



Positive healthcare
experiences don't
tell the full story

2026 Blue Cross
Women's Health Study

Methodology

To create the 2026 Blue Cross Women's Health Study, Research + Knowledge = Insight, an independent research company, conducted an online survey in March 2026.

The comprehensive sample for this survey includes 2,045 adult Canadians, including 12 key demographic measures (pictured to the right).

The study has a margin of error of plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20.

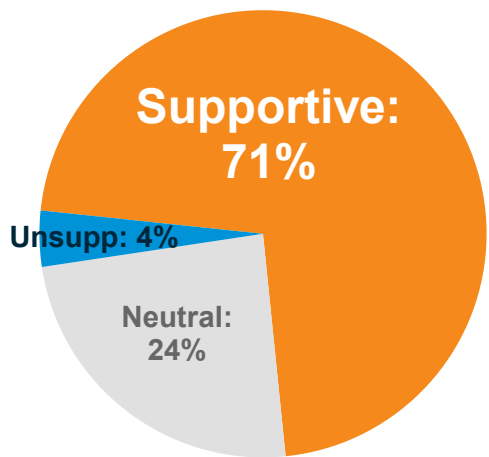




Canadians Feel Supported

Most Canadians describe their doctor as a trusted partner or generally supportive

View of doctor



Men somewhat more likely to view their doctor as supportive



4. How would you describe how you see your family doctor?

Supportive: Trusted Partner, I feel fully supported and respected, my doctor is an advocate for my health/
Supportive, my doctor generally listens and takes my concerns seriously
Neutral: Competent, my doctor is knowledgeable and provides good care, even if not always fully attentive
/Inconsistent, my doctor sometimes listens or provides care, but other times I feel overlooked



Younger men report stronger doctor support than women, with Gen Z showing the largest gender gap in confidence and care

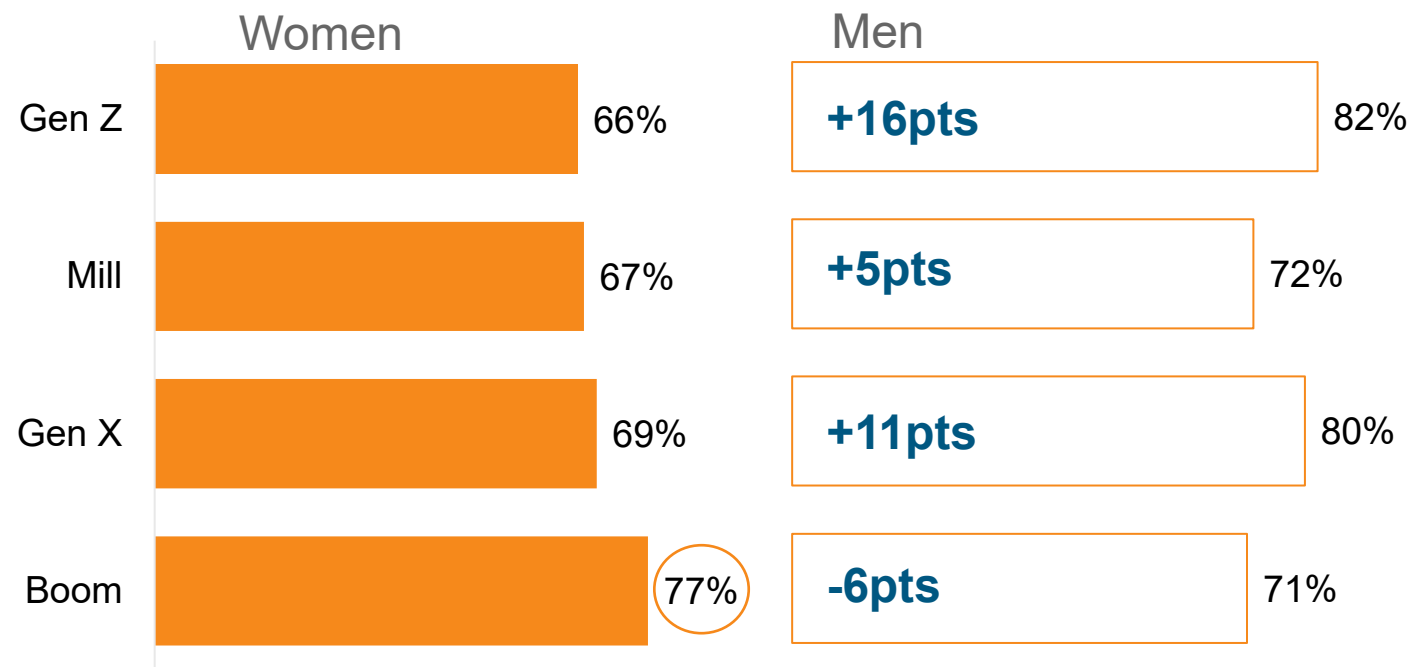




Younger Men Most Supported

Younger men (those up to ~60), are much more likely to say they feel supported by their doctor than women of the same age

Feel supported by their doctor



4. How would you describe how you see your family doctor?

Supportive: Trusted Partner, I feel fully supported and respected, my doctor is an advocate for my health/ Supportive, my doctor generally listens and takes my concerns seriously



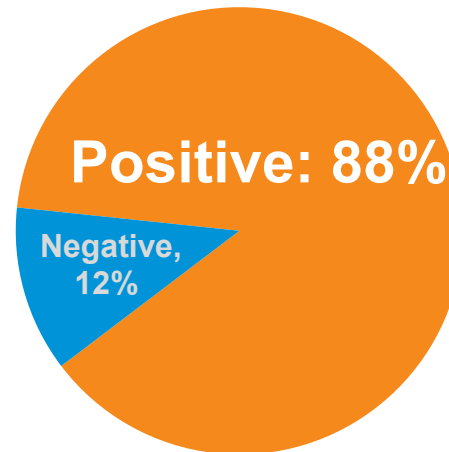


Most Anticipate Positive Doctor Visits

Overwhelmingly, Canadians feel that their meeting with a doctor will unfold positively

Anticipate the doctor's visit will unfold

Men somewhat more likely to anticipate positive



Women



87%

Men



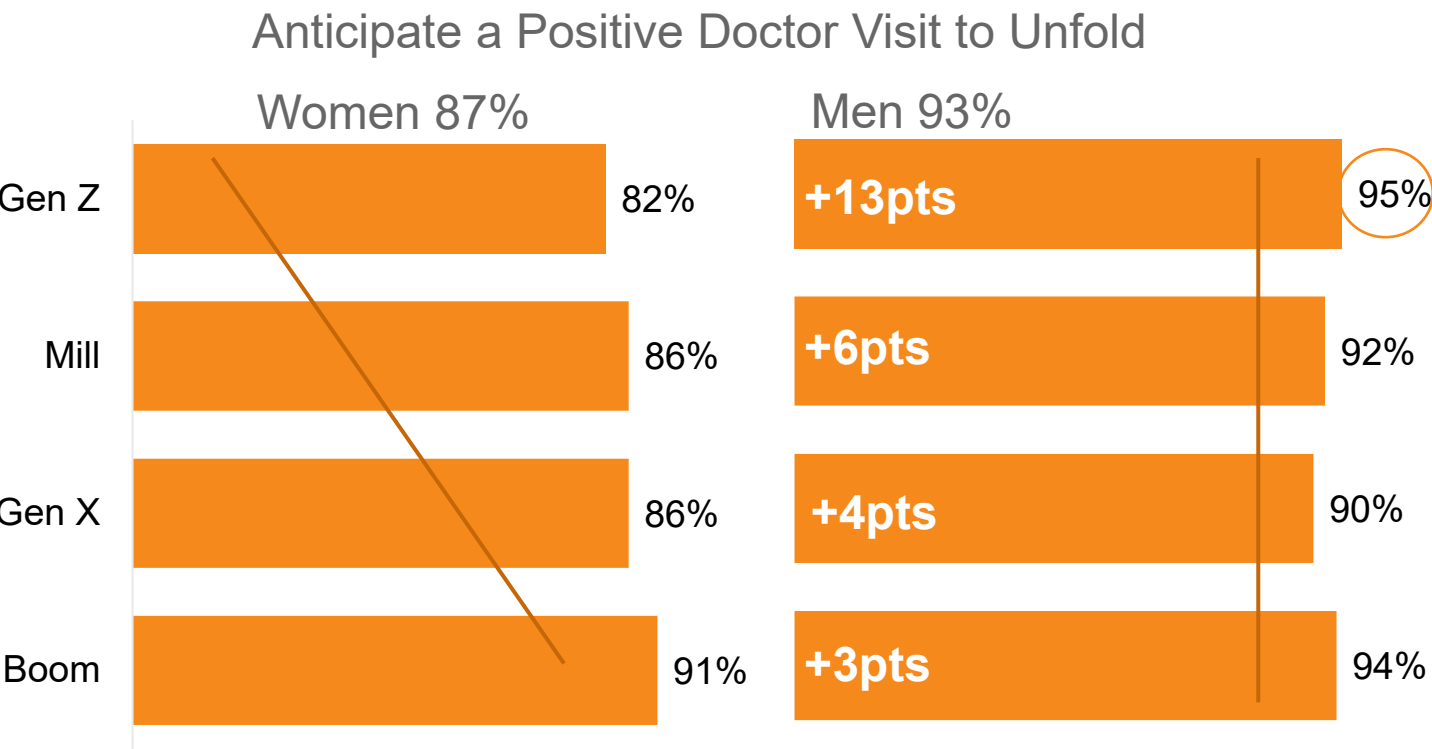
93%

5. When you walk into a doctor's office which of the following most describes how you feel the meeting will unfold?



Anticipation of Positive Doctor Visits Highest Among Young Men

Men lead women overall and the largest gap is among youngest, Gen Z



4. How would you describe how you see your family doctor?
Supportive: Trusted Partner, I feel fully supported and respected, my doctor is an advocate for my health/ Supportive, my doctor generally listens and takes my concerns seriously



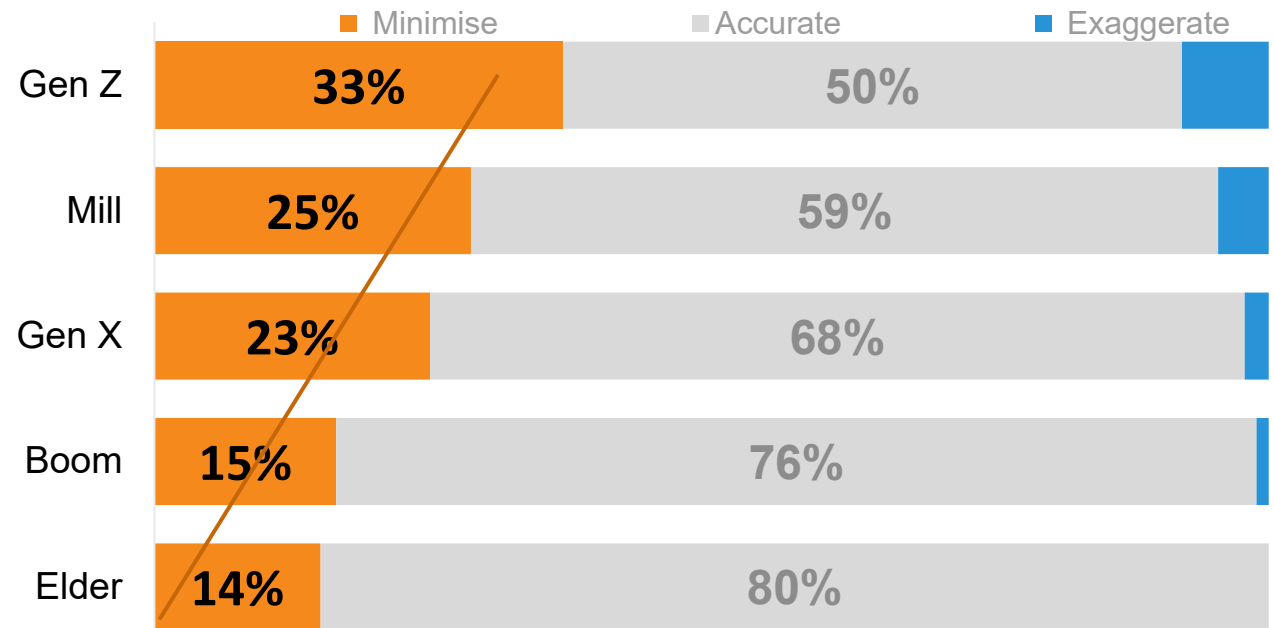
Younger generations are more likely to
downplay symptoms and feel the need
to prove themselves to doctors





Most Canadians report symptoms accurately

Younger generations are more likely to downplay symptoms and feel the need to prove themselves to doctors

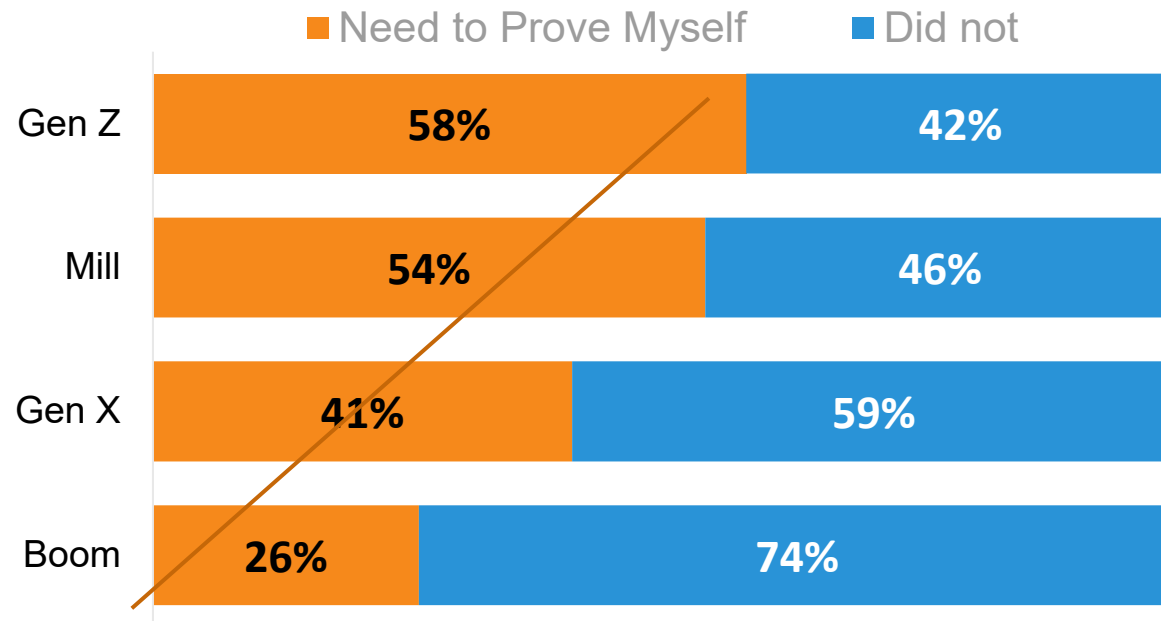


6. When you bring a health concern to a doctor, do you generally minimise or emphasise your symptoms?



Younger Canadians Feel They Must Prove Themselves to Doctors

Overall, 42% of Canadians feel they need to prove themselves to their doctor for their concerns to be taken seriously. Those over 61 are less likely



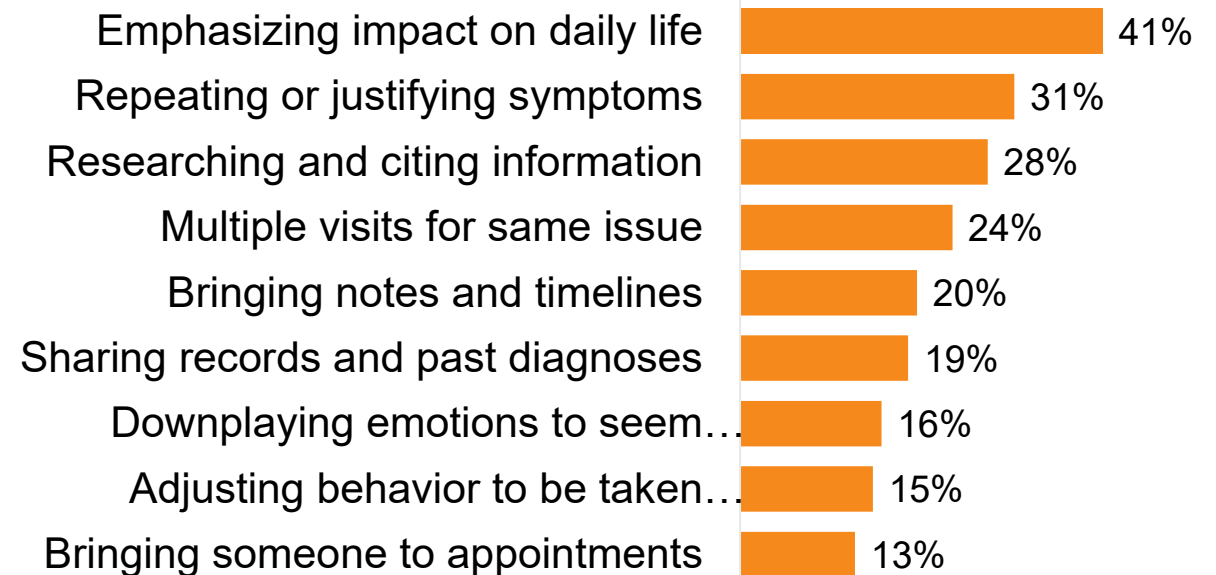
15. In the past 12 months, have you felt you had to prove yourself for your doctor to take your concerns seriously?





Tactics Used to Be Taken Seriously

Among Canadians who feel they need to prove themselves to their doctors, the top cited tactics are below



16. Which of the following have you used to demonstrate to your doctor that your concerns should be taken seriously?



Over half of women live with chronic health conditions, yet 2 in 3 hold back health concerns from their doctor

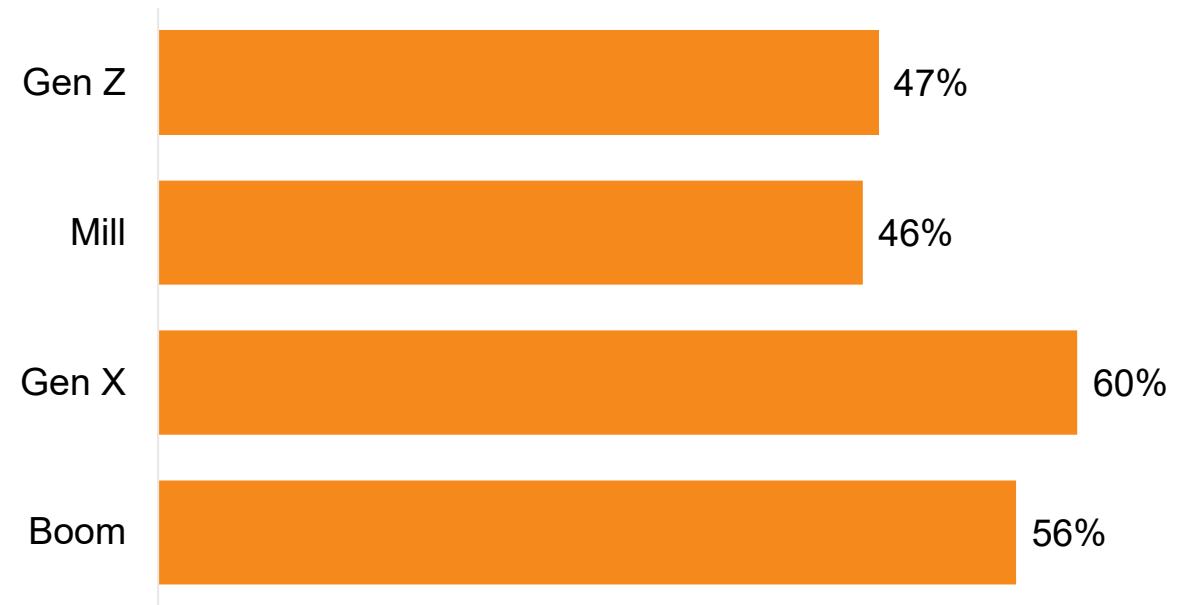




Half of Women have a chronic condition

53% of women have a chronic condition (42% currently and 10% in the past). More prevalent among those over 45

Women with a Chronic condition (past/present)



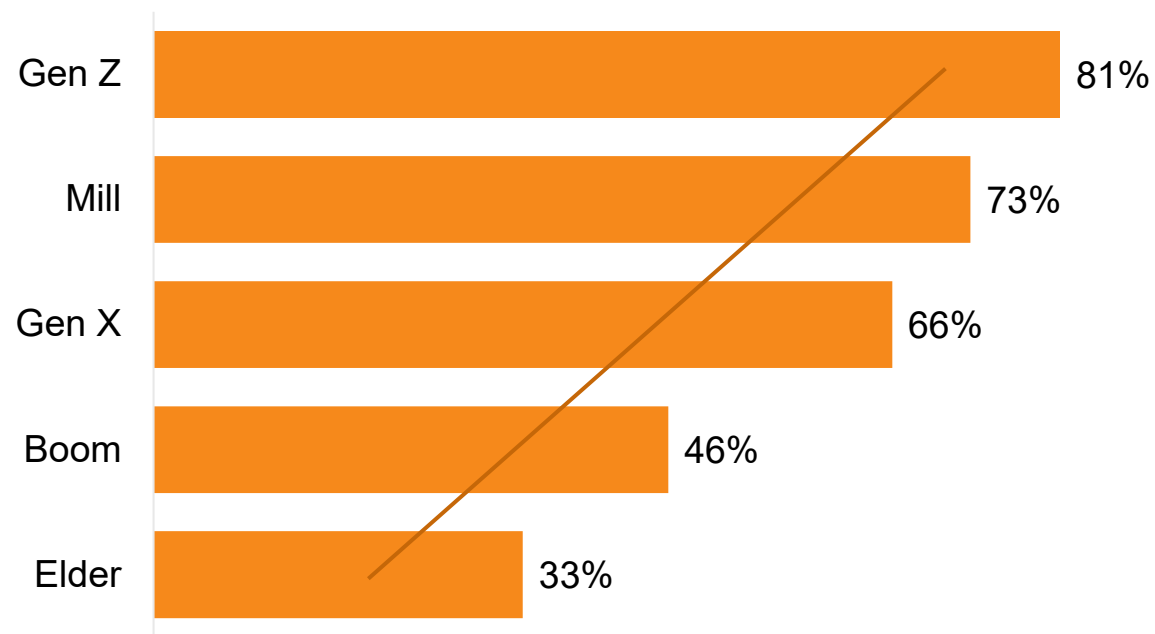
19. Have you ever been diagnosed with a chronic condition?



2 Out Of 3 Women Hold Back Health Concerns From Their Doctor

64% of women say there are topics that are hard to raise with their doctor

Women who find some topics hard to raise



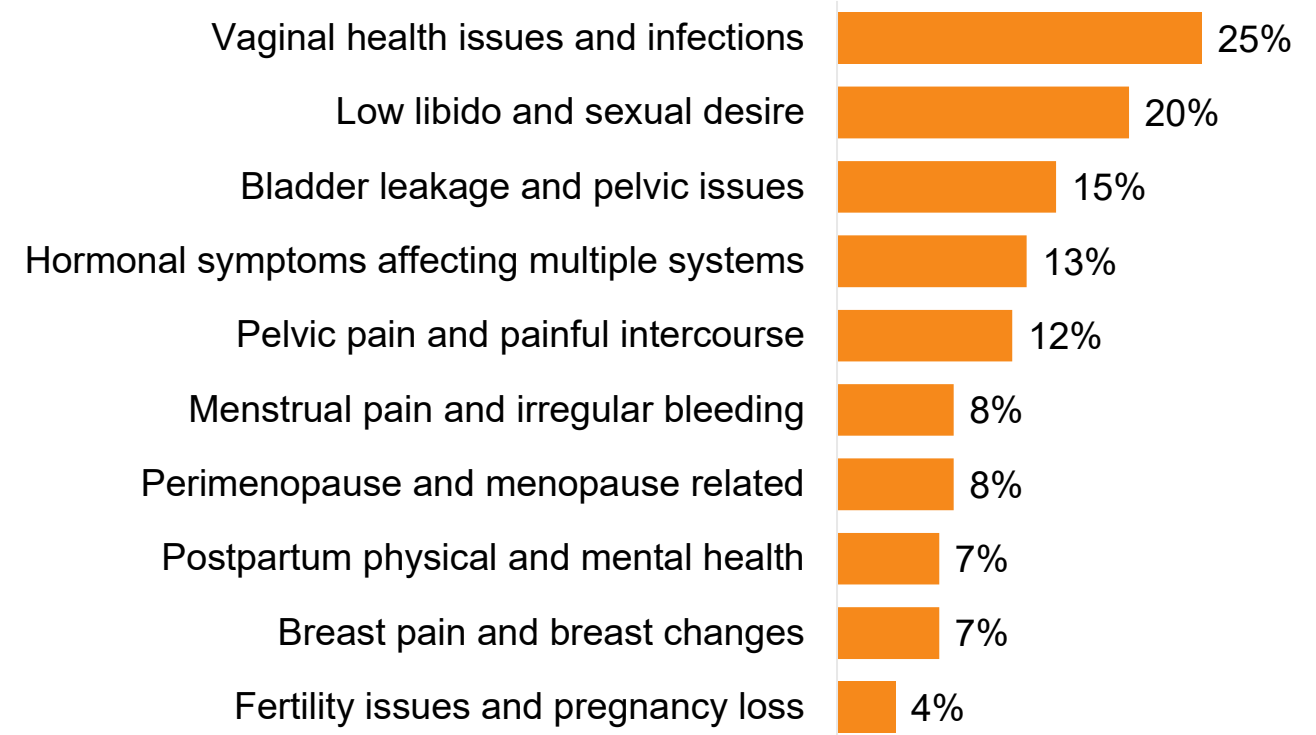
12. Which of the following health topics feel hardest to raise with a doctor? Thinking about your own experiences, please select any health topics that have felt uncomfortable, awkward, or difficult to bring up with a doctor





Health Concerns Hardest to Raise with Doctor for Women

The top cited topics women find hard to raise with a doctor are below



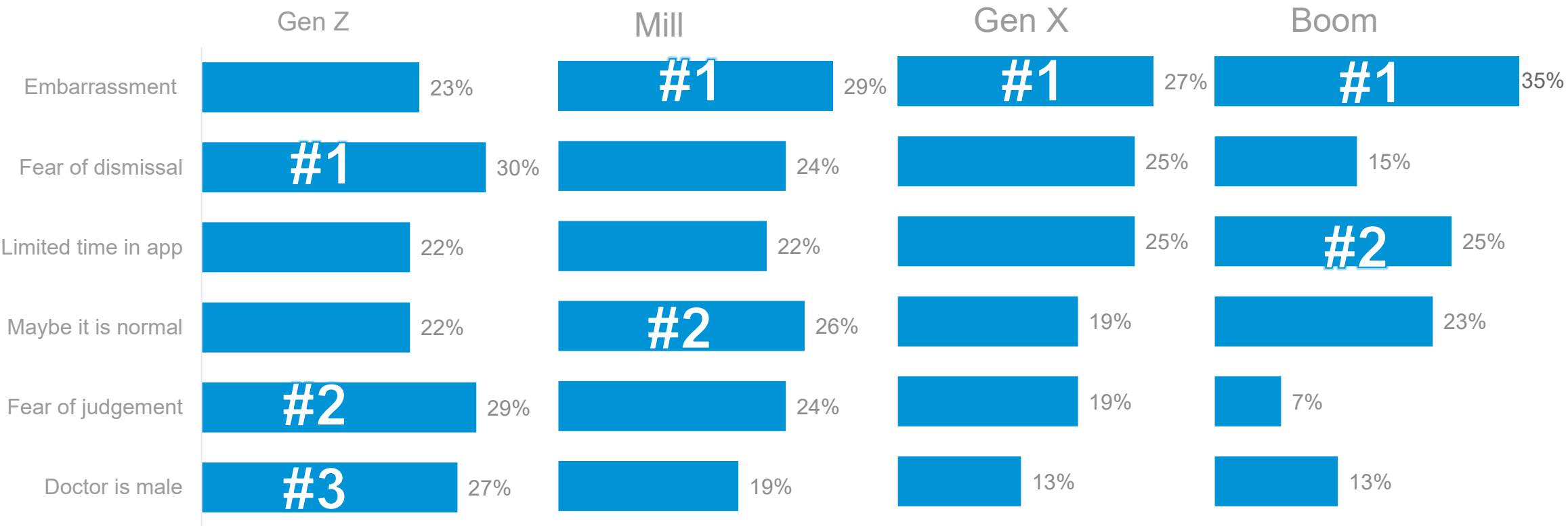
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Reasons Women “Hold Back”

Differences by age are evident

Embarrassment is the #1 reason women over 30 are holding back from their doctors. For those under 30, they fear dismissal or judgement

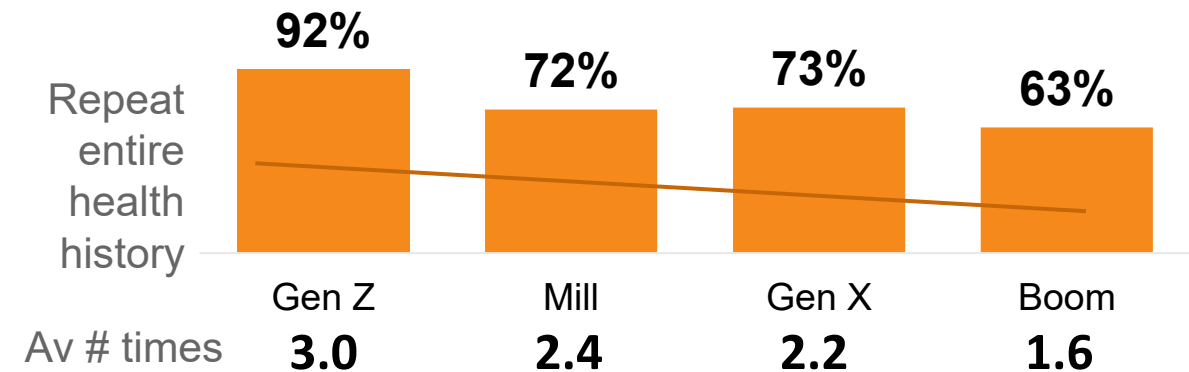
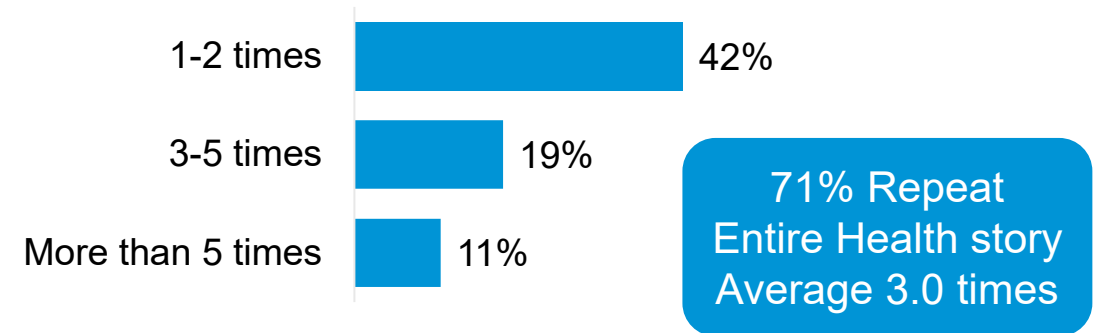




Repeating Entire Health History

71% Women with a chronic condition have to repeat their full health story more than once a year. On average 3.0 times

of times Repeat full health story



24. Thinking about the past 12 months, about how many times did you have to repeat your full health story? This could include having to restate your symptoms, history, or concerns when seeing different doctors, clinics, specialists, or care settings



Doctor sentiment/trust has direct correlation
to the overall healthcare experience



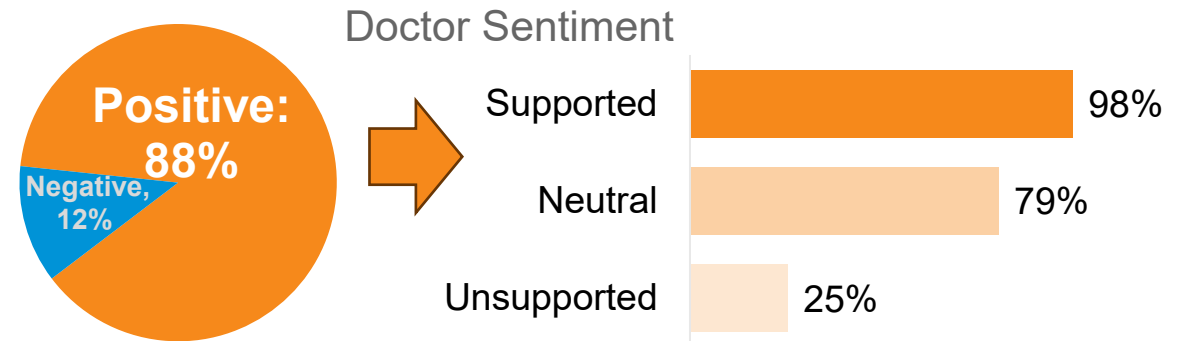


Feeling a Doctor Visit will unfold positively is correlated to doctor sentiment

Those who feel support from their doctor are significantly more likely to imagine the appointment will be positive

Overall 88% anticipate a doctor's visit will unfold in a positive manner

Among the small percent of Canadians who feel their doctor is unsupportive, three quarters enter an appointment feeling the it will unfold in a negative manner



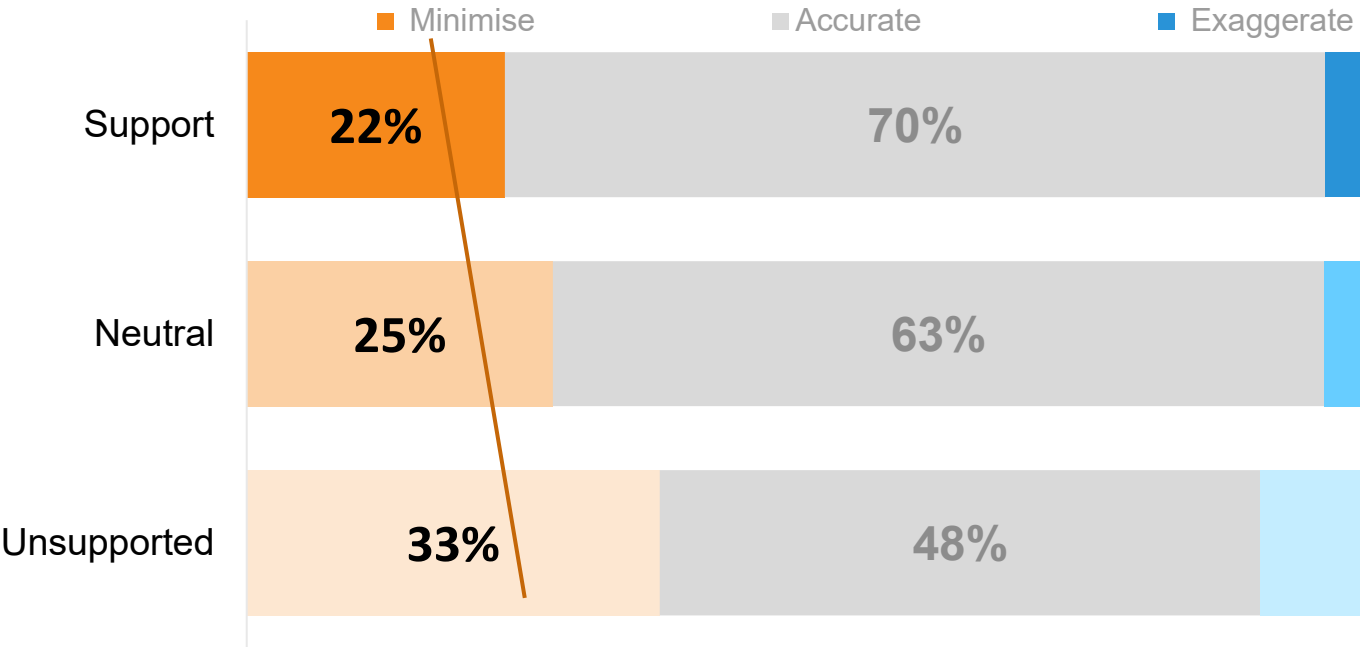
5. When you walk into a doctor's office which of the following most describes how you feel the meeting will unfold?



Doctor sentiment linked to symptom reporting

Overall 66% say they report symptoms accurately

Among the small percent of Canadians who feel their doctor is unsupportive, less than half will describe their symptoms accurately, the rest are exaggerating or minimising

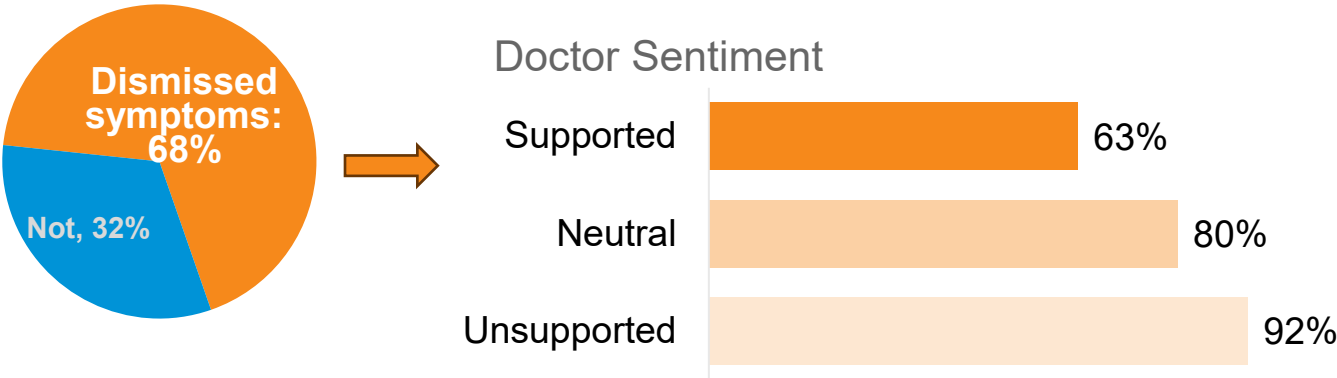


Unsupported are More Likely to Hear Placating Words

Those who feel support from their doctor are significantly less likely experience their symptoms being dismissed

About two thirds of women (and men) say a doctor has dismissed their symptoms

Among the small percent of Canadians who feel their doctor is unsupportive, 92% feel their symptoms are dismissed



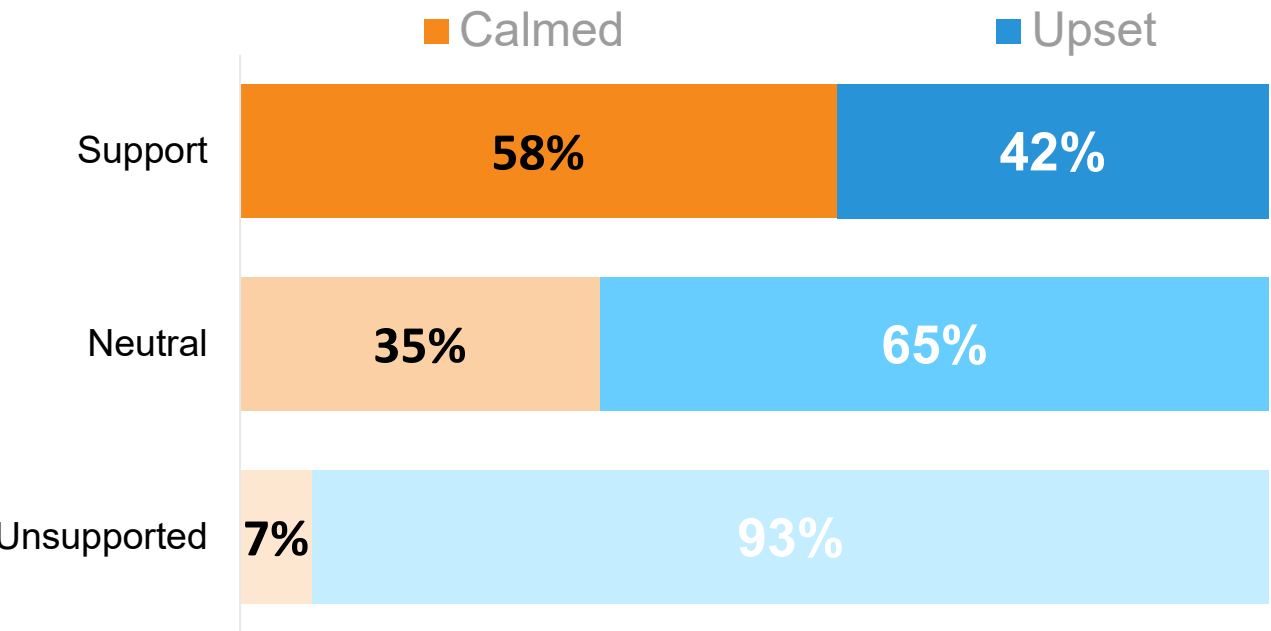
17. Has your doctor ever said any of the following to you, in response to persistent symptoms?



Doctor Sentiment Shapes Reactions to Placating Words

Overall 47% say placating words from their doctor calmed them, and 53% say they were upset

Among the small percent of Canadians who feel their doctor is unsupportive, 93% feel upset when their symptoms are dismissed. Those who are supported are much more likely to feel calmed

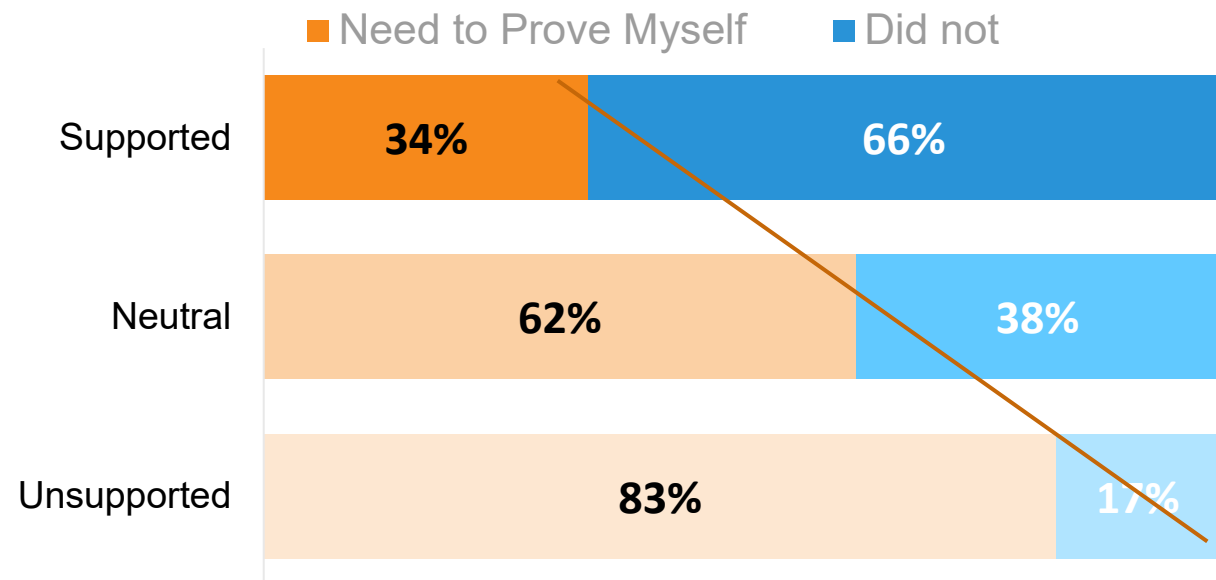




Unsupported Canadians Feel They Must Prove Themselves to Doctors

Overall, 42% of Canadians feel they need to prove themselves to their doctor for their concerns to be taken seriously

Among the small percent of Canadians who feel their doctor is unsupportive, 83% feel they need to prove themselves to their doctor (more than x2 vs supported)



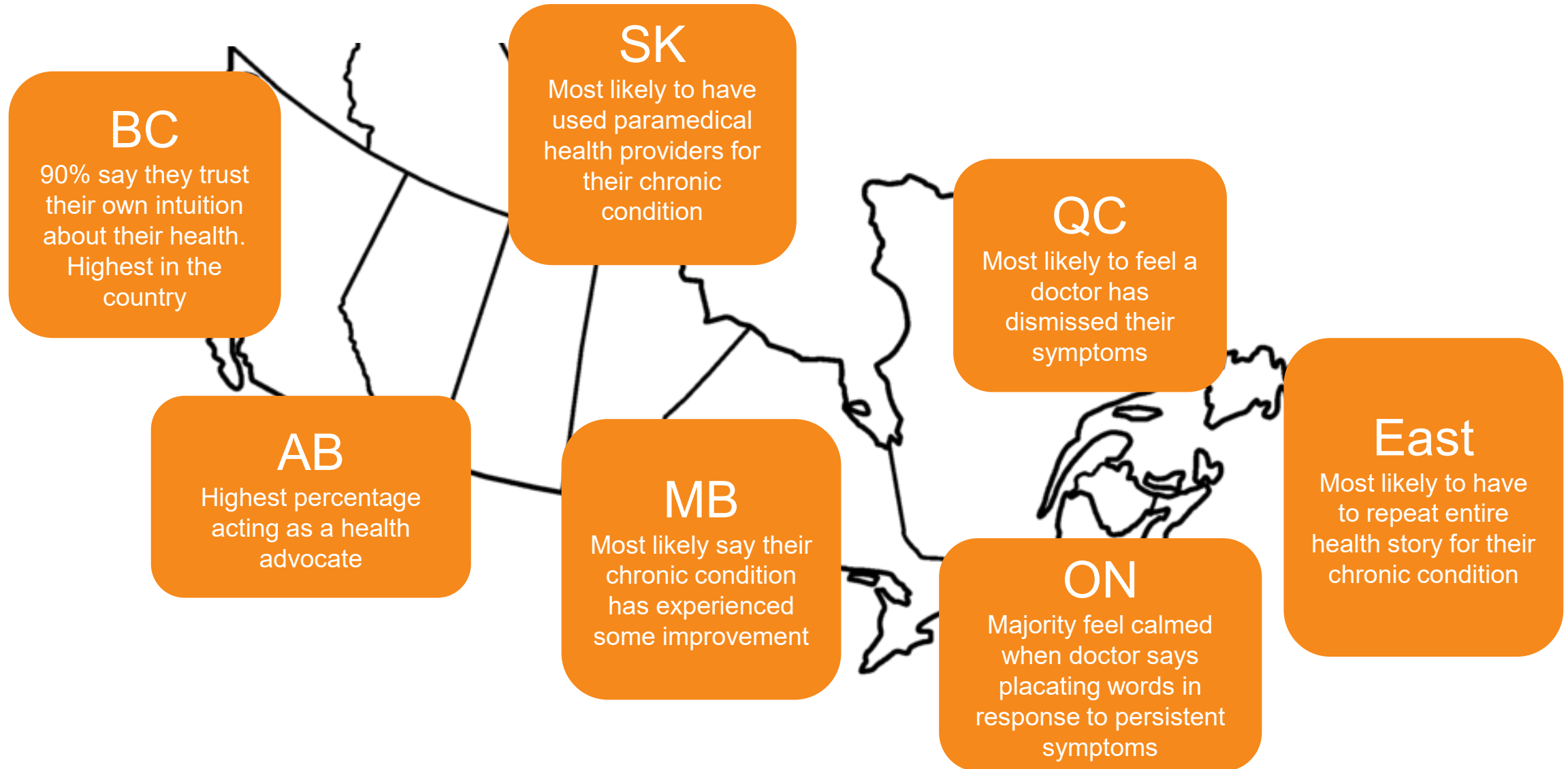
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Regional Variations



Regional highlights reveal additional perspectives





Positive healthcare
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For more information, visit
bluecross.ca/womenshealthstudy