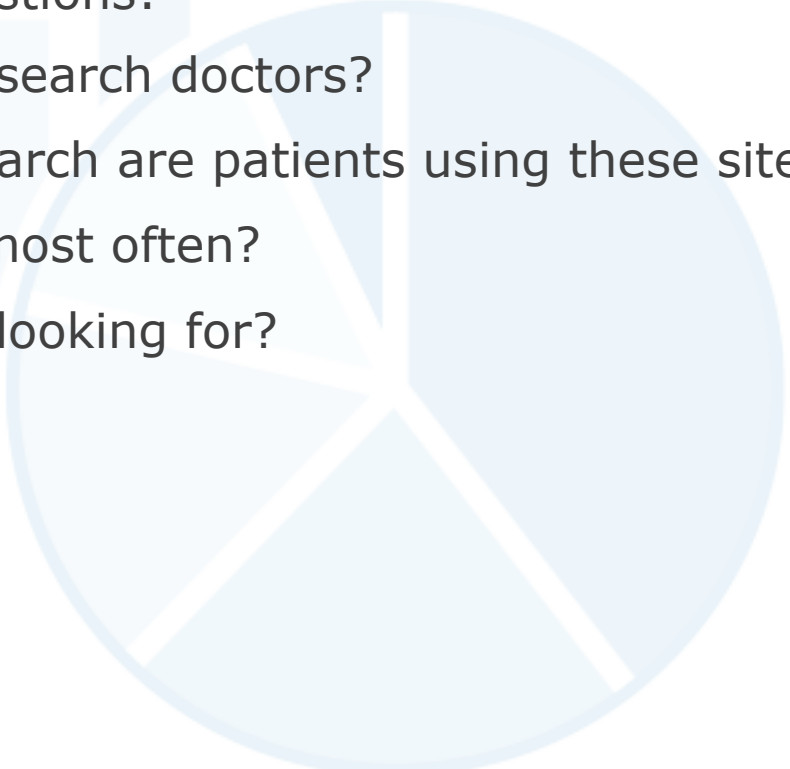# How Patients Use Online Reviews IndustryView Report

Trends from the healthcare industry

Abstract

In October and November 2013, we surveyed a total of 4,515 patients in the U.S. to reveal trends in the use of online physician review websites. We analyzed the data to answer the following questions:

- Who is using review sites to research doctors?

- During what point in their research are patients using these sites?

- What sites are patients using most often?

- What information are patients looking for?

Percentage of Patients Using Online Physician Reviews

25%

75%
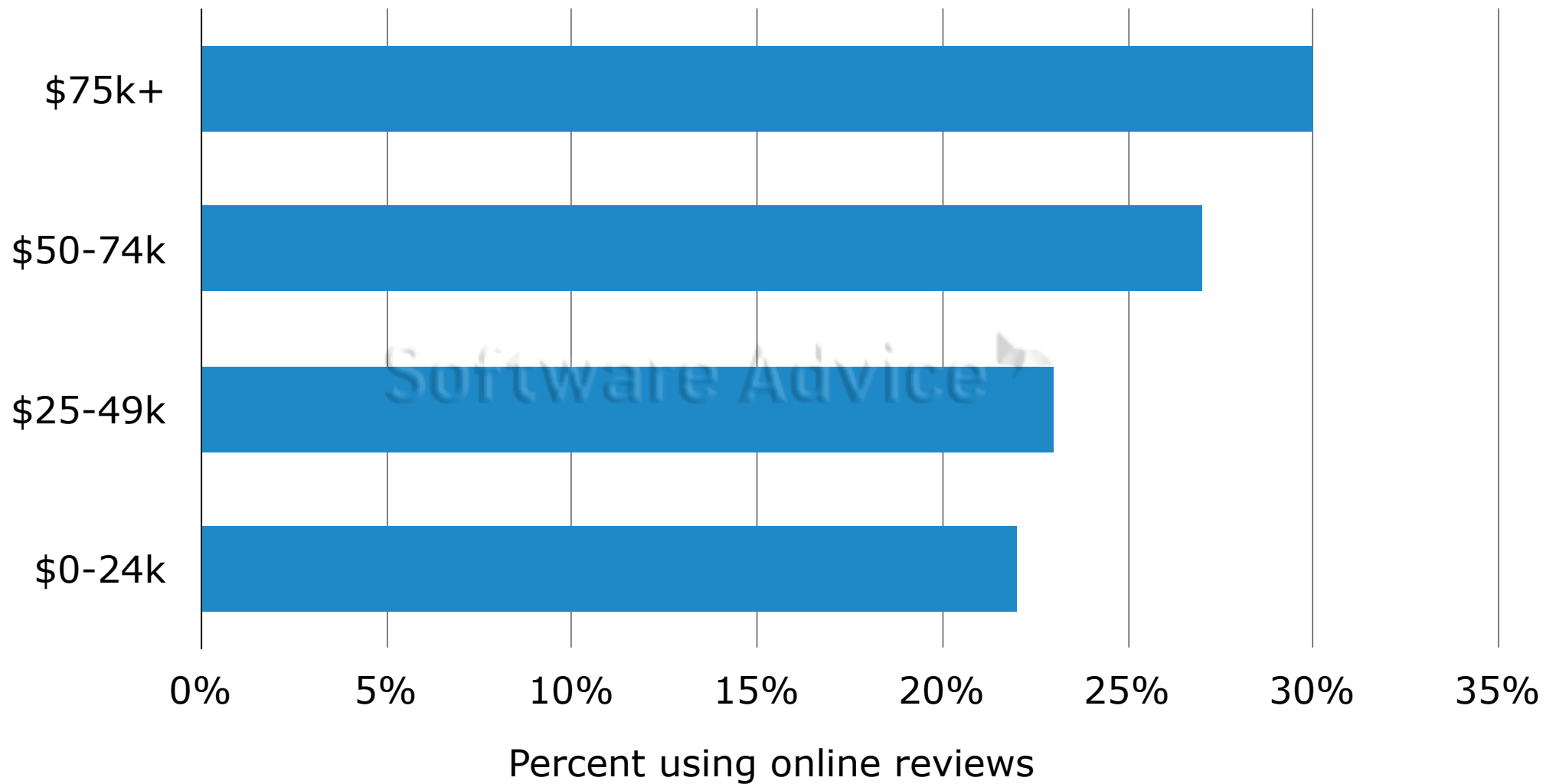
- Use online reviews
- Don't use online reviews
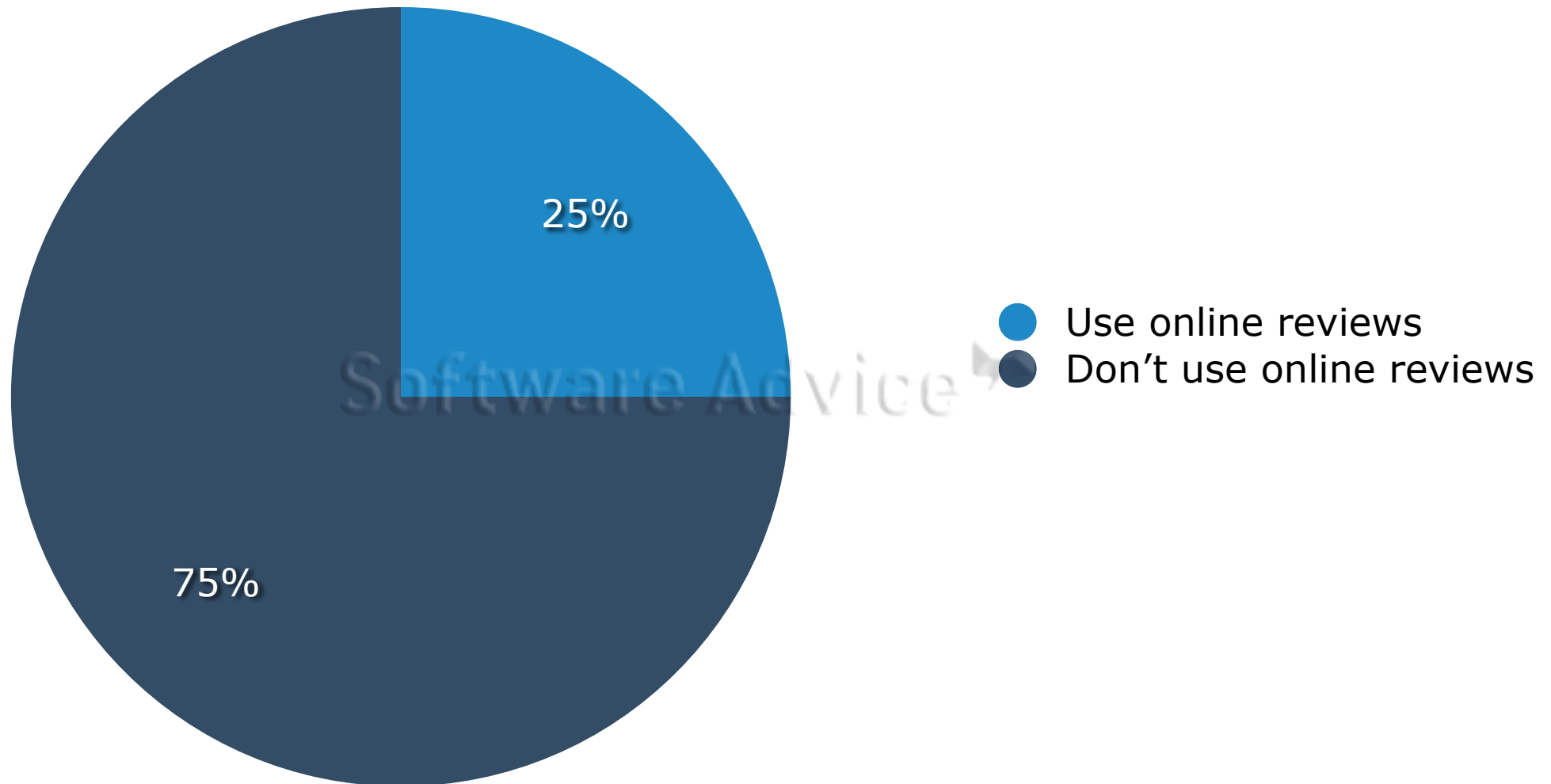
Though this figure lags behind the percentage of consumers using review sites for retail decisions, we found a significant percent of patients using online reviews.
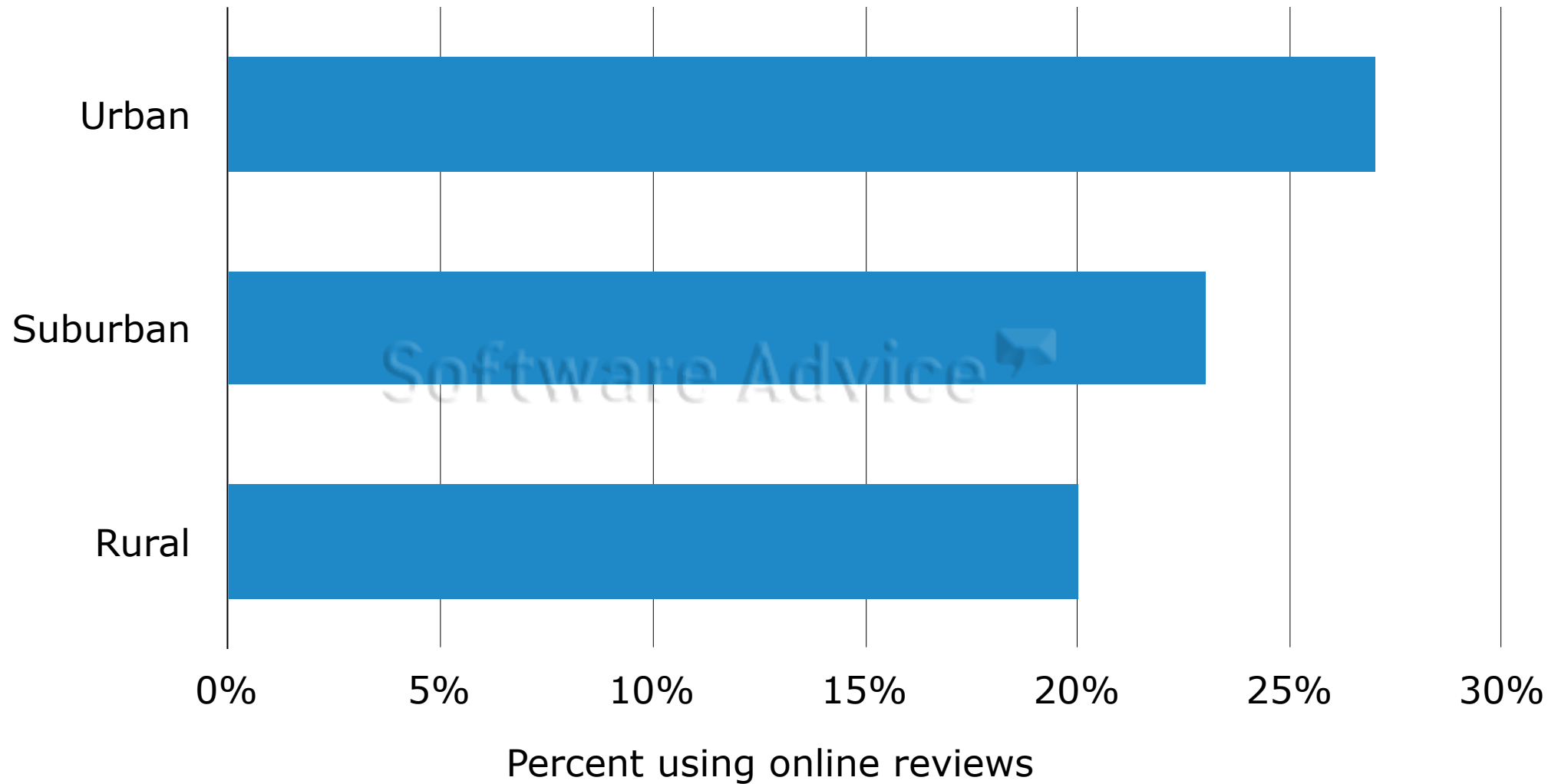
Patients Using Online Reviews by Age
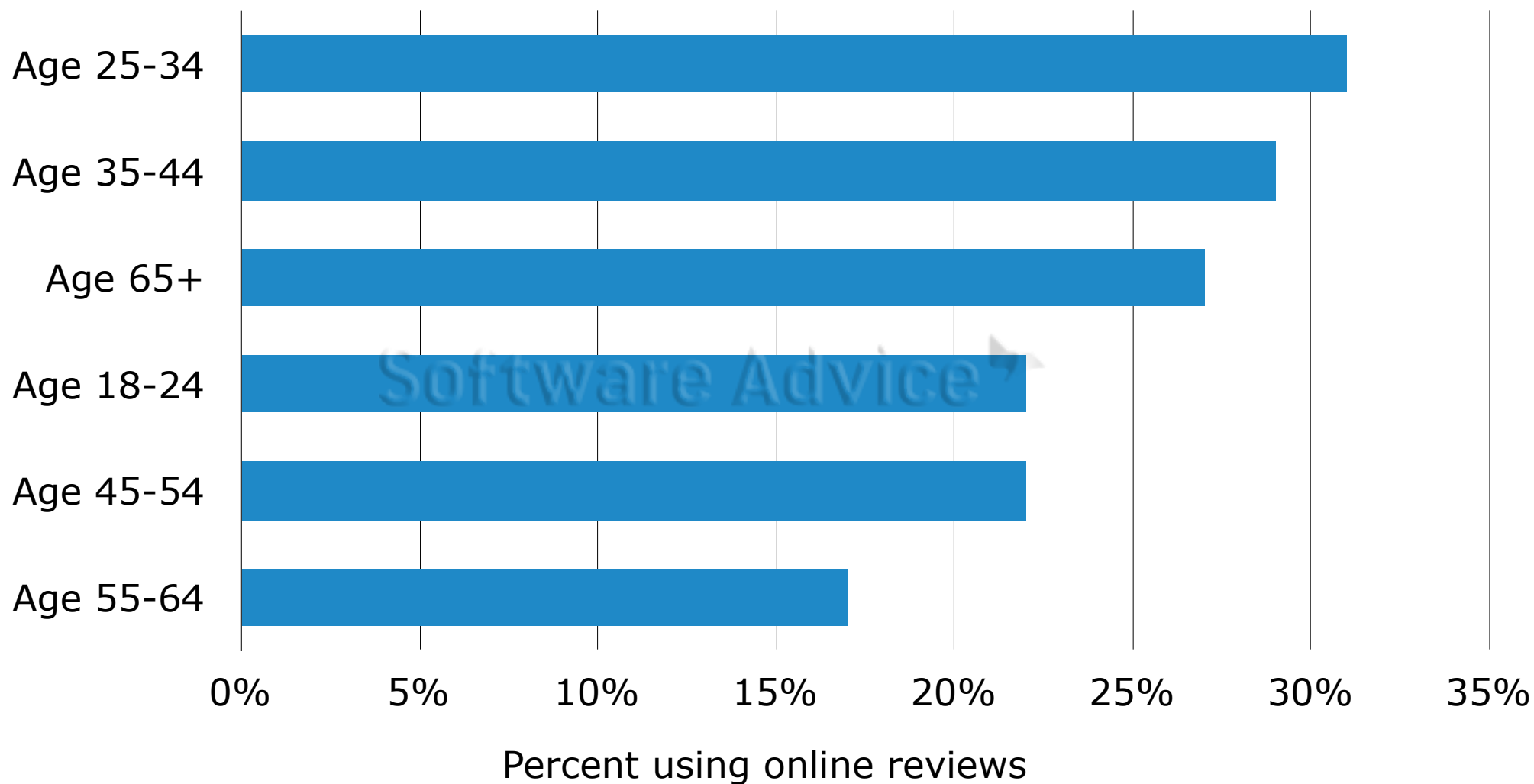
Although the 65+ age group has unexpectedly high utilization, overall we see use of online reviews trending downward with age.

# Patients Using Online Reviews by Income

As we expected, the likelihood of patients to use online reviews to research doctors increased steadily with their income.

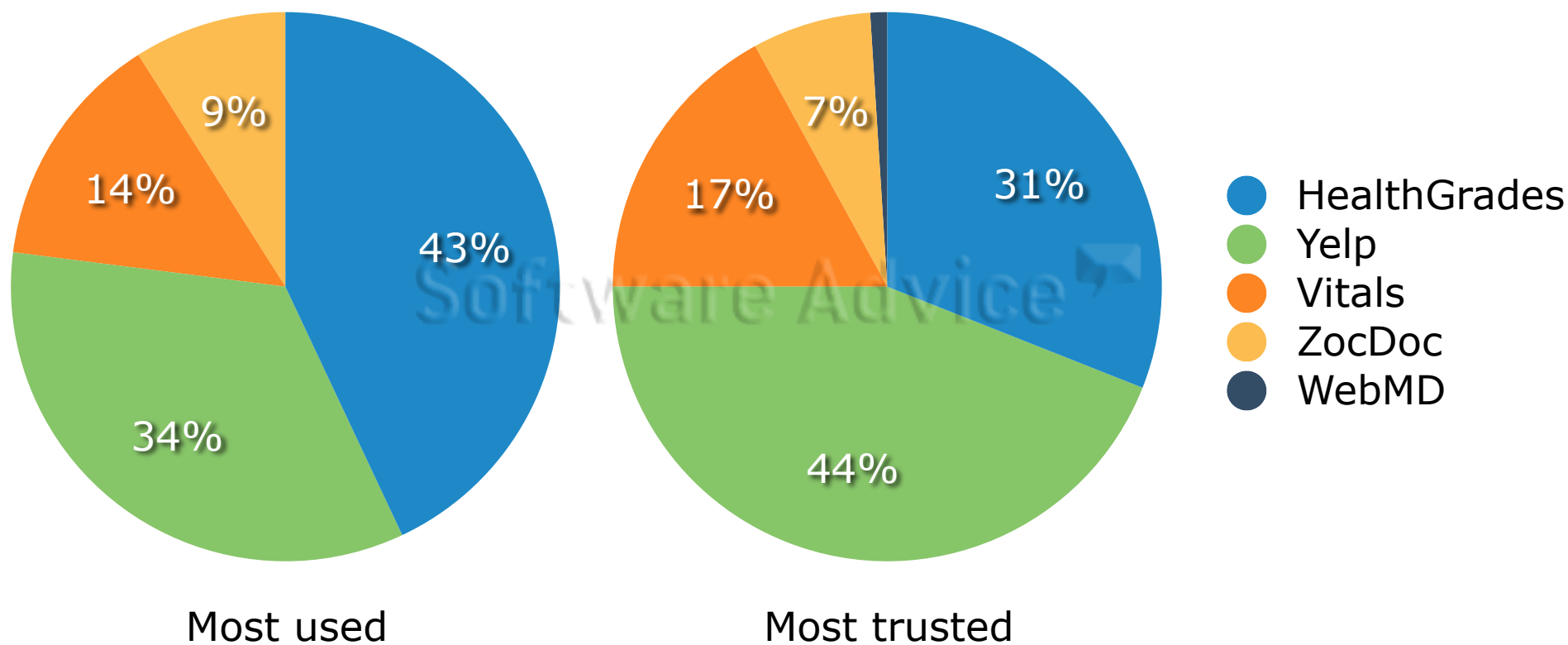# Patients Using Online Reviews by Urbanicity

Percent using online reviews

We found that patients in urban areas predictably use online reviews with greater frequency than those in suburban or rural areas.

Patients Using Online Reviews by Gender
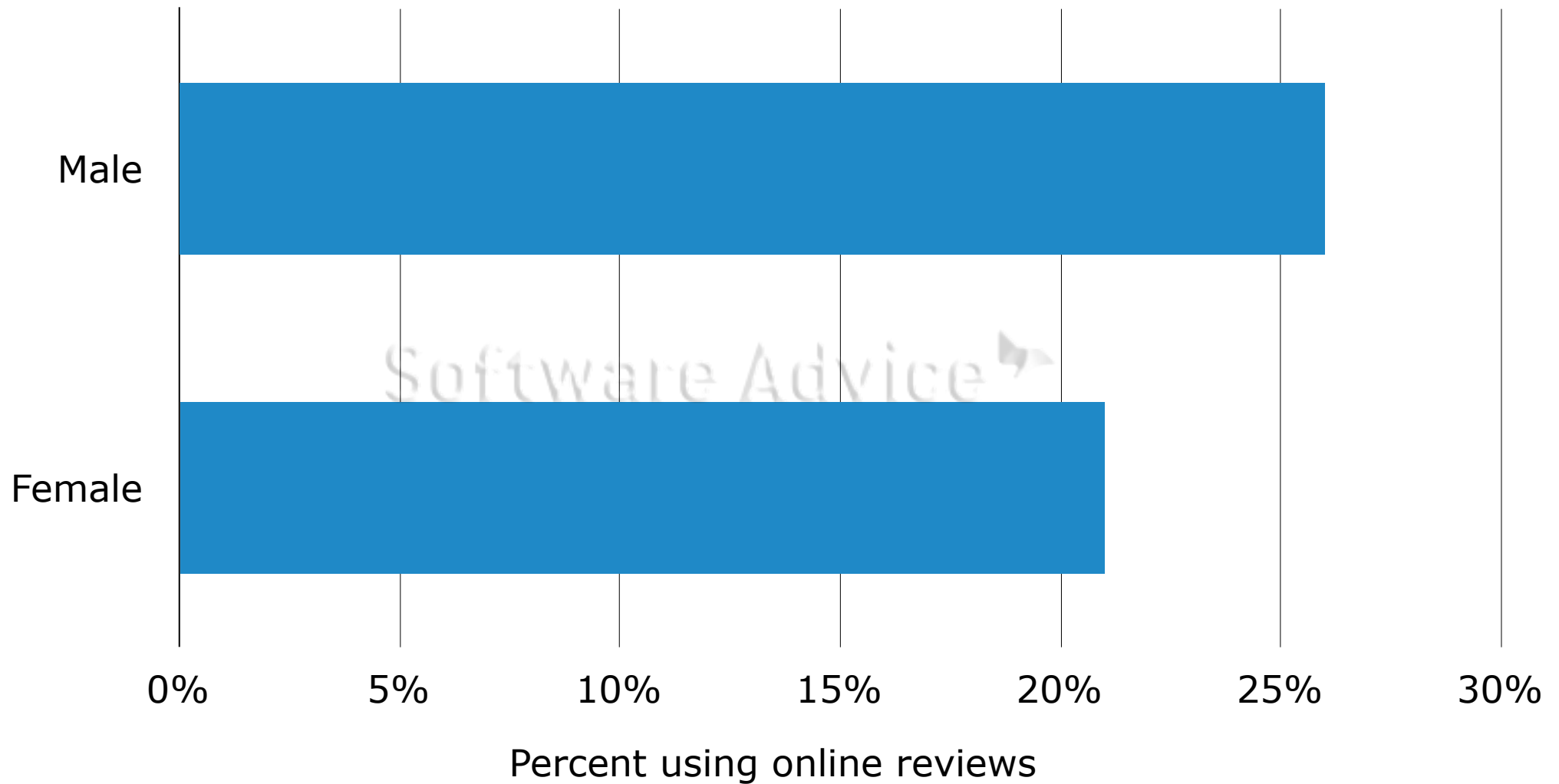
Perhaps most surprisingly, we found that males were one quarter more likely to use online review sites than females.

Most Used and Most Trusted Review Sites

Most used

Most trusted

Legend: HealthGrades, Yelp, Vitals, ZocDoc, WebMD

Most used: HealthGrades 43%, Yelp 34%, Vitals 14%, ZocDoc 9%

Most trusted: HealthGrades 31%, Yelp 44%, Vitals 17%, ZocDoc 7%, WebMD

While a plurality of patients say they use Healthgrades most often, more patients indicated Yelp was the most trustworthy source of online physician reviews.

When Patients Use Online Reviews in Their Research
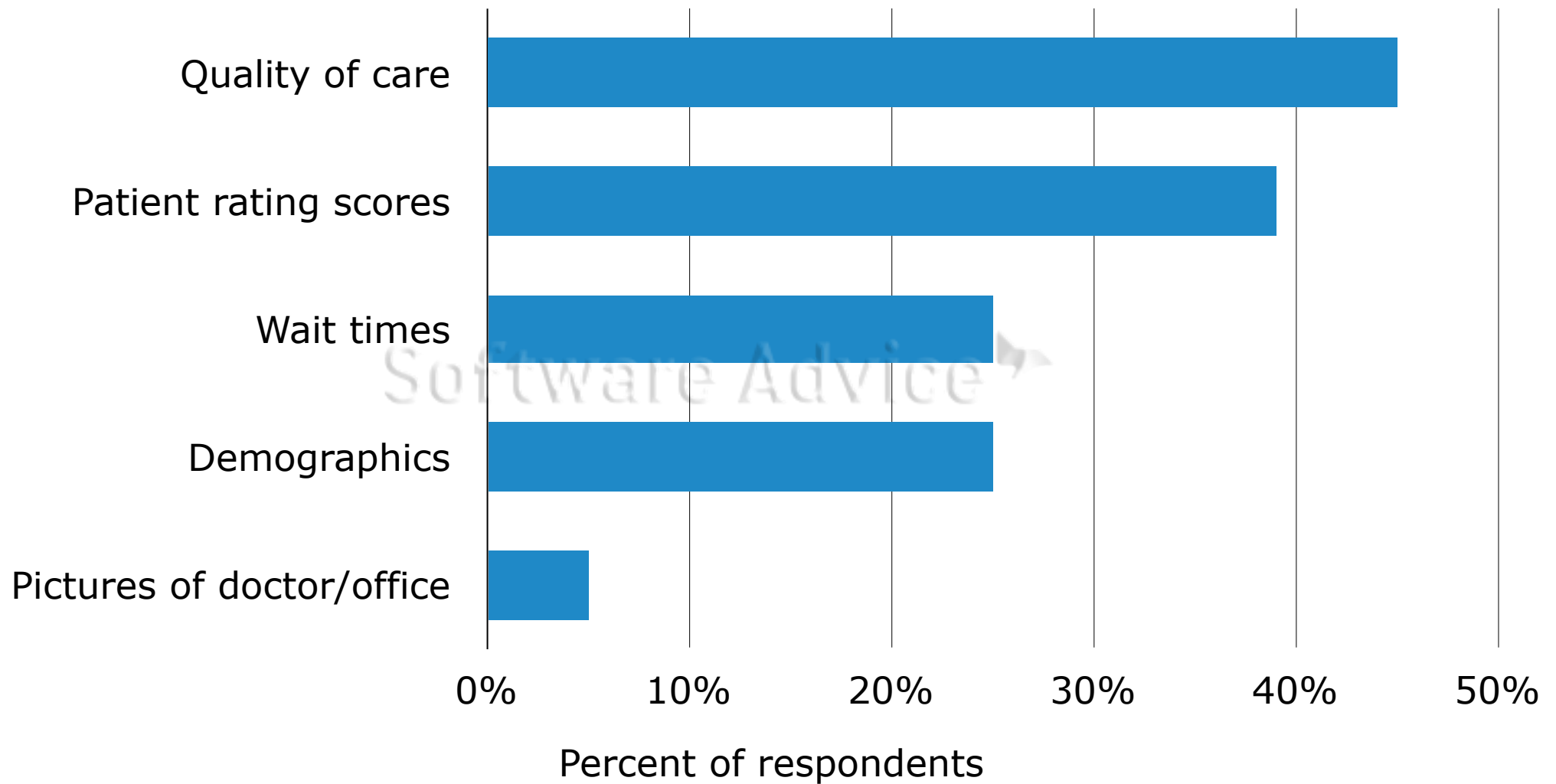

Legend:
- First step to find new doctor — 62%
- Validate tentative selection — 19%
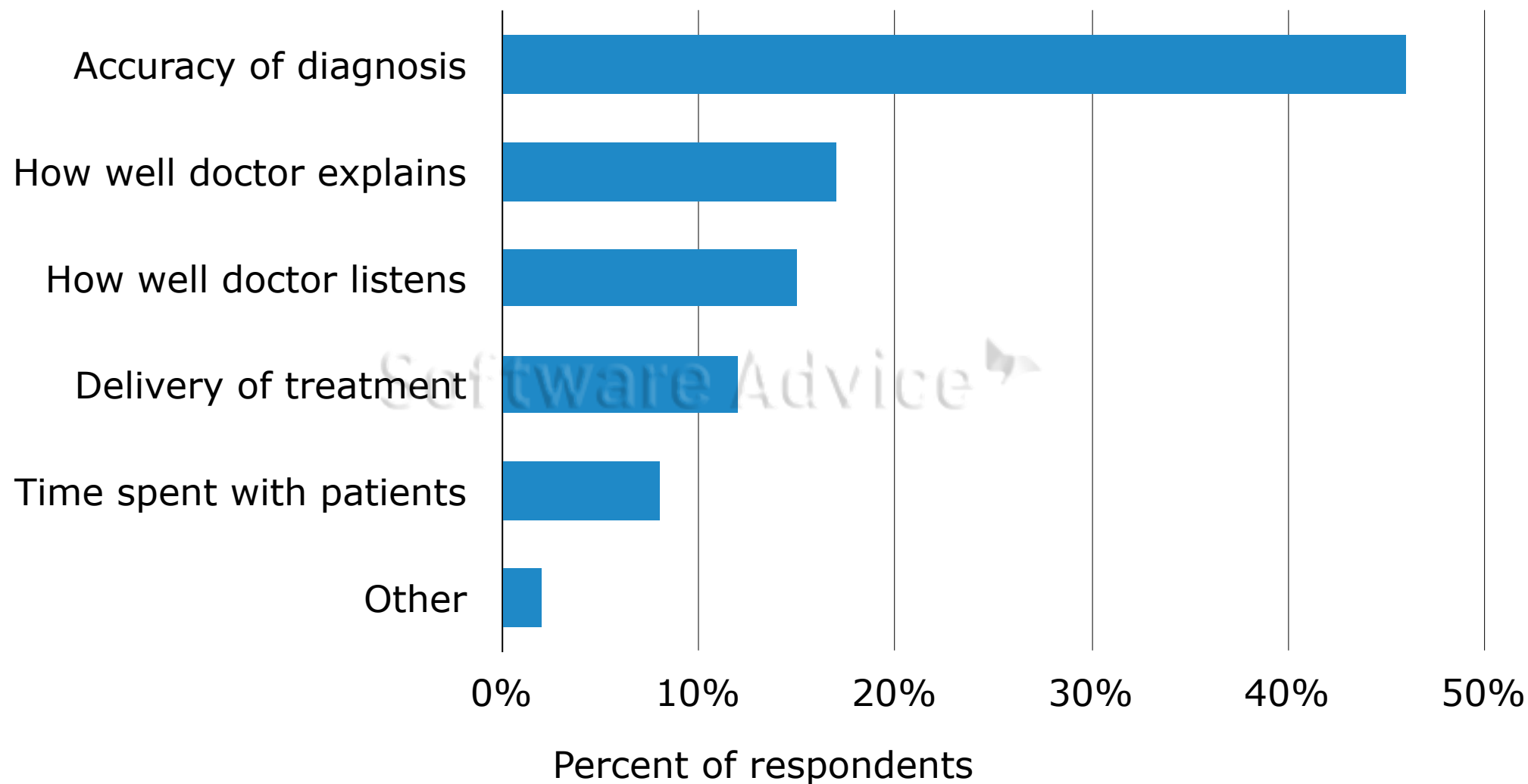- Evaluate existing doctor — 19%
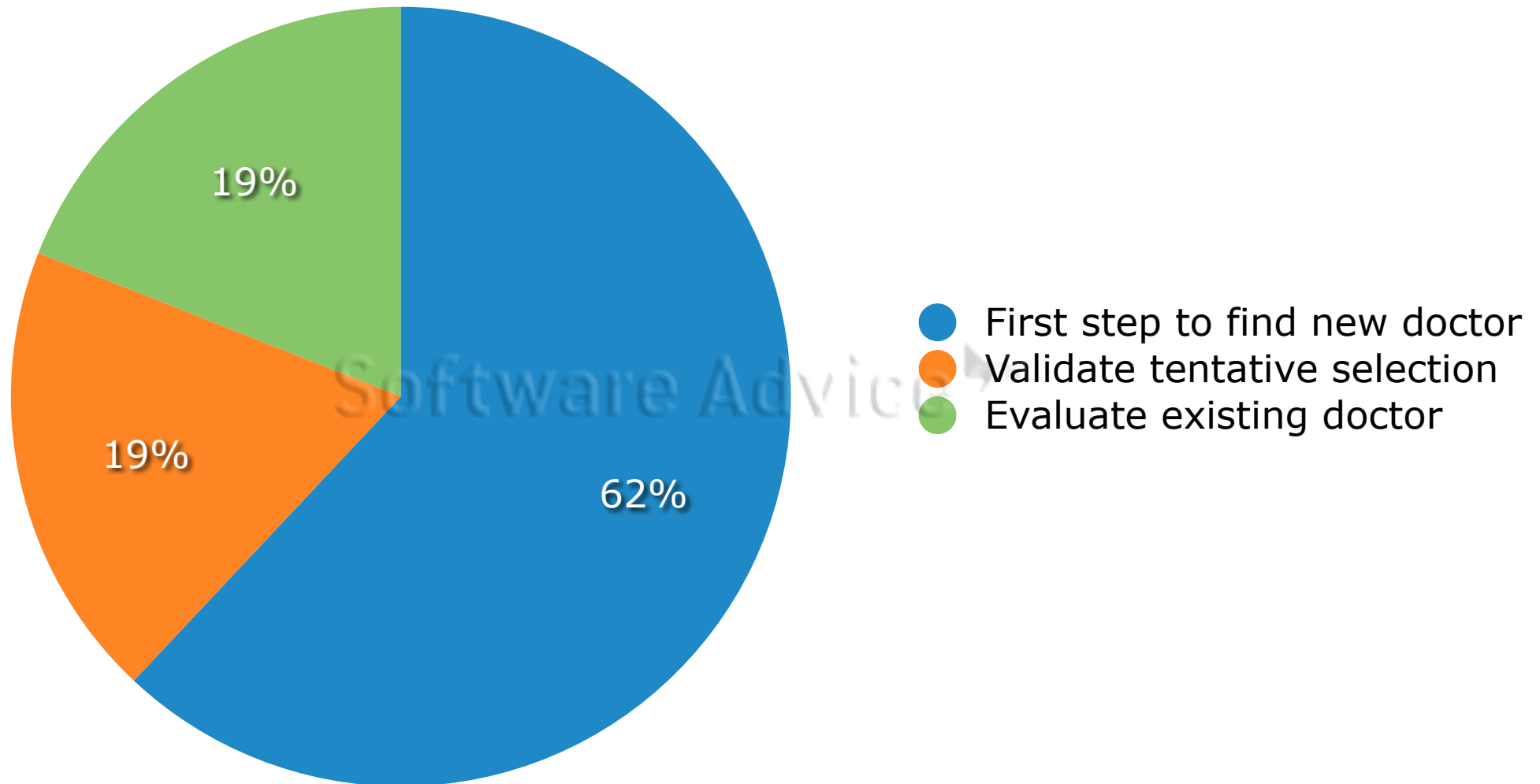
The overwhelming majority of patients using online reviews do so as a first step when looking for a new doctor.

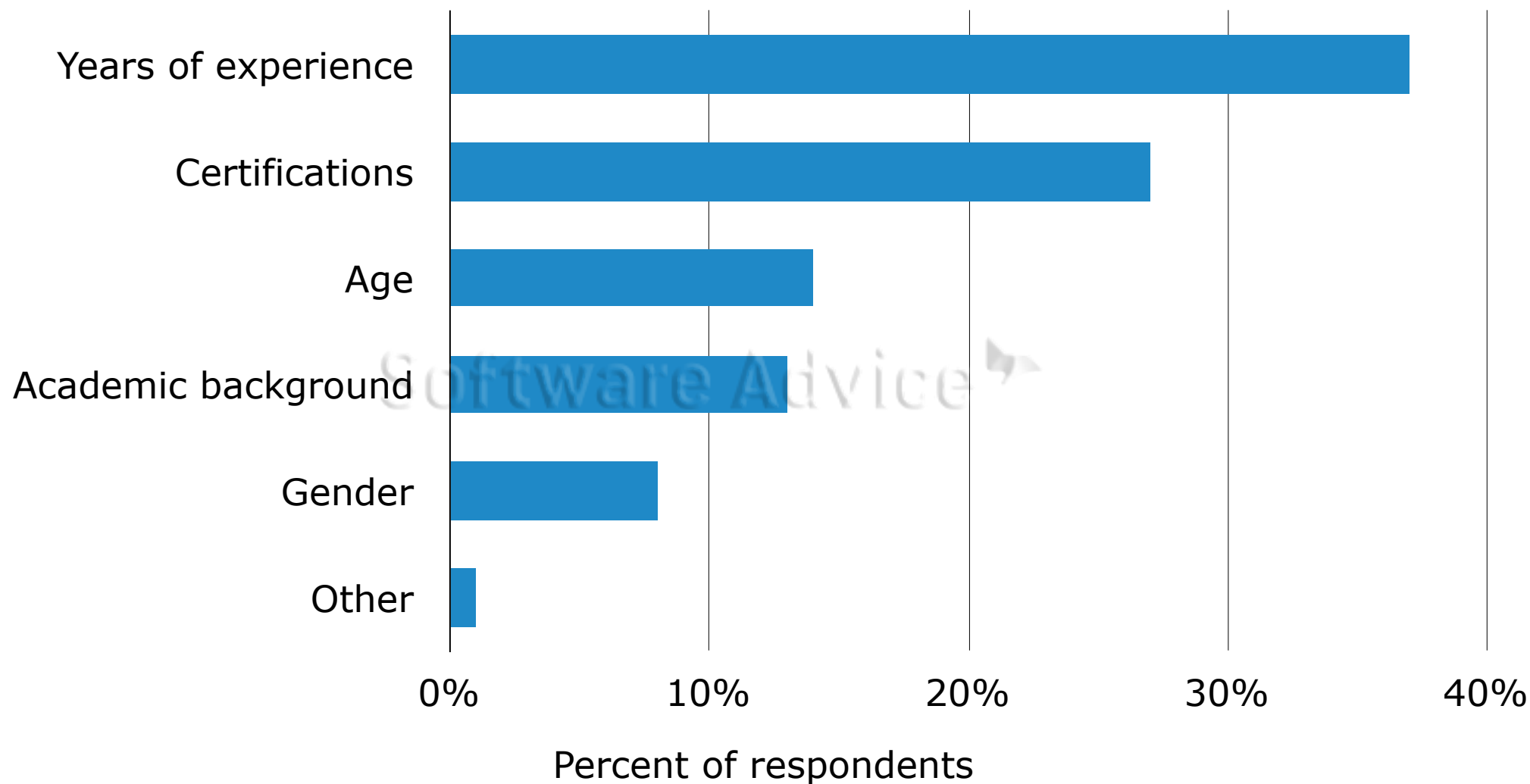# Types of Information Sought by Patients

We asked patients to rank the top 3 types of information they look for on review sites. Quality of care, overall ratings, and wait times were most important.

Most Important Information about Quality of Care

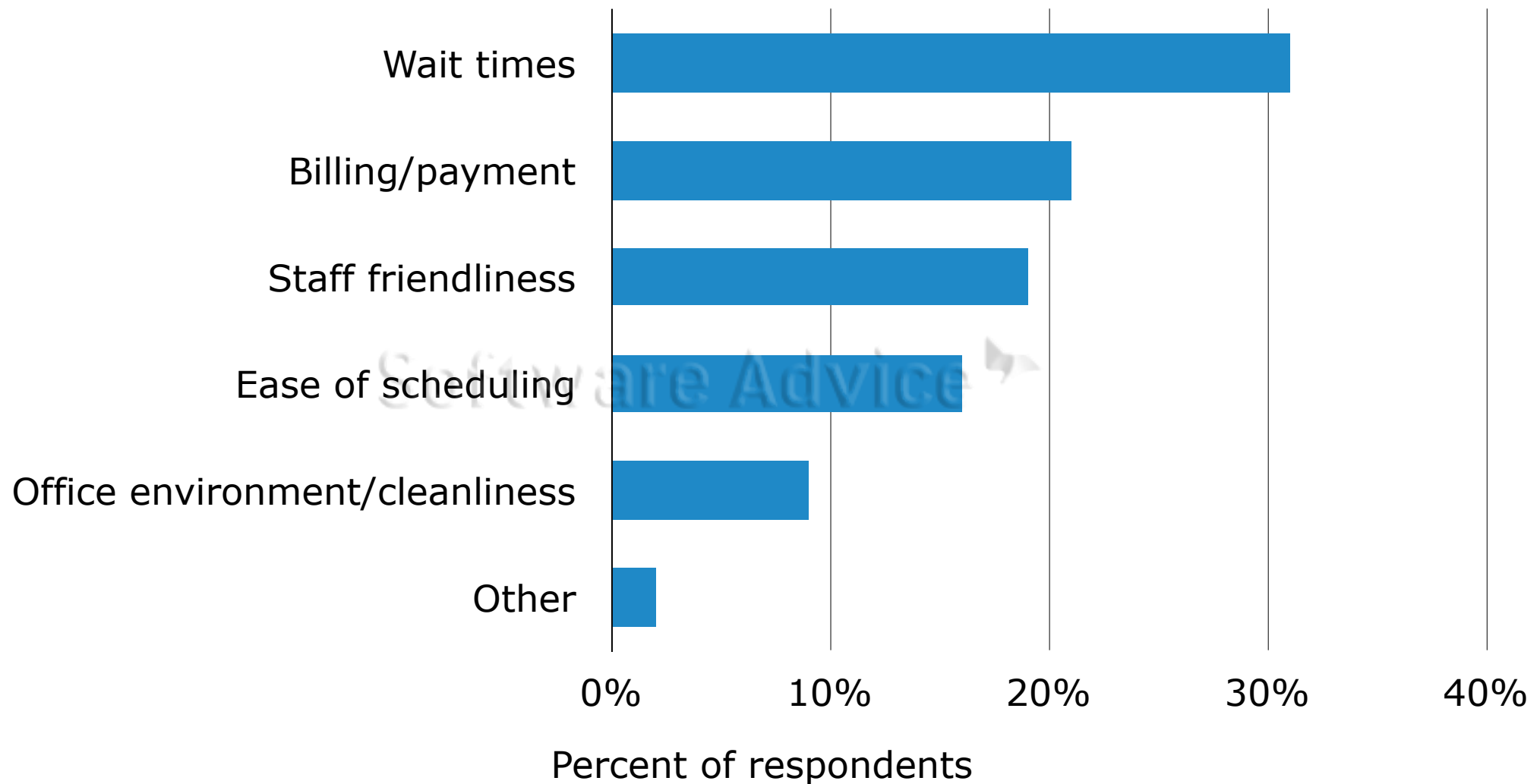| Category	Percent of respondents
Accuracy of diagnosis	~46%
How well doctor explains	~17%
How well doctor listens	~15%
Delivery of treatment	~12%
Time spent with patients	~8%
Other	~2%

Percent of respondents

When asked about the most important information related to quality of care, nearly half of the patients indicated accuracy of diagnosis is most important.

# Most Important Demographic Information

Years of experience and certifications were the most important demographic information sought by patients on review sites.

Most Important Administrative Information

Bar chart titled "Most Important Administrative Information" showing Percent of respondents:
- Wait times: ~31%
- Billing/payment: ~21%
- Staff friendliness: ~19%
- Ease of scheduling: ~16%
- Office environment/cleanliness: ~9%
- Other: ~2%

X-axis: Percent of respondents (0% to 40%)

When it comes to information about how the practice runs, patients are looking for information on wait times, billing and payment issues, and staff friendliness.

Willingness to Visit a Doctor Not Covered by Insurance

26%

74%

● Willing to go out of network
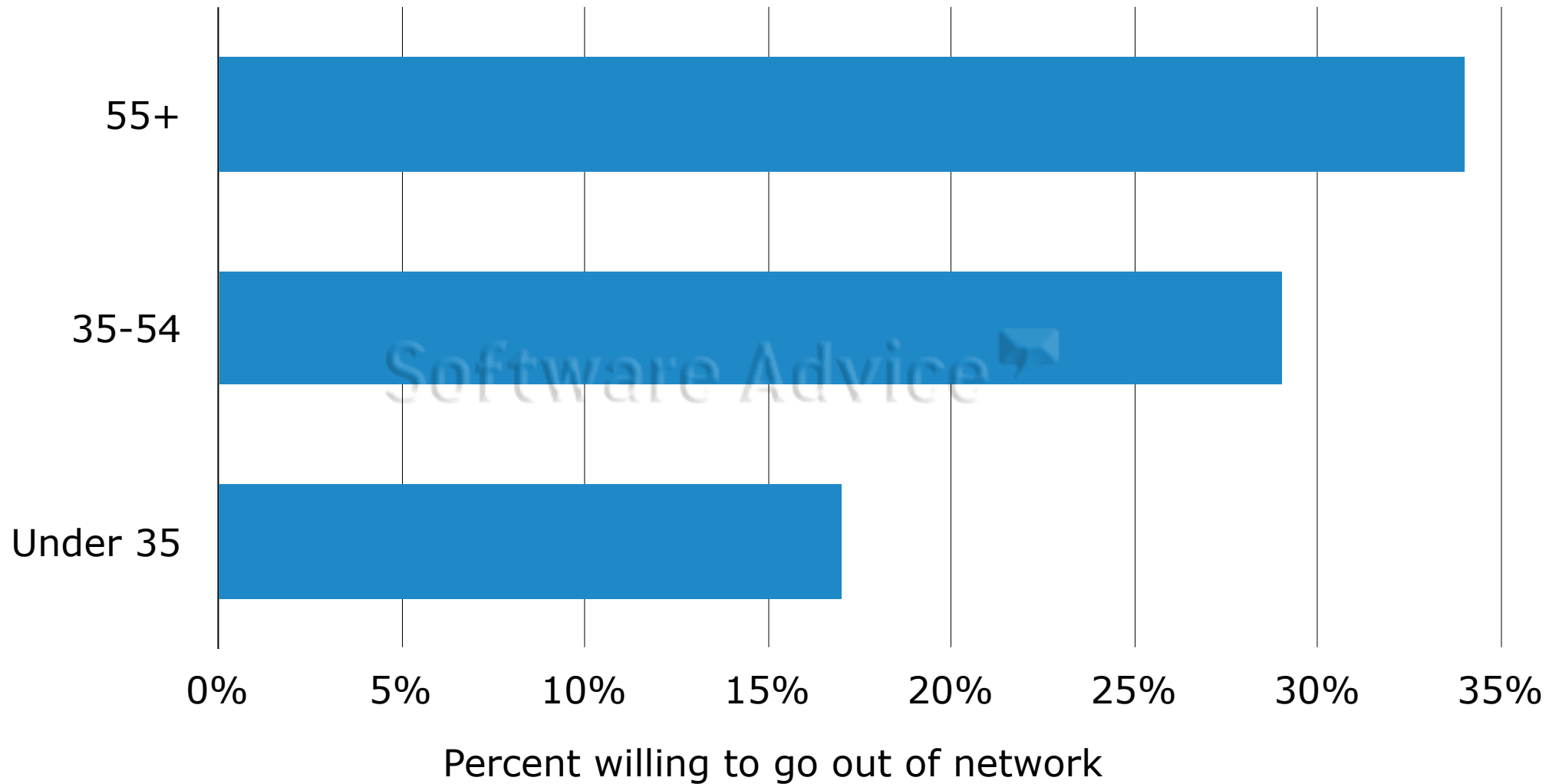● Not willing to go out of network
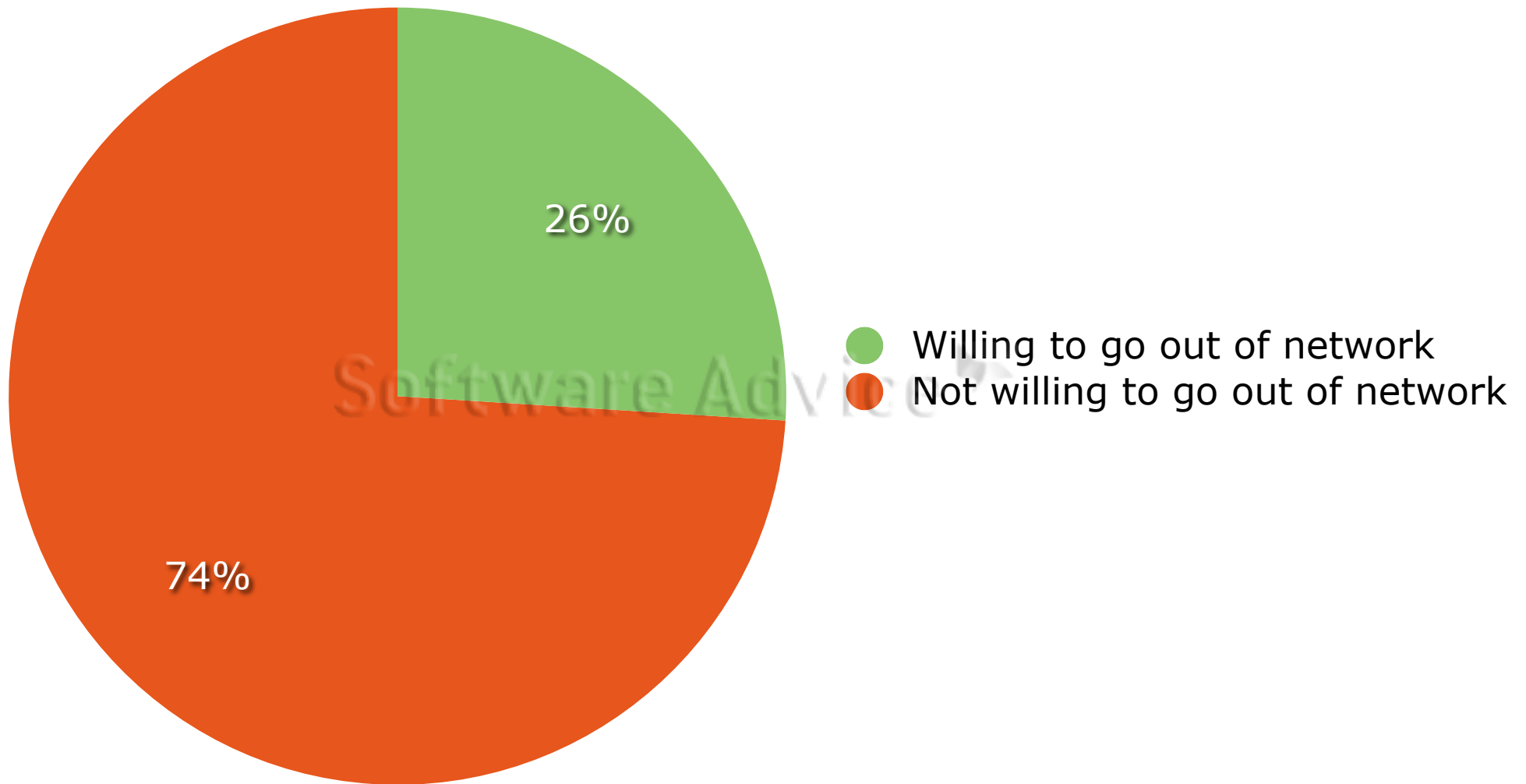
Over a quarter of insured patients indicated they'd be willing to visit a doctor outside of their insurance network if he or she were very highly reviewed.

Willingness to Go Out of Network by Gender

Female

Male

0%   5%   10%   15%   20%   25%   30%   35%

Percent willing to go out of network

Software Advice
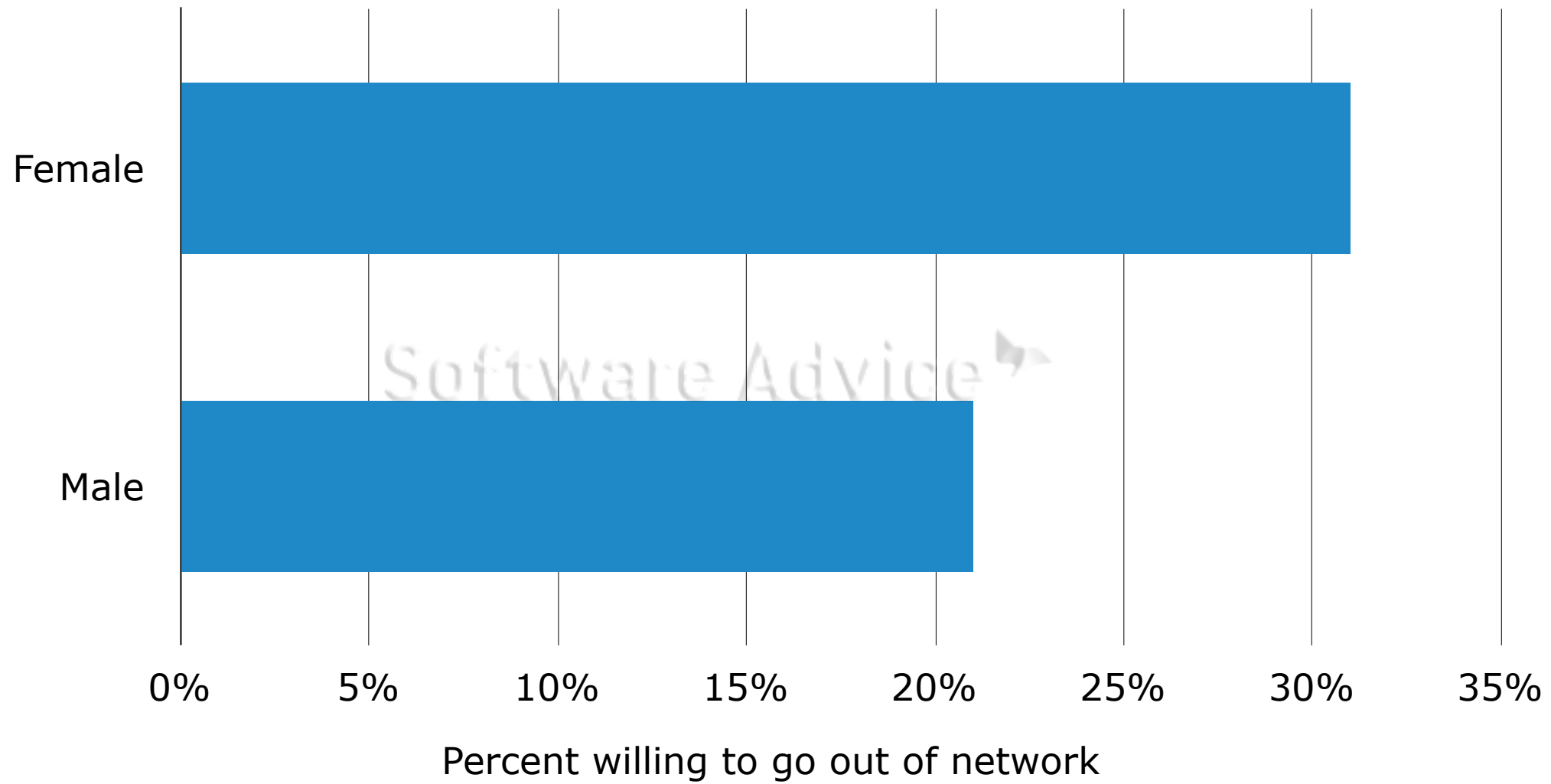
Females are significantly more willing to visit a highly-reviewed doctor outside of their insurance network than males.

Willingness to Go Out of Network by Age

Chart showing "Percent willing to go out of network" by age group:
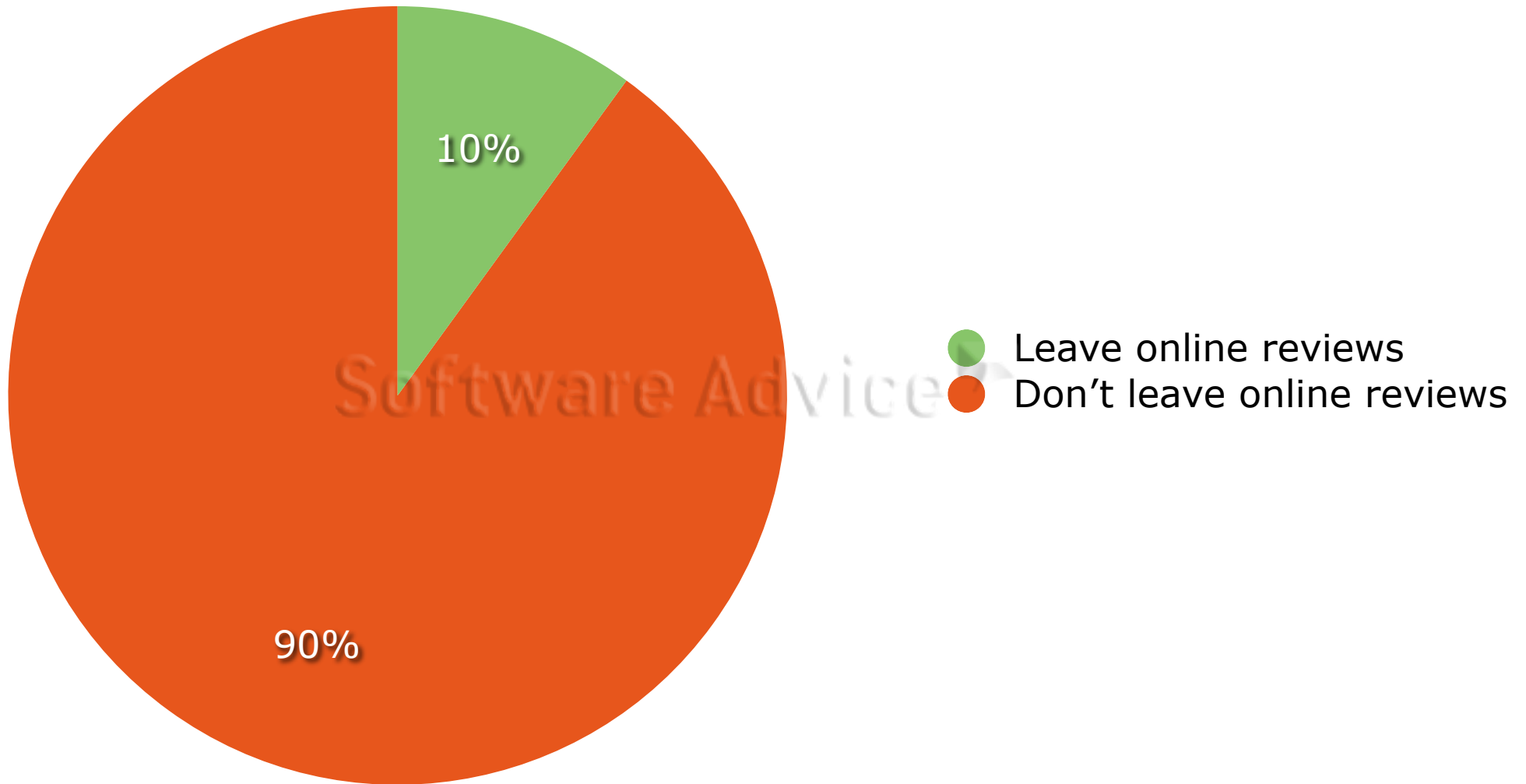- 55+: ~34%
- 35-54: ~29%
- Under 35: ~17%

X-axis: Percent willing to go out of network (0% to 35%)

The willingness of insured patients to visit a highly-reviewed out-of-network doctor is positively correlated with age.
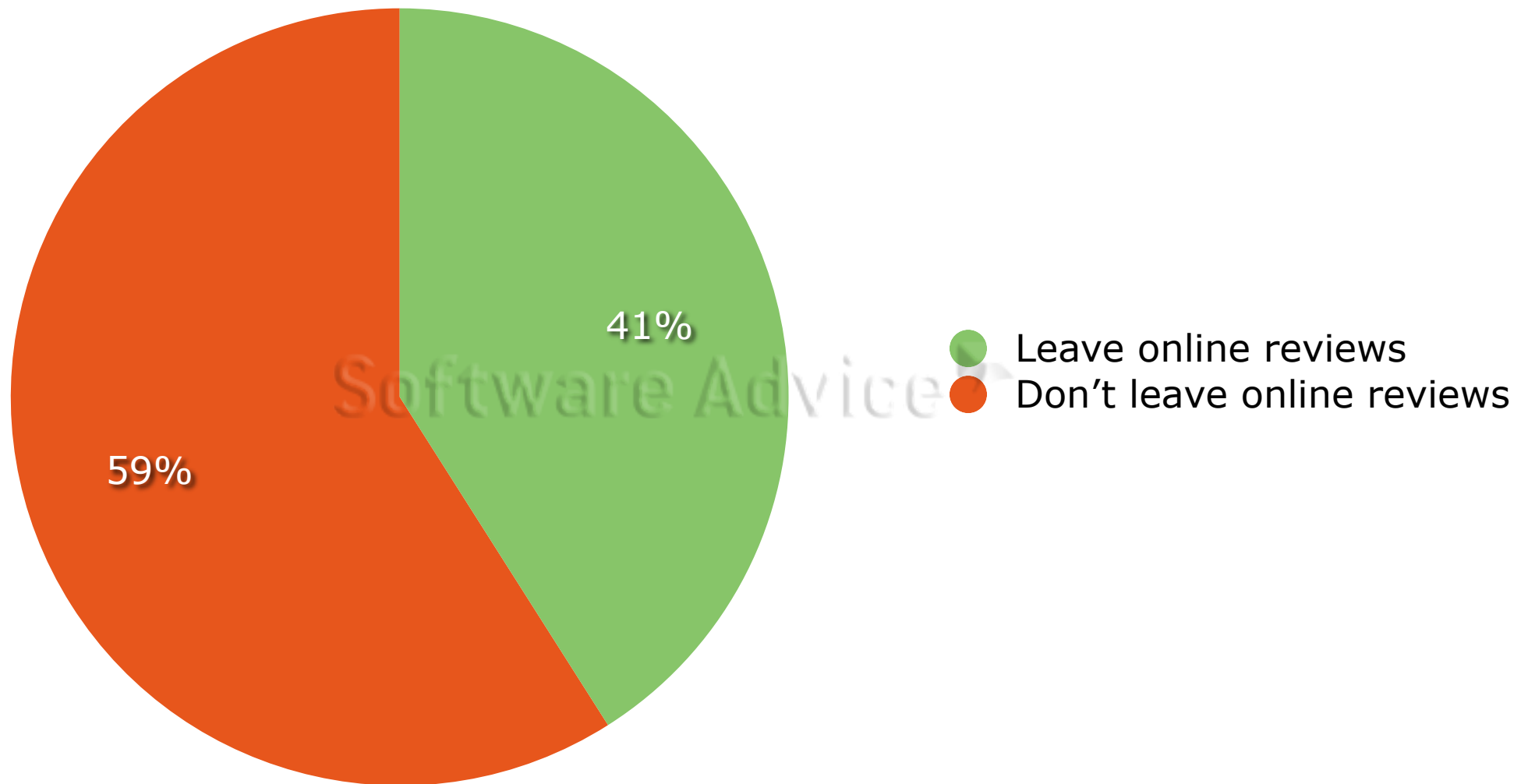
# Total Patients Who Leave Online Reviews for Doctors

10%

90%

● Leave online reviews
● Don't leave online reviews

Of all patients surveyed (including those who don't use review sites), only 10 percent indicated they leave reviews for their doctors online.

Patients Who Use and Leave Online Reviews

41%

59%

● Leave online reviews
● Don't leave online reviews

Among patients who use review sites to research doctors, only 41 percent indicated they also leave reviews for their doctors.

Patients Leaving Reviews Online by Urbanicity
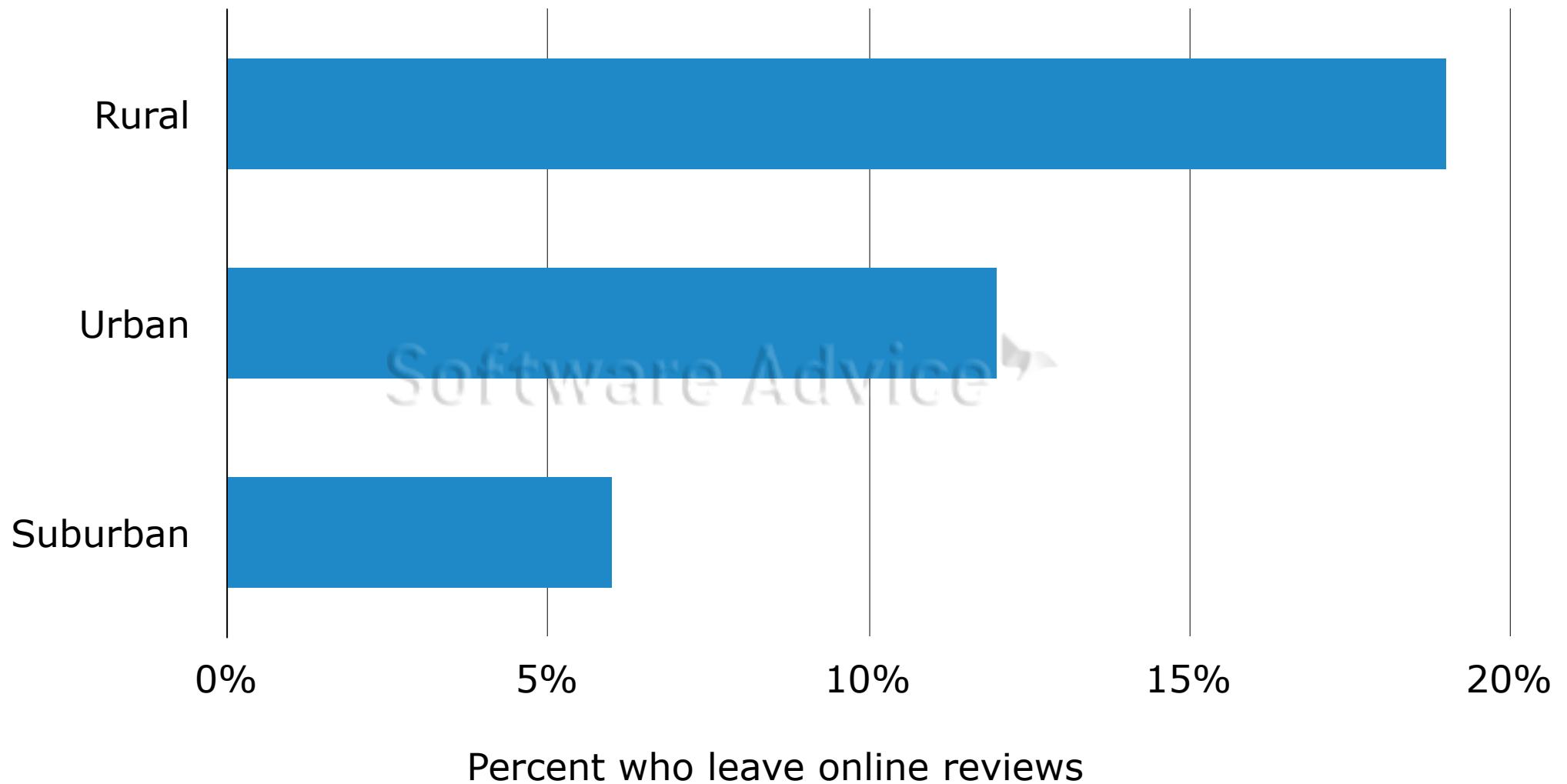
Though rural patients are least likely to use online reviews, they're most likely to leave them for their doctors.

Patients Leaving Reviews Online by Age

Another surprise: excepting the 65+ age group, older patients are both less likely to use online reviews and more likely to leave them.

Read Report | Read about our findings in more detail.

Twitter: @SoftwareAdvice

LinkedIn: /company/software-advice

Facebook: /SoftwareAdvice

Google+: @SoftwareAdvice

Software Advice

Software Advice is a trusted resource for software buyers. The company's website, www.softwareadvice.com, provides detailed reviews, comparisons and research to help organizations choose the right software. Meanwhile, the company's team of software analysts provide free telephone consultations to help each software buyer identify systems that best fit their needs. In the process, Software Advice connects software buyers and sellers, generating high-quality opportunities for software vendors.