



2021 SURVEY OF ENSA STUDENT MEMBERS

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Executive Summary

- ❖ *Almost 90% of respondents considered themselves to be in favour of vaccination programmes for public health.*
- ❖ *The majority (80.33%) of respondents felt they were generally either always or usually confident in responding to questions about vaccines.*
- ❖ *Aside from their educational institute, over 50% of respondents reported getting the majority of their information on vaccines from national/regional health institutions (72.60%) or European/international health institutions e.g. WHO, ECDC, UNICEF (53.67%).*
- ❖ *Two-thirds (67.00%) of respondents feel they do not receive enough education on vaccines as part of their course.*
- ❖ *Over 90% of respondents (92.78%) think all nursing students should receive the COVID-19 vaccine except for those with medical exemptions.*
- ❖ *While almost all respondents (97.14%) think that student nurses should be part of the COVID-19 vaccine administration process if they wish to take part, over a quarter (28.64%) reported that students are unable to participate in their country.*
- ❖ *Almost half (44.33%) of respondents reported that students were paid in their country for assisting in the vaccine administration, while over a fifth (21.54%) reported that students did not receive any recognition.*
- ❖ *Just over a quarter (26.03%) of respondents reported being told they may not be able to attend clinical placement if they do not avail of the COVID-19 vaccine, with only a quarter (25.29%) having received any financial compensation for being on placement during COVID-19.*
- ❖ *Almost half (45.01%) of respondents reported being unable to continue to work part-time jobs as normal to support themselves while on clinical placement this year.*
- ❖ *Almost all respondents (97.76%) reported that their academic learning have to move online as opposed to taking place in person due to COVID-19, while over two-thirds (69.08%) of respondents did not feel they receive adequate support from their educational institute.*
- ❖ *Almost two-fifths (38.76%) of respondents have cared for patients with COVID-19, with a fifth (20.08%) caring for patient(s) who subsequently died of COVID-19.*
- ❖ *Over half (57.30%) of respondents believe their experience of COVID-19 has had a negative psychological impact on them, while 86.80% believe their student nursing colleagues had a negative psychological impact as a result of their experience.*

- ❖ *When off duty, the majority of respondents reported feeling mentally exhausted (76.26%), finding it difficult to relax (56.88%), and having trouble concentrating (56.60%) since the pandemic began.*
- ❖ *A fifth of respondents are considering leaving their course (21.63%) or leaving the profession (20.93%) as a result of having worked during the pandemic, while over a third (36.24%) know of a classmate who has left the course due to their experience.*
- ❖ *The majority of respondents have experienced stress about the risk of spreading the infection to family or housemates (80.90%), and felt that their personal health has been put at risk on clinical placement (51.69%), though over half (57.59%) reported that the correct personal protective equipment is always available at their placement site.*
- ❖ *Almost half of respondents (49.93%) did not feel they had access to adequate psychological support.*
- ❖ *Three-quarters (76.97%) of respondents believe students should have routine COVID-19 testing at their clinical placement site.*
- ❖ *Almost a tenth (8.85%) of respondents contracted COVID-19, with 13.90% being on sick leave due to COVID-19 for more than 14 days.*
- ❖ *A minority (6.04%) of respondents who contracted COVID-19 were experiencing long-term physical effects of the virus at the time of the survey.*

Foreword

There can be no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the lives of millions of people globally. However, there has been little research to date into gathering data on how student nurses in Europe have been affected by the pandemic. Anecdotal evidence suggested that many students were struggling with online classes, facing mental health challenges, not being prioritised in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, and experiencing financial pressure as a result of not being able to work while on placement.

In 2021 the ENSA board conducted its first survey of nursing students in Europe. The survey was opened on the 29th of June 2021 and closed on the 31st of July 2021. It was distributed via email to student members who have linked in with ENSA directly in the past, as well as being advertised on ENSA's social media channels. ENSA also asked EFN to circulate the survey link to their national nursing associations to encourage students in their country to participate. While acknowledging the limitations of doing a survey in this manner compared to the rigour of studies for publication, the ENSA Board hoped to gain some insight into what student nurses in Europe were experiencing at the time it was conducted.

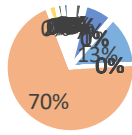
Section 1: Individual Question Summary Results

1. In what country are you studying

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Albania	0,00 %	0
Austria	0,63%	6
Belgium	0,00%	0
Bulgaria	0,00%	0
Croatia	0,63%	6
Cyprus	0,00%	0
Czech Republic	0,00%	0
Denmark	1,79%	17
Estonia	0,74%	7
Finland	0,11%	1
France	0,00%	0
Germany	7,04%	67
Greece	0,00%	0
Hungary	0,00%	0
Iceland	0,53%	5
Ireland	12,61%	120
Italy	0,00%	0
Latvia	0,00%	0
Lithuania	0,00%	0
Luxembourg	0,00%	0
Malta	0,00%	0
Montenegro	0,00%	0
Netherlands	0,00%	0
North Macedonia	0,00%	0
Norway	70,06%	667
Poland	0,21%	2
Portugal	2,21%	21
Romania	0,00%	0
Serbia	0,00%	0
Slovak Republic	0,11%	1
Slovenia	0,00%	0
Spain	1,37%	13
Sweden	0,21%	2
Switzerland	1,37%	13
UK	0,32%	3
Other (Please specify)	0,11%	1
Answered		952
Skipped		0

Table 1

Figure 1



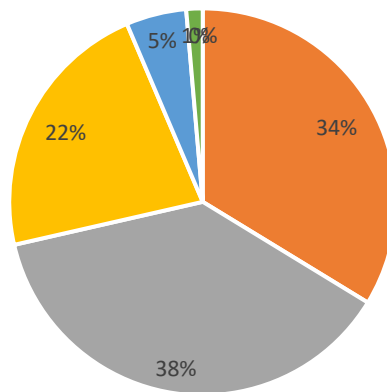
- Answer Choices
- Albania
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal

2. In what year of your course are you studying?

	Responses	N =
1st. year	33,72 %	321
2nd. year	37,71 %	359
3rd. year	22,16 %	211
4th. year	5,04 %	48
Other (please specify)	1,37 %	13
Answered		952
Skipped		0

Table 2

Figure 2

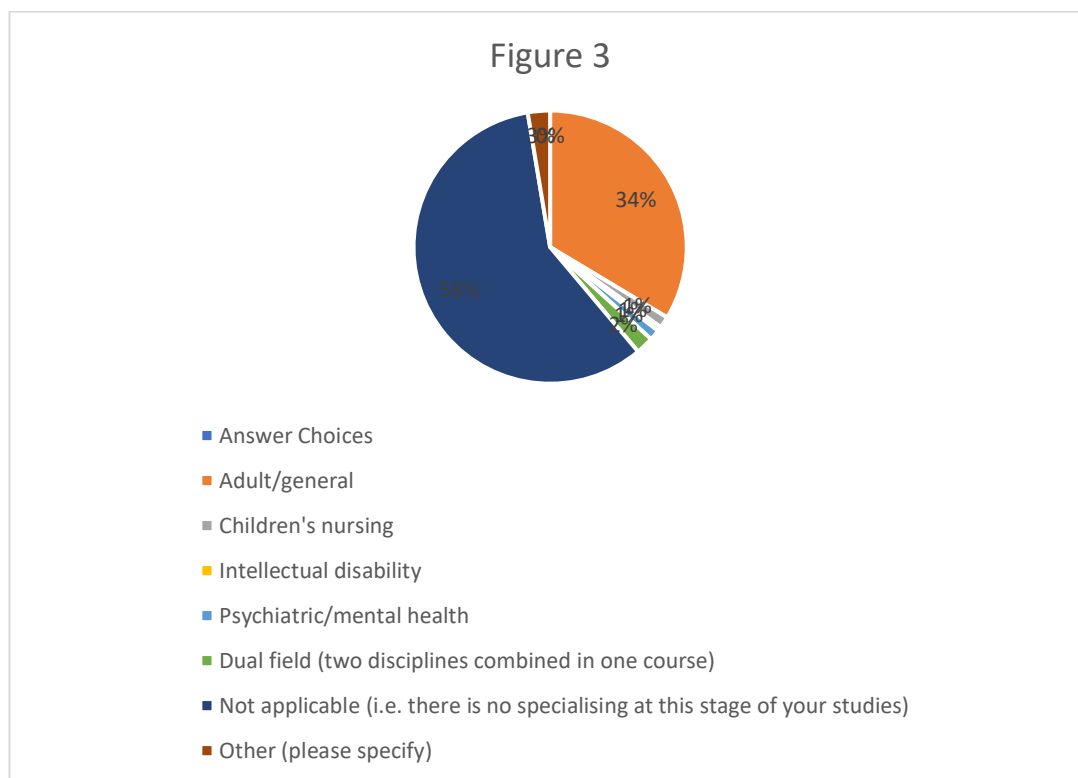


- Answer Choices
- 1st year
- 2nd year
- 3rd year
- 4th year
- Other (please specify)

3. In what year of your course are you studying?

	Responses	N =
Adult/general		320
Children's nursing		13
Psychiatric/mental health		12
Intellectual disability		5
Dual field (two disciplines combined in one course)		20
Not applicable (i.e. there is no specialising at this stage of your studies)		557
Other (please specify)		25
Answered		952
Skipped		0

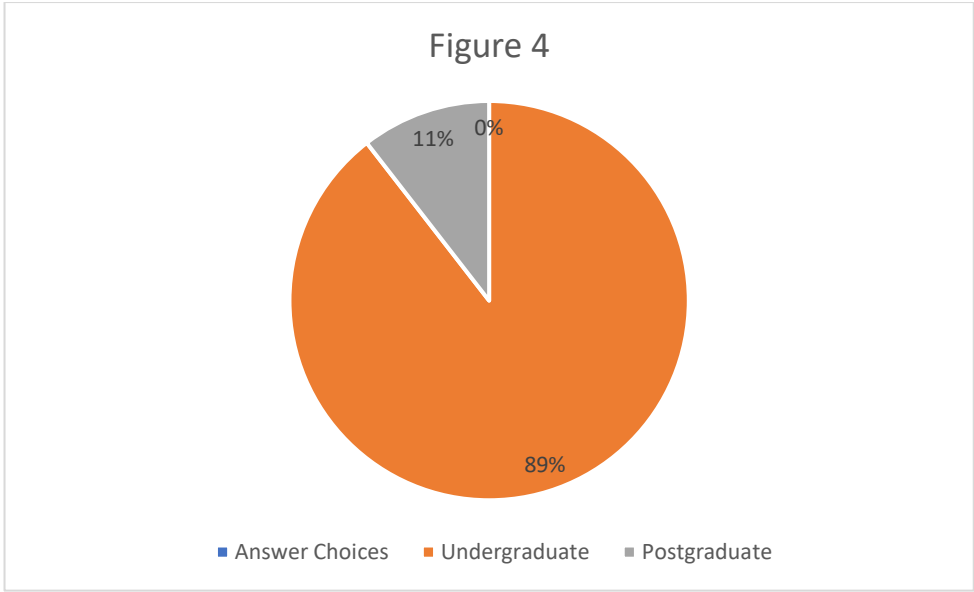
Table 3



4. Are you an undergraduate or postgraduate student?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Undergraduate	89,50 %	852
Postgraduate	10,50 %	200
Answered		952
Skipped		0

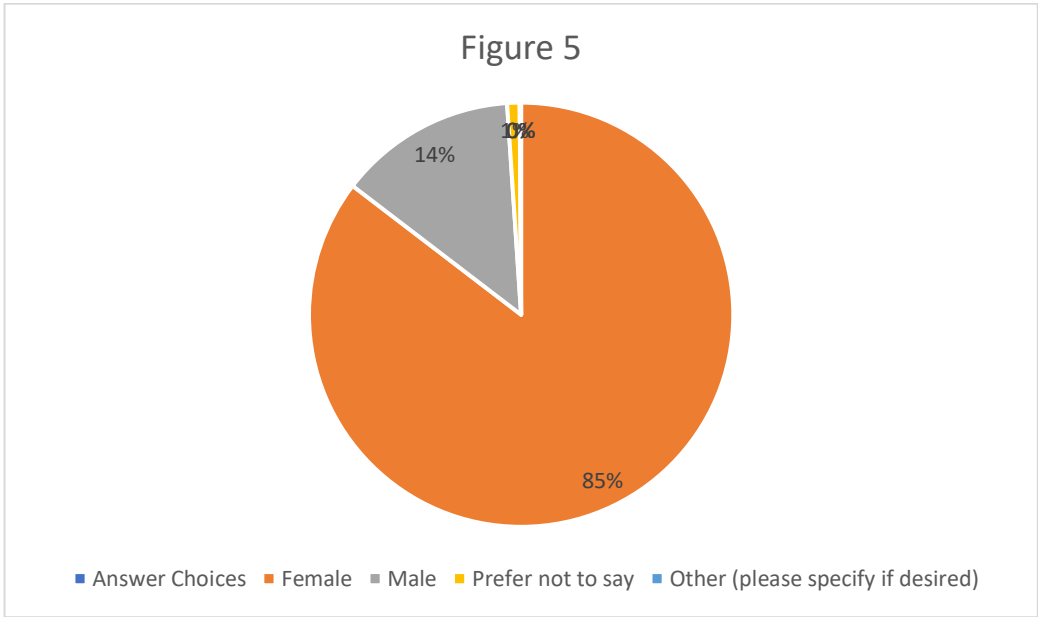
Table 4



5. Please state your sex

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Female	85,40 %	813
Male	13,55 %	129
Prefer not to say	0,95 %	9
Other (please specify if desired)	0,11 %	1
Answered		952
Skipped		0

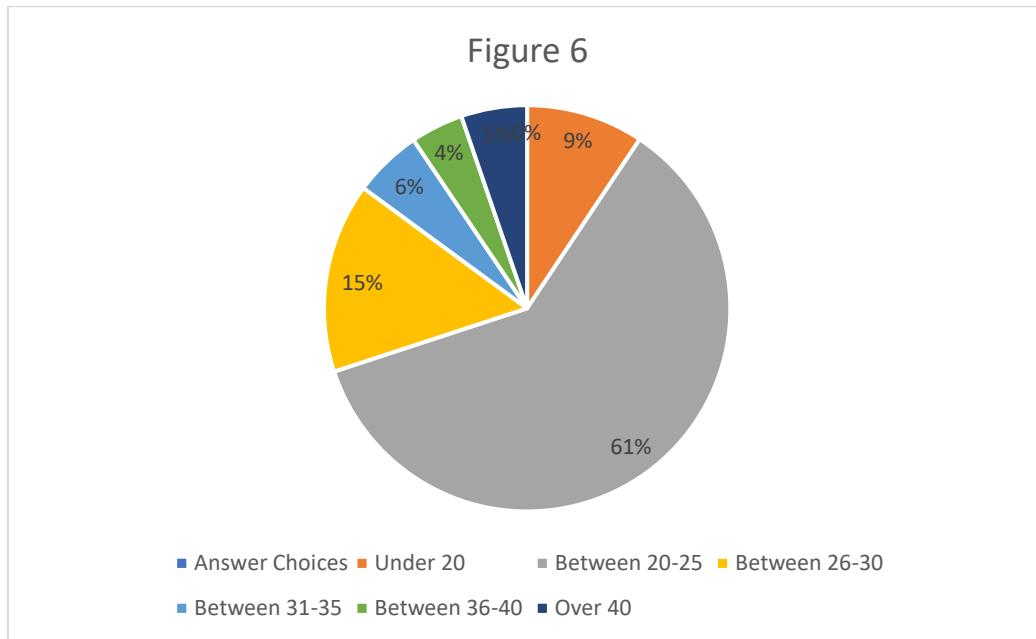
Table 5



6. What age are you?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Under 20	9,35 %	89
Between 20 -25	60,61 %	577
Between 26 -30	15,13 %	144
Between 31- 35	5,46 %	52
Between 36 – 40	4,20 %	40
Over 40	5,25 %	50
Answered		952
Skipped		0

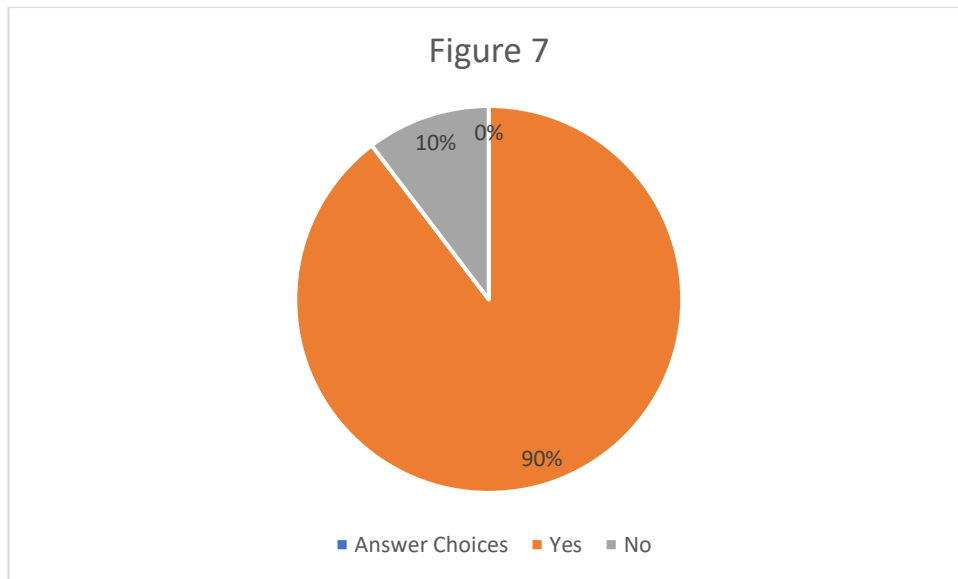
Table 6



7. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be in favour of vaccination programmes for public health?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	89,66 %	720
No	10,34 %	83
Answered		8,3
Skipped		149

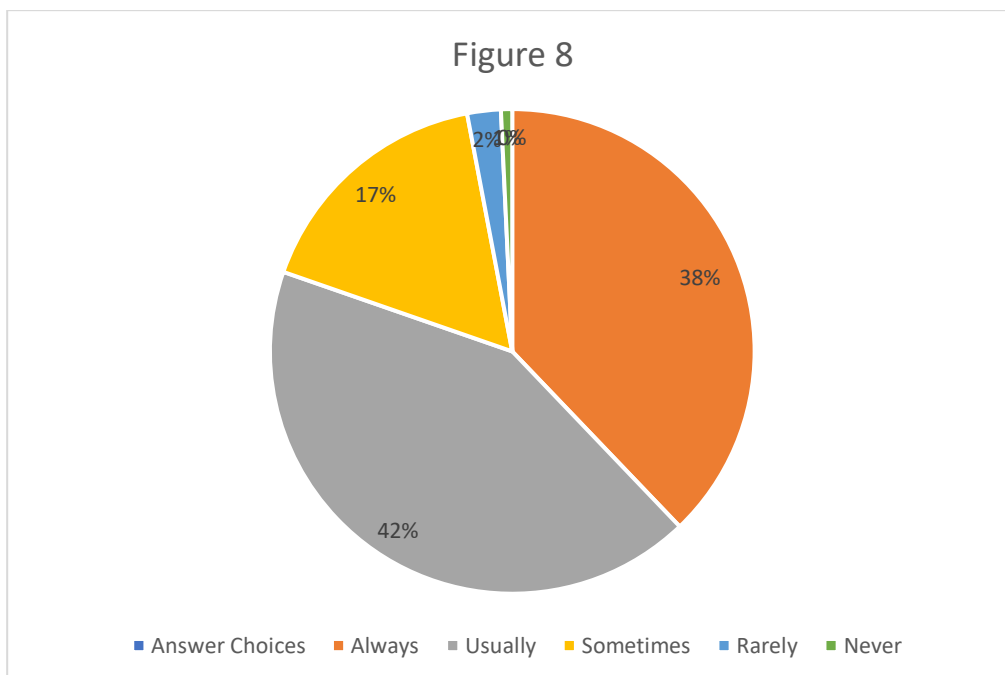
Table 7



8. In general, do you feel confident to reply to questions about vaccines?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Always	37,86 %	304
Usually	42,47 %	341
Sometimes	16,69 %	134
Rarely	2,24 %	18
Never	0,75 %	6
Answered		8,3
Skipped		149

Table 8

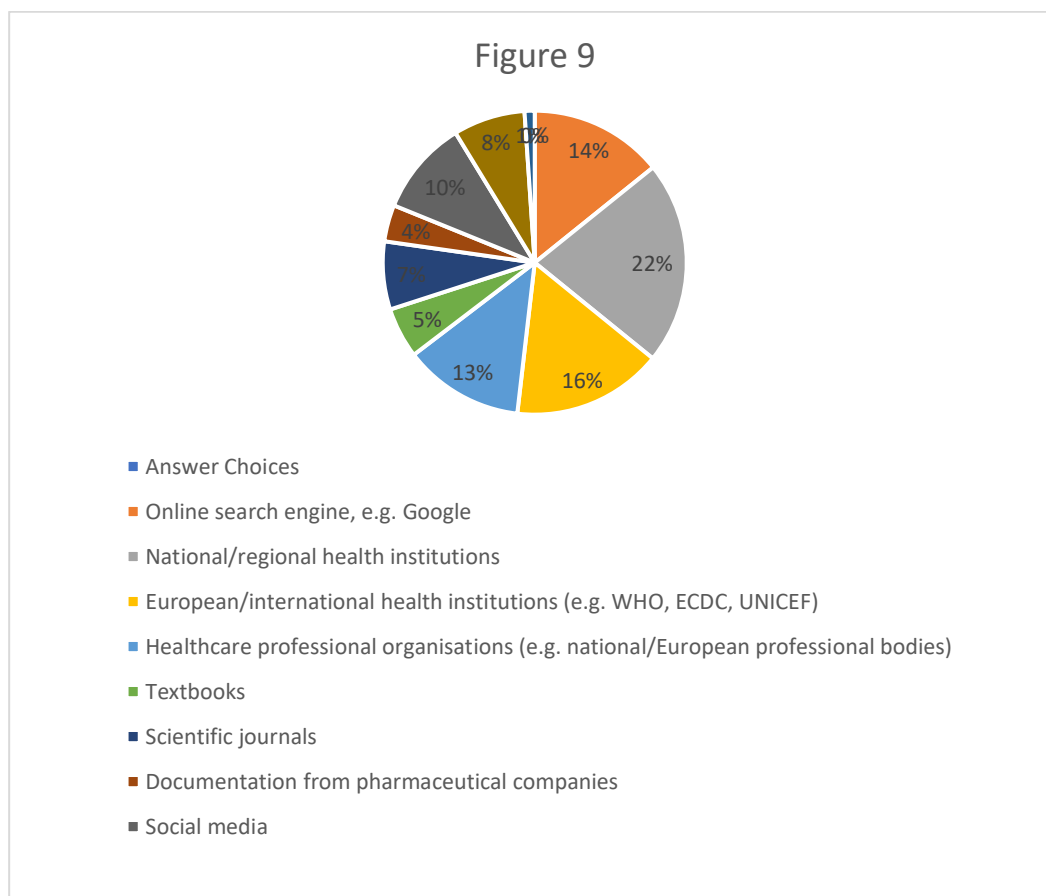


9. Aside from your college/university/educational institute, where do you get most of your information on vaccines from? (tick all which apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
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Online search engine, e.g. Google	47,70 %	383
National/regional health institutions	72,60 %	583
European/international health institutions (e.g. WHO, ECDC, UNICEF)	53,67 %	431
Healthcare professional organisations (e.g. national/European professional bodies)	42,96 %	345
Textbooks	18,06 %	145
Scientific journals	24,28 %	195
Documentation from pharmaceutical companies	13,08 %	105
Social media	34,00 %	273
Speaking with peers	25,65 %	206
Other (please specify)	3,61 %	29
Answered		803
Skipped		149

Table 9

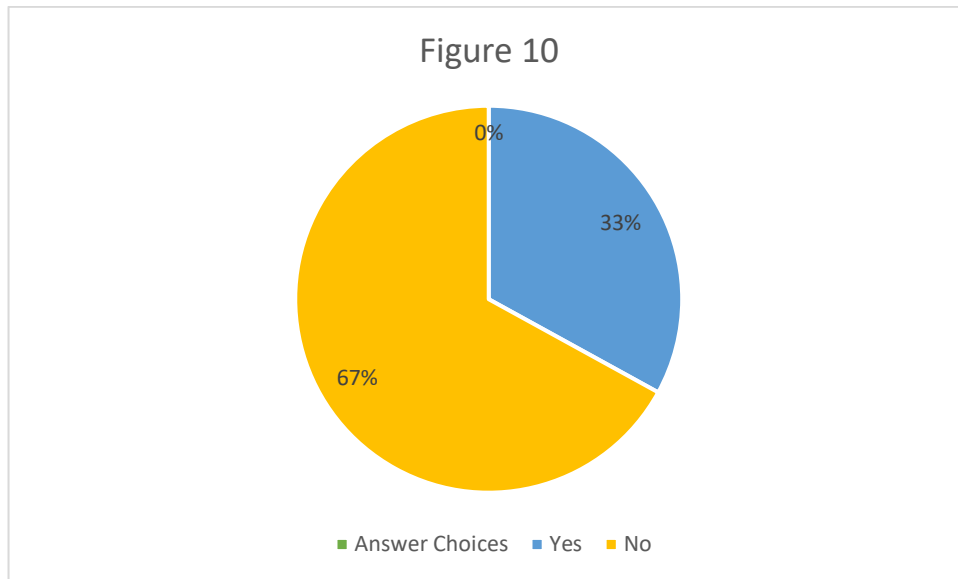


10. Do you feel you receive enough education on vaccines as part of your course?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	33,00 %	265

No	67,00 %	538
Answered		803
Skipped		149

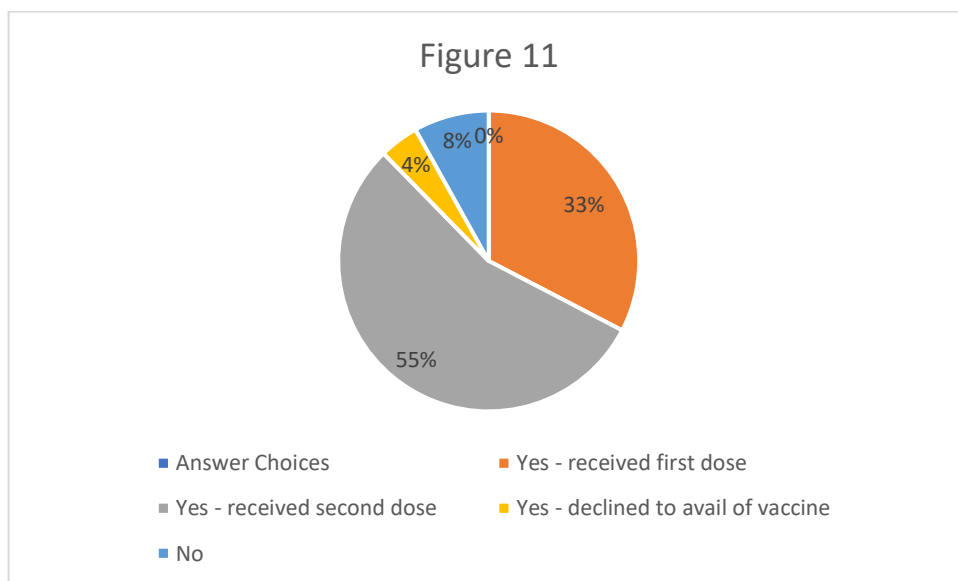
Table 10



11. Have you been offered the COVID-19 vaccine yet?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes - received first dose	32,63 %	262
Yes - received second dose	55,04 %	442
Yes - declined to avail of vaccine	4,23 %	34
No	8,09 %	65
Answered		803
Skipped		149

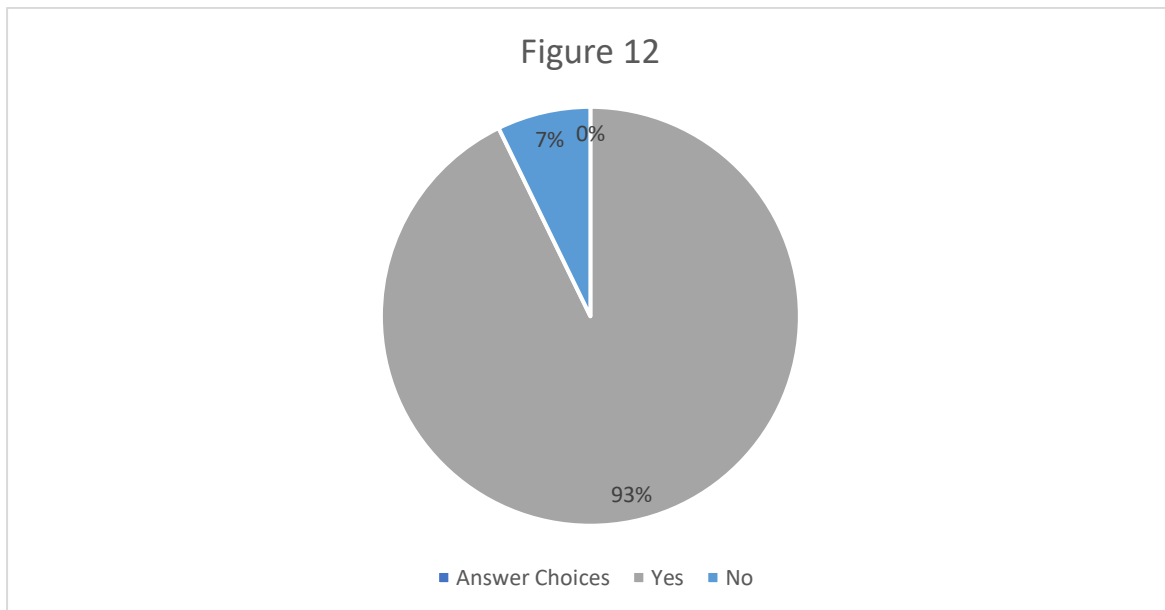
Table 11



12. Do you think all nursing students should receive the COVID-19 vaccine (except for those with medical exemptions)?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	92,78 %	745
No	7,22 %	58
Answered		803
Skipped		149

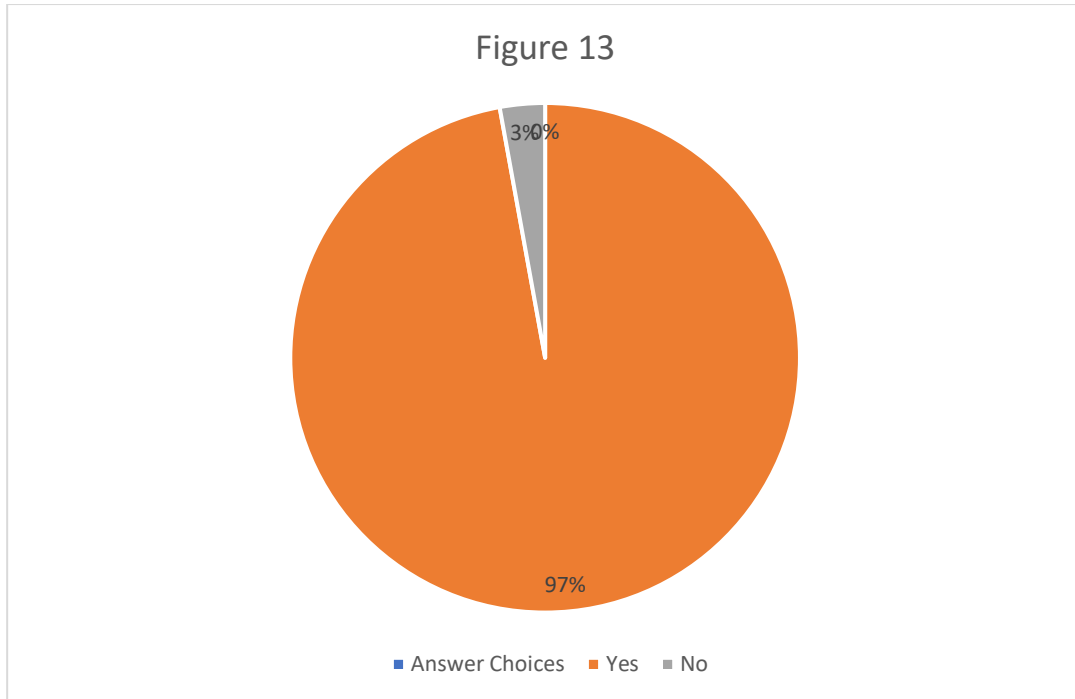
Table 12



13. Do you think student nurses should be part of the COVID-19 vaccine administration process if they wish to take part?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	97,14 %	780
No	2,86 %	23
Answered		803
Skipped		149

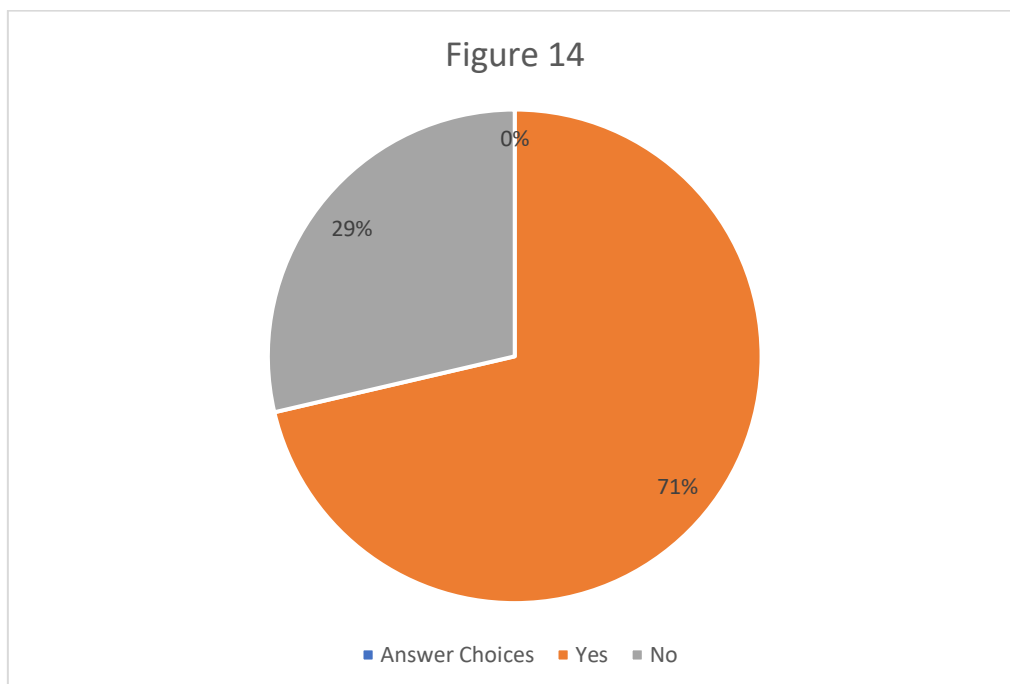
Table 13



14. Are nursing students in your country able to participate in the COVID-19 vaccine administration in some capacity?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	71,36 %	573
No	28,64 %	230
Answered		803
Skipped		149

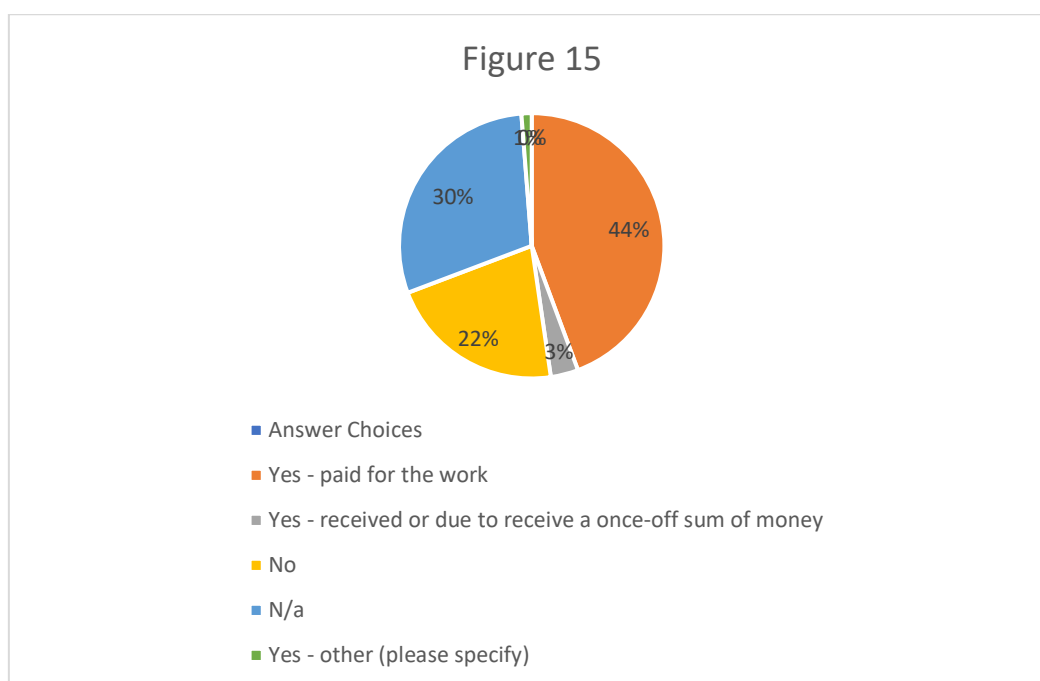
Table 14



15. If yes, have students received any recognition for assisting in vaccine administration?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes – paid for the work	44,33 %	356
Yes – received or due to receive a once-off sum of money	3.36 %	27
No	21,54 %	173
N/a	29.51 %	237
Yes – other (please specify)	1.25 %	10
Answered		803
Skipped		149

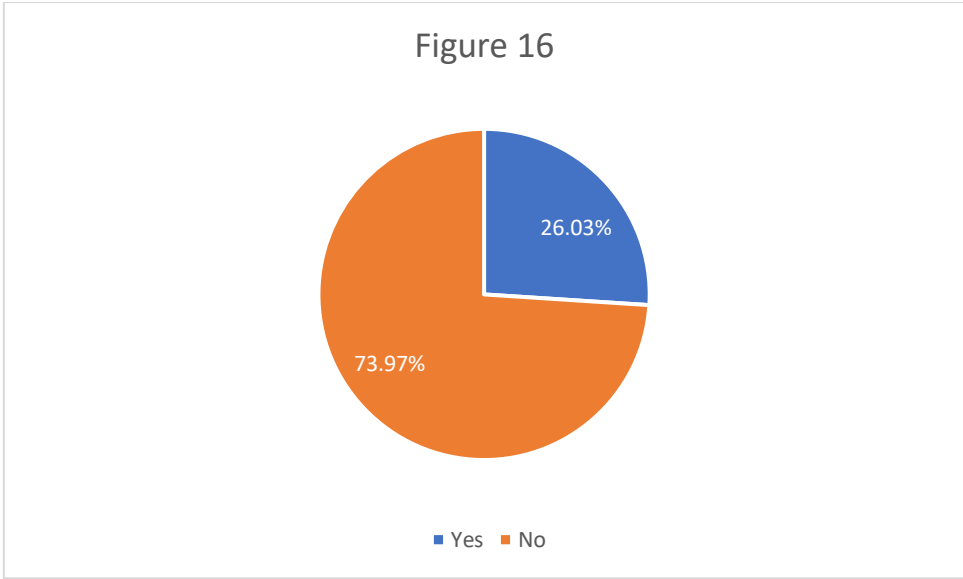
Table 15



16. Have you been told that you may not be able to attend clinical placement if you do not avail of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	26.03%	209
No	73.97%	594
	Answered	803
	Skipped	149

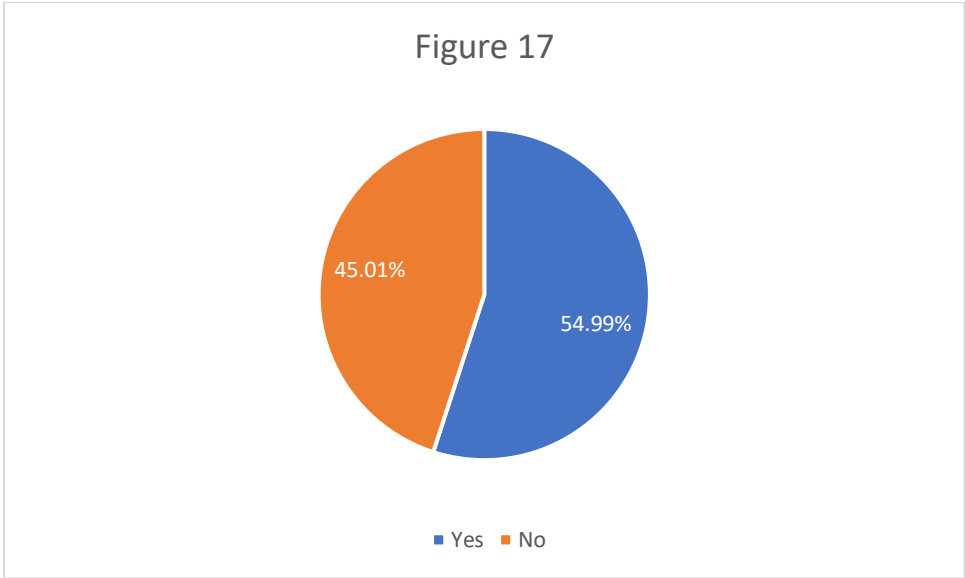
Table 16



17. Have you been able to continue to work part-time jobs as normal to support yourself while on clinical placement this year?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	54.99%	424
No	45.01%	347
	Answered	771
	Skipped	181

Table 17

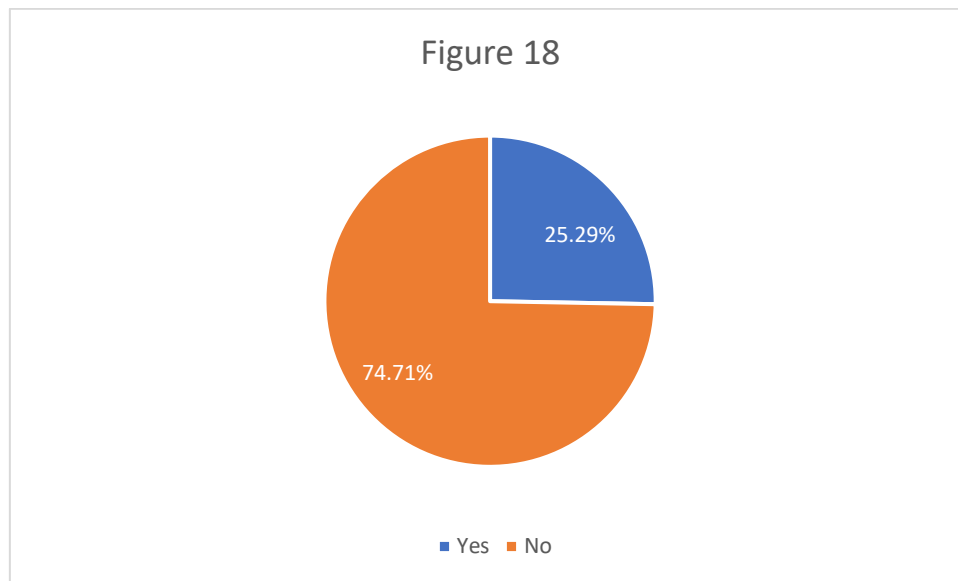


18. Have you received any financial compensation for being on placement during COVID-19? E.g. a new student grant or a specific social welfare payment for not being able to work?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	25.29%	195

No	74.71%	576
	Answered	771
	Skipped	181

Table 18

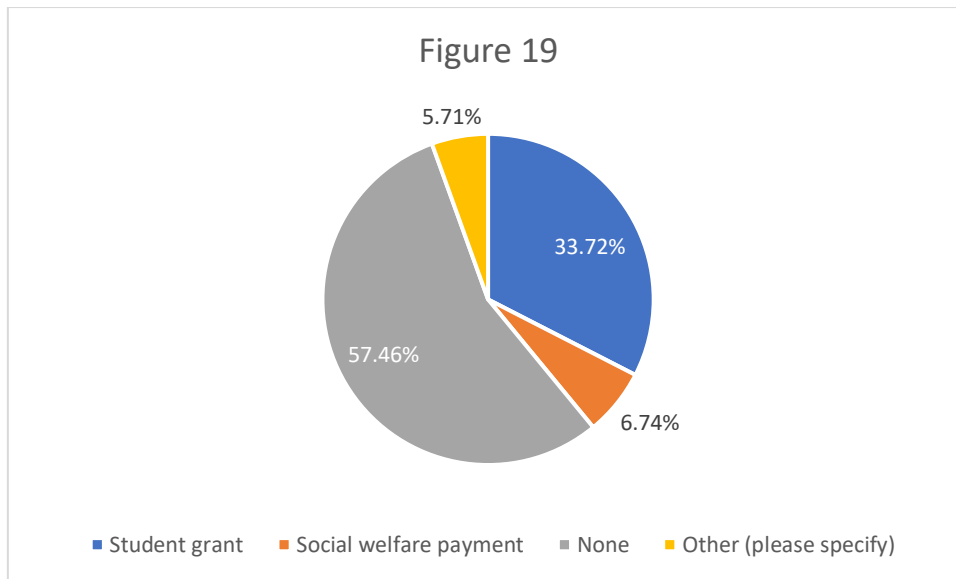


19. What type of financial compensation have you received (tick all which apply)?

Answer Choices	Responses choosing option as first choice	N =
Student grant	33.72%	260
Social welfare payment	6.74%	52
None	57.46%	443
Other (please specify)	5.71%	44
	Answered	771
	Skipped	181

Table 19

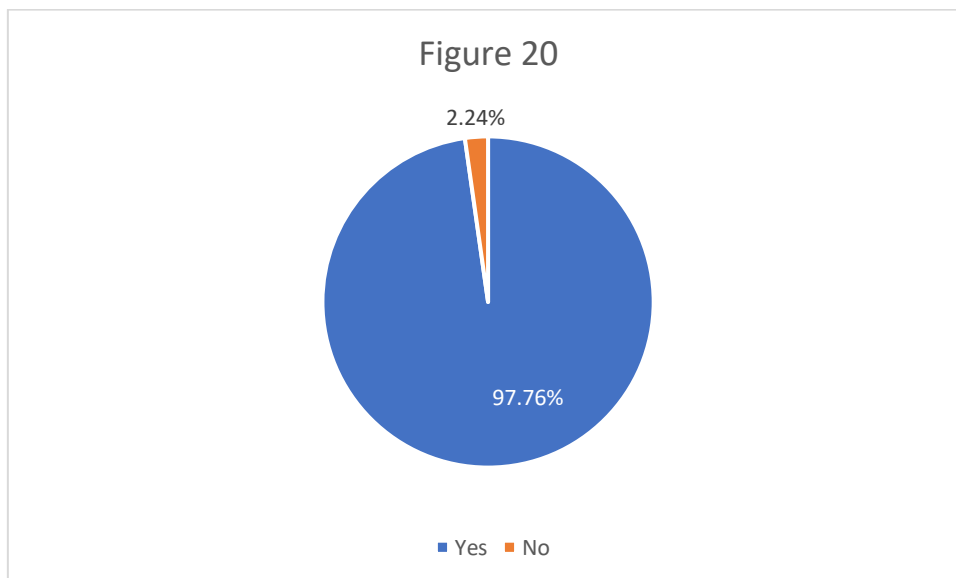
Examples of 'other' responses include, but are not limited to; "job payment"; "loan"; "once-off placement grant"; "stipendium"



20. Did your academic learning have to move online as opposed to taking place in person due to COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	97.76%	743
No	2.24%	17
	Answered	760
	Skipped	192

Table 20

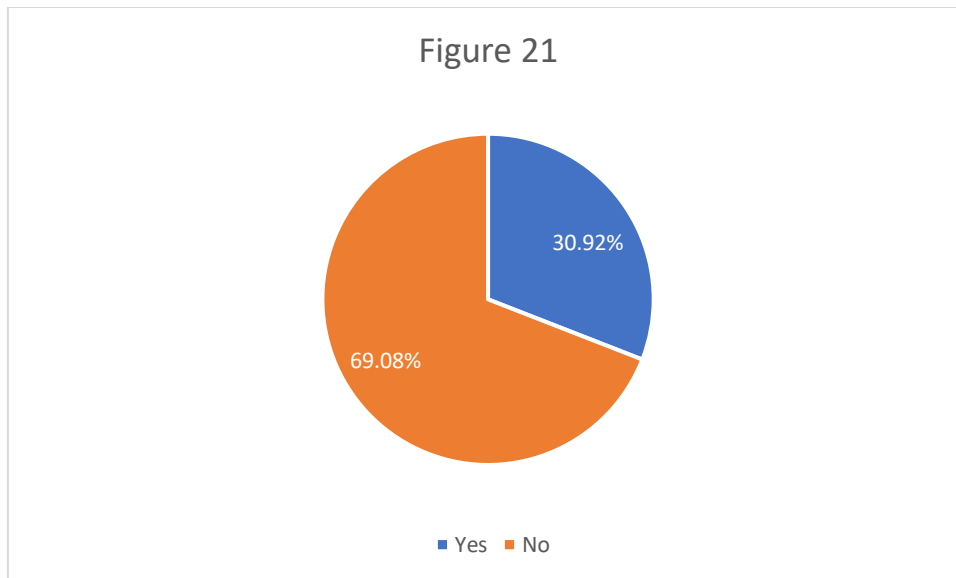


21. Did you feel you received adequate support from your higher education institute/college/university?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
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Yes	30.92%	235
No	69.08%	525
	Answered	760
	Skipped	192

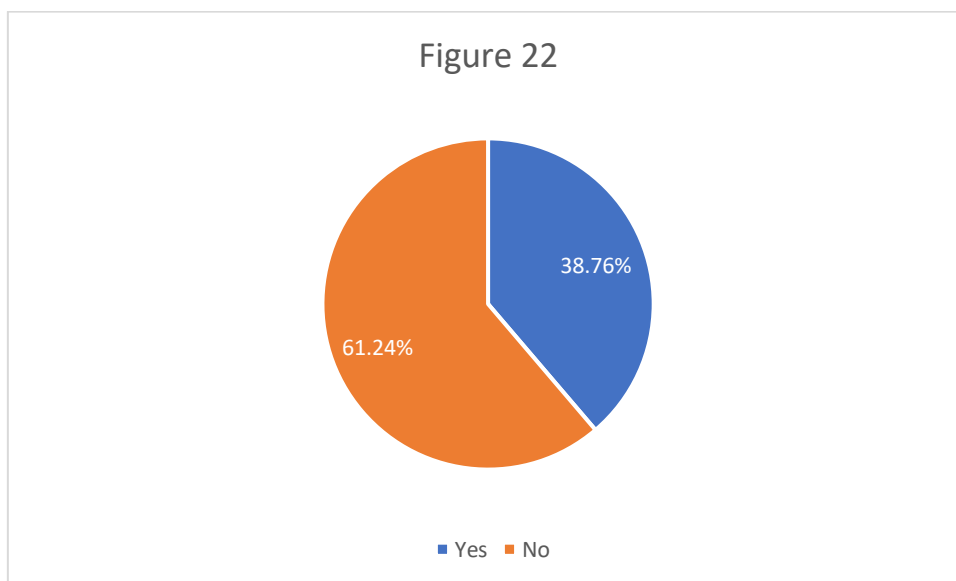
Table 21



22. Did you or do you care for patient(s) with COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	38.76%	276
No	61.24%	436
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

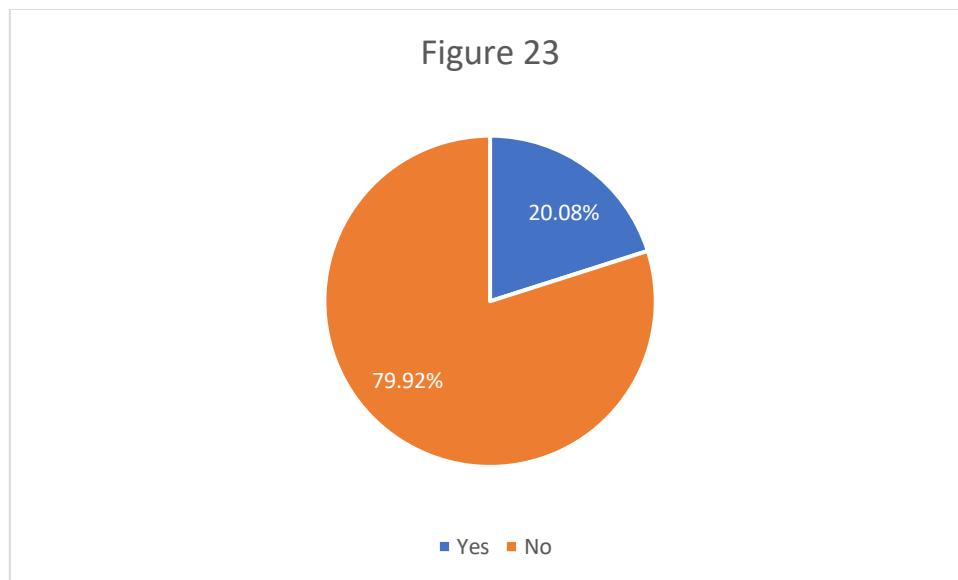
Table 22



23. Did you care for patient(s) who subsequently died of COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	20.08%	143
No	79.92%	569
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

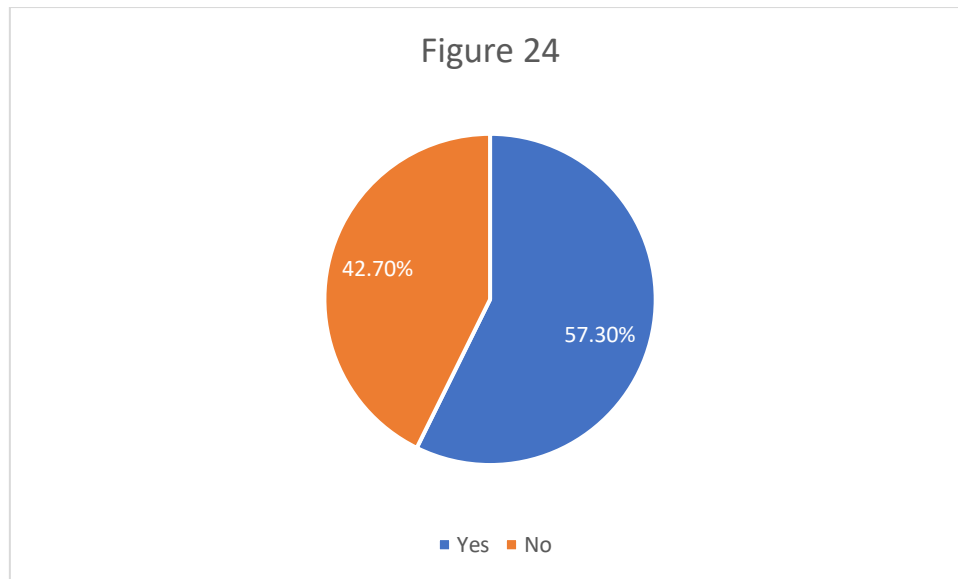
Table 23



24. Do you believe that your experience of COVID-19 has had a negative psychological impact on you?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	57.30%	408
No	42.70%	304
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

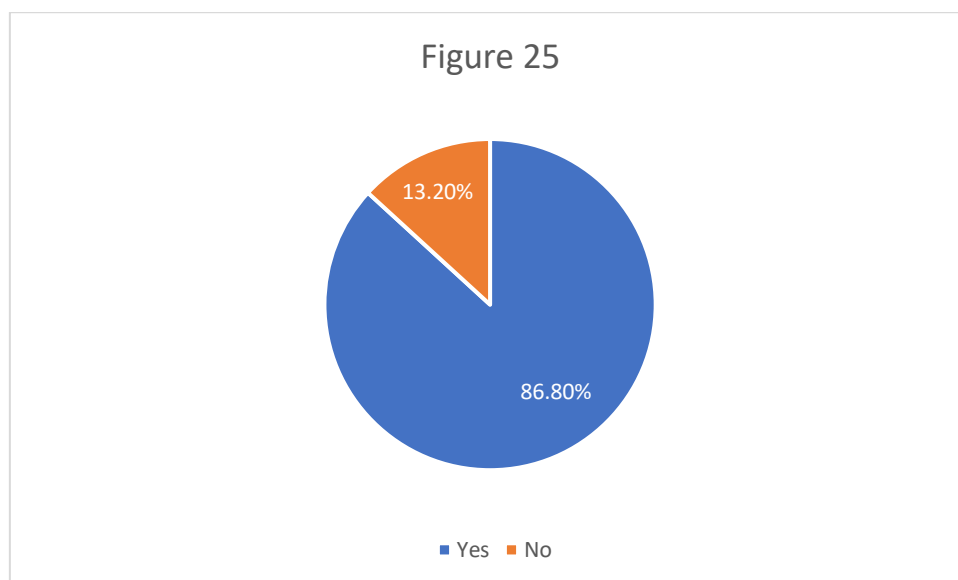
Table 24



25. Do you believe that the experience of COVID-19 has had a negative psychological impact on your student nursing colleagues?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	86.80%	618
No	13.20%	94
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

Table 25



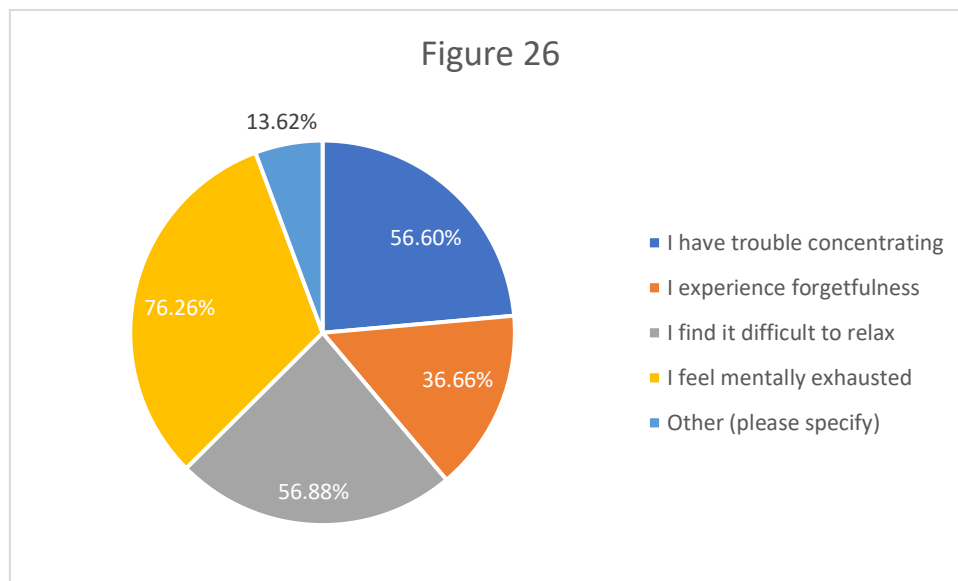
26. When off duty, have you experienced any of the following since the COVID-19 pandemic?
(Tick all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
I have trouble concentrating	56.60%	403

I experience forgetfulness	36.66%	261
I find it difficult to relax	56.88%	405
I feel mentally exhausted	76.26%	543
Other (please specify)	13.62%	97
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

Table 26

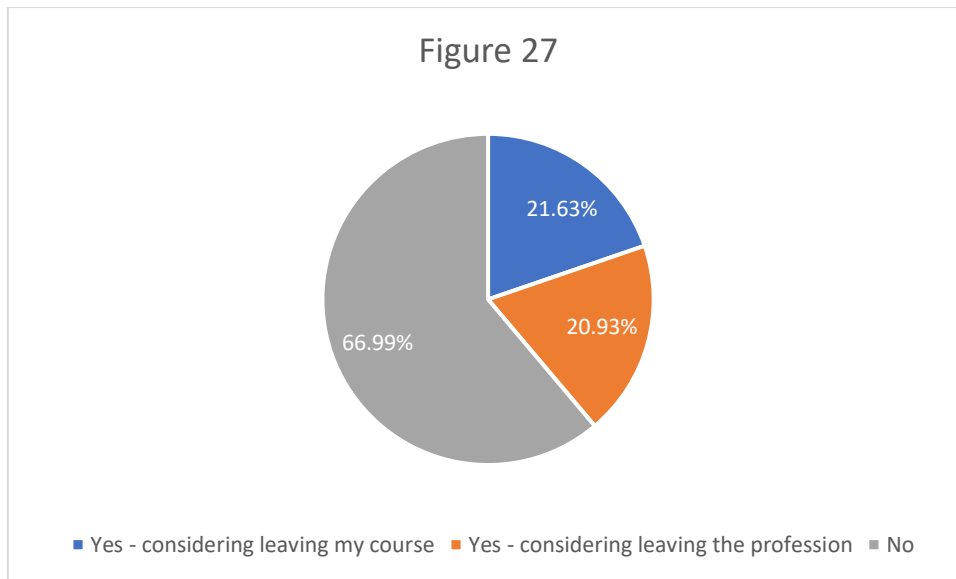
Examples of 'other' responses include, but are not limited to; "My mental health has declined so much that I've returned to seeing a therapist"; "insomnia"; "loneliness"; "none"



27. Has your experience of working during the COVID-19 caused you to consider leaving the profession/dropping out of your course? (Tick all which apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes - considering leaving my course	21.63%	154
Yes - considering leaving the profession	20.93%	149
No	66.99%	477
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

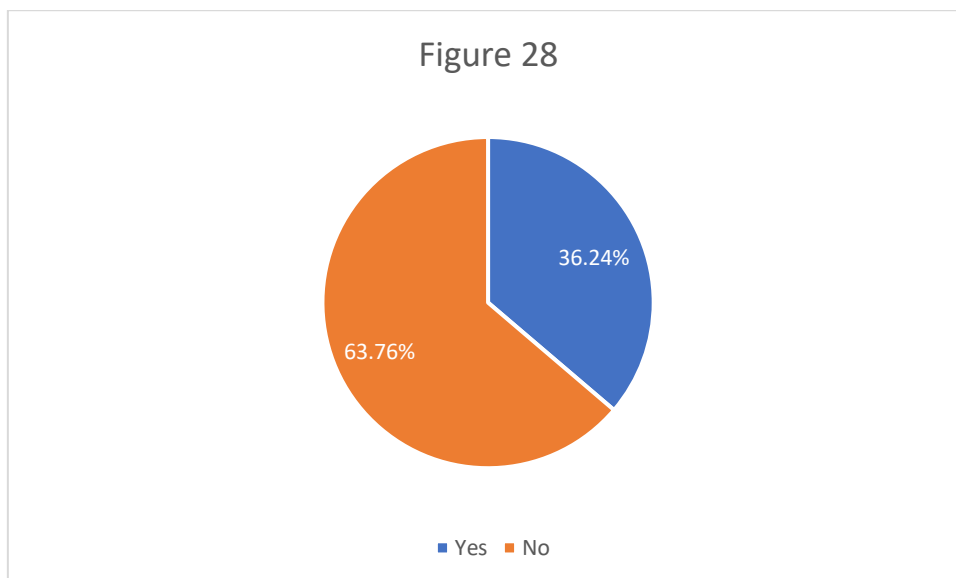
Table 27



28. Do you know of any of your classmates who have left the course due to their experience of working during COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	36.24%	258
No	63.76%	454
		Answered 712
		Skipped 240

Table 28

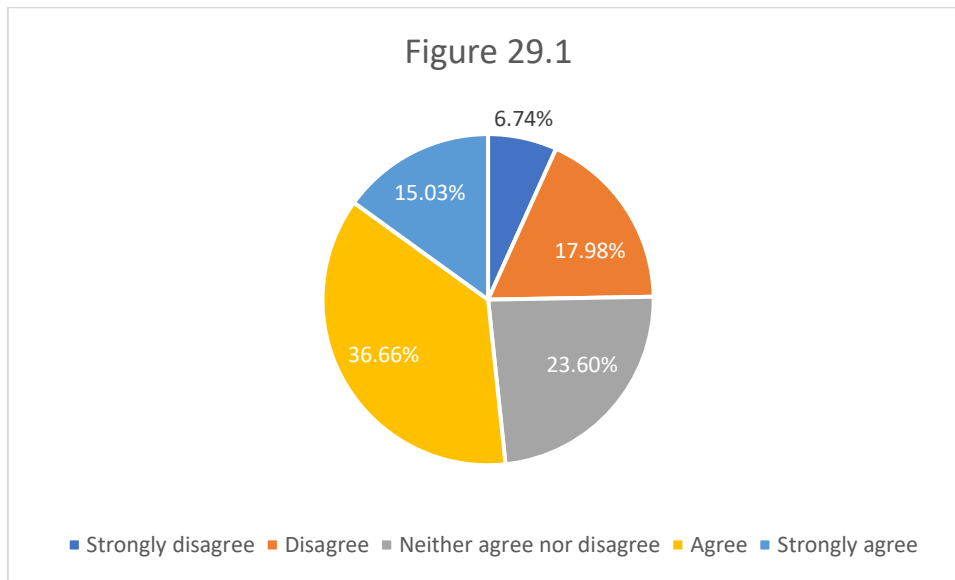


29. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements around your experience of COVID-19 in the clinical placement environment:

“I feel that my personal health has been put at risk”

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Strongly disagree	6.74%	48
Disagree	17.98%	128
Neither agree nor disagree	23.60%	168
Agree	36.66%	261
Strongly agree	15.03%	107

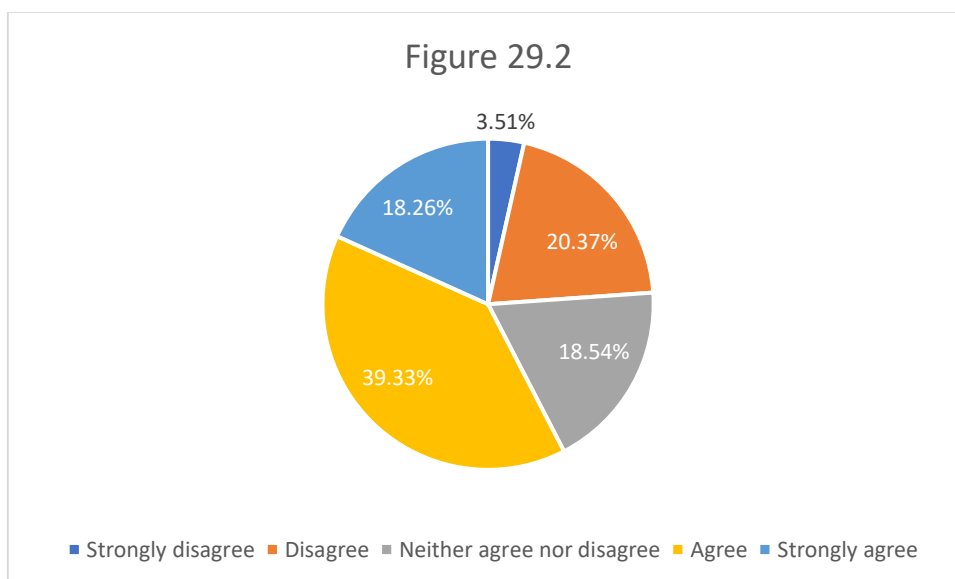
Table 29.1



“The correct personal protective equipment is always available in my clinical placement site”

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Strongly disagree	3.51%	25
Disagree	20.37%	145
Neither agree nor disagree	18.54%	132
Agree	39.33%	280
Strongly agree	18.26%	130

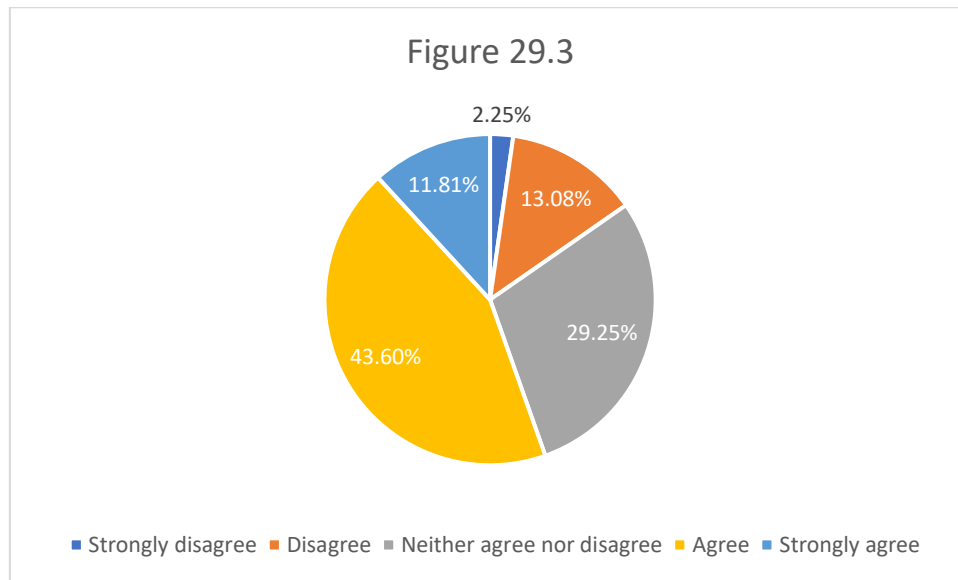
Table 29.2



“I am confident in my clinical placement site’s ability to keep my safe”

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Strongly disagree	2.25%	16
Disagree	13.08%	93
Neither agree nor disagree	29.25%	208
Agree	43.60%	310
Strongly agree	11.81%	84

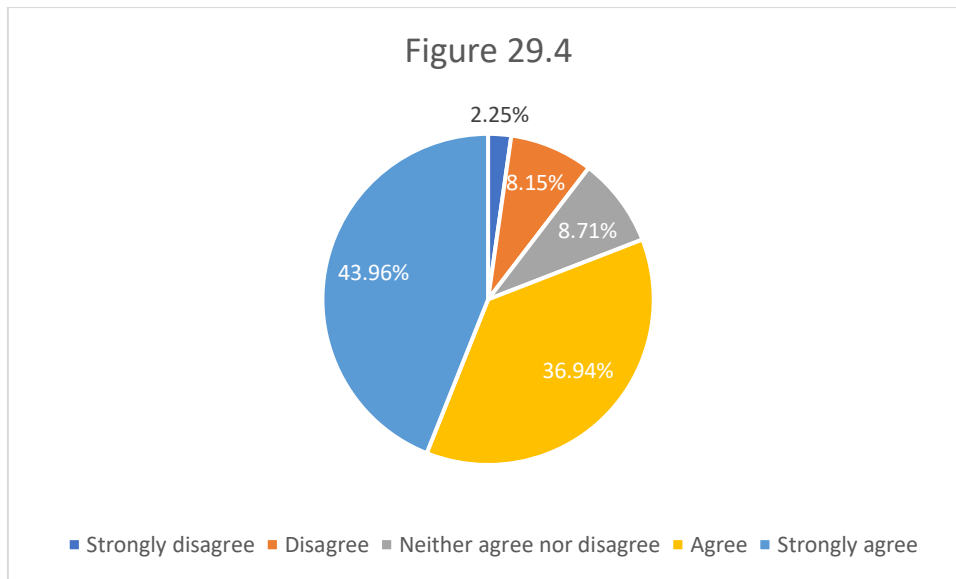
Table 29.3



“I experience stress about the risk of spreading the infection to family or housemates”

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Strongly disagree	2.25%	16
Disagree	8.15%	58
Neither agree nor disagree	8.71%	62
Agree	36.94%	263
Strongly agree	43.96%	313

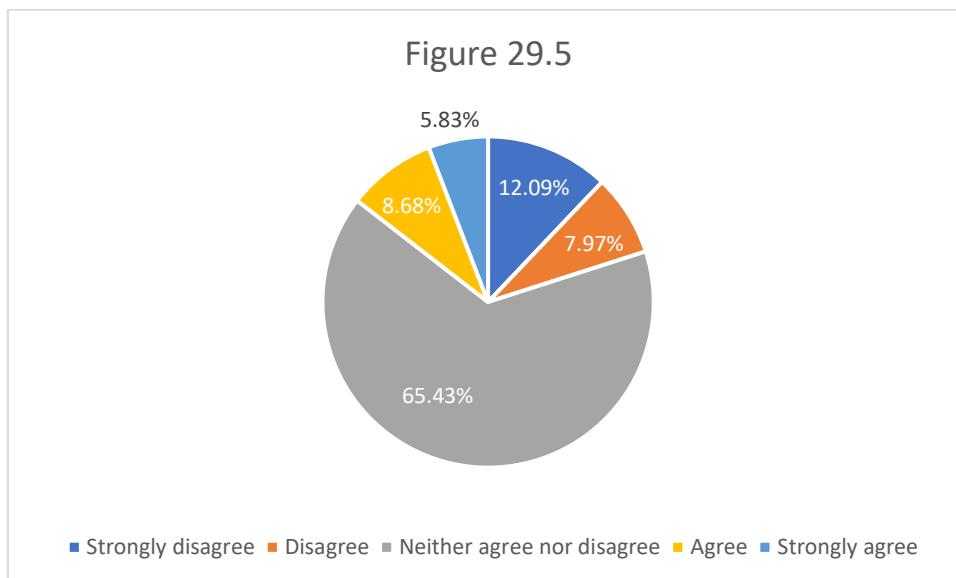
Table 29.4



“I have experienced stress in securing childcare during the pandemic”

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Strongly disagree	12.09%	85
Disagree	7.97%	56
Neither agree nor disagree	65.43%	460
Agree	8.68%	61
Strongly agree	5.83%	41

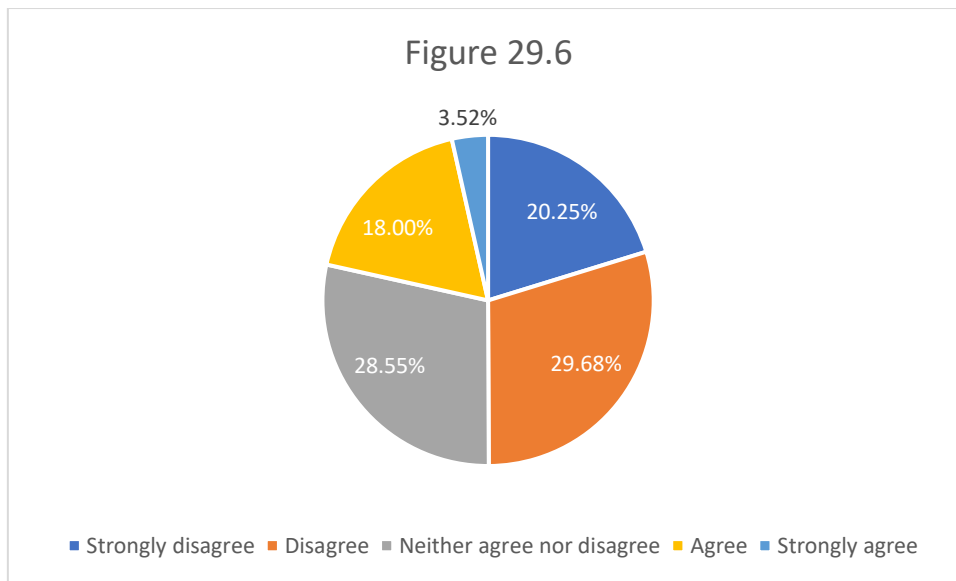
Table 29.5



“I have had access to adequate psychological support”

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Strongly disagree	20.25%	144
Disagree	29.68%	211
Neither agree nor disagree	28.55%	203
Agree	18.00%	128
Strongly agree	3.52%	25

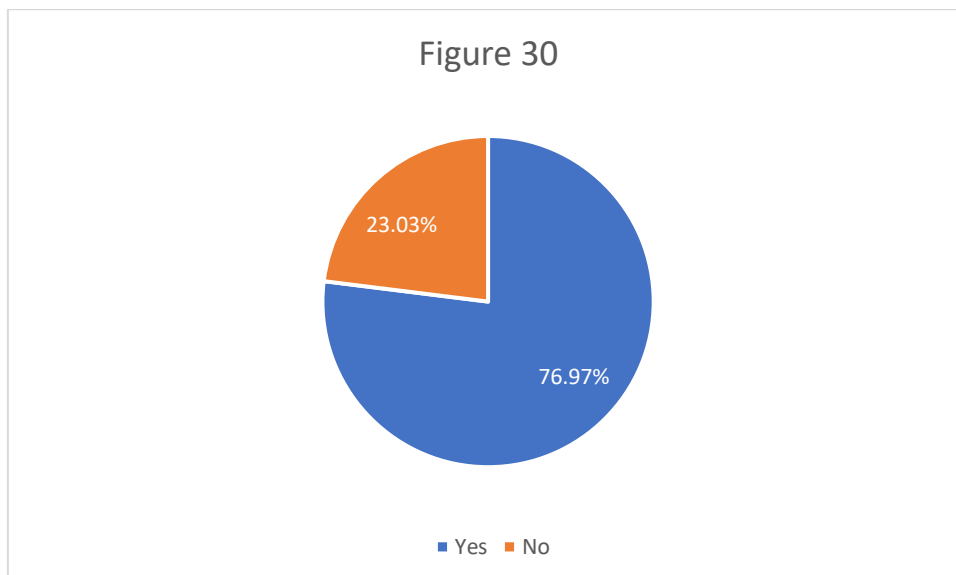
Table 29.6



30. Do you believe that routine COVID-19 testing of students should take place at your clinical placement site?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	76.97%	548
No	23.03%	164
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

Table 30

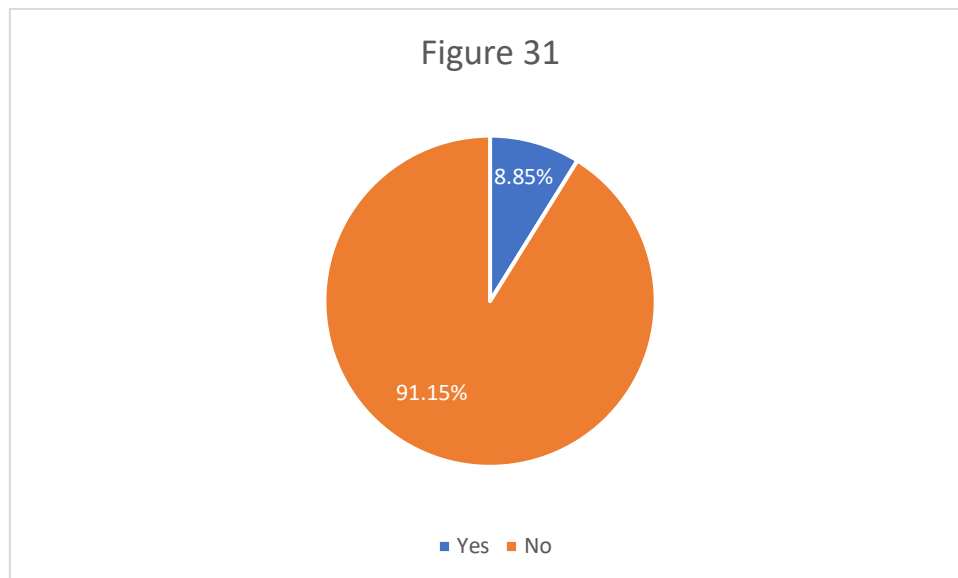


31. Did you contract COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	8.85%	63

No	91.15%	649
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

Table 31

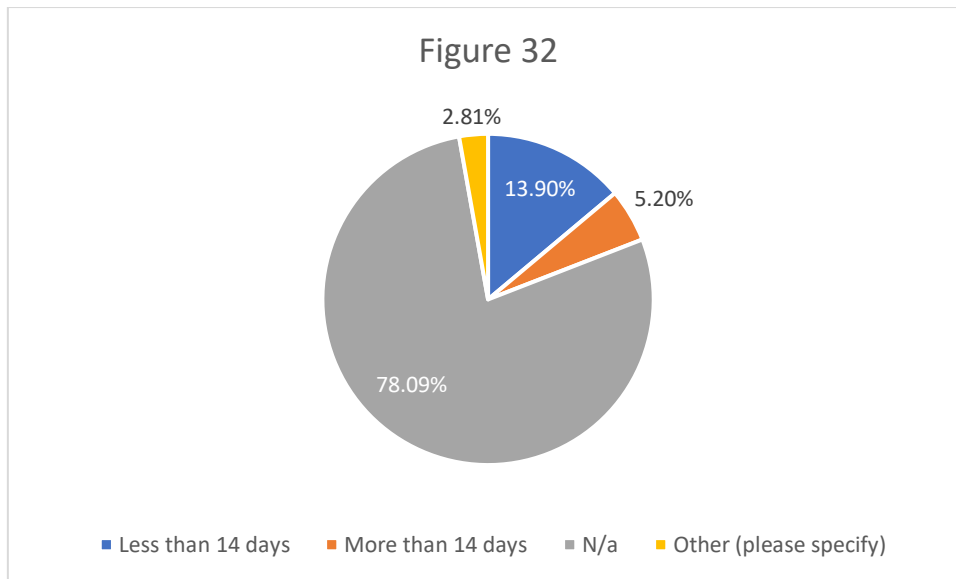


32. How long were you out on sick leave due to COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Less than 14 days	13.90%	99
More than 14 days	5.20%	37
N/a	78.09%	556
Other (please specify)	2.81%	20
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

Table 32

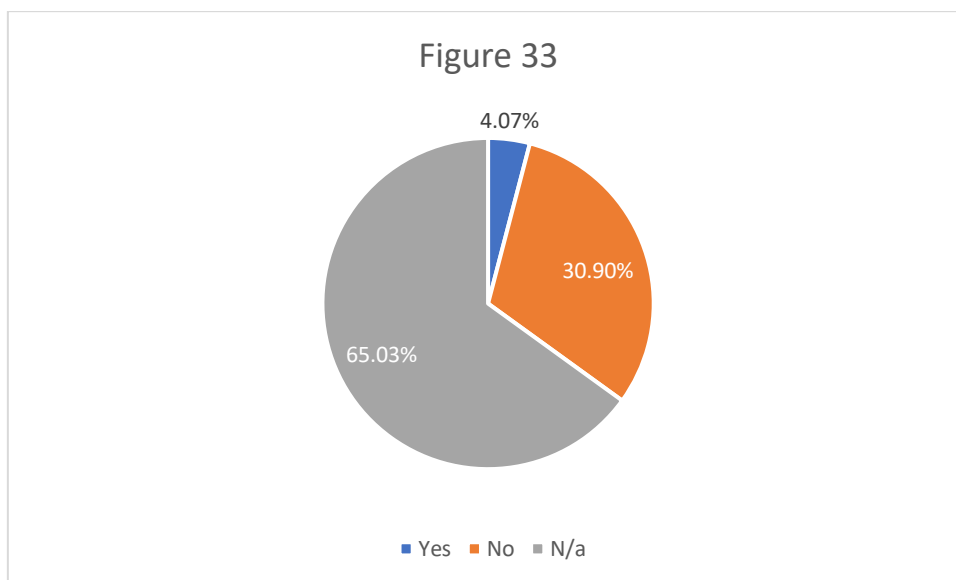
Examples of 'other' responses include, but are not limited to; "0 days"; "none"; "close contact isolation 10 days"; "I wasn't sick by covid-19, but depression. Finished school online"; "school online".



33. On returning to placement, did you have to take further sick leave due to COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	4.07%	29
No	30.90%	220
N/a	65.03%	463
	Answered	712
	Skipped	240

Table 33

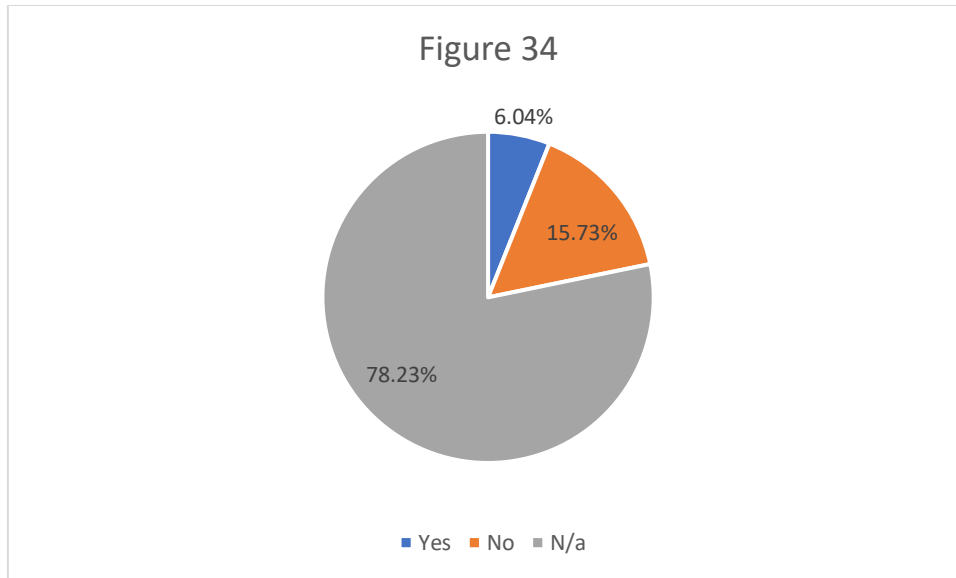


34. If you contracted COVID-19, are you currently experiencing long term physical effects of the virus?

Answer Choices	Responses	N =
Yes	6.04%	43

No	15.73%	112
N/a	78.23%	557
		Answered
		712
		Skipped
		240

Table 34



Section 2: Respondents Comments / Thoughts

Question 35 was an optional question which allowed respondents to leave an open comment in relation to matters they believed required mentioning. This option was taken up by 82 respondents, of whom 20 commented “no”, “none”, or “n/a”, while 10 participants left feedback about the survey itself e.g. “good questions”, “thanks for doing this survey”, “quite a lot of questions didn’t have the appropriate box for my situation. Lacks a N/A box some places”. Selected comments were categorised under the following headings based on the trends that emerged.

2.1 Remote learning / Support from education institute

“I feel as student nurses we were supported very well while on clinical placement but I feel very strongly that we missed out on so much learning opportunities by having no practical sessions at all throughout my full second year of general nursing. We learned our practical skills from YouTube videos and there is no comparison to classroom learning when it's such a practical vocation such as nursing.”

“Our online education was shit and left me a lot less motivated.”

“The university i go to have not done a very good job during covid. We have lost alot of learning opportunities and lessons.”

“The quality of both theoretical and practical studies have dropped drastically and I do not feel like me and my classmates have gotten the proper education for giving the best possible care to our current and future patients. The teachers have been distant and students have been left to our own business without the proper introduction to each new subject.”

“CoVid has caused a huge drop in quality when it comes to our education, and the school keeps asking us to be understanding and that CoVid makes things difficult for them and yet they show us no understanding at all. That has been very frustrating.”

“We have not been attending school at all (on less than 5 occasions) and have not gained the needed practical or theoretical knowledge to help us move forward with our studies (i.g. not learned injections in 1st year).”

“I am one of the lucky ones where my clinical placement has been almost not affected by the pandemic at all. Theoretical courses however, have all been affected and online, leading to digital exhaustion.”

“Little support and understanding was shown by the college.”

“Online learning in my opinion is not suitable for teaching the nursing profession.”

2.2 Vaccinations

“In Portugal internship nursing students are not being vaccinated, and i specifically became infected at my internship site through contact with an infected patient. It would be important that they also protect students, since we are at constant risk like other professionals who are receiving a salary.”

“There should be more focused effort on maintaining the students psychological health post-covid.”

“I strongly agree in the vaccination program, and have declined the vaccine due to early pregnancy.”

“Before entering practical training Alle students should have been offered the Covid19 vaccine as a standard.”

“I think students should be offerd the vaccsine before placement. I have been scerd to acsidental spread covid-19 to my patients, so i have been less social than i could have.”

“I received the COVID-19 vaccine since I work at an nursing home beside my studies. I haven’t gotten any offer based on that I’m an nursing student.”

“Very sad that health care workers were prioritized to have vaccine, while us students (who perform health care in the same places, but are students/not paid) have not yet been offered vaccine.”

“Felt side effects long term from covid vaccine rather than covid itself.”

2.3 Mental Health

“There should be more focused effort on maintaining the students psychological health post-covid.”

“I have struggled with mental health in the past. The past year pandemic/lockdown/quarantine combination led me to a new bottom that in turn pushed me to seek professional help; for that alone I am grateful.”

“Not enough questions about mental health. The whole pandemic and lock downs have had a gigantic effect on mental health that we are not enough aware of.”

“Most stressfull thing being a nursing student was the fear of contracting covid or being quaranteed. Because that would mean we would have to retake the placement course and fall a year behind. It was out of my control to be honest. Having that fear day and night during 4 placements was the most awful thing I have ever felt.”

“The worst year of my studies. Tried to quit so many times due to financial stress, being sent to placement sites too far away costing too much money and requiring me to stay in a strangers home when I couldn't even visit my family. Reached out for support to change my sites and was refused every time. Had to get student counselling. Cannot wait to finish and move on to a different career.”

2.4 Respect / Appreciation

“I don't feel like my government care about me or other students in my situation at all.”

“I feel students learning environment was compromised and that students had to cover the workload of staff out on sick leave. We are massively under oajrd and under recognised for our contribution to keep the health service functioning.”

“Out of my class of 15 graduating this September with me, 3 people plan to continue nursing as a career. The lack of recognition, pay and stress levels is not worth it.”

“In my hospital the Administration sent all the students to the covid 19 unit, because they were more resistant to the virus than the older staff. We felt like our health didn't matter to them whatsoever.”

“In the long-term home in which I work, we get neither recognition nor thanks for our commitment during the pandemic.”

2.5 Pay / Conditions

“It would be nice if nursing students did receive some financial compensation while in clinical placement. Right now it feels like we are being used as free work force.”

“Made me consider leaving the profession, and that the pay and working conditions make me make a serious round with myself.”

“This pandemic has been horrid for obvious reasons but I feel that as nursing students, our labour was exploited under the guise of clinical placement.”

“I feel as a student on my 1st placement it was all a bit up in the air with us actually going to attend or not. Trying last minute to organise childcare and accommodation. Also not having the vaccination prior to going out caused me a great deal of stress before getting to placement. Plus being unable to work while on placement has put a huge financial burden on me. Even without the ban the hours alone on placement make it difficult to work aswell, along with family commitments.”