

Remote Work and Psychosocial Risks: High Demand and Gender Disparities

An Exploratory Study on Remote Work and Psychosocial Risks

Rodrigo Finkelstein (Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy / Simon Fraser University, Canada)

Magdalena Garcés (Universidad Alberto Hurtado / Universidad Diego Portales, Chile)

Pamela Frías (Universidad Alberto Hurtado / Universidad Diego Portales, Chile)



Centre for
Research on
Work Disability Policy



SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATION

uah/

Facultad de Psicología
Universidad Alberto Hurtado



/ Socioeconomic Context

Country: Chile. The **GDP per capita: CAD 20,700**. The **Gini Coefficient** is around **50** (degree of inequality).

Income: The **minimum** income sits around **CAD 5,076** per year and the **median** (central tendency) income around **CAD 8,112** per year.

Economy: **Neoliberal model** where public resources have been completed or partially privatized (healthcare, education, water, electricity, pension, highways).

Work Health and Safety: Public and private Workers Compensation Boards **based on the German Model:** (a) no-fault compensation, (b) collective liability (c) employer funding, (d) compulsory insurance and (e) medical and wage-replacement benefits.



/ COVID-19 Context

Chile's population: **19.12 million** people.

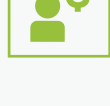
Cases per 100,000 people: **3,090**. Ranks 30th worldwide.

Total Cases: **548,941**. Ranks 19th worldwide.

Deaths per 1 million people: **801**. In the top 10 worldwide.

Total Deaths: **15,322**. Ranks 19th worldwide.

Lockdown: **Complete lockdown** for about 4 months followed by partial lockdowns.



/ Study Design

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to **explore** the presence and extent of psychosocial risks in the novel remote work environment.

Methods: An online **self-administered questionnaire** structured on the basis of closed-ended and Likert Scale questions was used to collect primary data. Based on nonprobability sampling - convenience sampling - it was distributed via the social media (Linkedin, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp) and e-mails.

Date: The questionnaire was available from **June 7 to 20**, 2020.

Spontaneous Sample: Composed of **479 participants** at a completeness rate of 88% (420 questionnaires fully completed). The 420 questionnaires comprises 62.6% women (263 questionnaires) and 37.4% men (157 questionnaires).



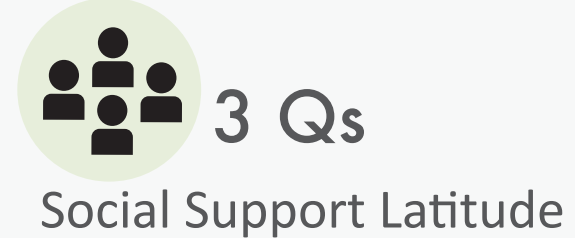
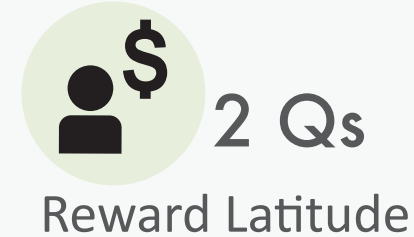
/ Study Design

Demographic Characteristics: **48%** of the sample corresponds to workers between **40 and 49 years old**; 19% to the age group between 26 and 35 years old; 13% to the age group between 36 and 39 years old; and 9% to the 50-55 age bracket. The rest age brackets are equally distributed around 3%.

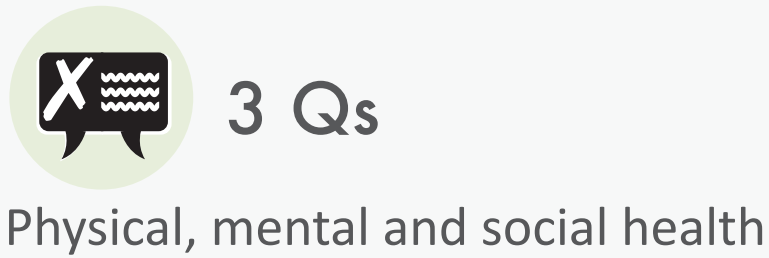
60% of the sample is employed under an **unlimited term contract** whereas 9% is employed under a limited term contract. 11% of the sample is not formally contracted and 20% declares to be self-employed or a business owner.

53% of the sample lives with his/her **partner and children** while 18% lives only with his/her partner. 8% of the sample lives alone and another 8% lives alone with children. The rest live with their parents, friends and others not specified.

/ Psychosocial Risks Dimensions



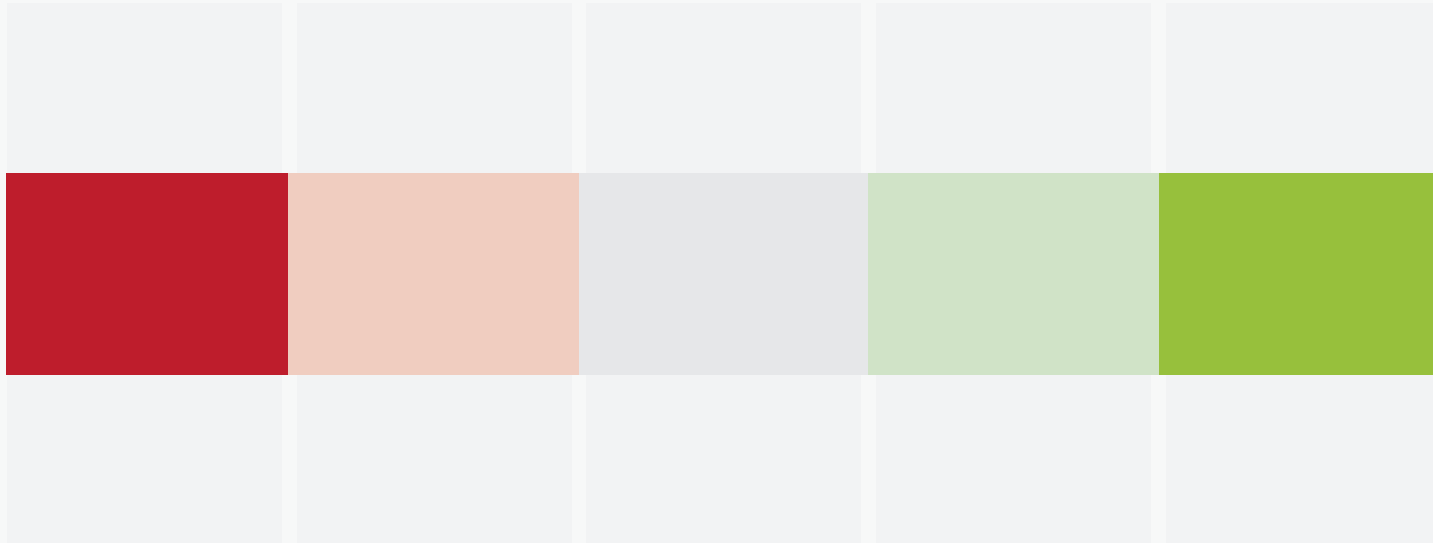
/ Symptoms



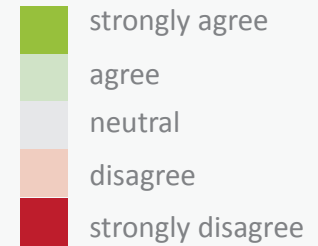
/ Risk Scale

Color Scale

High Risk Risk Neutral No Risk Absolutely
No Risk



/ Risk Scale

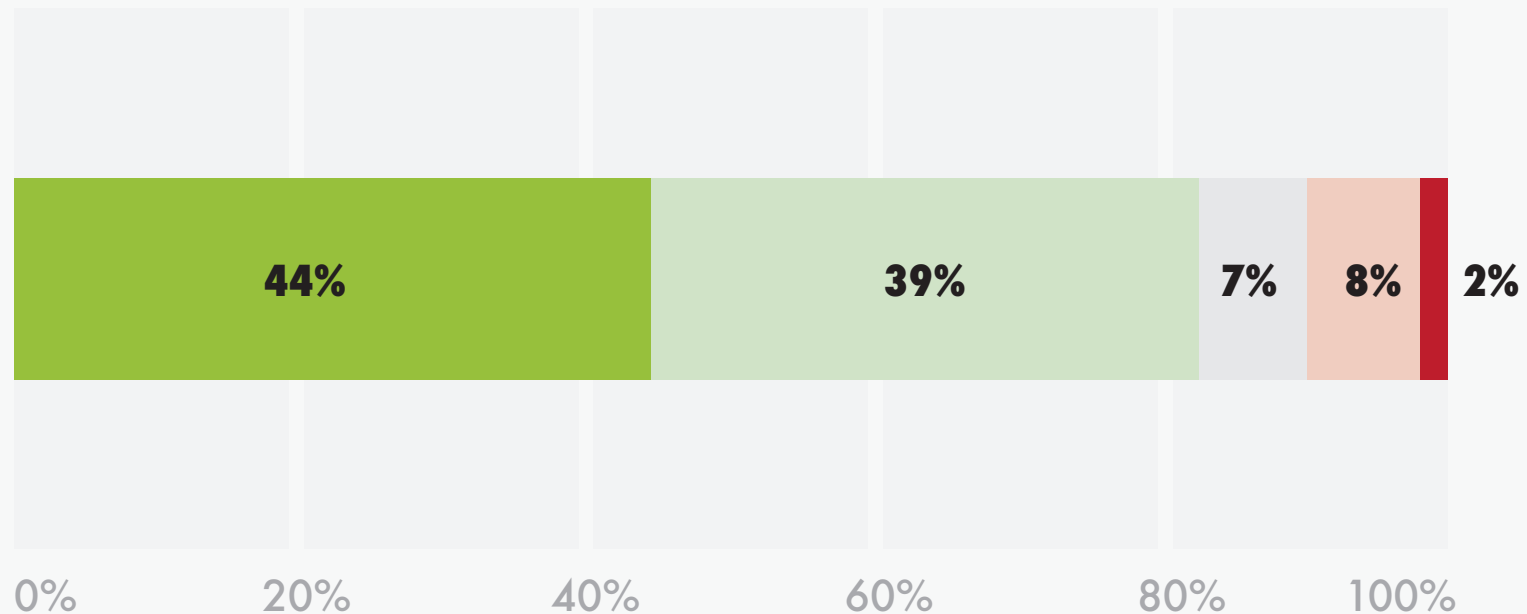


Positive Statement

I have the chance to talk with my colleagues about the problems I experience while working remotely.



Social Support
Latitude



/ Risk Scale

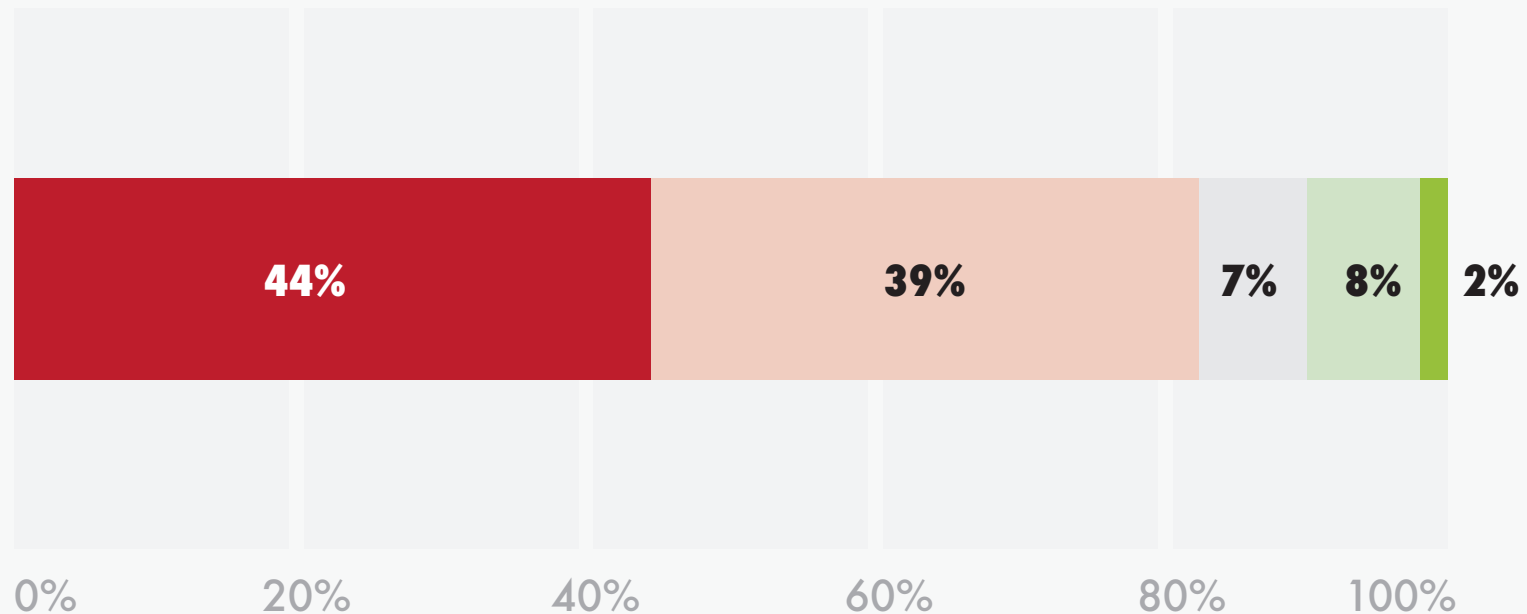


Negative Statement

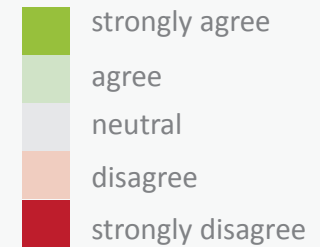
I have NO chances to talk with my colleagues about the problems I experience while working remotely.



Social Support
Latitude

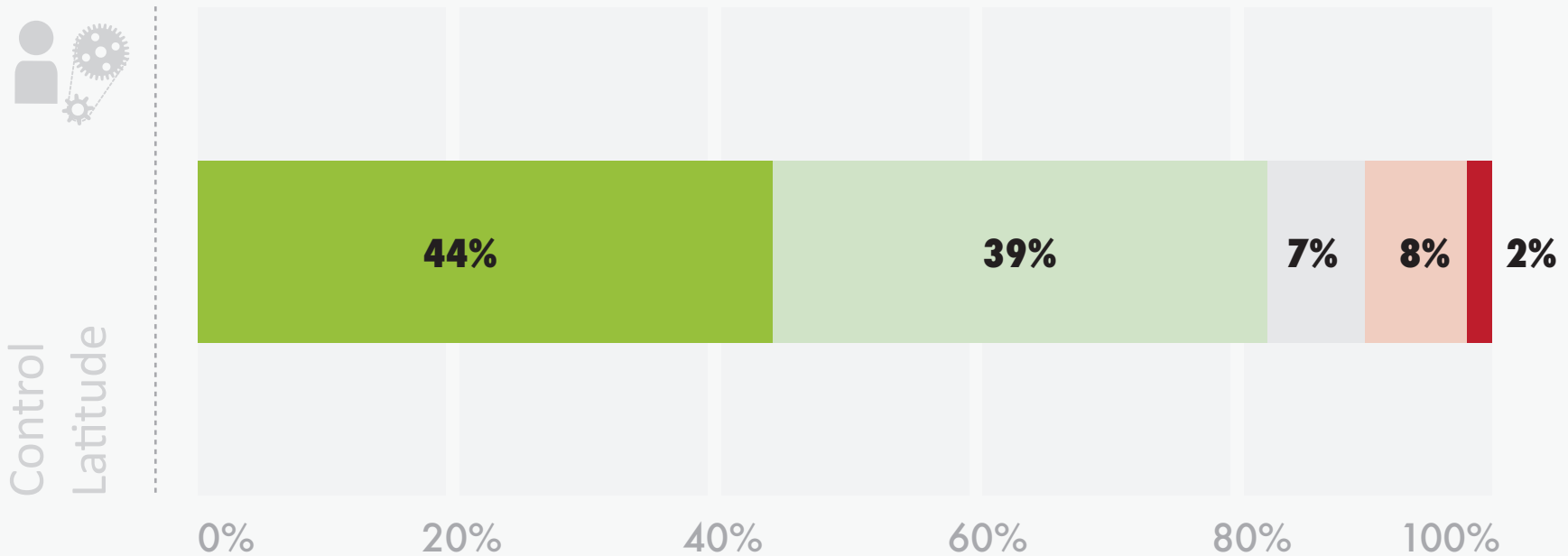


/ Results



Q1

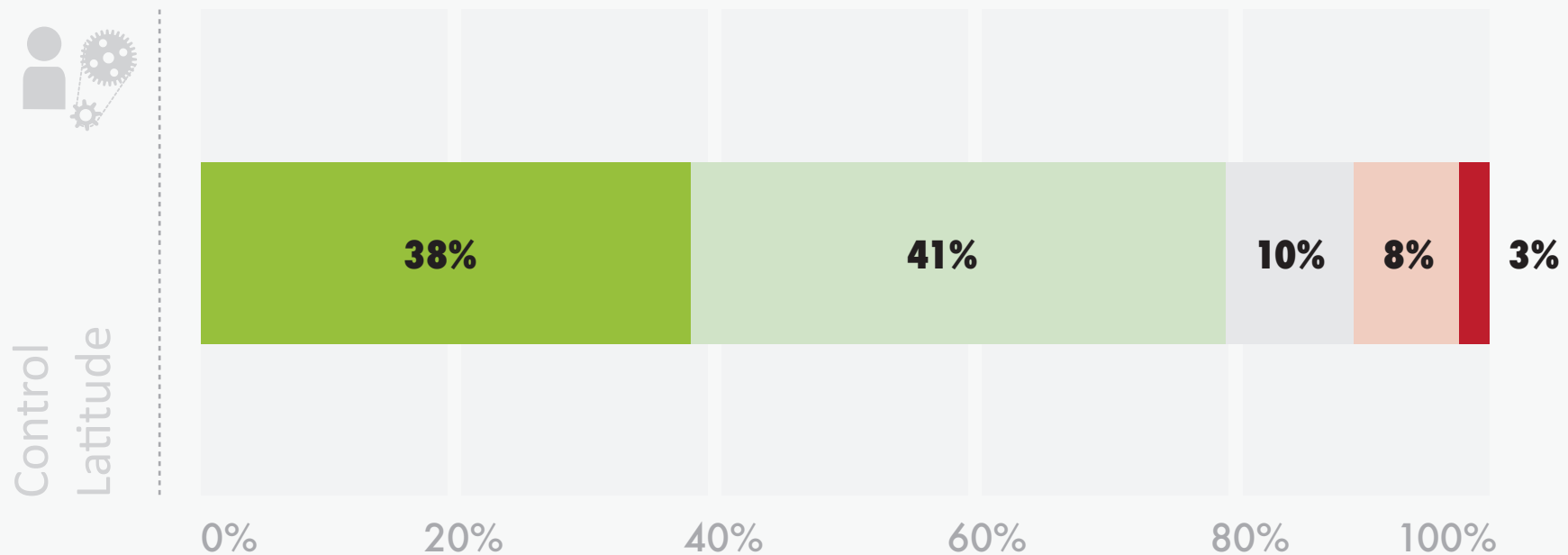
I have the necessary working conditions and resources to perform my job at home (working space, suitable desk, internet connection, equipment and other furnishings required to carry out my duties).



/ Results

Q2

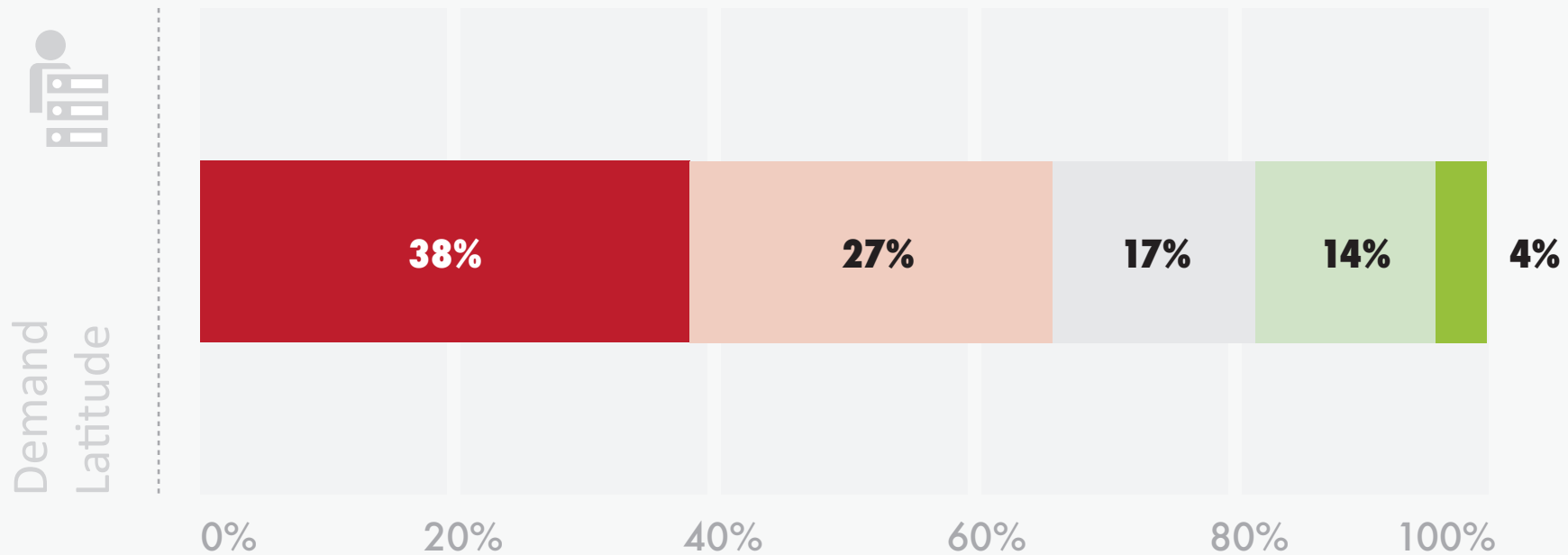
I enjoy the necessary autonomy and independence to successfully perform the tasks that remote work demands.



/ Results

Q3

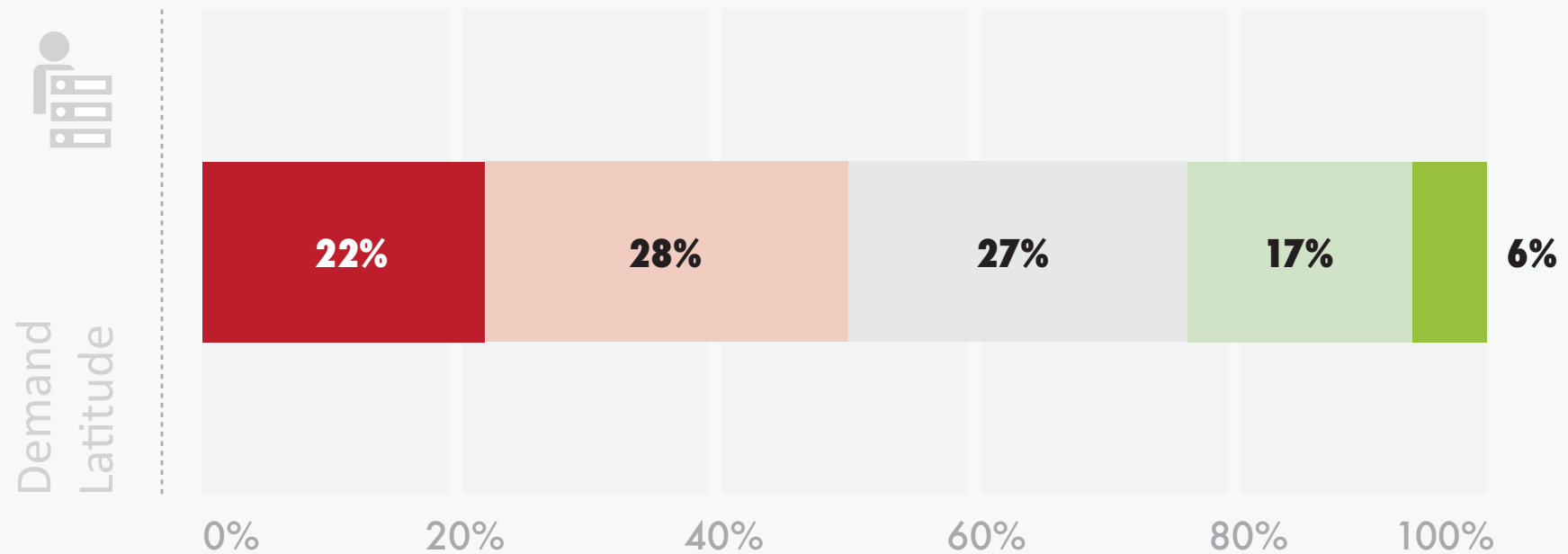
I work with higher intensity or longer hours than I used to before begining to work remotely.



/ Results

Q4

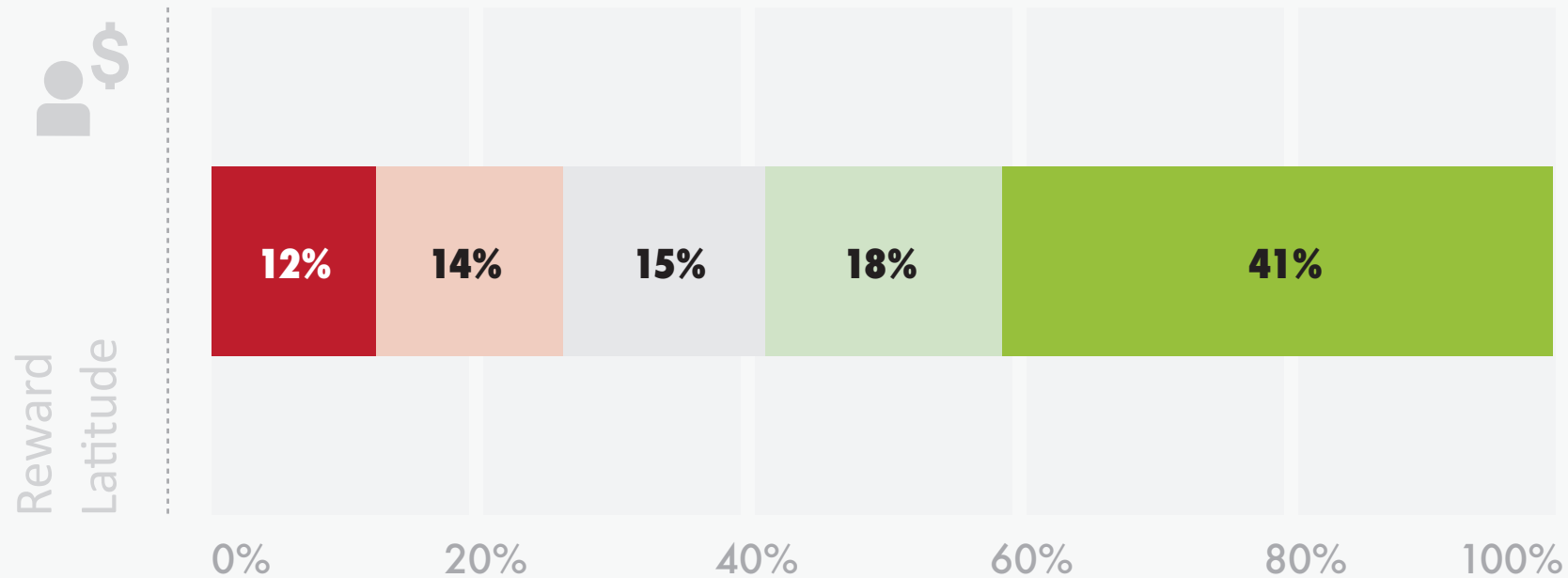
My job responsibilities have increased as a result of working remotely.



/ Results

Q5

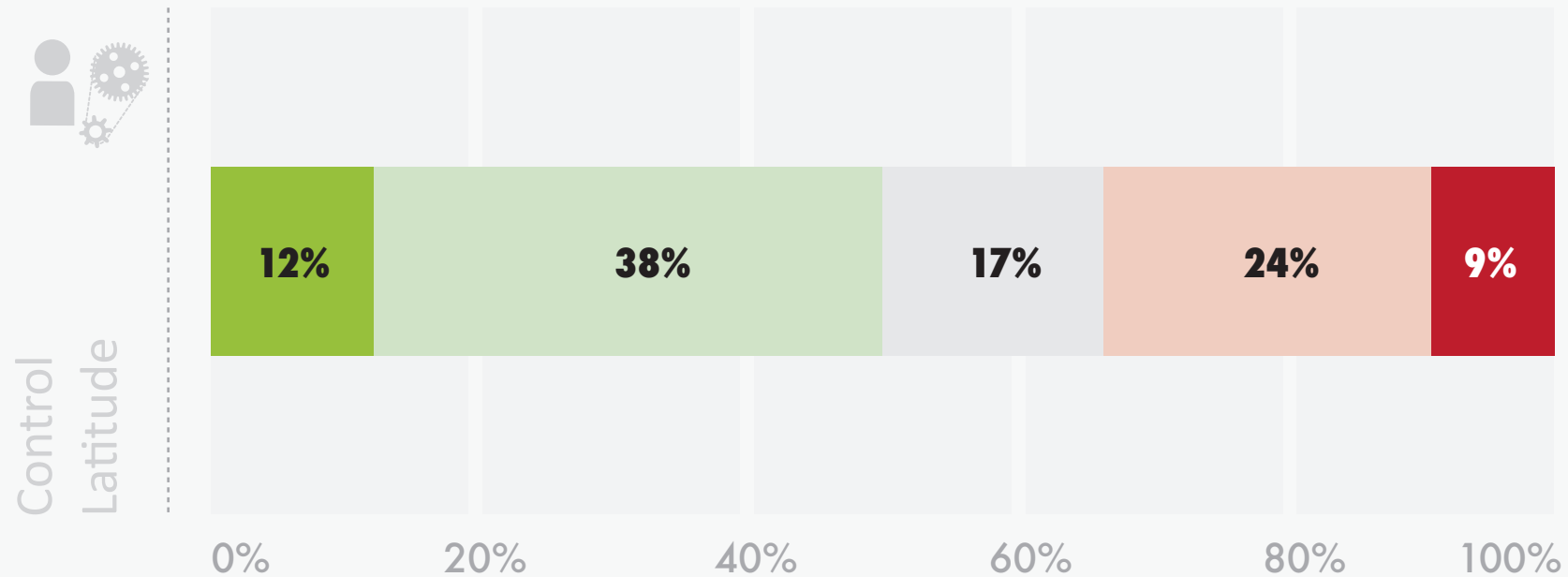
Mi income adversely changed with the shift to remote work.



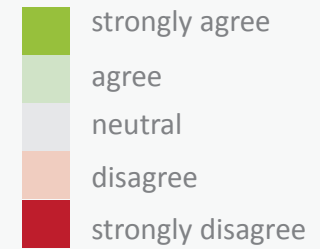
/ Results

Q6

I have been able to balance remote work with joyful and/or recreational activities that allow me to unwind and relax.

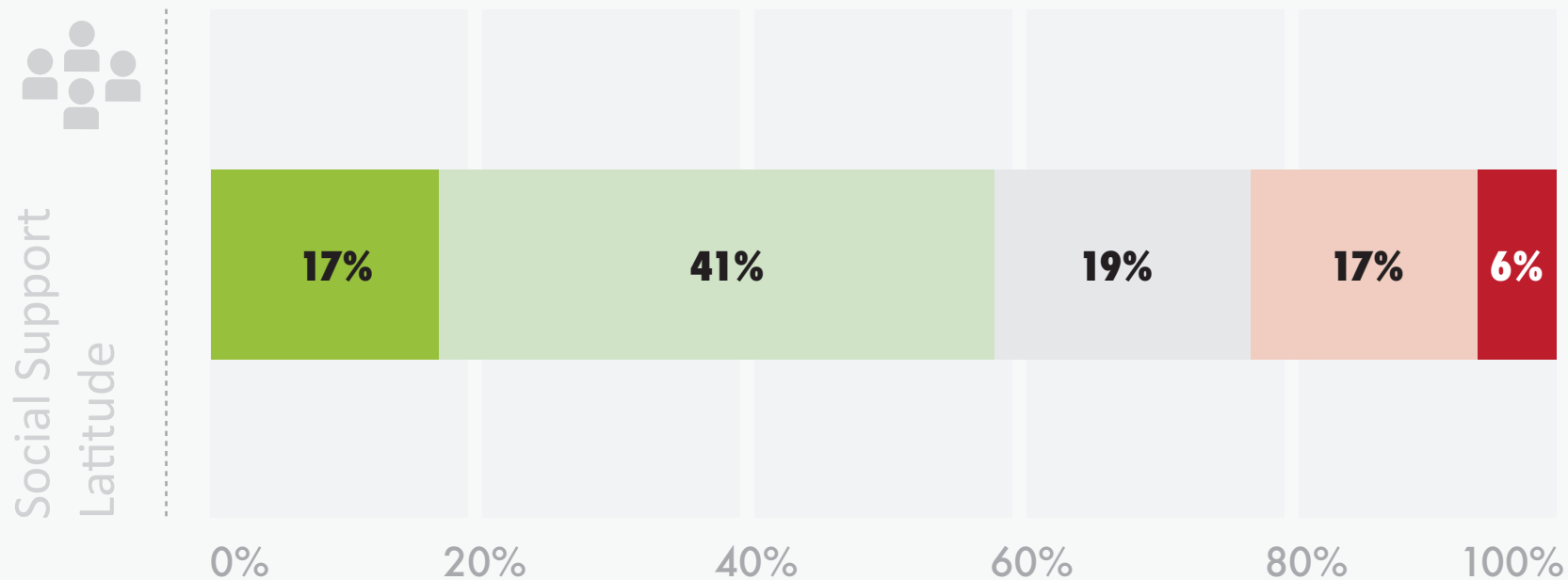


/ Results

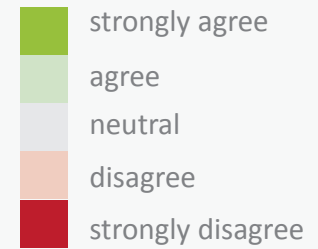


Q7

I get the necessary feedback from my boss, colleagues or clients to effectively guide my job duties.



/ Results

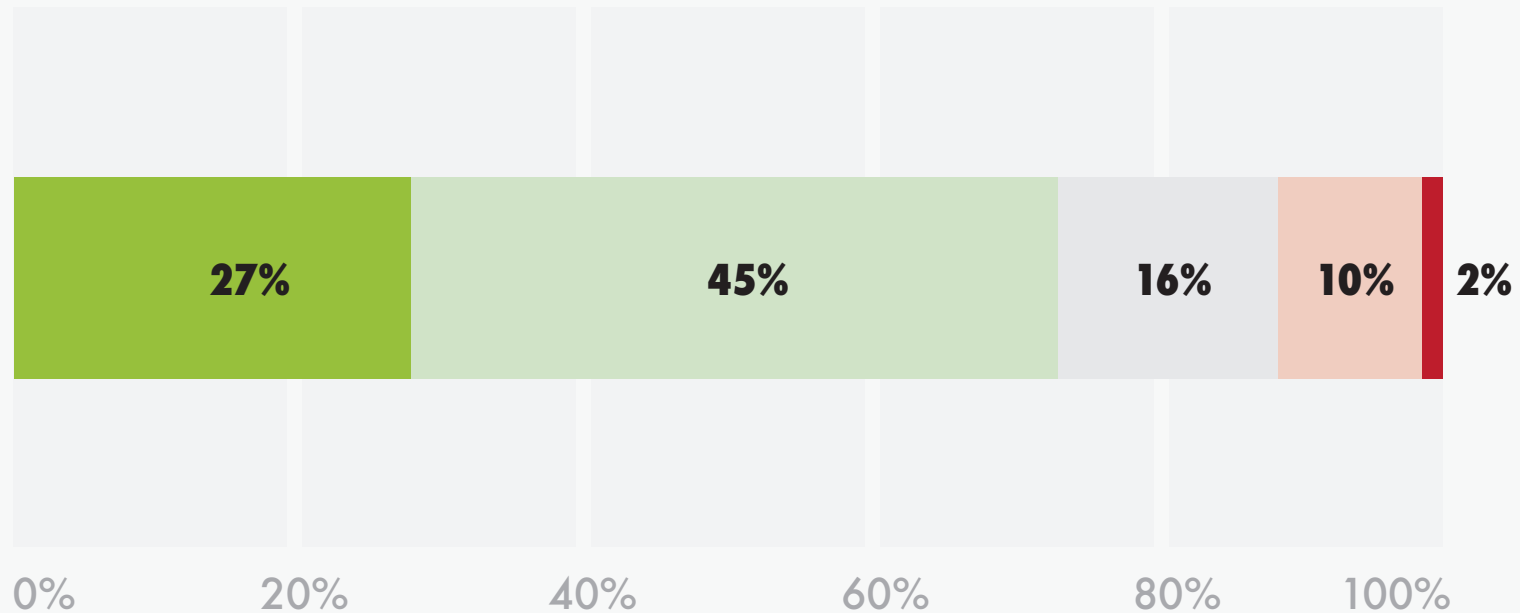


Q8

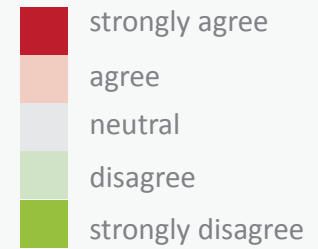
I have the chance to talk with my colleagues about the problems I experience while working remotely.



Social Support
Latitude



/ Results

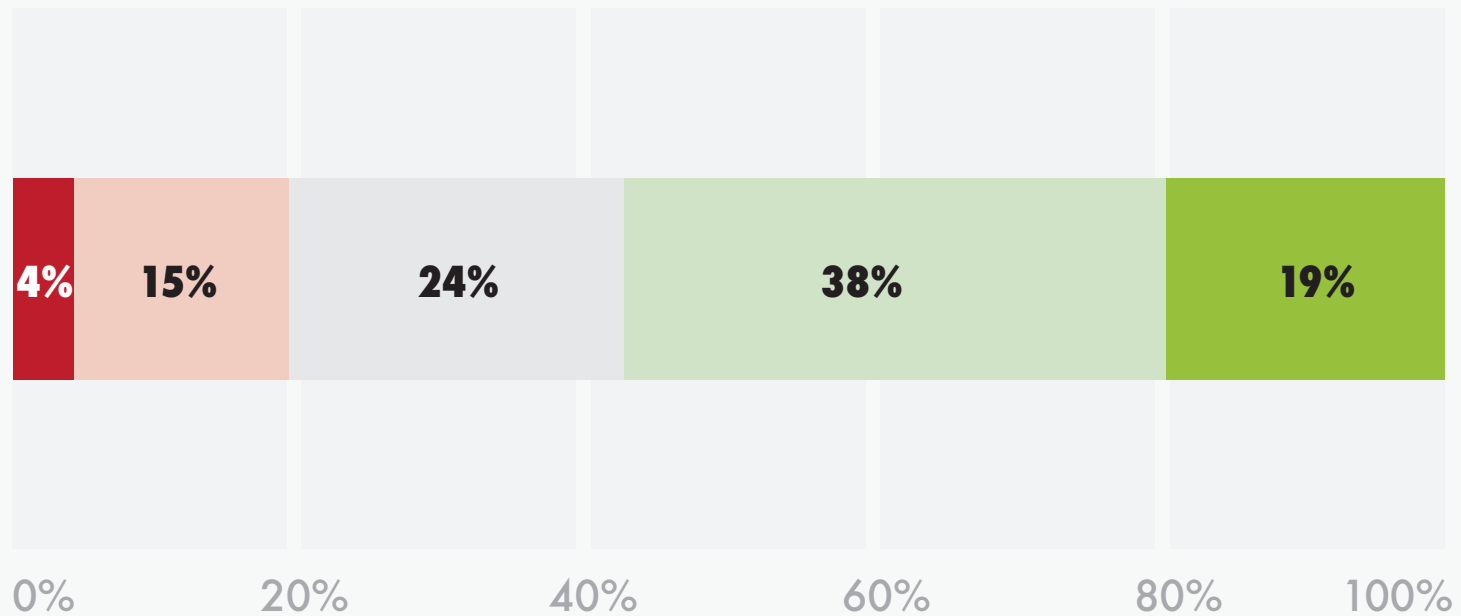


Q9

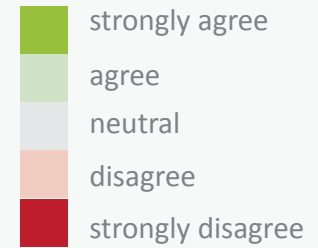
Remote work has increased my personal conflicts and/or disputes within my working group.



Social Support
Latitude

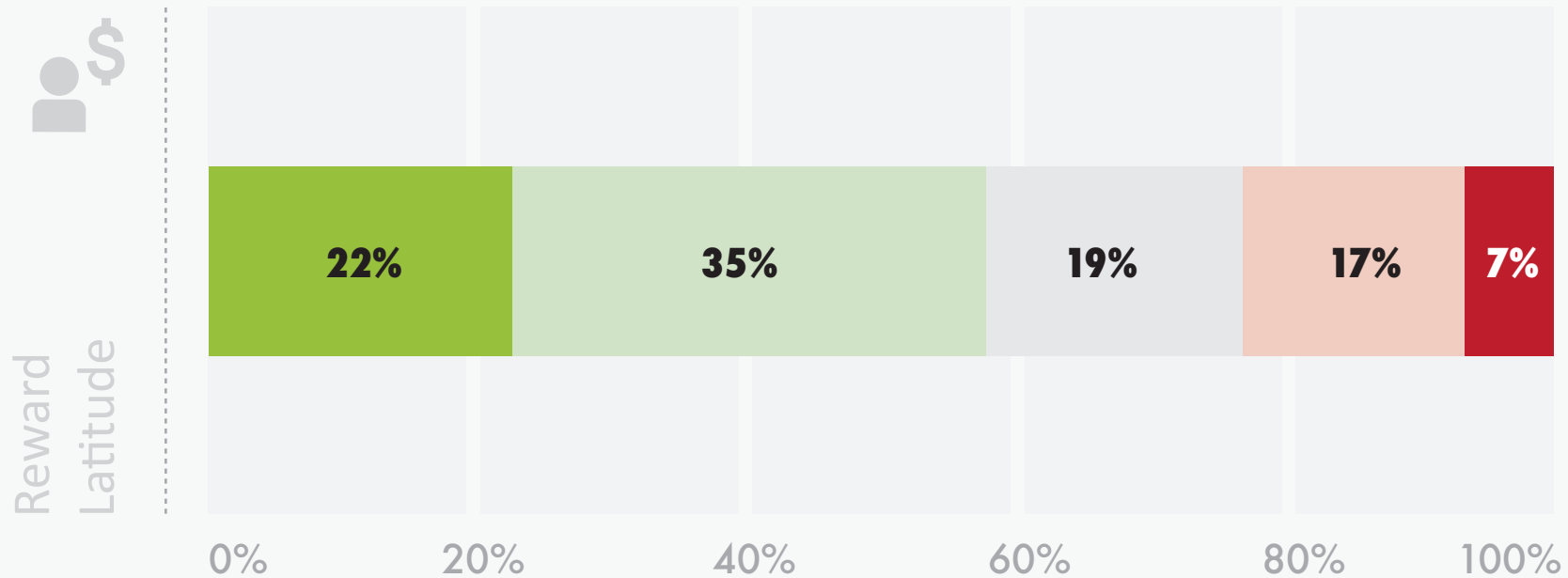


/ Results

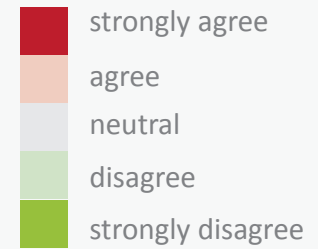


Q10

I am economically well rewarded for remotely performing my job at home.



/ Results

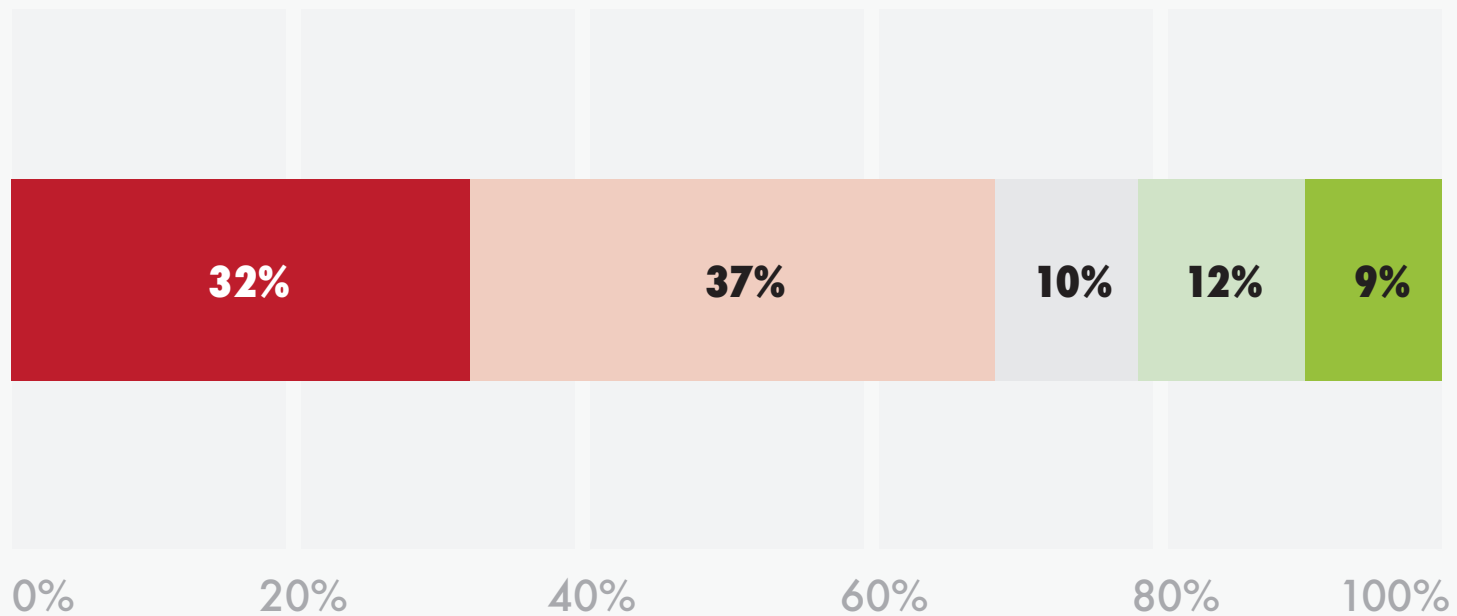


Q11

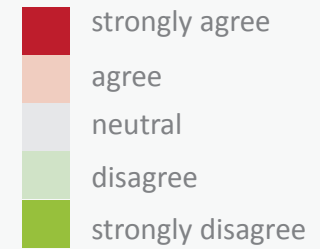
I have experienced muscle aches or/and other physical discomfort due to remote work (Back pain, lumbago, tendinitis, visual problems, etc).



Symptoms



/ Results

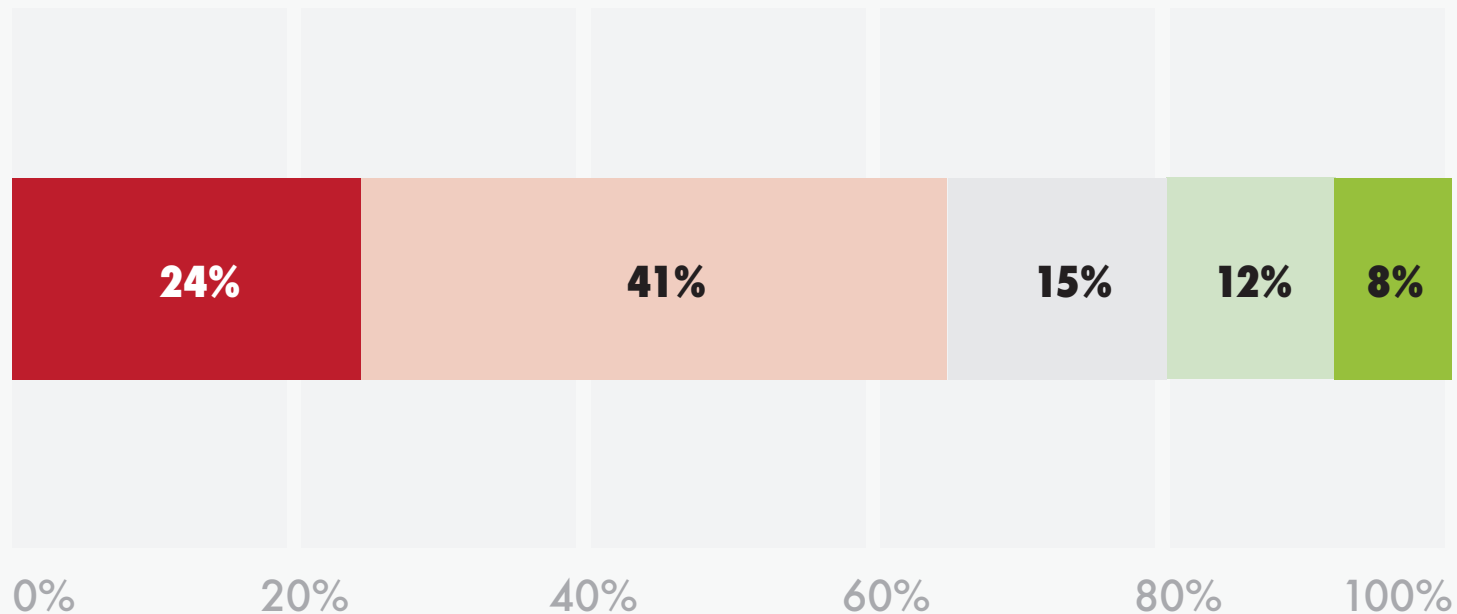


Q12

I have experienced mental health issues (stress, depression, anxiety, irritability, lack of concentration, insomnia) due to remote work or its circumstances.



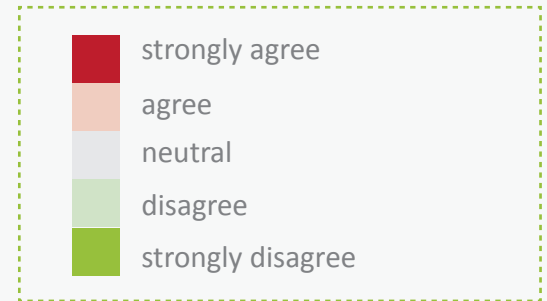
Symptoms



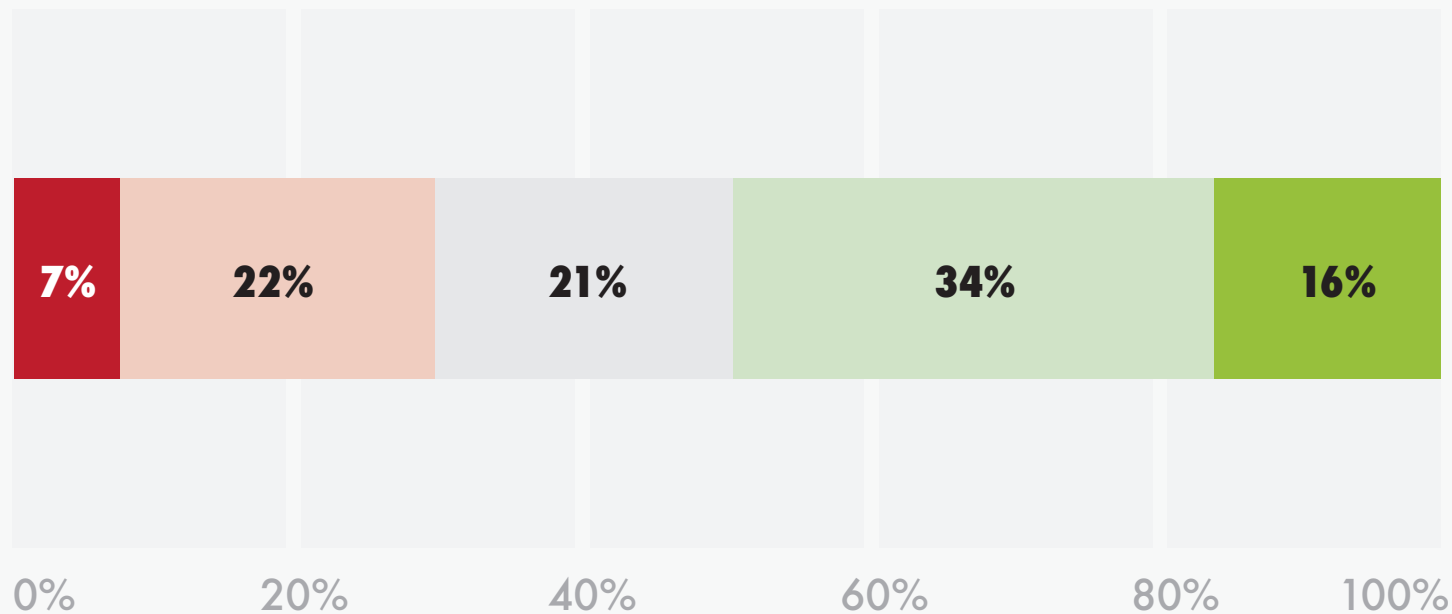
/ Results

Q13

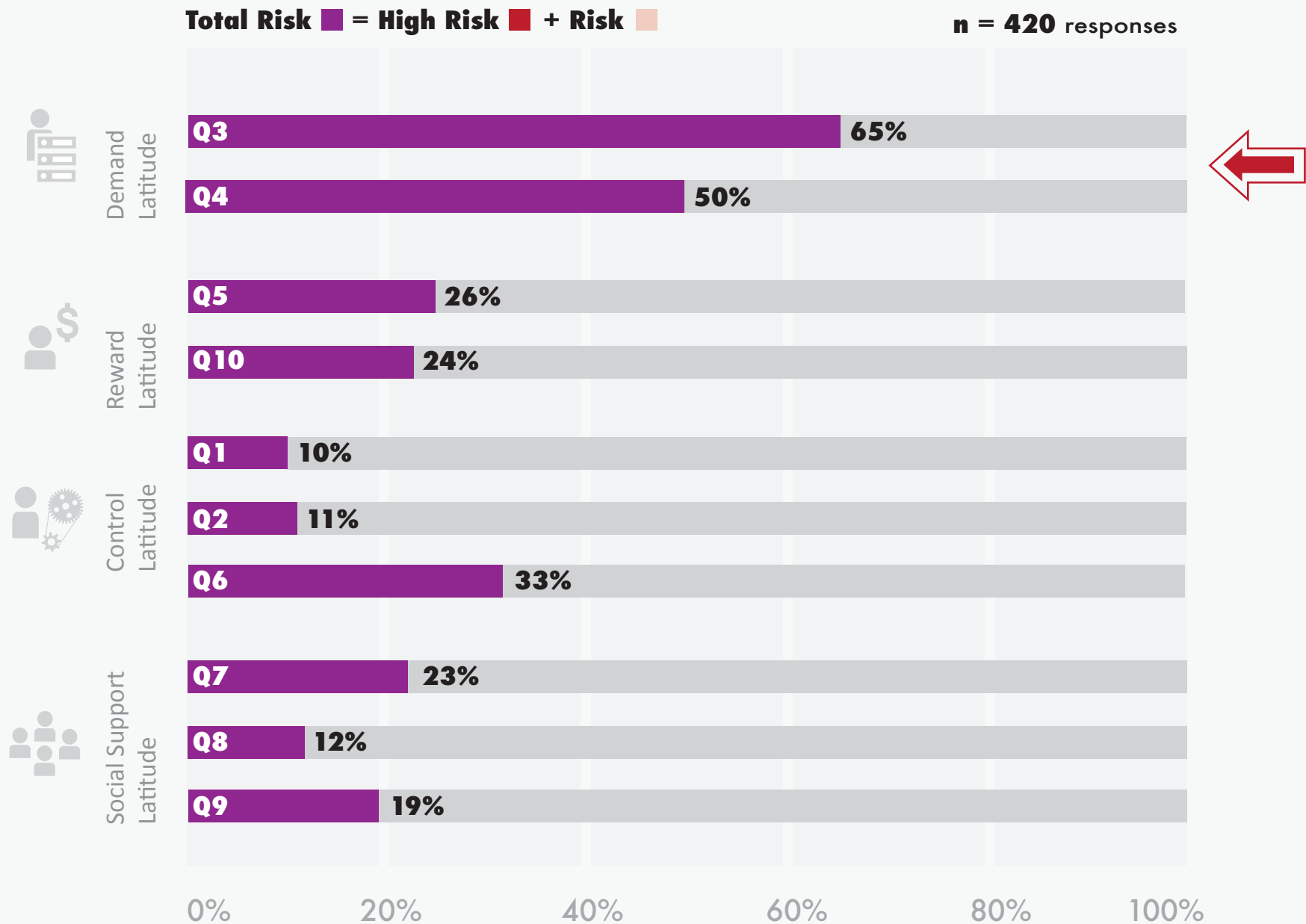
I have experienced symptoms of social malaise (loneliness, isolation, lack of social support) caused by not having the physical presence of colleagues and/or supervisors to perform my remote work.



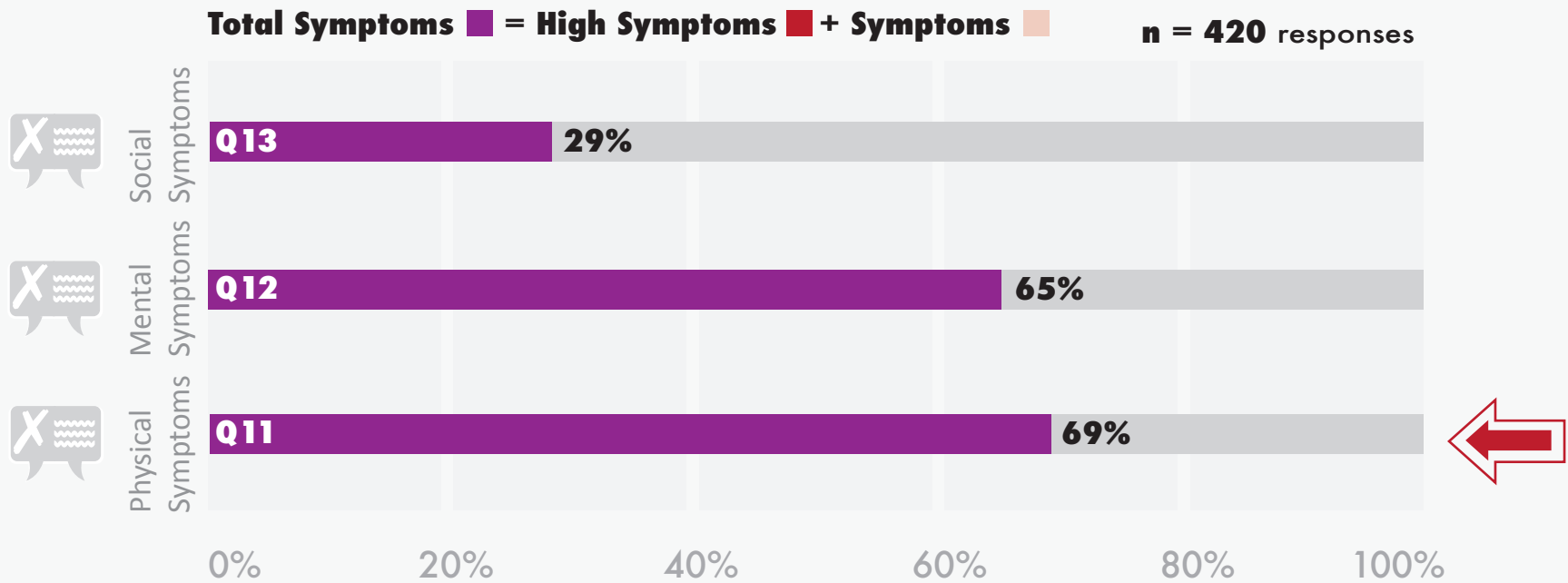
Symptoms



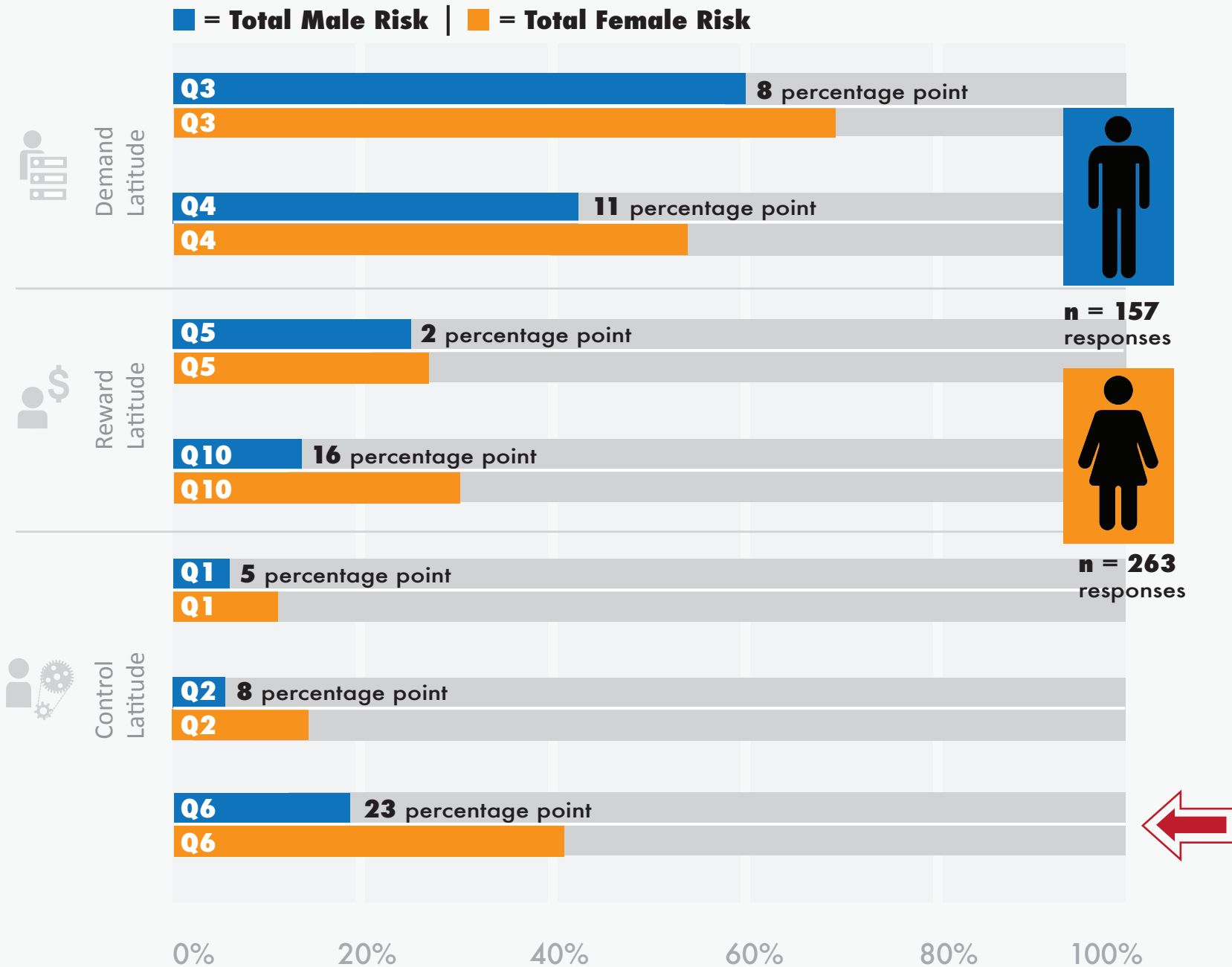
/ Comparative Results



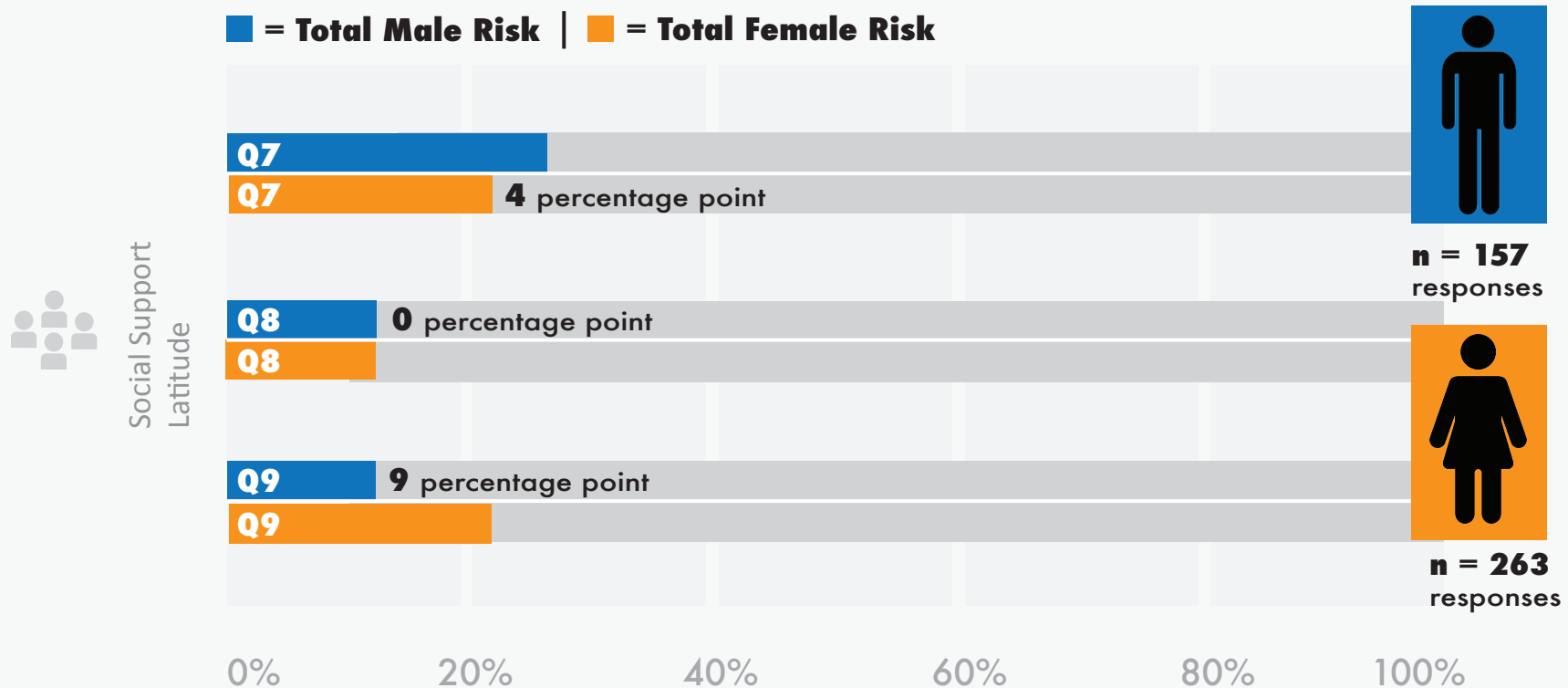
/ Comparative Results



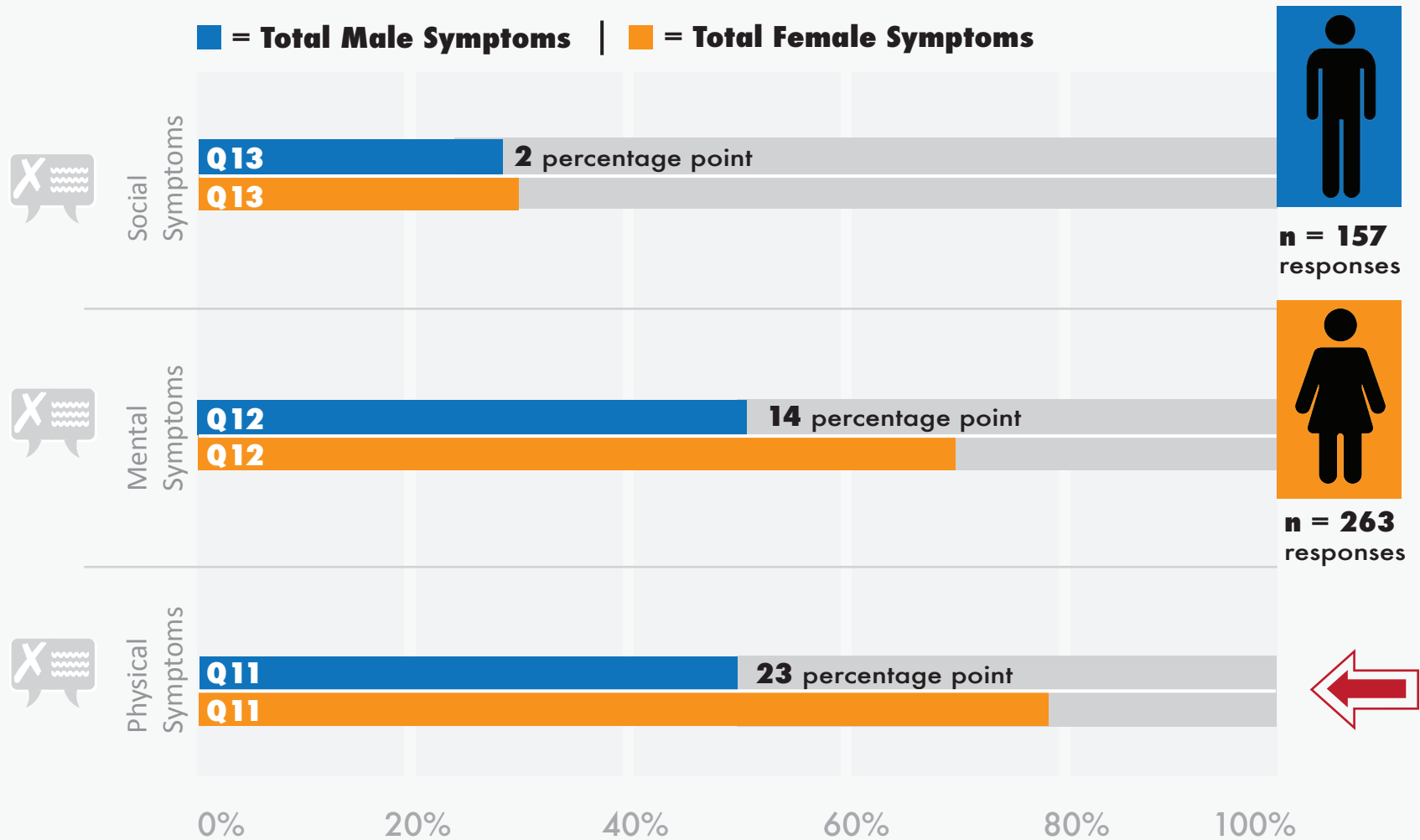
/ Comparative Results by Gender



/ Comparative Results by Gender



/ Comparative Results by Gender





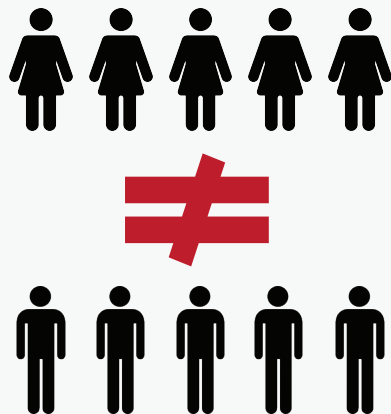
/ Conclusions

Remote work is **not a psychosocial-risk-free** work environment.



Under remote work, men and women are greatly exposed to **high demand**: high intensity/ longer hours/ more responsibilities.

Remote work is **not a gender-neutral** work environment.



Under remote work, **women are disproportionately exposed** to psychosocial risks, particularly, the struggle to balance remote work with recreational activities.

Thank You!