

Dog Bites in Colorado **July 2007- June 2012:** *Data, Conclusions, and* *Tips for Keeping* *Communities Safer*



**Coalition for
Living Safely
with Dogs**

About CLSD

- Coalition's purpose
 - Assist local governments in creating and enforcing effective dangerous dog laws
 - Collect data to better understand why dogs bite
 - Provide information to the community about dog bite prevention

About CLSD

- Coalition comprised of 7 organizations
 - All Breed Rescue Network
 - Animal Assistance Foundation
 - Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers
 - Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians
 - Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies
 - Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
 - Metro Denver Shelter Alliance



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The Need to Collect Bite Data

- Why collect bite data?
 - Assist in making informed decisions about dangerous dog legislation
 - Focus community resources and education efforts
 - Support animal management and animal welfare programs
 - Lack of studies based on data reported by animal control officers (ACOs)



Innovative Approach

- Previous studies
 - Colorado Department of Health & Environment
 - Centers for Disease Control (2001)
 - limited to emergency room reports and insurance company data
- CLSD Bite Data Study
 - first comprehensive collection and analysis through animal control agencies
 - most rigorous study of its type

Data Collection Effort

- Process developed to accurately report and understand bite incidents
- Partnership with the Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (CAACO) for data collection
- Web-based survey instrument developed for use by reporting animal control agencies
- Year-one data analysis by Corona Research



About the Survey

- Bite incident data collected from July 2007 through June 2012
- Data reported online by animal control officers
- 22 participating animal control agencies
 - 11 agencies participated for all 5 years
- Survey respondents (ACOs) serve approximately 80% of the human and dog populations of Colorado



Reported Bite Incidents

- 11,484 bite incidents reported over 5 years
- Average of 2,297 (+/- 168) bite incidents reported annually
- 8,449 bite incidents reported over the 5-year period by the 11 agencies that reported for all 5 years



Key Findings

- Most dogs do NOT bite
 - Based on reports to animal control, less than 1% of dogs bite a human
- Any dog can bite
 - Bites from 165 different breeds were reported
- Maulings and fatalities are extremely rare
 - 0.6% of reported incidents were maulings, with only one fatality
- Most bites are preventable



Bite Rate Estimate

- 1,941,000 households in CO
 - US Census Bureau, 2011
- 0.584 dogs per household
 - AVMA Pet Ownership Demographics Sourcebook, 2012
- Thus, total dogs in CO equals 1,133,544
 - $1,941,000 \times 0.584$
- 84% of CO population is on the Front Range, where the study was primarily conducted
- Thus, there are ~952,177 dogs in the study area
 - $1,133,544 \times 84\%$



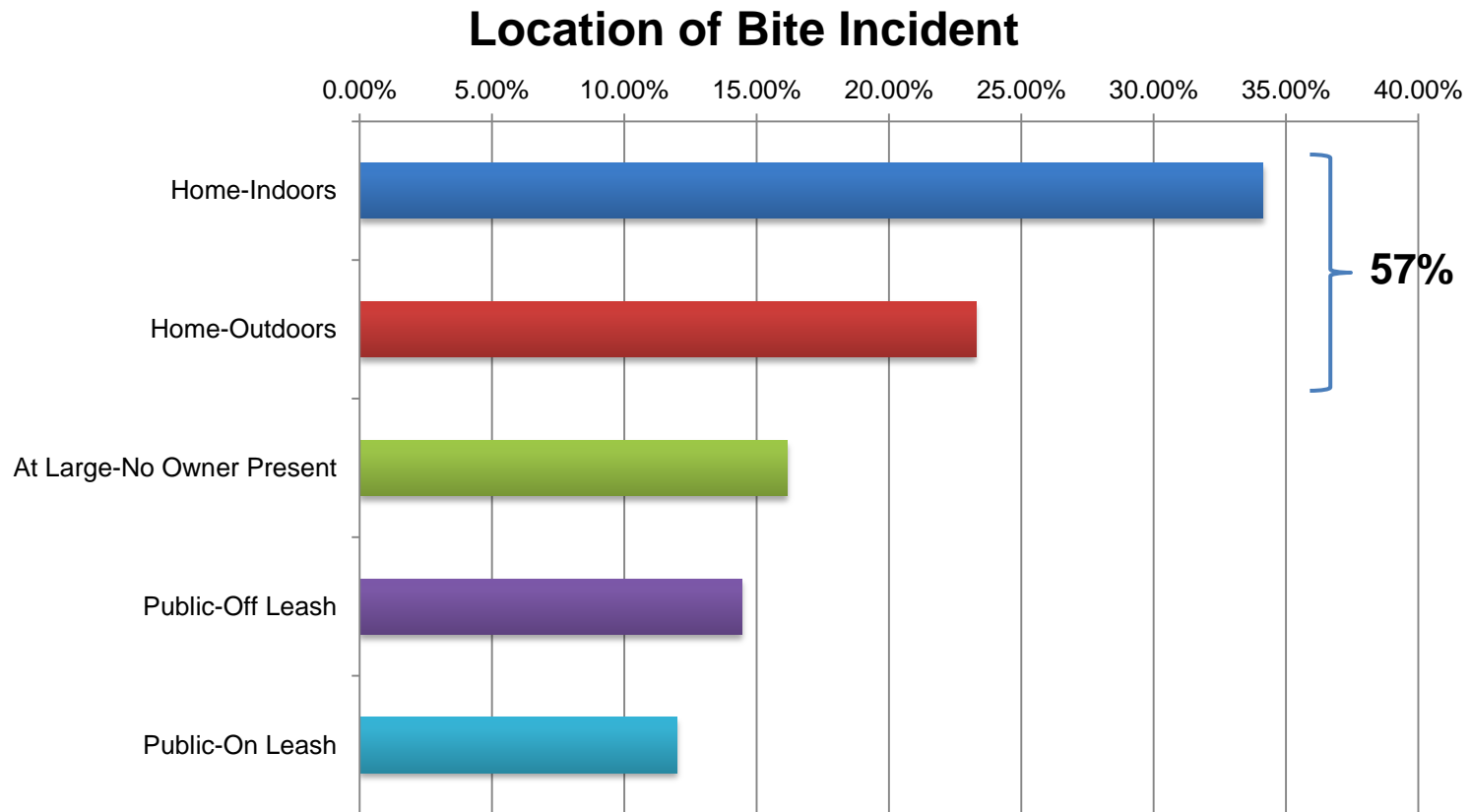
Bite Rate Estimate

- 2,297 bites per year from 952,177 dogs on the Front Range during the five-year study period
- Thus, 0.2% of the dog population had reported bites
 - $2,297 \div 952,177$
- Even if CLSD data represent only 20% of the actual bites, the 0.2% would increase to 1.0%
- Thus, ~99% of dogs DON'T bite

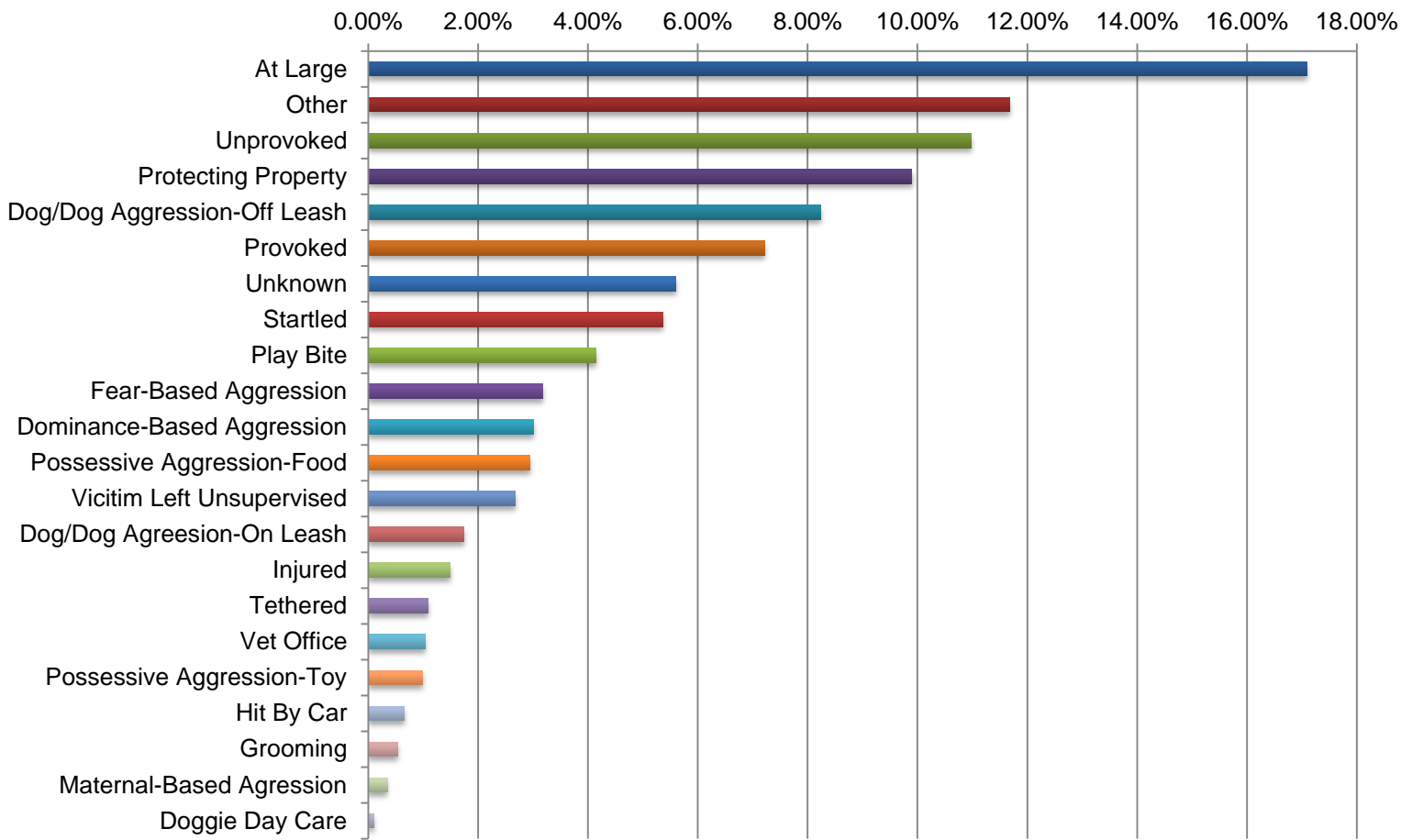


Bite Location

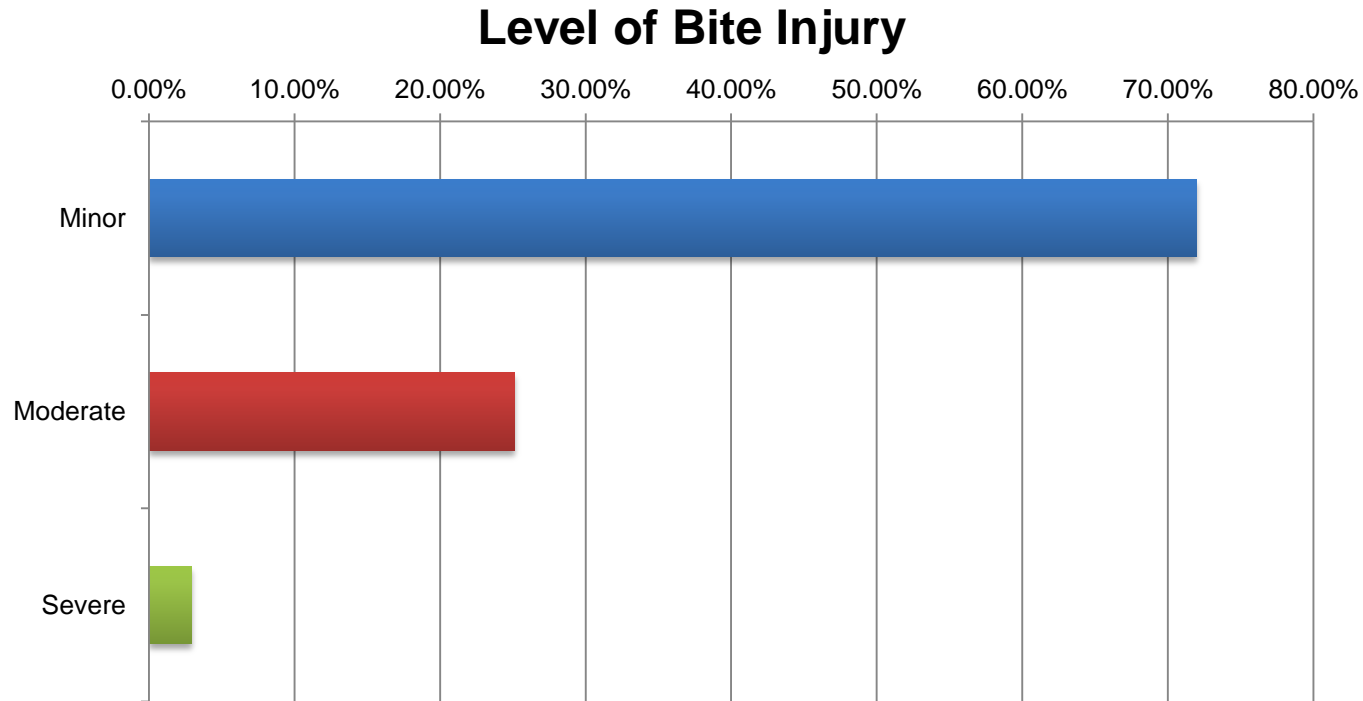
- Most bites occurred at home



Bite Circumstances



Bite Severity



Minor = Bruising/one puncture

Moderate = Multiple punctures

Severe = Multiple punctures and lacerations; includes maulings (severe bodily injury)

Bite incidents involving police dogs are not included.

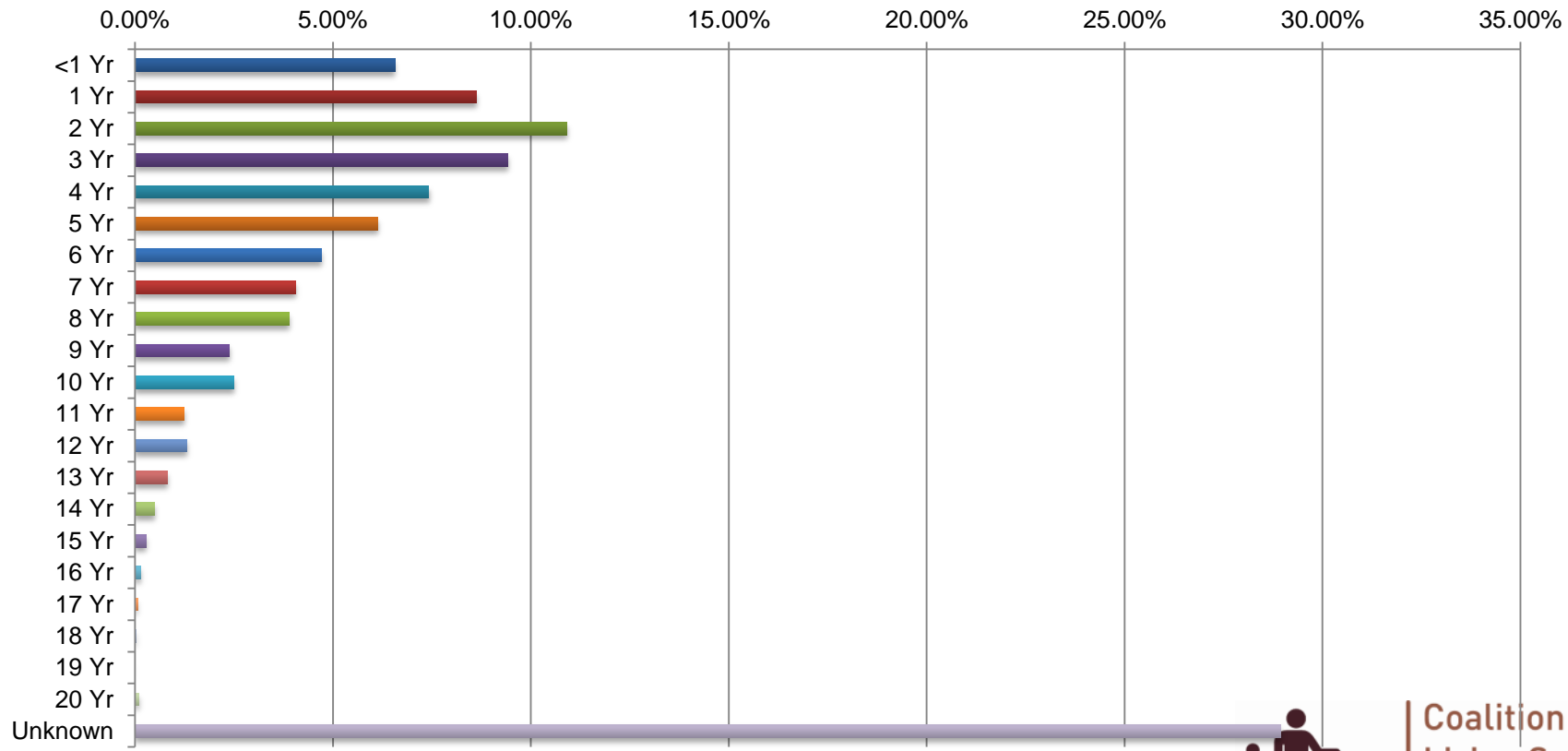


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About the Dogs That Bit

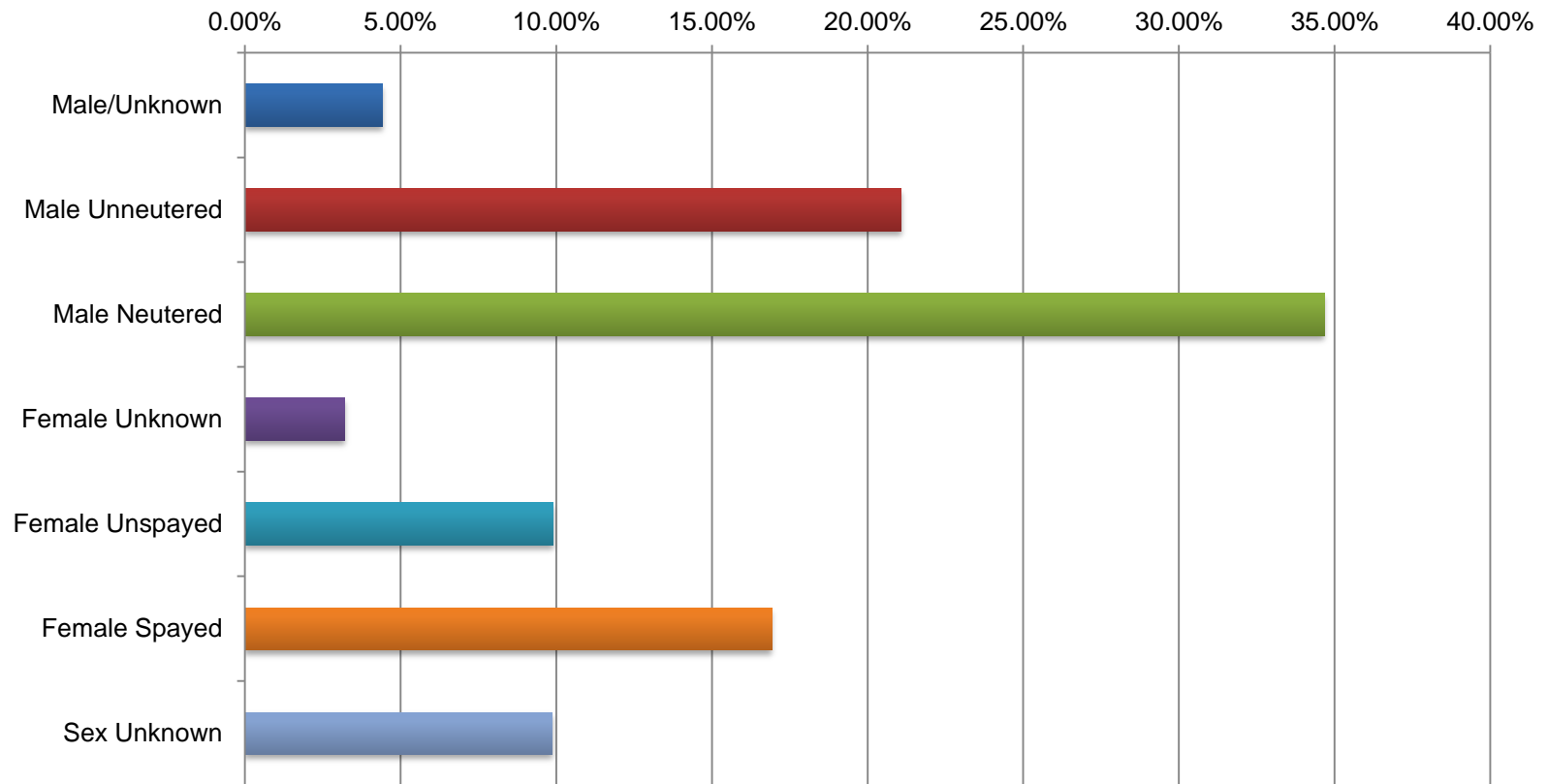
- Adolescent dogs bit more frequently than puppies or older dogs

Percentage of Bites by Age of the Dog



About the Dogs That Bit

Sex and Reproductive Status of the Dog



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About the Dogs That Bit

- Breeds that bit
 - Bites were reported for 165 breeds
 - 93 breeds bit 10 times or more
- Not enough information to draw conclusions about whether one breed is more or less likely to bite
 - No dog census in Colorado to determine if number of bites is proportional to each breed



About the Dogs That Bit

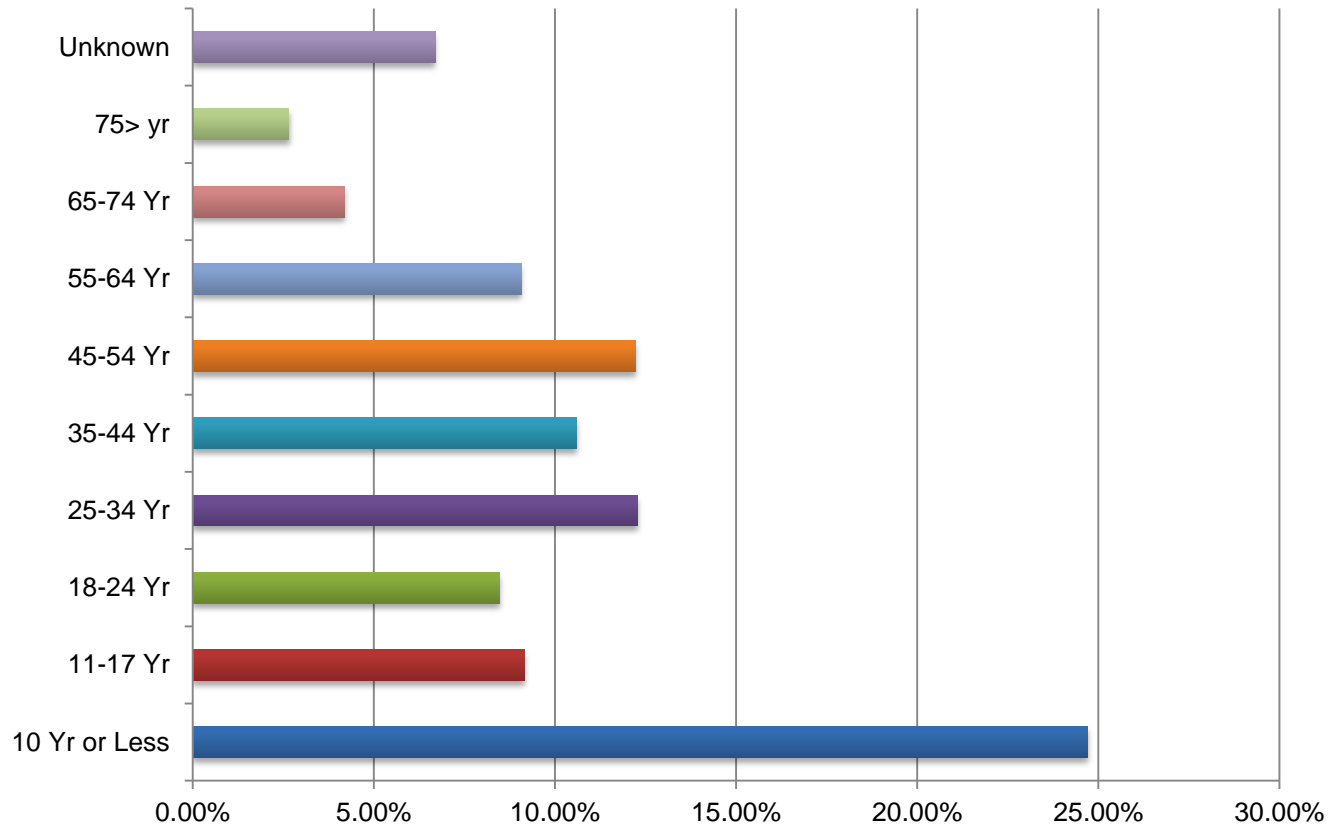
Top 10 Breeds of Dog That Bit

Rank	Total	Percent of Total	Breed
1	1287	11.29%	Labrador Retriever
2	1065	9.35%	Pit Bull
3	877	7.70%	German Shepherd
4	532	4.67%	Chihuahua - Smooth Coated
5	380	3.33%	Rottweiler
6	379	3.33%	Border Collie
7	365	3.20%	Australian Shepherd
8	345	3.03%	Boxer
9	314	2.76%	Australian Cattle Dog
10	283	2.48%	Chow Chow



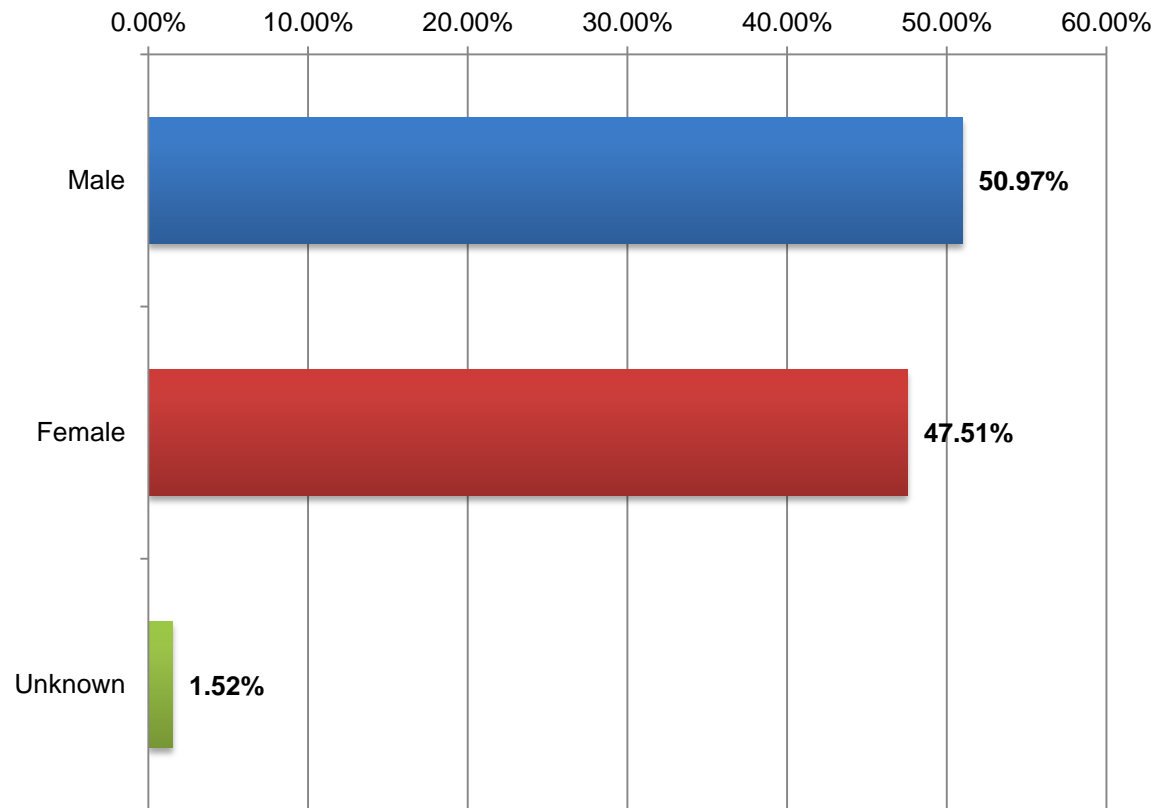
About the Victim

Percentage of Dog Bites by Victim's Age



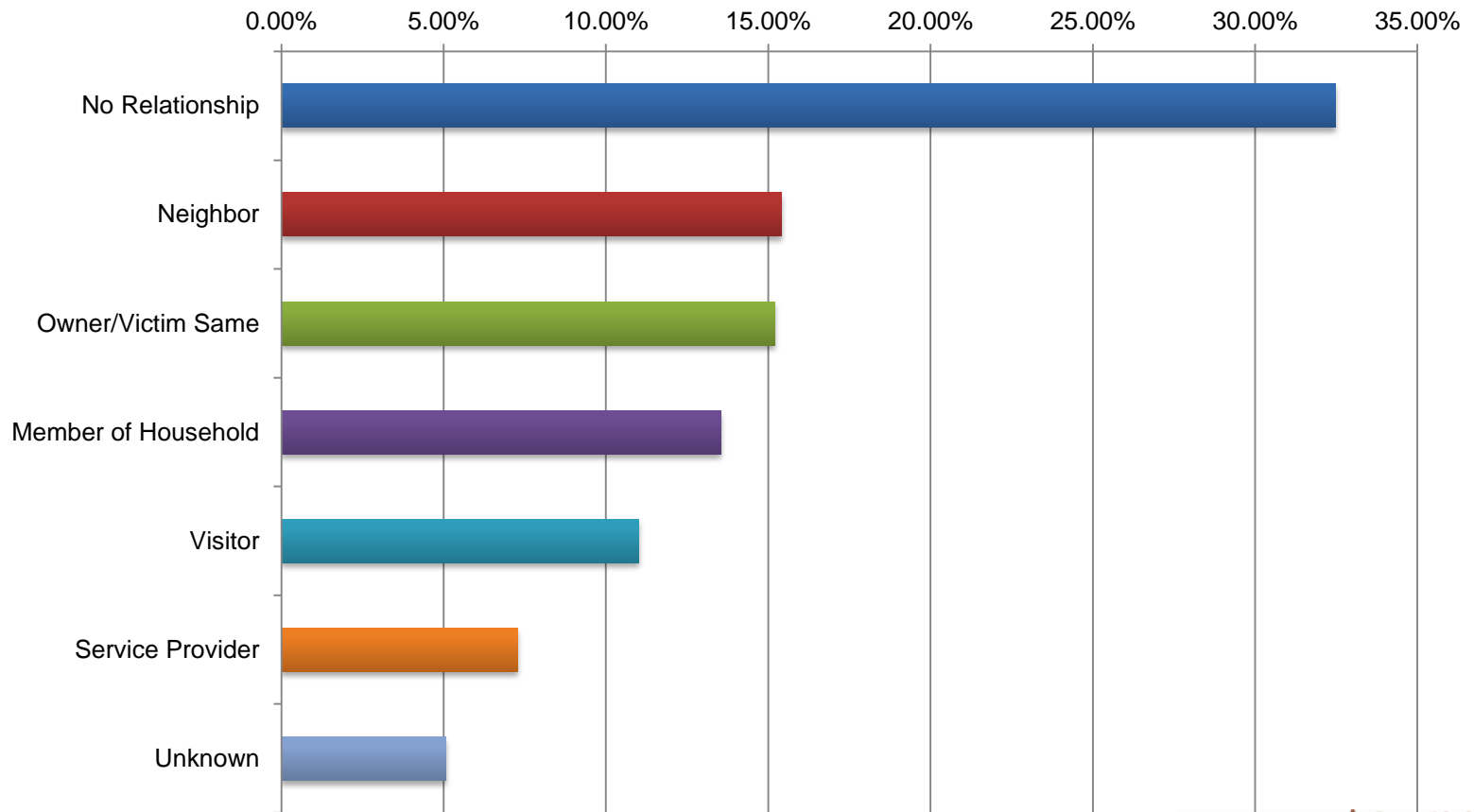
About the Victim

Sex of the Victim



Victim/Owner Relationship

Relationship of Victim to Dog's Owner



Key Take-Aways

- Any dog can bite, regardless of breed, age or sex
- Most dogs (99%) don't bite
- Severity of most reported bites is minor
- All reported bites, regardless of severity, are resource intensive

... continued ...



Key Take-Aways (continued)

- Most bites are preventable
 - Many potential bite circumstances can be avoided
- Education about living safely with dogs is needed to reduce the number of bites

For example:

- Select the appropriate dog for your lifestyle and environment
- Socialize your dog with people and other dogs, and provide obedience training
- Supervise your children around dogs
- Obey leash laws



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Next Steps in Your Community

- Encourage ACOs and veterinarians to educate dog owners and members of public
- Encourage reporting of bites so that behavior of individual dogs/owners can be addressed
- Maintain robust animal care and control programs, which are critical in preventing and tracking dog bites
- Enact ordinances that effectively address bite circumstances and individual dog/owner behavior

