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# COHORT DIFFERENCES IN AGING IN PLACE NEEDS AMONG A RURAL-SERVING AREA AGENCY ON AGING CLIENT POPULATION

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## Background

This study was conducted as part of a foundation-funded initiative to better coordinate the system of care in a rural New England area for older adults and individuals with chronic conditions and disabilities.

A needs assessment was undertaken to identify challenges and needs faced by area community members in order to inform the development of a strategic plan for meeting client needs.

The Center on Aging partnered with the Eastern Area Agency on Aging to survey clients and better understand pressing needs.

## Methodology

- The study utilized a mailed survey to clients of the Eastern Area Agency on Aging. There were 898 clients served in the region who were identified. There were 347 surveys returned for a response rate of 39%.
- Respondents ranged from 55-105 years old and had a mean age of 73.4 years.
- Among the respondents:
  - 57.7% lived alone
  - 55.7% identified as having a chronic condition or disability
  - 70.3% lived in their own home
  - 87.9% were not receiving any in-home care
- Participants were prompted to identify whether they had experienced any of 19 presented challenges in the past year and had been unable to receive help to address these challenges. They were also given the opportunity to write in other challenges not offered.
- An analysis was completed to understand the most prevalent challenges faced by clients and differences between sub-groups, including:
  - Those receiving homecare services
  - Individuals living alone
  - Individuals with chronic conditions
  - Individuals under and over 65

Research carried out by University of Maine Center on Aging in partnership with the M.O.O.V Penobscot Thriving in Place initiative and Eastern Area Agency on Aging  
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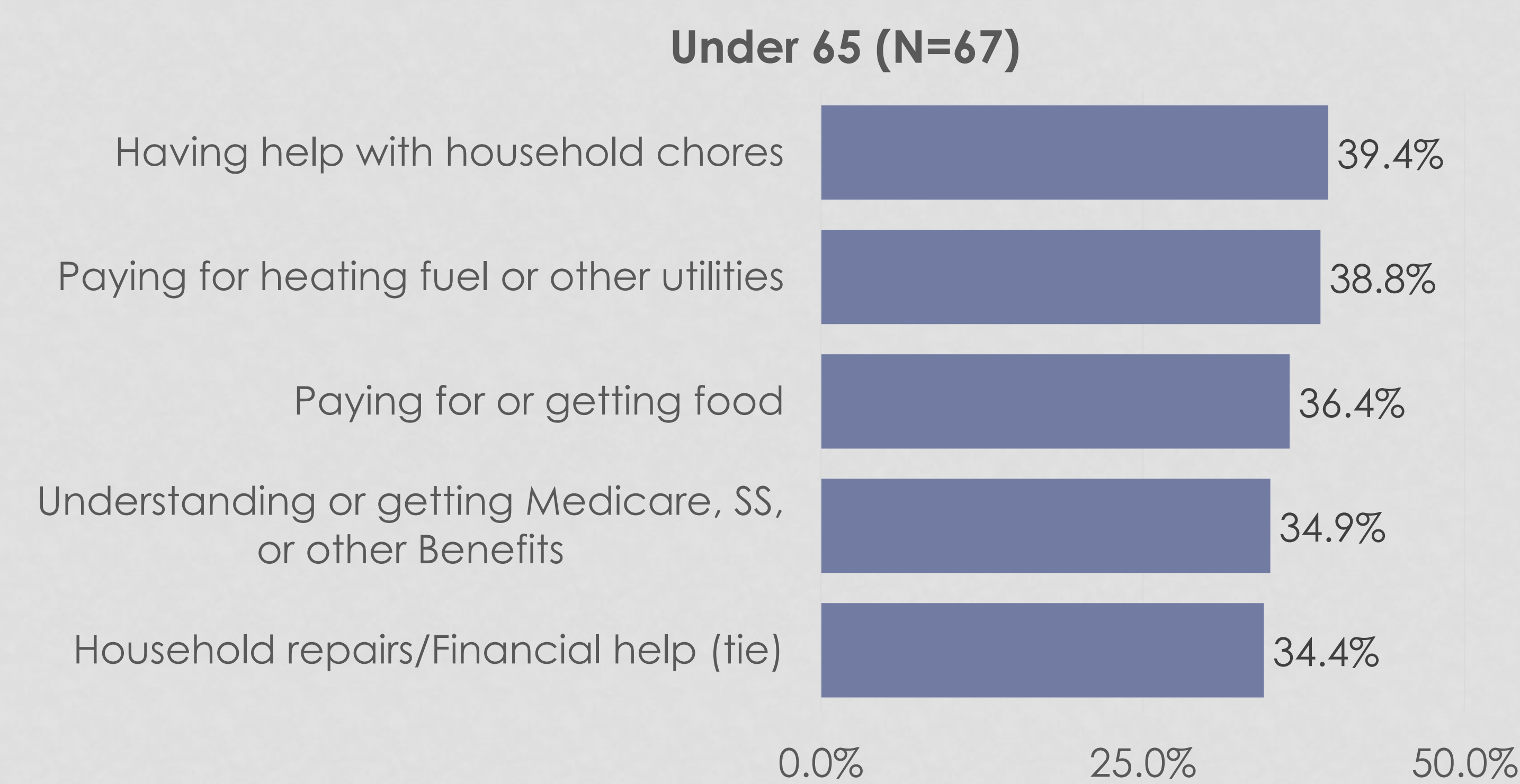
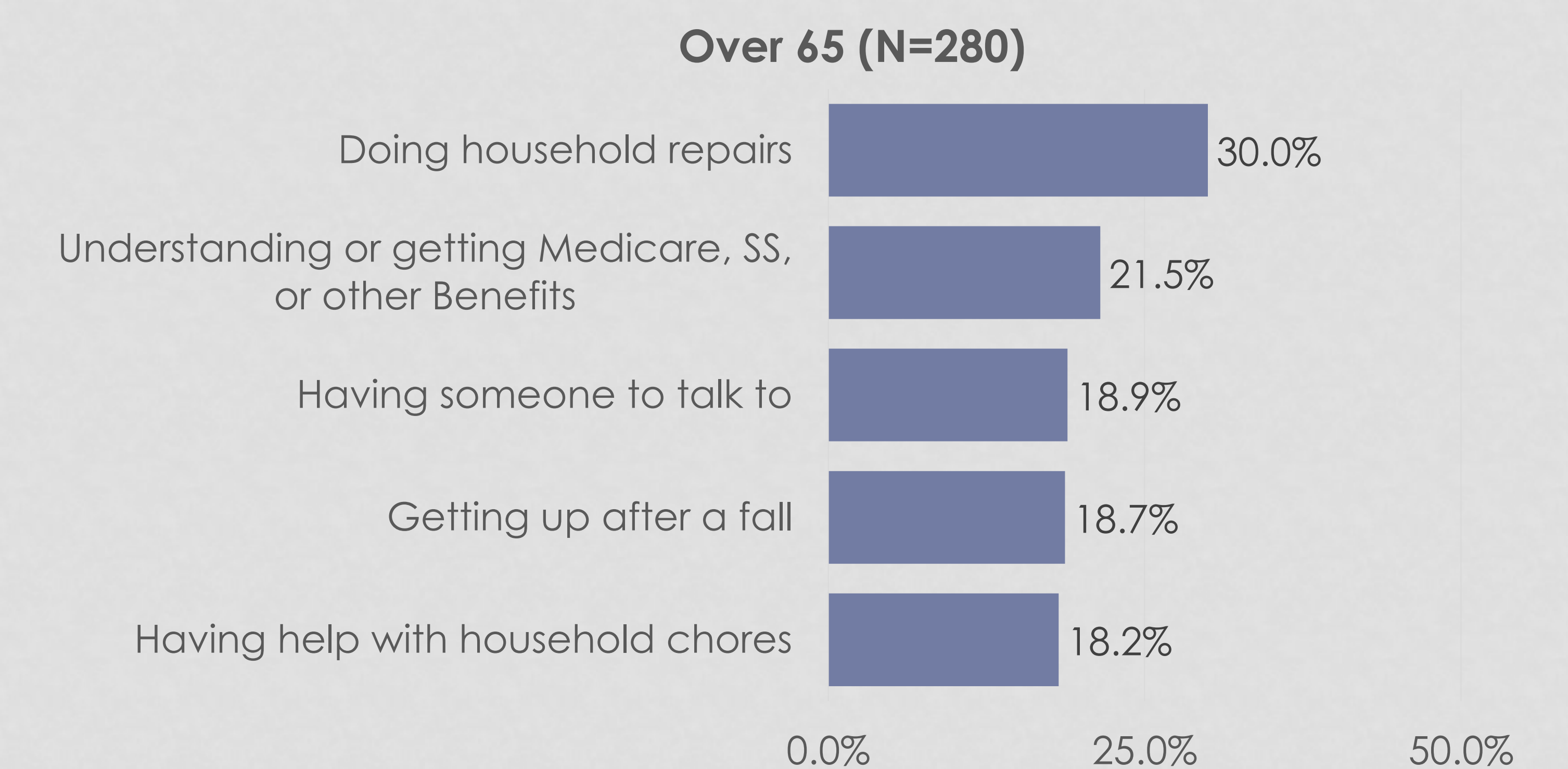
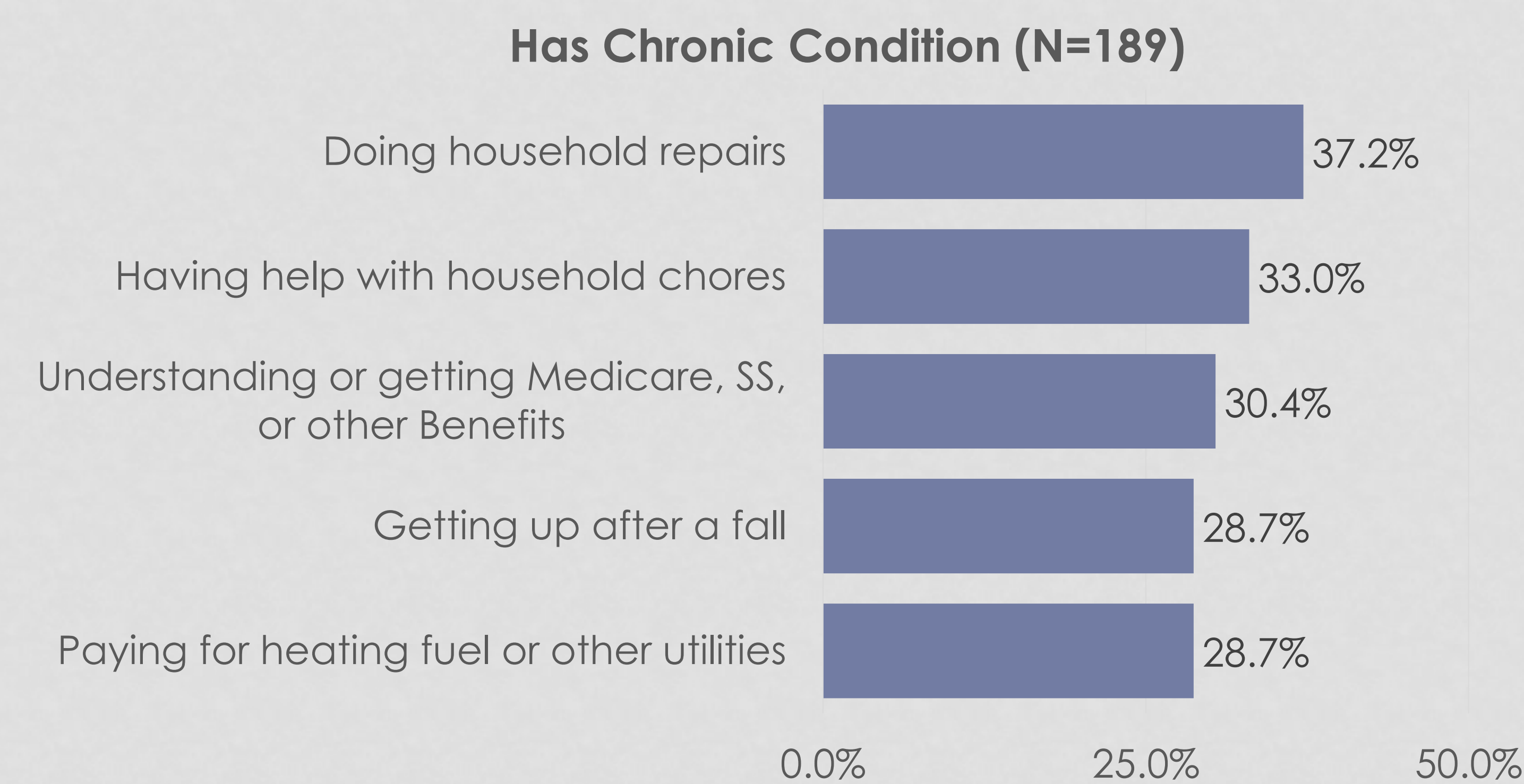
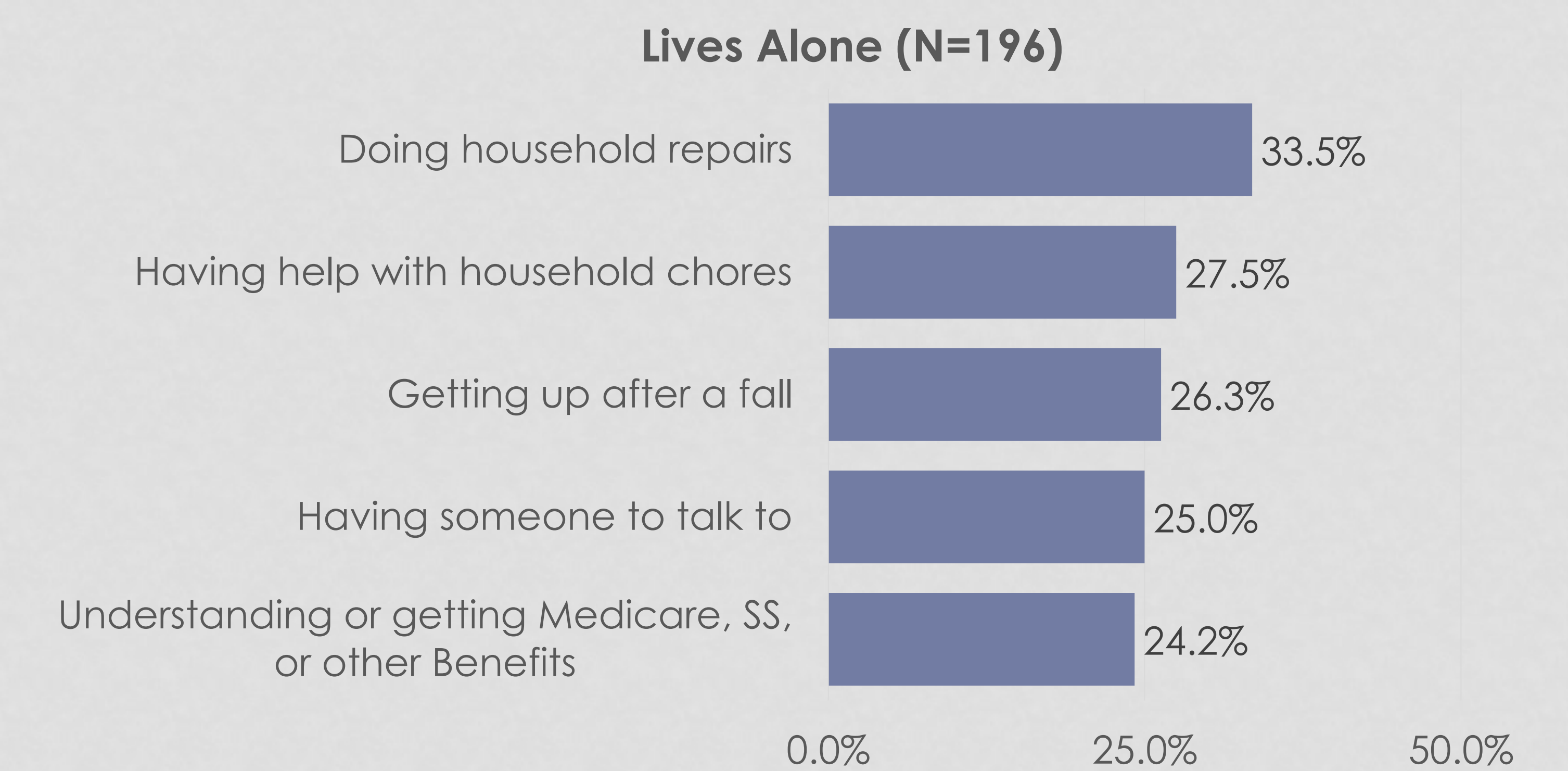
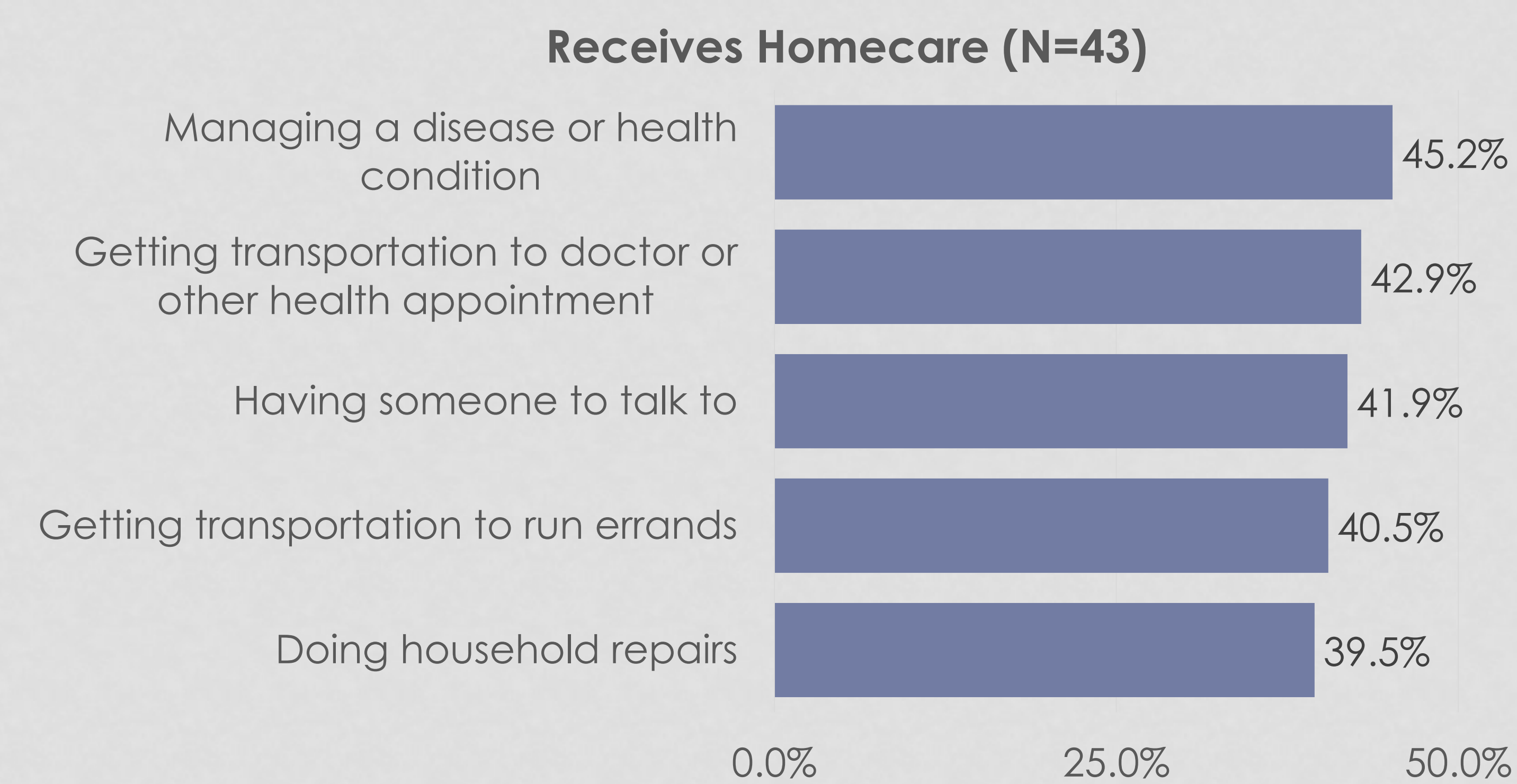
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## Findings – Top Five Challenges Identified by Client Sub-Groups

The following were challenges survey respondents could identify. Bolded items indicate needs that were in the top five of at least one client sub-group:

- Getting and managing my medications
- Getting transportation to a doctor or other health appointment (including dentist, eye doctor)**
- Doing household repairs**
- Paying for or getting food**
- Paying for heating fuel or other utilities**
- Paying for medications
- Getting transportation to see friends or family
- Getting transportation to run errands (groceries, other shopping, etc.)**
- In-home nursing or homecare
- Getting up after a fall**
- Legal help (will, power of attorney, etc.)
- Getting around my home or apartment
- Having someone to talk to**
- Having help with household chores**
- Being in touch with friends or family
- Managing a disease or health condition**
- Dealing with the loss of a spouse, partner, family member, friend, or pet
- Financial help (mortgages, taxes, etc.)**
- Understanding or getting Medicare, Social Security or other benefits**
- Other (write in)



### Summary of findings and Implications

The highest need sub-groups of agency clients were those receiving homecare and those under age 65.

Household repairs and help with household chores were among the most common needs across client subgroups.

Prevalence of difficulty getting up after falls was significant among multiple groups, ranging from 18.7% to 28.7%. Given the physical dangers associated with falls, this suggests a significant area for implementing effective interventions.

Social isolation is a particular challenge among those receiving homecare, the over 65 population and individuals living alone.