



Public Health Workforce in Switzerland: A National Census

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Census of the Public Health Workforce

Study Objective

To create a profile of the public health workforce in Switzerland:

- Size
- Demographics
- Professional Areas
- Education
- Public Health Competency Needs

Purpose

To better understand the public health workforce in order to strengthen the planning, development and training of this workforce.

Study Methodology

Population-based online-survey targeting *individuals* who, through their *organizations*, provide one or more **essential public health services**:

- **Population-based interventions** against diseases and their consequences, mainly in the field of prevention and health promotion
- **Interventions on the structure and activity of the health system**, including management and planning of health care, health policy work and health law
- **Research** on any public health discipline, including international/global health and aspects of primary care
- **Education and Training** on any public health discipline

Adapted from The Public Health Functions Steering Committee, US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Partners (1993), and WHO Europe, The 10 essential public health operations (EPHOs)

Organizational Survey Methodology

Fully Surveyed:

- Government Institutions
- Educational/Research Institutions
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Professional Associations

Sampled:

- Hospitals
- Health Insurance Companies
- Pharma/Biotech Companies
- Consulting Firms
- International Organizations

Data Gathering Process

January 3 to May 31, 2012

- Contacted by phone organizations identified as meeting public health service criteria, to explain study and obtain agreement to participate
- Distributed online survey to public health workforce members via *point persons at identified organizations*
- Each point person was to identify *all* individuals within his/her organization who provide at least one of the four public health services
- Obtained summary data from large organizations

Organizations Providing Public Health Services and Activities

- **445** organizations identified
- **430** organizations contacted by phone
- **188** organizations participated in the study

Participating Organizations

| Organization Sectors | # of Participating Organizations | % of Contacted Organizations Participating (by sector) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Professional Associations | 51 | 31% |
| Government Institutions | 44 | 69% |
| Non-Governmental Organizations | 42 | 47% |
| Educational/Research | 31 | 76% |
| Hospitals | 13 | 33% |
| Health Insurance | 4 | 31% |
| Consulting | 2 | 29% |
| International Organizations | 1 | 25% |
| Pharma/Biotech Industry | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 188 | |

Size of Public Health Workforce

Individuals meeting study criteria:

- 4388 received survey link
 - 1598 individuals completed the survey

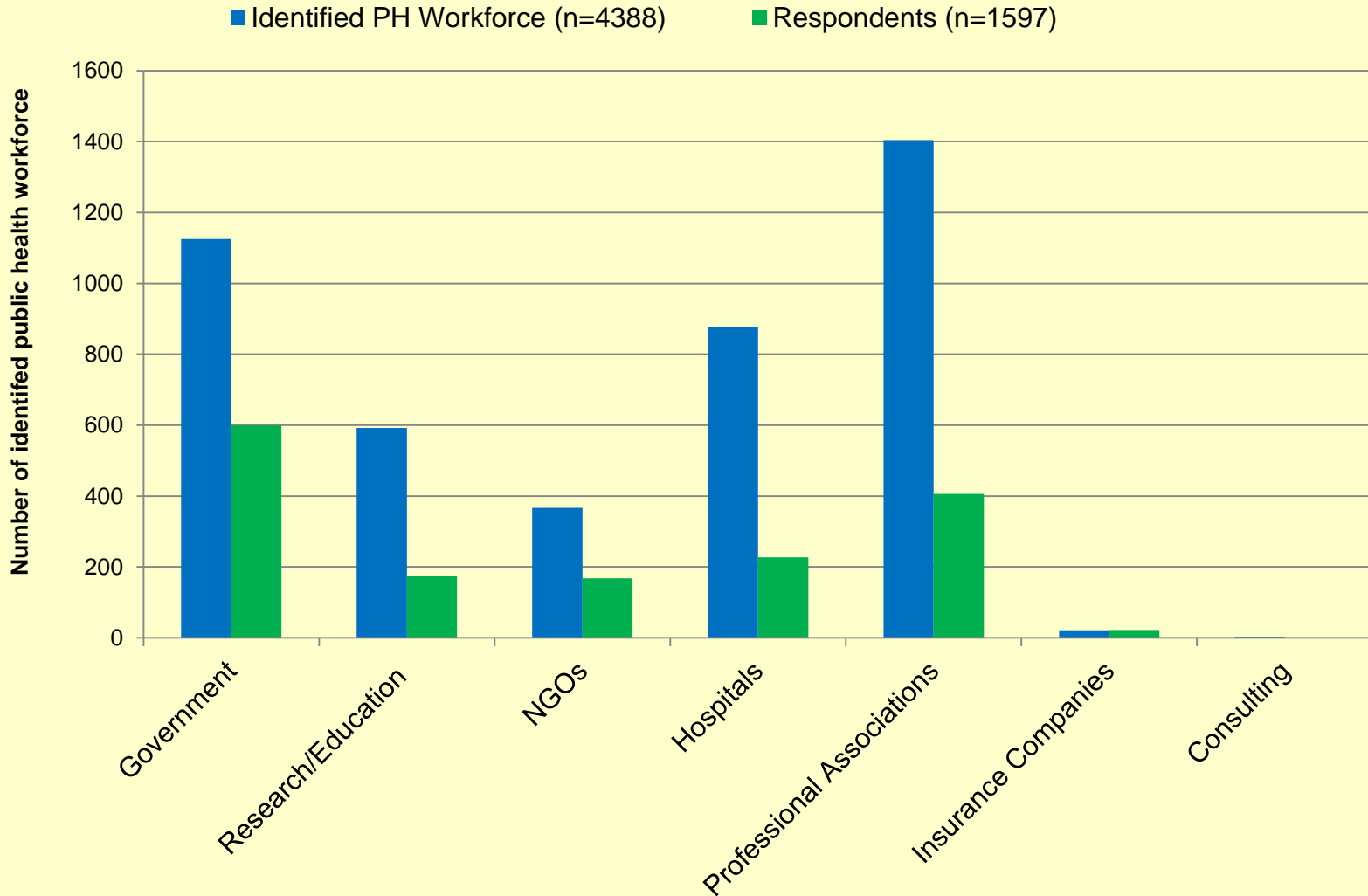
Organizational summary data:

- 1425 total individuals
 - 258 from SUVA
 - 1167 from WHO

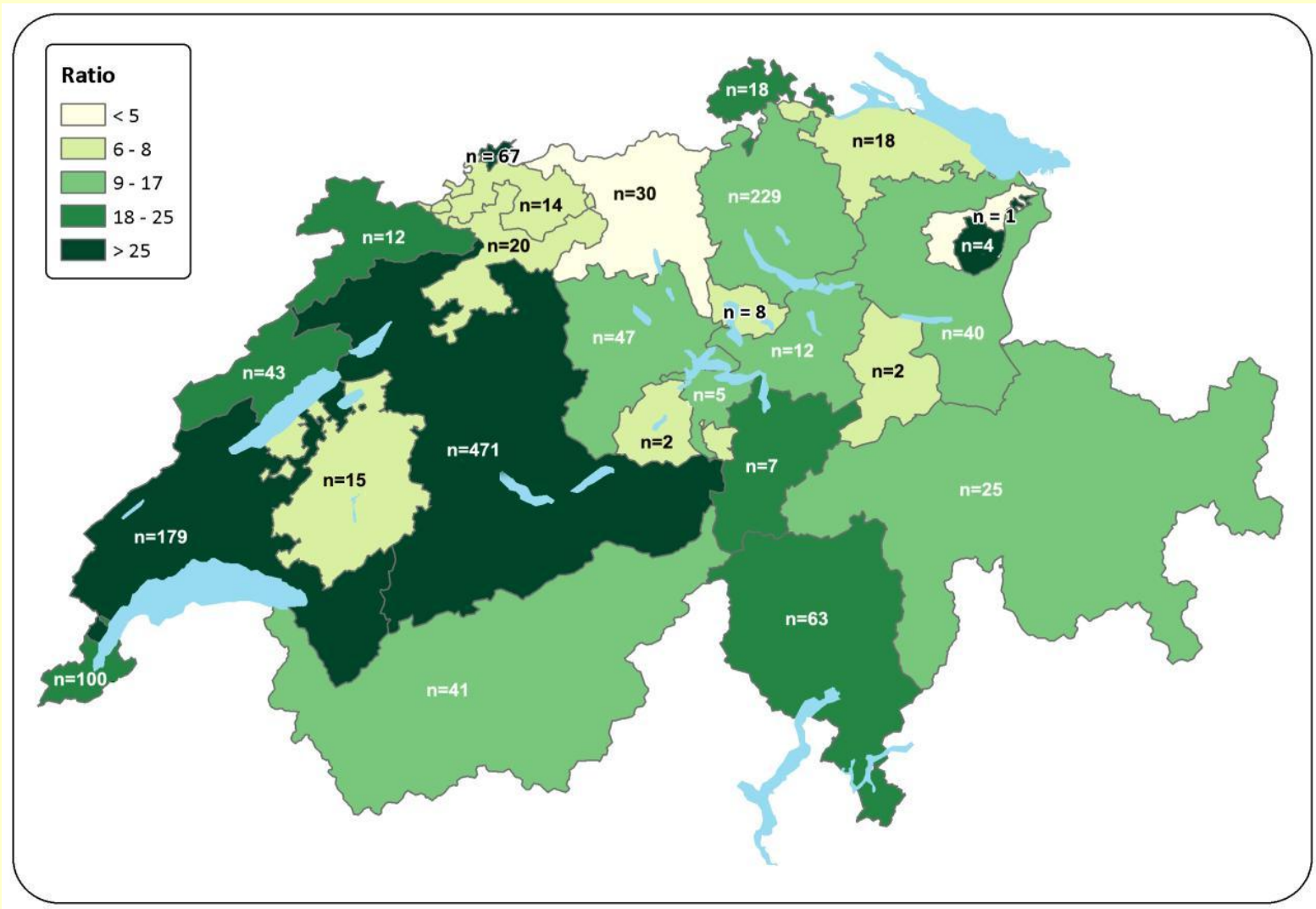
Total estimated public health workforce:

- At least **5813** individuals

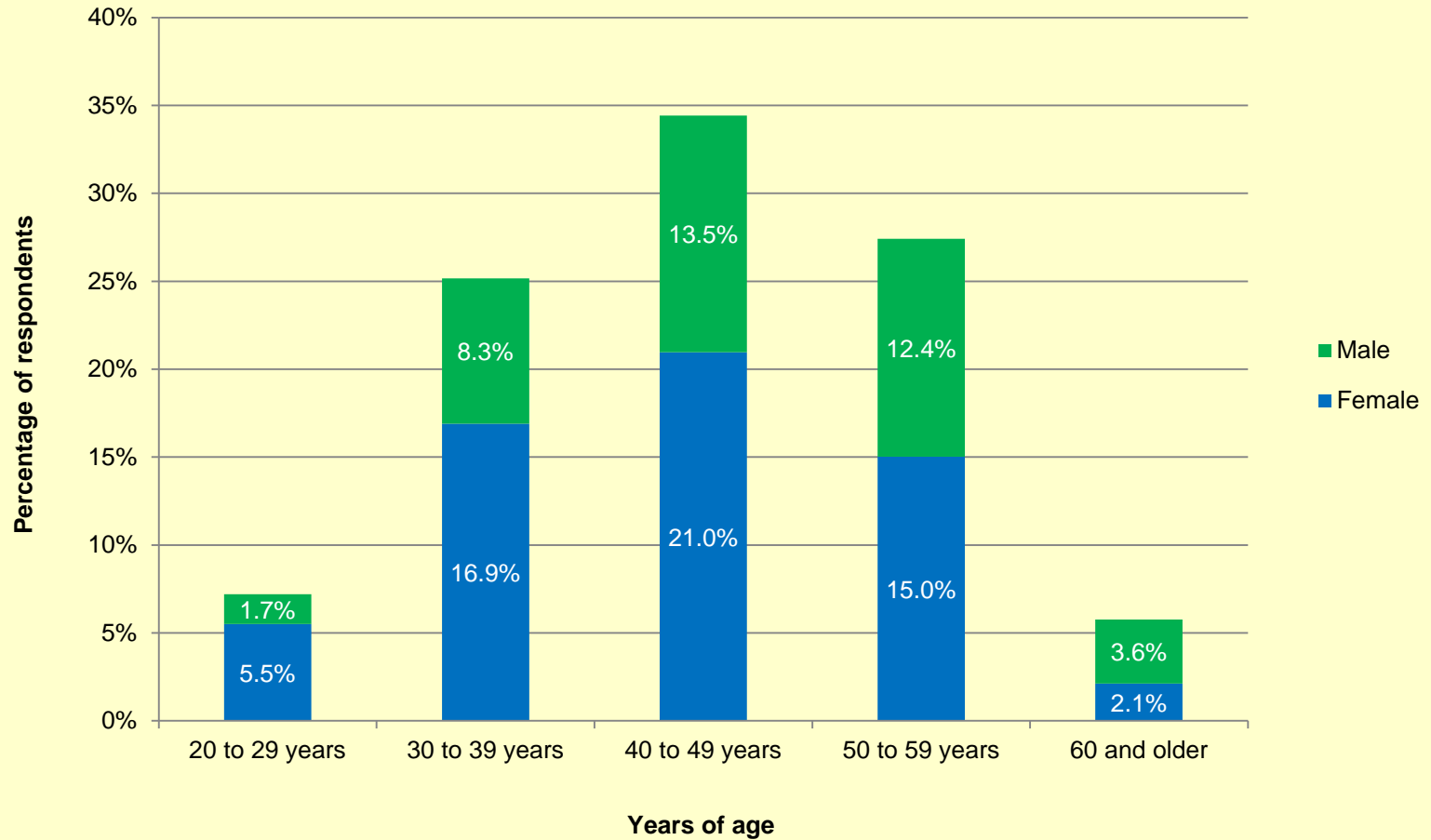
Identified Public Health Workforce and Study Respondents by Organization Sector



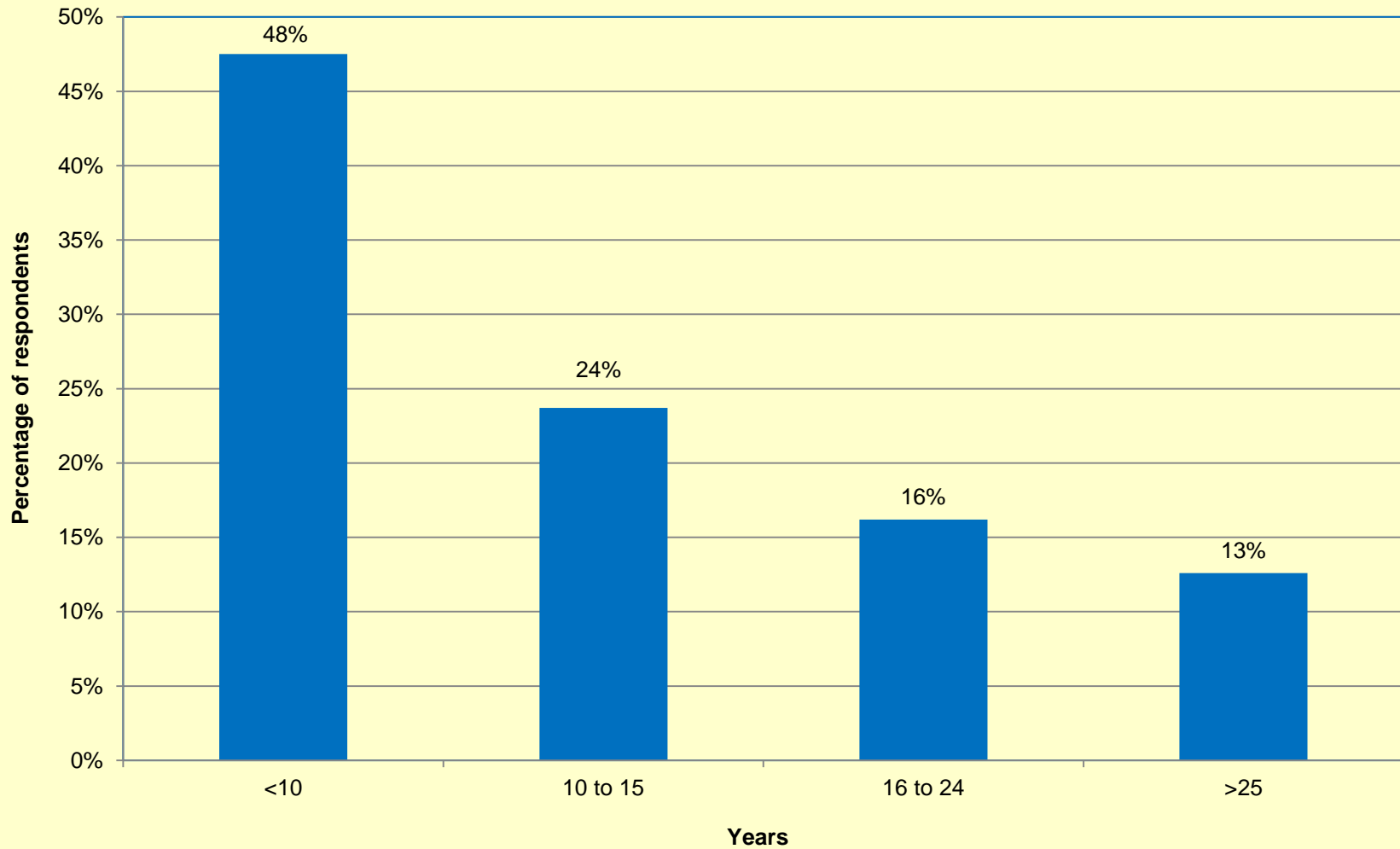
Respondents' Distribution by Canton per 100'000 Population



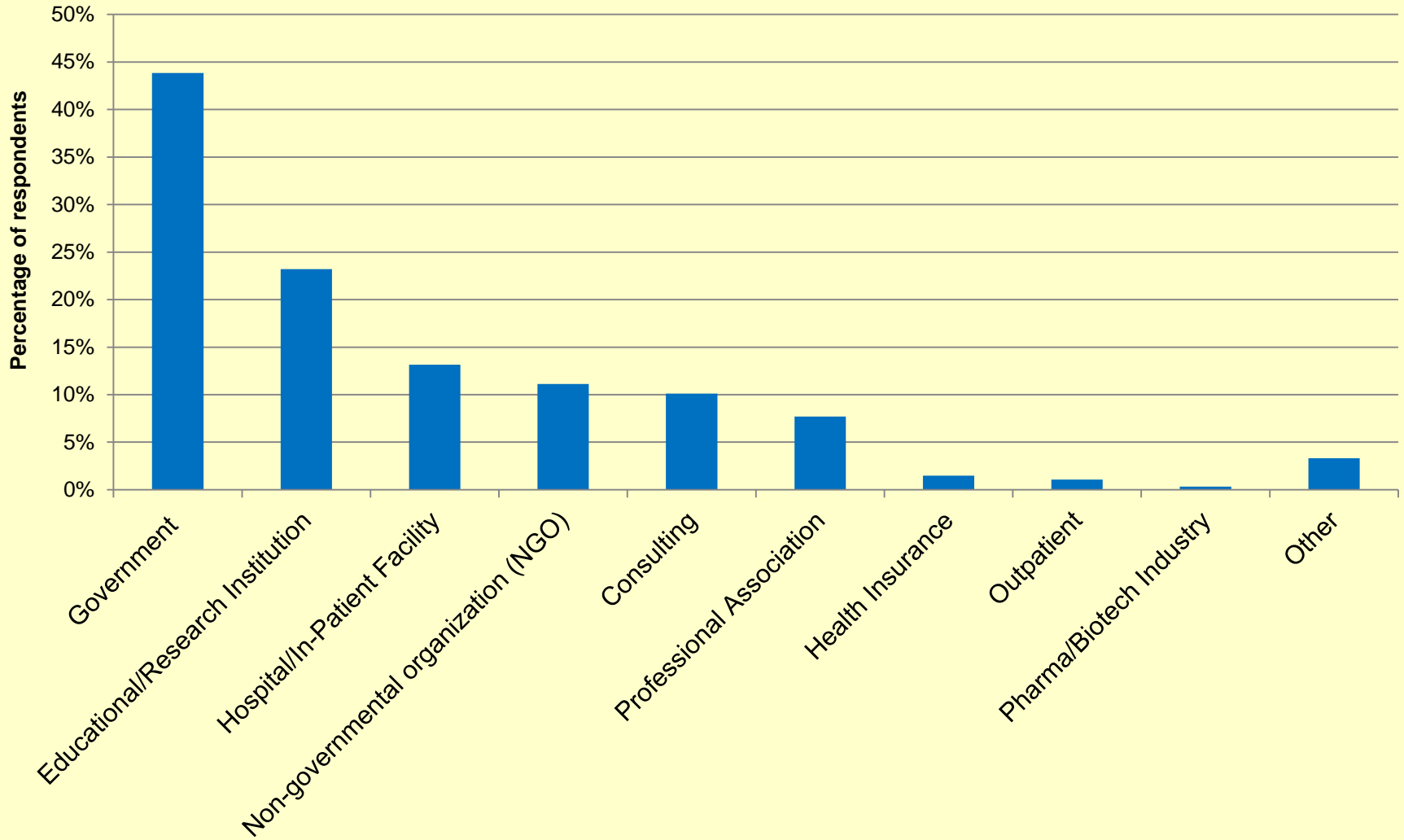
Age Distribution by Gender



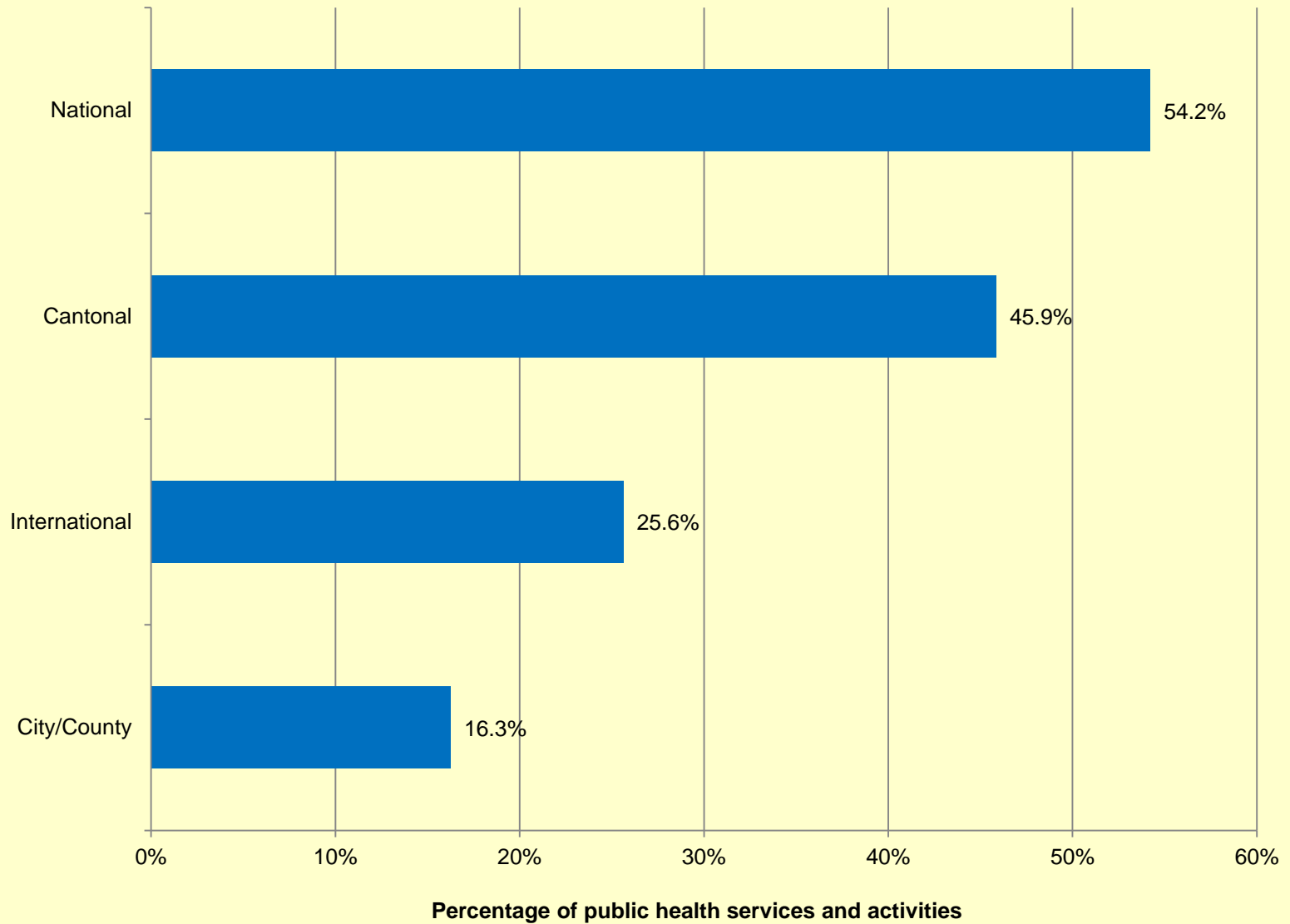
Years of Experience in Public Health



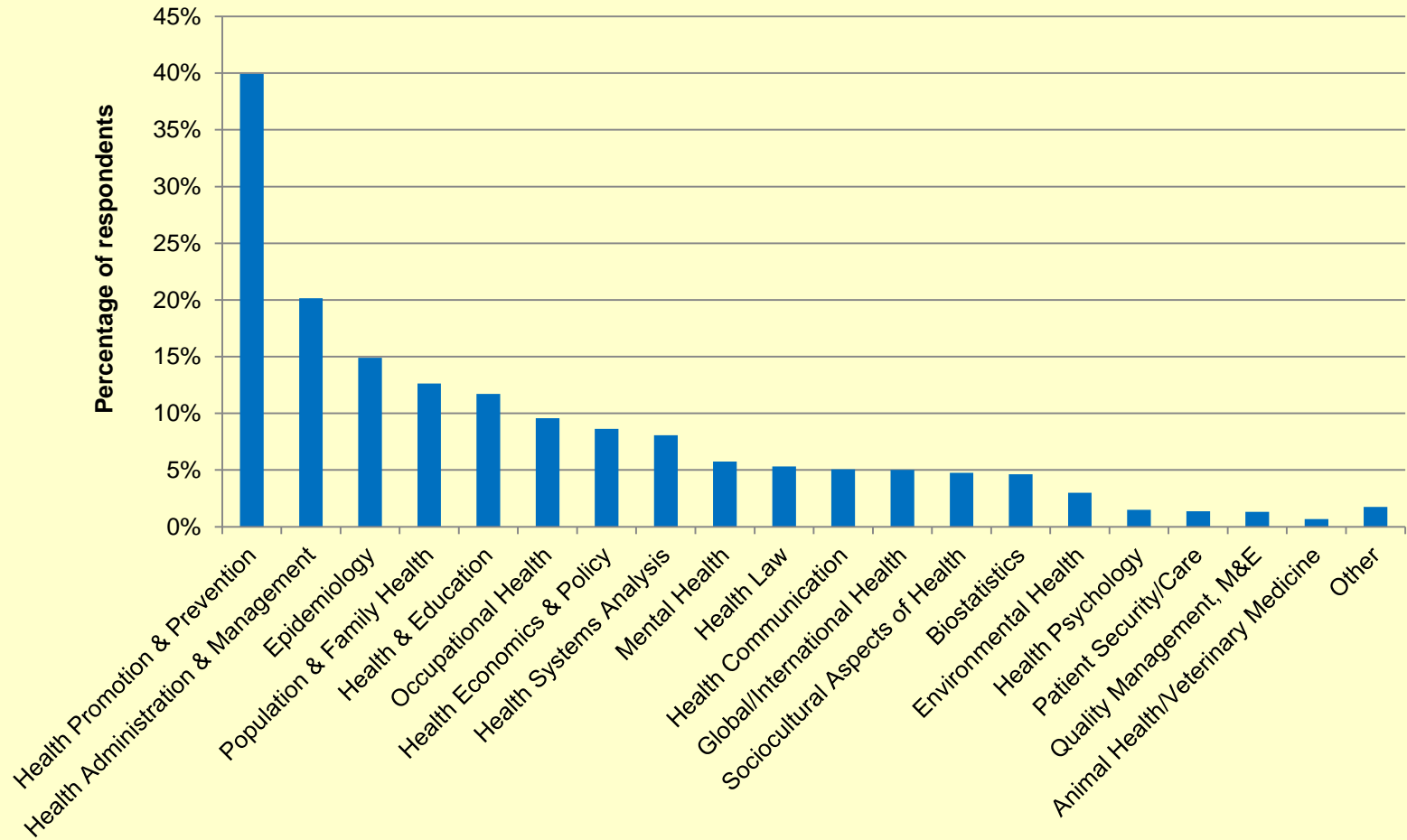
Professional Sector



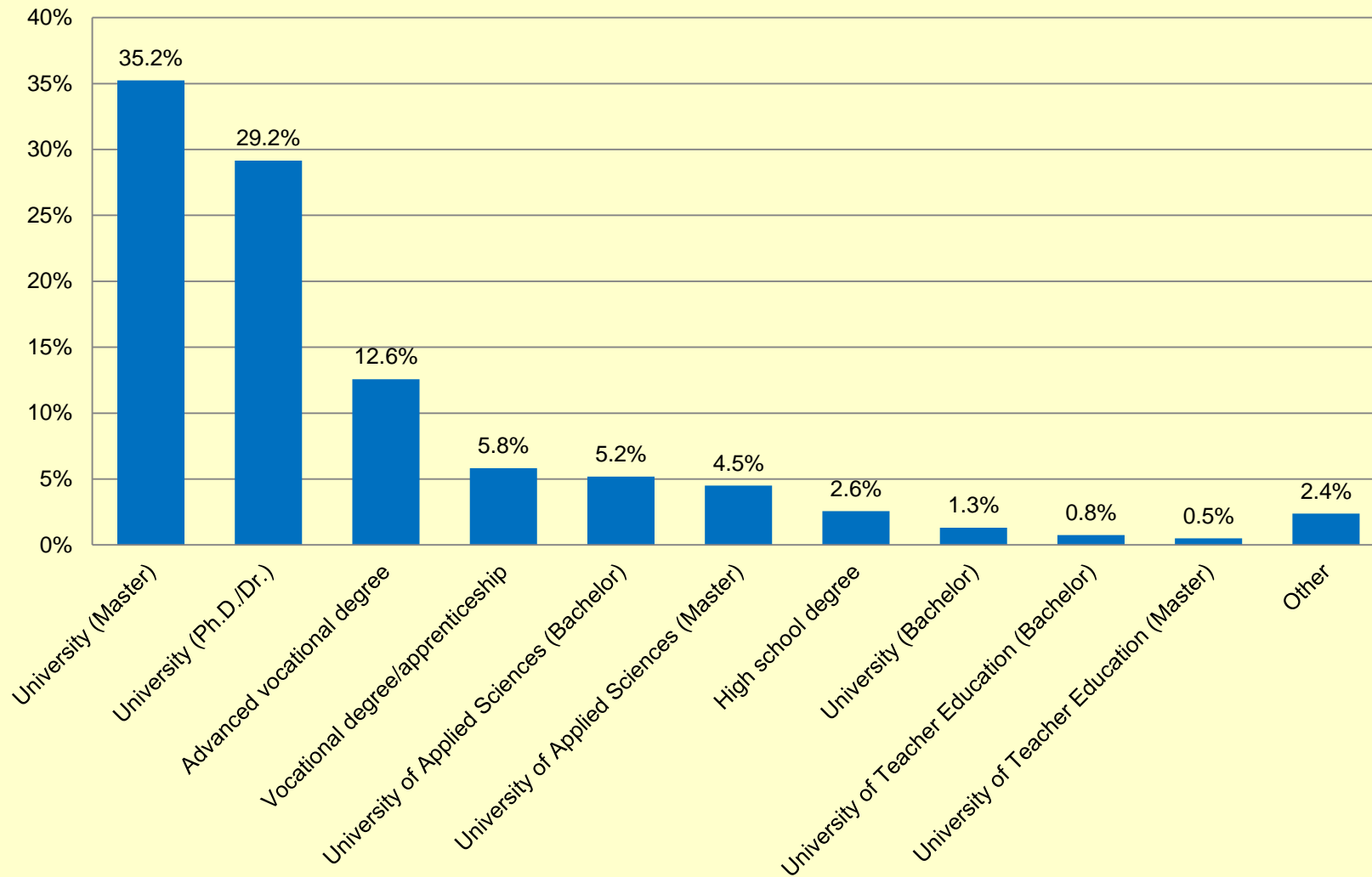
Geographic Reach of Public Health Services and Activities



Public Health Specialty

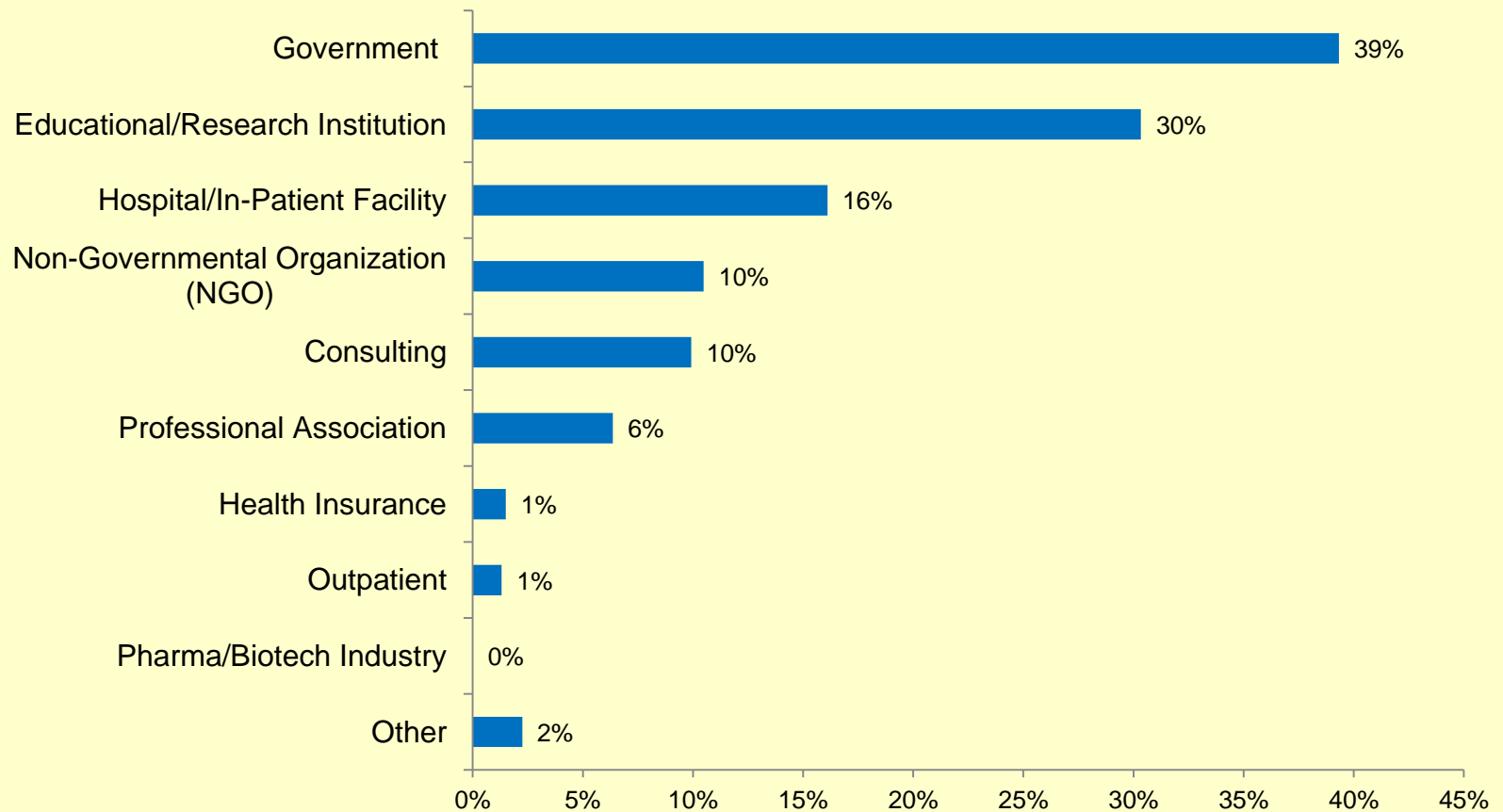


Highest Education



Professional Sector by Public Health Education

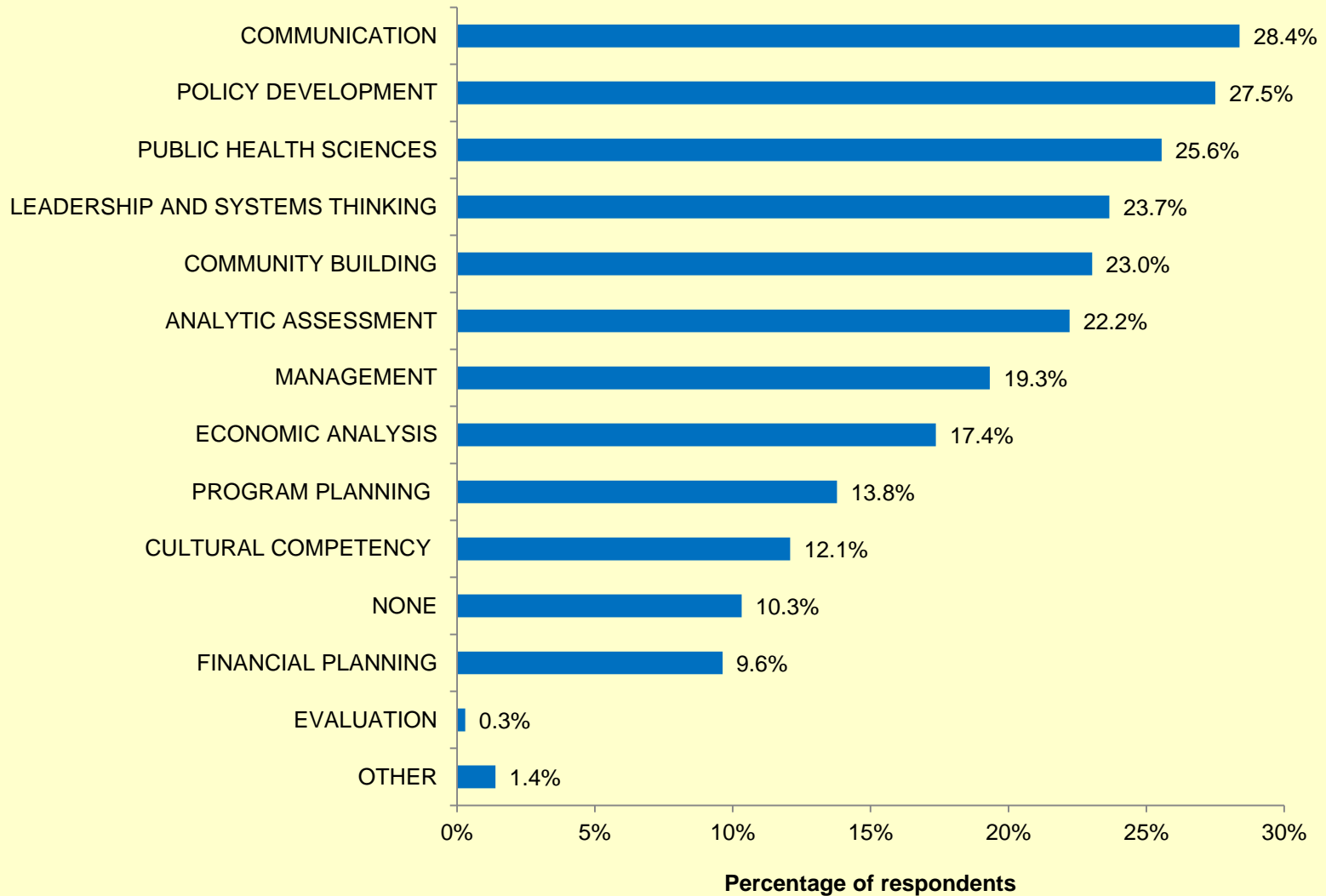
■ Percentage of Respondents with a Public Health Education (n=534)



Continuing Education in Public Health

- 78% of respondents have had some type of continuing education in public health
- Over half of the respondents (54%) attended at least one non-degree, public health related training in 2011, with a median of 20 hours of training
- 29% of respondents attended or are currently attending at least one training with a formal degree, such as a CAS, DAS or MAS
- Key Education Disciplines:
 - Public Health (Masters and Certificates)
 - Health Economics and Management
 - Health Promotion and Prevention

Public Health Competency Needs



Summary and Conclusions

- The size of the public health workforce in Switzerland:
 - At least 5813
 - Difficult to measure – organizational participation, scope definition
- The public health workforce in Switzerland is highly educated:
 - 64% of respondents have an academic degree
- It is a relatively junior workforce in terms of public health experience:
 - Nearly half (48%) have less than 10 years of experience
- Women are in the majority:
 - Nearly 2/3 of respondents are women (61%)
- The workforce wants both:
 - More “soft skills” – communications, leadership and systems thinking
 - More technical skills – public health sciences and policy development

Acknowledgments

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