Selected Findings for the Public Safety Sector From the 2010 National Health Interview Survey – Occupational Health Supplement (NHIS-OHS)

Background

In 2010, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), recognizing a growing need for current, national estimates on work-related health and safety conditions, sponsored an occupational health supplement (OHS) to the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).

The interviewed sample adult component of the 2010 NHIS consisted of 27,157 persons, of whom approximately 17,524 had been employed in the past 12 months. The sample is designed and weighted to produce national estimates.

For more information on the NHIS and to access the 2010 NHIS data, please refer to the following website: (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm)

Purpose

This profile summarizes the 2010 NHIS-OHS data for the Public Safety sector through figures and tables in an effort to provide sector leaders with information so they can better understand health and exposure burdens specific to their industry.

In the 2010 NHIS-OHS, the sample of those employed by the Public Safety sector consisted of 204 persons, representing approximately 1.8 million workers. This profile summarizes the prevalence of selected health outcomes; work organization and psychosocial factors; and physical and chemical exposures among workers in the Public Safety sector. All Public Safety workers are compared to all U.S. workers combined, and comparisons are made among 4 Public Safety occupational categories, although small sample sizes within several of the categories limit the reporting of some estimates.

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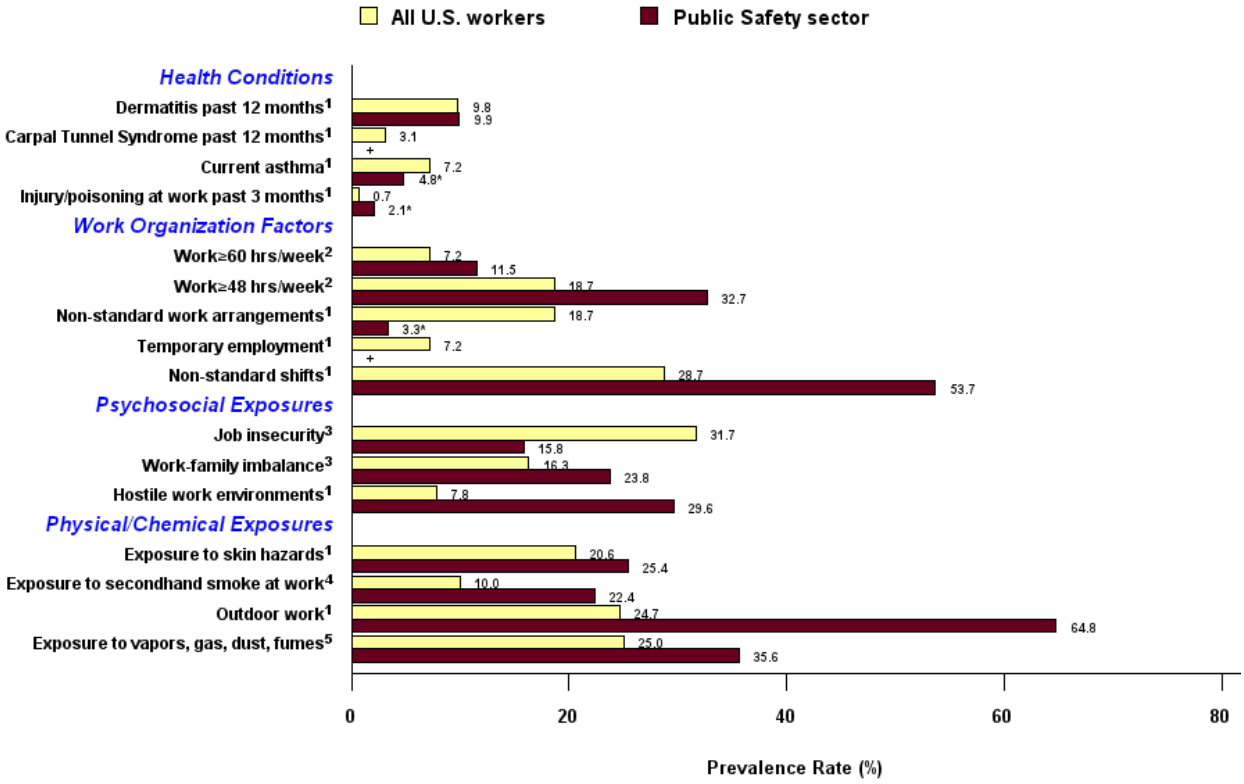
Table A. U.S. Public Safety sector workers by occupational category, 2010

Occupational category	Census 2010 occupation codes	Estimated Population Represented by Sample	% of U.S. Public Safety workforce
Law Enforcement workers	3710, 3820, 3850	874,417	49.4
Firefighting and Prevention workers	3720, 3740, 3750	237,098	13.4
Corrections workers	3700, 3800	549,087	31.0
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	3400	110,557	6.2
Total		1,771,159	100

Figure 1. Prevalence of selected health conditions; work organization and psychosocial factors; and physical and chemical exposures among U.S. workers (Public Safety sector vs. All U.S. workers, 2010)



[1]Among U.S. adults who have worked in the past 12 months.

[2]Among U.S. adults who have worked in the past 12 months, who only held 1 job.

[3]Among U.S. adults who were employed in the week prior to interview.

[4]Among non-smoking U.S. adults who have worked in the past 12 months.

[5]Exposure during longest-held job (all other exposures refer to current or most recent job).

* These estimates have a relative standard error >30% and <50% and should be used with caution as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

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Table 1. Prevalence of selected health conditions; work organization and psychosocial factors; and physical and chemical exposures among U.S. workers (Public Safety sector vs. All U.S. workers, 2010)

		All U.S. workers			Public Safety sector		
		Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
Health Conditions	**Dermatitis in the past 12 months**	9.8	0.3	9.2-10.3	9.9	2.3	5.3-14.4
	Carpal tunnel syndrome in the past 12 months	3.1	0.2	2.8-3.4	+	+	+
	Current asthma	7.2	0.2	6.7-7.6	4.8*	1.8	1.3-8.3
	Injury or poisoning at work in the past 12 months	2.8	0.4	2.0-3.4	8.4*	4.0	0.5-16.0
Work Organization Factors	**Work 60 hours a week or more**[2]	7.2	0.3	6.7-7.7	11.5	3.0	5.7-17.4
	Work 48 hours a week or more[2]	18.7	0.4	18.0-19.5	32.7	4.7	23.5-42.0
	Non-standard work arrangements	18.7	0.4	18.0-19.4	3.3*	1.1	1.2-5.4
	Temporary employment	7.2	0.3	6.7-7.7	+	+	+
	Non-standard shifts	28.7	0.5	27.8-29.7	53.7	3.9	46.1-61.3
Psychosocial Exposures	**Job insecurity**[3]	31.7	0.5	30.8-32.6	15.8	2.8	10.3-21.3
	Work-family imbalance[3]	16.3	0.4	15.6-17.1	23.8	3.6	16.7-30.9
	Hostile work environments	7.8	0.3	7.3-8.4	29.6	3.8	22.1-37.1
Physical/Chemical Exposures	**Exposure to potential skin hazards at work**	20.6	0.4	19.8-21.3	25.4	3.8	17.9-32.8
	Exposure to secondhand smoke at work[4]	10.0	0.3	9.3-10.6	22.4	3.6	15.4-29.4
	Exposure to outdoor work	24.7	0.4	23.8-25.6	64.8	3.8	57.2-72.3
	Exposure to vapors, gas, dust, or fumes[5]	25.0	0.4	24.2-25.8	35.6	3.7	28.2-42.9

[1] Among U.S. adults who have worked in the past 12 months.

[2] Among U.S. adults who have worked in the past 12 months, who only held 1 job.

[3] Among U.S. adults who were employed in the week prior to interview.

[4] Among non-smoking U.S. adults who have worked in the past 12 months.

[5] Exposure during longest-held job (all other exposures refer to current or most recent job).

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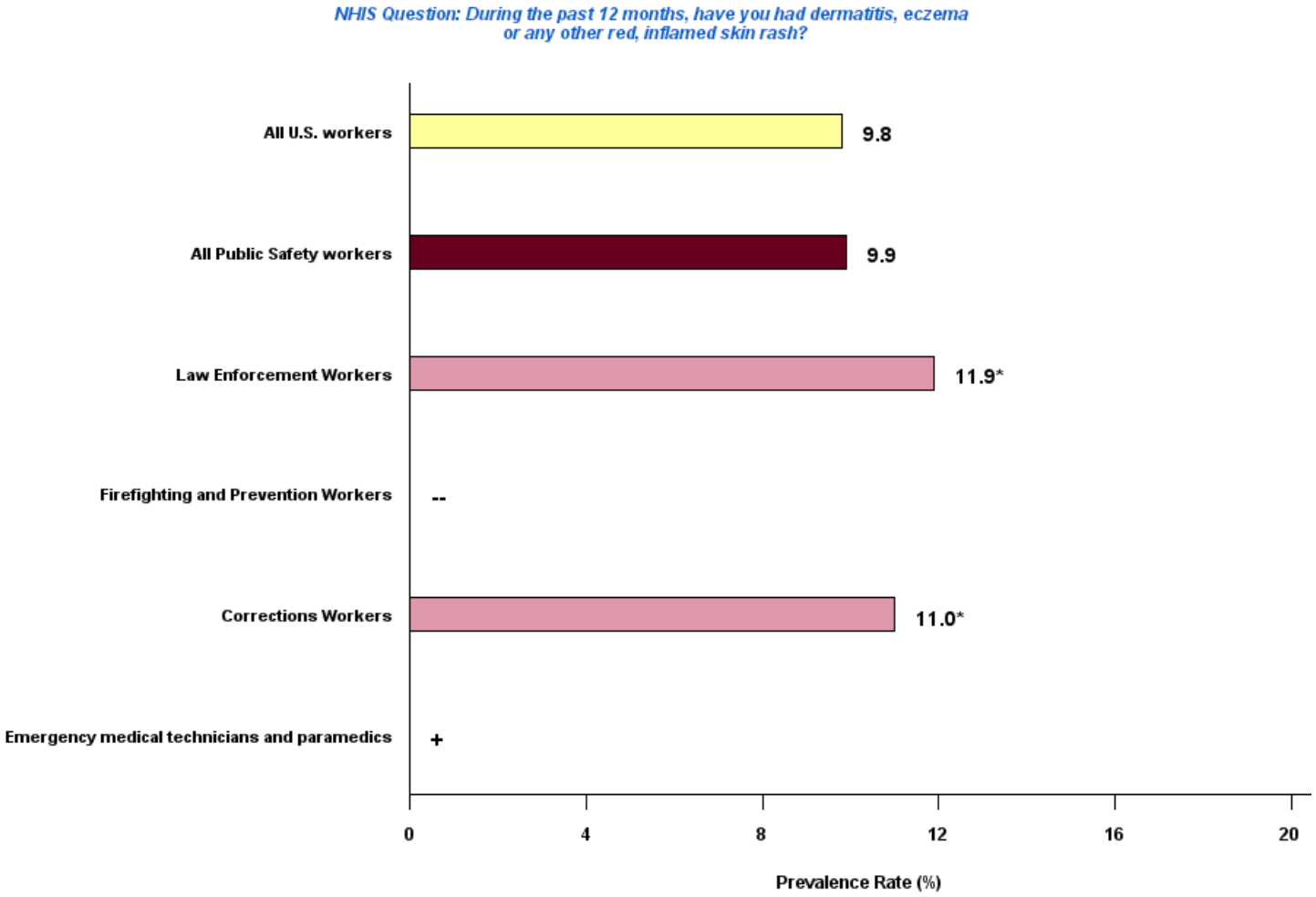
Figure 2. Prevalence of dermatitis in the past 12 months among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010



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-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Table 2. Prevalence of dermatitis in the past 12 months among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	9.8	0.3	9.2-10.3
All Public Safety workers	9.9	2.3	5.3-14.4
Law Enforcement Workers	11.9*	3.6	4.7-19.0
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	--	--	--
Corrections Workers	11.0*	4.3	2.5-19.5
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

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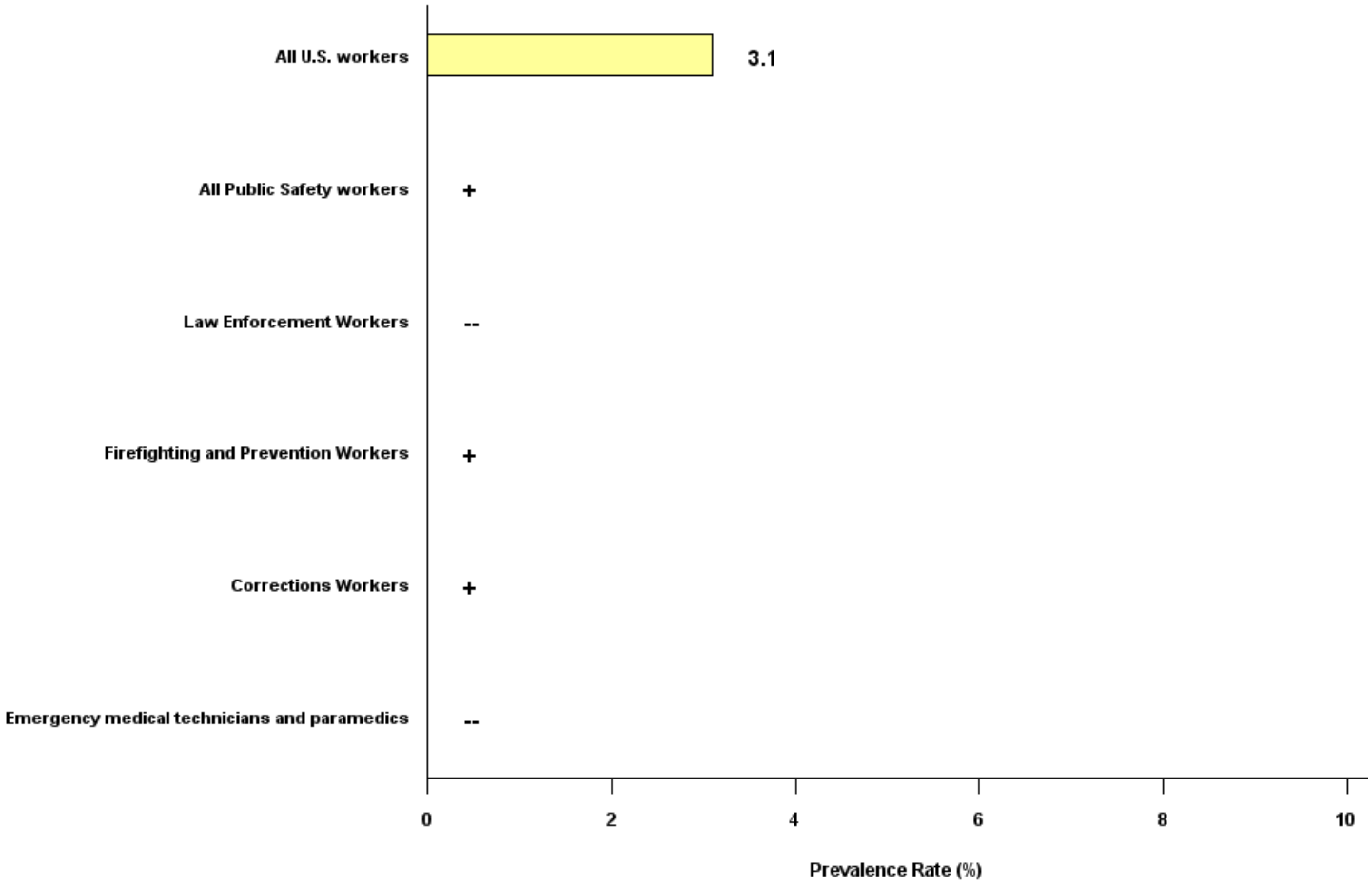
Figure 3. Prevalence of carpal tunnel syndrome in the past 12 months among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: Have you ever been told by a doctor or other health professional that you have a condition affecting the wrist/hand called carpal tunnel syndrome? During the past 12 months, have you had carpal tunnel syndrome?



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-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Table 3. Prevalence of carpal tunnel syndrome in the past 12 months among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	3.1	0.2	2.8-3.4
All Public Safety workers	+	+	+
Law Enforcement Workers	--	--	--
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	+	+	+
Corrections Workers	+	+	+
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	--	--	--

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-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Figure 4. Prevalence of current asthma among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: Have you ever been told by a doctor or health professional that you had asthma? Do you still have asthma?

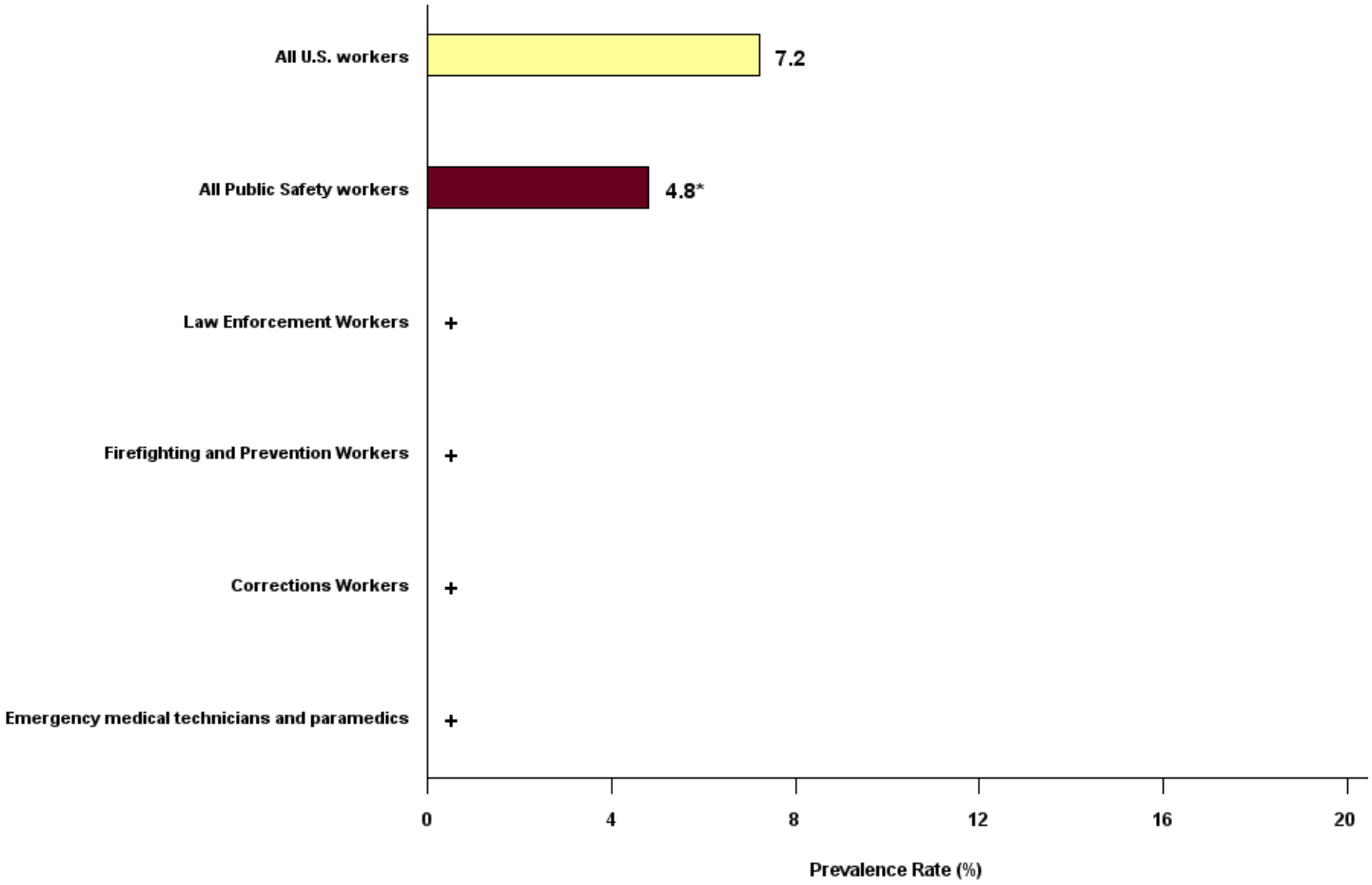

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Table 4. Prevalence of current asthma among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	7.2	0.2	6.7-7.6
All Public Safety workers	4.8*	1.8	1.3-8.3
Law Enforcement Workers	+	+	+
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	+	+	+
Corrections Workers	+	+	+
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

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Figure 5. Prevalence of working 48 hours a week or more among U.S. adults working one job at the time of interview by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

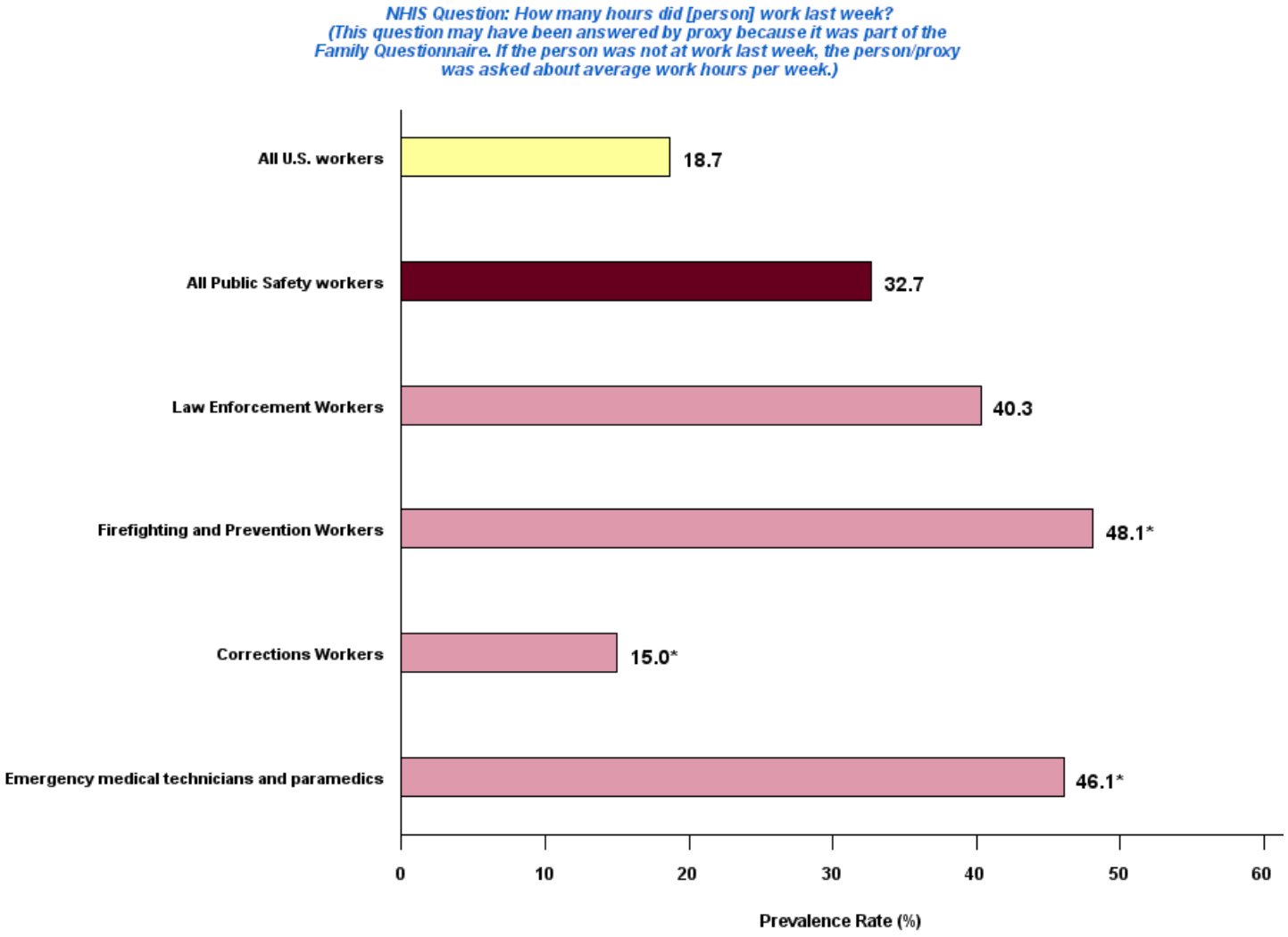

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Table 5. Prevalence of working 48 hours a week or more among U.S. adults working one job at the time of interview by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	18.7	0.4	18.0-19.5
All Public Safety workers	32.7	4.7	23.5-42.0
Law Enforcement Workers	40.3	7.3	26.0-54.6
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	48.1*	14.9	18.7-77.5
Corrections Workers	15.0*	5.2	4.9-25.1
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	46.1*	16.3	14.0-78.2

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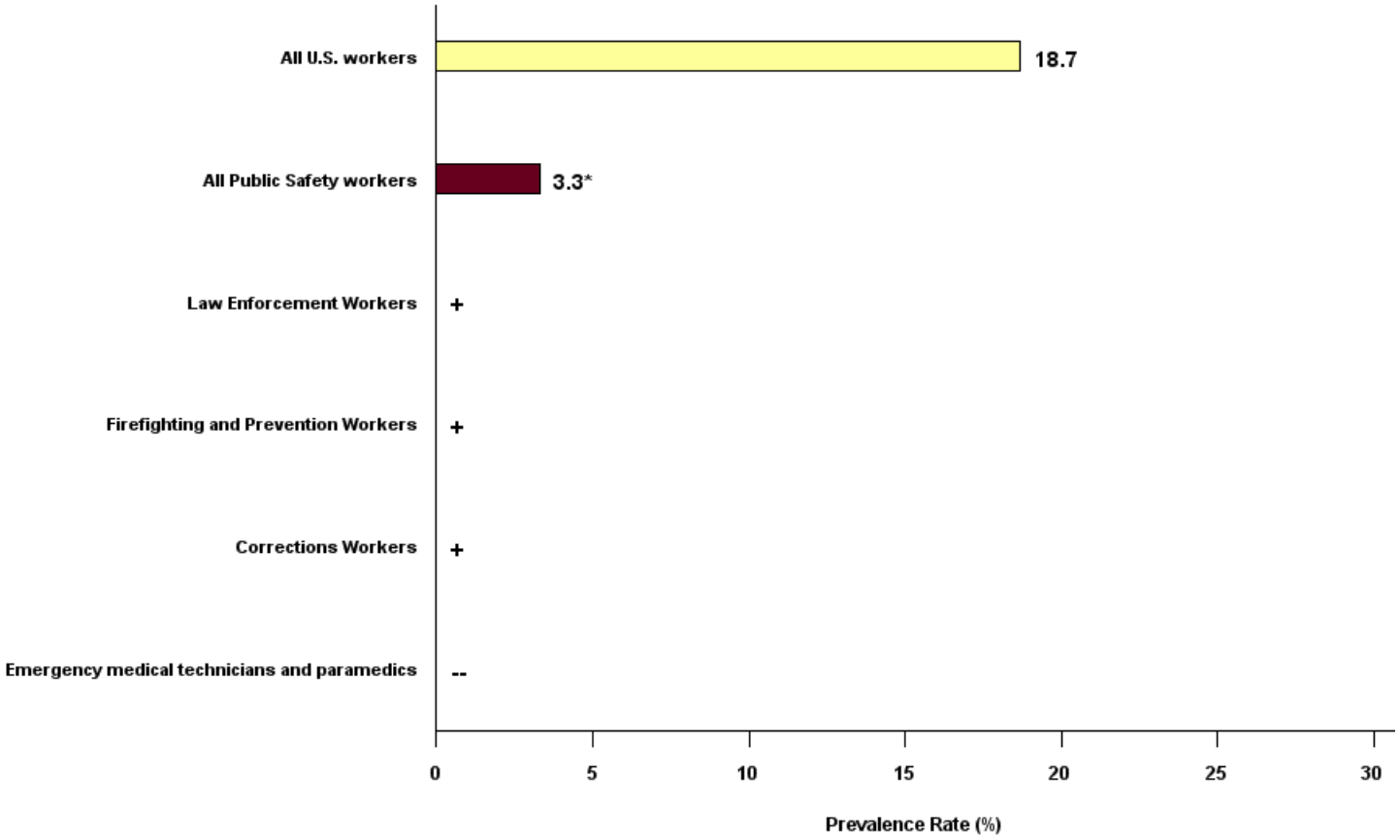
Figure 6. Prevalence of non-standard work arrangements among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: Which of the following best [describes/described] your work arrangement?
(Non-standard work arrangement = independent contractor, independent consultant, or freelance worker; on-call, and [work/worked] only when called to work; paid by a temporary agency; or [work/worked] for a contractor who provides workers and services to others under contract)



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-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Table 6. Prevalence of non-standard work arrangements among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	18.7	0.4	18.0-19.4
All Public Safety workers	3.3*	1.1	1.2-5.4
Law Enforcement Workers	+	+	+
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	+	+	+
Corrections Workers	+	+	+
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	--	--	--

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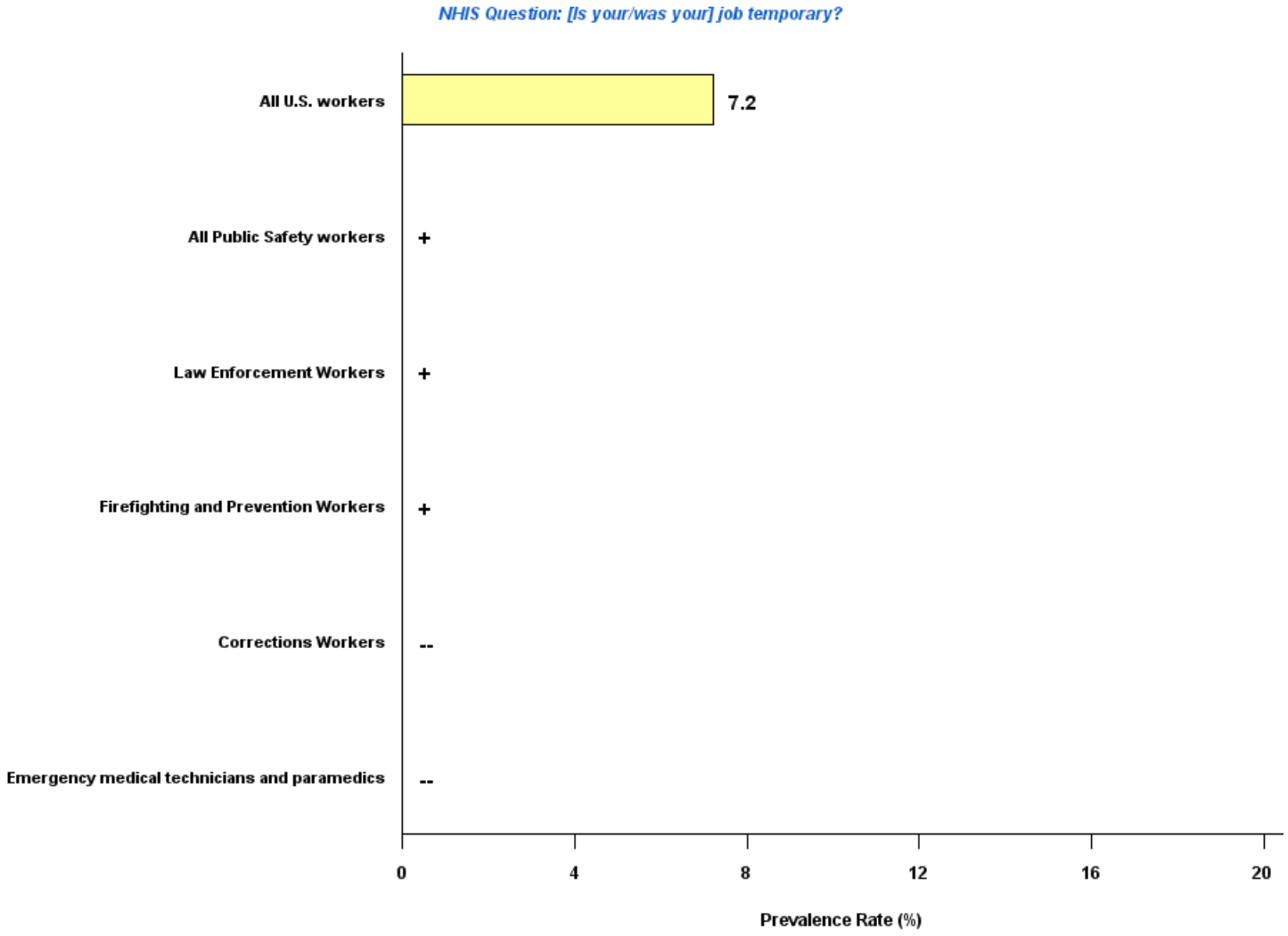
Figure 7. Prevalence of temporary employment among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010



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-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Table 7. Prevalence of temporary employment among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	7.2	0.3	6.7-7.7
All Public Safety workers	+	+	+
Law Enforcement Workers	+	+	+
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	+	+	+
Corrections Workers	--	--	--
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	--	--	--

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-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Figure 8. Prevalence of non-standard shifts among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: Which of the following best describes the hours you usually [work/worked]? (Non-standard shift = a regular evening shift; a regular night shift; a rotating shift; or some other schedule not including a regular daytime schedule)

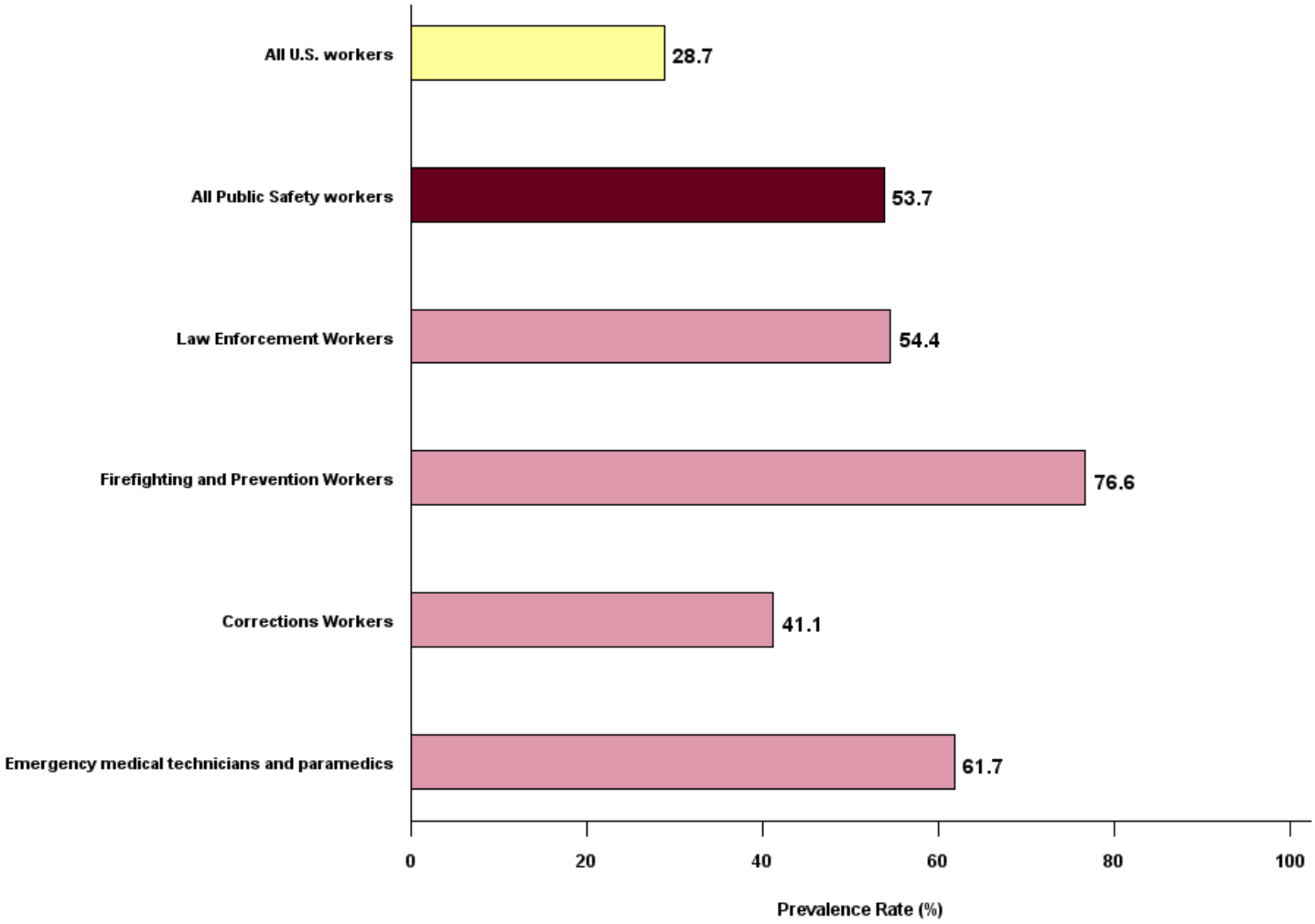

Table 8. Prevalence of non-standard shifts among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	28.7	0.5	27.8-29.7
All Public Safety workers	53.7	3.9	46.1-61.3
Law Enforcement Workers	54.4	5.7	43.3-65.6
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	76.6	9.5	57.9-95.3
Corrections Workers	41.1	6.9	27.4-54.7
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	61.7	13.4	35.3-88.1

Figure 9. Prevalence of job insecurity among working U.S. adults by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: I [am/was] worried about becoming unemployed.
(Job insecurity = strongly agree or agree)

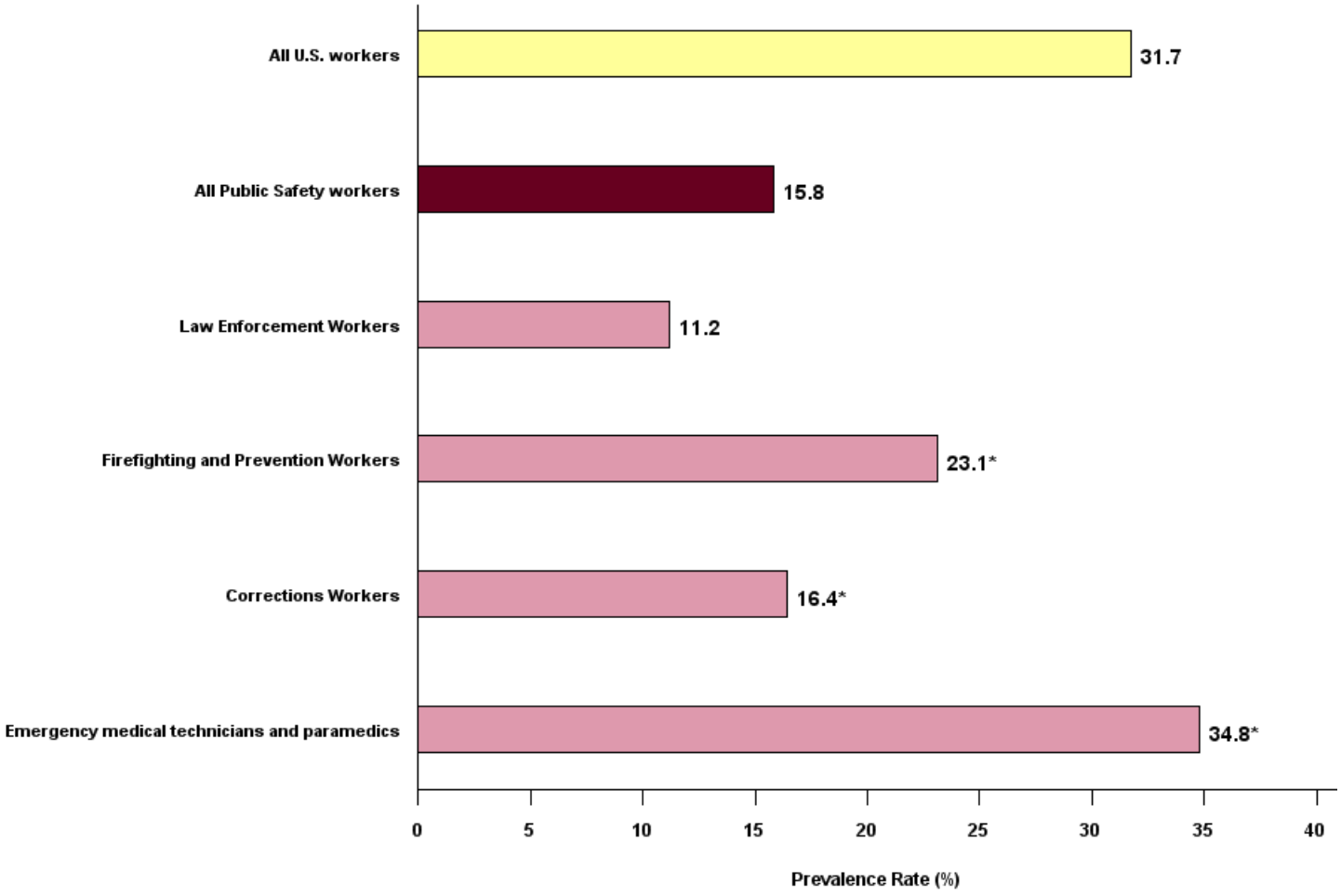

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Table 9. Prevalence of job insecurity among working U.S. adults by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	31.7	0.5	30.8-32.6
All Public Safety workers	15.8	2.8	10.3-21.3
Law Enforcement Workers	11.2	3.4	4.6-17.9
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	23.1*	10.5	2.4-43.8
Corrections Workers	16.4*	5.1	6.4-26.3
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	34.8*	13.2	8.7-60.8

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Figure 10. Prevalence of work-family imbalance among working U.S. adults by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: It [is/was] easy for me to combine work with family reponsibilities. (Work-family imbalance = disagree or strongly disagree)

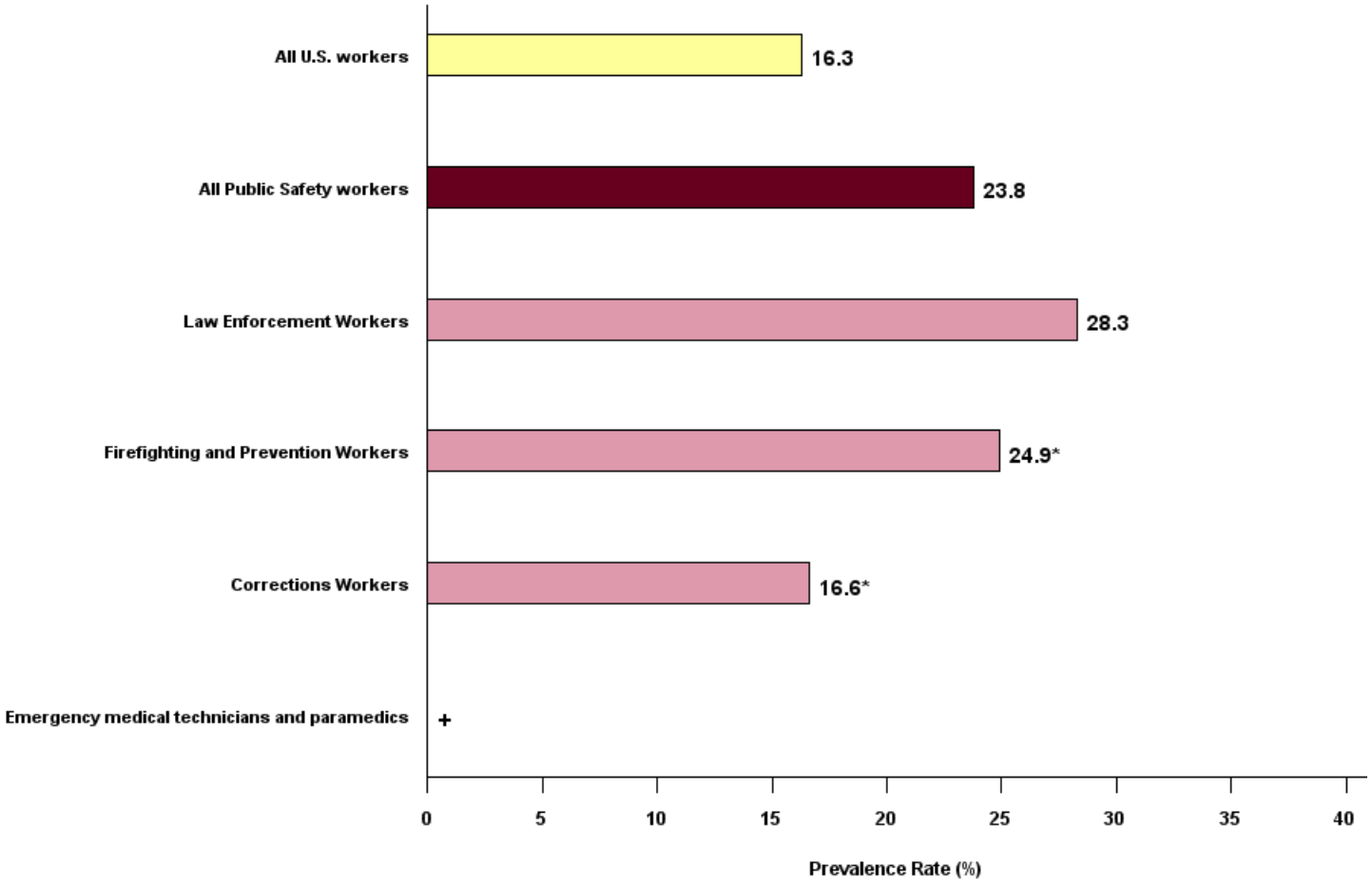

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Table 10. Prevalence of work-family imbalance among working U.S. adults by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	16.3	0.4	15.6-17.1
All Public Safety workers	23.8	3.6	16.7-30.9
Law Enforcement Workers	28.3	5.8	16.8-39.8
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	24.9*	10.7	3.8-46.0
Corrections Workers	16.6*	5.0	6.7-26.5
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

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Figure 11. Prevalence of hostile work environments among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

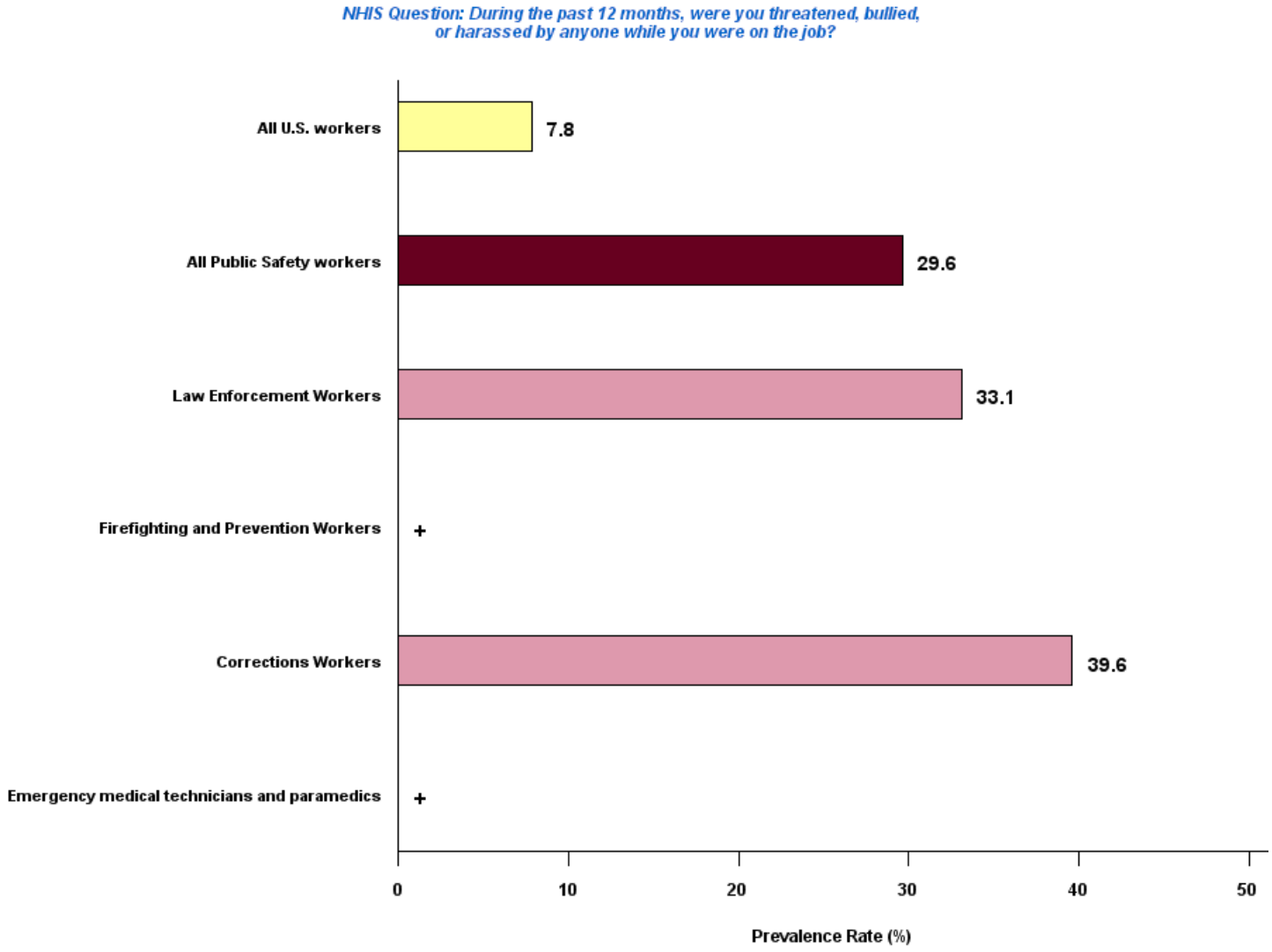

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Table 11. Prevalence of hostile work environments among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	7.8	0.3	7.3-8.4
All Public Safety workers	29.6	3.8	22.1-37.1
Law Enforcement Workers	33.1	5.3	22.8-43.5
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	+	+	+
Corrections Workers	39.6	8.5	22.8-56.3
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

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Figure 12. Prevalence of exposure to potential skin hazards at work among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: During the past 12 months, did you regularly handle or were you in skin contact with chemical products or substances at work twice a week or more?

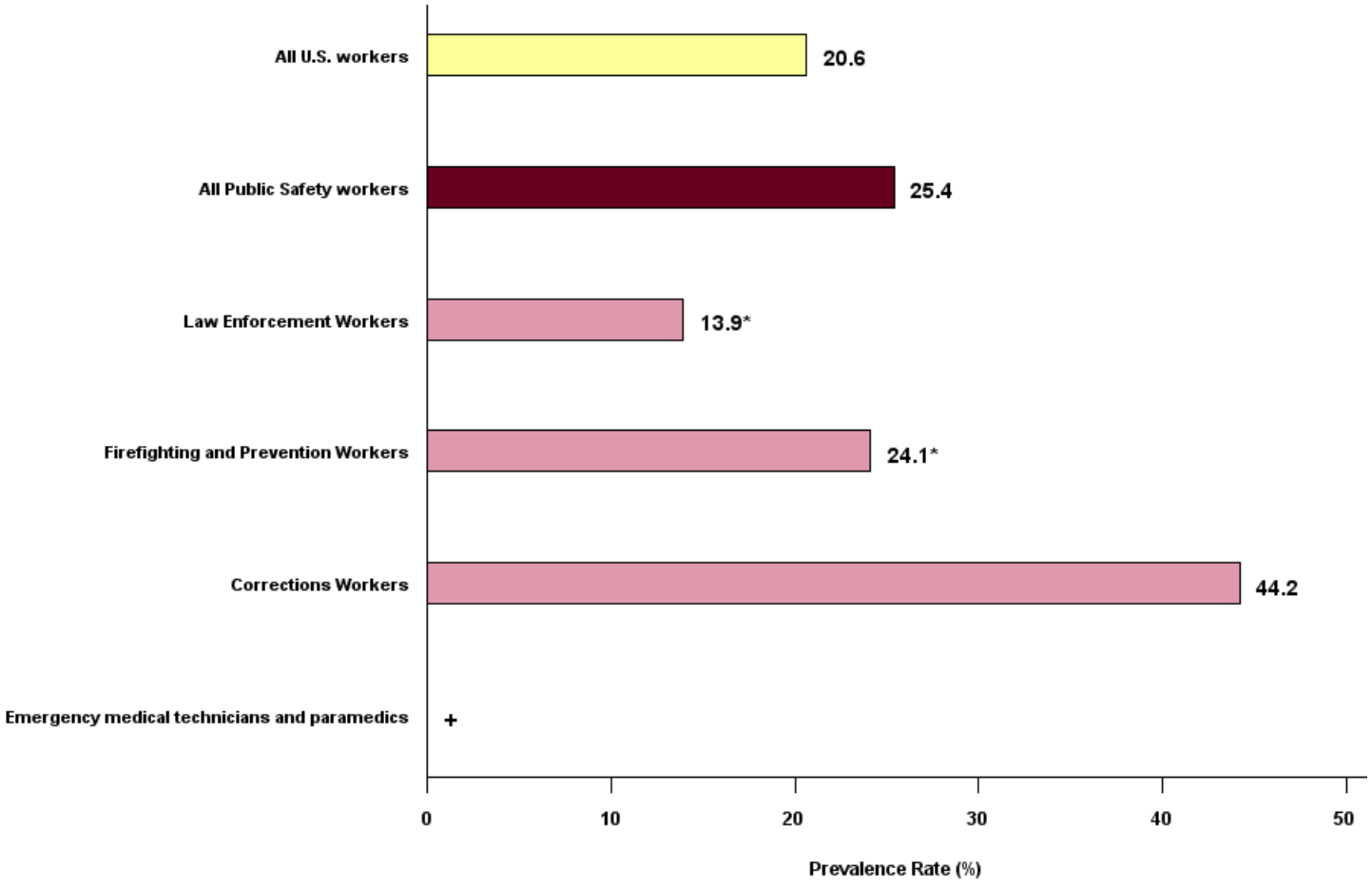

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Table 12. Prevalence of exposure to potential skin hazards at work among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	20.6	0.4	19.8-21.3
All Public Safety workers	25.4	3.8	17.9-32.8
Law Enforcement Workers	13.9*	4.7	4.6-23.2
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	24.1*	9.0	6.3-41.9
Corrections Workers	44.2	8.5	27.6-60.8
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

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Figure 13. Prevalence of exposure to outdoor work among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

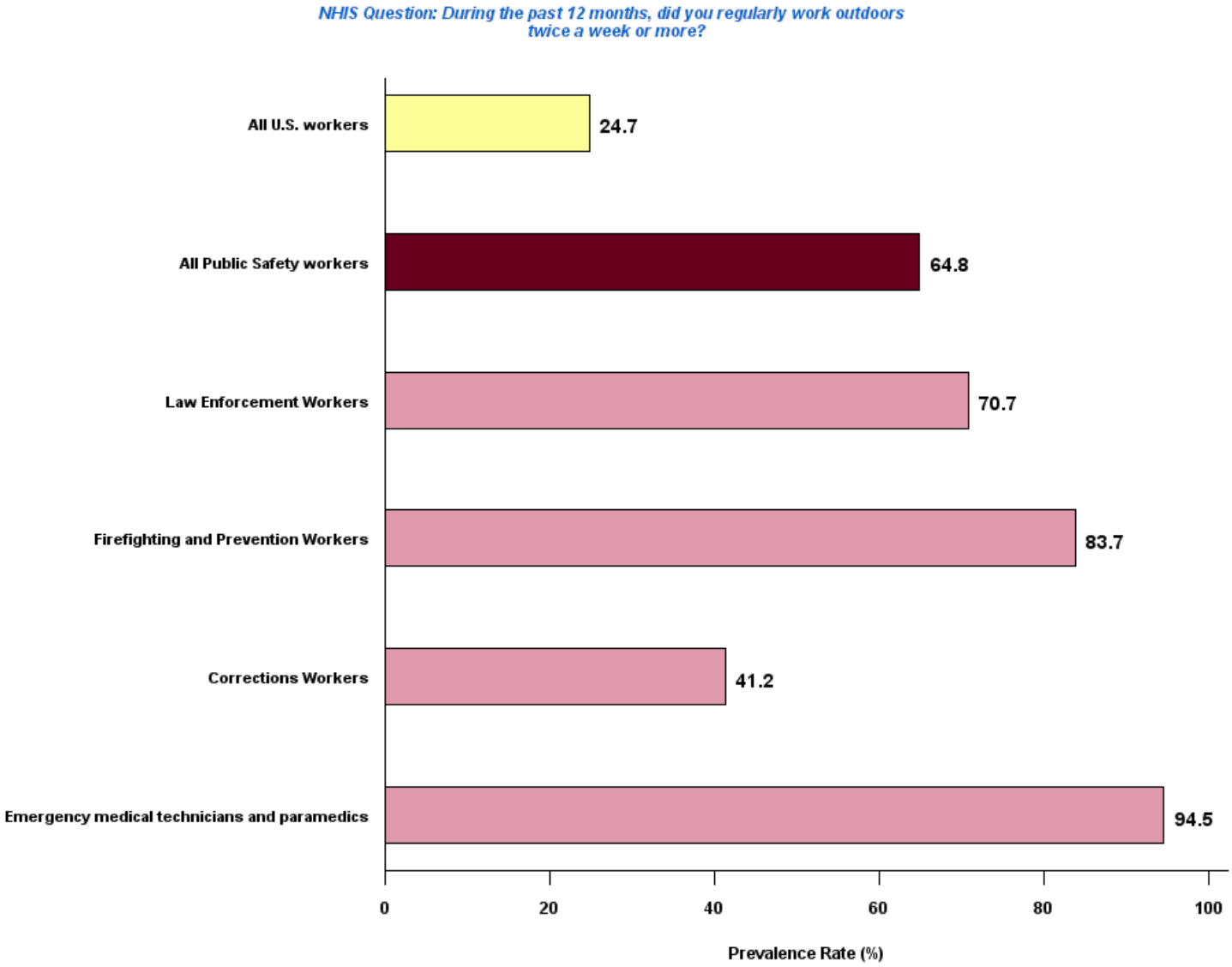


Table 13. Prevalence of exposure to outdoor work among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	24.7	0.4	23.8-25.6
All Public Safety workers	64.8	3.8	57.2-72.3
Law Enforcement Workers	70.7	5.3	60.3-81.1
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	83.7	6.8	70.4-97.1
Corrections Workers	41.2	7.0	27.3-55.0
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	94.5	4.1	86.4-102.5

Figure 14. Prevalence of exposure to vapors, gas, dust, or fumes among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

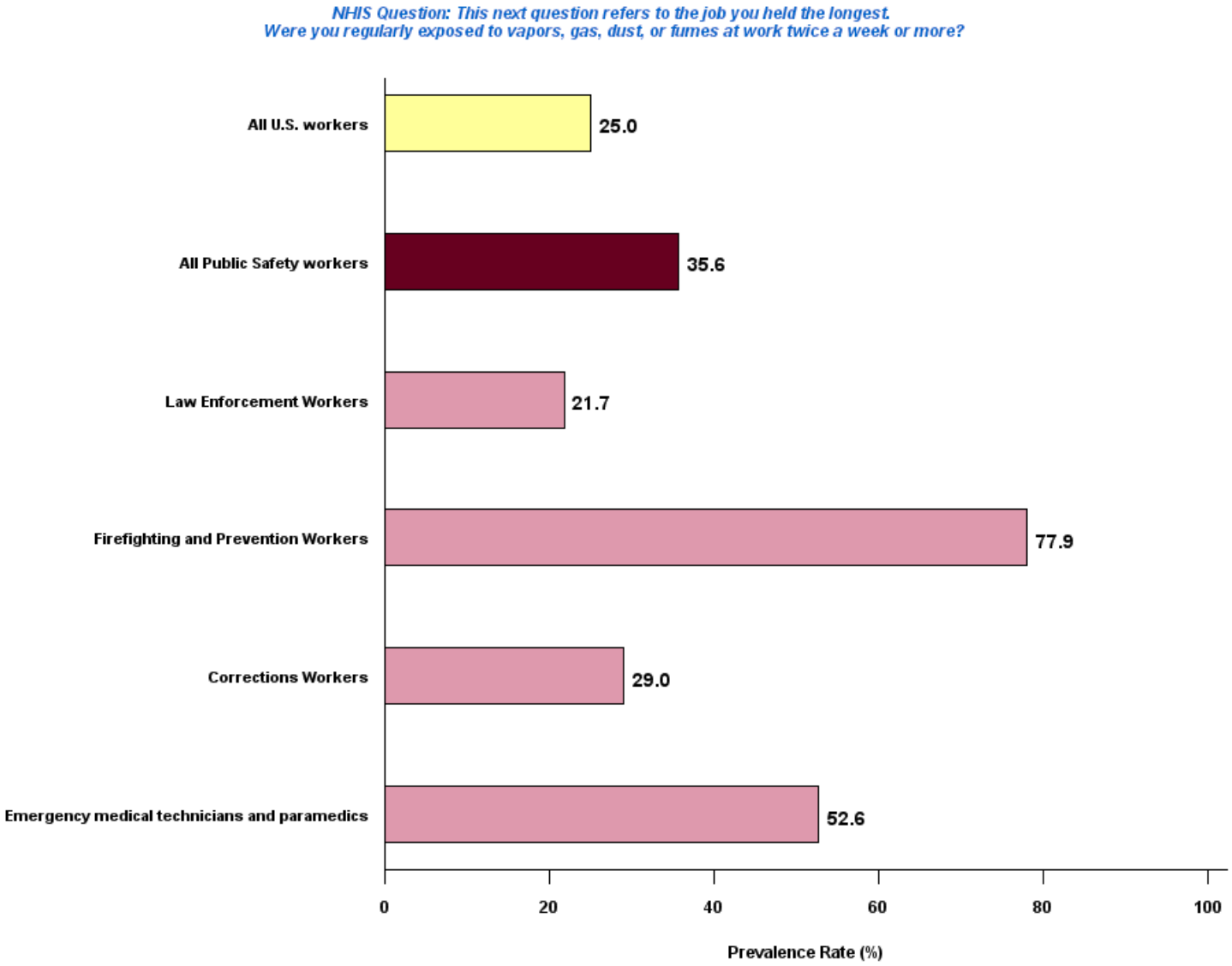
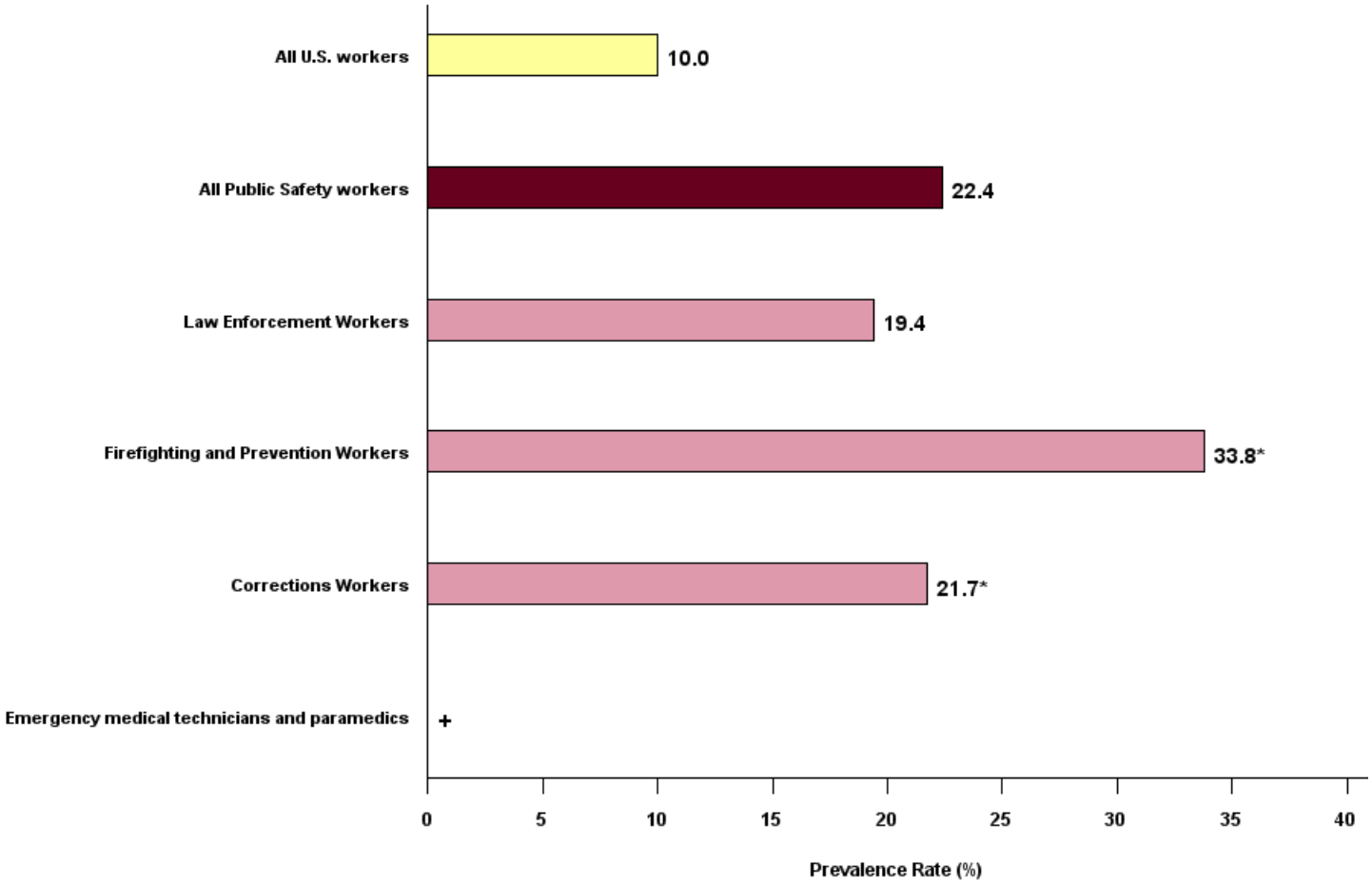


Table 14. Prevalence of exposure to vapors, gas, dust, or fumes among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	25.0	0.4	24.2-25.8
All Public Safety workers	35.6	3.7	28.2-42.9
Law Enforcement Workers	21.7	4.9	12.0-31.3
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	77.9	7.7	62.8-93.1
Corrections Workers	29.0	6.8	15.7-42.4
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	52.6	14.1	24.8-80.4

Figure 15a. Prevalence of exposure to secondhand smoke at work among non-smoking U.S. adults by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: During the past 12 months, were you regularly exposed to tobacco smoke from other people at work twice a week or more?



* These estimates have a relative standard error >30% and <50% and should be used with caution as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

+ Estimates with a relative standard error >50% are not shown as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

Table 15a. Prevalence of exposure to secondhand smoke at work among non-smoking U.S. adults by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

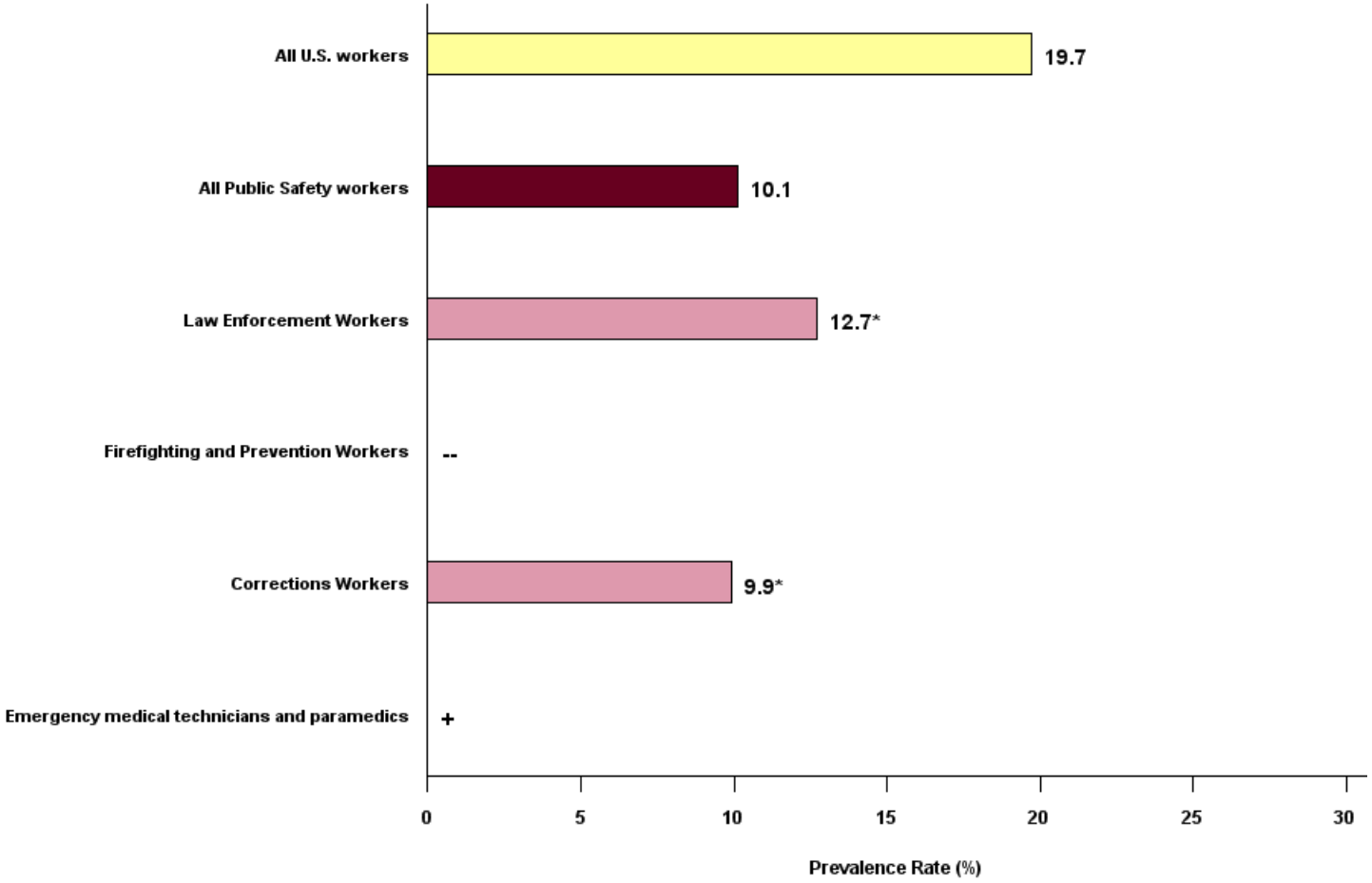
	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	10.0	0.3	9.3-10.6
All Public Safety workers	22.4	3.6	15.4-29.4
Law Enforcement Workers	19.4	4.5	10.4-28.3
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	33.8*	10.9	12.3-55.3
Corrections Workers	21.7*	7.0	7.9-35.5
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

* These estimates have a relative standard error >30% and <50% and should be used with caution as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

+ Estimates with a relative standard error >50% are not shown as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

Figure 15b. Prevalence of smoking among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

NHIS Question: Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days or not at all?



* These estimates have a relative standard error >30% and <50% and should be used with caution as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

+ Estimates with a relative standard error >50% are not shown as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.

Table 15b. Prevalence of smoking among U.S. adults who worked in the past 12 months by Public Safety occupational category, 2010

	Prevalence (%)	Standard Error of Prevalence	95% Confidence Interval
All U.S. workers	19.7	0.4	18.9-20.4
All Public Safety workers	10.1	2.6	5.0-15.3
Law Enforcement Workers	12.7*	4.0	4.9-20.6
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	--	--	--
Corrections Workers	9.9*	4.4	1.2-18.6
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	+	+	+

* These estimates have a relative standard error >30% and <50% and should be used with caution as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

+ Estimates with a relative standard error >50% are not shown as they do not meet NCHS reliability/precision standards.

-- No cases detected, likely due to insufficient sample size.