



Pediatric specialists' concerns regarding marijuana use among adolescent patients

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Background

- Youth with chronic medical conditions report similar levels of marijuana use compared to healthy peers (Wisk & Weitzman, 2016)
- Marijuana use is associated with poor physical and mental health outcomes (Hall & Degenhardt, 2014) and treatment nonadherence (Weitzman, et al. 2015)
- Controversy surrounding the use of marijuana as medicine may send conflicting messages to youth with chronic conditions
- Youth may see subspecialty care as their medical home because of frequent visits and likely refer to these providers for disease-specific health information
- Little is known about the concerns of pediatric specialists regarding marijuana use among their adolescent patients

Objectives

- Assess pediatric specialists' concerns regarding marijuana use among adolescent patients
- Determine differences in concerns across subspecialty type

Methods

- Sample consisted of U.S. endocrinologists and rheumatologists who regularly see 14-17 year old patients
- Recruited through an online survey delivered by professional network mailing lists
- Descriptive statistics used to characterize the overall sample and chi-square tests to compare subspecialty type by sample characteristics
- Logistic regression to examine associations between concerns and subspecialty type

Results

- 232 survey responses (64.7%/35.3%) by pediatric endocrinologists/rheumatologists
- Endocrinologists were more likely to report being moderately/very concerned about marijuana's impact on aspects of their adolescent patients' care (see Figure 2)
- No significant differences by subspecialty in provider concern regarding the general impact of marijuana (Figure 1b) or marijuana as medicine (Figure 1c)

Figure 1a. Provider concerns regarding the impact of marijuana on aspects of patient care

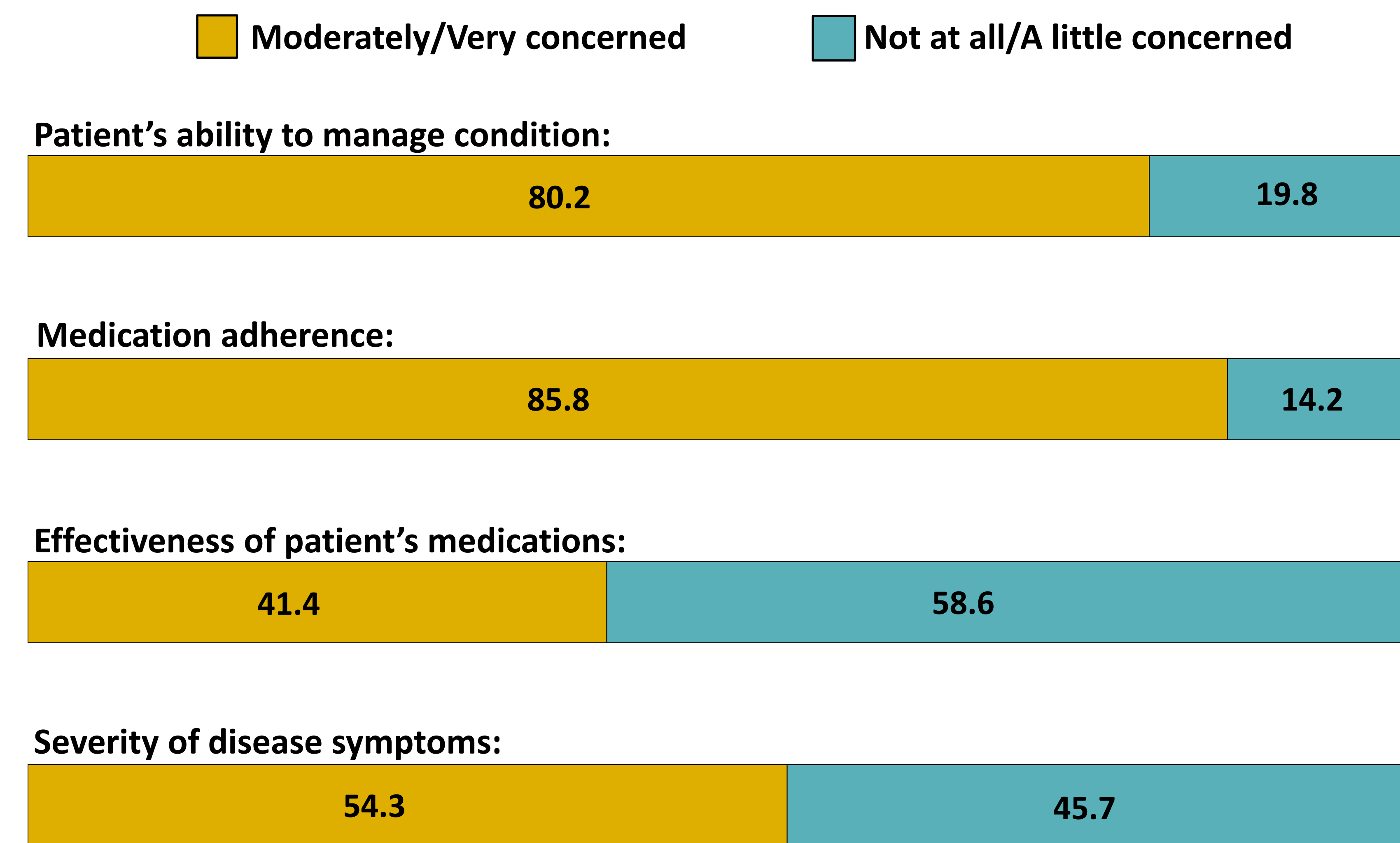


Figure 1b. Provider concerns about the general impact of marijuana on adolescent patients

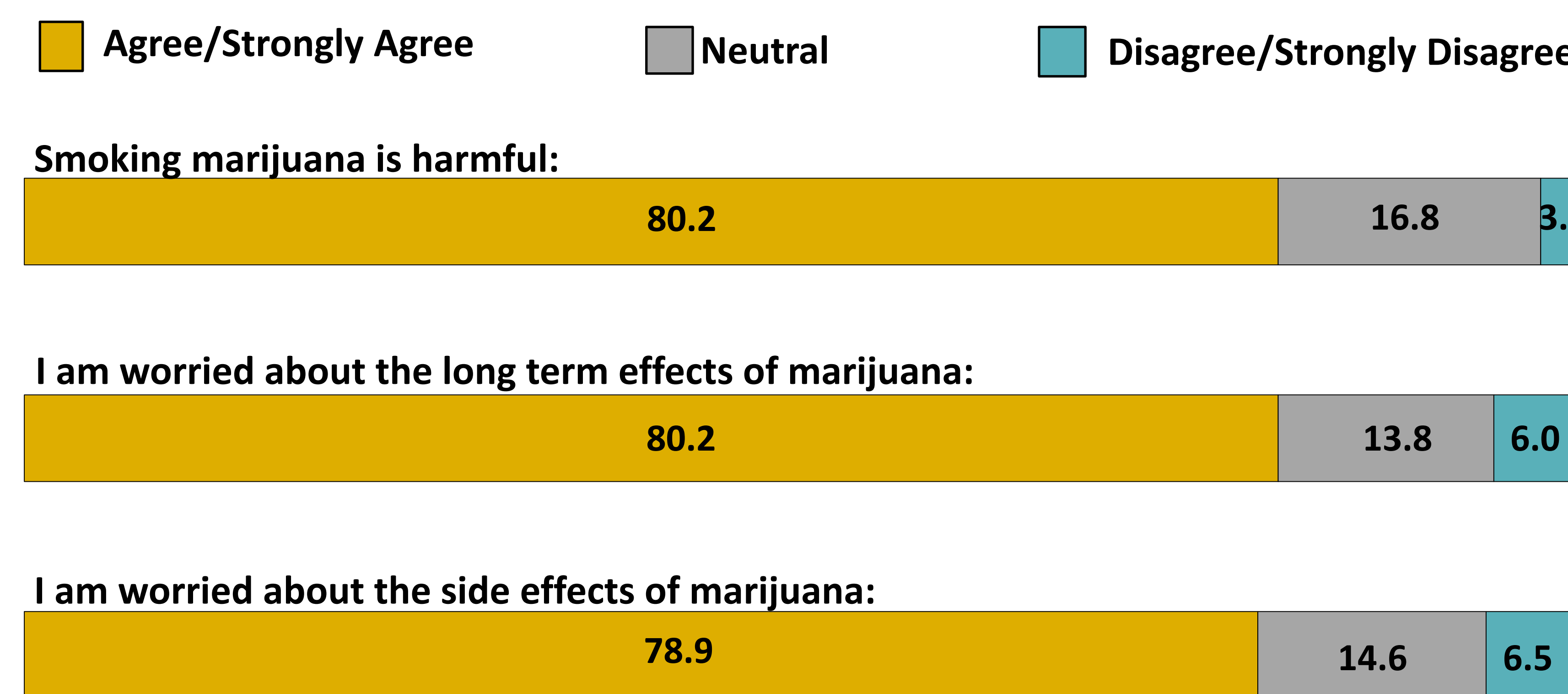


Figure 1c. Provider concerns about marijuana as medicine

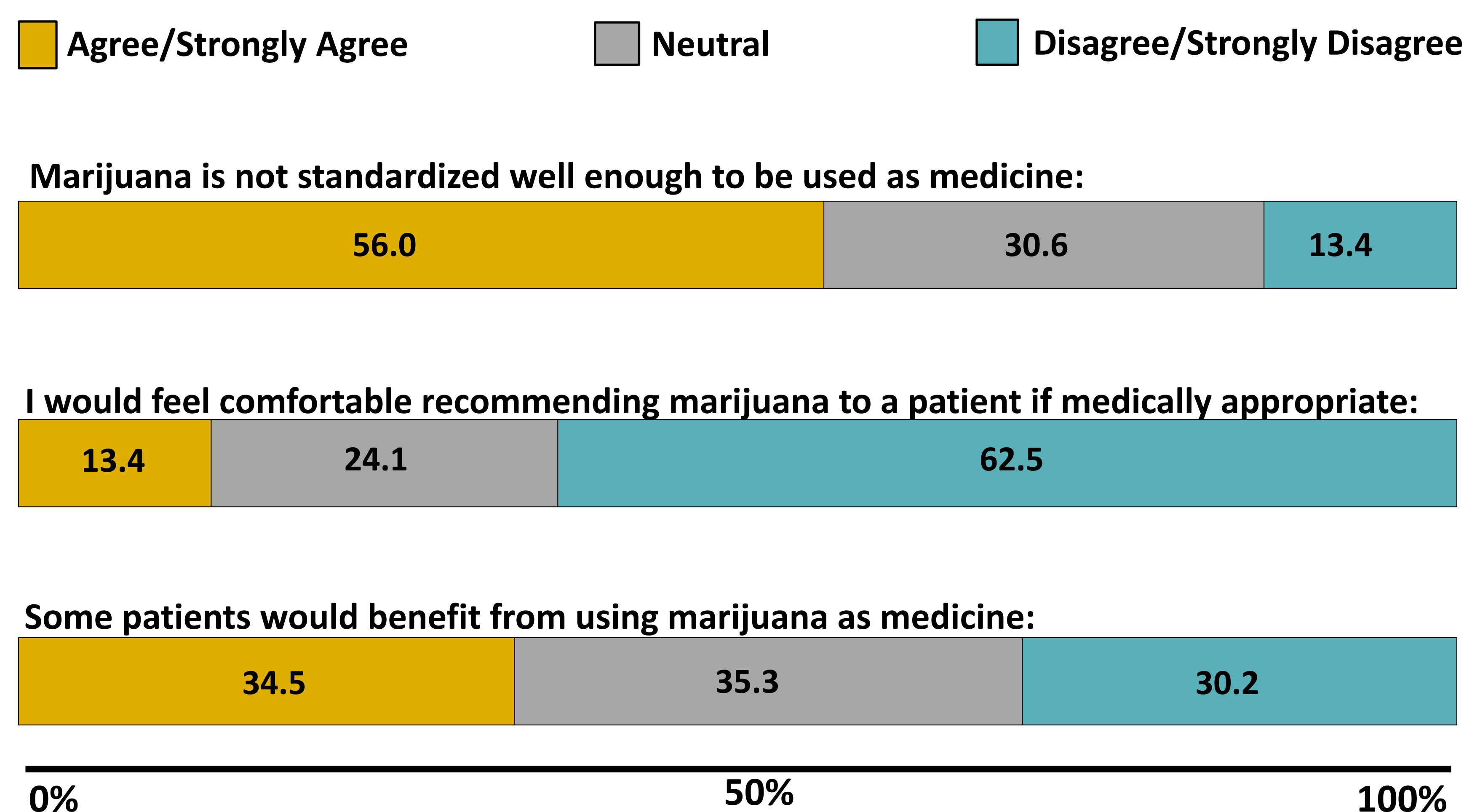
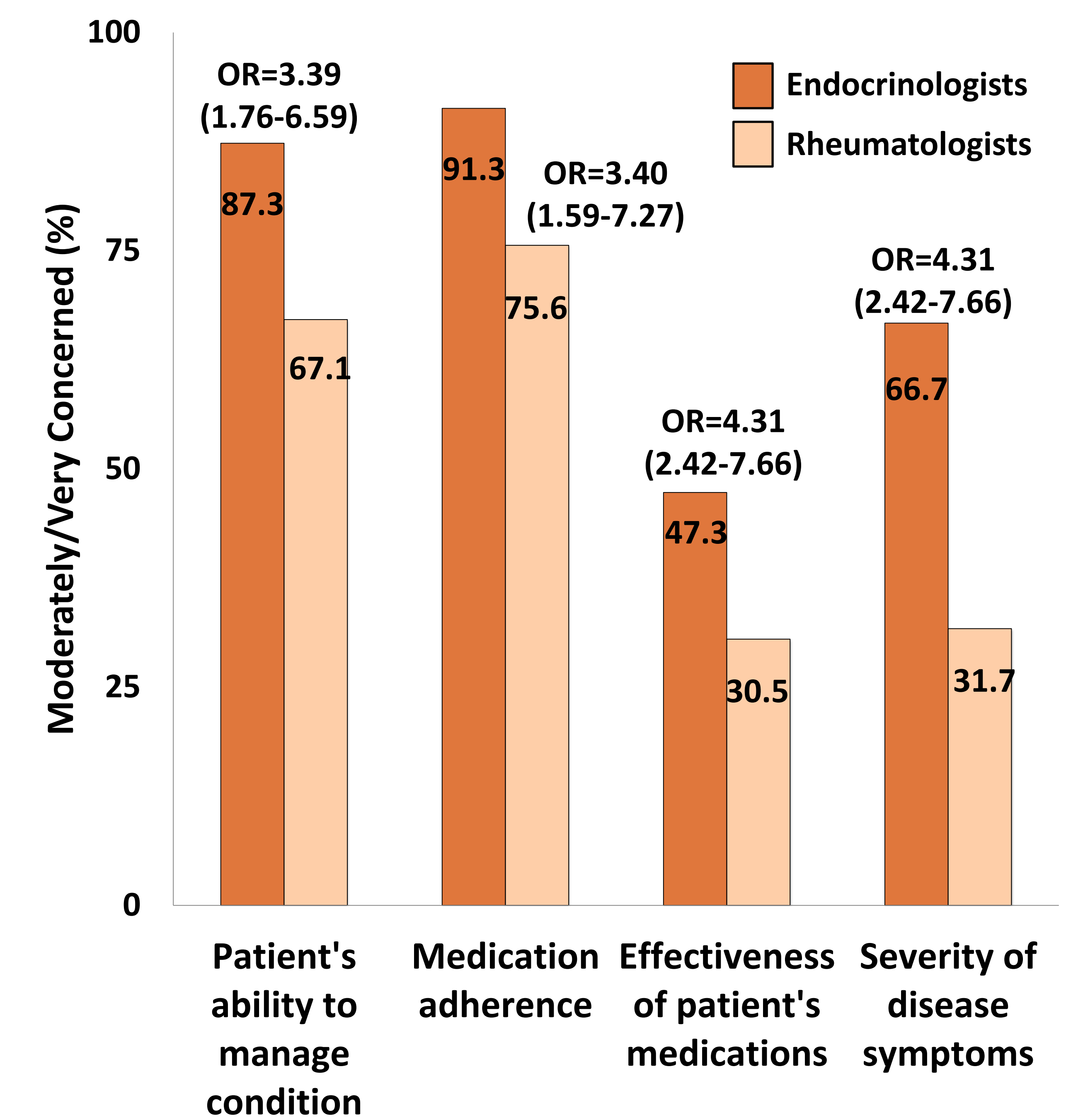


Figure 2. Providers concerns regarding the impact of marijuana on aspects of patient care by subspecialty



Odds ratios (95% CI) derived from logistic regression
Reference group = Rheumatologists

Discussion

- Overall, there is a high level of concern among providers' regarding marijuana use among adolescent patients
- Most providers report discomfort with marijuana as medicine and would not recommend it to their patients
- Concerns surrounding the disease-specific impact of marijuana on aspects of patient care differ by subspecialty

Conclusion

- Pediatric specialists report high levels of concern regarding marijuana use among adolescent patients, however, concerns vary by disease-context
- Further investigation is needed as to how specialists' concerns influence health messages provided to their patients and patient families

Contact and Funding

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Project funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (CNF20140273)