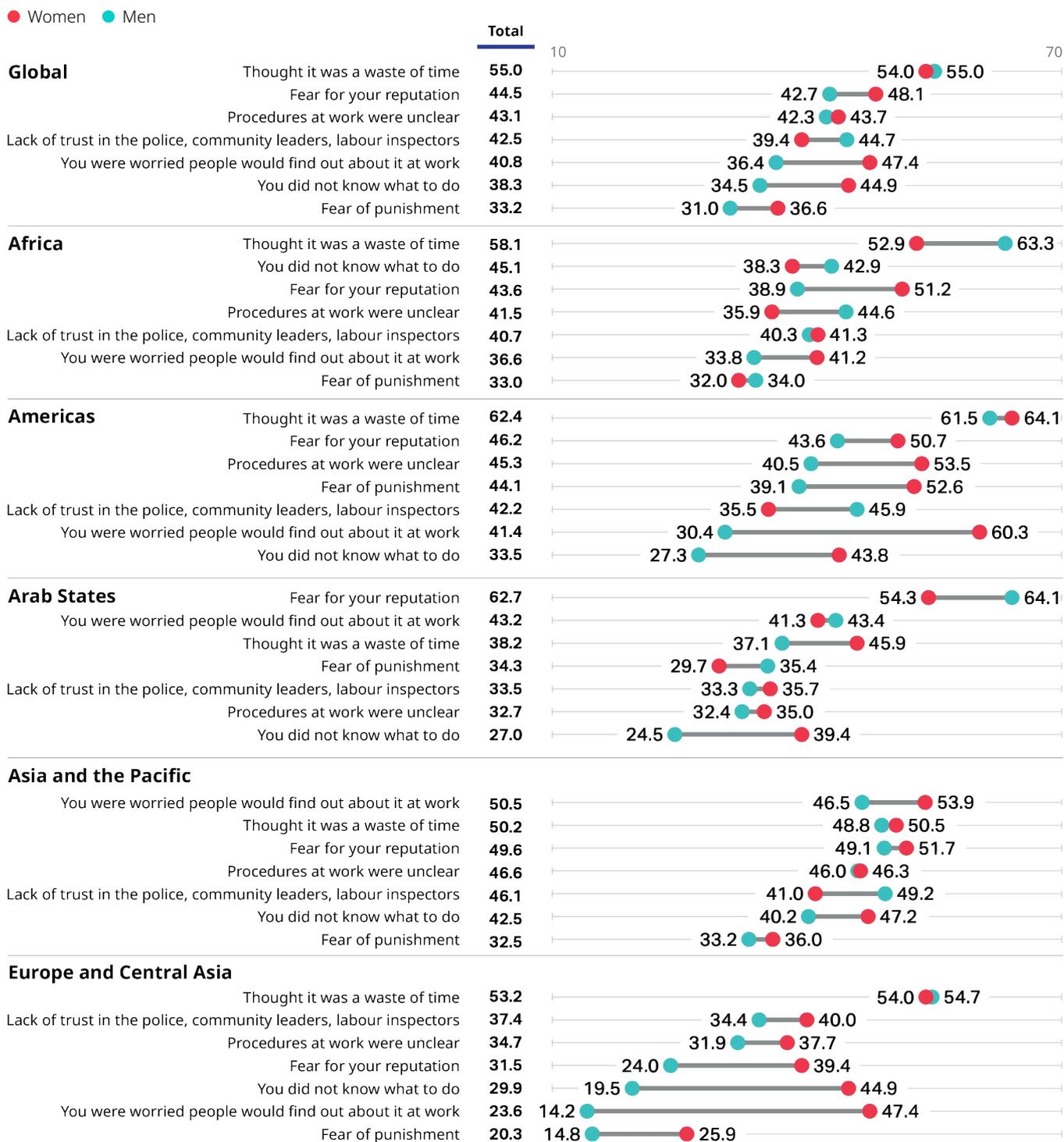
Survey question: Please tell me if each of the following is a reason why you did not tell anybody about your experience. Was it because ...?
Global results



²⁰ Globally, respondents selected an average of more than three reasons, with no difference between women and men.

► **Figure 3.4** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment at work within the past five years but did not report it, by reason for not reporting, by region and by sex, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Please tell me if each of the following is a reason why you did not tell anybody about your experience. Was it because ...?



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they experienced any form of violence and harassment in the past five years and said they did not tell somebody about the experience. More than one response possible. Global and regional estimates are weighted by the overall employed population of individuals aged 15+ for each country. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 68.7 per cent (120 countries). Questions about not reporting experience of violence and harassment at work were not asked in China, and the reply option “lack of trust in the police, community leaders or [insert country-specific example]” was omitted in Myanmar, Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

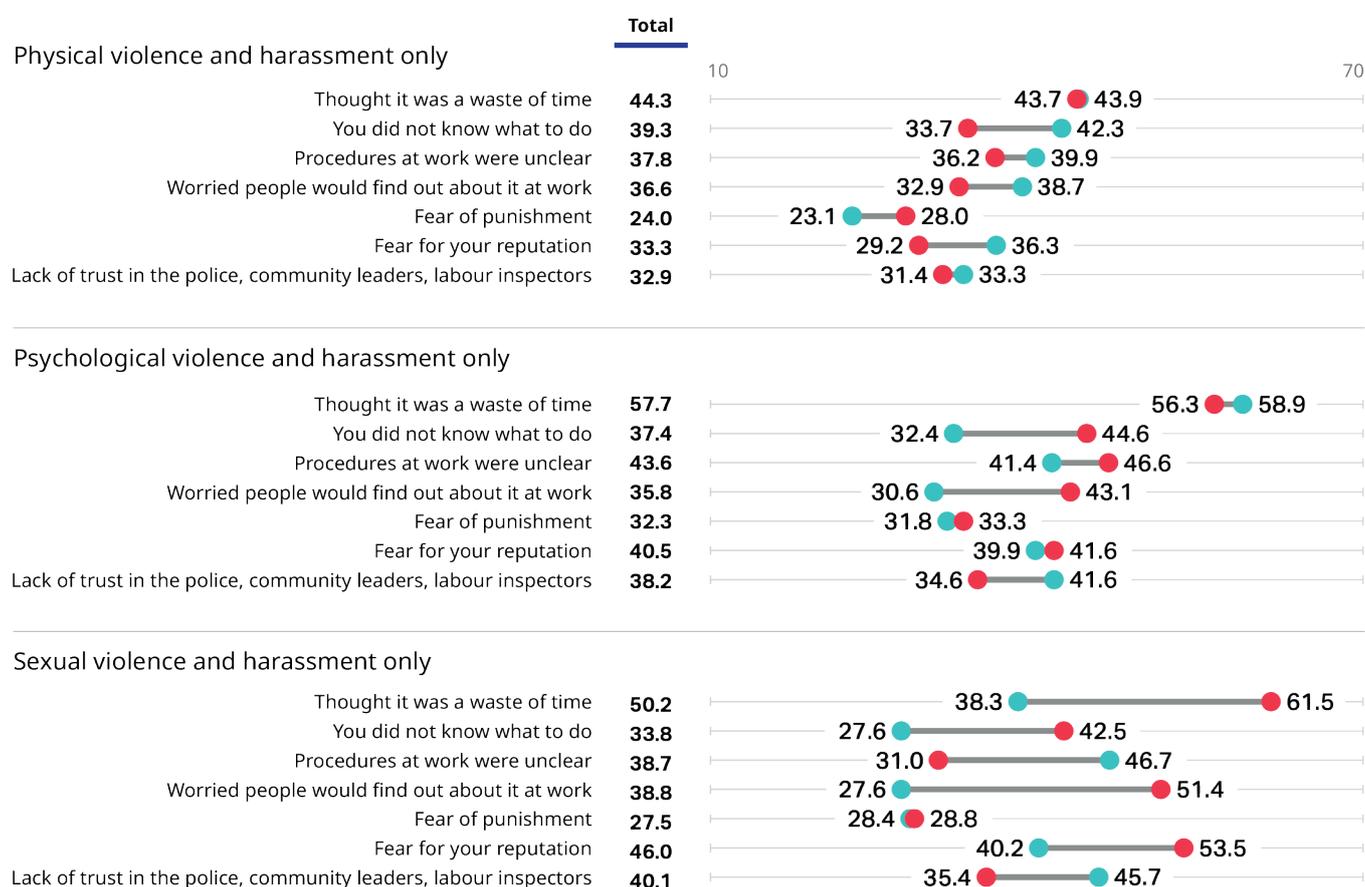
When looking at the reasons for not talking about each of the specific forms of violence and harassment, “waste of time” was the most commonly named barrier for each.

Interestingly, men were a bit more likely than women to mention “waste of time” as a barrier in the case of psychological violence and harassment (58.9 per cent and 56.3 per cent, respectively); while women were much more inclined to mention it than men in the case of sexual violence and harassment (61.5 per cent and 38.3 per cent, respectively). Of significance is the number of survey respondents, mainly women, who did not share their experience of sexual violence and harassment out of fear for their reputation or because they worried that people at work would find out.

► **Figure 3.5** Share of persons in employment who have experienced violence and harassment within the past five years but did not report it, by reason for not reporting and by type of violence and harassment, global results, 2021 (%)

Survey question: Please tell me if each of the following is a reason why you did not tell anybody about your experience. Was it because ...?

● Women ● Men



Note: Among all employed persons 15 years and older who said they experienced any form of violence and harassment in the past five years and said they did not tell somebody about the experience. More than one answer possible. Percentage of employed population and number of countries – World: 67.8 per cent (117 countries). Questions about physical violence and harassment were not asked in China, and questions about sexual violence and harassment were not asked in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Source: Lloyd’s Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2021 [Data set]

► Conclusion

The ILO-Lloyd's Register Foundation-Gallup survey represents a first attempt to assess the prevalence and characteristics of work-related violence and harassment, a topic that is challenging to measure. This survey confirms that violence and harassment is a widespread phenomenon around the world, with more than one in five persons in employment having experienced violence and harassment at work during their working life. Findings also show that violence and harassment at work is a recurrent phenomenon, with more than three in five victims having faced it multiple times. For the majority of the victims, the last episode has been a recent one, occurring within the last five years. Moreover, keeping in mind the limitations of coverage of some regions in relation to specific survey questions, psychological violence and harassment has emerged as the form of violence and harassment most commonly experienced during respondents' working lives.

Overall, women represented the majority of those experiencing sexual violence and harassment, and they were slightly more likely than men to have faced psychological violence and harassment; while men were overrepresented among those who have experienced physical violence and harassment. In addition, findings also show that the risk of experiencing violence and harassment at work is not equally distributed across different demographic groups. Instead, certain types of individuals, such as youth, migrant, and wage and salaried²¹ women and men were shown to be more at risk.

The risk of violence and harassment at work increases when these characteristics intersect. For instance, survey results show that young women were twice as likely as young men to have experienced sexual violence and harassment, and migrant women were almost twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment. In addition, persons who have experienced discrimination related to gender, race/nationality/ethnicity, skin colour, religion or disability status during their life were more likely to have experienced violence and harassment at work. Those facing gender-based discrimination have been particularly affected, as they are more than 2.5 times as likely to have faced violence and harassment at work than those who were not discriminated against on the basis of gender throughout their life.

Overall, survey results show that talking about violence and harassment still represents a challenge for many victims, with only one in two people willing to share their experience with someone else. The belief that it would be a "waste of time" and "fear for their reputation" were the most common reasons preventing people from talking about their experience.

These findings confirm that the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206), 2019, are instrumental towards building a world of work based on dignity and respect for all. By recognizing the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, these instruments call for the adoption of an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach with measures including prevention and protection, enforcement and remedies, and training and awareness-raising – with social partners playing an essential role in the process.²² The novel data derived from this global first survey strongly confirm the urgency and necessity of taking such an approach, with much needed attention paid to:

- **More regular collection of robust data** on work-related violence and harassment at the national, regional and global levels. Quality statistics on the phenomenon are important to inform prevention and remediation laws and mechanisms, policies and programmes, as well as research and advocacy. The acquisition of better data requires a sound conceptual and methodological measurement framework, towards which the ILO is working, with the aim of supporting countries to measure the issue and monitor progress in the future.
- **Prevention mechanisms.** Existing national and workplace mechanisms should be extended or adapted to effectively prevent and manage violence and harassment in the world of work, including through occupational safety and health (OSH) management systems, OSH policies and programmes, OSH national tripartite mechanisms and labour inspection systems. These prevention mechanisms should be updated to enable protection against all forms of violence and harassment by responding to the different needs of women and men in all their diversity.

²¹ As opposed to self-employed.

²² See Annex 2 for a list of ILO publications and materials on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206.

- ▶ **Rights-based framework** for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment grounded on decent work and the elimination of inequalities. In this regard, the results of the study yield important insights into the significant linkage between people's overall vulnerability to discrimination in both private and public life and their likelihood to face violence and harassment at work, pointing to the fact that violence and harassment does not happen in isolation but is fuelled by a general climate of injustice and inequality. Efforts to advance substantive equality and overcome harmful social norms – including stereotypes based on sex and other personal characteristics – should be strengthened, as they would help curb discrimination and violence and harassment, both in society and in the world of work.
- ▶ **Increased awareness on violence and harassment at work**, as well as on social stigma and attitudes, with a view to changing perceptions and behaviours that perpetuate violence and harassment in all its forms. Too many people are still afraid to speak up because of fear for their own reputation and fear of retaliation. Heightened awareness and knowledge are a first step in changing the perceptions and attitudes that perpetuate or condone various forms of violence and harassment, particularly gender-based violence and harassment and violence and harassment motivated by discrimination.
- ▶ **Enhanced capacities of institutions** at all levels to deliver effective prevention, remediation and support services to build people's trust in justice and to ensure victims are not left alone to handle these unacceptable incidents. In line with ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206, this would include strengthening the capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to design and implement effective measures, as well as to provide support services to their members. It would also include enhancing dispute resolution mechanisms and services to deal in a timely and gender-responsive manner with instances of violence and harassment.

To conclude, there is no denying that it is challenging to develop and implement successful and effective strategies and measures to prevent and remedy violence and harassment at work. Doing so requires the **involvement of all levels of government, employers and workers and their respective organizations, as well as society in general and relevant international actors**. Strong political will and concerted efforts are crucial to ensuring a world of work free from violence and harassment for all.



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► Annexes

► Annex 1. Violence and Harassment Questionnaire 2021

Now, I would like to ask you questions on violence and harassment at work. By work, I mean any activity you may have performed for which you received money or goods. Let me reassure you that the information you provide will remain strictly confidential.

VH1

Have you, personally, EVER experienced PHYSICAL violence and/or harassment AT WORK, such as hitting, restraining, or spitting?

	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Yes	1
No	2
(Respondent has never worked)	7
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1 in VH1, Continue; If code 7 in VH1, Terminate; Otherwise, Skip to VH2)

VH1_B

How many times have you experienced this? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?

	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Once or twice	1
Three to five times	2
More than five times	3
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

VH1_C

Approximately, WHEN was the LAST time this happened to you - was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Within the last year	1
Two to five years ago	2
More than five years ago	3
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

VH2

Have you, personally, EVER experienced PSYCHOLOGICAL violence and/or harassment, such as insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation AT WORK?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Yes	1
No	2
(Respondent has never worked)	7
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1 in VH2, Continue; If code 7 in VH2, Terminate; Otherwise, Skip to VH3/WP22503)

VH2_B

How many times have you experienced this? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Once or twice	1
3 to 5 times	2
More than 5 times	3
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

VH2_C

Approximately, WHEN was the LAST time this happened to you - was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Within the last year	1
2 to 5 years ago	2
More than 5 years ago	3
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

VH3

Have you, personally, EVER experienced any type of SEXUAL violence and/or harassment AT WORK, such as unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails, or sexual requests while at WORK?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Yes	1
No	2
(Respondent has never worked)	7
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1 in VH3, Continue; If code 7 in VH3, Skip to Terminate; Otherwise, Skip to Note before VH4)

VH3_B

How many times have you experienced this? Once or twice, three to five times or more than five times?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Once or twice	1
3 - 5 times	2
More than 5 times	3
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

VH3_C

Approximately, WHEN was the LAST time this happened to you - was it within the last year, two to five years ago or more than five years ago?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Within the last year	1
2 - 5 years ago	2
More than 5 years ago	3
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1 in VH1, VH2, or VH3, Continue; Otherwise, Terminate)

VH4

Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced AT WORK?

RESPONSE OPTIONS	
Yes	1
No	2
(Don't know)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1 in VH4, Continue; If code 2 in VH4, Skip to VH4_C/Text; Otherwise, Terminate)

VH4_B**Whom did you tell about your experiences? Was it...?**

		Yes	No	(Don't know)	(Refused)
VH4_B1	Your employer or supervisor	1	2	8	9
VH4_B2	A co-worker	1	2	8	9
VH4_B3	A friend or family member	1	2	8	9
VH4_B4	A trade union representative	1	2	8	9
VH4_B5	The police, a community leader, or (a/ an [insert country-specific example, such as a labour inspector])	1	2	8	9
VH4_B6	Social services or a not-for-profit organization	1	2	8	9

*(All in VH4_B, Terminate)***VH4_C****Please tell me if each of the following is a reason why you did not tell anybody about your experience. Was it because...?**

		Yes	No	(Don't know)	(Refused)
VH4_C1	You thought it was a waste of time	1	2	8	9
VH4_C2	You did not know what to do	1	2	8	9
VH4_C3	Procedures at work were unclear	1	2	8	9
VH4_C4	You were worried people would find out about it at work	1	2	8	9
VH4_C5	Fear of punishment	1	2	8	9
VH4_C6	Fear for your reputation	1	2	8	9
VH4_C7	Lack of trust in the police, community leaders, or [insert country-specific example, such as labour inspectors]	1	2	8	9

► Annex 2. ILO resources on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206

Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No.190)

Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206)

Publications

ILO. 2022. *Violence and Harassment at Work: A Practical Guide for Employers*.

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Brief No. 1: "Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No.206 at a Glance".

Brief No. 2: "Sexual Harassment in the World of Work".

Brief No. 3: "Domestic Violence and Its Impact in the World of Work".

Brief No. 4: "Violence and Harassment against Persons with Disabilities".

Brief No. 5: "HIV-related Violence and Harassment in the World of Work".

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ILO. 2016. *Background Paper for Discussion at the Meeting of Experts on Violence against Women and Men in the World of Work*, MEVWM/2016.

Portals

ILO Topic Portal on the Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work

ILO Ratification Campaign – ILO Campaign Toolkit



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DU TRAVAIL,
DU PLEIN EMPLOI
ET DE L'INSERTION

*Liberté
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