

Public Knowledge and Beliefs Regarding Licensure and Certification of Physician Assistants

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National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, Johns Creek, GA

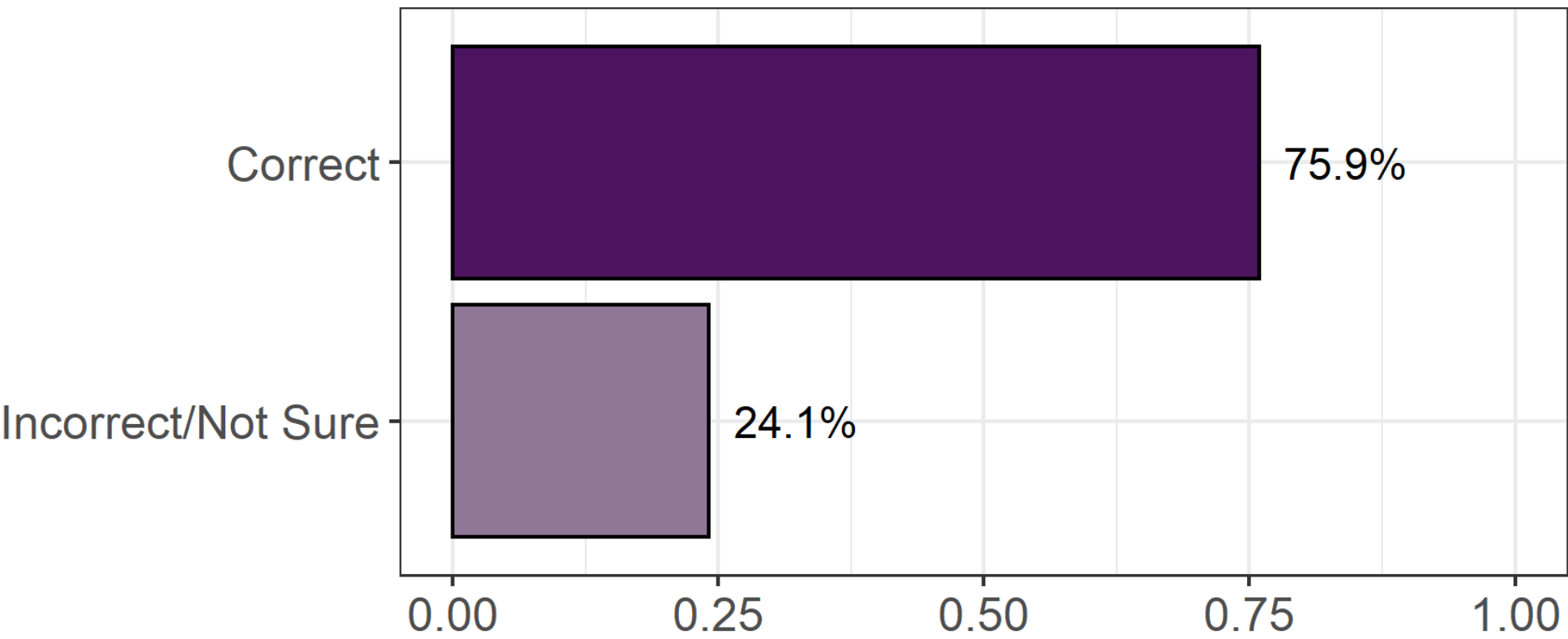
PURPOSE

- The objective of our study was to explore public knowledge and beliefs regarding licensure and certification of PAs and assess differences based on demographics, number of visits to provider in the last year, health status, and health insurance

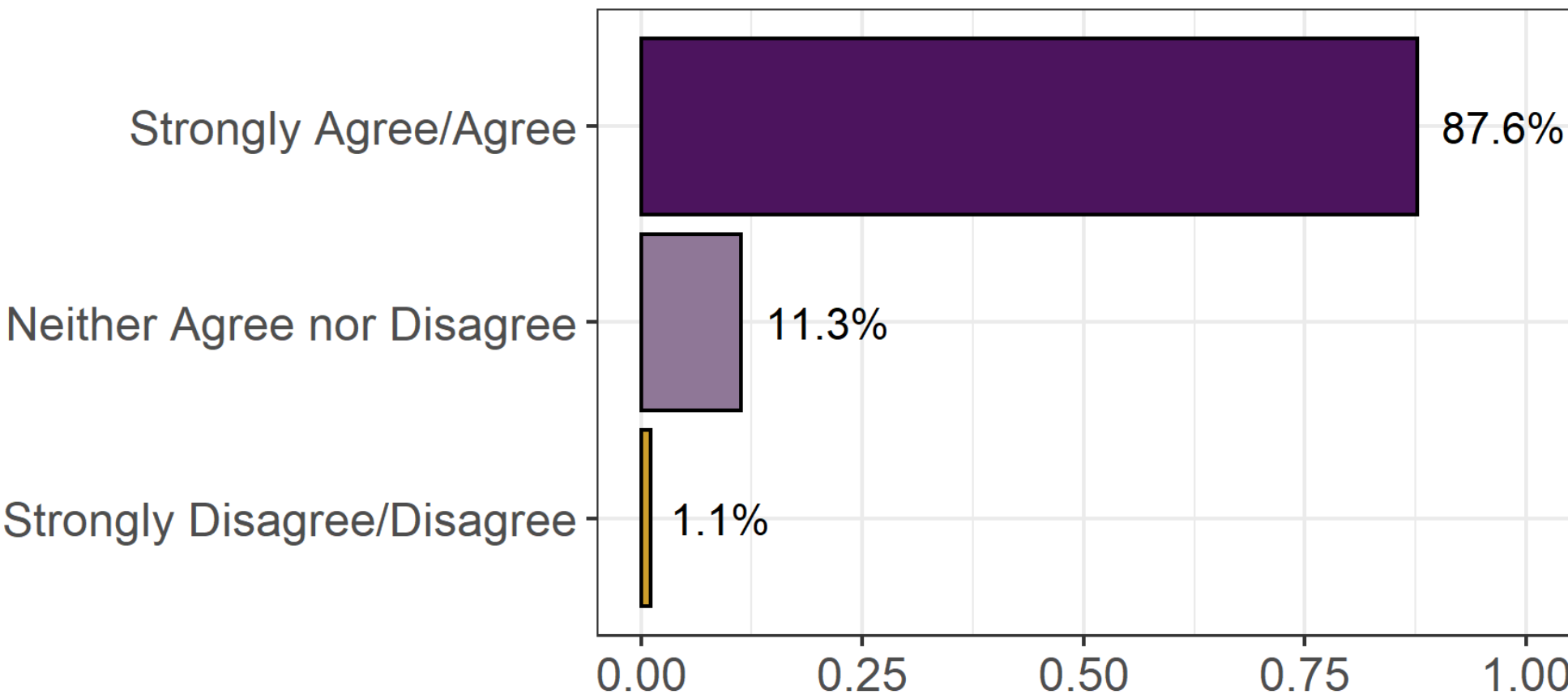
METHODS

- After IRB approval, we conducted an online survey in late 2018 using quota sampling to approximate the proportions in demographics (N=1,388) of the US population
- The survey assessed whether the public knew that PAs must pass a national certifying exam as one requirement for obtaining an initial license to practice medicine and beliefs related to whether PAs are well educated in medicine and should be licensed by state medical boards, continually learn about new medical information, be assessed regularly on their medical knowledge, and be held to the same standards of care as physicians
- Demographic variables were collected as well as number of visits to provider in the last year, health status, and health insurance
- Chi-square tests for independence and post-hoc z-tests for column proportions were used with a Bonferroni correction

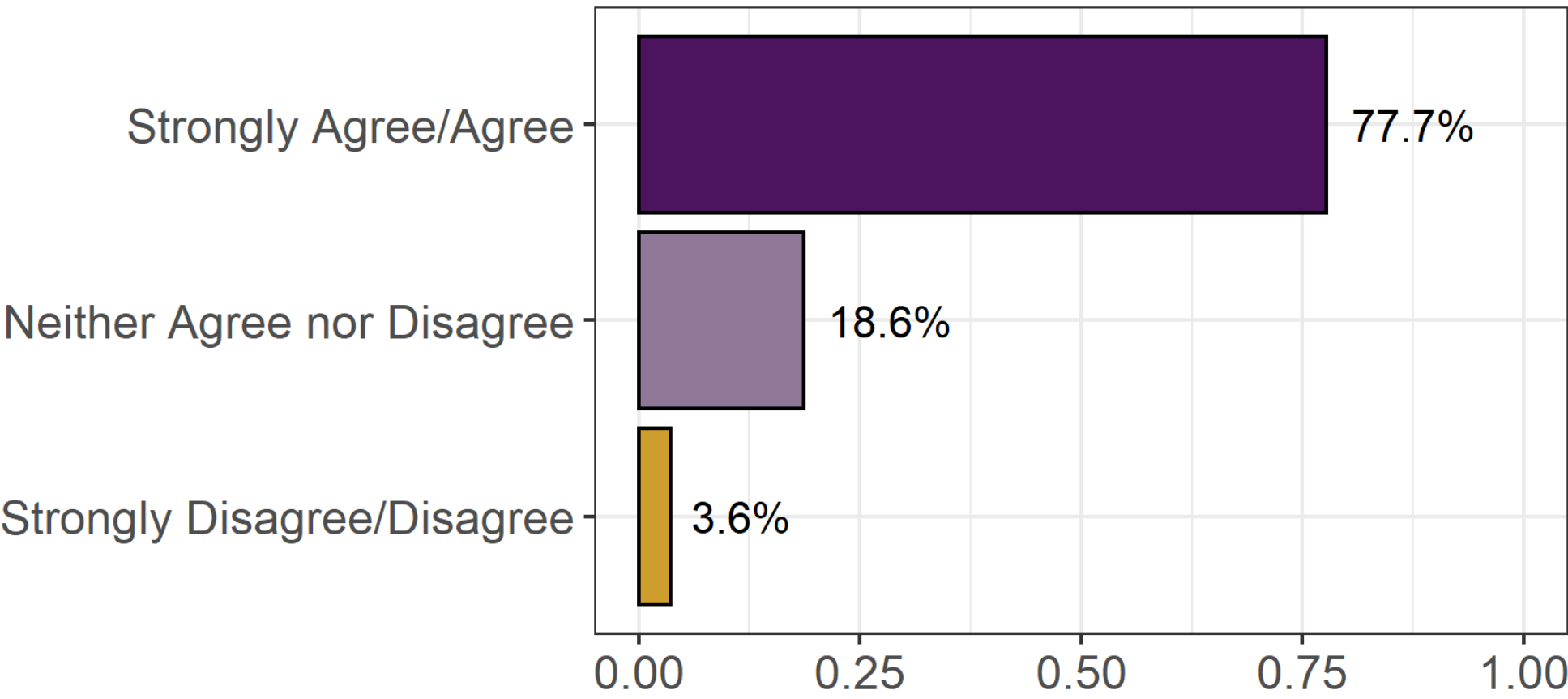
PAs must pass a national certifying exam as one requirement for obtaining an initial license to practice medicine



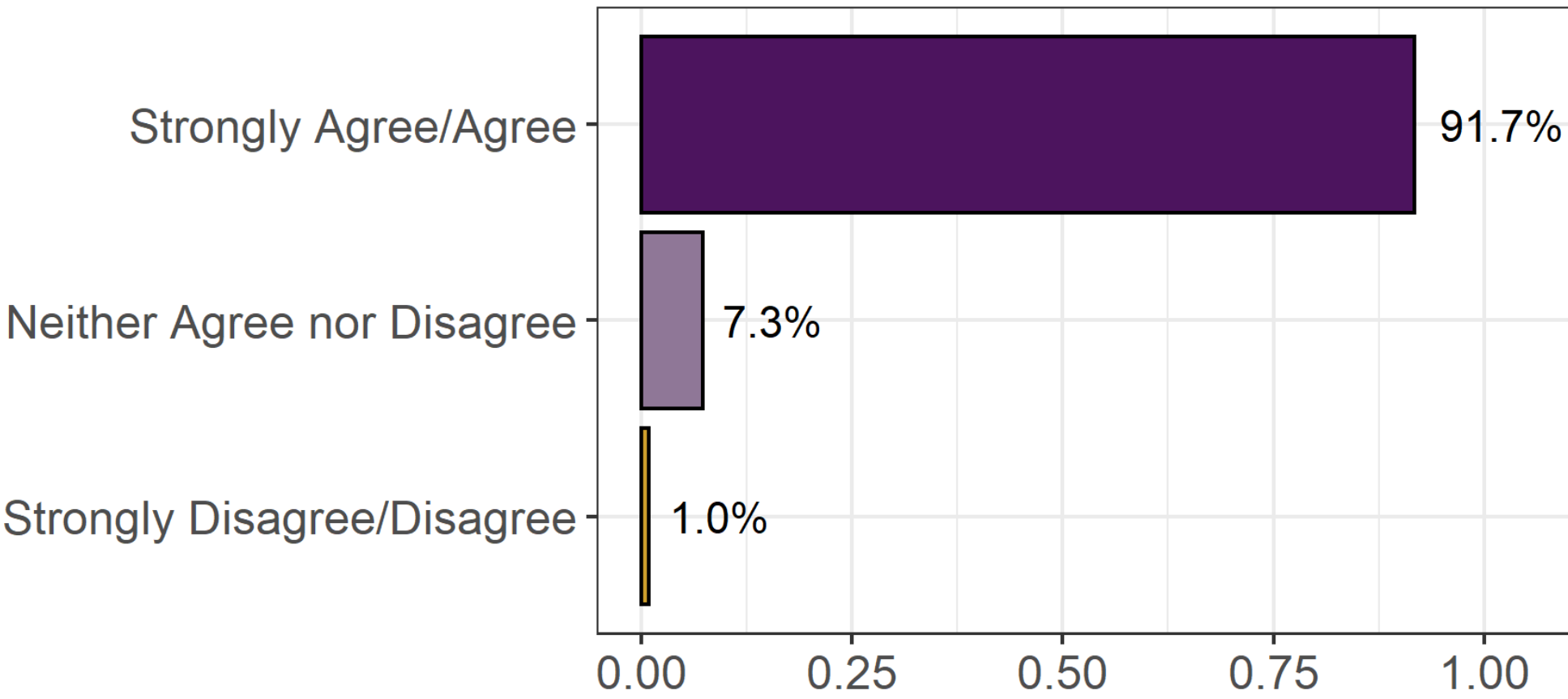
I believe PAs should be licensed by state medical boards



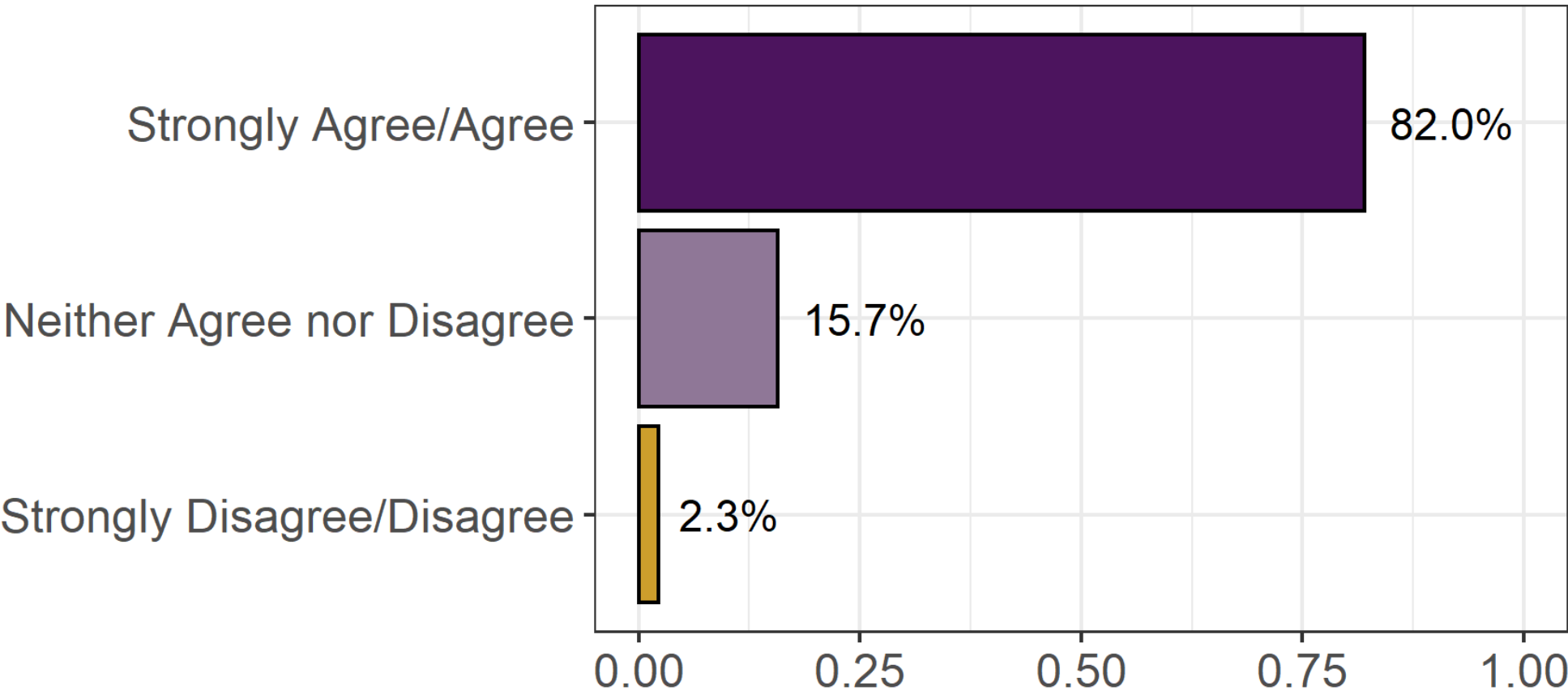
I believe PAs are well educated in medicine



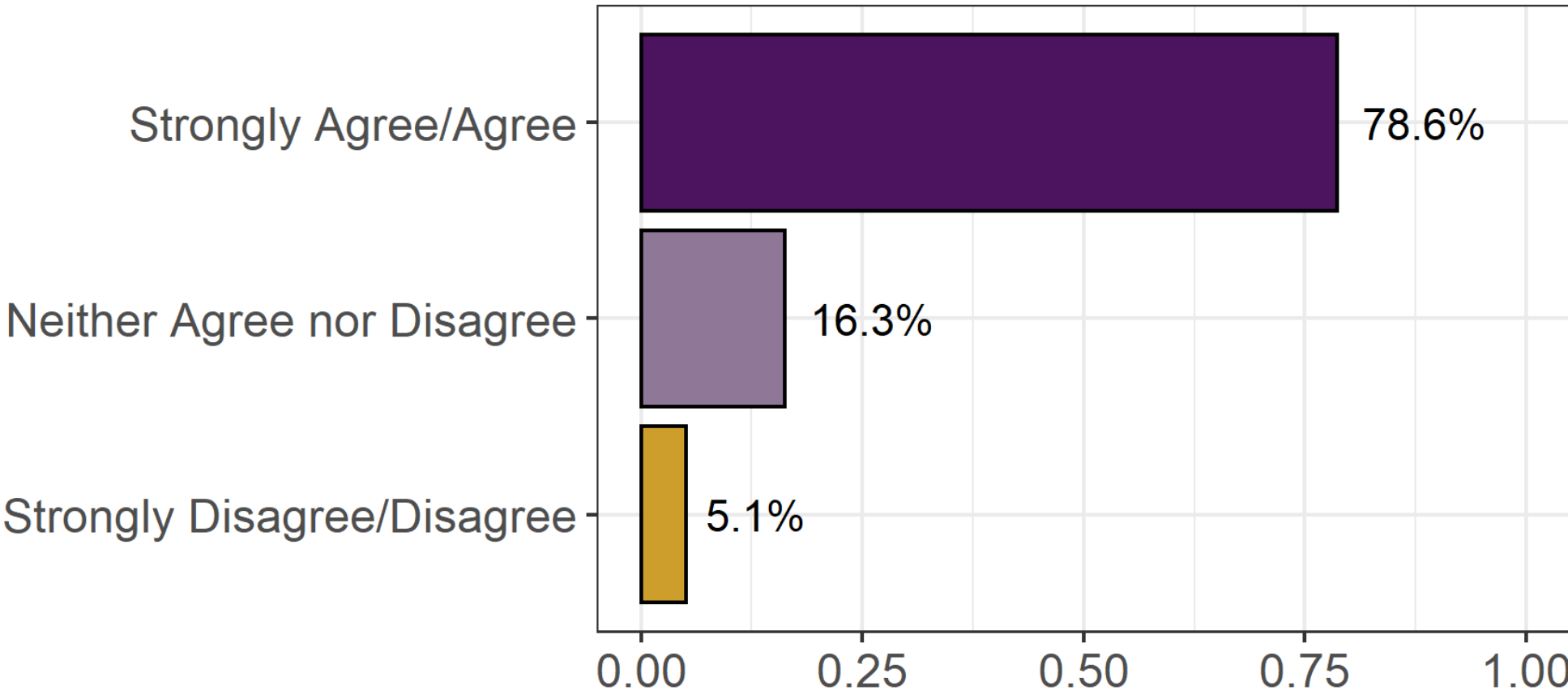
I believe PAs should continually learn about new medical information



I believe PAs should be assessed regularly on their medical knowledge



I believe PAs should be held to the same standards of care as physicians



RESULTS

- Most (75.9%) correctly indicated true to the knowledge item that PAs must pass a national certifying exam as one requirement for obtaining an initial license to practice medicine
- Respondents were more likely to answer correctly if they were aged 65+ compared to 18-34 (p=0.010; 80.2% vs. 70.8%), if they had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to less education (p<0.001; 81.5% vs. 73.0%) and if they had private insurance compared to none or Medicaid (p<0.001; 82.2% vs. 69.3% vs. 65.9%)
- Most agreed that PAs should: be licensed by state medical boards (87.6%), continually learn new medical information (91.7%), be assessed regularly on medical knowledge (82.0%), be held to the same standards as physicians (78.6%) and are well educated in medicine (77.7%)
- Participants 65+ and those with more education were more likely to believe PAs should be licensed, continually learn new medical information, and be held to the same standards of care as physicians
- Public members with more education were also more likely to believe that PAs are well educated in medicine and that they should be assessed regularly on medical knowledge

CONCLUSION

- Evaluating public knowledge and beliefs about PA licensure and certification is important as it informs decision making about healthcare and provides insight for policymakers and medical regulators to use in developing appropriate measures to meet patient expectations for high quality and safe medical care

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