

Difficult conversations with families and patients about end of life care after stroke: what are the educational needs of health care professionals?

Bailey F¹, Cowey E^{2,3,4}, Doubal F, ⁴Borthwick S, ¹Somerville M, Boyd K, Murray S, ^{3,4}C Lerpeniere, ⁵M Grundy, ¹Reid L ^{3,4}Mead GE. ¹Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, ²University of Glasgow, ³University of Edinburgh, ⁴NHS Lothian ⁵NHS Education Scotland

BACKGROUND

End-of-life care after stroke is complex. Discussions with families and patients can be difficult. There is no stroke specific guidance or learning tool.

AIM

To identify learning needs and develop e-learning materials for end-of- life care after stroke.

METHOD

- A survey monkey questionnaire was sent to Scottish Stroke Nurses and Allied Health Professionals Fora, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, NHS Lothian clinical leads, emergency physicians and general practitioners, palliative care teams and British Association of Stroke Physicians.
- We asked 'closed' questions about the value of educational materials on a range of specific topics (5 point likert scale), and 'open' questions to identify other learning needs.

RESULTS

599 replies were received over a fixed period of three weeks.

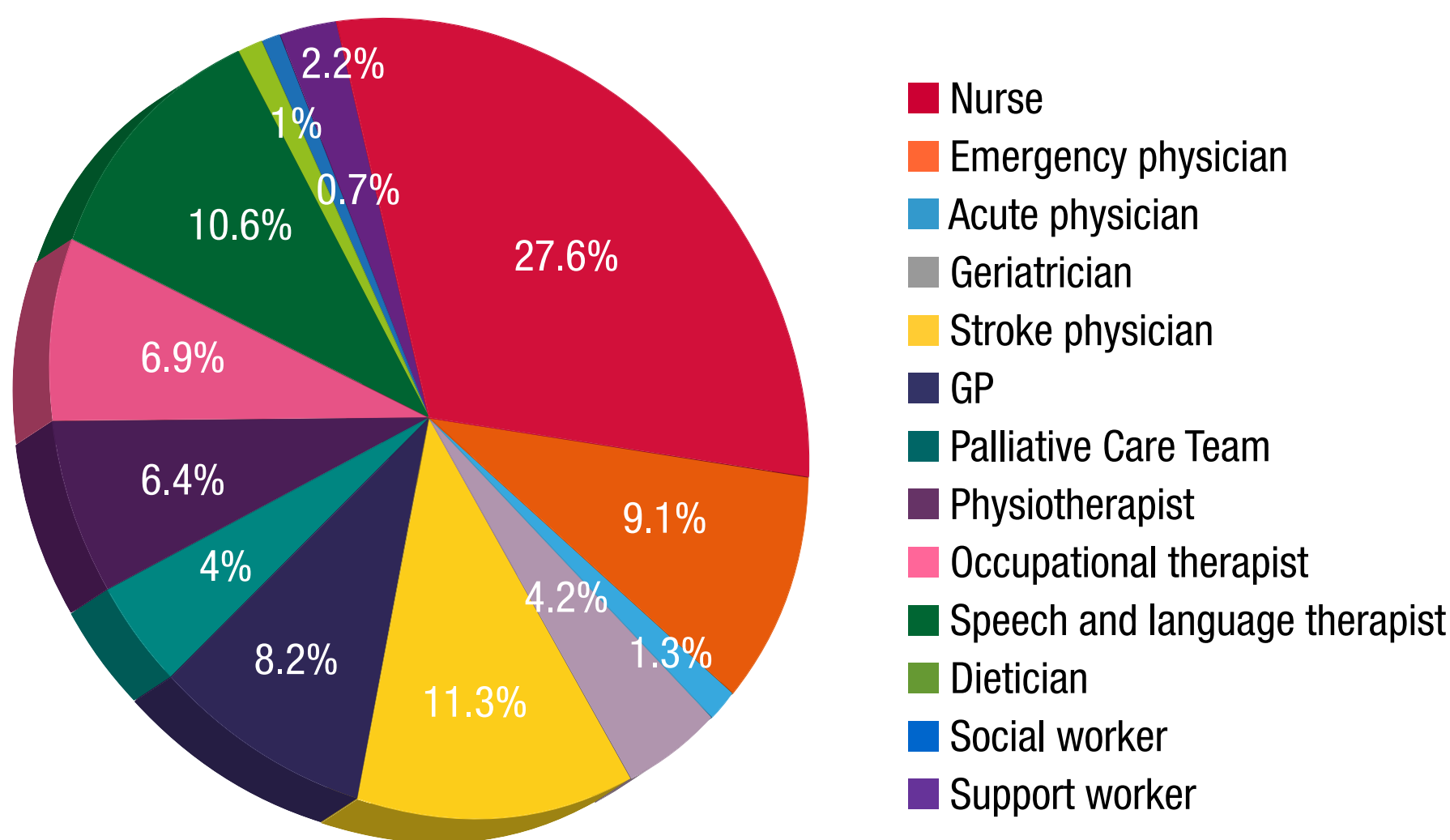
THE SIX TOP THEMES FOR LEARNING WERE

- How to have conversations about uncertainty of prognosis, time of death and trajectory of dying and giving bad news
- Dealing with anxious, distressed or aggressive relatives
- Communication within MDT and recording information from conversations
- Conversations about feeding and hydration
- Managing unrealistic expectations
- Conversations about stopping futile treatment

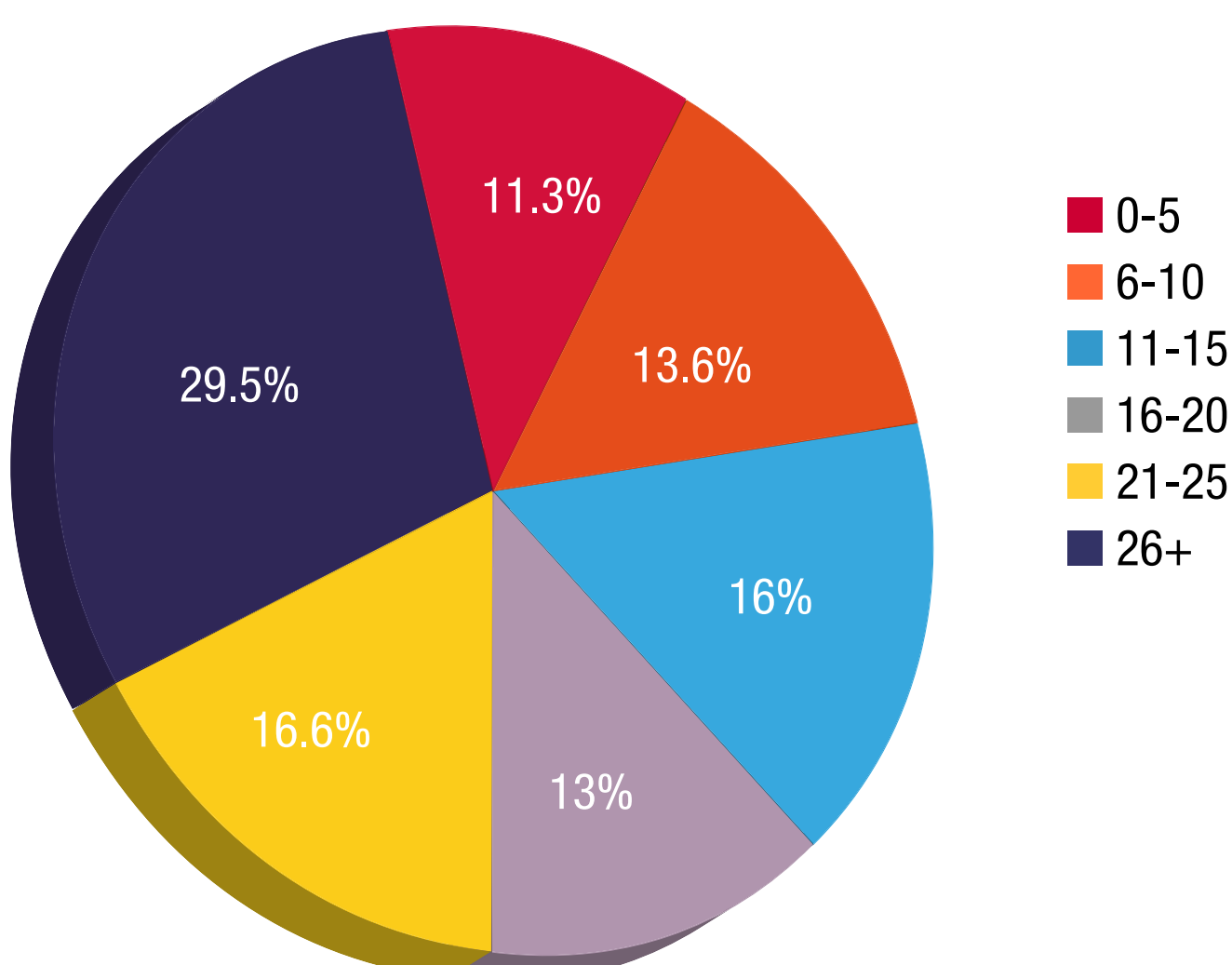
CONCLUSIONS

- Health care professionals report multiple learning needs for sensitive and effective communication about end-of-life care after stroke.
- There is a need to explore communication and documentation within teams caring for stroke patients at end of life.
- A STARs (Stroke Training and Awareness Resource) module has been developed to address these learning needs. The module is available from December 2015 at www.stroketraining.org

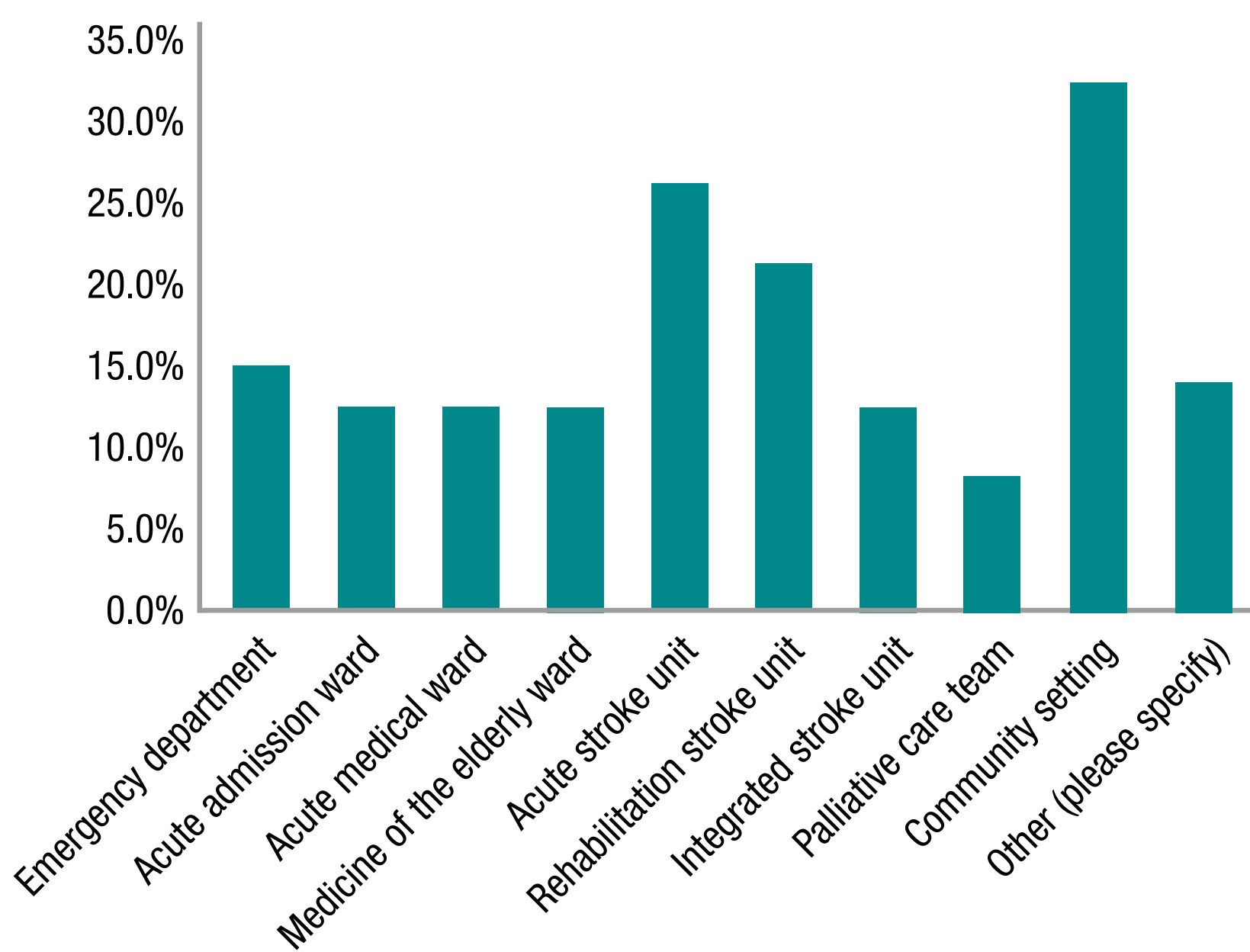
Question 1 - What is your background?



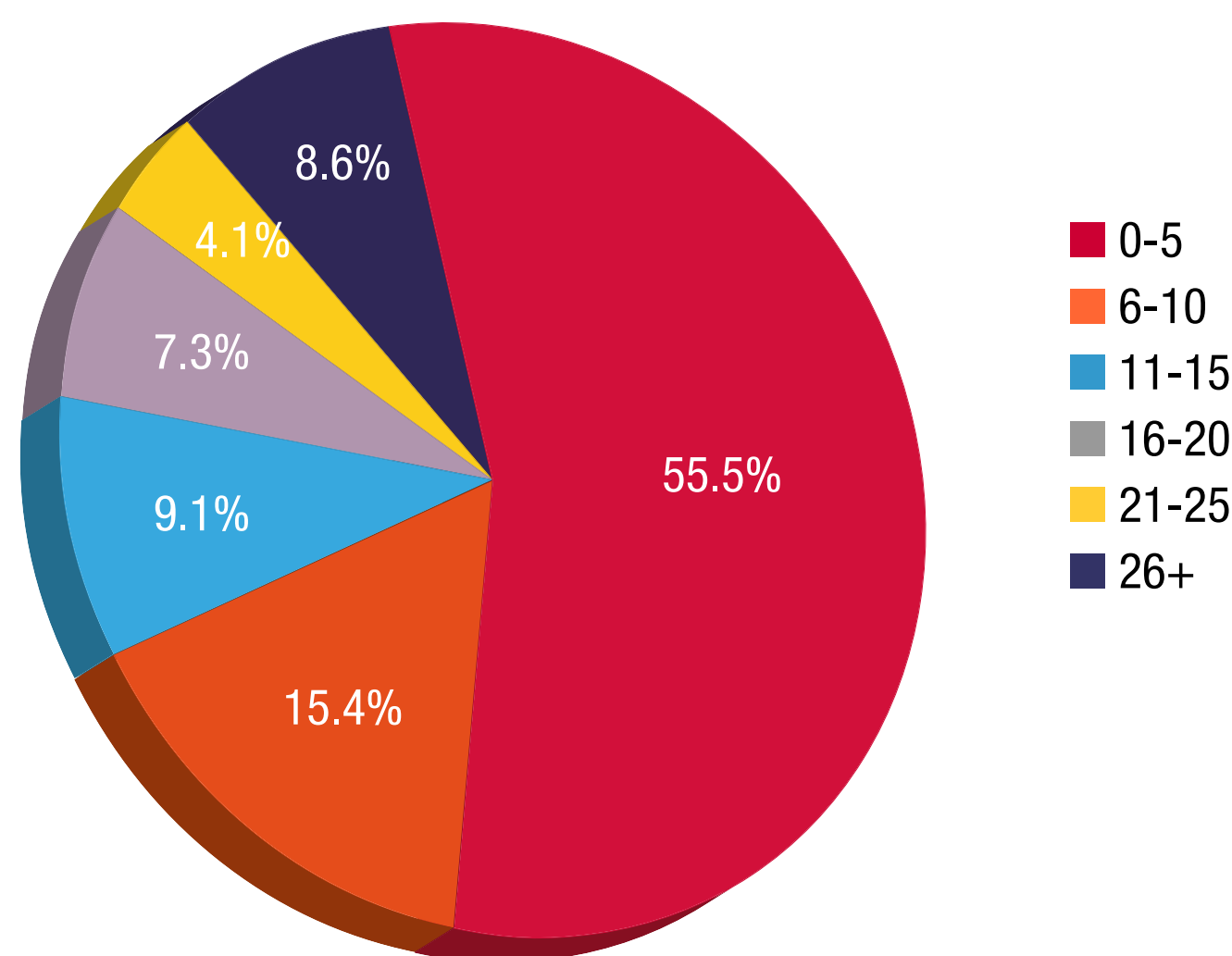
Question 2 - How many years have you been qualified?



Question 3 - Where do you work?



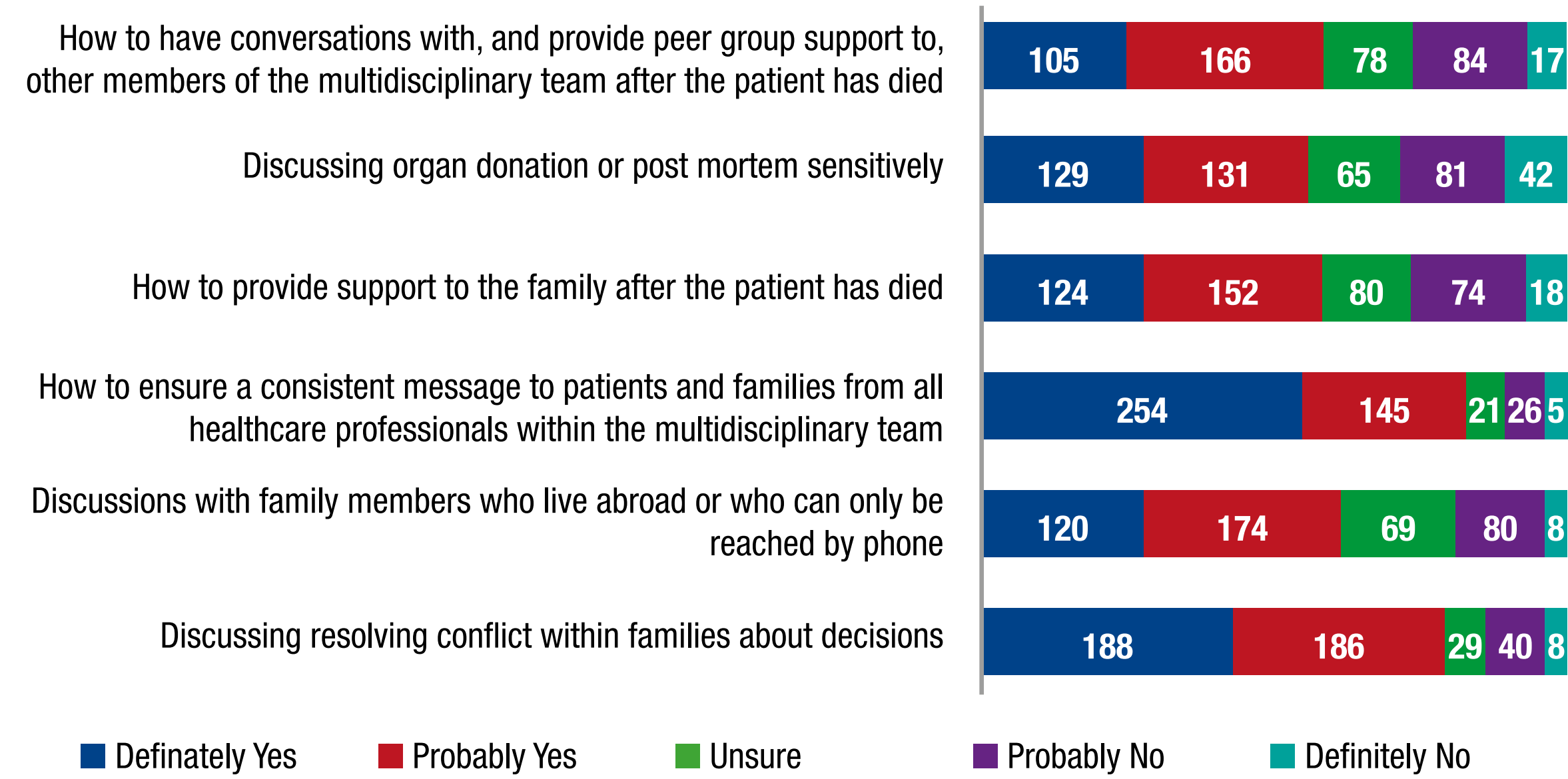
Question 4 - In the past year, how many patients following acute stroke who required end of life care have you been involved with?



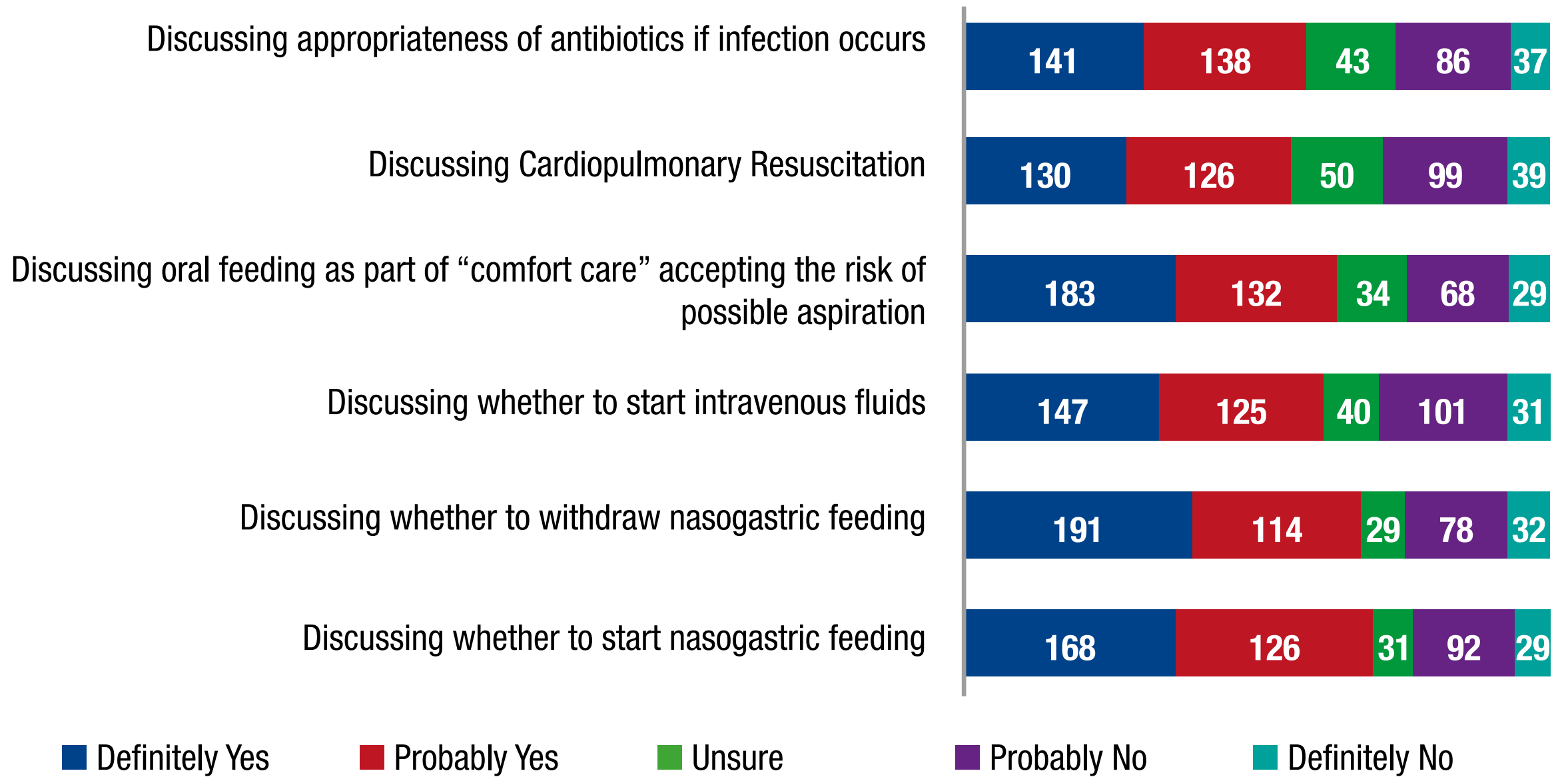
Question 5 - What do you find is the most difficult aspect of having conversations with stroke patients and their families about end of life care? (Top 6 themes)

- Uncertainty of prognosis, time of death/trajectory, giving bad news
- Dealing with anxious, distressed or aggressive relatives
- Communication within MDT and recording information from conversations
- Issues around feeding and hydration
- Managing unrealistic expectations
- Stopping futile treatment

Question 6 - Would you value educational resources on the following topics?



Question 7 - Would you value educational resources on the following topics?



Question 8 - Would you value educational resources on the following topics?

