

# REPORTING IN THE TIME OF 'NEW NORMAL': JOURNALISM AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## South and Southeast Asia Regional Group

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Uma Shankar Pandey (India)

## GLOBAL RISK JOURNALISM HUB - [WWW.GLOBALRISKJOURNALISMHUB.COM](http://WWW.GLOBALRISKJOURNALISMHUB.COM)

- A network of more than 60 researchers from 8 regions, educators and practitioners from around the world to investigate the news reporting of globalized crises issues.
- The aim is to inspire collaborative projects transcending national boundaries, opening up new spaces for dialogue and debate regarding how best to improve the quality of journalism in the public interest within today's dimensions of globalized digital data ecosystems.
- Ingrid Volkmer, Ph.D. Director (International Digital Policy Lab, Australia)

## TWO-TRACK INITIAL STUDY

- Snapshot Survey
  - Q1 2021
- Qualitative Interviews
  - Q1 2022



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## **SNAPSHOT SURVEY**



Challenges faced by journalists in covering the pandemic

The role of disinformation amid the pandemic

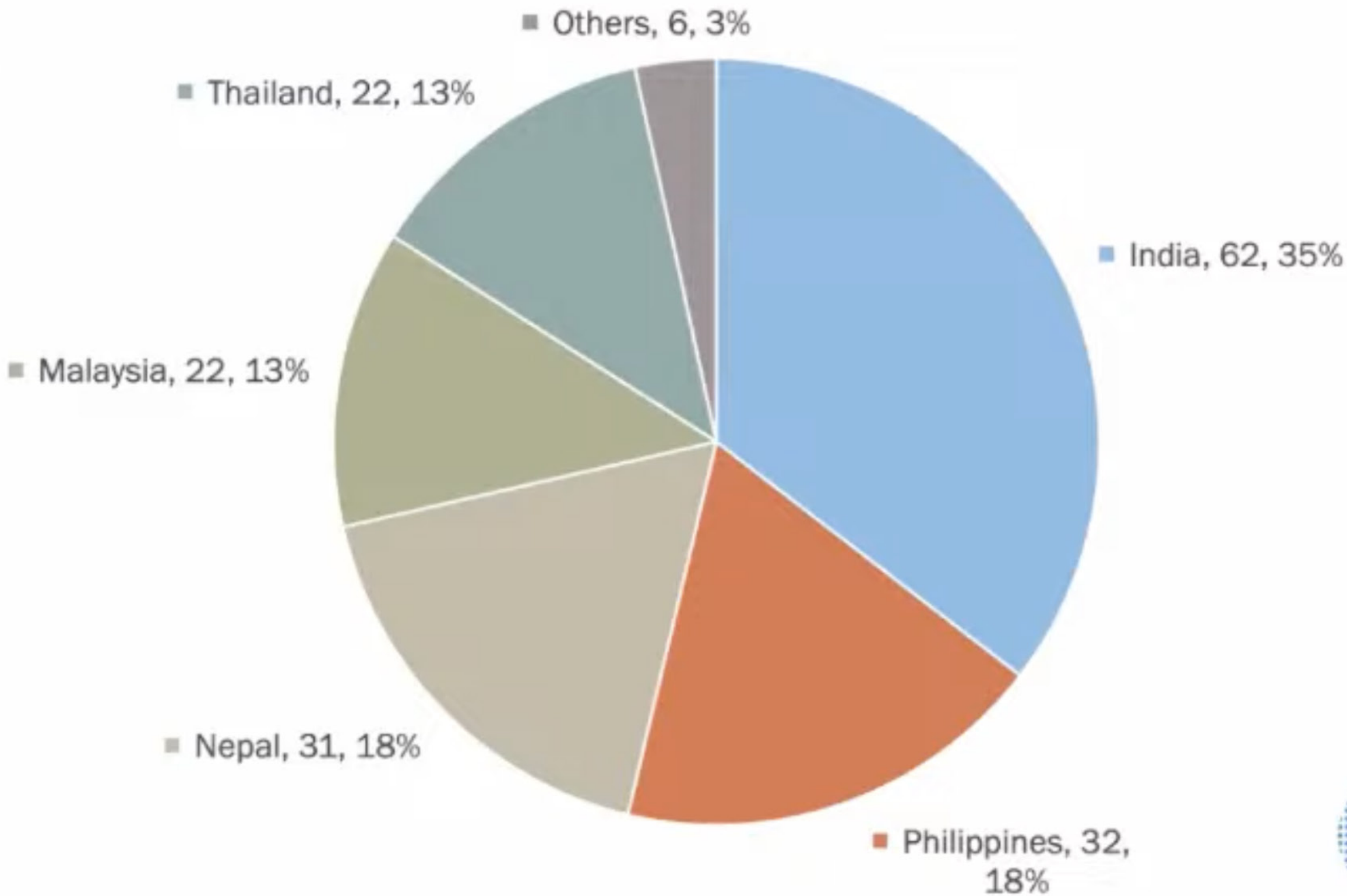
Sources of information about COVID-19

Pressures faced by journalists in covering the pandemic



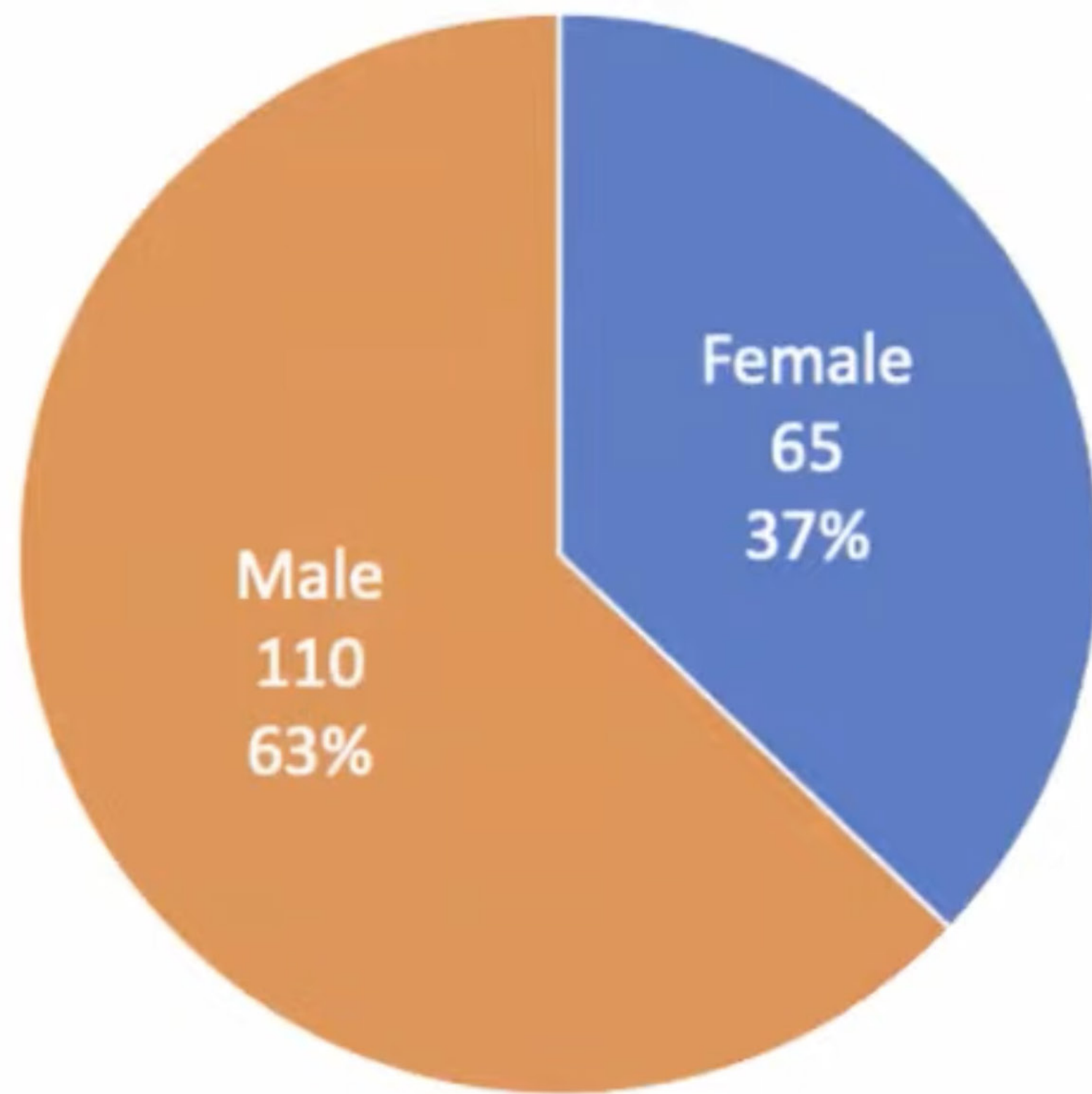
# SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ASIA BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS

- TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 175
- 24% OF GLOBAL RESPONDENTS (744)



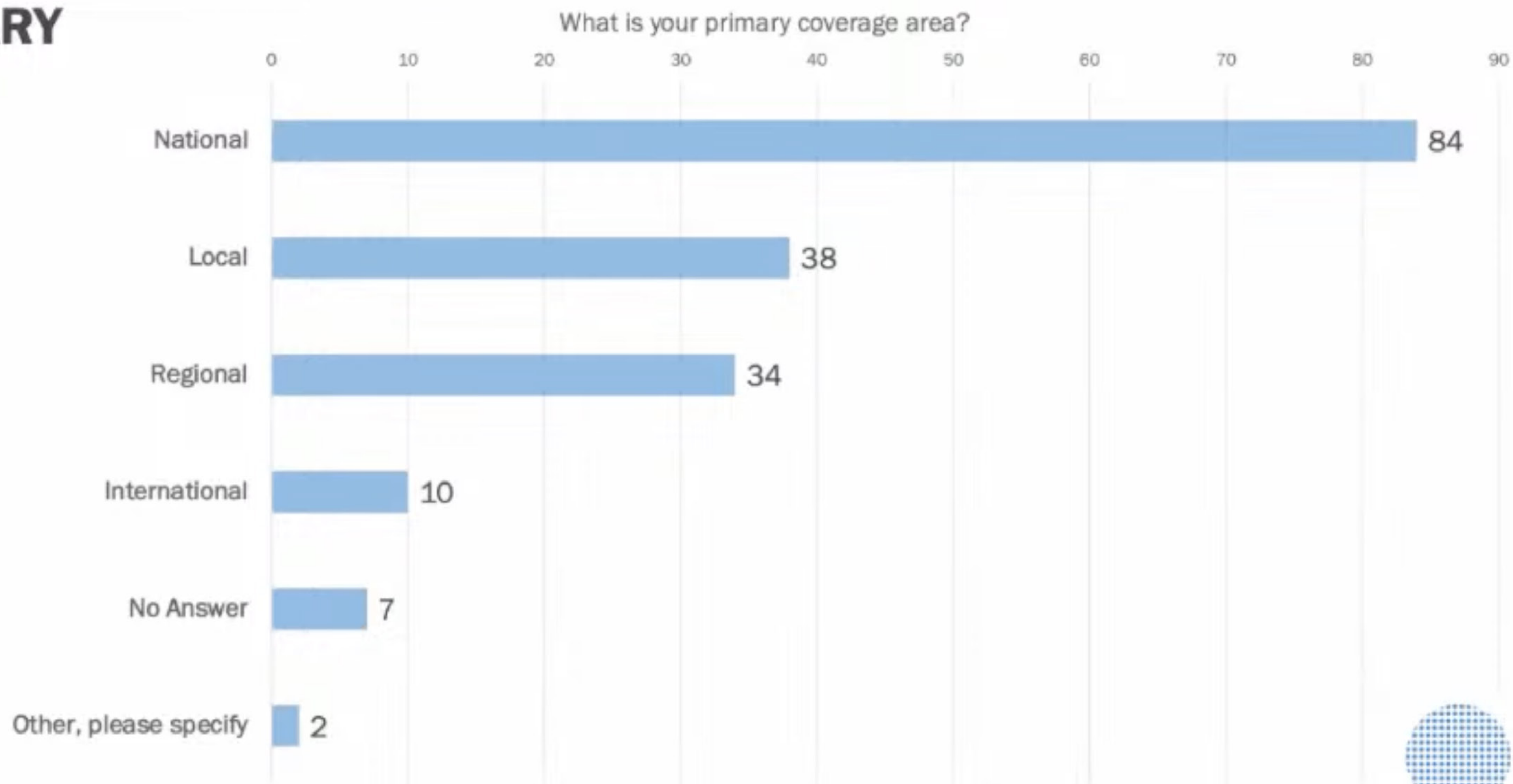


## GENDER





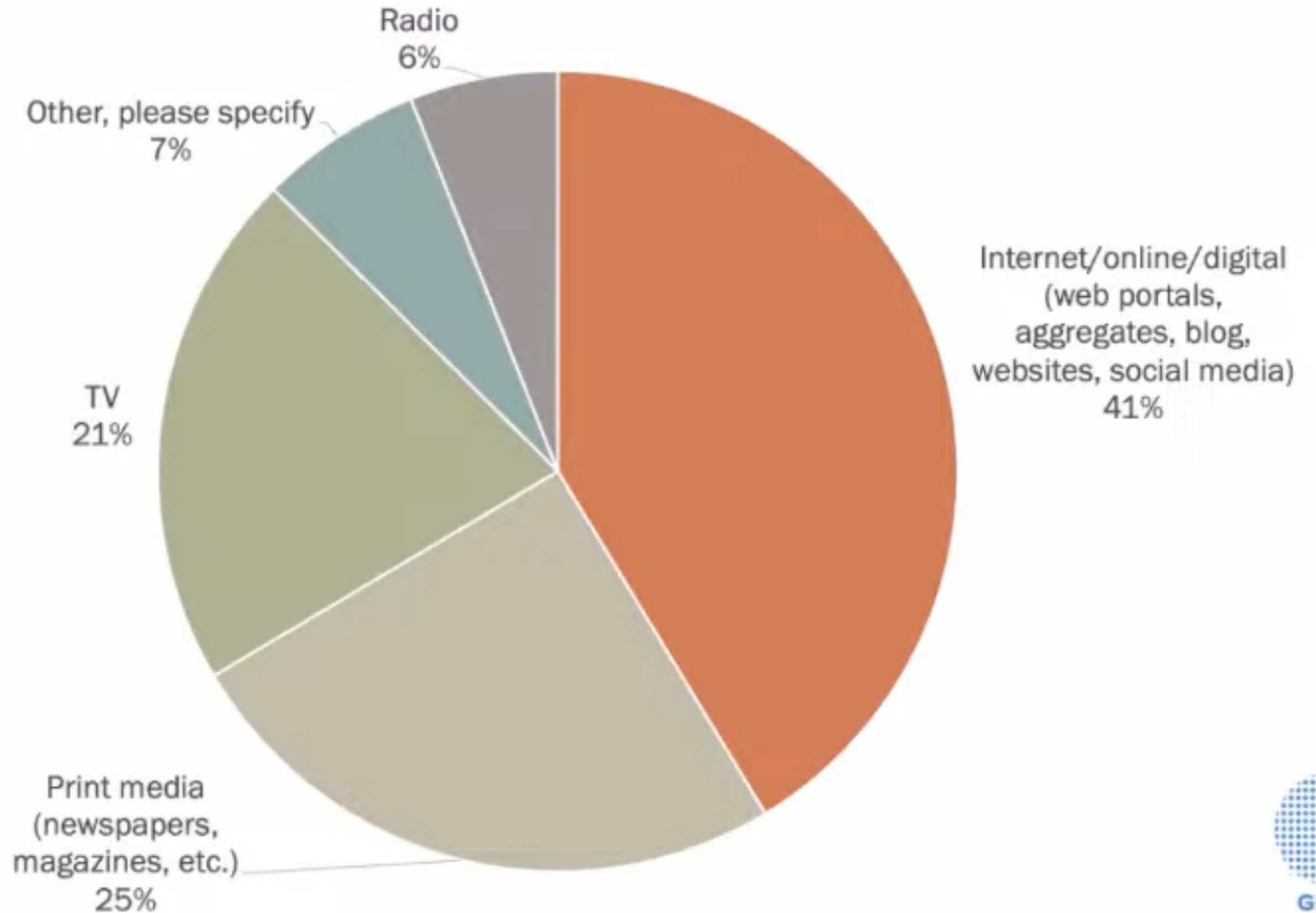
## PRIMARY AREA





Where would you say the majority of your work is being published/aired?

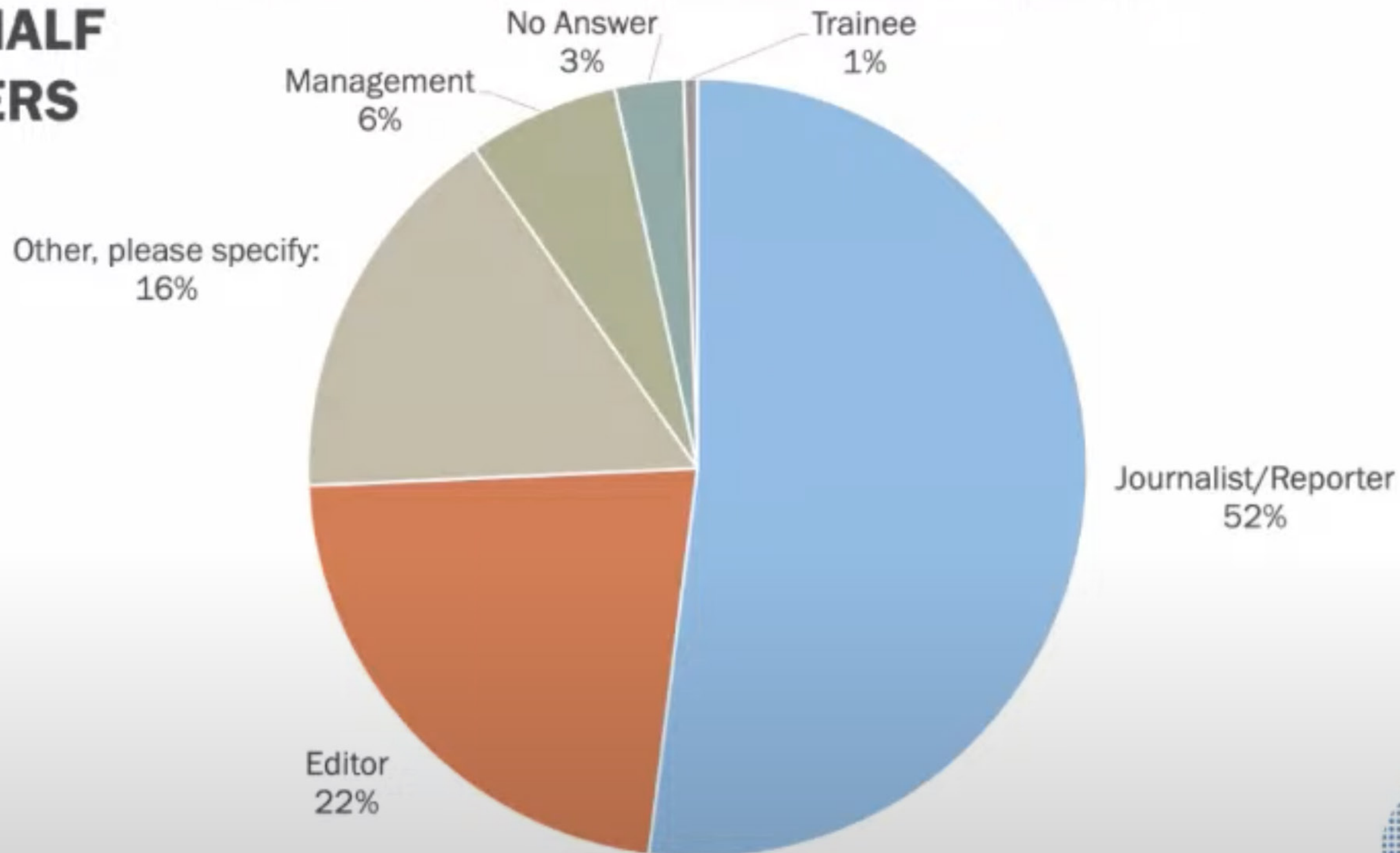
## PLATFORM





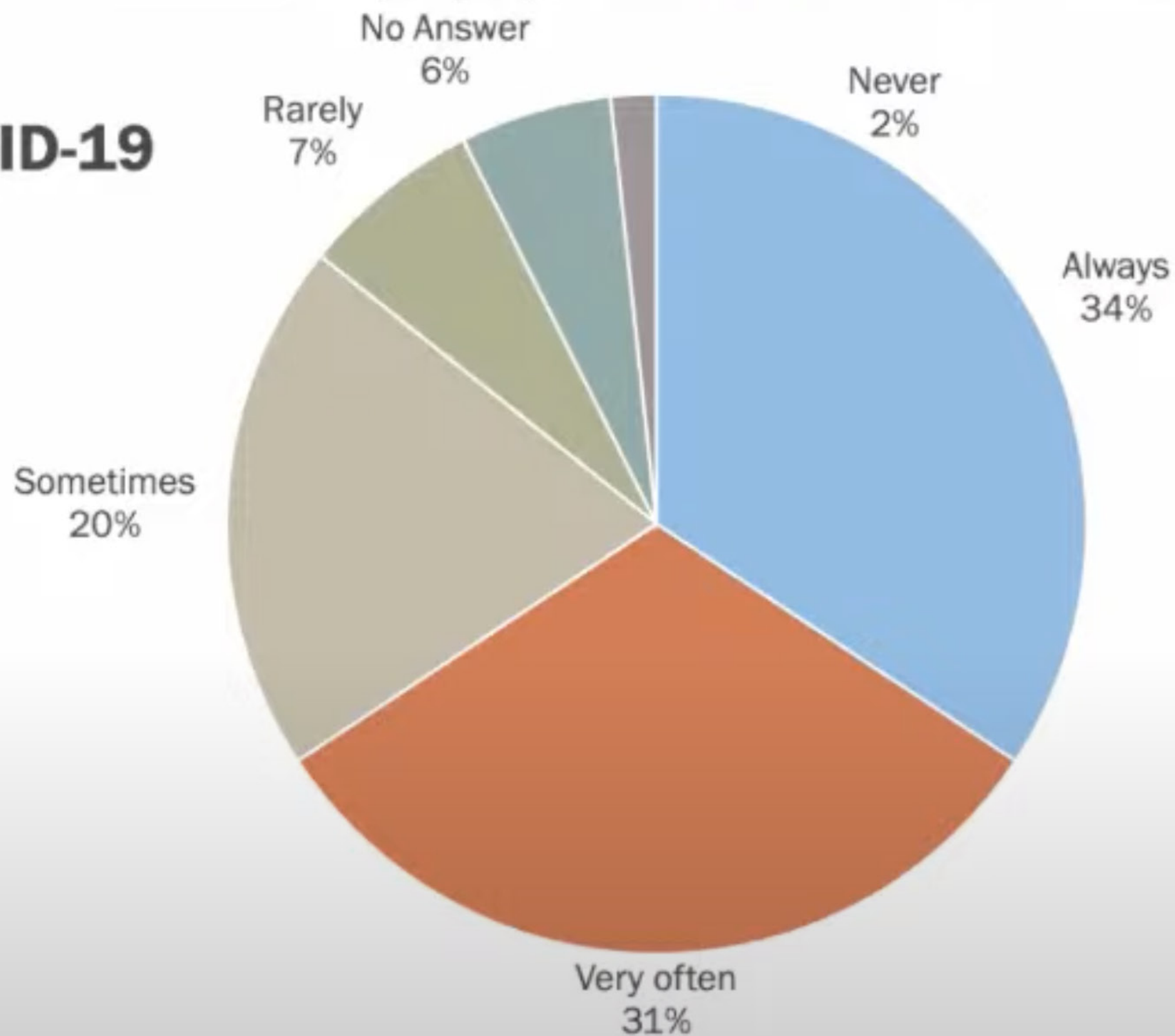
## MORE THAN HALF ARE REPORTERS

If you are full-time or part-time employed, what is your current position?



## 9 OUT OF 10 WRITE STORIES ABOUT COVID-19

How frequently do you write stories related to COVID 19?

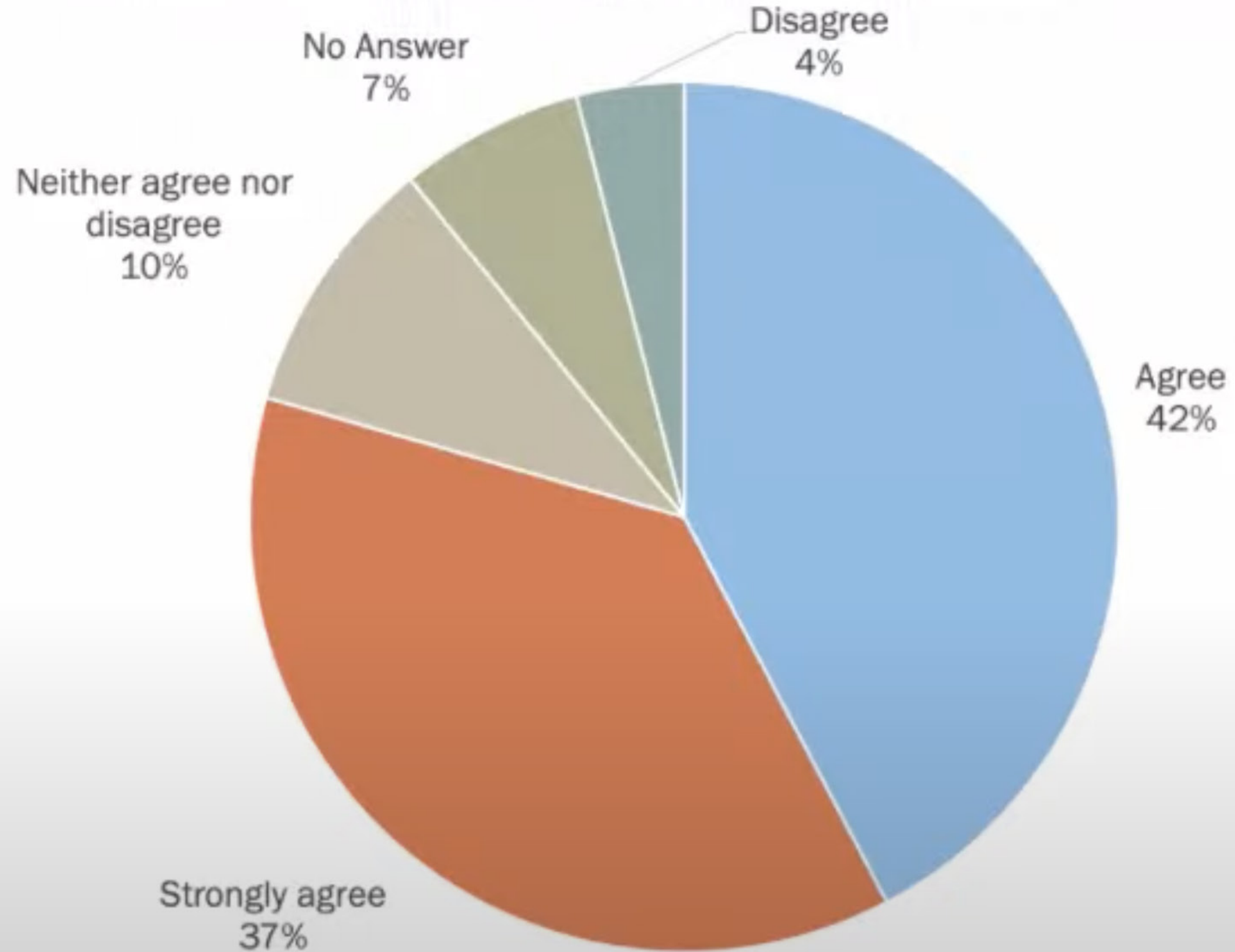




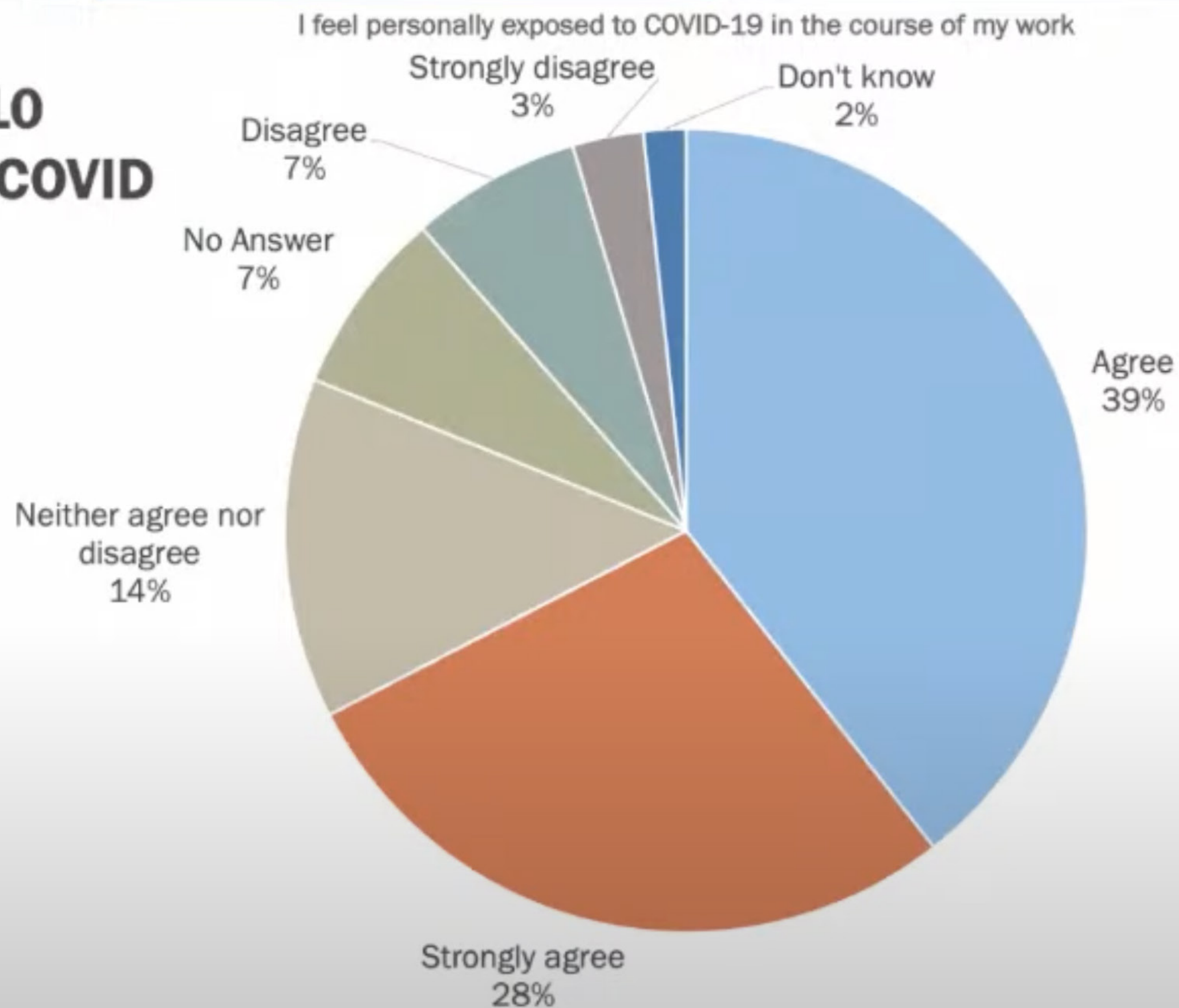
I feel my reporting assignments are challenging overall during the coverage of COVID-19.

## CHALLENGING

8 out of 10  
reporters feel  
it is  
challenging.

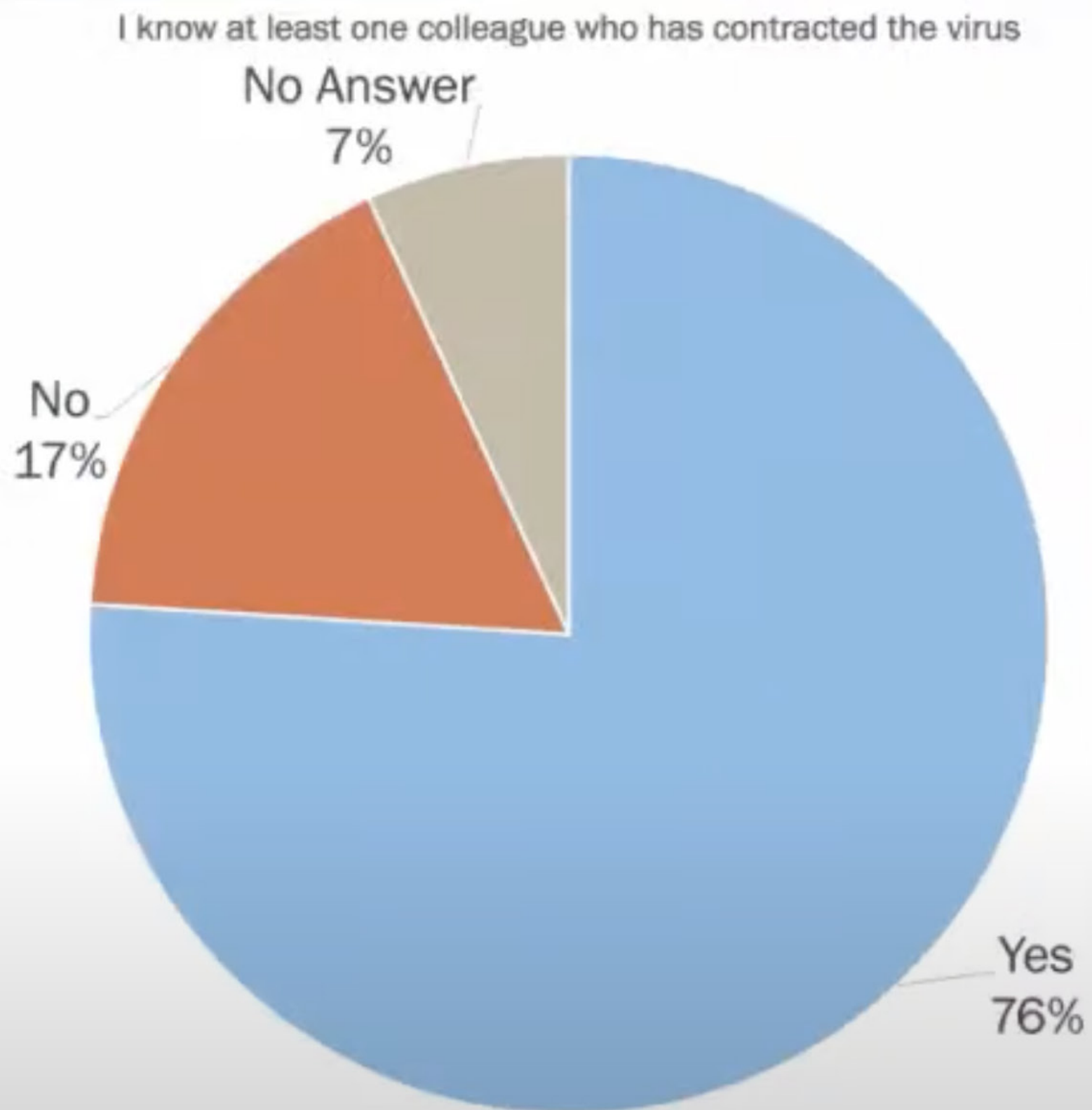


## NEARLY 7 OUT OF 10 FEEL EXPOSED TO COVID



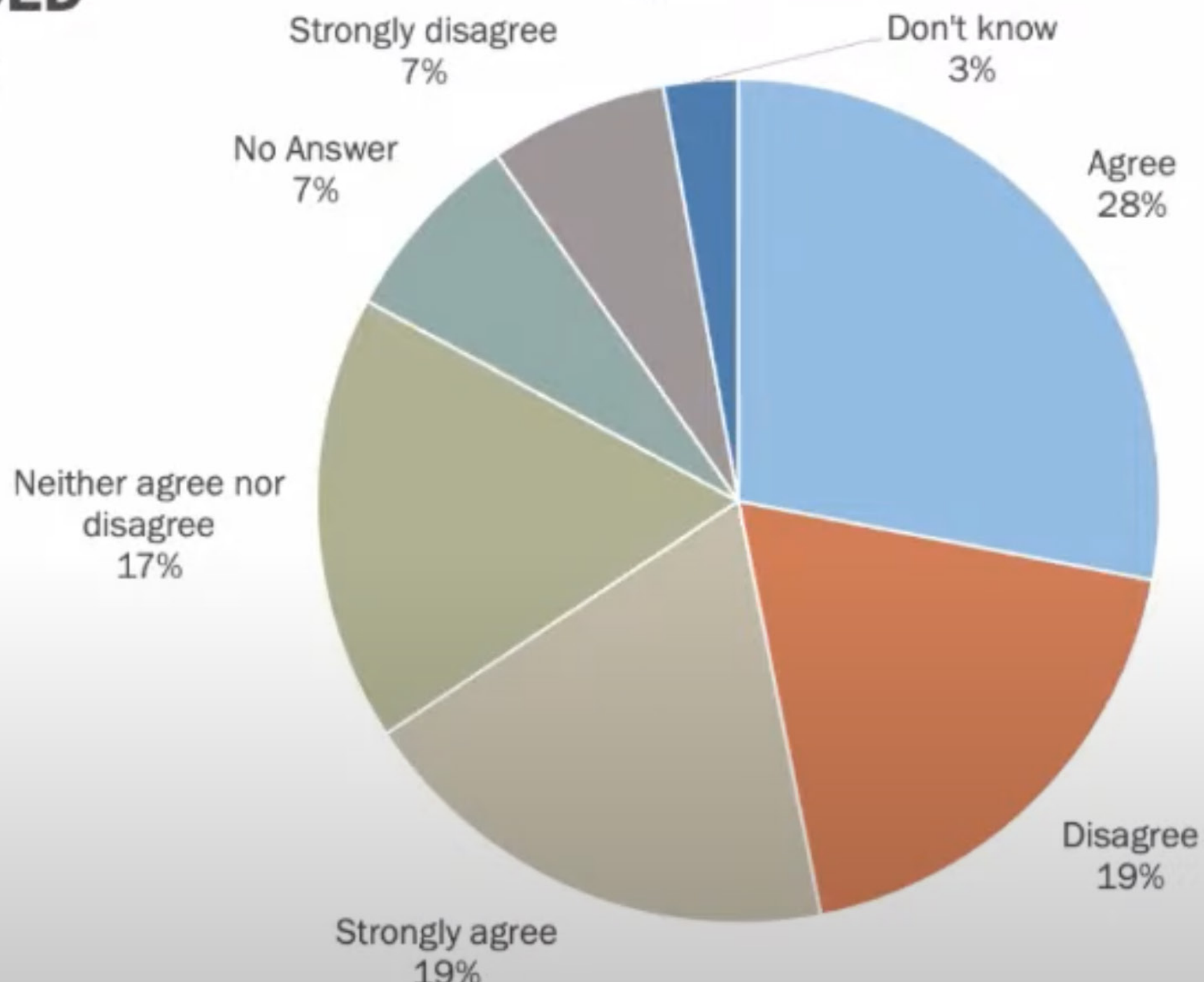


## 76% HAD AT LEAST ONE COLLEAGUE WHO HAD COVID



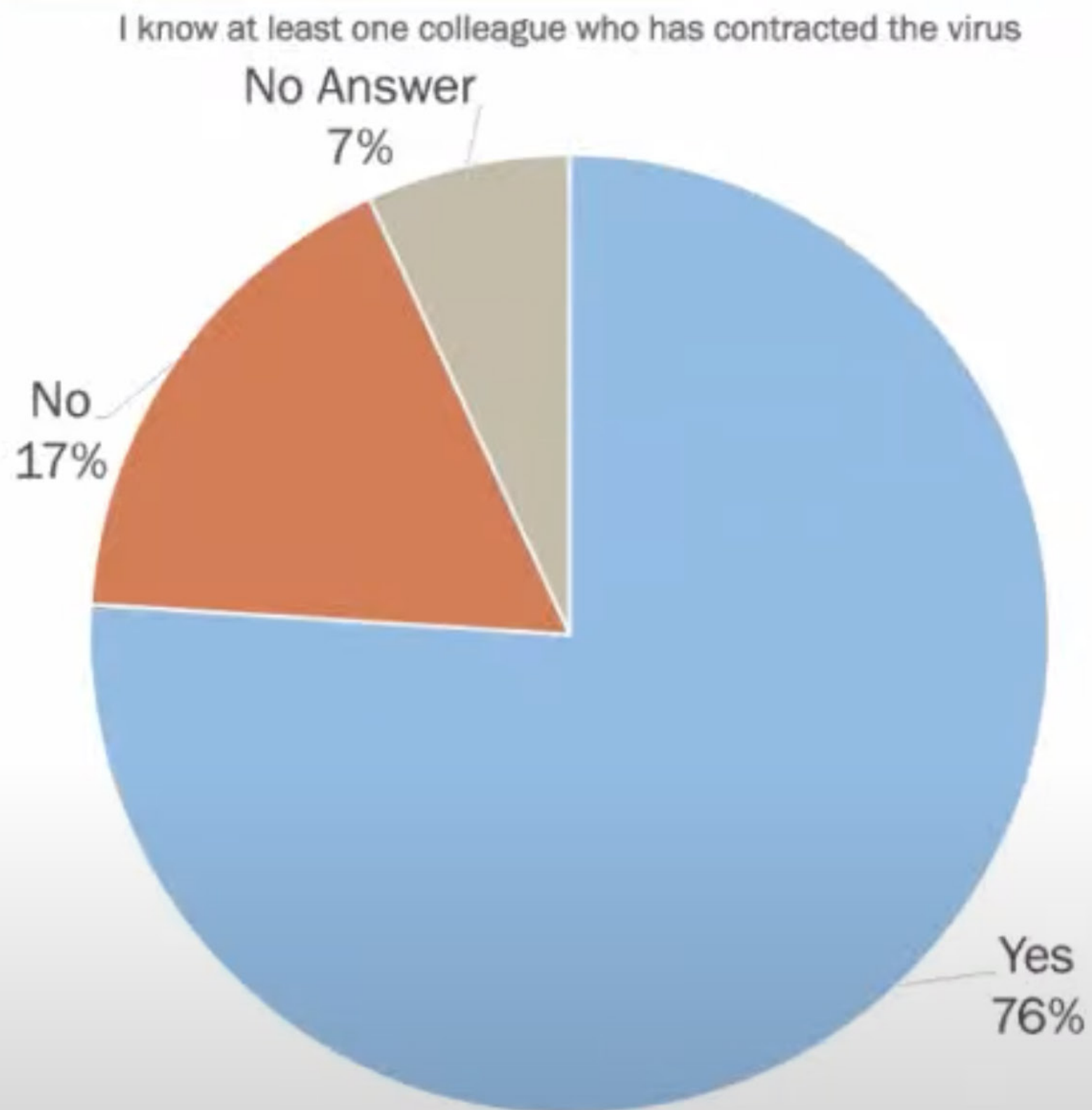
## 37% WERE PROVIDED PROTECTIVE GEAR

My organization (client if you are a freelancer) provides important health protection equipment for its journalists

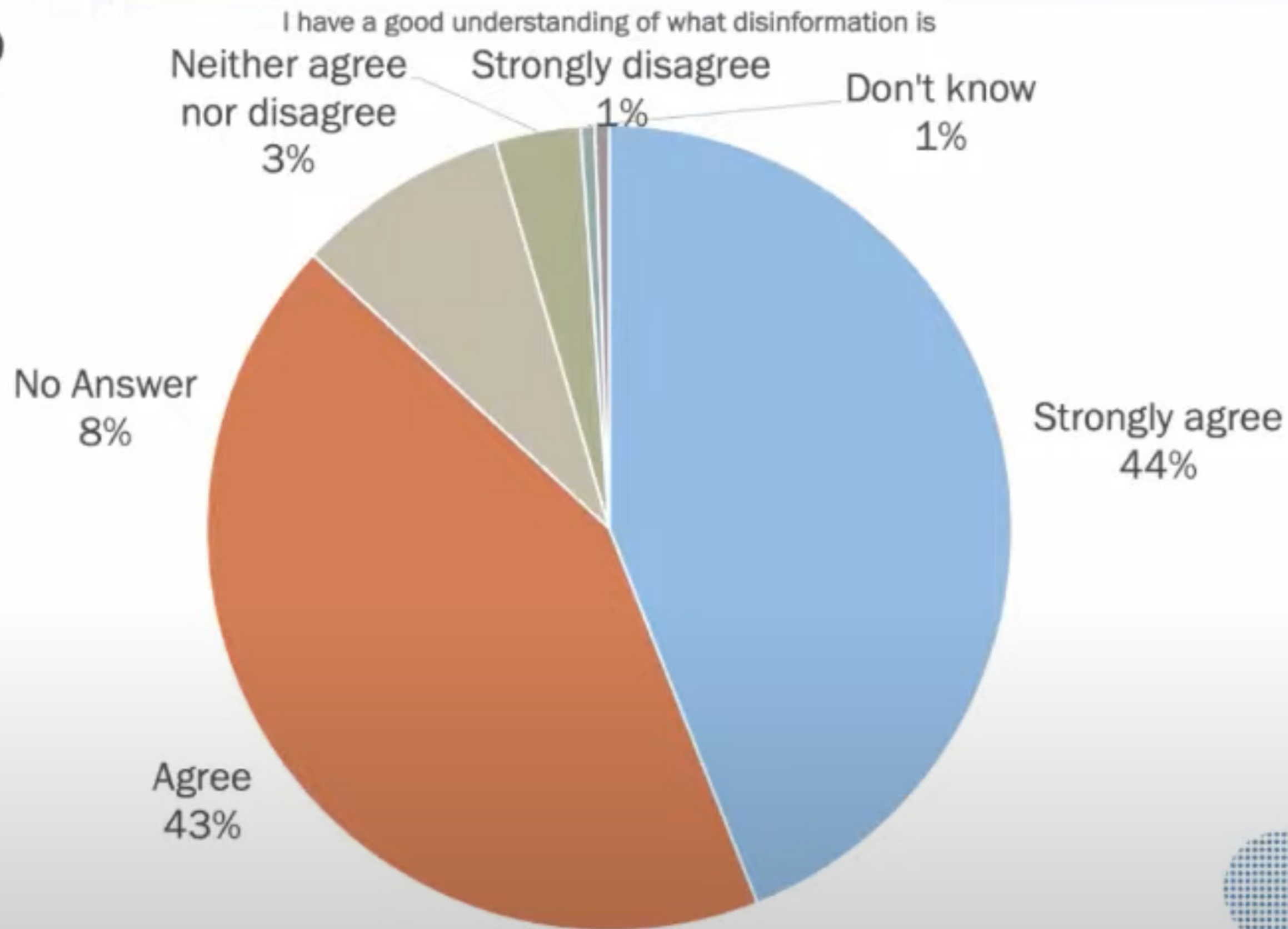




## 76% HAD AT LEAST ONE COLLEAGUE WHO HAD COVID

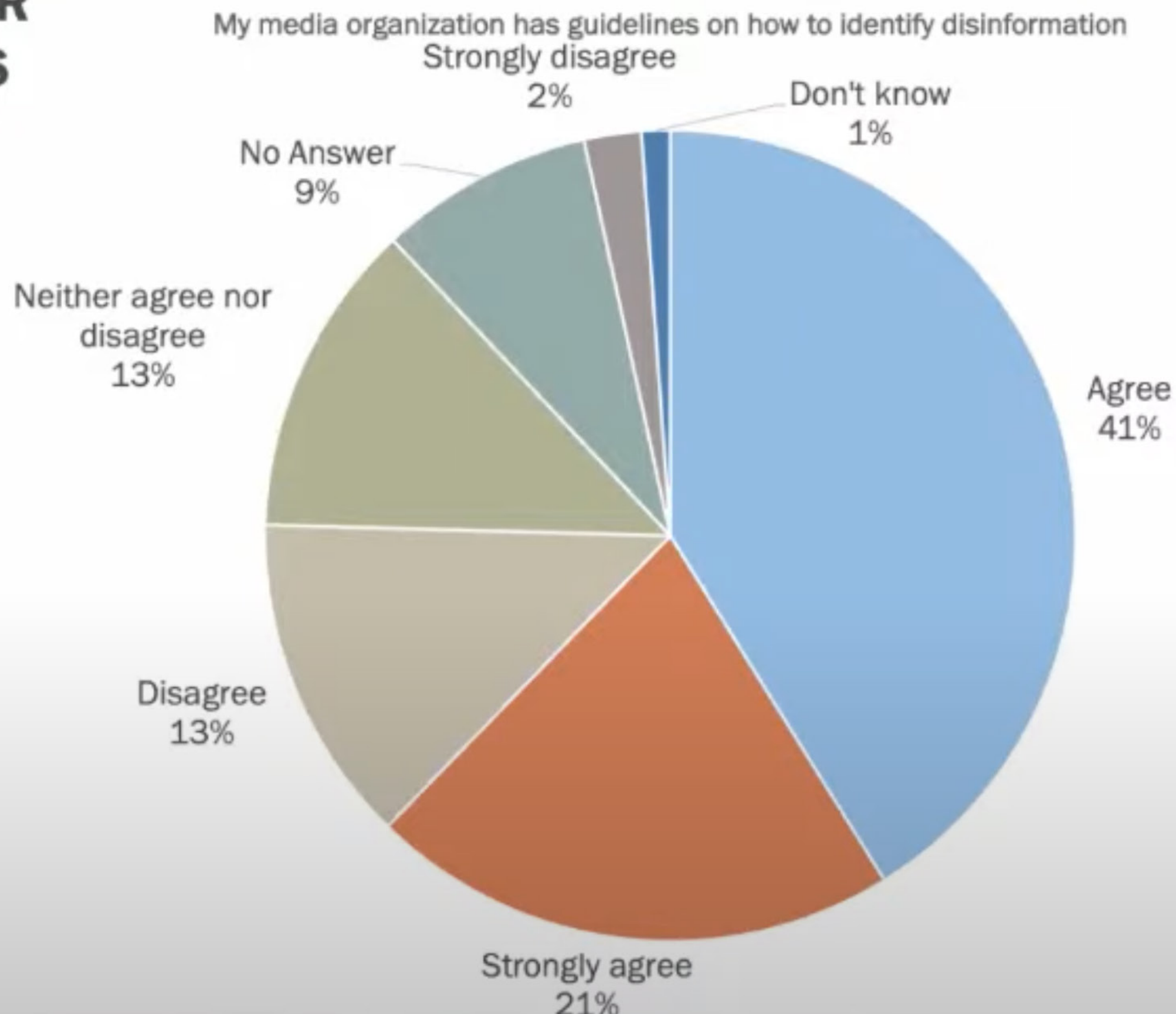


## NEARLY 9 OUT OF 10 UNDERSTAND WHAT DISINFORMATION IS

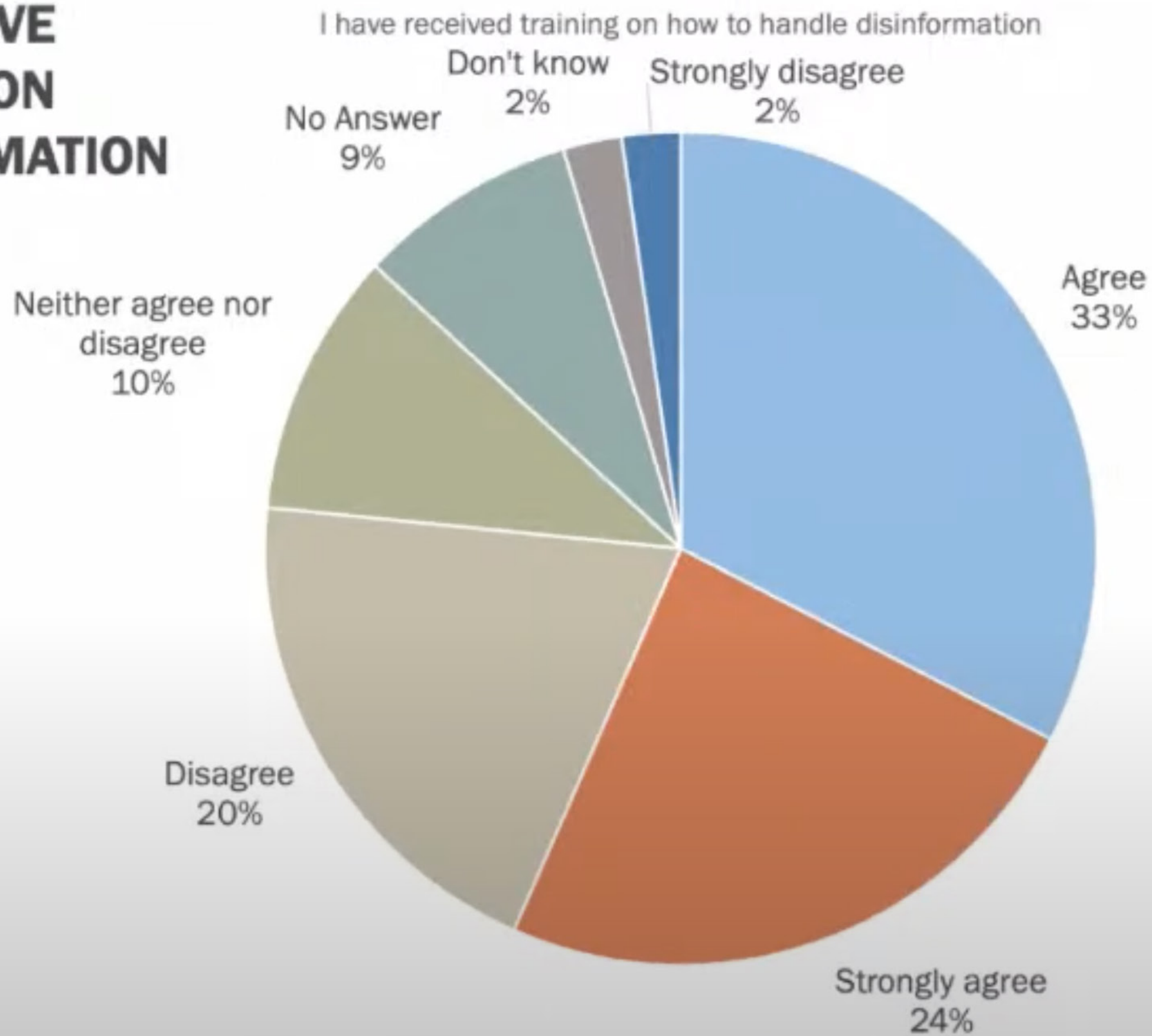




## 6 OUT OF 10 SAY THEIR ORG. HAS GUIDELINES VS. DISINFORMATION

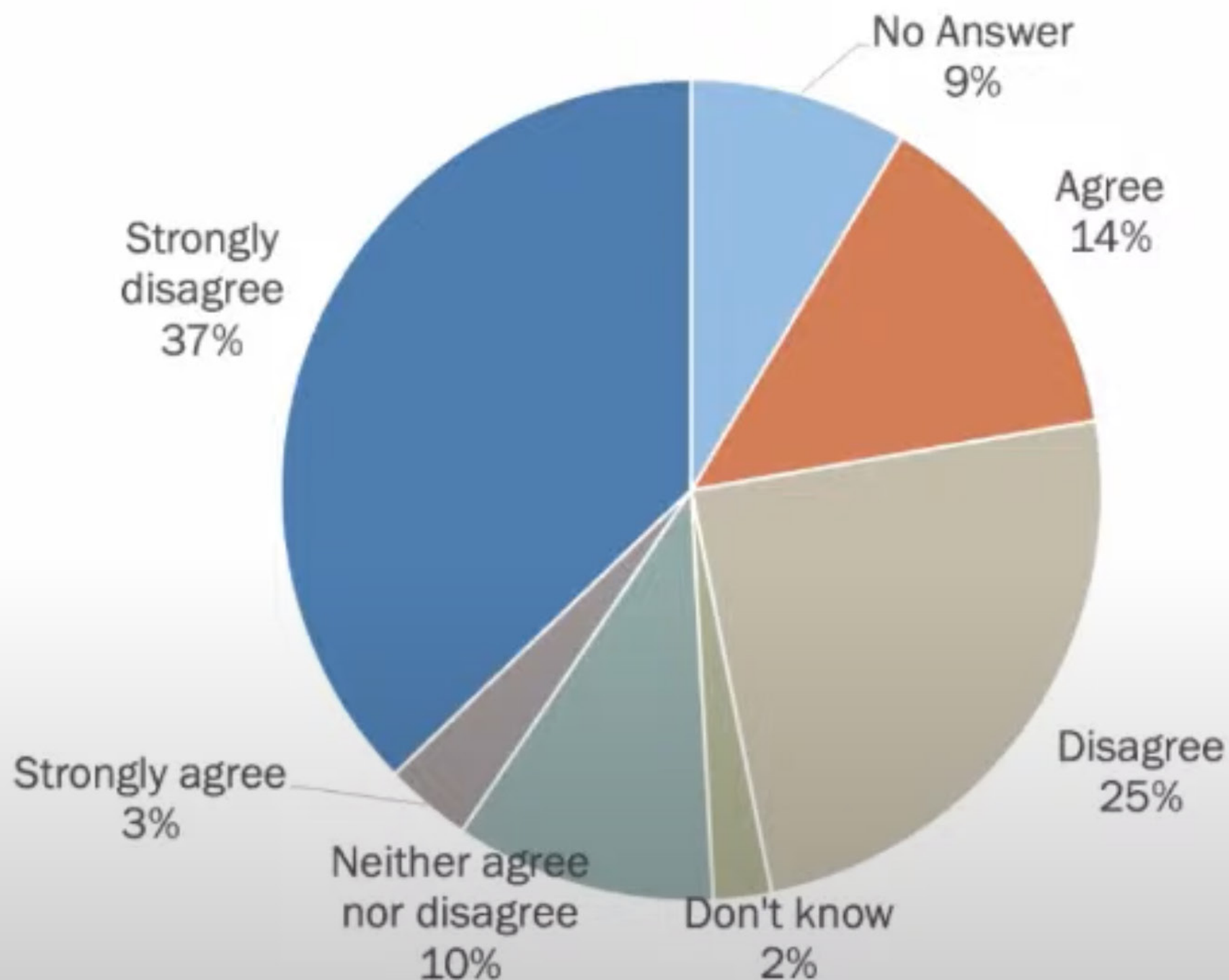


## MORE THAN HALF HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING ON HANDLING DISINFORMATION



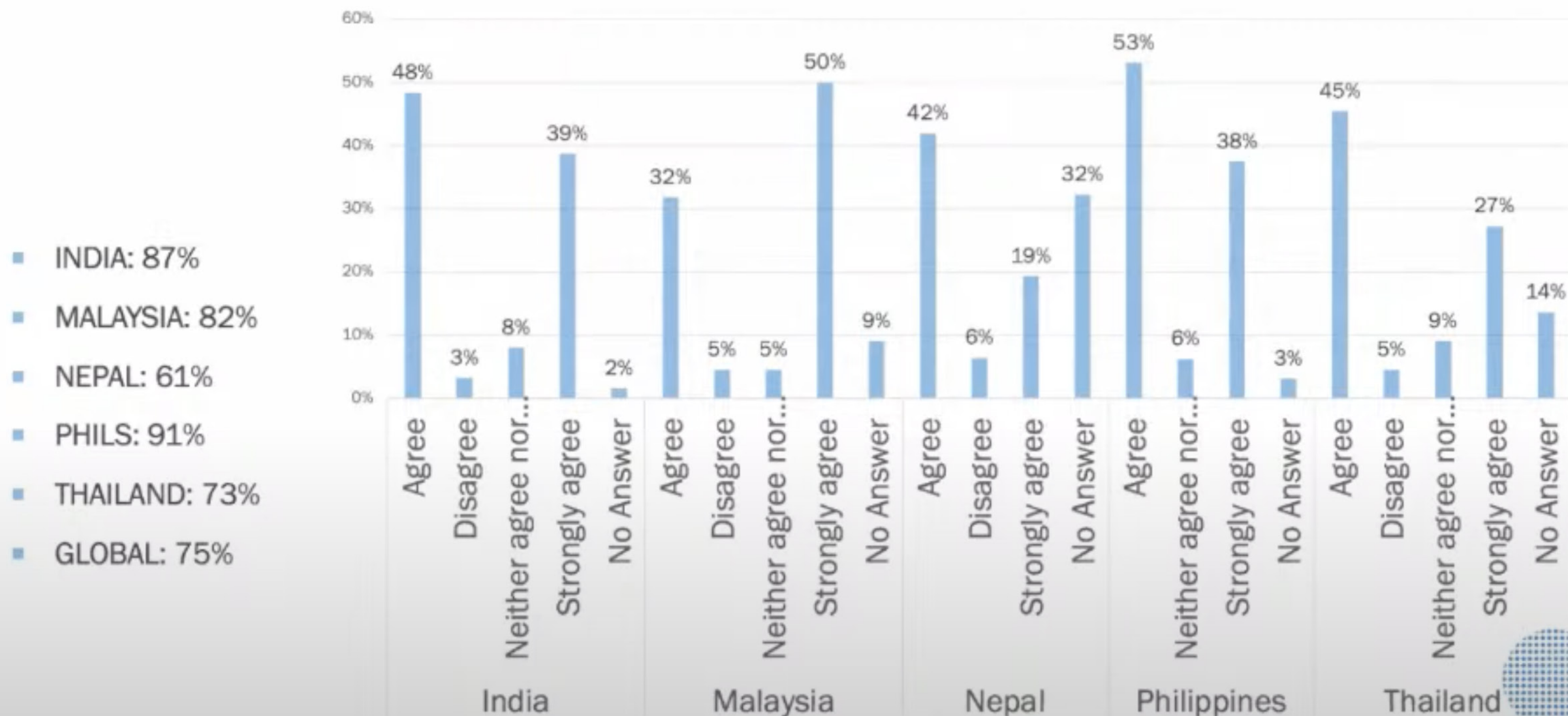
## ONLY 17% SAY THEIR ORG. HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH DISINFO

The organization for which I publish/produce stories has been associated with producing disinformation





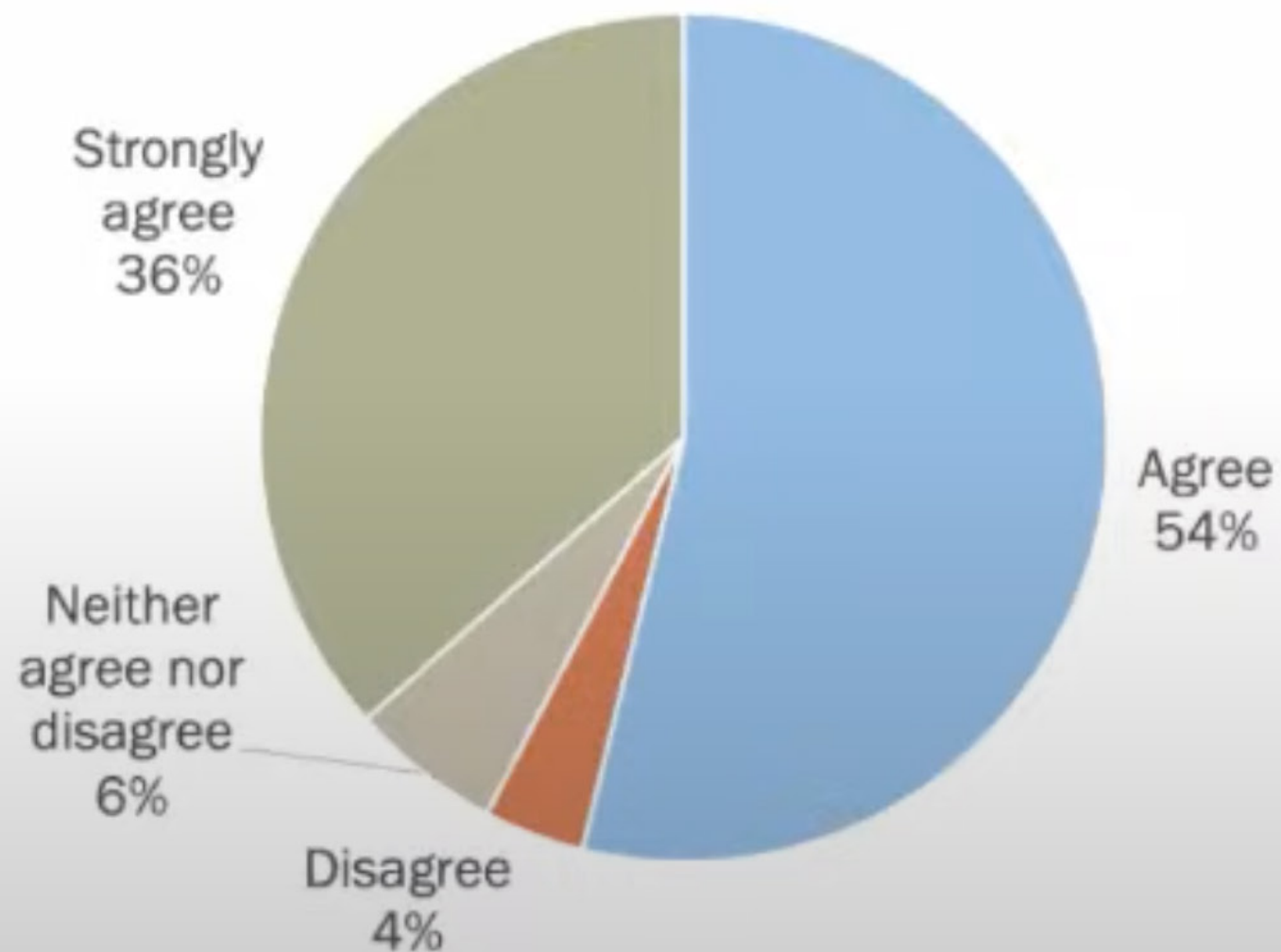
## HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON GOVT FOR INFORMATION



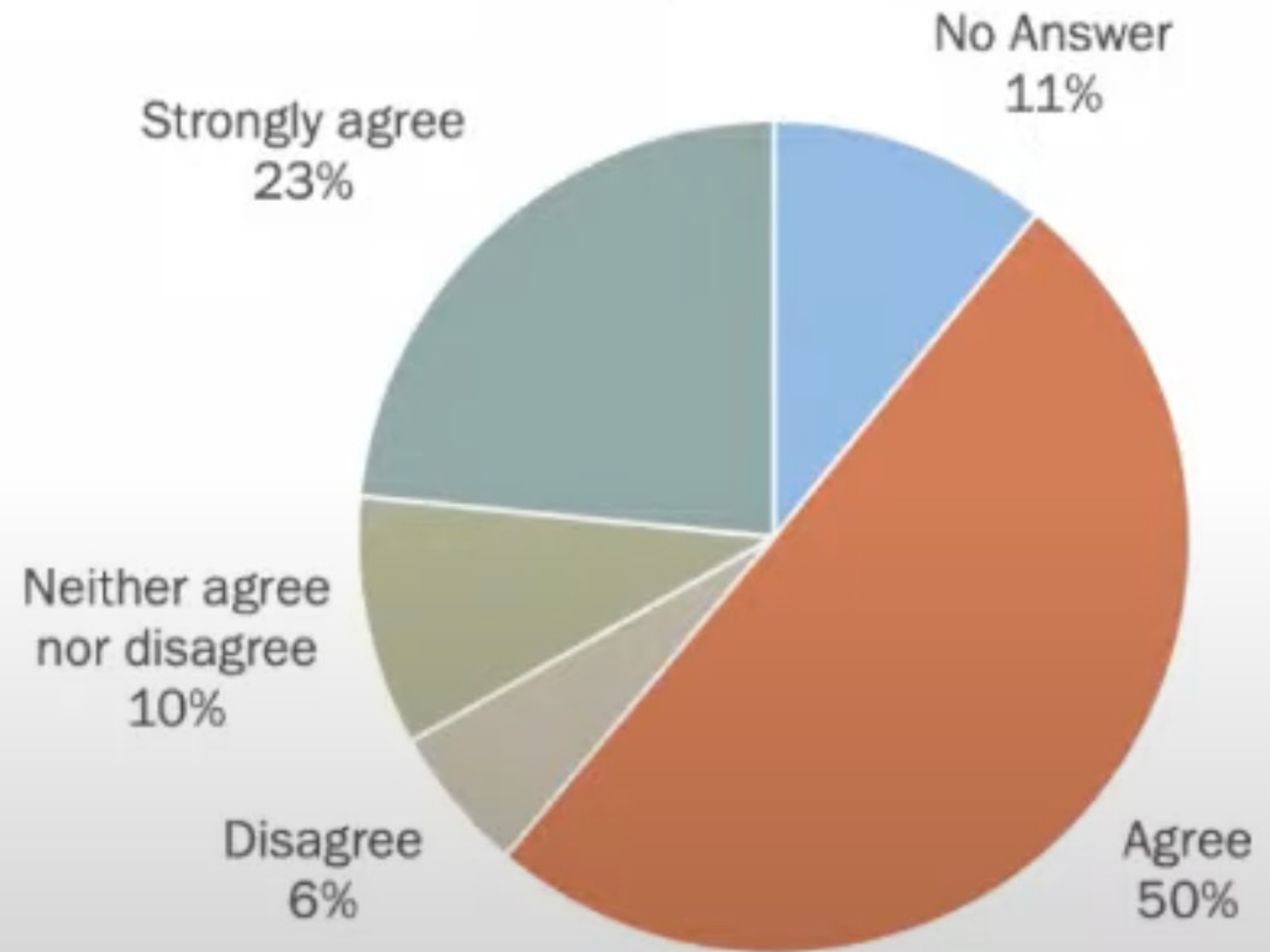
# TRUST IN EXPERTS IS VERY HIGH

## HEALTH EXPERTS: 9 OUT OF 10; WHO: 7 OUT OF 10

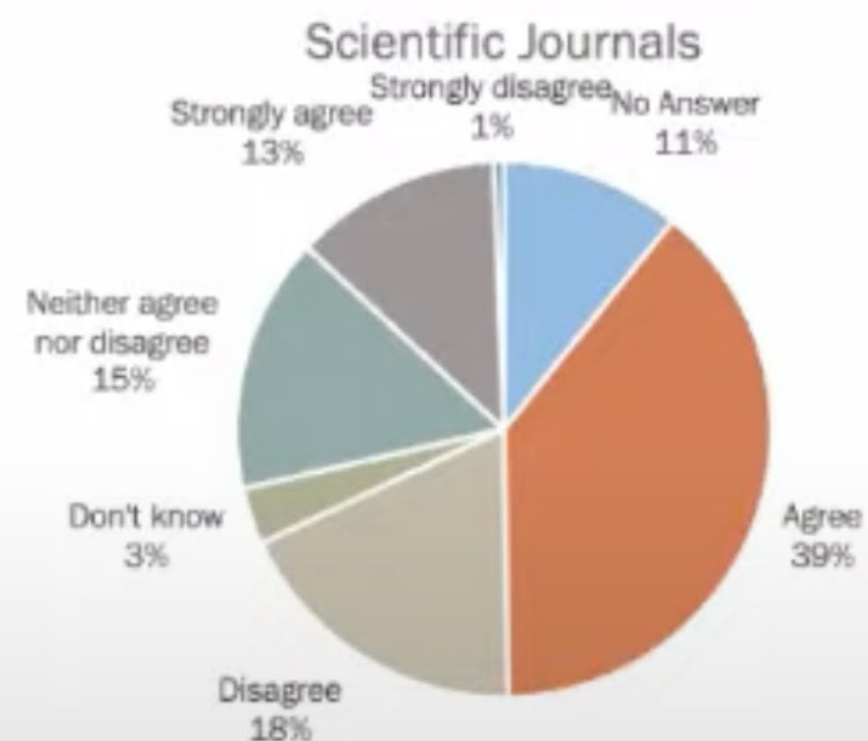
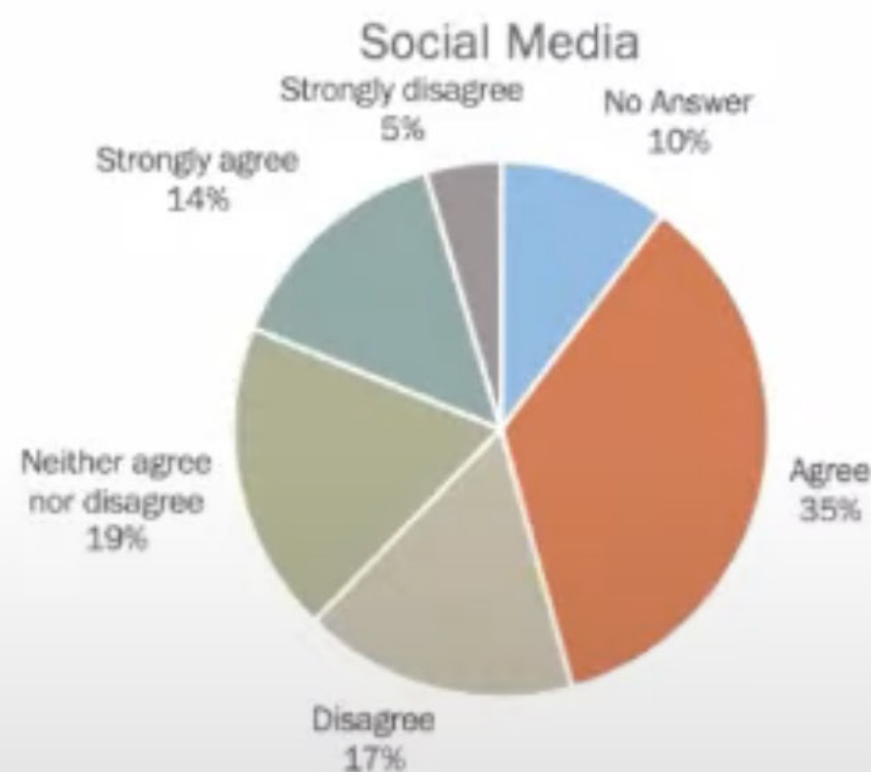
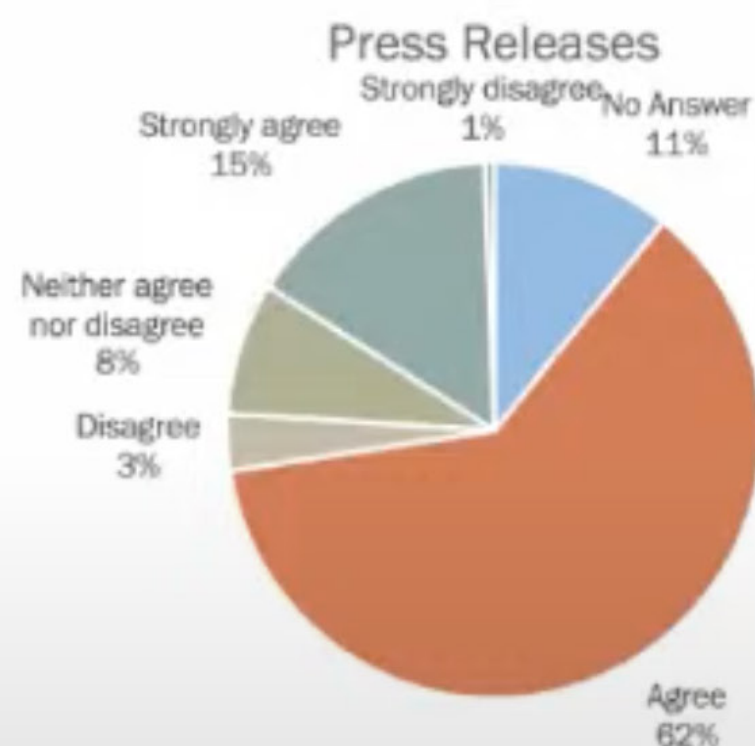
Health experts



WHO

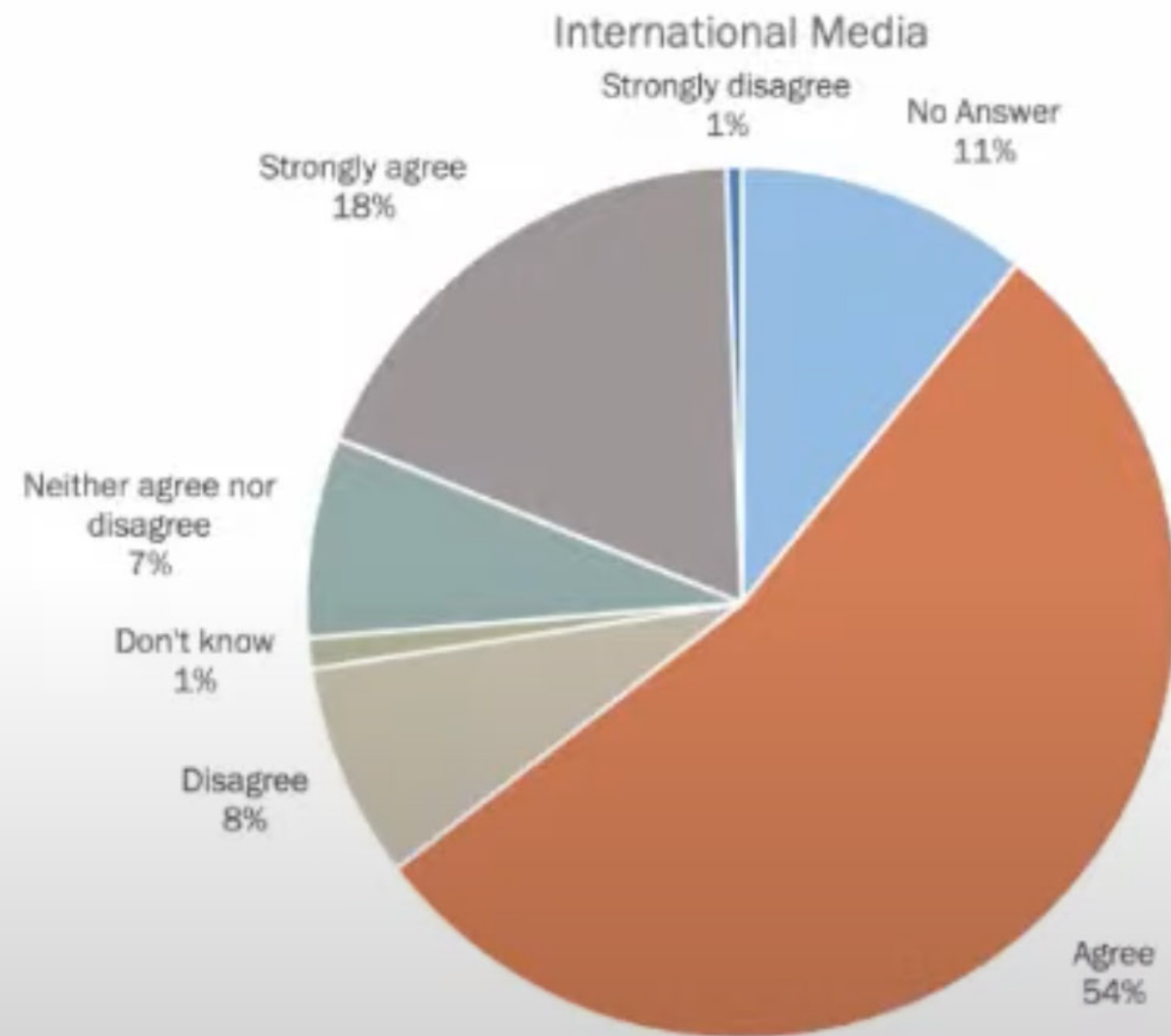


## HIGHER DEPENDENCE ON PRESS RELEASES (77%) VS. SOCIAL MEDIA (49%) AND SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS (52%)



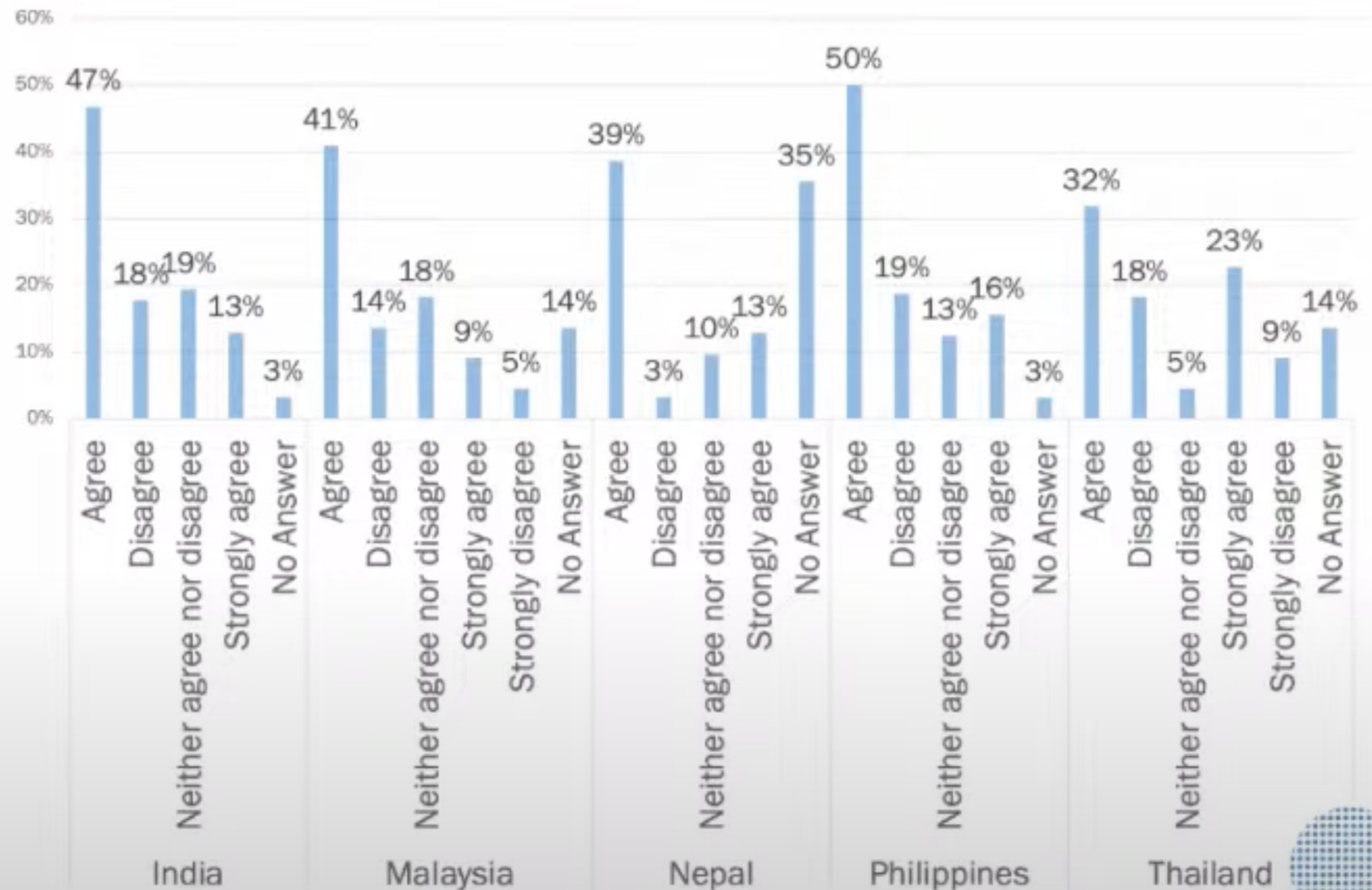


## HIGHER PREFERENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDIA (72%)



## AT LEAST HALF OF JOURNALISTS BALANCE COVERAGE BY INTERVIEWING MARGINALIZED SOURCES

- INDIA: 60%
- MALAYSIA: 50%
- NEPAL: 52%
- PHILS: 66%
- THAILAND: 55%
- GLOBAL: 49%



# MAJORITY OF JOURNALISTS IN INDIA, PHILIPPINES, THAILAND SAY NO GOV'T PRESSURE TO PUBLISH INFO

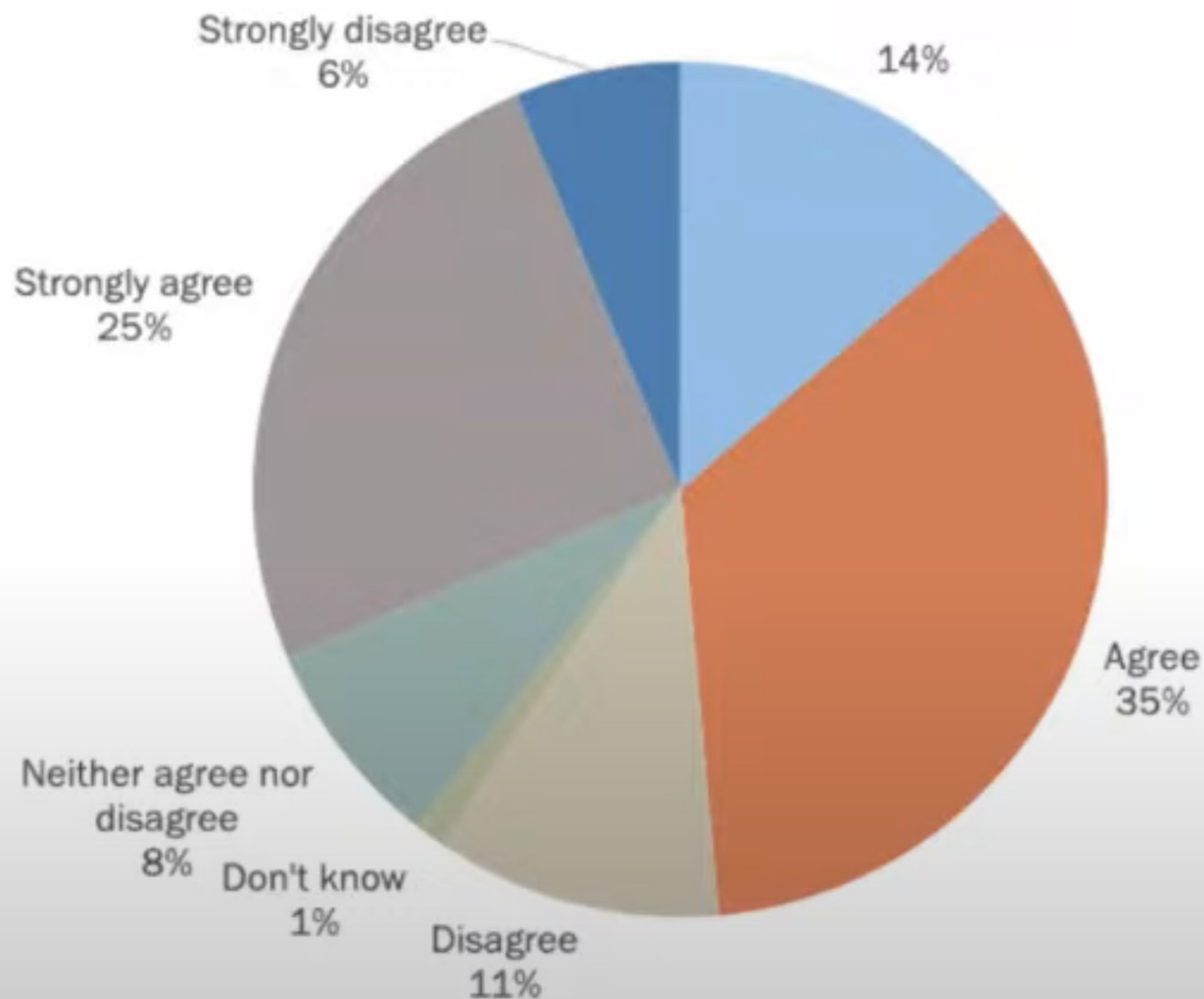




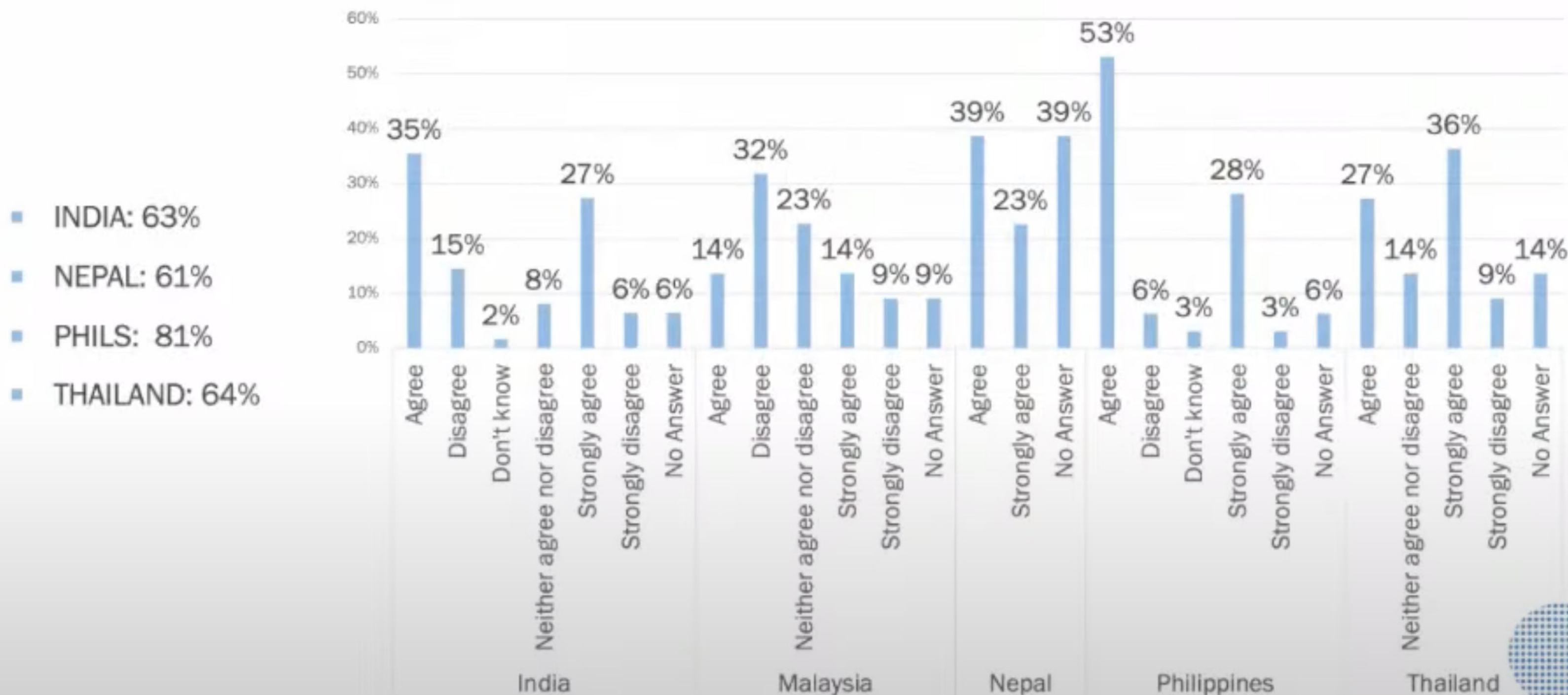
# 6 OUT OF 10 JOURNALISTS FEAR THEIR ORG. WILL EXPERIENCE FINANCIAL STRESS

(GLOBAL: 63%)

I fear my news organization is going to experience financial difficulties because of the pandemic



## FEAR OF FINANCIAL STRESS STRONGEST IN THE PHILIPPINES AT 81%



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## SECOND TRACK: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

- Q1 2022: The researchers will wrap up in-depth interviews with at least 30 journalists who report on the Covid-19 pandemic from different platforms. Interviews will be conducted in person, by phone, or using Zoom or Google Meet.
- Selection of interviewees will be relativistic, meaning selection will take into consideration the different lived realities and experiences of journalists, reporters, editors, and emerging news professionals and new news actors.
- It will also be purposive, meaning the researchers will deliberately select news professionals and/or influencers, new news portals and crisis news actors to gain insight into their expert knowledge. Key organizations/players delivering news on Covid-19 will be identified.
- The interview guide developed by the Global Risk Journalism Hub will be used.



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## SECOND TRACK: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

- Selection of interviewees will follow a two-step process as set forth by the Global Risk Journalism Hub.
- First, the researchers will list key news outlets and media professionals in the crisis public ecology, meaning the key news organizations or players delivering Covid-crisis news in the country.
- Second, the researchers will identify representatives of these news outlets.
- In drawing up the listing of key news outlets (stage 1), the researchers will ensure geographical representation, i.e., selection of key news outlets in Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao as well representation across platforms (print, online, TV, radio).
- In selecting representatives of news outlets (stage 2), the researchers will also endeavor to ensure gender representation.

## ANALYSIS

- Thematic analysis will be done after all the data have been collected. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data.”
- The first step of the analysis is the reading and re-reading of the transcripts. The data will then be categorized into groups while relevant points are noted.
- The next step is to come up with broader themes relevant to the research topic.
- A review of whether the themes are logical and distinct from each other follows.
- The fifth step is to identify the “essence” of what the themes are about. (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 92).
- The final stage is the write-up or the narrative of the entire process.



## KEY ISSUES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### Philippines

1. Poor government response
2. Economic difficulties due to mobility restrictions
3. Slow vaccination rollout
4. Press conferences are mostly virtual
5. Cost of RT-PCR testing is discouraging journalists



## GLOBAL SCOPE OF THE CRISIS

### Philippines

1. Coverage is mostly focused on local angles due to the local audience, but touches on global issues when it came to vaccine rollout.

## CRISIS NARRATIVE

### Philippines

1. Heavy dependence on government sources – IATF.
2. Research mostly confined to Google searches

## MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

Philippines

High – especially regarding vaccines



## LEGITIMACY

### Philippines

More trust on health experts than on Duterte and political appointees and military people overseeing the response

## POTENTIAL RISK

### Philippines

- a. Fear of going out to cover and bring Covid-19 home
- b. Journalists getting used to working from home and going out only for major coverages
- c. Difference between city and provincial journalists



**THANK YOU!**



**GRJH**