

- Family Health Center of Worcester (FHCW) serves over 30,000 individuals.
- Ethnicities of patients at FHCW:
 - White Hispanic and non-Hispanic: 60%
 - African American and African-born: 26%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander decent: 14%
- Almost half of the patients speak a primary language other than English
- 99% of the patients have income levels below 200% of poverty
- Insurance: 51% on Medicaid; 8% on Medicare; and 23% uninsured

Objectives

- To assess current referral system at the FHCW
- To implement changes in referral system
- To improve patient attendance at specialist appointments
- Communication barriers in the current referral system
- Patient communication preferences in setting up referrals

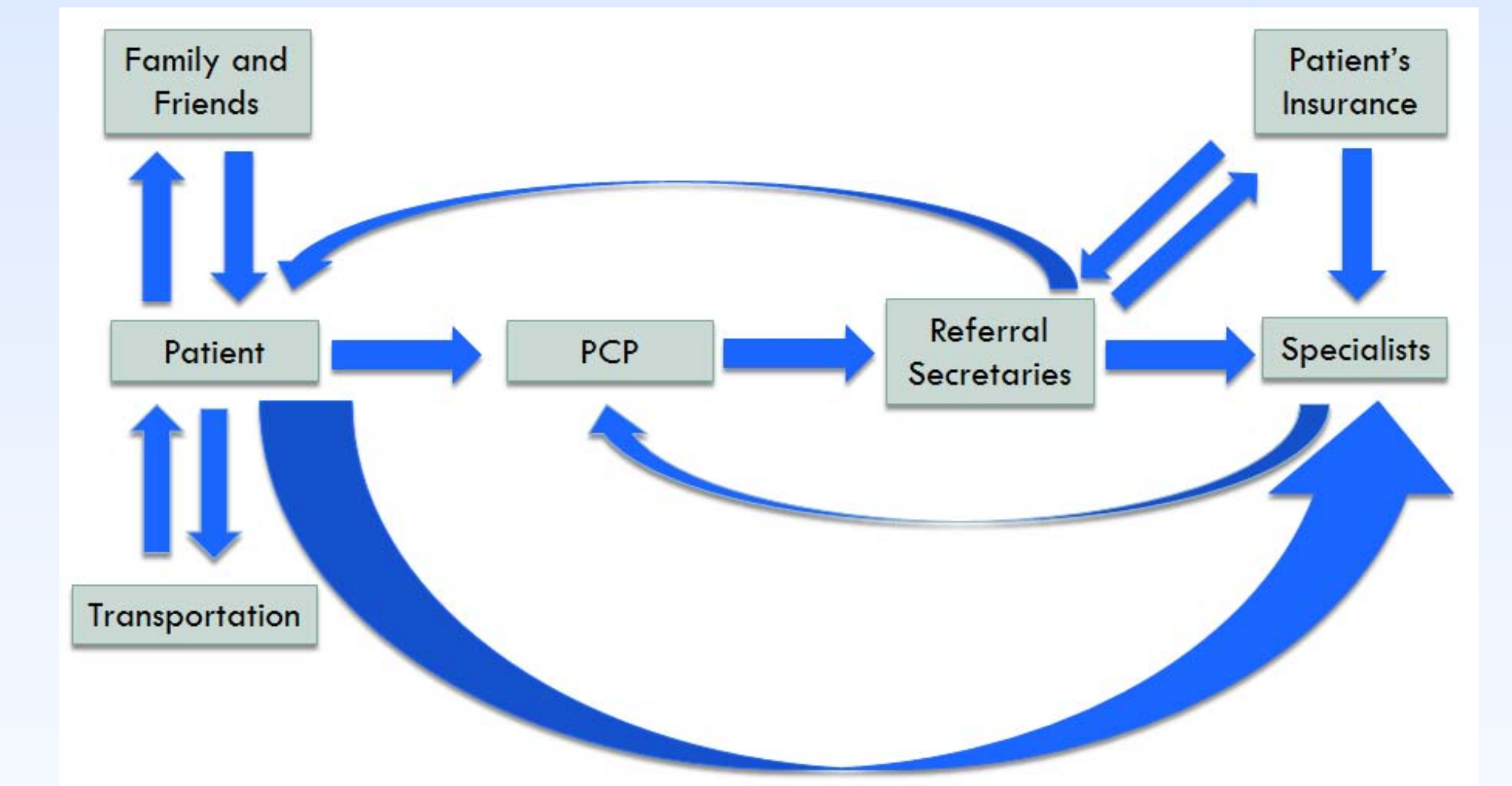


Figure 1. Referral System at Family Health Center of Worcester

Methods

- ❖ Conducting Face to Face Interviews
- Identify patients who had referrals in the last 5 months
- Assess patient experience with current referral system
- ❖ Data Analysis: Survey Monkey was used to organize and analyze all collected data.

Total Survey Population

- Sample size (n=39)

Table 1: Ability to Understand English	
Easiness of Reading in English	Percentage
Can Read English Well	46.2%
Can Read Some English	15.4%
Cannot Read in English	35.9%
Other (deaf, comprehension problem)	2.6%

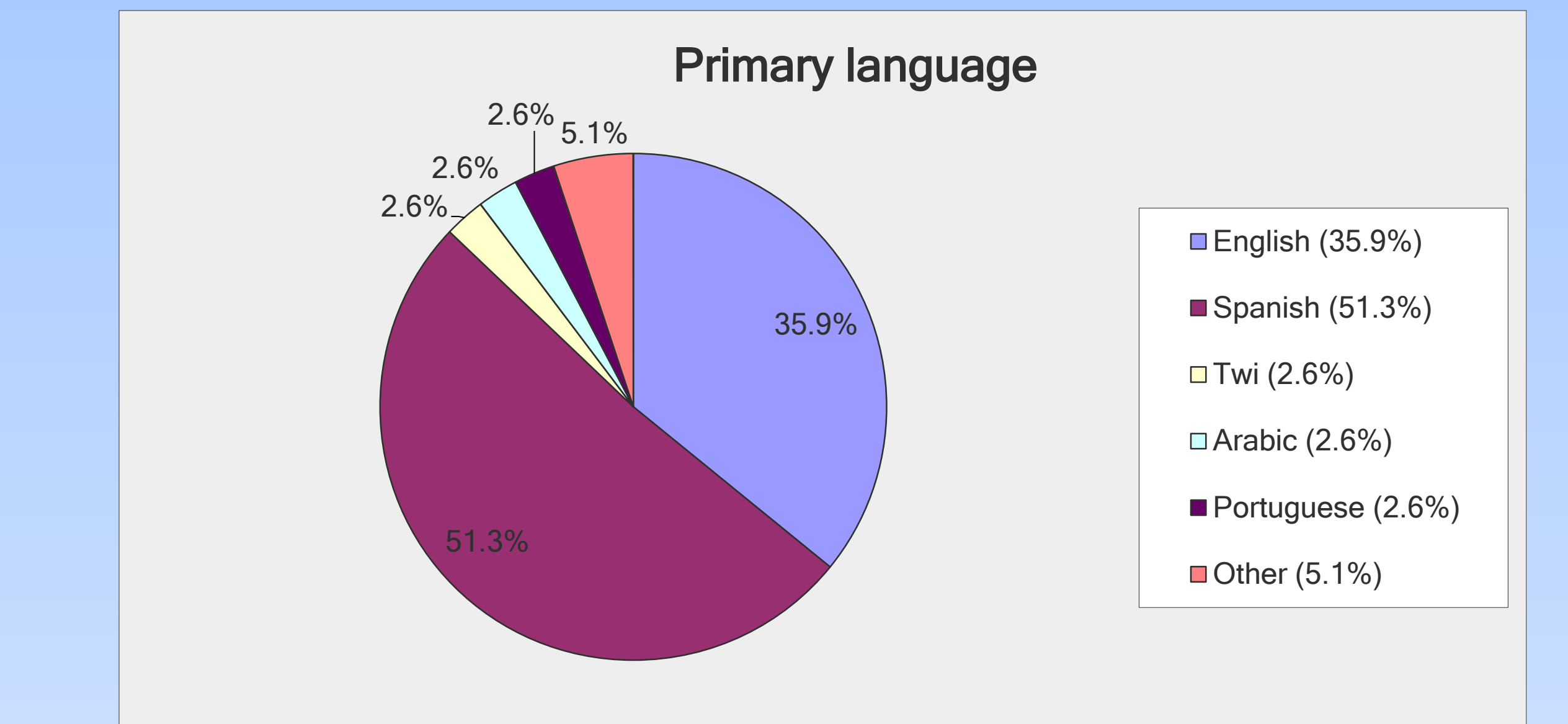


Figure 1. Primary Language

Communication Preference

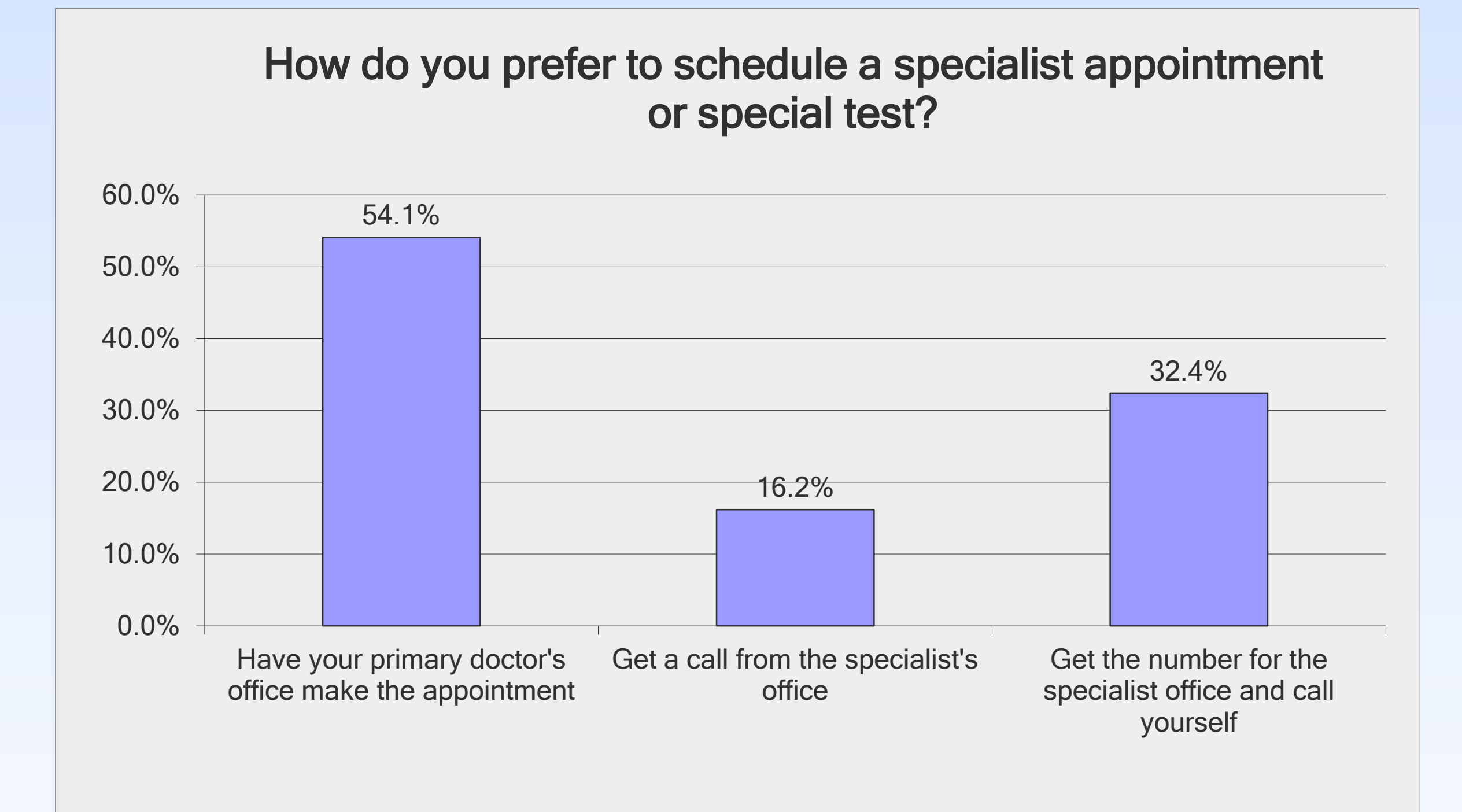


Figure 2. Patient Preference in Making Appointment.

Patient Experience

Did you go to the appointment?

- Yes: 76.5%
- No: 23.5%

Were the instruction about the referral appointment easy to follow?

- Yes: 75.0%
- No: 25.0%

Difficulty Understanding Instructions (Subgroup)

Sample size (n=8)

Table 2: Ability to Understand English of Subgroup	
Easiness of Reading in English	Percentage
Can Read English Well	12.5%
Can Read Some English	25.0%
Cannot Read in English	62.5%
Other	0%

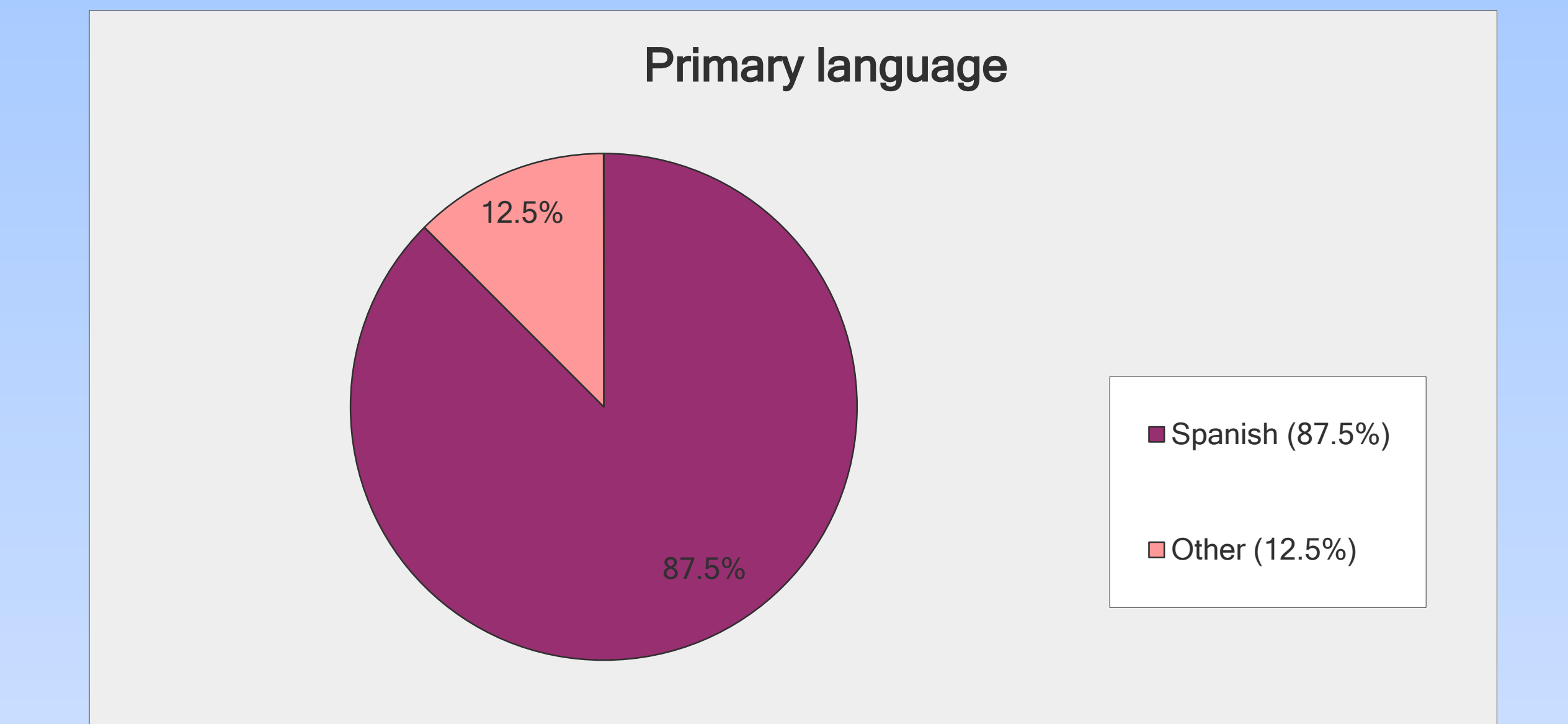


Figure 3. Primary Language of Subgroup

Communication Preference

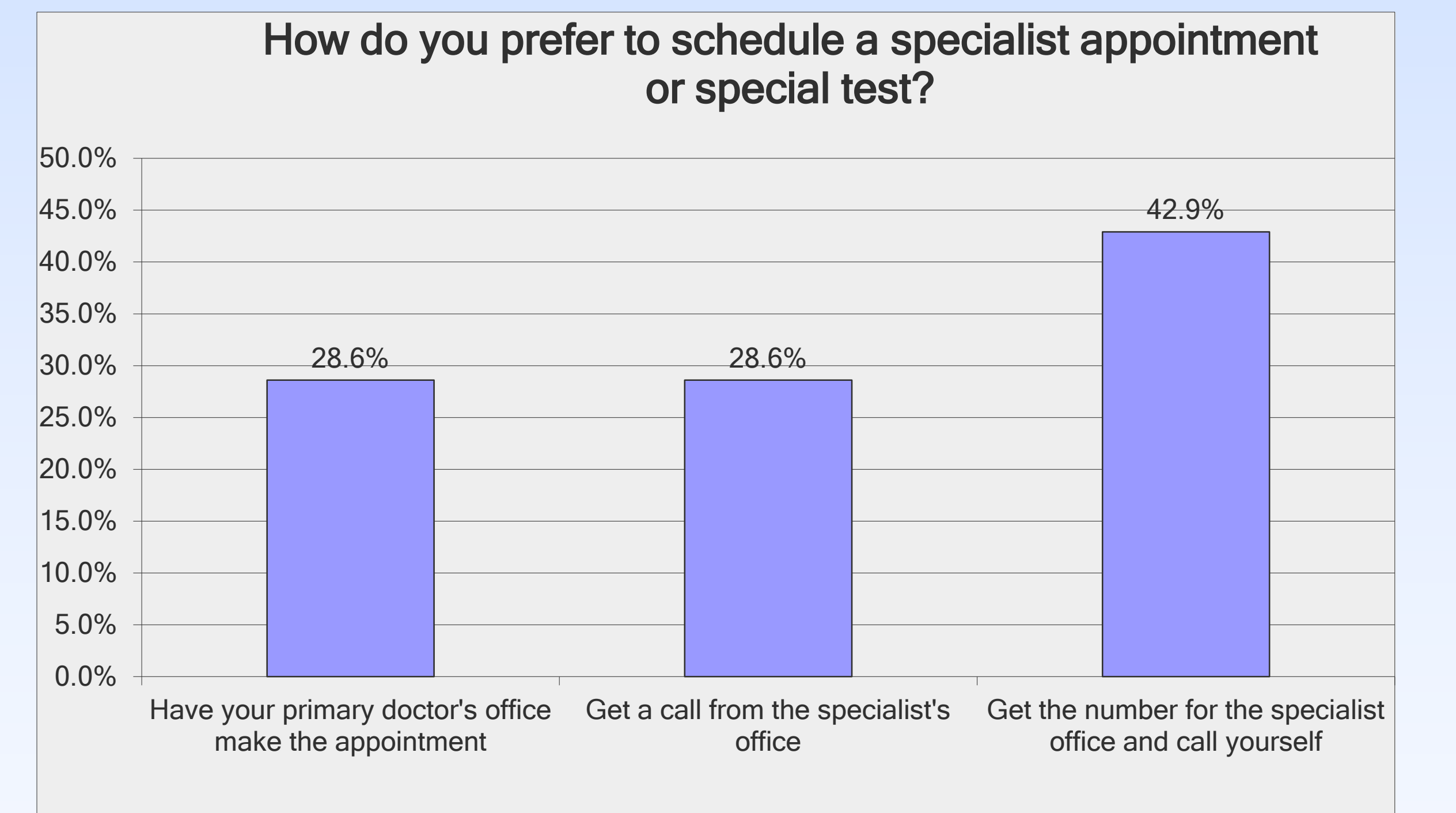


Figure 4. Patient Preference in Making Appointment of Subgroup.

Patient Experience

Did you go to the appointment?

- Yes: 50.0%
- No: 50.0%

Patients who had difficulty understanding instructions were more likely

- Spanish speaking (87.5 vs. 51%)
- To prefer to receive the number of the specialist and call themselves (42.9% vs. 32.4%)

Significantly, the no show rate more than doubled (50.0% vs. 23.5%) in this subgroup.

Limitations

- Small sample size (n= 39)
- Confounds of population: language, literacy
- Inconsistent data collection
- Team/staff approach
- Unclear wording of questions
- Lack of verifiability of results (attendance confirmation)

Recommended Changes to Referral System

- Patient should be notified by letter and phone.
- Patient should be notified of referral in their language of choice as well as English.
- Letters should be typed instead of handwritten.

Future Research

- Gather information from staff point of view
- Gather feedback from specialist office

References

Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc. (2013). QuickFacts. Retrieved October 22, 2013 from <http://www.fhcw.org/en/AboutUs/QuickFact>

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