

Data From the 2003-2004 Somerville High School Health Survey

Presented to:

The Somerville Public Schools
The Cambridge Health Alliance
The Somerville Health Department

Presented by:

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METHODS

WHO CONDUCTED THE SURVEY?

- The Somerville Public Schools, The Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Somerville Cares About Prevention Coalition through the Somerville Health Department, in collaboration with Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.

HOW AND WHEN WAS THE SURVEY CONDUCTED?

- The survey was administered as a questionnaire in February of 2004 to all Somerville public school students in grades 9 through 12.
- The survey was administered in four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian.

WHO RESPONDED?

- The total number of respondents was 1,382. The number of respondents in each grade is as follows: 9th = 343, 10th = 370, 11th = 346, 12th = 317 (other and unknown = 6).

WHAT DID THE SURVEY ASK ABOUT?

- Background characteristics such as gender, age, and grade level.
- Student use of and perceptions about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Other related health issues such as depression and suicide, violence and safety, sexual behavior, and dietary behavior.

CAVEATS

VALIDITY

- Research indicates that student responses to such surveys are reasonably accurate provided that the survey is voluntary and confidential. The Somerville high school survey met these conditions.
- Completed questionnaires were reviewed to identify frivolous responses; such cases were removed.
- Many of the items are based on standard and reliable items from surveys such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Monitoring the Future, Profiles of Student Life – Attitudes and Behaviors, and Survey of Student Resources and Assets.

NON-RESPONDENTS

- Results can be generalized only to students who were present when the survey was administered and may not reflect responses from youth who are truant, chronically absent, or out of school.

TRENDS

- As this is the second administration of the Somerville High School Health Survey, limited trend comparisons can be made to results from the 2002 survey.

COMPARATIVE DATA

- Limited comparisons can be made to Massachusetts as a whole using the most recent available state YRBS data (Spring 2001 and 2003). Only limited data from the 2003 Massachusetts survey were available at the time of this report.

WHO HAS THE PROBLEM?

- Although the survey was administered to students in school, the behaviors addressed are not confined solely to youth.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- These are community issues that require the attention of all community members and organizations, not merely the schools.

Substance Use

What substances are used most often by Somerville youth?

How does use change as youth age?

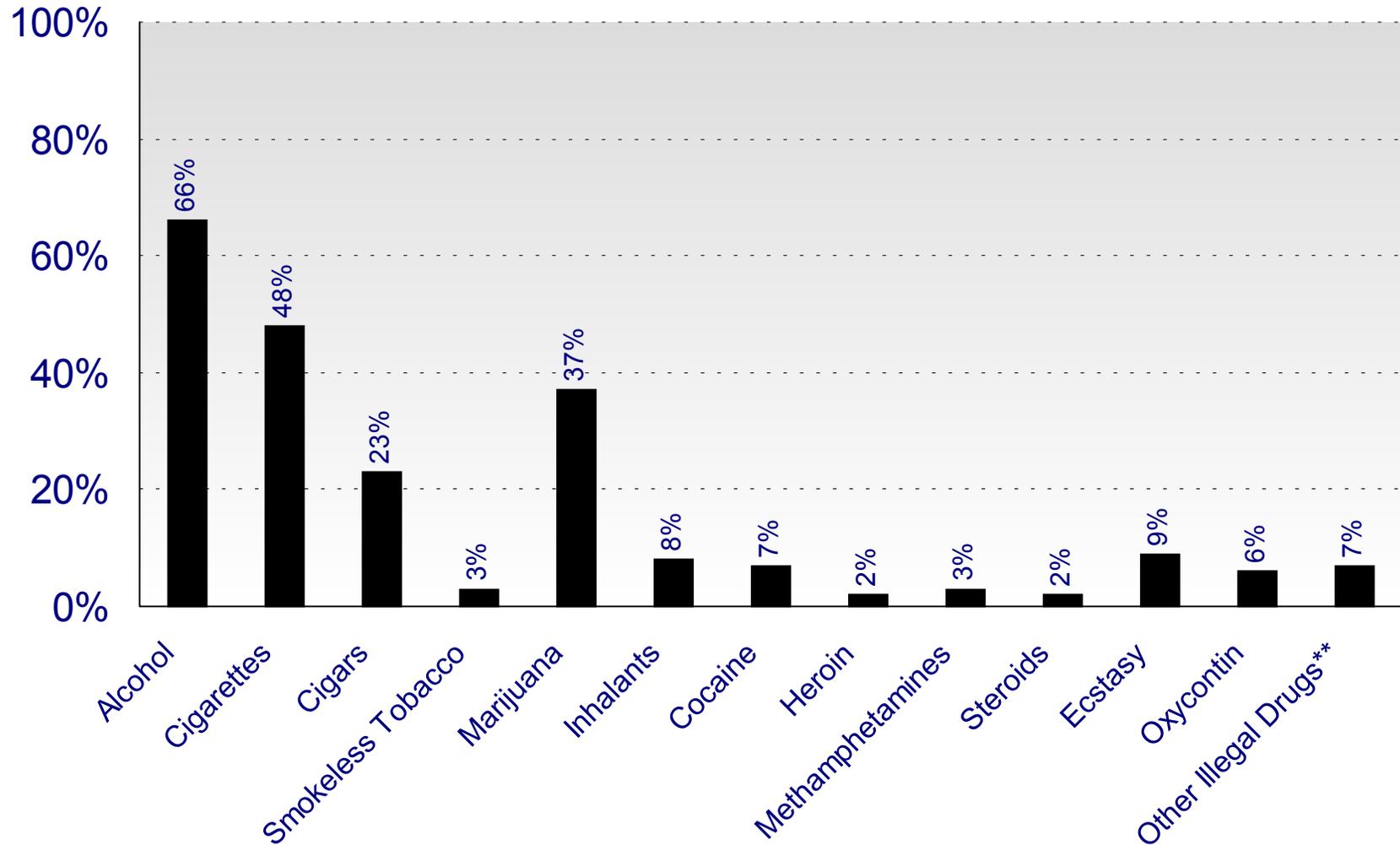
Are boys or girls more likely to use substances?

How has use changed in Somerville over time?

Are rates of substance use higher or lower in Somerville than in other places?

How are youth exposed to substance use at home and how might this exposure influence a youth's own use?

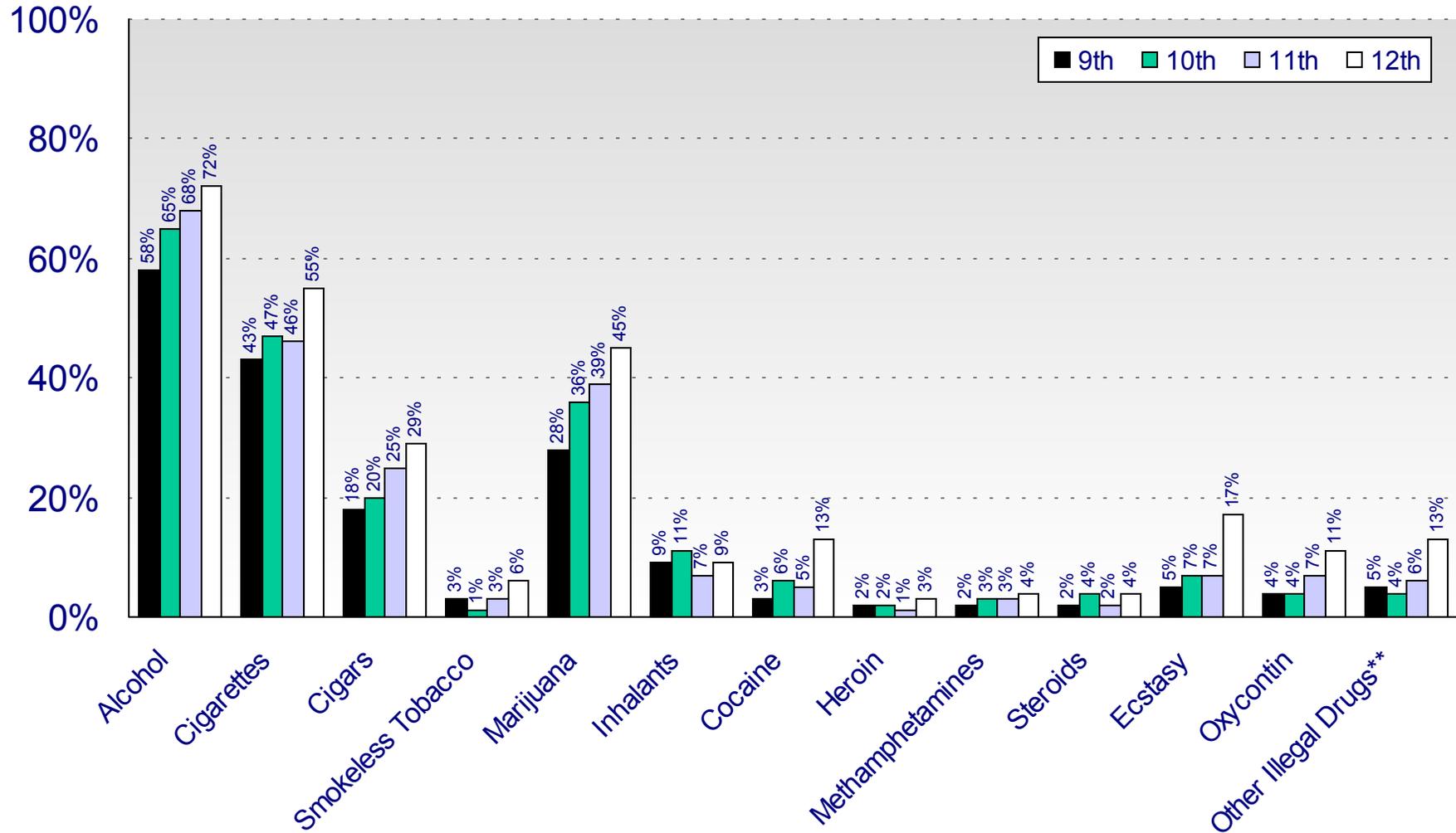
Lifetime* Substance Use for Somerville High School Students (2004)



* Lifetime use is any use in one's lifetime.

** Respondents were asked about their use of "any other type of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB."

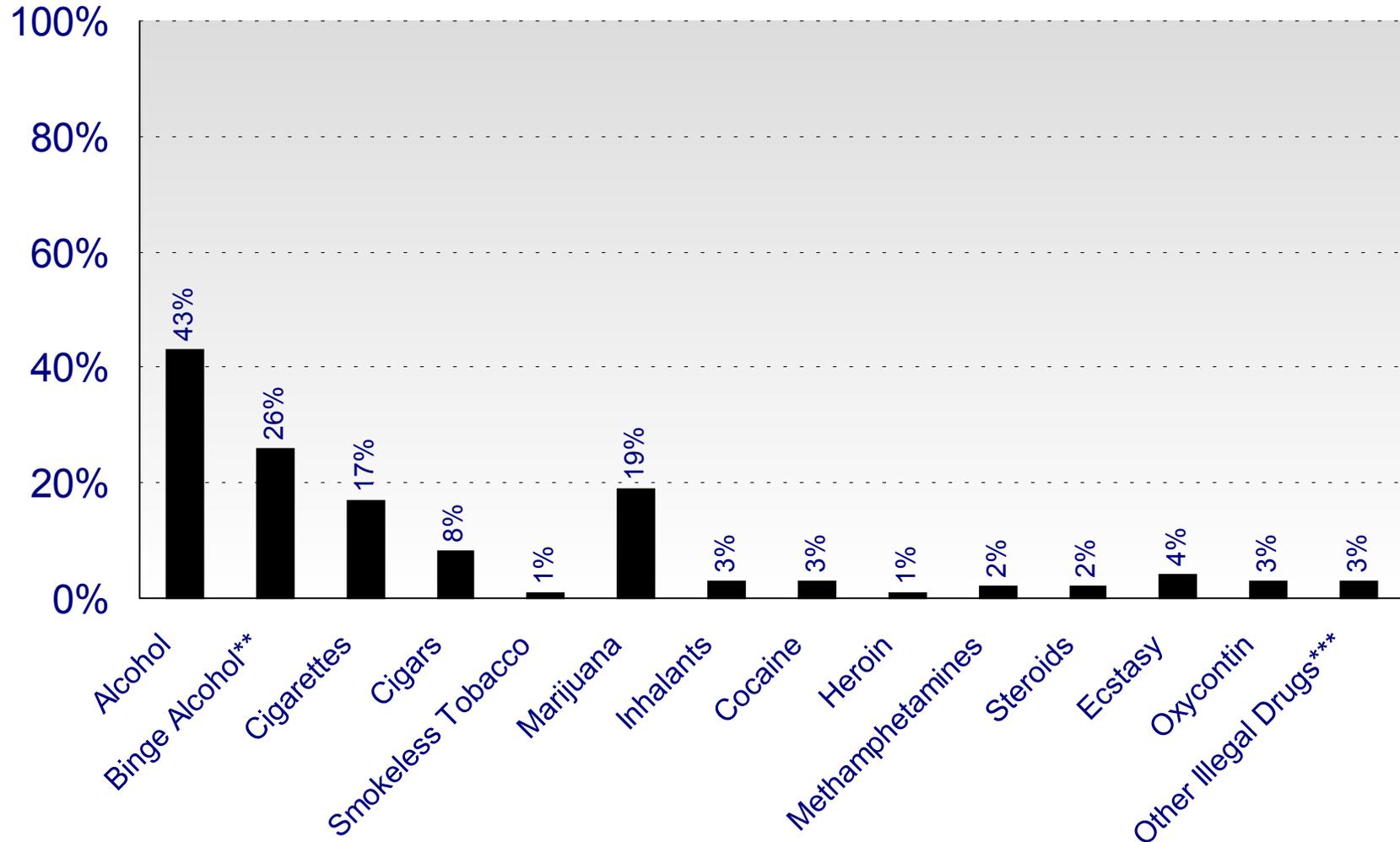
Lifetime* Substance Use for Somerville High School Students, by Grade (2004)



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Current* Substance Use for Somerville High School Students (2004)

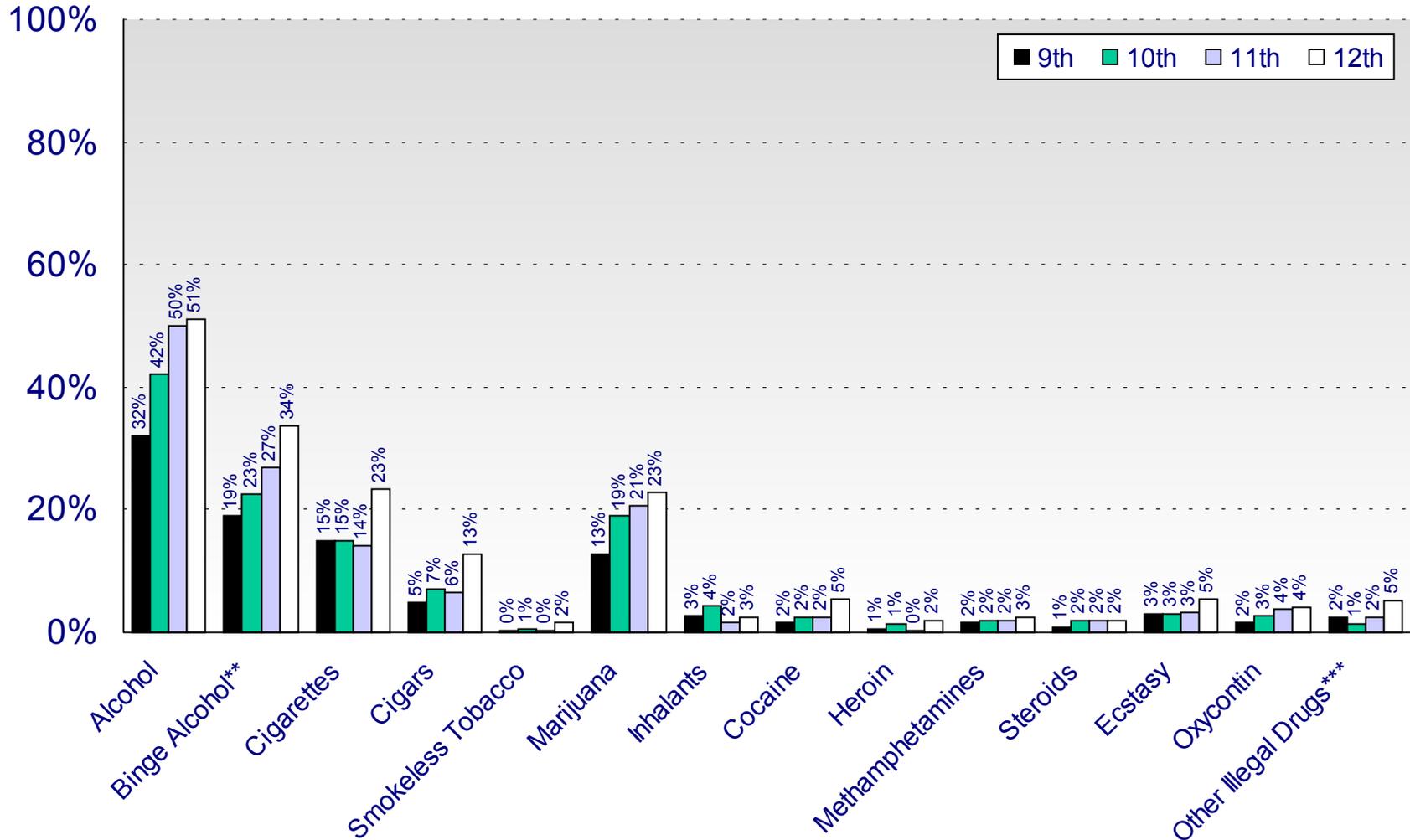


* Current use is any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.

** Binge alcohol use is defined in the survey as having "five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours."

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Current* Substance Use for Somerville High School Students, by Grade (2004)

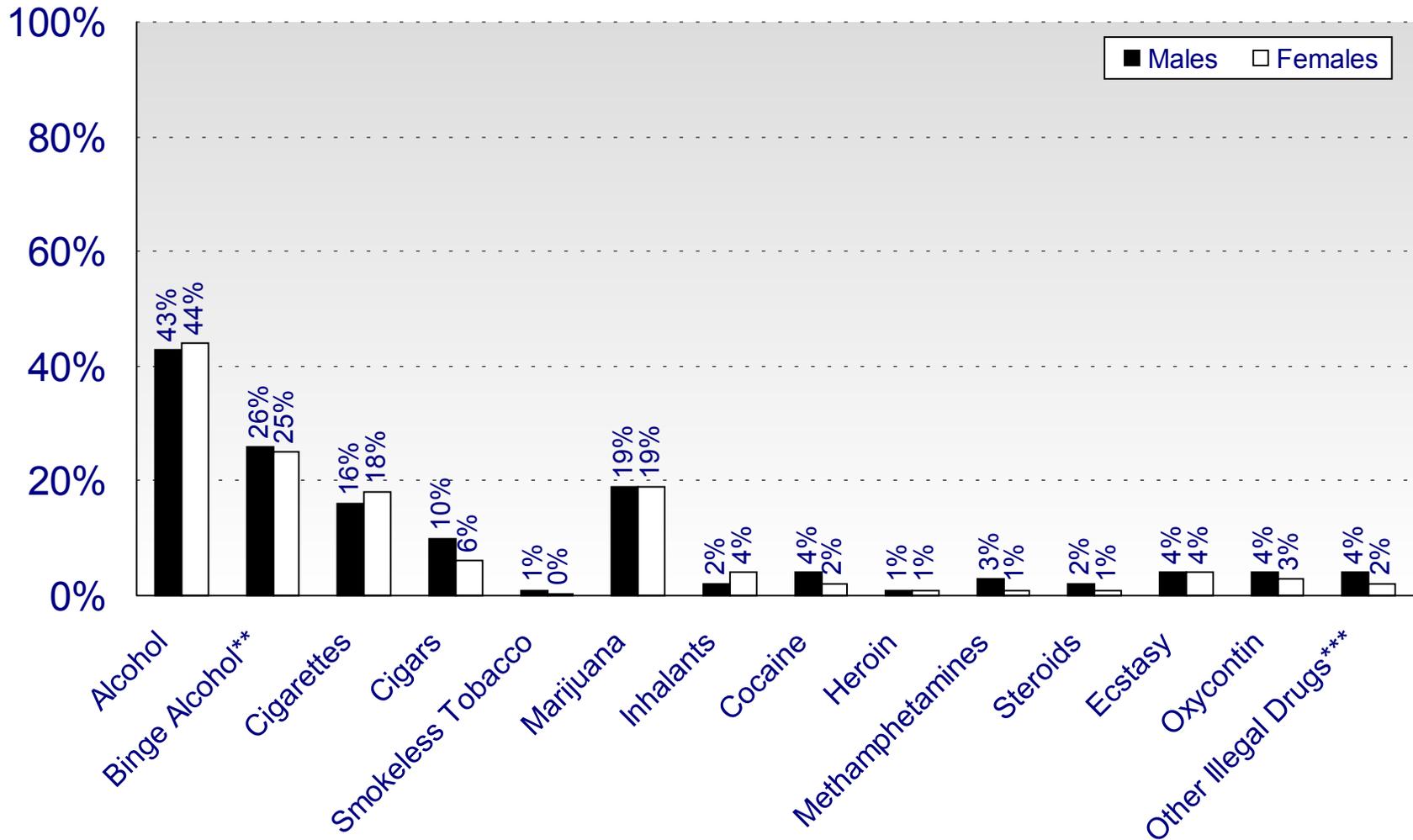


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Current* Substance Use for Somerville High School Students, by Gender (2004)

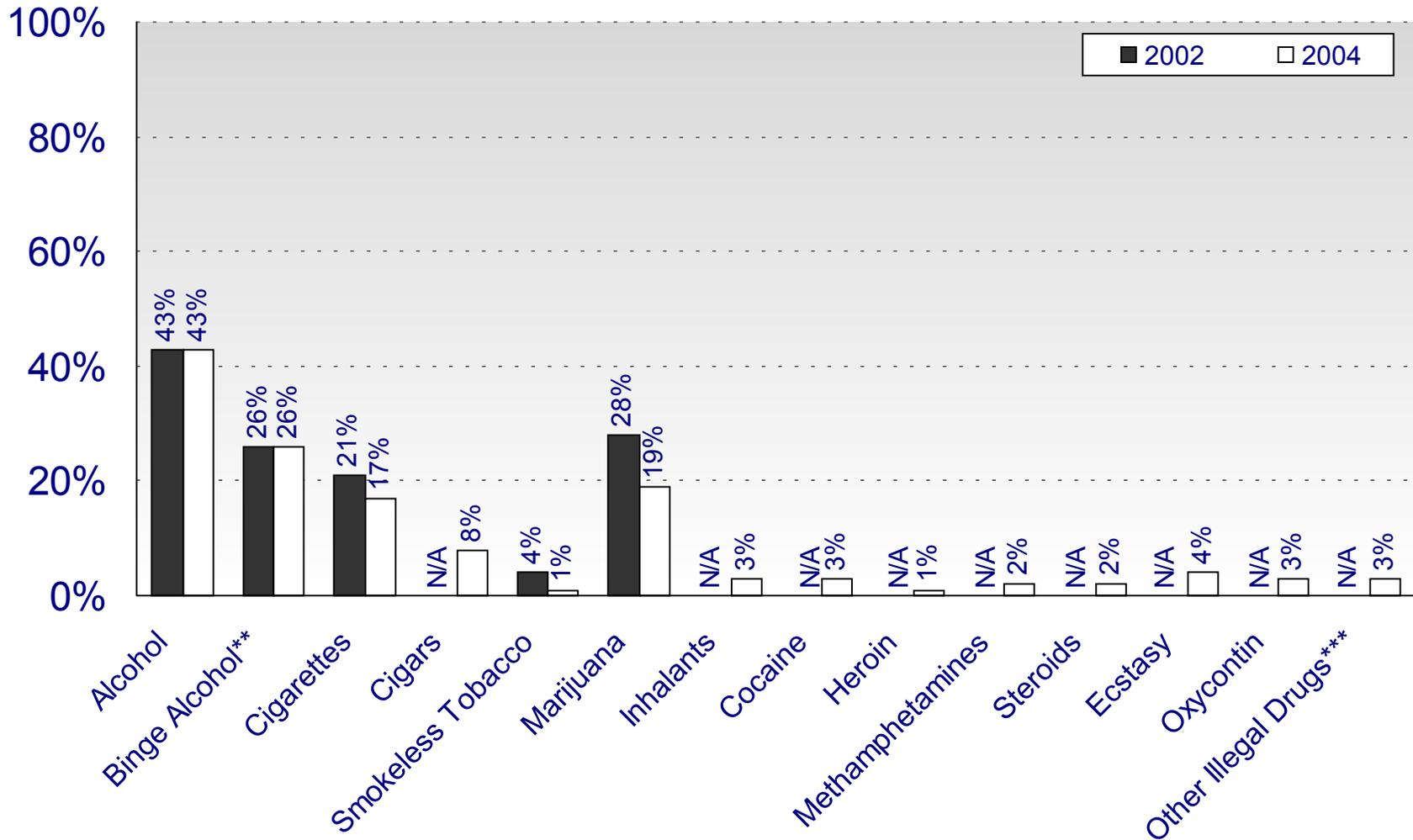


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Trends in Current* Substance Use for Somerville High School Students (2002, 2004)

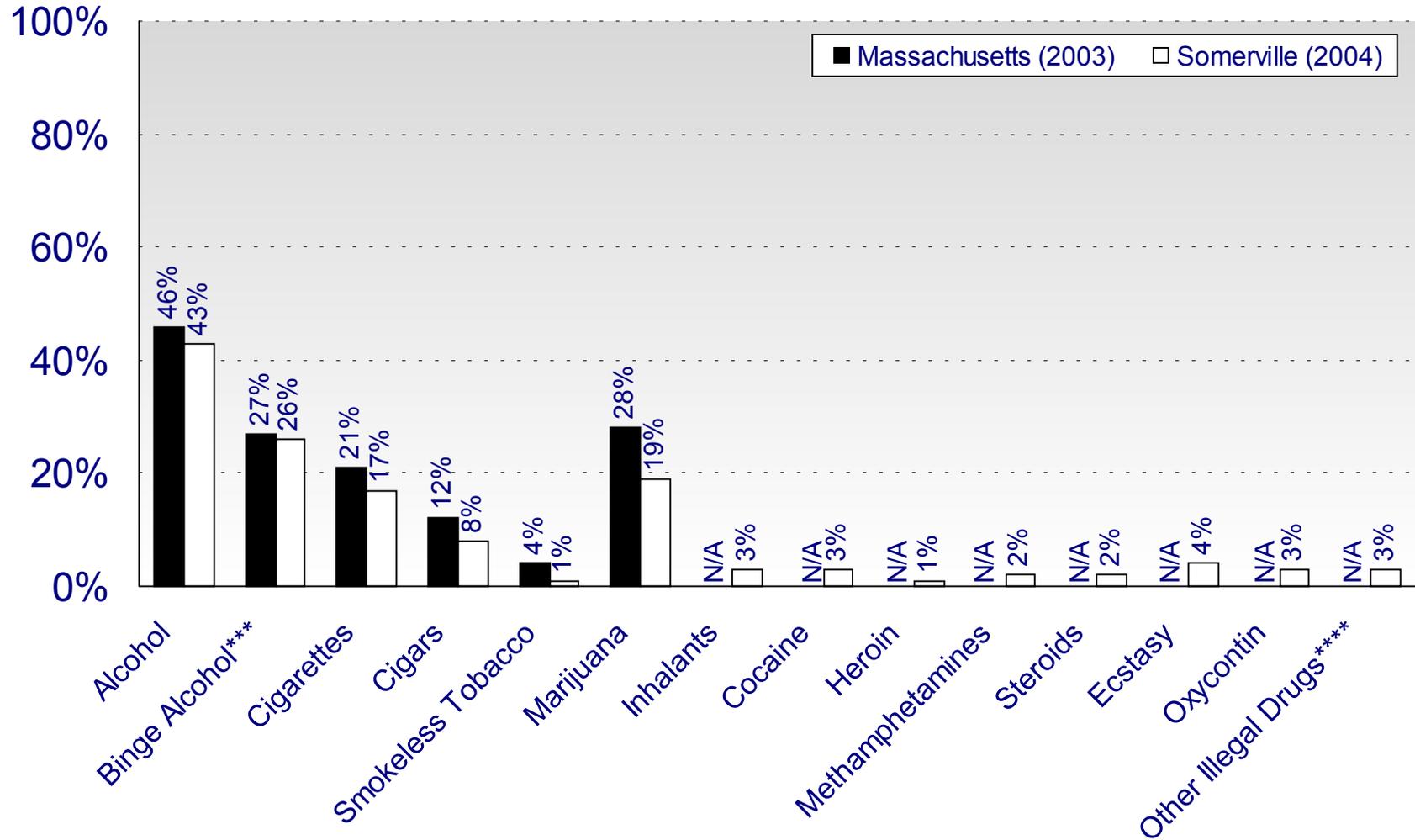


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Current* Substance Use for Massachusetts** (2003) and Somerville (2004) High School Students



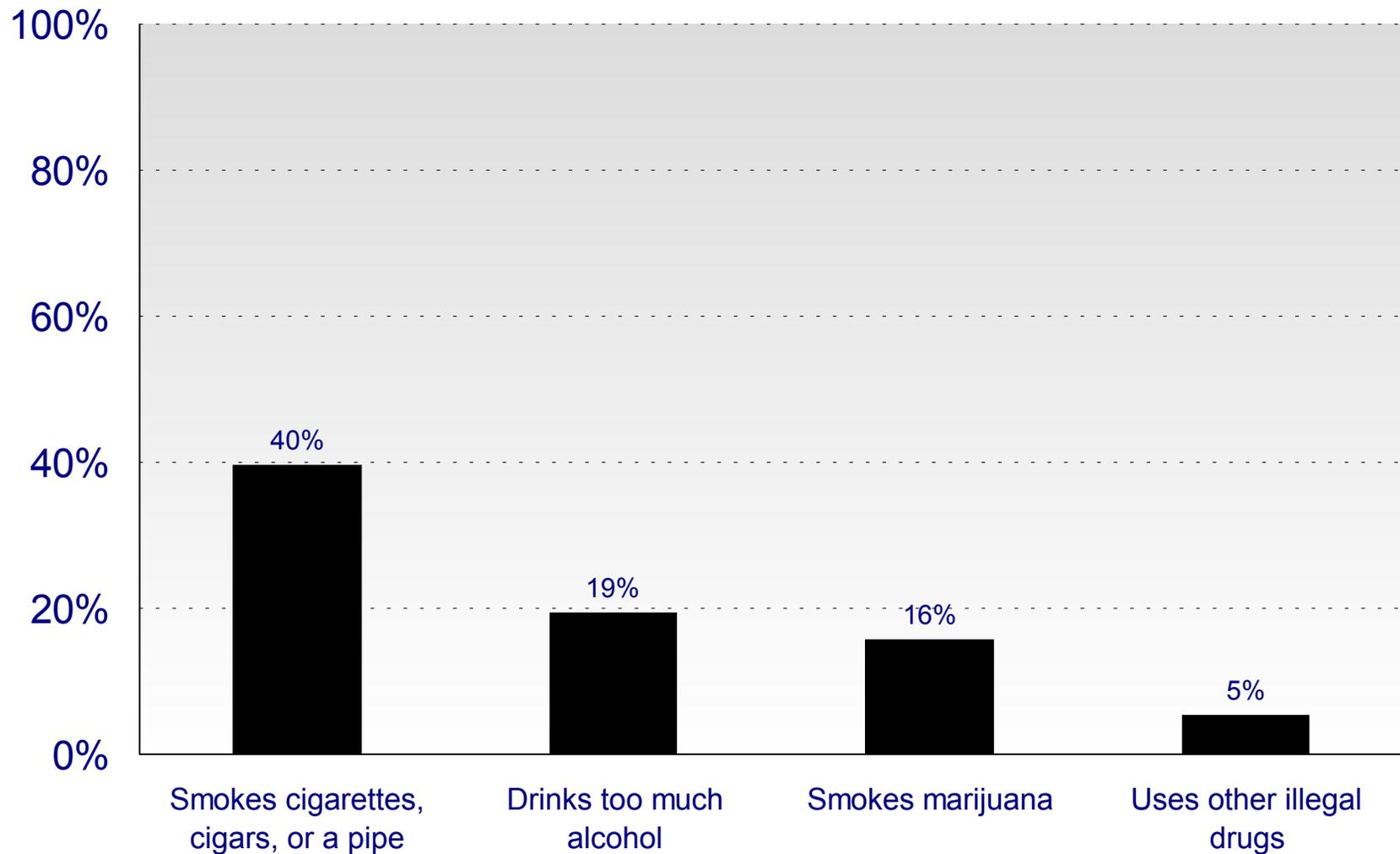
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** Massachusetts data from the 2003 *Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey* conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2003).

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Percent of Somerville High School Students Who Reported Having Someone Living in their Household* Who Uses Substances (2004)



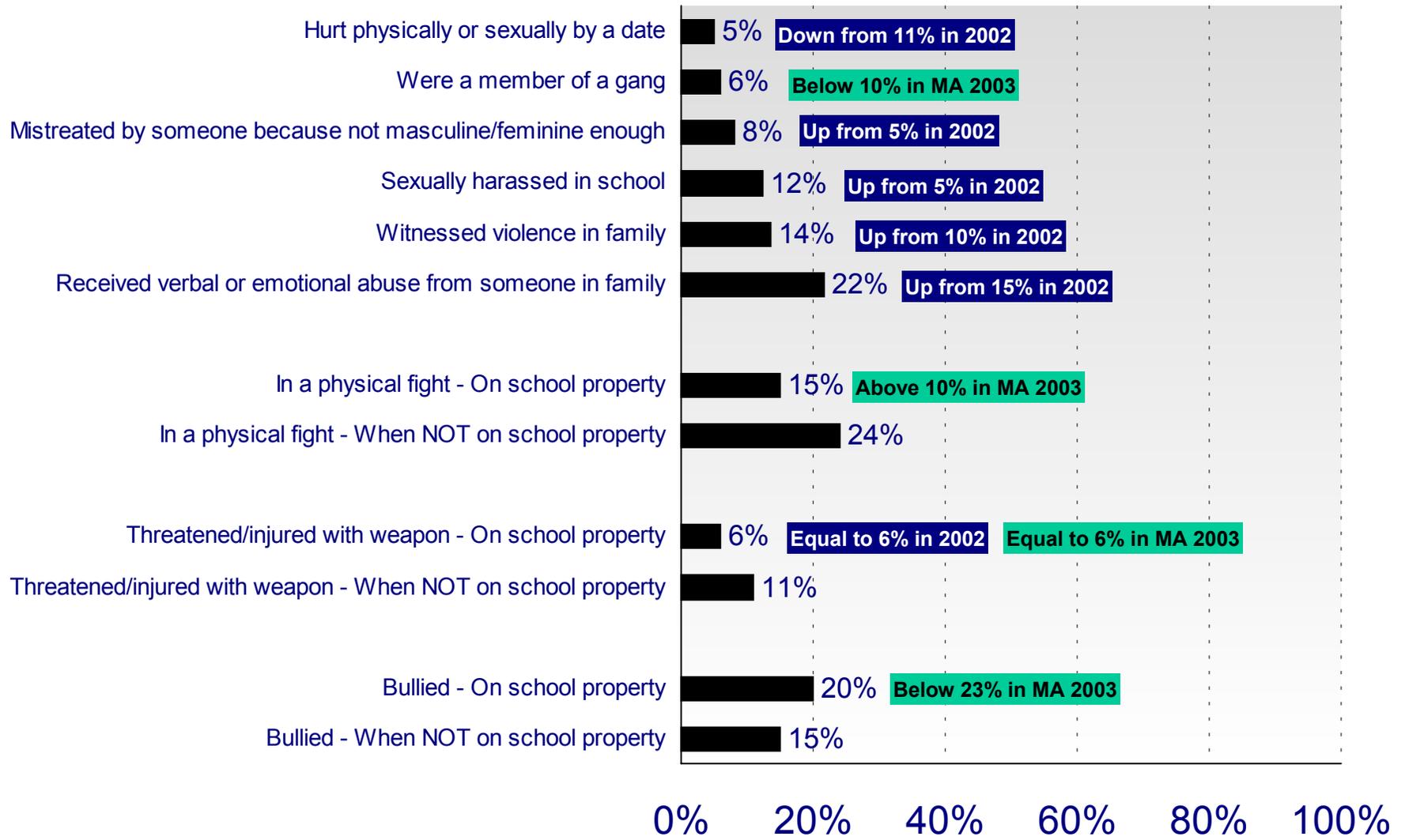
* Respondents were asked "Is there anyone (other than you) living in your household who...?"

The Relationship between Exposure to Substance Use at Home and Actual Use

- Students who live with someone who uses substances are *more* likely to report using those substances themselves:
 - **Current Alcohol Use** – 58% of those who live with someone who they think drinks too much vs. 41% of those who do not.
 - **Current Binge Drinking** – 38% of those who live with someone who they think drinks too much vs. 23% of those who do not.
 - **Current Cigarette Use** – 24% of those who live with someone who smokes vs. 12% of those who do not.
 - **Current Marijuana Use** – 50% of those who live with someone who smokes marijuana vs. 13% of those who do not.
 - **Current Use of Other Illegal Drugs** – 31% of those who live with someone who uses illegal drugs other than marijuana vs. 6% who do not.

Violence and Safety

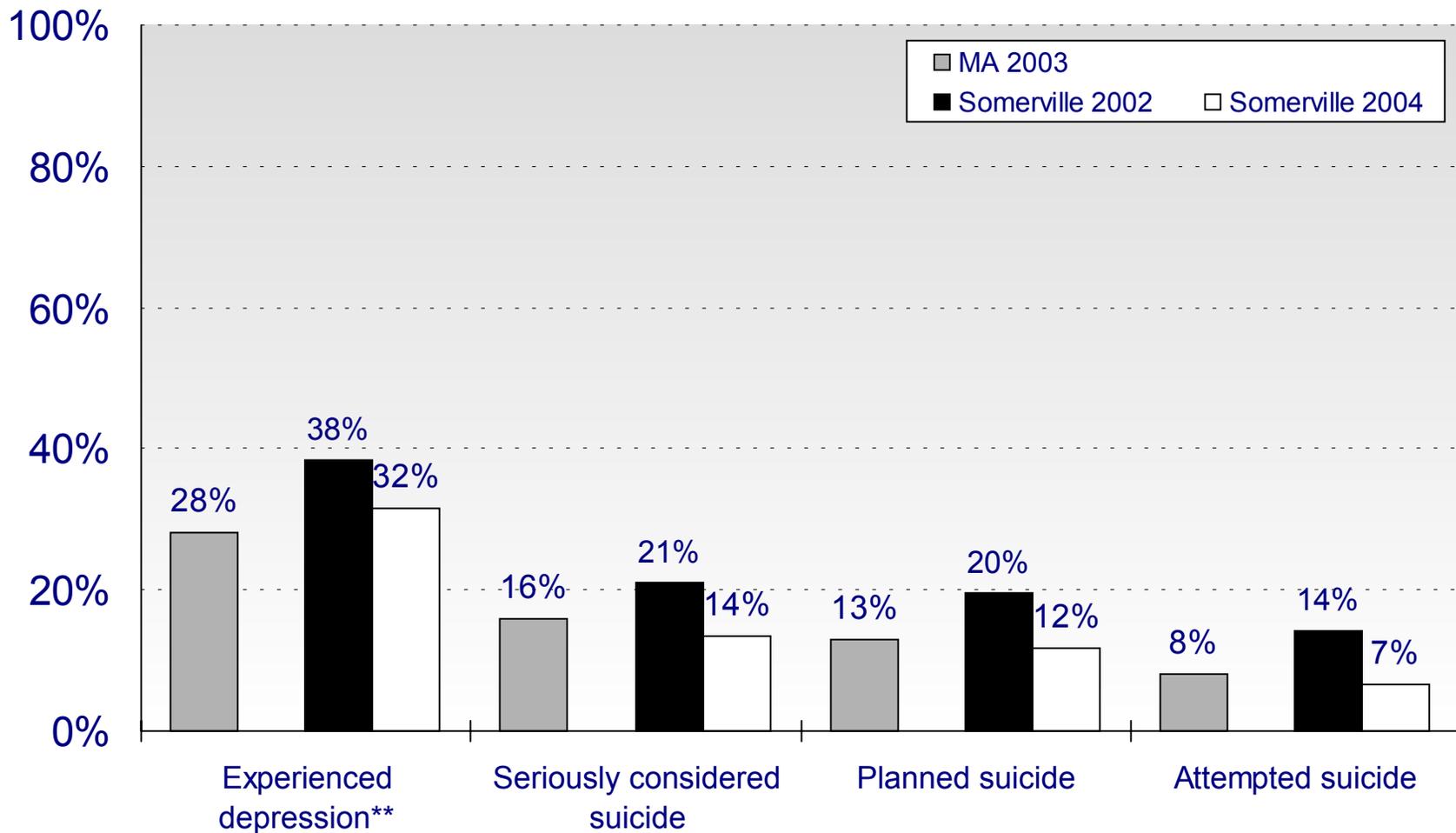
Percent of Somerville High School Students Who Reported Violence-Related Experiences in the Past 12 Months (2004)*



* Trend and comparative data are available only for the items listed.

Mental Health

Depression and Suicidal Ideation and Behavior in the Past 12 Months Among Somerville (2002, 2004) and Massachusetts* (2003) High School Students

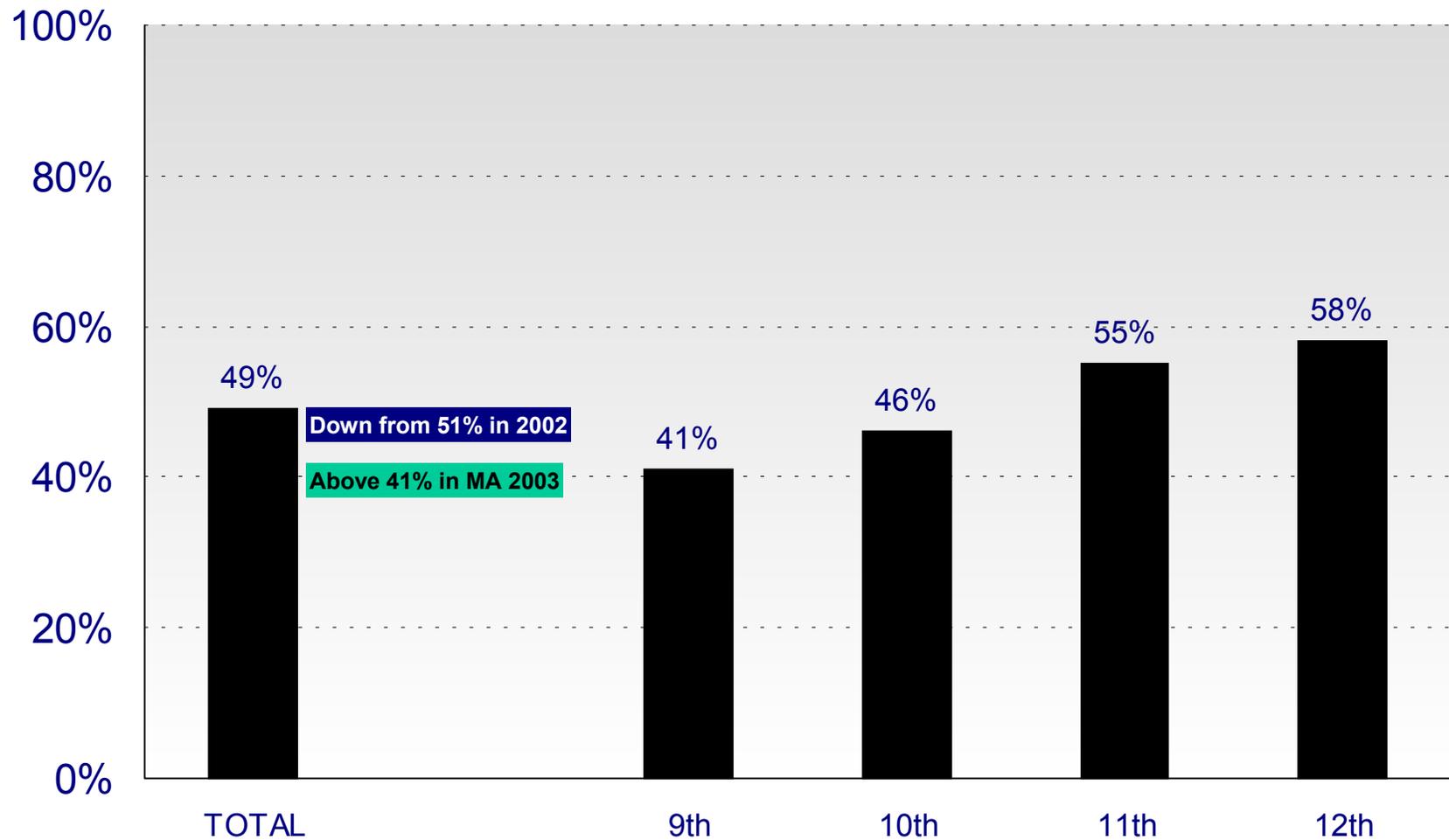


* Massachusetts data from the 2003 *Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey* conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2003).

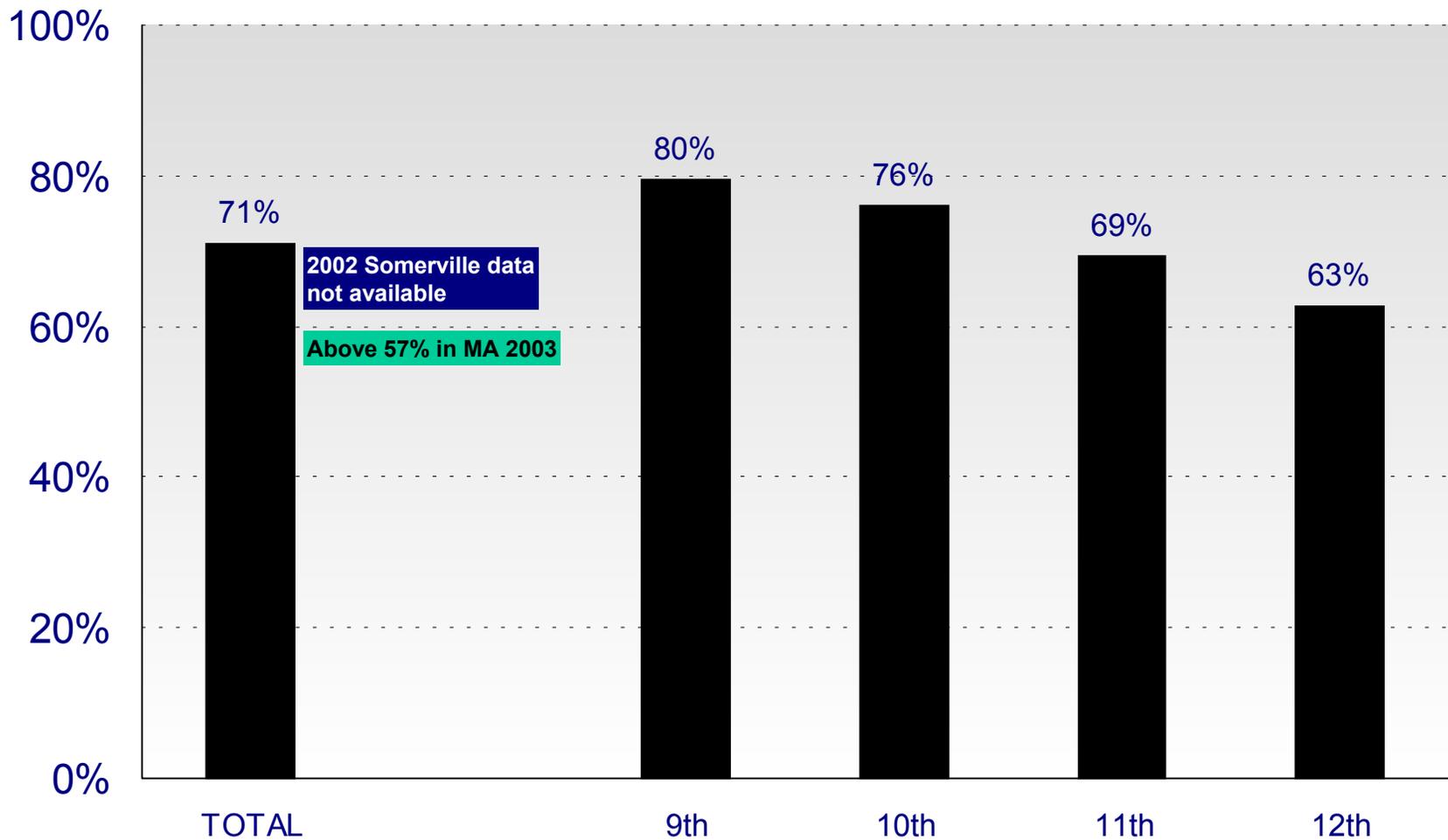
** Depression is defined in the survey as feeling "so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities."

Sexual Behavior

Percent of Somerville High School Students Who Have Ever Had Sexual Intercourse, Total and by Grade (2004)

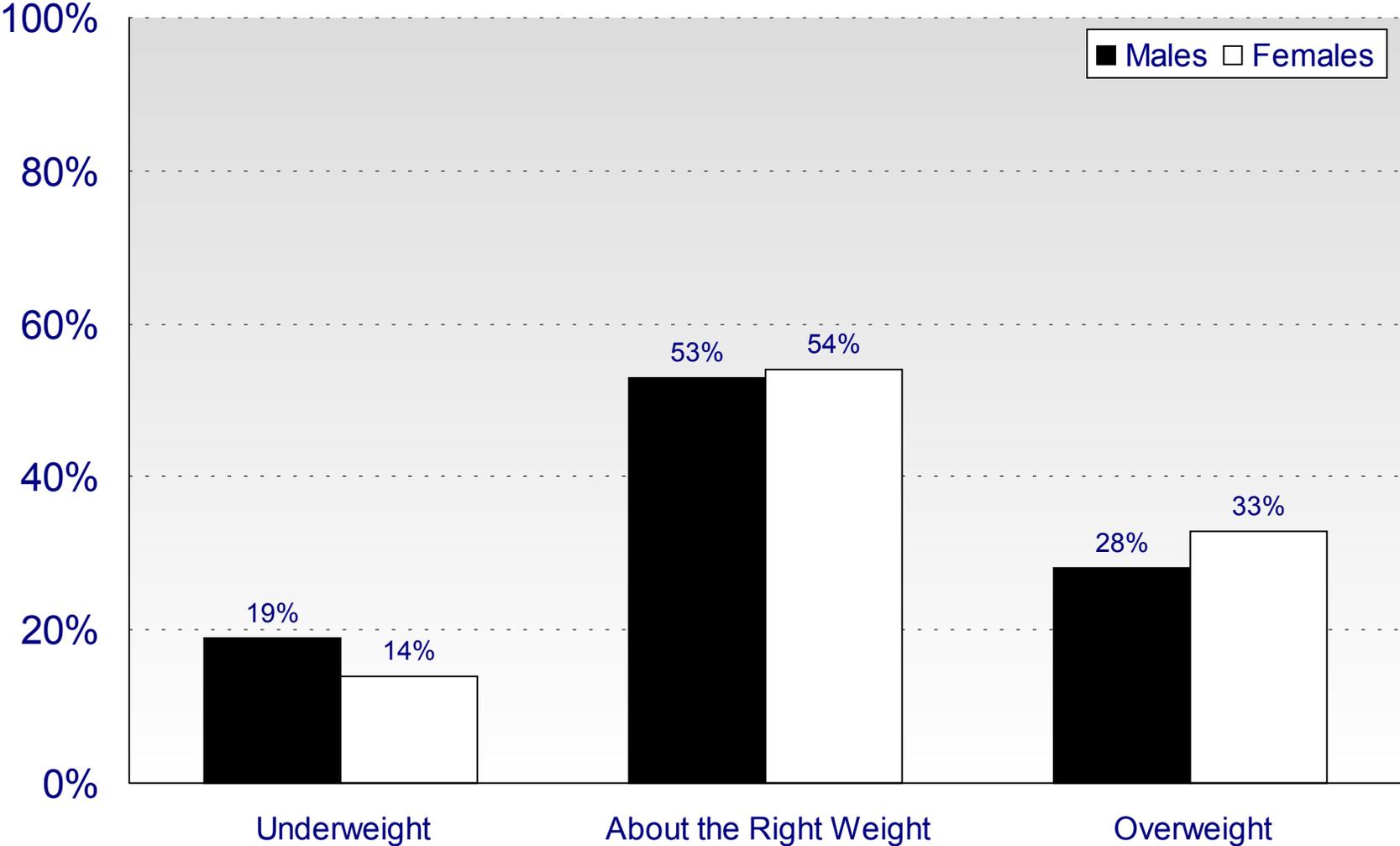


Percent of Sexually Active Somerville High School Students Who Used a Condom at the Last Time They Had Sex, Total and by Grade (2004)

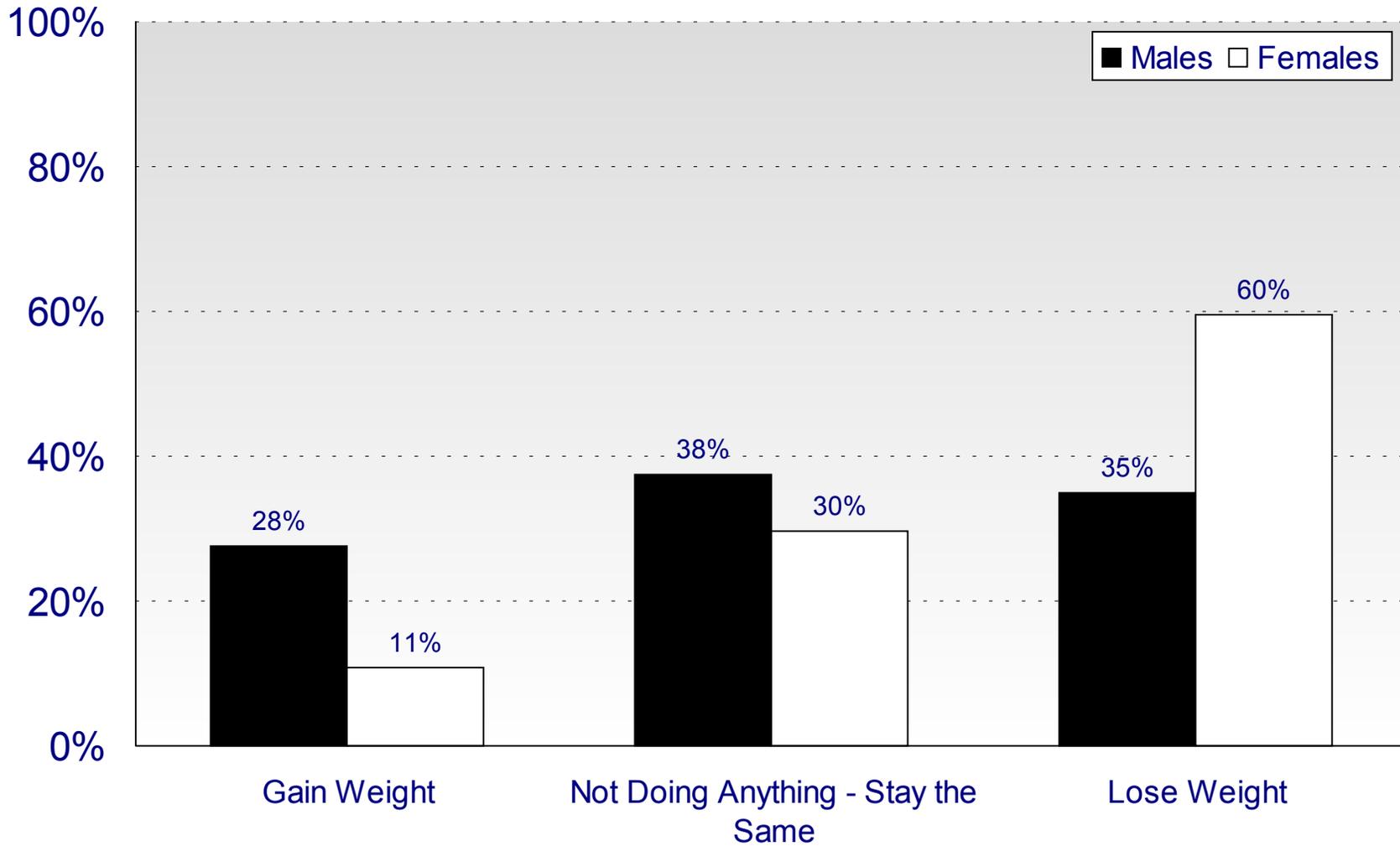


Weight Perception and Control

Perception of Body Weight by Somerville High School Students, by Gender (2004)

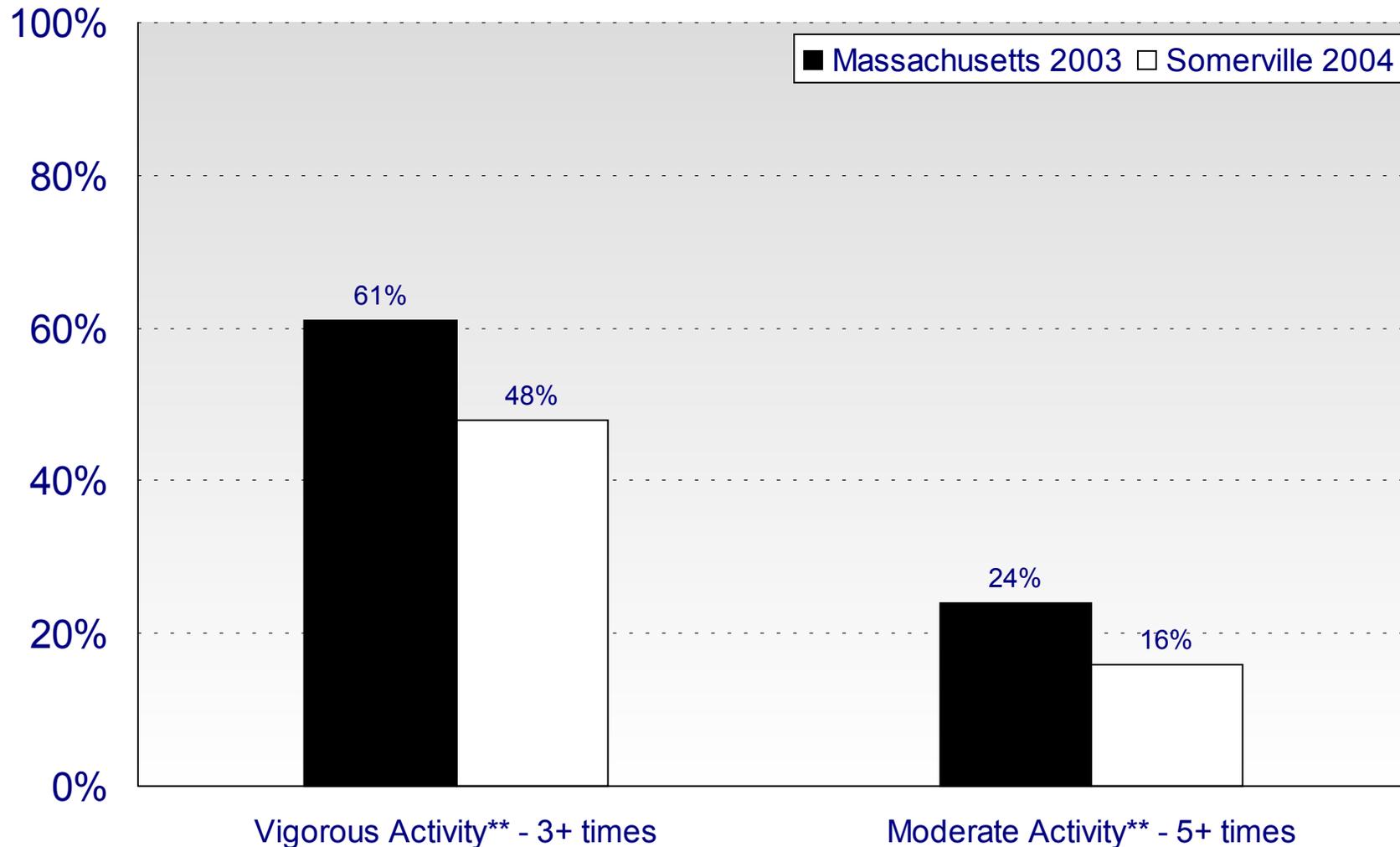


Percent of Somerville High School Students Reporting Attempts to Change Their Weight, by Gender (2004)



Physical Activity

Percent of Massachusetts* (2003) and Somerville (2004) High School Students Who Reported Physical Activity in the Past 7 Days

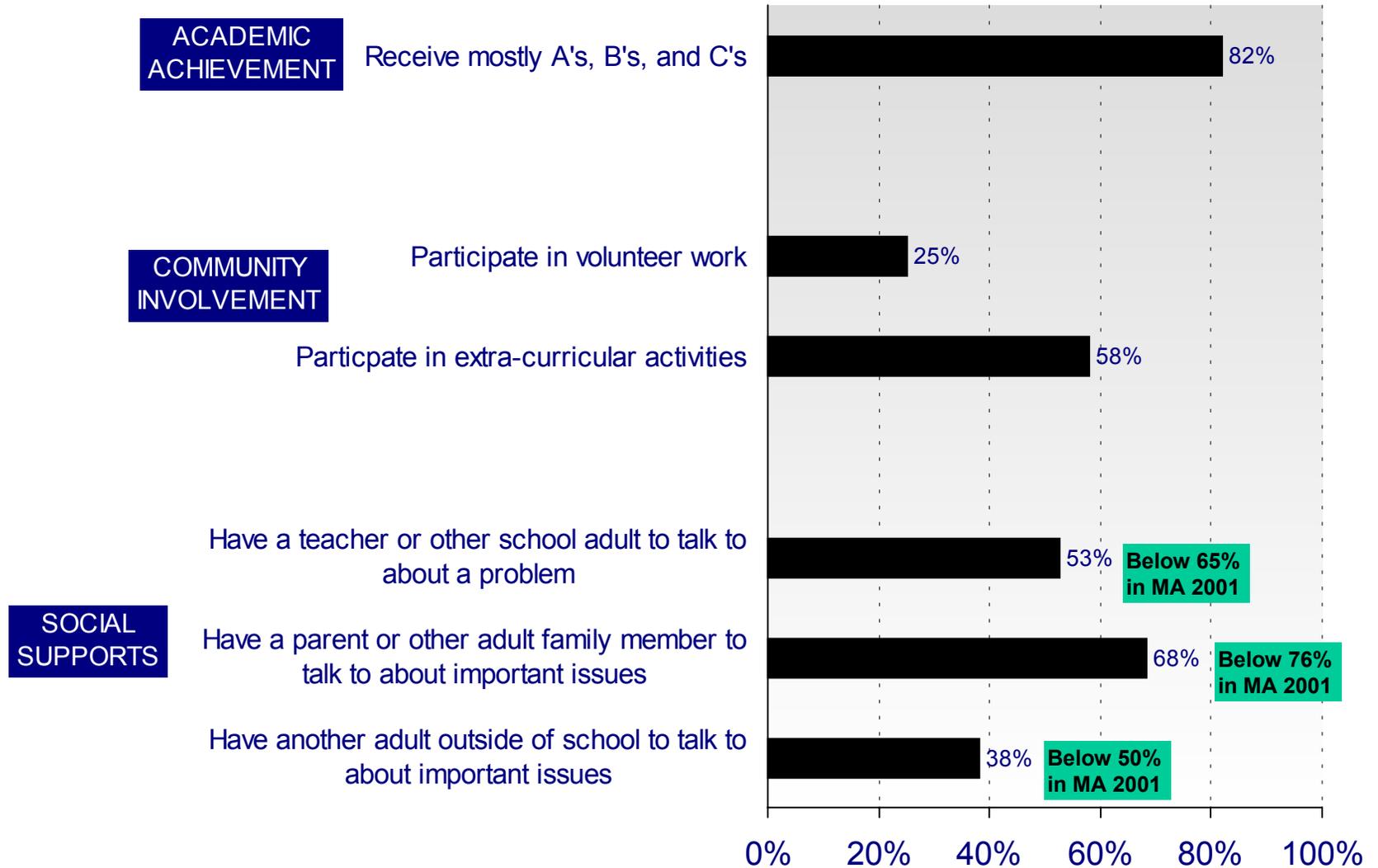


* Massachusetts data from the 2003 *Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey* conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2003).

** *Vigorous* physical activity was defined as participating in physical activities that make you sweat or breath hard for at least 20 minutes. *Moderate* physical activity was defined as participating in physical activities that do not make you sweat or breathe hard for at least 30 minutes.

Resiliency

Percent of Somerville High School Students Reporting Potential Protective Factors (2004)*



* Comparative data are available only for the items listed and are limited to data from the 2001 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Trend data from 2002 are not available for these items.