

# Incidence of Accommodations for Patients With Significant Vision Limitations in Physicians' Offices in the US

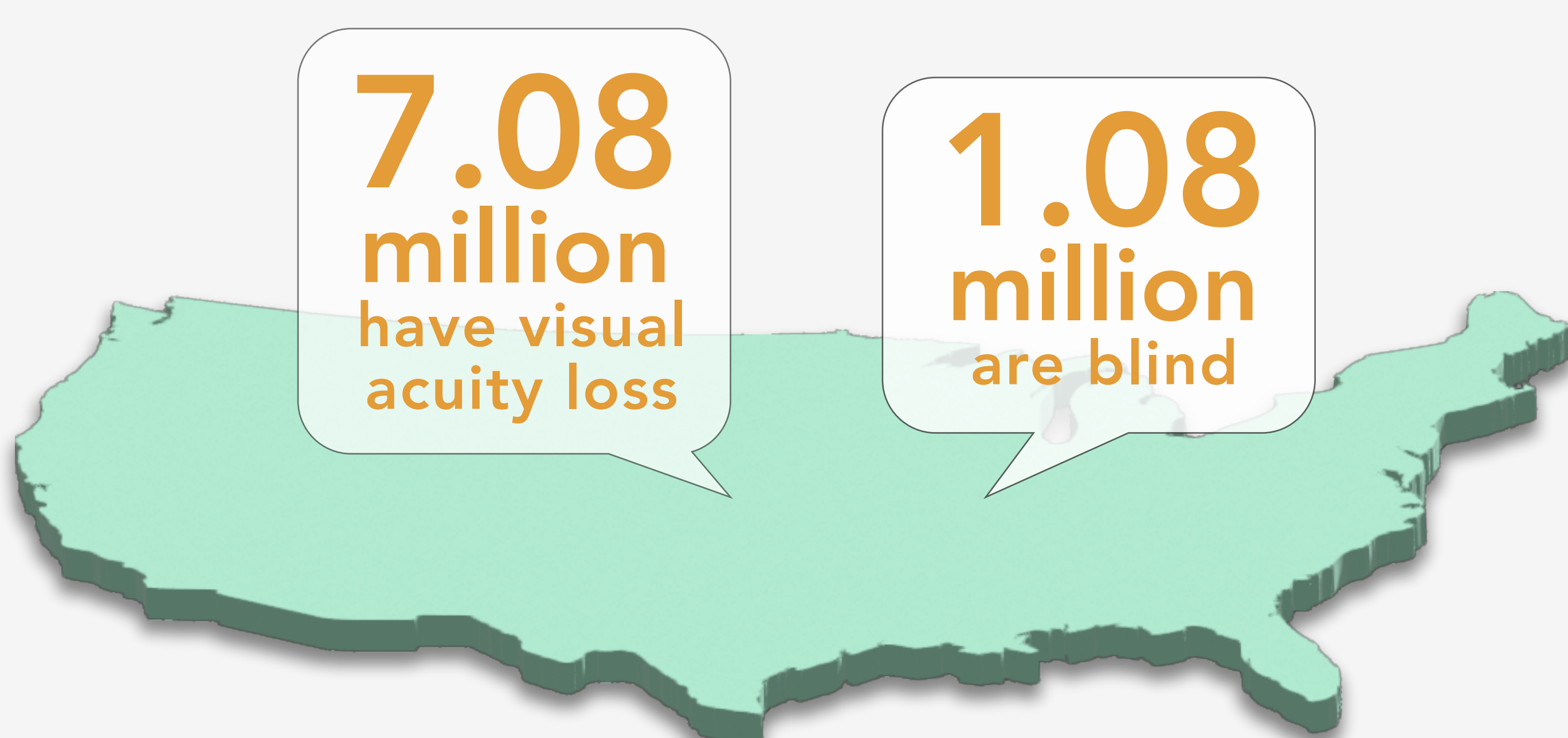
lezzoni LI, Sowmya RR, Ressalam J, et al. *JAMA Ophthalmol.* 2022;140(1):79-84.  
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In this physician survey study, the extent of basic accommodations provided to patients with significant vision limitations during outpatient care within the US was empirically explored.



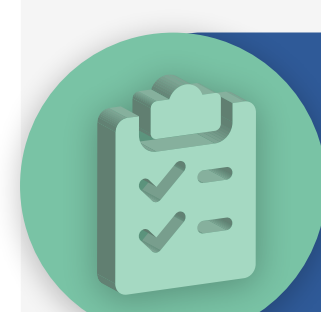
## With the aging US population, vision loss is a major public health problem

Cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma contribute to increasing numbers of individuals with blindness or substantial vision impairments.



Persons with impaired vision experience health care disparities, like lower rates of screening for breast or colon cancers, and may have worse health outcomes.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, people with impaired vision had more difficulty than others obtaining trusted information.
- People with significant vision impairments described needing basic accommodations during health care visits, such as having clinic staff describe examination room spaces (to ensure patients' safety and comfort) and receiving printed materials (eg, instructions, prescriptions) in accessible formats (eg, Braille, large font).



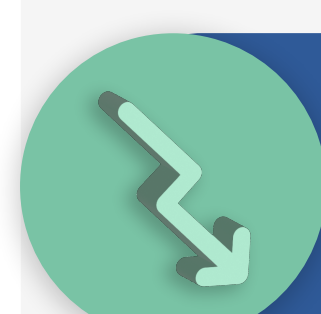
## The researchers developed a survey to explore basic accommodations

The researchers developed a survey appropriate for physicians practicing in 7 specialties:

- Family medicine
- General internal medicine
- Neurology
- Obstetrics-gynecology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopedic surgery
- Rheumatology

The final survey had 75 questions grouped into 8 modules, including available and provided accommodations centered around limitations in:

- Hearing
- Intellectual disabilities
- Mental health
- Mobility
- Vision



## Accommodations provided by any specialty were low

For the vision module, the researchers identified potential accommodations for outpatient practices based on prior qualitative research.

The researchers focused on frequent use of 2 accommodations:

- Always or usually verbally describing the examination room
- Always or usually providing large-font printed materials

They defined a 3-level outcome variable: participants reported always or usually providing:

- (1) both
- (2) one but not both
- (3) neither of these 2 accommodations

Survey Participant Characteristics and Associations With Accommodations for Patients With Significant Vision Limitations

| Variable        | Overall<br>Number/ <sup>a</sup> % (95% CI) <sup>b</sup> | Vision accommodation practices <sup>a</sup>          |  |   |
|-----------------|---|--|--|---|
|                 |   | Both<br>Number/ <sup>a</sup> % (95% CI) <sup>b</sup> | One but not both<br>Number/ <sup>a</sup> % (95% CI) <sup>b</sup> | Neither<br>Number/ <sup>a</sup> % (95% CI) <sup>c</sup> |
| Primary Care    | 252 (72.5)  | 20 (8.4)   | 73 (28.3)  | 159 (63.4)  |
| Ophthalmology   | 75 (7.6)  | 18 (24.0)  | 35 (46.7)  | 22 (29.3)   |
| Other specialty | 135 (19.9)  | 10 (6.1)   | 39 (33.3)  | 86 (60.6)   |

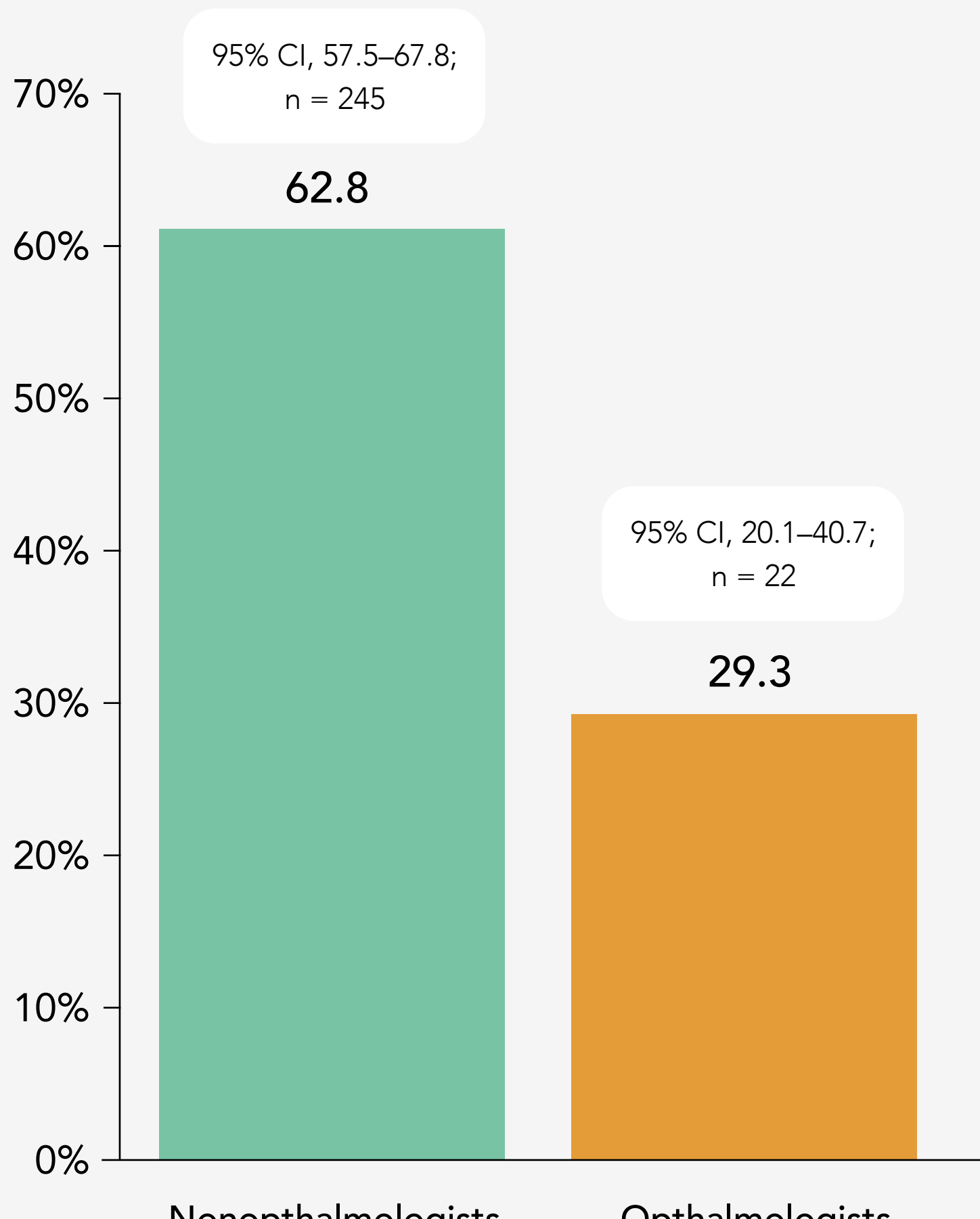
<sup>a</sup> Accommodations were always or usually describing examination room and/or using large-font printed materials.

<sup>b</sup> May not add to the total owing to missing data.

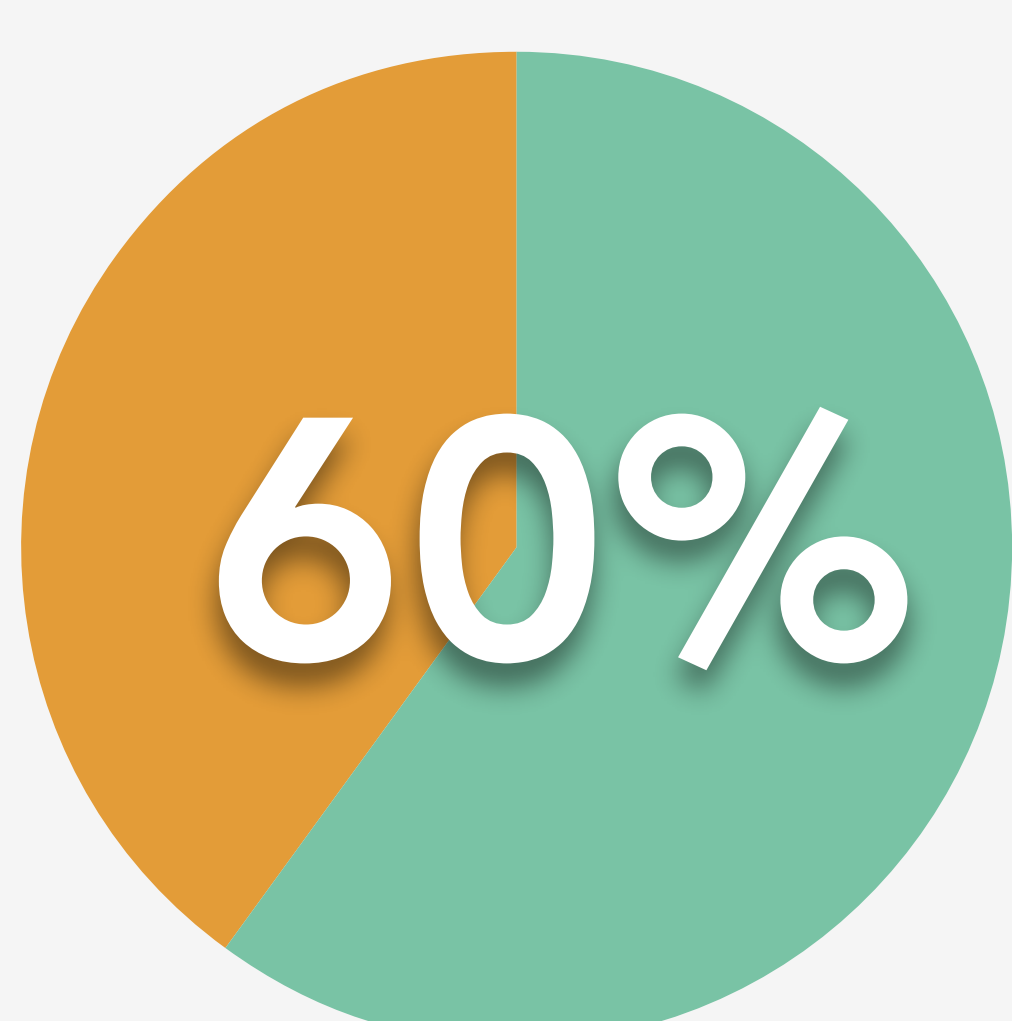
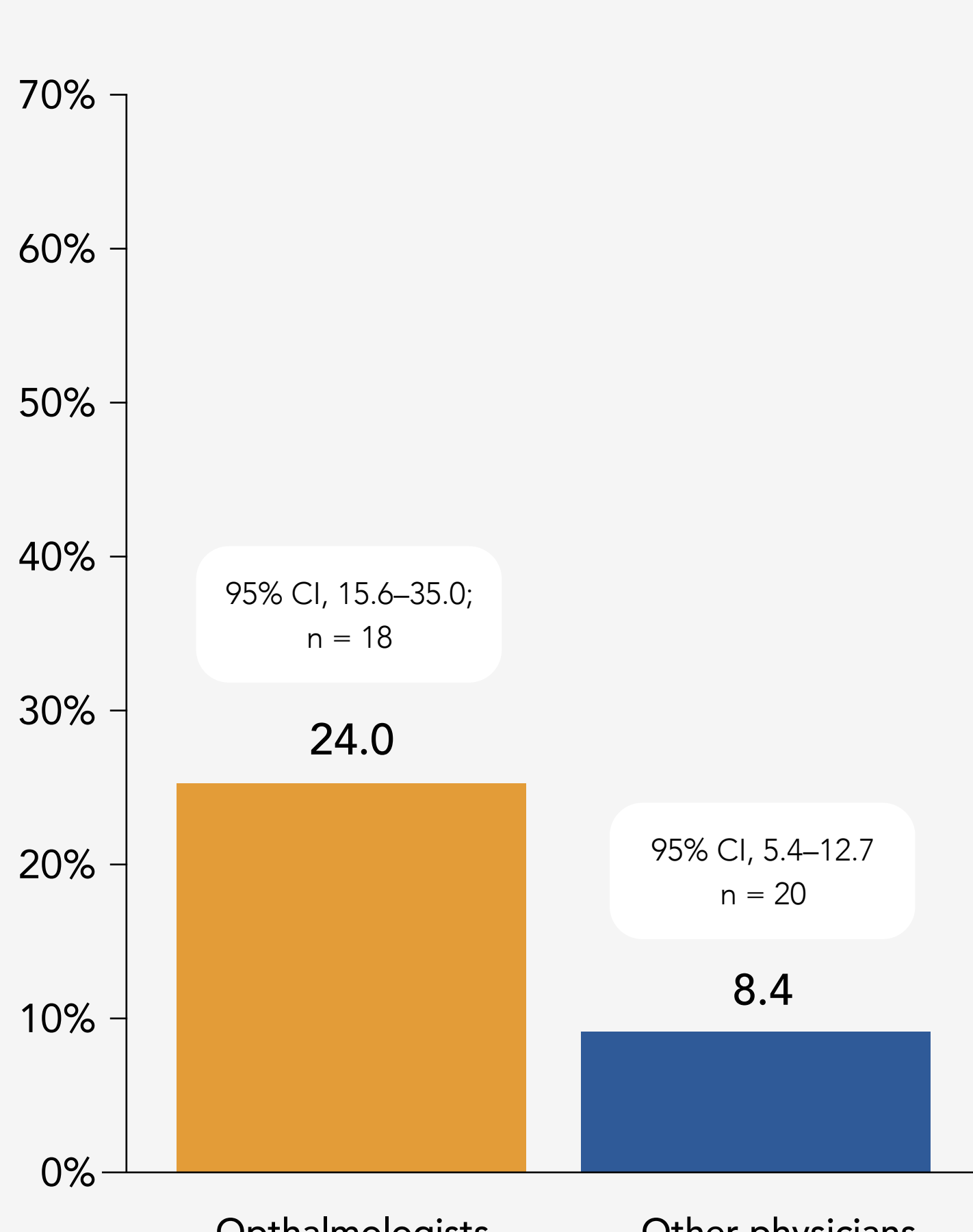
<sup>c</sup> Percentages adjusted for sampling weights.

P < .001

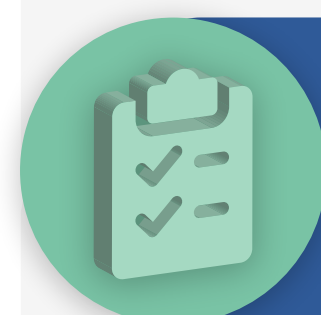
### Survey participants not providing any accommodations



### Survey participants providing both accommodations



Approximately three-fifths of physicians practicing in the US do not routinely describe the examination room, nor provide printed materials in large font to patients with significant vision limitations.



## Conclusions

**This survey study suggests that less than one-tenth of physicians practicing in the US who care for patients with significant vision limitations provide both basic vision accommodations, with less than one-third of ophthalmologists doing so. Actions to address this seem warranted; various other accommodations, requiring little time or financial expense, can also enhance care for these patients.**