

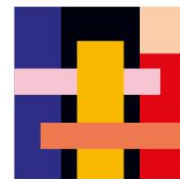


# **Polyvictimisation in the Context of Forced Marriage: The Experiences of Women in Iran**

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## **VISION**

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*The views expressed are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the UK Prevention Research Partnership or any other funder.*



# Forced Marriage: Definition

- A forced marriage (FM) is where one or both parties have or could not give their full and free consent to marriage (or to leave it). Child marriage is a form of FM, but FM can occur across all age groups.
- Over 650 million women alive in 2021 were married during their childhood (UNICEF). Prevalence of FM remains particularly high in low- and middle-income regions, including in Middle East and North Africa.
- UNICEF lists Iran as one of the top five countries in the Middle East and North Africa for child and forced marriage.
- In Iran, 17% of children will be married before the age of 18 (Child Marriage Global Database, 2024).



# Polyvictimisation in the context of forced marriage

- Polyvictimisation refers to experiencing multiple types of victimisation, often across different life stages and contexts and perpetrated by different individuals (Finkelhor, 2007).
- FM, by its very definition, involves coercion, which can manifest in various forms of pressure and abuse.
- FM is just one aspect of a broader spectrum of harms that women forced into marriage may encounter throughout their lives.
- However, existing research has often treated various forms of violence that victims of FM experience in isolation.



## **This study aims to elucidate:**

1. How often forced marriage is reported among female victims of violence in Iran based on a social media sample.
2. The link between forced marriage and other forms of violence in different settings (domestic and non-domestic).
3. The connection between forced marriage, poor mental health, and low marital satisfaction.



## The 2022 Iran Online Survey on VAWG

- A link to the survey was distributed through Instagram
- Instagram is the most widely used social media platform in Iran (used by 43% of social media users)
- Survey was designed by a researcher and DV service provider in Iran
- One Instagram account was used for data collection
- No personal identifiers were included in the survey
- All the participants provided e-informed consent
- An “Exit” button on each survey page was provided
- Data collected between Feb 2020 and Jan 2022



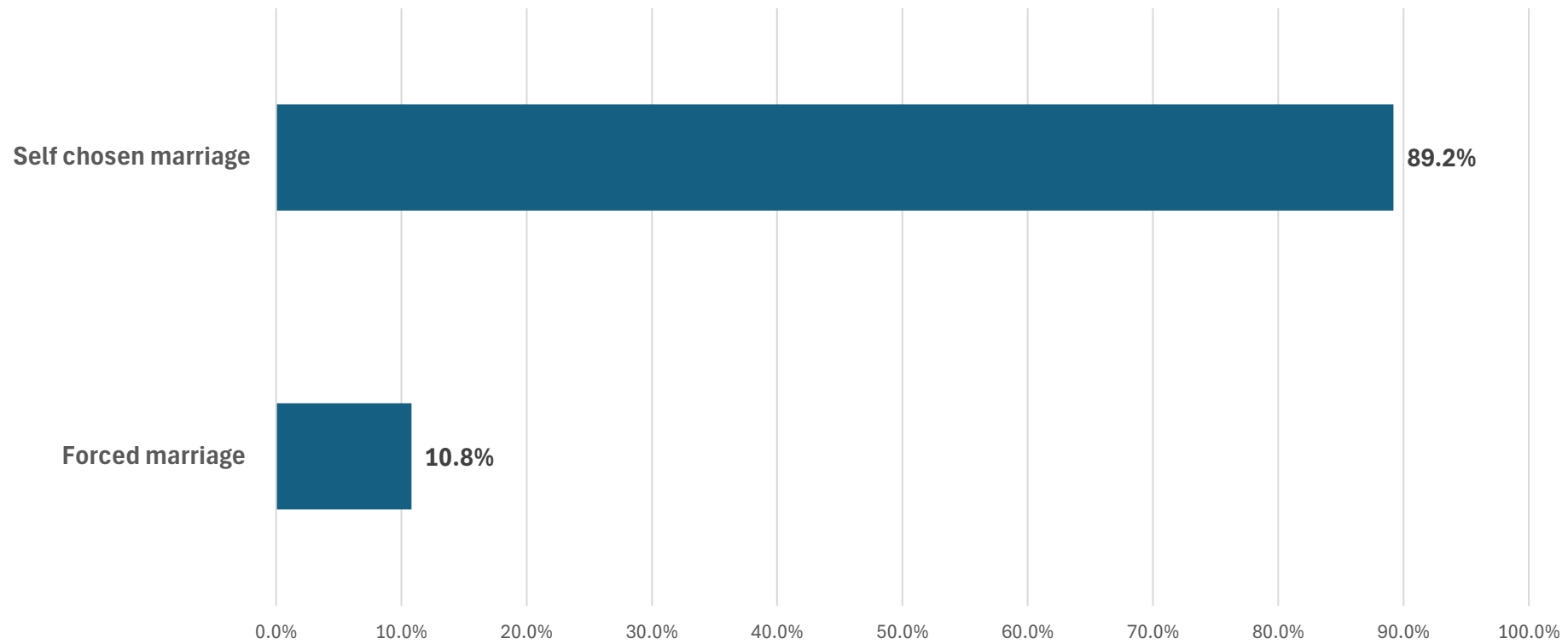
Instagram

## Sample characteristics

- Sample: 453 Iranian women aged 14-59 (Mean=28.8, SD=8.04)
- The survey sample was younger than the female general population.
- The share of tertiary-educated was higher among the sample than the general population (79.4% vs 57.0%).
- A higher proportion of the study sample were in a paid job than the female general population (27.4% vs 15.7%).
- Residing in urban areas was reported by a higher proportion of the sample (96.5%) than the general population (96.5% vs 75.8%).



# Prevalence of FM





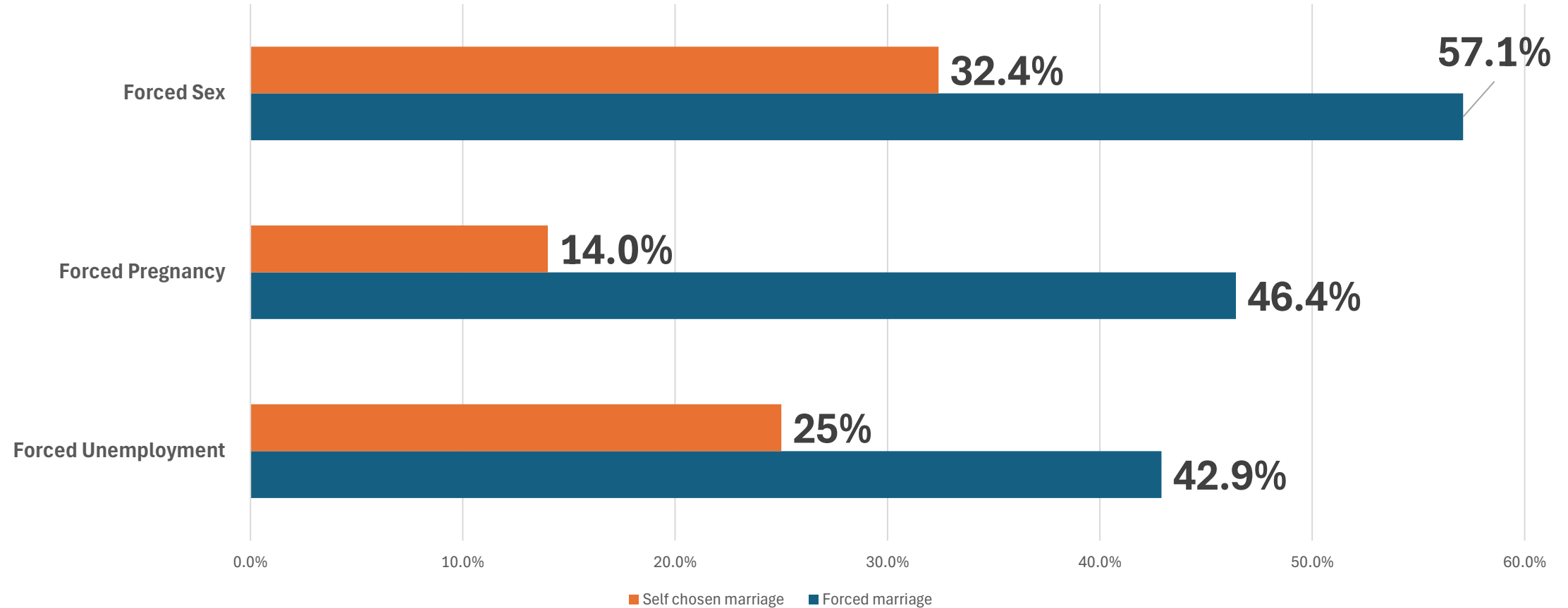
# Distribution of forced marriage across sociodemographic sub-groups

Those who experienced FM compared to those who did not were:

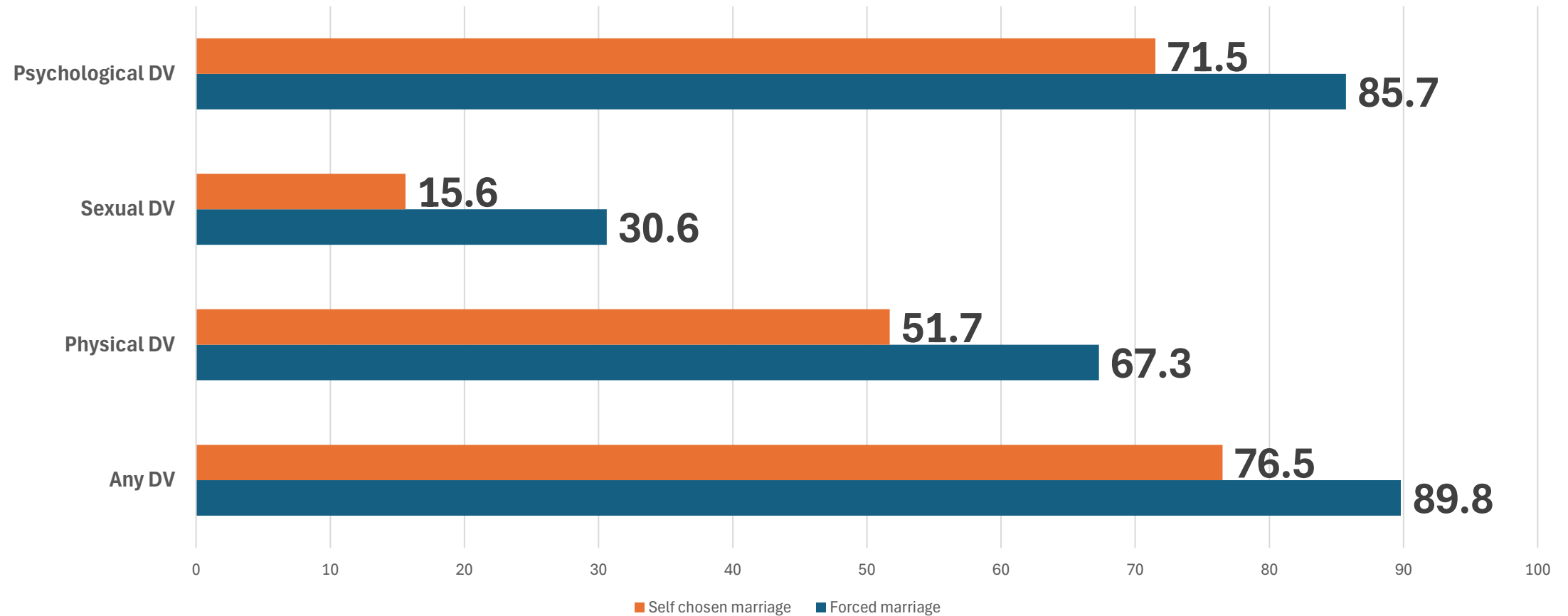
- Older
- Less likely to be in a paid job
- Less likely to have a postgraduate qualification



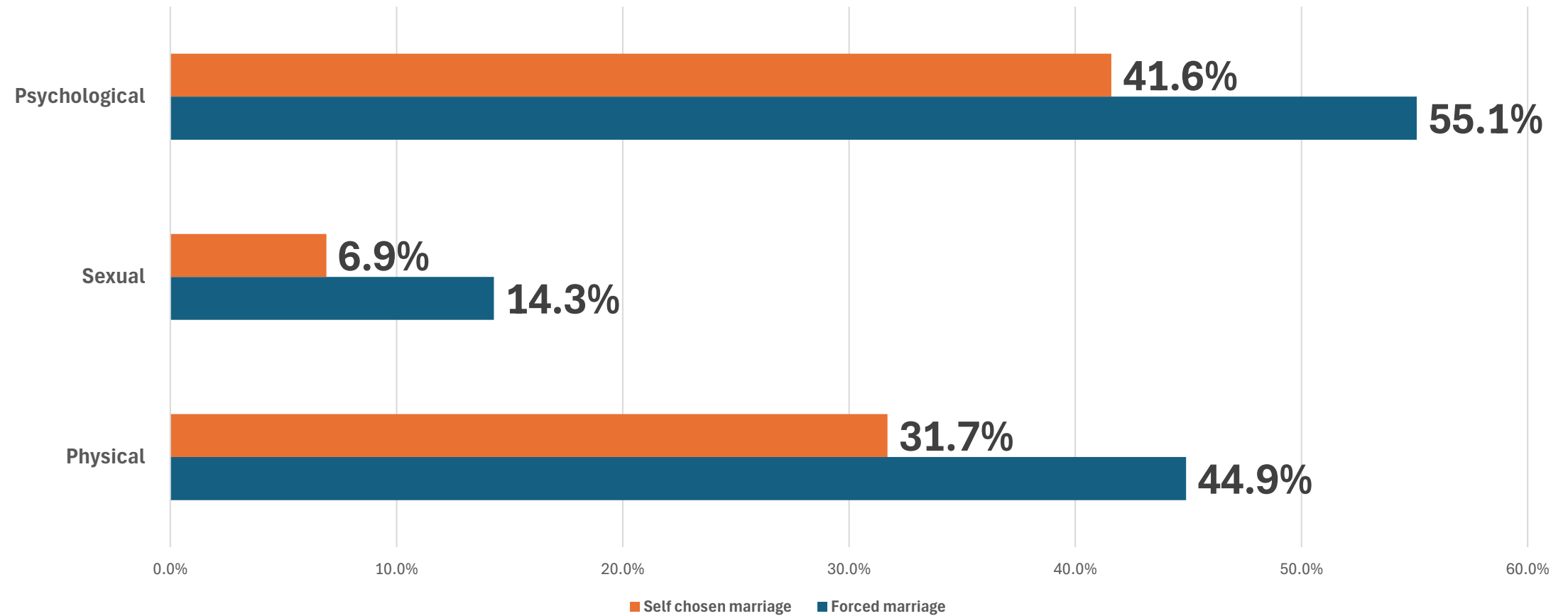
# Prevalence of Forced Unemployment, Forced Pregnancy, Forced Sex by FM



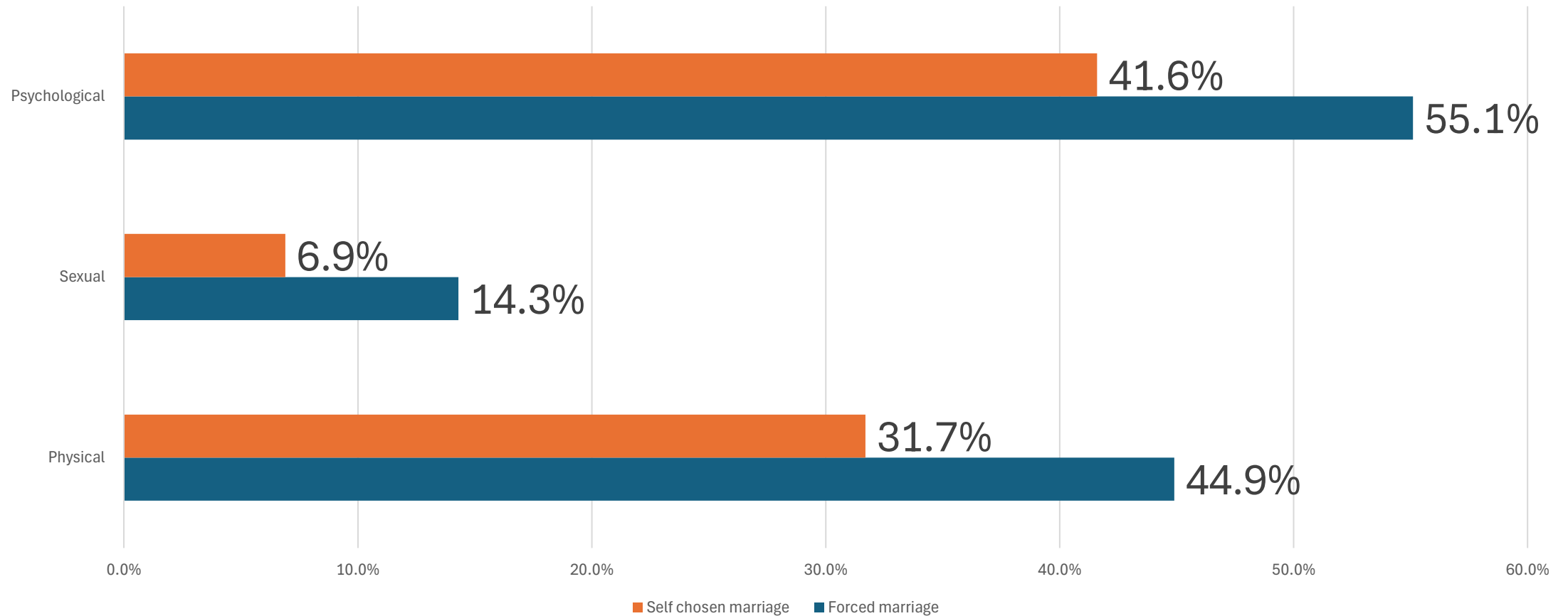
## Prevalence of DV (perpetrated by partner/father/brother) by FM



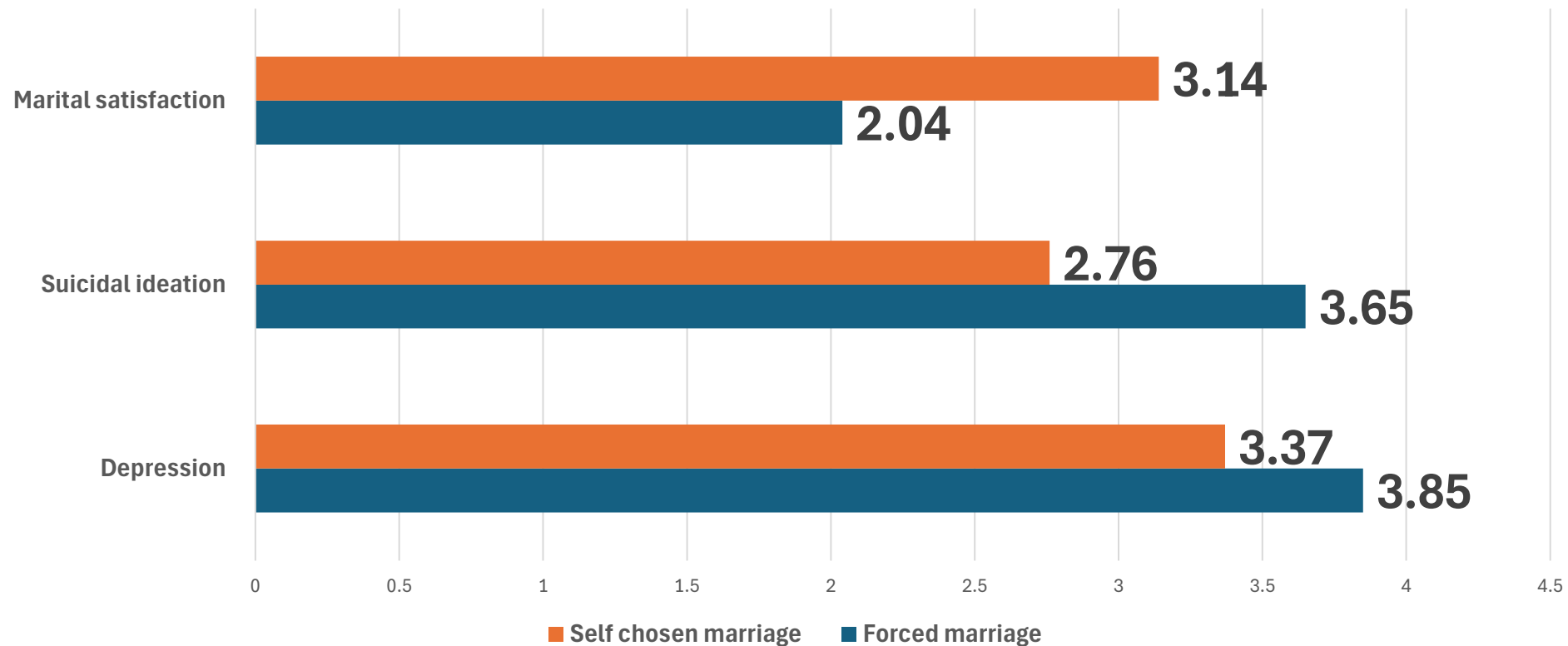
# Prevalence of IPV by FM



# Prevalence of DV (perpetrated by father/brother) by FM



# Association between FM and women's mental health and marital satisfaction



## Summary

- Women victims of FM are at higher risk of enduring multiple forms of violence in different settings (home and work) and at the hands of multiple perpetrators including their male family members (partners and brothers/fathers), and their colleagues.
- They are more likely to suffer from higher level of depression and suicidal ideation and lower level of marital satisfaction.



## Implications

- These findings indicate that the concept of polyvictimisation, as developed by Finkelhor (2011), can be applied to FM.
- Policies should recognise that victims of forced marriage often experience multiple forms of abuse. A holistic approach is essential, addressing not only forced marriage itself but also related forms of polyvictimisation.
- Taking polyvictimisation into consideration plays an important role in violence prevention and interventions (e.g., community mobilisation interventions ).
- Specialised services for victims of forced marriage should acknowledge the complexity of polyvictimisation, tailor support accordingly, and ensure that mental health support is integrated into these services.





## Questions?

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