



# PERSPECTIVES OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS COMPARED TO PATROL OFFICERS: A STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH



Retrieved from: <https://inpublicsafety.com/2014/02/the-impact-of-stress-and-fatigue-on-law-enforcement-officers-and-steps-to-control-it/>

By Nicole Richins, Audrey Reynoso and  
Riley Blackham

# WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

- Who suffers worse with mental health issues between correctional and patrol officers and why. (Or if it's close to the same or similar issues)
- Does one or the other abuse medications or has/have drug use issues because of the job and why.
- What has helped with their recovery or coping mechanisms.
- How it has affected their personal lives because of the job.
- We wanted to compare and contrast mental health along with age, gender, wage, years of service, etc. to see if there was something else that affected the mental health of the individual and not just the job specifically.



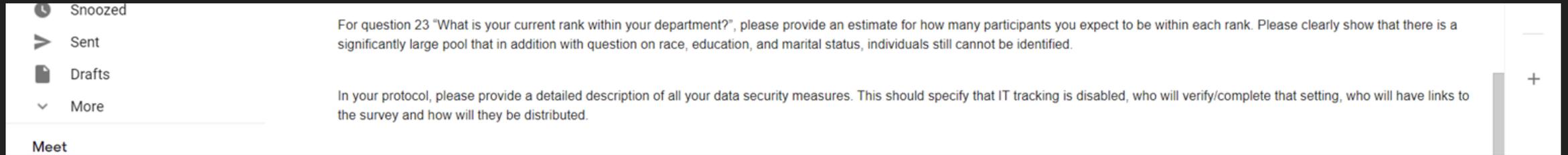
# HOW WE DID IT

- Our design was to conduct a survey of patrol officers, correctional officers and officers who have worked in both capacities.
- The purpose of this was to better compare and contrast the differences and similarities in patrol and correctional officers. This was also designed to see which job affected their mental health more or if it was relatively similar. By adding the officers who have worked both, we were hoping to see more honest results since there was firsthand experience there.

 Survey		
Perspectives of Correctional Officers Compared to Patrol Officers	Active	24
Modified Jul 27, 2020	Status	Questions



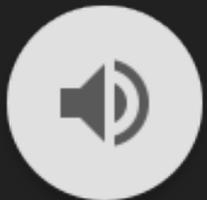
# PROBLEMS WE ENCOUNTERED



- ❖ Some problems we encountered before we could even conduct our research were those pictured above.
- ❖ We had one question about rank that the IRB wanted an estimate for how many of each rank would be participating but we ultimately decided that it wasn't necessarily relevant enough for our survey.
- ❖ They also wanted us to be sure that the subject group was large enough that there would be no way of identifying the individuals participating based on their answers in the survey.
- ❖ Another problem we had to fix was our initial application. There was extra information needed to show that there was no way of obtaining the identity of those participating.
- ❖ Due to these mistakes, our initial application wasn't accepted and we had to fix our mistakes which set us back about four days for our research to start.

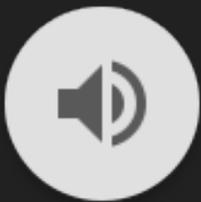


# LITERATURE REVIEW



# PAST STUDIES

- A Comparative Study of Perceived Work Stress
- The California Correctional Officer Survey
- Causes for Correctional Officer Stress
- Stress During Call of Service



# A Comparative Study of Perceived Work Stress

## PURPOSE

This study focused on the perceived work stress of Caucasian police officers compared to their African American colleagues. The study focused on five specific categories when examining different forms of stress. This included police job stress, felt stress, coping strategies, adverse outcomes, and workplace participation.

## RESULTS

Results of this study determined that “racial composition of the command staff of a law enforcement organization influences the police organizational stress levels of those not represented” (Hodges, 2015). The study also found “that officers of color experienced higher levels of police organizational stress than white officers” (Hodges, 2015).



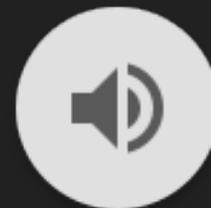
# The California Correctional Officer Survey

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this survey was to gather individual level information on the thoughts, attitudes, and experiences of correctional officers

## RESULTS

Results of this survey expressed a large number of correctional officers facing serious stress related illnesses compared to the average American. The report stated that 28% of correctional officers had feelings of anxiety or depression. With 38% reporting that they no longer had interest or pleasure in doing things. Forty percent of correctional officers were found to have experienced a form of PTSD. Over 10% of correctional officers admitted to having thoughts about suicide, with the rate being higher for retired officers. Sadly, 73% reported that they have never told anyone about these suicide ideations, meaning that they are



# Causes for Correctional Officer Stress

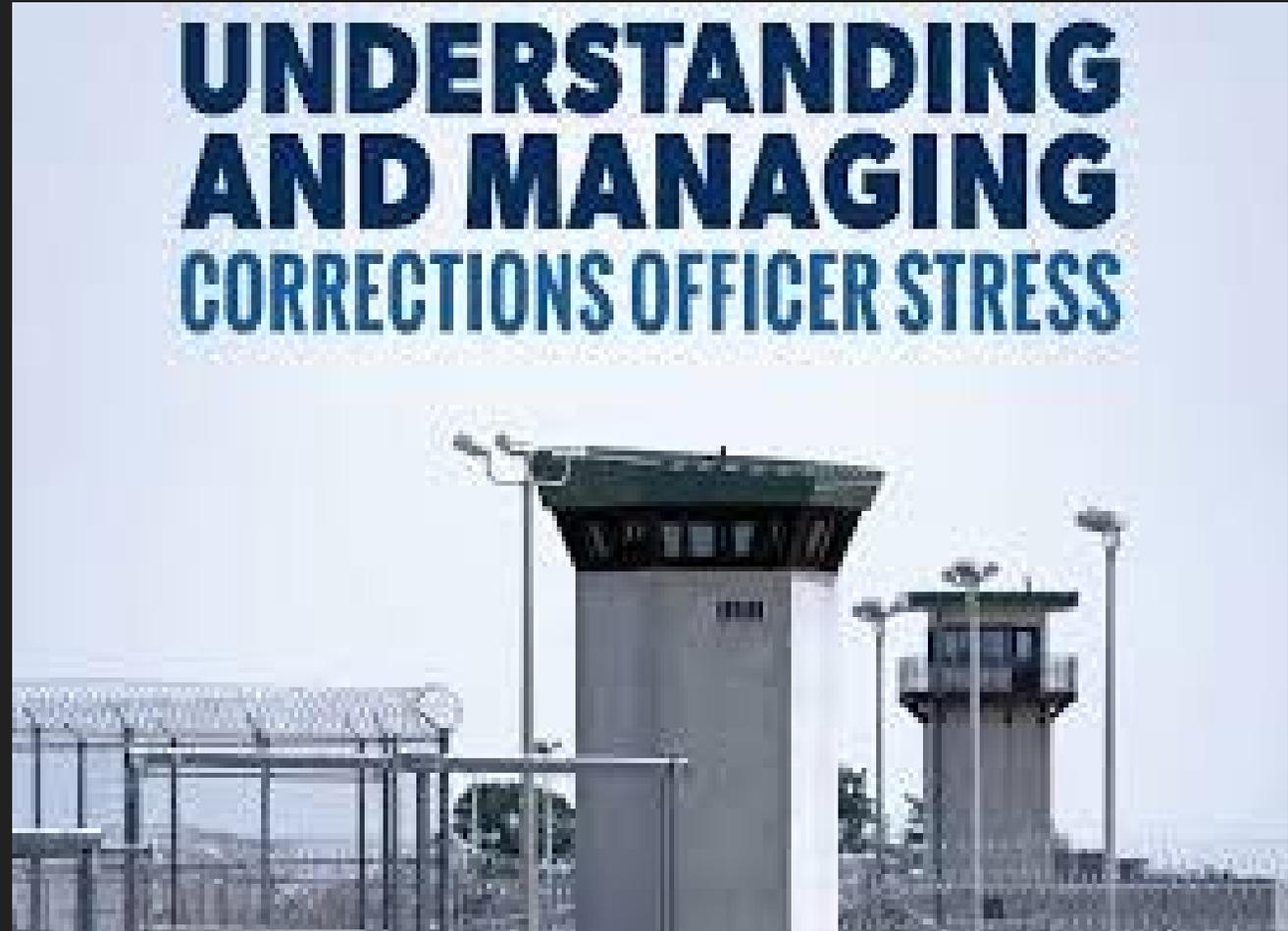


## PURPOSE

This study was done to assess the different factors that triggered stress for correctional officers, its consequences, and the coping methods officers used to reduce stress. The goal in this study was to explore the backgrounds that created the stress, uncover the results, reveal the coping strategies used to deal with the stress, and determine if these coping strategies were in fact helpful

## RESULTS

These surveys reported that many of these correctional officers suffer from high levels of stress from their job. Many expressed stresses were linked to insufficient salaries and overtime demands. Additional stressors such as prison security, lack of administration support, and lack of decision making were also mentioned in the final report



# Stress During Call of Service



## PURPOSE

In 2019, a study was conducted to track an officer's heart rate during their shift. Researchers wanted to study just how often police officers experienced “physiological stress responses” during a regular scheduled shift. In order to measure the officer's level of stress researchers attached heart rate monitors with GPS capability

## RESULTS

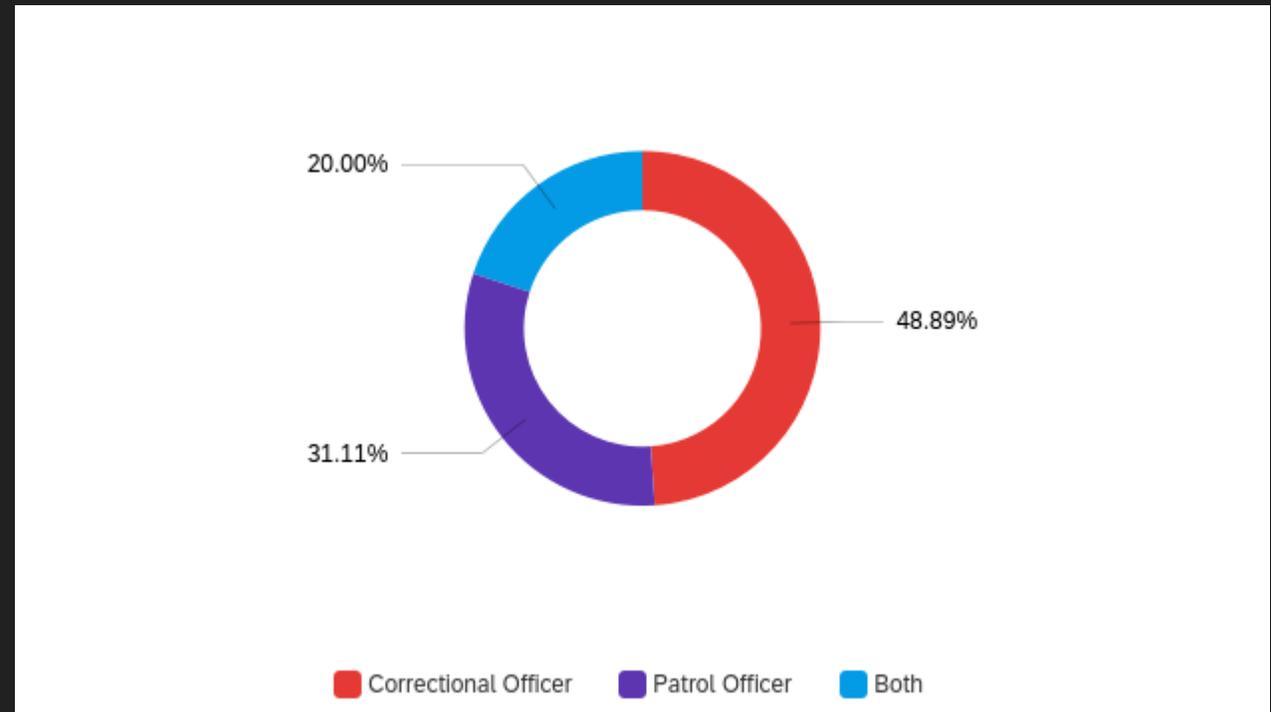
Results of this study reported that heart rate responses were greater for higher priority calls with increased arousal noted as the officers moved through the phases of the call from the beginning to the end. The study also found that calls involving weapons, arrests, or drawing firearms resulted in an officer's heart rate increasing (Kliem, 2019). Surprisingly, an officer's training and experience such as age, gender, or years on the job did not significantly impact or mitigate elevated heart rates caused by stress (Kliem, 2019).



# PARTICIPANTS

Total of 45 Respondents

- 22 Correctional Officers
- 14 Patrol Officers
- 9 who have worked both



# Demographic Data

Total of 45 respondents

- Male - 89% (40)
- Female- 11% (5)
- Age Range - 18 to 54
- Years of Service - 1 to 30 yrs
- Race - 93% Caucasian, 2% Native American, 5% Hispanic
- Average Hourly Wage - \$21 to \$30
- Marital Status - 91% Married, 9% Single, No Divorces reported
- Education - Majority answered "Some College"



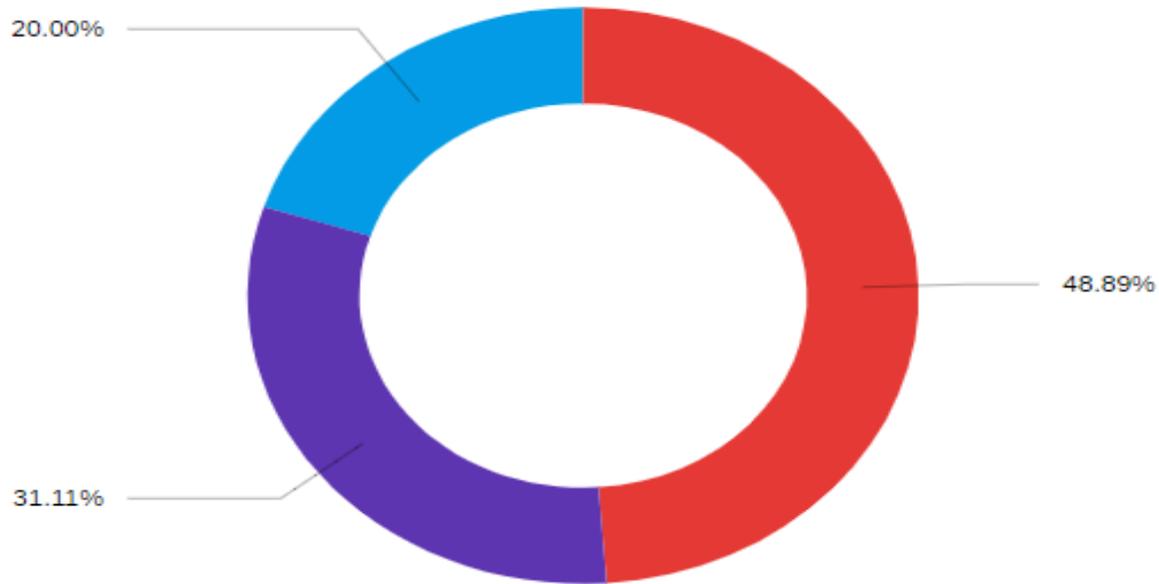
# RESPONSE RATE





# Our data findings

## Types of officers

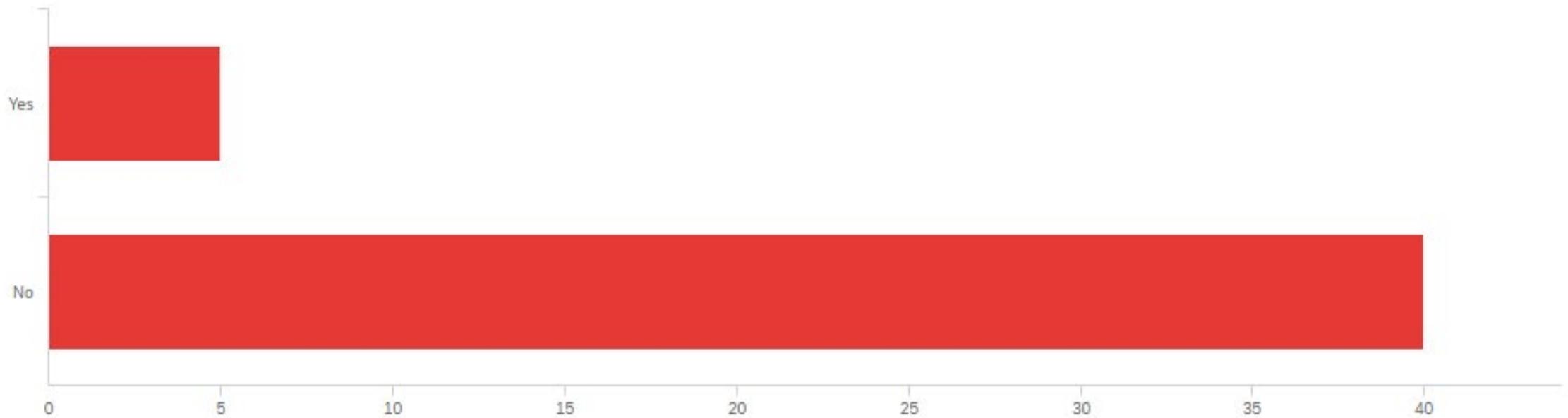


■ Correctional Officer ■ Patrol Officer ■ Both



# Findings on substance abuse

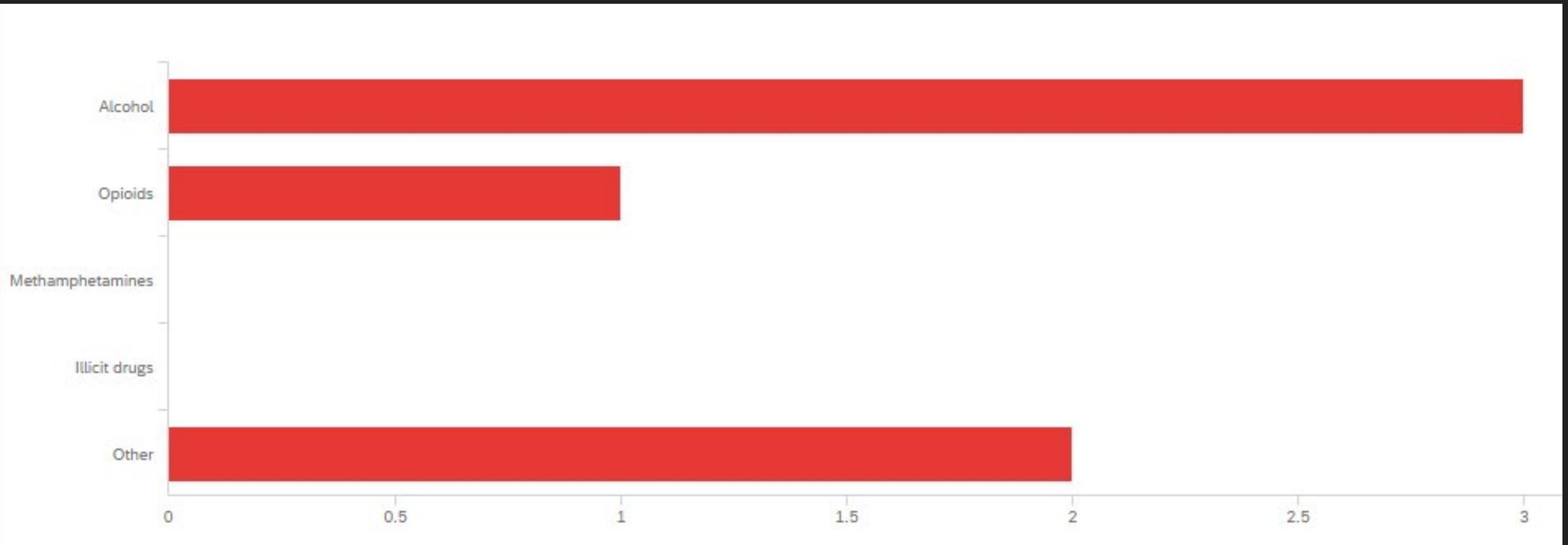
Most of the officers who took the survey have not had substance abuse





# Findings on substance abuse

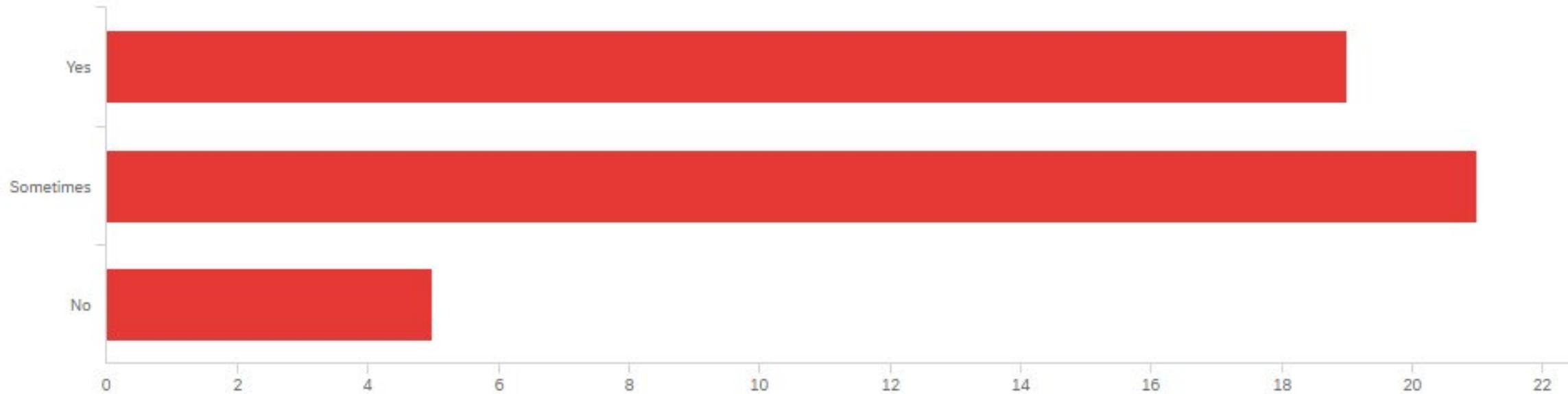
What substance has been abused?





# Findings from our data on anger

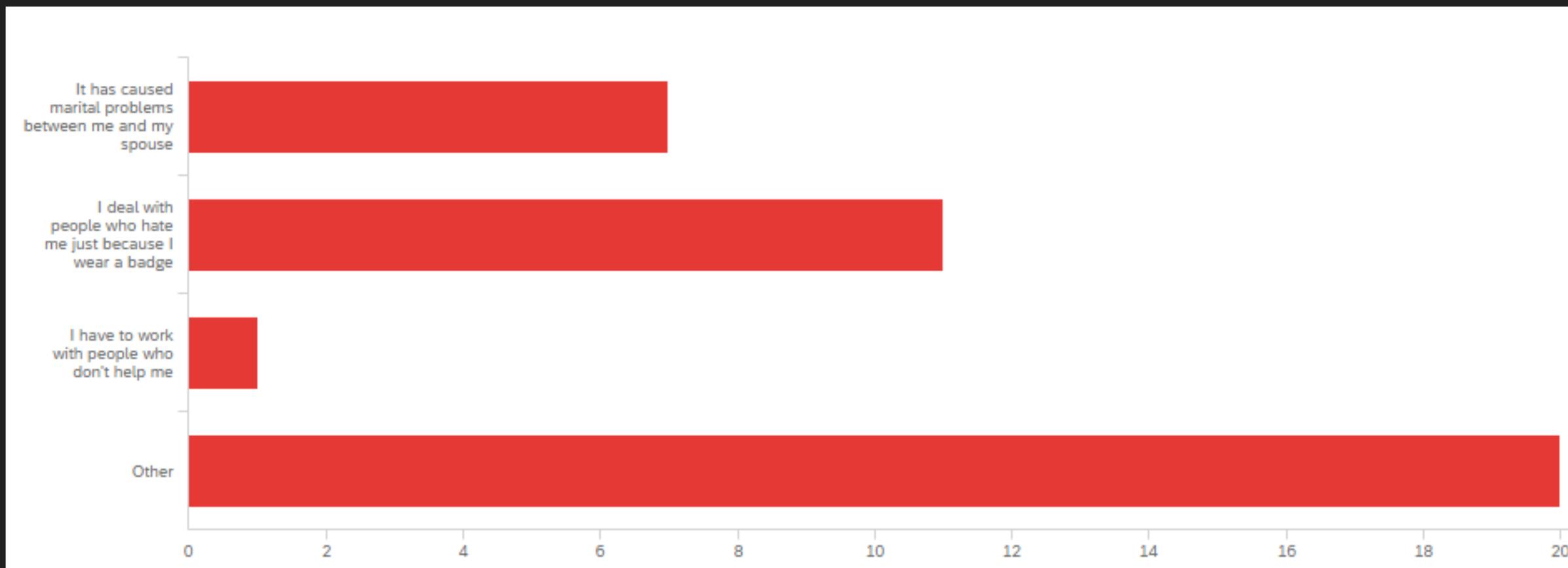
Has your job caused more anger?





# Findings from our data on anger

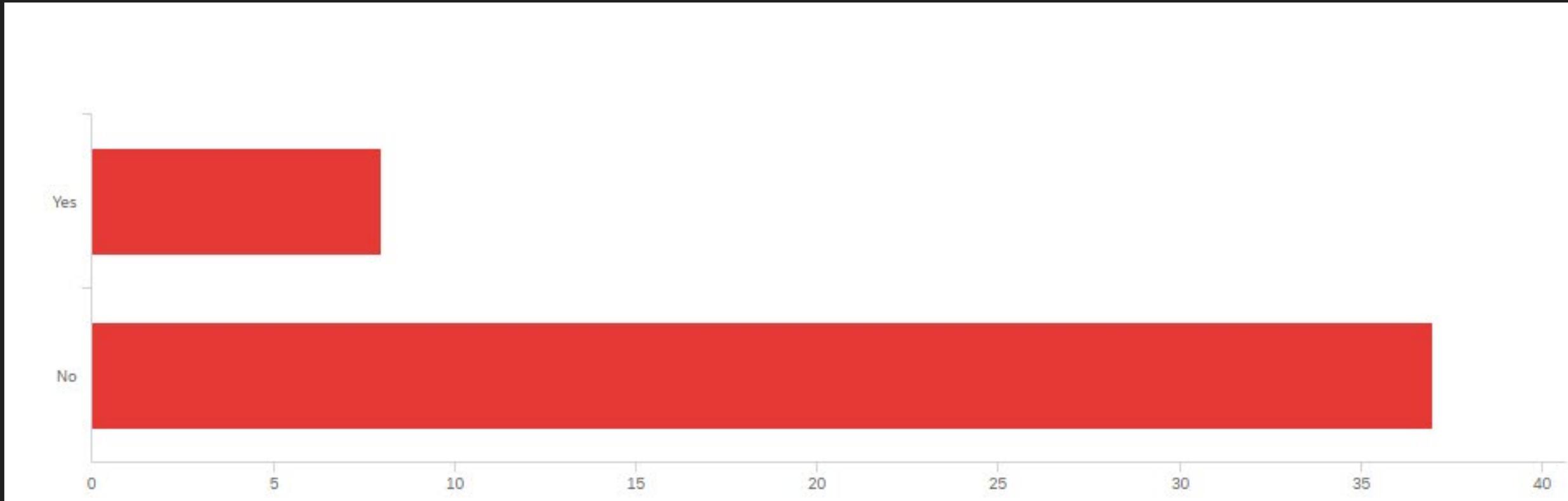
## Why were you more angry than normal?





# Findings on suicide

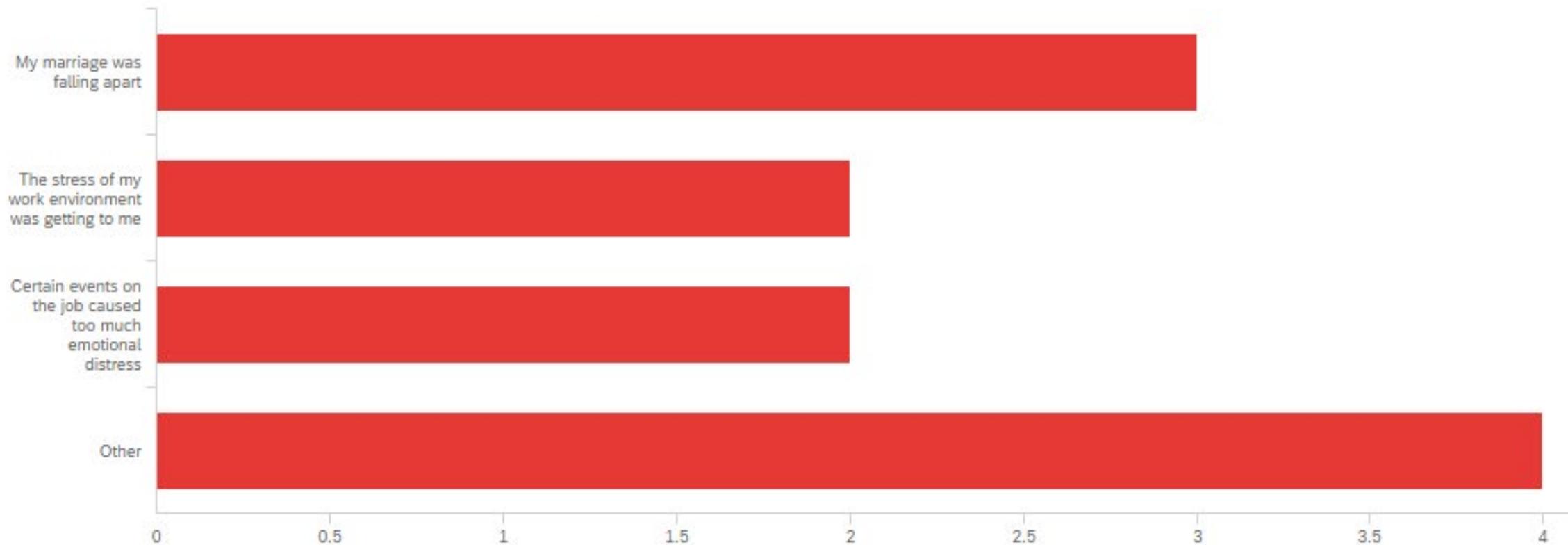
Has your job caused you to have suicidal thoughts?





# Findings on suicide

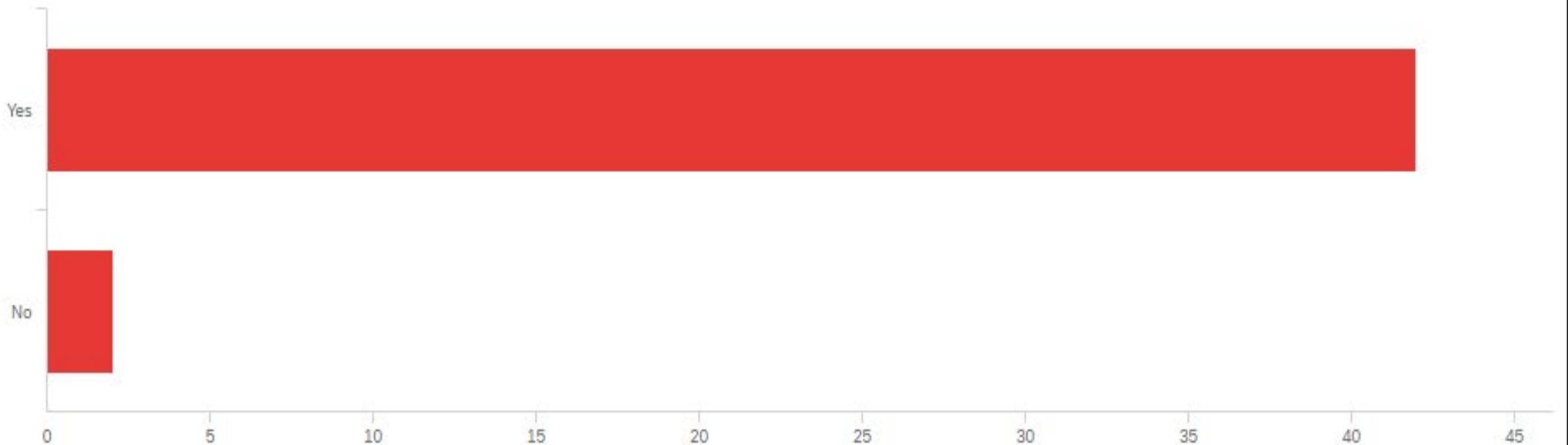
What was causing your suicidal thoughts?





# Treatment Programs

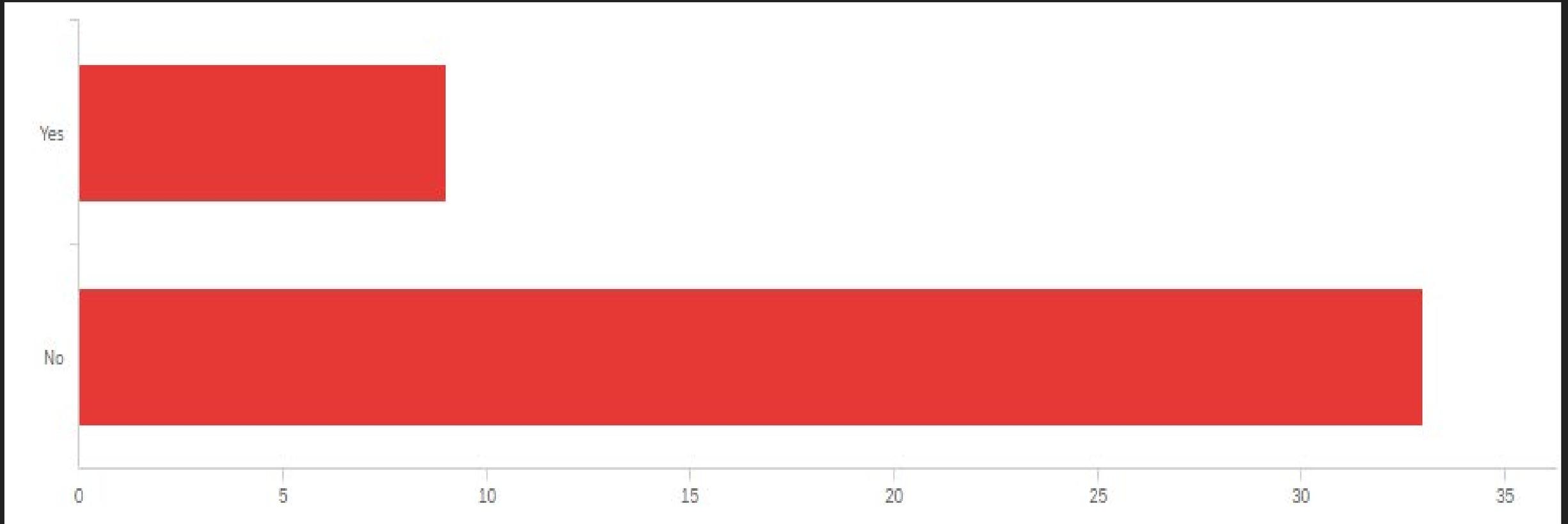
Is there a treatment program?





# Treatment Programs

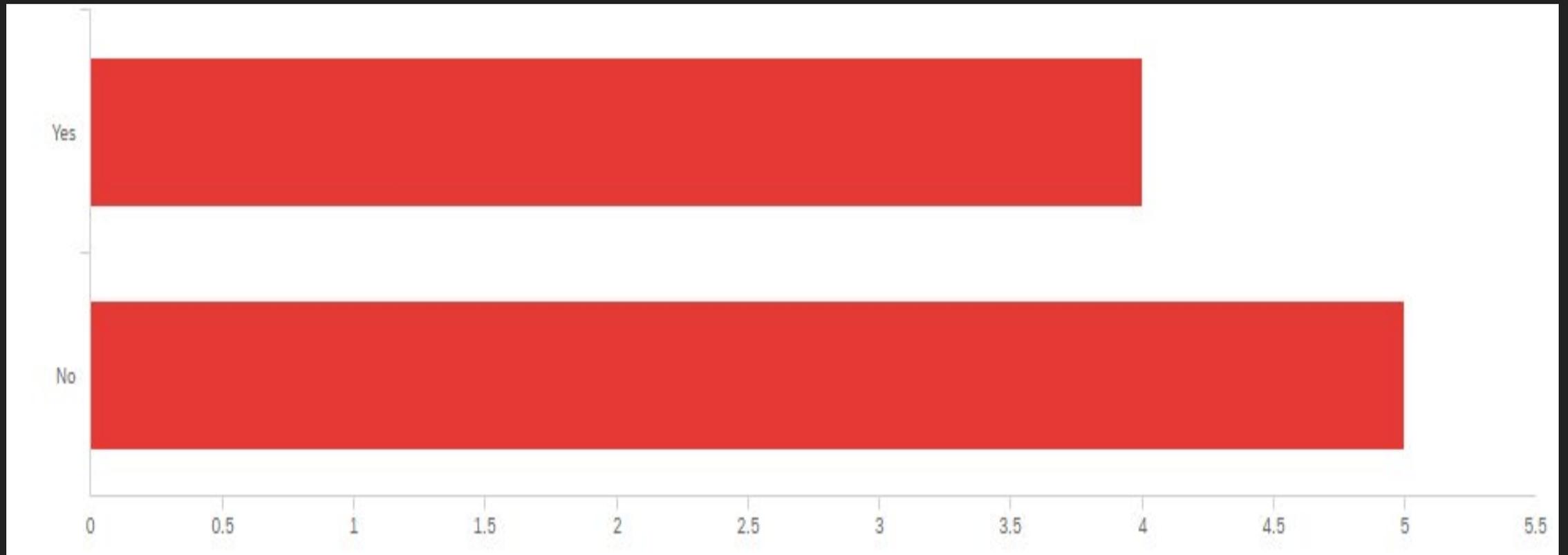
Have you used the programs offered?





# Treatment Programs

Are the treatment programs helpful?



# Final Conclusions

- Most officers have not had substance abuse
- Alcohol was the highest abused substance
- Being more angry is a possibility
- There are underlying issues as to why an officer is angrier than normal
- Officers do not have suicidal thoughts that often
- There are treatment programs offered to help the officers
- Most officers have not used the treatment programs

