

Severe Asthma Patient Research: The Patients' experience living with Severe Asthma in Greece

Rovina Nikoleta¹, Aggelopoulou Christina², Fouka Evangelia³, Galanakis Petros⁴, Gogali Athena², Kostikas Konstantinos², Mathioudakis Nikolas⁴, Porpodis Konstantinos³, Samitas Konstantinos⁵, Tsiouprou Ioanna³
¹1st University Department of Respiratory Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
²Respiratory Medicine Department, School of Medicine, University of Ioannina, Greece
³Pulmonary Department, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, G. Papanikolaou Hospital, Thessaloniki, Greece
⁴AstraZeneca Medical Department, Respiratory & Immunology, Athens, Greece
⁵7th Respiratory Department, Athens Chest Hospital "Sotiria", Athens, Greece

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: Severe Asthma (SA) is a complex and heterogeneous disease with major public health implications affecting the lives of millions of people, causing a significant burden on patients' quality of life (QoL) and daily routine. This research aimed to understand the patients' perspective living with SA in Greece.

MATERIAL-METHOD: A quantitative descriptive study was conducted from June 2021 to August 2022 and the final sample consisted of 162 SA patients. The questionnaire was completed online (CAWI). Patient-reported outcomes were reported coming directly from patients about how they feel or function in relation to their disease and its therapy.

RESULTS: The majority of SA patients was women, aged 35-54; as indicated by participants, half of patients received biologic treatment. Approximately 40% of patients expressed neutral or poor/very poor stance towards perceived QoL; SA has mostly affected aspects of their life concerning the ability to complete everyday chores (92%), quality of sleep (91%) and feeling optimism for the future (91%). A greater percentage of patients on biologics compared to those not on biologics reported no influence of SA on their mental health (36% vs 13%), no stress considering the possibility of exacerbations (34% vs 13%) and no influence of SA on their self confidence and optimism for the future (36% vs 13%). Cough/Phlegm was the most frequent symptom reported by more than 1/3 of patients followed by Dyspnea/Shortness of breath; patients not receiving biologics reported higher frequency of all symptoms compared to those receiving biologics. Reduction of exacerbations and discontinuation of cortisone were the most important considerations for SA patients in assessing control of their asthma.

CONCLUSION: Severe asthma is associated with a significant health-related QoL burden due to excessive symptoms. Patients with SA on biologics are less stressed with greater optimism compared to patients not on biologics.

INTRODUCTION

Severe Asthma (SA) is a complex and heterogeneous disease with major public health implications affecting the lives of millions of people worldwide, causing a significant burden on patients' quality of life (QoL) and daily routine (1-3). This research aimed to understand the patients' perspective living with SA in Greece.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

A qualitative descriptive study was conducted by IQVIA from June 2021 to August 2022 and the final sample consisted of 162 SA patients. The questionnaire was completed online (CAWI). Patient-reported outcomes were reported coming directly from patients about how they feel or function in relation to their disease and its therapy.

PATIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Women, aged 35-54, were the most common SA patient profile; as indicated by study participants, half of patients received biologic treatment (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Patient demographics

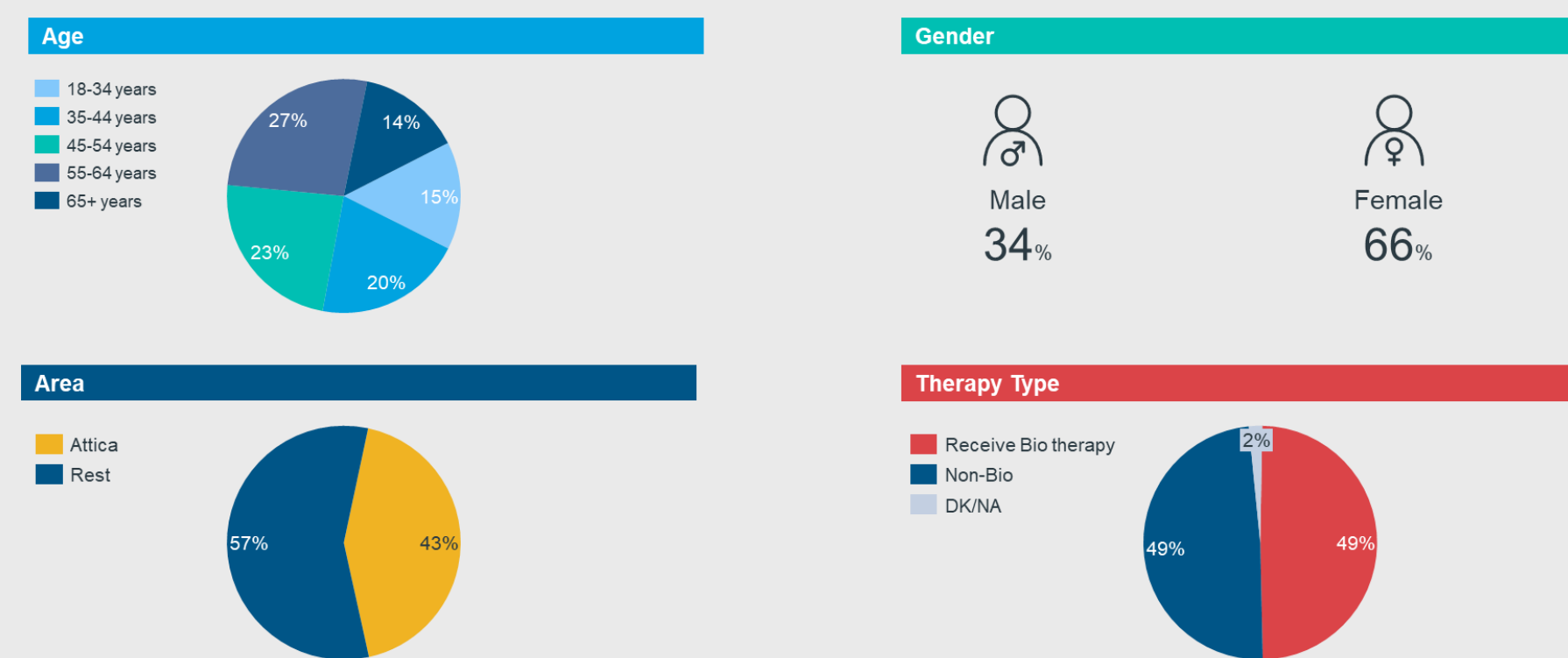
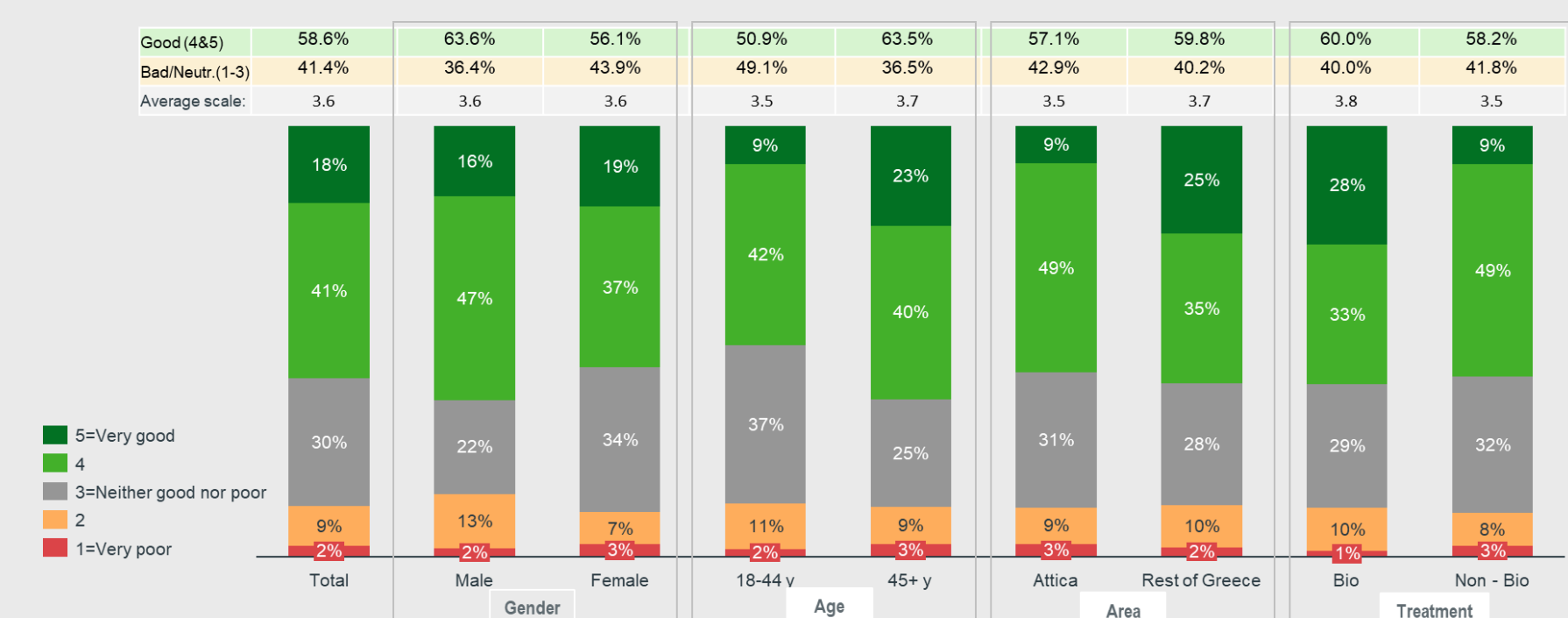


Figure 2. Perceived QoL of patients with SA



RESULTS

Perceived QoL of a patient with SA

Approximately 4/10 patients express a neutral or poor/very poor stance towards perceived quality of life; higher quality of life scores found in males, older and patients receiving biologic treatment (Figure 2).

Abilities Influenced by Severe Asthma

Most significant abilities as ranked by SA patients are the ability to complete everyday chores (92%), quality of sleep (91%) and feeling optimism for the future (91%) (Figure 3). A greater percentage of patients on biologics compared to those not on biologics reported no influence of SA on their mental health (36% vs 13%), no stress considering the possibility of exacerbations (34% vs 13%) and no influence of SA on their self confidence and optimism for the future (36% vs 19%) (Figure 4).

Frequency of symptoms

Cough/Phlegm was the most frequent symptom reported by more than 1/3 of SA patients followed by Dyspnea/Shortness of breath (Figure 5); patients not receiving biologic treatment reported higher frequency of all symptoms (Figure 6).

Figure 3. Significant abilities for SA patients

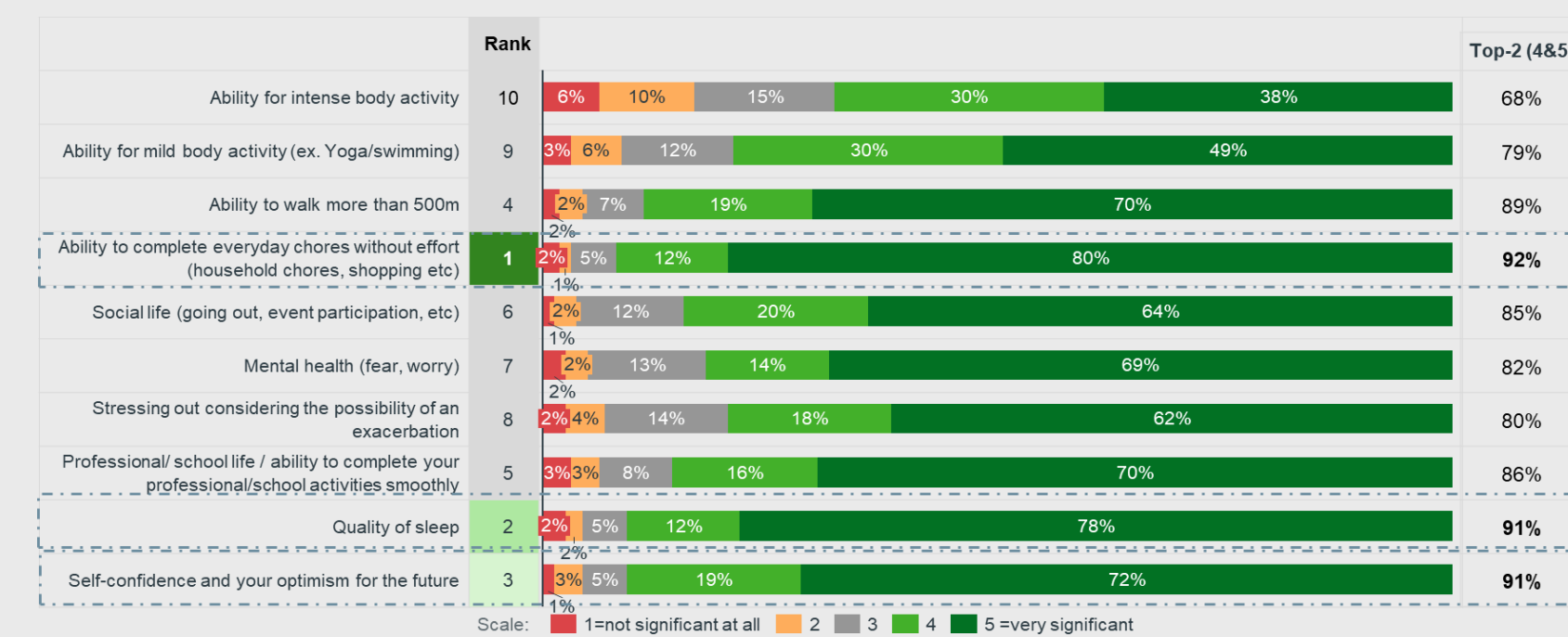


Figure 4. Abilities Influenced by Severe Asthma - split by treatment

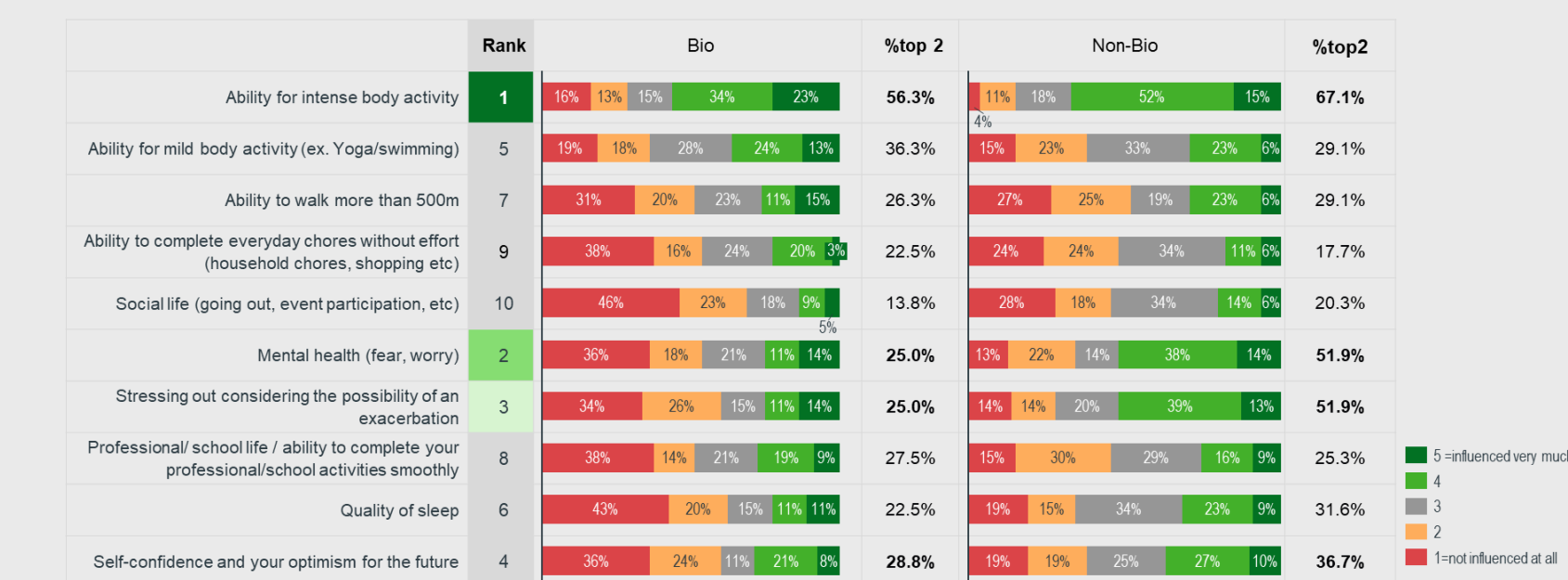
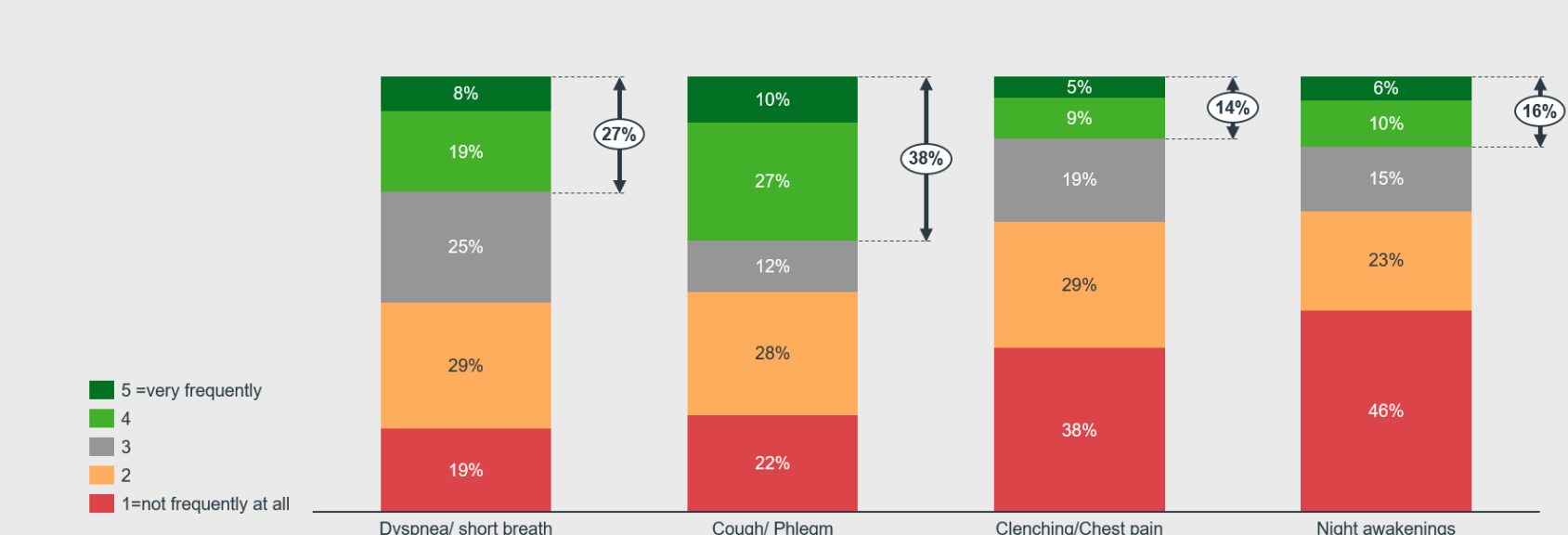


Figure 5. Frequency of symptoms



RESULTS

Factor significance for Controlling Severe Asthma

Reduction of exacerbations followed by discontinuation of cortisone were the most important considerations for SA patients in assessing control of their asthma (Figure 7).

Sources of information about SA

The attending doctor was the main source of information about Severe Asthma, followed to a lesser degree by internet search (Figure 8).

Awareness of SA clinical studies

Poor awareness of Severe Asthma clinical studies was reported especially among younger, patients not receiving biologic treatment and living in Attica patients (Figure 9). The majority had no previous experience with clinical studies; the few who did, mainly described a very positive experience (Figure 10).

Figure 6. Frequency of symptoms - split by treatment

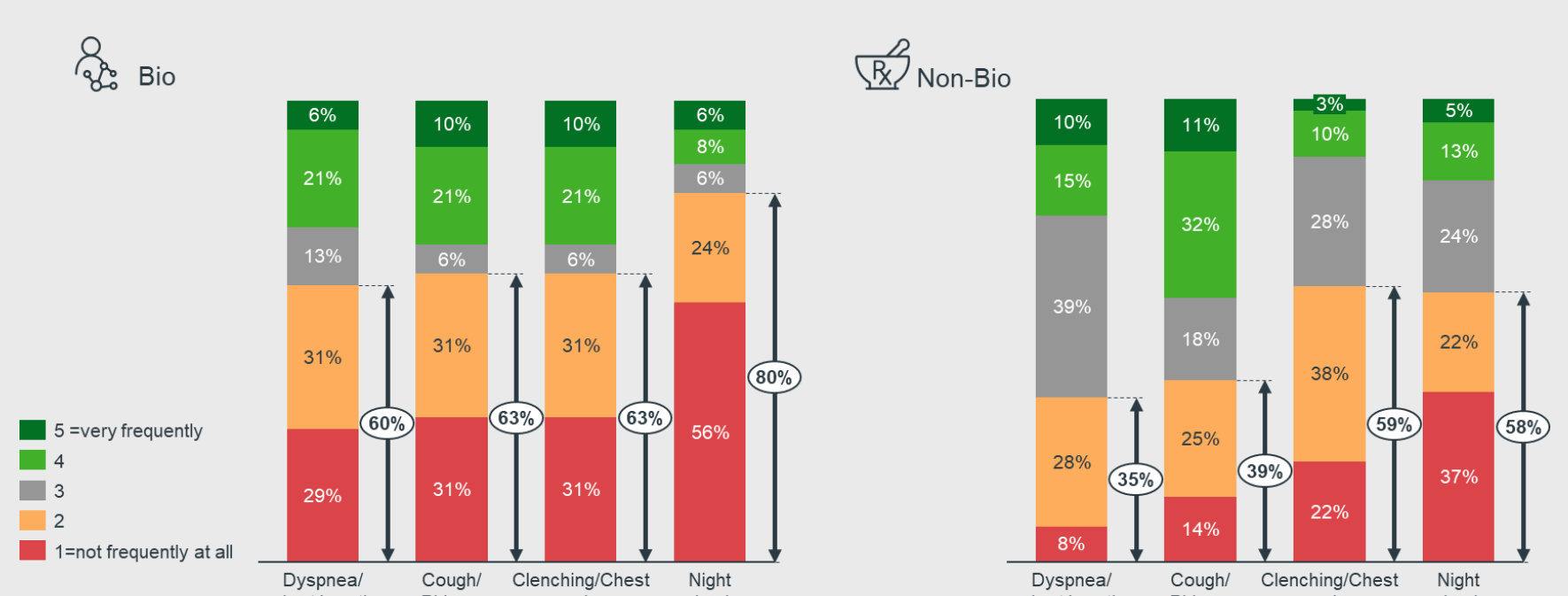


Figure 7. Factor significance for Controlling Severe Asthma

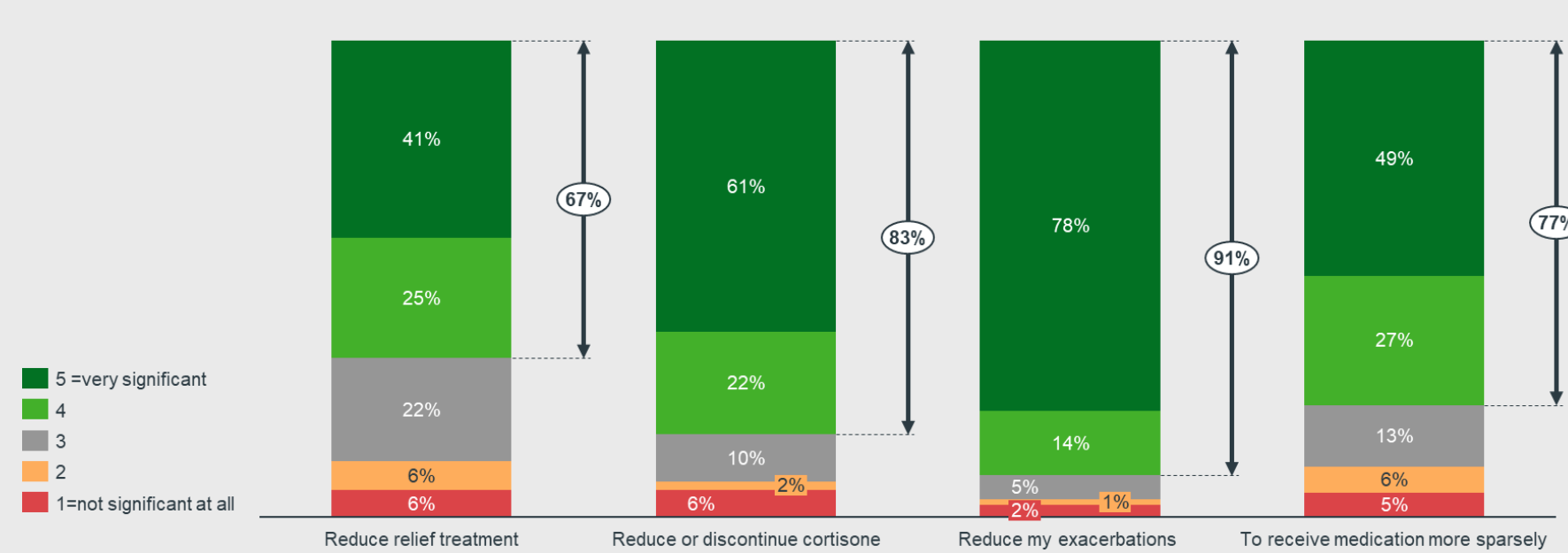
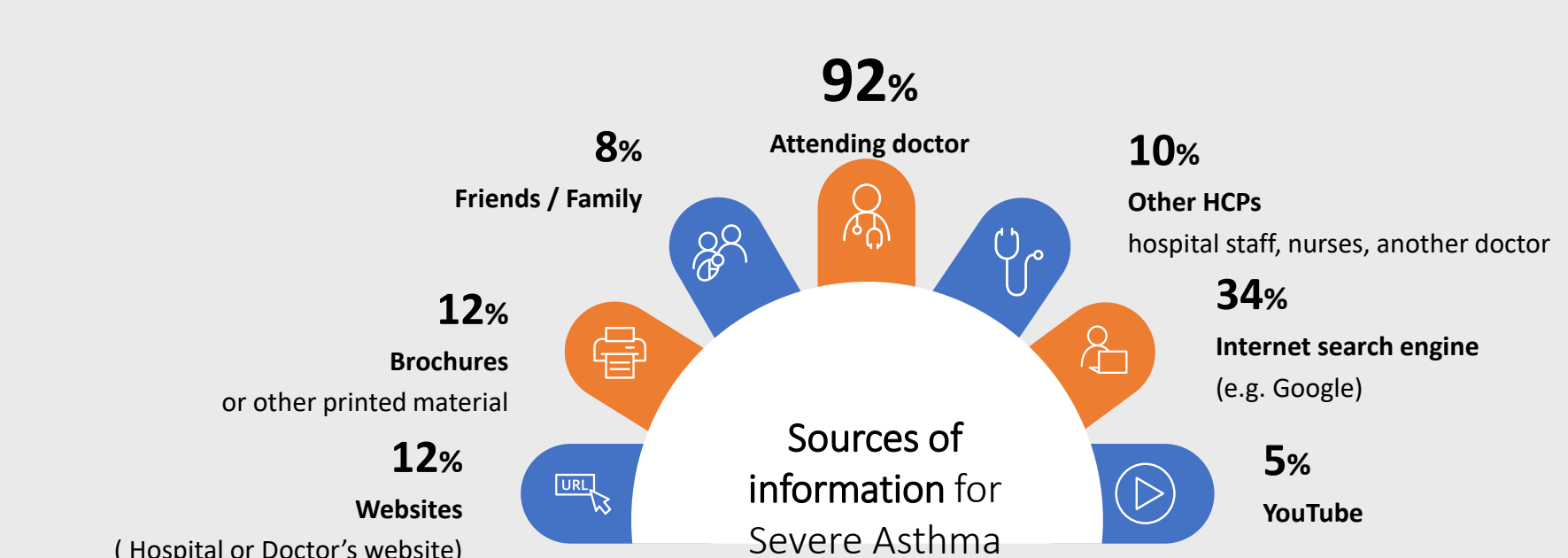


Figure 8. Sources of information about SA



DISCUSSION

In this largest study of Severe Asthma Patients in Greece regarding Quality of Life, a significant amount of patients still has an impaired quality of life despite advances in new treatments. Patients report affected QoL in terms of completing everyday tasks, quality of sleep and mental health. Reduction or elimination of exacerbations and cortisone followed by less frequent medication administration were rated as very significant factors in SA control by participating patients.

Approximately half patients completing this questionnaire were on biologic therapy and reported better outcomes in almost all everyday abilities influenced by SA (ability to exercise and walk, social life, stress of exacerbation, self-confidence etc). Finally, although awareness of SA clinical studies is low, very positive experience is depicted on patients who were enrolled in a clinical study.

CONCLUSIONS

Severe asthma is associated with a significant health-related quality of life burden due to excessive symptoms. These results conclude that the most significant need reported by SA patients is the better control of symptoms. Patients with SA on biologics are less stressed with greater optimism compared to patients not on biologics.

Figure 9. Awareness of SA clinical studies

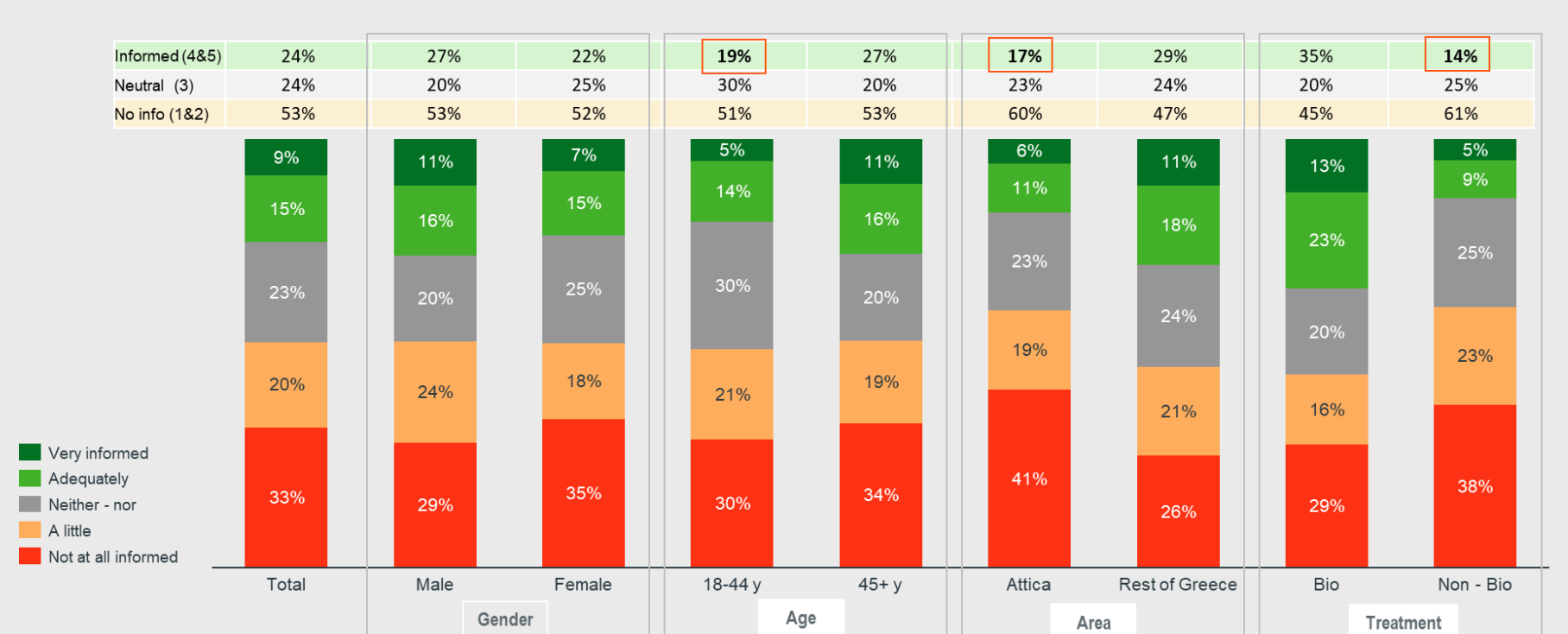
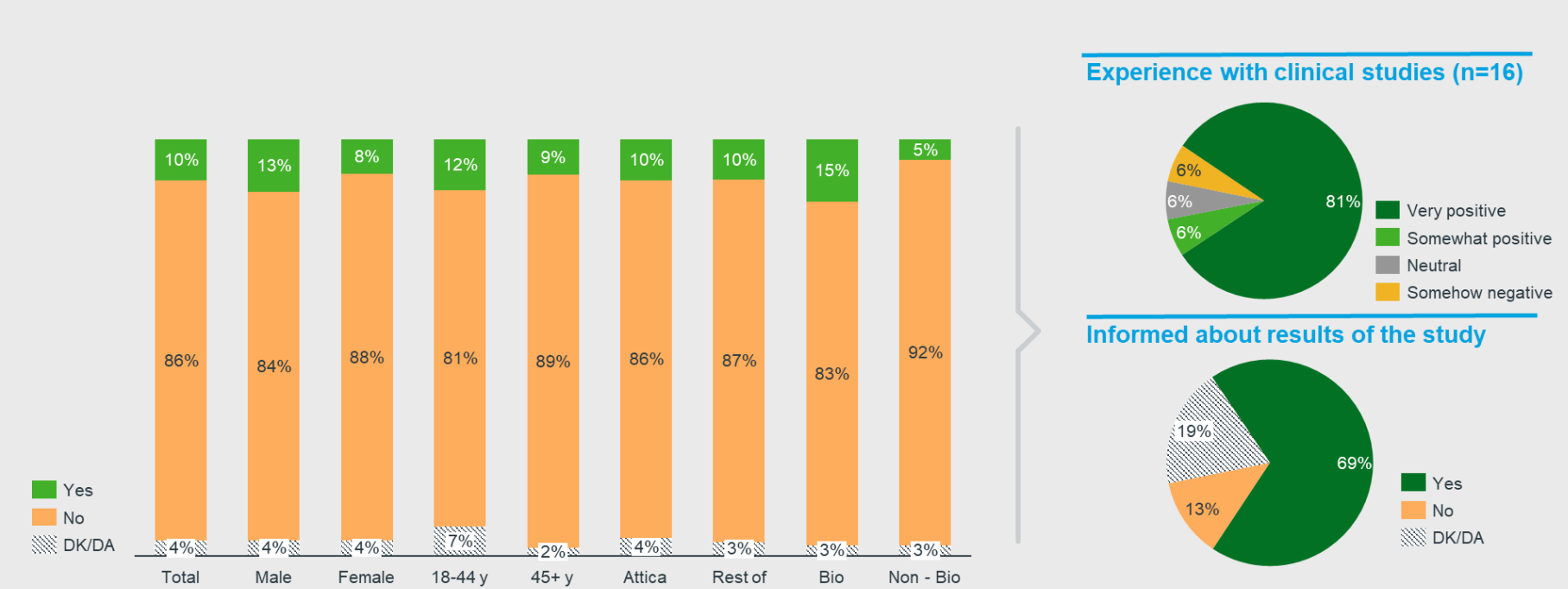


Figure 10. Participation in SA clinical studies



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