

## BACKGROUND

This study assessed the suitability of written materials as well as consumers' perceptions of the information they receive in WCHS Health Clinics (STD, Child Health, Dental, Immunization, TB, Family Planning, Prenatal and WIC). The assessment was completed by the authors as part of the 2013 Faculty Development Program in Health Literacy and Aging at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## METHODS

### Written Materials

- Programs submitted the most frequently used written material for assessment in English and Spanish.
- The Suitability Assessment of Materials (SAM, 1993) was used to evaluate the materials.
- Each piece was reviewed by 2 health educators trained in using SAM. Scores were averaged across reviewers if they were discrepant.

### Consumer Survey

- The 19 question self-administered survey (English or Spanish) was adapted from the *Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit*.
- The survey was administered to all consumers attending the seven health clinics and WIC over a one week period.
- The survey was developed to learn how well WCHS consumers:
  - Understand their health conditions and medications
  - Understand written and oral information from providers
  - Are able to fill out required forms
  - Perceive their interactions with providers

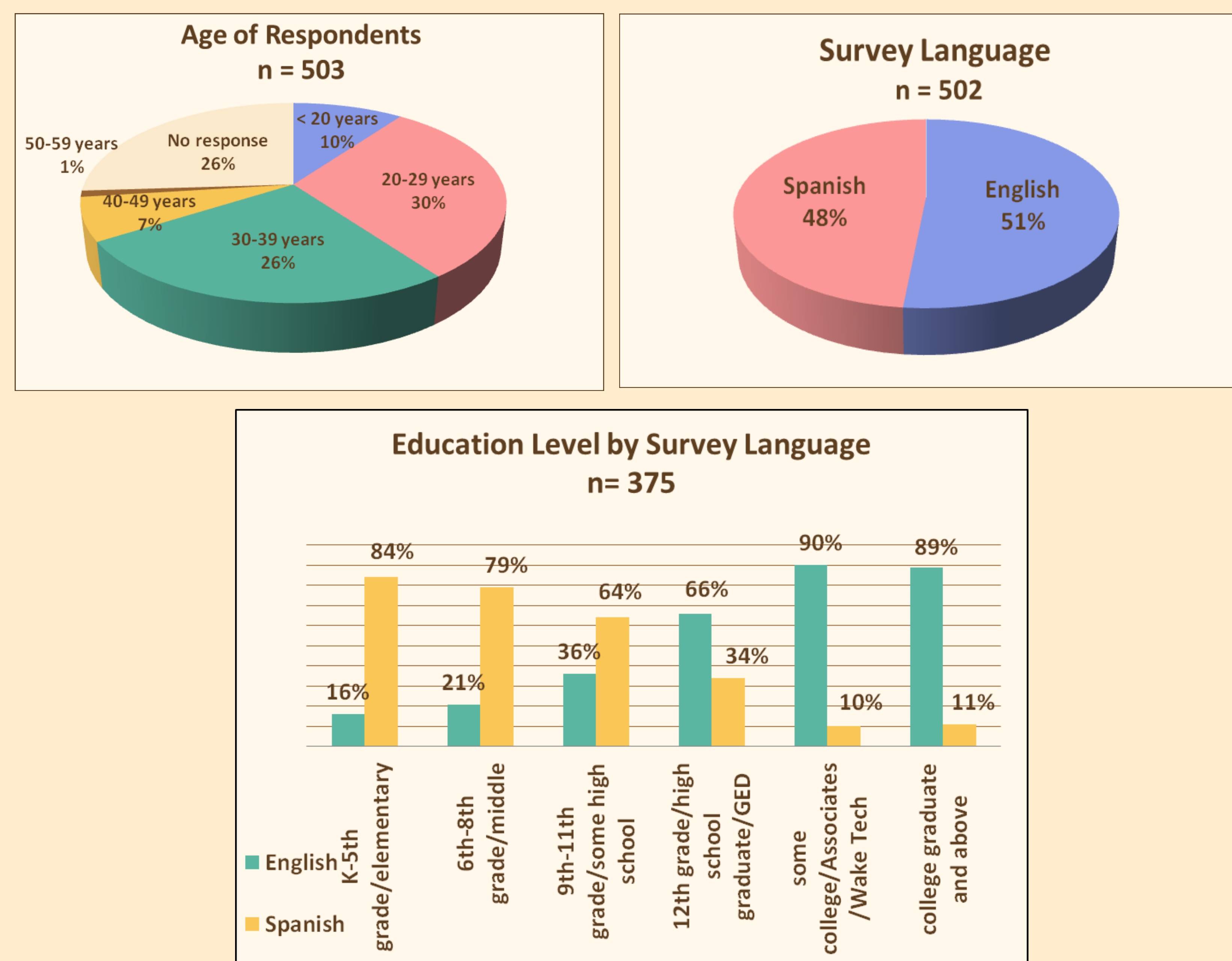
## RESULTS—Written Materials

| Suitability Assessment of Materials |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
|                                     | Superior                                       | Adequate   | Not Suitable   |
| <b>English<br/>(13 materials)</b>   | <b>2</b><br>fact sheet & instruction guide     | <b>8</b><br>program/service guide (4),<br>consent form, information brochure & instruction guide (2) | <b>3</b><br>consent form, medication information sheet & program service guide |
| <b>Spanish<br/>(11 materials)</b>   | <b>3</b><br>fact sheet & instruction guide (2) | <b>6</b><br>program/service guide (3),<br>consent form, information brochure & instruction guide     | <b>2</b><br>consent form, medication information sheet                         |

## RESULTS—Consumer Survey

### Respondents

- Surveys were completed by 922 WCHS consumers, **503 of those utilized WCHS as their primary place for health care**, and are included in the results shown here.
- The majority of respondents were under 40 years of age.
- Nearly half (48%) of respondents filled out the survey in Spanish.
- Those who filled out the survey in English had higher education levels than did respondents who filled out the survey in Spanish.



### Key Findings

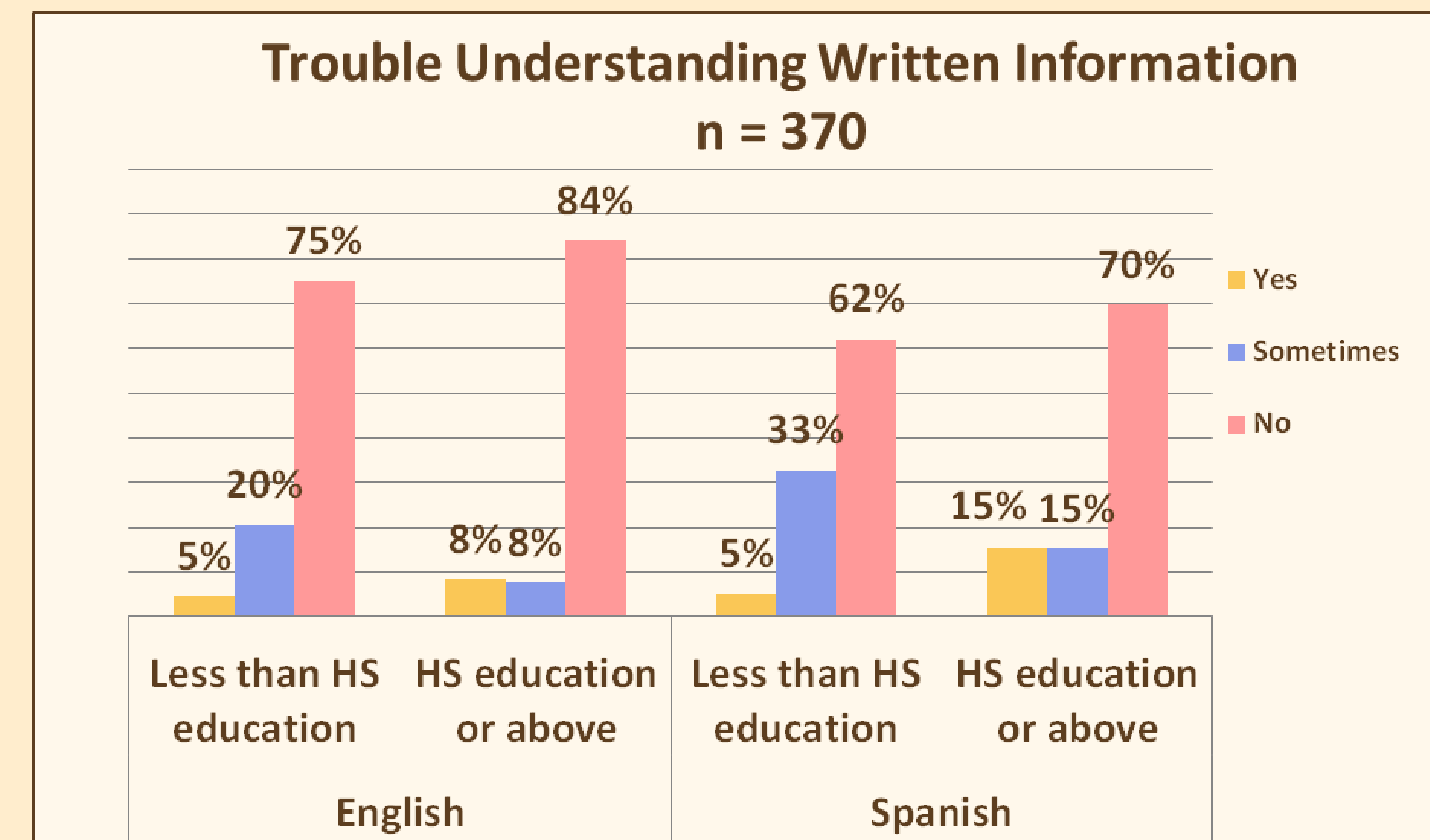
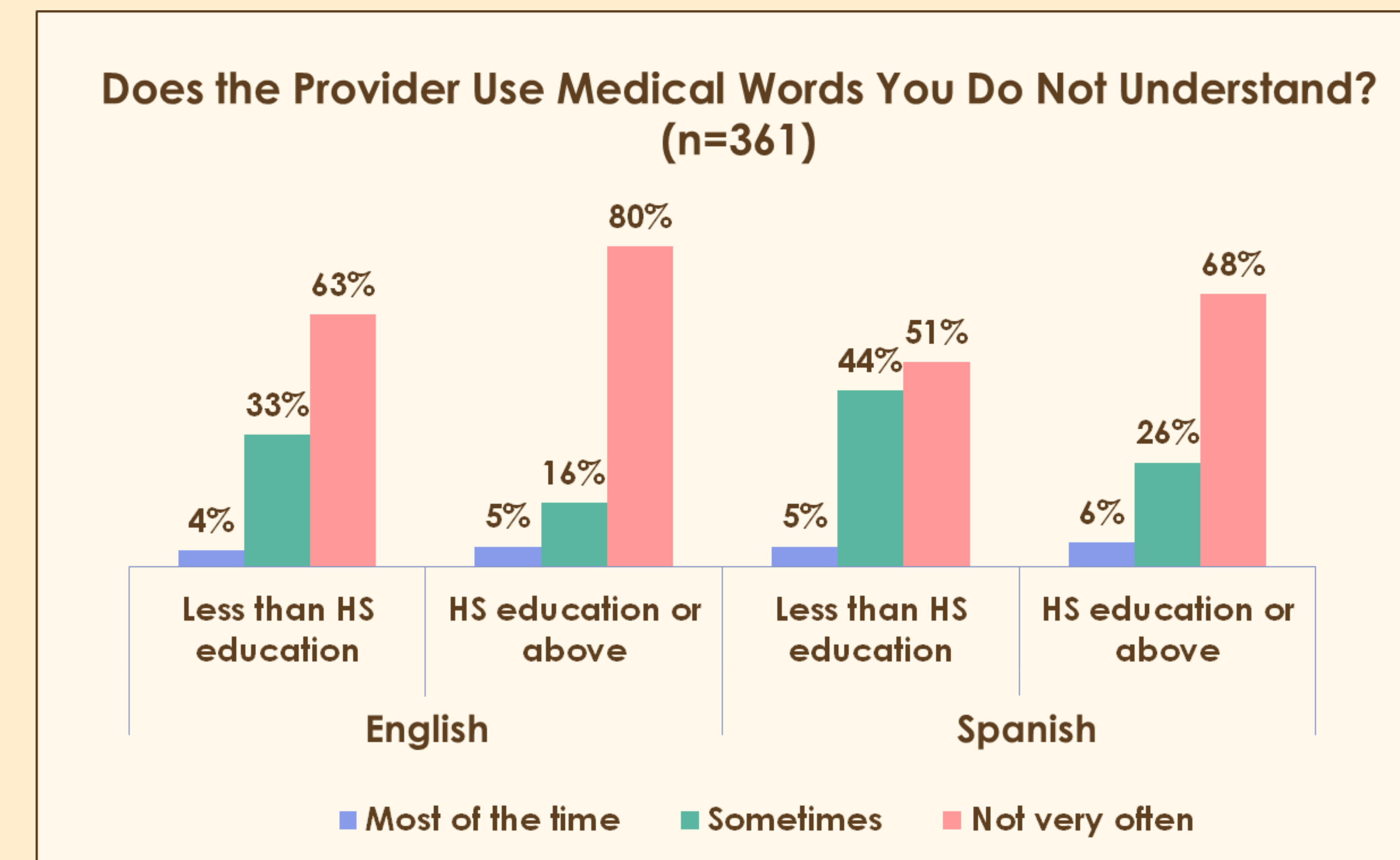
Consumers felt:

- Staff respected what they said (89%)
- Comfortable asking the provider to explain things to them (88%)
- Providers listened carefully to what they had to say (88%)
- Health care providers made sure they understood what they needed to do to improve their health (85%)
- They got "just enough information" (82%)

Respondents with lower education levels and those who completed the survey in Spanish reported:

- Having **more trouble understanding written materials\***
- That **providers used medical words they did not understand\***

\*Interpreters and written materials are available in Spanish at WCHS



## CONCLUSIONS

- WCHS providers communicate well with consumers
- WCHS needs to focus on:
  - Improving written materials
  - Using plain language as a universal precaution

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