

Counsellors' barriers, needs and preferences regarding providing and improving physical activity counselling to adults with spinal cord injury: an international survey

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BACKGROUND

- Recently, an international panel co-created theory- and evidence-based best practices to improve physical activity counselling for adults with spinal cord injury (SCI).¹
- To support the implementation of these best practices, training modules are being developed that will teach counsellors these best practices.
- To ensure this training will be useful, it should address counsellors' current barriers, needs and preferences.

AIMS

To identify counsellors' barriers, needs and preferences regarding providing and improving SCI-specific physical activity counselling.

METHODS



- Guided by the **IKT Guiding Principles**², we meaningfully engaged research users throughout this study.

- This cross-sectional study involved an online **survey**.



- Survey included questions about demographics, counselling experiences, barriers, needs and preferences on improving SCI-specific physical activity counselling.



- Participants could take part if they were planning to provide guidance or counselling to one or more clients in the next 12 months on starting and/or maintaining a physically active lifestyle.

- Descriptive statistics were used to present and analyze the data.

References:

- Hoekstra et al. (2022) Preprint; 10.31219/osf.io/dfmsz.
- Gainforth et al. (2021) Arch Phys Med Rehabil. Apr;102(4):656-663.



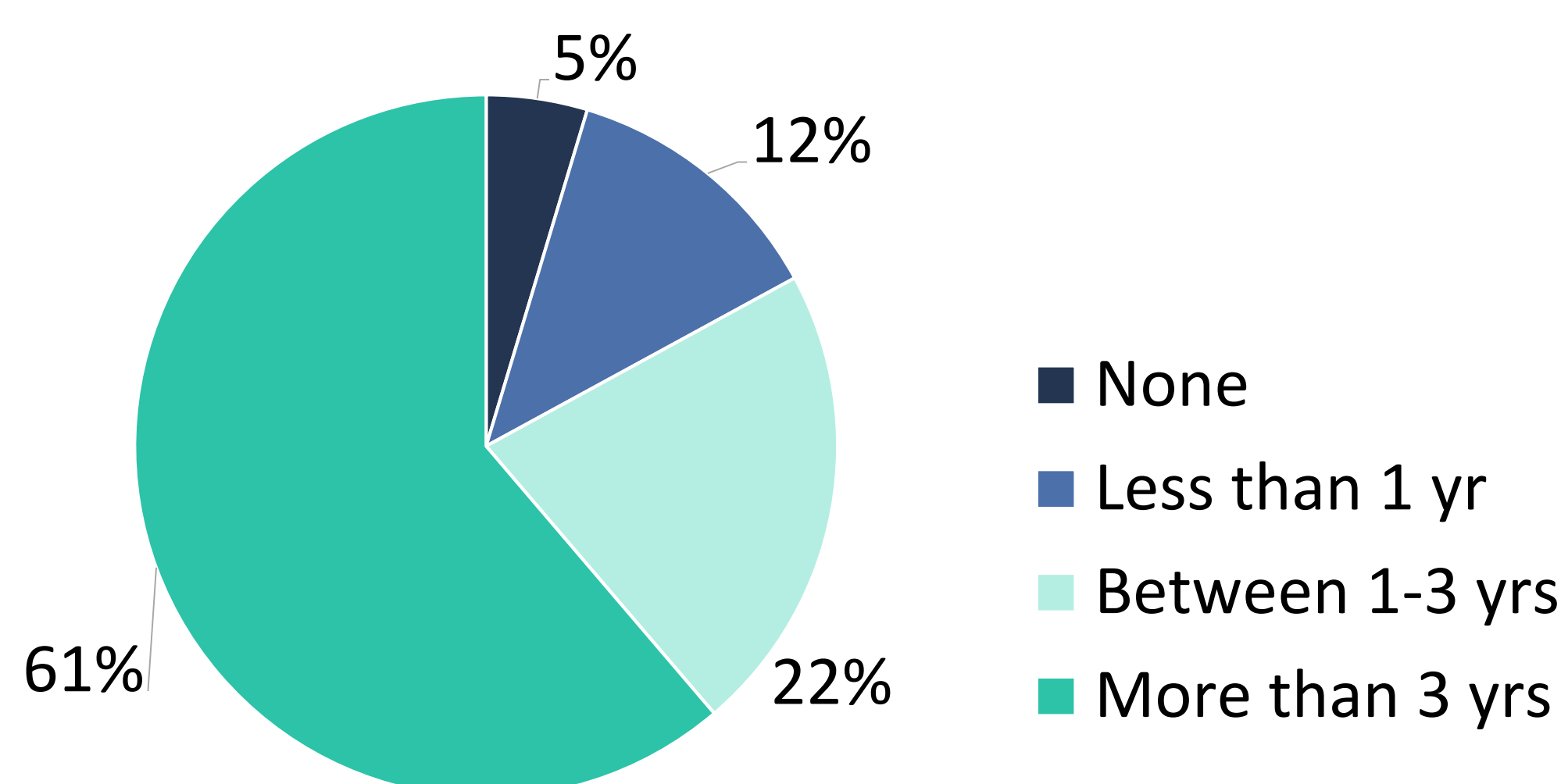
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RESULTS

Counselling expertise and experiences

- Survey participants (n=129) included lifestyle/exercise counsellors (n=52), physiotherapists (n=28), recreation therapists (n=25), occupational therapists (n=12), SCI peer mentors (n=12), fitness trainers (n=12), other coaches (n=11).

How many years of counselling experiences do you have?



How many clients with SCI do you counsel per year?

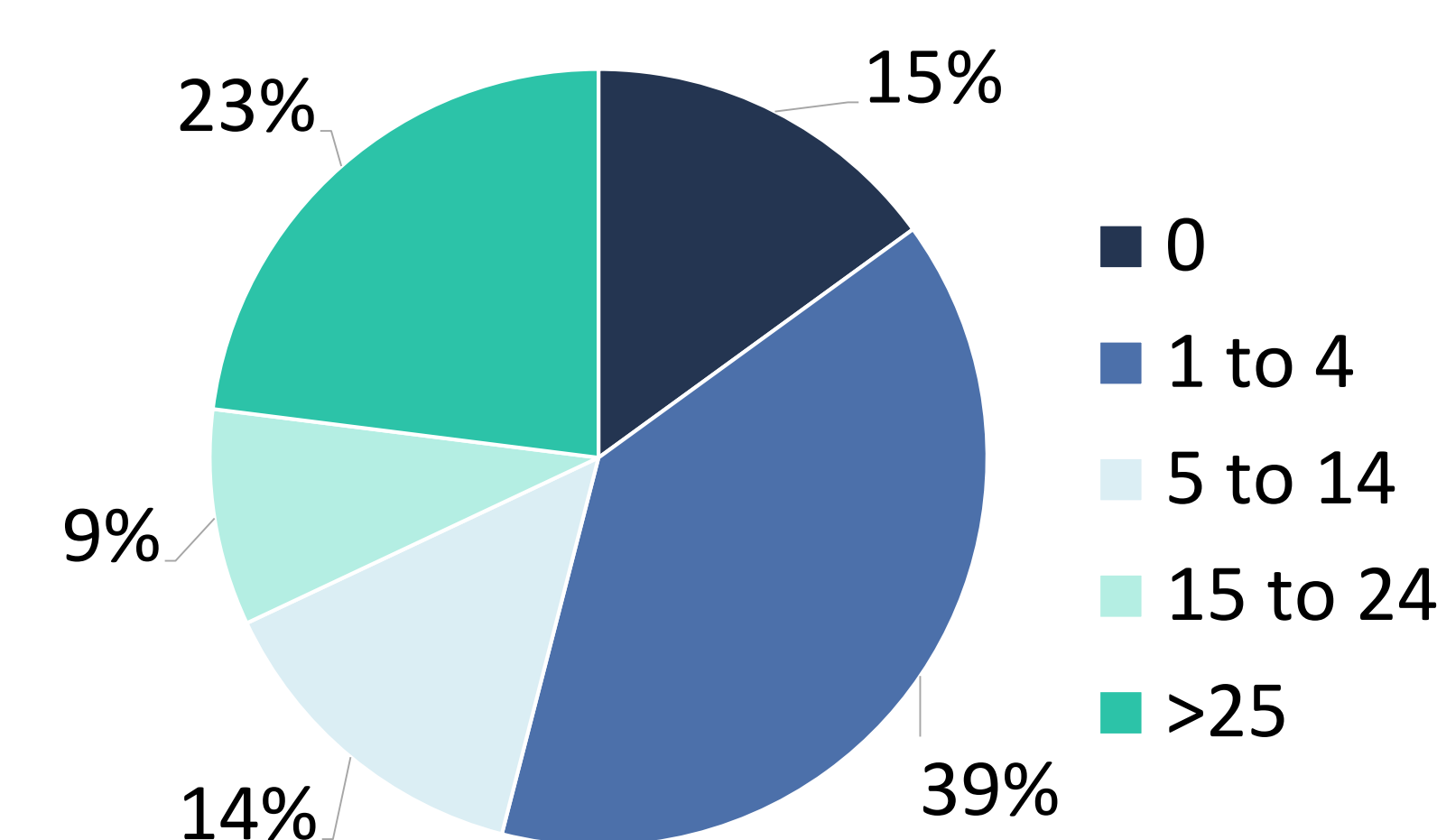
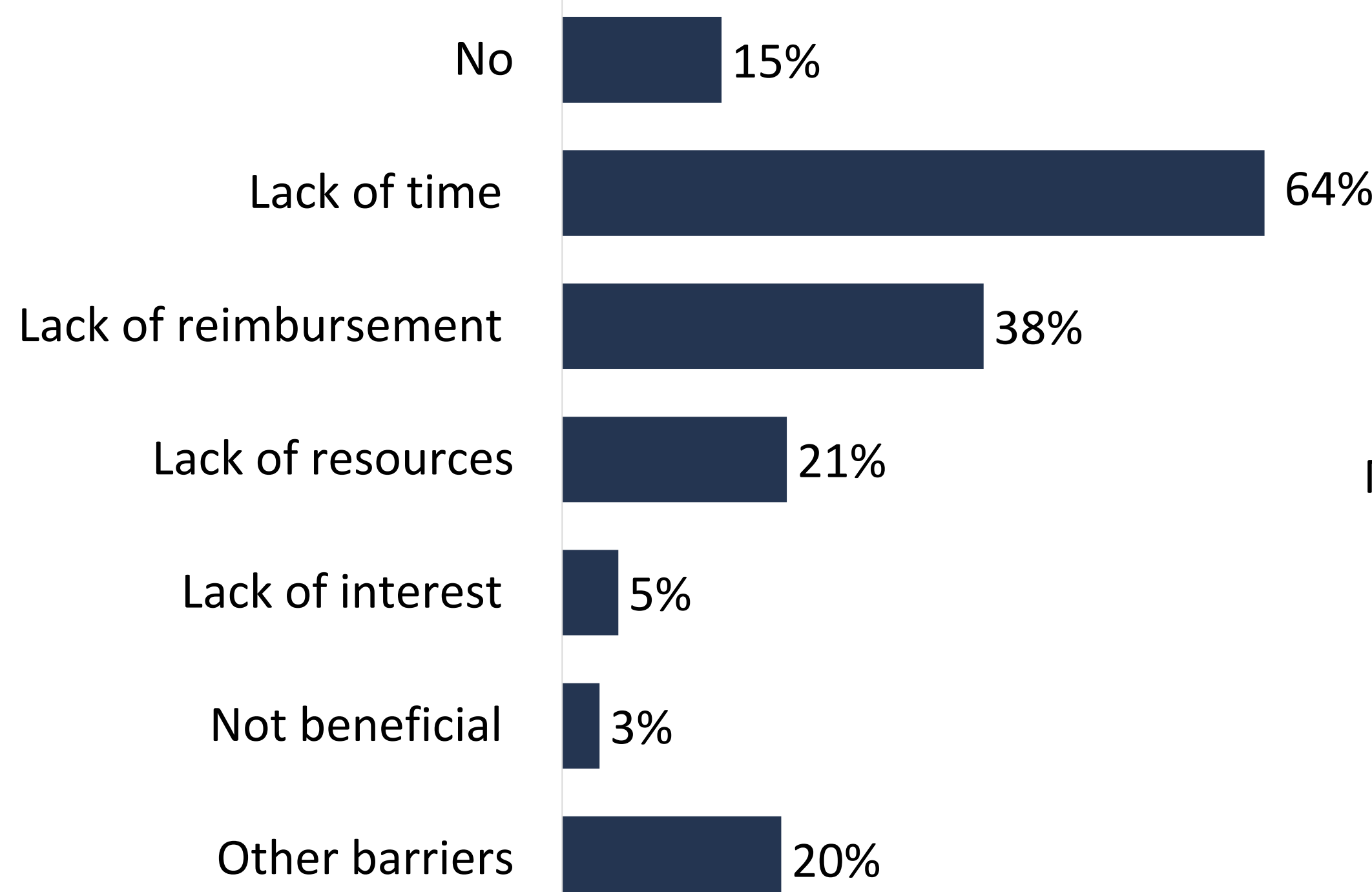


Figure 1: Participants' counselling experiences. The majority (61%) of the participants have more than 3 years of counselling experiences (*left figure*). 39% of participants counsel 1 to 4 clients with SCI per year; 23% counsel between 5 and 24 clients, and 23% of participants counsel >25 clients with SCI per year (*right figure*).

Barriers, needs and preferences

- Almost all participants (87%) are interested in online training modules on the best practices.

Are you experiencing any barriers to improving your knowledge and skills on SCI physical activity counselling?



What topics on SCI physical activity counselling would you like to learn more about?

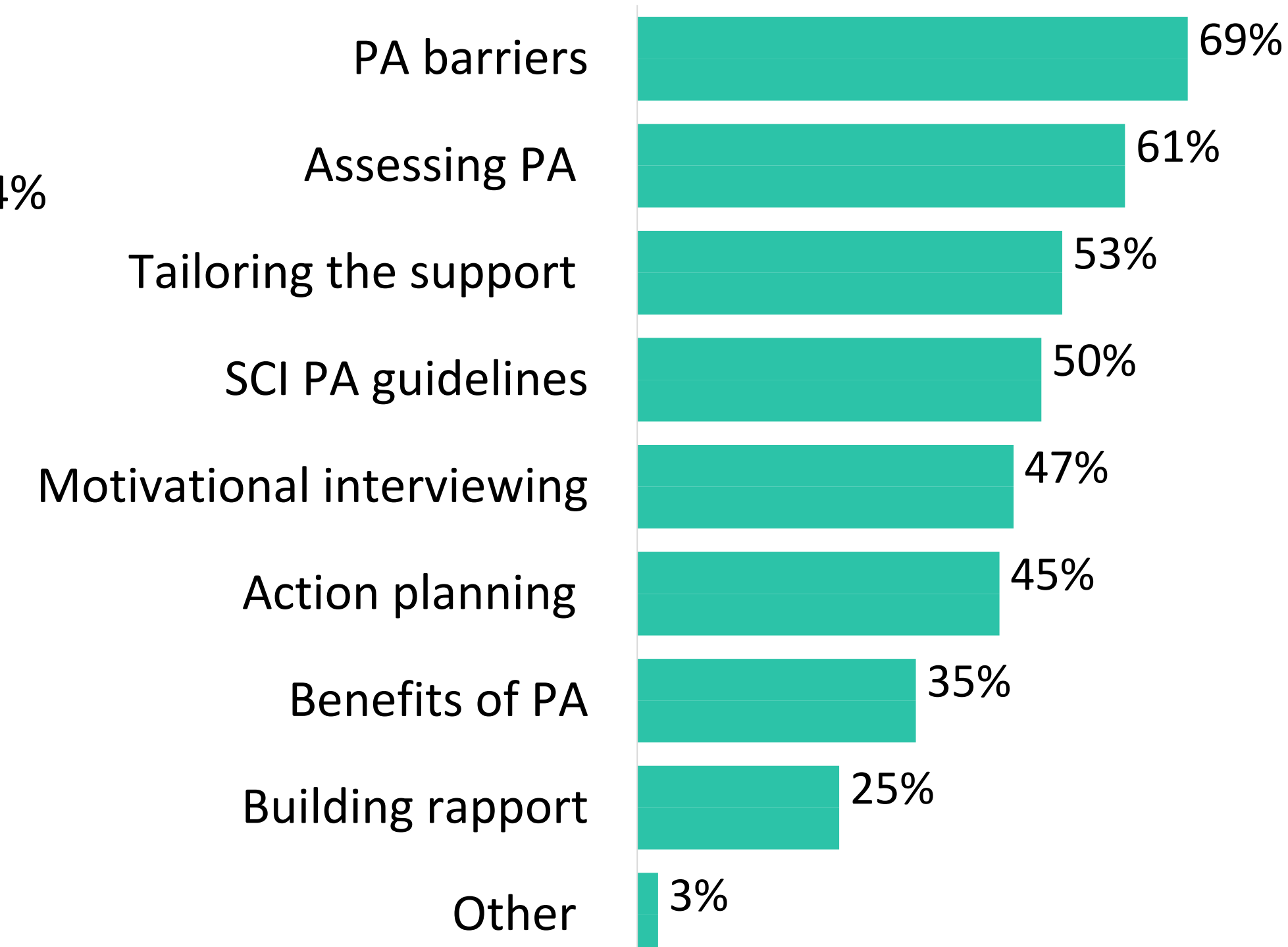


Figure 2: The majority (85%) of participants experiences barriers to improving their knowledge and skills on SCI physical activity counselling (*left figure*). The most common barriers were: lack of time (64%), lack of reimbursement (38%), and lack of resources (21%). Participants wanted to learn more about SCI physical activity barriers (69%), assessing physical activity in adults with SCI (61%), and tailoring the support (53%) (*right figure*). PA = physical activity.

CONCLUSION

- While counsellors want to improve their knowledge and skills on SCI physical activity counselling, the majority (85%) face barriers to do so.
- These findings informed the development of online, evidence-based training modules to teach counsellors the best practices for SCI physical activity counselling.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Training modules on these best practices can contribute to optimizing SCI physical activity counselling services and, subsequently, improving physical activity behaviour of adults with SCI.