

**Background**

- NHS services are driving improvements in order to give patients high quality healthcare outcomes and experiences (NHS England, 2017).
- Strategies focus on promoting patient care that is person-centred and closer to home at your local GP surgery, to meet the needs of an ageing population many of whom have long term conditions (Walsh, 2017; NHS England, 2017).
- Spiritual care is a fundamental element of person-centred care (NHS Scotland, 2009), and nurses have the professional duty to be confident, knowledgeable and have the necessary skills to assess spiritual care as part of person-centred care (NMC, 2018).
- Spirituality is often interlinked with religion and as such, can be confusing and challenging for nursing staff (McSherry and Jamieson, 2011)

**Research Aims**

To investigate General Practice Nurses' (GPNs) perceptions of spirituality and spiritual care, and practices in delivering spiritual care.

**Research Questions**

1. What are GPNs' perceptions of spirituality?
2. What sense can be made of why GPNs deliver spiritual care the way they do?
3. What is the impact of these perceptions of spirituality and spiritual care on GPNs' spiritual care practices?
4. What are the implications of GPN spiritual care practices for GP settings?

**Research Design**

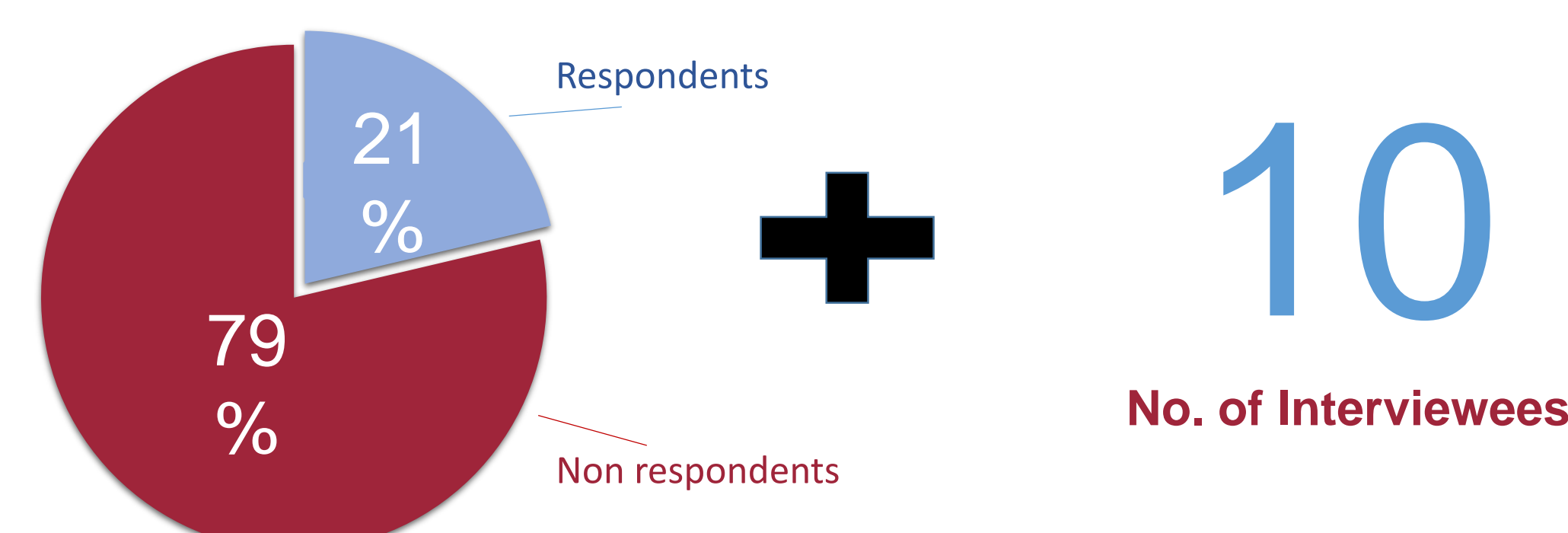
**Participants:** Qualified nurses currently working in a GP practice within the UK

A sequential **mixed methods approach:** quan + qual → QUAL

**Phase 1:** Mixed modes, online questionnaire – 39 respondents

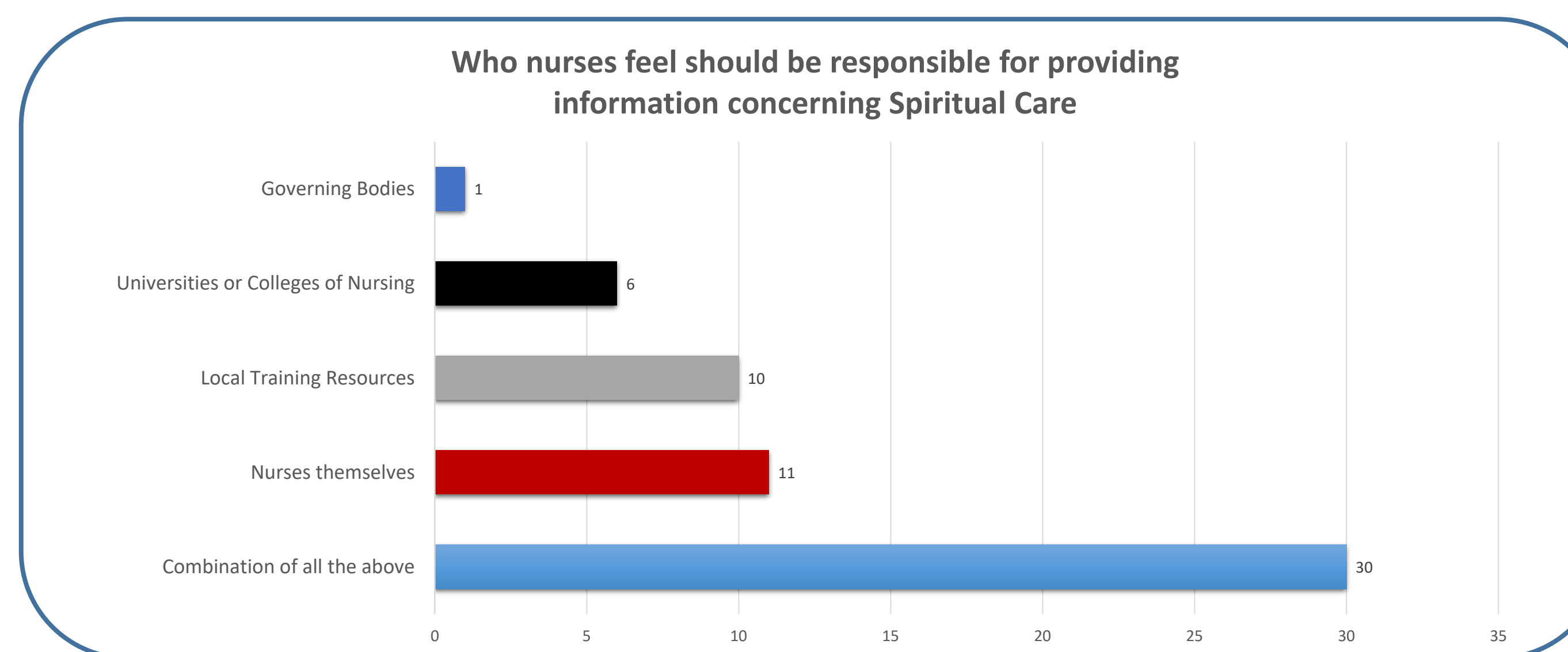
**Phase 2:** Semi-structured interviews – 10 interviews

No. Respondents to the questionnaire



**Data and Findings from Quantitative Phase**

- 92.3% of GPNs reported that nurses do not receive sufficient training on matters concerning spiritual care.
- During the course of their nurse training, 69.2% of GPNs did not recall receiving any lectures or training covering spiritual care.
- Some nurses felt it was partly their responsibility to provide information concerning spiritual care (see diagram below).



The percentage of GPNs who agree with the questionnaire statements

Spirituality and spiritual care ...	GPNs
e) focus on finding meaning	87%;
l) include areas such as art, creativity and self expression	82%;
o) apply to Atheists or Agnostics	82%;
i) are the way one conducts one's life here and now	87%;
k) are a unifying force	80%;
g) enable a patient to find meaning and purpose in their illness	69%;
h) focus on having a sense of hope in life	74%;
q) mean arranging a visit by a religious leader	77%;
n) Include personal friendships and relationships	82%;
p) include people's morals	72%.

**Data and Findings from Qualitative Phase**

A total of 239 minutes of interview data was transcribed and was analysed with Nvivo 12 by using a thematic analysis. Findings identified:



**Contribution to Knowledge**

- An Empirical research designed to contribute to addressing the gap identified in a review of nursing and healthcare literature
- The approach and use of research tools contributes to expanding our knowledge and understanding of spirituality and spiritual in healthcare.
- The creation of a five-point conceptual CARInG Star Model of GPN's approaches to delivering spiritual care.

**Conclusion**

- The findings suggest that there is a need for professional development in terms of nurturing more developed conceptions of spirituality and spiritual care among GPNs to develop confidence.
- GP practices would do well to establish good professional practice where GPNs are adequately trained in delivering spiritual care.
- GP practices would benefit from understanding the various outcomes of delivering spiritual care to meet patients' specific needs.

**Academic Impact**

- Fulfils the Urban Living Partnership programme identified as a priority, multidisciplinary research area by UKRI;
- Improved understanding of how GPNs perceive spirituality and how they report delivering spiritual care;
- Potential avenues for new training development of spiritual care for healthcare staff.

**Societal and Economical Impact**

- Benefit NHS patients;
- Improving patient care through healthcare staff knowledge of spirituality and spiritual care;
- Changing organisational culture and practices in delivering spiritual care.

**References**

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NMC (2018) *Future nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses*. <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/future-nurse-proficiencies.pdf>

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