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Poster #1

Exploring Attitudes Toward AI and Omnichannel in Medical Communications

HCG Publications Center of Excellence
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Adelphi   IN HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS   ExcerptaMedica

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Background

- Since the launch of ChatGPT at the end of 2022, interest in artificial intelligence (AI) and omnichannel strategies in medical communications has grown exponentially
  - Generative AI is leading a drive to integrate AI into medical communications, including in omnichannel strategies
  - However, concerns over the potential risks for inaccuracy, bias, and security remain
- In 2023, we discussed these topics at a roundtable held at the 19th Annual Meeting of ISMPP, 6 months after the launch of ChatGPT
- In 2024, we have more guidance on AI in medical communications, including the ISMPP position statement and call to action[1]
  - However, there remains a need to better characterize and understand how AI and omnichannel can be implemented into medical communications

Objective

- To evaluate the current understanding, application, and future potential of AI and omnichannel among medical publication professionals

Methods

- A 17-question survey was developed to explore respondents' experience, attitudes, and future plans for AI and omnichannel use, including perceived barriers and implementations challenges
- Microsoft Forms - The Microsoft Forms survey was deployed via email, LinkedIn, and ISMPP Connect on January 7, 2024 and responses were extracted on March 18, 2024, and Descriptive statistics are reported

Results

- A total of 87 respondents filled out at least one question, and 86 completed all survey questions (**Table 1**)
- The vast majority of respondents were from a scientific communication agency, and most had ≥ 10 years of experience (**Table 2**)

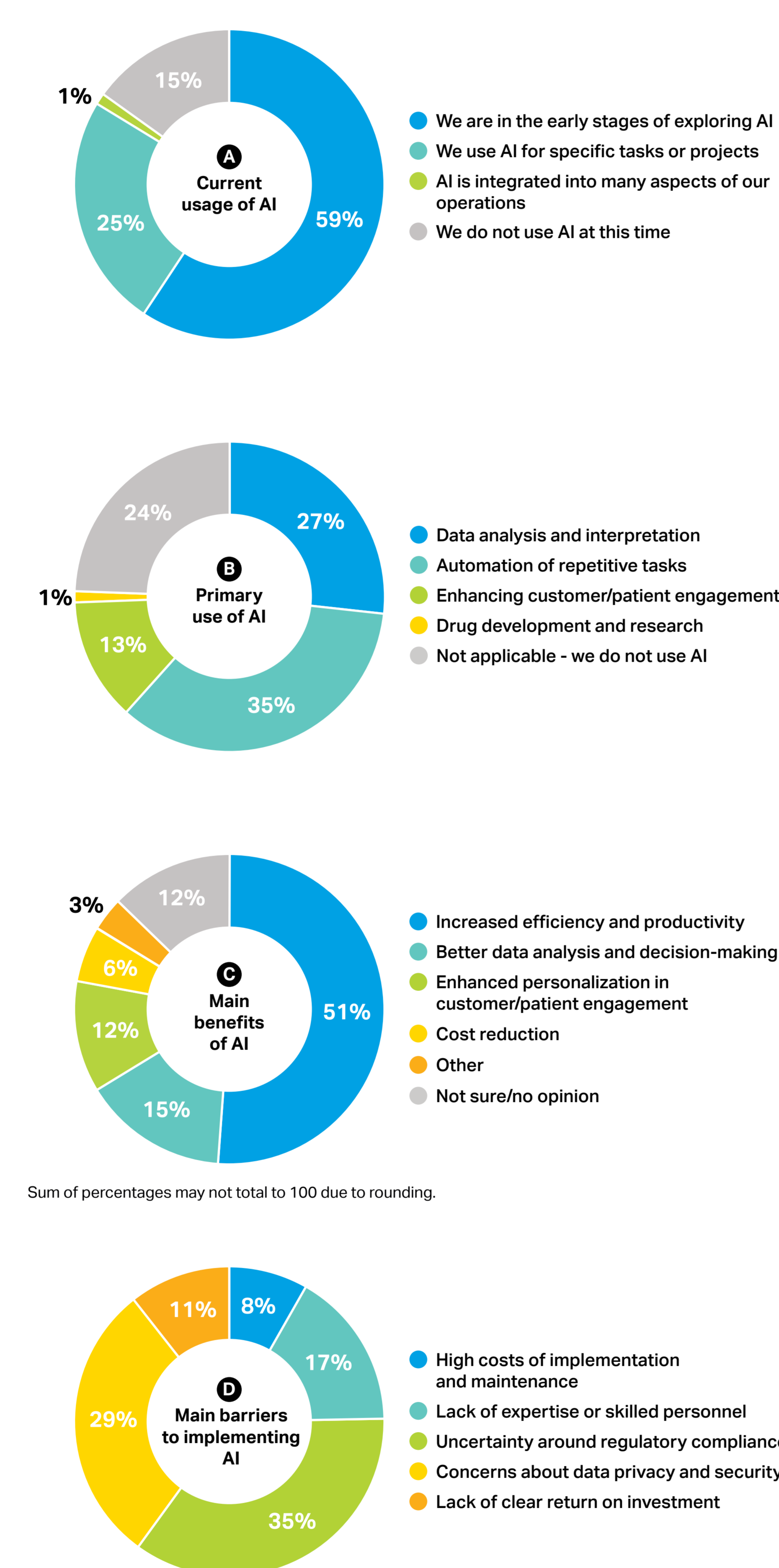### Table 1: 17-Question Survey on AI and Omnichannel

Section 1: Background information	• Role/job title • Company type • Years of experience in the industry (not AI specific) • Location
Section 2: Experience with AI	• Current use of AI in your organization? • Primary use of AI in your organization? • What do you perceive as the main benefits of AI for our industry? • What do you see as the main barriers to implementing AI at your current organization?
Section 3: Omnichannel	• Rate your understanding and awareness of omnichannel strategies • What is the current implementation of omnichannel strategies at your company? • What do you see as the main barriers to omnichannel implementation?
Section 4: AI and omnichannel	• What impact do you expect AI to have on omnichannel strategies? • What training opportunities are available at your current company around AI? About omnichannel? • What future plans are you aware of regarding AI and omnichannel?
Section 5: Further thoughts	• Thinking back to this time last year (Q1 2023), how has your perception changed regarding AI and the potential impact on your day-to-day work? • Please share any other thoughts, queries, or concerns you have around AI and/or omnichannel

Table 2: Respondent Attributes

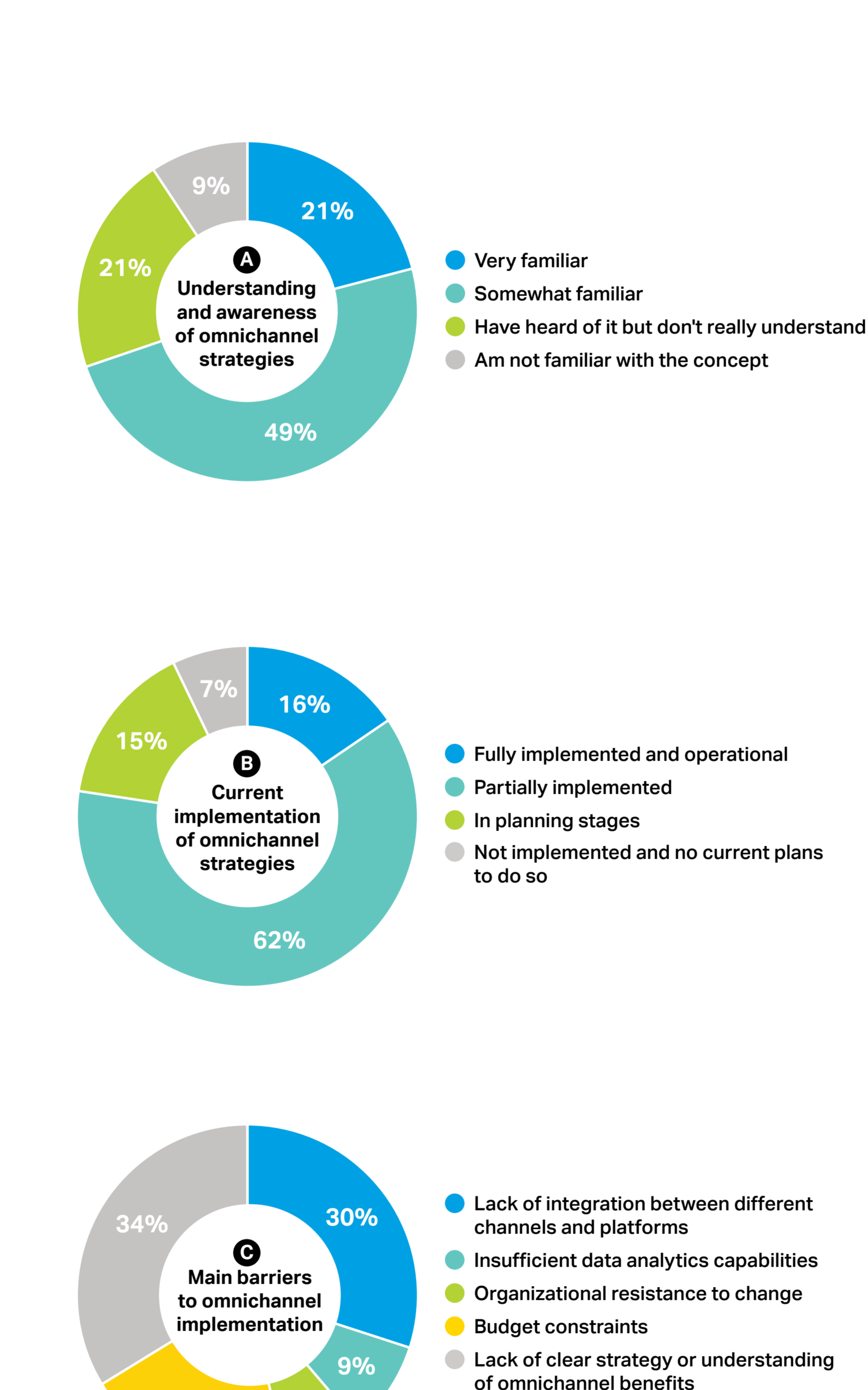| N=86		Respondents (%)
Company type	Agency	77 (90)
	Pharmaceutical company	5 (6)
	Freelancer	2 (2)
	Other	2 (2)
Years of experience in medical communications	<1	5 (6)
	2-5	32 (37)
	6-10	9 (10)
	≥10	40 (47)
Location	North America	51 (59)
	Europe	34 (40)
	Asia	1 (1)
	Other locations	0

- Most respondents are already exploring and implementing AI, primarily for automation and analysis, with the goal of increasing efficacy and productivity; regulatory compliance and concerns around privacy and security were seen as the main barriers (**Figure 1**)

Figure 1: Current Use of AI

A Current usage of AI
- 59% We are in the early stages of exploring AI
- 25% We use AI for specific tasks or projects
- 15% AI is integrated into many aspects of our operations
- 1% We do not use AI at this time

B Primary use of AI
- 27% Data analysis and interpretation
- 35% Automation of repetitive tasks
- 13% Enhancing customer/patient engagement
- 24% Drug development and research
- 1% Not applicable - we do not use AI

C Main benefits of AI
- 51% Increased efficiency and productivity
- 15% Better data analysis and decision-making
- 12% Enhanced personalization in customer/patient engagement
- 6% Cost reduction
- 3% Other
- 12% Not sure/no opinion

D Main barriers to implementing AI
- 8% High costs of implementation and maintenance
- 17% Lack of expertise or skilled personnel
- 35% Uncertainty around regulatory compliance
- 29% Concerns about data privacy and security
- 11% Lack of clear return on investment

Sum of percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

- General attitudes around omnichannel were similar to those for AI, indicating crossover in these interests; however, general understanding and adoption appeared lower than with AI (**Figure 2**)
- The main barriers to implementation—a lack of clear strategy and understanding of the benefits of omnichannel—could be overcome with better communication and education (**Figure 2**)

Figure 2: Current Attitudes Toward Omnichannel

A Understanding and awareness of omnichannel strategies
- 21% Very familiar
- 49% Somewhat familiar
- 21% Have heard of it but don't really understand
- 9% Am not familiar with the concept

B Current implementation of omnichannel strategies
- 16% Fully implemented and operational
- 62% Partially implemented
- 15% In planning stages
- 7% Not implemented and no current plans to do so

C Main barriers to omnichannel implementation
- 30% Lack of integration between different channels and platforms
- 9% Insufficient data analytics capabilities
- 7% Organizational resistance to change
- 20% Budget constraints
- 34% Lack of clear strategy or understanding of omnichannel benefits

- Among all respondents, the majority felt AI would significantly (17%) or somewhat (38%) enhance the effectiveness of omnichannel (**Figure 3**)
  - 35% were unsure and 6% were neutral
- In their respective organization, respondents shared that significant (33%) or limited (44%) investment and expansion was planned for AI and omnichannel (**Figure 4**)
  - 15% of respondents said there were no plans to invest in AI or omnichannel
  - Majority of the responses suggested that there are opportunities for training and education in AI (69%) and omnichannel (71%) in place (**Figure 5**)
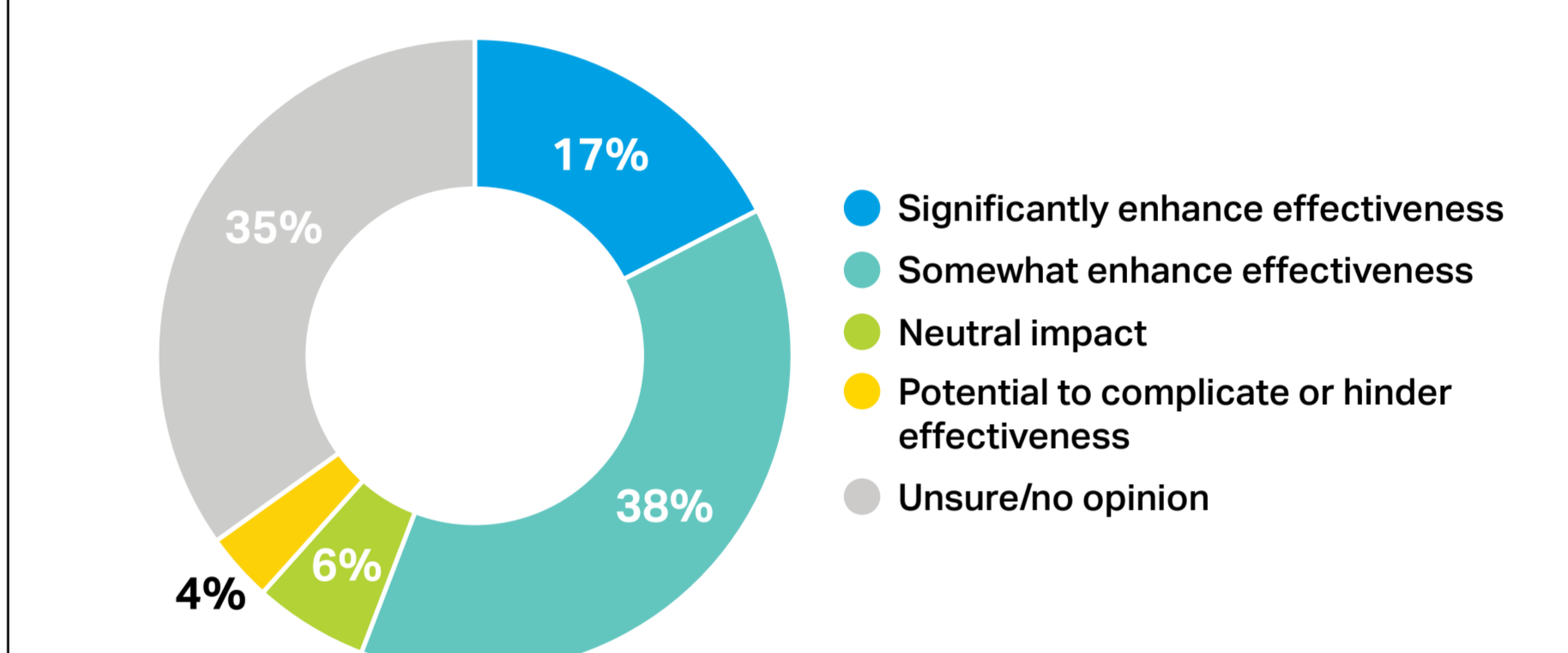
Figure 3: Impact of AI on Omnichannel Strategies

- 17% Significantly enhance effectiveness
- 38% Somewhat enhance effectiveness
- 4% Neutral impact
- 6% Potential to complicate or hinder effectiveness
- 35% Unsure/no opinion

Figure 4: Future Plans for AI and Omnichannel

- 32% Planning significant investment and expansion
- 44% Will likely invest but on a limited scale
- 8% Maintaining current level of investment
- 1% Reducing investment
- 15% No plans to invest in AI for omnichannel
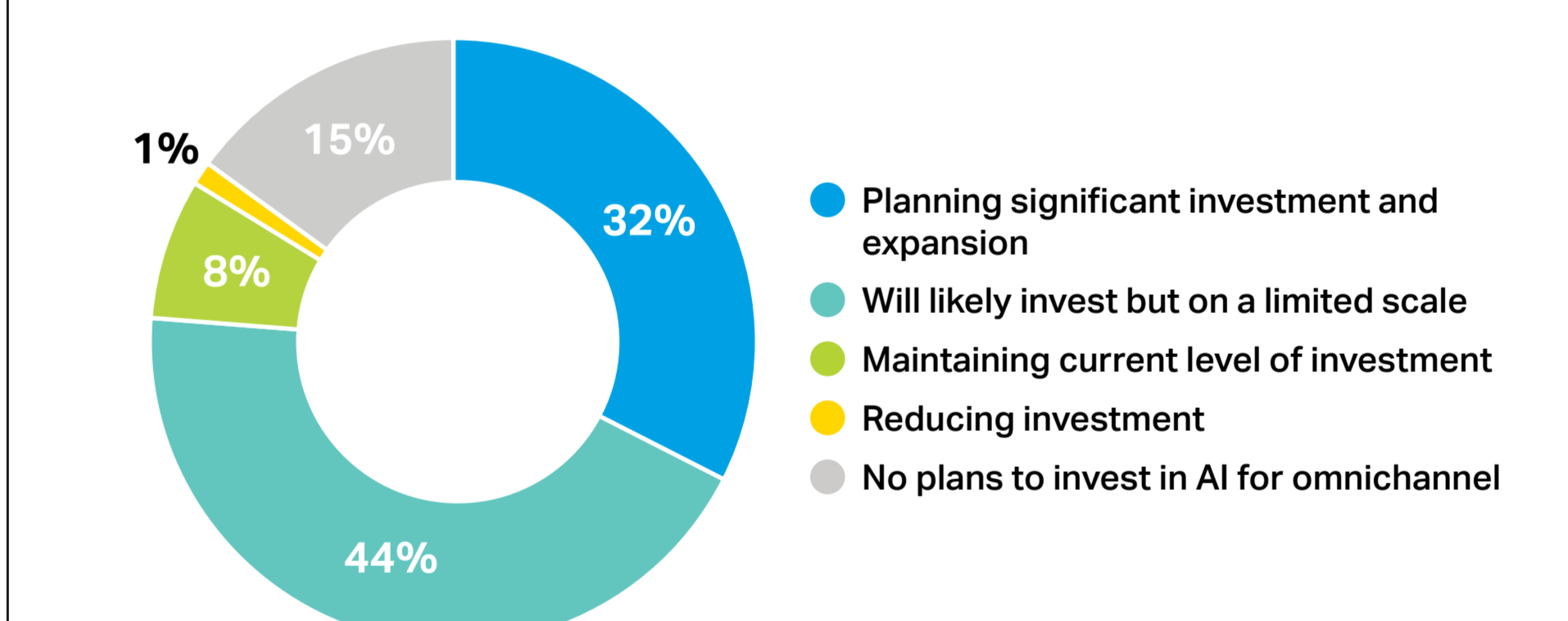
Figure 5: Opportunities for Training and Education

n=83 ● AI ● Omnichannel

	AI	Omnichannel
Extensive training and development in place	3	21
Some training but not comprehensive	19	24
Limited training—mainly ad hoc or informal	32	15
No specific training provided	16	8
Unsure	8	17
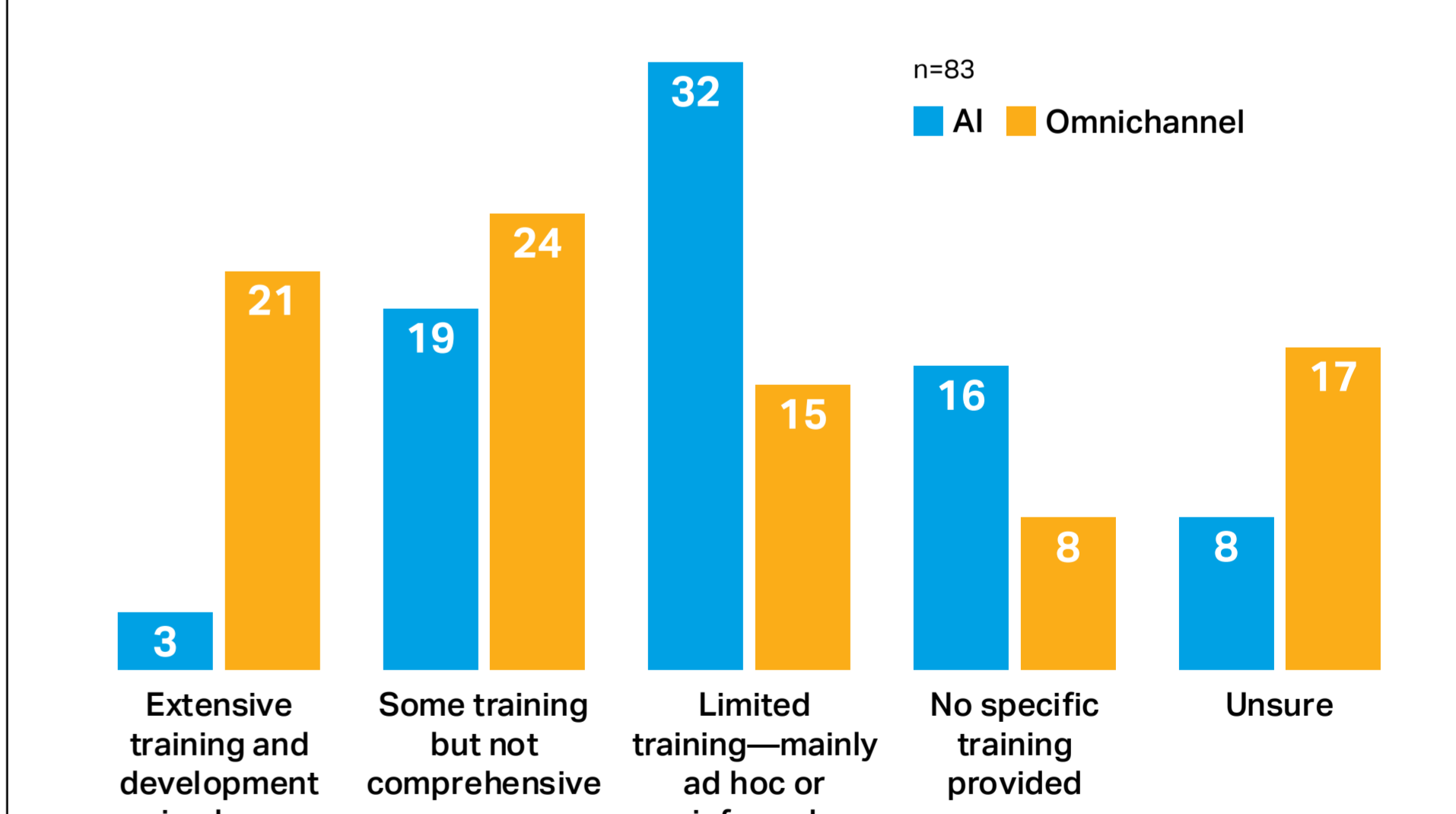
Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response.

Discussion and Conclusions

- Our survey indicated a high level of interest and **engagement** in AI and omnichannel, and of AI to support omnichannel strategies specifically
  - This may be increasing over time, as we found higher **usage** and **awareness** for AI than in previous research
- Compared with a recent survey study in which 49% of participants were unaware of AI or did not use AI in medical communications (superscript 2) only 15% of respondents in our survey indicated that they do not use AI
- The main perceived **benefits** of AI were efficiency and productivity
  - Reduced costs did not factor highly—initial set-up costs may be high, and the ability to quickly identify more relevant insights translates into more time required for synthesis
- Along with an expressed need for education and training on these technologies for effective implementation, there was marked **optimism** about the role AI and omnichannel will play in medical communications
- Further **education** around both AI and Omnichannel will help equip right knowledge and expertise to navigate future questions on implementation, use, and maintenance of these complex technologies for medical communications

Key Recommendations

- Familiarize yourself with free AI tools—don't be afraid to experiment!
- Understand the benefits and limitations of available tools
- Support colleagues who may be technoskeptic—everyone learns in their own way
- Monitor for emerging guidance around use of AI and omnichannel approaches in medical communications

References: 1. International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP). *Curr Med Res Opin.* 2024;40(1):9-10. 2. Kapadia A, et al. ISMPP-EU 2024. Abstract 5.

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