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Introduction

While many countries have established formal mechanisms for patient engagement (PE) in health technology assessment (HTA), in Israel these opportunities are limited.

PE in Israel occurs primarily through informal channels such as public, media, and political activities.

Understanding patient influence strategies and their effectiveness is crucial for improving HTA processes, while ensuring adequate representation of all stakeholders, particularly patients

Objectives

- To examine patient-employed influence strategies in Israeli HTA processes.
- To characterize these approaches.
- To evaluate their perceived effectiveness.

Methods

Study design

Two validated surveys, developed based on international practices and interviews with Israeli decision-makers and policymakers.

Participants

362 participants: 161 PAGs and 201 HCPs.

Data collection

Surveys assessed perceptions of strategy use and effectiveness using a 5-point Likert scale (1="not important at all" to 5="very important").

Strategies included direct communication with decision-makers, media utilization, lobbying, and professional collaborations.

Results

No strategy achieved high agreement (>50% responding "to a large extent" or "to a very large extent").

Among PAGs, moderate or higher agreement was recorded for:

- Letters to the Health Basket Committee (HBC), the national body responsible for recommending the reimbursement of new pharmaceuticals and other medical technologies (73%); Patient stories in media (70%);
- Lobbying (57%).

Among HCPs, moderate or higher agreement was expressed regarding:

- Media stories (73%);
- Letters to the HBC (70%);
- Lobbying (68%).

Submission of inclusion requests to the Health Basket and meetings with HMOs and the Ministry of Health received low agreement in both groups, indicating perceived low effectiveness of formal channels.

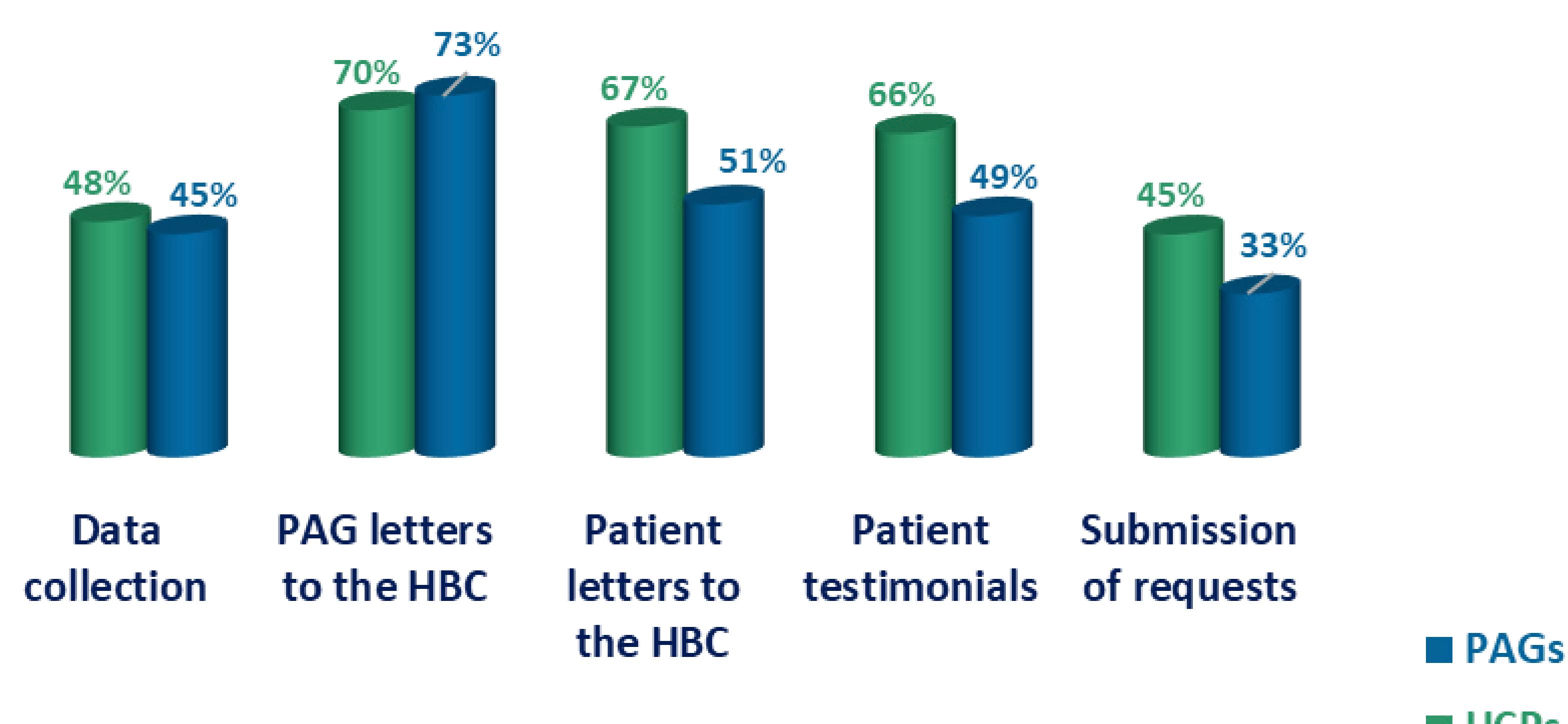


Figure 1. Engagement in formal HTA stages

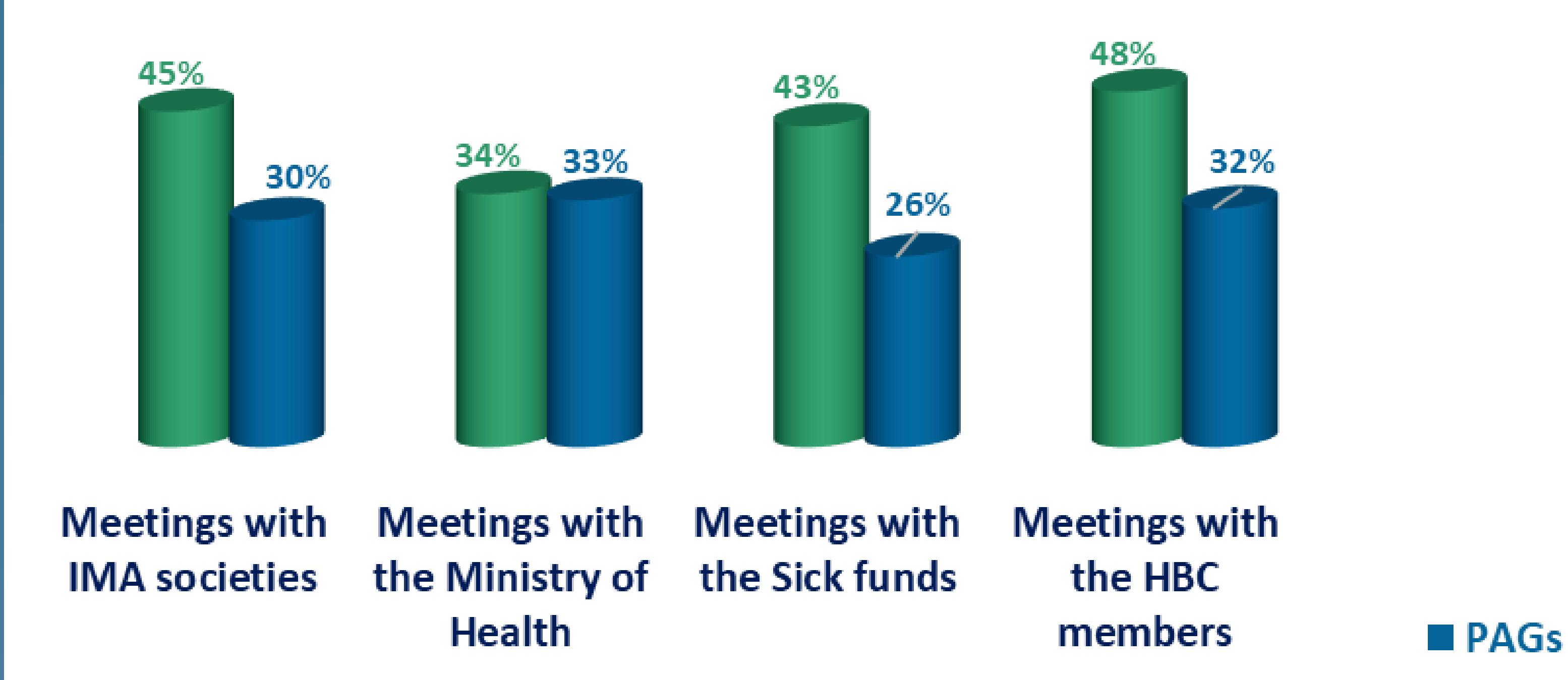


Figure 2. Interaction with opinion leaders and decision-makers

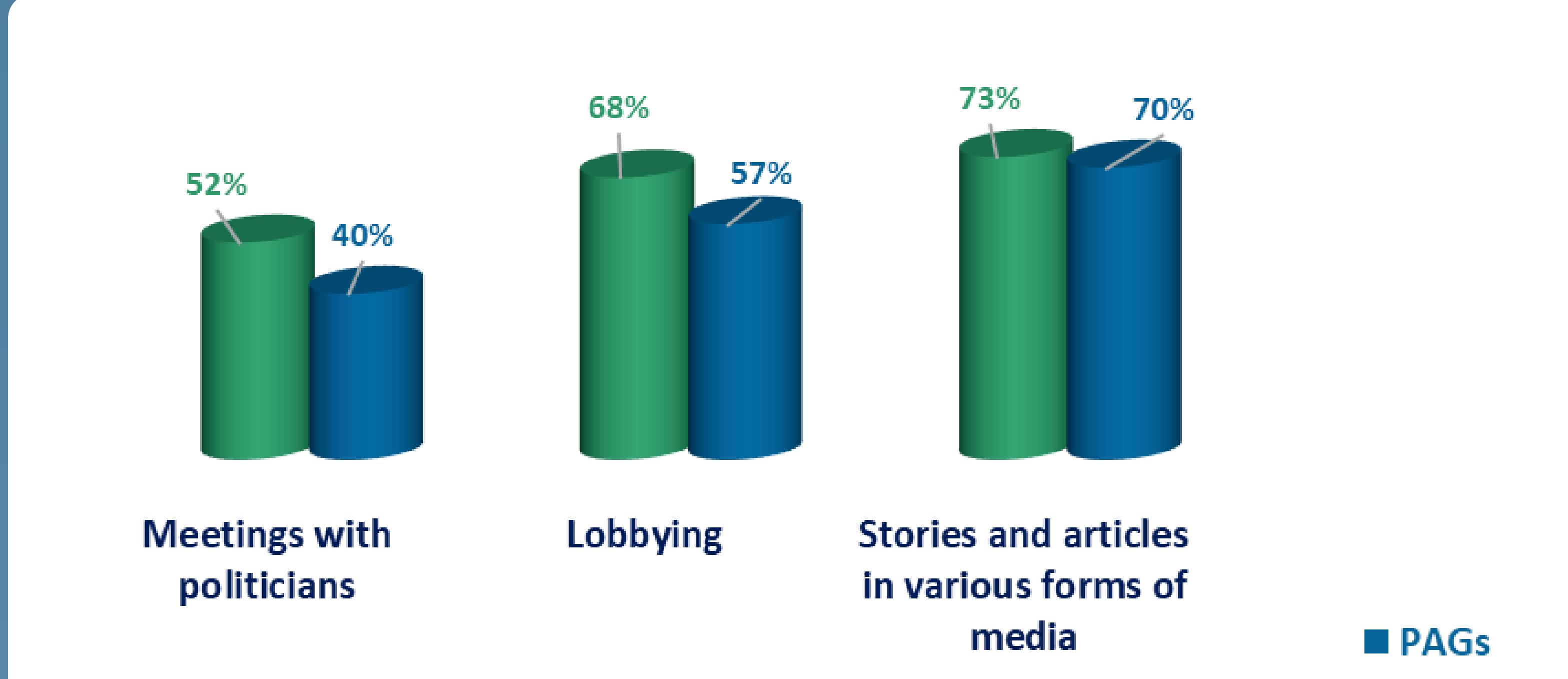


Figure 3. Influence in the public and political arena

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Most strategies were perceived as having limited influence, indicating significant challenges for patients.
- Influence is primarily expressed through written appeals, lobbying, and public communication, while the low effectiveness of formal channels suggests structural barriers.
- Establishing a formal PE framework in Israeli HTA is recommended, incorporating training, capacity building, awareness raising, and resource allocation to enhance patient impact.