

Genetic Counselor's Adaptations and Perceptions in Language Discordant Patient Encounters

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Overview



Project Goal: To understand strategies in which genetic counselors navigate language discordance during patient appointments, as well as their attitudes toward these adaptations



Methods: Cross-sectional, observational online quantitative survey (N=56), descriptive statistics



Target Population: Genetic Counselors in the United States and Canada

Language Discordance:
Occurs when the patient and
provider lack proficiency in the
same language



Introduction

Language Discordance Is Associated with Poorer Health Outcomes

Reduced Lifestyle
Factor Counseling

Lower Awareness of
Preventative
Healthcare Options

Reduced Patient
Follow-Up

Inadequate
Psychiatric Care

Missed Medical
Appointments

Adverse Drug
Reaction/Medication
Noncompliance

Delayed Access to
Referral and
Diagnosis

Increased Risk for
Misdiagnosis

Health
Communication
Anxiety

Decreased
Satisfaction in Care

State of Knowledge in Clinical Genetics

Most research is qualitative, with language discordance not serving as the primary objective

- lack of understanding or appreciation of the potential benefits of genetic services.
- Culturally incongruent expectations about healthcare
- Limited availability and quality of interpreting services





Study Objectives

1. Understand what strategies genetic counselors use to navigate language discordant patient encounters.
2. Genetic counselors' preferences when using interpretive services
3. The way(s) that they adapt their language and counseling aids in language discordant patient sessions
4. Genetic counselors' perceptions of patient understanding during the appointment.

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Methods

Survey

- Designed to assess genetic counselor's utilization of adaptations to language discordance previously described in the literature

Eligibility

- Genetic counselors currently practicing in patient facing roles in the United States and Canada

Recruitment

- Participants were recruited through the NSGC mailing list

Statistical Analysis

- Analyze results using descriptive statistics

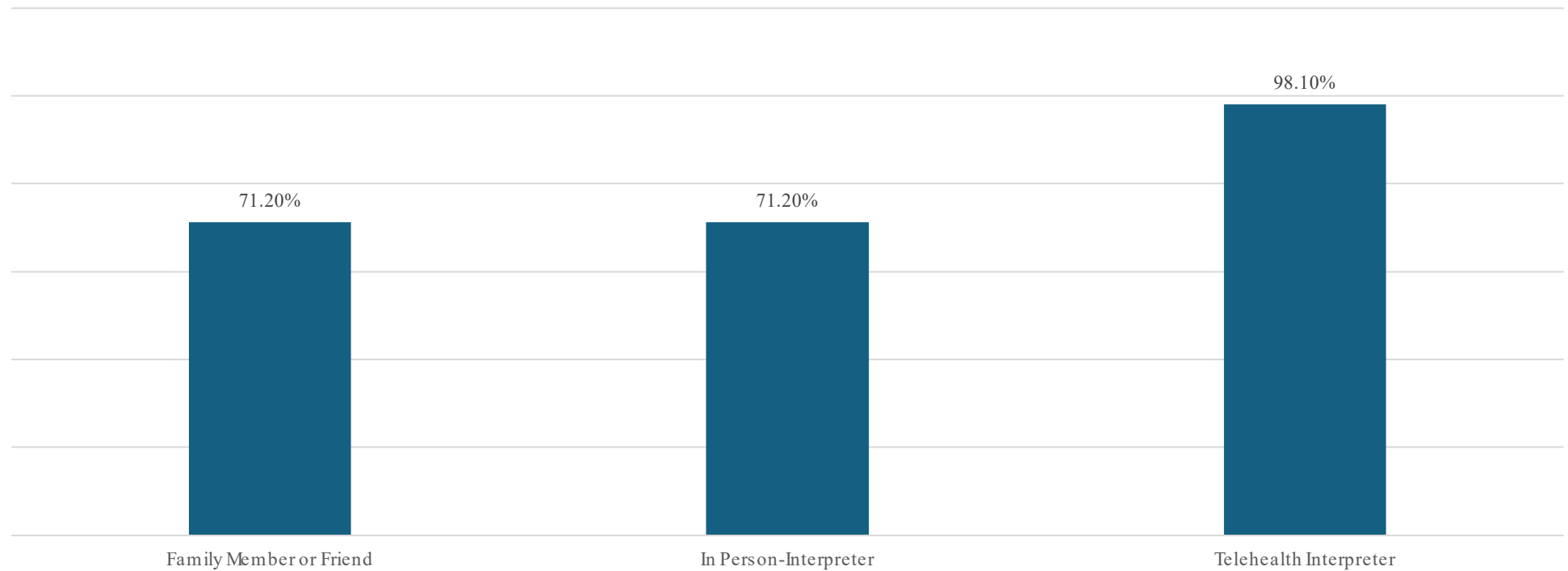
Results

Participant Characteristics

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Specialty	Years in Practice
20-24 (N=2, 3.6%)	Female (n=52, 92.9%)	White (n=44, 78.6%)	Cancer (n=16, 30.2%)	<1 (n=9, 16.9%)
25-29 (N=30, 54.6%)	Male (n=1, 1.9%)	Asian (n=7, 12.5%)	Prenatal (n=13, 24.5%)	1-4 (n=28, 52.8%)
30-34 (N=12, 21.8%)	Nonbinary/ Other (n=1, 1.9%)	Hispanic or Latine (n=2, 3.6%)	Pediatric/General (n= 19, 35.9%)	5-9 (n=9, 16.9%)
35-39 (N=6, 10.9%)		Black or African American (n=2, 3.6%)	Other (n= 5, 9.4%)	10-14 (n=4, 7.5%)
40-59 (N=4, 7.3%)		African or Middle Eastern (n=1, 1.8%)		>15 (n=3, 5.6%)

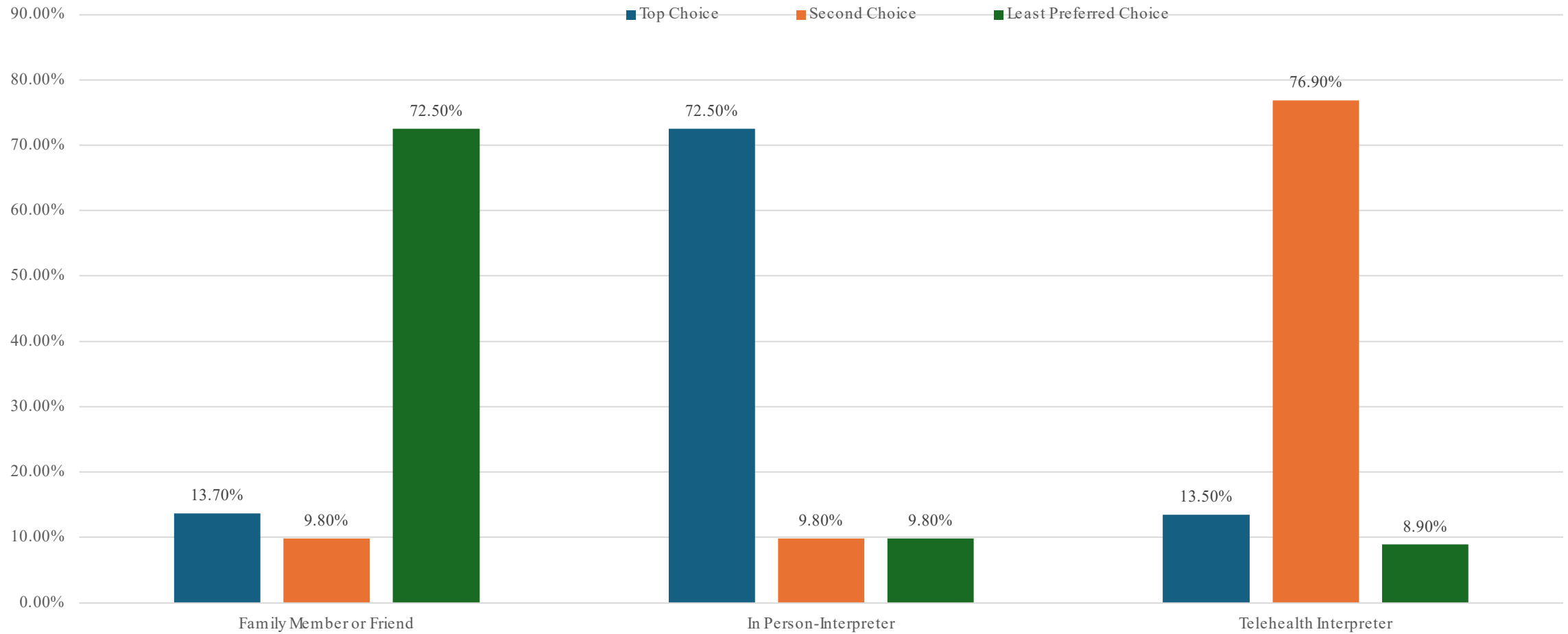
Interpretive Services

Interpretive Services Used



Participants Responding 'yes' to Having Used Modality


Interpretive services Ranked by Genetic Counselor Preference





Genetic Counselors' Experiences Working with Institutional Interpreters

	Positive Experiences		Negative Experiences	
	n=	Percent	n=	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	1.8
Disagree	2	3.6	7	13.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	1.9	5	9.6
Agree	34	65.4	32	61.5
Strongly agree	15	28.8	7	13.5
Total	52	100	52	100



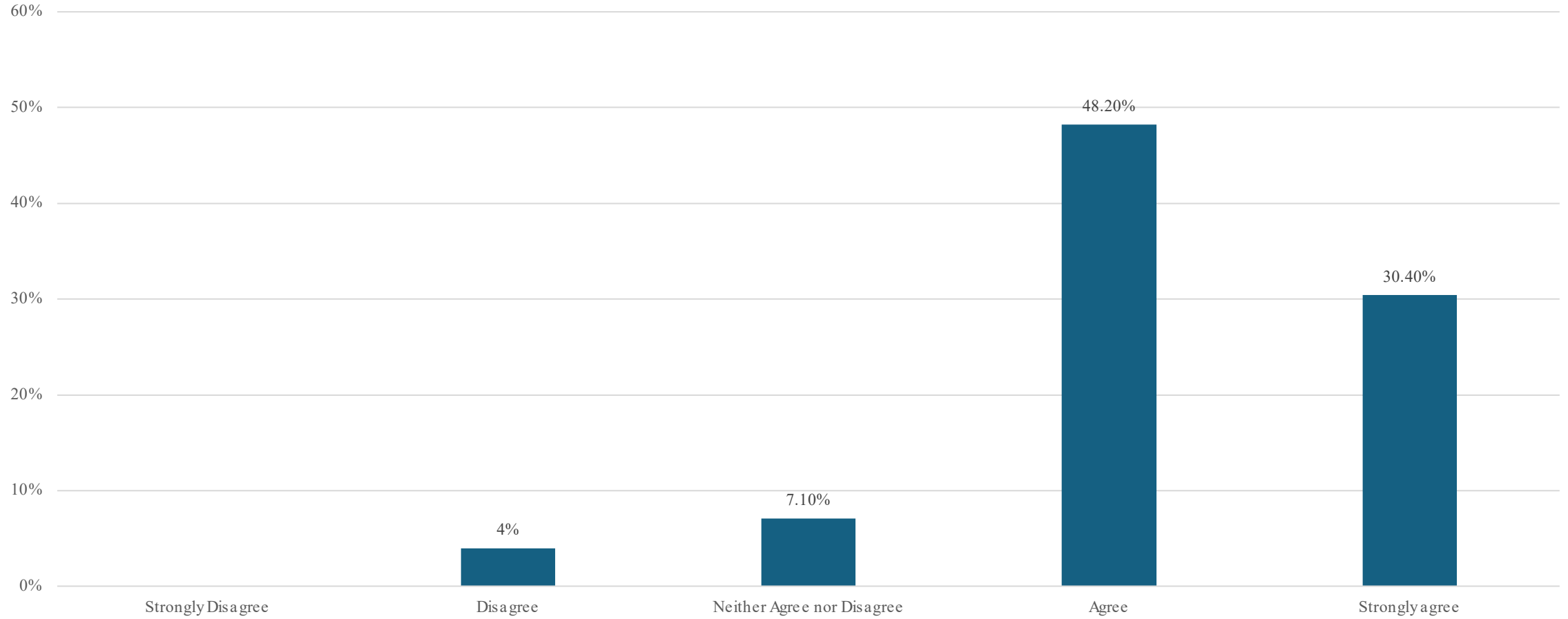
Genetic Counselors' Experiences with Family Members and Friends

	Positive Experiences		Negative Experiences	
	n=	Percent	n=	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.8	8	14.3
Disagree	5	9.6	13	25
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12	23.1	19	36.5
Agree	24	46.2	4	7.7
Strongly agree	1	1.9	8	15.4
Total	52	100	52	100

Frustration with Interpreters

	n=	Valid Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.9
Disagree	9	17.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	3.8
Agree	32	61.5
Strongly Agree	8	15.4
Total	52	100.0

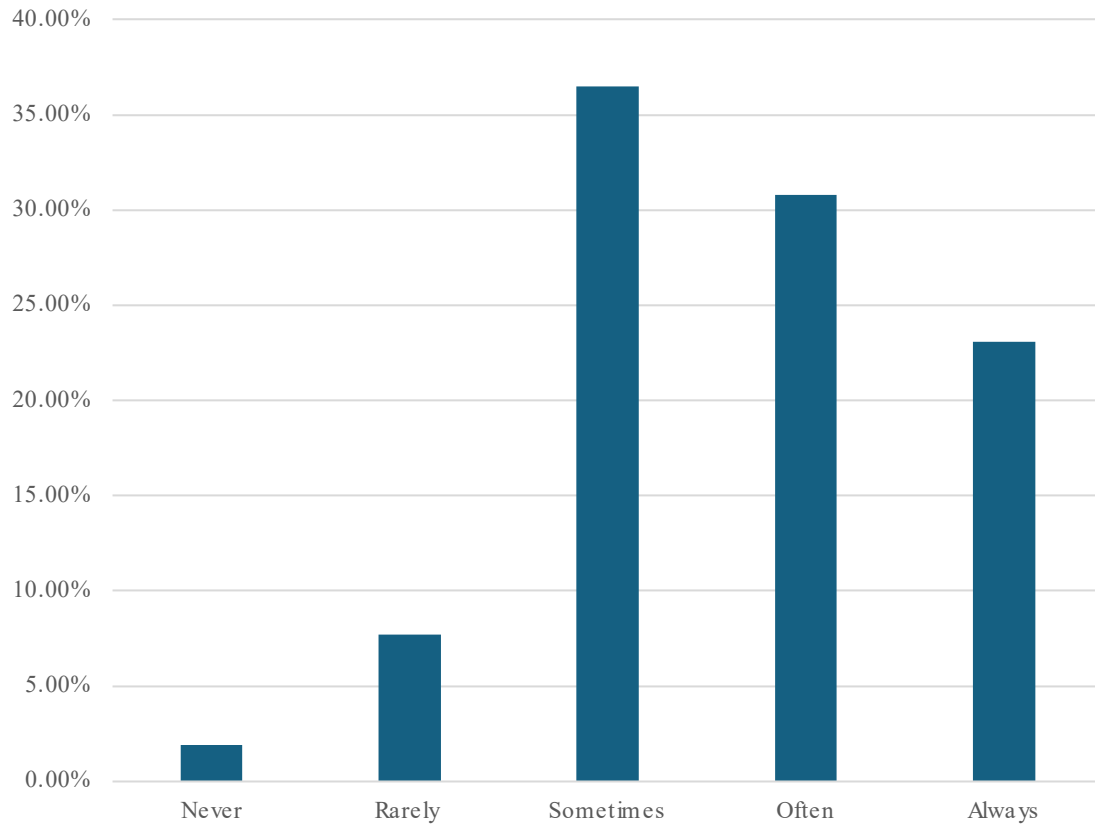
More Positive Experiences Working with Interpreters Overall than Negative Experiences



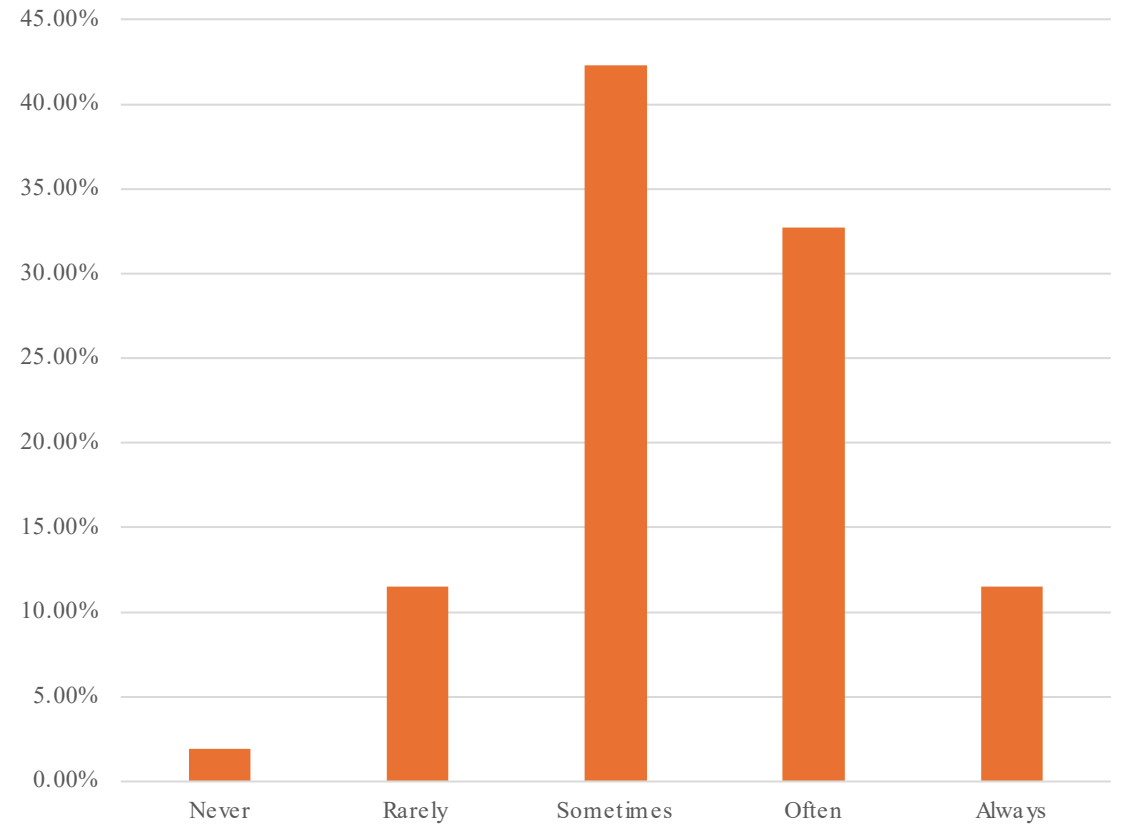
Adaptations Within the Appointment

Adaptations Made in Patient Appointments

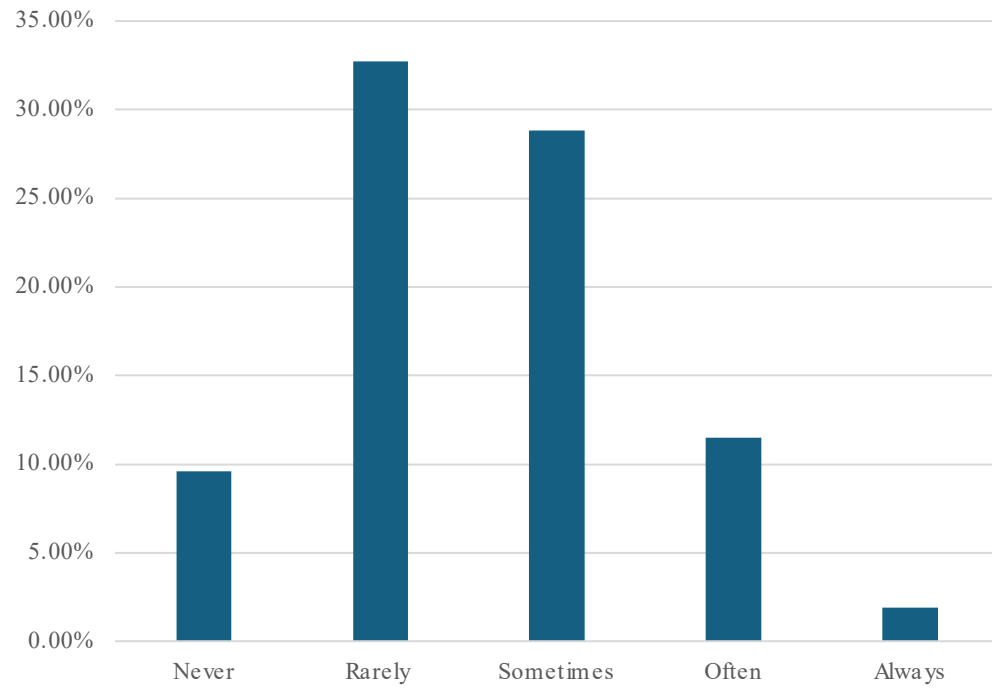
Short Sentences



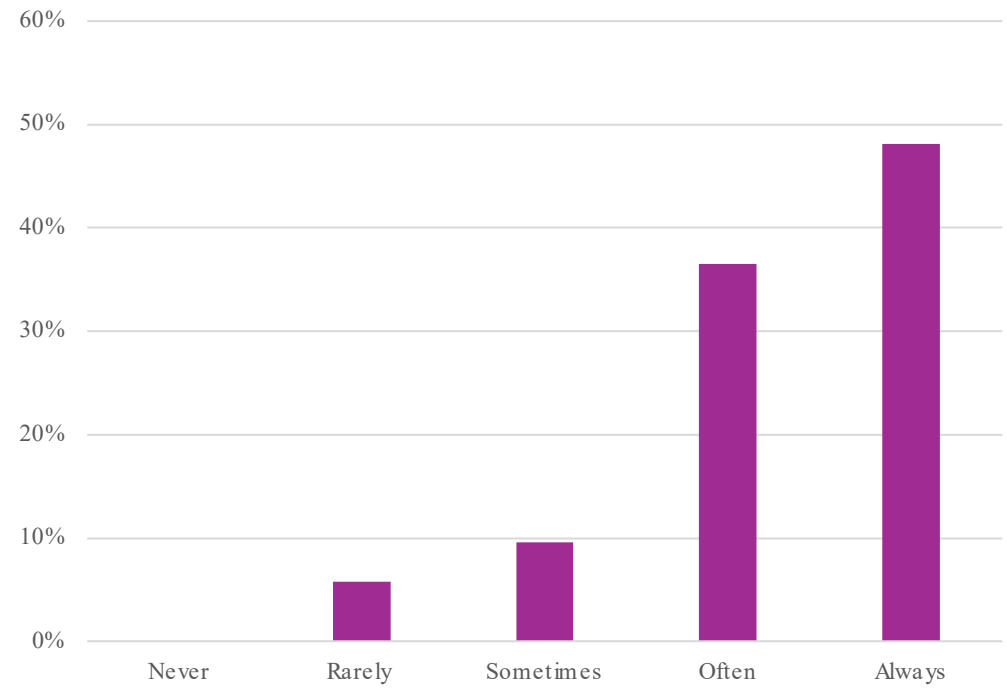
Adapted Word Choice



Visual Aids

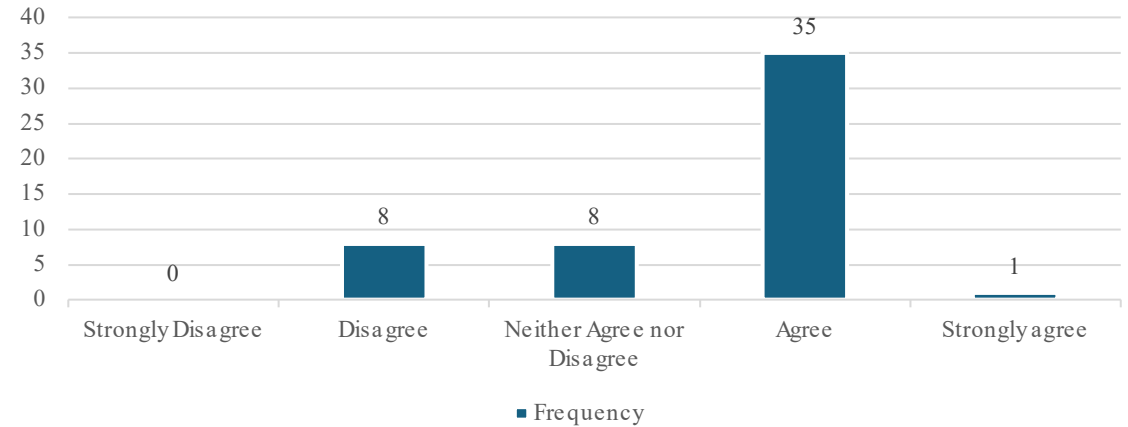


Longer Session Length

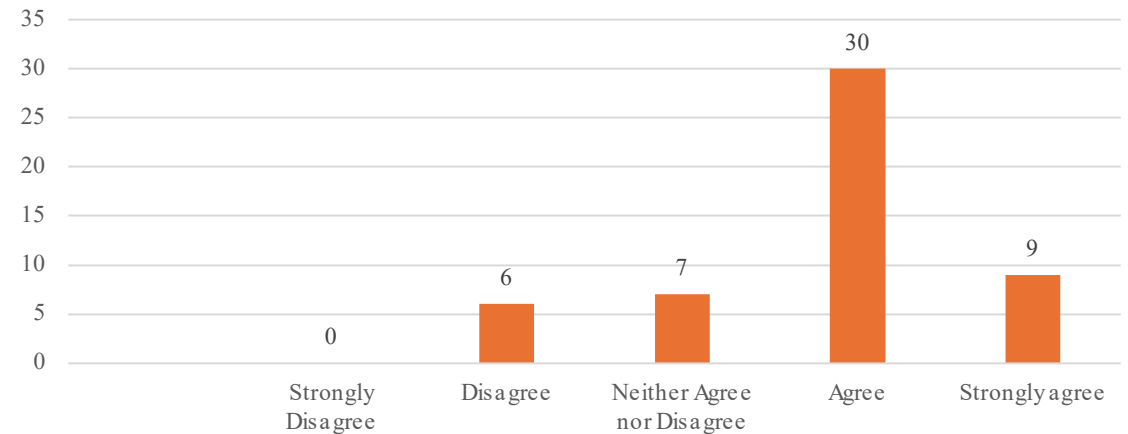


Perceptions of Patient Understanding

Patient Understanding of Testing Options is Strong at Appointment Conclusion



Informed Consent was able to be Obtained While Using an Interpreter



Summary of Interpretive Findings

Genetic counselors exhibit a strong preference for in person interpreters, with 72.5% of participants ranking it as their top choice

Participants reported using all types of interpretive modalities, with the most universally utilized being telehealth (98.1%)

Participants reported overall positive experiences working with all types of interpreters (78.6%)

- 67% report negative experiences with an interpreter provided at the institution, and 23.1% report negative experiences using a family member or a friend

The majority of participants agreed that they became frustrated at times while working through an interpreter (76.9%)



Summary of Adaptation Findings

Increasing the amount of time spent in the genetic counseling session was the most consistent tool genetic counselors used to adapt to language discordance

42.3% of participants reported using visual aids “rarely” or “Never”

Genetic counselors believe that patients leave appointments with a good understanding of their testing options the majority of the time (69.2%)

Genetic counselors also believe that informed consent is obtained from patients the majority of the time (75%)

Discussion



Increasing length of time in a session as a favored method of managing language discordance



Exploring the link between counselor specialty and utilization of visual aids



Are language discordant patients less able to participate in informed consent?



High levels of frustration working through interpreters merits further exploration

Next Steps



EXPLORING CORRELATIONS
BETWEEN VARIABLES



PREPARING FOR
PUBLICATION

Considerations for Clinical Practice

1

Contract with medical interpreters when possible

2

Consider increased usage of visual aids in language discordant appointments

3

Take time to check for patient understanding

4

Consider providing both verbal and written consent information for language discordant patients



Acknowledgements

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Study Participants

VCU Class of 2024 Genetic Counseling Cohort



Questions?

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