

# Evaluation of the performance of an ultra-thin flange extender in ostomates with active lifestyles

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## Introduction

The formation of a stoma may discourage or even prevent new ostomates from resuming their preoperative active lifestyles or from pursuing new active interests.

Those who do take up an active lifestyle after their surgery will subject their ostomy products to more testing conditions, through bending, stretching, sweating and exposure to water. Although exercise introduces additional challenges for ostomy care products, this should not prevent the wearer from taking part and being active. The products they use need to be, therefore, secure, conformable, comfortable and discreet enough to

keep up with the demands of their active lifestyles.

Early research into the use of an innovative ultra-thin flange extender revealed particularly positive results from those who wore their extenders while taking part in what they themselves described as "high-level activity". The results showed that the new product increased security, conformability, comfort and discretion for these users. Additional active ostomates were invited to evaluate this ultra-thin flange extender to get a better understanding of their needs and how the extenders being evaluated compared to currently established products.

## Objectives

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an innovative ultra-thin flange extender when used by ostomates with active lifestyles, both during regular day-to-day use and during activities which the users described as being high-level.

The users' perceptions of the product's security, conformability, comfort and discretion during these activities were of particular interest as these had been identified as key priorities of ostomates with active lifestyles.

## Materials and Methods

The agreed exclusion criteria limited participants to those who were already using flange extenders established in their markets and had no existing peristomal skin complications. Ostomates from the UK, Denmark and Sweden, who met the inclusion criteria, were invited to take part. A total of 15 completed the evaluation.

Of the 15, 7 were based in the UK, 6 in Denmark and 2 in Sweden. Each completed a questionnaire

based on their lifestyles and existing flange extenders before using samples of the ultra-thin flange extender for 1 week. They then completed a second questionnaire which compared their experiences and opinions of the ultra-thin flange extender with that of their existing flange extenders.

There were no restrictions placed on the activities in which participants could take part to be included in this group; the only requirement was

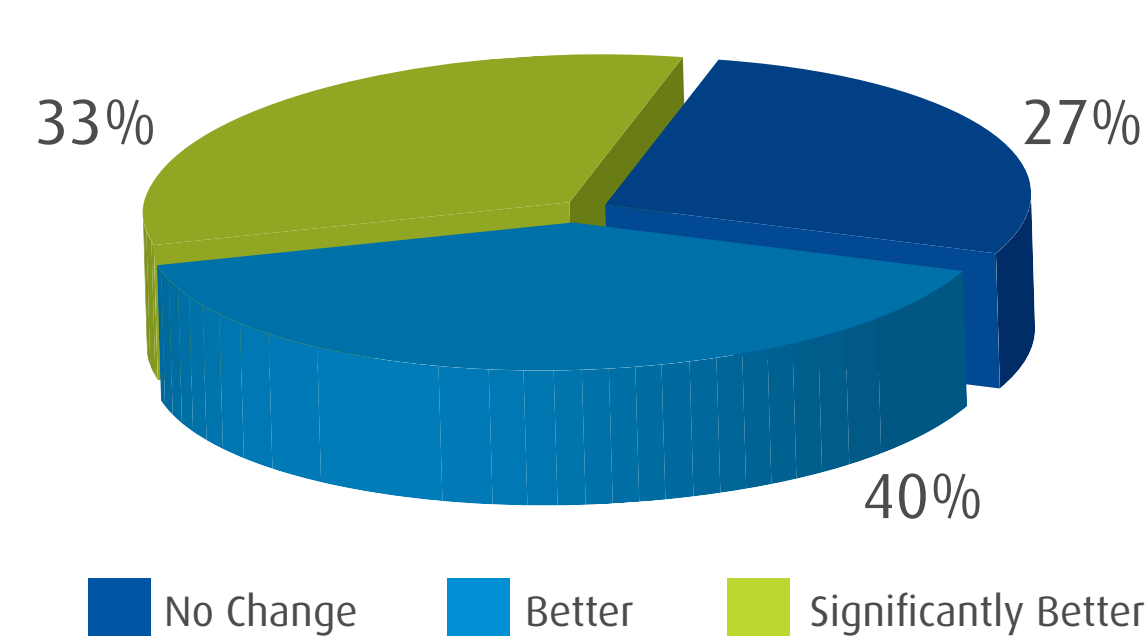
that they themselves described the activities they were completing as being "high level". Each participant was asked to list the activities in which they took part while wearing the ultra-thin flange extender. The responses included, but were not limited to: running a marathon, completing a triathlon, running, swimming, cycling, kayaking, hiking, shooting, fishing, Pilates, gardening and horse riding.

## Results

### Security

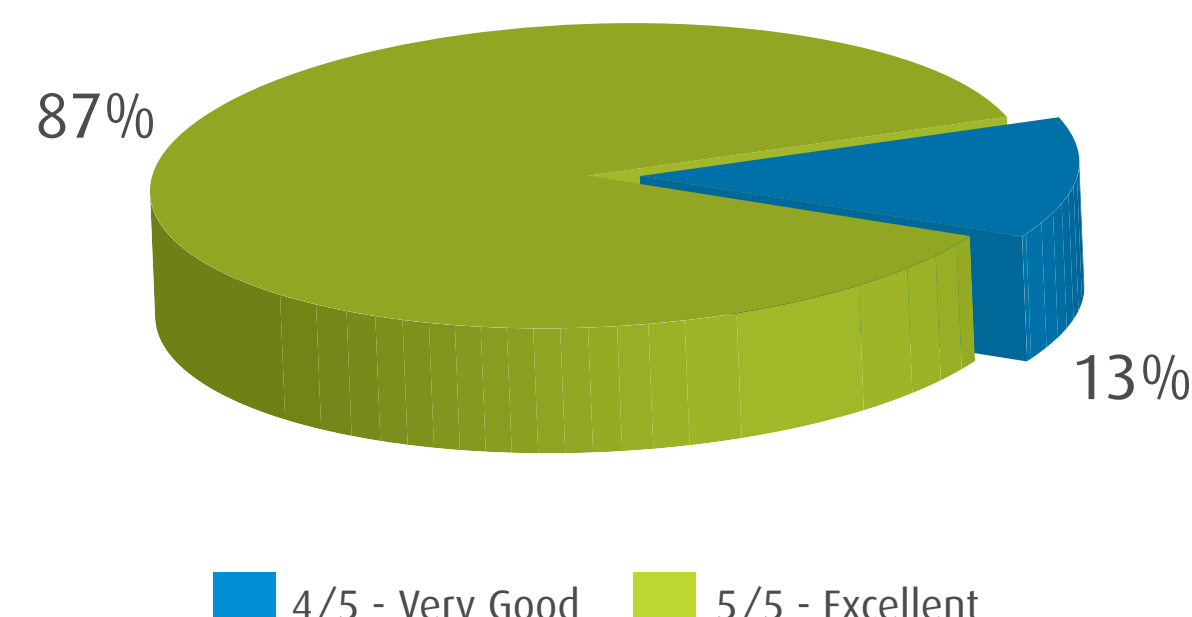
When asked to compare the security of the ultra-thin flange extender with their regular products, **73% felt that the ultra-thin flange extender gave them an increased sense of security.** The full results were as follows: 33% felt that the ultra-thin flange extender was significantly better, 40% felt that it was better and the remaining 27% felt that it was to the same standard as their existing flange extenders.

Security compared to existing flange extender



Participants were also asked to rate the security of the ultra-thin flange extender without drawing comparison to their existing product. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), **87% rated security 5 (excellent)** and 13% rated security as 4 (very good).

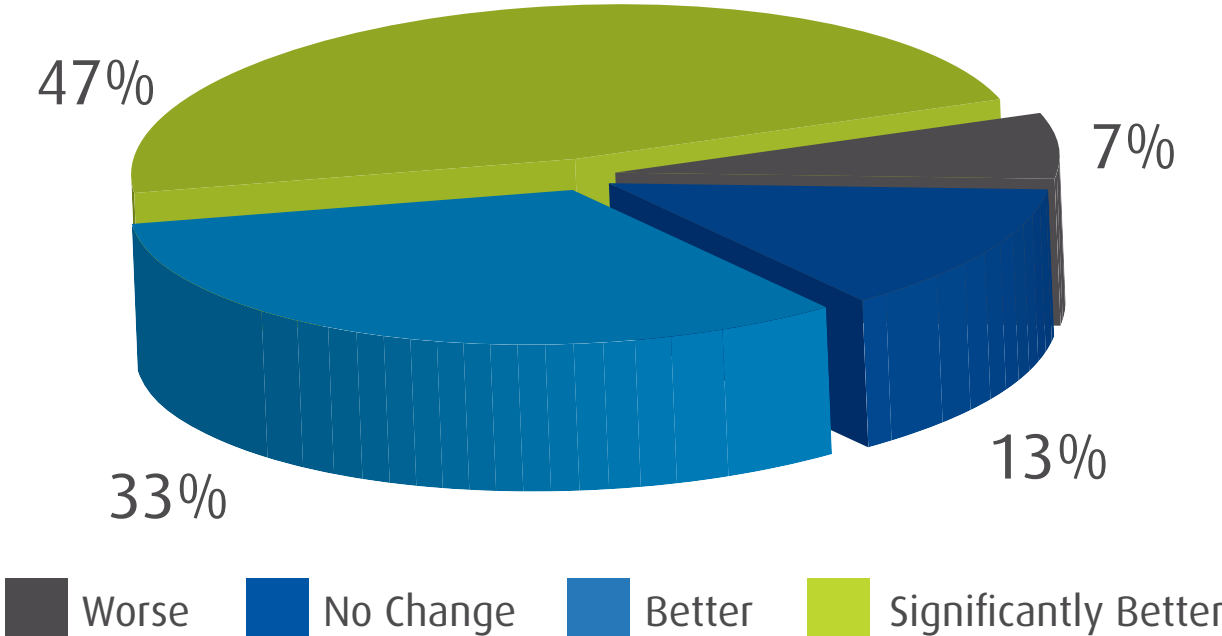
Security out of 5



### Conformability

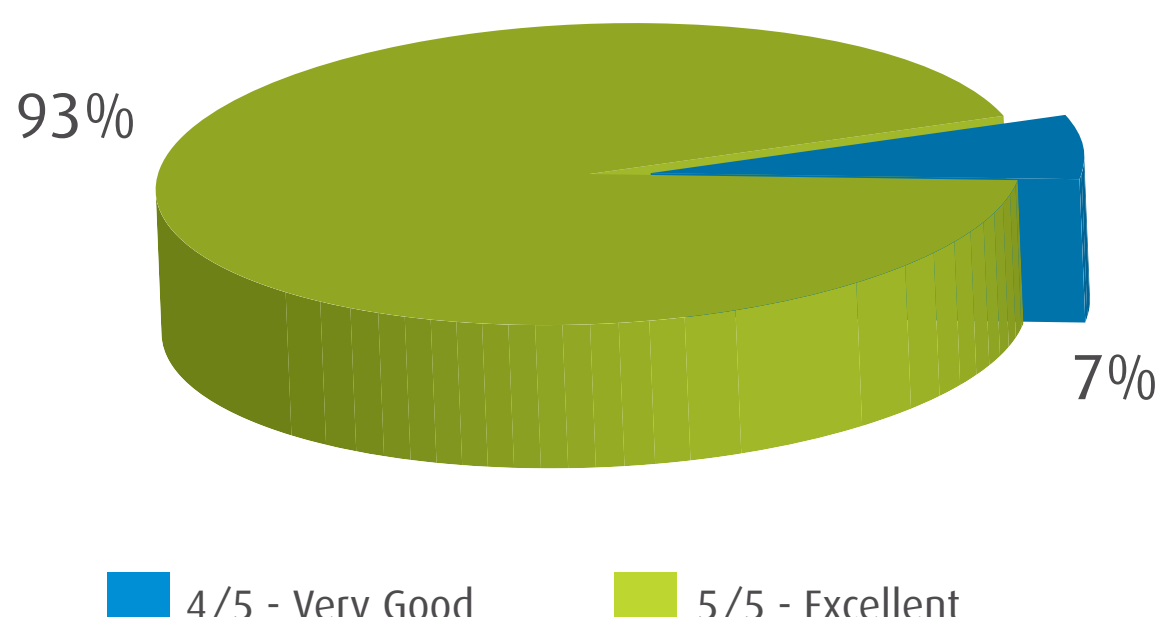
Of the 15 active evaluators, **80% perceived the conformability of the ultra-thin flange extender to be of a better quality than the regular flange extenders.** The full results were: 47% felt that the ultra-thin flange extender was significantly better, 33% felt that it was better, 13% felt that it was the same standard and the remaining 7% felt that it was worse.

Conformability compared to existing flange extender



Participants were asked to rate the conformability of the ultra-thin flange extender without drawing comparison to their existing product. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), **93% rated the conformability as 5 (excellent)** and 7% rated the conformability as 4 (very good).

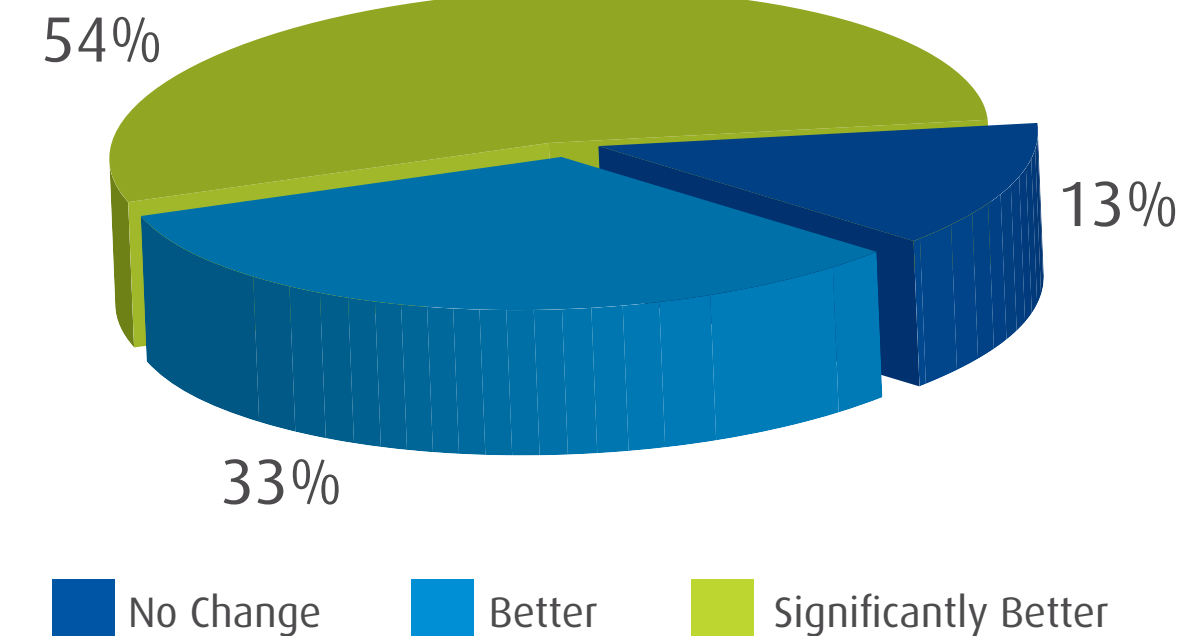
Conformability out of 5



### Discretion

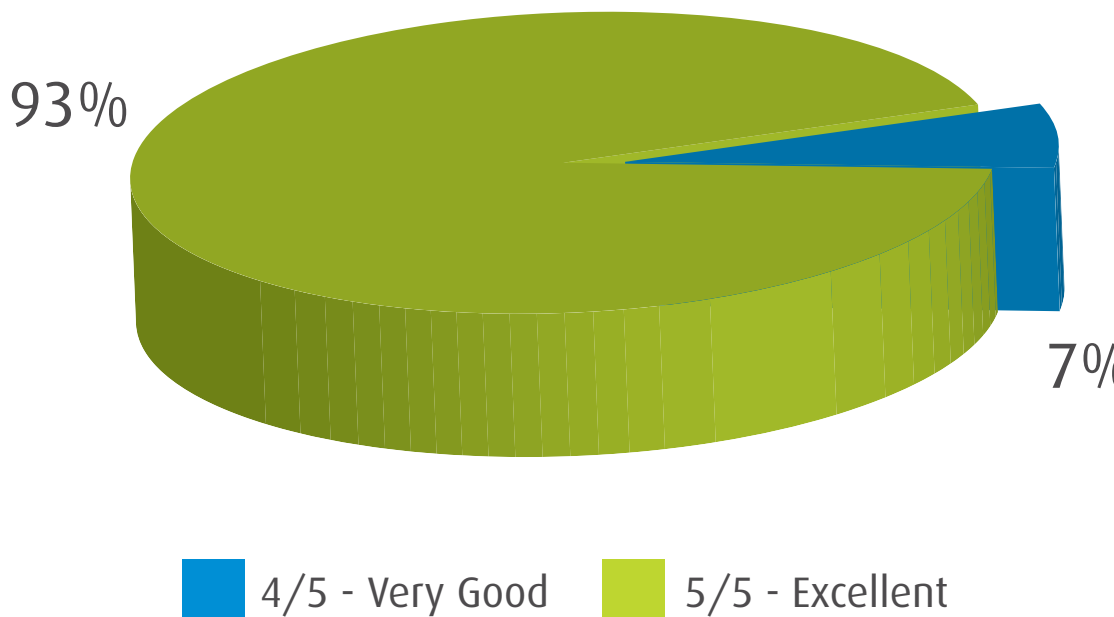
**A total of 87% felt that the discretion of the ultra-thin flange extender was better than their existing flange extenders.** The full results were: 54% felt that the discretion of the ultra-thin flange extender was significantly better, 33% felt that it was better and 13% felt that it was the same.

Discretion compared to existing flange extender



Participants were asked to rate the discretion of the ultra-thin flange extender without drawing comparison to their existing product. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), **93% rated the discretion as 5 (excellent)** and 7% rated it as 4 (very good).

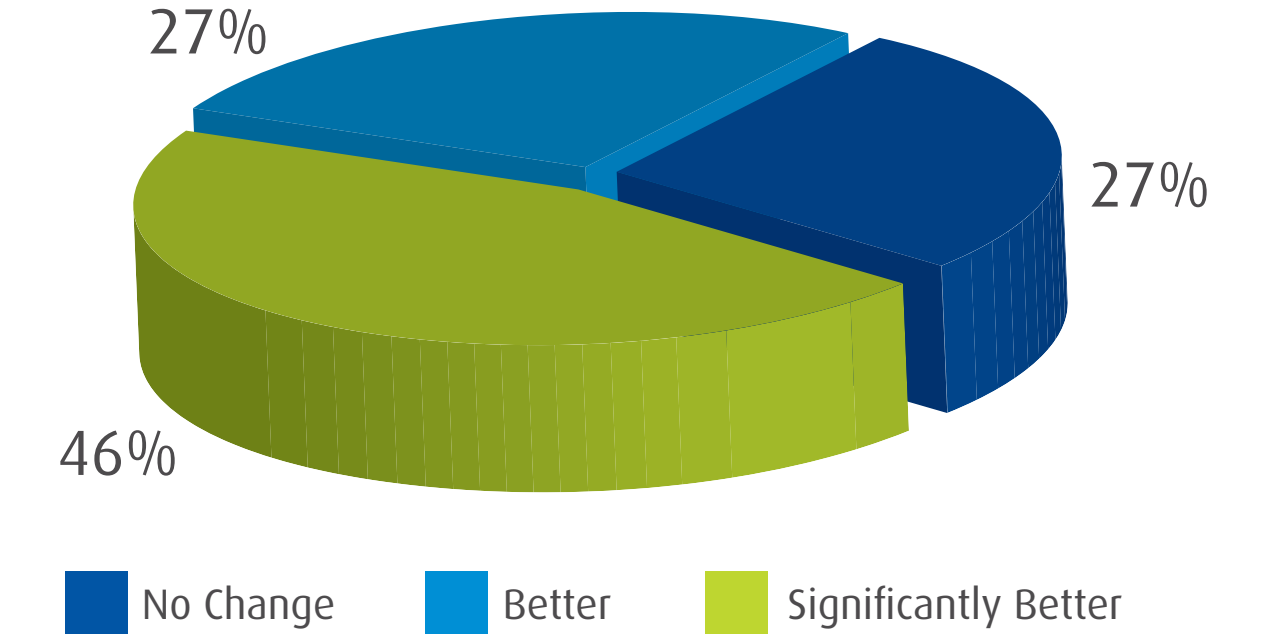
Discretion out of 5



### Comfort

When comparing the comfort of wearing the ultra-thin flange extender with the comfort to which they were accustomed with their regular flange extenders, **73% felt that the comfort of the ultra-thin flange extender was better.** The full results were: 46% said the ultra-thin flange extender was significantly better, 27% felt it was better and the remaining 27% felt that it was to the same standard.

Comfort compared to existing flange extender



## Conclusions

In this evaluation **73% of active ostomates said that they would use the ultra-thin flange extender in place of their existing product.** The majority of those who took part in the evaluation found the security, conformability, comfort and discretion of the ultra-thin flange extender to be to a high standard; in each of these areas respectively: **73%, 80%, 73% and 87%** of participants felt that the performance of the ultra-thin flange extender surpassed that of the flange extenders they were regularly using. This demonstrates a strong case for advocating the use of this new flange extender for day-to-day use and in particular for ostomates with active lifestyles.