



Dying With Dignity Canada
It's your life. It's your choice.



Ipsos Reid

Dying with Dignity Public Perception Survey



Methodology

- Dying with Dignity commissioned Ipsos to conduct a public perceptions study around the issue of assisted dying. Topics such as opinions and favourability of the issue, different scenarios involving legalization, and general attitudes towards different aspects of the issue were covered.
- The data was collected between August 21st to 29th, 2014
- Overall, a sample of n=2,515 Canadians was interviewed online via the Ipsos online I-Say panel , with included 94 Canadians with disabilities and 181 Canadians working as a regulated health care professional. Minimum quotas in the following areas were collected:
 - ⇒ N=400 completes in British Columbia
 - ⇒ N=300 completes in Alberta
 - ⇒ N=1,000 completes in Ontario
 - ⇒ N=300 completes in Nova Scotia
- The precision of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a Bayesian credibility interval. In this case, the survey is considered accurate to within +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had the entire Canadian population been surveyed. Sub-sample credibility intervals are as followed:
 - ⇒ British Columbia (+/- 5.6 percentage points)
 - ⇒ Alberta (+/- 6.5 percentage points)
 - ⇒ Ontario (+/- 3.4 percentage points)
 - ⇒ Nova Scotia (+/- 3.5 percentage points)
 - ⇒ Disabled Canadians (+/- 11.5 percentage points)
 - ⇒ Regulated health care professionals (+/- 8.3 percentage points)
- Data was weighted to be representative to gender, age, and regional proportions within Canada as set by Statistics Canada



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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

- This is the most comprehensive Canadian survey ever undertaken on the public's perception of dying with dignity.
- Regarding the statement "A doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die", 84% agree, while 16% disagree.
- Most people polled (58%) did not know that the majority of Canadians support assisted dying. Only (42%) were aware that the majority of Canadians support assisted dying with 39% not sure and 19% believing most Canadians are opposed.
- There were high levels of support from both the religious and non-religious. In total 80% of all Christians support assisted dying, including 83% of Catholics. (Sample sizes for other religious affiliations, though reflective of the Canadian population, were too small to draw conclusions.)
- Individuals who identified as members of a regulated health profession (such as doctors, nurses and physiotherapists) were 85% in support of assisted dying.
- Individuals from the disability community (those who are severely physically disabled and unable to carry out the basic activities of daily living without assistance) are 85% in support of medically assisted dying.

- Support for assisted dying is highest in Nova Scotia (89%) and BC (87%) followed by Ontario (85%) and Quebec (84%). Support is lowest in the rest of Atlantic Canada (80%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (79%).
- There is no statistically significant difference in support by age group or community size and little variation by income level.
- There was slightly lower support among those who hadn't graduated from high school (75%) compared to those with greater levels of education (83% - 87%).
- 57% of respondents indicated that someone close to them had suffered terribly before they died. 85% of those individuals support assisted dying.
- 73% of individuals polled indicated that this issue is important to them personally. Respondents were most likely to indicate it was important to them personally if someone close to them suffered terribly before they died (80%) or if they were from the disability community (86%).

- Most Canadians generally agree with the concept of assisted dying, regardless of how it is specifically defined. Nine in ten (91%) agree that a person should not be forced to endure drawn-out suffering, and a similar proportion (91%) agree that palliative care is not enough.
- Support for the right to die is highest when speaking about patients who have a “terminal illness that results in unbearable suffering” (88%) or a “serious incurable illness or condition, with an advanced state of weakened capacity that is permanent, incurable, and results in unbearable suffering” (86%).
- There was, however, still considerable support for assisted dying for individuals with a “permanent and severe disability that significantly impacts quality of life and the ability to carry out basic activities of daily living” (67%).
- Canadians were generally aware (78%) that doctors providing assisted dying would be charged. This recognition was lowest in Quebec (67%) where there may be confusion about the planned implementation date (late 2015) for An Act Respecting End of Life Care.
- While there was support for every scenario tested, 4 out of 5 Canadians believe physicians should be prescribing or administering life-ending medication. This support drops to 7 in 10 when a nurse or other healthcare practitioner administers the medication.



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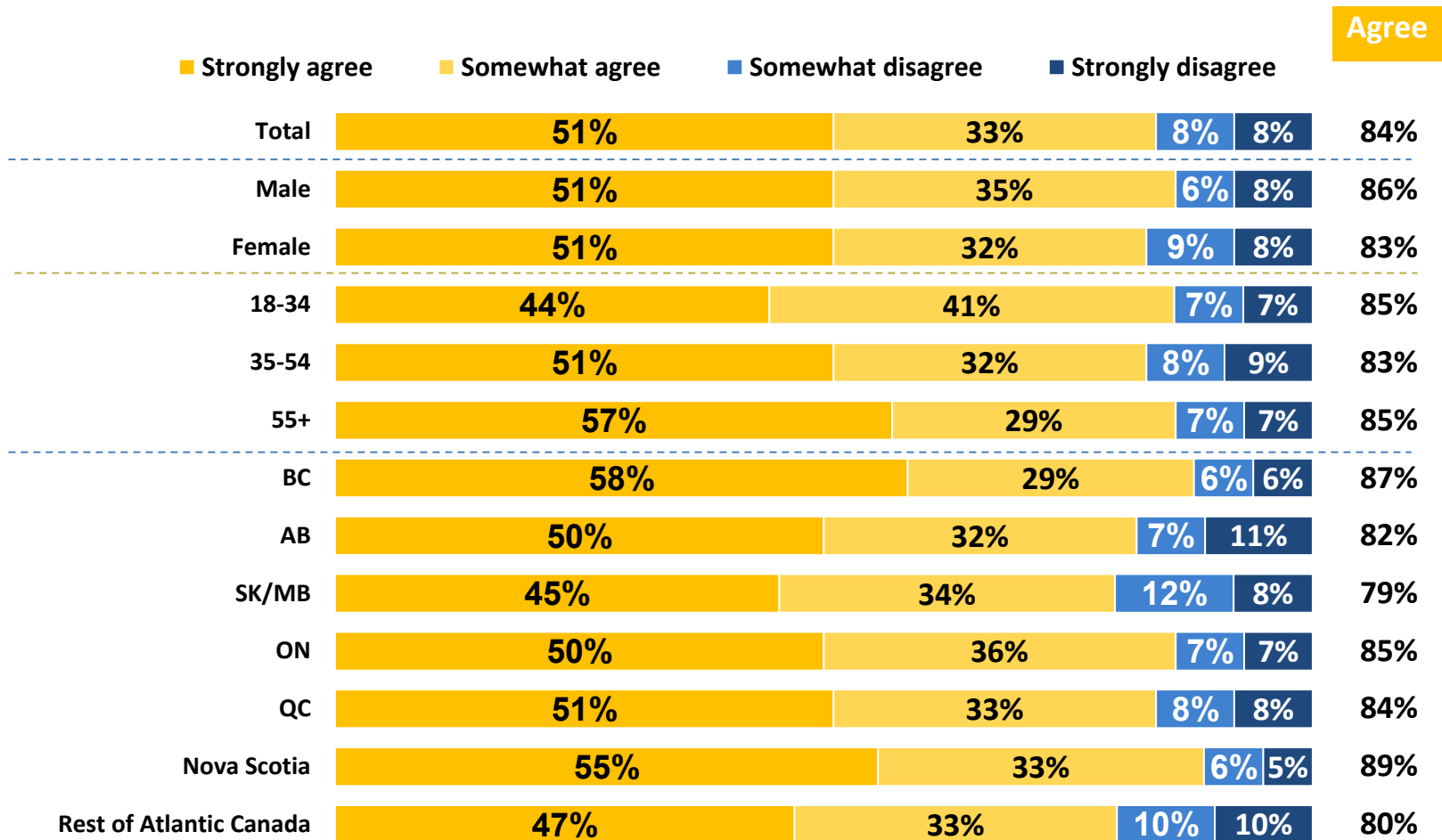
Detailed Findings



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Doctors Should be Able to Help Someone End Their Life if Asked

- More than eight in ten (84%) Canadians 'agree' (51% strongly/33% somewhat) that doctors should be able to end someone's life if they are competent and suffering. This agreement is led by Nova Scotians (89%), British Columbians (87%), and men (86%).

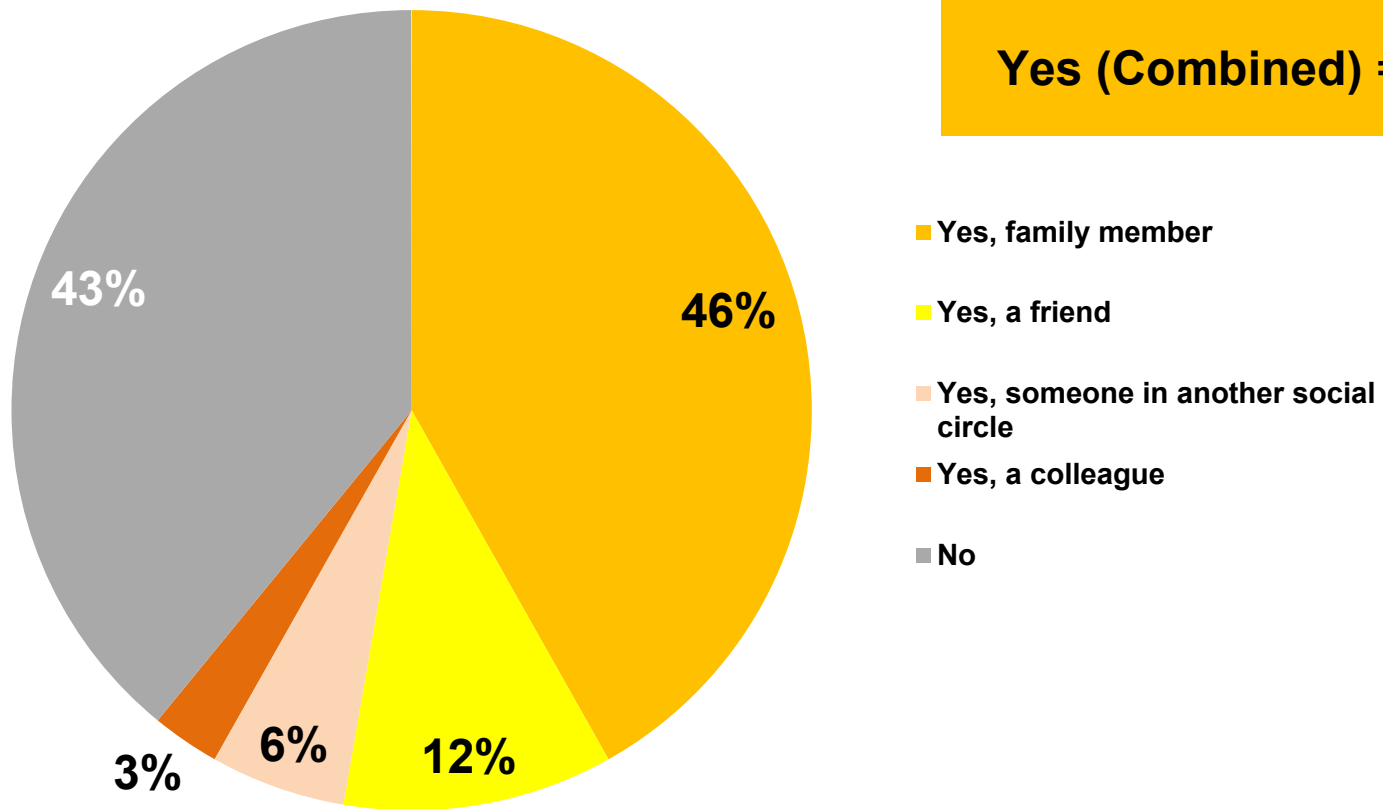


In October, The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear a case about assisted dying. As long as there are strong safeguards in place, how much do you agree or disagree that a doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Someone Close has Suffered Before They Died

- A majority (57%) of Canadians have been close with someone who suffered terribly before they died.

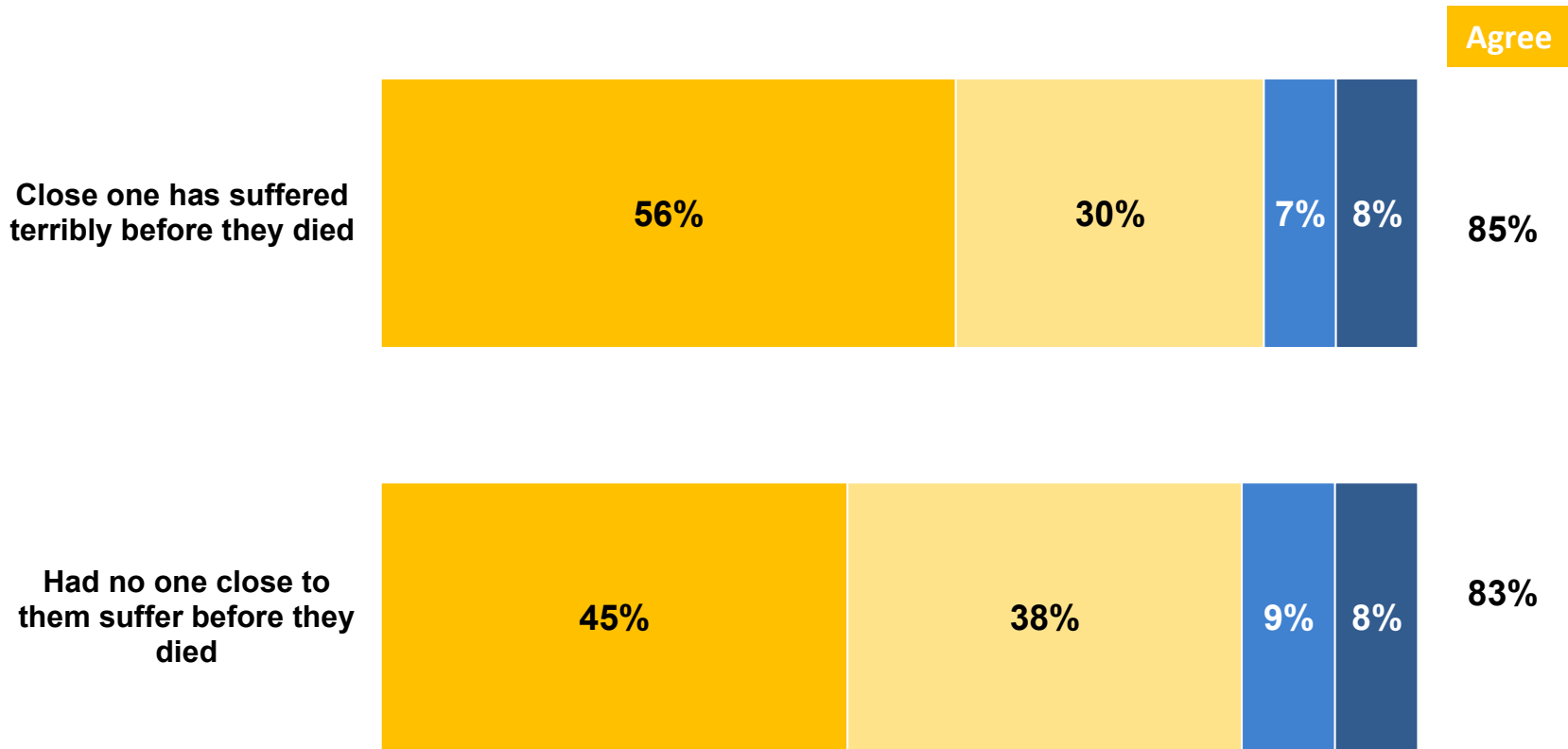


Have you been close to someone who suffered terribly before they died?

Doctors Should be Able to Help Someone End Their Life if Asked – Someone close suffered before they died

- A majority (85%) of those who have had someone close to them suffer terribly before they died agree that physicians should be able to help someone end their life if they are suffering and ask for assistance to die.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree



In October, The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear a case about assisted dying. As long as there are strong safeguards in place, how much do you agree or disagree that a doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die?
Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

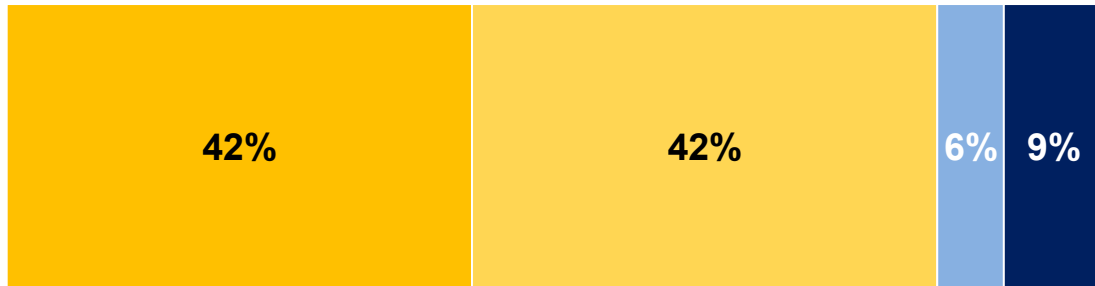
Doctors Should be Able to Help Someone End Their Life if Asked – Health Care Professionals

- **Nine in ten (85%) regulated health care professionals support a physician's ability to assist in dying should someone be terminally ill and suffering unbearably.**

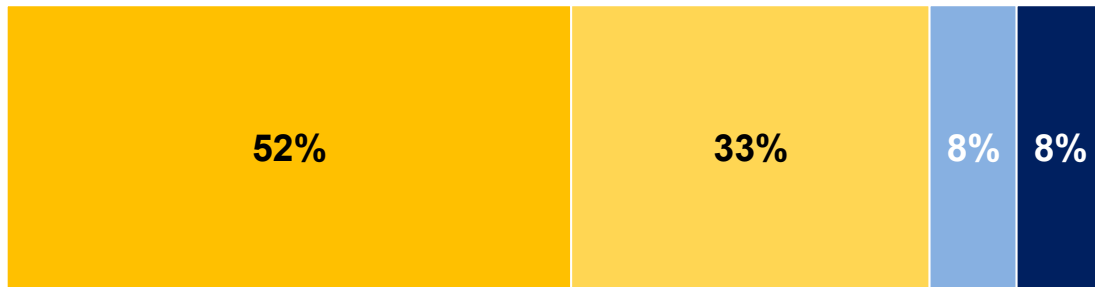
■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Agree

Regulated Healthcare Professional



Not a Regulated Healthcare Professional

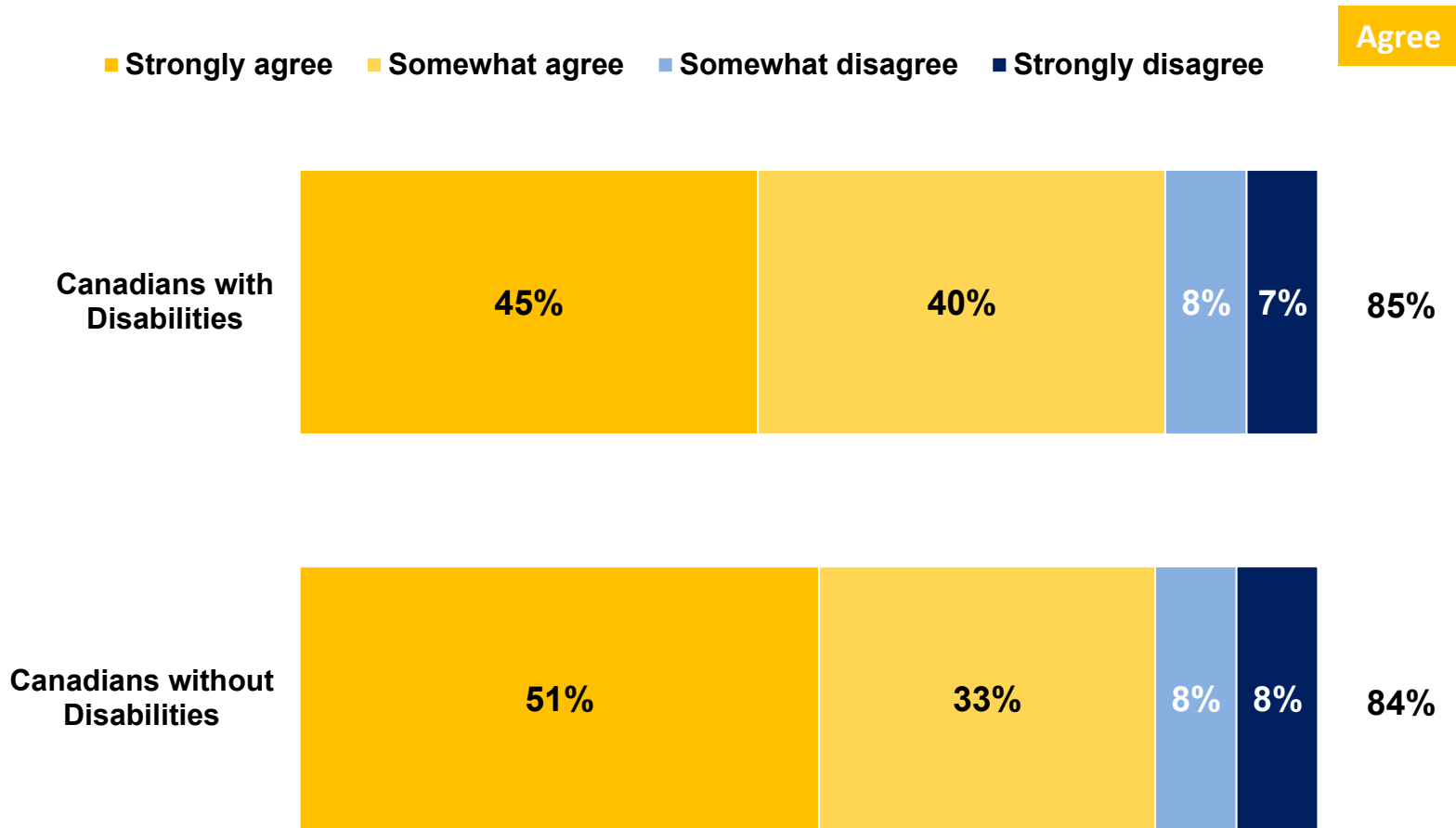


In October, The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear a case about assisted dying. As long as there are strong safeguards in place, how much do you agree or disagree that a doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Doctors Should be Able to Help Someone End Their Life if Asked – Canadians with Disabilities

- Nine in ten (85%) Canadians with disabilities support a physician's ability to assist in dying should someone be terminally ill and suffering unbearably.



In October, The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear a case about assisted dying. As long as there are strong safeguards in place, how much do you agree or disagree that a doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Doctors Should be Able to Help Someone End Their Life if Asked

Non-religious Canadians are more likely to agree with this statement, but support varied little by other variables.

	Education				Regulated Healthcare Provider		Religious Identity					Are you disabled	
	Less than HS	High School	Some Post-Secondary	University Graduate	Yes	No	Roman Catholic	Protestant /Other Christian	Christian	Atheist/Agnostic	No religious identity	Yes	No
Strongly agree	39%	50%	53%	51%	42%	52%	46%	43%	44%	71%	65%	45%	51%
Somewhat agree	37%	36%	32%	33%	43%	33%	38%	33%	35%	24%	30%	40%	33%
Somewhat disagree	10%	9%	7%	8%	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%	3%	4%	8%	8%
Strongly disagree	14%	4%	8%	9%	9%	8%	7%	14%	11%	1%	2%	7%	8%
Top2Box (Agree)	76%	87%	85%	83%	85%	84%	83%	76%	80%	96%	95%	85%	84%
Low2Box (Disagree)	24%	13%	15%	17%	15%	16%	17%	24%	20%	4%	5%	15%	16%

In October, The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear a case about assisted dying. As long as there are strong safeguards in place, how much do you agree or disagree that a doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Doctors Should be Able to Help Someone End Their Life if Asked

Non-religious Canadians are more likely to agree with this statement, but support varied little by other variables.

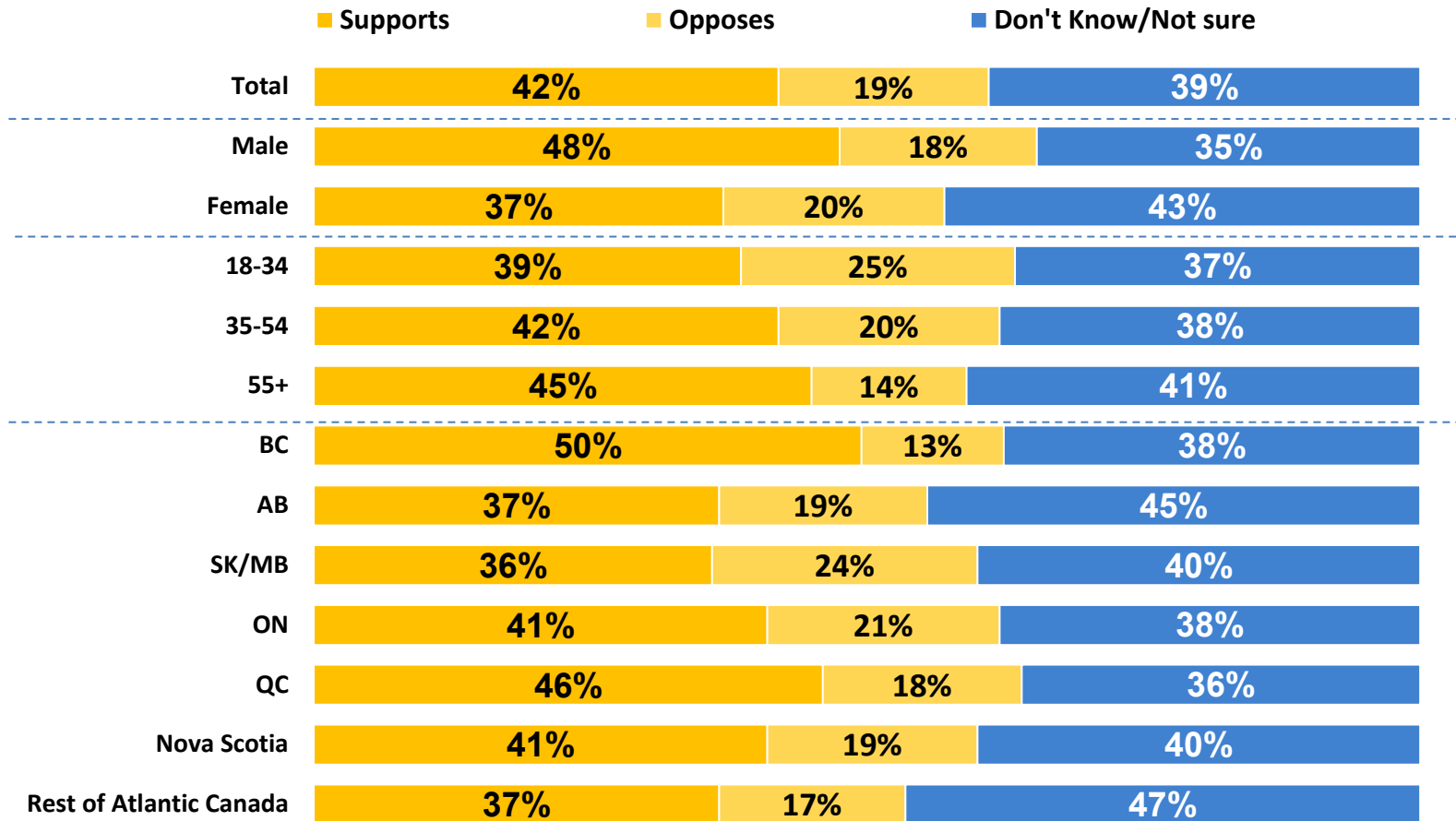
	Community Size				Income				Frequency of Religious attendance			
	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Small Town</i>	<i>Large City</i>	<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Less than \$40,000</i>	<i>\$40,000 to < \$60,000</i>	<i>\$60,000 to < \$100,000</i>	<i>\$100k +</i>	<i>Once a week or more</i>	<i>Less than once a week but more than once a month</i>	<i>Once a month or less</i>	<i>Never</i>
Strongly agree	53%	52%	50%	48%	51%	48%	51%	57%	27%	48%	56%	65%
Somewhat agree	31%	33%	34%	36%	32%	35%	34%	31%	31%	41%	34%	28%
Somewhat disagree	8%	8%	7%	8%	8%	9%	8%	6%	15%	8%	6%	4%
Strongly disagree	8%	7%	8%	8%	9%	7%	6%	7%	27%	4%	4%	4%
Top2Box (Agree)	84%	85%	85%	84%	83%	83%	86%	87%	58%	89%	90%	92%
Low2Box (Disagree)	16%	15%	15%	16%	17%	17%	14%	13%	42%	11%	10%	8%

In October, The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear a case about assisted dying. As long as there are strong safeguards in place, how much do you agree or disagree that a doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Do Most Canadians Support or Oppose Legalizing Assisted Dying

While four in ten (39%) Canadians don't claim to know others position on the issue, they are more than twice as likely to believe Canadians support (42%) the issue rather than oppose (19%) it. This perception is highest among British Columbians (50%) and men (48%) and increases as age increases.



Personal Importance of Assisted Dying Issue

- Looking through a religious lens, atheists (80%) and Catholics (74%) find the issue most important to them, while at least four in five disabled (86%) Canadians and Canadians who have been close to someone who has suffered terribly before they died (80%) say the issue is personally important to them.

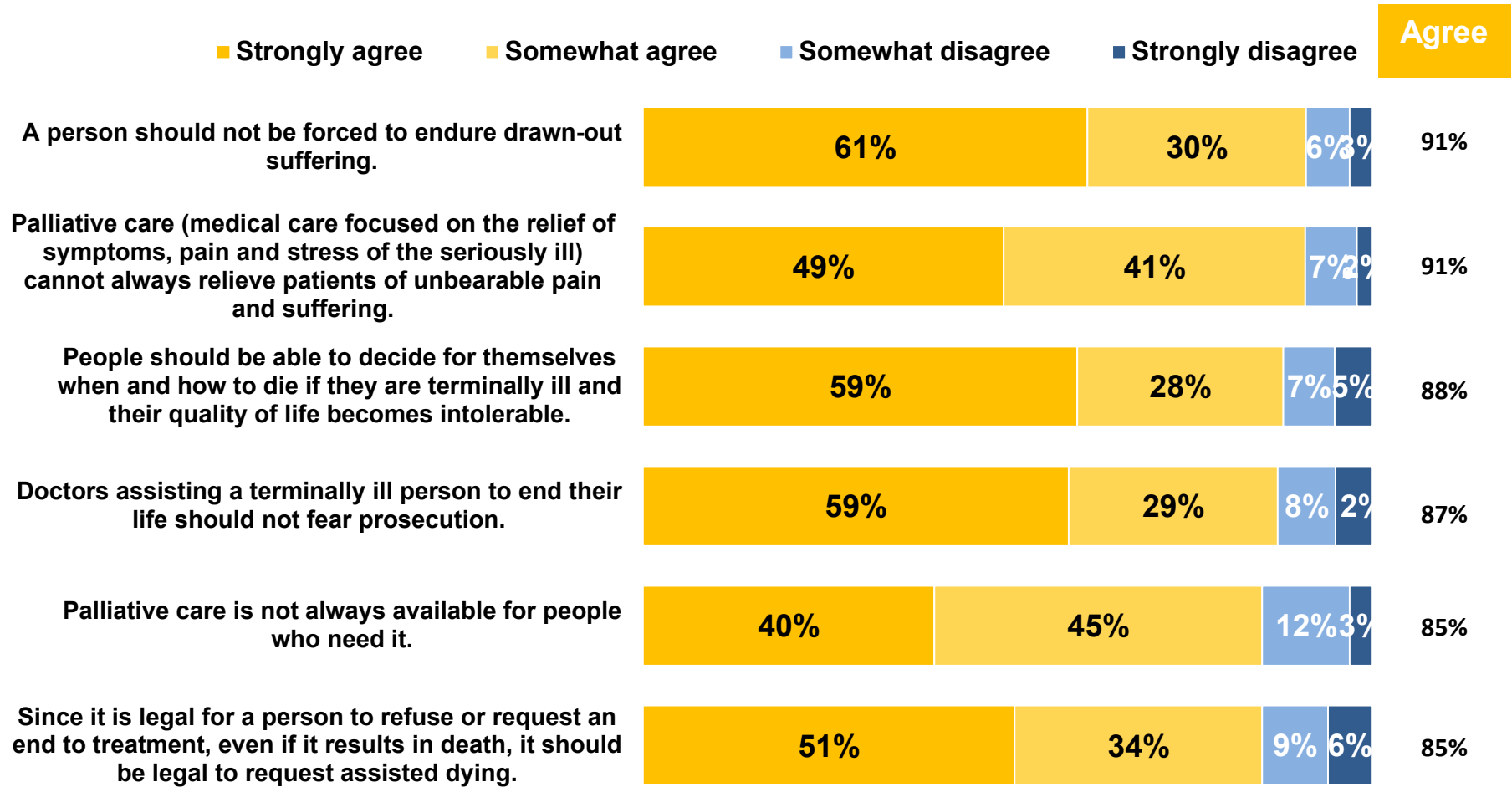
	Religious Identity					Are you disabled		Someone close has suffered terribly before died	
	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant/ Other Christian</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>Atheist/ Agnostic</i>	<i>No religious identity</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Very important	30%	27%	28%	30%	29%	48%	27%	35%	20%
Somewhat important	44%	43%	43%	50%	43%	38%	45%	45%	44%
Not very important	22%	24%	23%	18%	24%	10%	23%	17%	30%
Not at all important	3%	7%	5%	2%	4%	4%	5%	4%	6%
Top2Box (Important)	74%	69%	72%	80%	72%	86%	72%	80%	64%
Low2Box (Not Important)	26%	31%	28%	20%	28%	14%	28%	20%	36%

How important is the issue of assisted dying for the terminally ill to you, personally?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying

- Four in five (82%) 'agree' that an individual has the right to choose when and how to die and that people should be able to decide for themselves when and how to die if they are terminally ill or have an intolerable quality of life (88%), while even more (91%) believe a person should not be enforced to endure drawn-out suffering.

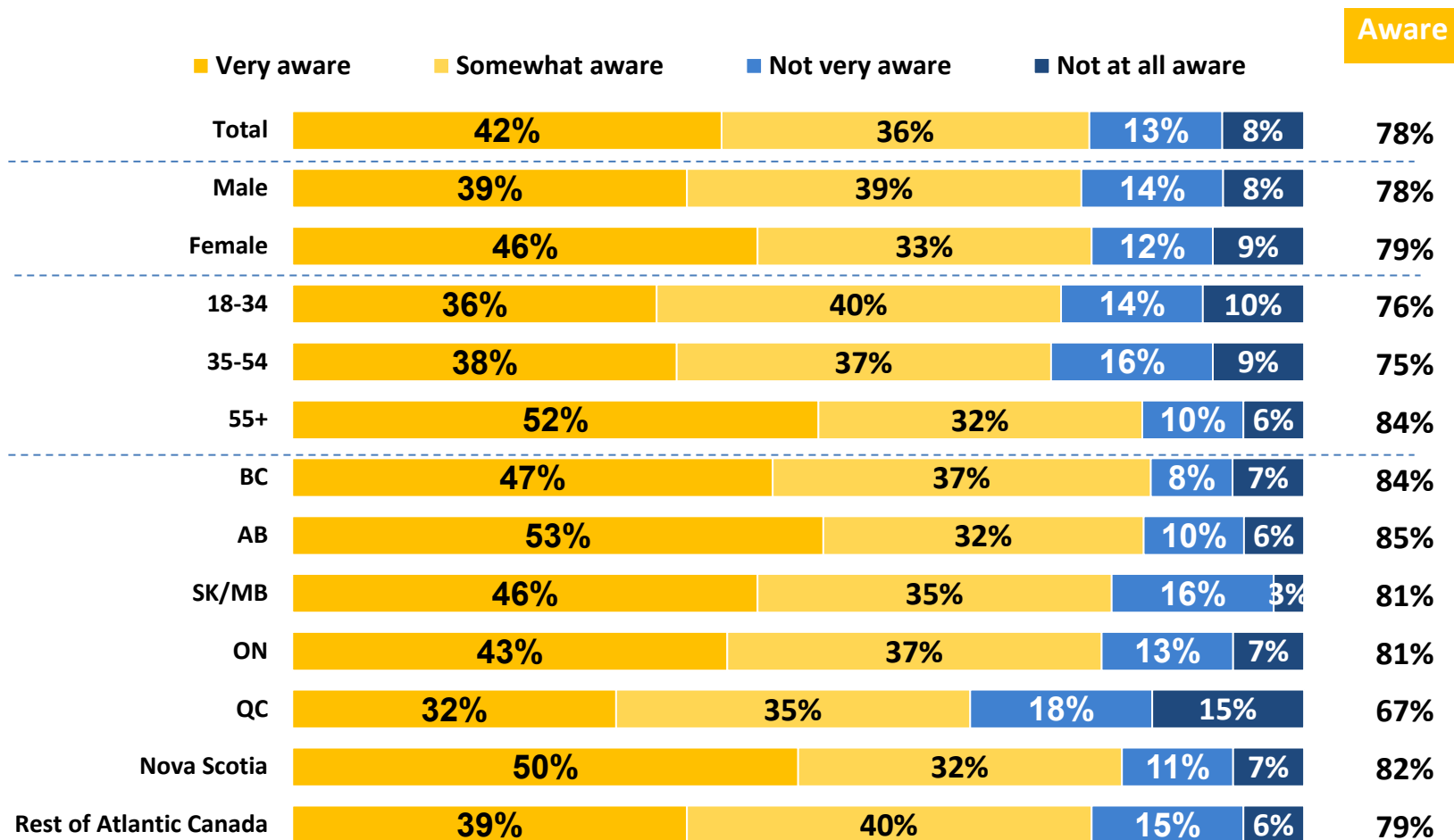


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Awareness of Charges for Doctors Assisting some to end their life

- Four in five (78%) are aware that doctors performing assisted dying would be charged, with Albertans (85%), British Columbians (84%), and seniors (84%) being most aware.



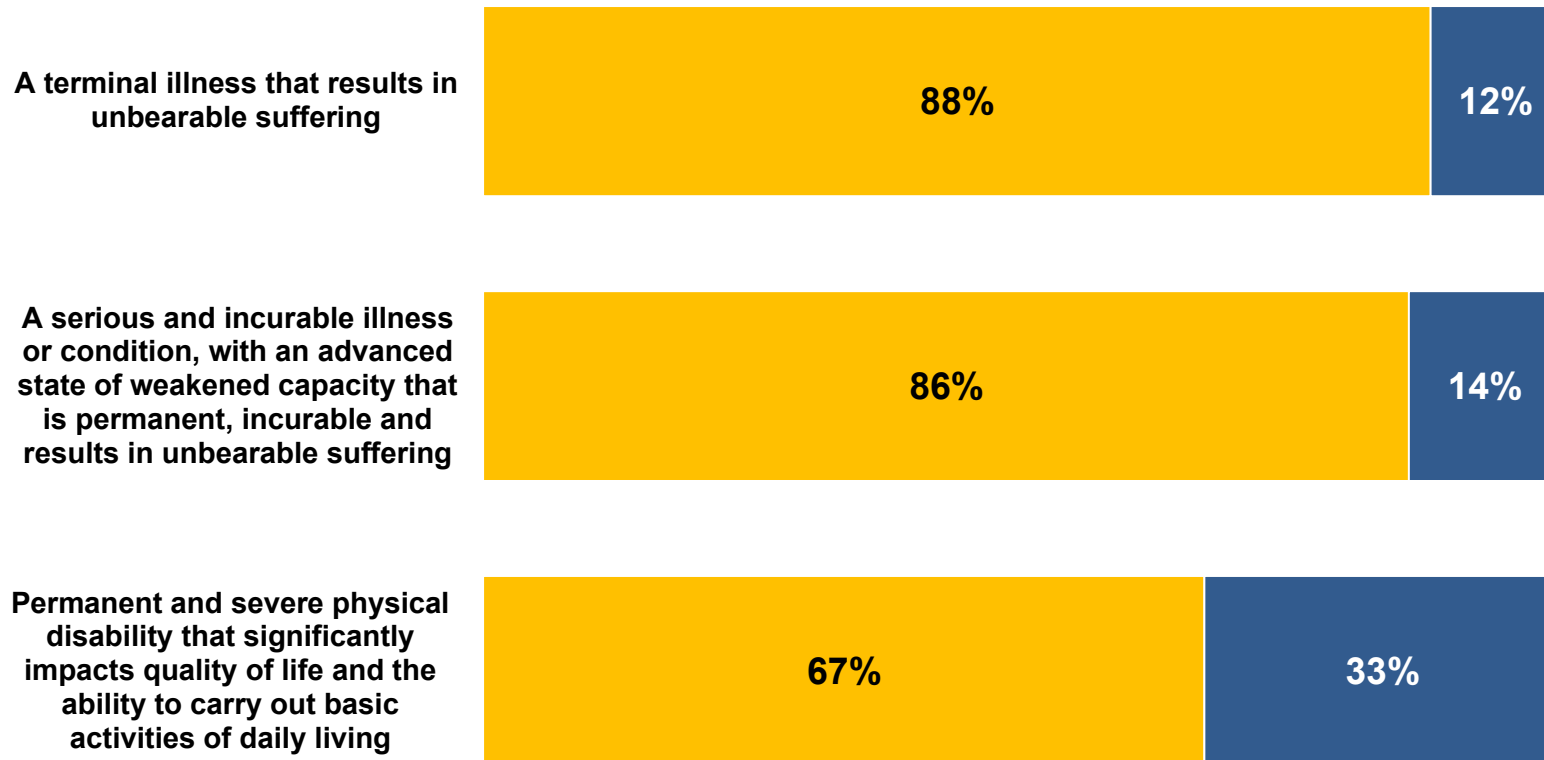
How aware are you that if a doctor assisted a terminally ill patient to die by prescribing or administering life-ending medication, the doctor would be charged with assisting a suicide (maximum 14 year prison sentence) or committing a homicide (maximum life in prison).

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Scenarios in Which a Patient Should Have the Right to Choose Assisted Dying

• Nine in ten believe that a patient should have the right to choose assisted dying if they have a terminal illness causing unbearable suffering (88%) or they have a serious and incurable illness or condition (86%). Only two in three (67%) believe they should have this right if a patient has a permanent or severe physical disability that impedes quality of life. (Demo breakdown in Appendix)

- Yes, they should have the right to choose assisted dying
- No, they should not have the right to choose assisted dying

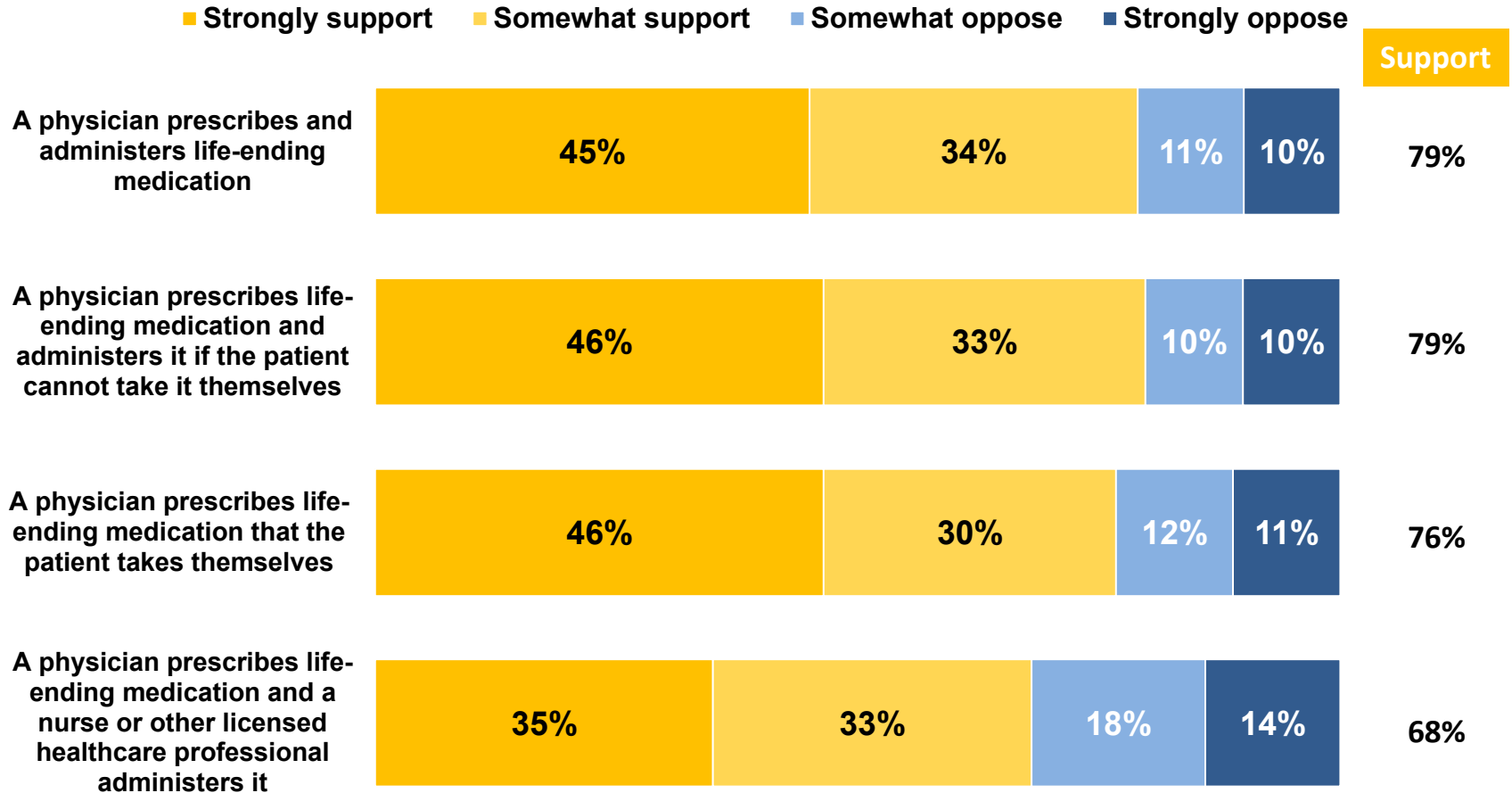


The following are various descriptions of health. Please indicate the health scenarios under which you believe a patient *should* have the right to choose assisted dying for *themselves*.

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Support for Law Changes Allowing Different Scenarios

- When providing different scenarios, support for assisted dying declines slightly although four in five (79%) would still support scenarios where a physician prescribes and administers the medication. Support is lowest (68%) when a nurse or other licensed professional administers life-ending medication.



If there were to be a change in the law to allow assisted dying for the terminally ill, how much would you support or oppose the following:

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)



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Appendix

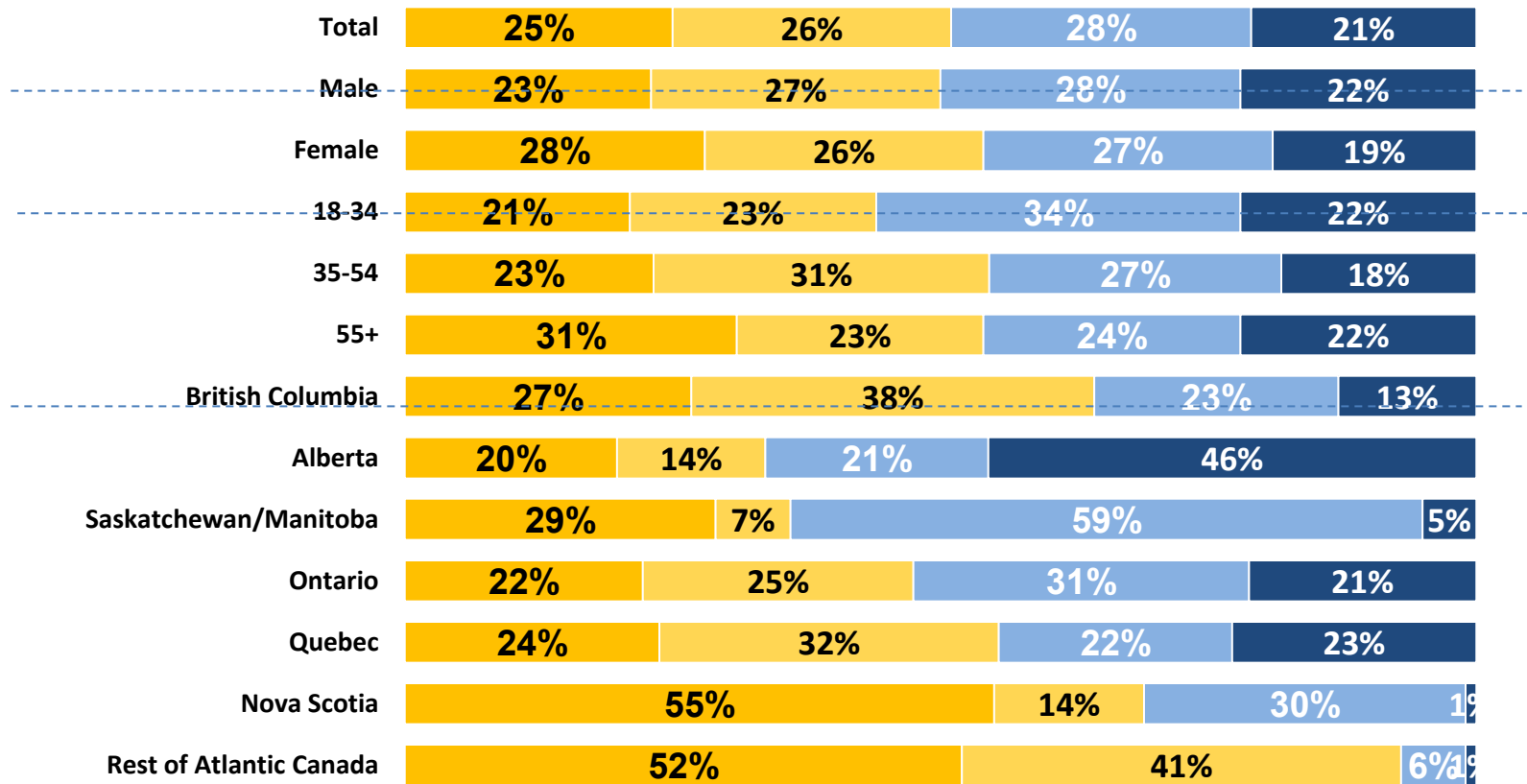


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Demographics

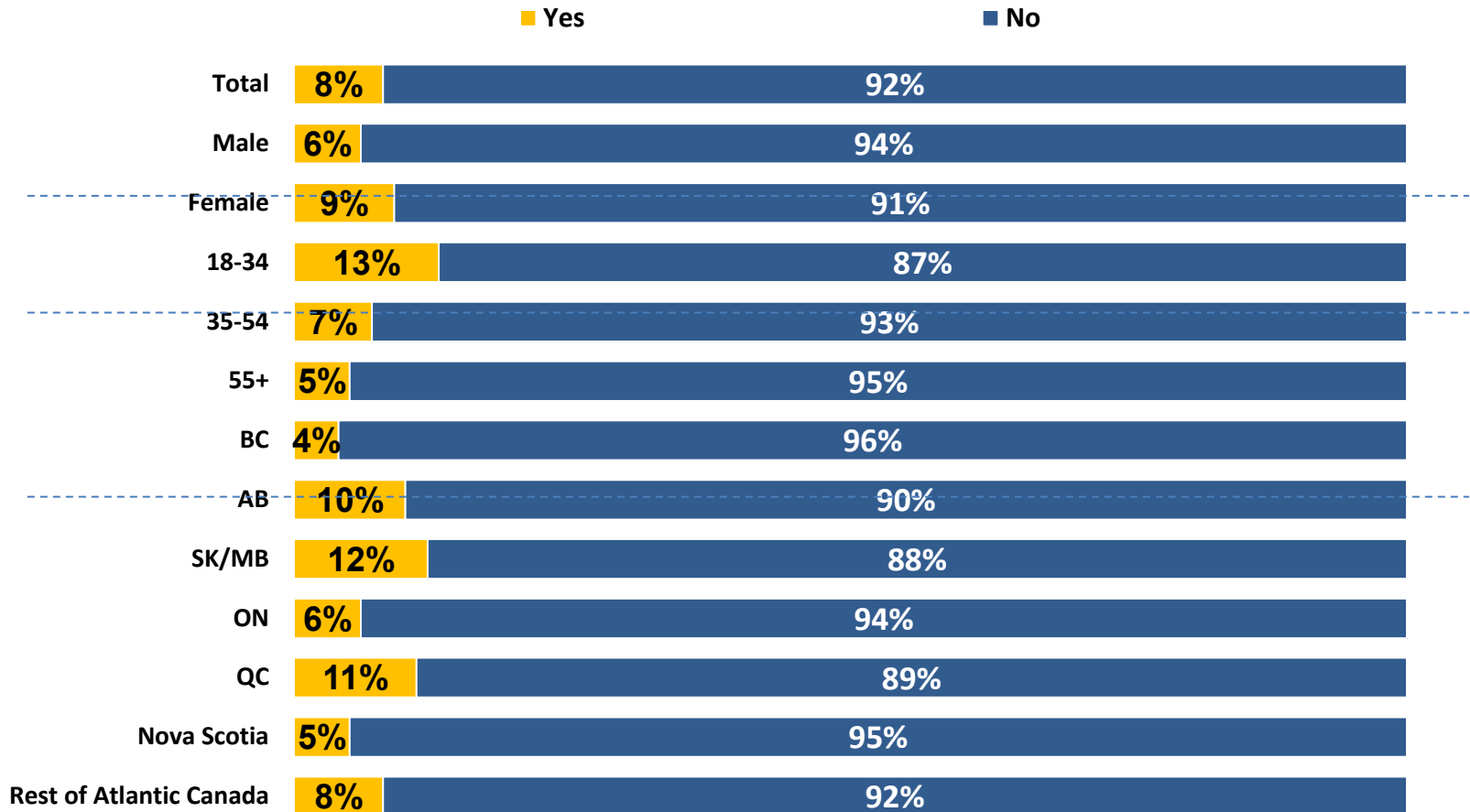
Community Size – Demographics

- Rural (population of less than 50 thousand)
- Small Town (population from 50 thousand to just under 250 thousand)
- Large City (population from 250 thousand to just under 1 million)
- Metropolitan (Population of one million or greater)



Which of the following descriptions best defines where you live?
 Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Regulated Healthcare Provider/Practitioner

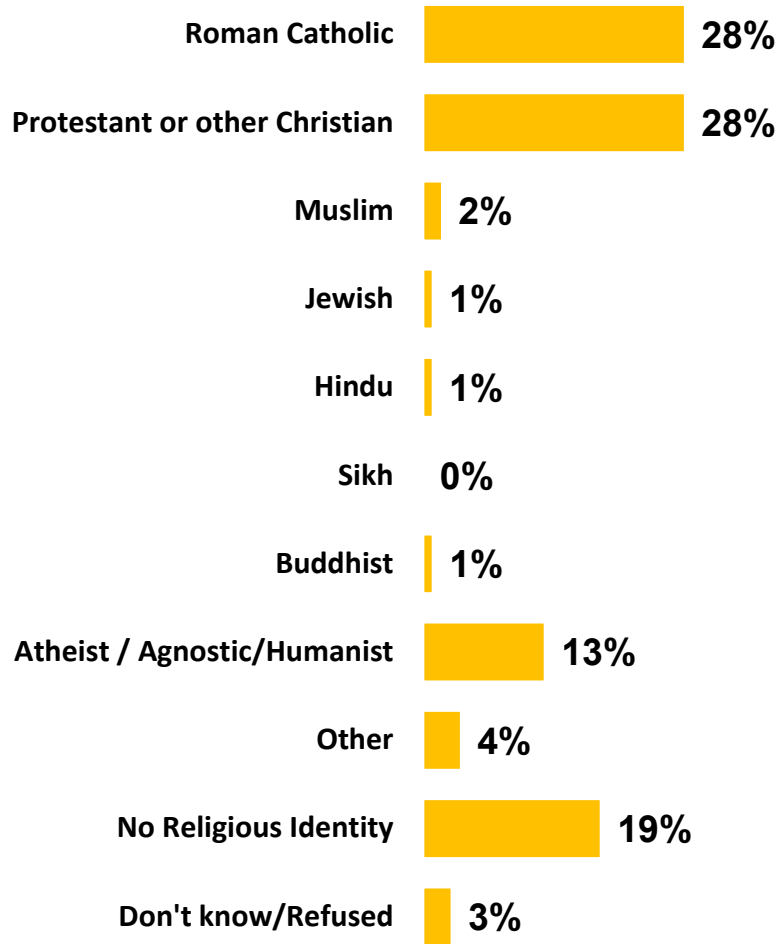


Are you a regulated healthcare provider/practitioner? (i.e. nurse, doctor, pharmacist, physiotherapist, etc.)

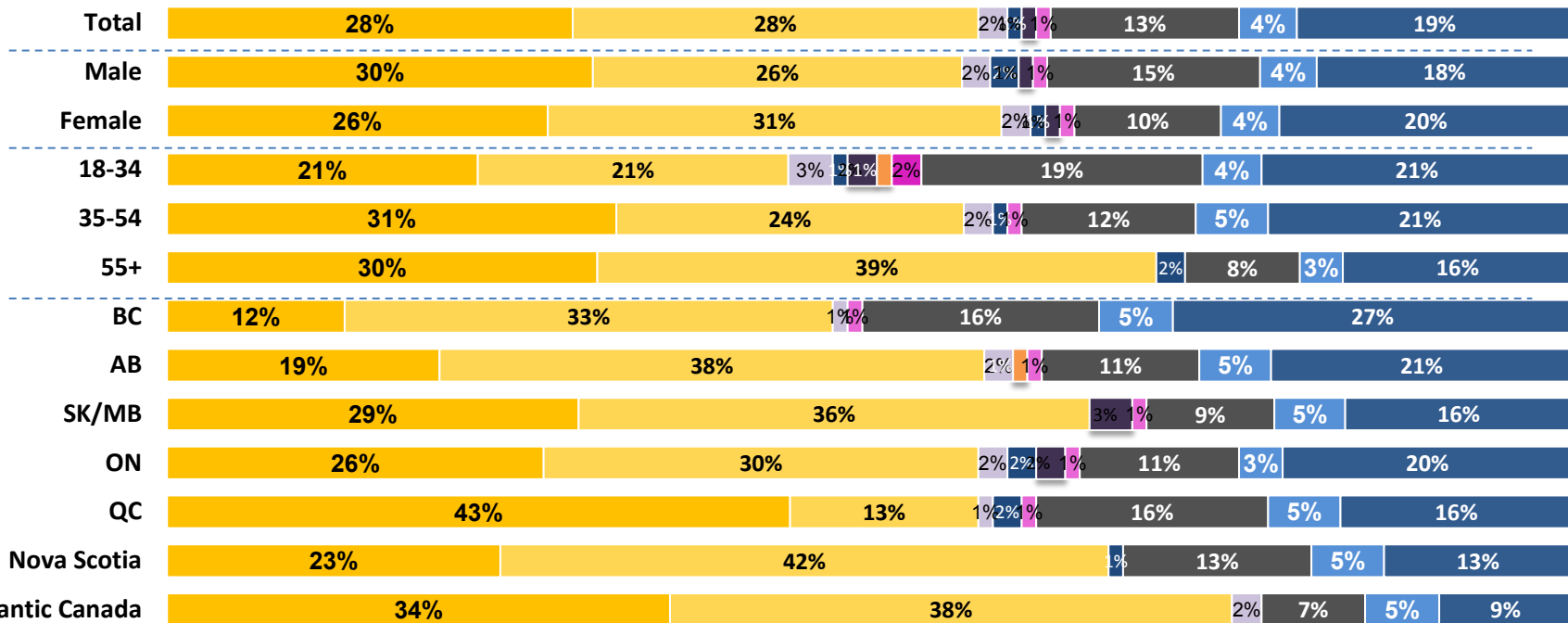
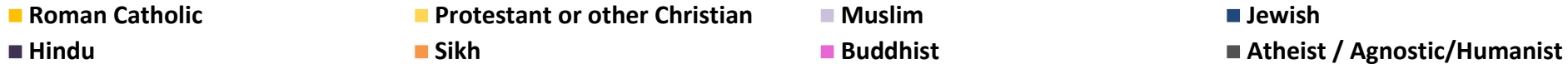
Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Religious Denomination

Chart Title



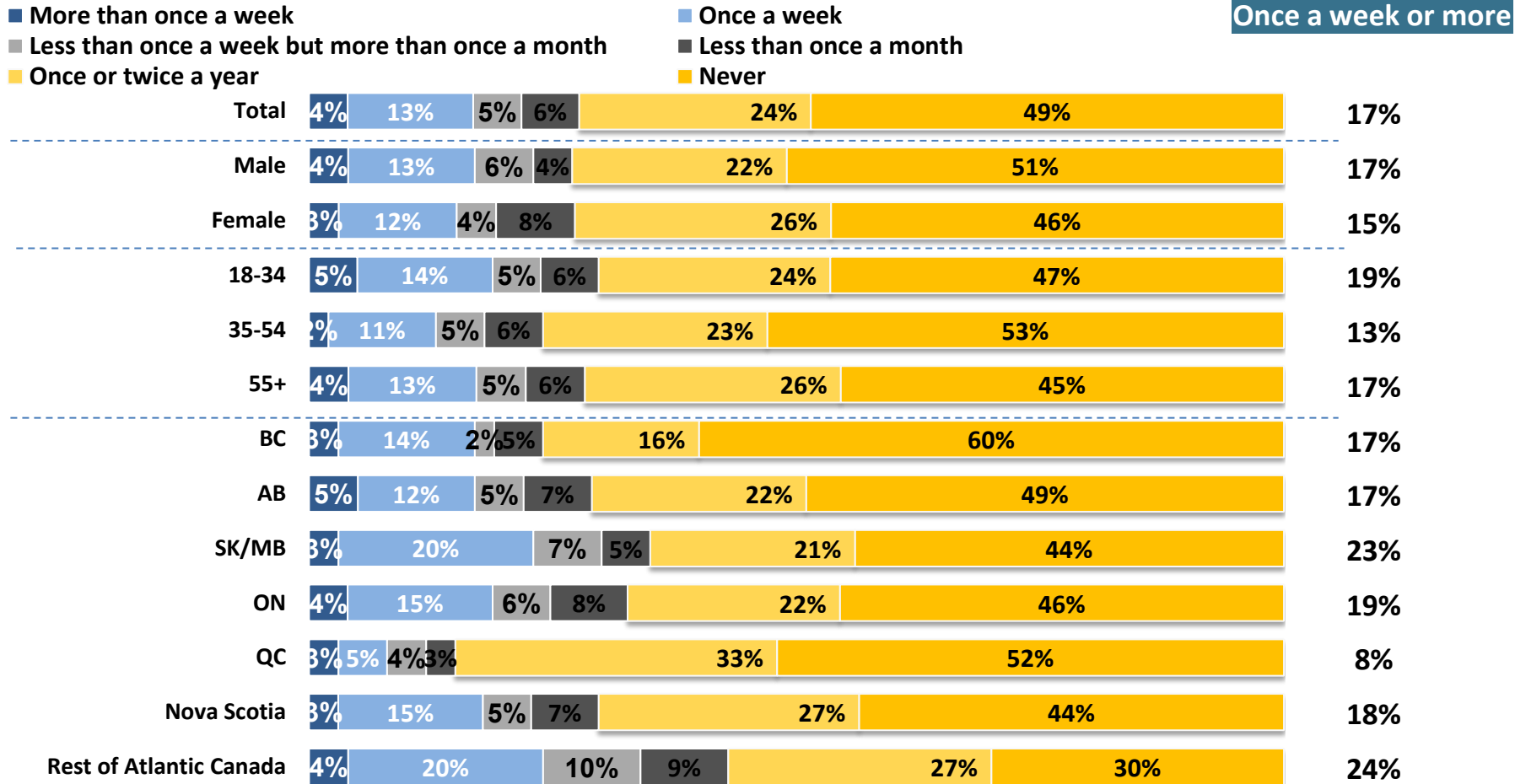
Religious Denomination – Demographics



*Values under 2% not labeled

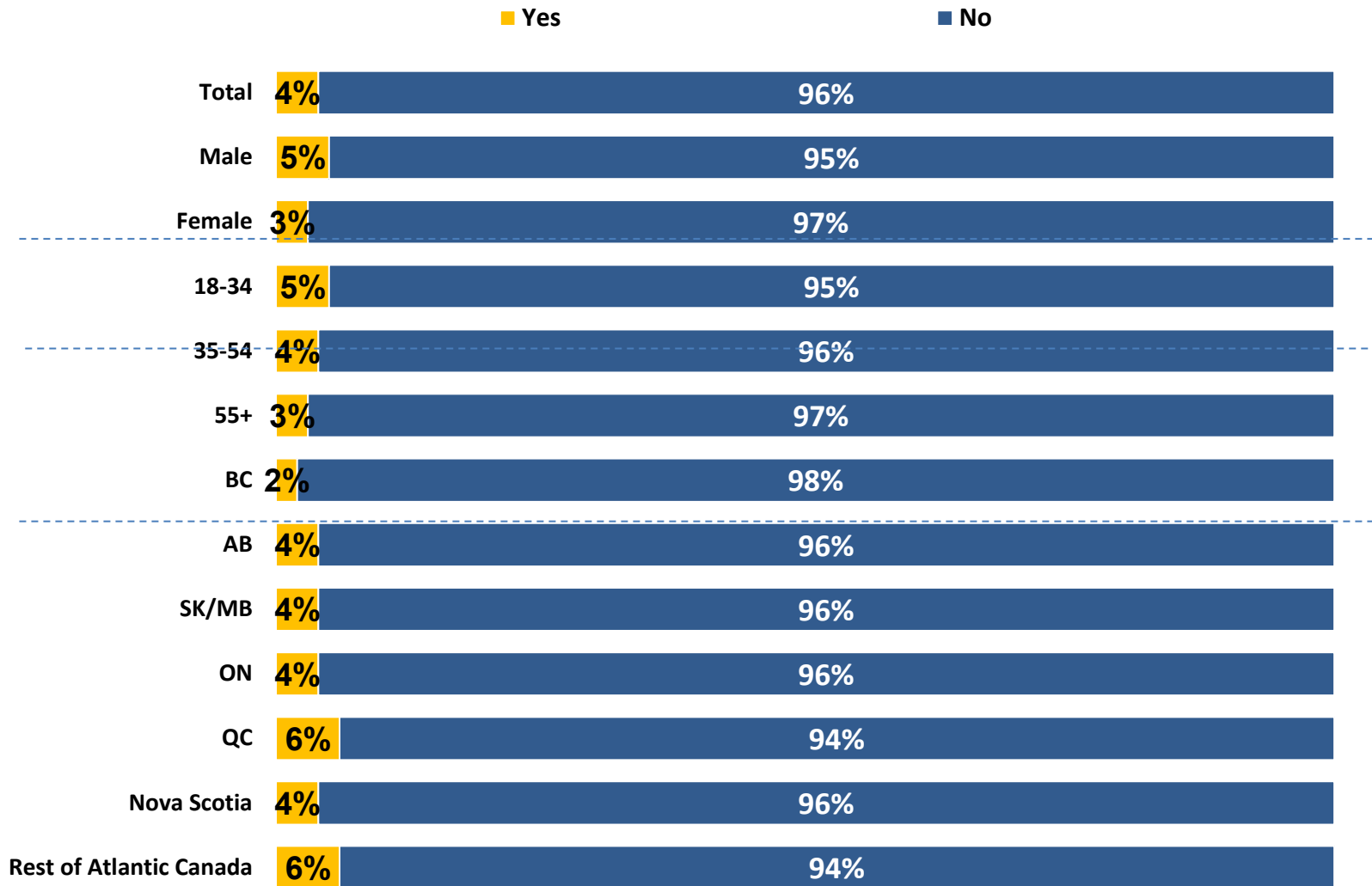
Which of the following best describes your religious identity?
 Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Religious Attendance - Demographics



How often do you attend church, temple, mosque services at your place of worship?
 Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Permanently or Severely Physically Disabled Canadians



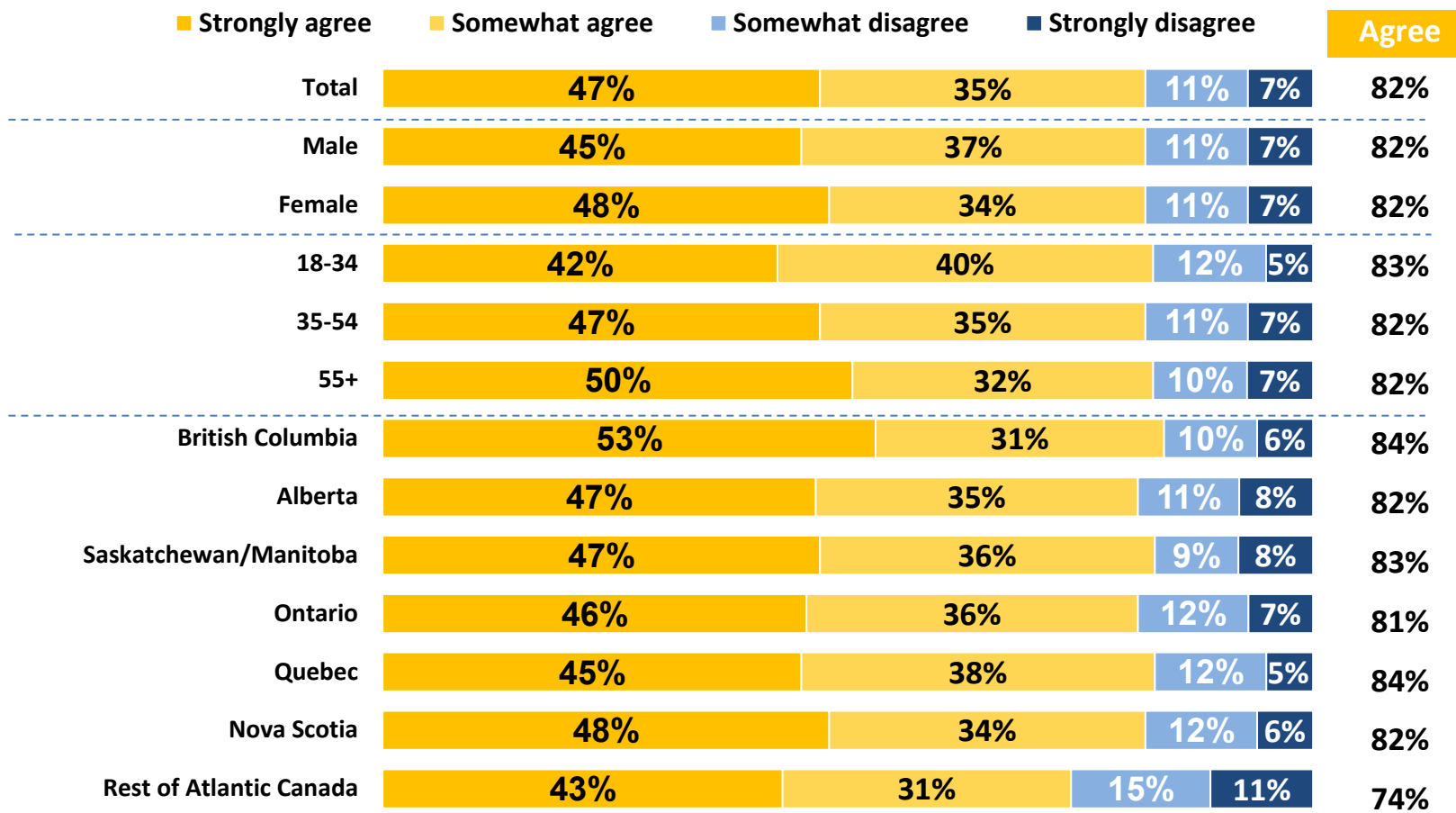
Demographics

Gender		Education		Region	
Male	48%	Primary school or less	<1%	British Columbia	13%
Female	52%	Some high school	4%	Alberta	11%
		Graduated high school	18%	Saskatchewan/ Manitoba	7%
		Some college / CEGEP / Trade School	11%	Ontario	38%
		Graduated from college / CEGEP / Trade School	23%	Quebec	24%
		Some university, but did not finish	8%	Nova Scotia	3%
		University undergraduate degree, such as a Bachelor's Degree	26%	Rest of Atlantic Canada	4%
		University graduate degree, such as a Master's or PhD	9%		

General Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying

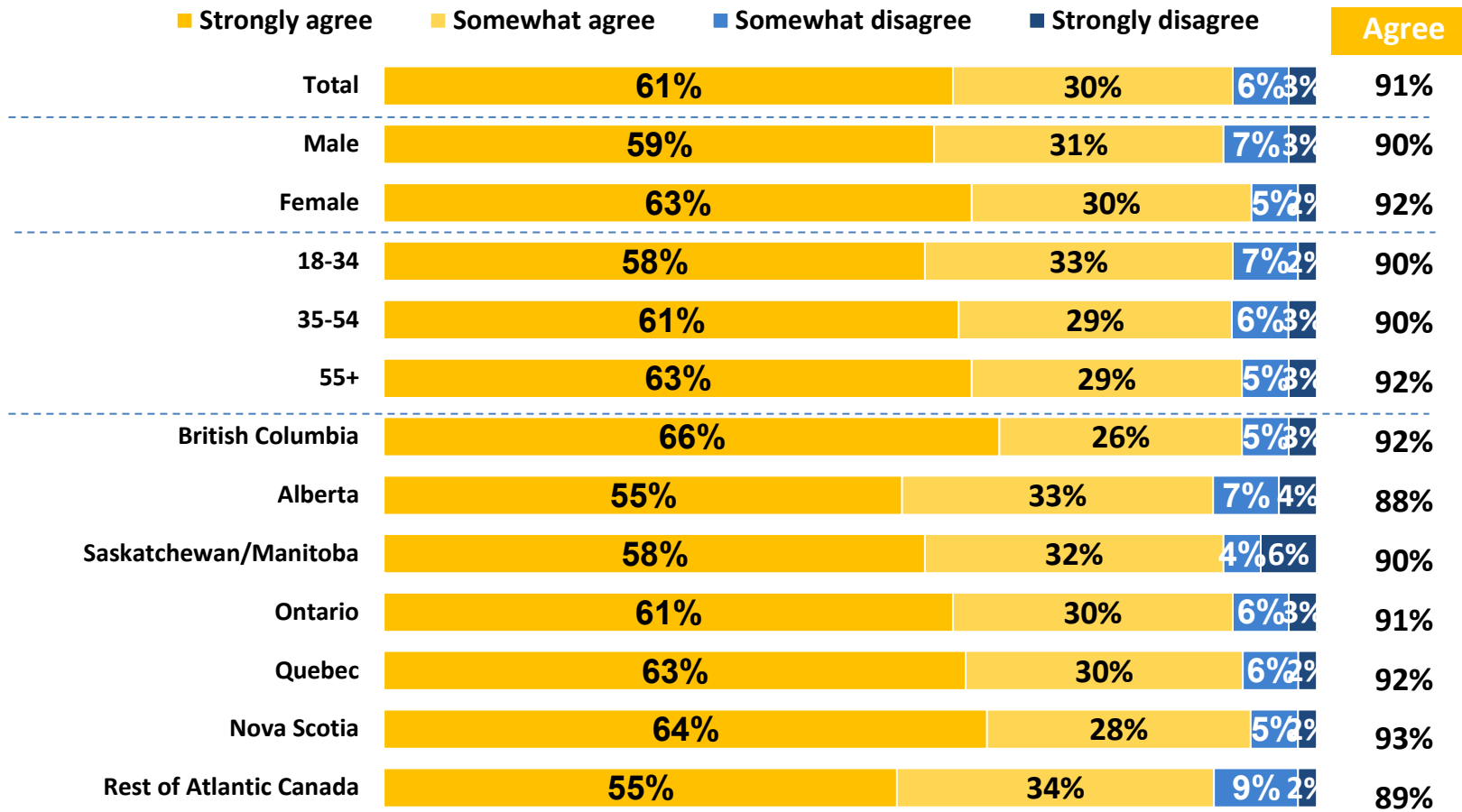
Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying-

An individual has the right to choose when and how to die



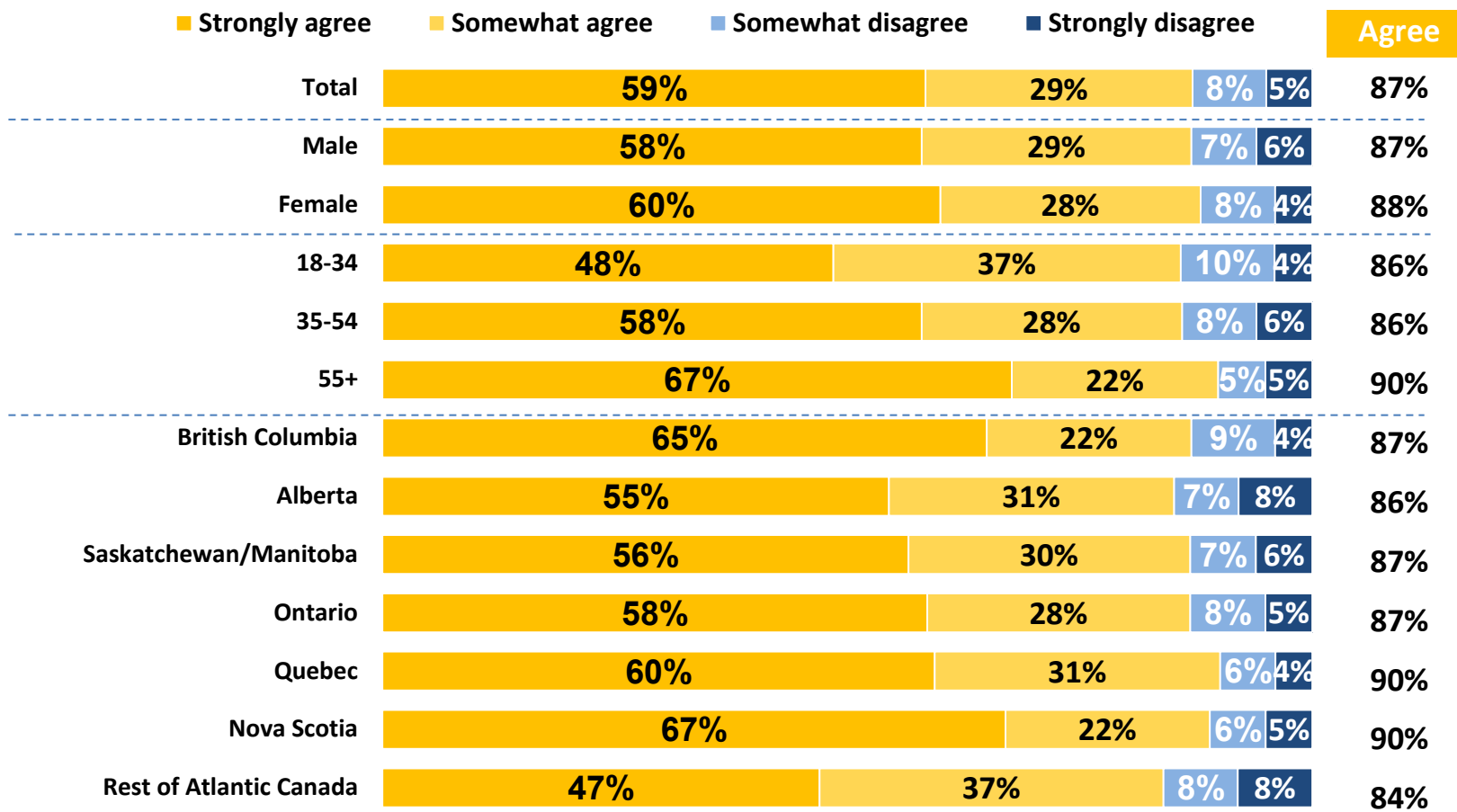
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? An individual has the right to choose when and how to die.
 Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying- A person should not be forced to endure drawn-out suffering.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? A person should not be forced to endure drawn-out suffering.
Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

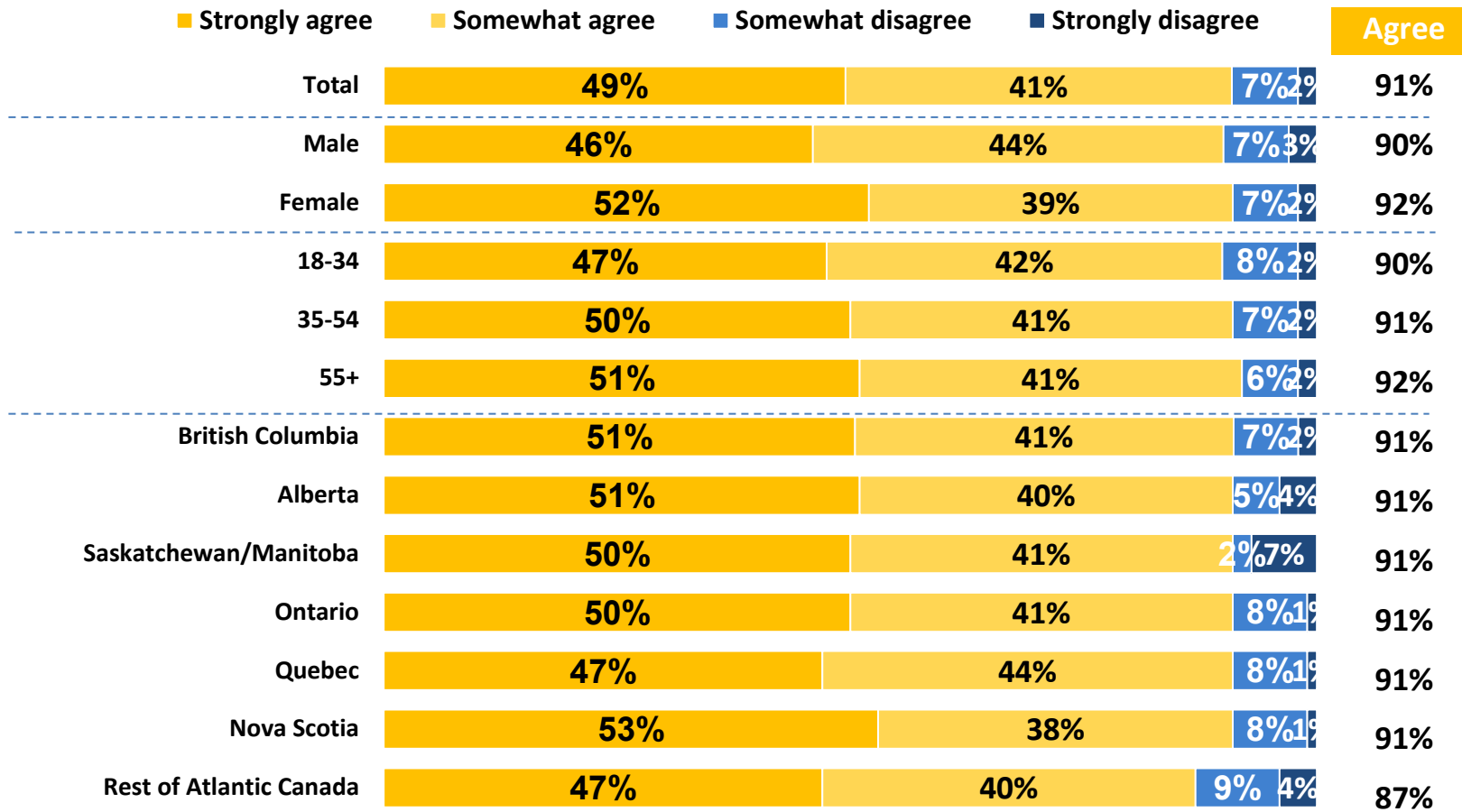
Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying- Doctors assisting a terminally ill person to end their life should not fear prosecution



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Doctors assisting a terminally ill person to end their life should not fear prosecution.

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying- Palliative care (medical care focused on the relief of symptoms, pain and stress of the seriously ill) cannot always relieve patients of unbearable pain and suffering.

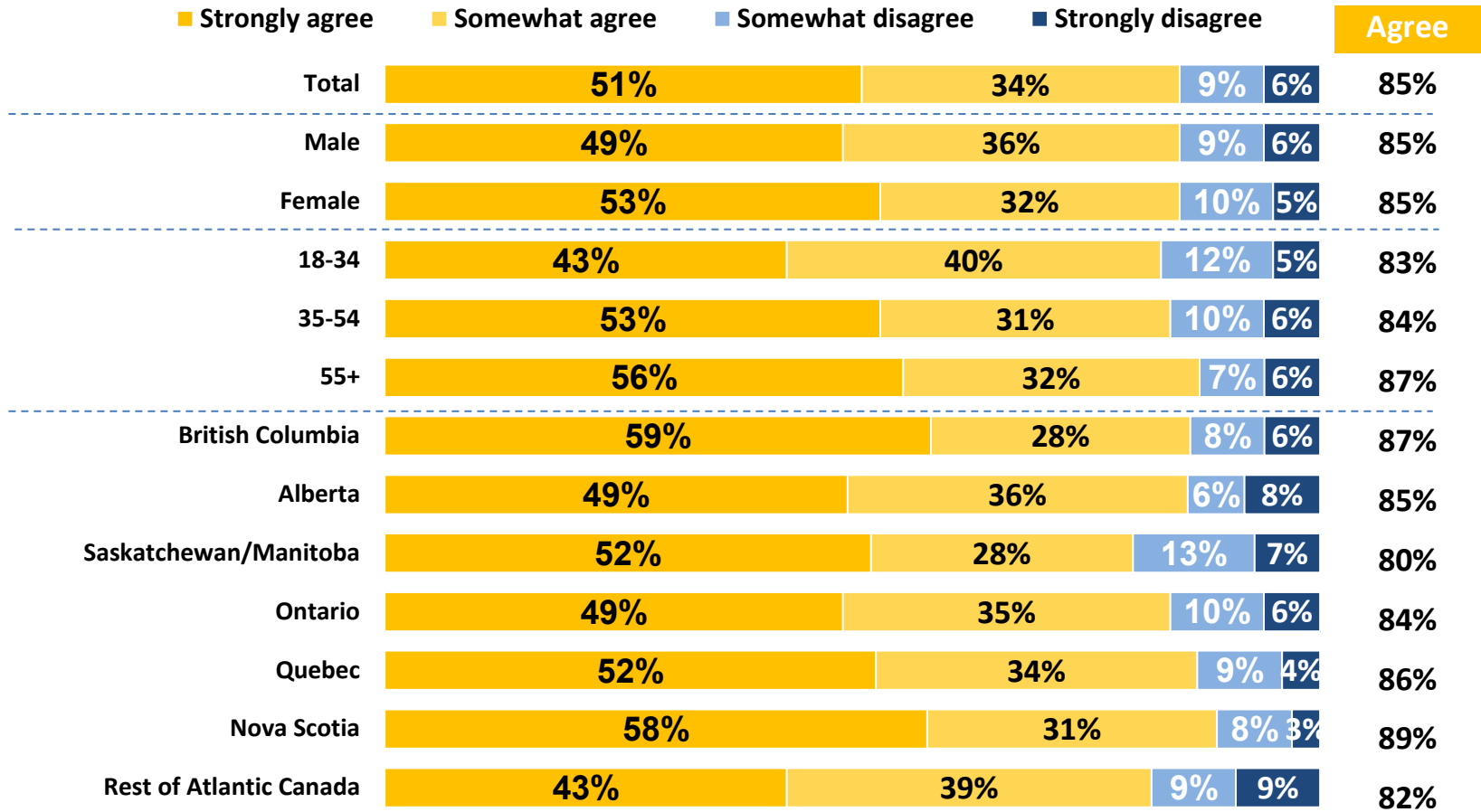


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Palliative care (medical care focused on the relief of symptoms, pain and stress of the seriously ill) cannot always relieve patients of unbearable pain and suffering.

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying-

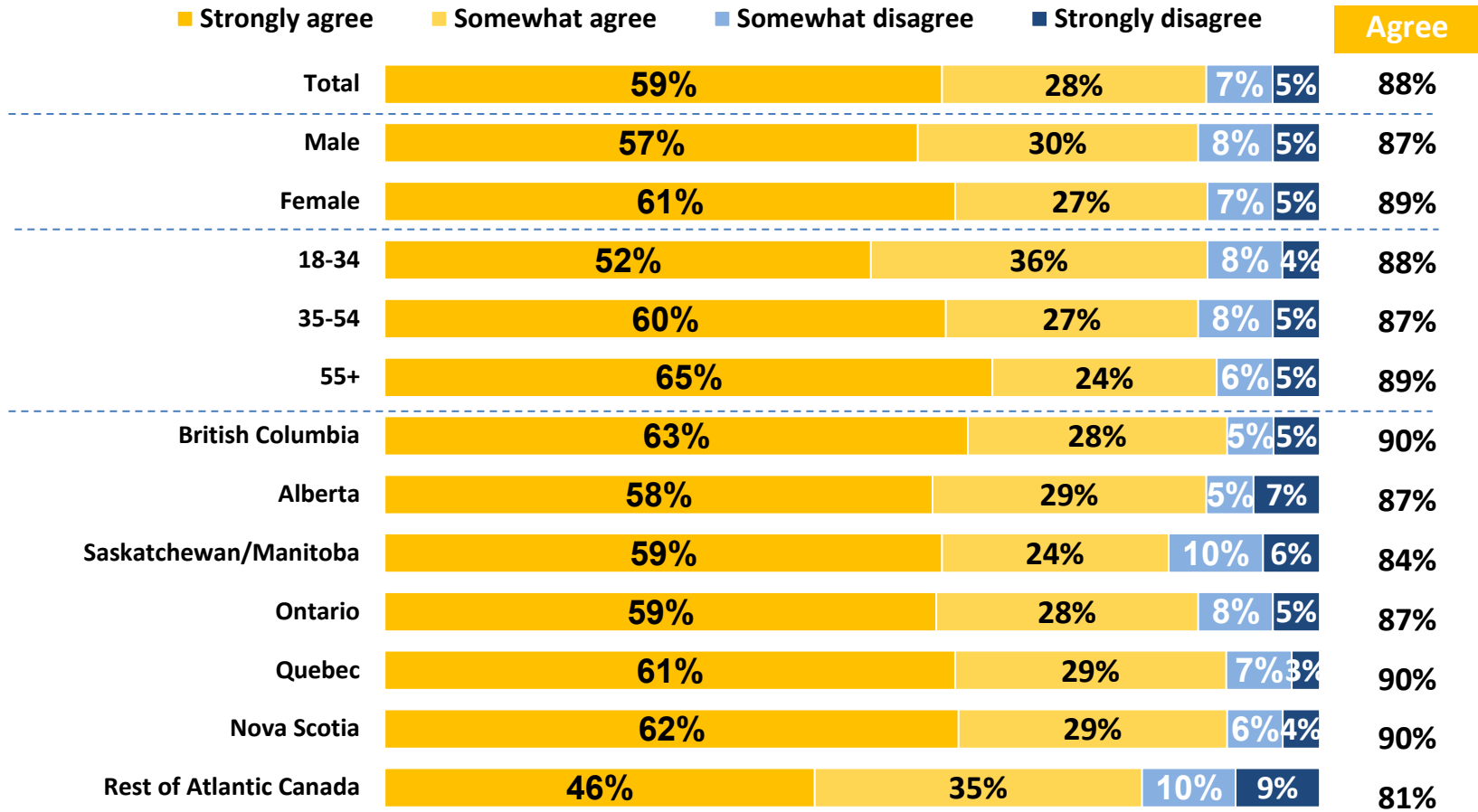
Since it is legal for a person to refuse or request an end to treatment, even if it results in death, it should be legal to request assisted dying



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Since it is legal for a person to refuse or request an end to treatment, even if it results in death, it should be legal to request assisted dying

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Attitudes Towards Assisted Dying- People should be able to decide for themselves when and how to die if they are terminally ill and their quality of life becomes intolerable

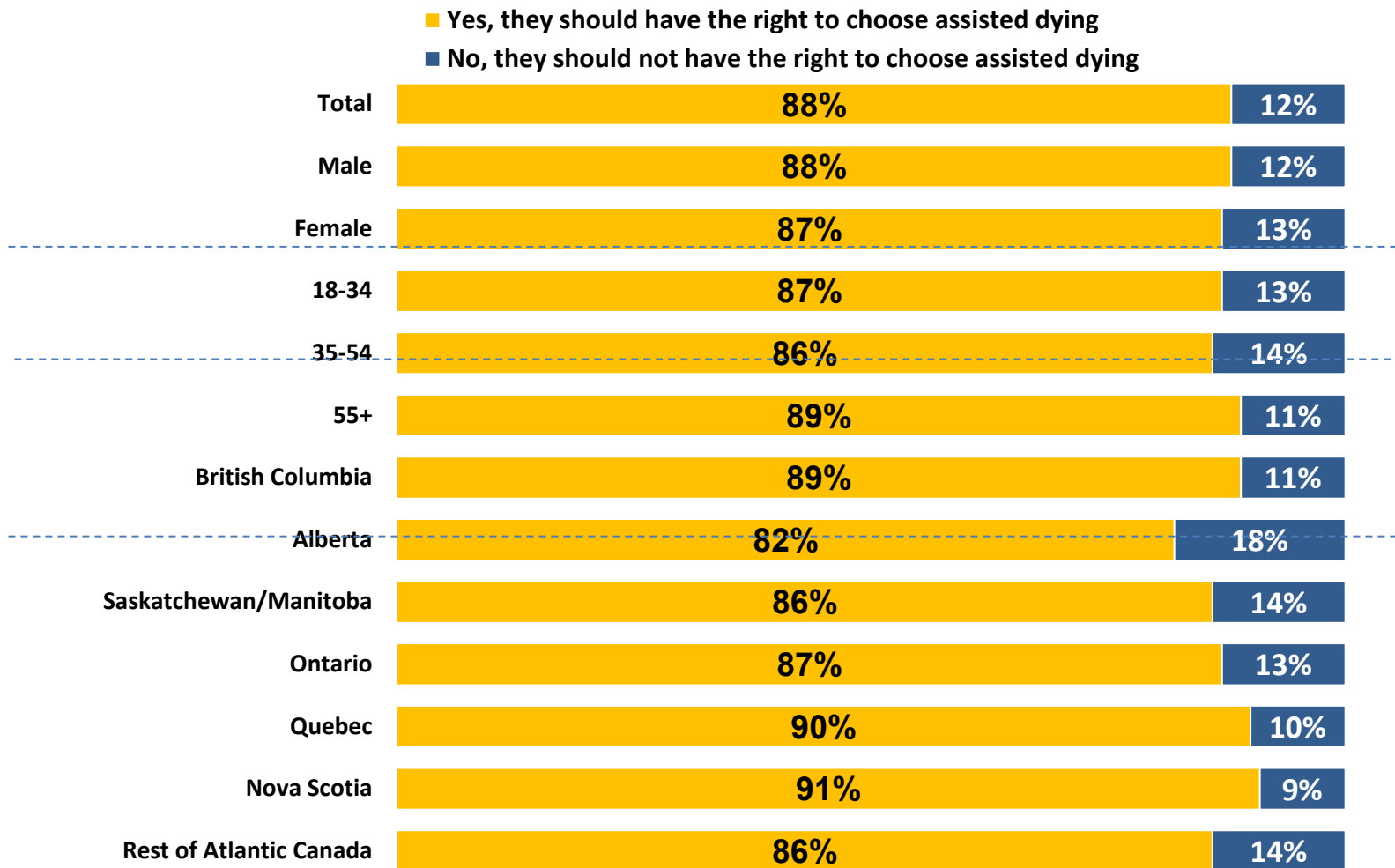


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People should be able to decide for themselves when and how to die if they are terminally ill and their quality of life becomes intolerable

Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Scenarios Where a Patient Should Have the Right to Choose Assisted Dying

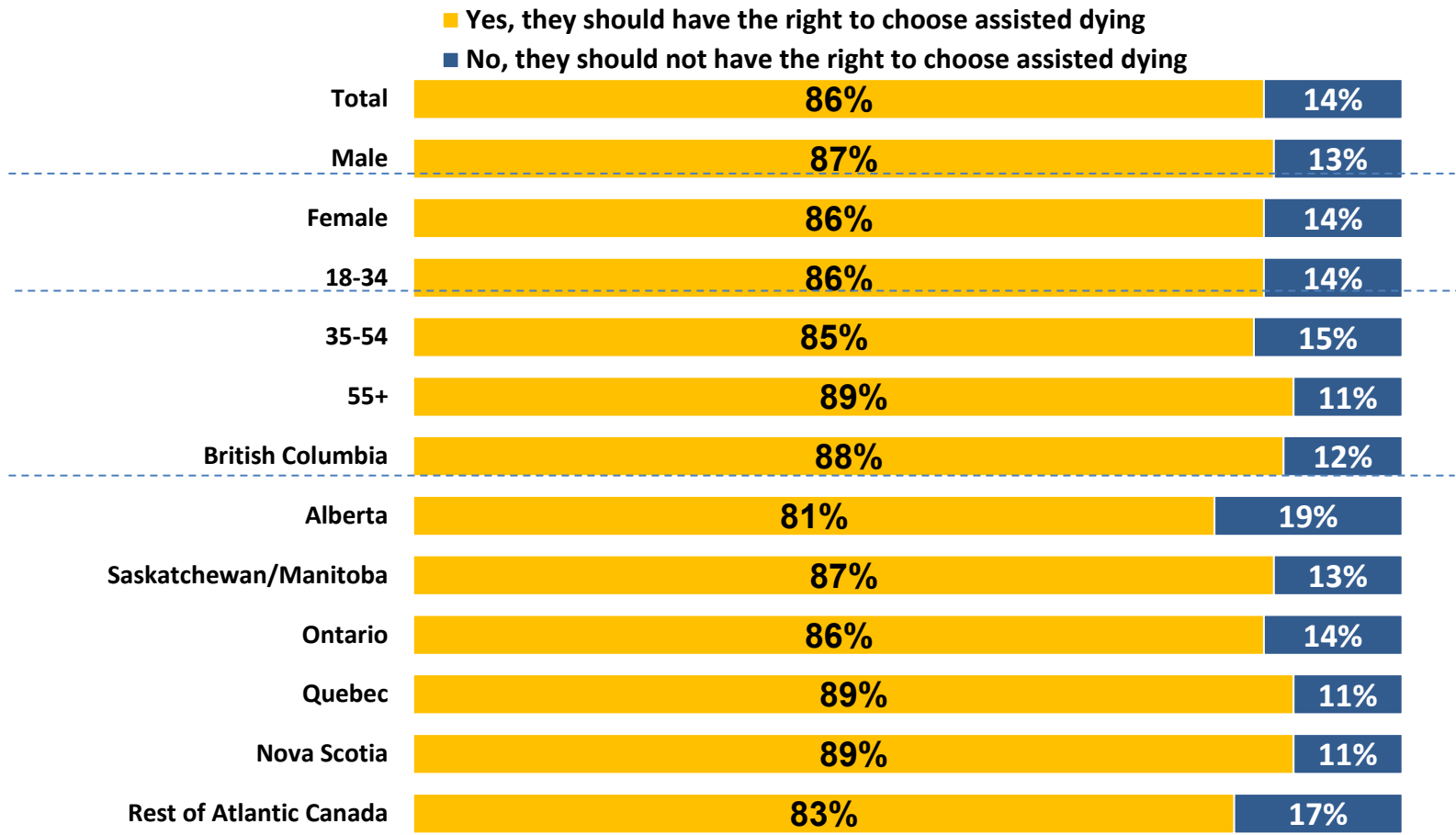
Scenarios in Which a Patient Should Have the Right to Choose Assisted Dying- A terminal illness that results in unbearable suffering



The following are various descriptions of health. Please indicate the health scenarios under which you believe a patient *should* have the right to choose assisted dying for *themselves*. - A terminal illness that results in unbearable suffering

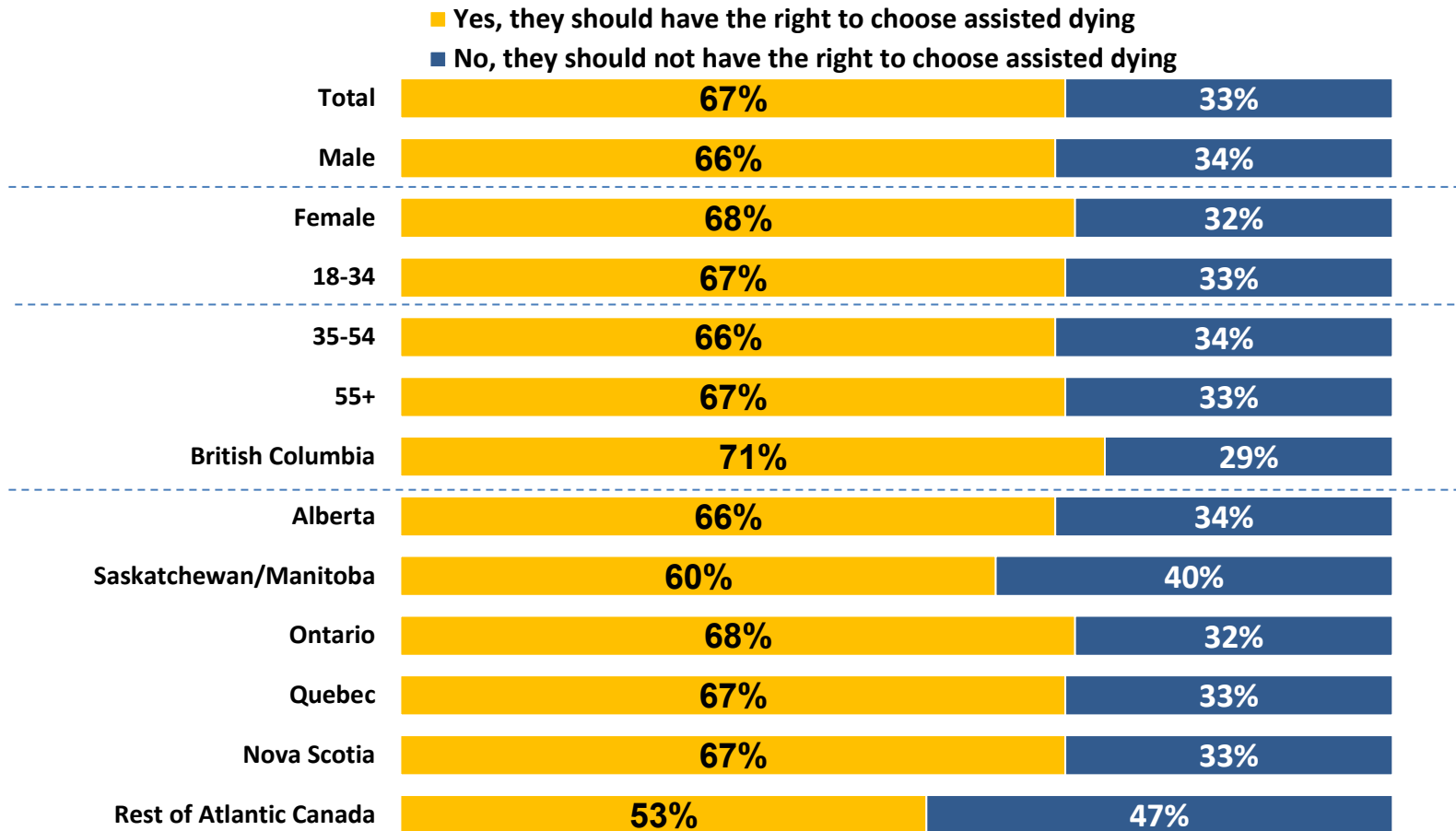
Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Scenarios in Which a Patient Should Have the Right to Choose Assisted Dying- A serious and incurable illness or condition, with an advanced state of weakened capacity that is permanent, incurable and results in unbearable suffering



Q10_2. The following are various descriptions of health. Please indicate the health scenarios under which you believe a patient *should* have the right to choose assisted dying for *themselves*. - A serious and incurable illness or condition, with an advanced state of weakened capacity that is permanent, incurable and results in unbearable suffering. Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

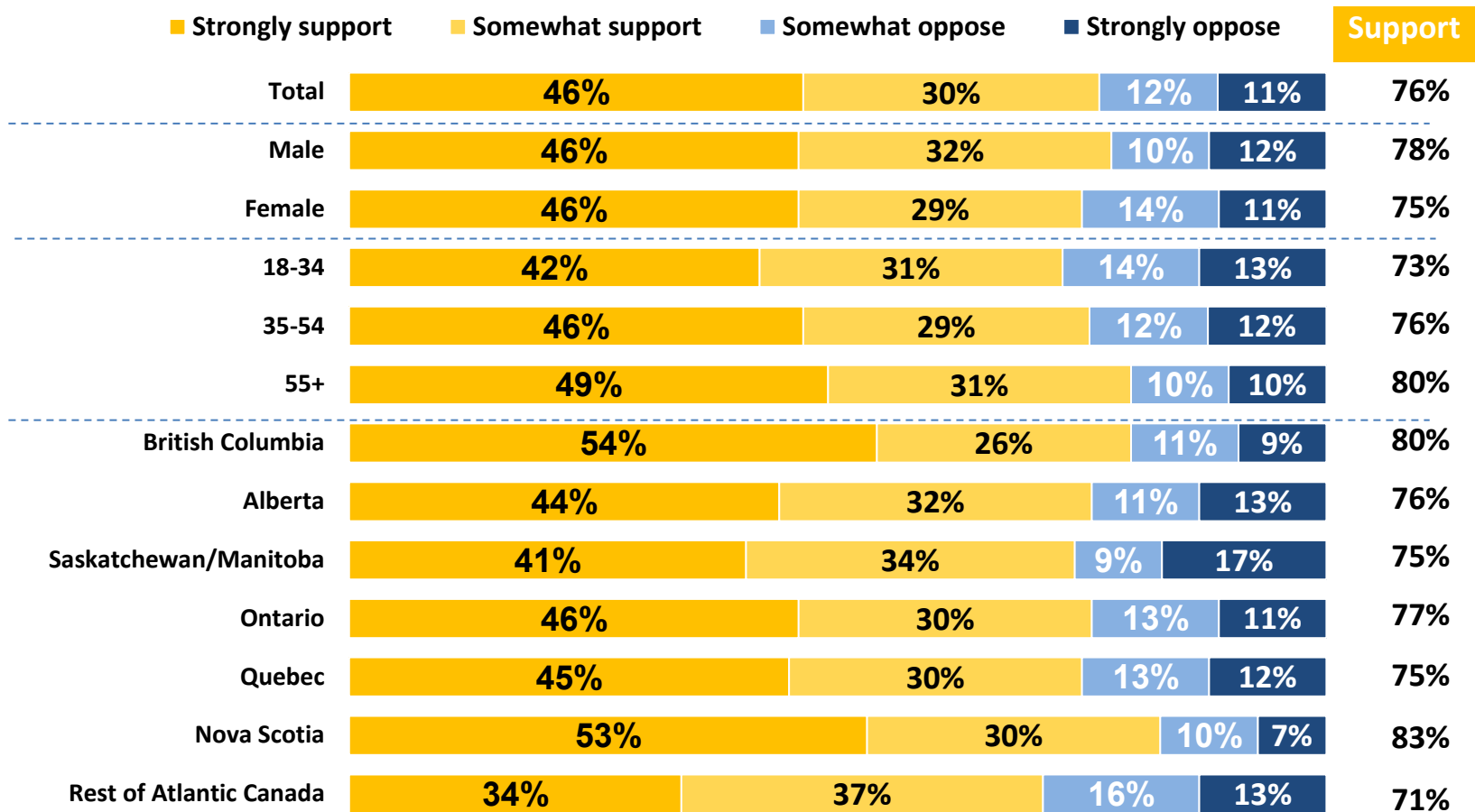
Scenarios in Which a Patient Should Have the Right to Choose Assisted Dying- Permanent and severe physical disability that significantly impacts quality of life and the ability to carry out basic activities of daily living



The following are various descriptions of health. Please indicate the health scenarios under which you believe a patient *should* have the right to choose assisted dying for *themselves*. - Permanent and severe physical disability that significantly impacts quality of life and the ability to carry out basic activities of daily living. Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

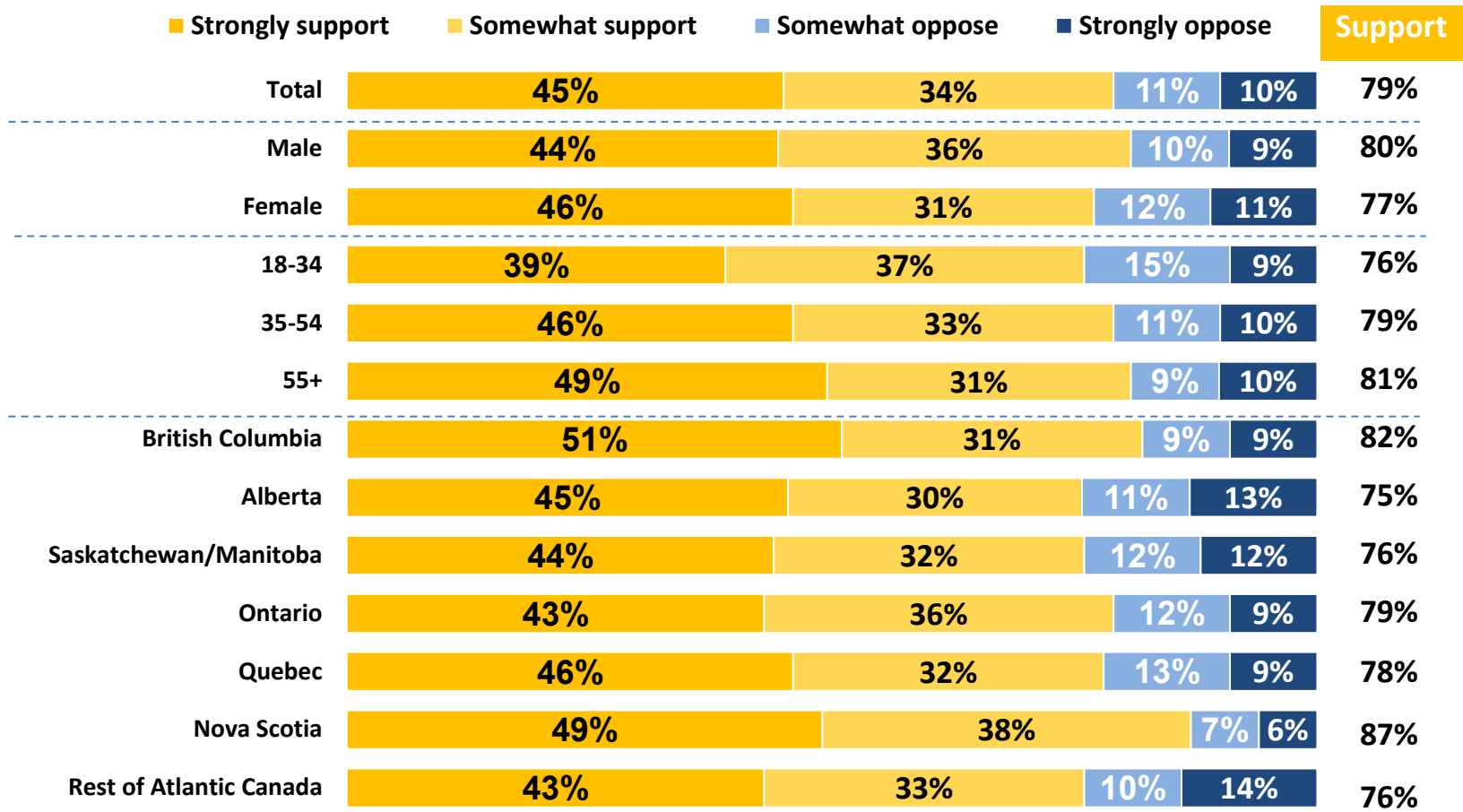
Law Changes and Different Scenarios

Support for Law Changes Allowing Different Scenarios - A physician prescribes life-ending medication that the patient takes themselves



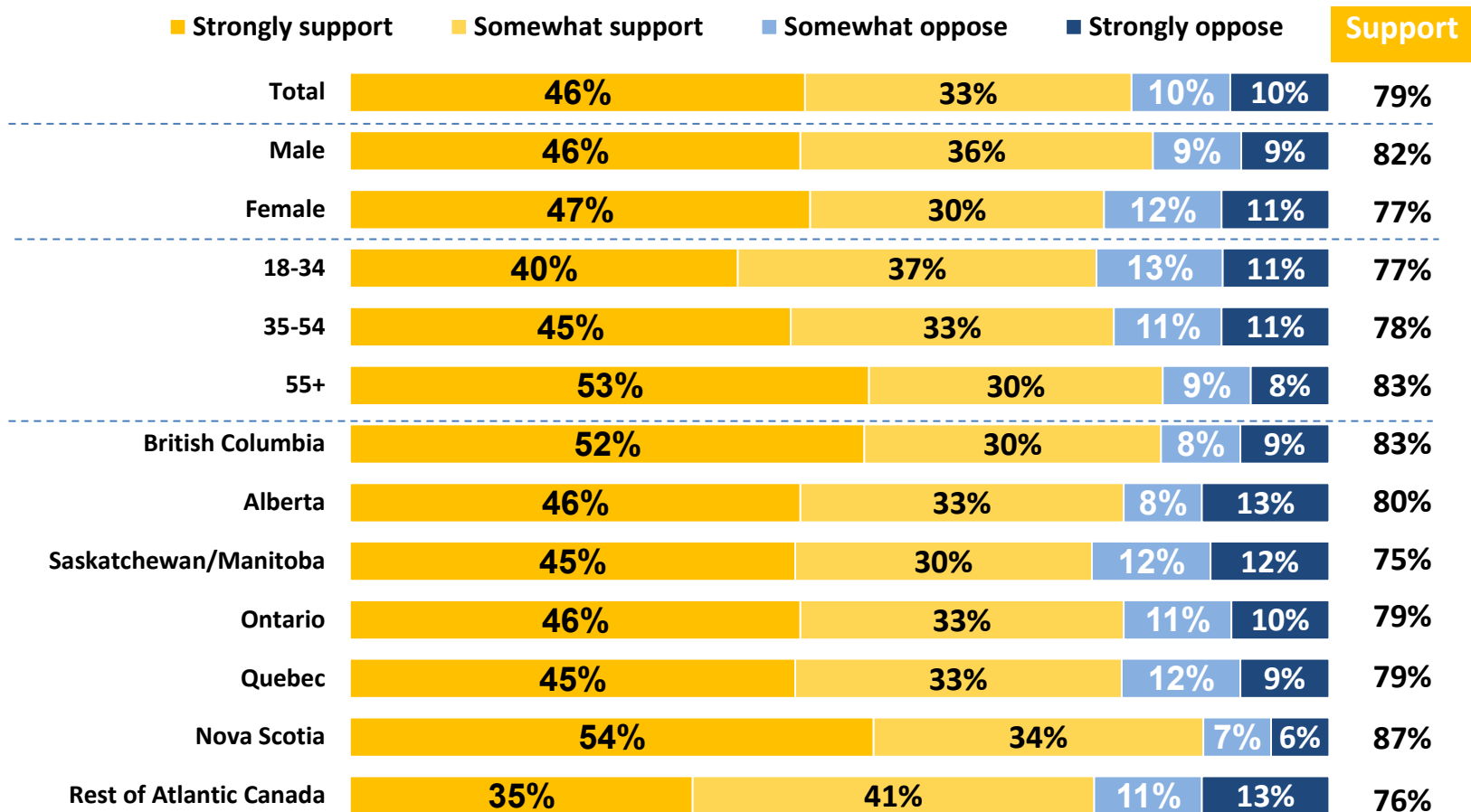
If there were to be a change in the law to allow assisted dying for the terminally ill, how much would you support or oppose the following: A physician prescribes life-ending medication that the patient takes themselves
Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Support for Law Changes Allowing Different Scenarios - A physician prescribes and administers life-ending medication



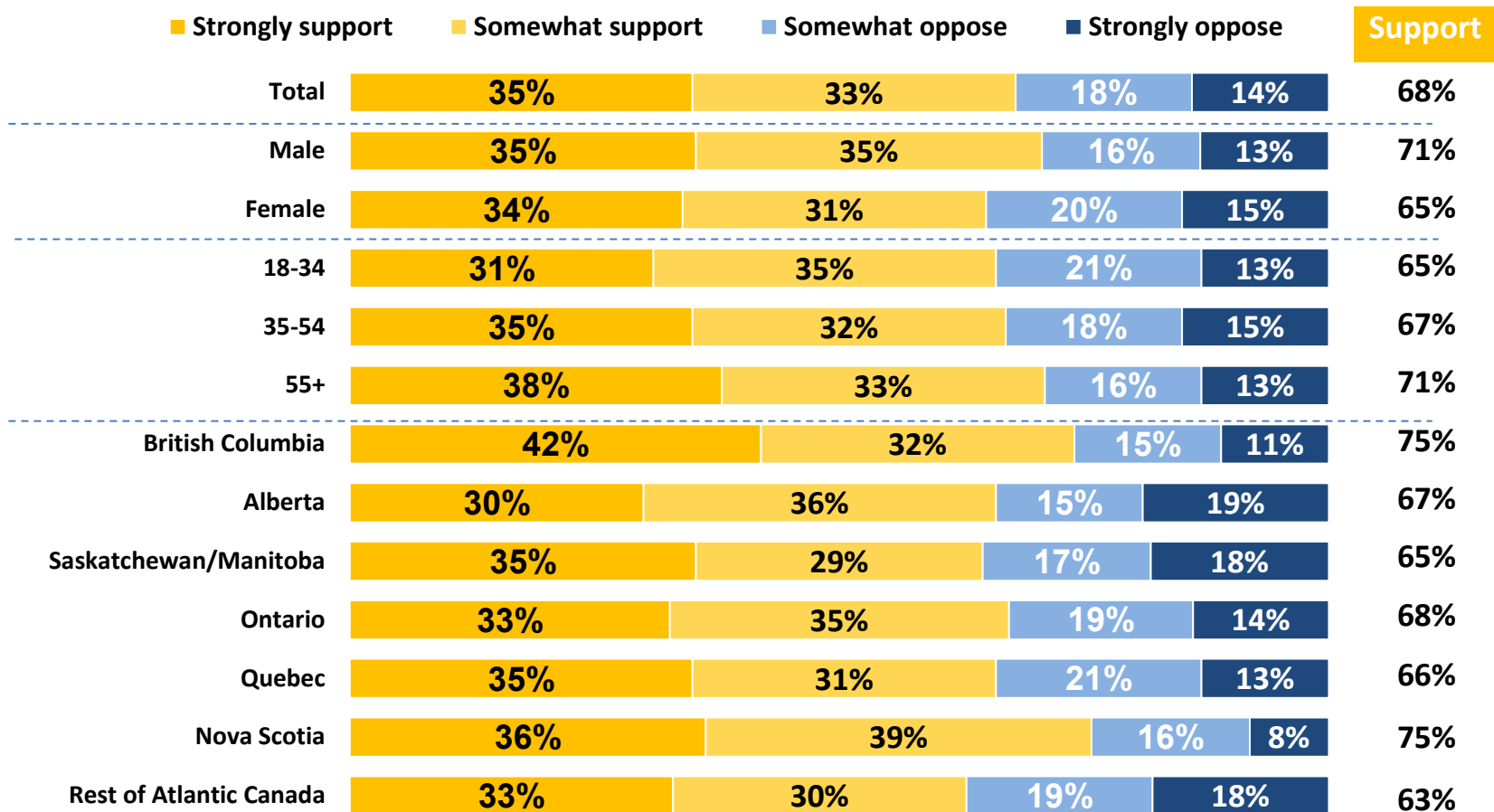
If there were to be a change in the law to allow assisted dying for the terminally ill, how much would you support or oppose the following: A physician prescribes and administers life-ending medication
Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Support for Law Changes Allowing Different Scenarios - A physician prescribes life-ending medication and administers it if the patient cannot take it themselves



If there were to be a change in the law to allow assisted dying for the terminally ill, how much would you support or oppose the following: A physician prescribes life-ending medication and administers it if the patient cannot take it themselves. Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)

Support for Law Changes Allowing Different Scenarios - A physician prescribes life-ending medication and a nurse or other licensed healthcare professional administers it



If there were to be a change in the law to allow assisted dying for the terminally ill, how much would you support or oppose the following: A physician prescribes life-ending medication and a nurse or other licensed healthcare professional administers it. Base: All Respondents: (n=2515)