

Clinical Practice Characteristics and Technology Usage of Physicians from the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative

LaTonya Lott, MS, MPH, Xavier Johnson, MPH, Augusta Bilbro, BS
Mississippi State Department of Health, Jackson, Mississippi



BACKGROUND

To meet the challenge of providing access and better care of hypertension to Mississippians, the Mississippi State Department of Health's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program created the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative (MHSI). The goal of the program is to improve the quality of care strategies for patients by increasing physicians' knowledge and skills in managing complex, treatment resistant forms of hypertension and increasing the number of certified hypertension specialists in Mississippi.

OBJECTIVE

To examine the clinical practice characteristics and technology usage of Mississippi physicians recruited during the first year of MHSI.

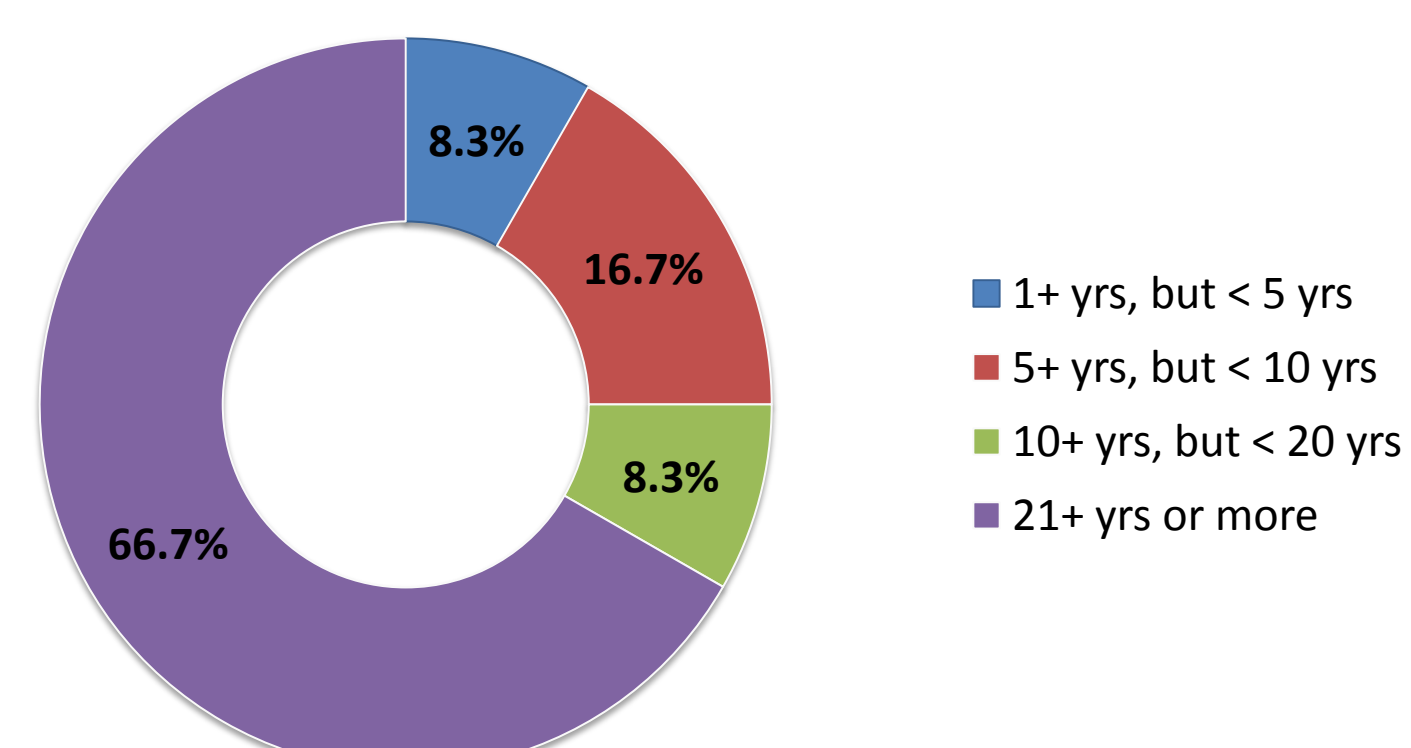
METHOD

Mississippi physicians were recruited to participate in a two-day clinical review course to prepare for the American Society of Hypertension Specialist (ASH) Exam. Prior to participating the two day-clinical review course, Mississippi physicians completed a survey including questions on their medical practice, demographics, and current technology use. Frequency analysis using SPSS 21.0 was conducted on responses to survey questions.

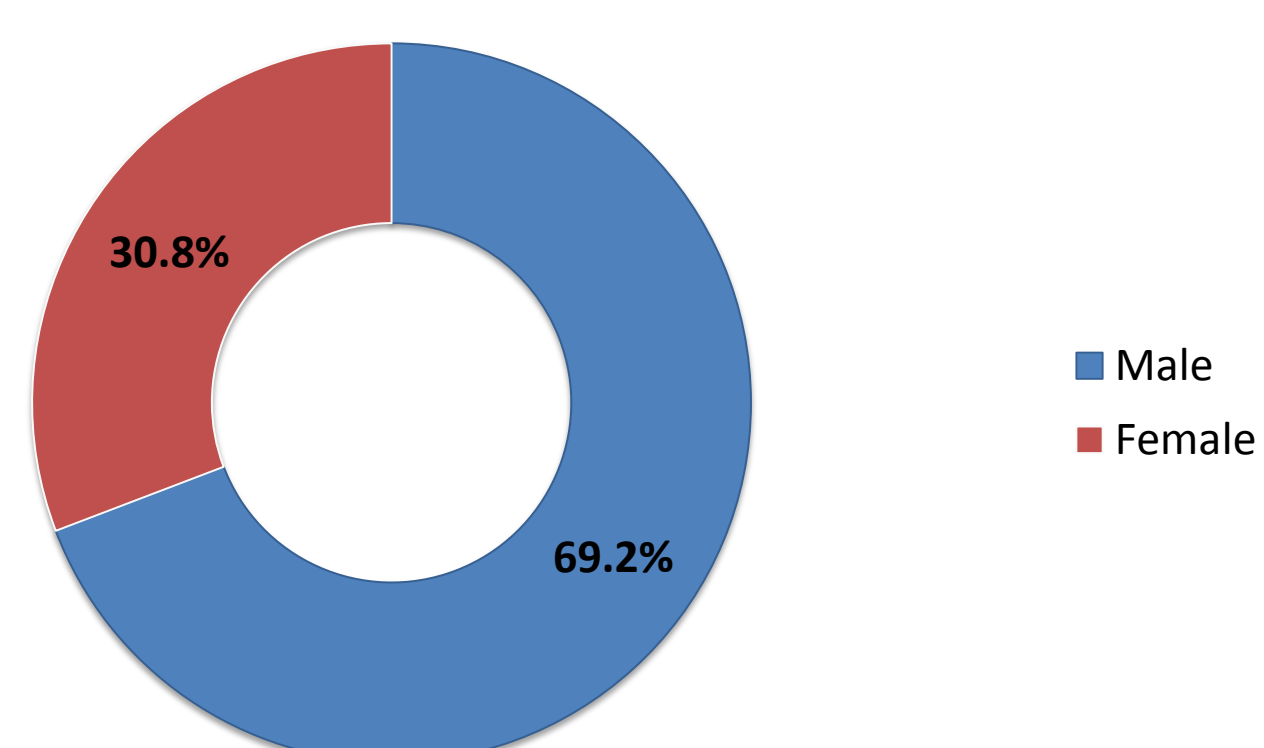
RESULTS

Thirty-three out of the 37 physicians who participated in the ASH prep course completed the survey (89.2% response rate, n=33). Mostly, the physicians were male (69.2%), white (46.2%), had more than twenty years experience as a practicing medical doctor (66.7%).

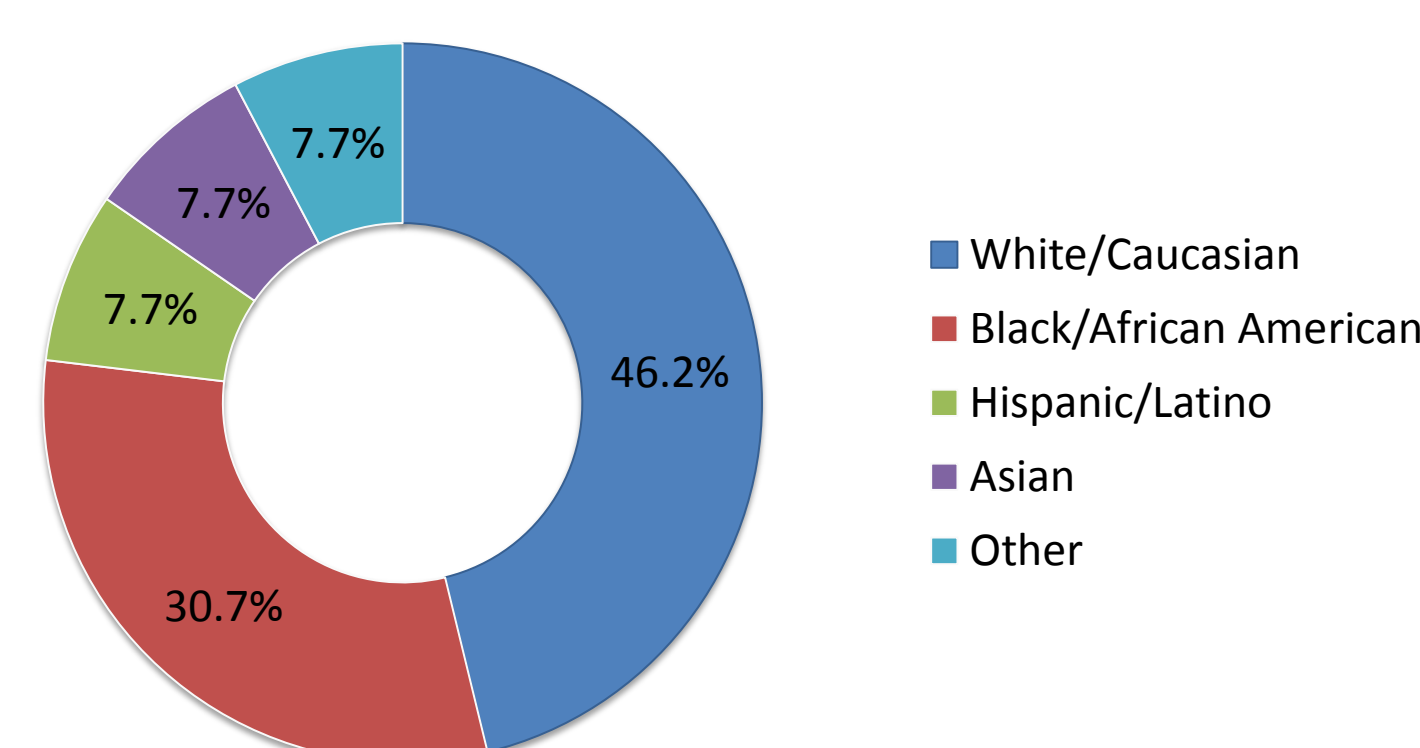
Number of Years as Practicing Physician by Percent



Physicians' Gender by Percent



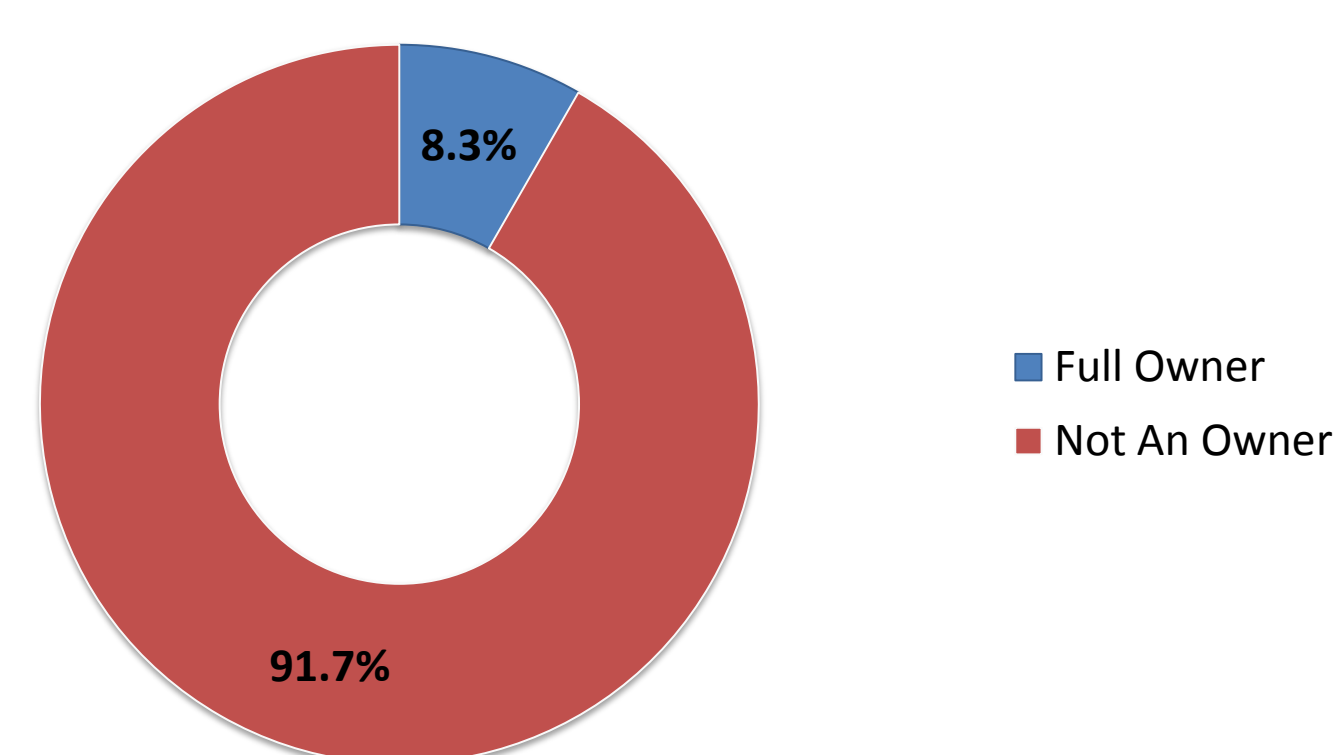
Physicians' Race/Ethnic Background by Percent



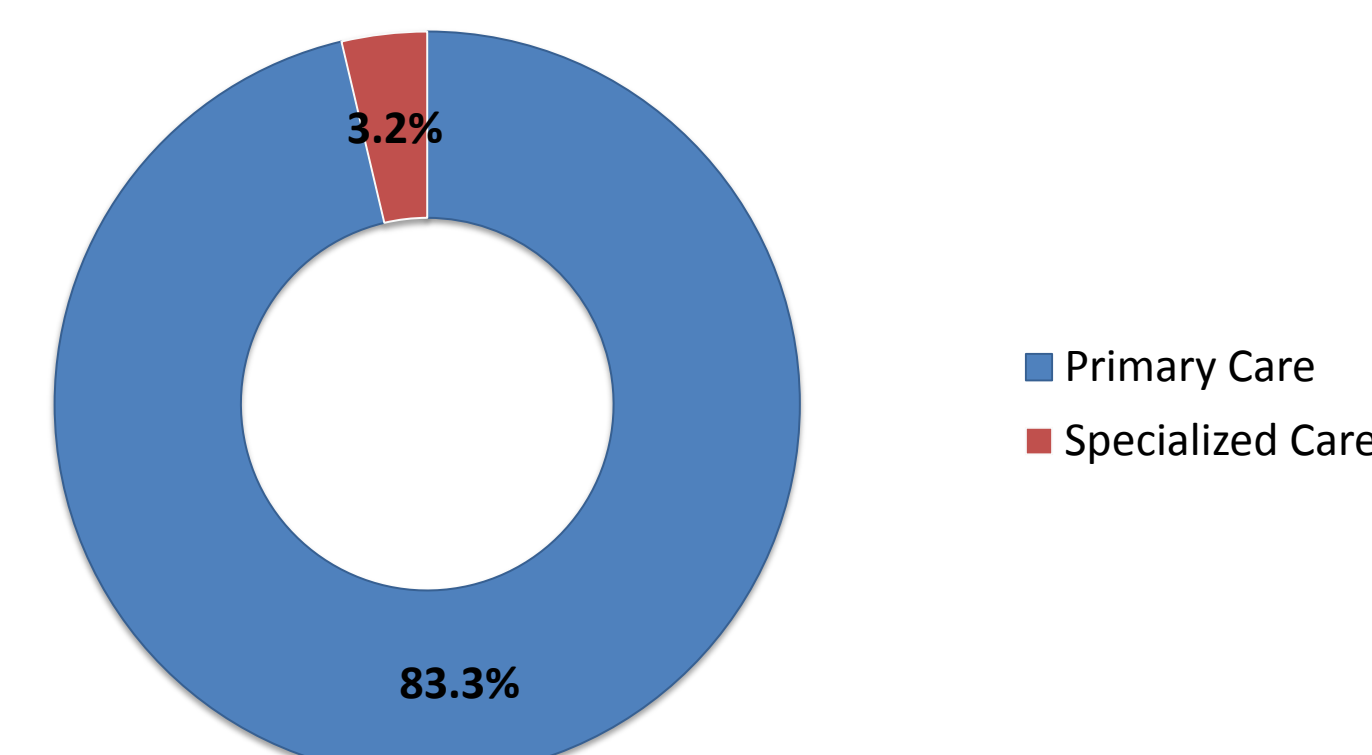
CLINICAL PRACTICE CHARACTERISTICS

The majority of the physicians worked in primary care (83.3%) and community/public clinic (45.4%), did not own their practice (91.7%), had weekly patient load of 61-80 patients (38.5%). Over 92% of the physicians work 31 or more hours per week.

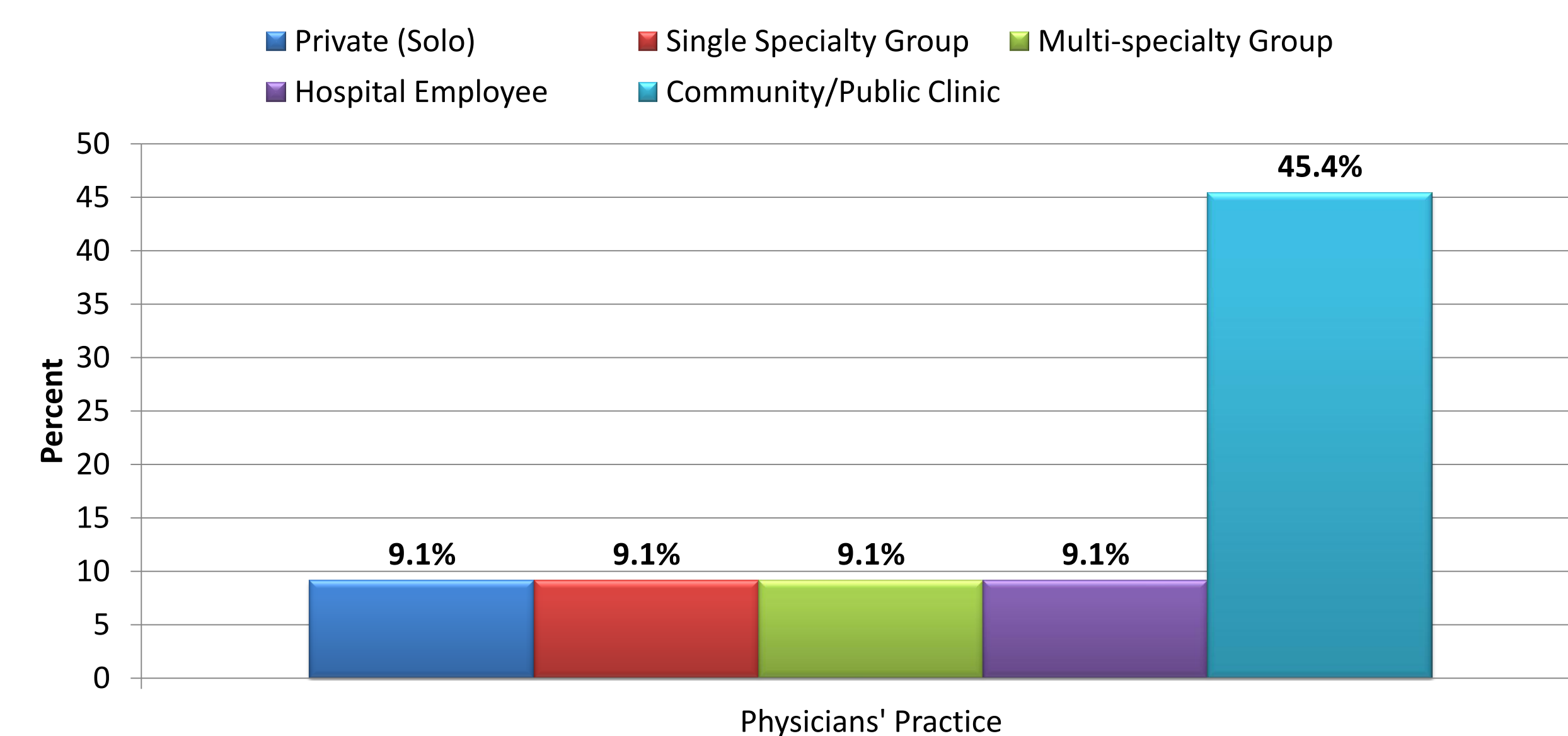
Physicians' Ownership of Practice by Percent



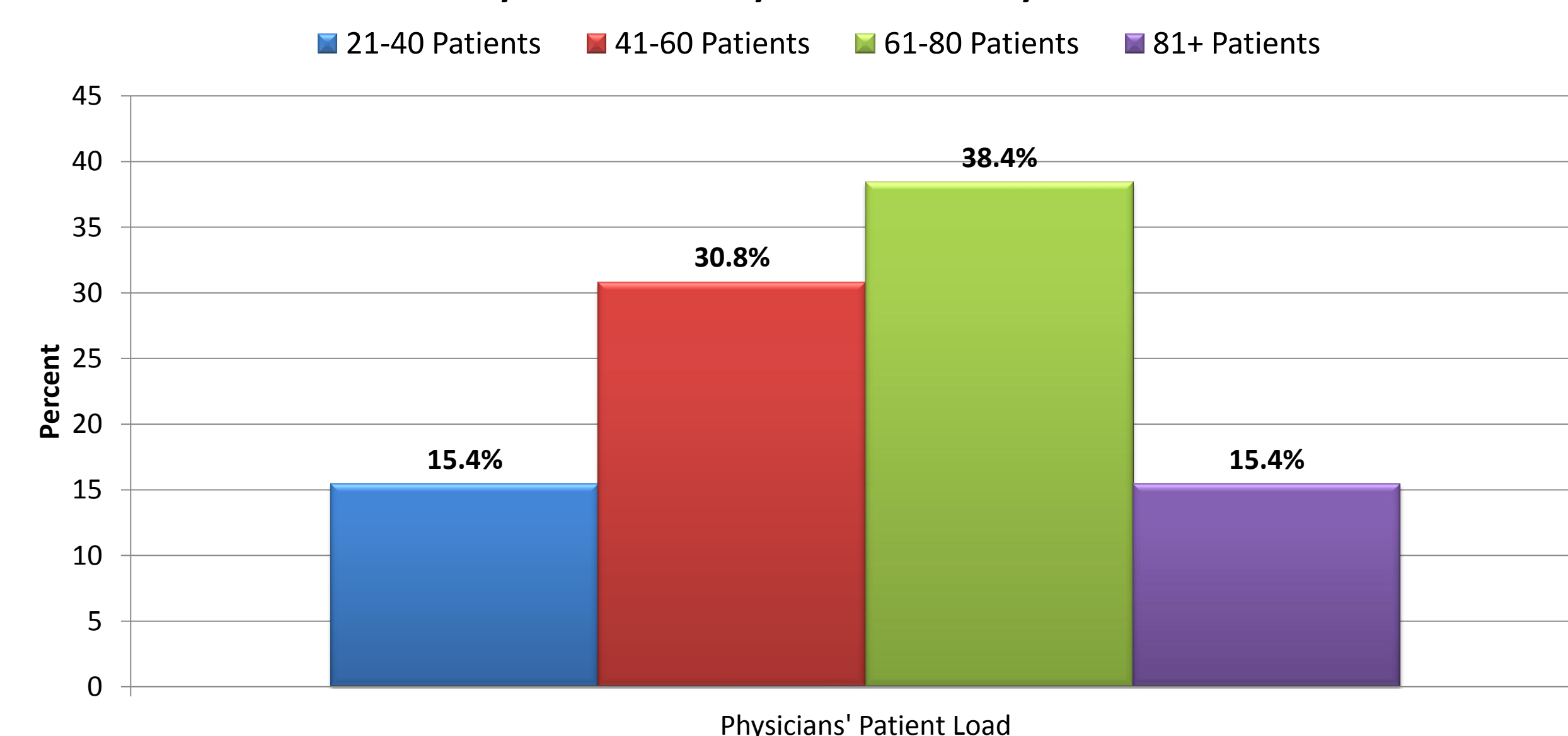
Type of Medical Practice by Percent



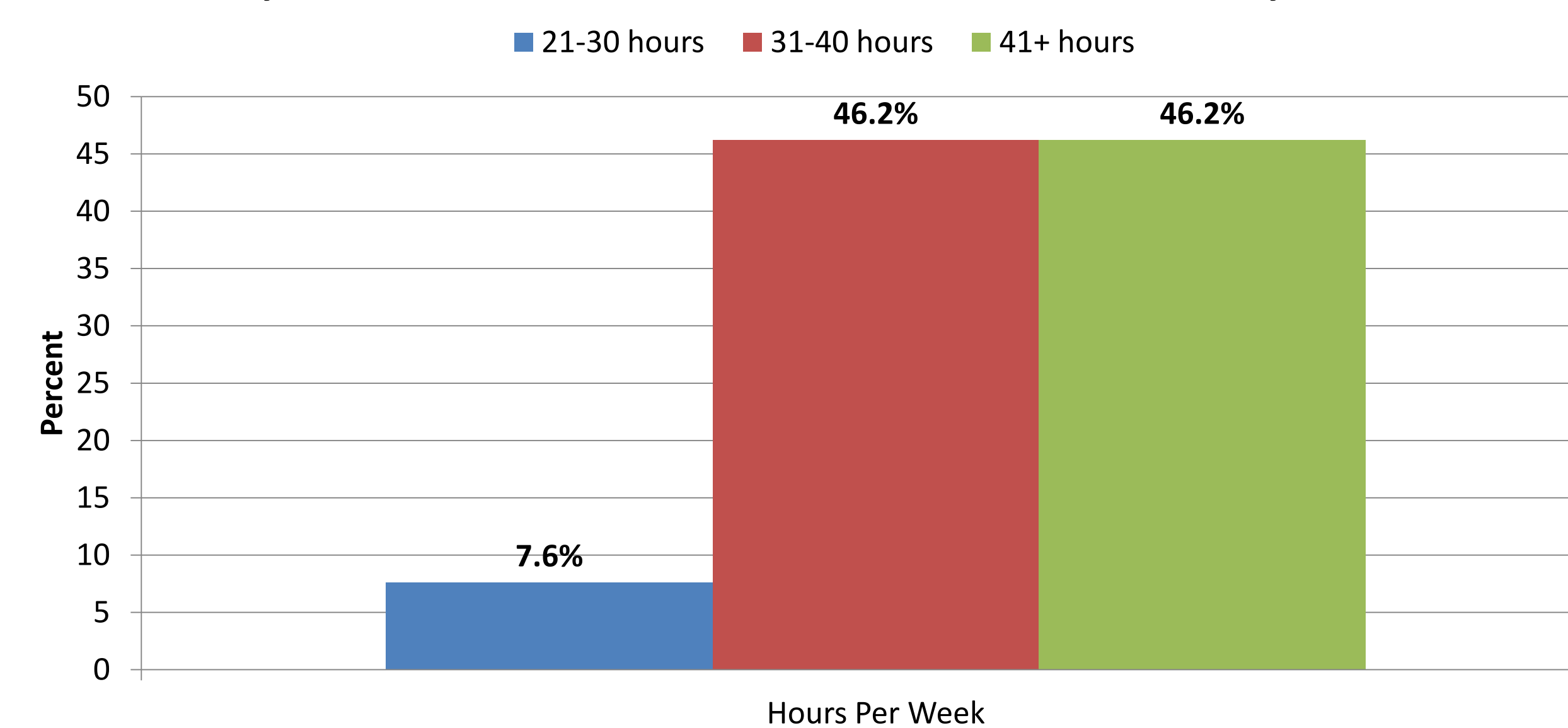
Physician Practice Type by Percent



Physicians' Weekly Patient Load by Percent



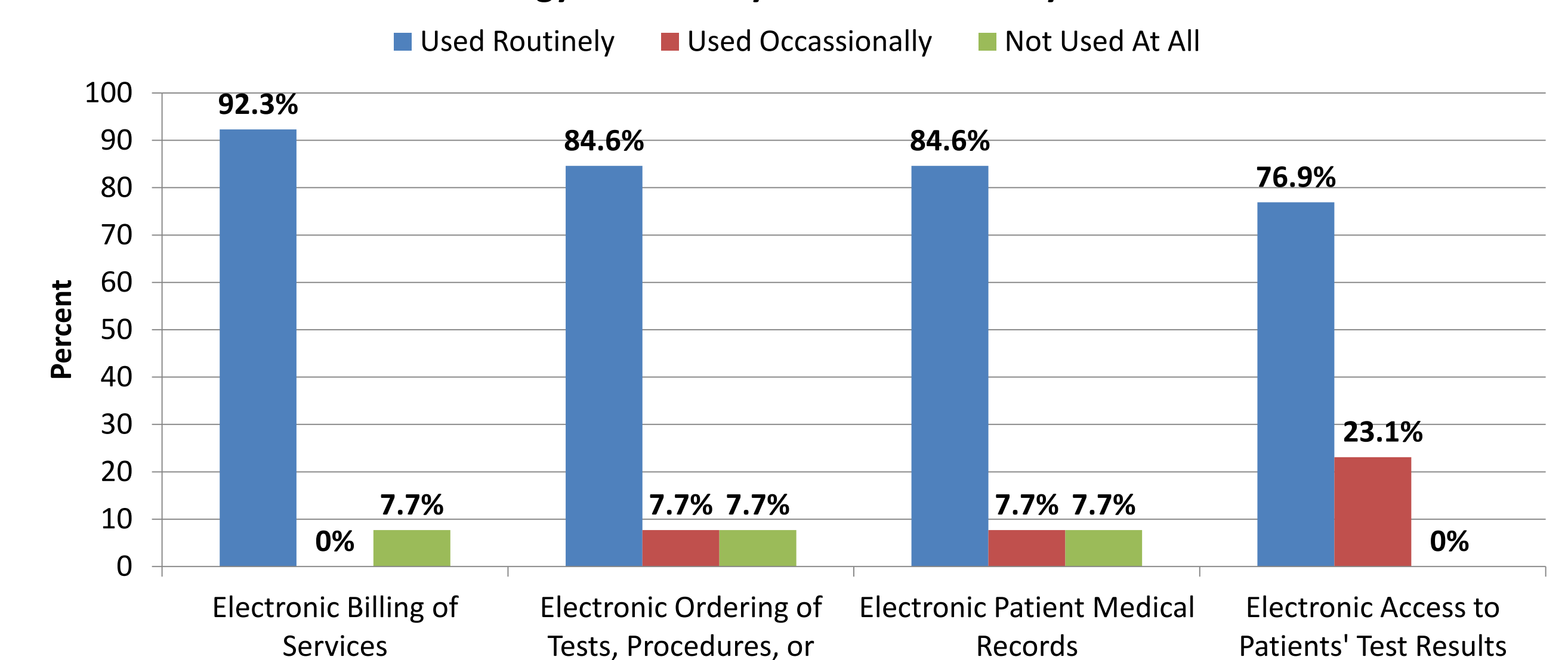
Physicians' Hours Per Week Involved with Direct Patient Care by Percent



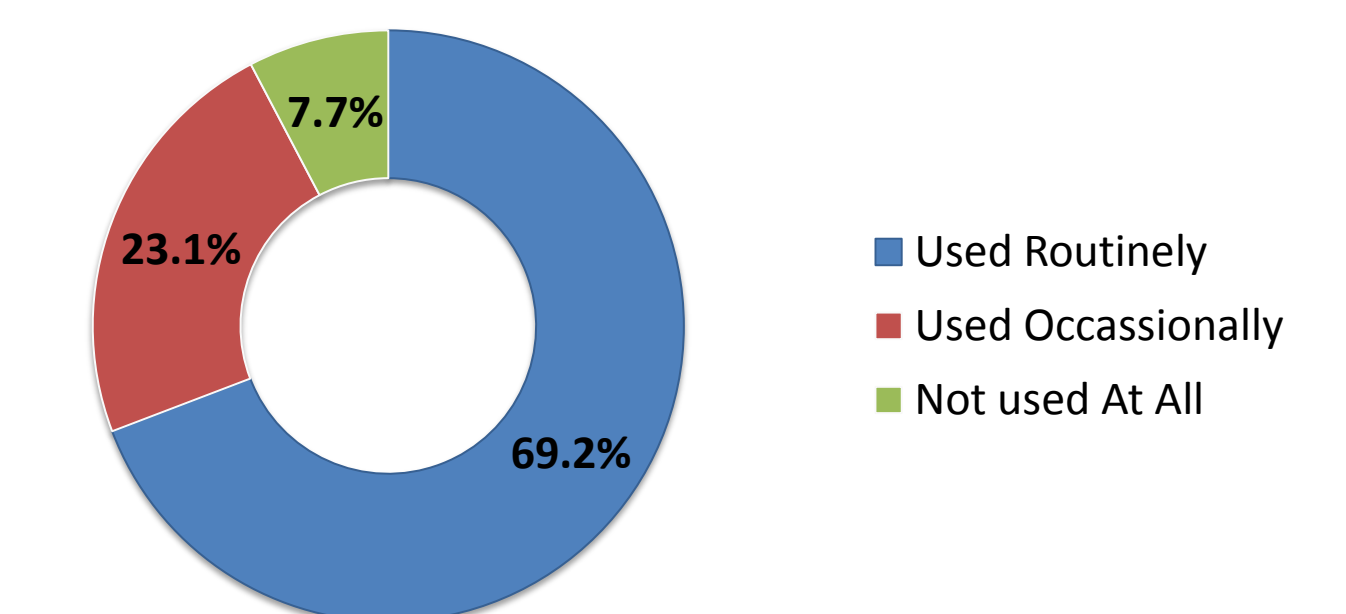
TECHNOLOGY USAGE

Also, physicians responded that they routinely used: electronic billing of services (92.3%), electronic ordering of tests, procedures or drugs (84.6%), electronic patient medical records (84.6%), email other doctors to consult or communicate about patients (30.8%), email patients to communicate about care (23.1%), and computer-based decision support tools that provide real-time treatment recommendations or diagnostic support for patients (69.2%).

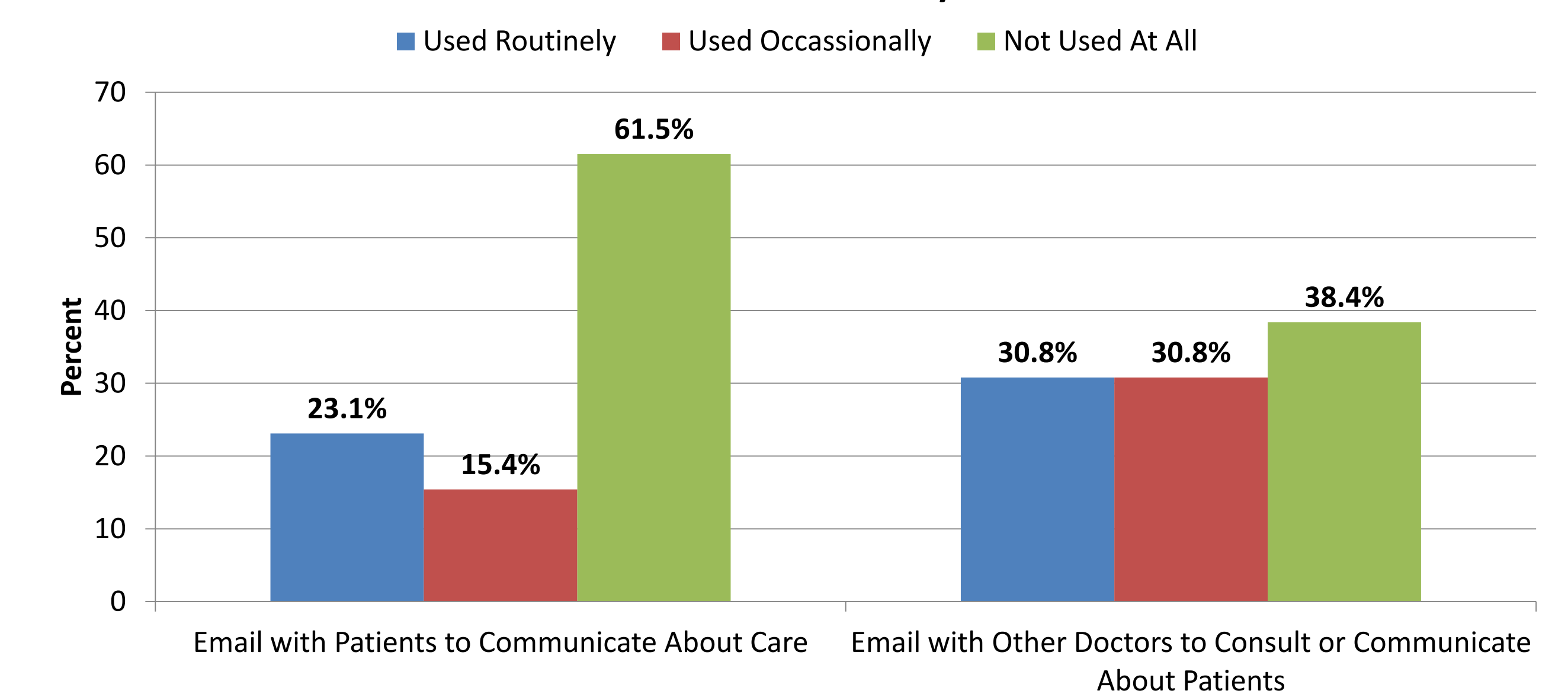
Technology Tools in Physicians' Practice by Percent



Physicians' Use of Computer-Based Decision Support Tools by Percent



Use of Email to Communicate in Physicians' Practice



DISCUSSION

- Examining Mississippi physicians' practice and technology usage provided understanding of their delivery of health care services.
- Mississippi physicians who participated in the ASH prep course had many years of experience and utilized technological support mechanisms in their day-to-day clinical practice.
- An overwhelming majority of the physicians reported that they routinely use computer-based decision support tools in their practice. This demonstrates that MHSI recruitment is effectively targeting physicians whose practices have pre-requisite qualifications for them to become a designated hypertension specialist.