

Barriers to cervical screening among 25-29 year olds

With cervical screening (smear test) uptake falling year on year, and one in three young women who are invited to their first cervical screening not taking up their invitation, we wanted to find out more about why these women don't attend and what they know about the test.

Total sample size was 3,002 women aged 25 – 29. Fieldwork was undertaken by Censuswide between 27 October – 03 November 2016. The survey was carried out online.

Cervical screening provides the best protection against cervical cancer as it can prevent up to 75% of all cervical cancer from developing. It is estimated that the NHS cervical screening programme saves around 5,000 lives a year. However, in England cervical screening is currently at a 19 year low with only 72.7% of women attending their screening in 2015/16. Uptake drops even lower among 25-29 olds of which only 63.3% attended equating to almost a quarter of a million young women not taking up their invitation in England.

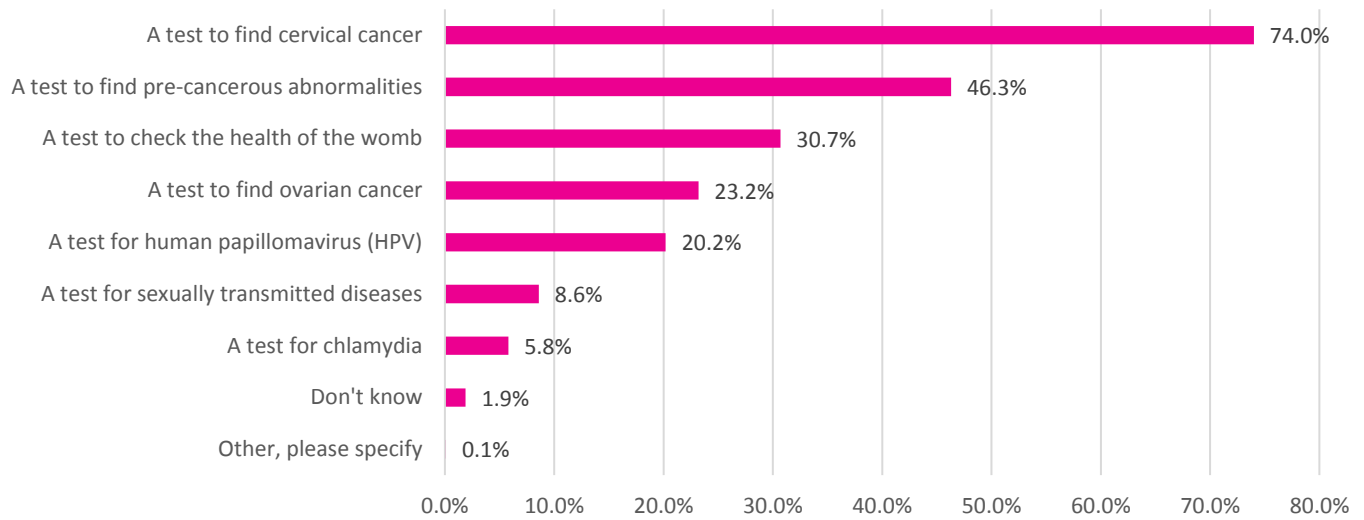
Key findings include:

- Over a quarter (26.7%) are too embarrassed to attend cervical screening
- Over two thirds (70%) don't think cervical screenings reduce a woman's risk of cervical cancer
- 72% of the 25-29 year olds surveyed do not feel comfortable getting undressed in front of doctors or nurses however in stark contrast just under one in ten (8.4%) would consider surgery to alter the way their genitals look
- Over half (51%) of the women surveyed reported delaying or not attending screening with almost one quarter (24%) admitting they have delayed for over one year and almost one in ten (9%) having never attended the test
- Reasons for not attending include simply putting it off (33%), worrying it would be embarrassing (27%), or worrying it would be painful (25%).

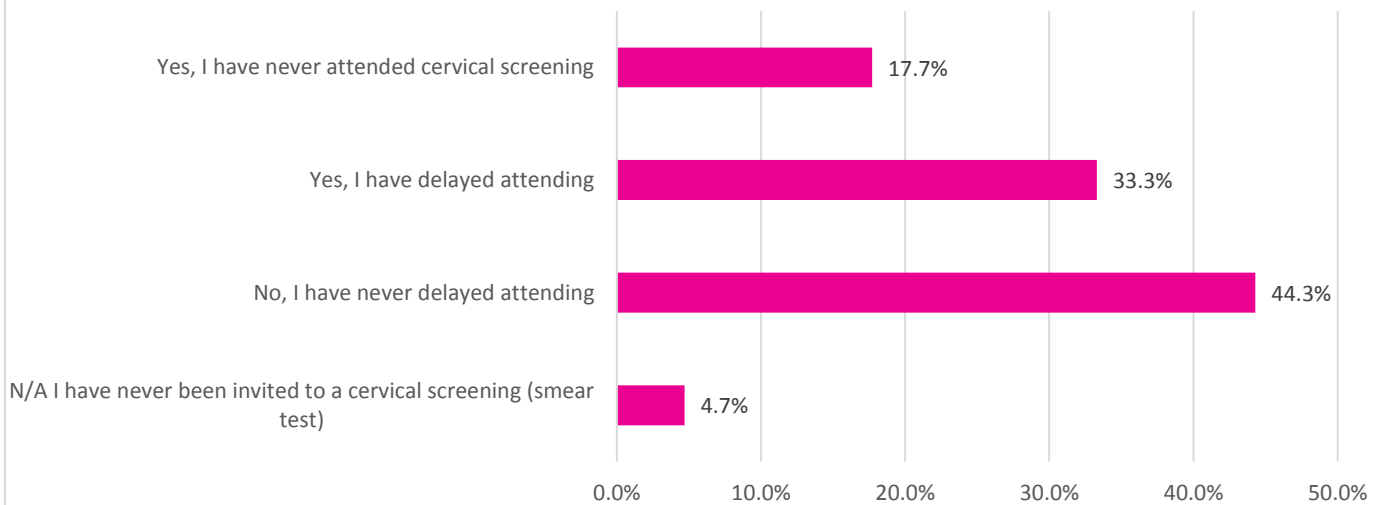
The results of the survey were published during 2017's Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (22-28 January) to launch our #SmearForSmear campaign for the third year. The campaign aims to tackle many of the barriers highlighted in the survey including embarrassment in talking about and to educate women about the role of the test in preventing cervical cancer.

[Read the press release on the survey](#)

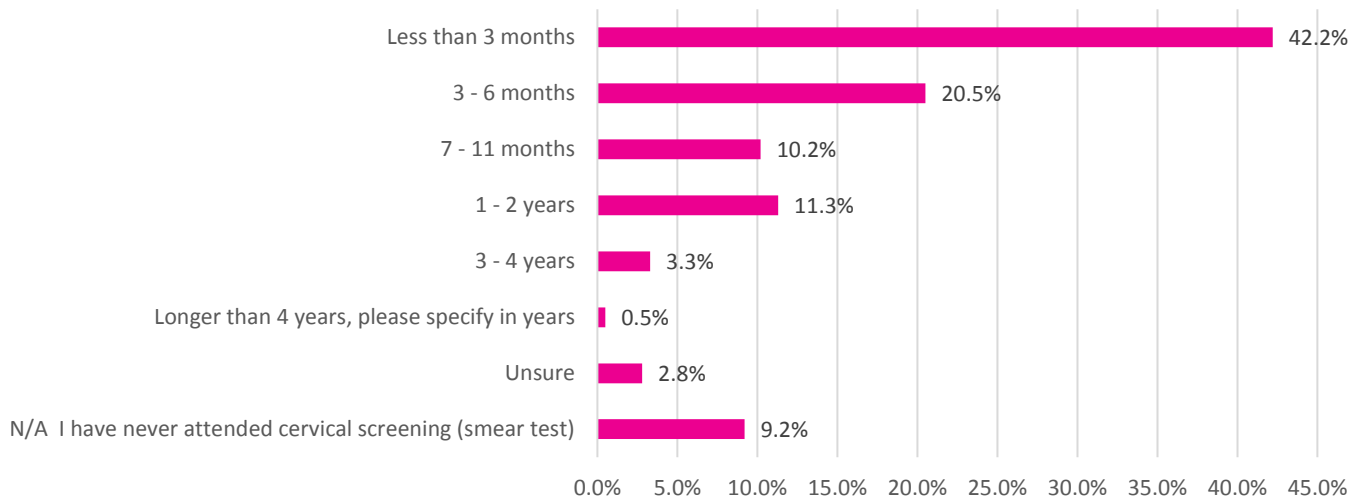
What do you think cervical screening (smear test) is? (Tick all that apply)



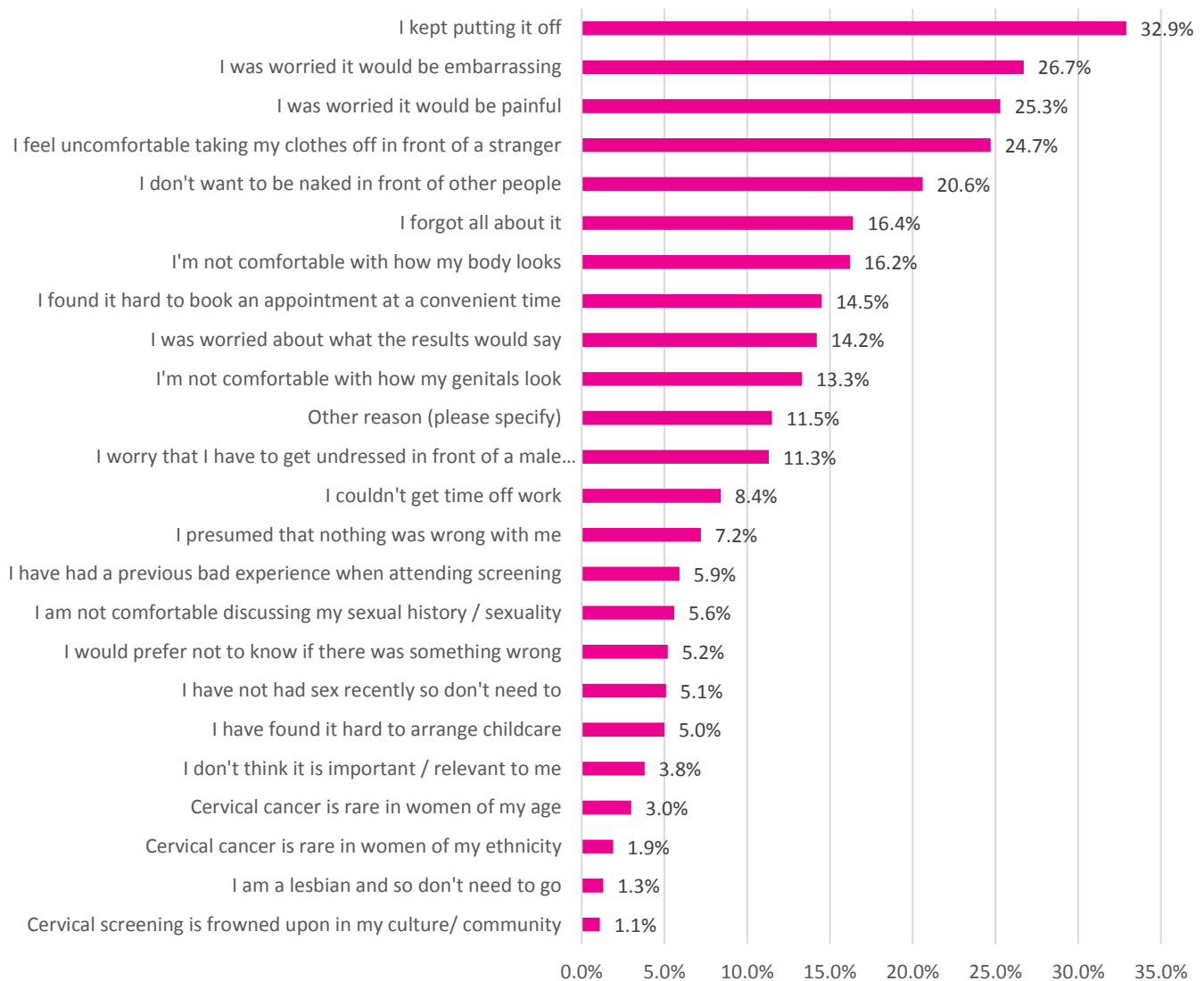
Have you ever delayed your cervical screening (smear test)?



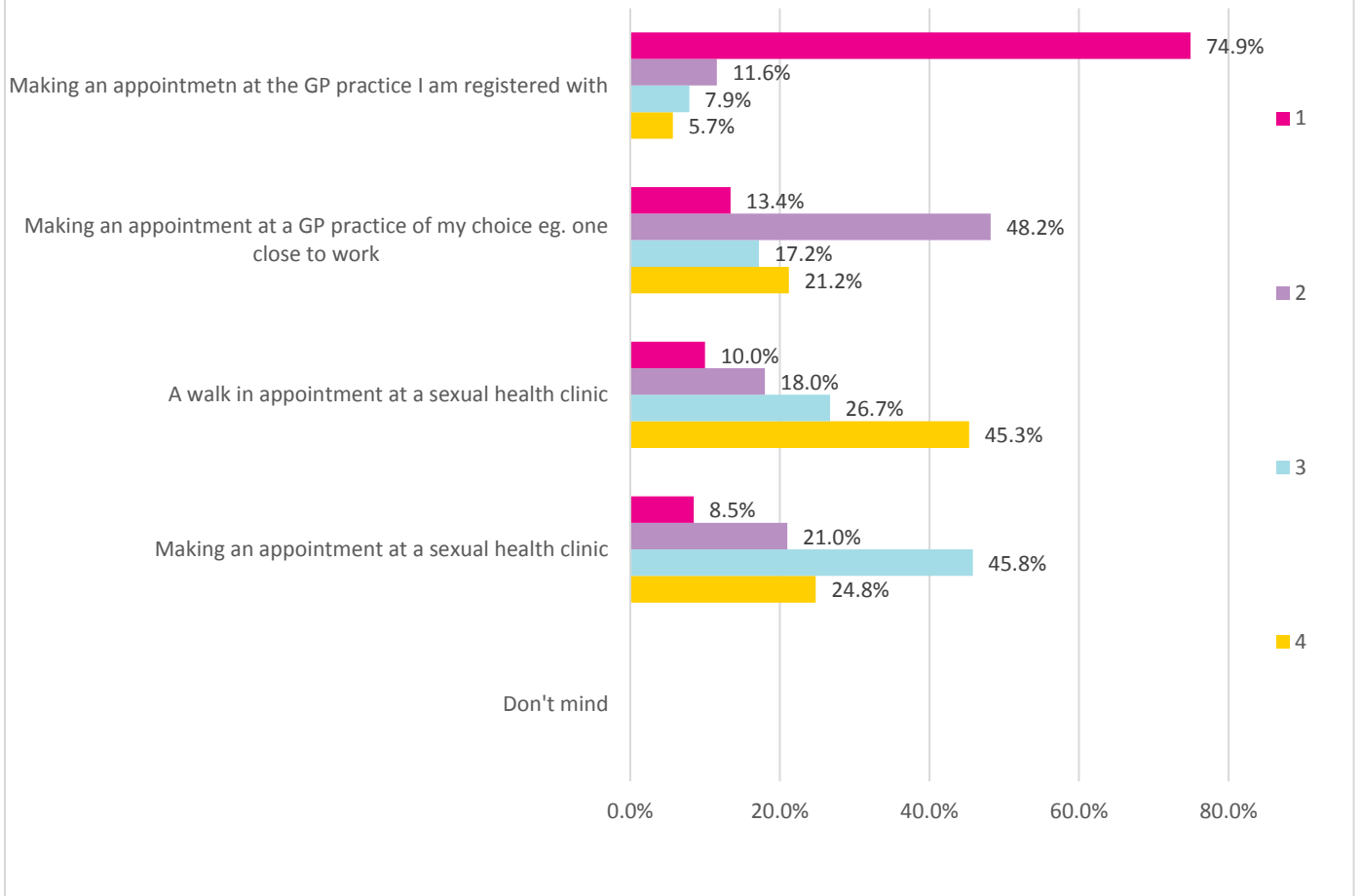
How much time passed between receiving your invitation letter and attending your cervical screening (smear test)?



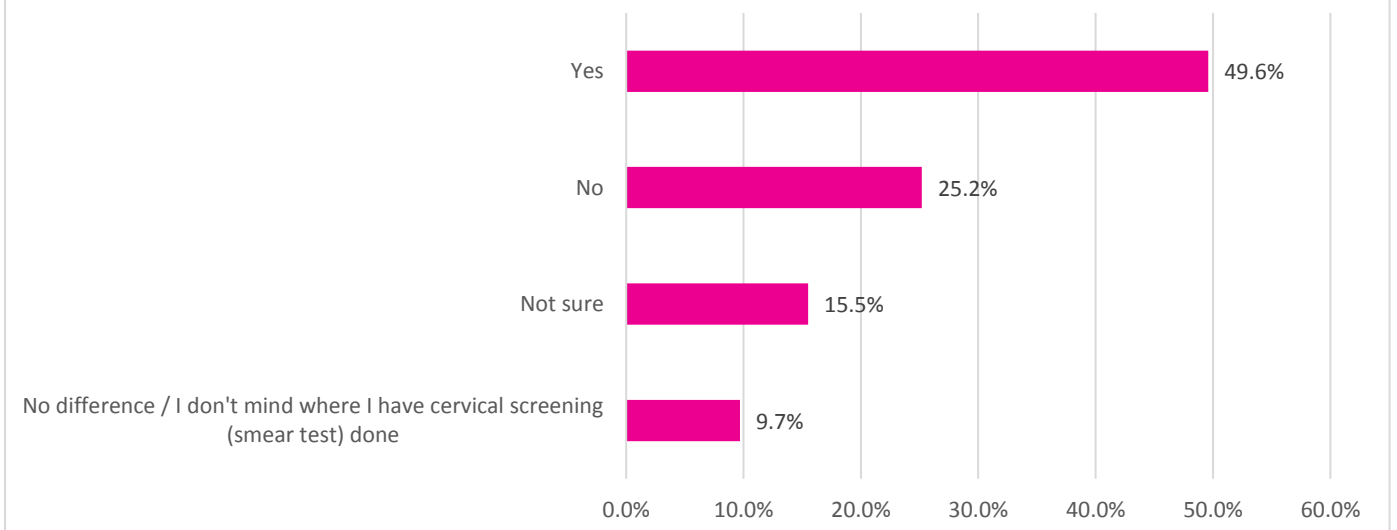
What has caused you to delay or not attend cervical screening (smear test)? (Tick all that apply)



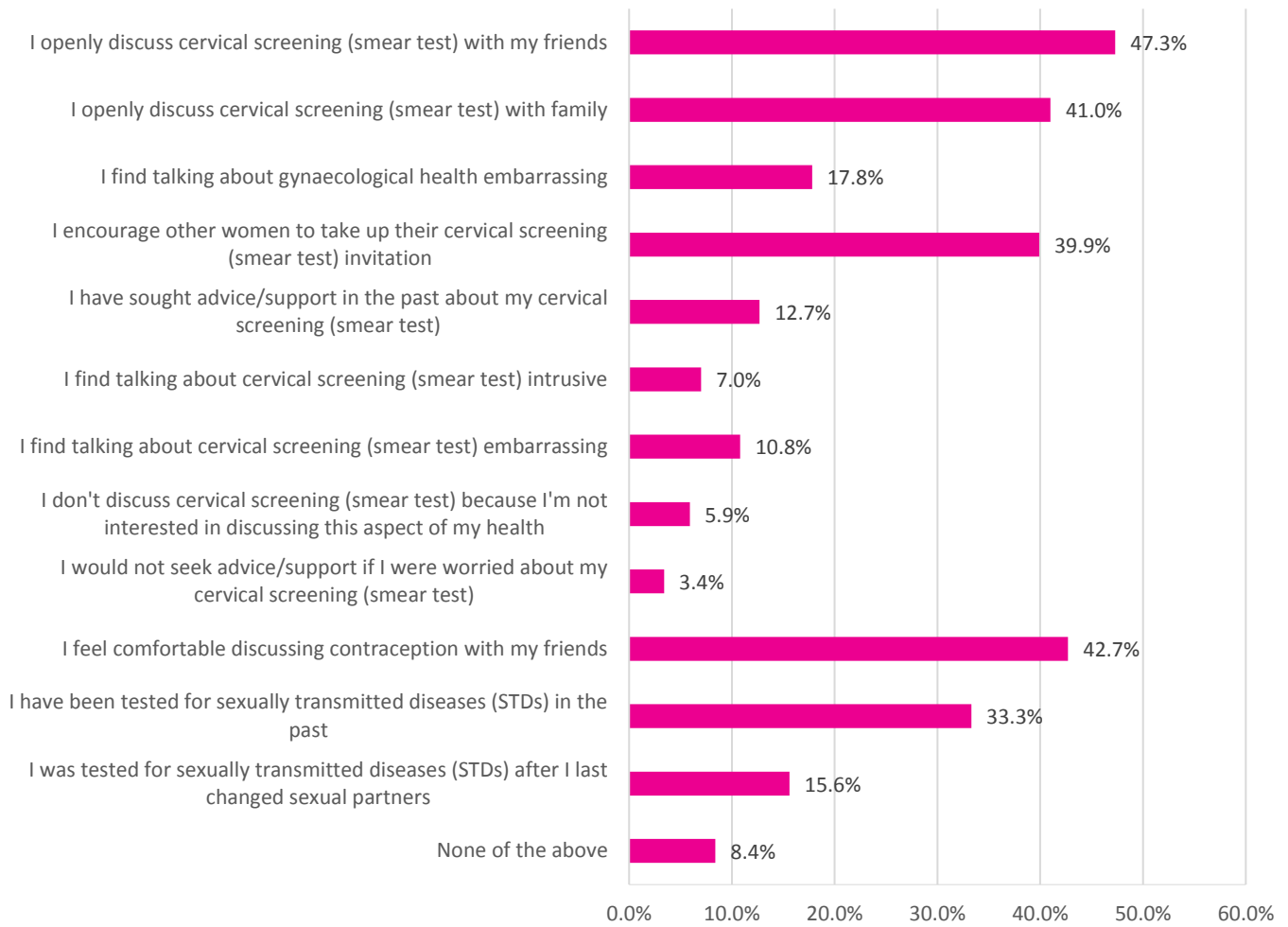
Where would you prefer to have your cervical screening (smear test) appointment? Please rank in order of preference, where your most preferred choice is ranked at the top, and your least preferred choice is ranked at the bottom.



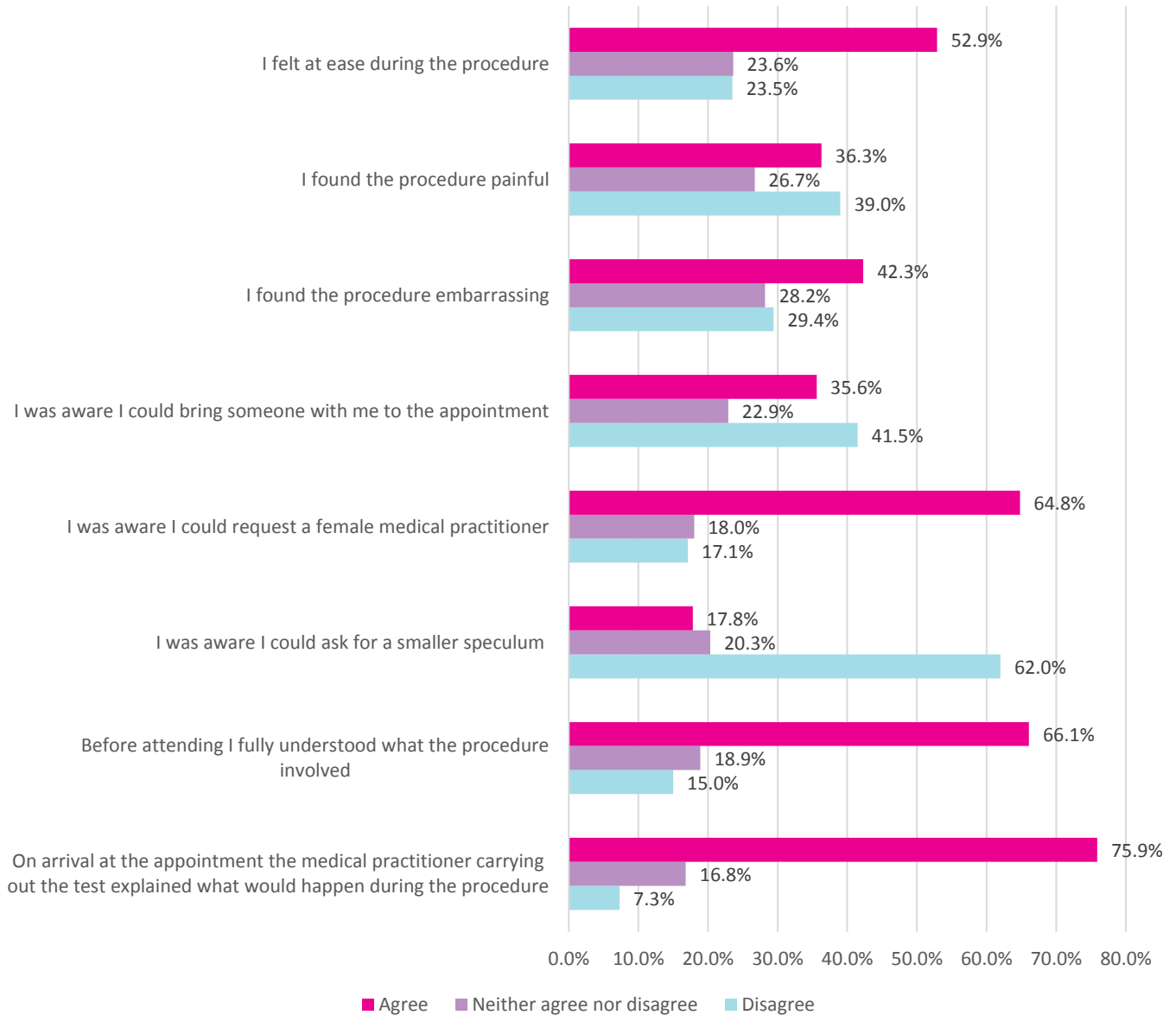
Would you like to be offered the opportunity to take your own sample at home and send it off to be tested instead of going to your GP?



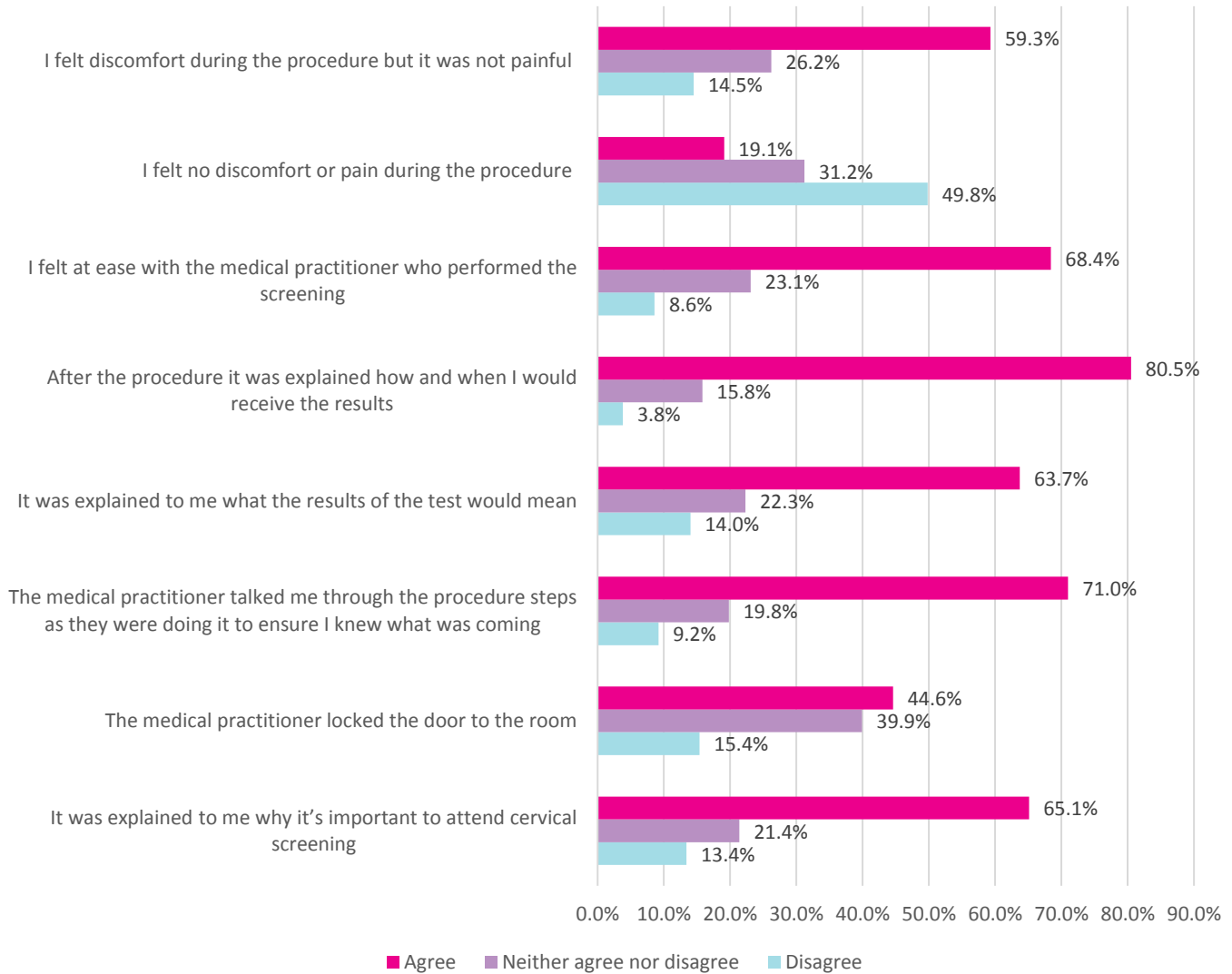
Which of the following statements do you agree with? (Tick all that apply)



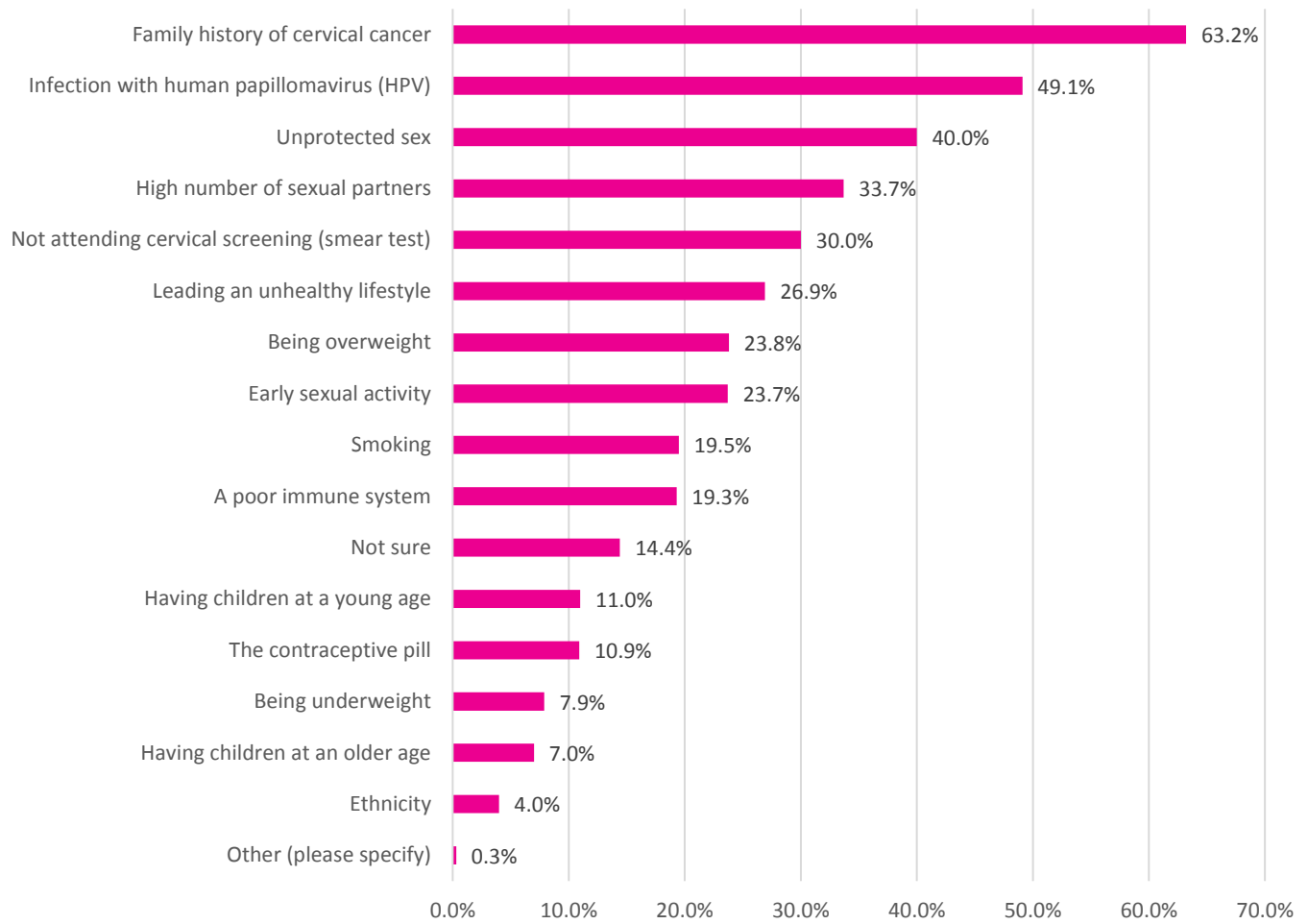
Thinking about the last time you attended cervical screening test (smear test), to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



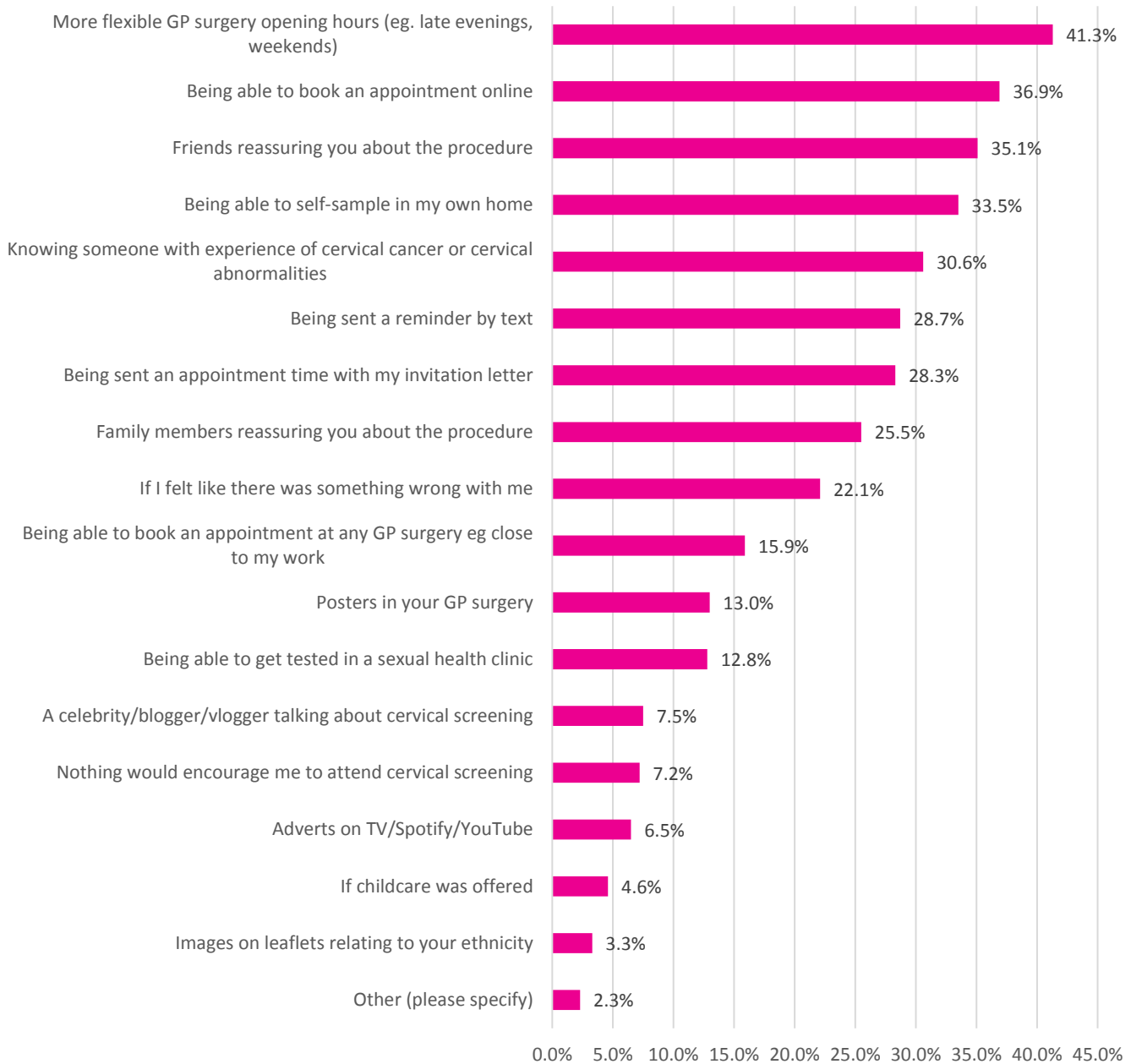
Thinking about the last time you attended cervical screening (smear test), to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



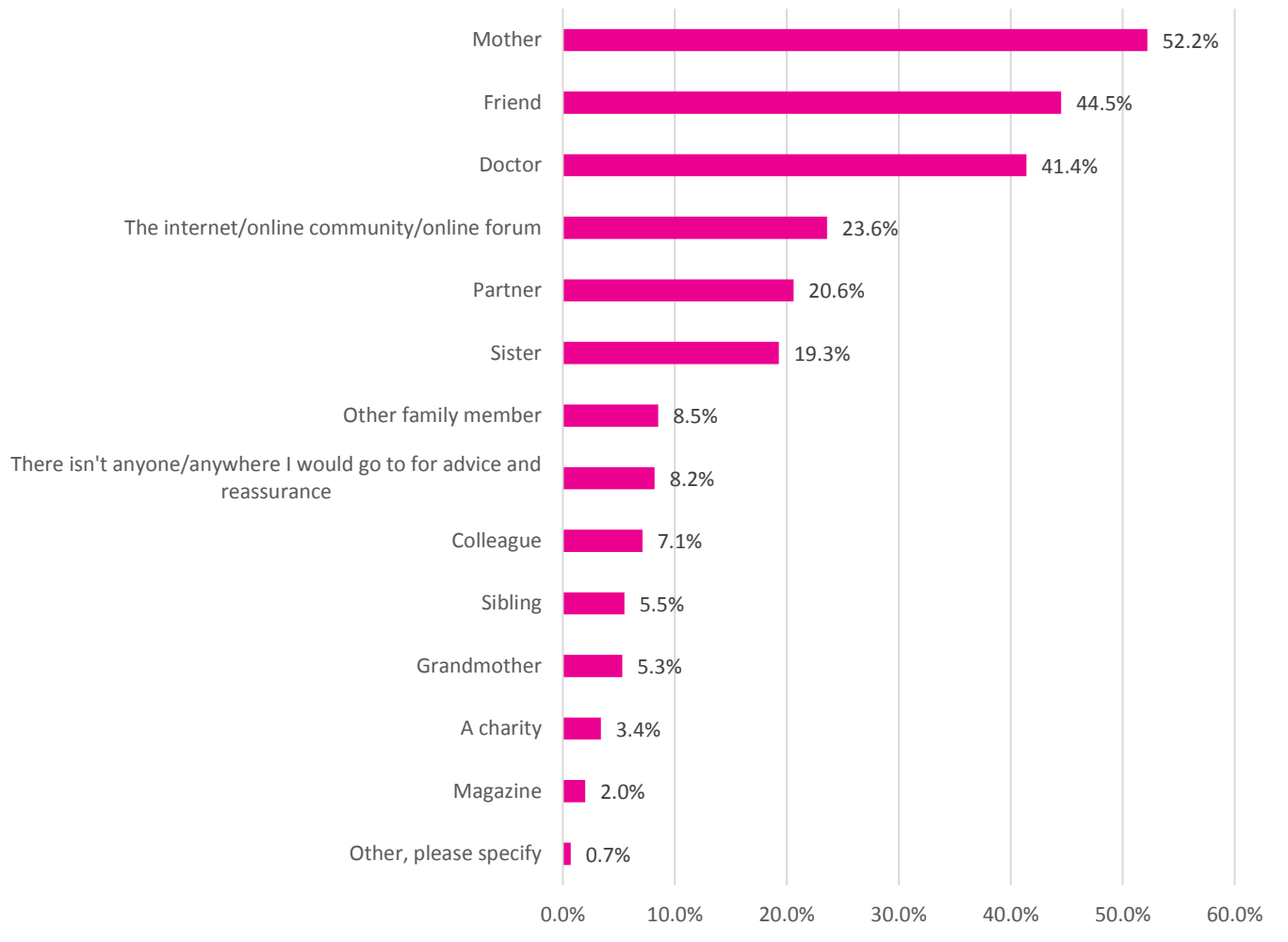
What do you think are the risk factors for developing cervical cancer? (Tick all that apply)



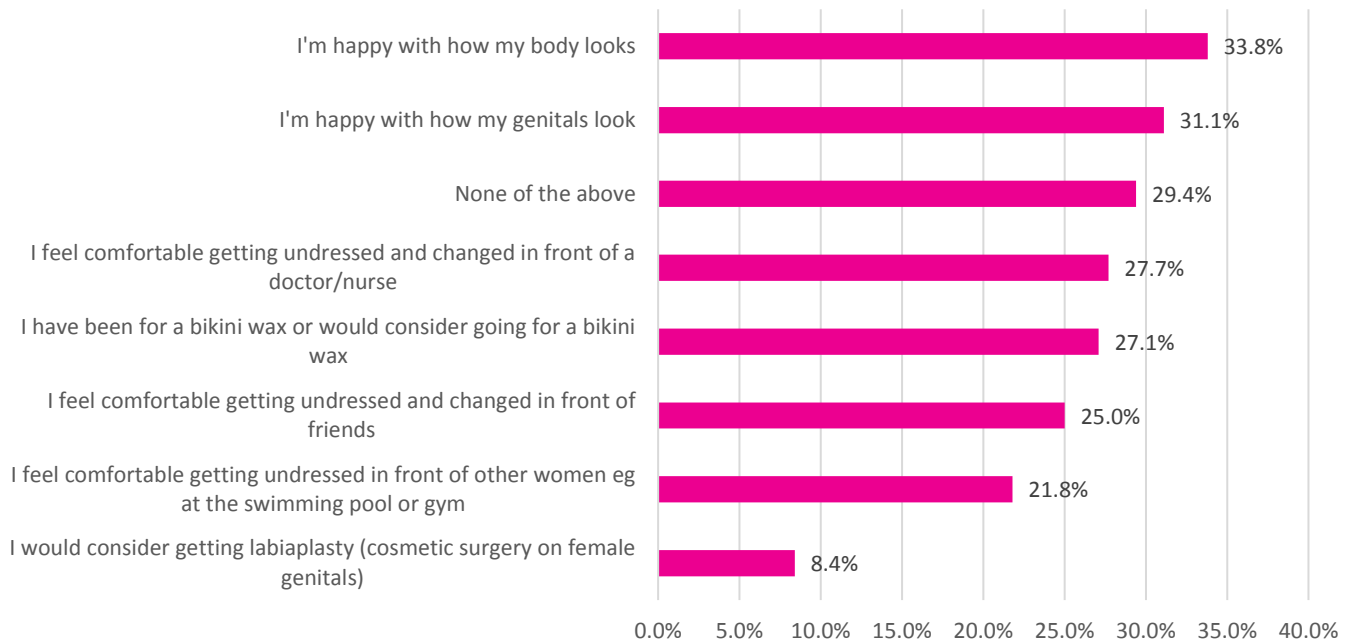
What would encourage you to attend cervical screening (smear test)? (Tick all that apply)



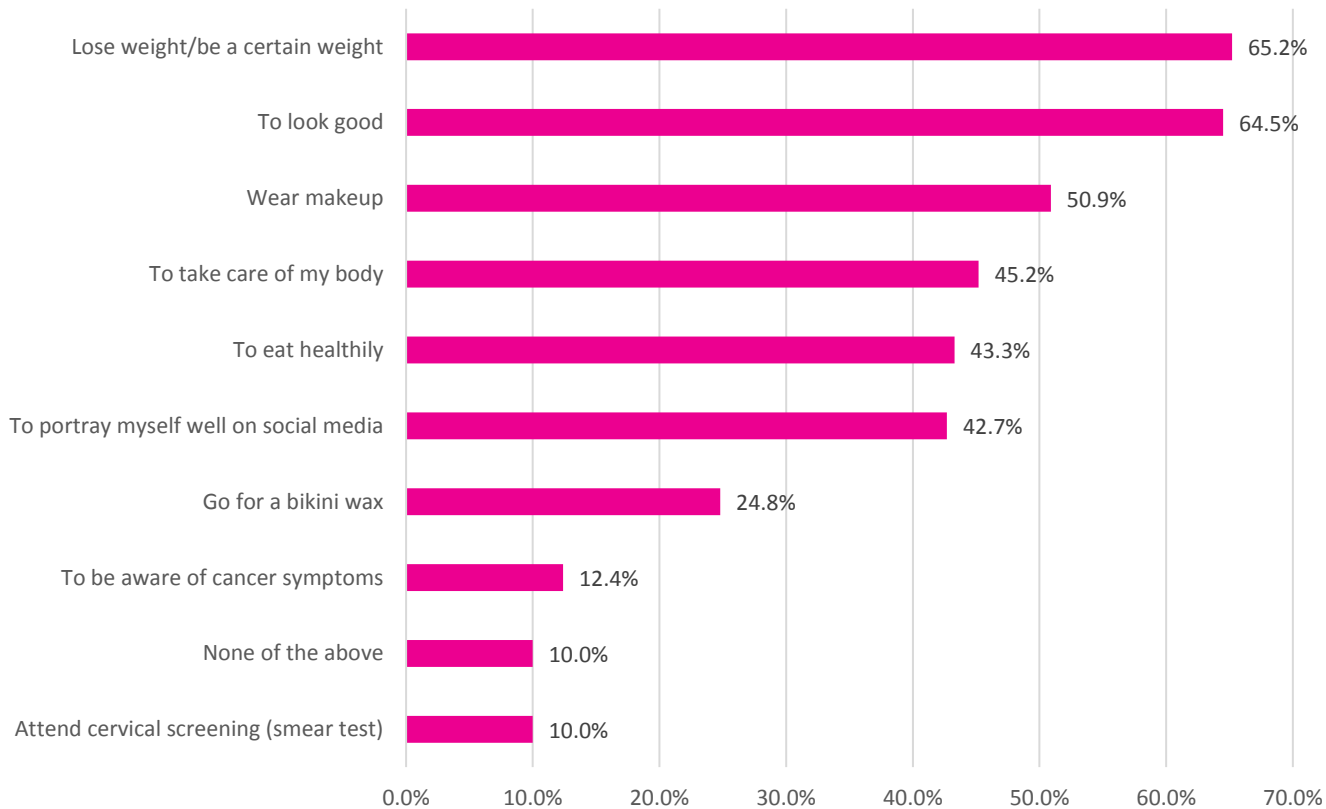
Who or what would you go to for advice and reassurance about cervical screening (smear tests)? (Tick all that apply)



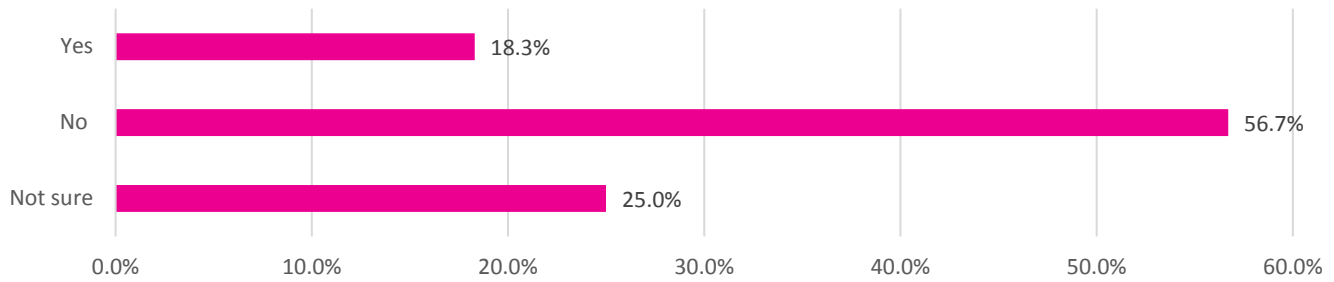
Which of the following statements do you agree with? (Tick all that apply)



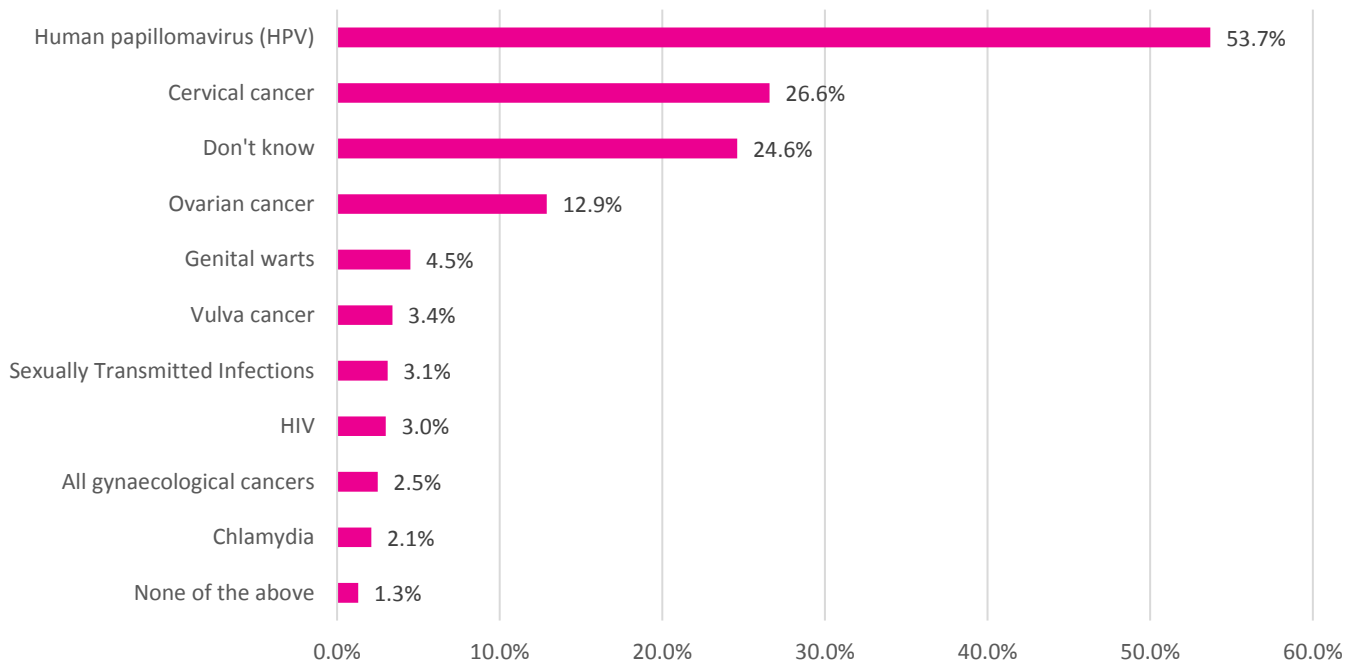
Which of the following do you feel there is social/peer pressure to do? (Tick all that apply)



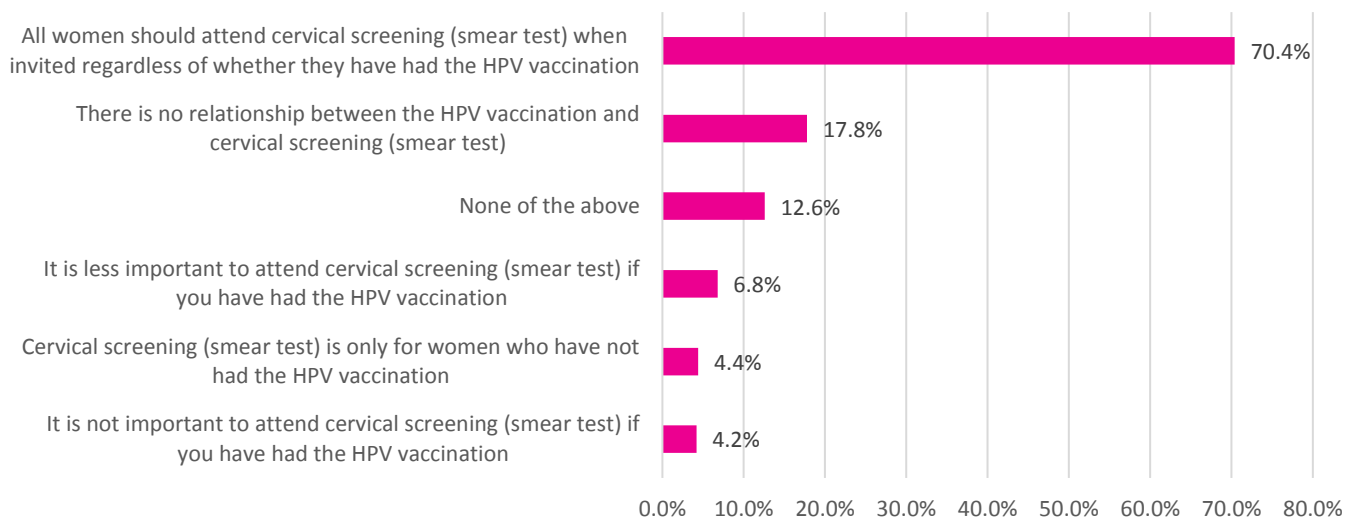
Have you received the HPV vaccination?



Which of the following do you think the HPV vaccination protects you against? (Tick all that apply)



Which of the following statements do you agree with? (Tick all that apply)



Which, if any, of the following do you think are symptoms of cervical cancer? (Tick all that apply)

