

German Primary Care in Times of COVID-19 – Results of the German Part of the international PRICOV-19 study

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“The role of the GPs is not strong enough”

The health policies in Germany were perceived to be even more burdensome on the health system and more detrimental to the provision of high quality primary health care than the COVID-19 virus itself. A lack of attention to the German GPs with a simultaneously ever increasing responsibility can be seen: due to health policy guidelines, they cannot live out their role in the sense of their GP profession. But precisely the perception and self-image of protecting the common good of society, which this profession stands for, shows that GPs are not just doing “a” job, but act in the spirit of their profession.

Introduction

The international study PRICOV-19 assesses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organisation and quality of Primary Health Care (PHC). In Germany, the health care system was confronted with a myriad of health policy measures to control the pandemic.

Aim and research question

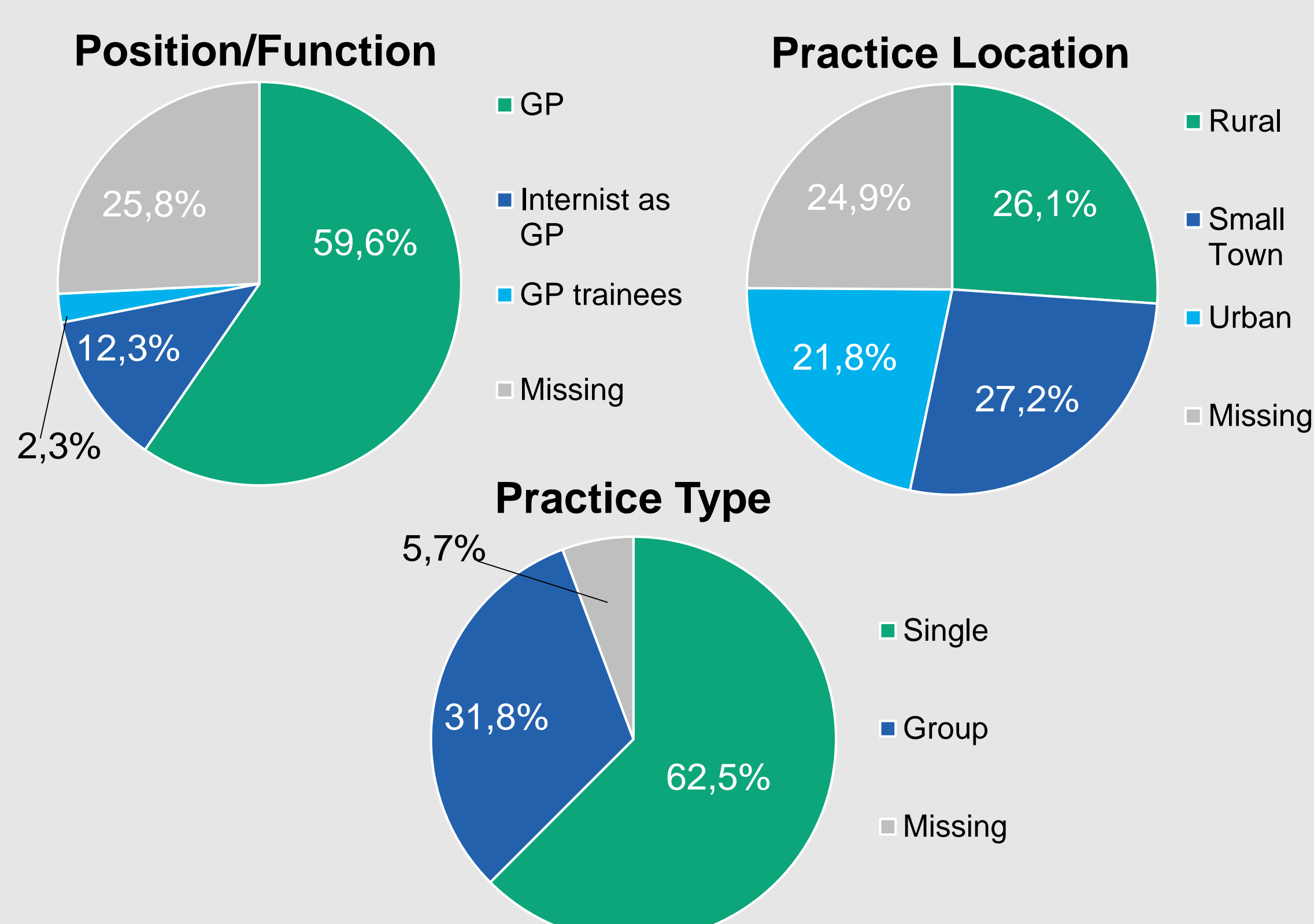
- Exploration of the German GPs’ perception of health policy measures and changes in PHC
- Analysis of the perception’s influence on the medical profession

How have the pandemic measures affected the perception and role of German GPs?

Methods

Data collection throughout Germany in February 2021 using a quantitative online questionnaire. GPs recruited through a snowball procedure (n=349 practices). Questionnaire analysed through descriptive quantitative and qualitative analysis; frequent utilisation of the open text field.

Characteristics



Results

I. Qualitative content analysis of the open text field

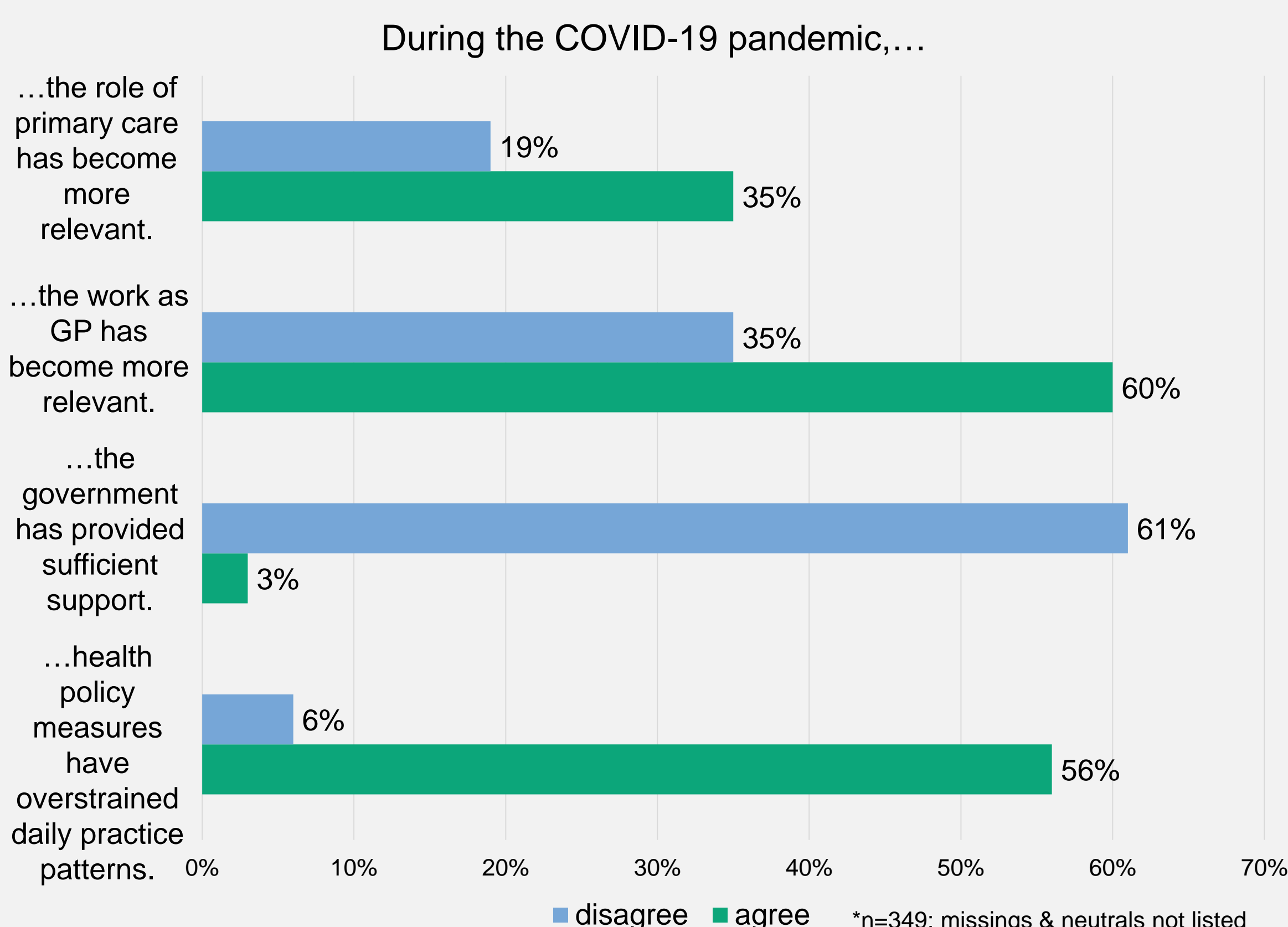
I. Policies and Health Care System

- “As GPs, we experience a discrepancy between statements, figures, political action and experience on the front line.”
- “Political coordination is an absolute disaster.”
- “The flood of weekly, even daily information and the nonsense spread in the press regarding Covid weighs more on my mind than the treatment and handling of patients.”

II. Role and Self-Perception

- “Dealing with the pandemic is part of the job [...] I am doing my part in coping with the pandemic and, if possible, giving our patients support and peace of mind.”
- “The role of GPs is not strong enough.”
- “I see the pandemic as a great danger and challenge. But I also see it as a fundamental medical task to face this challenge.”

II. Preliminary quantitative analysis*



Main topics discussed:

- The way GPs are not sufficiently acknowledged for their contribution to the ensuring of high quality care during the crisis
- The dissatisfaction with political communication and inadequate cooperation within the German health care system

