

Do HIV patients find remote services acceptable?

A survey of attitudes towards digital HIV care

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INTRODUCTION

- The digitalisation of the NHS provides valuable opportunities for the engagement with 'hard-to-reach' populations.
- Solent NHS Trust has developed an online 'HIV Patient Portal' for an enhanced and secure communication of medical advice and blood results to HIV patients.
- It is important to examine the acceptability and attitudes towards remote HIV services in order to deliver the highest standards of care in a cost-effective and patient-centred manner.

AIM

To evaluate the acceptability of HIV Patient Portal as part of standard care

METHOD

Design

- Between July and December 2018, a questionnaire survey was given to HIV patients attending a large urban outpatient service for routine care.
- The functionality of the 'HIV Patient Portal' was discussed during their routine consultation.
- Patients were asked to complete the survey and hand them in a sealed envelope to the researchers.
- The questionnaire consisted of 32 items exploring demographic and attitudinal questions examined using Likert scales.
- Binary logistic regressions were performed to identify the correlates of acceptability.

RESULTS

Sample characteristics (N=195):

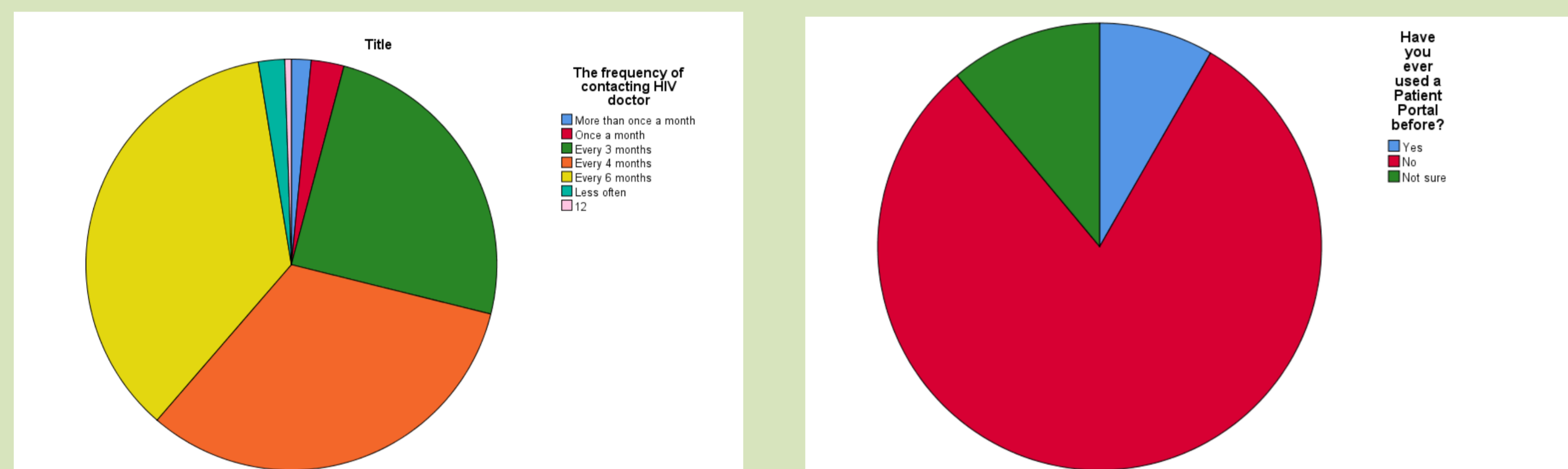
Age: 66% between 35 and 54 years

Gender: 71% Male, 28% Female

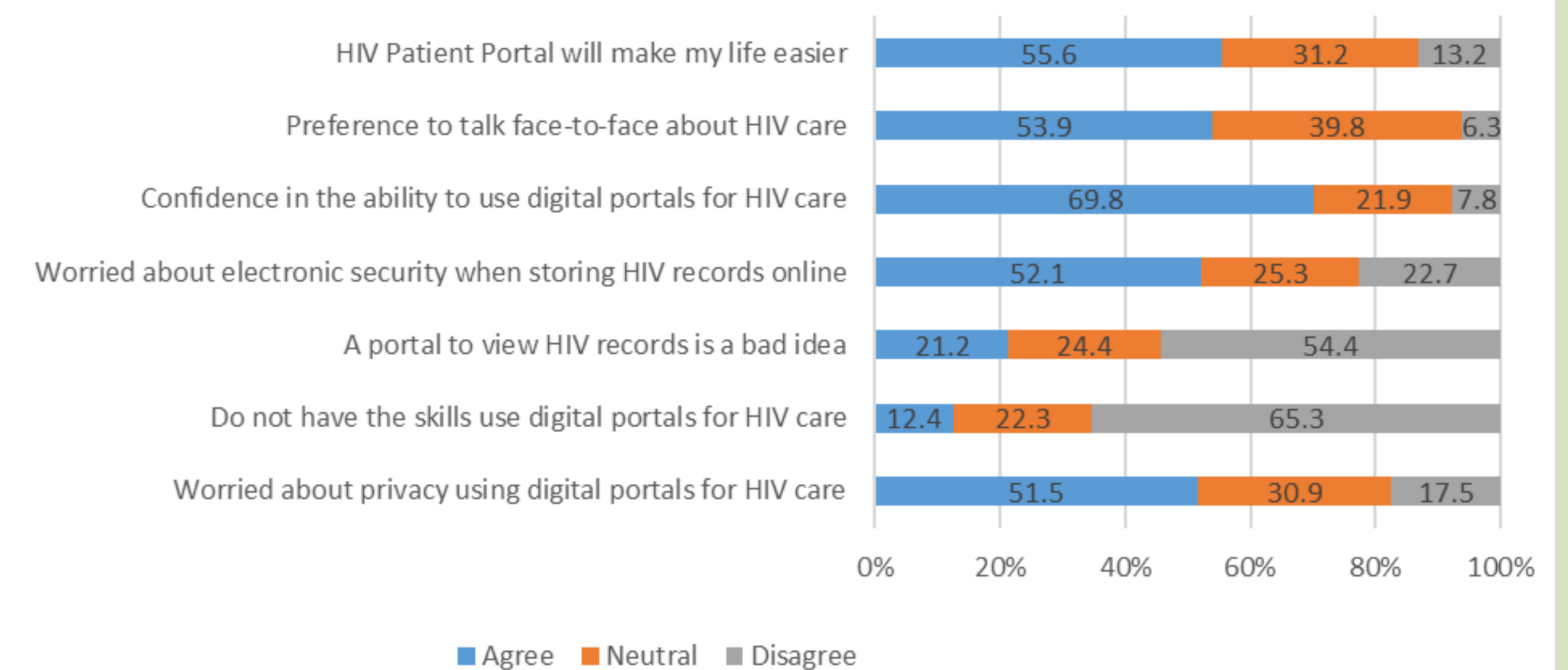
Ethnicity: 58% White, 31% Black African, 1% Black Caribbean

Education: 3% No education, 17% High school, 27% College, 67% University

Perceived IT skills: 9% Very poor/poor, 21% Moderate, 68% Good/very good

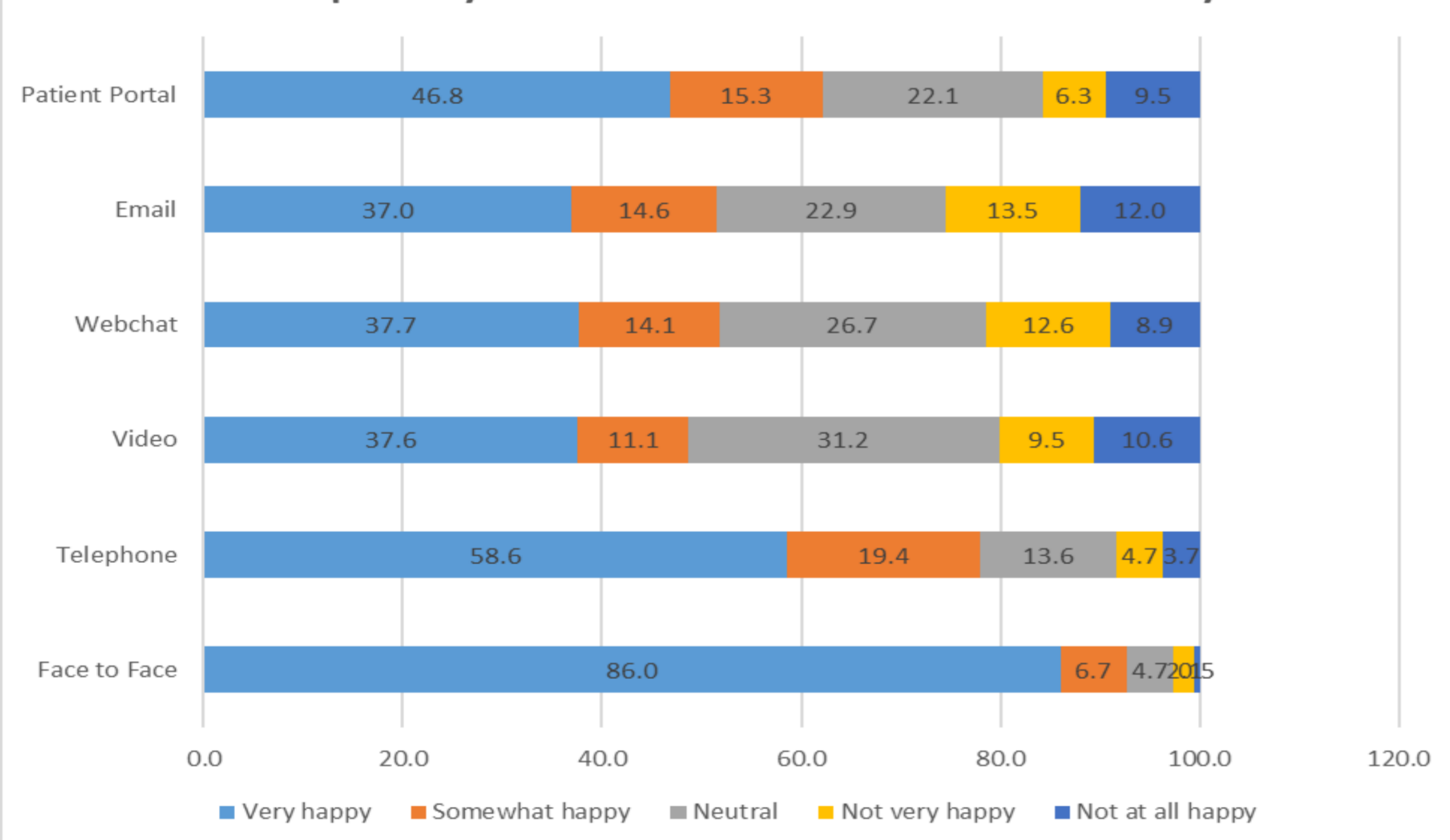


Attitudes towards digital HIV services and HIV Patient Portal



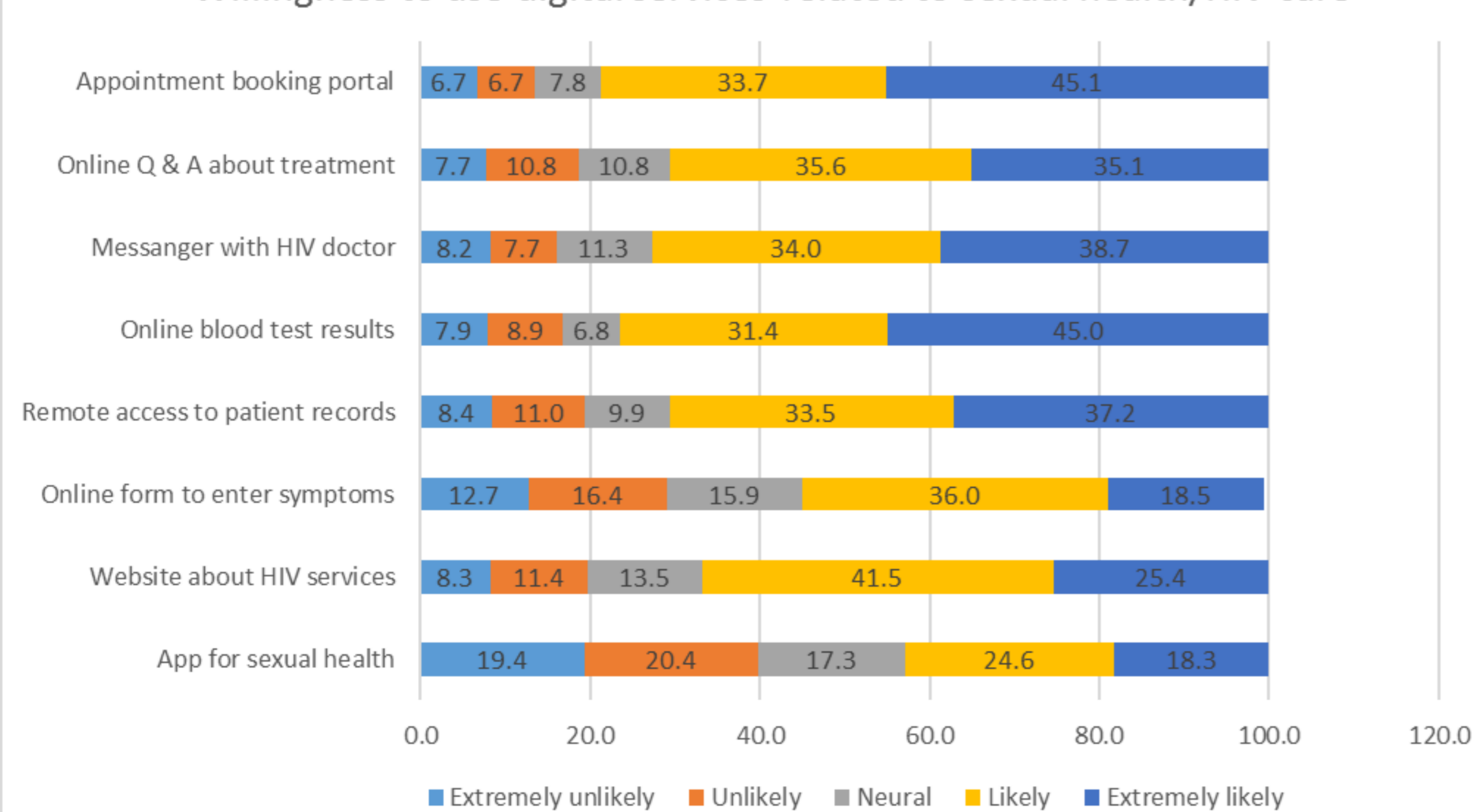
- Most HIV patients still prefer face-to-face contact, although they are receptive to using HIV Patient Portal
- A substantial proportion of patients are concerned about the security and confidentiality of digital services

The acceptability of various modes of HIV service delivery



HIV Patient Portal and telephone consultations were the most acceptable remote services for sexual health/HIV care in HIV patients.

Willingness to use digital services related to sexual health/HIV care



HIV patients saw the facility to book appointments, review blood tests and communicate with HIV team as the most attractive. Online forms for entering symptoms and mobile phone application for sexual health were less acceptable.

DISCUSSION

- There is moderate acceptability of digital services for HIV care.
- Patients who were more confident about the usability and security of online services were more likely to accept them.
- As a substantial proportion of HIV patients would still prefer face-to-face interactions, patients' concerns should be taken into consideration when developing remote digital services.
- Future research needs to evaluate the impact of those services on care delivery and overall satisfaction.

WHAT IS A PATIENT PORTAL?

- Patient portal is a secure Web-based portal which enables access to the Electronic Health Record from PCs, laptops and other electronic devices such as smart phones and tablets.
- It is primarily for HIV patients to access information about their test results and medication history anytime and anywhere.
- It can also be used to request medication refills, request and cancel appointments, exchange messages with health care team.
- It can increase patient engagement with their care.

References:

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- Daskalakis DC. The Electronic Health Record and Patient Portals in HIV Medicine. *Camb Q Healthc Ethics* 2017 Apr;26(2):332-336