# Clerical Benchmark Survey Report

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## Background

In the 2006 round of bargaining, HEU succeeded in negotiating $3 million in cumulative funding to review clerical benchmarks and fund resulting wage adjustments. This will provide approximately $1 million per year, for the next three years.

Since July, a review committee - made up of three HEU members, one HEU staff resource person, one BCGEU representative and employer representatives - has been examining all 84 clerical benchmarks in the job family's 11 sub-categories. The challenging mandate of this joint committee is to determine what has changed in the clerical job family between 1980 and the present.

Clerical workers across the province have played a vital role in this review, by completing an on-line survey about their work. The results will support the Committee to update, adjust or create benchmarks and to delete redundant ones.

The Clerical Benchmark Review has been divided into 3 phases. In phase one, benchmarks will be revised with housekeeping changes, and redundant ones deleted. An example might be the elimination of a requirement for shorthand. Creation of new benchmarks are the focus of phase two. In phase three, the negotiated funding will be allocated to new or significantly changed benchmarks.

Completion of phase three will mark the beginning of ongoing work within the clerical family. When benchmarks are completed, work will need to be done at the local level to update job descriptions. And while the Committee is reviewing all the benchmarks, there will not be agreement on all the necessary changes – some of the changes that HEU advocates for may have to be addressed in future negotiations. This is a start, but it is a good one.

## Survey Results

### Sample Size

1331 clerical members took part in this on-line survey, providing a very good sample size, with a low margin of error.[1]

### Response Rate

The response rate was also strong. The 1331 respondents represented more than 15% of members in the clerical family. The largest job title response came from unit clerks.

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[1] With a sample of this size, the margin of error is just 2.7%. (The margin of error is larger for questions or data with a smaller sample size). This is also a self-selected sample.

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There were 398 respondents who indicated they were unit clerks (or unit co-ordinators, or nursing unit assistants or ward clerks) in the job title question <u>or</u> selected 10104 R9 Nursing Unit Assistant as a benchmark match. This is approximately 30% of respondents.

The next largest group in the survey were the admitting clerk IVs, with 235 responses.

There was a response from members in every health authority, and from all the sub-families, or class-series (admitting, business office, clerk - steno, communications, data processing, medical records, payroll, printing, purchasing).

Many members were matched to two or more benchmarks.

The percentages noted in each case, were percentages of those that answered any given question, unless otherwise indicated.

For many questions, the results are broken down into several sub-families. Sub-families were removed from this breakdown, where the sample size was too small to be reliable. However, the survey responses for these members was still valuable for both the total survey results and for the individual comments that were made.
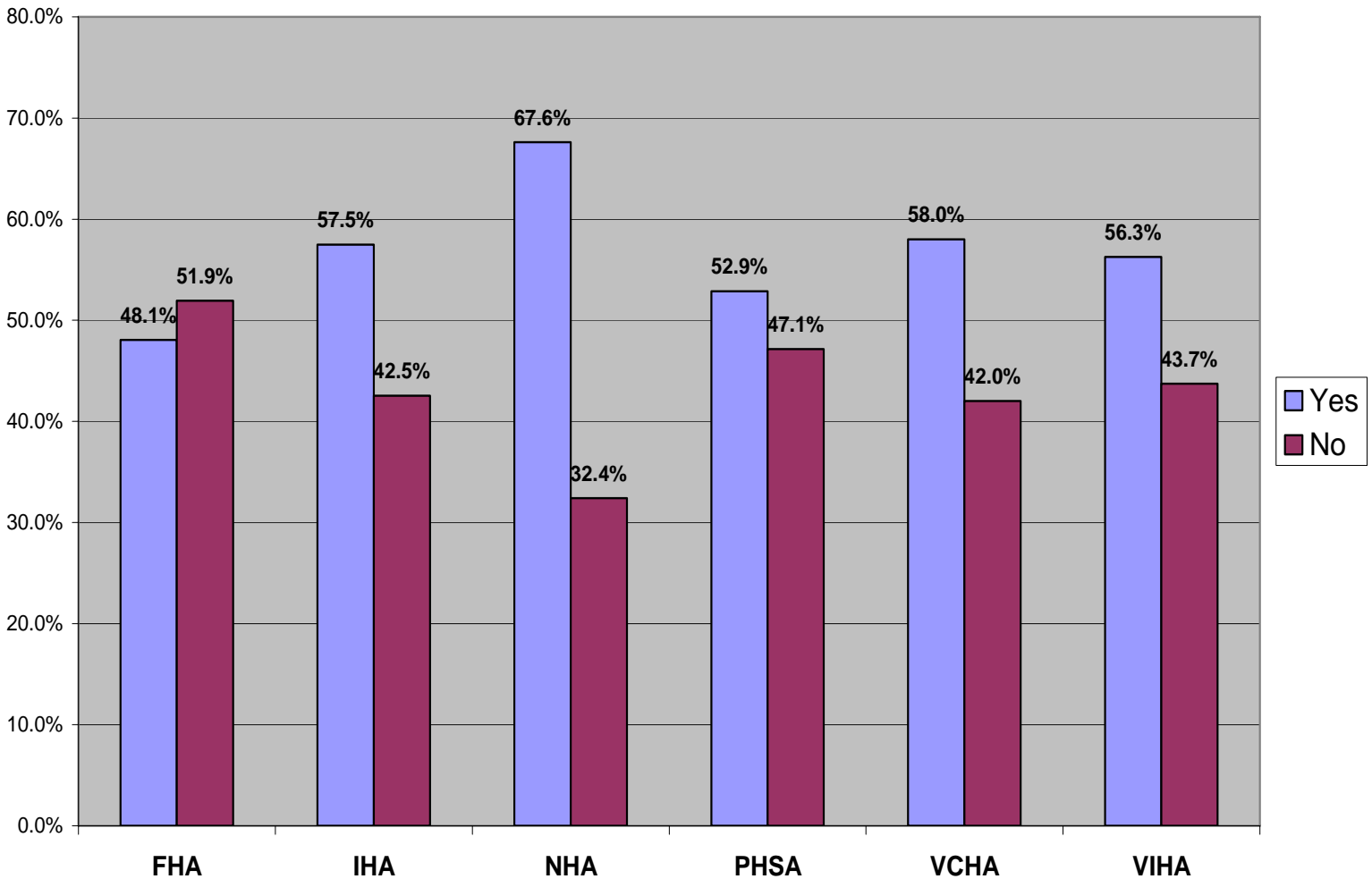
**Additional Job Requirements**

More than half of the respondents (54.9%) reported that they have additional qualifications or requirements of their job, which are not found in the benchmark.

**Additional Qualifications in Job Not Found in Benchmark?**

| Response | Count |
|----------|-------|
| Yes | 620 |
| No | 509 |
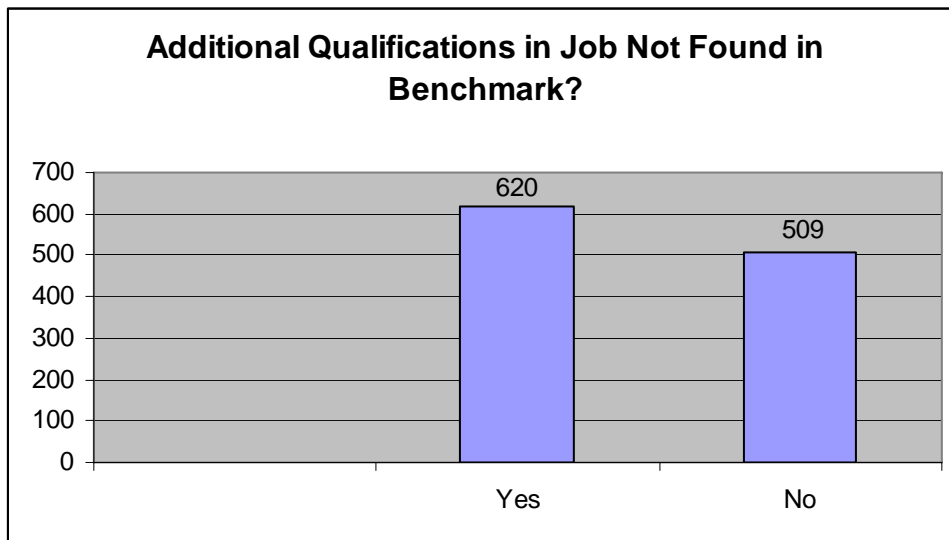
Their response to this question varied among the health authorities, with a particularly high positive response in the Northern Health Authority.

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**Are there additional requirements of your job, not found in the benchmark?**



The additional qualifications or requirements covered a vast array of skills, both technical and interpersonal.  The following answer to the question asking what those additional qualifications are, provides a good example:

"High level of communication skills. Diplomacy required when dealing with patients/families and physicians. Increasingly advanced computer programs."

Many of the additional qualifications related to technical proficiency.  Others point to organizational responsibilities.
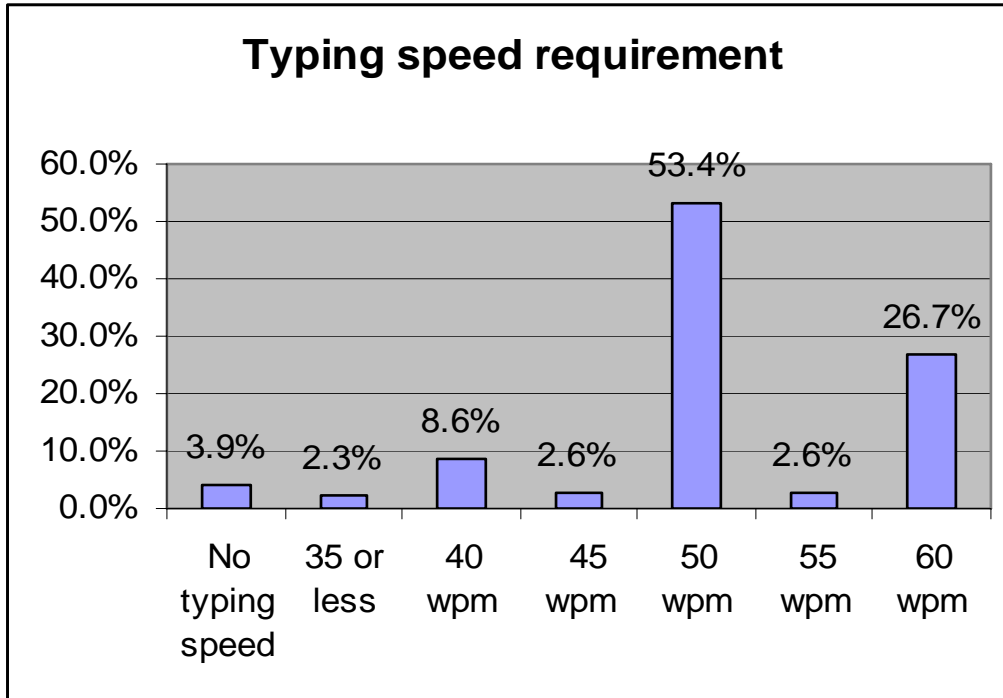
**Typing Requirements**

Respondents were asked if typing is a requirement of their job. Of those respondents that answered the question, 92.8% said that typing is a requirement of their job, and 7.2% said it isn't.

About three quarters of clerical members (76.9%) were required to take a typing test when they initially posted into the position.

The most common required typing speed is 50 wpm (53.4% of respondents). More than four out of five clerical members (82.7%) reported a typing speed requirement of 50 wpm or higher.

**Typing speed requirement**

| Typing speed | Percentage |
|---|---|
| No typing speed | 3.9% |
| 35 or less | 2.3% |
| 40 wpm | 8.6% |
| 45 wpm | 2.6% |
| 50 wpm | 53.4% |
| 55 wpm | 2.6% |
| 60 wpm | 26.7% |

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## Typing Speed Requirement by Job Sub-Families

**What is the current typing speed of your Job Description?**
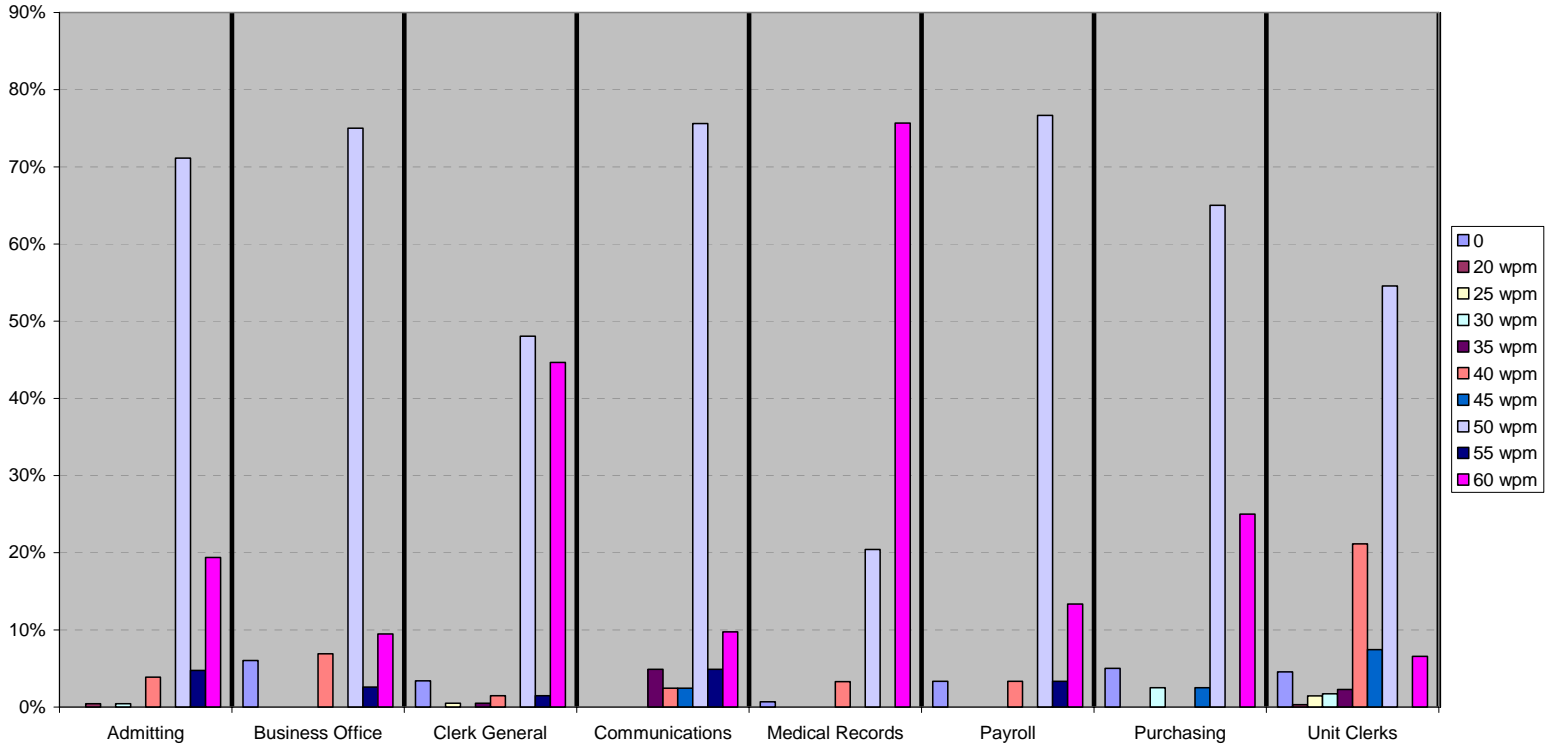


75.7% of members in the medical records sub-family reported a required typing speed of 60 wpm.

About one in 10 members reported that they have been denied a move to a position at the same classification level as their current position, because they didn't pass a typing test. 6.7% say that in the past 10 years they have been denied a move to a new position at a higher classification, but with the same typing speed required as their present position, because they didn't pass a typing test.

### How much time do clerical members spend typing correspondence?

Of the 1221 members who responded to the question, "what percentage of your day do you spend typing correspondence?" almost one third reported that they spend 15% of their time typing correspondence. One quarter said they spent no time at all typing correspondence. The results of this question vary depending on the job sub-family, with most members in communications spending no time doing correspondence, while almost half the members in medical records spend almost all of their time typing correspondence.
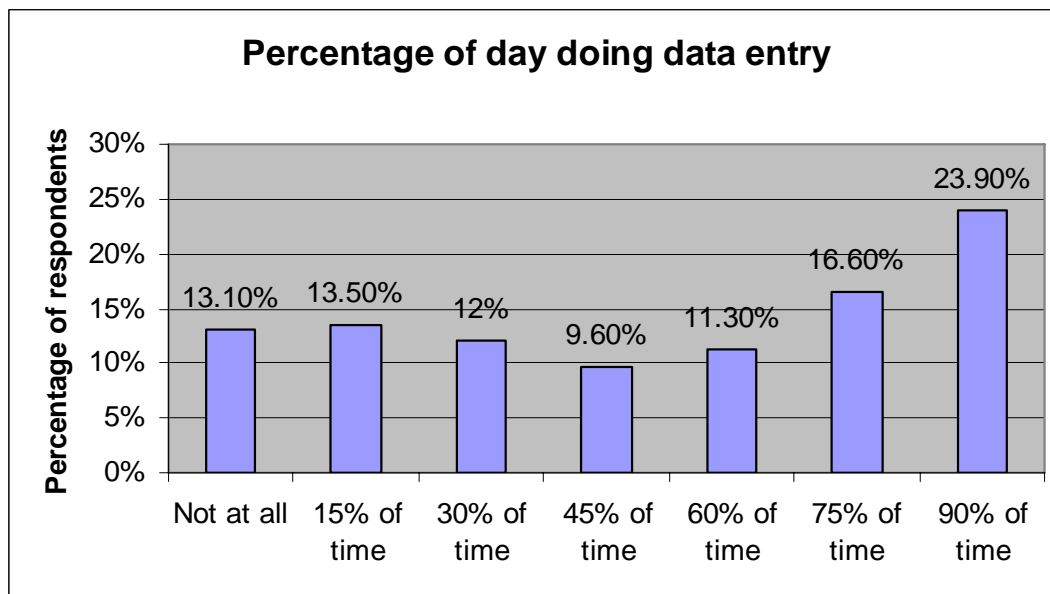
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**On average, what percentage of your day do you spend typing correspondence?**
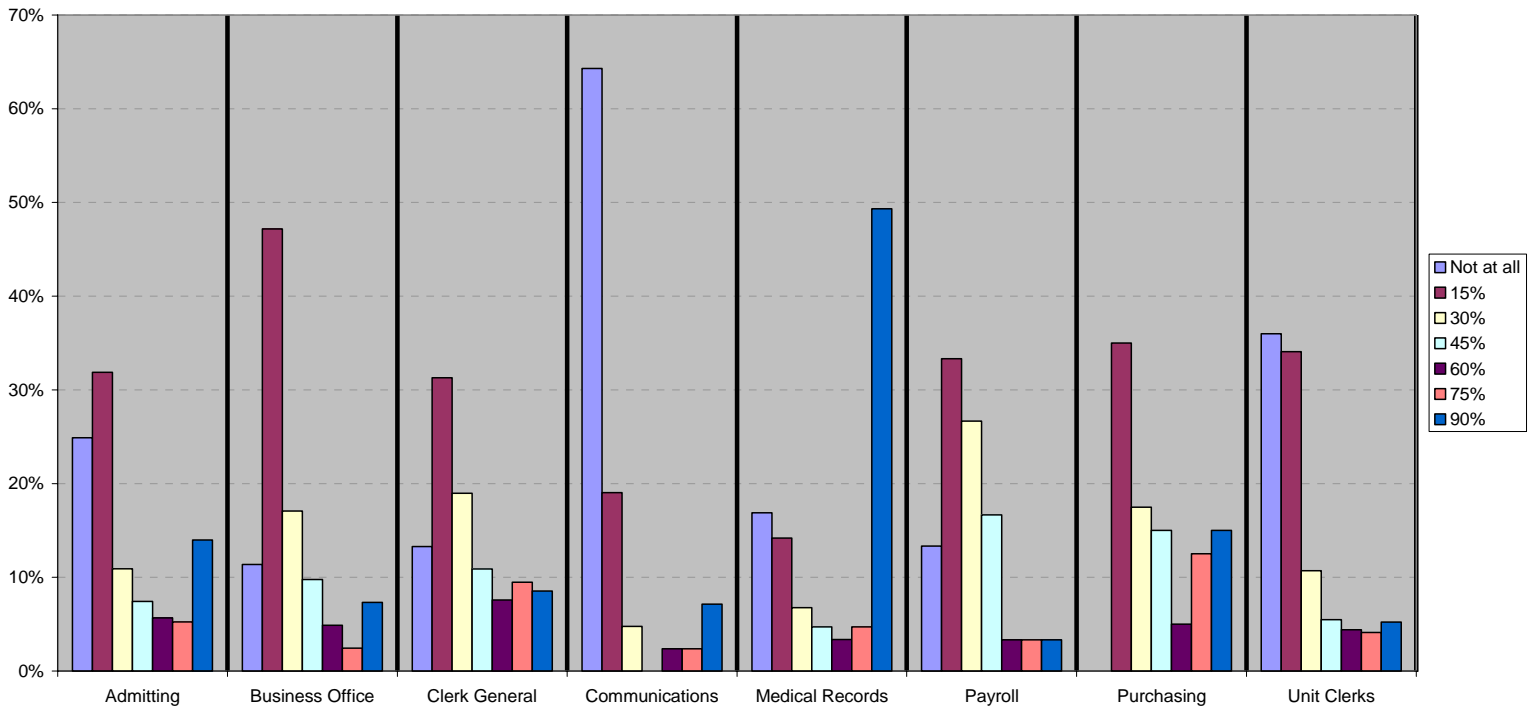


## Our Clerical members spend more time doing data entry

A higher percentage spends their time doing data entry than correspondence. Almost one quarter of the 1221 members who answered the question, reported that they spent 90% of their day doing data entry.

Again, this varies depending on the sub-family.   More than one in three members in the Admitting class series spend almost all their time doing data entry.  At the other end of the scale, more than one-third of members in medical records report spending no time at all doing data entry.

**On average, what percentage of your day do you spend doing data entry?**
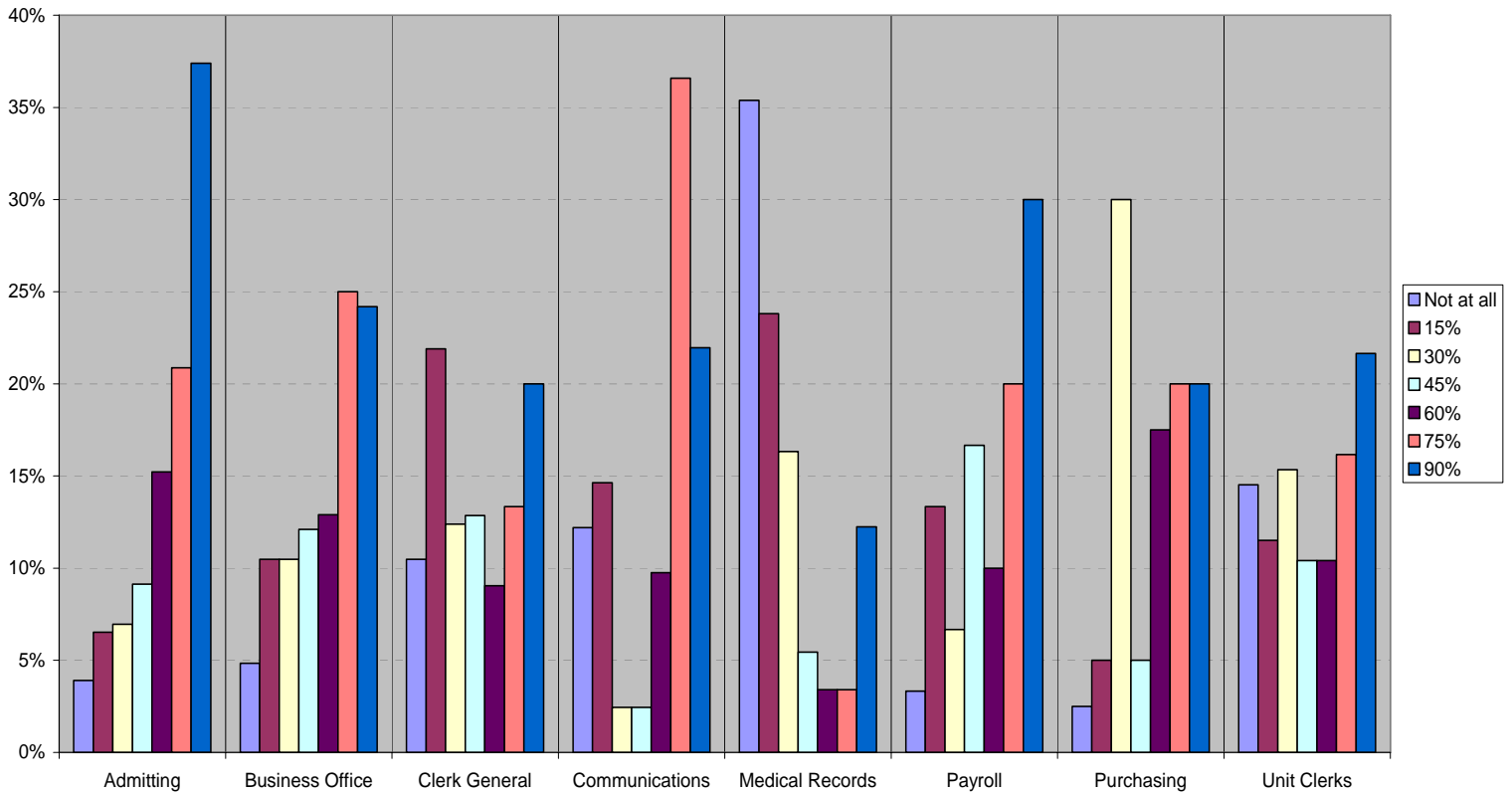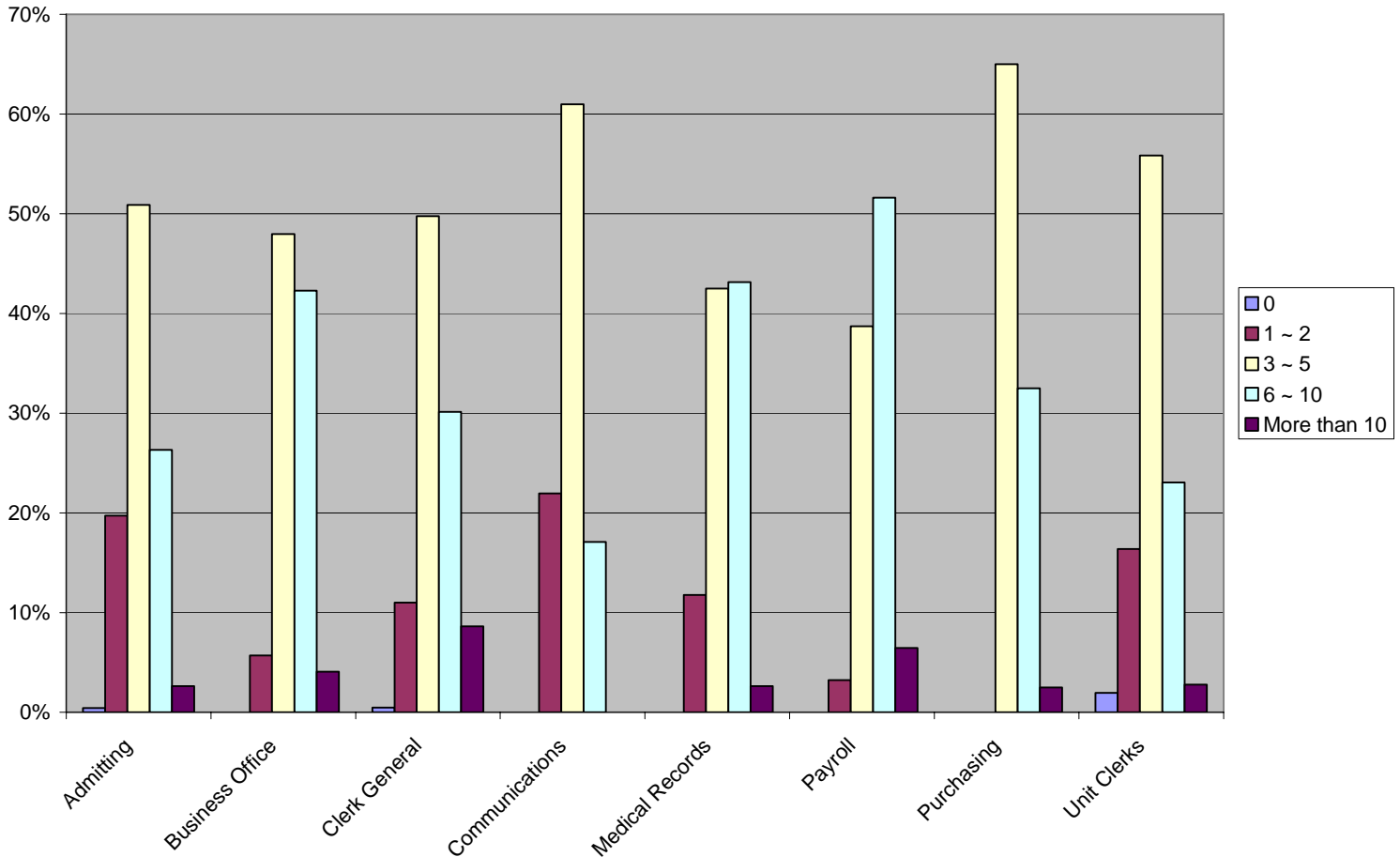


**Software Program Usage**

Our members are very computer literate, with knowledge of a variety of computer software programs.   99.3% of respondents are required to use one or more software programs for their job, 85.5% use 3 or more programs.   In the PHSA, 46.3% of respondents reported that they are required to use 6 or more software programs for their jobs.   From an earlier survey of clerical members, we learned that they are required to know an average of about 5 computer software programs for their jobs. These include a variety of standard programs, BC Health programs, health care industry programs, and facility specific programs.

Within the job sub-families, although the sample from members in printing was very small, all reported that they were required to use 6 – 10 programs in their work

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In payroll, almost every member uses 3 or more software programs in their work (96.8%).

**How many different software programs are you required to use in your job?**



Respondents were asked if they used intermediate or advanced functions of the software programs, such as creating formulas on Excel spreadsheet. Almost half (48.2%) said they did.

Members in payroll, purchasing and business office have very high usage of intermediate or advanced functions.

**Of the software programs you are required to use, do you use intermediate or advanced functions? (an example would be if you created formulas on Excel spreadseehts)**
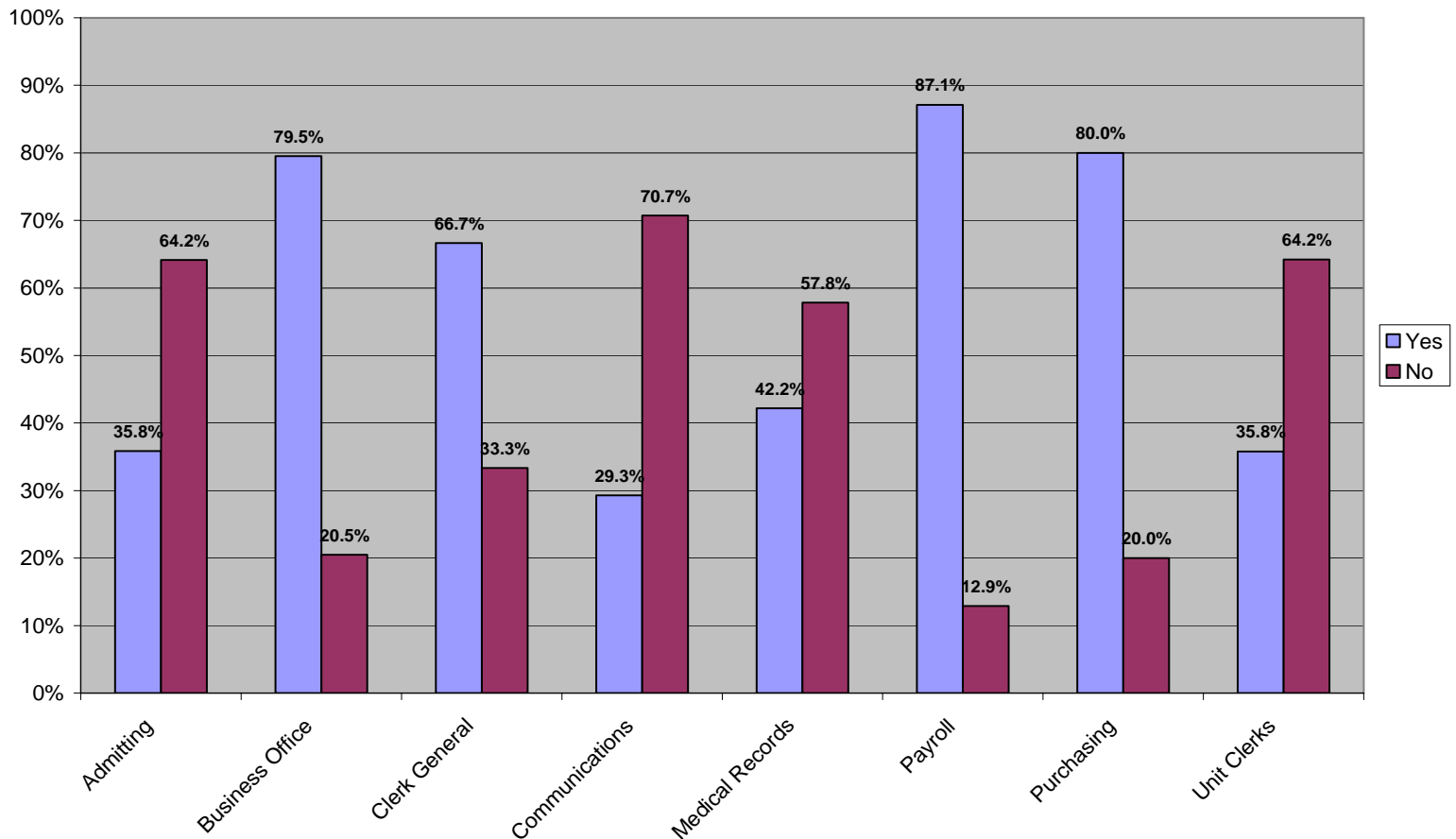


Of those that did create formulas, half said that they did this for 1-2 programs, while a further 40% said they used intermediate or advanced functions for 3 or more programs.

**Clerical Workers Experience Change**

It is clear that there is constant change in the work of clerical workers. Half of respondents said that the employer had changed the computer program they used at work during the last year. In addition, 43.5% said that they are required to troubleshoot computer software applications. This was particularly noticeable in printing, medical records, clerk – general and admitting.

One in ten (9.7%) are required to create dictionaries for computer programs. In medical records, more than a quarter (28.7%) create dictionaries. More of are members - about one in eight (12.3%) - are required to modify dictionaries for computer programs. Again, in medical records, the number was particularly high – more than a third were required to change or modify dictionaries.
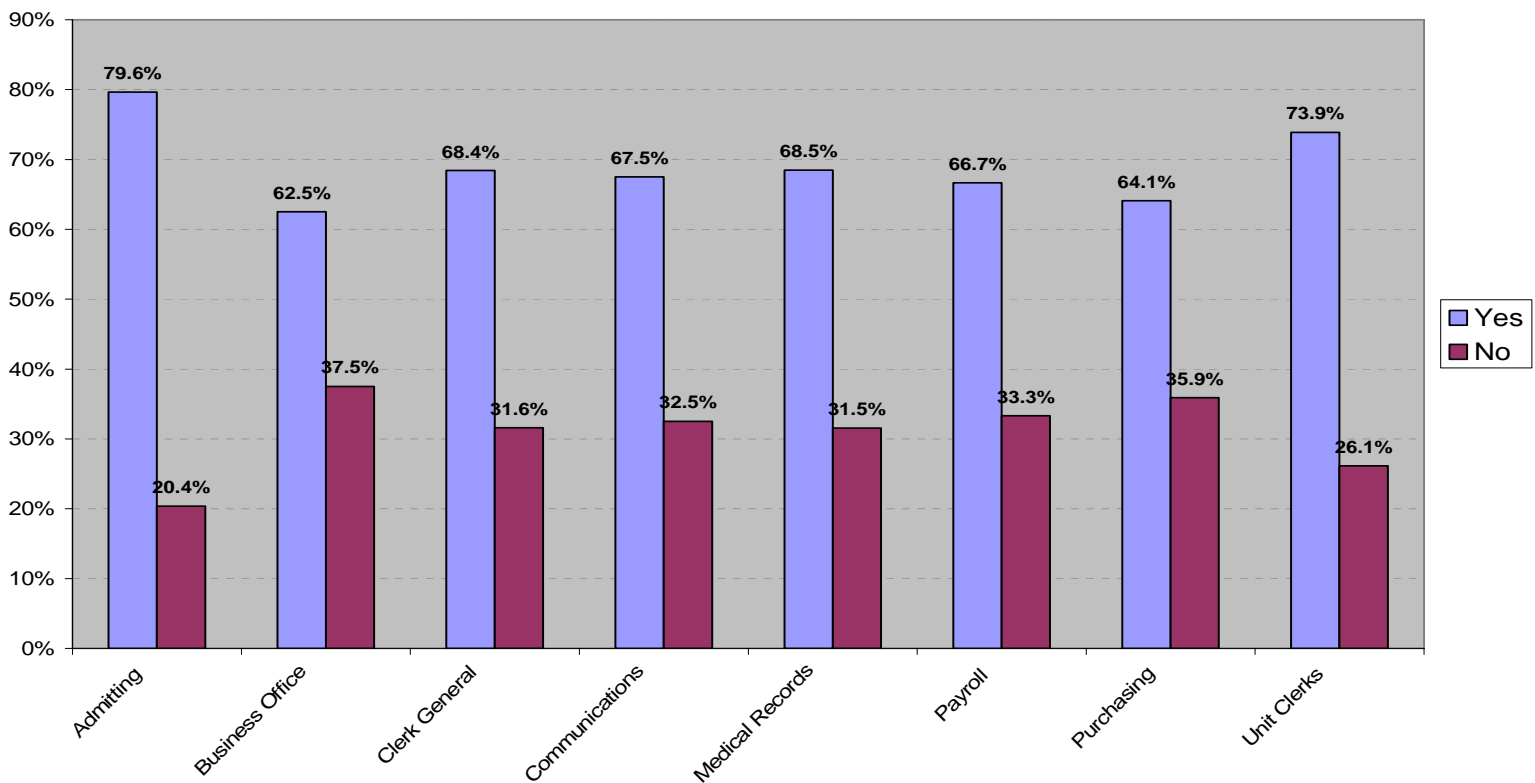
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## Training

We asked our members if they are required to train staff on computer software.
Close to three quarters (72%.1) of clerical members must train staff on computer software, predominantly spending around 15% of their time doing this. However, about 12% of the respondents answered that they spent upwards of 45% of their time training staff on computer software.

Significant training takes place in every job sub-family, with admitting and unit clerks ranking highest in the requirement.

**Are you ever required by your employer to train staff on computer software?**



| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Admitting | 79.6% | 20.4% |
| Business Office | 62.5% | 37.5% |
| Clerk General | 68.4% | 31.6% |
| Communications | 67.5% | 32.5% |
| Medical Records | 68.5% | 31.5% |
| Payroll | 66.7% | 33.3% |
| Purchasing | 64.1% | 35.9% |
| Unit Clerks | 73.9% | 26.1% |

## Computer Super-Users

More than 4 out of every 10 members reported that they are computer super-users, although only about a quarter were recognized as such by their employers.

## Preceptoring

38.4% of members are required to do preceptoring. Of those that do two-thirds report that they spend 15% of the time doing this. Most of the rest spend about 30% of their time preceptoring.

**Supervision**

An overwhelming majority of our members (86.9%) said that their supervisor was available for them to access in the workplace. About 60% said that those supervisors were responsible only for their site, while about 30% said they were responsible for supervising their site and others in the region. (10% did not know). More than 4 in 10 respondents (41.5%) said that they take on some or all of their supervisor's duties when he or she is not there.

**Communications**

Seven out of every ten respondents said that they are responsible for co-ordinating communications or information between departments, and seven out of ten (69%) also said that they are responsible for co-ordinating communications for information with professional staff.

More than 4 in 10 respondents (41.5%) said that they take on some or all of their supervisor's duties when he or she is not there.

**Policy and Procedure Manuals**

Four out of 10 (41.7%) of respondents said that they have created a policy and procedure manual for use in their department. Almost half of respondents are responsible for revising/updating policy and procedure manuals. Of those that do update manuals, more than half (52.9%) said they do this more than once a year. Almost 8 of 10 (79.2%) of respondents said that they update the manuals once a year or more.

**Patient Booking**

A question directed to those working in Patient Booking, "are you ever required by the employer to create patient information sheets, specifically for diagnostic or other testing?" was answered 48% yes and 52% no.

Almost 6 in 10 unit clerks, and about half the members in admitting, data processing and medical records are required to create patient information sheets.

**Are you ever required by the employer to create patient information sheets, specifically for diagnostic or other testing?**
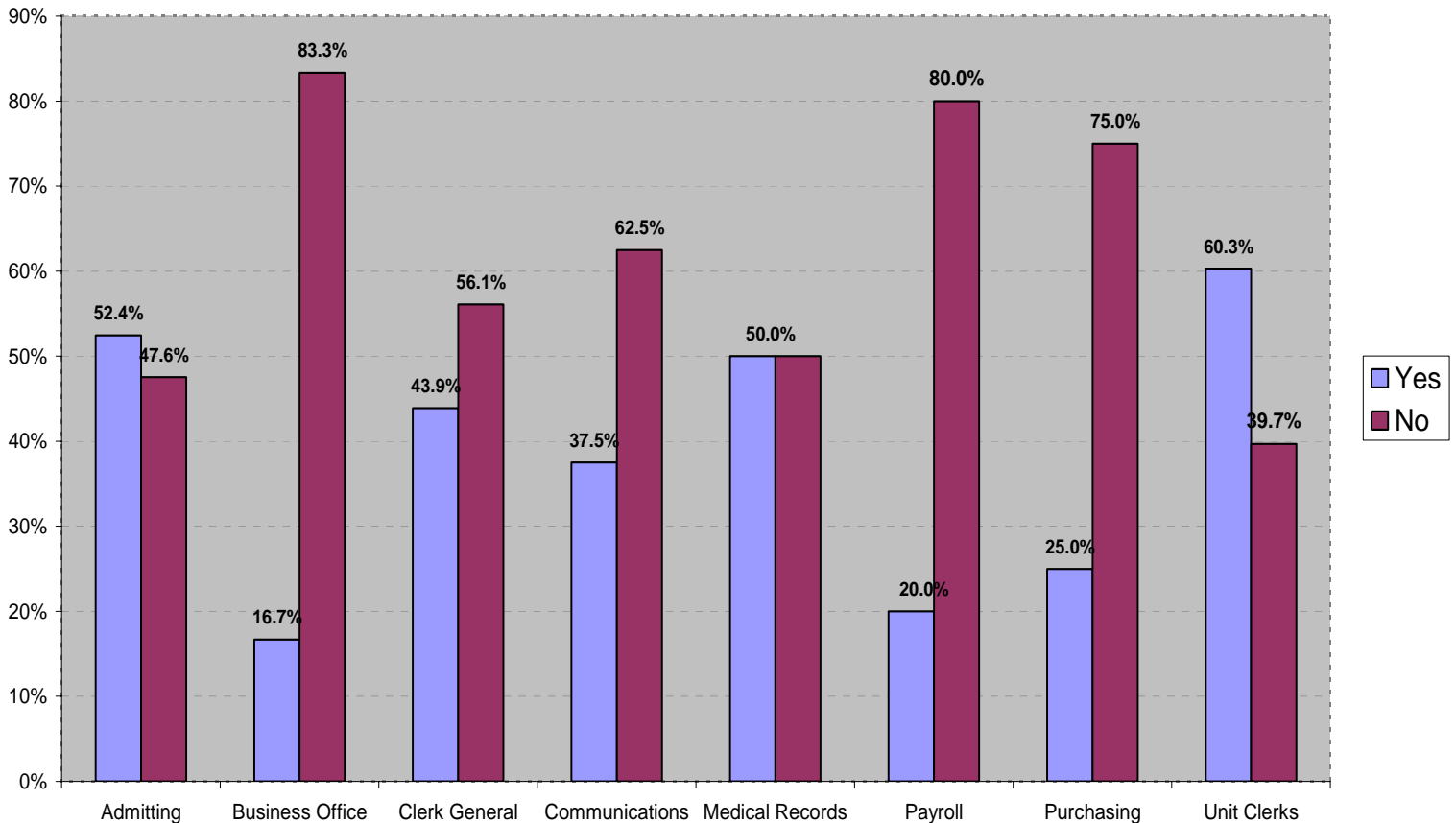


### Physicians' Schedules

One quarter (24.6%) of our members are required to create physicians' schedules (that is, which doctors are scheduled to work, or on-call schedules).

### Scheduling Employees

Three out of every ten members report that they are required to schedule and call in employees covered by more than one collective agreement.

Communications, clerk – general and nursing unit clerk are most required to do this.

One in four (26.2%) members allocate and call in employees covered by more than one collective agreement.

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## Booking Appointments

For most (51.6%) clerical members, the process for booking appointments has become more difficult over the past 6 years. Only 9.7% said it was easier, and four in ten (39.1%) respondents said it was the same. There is some variety over health authorities.

**If you book patient appointments, has this process become easier or more difficult over the last 6 yrs?**
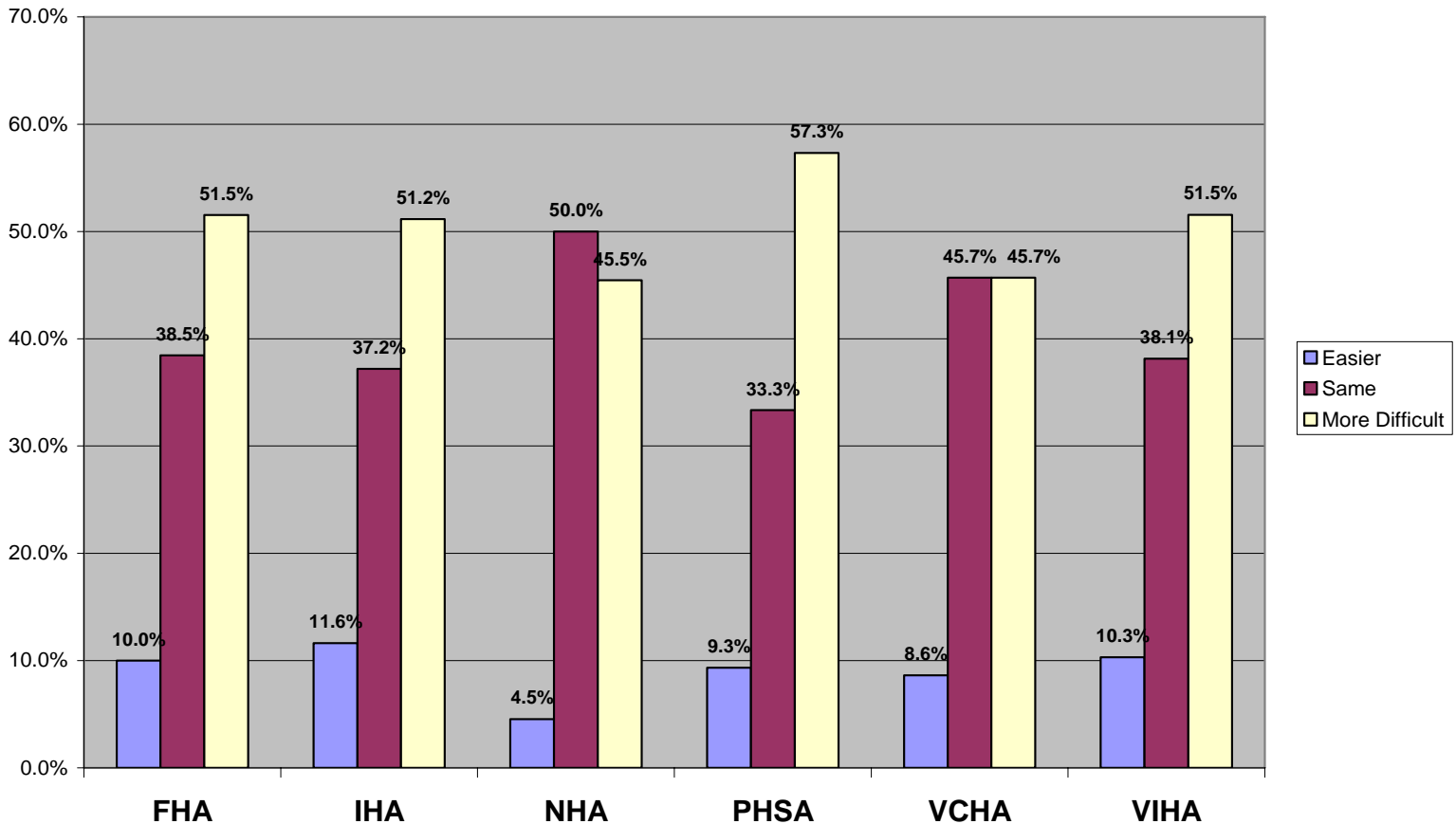


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