



# Parenting Style: Does it matter?

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Teen Assessment Project

UNH Cooperative Extension

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# Previous Research on Parenting Styles

\* Baumrind (1967, 1971): originally characterized as

- authoritative (democratic)

- authoritarian (autocratic)

- permissive

\*Maccoby & Martin (1983): further defined permissive

- category as permissive indulgent or permissive

- neglectful

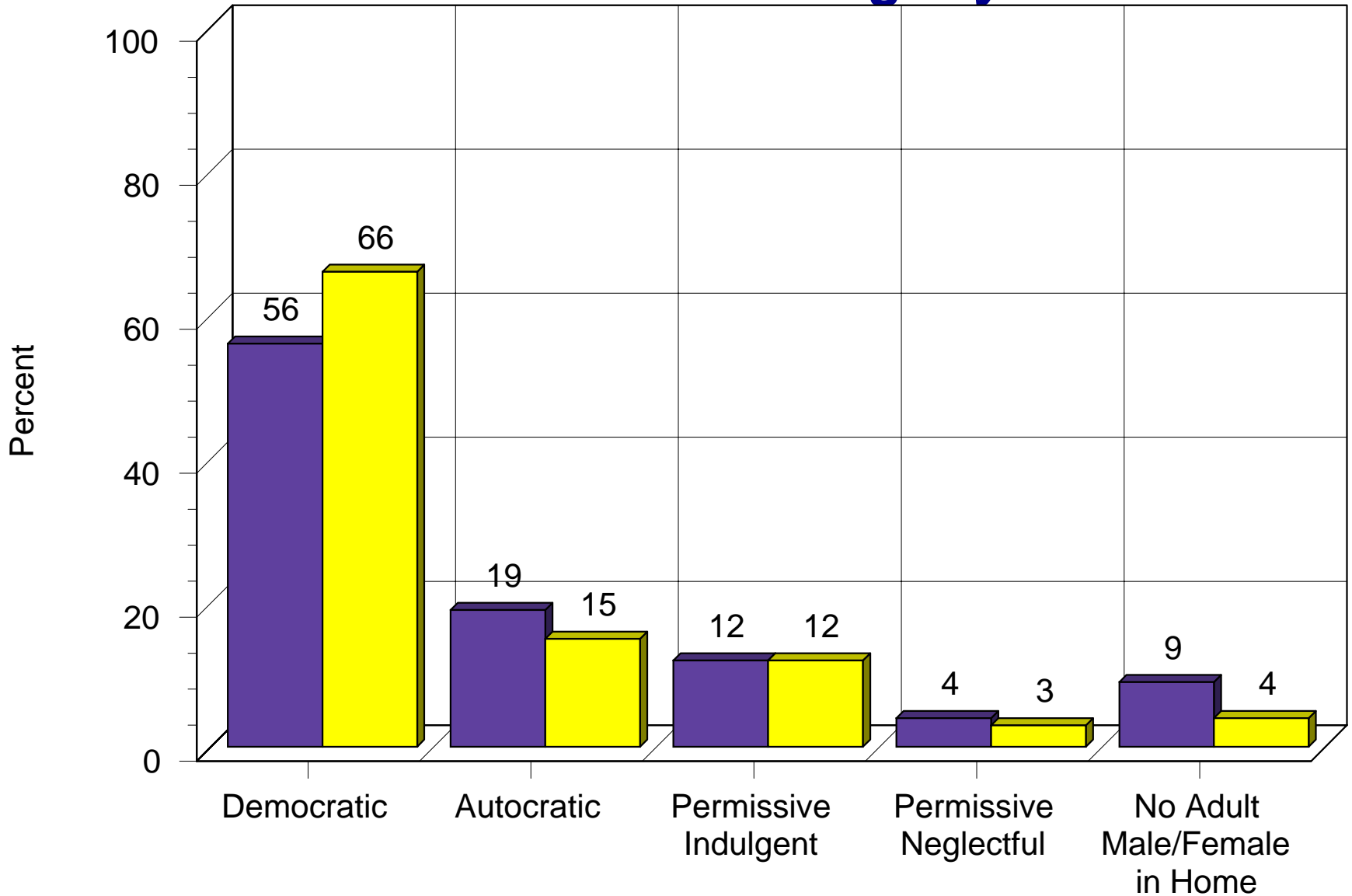
TAP question asked for both mother/adult female and  
father/adult male:

“In general, how are most important decisions  
made between you and your mother/father  
or other adult female/male at home

(for example, what time you need to be home at night  
or where you can go with your friends?”

*Adapted from the Kandel & Lessor (1972) Independence Training  
Index. Kandel, D. & Lessor, G. : Youth in Two Worlds. San  
Francisco: Jossey-Bass.*

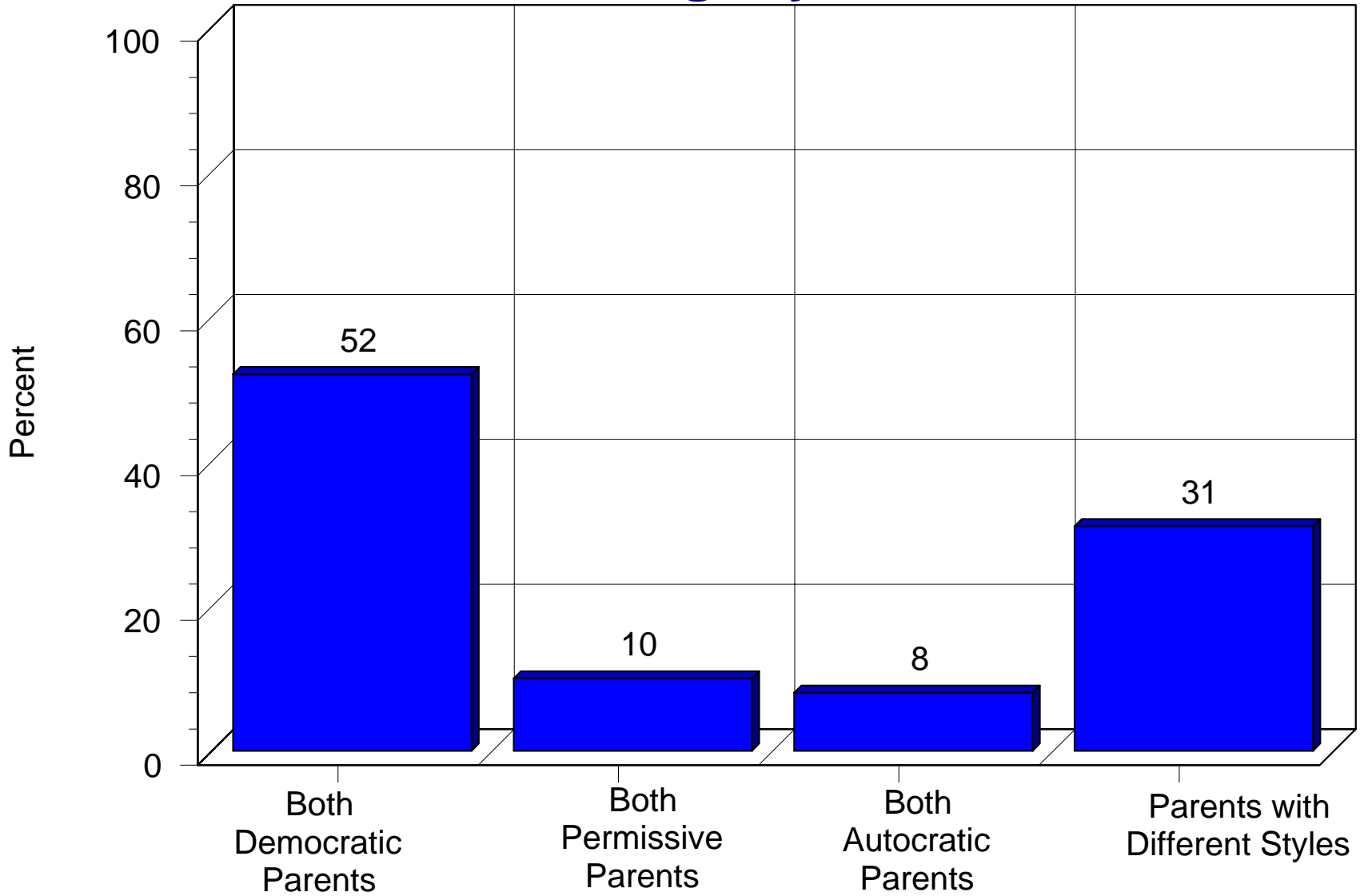
# Parents' Decision-Making Style



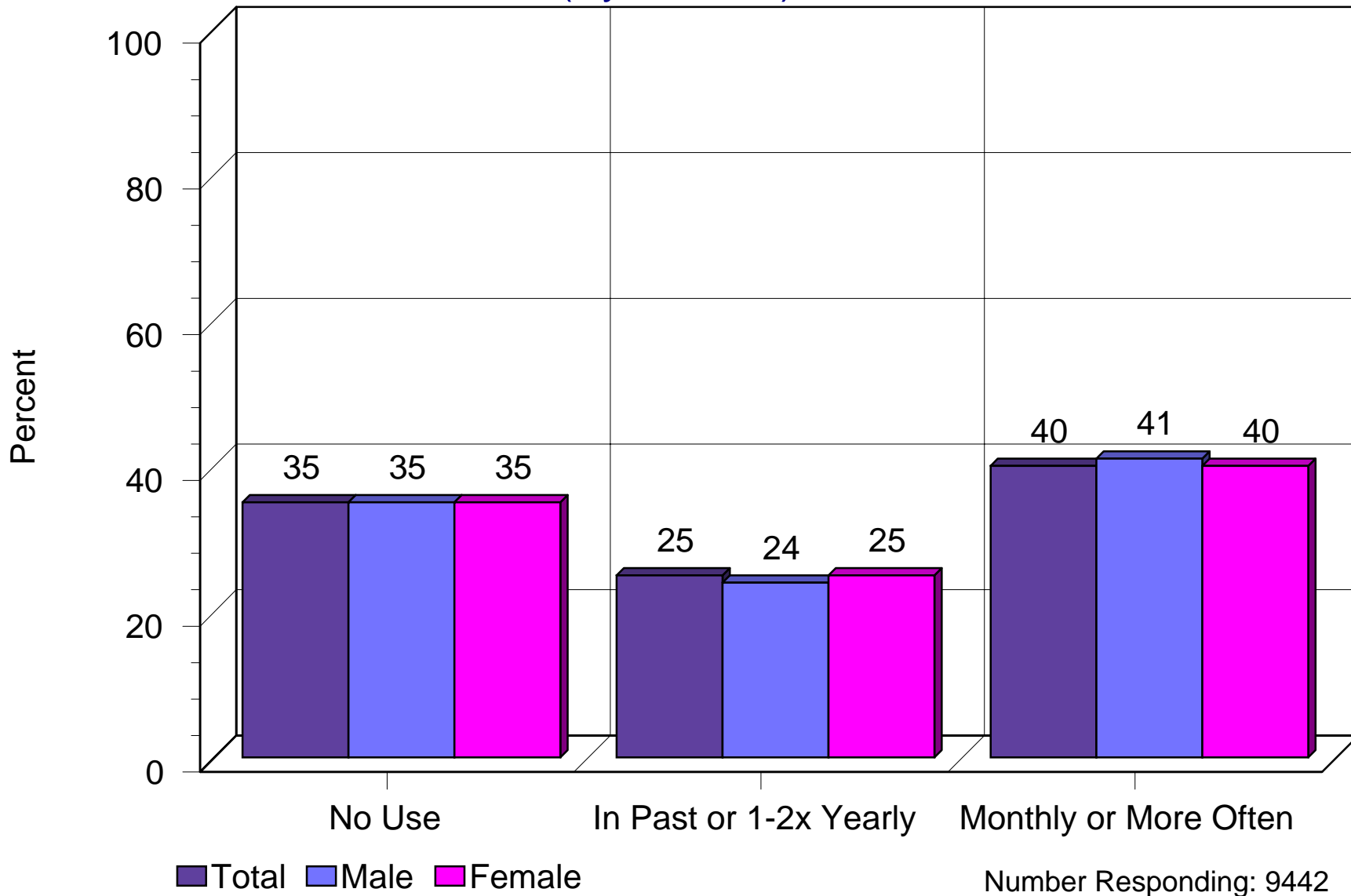
■ Fathers ■ Mothers

Number Responding: About Fathers: 9270  
About Mothers: 9290

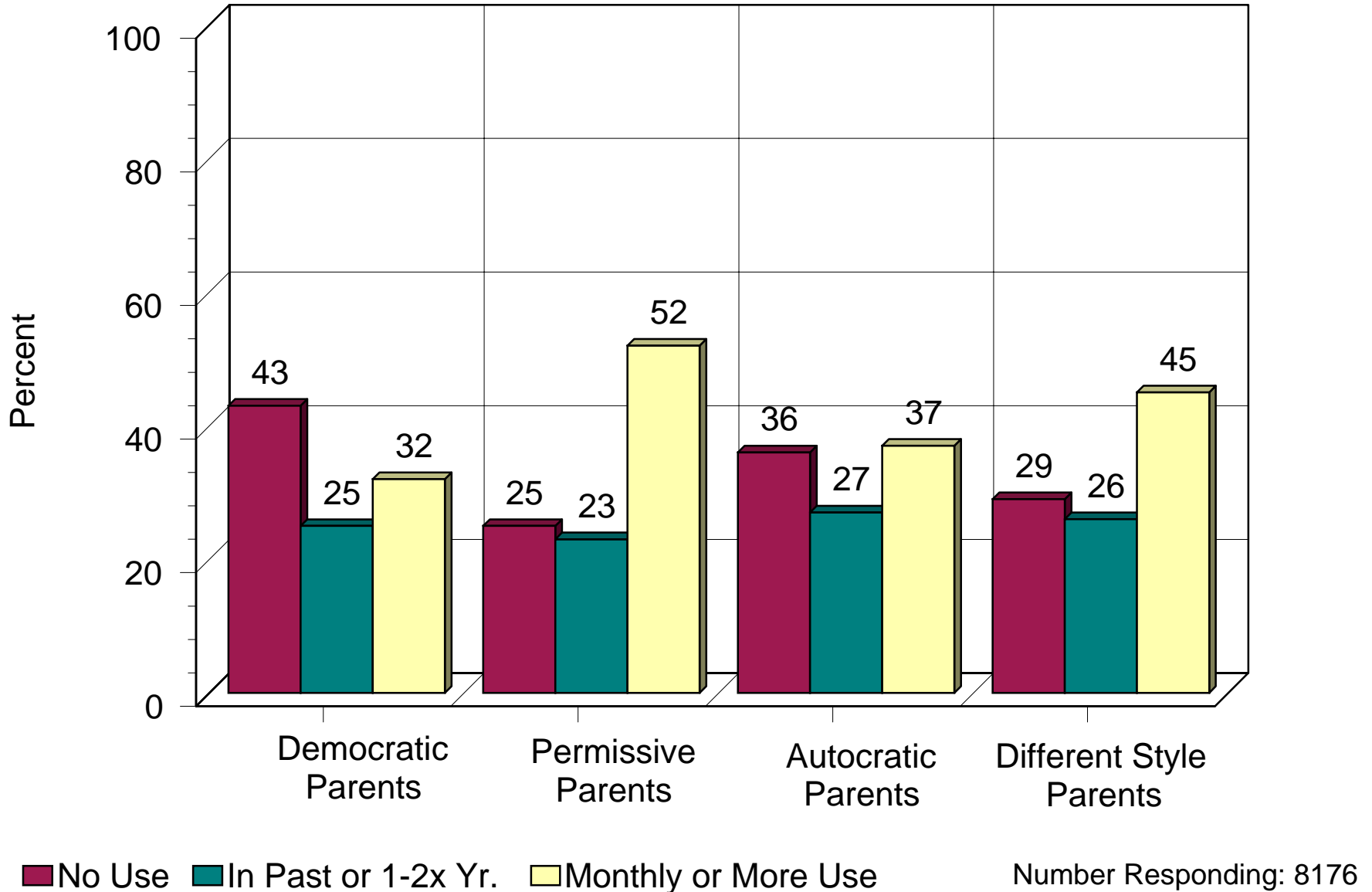
# Parenting Styles



# Frequency of Substance Use: Tobacco, Alcohol, Marijuana (By Gender)

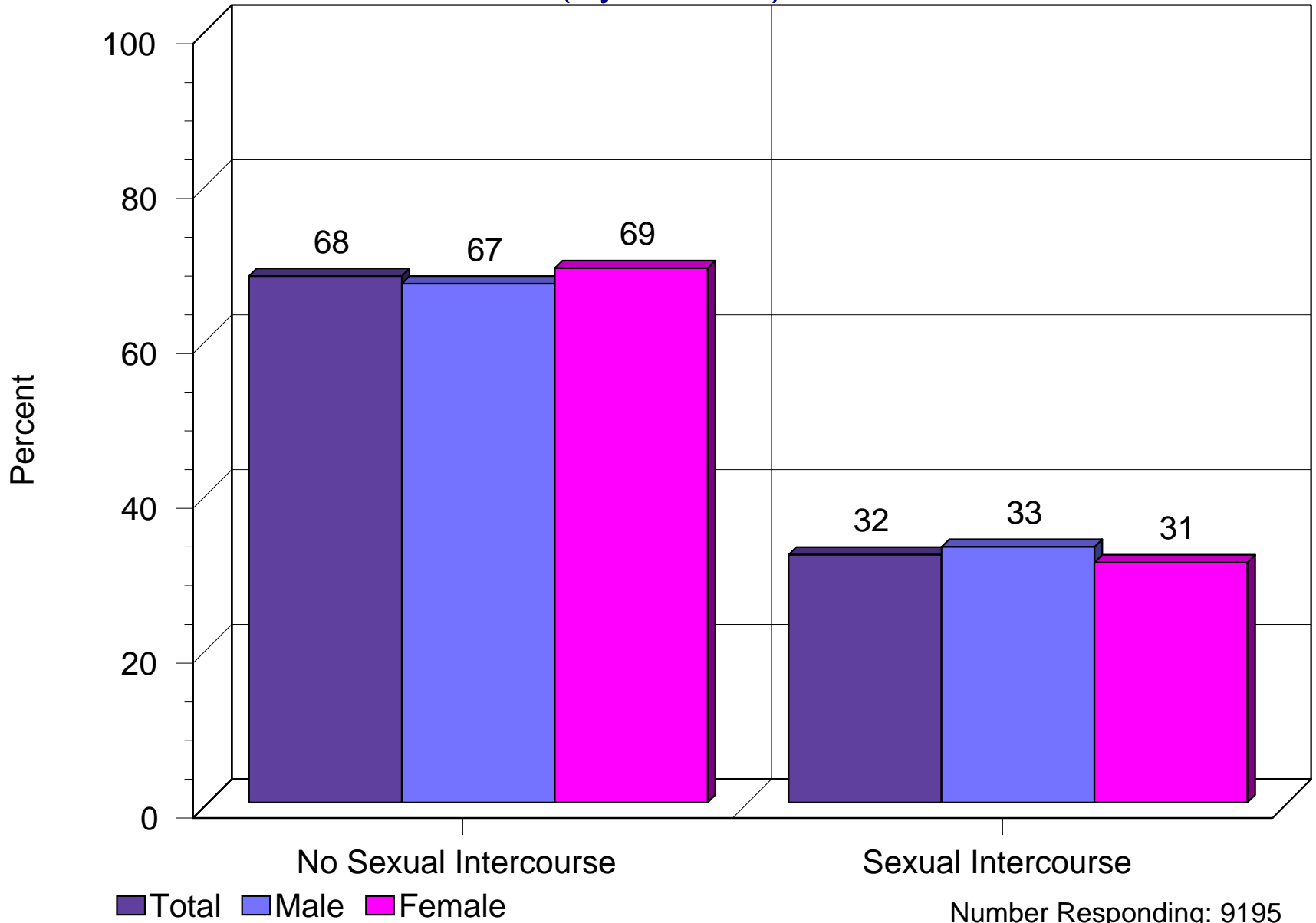


# Link Between Parenting Style and Monthly or More Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, Marijuana

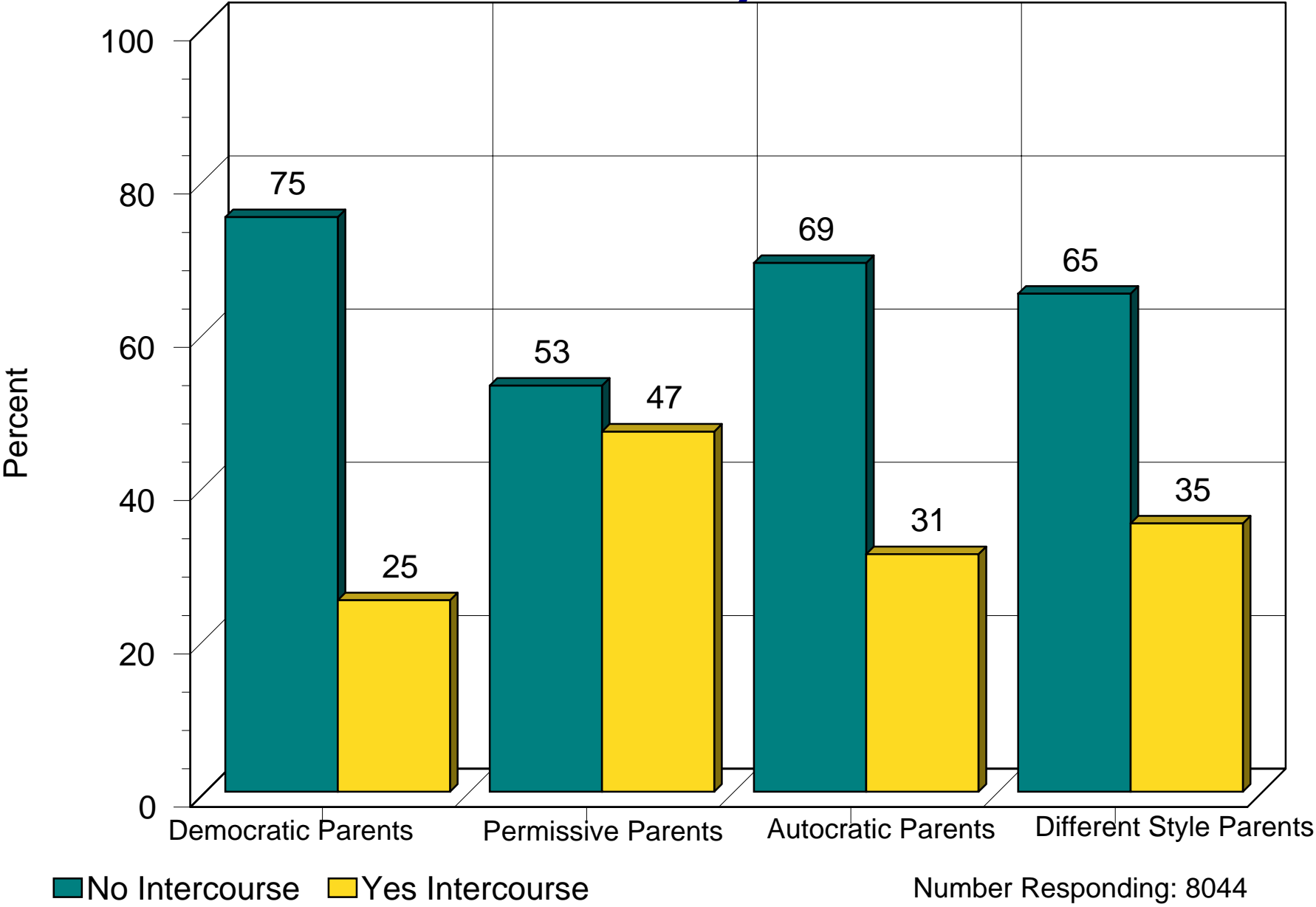


# Status of Teen Sexual Intercourse

(By Gender)



# Link Between Parenting Style and Teen Sexuality



## Results:

\* In this dataset, when the responses to the survey question were categorized as described, two associations were found:

-lowest prevalence of teen use of alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana was found for teens who reported that both parents had a democratic parenting style.

-lowest percentage of teen sexual intercourse was found for teens who reported that both parents had a democratic parenting style.

## Caveats:

- \* dataset is limited; not random sample
- \* results based on the use of 1-item; not a composite
- \* direction of effects is not known
- \* causal assumptions: Steven Pinker caution

“Most parenting advice, for example, is inspired by studies that find a correlation between parents and children. Loving parents have confident children, authoritative parents (neither too permissive nor too punitive) have well-behaved children... Everyone concludes that to rear the best children, parents must be loving, authoritative, and talkative, and if the children don’t turn out well, it must be the parents’ fault.

But there is a problem with this reasoning, and it comes from the tacit assumption that children are blank slates. Parents, remember, provide their children with genes, not just a home environment. The correlations between parents and children may be telling us only that the same genes that make adults loving, authoritative, and talkative make their children self-confident, well behaved, and articulate. Until the studies are redone with adopted children (who get only their environment, not their genes from their parents), the data are compatible with the possibility that genes make all the difference, the possibility that parenting makes all the difference, or anything in between.”

*Pinker, The Blank Slate*