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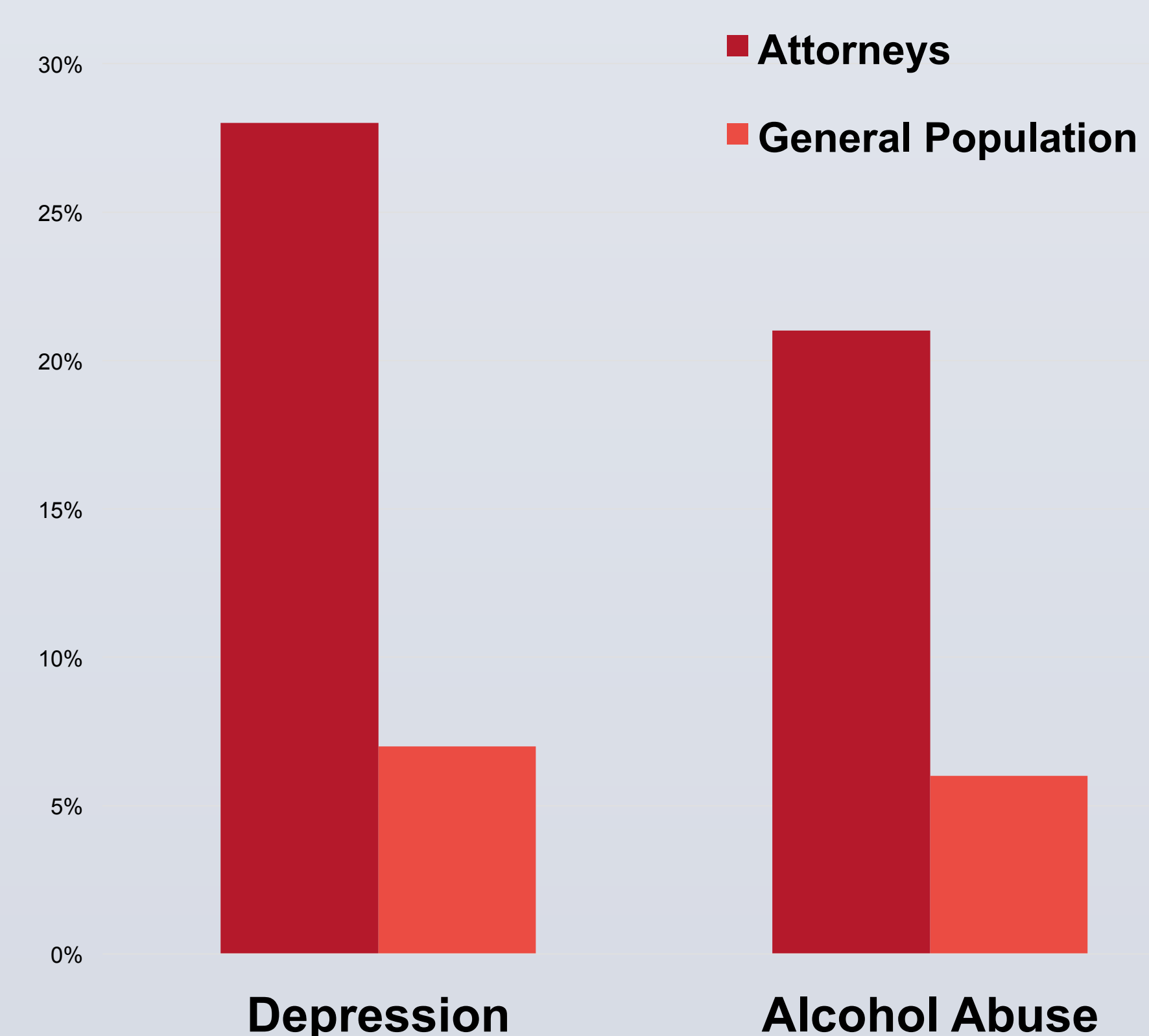
ABSTRACT

- According to the American Bar Association (2017), there are almost 1.5 million working attorneys in the United States.
- Research shows that attorneys experience a high rate of psychological problems (Krill, Johnson, & Albert, 2016).
- This poster integrates current literature to support the argument that attorneys are vulnerable to experiencing secondary traumatic stress (STS).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

- Compared to the general population, attorneys have higher rates of depression (28% vs 7% general population) and alcohol abuse (21% vs 6% general population; American Bar Association [ABA], Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation & Albert, 2016; see Figure 1).

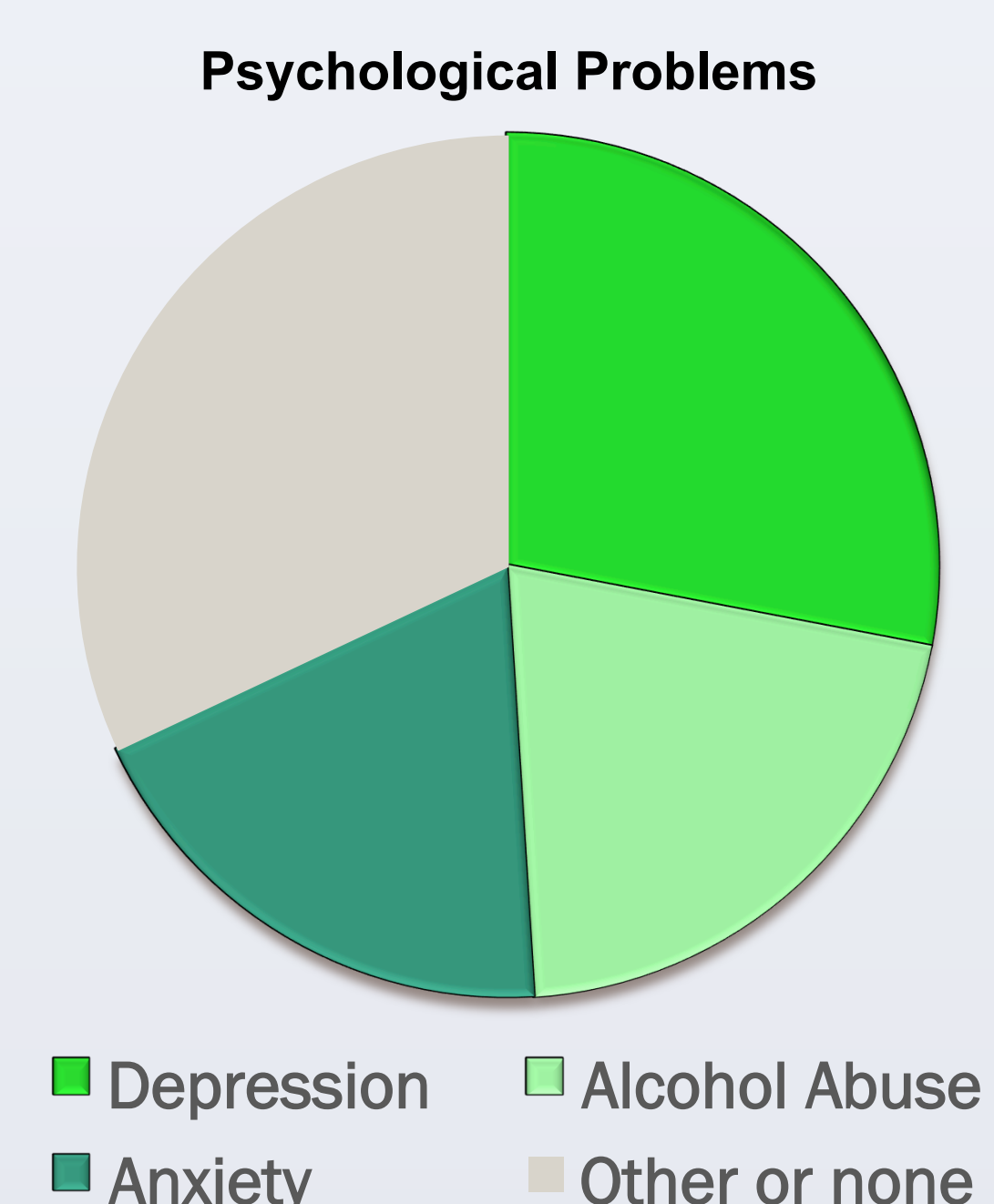
Figure 1: Depression and Alcohol Abuse in Attorneys and the General Population



PREVIOUS RESEARCH

- Research shows a substantial proportion of attorneys experience psychological problems including depression (28%), anxiety (19%), and substance abuse (20.6%; Krill et al., 2016; see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Psychological Problems in Attorneys



- Problematic drinking is more common in male attorneys than female attorneys (ABA et al., 2016; see Figure 3).
- Problematic drinking is more common in younger associates than senior partners (ABA et al., 2016; see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Problematic Drinking in Male Attorneys and Female Attorneys

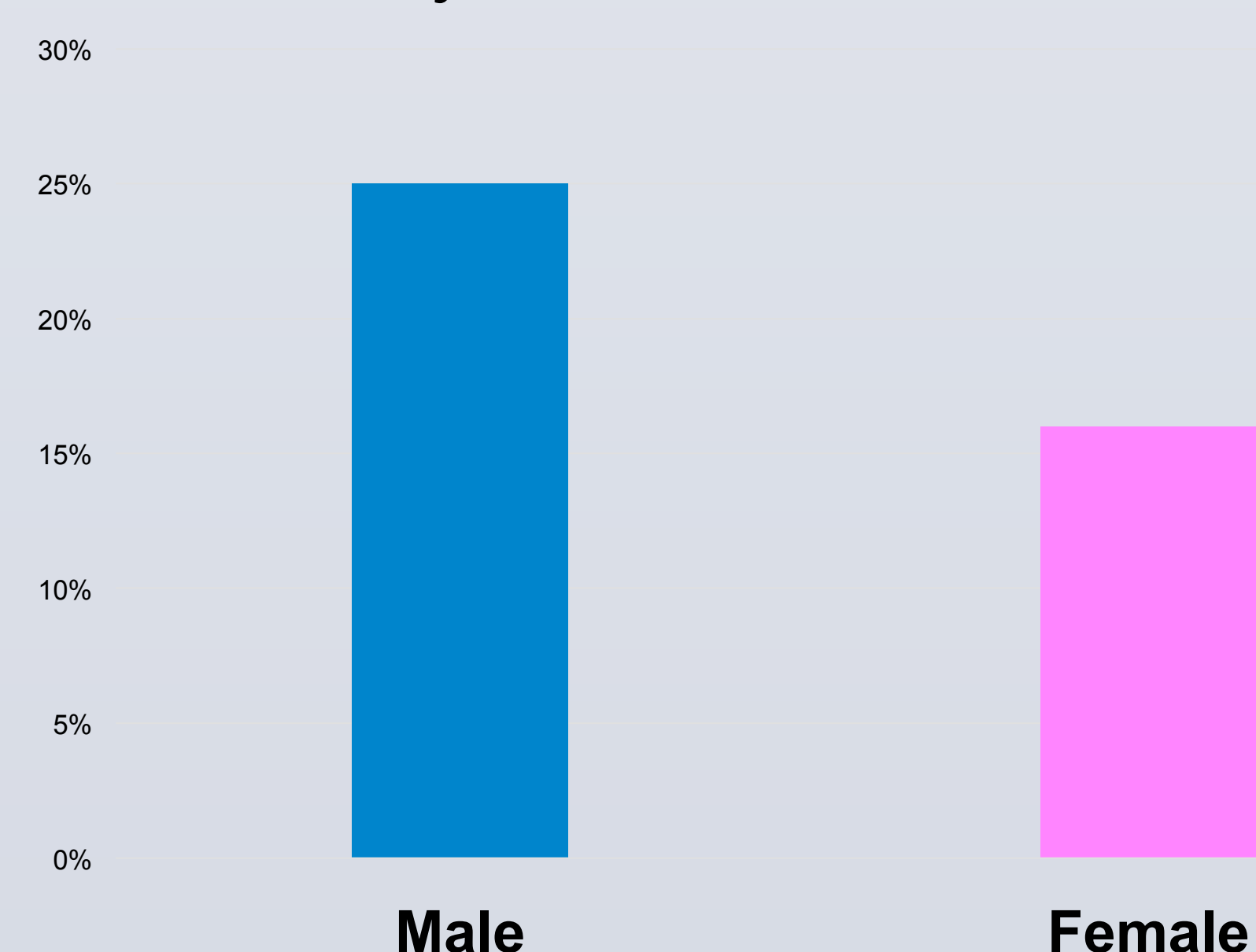
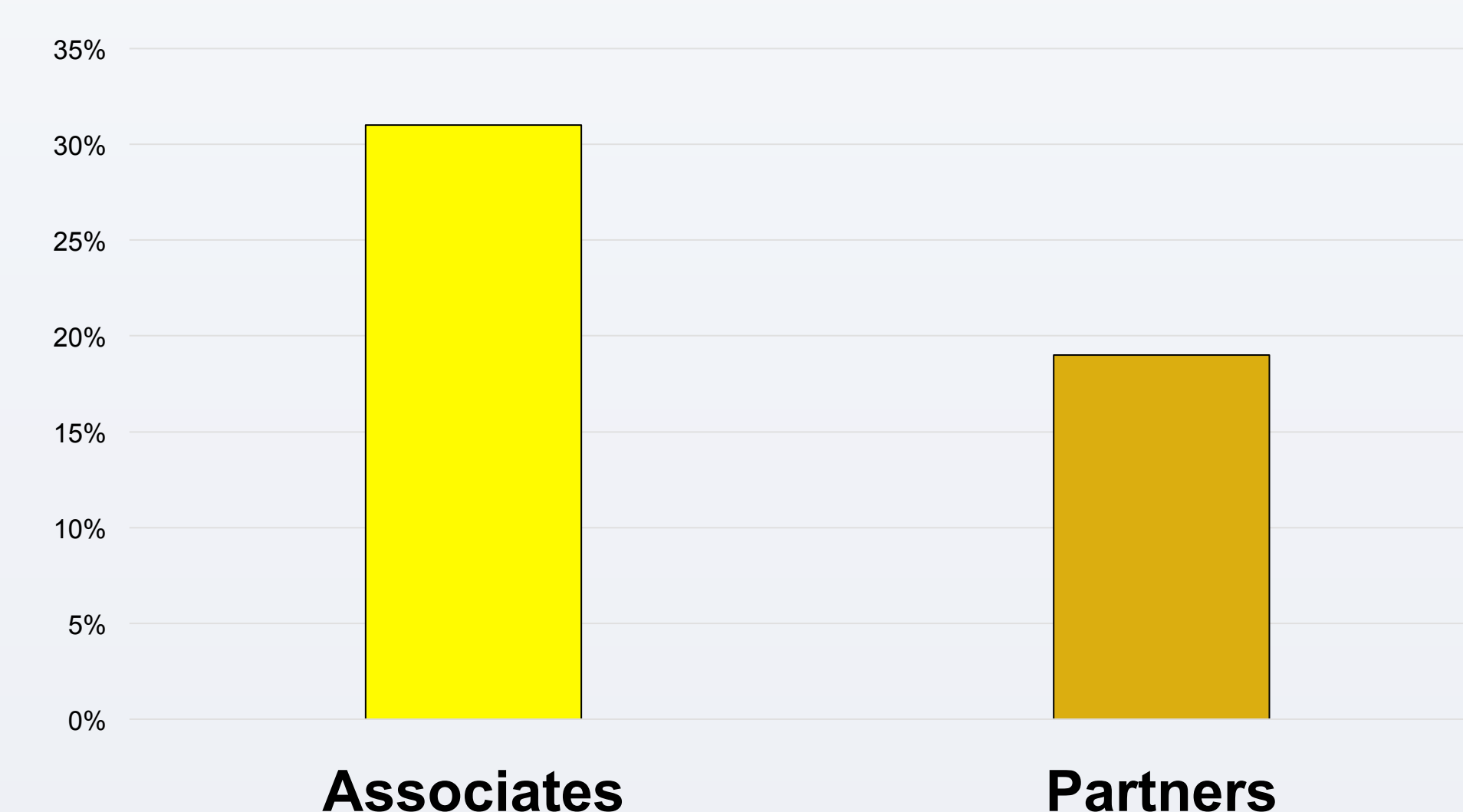


Figure 4: Problematic Drinking in Younger Associates and Senior Partners



SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS (STS)

- Secondary traumatic stress (STS) can develop in attorneys (and others) who are exposed to traumatic content (Levin & Greisberg, 2003).
- STS produces symptoms similar to PTSD.
- Researchers have found high rates of PTSD in attorneys (Levin, Besser, Albert, Smith, & Neria, 2012).
- These symptoms may reflect STS.

POTENTIAL CAUSES OF STS

- Traumatic casework, especially in family and criminal attorneys (Levin & Greisberg, 2003; Vrkleviski & Franklin, 2008)
- Large caseloads (Levin & Greisberg, 2003)
- Lack of supervision (Levin & Greisberg, 2003)
- Stressful working conditions (Norton, Johnson, & Woods, 2016)
- Lack of psychoeducation (Norton et al., 2016)
- High educational and professional standards (Rothstein, 2008)

WHY EXAMINE STS IN ATTORNEYS?

- Recognize and address mental health concerns in a profession that has been overlooked.
- Initiate preventative care programs during law school.
- Provide psychoeducation addressing signs, symptoms, and available resources.
- Develop successful coping skills and strategies for attorneys.

CONCLUSION

- The frequency of STS in attorneys needs to be recognized, quantified, and addressed.
- Preventative strategies and coping skills should be developed.

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