

## **Elective Cosmetic Surgery – Examination of the Patient Experience\***

Prepared for:

American Society of Plastic Surgeons

\*Abbreviated version of full report

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## Background & Objectives

- ✓ **The American Society of Plastic Surgeons commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct a study investigating attitudes and experiences of patients who have undergone elective cosmetic surgical procedures under general anesthesia within the past two years. As a further area of interest and as a point of comparison, the study also explored attitudes and perceptions of patients who have undergone planned medically necessary surgery under general anesthesia within the past two years.**
  
- ✓ **Key objectives of this study were to:**
  - Assess the attitudes and beliefs held by elective cosmetic surgery patients prior to surgery.
  - Explore the level of knowledge of elective cosmetic surgery patients prior to surgery.
  - Investigate levels of communication between doctors, surgeons and patients.
  - Examine patients' experience of post-surgical risks and complications.
  
- ✓ **Results from this study are intended for public release.**

## Sample & Methodology

### ✓ Total sample includes:

- 301 adults who have had an elective cosmetic surgical procedure under general anesthesia within the past two years.
- 316 adults who have had a planned medically necessary procedure under general anesthesia within the past two years.
  - Due to the relatively small incidence of plastic surgery patients in the general population, all respondents who had elective cosmetic surgery under general anesthesia within the past two years were automatically assigned to the elective cosmetic surgery group, even if they had also had medically necessary surgery.
  - Data are weighted to be representative of people who have undergone elective cosmetic plastic surgery and medically necessary plastic surgery.

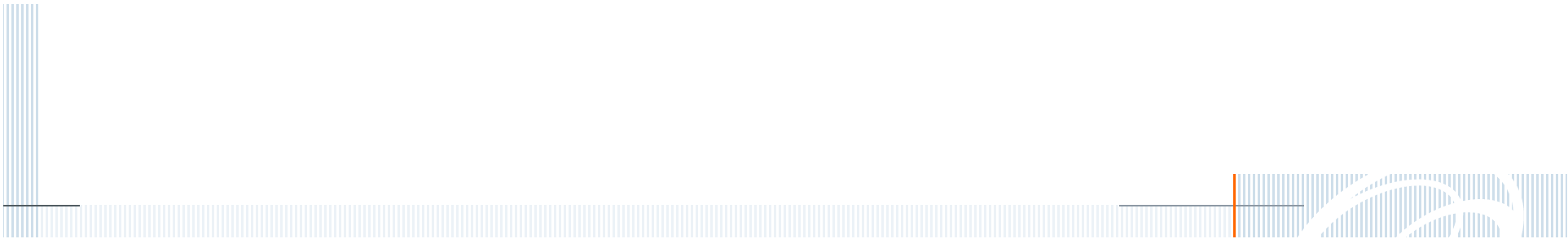
### ✓ Interviewing was conducted between January 15<sup>th</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

- All interviews were conducted online using The Harris Poll Online (HPOL) database as the sample frame.
- Interviews averaged 10 minutes in length.

## Report Structure

✓ **In reviewing this report, please note that:**

- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding, the acceptance of multiple responses or the exclusion of any “not sure” or “decline to answer” responses.
- An asterisk (\*) signifies a value of less than one-half percent. A dash (-) represents a value of zero.
- Elective cosmetic surgery is sometimes referred to as ECS and medically necessary surgery is sometimes referred to as MNS.



# Executive Summary

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## Executive Summary

### Pre-Surgery – Level of Preparation

In advance of surgery, the majority of elective cosmetic surgery (ECS) patients felt very well-prepared, comparable to the overall positive pre-surgical experience most medically necessary surgery (MCS) patients reported. Prior to surgery, most ECS patients believed their doctor had fully informed them of the details of surgery, had answered all of their questions, and did everything possible to make their surgical experience a success.

- ✓ Prior to surgery, the vast majority of patients feel that their doctor or surgeon:
  - ✓ answered all the questions they had (90% ECS, 96% MNS);
  - ✓ addressed how to properly prepare for the day of surgery (82% ECS, 89% MNS); and
  - ✓ informed them of the details of the surgical procedure (77% ECS, 74% MNS).
- ✓ The majority of patients (89% ECS, 95% MNS) felt their doctor or surgeon did everything possible to make their surgical experience a positive one.

# Executive Summary

## Pre-Surgery – Risks and Complications

**Although ECS and MNS patients said they were well-prepared in advance of surgery, about 1 in 2 still expressed some concern about the outcome of the procedure and post-surgical complications.**

- ✓ Prior to surgery, many ECS and MNS patients report being very concerned or concerned about:
  - ✓ post-surgical complications (57% ECS; 56% MNS);
  - ✓ outcome of surgery (56% ECS; 53% MNS);
  - ✓ quality of medical care (49% ECS; 42% MNS); and
  - ✓ cost of surgery (50% ECS; 33% MNS).

**Prior to surgery, almost all ECS and MNS patients said they were well-informed about the risk of possible post-operative complications - though many felt they should have been more proactive in learning about the risks and complications beforehand. Pain, scarring, and infection were the most common post-operative complications that ECS patients discussed with their doctors.**

- ✓ In advance of surgery, 91% of ECS patients and 95% of MNS patients felt they knew what to expect in terms of post-operative risks and complications.
- ✓ 96% of ECS patients and 94% of MNS patients said their doctor or surgeon informed them of at least one possible post-operative complication prior to surgery.
- ✓ About four in ten (39%) ECS patients – and about three in ten (29%) MNS patients - felt they should have been more proactive in learning about the risks and complications of their surgeries.
- ✓ Prior to surgery, patients were informed by their doctor or surgeon that they might experience:
  - ✓ pain (74% ECS; 79% MNS);
  - ✓ scarring (60% ECS; 31% MNS); and
  - ✓ infection (57% ECS; 64% MNS).

## Executive Summary

### *Pre-Surgery – Credentials and Types of Doctors/Surgeons*

**About one-quarter of ECS patients did not check the credentials of the doctor or surgeon performing their operation in advance of surgery, and even more did not ensure that their doctor or surgeon was in an accredited program or certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.**

- ✓ Over one quarter of ECS patients (28%) did not check any credentials when selecting a doctor or surgeon for their elective cosmetic surgery.
- ✓ About 1 in 4 ECS patients (37%) did not make sure their doctor was certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.
- ✓ Less than half of ECS patients (46%) checked that their doctor completed an accredited residency program in plastic surgery.

# Executive Summary

## Post-Surgery – Risks and Complications

**Overall, the majority of ECS and MNS patients were satisfied with their surgical experience. However, among ECS patients who experienced post-surgical complications, almost four in ten found the complications to be worse than they had imagined, and about one-third found the complications at least somewhat difficult to manage.**

- ✓ 80% of ECS patients and 78% of MNS patients were satisfied with their overall surgical experience.
- ✓ 39% of ECS patients and 55% of MNS patients who experienced post-operative complications found the complications to be worse than they had expected.
- ✓ About three in ten ECS patients (30%) and MNS patients (33%) who experienced post-operative complications reported the complications being at least somewhat difficult to manage.

# Executive Summary

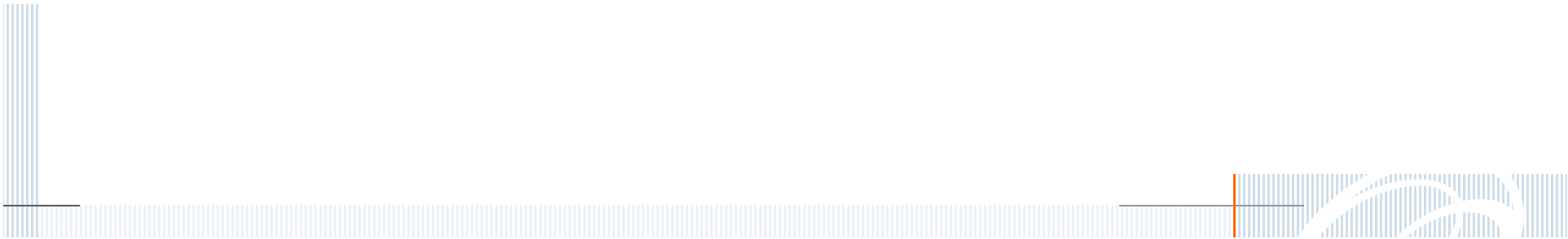
## Post-Surgery – Impact on Life

**Among ECS patients who experienced complications, about 7 in 10 say the complications negatively impacted their lives. About one-third were not able to accomplish necessary daily tasks, and over a quarter were not able to enjoy leisure activities due to post-operative complications.**

- ✓ 68% of ECS patients and 72% of MNS patients who experienced post-operative complications reported the complications negatively affected their lives.
- ✓ Among those who experienced complications, patients said the complications had the following specific impact on their lives:
  - ✓ Inability to accomplish necessary tasks (35% ECS; 44% MNS)
  - ✓ Decrease in energy level (32% ECS; 53% MNS)
  - ✓ Inability to enjoy leisure activities (26% ECS; 35% MNS)

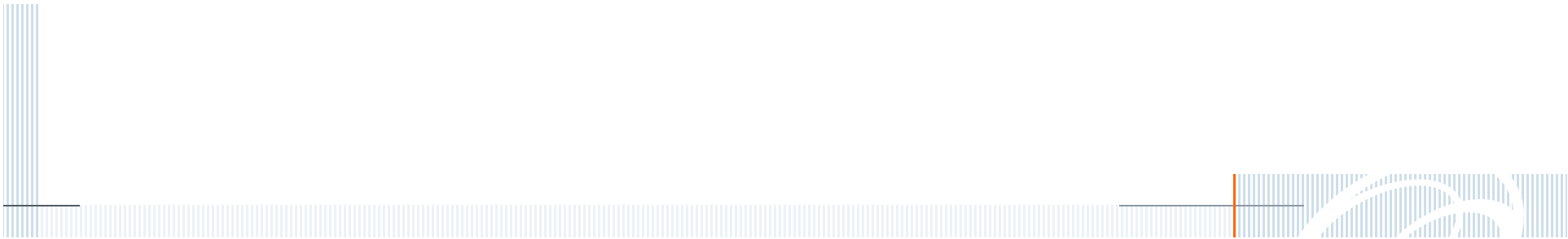
**Among ECS patients who experienced post-operative complications, about 1 in 4 were unable to go to work after surgery due to their complications, typically missing about 5 days to recover.**

- ✓ Over one-quarter (27%) of ECS patients and 39% of MNS patients who experienced post-operative complications were not able to go to work due to their complications.
- ✓ 39% of ECS patients who experienced complications reported missing four or more days of work.



## Detailed Findings

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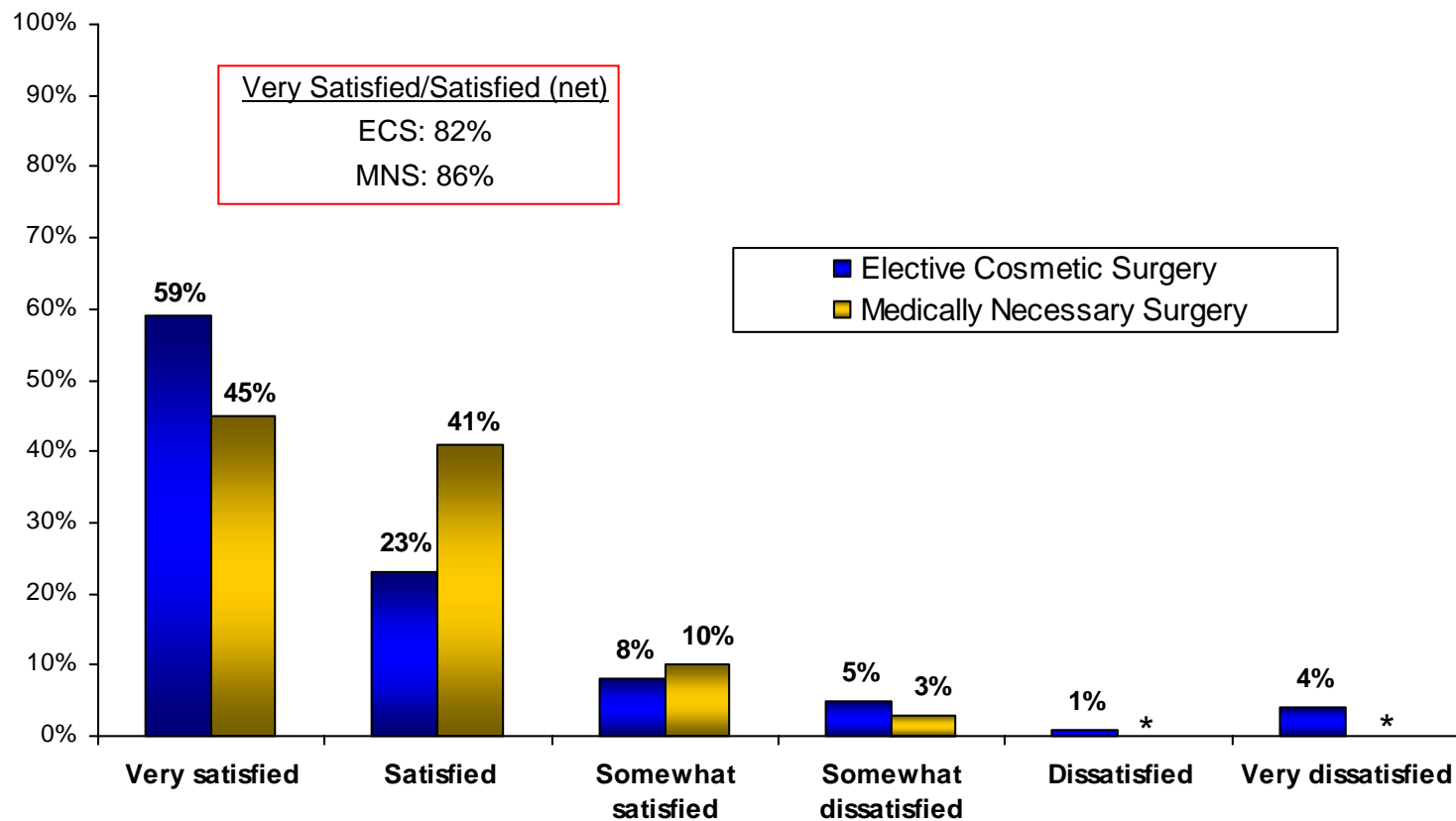


## Pre-Surgery – Level of Preparation

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Over eight in ten ECS and MNS patients were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of discussions they had with their doctor or surgeon prior to surgery.

**Quality of Discussions before Surgery**

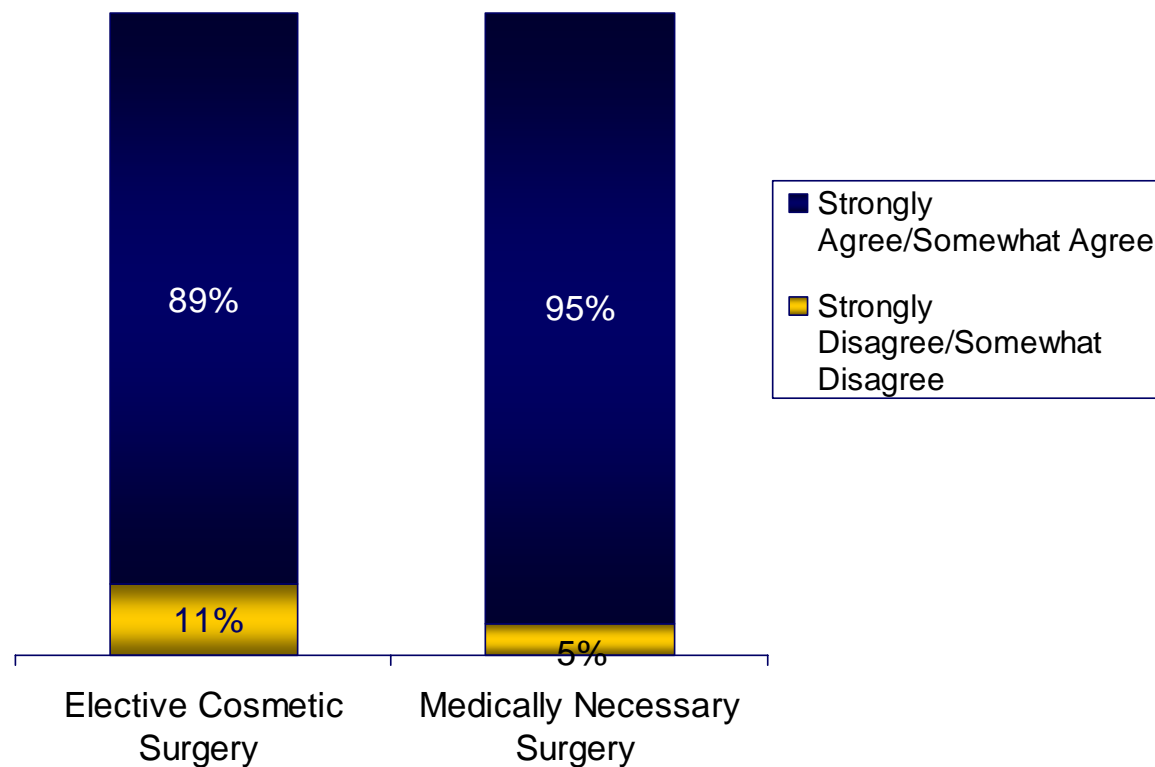


Q710: Before surgery, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of discussions that you had with the doctor or surgeon who performed your surgery?

Base: All respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=301, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)

# The majority of ECS and MNS patients felt their doctor or surgeon did everything possible to make their surgical experience a positive one.

**“He/She did everything possible to make my surgical experience a positive one.”**



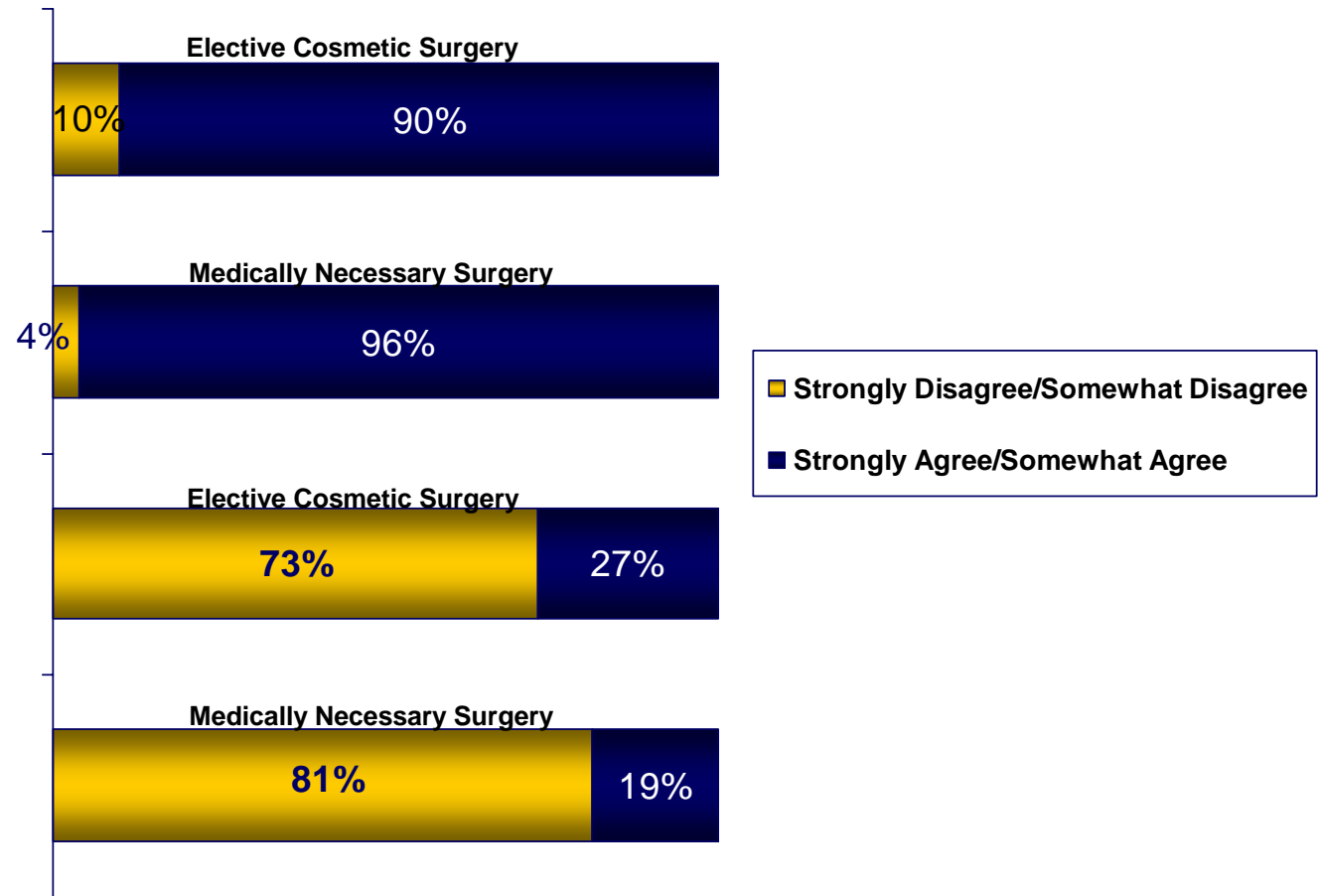
Q715: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the doctor or surgeon who performed your surgery?

Base: All respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=301, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)

The vast majority of patients reported their doctor or surgeon answered all the questions they had prior to surgery, but about three in ten ECS patients reported feeling uncomfortable asking questions before surgery.

**Questions Asked/Answered Prior to Surgery**

“He/she answered all the questions I had before surgery.”



“I was uncomfortable asking him/her questions prior to surgery.”

Q715: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the doctor or surgeon who performed your surgery?

Base: All respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=301, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)

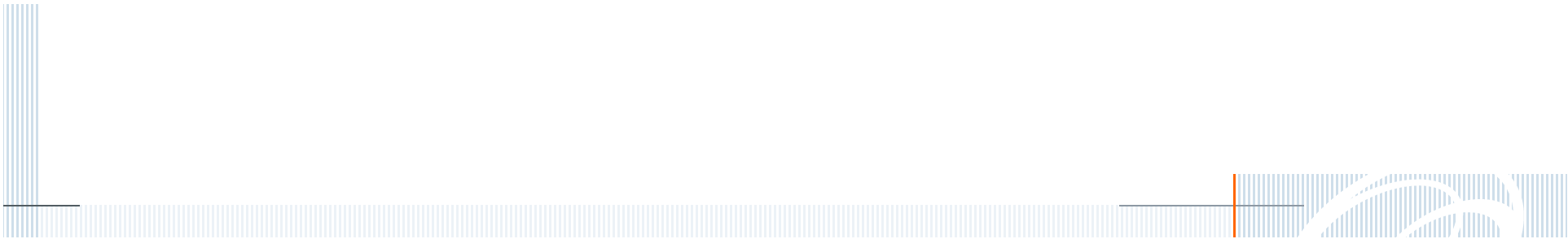
Over three-quarters of ECS and about seven in ten MNS patients felt their doctor or surgeon had completely addressed the details of the surgical procedure and how to prepare for the day of surgery.

**Issues Addressed Prior To Surgery**

		Addressed completely	Addressed somewhat	Did not address at all
Details of surgical procedure	ECS	77%	16%	7%
	MNS	74%	23%	3%
How to properly prepare for the day of surgery	ECS	82%	13%	6%
	MNS	89%	9%	1%
Alternatives to surgery	ECS	44%	27%	29%
	MNS	62%	20%	18%

Q720: How completely do you feel the doctor or surgeon who performed your surgery addressed the following issues prior to surgery?

Base: All respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=301, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)

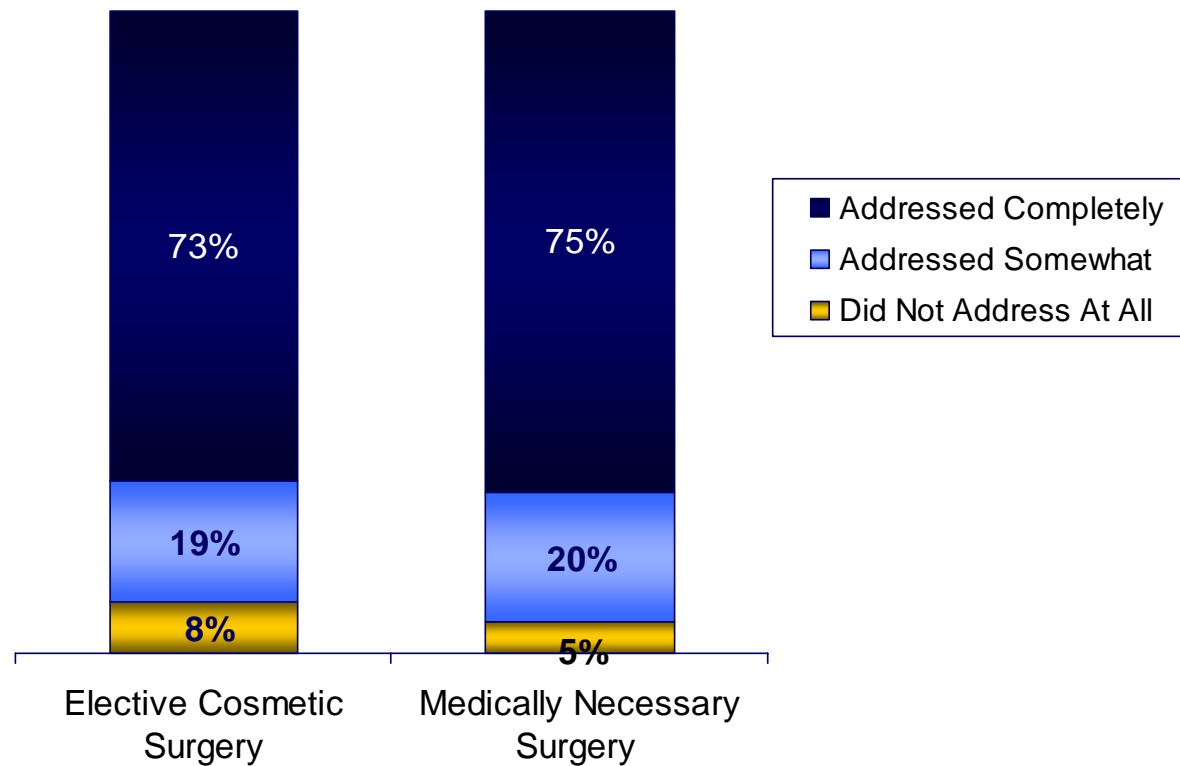


# Pre-Surgery – Risks and Complications

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Over seven in ten ECS and MNS patients felt their doctor or surgeon completely addressed potential risks and complications prior to surgery.

**Addressed Prior to Surgery: Potential Risks and Complications After Surgery**



Q720: How completely do you feel the doctor or surgeon who performed your surgery addressed the following issues prior to surgery?

Base: All respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=301, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)

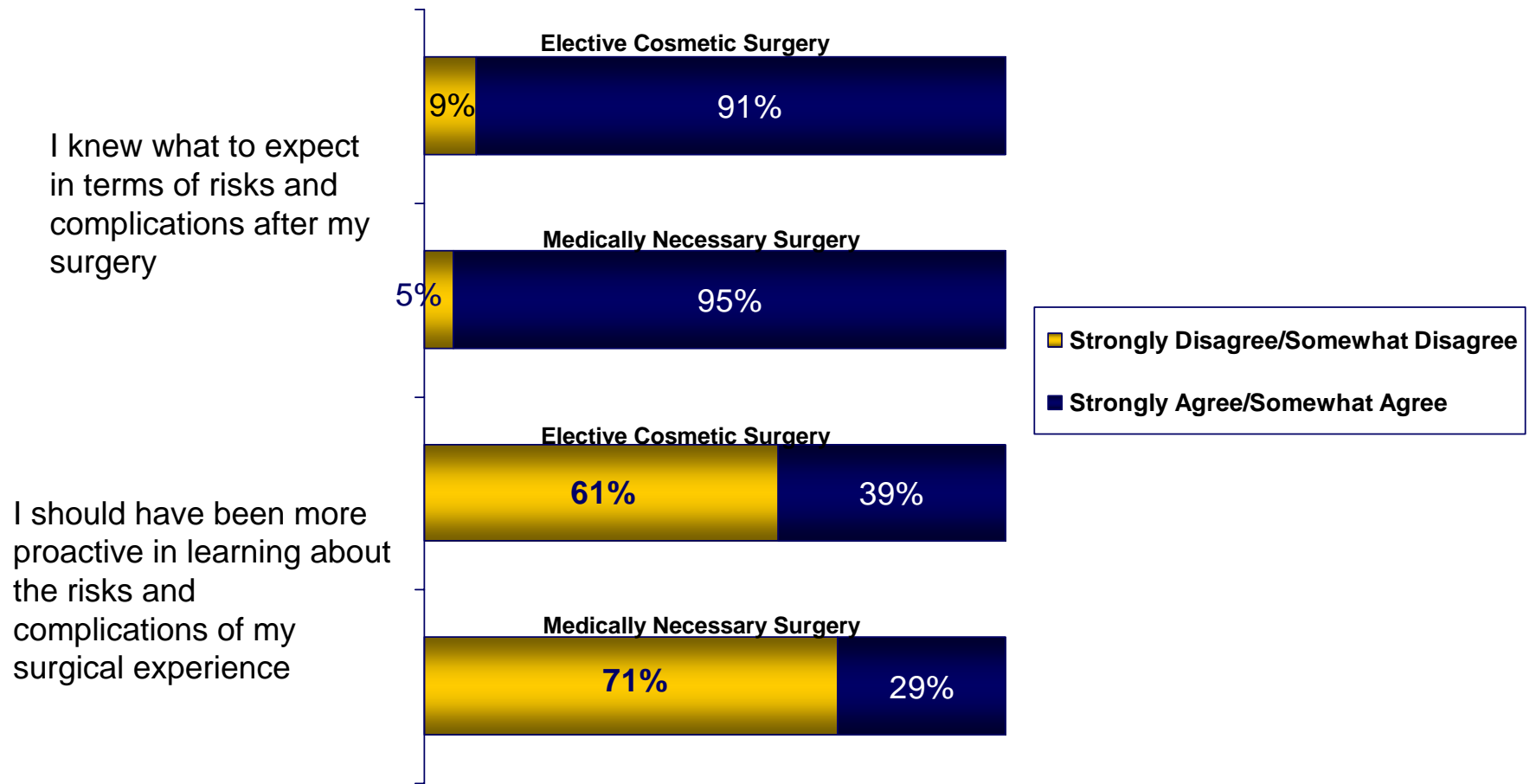
Prior to surgery, almost six in ten ECS and MNS patients were concerned about post-operative complications, and over half of both ECS and MNS patients were concerned about their surgical outcome.

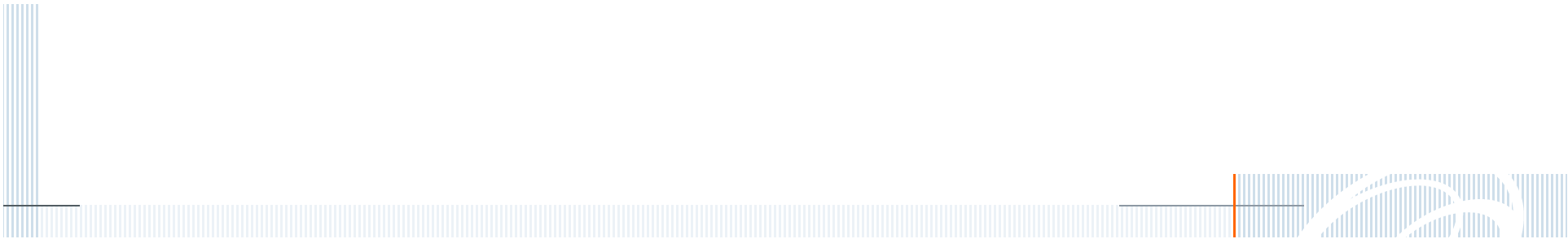
**Concerns Prior To Surgery**

		Very Concerned/ Concerned	Somewhat Concerned/ Not At All Concerned
Complications after surgery	ECS	57%	43%
	MNS	56%	44%
Surgical outcome	ECS	56%	44%
	MNS	53%	47%
Quality of medical care	ECS	49%	51%
	MNS	42%	58%
Cost of surgery	ECS	50%	50%
	MNS	33%	67%

Prior to surgery, almost all ECS and MNS patients felt they knew what to expect in terms of post-operative risks and complications, however four in ten ECS patients felt they should have been more proactive in learning about possible post-operative risks and complications.

**Agreement with Statements about Surgery**



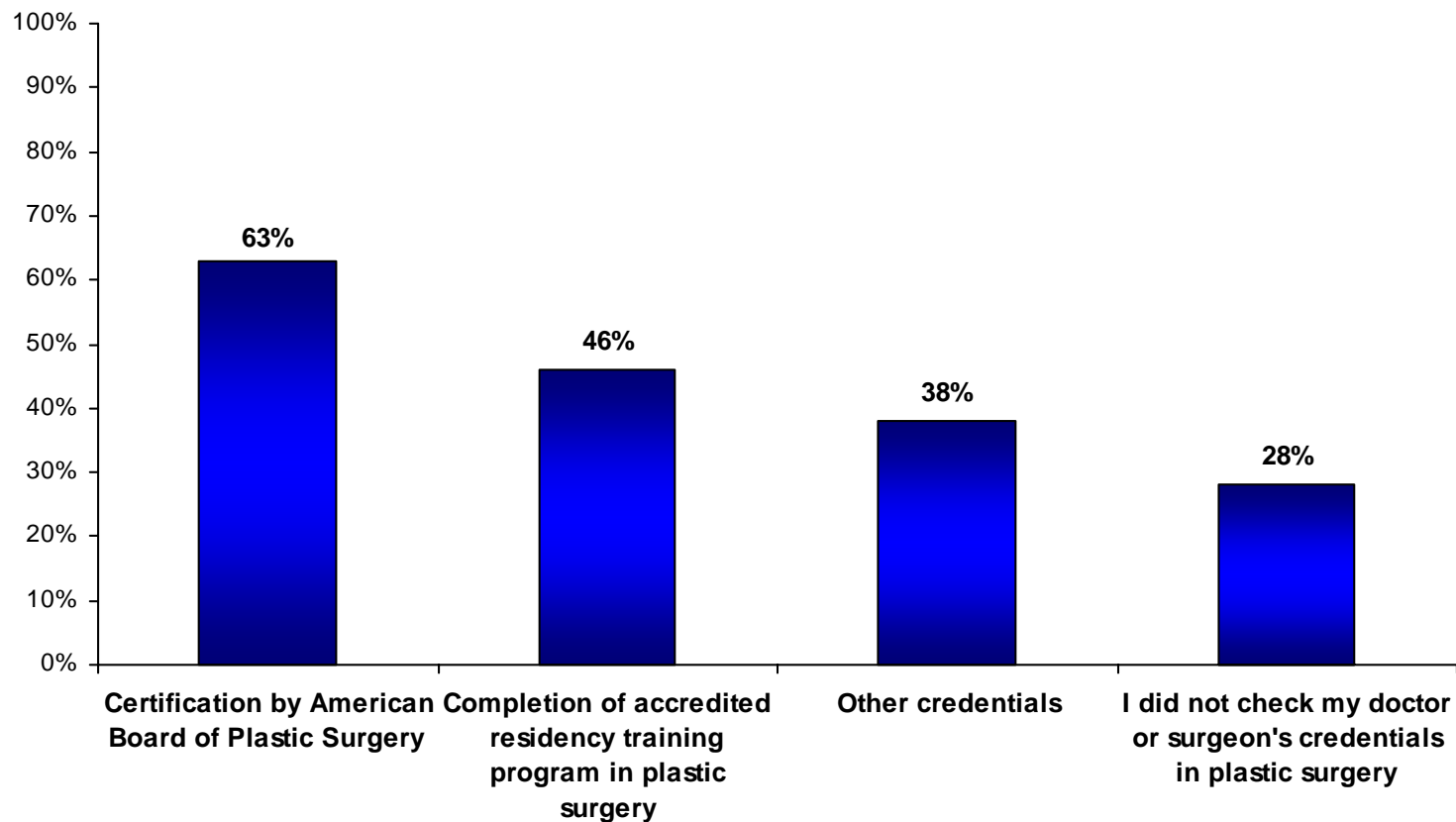


## Pre-Surgery – Credentials and Types of Doctors/Surgeons

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Over one-quarter of ECS patients did not check any credentials of the doctor or surgeon that performed their surgery, and about one in four did not make sure their doctor or surgeon was certified by the ABPS.

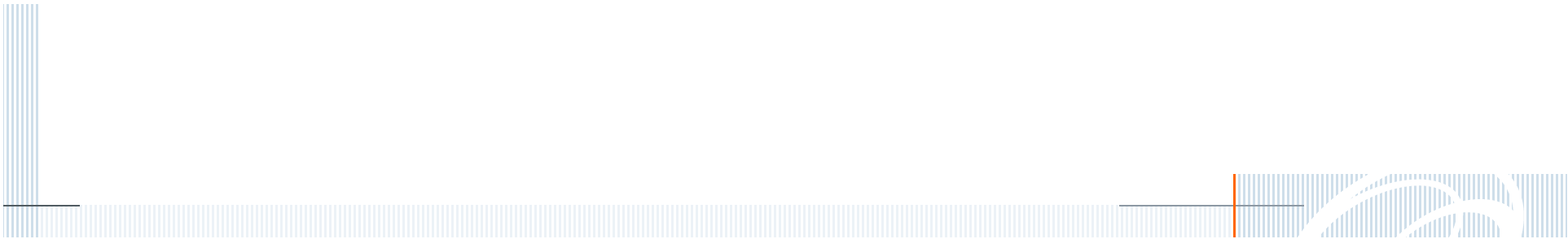
### Type of Credentials Checked Prior to Surgery



Q705: When selecting the doctor or surgeon for your elective cosmetic surgery, did you check if he or she had any of the following credentials?\*

Base: Elective Cosmetic Surgery respondents (n=301)

\* Multiple responses were allowed.

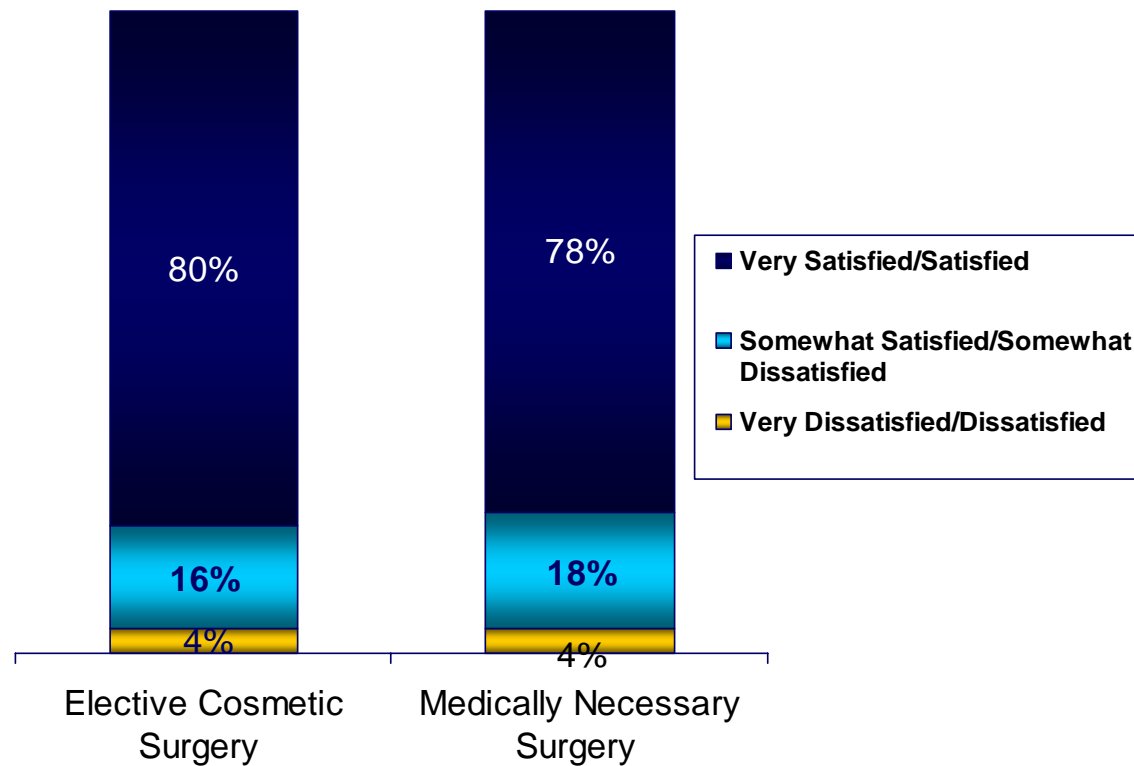


# Post-Surgery – Risks and Complications

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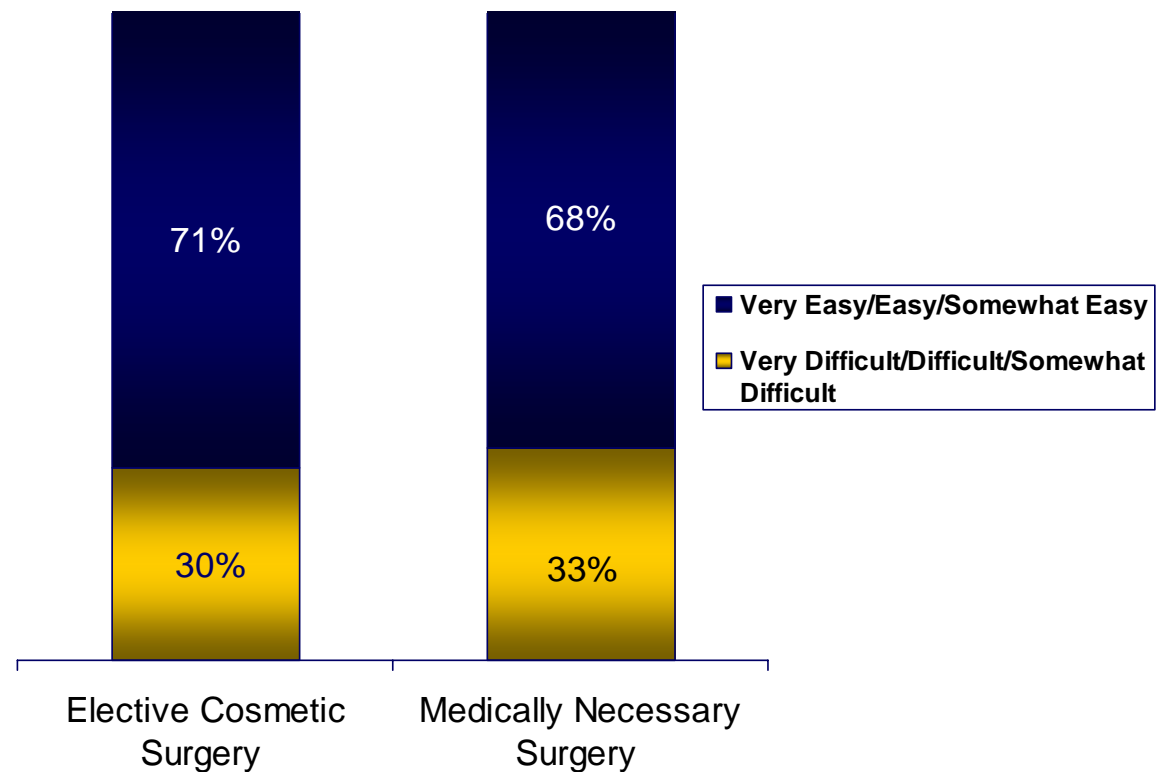
The majority of ECS and MNS patients were satisfied with their surgical experience.

### Overall Satisfaction with Surgical Experience



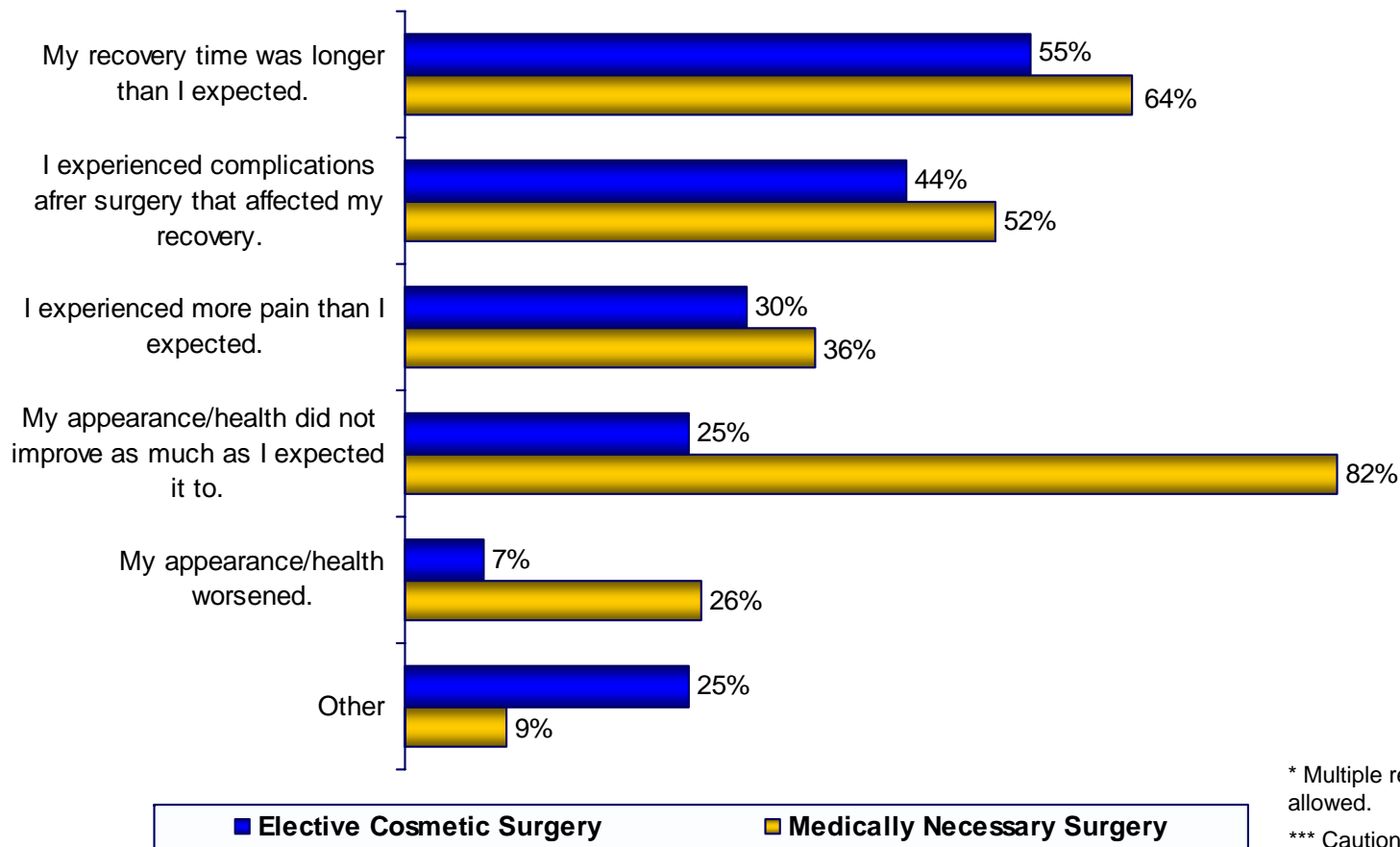
Around three in ten ECS and MNS patients who experienced post-operative complications reported the complications being at least somewhat difficult to manage.

### Level of Difficulty Managing Post-operative Complications



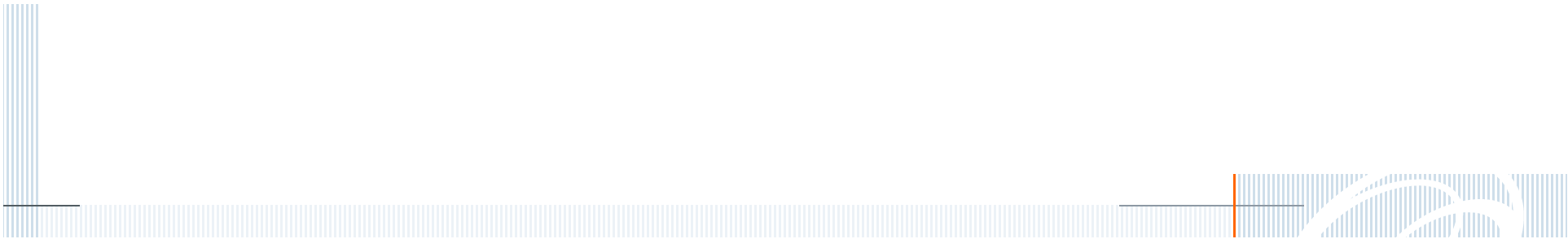
Of the very small number of ECS patients dissatisfied with their surgical experience, the most frequently given reasons were a recovery time that was longer than expected and experiencing complications that affected their recovery.

**Reason for Dissatisfaction**



\* Multiple responses were allowed.  
 \*\*\* Caution should be used in interpreting results due to extremely small base size.

Q625: Why were you dissatisfied with your surgical experience? Please select all that apply.\*  
 Base: Very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=26\*\*\*, Medically Necessary Surgery n=26\*\*\*)

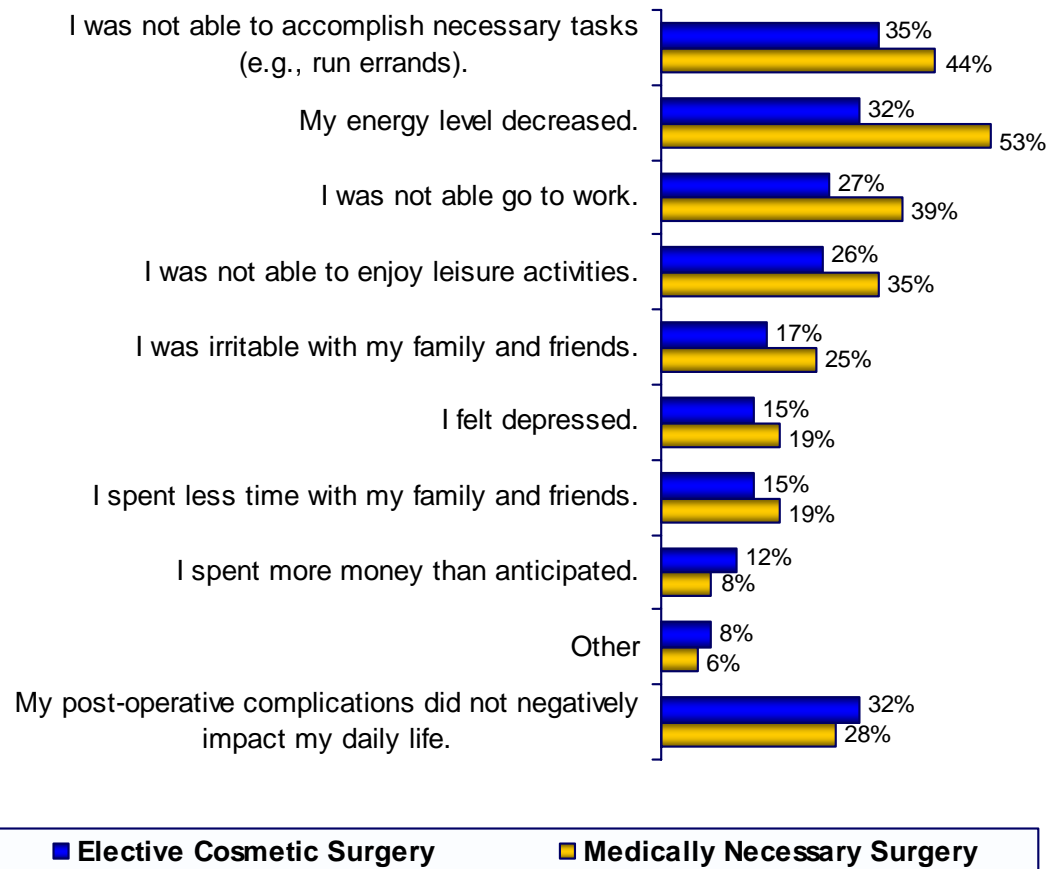


## Post-Surgery – Impact on Life

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About seven in ten ECS and MNS patients who experienced post-operative complications said the complications negatively impacted their lives. Among ECS patients, not being able to accomplish necessary tasks, a decrease in energy level, and not being able to go to work were most commonly mentioned.

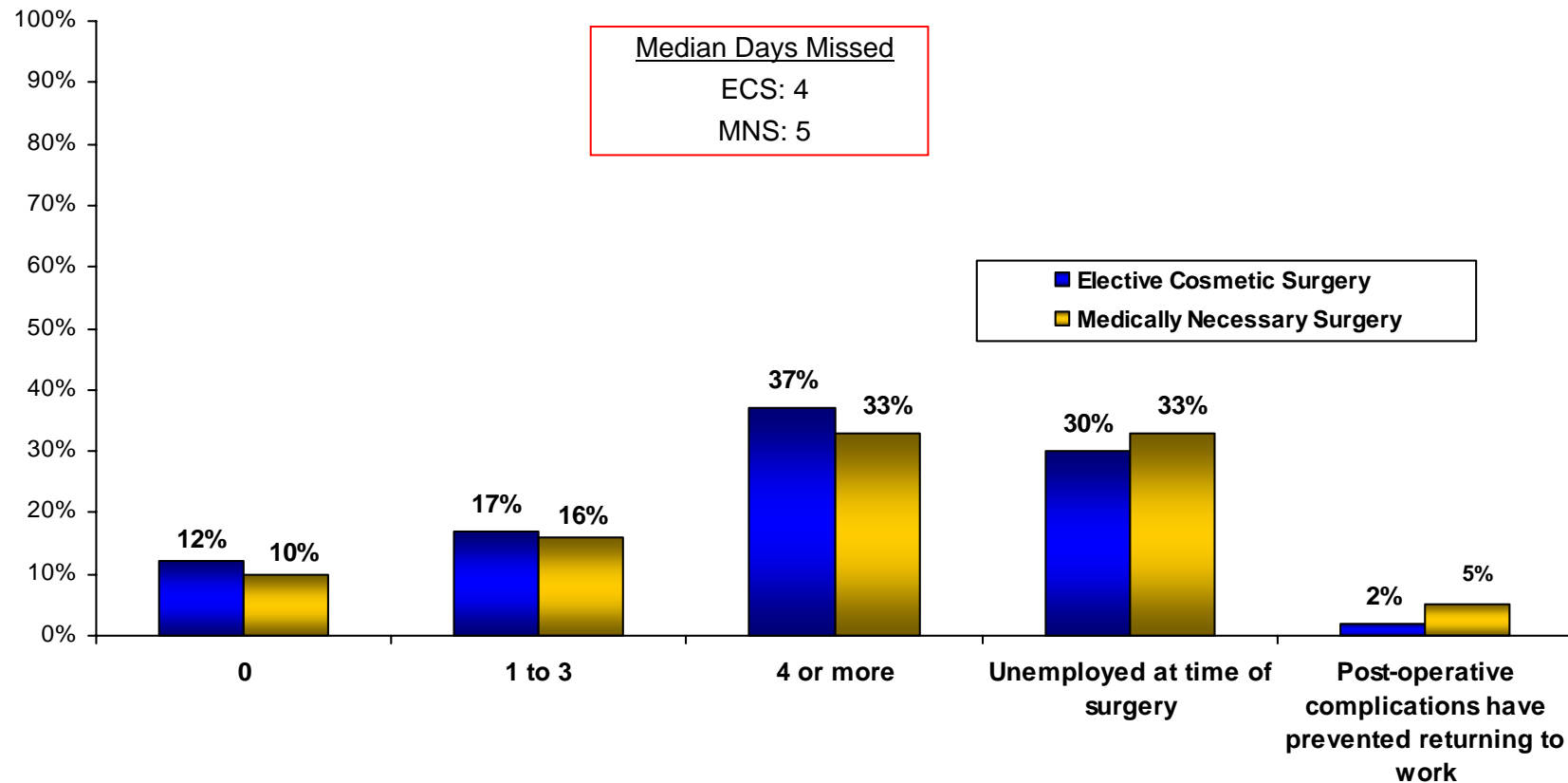
### Negative Impact of Post-Operative Complications on Daily Life



Q860: How did your post-operative complications negatively impact your daily life? Please select all that apply.\*  
 Base: Experienced post-operative complications (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=223, Medically Necessary Surgery n=220)

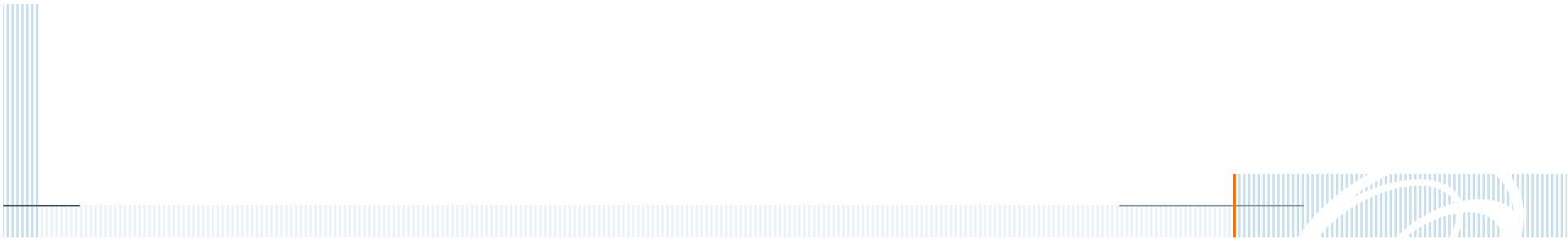
# About four in ten ECS and three in ten MNS patients who experienced complications after surgery reported missing four or more days of work.

## Days of Work Missed Due to Post-operative Complications



Q862: How many days of work, if any, did you miss due to your post-operative complications? If you are unsure, your best estimate will be fine. If you were unemployed at the time of your surgery, or have not yet returned to work, please indicate that below.

Base: Experienced post-operative complications (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=223, Medically Necessary Surgery n=220)



# Demographic Profile

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# Demographics – Types of Surgery

	Elective Cosmetic Surgery	Medically Necessary Surgery (planned)	Medically Necessary Surgery (due to accident)	Other
Elective Cosmetic Surgery	100%	27%	11%	2%
Medically Necessary Surgery	-	100%	3%	2%

	Outpatient (released the same day)	One overnight stay in hospital following surgery	Multiple night stay in hospital	Other
Elective Cosmetic Surgery	60%	21%	17%	1%
Medically Necessary Surgery	60%	12%	26%	2%

Q440: What type of surgery under general anesthesia did you undergo within the past two years?\*

Q610: What type of surgery did you undergo?

Base: All respondents (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=301, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)

\* Multiple responses were allowed.



# Demographics – Types of Elective Cosmetic Surgery

	Past Two Years	Most Recent
Breast augmentation	20%	19%
Tummy tuck	13%	36%
Eyelid surgery	11%	11%
Liposuction	11%	21%
Nose reshaping	10%	16%
Male breast reduction	9%	14%
Breast lift	7%	21%
Hair replacement surgery	7%	14%
Facelift	6%	8%
Forehead lift	5%	7%
Facial implants	3%	6%
Other	38%	5%

\* Multiple responses were allowed.

\*\* Caution should be used in interpreting results due to small base size.

**Q450:** Which of the following elective cosmetic surgeries under general anesthesia have you had in the past two years?\*

*Base: Elective Cosmetic Surgery respondents (n=301)*

**Q600:** Which of the following was your most recent elective cosmetic surgery? If your most recent surgery involved more than one procedure, please select all that apply.\*

*Base: Elective Cosmetic Surgery respondents who had more than one elective cosmetic surgery (n=63\*\*)*

# Demographics – Types of Medically Necessary Surgery

		Past Two Years	Most Recent
OG-GYN-related surgery (e.g. Cesarean section)	ECS	37%	27%
	MNS	8%	13%
Heart or lung surgery	ECS	24%	25%
	MNS	4%	7%
Orthopedic surgery (e.g. knee replacement surgery)	ECS	24%	21%
	MNS	14%	13%
Cancer-related surgery (e.g. mastectomy)	ECS	20%	36%
	MNS	8%	12%
Ear, nose, and throat surgery (e.g. tonsillectomy)	ECS	18%	11%
	MNS	7%	4%
Bariatric Surgery (e.g. gastric bypass)	ECS	14%	19%
	MNS	2%	9%
Ophthalmic surgery (e.g. eye surgery)	ECS	11%	6%
	MNS	4%	6%
Colon or rectal surgery	ECS	9%	11%
	MNS	8%	28%
Other medically necessary surgery under general anesthesia not due to accident or emergency	ECS	45%	12%
	MNS	56%	29%

\* Multiple responses were allowed.

\*\* Caution should be used in interpreting results due to small base size.

\*\*\* Caution should be used in interpreting results due to extremely small base size.

**Q445:** Which of the following medically necessary surgeries under general anesthesia have you had in the past two years? Please only include those that have been planned in advance, and do not include any surgeries that you've had due to accidents or emergencies.

*Base: All respondents who had medically necessary surgery (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=83\*\*, Medically Necessary Surgery n=316)*

**Q605:** Which of the following was your most recent medically necessary surgery? If your most recent surgery involved more than one procedure, please select all that apply.\*

*Base: All respondents who had more than one medically necessary surgery (Elective Cosmetic Surgery n=29\*\*\*, Medically Necessary Surgery n=36\*\*\*)*

# Demographics – All Respondents

	<u>Elective Cosmetic Surgery</u>	<u>Medically Necessary Surgery</u>
<b>Gender</b>	%	%
Male	45	53
Female	55	47
<b>Age</b>	%	%
18-19	3	3
20-24	6	12
25-29	12	10
30-34	15	6
35-39	13	7
40-44	9	8
45-49	16	10
50-54	7	8
55-59	4	8
60-64	2	6
65 and over	11	22
<b>Ethnicity</b>	%	%
White	63	74
Hispanic	22	16
African American/Black	12	7
Native American/Alaskan native	*	*
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	*
Mixed Racial Background	*	*
Other race	1	1
Decline to answer	1	1

	<u>Elective Cosmetic Surgery</u>	<u>Medically Necessary Surgery</u>
<b>Adults in Household</b>	%	%
1	18	22
2	49	47
3	17	21
4	10	5
5+	5	5
<i>Mean</i>	2.4	2.5
<i>Median</i>	2	2
<b>U.S. Region</b>	%	%
East	22	22
Midwest	19	26
South	36	33
West	23	19

	<u>Elective Cosmetic Surgery</u>	<u>Medically Necessary Surgery</u>
<b>Marital Status</b>	%	%
Married	55	49
Single, never married	31	28
Divorced	6	11
Living with partner	5	3
Separated	3	4
Widowed	2	4
<b>Children in Household</b>	%	%
0	59	71
1	12	11
2	17	10
3	10	5
4	2	1
5+	0	2
<i>Mean (including zero)</i>	0.9	0.6
<i>Median (including zero)</i>	-	-

## Demographics – All Respondents (Cont.)

Education	<u>Elective</u>	<u>Medically</u>
	<u>Cosmetic</u>	<u>Necessary</u>
	<u>Surgery</u>	<u>Surgery</u>
	%	%
High school or less (net)	44	29
Less than high school	1	*
Some high school	2	4
High school or equivalent (e.g., GED)	40	25
Some college (net)	28	38
Some college, but no degree	19	31
Associate's degree	9	7
College or more (net)	28	33
College (e.g., B.A., B.S.)	19	19
Some graduate school, but no degree	2	5
Graduate school (e.g., M.S., M.D., Ph.D.)	7	10

Employment Status	<u>Elective</u>	<u>Medically</u>
	<u>Cosmetic</u>	<u>Necessary</u>
	<u>Surgery</u>	<u>Surgery</u>
	%	%
Employed full time	50	44
Employed part time	18	14
Self-employed	6	5
Not employed, but looking	2	2
Not employed and not looking	4	6
Retired	11	22
Student	10	17
Homemaker	12	10