

What is the awareness of oral cancer in Scotland?



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 Let's Talk About Mouth Cancer
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Introduction

Oral Cancer in the UK is on the rise. Increasing numbers of cases have been recorded with 6,600 reported cases in 2010 rising to 7,700 in 2011. A call to action by Cancer Research UK and the British Oral Medicine Society gave rise to an expanding public health campaign in Scotland. Let's talk about Mouth Cancer was founded in 2014 as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the aim of improving the prognosis of the patient diagnosed with oral cancer through early detection and diagnosis. To this end the group have focused on improving both public and professional knowledge about the disease.

Methods

Volunteers were trained and calibrated at training sessions. The survey examined subjects' knowledge of mouth cancer symptoms, risk factors, participant demographics and who they would present to with a suspicious lesion in their mouth. The surveys were uploaded to an application on tablets. One to one interview were conducted with members of the public interacting with a public health campaign.

Results

641 responses were recorded, the sample was made up of 52% (349) female, 45% male (292) and 1% (5) unknown. Respondents were mostly in the 21-30 age group, 36% (233). 82.6% (530) of the cohort had previously heard of mouth cancer.

22% (141) of the sample were smokers, and 3% (20) of the sample admitted to consuming more than the UK weekly recommended intake of alcohol. 28% (177) of the participants felt they were at an elevated risk of mouth cancer.

Table 1 Awareness of risk factors

	Yes	No	Don't Know
> 50 years	365 (61.14%)	170 (28.48%)	62 (10.39%)
Tobacco	558 (93.31%)	31 (5.18%)	9 (1.51%)
Alcohol	489 (82.05%)	67 (11.24%)	40 (6.71%)

Table 2 Source of prior knowledge

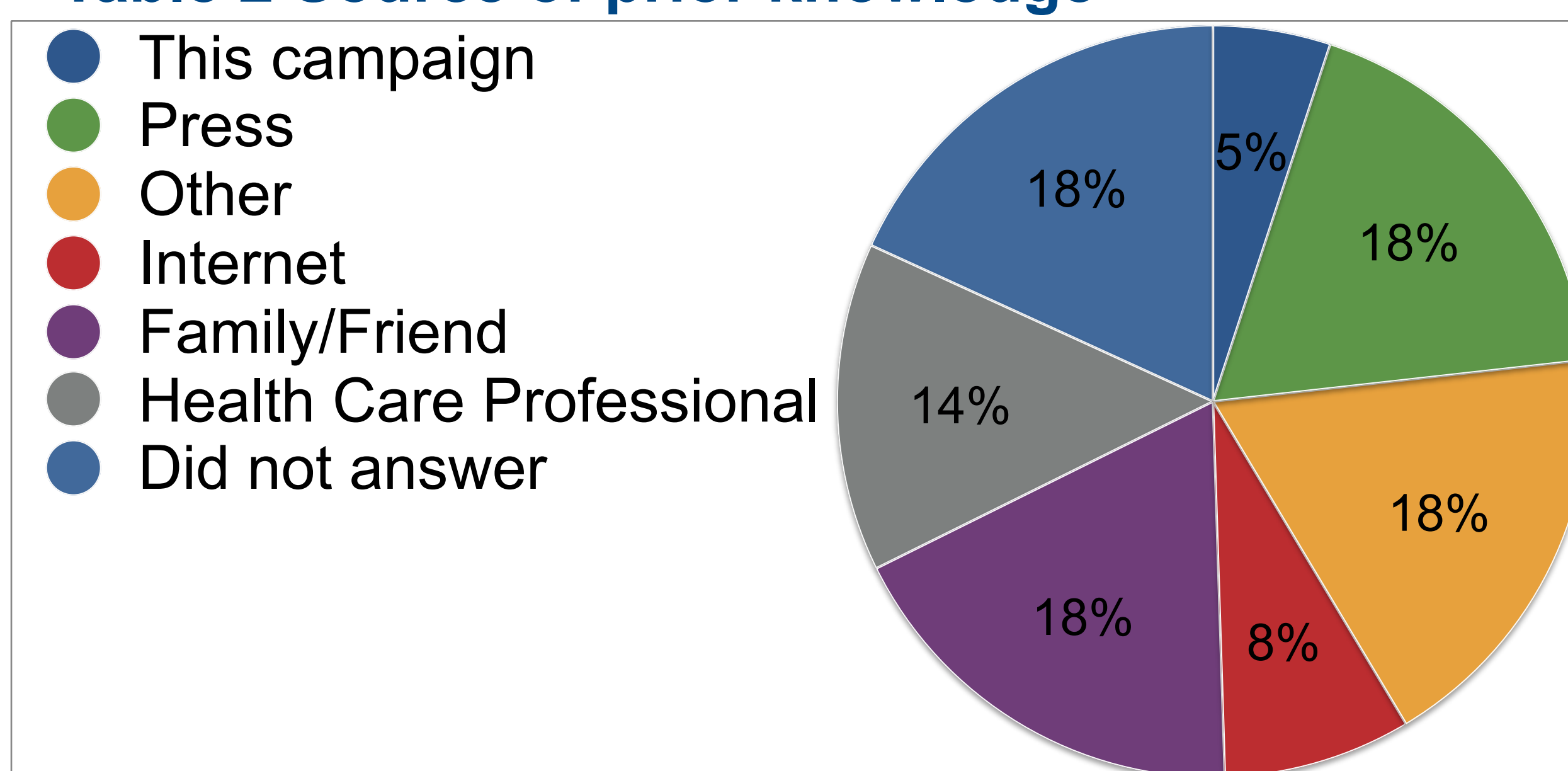


Table 3 Awareness of symptoms

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Ulcer	537 (88.61%)	42 (6.93%)	27 (4.46%)
Red patch	545 (90.23%)	33 (5.46%)	26 (4.3%)
Ongoing pain	548 (90.73%)	36 (5.96%)	20 (3.31%)

Discussion

Based on the findings of this survey, it appears a large proportion of the Scottish population are aware of mouth cancer on some level. Our sample shows a higher awareness of mouth cancer than in a survey undertaken in 1995 which showed 56% of adults in the UK had awareness of mouth cancer, with a regional awareness in Scotland of 62%. However, our Scotland specific sample showed a lower awareness of mouth cancer than a Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) wide survey undertaken in 2005 which showed 95.6% had awareness of mouth cancer. There was a higher number of smokers in our sample, 22%, than UK average, 19%. Our cohort showed a higher awareness of alcohol as a risk factor, 82%, than previous surveys in 1995 and 2005 where 19% and 19.4% of participants could identify alcohol as a risk factor respectively.

References

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