

Native Elder Maltreatment Survey (NEMS): Elder American Indian Women's Experiences

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Background

There are seven types of elder maltreatment according to the National Center on Elder Abuse (2019), including physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, financial/material exploitation, neglect, self-neglect, and abandonment. Elder maltreatment exists when someone the elder has a relationship with (their spouse, sibling, child/ren, friend, or caregiver) mistreats them. In the general population, those ages 65 years and older are expected to more than double in number by 2060, while the same age group among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) is expected to triple (AOA, 2019). National studies have indicated about 1 in 10 older adults is a victim of abuse, and more than 65% of elder abuse victims are women (Acierno, Hernandez, Amstadter, Resnick, Steve, Muzzy, & Kilpatrick, 2010). There is limited literature and national data on elder abuse and neglect among AI/AN populations. National studies provide no information about AI/AN populations and indicate there is not enough data to analyze if any comment is made at all (Acierno, et al, 2010; Laumann, Leitsch, Waite, 2008). This lack of data indicates the need for national evaluation to determine risk indicators of abuse in tribal communities, particularly the specific vulnerabilities of older women. The National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) Program began the Native Elder Maltreatment Survey (NEMS) to determine an estimate of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation concerns in tribal communities.

Methods

The NIEJI NEMS (NEMS; Jervis, Fickenscher, Beals, & Shielding American Indian Elders Project Team, 2014) study began in 2017. This poster examines self-identified AI elderly older than 50 years of age. IRB approval and tribal resolutions were obtained before beginning data collection. Participants were recruited from their local tribal elder service programs and given a structured interview about elder abuse and neglect behaviors. All data were collected in tribal communities through face-to-face or telephone interviews. Interviewers were given training on gathering data, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting.

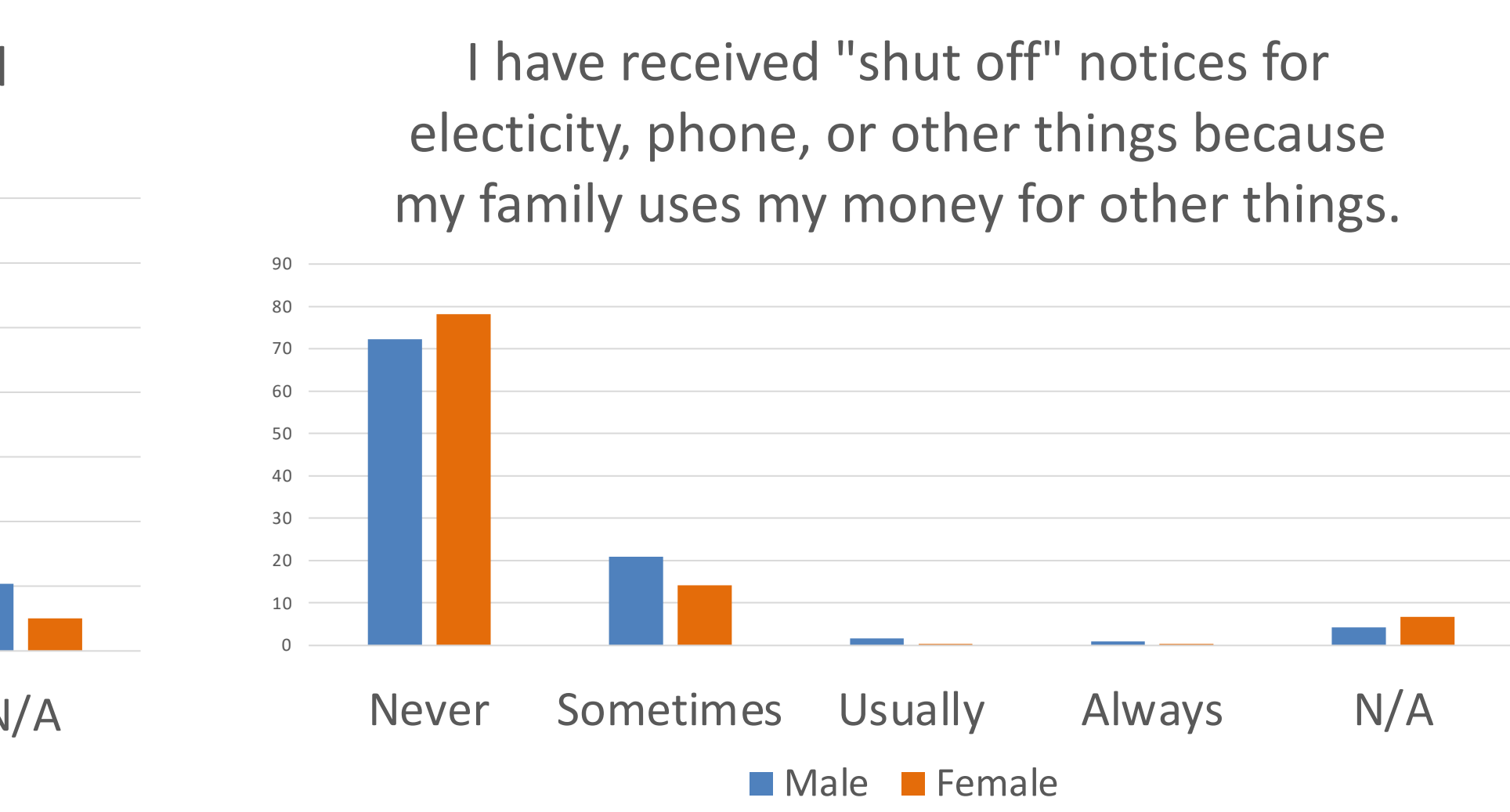
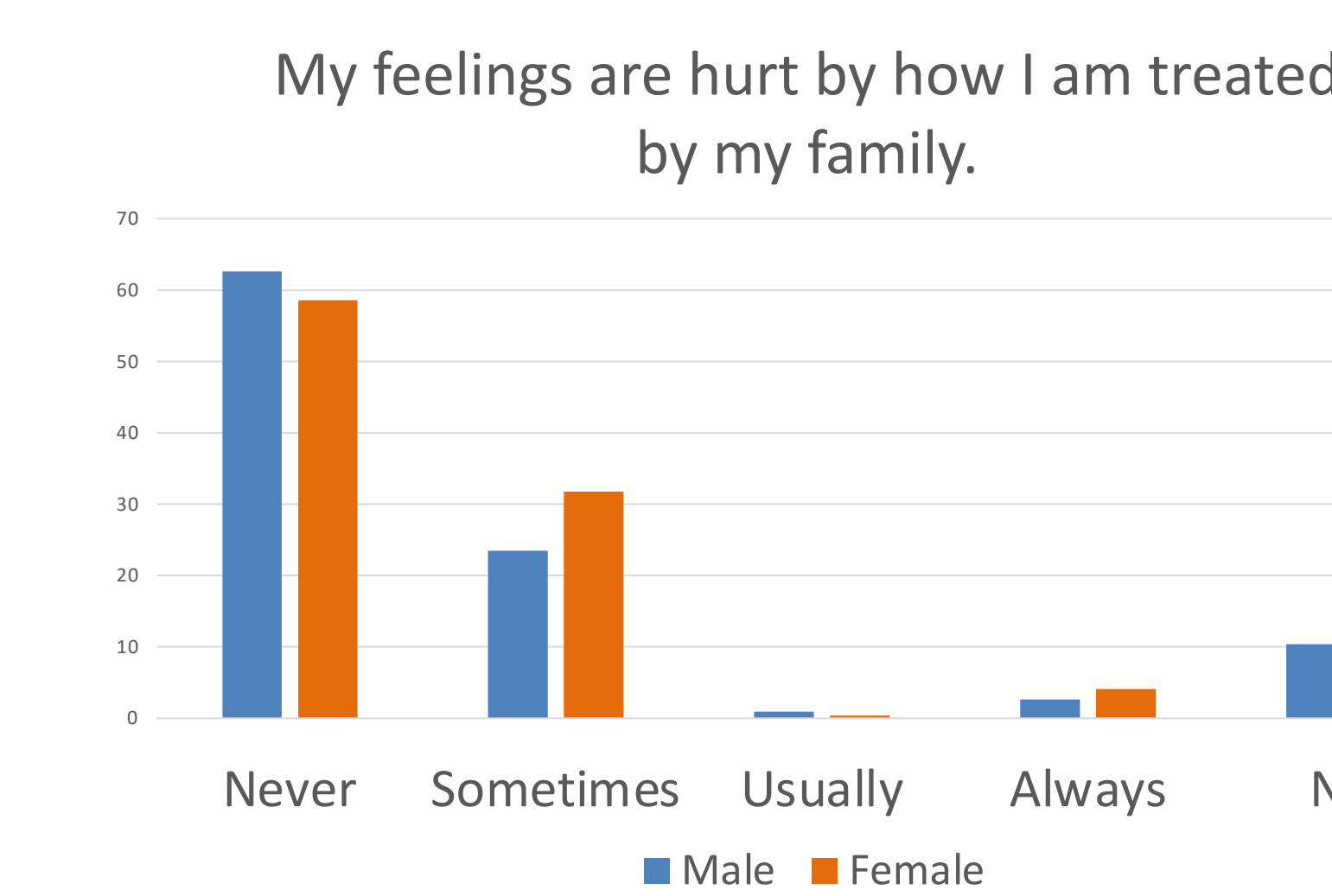
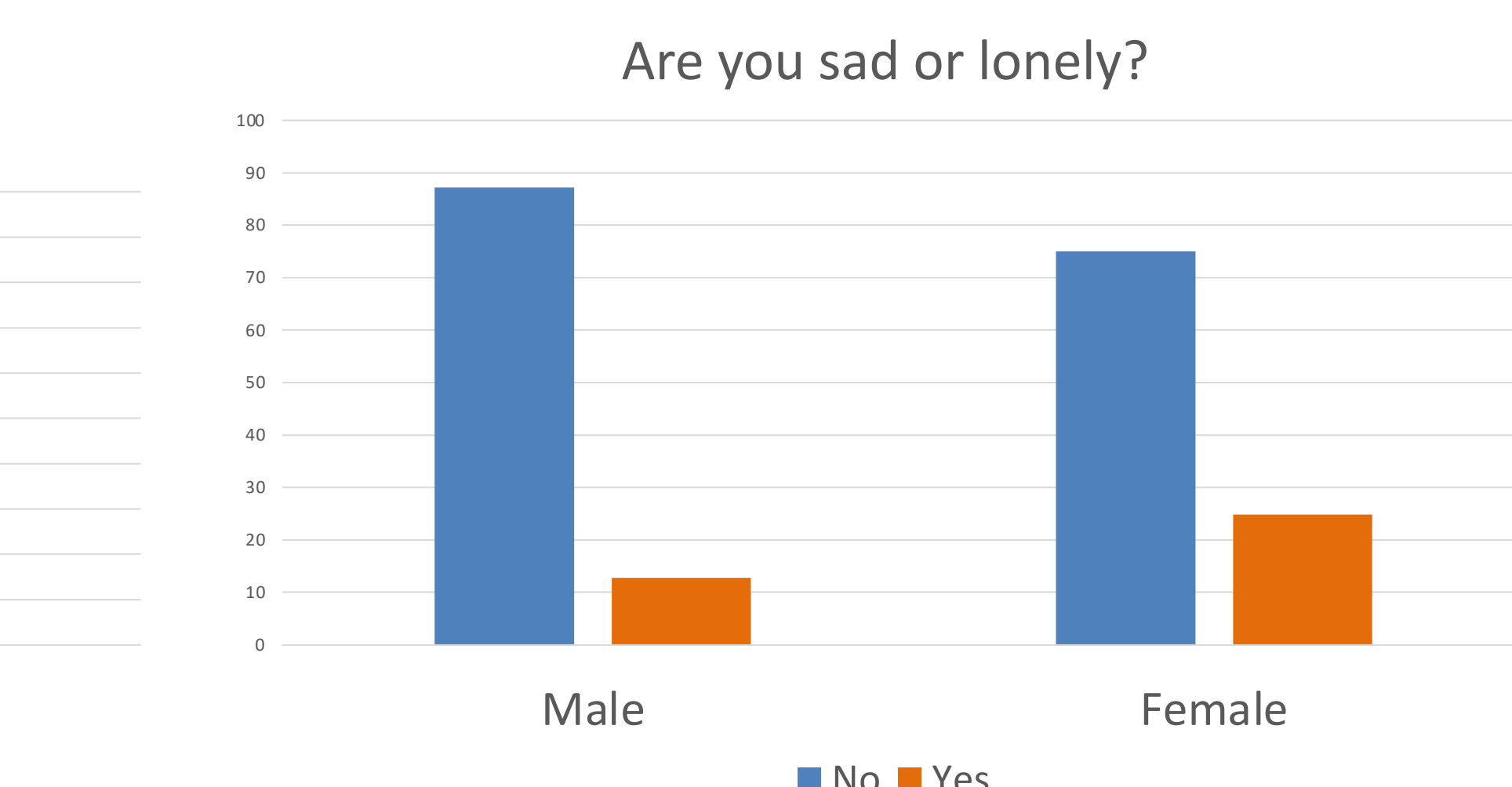
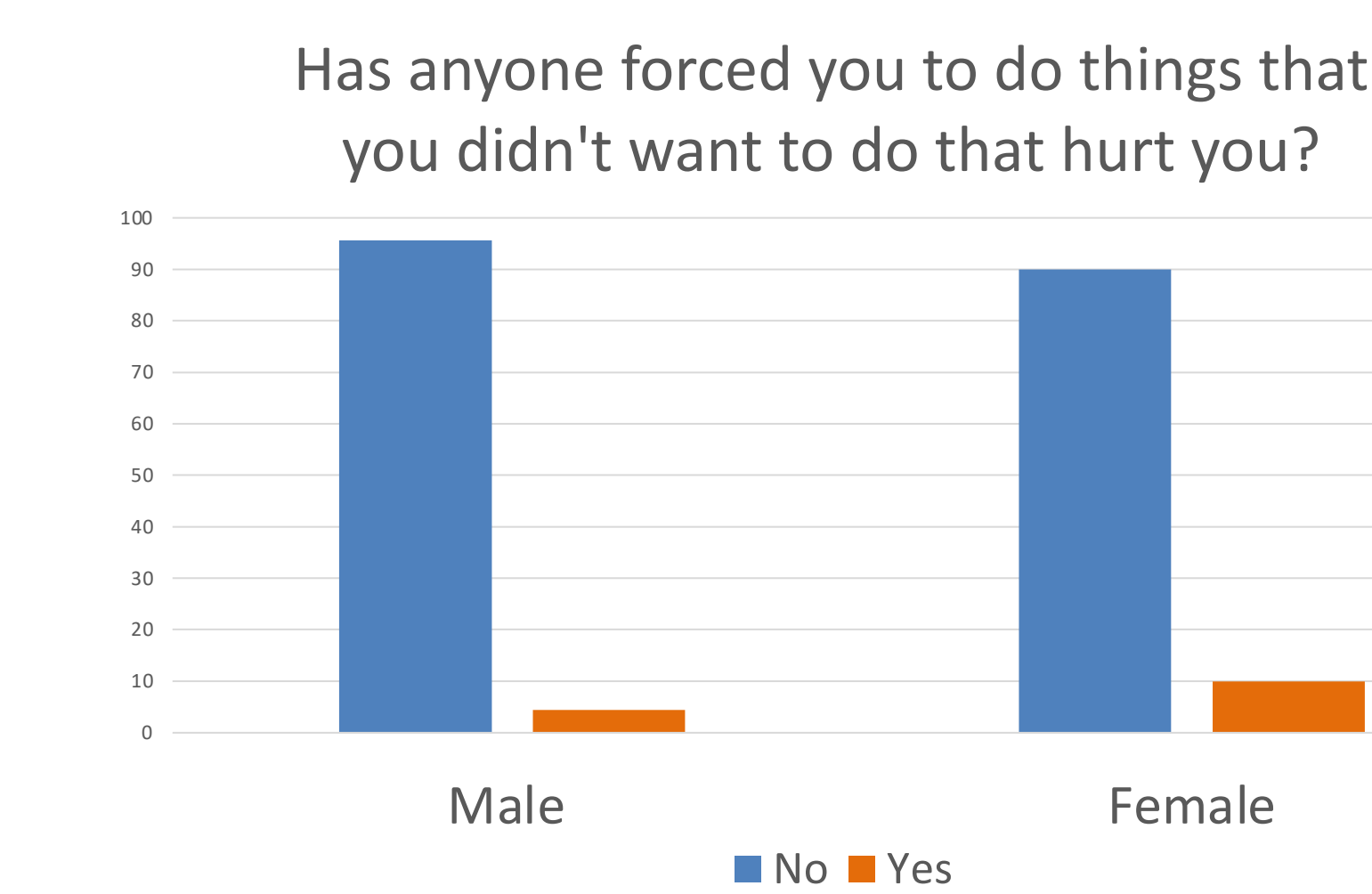
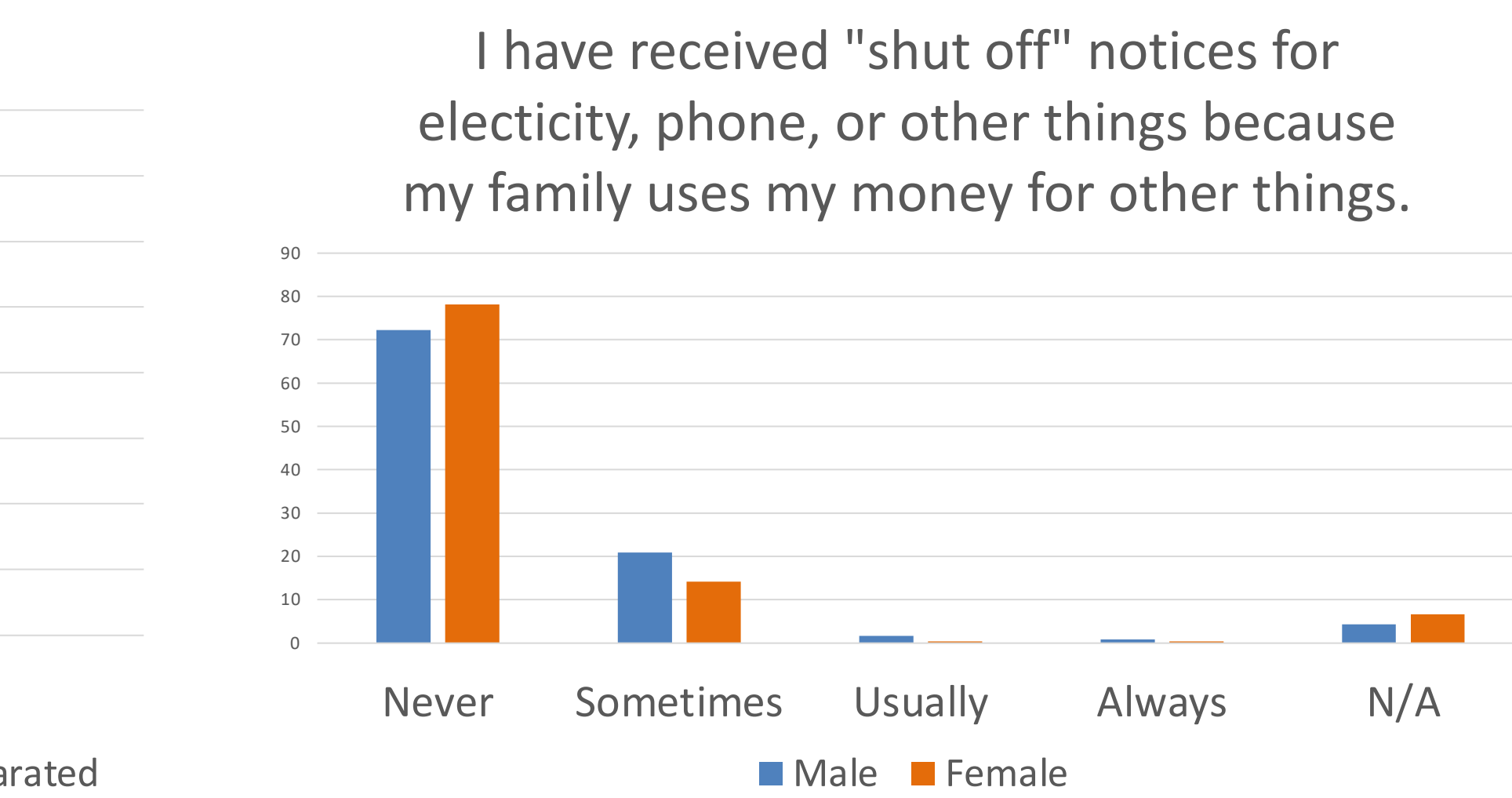
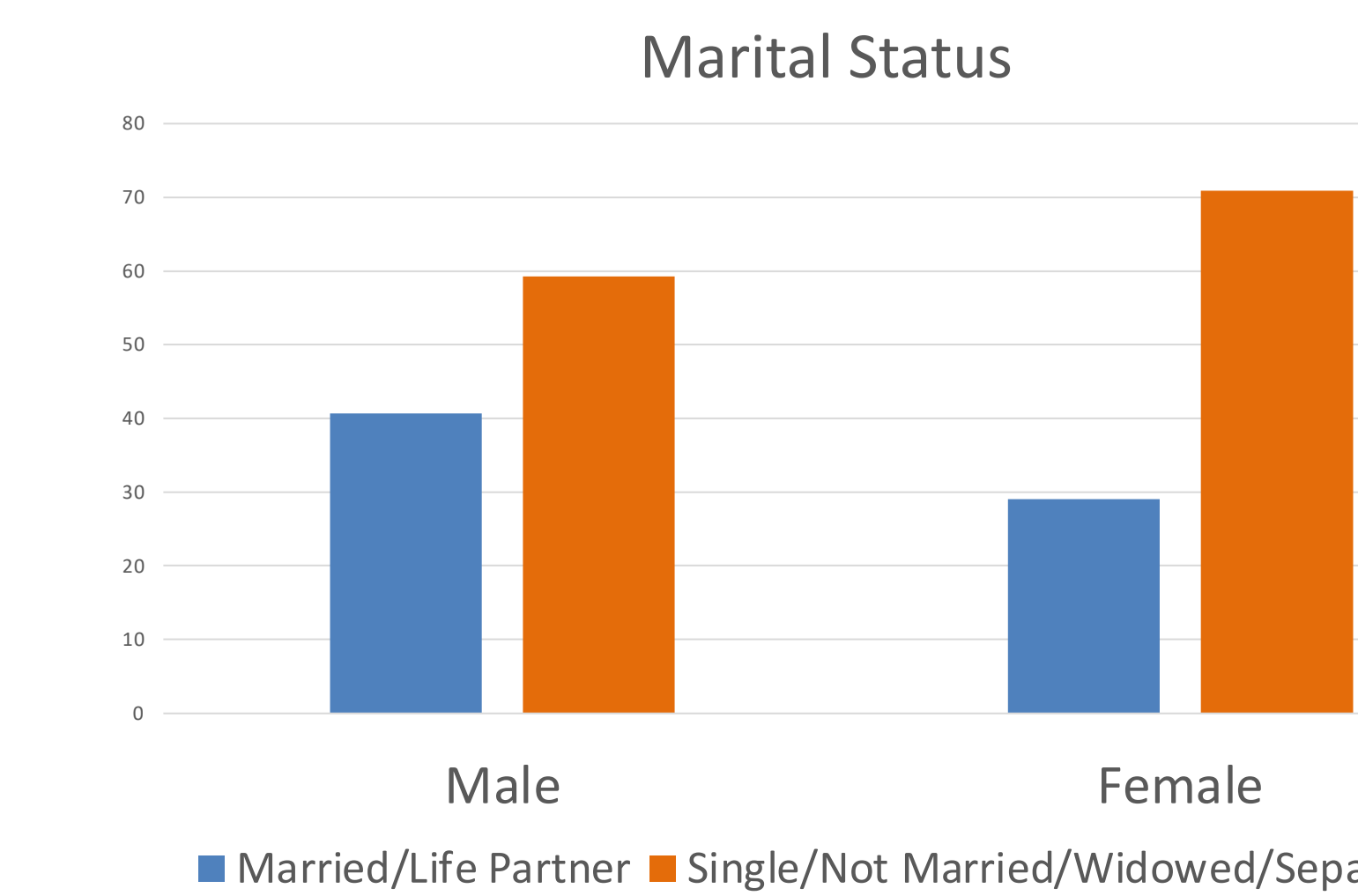
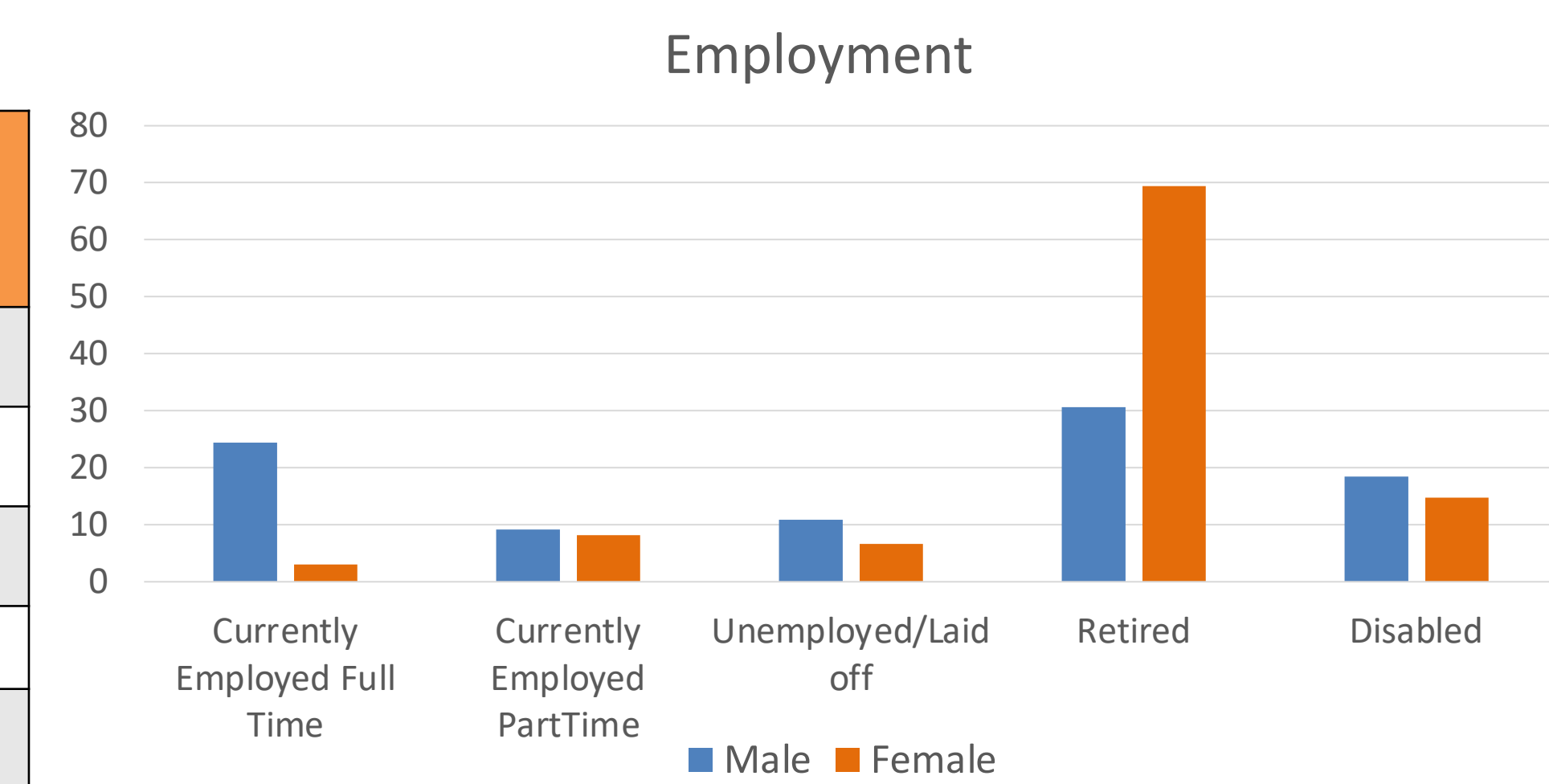
The NEMS was converted to a Scantron-based survey with software developed to read the data into SPSS software. Data was scanned into an SPSS data file and saved on a secure server located at the NIEJI office. The tribes own their data and analysis was provided by authorized NIEJI staff. Surveys were numbered for ease of data entry, but no personal identifiers were on the survey. Analyzed data were returned to the tribe with a comparison to aggregate data from all tribes participating. The data for this project is the aggregate of all tribes that participated in the NEMS.

- A total of 246 women from 24 tribes participated in the project.
- Ages ranged from 50-101 years, with a mean of 67.4 ±8.5 years.
- 51.5% had education beyond high school or GED.
- 70.3% were single, divorced, or widowed.
- 38.2% were employed at least part time, and 35.4% were retired.

Results

Data was analyzed to show the types of abuse occurring in all participating tribes. Although this is a small sample of the 573 federally recognized tribes, this will begin to address the paucity of data on elder abuse and neglect in Indian Country. Subscales included the Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test (H/S EAST); Native Elder Life Scale (NELS) – Financial Exploitation (FE); NELS-Neglect (N), NELS-Psychological and Physical (PP), and Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS).

NEMS Subscale			
Subscale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach α
H/S EAST	5.71	2.51	0.727
NELS-FE	23.80	6.65	0.768
NELS-N	22.69	5.15	0.576
NELS-PP	7.41	2.61	0.428
CTS	6.00	0.10	0.820



Conclusion

- Female participants were predominantly Single/Not Married/Widowed/ Separated
- More than half had more than a High School Education/GED.
- Mean age was 67.4 ±8.5 years old.
- More females than males indicated vulnerability to abuse in almost all abuse categories.
- Women indicated higher levels of neglect and financial exploitation than physical and psychological abuse.
- 34% were Retired /28% were Currently Employed Full Time.
- Female indicated more feelings of sadness or isolation than males. ✓ p=.005.
- Women felt nobody wanted them around more often than men.
- Men were less trusting of others and reported their family ridiculed their race, culture, and beliefs more often than women.
- More females (14.2%) than males (11.3%) indicated being forced to do something they didn't want to do.
- More older women (70.9%) are Single/ Not Married, Widowed, Separated than older men (59.3%) ✓ p=.02.
- 10% of females indicated they were forced to do things they didn't want to do that hurt them, compared to 4.4% of males. ✓ p=.05
- More women are Employed Full Time (8.2%) and Retired (69.4%) than men (24.4%, 30.6%), but more men are Unemployed or Laid off (10.9%) or Disabled (18.5%) than women (6.6%, 14.8%).

References

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