

# Medication Adherence Survey Highlights

A Survey of Upstate New York, 2017

# Survey Methods

# Method and Design

Excellus BCBS commissioned One Research to conduct an online survey of upstate New York adults. Participants were recruited from a vendor panel by email invitation to take the survey between January 6 and January 19, 2017. Participants were not asked to disclose their health care provider.

Survey respondents had to be at least 18 years old and living within the health plan's 39-county coverage area. County-level quotas were established to ensure the geographic distribution of the final sample would closely match the actual distribution of the general population.

The design of the study was cross-sectional. The survey instrument contained a brief screening, demographic questions and randomized questions on several health-related topics. A subset of participants (n= 1,215) who were currently taking a prescription medication for a chronic condition were also asked about medication adherence. The survey was designed for self-completion via an online platform. In conducting the analysis, data were tested at a 95 percent confidence interval.

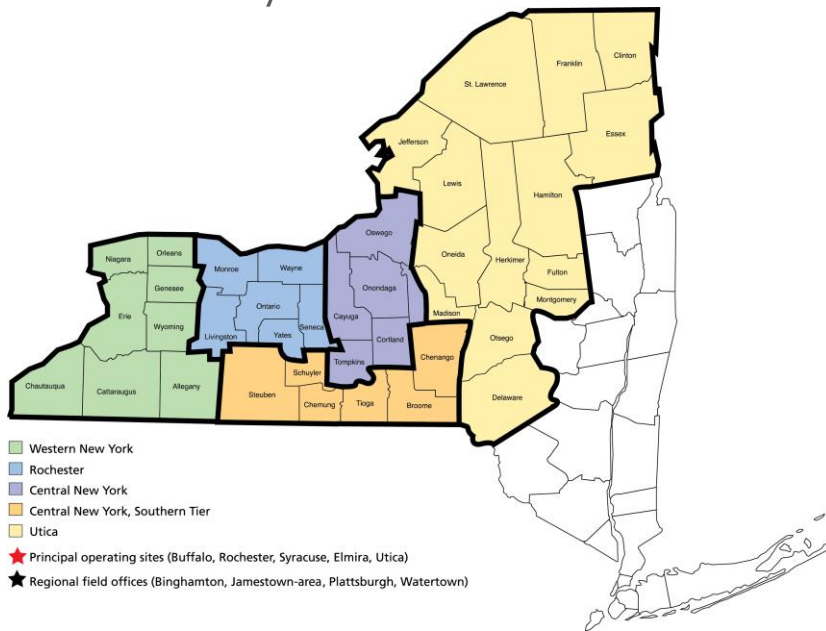
**Editor's note: This is general population data, and not a survey of health plan members.**

# Participants

2,000 individuals from a 39-county region in upstate New York completed the survey.

The demographics of the respondents indicate that the survey sample was representative of upstate New York adults.

A subset of 1,215 participants currently taking a prescription medication for a chronic condition are the focus of this analysis.



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## Participant Characteristics (n = 1,215)

Region	
Western NY	31%
Rochester/Finger Lakes	21%
Central NY	17%
Southern Tier	10%
Utica/Rome/North Country	21%
Sex	
Male	40%
Female	60%
Age	
18-24	8%
25-34	14%
35-44	16%
45-54	20%
55-64	21%
65+	21%

# Participants (cont.)

## Participant Characteristics (n = 1,215)

Race		Education Level	
White	92%	High school graduate or less	22%
Black or African American	4%	Some college	21%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%	Associate's degree	15%
Native American or Alaskan Native	1%	College 4 years	24%
Mixed Race	2%	Post graduate	18%
Some other race	0%	Annual Household Income	
Employment Status		Less than \$15,000	9%
Employed full or part-time	48%	\$15,000-\$24,999	12%
Self-employed	4%	\$25,000-\$34,999	9%
Not employed, looking for work	4%	\$35,000-\$49,999	15%
Not employed, not looking for work	4%	\$50,000 to \$74,999	19%
Retired	24%	\$75,000 to \$99,999	17%
Student	2%	\$100,000 or more	14%
Homemaker	9%	Prefer not to respond	5%
Other	5%		

# Participants (cont.)

## Participant Characteristics (n = 1,215)

### Prevalence of Chronic Conditions

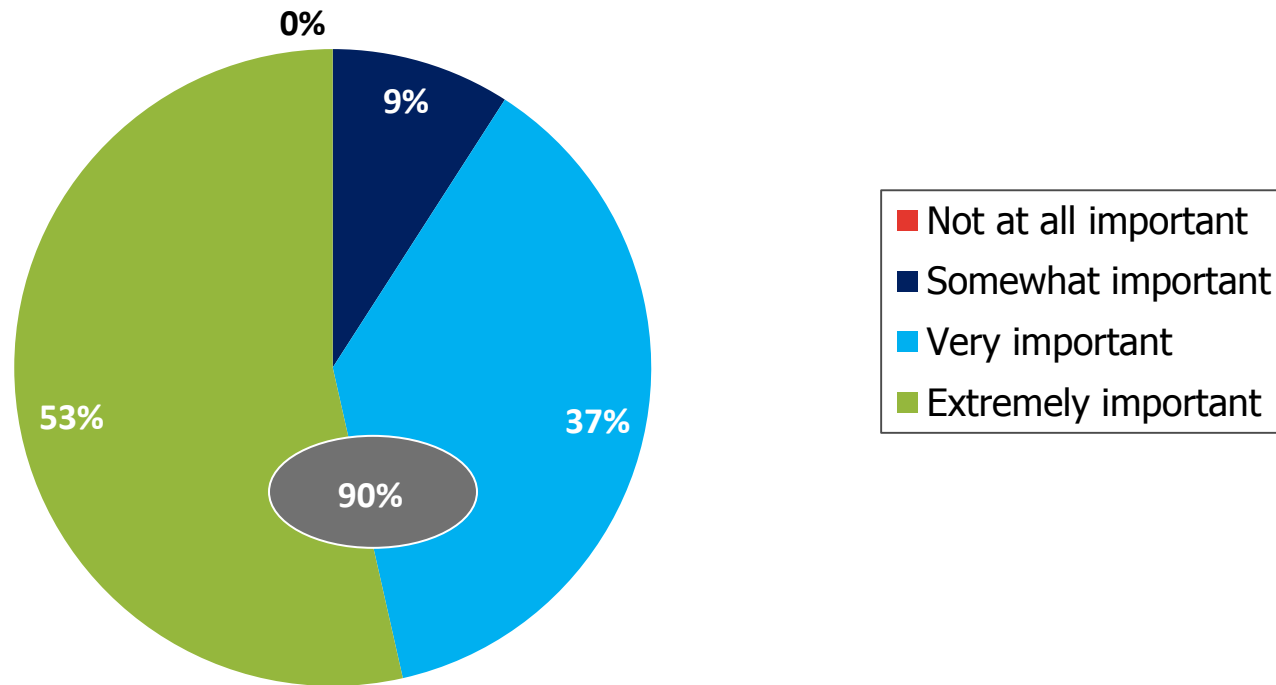
High blood pressure (hypertension)	37%
High cholesterol	31%
Depression	25%
Diabetes	18%
Asthma	14%
Heart trouble, including angina	6%
Cancer	2%
Other	39%

# Medication Adherence Results

(n = 1,215, only respondents currently taking a prescription medication)

Patients know it is important to take medications as prescribed. 90% reported it is “Very Important” or “Extremely Important”.

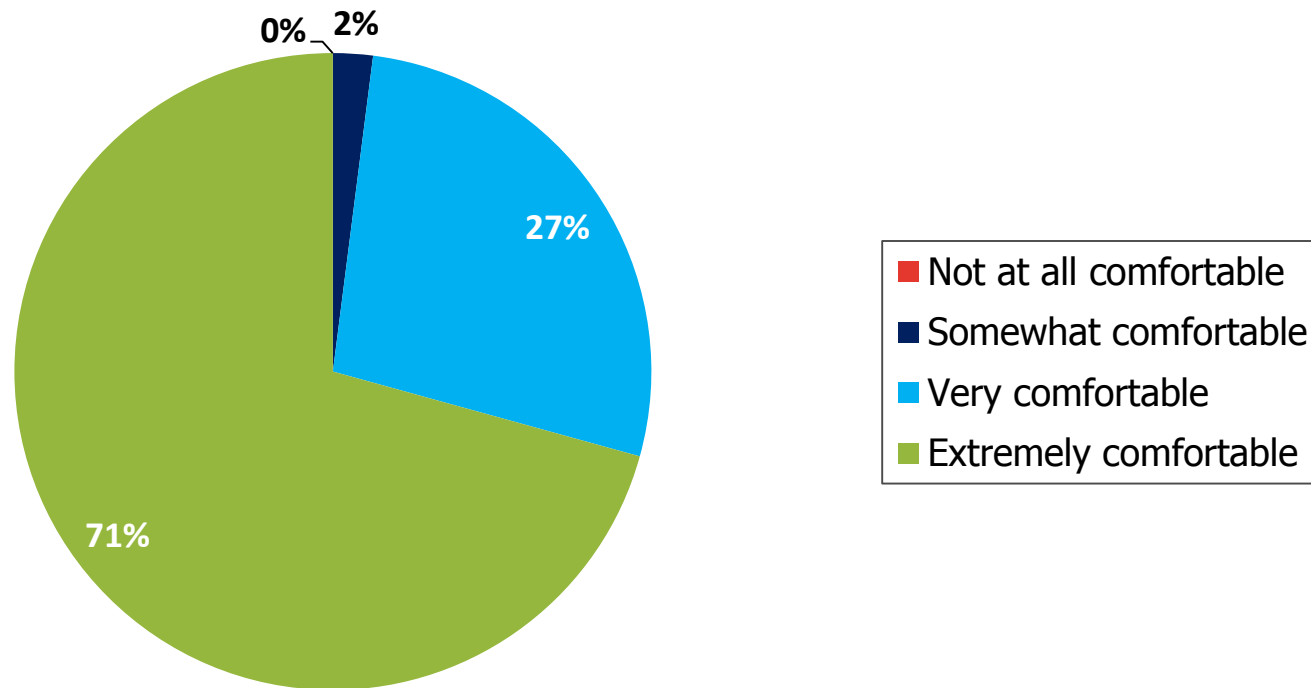
### Importance of Always Taking Medication As Prescribed





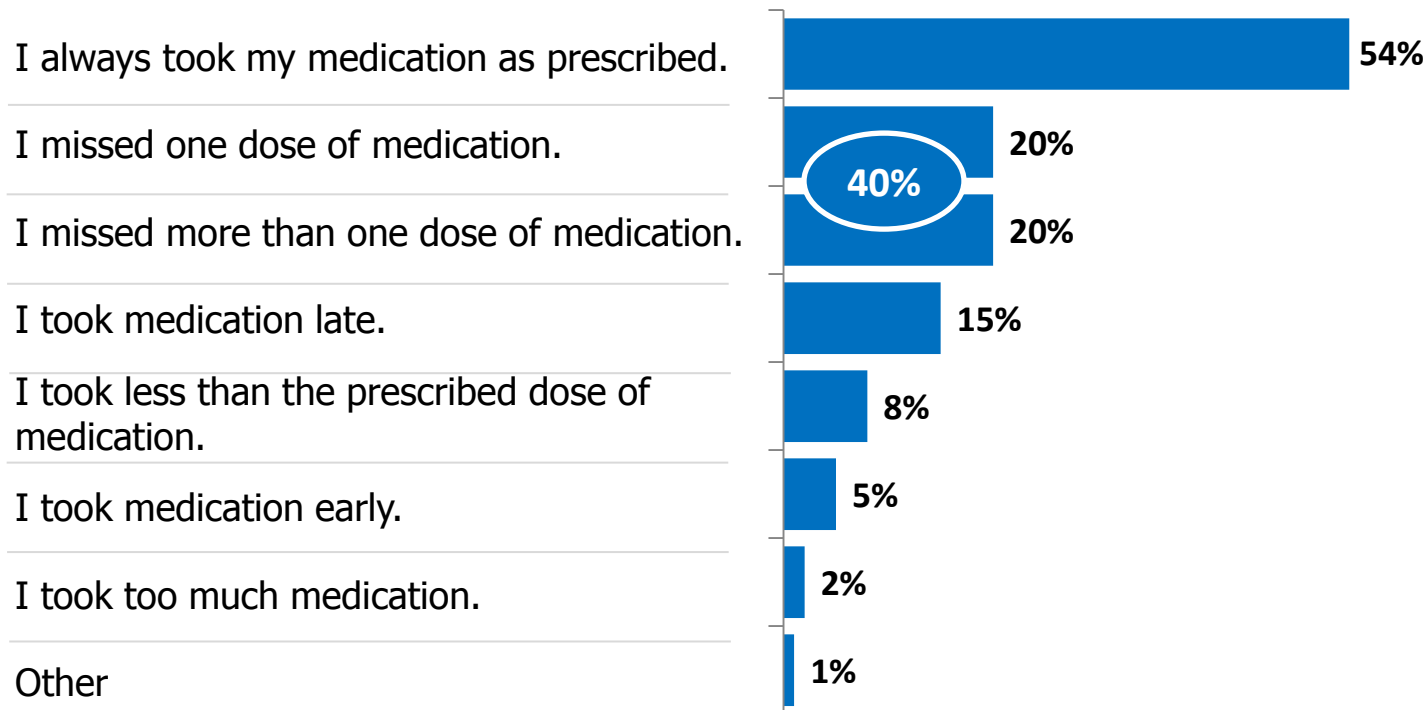
7 out of 10 patients are “Extremely Comfortable” in knowing how to take medication as prescribed.

### Comfort in Knowing How to Take Medications as Prescribed



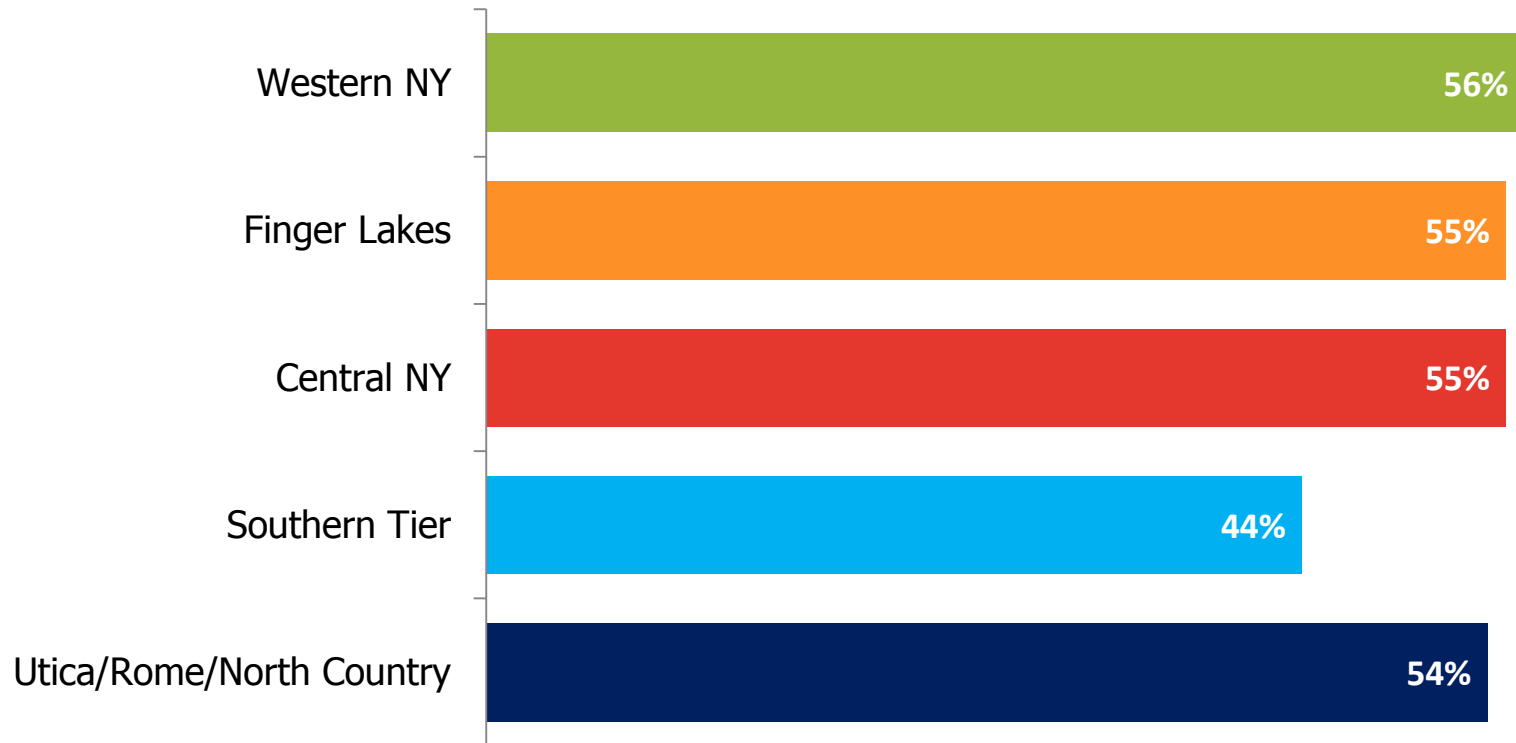
Despite the perceived importance of and comfort with medication adherence in this sample, 2 out of 5 patients have missed at least one dose.

**Percent of Patients taking Medication**



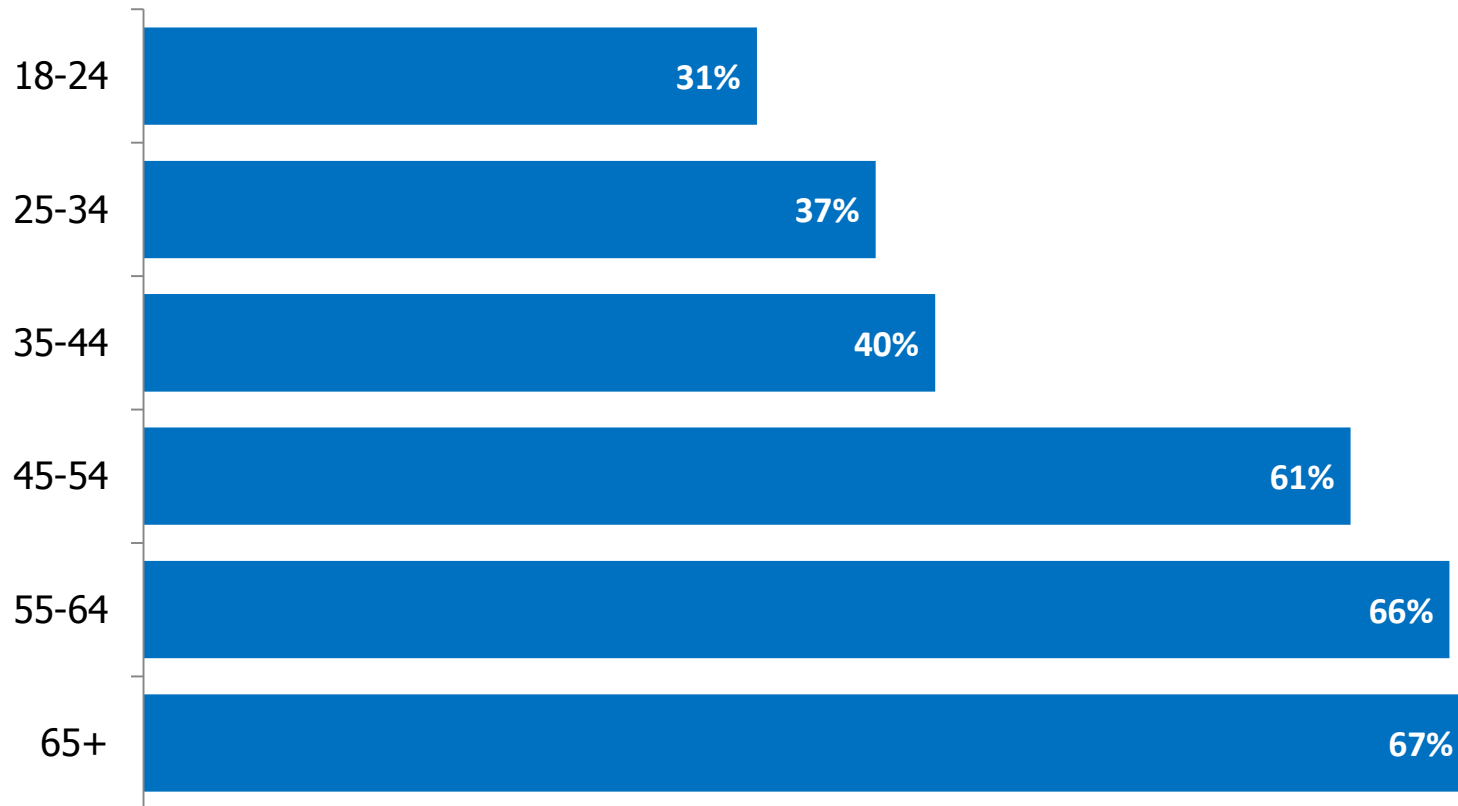
Medication adherence is lower in the Southern Tier compared to other regions.

### Always Took Medication as Prescribed, by Region

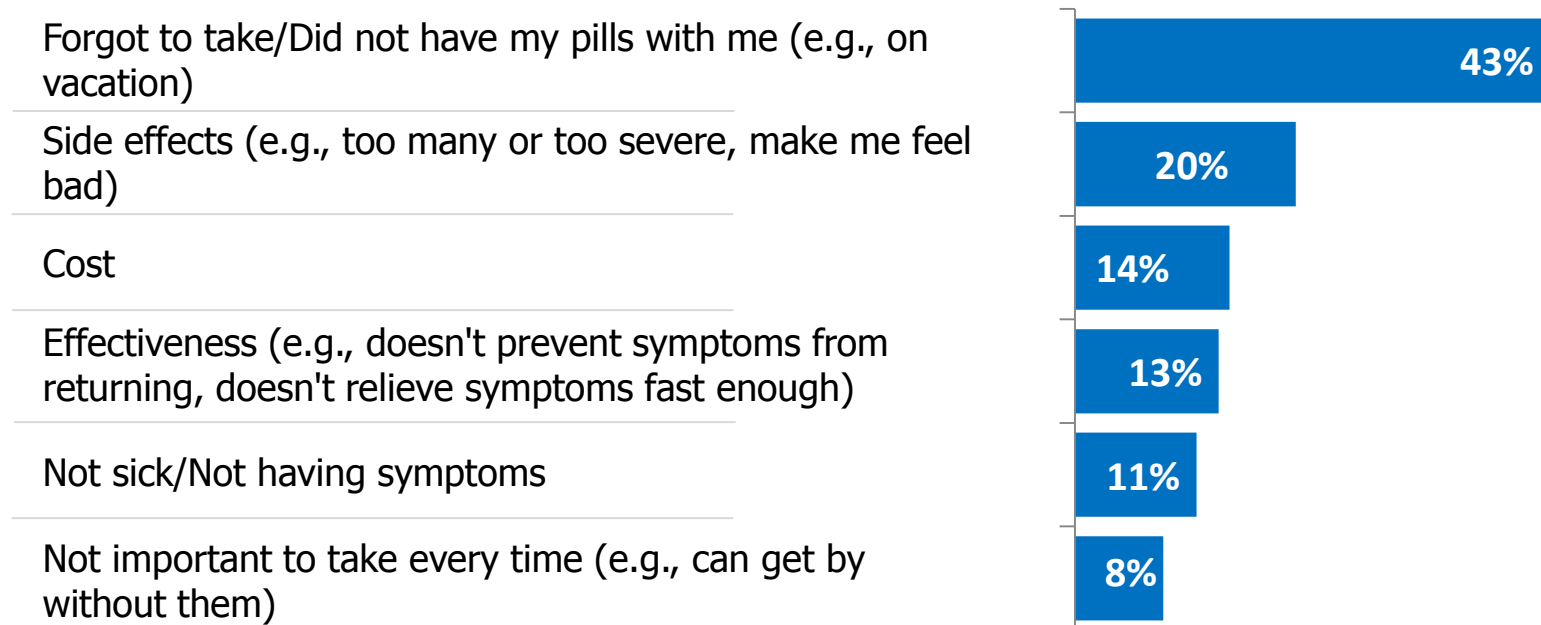


Adults ages 45 and older reported higher medication adherence than younger adults.

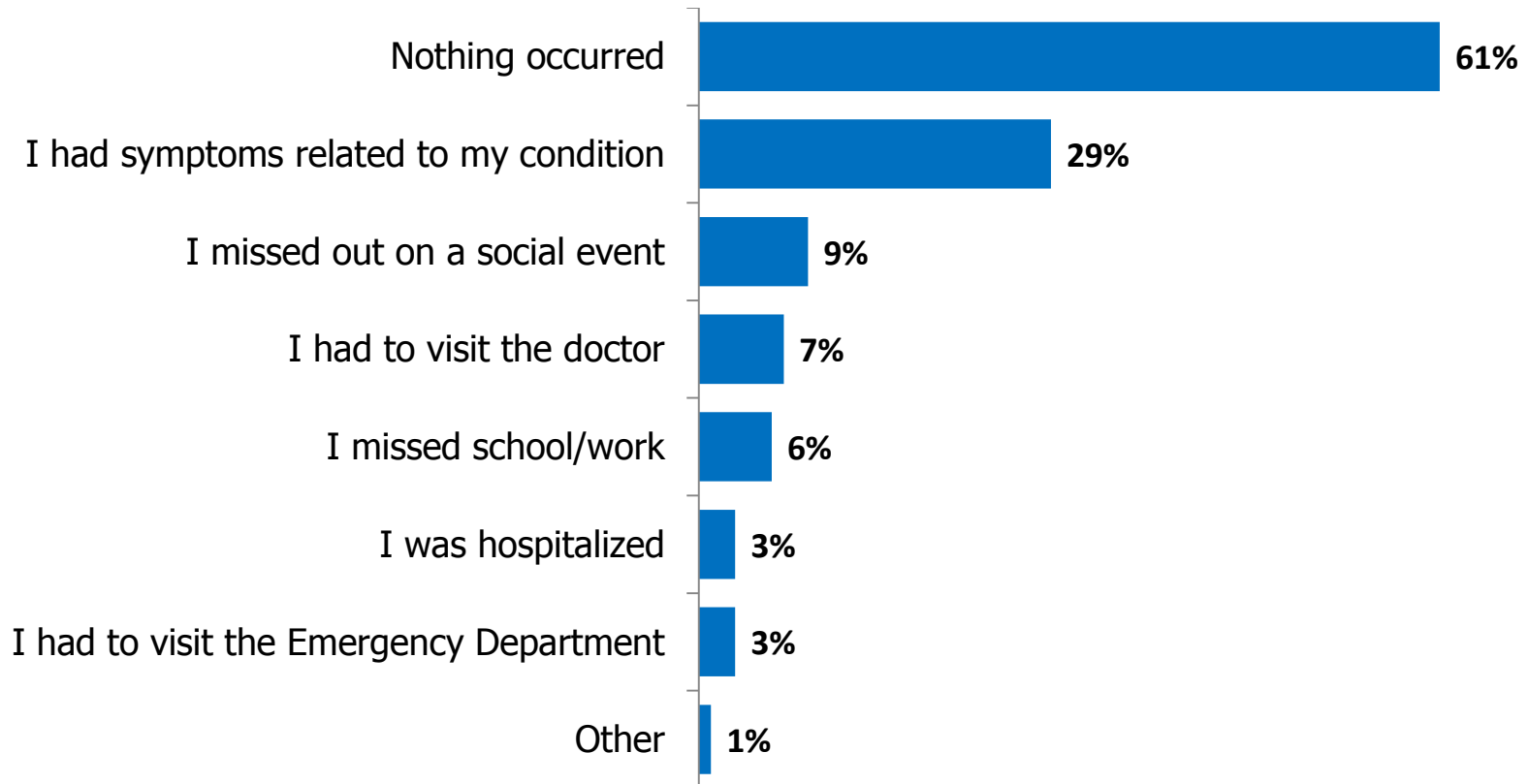
**Always Took Medication as Prescribed, by Age**



When patients stop taking or change the way they take their prescription medication, it is usually from forgetfulness or not having the medication with them, or because of side effects.



Among those who missed a dose of medication, about 3 in 10 reported that symptoms returned.



n = 420, only respondents who missed a dose of medication

Most patients depend on themselves to make sure they take their medication as prescribed. Partners, spouses and doctors are also sources of assurance.

Who helps patients make sure they take their medications as prescribed?

**58%**



**Themselves**

54 years

**21%**



**Partner/Spouse**

48 years

**18%**

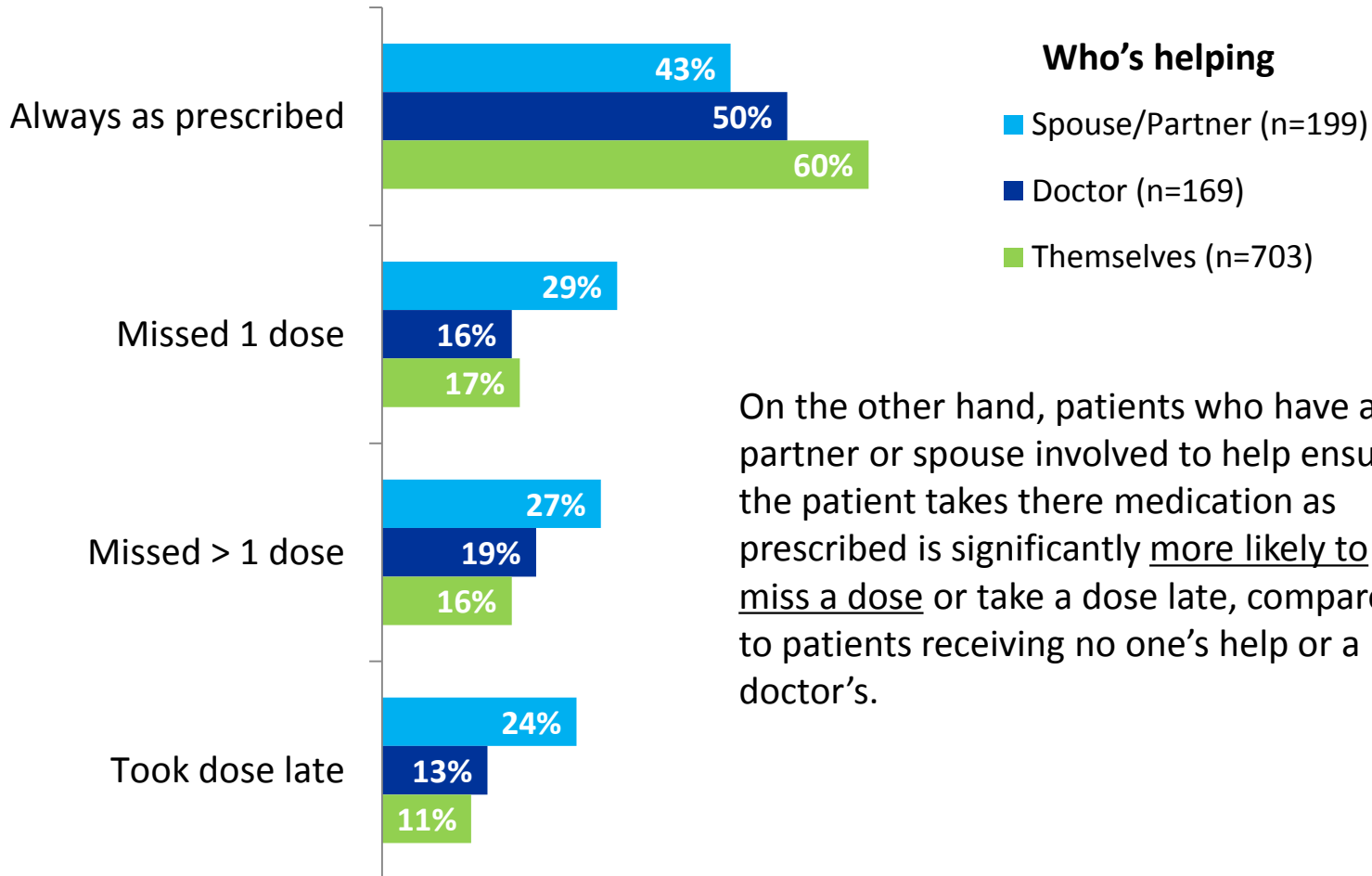


**Their doctor**

43 years

Average  
patient age

Patients who rely solely on themselves to ensure they take their medication as prescribed are much more adherent than patients who rely on a spouse/partner or their doctor.



On the other hand, patients who have a partner or spouse involved to help ensure the patient takes their medication as prescribed is significantly more likely to miss a dose or take a dose late, compared to patients receiving no one's help or a doctor's.



Daily routines and a pill box or alarm clock are the key methods patients use to help them take medications as prescribed.

**Percent of patients using method**

