

Awareness of driving requirements for people with diabetes using insulin: Health care professional perspectives

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INTRODUCTION

- ✦ The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has published guidance on driving regulations and requirements including recommendations for safe driving precaution measures.
- ✦ There were deficits in patients' knowledge and adherence to DVLA guidance.
- ✦ This raises questions about knowledge of health care professionals on driving requirements for people with insulin-treated diabetes.

AIM

- ✦ To assess the experience of primary and secondary health care professionals and their clinical practice regarding current DVLA's regulations and recommendations.

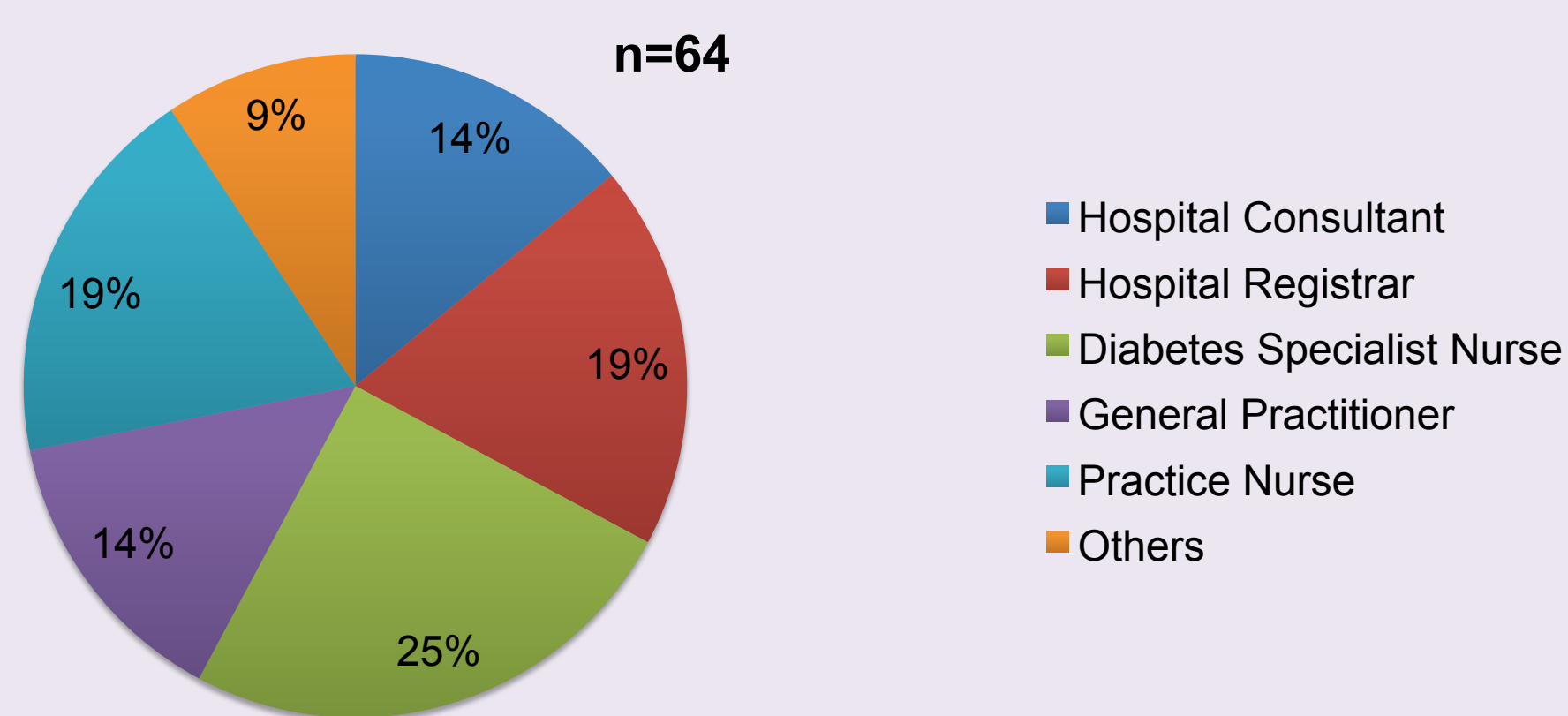
METHOD

- ✦ A web-based anonymous questionnaire survey created on www.surveymonkey.com.
- ✦ Diabetes Multidisciplinary Team members in 10 hospitals; 10 general practices in South Wales; all general practices in North Wales; and all specialist registrars in diabetes in Wales were invited via email.
- ✦ The questionnaire included six case scenarios loosely adapted from clinic encounters.
- ✦ Opinion from a DVLA medical advisor was sought by telephoning DVLA medical advice helpline number (+44 (0) 1792782337).
- ✦ The survey was live for four weeks.

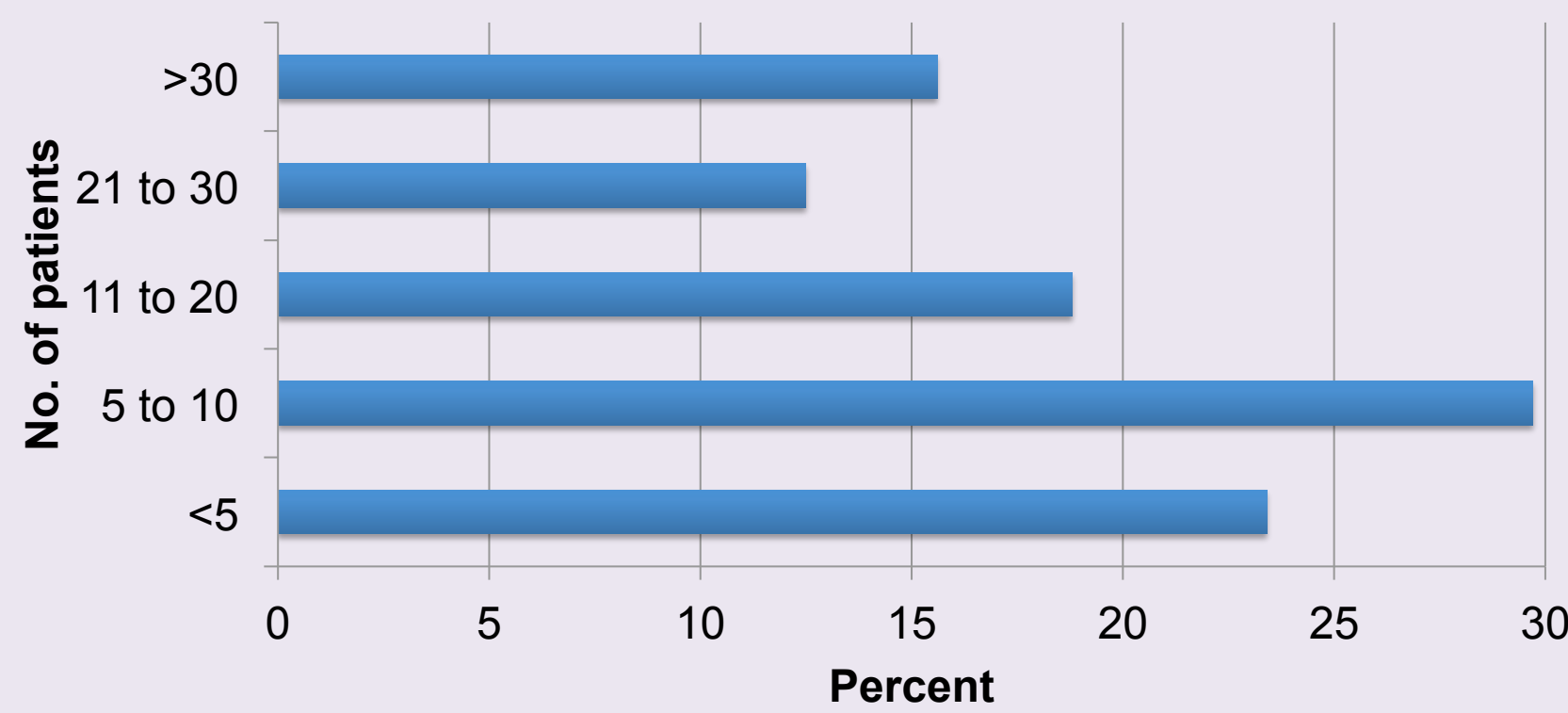
RESULTS

- ✦ 64 Health care professionals (HCP) completed survey.
- ✦ Overall response rate was estimated to be low.
- ✦ Due to nature of distribution of survey, it was unable to calculate exact response rate.

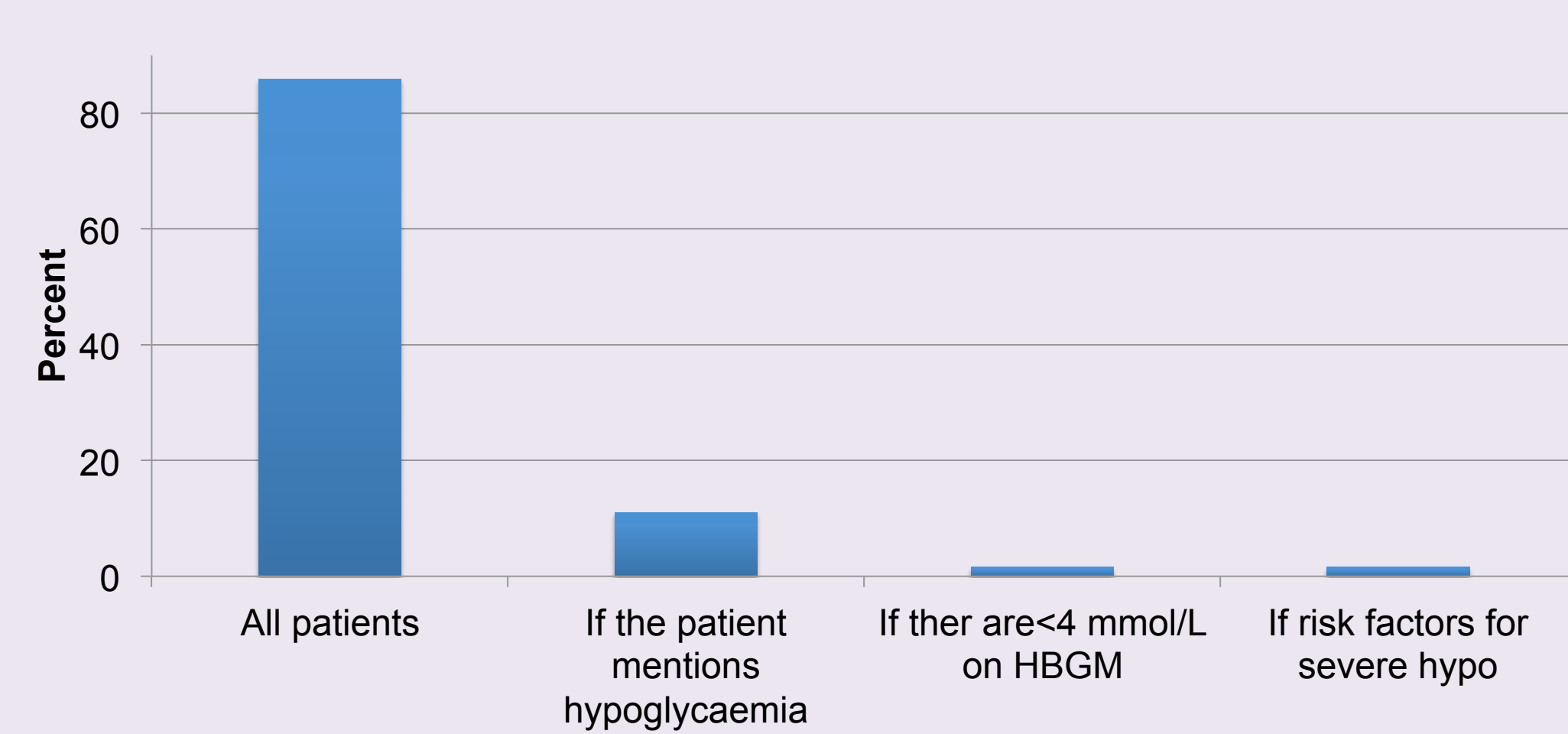
Role of health care professionals participated in survey



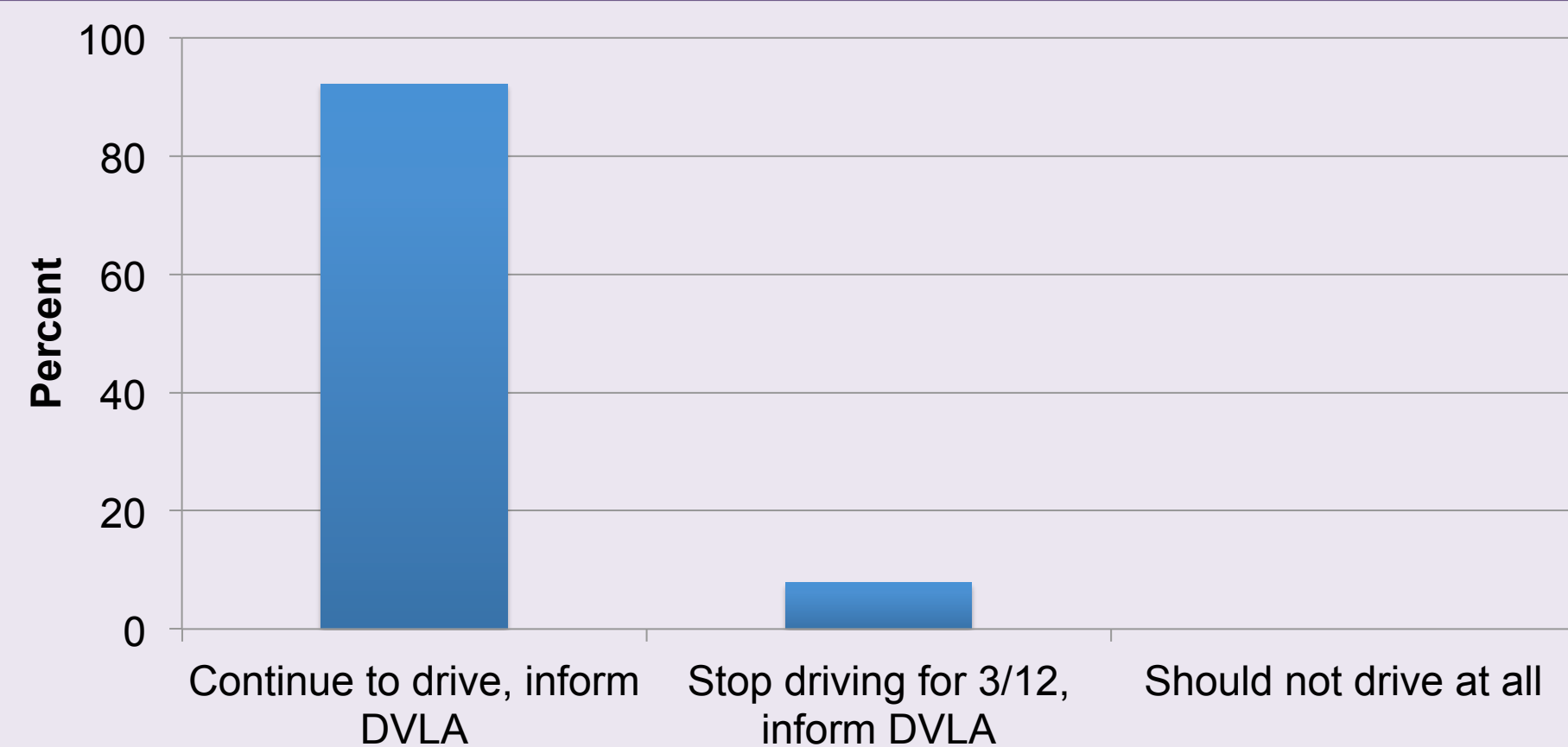
How many patients with insulin-treated diabetes do you review in your clinic/ practice in a week?



When do you ask about hypoglycaemia and driving in patients with insulin-treated diabetes?

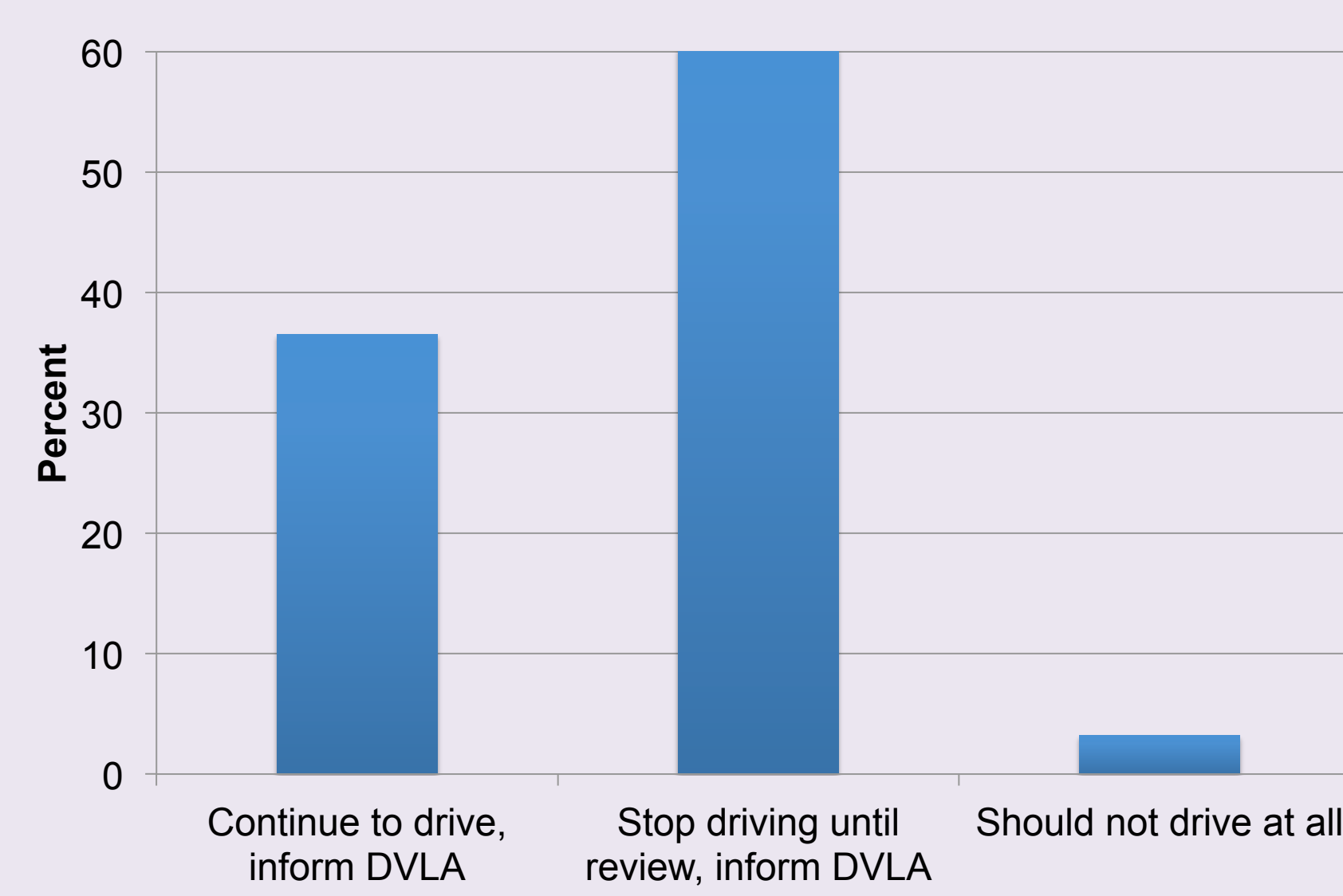


Case 1: 21 years old university student was recently diagnosed with T1DM. He worked part time as a delivery boy in a takeaway shop. He was asking about your advice regarding driving.



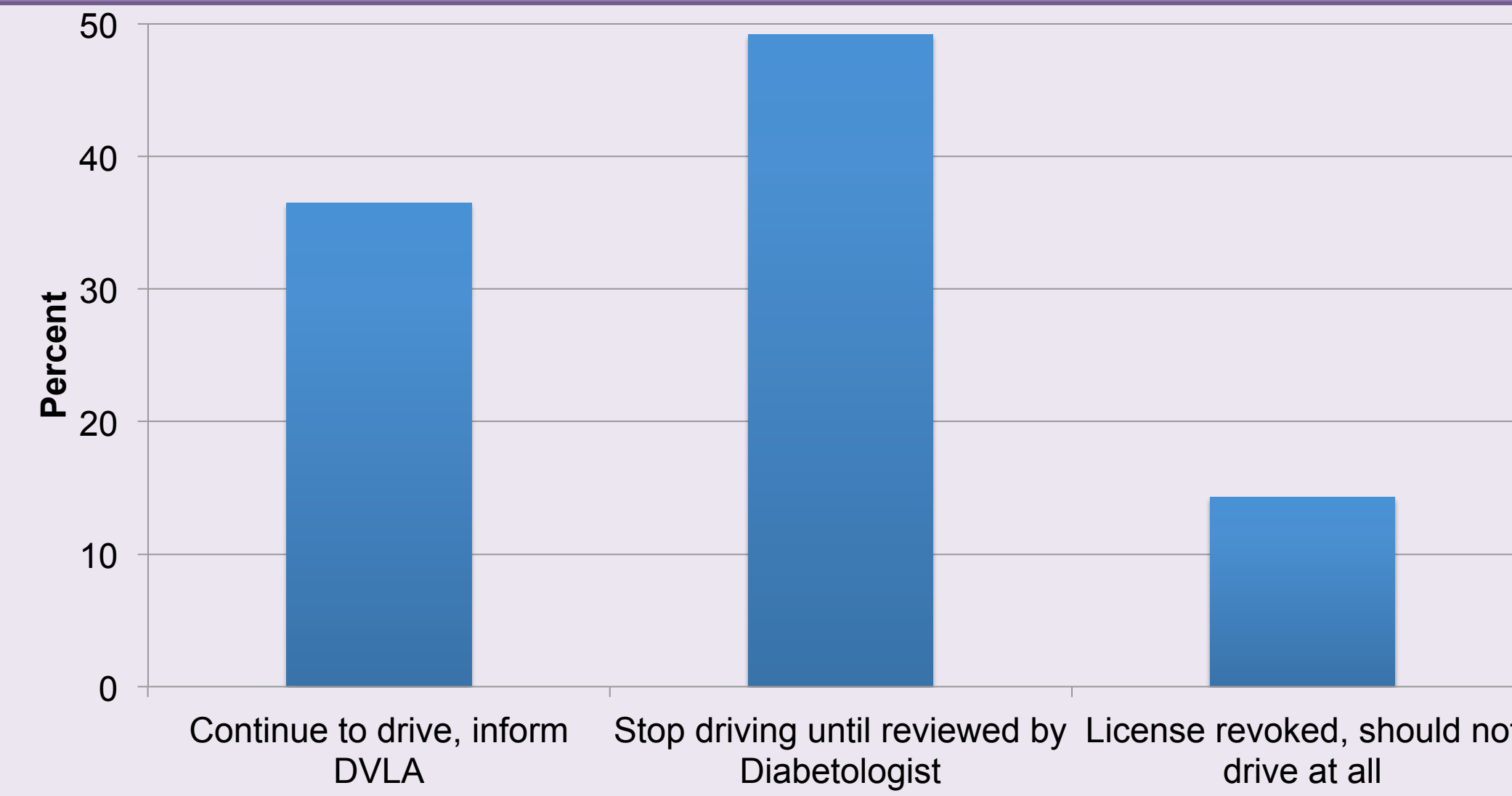
DVLA medical advisor's opinion: The patient can continue to drive, must inform DVLA & monitor blood glucose closely.

Case 2: 30 years old man, lorry driver, was admitted with Diabetes Ketoacidosis and started on insulin a few weeks ago. He wanted to know whether he could continue driving.



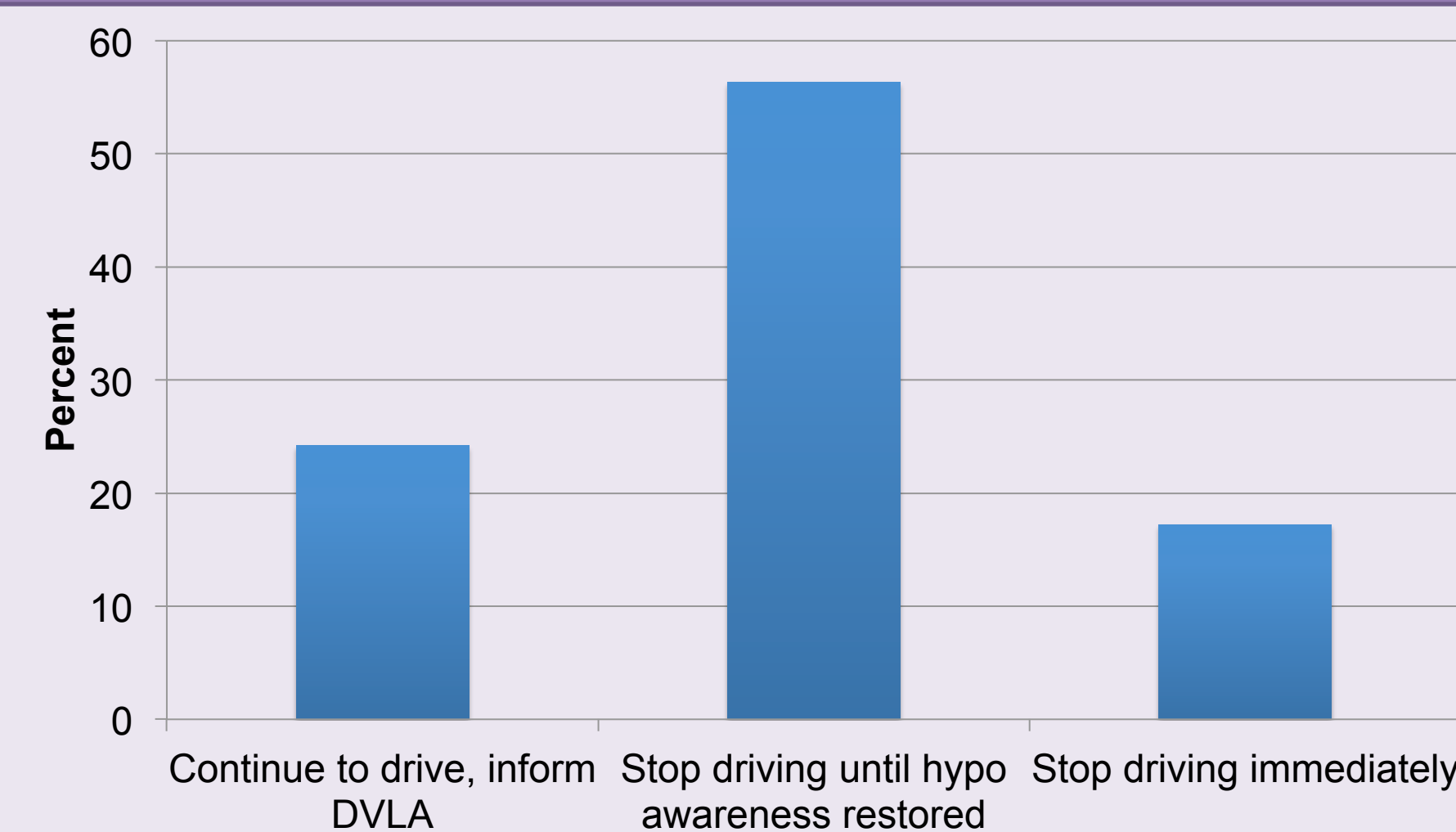
DVLA medical advisor's opinion: The patient must stop driving for at least 3 months, until his diabetes has been stable and assessed by Consultant Diabetologist.

Case 3: 21 years old man with type 1 diabetes was admitted with severe hypoglycaemia. He had another severe hypoglycaemic episode that required paramedic assistance, 18 months ago. What advice do you give him?



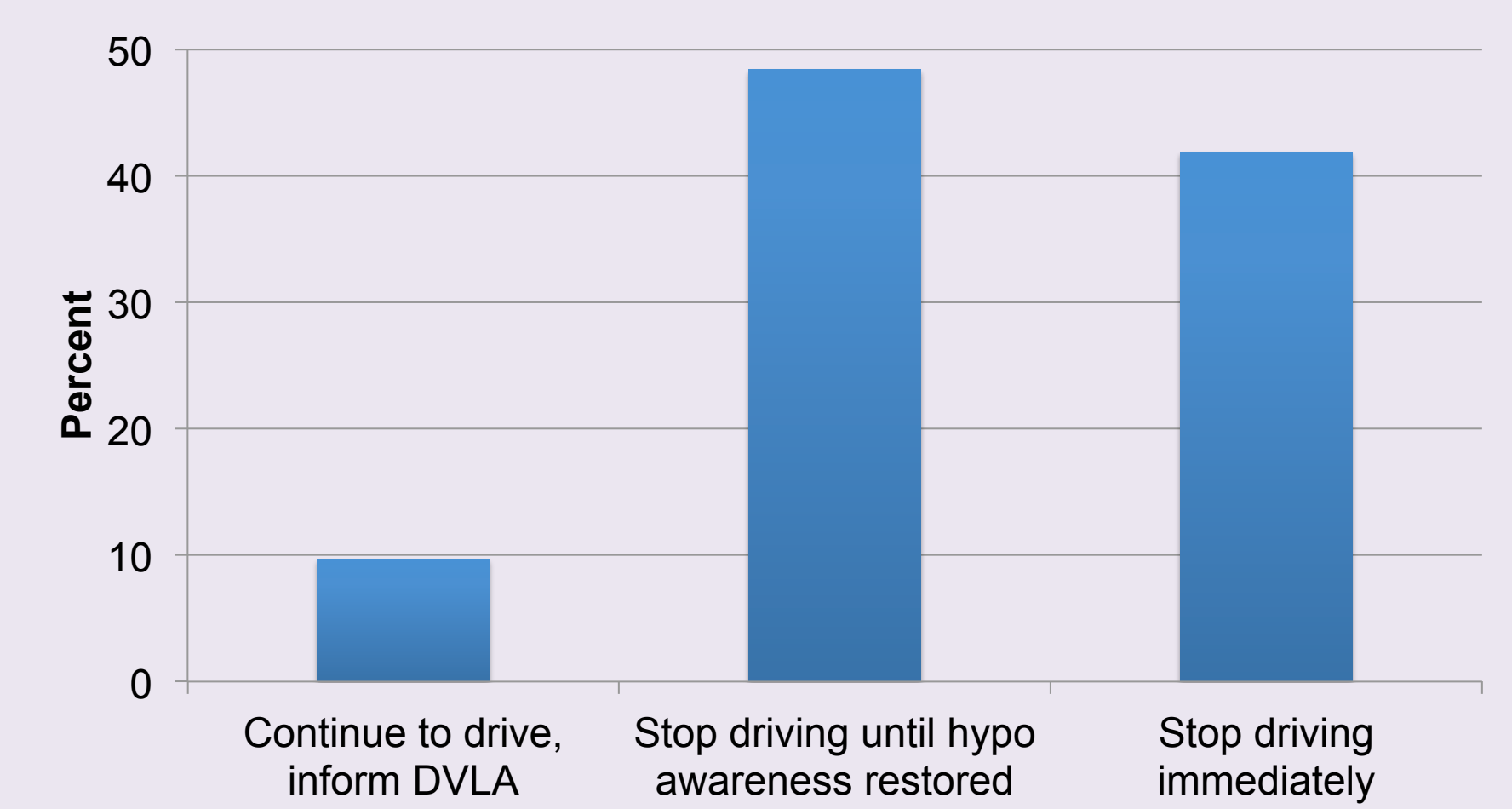
DVLA medical advisor's opinion: The patient should be assessed by Consultant Diabetologist, prior to resuming his driving. He could continue to hold Group 1 licence.

Case 4: 25 years old man with Type 1 diabetes admits that he is not able to recognize symptoms of hypoglycaemia on a few occasions. He works as a sale man. His job involves long hour driving. How would you advise him?



DVLA medical advisor's opinion: The patient should stop driving at least temporarily, until hypoglycaemic awareness was restored.

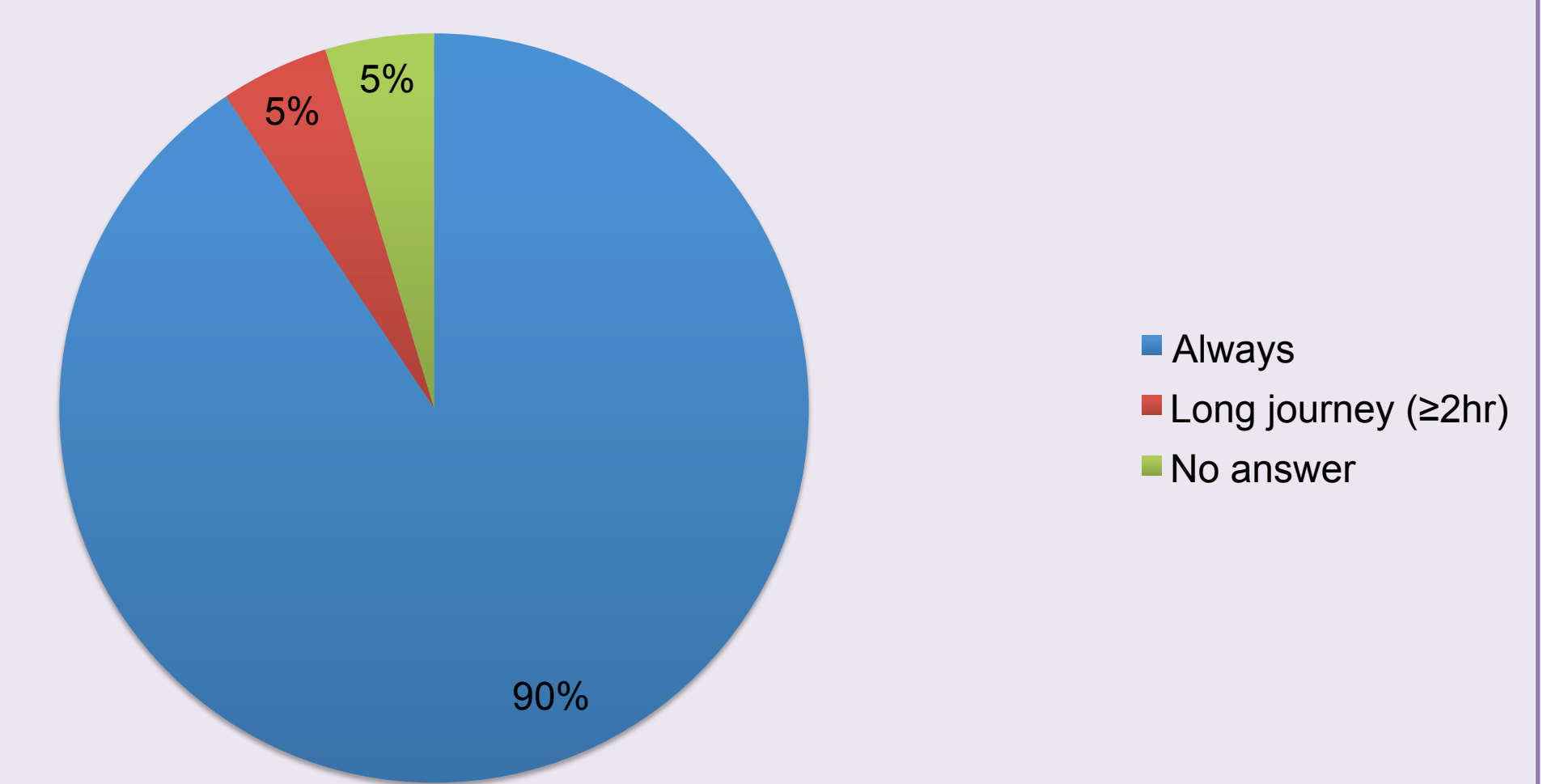
Case 5: You reviewed a 38 years old lorry driver with type 1 diabetes in the clinic/practice. You noticed he had several low blood glucose readings as low as 2 mmol/L on his glucose meter. He reported that he was completely asymptomatic during these episodes. What do you advice him regarding his driving?



DVLA medical advisor's opinion: The patient was no longer eligible to hold the licence because of hypoglycaemia unawareness. He should stop driving and his licence would be revoked. He might be able to reapply his licence once his hypoglycaemic awareness was fully restored.

Case 6: 18 years old boy has been recently diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. His parents are worried the risk of hypoglycaemia while driving. They would like to get your advice on safe driving recommendations. They are asking:

"How often their son should check blood glucose level before driving?"



"What is the recommended safe blood glucose level before driving?"

Blood glucose level	n	%
≥ 5mmol/L	42	65.6
≥4 to <5mmol/L	13	20.3
No answer	9	14.1

SUMMARY

- ✦ Majority of HCPs had consistent recommendations for Group 1 licence holder.
- ✦ Conflicting areas were Group 2 licence, previous history of severe hypoglycaemic episodes and hypoglycaemia unawareness.
- ✦ Up to 20% of HCPs were unaware of the cut-off blood glucose level for definition of hypoglycaemia and the recommended minimal blood glucose level for safe driving.
- ✦ Approximately 10% of HCPs were unaware of the recommended blood glucose testing frequency while driving.

CONCLUSIONS

- ✦ There are variations in clinical practices and deficiencies in knowledge regarding DVLA recommendations and requirements for drivers with insulin-treated-diabetes.
- ✦ There is an urgent need for education of current driving regulations for diabetes amongst HCPs.

REFERENCES

1. DVLA guidance for medical professional.
2. Graveling A et al; Diabetes Med 2004.
3. Watson et al; Practical diabetes 2007.