

# #Curbsiding: Potential Value and Patient Confidentiality Implications of Infectious Disease Clinician Peer Consultations via Social Media

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## Background

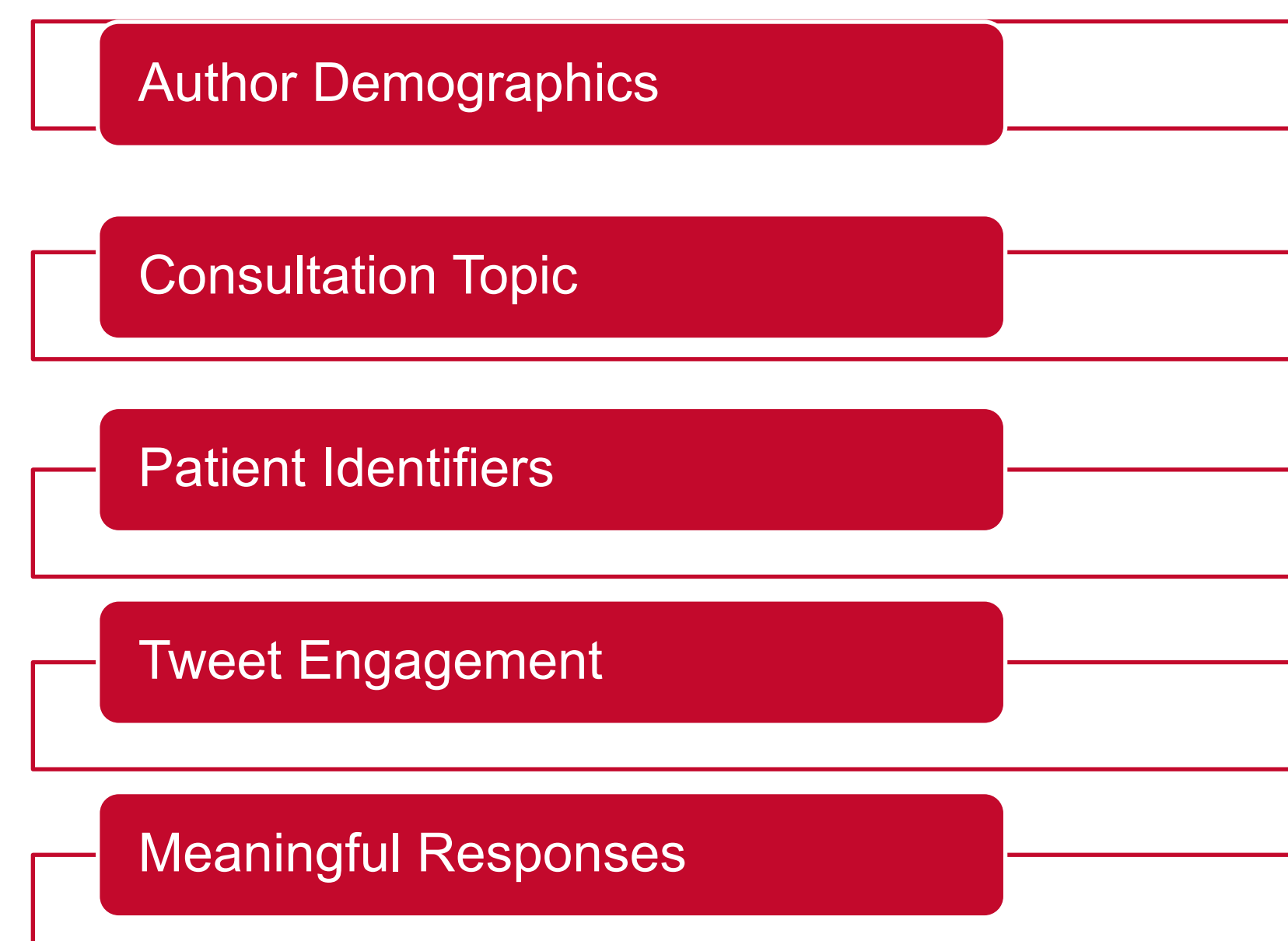
- Social media is increasingly important for professional collaboration and communication.
- Infectious Disease (ID) professionals have adopted Twitter as the social media platform of choice

We sought to answer three key questions:

- 1) for what topics do clinicians use #IDTwitter for peer clinical consultation?
- 2) how often are those consultation requests meaningfully answered?
- 3) to what degree do those consultation requests include specific clinical scenarios with potentially identifiable patient information?

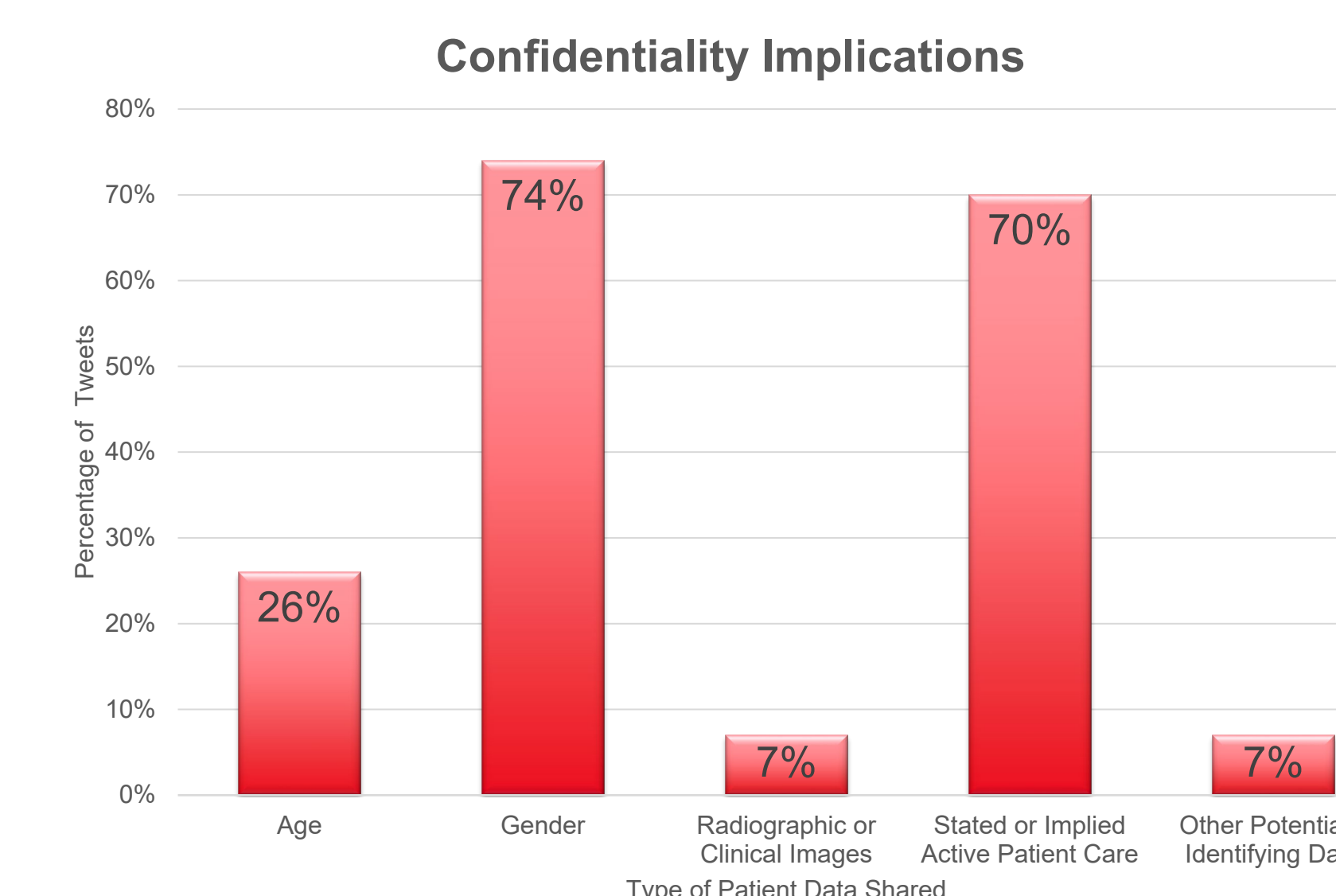
## Methods

- Reviewed tweets containing the #IDTwitter hashtag over a 6-week period ending August 31st, 2021.
- Included tweets involving peer clinical consultation.
- Clinicians included physicians, pharmacists, clinical/medical scientists, or trainees in the above professions.
- Tweet data collected were as follows:



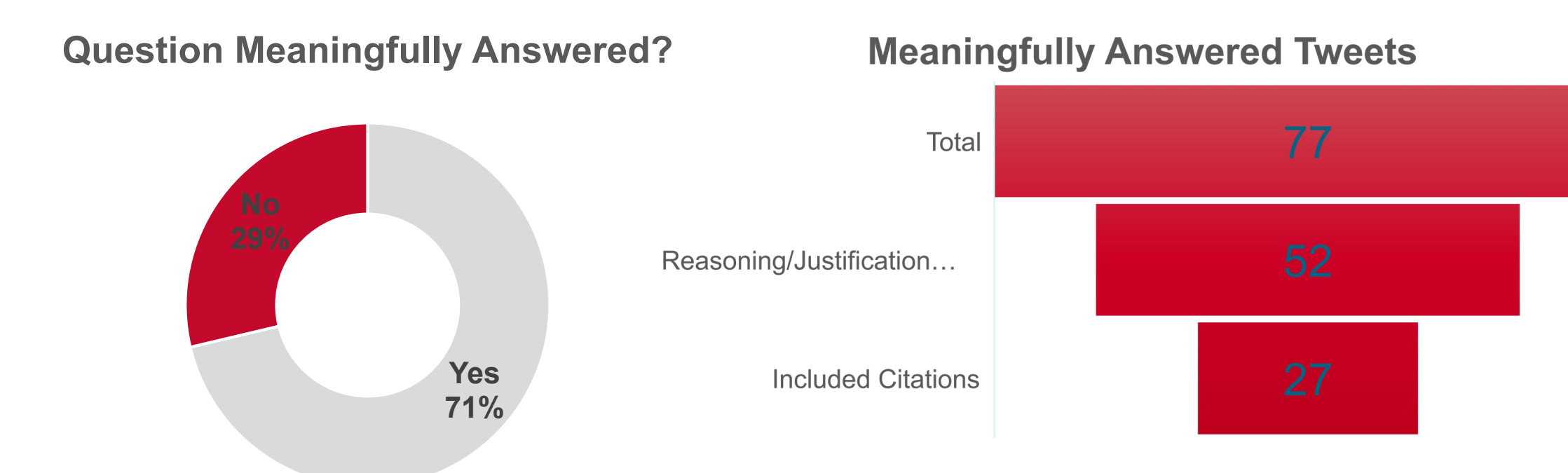
## Confidentiality Implications

- Sixty-one users (92.4%) had their place of employment available.
- A total 28/108 tweets (26%) referenced the care of a specific patient. In one tweet, the patient was the author themselves. Information shared on the remaining twenty-seven tweets is visible below.



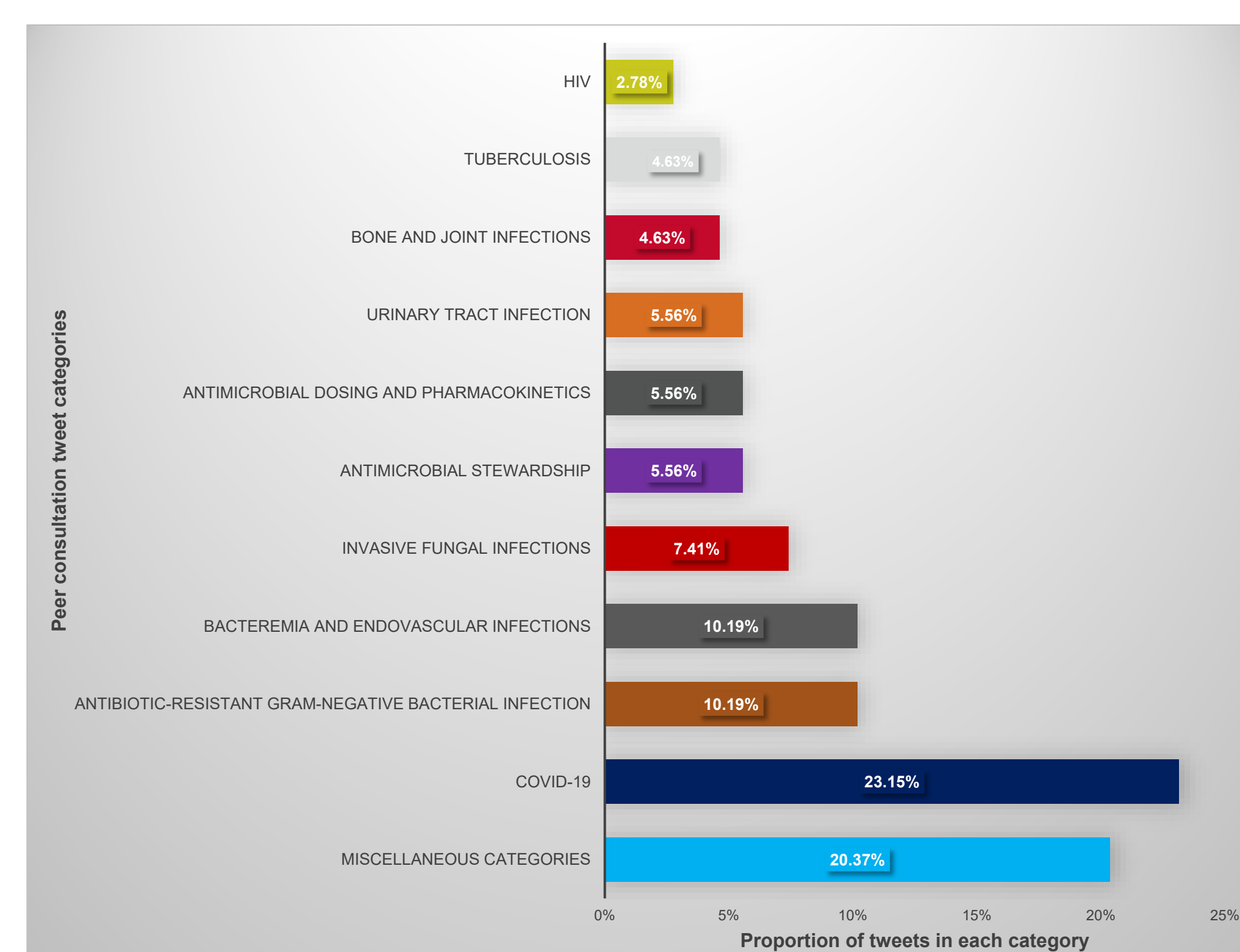
## How Successful were Inquiries?

Questions were more likely to be meaningfully answered if they included polls (91.7% vs 65.5%; p=0.01). Other factors were not associated with a meaningful answer.

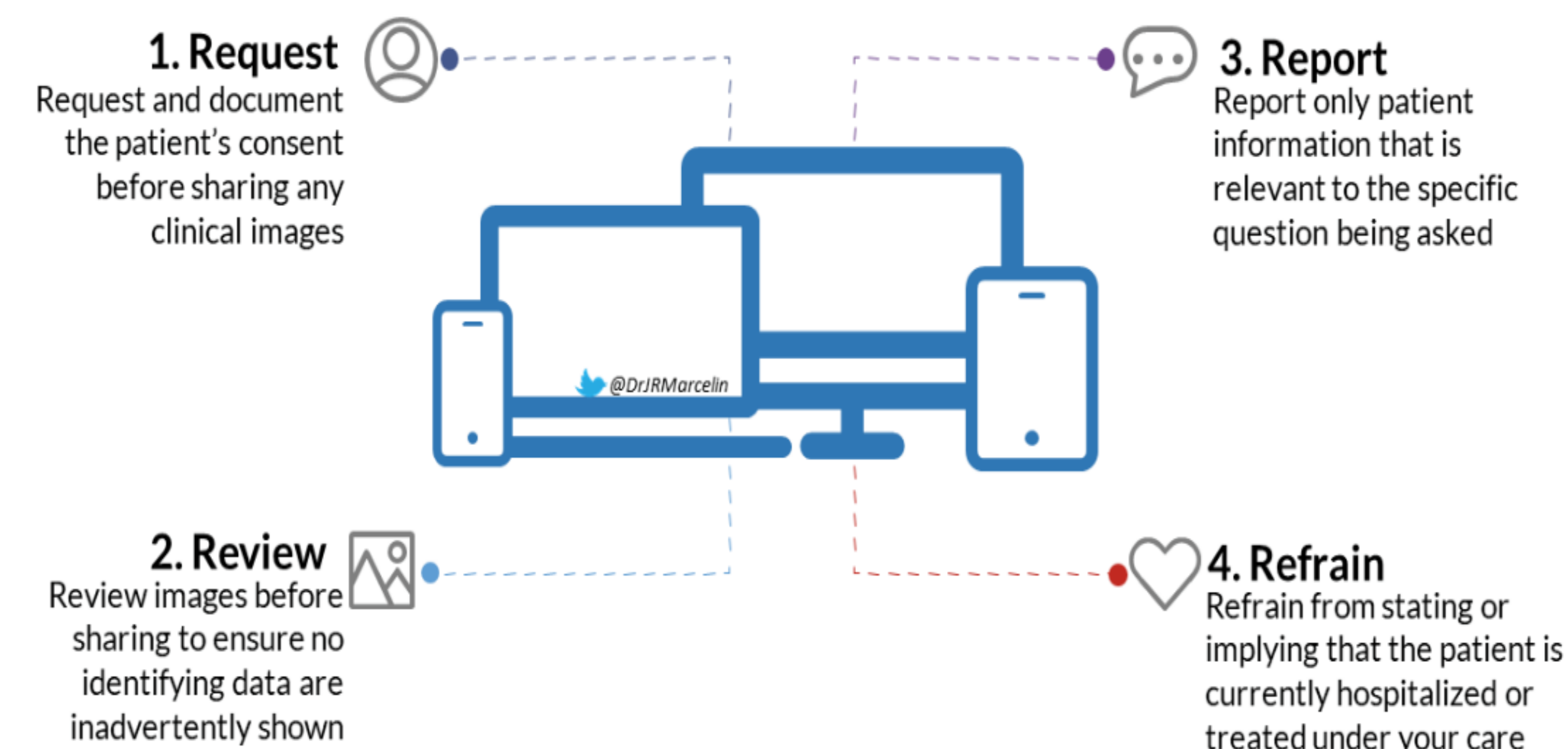


## What are Peer Consults Asking About?

We identified 10 common content categories of inquiry, accounting for 83% of all questions



## The Four Rs of Protecting Privacy on Social Media



## Conclusion

We found peer consultation via social media often yielded meaningful responses, particularly when a poll was included. However, disclosure of information that might breach confidentiality was not uncommon. We propose a "Four Rs" method to protect patient privacy on social media when seeking peer input.