Implementation of a Web-Based Tool to Help Patients Prepare their Visits in Two Laval Primary Care Teaching Clinics

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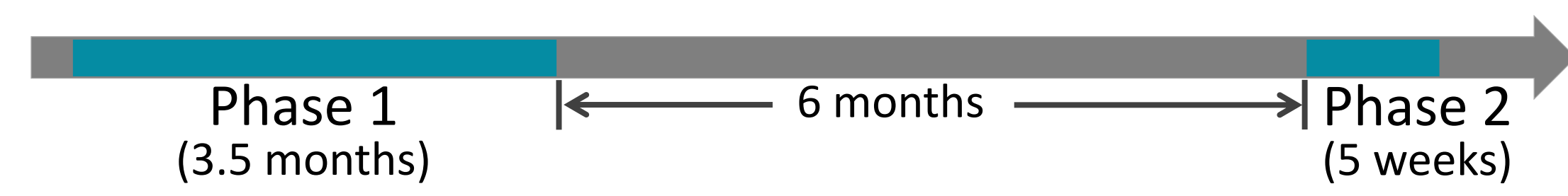
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DiscutonsSante.ca
PARTENAIRES PATIENT - PROFESSIONNEL

FONDATION CITÉ DE LA SANTÉ

RRSP Université de Montréal

Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de Laval

Québec

Background & Goals

- Engaged and informed patients participate more actively in discussions with their healthcare providers, enhancing the effectiveness of medical encounters.
- *Discutons Santé* (Let's Discuss Health) is a francophone website, freely accessible. It helps patients prepare their medical visits.
- Previous work from our research group showed that *Discutons Santé* is adopted by 16.5% of the patients with chronic diseases in primary care (PC) clinics.
- *Discutons Santé* was implemented in two PC teaching clinics in Laval (Qc) in 2017 as a cutting-edge practice.

Goals:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of *Discutons Santé* in two PC teaching clinics in Laval (Qc) (Phase 1).
2. Evaluate the adoption of *Discutons Santé* six months post implementation in one of the two PC clinics (Phase 2).
3. Identify factors facilitating and limiting its adoption by patients visiting one of the two PC clinics (Phase 2).

Phase 1 (3.5 months) — 6 months — Phase 2 (5 weeks)

Methods

Design & setting: Observational study in 2 PC teaching clinics for Phase 1 and in one of these two clinics for Phase 2.

Participants: Patients ≥ 18 years old (Phase 1 and Phase 2).

Intervention: *Discutons Santé (DS)* implementation between March and June 2017 (Phase 1).
Promotional strategies included: 1) bookmarks distributed by receptionist or trained volunteers; 2) posters and video displayed in waiting rooms; 3) *Discutons Santé* information added to the voice message and appointment confirmation e-mails; 4) individual website demonstrations by trained volunteers using electronic tablets.

Outcomes	Study instruments
Implementation reach	Volunteers' logbooks; website metrics measured by Google Analytics
Patient awareness, adoption rate, barriers and facilitators to the use of *Discutons Santé*	Self-administered questionnaire distributed to all adult patients in the clinic waiting room

PHASE 1: Reach of implementation strategies

1557 patients (19.8% of all consultations) **were** approached **by trained volunteers**
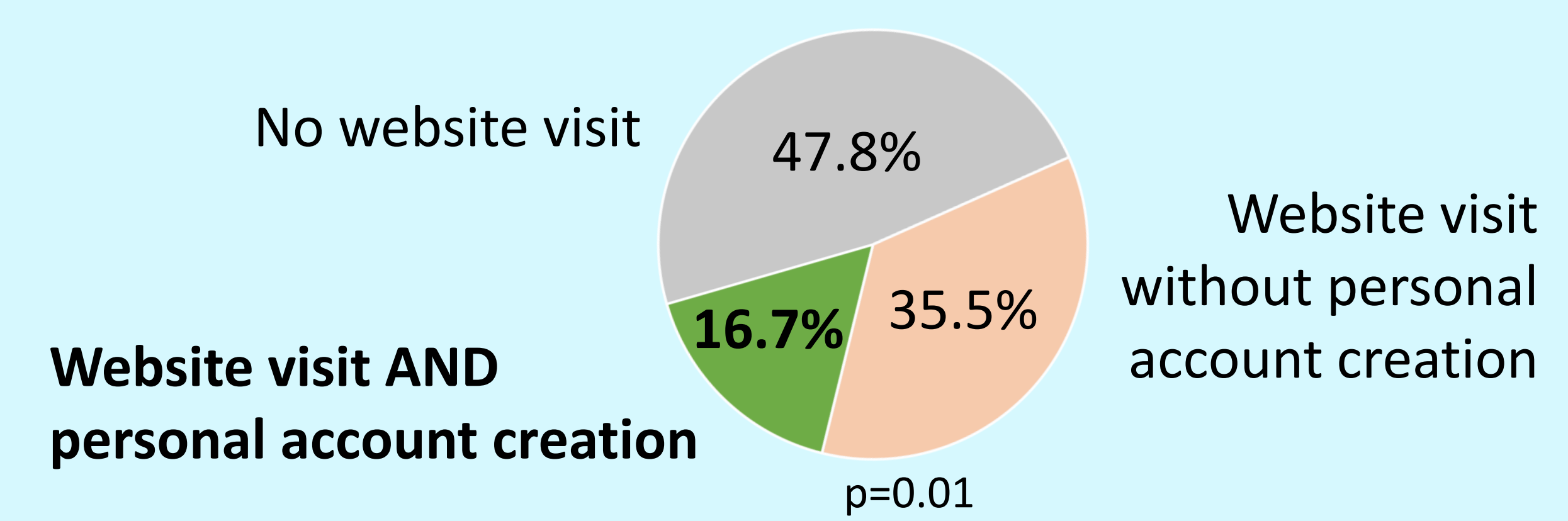➤ 10.5 % watched a demonstration

@ **Web traffic (average)**
➤ 364 users per month (+22.6%)
➤ 232 *DS* accounts created/month (2 fold increase)

PHASE 2: Patient adoption, barriers and facilitators to the use of *Discutons Santé*
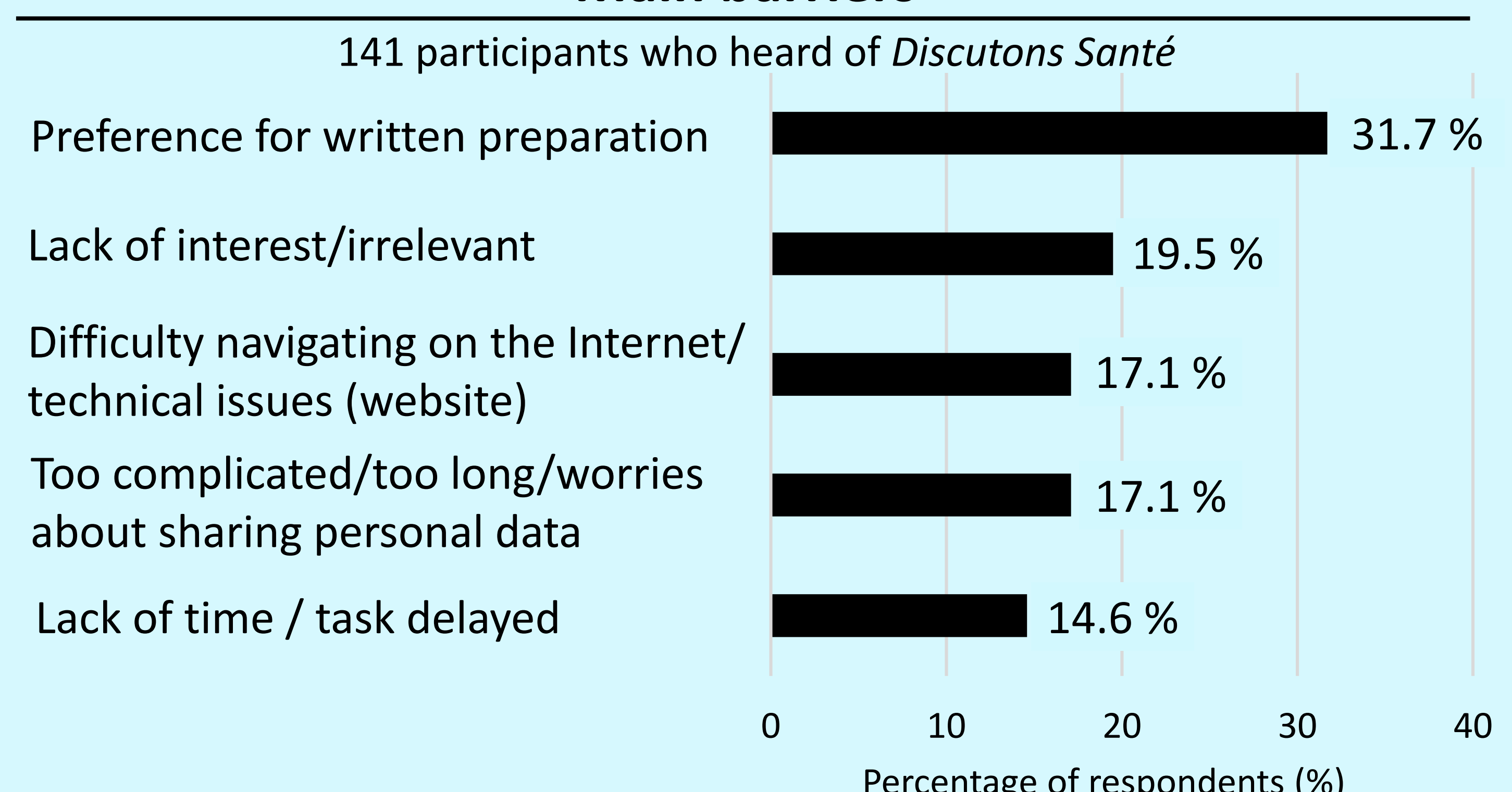
Characteristics, % (n) (n=492)	Heard of *Discutons Santé* (n=141)	Not heard of *Discutons Santé* (n=351)	P-value
<40 y.o.	35.4 (50)	32.8 (114)	0.63
40-59 y.o.	24.8 (35)	33.1 (116)	
60+ y.o.	27.7 (39)	25.6 (90)	
Women	68.1 (96)	62.1 (218)	0.065
New patients at the clinic	2.8 (4)	11.1 (39)	<0.01

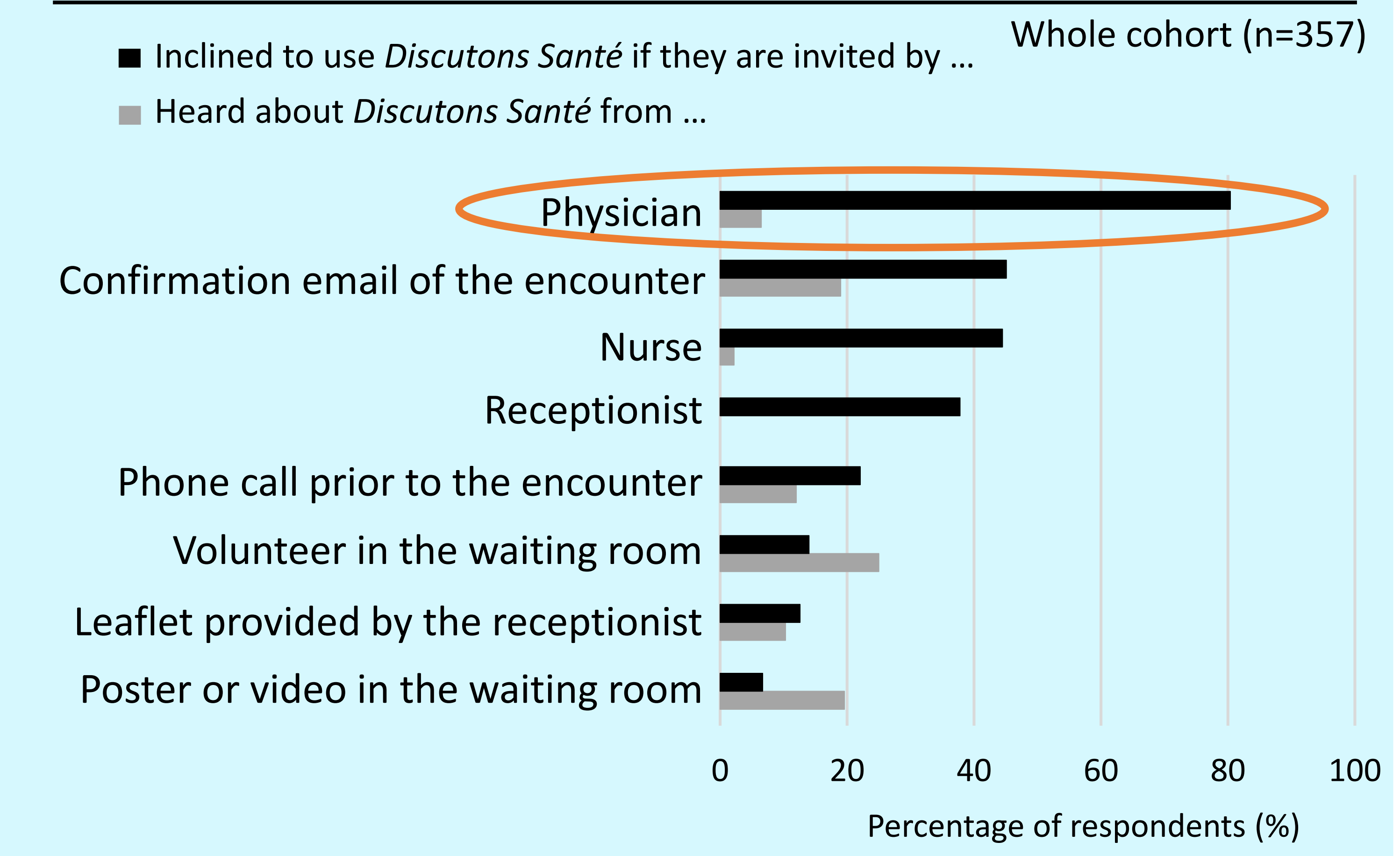### Use of *Discutons Santé,* 6 months after implementation

28.6 % (n=141) of patients reported having heard of *Discutons Santé*

No website visit 47.8%
Website visit without personal account creation 35.5%
Website visit AND personal account creation 16.7%
p=0.01

Main barriers

141 participants who heard of *Discutons Santé*

- Preference for written preparation — 31.7 %
- Lack of interest/irrelevant — 19.5 %
- Difficulty navigating on the Internet/ technical issues (website) — 17.1 %
- Too complicated/too long/worries about sharing personal data — 17.1 %
- Lack of time / task delayed — 14.6 %

Percentage of respondents (%)

Main factors increasing the interest of using *Discutons Santé*

■ Inclined to use *Discutons Santé* if they are invited by … Whole cohort (n=357)
■ Heard about *Discutons Santé* from …

- Physician
- Confirmation email of the encounter
- Nurse
- Receptionist
- Phone call prior to the encounter
- Volunteer in the waiting room
- Leaflet provided by the receptionist
- Poster or video in the waiting room

Percentage of respondents (%)

Discussion

➤ **One in six** patients may improve their patient-healthcare provider partnership by using *Discutons Santé* to prepare their medical visits.
➤ Still it remains a challenge to inform patients and get them involved in preparing for their medical visit.
➤ The added-value of using a web-based tool to prepare the medical visits is not always perceived by patients.
➤ Patients would be more inclined to prepare their medical encounters by using a web-based tool such as *Discutons Santé* if their **healthcare provider encourages its use**.
➤ Results of this study confirm the importance of physician's opinion from the patients' point of view.

Conclusion

Web tools are useful for supporting the patient-professional partnership, but physicians must play an active role in informing patients about their existence and usefulness.