

## 5.3 RESPONSE FROM DIOCESES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The response to the allegations of child sexual abuse by the bishops, major superiors and other priests who were presented with the problem was first shaped by the timing of the allegation. When all allegations are considered, only one in four allegations was made within ten years of the incident that gave rise to the allegation. Half of all allegations were made between ten and thirty years after the incident and the remaining 25% were reported more than 30 years after the incident.

Study data provided the researchers with two ways to understand the responses to allegations of child sexual abuse undertaken by dioceses and religious communities—responses to the formal survey questions and the notes and explanations that were added by those who completed the incident-level Victim Surveys. The Victim Survey questions addressed investigations, the results of those investigations and the actions prompted by the results. The handwritten notes on both Cleric and Victim Surveys were recorded and coded into a credibility scale to indicate whether the Church files on an individual priest reflected a conclusion that the allegation about his actions was credible or not credible.

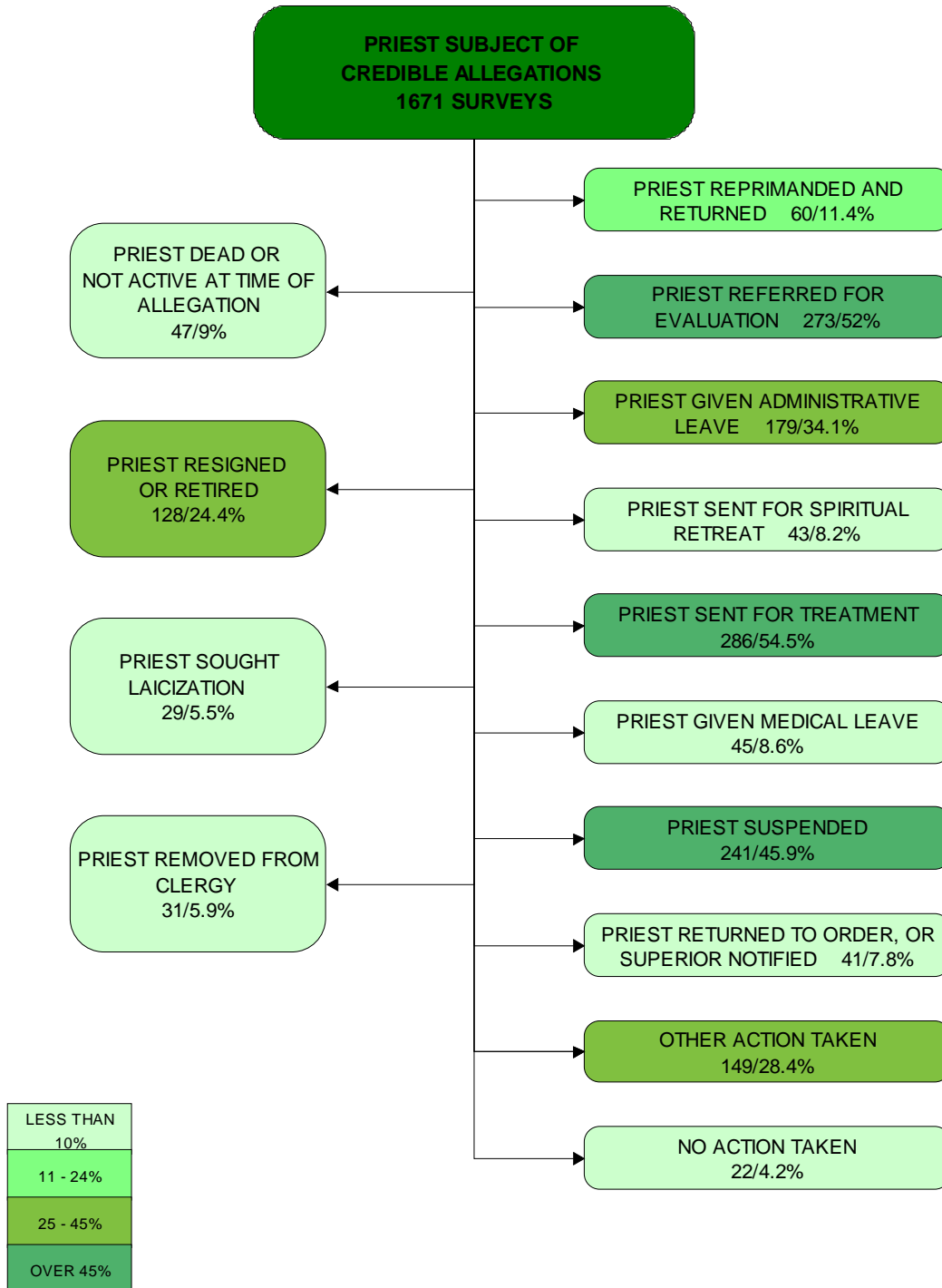
The actions and responses of the Church to allegations are various and multiple: an individual priest may have been counseled, evaluated, provided with treatment, suspended, or limited in his priestly capacity. These actions are present whether the allegation was found to be or not to be credible or substantiated, but with different distributions. The survey data results for actions taken as a result of the allegations of child sexual abuse include the following:

- The Diocesan and Order Profiles reported that 298 priests and deacons had been completely exonerated. No surveys were completed for priests who were exonerated, and these individuals are not included in the study statistics.
- The handwritten annotations on the surveys indicated that for 1,671 priests the allegations were thought to be credible, and not credible for 345 priests.
- 9,281 Victim Surveys had information about an investigation. In 6,696 cases, or 72%, an investigation of the allegation was carried out.
- Of the alleged incidents investigated by the dioceses and religious communities, a definitive result of the investigation was reported for 5,681 cases. Of these cases, 4,570, or 80%, were substantiated; 1,028, or 18%, were unsubstantiated; 83, or 1.5%, were found to be false. Priests were reported to deny the allegations in 56 cases. Of the investigations that did not produce a definitive result, in many cases the priest was deceased at the time of the allegation or the investigation was ongoing at the time the survey was submitted to the study.
- When all Cleric Surveys are considered, 27% of all priests subject to an allegation had their ministry restricted by a superior.

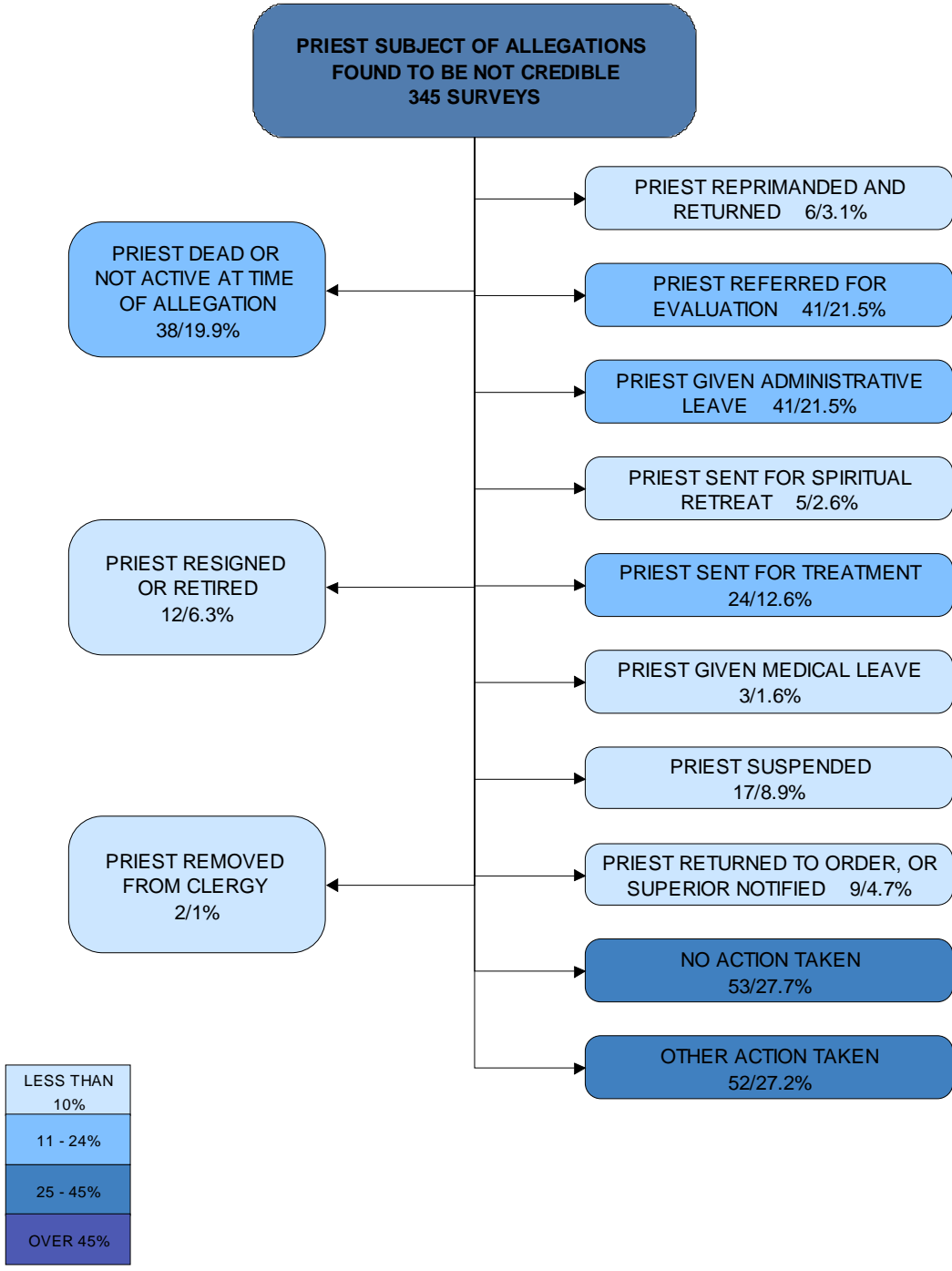
The figures that follow show the distribution of responses and actions by the Church to allegations of abuse. The percentages apply to the number of surveys within each subgroup that had a response.

## ACTIONS OF DIOCESES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES PRIESTS WITH CREDIBLE ALLEGATIONS

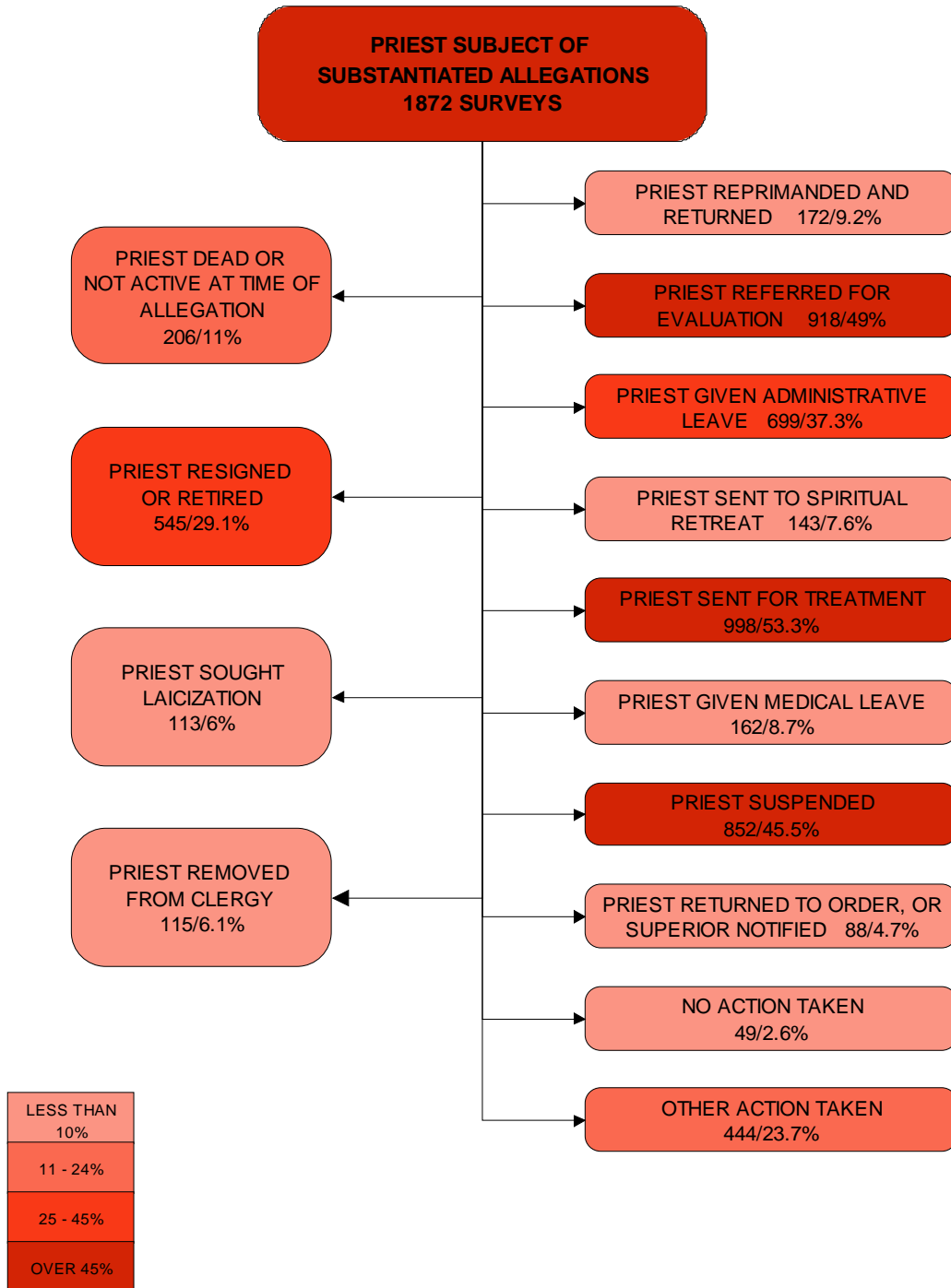
Of the 1,671 surveys with written support for the credibility of the allegation,  
notes on 525 indicated strong support.  
The percentages in this figure apply to the strongly-supported cases.



**ACTIONS OF DIOCESES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES  
PRIESTS WITH STRONGLY NON-CREDIBLE ACCUSATIONS  
N = 215**



## ACTIONS OF DIOCESES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES PRIESTS WITH SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS



## ACTIONS OF DIOCESES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES PRIESTS WITH UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

