

Further understanding of the perception of cervical screening among women over 50

[Annual statistics](#) show incidences of cervical cancer in the UK have risen from 8 diagnoses every day to 9 each day meaning 3,224 women faced a diagnosis in 2014. Adding to concern, new modelling work commissioned by Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust in 2016 uncovered a ticking time bomb: incidences of cervical cancer are set to rocket if current uptake of cervical screening remains the same. By 2040 incidences will have increased by 16% among 60-64 year olds and 85% among 70-74 year olds. A 100% increase in mortality among 60-64 year olds is also a very real threat rising to a massive 117% if screening uptake continues to decline and falls by another 5%.

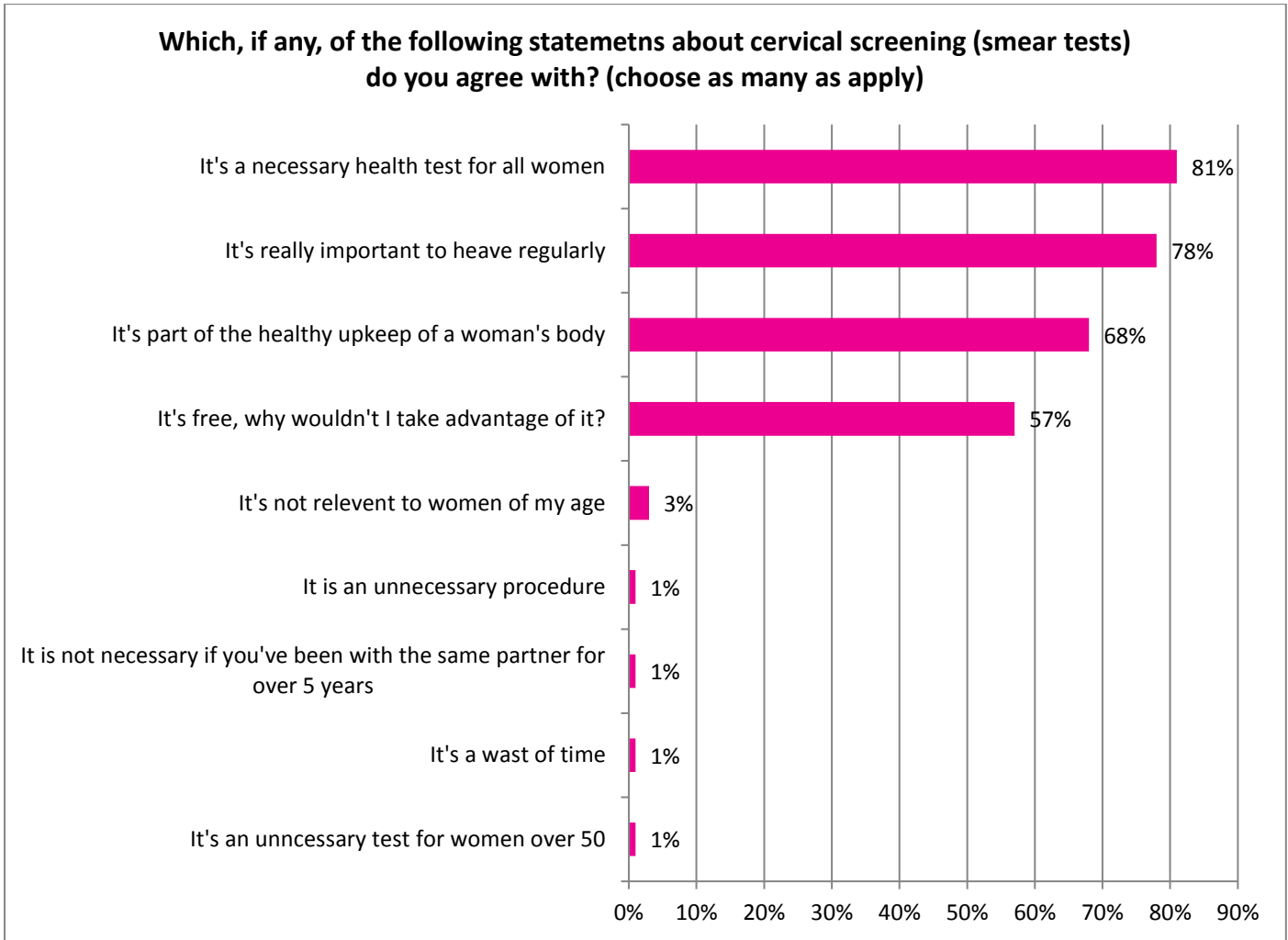
In April 2016 we undertook a survey of women aged 50 and over as part of our [Eradicate Cervical Cancer campaign](#). We wanted to further explore their knowledge of cervical cancer and barriers to cervical screening. The results were launched during Cervical Screening Awareness Week 2016.

We partnered with Gransnet, the busiest social networking site for the over 50s, to survey their users. Total sample size was 1020 women aged 50 and over. Fieldwork was undertaken between 18 April - 11 May 2016. The survey was carried out online.

Key findings include:

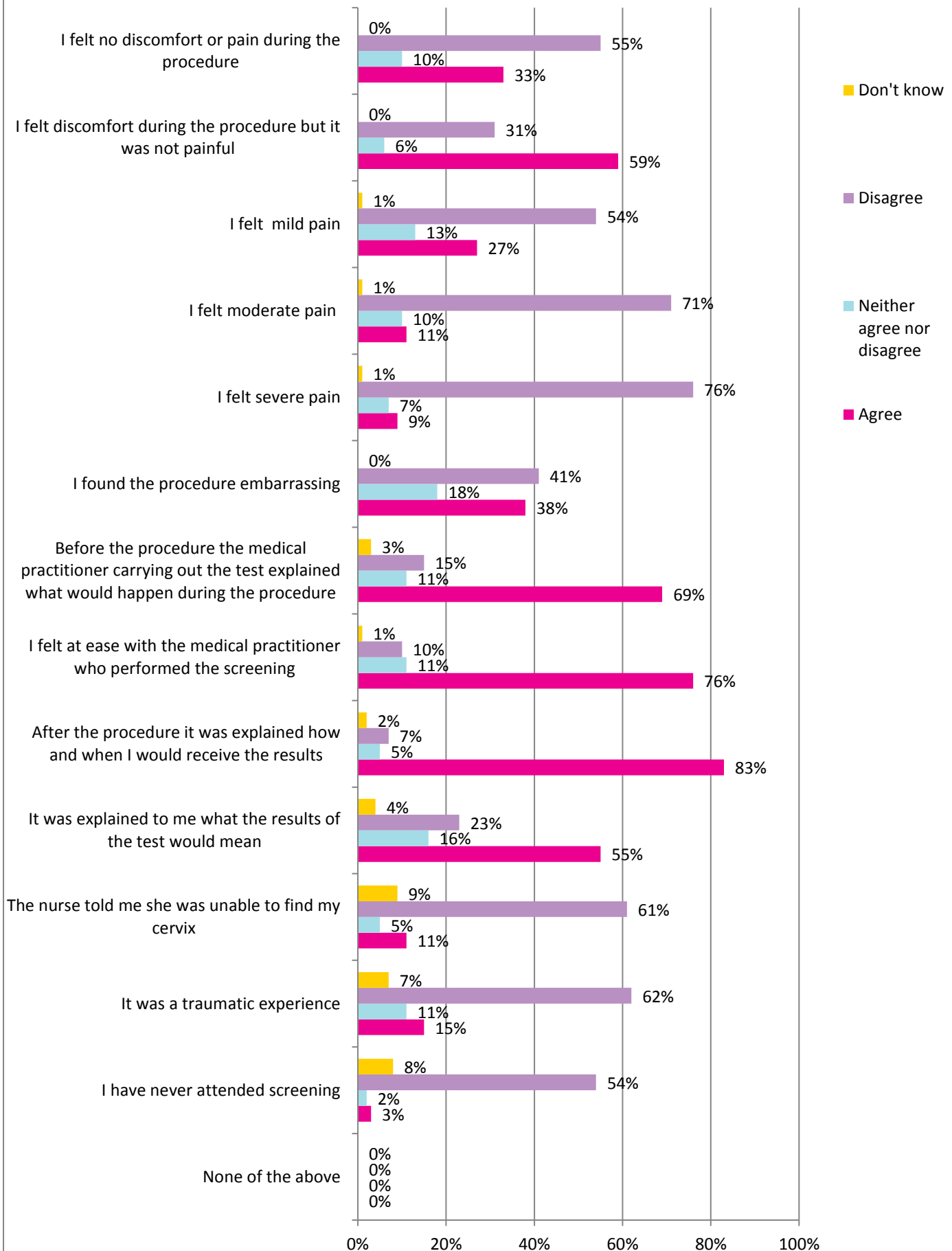
- One in three (33%) reported delaying cervical screening
- 32% do not think cervical screening is part of the healthy upkeep of a woman's body
- On average women over 50 delay their cervical screening for 26 months and 1 in 10 (10%) delay for over 5 years
- 46% do not agree or do not know that human papillomavirus (HPV) is common
- 21% do not agree or do not know that regular cervical screening reduces the risk of cervical cancer

The survey revealed relevance, accessibility and flexibility to be significant barriers to cervical screening among this group. For women who are post-menopause, screening can be also particularly uncomfortable which is why we now call for further research into HPV self-sampling tests as it could help overcome some of the barriers for this age group.



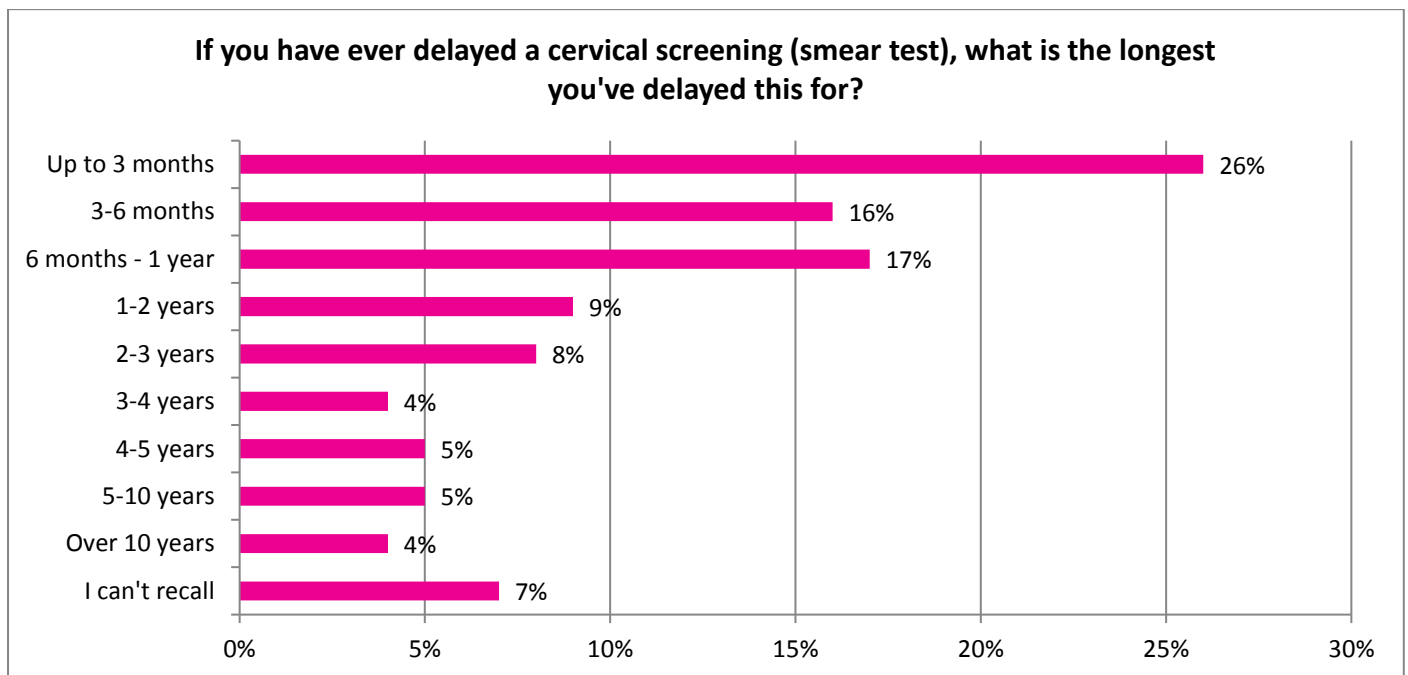
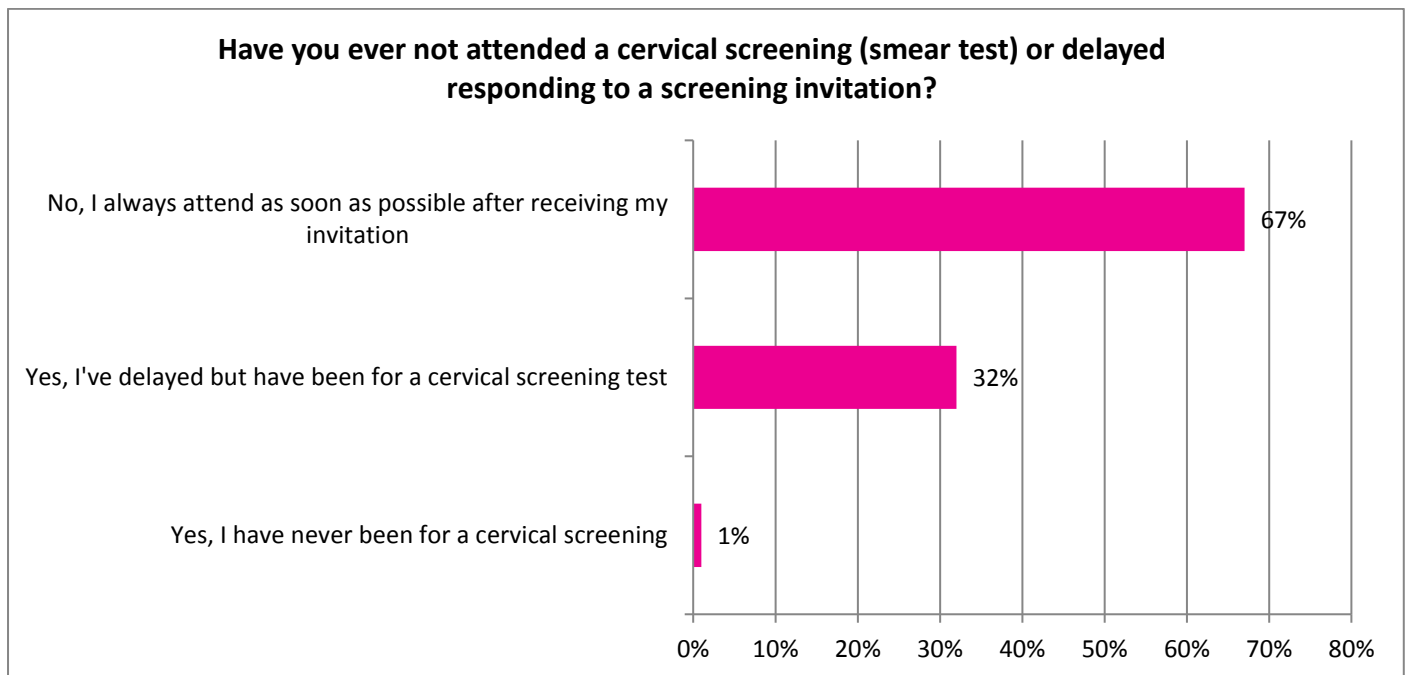
For those who have never been for cervical screening only 54% agreed that “it’s a necessary health test for all women”, 46% agreed that “it’s important to have regularly” and 8% agreed that “it’s a waste of time”.

Thinking about the last time you attended a cervical screening (smear test), please tell us to what extent you agree with the following statements.

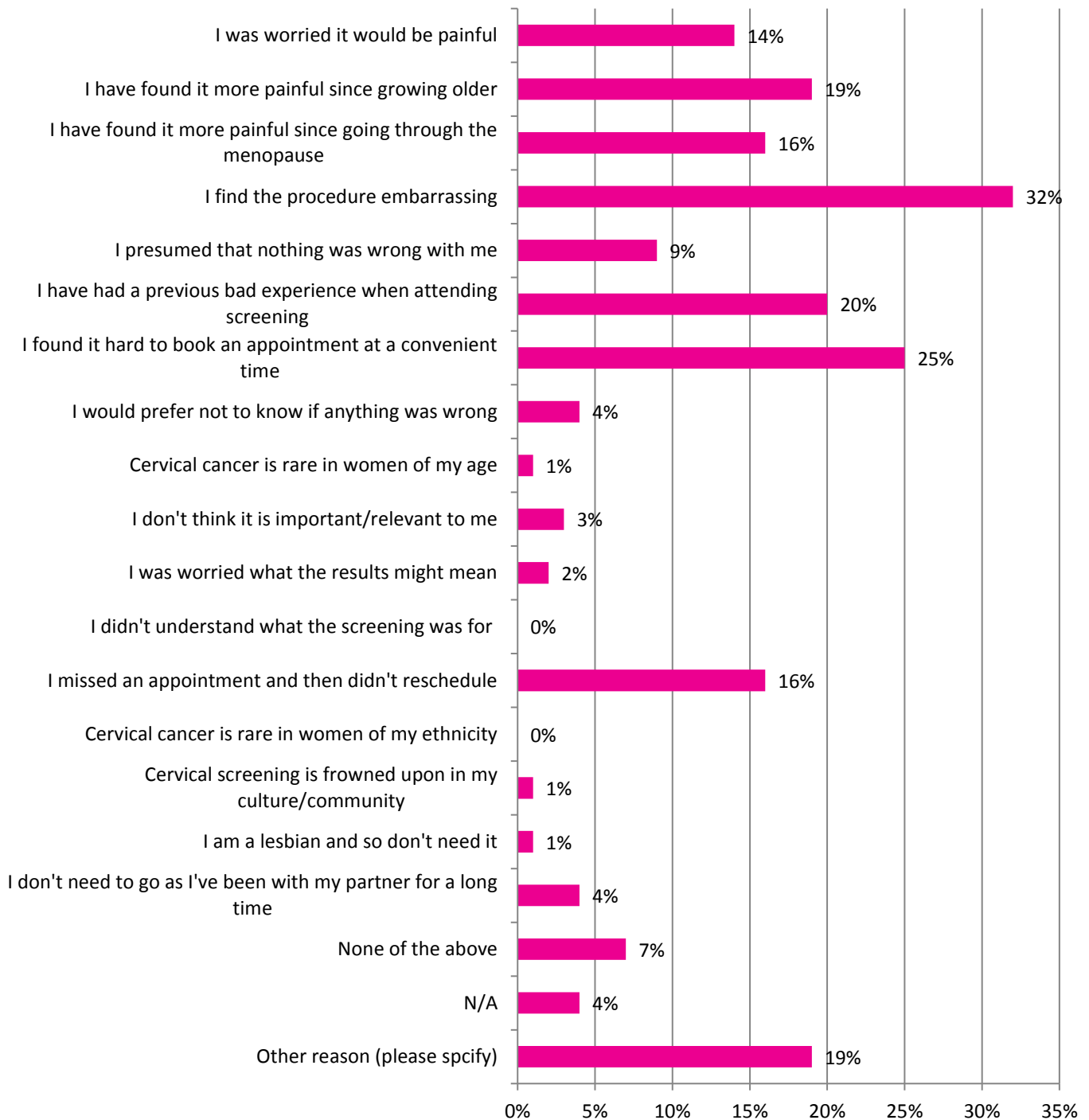


Of the respondents who reported always attending their screening, 83% agreed that they felt at ease with the medical practitioner who performed the screening, whereas of those who have previously delayed attending only 64% agreed. Furthermore, of those who have previously delayed their screening, 27% agreed that their cervical screening was a traumatic experience, compared to only 10% of those who have always attended their screening as soon as possible.

Of those who have never attended cervical screening 8% said that it is frowned upon in their culture/community, compared to 0% of those that have always attended screening as soon as possible.

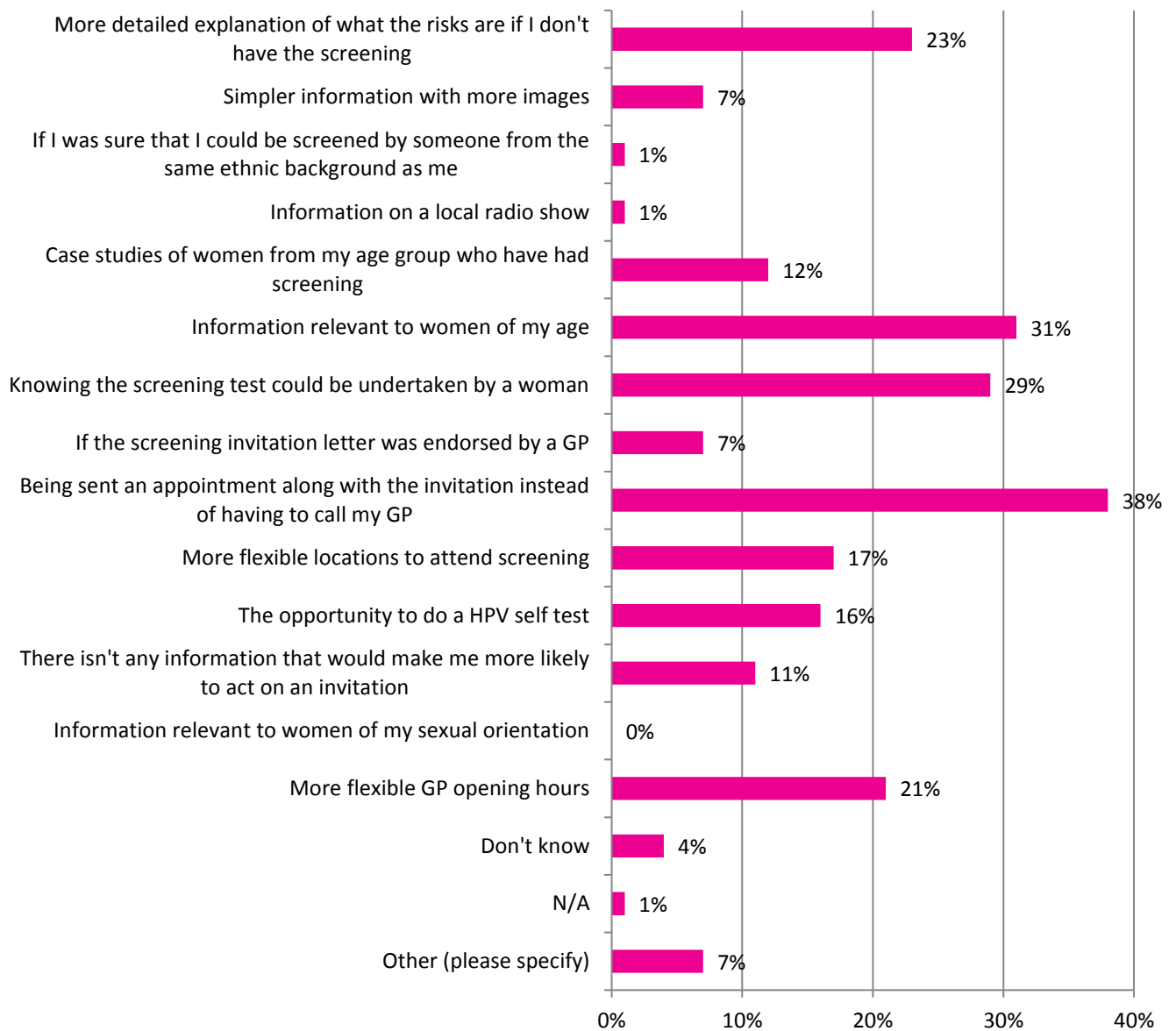


Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you have not attended or have delayed a cervical screening (smear test) appointment after being invited? (tick all that apply)



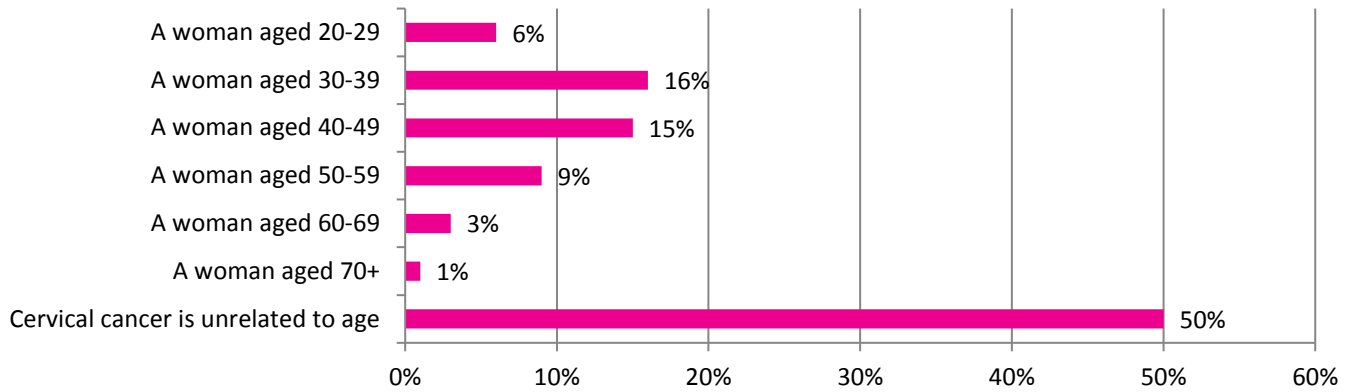
Within the "other reason" section, frequent answers including being peri-menopausal and experiencing irregular bleeding which made it difficult to arrange an appointment, or being busy and forgetting or putting off the appointment.

Which, if any, of the following would make you more likely to act on an invitation and book an appointment for a cervical screening (smear test)? (tick all that apply)



Within the “other” section women said they would be more likely to act on an invitation if they knew that the test is being carried out by a female expert familiar with reasons why it might be painful and hence able to reassure patients.

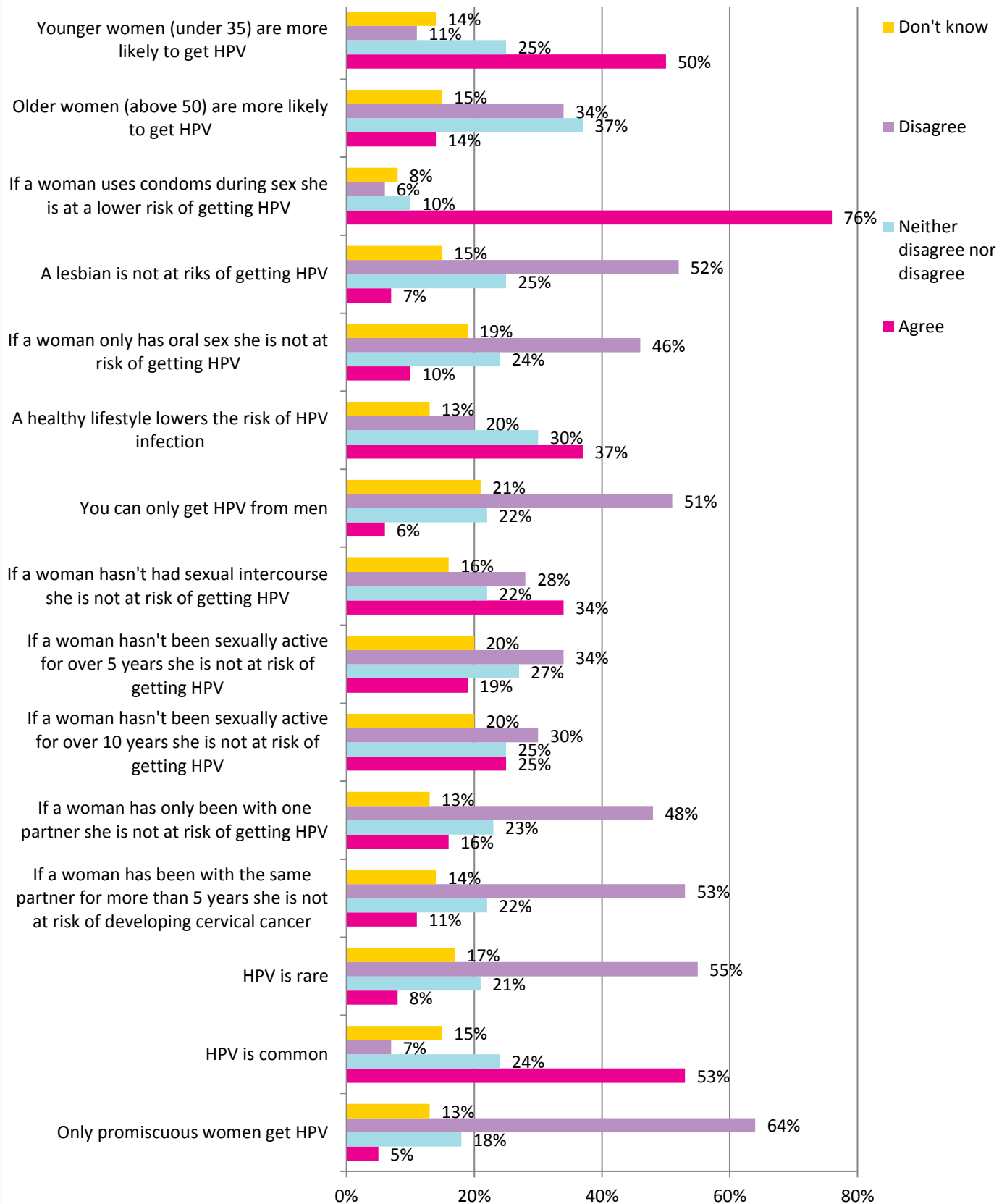
Which age group do you think is most likely to develop cervical cancer in the UK?



The following may or may not increase a woman's chance of developing cervical cancer. To what extent do you agree that each of these can increase a woman's chance of developing cervical cancer?



The Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the cause of 99.7% of cervical cancers. It is transmitted through skin to skin contact of the genital area. To what extent do you agree with the following?



The following may be symptoms of cervical cancer. Please let us know whether you think they are or not.

