

The Human Advantage in Healthcare:

Why Patients Trust 😊 People * Over AI



Introduction

Technology continues to transform healthcare, but when it comes to communication, it's the human hello that patients value most.

To understand more about how people feel about AI in patient communication, **WellReceived** partnered with OnePoll on a study of 6,000 consumers across the U.S., Canada and the U.K. Across every age group, demographic, and region, the message was clear: patients prefer people-first service.

Our findings reveal:



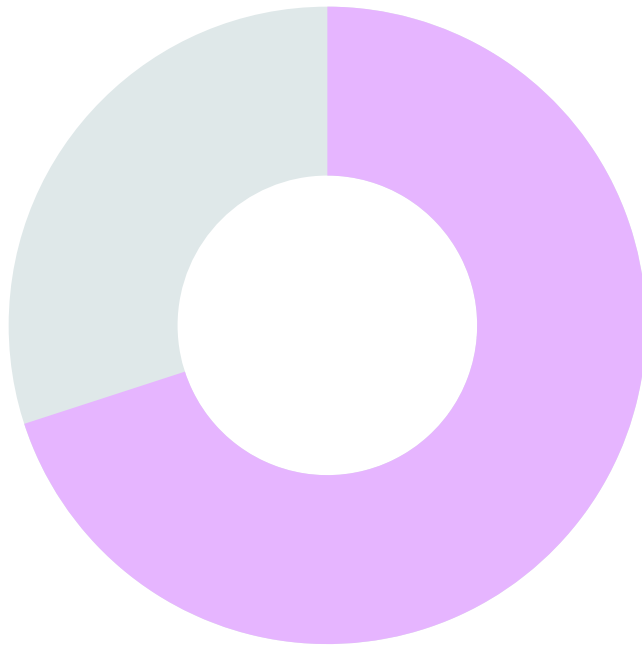
89%

of patients prefer speaking to a real person when contacting a medical practice.



83%

have actively requested to bypass AI tools to speak with a human.



70%

believe human agents show more empathy and care.

These results show more than a preference; it's a matter of building trust from the start of their patient journey. AI may improve efficiency, but **healthcare isn't a transaction. It's a relationship.**

Part One

Patients Want People

When patients call a healthcare practice, they don't just schedule an appointment. They share personal concerns, ask vulnerable questions, and look for reassurance.

When contacting the following types of businesses, would you rather speak to a real person, or AI?

89% Healthcare

87% Law

85% Local Services

82% Real Estate

89% prefer to speak to a person when calling a healthcare practice.

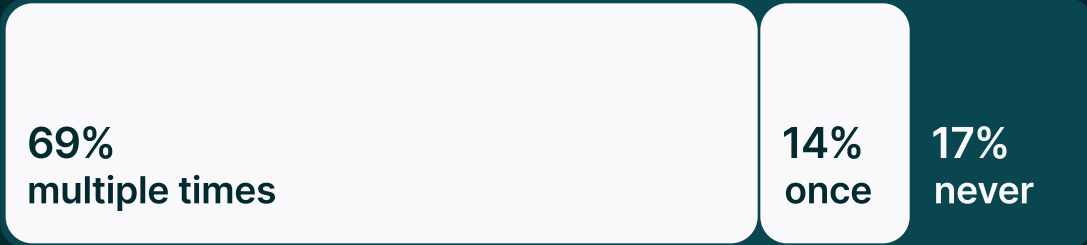


Part One

83%

have asked to
speak to a person
instead of a bot.

Have you ever requested to speak to a real person
instead of an AI agent or chatbot?





1 in 3

people would hang up if
connected to an AI system.



Part One

51%

report that AI tools fail to understand their needs.

While AI tools can handle basic queries, they struggle to recognise emotion, urgency, or fear. In healthcare, that gap matters.

What Practices Can Do

- Prioritise human reception for first contact.
- Use AI tools only to support, not replace, people.
- Measure patient satisfaction against sentiment, reviews and loyalty.



Part Two

Empathy is the one quality people don't believe AI can replicate.

47%

do not trust AI to relay accurate information

70%

said human agents show more care and empathy than automated systems.



Part Two

Empathy Builds Trust

A calm, compassionate voice can reduce anxiety, increase trust, and strengthen adherence to medical advice.

What Practices Can Do

- Train staff in empathetic listening and calm communication.
- Ensure every patient-facing interaction reflects your practice's care values.
- Collect feedback on patient service, including on tone, warmth, and clarity.



Human connection has a direct impact on the success of your practice as well.

59%

are more likely to leave a positive review after speaking to a real person.

63%

do not trust AI to relay accurate information.

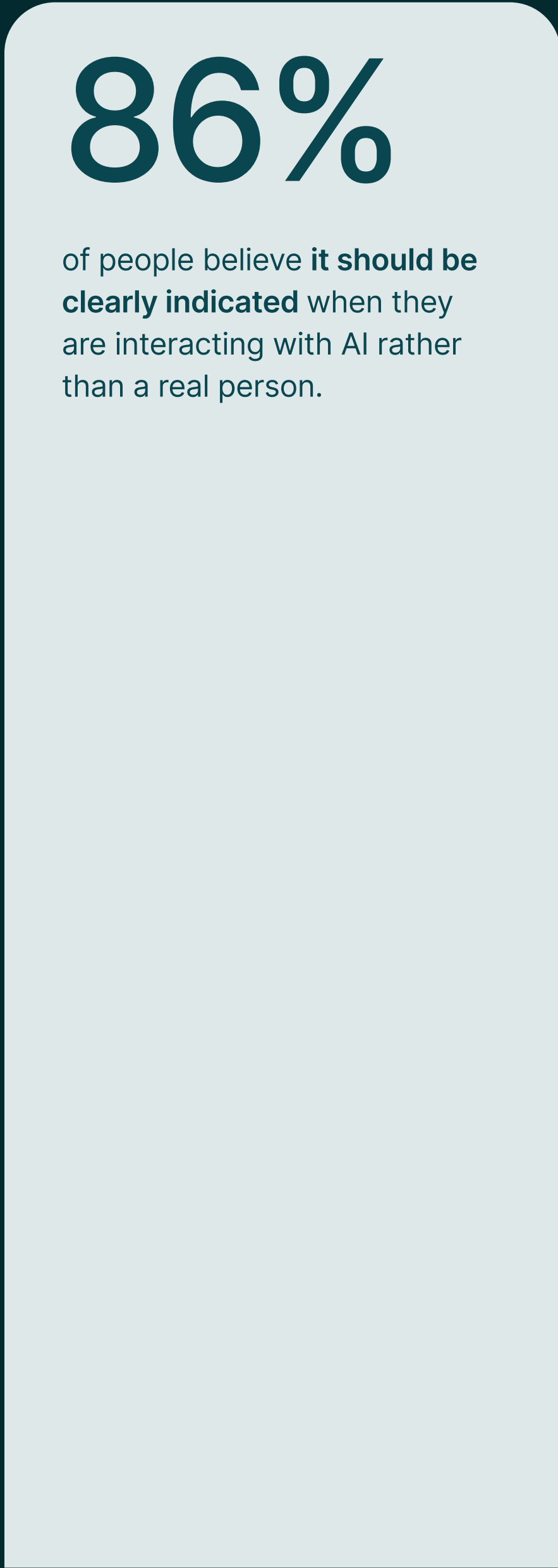
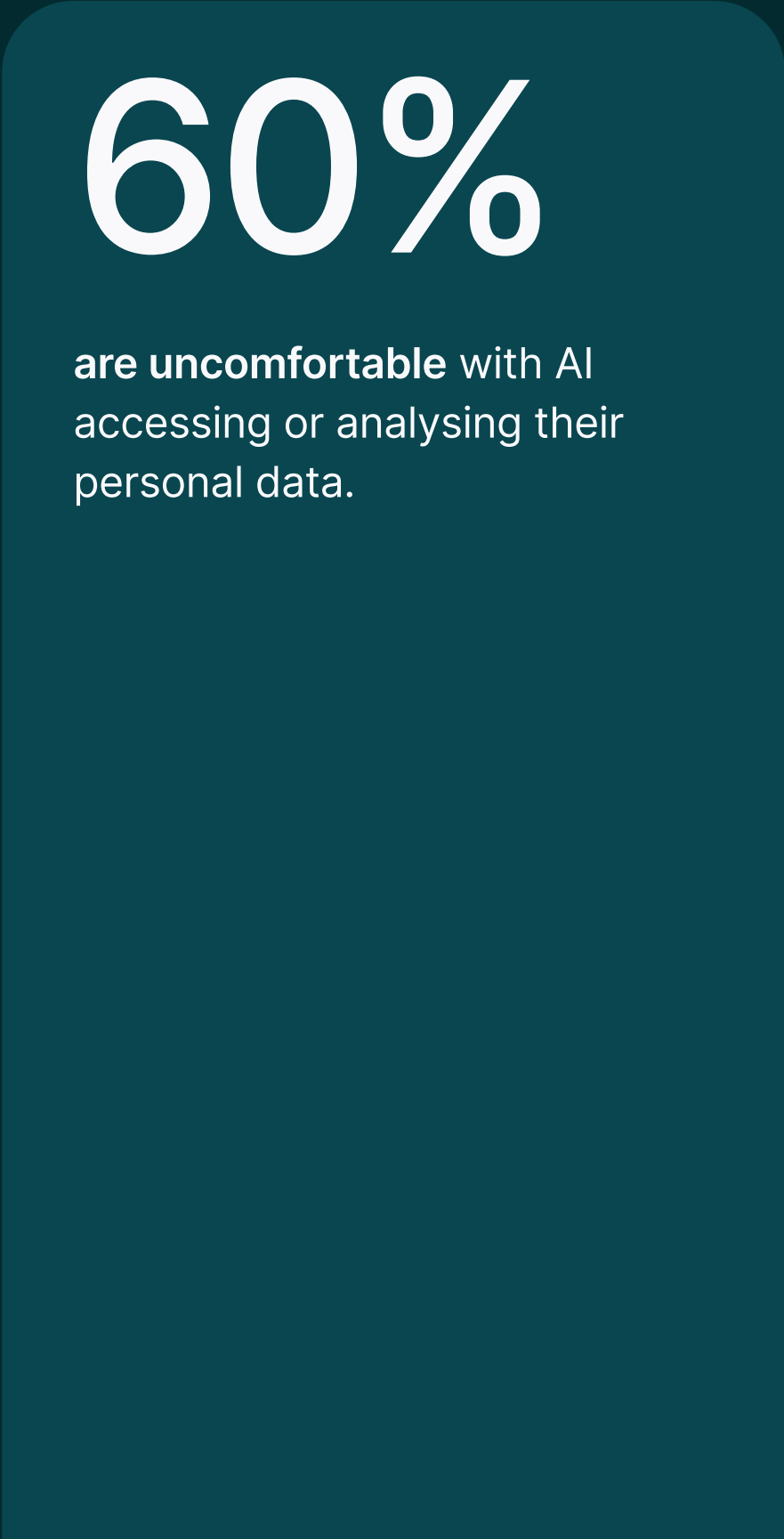
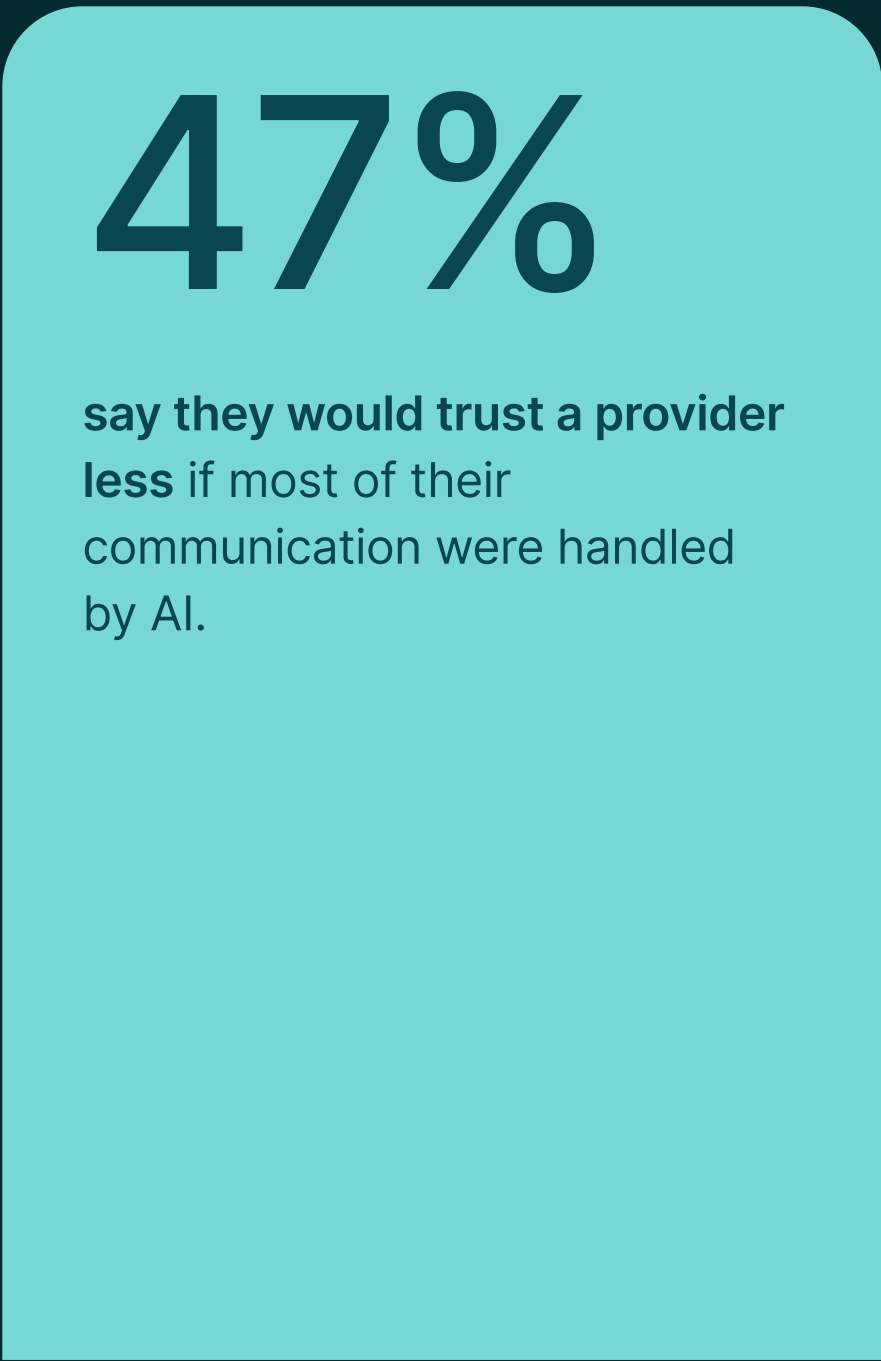
Part Three

The Risks of AI-Only Communication

Patients expect confidentiality and compassion from their healthcare provider. AI tools can misinterpret tone, mishandle sensitive data, or fail to detect distress—all of which can have real consequences for patient wellbeing.

What Practices Can Do

- Keep people at the heart of patient communications.
- Offer clear transparency on when AI is used.
- Use automation only for administrative efficiency, never emotional engagement.



Part Four

Balancing Innovation with Care

Technology can empower human medical teams, freeing them to focus on patient care. But it needs thoughtful consideration.

WellReceived helps practices balance efficiency and warmth, offering:



24/7 live receptionists

who understand patient communication.



HIPAA-compliant systems

for data safety and accuracy.



Seamless technology

to manage your practice on-the-go.

Keeping 😊 People in the ❤️ Picture

The study's results are clear. Patients don't want healthcare to feel automated, and will reward practices who show them they care from the very first interaction. This care, this empathy, is what sets healthcare apart, and it's what patients truly value.

Healthcare has always been about people helping people. Practices that prioritize keeping healthcare human will not only foster stronger patient relationships but also future-proof their business for decades to come.





“

Empathy is a strange and powerful thing. There is no script. There is no right way or wrong way to do it. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgement, emotionally connecting and communicating that incredibly healing message of “You're not alone”.

– Brené Brown

well  received

Start delivering
patient  care with a
human hello  today.

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