



The Optimus Study on Child Abuse, Violence and Neglect in South Africa



What are we exploring? The child's exposure to violence

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Violent crime (e.g., robbery, theft, assault)
- *Cyberbullying*
- Witnessing violent incidents
- Exposure to family violence



Population Study & Instrument

Population Survey

Household Survey:

- N=5,635
- 15 to 17 year old
- Multi-stage area probability sample

School-based survey:

- N=4,095
- Cluster sampling (matched to h/h)
- Grades 8 to 10

Administered questionnaires

Self-completed forms

Instrument:

- Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (Finkehor et al, 2005)

* Sample: de=3, CI=95%, RR=90%



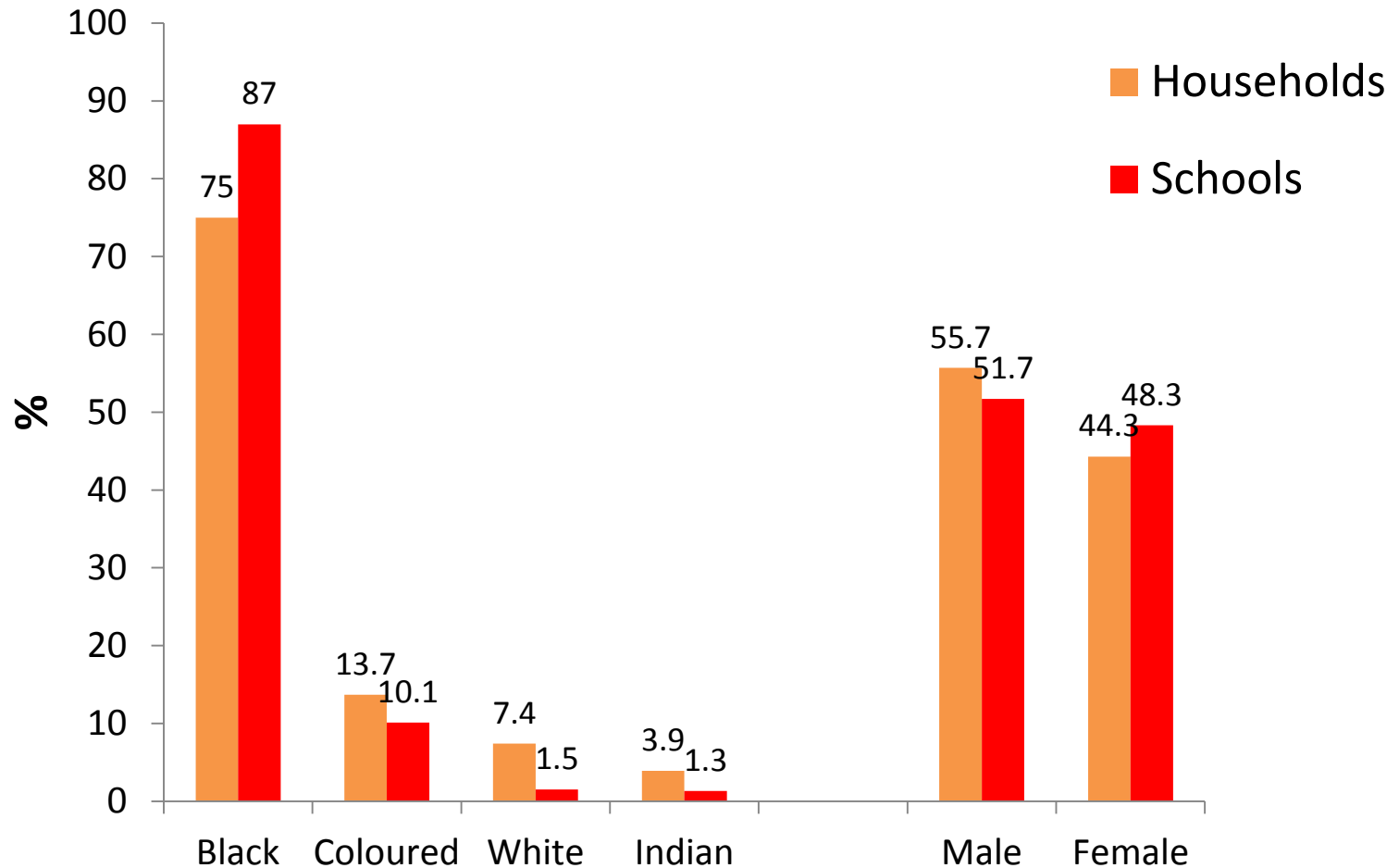
Study Findings



OPTIMUS STUDY ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT



Study Demographics



“At any time in your life, did a caregiver hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?”

CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE



Child physical abuse

- **One in three** (34.4%) reported physical abuse
- Girls reported more physical abuse than boys
- Other rates reported:
 - In schools interviews: 20.8%
 - In home interviews: 18.0%
 - In home self-administered questionnaires: 26.1%
- Global average: 22.6%



“At any time in your lifetime, did you get scared or feel really bad because grown-ups (adults) in your life called you names, said mean things to you, or said they didn’t want you?”

CHILD EMOTIONAL ABUSE



Child emotional abuse

- **One in six** (16.1%) reported emotional abuse
- Girls reported more emotional abuse than boys
- Other rates reported:
 - In home interviews: 12.6%



1. Was there a time in your life that you often had to look after yourself because a parent drank too much alcohol, took drugs, or wouldn't get out of bed?
2. Was there a time in your life when you often had to go looking for a parent because the parent left you alone, or with brothers and sisters, and you didn't know where the parent was?
3. Was there a time in your life when your parents often had people over at the house who you were afraid to be around?
4. Was there a time in your life when you lived in a home that was broken down, unsafe, or unhealthy? For example, it had broken stairs, toilets or sinks that didn't work, trash piled up, and things like that?
5. Was there a time in your life when your parents did not care if you were clean, wore clean clothes, or brushed your teeth and hair?

CHILD NEGLECT

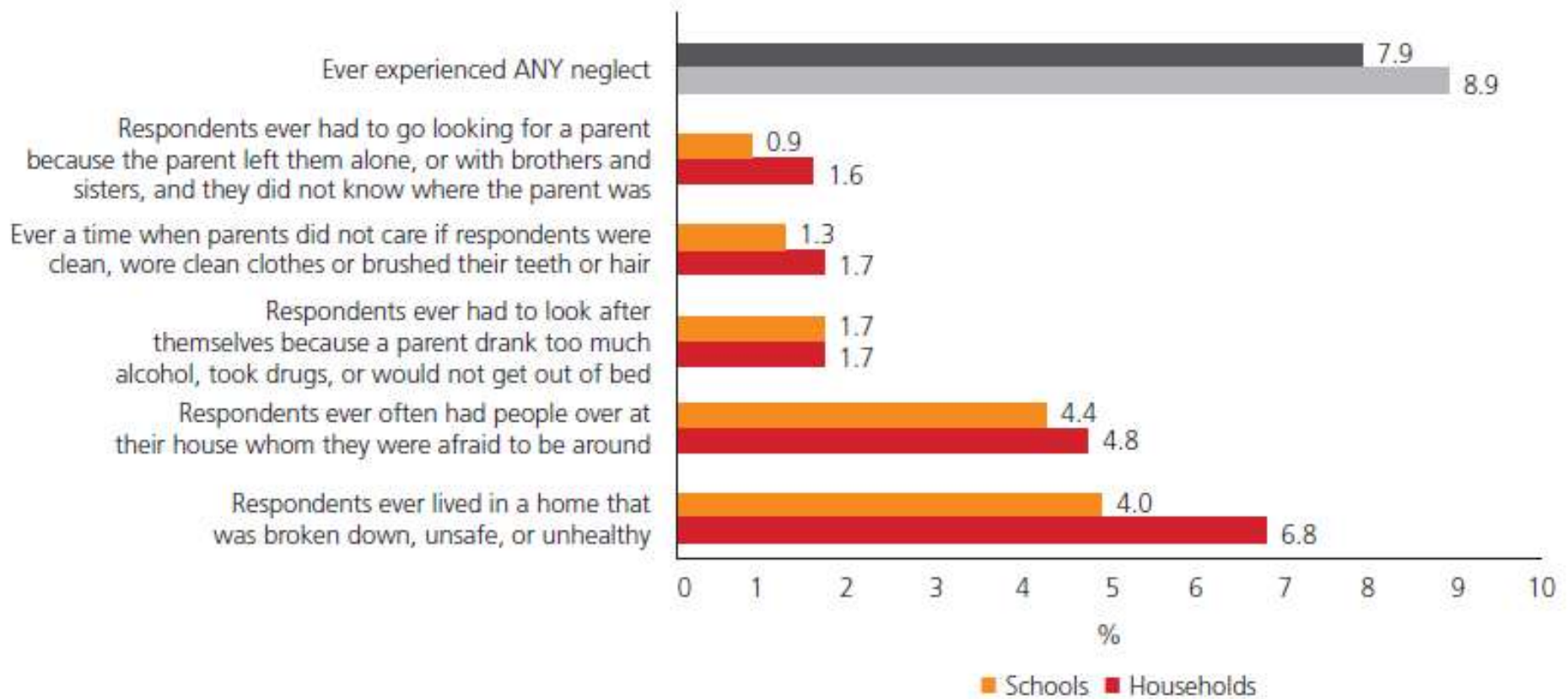


Child neglect

- **One in five** (21.3%) reported having experienced one form of neglect
- Girls reported more neglect than boys
- Other rates reported:
 - In schools interviews: 7.9%
 - In home interviews: 8.9%
 - In home self-administered questionnaires: 17.0%
- Global average: 16.3%



Child neglect



Whether adolescents had been exposed to:

- coerced (unwanted or by force) and consensual sexual touching,
- exposure to intimate body parts or pornographic images
- sexual harassment
- penetrative and non-penetrative sexual intercourse (actual or attempted),
- ... by or with an adult or similar aged peers.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT

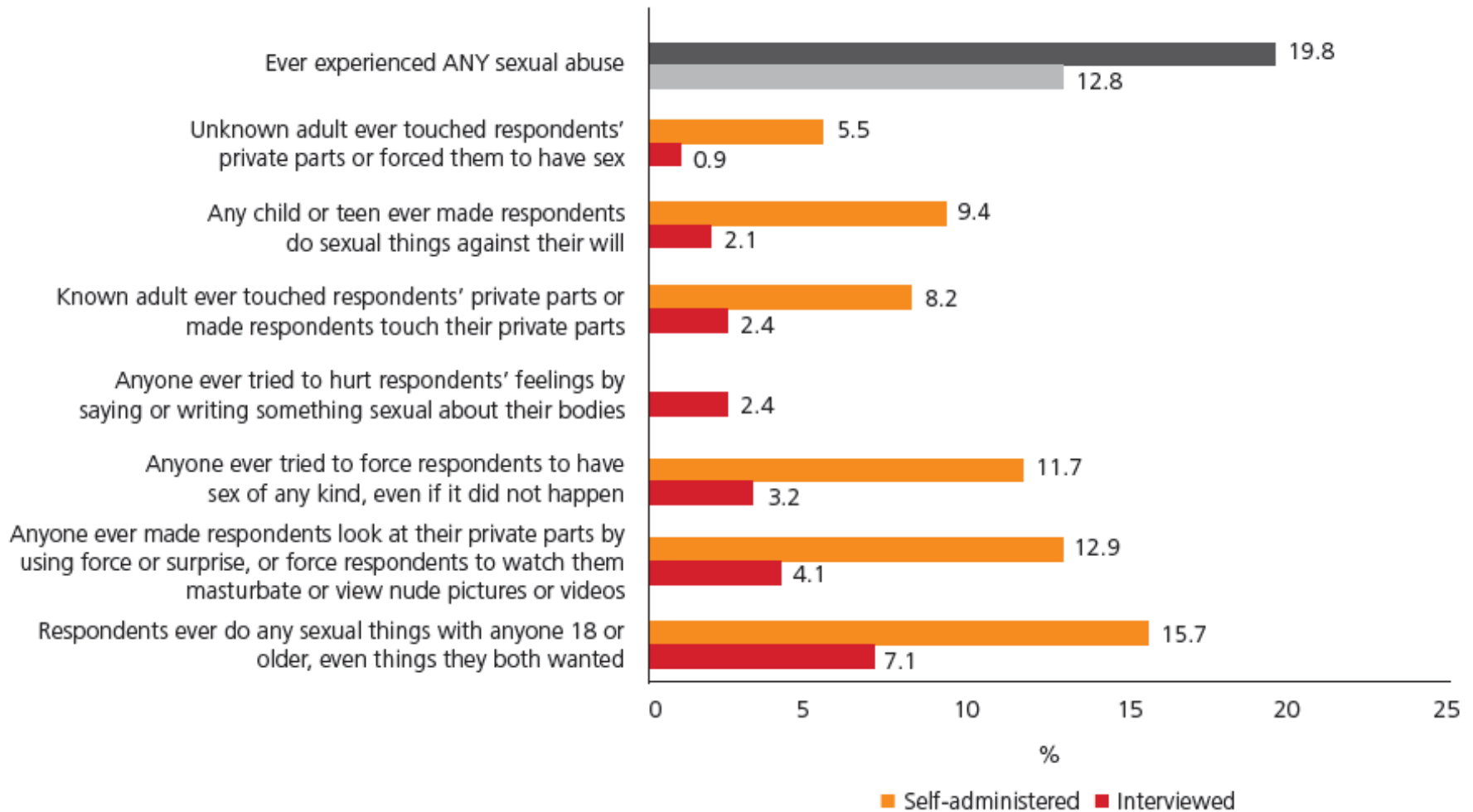


Child sexual abuse and maltreatment

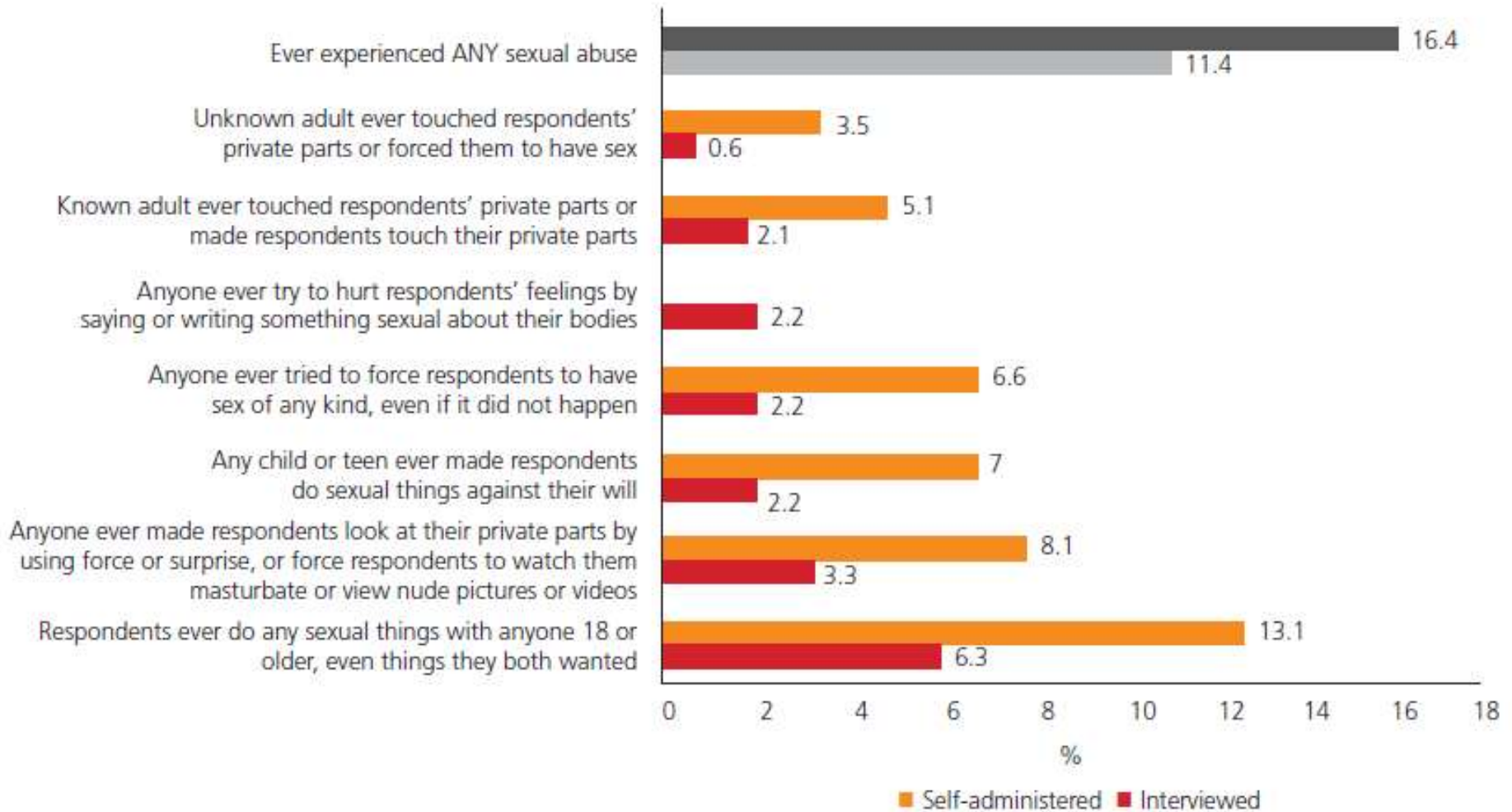
- **One in five** young people reported having experienced some form of sexual abuse in their lifetimes
- This rate is higher than the global average, but no worse than the highest rates identified in studies from Australia and other countries in Africa.
- Although boys reported *similar* rates of having experienced some form of sexual abuse:
 - girls were more likely to experience forced and penetrative sexual abuse, and other forms of sexual abuse that involve contact with the abuser,
 - boys were more likely to report forced exposure to sexual acts and material.



Child sexual abuse (schools)



Child sexual abuse(households)



Lifetime exposure to sexual abuse, by gender

- There were large differences between the interviewer-administered and self-administered questionnaires, in both schools and households.
- In the schools questionnaires, male responses increased from 10.8% in the interview to 20.3% in the self-administered questionnaires.
- Female responses increased from 15% in the interview to 19.2% in the self-administered questionnaires.
- A similar pattern is true for the household sample.



Identity, age and knowledge of the abuser (schools)

- Schools questionnaire: 2.4% stated in the interview that a *known adult* had sexually abused them
- Schools self-administered: 5.7%
- Schools questionnaire: 0.9% stated in the interview that a *unknown adult* (stranger) had sexually abused them
- Schools self-administered: 5.5%



Full report available....

- <http://www.cjcp.org.za/cjcp-research-bulletins.html>
- And there is more to come!

