

Early detection of infantile hydrocephalus: time to 'Get-A-Head'

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Objectives

- Head circumference (HC) measurements are an important indicator of health in childhood, and a useful diagnostic tool for the detection of infantile hydrocephalus.¹
- In the United Kingdom (UK), routine HC monitoring is only recommended around birth (once moulding has resolved), and at 6-8 weeks of age, unless a problem is identified.²
- We sought to examine the experiences and knowledge of new parents regarding routine HC monitoring, and hydrocephalus, across the UK.

Methods

- An online, electronic survey was created using the Qualtrics XM platform. The survey contained 10 closed questions and 1 open question.
- Questions explored parental experiences and knowledge of routine HC measurements, and hydrocephalus.
- It was distributed via Bounty in Feb-March 2022 to new parents in the UK with a child aged 0-12 months, via an email mailing list.
- Descriptive statistics were used to analyse closed questions.

Results

750 responses were obtained.

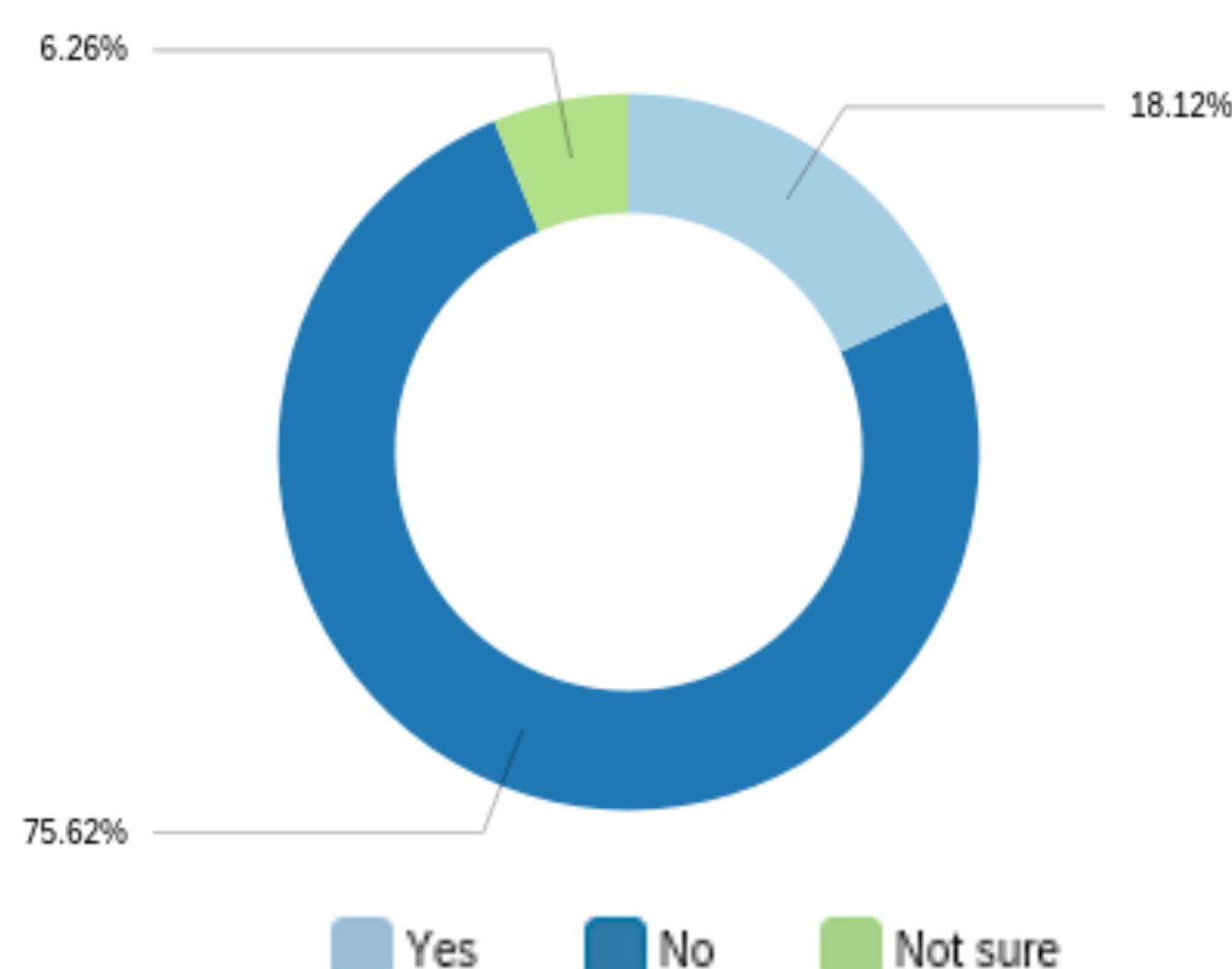
Do you know that your baby's head should be measured at birth?



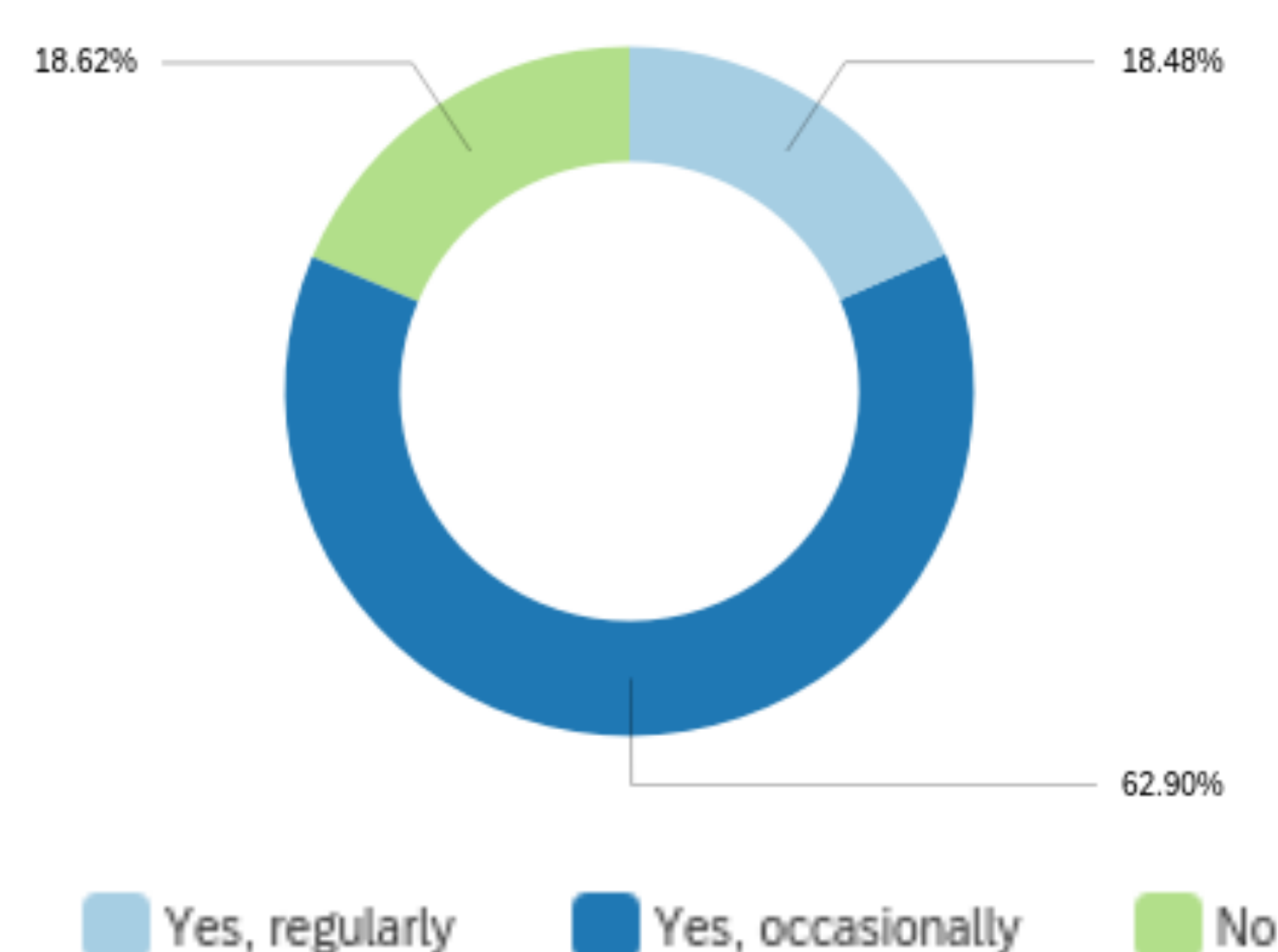
Do you know that your baby's head should be measured at their 6-8-week check?



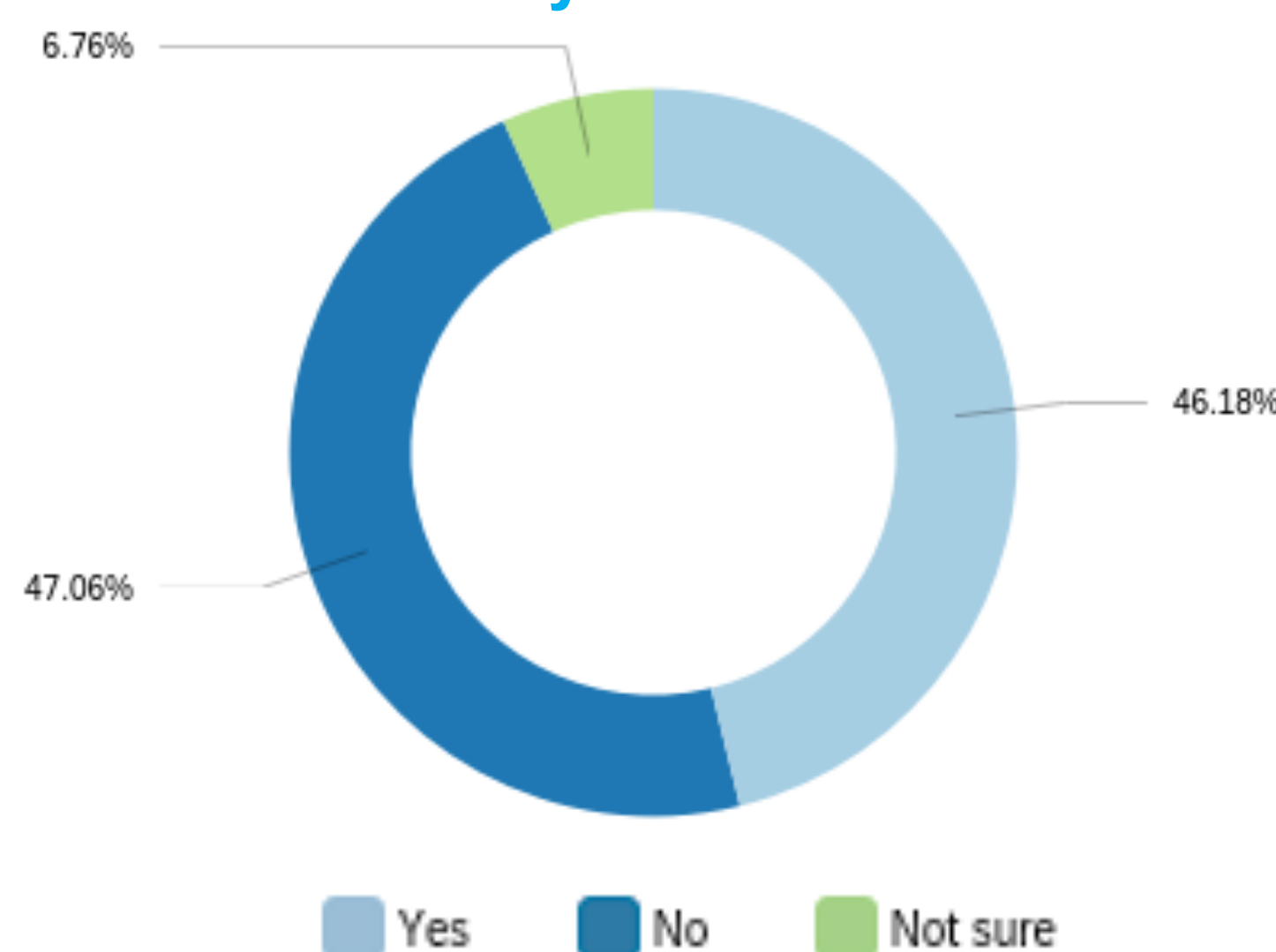
Were you told why your baby's head was being measured?



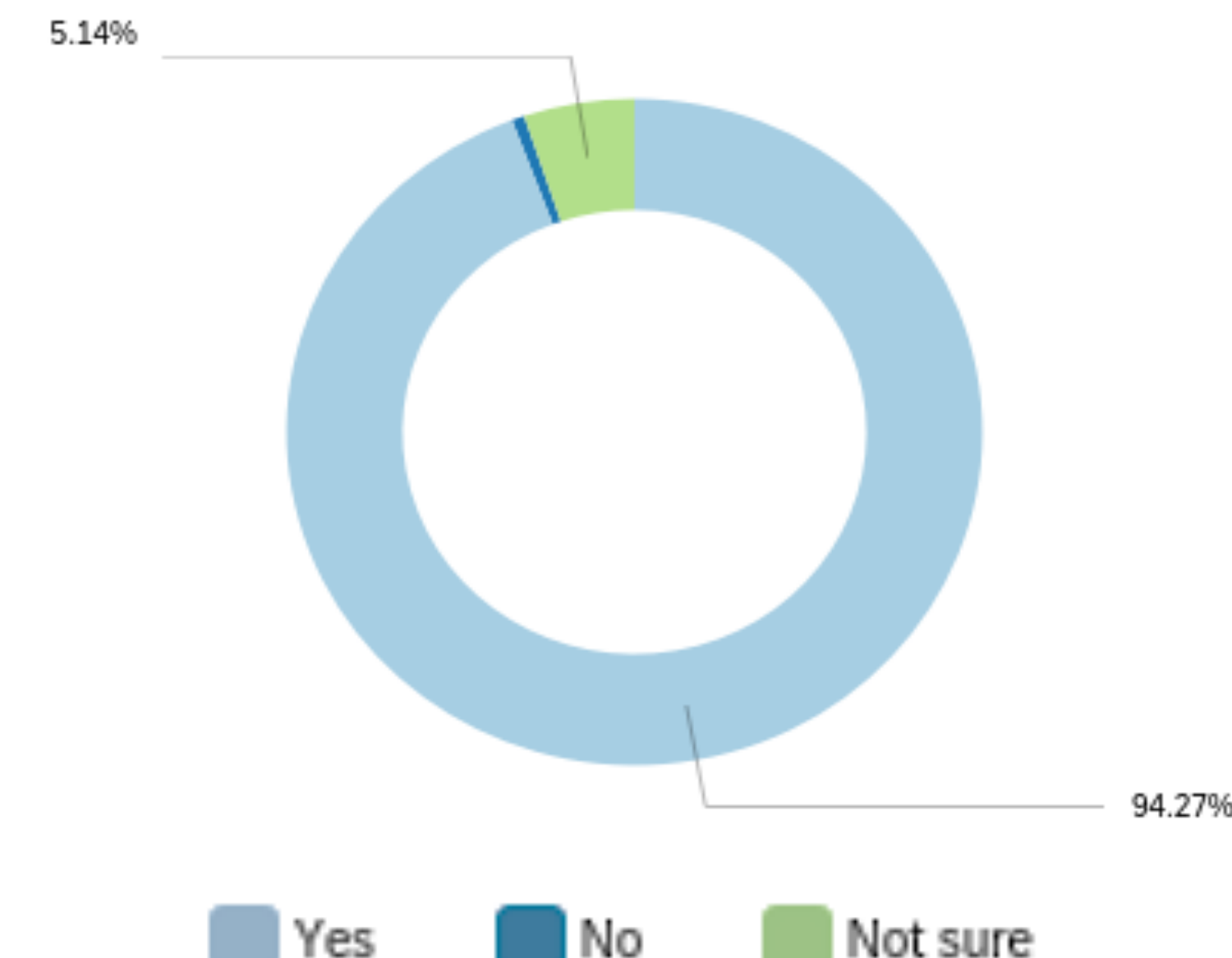
Do you see your health visitor in person?



Does your health visitor measure your baby's head?



Would you support healthcare professionals' measuring HC until 1-year?



Have you heard of hydrocephalus?



Do you know that measuring a baby's head can help identify hydrocephalus?



Conclusions

- Awareness and education of new parents on the purpose of HC measurements, and hydrocephalus, is poor in this sample of UK parents.
- Missed HC measurements and virtual health checks may limit our ability to identify abnormal growth patterns early.
- To address this, we launched the **'Get-A-Head' campaign** in 2022, which is calling for improved **Contact, Communication, and Concern**:



CONTACT:

Minimum number of face-to-face contacts during infancy, with a professional trained to measure and interpret HC.



COMMUNICATION:

Parents and carers should be involved why and when checks and measurements are supposed to take place.



CONCERN:

A review of current national guidelines on what constitutes abnormal growth, and criteria for specialist referral.

References

- Zahl SM, Wester K. Routine measurement of head circumference as a tool for detecting intracranial expansion in infants: what is the gain? A nationwide survey. *Pediatrics*. 2008 Mar;121(3):e416-20. doi: 10.1542/peds.2007-1598. PMID: 18310161.
- Health for all Children. 5th ed. Oxford University Press; 2019:480.