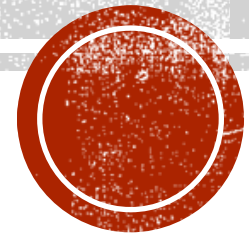


# **HOW DO THE NEGATIVE OPINIONS OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES, AFFECT THE CURRENT COHORTS OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDENTS?**

**Ben Carter, Chloe Balderstone, Chantal Simon**



# WHY INVESTIGATE THIS TOPIC?

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## **Anger over physician associates with barely any training treating NHS patients in roles far beyond their remit as evidence mounts of care causing misdiagnoses and deaths**

- **Physician associates are being asked to take on clinical duties beyond remit**

By [JO MACFARLANE](#) and [ETHAN ENNALS FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY](#)  
**PUBLISHED:** 22:00, 2 March 2024 | **UPDATED:** 09:07, 4 March 2024



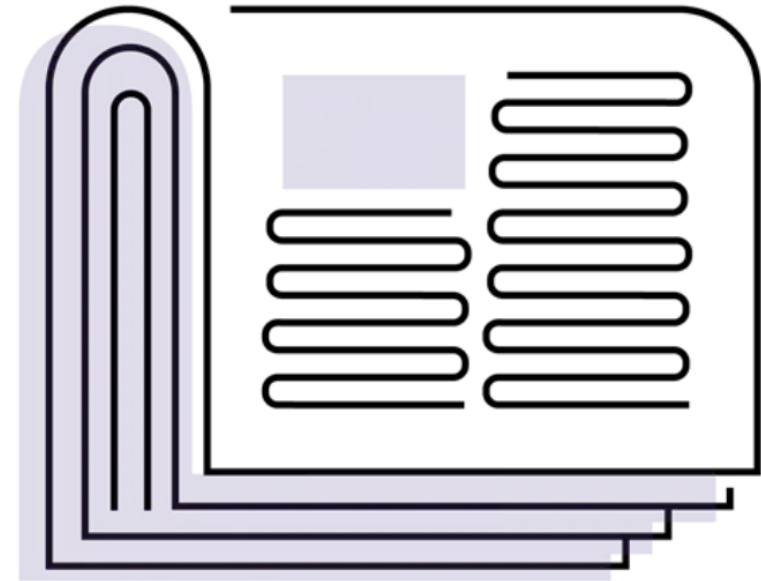
# WHY INVESTIGATE THIS TOPIC?

Home > BMA media centre >

## **BMA sets out first national guidance for the role and responsibilities of physician associates in major intervention for patient safety**

by BMA media team

BMA press release.



# METHODOLOGY

- On-line survey
- Aim: to determine the impact on UK PA students of the recent negative BMA and press campaign regarding the Physician Associate (PA) profession
- Participants: Current PA students based in the UK
- Ethical approval: Bournemouth University Health and Social Care Ethics Panel



# RESULTS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Age:

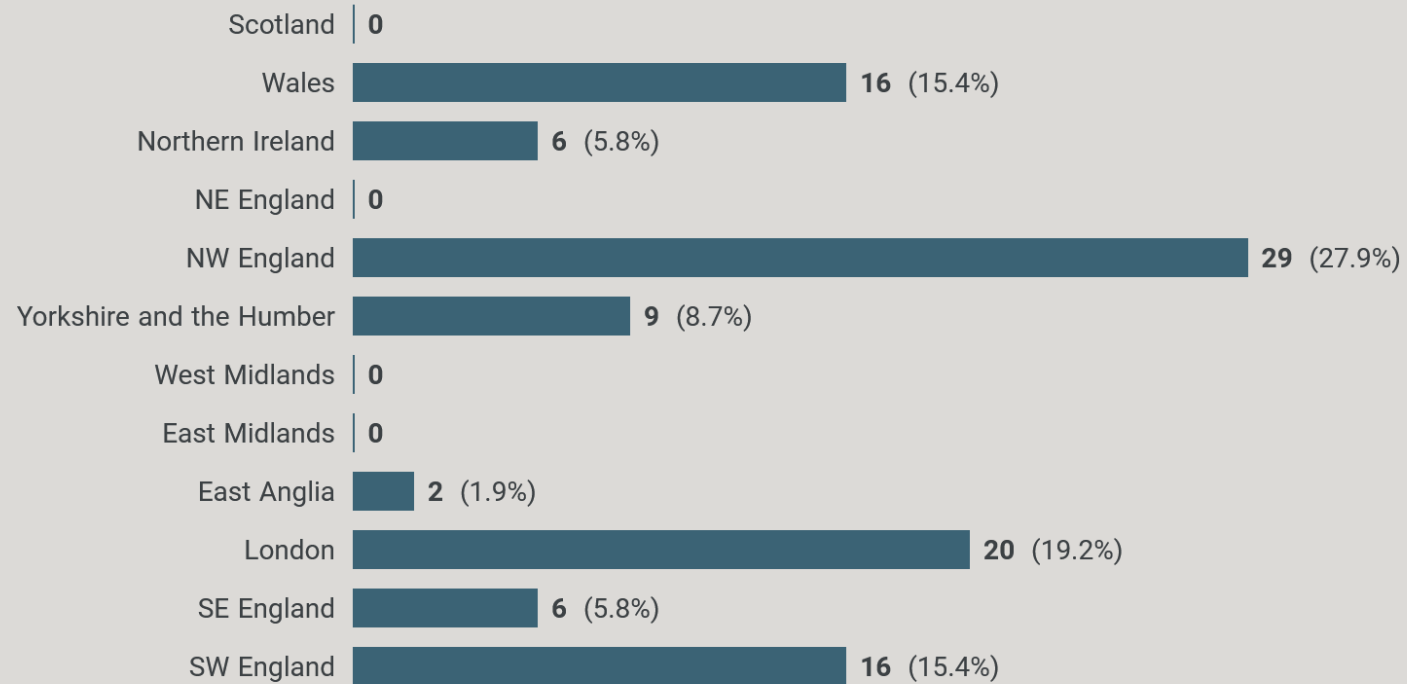


Sex:



# RESULTS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Country/Region of study and placement(s):

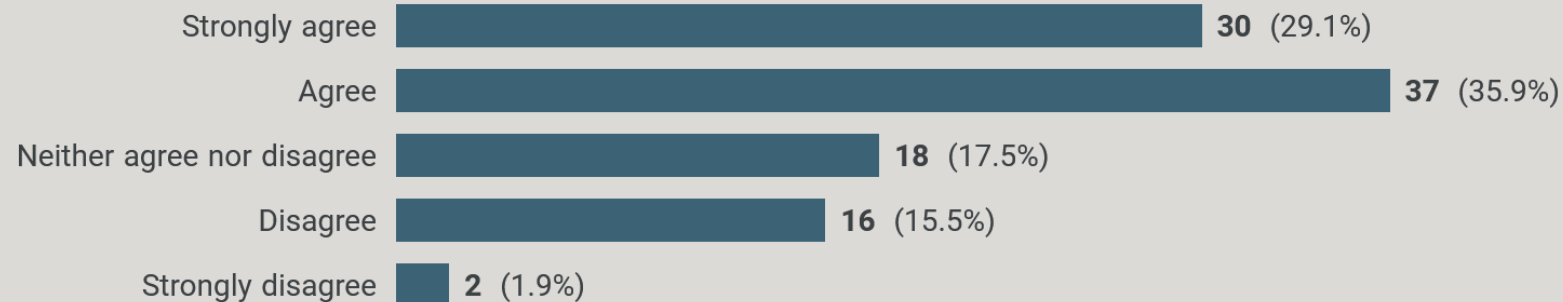


# RESULTS — NEGATIVE COVERAGE

Negative press surrounding Physician Associates, and the Physician Associate profession, is something that I have encountered.



This has negatively impacted my mental health

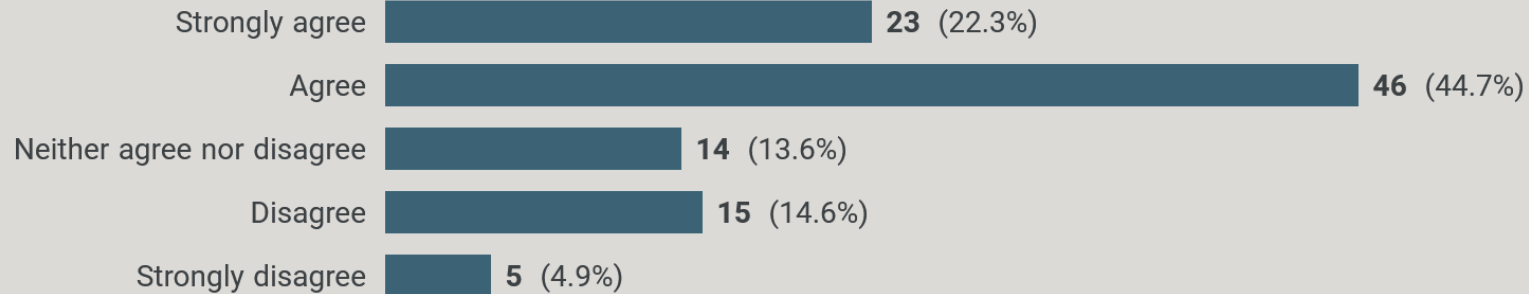


*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



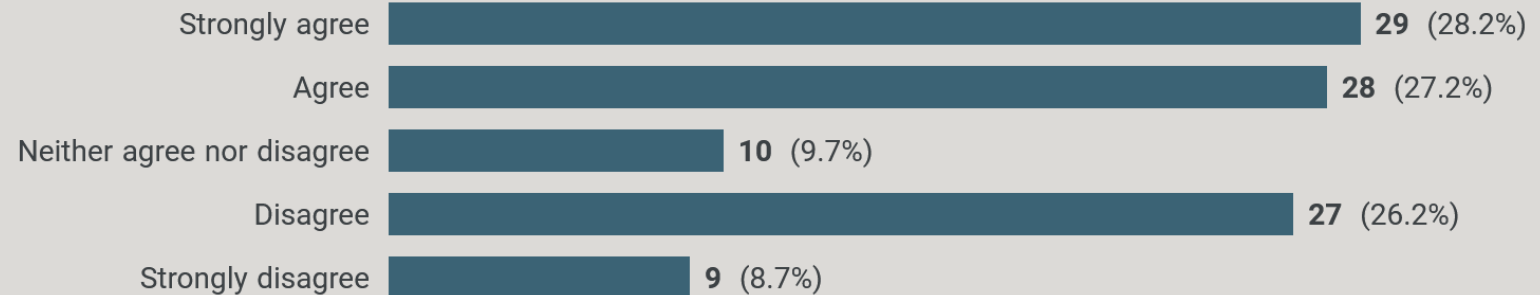
# RESULTS – NEGATIVE COVERAGE

This has had an adverse effect on my study



*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*

This has made me contemplate leaving the course



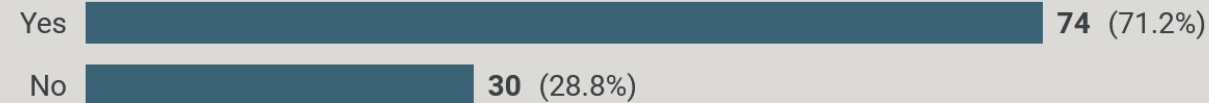
*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*





# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

Negative attitude and opinion toward Physician Associates and/or Physician Associate Students from other healthcare workers is something I have encountered.



Positive attitude and opinion toward Physician Associates and/or Physician Associate Students from other healthcare workers is something I have encountered.



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

## Negative feedback from healthcare staff about the PA role:

- Adversely impacts mental health (62.5% respondents)
- Adversely impacts ability to study (57.6% of respondents)
- Has made students contemplate leaving their PA course (43.8% of respondents)
- Has made students question whether they want to pursue PA as a career (70% of respondents)
- Has caused concerns about future employment prospects as a PA (73.7%)



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

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- Has made students question whether they want to pursue PA as a career (70% of respondents)
- Has caused concerns about future employment prospects as a PA (73.7%)

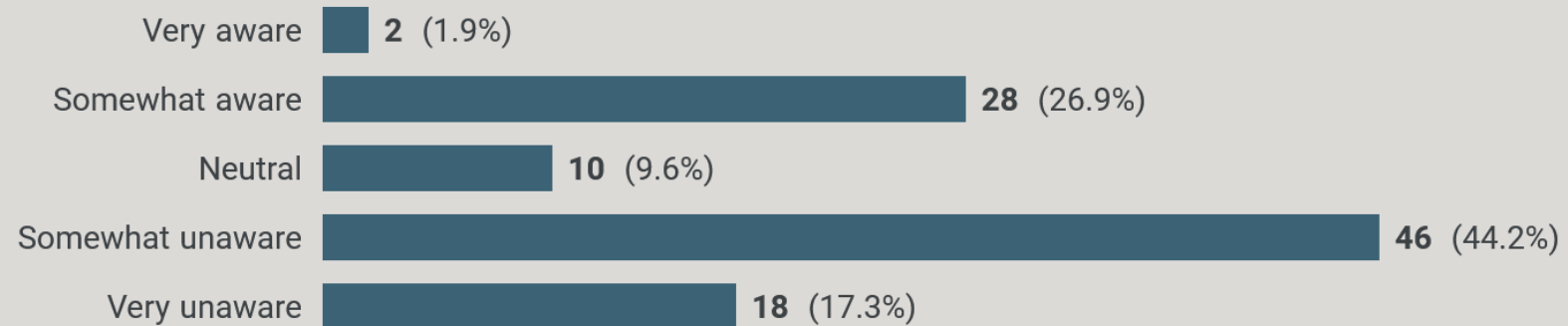
## Positive feedback from healthcare staff about the PA role:

- Improves mental health (75.5% respondents)
- Improves ability to study (72.5% of respondents)
- Has encouraged students to continue their PA course (70.5% of respondents)
- Has cemented students' desire to become a PA (67.3% of respondents)
- Has alleviated concerns about future employment prospects as a PA (55.1%)



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How aware do you feel other healthcare workers are, about what the Physician Associate role entails?

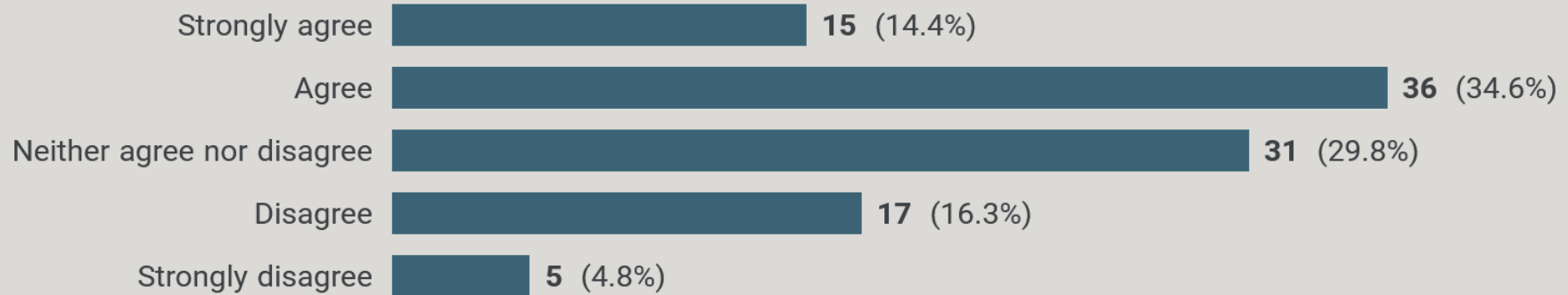


*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

I feel welcome on the wards and in other clinical areas as a Physician Associate student whilst on placement.

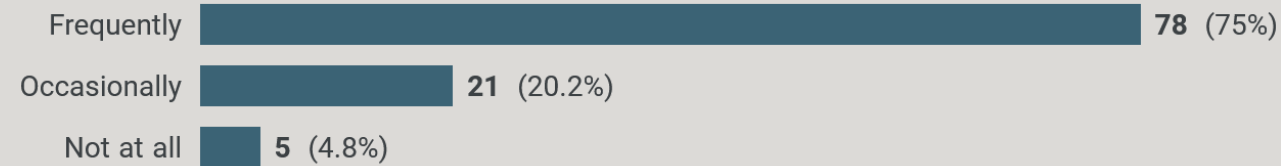


*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How often have you been mistaken for a medical student, or been incorrectly introduced as a medical student, despite stating that you are a Physician Associate student?

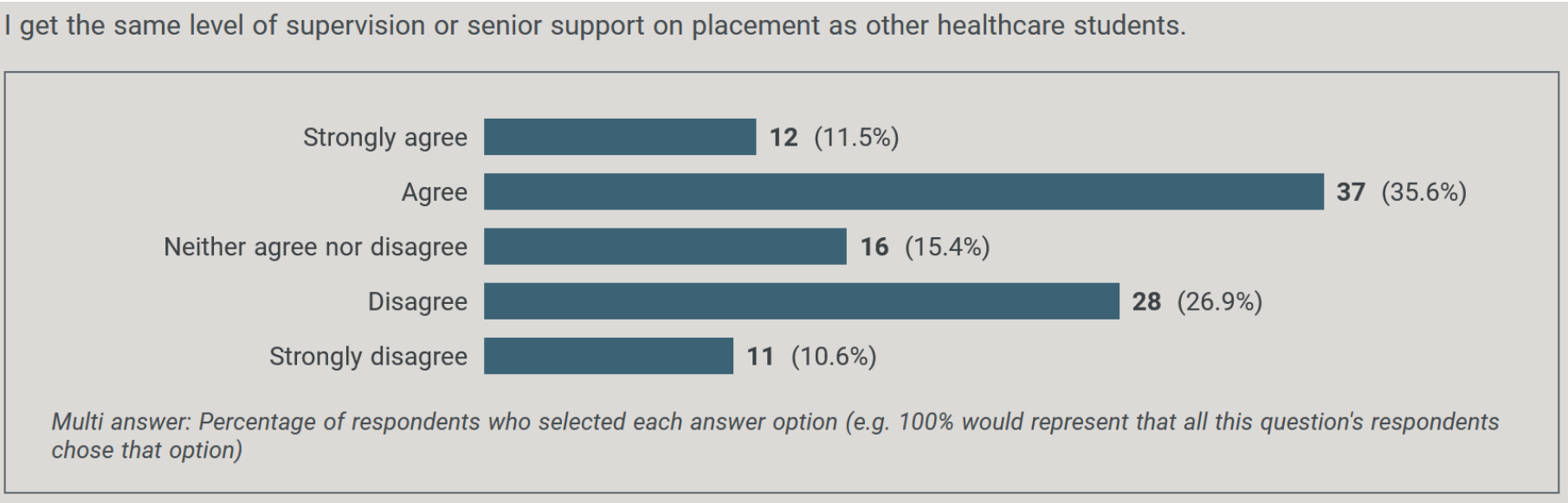
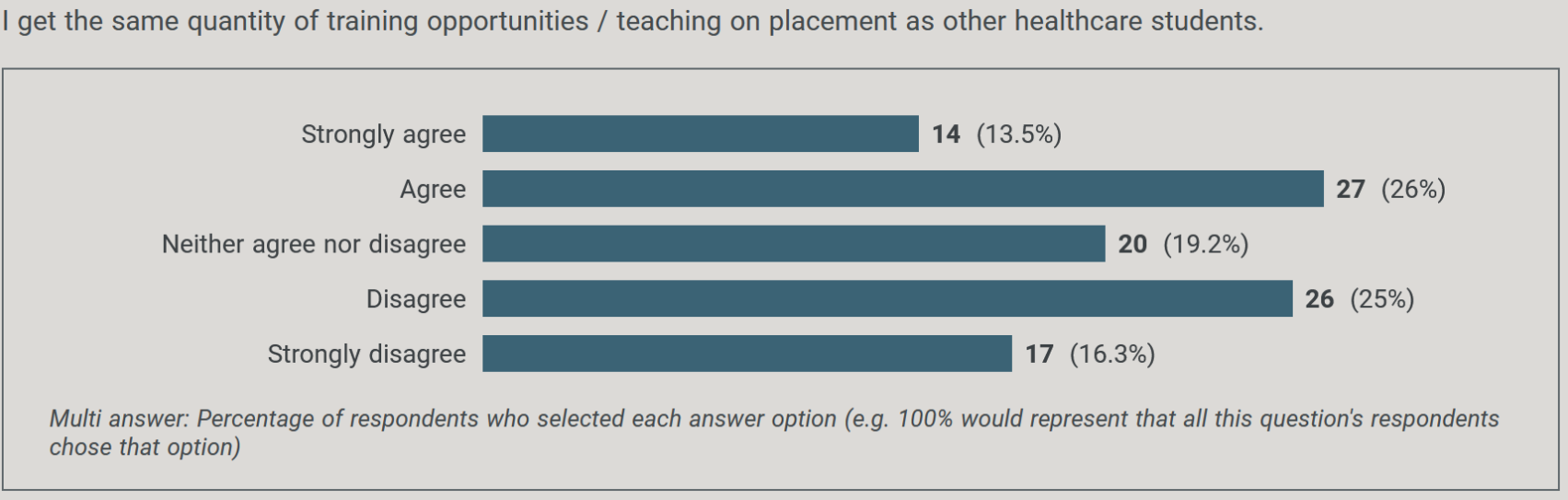


*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT

(HEALTHCARE STAFF)



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How often have you encountered other healthcare staff suggesting the amount qualified Physician Associates earn, is too much



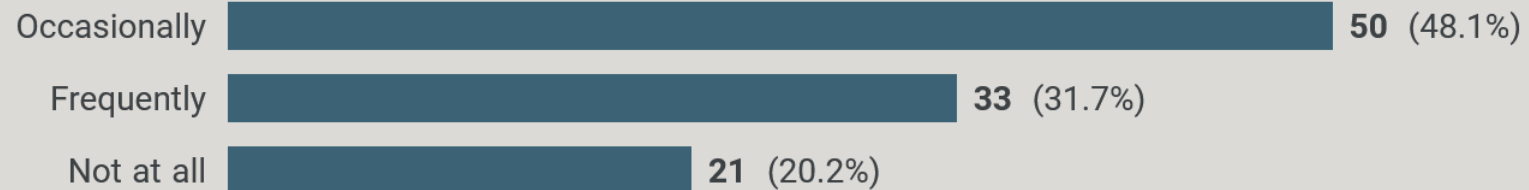
*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*





# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How often have you encountered other healthcare staff questioning the competence of Physician Associates?

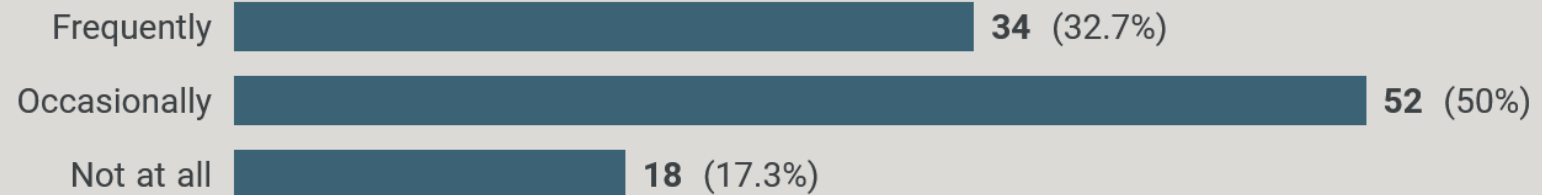


*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How often have you encountered other healthcare staff questioning the validity of Physician Associate training?

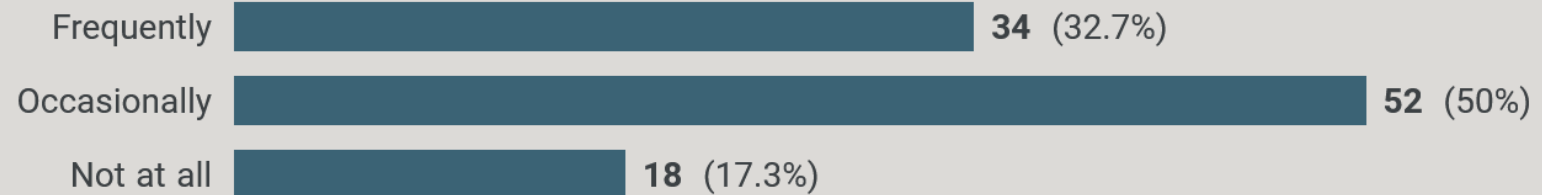


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# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

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*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How often have you encountered other healthcare staff suggesting that Physician Associates are undercutting other healthcare professions and stealing their jobs, or training opportunities?

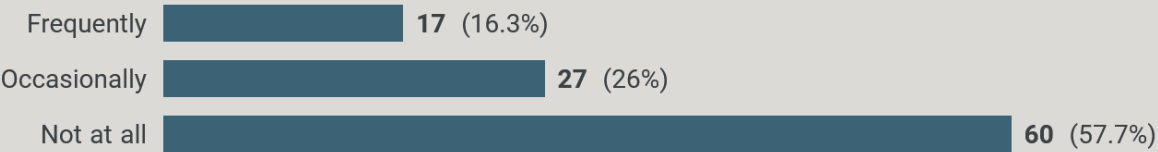


*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



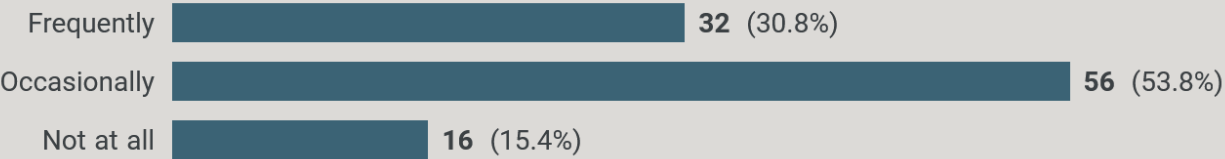
# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (HEALTHCARE STAFF)

How often have you encountered other healthcare staff suggesting that working with Physician Associates is actually worsening / increasing their workloads?



Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

How often have you encountered other healthcare staff suggesting that working with Physician Associates is actually helping / reducing their workloads?

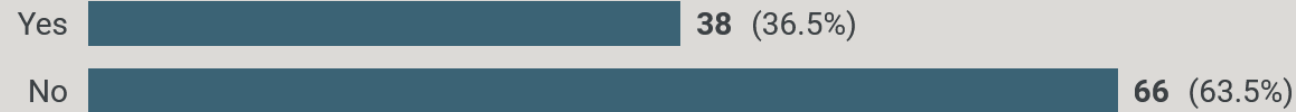


Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

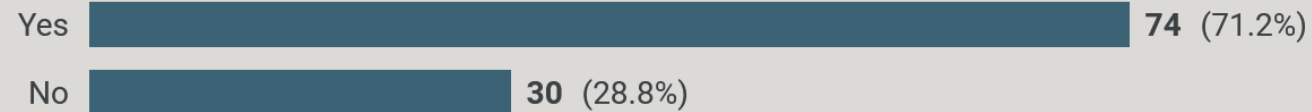


# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (PATIENTS)

Negative attitude and opinion toward Physician Associates and/or Physician Associate Students from patients is something that I have encountered.

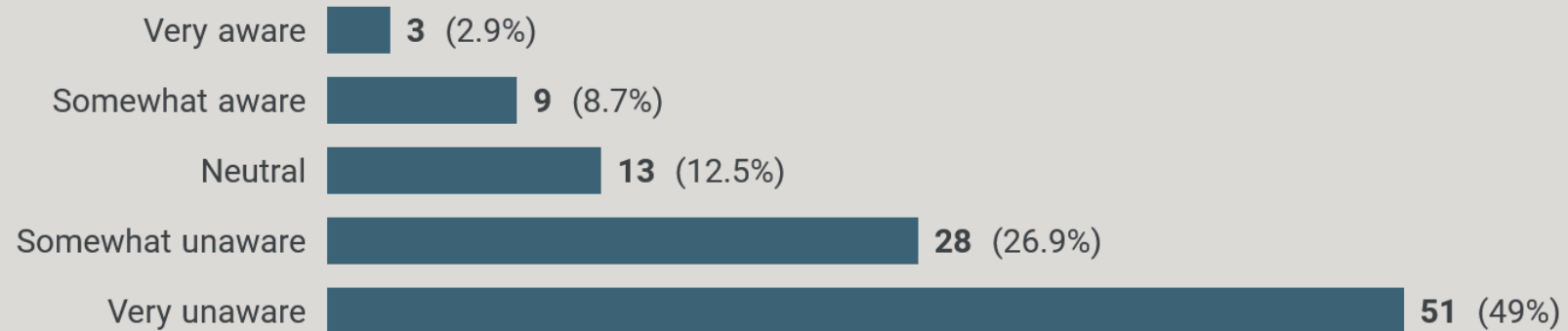


Positive attitude and opinion toward Physician Associates and/or Physician Associate Students from patients is something that I have encountered.



# RESULTS — EXPERIENCE ON PLACEMENT (PATIENTS)

How aware do you feel patients are, about what the Physician Associate role entails?



*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*



# CONCLUSIONS

- Negative press and social media coverage has significant impact on perceived well-being of PA students, their studies their desire to complete their training, and their perceived employment prospects
- PA students generally feel they get adequate supervision/senior support on placement, they often feel that they are not receiving the same training opportunities as other healthcare students
- Most PA students have experienced negative feedback about the PA role whilst on placement.
- Positive feedback about their role from other healthcare workers improves PA students' perceived mental health and encourages them to complete their studies to become fully qualified PAs
- Patients often do not understand the role of the PA but generally give positive feedback to PA students





# **LIMITATIONS**

- On-line survey – self-selected population ? Representative of all views
- Possibility of third party distribution with some respondents not from the target sample



# ANY QUESTIONS?

