

Dietetic Attitudes and Practice towards Bolus Feeding

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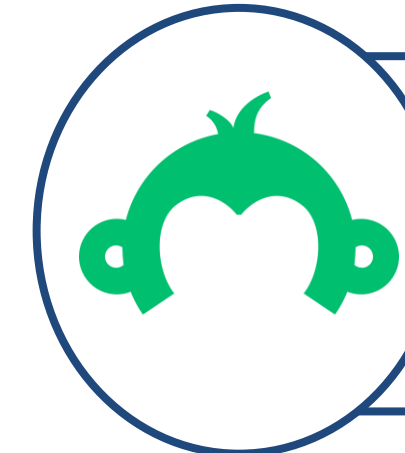
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INTRODUCTION

Bolus feeding is the administration of feed to a patient as a series of smaller volumes of feed given at regular intervals via an enteral feeding tube.¹ It is estimated that there are over 2,000 people receiving home enteral tube feeding (HETF) in Ireland, however there are no statistics to indicate how many of these may be using bolus tube feeding in their feeding regimes.²

In the UK, 37% of patients receiving HETF use bolus feeding, with 46% of these using bolus feeding as a sole feeding method.³ Benefits of bolus feeding in HETF patients include reduced feeding time, flexibility with feeding times, easier transport of feeds and simpler to administer than pump feeding.¹

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS



An 18-item questionnaire was created using Survey Monkey.



The questionnaire was distributed by the INDI and the Irish Nutrition Jobs Facebook group.



Data analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel and SPSS® v27 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA).

AIM To investigate the attitudes and usage of bolus feeding, among a sample of dietitians in Ireland, working in clinical practice with adult patients only.

RESULTS



100
dietitians completed
the questionnaire
74
fit eligibility criteria

Table 1: Dietitians area of work. (Some dietitians worked in >1 area.)

Place of work	n
Hospital	47
Community	26
Other	6

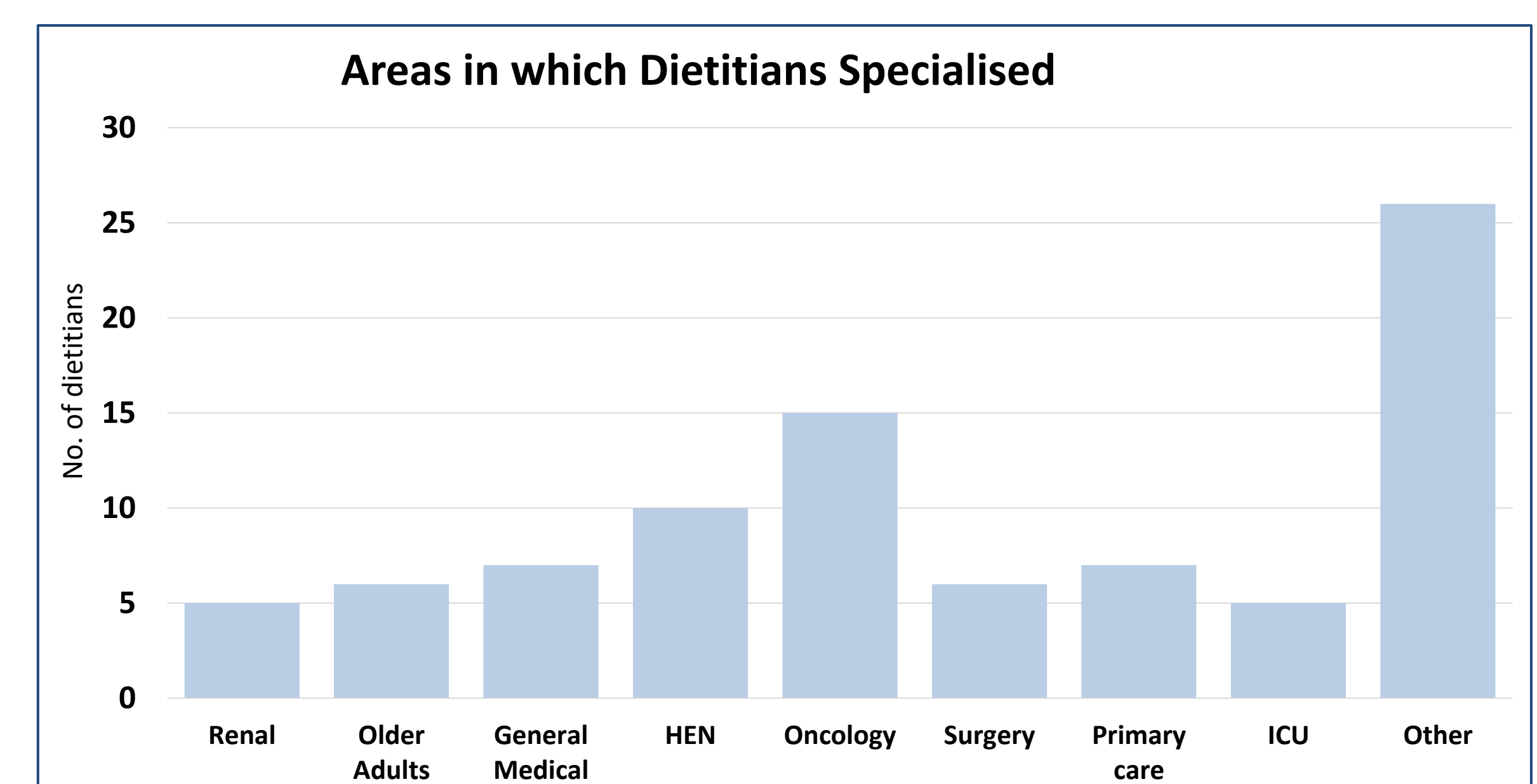


Figure 1: Bar chart displaying areas in which Dietitians specialised (n=74). (Some Dietitians specialised in more than one area.)

Just over half (58%) reported that the number of patients being bolus fed has increased over the past 5 years.

The main reason reported for choosing bolus feeding was to fit with patients' lifestyles (95%, n=70).

Patient preference was indicated as main reason for choosing the type of bolus feeding method they used (78%, n=54).

Of the total sample, 61% (n=45) of dietitians agree that feeds in a specific format for bolus feeding would improve patient experience.

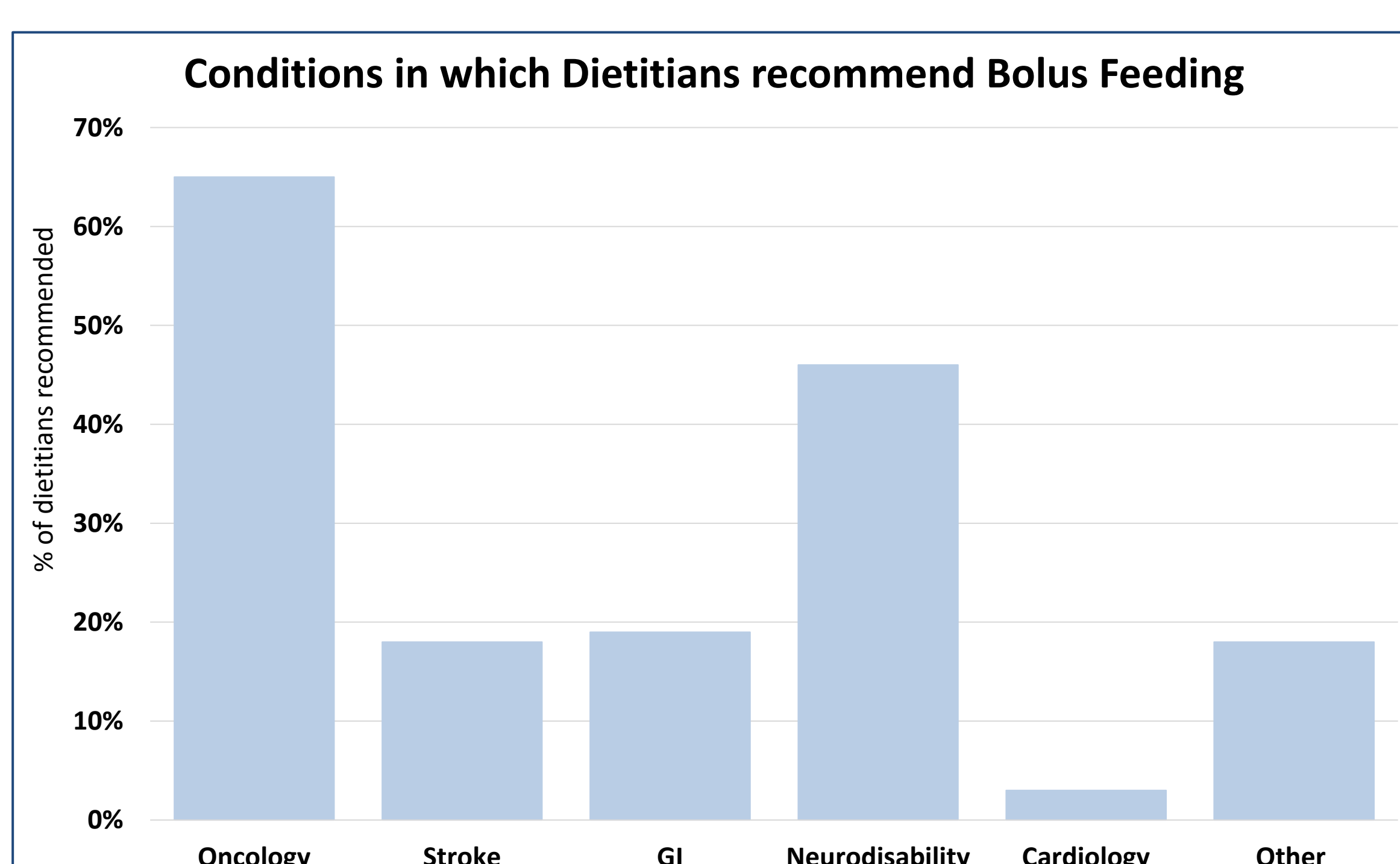


Figure 2: Bar chart displaying conditions in which dietitians recommend bolus feeding (n=74). (Dietitians could select more than one condition.)

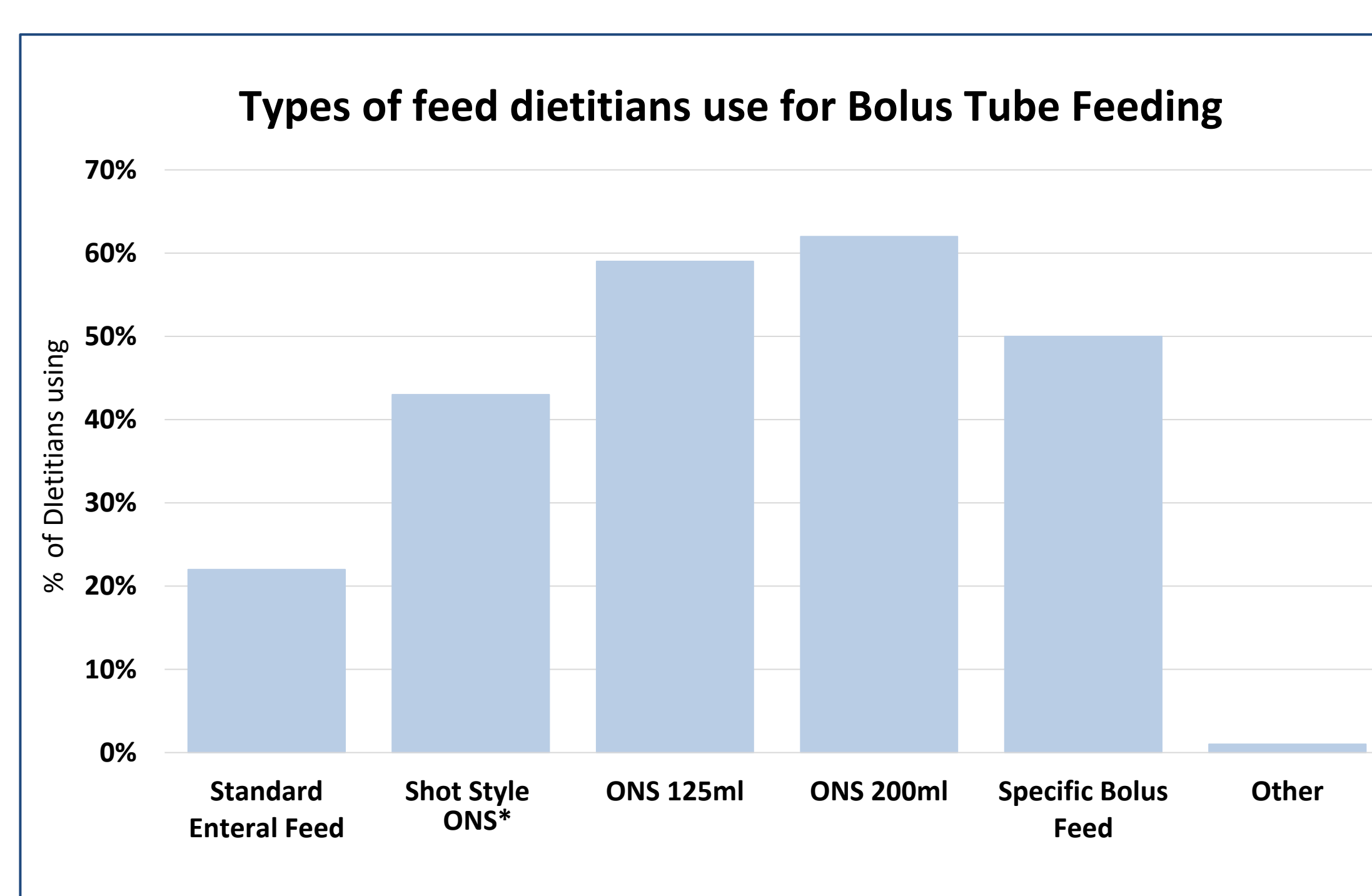


Figure 3: Feeds used by dietitians when bolus feeding (n=74). (Dietitians could select more than one feed.)

*ONS - Oral Nutritional Supplement

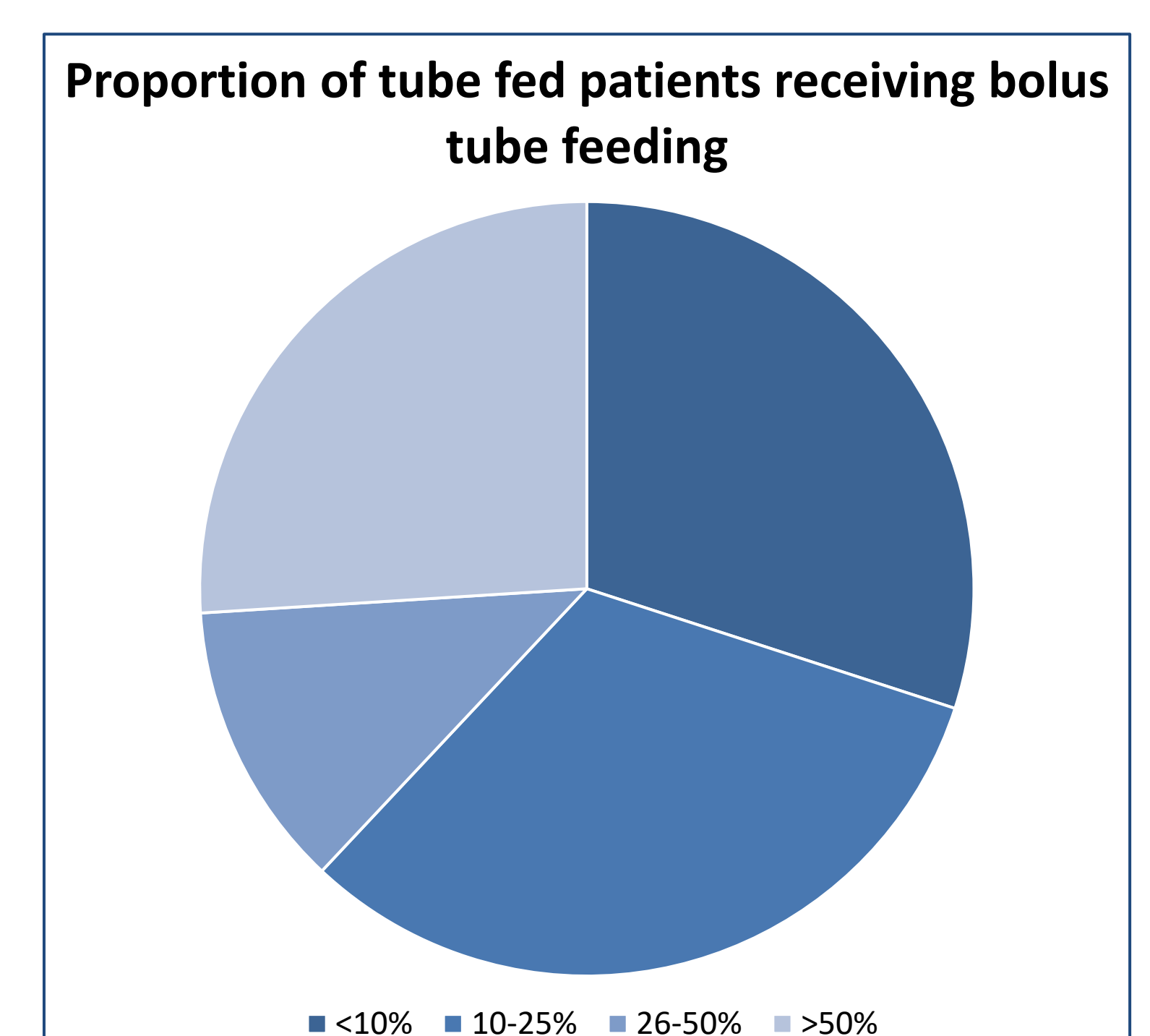


Figure 4: Proportion of dietitians enterally fed patients receiving bolus feeding.

CONCLUSION

This study found that dietitians are recommending bolus feeding for patients more often in the last 5 years. Participants reported that bolus feeding suits patients' lifestyles and there is a need for a specific format for bolus feeding products to improve patient experience.

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