



# ACCESS DENIED

**Survey shows Kenyans  
want life-saving alternative  
nicotine products to be more  
affordable and available**

February 2022



# Overview

THE vast majority of smokers in Kenya want to use tobacco harm reduction products, such as nicotine pouches or vapes/e-cigarettes, to help them quit traditional cancer-causing cigarettes.

Yet almost three in four people find these innovative life-saving products too expensive or difficult to get hold of, and almost all would stop using them if Government increased their price.

These are the disturbing findings of a new survey by the Campaign for Safer Alternatives (CASA). The results demonstrate the urgent need for our regulators to treat nicotine pouches and vapes/e-cigarettes as an essential and effective tool in the battle to save more of the 8,100 Kenyan lives lost to tobacco-caused disease every year.

Evidence-based global research shows that nicotine pouches and vapes/e-cigarettes, are about 95% less harmful than cigarettes.

They are also proven to be helping more adult smokers to quit successfully than Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products such as lozenges, gums and patches, which are on the WHO's list of essential medicines.

Yet activists in Kenya demand stricter regulations, exaggerate the health risks of nicotine alternatives and largely ignore the potential benefits of nicotine pouches and vaping for adults who smoke.

CASA's survey gives a voice to the silent victims in this debate - the general public, including many smokers who are desperate to kick their deadly habit.

Nine out of 10 respondents in the survey say they have used traditional tobacco in some form, yet almost two-thirds want to quit. Almost all think nicotine pouches or vapes/e-cigarettes will give them the best chance of doing so successfully.



**There is an urgent need for our regulators to treat nicotine pouches and vapes as an essential tool in the battle to save the 8,100 Kenyan lives lost to tobacco-caused disease every year**

<p>More than a third of <b>smokers who've tried to quit, failed</b> to do so</p>	<p>Almost all (88%) think nicotine pouches or vapes/e-cigarettes are the <b>most effective quitting tool</b></p>	<p>Almost three in four (70.5%) think nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes/vapes are <b>too expensive</b> or <b>difficult to get hold of</b></p>	<p>Almost half (39%) think they should be made <b>more affordable</b></p>
<p>One in three users of pouches or vapes would seek out <b>cheaper products</b> if they were made more expensive</p>	<p><b>Other significant results from the survey of more than 200 Kenyans</b></p>		<p>Most people think <b>public health authorities</b> and GPs should more strongly <b>recommend pouches and vapes as quitting tools</b></p>
<p>Two in three (64%) realise that <b>tobacco is far worse for their health</b> than nicotine pouches or vapes/e-cigarettes</p>	<p>Three out of four (70%) <b>object</b> to nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes/vapes being <b>regulated as harshly as tobacco products</b></p>	<p>Most think more smokers would <b>quit and switch</b> to nicotine pouches or vapes/e-cigarettes if the <b>Government made them more available</b></p>	<p>Two in three (69%) would <b>stop using</b> nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes/vapes if <b>Government increased their price</b></p>





# Introduction

The policy of tobacco harm reduction seeks to reduce the heavy toll from cigarettes by moving smokers towards less risky alternatives, such as nicotine pouches and vapes/e-cigarettes.

This approach is gaining momentum in countries whose advanced tobacco control policies are significantly reducing smoking rates and thereby saving lives.

In Kenya, however, too many people are determined to stick to the failed tobacco control policy of quit-or-die and the myths used to perpetuate it.

Most recently, there have been calls by some in the activist community to ban nicotine pouches, despite research showing they have the same risk profile as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products that have been approved by medical regulatory bodies around the world for use as an acceptable strategy to quit smoking.

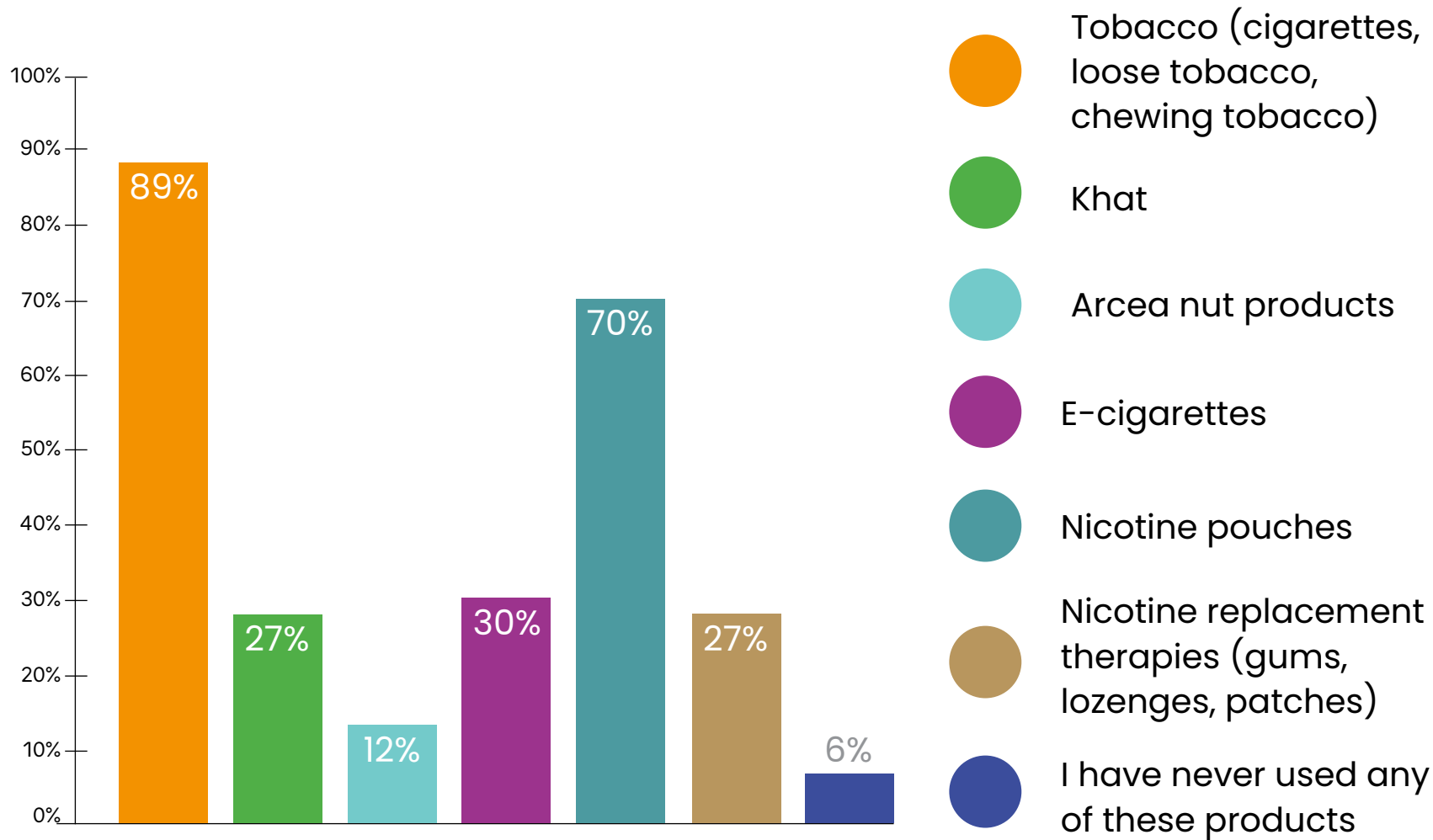
The Campaign for Safer Alternatives (CASA) sought to gauge the opinions of the general public – including smokers who are desperate to quit – by surveying more than 200 consumers nationwide.

The results are illustrated on the following pages.



Q1

# Do you use or have you ever used the following products (select all that apply)?

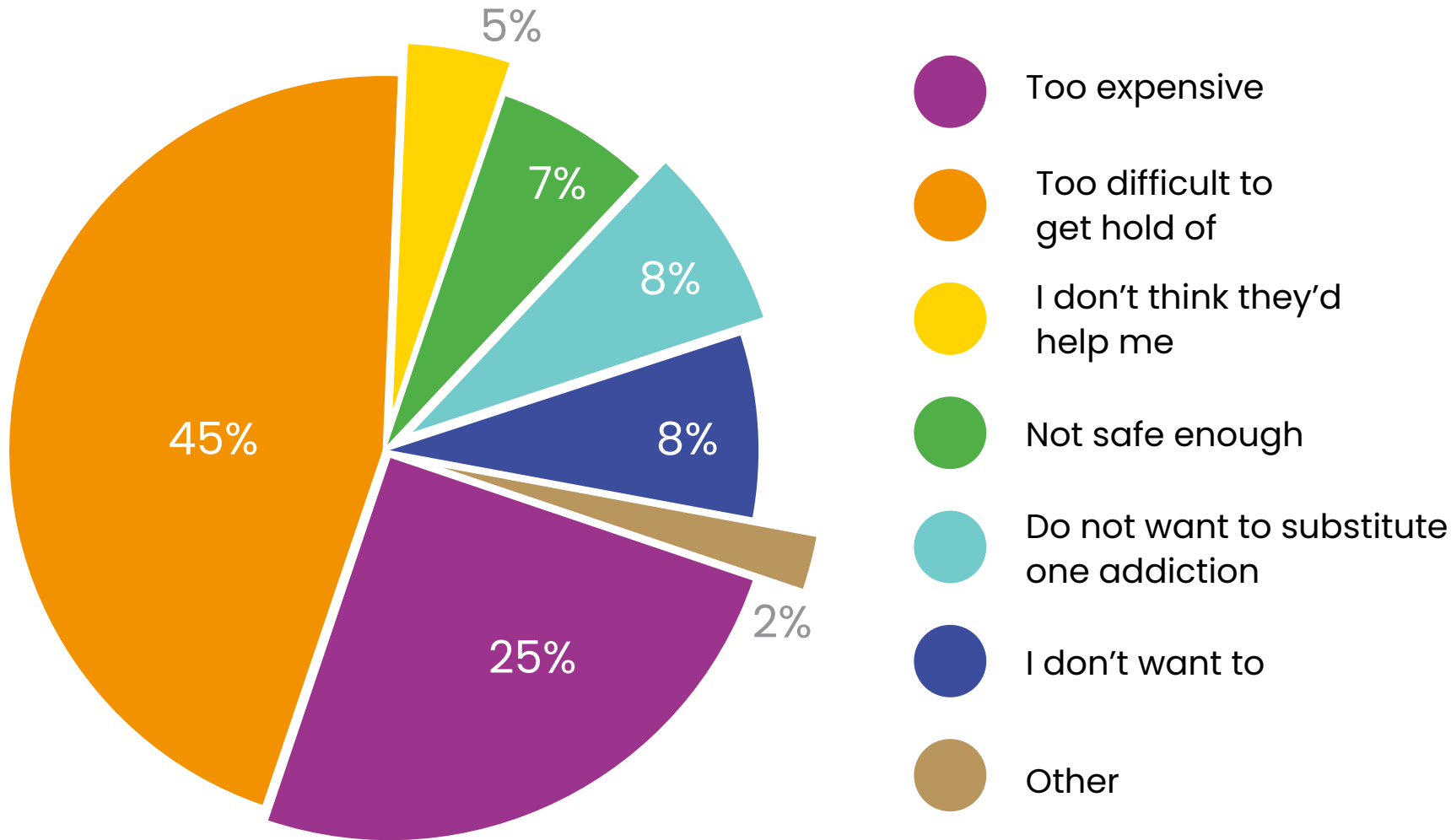


Nine out of 10 people have used traditional tobacco in some form (combustible cigarettes, loose tobacco or chewing tobacco).

Only one in 20 has not used tobacco, khat, arcea nut products, e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches or Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT).

Q2

## For those who haven't tried e-cigarettes or nicotine pouches, why haven't you tried them?

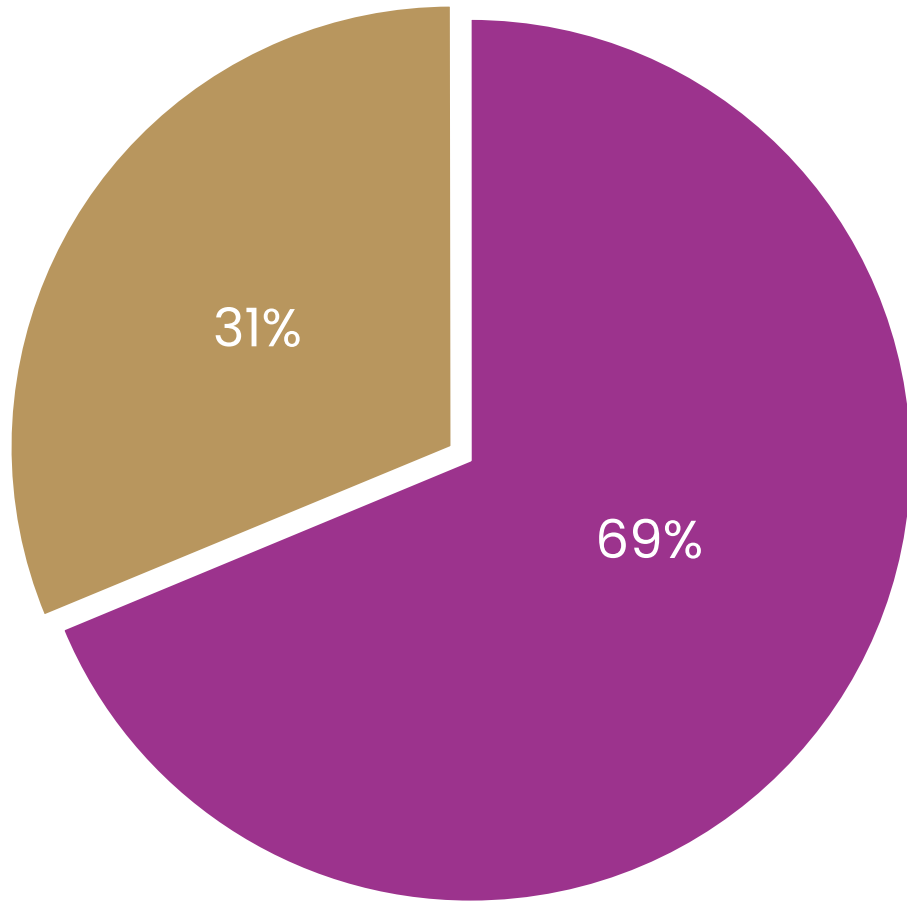


Of those who haven't tried nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes/vapes, 70% said it was because they were either too expensive or too difficult to get hold of.

Just 7% said they haven't tried them because they're concerned that they're not safe enough.

Q3

## If the government increased the price of nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes, how would this impact you?



I'd quit using them



I'd go back to smoking cigarettes

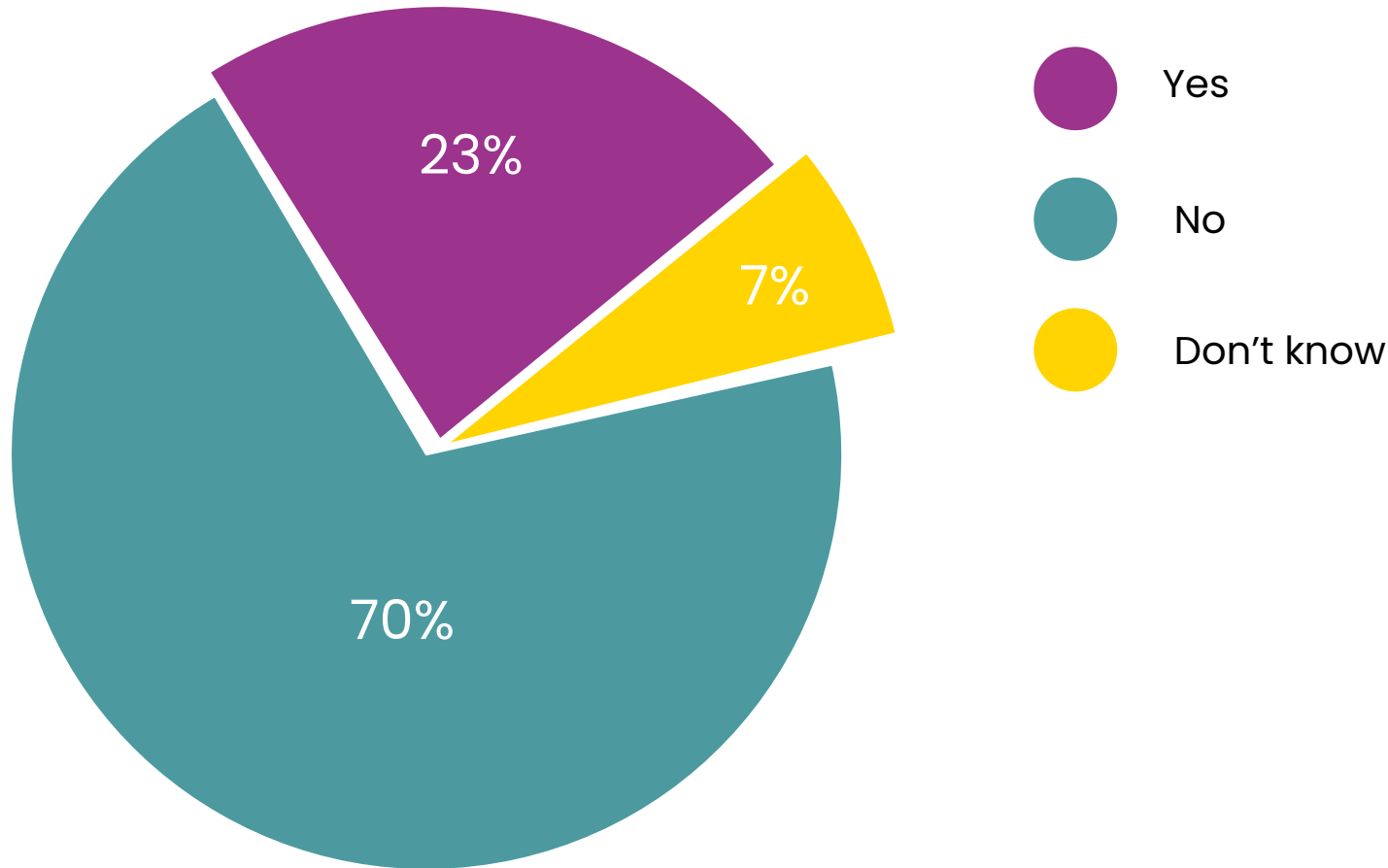
There was zero responses for the following questions:

- I'd find alternative ways to source cheaper products
- It would have no impact
- Other

Two in three users of nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes would stop using them if Government increased their price. The other third would seek out cheaper products, which could be unregulated, unsafe and potentially deadly.

Q4

## Should tobacco-free nicotine pouches & e-cigarettes be regulated the same as regular cigarettes?



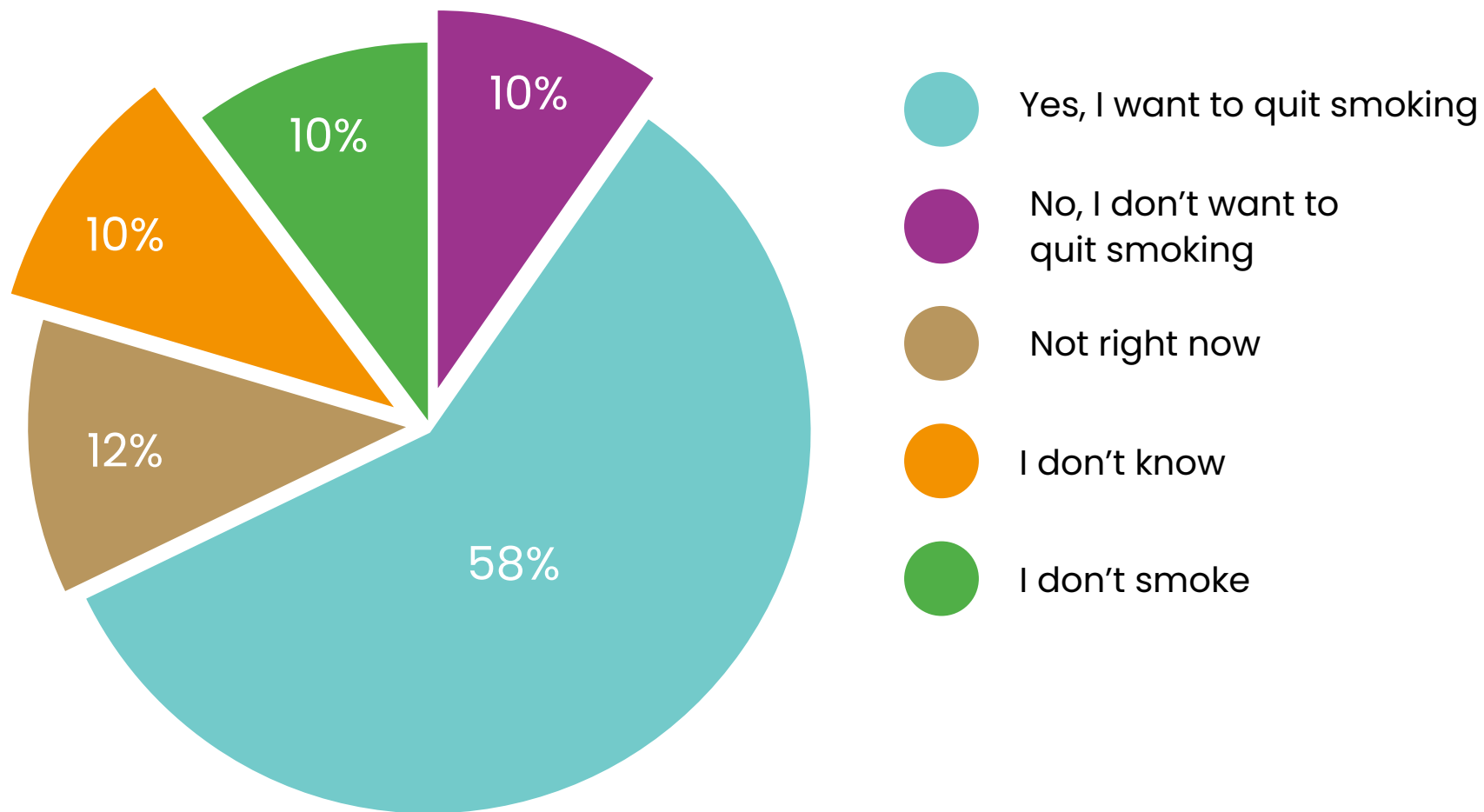
Three out of four (70%) people object to nicotine pouches and e-cigarettes being regulated just as harshly as tobacco products.

Less than one in four believes they should be treated the same.



Q5

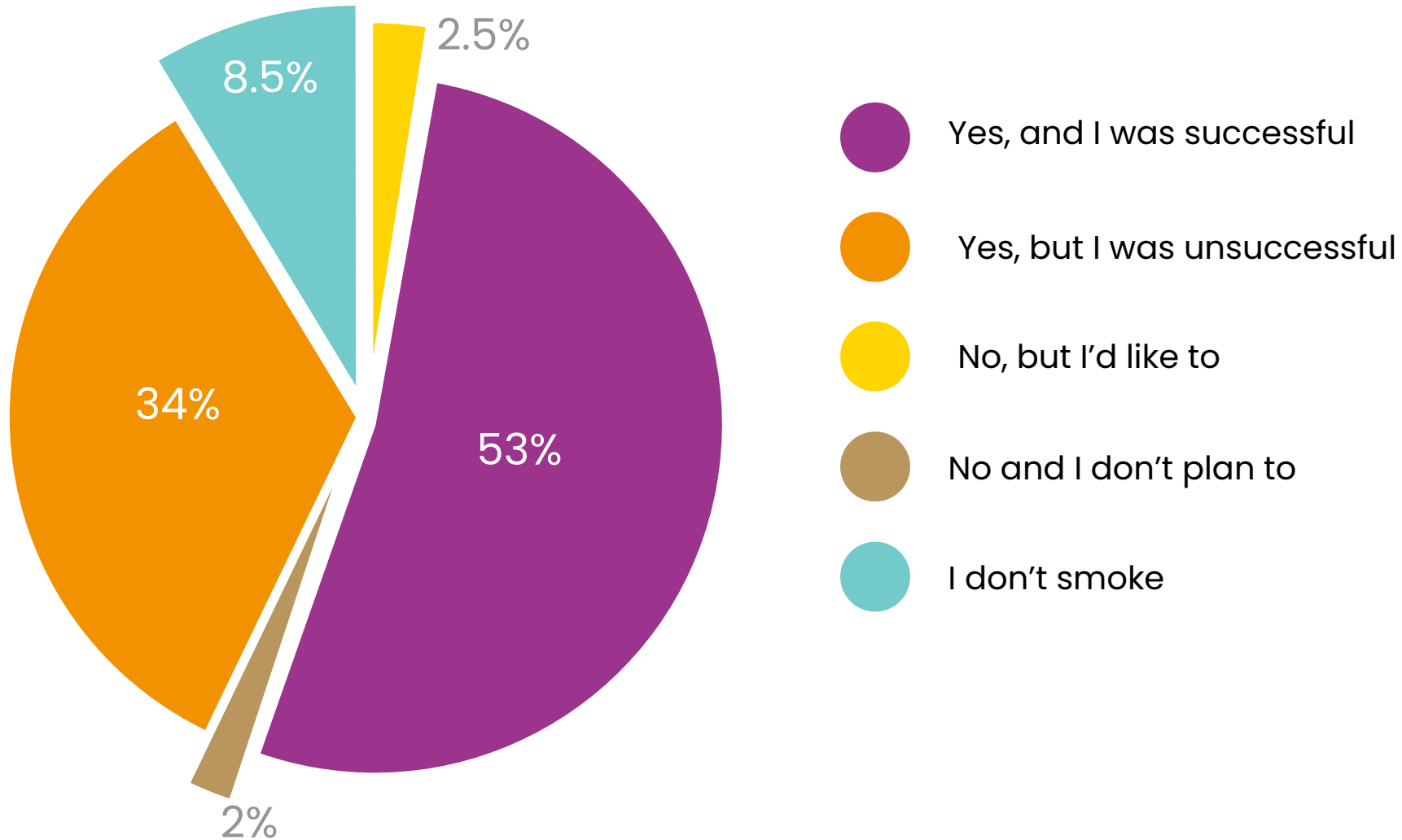
## Do you want to quit smoking?



More than two-thirds of smokers questioned want to quit. One in 10 said they did not want to kick their deadly habit.

Q6

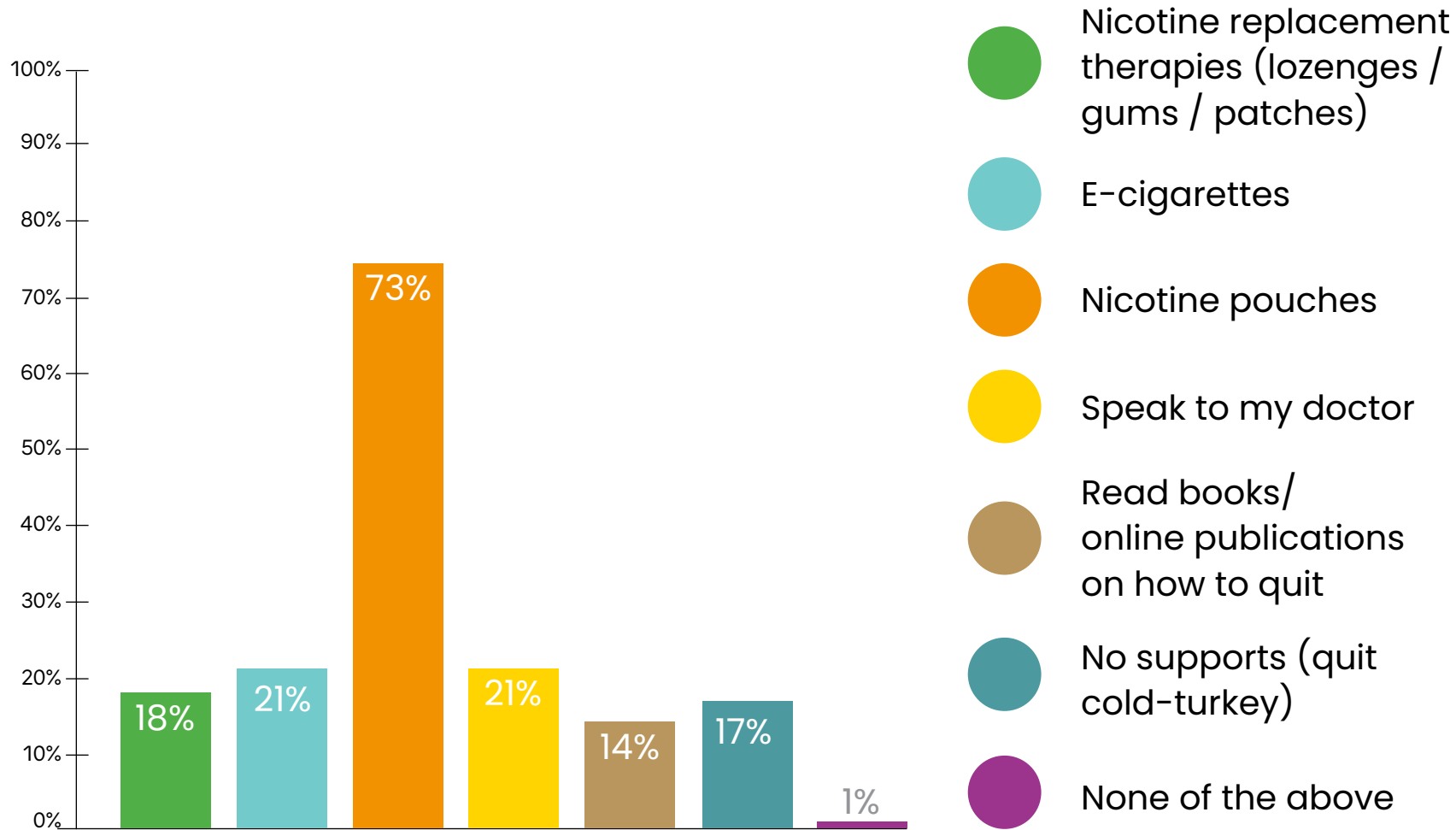
## Have you ever tried to quit smoking?



More than a third of smokers (34%) who had tried to quit failed to do so, showing that smokers need greater assistance to move away from cancer-causing cigarettes.

Q7

## What supports did you use/would you use to help you quit? (select all that apply)

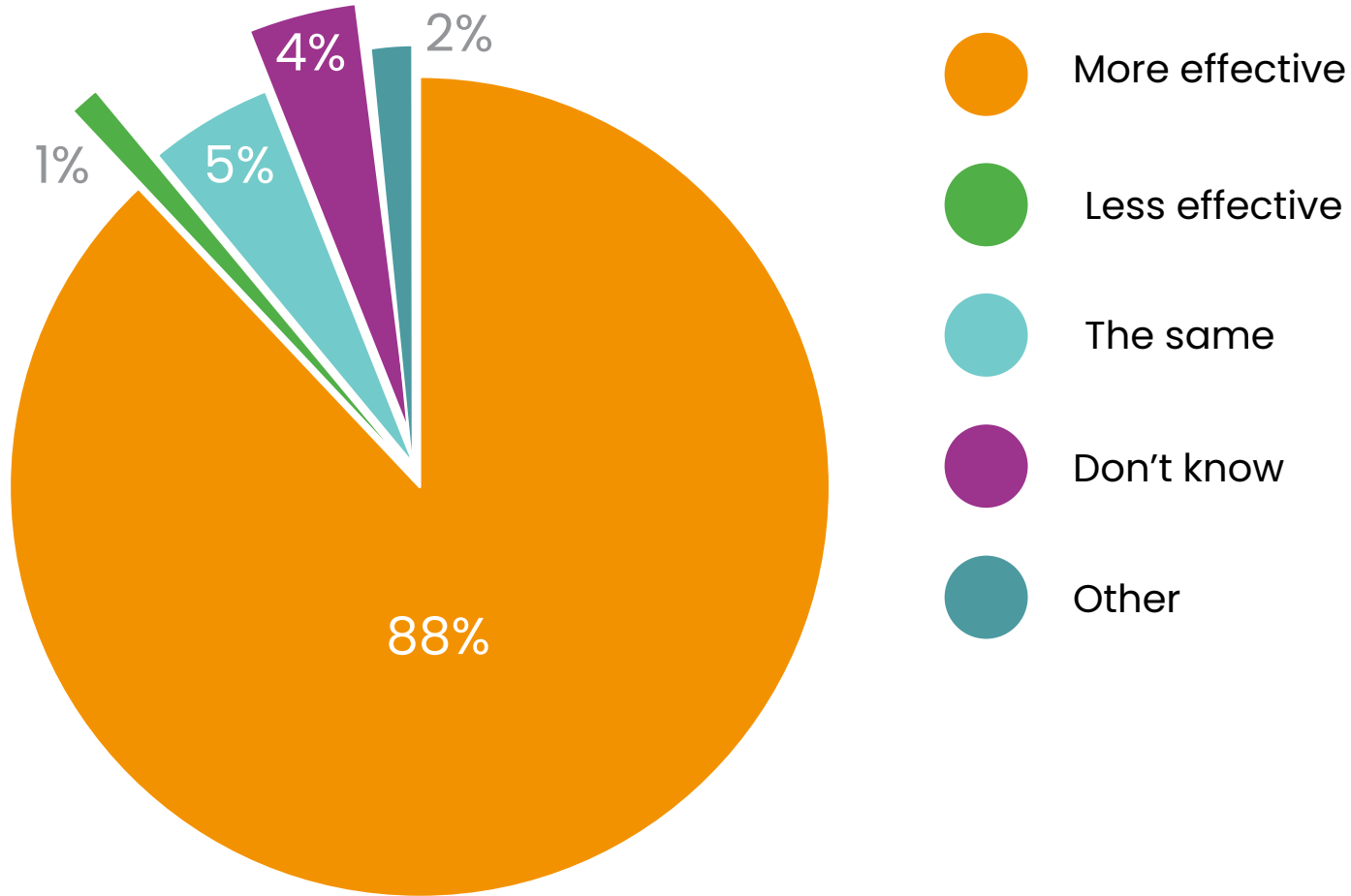


Nicotine pouches are the preferred method of quitting for almost three in four (73%) respondents.

They are three times as likely to be used for quitting as e-cigarettes or Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs), and almost five times more popular than going 'cold turkey' without any supports whatsoever.

Q8

## Are e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches more or less effective to quit smoking than other cessation methods?

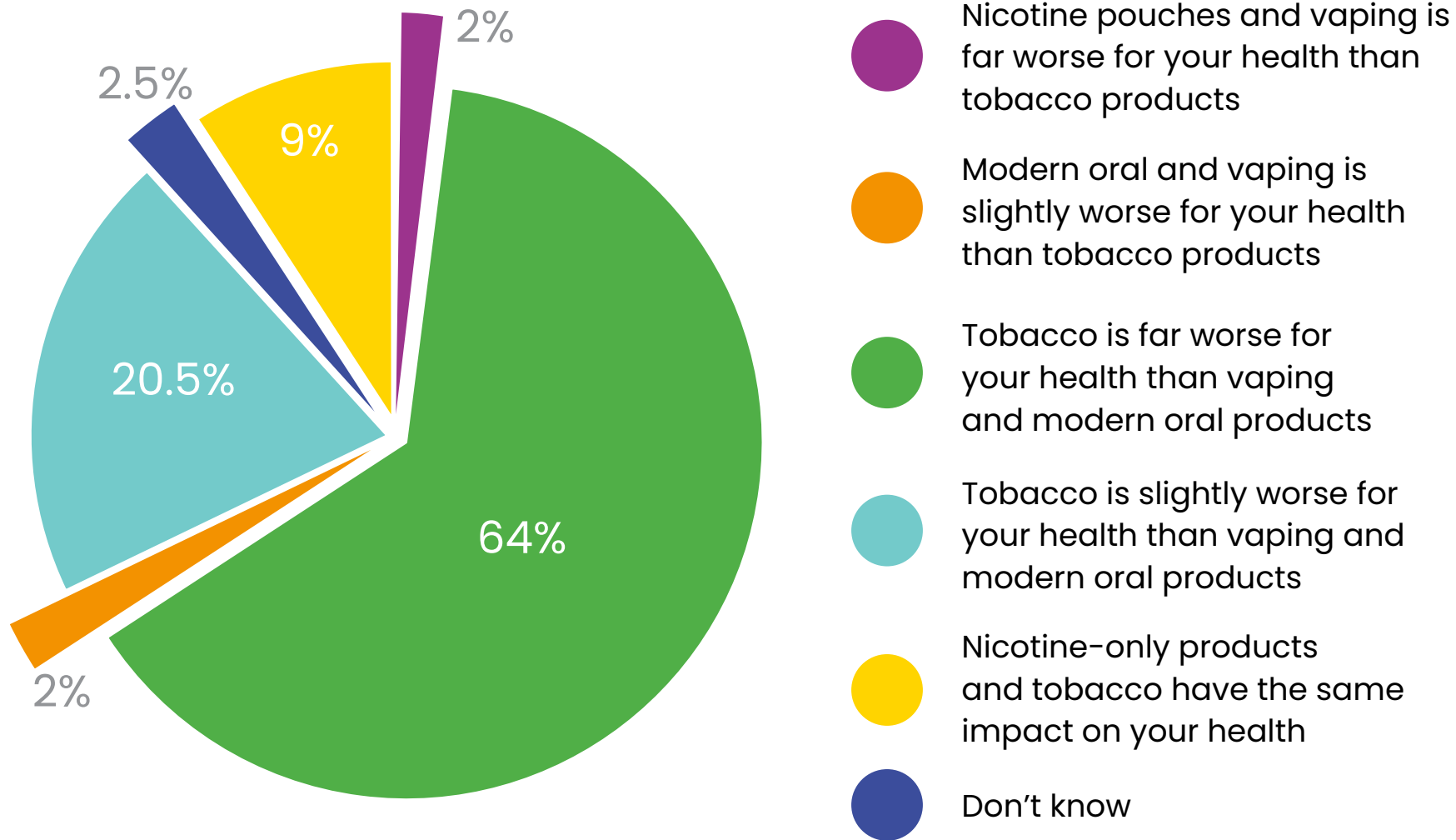


Almost all (88%) respondents think nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes are the most effective quitting tool.

Only one in 100 think there are any quitting aids that are more effective.

Q9

## Which of the following statements is closest to your view?



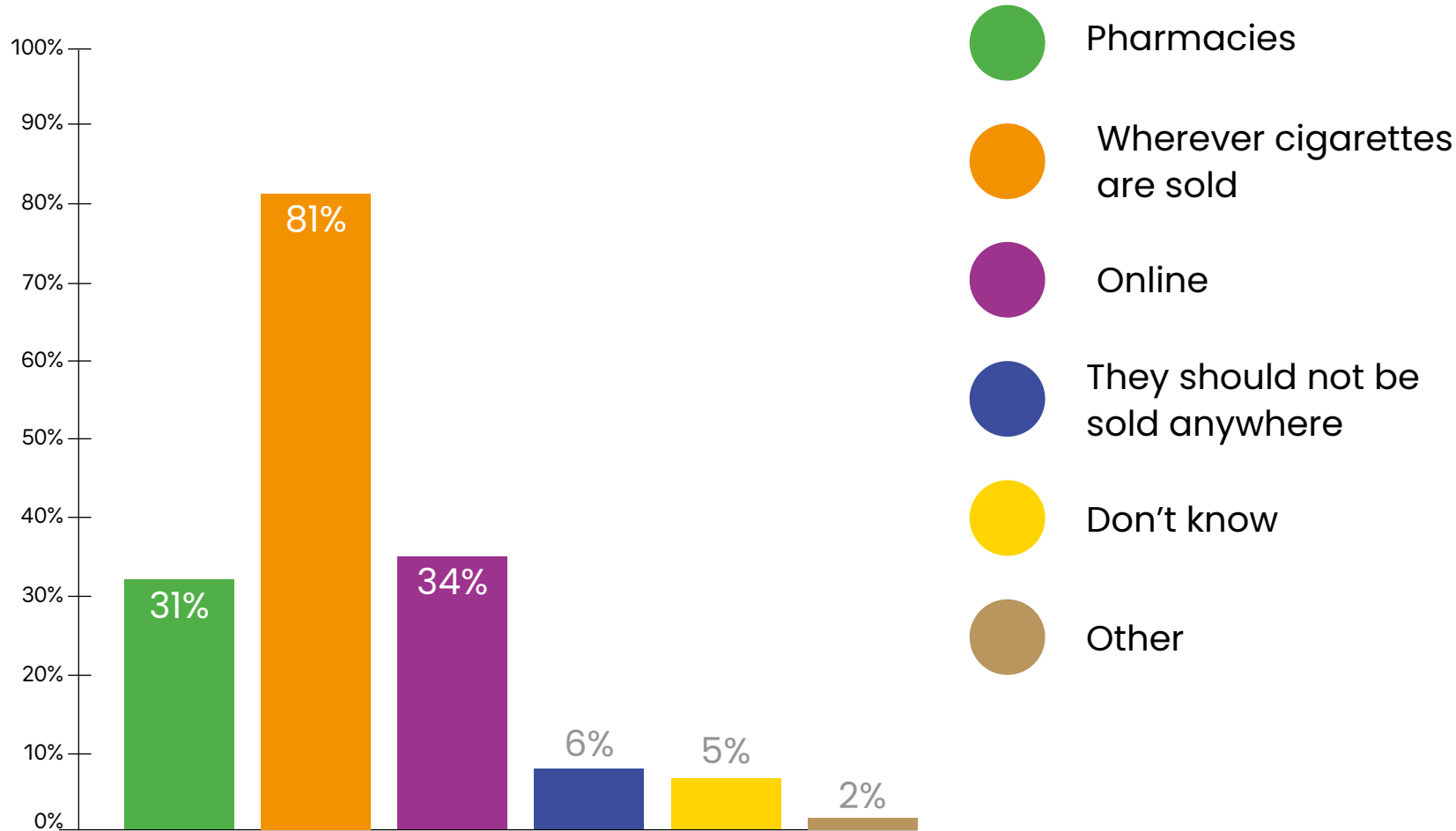
Two in every three people (64%) correctly think that tobacco is far worse for your health than vaping and modern oral products.

Worryingly, 10% of people think nicotine-only products have the same impact on your health as tobacco and 20% think tobacco is only slightly more harmful.



Q10

# Where should nicotine alternative products be sold? (select all that apply)

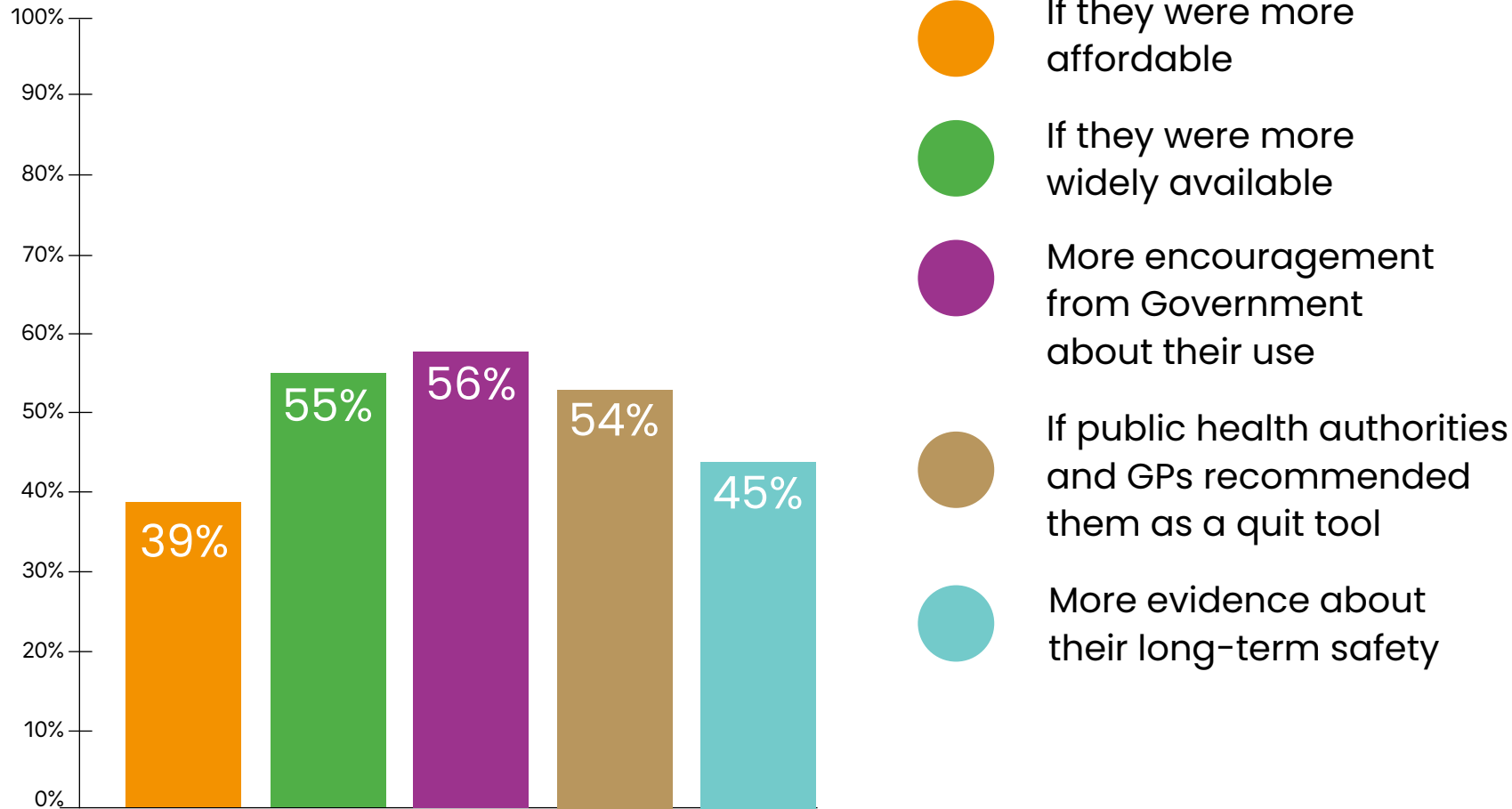


Four out of five people think tobacco harm reduction products should be sold wherever cigarettes are sold.

Only one in 20 believes they should not be sold anywhere.

Q11

# What would encourage more smokers to switch to vaping and nicotine pouches? (select all that apply)



Most people think more smokers would quit and switch to nicotine pouches or e-cigarettes if the Government made them more available and there was more encouragement from public health authorities and GPs to use them as a quitting tool.

Four out of 10 people (39%) think they should be more affordable.

# Conclusion

By **CASA** chairman **Joe Magero**

Our survey has finally given a voice to the silent victims in Kenya's debate over alternative nicotine products – the general public, and smokers in particular. Too often smokers are excluded from decision-making about the products that could ultimately save their lives.

At last, they have been given a say and their message is clear: nicotine pouches and vapes/e-cigarettes offer them their best hope of kicking the addiction that threatens to kill them.

However, a large proportion of smokers find these lifesaving products too expensive or too hard to find. If taxes make them even more expensive, they would be forced to seek out cheaper – and often more dangerous – alternatives.

I was a cigarette smoker before e-cigarettes helped me to quit and saved my life. Other Kenyans are desperate for that opportunity. They need nicotine pouches and vapes/e-cigarettes to be regulated so that they are affordable and accessible for adult smokers.

Instead of adopting a dogmatic, unscientific stance against tobacco harm reduction, Kenya should be embracing it as an exciting opportunity to save thousands of lives lost to cigarettes.

## About CASA

Campaign for Safer Alternatives is a pan-African non-governmental member organisation dedicated to achieving 100% smoke-free environments in Africa.

Our initiative is aimed at promoting innovative solutions for tobacco-smoking cessation. While remaining committed to and supporting tobacco control efforts in Africa, especially Article 14 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), our organisation serves as a platform for advocating and promoting all innovative solutions for ending smoking - whether counselling, nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) or harm reduction.