

# Differences in Reproductive Health Knowledge, Attitudes, and Intentions among Adolescents by Pre-Sexual Experience

Kate Welti, Brooke Whitfield, and Jennifer Manlove (Child Trends)



## ABOUT THE STUDY

Previous research has found that adolescents with pre-sexual experience are more likely to initiate vaginal sex than those with no sexual experience. Therefore, it is important to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and intentions of adolescents with differing levels of sexual experience to help **teen pregnancy prevention** programs target their message to students. In this study we examine pre-sexual experience among a sample of students who participated in the evaluation of a teen pregnancy prevention program, Re:MIX.

### Pre-sexual experience

having engaged in sexual touching or oral sex, but not vaginal sex

## ABOUT RE:MIX



School-based pregnancy and STI prevention program  
 Implemented in 3 charter schools in Texas  
 Designed for Latinx students  
 Co-led by young parent educators and trained health educators

## ABOUT THE SAMPLE

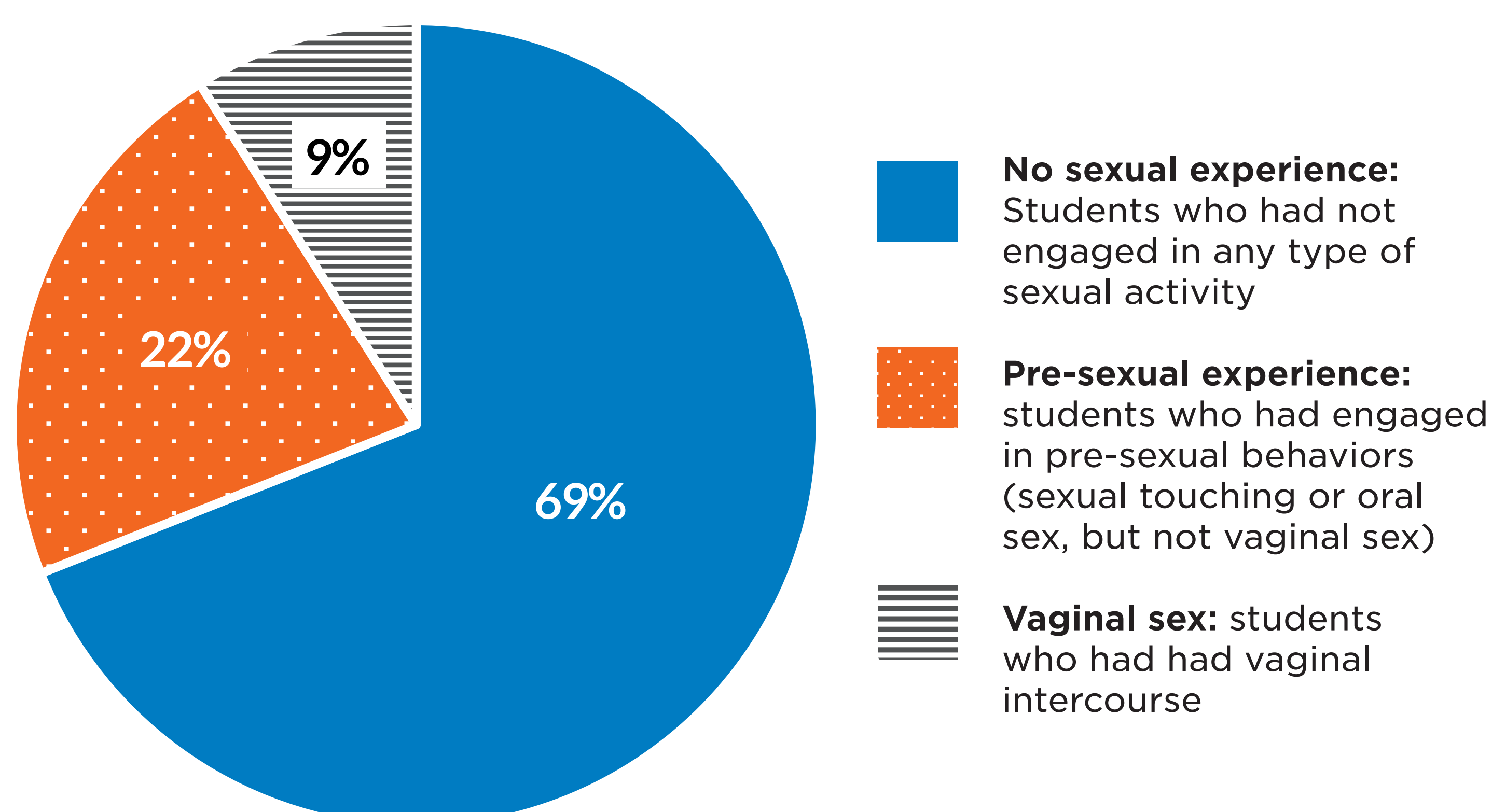


57 classes grades 8-10  
 Average age 14  
 50% male



626 students enrolled in study  
 71% Latinx  
 42% have a parent with less than a high-school degree

### Sexual experience among students at baseline

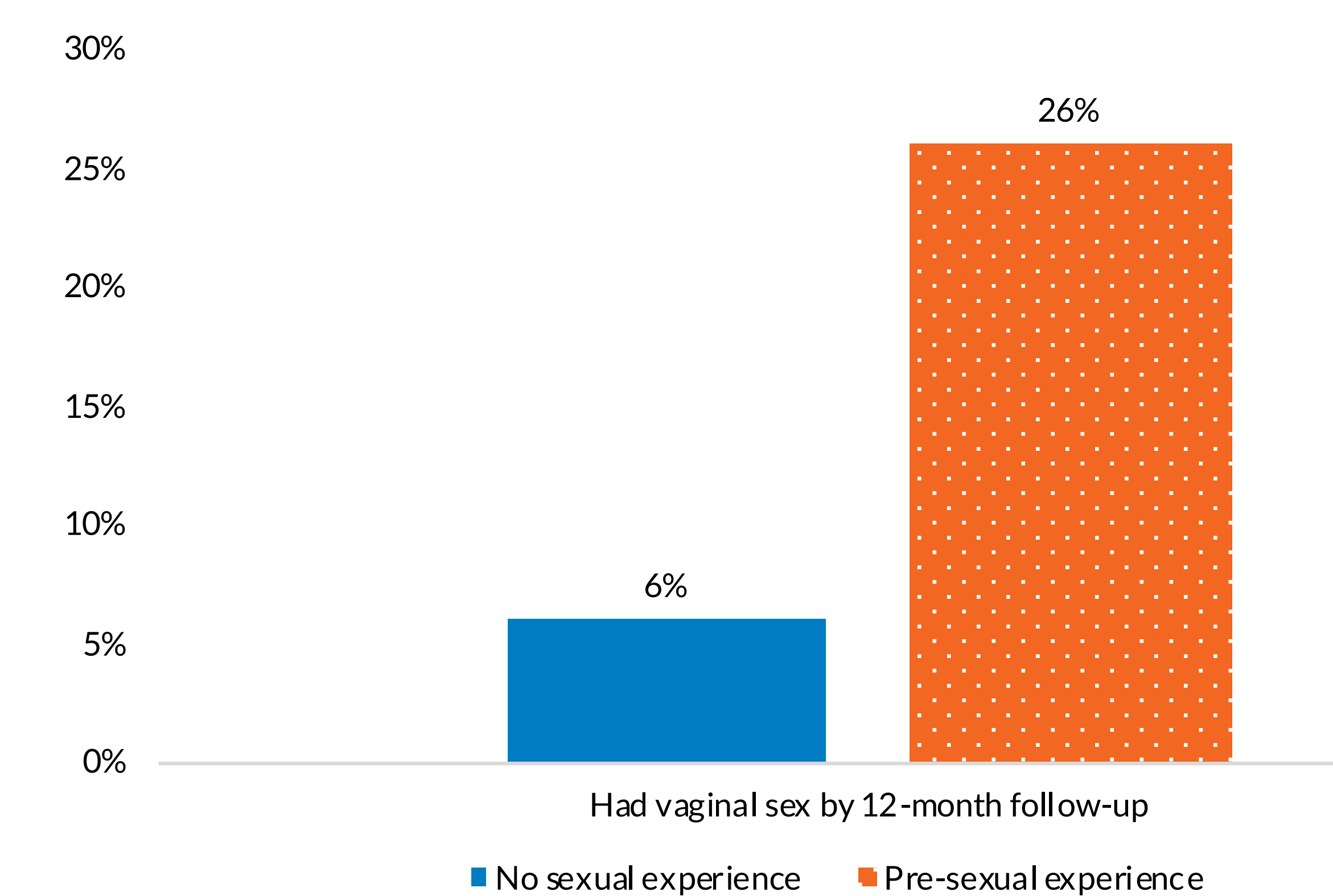


## THE FINDINGS

### Links between pre-sexual behaviors and vaginal sex

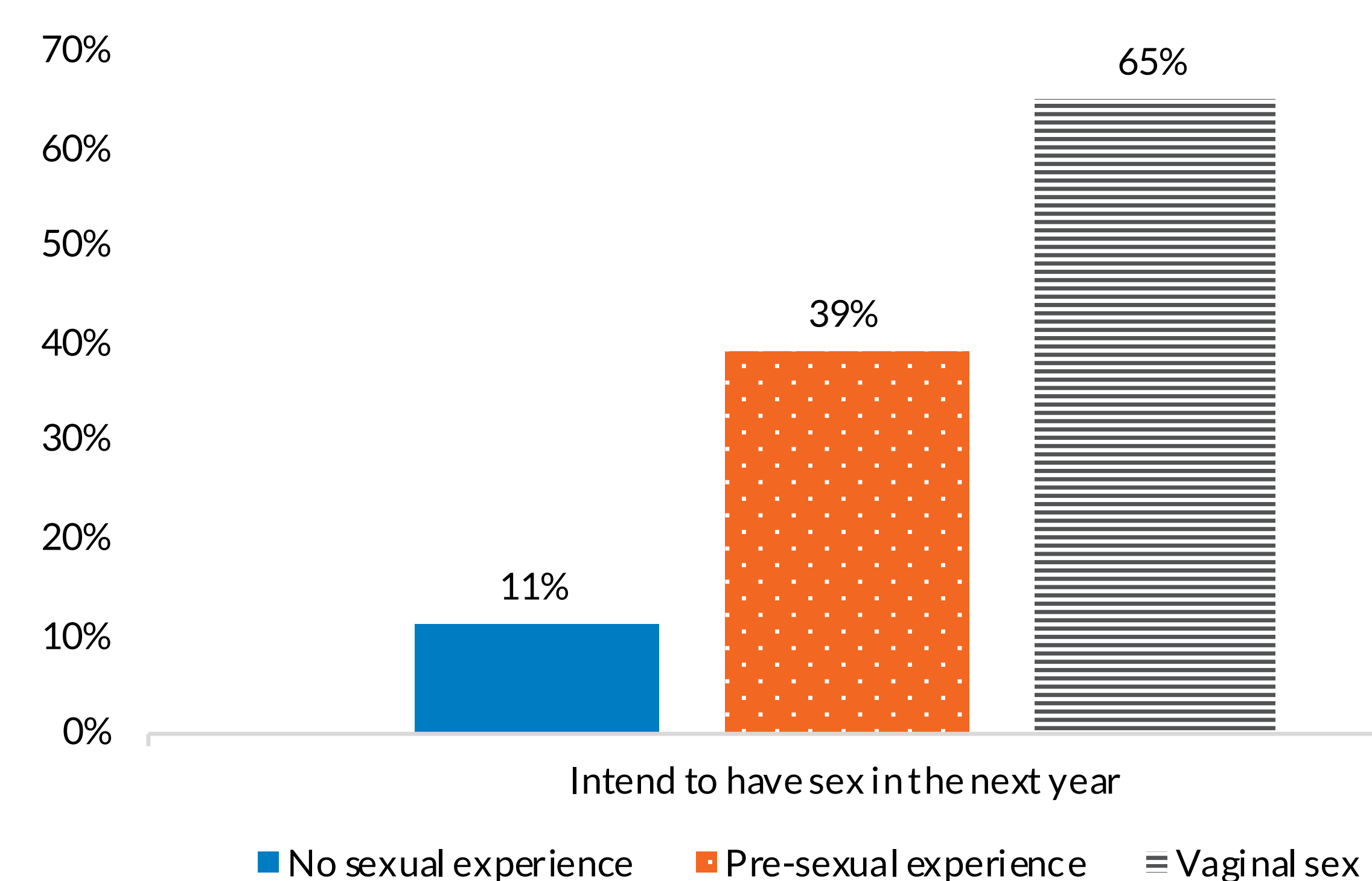
Students in the control group with pre-sexual experience at baseline were **4X** more likely to have vaginal sex by 12 month follow up.

### Vaginal sex at 12-month follow-up among those who had not had vaginal sex at baseline, by pre-sexual experience

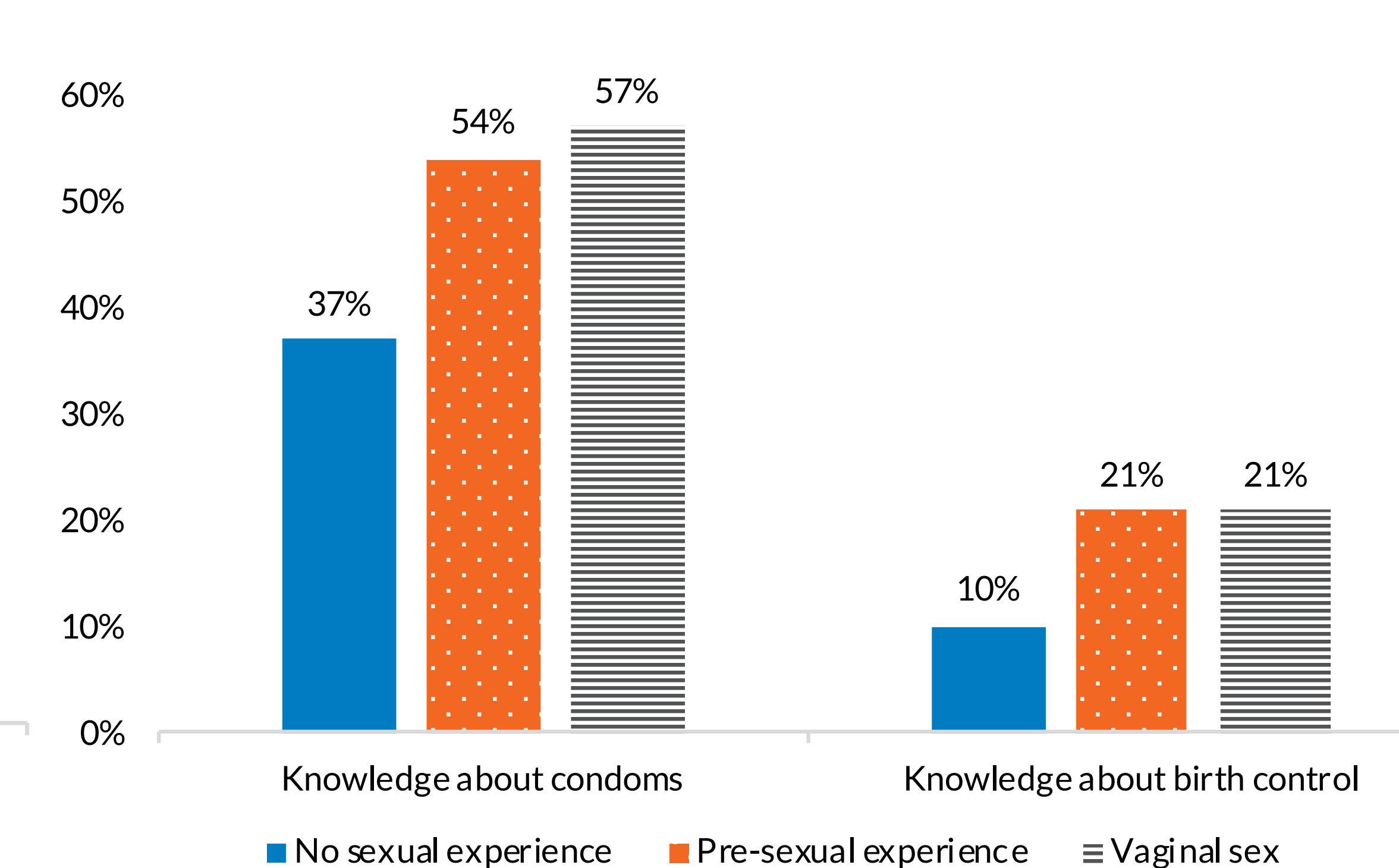


### Knowledge, attitudes, and intentions of students, by sexual experience

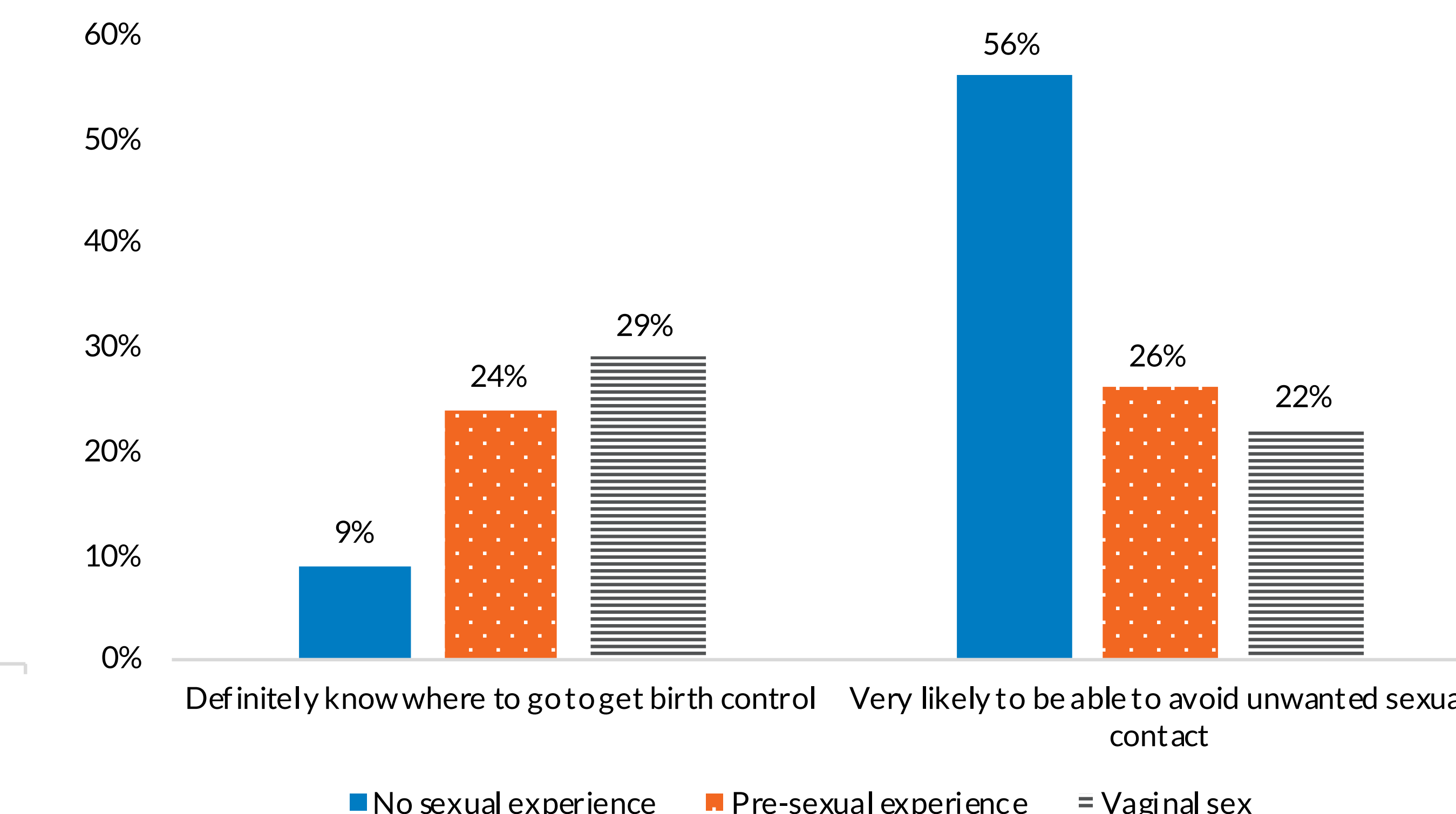
#### Percentage of students who intend to have sex in the next year, by sexual experience



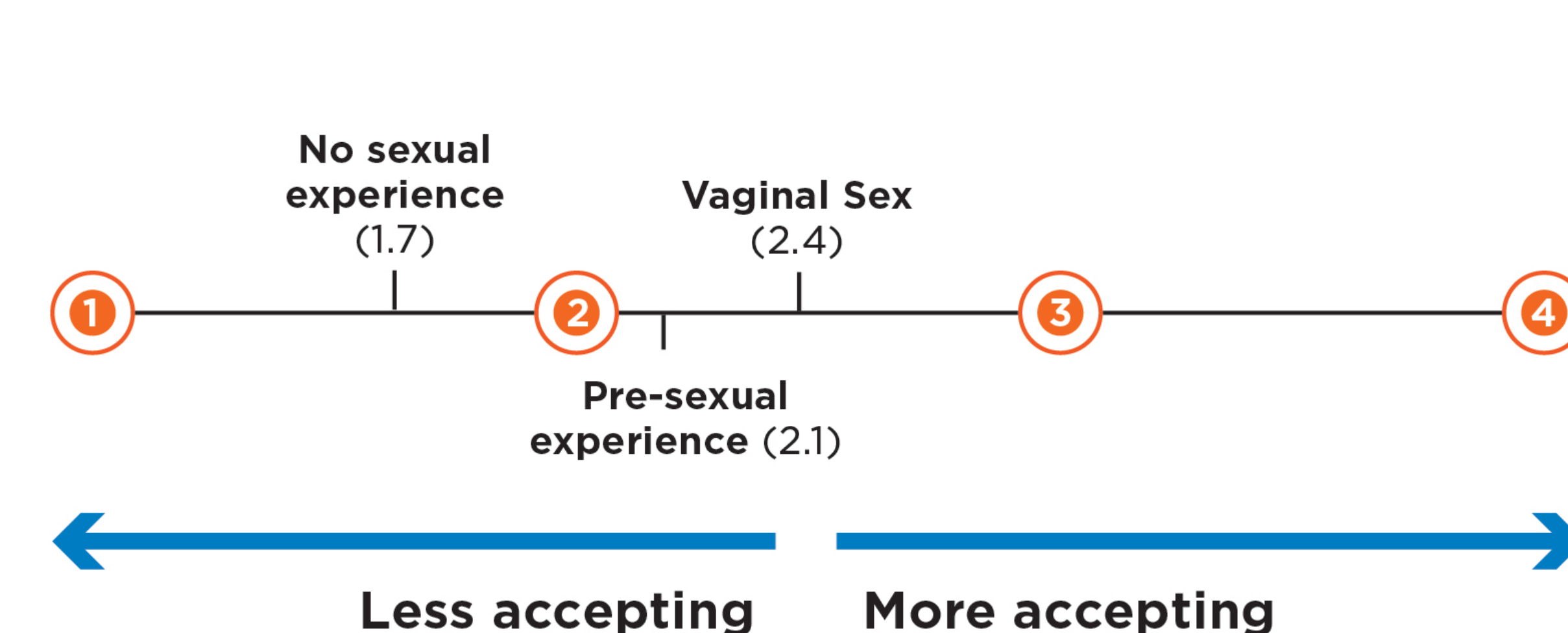
#### Accurate knowledge about condoms and birth control, by sexual experience



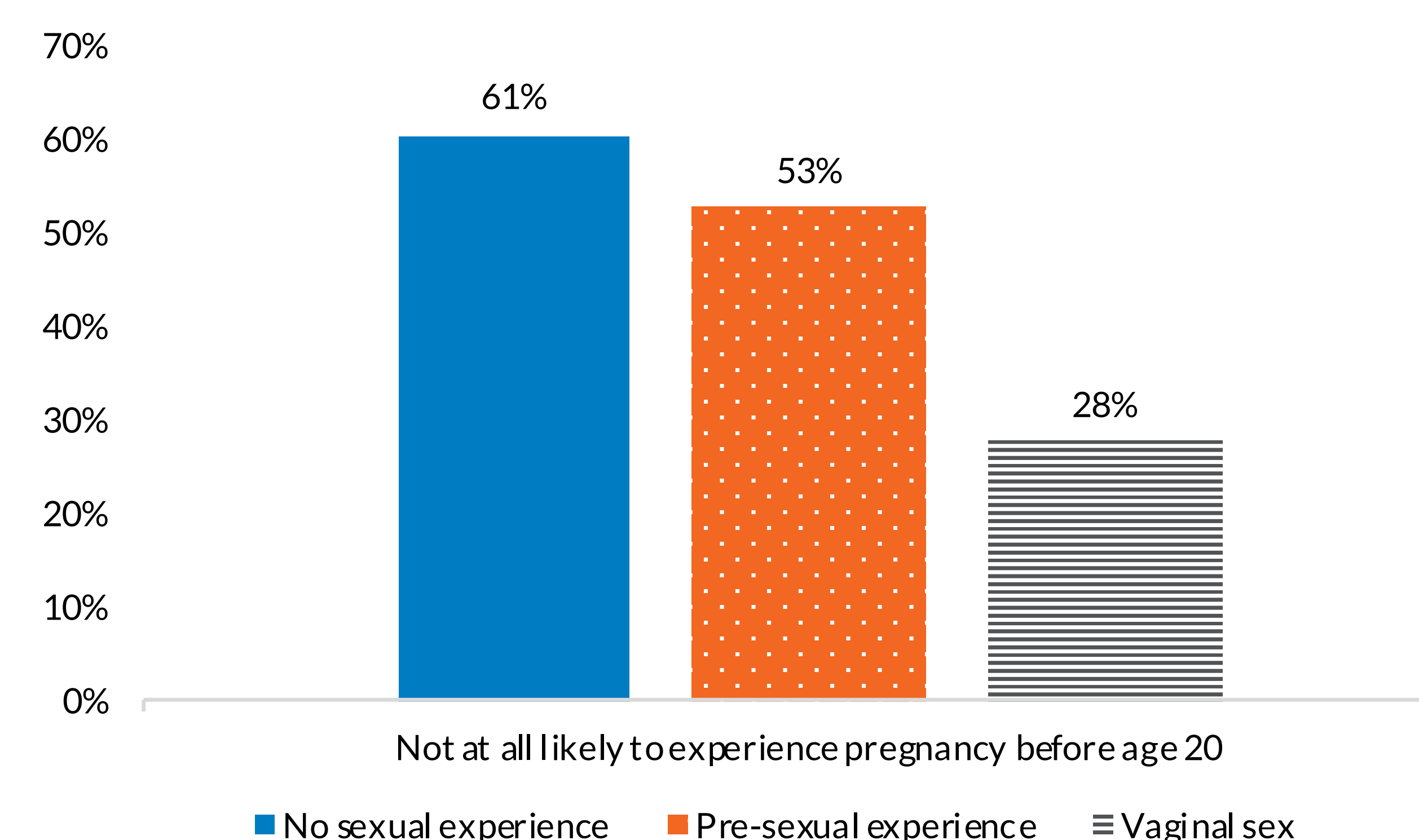
#### Self-efficacy, by sexual experience



### Attitudes towards having sex in early adolescence



### Percentage of students reporting they are not at all likely to experience a pregnancy before age 20, by sexual experience



## CONCLUSION

- When evaluating teen pregnancy prevention programs, failing to account for pre-sexual experience could bias impact findings, particularly when the outcome of interest is sexual initiation.
- Using pre-sexual experience as an outcome may improve evaluators' ability to detect behavioral changes and to determine which curricula are most effective with younger, less sexually experienced teens.
- By understanding the prevalence of pre-sexual experience among students, as well as the intentions, knowledge, and attitudes associated with pre-sexual experience, providers of teen pregnancy prevention programs—particularly those working with populations of younger adolescents—can better target their curricula.