

Introduction

- 1 in 5 people in Ontario live with a mental health condition.¹
- Primary care settings provide an opportunity to facilitate mental health assessments with validated tools including Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7), Personal Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).²
- To support efficient and standardized mental health assessments using validated tools, the eHealth Centre of Excellence in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW) developed a program to support primary care providers (PCPs) with tablets that integrate information directly into their electronic medical records (EMRs).

Objectives

- Explore the use of tablets for conducting other health-related assessments
- Highlight the patient experience with using tablets to complete assessments
- Illustrate the impact of adopting tablets for mental health assessments

Methods

- The eHealth Centre of Excellence provided individualized change management support to PCPs in Waterloo Wellington at 13 different clinics to support the adoption of tablets for mental health assessments and management.
- PCPs were encouraged to use tablets for other assessments and patient questionnaires to enhance the efficiency of their practice.
- The target population for mental health form distribution included individuals visiting their PCP for mental health reasons, annual examinations, new patient visits and females scheduled for postpartum visits.
- A patient experience survey using a five-point Likert scale was attached to the aforementioned mental health form in order to assess patient experience with using tablets for mental health assessments.
- Administrative data was monitored to assess the number of mental health assessments conducted over time and the use of tablets for other assessments.

Results

1) Monthly Number of Mental Health Assessment Forms Completed by Clinics

The tablets significantly increased the number of validated mental health assessments conducted (n=14,434) across 13 clinics, of various sizes, live 6 to 11 months, allowing a direct integration of information into the PCP's EMR and facilitated evidence-based decisions at the point of care (Figure 1).

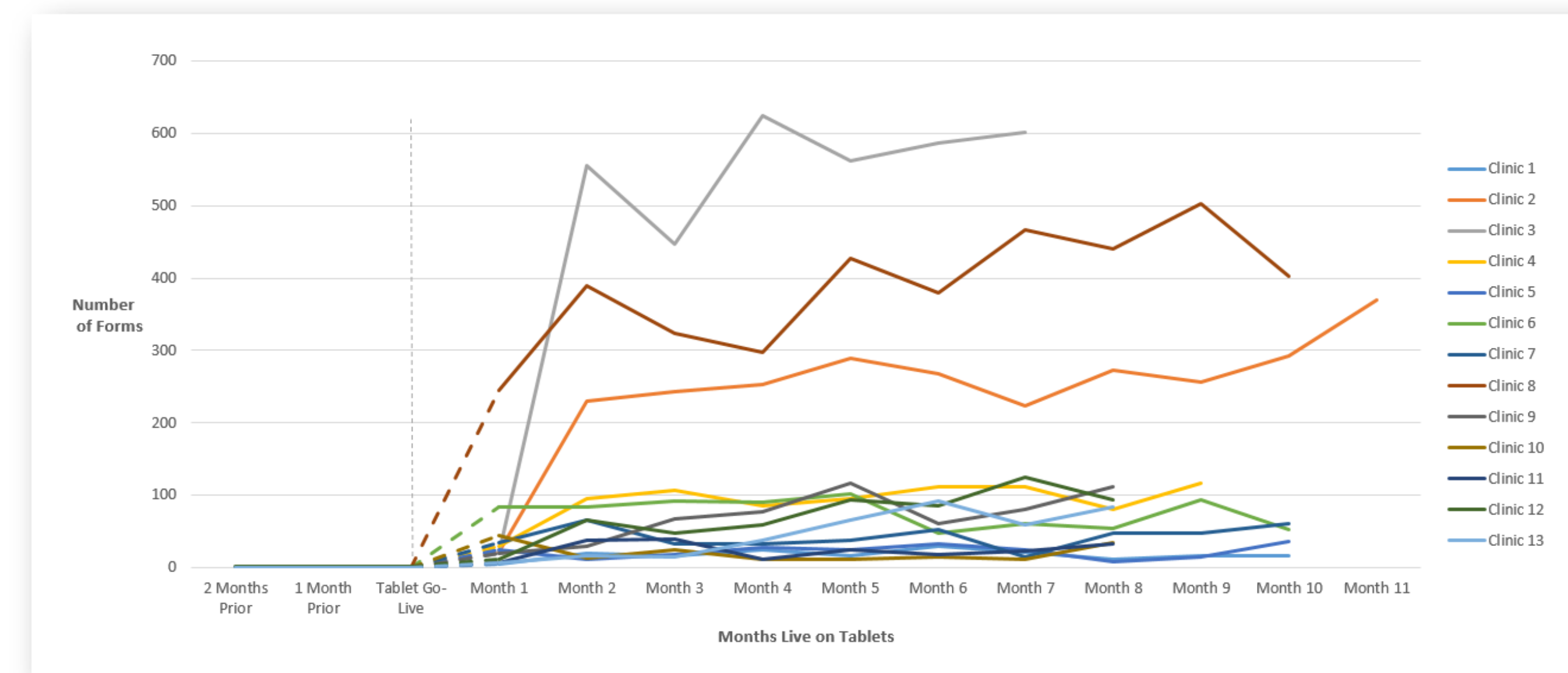


Figure 1. Monthly trend

2) Patient Experience Using Tablets for Mental Health Assessments

As illustrated in Figure 2, the majority of patients found the tablet easy to use and liked having something to do while waiting for their appointment (n=4,425).

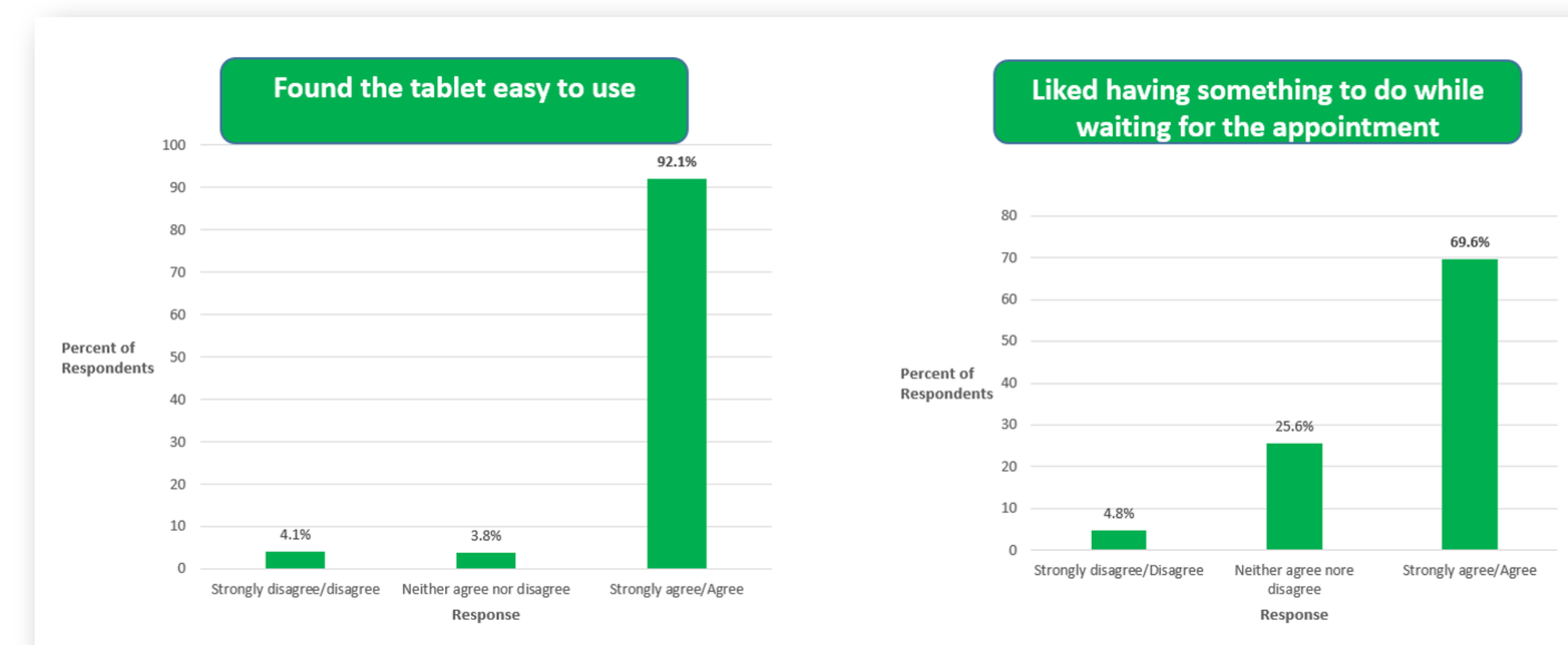


Figure 2. Patients' attitudes towards tablet use

As illustrated in Figure 3, over a third of patients were able to be more honest with their answers using the tablets, while a proportion of patients would not have preferred to answer the questions during a face to face chat with the clinician (n=3,926).

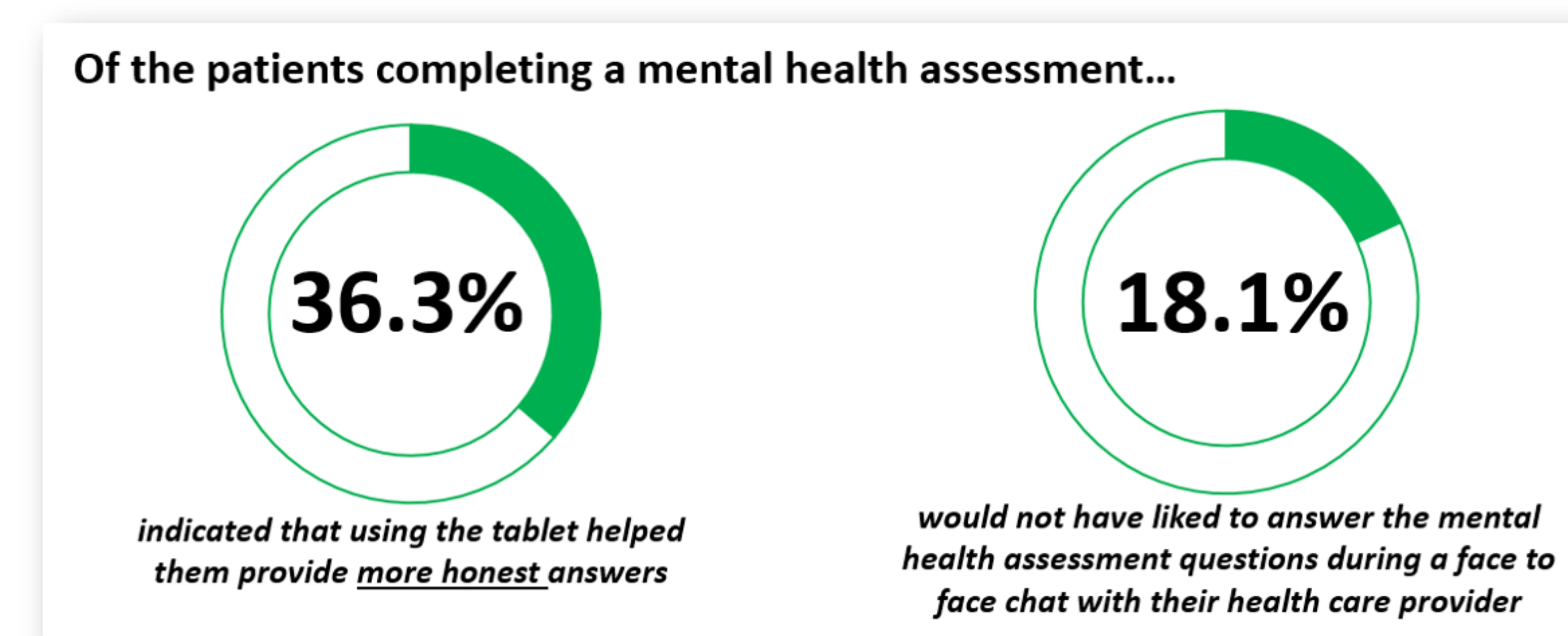


Figure 3. Patients' preferences towards tablet use

3) Tablet Uses for Other Assessments in Primary Care Settings

As illustrated in Figure 4, tablets were an acceptable and feasible means of collecting information from patients for mental health concerns as well as other healthcare assessments. In total, 21,727 individuals were reached and completed 38,074 eForms* on tablets within a 11-month period. *Excludes QBIC Patient Experience Survey (n=4,701).

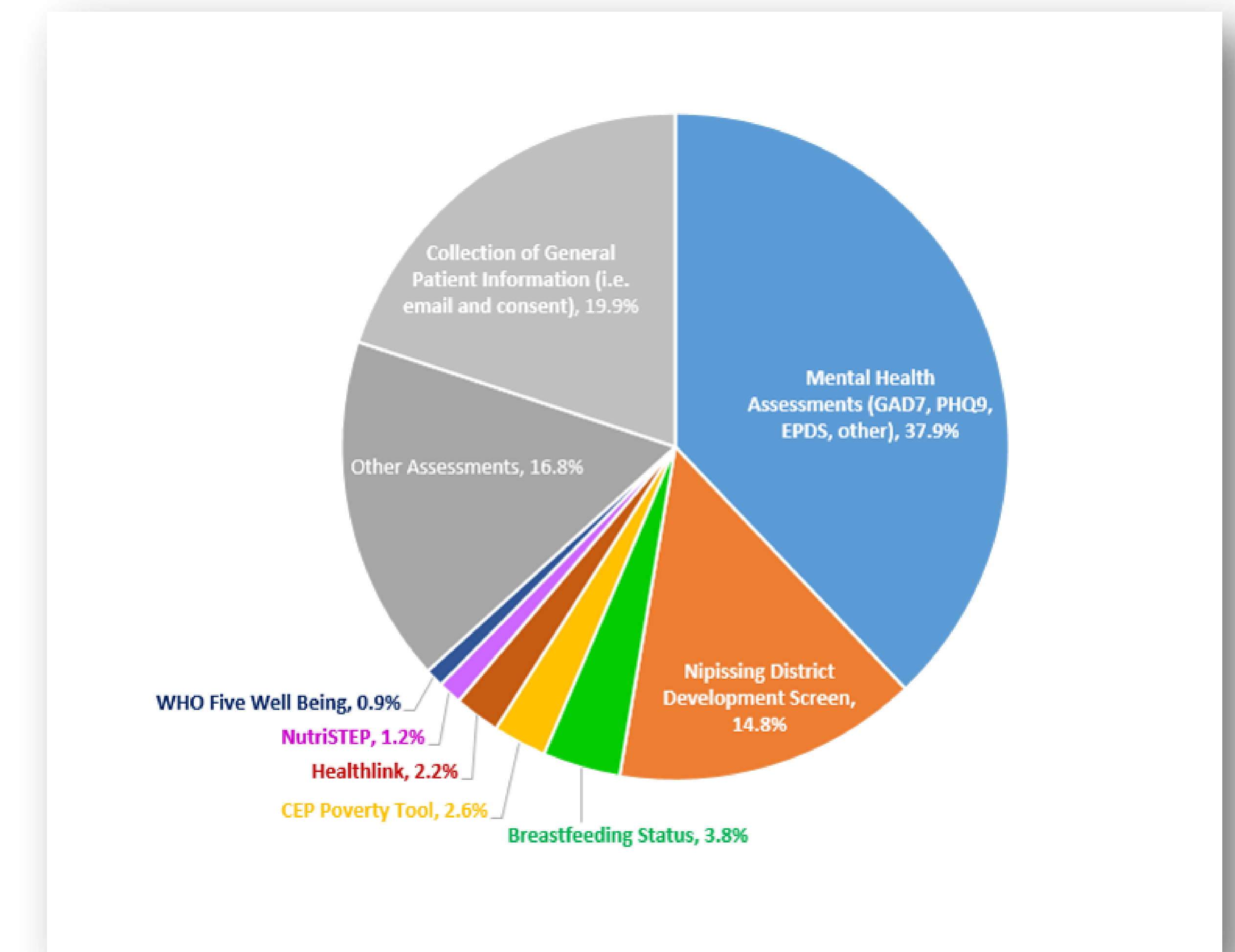


Figure 4. Tablet uses

Conclusion

- The implementation of tablets facilitates efficient assessment and management of patients in primary care, while facilitating more accurate mental health assessments and the use of patient information at the point of care.
- The results illustrated an increased number of standardized mental health assessments, enhancing the patient experience while they wait in the waiting room, and empowering patients to communicate on sensitive health topics such as mental health.

References

1. Brian, S., Grenier, L., Kapral, M. E., Kurdyak, P., & Vigod, S. (2015). Taking Stock: A Report on the Quality of Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario. HQO/ICES Report. ON: Toronto.
2. Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (2016). Mental Health and Primary Care Policy Framework. ON: Toronto.