

Crisis Surrounding the Right to Health of the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster Victims —A Report from Tochigi Prefecture*—

*Tochigi Prefecture is a western-neighbor of Fukushima Prefecture.

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Presenter's Main Activities on this issue

- A member of the Project Supporting Preschoolers and Pregnant Women of Fukushima(2011-2015), which was reorganized as the Research Forum on Fukushima Nuclear Disaster (2015-present) in Center of Multicultural Public Sphere in the Faculty of International Studies, Utsunomiya University.

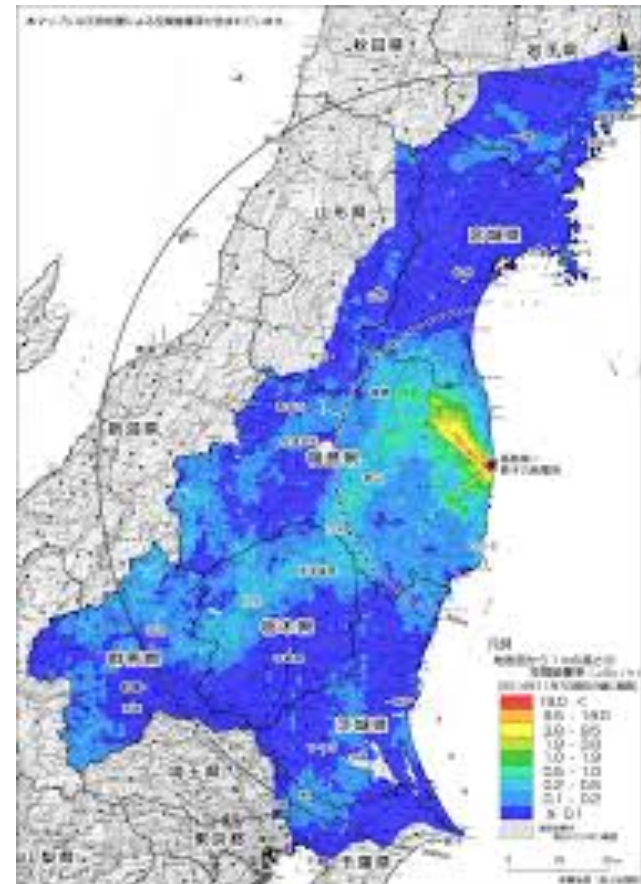
<Main Activities of the Project/Forum>

- ① Supporting the Evacuees from Fukushima, especially the families with preschoolers and pregnant women.
- ② Conducting Interviews with the Evacuees from Fukushima to Tochigi.
- ③ Conducting Interviews and Questionnaire Surveys on the Parents of the preschoolers living the Tochigi's radiation "hot spots."
- ④ Publicizing the results of the Surveys
- ⑤ Submitting the petitions on the needs of the victims to the Municipalities, Ministers of Reconstruction and the Environment.

1-1 Wide-spread Contamination beyond Fukushima Prefecture

- The radioactive materials released from the Fukushima Power Plants have spread well beyond the Fukushima Prefecture.
- There are number of neighboring prefectures suffering from the same level of contamination as Fukushima, including Tochigi Prefecture.

Air Radiation Dose of 1 m from the ground, November 7, 2014 .



1-2 Designated Areas for Focused Research on the Level of Contamination

- The Ministry of the Environment designated the following 8 prefectures as **the Areas for Focused Research on the Level of Contamination**.

Iwate (3 cities, towns and villages) ▪ Miyagi (9) ▪ Fukushima (41) ▪ Ibaragi (20) ▪ Tochigi (8) ▪ Gunma (12) ▪ Saitama (2) ▪ Chiba (9)

Total 104 cities, towns and villages in 2012

→ Total 99 cities, towns and villages in 2016

1-3 Definition of the Areas for Focused Research

- Definition provided by the press release of the Ministry of the Environment, February 24, 2012.

The average air radiation dose of the Designated Areas is over the $0.23\mu\text{Sv/h}$. The Ministry will conduct the focused research on the contamination of the environment caused by the Nuclear Power Plant accident...

→ Excluding any possibilities of internal radiation

1-4 Disparities of National Support

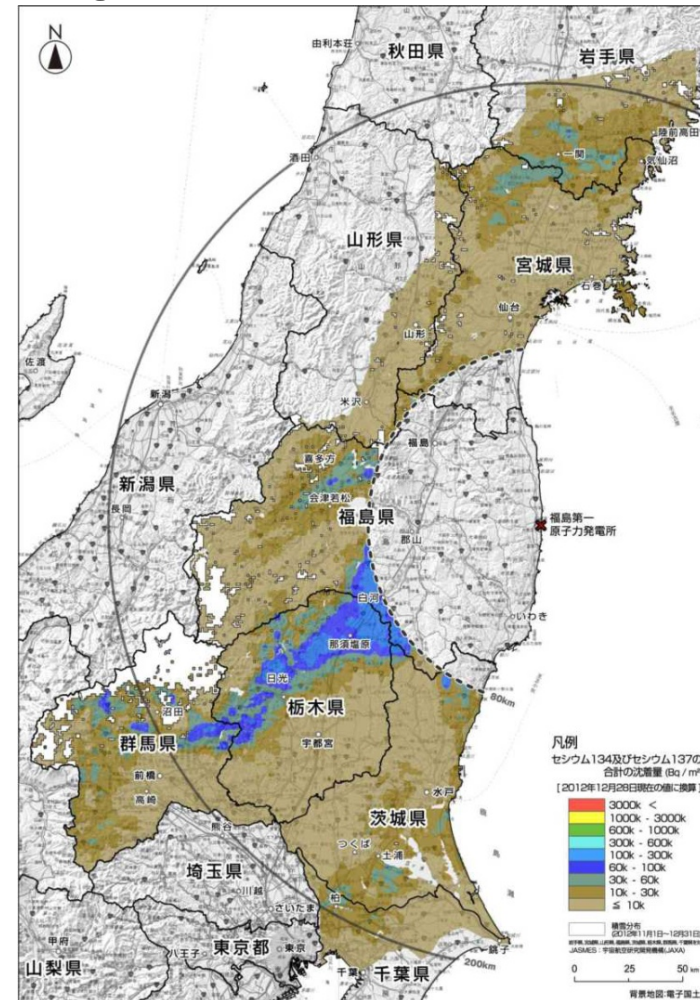
Contamination in Tochigi Prefecture

- 8 cities and towns in Tochigi has been designated as the special areas by the Ministry of the Environment.

Sano (delisted in 2016), Kanuma, Nikko, Otawara, Yaita, Nasushiobara, Shioya, Nasu.

- In these areas, there are many radiation “hot spots” over $0.23\mu\text{Sv/h}$ although 5 years have passed since the disaster.

Map of Total of Cs134, 137 Fallouts on the ground (Dec. 28, 2012)



1-5 Uneven Radiation Contamination and Delay of Protection Measures

Serious Contamination in the Northern Part of Tochigi

As the radiation contamination was mainly observed only in the northern part of Tochigi, the Prefectural government located in the center part of Tochigi could not recognize the seriousness of the problem immediately after the accident. Consequently, the necessary protection measures were not provided when they were most necessary.

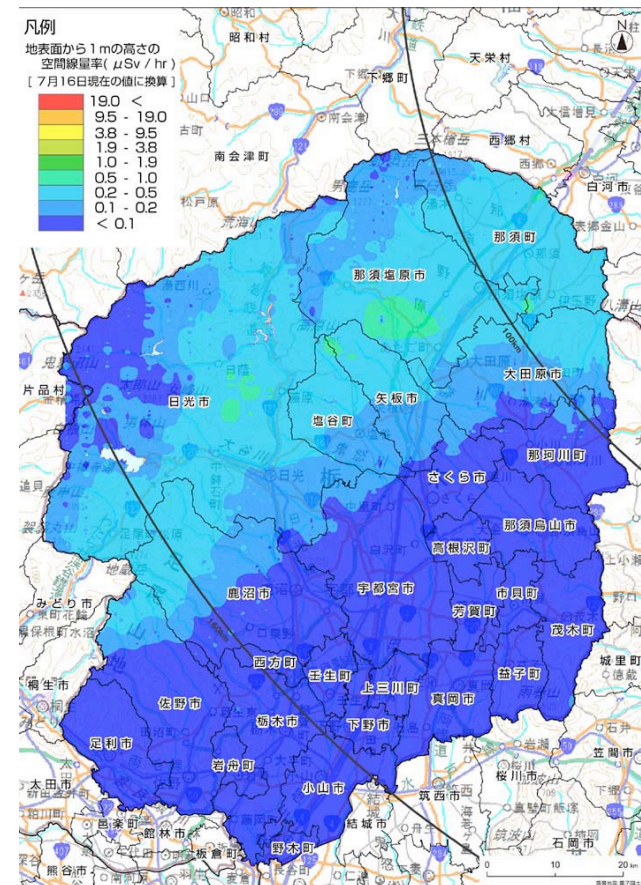
Utsunomiya City $0.07\mu\text{Sv/h}$
(where the Prefectural Government Office is located)

Nasushiobara City
(Park in the Houkigawa Area)

Before decontamination : 2013.5.23 $0.67\mu\text{Sv/h}$

After decontamination : 2013.12.26 $0.45\mu\text{Sv/h}$

Map of Radiation Air Dose of Tochigi in July 2011.



1-6 Hasty Protection of the agriculture and tourism industries by the Prefectural Government

- “Declaration of Safety of Tourism in Tochigi” by the Governor in April 5, 2011.

“There are almost no direct damages caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and by the Accident of the Fukushima Power Plant in Tochigi’s famous sightseeing spots. We are providing “safe and secured” air, water and food...

The Prefectural Government makes this declaration in order to eradicate completely the false rumors on the Tochigi’s sightseeing spots.”

1-7 Delayed Decontamination

① Decontamination around the Monitoring Posts

Only the radiation levels around the monitoring posts are low.

There still remains many high level radiation near the posts.

→ As the radiation levels of the monitoring posts are low and they are publicized as the official records, it may make people believe that the radiation levels of all the area have become lower. As a consequence, the necessary measures will not be provided.

② Limited measures of decontamination financed by the Government.

The most effective decontamination measure, the removal of topsoil, which is widely utilized in Fukushima, is not financially supported by the Government in Tochigi. The Governor and mayors of Tochigi submitted petitions to the Ministers of Reconstruction and the Environment in July 2013, asking for the financial support equal to Fukushima.

1-8 The Lack of the Health Monitoring

- The health monitoring financed by the national budget of the affected residents in Tochigi has not been realized.
- The Final Recommendation by the Meeting of the Specialists on the Health Effect of the Radiation organized by the Tochigi Prefectural Government.

“This report makes an evaluation based on the scientific data that the situation in Tochigi is free from the fear of future health risk. The report also makes it clear that **any health monitoring including laboratory testing is not necessary..**」 (July 2012)

1-9 The Statute on Protection and Support for the Children and other Victims of Tokyo Electric Power Company Nuclear Power Plant Disaster (Victims Protection Law)

The Victims Protection Law has been passed in June 2012 with unanimity at the National Diet.

- ① Admitting the uncertainty of the future health risk of radiation in today's science.
- ② Focusing on the prevention of health hazards with special attention to children (including fetuses) and pregnant women.
- ③ Helping the realization of the rights to avoid radiation by officially supporting the evacuees from the voluntary evacuation zones.
- ④ Realizing the official support to the radiation “hot spots” outside of Fukushima by providing effective decontamination, health monitoring, health services.

1-10 Lobbying Activities demanding the voices of the victims to be heard

- More than 180 local authorities and citizens' groups submitted petitions demanding the early enforcement of the Victims Support Law.
- The Law should ①support all the areas above the 1 mSv/yr. ②support the voluntary evacuees. ③reflect the voices of the victims by holding public hearings.

1-11 Submission of the Petition to the Reconstruction Agency.

- The presenter and the project members have submitted several petitions reflecting the needs of the victims based on the result of the surveys to the Reconstruction Agency in March and April, 2013.



1-12 Basic Policy decided without reflecting the victims' voices

- On August 30, 2013, the Reconstruction Agency suddenly announced on its homepage the publication of a draft Basic Policy of the Victims Protection Law and invited the public to submit comments on the draft only within 2 weeks. As the Agency received many criticism on this announcement, it was decided to prolong the deadline of the submission 10 more days, and two briefing sessions were hastily held, but there was no open public hearing.
- In October, the Basic Policy was officially decided by the Cabinet without reflecting the needs of the victims, such as the support to the voluntary evacuees, more flexible offers of the municipally subsidized rental housing, filling the gaps made by support disparities, providing effective decontamination and health monitoring in the radiation “hot spots” outside of Fukushima.

1-13 Victims Support Law and Tochigi

- Although many petitions were submitted by the residents of Northern Tochigi and local governments, **Tochigi was not included in the Target Areas of Support by the Basic Policy.** Instead, Tochigi was categorized as “Secondary Target Areas of Support” which has no legal basis in the Victims Support Law.
- A petition to the Minister of Reconstruction from Governor (September 13, 2013)
- A petition from the City Council (September 13, 2013)
- A petition from the Prefectural Assembly (September 17, 2013)

1-14 Loosened standards and the debates over the new 20mSv/y cutoff line

20mSv/y standard for reopening of schools set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

→ Widely criticized, nationally as well as internationally.

⇔ Annual dose limit of the general public 1mSv/y

However, the 20mSv/y standard has been applied since the accident in Japan.

2-1 Current Situation of the Victims in Tochigi Prefecture

- Invisible Victims

The contamination and its damages of Northern Tochigi are not recognized nationally as well as in other parts of Tochigi (center or south).

- “We cannot talk freely about our anxiety over radiation.”

It is difficult for the residents to talk freely about their fear of radiation as they fear to be criticized as inciting “harmful rumors” damaging local industries or to call forth other peoples anxiety.

2-2 Voluntary Protection Activities by the local residents

- In the face of the lack of official protection measures, some of the residents started voluntary activities to protect themselves from radiation
- Forming study groups.
- Regular measuring of radiation level and its public release.
- Making original radiation maps.
- Measuring of foods and consultation
- Submitting petitions to the local and national authorities.



2-3 Anxieties of the Parents of preschoolers

- Receiving the requests from several residents in Northern Tochigi, the presenter conducted anonymous questionnaire surveys targeting the parents of the preschoolers in 2012 and 2013.
- Preparatory survey (August 2012) with 1 kindergarten and 1 nursery school in Nasushiobara City. 245 answers were collected (response rate : 53%)

94% of the parents answered “I have anxiety about child rearing after the earthquake.”

2-4 A survey in 2013 with 38 kindergartens and nursery schools

<Period of Survey >

August 22, 2013- October 9, 2013

<Questionnaire creator and executant >

the Project Supporting Preschoolers and Pregnant Women of Fukushima, Center of Multicultural Public Sphere in the Faculty of International Studies, Utsunomiya University.

<In Cooperation with >

Nasushiobara City / Nasu Town

2-5 Targets and the Response Rate

<Targets> 3,241 Parents of the children in 38 kindergartens and nursery schools in Northern Tochigi Nasushiobara City

14(all the) public kindergartens and nursery schools

15 private kindergartens

Nasu Town

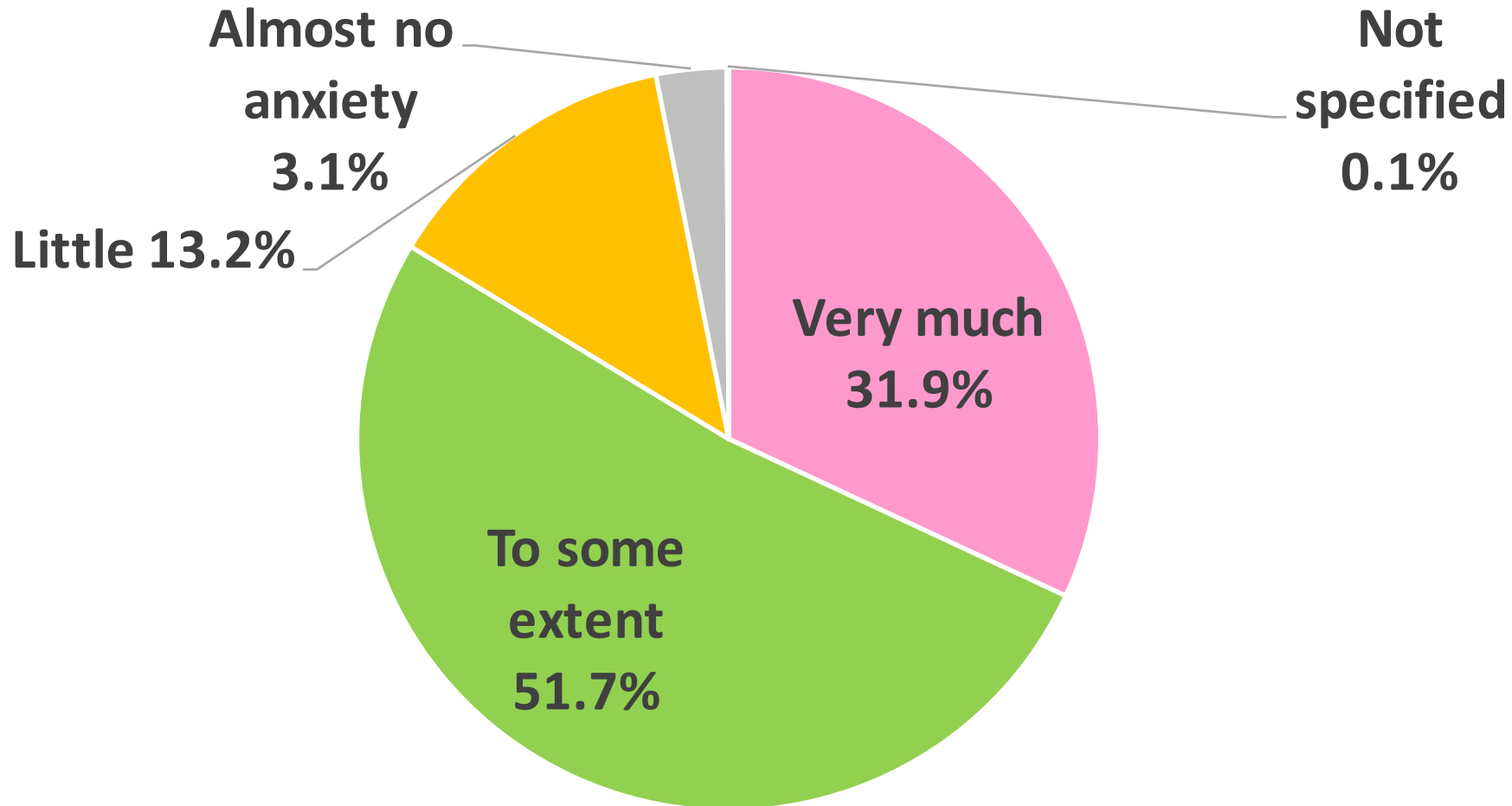
8 (all the) public nursery schools

1 private kindergarten

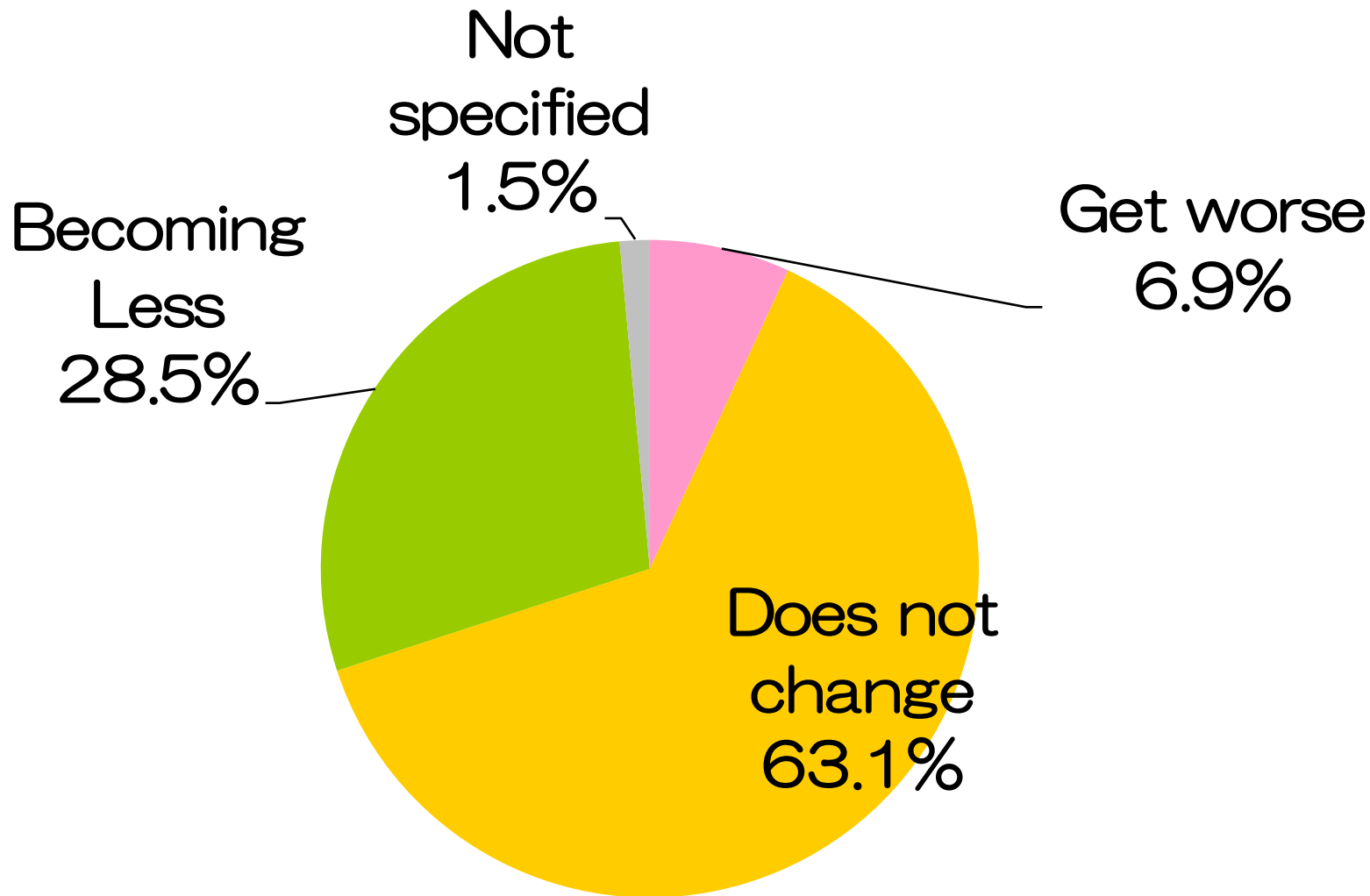
<Response Rate>

2,202 responses (rate: 68%)

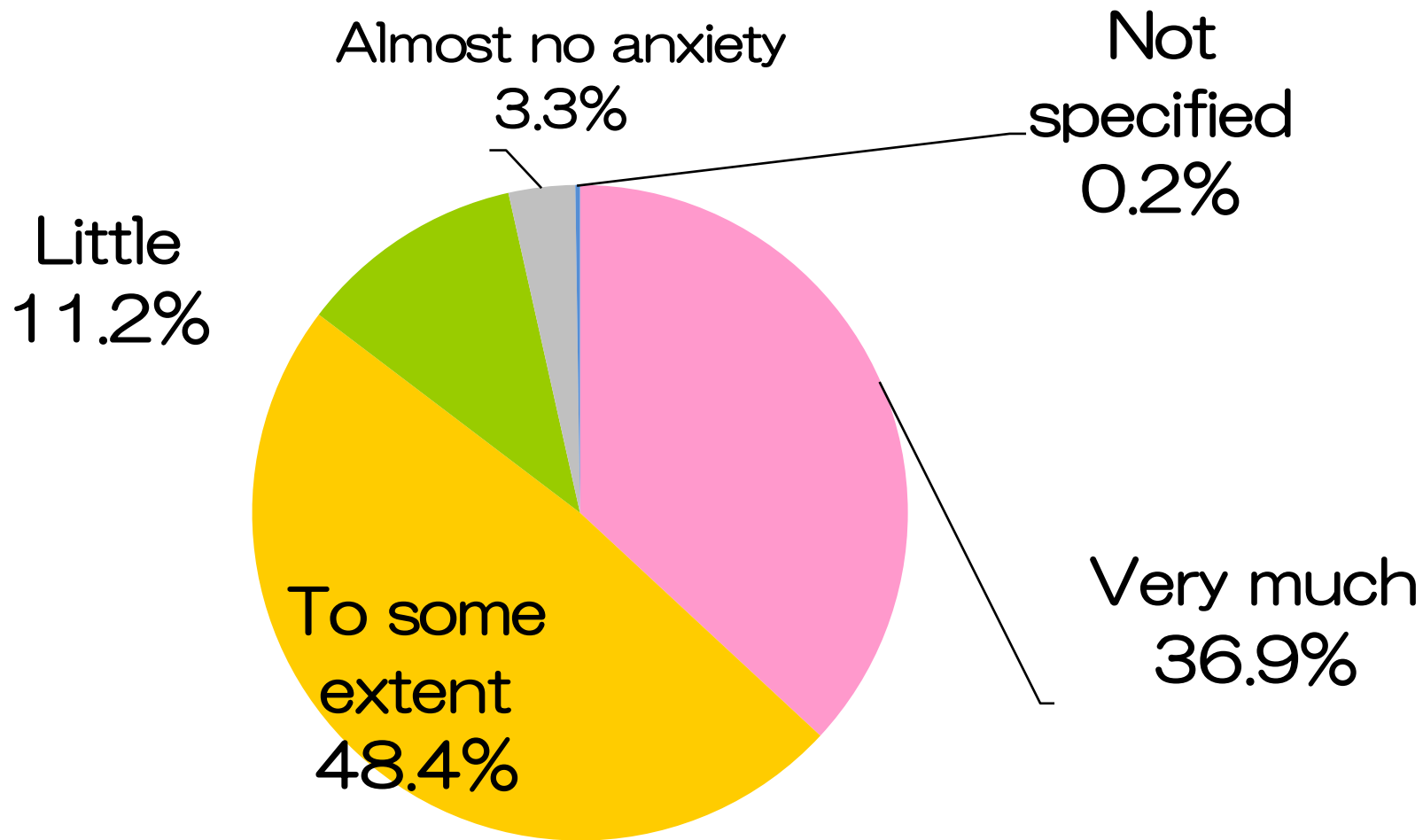
2-6 Do you feel anxious now about the health risk of external radiation to your children?



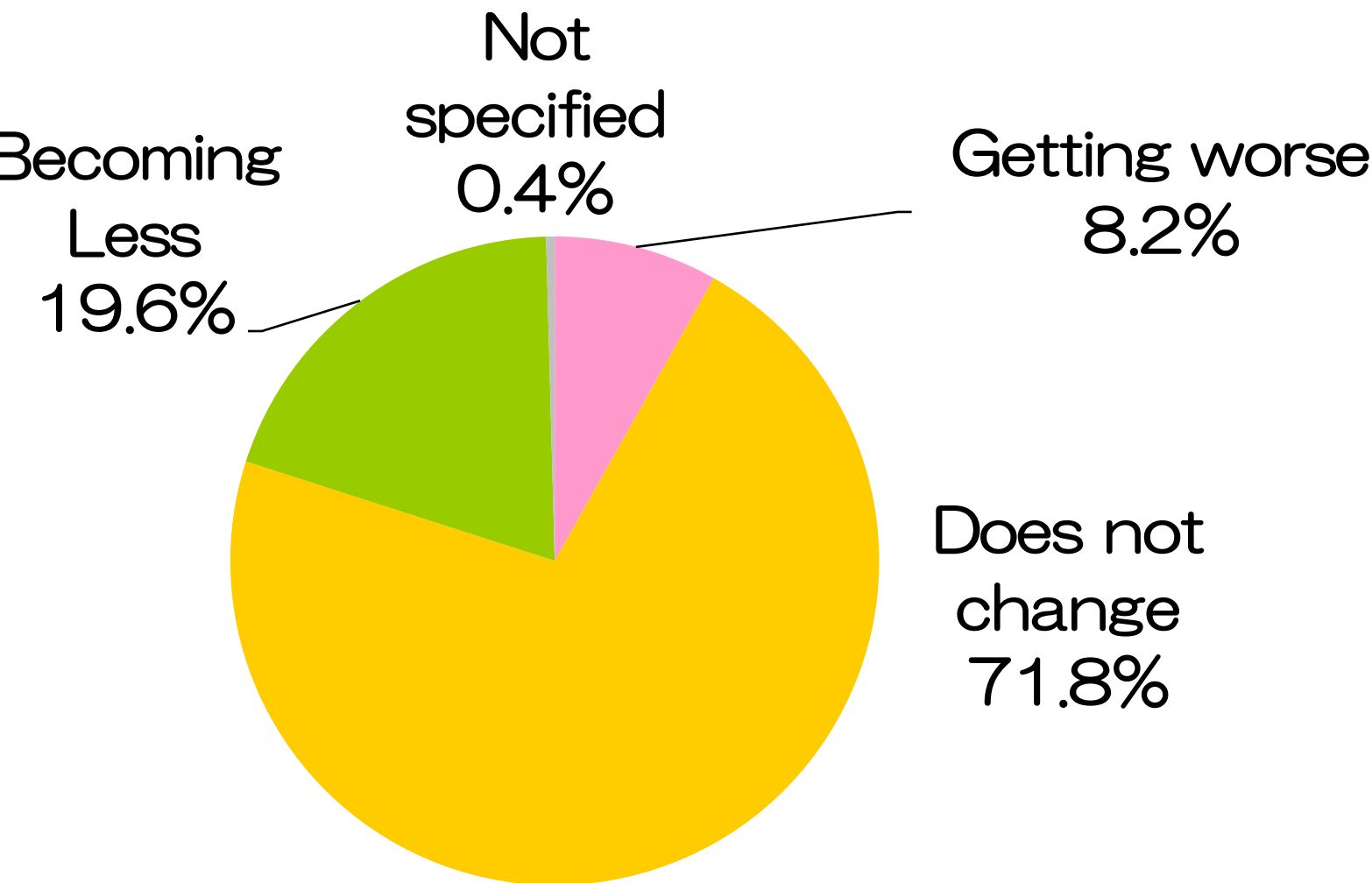
2-7 Does the level of your anxiety on external radiation
of your child change
after 3 years from the accident?



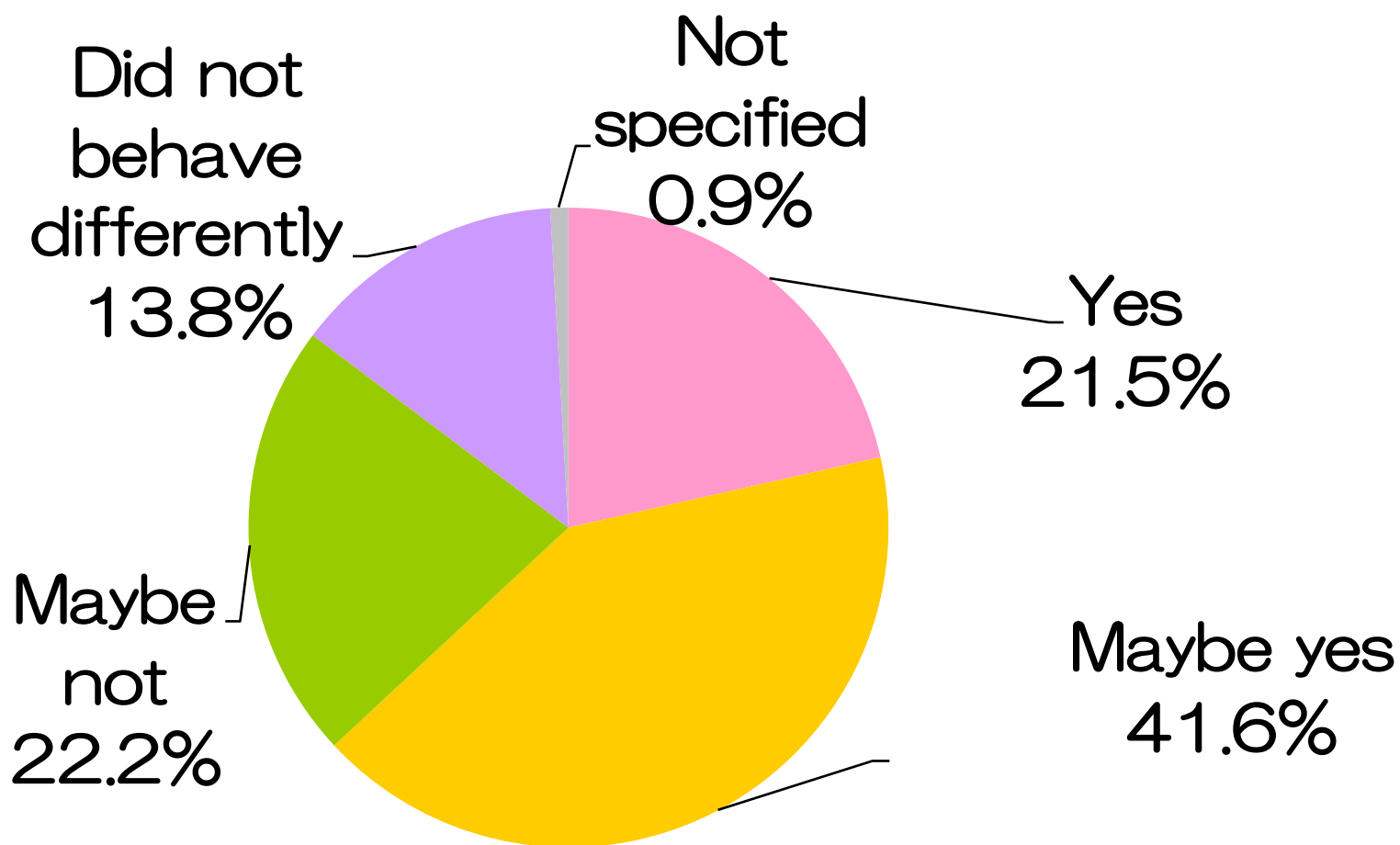
2-8 Do you feel anxious now about the health risk of internal radiation to your children?



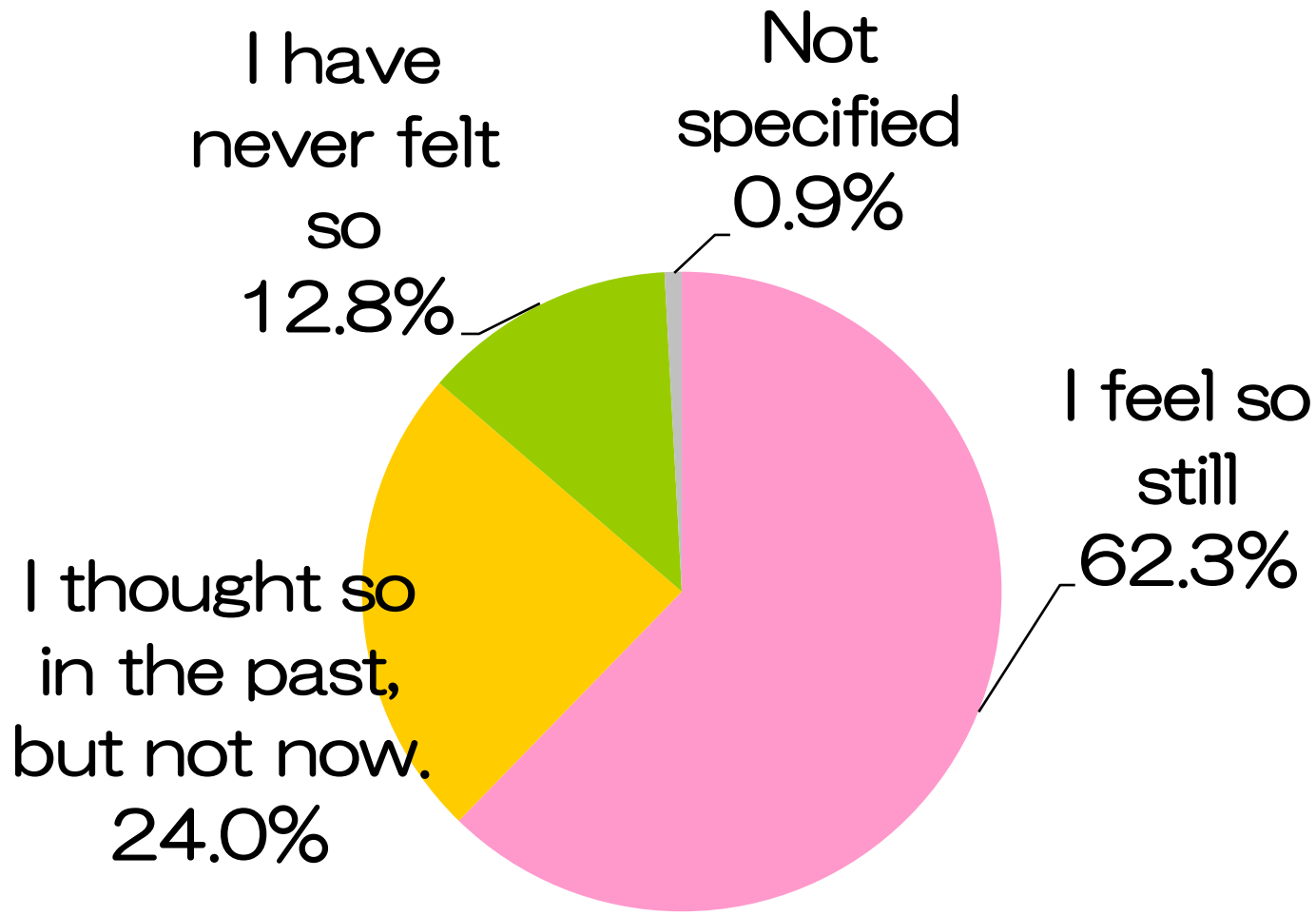
2-9 Does the level of your anxiety on internal radiation of your child change after 3 years from the accident?



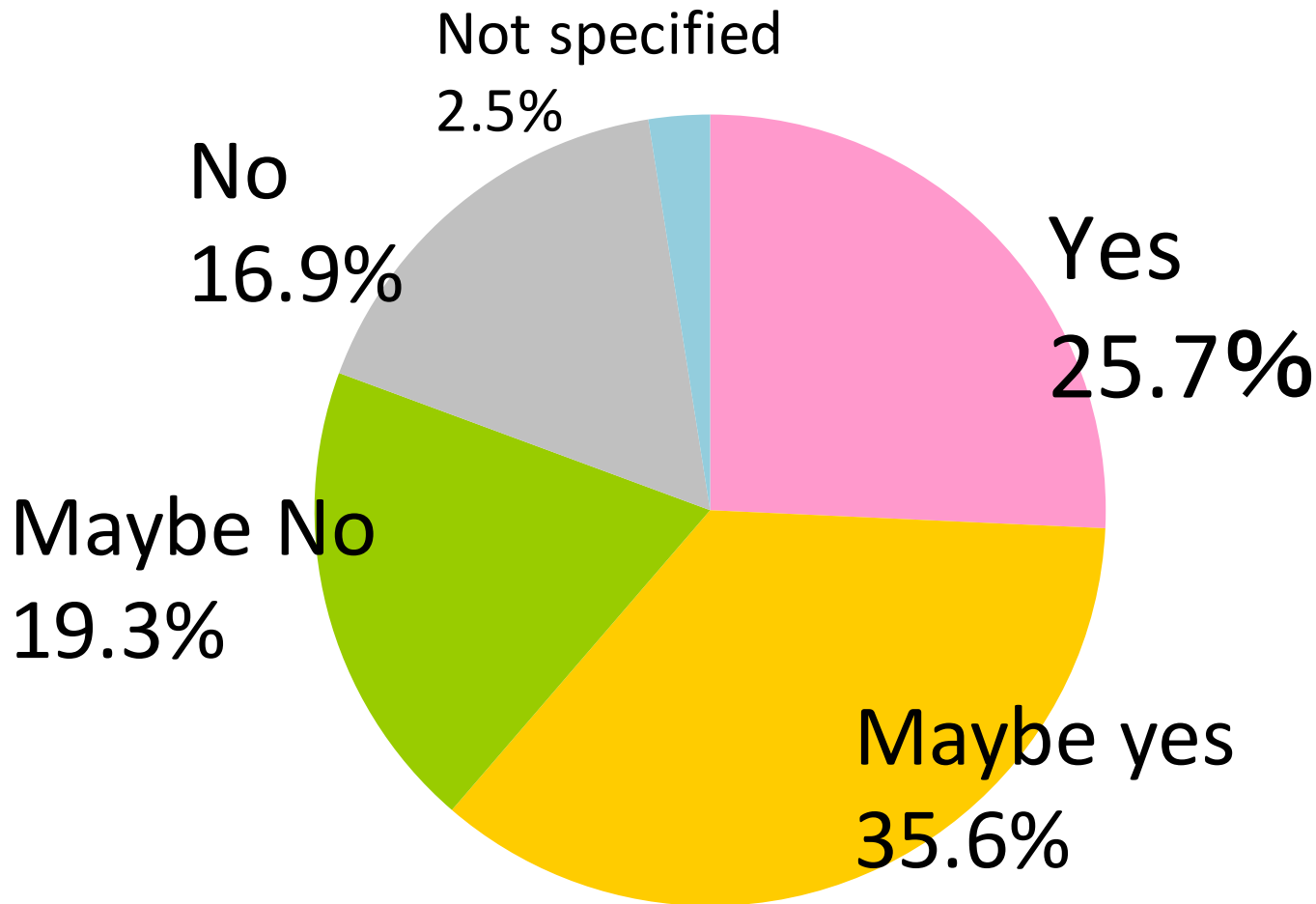
2-10 Did you behave differently at the time of the accident only if you had the knowledge and information now you have?



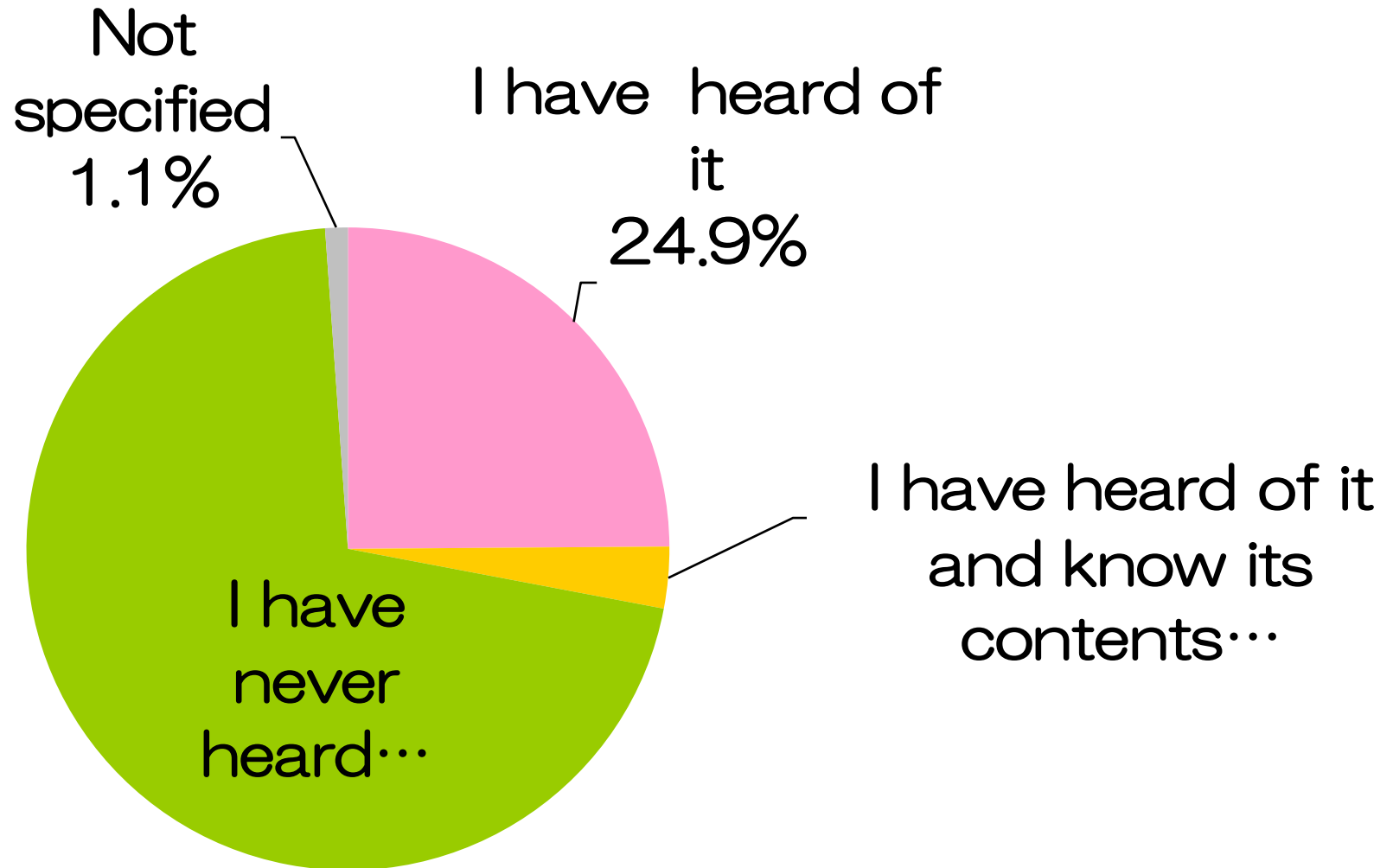
2-11 I worry about the future of the children in Tochigi.



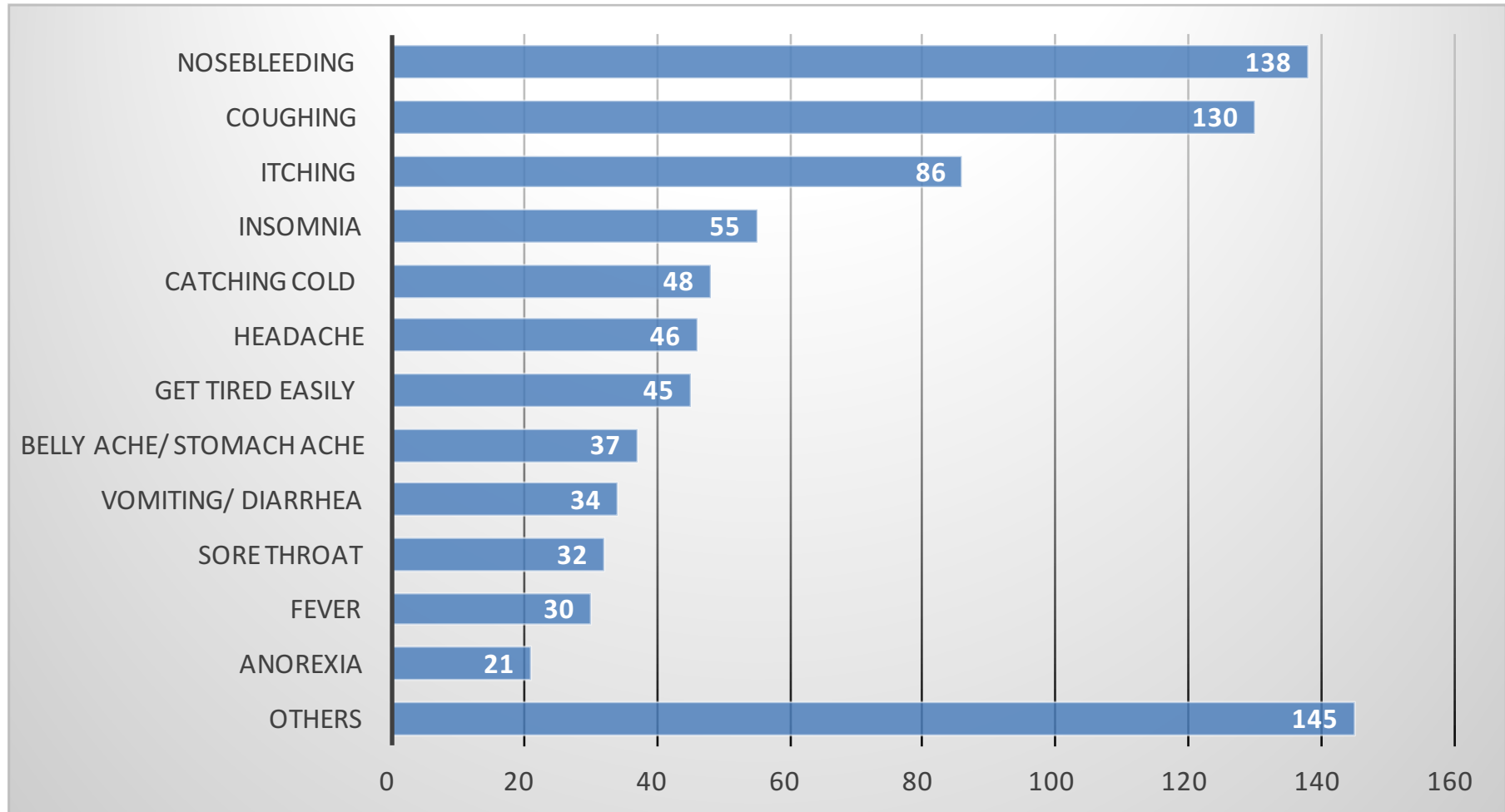
2-12 Voices of the women and mothers are not much reflected in the policies responding the accident



2-13 Do you know the Victims Support Law?



2-14 Have you observed any of the following symptoms which were not found before the accident in the last one year? (multiple choices allowed)



2-15 Strong needs for the official health check-up

Questionnaire Survey on the Examinees of the private funds' thyroid ultrasound tests in Tochigi

Collecting 165 answers (about 85% response rate)

- 99% needs official health check-up

- 81% needs official health check-up at schools

- 82% needs a check-up once a year

- 74% wants the check-up will continue more than 10 yrs

- 85% wants tests other than thyroid tests

3-1 The evacuees from the contaminated areas in Fukushima

- Evacuees from Fukushima Prefecture (as of May 2016)

Living in non-designated areas of Fukushima 50,662

Living outside of Fukushima 41,532

These numbers include the “voluntary evacuees” from non-designated evacuation areas.

- 2,809 evacuees are living in Tochigi Prefecture
(as of May 2016)

3-2 Interviews with the Evacuees in Tochigi

Conducted from April 2012 to the present

○My home is in the Designated Evacuation Area. My wife and I was living with my son's family, and they are saying that **they do not want to go back** even the decontamination has been completed.

○Perceptions of the health effects of radiation have been sharply different between my husband and myself, **so that we may end up divorcing**.

○My eldest daughter was 12 years old in 2011. She has **strong anxieties over the health risk of radiation** and do not want to go back.

3-3 The Residents living in the contaminated areas in Fukushima Prefecture

○Interviews conducted from December 2013 to the present.

At Fukushima City

The decontamination of my housing area finally started in 2013. However, the removed soil with high level radioactive materials has been left, only being covered with the plastic sheets.

At Nihonmatsu City

The highly radiated Yamakiya-district is very close to my house. In order to avoid any mental stress, I try not to think about the radiation in our daily lives.

3-4 The returnees living in Fukushima

Interviews conducted in Nihonmatsu City in May 2016.

Getting tired with living surrounded by the bags filled with radiated soil. Trying not to eat vegetables and mushrooms growing in the mountains. **Always worrying about the health conditions of the children.**



3-5 Questionnaire surveys on Evacuees living outside of Fukushima (2015)

Survey conducted by Fukushima Prefecture collecting 16,417 answers
(32.9% response rate)

- Future Prospects
 - 35.6% No answer
 - 22.3% I want to live in the place now living
(outside of Fukushima)
 - 20.6% I have not decided
 - 15.4% I want to go back to my home town
 - 2.6% I want to live outside of Fukushima, but not in
the place I am living now.
 - 2.1% I want to live in Fukushima, but not in my home town.
 - 1.3% Other answers

4-1 Necessary Measures 1

Accordingly, victims' rights to health and human security are threatened seriously.

First of all, it is necessary to challenge the difficulties of talking freely about the anxiety of radiation.

The long-term policies for addressing the anxieties of the residents: Effective decontamination, Regular measuring of the radiation of the air, soil and foods, health monitoring.

4-2 Necessary Measures 2

- Encouraging measures with reliable consultations for the residents to utilize rental dosimeters, food measuring programs, subsidies for health surveys, etc.
- Ex). Fukushima City introduced non-destructive food measuring system, which can check the radiation level in 5 minutes with consultation service.
- Ex) In Belarus, all the elementary schools have food measuring devices and the students are learning how to measure in their classes.

4-3 Necessary Measures 3

- Providing support for the agricultural and tourism industries heavily damages by the accident and radiation by **exchanging information between Fukushima and other affected areas.**
- **Recording and publication of the unheard voices of the victims to getting recognition in much wider public.**
- Demanding the realization of the Victims Support Law in its original spirit.
- **Importance of raising awareness of the violations of the right to health of the victims continuously for there are many victims who do not realize that their human rights are not protected.**
- **Challenging the difficulties of talking freely about the anxiety of radiation.**

For your reference:

Nanako Shimizu (2015) “Human Insecurity Caused by the Dysfunction of the State: New Security Issues in Post-Fukushima Japan,” in *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, Volume 3, No.2, (November 2015) pp. 165-187

http://tongil.snu.ac.kr/ajp_pdf/201512/02_Nanako%20Shimizu.pdf