

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: October 5, 2016
RE: Key Findings from a Survey of Women Fast Food Workers

Hart Research conducted a nationwide online survey among 1,217 women age 16 and older who work in fast food restaurants in a non-managerial position. Interviews were conducted from July 22 to 27, 2016. This memo highlights the key survey findings.

OVERVIEW: Two in five women working in fast food restaurants have been subjected to sexual harassment on the job, and many of them report serious negative health and professional consequences as a result. Women who speak out about the problem often face negative consequences from their employers, so many women try to resolve it on their own and/or feel that they have to put up with harassment to keep their jobs.

1. Forty percent (40%) of women in the fast food industry have experienced unwanted sexual behaviors on the job, including 28% who have experienced multiple forms of harassment.

- We asked fast food workers whether they have experienced 18 types of unwanted sexual behaviors that constitute workplace sexual harassment, a list compiled by experts including KC Wagner of the Worker Institute at Cornell University and other experts from the National Partnership for Women & Families and Futures Without Violence. The most common types of harassment include unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks or questions (27%), unwanted hugging or touching (26%), and unwanted questions about workers' sexual interests or information about others' sexual interests (20%), with 2% of women even reporting sexual assault or rape on the job.

Rates of Unwanted Sexual Behaviors Directed at Women Fast Food Workers

	<u>%</u>
Experienced Any Type of Sexual Harassment at Work	40
Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions	27
Hugging or touching	26
Questions about your sexual interests or unwanted information about others' sexual interests	20
Sexually suggestive looks or gestures	18
Comments or questions about your sexual orientation	15
Sexual names	13
Kissing, pinching, fondling, or groping	10

Rates of Unwanted Sexual Behaviors Directed at Women Fast Food Workers (cont.)

	%
Comments or questions about your gender or gender identity	9
Pressure to go out with someone	9
Requests for sex	8
Shown or received sexually explicit images	6
Someone rubbed their genitals against you	6
Told to flirt with customers	6
Told to alter your appearance beyond the restaurant's dress code, such as wearing tighter clothing or makeup	6
A person exposed parts of their body to you	5
Told to expose any part of your body	4
Asked to pose for or send nude photos	3
Offered more hours, a promotion, or any other benefit in exchange for a date or sexual favors	3
Sexually assaulted or raped	2

2. Sexual harassment takes a serious toll on fast food workers. Women who have been subjected to harassment on the job report frequent negative personal, health, and professional consequences as a result, yet many feel compelled to accept it out of financial necessity.

- Among women subjected to unwanted sexual behavior at their fast food job, 45% report health problems as a result, including stress (34%), anxiety about coming to work (21%), depression (17%), sleep disruption (11%), and loss of appetite (9%). Women who experience multiple types of harassment are much more likely to suffer health consequences.

Negative Impacts on Health Resulting from Sexual Harassment at Work

	%
Experienced Any Type of Health Problem	45
General stress level increased	34
Afraid or worried about coming to work	21
More sad or depressed	17
Less productive at work	17
Sleep patterns changed	11
Appetite changed	9
Enjoyed free time less	6

- Victims of sexual harassment also face significant disruptions in their job and career. Fifteen percent (15%) changed their schedule as a result of unwanted sexual behavior, 10% cut back on the number of hours they worked, and 8% quit their jobs altogether. African-American workers (33%) and Latinas (32%) are more likely to face these types of work disruptions than are white women (25%).

- Despite these significant consequences, 42% of women who experience unwanted sexual behavior feel that they need to accept it because they cannot afford to lose their job. Latinas (47%) are more likely than Anglo women (41%) to feel stuck and forced to accept the harassment.

3. Harassment tends to be underreported through official channels, with many women left trying to address the situation on their own. A likely reason for underreporting is that many women experience negative professional consequences when they talk about the unwanted behaviors.

- Forty percent (40%) of women who have been subjected to sexual harassment at their fast food job report the behavior to their employer. Thirty-three (33%) percent reported the behavior to a superior within their own store, while 5% reported it to corporate headquarters or HR, and 2% called their company's sexual harassment hotline.
- Many workers feel that they are on their own when it comes to dealing with unwanted sexual behavior at work, and they often resort to making personal sacrifices to avoid harassers, such as reducing their hours. Although two-thirds (66%) of women fast food workers take some sort of action to address the unwanted sexual behavior, most of these responses are informal. The most common response is to try to avoid the harasser (45%). Thirty-eight percent (38%) asked the harassers to stop, and 34% told coworkers.
- One in five (20%) women who suffered harassment report that their employer took some kind of negative action as a result of their raising the issue, including 11% who had their hours cut, 8% who were changed to a less desirable schedule, 5% who were given additional or undesirable duties, 3% who were denied a raise or a promotion, 2% who were transferred, and 2% who were fired.
- Women of color are especially likely to experience negative consequences in response to talking to their employer about unwanted sexual attention. Thirty-four percent (34%) of African-American women and 26% of Latinas report at least one negative action, compared with 17% of white women.

4. More than one in five (22%) women has been subject to three or more types of harassing behaviors at their fast food jobs. Workers who face this type of pervasive harassment are especially likely to suffer negative health and professional consequences, and to feel that they have no choice but to put up with it.

- Fully 64% of women who faced three or more types of unwanted sexual behavior experienced negative health outcomes. This includes 49% who say their stress level increased, and 31% who are afraid of coming to work.
- Women who face multiple types of harassment are also more likely to experience negative professional consequences or responses from their companies. Sixteen percent (16%) had their hours cut and 13% were given a less desirable schedule as a result of speaking out. Twenty-three percent (23%) changed their own schedule in response to the harassment, 15%

reduced their hours, 14% altered their appearance, and 12% quit their job altogether.

- A large majority (60%) of women who experienced three or more types of unwanted behaviors say they have to put up with it because they cannot afford to quit their job, meaning that, overall, one in eight women in fast food faces extensive sexual harassment at work but feels trapped and unable to leave.