

Caregivers' representations of and attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

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Background

PLWHA health status has dramatically improved in countries where antiretroviral therapy is widely available; meanwhile, they still face high level of stigma, sometimes exerted by healthcare workers. There are no recent figures in France on caregivers' representation of and attitude towards PLWHA; we therefore aimed to explore the representations of healthcare providers regarding PLWHA, their apprehension when taking care of such patients, and to what extent they witnessed inappropriate behaviors.

Methods

We elaborated an anonymous online survey and diffused it to different groups of caregivers (mainly nurses and nurse's aides) on social networks from November 16 to 24, 2018. They were working in different types of working facilities (fig 1). The questionnaire focused on healthcare workers knowledge and apprehensions regarding PLWHA, and proposed participants to give example of misconduct they witnessed.

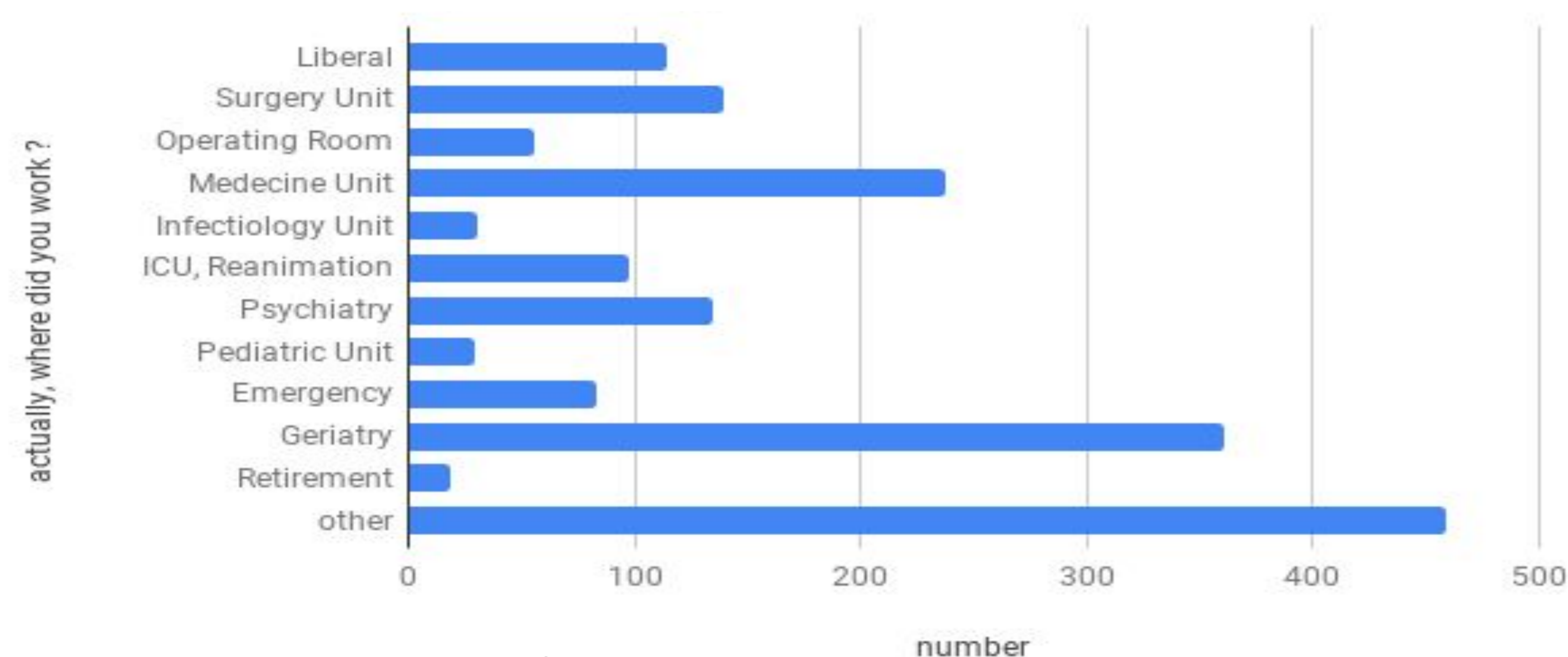


Fig 1: working place of the participants

Results

A total of 1759 participants completed the survey (92% women and 8% men); 64.2% were under 35 years of age. There were 41.7% nurses, 32.0% nurse aides, and 12.0% nursing students.

Regarding knowledge about HIV, 42% of respondents thought that even with a controlled viral load, PLWHA remain more or less contagious; conversely, 29.6% knew that when the viral load is undetectable, the transmission risk is null. When asked about the precautions to be taken with PLWHA, 7% of them indicated that HIV-positive patients should always be in a single room (table 1).

Regarding inappropriate behavior towards an HIV-positive patient, 29.1% of the participants reported having witnessed this from colleagues (Fig 2). The 469 testimonials featured denials of care and avoidance strategies (35.6%), unnecessary precautions (42.6%), and value judgment or even insults (25.2%).

Regarding their own perceptions, 49.6% of participants declared having some apprehension with HIV-positive patients that they would not have with patients with another transmissible disease (fig 3). During a care with an HIV+ patient, 56.4% of the caregivers have declared feel afraid of contamination (fig 4).

Conclusions

This study shows that negative attitudes towards PLWHA still exist in France; these misconducts are possibly related in part to the fragmentary knowledge of some caregivers. They should receive an adequate formation not to participate in PLWHA stigmatization and to deliver better quality care.

22.7% of caregivers believe that **standard precautions are not enough** to care for an HIV-positive patient.

7% of caregivers think that an HIV-positive patient **should be installed in a single room**, regardless of his or her viral load.

11.5% of caregivers believe that even with a controlled viral load, **the life expectancy of an HIV patient is halved**.

56.8% of caregivers believe that an **HIV-positive patient can not receive a transplantation**.

77.4% of caregivers do not know that **an HIV-positive patient with an undetectable viral load can have sex without a condom**

Table 1: misconceptions among the participants

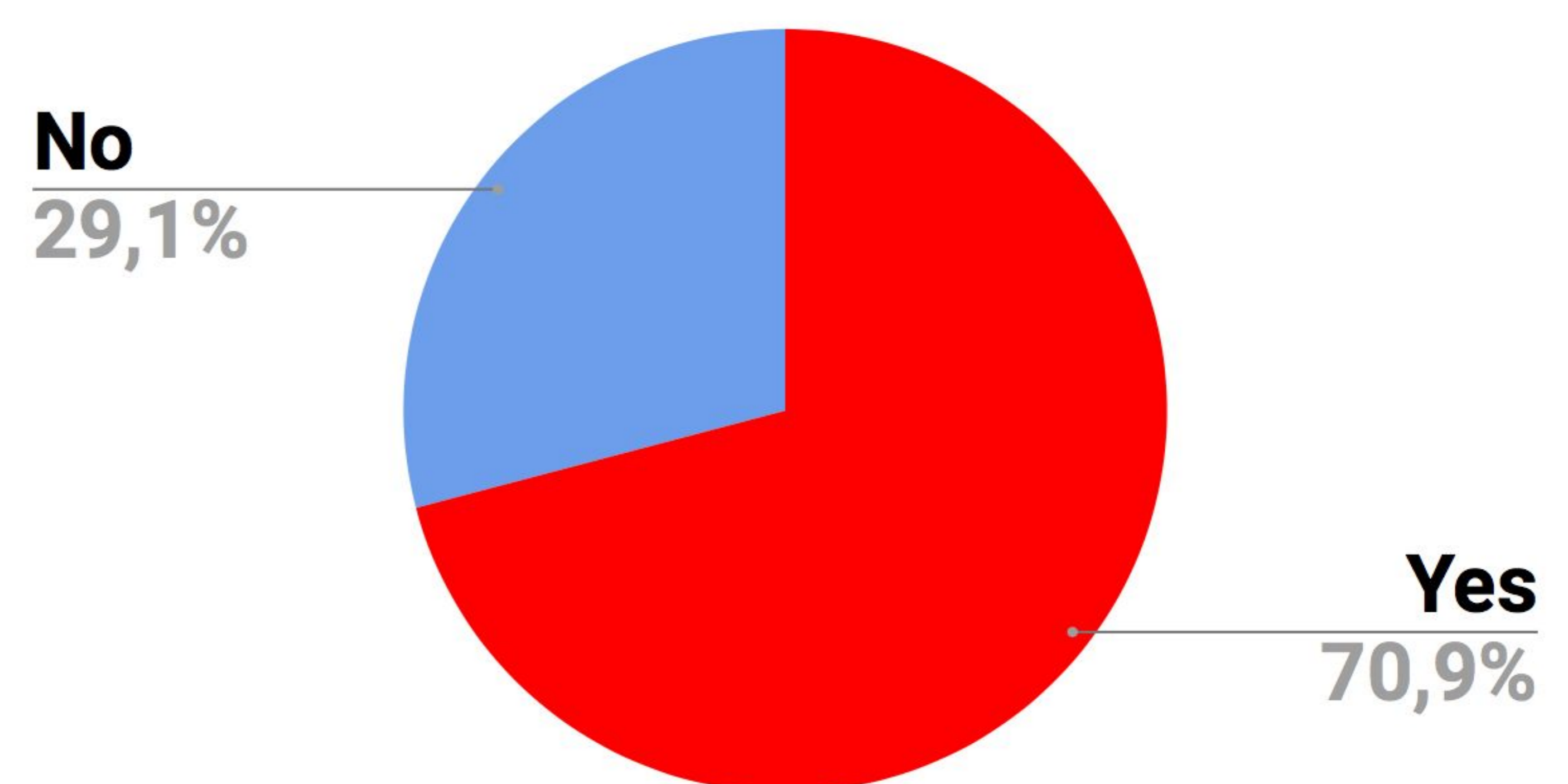


Fig 2: answer to the question « Have you ever seen colleagues behave inappropriately toward an HIV+ patient ? »

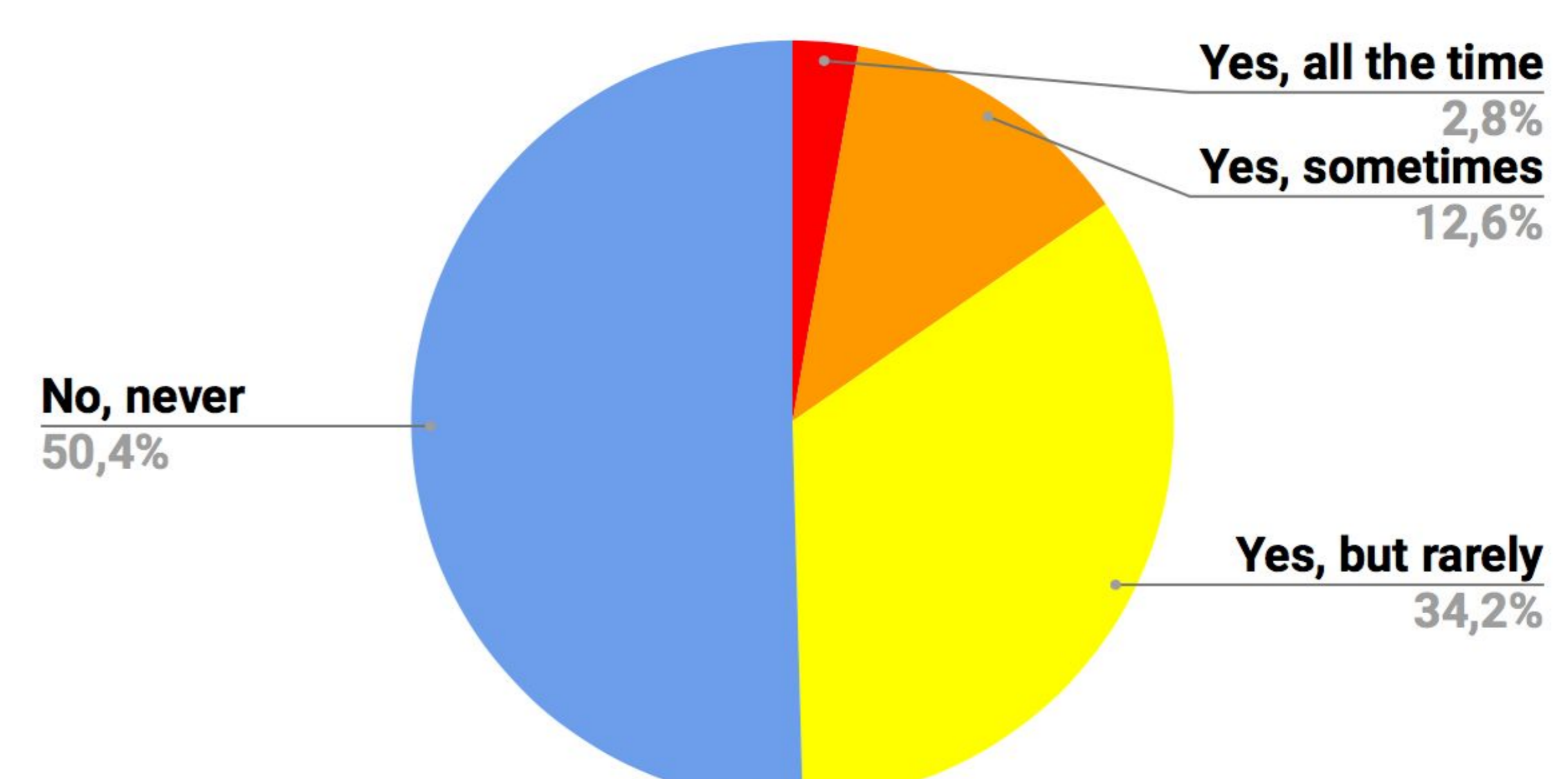


Fig 3: answer to the question «Do you have some apprehension with HIV + patients that you would not have with patients with another infection?»

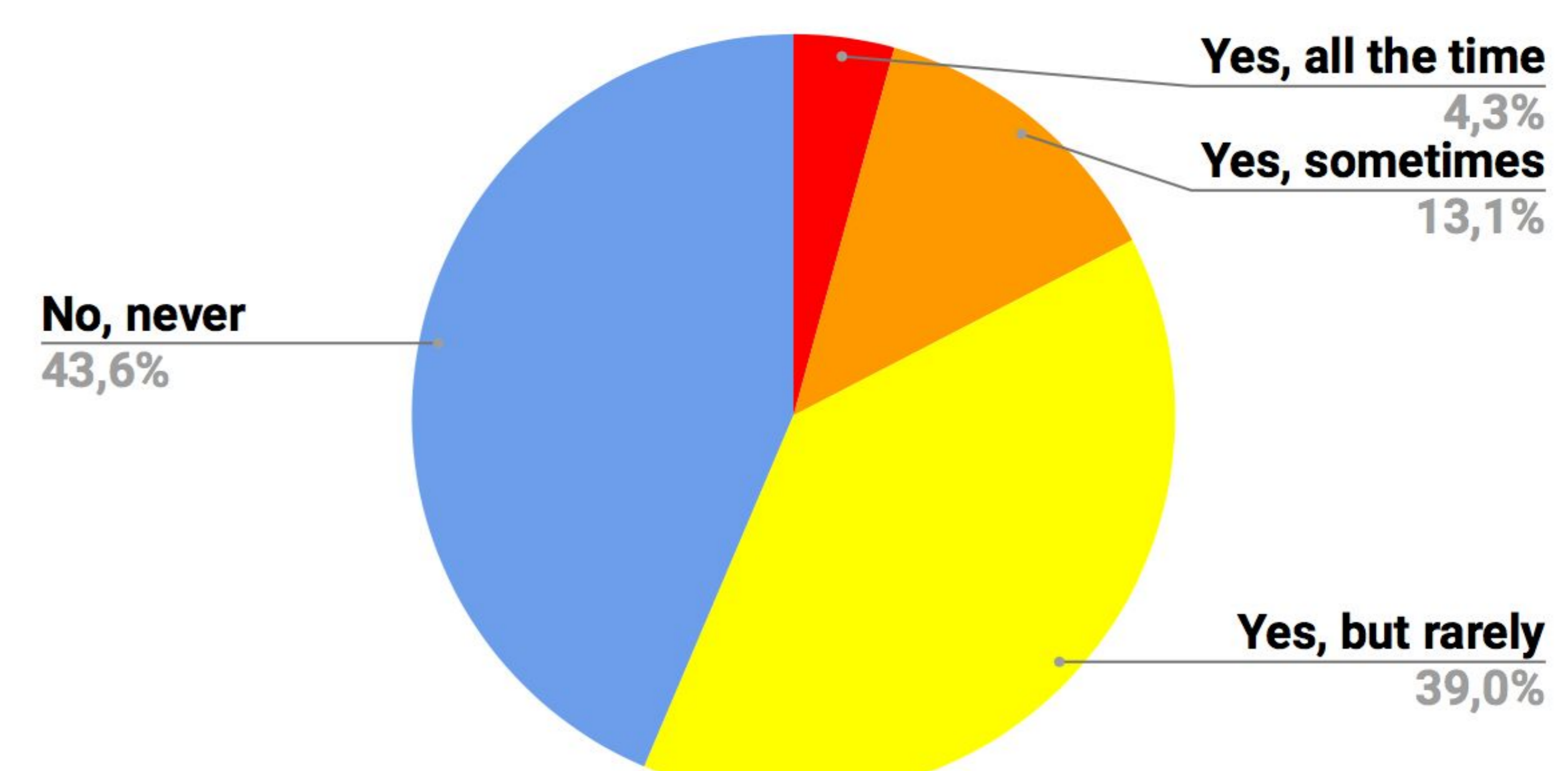


Fig 4: answer to the question « Do you ever feel afraid of being contaminated by an HIV+ patient during a care ? »