

## The differing understanding of cervical screening among white women and women from a BME community

Annual statistics from the NHS Screening Programme reveal the age and location of women who do not attend screening when invited. However, these statistics are not broken down by ethnic origin. It is widely accepted that people from a black and minority ethnic background are harder to reach and so less likely to access health programmes. To understand the barriers to screening for BME women the charity therefore commissioned a survey with YouGov<sup>1</sup> that looked into screening uptake and knowledge about cervical cancer within the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community comparing it to responses from white women.

Key findings include:

- BAME women were more likely than white women to say they had never attended a screening (12% vs 8%)
- 70% of Asian women aged 20-65 knew that screening is a test to check cells from the cervix to find pre-cancerous abnormalities against 91% of white women aged 20-65
- 53% of BME women aged 55-65 think screening is a necessary health test against 67% of white women aged 55-65
- Almost half (45%) of white women would be comfortable talking to a male GP about cervical screening but only 28% of BME women agreed.
- Twice as many BME women as white women said better knowledge about the test and why it is important would encourage them to attend (30% against 14%)

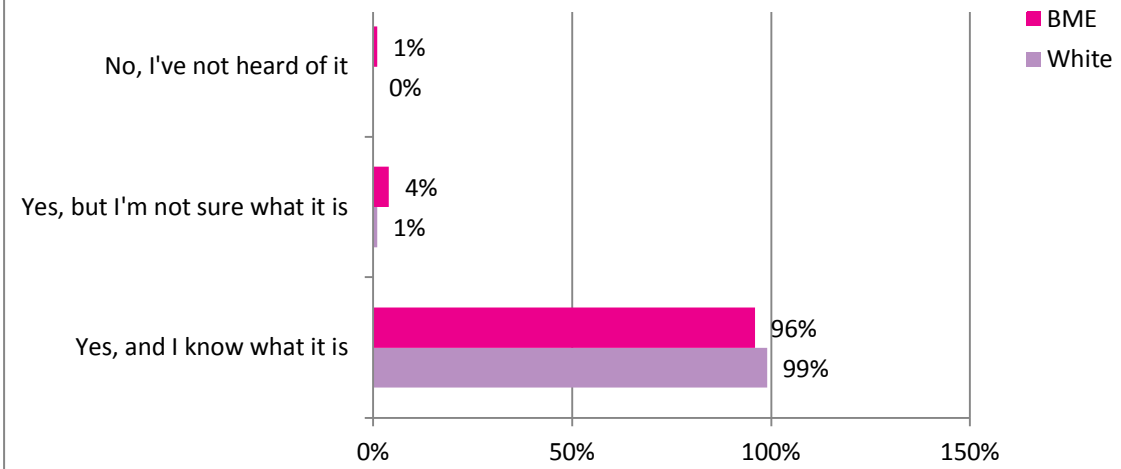
The survey revealed that there needs to be further education within the BME community about what cervical screening is and why it is so important. Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust is working to run targeted awareness campaigns and events such as an annual free BME workshop. We are also working with the NHS Cervical Screening Programme to develop better data so we can identify and target non-attenders and are currently developing a video resource about cervical screening and cervical cancer targeted at women from a BME background.

Below are the most significant results of the survey:

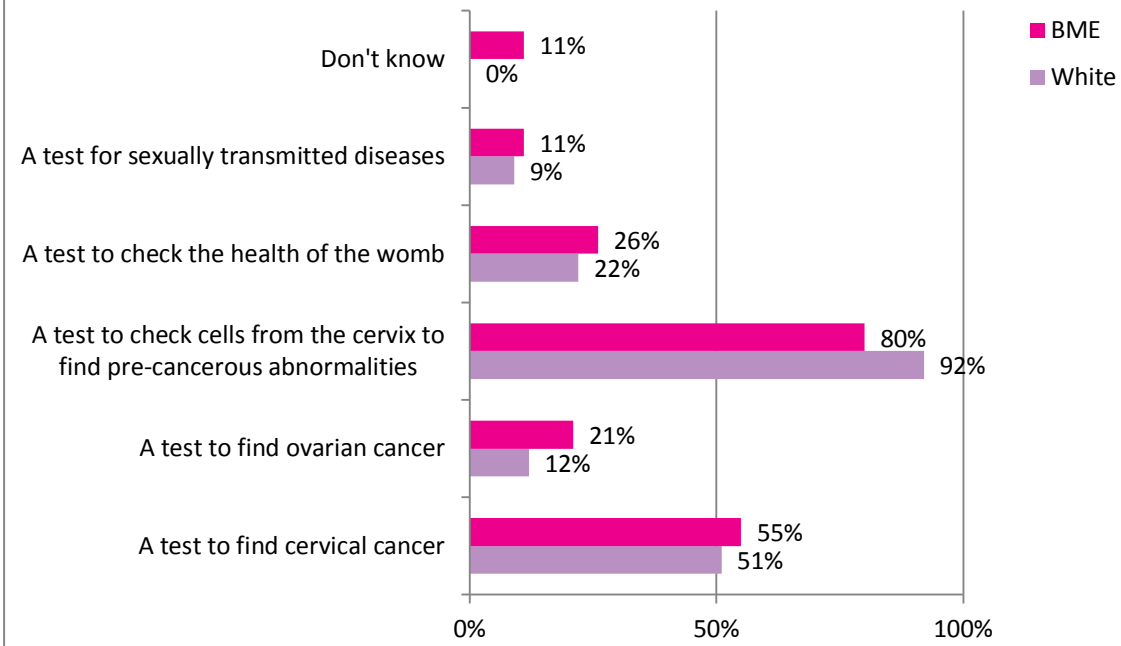
---

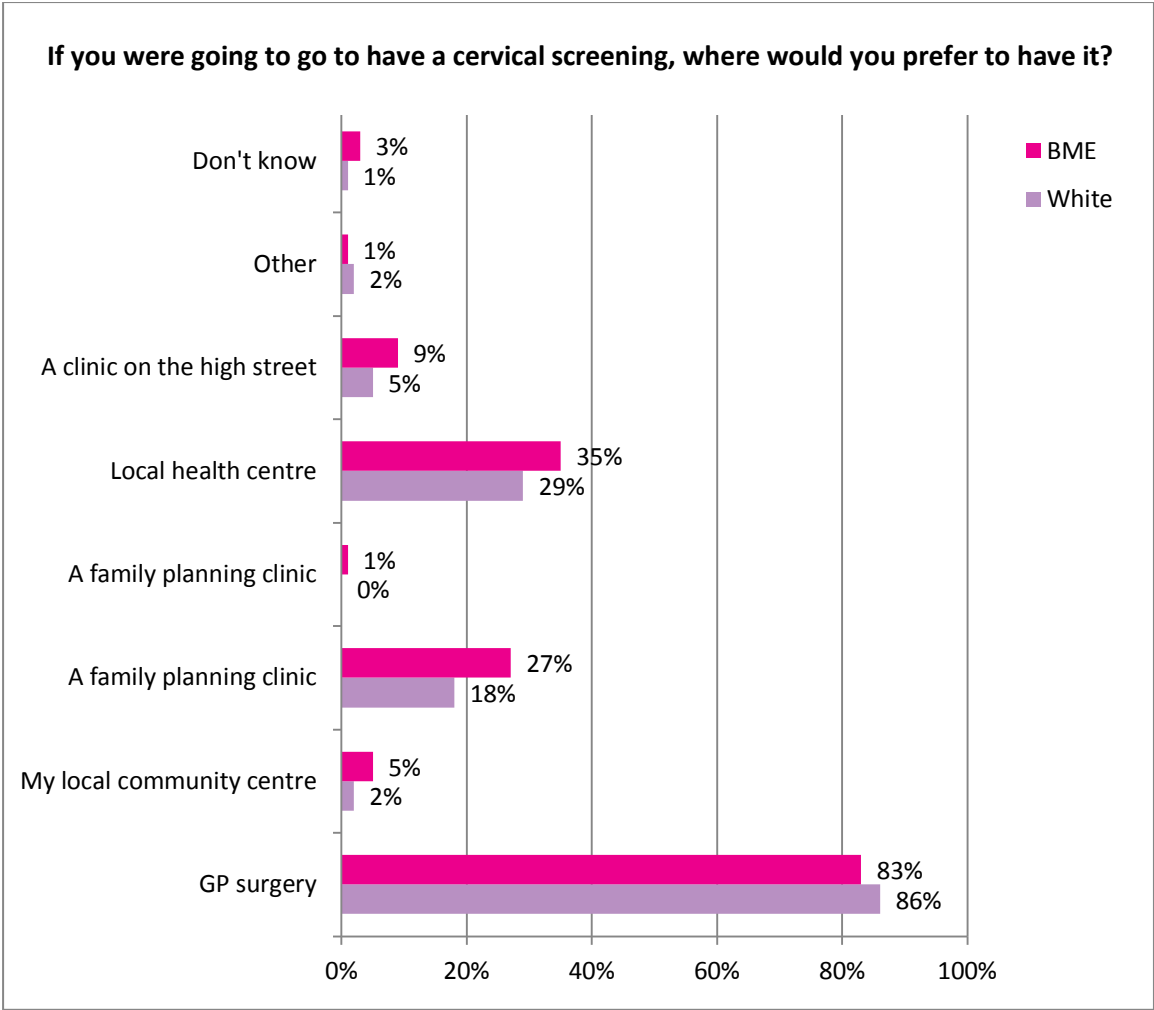
<sup>1</sup> All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1179 white women aged 25-65 and 1177 BME women aged 25-65. Fieldwork was undertaken between 30th June - 7th July 2011. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of the two groups.

**Have you heard of cervical screening (also known as a smear test)?**



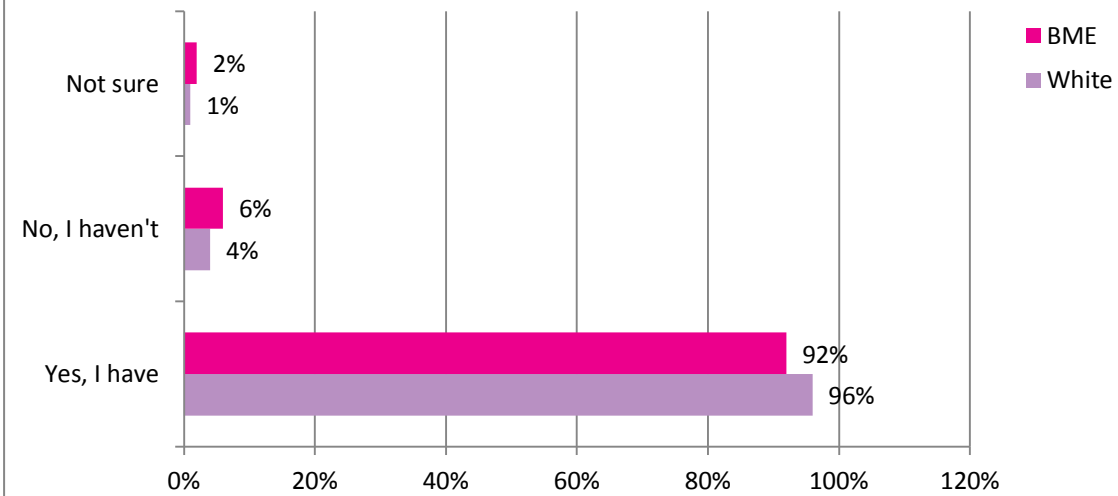
**Which, if any, of the following do you think cervical screening is?**



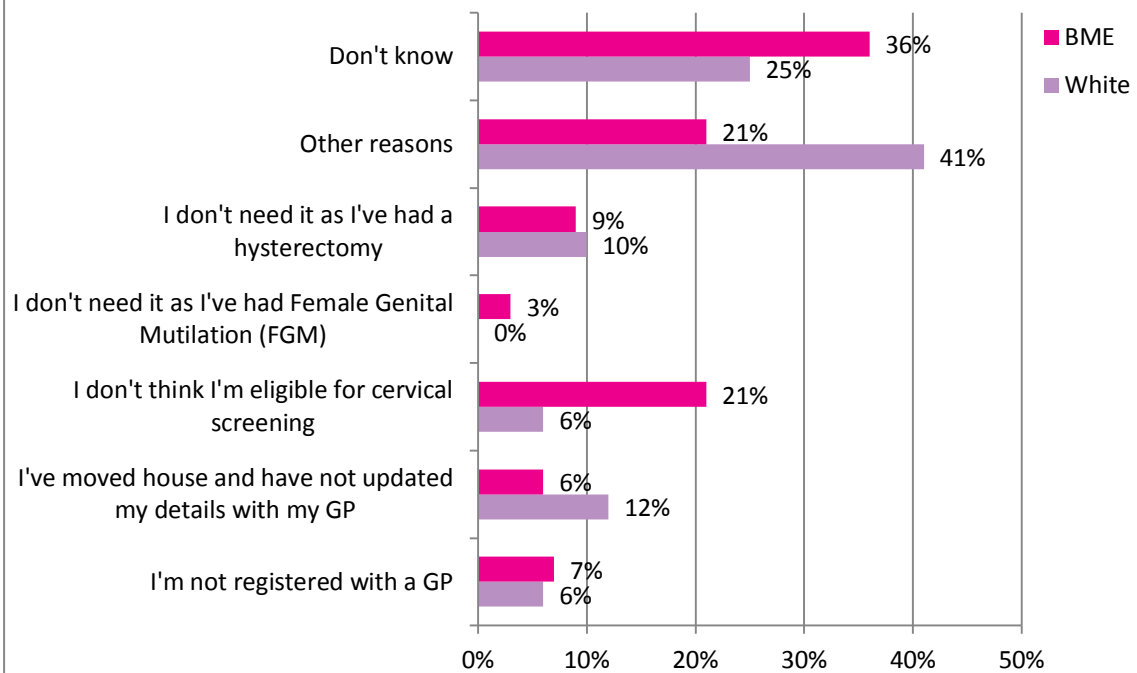


Many of the women who answered with “Other” specified that they would like to have their cervical screening performed in a hospital, privately, or in a female orientated clinic/gynaecologist.

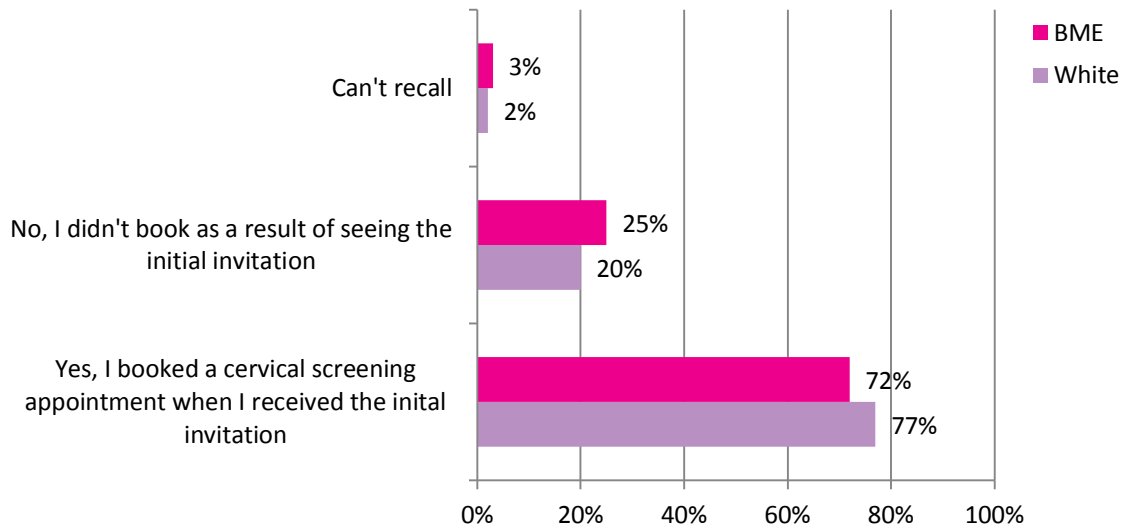
### Have you ever been invited to have a cervical screening examination?



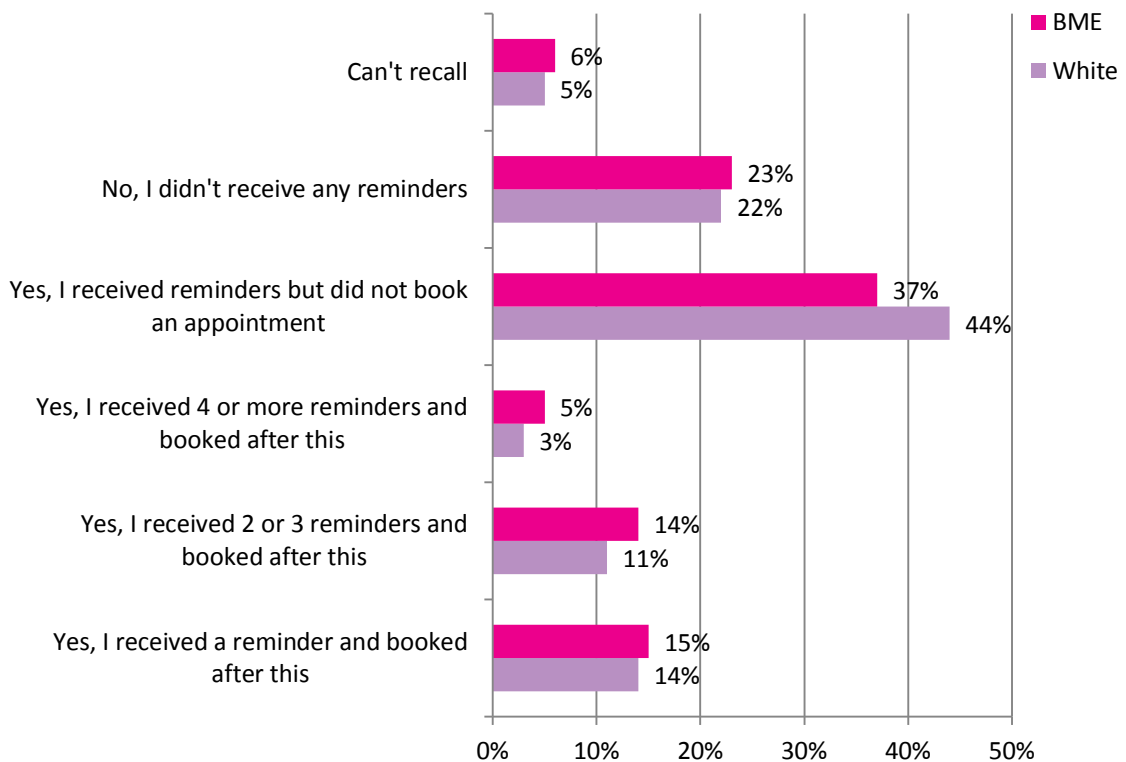
### Why do you think you have never received an invitation for a cervical screening examination?



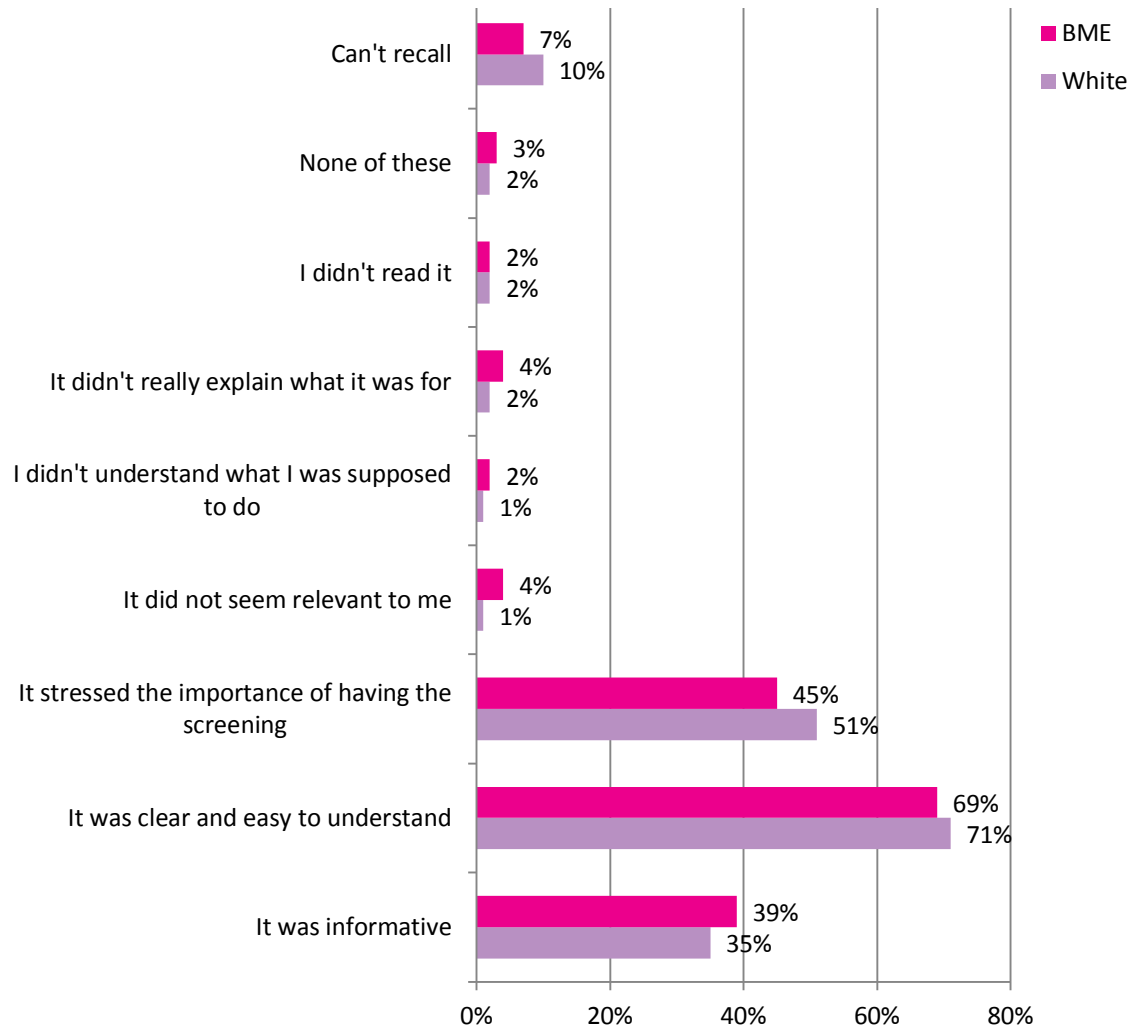
**When you were last invited to have a cervical screening examination did you respond to the initial invitation?**



**You said you didn't book as a result of seeing the initial invitation to have a cervical screening examination, did you receive reminders after your initial invitation?**

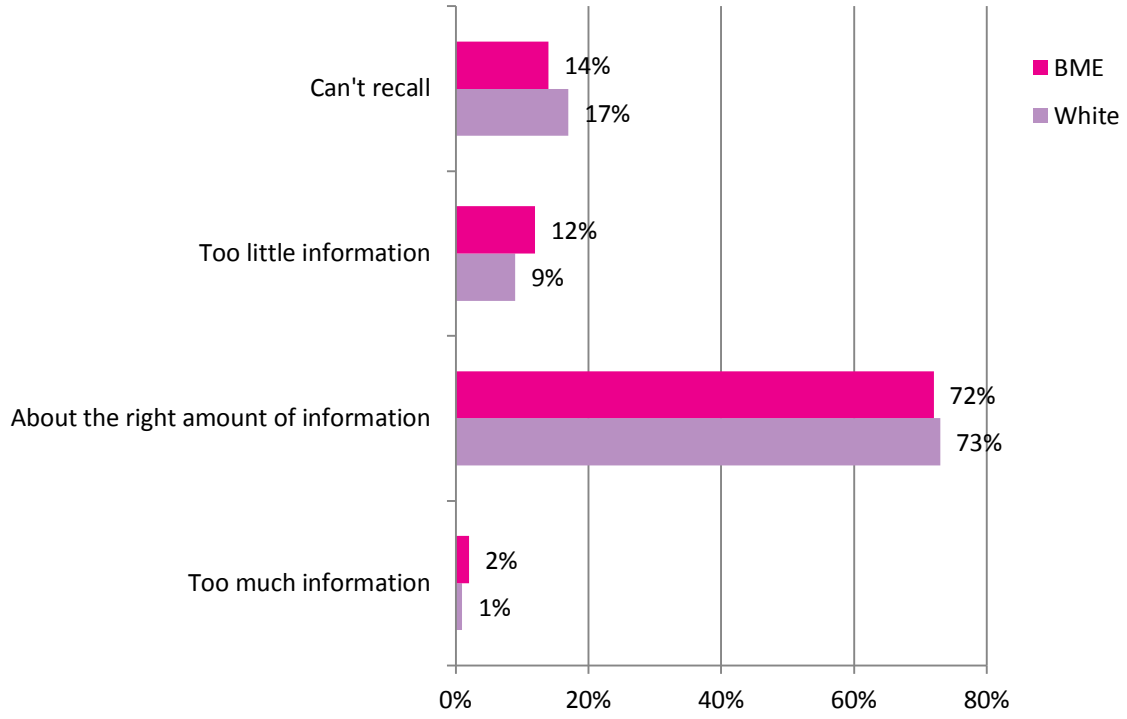


**Which, if any, of the statements do you agree with about the letter you received inviting you to attend cervical screening?**

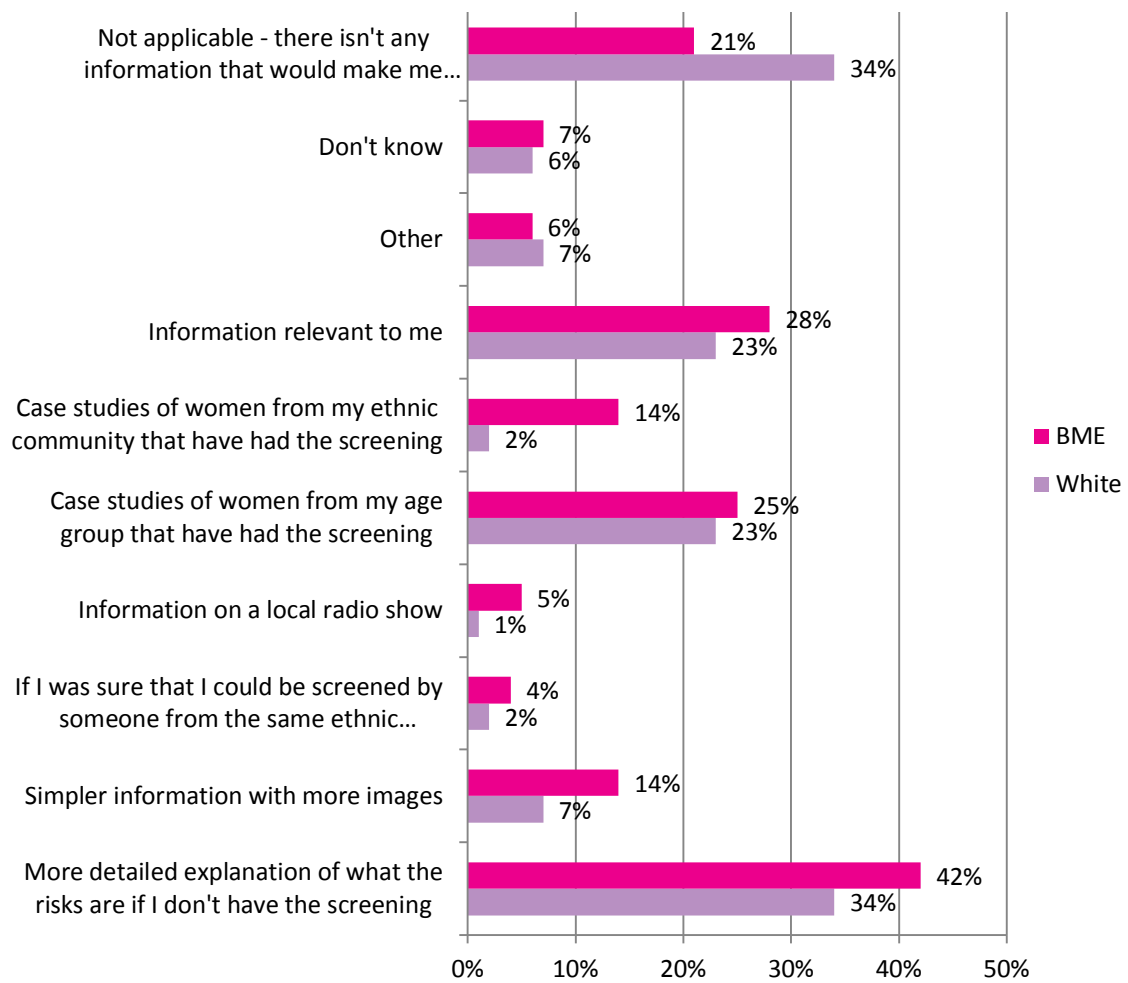


**Thinking about the invitation that you received for cervical screening...**

**Do you think that the letter and any other material you received (i.e. pamphlet, leaflet etc.) included too much, too little or about the right amount of information about cervical screening?**

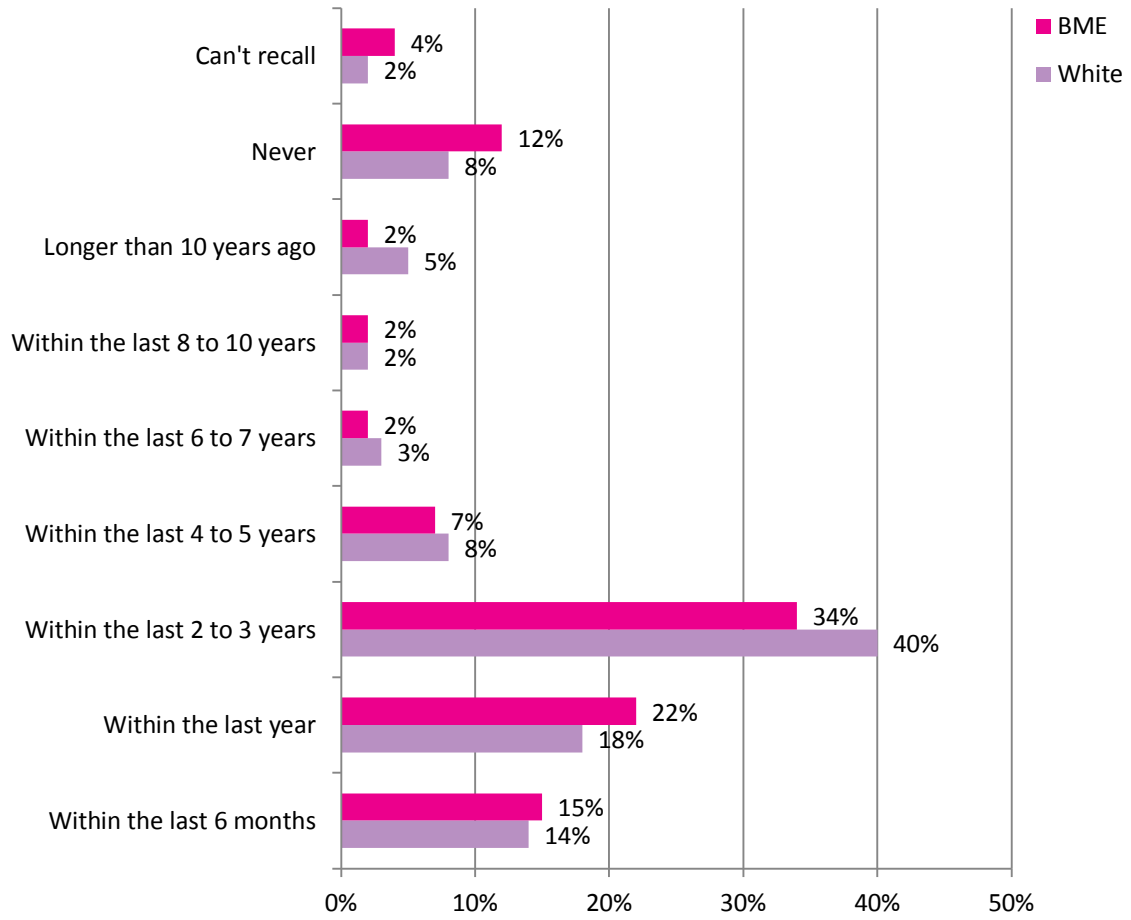


**Which, if any, of the following types of information would make you more likely to act on an invitation and book an appointment for a cervical screening?**

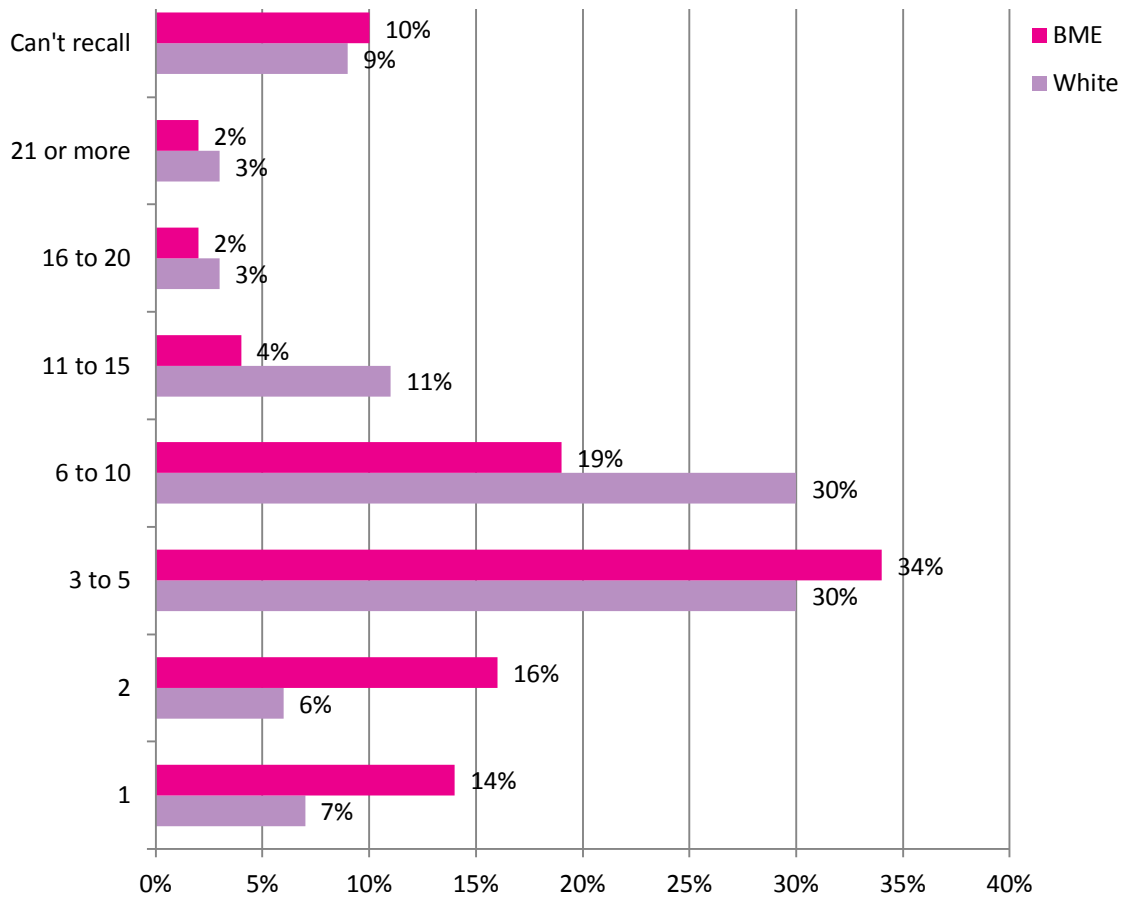




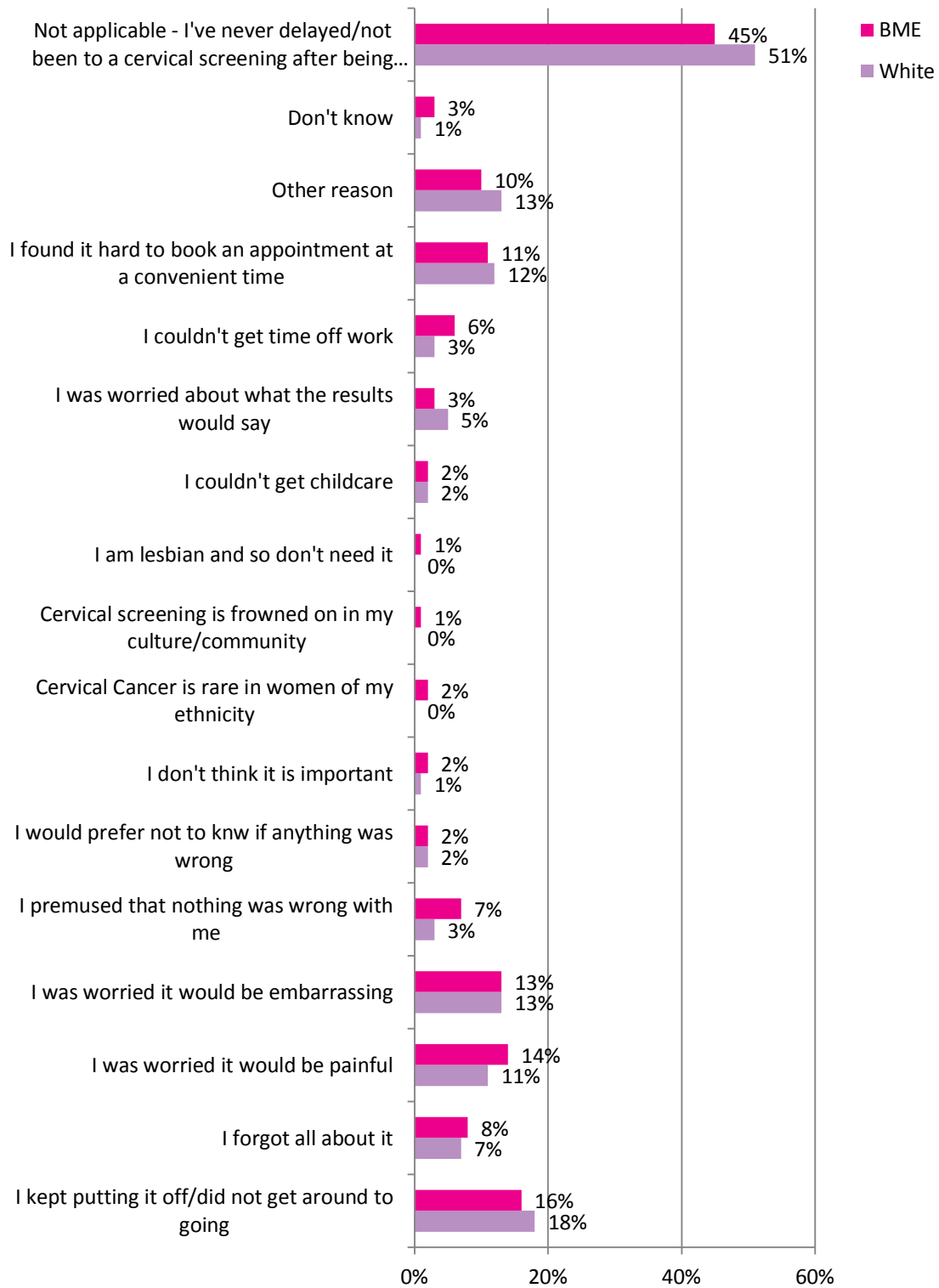
### When was the last time that you attended a cervical screening?



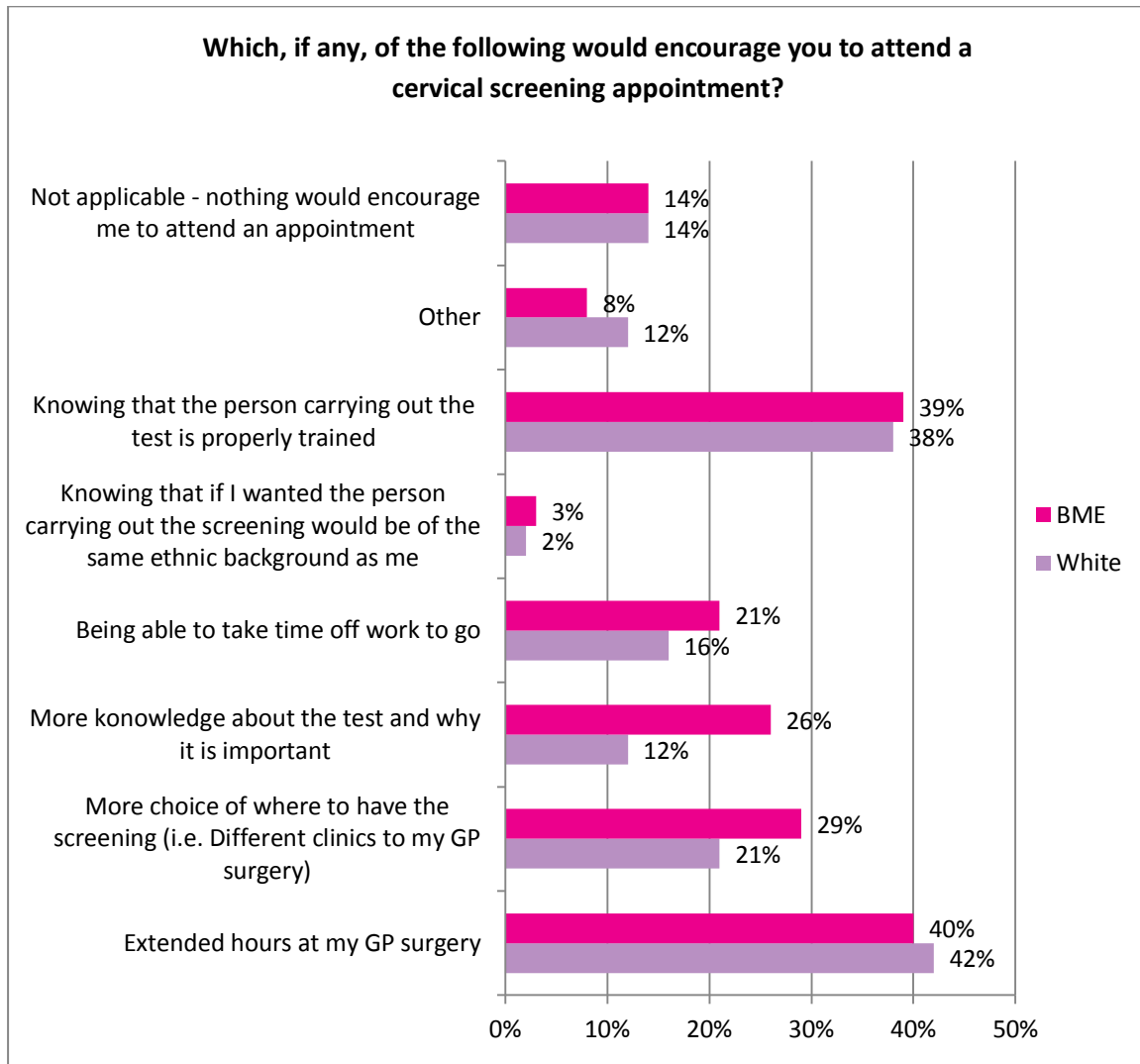
### And approximately how many cervical screenings have you had in your life time?



**Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you have ever delayed or not been to a cervical screening after being invited? If you have never delayed or not been to an appointment please choose the "not applicable" option.**

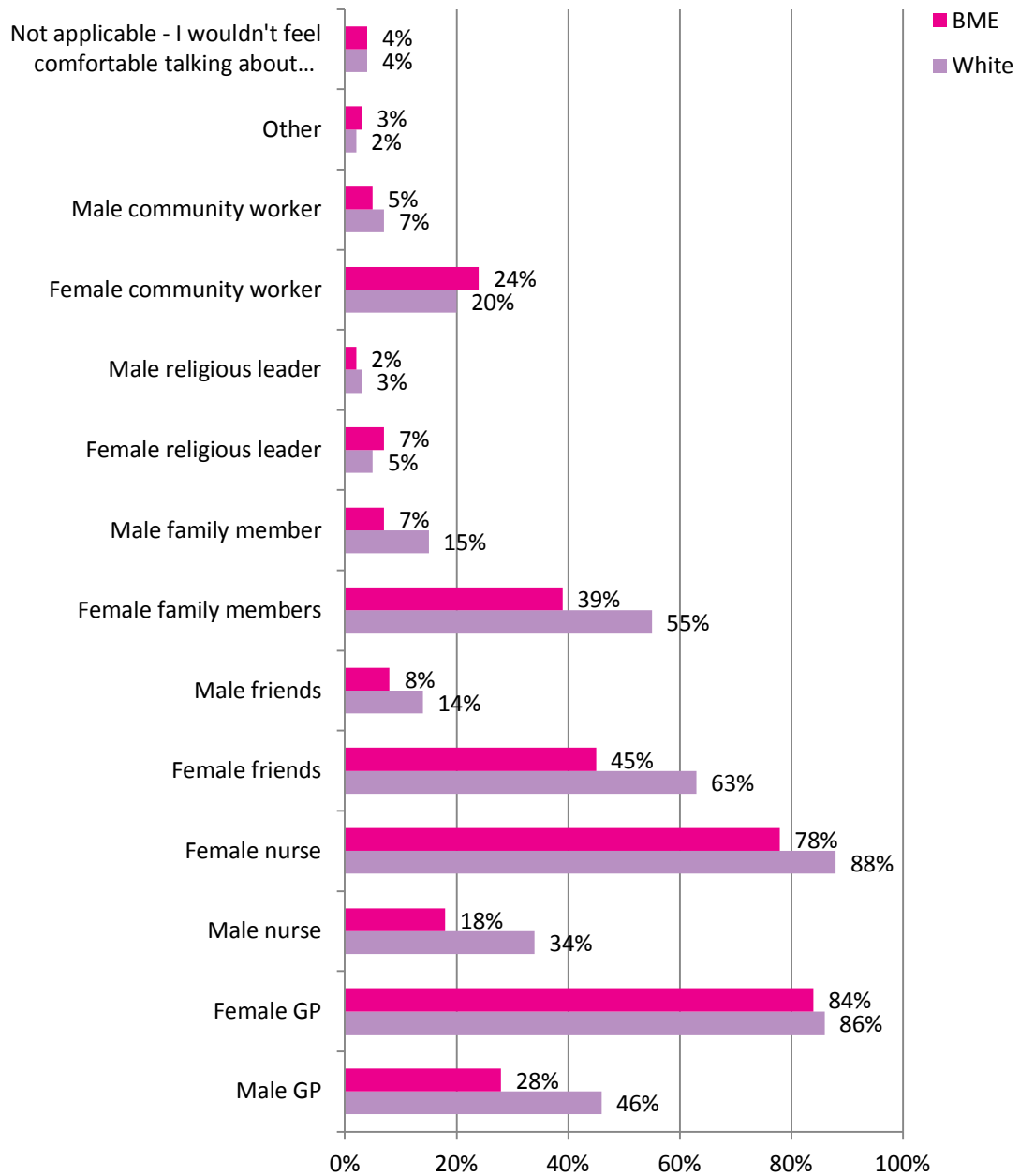


Many of the women who answered with “Other reason” clarified in the comments that they had been pregnant at the time, were dealing with other health issues, were too embarrassed/felt uncomfortable about it, had had a hysterectomy or are sexually inactive.



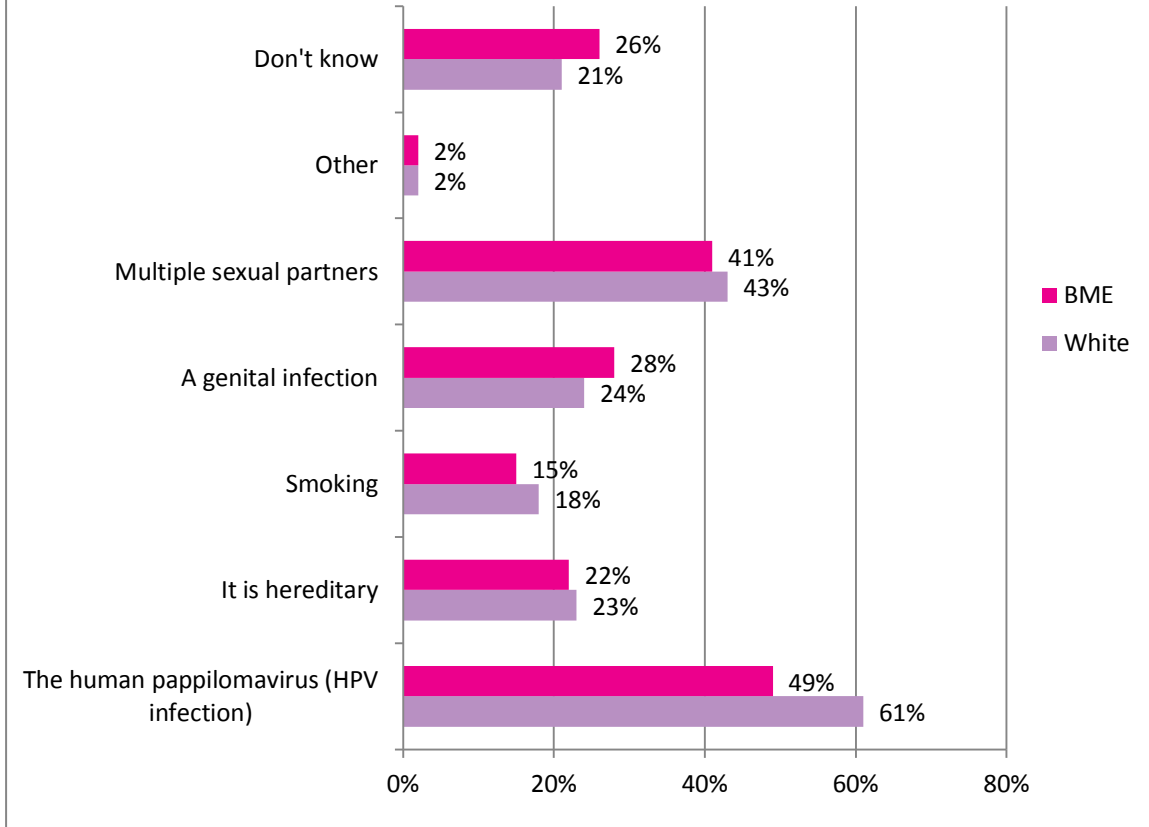
Many of the women who answered “Other” clarified in the comments that they would feel more comfortable if they were sure that a female health professional would perform the screening instead of a male. Some women also noted that nurses should be trained to address any issues prior to the exam.

**Which, if any, of the following would be comfortable talking to about cervical screening?**



**Thinking now more specifically about Cervical Cancer...**

**Which, if any, of the following do you think can cause it?**



**In the comments of this question many women said that they think cervical cancer is caused by early sexual encounters.**