



# Advance Care Planning: Increasing Healthcare Providers' Awareness – Sharing the SingHealth Symposium Experience

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### Introduction

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is a series of conversations for people to share with their loved ones their future healthcare treatment preferences, based on their goals and values.

Research shows that having an ACP done benefits loved ones who:

- have a better understanding of the person's treatment preferences
- know what to do when making healthcare decisions on behalf of the person
- are mentally prepared and is less stressed when making decisions on the person's behalf.

ACP was introduced in Singapore's acute hospitals in 2010, with formalised documentation process. However, it is not widely practised locally as part of patient care.

This practice paper will present SingHealth's experience in organising an institution-wide ACP symposium to generate more awareness and interest among healthcare providers.

### Methodology

The symposium was co-sponsored by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), supported by SGH Medical Board and SingHealth Academy, and led by medical social workers from Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National Heart Centre Singapore (NHCS).

Guest speakers included experts from Canada's Fraser Health Authority - Dr Doris Barwich and Ms Cari Hoffmann. A local health law expert Miss Sumytra Menon also provided insights to the ethico-legal perspectives.

The event on 12 May 2015 was divided into three segments, to meet the needs of different stakeholders:

1. A breakfast dialogue for the Canadian experts to share research data and results of ACP with the senior management. It provided a platform for SingHealth leaders to discuss key implementation strategies and understand milestones that could lead to a successful ACP program
2. An educational forum covering topics on weaving ACP into standard care, research findings and legal aspects of ACP. Feedback was received via a survey to understand the impact of the forum.
3. A networking session in the late afternoon was attended by the ACP core team members from eight regional hospitals and medical centres. At the session, best ACP practices among different hospitals were shared.



Organising Committee with the invited speakers



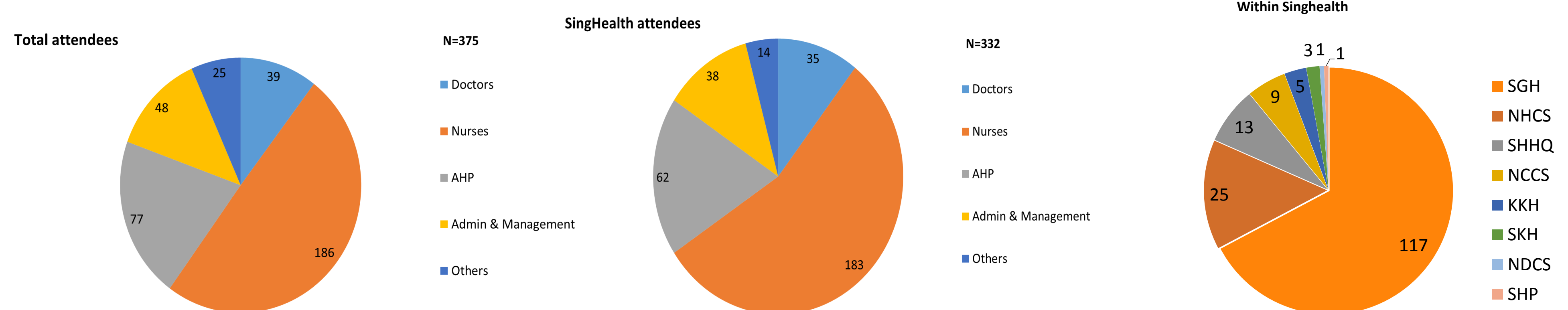
### Results

About 450 healthcare professionals from eight clusters attended the symposium:

- 34 hospital leaders met with the Canadian experts at the morning dialogue session.
- 375 registered participants attended the forum to learn about the evidence-based ACP initiative in Canada.
- more than 40 ACP team members from various clusters met to discuss best clinical and operational practices.

The greatest support came from nurses and allied health professionals.

Below is the breakdown of the participants' profile:

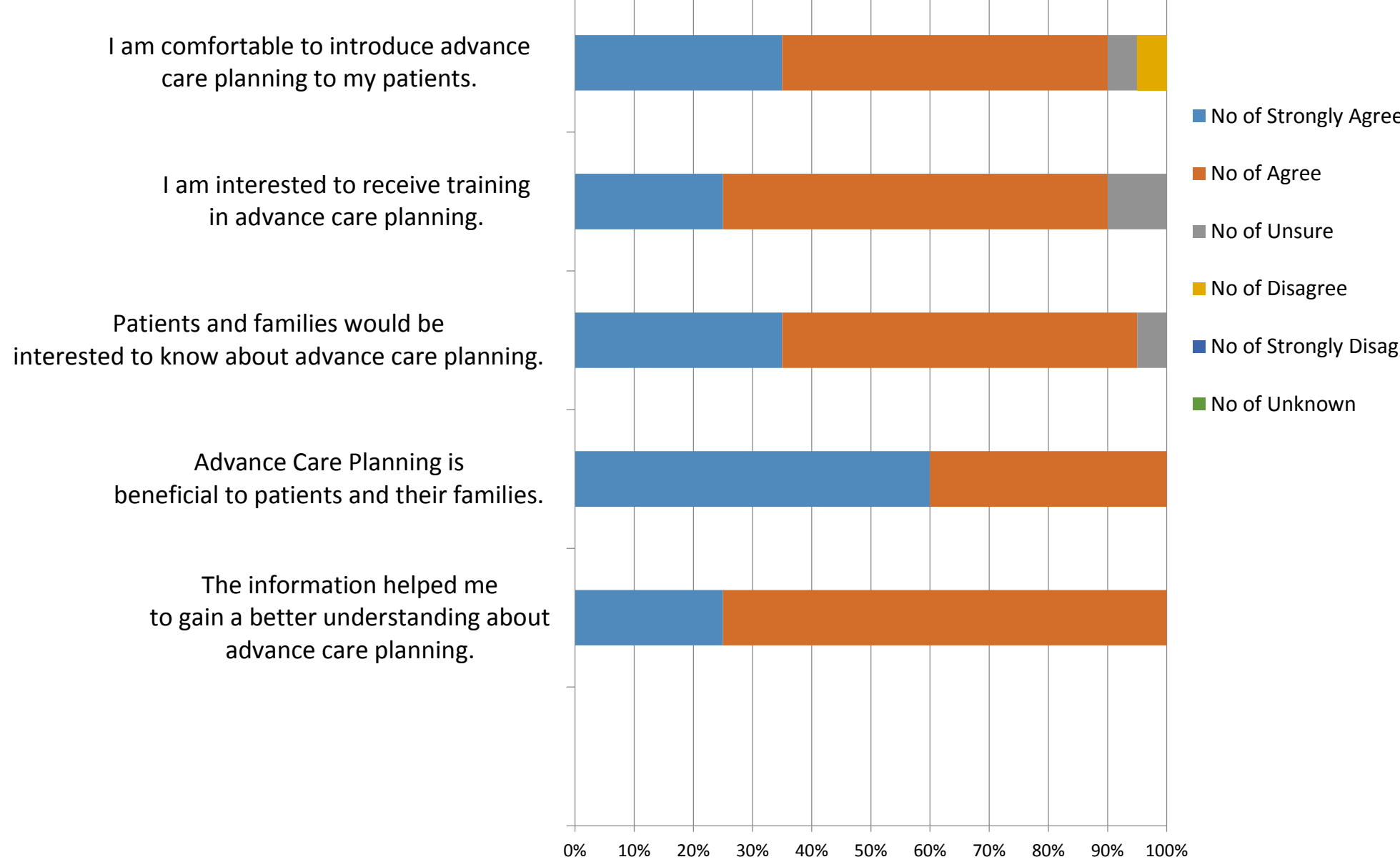


Ms Sumytra sharing insights on ethico-legal perspectives

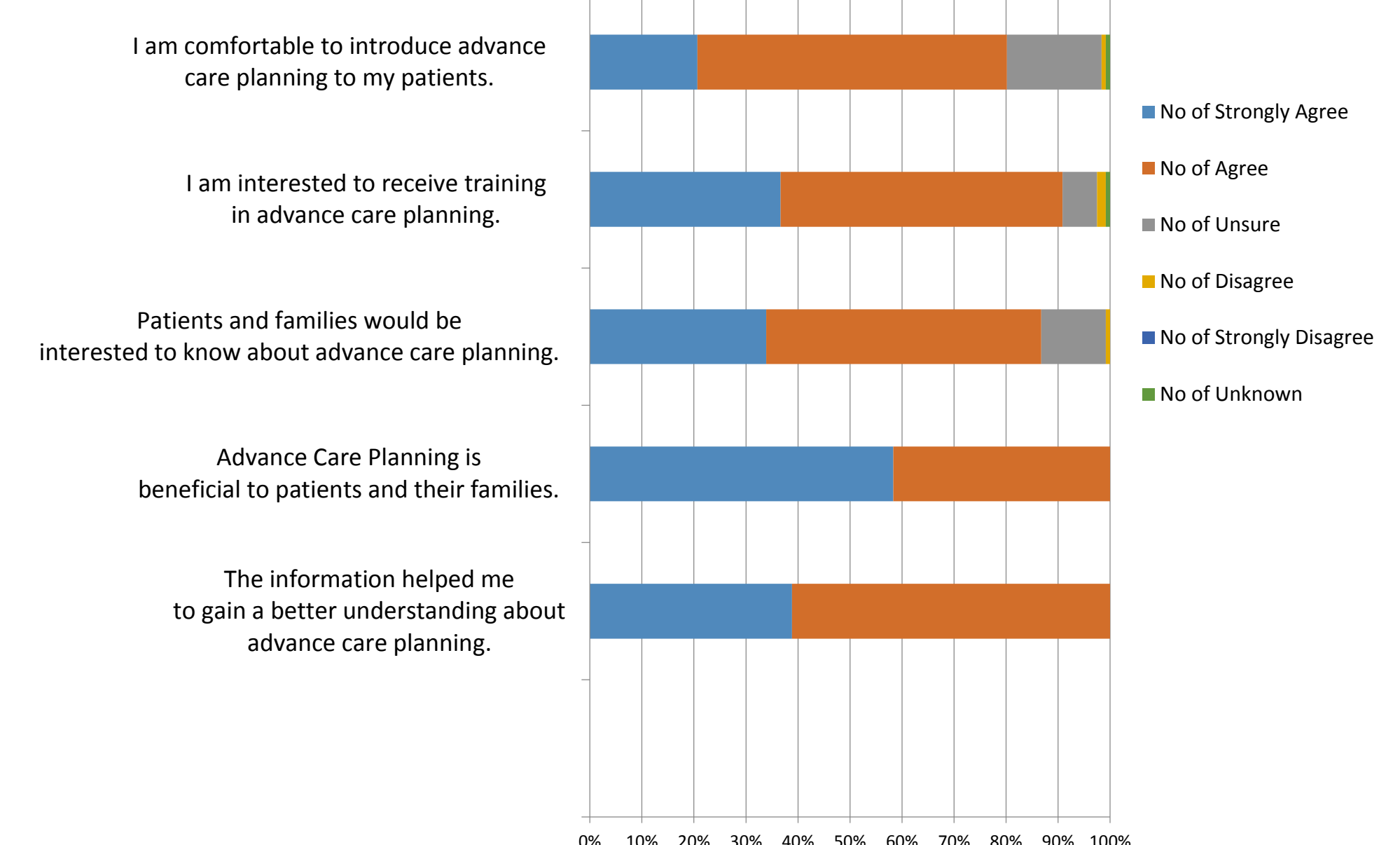
A post forum survey among the participants drew the following responses. It shows that:

- 99% of participants are positive that the forum helped them gain a better understanding about ACP and believe that ACP is beneficial for patients.
- 90% of doctors, 90% of nurses, 76% of allied health professionals and 71% of administrative and support staff indicated an interest to receive training in ACP.

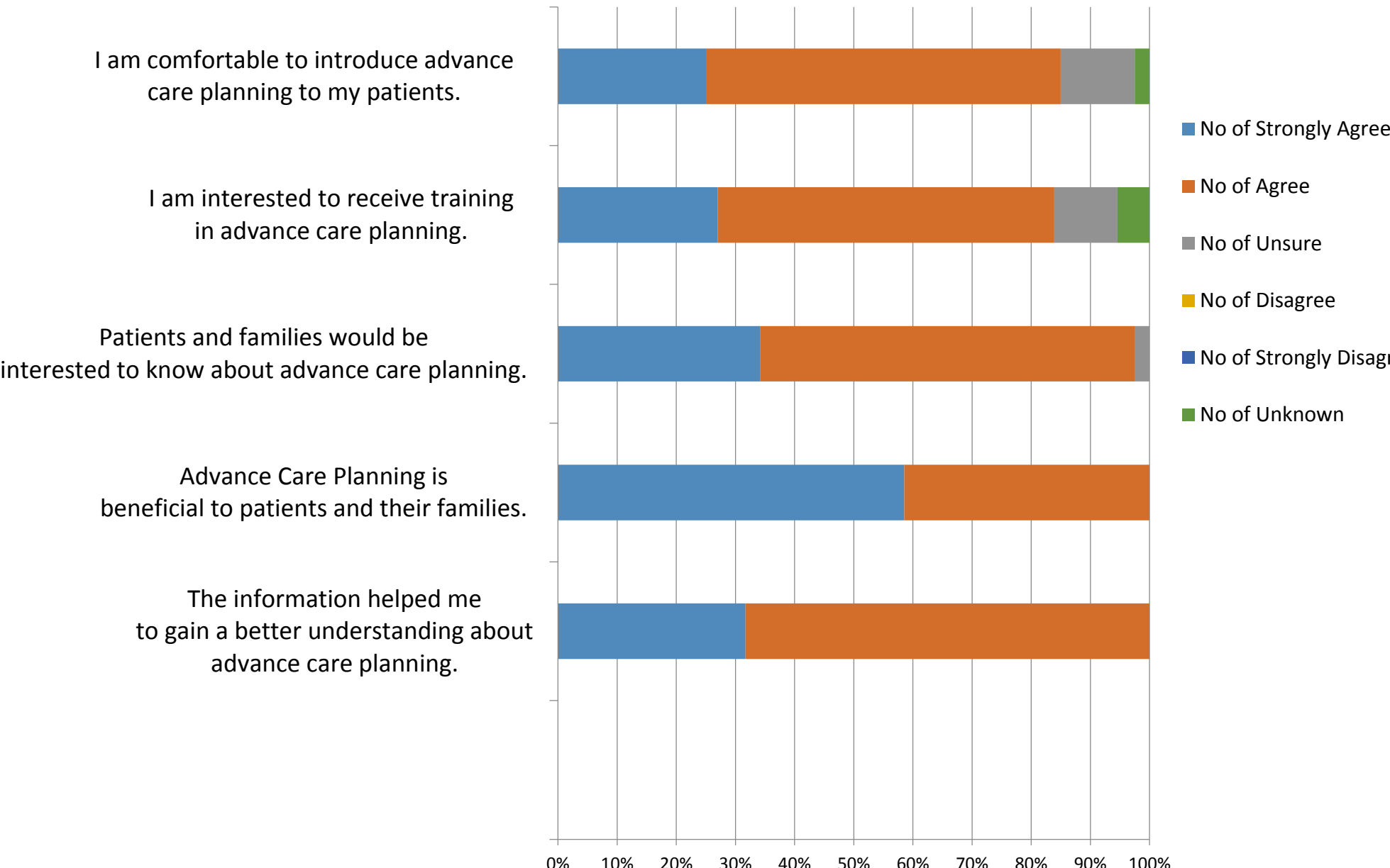
#### Doctors N= 20



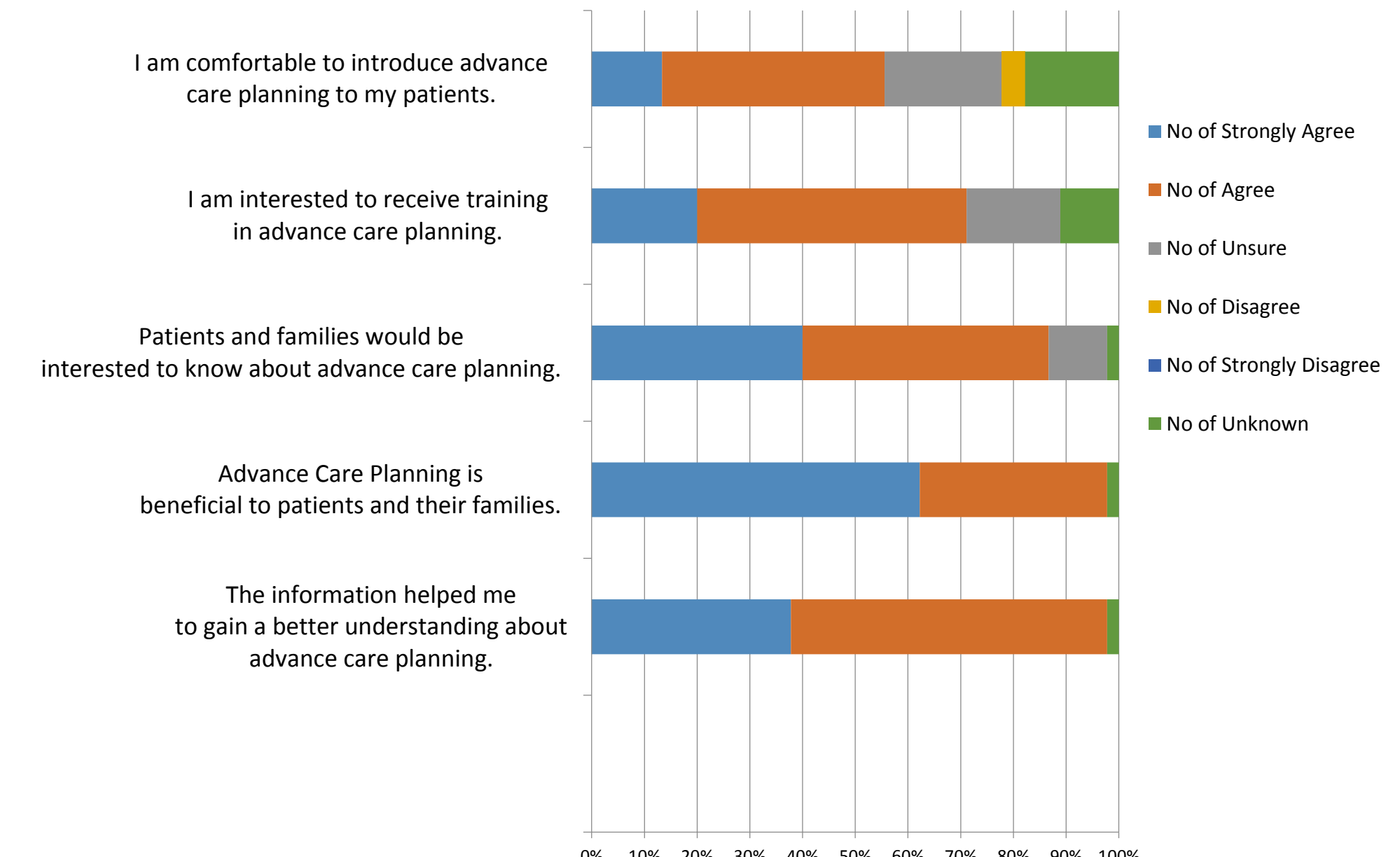
#### Nurses N=121



#### Allied Health Professionals N=41



#### Admin and Support Staff N=45



### Conclusion

Endorsement and support from institutional leadership in the ACP initiative was a key success factor in organising this symposium. This event marks a major milestone for ACP in SingHealth to gather the response of staff towards this program after many years of implementation. With collaboration from the Communications Department, a multi-pronged and coordinated publicity and recruitment strategy led to an overwhelming turnout for the event. Additionally, international exchanges with Canada and USA, ongoing engagements with clinicians and senior management and regular education of ACP to healthcare professionals enabled the organising committee to:

1. invite appropriate keynote speakers
2. deliver contextualised information to address the needs and concerns of healthcare providers to implement ACP in their practice and lastly
3. attract the interest and participation of staff members.

#### Acknowledgement:

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