

# Monitoring Adherence to the National Pregnancy Prevention Programme in Young Women of Child-Bearing Age Prescribed Sodium Valproate for Mental Health Indications

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## BACKGROUND

Sodium valproate is licensed in Ireland for the treatment of bipolar disorder and epilepsy. Due to teratogenicity, valproate should not be used in females of childbearing age unless other options are ineffective or are not tolerated. In February 2018, the Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee of the European Medicines Agency recommended new restrictions on the use of valproate in women of child-bearing age and introduced a Pregnancy Prevention Programme with the aim of reducing the significant risks to the unborn child. Valproate should only be commenced once the conditions of the Pregnancy Prevention Programme are met.

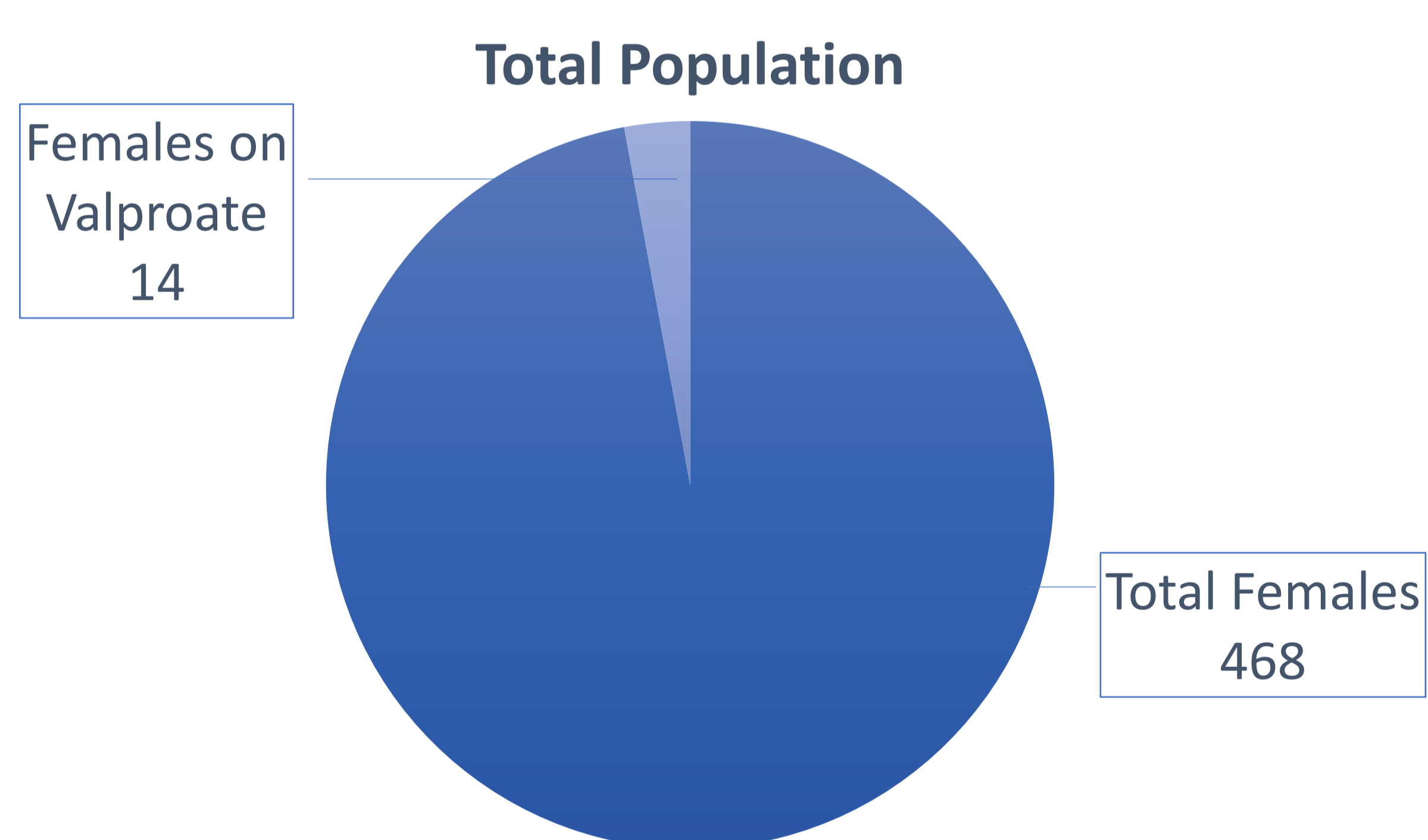
## OBJECTIVES

To audit adherence to the Pregnancy Prevention Programme in a Dublin Mental Health Service.

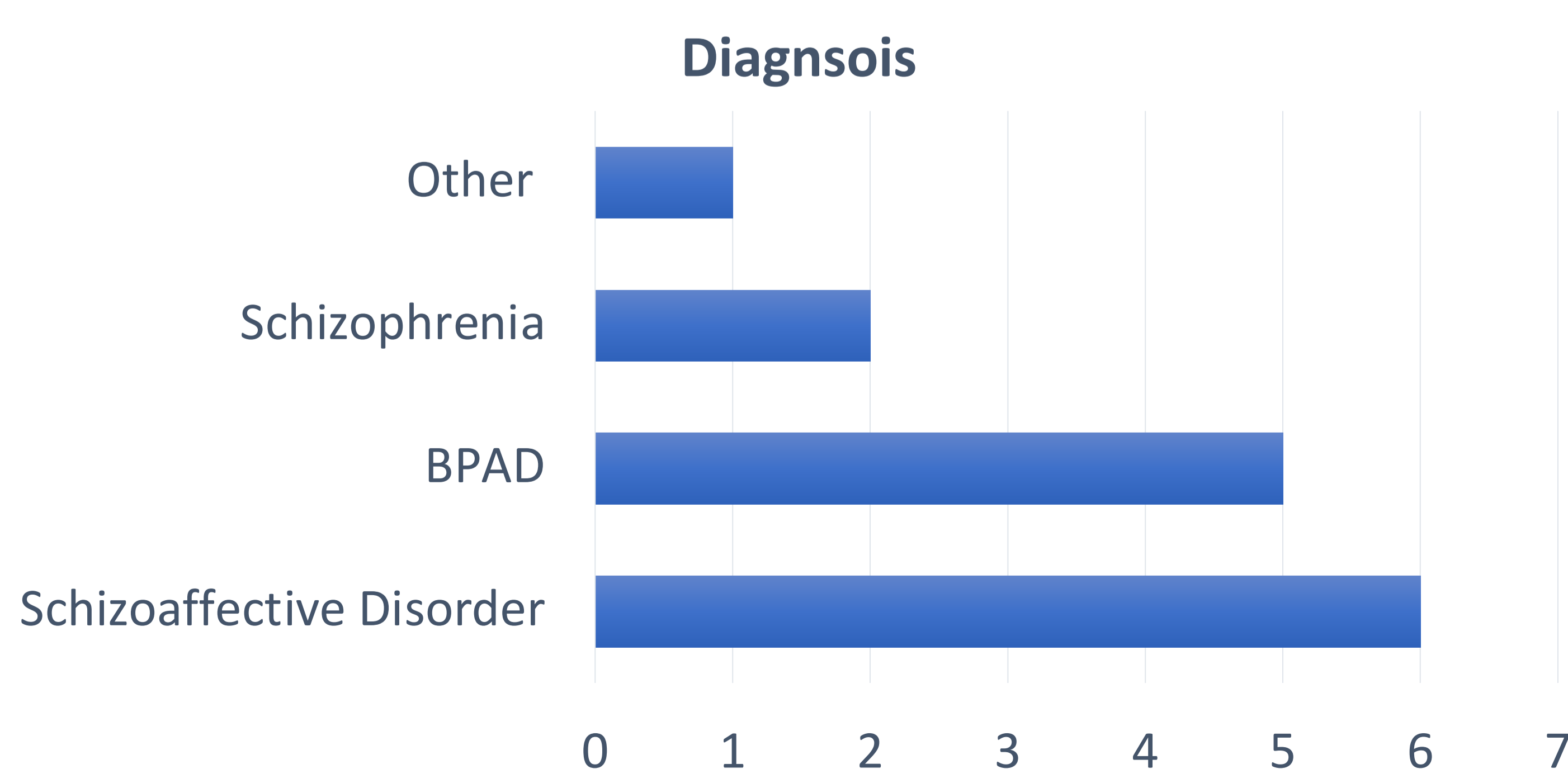
## METHODS

We obtained a list of all adult female patients attending a general adult Mental Health Service in Dublin in June 2020. We identified those females aged 55 or less and reviewed each patient's chart to identify those patients prescribed Valproate. We reviewed clinical notes for the previous year of those patients on valproate to determine if the conditions of the Pregnancy Prevention Programme were met. We provided feedback on the audit findings to each of the individual teams and we conducted an educational session on the Pregnancy Prevention Programme in March 2021. We re-audited in January 2022. Audit consent was obtained and approved.

## CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS



The median age was 46.5 years.

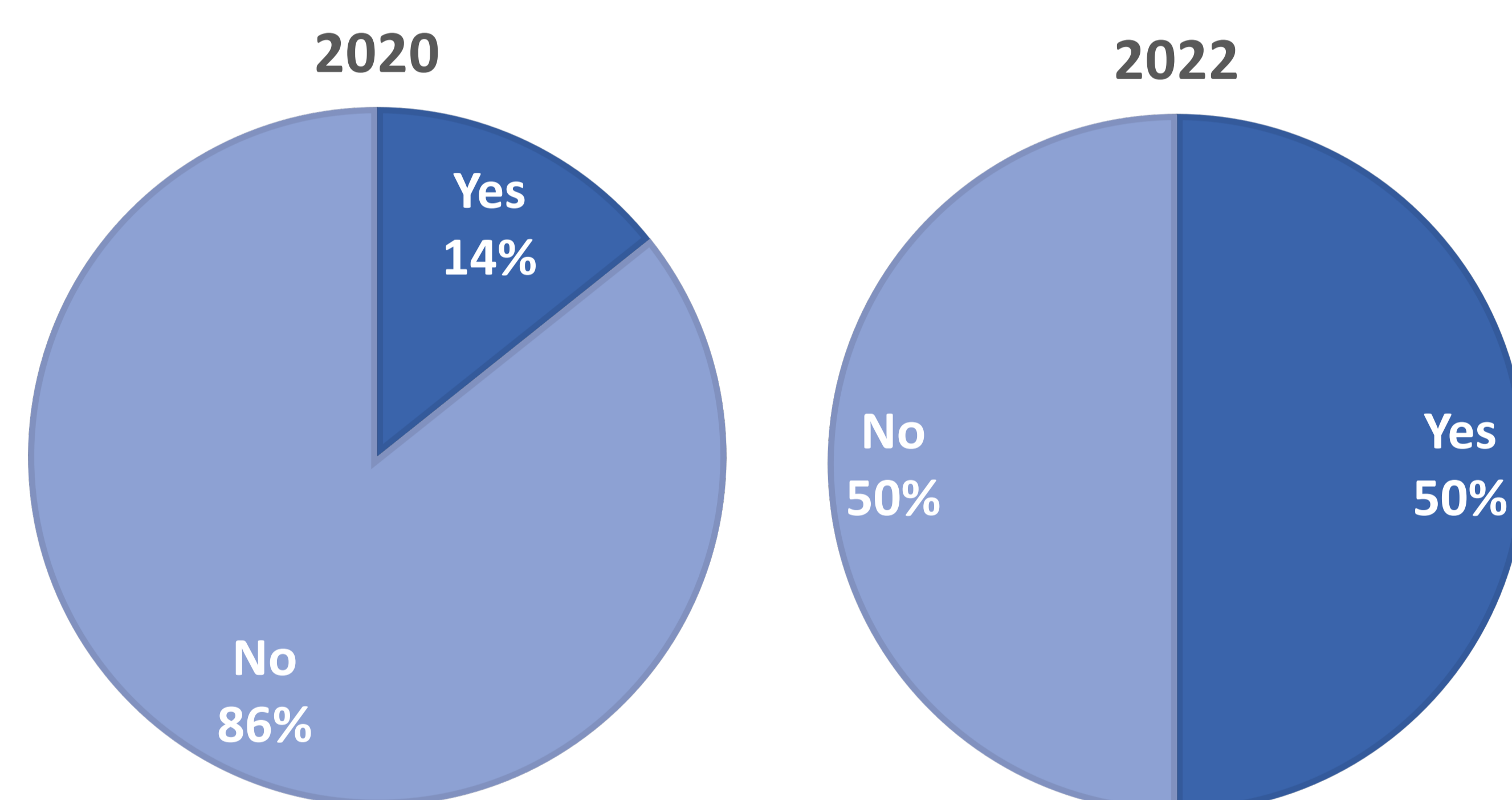


## RESULTS

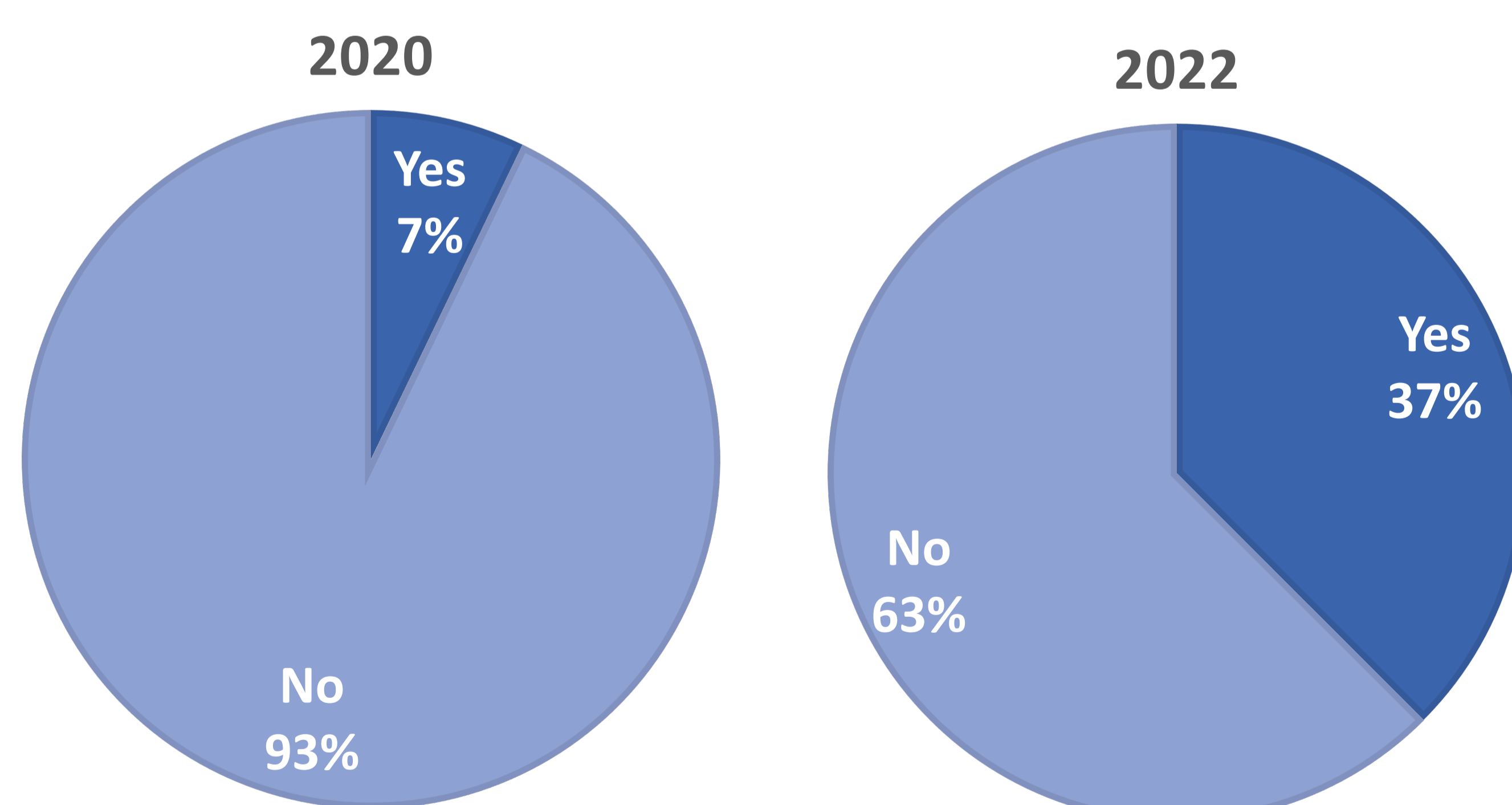
In 2020, 88% of women were not documented as being on a highly effective contraceptive as recommended in the Pregnancy Prevention Programme.

On re-audit, 5 women had been taken off Valproate and of those that remained on it, 75% were not documented as being on a highly effective contraception.

## DISCUSSION ABOUT RISKS OF PREGNANCY



## ANNUAL RISK AWARENESS FORM SIGNED



## CONCLUSION

Adherence to the national Pregnancy Prevention Programme has increased within the Mental Health Service over a 19-month period however it remains suboptimal. Further audit and training is needed for us to achieve 100% adherence.