



Public Opinion on the Use of Personal Information for Equity Measurement in Canadian Hospitals

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Health equity in hospital settings

- Equity is increasingly accepted as a key dimension of healthcare quality
- Measurement of inequities is key
 - “measure and understand the problem and assess the impact of action” (WHO CSDH)*
- The need for patient-level sociodemographic data



The importance of public opinion

- The need for organized, effective and acceptable processes of collecting sociodemographic information from patients
- Implications for privacy and the future of data systems in Canada, e.g. electronic health records



Public opinion survey

- The first national survey of Canadian adults to assess the perceived importance of, and concern over, the collection of personal sociodemographic information by hospitals
- Public preference for practical approaches to the future collection of such information were examined



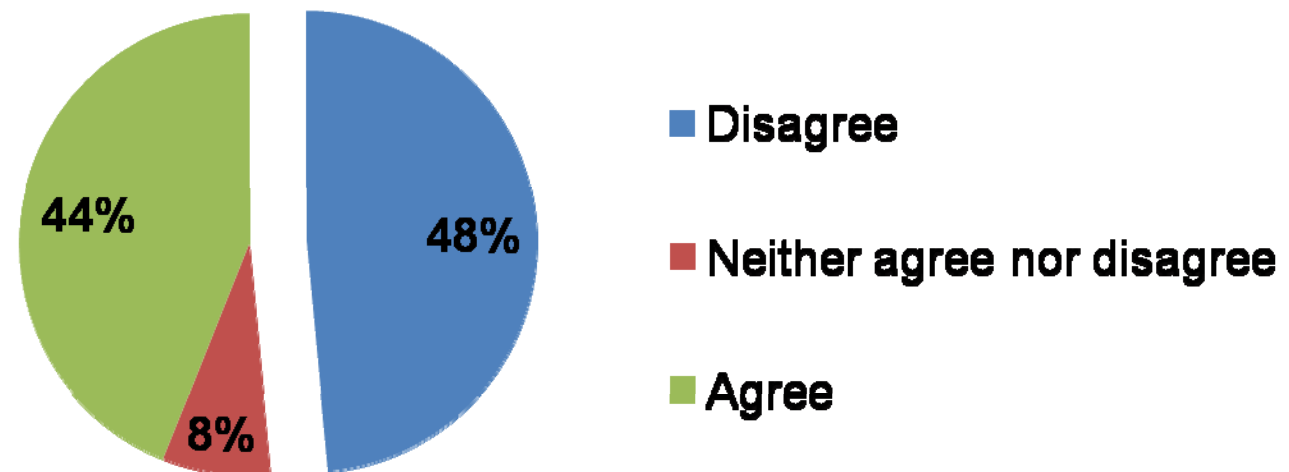
Public opinion survey

- Telephone interview in November 2009
- 1,005 participants, 18 years and over
- Survey prefaced by suggestion that hospitals may collect personal information “to monitor the quality of the services they provide“

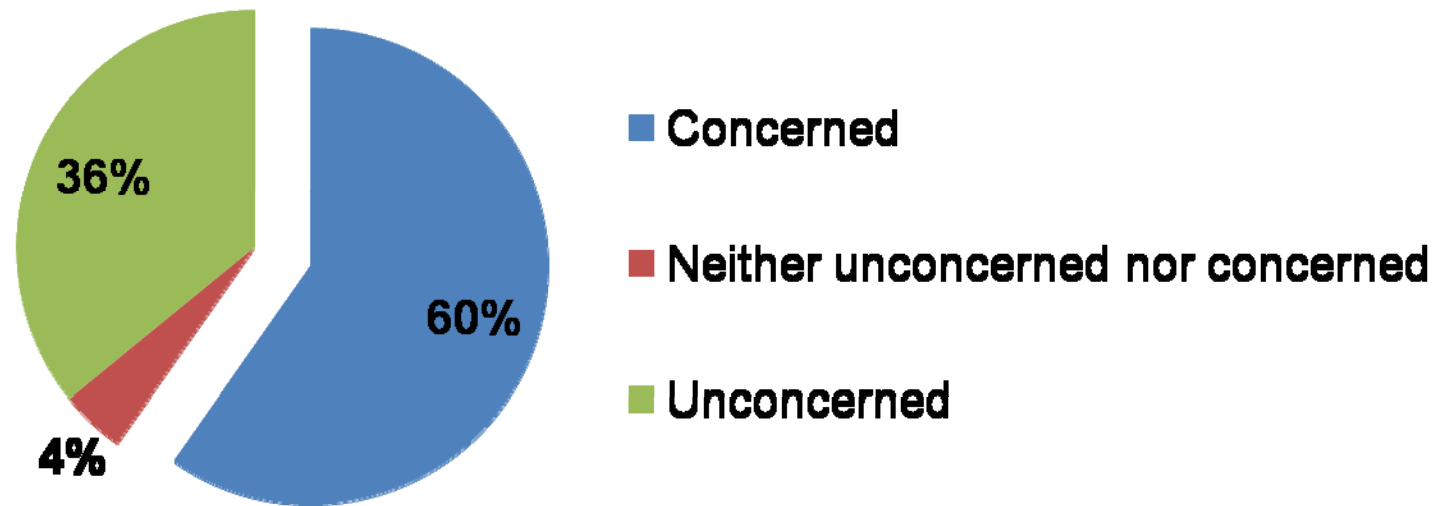


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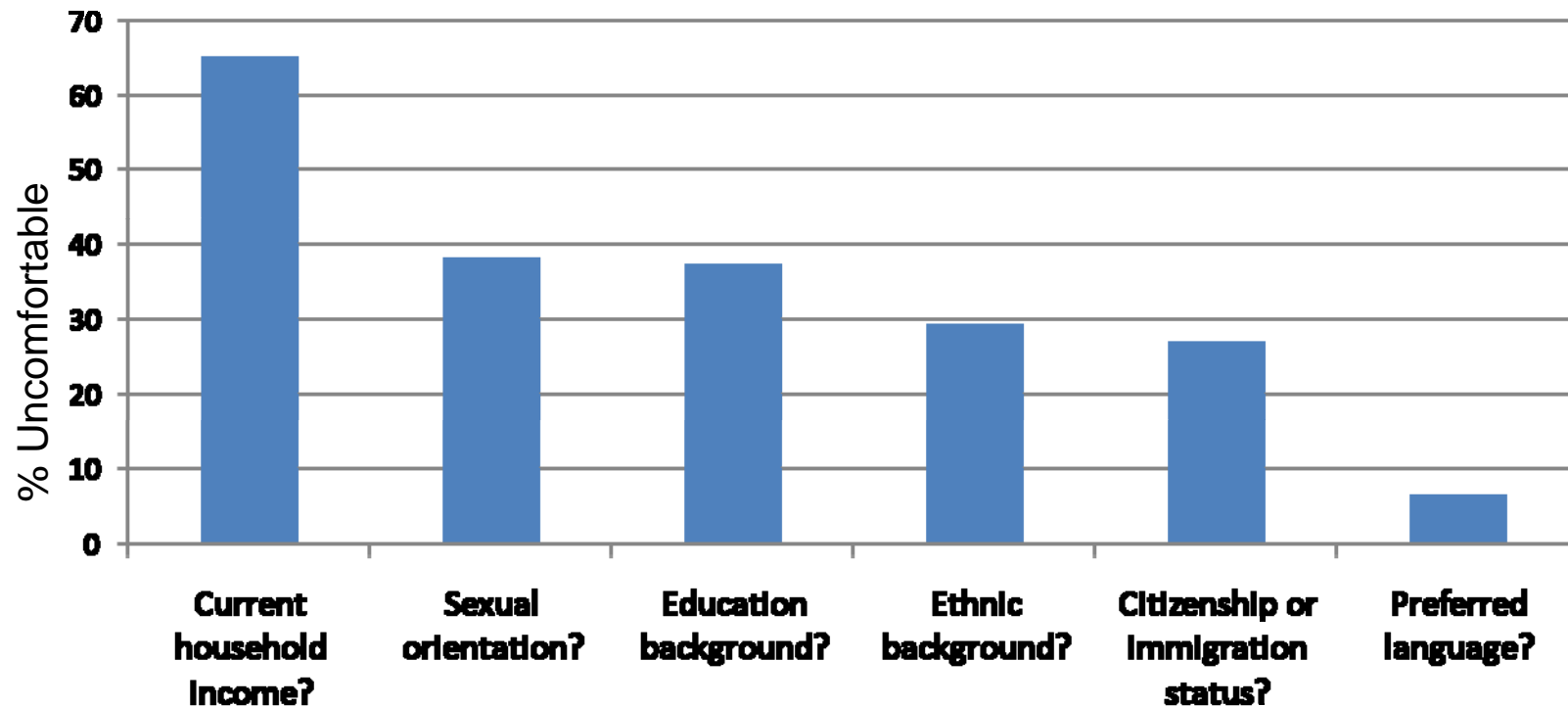
It is important for hospitals to collect information from patients about personal characteristics like ethnic background, family income and language of preference.



How concerned would you be that the collection of this type of information could negatively affect the care that you or others receive?



Discomfort with the collection of information on various patient characteristics by hospital

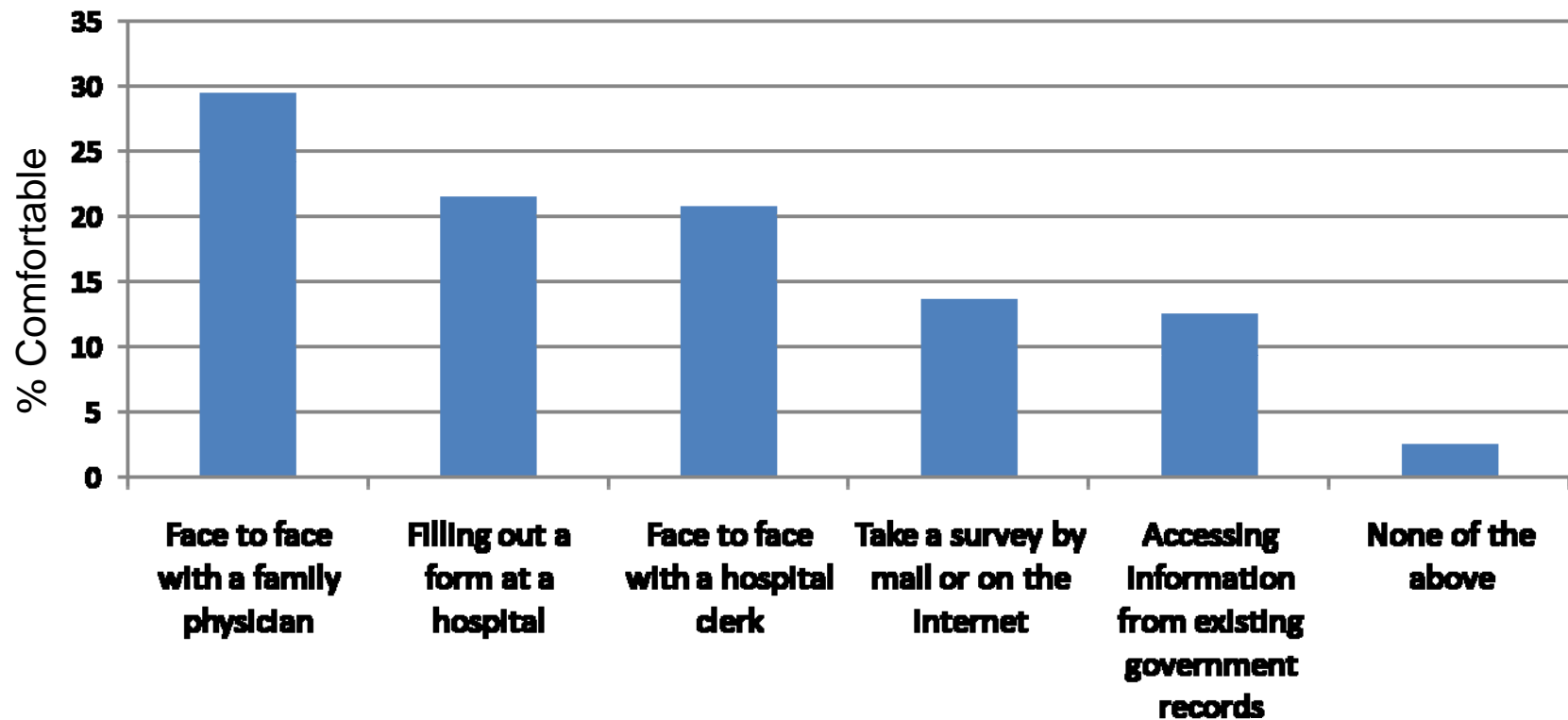


Significant variation in discomfort across participant subgroups



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If the government asked hospitals to look for ways to collect this information, which of the following methods would you be comfortable with?



Next steps

- Conduct a series of focus groups and key informant interviews to:
 - Further explore similar findings from a survey of Ontario residents
 - Explore feasibility and support for data collection from the perspective of healthcare providers, administrators and policy-makers
 - Create dialogue with stakeholders towards improving equity measurement in Ontario

