

2022 Health Information Trends

Usage, trust and impact among US adults

2022

2019



Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States between June 15-June 17 among 2003 adults (aged 18 and over) by The Harris Poll via its Harris On Demand omnibus product.

Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

Background

The 2022 Health Information Trends Survey was conducted by The Harris Poll to update and expand upon research from 2019 exploring attitudes and behaviors toward the usage of and trust in healthcare information sources.

The research explored:

- reliance on information sources, frequency of usage and trustworthiness of different sources
- how access to information supports and facilitates the public's health care and relationships with providers
- how information seeking attitudes, behaviors and perceptions have changed since 2019

Objectives

This study was conducted to:



Understand the usage behavior and degree of trust towards sources used to gather health-related information.



Explore the public's usage of different information sources, the degree to which they verify information and, how information impacts interactions and relationships with providers.



Compare how these attitudes, behaviors and perceptions changed since 2019.



The public is hungry for health-related information, demonstrating high utilization of information alongside high confidence in their ability to find needed information.

- Overall, reliance on information sources is consistent with 2019, with PCPs still the most common source turned to when in need of health-related information (57% in 2022 and 59% in 2019).
- In 2022, there are also increases in reliance on both other health care providers and non-provider information sources.
- Among provider groups there has been an increased reliance on primary care nurses/NP/PAs (31% vs. 28%) and alternative or homeopathic providers (8% vs. 5%), while the proportion who turn to specialists has remained essentially the same (28% and 26%).
- Among non-provider sources there has been an increase in reliance on information from across the health care spectrum: patient advocacy and support groups, pharma companies, government resources, peer-reviewed journals, print, broadcast and social media.
- Utilization of specific sources, including several which grew in reliance since 2019, is high. Between 54% and 88% of adults have ever looked for answers and information about health topics from patient advocacy groups (54%), pharma companies (59%), peer-reviewed medical journals (61%), government agencies (64%), health insurance companies (70%), and online sources (88%).
- Adults feel positively about having access to health information and largely agree that they can find what they need without going to a health care provider. Knowledgeable (47%), confident (36%), prepared (35%), and in control (33%) are the most common ways adults describe their experience of accessing health information online. Additionally, nearly two-thirds (63%) agree that they can often find the health information they need without having to go to a health care provider.

The changes in reliance are observed in an environment where the landscape of trusted sources has shifted since before the pandemic in 2019. While health care providers are trusted a great deal or a lot by large majorities of the public and more so than non-provider information sources, the data show a decline in trust in PCPs and specialists and increases in trust in non-provider sources.

- PCPs and specialists are still trusted by majorities of adults a great deal or a lot, however, this is significantly lower than in 2019 (PCPs: 78% vs. 83%; specialist: 76% vs. 80%).
- During the same time period there has been an increase in the proportion who trust non-provider sources a great deal or a lot including internet searches (41% in 2022 vs. 33% in 2019), pharmaceutical companies (36% vs. 26%), patient advocacy groups or associations (35% vs. 28%), support groups (35% vs. 29%), and various types of media (broadcast: 26% vs. 19%; print: 26% vs. 20%; and social: 25% vs. 13%).



Health information sought and found supports adults' overall health as well as their relationships with health care providers.

- Large majorities, larger even than 2019, report that their ability to research health information has a positive impact on how they manage their health (80% vs. 76%), and their ability to understand their treatment plan and any medications they may be taking (82% vs. 79%).
- Adults also note positive impacts related to their provider relationships including their ability to have productive conversations with health care providers (80% vs. 76%) and relationships with health care providers (73% vs. 65%).



However, confidence may be overstated. The data show a strong tendency toward verification alongside an acknowledgement that help is needed to understand and make sense of the information they find.

- Regardless of source, over 9 in 10 adults ever verify information found from online sources, health insurance companies, government agencies, peer-reviewed medical journals, pharma companies, or patient advocacy groups. Moreover, three-quarters or more verify information at least half the time.
- Verification of the specific information sources examined in the survey is prompted primarily by wanting to have more than one source with the same information (range: 45% - 62%) and secondarily because information is changing all the time and it's hard to keep up (range: 35% - 43%).
 - Other reasons for verifying information include that the information received didn't make sense (range: 20%-27%) or that they didn't understand the information provided (range: 19% - 23%).
- Six in ten (61%) adults agree they need help making sense of all the health information available online, an increase from 56% in 2019.





Usage trends

2022

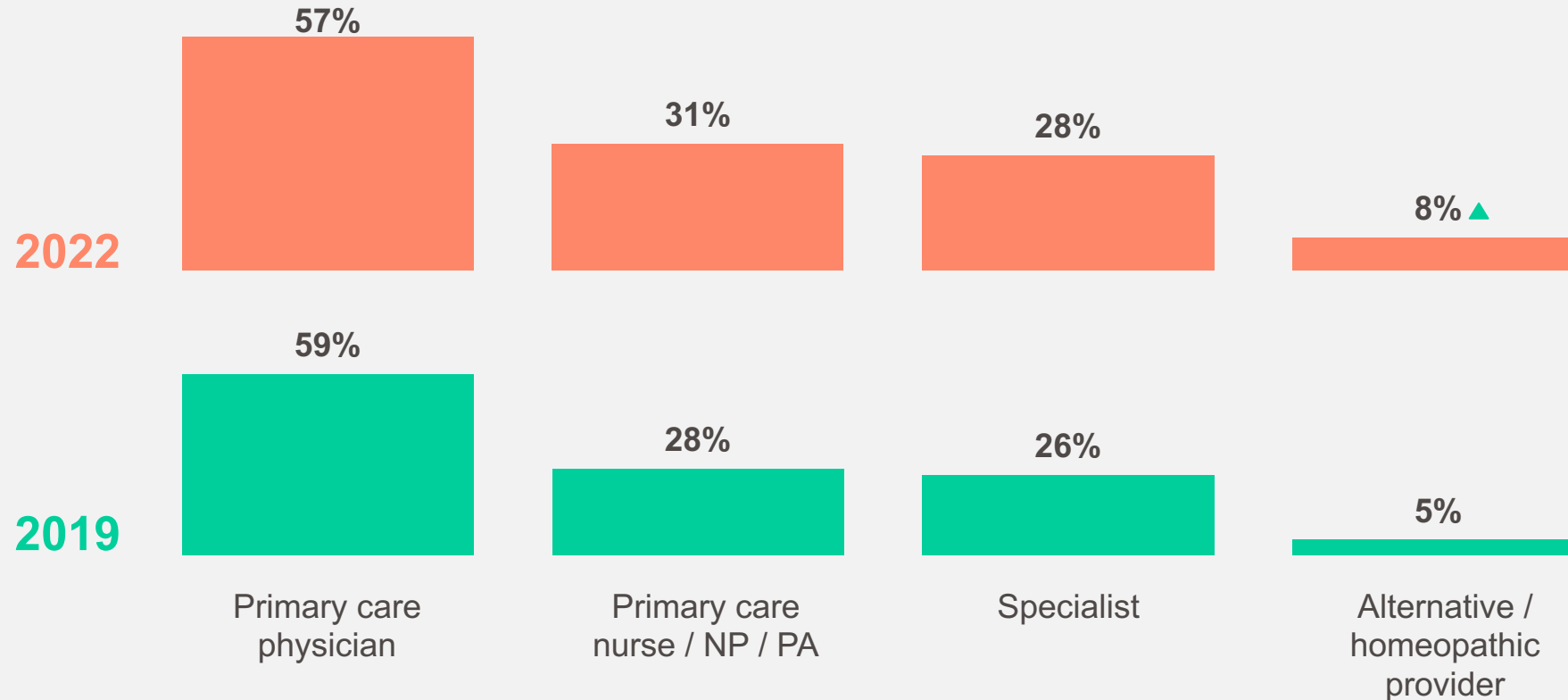


2019



Over half of adults turn to their PCP for health-related information, similar to 2019

Reliance on providers for health information



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q3: When you have a question about your health or need health-related information, where do you typically turn to for answers and information? Please select all that apply.

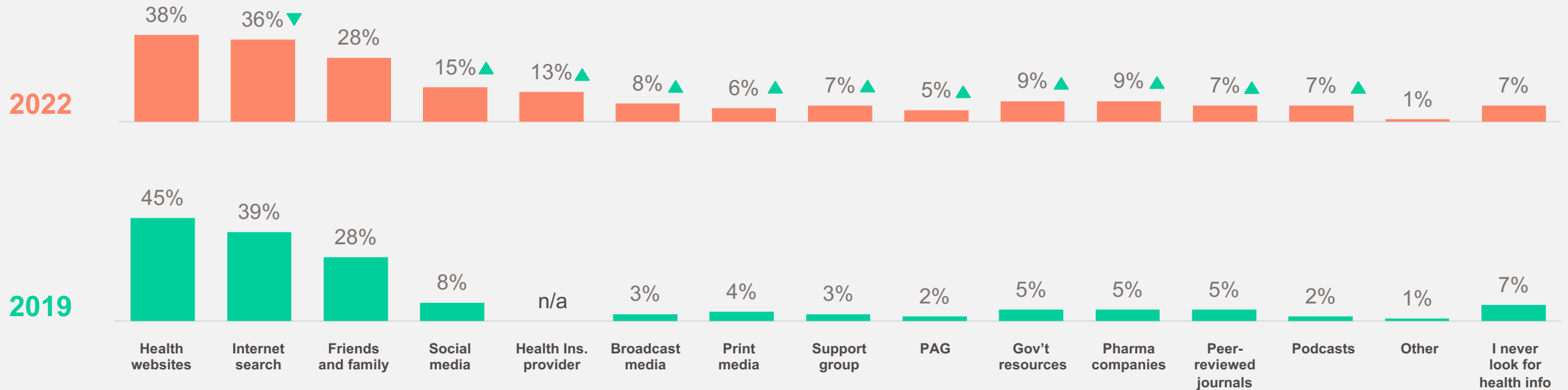
▲▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence

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Usage of most non-provider resources has increased since 2019

Reliance on other sources of health information



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

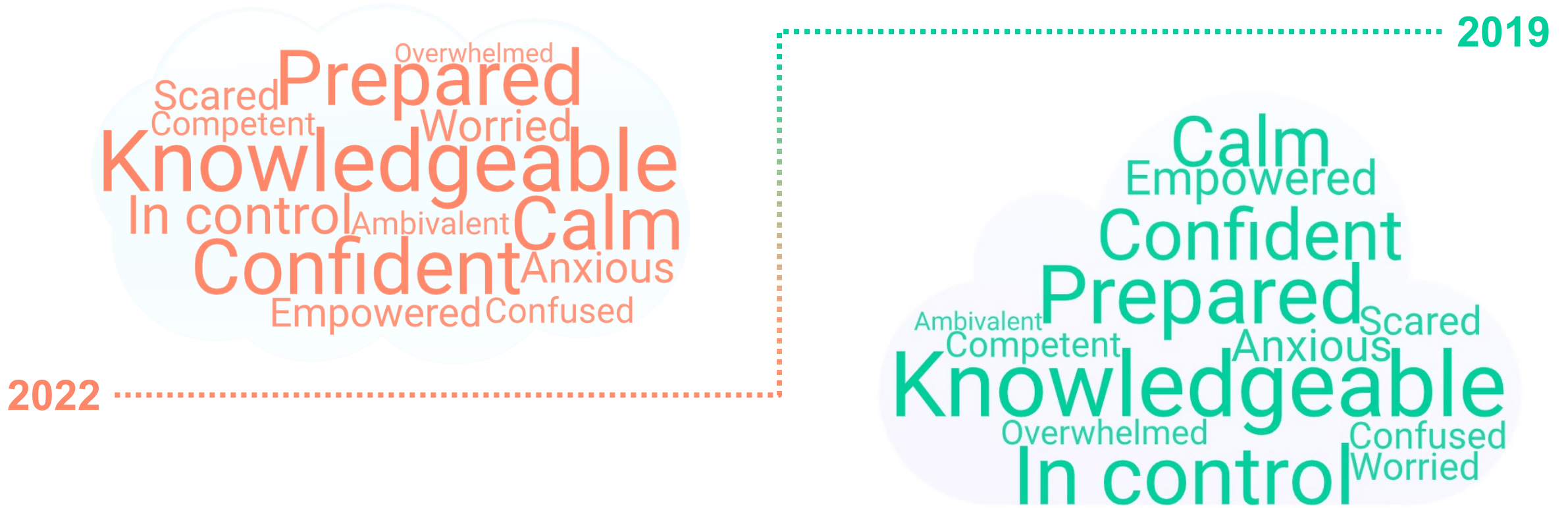
Q3: When you have a question about your health or need health-related information, where do you typically turn to for answers and information? Please select all that apply.

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Overall, outlook is positive among adults on having access to answers and info online; however, they are less likely to indicate they feel in control compared to 2019



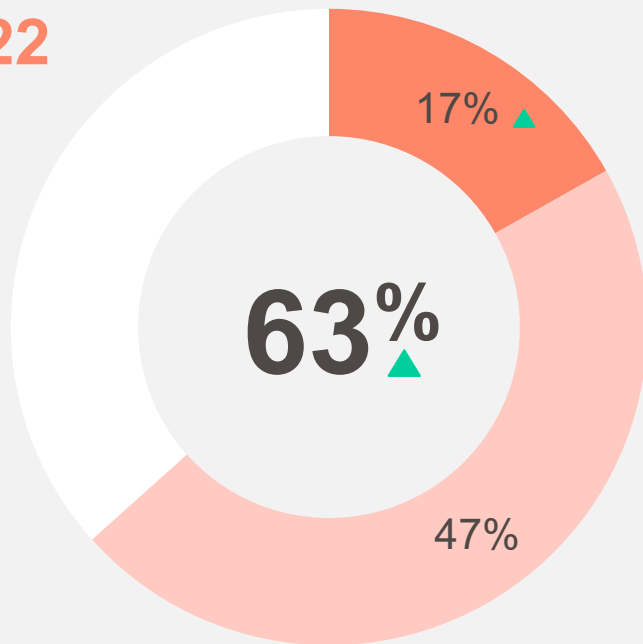


Roughly two-thirds of adults can find health information on their own, without having to go to a health care provider, an uptick since 2019

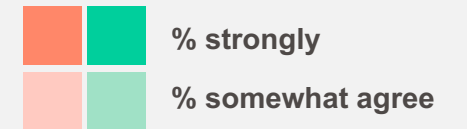
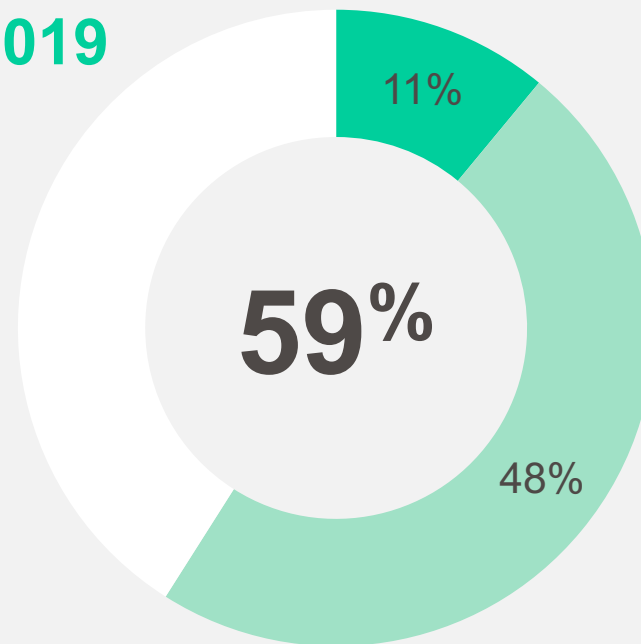
I can often find the health information I need without having to go to a health care provider

% strongly/somewhat agree

2022



2019



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)
Q11: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about health information?

▲▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence

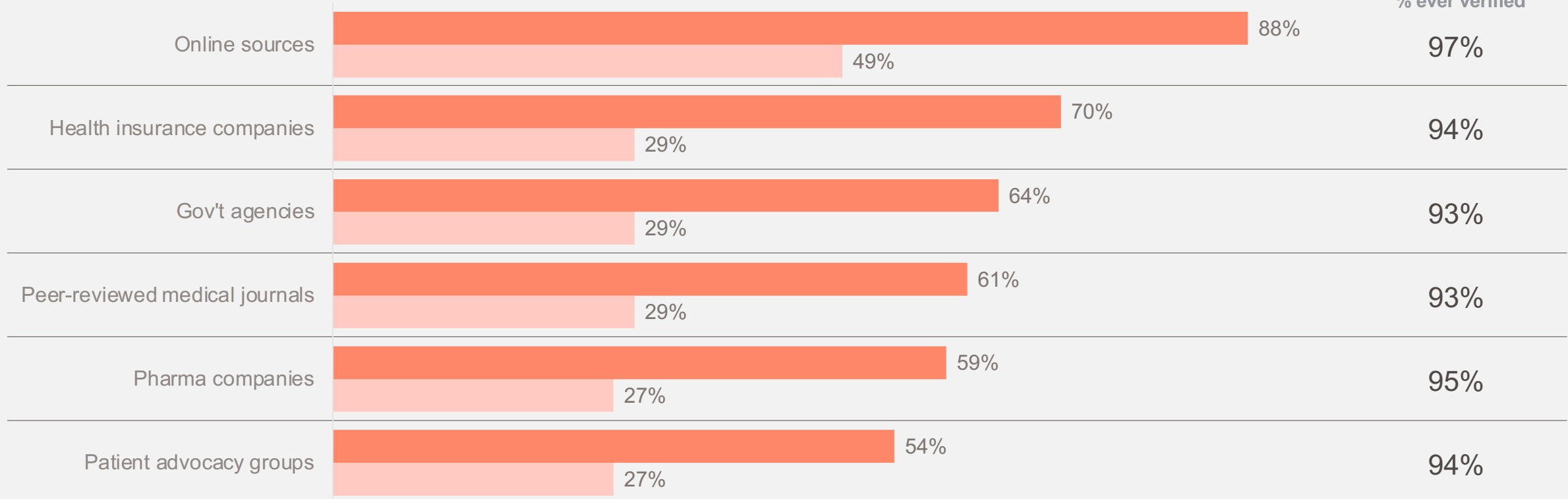
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Verification of specific health information sources is nearly universal

2022 usage of specific sources

2022 Verification % ever verified



All respondents (n=2003)

New 2022 Q15: How often do you look for answers and information about health topics from each of the following?

■ Ever Use ■ Use at Least Once a Month

Respondents who look for information from listed sources (Online sources n=1703; Health Ins. n=1312; Gov't agencies n=1192; Peer-reviewed medical journals n=1139; Pharma companies n=1125; PAG n=1030)

New 2022 Q8: How often do you verify information from each of the following sources?



Verification behavior is primarily prompted by adults seeking a second opinion for the health information they find

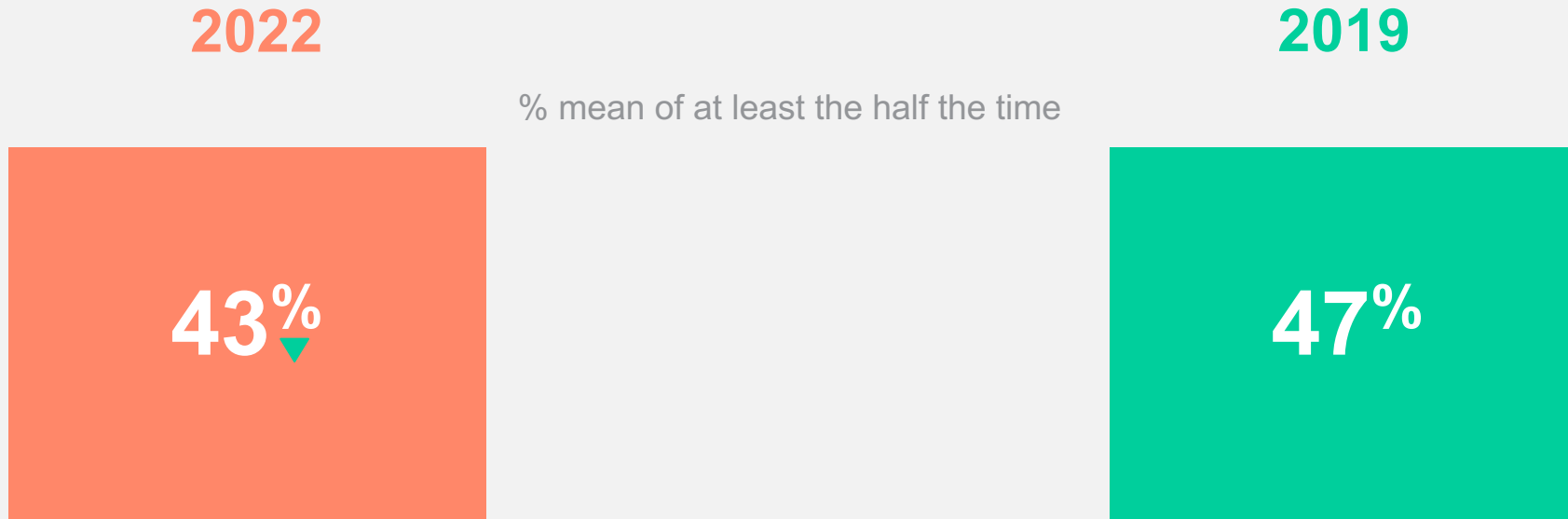
	Online sources	Health insurance company	Pharma	Patient advocacy group	Government	Peer-reviewed
I like to have more than one source with the same information	62%	45%	45%	50%	50%	47%
Information is changing all the time and it's hard to keep up	43%	35%	35%	37%	39%	38%
It contradicted other information I had heard or seen	28%	23%	26%	27%	25%	26%
The information I received didn't make sense to me	24%	27%	27%	25%	20%	23%
I didn't understand the information provided	23%	19%	21%	20%	20%	21%
I relied on health information that I later found out was inaccurate	21%	23%	23%	23%	22%	23%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Respondents who look for answers/info about health topics (Online sources n=1703; Health Ins. n=1312; Gov't agencies n=1192; Peer-reviewed medical journals n=1139; Pharma companies n=1125; PAG n=1030)
 New 2022 Q16: Why do you verify health related information from [selected source]? Please select all that apply.



Adults also discuss what they find online with their doctor, with about 4 in 10 saying they still follow up about the information they find online with their HCP

Adults who still follow-up with a health care provider about information found online



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q8: When you look for answers and information about health topics online, approximately what proportion of the time...?

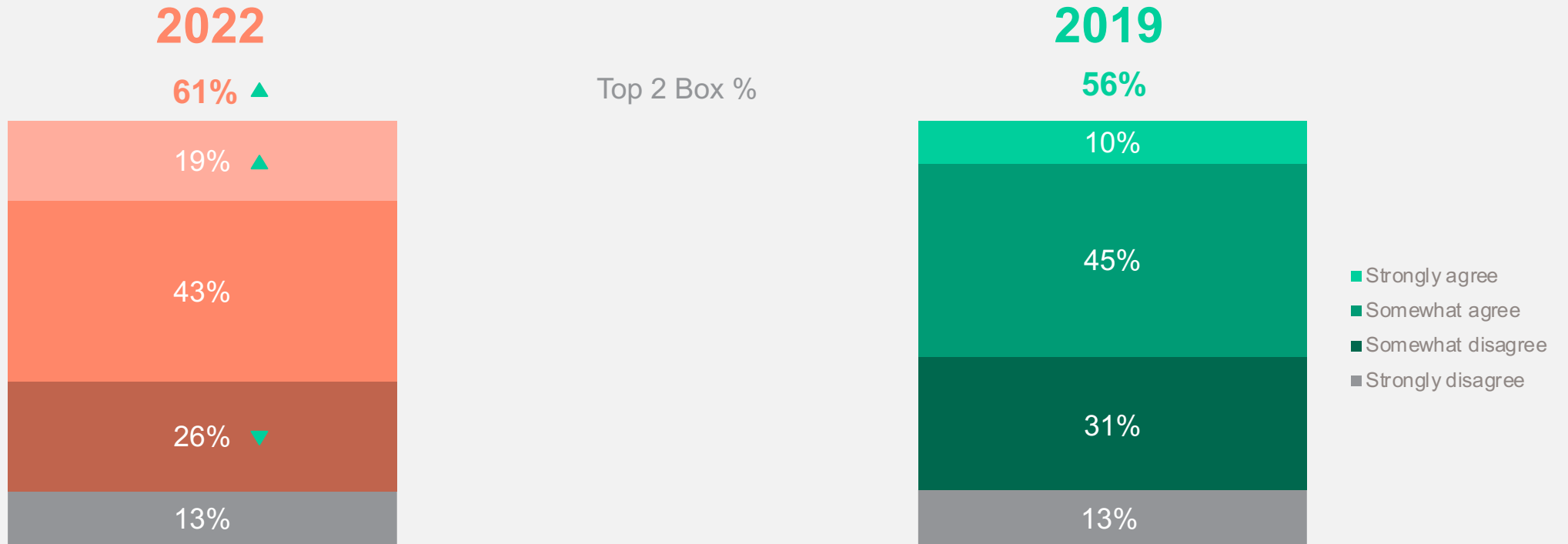
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There are more adults who need help making sense of all the health info available online compared to 2019

I need help making sense of all the health information available online...



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)
 Q11: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about health information?

▲▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence



Trust in sources of health information

2022



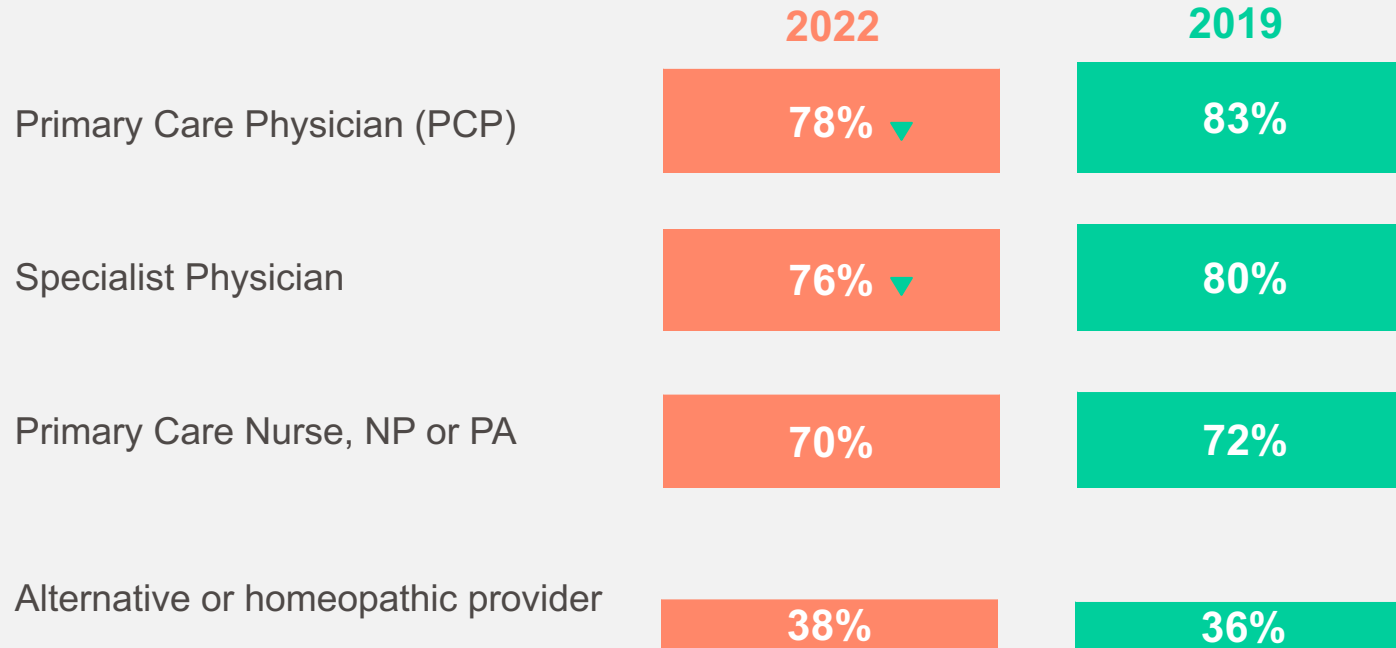
2019



While PCPs, specialists, NPs and PAs are trusted a great deal or a lot by majorities of adults for health-related info, this level of trust has declined since 2019

Trust

% of great deal or a lot of



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q4: How much do you trust the health information available from each of the following sources? Even if you have not personally relied on a particular source, we are still interested in your opinions based on anything you may have seen/read/heard.

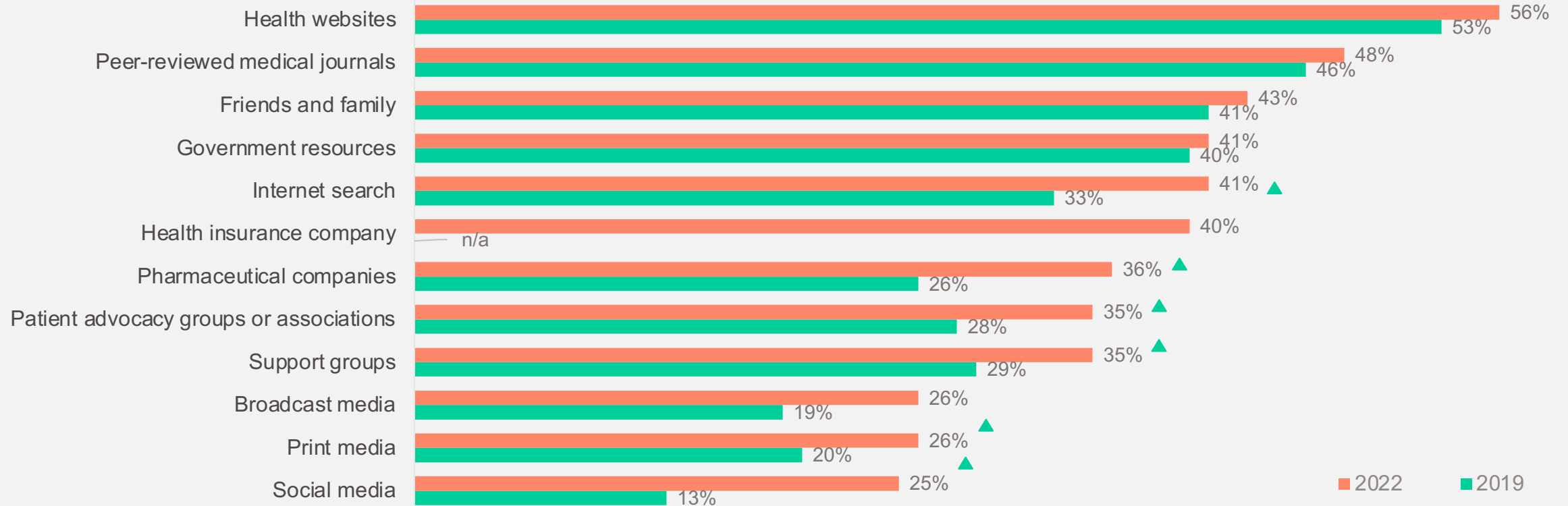
▲▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence



Digital and less commonly used health-related info sources gained trust among adults since 2019, including pharma companies, patient advocacy and support groups, print, and social media

Trust of non-HCP Sources

% a great deal/a lot



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q4: How much do you trust the health information available from each of the following sources? Even if you have not personally relied on a particular source, we are still interested in your opinions based on anything you may have seen/read/heard.

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Role of health-related information

2022

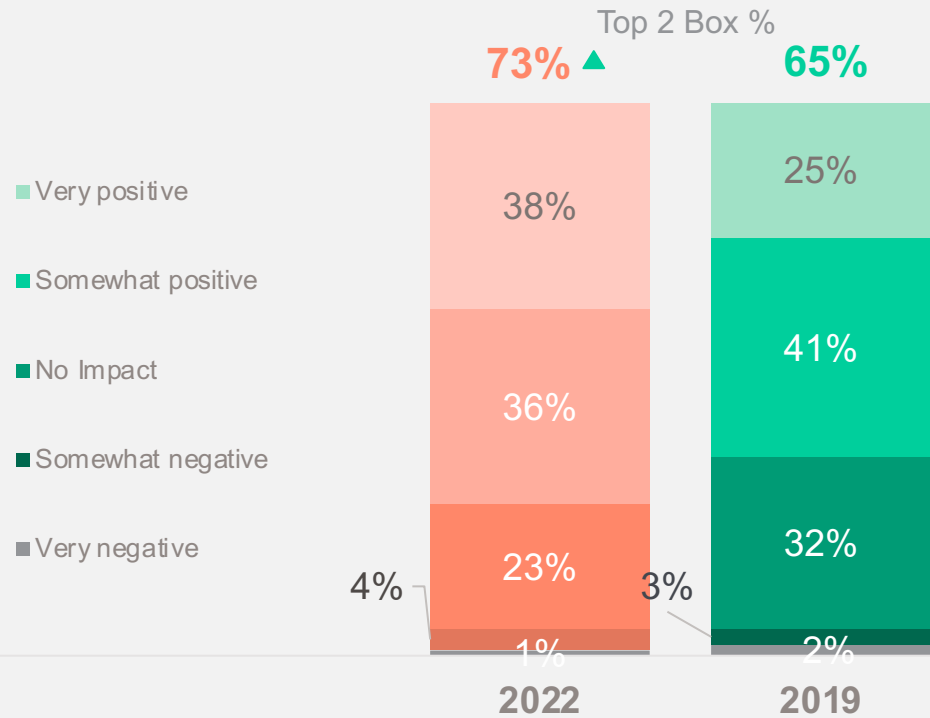


2019

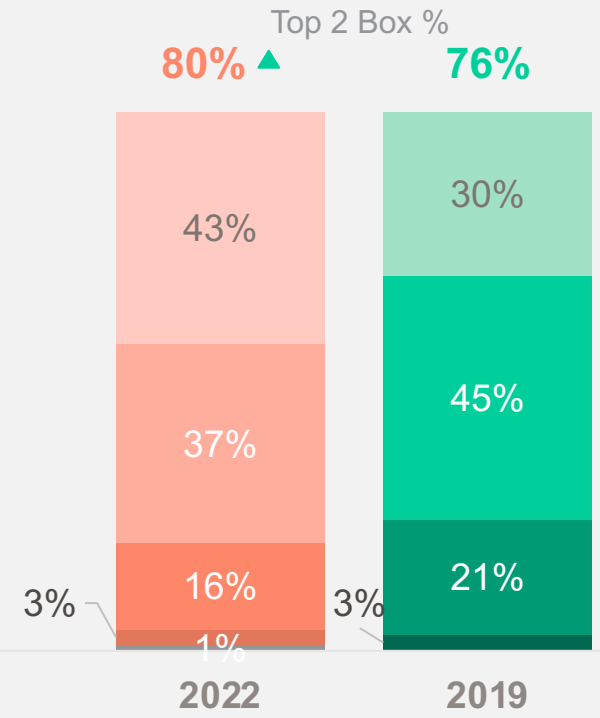


Adults continue to recognize that the ability to research health info has a positive impact on the overall relationship with their HCPs and that it allows for more productive conversations

My overall relationship(s) with my healthcare provider(s)...



My ability to have productive conversations with my health care provider(s)...



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q17: In general, do you feel that your ability to research health information for answers and information about health topics has a positive impact, a negative impact, or no impact on each of the following aspects of your health?

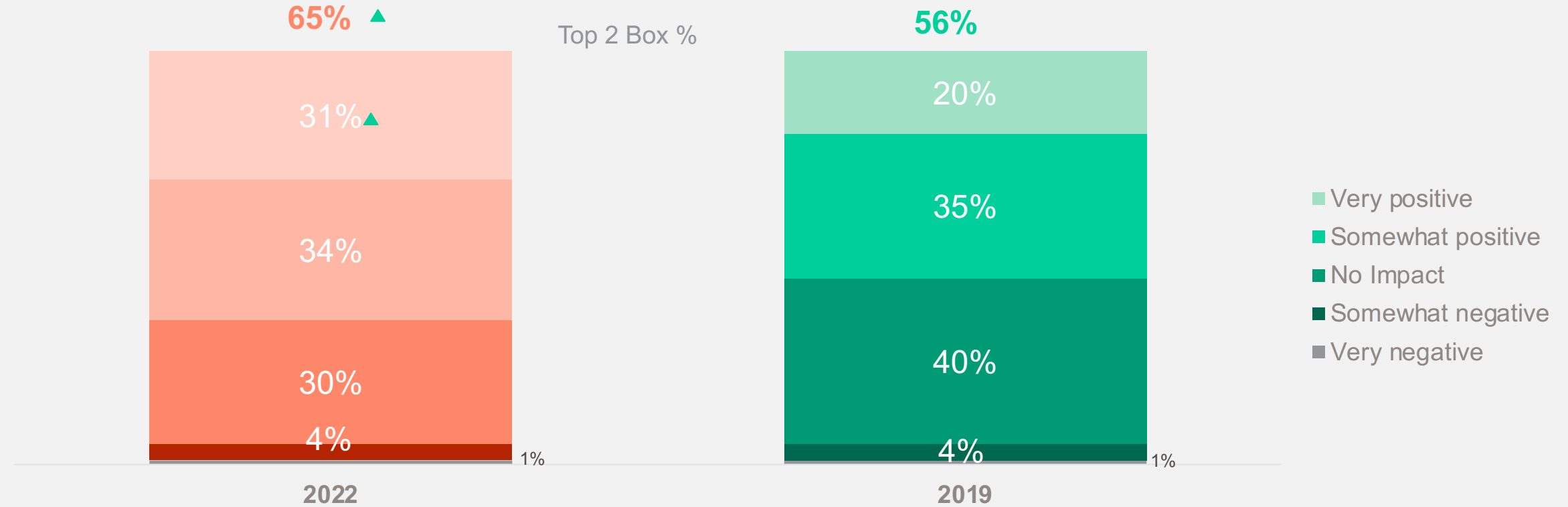
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The ability to search for information has a lesser contribution to adults' ability to manage health care costs; however, there are more adults who do recognize the positive impact compared to 2019

My ability to manage my health care costs...



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q17: In general, do you feel that your ability to research health information for answers and information about health topics has a positive impact, a negative impact, or no impact on each of the following aspects of your health?

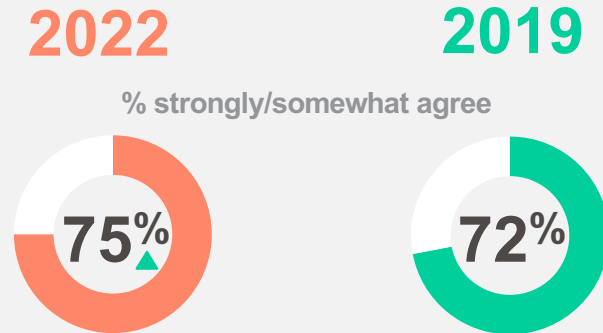
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While 3 in 4 adults do research to know what questions to ask at appointments, nearly half have a hard time communicating their experiences with their HCPs

I often do my own research before appointments with health care providers, so I know what questions to ask.



I wish I had more tools/information to help me prepare for visits and have productive conversations with my health care providers



I have a hard time properly communicating my experiences during appointments with health care providers



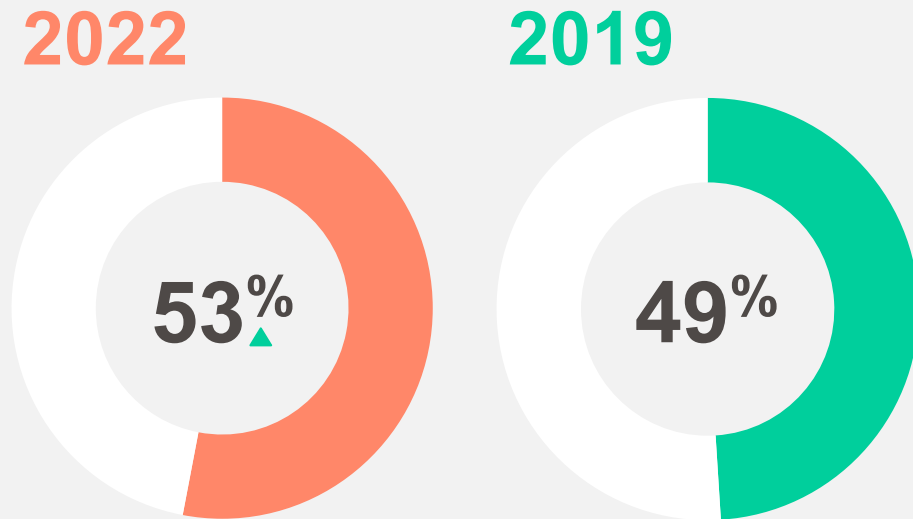
All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)
Q12: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about communicating with health care provider(s)?
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Over half of adults agree that HCPs expect that patients have looked up information prior to appointments, and 7 in 10 feel that HCPs are more attentive if patients come better informed about their health

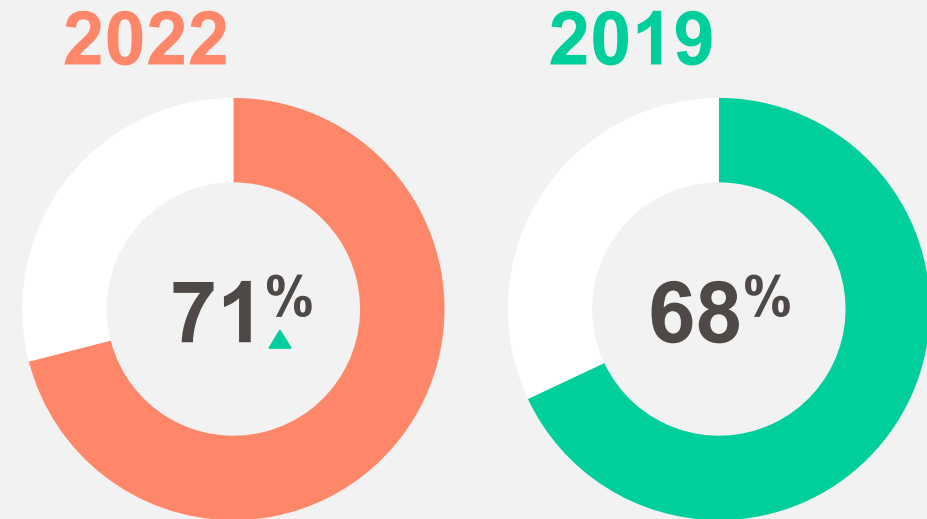
Health care providers now expect that patients have already looked for answers and health information online before coming to see them for an appointment

% strongly/somewhat agree



Health care providers tend to be more attentive to patients who are better informed about their health

% strongly/somewhat agree

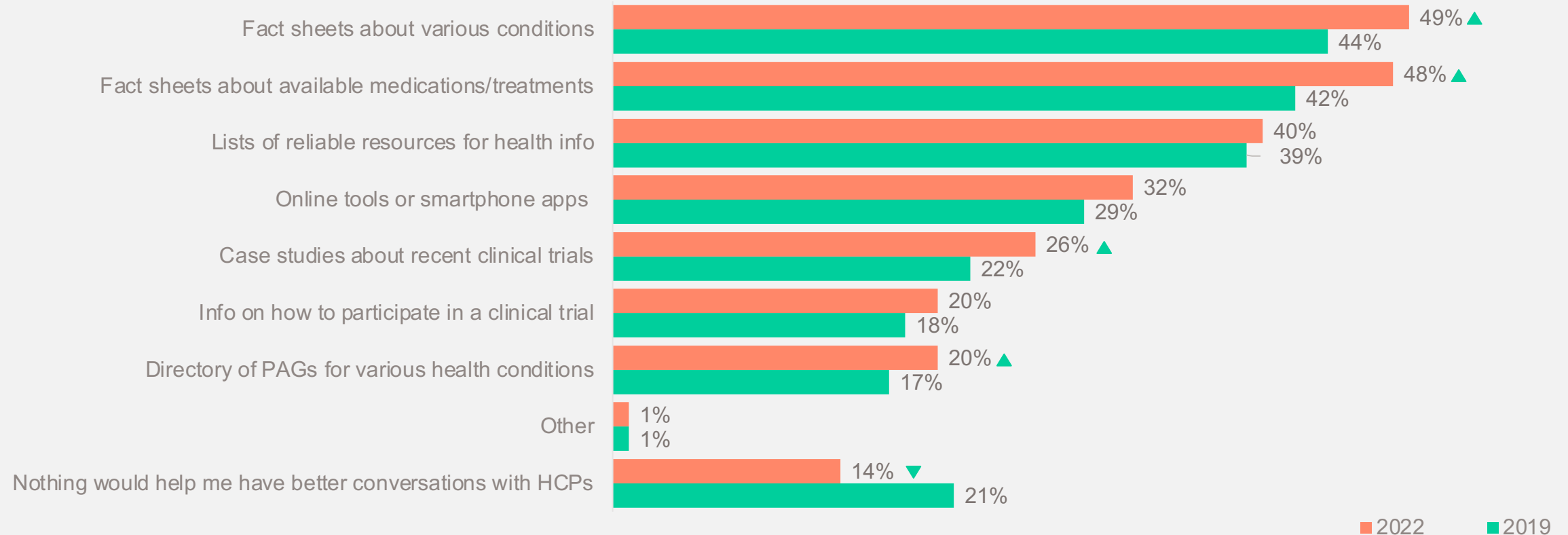


All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)
Q12: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about communicating with health care provider(s)?
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About half of adults agree that fact sheets about various conditions or available medications or treatments would help them converse better with their HCP

Tools that would help better conversations with HCPs



All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)

Q13. What tools or information, if any, would help you have better conversations with health care providers? Please select all that apply.

▲▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence

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Usage and role of online health-related information

2022



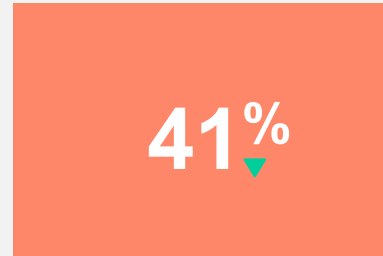
2019



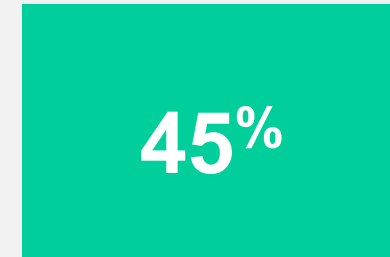
Among those who look for information online, adults' ability to find or understand the information they are looking for declined significantly since 2019

**% mean who
ARE ABLE TO FIND
ANSWERS/INFORMATION THEY
WERE LOOKING
at least the half the time**

2022

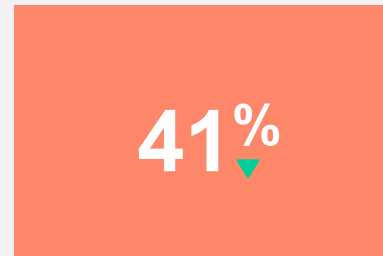


2019

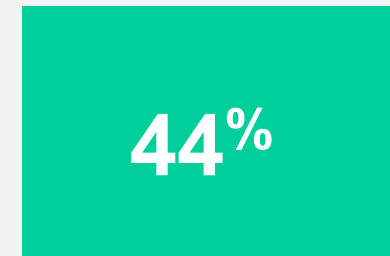


**% mean who
ARE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND
THE INFORMATION
at least the half the time**

41%



44%



Ever look for answers/info about health topics online (2022 n= 1789; 2019 n= 1829)
Q8: When you look for answers and information about health topics online, approximately what proportion of the time...?.

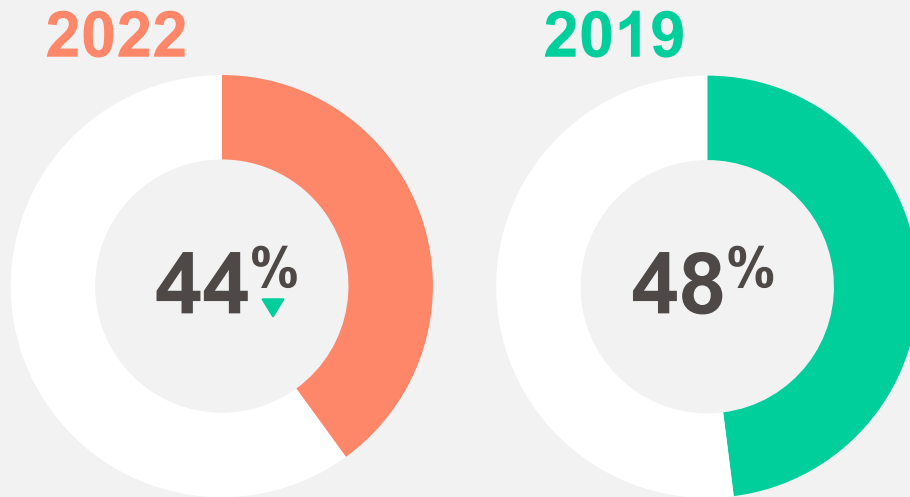
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There is also a decline in the proportion of time adults are satisfied with the quantity or quality of online sources

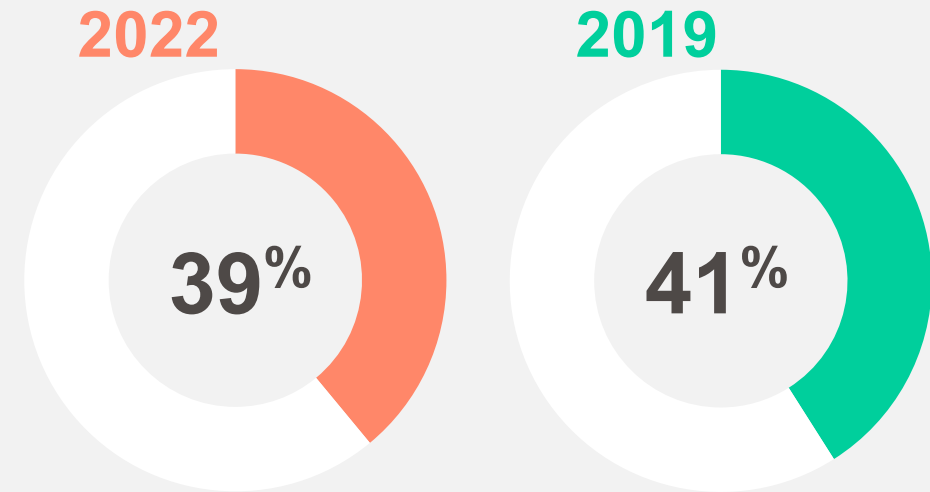
Quantity of online resources available

Mean % of time US adults indicated they are satisfied



Quality of online resources available

Mean % of time US adults indicated they are satisfied



Ever look for answers/info about health topics online (2022 n= 1789, Base 2019 n= 1829)
Q8: When you look for answers and information about health topics online, approximately what proportion of the time...?

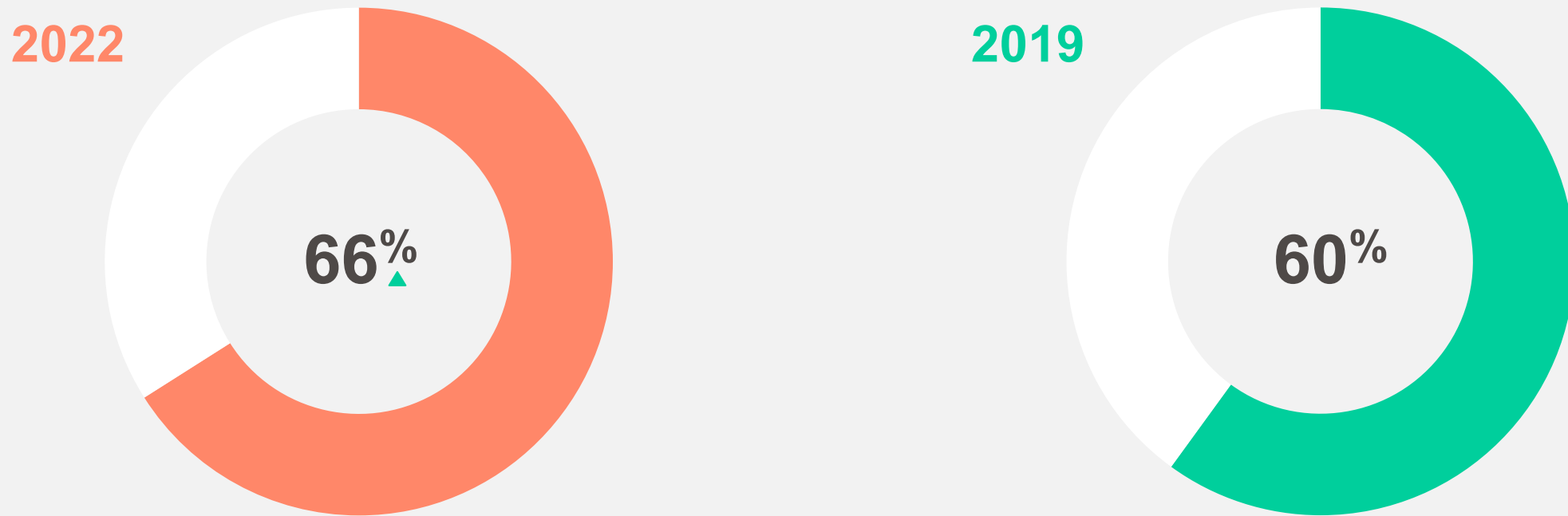
▲▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence



Compared to 2019, more adults feel that HCPs discredit information that is found by patients online with 2 in 3 indicating this

Healthcare providers often discredit the health information that patients find online

% strongly/somewhat agree



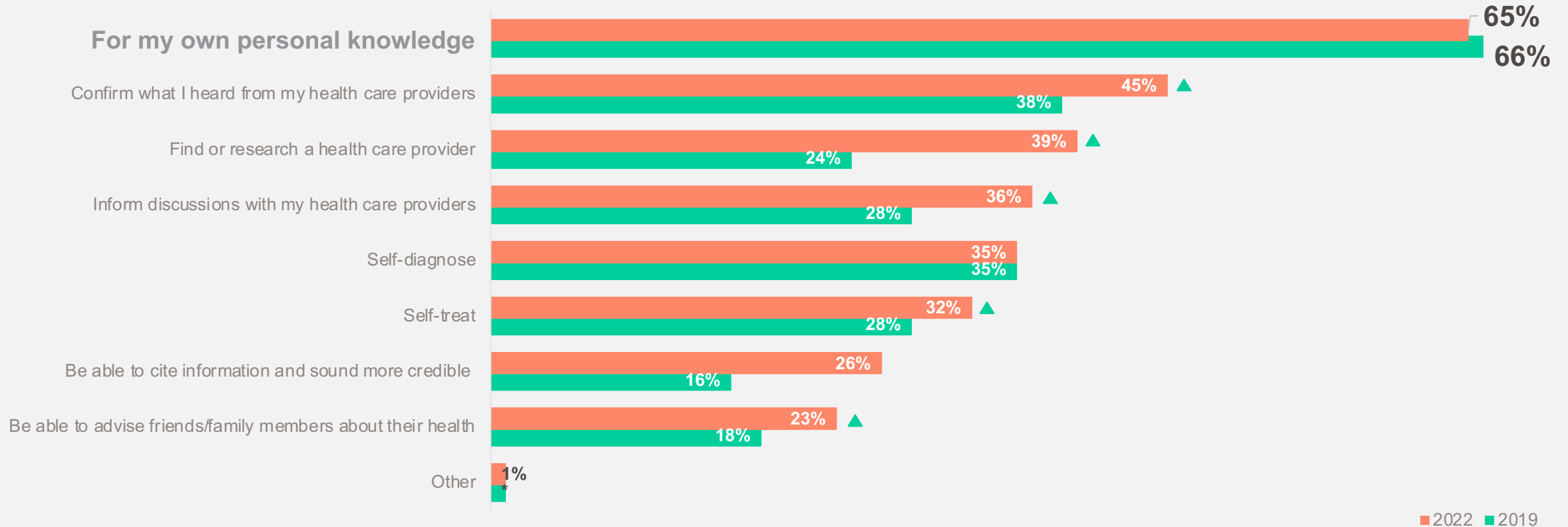
All respondents (2022 n=2003; 2019 n=2028)
Q12: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about communicating with health care provider(s)?

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Most adults looking for health information online do so primarily for their own personal knowledge with 2 in 3 indicating this as a reason

Reasons for verifying information



Ever look for answers/info about health topics online (2022 n= 1789; 2019 n= 1829)
 Q7: Why do you look for answers and information about health topics online? Please select all that apply

▲ ▼ Indicates significant change from 2019 at 95% confidence



Thank you.

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