

What Most Concerns Patients about the Impact of Diabetes and Its Treatment on Their Ability to Drive?

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Objectives

- Many people diagnosed with diabetes will seek or currently hold a driving licence, which may be essential for work, family and social activities. The complications of diabetes and its management can adversely affect people's ability to drive, with economic and quality of life (QoL) consequences. We sought to explore how far social media posts from a publicly available forum might allow us to understand how these factors affect the lived experience and concerns of patients.

Methodology

- A sample of 180 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) threads from a diabetes forum in the UK accessed on 08/12/2023 were assessed using an Evidence Mapper tool (www.evidencemapper.co.uk).
- Threads were indexed by fields including disease, intervention, topic and sub-theme. Sub-themes were then grouped into themes and then main themes.

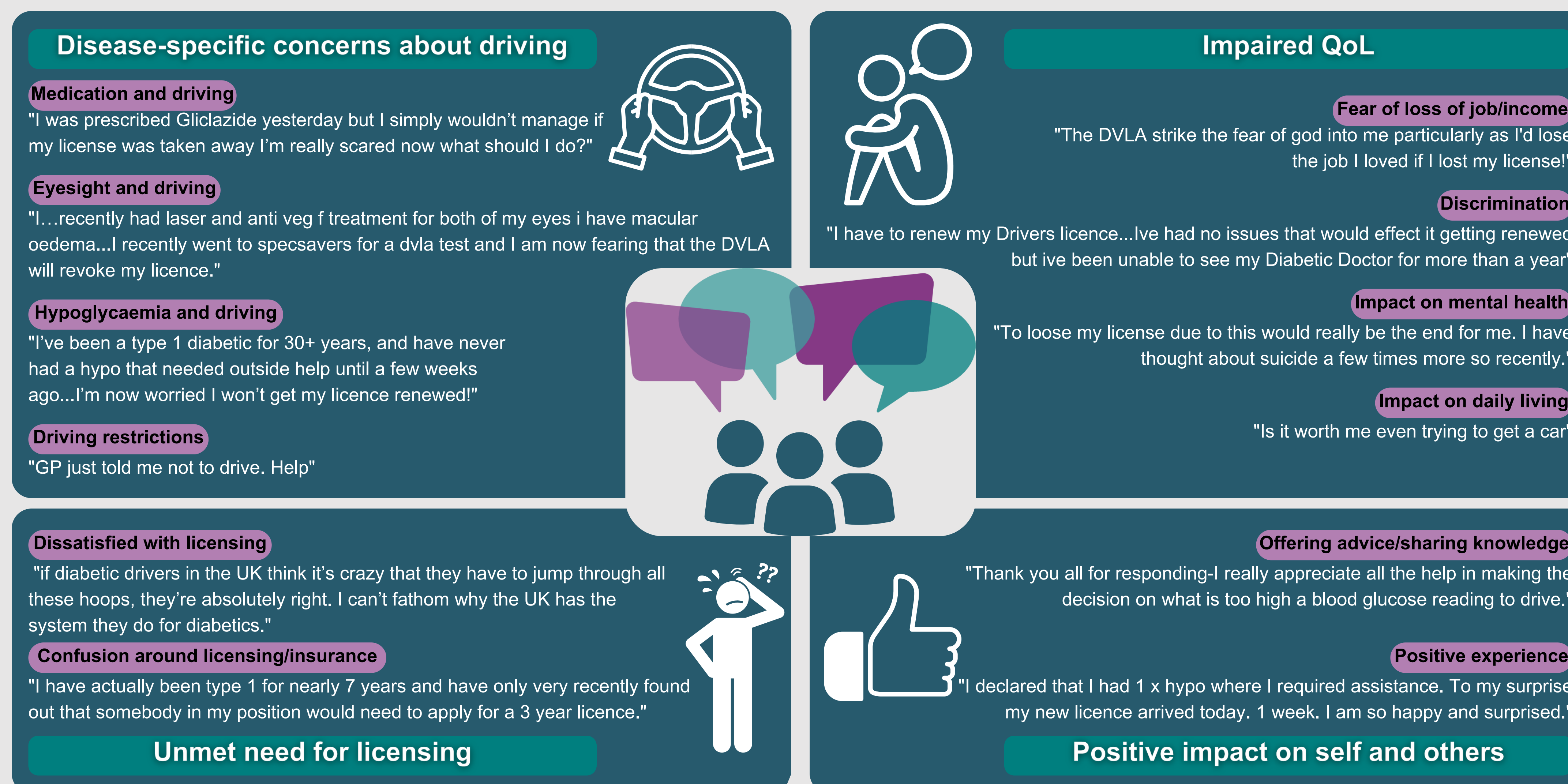


Figure 1: Main themes (green), themes (purple) and examples of corresponding patient quotes

Results

- Most of the discussion described confusion about the process for interacting with the DVLA and obtaining medical clearance for driving.
- Disease-specific concerns were mainly around the impact of hypoglycaemic events, especially related to the use of insulin and gliclazide, on the legal ability to drive. Concerns about impaired visual acuity were less frequent.
- Impaired QoL was commonly linked to fear of loss of job/income; depression, discrimination and stigma associated with driving restrictions; and necessary lifestyle changes/sacrifices.
- However, the forum also provided valued advice/sharing of knowledge with others.

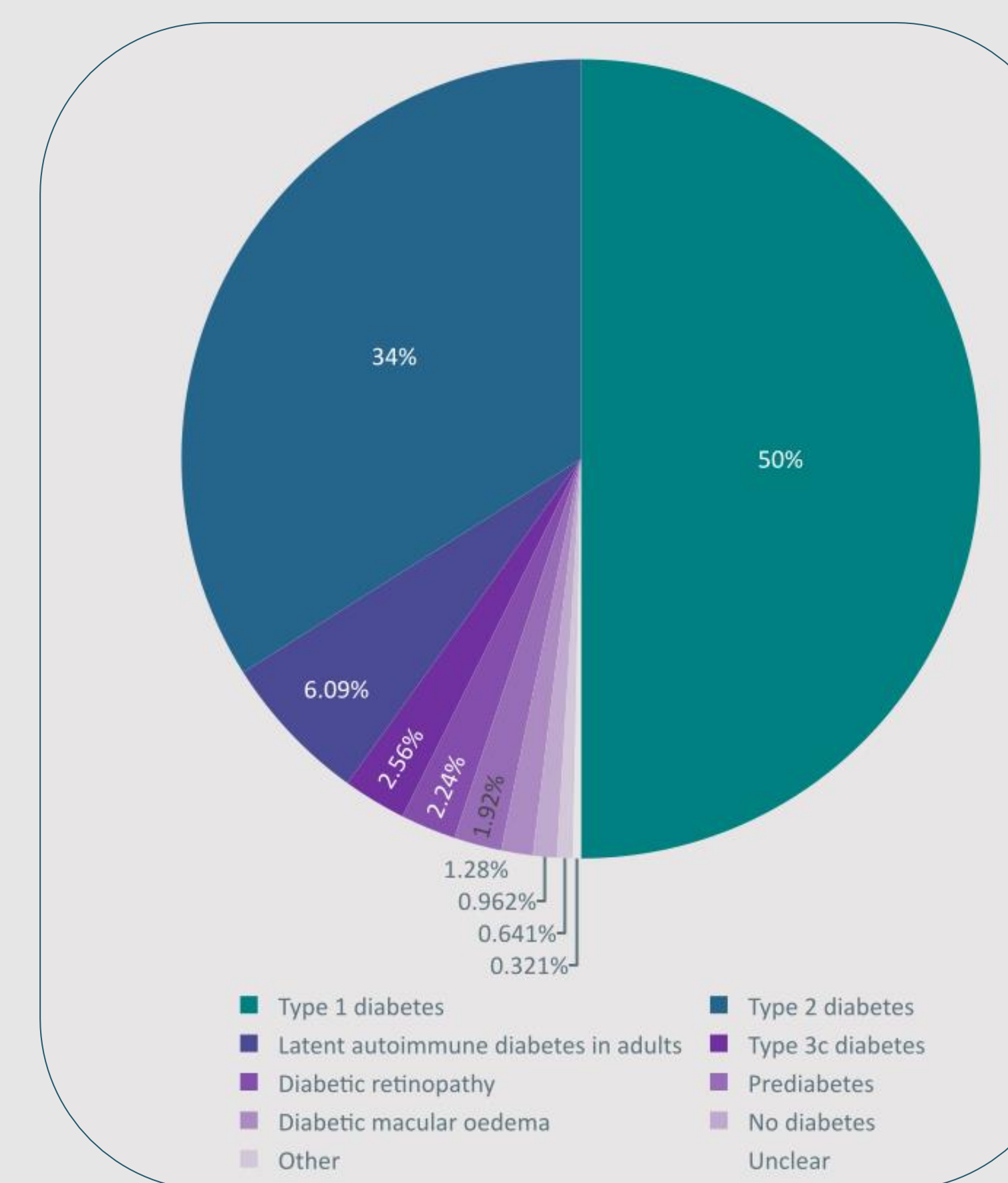


Figure 2: Threads indexed by disease

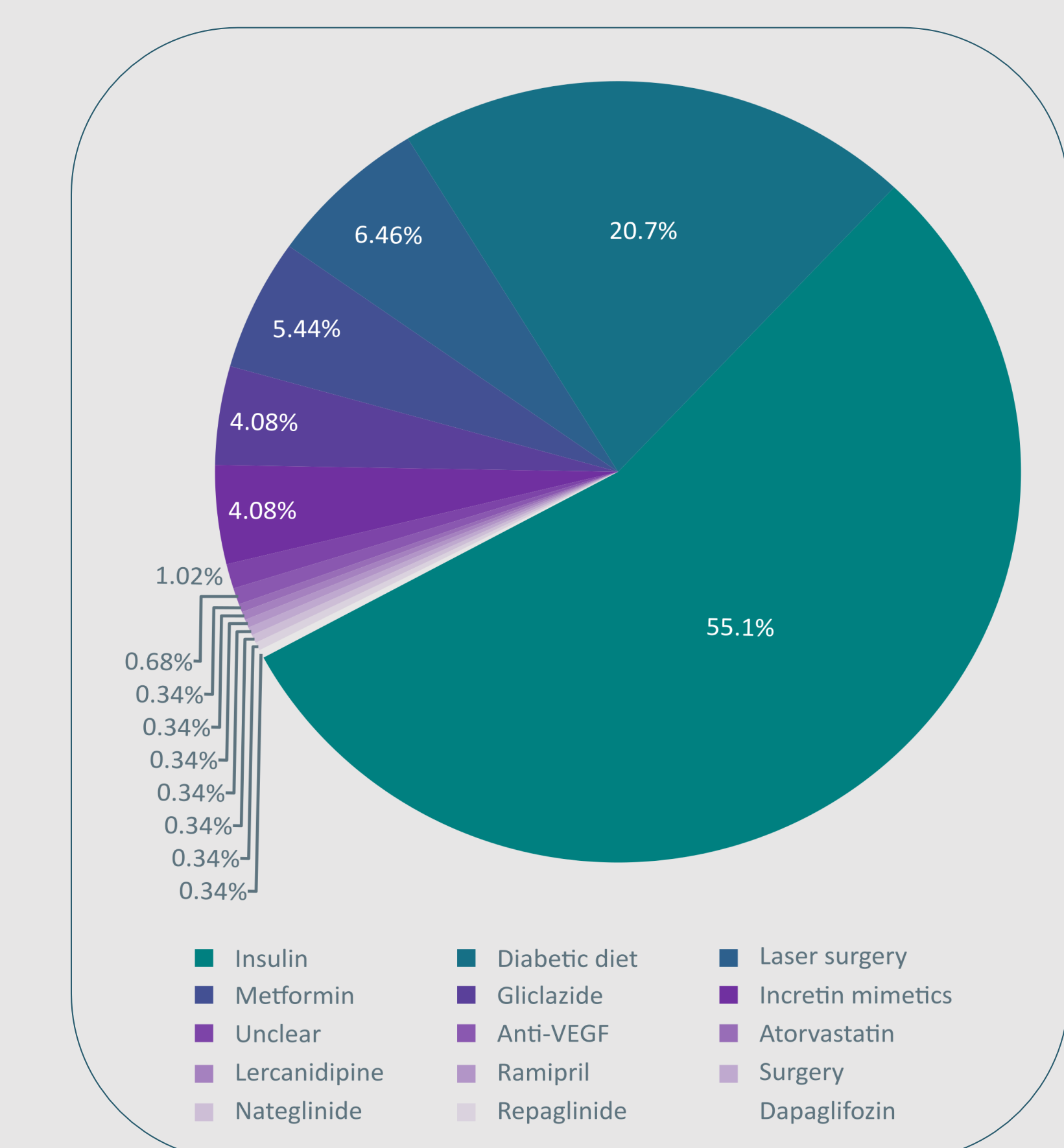


Figure 3: Threads indexed by intervention

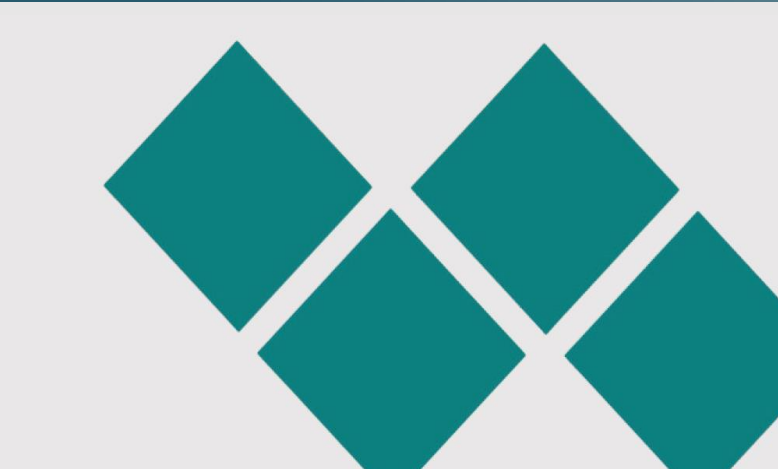
Conclusion

- Antidiabetic medication that minimizes the need for insulin therapy and avoids hypoglycaemic attacks is likely to be valued by patients who need to be able to drive.
- Patients also have an unmet need for better guidance on the driving approval process.
- The diabetes forum provided a quick and economical way of accessing views of patients on this specific topic and provides a good starting point to identify issues that most concern patients, which can be explored in more detail via traditional outcomes research.



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