

Cancer Awareness Measure September 2021: Key findings

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Reference: Cancer Research UK's Cancer Awareness Measure: Key Findings
(September 2021), unpublished data



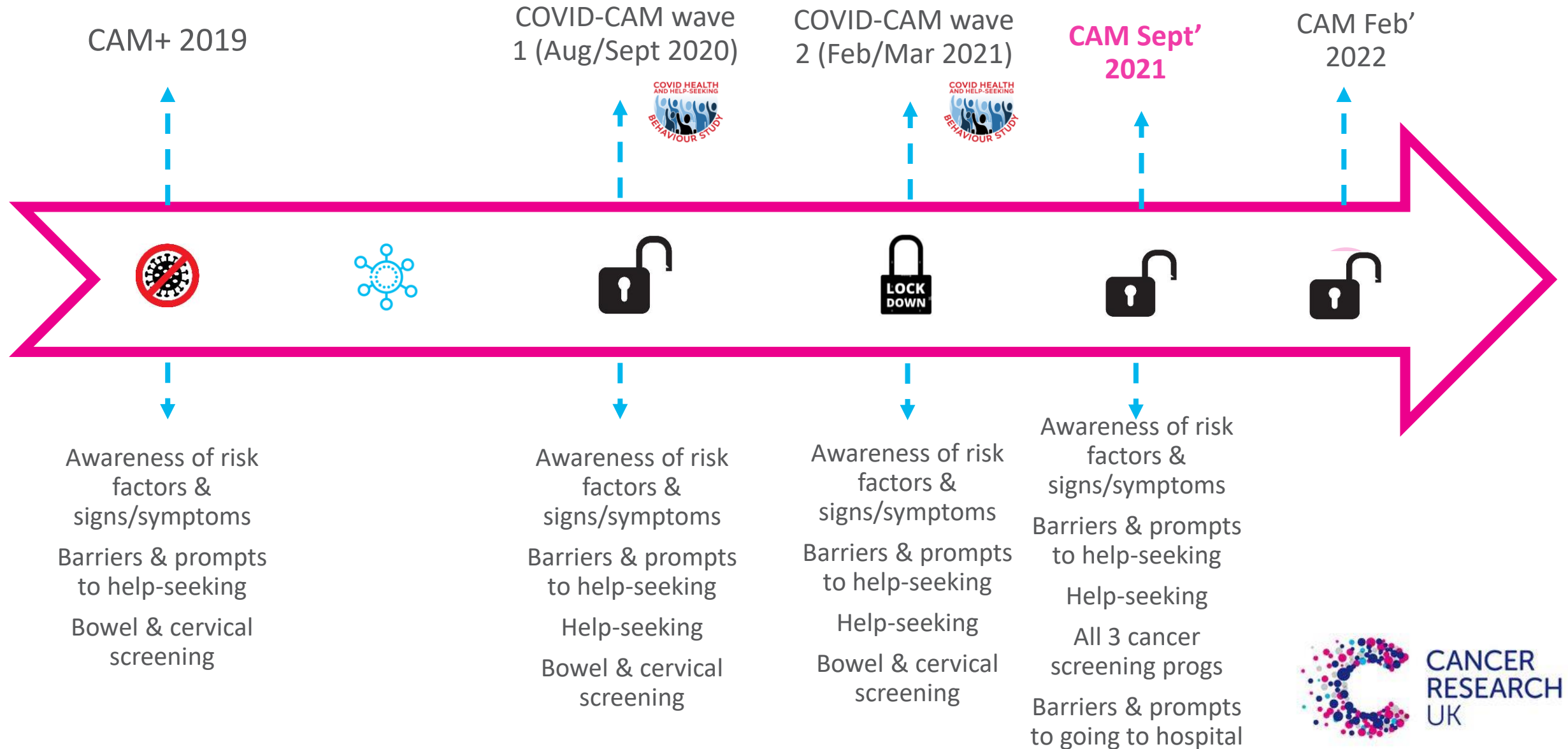
Together we will beat cancer

Using these findings

- If you use these findings, please use the following reference:

Cancer Research UK's Cancer Awareness Measure: Key Findings (September 2021), unpublished data

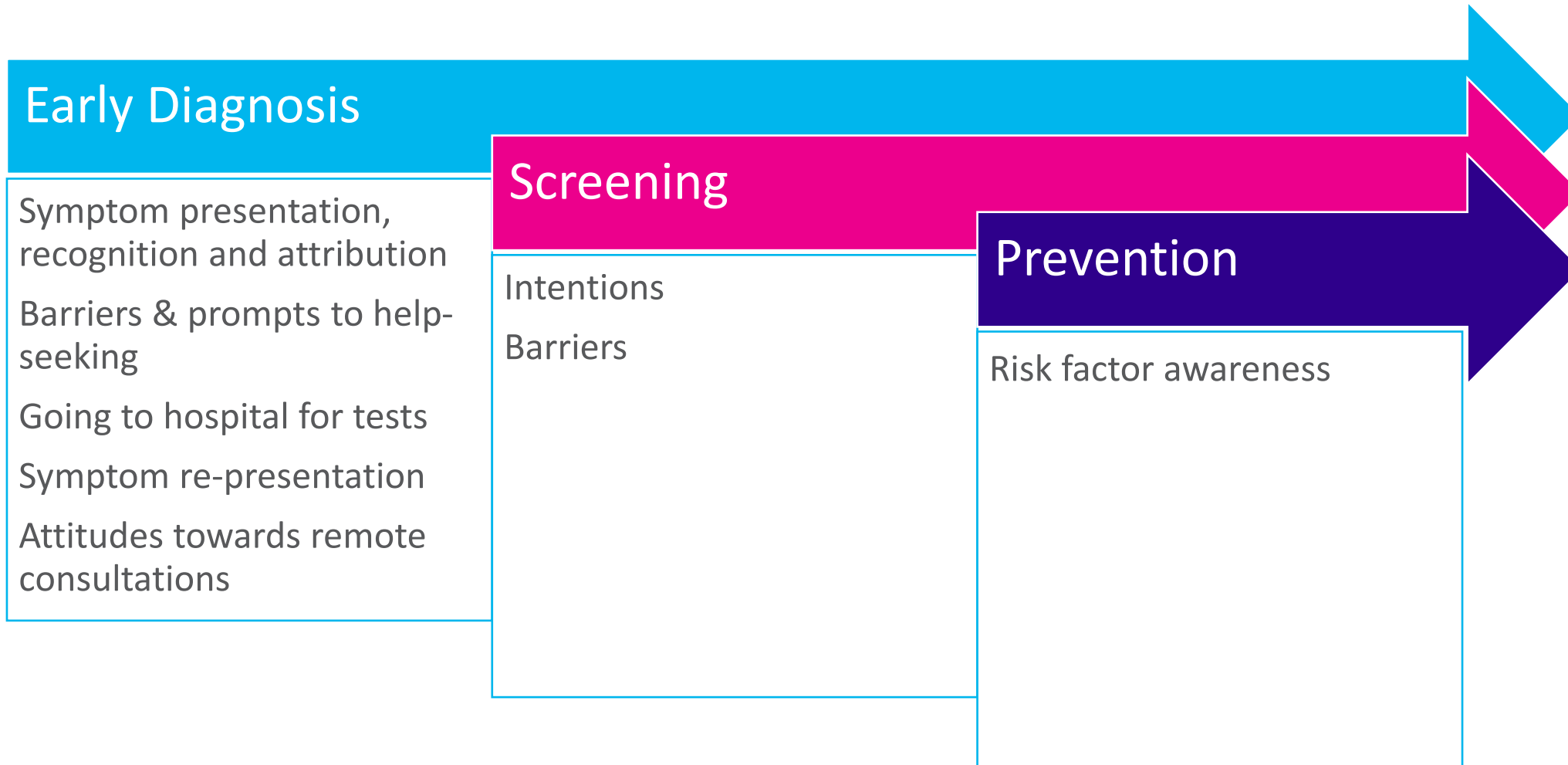
CAM recent history



Methods

- UK-wide survey of 2,446 adults via YouGov's online panel
- Data collected 8th-30th September
- Boosts to ensure ≥ 100 per England region, UK nation and all ethnic minority groups (Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicity)
- Data weighted at nation and UK level (age, gender, social grade, region and ethnicity)

Content



Early Diagnosis

Symptom presentation

Symptoms assessed

Non-specific

A persistent change in bowel habits

A persistent change in bladder habits

Tired all the time

Persistent unexplained pain

Unexplained weight loss

Red flag

A change in the appearance of a mole

An unexplained lump or swelling

Unexplained bleeding

A persistent difficulty swallowing

A sore that does not heal

Unexplained weight loss

Coughing up blood

Lung-specific

Shortness of breath

Persistent hoarseness

A persistent cough

A change in an existing cough

Coughing up blood

Symptom presentation

	Any	Lung-specific
Contacted GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 41%
Did not contact GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 51%
	Red flag	Non-specific
Contacted GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 42%
Did not contact GP within 6 months	• 46%	• 53%

Q15. You said that you have experienced ... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. How long after you first noticed the symptom did you contact the GP about it? If you are unsure, please give your best guess. Please select one answer. Any cancer symptom (n=1159), Any non-specific cancer symptom (n=945), Any red-flag cancer symptom (n=443), Any lung specific cancer symptom (n=423).

Symptom presentation

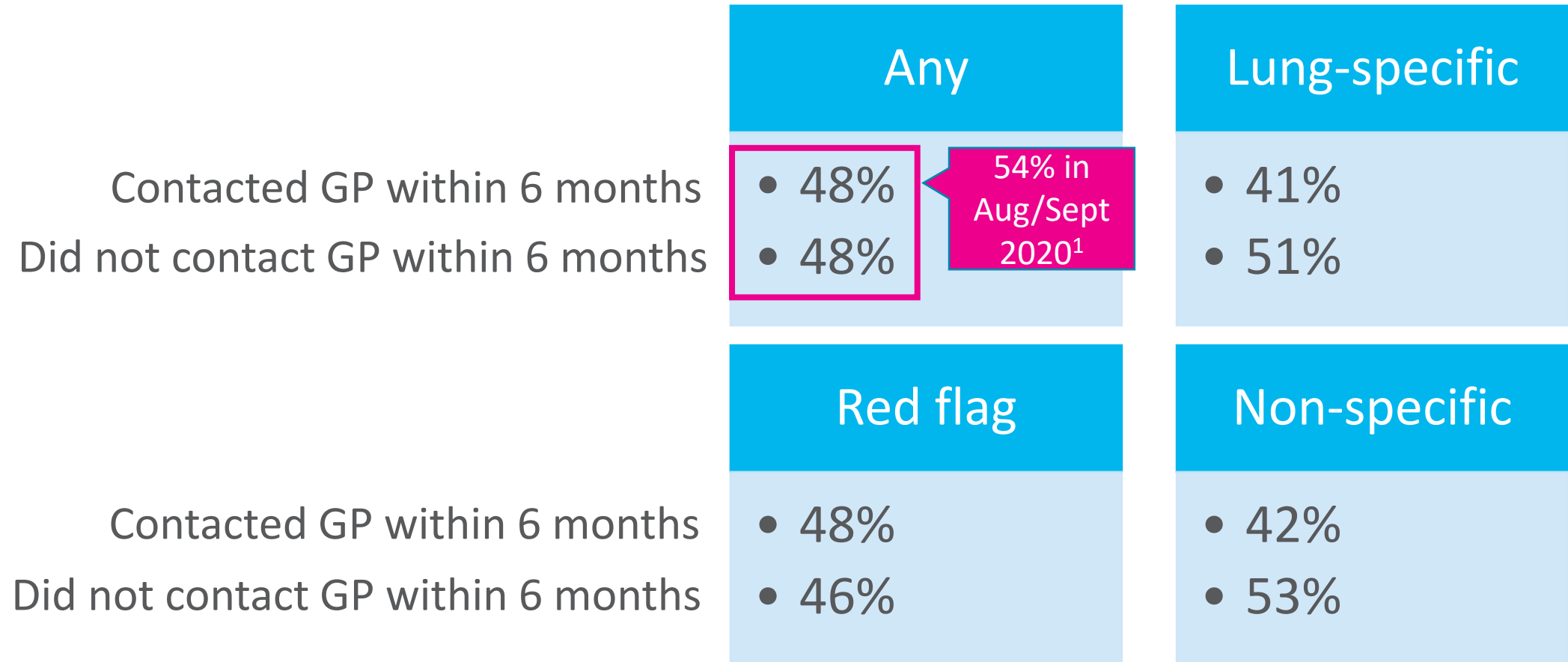
48% contacted their GP within 6 months of noticing a potential cancer symptom, whereas 48% did not

	Any	Lung-specific
Contacted GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 41%
Did not contact GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 51%
	Red flag	Non-specific
Contacted GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 42%
Did not contact GP within 6 months	• 46%	• 53%

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Symptom presentation

Help-seeking may have gone down since Aug/Sept 2020



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Q15. You said that you have experienced ... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. How long after you first noticed the symptom did you contact the GP about it? If you are unsure, please give your best guess. Please select one answer. Any cancer symptom (n=1159), Any non-specific cancer symptom (n=945), Any red-flag cancer symptom (n=443), Any lung specific cancer symptom (n=423). ¹Quinn-Scoggins et al., 2021 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34531224/>

Symptom presentation

Help-seeking was lower for lung-specific and non-specific symptoms

	Any	Lung-specific
Contacted GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 41%
Did not contact GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 51%
	Red flag	Non-specific
Contacted GP within 6 months	• 48%	• 42%
Did not contact GP within 6 months	• 46%	• 53%



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UK

Q15. You said that you have experienced ... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. How long after you first noticed the symptom did you contact the GP about it? If you are unsure, please give your best guess. Please select one answer. Any cancer symptom (n=1159), Any non-specific cancer symptom (n=945), Any red-flag cancer symptom (n=443), Any lung specific cancer symptom (n=423).

Symptom presentation

Help-seeking was highest for red flag symptoms, although 46% still did not contact their GP

Contacted GP within 6 months Did not contact GP within 6 months	Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 48%• 48%	Lung-specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 41%• 51%
	Red flag	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 48%• 46%	Non-specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 42%• 53%

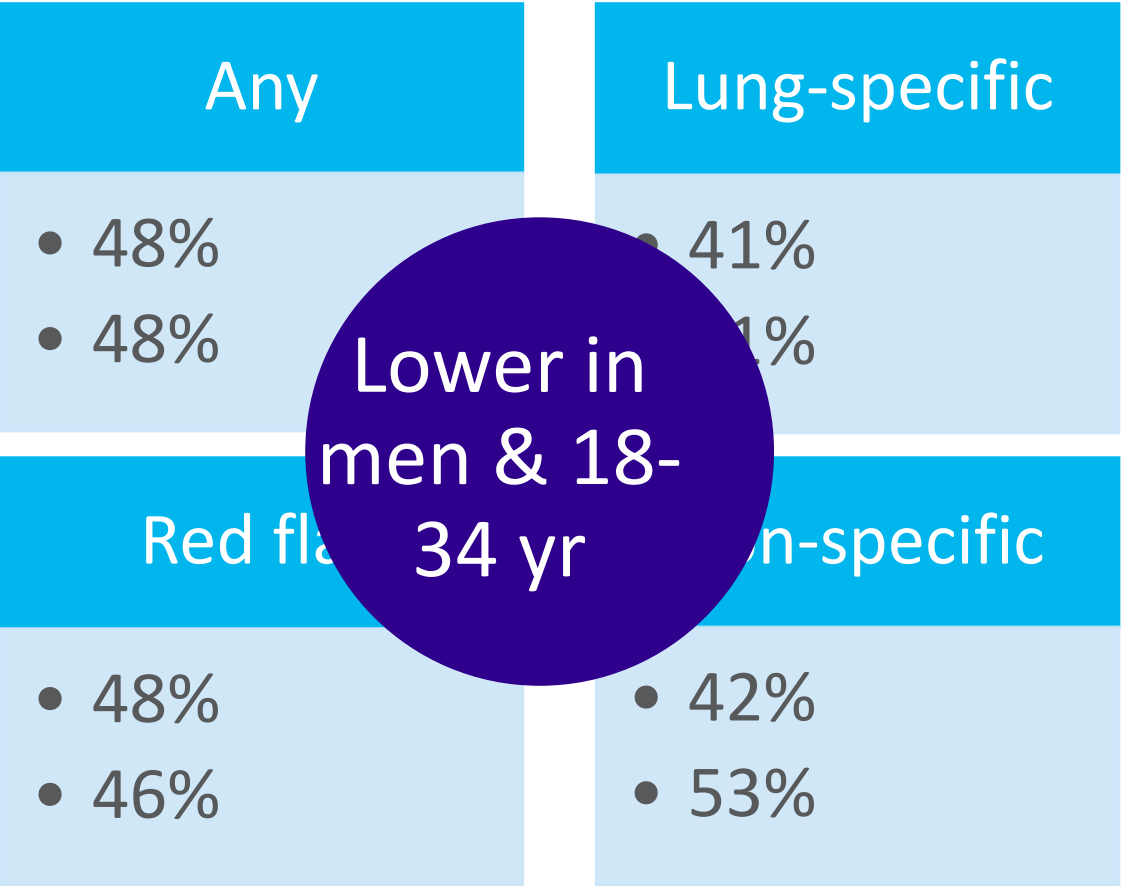
Q15. You said that you have experienced ... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. How long after you first noticed the symptom did you contact the GP about it? If you are unsure, please give your best guess. Please select one answer. Any cancer symptom (n=1159), Any non-specific cancer symptom (n=945), Any red-flag cancer symptom (n=443), Any lung specific cancer symptom (n=423).

Symptom presentation

Help-seeking was lower in men and those ages 18-34 years old

Contacted GP within 6 months
Did not contact GP within 6 months

Contacted GP within 6 months
Did not contact GP within 6 months



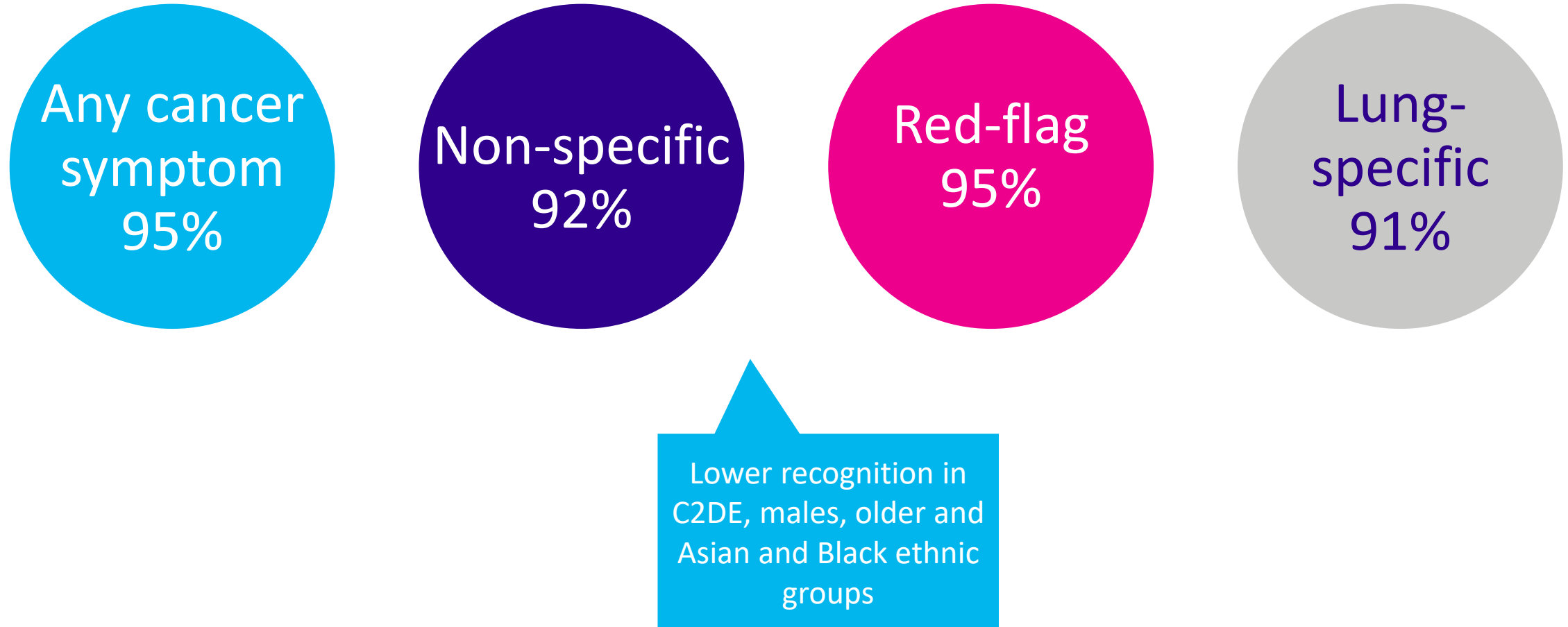
Symptom recognition

Symptom recognition

Overall symptom recognition was high, but was lower for lung-specific and non-specific symptoms

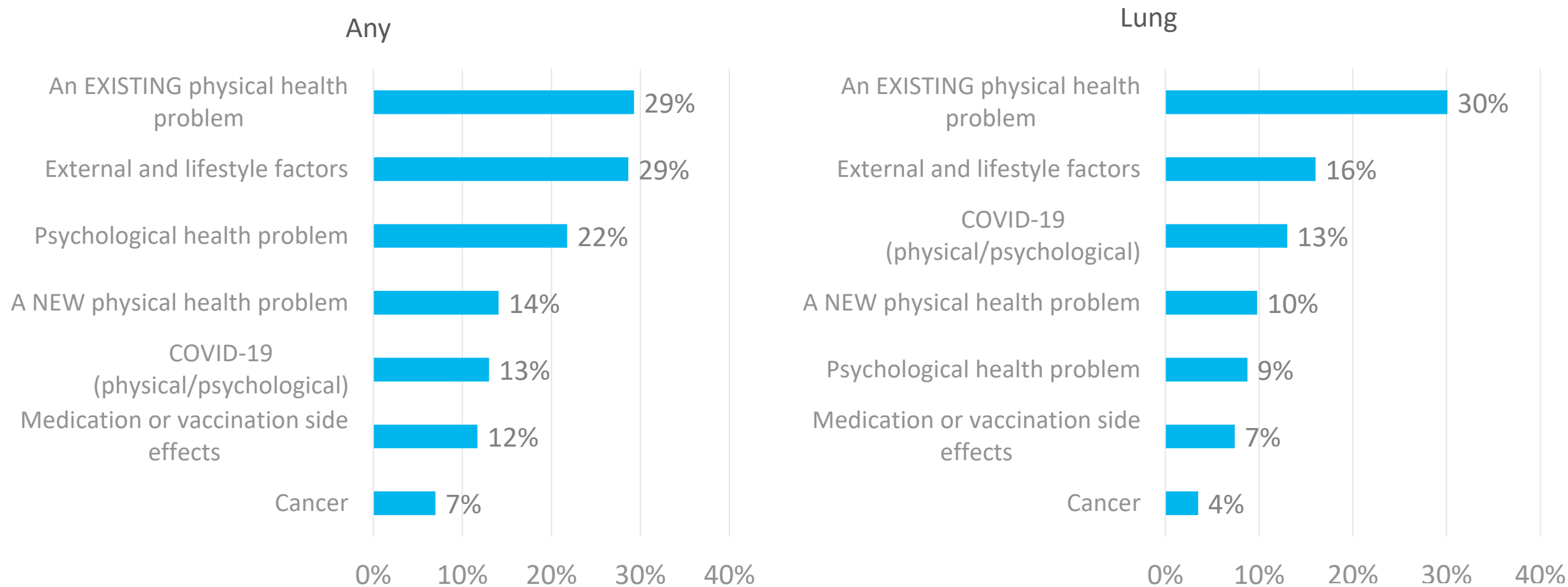


Symptom recognition



Symptom attribution

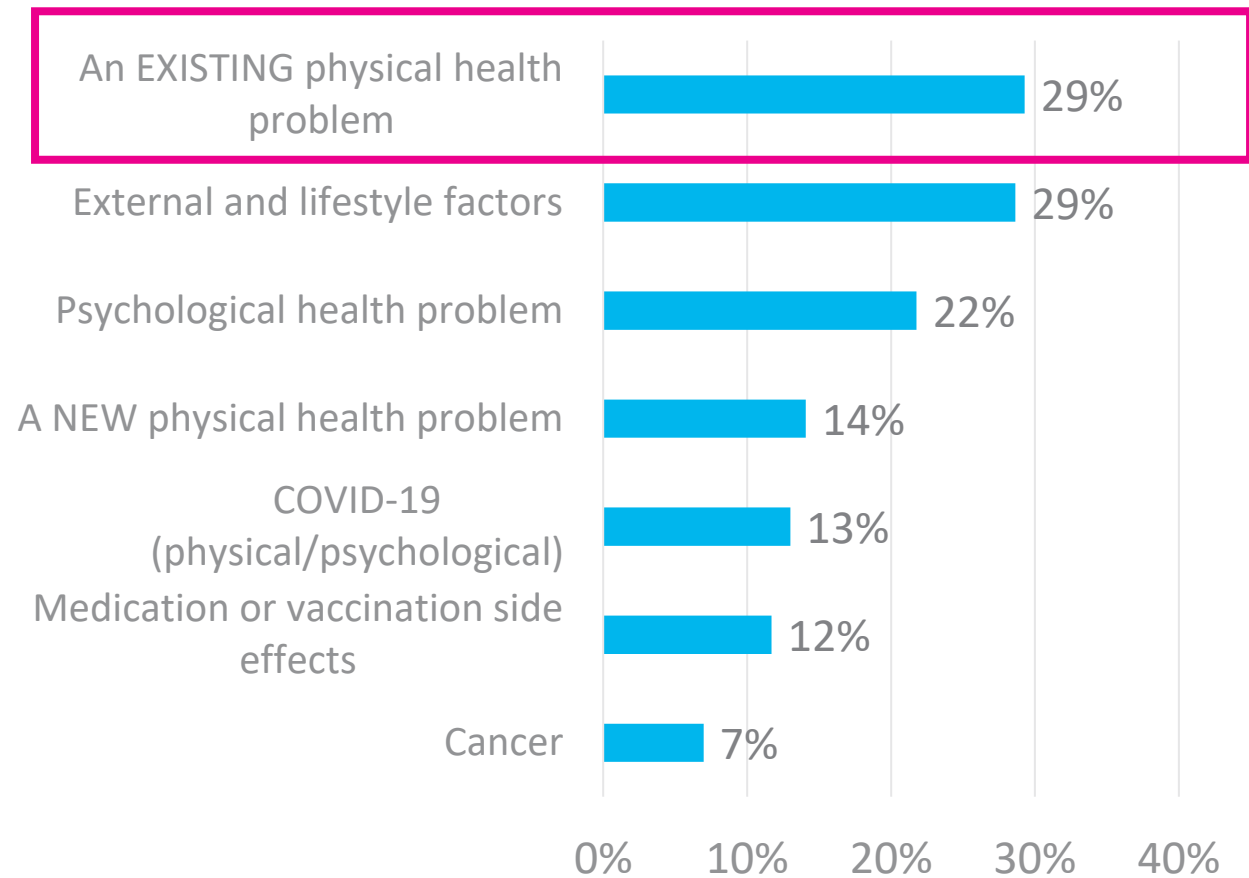
Symptom attribution



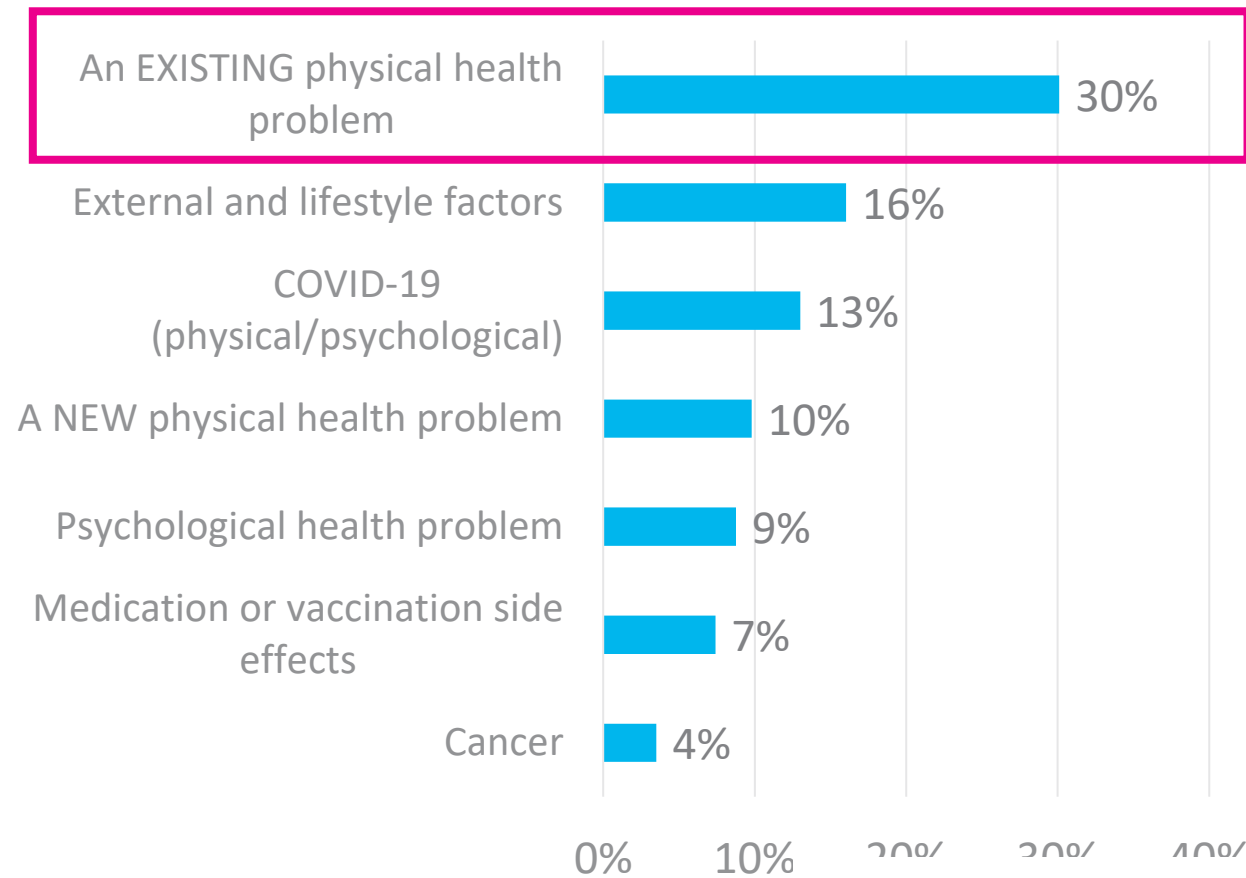
Symptom attribution

Almost a third thought their potential cancer symptom was caused by an existing physical health problem.

Any



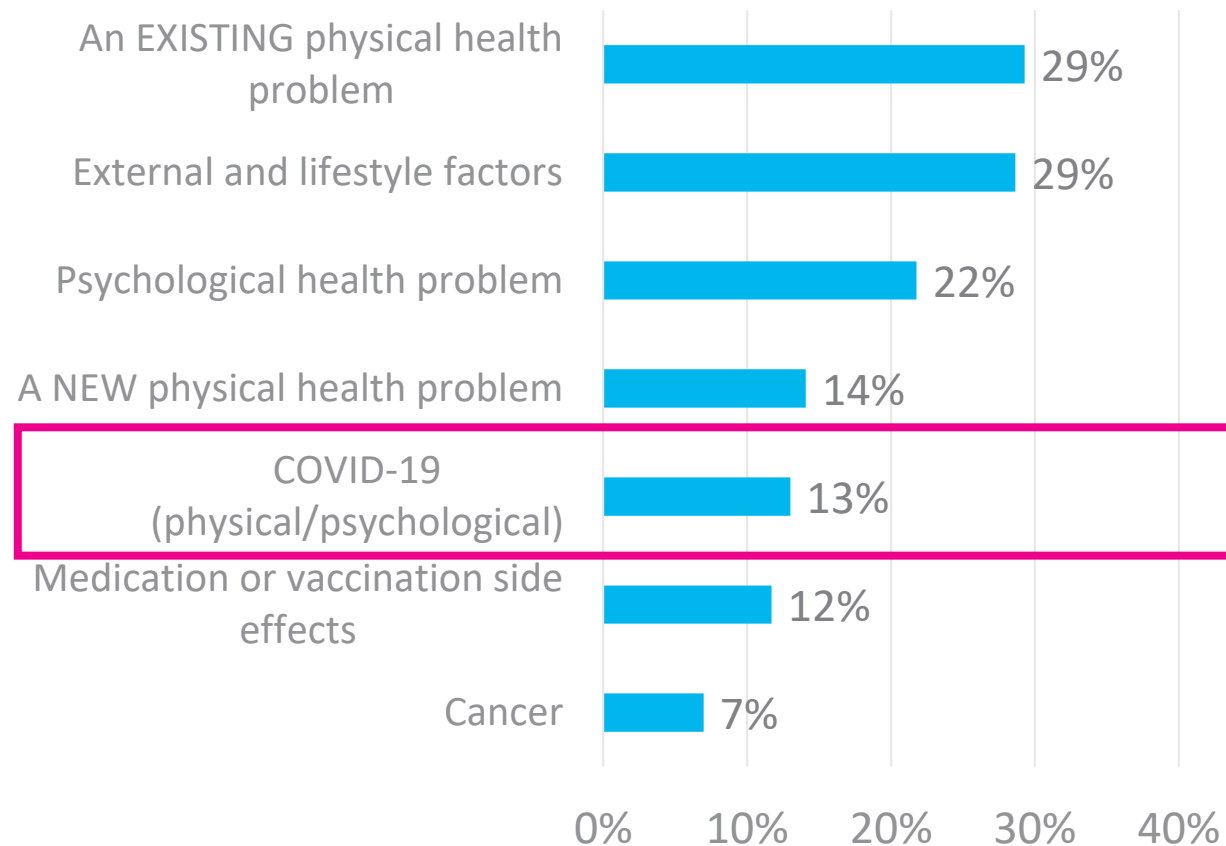
Lung



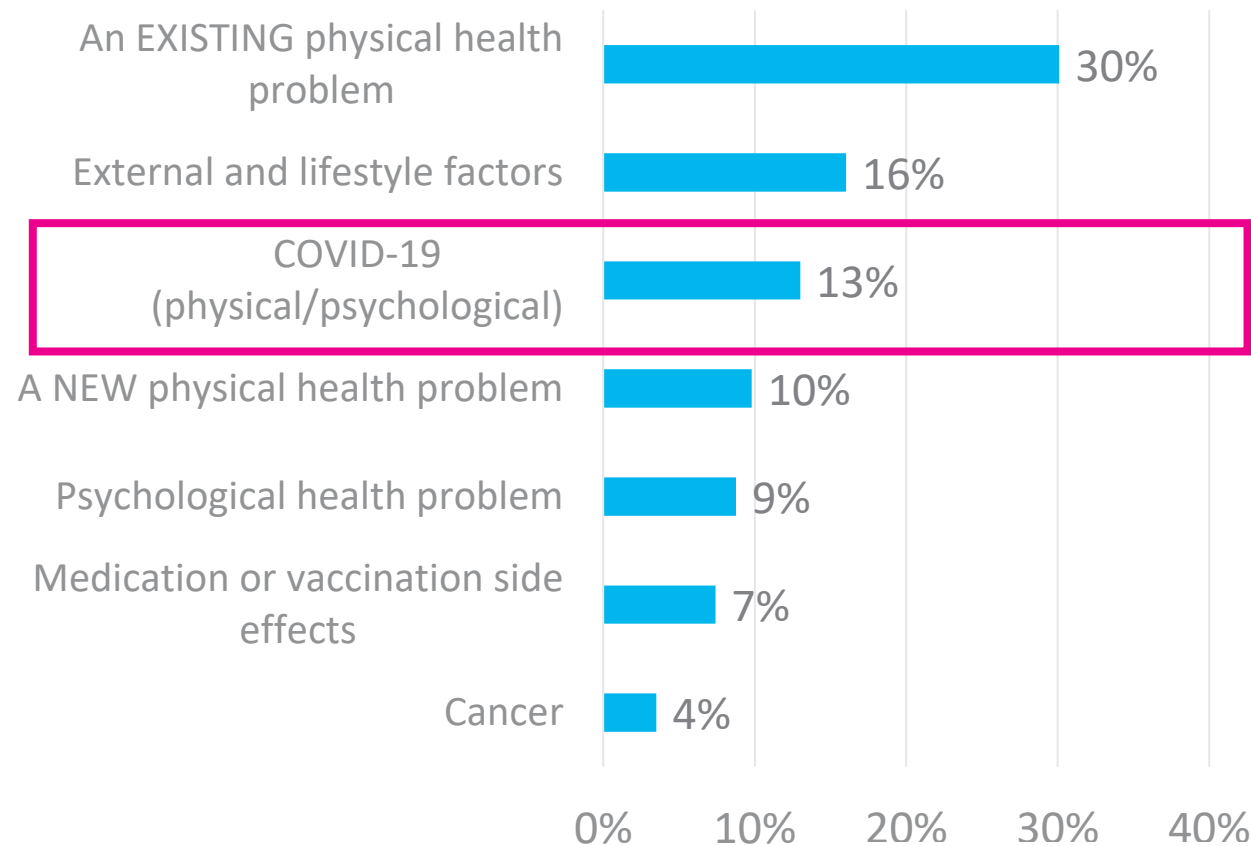
Symptom attribution

13% thought their potential cancer symptom was caused by COVID-19

Any



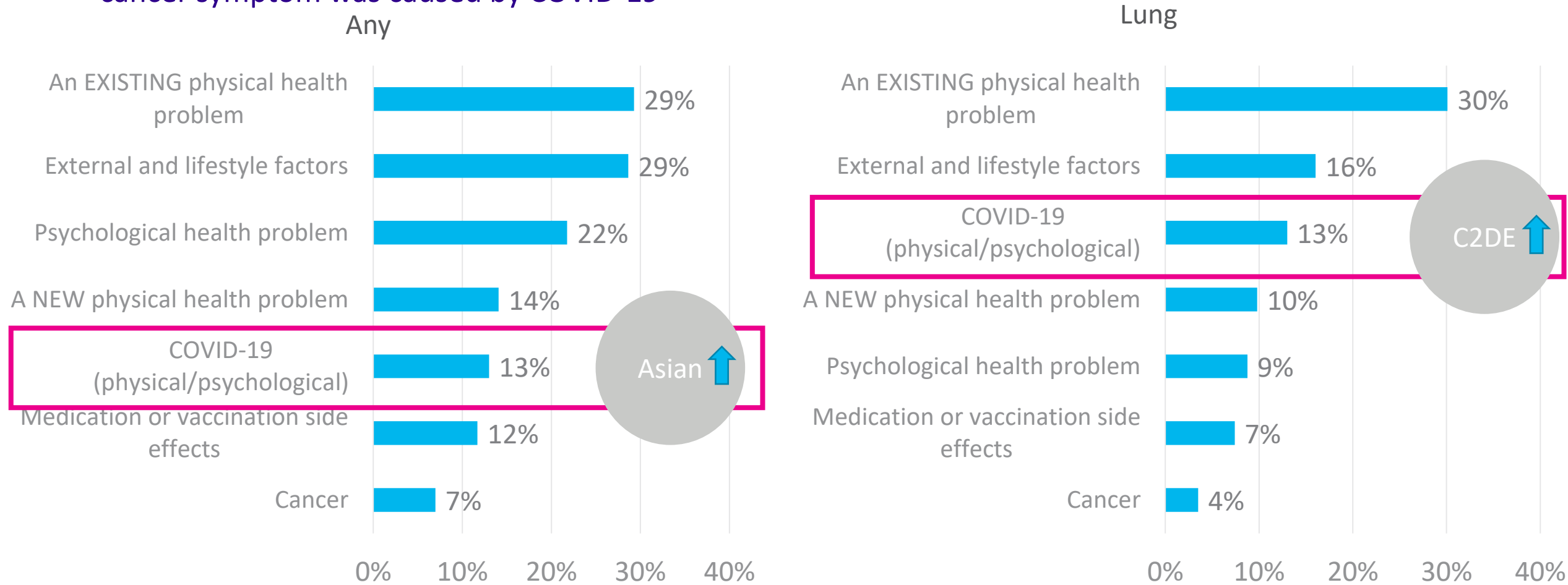
Lung



Q14. You said that you have experienced... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. What do you think caused this symptom? Please select all that apply. (Any=1159, Lung=423)

Symptom attribution

People from Asian ethnic groups were more likely to think that their potential cancer symptom was caused by COVID-19. C2DE social grade groups were more likely to think that their potential lung cancer symptom was caused by COVID-19

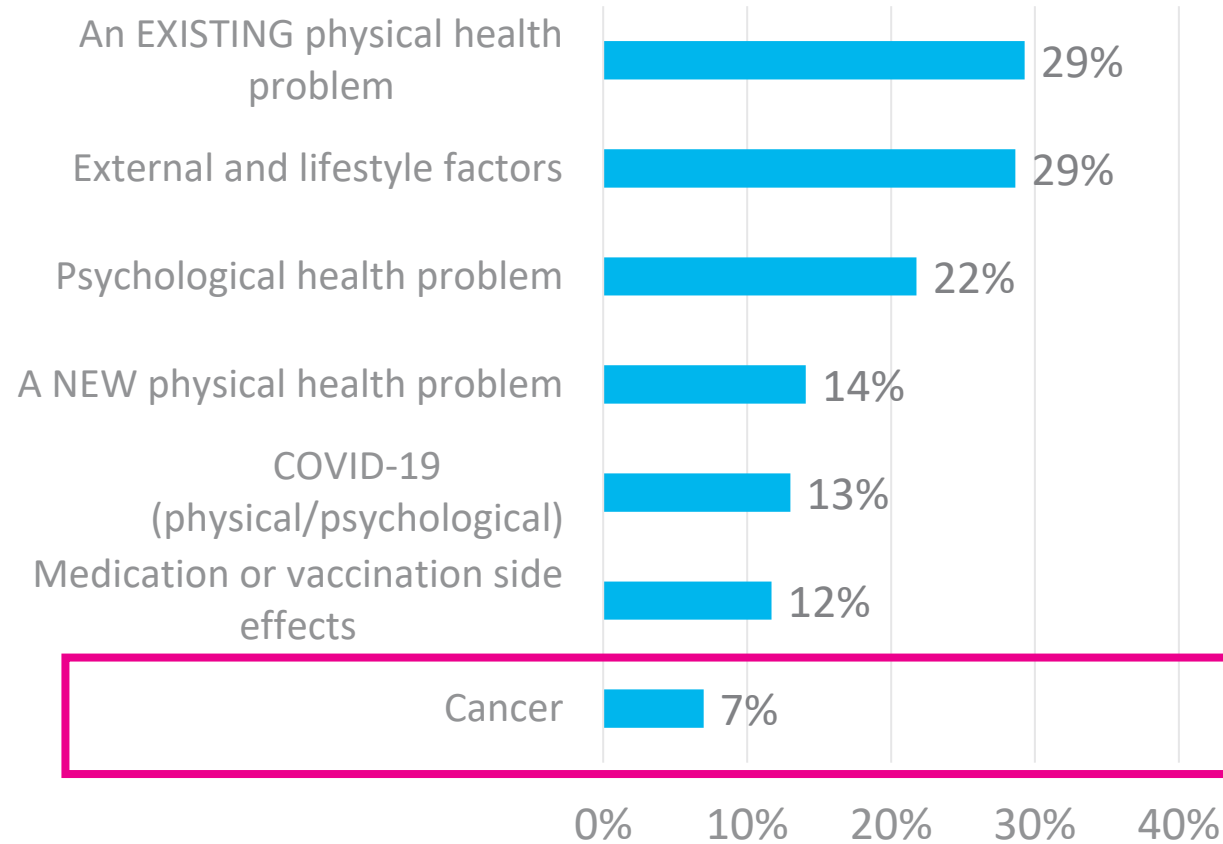


Q14. You said that you have experienced... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. What do you think caused this symptom? Please select all that apply. (Any=1159, Lung=423)

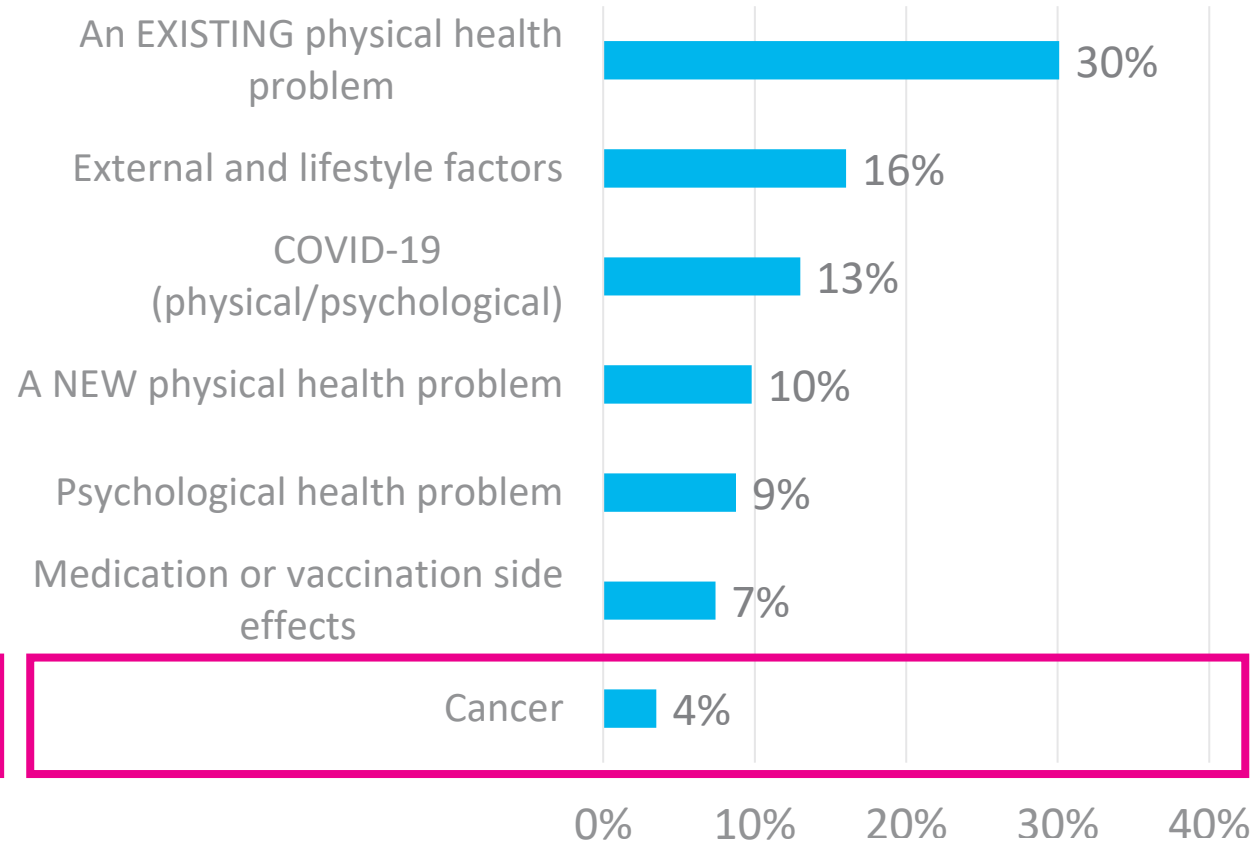
Symptom attribution

Few thought their potential cancer symptom could be cancer

Any



Lung



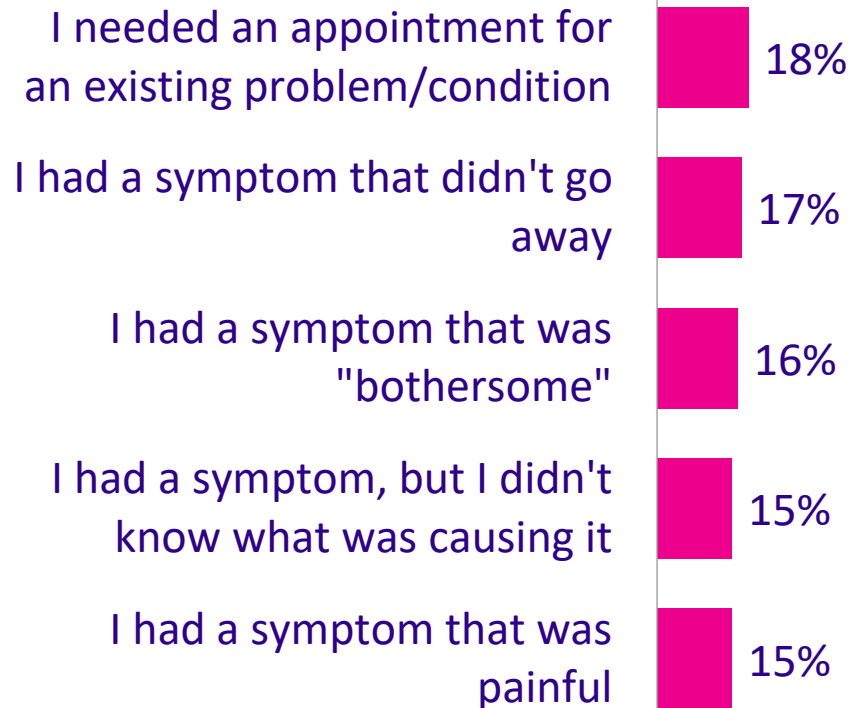
Q14. You said that you have experienced... We would now like to ask you a few more questions about this. What do you think caused this symptom? Please select all that apply. (Any=1159, Lung=423) Quinn-Scoggins et al., 20211 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34531224/>

Barriers & prompts to help-seeking

Top barriers & prompts to help-seeking

Concern about catching COVID-19 is not currently in the top barriers to help-seeking

Prompts



Barriers



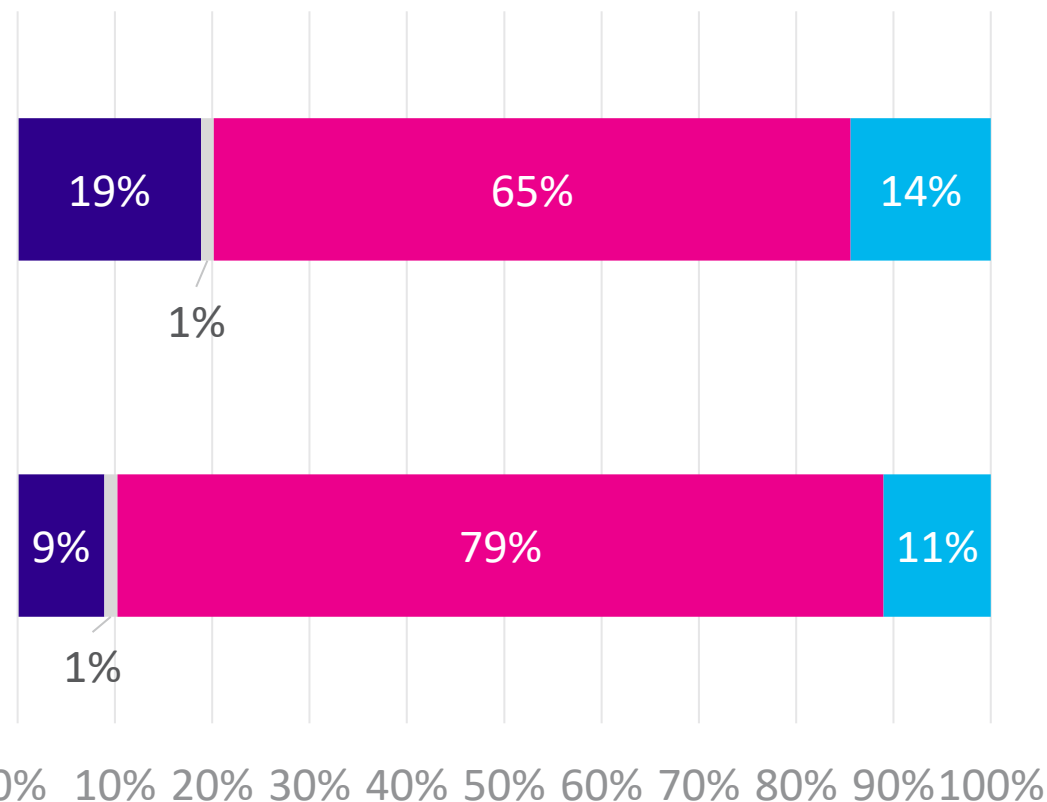
Q25. The last time you saw or spoke to a medical professional about your health, which of the following played a role in your decision to do so? Q26. Thinking about the last time you considered seeing or speaking to a medical professional about your health, did any of the following put you off, or make you delay doing so? (n=2446)

Barriers to seeking medical help

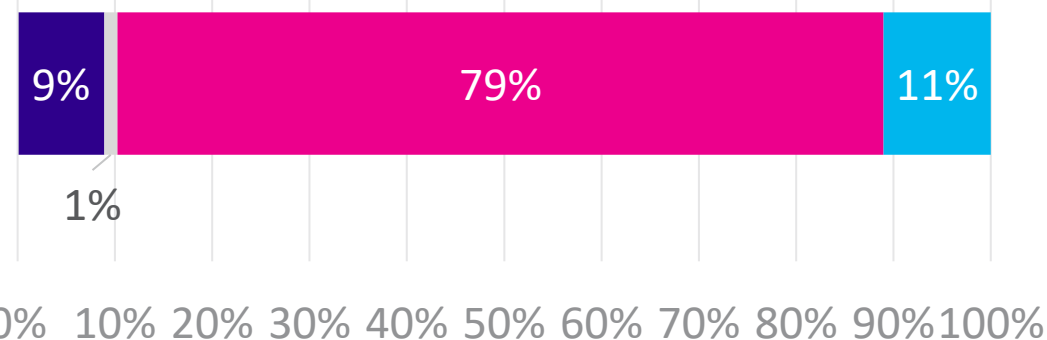


Data collected in September 2021. Q26. Thinking about the last time you considered seeing or speaking to a medical professional about your health, did any of the following put you off, or make you delay doing so? (sample size=2446)

It is harder to get an appointment with my doctor (GP) now than it was before the coronavirus pandemic started



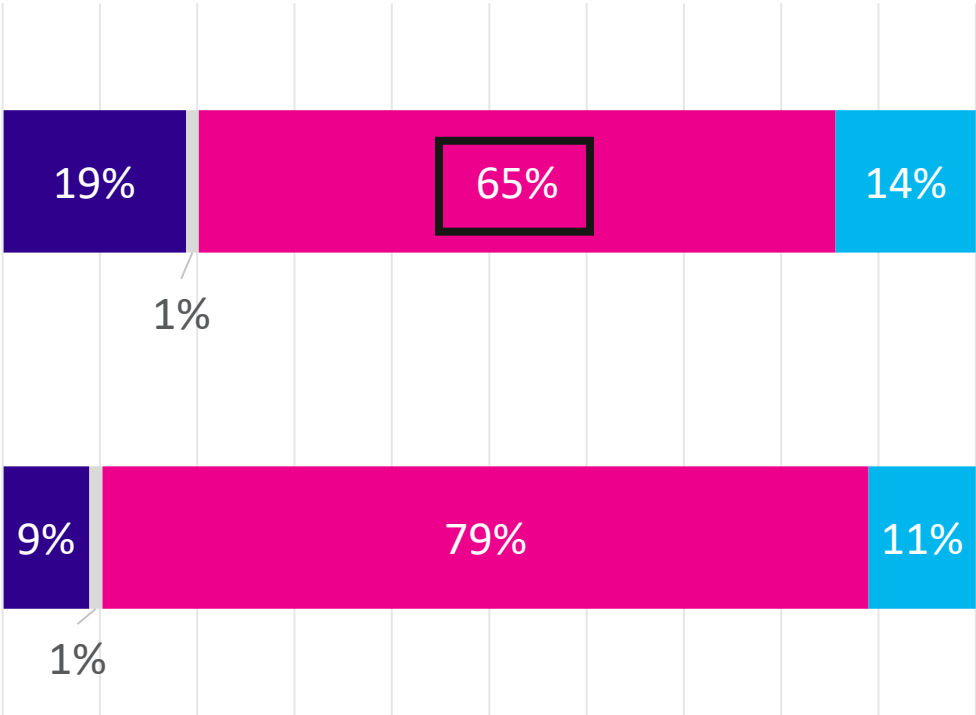
I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at my GP surgery.



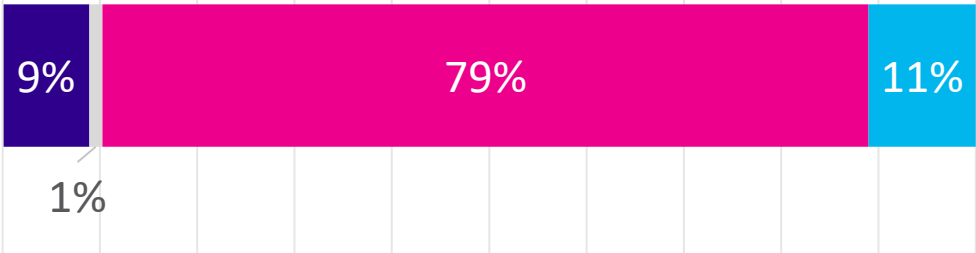
■ I don't know ■ Prefer not to say ■ Net: Agree ■ Net: Disagree

Nearly two thirds think it's harder to get an appointment with their Dr now than it was before the pandemic started

It is harder to get an appointment with my doctor (GP) now than it was before the coronavirus pandemic started



I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at my GP surgery.



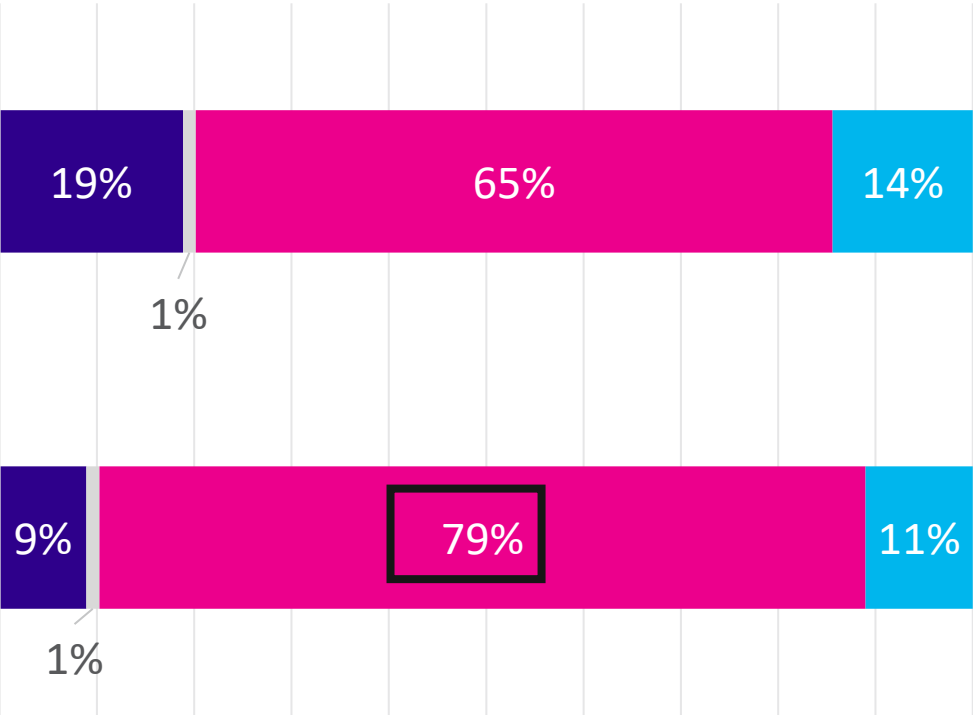
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

I don't know Prefer not to say Net: Agree Net: Disagree

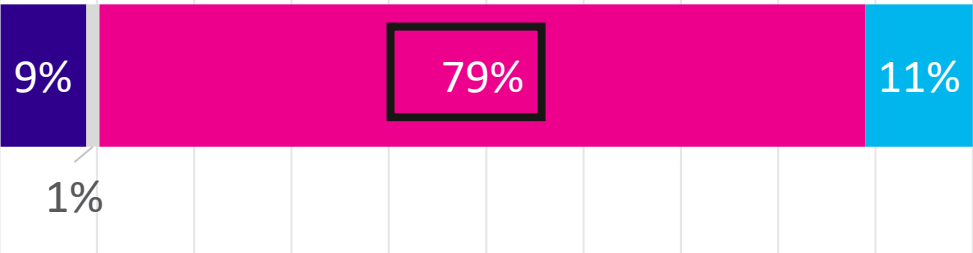


Almost four fifths feel confident that they'd be safe from COVID if they needed an apt at their GP surgery

It is harder to get an appointment with my doctor (GP) now than it was before the coronavirus pandemic started



I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at my GP surgery.



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%100%

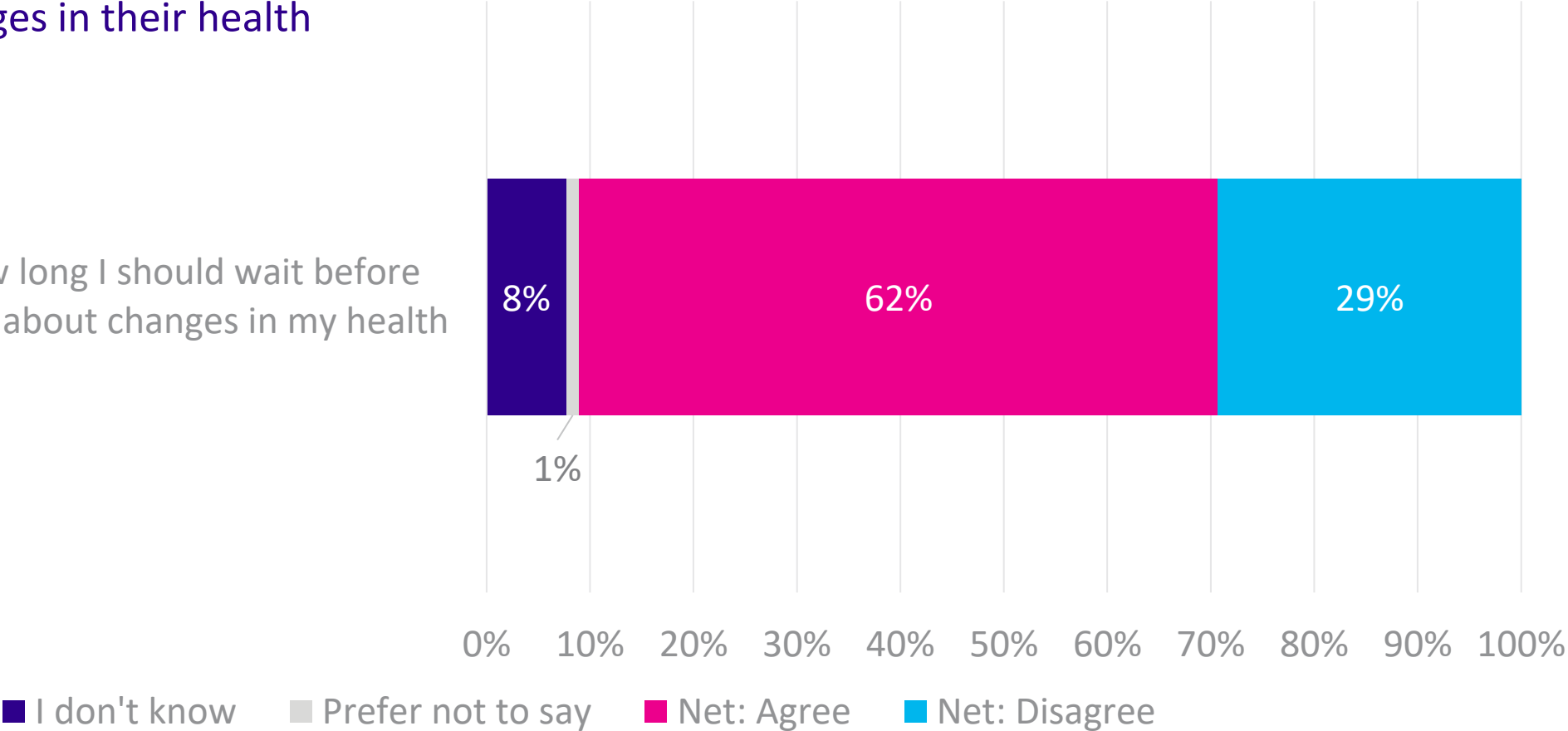
I don't know Prefer not to say Net: Agree Net: Disagree



How long do I wait?

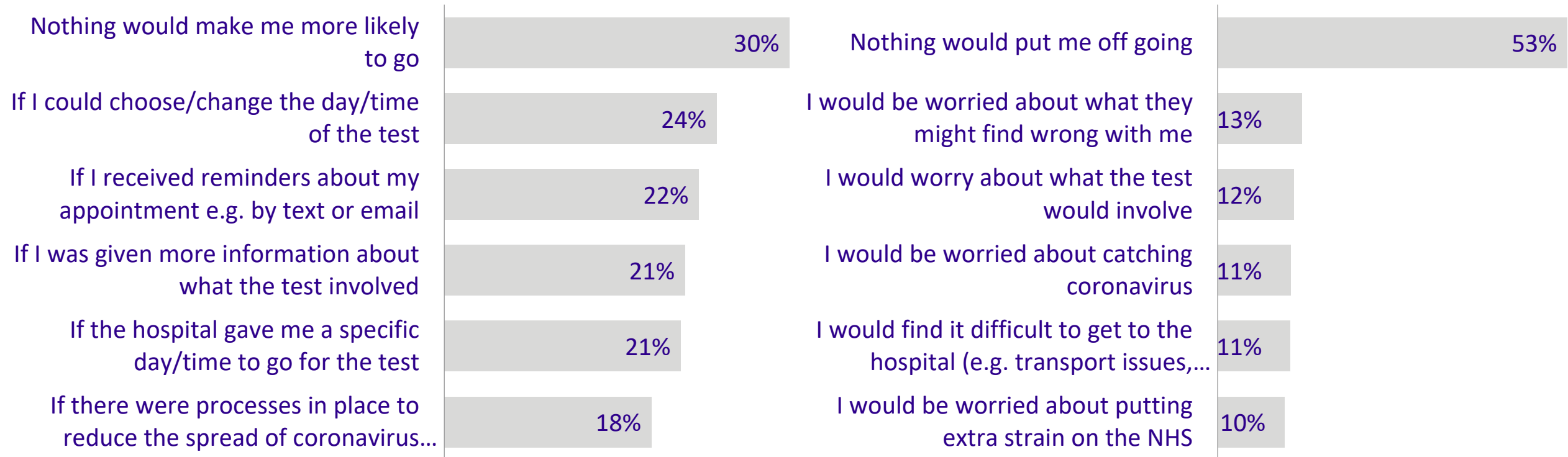
62% of respondents said they're not always sure how long they should wait before contacting their doctor about changes in their health

I am not always sure how long I should wait before contacting my doctor (GP) about changes in my health



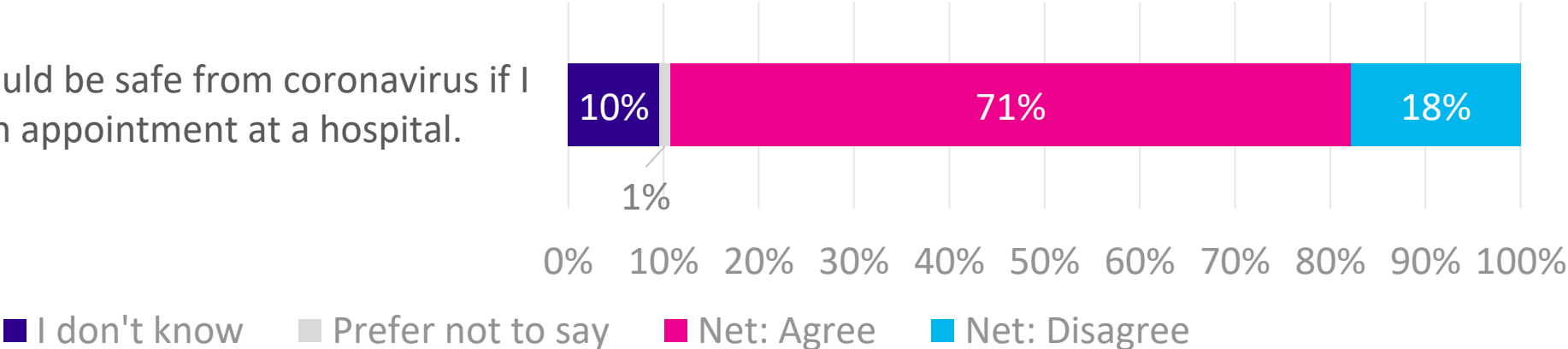
Going to hospital for tests

Top barriers & facilitators to going to hospital



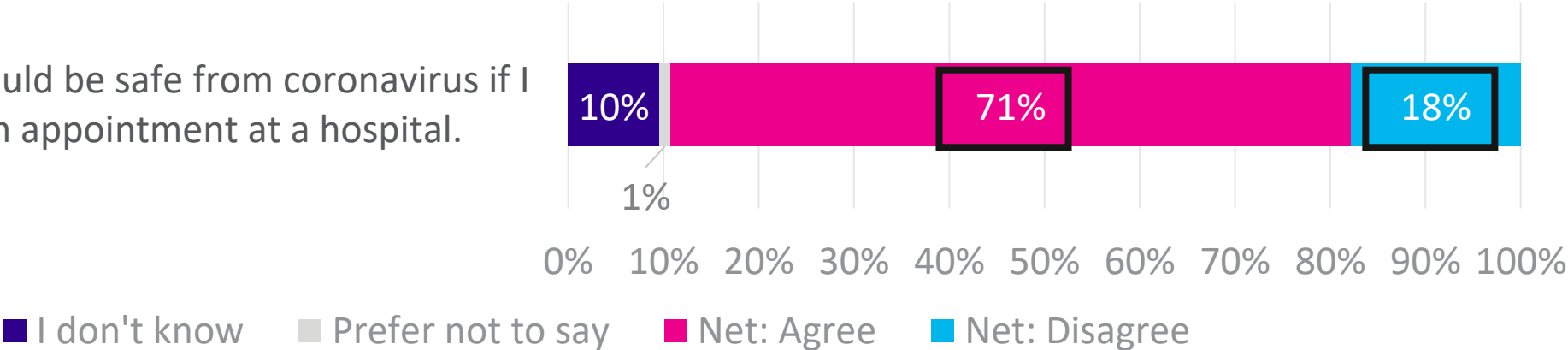
Barriers & facilitators to going to hospital

I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at a hospital.



Barriers & facilitators to going to hospital

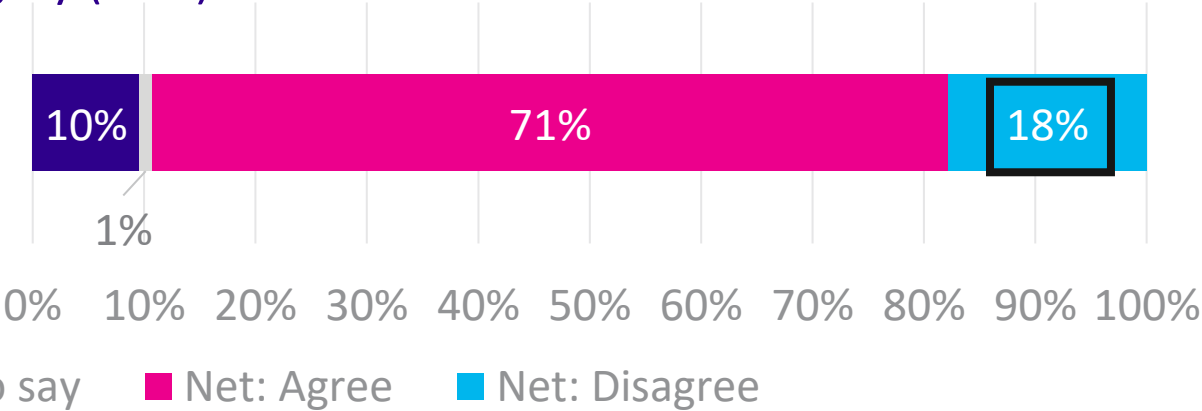
I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at a hospital.



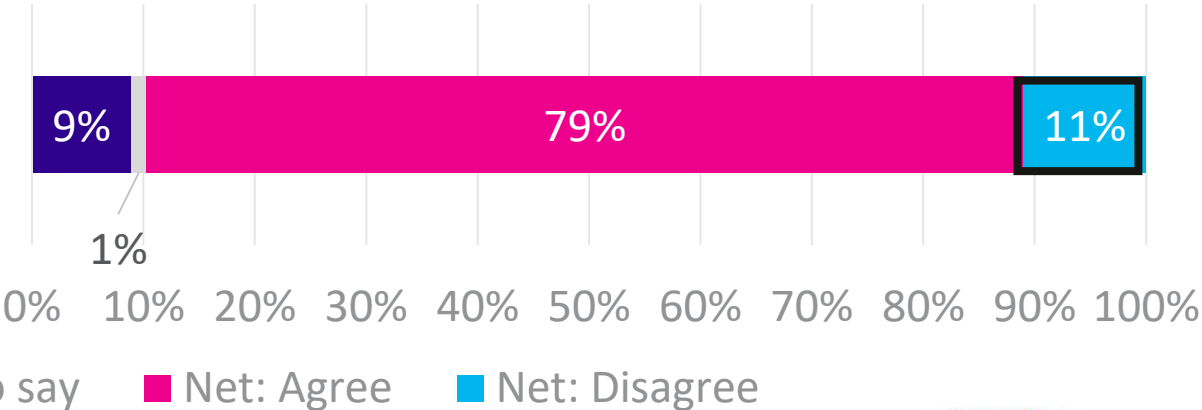
Barriers & facilitators to going to hospital

More people are not confident they would be safe from COVID-19 if they needed to attend a hospital (18%) than if they needed to attend their GP surgery (11%)

I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at a hospital.



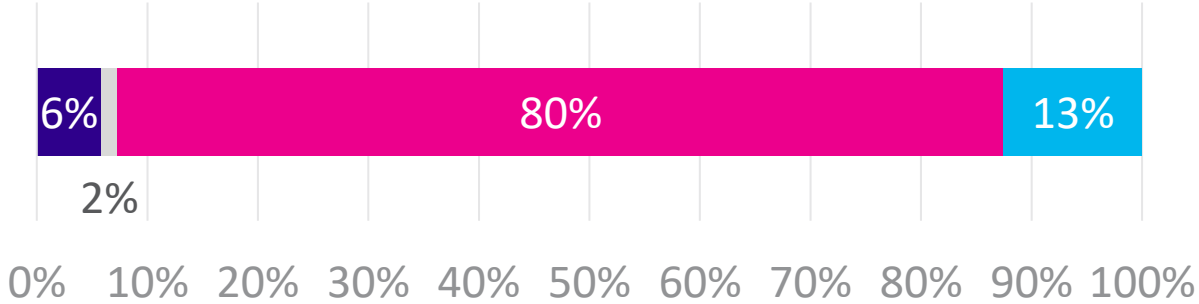
I am confident that I would be safe from coronavirus if I needed to attend an appointment at my GP surgery.



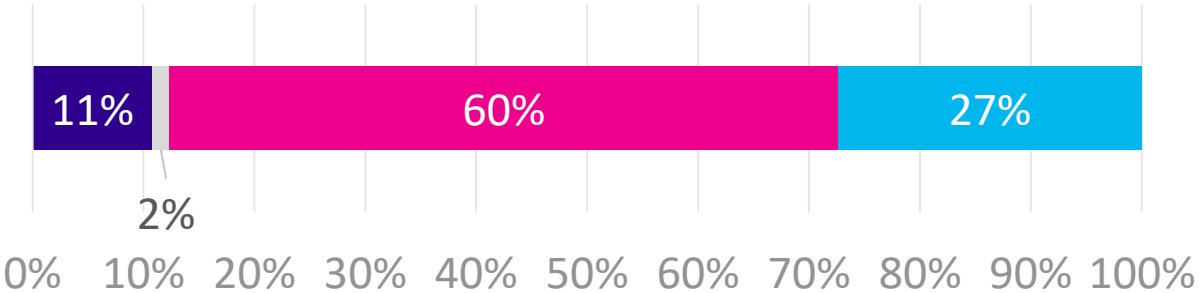
Symptom re-presentation

Confidence to re-present

I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem if it didn't go away or got worse



I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem after a test result suggested there was nothing to worry about



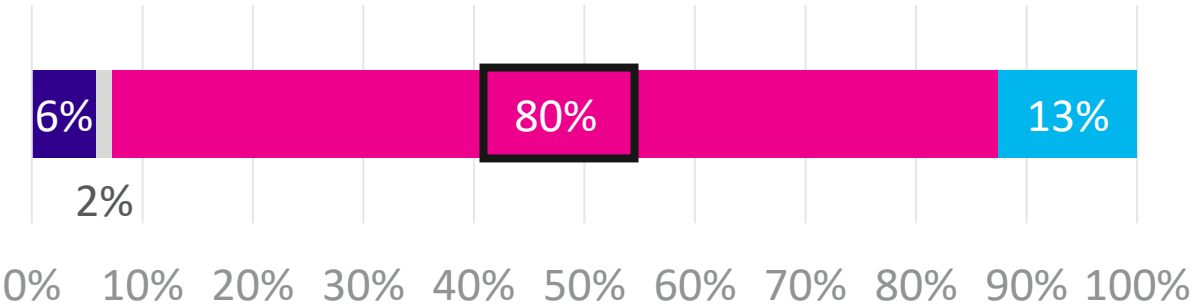
■ I don't know ■ Prefer not to say ■ Net: Agree ■ Net: Disagree



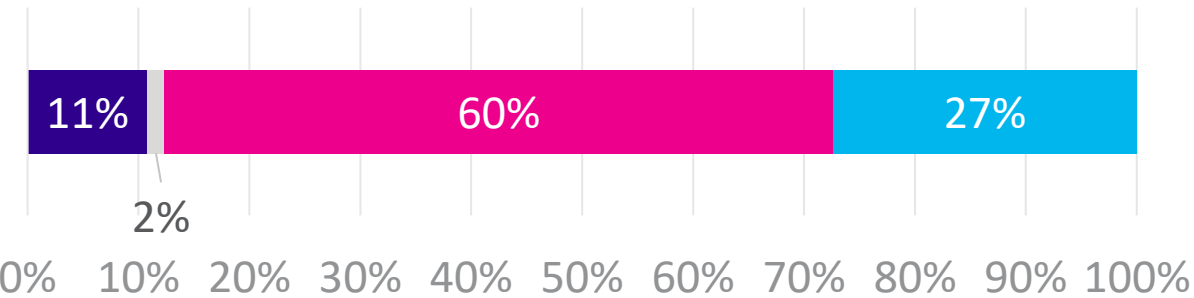
Confidence to re-present

Hypothetically speaking, 80% are confident going back to their Dr with the same symptom/health problem if it doesn't go or gets worse

I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem if it didn't go away or got worse



I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem after a test result suggested there was nothing to worry about



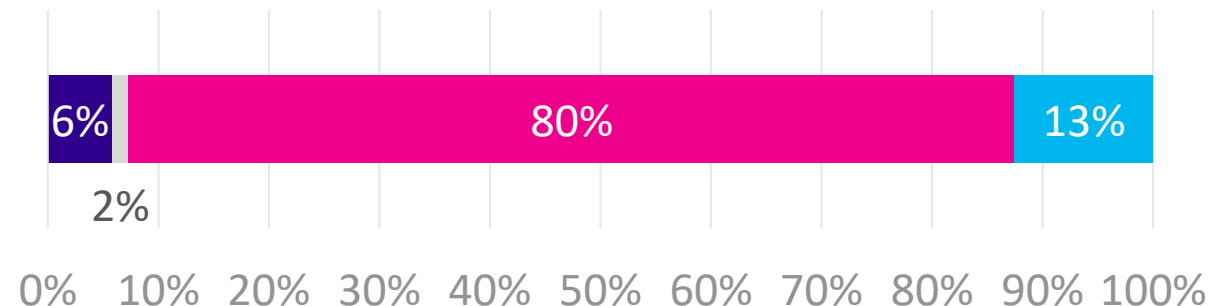
■ I don't know ■ Prefer not to say ■ Net: Agree ■ Net: Disagree



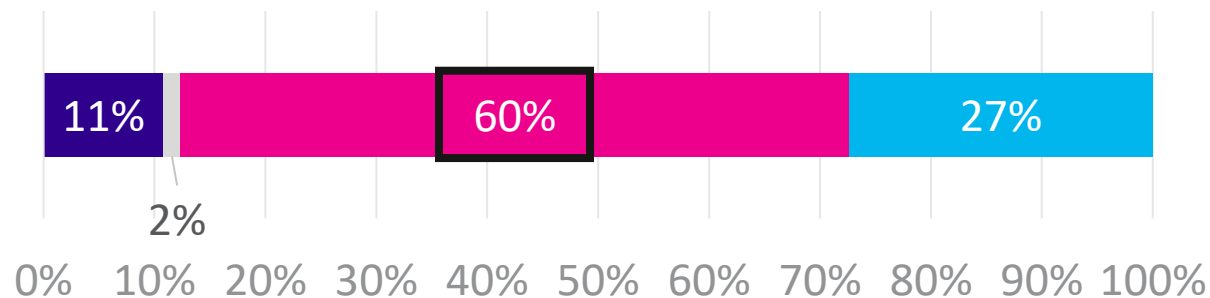
Confidence to re-present

60% are confident going back to their Dr with the same symptom/health problem if they'd had a test result which suggested there was nothing to worry about

I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem if it didn't go away or got worse



I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem after a test result suggested there was nothing to worry about

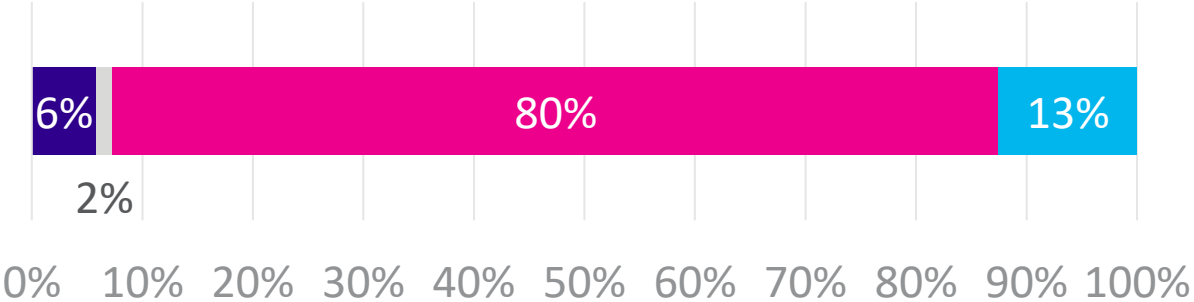


■ I don't know ■ Prefer not to say ■ Net: Agree ■ Net: Disagree

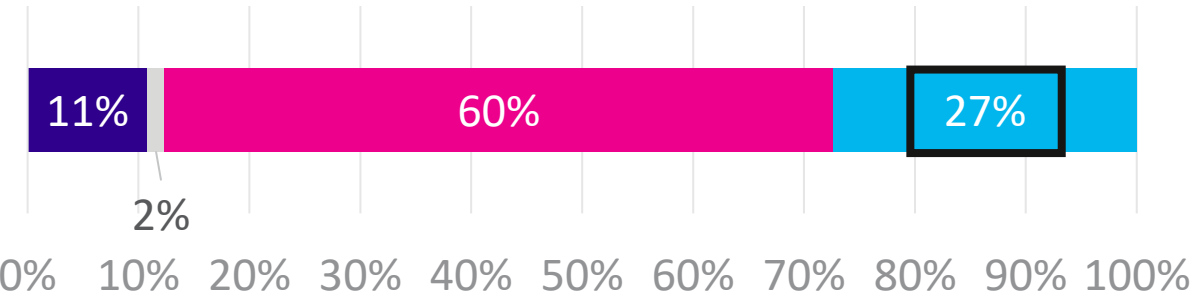
Confidence to re-present

More than quarter aren't confident going back with the same symptom/health problem after a test result suggested there was nothing to worry about

I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem if it didn't go away or got worse



I would feel confident going back to my doctor (GP) with the same symptom/health problem after a test result suggested there was nothing to worry about

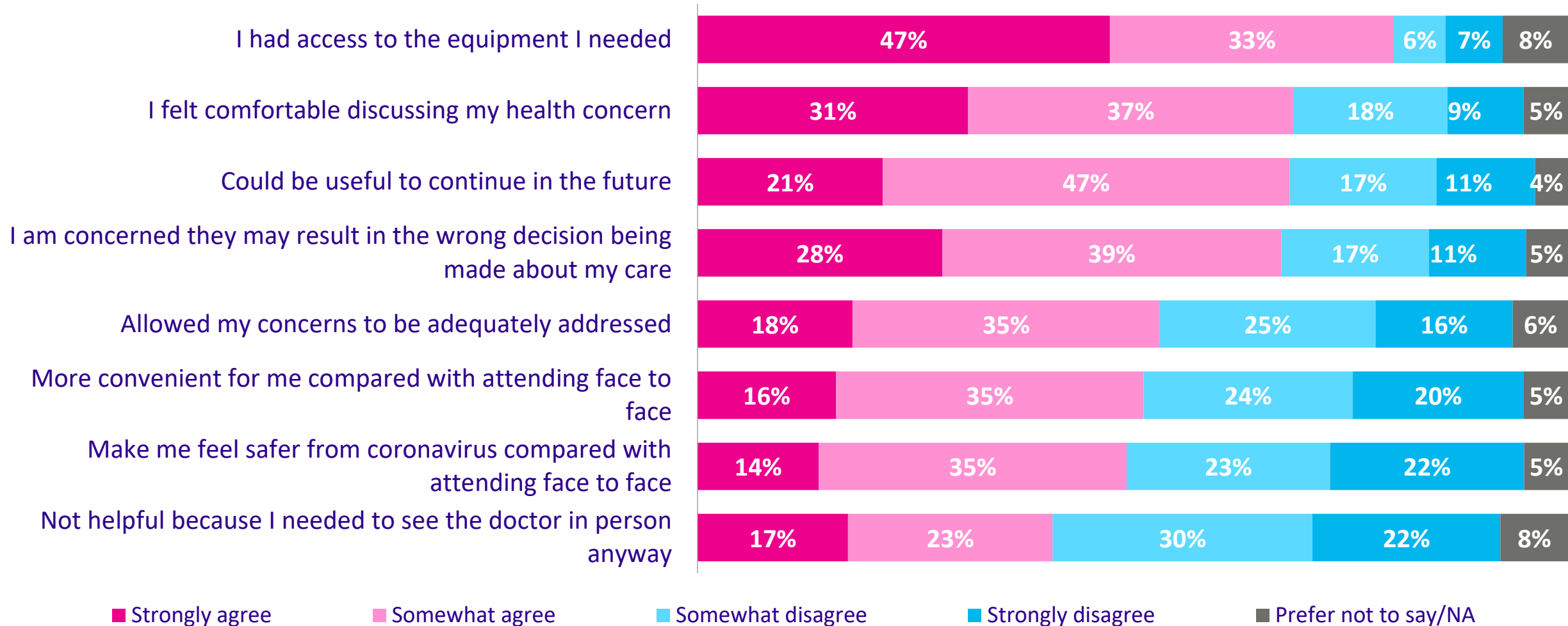


■ I don't know ■ Prefer not to say ■ Net: Agree ■ Net: Disagree



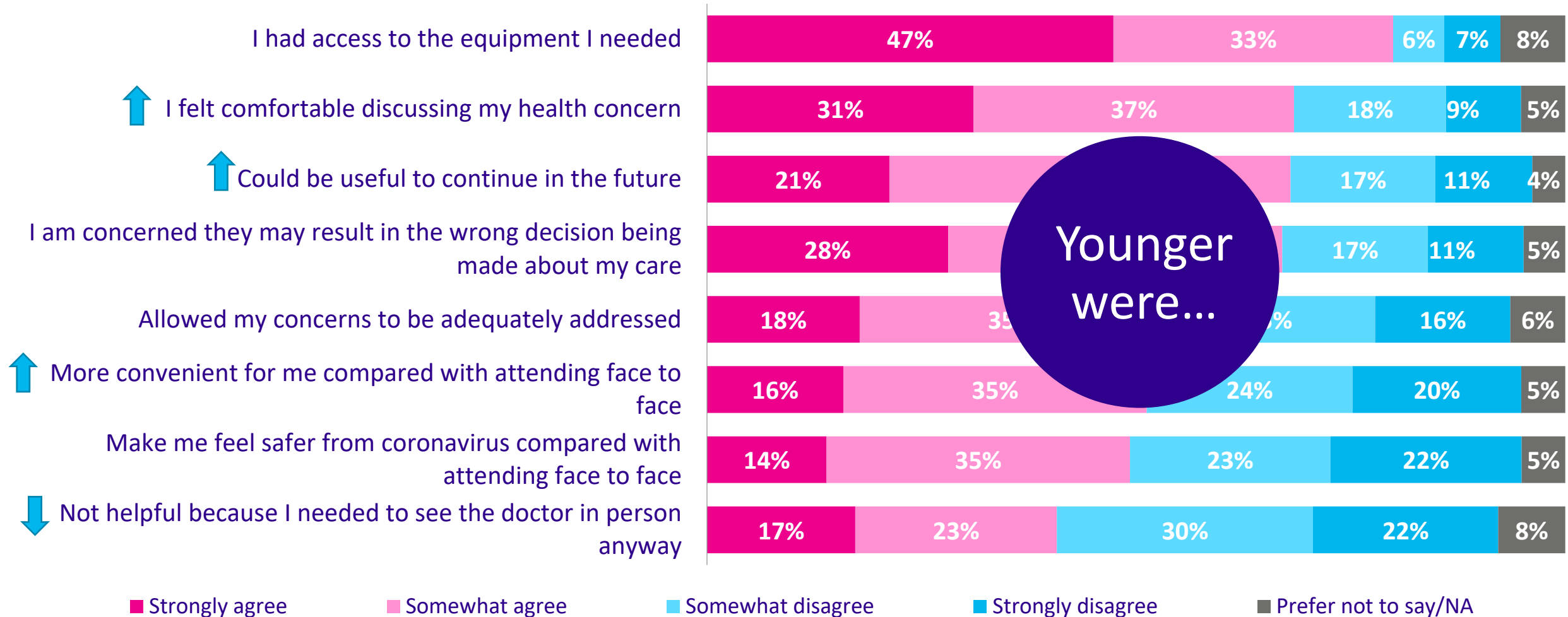
Attitudes towards remote consultations

Attitudes towards remote consultations



Q24. If you had a remote consultation/appointment with a medical professional from your GP practice in the last 6 months, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements Please select one answer per statement. (All who had a remote consultation n=448, 18-34 n=117, 35-54 n=145, 55+ n=186, ABC1 n=268, C2DE n=180)

Attitudes towards remote consultations



Q24. If you had a remote consultation/appointment with a medical professional from your GP practice in the last 6 months, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements Please select one answer per statement. (All who had a remote consultation n=448, 18-34 n=117, 35-54 n=145, 55+ n=186, ABC1 n=268, C2DE n=180)

Attitudes towards remote consultations

↓ I had access to the equipment I needed

↓ I felt comfortable discussing my health concern

↓ Could be useful to continue in the future

↑ I am concerned they may result in the wrong decision being made about my care

↓ Allowed my concerns to be adequately addressed

↓ More convenient for me compared with attending face to face

Make me feel safer from coronavirus compared with attending face to face

↑ Not helpful because I needed to see the doctor in person anyway

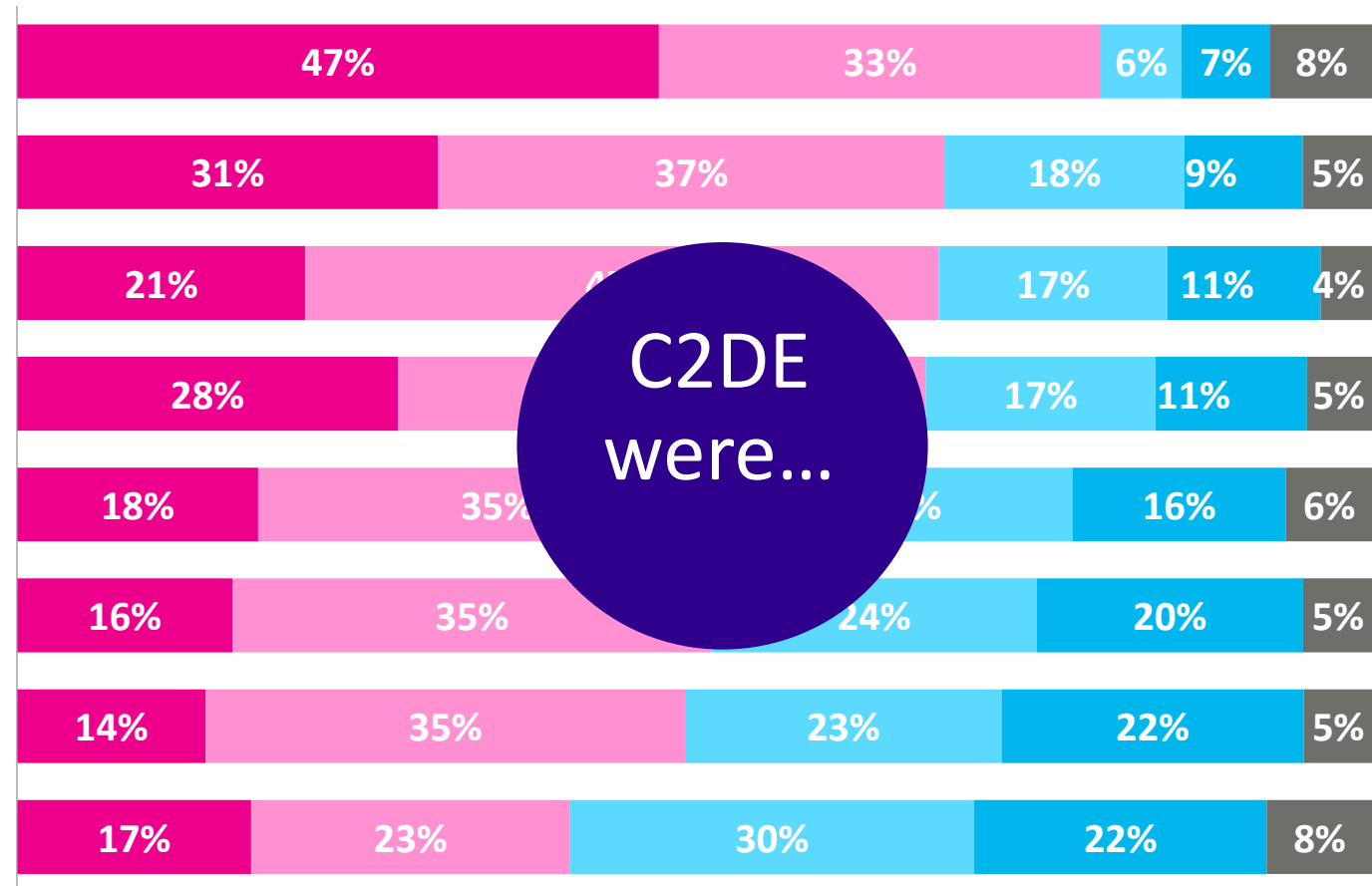
Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Prefer not to say/NA



Q24. If you had a remote consultation/appointment with a medical professional from your GP practice in the last 6 months, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements Please select one answer per statement. (All who had a remote consultation n=448, 18-34 n=117, 35-54 n=145, 55+ n=186, ABC1 n=268, C2DE n=180)

Summary/Reflections - ED

- High % report not seeking help for potential cancer symptoms, but this doesn't appear to have got worse since the same time last year
 - How does this compare to data on actual GP activity?
 - How does it compare to other periods within COVID? E.g. lockdowns.
- Awareness of and help-seeking for non-specific and lung-specific symptoms appears lower than for other types of symptom
- People aren't sure how long to wait to contact their Dr initially
- People say they are confident to go back if things get worse/don't go away, less so after a "normal" test result
 - Does this hypothetical confidence translate into self-reported/actual re-presentation?

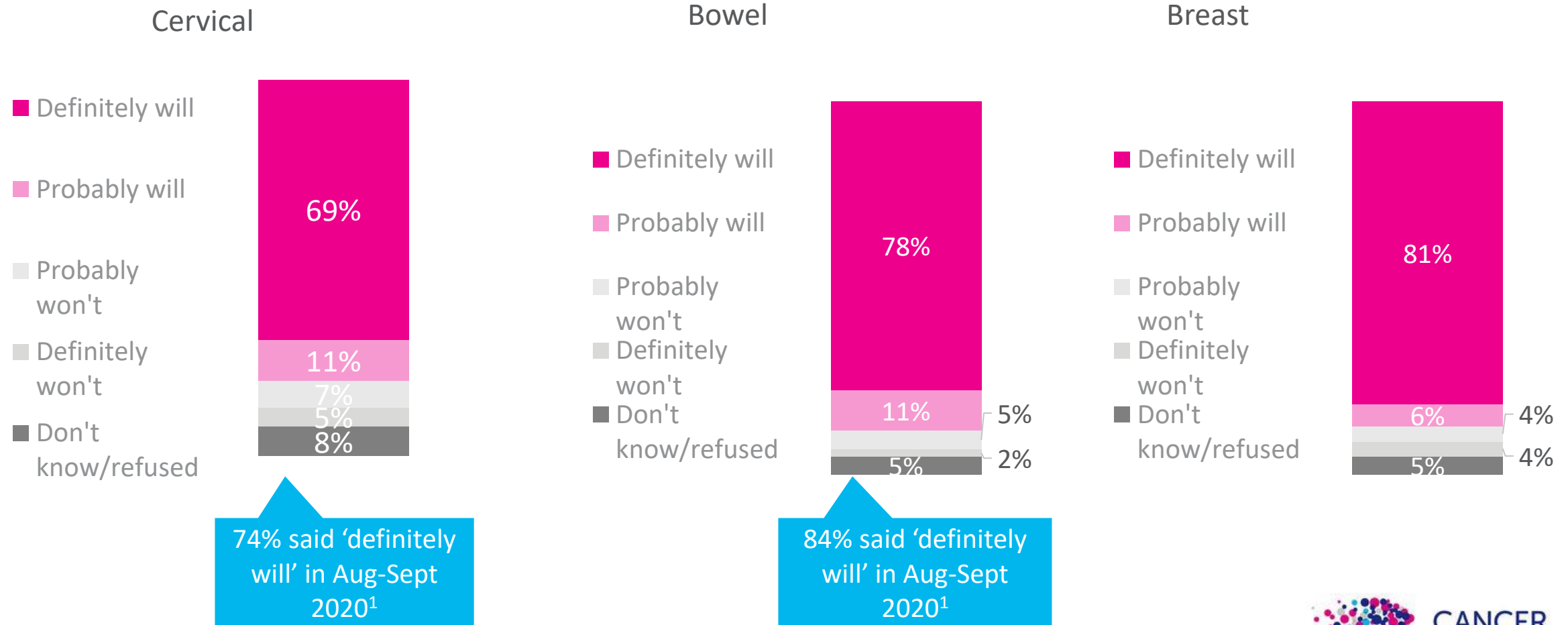
Summary/Reflections – ED cont.

- People think their potential cancer symptom is almost anything other than cancer. COVID-19 may have become another alternative explanation for potential cancer symptoms (i.e. not lung specific)
 - Need to monitor COVID misattributions, and distinguish between acute and long COVID misattribution
- Pre-existing conditions are having multiple effects on help-seeking
 - When people have a potential cancer symptom they tend to think it's related to an existing health problem, and will put off/delay seeking help because of this
 - Many are prompted to seek help for existing illness/conditions
- Overall, few people are worried about catching COVID-19 at GP surgeries and this is no longer putting people off seeking help, but it's still a concern and barrier to going to hospital for tests
 - Has this changed with the Omicron variant?
- Remote consultations do not work equally well for all

Screening

Cancer screening intentions

Intentions to attend cervical screening and complete bowel screening in September 2021 were lower than in Aug/Sept 2020



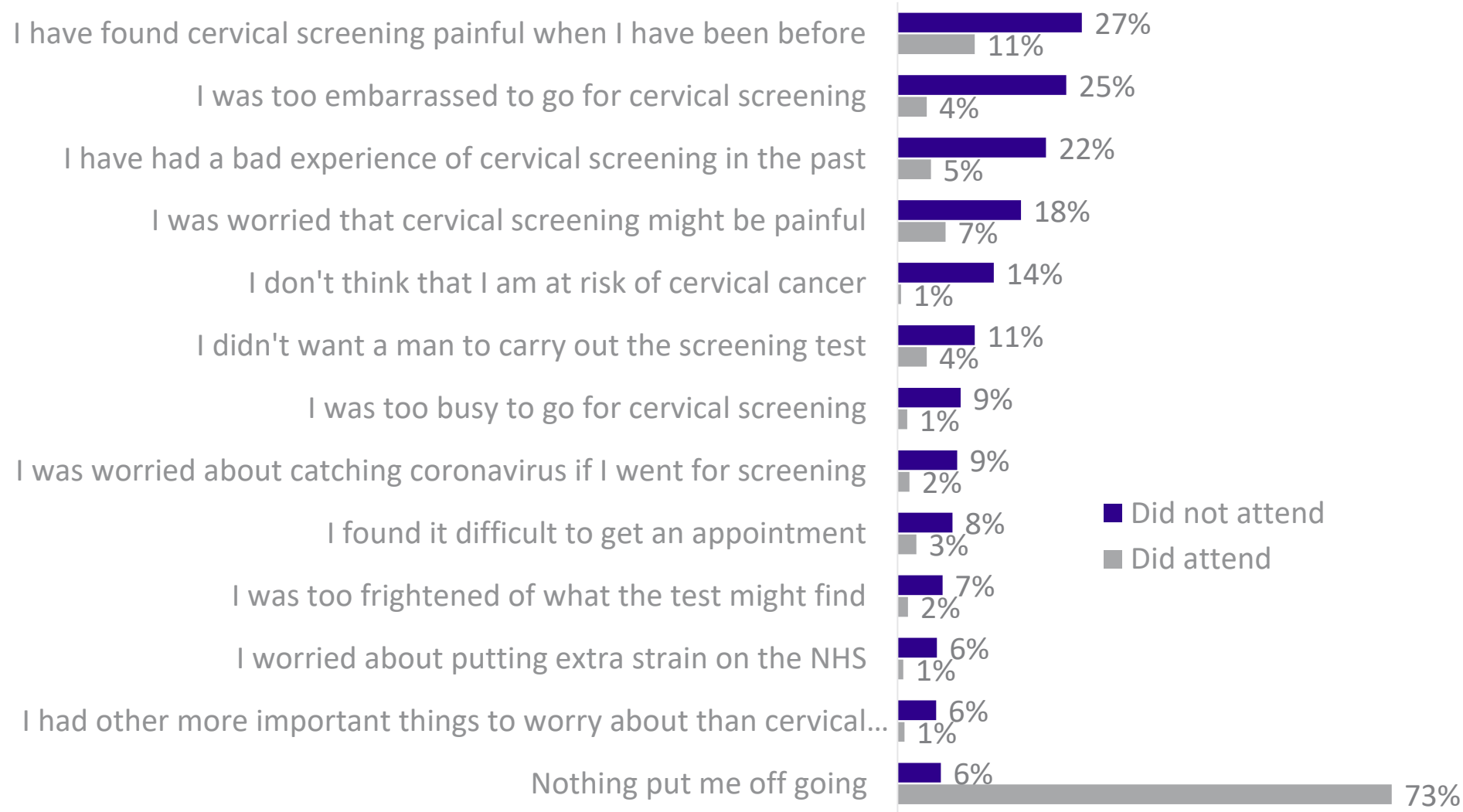
Q37. Will you go for cervical screening next time you are invited? Base: all eligible (n=932)

Q41. Will you complete the kit next time you are sent one? Base: all eligible (n=796)

Q44. Will you go for breast screening next time you are invited? Base: all eligible (n=542)

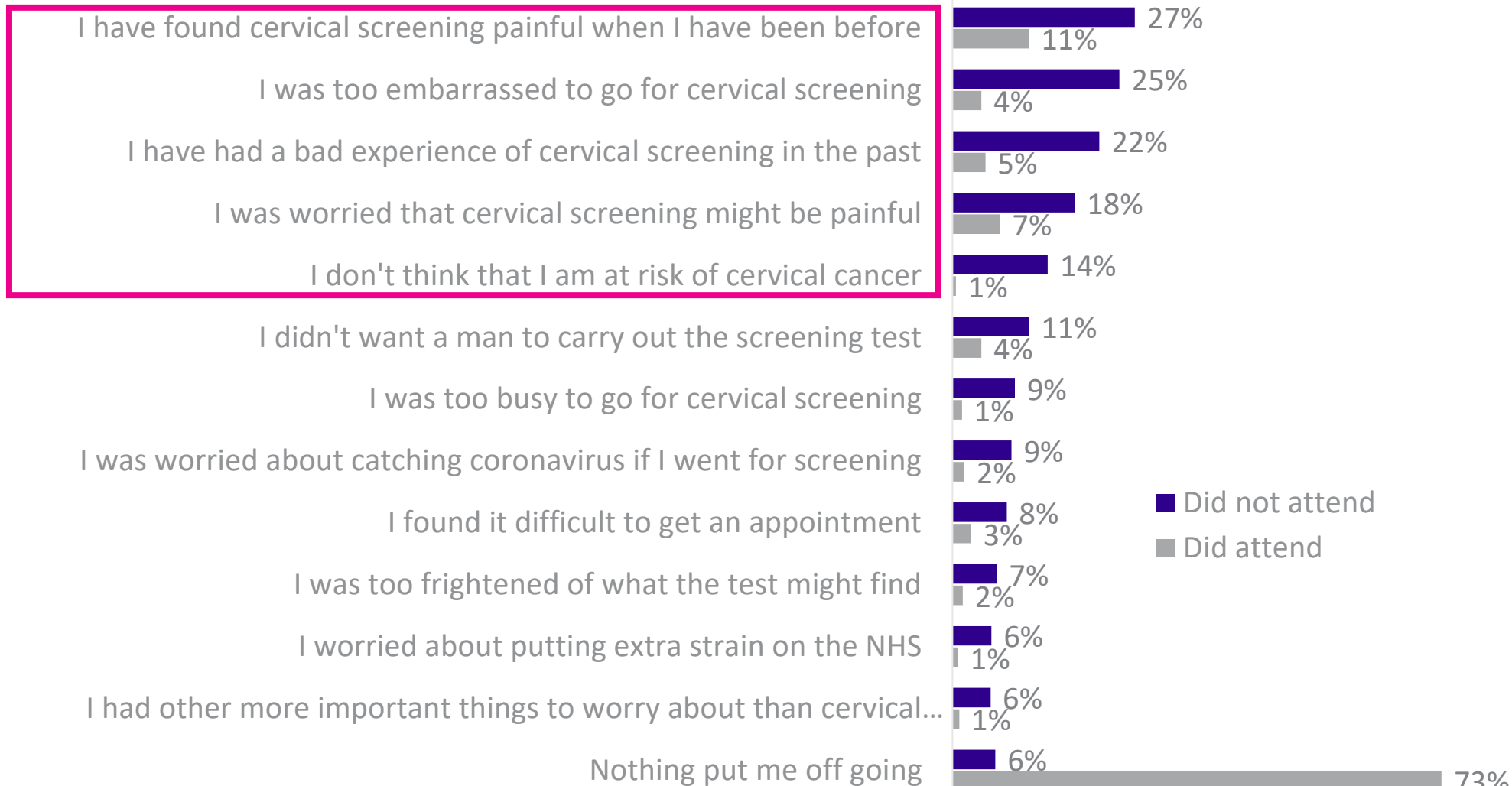
¹Wilson et al 2021 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34599921/>

Cervical screening barriers

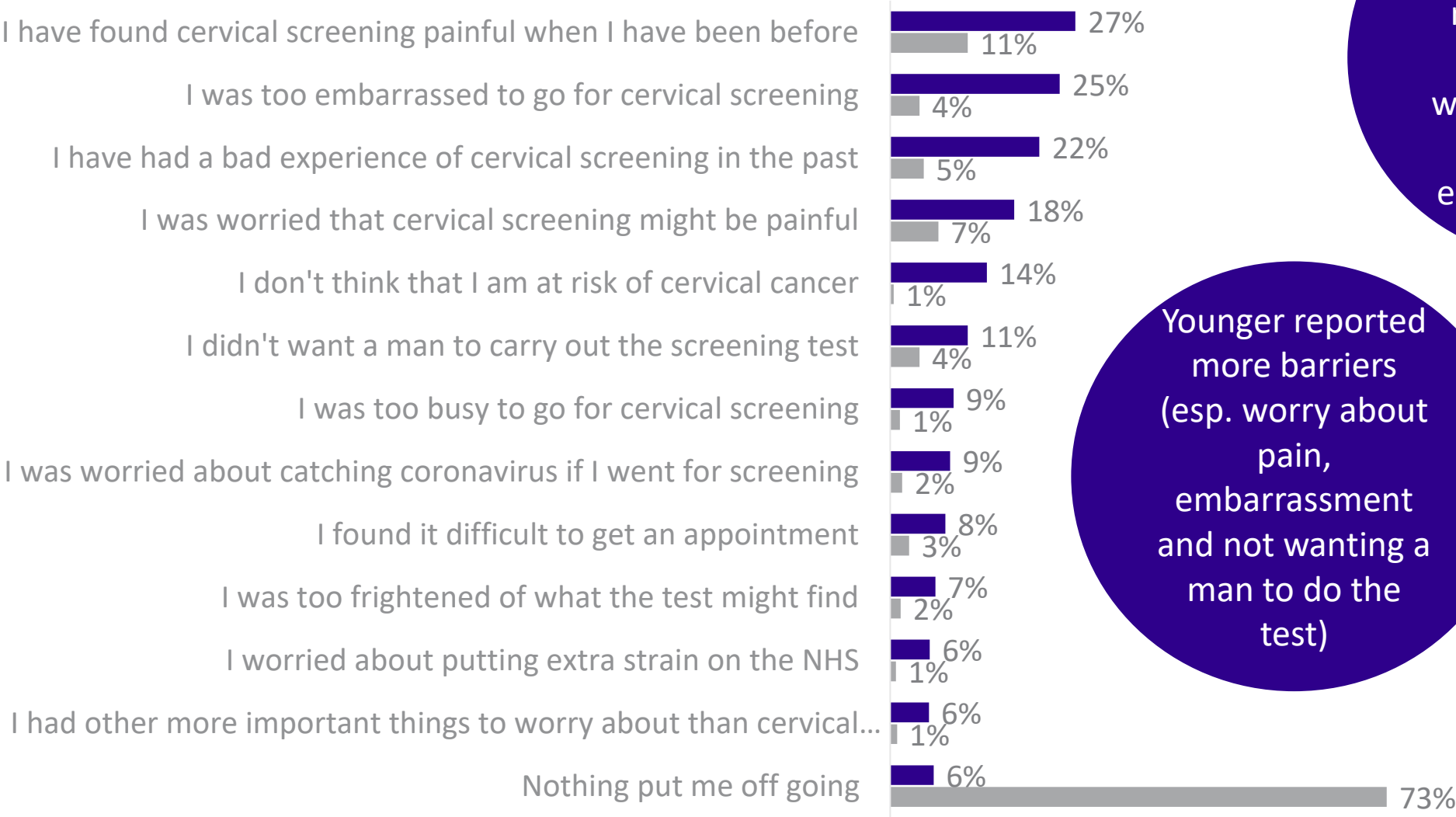


Cervical screening barriers

Having found cervical screening painful has become the new top barrier to attending in both previous attenders and non-attenders, after this response option was added in September 2021



Cervical screening barriers



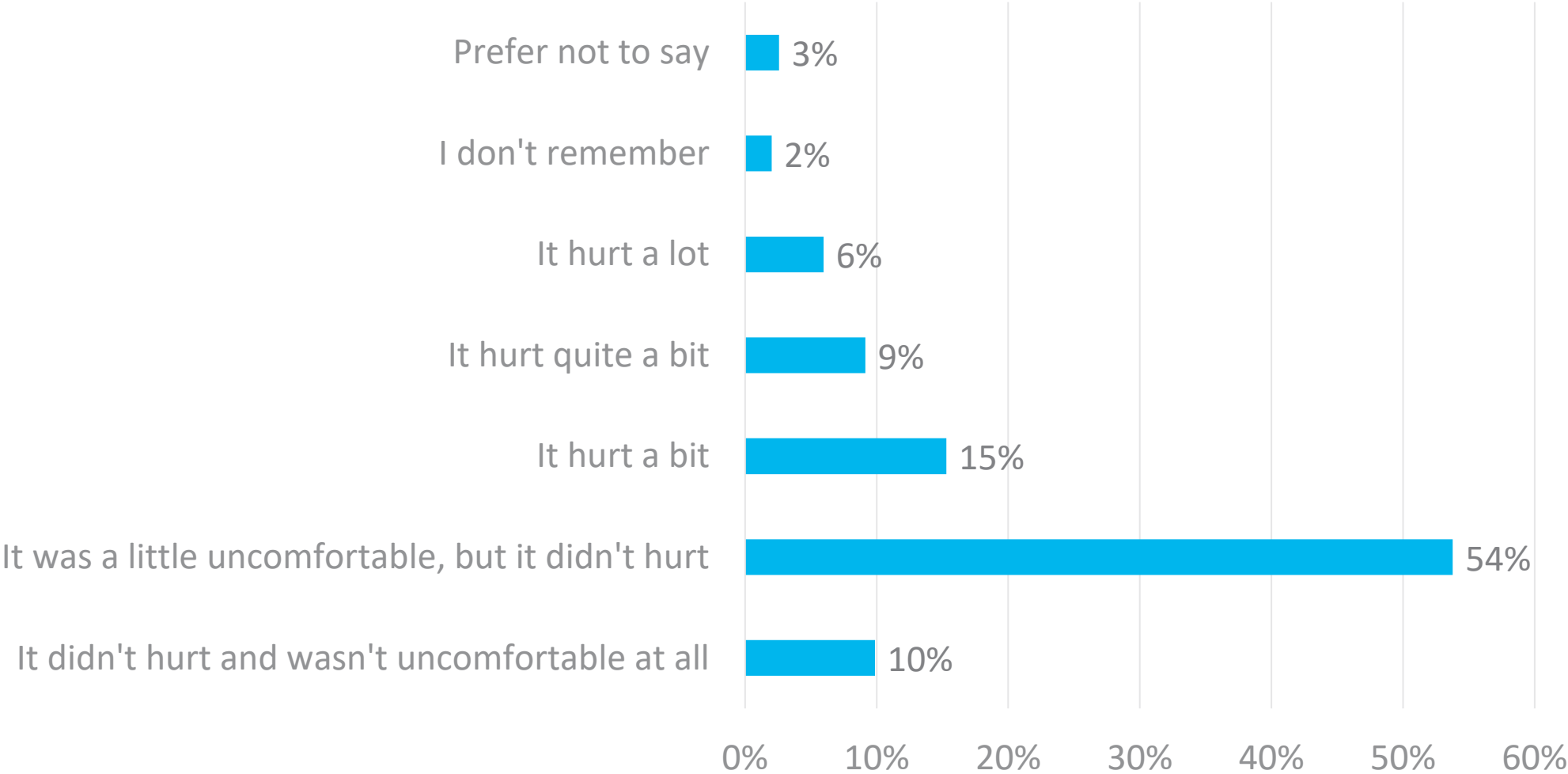
Ethnic minority backgrounds reported more barriers (esp. worry about pain and embarrassment)

Younger reported more barriers (esp. worry about pain, embarrassment and not wanting a man to do the test)



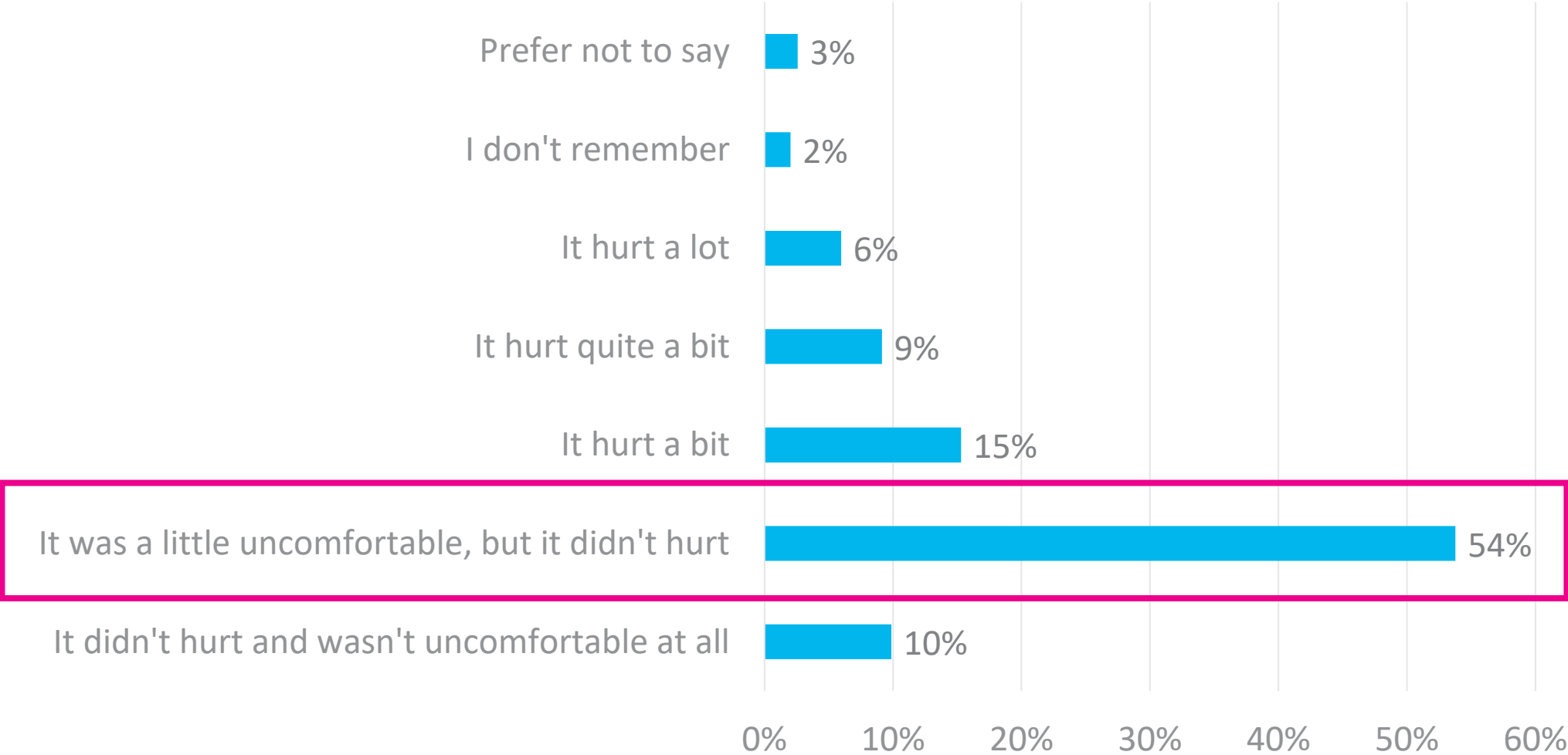
Q38. Thinking about the last time you were invited for cervical screening, did any of the following put you off going? Please select all that apply. Base: All who did attend (n=817) and didn't attend (n=234)

Pain during cervical screening



Q32. Which of the following best describes how cervical screening, where a nurse or other health professional collected a sample from your cervix, felt the last time you went? N=848

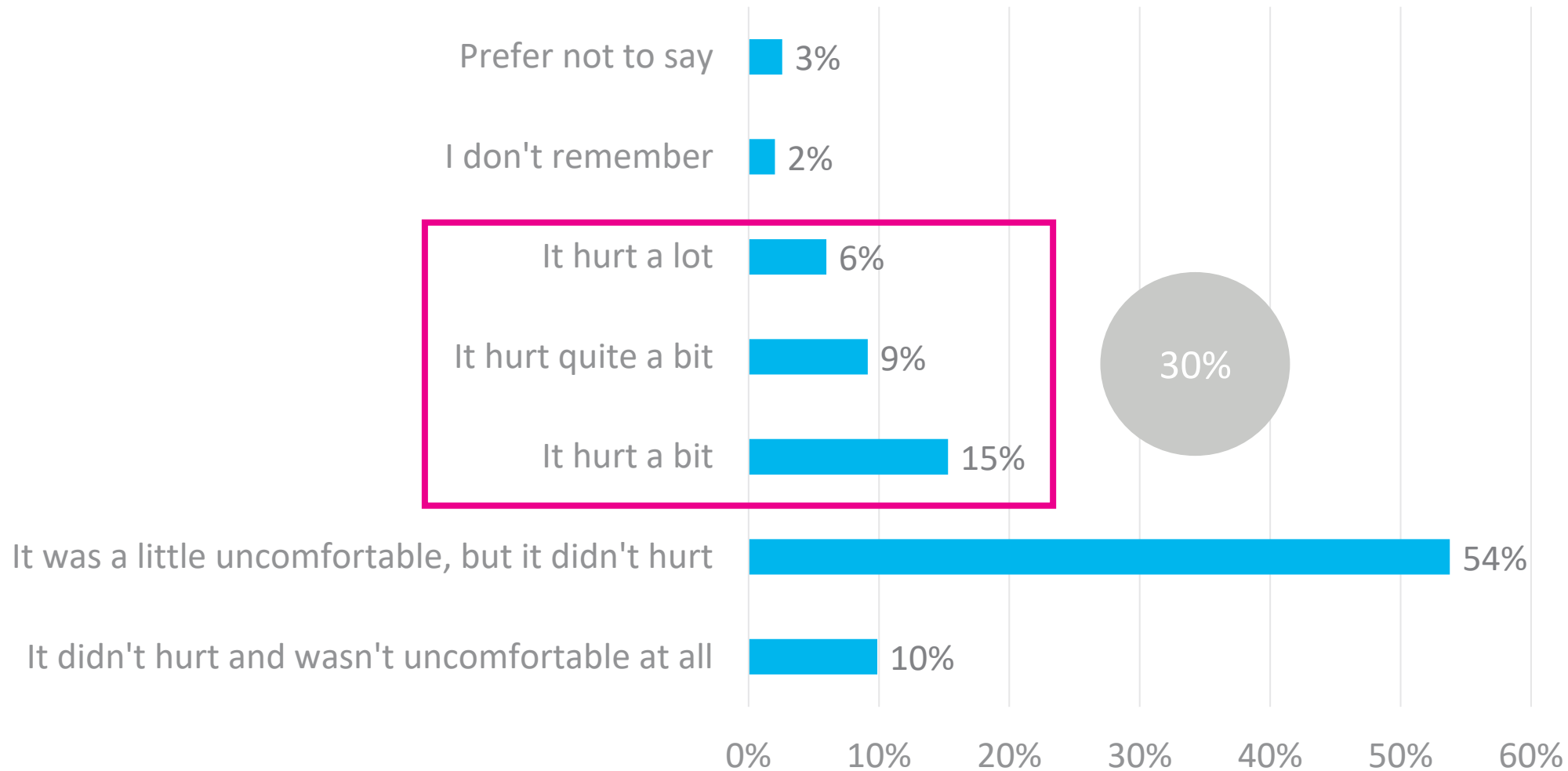
Pain during cervical screening



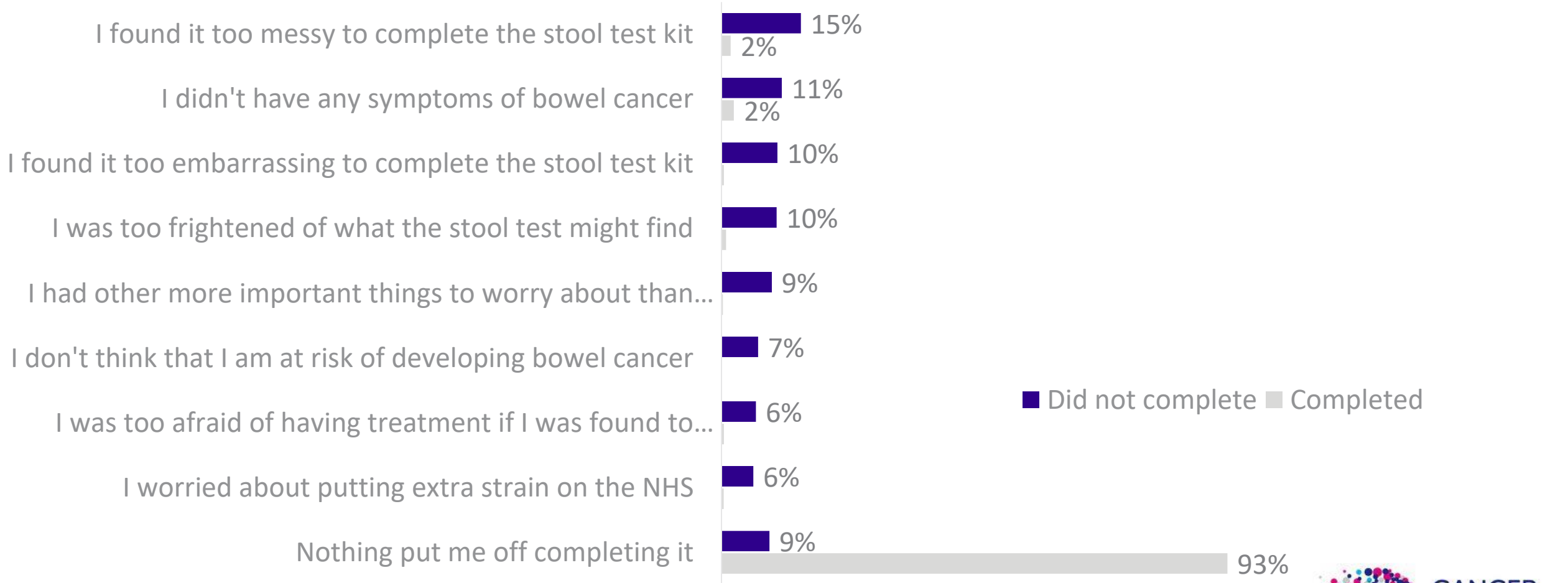
Q32. Which of the following best describes how cervical screening, where a nurse or other health professional collected a sample from your cervix, felt the last time you went? N=848

Pain during cervical screening

Almost a third said that cervical screening hurt the last time they went



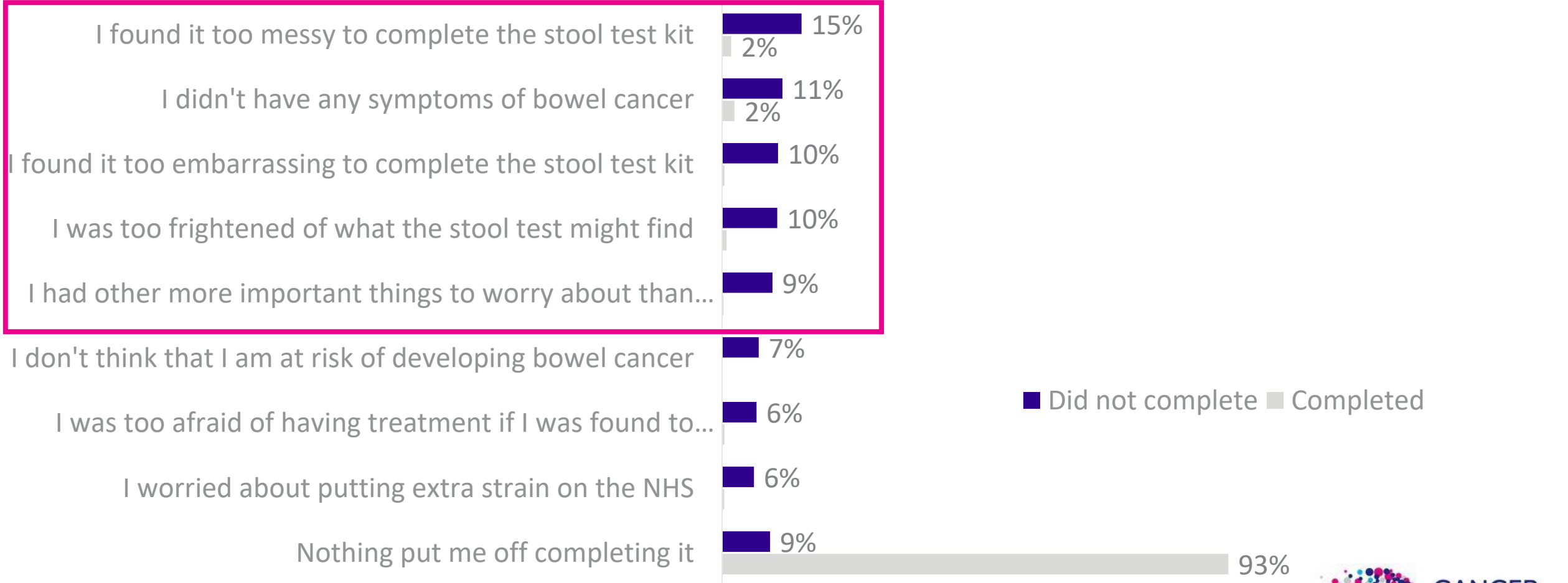
Bowel screening barriers



Q42. Thinking about the last time you received a bowel cancer stool test kit, did any of the following put you off completing it? Please select all that apply. Base: All who did complete (n=586) and didn't complete (n=137)



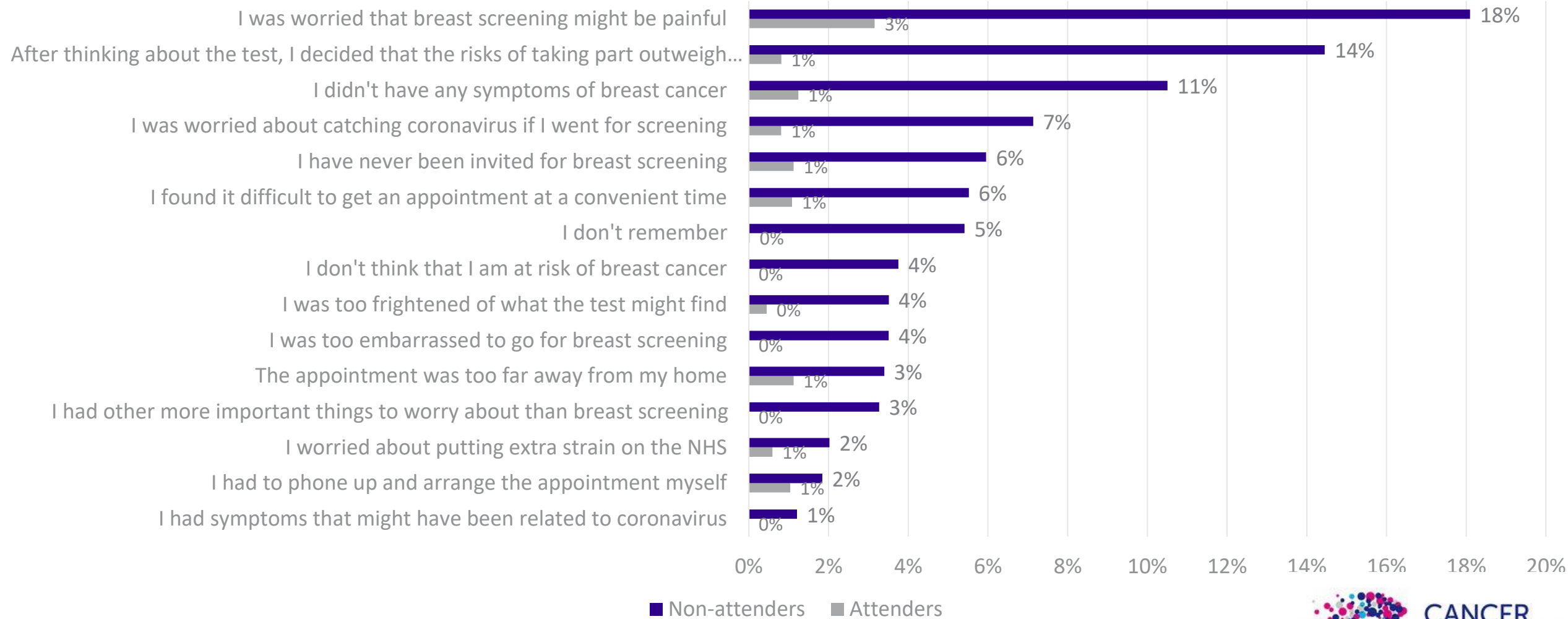
Bowel screening barriers



Q42. Thinking about the last time you received a bowel cancer stool test kit, did any of the following put you off completing it? Please select all that apply. Base: All who did complete (n=586) and didn't complete (n=137)

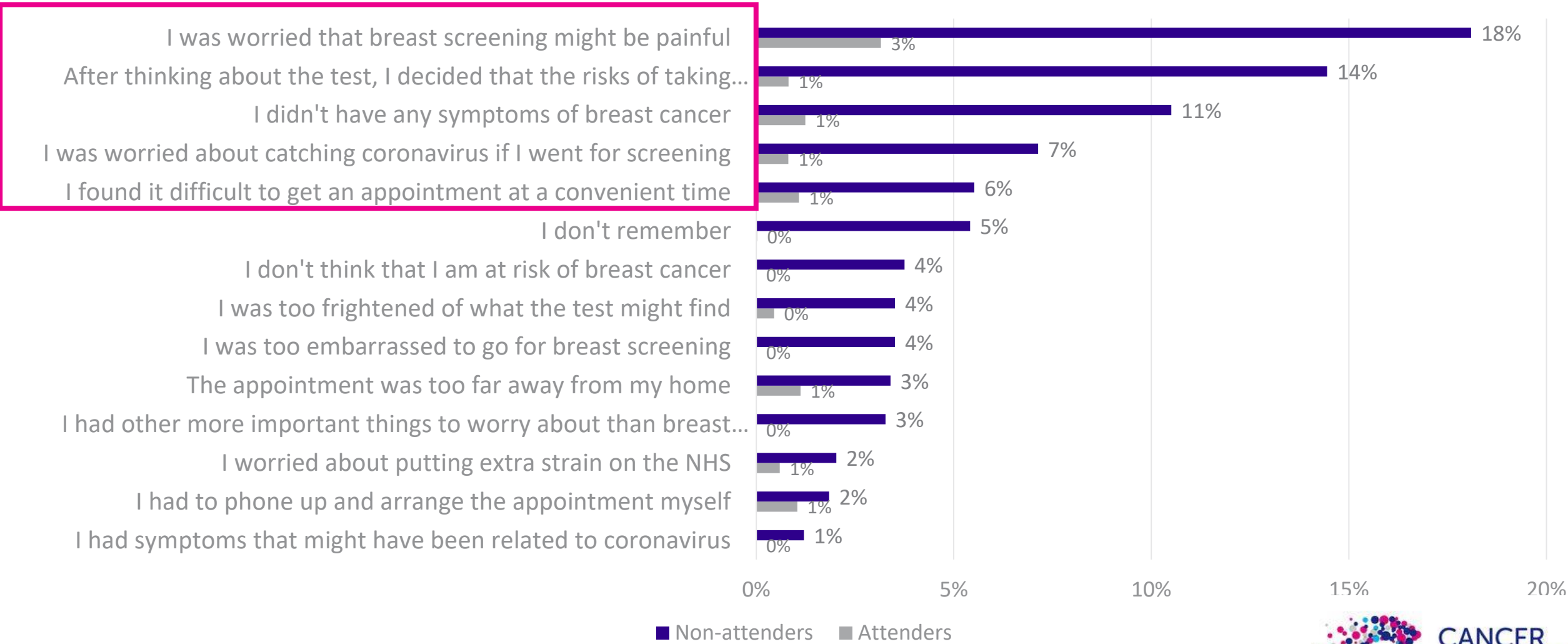


Breast screening barriers



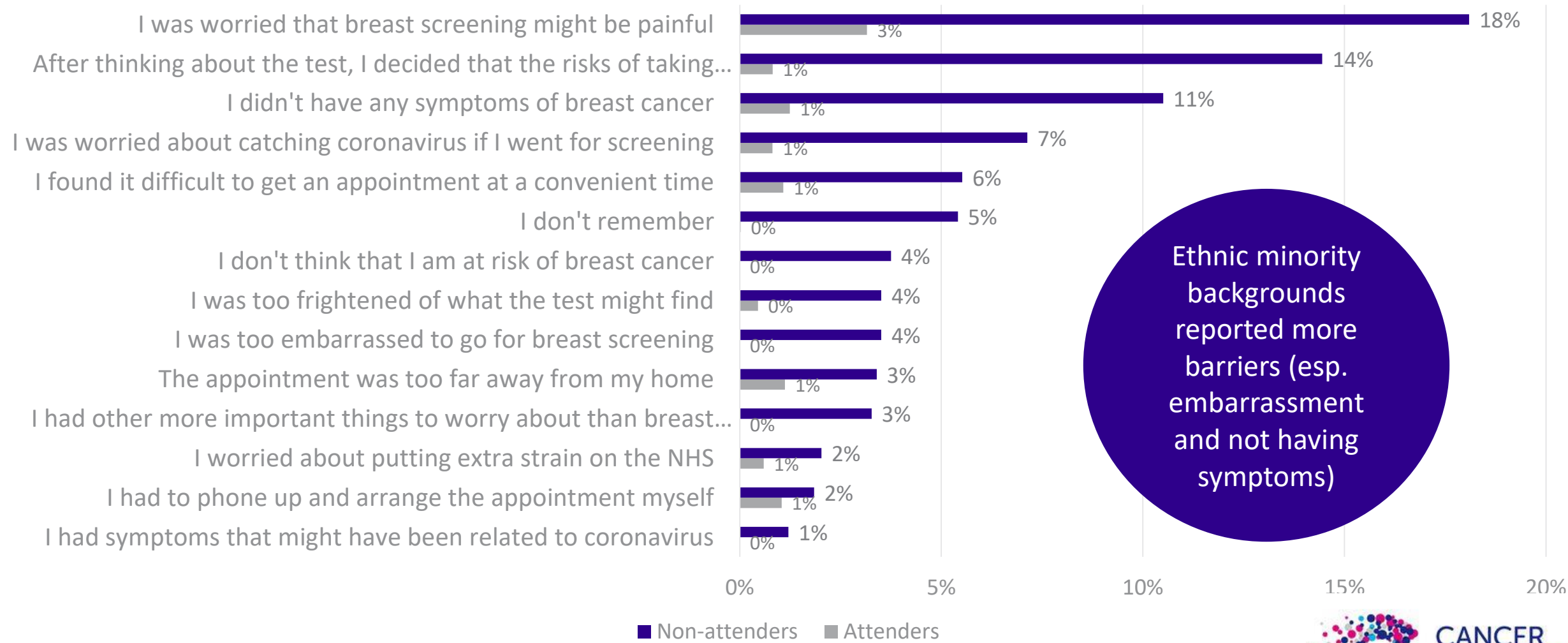
Q45. Thinking about the last time you were invited for breast screening, did any of the following put you off going? Please select all that apply. Base: All who did attend (n=462) and didn't attend (n=73)

Breast screening barriers



Q45. Thinking about the last time you were invited for breast screening, did any of the following put you off going? Please select all that apply. Base: All who did attend (n=462) and didn't attend (n=73)

Breast screening barriers



Q45. Thinking about the last time you were invited for breast screening, did any of the following put you off going? Please select all that apply. Base: All who did attend (n=462) and didn't attend (n=73)

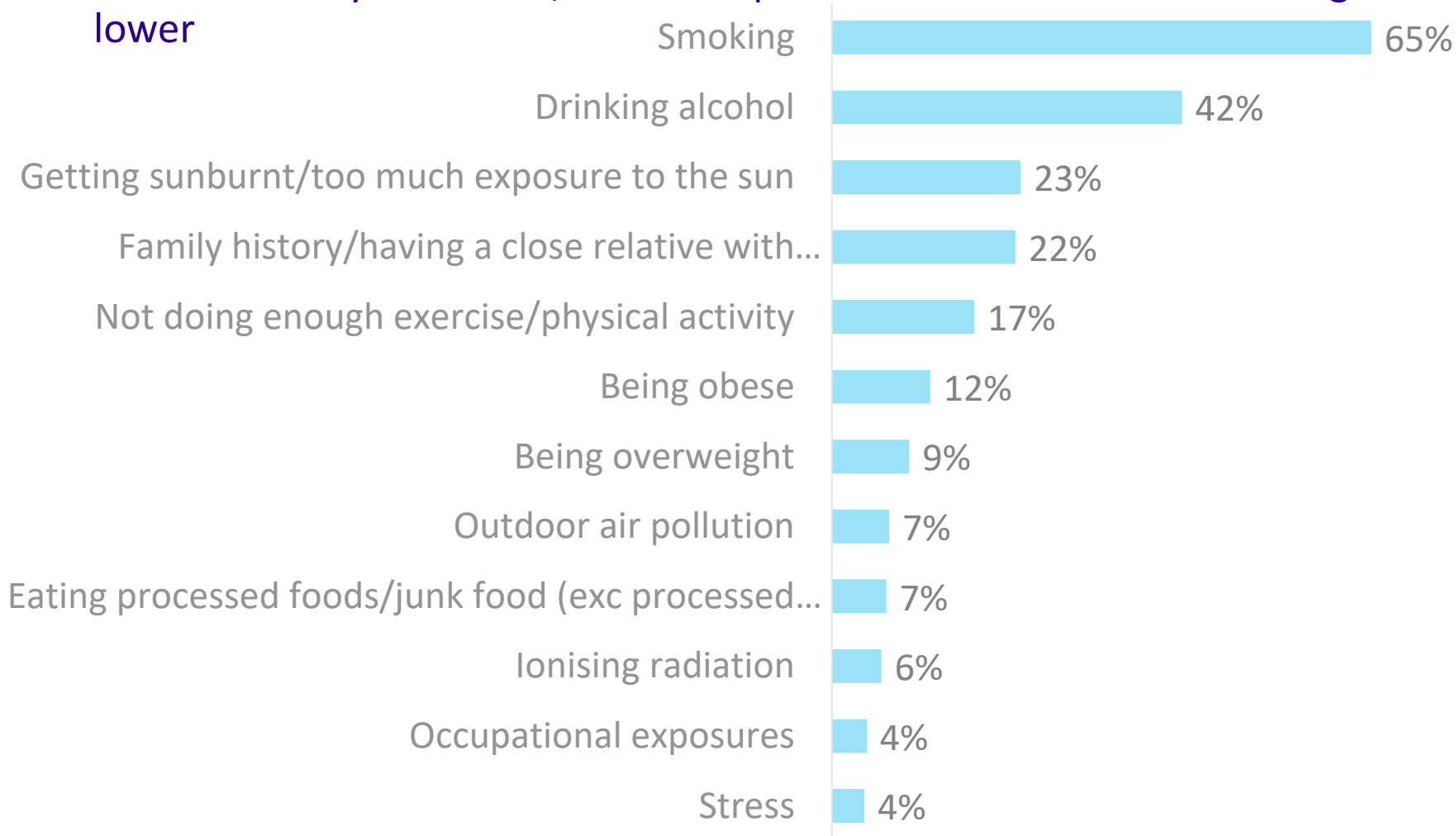
Summary/Reflections - screening

- Intentions to attend/complete cervical and bowel screening are lower than they were the year before
 - Why could this be?
- Having experienced pain last time is the new top barrier to attending cervical screening, and a concerning percentage of respondents said that cervical screening was painful the last time they went
 - CRUK looking at how our health information should adapt to this
- Top (4) bowel screening barriers haven't changed since pre-COVID
- Top barriers to attending breast screening include: worry it might be painful, and the risks outweighing the benefits
 - How many actually find it painful?
 - Concern about risks vs benefits isn't mirrored in other screening programmes

Prevention

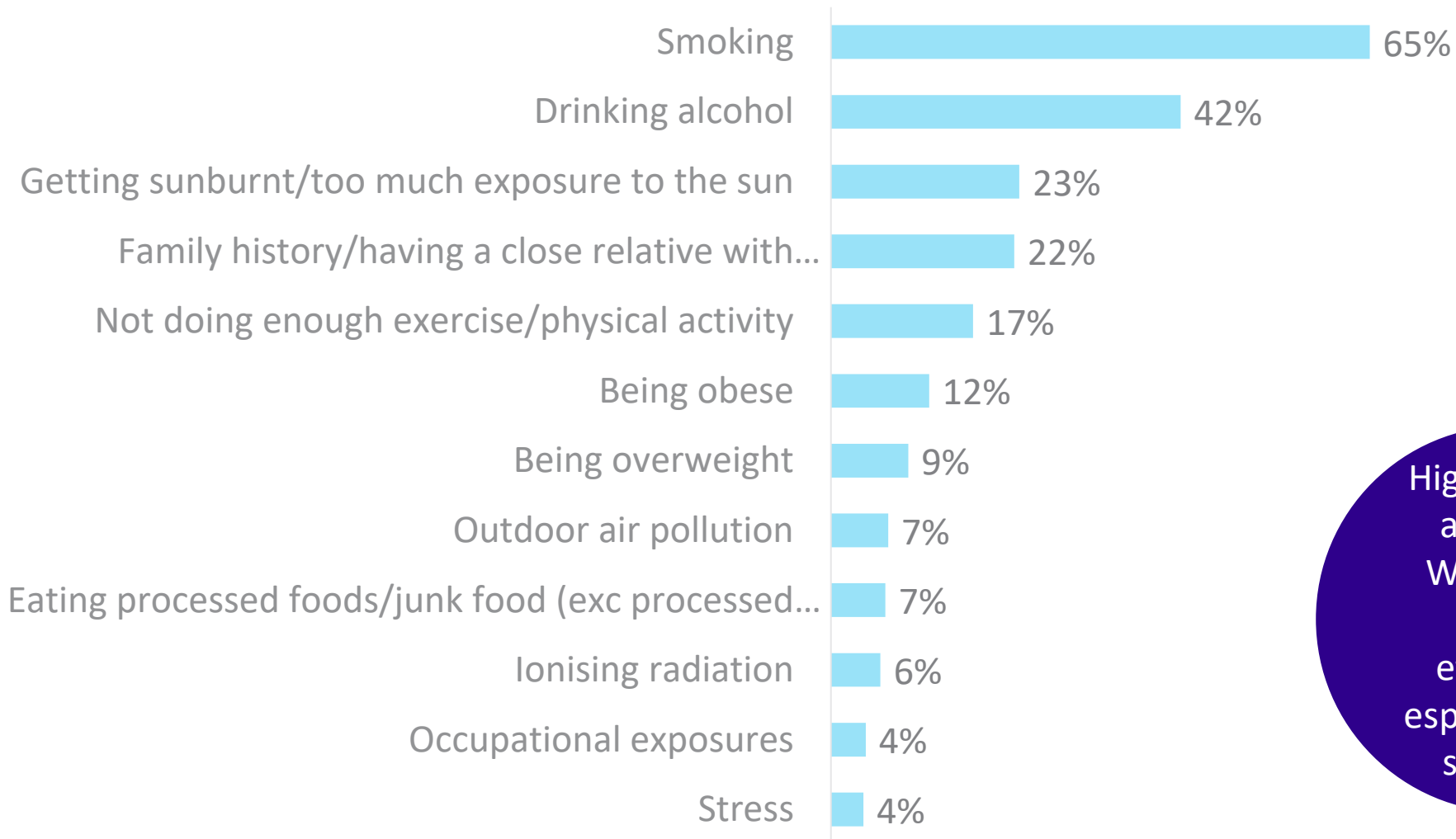
Spontaneous recall of risk factors

Smoking was spontaneously mentioned by two-thirds, considerably ahead of any other factor. Alcohol was recalled by two-fifths, but other preventable factors such as being overweight/obese were much lower



Q33. What things do you think could increase a person's chance of developing cancer?
Base: All UK adults (n=2,446)

Spontaneous recall of risk factors



Higher recall
amongst
women, AB1C

Higher recall
amongst
White and
Mixed
ethnicity,
especially for
smoking

Summary/Reflections - prevention

- Awareness of cancer risk factors differs across demographic factors
- Overweight and obesity are the second biggest cause of cancer, but are not the risk factor people are second most aware of

For further information please contact:
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Reference: Cancer Research UK's Cancer Awareness Measure:
Key Findings (September 2021), unpublished data