

## **Pain in Maryland 2002**

### **Background & Research Objectives**

This survey was commissioned by the American Pain Foundation (AFP), a national nonprofit organization serving people with pain through information, education, and advocacy. The mission of APF is to improve the quality of life for people with pain by raising public awareness, providing practical information, promoting research, and advocating removing barriers and increasing access to effective pain management. The Maryland Pain Initiative is an interdisciplinary organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Marylanders affected by pain.

The objectives of this survey are to;

- Gain an understanding of the public awareness of, and attitudes towards, pain and pain management
- Document the incidence, frequency and intensity of pain among the general public in Maryland
- Understand the impact of pain on the physical, emotional and social well-being of those who suffer from pain
- Identify the obstacles and mindsets that prevent pain sufferers from seeking proper assessment and treatment
- Measure public support for health policies which remove the barriers to timely and proper pain assessment and treatment.

That is the context in which this survey of Maryland residents was conducted. These objectives are accomplished by this survey and are detailed in this report.

### **Methodology**

This survey was conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc., from February 7-11, 2002. A total of 625 Maryland adults were interviewed statewide by telephone. Those interviewed were selected by a random variation of the last four digits of telephone numbers. A cross-section of telephone exchanges was utilized to ensure an accurate reflection of the demographic profile of the state of Maryland.

The margin for error, according to standards customarily used by statisticians, is no more than  $\pm 4$  percentage points for the entire sample. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figure would fall within that range if all registered voters were interviewed. The margin for error is larger for any subgroup of the sample.

# Pain in Maryland 2002

## Findings

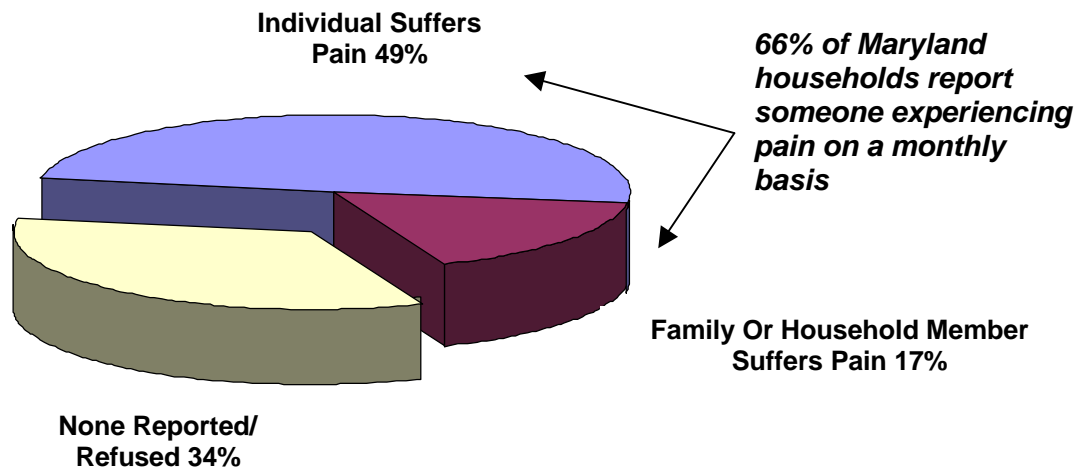
### Incidence, Frequency, and Intensity of Pain Suffered by Marylanders

As in the rest of the United States, pain is a major health problem in Maryland. An estimated 50 million Americans suffer with malignant and non-malignant chronic pain, and, each year, approximately 25 million suffer with acute pain from injuries or surgeries.

- Two-out-of-three (66%) households in Maryland have someone that suffers from pain on at least a monthly basis. Of survey respondents, 49% said that they themselves suffered from ongoing mild, moderate to severe pain. An additional 17% reported that someone in their family or household suffered from pain.

This incident rate translates to **1.4 million households** in the state **with at least one person suffering with pain.**

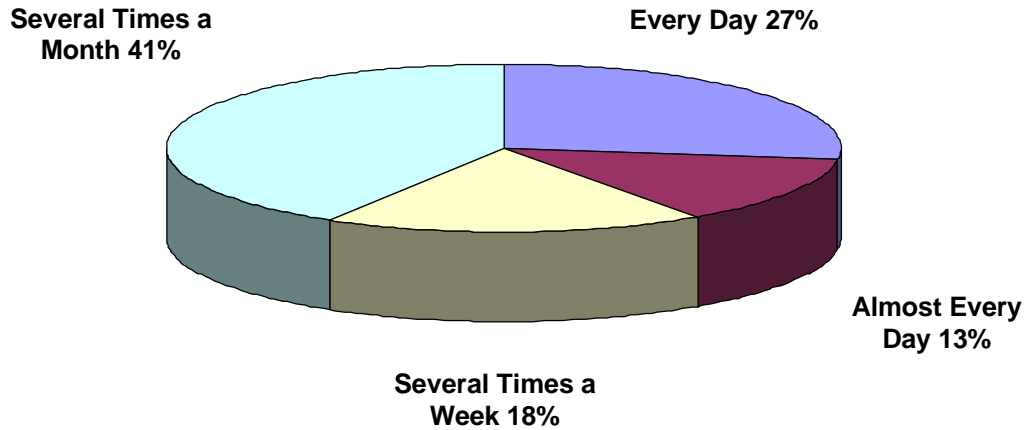
### Incidence of Pain in Maryland Households



**Incident, Frequency, and Intensity of Pain Suffered by Marylanders** (continued)

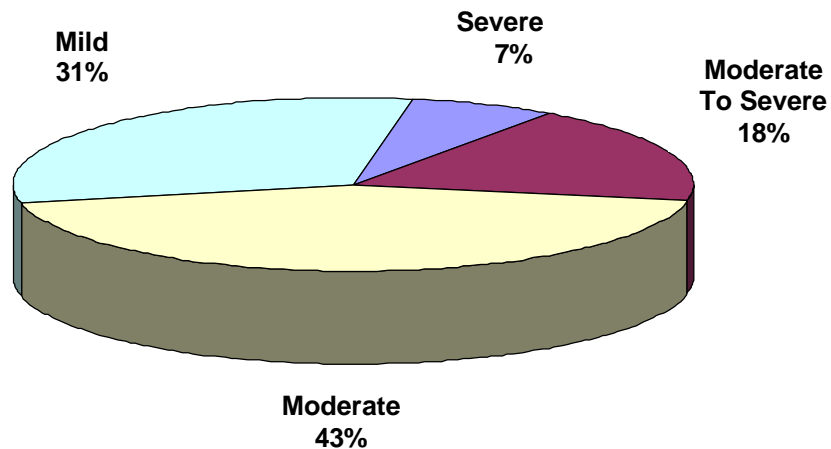
- Of the 49% of respondents who reported that they suffered from pain on at least a monthly basis, **40%** said that they experienced pain "every day" or "almost every day".

**Frequency of Pain Reported by Individuals Suffering from Pain**



- One-in-four (25%) pain sufferers described their pain as severe or moderate to severe. Forty-three percent (43%) described their pain as moderate, and 31% as mild. These findings in the state of Maryland are consistent with national findings.<sup>1</sup>

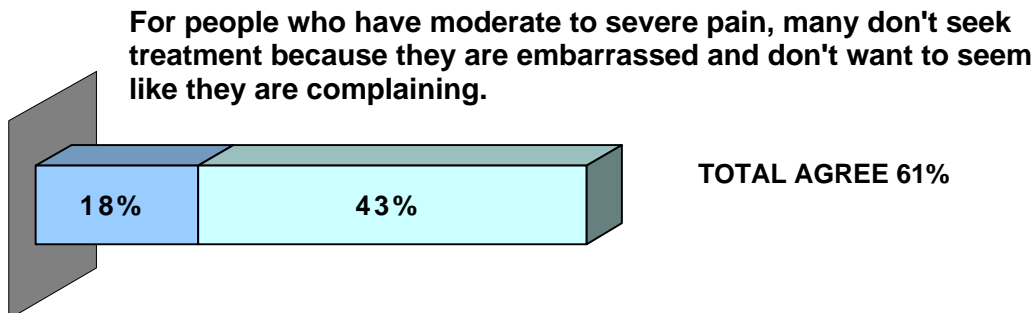
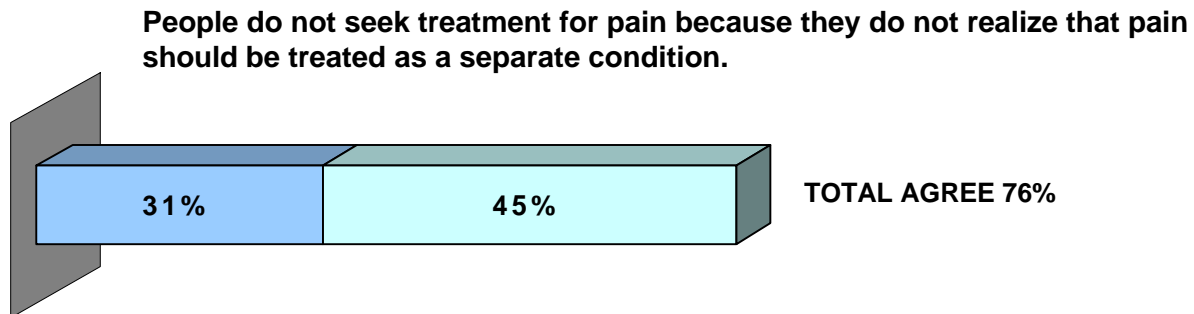
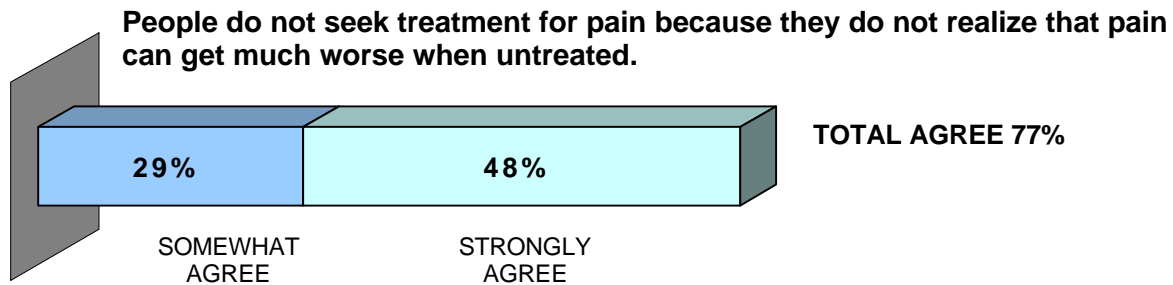
**Intensity of Pain Reported by Individuals Suffering from Pain**



<sup>1</sup> Pain in America, A Research Report Prepared for: Merck, Gallup Organization, April 2000, page 7.

## Attitudes Towards Pain

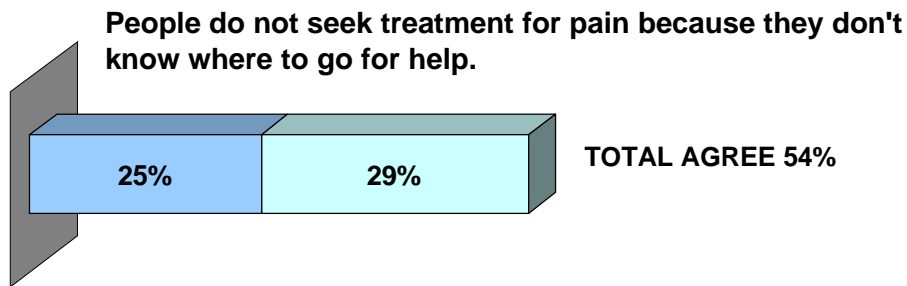
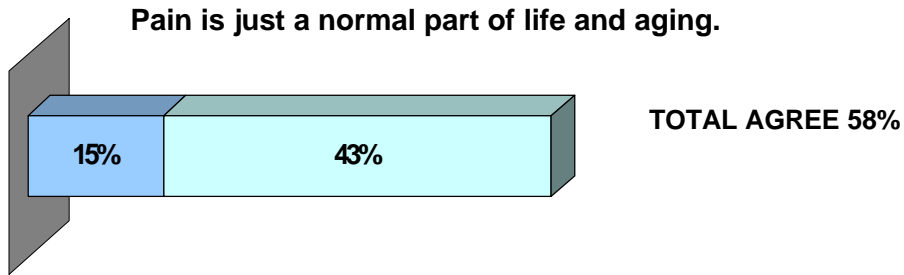
- ***Pain is simply something one must live with... simply a function of age...*** This attitude is shared by most Americans<sup>2</sup>, as well as a majority of Marylanders. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of all Marylanders say that pain is simply a part of life and aging. This attitude of resignation is among several reason people for not seeking treatment for pain. Other reasons include; embarrassment/not wanting to be seen as complaining (61%) , not knowing that pain should be treated as a separate condition (76%), and simply do not "know where to go for help" (54%).



<sup>2</sup> Pain in America, A Research Report Prepared for: Merck, Gallup Organization, April 2000, page 21.

**Attitudes Towards Pain** (continued)

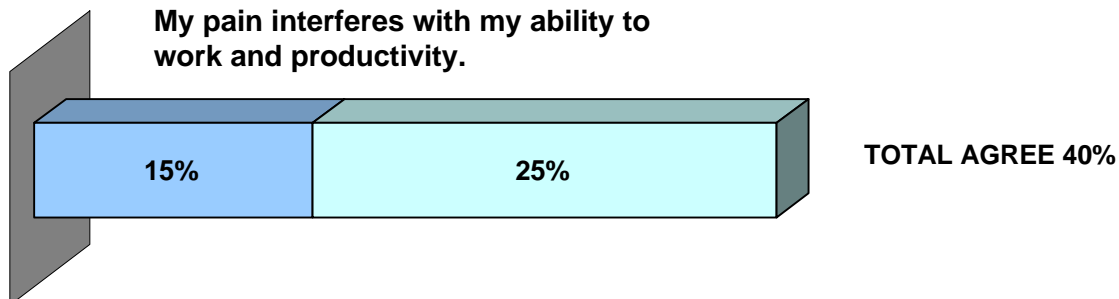
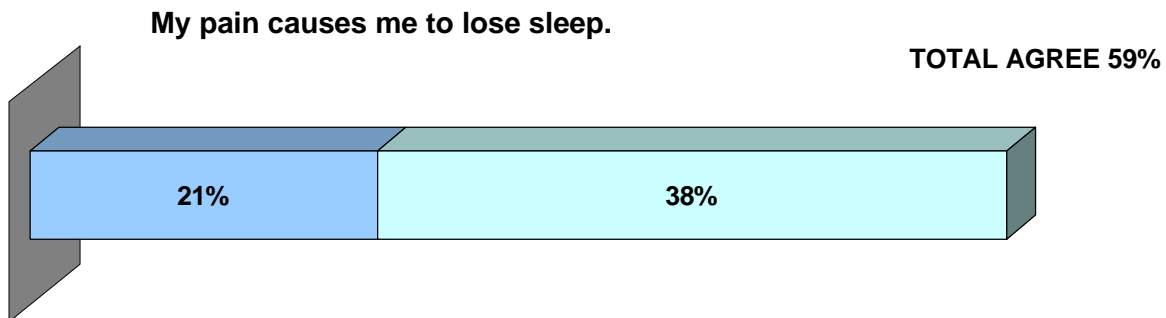
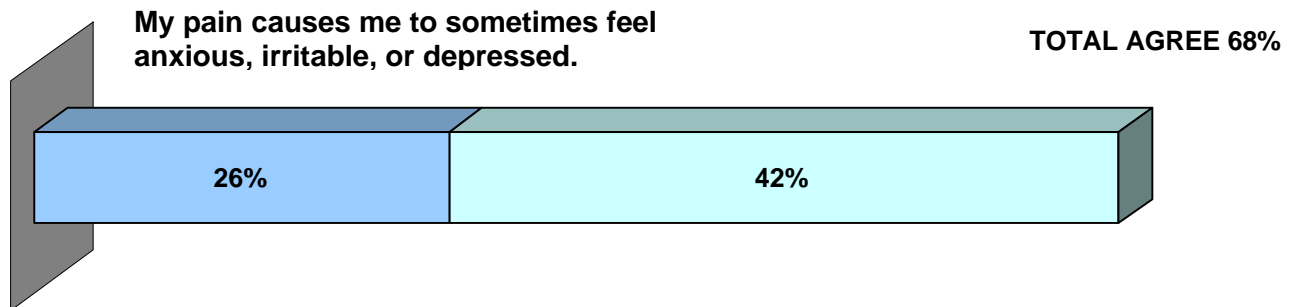
- While 58% of all respondents stated agreement that "pain is just a normal part of life and aging", it is interesting to note that **71% of lower income** respondents stated agreement. This suggests that those with less access to health care, like those with lower incomes, are less likely to seek proper assessment and treatment for their pain.



## Impact of Pain

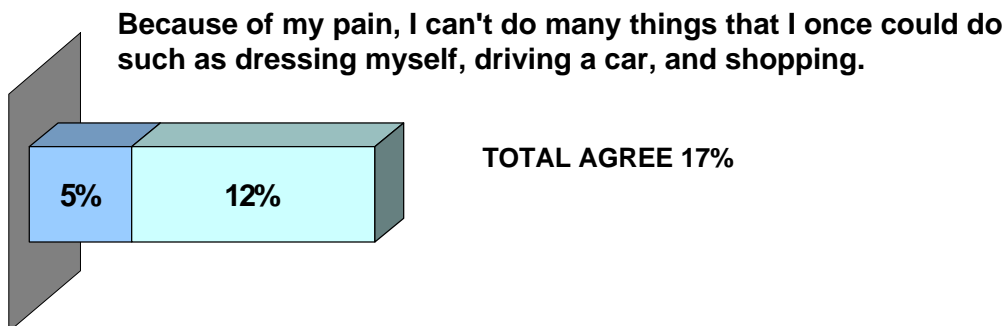
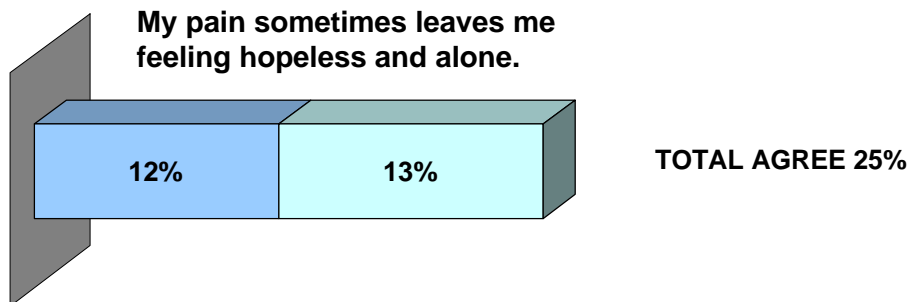
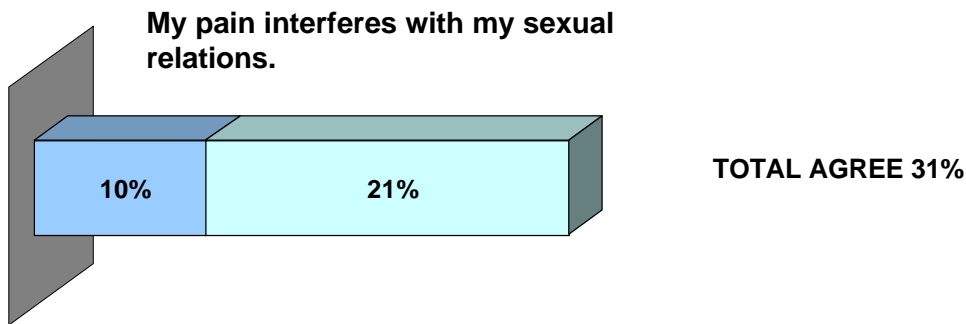
More troubling than the incidence and frequency of pain reported by Marylanders is the negative impact on their lives which extends well beyond their physical well-being. Their emotional, psychological and social well-being are negatively impacted as well.

- Physical impacts include **loss of sleep (59%)** and **interference with work and productivity (40%)**.
- Sixty-eight percent (**68%**) of pain sufferers report that **pain causes them to feel anxious, irritable or depressed**.



**Impact of Pain** (continued)

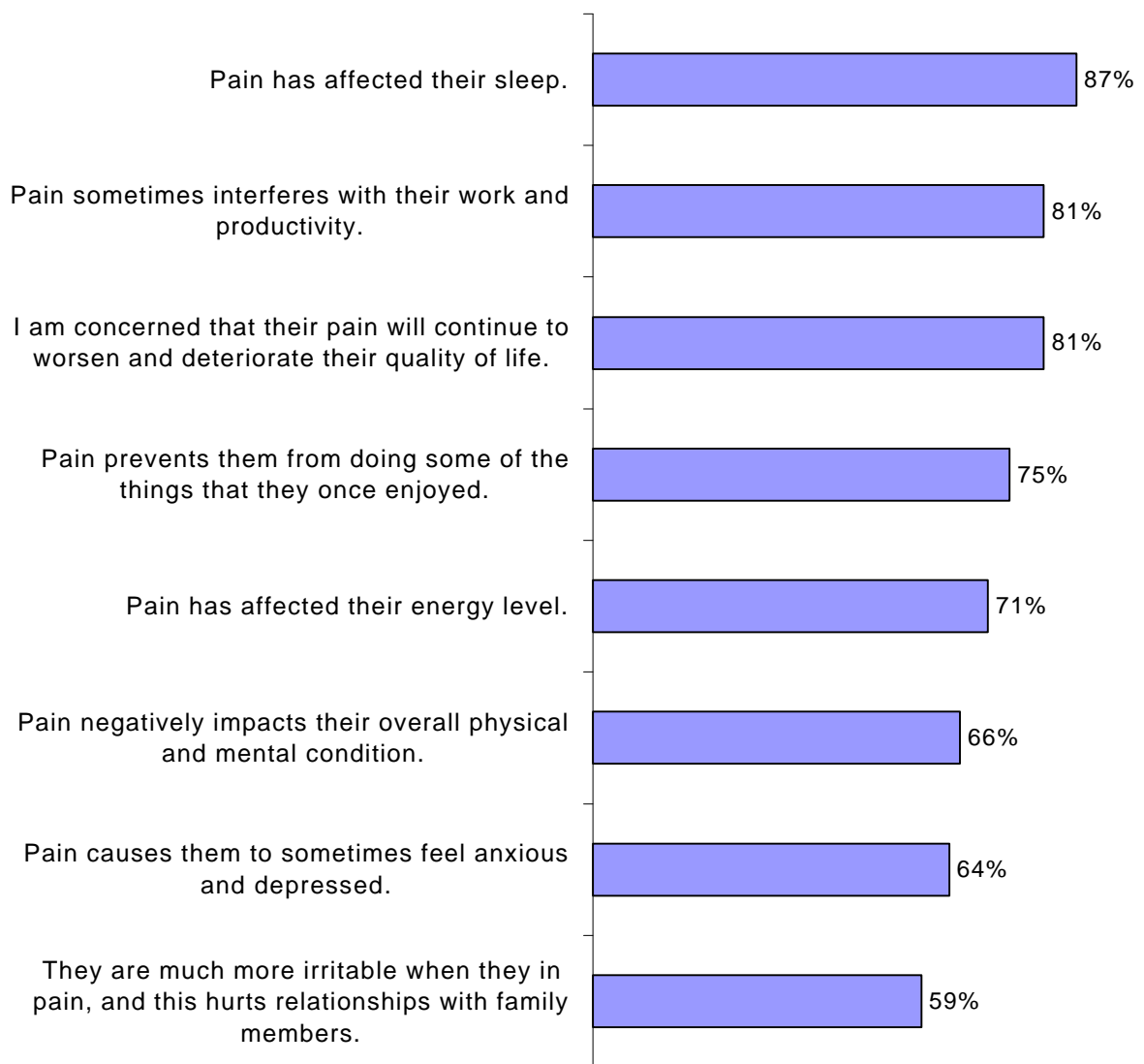
- One-in-three (**31%**) report that **pain interferes with their sexual relations.**
- Twenty-five percent (**25%**) say that **pain sometimes leaves them feeling hopeless and alone** and **21%** report that pain has negatively **affected their relationship with loved ones and friends.**
- Nearly 1-in-5 (**17%**) pain sufferers **say that they can no longer perform simple physical tasks** like driving, shopping and dressing.



**Family Members Perceptions and Attitudes About Pain**

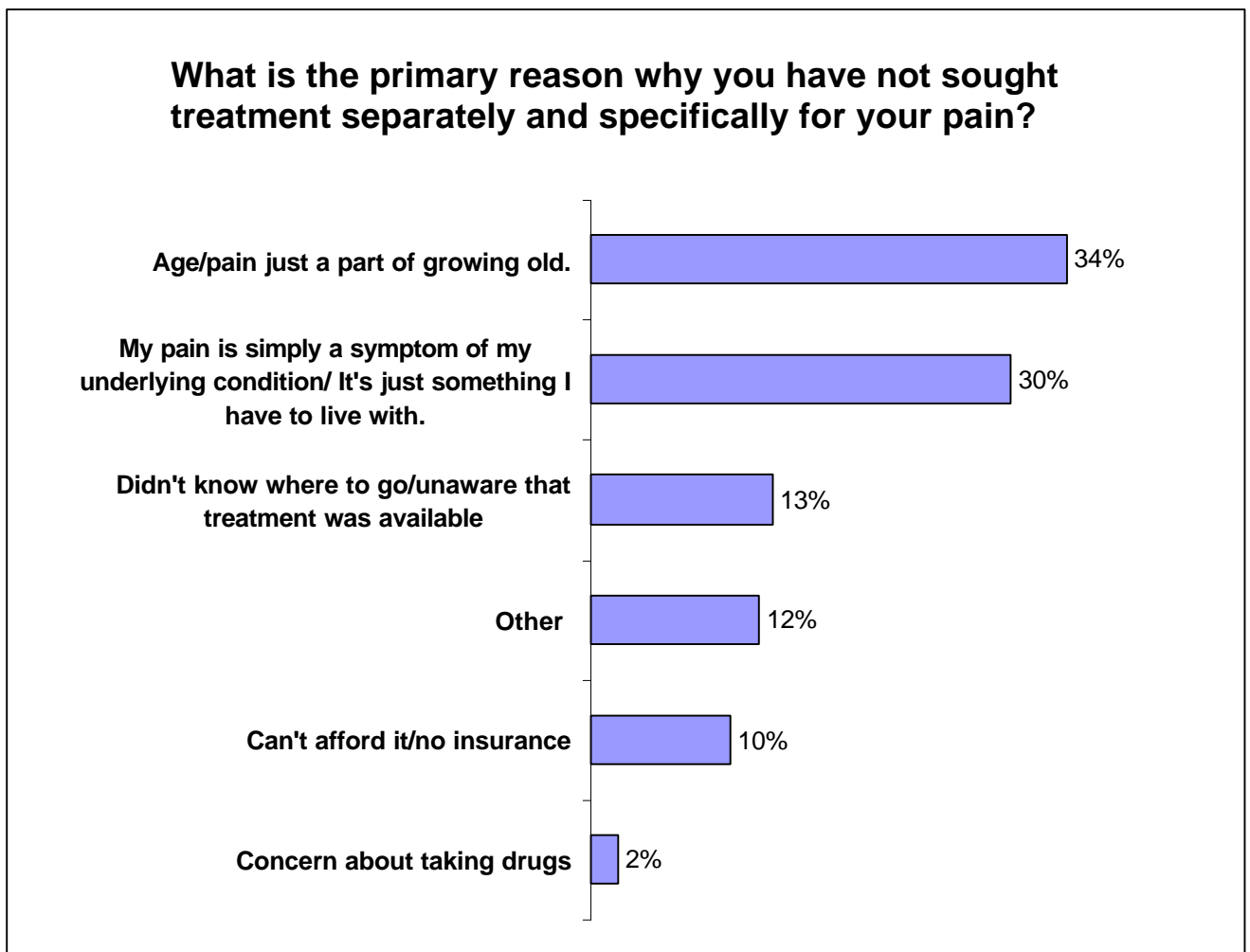
- One of the most interesting findings in the survey is that family members reported a higher degree of impact on the lives of pain sufferers than reported by pain sufferers themselves. For instance, while just 59% of those who suffer from pain stated that it caused them to lose sleep, 87% of family & household members reported that pain had impact the pain sufferers sleep. The table below details similar reports of impact by those living with pain sufferers.

**Impact of Pain as Perceived by Family/Household Members of Those Who Suffer With Pain.**



## Treatment of Pain by Healthcare Professionals

- While a good majority (67%) of pain sufferers expressed satisfaction that their healthcare professional "thoroughly discussed" the cause of their pain and treatment options, risks and costs, 15% expressed dissatisfaction, and 19% stated that they had not sought medical treatment for their pain.
- Of the 19% of pain sufferers who had not sought medical treatment, 64% had not sought treatment because they had resigned themselves to pain being just a part of growing old or simply a condition they must live with. Thirteen percent (13%) had not sought treatment because they didn't know where to go or that treatment was available specifically and separately for their pain. Another 10% said they had no insurance or otherwise could not afford treatment.



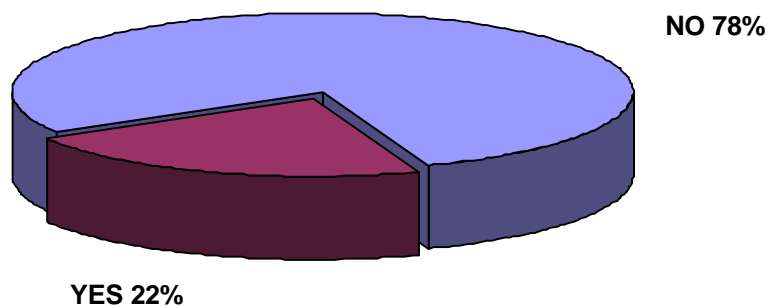
**Treatment of Pain by Healthcare Professionals** (continued)

- Eighty-six percent (86%) of pain sufferers expressed confidence that their pain was taken seriously and that they were treated with dignity and respect by their healthcare professional. And, though a similar percentage (80%) were confident that their pain was properly assessed and promptly treated, nearly 1-in-3 (27%) stated that their pain relief was "not too effective" or "ineffective".

**Awareness of and Access to Pain Specialist**

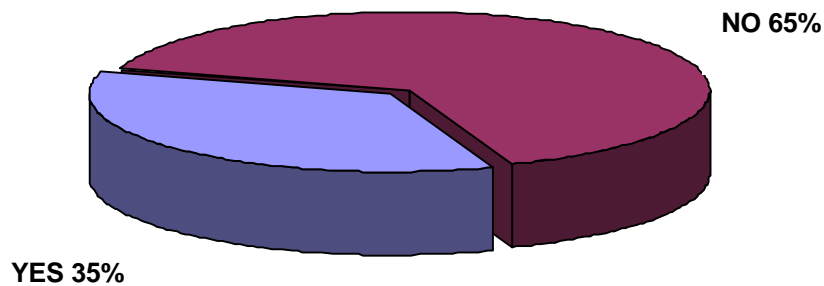
- The vast majority (78%) of pain sufferers who have sought medical treatment for their pain have never been referred to a pain specialist.

**Have you ever been referred to a pain specialist for treatment?**



- A majority (65%) of them are not aware of pain specialist in their community.

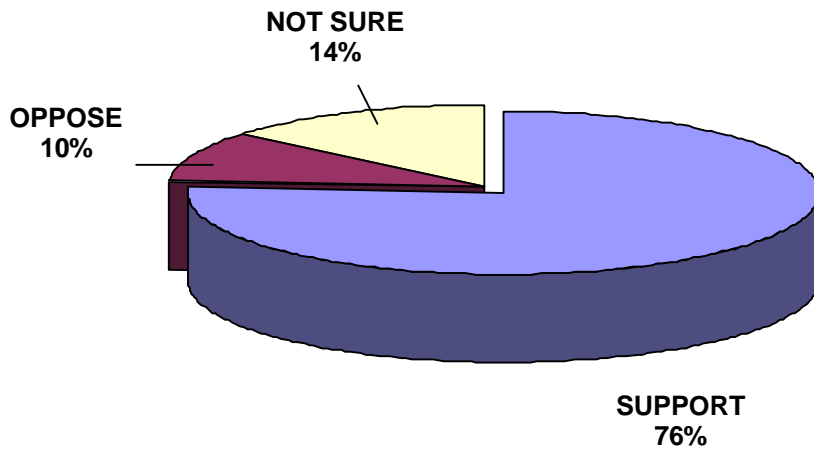
**Are you aware of any pain specialists in your community?**



**Support for Legislation Addressing the Obstacles to Proper Treatment of Pain**

- The survey measured support among adult Maryland residents towards two specific legislative proposals currently being considered in the Maryland Legislature. Each proposal garnered significant support.

***In an effort to address the needs of Marylanders who suffer with pain, the Maryland legislature is considering legislation that would establish a state appointed advisory council on pain management to make recommendations on how to provide better pain care in our state. Do you support or oppose this legislation?***



***The Maryland legislature is also considering legislation that would require nursing homes and other healthcare facilities to regularly monitor and measure patients' pain, reassess pain that is not relieved and provide other treatments—until the pain is relieved. Do you support or oppose this legislation?***

