

Survey on Air Quality and Respiratory Health of Children



Objectives



- Raise public awareness of the health impact of air pollution on children;
- Sound out parents' concerns about air pollution & child health;
- Provide quantitative figures to demonstrate the need to improve air quality

Survey Background

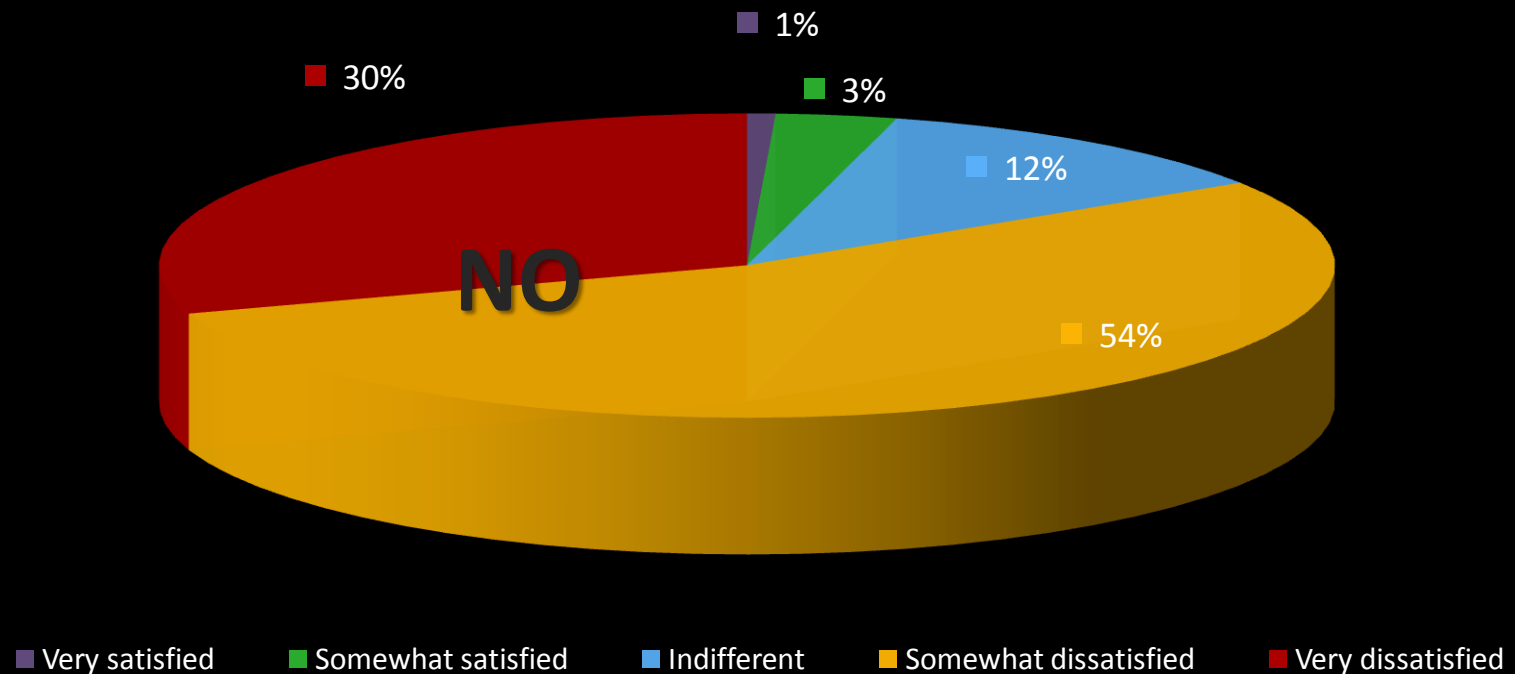
- Period of time : Late February to end of March (5 weeks)
- Questions were vetted by HK Asthma Society chairman, Dr. Alfred Tam
- Location: 10 pediatricians' clinics throughout Hong Kong
- Sample size: 512 respondents
(Hong Kong local: 322 Expat: 67 Unidentified: 123)
- Respondents were evenly distributed throughout HK
(HK Island 32%, KLN 32% and NT 34%)
- 52% : 1 child 38% : 2 children 8%: 3 children 2%: 4 children
- Child age: 53%: 0-5 below 23%: 5-10 23%: above 10



Findings

Dissatisfaction

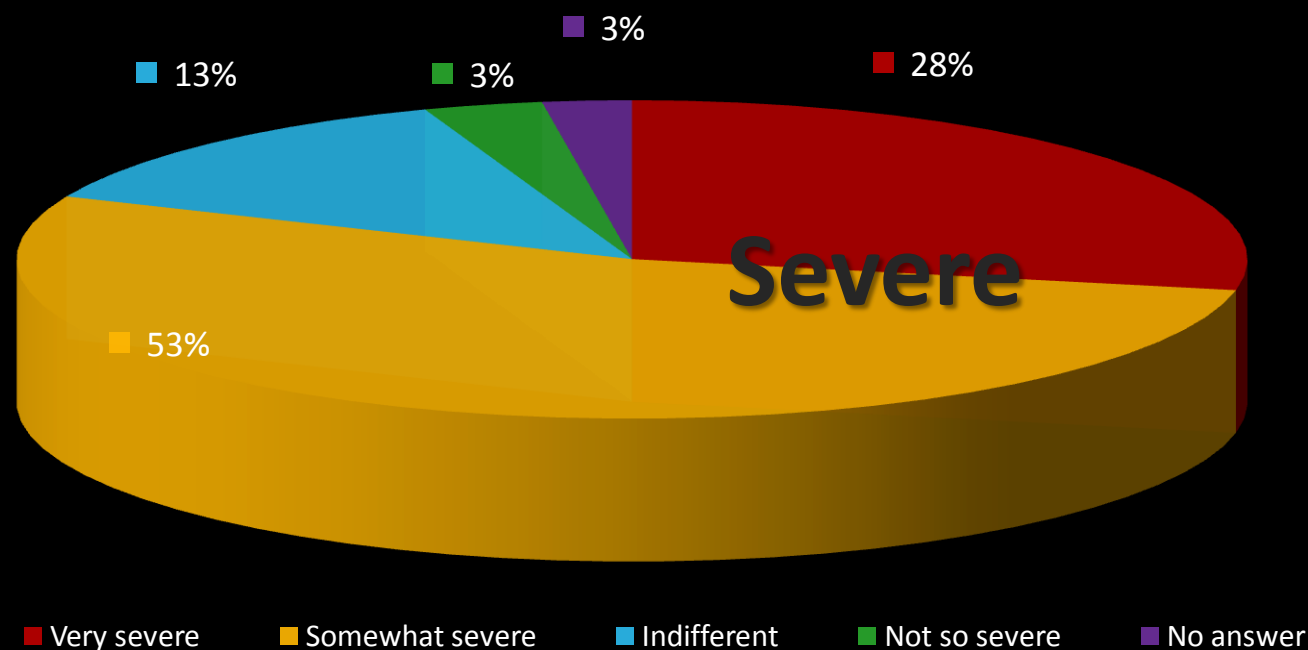
Are you satisfied with the air quality of HK?



84% are not satisfied with the air quality of Hong Kong

Dissatisfaction

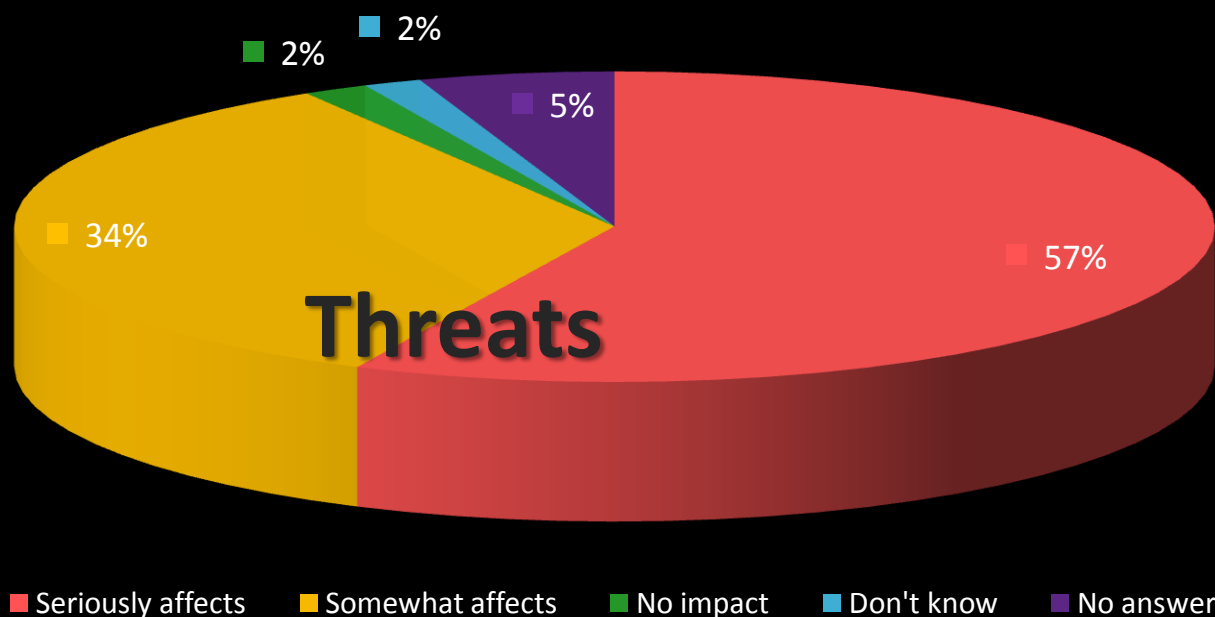
How severe do you think the air pollution in HK is compared to 3 years ago?



81% found it more severe than 3 years ago

Dissatisfaction

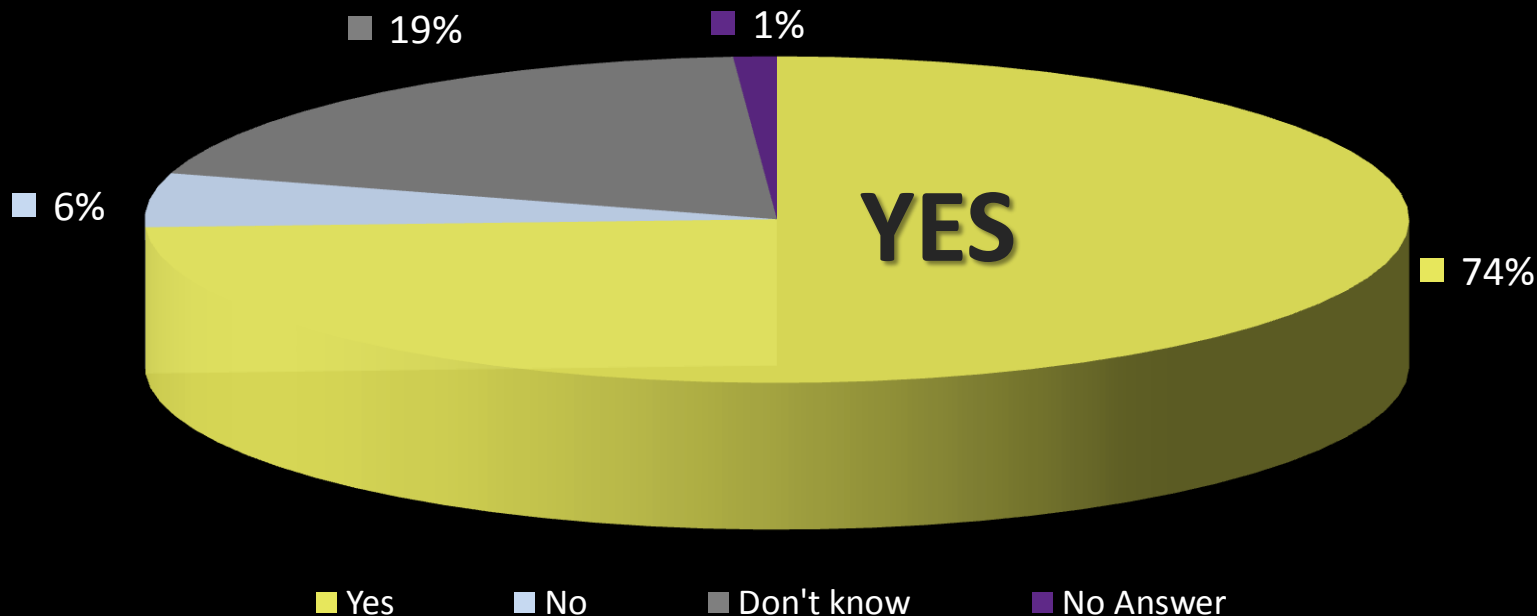
To what extent do you think air quality affects your child/
children's respiratory health?



91% parents think the current poor air quality threatens their children's health

Air pollution and child health

Have you observed a connection between your child's/children's illness and high API readings?

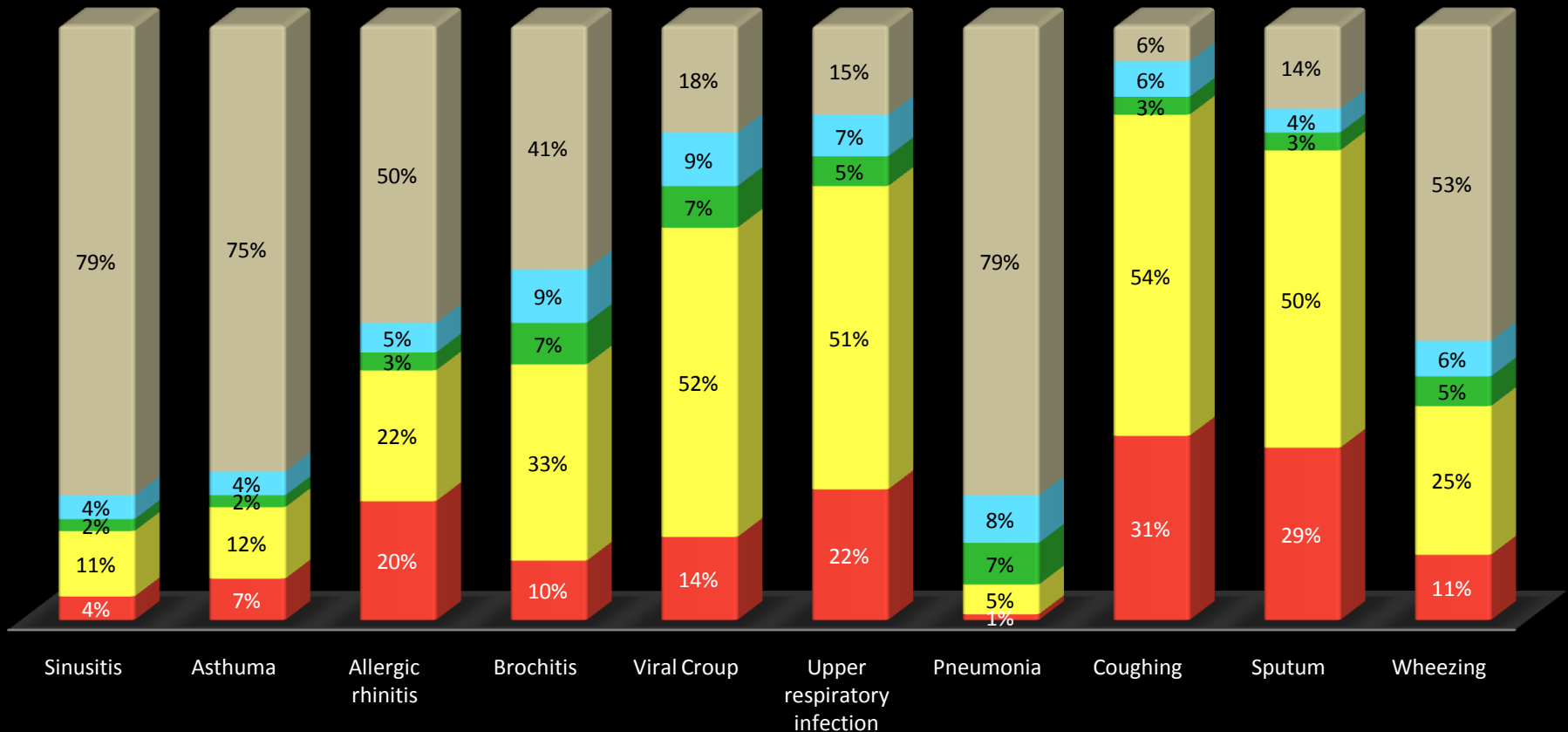


74% believe there is a correlation between their children's health and API readings

Worsening health condition

How frequently does your child/children suffer from the illnesses below?

■ Chronically ill
 ■ One or several times a year
 ■ Once every few years
 ■ Once or twice in lives
 ■ Never



Worsening health condition

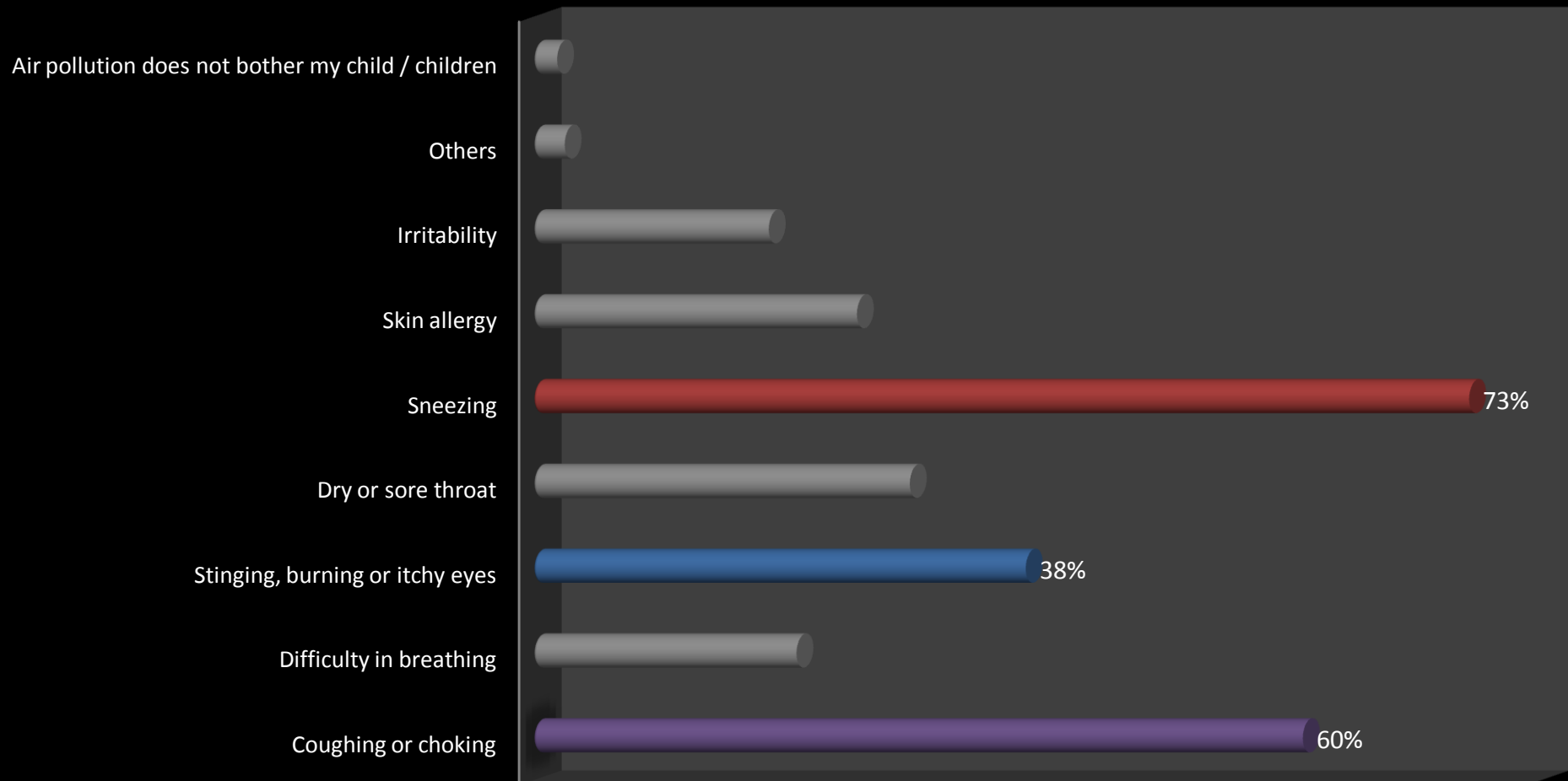
*Chronically** ill:

- 31% cough
- 29% have sputum
- 22% upper respiratory infection
- 20% allergic rhinitis
- 10% bronchitis and wheezing

*Parents were given the choice of “chronic”, “sometimes” and “never”

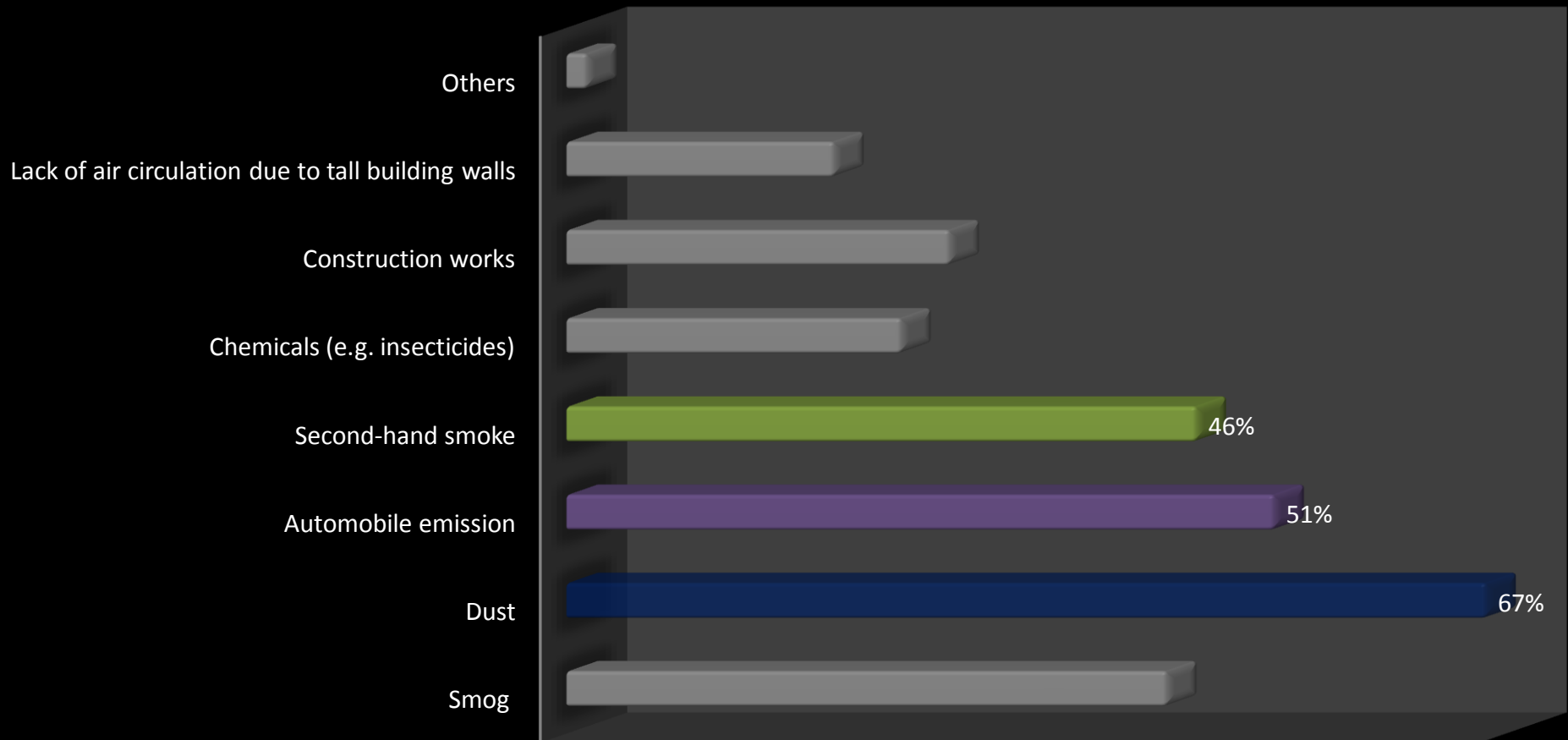
Worsening health condition

What do you observe when your child is / children are exposed to an air polluted environment?



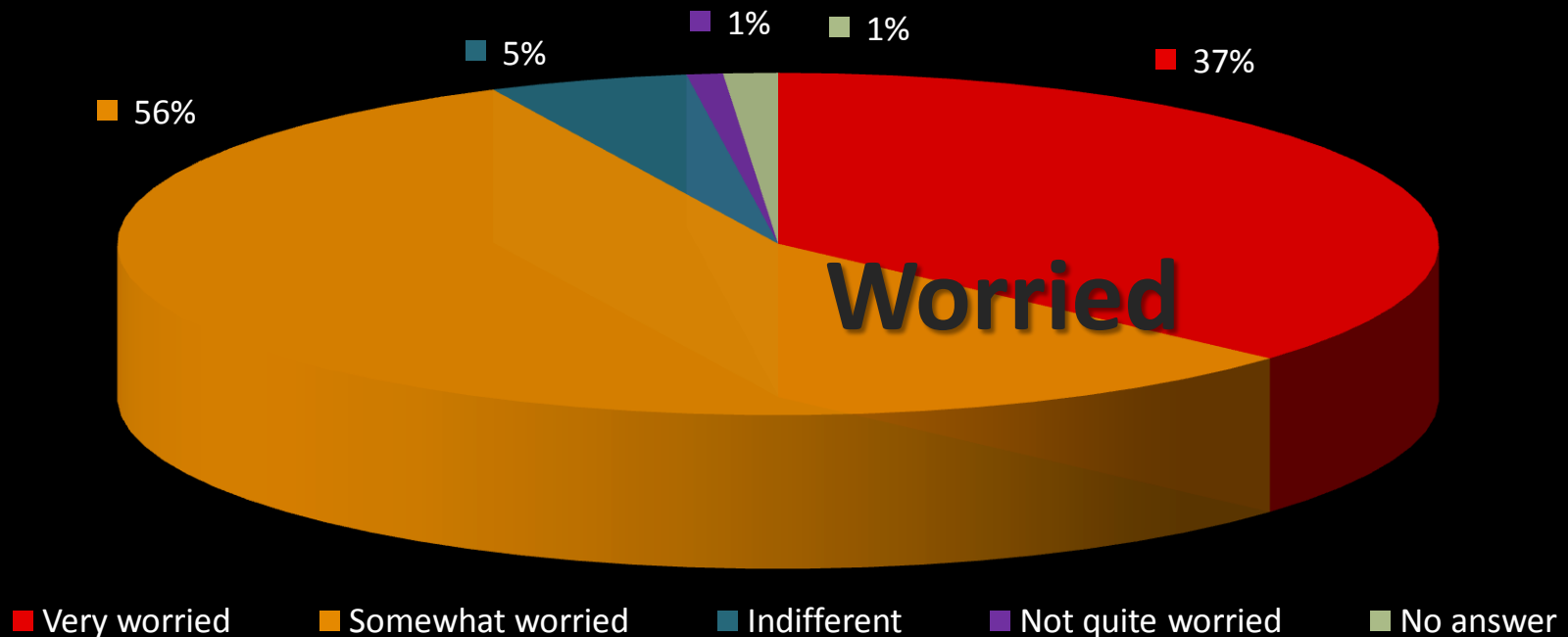
Pollution source

Have you seen your child's / children's illness worsen when there is a high level of the following?



Anxiety

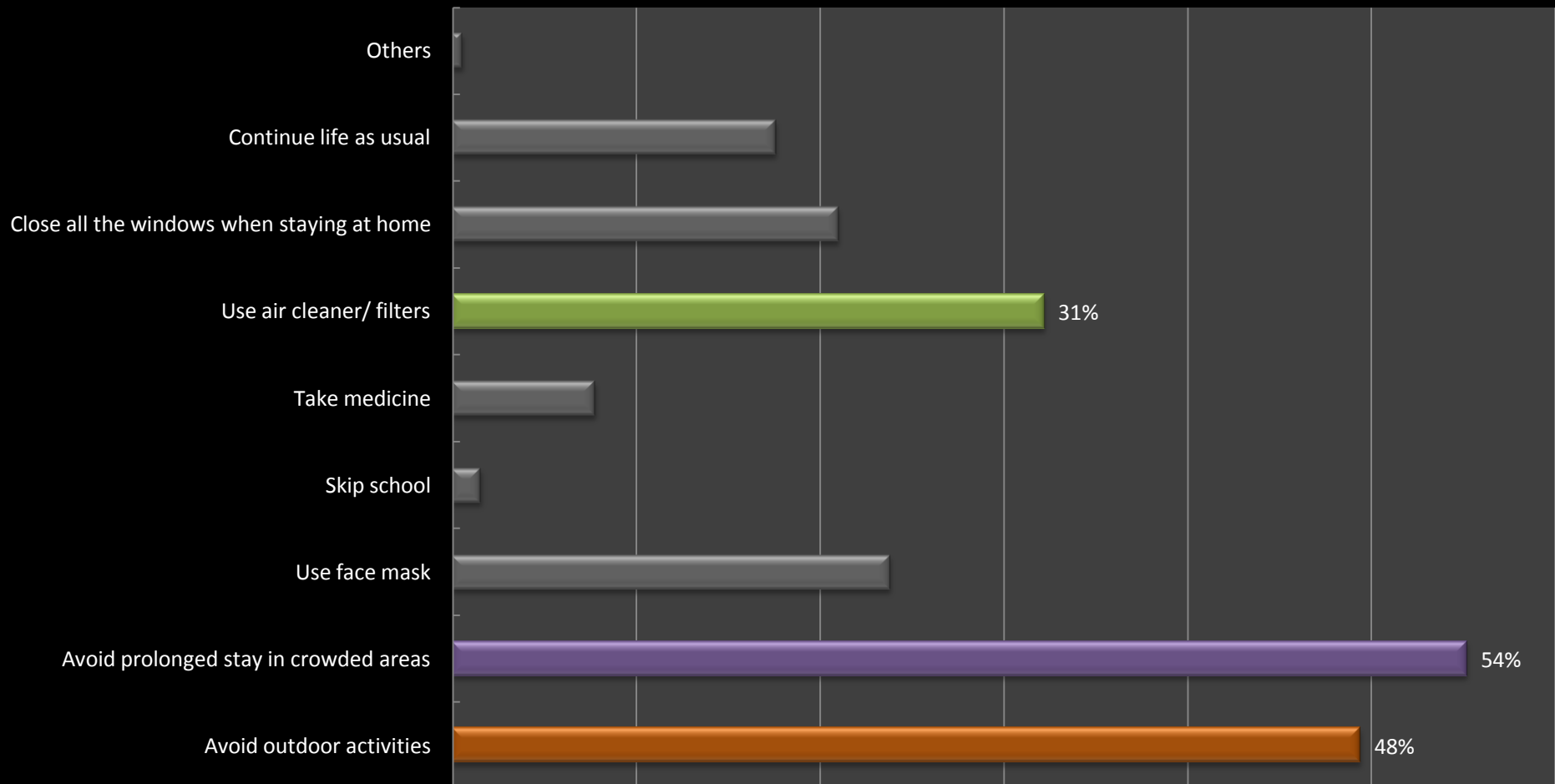
Do you worry that your children's respiratory health will worsen/illness will be triggered when the API is at a 'High Level' or above?



93% of parents worry that children's respiratory health will worsen when the API is at a "High Level" or above.

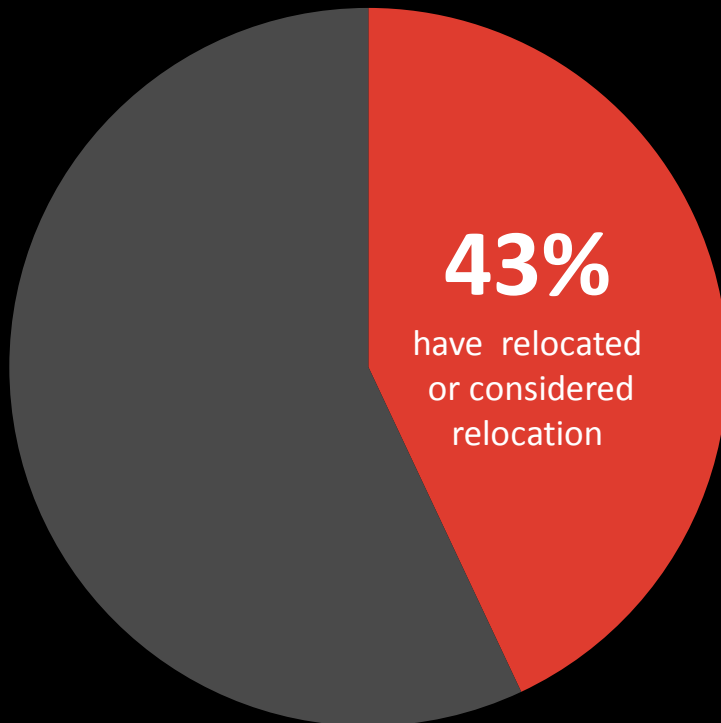
Ways of avoidance

What do you do with your child/ children when the Air Pollution Index (API) is at a 'High Level' or above?

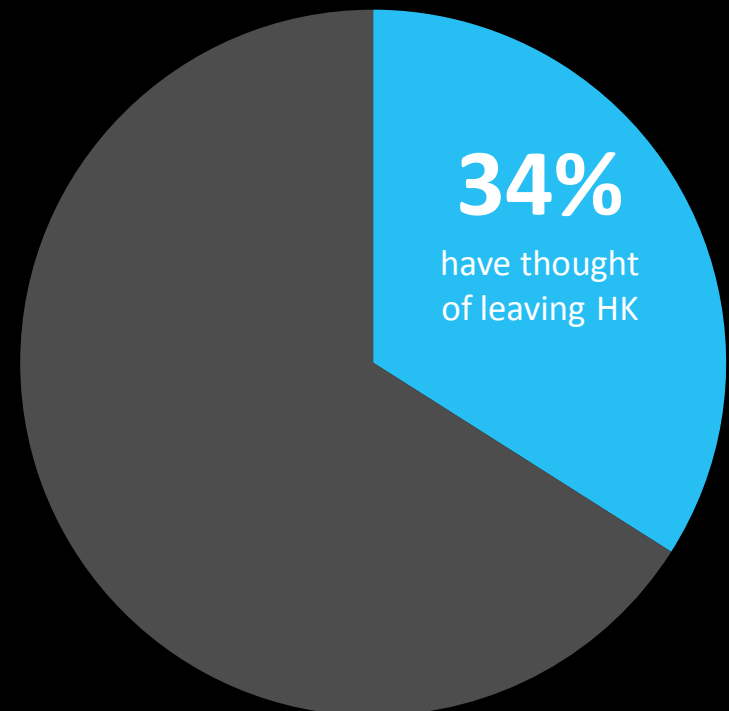


Time to leave?

Have you relocated or considered relocation within HK because of the impact of air pollution on your children's health?

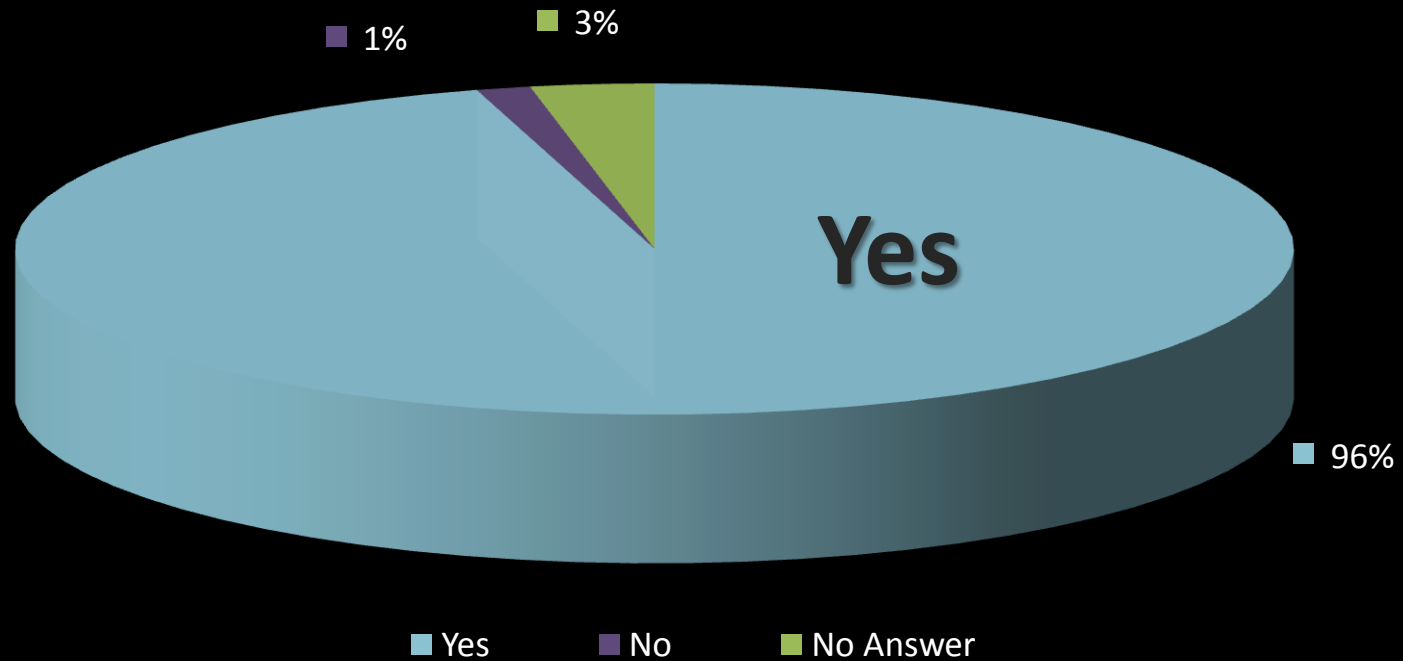


Have you ever thought of leaving HK for the sake your children's health due to the air pollution?



Government Action

Would you support more government spending to improve air quality?



Government Action

Which of the following Government measures would you support to reduce air pollution for the benefit of your child's / children's health?



Conclusions

- Strong linkage between high air pollution and respiratory illnesses in children
- A significant percentage of children visiting doctors in Hong Kong suffer **CHRONICALLY** from pollution-related ailments.
- A significant percentage of parents are or would consider relocating for their children's health
- Parents unanimously support more government spending to improve air quality

Recommendations

- Government to tighten AQOs asap.
- The government should replace all pre-Euro III buses by 2015.
- Get Pre-Euro III Diesel Commercial Vehicles off the road by 2015 through effective carrot and stick policies.
- Set up alarm systems like those for typhoon or heavy rainfall.

The End

