

Introduction

- In recent times, there has been a consistent global rise in the utilization of generic medications, primarily driven by the economic imperative to curtail pharmaceutical spending [1].
- Despite the worldwide trend of increasing utilization of generics, Greece falls behind in achieving optimal penetration of generics [2].
- Misperceptions surrounding generic drugs can have a significant impact on their overall uptake [3].

Objective

- The objective of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of Greek patients regarding generic medicines.

Methods

- A cross-sectional study was conducted in Greece within an outpatient setting from April 2022 to July 2022.
- To gather data, a self-administered anonymous questionnaire was utilized. The questionnaire was developed based on previous studies with similar objectives.

Results

- Among the 351 respondents, 83.9% claimed adequate knowledge about generics.
- Their main information sources were the internet (30.3%), media (30%), pharmacists (21.6%), and family doctors (19.6%), followed by official sources (17.3%) and friends/relatives (14.7%) (Fig. 1).
- The majority of patients (78%) perceived generic drugs as effective and safe, 67% to be similar in quality, and 81% as cheaper compared to brand-name drugs (Fig. 2).
- However, only 74% believed that generics contain the same active substances as the brand name products (Fig. 3). Moreover, 73% of the respondents agreed that generics are subject to the same strict regulations, and 63% had a generally positive view of generics.
- Moreover, 78% of the surveyed individuals expressed the belief that generic drugs contribute to cost savings for patients and enhance pharmaceutical access for economically disadvantaged populations (Fig.4). Additionally, around 68% of respondents opined that generics primarily serve as a means to reduce government healthcare expenditures, and an equal percentage (68%) believed that generics have a positive impact on public health. It is noteworthy that 11% of those surveyed indicated that generics do not offer any societal benefits.
- Roughly 42% of respondents conveyed a greater level of trust in brand-name products compared to generics, and 44% mentioned that their trust in generics is contingent on the manufacturer (Fig. 5). Furthermore, 26% of participants indicated a preference for doctors who prescribe brand-name products, and 24% expressed apprehensions when their healthcare provider transitioned from brand-name

Conclusions

- Despite a significant percentage of patients claiming to have sufficient knowledge about generics, a notable proportion of respondents still hold negative perceptions of generic drugs.
- The findings highlight the need for patient education to correct misperceptions and improve attitudes towards generic drugs, ultimately increasing their acceptance and utilization among Greek patients.

Results

Figure 1. Patients’ main sources of information about generics

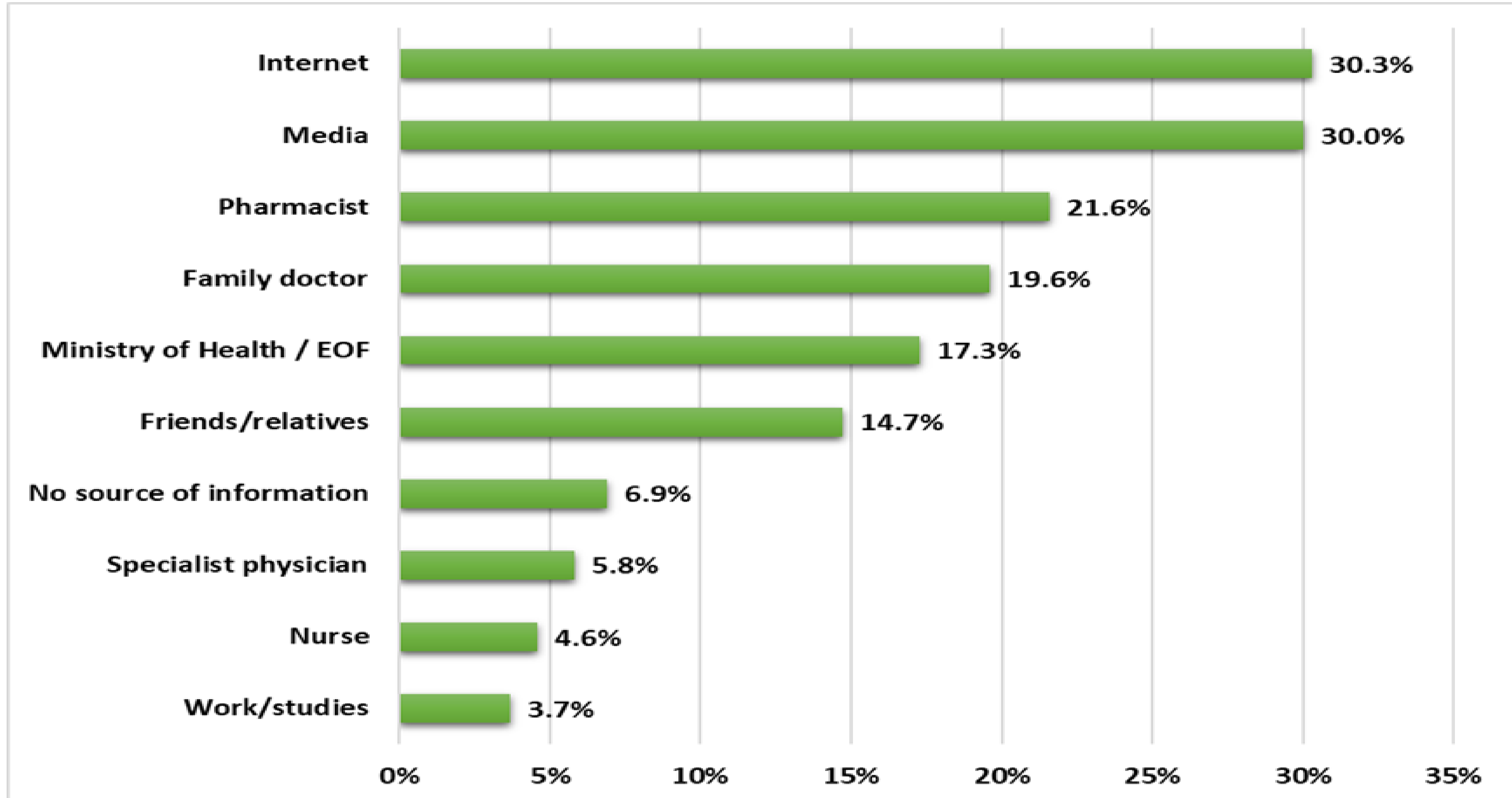


Figure 2. Patients’ subjective comparison of brand name products with generics (%)

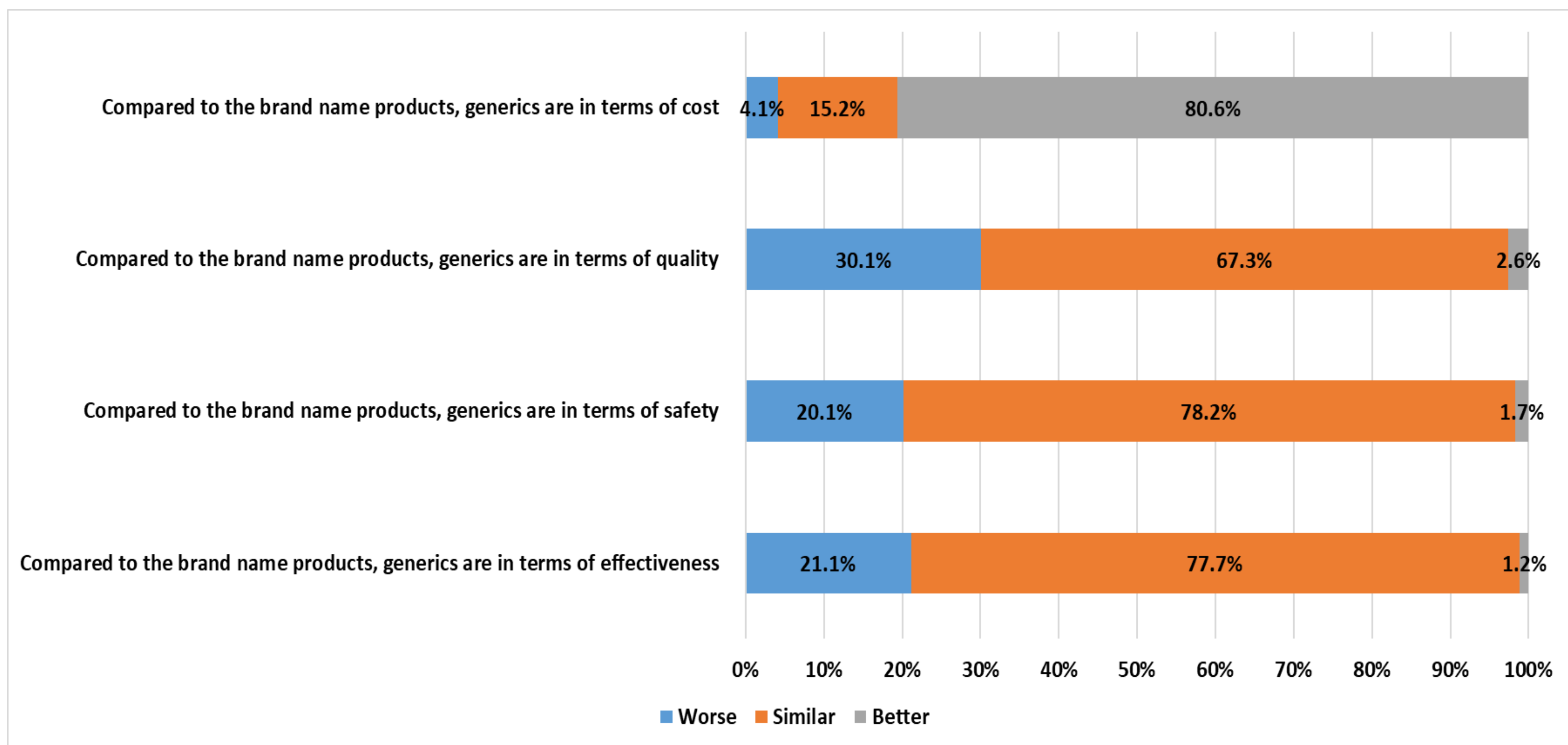


Figure 3. Patients’ general perceptions about generics (%)

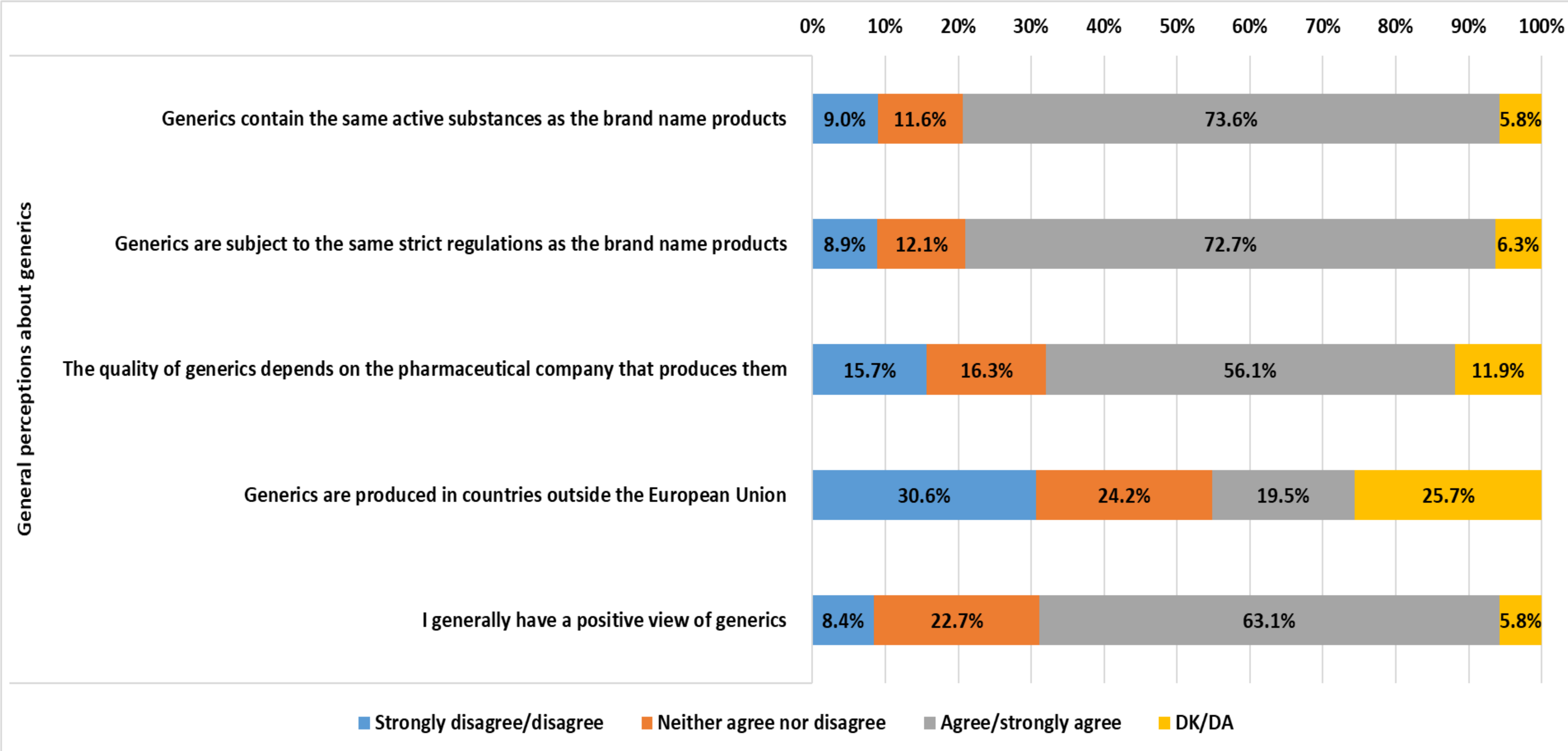


Figure 4. Patients’ perceived benefits from generics (%)

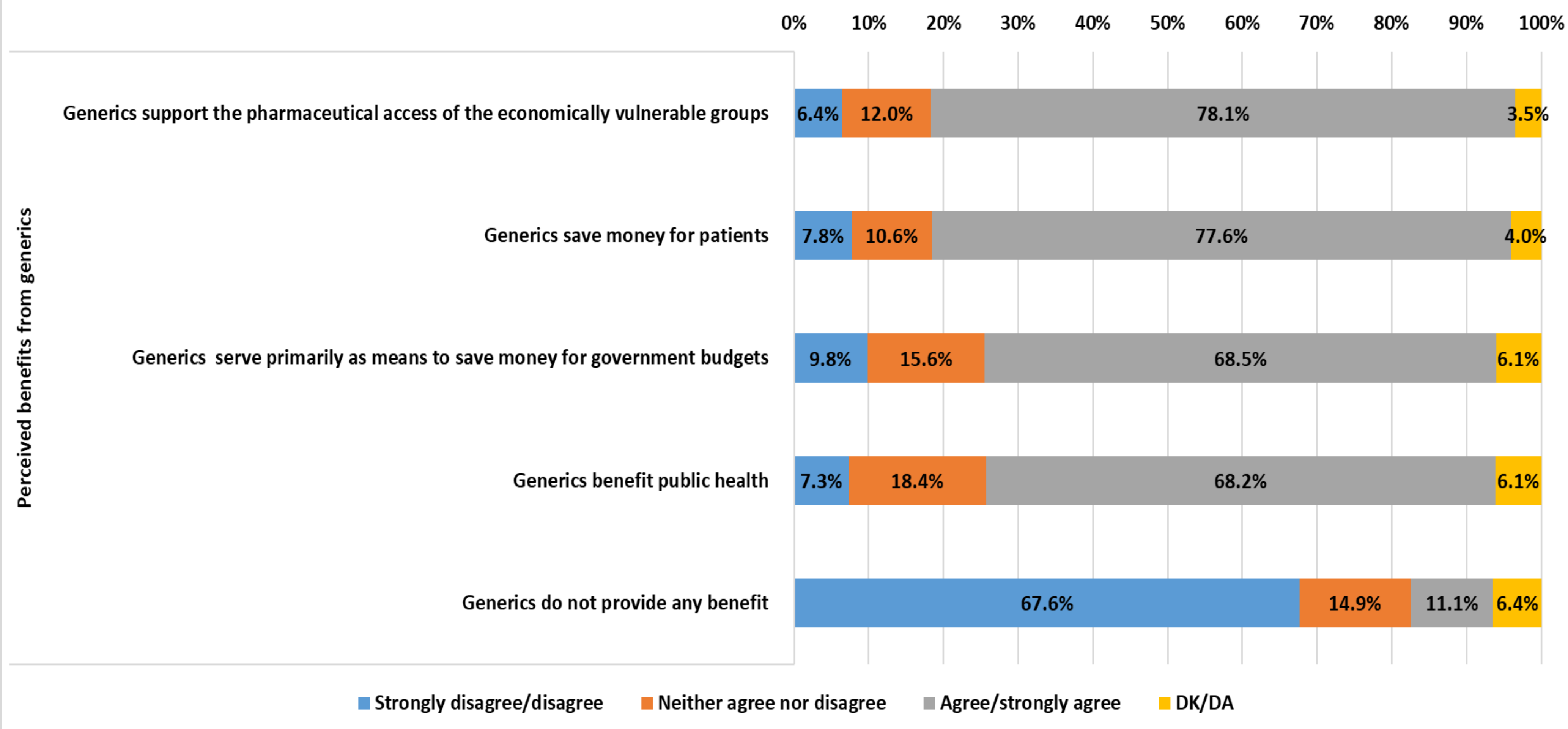
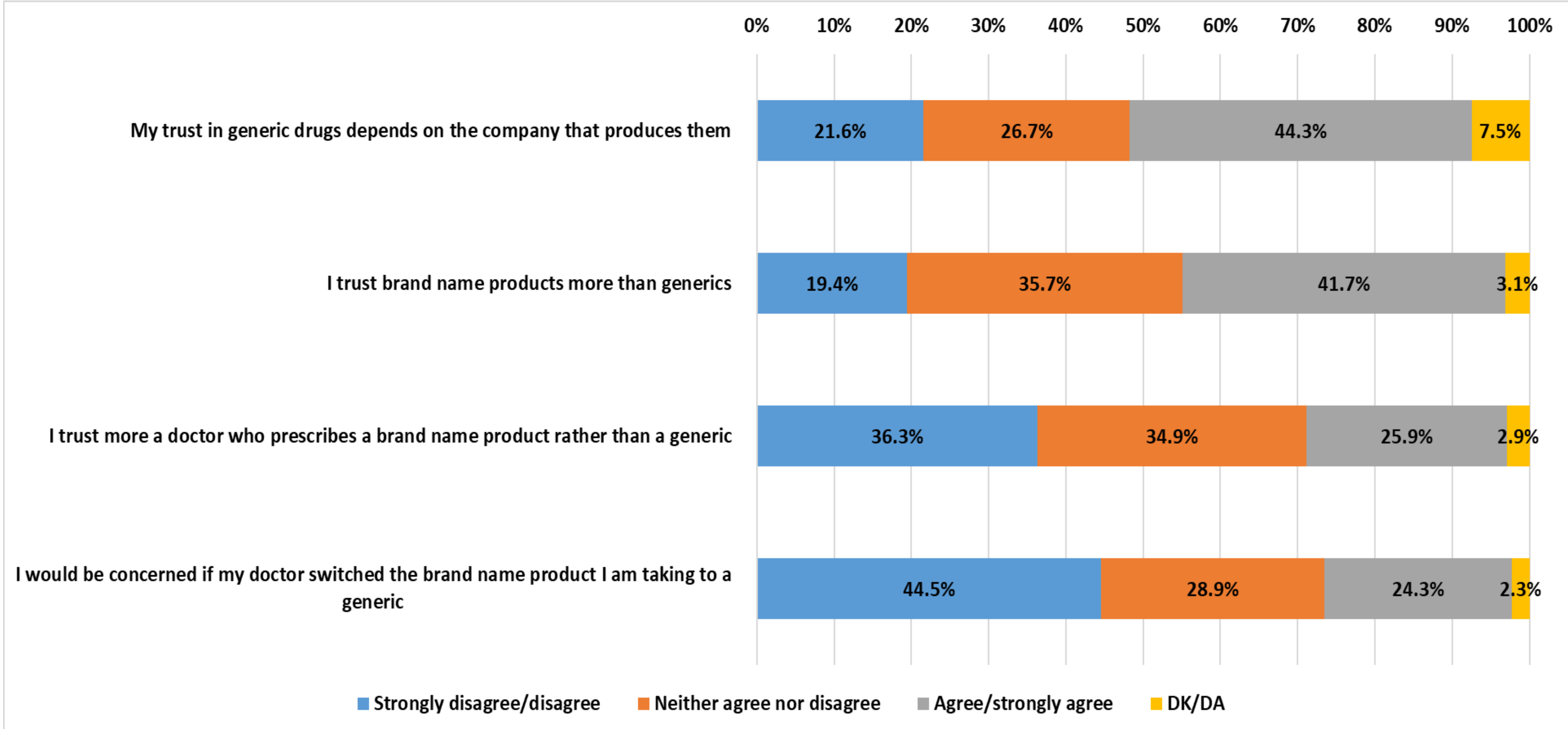


Figure 5. Patients’ trust in generics (%)



References

[1] Andersson K, Bergström G, Petzold MG, Carlsten A. Impact of a generic substitution reform on patients' and society's expenditure for pharmaceuticals. Health Policy. 2007;81(2-3):376-84.
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[3] Alrasheedy AA, Hassali MA, et al. Patient knowledge, perceptions, and acceptance of generic medicines: a comprehensive review of the current literature. Patient Intelligence. 2014;6(null):1-29.