Older adults' perceptions of information seeking and access to cannabis for health conditions: Findings from a descriptive survey.

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Background

- Wide use of cannabis for medicinal purpose – pain, nausea, arthritis, anxiety, sleep issues, and depression.[1-3]

- Legalized in Canada for health reasons in 2001. [4,5]

- Still considered as an illicit drug. [6]

- Stigmatization–prevents discussion of its use– end up accessing cannabis from illicit providers.[7,8]

- Inadequate information about cannabis– leads to consequences (e.g., consuming wrong dosage of cannabis–health impacts). [9]

- Need to focus on enhancing safe use of cannabis.

Aim

- To understand older adults' perceptions of their information seeking and access to cannabis for health reasons.

Methods

Design	• Descriptive survey

Sampling & Participants	• Purposive sampling • Canadians≥60 years, cannabis users or prospective users

Recruitment	• Flyers posted in various platforms (CanAge, HelpAge, retail stores, cannabis dispensaries) • Interested participants self selected to participate by contacting the researchers • Screened for eligibility

Data collection	• Data collection: Eligible participants were sent online survey link via email –completed the online survey

Contd... Methods (Data analysis)
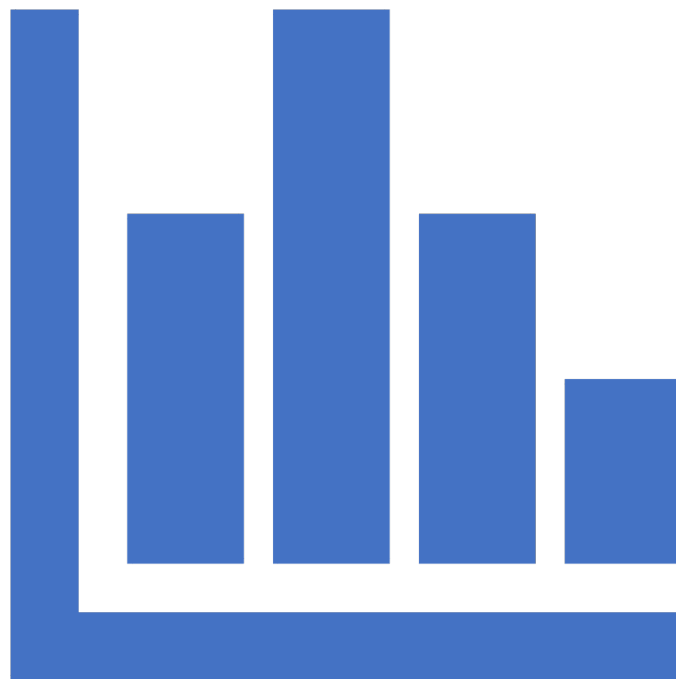
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

PROPORTION

FREQUENCY

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants (N=114)

Socio-demographic characteristics	N (%)
Age (Mean ± SD), (Range)	67.12 ± 5.51, (60-95 years)
Gender	
Male	61 (53.5%)
Female	47 (41.2%)
Preferred not to disclose	6 (5.3%)
Participant's location	
Atlantic provinces	13 (11.4%)
British Columbia	19 (16.7%)
Ontario	32 (28.1%)
Prairie provinces	38 (33.3%)
Quebec	12 (10.5%)
Participants' location type	
City less than 1 million people	49 (43%)
City over 1 million people	30 (26.3%)
Rural (farm or acreage)	3 (2.6%)
Town or village	32 (28.1%)

Used cannabis in the past?
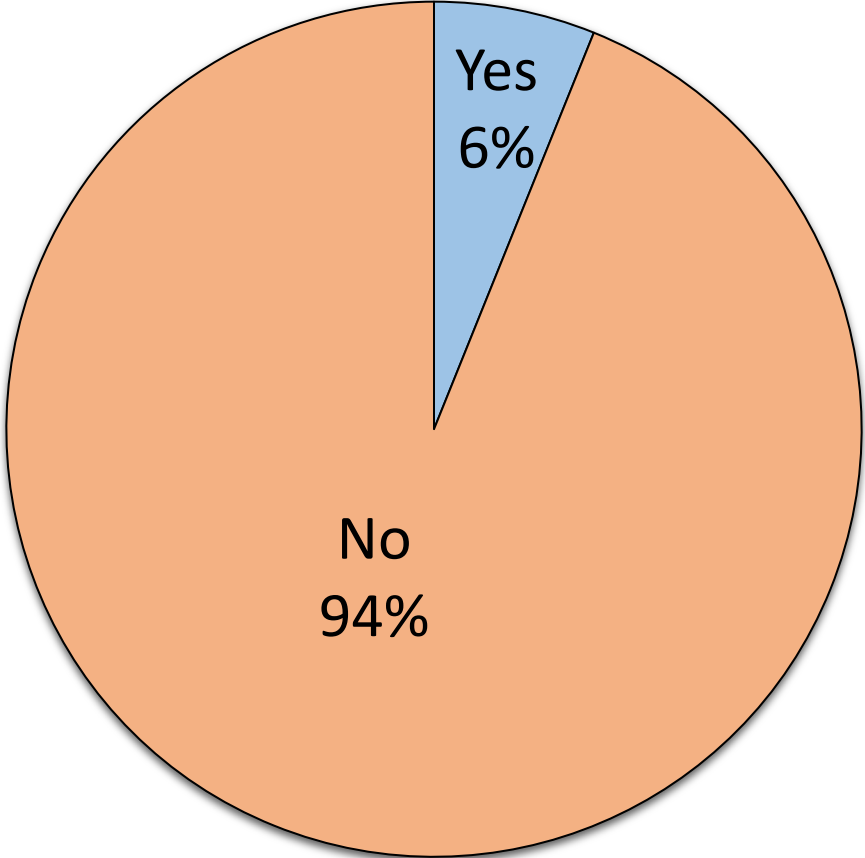
Motivations to use cannabis (N=114) *Multiple response question

- Not sure: 4.40%
- Bored: 8.80%
- For Fun: 13.20%
- Anxiety: 16.70%
- Legal now: 35.10%
- Health condition: 58.80%

Legend: ■ Health condition ■ Legal now ■ Anxiety ■ For Fun ■ Bored ■ Not sure
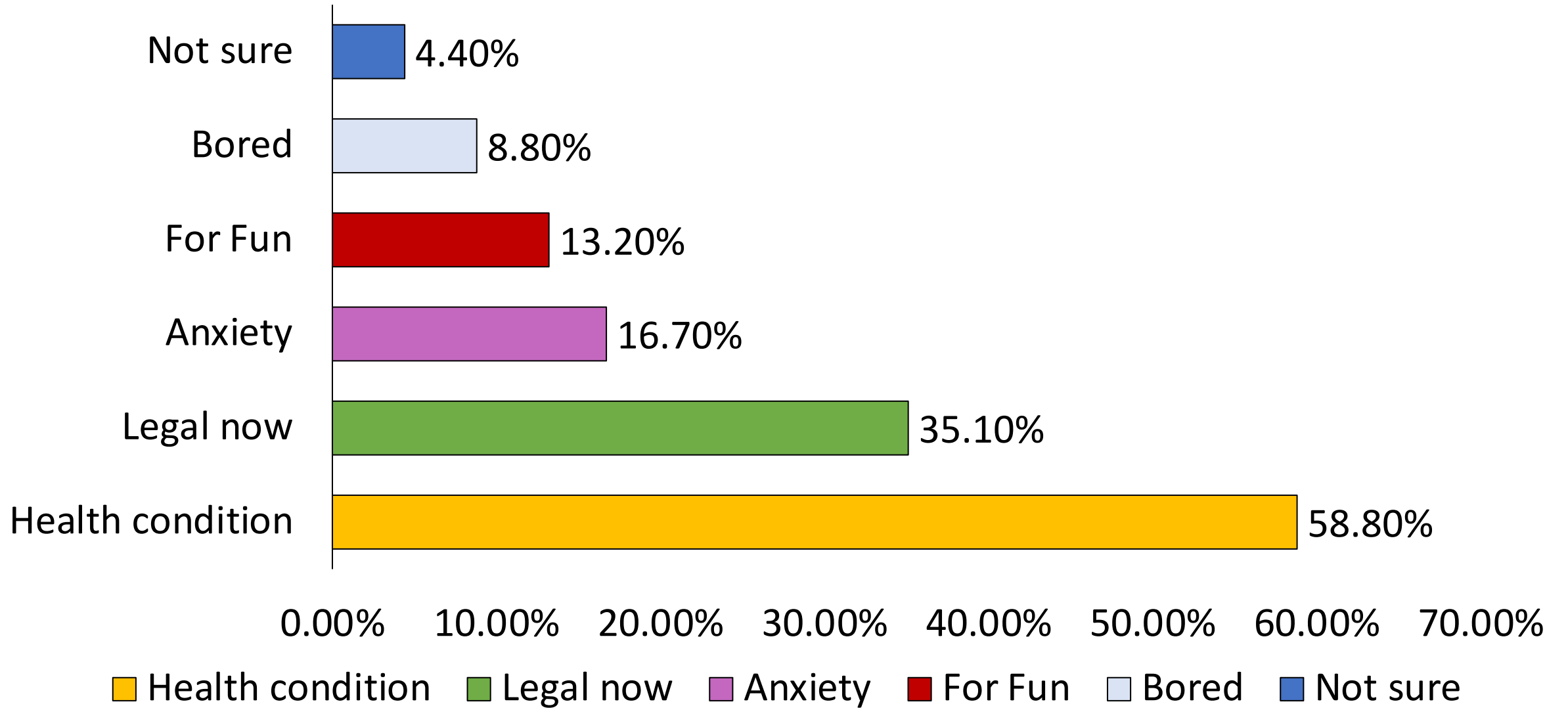
General experience with cannabis
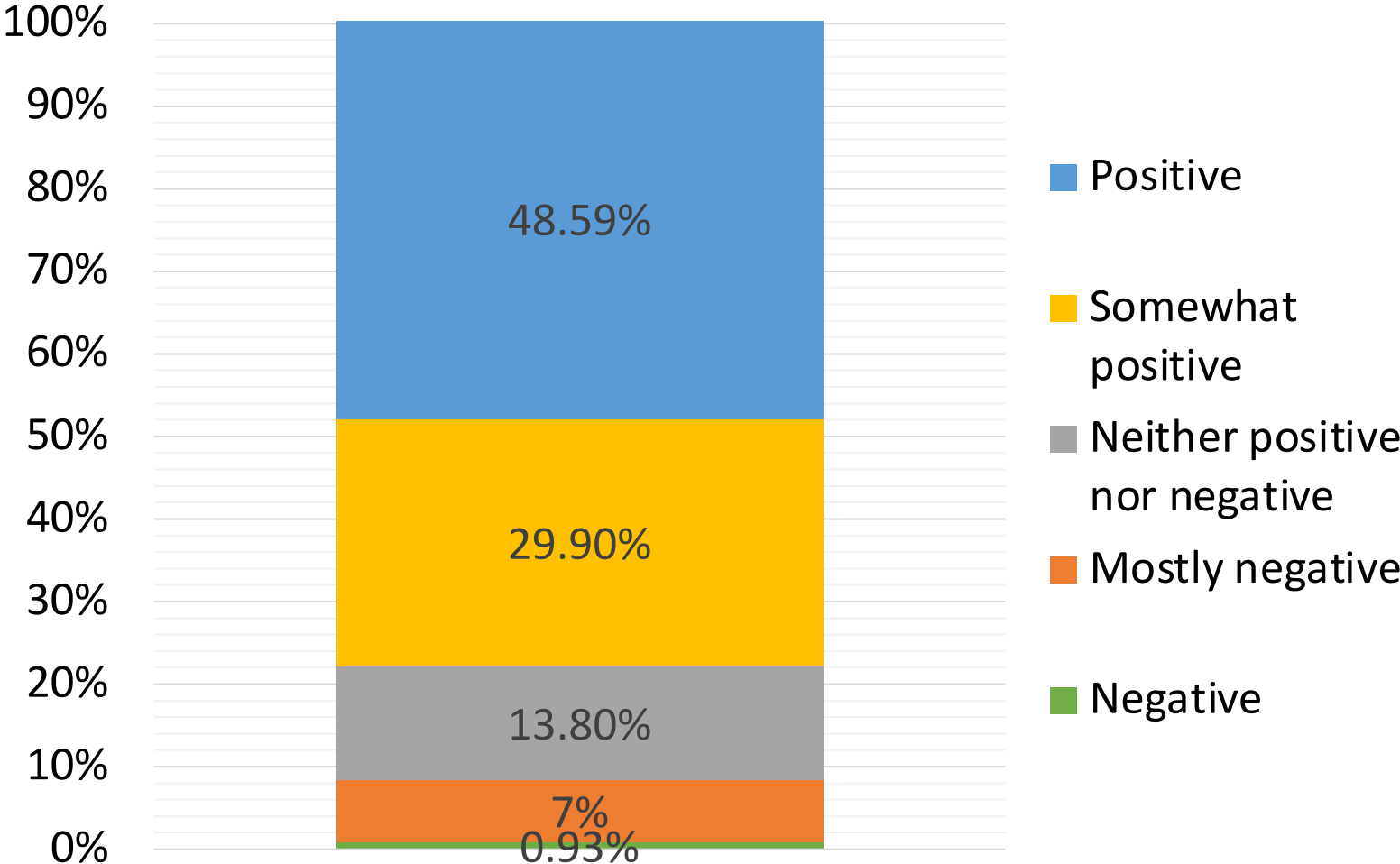
What was the experience like? (n=107)

Legend:
- Positive — 48.59%
- Somewhat positive — 29.90%
- Neither positive nor negative — 13.80%
- Mostly negative — 7%
- Negative — 0.93%

Cannabis use and judgement

Legend:
- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not usually
- Never

Have you used cannabis throughout your life? (n=114)
- Always: 4.40%
- Most of the time: 21.10%
- Sometimes: 37.70%
- Not usually: 23.70%
- Never: 13.20%

Have you ever felt like you had to hide your use of cannabis? (n=106)
- Always: 7.54%
- Most of the time: 15.09%
- Sometimes: 36.79%
- Not usually: 20.75%
- Never: 19.81%

Do feelings of being judged impact your decision to use cannabis? (n=106)
- Always: 0.94%
- Most of the time: 8.49%
- Sometimes: 20.75%
- Not usually: 19.81%
- Never: 50.00%

Do feelings of being judged impact your decision to seek information about cannabis?(n=105)
- Most of the time: 13.33%
- Sometimes: 18.09%
- Not usually: 21.90%
- Never: 46.66%

Quality of information by sources

Legend:
- Answered all my questions
- Mostly
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Source	Not at all	Somewhat	Mostly	Answered all my questions
Healthcare professional (n=56)	1.80%	8.90%	50%	39.30%
Friend (n=35)		34.28%	45.71%	20%
Family member (n=23)		21.70%	21.70%	56.50%
Cannabis retail store (n=44)		20.50%	47.70%	31.80%
Internet (n=39)		30.70%	51.28%	17.94%
Cannabis growers (n=21)			52.40%	47.60%
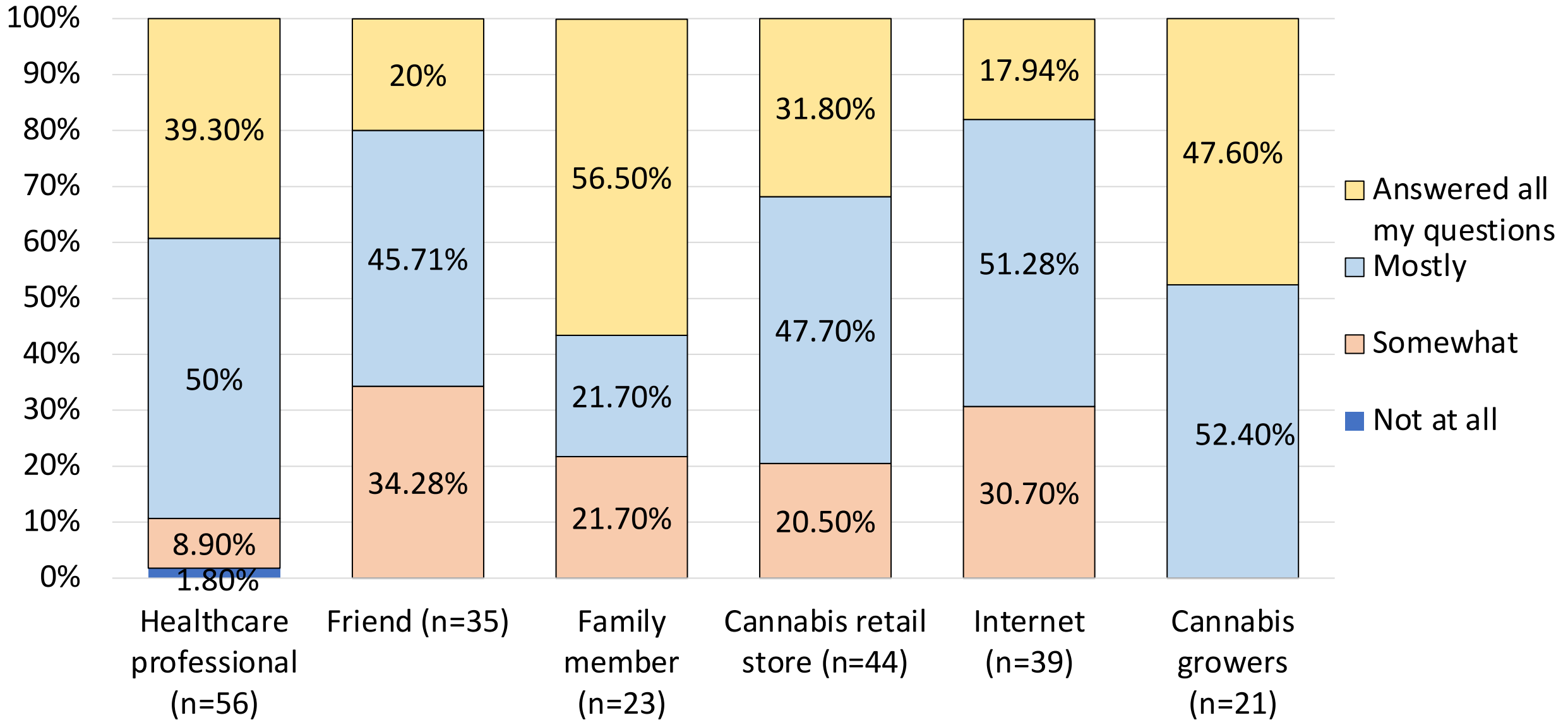
Comfort with methods of accessing cannabis

	Cannabis grower (n=27)	Cannabis retail stores (n=61)	Medical dispensary (n=28)	Friend (n=10)	Family member (n=1)
Very comfortable	29.60%	31.10%	32.10%	30.00%	
Somewhat comfortable	51.90%	36.10%	25%	20%	
Neutral	7.40%	13.10%	7.10%	30%	100%
Some anxiety	3.70%	6.60%	28.60%	10.00%	
Very uncomfortable	7.40%	13.10%	7.10%	10.00%	
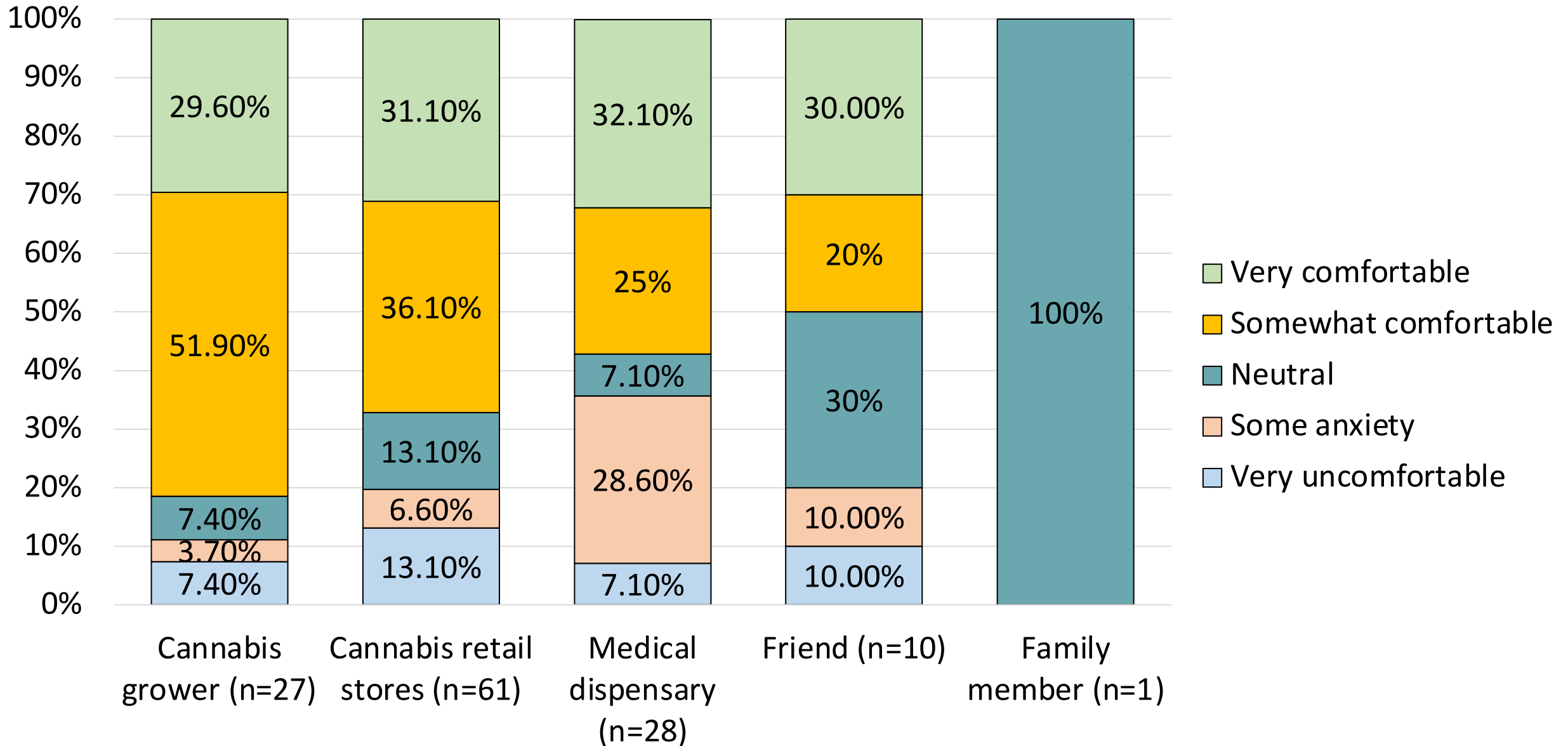
Conclusion

Majority had positive experience

Most accessed information through health care professionals followed by retailers, internet, friend, family members and cannabis growers

Majority accessed cannabis via cannabis retail stores followed by medical dispensary, cannabis grower.

Older adults still feel uncomfortable accessing information and cannabis.

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Thank You

Any Questions?

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