

# Patient Preference for Tele-Behavioral Health Appointments During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Alyson Gwaltney, Pharm.D. Candidate 2021, Kara Hoehn, Pharm.D. Candidate 2021  
 Kelly Gable, Pharm.D., BCPP, Jaron Asher, MD

## Background

The confinement associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has limited patients' access to proper mental health care services.

Telehealth services have been widely implemented, aiming to minimize COVID-19 exposure. It has been reported that telemedicine services are well-accepted by both healthcare staff and patients.

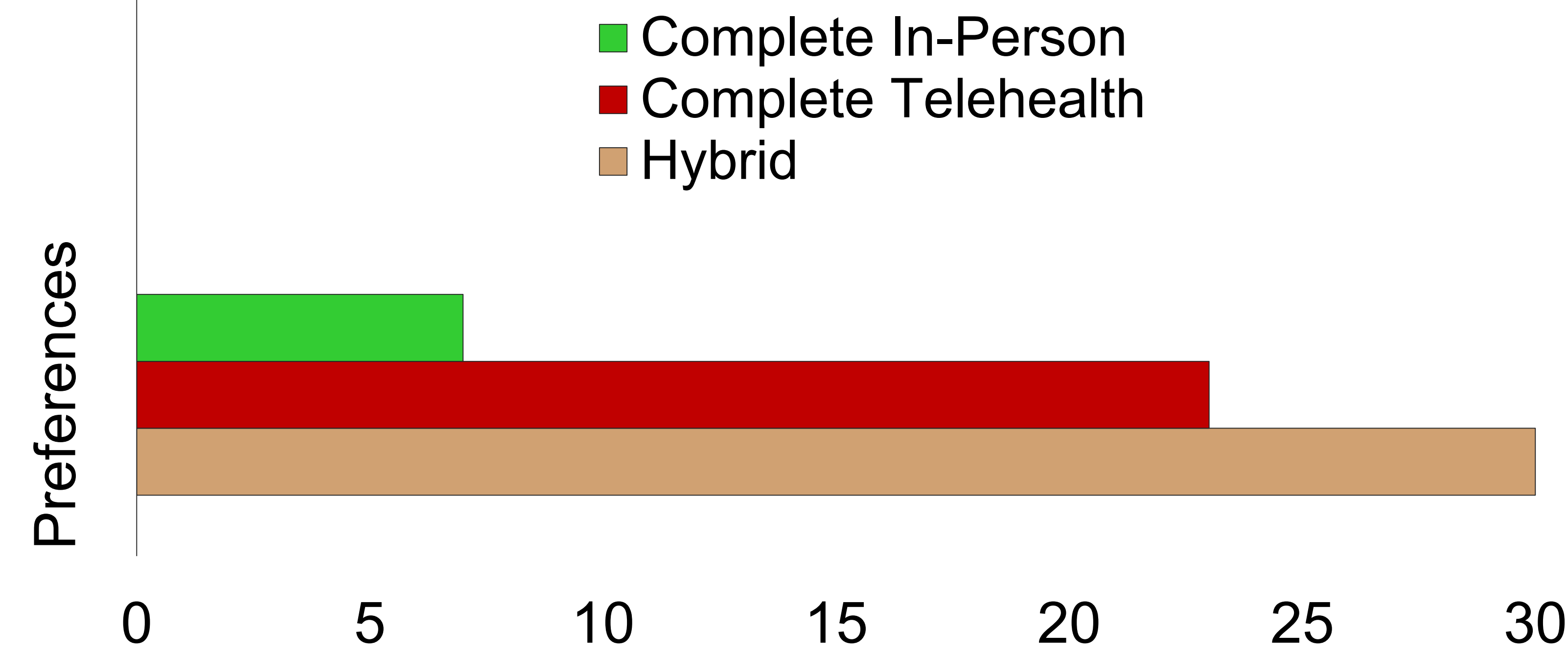
It is important to not overlook patient preferences towards how they receive services.

## Methods

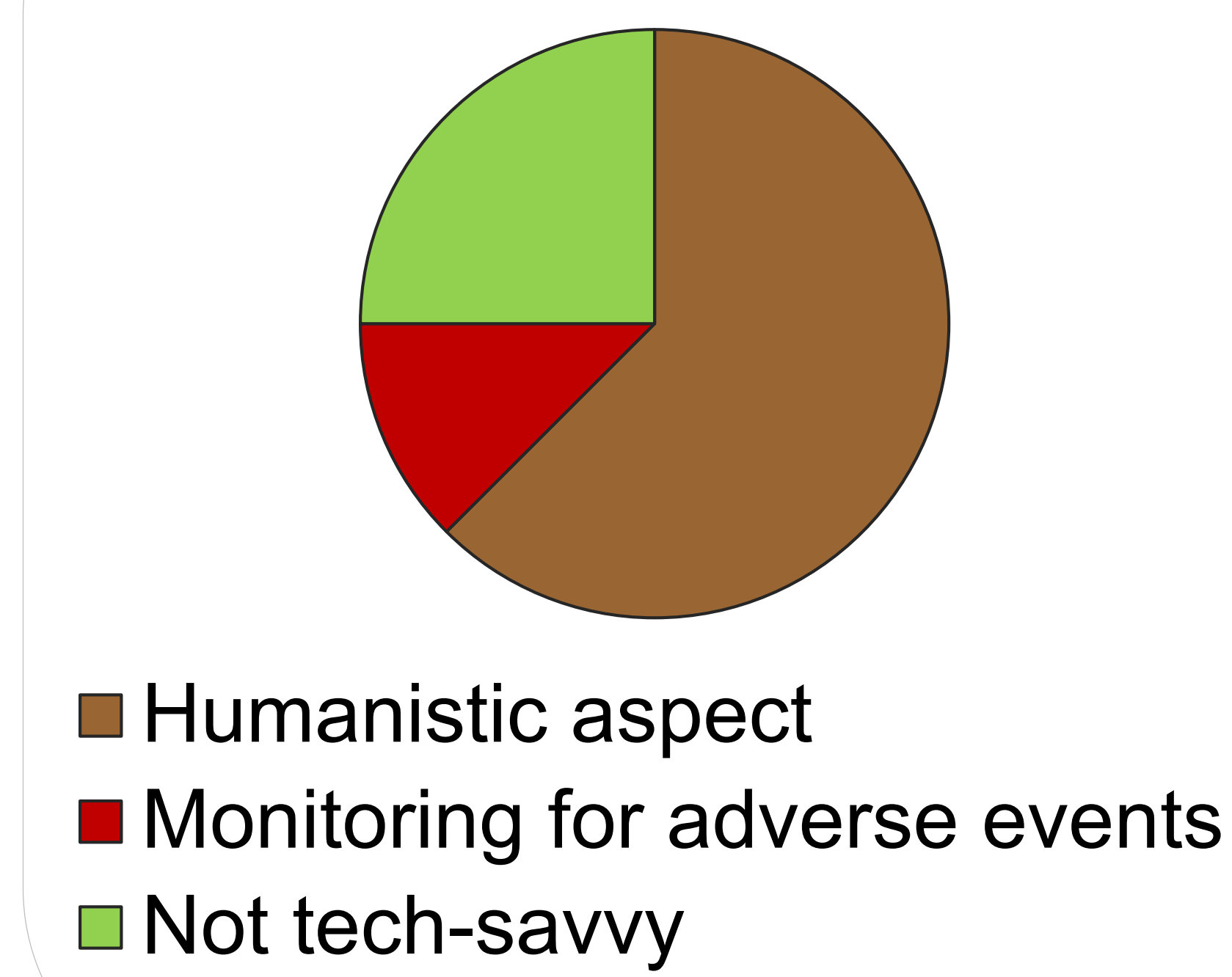
Participants were those actively receiving care from providers at Family Care Health Center within the past 6 months.

- 8-question telephone survey
- Purpose: assess visit preference, reason for preference, and determine any potential barriers to receiving care.
- Asked to rate satisfaction of their last in-person and last telehealth visit.
- Collected demographic information included age and distance from clinic (miles).

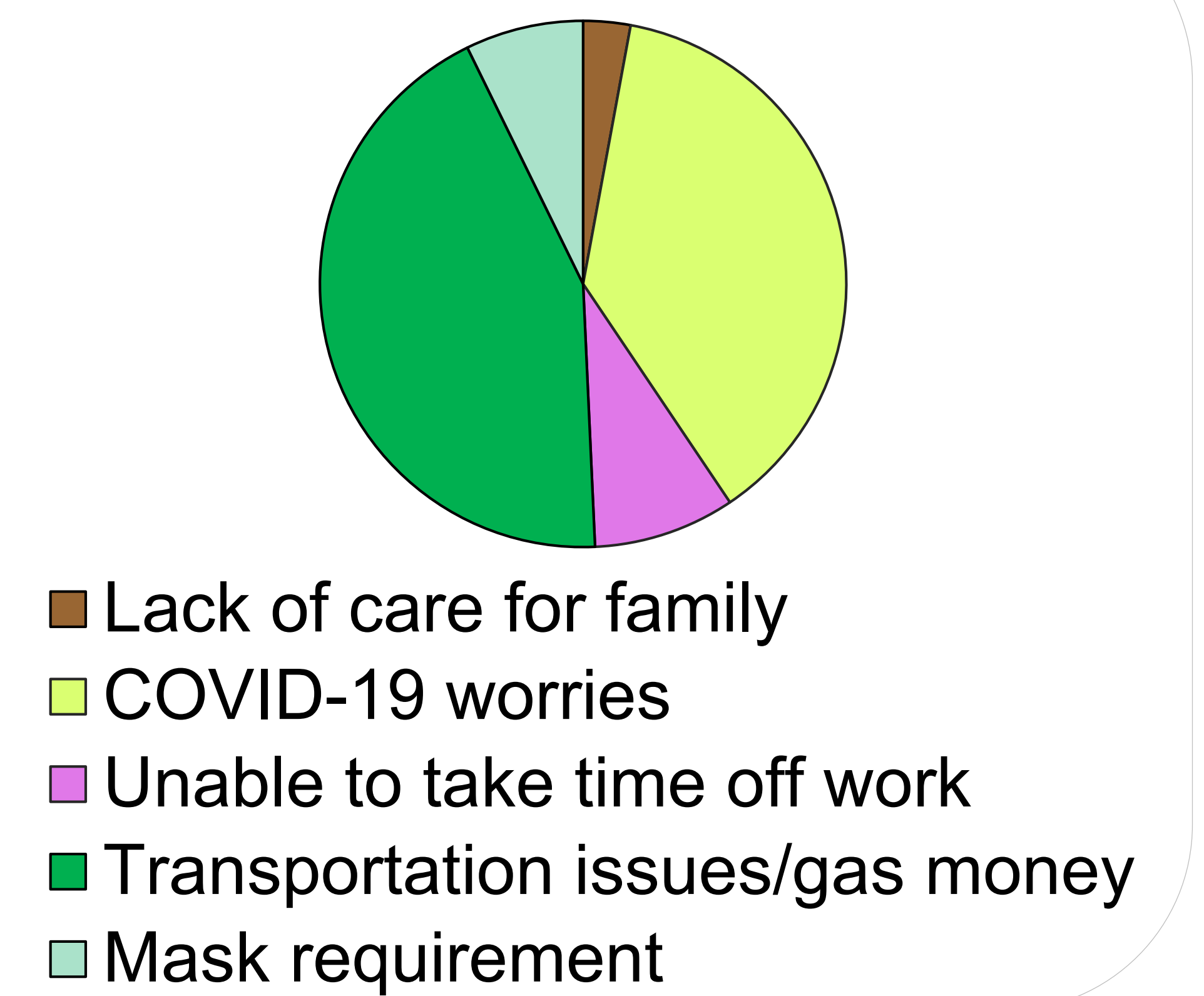
## Results



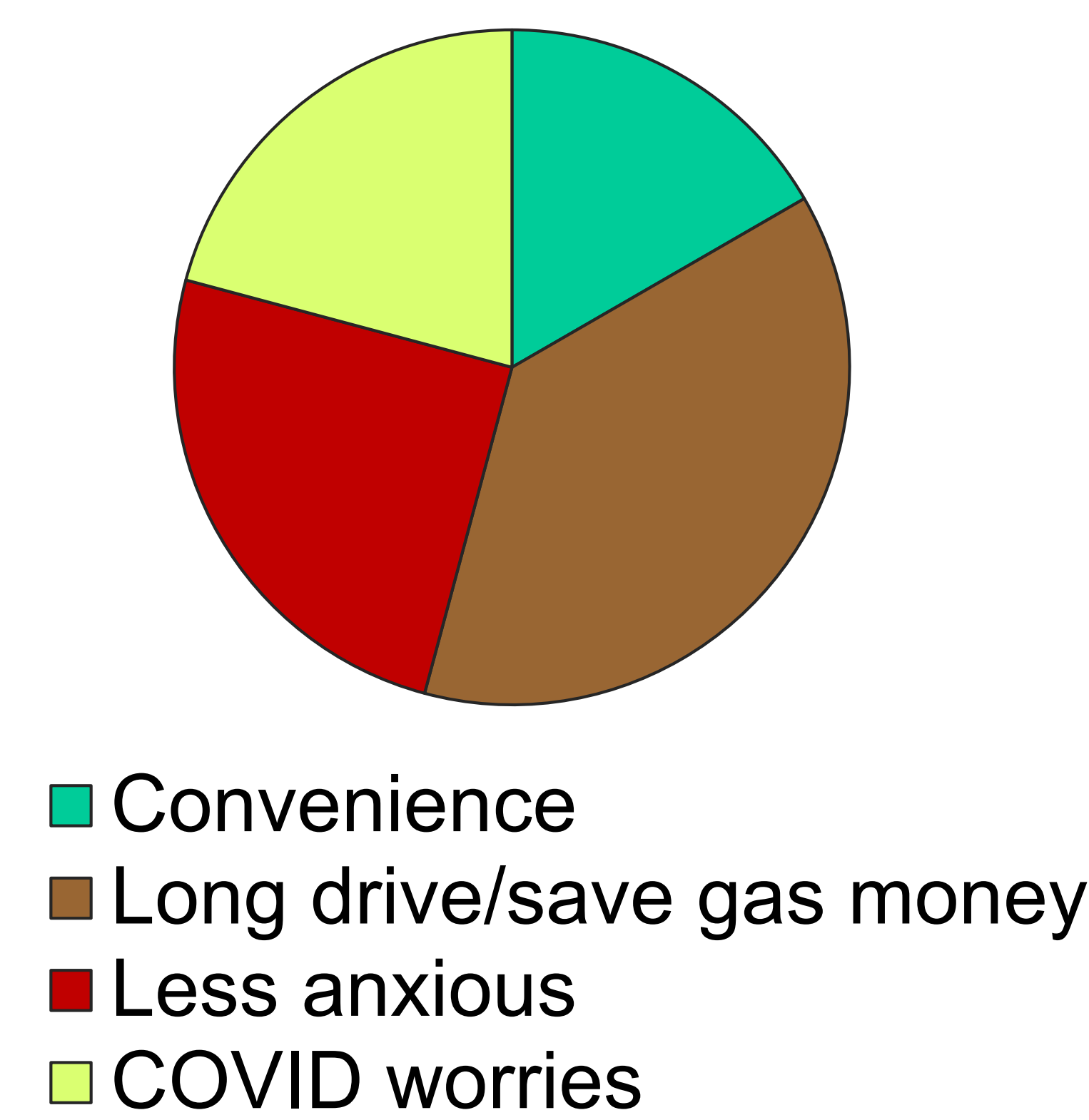
### Preference for In-Person Visits



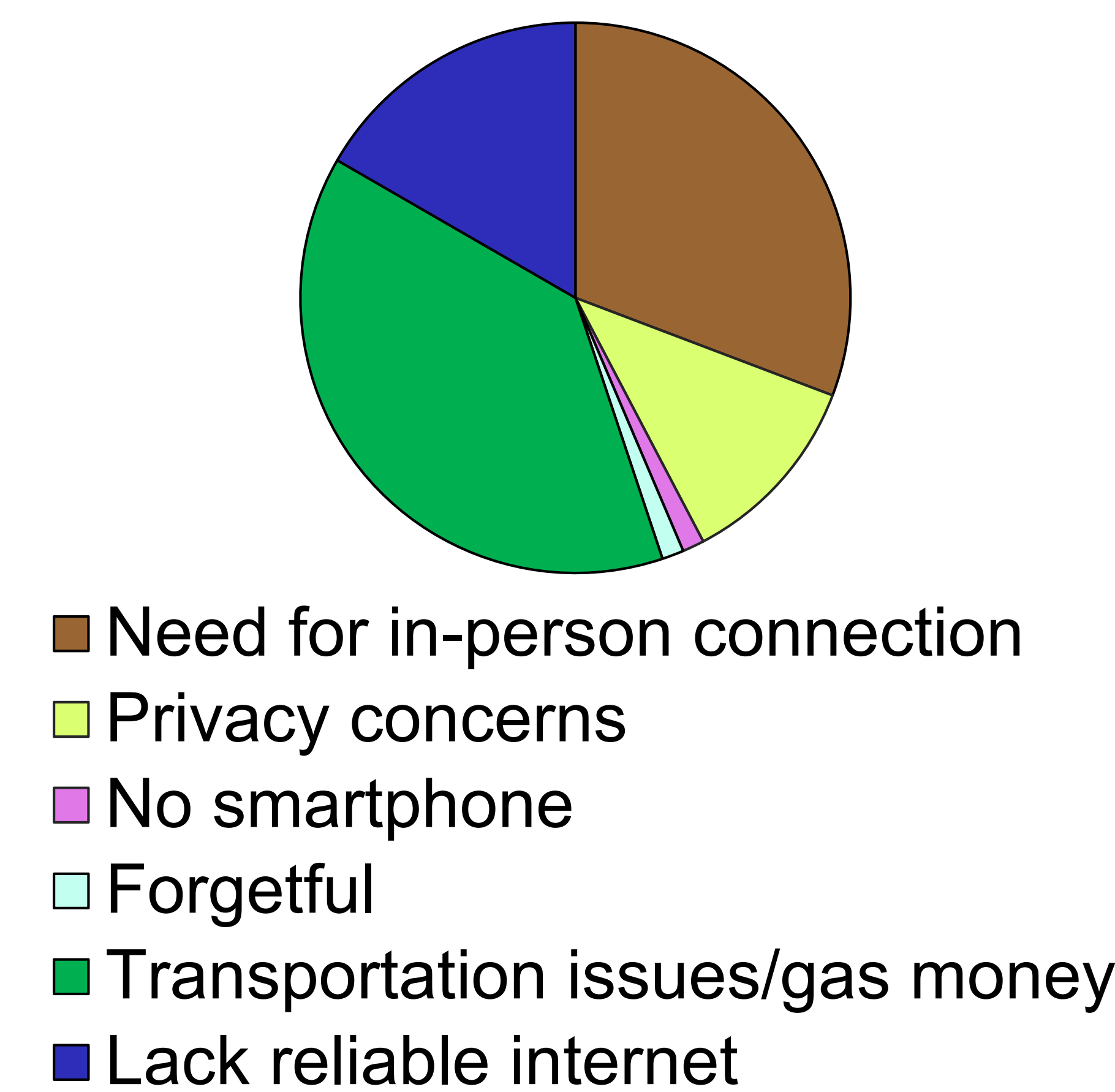
### Barriers to In-Person Visits



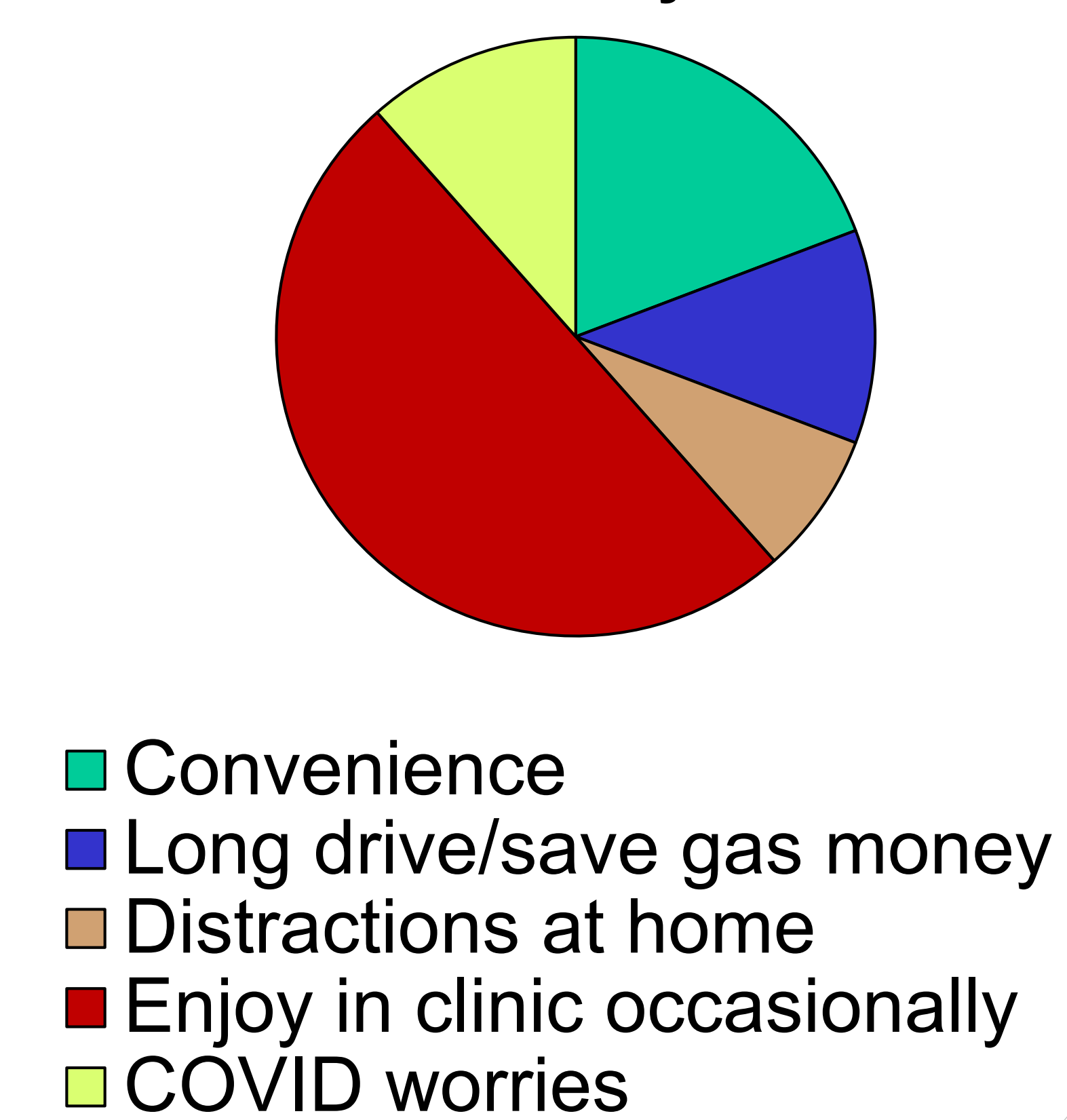
### Preference for Complete Telehealth Visits



### Barriers to Telehealth Visits



### Preference for Hybrid Visits



Satisfaction with last in-person visit*	Satisfaction with last telehealth visit
Avg. 3.6 / 5 (2-5 range)	Avg. 4.7 / 5 (1-5 range)

Age	Miles from Clinic
Avg. 44.5 (18-68 range)	Avg. 11.2 (1-50 range)

## Conclusions

Half of the patients showed a preference for a hybrid method of appointments, most commonly due to convenience and decreasing travel and costs. Almost 40% of patients preferred complete telehealth appointments due to long drives, COVID anxiety, and telehealth appointments being less anxiety-inducing. The most common barriers to care were transportation issues or COVID-19 worries. Overall, the results of this study will help establish a more patient-care centered approach when serving those with behavioral health concerns at the clinic.

## Limitations

- Single site
- Small sample size
- Patient interpretation of questions