

National survey of long-term recovery from chemotherapy-induced hair loss in breast cancer patients

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Comprehensive Support Project

Background

- Altered appearance due to chemotherapy is a very distressing adverse event and may not recover for a long time after chemotherapy.
- To clarify the current status of appearance changes and support systems for it, we conducted a national questionnaire survey of breast cancer patients who had undergone chemotherapy in Japan.
- Here we report the long-term recovery of scalp hair loss during and after chemotherapy.

Patients and methods

- Questionnaire between April and October 2013.

Patients' appearance issues related to chemotherapy (scalp hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, nails, skin)
 Current status of support systems for their appearance
 Effect of chemotherapy regimens
 endocrine therapy
 duration after chemotherapy

- Physicians at each hospital asked their patients to fill out the questionnaire and mail it directly to the data center.
- Eligibility
 - breast cancer without any recurrence
 - underwent adjuvant or neoadjuvant chemotherapy containing anthracycline+cyclophosphamide (AC), triweekly docetaxel (DOC), A+C+weekly paclitaxel (ACP), or ACD
 - Less than 5 years after the last chemotherapy treatment
- Scalp hair status was analyzed in a cross-sectional manner according to the chemotherapy regimen and the interval after chemotherapy.

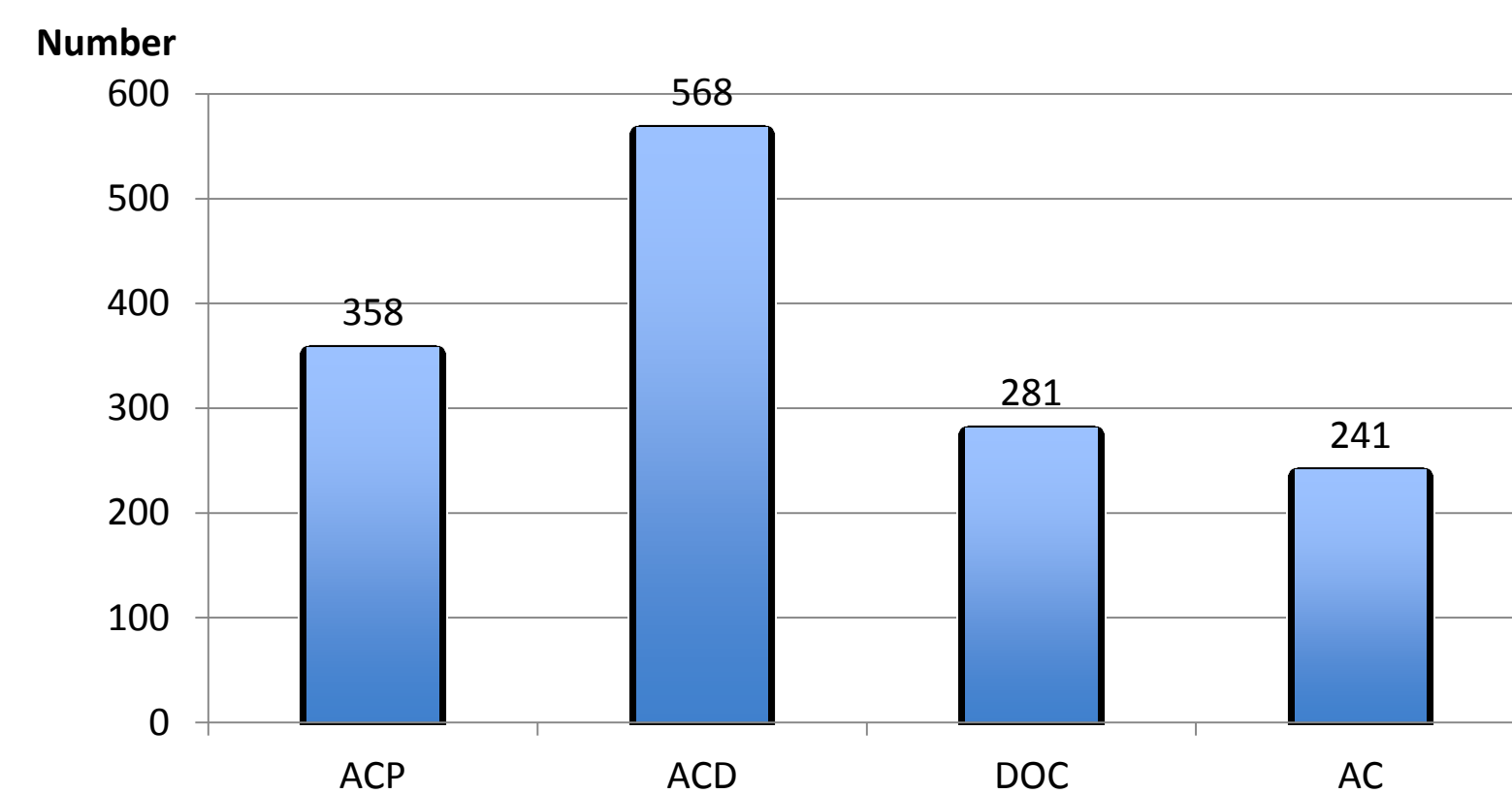
Results

1511 patients at 47 hospitals (response rate 82%; 1511/1853)

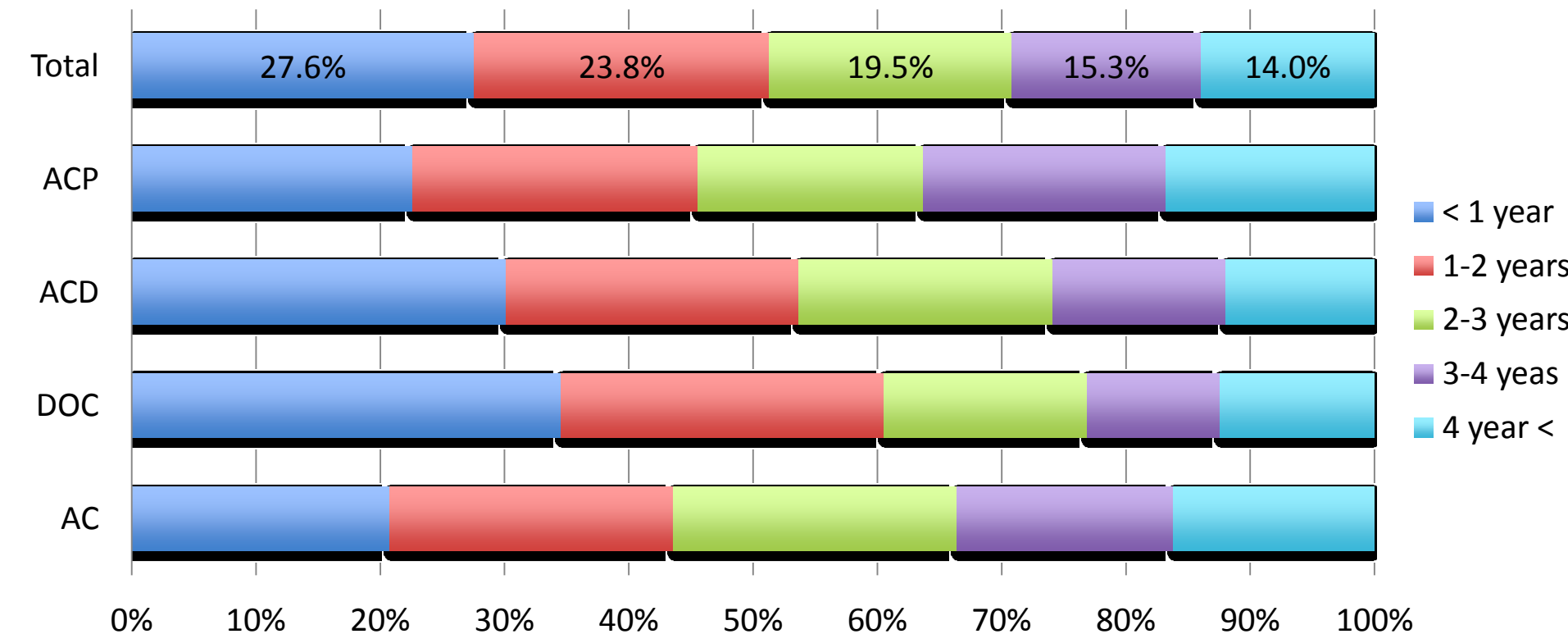
Exclusion
 33 patients mainly because >5 years had passed after
 30 patients
 P (17), P+D (1), or AC+P+D (12)

1448 questionnaires were finally analyzed

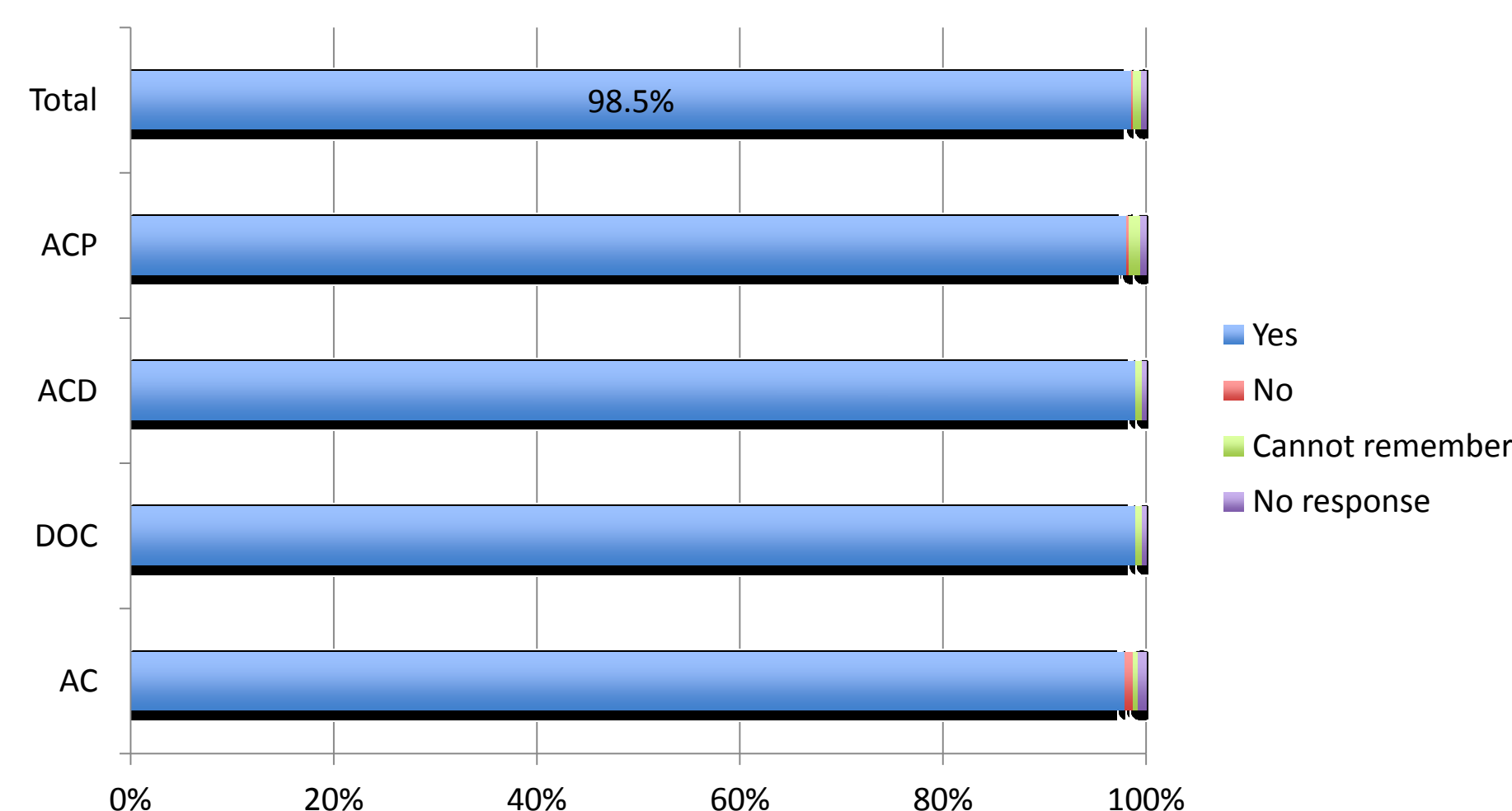
Number of patients by chemotherapy regimen



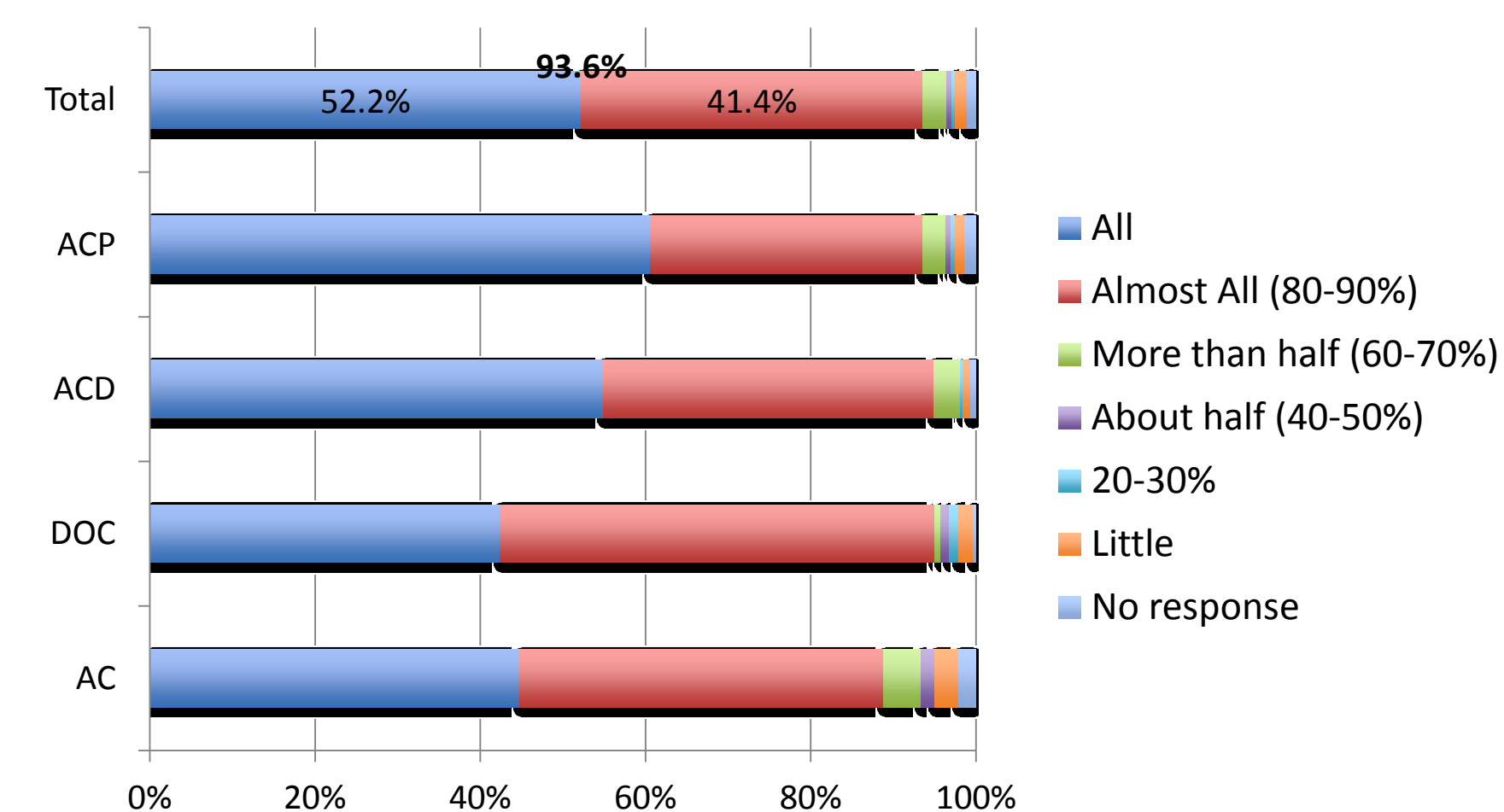
Distribution of patients according to the time after the last chemotherapy treatment



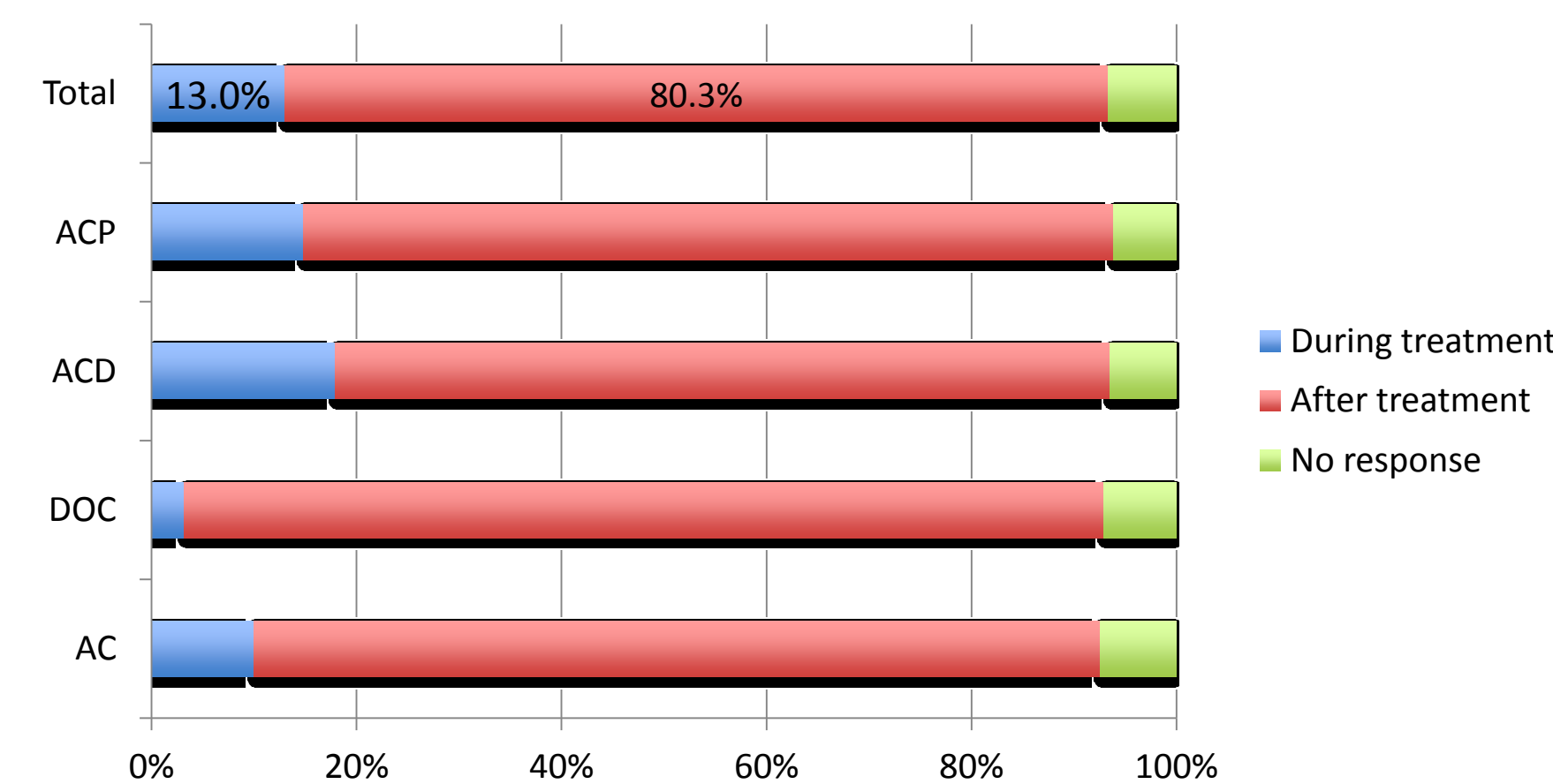
Incidence of scalp hair loss during chemotherapy



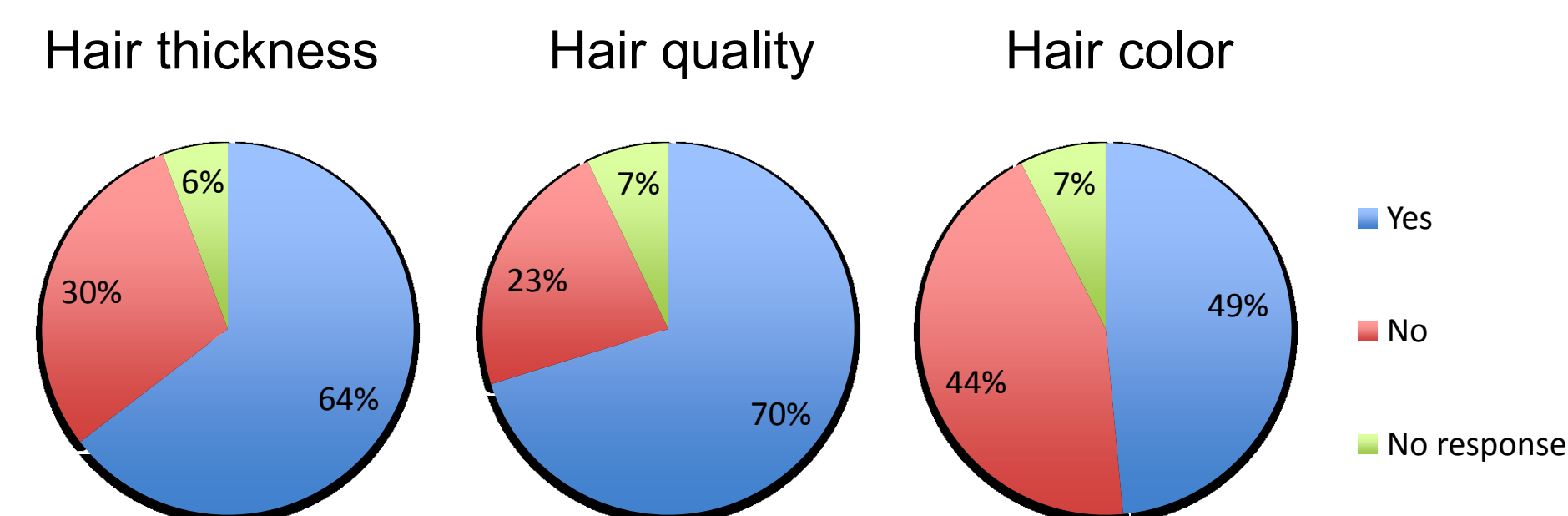
Extent of hair loss during chemotherapy



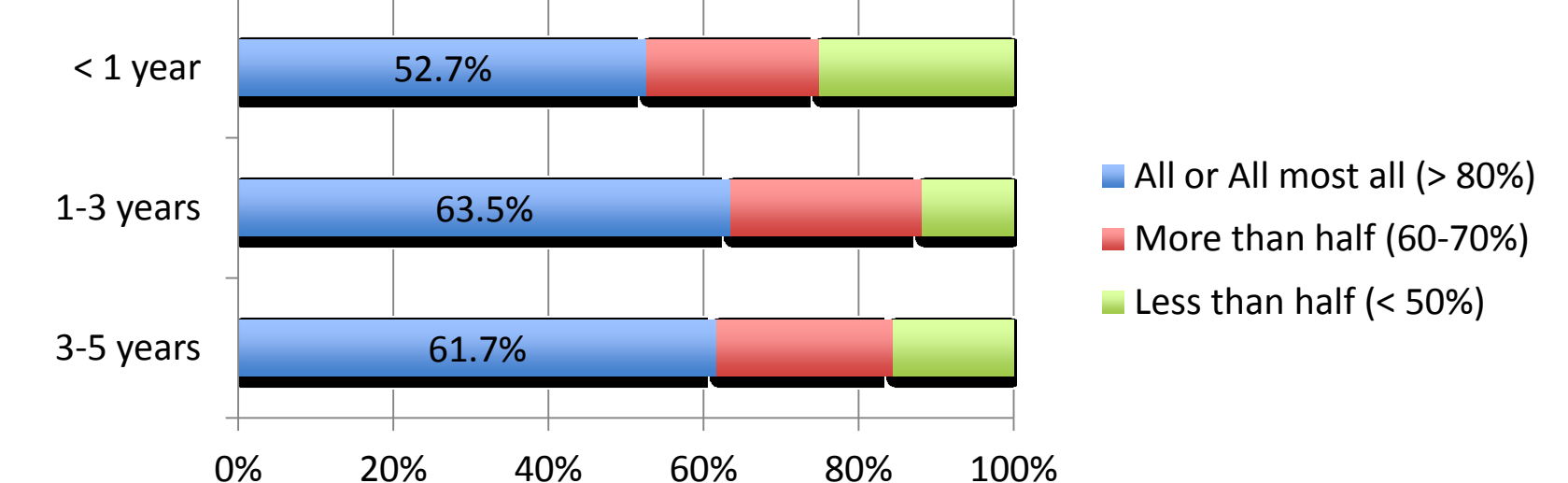
Timing of beginning of hair growth



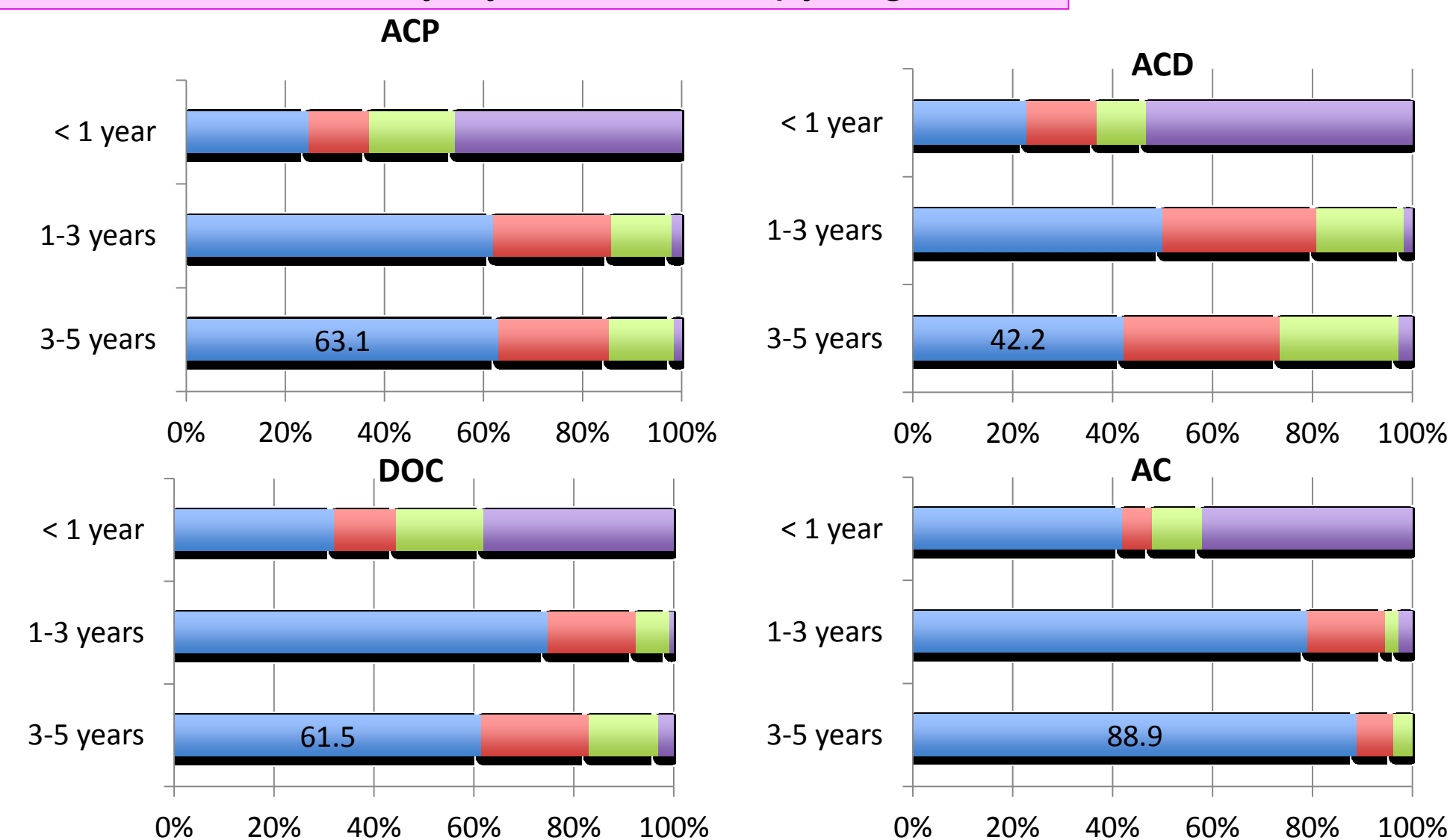
Hair change within 6 months of the start of hair growth



Hair volume recovery (excluding unanswered or not applicable)



Hair volume recovery by chemotherapy regimens



After 3 years, patients who had received ACP, DOC, and ACD had significantly less recovery of volume than patients who had received AC (P<0.001 for all).

Conclusions

Almost all breast cancer patients experienced severe hair loss during standard chemotherapy, but a recovery trend was noted after chemotherapy. However, hair growth did not recover to various degrees in a significant number of patients even at 3–5 years after chemotherapy, especially in those who had received taxane-containing regimens. We should consider the need for support of patients who experience chemotherapy-induced hair loss.

Acknowledgement

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