



# Telephone Follow-up Visits Offer a New Care Option for Patients with Hip & Knee Arthritis

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## BACKGROUND

Advanced Practice Providers (APP) have improved equitable access to care for over 30, 000 patients with hip and knee arthritis since the introduction of Sunnybrook’s Hip and Knee Rapid Access Clinic (RAC) in 2007. Up to 40% of RAC patients do not proceed to surgical consultation. **A RAC 3-month follow-up visit is offered to patients who require evaluation of conservative treatment outcomes and re-assessment of their readiness for joint replacement.**

A gap in care was created during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, when 88 patients scheduled for in-person RAC 3-month follow-ups were cancelled or postponed.

## AIM

The purpose of this quality improvement project was to conduct virtual RAC follow-up visits via telephone to identify patients who:

- 1. Did not require further care
- 2. Felt ready for surgical consultation
- 3. Required urgent surgical consultation

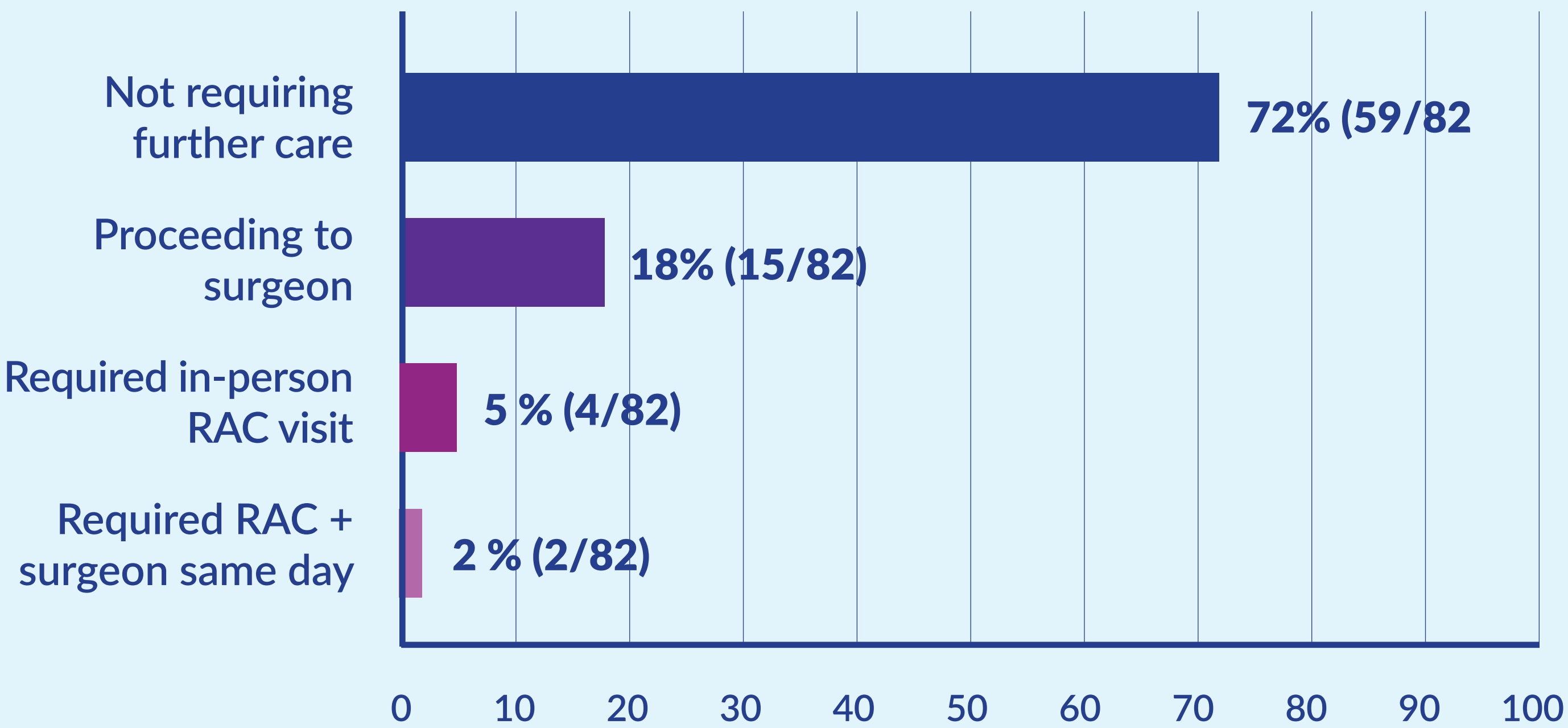
We also wanted to evaluate patient experiences with virtual care.

## METHODS

Two APPs attempted to contact patients (n=88) booked for a RAC follow-up visit in Spring 2020. Telephone visits were conducted with patients who consented to a virtual visit and follow-up (n=82). After the visit, we emailed an anonymous, optional four-question survey to each patient. The survey contained three Likert-scaled questions and one open-ended question to gather further impressions about the patient experience. Those that could not be reached via email were sent a print version of the survey via Canada Post with a stamped return envelope. A total of 81 surveys were successfully sent out.

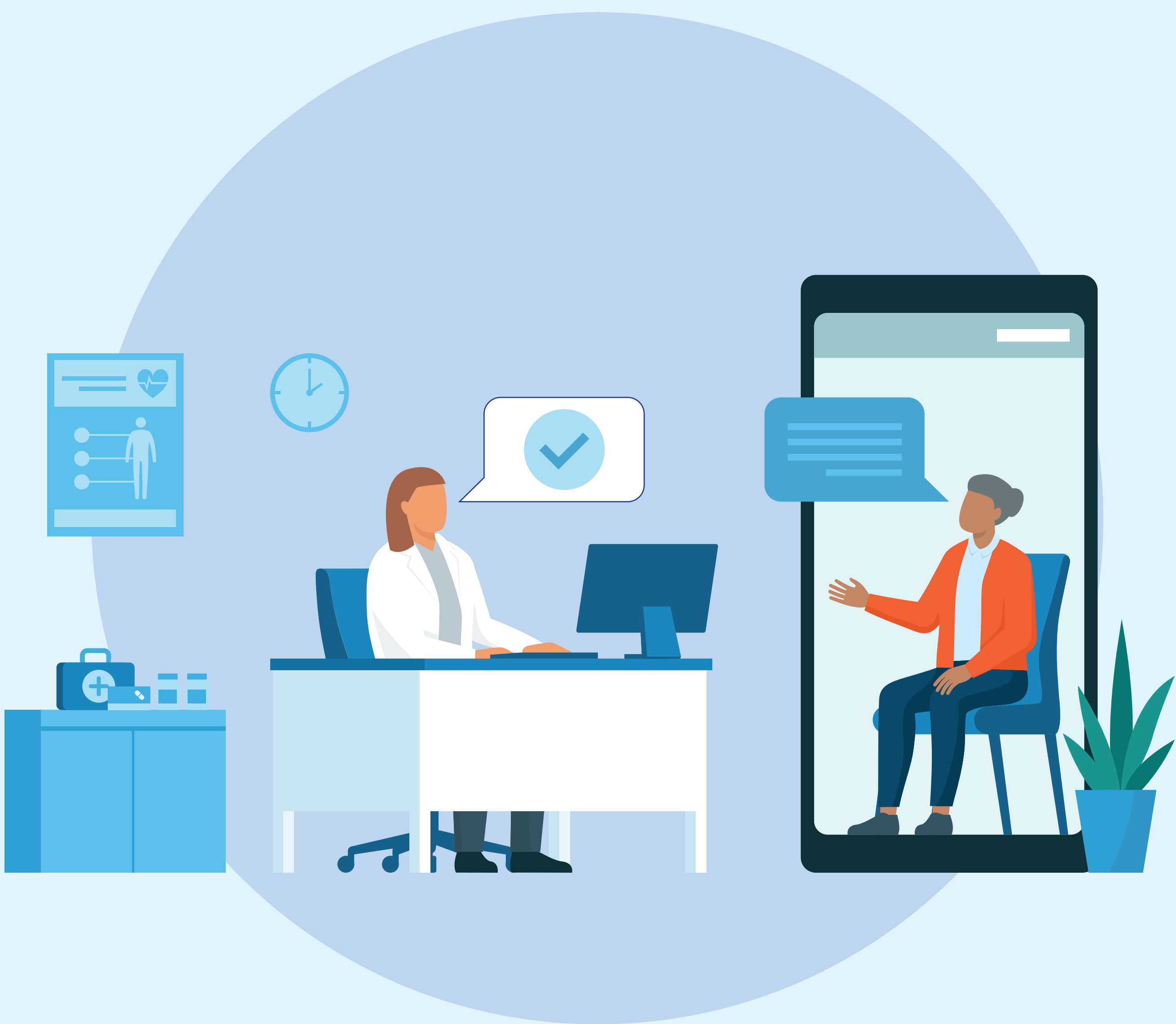
## RESULTS

### Outcome of Telephone RAC Follow-ups

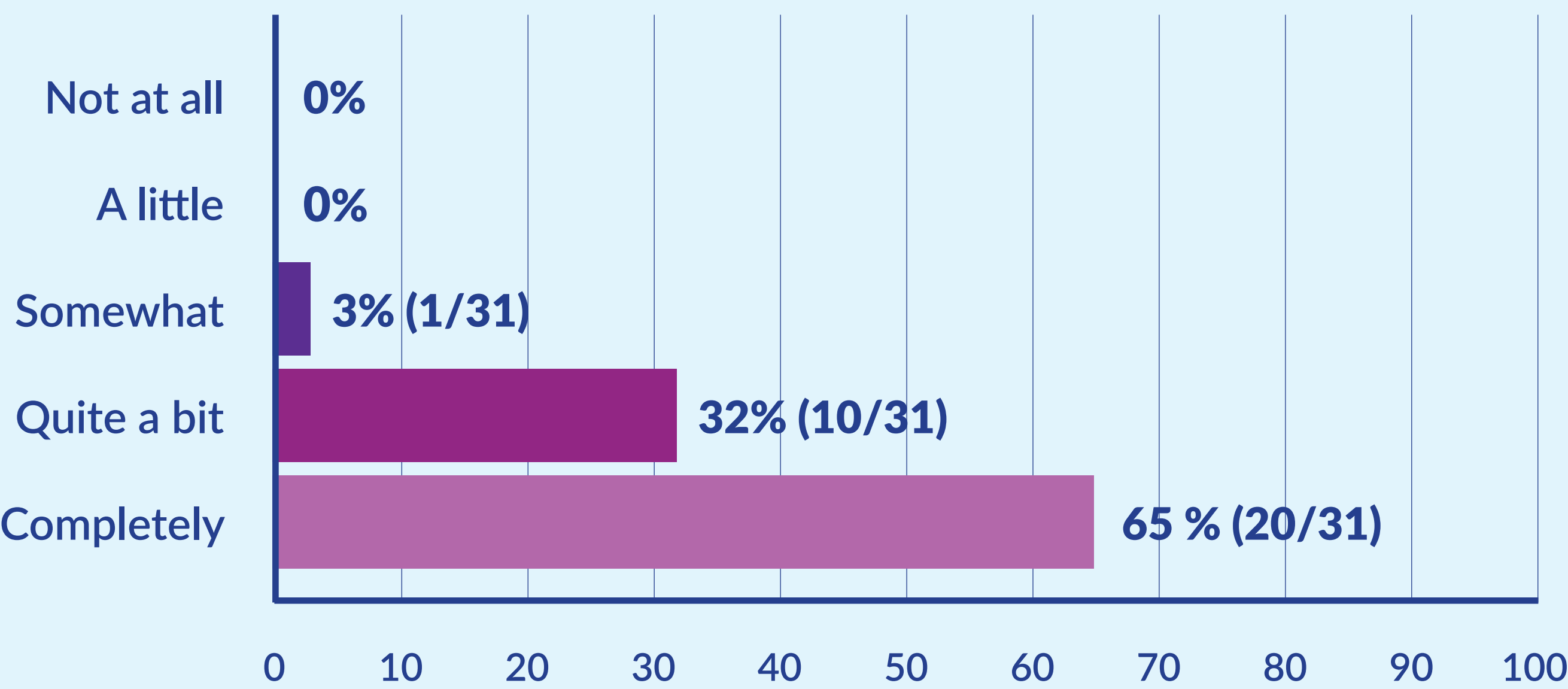


### Survey Results

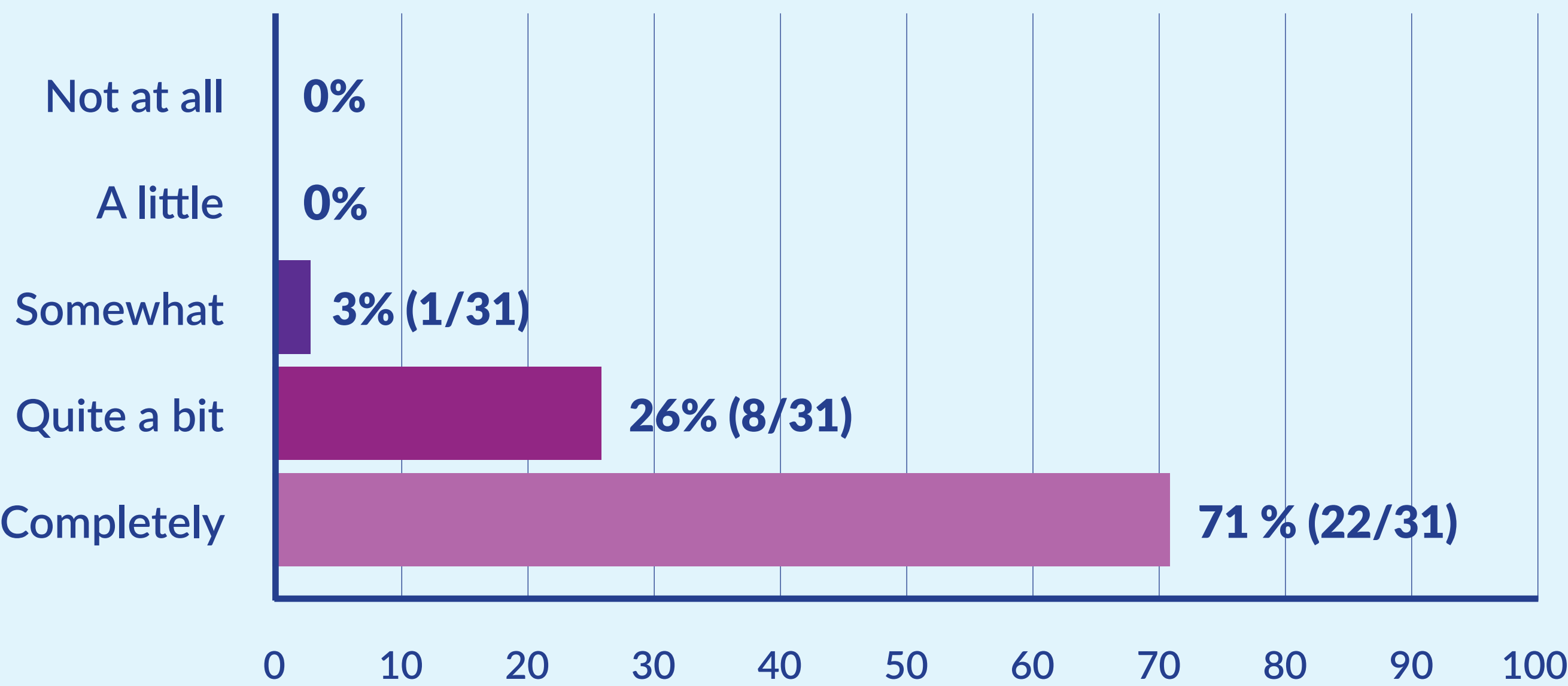
Survey response rate was 38% (31/81) with 27 responding online and 4 via post.



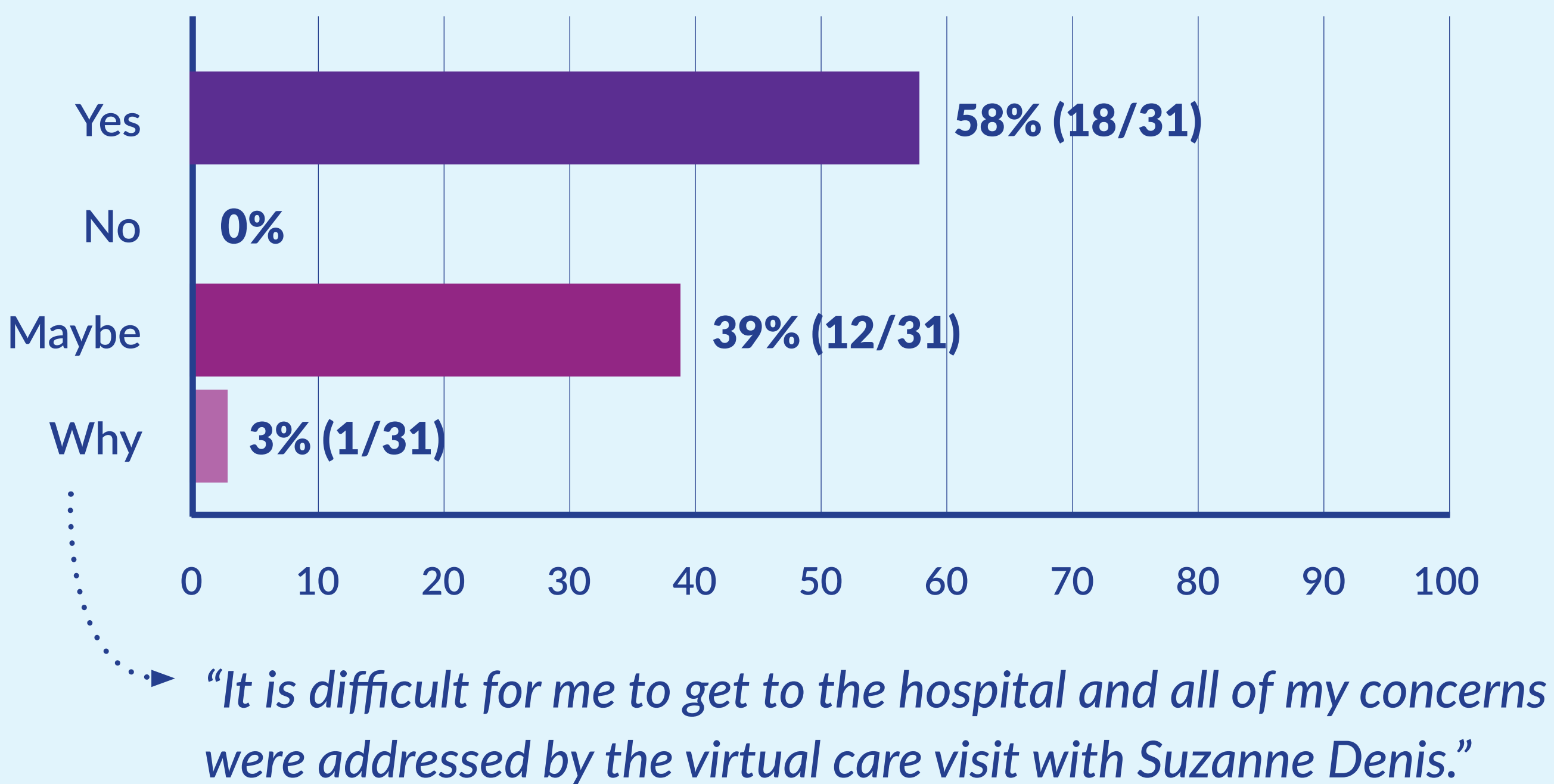
### Did the call address what matters most to you with regards to your hip or knee arthritis?



### How satisfied are you with the recommendations and plan provided?



### Would you choose a virtual care visit in the future?



### Patient Feedback

*"I am very pleased and grateful for all the caring and professional service and attention."*

*"I think you are providing excellent service. A lot can be done by phone and video conferencing. We still need the in-person visit, but a careful balance of the two should be best practice."*

*"Great service and expertise."*

*"My spinal stenosis is a concern as it affects the function of my two replaced knees and right hip. We were able to discuss this. I felt that it was a 'bonus virtual appointment' because all of my issues were discussed fully. I was also emailed 'Exercises for osteoarthritis of the Hip and Knee' which I am finding helpful."*

## IMPACT

Given the positive results of our surveys, we have adapted our practice and offer 3-month RAC follow-up visits via telephone. Patients now have more choice about how they access RAC follow-up care. We continue to leverage our success with virtual follow-up care to offer virtual clinics for post-operative patients as well.

- Regularly scheduled APP virtual care clinics now include:
- Telephone RAC follow-ups (2 clinics/month)
  - Routine Post-operative follow-ups:
    - 1 Videoconference clinic/week (via Zoom platform)
    - 1 Telephone clinic/week