

Attitudes Toward AI-Assisted Diagnostics

in NHS Ophthalmology

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence is increasingly explored to support overstretched NHS ophthalmology services.

Rising demand, image-heavy workflows and workforce constraints have driven interest in AI for **DR screening, glaucoma triage, AMD biomarker detection, cataract workflow** and admin tasks.

Yet **workforce readiness and clinician concerns** remain incompletely understood.

METHODS

42

UK NHS ophthalmologists
consultants · specialty doctors · trainees

Cross-sectional online survey, Sep – Dec 2025, all NHS Trusts.

Distribution: mailing lists; voluntary, anonymous.

8 domains: familiarity, exposure, usefulness, willingness, benefits, concerns, workforce, training.

AIM

To evaluate among UK NHS ophthalmologists:

Understanding & familiarity with AI in ophthalmology

Perceived utility across DR, glaucoma, AMD, cataract

Perceived risks & governance concerns

Training expectations & professional development needs

RESULTS

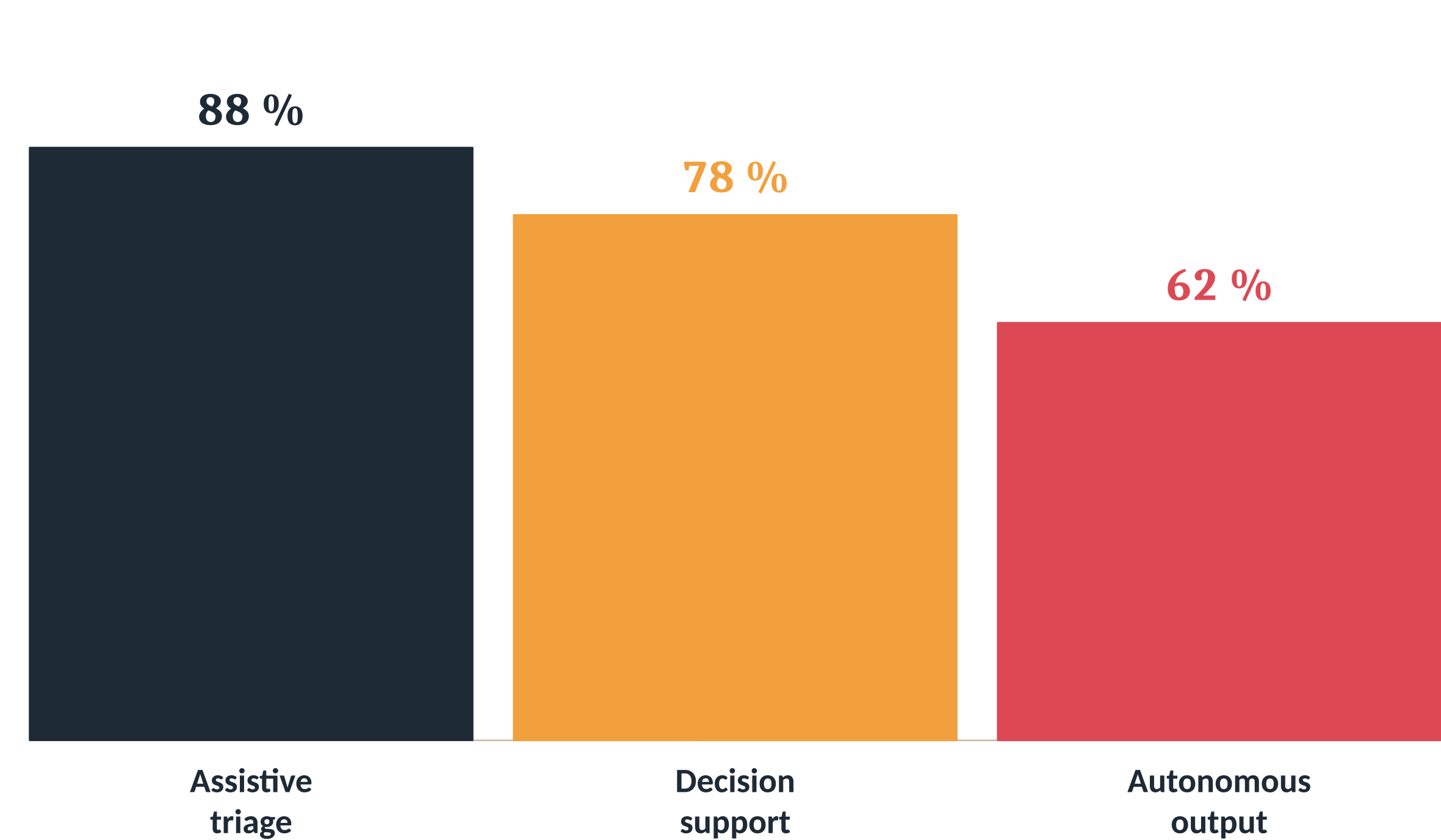
4 readouts — familiarity · adoption · pathway usefulness · benefits vs concerns

1. Familiarity

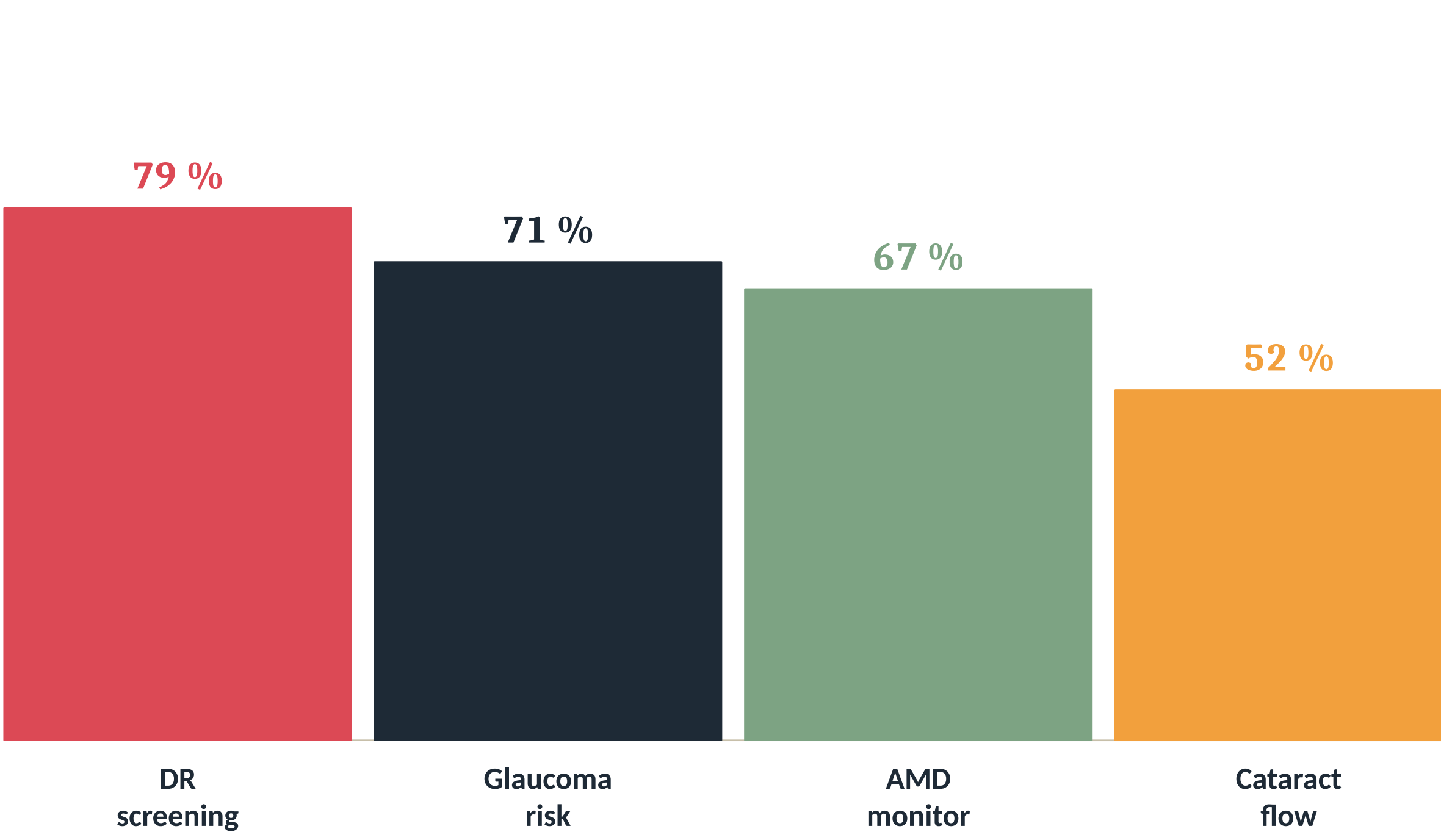


- Minimal
- Basic
- Good / Advanced

2. Adoption Readiness



3. Pathway Usefulness



4. Benefits & Concerns



DISCUSSION

1 Broad receptivity

UK ophthalmologists are largely open to AI-assisted diagnostics — especially in high-volume imaging pathways.

3 Trust barriers persist

Medico-legal liability, governance, algorithmic bias and explainability are decisive adoption barriers.

2 Imaging-heavy gains

Greatest perceived value in DR screening, glaucoma surveillance, AMD monitoring and cataract workflows.

4 Training is the unlock

84 % want structured RCOphth-endorsed training — a clear, feasible national priority.

CONCLUSION

UK ophthalmologists are **broadly receptive** to AI-assisted diagnostics in NHS care.

Clear **national guidance, transparent validation and structured training** will be essential for safe, equitable adoption.

PATHWAY & RECS



- Develop RCOphth-endorsed online AI training (all grades).
- Establish clear medico-legal frameworks for AI decisions.
- Set transparent NHS validation standards for clinical AI.
- Pilot autonomous AI in DR screening with active surveillance.