

Work Family Policy: Its Critical Impact on American Women and Families

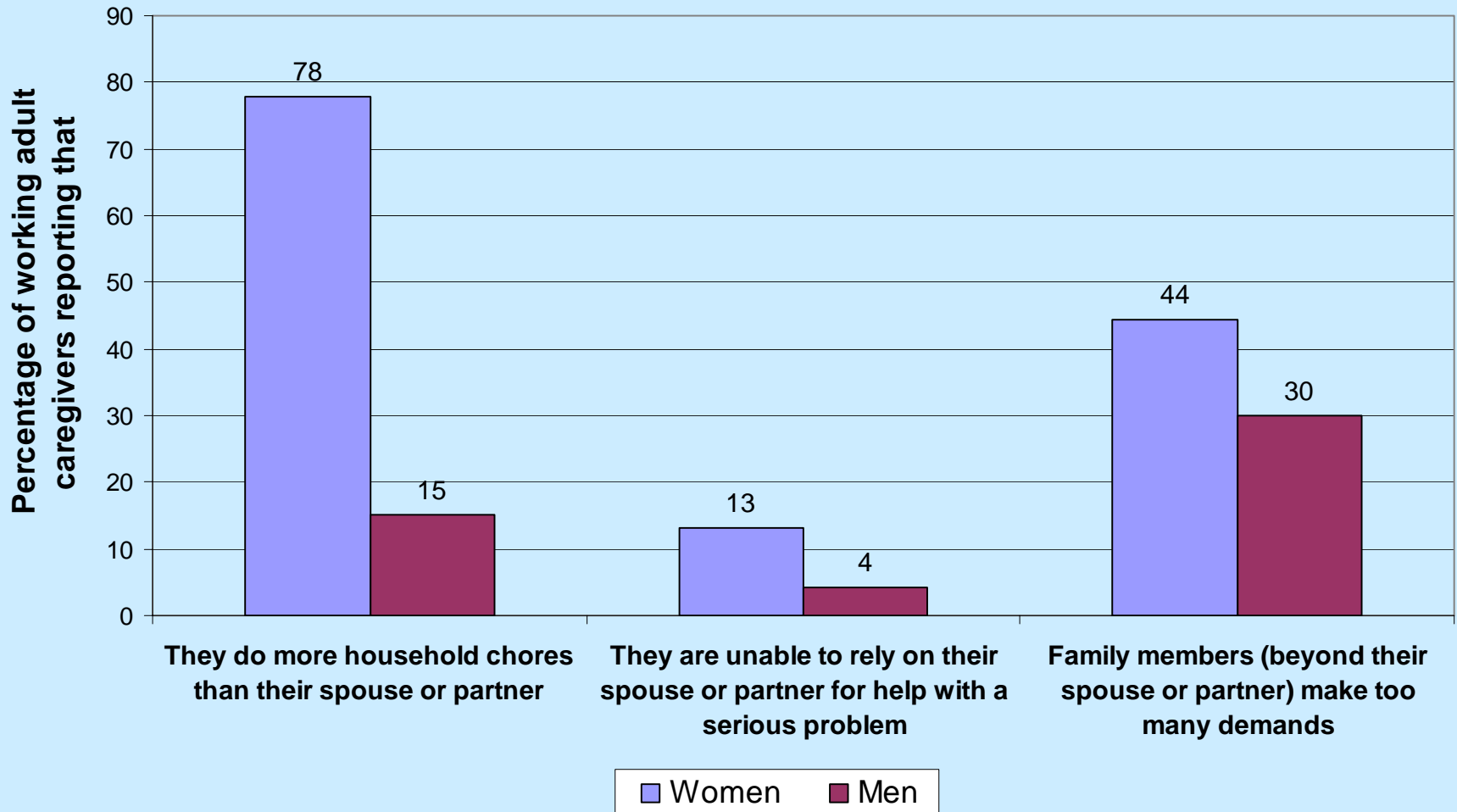
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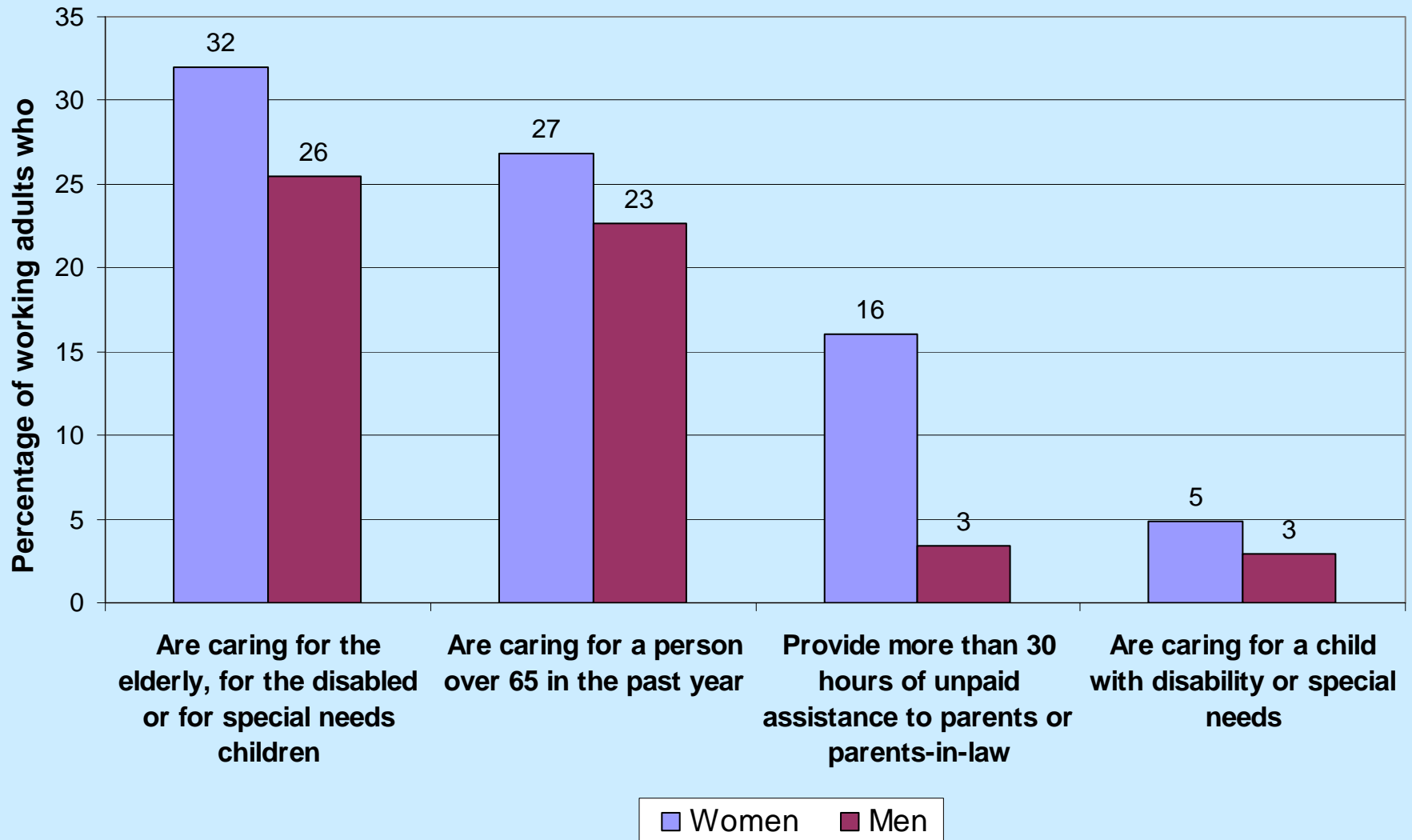
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Both Men and Women Agree: Women Carry More of the Workload at Home



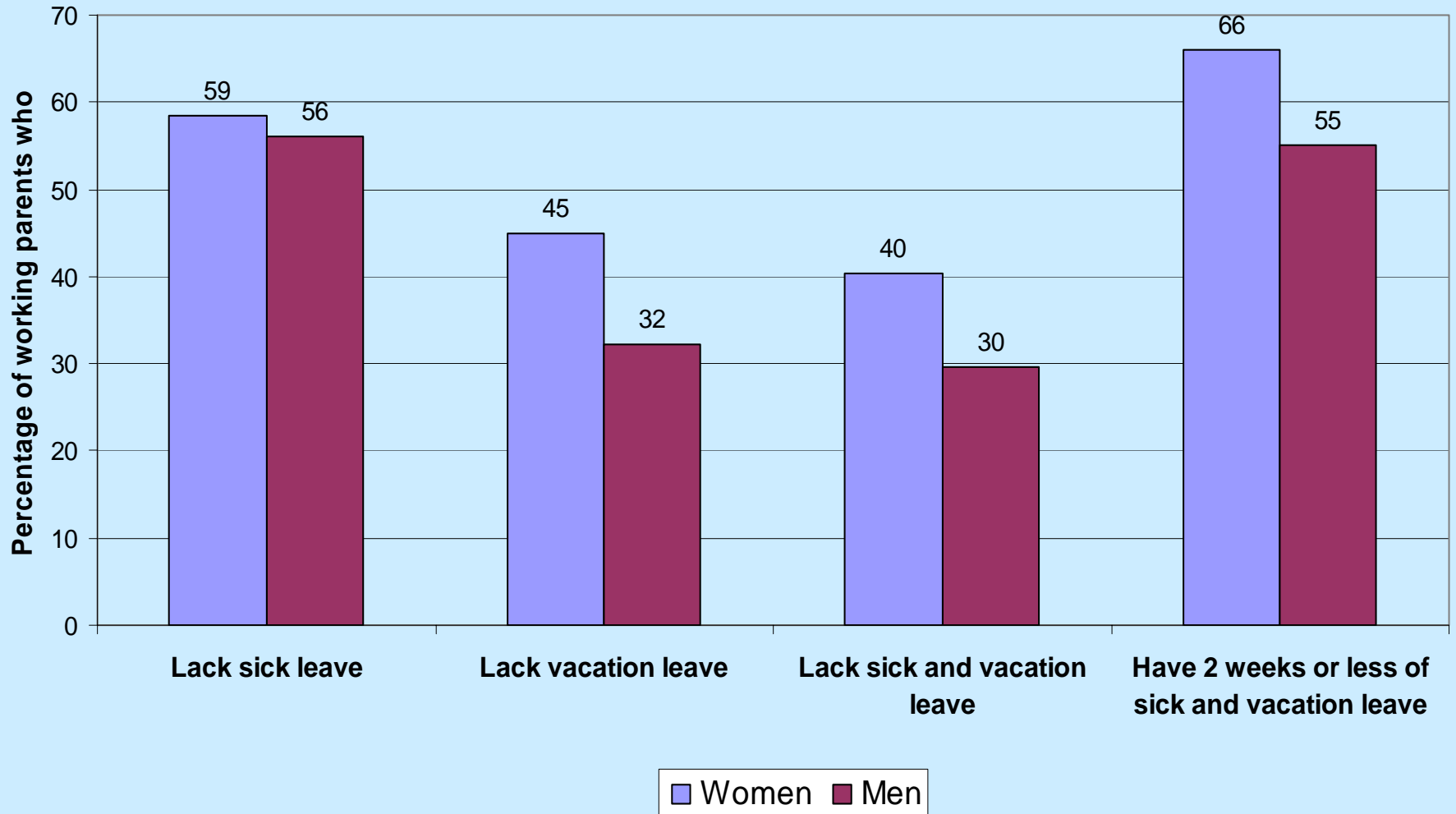
Source: Heymann SJ. *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families are in Jeopardy—and What Can Be Done About It*. Basic Books.

Working Women Do Substantially More Caregiving



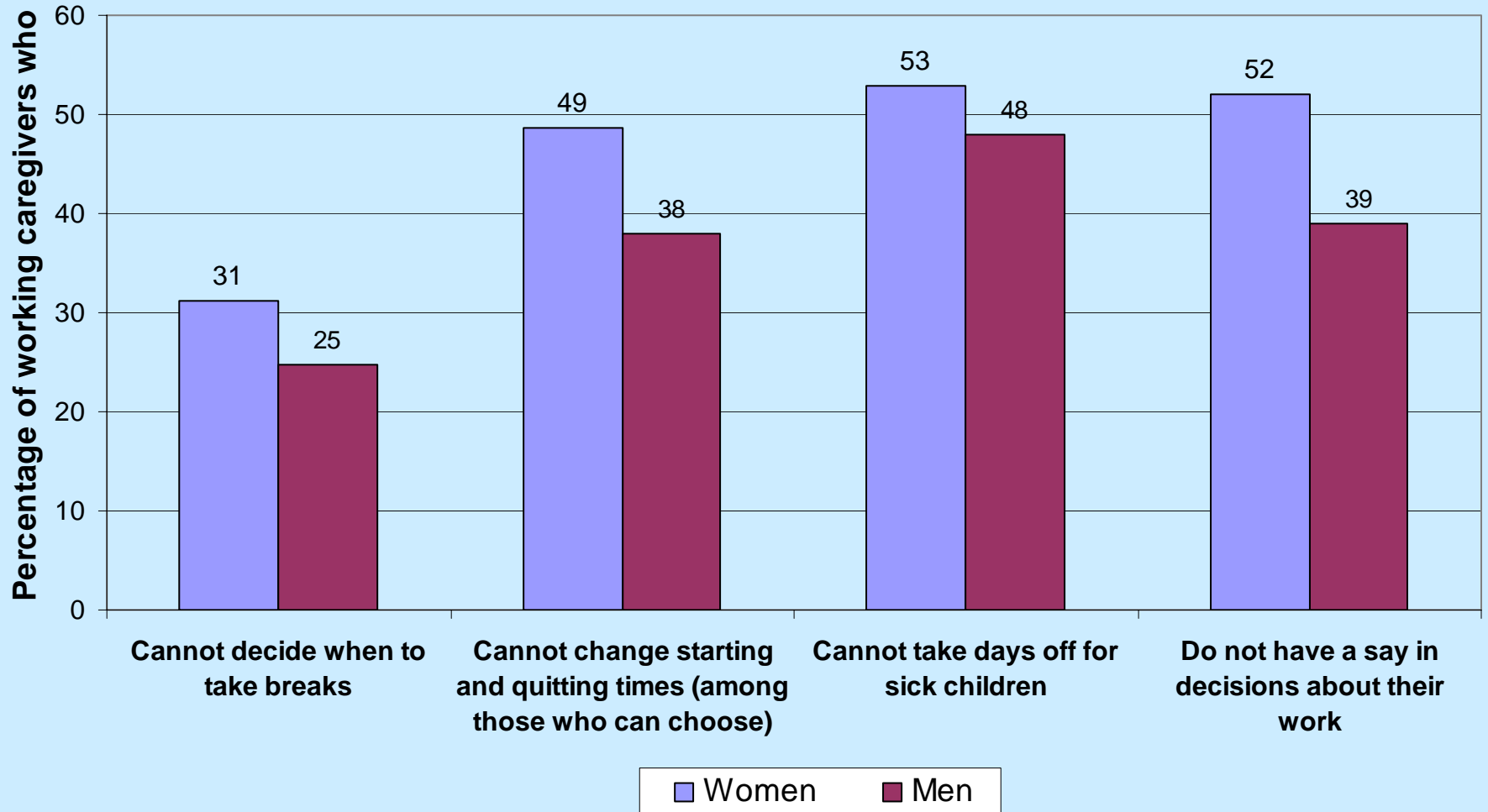
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Working Women Are More Likely to Lack Basic Fringe Benefits Needed to Care for Family



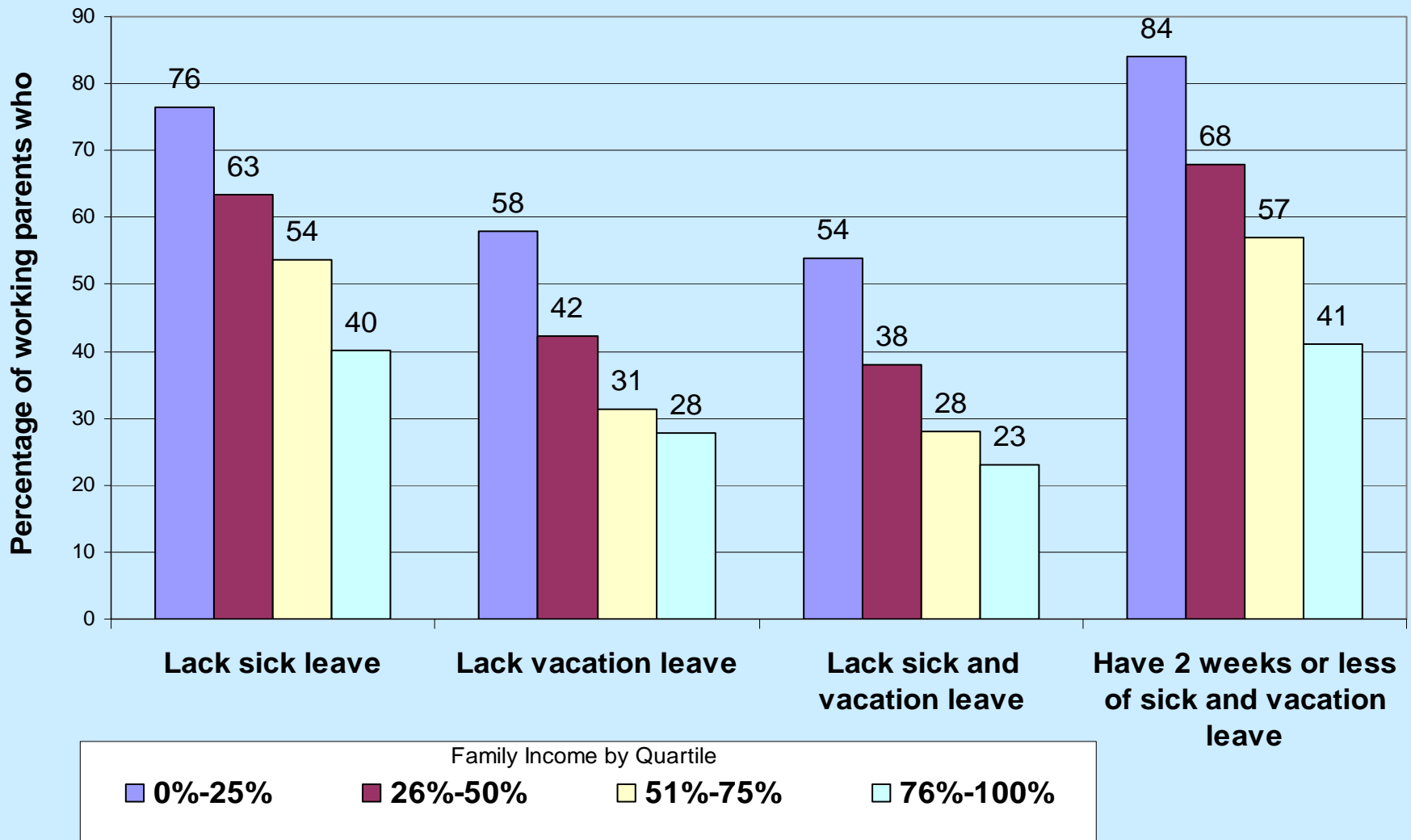
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Working Women Are More Likely to Lack Job Flexibility



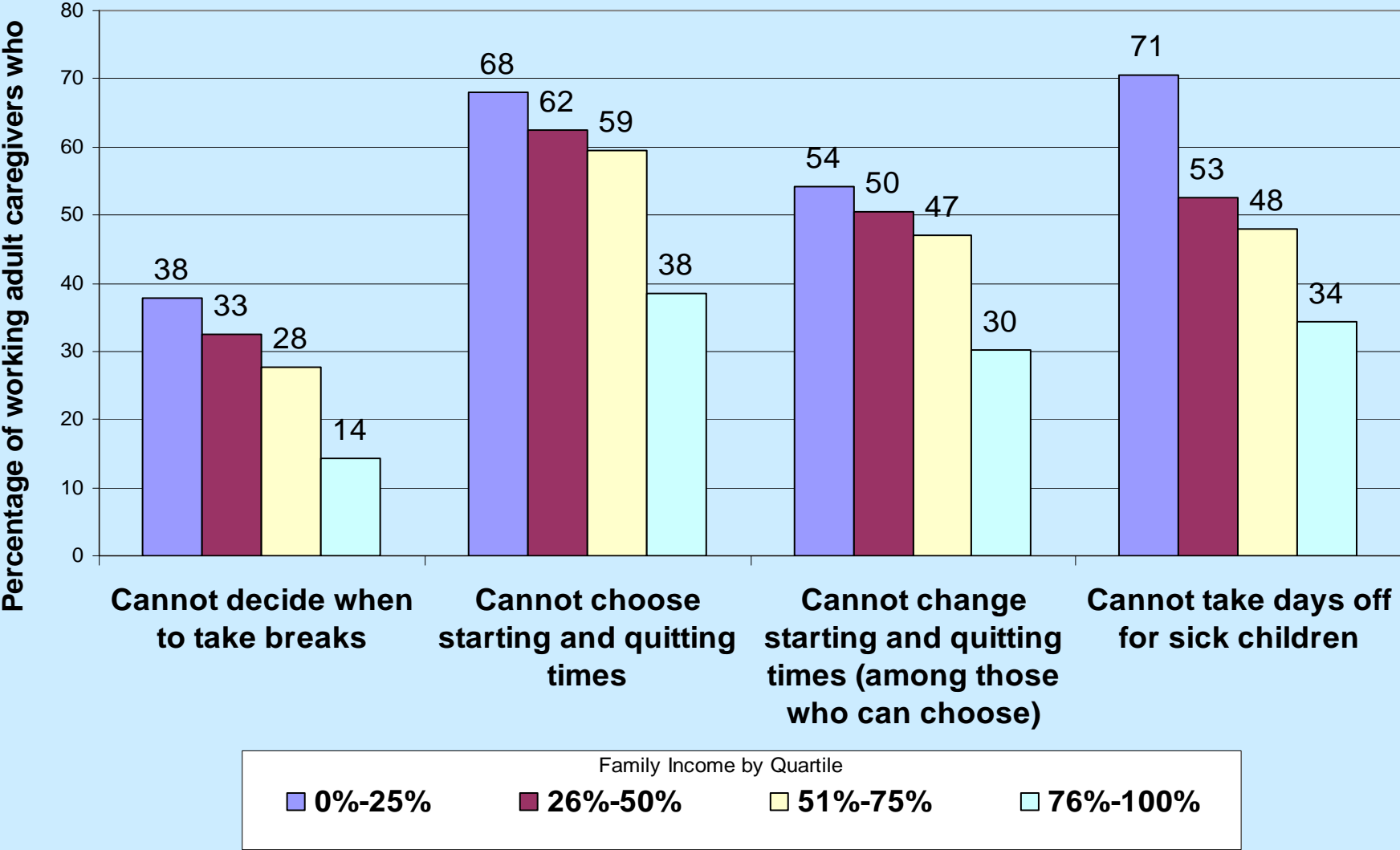
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National Picture: Who Lacks Basic Fringe Benefits Essential to Working Families



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National Picture: Who Lacks Job Inflexibility Essential to Families



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The Poor are Disproportionately Female

- In 2002, 56% of the poor in the United States were female, 44% were male.
- 50% of poor families were headed by single women, 8% were headed by single men.

Consequences of Inadequate Working Conditions and Supports

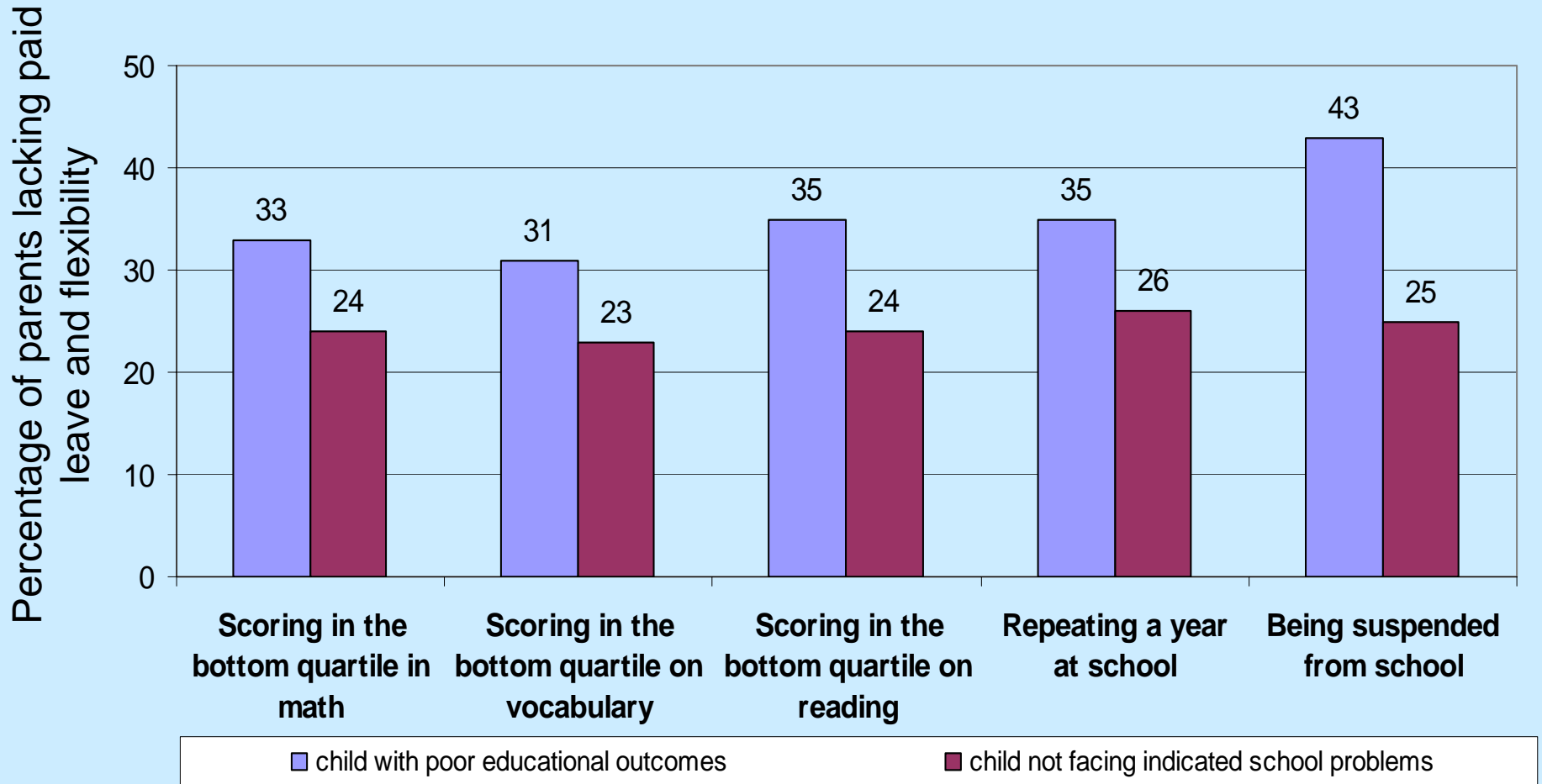
Importance for Children's Health

- Studies have shown that sick children have shorter recovery periods, better vital signs, and fewer symptoms when their parents participate in their care.
- The presence of parents has been shown to reduce hospital stays by 31%. When parents are involved in children's care, children recover more rapidly from outpatient procedures as well.
- Research has shown that parents play important roles in the care of children with chronic as well as acute conditions. Receiving care from their parents is important for children's mental as well as physical health.
- *Parents who received paid leave are more than five times as likely to be able to care for sick children, even after taking into account demographic differences.*

Importance for Children's Educational Outcomes

- When parents are involved in their children's education, children achieve more in elementary school, junior high school, and high school.
- Parental involvement is associated with children's higher achievement in language and mathematics, improved behavior, greater academic persistence, and lower dropout rates.
- *For every hour a parent works between 6 PM and 9 PM, his or her child is 16% more likely to score in the bottom quartile on math tests.*
- *The children of parents who work nights are 172% more likely to have gotten into trouble and been suspended from school.*

Children at Risk Educationally and Parental Leave and Flexibility



Source: Heymann SJ. *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families are in Jeopardy—and What Can Be Done About It*. Basic Books.

Impact on Women's Income and Jobs

- Among 30-year-old working women, those who are not mothers earn 95% as much as men, whereas mothers earn 75% as much as men¹
- Leading causes of job turnover include the birth of a child and caring for a child with special needs. Women whose children had a health limitation had a 33% higher job turnover probability than other mothers, even when controlling for personal, human capital, family, and local economic characteristics²

¹ Waldfogel, J. "Women Working for Less: Family Status and Women's Pay in the U.S. and the U.K." Working Paper No. D-94-1, Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy, Harvard University, 1994.

² Earle, AE. "What Causes Job Loss Among Former Welfare Recipients: The Role of Family Health Problems." *JAMWA* 57: 5-10. 2002.

The Impact on Women's Health

A Harvard study found that the coronary heart disease risk of women who cared for ill or disabled spouses for nine or more hours a week was almost two-fold that of other women.

Source: Lee S, Colditz GA, Berkman LF, Kawachi I. "Caregiving and risk of coronary heart disease in U.S. women: a prospective study." Am J Prev Med 24 (2):113-9, 2003.

Key Steps in Equalizing Demands and Resources: Work Family Policies

- Paid parental leave
- Quality care for 0-2 years
- Quality early education
- Expanded school-age opportunities
- Paid leave and flexibility to meet urgent family needs
- Equal opportunities for older and disabled Americans
- Care for elderly and disabled adults in need
- Updating institutions

The Work, Family, and Equity Index: Goals and Preliminary Findings

Purposes of the Index

- Define essential goals for work family policy
- Measure progress in implementing public policies for working families
- Compare US progress to international standards

Paid Parental Leave

- The only industrialized countries without paid maternity leave are the United States and Australia. In contrast to the U.S., Australia provides 52 weeks of unpaid leave.
- Countries around the world, including low-, middle-, and high-income countries, have all demonstrated the affordability of providing paid parental leave.
 - Senegal provides 14 weeks paid maternity leave with 100% wage replacement.
 - The U.K. provides up to 18 weeks paid maternity leave, with the first six weeks at 90% wage replacement and a flat rate thereafter.
 - Brazil provides 120 days paid maternity leave with 100% wage replacement.
- Paid paternity leave is also provided
 - Many countries allow the father to take a portion of the time allotted for paid parental leave, such as Denmark and Spain.
 - Other countries specifically provide paid paternity leave, such as Iceland, Norway, and Croatia.

Paid Sick Leave for Family Health

Paid sick leave is provided in a wide range of countries:

- El Salvador: Employers required to grant up to 15 days leave for serious illness or injury of a child, spouse or parent, at 100% wage replacement
- Germany: 10 days paid leave annually, at 100% wage replacement, per child (maximum 25 days). Single parents have 20 days paid leave per child
- South Africa: 3 days paid leave annually to care for a family member, at 100% wage replacement
- Norway: 10 days per year to care for a sick child, at 100% wage replacement; 15 days if employee has more than one child; 20 days if caring for a chronically ill child

For further information, contact us at:

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