

A Survey To Review The Impact Of COVID-19 On The Mental Wellbeing Of Patients With An Intellectual Disability.

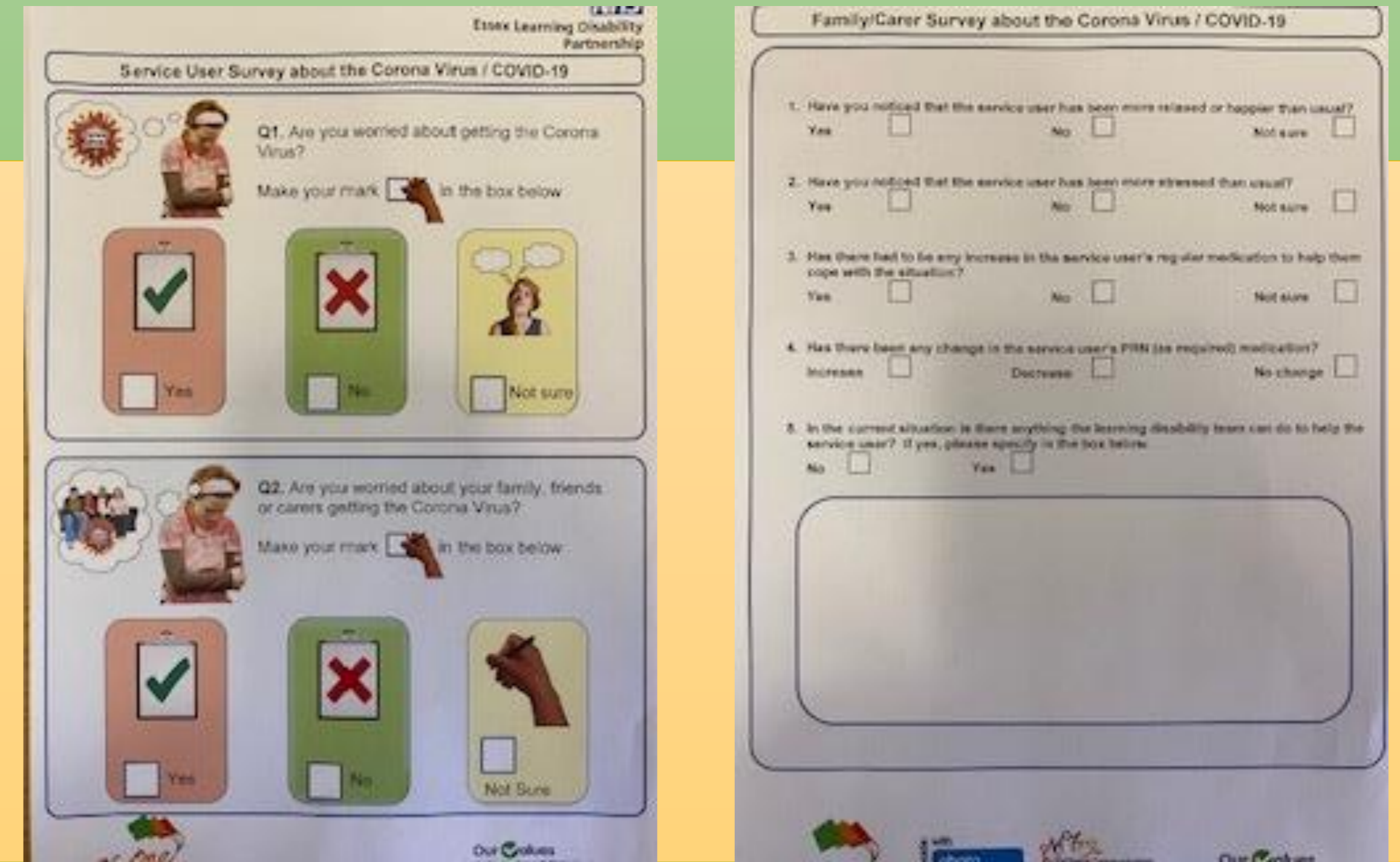
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Introduction:

A survey was carried out to review the impact that COVID-19 has had on the mental wellbeing of patients with an intellectual disability, their families and carers. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on everyone, professionals hypothesised that patients with an intellectual disability would struggle with the huge changes, loss of routine, structure and their normal activities, and mental health would deteriorate with an increase in crisis situations. Clinical practice was starting to suggest otherwise however, this led to the survey being conducted to capture some views of our patients and their relatives and carers.

Methods:

An easy read questionnaire was developed and sent, in May 2020 during the lockdown period, to 250 patients, with a short questionnaire for family members and carers attached. The survey was designed to capture some impacts of coronavirus on patients thoughts, feelings and social interactions, as well as any medical support required.



Results:

Responses received from 166 patients, carers and family members.

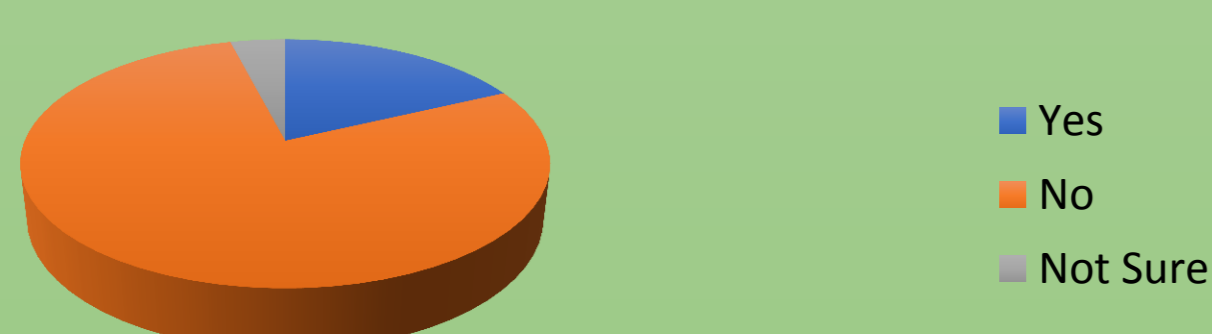
Patient responses:

- 42% were worried about getting COVID-19.
- 53% were worried about family or carers getting COVID-19.
- 48% were worried who would help them if their carer became ill.
- 87% were washing their hands more, 78% were distancing from other people.
- 44% enjoyed being at home more and 66% were doing more activities at home.
- 51% felt more relaxed during lockdown, 60% liked being out with fewer people around.
- 61% felt more upset and 59% found changing their routine difficult.
- 72% had no contact with any medical professionals.

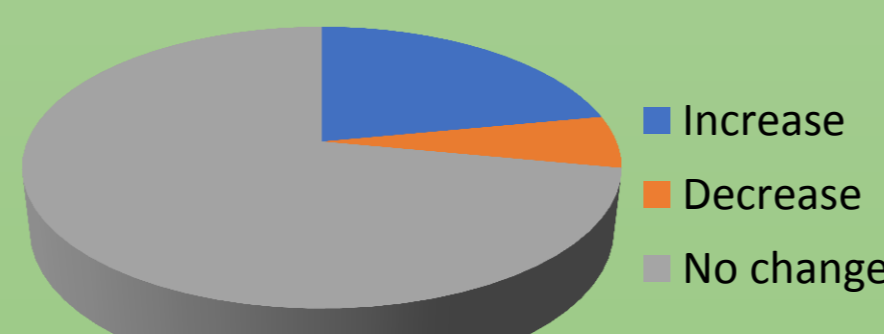
Family and carer responses:

- 30% noticed service users were more relaxed, 56% thought they were more stressed.
- 78% saw no increase in regular medication and 72% saw no change in PRN medication.

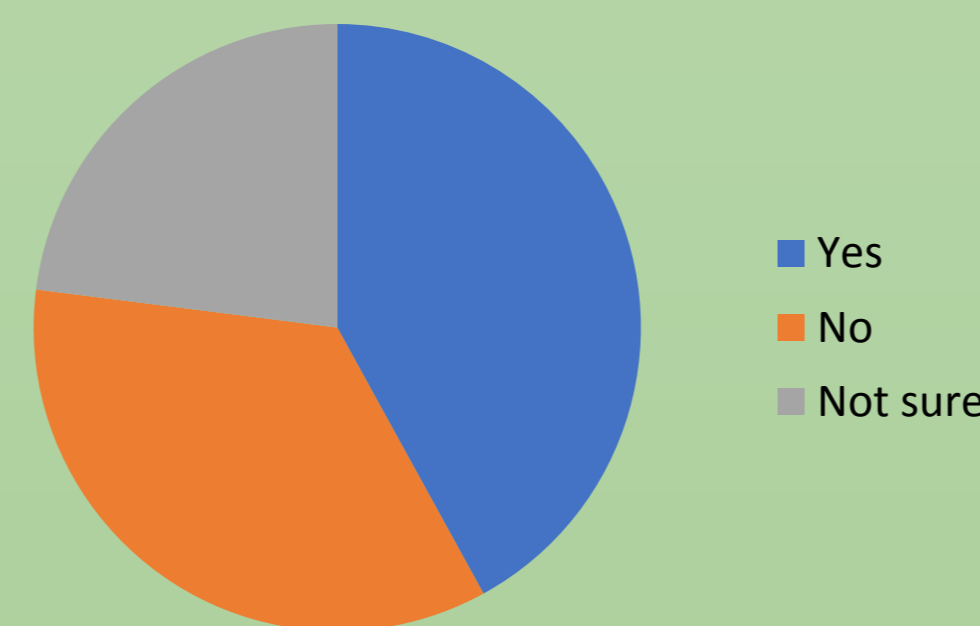
Increase in medication to help cope with the situation



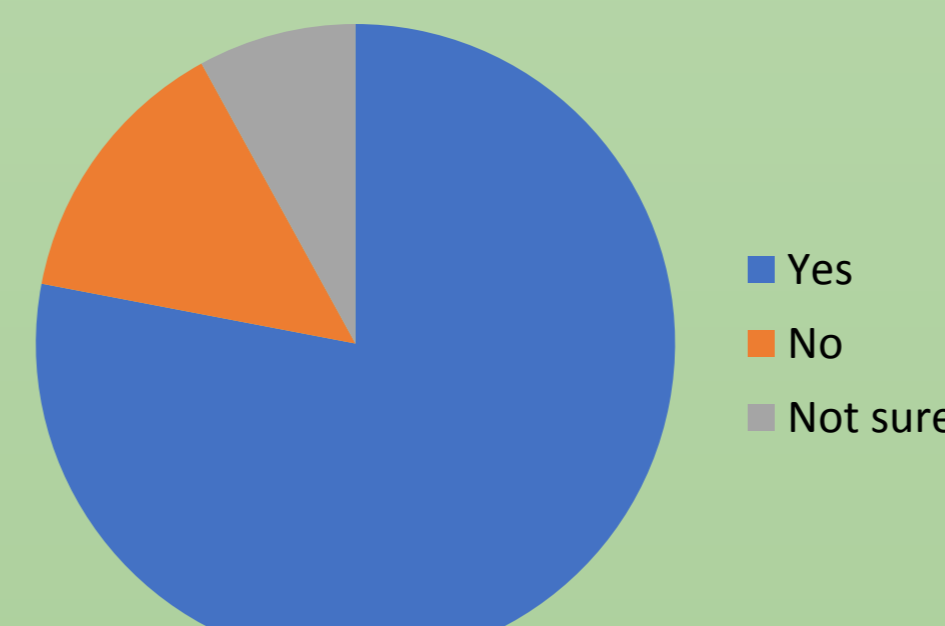
Change in PRN medication



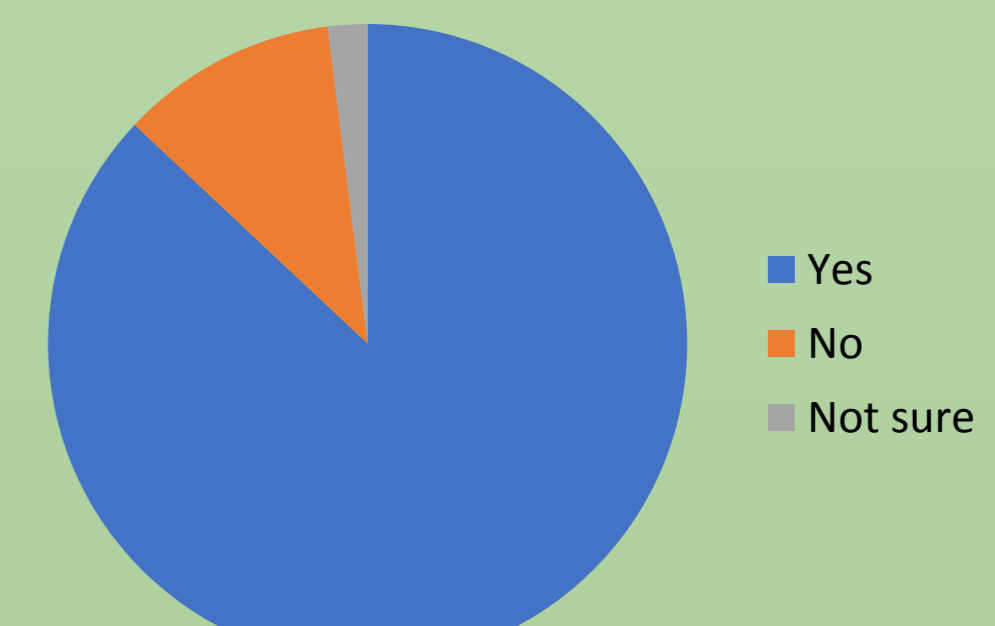
Worried about getting covid-19



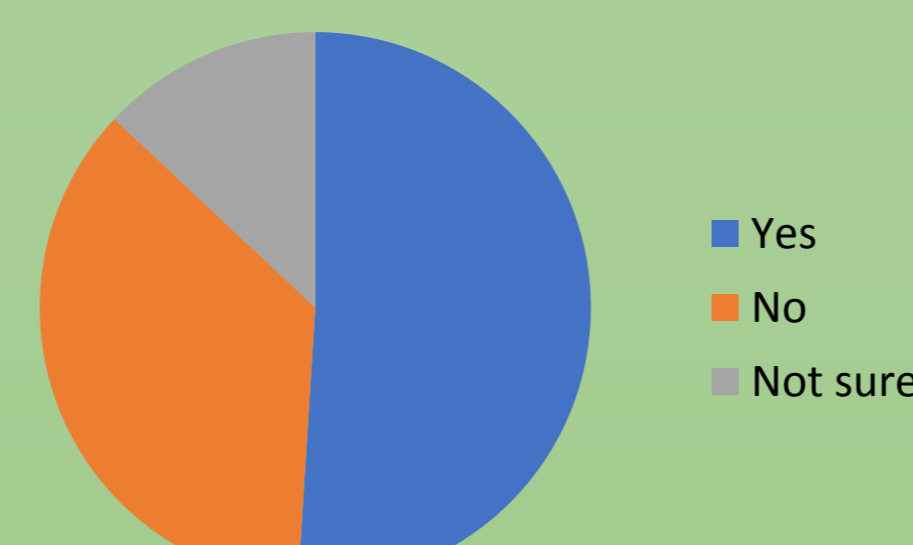
social distancing



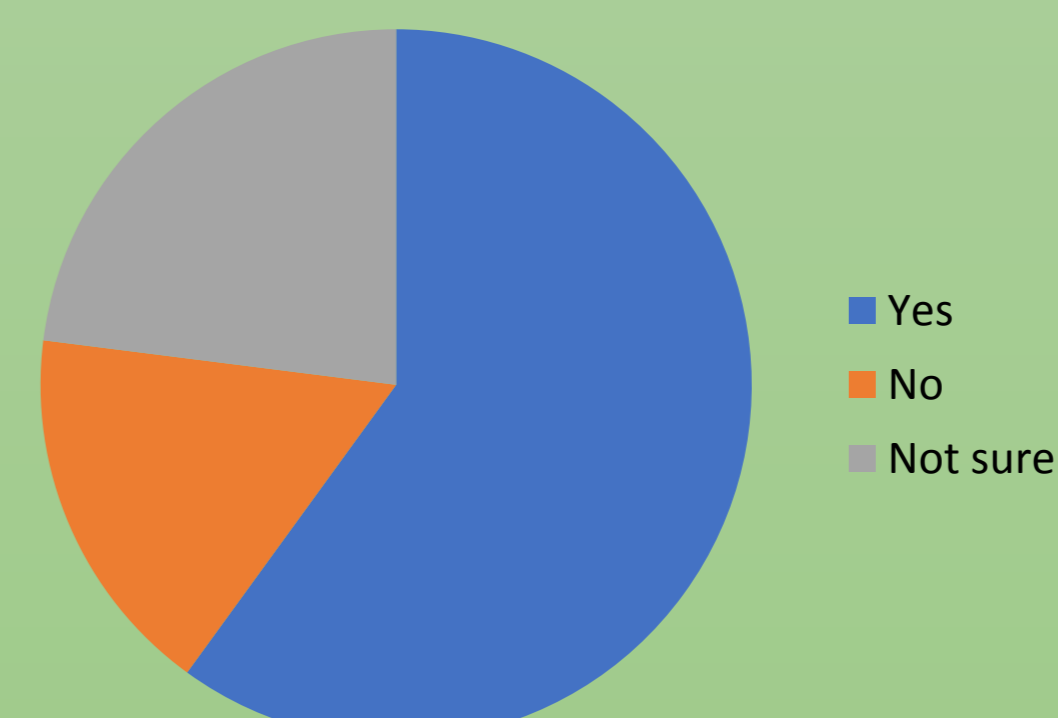
Washing hands more



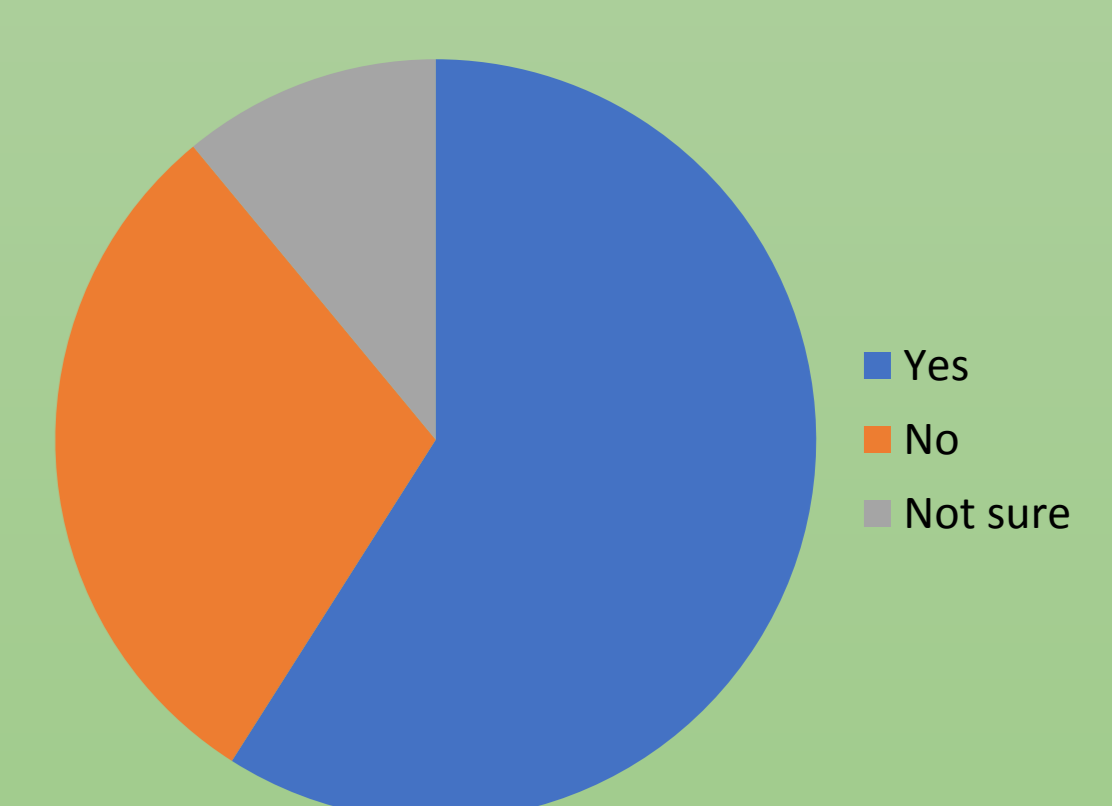
More relaxed in lockdown



Enjoy less people around



change in routine been difficult



Discussion:

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the country was placed in lockdown, and the NHS saw a remarkable change in its provisions, many professional surveys were carried out. There were very few to be found on how patients and their families / carers coped throughout this period. This survey was designed to try and capture some of the thoughts, feelings and actions of patients with an intellectual disability and their family / carers. It had been noticed in clinical practice that the response to lockdown had not been as predicted and that many of our patients were actually quite well and even enjoying the change.

The majority of our patients were worried about COVID-19, especially the impact on their family / carers. The key government messages of hand washing and social distancing appeared to be understood and adhered to by a high percentage. Results did indicate that the change in routine was hard for many but interestingly the majority of patients expressed positives about the lockdown period. They had more to do at home and enjoyed this, over half felt they were more relaxed and most found it more enjoyable to be out and about with less people around. The quiet, less stimulating environment plus less need to engage in multiple activities outside of the home appeared to be working well for many. This was also supported by the information gathered that very few people required any changes to their medication and a few even had medication decreased. Patients and their families / carers appear to have managed well and hardly anyone said they had required medical support of any kind.

Conclusions:

There is some evidence that patients with an intellectual disability coped remarkably well with the sudden changes going on around them during the COVID-19 pandemic. The major and sudden changes to their routine and structure may not have had the impact first thought, and the changes in society perhaps suited some peoples needs better. The quiet and calm of society and the reduced pressure to fit to 'social norms' appears to have been a positive for many.