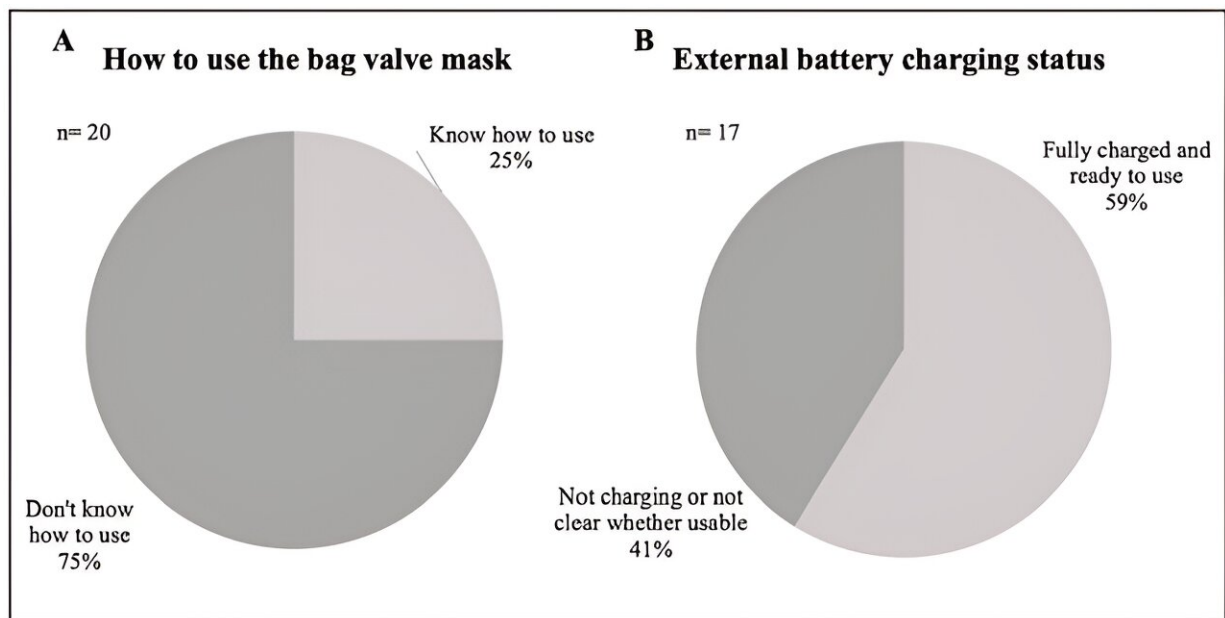


Researchers: Advances must be made in disaster preparedness for ALS patients

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(A) and whether they knew the charging status of the external battery (B), respectively. (A) A quarter of bag-valve mask owners knew how to use their equipment, and three-quarters answered they did not know how to use it. (B) Approximately 40% of external battery owners answered that the batteries were not charging, or they were unsure of the availability of the battery. Credit: Dr. Takehisa Hirayama

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is an intractable disease of the motor neurons for which there is currently no radical cure. ALS causes

reductions in patient ability to walk, any many patients required invasive or non-invasive ventilator assistance. Thus, when a disaster causes a loss of transportation or power outages, patients with ALS face serious challenges.

Patients with advanced ALS require electrical equipment to maintain life, and are often difficult to transport to evacuation centers. As such, preparedness for disasters is an especially important issue for patients with ALS. However, few reports have investigated disaster preparedness in this cohort.

Professor Osamu Kano, M.D., Ph.D. and his colleagues investigated the disaster preparedness of patients with ALS and their caregivers in Japan. They performed a cross-sectional questionnaire survey, in which >70% of the [respondents](#) answered that they were not prepared for disasters.

Further, 86% of the respondents had no plans for alternative means of communication if the [phone lines](#) were down. Including ventilator users,

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