



Perspectives on hyperacusis and support in primary care

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Why this study is important

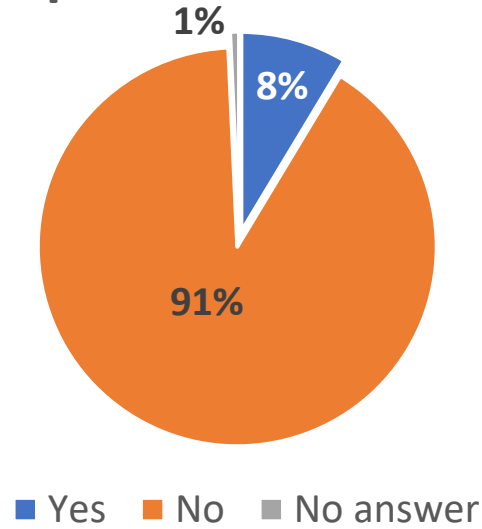
- ❖ Tinnitus: 15.3% adults (England); Hyperacusis: 8-17% (population studies)
- ❖ 1.1 million GP consultations for tinnitus per year
- ❖ Societal cost of tinnitus over £2.1 billion annually

Challenging primary care environment

- ❖ Variation in self-management support
- ❖ Inconsistent use of guidelines
- ❖ Time constrained consultations
- ❖ Limited GP training and resources
- ❖ Patient dissatisfaction and revolving door scenario



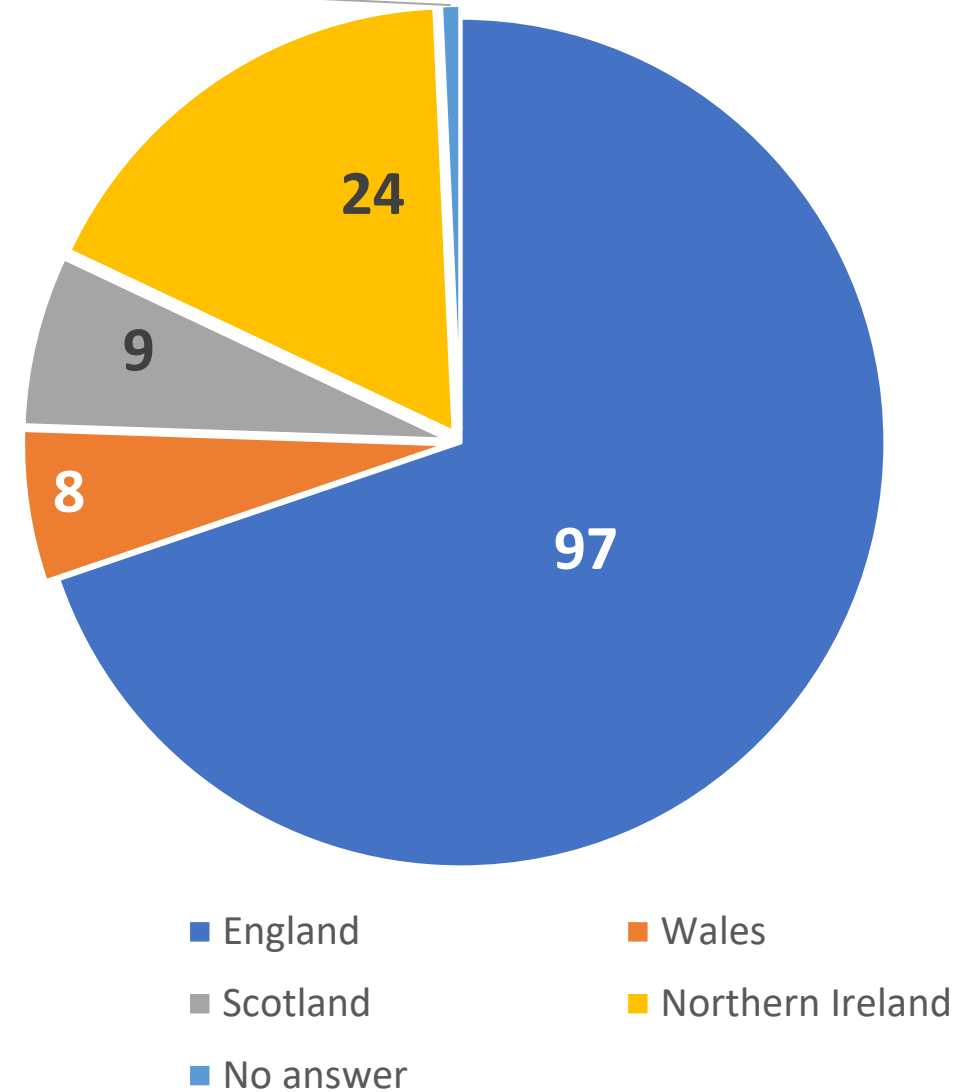
Special interest in ENT



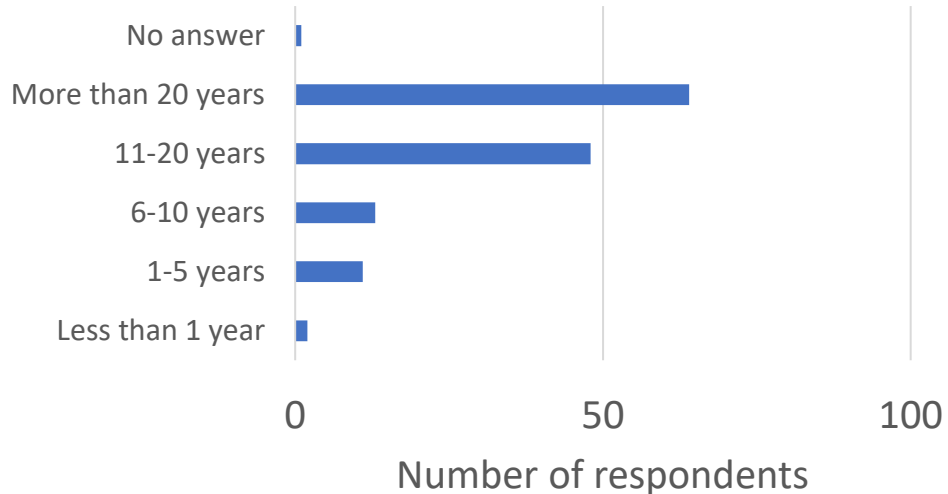
Our GP respondents



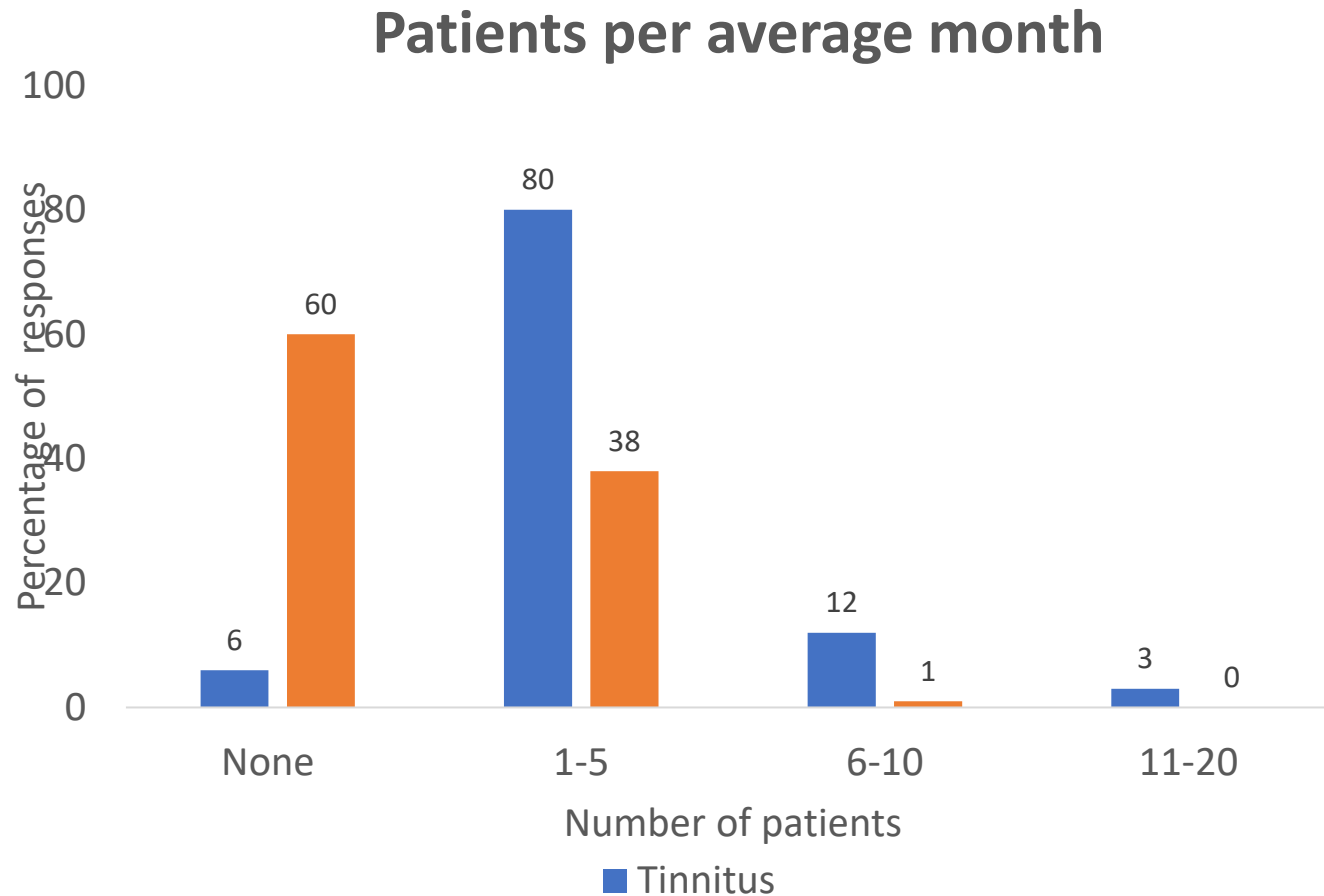
Location of GP practice



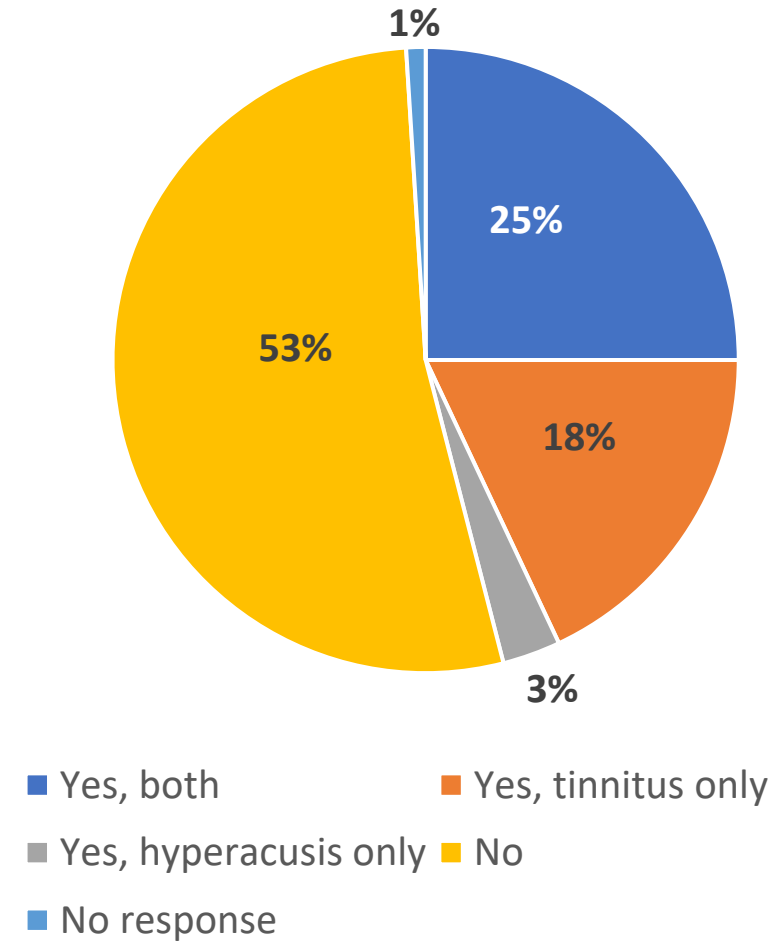
Years practicing



The clinical workload



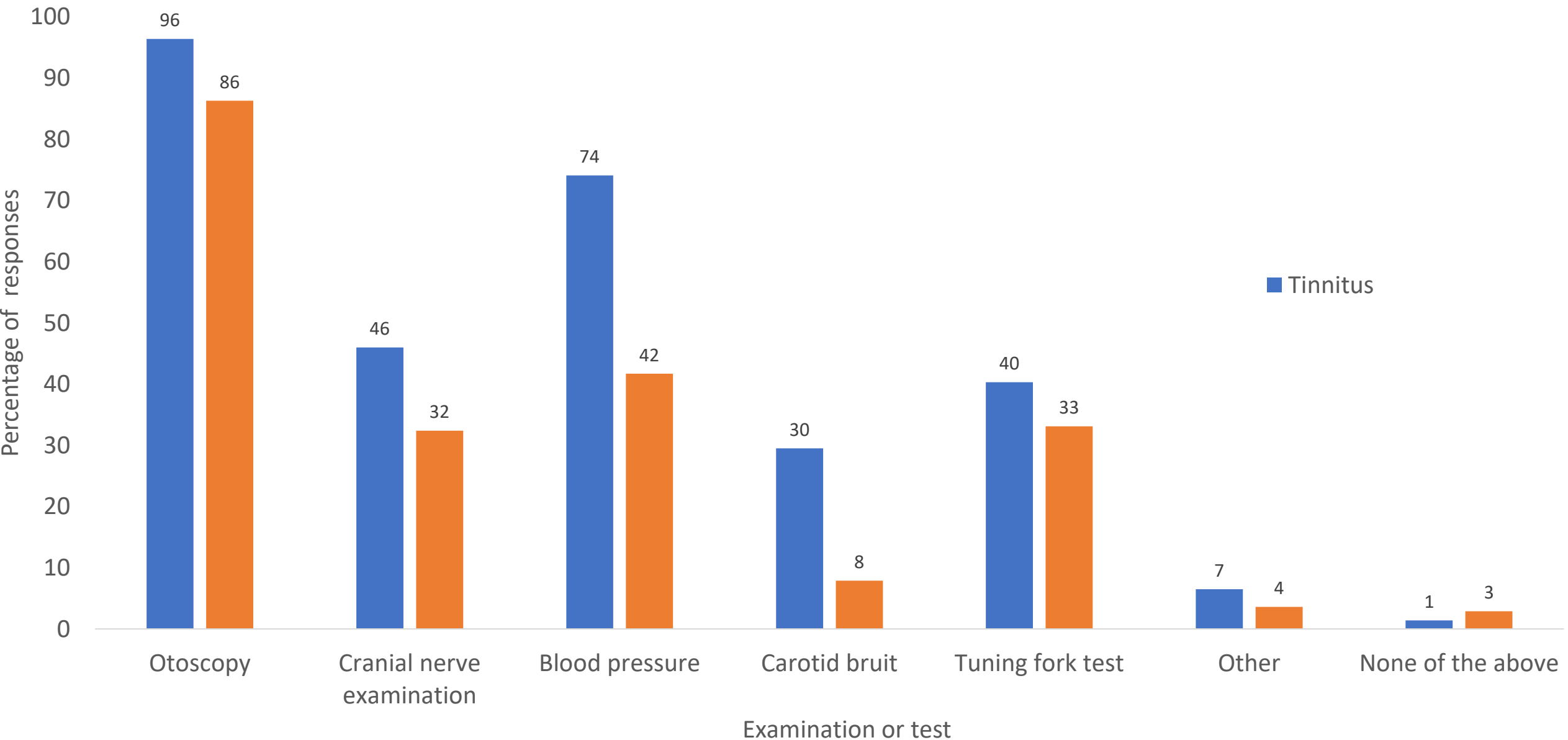
Does tinnitus and/or hyperacusis have sufficient impact on your practice to warrant specific training or resources?



What information do you obtain when taking a patient history relating to tinnitus or hyperacusis?

Information	Tinnitus %	Hyperacusis %
Onset	99	88
Causes	86	71
Quality of sensation	66	48
Tinnitus laterality	95	29
Tinnitus pulsatility	85	22
Impact on quality of life	94	71
Presence of hearing loss	99	65
Presence of vertigo	93	59
General medical health	86	68
Medications taken	90	66
Other	17	13
None of the above	1	6

Routinely performed examinations



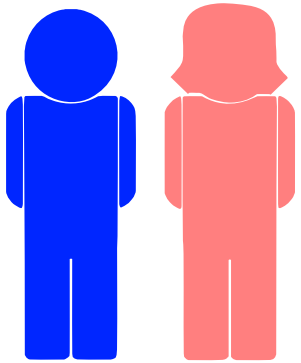
Which of the following management options do you typically provide for patients with tinnitus or hyperacusis?

Management option	Tinnitus %	Hyperacusis %
Ear wax removal	61	40
Advice and reassurance	89	60
Online information/leaflets	68	42
Sound therapy devices	23	6
Self-help management advice	76	3
Signposting to self-help groups	48	27
Hearing protection	19	17
Sound desensitisation therapy	7	5
Prescription medication	15	6
Psychological therapies	16	9
Referral to audiology or ENT	95	81
Other	1	1
None of the above	0	1

Typically recommended self-management strategies



Our survey respondents

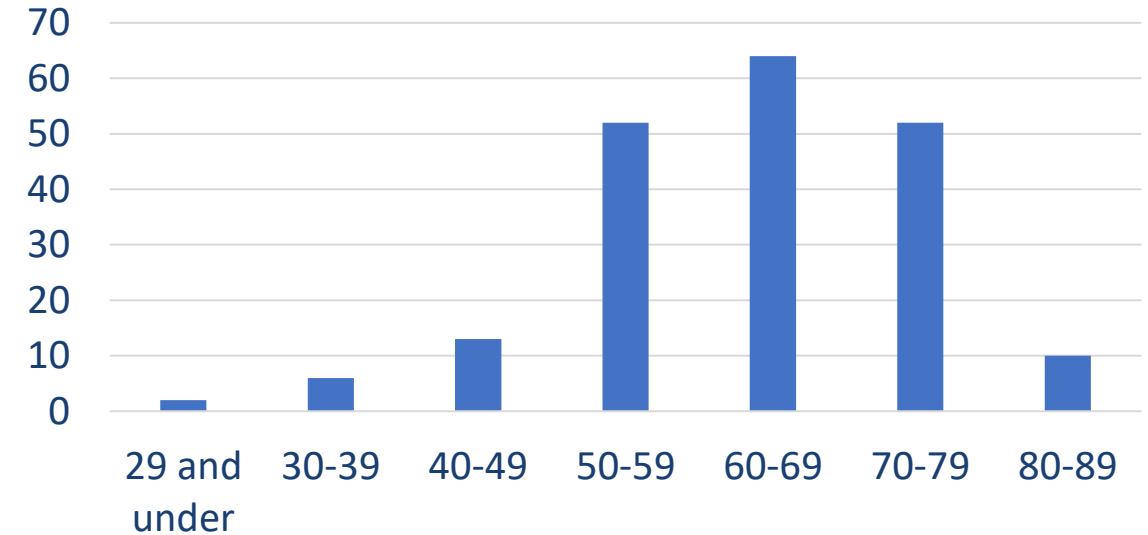


- 49% male
- 51% female
- 1% describe in another way



- 91% England
- 4% Scotland
- 5% Wales

Respondent age

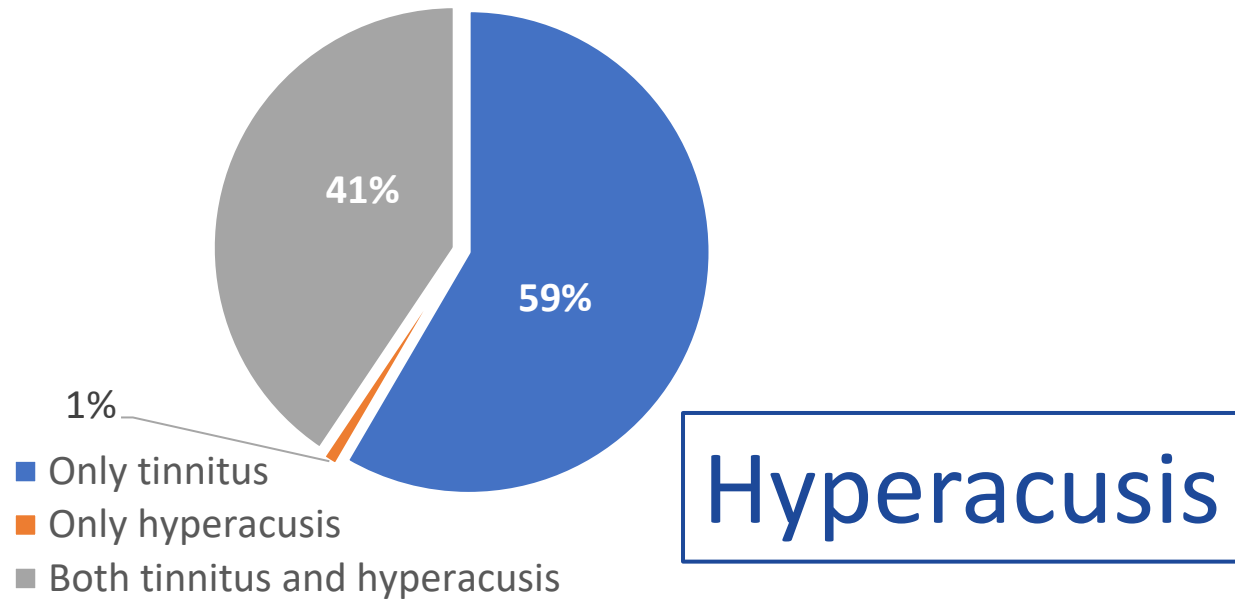


■ Respondent age

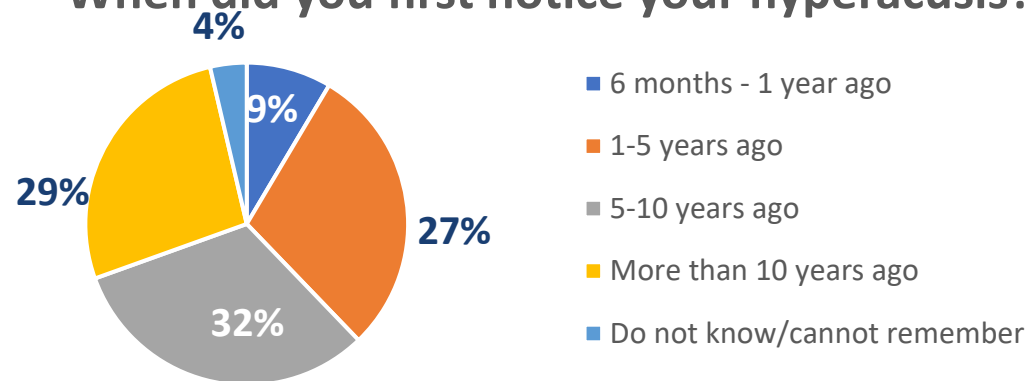


- 1% Asian/Asian British
- 2% Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- 2% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- 94% White
- 1% Other ethnic group
- 2% Prefer not to answer

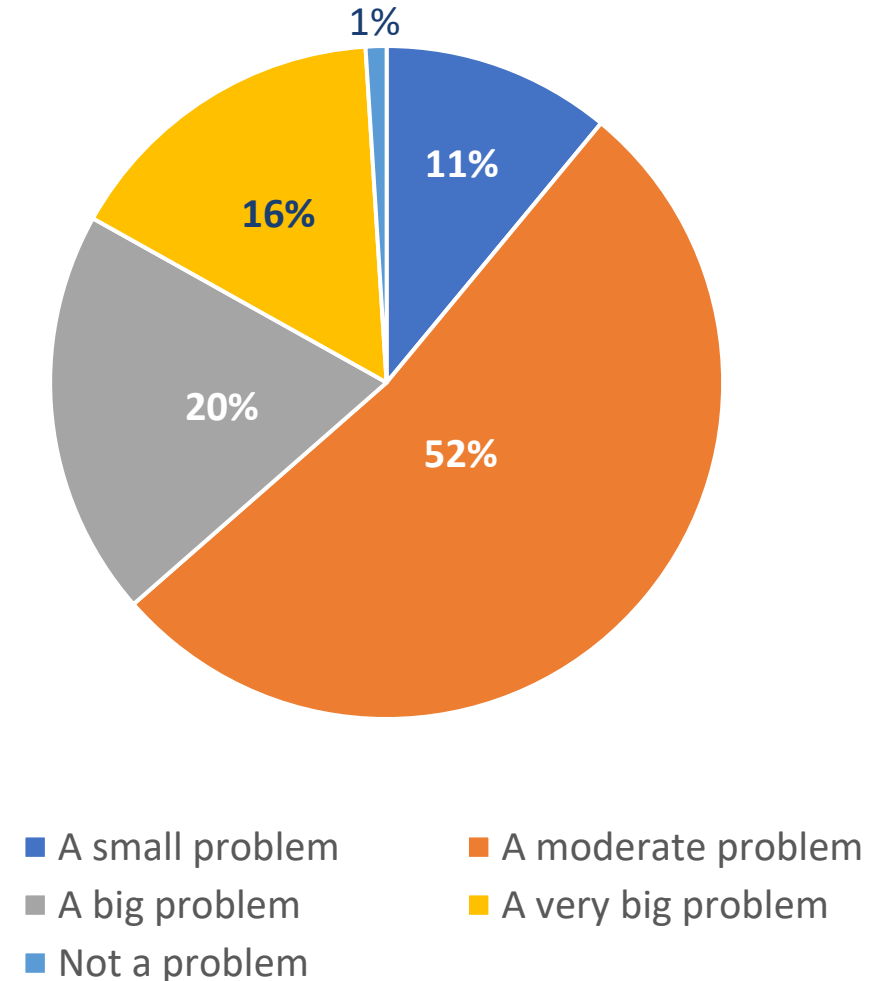
Do you have tinnitus and/or hyperacusis?



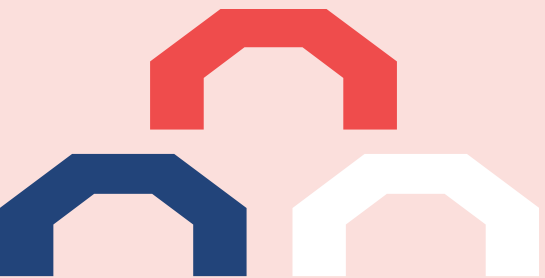
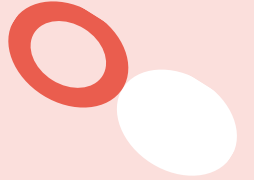
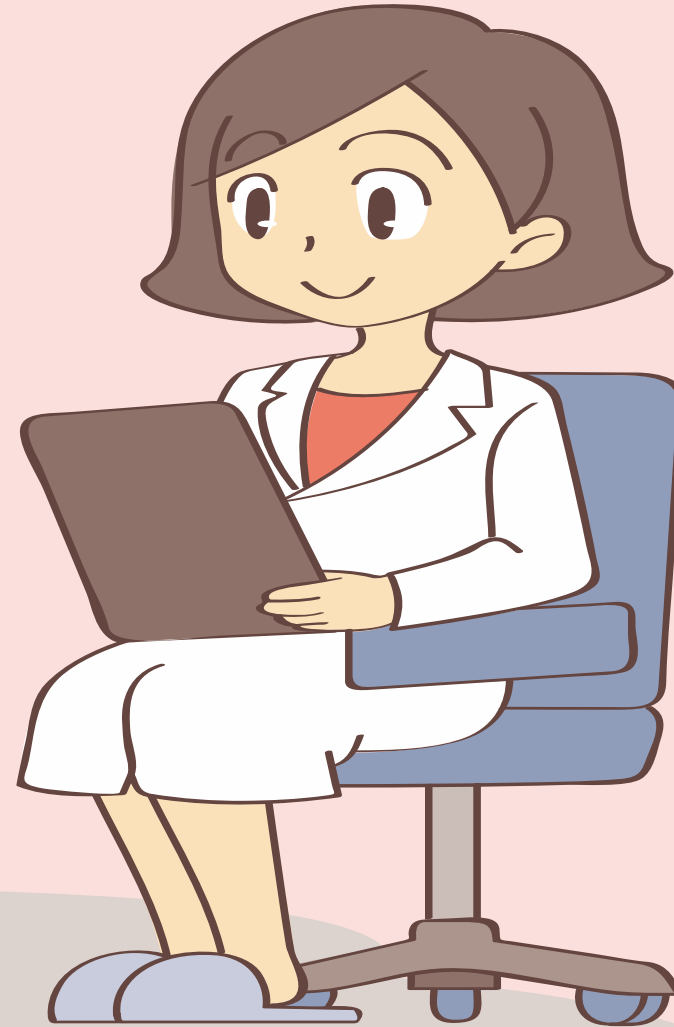
When did you first notice your hyperacusis?



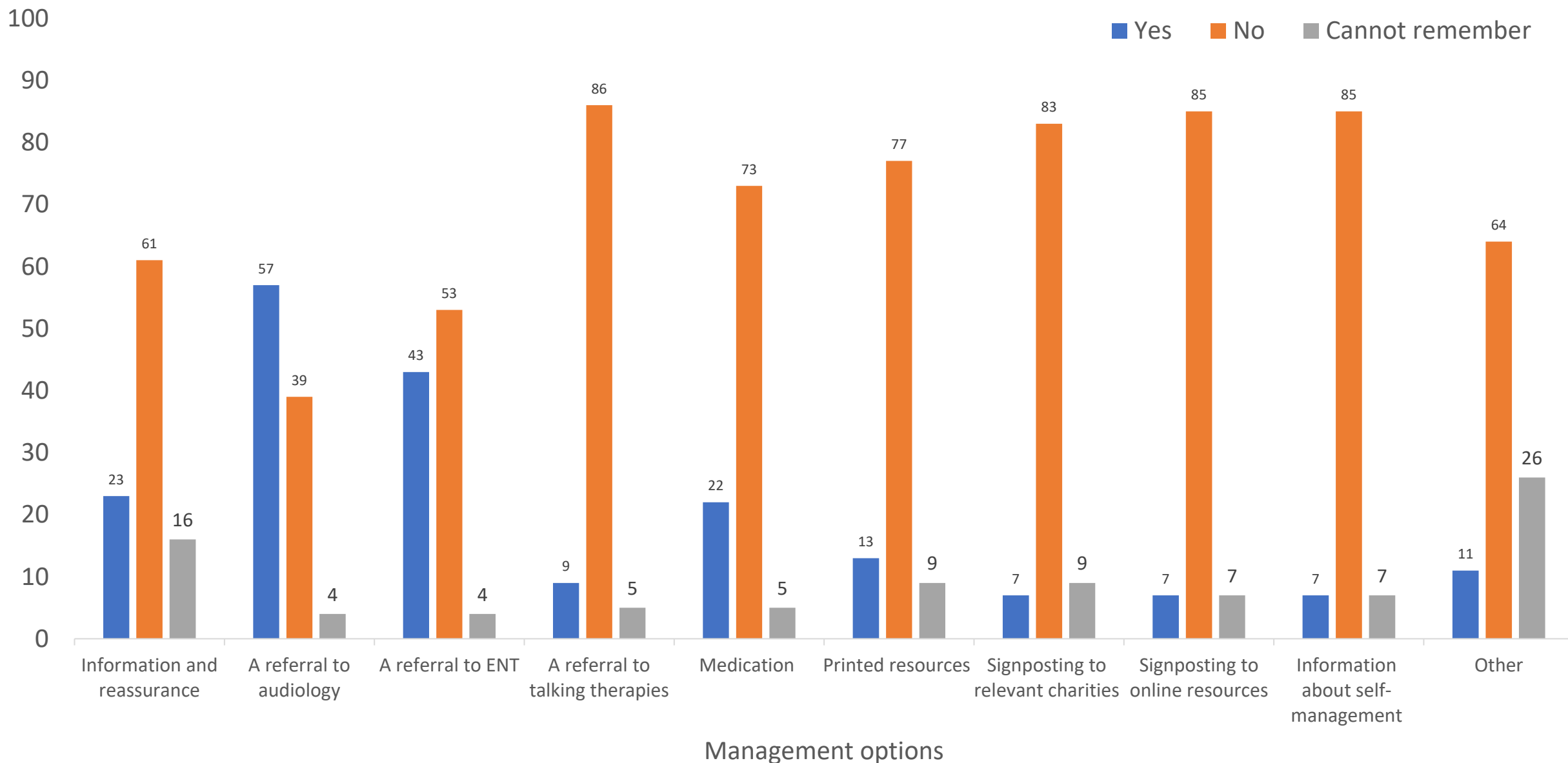
Over the last week, have external sounds been a problem, being too loud or uncomfortable for you when they seemed normal to others around you?



What is it?
Will it go away?
What can be done?



Management options discussed in the first GP consultation

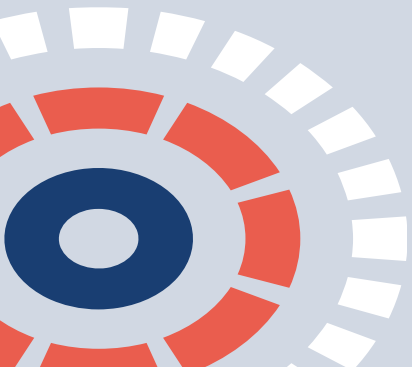
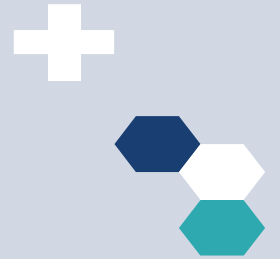


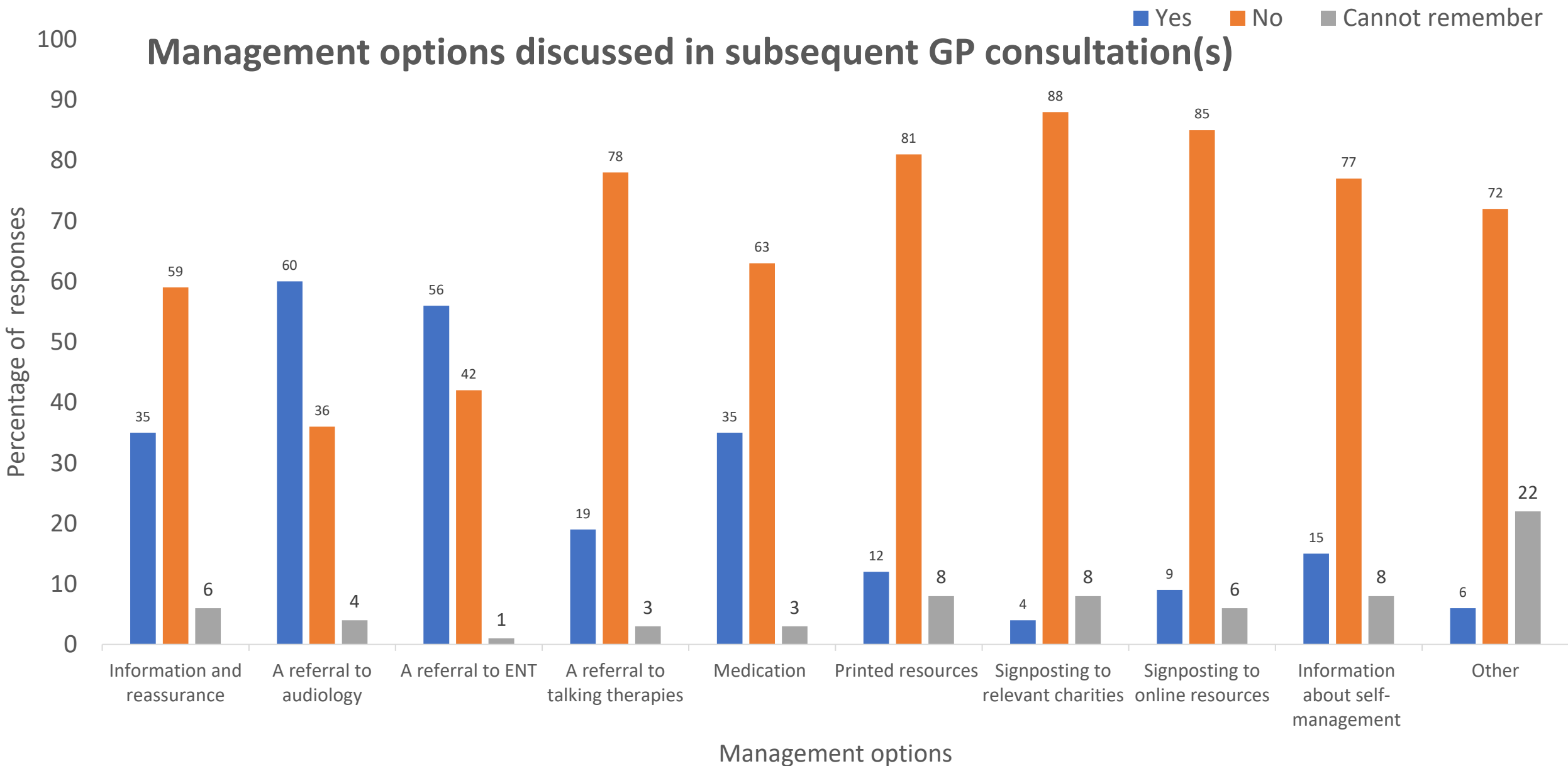
“Total waste of time. Was told there was no cure for tinnitus, and also despite explaining my symptoms of what I didn't know was hyperacusis at the time, the word was never mentioned. Left the surgery very dejected.”

“I had taken the first step in treating and understanding the condition”

“The referral to Audiology was reassuring that I was accessing specialist help.”

“At the time I was unsure what was happening as I had a multitude of symptoms along with the hyperacusis / tinnitus. I felt listened to to some degree, but also completely at sea - as I am sure the doctor possibly felt too.”





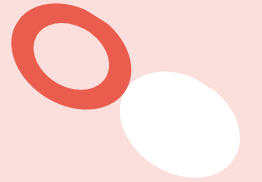
Which self-management techniques have you ever tried for your tinnitus or hyperacusis?

Self-management technique	Ever tried All (%)	Ever tried H/T &H (%)	Self-management technique	Ever tried – All (%)	Ever tried H/T & H (%)
Sound therapy	63	68	Online resources	46	55
Sound desensitisation	21	24	In person support group	29	29
Hearing protection	53	70	Online support group	24	30
Mindfulness techniques	52	66	Online forum	29	39
Relaxation techniques	61	66	Printed materials	43	51
Cognitive behavioural approaches	30	38	Alternative therapies	20	28
Lifestyle modification	47	55	Supplements and vitamins	33	41
Physical activity	53	62	Other	37	39
Charity helpline	32	32	Did not try any	10	7

In conclusion:

- ❖ There's inconsistency in GP practice
- ❖ GP and patient accounts differ
- ❖ GPs want better support, particularly for hyperacusis
- ❖ Patients want clear explanations, reassurance and practical advice, not simply referral
- ❖ Improving conversations in primary care could improve patients' experiences from the very start of their journey





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