

Preferred Sources of Information on Asthma: Data from a Multinational Survey of Patients in Asia

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Introduction

- An important component of holistic asthma management is providing appropriate disease information to patients, their families, and other caregivers.
- While provision of information improves knowledge, its impact on asthma outcomes is limited.¹ The Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) has pointed out core information which is important to communicate, in an approach that aims to develop shared goals between patients and health care providers.²
- A recent, large multinational survey in Europe (REALISE) has shown that healthcare professionals and online sources (such as search engines and health-related websites) are the most important sources of disease information favored by patients with asthma.³
- Given the importance of adapting information to the appropriate context, we aim to uncover the sources of information preferred by patients in Asia.

Methodology

- REALISE Asia was an online, questionnaire-based survey conducted in 8 countries in Asia (China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan).
- Translation and back-translation of the questionnaires were carried out by a team of professional translators, and reviewed by the REALISE Asia Working Group, observing both the conceptual and cultural correspondence of the original and translated texts.
- Patients between the ages of 18 and 50 years with ≥ 2 prescriptions for asthma in the past 2 years, and who used social media were recruited using a validated consumer panel. Online panels were used as the survey was addressed to the affordable population with access to medical care and social media, with nationwide coverage.
- Data were collected on the following: demographic profile, asthma control (assessed using GINA-based criteria), perceptions and attitudes towards asthma and its management, disease burden, and informational needs and sources. The responses were validated using a series of rigorous quality checks, including pre-defined screening criteria, duplicate-prevention algorithms, digital footprints, and checks to rule out illogical answers or careless respondents.
- This non-interventional survey was double blinded to reduce bias and protect respondents' privacy, in keeping with the code of conduct of the European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR).

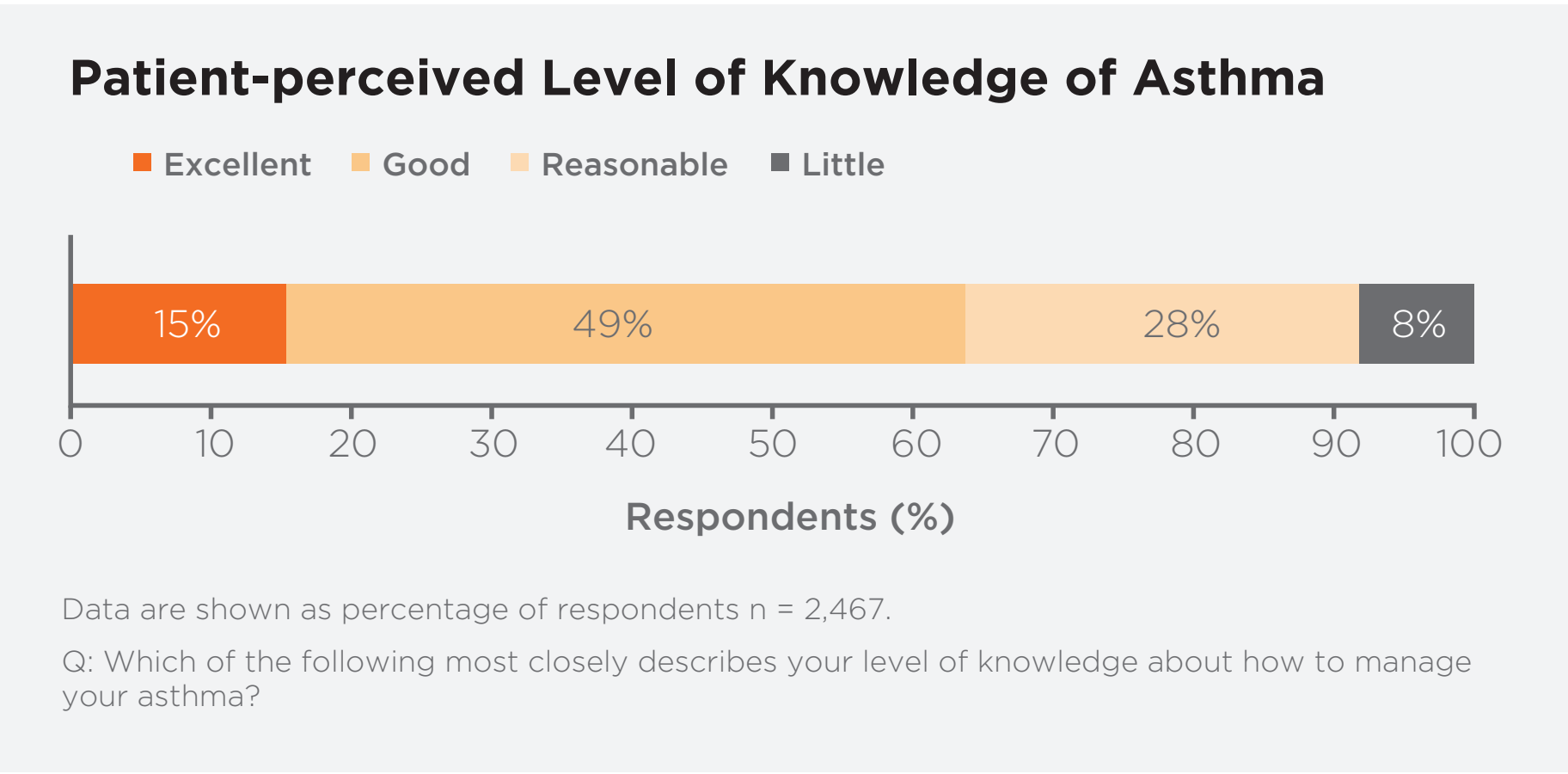
Results

Demographic Information

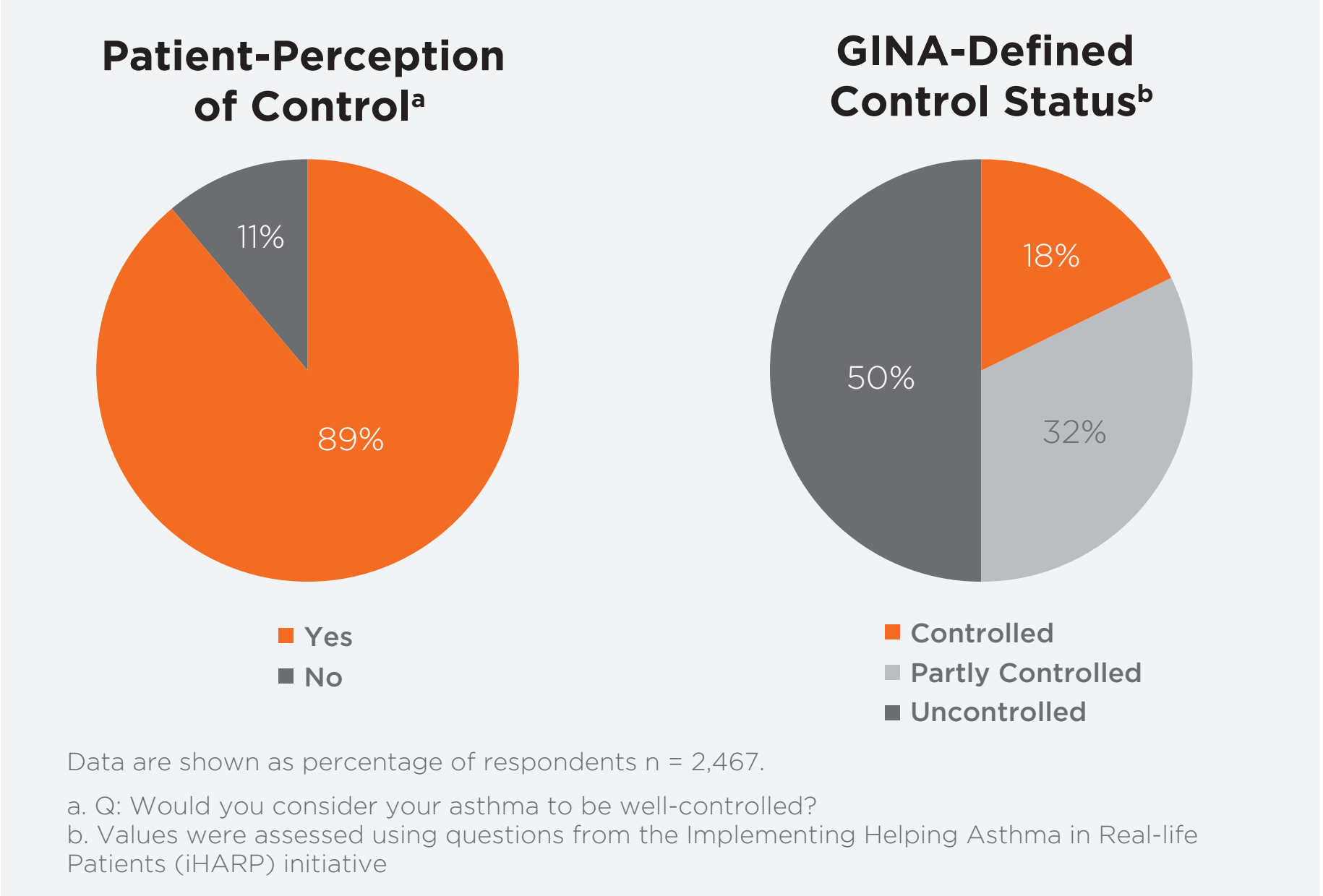
- A total of 2,467 patients were recruited from the following countries: China (800), Hong Kong SAR (200), Indonesia (166), Malaysia (151), Philippines (150), Singapore (200), South Korea (500), and Taiwan (300).
- Mean age of respondents is 34 years old, and relatively equal proportion of men (54%) to women (46%).
- Majority of respondents (85%) use social media every day or several times a day.

Perceived Asthma Knowledge and Level of Control

- Over 90% of the respondents reported that they had at least a reasonable knowledge of asthma and how to manage it.

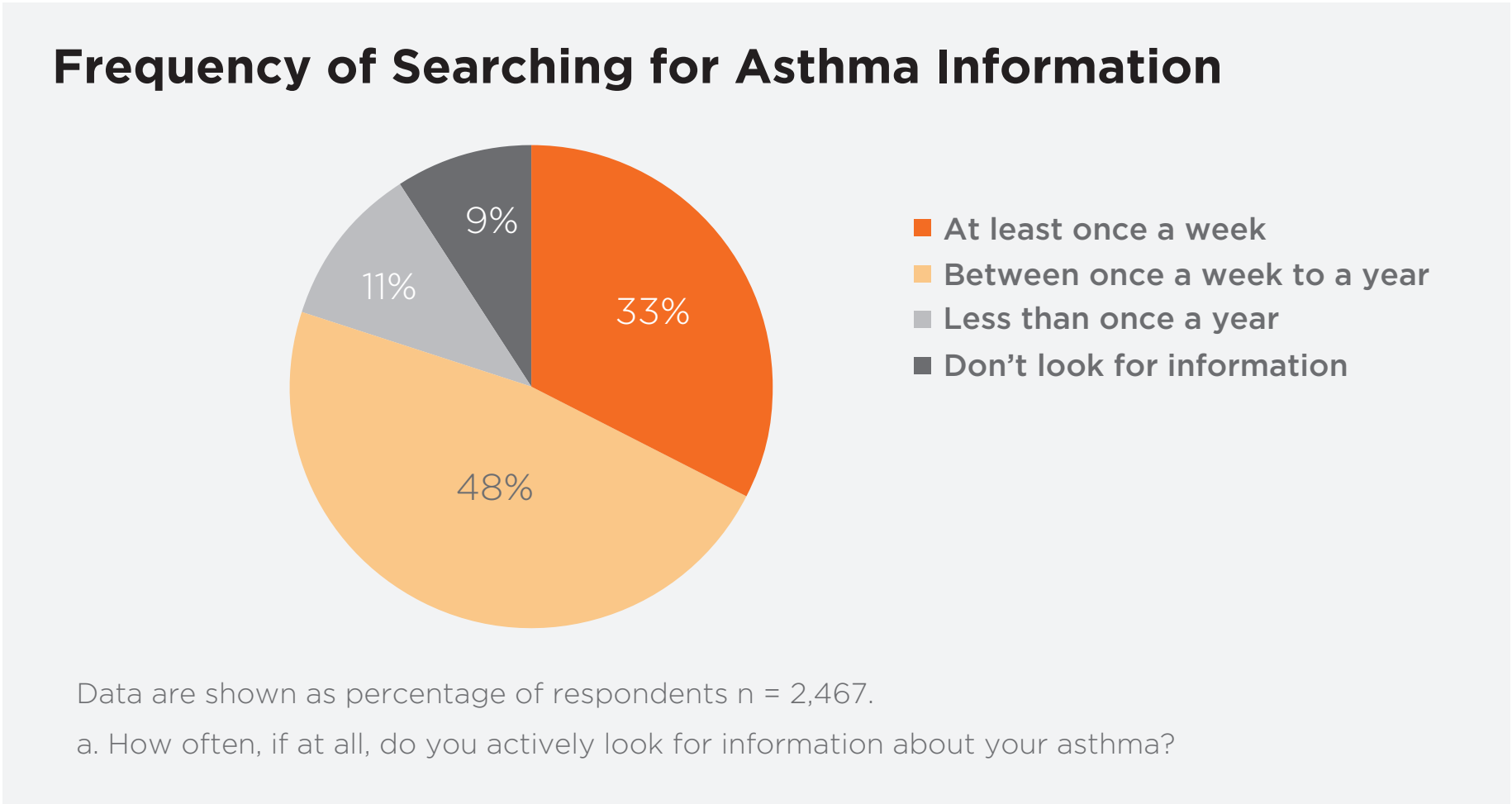


- Of this group, 72% claimed that they know how to manage their asthma without the help of physicians. However only 18% of the patients could be considered well-controlled using GINA-defined criteria.

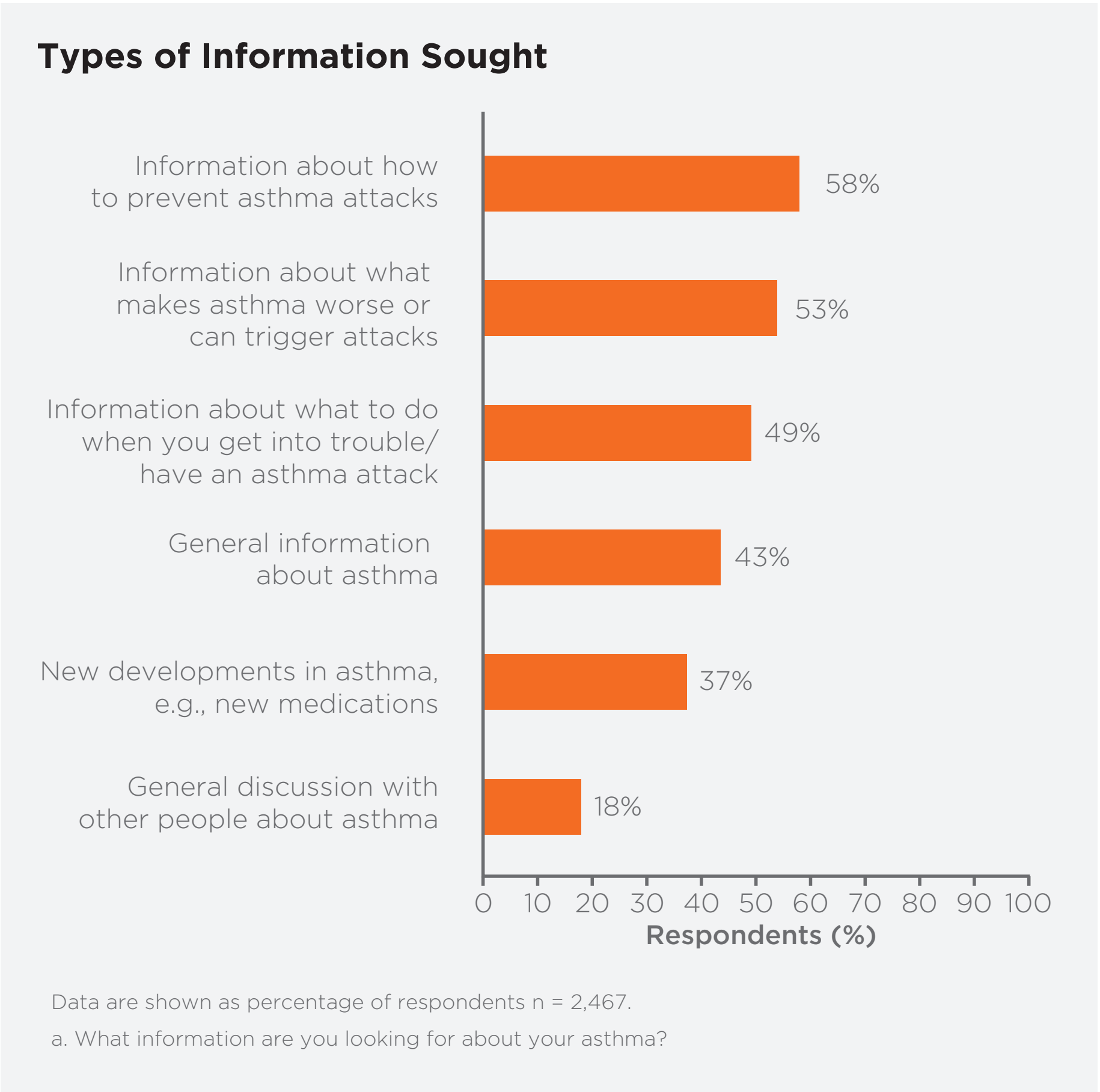


Information Needs

- More than 81% actively seek information about asthma at least once a year, and 33% say they look for such information at least once a week.

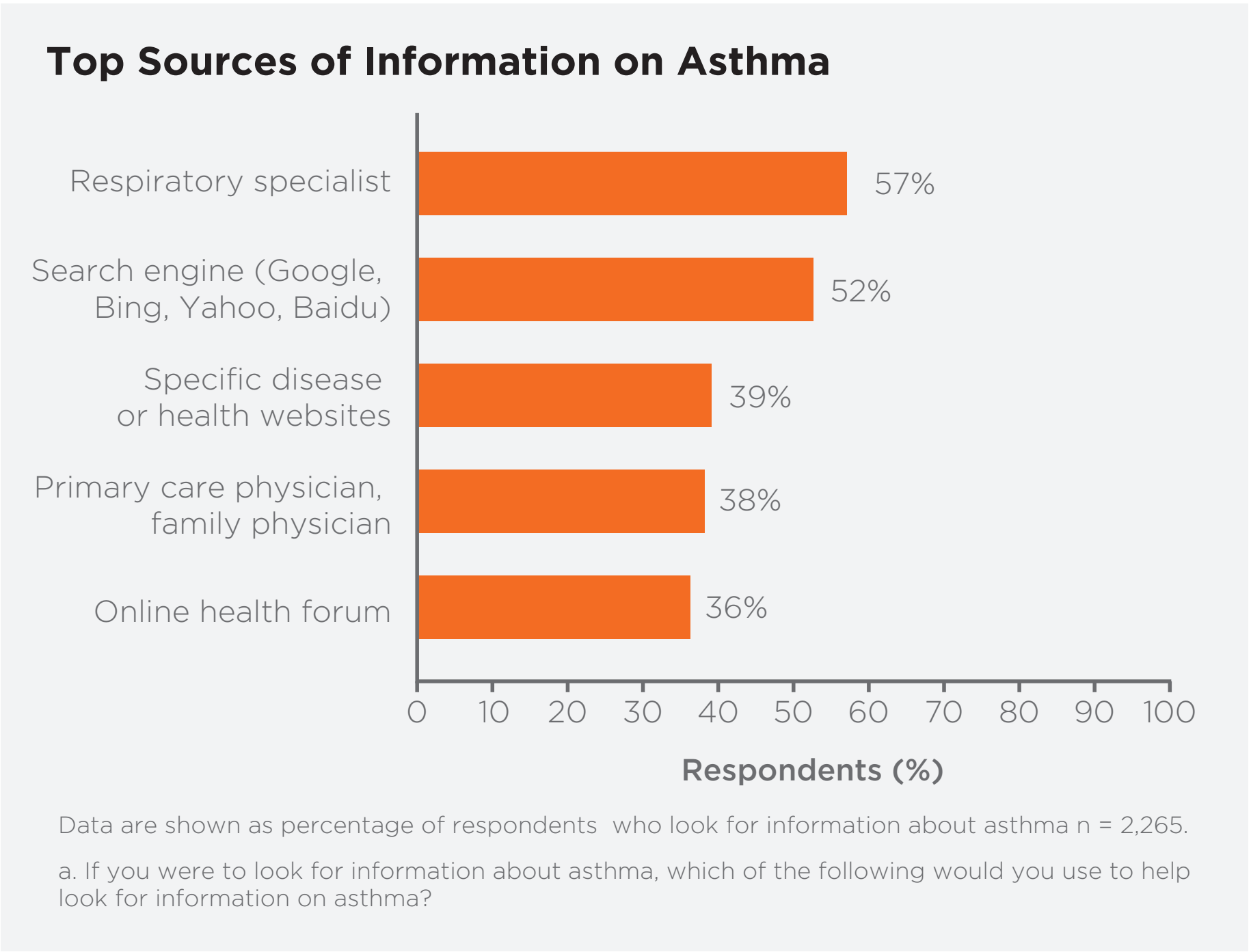


- Patients seeking asthma information most frequently search information relating to asthma exacerbations: how to prevent an attack, what triggers an attack, and what they should do in an asthma attack.

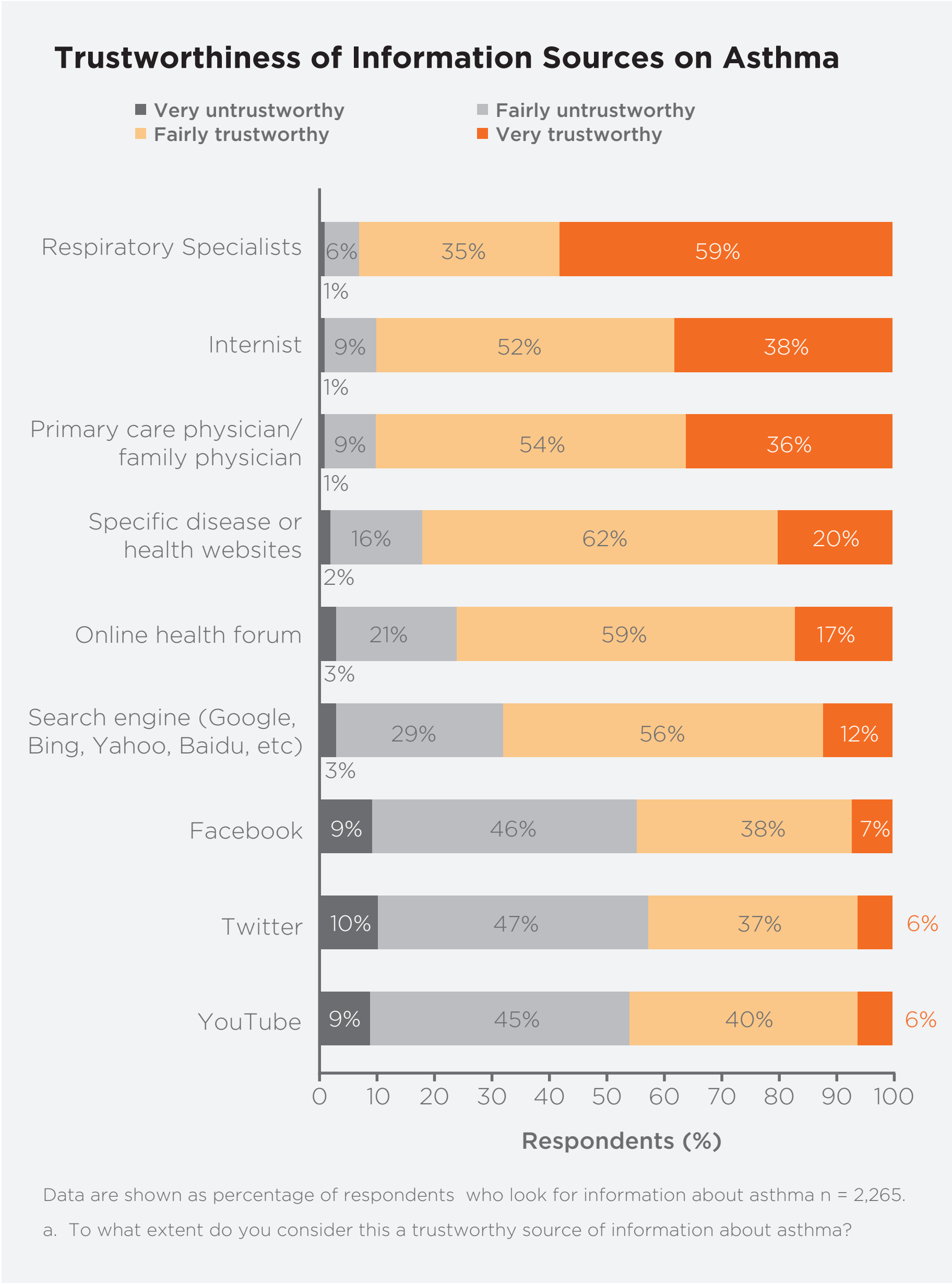


Information Sources

- Among sources of information, respondents preferred respiratory specialists (57%), online sources such as search engines (52%) and specific disease and health websites (39%), followed by primary care physicians (38%).



- Over 90% of patients consider physicians (specialists or general practitioners alike) as trustworthy sources of information. Although > 70% of patients consider internet information (i.e. disease or health websites, search engines) as trustworthy, only 33% would recommend them to friends.



- In general, social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) are not considered as trustworthy information sources as compared to health care professionals.

Conclusions

- Patients with asthma in Asia perceive themselves as knowledgeable and confident in managing asthma, and majority actively look for information about their condition.
- Moreover, patients prefer physicians (respiratory specialists and primary care physicians) and the internet (disease or health websites and search engines) as sources of information about asthma.
- Patients most frequently search for information about managing asthma exacerbations, a reflection of their perception of asthma treatment. Physicians, working in partnership with their patients, are in a good position to help clarify treatment goals and move the patient away from this crisis-oriented mindset, and toward the goal of better asthma control.
- Healthcare professionals may be able to leverage this information-seeking behavior to educate patients about better asthma self-management and improve asthma outcomes.

References

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Declarations of Interest

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