

# Mask use by Adults with Asthma in the Era of COVID-19

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## Purpose

- Evidence that wearing masks greatly reduces the chance of becoming infected with COVID-19 is strongly supported.
- This cross-sectional study sought to determine:
  - To what extent adults with asthma wear masks
  - Types of masks worn
  - Discomfort/problems encountered when wearing a mask
  - Participant recommendations regarding mask wearing

## Methods

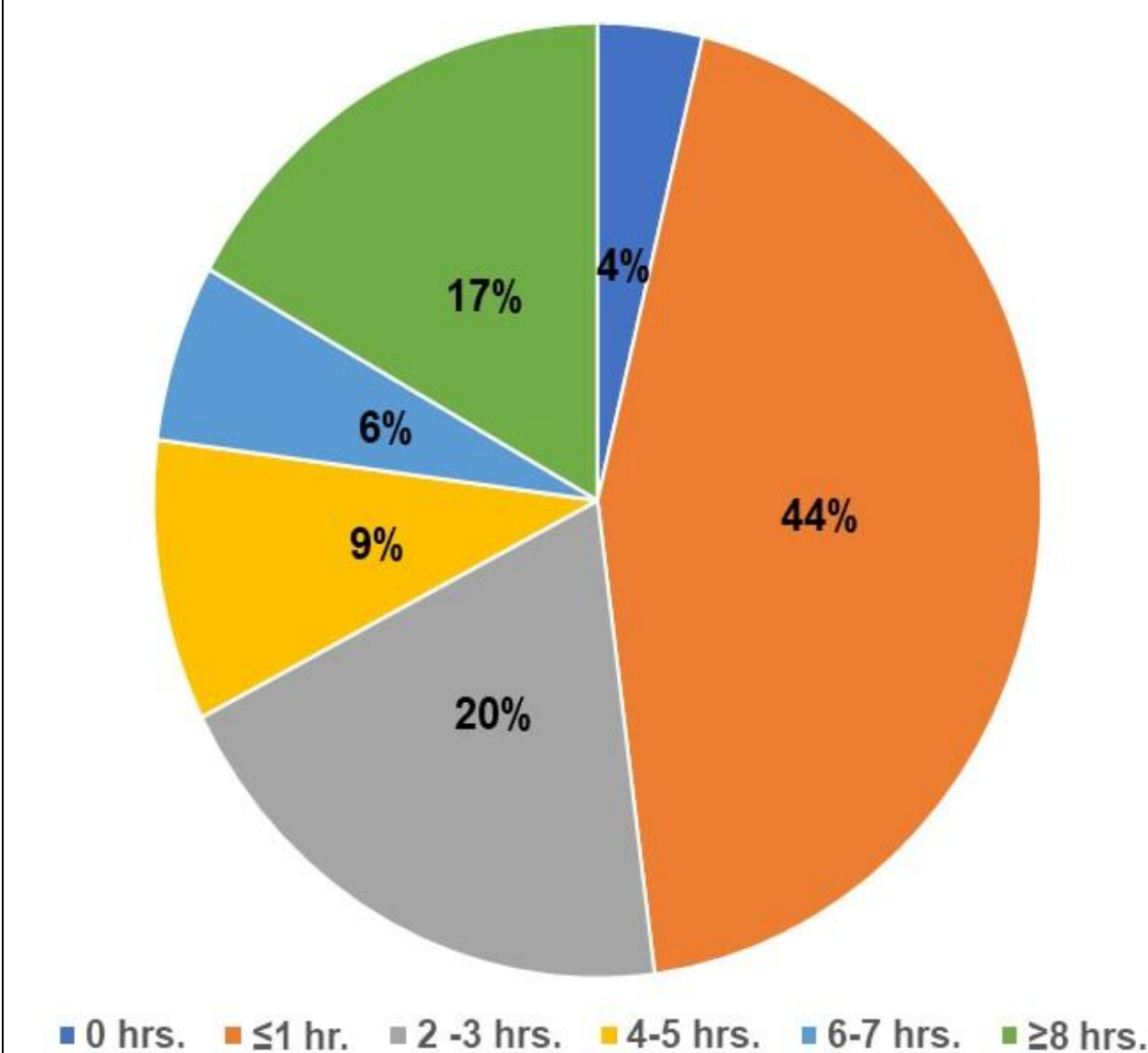
- Online REDCap survey
- Participants: Adults with asthma who previously completed a survey & indicated willingness to participate in additional studies
- Data collected 11/2020- 2/2021
- Face Mask Use in Adults with Asthma survey included:
  - Hours/day mask worn
  - Type of mask worn
  - Experiences wearing a mask
  - Recommendations

## Participants (N=501)

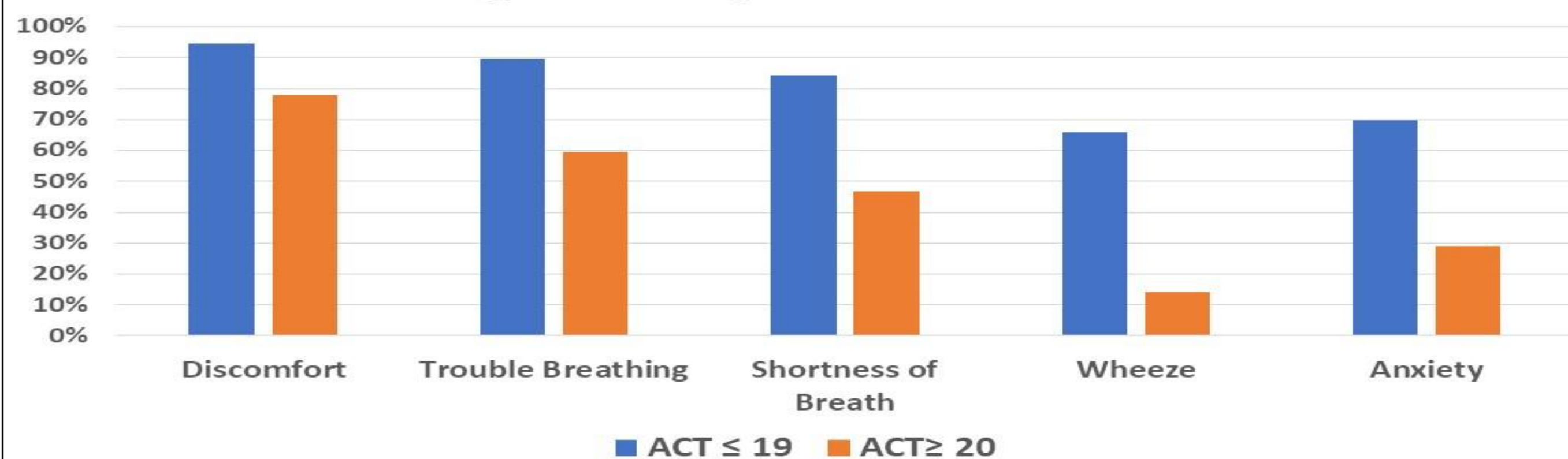
- Female: 84.5%
- White: 89%
- College graduate: 74%
- History of Covid-19 infection: 11.6%
- Wear mask in public: 98.4%
- Asthma Control Test:
  - ≥ 20: 66.5%
  - ≤ 19: 33.5%
- Types of mask usually worn
  - ✓ Cloth with ≥2 layers: 65.5%
  - ✓ Surgical/procedural: 43.9%
  - ✓ Cloth with 1 layer: 23.4%
  - ✓ N95 type: 12.6%
  - ✓ Bandana/neck fleece/gaiter: 3.4%

## Results

Length of time mask worn in public on typical day



Problems experienced by adults with asthma when wearing a mask by asthma control status



## Participant Recommendations

- ❖ “Wear a mask!”
- ❖ “Take breaks if possible to be able to remove the mask in a safe area, to take some deep breaths, and clear the lungs and get fresher air”
- ❖ “Do your best to limit the time spent on those situations as much as you can.”
- ❖ “Find one that fits well without being constricting. It may take experimentation to find the right one.”
- ❖ “Bring your inhaler with you in case you are struggling to catch your breath.
- ❖ “Educate yourself on the science behind mask effectiveness - it is highly motivating!”

## Conclusions

- Adults with uncontrolled asthma reported having more discomfort and asthma-like symptoms when wearing a mask.
- Efforts are needed to assure the knowledge and means to secure the most effective masks are available to adults with asthma.
- Employers should be aware of the potential negative impact of wearing a mask for several hours and provide flexible schedules to allow for more breaks