

# Attitudes of Primary Care Physicians Regarding COPD Guidelines

Greg Salinas, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Chad Williamson<sup>1</sup>, Ravi Kalhan, MD, MS<sup>2</sup>, Byron Thomashow, MD<sup>3</sup>, Jodi Scheckermann, PharmD<sup>4</sup>, John Walsh<sup>5</sup>, Maziar Abdolrasulnia, PhD<sup>1</sup>, and Jill Foster, MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Outcomes, Inc., Birmingham, AL <sup>2</sup>Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, IL <sup>3</sup>Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, NY <sup>4</sup>Boehringer-Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Ridgefield, CT <sup>5</sup>COPD Foundation, Miami, FL

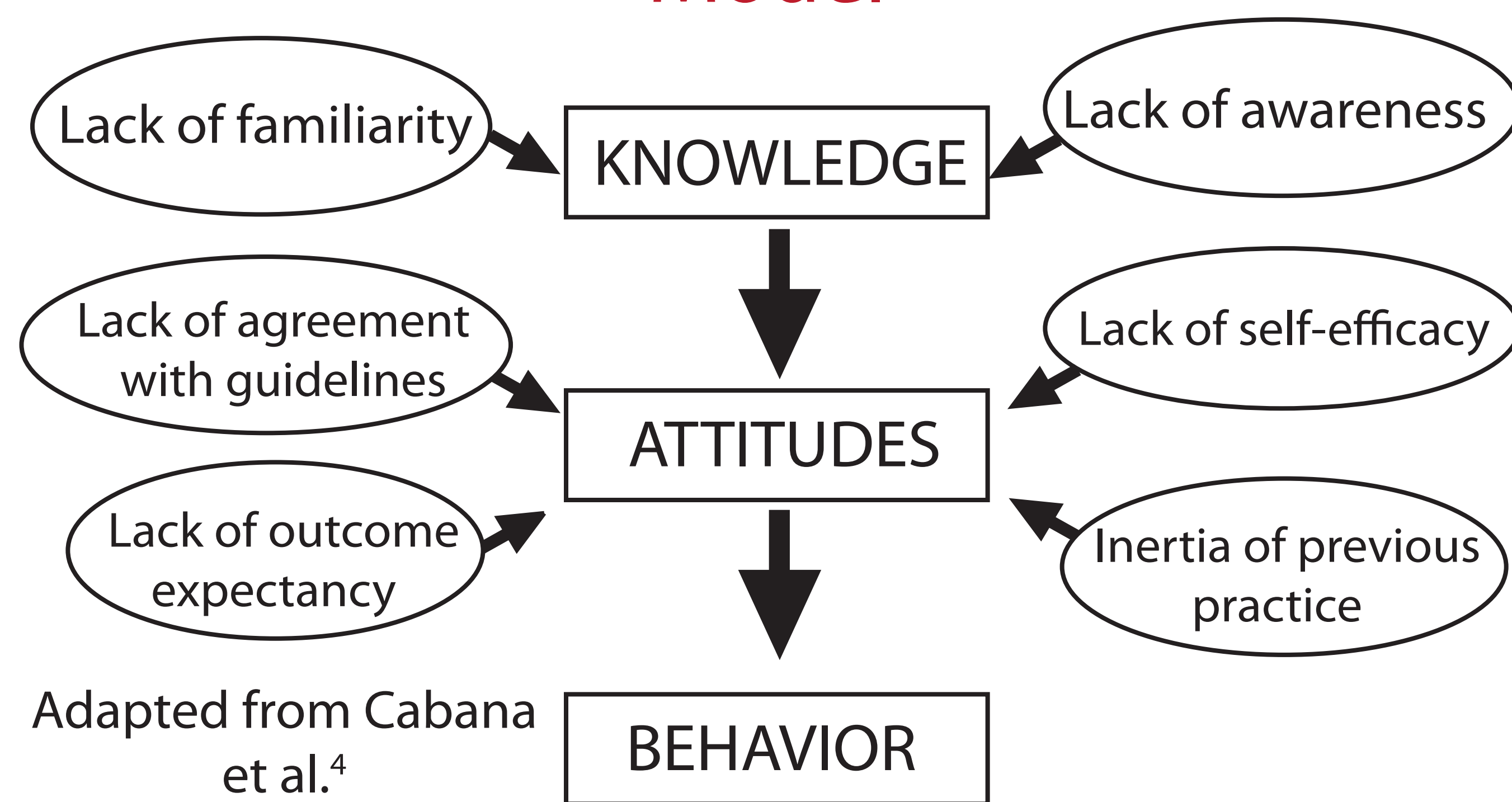
## Background

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the 4th leading cause of death in the United States. In 2005, 11.6 million Americans were diagnosed with COPD, but due to significant under-recognition, more than twice this number are estimated to have the disease.<sup>1</sup>

In 2001, the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) launched new COPD practice guidelines. A 2006 survey of primary care physicians (PCPs) revealed that among physicians who were aware of COPD guidelines, only 46% used them to inform clinical decision-making.<sup>2</sup>

Limited familiarity with and knowledge of practice guidelines have been implicated in the use of inappropriate therapies for COPD.<sup>3</sup> As part of an educational needs assessment, this study was designed to better understand current PCP attitudes toward COPD guidelines.

## Model



## Methods

A survey was designed based on the above model and distributed to US practicing PCPs to examine the following measures using rating scales:

- Familiarity with evidence-based COPD guidelines
- Attitudes towards GOLD guidelines
- Agreement towards guideline statements

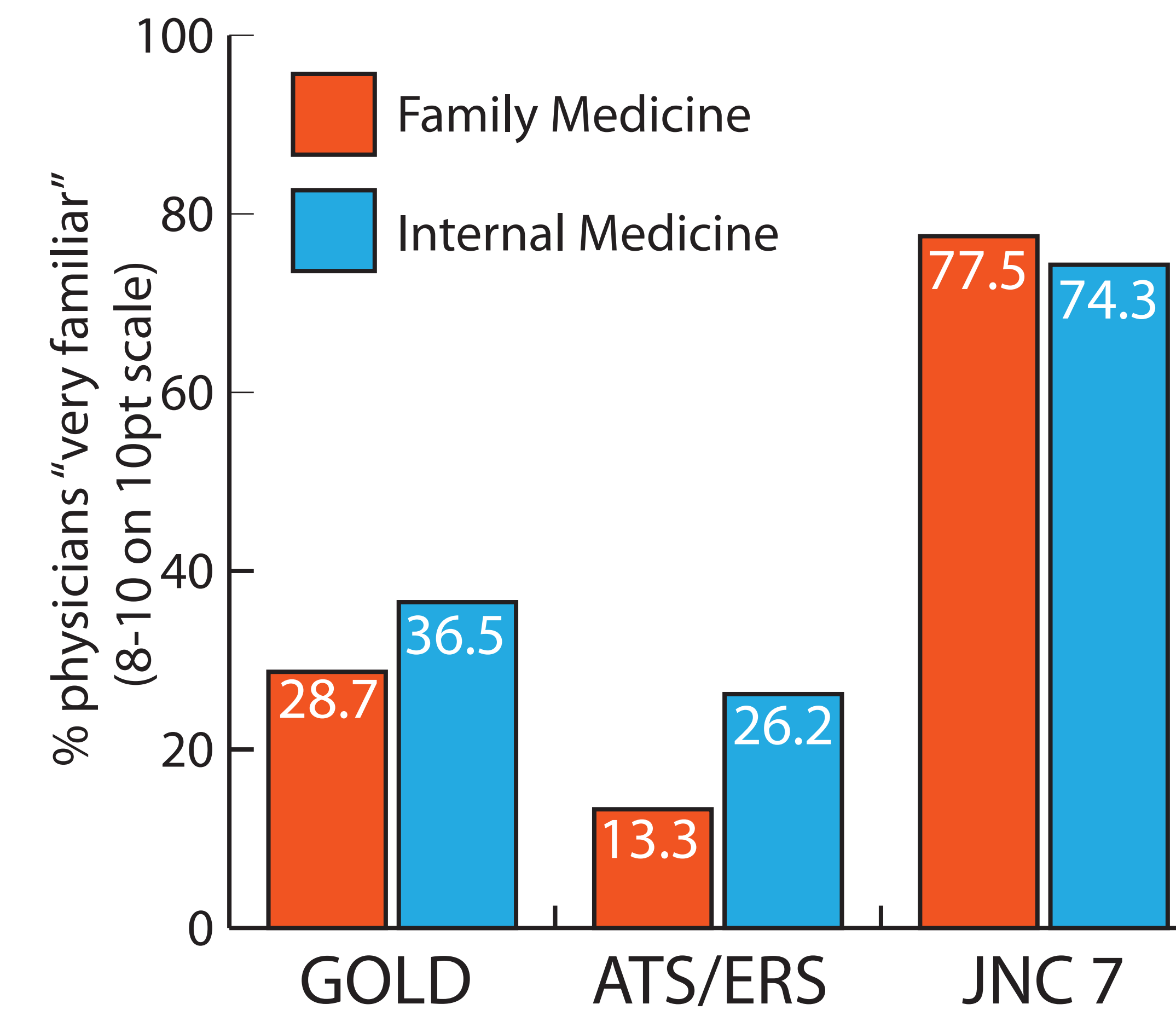
Responses from 500 practicing PCPs were analyzed with SPSS 17.0 (Chicago, IL). Familiarity with guidelines is defined as rating 4-10 on a 10 point scale; very familiar is defined as 8-10.

## Results

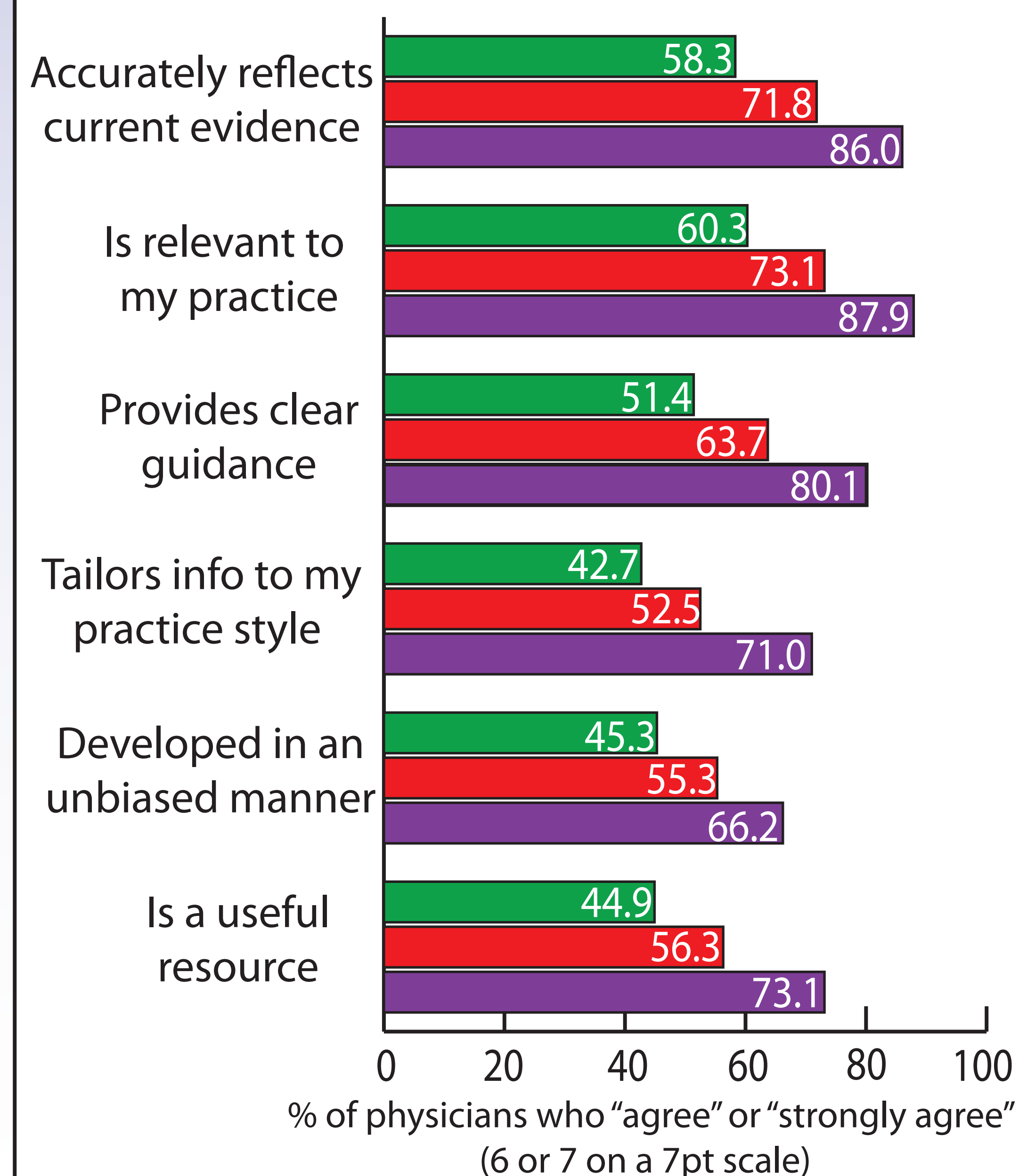
### Characteristics of survey respondents

	Overall (N=500)	FM (N=309)	IM (N=191)
Years in practice	16.1	15.6	16.8
Patients seen per week with COPD	19.2	17.2	22.5
Female (%)	27.4	28.8	25.1

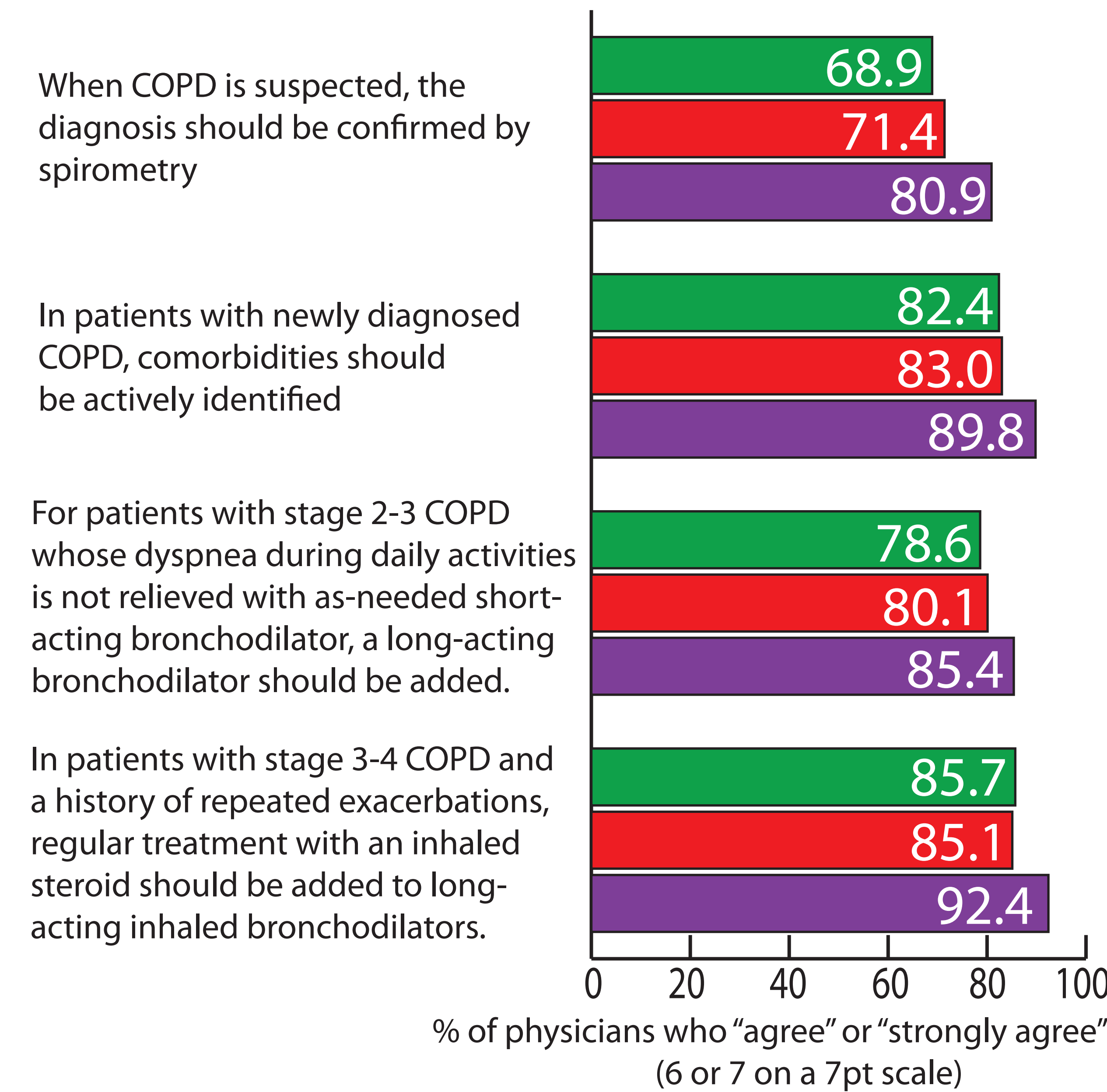
### Familiarity with COPD guidelines



### Attitudes towards GOLD guidelines



### Agreement with GOLD guidelines



## Discussion

Although familiarity with COPD guidelines has increased in the last few years, only 32% of PCPs are very familiar with the landmark GOLD guidelines. PCPs are far less familiar with COPD guidelines than JNC 7 hypertension guidelines.

Physicians familiar with GOLD guidelines are more likely to have positive attitudes towards them.

A majority of PCPs agree with GOLD guideline statements, but almost a third of PCPs have some abivalence about confirming COPD diagnosis with spirometry. Familiarity with GOLD is positively associated with GOLD guideline statements.

## Implication for Education

PCPs familiar with GOLD guidelines were more likely to have positive attitudes towards them. However, familiarity alone may not be sufficient to alter behavior.

To address concerns about low utility and potential bias, guideline developers may need to work closely with PCPs and their organizations to create a more tailored document.

In the meantime, highlighting key recommendations in a succinct manner with underlying evidence demonstrating favorable impact on outcomes may help overcome PCP resistance to using these valuable resources.

## References

- 1) Minino AM et al. (2006) Natl Vital Stat Rep 54, 1-49.
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- 3) Barr GR et al. (2005) Am J Med 118, 1415.e9-1415.e17
- 4) Cabana MD et al. (1999) JAMA 282, 1458-1465.

## Acknowledgements

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For additional information about this study, please contact:

Greg Salinas, PhD  
 Outcomes, Inc.  
 greg.salinas@ceoutcomes.com  
 205-259-1500