



# Staff response and clinic attendee reactions to participation of a UK sexual health service in a reality TV series

## Introduction

- Entertainment-education television shows provide opportunities to deliver effective sexual health promotion.
- Opinions cited by young people regarding sexual health services include concerns about confidentiality, lack of confidence to access services and fear of the unknown<sup>1</sup>.
- Our service featured in six reality TV programmes: "Unsafe Sex in the City"(Firecracker Films) following real patients and staff in common STI and HIV testing scenarios.
- Programmes also featured patient background stories and were developed in dramatic and humorous style. The show was broadcast on BBC 3, a public service channel aimed at 16-34 year olds, the group at highest risk of STIs in the UK.

- We sampled staff and clinic attendee opinions to assess whether this format demonstrated features of entertainment, identification, viewer engagement and effective health education messages; and how acceptable such filming was to staff.

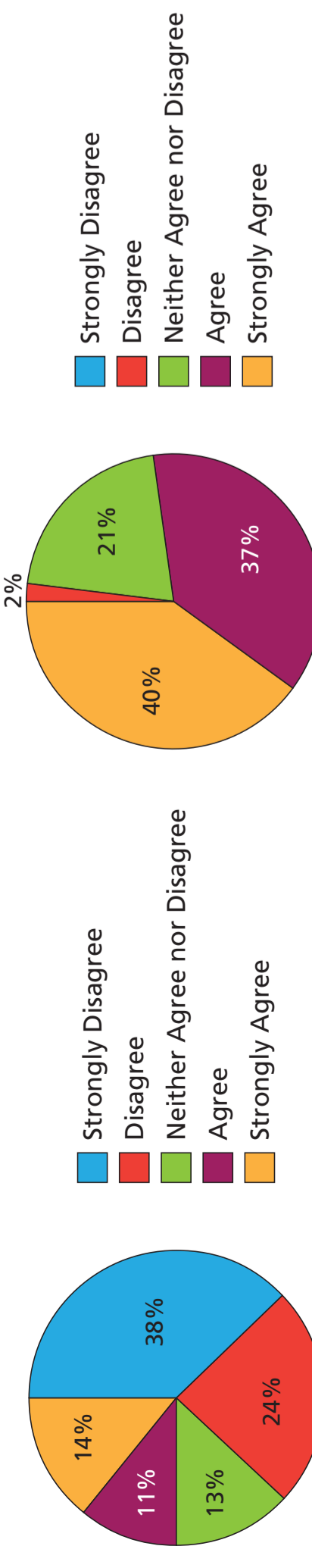
## Methods

Questionnaires were distributed to staff and attendees during the programme broadcast period (October - November 2013).

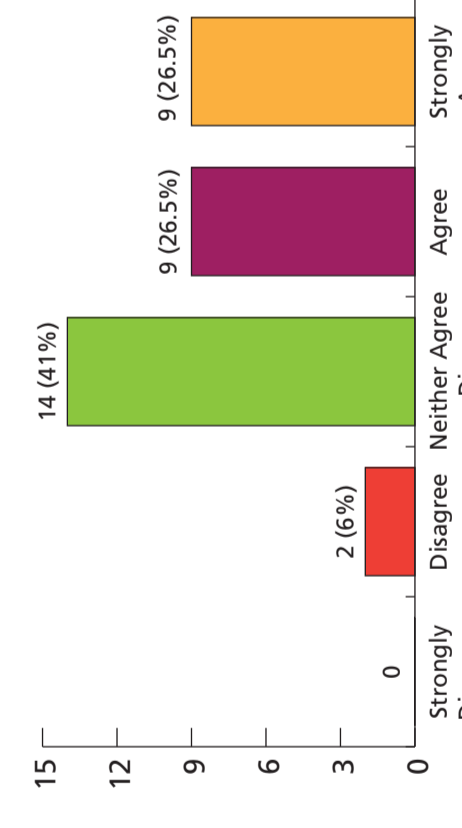
## Results

- Attendee Responses (n=194)**
  - 109 female (56%), 175 (91%) aged 16-34.
  - 91 (47%) watched the programme.

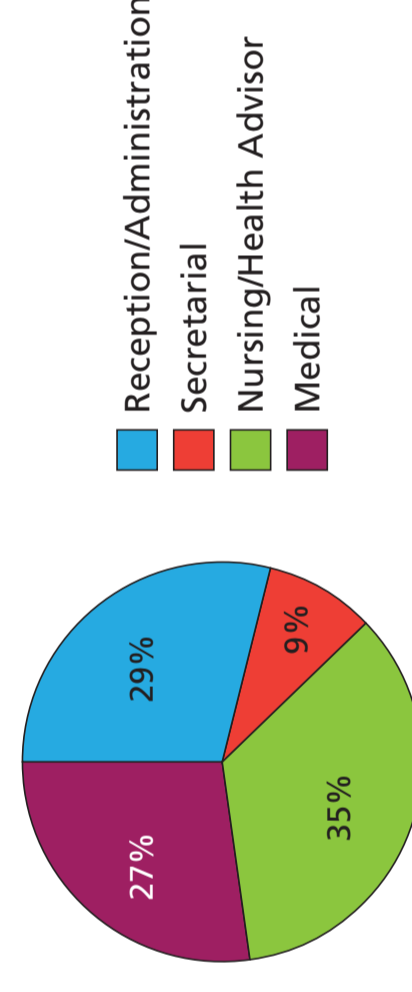
*I came today because I watched Unsafe Sex in the City*



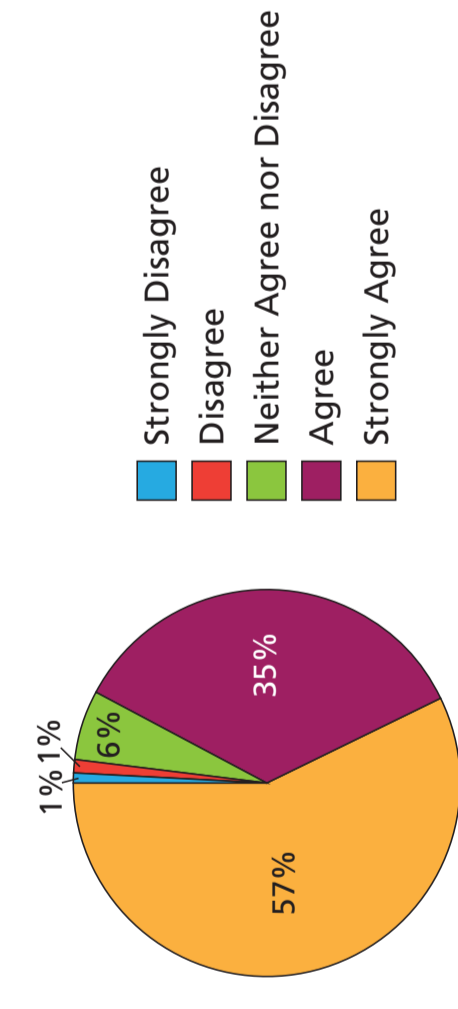
*I felt enthusiastic and supported filming*



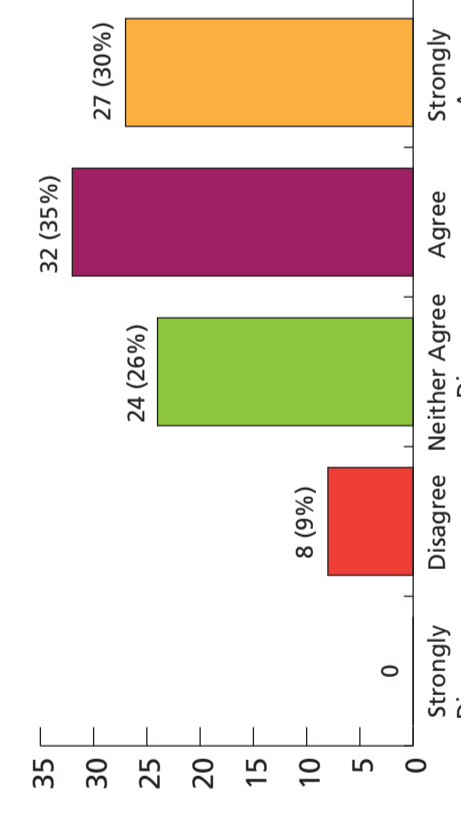
*Staff respondents - Occupation*



*The staff appeared professional & caring*



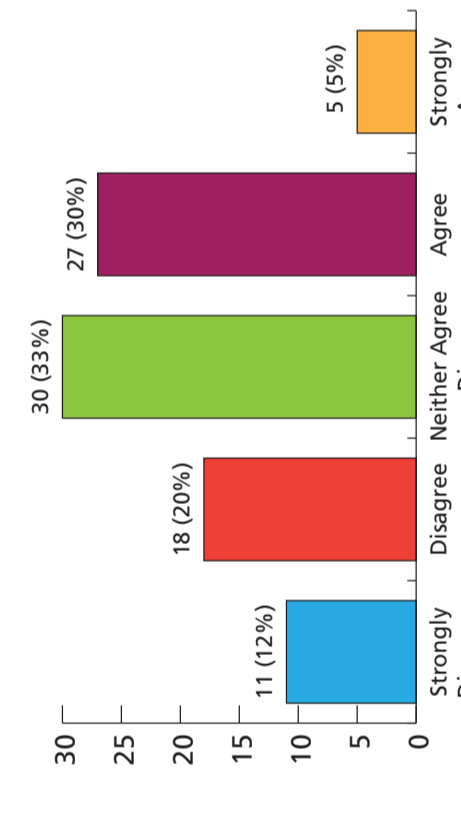
*I found the programmes entertaining*



*I found the programmes embarrassing*



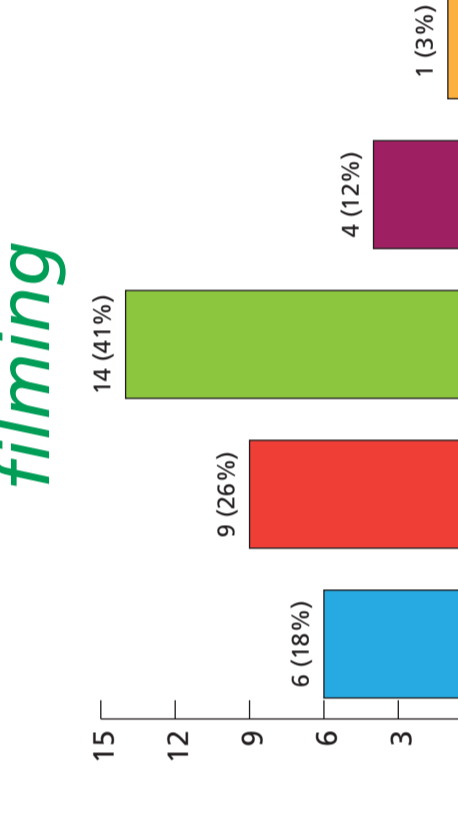
*The patient stories were similar to mine*



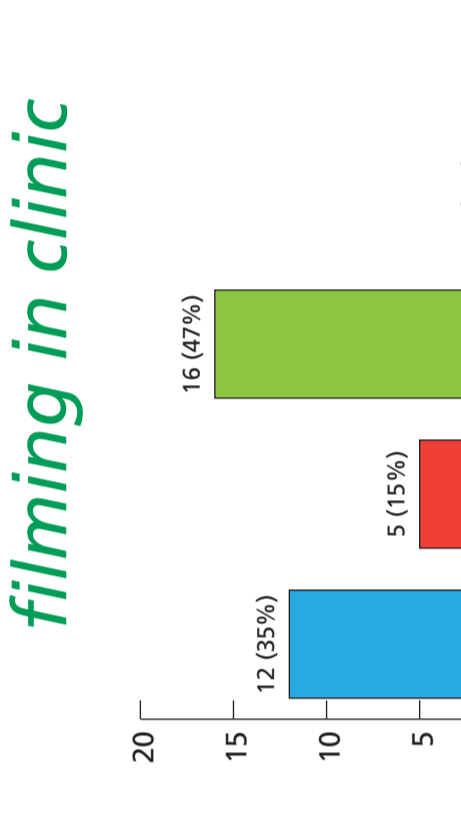
## Patient Comments

- "I was planning on coming but the programme pushed me to do it"
- "Always feel comfortable and staff non judgemental"
- "I didn't realise the HIV rate in Leeds was so high"
- "I saw someone I had sex with on the programme being treated for chlamydia"
- "I didn't know you could catch an STI from oral sex"
- "I didn't know testicular pain could be a sign of an STI"

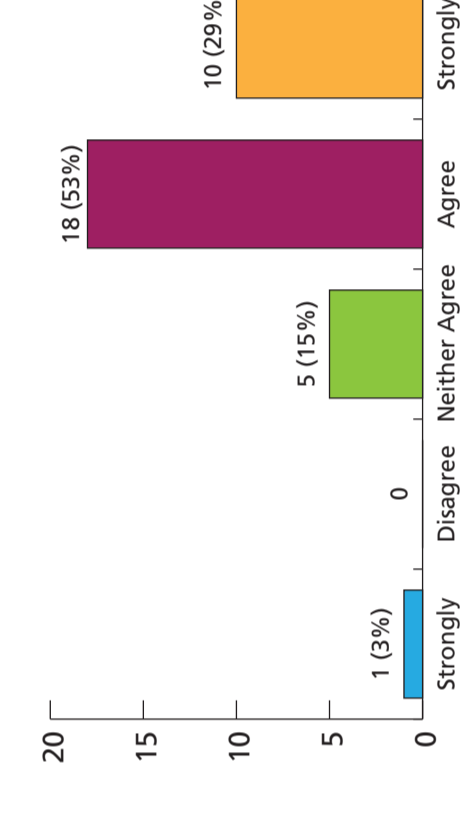
*I felt uncomfortable but supported filming*



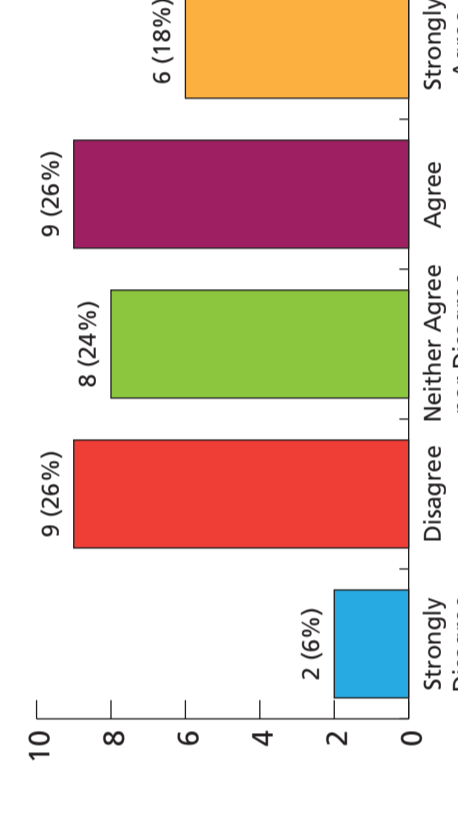
*I felt we should not be filming in clinic*



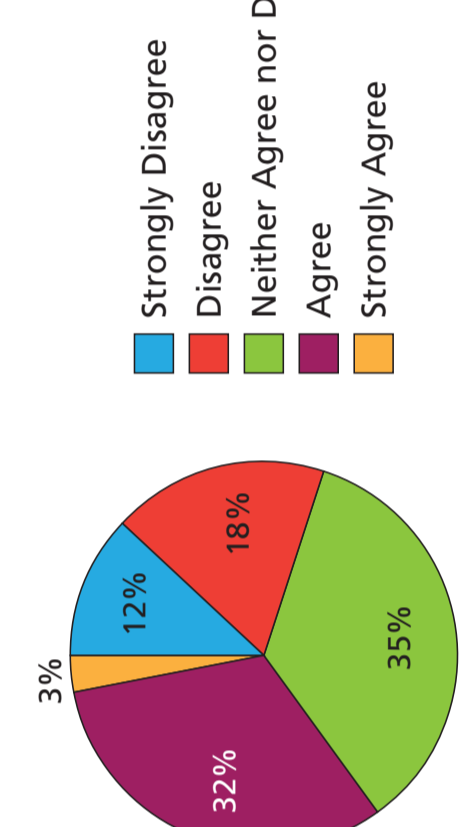
*I found the film crew professional*



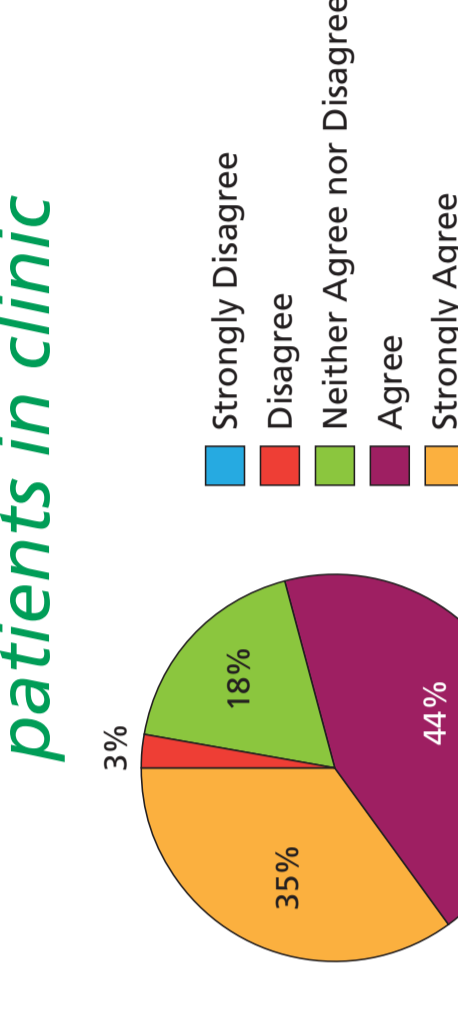
*I found the presence of the crew made patients not being filmed uncomfortable*



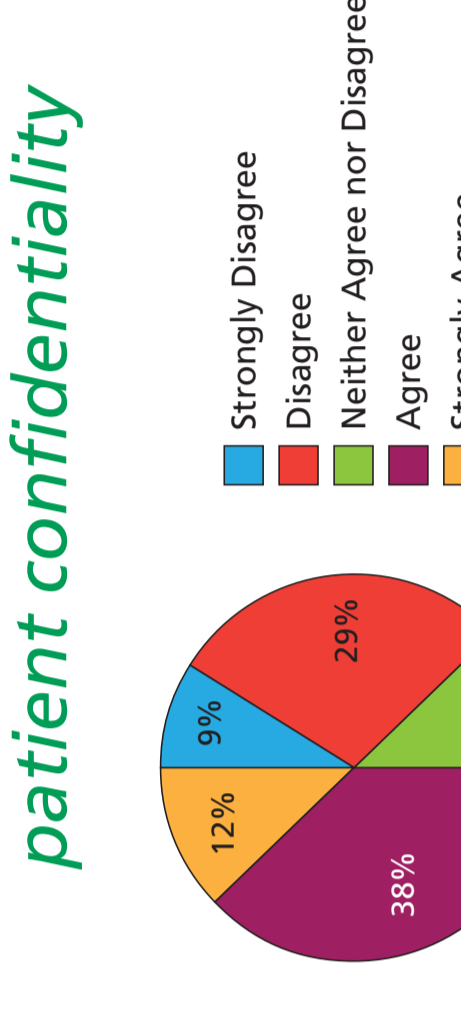
*I found the filming disruptive*



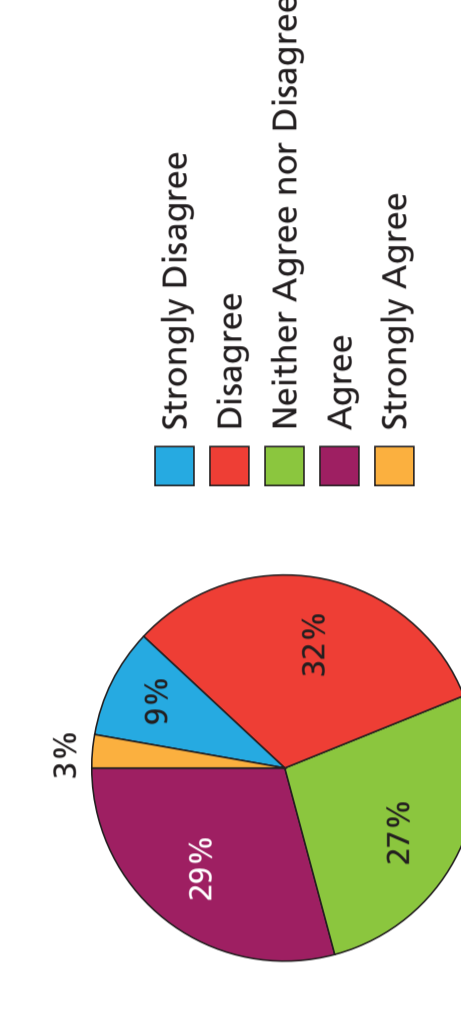
*I was pleased the public would see what happens to patients in clinic*



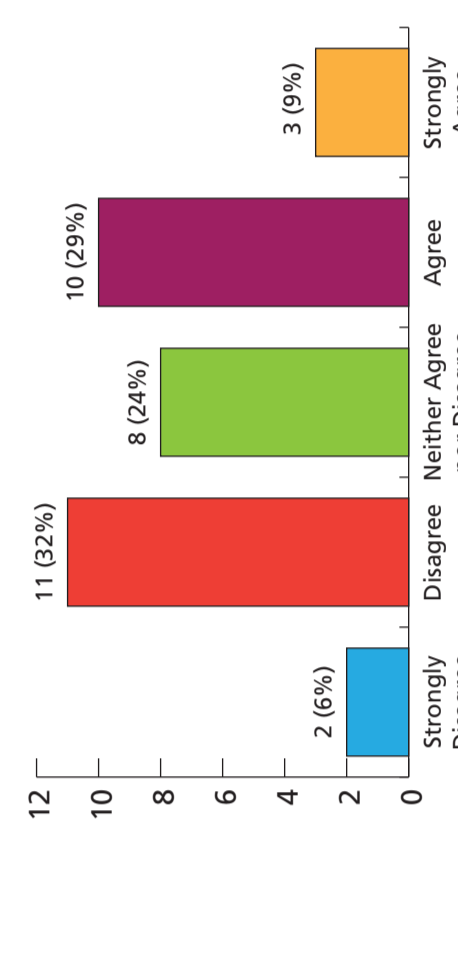
*I was concerned about patient confidentiality*



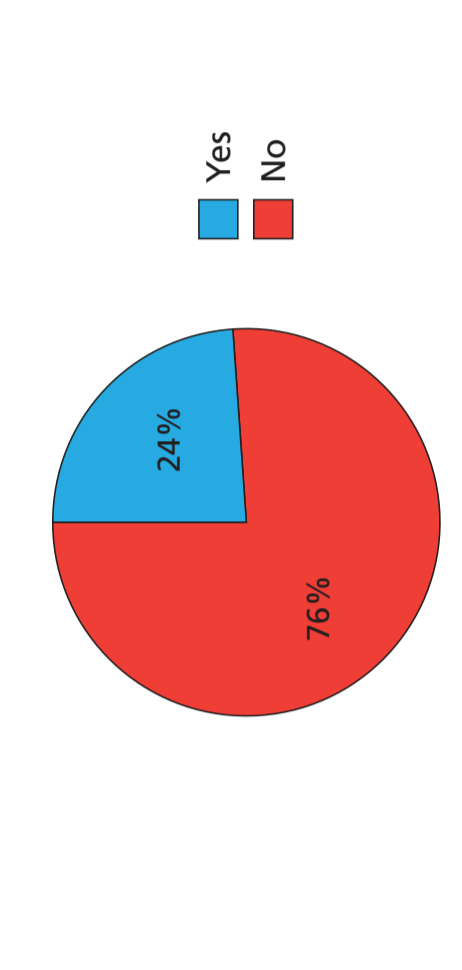
*I was concerned vulnerable patients might be exploited*



*I found the presence of the crew made staff not being filmed uncomfortable*



*Did you ask the crew to stop filming at any point?*



## Staff Comments

- "The programme highlighted the risk of catching STIs and unwanted/unplanned pregnancies"
- "My non-NHS friends..found it informative and a vehicle to talk to their children about sexual health"
- "I felt disappointed that not more educational information was included"
- "It typically showed people with high risk behaviours who mostly got negative text results...people with positive results declined to be filmed"

## Conclusions

- Although only one third of attendees felt patient stories were similar to theirs, 65% agreed the show was entertaining and over three quarters found the show informative about sexual health and HIV.
- Approximately half of clinic staff felt patient stories in the programme reflected typical patient stories and half of our staff found the programme entertaining and informative.
- The majority of staff supported the filming process, but half had concerns around threats to patient confidentiality, one third about patient exploitation and 40% about service disruption.
- We suggest that should others choose to take part in reality television, careful work should be undertaken, in conjunction with programme makers, to allay these fears and minimise the negative impacts of this process.
- Overall, our findings suggest that health promotion via reality television is acceptable and can lead to increased viewer knowledge and hence behaviour change.

## Reference

- Goold et al. Pilot study in the development of an interactive Multimedia Learning Environment for sexual health interventions: a focus group approach. *Health Education Research*. 21(1):15-25.