

How communication impacts the right to public healthcare

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AIM OF THE PRESENTATION



- To give an account of current ongoing intercultural and interlinguistic practices in Spanish hospitals and how linguistic and cultural asymmetries affect the access to healthcare for migrant patients.
- We believe that joint efforts between health, language, and communication disciplines is necessary to explore, develop and improve the ways in which healthcare professionals and patients communicate and to achieve an equal society in which migrants have equal access to healthcare.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

(Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)).



**United
Nations**

**Peace, dignity and equality
on a healthy planet**



MIGRANT/FOREIGNERS' RIGHTS WHEN ACCESSING HEALTHCARE



Universal
Declaration of
Human Rights



Right to
healthcare



Right to freedom
of expression,
including access
to information



SPANISH LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Spain lacks clear policies regarding language provision in healthcare settings, leading to ambiguity and potential misunderstandings.
- ***Law 41/2002*** of 14 November on the regulation of the autonomy of the patient and their rights and obligations regarding information and clinical documentation

Information will be communicated to the patient in a way that they will understand and will be adapted to their needs.

No reference to the language in which this information will be rendered.

MIGRANT/FOREIGNERS RIGHTS WHEN ACCESSING HEALTHCARE IN SPAIN



*Right to **universal** public health care*

Royal Decree Law 7/2018, passed in July 2018, recognises access to the National Health System as a fundamental right of every person in Spain

- *Universal for whom?*
 - *Spanish nationals*
 - *EU citizens*
 - *Foreign nationals with permanent residence*
 - *+90 days of residence*
 - *registered in a municipality*

➡ *Non-permanent residents need a favorable report where this right is acknowledged*

- *Exceptions:*
 - *pregnant women*
 - *underaged*
 - *victims of human trafficking*
 - *people in serious condition (humanitarian reasons)*



SPANISH LEGAL FRAMEWORK

NO REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH THIS INFORMATION WILL BE RENDERED DESPITE...



LANGUAGE BEING KEY FOR
UNDERSTANDING.



THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES
THIS MAY HAVR GOT
HEALTHCATE PROVIDERS.

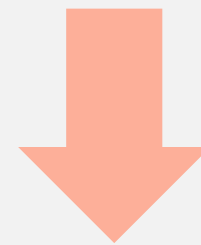


LINGUISTIC RIGHTS ON HEALTHCARE ASSISTANCE IN SPAIN

The use of one's mother tongue is a fundamental right.

DIRECTIVE 2011/24/EU of the OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare

- *Measures must be implemented to ensure that patients understand all information provided by healthcare workers.*
- *Each Member State is free to provide information in languages other than the official languages.*



CONTRADICTION: UNDERSTANDING COMES HAND IN HAND WITH KNOWING THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH THE INFORMATION IS PROVIDED

NARRATIVE INQUIRY ABOUT COMMUNICATION IN HEALTHCARE IN SPAIN



Methodology

- Revise legal texts to give an update of current legislation in Spain
- Check how legislation is being applied in practice



LEGISLATION

SURVEY





SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- *65 RESPONDENTS*
- *ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO PROFESSIONALS
AT A PUBLIC HOSPITAL IN MADRID*
- *INTERVIEWS*

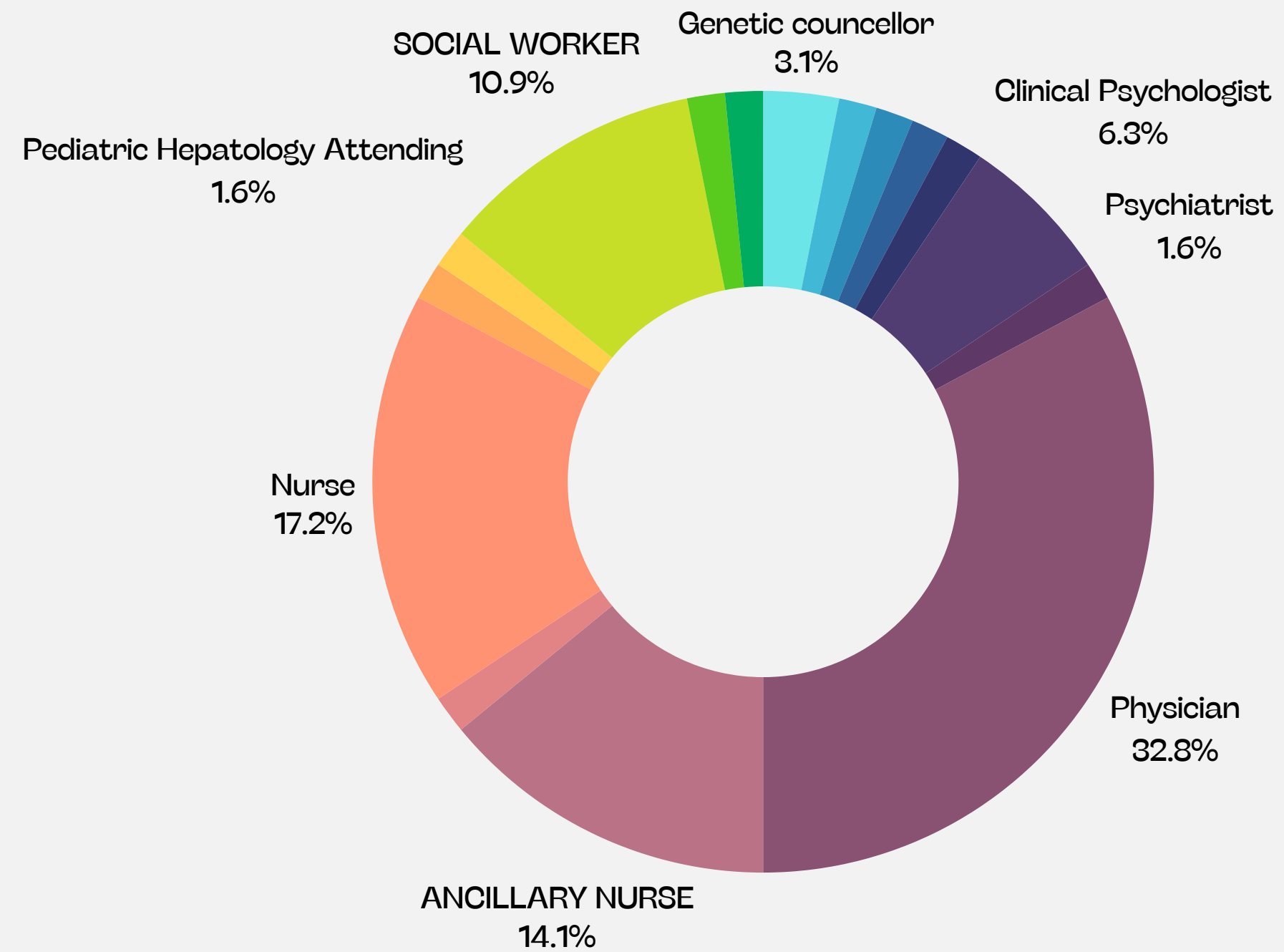
QUESTIONS



- Professional category.
- How do you feel when you have a foreign non-Spanish speaking patient?
- To what extent does the fact that the patient is foreign affect healthcare communication?
- Do you think communication is only affected by language or are there other issues (for example, Latin patients in Spain)?
- When you have a patient who does not speak Spanish, what do you do?
- Do you have any strategies for this?
- If you have used a common language with a patient (not necessarily patient or professional's main language), did you communicate effectively?
- Have you ever had any linguistic misunderstandings with foreign patients?
- Have you ever had any cultural misunderstandings with foreign patients?
- Do you try to adapt your language to be understood by foreign patients? If so, how?
- Do you try to understand the other culture (for example, distance, eye contact...)?
- How do you think communication with non-Spanish speaking patients could be improved?



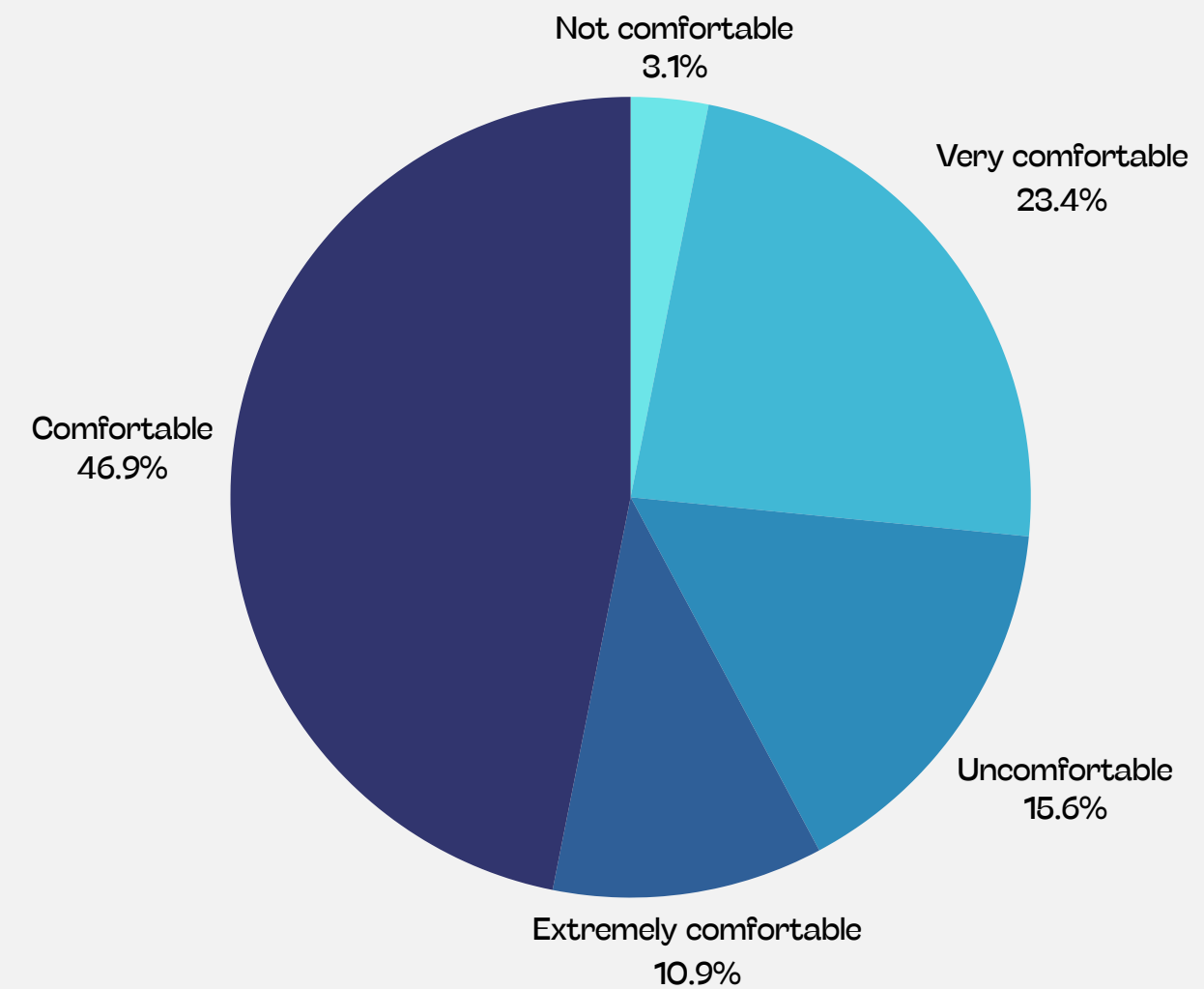
PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY



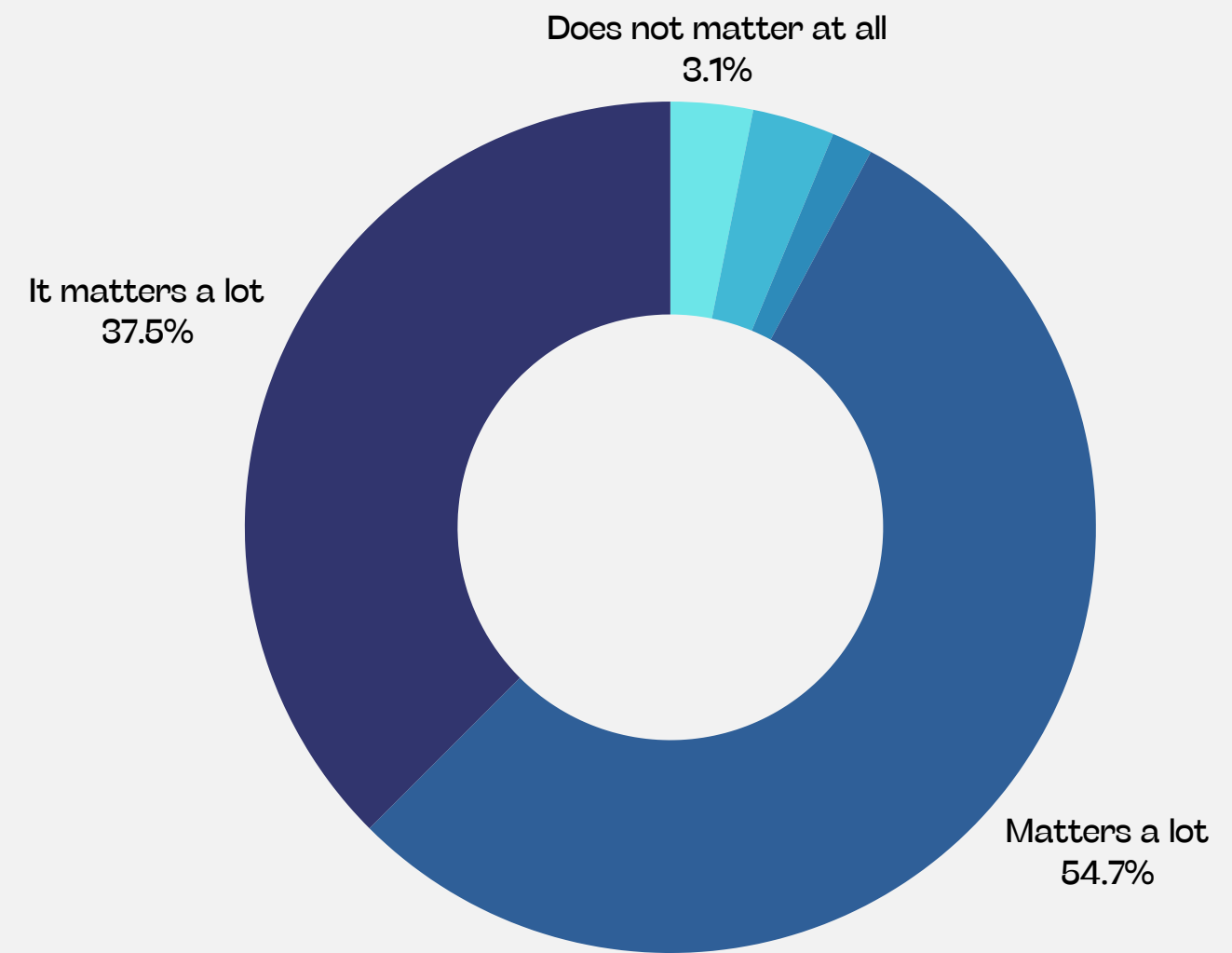
EXPERIENCES



How do you feel when you have a foreign non-Spanish speaking patient?



To what extent does the fact that the patient is foreign affect healthcare communication?





FACTORS THAT AFFECT COMMUNICATION

Do you think communication is only affected by language or are there other issues (for example, Latin patients in Spain)?

On the one hand, some of the healthcare professionals argued that:

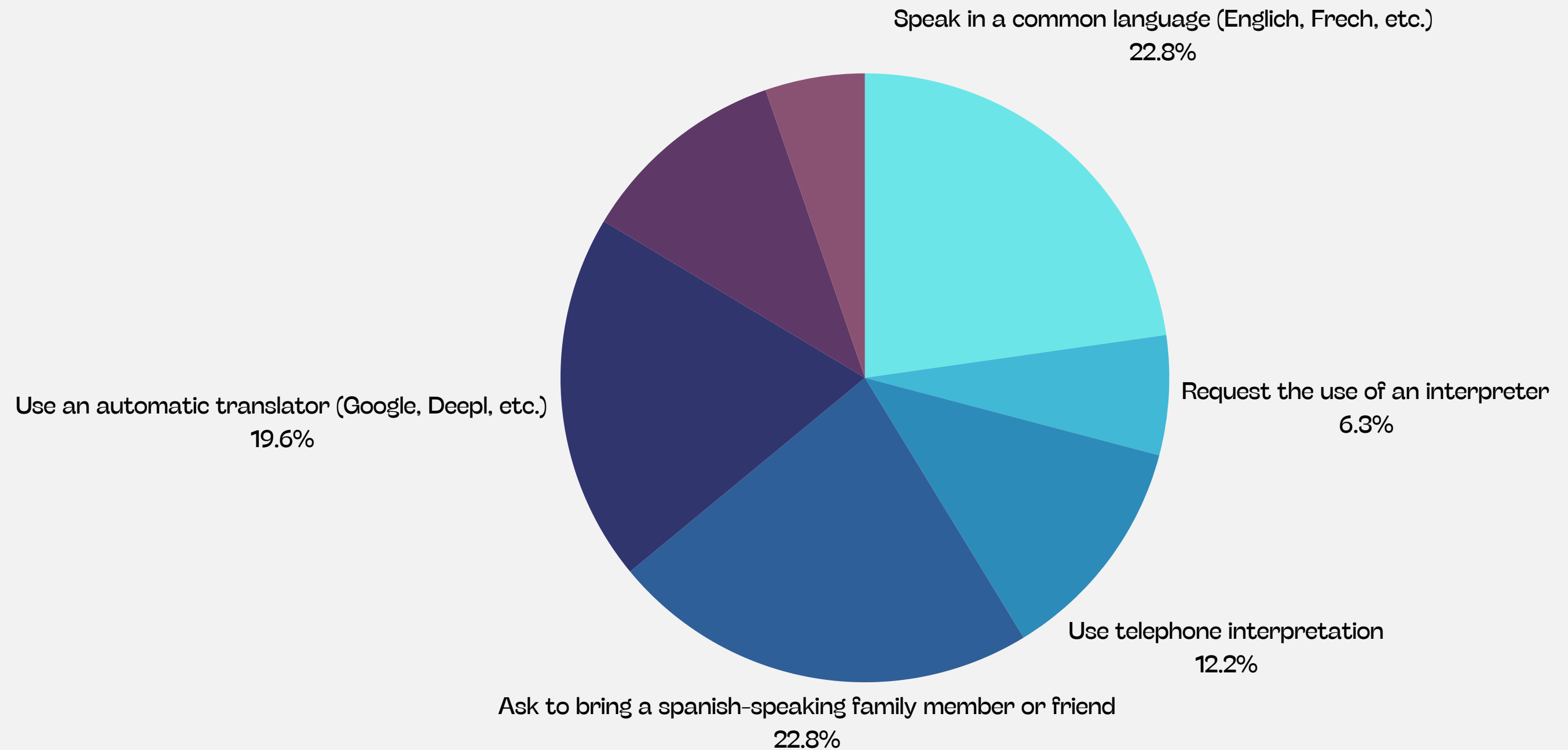
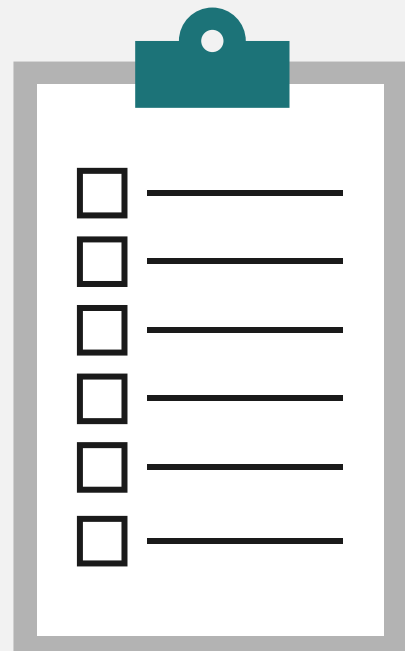
- *Language interpretation can pose problems.*
- *Culture needs to be taken into account.*
- *Some words can have different meanings.*
- *Religion can be an obstacle.*

On the other hand, others were of the opinion it is only affected when patients do not speak the language.



HOW DO THEY DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM?

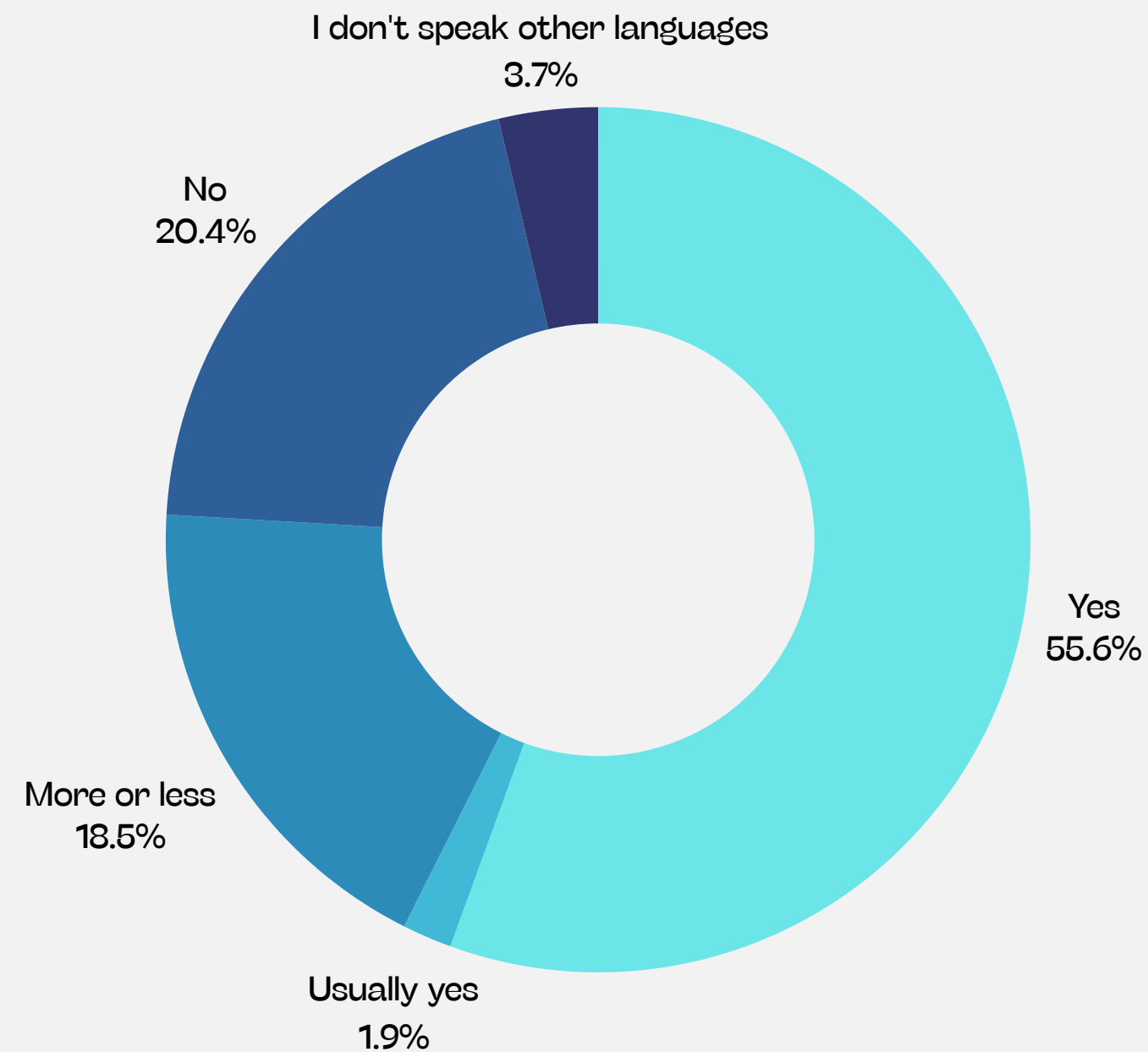
When you have a patient that does not speak Spanish, what do you do?



LINGUISTIC ASSISTANCE



If you have used a common language with a patient (not necessarily patient or profesional's main language), did you communicate effectively?





LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS WITH FOREIGN PATIENTS

LINGUISTIC MISUNDERSTANDINGS

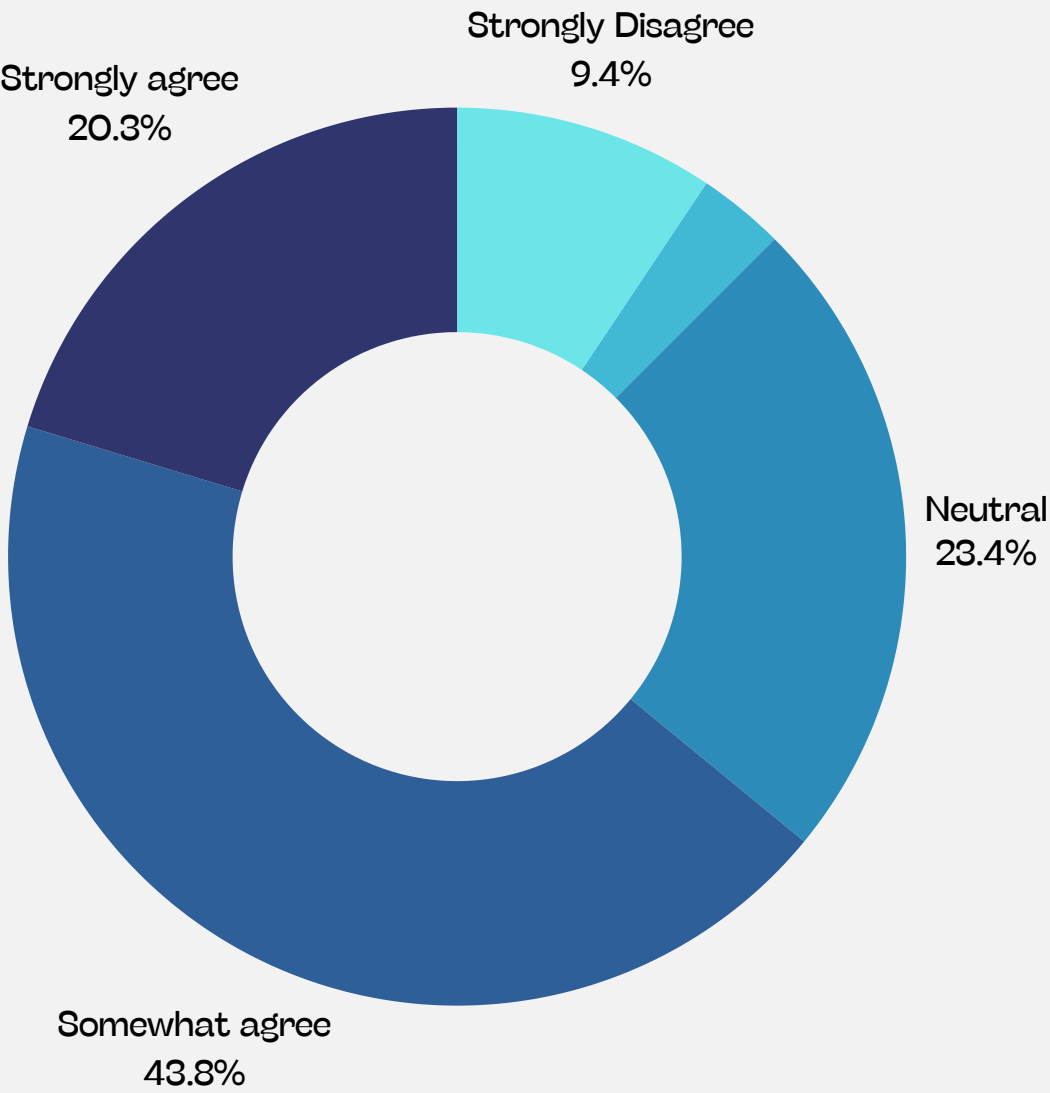
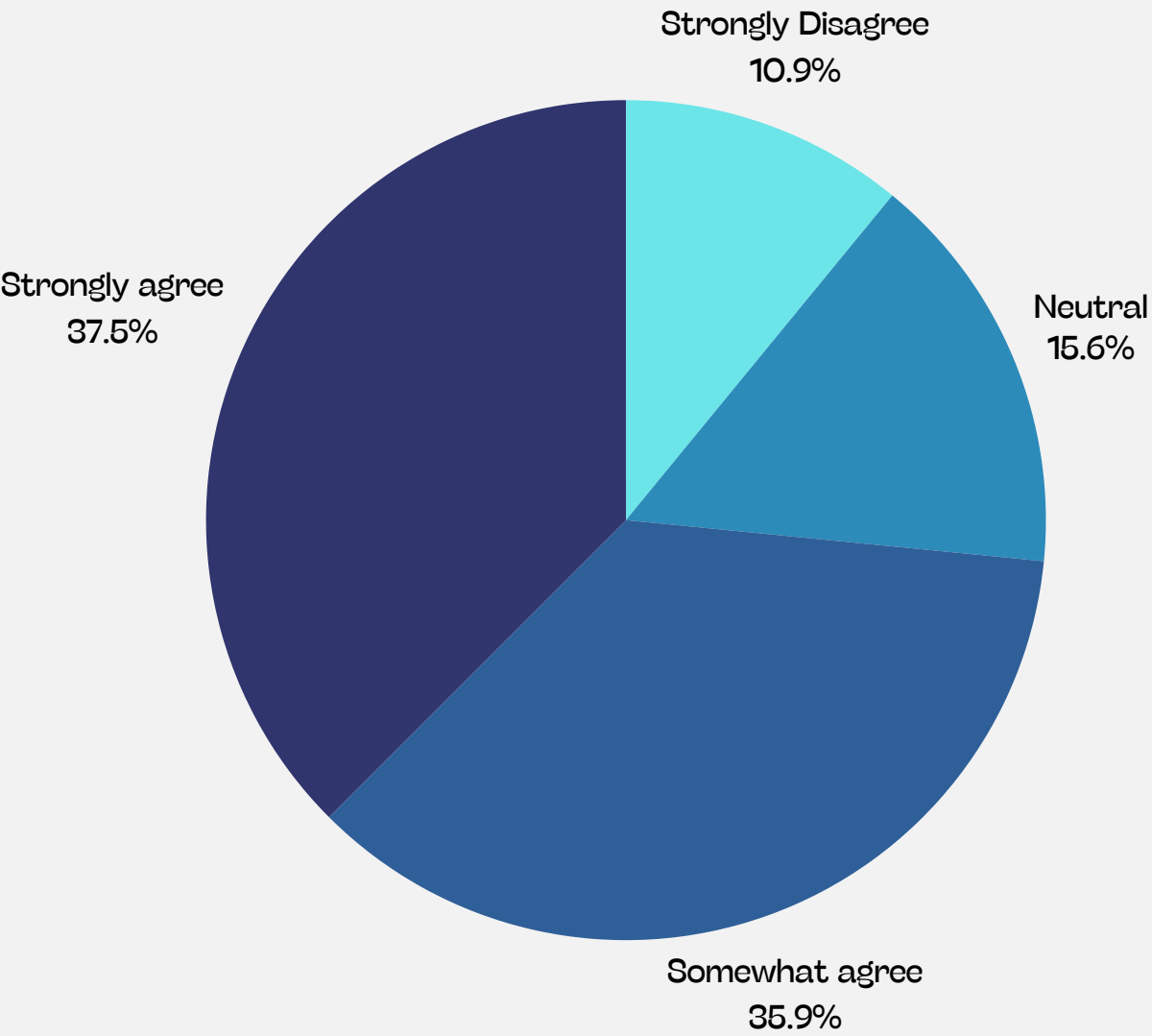
- Patients don't understand the meaning of the information about treatments or medication.
- Trouble understanding dosages.
- Patients wrongly believe they are taking a specific type of medication.
- Not being able to work with a translator.

CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS

- Some patients prefer natural remedies.
- They get the meals of the day confused.
- Problems understanding how the healthcare system works.
- They do not understand some concepts such as brain death.

COMMUNICATION MISUNDERSTANDINGS

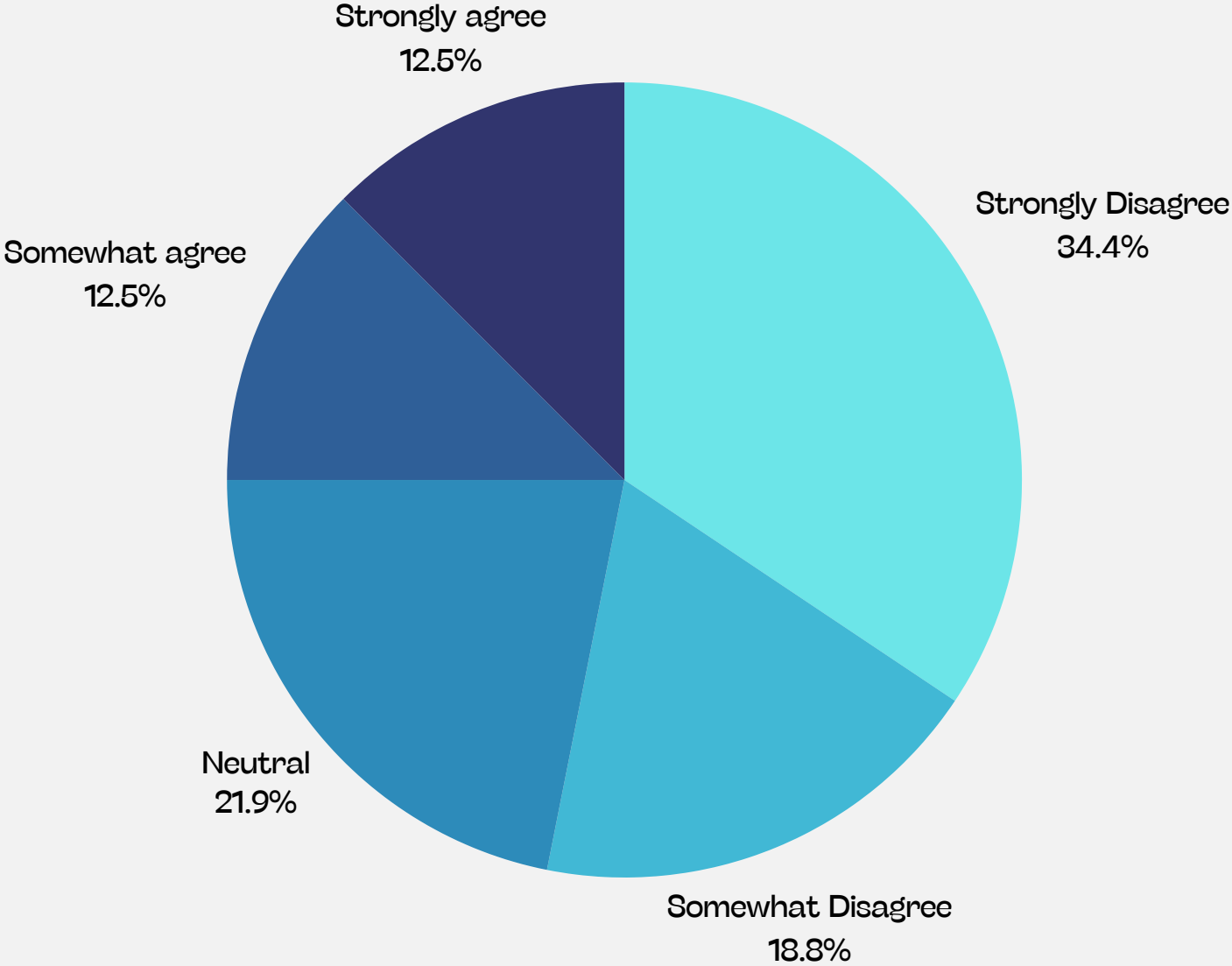
They did not understand Spanish or any of the languages I speak



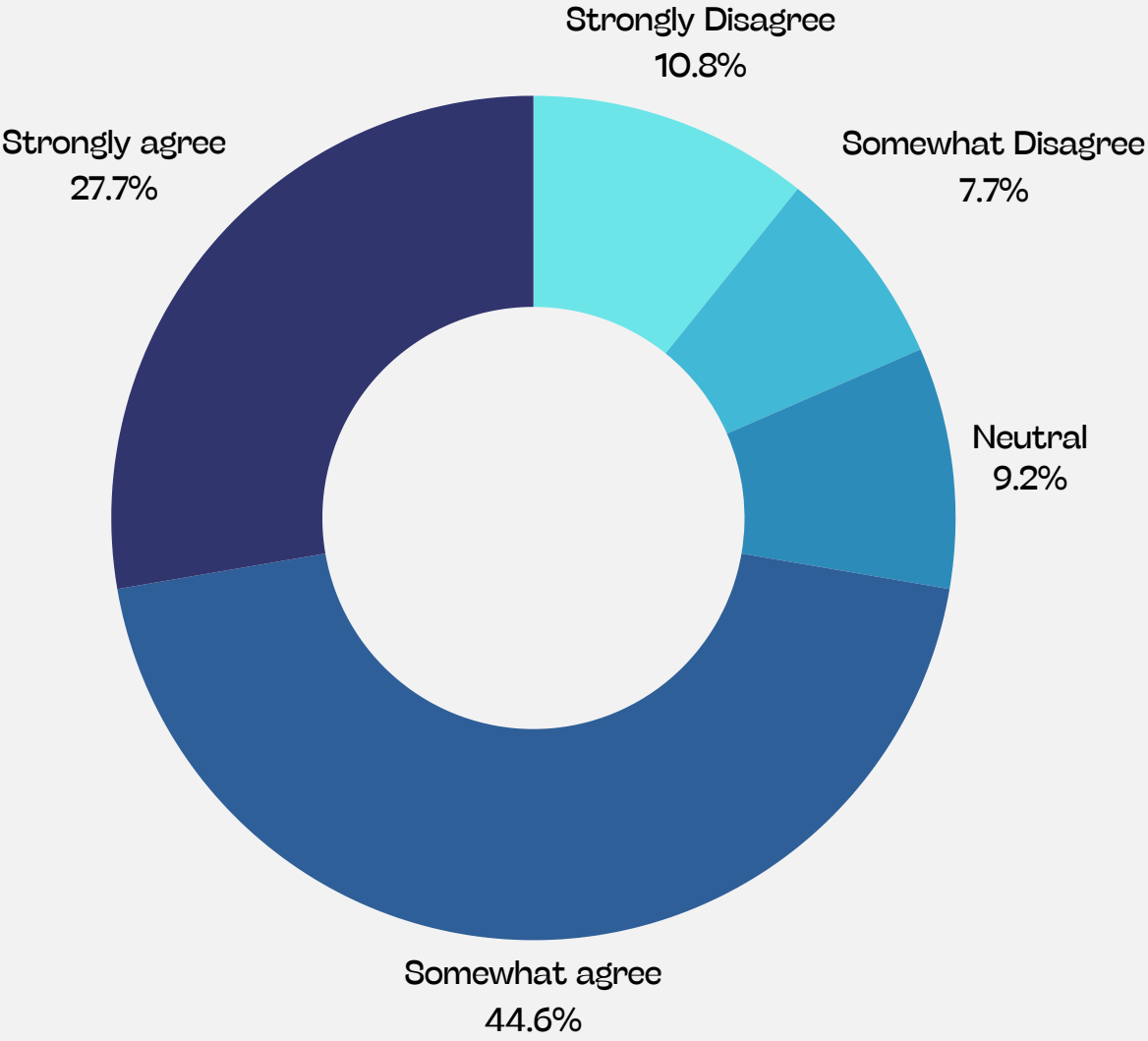
They did not understand the concepts I was explaining, even though they spoke some language

COMMUNICATION MISUNDERSTANDINGS

They seemed to understand but then it turned out that they did not

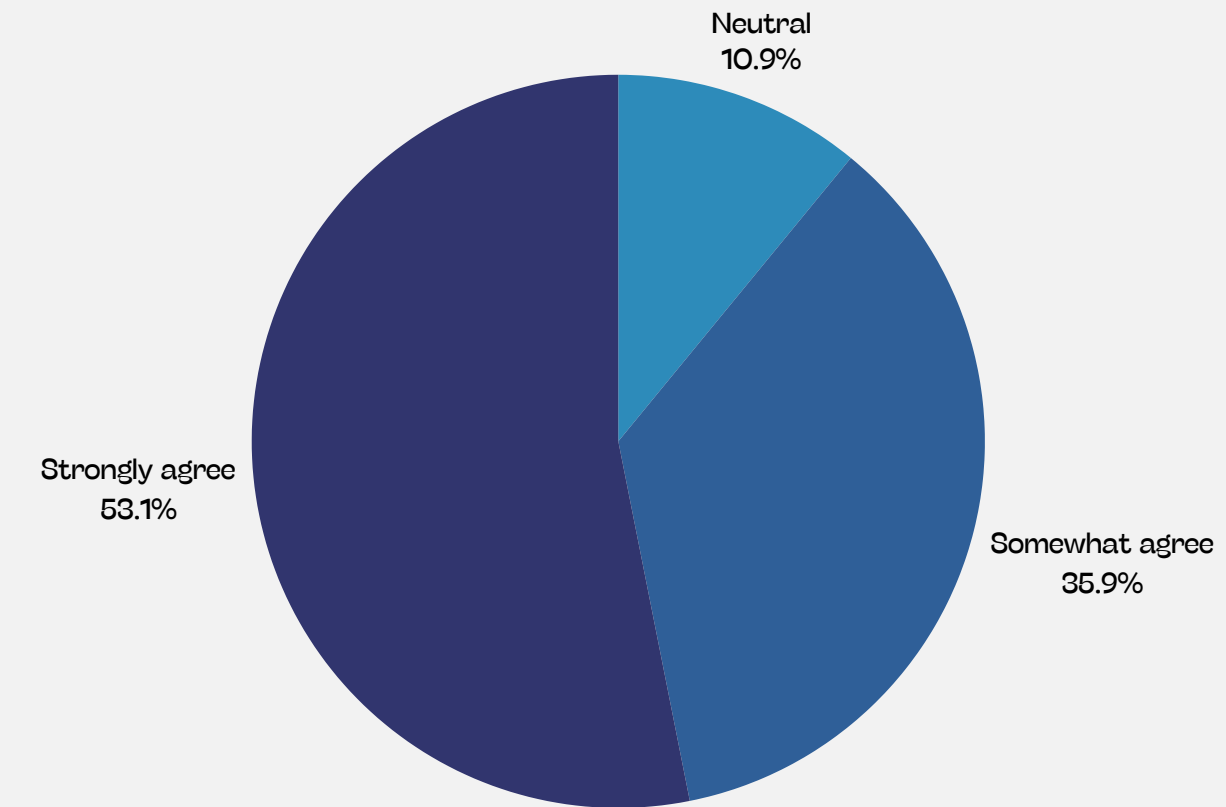


They pretended not to understand





Do you try to adapt your language to be understood by foreign patients?



Do you think you should adapt to the other culture (for example, distance, eye contact...)?

Adaptation to different cultures is crucial to facilitate communication

Patients and their families should make an effort to adapt to the norms and practices of the healthcare system.

Limited time in the practice makes it difficult



How do you think communication with non-Spanish speaking patients could be improved?

- ✓ Adequate resources + specific training
- ✓ Accessible interpreters (face-to-face and remote)
- ✓ Technological tools (pictograms and common phrases)
- ✓ Training of administrative staff
- ✓ Clear protocols
- ✓ Training on patients' cultural traditions

EU POLICIES

Directive 2011/24/EU mandates patient comprehension of healthcare information but allows Member States to use non-official languages, creating inconsistencies.





National research project: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN FEMALE HEALTH INTERLINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION



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dialogos

THANK YOU

