



Monthly polls: The results

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Over the past 10 months (March 2014 until December 2014) I, King_oni, conducted a monthly poll on Aspiescentral in order to map out the average forummember. Of course, with all that data I intended to draw up some fancy graphs, since you know... aspies, information, graphs, it most likely tickles someones fancy. Quite sure it does.

So, going over all the data collected in the past months, and I will say that, despite it being a small group, it had somewhere between just over 10 and up to 40 users taking part in the poll every month, it might not be the most precise of polls. But we can't force everyone to be part of it; it was on a voluntary basis. Some members probably voted once or twice and didn't come back to the forum for extended periods, while some actually looked forward to the next poll to vote again and mark their little part within this online autismcommunity. But hey, I'm not claiming it to be science either.

So I'd like to thank everybody who contributed.

With that out of the way; let's draw up an average first. After that I'll get to a representation in the form of a graph of every months poll.

The average Aspiescentral user is:

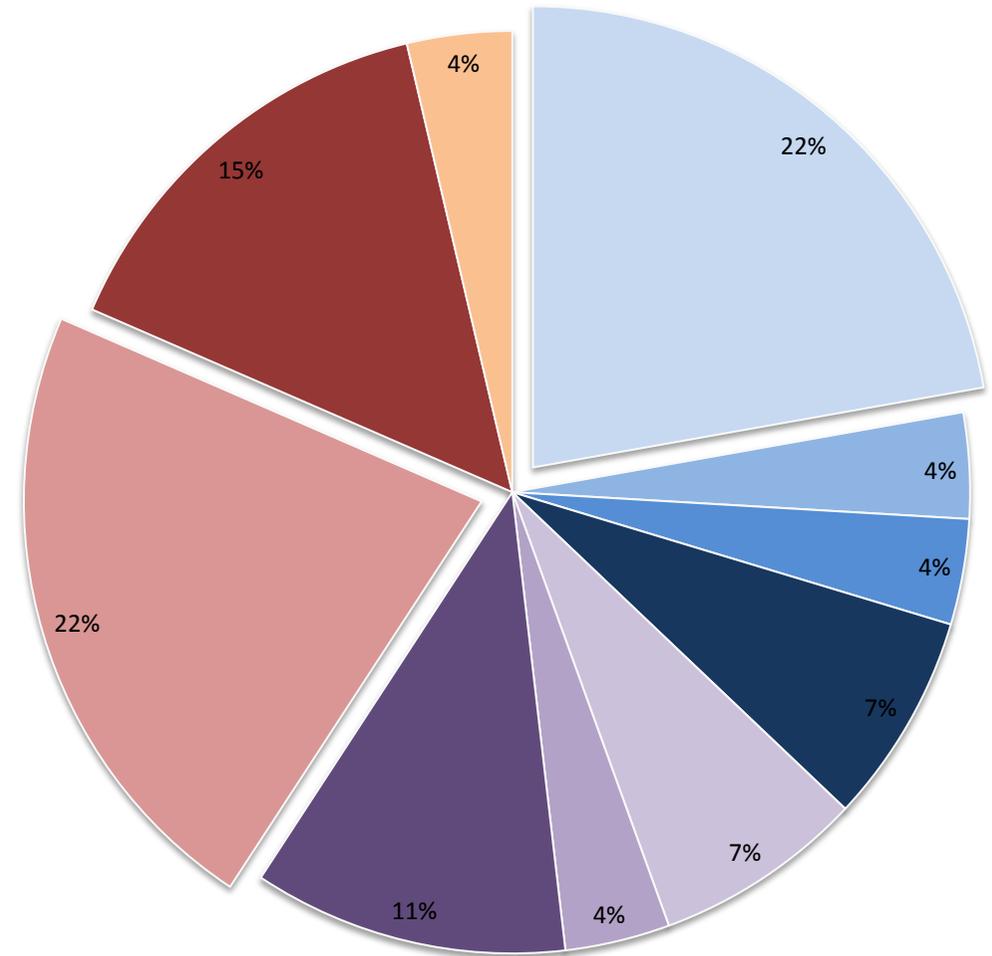
A man between 20 and 29 years old who is officially diagnosed with only an autism spectrum disorder. He might have friends who are also on the spectrum in his personal life. He is on this forum mostly to hang out with other people on the spectrum and hangs out on this forum about autism exclusively. He never felt discriminated against because of his autism but feels that autism in general has a negative image. He is either full-time employed or unemployed and gets by on government assistance. And he most likely lives in either the UK or in Ireland.

Then; the polls

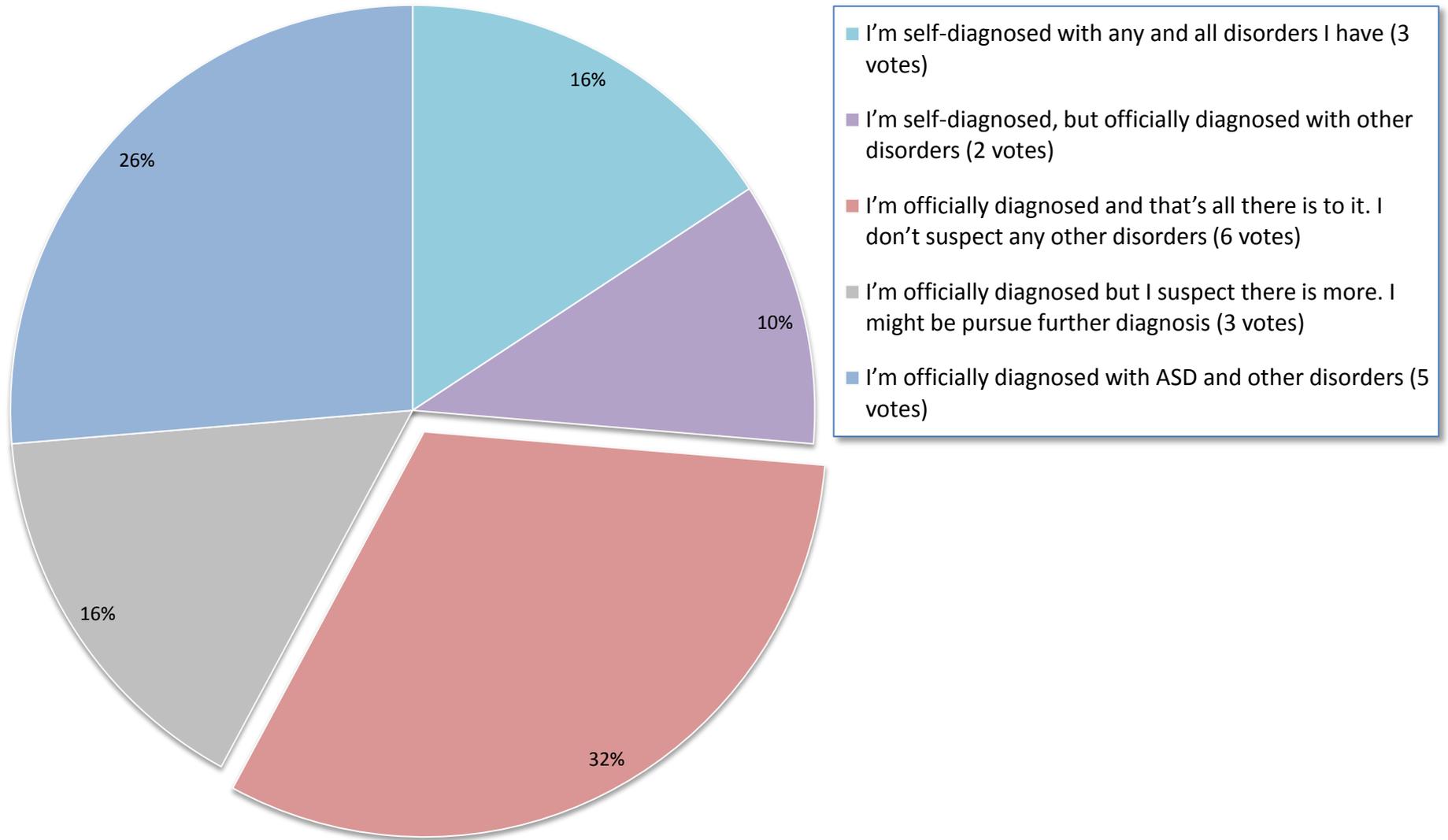
For more in-depth information about every poll, see the addendum in the PDF I'll put up for download or check out the link of the corresponding poll that goes with the graph on the forum. In any poll, any options that did not get any votes, will not be mentioned in the graph either. It would take up all kinds of space to give a fancy 0% text, which seems quite unnecessary for being such an absent part.

March: Employment (27 votes)

- I'm Full-time employed (6 votes)
- I'm Part-time employed (1 votes)
- I'm Full-time employed and I'm attending school (1 votes)
- I'm Part-time employed and I'm attending school (2 votes)
- I volunteer and I'm unemployed otherwise (2 votes)
- I volunteer and I'm attending school (1 votes)
- I don't have/need a job cause I'm attending school (3 votes)
- I'm unemployed and live on some form of government assistance (6 votes)
- I'm unemployed and don't have any stable income (this also means Freelancing) (4 votes)
- I'm retired (or any other way that puts you in the position of not working; trust fund for example) (1 votes)

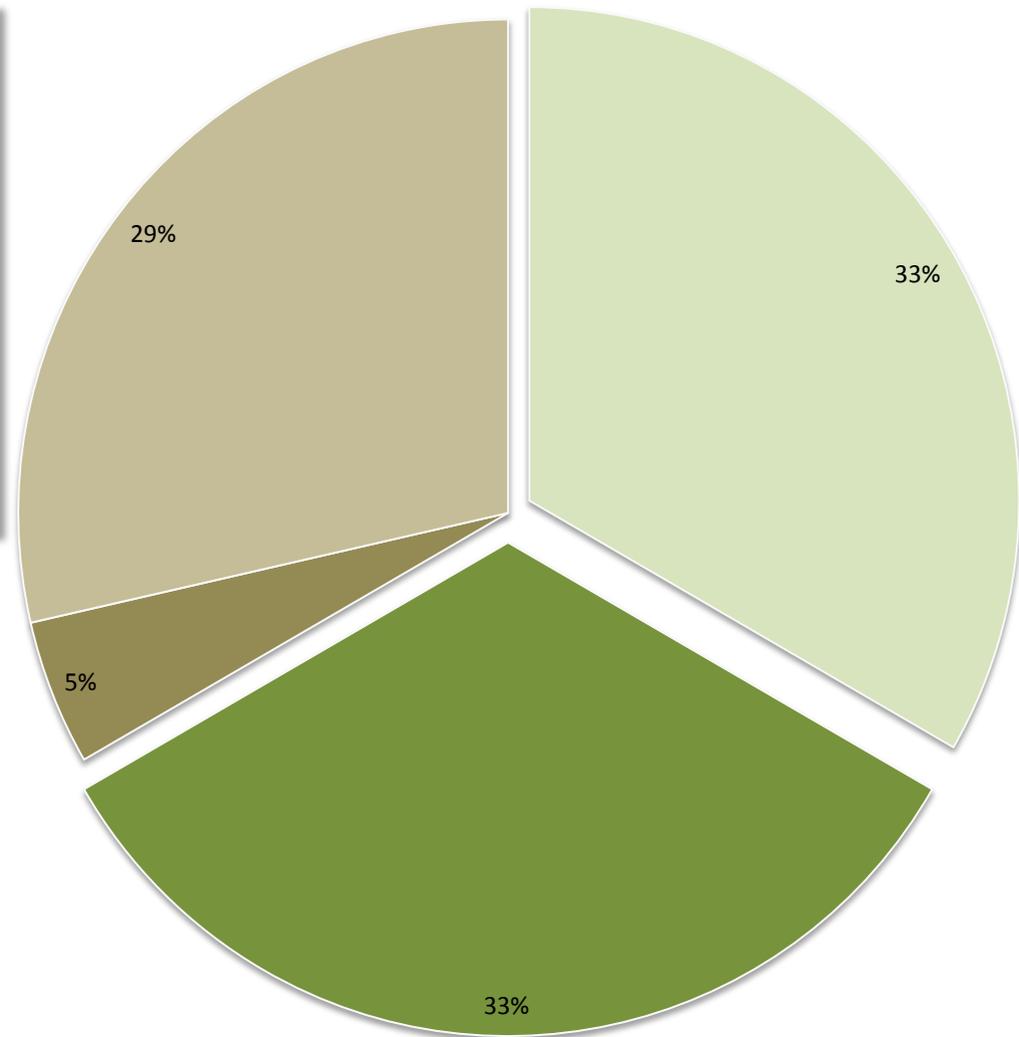


April: Diagnosis (19 votes)

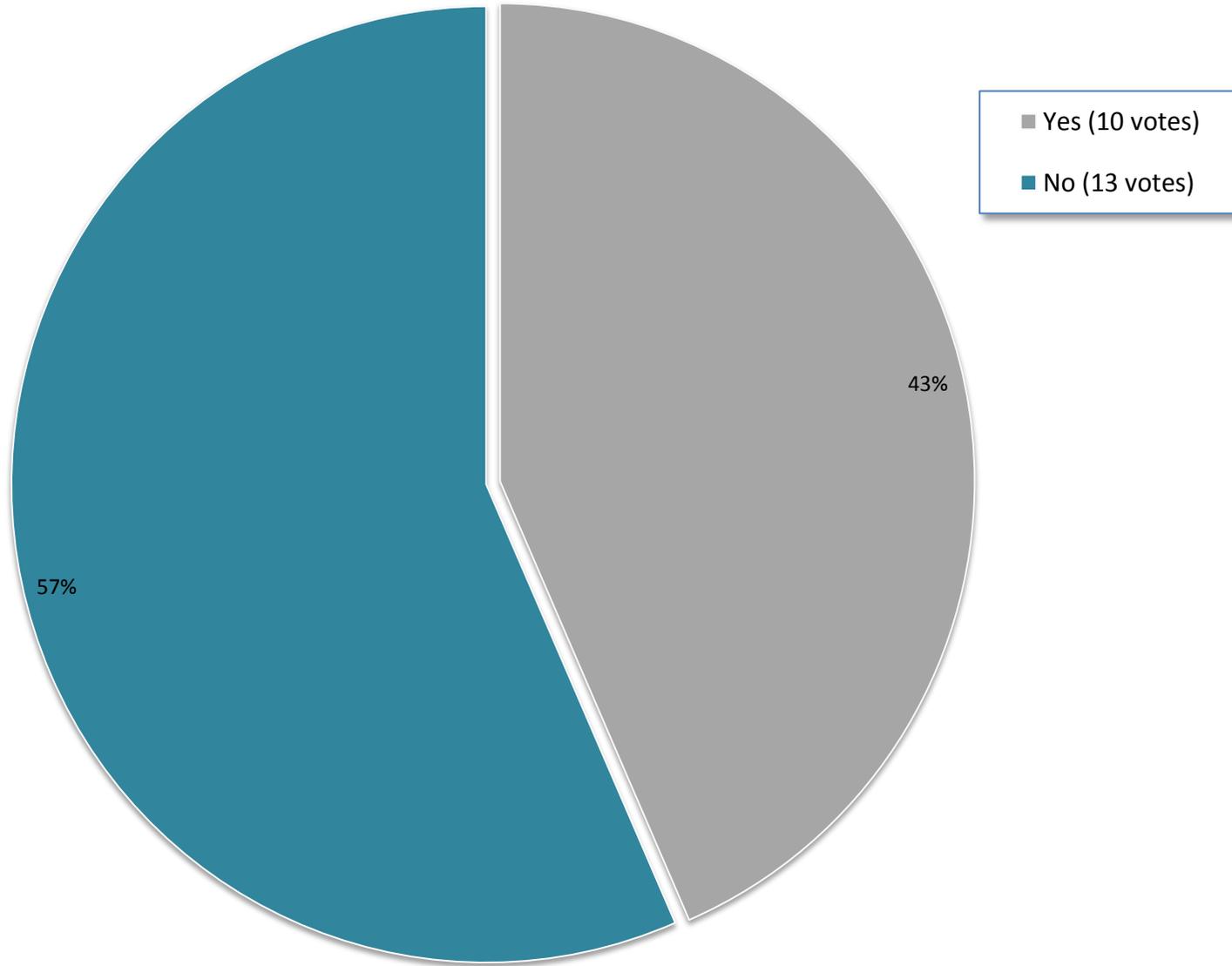


May: Real life spectrum friends (21 votes)

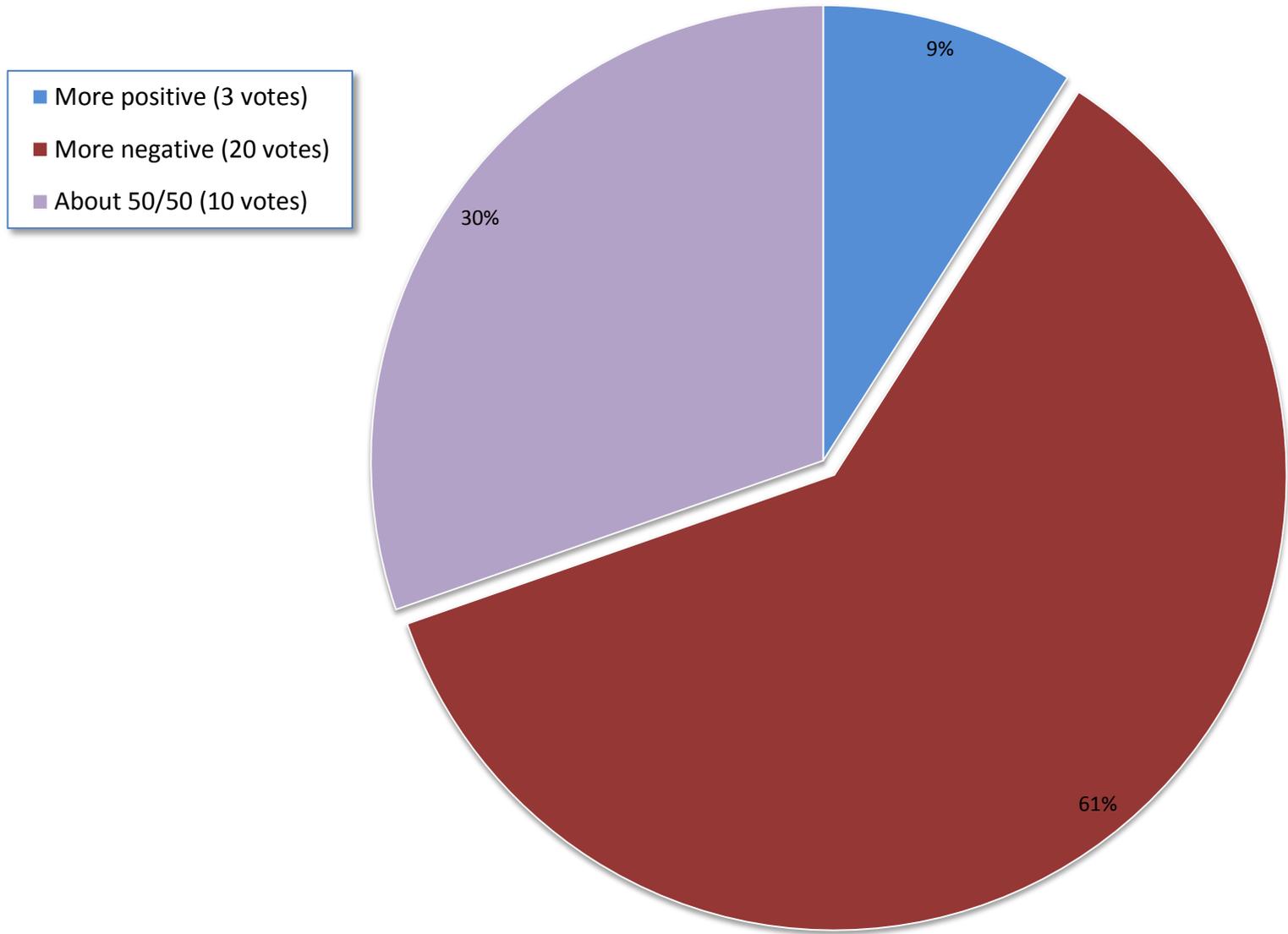
- I am on the spectrum and I don't know any people on the spectrum in real life (7 votes)
- I am on the spectrum and I have one or more friends on the spectrum which I know in real life (7 votes)
- I am on the spectrum and I have one or more family members on the spectrum (1 vote)
- I am on the spectrum and I have one or more family members and one or more friends on the spectrum (6 votes)



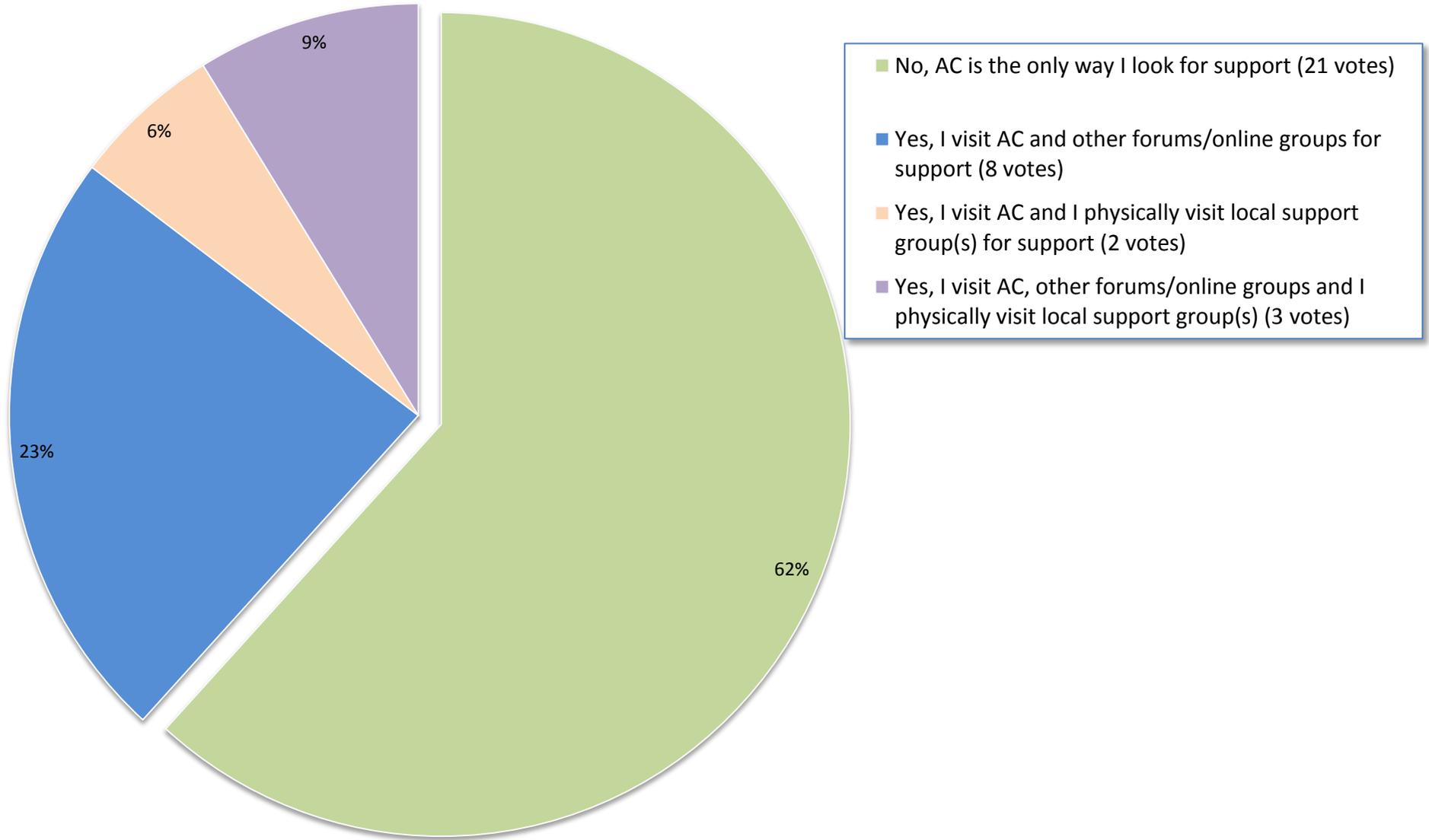
June: Professional assistance (23 votes)



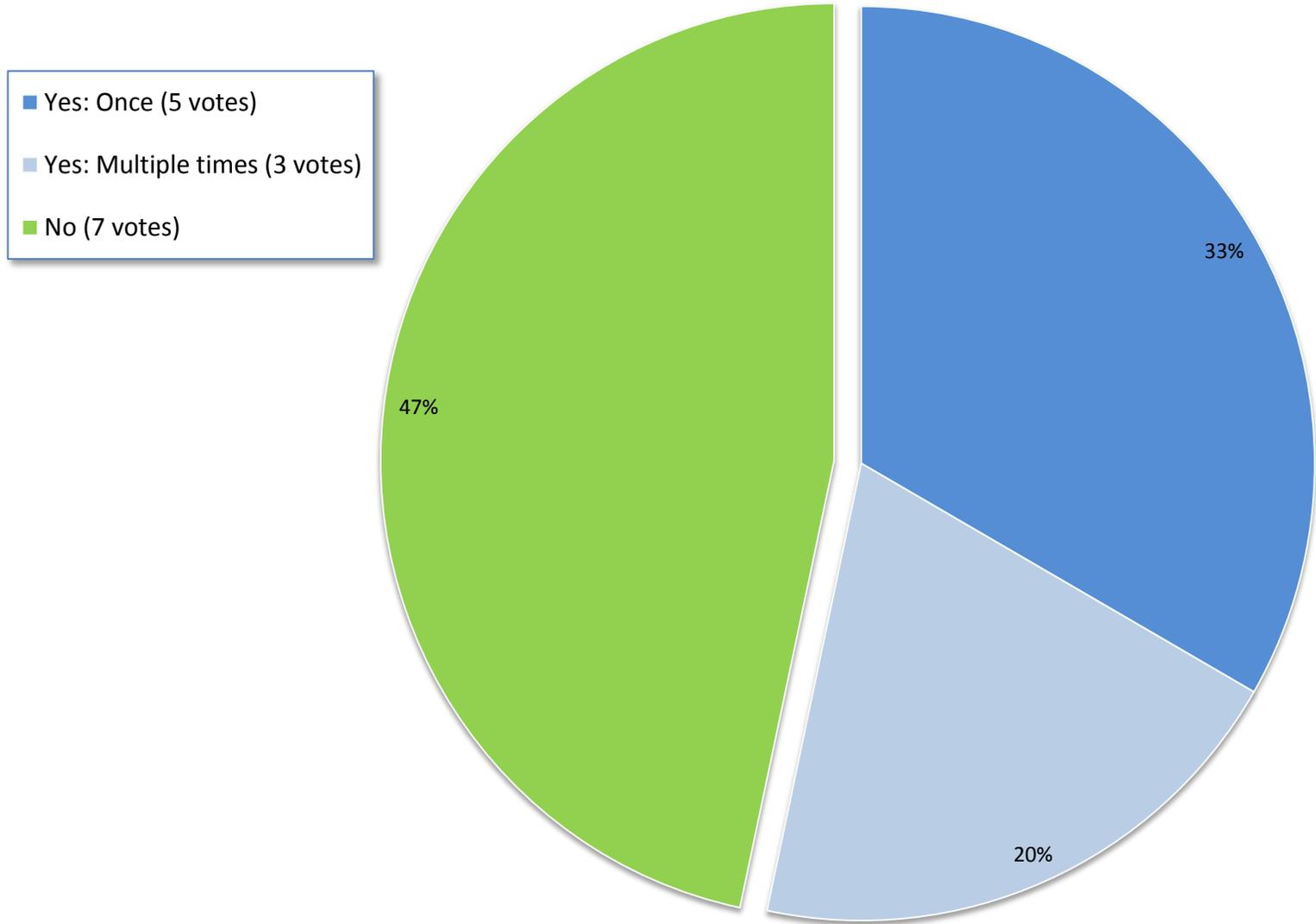
July: ASD image in society (33 votes)



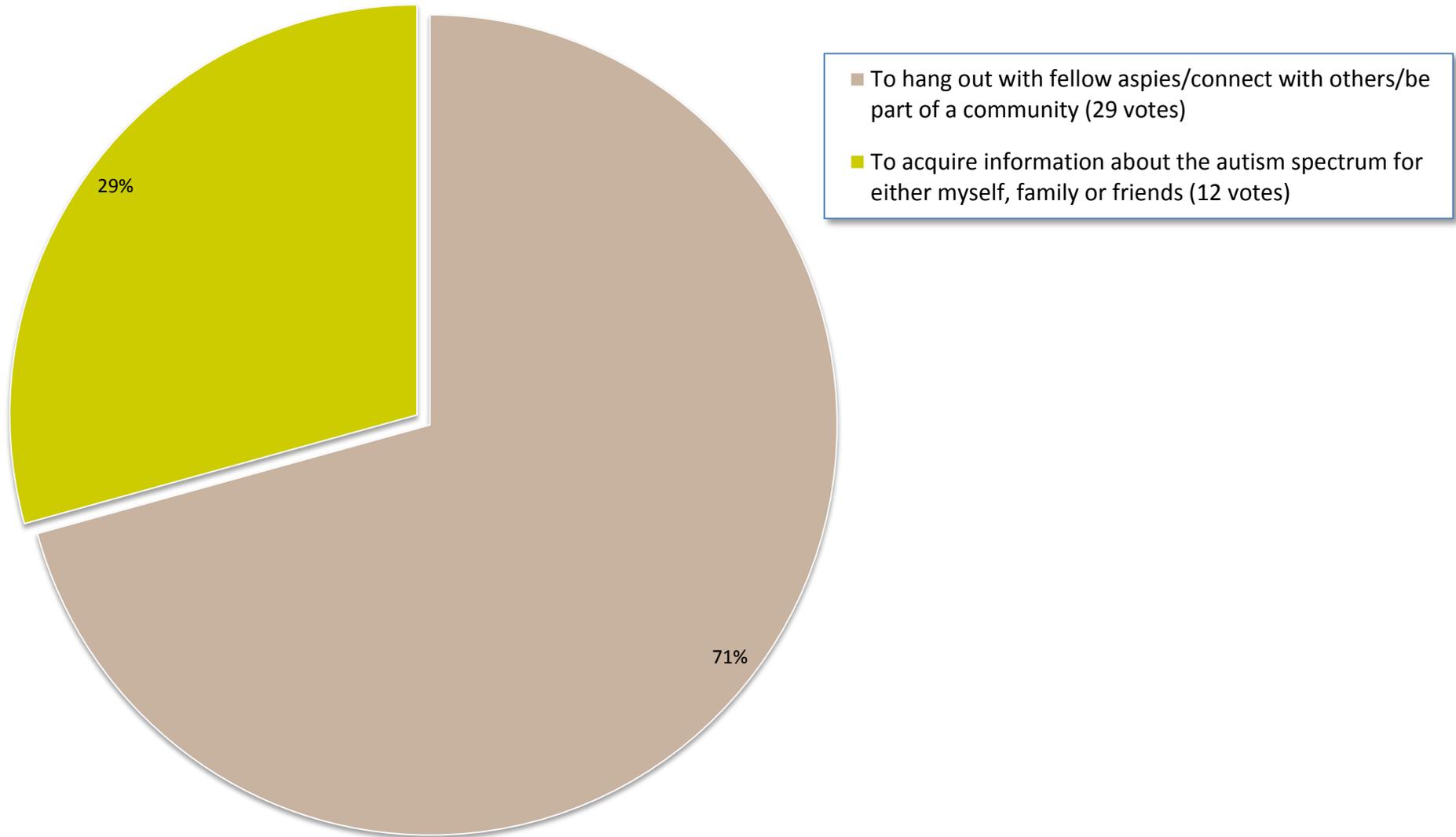
August: Other support groups/resources (34 votes)



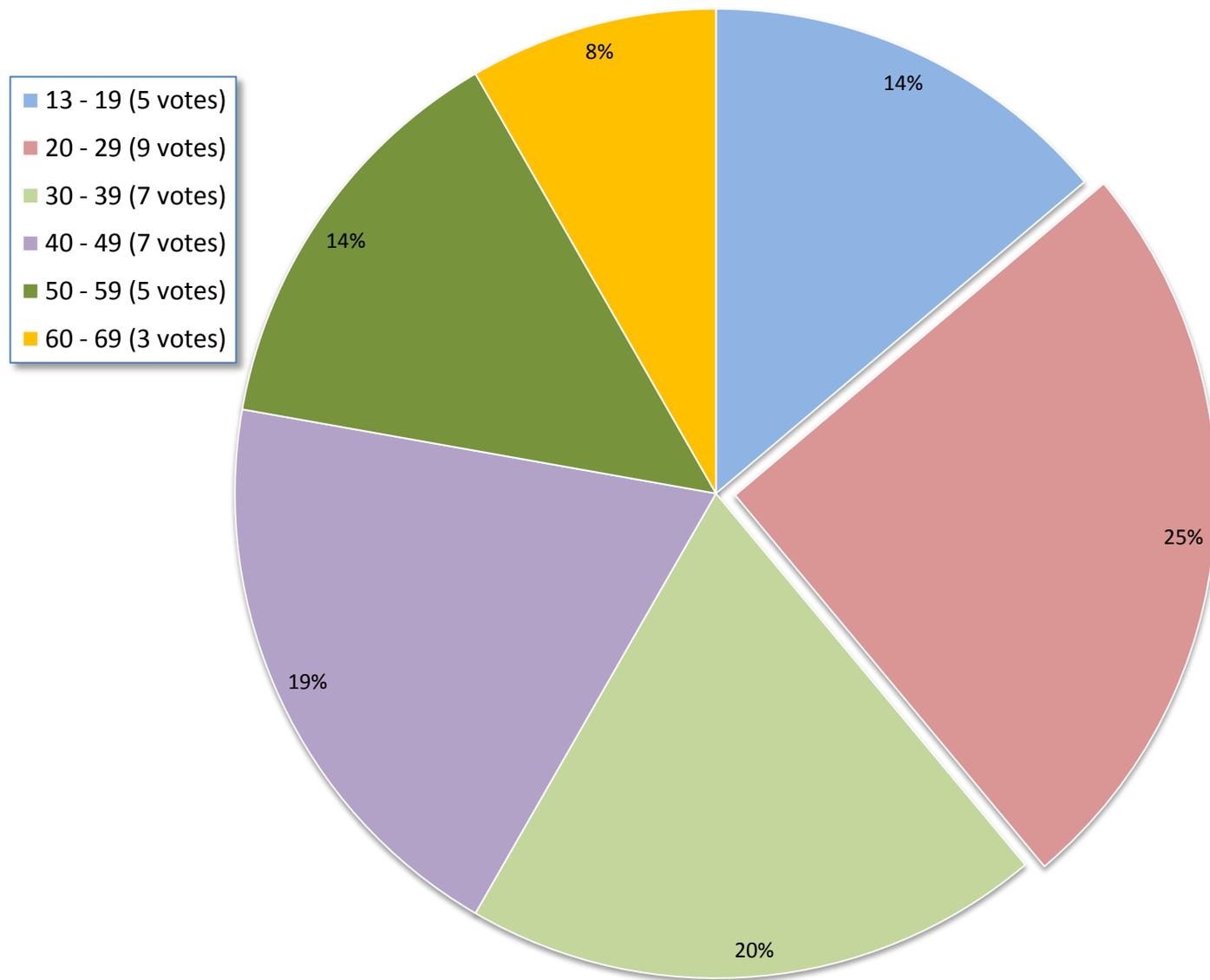
September: Discrimination (13 votes)



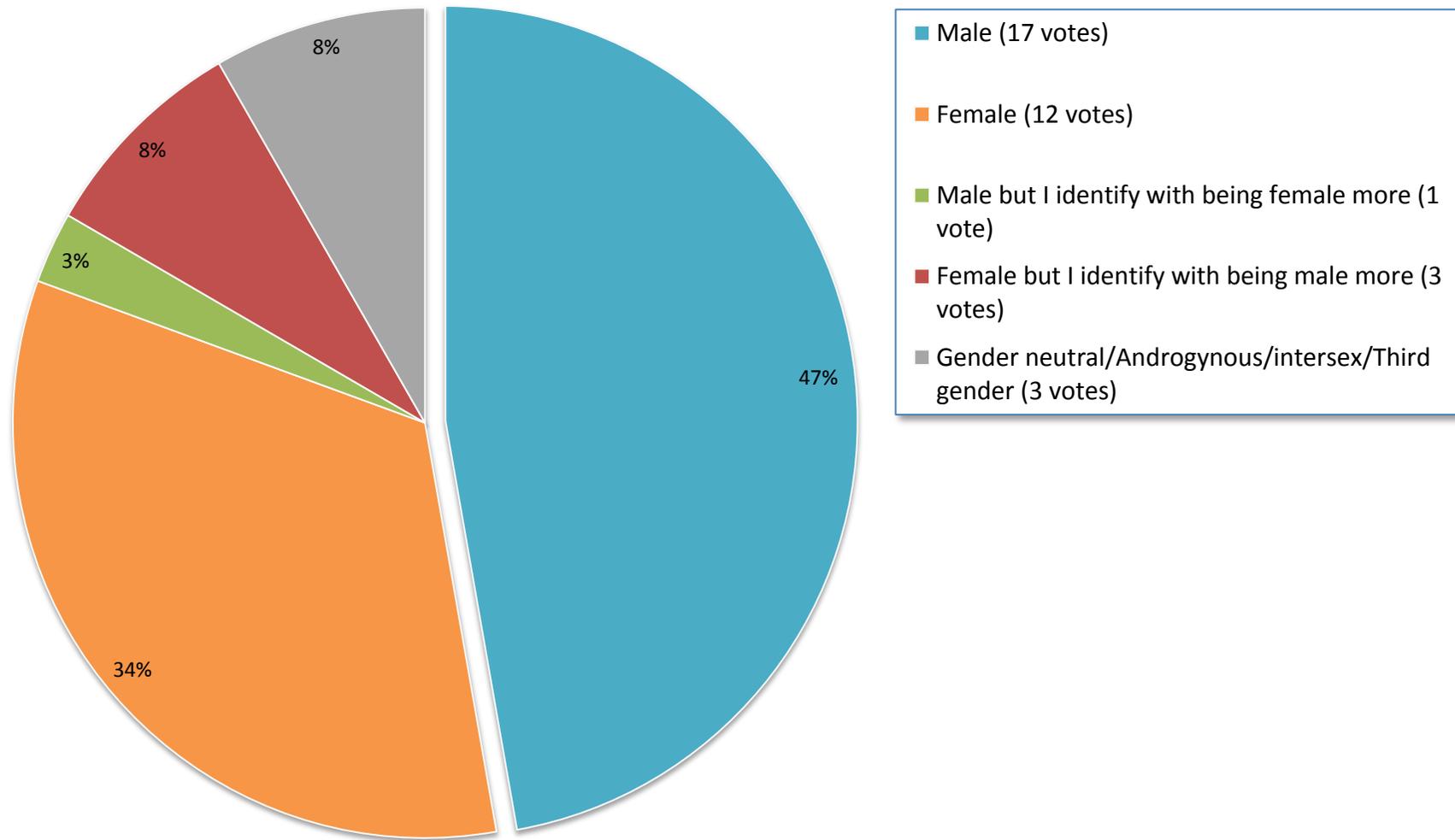
October: Primary reason to visit Aspiescentral (41 votes)



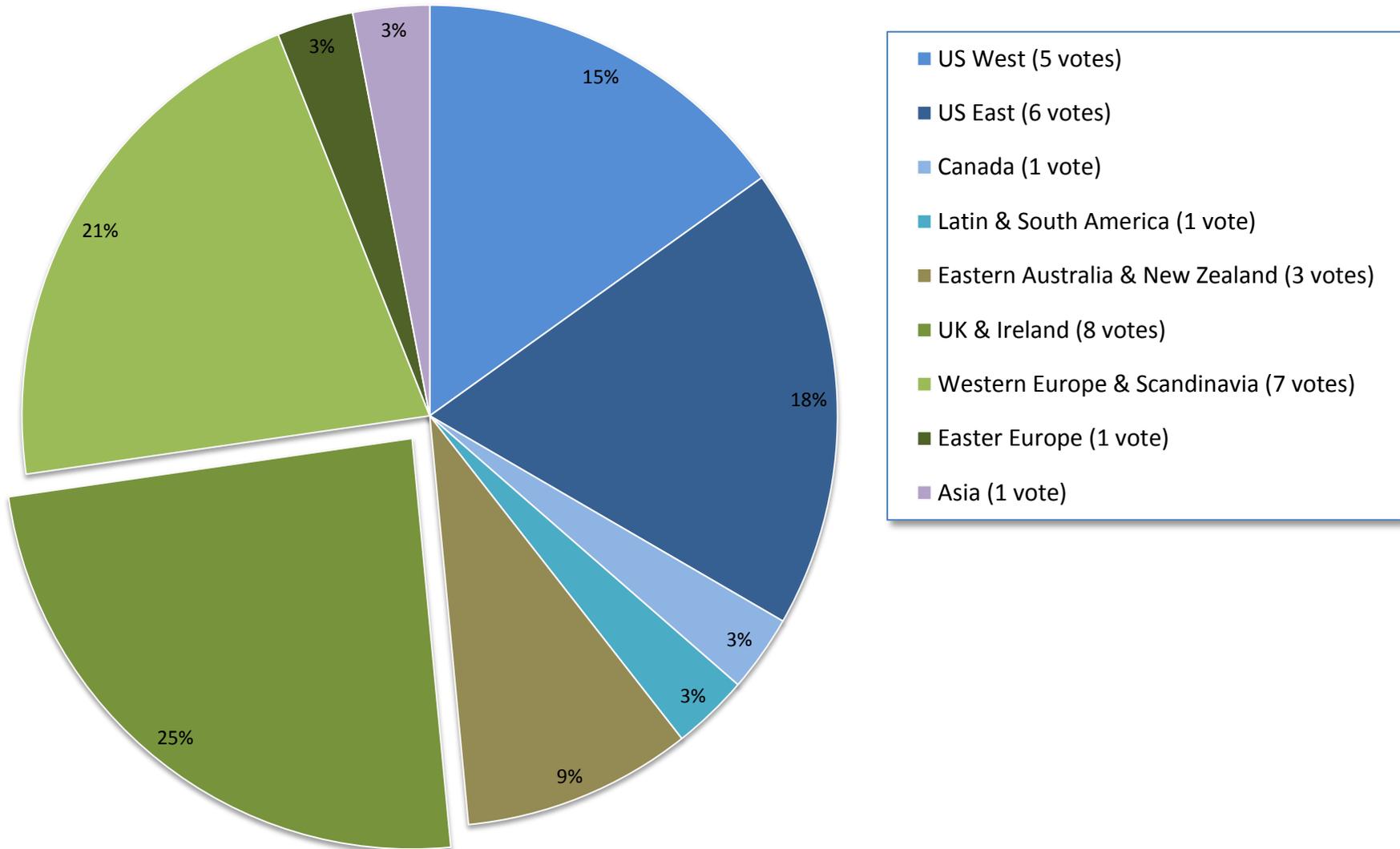
November: Age (36 votes)



December: Gender (36 votes)



December: Geographic location (33 votes)



Addendum

- Copy of every poll introduction to the answers and question from March through December. December in 2 parts since in that month there were essentially 2 polls up simultaneously. Added to every poll introduction are the results as they are on the forum, including any answers with 0 votes.

March

Employment.

Reports have shown that there's only a marginally small group of people with a disability in general have a job. About 2 years ago I contacted a temp agency that specialized in employing people with disabilities and they told me flat out that about 80% of the people on the autism spectrum are not employed. I'd argue that do a bad job themselves, but obviously it's not that simple to draw a conclusion like that.

Going around on this forum I read plenty of stories of people who don't have jobs, are on some kind of government assistance, so this would back up this claim that isn't specific to just the country I'm from, but most likely a global trend, and perhaps with a slight focus on "western" countries (Europe, North America, Australia; and perhaps even a few Asian countries who to some extent fall under this same functioning rather than 2nd or 3rd world classification).

But then again I've also seen people on this forum who have jobs, those who managed to pull themselves through university with success and make a decent penny.

So I'm curious to see how this translates to the Aspiescentral community.

I've come up with 10 answers for this poll which I think are the most suitable responses for the question;

Are you employed and/or in school?

I'll walk through the answers to try and cover any possible questions (since the thread is not open for replies).

I'd like to clarify that school can be seen with a really broad scope; college, high school, university, even home schooling or learning new skills with e-courses can be seen as this. The only criteria here is that it's something that takes a hefty amount of your time like any form of studying.

1. Full-time employment; Seems pretty straight-forward. Full-time employment is commonly seen as 40 hours a week (in most places; yet it seems to vary. If you have a job you probably know if you're full-time or parttime. For more information; [Full-time - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

2. Part-time employment; If you have such a job, you would probably know how many hours you're scheduled to be there. Part-time in general tends to be less than 30 hours a week, up to 0 hours and an on-call basis. But this might vary depending on where you're from.
3. I'm Full-time employed and I'm attending school; See 1. And the clarification what qualifies as school above.
4. I'm Part-time employed and I'm attending school; See 2. And the clarification what qualifies as school above.
5. I volunteer and I'm unemployed otherwise; seems straight forward.
6. I volunteer and I'm attending school; Also, pretty straight forward
7. I don't have/need a job cause I'm attending school; You're a student and don't have a job. Perhaps you don't even need a job because you're part of the predominantly younger group of high school and college attending forum members, and therefor might have relatively little expenses and no need for a job. Or your parents pay things for you of course, hehe.
8. I'm unemployed and live on some form of government assistance; This stretches anywhere from disability income to welfare checks and other forms up supplemental income that is, in some way government funded.
9. I'm unemployed and don't have any stable income (this also means Freelancing); No job and no stable income whatsoever. You make money as opportunities arise. And that's why I clump freelancing here as well, since that's essentially what you do to make money. Take any job that fits your field of expertise to make a living on a "per case" basis.
10. I'm retired (or any other way that puts you in the position of not working; trust fund for example); seems straight forward. It would basically come down to any other form that puts you in a position of not having to work but still being able to pay bills and have a monthly income of sorts.

Result:

Answer to; Are you employed and/or in school?	Votes (27 votes total)
I'm Full-time employed	6
I'm Part-time employed	1
I'm Full-time employed and I'm attending school	1
I'm Part-time employed and I'm attending school	2
I volunteer and I'm unemployed otherwise	2
I volunteer and I'm attending school	1
I don't have/need a job cause I'm attending school	3
I'm unemployed and live on some form of government assistance	6
I'm unemployed and don't have any stable income (this also means Freelancing)	4
I'm retired (or any other way that puts you in the position of not working; trust fund for example)	1

April

Self-diagnosis

This month's poll is pretty straightforward, and perhaps I could do a headcount based on what members put in their user profile on this forum. But I've decided it could've been expanded a bit more.

The April 2014 AC poll question is;

How are you diagnosed (in regards to autism)?

Like last time, there will be a few options to select. They seem straightforward and I hope they're not ambiguous to anyone. If so, let me know through a private message so I can clear it up.

1. I'm self-diagnosed with any and all disorders I have
2. I'm self-diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, but officially diagnosed with other disorders (ADD, ADHD or Bipolar for example)
3. I'm officially diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder and that's all there is to it. I don't suspect more than just an autism spectrum disorder
4. I'm officially diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder but I suspect there is more. I might be planning future screenings to see what other things I might have going on.
5. I'm officially diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder by a psychologist as well as other disorders (ADD, ADHD or Bipolar for example)
6. I'm not diagnosed at all, I don't suspect I am. I'm visiting this forum for friends or family

Result:

Answer to; How are you diagnosed (in regards to your autism)?	Votes (19 votes total)
I'm self-diagnosed with any and all disorders I have	3
I'm self-diagnosed, but officially diagnosed with other disorders	2
I'm officially diagnosed and that's all there is to it. I don't suspect any other disorders	6
I'm officially diagnosed but I suspect there is more. I might be pursue further diagnosis	3
I'm officially diagnosed with ASD and other disorders	5
I'm not diagnosed at all, I don't suspect I am. I'm visiting this forum for friends or family	0

May

Online/offline contacts on the spectrum

I've come to the conclusion that there's a world of difference between communicating with people on the autism spectrum online and offline. And thus, this month's poll will revolve around this; do you know any people on the spectrum in real life, as opposed to online (like forums or facebook groups)?

I think it's also important to differentiate between spectrum friends and spectrum family. From my understanding, spectrum family still is a different social dynamic than spectrum friends. I'm naming it "spectrum"-friends/family on purpose to not limit it to Asperger's obviously. It is related to anything on the Autism spectrum from anywhere when the DSM books first introduced it up to when the DSM IV (TR) and DSM V are around; Asperger's Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder (in any form from low to high functioning) as well as PDD-NOS (since that was part of the spectrum back in the day). Also, keep in mind, this is about confirmed cases. Not "I suspect a friend might be an aspie" situations.

To differentiate here, I think it's important to differentiate between people on the spectrum with family members as well as neurotypical people with family members on the spectrum, since these people are most likely on this forum for advice and support for people close to them.

Lastly; if you identify with being on the spectrum (instead of being officially diagnosed), you're good to go as "being on the spectrum". Making a difference there for sake of the poll (and any forum contributions you made because you're convinced you belong here) would make this poll open for misinterpretation too much. As much as this might contradict the aforementioned "suspecting a friend" self-diagnosis on yourself still is a different deal than "self-diagnosing" someone else.

The May 2014 AC poll question is;

Do you know any people on the spectrum in real life?

1. I am on the spectrum and I don't know any people on the spectrum in real life
2. I am on the spectrum and I have one or more friends on the spectrum which I know in real life
3. I am on the spectrum and I have one or more family members on the spectrum

4. I am on the spectrum and I have one or more family members and one or more friends on the spectrum which I know in real life

5. I am not on the spectrum but I have friends on the spectrum in real life

6. I am not on the spectrum but I have family on the spectrum

7. I am not on the spectrum nor do I have know any people in real life (this could very well be the option for any researchers and professionals in the field that visit this forum)

Result:

Answer to; Do you know any people on the spectrum in real life?	Votes (21 votes total)
I am on the spectrum and I don't know any people on the spectrum in real life	7
I am on the spectrum and I have one or more friends on the spectrum which I know in real life	7
I am on the spectrum and I have one or more family members on the spectrum	1
I am on the spectrum and I have one or more family members and one or more friends on the spectrum	6
I am not on the spectrum but I have friends on the spectrum in real life	0
I am not on the spectrum but I have family on the spectrum	0
I am not on the spectrum nor do I have known any people in real life	0

June

Do you receive any outside assistance by professionals to function (in relation to your ASD)?

And with outside assistance one can take it rather broad. Therapy, psychosocial support through a social worker, but also special accommodations at your job or the school you study at.

Basically anyone or anything involved to make sure you struggle less with your autism in daily life. The key is, they are professionals. Having your mom drive you around cause you can't drive doesn't qualify here, though if you were to see a social worker weekly who would, for instance, help you out with phone calls and appointments that would very well qualify as "professional support". I would like to emphasize though, it has to be because of your ASD that you receive this support, not for comorbid disorders.

This month's poll's answers seem a bit more straight forward, opposed to previous ones. So a simple yes or no response would do here.

Result:

Answer to; Do you receive any professional assistance for any struggles in daily life in regards to you ASD?	Votes (23 votes total)
Yes	10
No	13

July

How do you feel about and perceive the general image of ASD in society?

(ranging from media to stereotypes and prejudices, perhaps even how it's being perceived on the workforce/school)?

Autism sometimes gets a bad rep and recently has been linked to some extreme violence (and let's not debate whether that's uncalled for or if it's true, that's not the discussion here) and as media reports, the masses eat it up, claiming that autism is dangerous. Add in the increase in diagnosis and you've got something brewing that raises concern.

Also add in the Rain man stereotype (even though there's no actual statement he was autistic. Nor was Kim Peek, who this movie was inspired on). I can't recall the times I heard comparisons to Rain man when I mentioned I was on the spectrum (and I really can't count the number of rubber bands in a jar). Nor does the stereotype of all autistic people being good with numbers and all brilliant with computers and such hold any truth. But it's one of the stereotypes I hear and read about quite a lot.

And there's also workplace accommodation and how co-workers might think that it's uncalled for that you need "special treatment" among other things. (Which in turn might lead to bullying)

The upside is; there are plenty of brilliant people in the present, past (and probably in the future) who are on the spectrum and contributed significantly. And that's when all prejudice is waived away for a while, if it's even brought up at all.

So it's 2 sides of the same coin.

But in essence; do you think ASD gets a bad rep overall and do we need a good public relations department? Or is only half as bad and do you think there's a lot of positive emphasis on ASD in general?

Result:

Answer to; How do you feel about and perceive the general image of ASD in society?	Votes (33 votes total)
More positive	3
More negative	20
About 50/50	10

August

Do you use any other support groups regarding your ASD?

Do you use any other ASD-related forums? Any Facebook groups that are targeted towards ASD? Any other way to gather with others on the spectrum? Google hangouts? Do you have any support group in your area that you visit in real life?

Promoting other forums isn't what we're looking for though. The answer is more along the lines of a "yes" or "no" answer, rather than an extensive and comprehensive list of forums and groups for people to visit. If anything, we're interested to see how people get their support. Single source or multiple sources.

Result:

Answer to; Do you use any other support groups regarding your ASD?	Votes (34 votes total)
No, AC is the only way I look for support	21
Yes, I visit AC and other forums/online groups for support	8
Yes, I visit AC and I physically visit local support group(s) for support	2
Yes, I visit AC, other forums/online groups and I physically visit local support group(s)	3

September

Have you even been discriminated against because of your autism?

Perhaps my main reason to ask is because of the recent article about Emotional Intelligence as a screening tool for employment. (found [here](#)) It would technically qualify as discrimination (at least, many agree on that); however, I don't think the focus should be just on that and employment and the ability to get a job. Perhaps it should be more generic. Think; denied access to services, not being allowed to enter somewhere, things like that. Though obviously, the employment issue does count as well. Perhaps you have disclosed that you are on the spectrum and a potential employer "suddenly" changed his mind.. .

Discrimination however; by definition would qualify as (according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary)

- the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people

I'm quite convinced that many people won't hear an official statement as such that someone blatantly discriminates against them, and thus it is often "hidden" or open to interpretation. Though sometimes it's just a matter of connecting the dots as well.

But even if it's open to interpretation, it does count for something.

So, this months question is; have you been the victim of (or suspect you have been a victim of) discrimination because of your autism (and just autism; let's leave race, sex, age and a variety of other factors at bay).

Result:

Answer to: Have you even been discriminated against because of your autism?	Votes (15 votes total)
Yes: once	5
Yes: multiple times	3
No	7

October

What is your business on Aspiescentral?

While it might sound a bit rough coming at it like this, with this months poll I/we would like to see what the primary reason is why people are on Aspiescentral.

Keyword "primary". The longer people stay, their intentions might change, and some might even just hang out because they made friends here. But at some point we all decided, let's see if there are any forums on autism (and the related spectrum). And thus that makes up the primary reason.

Choices are pretty straight forward this month.

Result:

Answers to: What is your business on Aspiescentral?	Votes (41 votes total)
To hang out with fellow aspies/connect with others/be part of a community	29
To acquire information about the autism spectrum for either myself, family or friends	12

November

As the end of the year draws closer and I'm slowly putting an end the polls; at least a 2014 run, up to gather some data, put it in some fancy graphs, there are a few basic things to be inquired to give a better outline of people active on this forum.

So this months question isn't as much ASD related as it is Aspiescentral user-related.

Thus, I'd like to hear from the active users (basically, the participants of these polls);

What's your age?

Result:

Age groups	Votes (36 votes total)
0-13	0
13-19	5
20-29	9
30-39	7
40-49	7
50-59	5
60-69	3
70-79	0
80 and up	0

December; Poll 1

This month there will be 2 polls (other one following later), just for the sake of collecting more information.

As with last month's poll asking about everyone's age, this one is a fairly neutral one, but a relevant one nonetheless. As it seems autism seems more prevalent in males, yet some members have remarked that there's a large female group on this forum.

What's your gender?

Is it male or female? Or do you feel you're legally male but feel more female or vice versa? Or do you fail to identify with any gender specifically and are more along the androgynous spectrum, are gender neutral, intersex or might even be recognized as third gender (which in some areas it is)?

Result:

Answer to; What's your gender?	Votes (36 votes total)
Male	17
Female	12
Male but I identify with being female more	1
Female but I identify with being male more	3
Gender neutral/Androgynous/intersex/Third gender	3

December; poll 2

Divided into 2 separate polls for practical reasons; forumsoftware only supports 10 answers, this poll needed more than 10.

Part A

This month there will be 2 polls (one already up for almost 2 weeks), just for the sake of collecting more information.

As with last month's poll asking about everyone's age, this one is a fairly neutral one, but a relevant one nonetheless.

We'd like to map out where members are located in general. We're not doing cities, that would be pretty extensive, but dividing big countries or continents up in smaller bits works. Because of the limitation of only 10 options there will be an A and B part of this poll. our country not listed? Chances are it's found in the other half of the poll; [The Aspiescentral Monthly Poll; December 2014 \(part 2B\) | AspiesCentral.com](#)

Where do you live?

1. US West

States: WA, OR, ID, CA, NV, MT, WY, CO, NM, AZ, AK, HI, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, TX

2. US East

States: MN, IA, MO, AR, LA, WI, IL, MI, IN, KY, TN, MS, AL, GA, FL, NC, SC, WV, VA, OH, PA, NY, VT, NH, ME, MA, CT, RI, NJ, DE, MD, DC

3. Canada

4. Latin America & South America

5. Africa

6. Eastern Australia & New Zealand

States: ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC

7 Western Australia

Part B

This month there will be 2 polls (one already up for almost 2 weeks), just for the sake of collecting more information.

As with last month's poll asking about everyone's age, this one is a fairly neutral one, but a relevant one nonetheless.

We'd like to map out where members are located in general. We're not doing cities, that would be pretty extensive, but dividing big countries or continents up in smaller bits works. Because of the limitation of only 10 options there will be an A and B part of this poll. Your country not listed? Chances are it's found in the other half of the poll; [The Aspiescentral Monthly Poll; December 2014 \(part 2A\) | AspiesCentral.com](#)

Where do you live?

1. UK & Ireland

2. Western Europe & Scandinavia

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

3. Eastern Europe

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine

4. Middle-east

Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen

5. Asia

Akrotiri and Dhekelia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, British Indian Ocean Territory, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Christmas Island, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Keeling Islands, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam

Result

Answer to; Where do you live?	Votes (33 votes total)
US west	5
US east	6
Canada	1
Latin America & South America	1
Africa	0
Eastern Australia & New Zealand	3
Western Australia	0
UK & Ireland	8
Western Europe & Scandinavia	7
Eastern Europe	1
Middle-east	0
Asia	1

Note: Purposefully left Antarctica off, despite it being a location, for obvious reasons

Closing

I hope anyone who took the time to check it out found it remotely interesting to see how these numbers rack up among members, and perhaps, mostly the regulars, the online friends, we all got to know through this forum.

Discussion about the results will probably end up as a thread on it's own on the forum, yet I do have a few comments to put out there as I'm rounding up

- The male/female ratio seemed weird. From what I understand the amount of females diagnosed with ASD is significantly smaller than it is with males. Yet on this forum there seems to be a way higher prevalence based on gender on this.
- I didn't expect the UK & Ireland to score highest on the geographic location poll. And comparatively, even if I would've put the US together as a whole, it would barely outdo the Brits. That said; one could even put Europe as a whole together. Didn't expect so many European people on Aspiescentral in general either actually, especially since the forums main language is English.
- On the topic of knowing people on the spectrum; the section where someone would answer not to be on the spectrum but would know people is strangely quiet. With plenty of parents asking for advice I would expect at least someone to have a peek at these polls and answer. On the other hand; these people are most likely not visiting to play around, at least less than the regulars.
- I am quite surprised about the lack of comorbid disorders as answered at the poll about diagnosis. Many said they only had ASD and nothing else; comorbid disorders seem to be quite common or so I've heard (ADD/ADHD being a main one). But ASD & comorbid was trailblazing it.
- I'm also surprised about employment. Statistics often show how 80% on the spectrum does not have a job or other meaningful employment. The poll shows otherwise. Though, unemployment would win the poll if you take all notions of unemployment together; Volunteering and no job, no job and government support and no job and no substantial government support of any kind. It would become 12 votes (~44%) versus all kind of employment either fulltime, parttime even with added education while holding a job; 10 votes (~37%). But still nowhere near the 80% reports often make us believe.