

IVI Institute

Fertility Barometer

UAE

COUNTRY REPORT **OCTOBER 2026**

Research conducted by GfK, a NielsenIQ company

Published by IVI Institute in partnership with ART Fertility



About the study

The IVI Institute Fertility Barometer

Fertility is an urgent social and public health issue, yet it is still discussed with little evidence on what people themselves think, want and fear. The IVI Institute Fertility Barometer was created to close that gap.

The study examines how people think about fertility, parenthood and family formation, and the barriers that shape reproductive decisions today. It was conducted by GfK, a NielsenIQ company, in collaboration with the member brands of IVI Institute and spans nine countries. Participating brands: IVI Fertility, Everleap Fertility, ART Fertility, Genera, Create Fertility, LIVIO, and TRIO Clinics.

This report sets out findings for the UAE and what they reveal about the future of family planning and motherhood.

IVI INSTITUTE Global leader in reproductive medicine

200+

locations in 15 countries

5

basic research centers

100+

babies born every day

Methodology

STUDY POPULATION

Women aged 19–49 years old
UAE (~3.1M)

SAMPLE SIZE

1,506 interviews

SURVEY DATES

June 17 – July 2, 2026

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nationally representative sample, with quotas on age and region

METHODOLOGY

Online interviews (Computer Assisted Web Interviews)

MARGIN OF ERROR

±2.53 percentage points at the 95% confidence level
(p=q=50%)

Executive summary – the intention gap

Women still want children, but they start later and have fewer children than they wanted

01 ASPIRATION

Motherhood is still a mainstream goal — 92% of women 19–49 are already mothers or want to be mothers and 89% say it is an important goal

02 THE GAP

Women start later and have fewer children than they wanted — 30% start later than desired, by about five years on average, and want 3.3 children against the 2.1 they have

03 ACCELERATION

The age of first child has significantly increased over the last 3 decades — From 22 years old to 27 years old at the time of first child, this increase is the result of a mix of the age of intent increasing, as well as a further delay experienced beyond what women intended

04 WHY LATER

The delay is circumstantial, not a change of heart — women point to finding the right partner, feeling ready and money issues as reasons to wait to start having children

Executive summary – the support gap

The toll is heavy and support is valued

- 05 **INFERTILITY**
Infertility reaches one woman in six — 500k have experienced it, ~180k face it now
- 06 **SECONDARY INFERTILITY**
It also strikes after a first child — 6% (~190k) struggled to conceive again after having had a baby
- 07 **STIGMA**
The silence has lifted — 91% say they would discuss the issue with family and friends if they had fertility issues
- 08 **EMOTIONAL TOLL**
The toll is heavy and widely felt — 65% of women who experienced infertility rate the impact at 7 or higher out of 10, and during treatment 82% report negative emotions against 70% positive
- 09 **SUPPORT GAP**
Psychological support is wanted — 92% rate it 7 or higher in importance, 75% were offered it during treatment

Executive summary – the treatment gap

Few women who face difficulty conceiving ever reach fertility care

10 CONSULTATION

Women who suffer infertility do seek help, and early — 77% who experienced it consulted a professional, at 27, after 17 months of trying

11 TREATMENT GAP

IVF works, but few women reach it — only 67% receive any treatment and 14% start any IVF

12 BARRIERS AND BURDEN

Navigating fertility treatment is as much about trust and information as it is about cost — 96% of women who have experienced infertility cite reasons other than costs, with 78% highlighting lack of trust and information as barriers to treatment

13 OPPORTUNITY

Reproductive medicine can reverse the trend — 20% say UAE faces a fertility crisis, and treatment can help the ~180,000 women facing infertility now build the families they want

The UAE fertility picture in eight numbers

IVI Institute Fertility Barometer – UAE · 1,506 women aged 19–49

92%

Are mothers or want to be mothers and 89% consider motherhood an important life goal

30%

Have a child later than desired — and these have an average delay of about five years

3.3 → 2.1

children wanted versus children had — a shortfall of 1.2 per woman

500k
women

one in six have experienced infertility; ~180,000 are affected right now

14%

of women who experienced infertility in the past had any IVF treatment, despite the fact that 77% did consult a healthcare professional

96%

cite barriers other than cost to access treatment, with 78% focusing on lack of trust and information

65%

report a significant negative impact; 75% were offered psychological support during treatment, which 92% rate as important

3.3

fertility rate if every woman experiencing infertility now had a baby (180k)

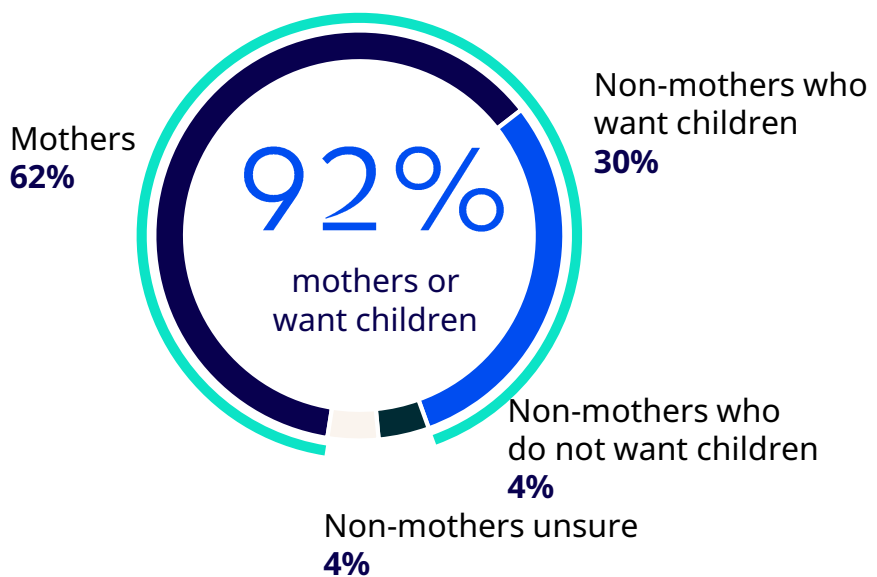
Family formation: aspirations vs. reality

01

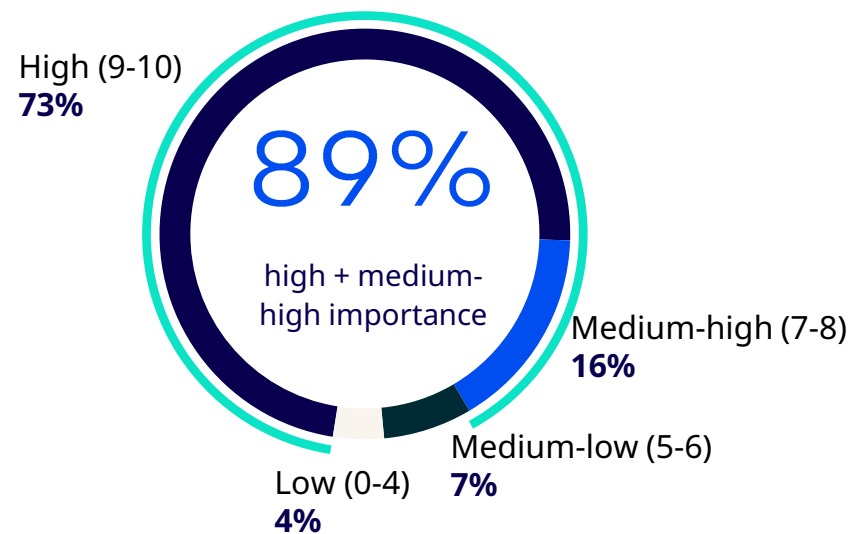
Motherhood remains a strong aspiration

9 in 10 women in the UAE are already mothers or want children, and 89% say motherhood is an important goal

Current motherhood status
% of women (n=1,506)



Importance of becoming a mother
% of women (n=1,506)



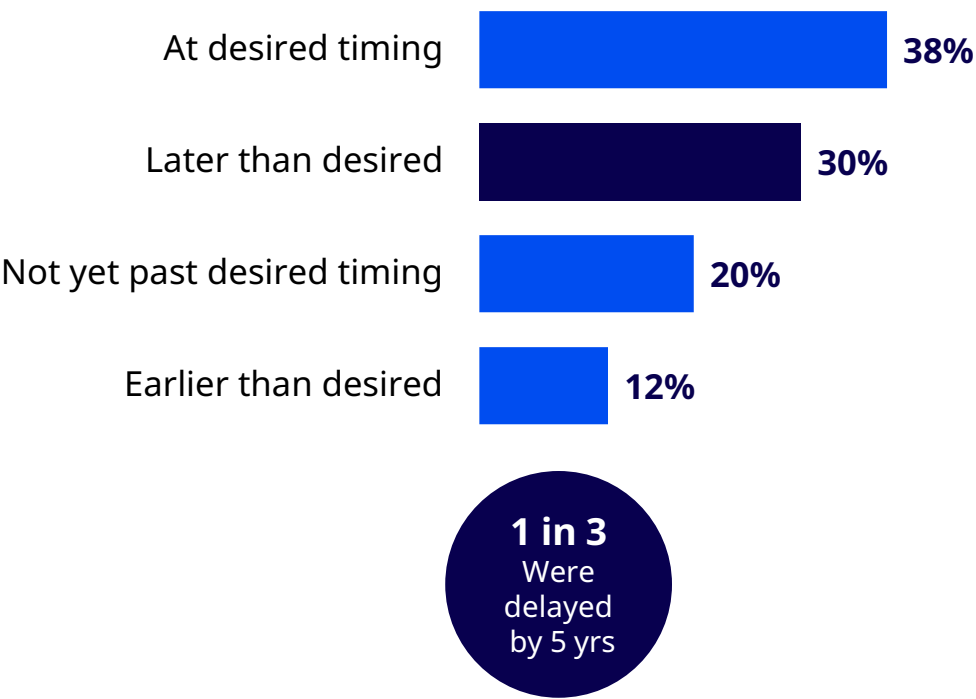
[Q] Thinking about the future, would you like to have more children?
[Q] Thinking about the future, would you like to have children?
[Q] How important is becoming a mother to you?

Later and fewer children than intended

Despite their strong desire for motherhood, their plans don't always turn out as intended

Timing of first child

% of women who have target age (n=1,160)



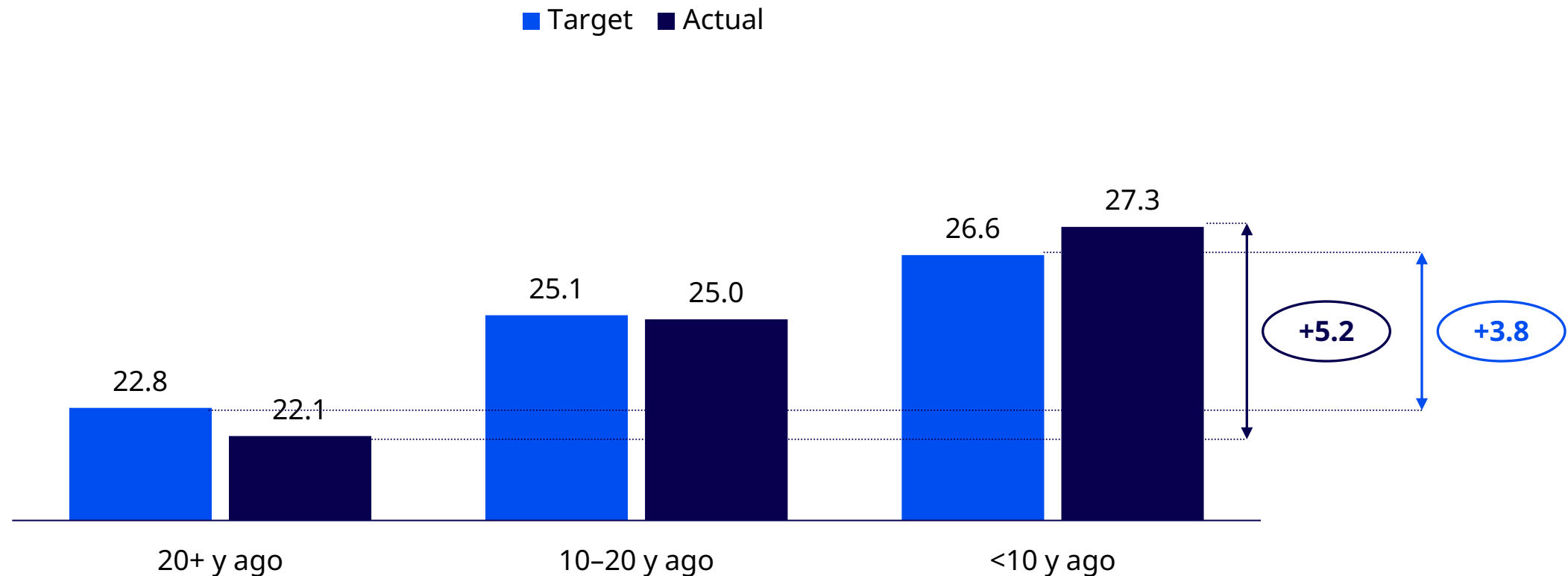
INTENDED VS. ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	GAP
CHILDREN PER MOTHER Mothers (n=926)	3.3	→ 2.1	1.2 fewer
AGE AT FIRST CHILD Age at first child — pregnancy in the past 10 years and reported an ideal age (n=435)	26	→ 27	1 yr later
AGE AT FIRST CHILD Later-than-desired group (n=322)	26	→ 31	5 yrs later

[Q] At what age would you like to or would you have liked to have gotten pregnant for the first time?
[Q] At what age did you get pregnant?
[Q] How many children would you like to have in total, including those you already have?

The increase of age at first child is accelerating

From 22 years old to 27 years old at the time of first child, this increase is the result of a mix of the age of intent increasing as well as this intent being realized even later than women wanted it to

Age at first child Target vs actual age, by time since having a baby (mothers n=775, by age group)

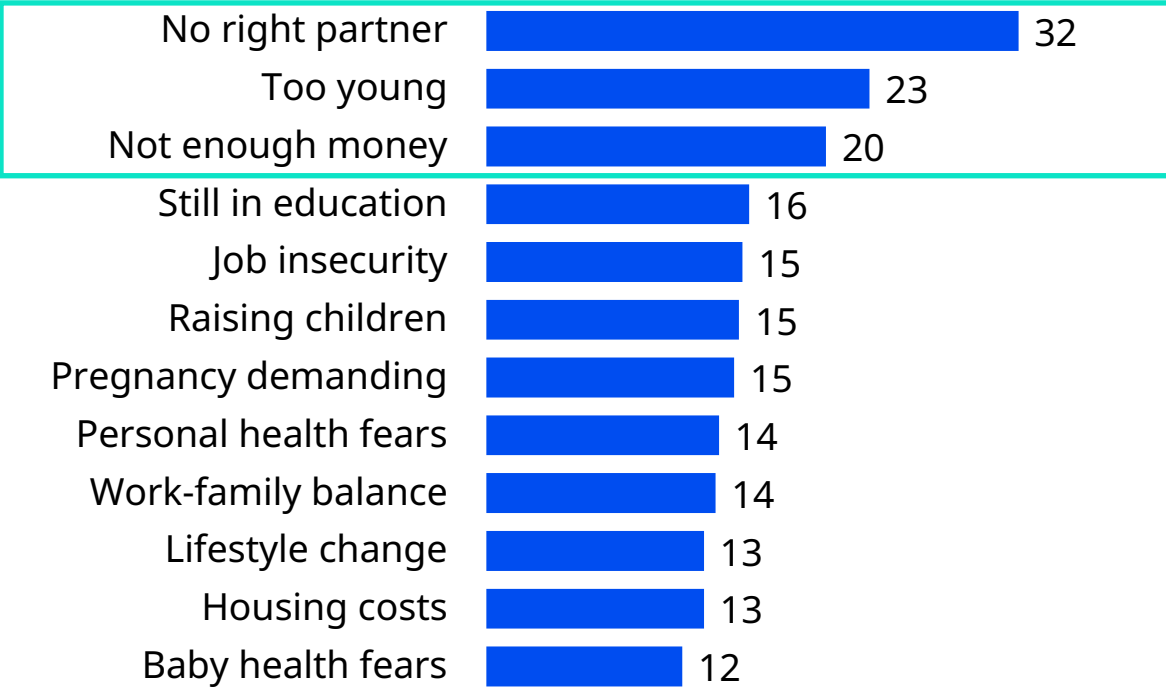


The delay is circumstantial, not intentional

The gate is readiness — a partner and money, not desire

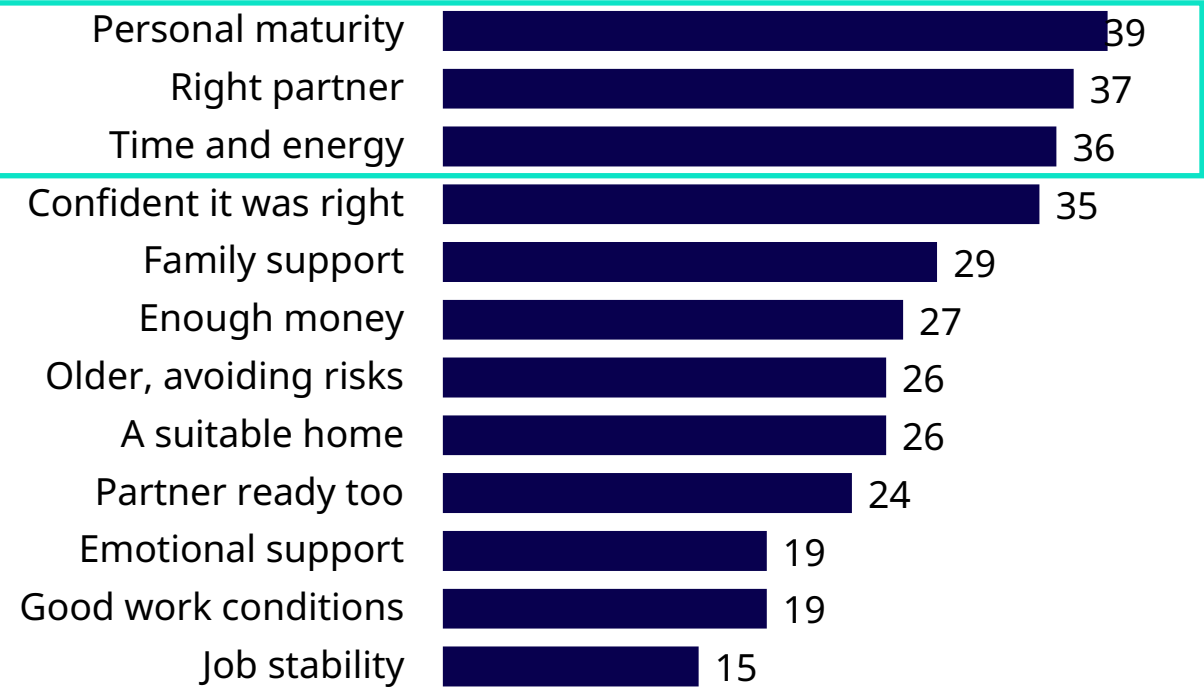
Reasons they have not had children

Still waiting to become mothers, % | n=520



What made it the right time

Already mothers or pregnant, % | n=968

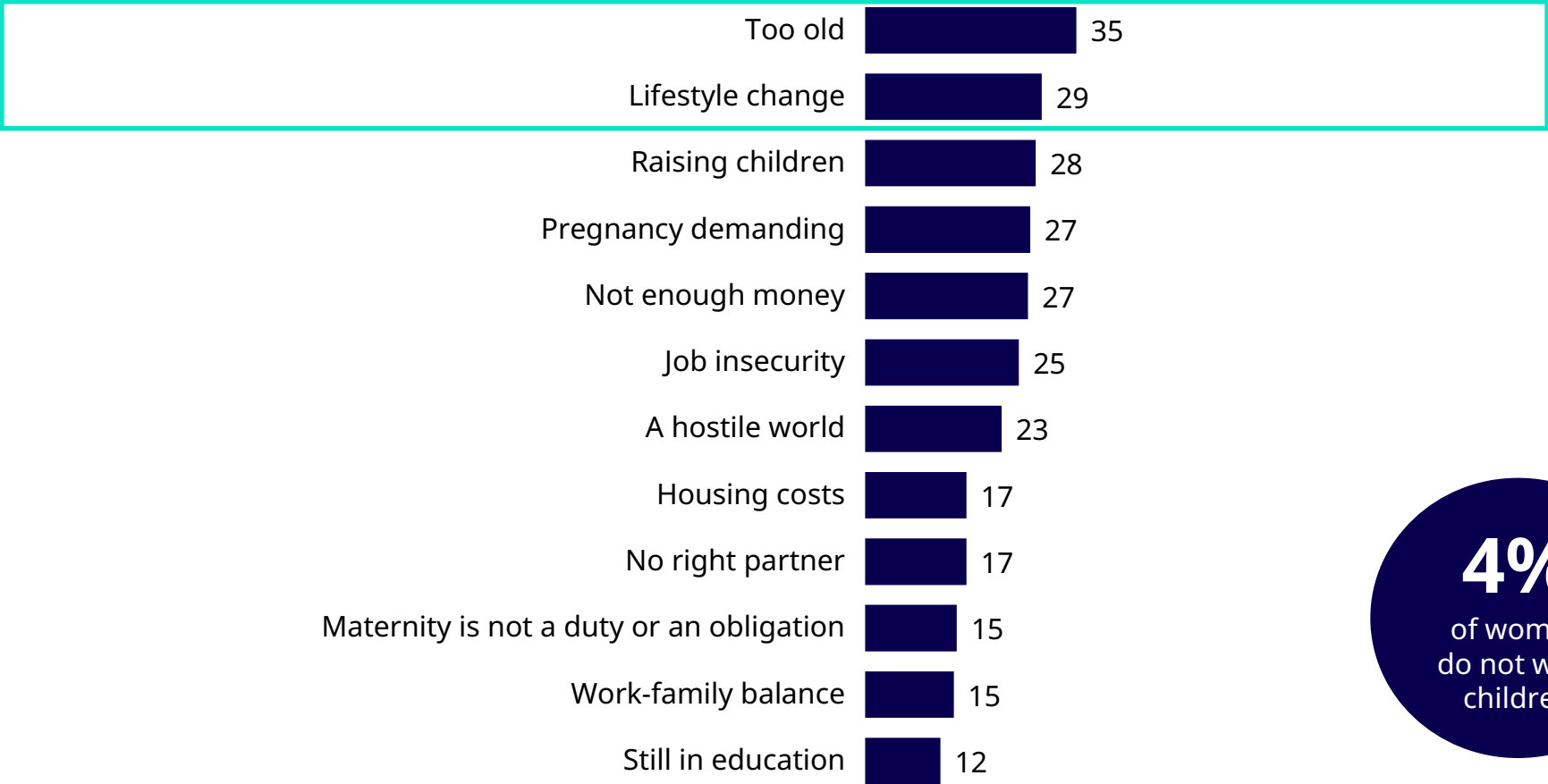


It is about identity, not obstacles

Among women who don't want children, age and lifestyle outweigh practical barriers

Reasons not to become mothers

% of women (n=60*)



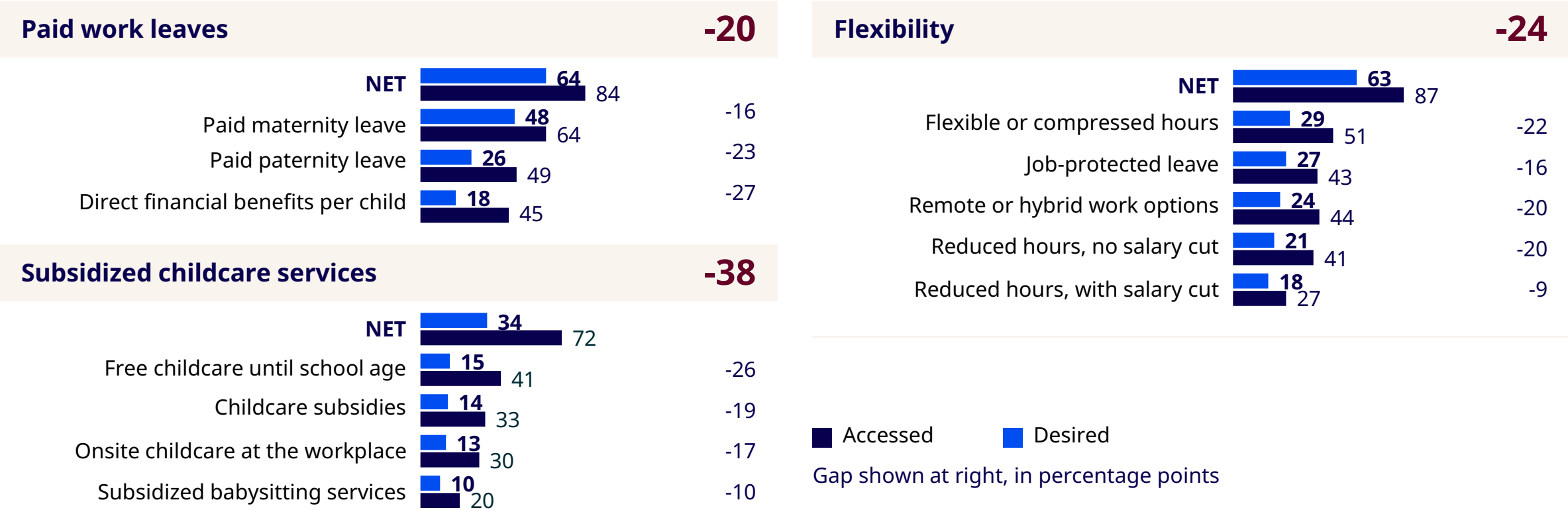
4%
of women
do not want
children

*Small base
Top 12 responses shown per question
[Q] What are the reasons why you do not want to have children in the future?

Leave is solved, flexibility and childcare are not

Mothers report significant shortfalls in access to childcare support and flexible work arrangements

Access vs. desire for family benefits
% of mothers (n=926)



Experiences with trying to conceive

02

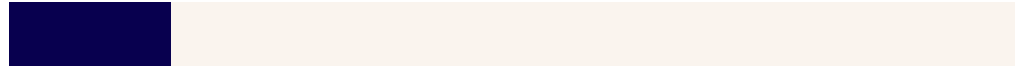
One in six women have faced infertility

One in six women in the UAE have experienced infertility; 6% are experiencing it right now

16% Lifetime infertility prevalence

500k women

have experienced infertility at some point



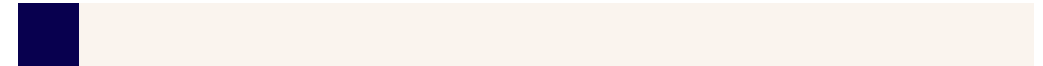
16% Yes

84% No

6% Last 12 months infertility prevalence

~180k women

are experiencing infertility right now



6% Yes

94% No

Secondary infertility accounts for 38% of cases

~190,000 women in the UAE have faced infertility after a previous pregnancy; ~70,000 are affected now

Lifetime — ever experienced

500k

16% of women in the UAE aged 19–49

Last 12 months — experiencing now

180k

6% of women in the UAE aged 19–49

Primary infertility

~310k

10% — unable to achieve a first pregnancy

Primary infertility — experiencing now

~110k

~4% — trying now without success, no previous pregnancy

Secondary infertility

~190k

6% — unable to achieve another pregnancy

Secondary infertility — experiencing now

~70k

~2% — trying now without success after a previous pregnancy

The silence has largely lifted

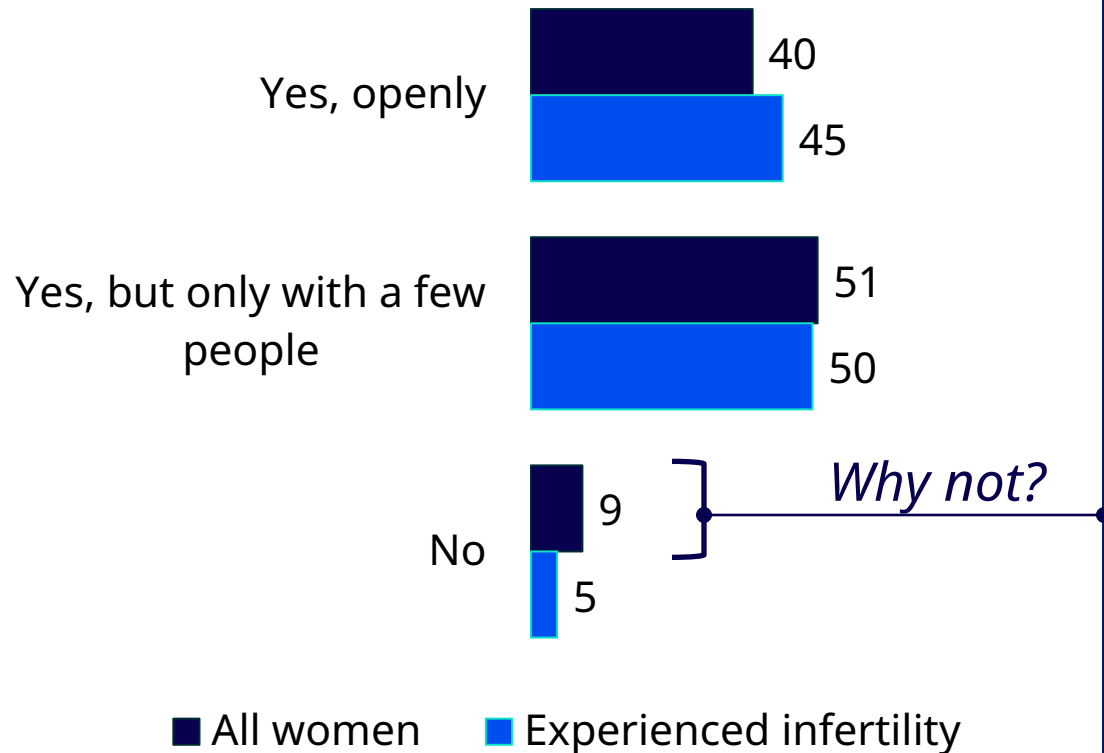
Social acceptance of fertility conversations appears high, with 91–95% of women willing to discuss it

Willingness to discuss fertility problems

% of women in a relationship with a male partner (n=1,171)

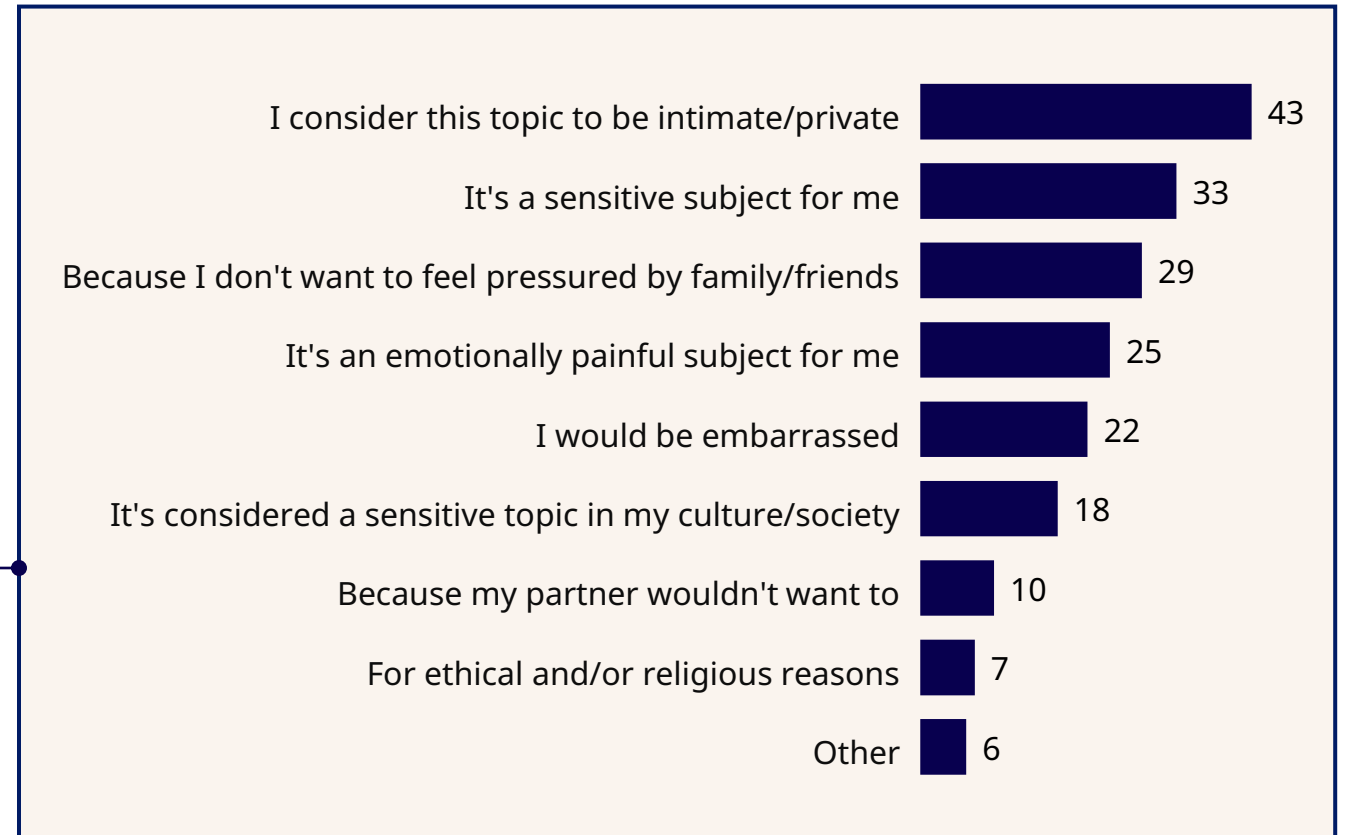
% of women in a relationship with a male partner

who have experienced infertility (n=241)



Reasons for not talking about it

% who would not talk (n=108)



Emotional and financial impact of fertility challenges

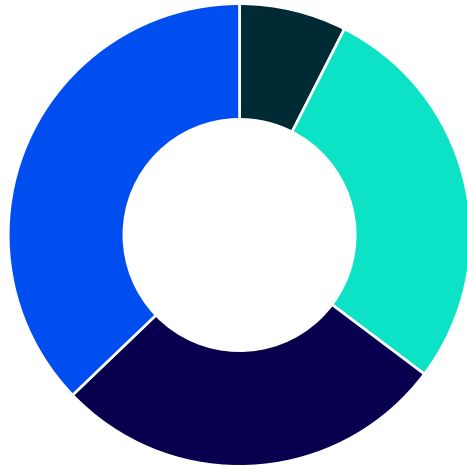
03

Women who have experienced infertility report a significant negative impact on their lives

Impact of fertility challenges

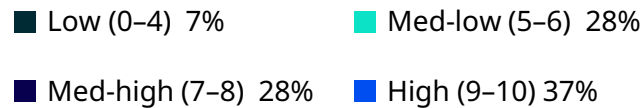
% who tried to conceive for 12 months without success (n=167)

0 = has not impacted me at all • 10 = has impacted me extremely negatively



65%

rate the impact of fertility challenges
at 7 or higher out of 10

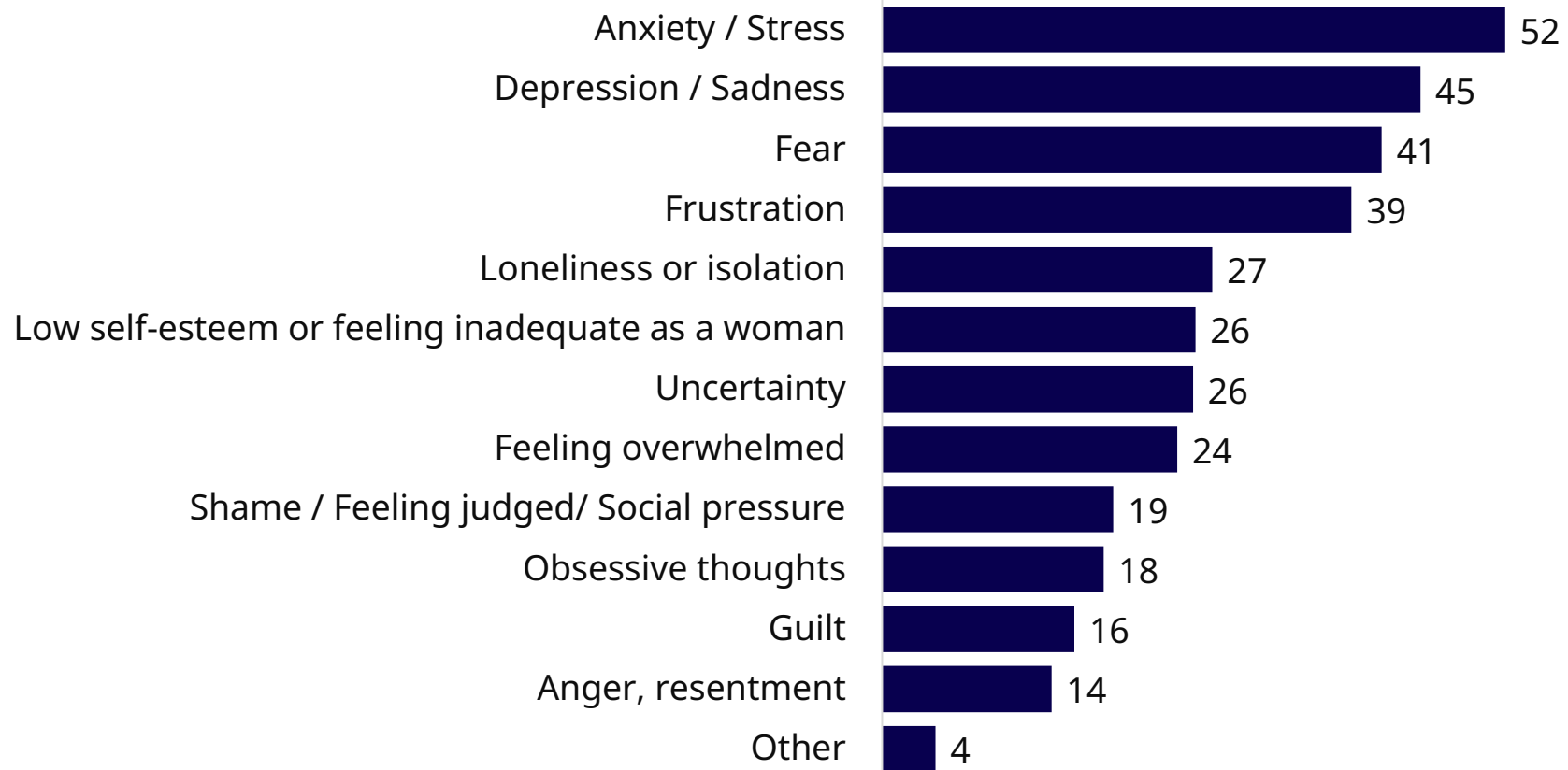


Emotions before care: getting pregnant

Fertility challenges generate a broad spectrum of emotional responses

Emotions experienced

% of women who have experienced infertility (tried to conceive for 12 months without success)
or had contact with healthcare professional (n=234)

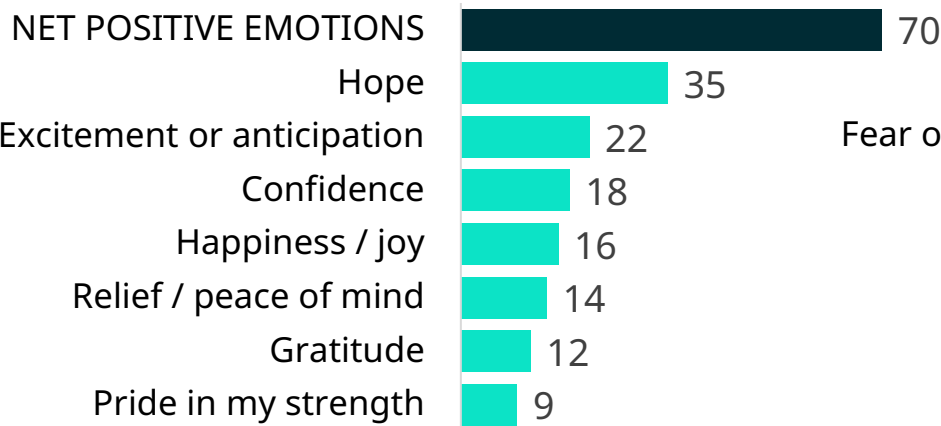


Emotions during care: fertility treatment

The fertility treatment journey is emotionally demanding, although hope remains a central part of it

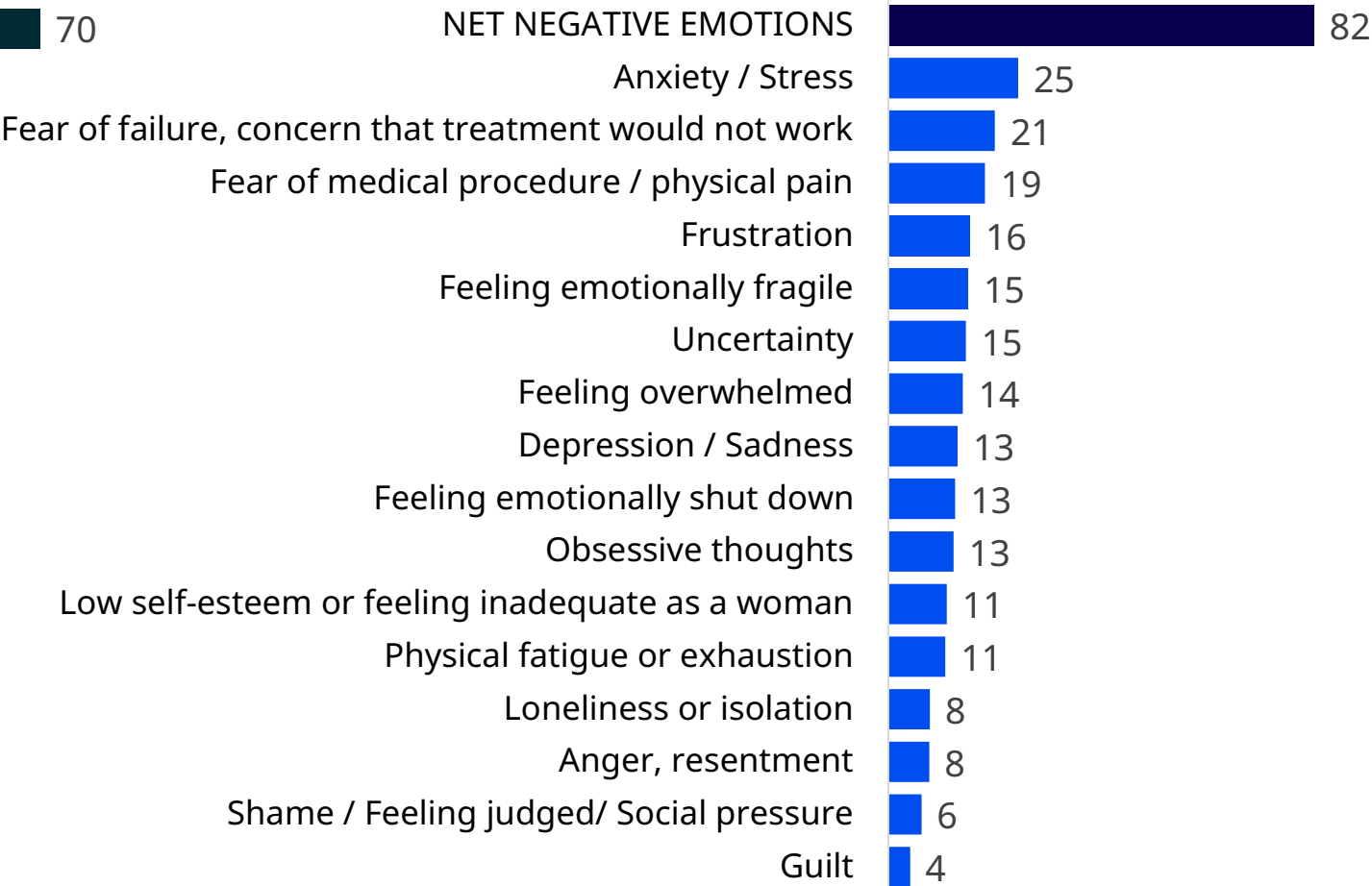
Positive emotions

% who received care (n=509)



Negative emotions

% who received care (n=509)

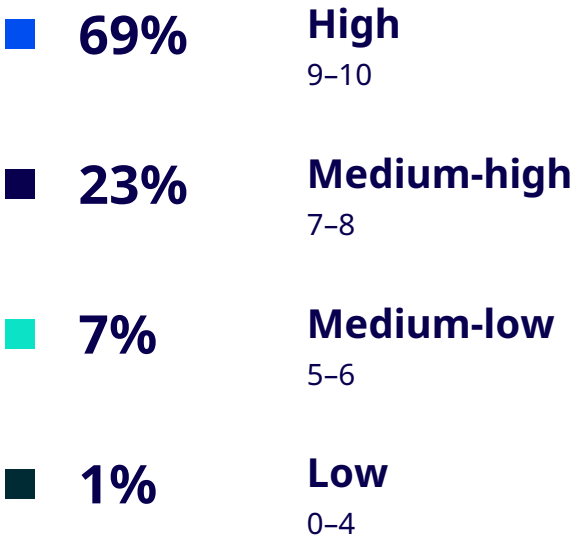
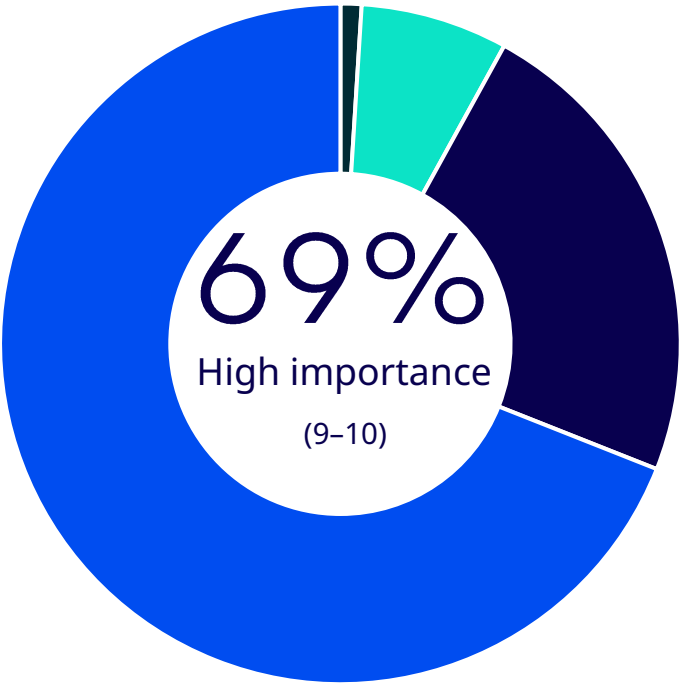


Importance of psychological support

Women view psychological support as a core component of fertility treatment

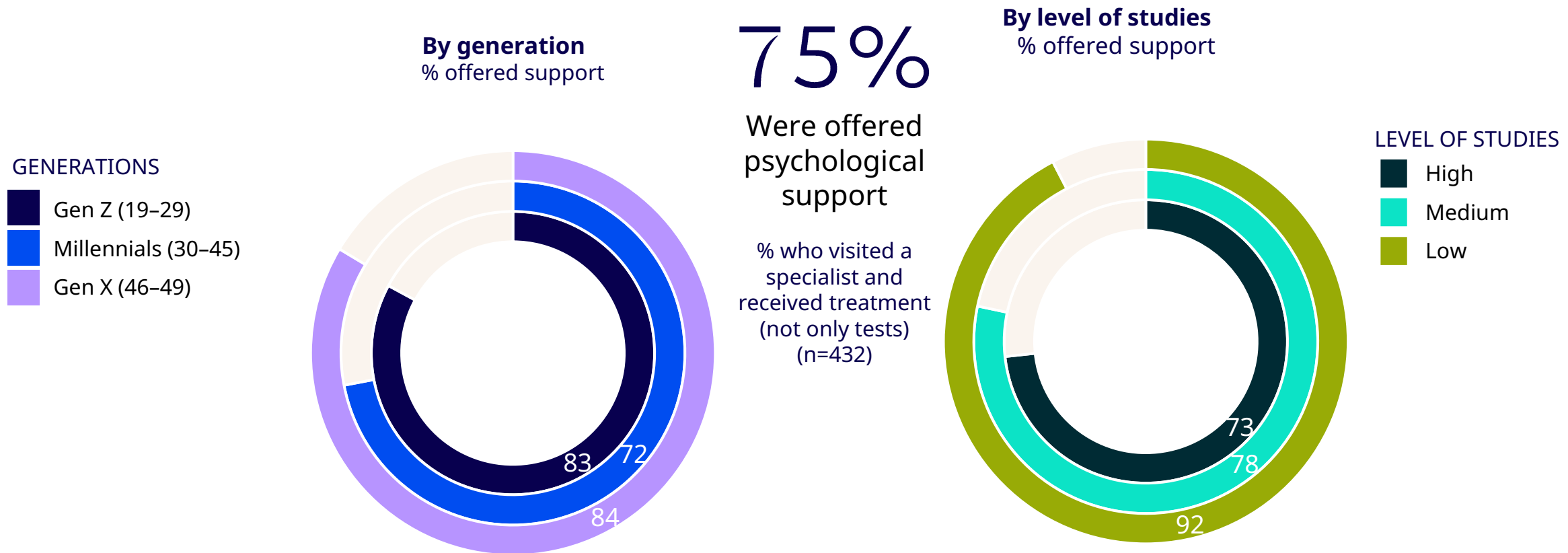
Importance of psychological support offered by the clinic

% who visited a specialist and received treatment (not only tests) (n=432)



Availability of psychological support in the clinic

Three in four women report being offered psychological support. Access is notably higher among Gen Z and X women and women with lower level of studies



Financial burden is the heavier stressor

Nearly half of women who received care report a high financial burden, while one in three feel men take fertility less seriously

Financial burden

45%

of women who received care — nearly one in two — report a high financial burden from procedures, medication, travel and lost income during fertility treatment

Perceived male engagement

33%

of women in the UAE believe men take fertility health less seriously than women; 42% think men take it more seriously

Fertility care and treatment pathways

04

Medicine leads, but not all roads are medical

Medical pathways lead the consideration set, but alternative family-building options also matter for a meaningful share of women in the UAE

Preferred medical pathway

% of women in a relationship with a male partner (n=1,171)

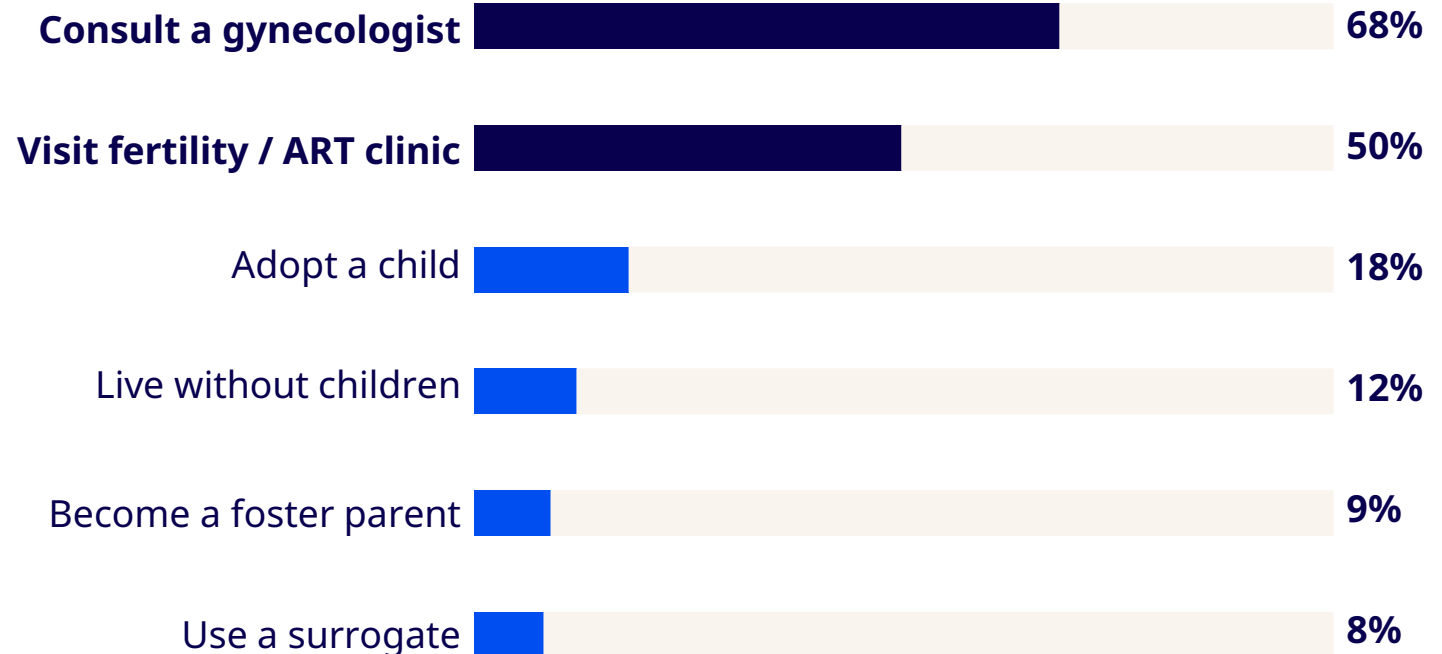
85%

would consider a gynecologist or fertility clinic

NET of the two medical options

Specific options they would consider if faced with infertility issues

% of women in a relationship with a male partner (n=1,171)



Women do consult, and they consult early

The vast majority of women who have experienced infertility (77%) contacted a healthcare professional

Consulted a healthcare professional

% of women in a relationship with a male partner (n=1,171)

% of women in a relationship with a male partner who have experienced infertility (n=241)

Have you ever consulted a doctor or other healthcare professional to discuss ways to help you get pregnant?

All women

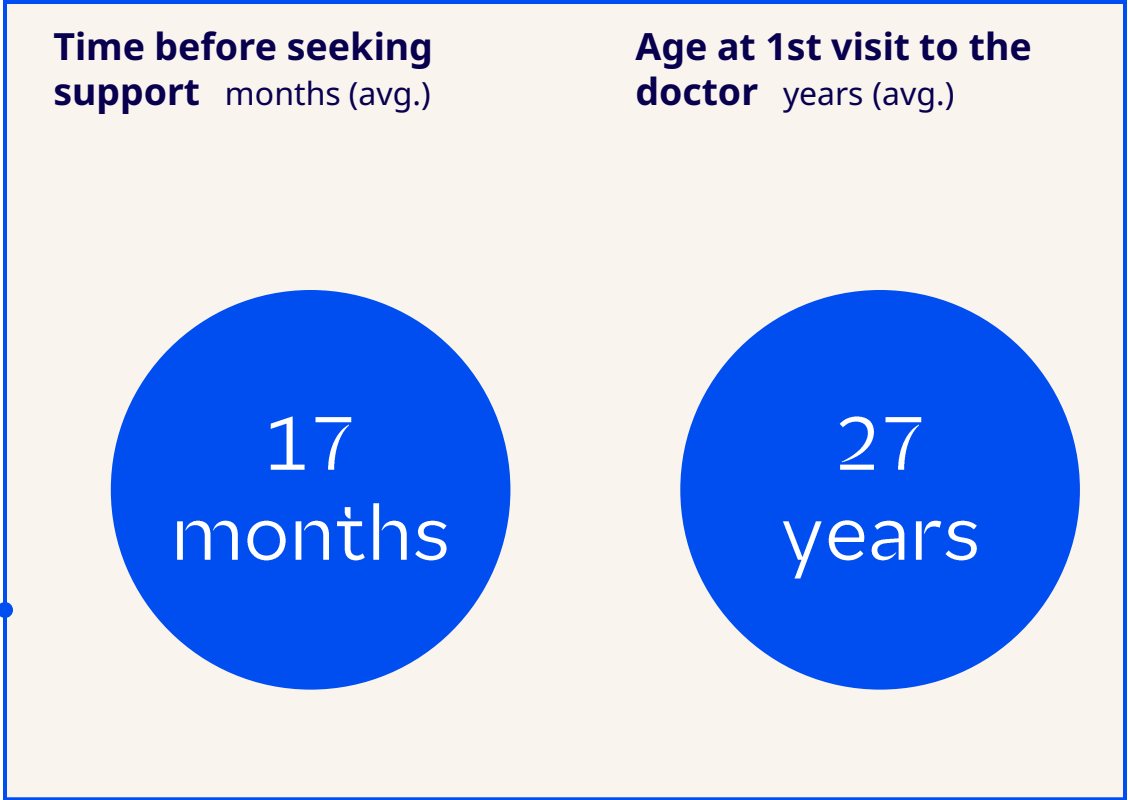


50%

Women who have ever experienced infertility



77%

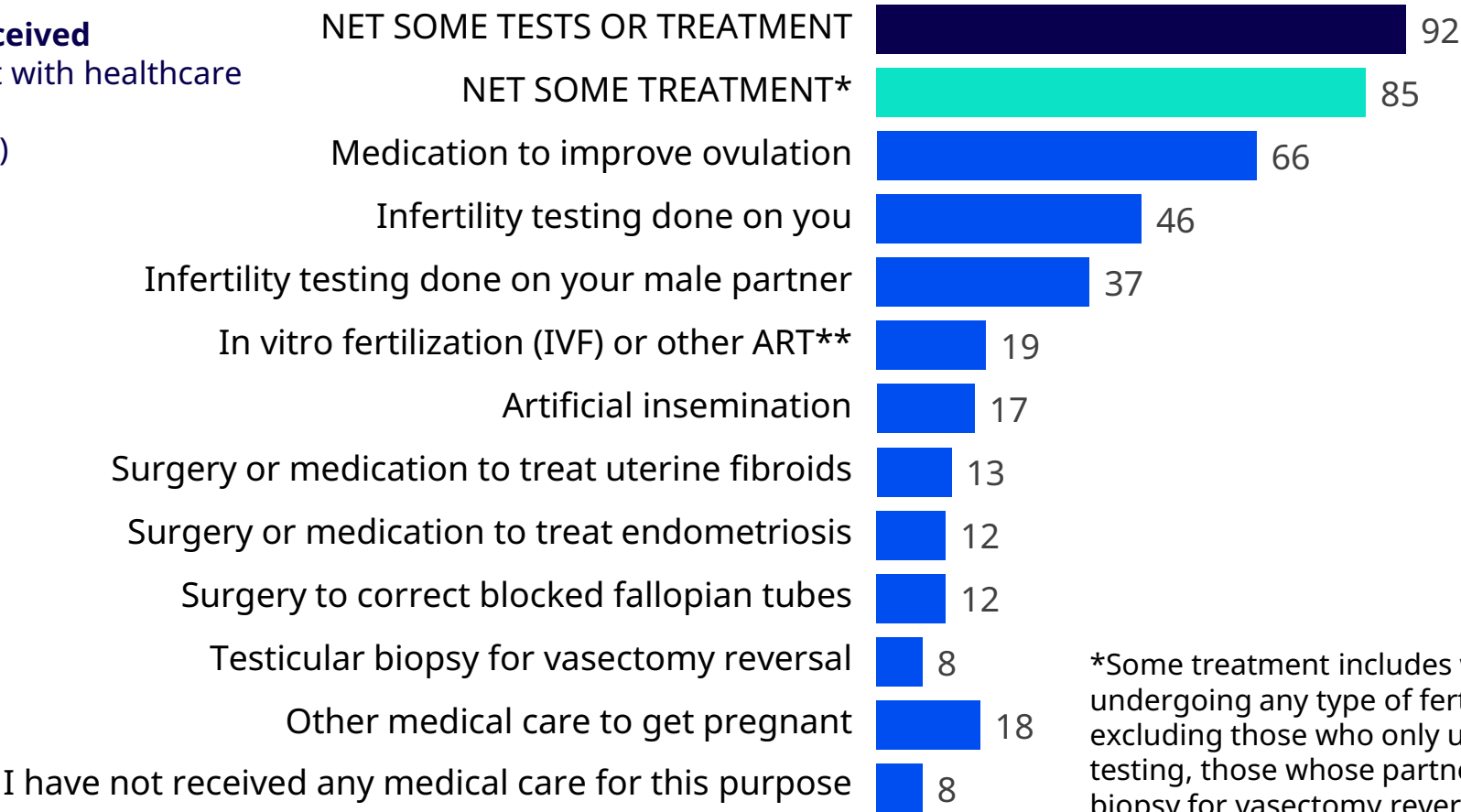


Services and treatments received

85% of women who ever experienced infertility and consulted a healthcare professional received some treatment

Services and treatments received

% of women who had contact with healthcare professionals and have ever experienced infertility (n=186)

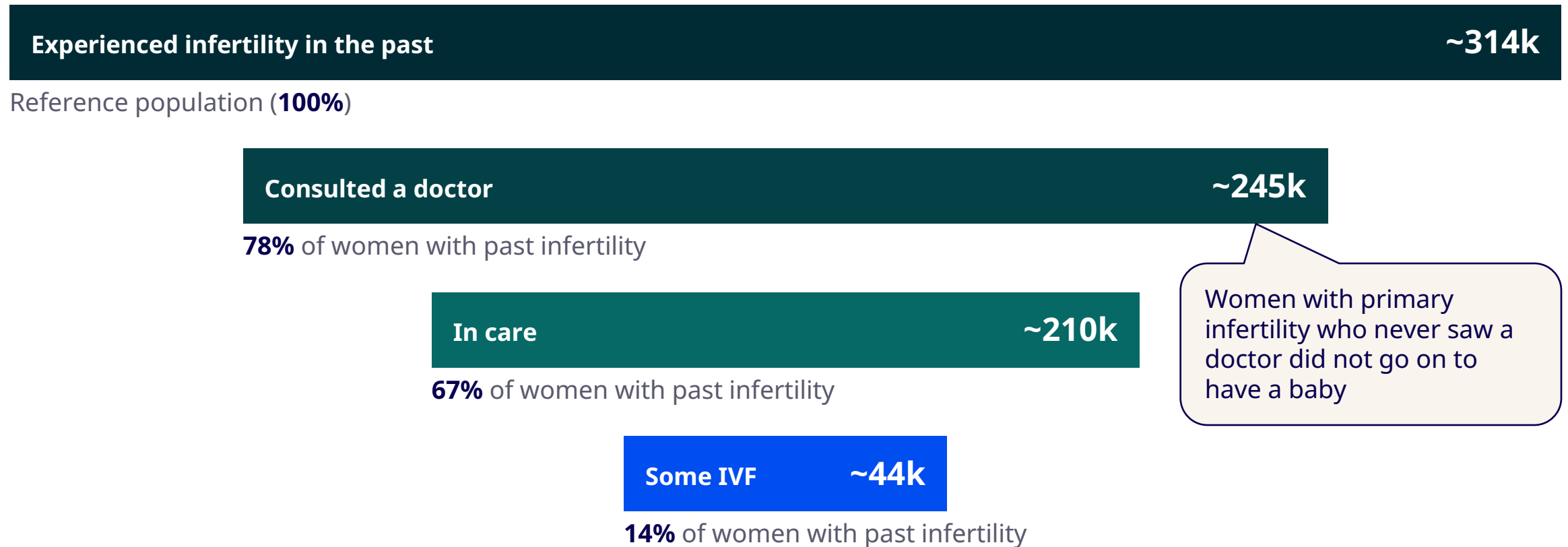


*Some treatment includes women who reported undergoing any type of fertility treatment, excluding those who only underwent fertility testing, those whose partner only had a testicular biopsy for vasectomy reversal, or those who reported only "Other" treatments.

**ART: Assisted Reproductive Technology
Base: [Q] Think about all the medical care you or your partner(s) have received throughout your lives to help you get pregnant. Which of the following services have you received?

78% of women with past infertility consult a doctor, but only 67% start any treatment

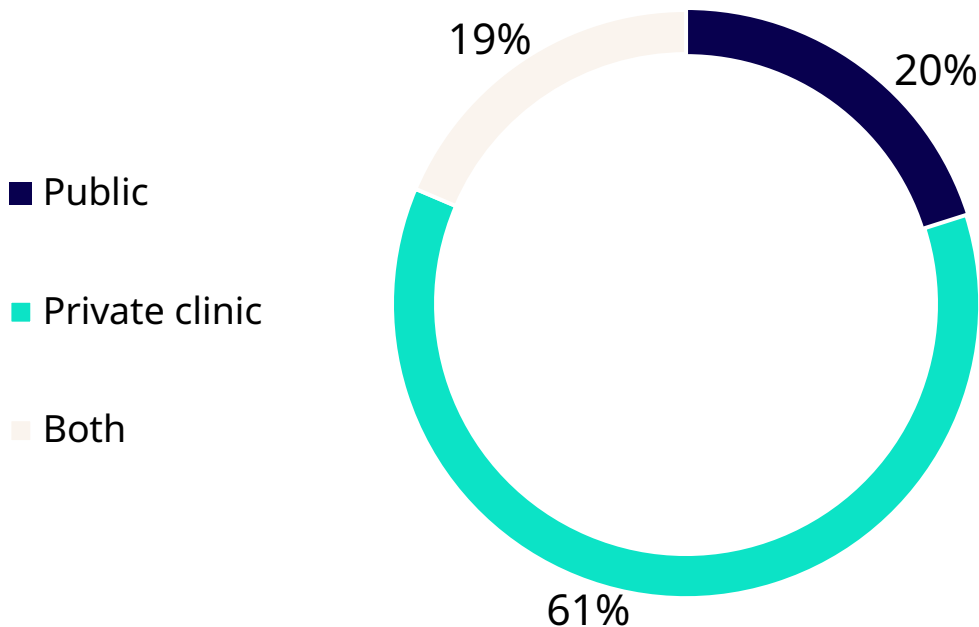
Only 14% of women who experienced infertility in the past underwent IVF



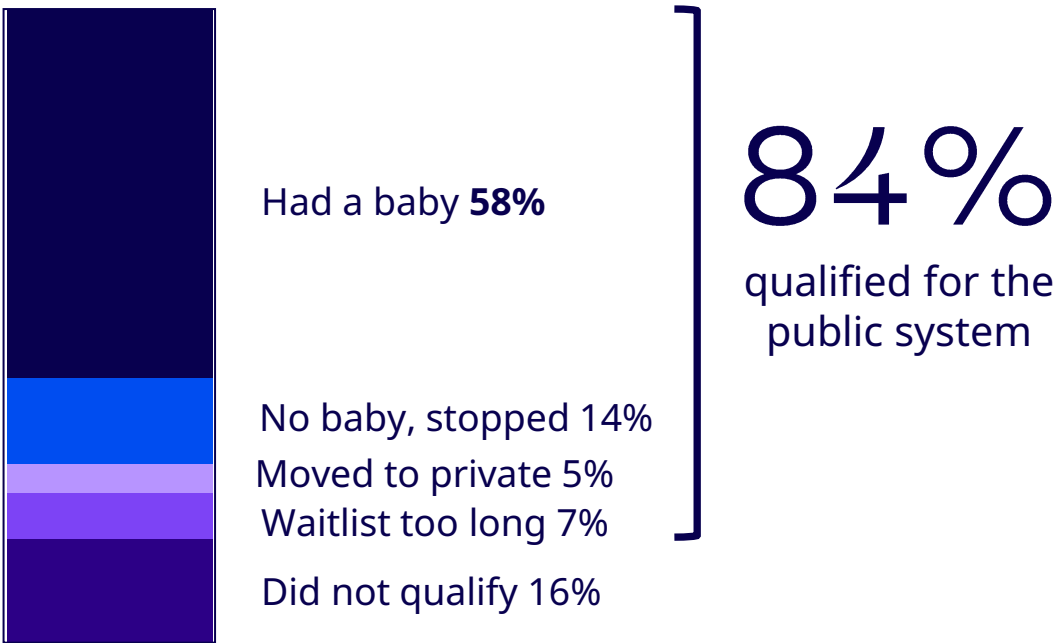
Public vs private medical care

Private care is the main entry point: 61% go private only, 39% use the public system. Among those who used it, 58% had a baby; 16% did not qualify and 7% found the waitlist too long

Where have you looked for medical care to get pregnant?
Contact with healthcare professionals (n=589)



Were you able to access assisted reproduction treatments through public health insurance?
Contact with the public system (public or both) and has received medical care (n=191)

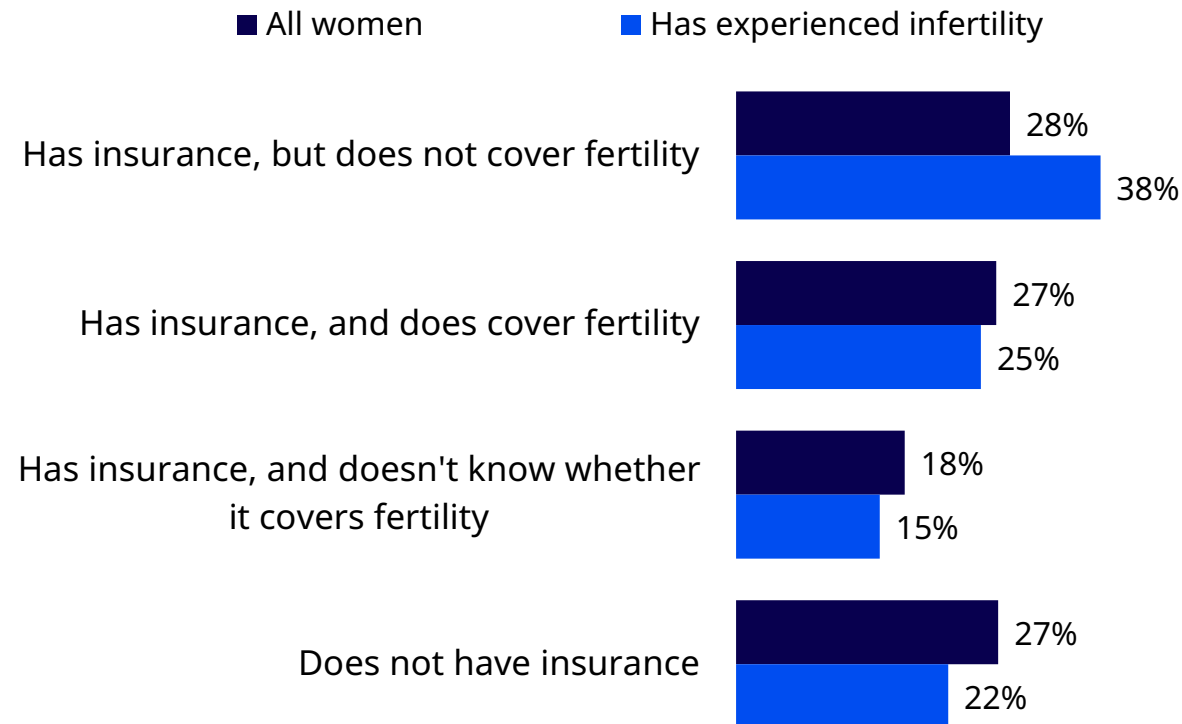


25% of women who have experienced infertility have insurance that covers fertility today

Insurance coverage today

% of all women (n=1,506)

% of women who have experienced infertility (n=241)



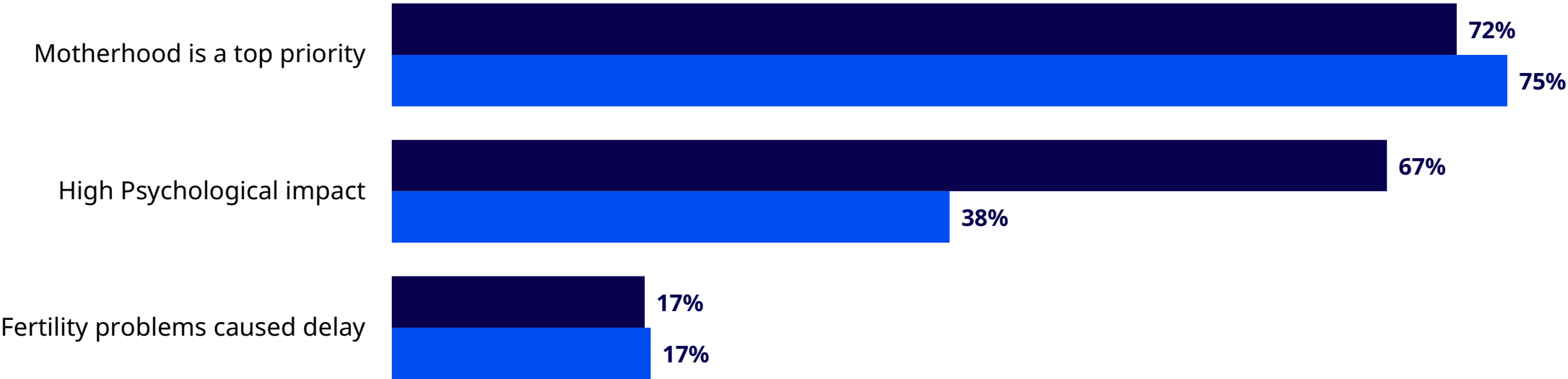
Education reveals two distinct fertility journeys

Women with lower secondary education or below report greater emotional impact

Differences by education level

% of women

■ Lower secondary education or below ■ University educated



WHAT THIS MEANS

Earlier, accessible support for women with lower secondary education or below

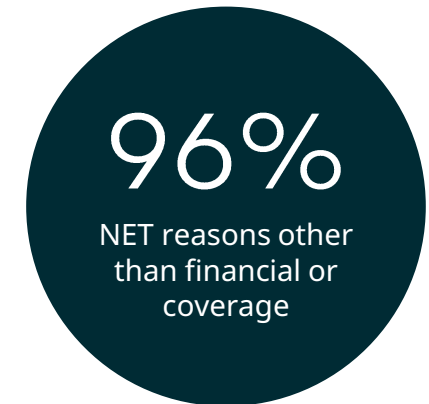
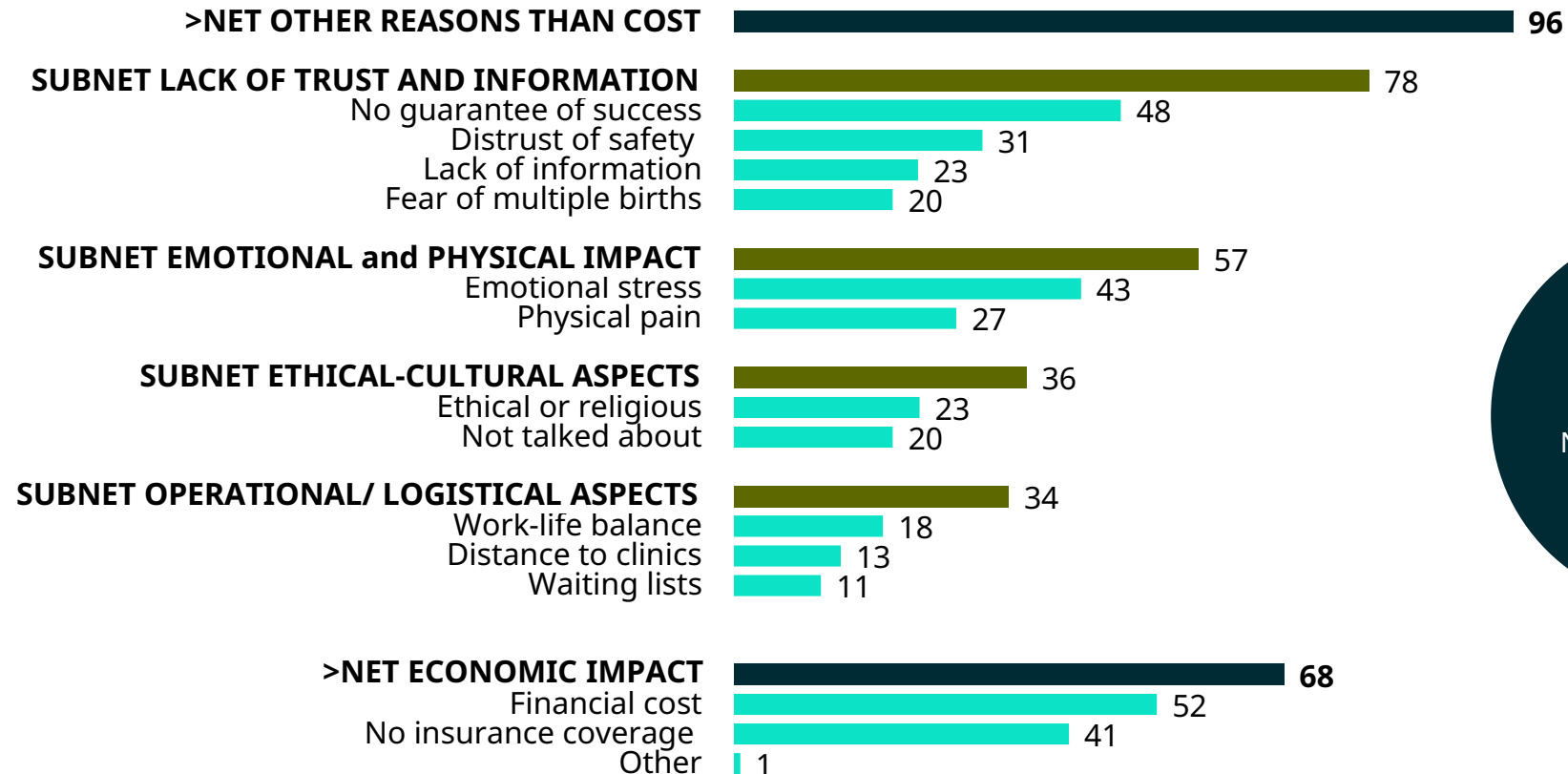
Planning information and fertility guidance for university-educated women

Navigating fertility treatment is as much about trust and information as it is about cost

96% of women who have experienced infertility cite reasons other than costs, with 78% highlighting lack of trust and information as barriers to treatment

Women who have experienced infertility

(n=241)



Treatment works, but few women get there

Almost eight in ten women who experience infertility ask for help, but only one in seven ever start IVF, and 96% point to reasons beyond cost

77%

They do ask for help

of women who have experienced infertility consulted a professional — on average at 27, after 17 months of trying

14%

Few start treatment

of women who experienced infertility in the past went on to start any IVF treatment

96%

The barriers are not only cost

cite reasons beyond cost — trust and information, emotional toll, logistics

77% ask for help, 14% reach IVF. Alongside cost, women point to trust, information, and emotional load as barriers to treatment

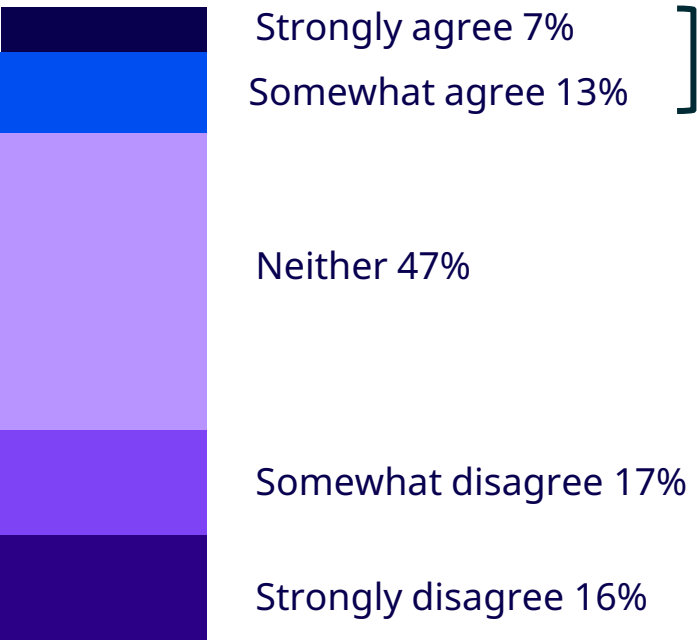
Societal implications of fertility dynamics

05

Perceived fertility crisis

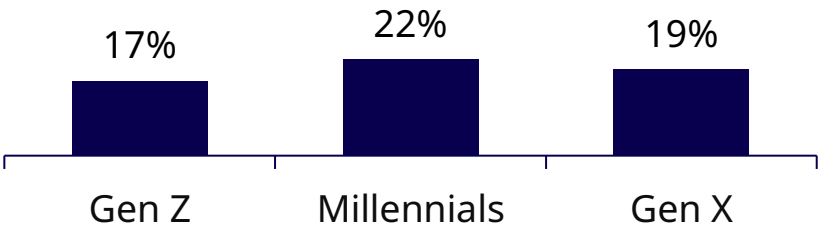
2 in 10 women in the UAE see a fertility crisis — millennials are the most convinced

Level of agreement
% of all women (n=1,506)



20%
agree UAE is facing a
fertility crisis
**Agree = strongly +
somewhat**

By generation
% who agree



**Millennials are +2 pts above Gen
X and +5 above Gen Z**

More expect to need ART than have used it

About 6% of Abu Dhabi's babies were born through any ART in the latest available regional data (2023), while 15% of UAE women planning a future pregnancy expect they will need fertility treatment

Latest available data from Abu Dhabi Emirate

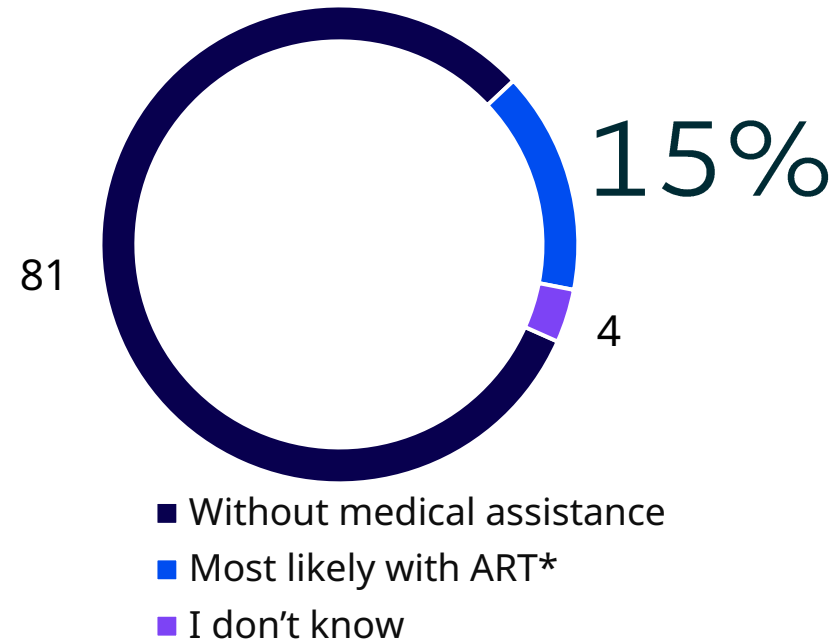
Share of live births conceived through ART (2023)

≈ 6.0%

An estimated 1,800 infants**
were born through ART in Abu Dhabi in 2023

Expectations for a future pregnancy

How expect to conceive in the future (n=873)

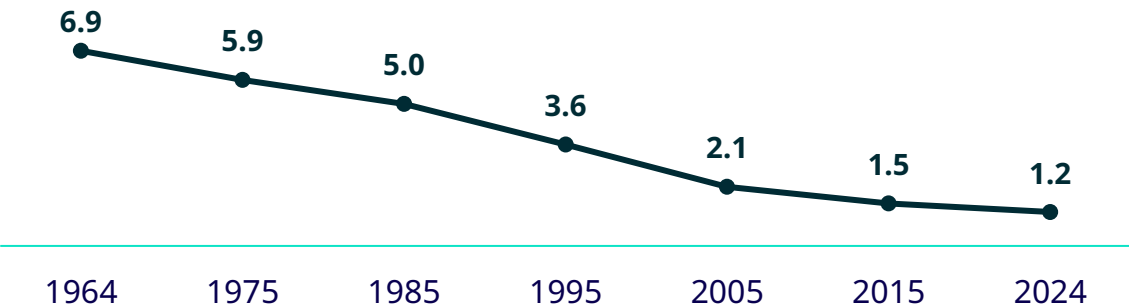


*ART: Assisted Reproductive Technology | Sources (left): Department of Health – Abu Dhabi. There is no official exact number of ART births in Abu Dhabi for 2023 — only the percentage. **This figure is an estimation applying the 6% ART share to "more than 30,000" births = ≈1,800. [Q] How do you expect to conceive your next child?

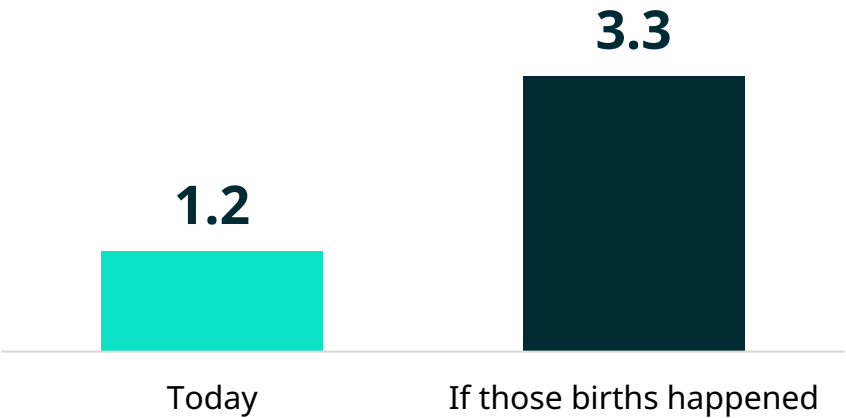
Reproductive medicine can help women achieve the families they want

Fertility rates have been dropping, but reproductive medicine could mitigate this trend by helping the 180k women who are experiencing fertility problems right now build the families they want.

Children per woman in UAE, 1964–2024



Children per woman — today vs if all of those women had a baby



180,000

women in UAE are experiencing infertility right now — 6% of women aged 19–49

