

COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy and Severe Mental Illness

Amy L. Keller, Pharm.D. Candidate [1]; Kelly N. Gable, Pharm.D., BCPP [1,2]; Nathaniel Dell, AM, MSW, LCSW [2]. 1. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) School of Pharmacy, 2. Places for People St. Louis, Missouri.

Background

- There have been 14.2 million people who have had a severe mental illness in the past year.¹
- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), near 1 in 25 adults in America live with a serious mental illness.²
- In 2019, the WHO listed vaccine hesitancy among the top 10 threats to global health because it “threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases.”³

Objectives

- To highlight the motivations when acquiring the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as continuing motivation for further vaccinations.

Methods

Study Design:

- Interviewer-administered 21-item survey

Study Dissemination:

- Delivered verbally in-person
- Responses collected on the Qualtrics survey platform
- PHI collected on paper separately

Study Population:

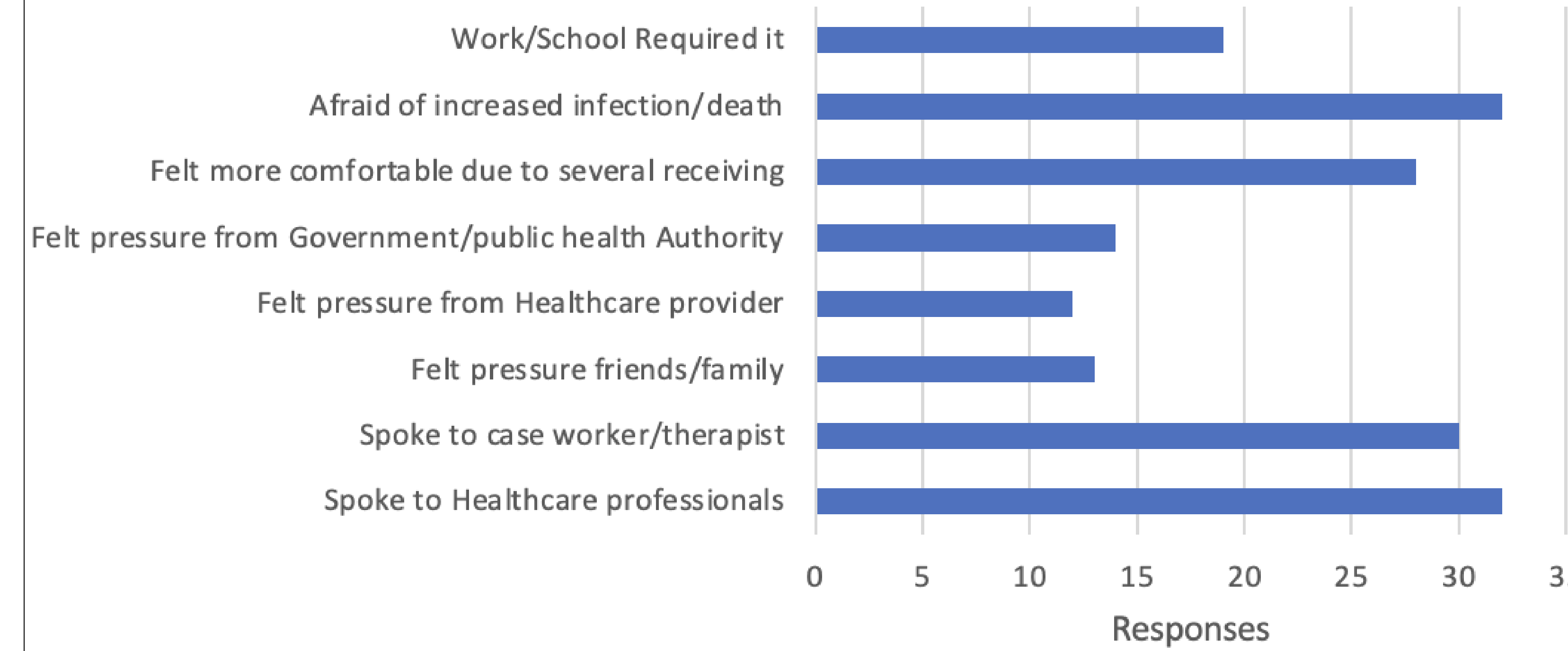
- Patients (18+) actively engaged in treatment for a severe mental illness at a community mental health center in St. Louis, Missouri during the time of data collection.

Study Measures:

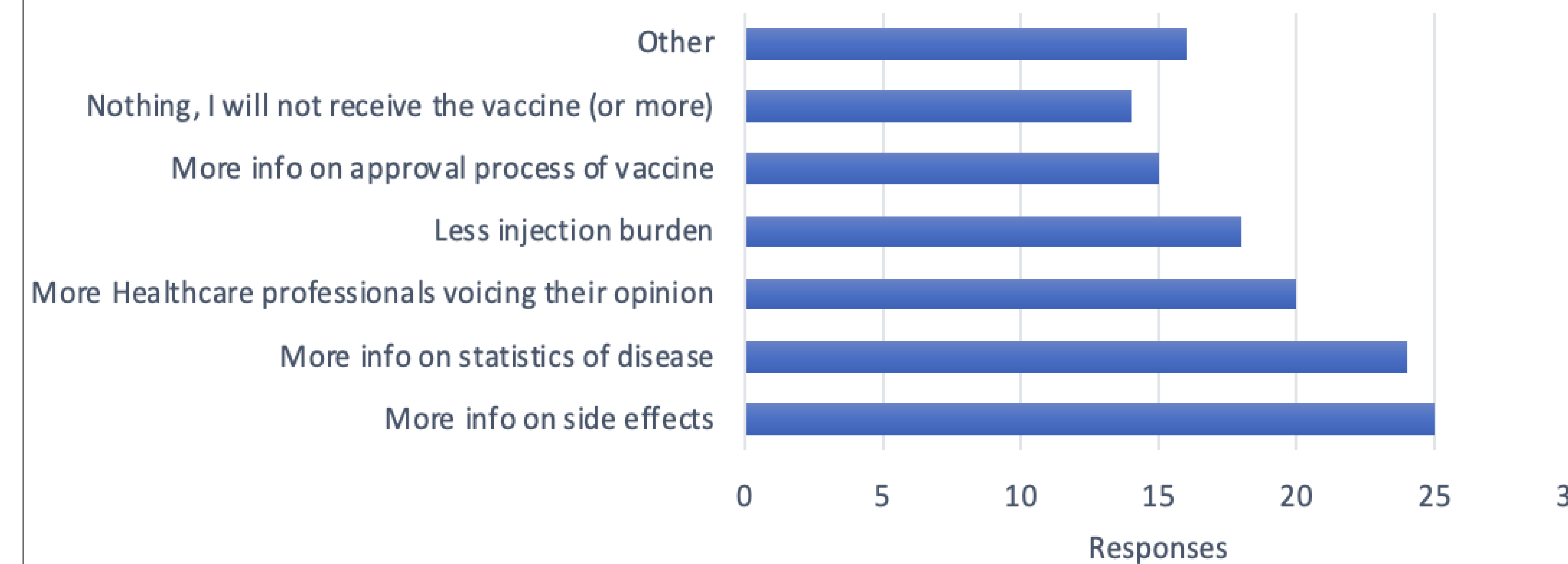
- Responses to questions about COVID-19 vaccines, primary sources of information, internal and external motivations on receiving the vaccine initially, as well as motivations to continue to receive booster doses.

Results

Graph 1: External Motivations of Fully Vaccinated (select all that apply)



Graph 2: Increase willingness to receive more of COVID-19 series (select all that apply)*



*Other : Another Outbreak (25%), more incentives (13%), location availability (13%), going to receive regardless (38%), more info on how it effects other disease states (6%), and more lay-language information (6%).

Figure 1: Overall Mental Health During the Pandemic *

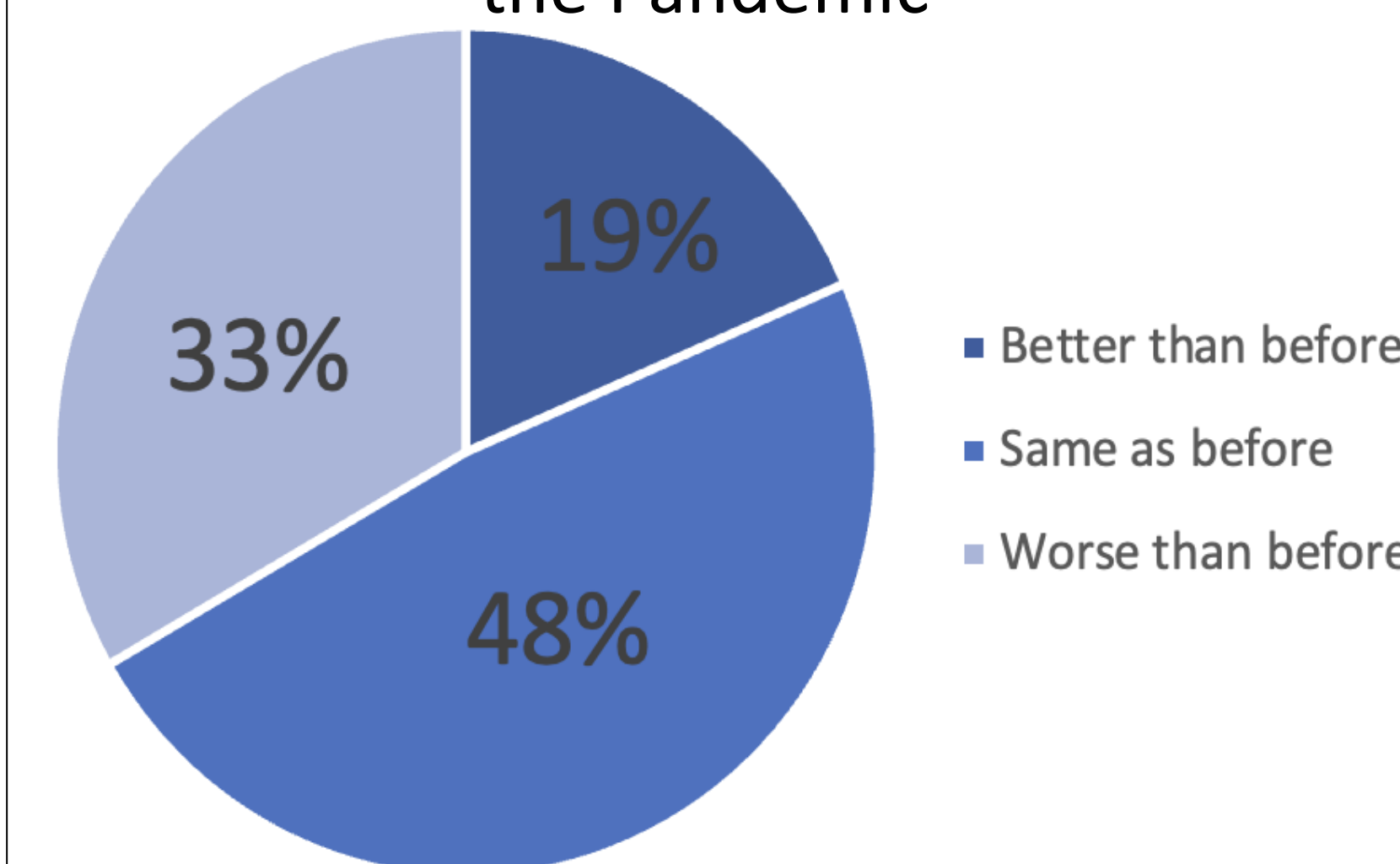
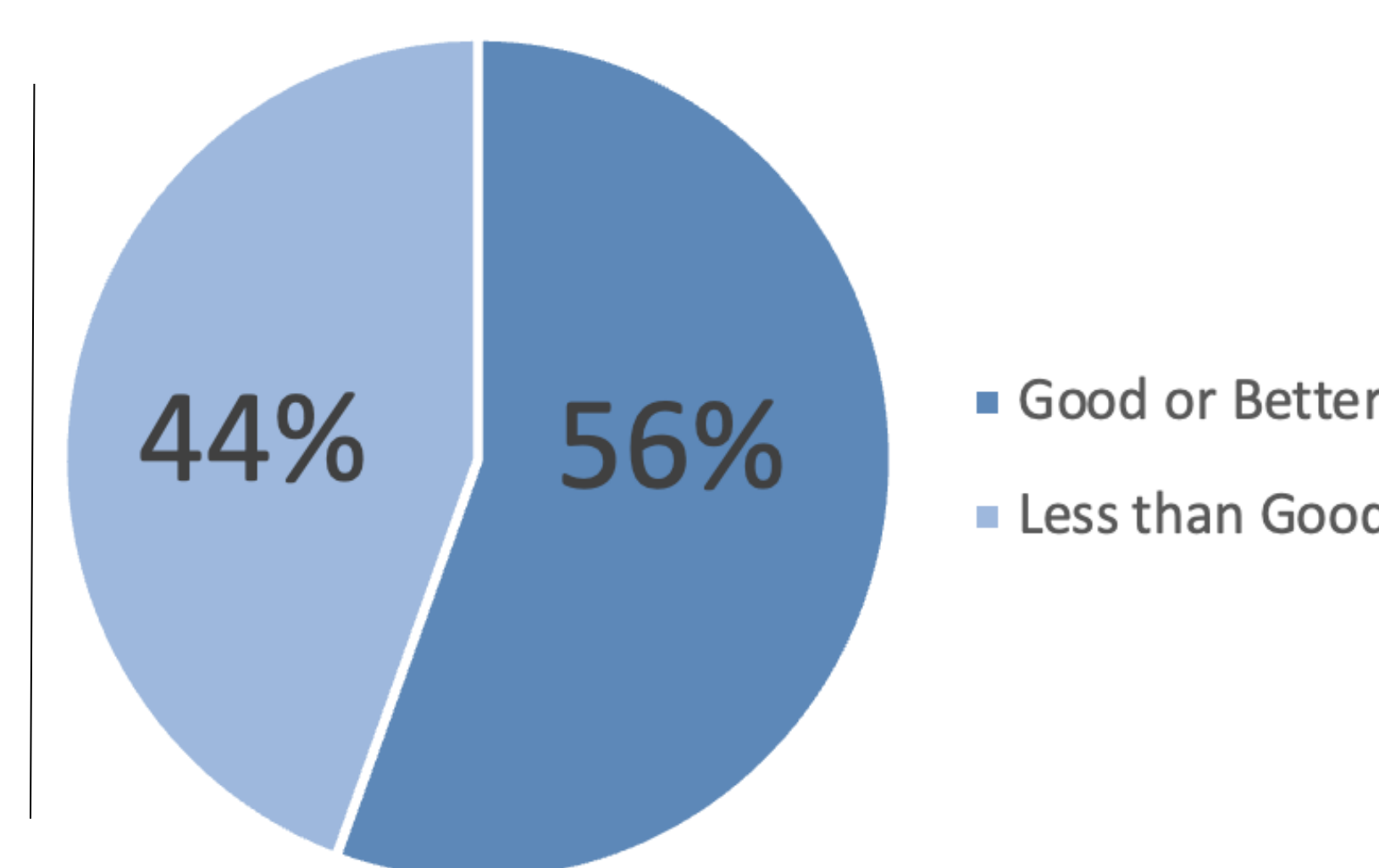


Figure 2: Current Mental Health**



*Chi-Squared Test: 71% of Non-Vaccinated individuals stated their overall mental health was the same as before the pandemic, while 44% of overall participants stated their current mental health as less than good.
** Date of Survey Completion: November 1st through December 31st, 2022

Results

- Forty-six percent of respondents stated they received most of their information regarding COVID-19 by private/personal medical sources; which was the most accessible resource for this patient population. While none received information from social media.
- The top four reasons for declining vaccination included: not thinking it was needed, didn't think it was safe, having a previous bad vaccination experience in the past, and adverse side effects.
- Out of all the participants, majority (57%) consulted with medical professionals about getting vaccinated with COVID-19 while 15% of those stated they would like more healthcare professionals to voice their opinions.

Conclusion

- There seems to be a potential link between the unvaccinated responses and lower mental health, but additional data is needed to be conclusive.
- There are so many vaccine infographics and campaigns on social media, but it seems we're missing a large population.
- Understanding COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and motivation within this population is important to promote vaccine acceptance while developing strategies tailoring to the specific needs of the patient.

1. Key Substance Use & Mental Health Indicators in the United States . SAMHSA.gov. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>. Accessed February 11, 2023.
2. Mental Illness Data Home | Nami: National Alliance on Mental Illness. <https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/GeneralMHFacts.pdf>. Accessed February 12, 2023.
3. Ten Threats to Global Health. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019>. Published 2019. Accessed February 11, 2023.