

***EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND OUTCOMES:  
ANALYSIS, CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS***

**Presented at the Data Infrastructure Grant Annual Meeting**

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# **Acknowledgments**

## **16-State Employment Work Group**

**Ray Bottger, MBA, ABD, Steve Davis, PhD and Tracy Leeper, MA (OK), Dick Ellis, PhD (CO), Kitty Hepfer, MA, CPA (SC), Ted Lutterman, PhD, Bernadette Phelan, PhD (AZ) and Dennis Geertsen, PhD, LCSW (UT-Chair)**

## **Other Participating States (IL, IN, MO, TX, VA, VT)**

## **Presenters on Employment at the 2002 National Conference on Mental Health Statistics**

**(Geertsen, Davis and Ellis)**

## **DIG Conference Call Coordinators and State Participants**

**Ron Manderscheid, PhD and Olinda Gonzalez, PhD (CMHS)  
Vijay Ganju, PhD and Ted Lutterman, PhD (NRI)**

# Outline of Presentation

- **Employment status using the mental health database (i.e., information systems, ongoing surveys)**
- **Employment outcomes**
  - **Mental health database**
  - **Linking the mental health database with state employment agency data**

## **\*Rationale for Measuring Employment Status and Change**

- **Productive activity is an important component of role functioning**
- **For many consumers and payers, employment is an important goal if not the ultimate “so what”**
- **Employment is determined by several factors, some of which are outside the control of the mental health system**
- **However, the system should have *some* impact**
- **Because it is “critical” and “important,” employment should be monitored**
- **\*Ted Lutterman, Ph.D., 16-State Draft Report, April 2002**

**Can employment be measured?**

**In my opinion, yes . . . but a number of  
data issues must be addressed**

# Data Issues

- **Uniform employment definitions**
- **Which consumer populations should be the focus of data collection?**
- **When should data be collected?**
- **Who should collect the data?**
- **How can data integrity be maintained (e.g., accuracy, completeness)?**
- **Can employment outcomes be measured?**

# **Uniform Employment Definitions**

# Four Categories

- **Employed**
- **Unemployed**
- **Not in Labor Force**
- **Unknown**

# Category 1 Definition

## **\*Employed**

- **Full-time (35 hours or more weekly)**
- **Part-time (less than 35 hours weekly)**
- **Competitive (includes supported and transitional employment)**
- **Compensated according to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**

**\*Supported and transitional employment meet essential criteria for employment**

# Category 2 Definition

## Unemployed

- **A person who has been laid off, fired, or is temporarily not working**
- **Applies only to persons seeking gainful employment**

# Category 3 Definition

## Not in Labor Force

- Applies to persons who do not fit any other category
- Includes persons who are:

Homemakers

Students

Retired

Volunteers

Disabled and not in labor force

Receiving sheltered work training

Not looking for work

Unpaid family workers

Other

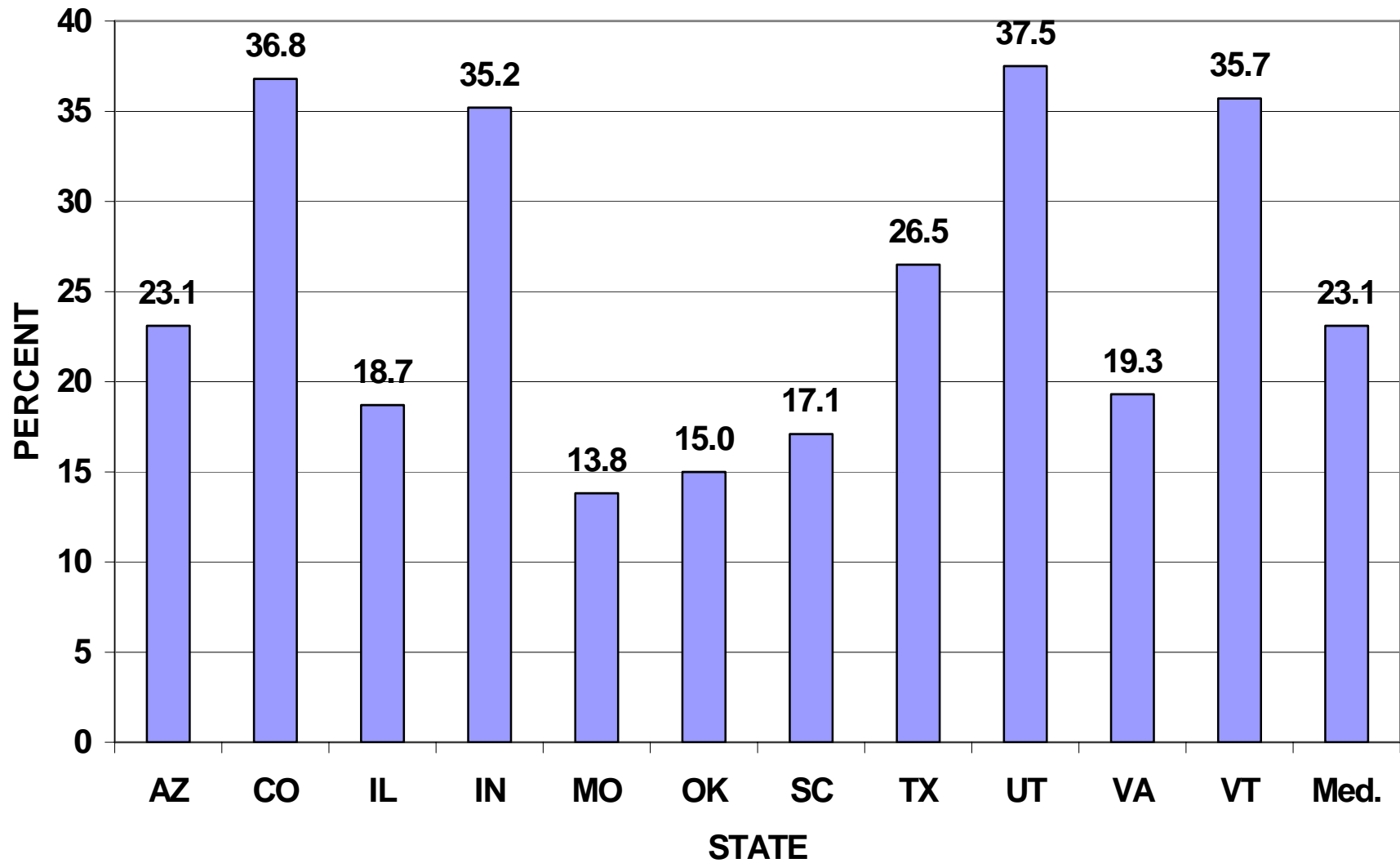
**Which consumer populations should  
be the focus of data collection?**

**The study populations varied significantly in the 16-State Study**

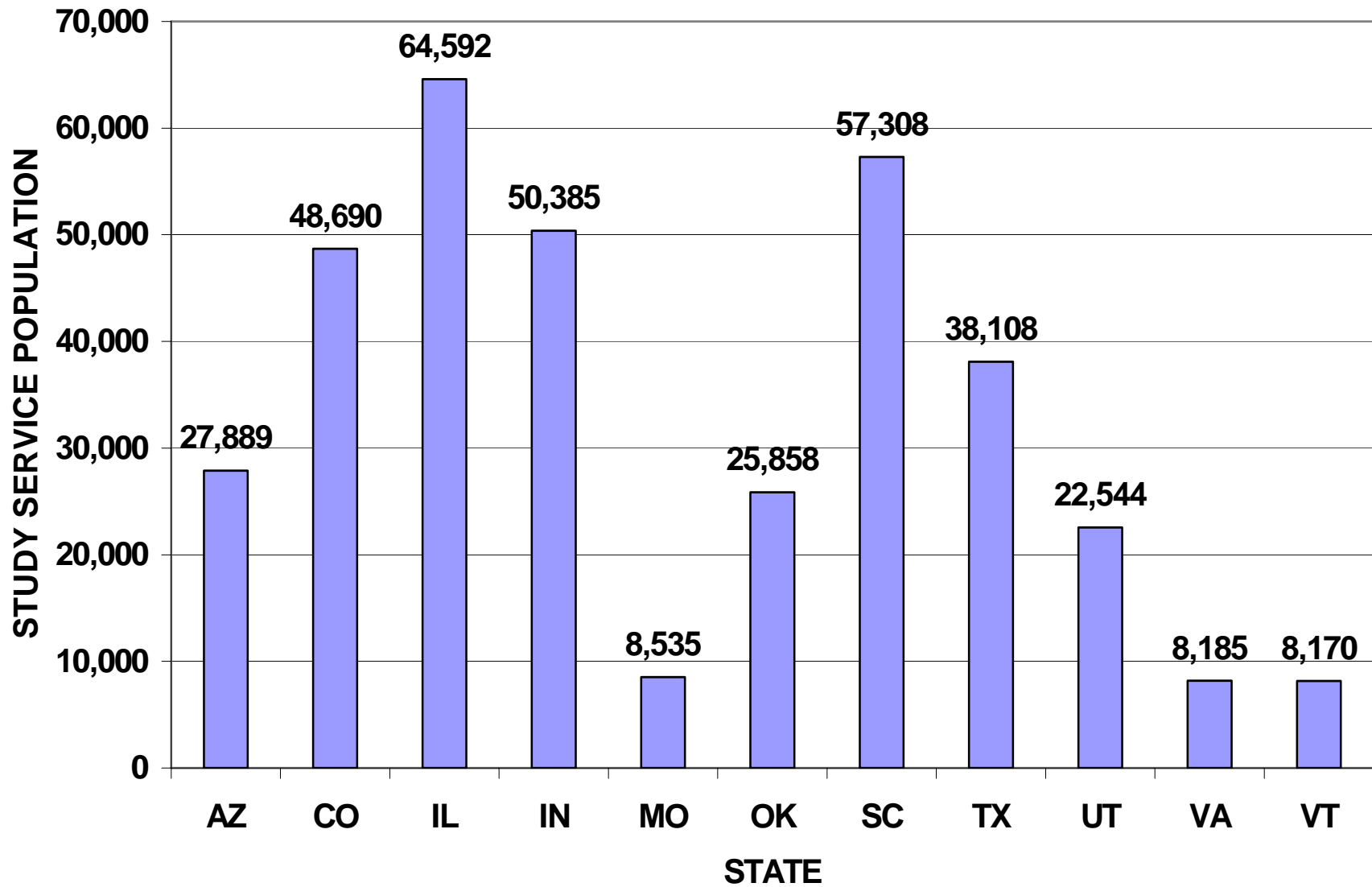
# Types of differences

- **Those with major mental illness only**
- **Major mental illness in service > one year**
- **Admissions only rather than unduplicated served**
- **Less than full year's data**
- **Different fiscal year (FY 2001 rather than FY 2000)**
- **Other subpopulation reported rather than statewide data**
- **Substantial numbers of unknown**
- **Persons 65 and over included**
- **One ethnic group excluded**
- **Other unique differences within states**

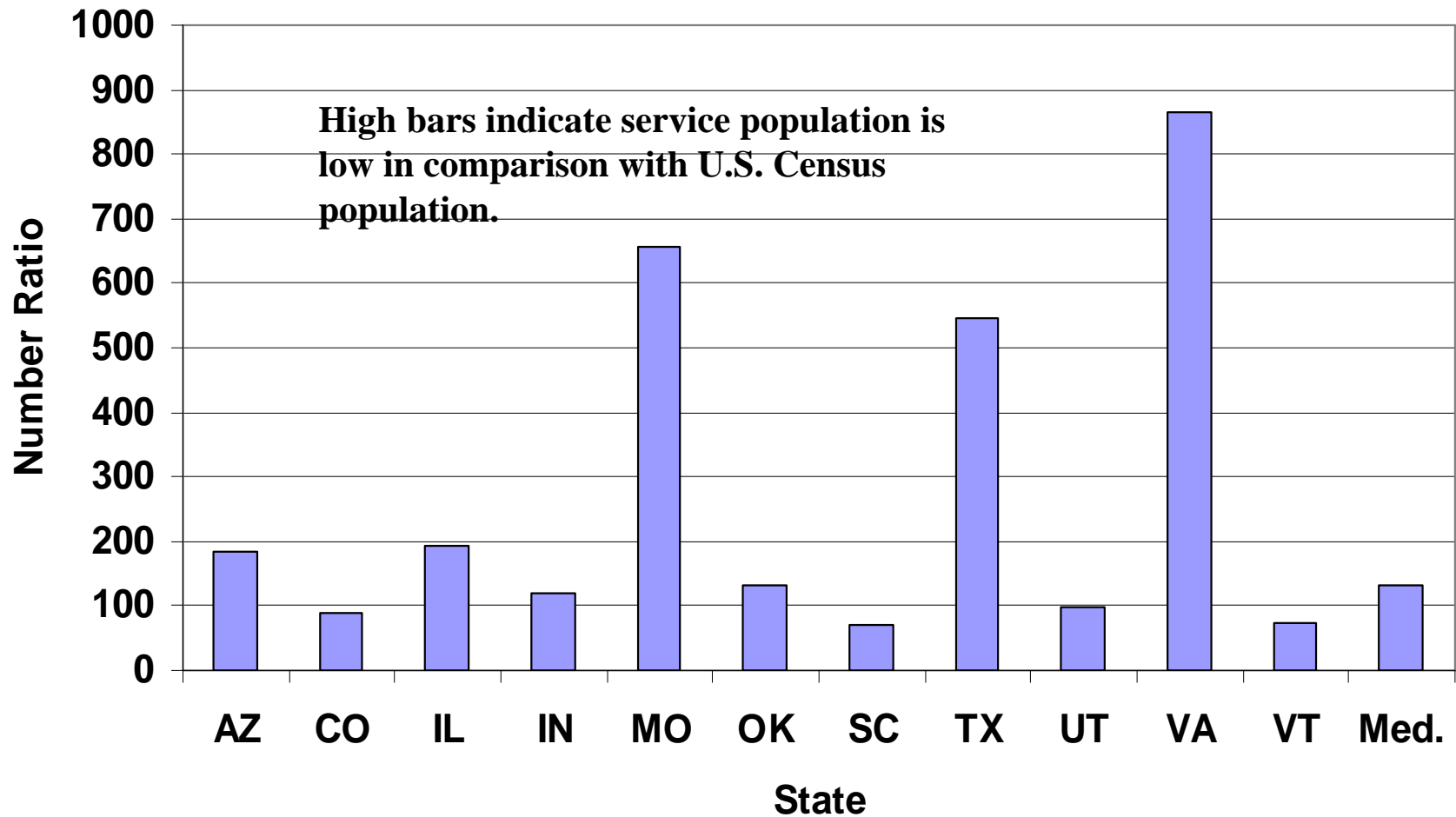
**Figure 1. Employment status of all clients**



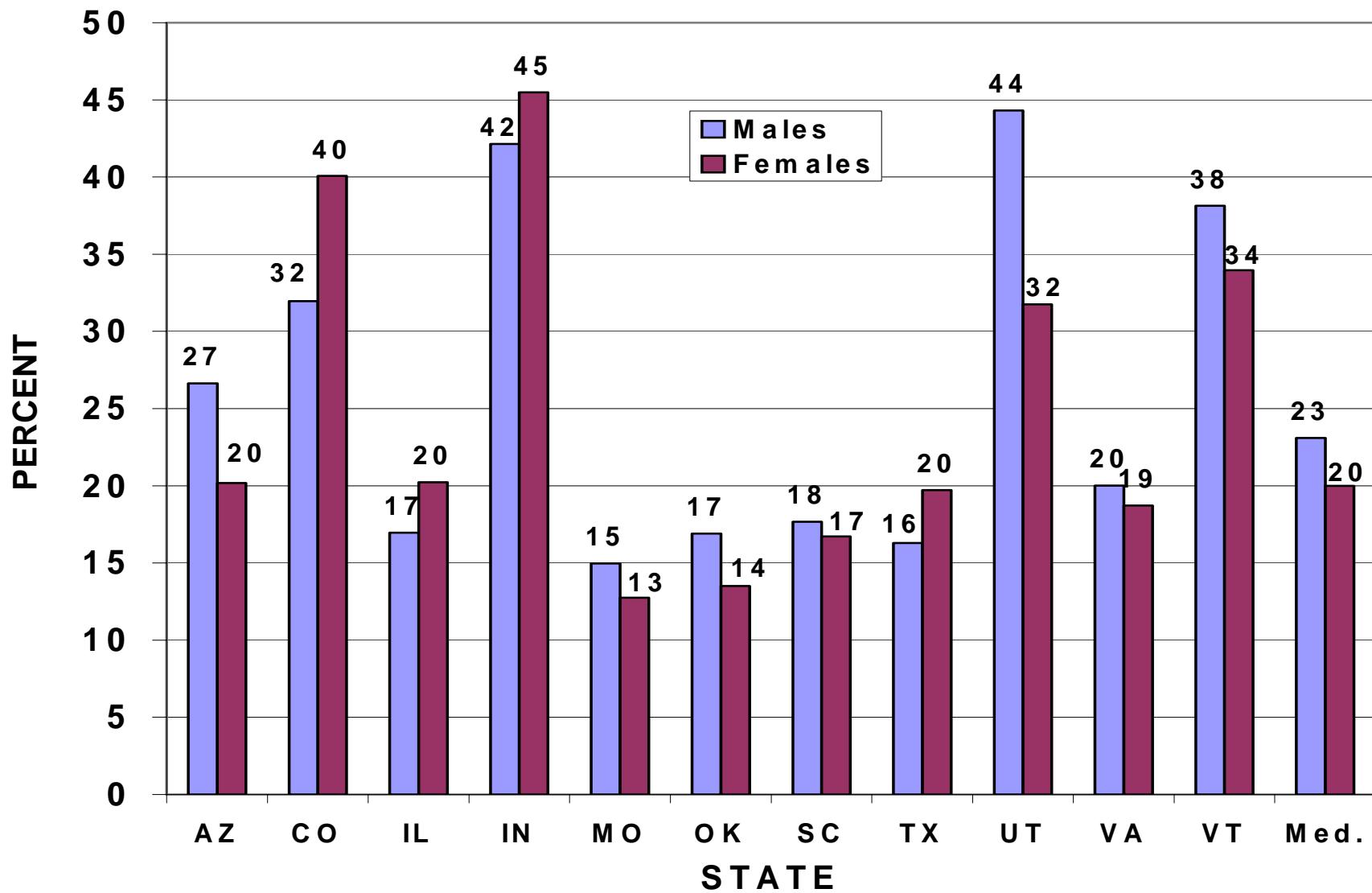
### STUDY SERVICE POPULATION 18-64 YEARS OF AGE BY STATE (LESS UNKNOWN)



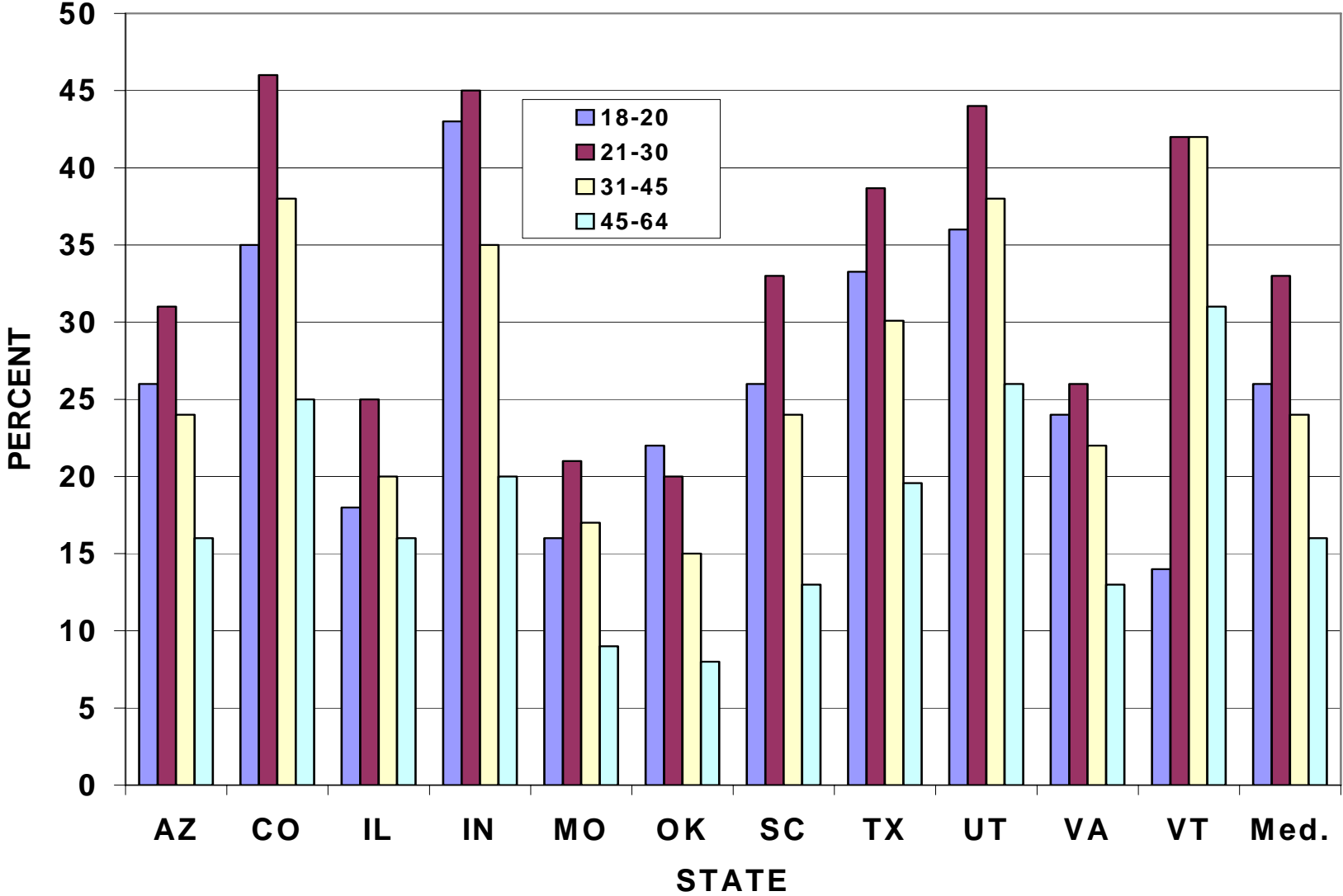
## Ratio of overall U.S. Census population estimate (April 1, 2000) to study population by state



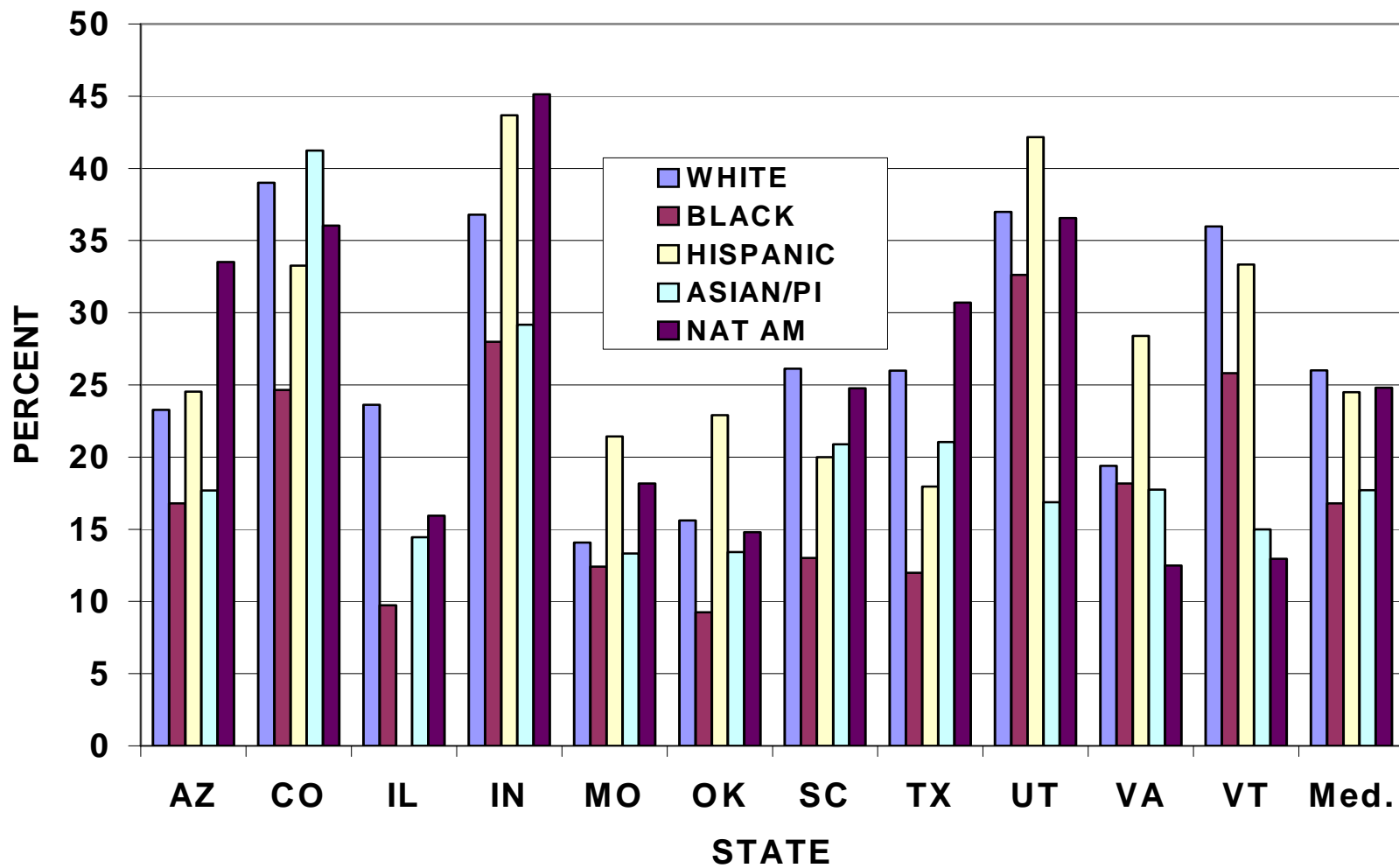
**FIGURE 2. EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY GENDER**



**FIGURE 3. EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY AGE GROUP**



**FIGURE 4. EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY RACE/ETHNICITY**



**FIGURE 5. EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY SCHIZOPHRENIA AND NON-SCHIZOPHRENIA DIAGNOSES**

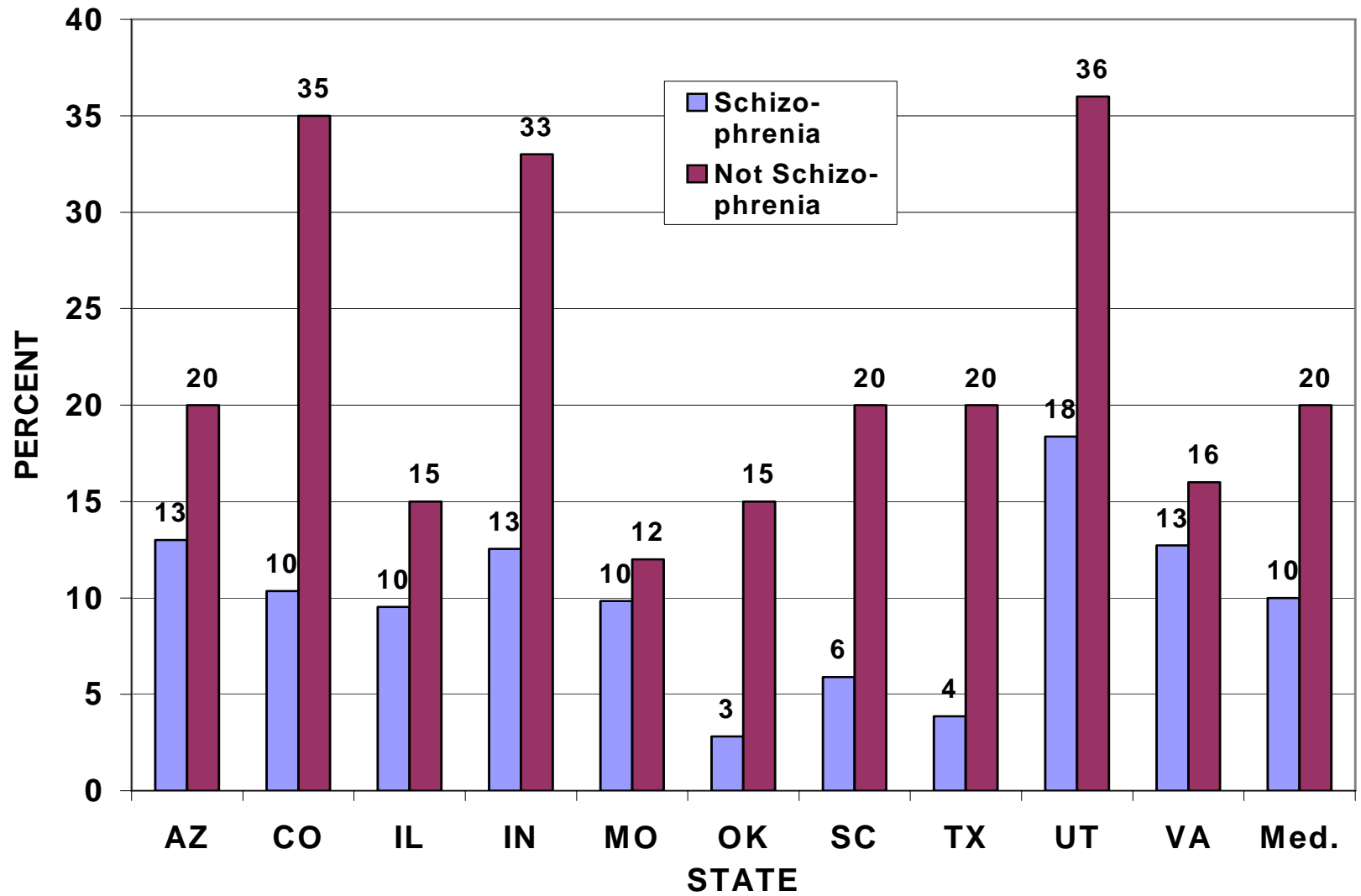
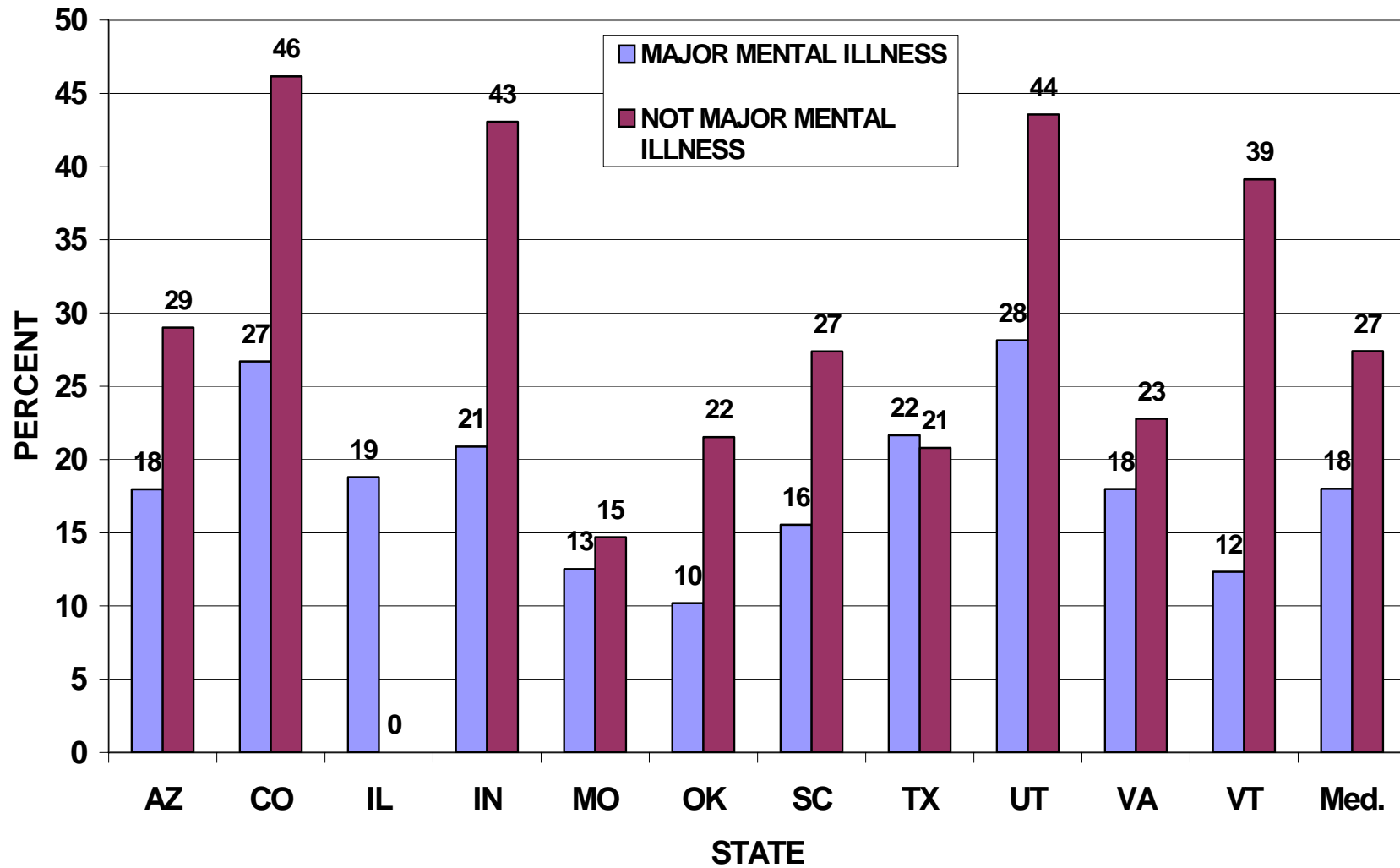


FIGURE 6. EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY MAJOR MENTAL ILLNESS



# Recommended Study Populations

- Unduplicated served
- All persons on caseload that had a “current” employment rating in the last 12 months
- Use latest rating for assessing employment status
- Persons 18-64 years of age
- Community residents
- Persons w/ major mental illness (outcome only)
- Collect key variables for comparisons (e.g., state, age, gender, race/ethnicity, diagnosis)

**When should data be collected?**

# **Collect current employment status at**

- Enrollment/admission**
- Every 6 months or one year**
- Discontinuation**

**Who should collect the data?**

# Data Collectors

- **\*Intake worker or other staff at enrollment/ admission**
- **A clinician should report data at update or discontinuation.**
- **\*If reporting is made by consumer & employment is left blank, staff are encouraged to ask.**

**How can data integrity be assured?**

# Two Processes

- **Self-correction**
- **Use of standard data collection and reporting procedures**

## **Self-Correction:**

**Interstate data integrity will improve as  
data are *used* within each state**

# Factors Facilitating Self-Correction

- Use employment as a performance indicator for planning and other uses *within* states
- Develop simple and understandable graphs
- Do both written reports and presentations
- Provide frequent feedback to stakeholders within states
- Facilitate stakeholder discussions (e.g., planning councils, provider organizations, etc.)

**Use of standard data collection  
and reporting procedures**

# Examples of Standard Procedures

- **Train primary data collectors in use of both the question and the procedures**
- **Probe for missing data**
- **Conduct data entry edits**
- **Provide feedback reports to local units**
- **Conduct periodic data audits**
- **Etc.**

**Can employment outcomes be  
measured?**

# **Yes . . . however . . .**

## **States must first**

- **adopt common definitions, populations and methods**
- **have the capacity to implement employment as a status measure**
- **be able to collect data at two or more points in time**

# What about states that meet all 3 criteria?

It is recommended that

- an employment outcomes workgroup be formed with these states
- these states proceed soon to pilot methods of assessing employment outcomes
- demonstrate that employment outcomes can be measured *within* their states
- documented pilot results be shared with the remaining DIG states

# **The workgroup reviewed two general outcome approaches**

- 1. Assessing employment outcomes from the ongoing consumer database  
(previous slides relate to this approach)**
- 2. Employment linking of consumer data with the state agency employment database**

# **Assessing employment outcomes from the ongoing consumer database**

**(Colorado example: Dick Ellis, Ph.D.)**

- **Employment data are collected at opening, review and discontinuation**
- **Limited to adults not in 24-hour care**
- **The sample consists of two most recent ratings that can be matched**
- **Percent of net change is assessed**
- **Programs with the best outcomes are rewarded**

## **Benefits of using the ongoing consumer database (e.g., information system)**

- **Full- or part-time status can be known**
- **All types of labor force employment may be included**
- **No out-of-pocket costs are assured for all states**
- **Not dependent upon external agency for data**
- **More control over client privacy and confidentiality**

## **Limitations of the mental health database approach**

- **Subjective reporting contains errors**
- **Staff need to rely on memory in many cases**
- **Data is frequently not current and accurate at review and discontinuation due to relatively high community drop-out rates**
- **Does not include entire population due to missing data and non-matches**

**Linking of consumer employment data  
with state agency employment database  
(Oklahoma example)**

**Steve Davis, Ph.D.**

**Tracy Leeper, M.A.**

**Becki Moore, M.S.**

**Mark Reynolds, Ed.D.**

# **Employment Data Linking Oklahoma**

- **Typically a very large database**
- **May be necessary for them to do matching at their end, i.e., State MH agency sends list of client SSNs**  
**(Must have strict procedures to protect client confidentiality)**
- **May be charged a flat rate or by the record**
- **Employment agency may purge the data when the database gets a certain size – not at a certain time**  
**(Pre-treatment period may vary, e.g., may only go back 2 ½ quarters)**

# **Benefits of Data Linking**

## **Oklahoma**

- **Accurate and complete pre- and post-treatment employment data**
  - **Uses entire population, no sampling errors**
  - **Relies on empirical data, eliminates memory problems**
  - **Longitudinal studies can be conducted without having to contact clients over time**
- **Fairly standardized among all states**
  - **Allows for interstate comparisons**

# **Limitations of Data Linking Oklahoma**

- **Only wage amount is recorded– not the amount of time worked**
- **Not possible to determine whether someone worked full- or part-time, or steadily or part of the quarter**
- **Federal and self-employment are not included (probably does not affect most MH consumers)**

# Conclusions

- **Employment is one important indicator of functional well-being, and to many the ultimate “so what.”**
- **Employment is measurable as a general indicator.**
- **Employment outcomes are possible though difficult to assess.**
- **Interstate comparability is difficult to obtain, but it is important to make the attempt.**
- **With information systems, outcomes are most effectively assessed within rather than between states.**
- **Consumer-linkage w/ employment agency data is a viable alternative for states.**