



Bowel screening: knowledge and awareness in Ireland

Market Research 2023

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An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service



BowelScreen

An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Putóige
The National Bowel Screening Programme

Purpose of bowel screening

Bowel cancer among most commonly diagnosed cancers in Ireland.

BowelScreen aims to:

- Detect signs of bowel cancer at an early stage, where there are no symptoms.
- Remove benign polyps (growths) in the colon before they might evolve into cancers.

Screening Age Range:

- Adults aged 60-69 years every two years that are known to the programme via free home testing for eligible.

FIT Test:

- A FIT test (faecal immunochemical test) looks for blood in the stool.



Research Methodology

2021

- Online National Representative Survey in Ireland (N=320)
- Fieldwork conducted between Sept-Oct 2021
- Male & Females aged 60-69 years

2023

- Online National Representative Survey in Ireland (N=400)
- Fieldwork conducted in June 2023
- Male & Females aged 60-69 years

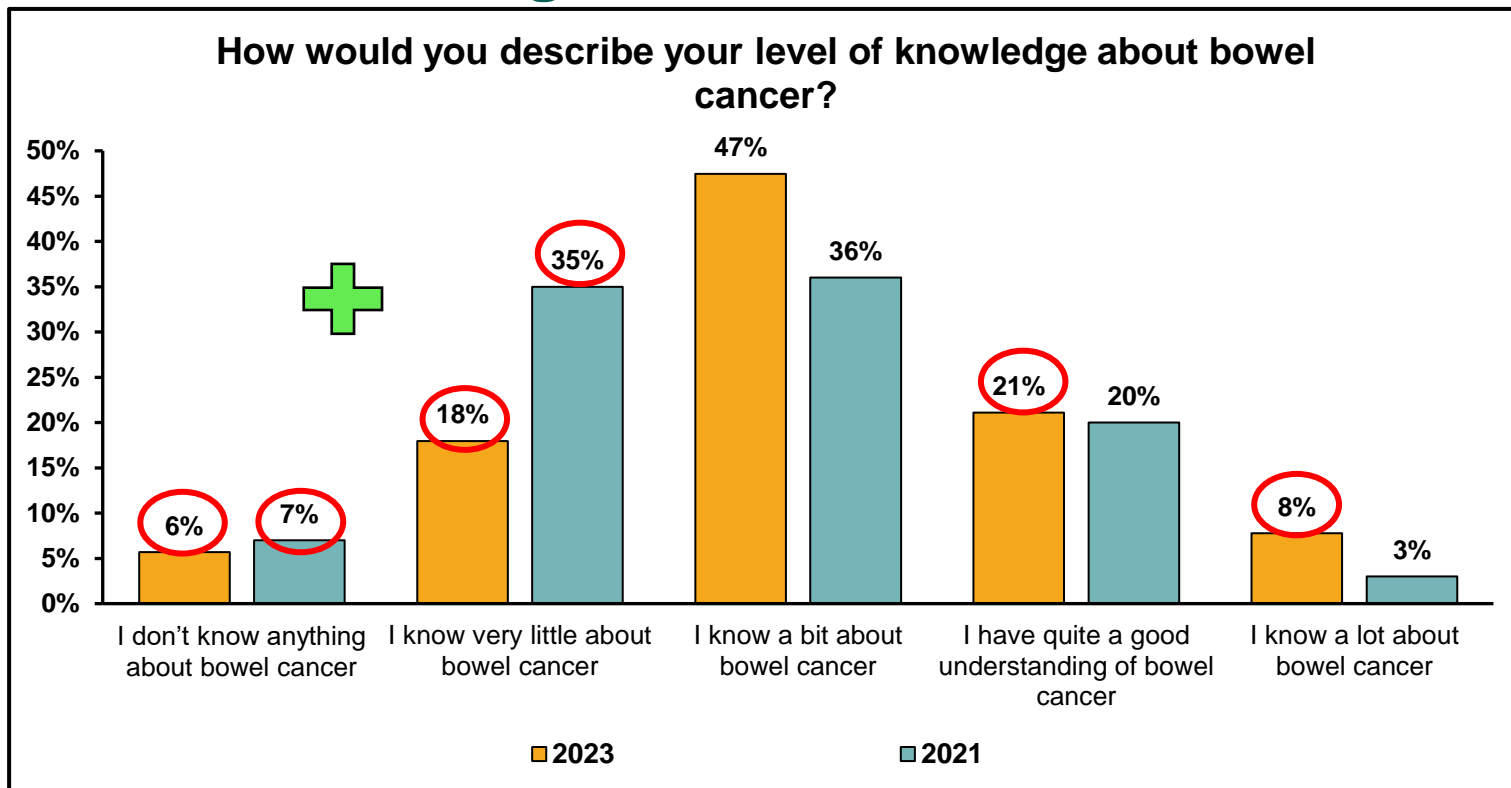
Aim: To examine the knowledge and awareness of bowel screening in Ireland

Where possible, results from the survey were compared to a similar research survey conducted in 2021





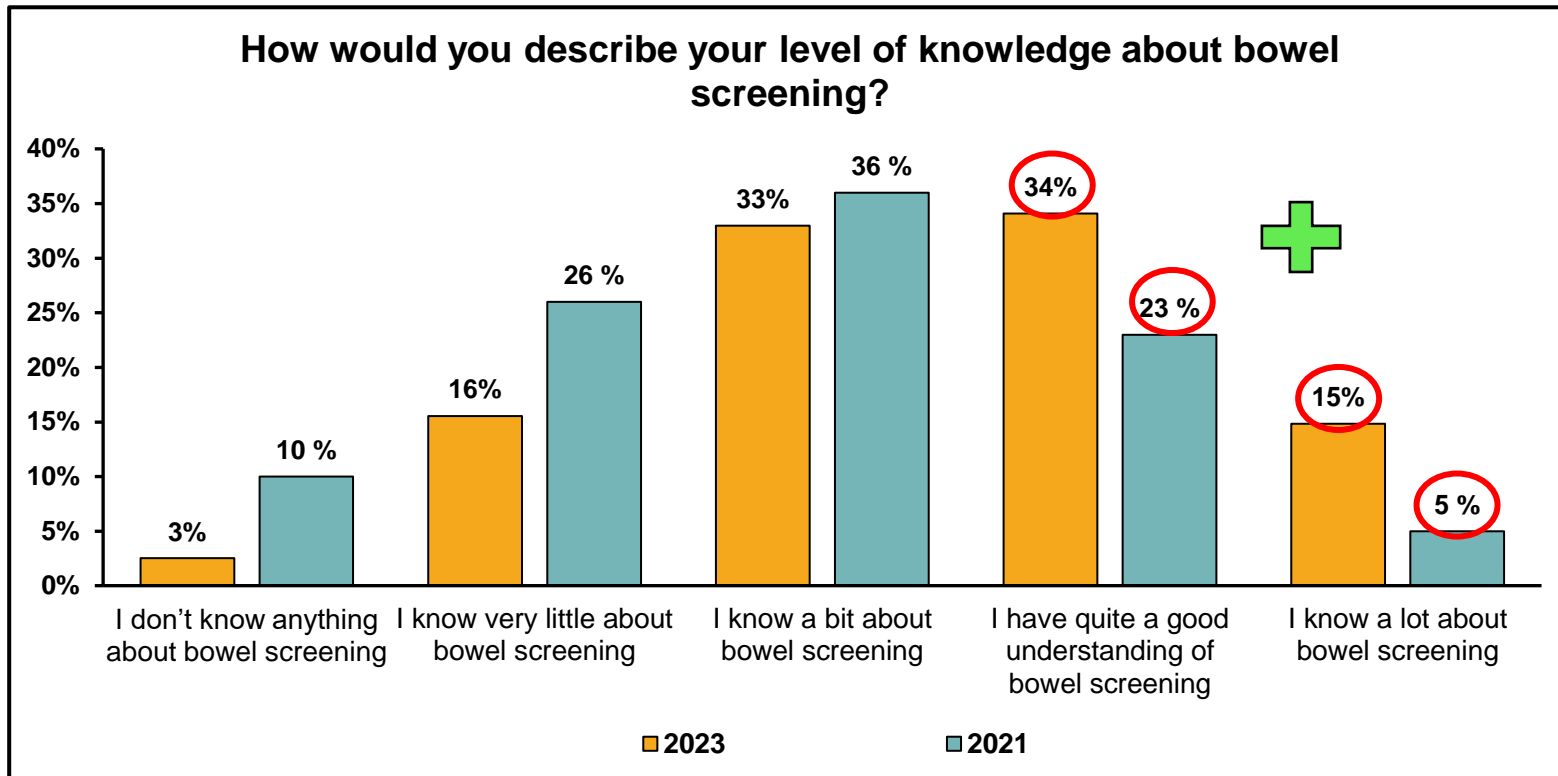
Level of knowledge about bowel cancer



Almost a quarter (24%) claim to know little or nothing about bowel cancer, down from the levels recorded in 2021 where 42% claim to have very little/no knowledge.

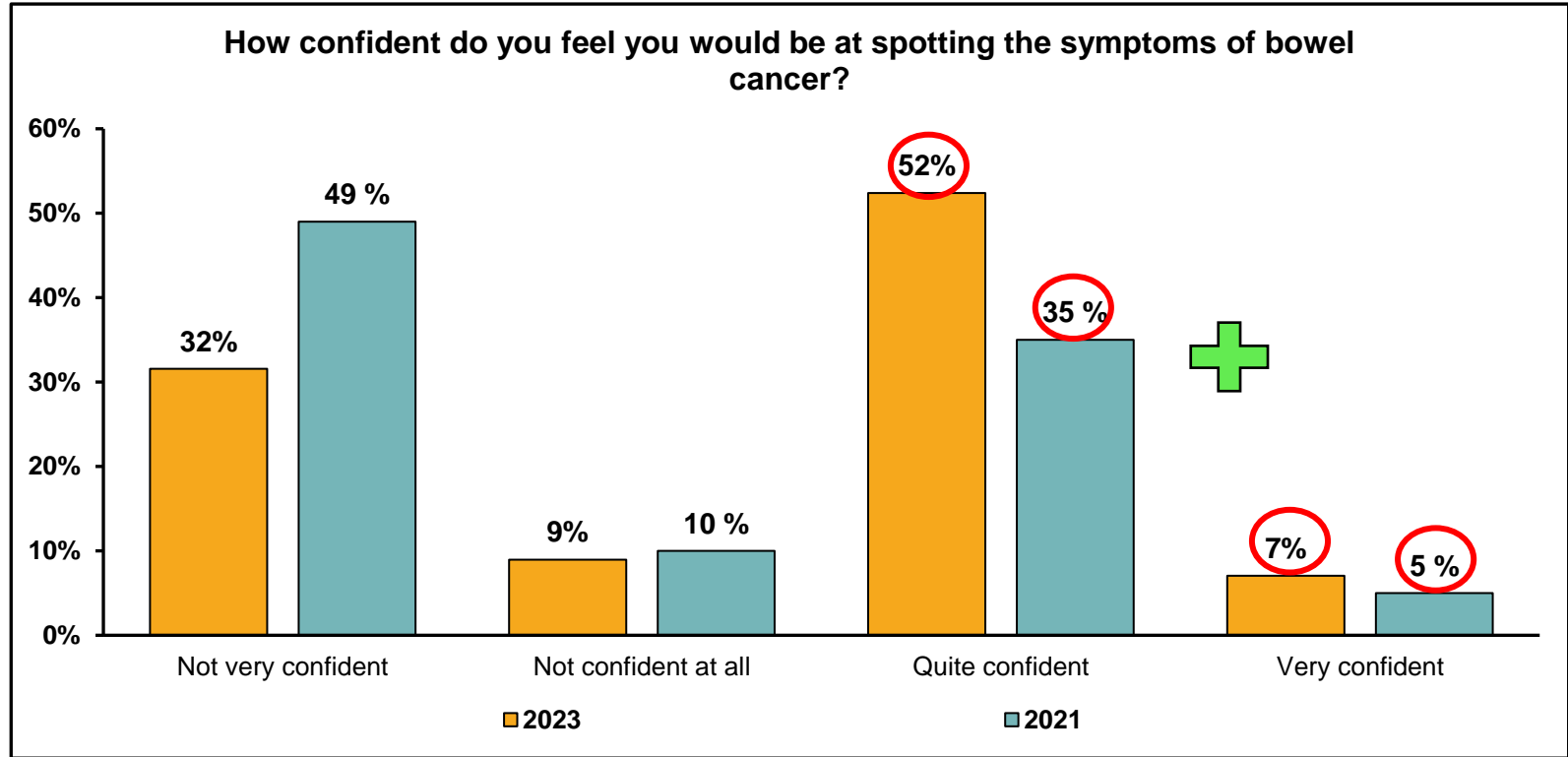


Level of knowledge about bowel screening



Almost half (49%) claim to have a good level of knowledge in relation to bowel screening, significantly up from 2021 levels (28%).

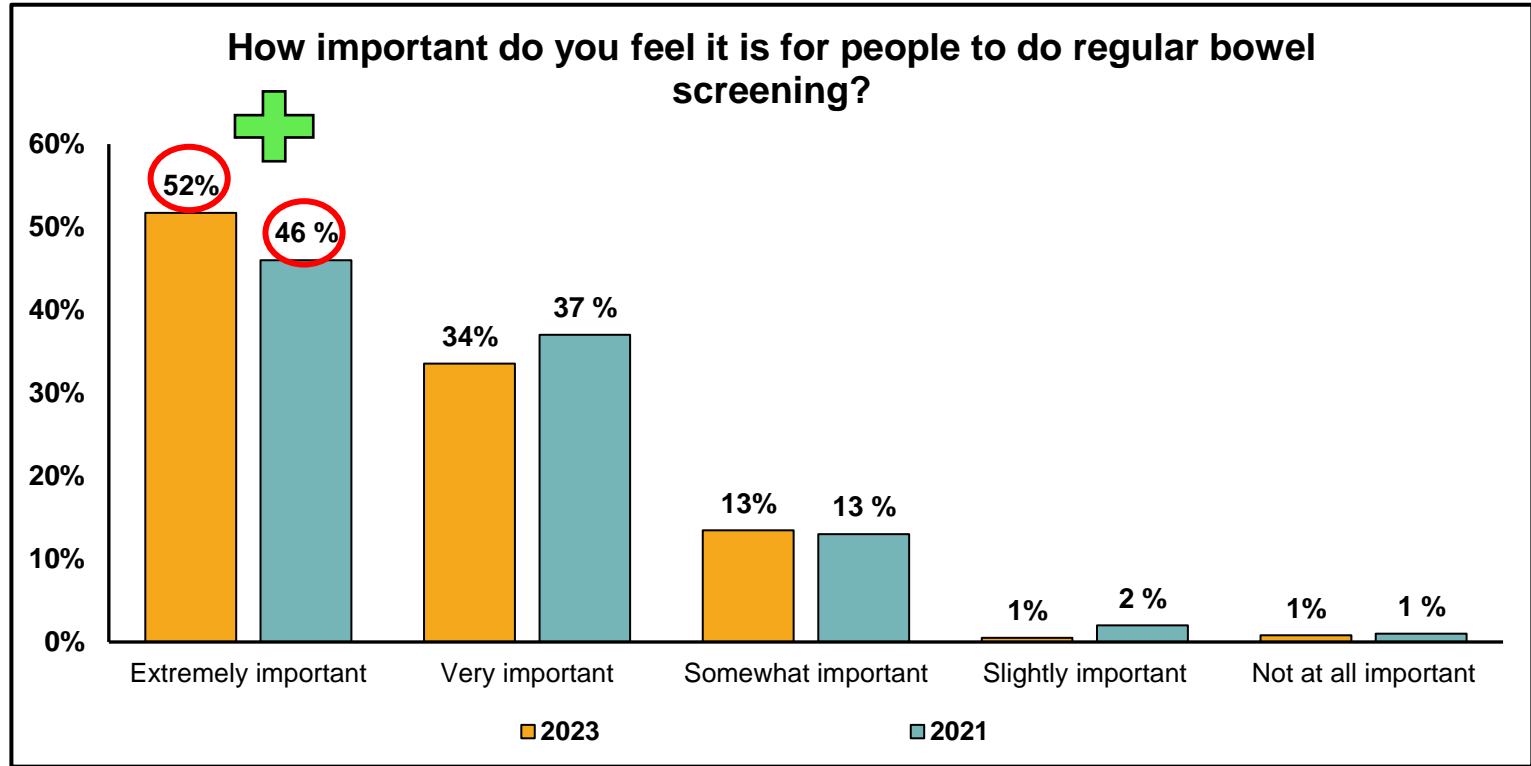
HE Confidence in spotting the symptoms of bowel cancer



Over half (59%) feel confident in their ability to spot the symptoms of bowel cancer, an increase since 2021 (40%)



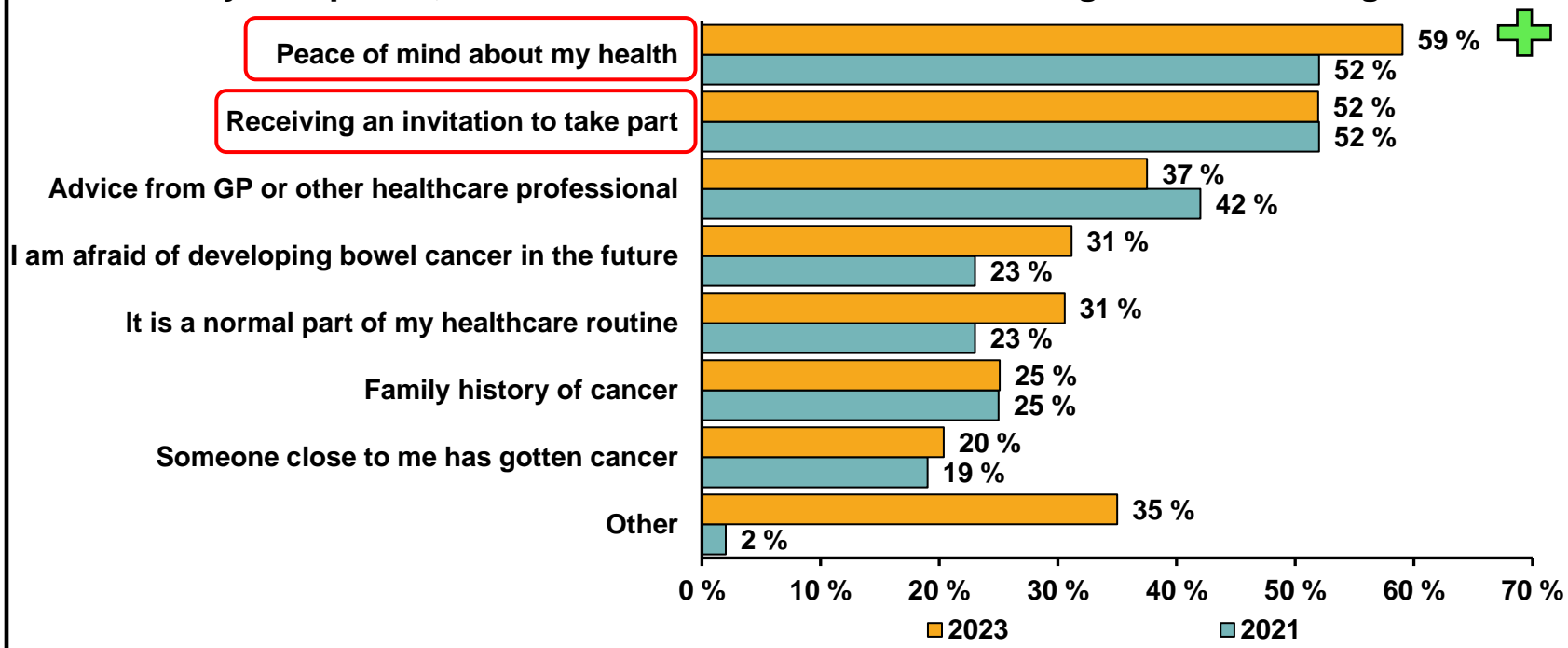
Attending regular bowel screening



Over half (52%) believing it to be extremely important for people to regularly attend bowel screening, an increase from 2021 (46%)

HE Motivators to attending bowel screening

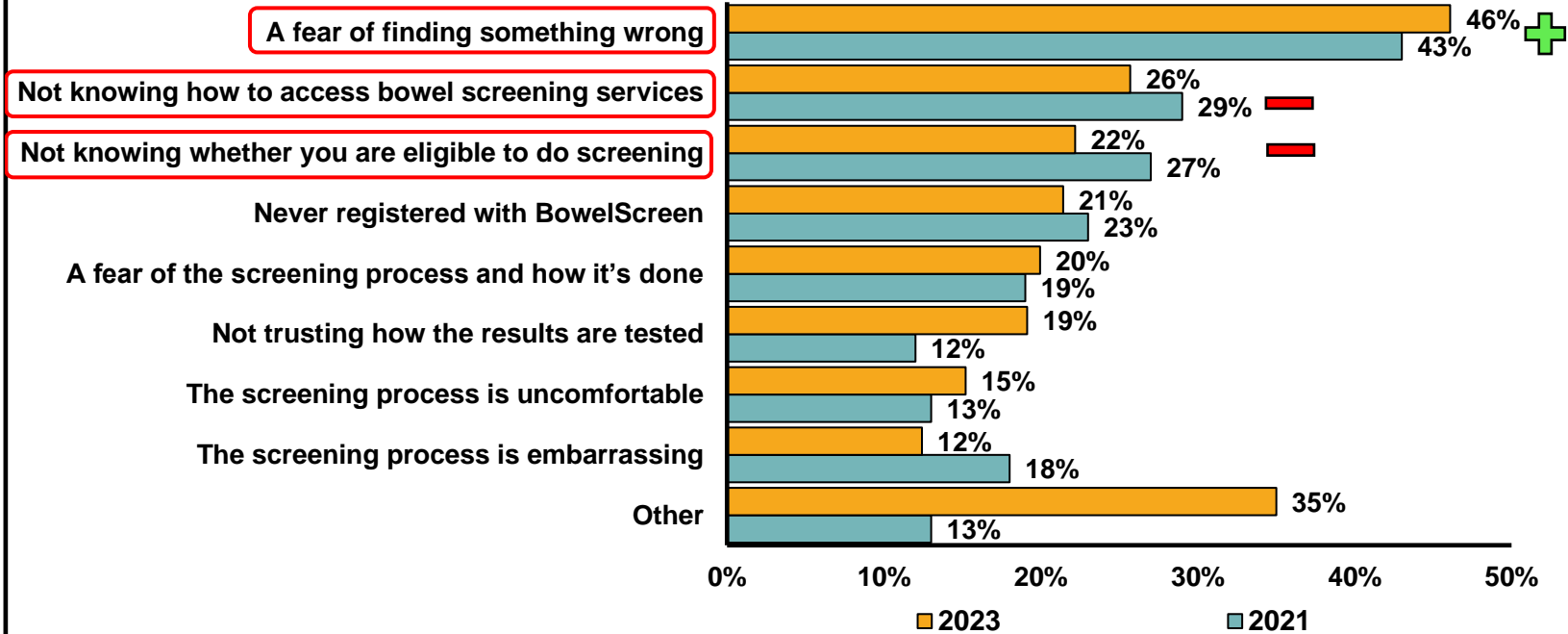
In your opinion, what are the main motivations of doing bowel screening?



Giving peace of mind and receiving the invitation to participate remains the key motivators in bowel screening participation in 2021 and 2023.

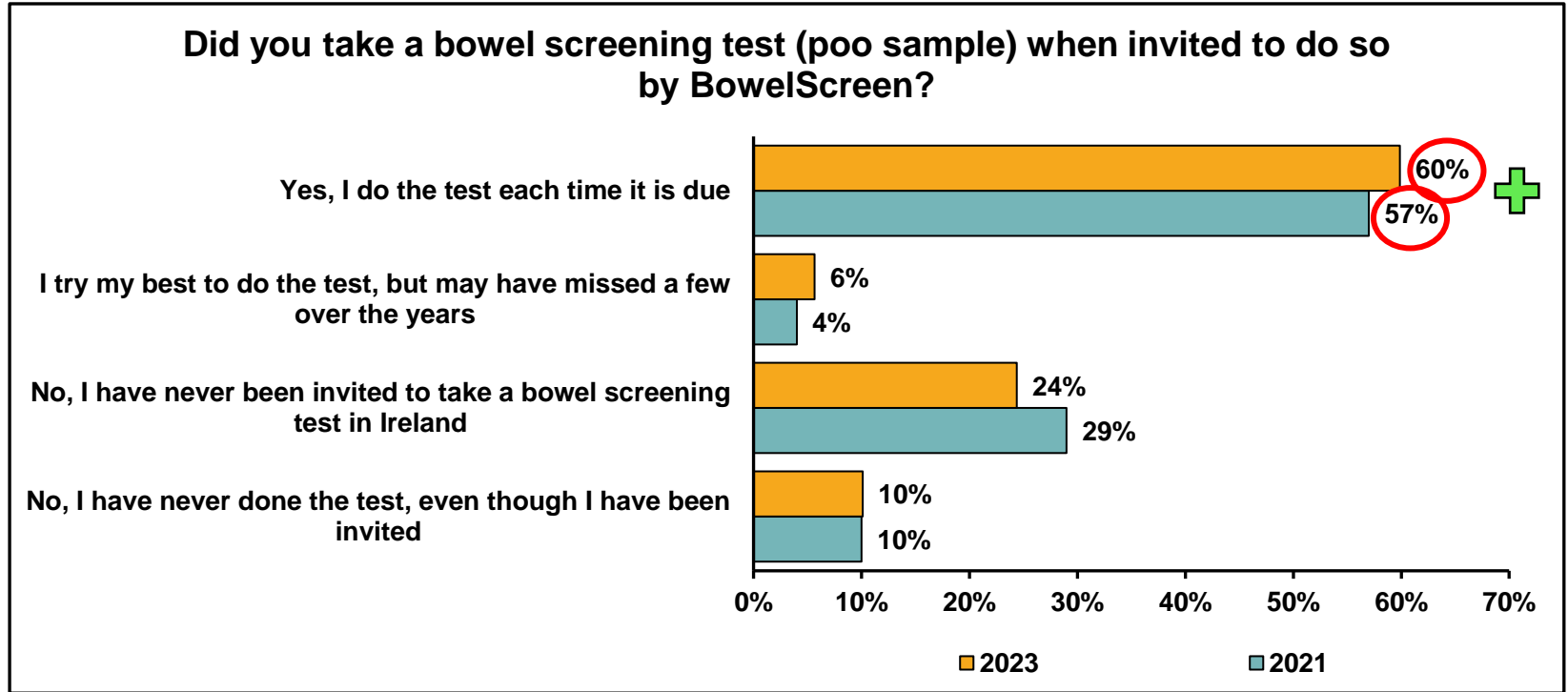
HE Barriers of attending bowel screening

In your opinion, what are the main barriers/challenges to availing of bowel screening?



The fear of finding something wrong, lack of knowledge on how to access and a lack of knowledge in relation to eligibility remain the key barriers to availing of bowel screen in 2021 and 2023.

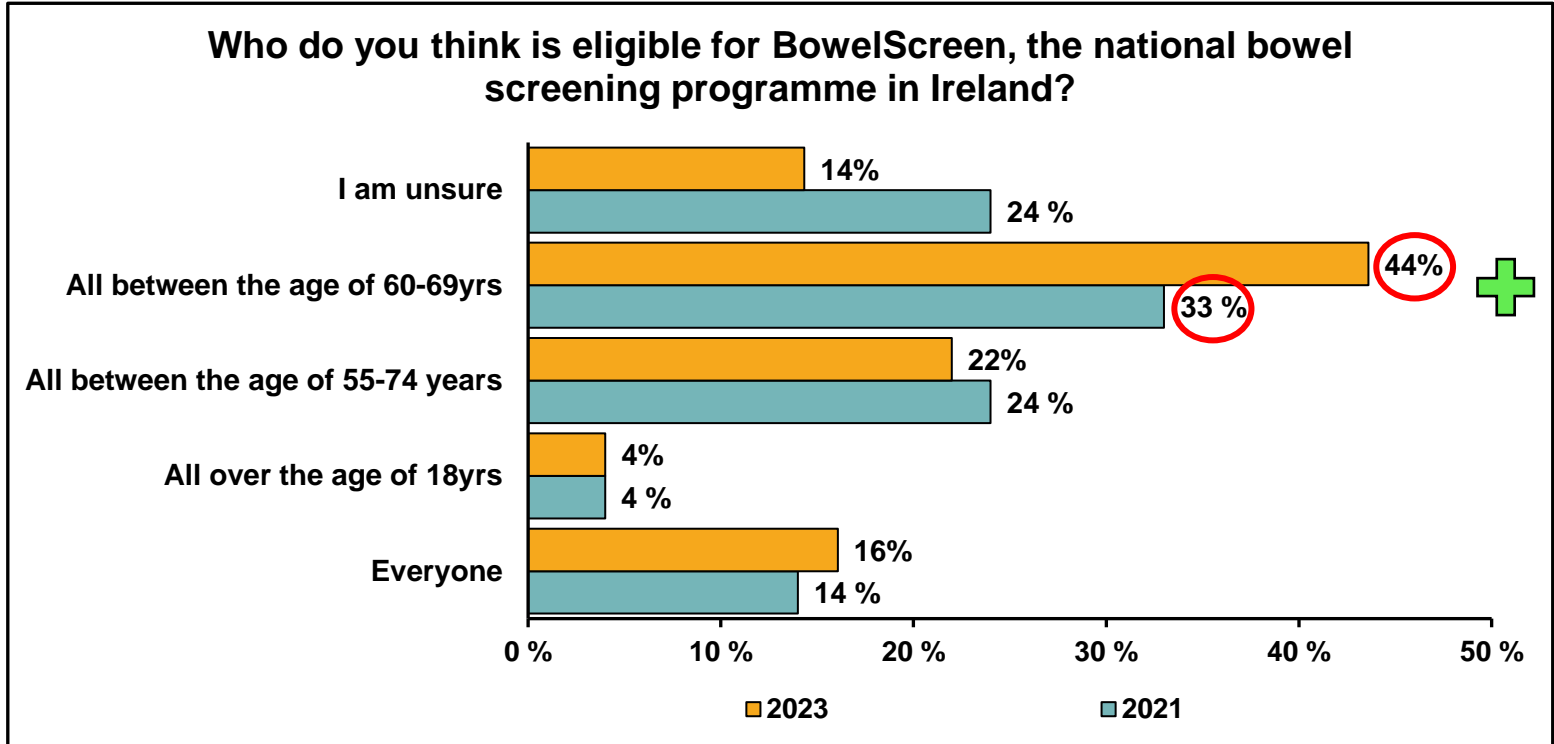
HE Bowel Screening test when invited to do so



6 in 10 (60%) take a bowel screening test when invited to do so by BowelScreen, this is a slight increase from 2021 (57%).



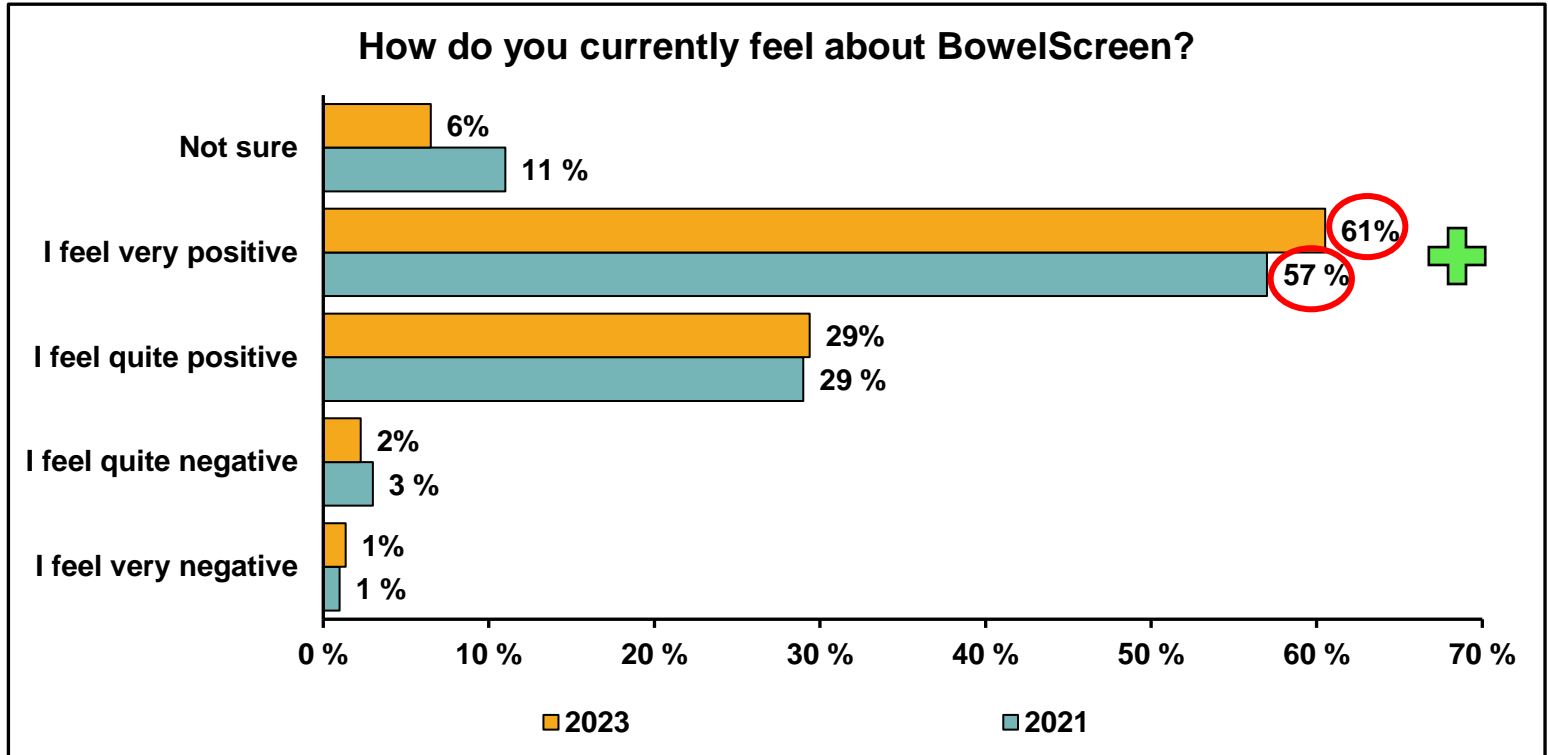
Eligibility for BowelScreen



A higher proportion of respondents in 2023 (44%) believe that those aged 60-69 years are eligible for BowelScreen compared to 2021 (33%).



Feelings about BowelScreen



A higher proportion of respondents in 2023 (61%) feel more positive about BowelScreen compared to 2021 (57%).



Conclusion

- ✓ Since the last survey, there is a decrease in the proportion of respondents that claim to know little or nothing about bowel cancer (2023: 42% vs 2021: 24%).
- ✓ Almost half now claim to have a good level of knowledge in relation to bowel screening (2023: 49% vs 2021: 28%).
- ✓ Over half feel confident in their ability to spot the symptoms of bowel cancer, an increase since 2021 (2023: 59% vs 2021: 40%).
- ✓ Over half believe it to be extremely important for people to regularly attend bowel screening, an increase from 2021 (2023: 52% vs 2021: 46%).
- ✓ Giving peace of mind and receiving the invitation to participate remains the key motivators in bowel screening participation in 2021 and 2023.
- ✓ The fear of finding something wrong, lack of knowledge on how to access and a lack of knowledge in relation to eligibility remain the key barriers to availing of bowel screen in 2021 and 2023.
- ✓ A higher proportion of respondents in 2023 believe that those aged 60-69 years are eligible for BowelScreen (2023: 60% vs 2021: 57%).
- ✓ A higher proportion of respondents in 2023 feel more positive about BowelScreen compared to 2021 (2023: 44% vs 2021: 33%).