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# Sexual expression in residential aged care - A person-centred approach

## Education and policy

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# Background



# What do we know about sexuality? Sexuality and older people?

## Sexual behaviours reported in aged care - Australian and overseas research

flirting	intercourse
holding hands	masturbation
cuddling	talking dirty
intimate touch	sadomasochism
fondling	sexual identity
kissing and other displays of affection	the use of sexual materials and sexual services

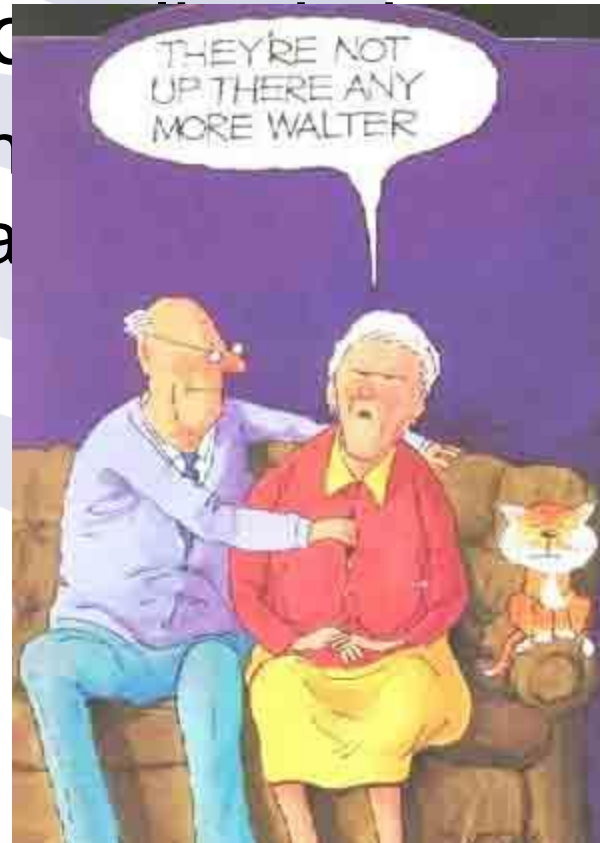
wellbeing

• Wide range of behaviours reported in residential aged care facilities

• Sexuality remains meaningful for many residents

# The expression of resident's sexuality can be problematic

- Sexually inappropriate behavior is not a part of healthy aging. It is a sign of a problem that needs to be addressed.



At my age, the only thing  
that gets hard is my arteries.

[www.cafepress.com/GeezerShop](http://www.cafepress.com/GeezerShop)



The Australian Centre for  
Evidence Based Aged Care

A research centre of La Trobe University Health Sciences



COLLABORATING CENTRE

# Some of the problems...

- The attitudes, skills & education of staff
  - Not seen to be part of the role
    - ‘It’s not our job to clean up semen’
  - Staff (and residents) are not comfortable
  - Staff do what they think is best (act as moral guardians)
  - Absence of good role models
    - *Some facility managers think this is an inappropriate & intrusive and/or not applicable topic*

# Nine oldsters booted out of nursing home — for trying to have an orgy!

LONDON — A group of nine love-hungry codgers were booted out of an old folks' home — after they tried to have an orgy in the recreation room!

The unidentified oldsters, who ranged in age from 73 to 98, had apparently planned the unauthorized after-hours get-together for weeks, according to Melinda Helterford, spokesperson for the well-respected Edith Scarborough Nursing Home.

"They somehow got it in their heads to celebrate the 90th birthday of one of the women with a kind of sex party," said Miss Helterford.

"This may sound harmless or amusing to some people, but Scarborough has a reputation to uphold. We cannot tolerate that kind of conduct."

By **MIKE FOSTER**  
*Weekly World News*

The nursing home made a concerted effort to keep the bizarre story out of the press and so details are difficult to come by.

But according to British papers, the let-it-all-hang-out party took place just after midnight on October 28. The three wrinkly Romeos and six sagging seductresses gathered together in the rec room and stripped to the buff.

"They really set the scene," a nursing home staffer who was not identified told a London tabloid. "They'd got

their hands on candles, which they lit, and even put on music to create a sexy mood."

The nude geezer gala went on for about 20 minutes before orderlies heard rumba music coming from the recreational room and went to investigate.

When they opened the doors, they were shocked to find the old-timers crowded together in their birthday suits, slathered with baby oil.

"They hadn't got too far — I guess it was taking some of the gents a while to get started," the staffer said.

"But they were all naked. Believe me, it was the scariest thing I've seen in my life."

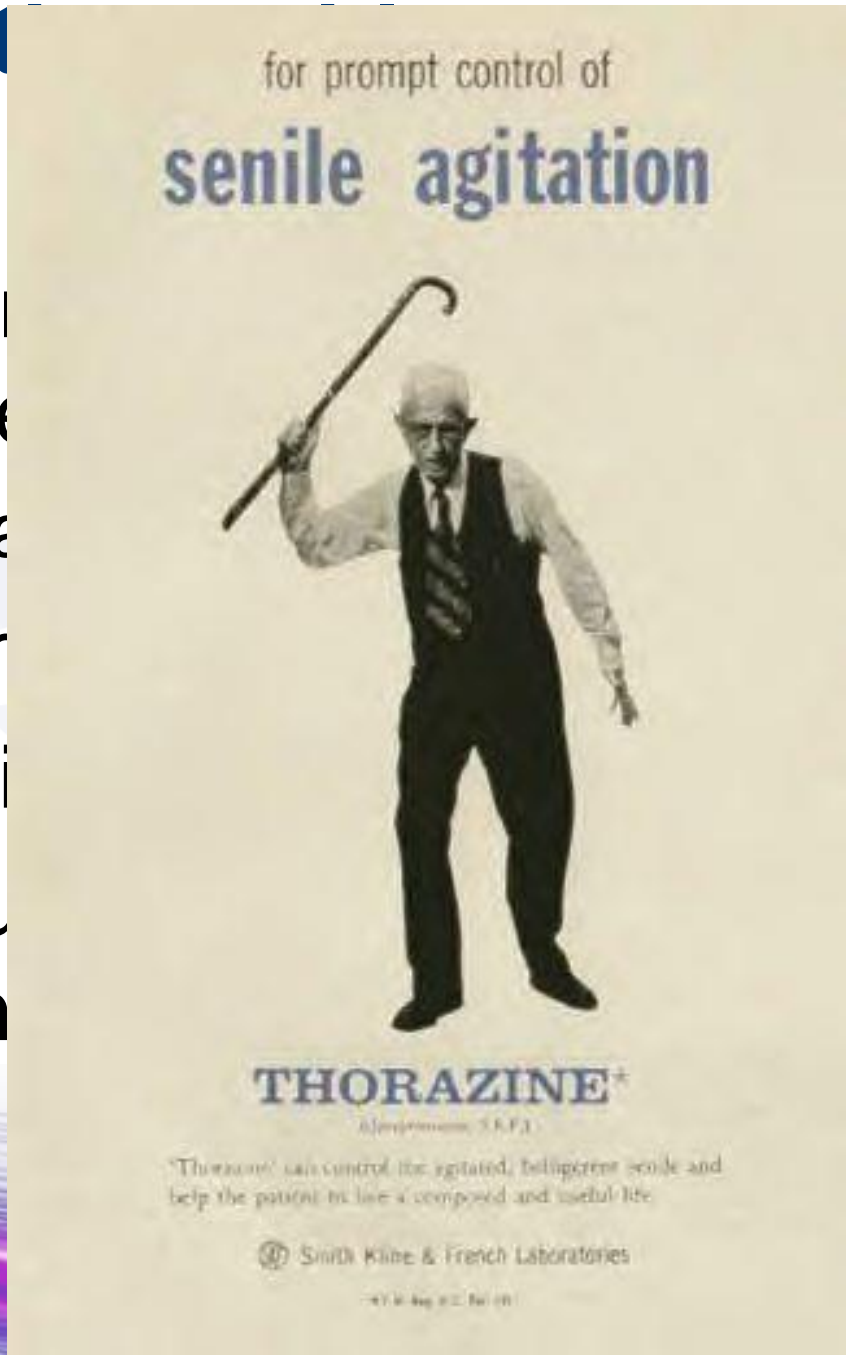
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# Some of the

- There is a need for...  
needs/the...
  - Not a pa...
- Environm...
- 'The fami...
- Behaviou...
- is demen...



patients'

to privacy

as if there





# What information related to sexuality is provided to residential aged care consumers?

## Residents Survey of all 826 residential aged care facilities in Victoria, Australia

Hostel accommodation is available for residents in need of assistance with daily living and personal care. Residents must be ambulatory.

### - content analysis (Neunendorf, 2002)

#### Level of Care

Personal care staff look after the individual needs of each resident. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are provided in addition to morning and afternoon tea and supper. A laundry service is also provided along with weekly cleaning of the unit. Bed linen and towels are provided.

A 24 hour emergency call system with a call button in the bathroom and a pendant to wear

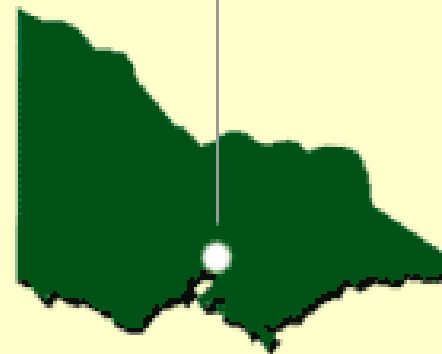




Australia



Melbourne



Victoria



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# Sexuality - an information void

- Response rate poor after 3 reminders (<20%).
- Less than 3% addressed the topic of sexuality, love, intimacy, or relationships in the text or images used.
- Reminder asked for reason for non-response.
- 64% reported having no information available for staff or residents!

(Bauer, Nay & McAuliffe, 2009)



# Residential care survey- qualitative data

- Strategies employed
  - Developing a policy (17)
  - ‘We address it verbally as part of our assessment’ (17)
  - Allow double beds from home
  - Allow some ‘private time’
  - Connect adjoining rooms
  - Contact a sex worker
  - Referral to a social worker/psychologist if needed

# Residential care survey- qualitative data cont.

- Strategies employed cont.
  - Do nothing
    - it's not relevant- dementia specific facility, nursing home, religious orientation, facility for priests/nuns
    - too sensitive to discuss
    - lack of staff education/training
    - one less thing to document

# Changing the culture amongst care staff

- Education for staff (and where relevant residents & family)
  - Sexuality, myths & stereotypes
  - Dealing with inhibitions
  - Responsibilities, supporting staff/residents/family
  - The need for assessment, life history, medical review
  - Sexuality & dementia
  - Understanding/interpreting residents' behaviours
  - Residents' rights
  - Consent & legal issues
  - The need for a decision making framework

# Workshop data

- Modified ageing sexuality knowledge & attitudes questionnaire pre/post

White (1982) and Kuhn (2002)

3 hour workshops

Victorian rural & regional aged care staff

Pre-test n=98

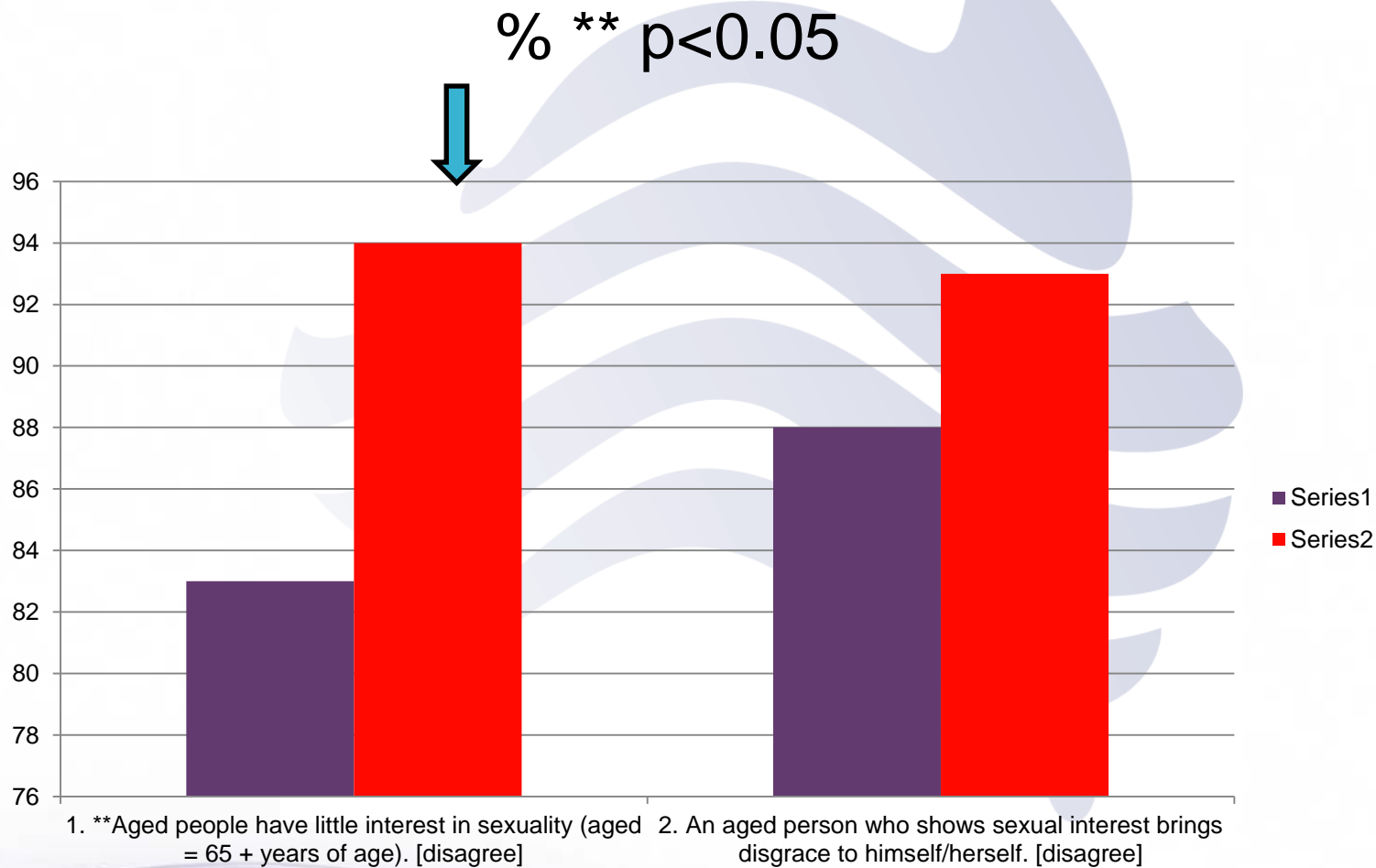
Post-test n=96

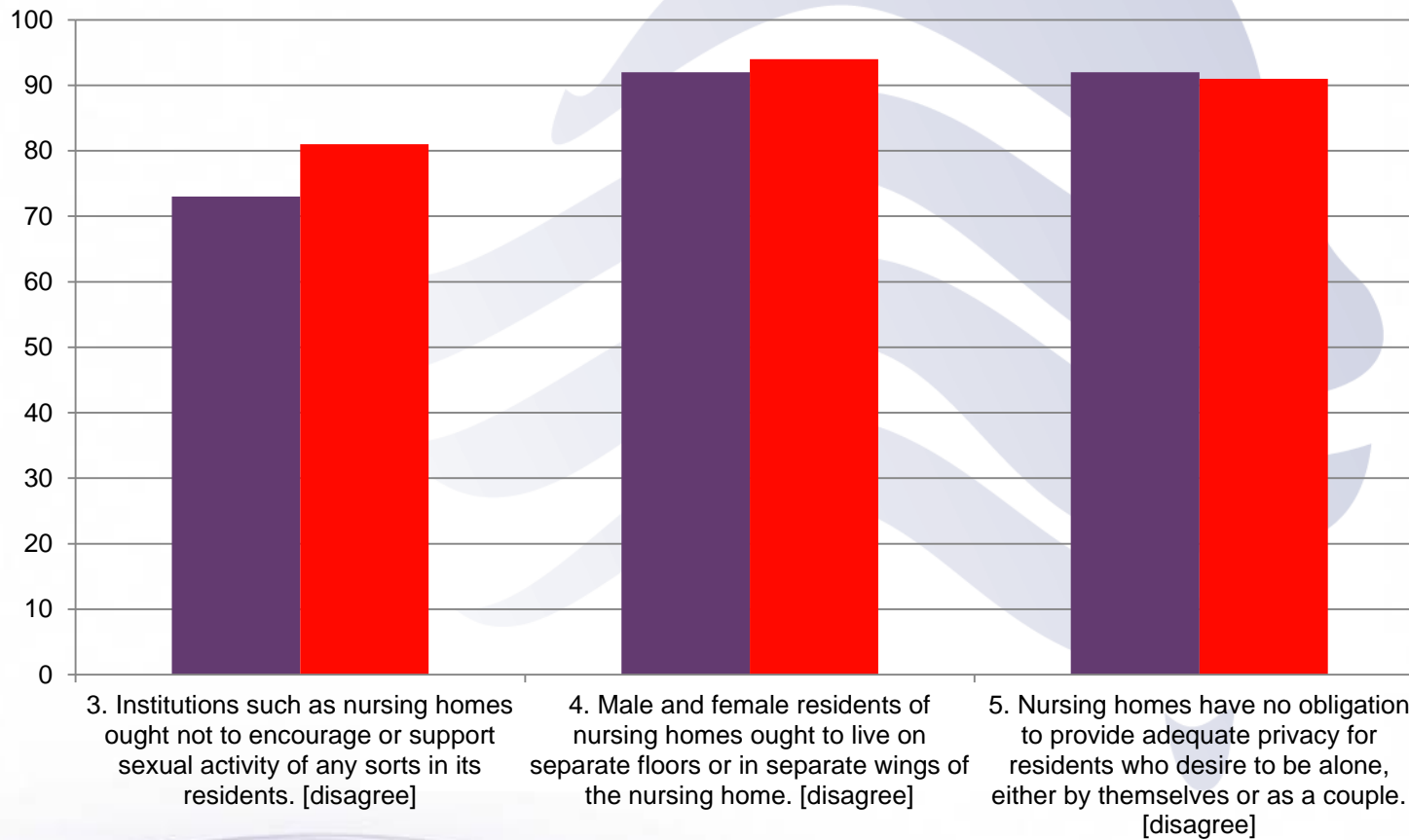
# Participant characteristics

<b>Female:</b>	<b>Male:</b>		
95%	5%		
<b>RN1:</b>	<b>RN2:</b>	<b>PCW:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
65%	25%	5%	5%
<b>Age</b>			
<b>18-30:</b>	<b>31-40:</b>	<b>41-50:</b>	<b>61-60:</b>
7%	12%	31%	44%
<b>61+:</b>			
6%			



# Pre-test/Post-test

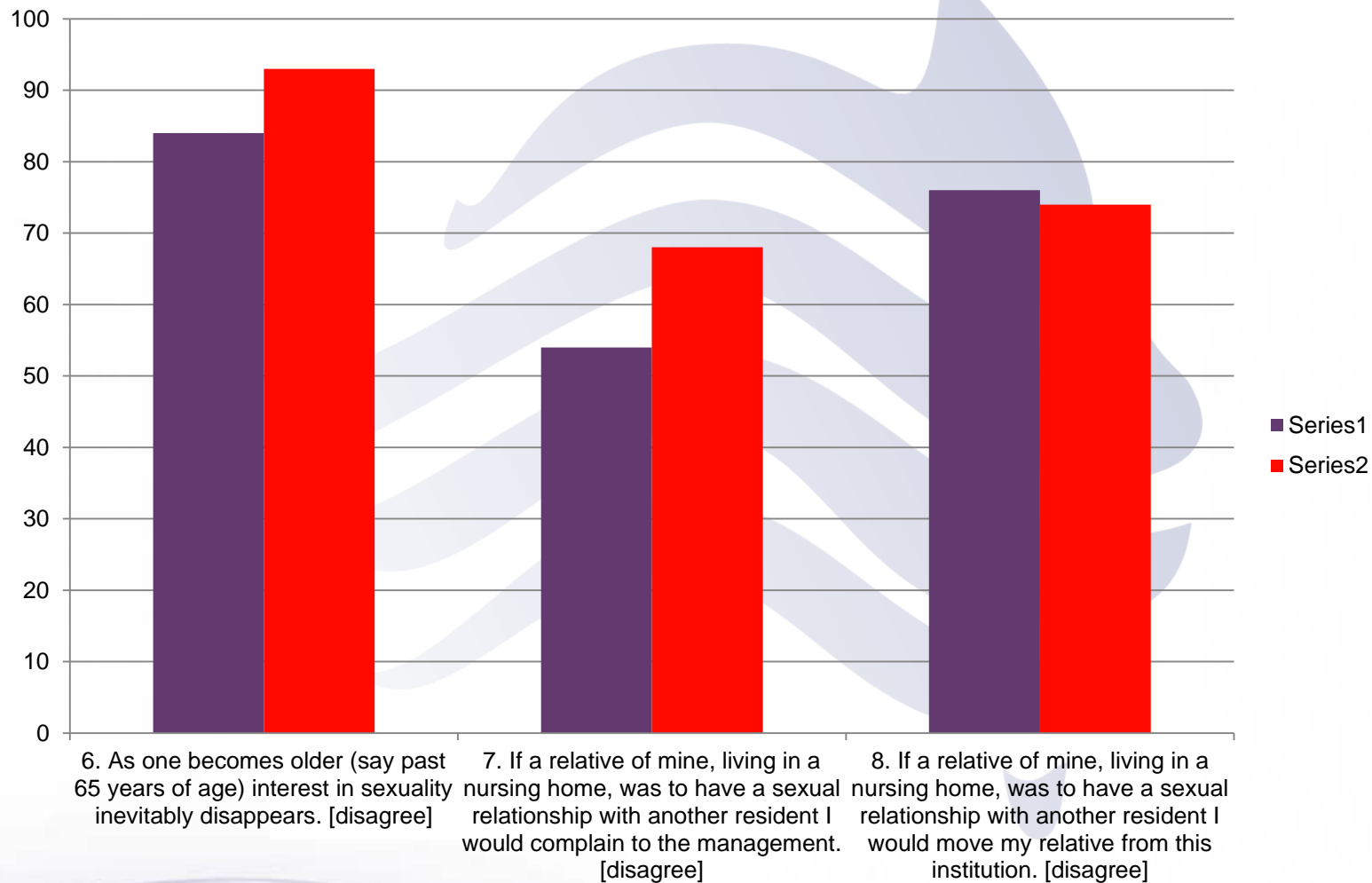


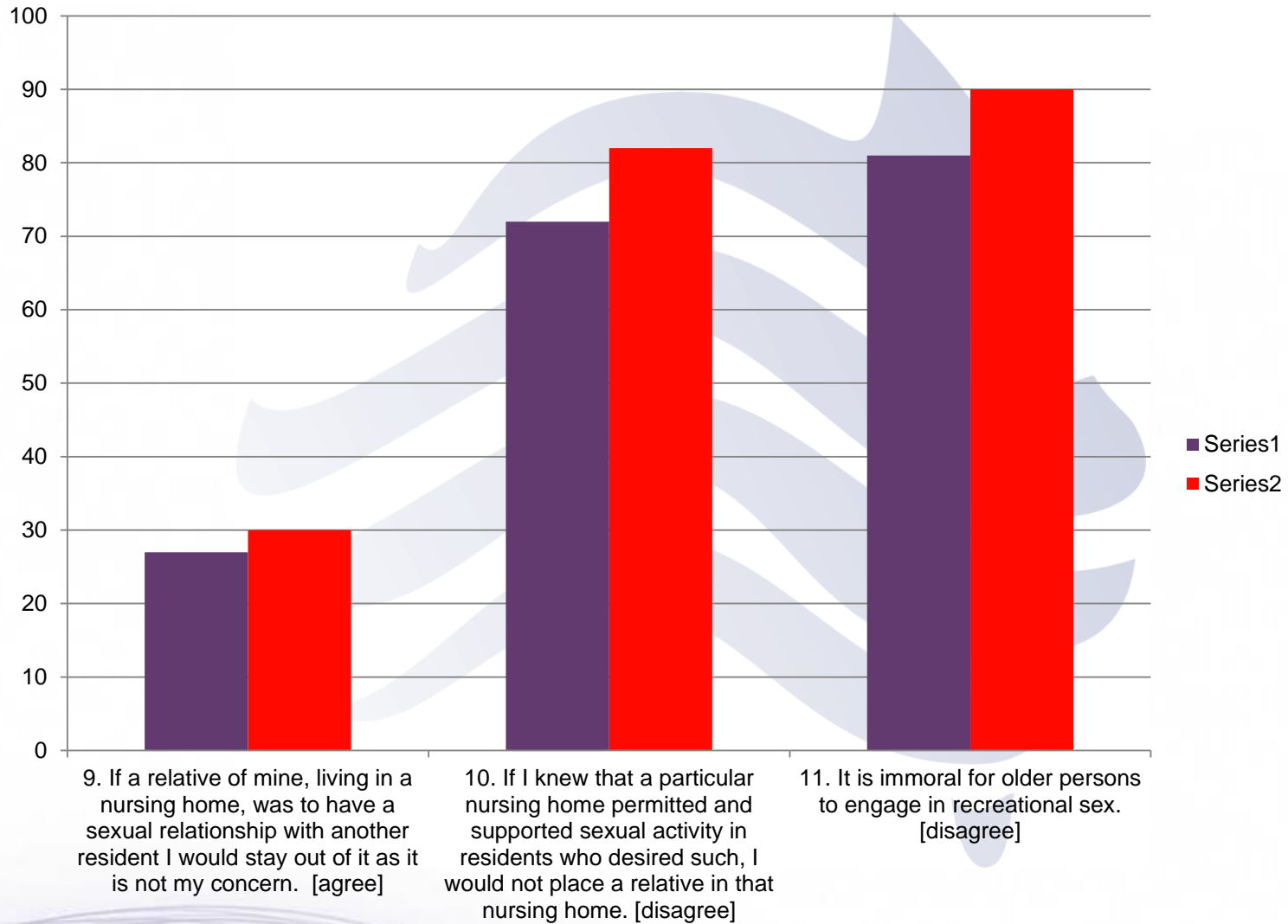


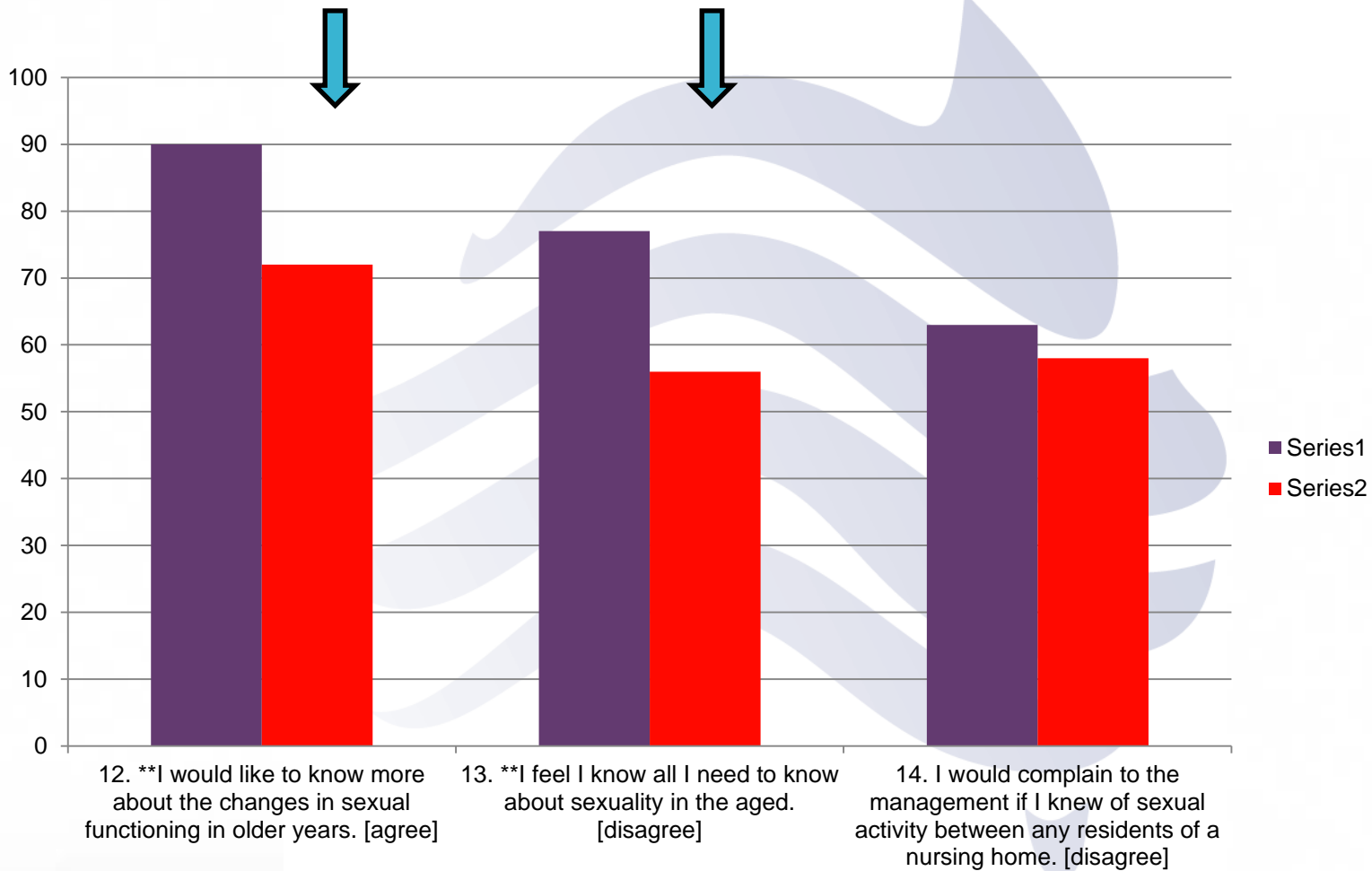
■ Series1  
■ Series2

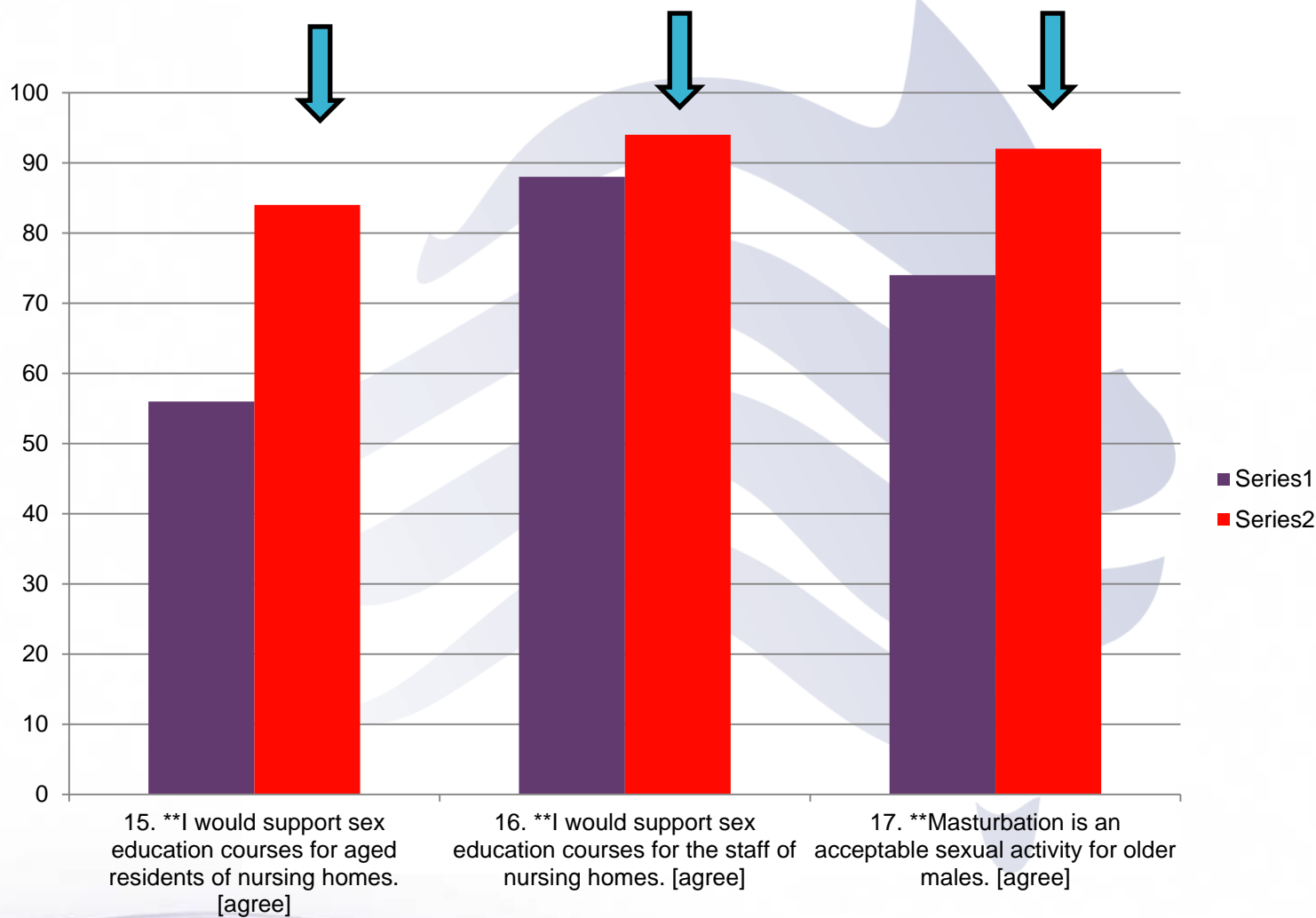


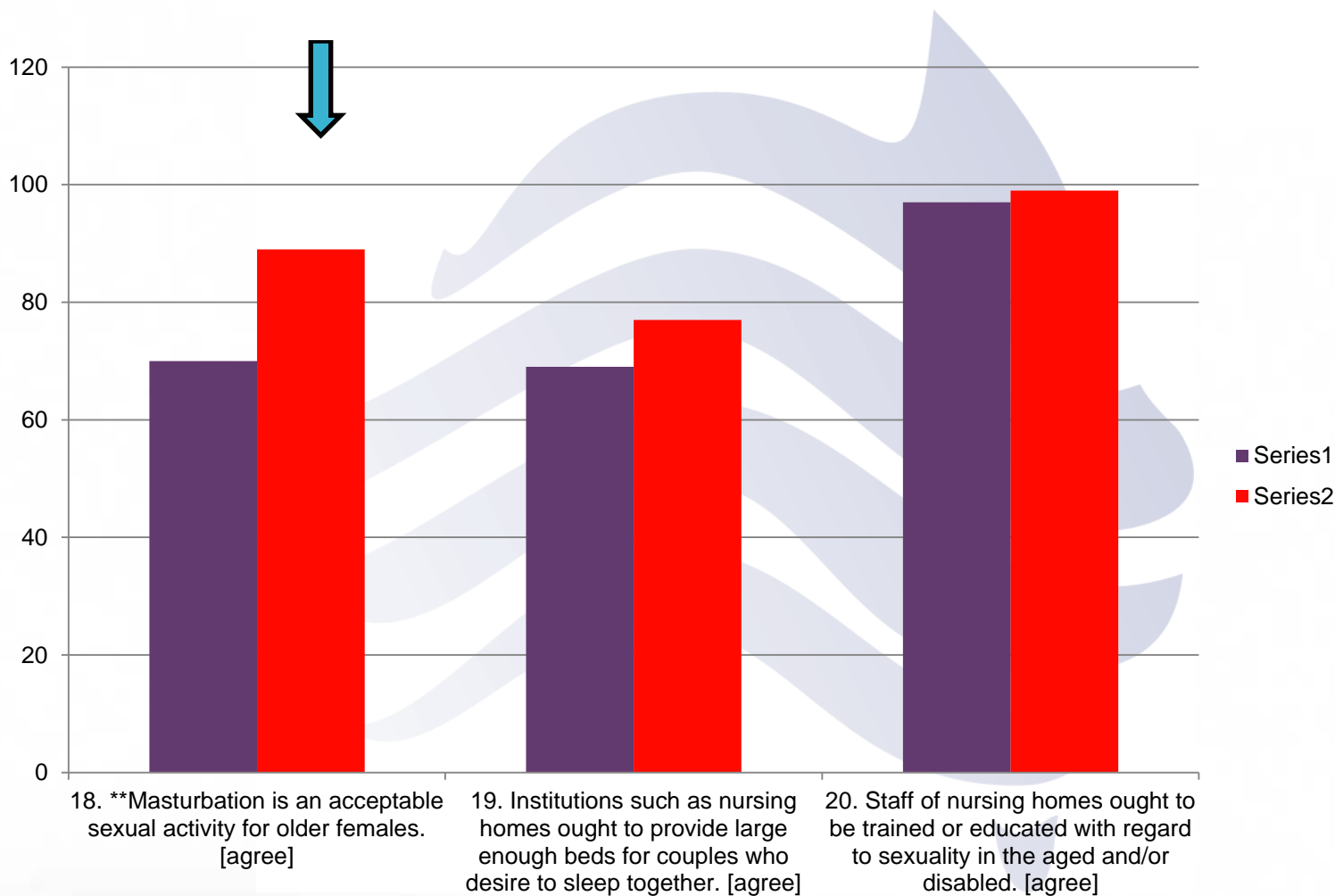
COLLABORATING CENTRE

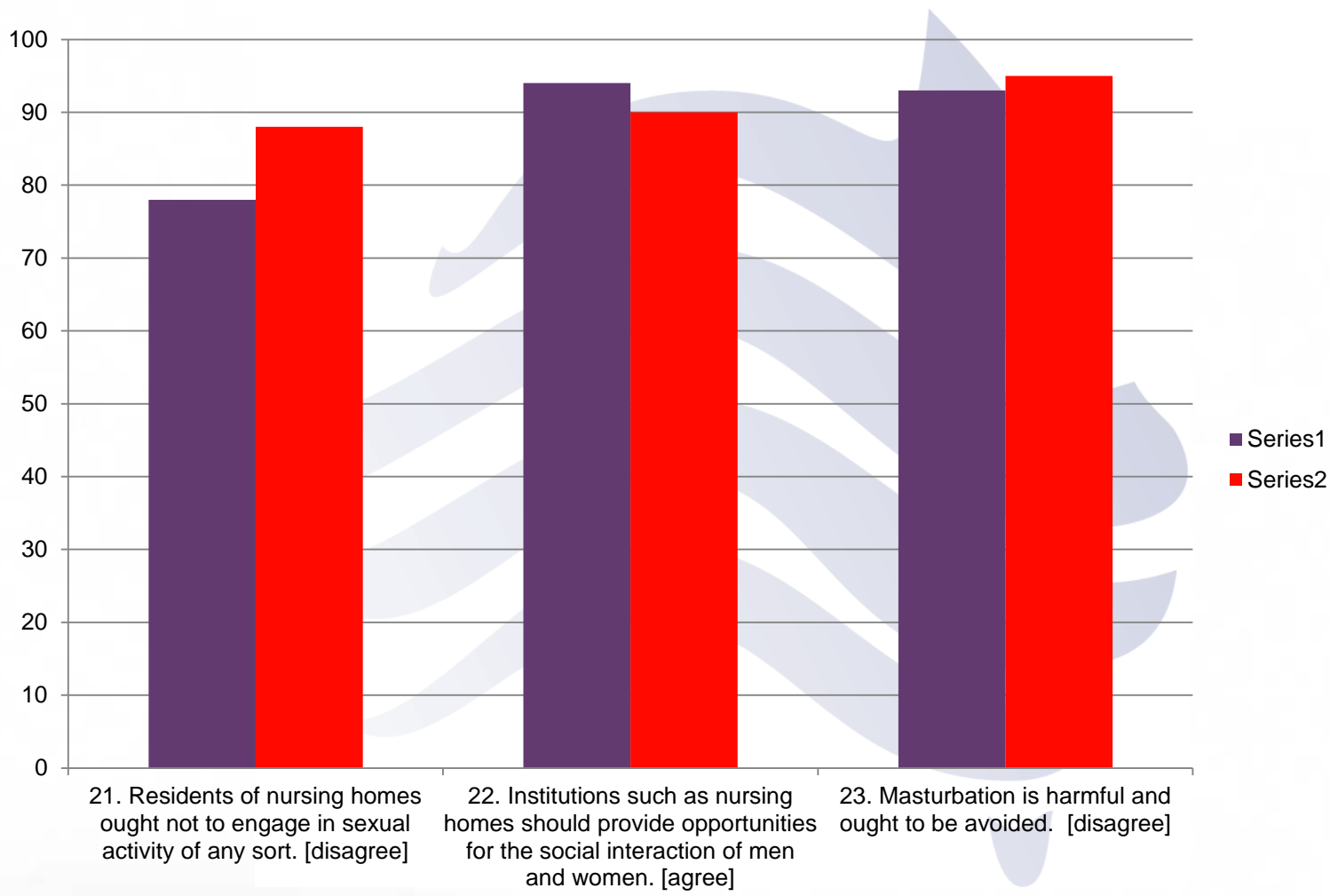




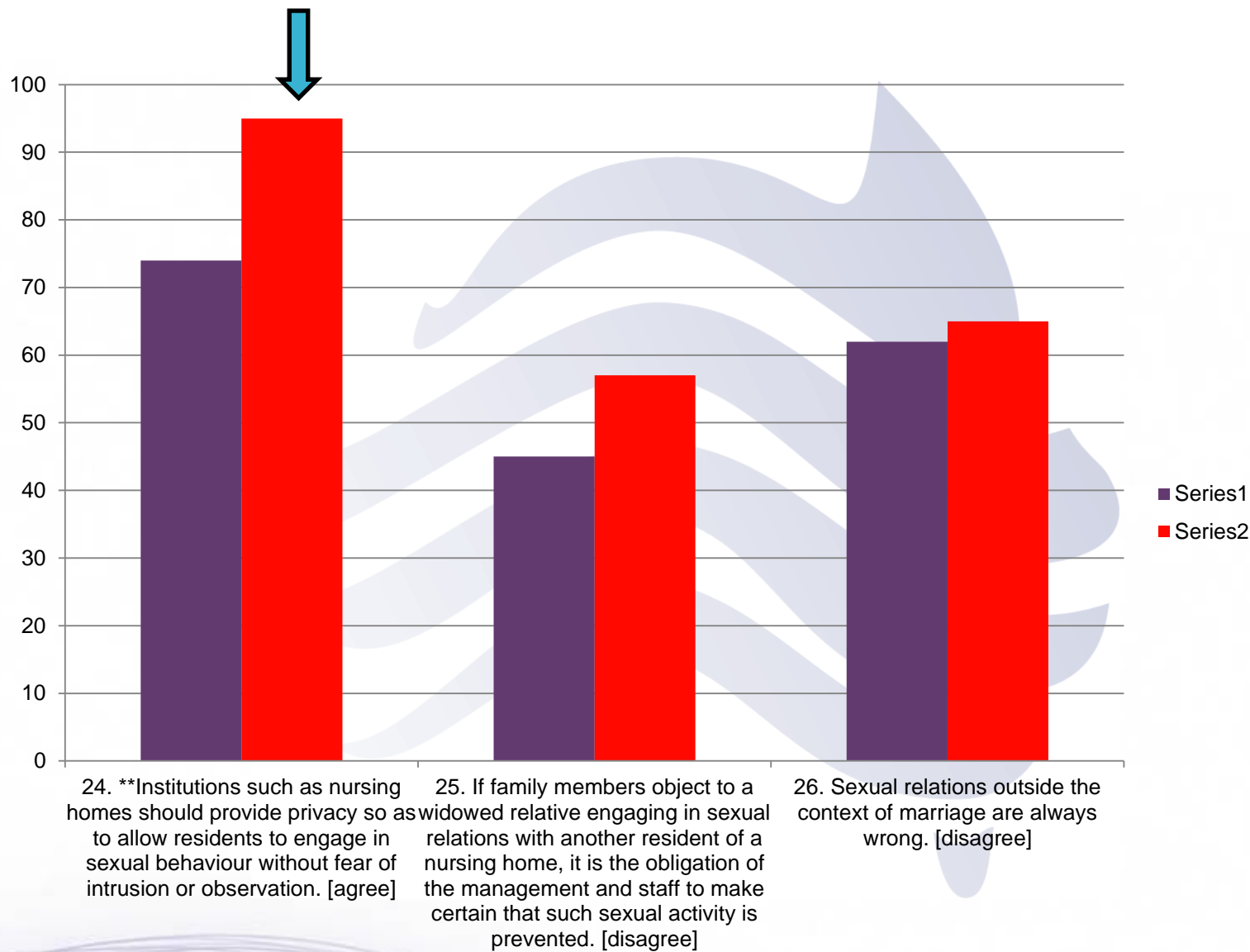


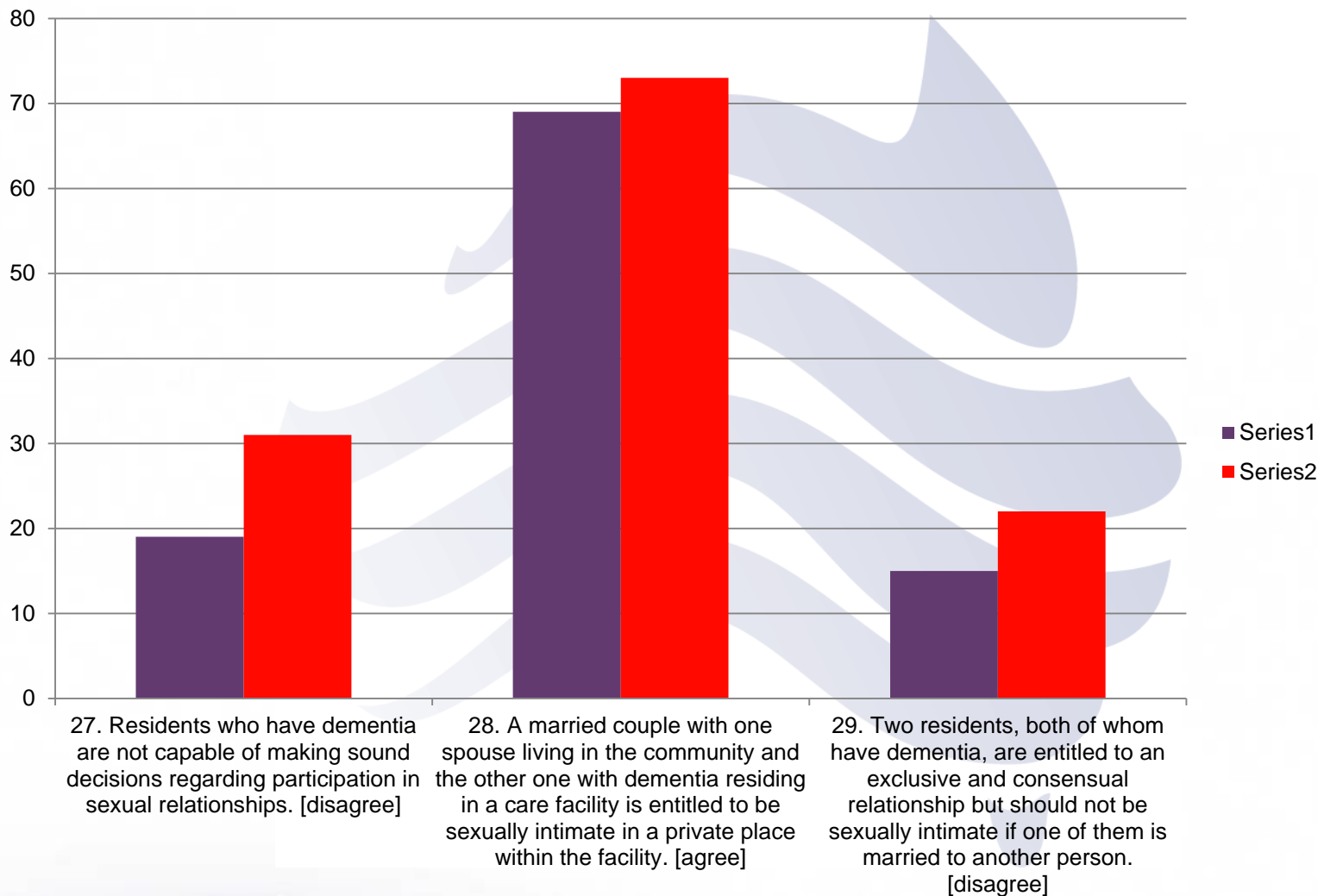


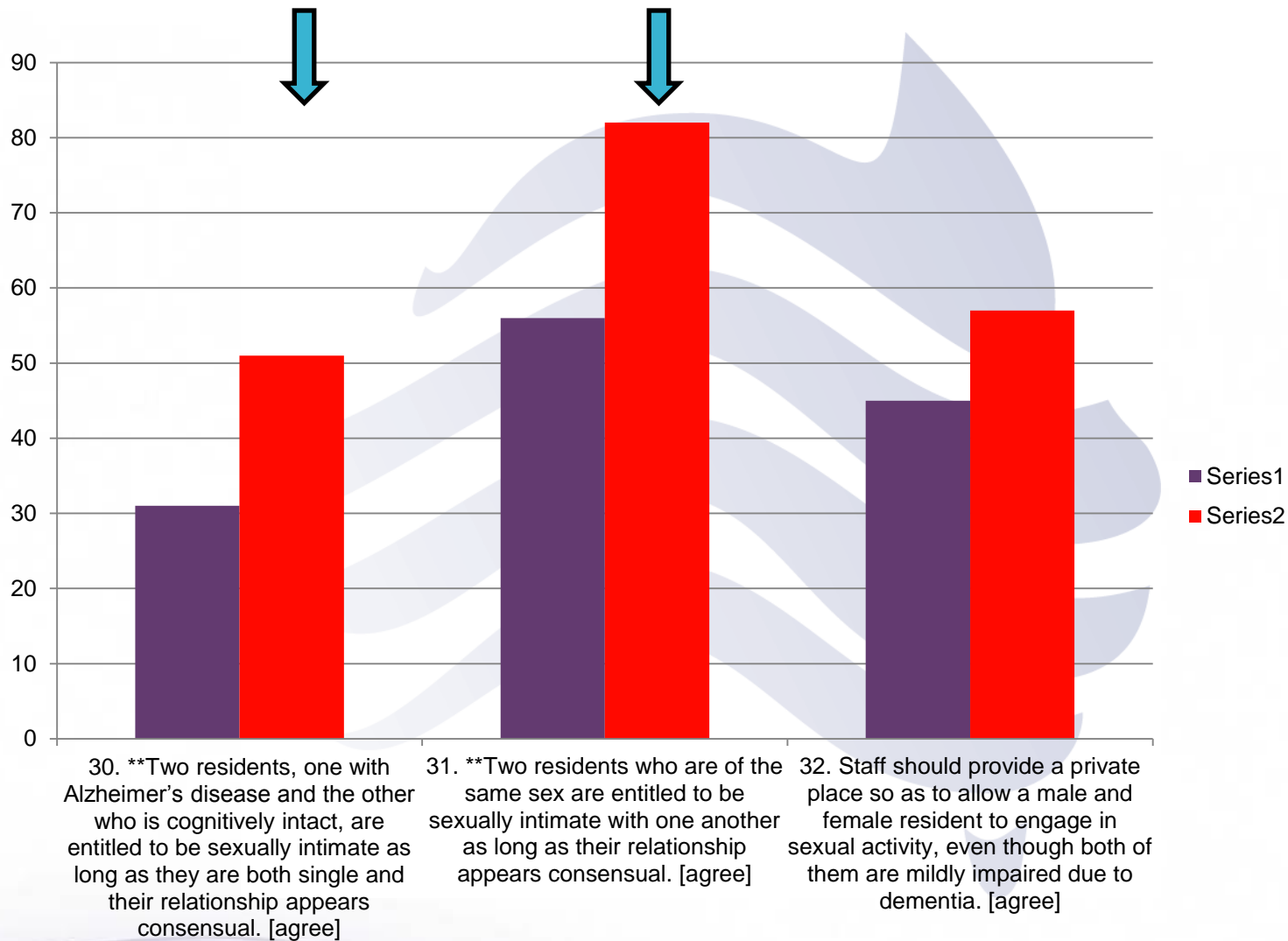


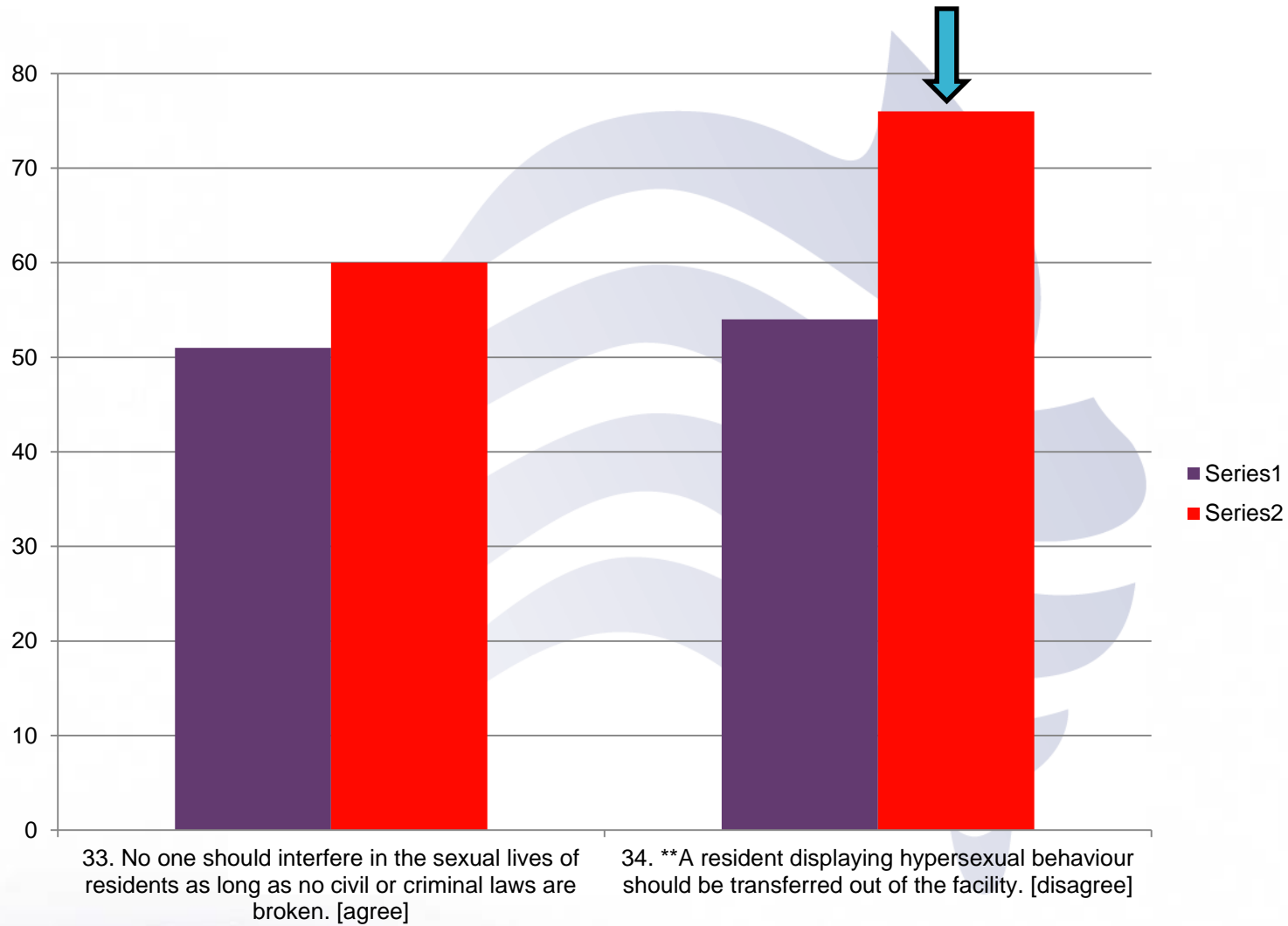














Thank you

