

Public Knowledge of the Treatability of Communication Disorders and Other Findings

YouGov Poll Commissioned by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA)
Summary Report of U.S. Adults Ages 18+, March 2022



Objectives

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is interested in collecting data on public awareness of conditions that are treated by audiologists and speech-language pathologists. This includes:

- Prevalence of concerns about balance/risk of falls, cognition, hearing, speech/language, and swallowing/eating.
- If and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected those with concerns.
- General knowledge and opinions about treatment.

Methodology

- Data was collected between March 22 and March 24, 2022. The survey was carried out online.
- A nationally representative sample of US Adults 18+ (n=2,964) was collected and balanced to be representative of all US adults 18 and over.

Key Findings

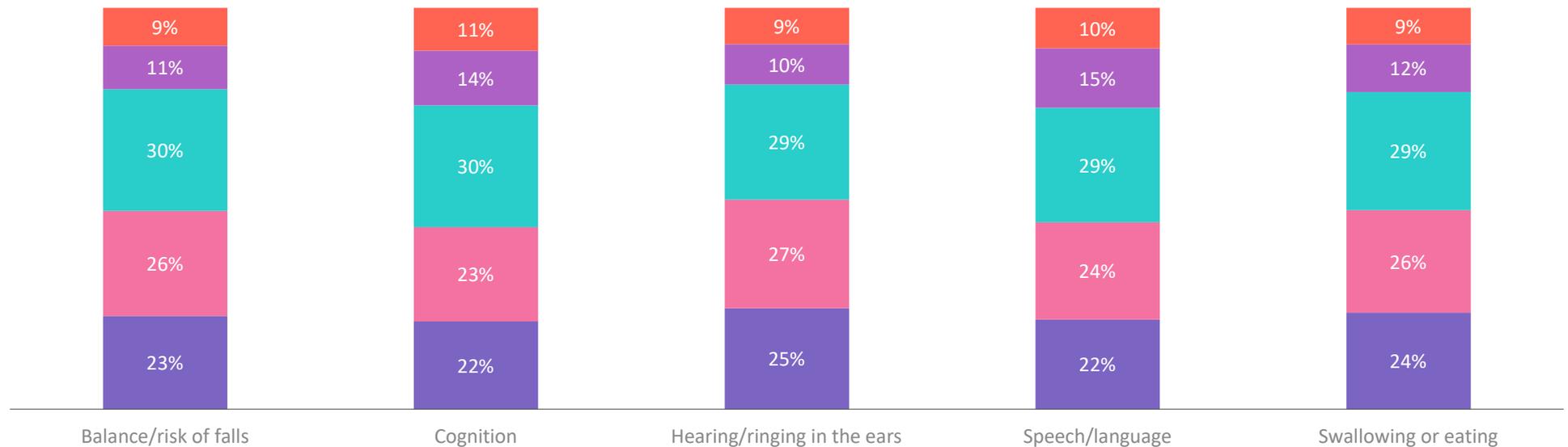
- Nearly half of U.S. adults report concern about one or more difficulties in the following areas: balance/risk of falls, cognition, hearing/ringing in the ears, speech/language, and swallowing/eating. Four-in-ten report concerns for an older relative.
- Around half of Americans are extremely/very confident that they know where/from whom to seek treatment for each of the above types of difficulties.
- One-third of Americans believe hearing/ringing in ears is very treatable by an audiologist. Balance/risk of falls are less associated with being treatable by an audiologist, with 1 in 5 believing they are very treatable.
- Almost half of Americans believe speech/language difficulties are very treatable by a speech-language pathologist. Cognition and swallowing difficulties are less associated with being treatable by a speech-language pathologist, with around 1 in 5 believing these are very treatable.
- The most commonly taken actions among those with concerns were scheduling an appointment with a medical professional (28%) and suggesting that a loved one talk to a professional (25%). However, 17% say they avoided situations where difficulties were obvious, and more than one-third (35%) report taking no action.
- Nearly two-thirds reveal that their number one concern regarding these difficulties is safety. Just over one-third of those with children with difficulties state that developmental concerns is one of their top concerns.
- The vast majority indicate that their concerns existed prior to the pandemic. The most commonly cited reasons for difficulties appearing or worsening were decreased interactions with others (38%) and decreased availability/access to medical professionals (37%).
- Half of those who had difficulties themselves believe the pandemic did not impact their timeline to seek help. Almost one-third who had difficulties themselves put off seeking help for a year or more.
- 15% of Americans have personally received care from an audiologist, and 9% from a speech-language pathologist. Overall, satisfaction with that care is high, with 77% of those who have personally received treatment indicating they are very or somewhat satisfied with the care received.
- 61% indicate they are at least somewhat open to receiving care via telehealth.

Around half of Americans are extremely/very confident that they know where/from whom to seek treatment for the difficulties specified below.

Only around 1 in 5 are not very/not at all confident about where/from whom to seek treatment

Confidence in Where to Seek Treatment

Extremely confident Very confident Somewhat confident Not very confident Not at all confident



Q2. How confident, if at all, are you in knowing where/from whom to seek help or treatment for each of the following difficulties, if needed?

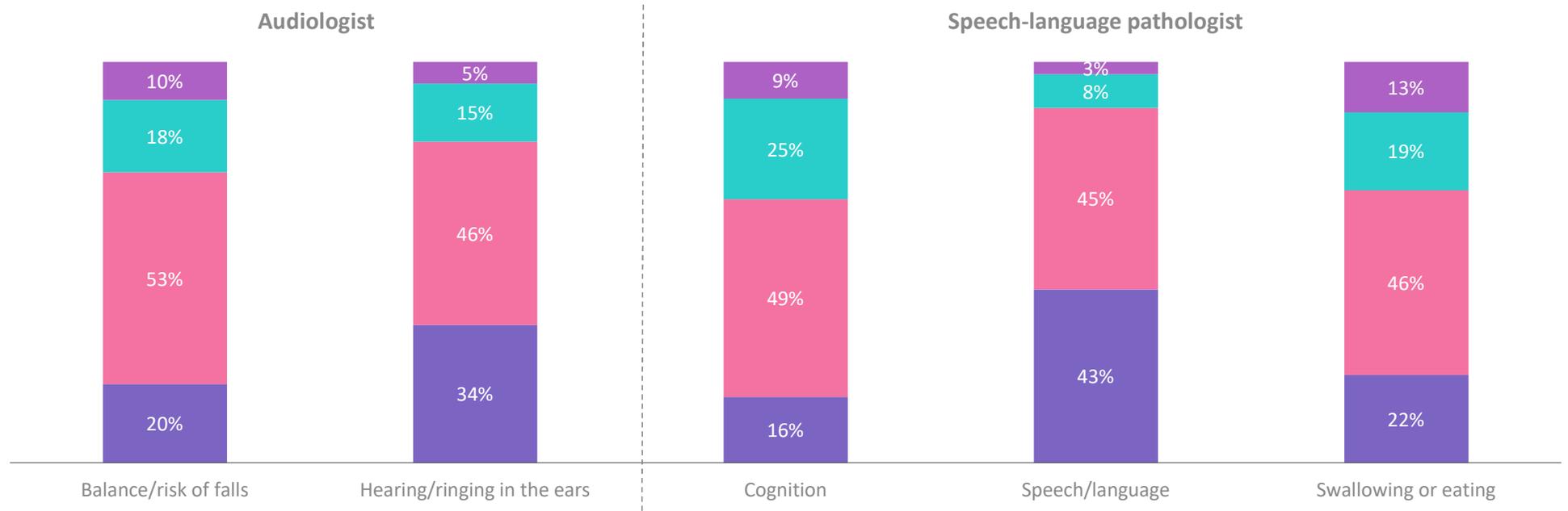
n = 2,964

When it comes to treatability, one-third believe hearing/ringing in ears is very treatable by an audiologist and almost half of Americans believe speech/language difficulties are very treatable by a speech language pathologist.

Balance/risk of falls are also less associated with being treatable by an audiologist, with 1 in 5 believing they are very treatable. Cognition and swallowing difficulties are less associated with being treatable by a speech-language pathologist, with around 1 in 5 believing these are very treatable.

Treatability of Difficulties, by Professional Type

Very treatable Somewhat treatable Not very treatable Not at all treatable

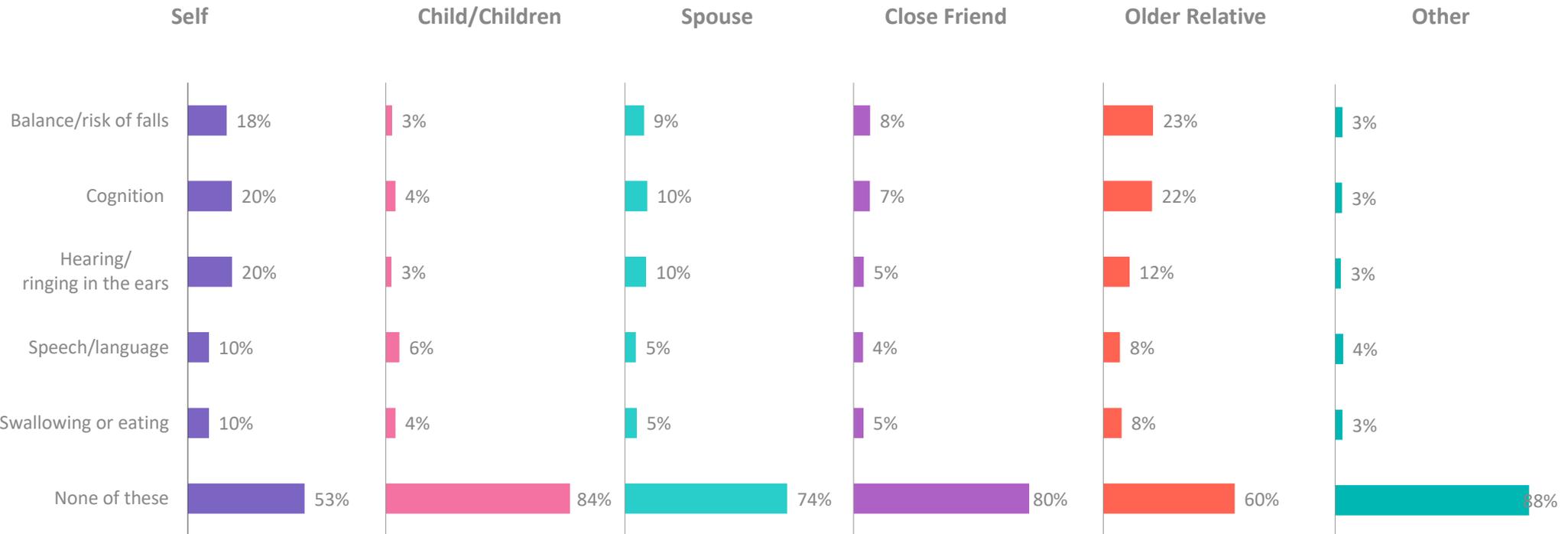


Q3a. To the best of your knowledge, how treatable, if at all, are each of the following difficulties with the help of a speech-language pathologist?
 Q3b. To the best of your knowledge, how treatable, if at all, are each of the following difficulties with the help of an audiologist?

Nearly half of U.S. adults report concern for one of more difficulties stated below.

Four-in-ten report concerns for an older relative.

Concerns for...



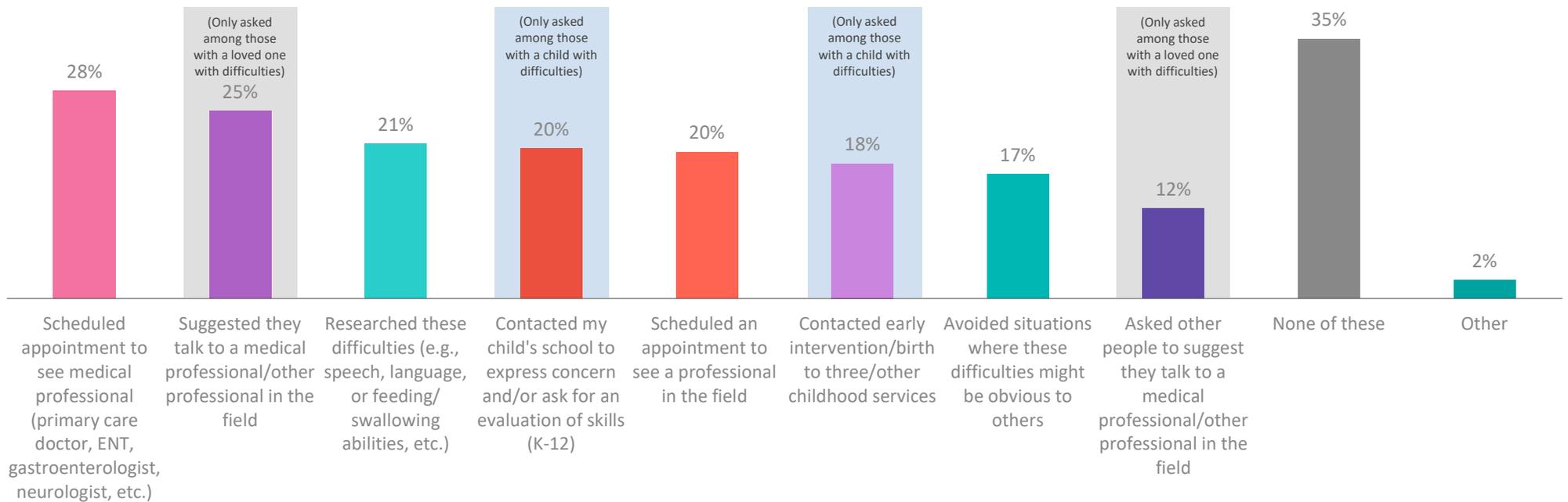
Q1. Do you have concerns about each of the following? Please select all that apply in each column.

n = 2,964

The most commonly taken actions were scheduling an appointment with a medical professional (28%) and suggesting that a loved one talk to a professional (25%).

However, 17% reported avoiding situations where difficulties were obvious, and more than one-third (35%) report no actions were taken.

Actions Taken Upon Recognizing Difficulties in Self or Loved One



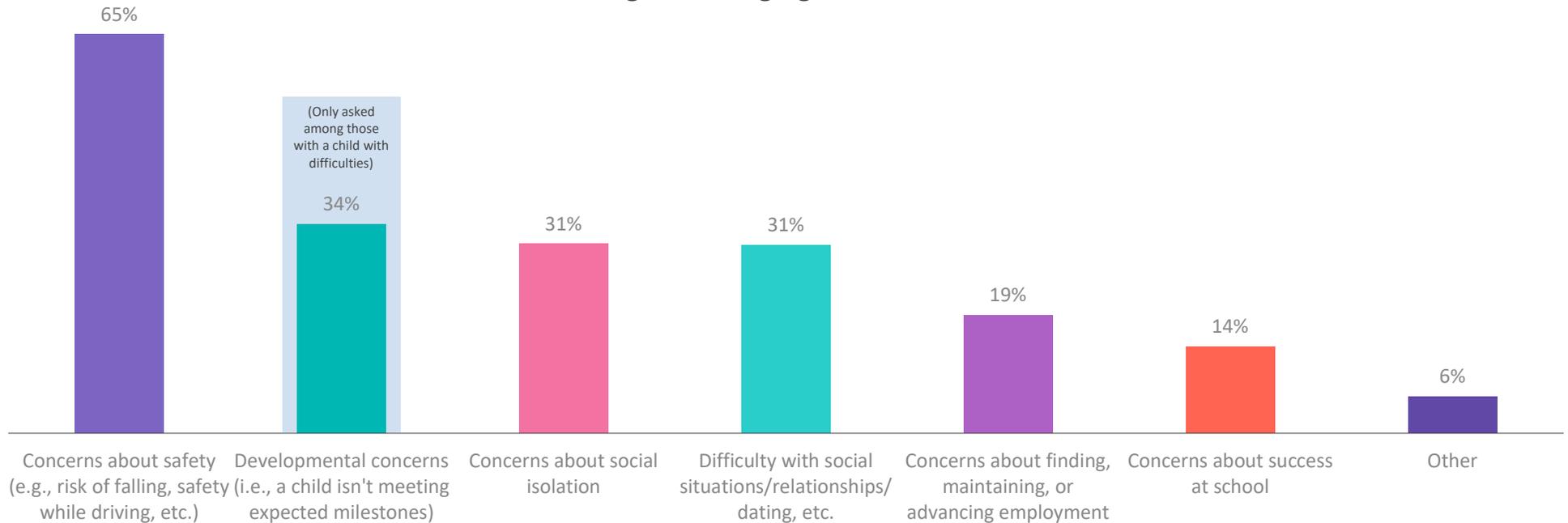
Q4. As a result of noticing [your/a loved one]'s [speech/language, hearing/ringing, balance, cognition, swallowing or eating] difficulties, which, if any, of the following have you done? Please select all that apply.

n = 1,955 (difficulties for self/loved one)
n = 1,611 (loved one)
n = 442 (children)

Nearly two-thirds reveal that their number one concern regarding these difficulties is safety.

Just over one-third with children with difficulties state that developmental concerns is one of their top concerns.

Drivers for Seeking/Encouraging Care for Self or Loved One



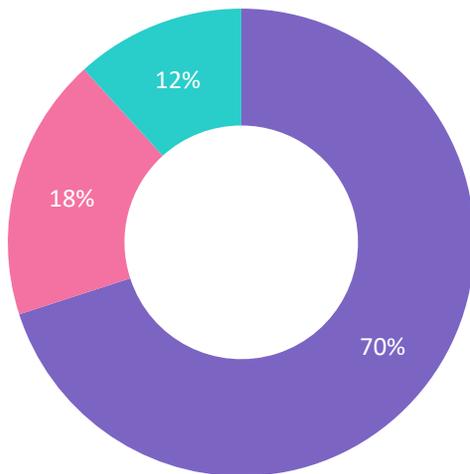
Q5. Which of the following are likely to cause you to seek/encourage care for [your/a loved one]'s [speech/language, hearing/ringing, balance, cognition, swallowing or eating] problem? Please select all that apply.

n = 1,955 (difficulties for self/loved one)
n = 442 (difficulties for children)

The vast majority, similar among those with difficulties themselves or a loved one with difficulties, indicate that their concerns existed prior to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

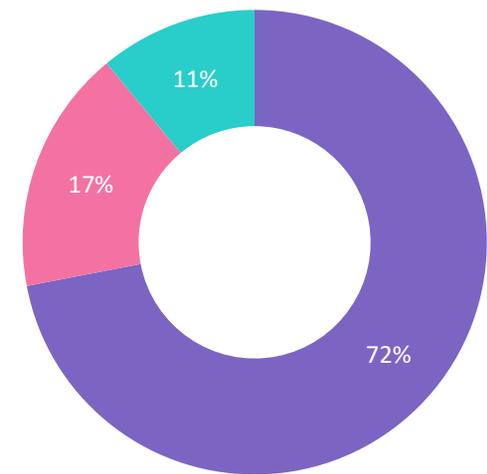
Just under 1 in 5, similar among those with difficulties themselves or a loved one, state that their concerns came about during the pandemic.

Impact of Pandemic on Difficulties Reported for Self



- existed before the pandemic/ No change due to the pandemic
- came about during the pandemic
- worsened during the pandemic

Impact of Pandemic on Difficulties Reported for Loved One



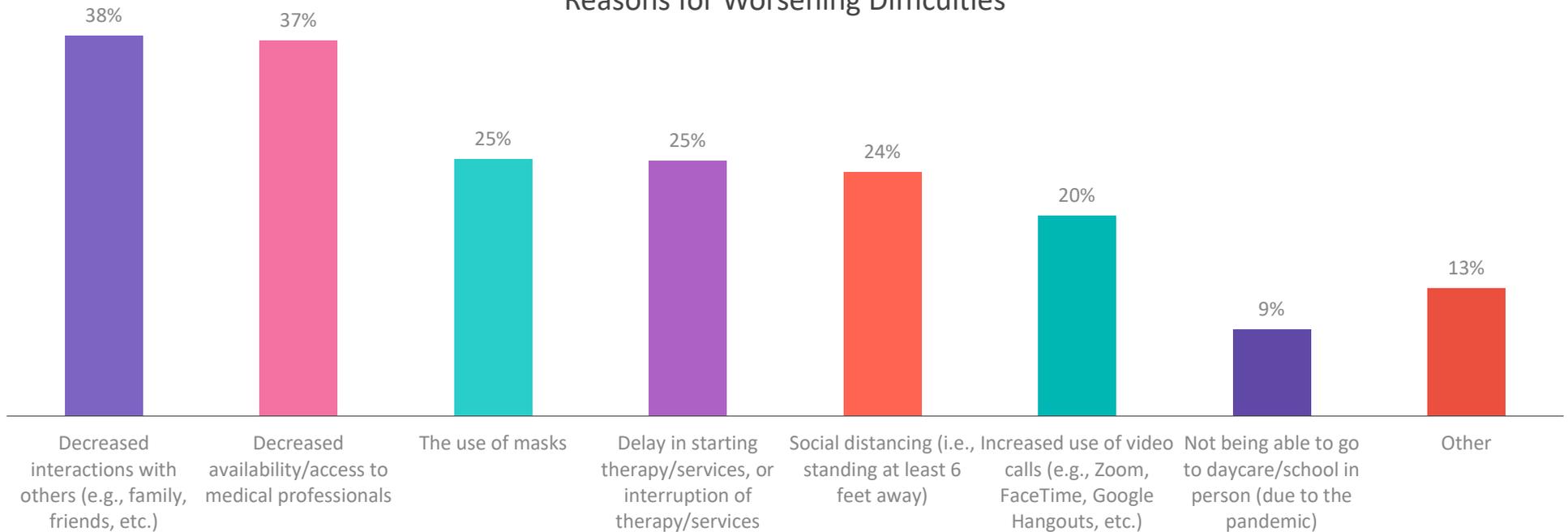
Q6. How, if at all, has the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted your concerns about [your/a loved one]'s [speech/language, hearing/ringing, balance, cognition, swallowing or eating] problem?

n = 1,371 (difficulties for themselves)
n = 584 (difficulties for loved one and not self)

The most commonly cited reasons for difficulties appearing or worsening were decreased interactions with others (38%) and decreased availability/access to medical professionals (37%).

A quarter believe the use of masks and delays in therapy are the reasons why their concerns came about/worsened during the pandemic.

Reasons for Worsening Difficulties



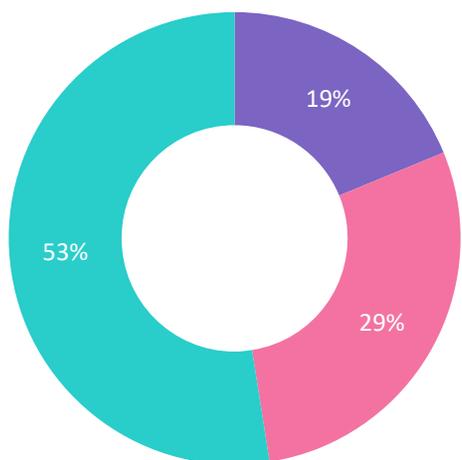
Q7. You mentioned that these concerns [came about/worsened] during the pandemic. Which, if any, of the following do you believe are the reasons why? Please select all that apply.

n = 556 (reported difficulties came about/worsened during pandemic)

Half of those who had difficulties themselves believe the pandemic did not impact their timeline to seek help; 30% with concerns for others report the same.

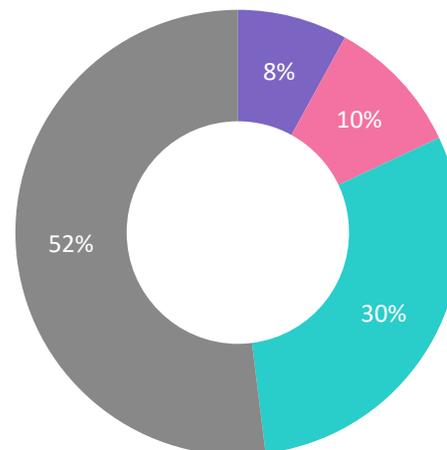
Almost a third who had difficulties themselves put off seeking help for a year or more.

Impact of Pandemic on Seeking Help for Self



- I put off seeking help for several weeks or months
- I put off seeking help for a year or more
- It has not had any impact, I sought help as soon as the difficulty became evident
- I'm not directly responsible for other people's healthcare decisions

Impact of Pandemic on Seeking Help for Loved One

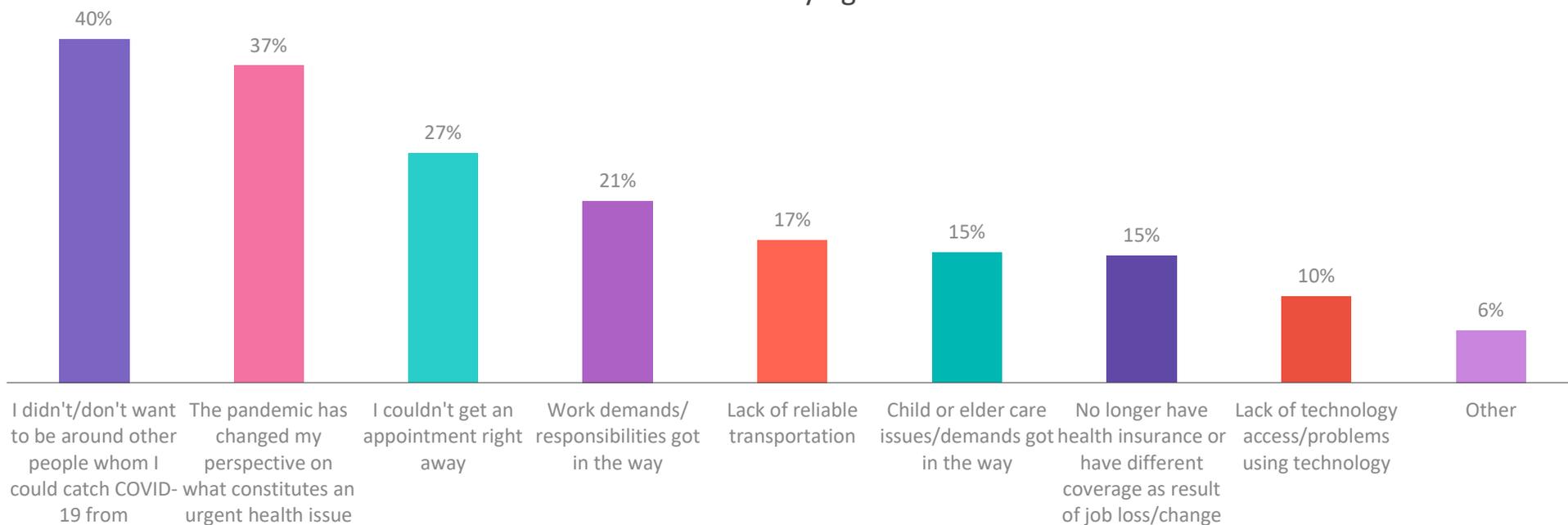


Q8. How, if at all, has the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted your timeline for seeking help for [your/a loved one]'s [speech/language, hearing/ringing, balance, cognition, swallowing or eating] difficulties?

n = 1,955 (total)
n = 1,371 (filtered: Had concerns for self) n = 1,611 (filtered: Had concerns for others AND NOT self)

The most common reasons for delaying treatment were not wanting to be around people they could contract COVID-19 from (40%) and the pandemic changing their perspective on what constitutes an urgent health issue (37%).

Reasons for Delaying Treatment

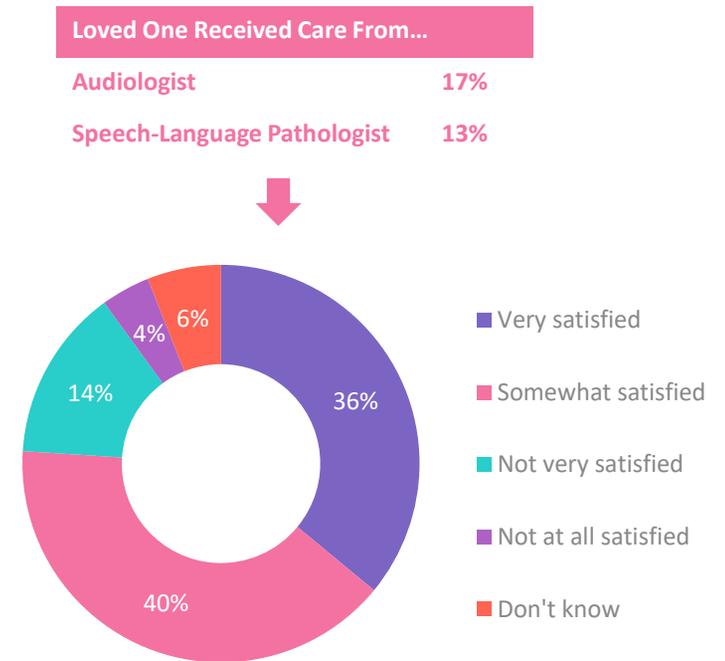
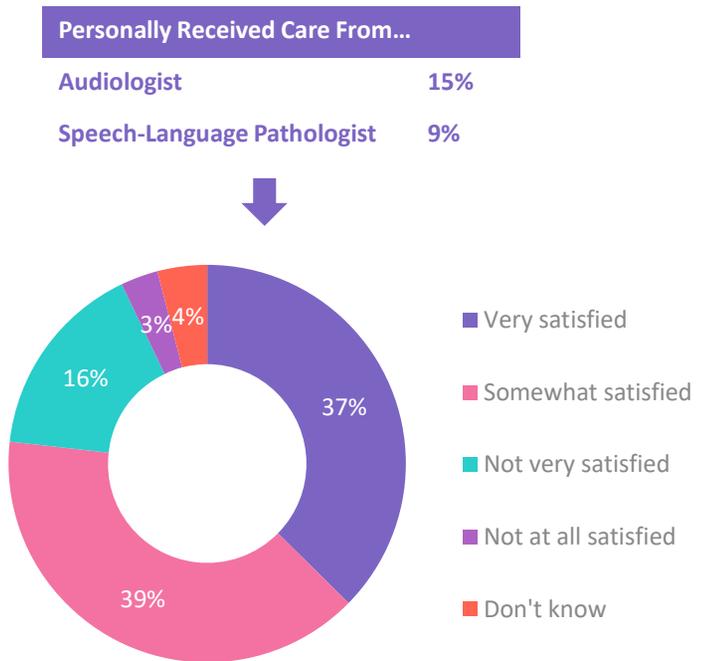


Q9. Which of the following are reasons why the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic delayed you from seeking help? Please select all that apply.

n = 745 (reported delaying treatment)

15% have personally received care from an audiologist; 9% from a speech-language pathologist. Slightly more know someone who has received care from each.

Overall, satisfaction with that care is high, with 77% of those who have personally received treatment indicating they are very or somewhat satisfied with the care received.

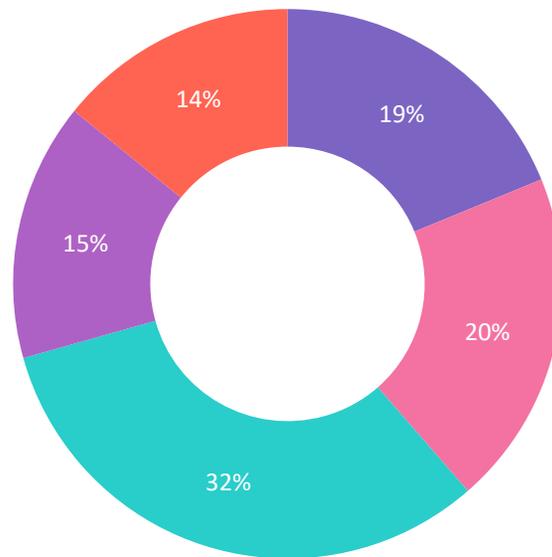


Q10. Which, if any, of the following professionals have you or a loved one ever received care/treatment from? (base: total)
 Q11. How satisfied, if at all, were you with the care received from an audiologist or speech-language pathologist for yourself or for a loved one?

n = 2,964 (total)
 n = 648 (self)
 n = 778 (loved one)

61% indicate they are at least somewhat open to receiving care via telehealth.

■ Extremely open ■ Very open ■ Somewhat open ■ Not very open ■ Not open at all



Q12. How open, if at all, would you be to receiving any type of care via telehealth (a web-enabled platform with video)?

n = 2,964 (total)