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Screening for Valvular Heart Disease:

Anxiety and attitudes in the OxVALVE Population Cohort Study

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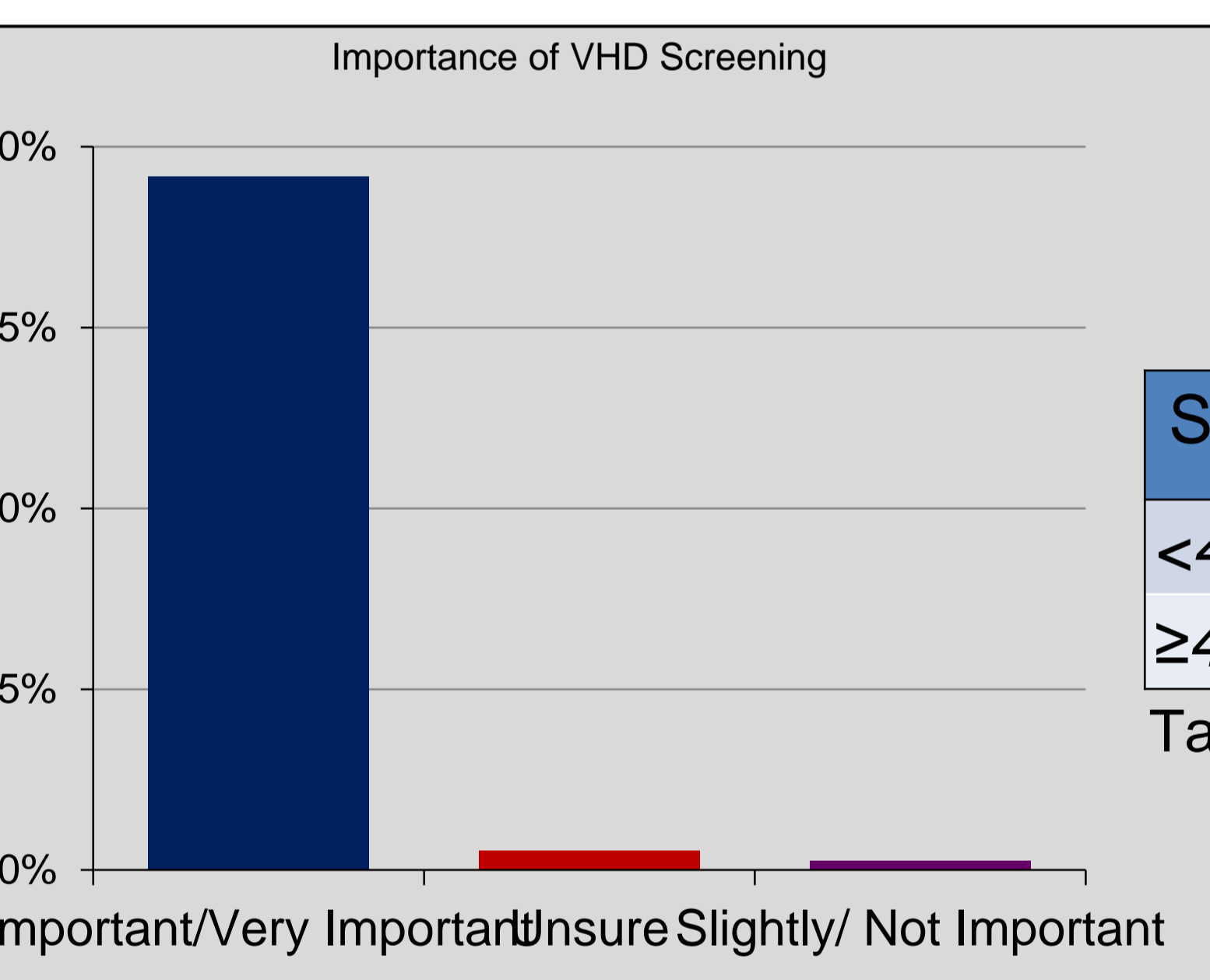
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Objectives:

- ✦ To assess the anxiety provoked by a community-based screening programme for valvular heart disease (VHD)
- ✦ To ascertain attitudes to screening for VHD in the community setting.

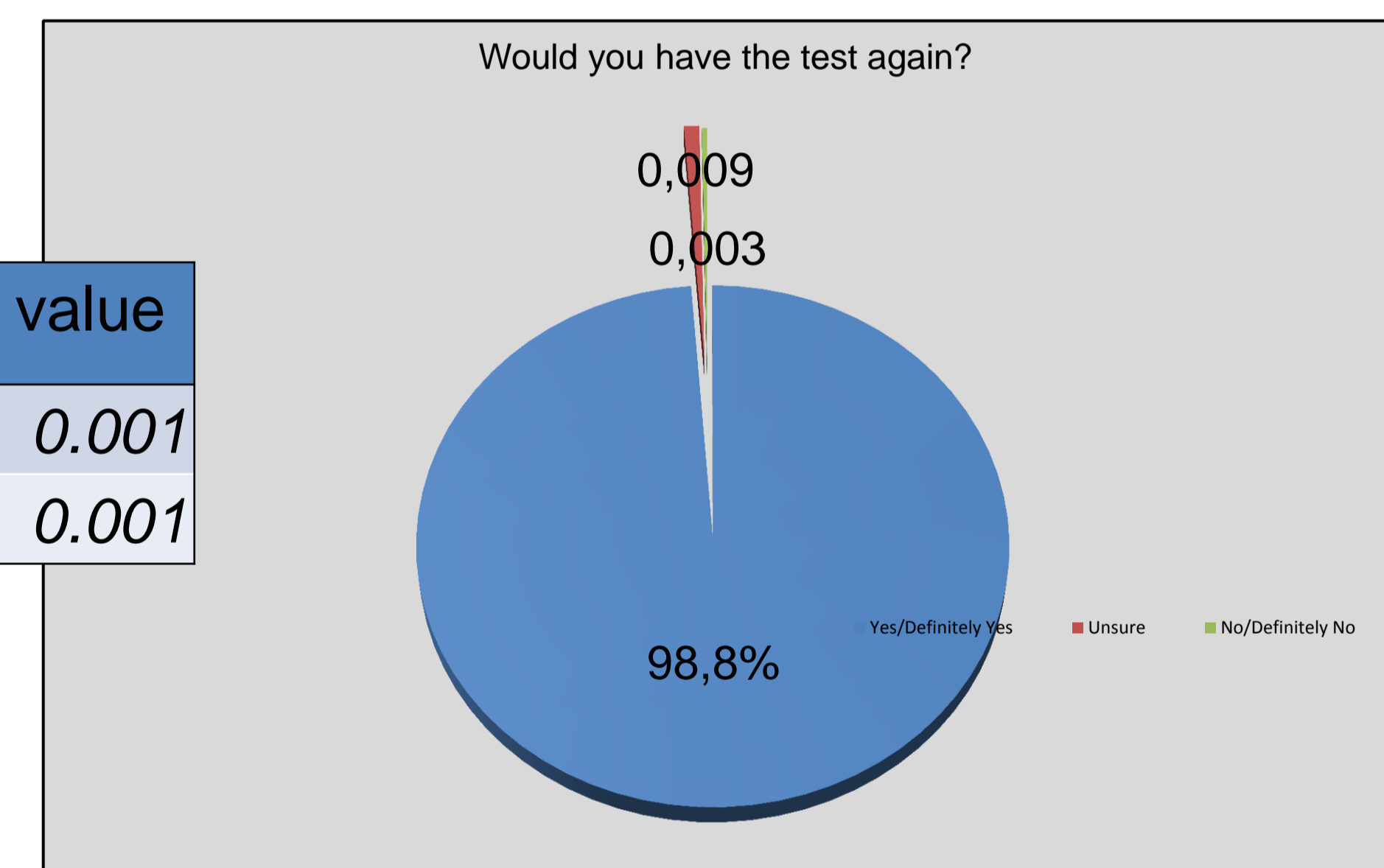
Methods:

- ✦ Subjects aged 65 years of age or older, with no previous diagnosis of VHD, were invited to attend for screening echocardiography in primary care.
- ✦ After receiving the results of their scan, participants completed the short form of the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI).
- ✦ Participants rated how important they considered heart valve screening, and whether they would be prepared to have the test again, using a 5-point scale.



| STAI Score | Male | Female | P value | VHD + | VHD- | P value |
|------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|---------|
| <42 | 92.0% | 87.7% | 0.001 | 87.3% | 91.6% | 0.001 |
| ≥42 | 8.0% | 12.3% | 0.001 | 12.7% | 8.4% | 0.001 |

Table of STAI scores by gender, and presence or absence of VHD



Results:

- ✦ 2,186 out of 2,500 participants (87%) completed the STAI questionnaire (mean age: 72.4±6 years, 51.5% female).
- ✦ 10.2% had a significant level of anxiety, as indicated by a prorated score of ≥42
- ✦ Significant anxiety was associated with gender (p=0.001), but was not associated with age
- ✦ A new diagnosis of VHD was associated with significant anxiety (12.7% in those with newly diagnosed VHD, 8.4% with no new VHD, p=0.001).
- ✦ 95.9% rated screening for VHD as important or very important; Only 1.3% felt that screening was slightly/not important,
- ✦ 98.8% would have echocardiographic screening again; 0.3% indicated that they would not have the screening test again
- ✦ There was no association between age, gender, or a new diagnosis of VHD, and a positive attitude to screening for VHD
- ✦ Age was strongly associated with whether or not participants would be willing to have an echo for VHD screening again (OR 0.93; 95% CI 0.88,0.98; p=0.008)

Conclusions:

- ✦ Screening for VHD in the community does not provoke high levels of anxiety
- ✦ Significant anxiety is more common among women, and those newly diagnosed with VHD.
- ✦ Attitudes to screening for VHD are extremely positive
- ✦ Community-based echocardiographic screening is highly acceptable to elderly patients.