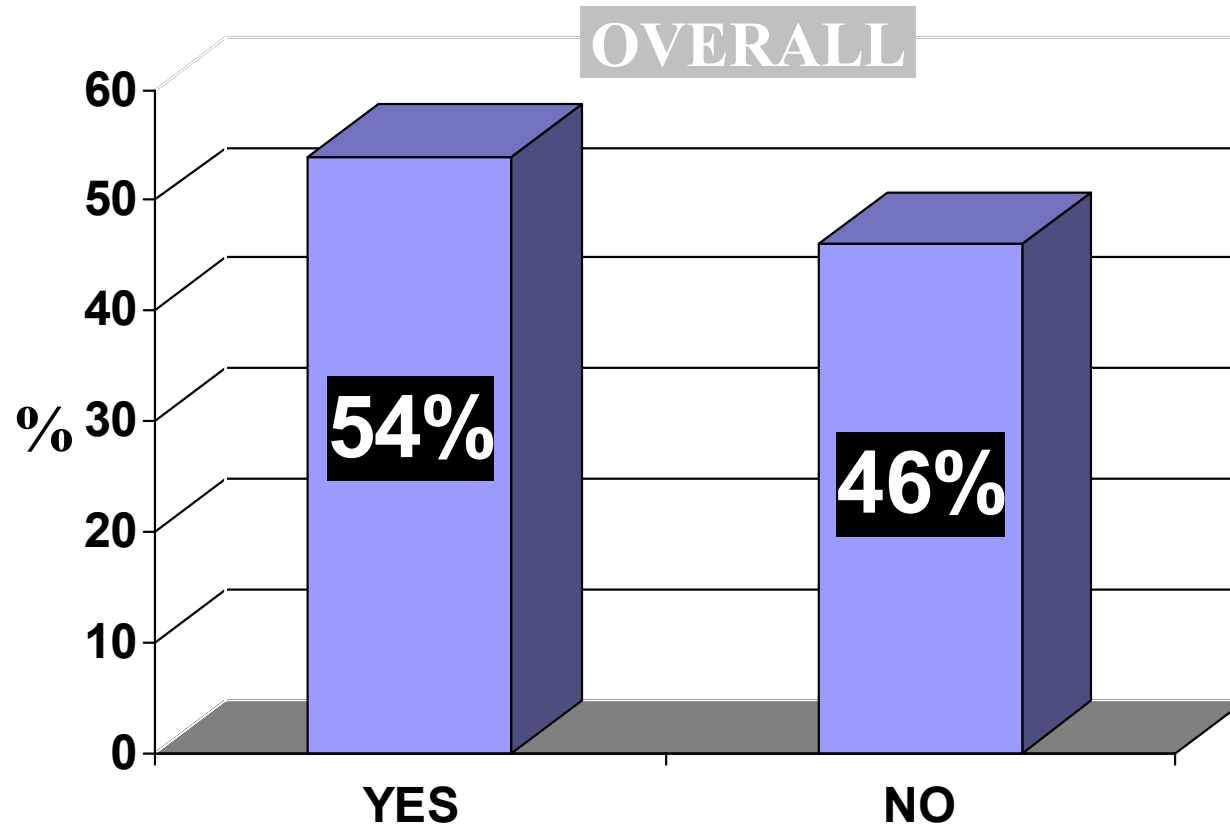


# Acceptability of Stutter Suppression Devices to People Who Stutter

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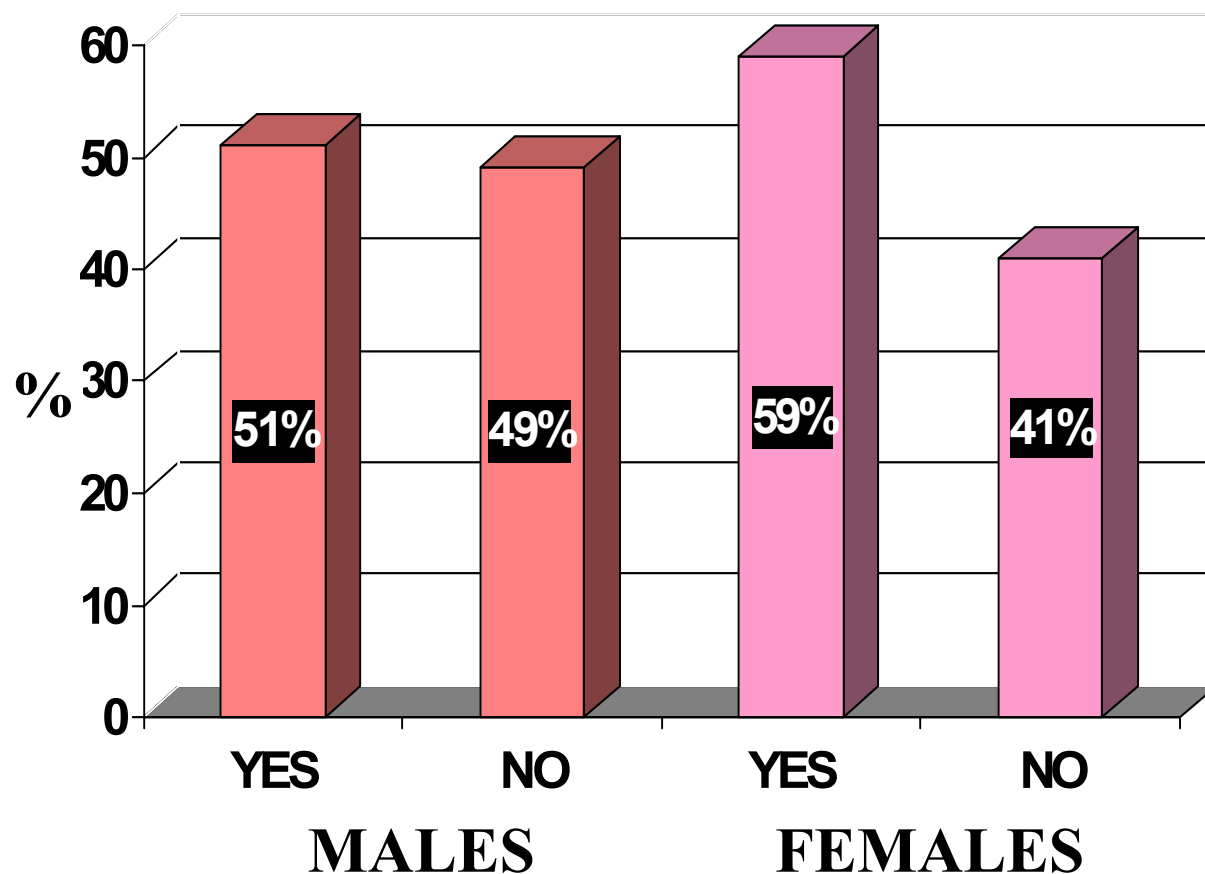
**Chart 1: Out of 194 respondents who completed the internet-based survey, a slight majority of people who stutter opted to use electronic devices (“YES”) and a substantial minority would not use them (“NO”).**

### **SURVEY QUESTION**

**With regard to electronic devices that are designed to help people who stutter speak fluently:**

- **I am open to their use if they work for me and I can afford them.**
- **I will never use them because they are crutches that hide the real problem.**

## GENDER DIFFERENCES

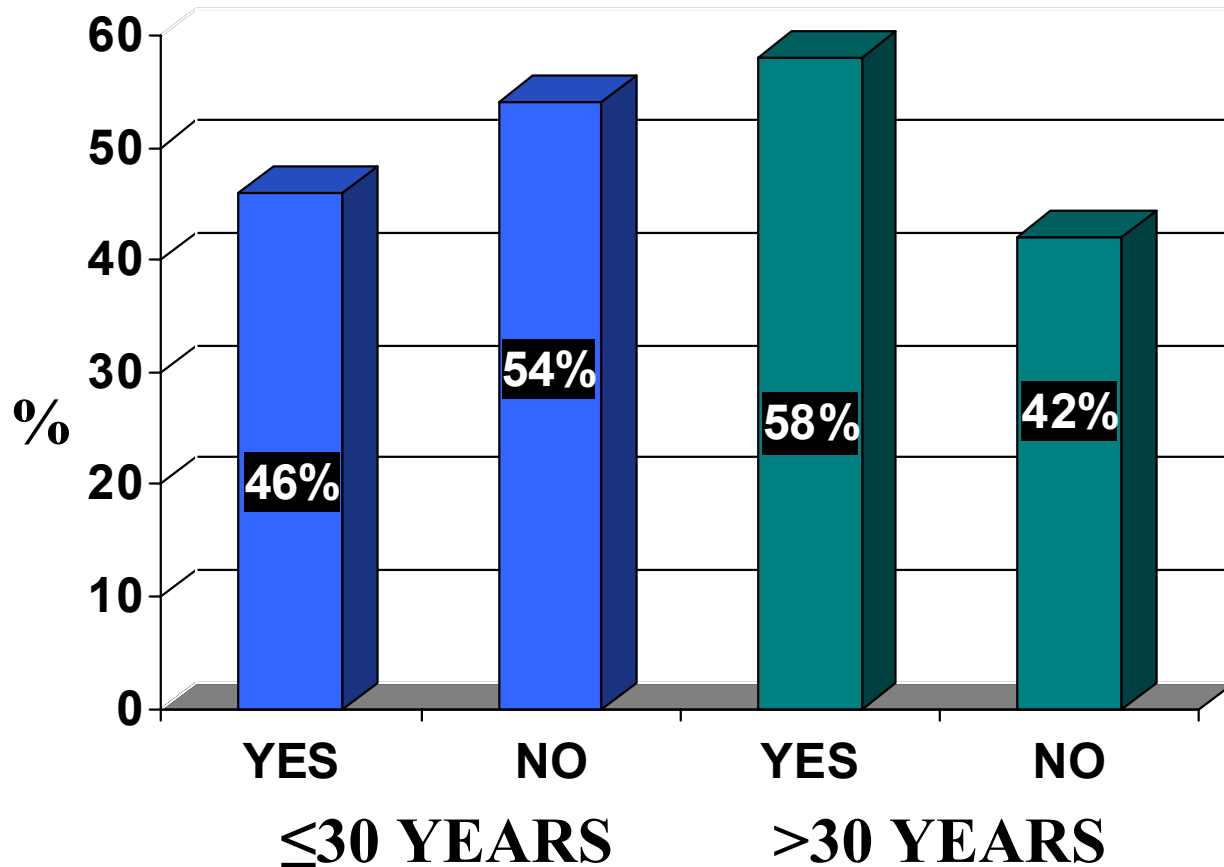


**YES –  
Open to use  
electronic  
devices.**

**NO – Will  
not use  
electronic  
devices.**

**Chart 2: Of the 194 respondents, 136 were males and 58 were females – a sex ratio of 2.34 to 1, roughly equal to the sex ratio for the prevalence of stuttering. *Male PWS are as likely to opt for the devices as not while nearly six out of 10 female PWS would be willing to try them.***

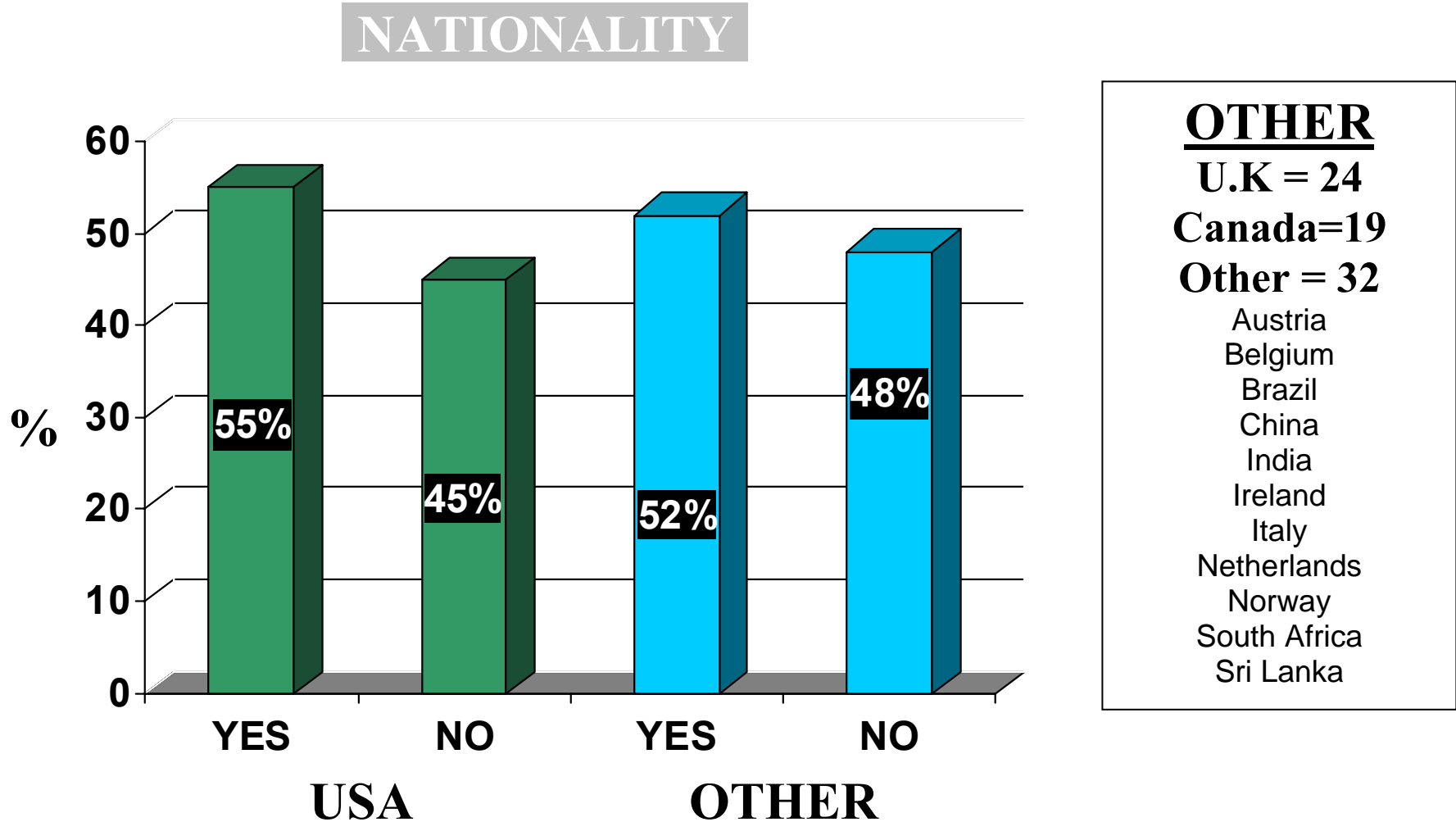
## AGE FACTOR



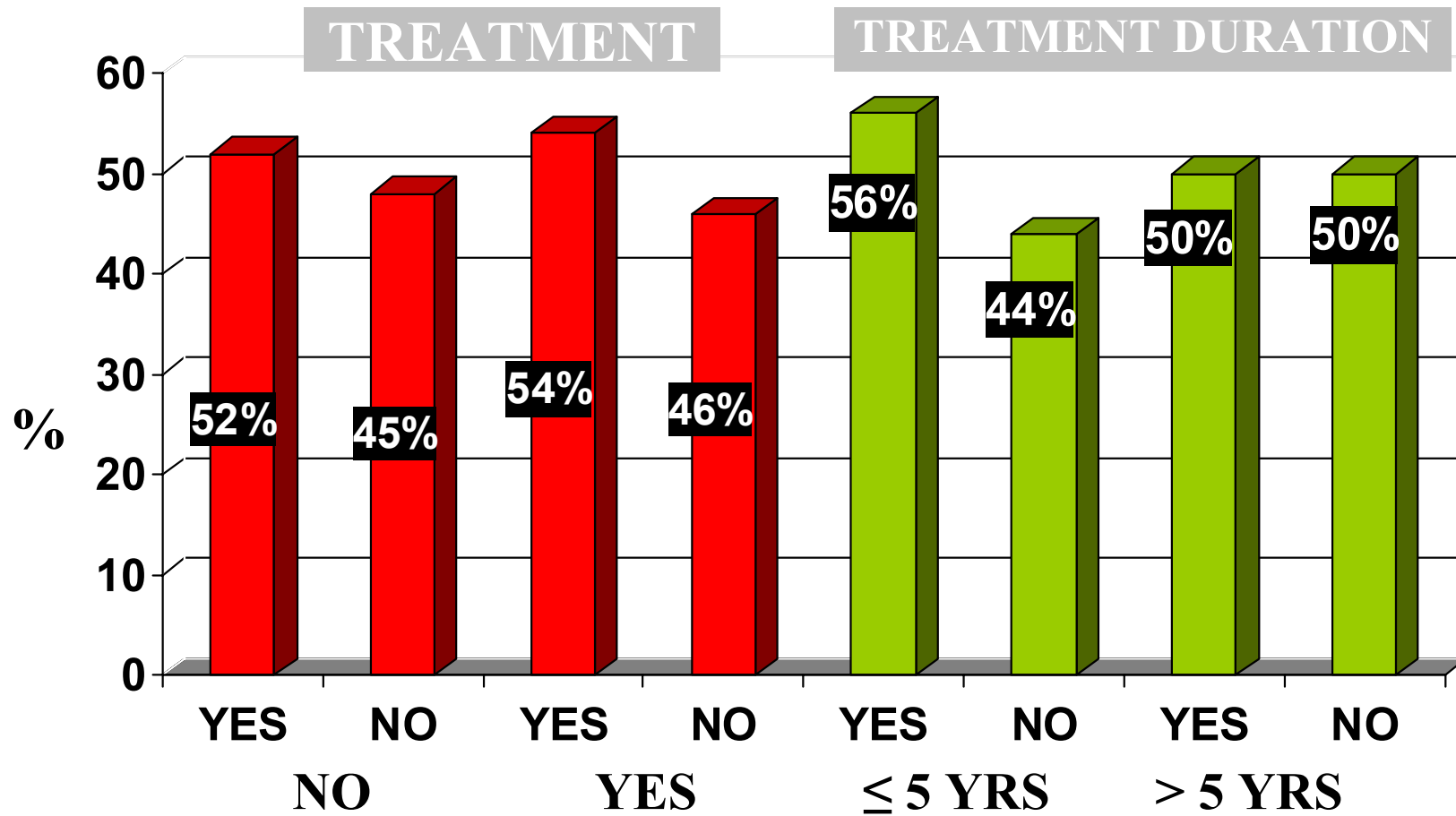
**YES – Open to use electronic devices.**

**NO – Will not use electronic devices.**

**Chart 3: Among those who were between the ages of 19 and 30 years (71 respondents), a slight majority opted for electronic devices. A clear majority of 123 respondents over the age of 30 opted for electronic devices while a strong minority was opposed. *Surprisingly, younger people appear to be more conflicted about the use of devices whereas older people are more open to their use.***

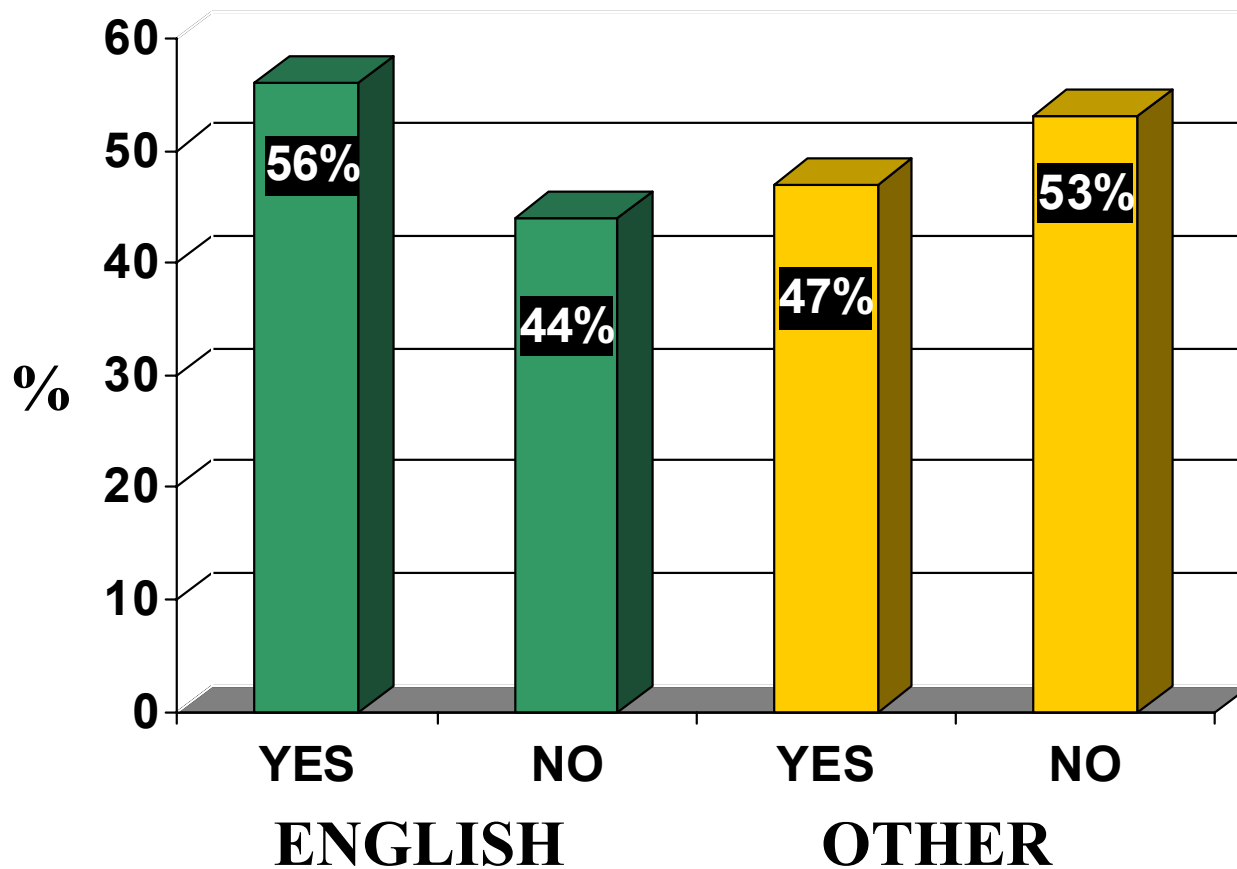


**Chart 4: Respondents from USA (119) and other countries (75) were roughly evenly split between opting to use and not use electronic devices. *National origin does not appear to be a factor in choosing to use a device. A slight majority in USA and other countries preferred their use.***



**Chart 5: The vast majority (173 respondents) reported receiving treatment compared to 21 who had no treatment. Of respondents who did not receive treatment, a slight majority opted for electronic devices. However, the small number of respondents who fall into this category makes this finding tenuous. *Of those receiving treatment, a slight majority favored the use of electronic devices. Among those who had received treatment for 5 years or less (109 respondents), a slight majority preferred to use devices. Those who had received treatment for longer than 5 years (64 respondents) were evenly split between the two options.***

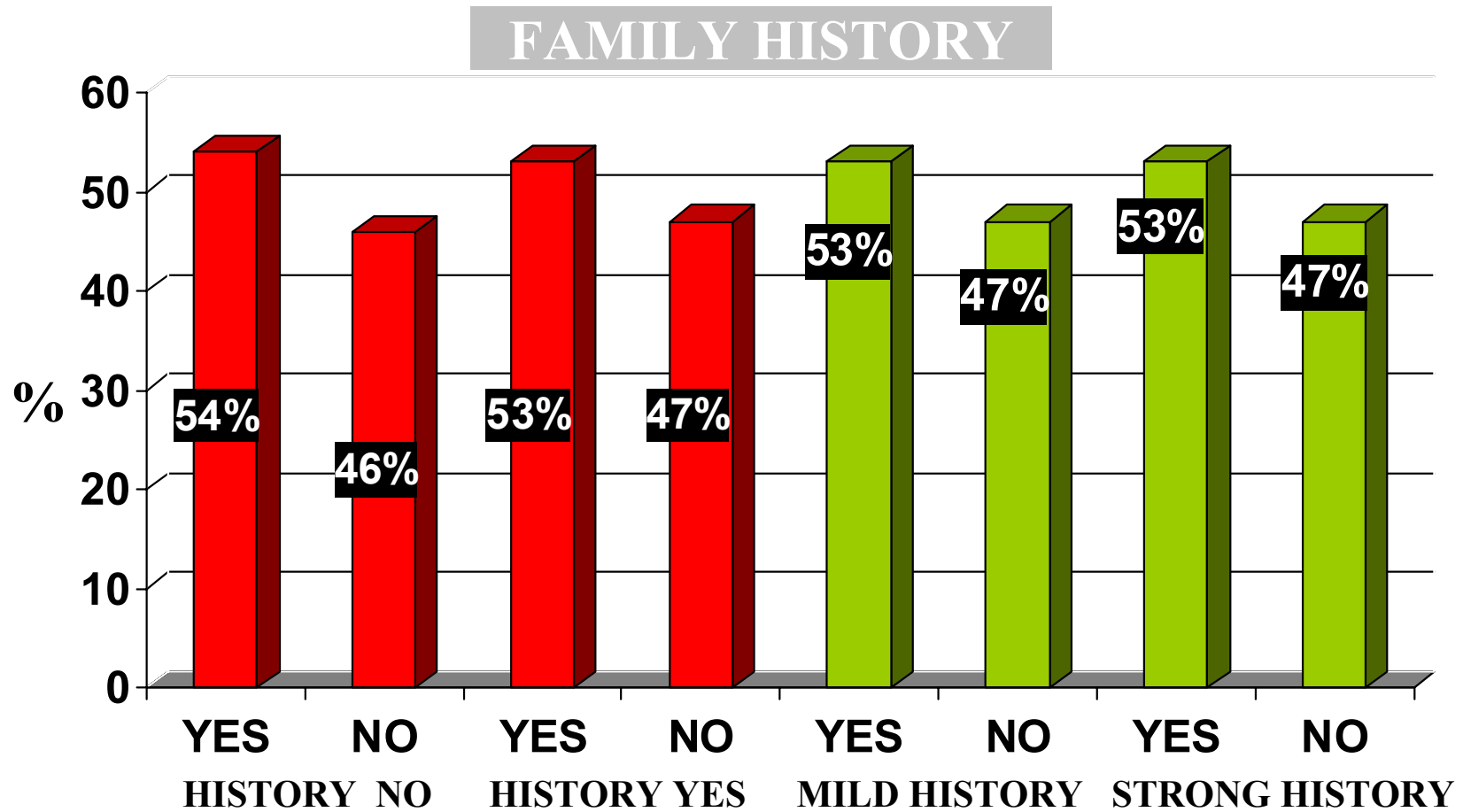
## LANGUAGE BACKGROUND



**Other = 43**

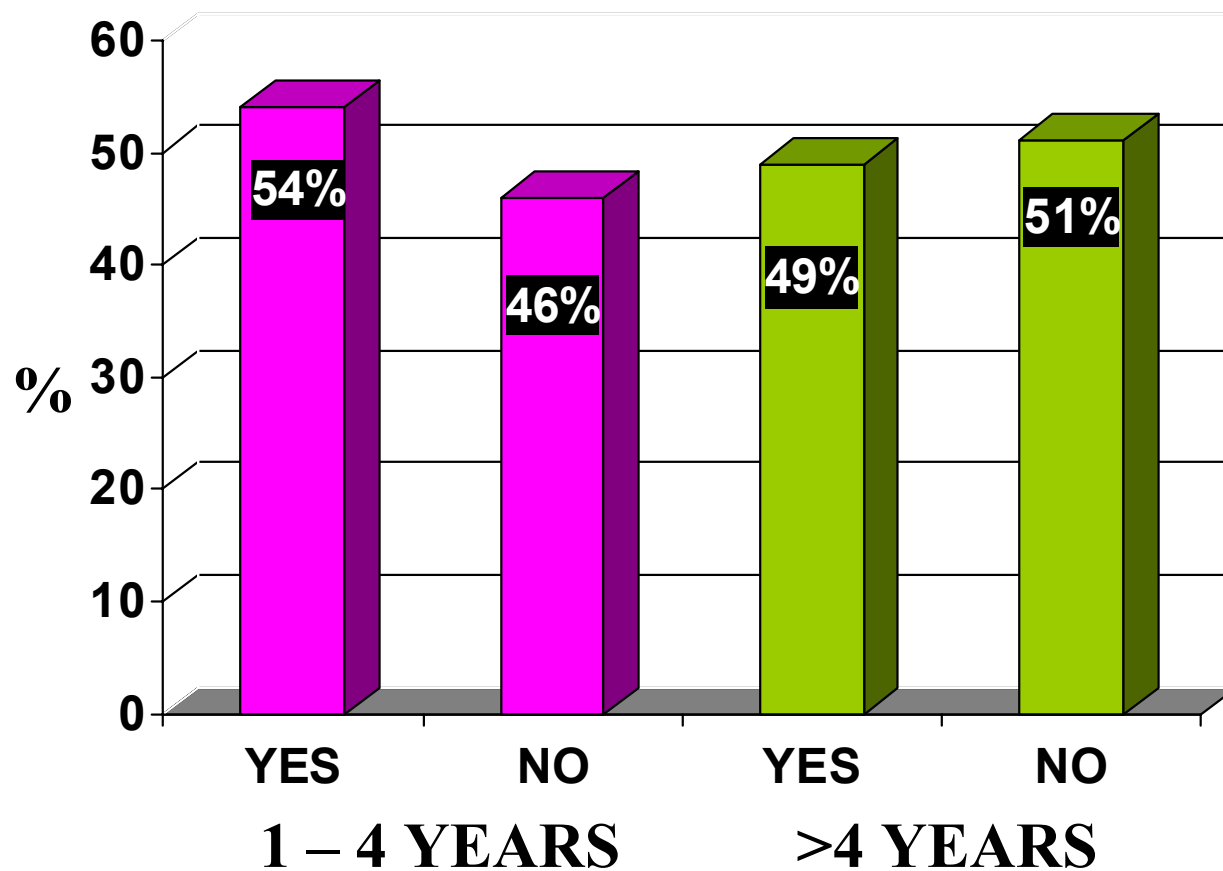
Arabic  
Cantonese  
Chinese  
Czech  
Dutch  
Gaelic  
German  
German  
Hindi  
Italian  
Portuguese  
Russian  
Sinhalese  
Spanish  
Telugu  
Ukrainian

**Chart 6: The survey was in English. A majority of respondents (151) who spoke English opted for electronic devices. A majority of those who spoke other languages (43 respondents) preferred not to use electronic devices. *English-speaking PWS appear to be more open to the use of electronic stutter suppression devices.***



**Chart 7: A slight majority of respondents who had no family history (90 respondents) and those with family history (104 respondents) were more favorable to electronic devices. Similarly, a slight majority of respondents with one known family member who stuttered (87 respondents) and those with many family members who stuttered (17 respondents) preferred to use electronic devices. *Family history does not appear to be a factor in the use of stutter suppression devices.***

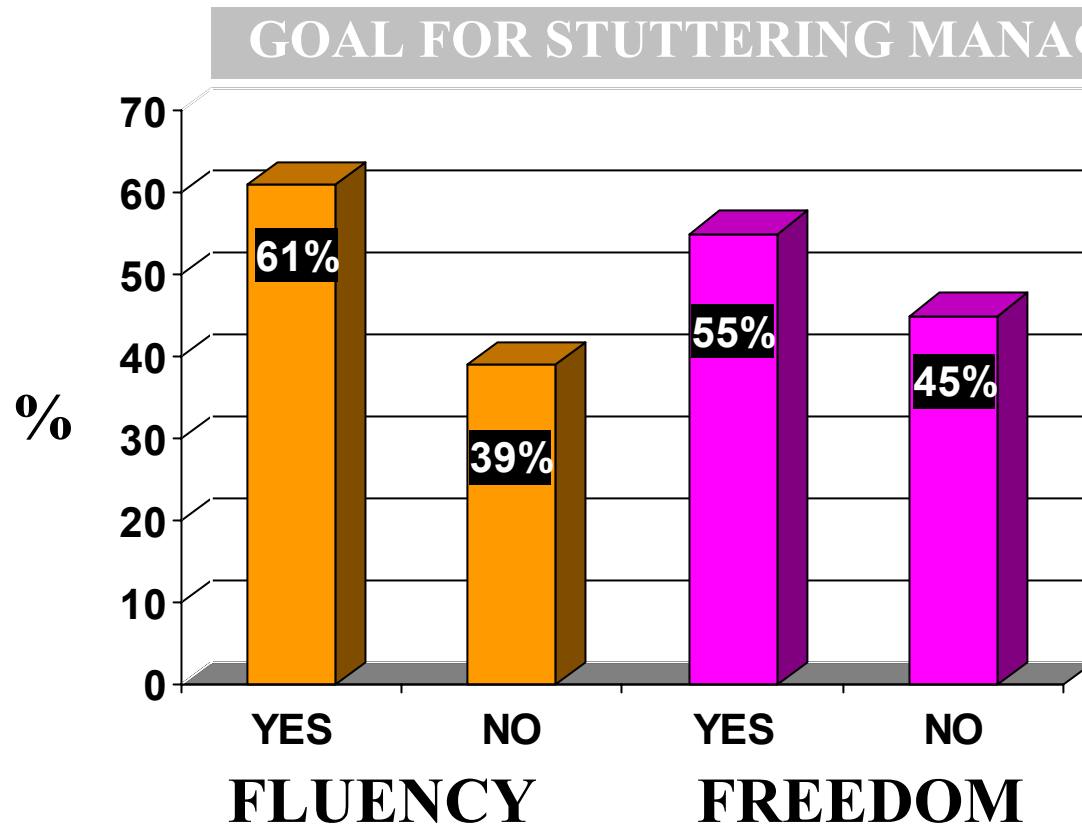
## REPORTED AGE OF ONSET



**YES – Open to use electronic devices.**

**NO – Will not use electronic devices.**

**Chart 8: Respondents who remembered to have begun to stutter at or earlier than 4 years of age (110 respondents) were slightly more open to using electronic devices than those who started stuttering after age 4 (84 respondents). *At present, there is no explanation for the observed difference.***



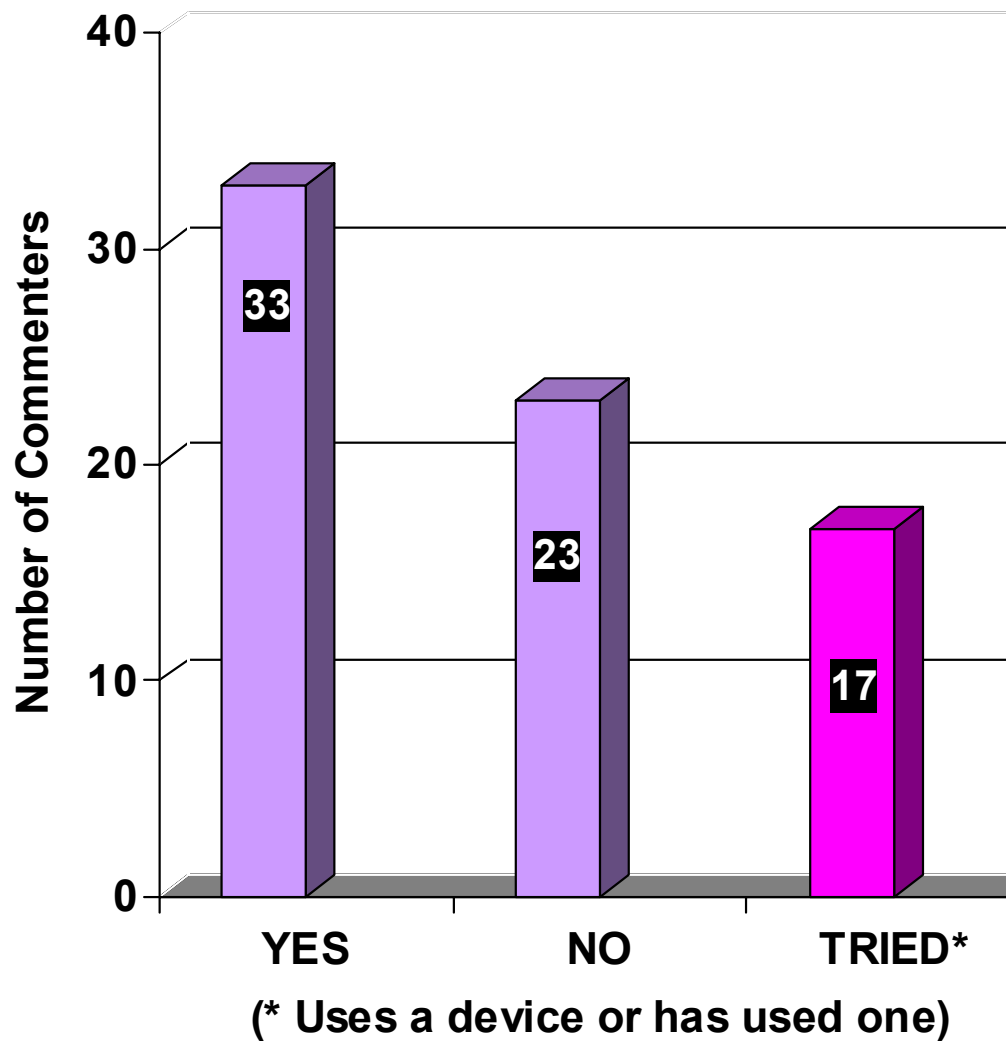
## Item 1 on the Survey

What I wish most is to:

- Speak fluently (“FLUENCY”).
- Speak freely (regardless of whether I am fluent or not) (“FREEDOM”).

**Chart 9: A clear majority of respondents who opted for fluency on Item 1 in the survey (105) also opted to use electronic devices. Interestingly, a majority of respondents who opted to speak freely whether fluent or not on Item 1 in the survey (89) were also in favor of using electronic devices. *Device use appears to substantially transcend the philosophical divide that exists on how one should manage one’s stuttering.***

## COMMENTS BY RESPONDENTS



- **Fifty-six of 194** respondents to the survey (29%) provided the optional comments.
- **Thirty-three (59%)** of the comments came from those who responded “yes” to electronic devices.
- **Seventeen commenters** are using or have used electronic devices. (Three use SpeechEasy – one helped “tremendously,” one “dissatisfied,” and one uses it rarely because of the “stress” it causes. One has used Edinburg Masker, and others different DAF devices, all of which helped to some degree).

## Comment themes by those who responded “yes” to electronic devices:

### PRO:

I have used them and they work.  
I use them for difficult days/difficult situations like phone.  
They may provide extra help some people need.  
They are a crutch, but useful.  
If I had stuttered severely, I would use them.

### CON:

I am doubtful of their effectiveness.  
They are expensive.  
They are difficult to use.  
They did not work for me.  
They are only a short-term solution.  
They may result in abnormal speech.

## Comment themes by those who responded “no” to electronic devices:

### PRO:

I used them, it was helpful but I would not use them now (No reason given for not using).

### CON:

They do not work.  
I don't know anything about them/never heard of them.  
They are a crutch.  
They are not useful for mild stutterers.  
I have accepted stuttering.  
I don't want to wear a device.

# Electronic Stutter Suppression Devices



**Fluency Master – vocal tone is picked up by a contact microphone and delivered to an ear.**

[\(www.stutteringcontrol.com/\)](http://www.stutteringcontrol.com/)



**SpeakEasy is a miniature delayed auditory feedback (DAF) and frequency altered feedback (FAF) device.**

[\(www.speecheasy.com/fluency\\_device\\_models.html\)](http://www.speecheasy.com/fluency_device_models.html)



**DAF/FAF device for telephone calls or face-to-face conversations**

[\(www.casafuturetech.com/Catalog/tfs.shtml\)](http://www.casafuturetech.com/Catalog/tfs.shtml)



**Fluency Coach is a software for DAF/FAF that can be installed on a Windows-based computer with a compatible sound card. The program is used with a microphone and a headset, purchased separately.**

[\(www.fluencycoach.com/?gclid=CLvM4vieuo8CFQRuZQod1A6nec\)](http://www.fluencycoach.com/?gclid=CLvM4vieuo8CFQRuZQod1A6nec)

**A free DAF/FAF software program for Windows-based computers, developed by Rick Arenas of the University of Iowa is available at:**

<http://myweb.uiowa.edu/rarenas/index.htm>



**A similar software can be installed on a PalmPilot type device for portability. With Bluetooth technology, the device can be used with a cordless headset much like cell phone.**

[\(www.artefactsoft.com/pocketdaf.htm\)](http://www.artefactsoft.com/pocketdaf.htm)

# In a nutshell...

- **Just over half of those surveyed were inclined to use stutter suppression devices.**
- **Male PWS were evenly divided on the use of devices while nearly six out of 10 female PWS would be willing to try them.**
- **A slight majority of younger people ( $\leq 30$  years) rejected devices while a slender majority of those over 30 were favorably disposed. Are older PWS more realistic than younger people?**
- **PWS for whom English was the first language (mostly from U.S., Canada, and U.K who constituted 84% of the respondents) were more open to the use of devices. This may be, in part, due to greater availability and/or awareness of devices. Nationality was not a factor but the skewed sample makes this finding as well as the one on language tenuous.**
- **Family history of stuttering was not a factor in deciding on the use of devices.**
- **Of those who had received treatment for stuttering (89% of respondents), a majority favored the use of electronic devices. This may suggest that, for this subset of respondents, treatment did not produce the desired level of fluency.**

# An open and shut case?

**In this survey, nearly seven out of 10 of those who were focused on achieving fluency were in favor of devices. Interestingly, just over half of those focused on freedom to speak with or without stutters would also use devices.**

**Late Marty Jezer, author of *Stuttering: A Life Bound Up in Words* (Basic Books, 1997), a leader in the self-help movement for PWS and an advocate for openness and acceptance of stuttering, used several different devices over an extended period of time. In an article in the ASHA SID 4 Newsletter (October 1999), he argued for the use of electronic devices:**

- ✓ **He stated that he is an effective public speaker, in part, because of the use of devices.**
- ✓ **According to him, the devices could serve as useful adjuncts to any treatment a PWS might receive.**
- ✓ **Many PWS with severe stuttering (he being one of them) would not talk as much and as often without a device simply because they would not be able to finish their speech and because they want to hide their problem.**
- ✓ **It reduces fear of speaking leading to greater participation.**
- ✓ **A device that allows children and teens speak with fewer stutters might provide emotional support and confidence they need.**
- ✓ **It should be noted that it is not a cure for stuttering.**