

Report from the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (WFOT) Global Survey of Current Assistive Technology Use

World Federation of Occupational Therapists

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Background

Today a billion people worldwide are estimated to need an assistive technology (AT) product.



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Only 1 in 10 people have access to the AT they need.

(World Health Organisation 2017)



Objectives

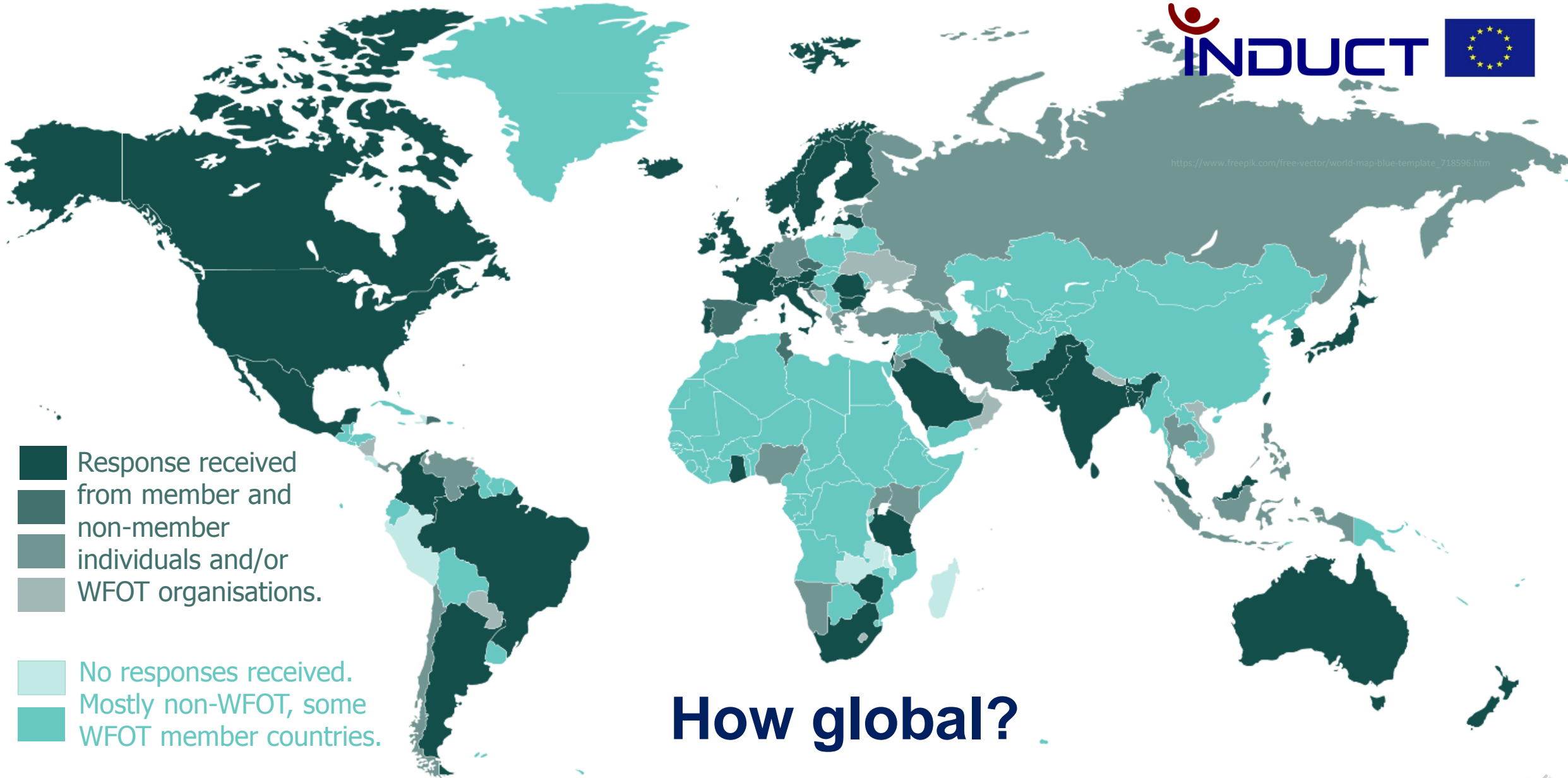


- To identify the status of AT access across WFOT member countries;
- and determine perceived barriers and facilitators to AT universal access locally and globally.

Definition:

Assistive technology comprises products (both mainstream and customised), environmental modifications, services, and processes that enable the participation of people with disabilities in desired occupations, across multiple environments and without prejudice (Cook & Polgar 2015)





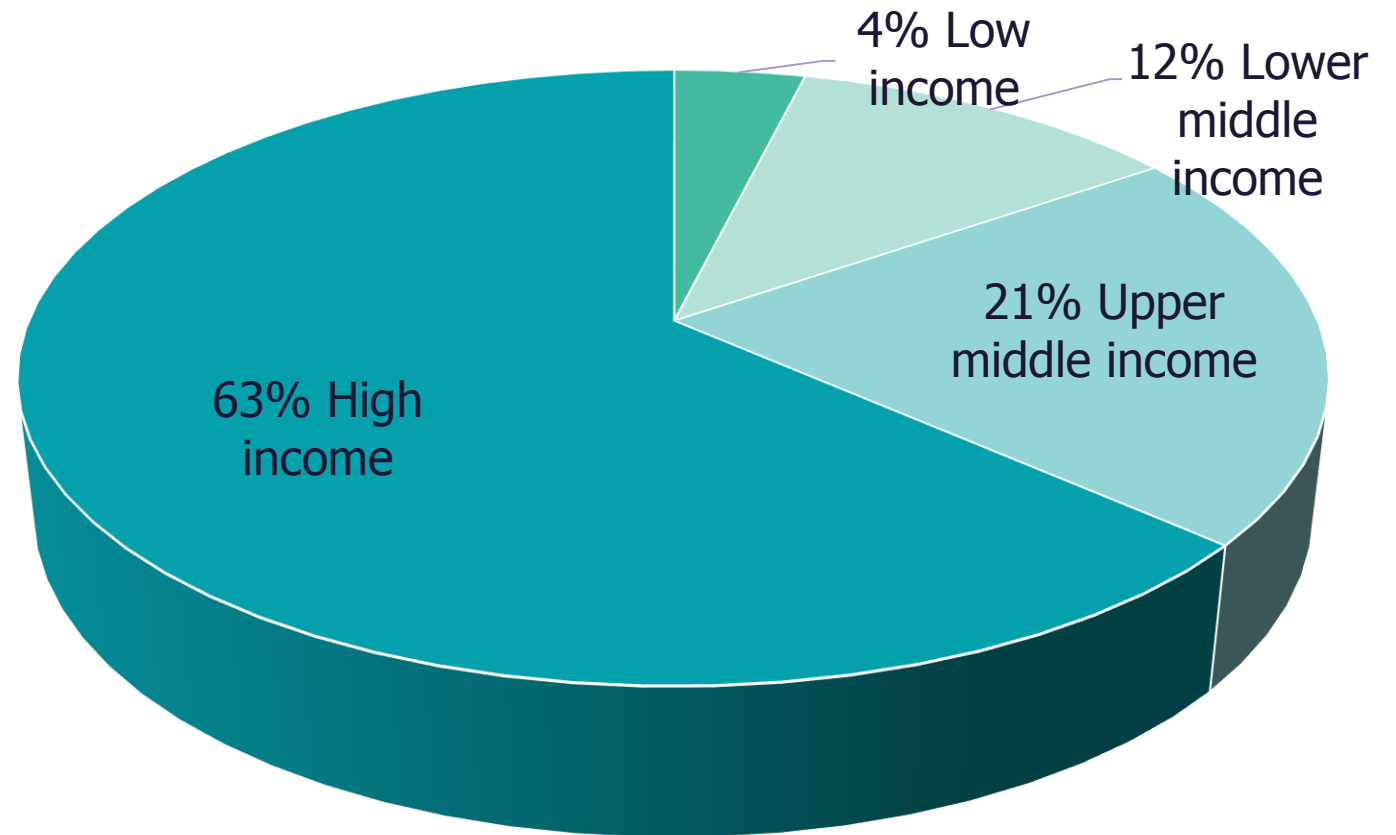
How global?

Responses to the Survey for Member Organisations:

51 out of 85 WFOT member organisations responded.

High representation from high income countries (World Bank 2018).

Income of countries represented by responding member organisations

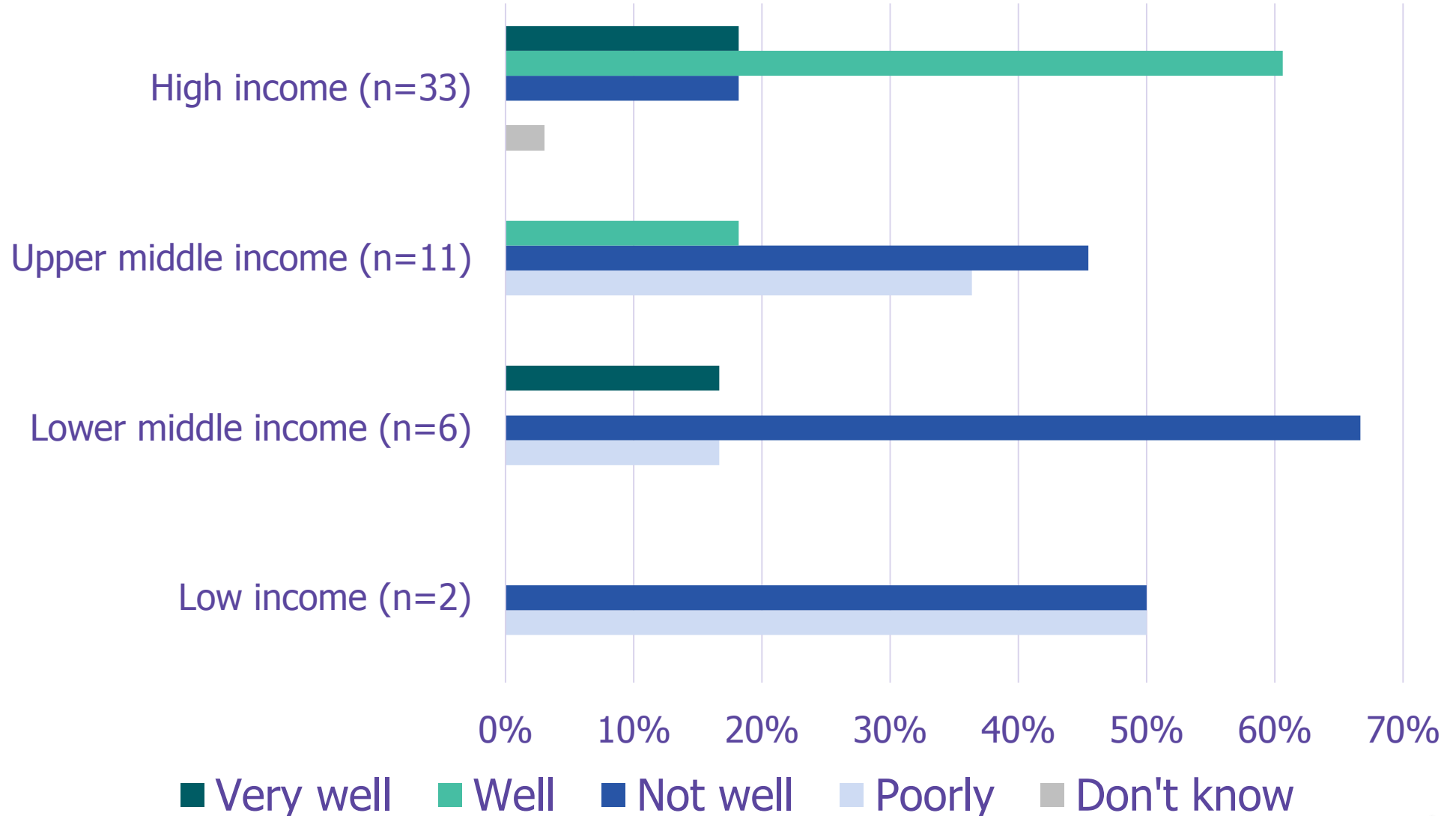


AT provision meeting needs.

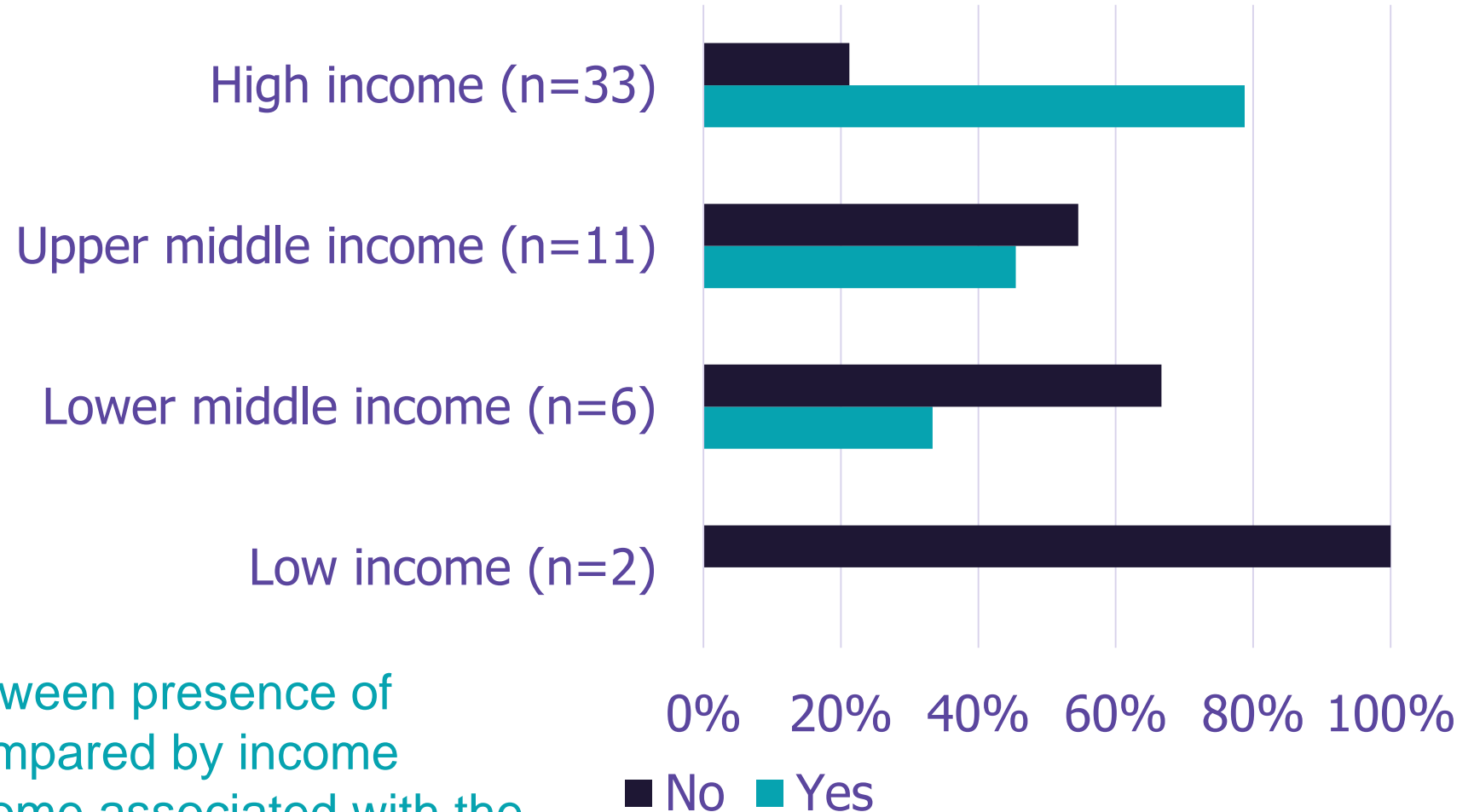
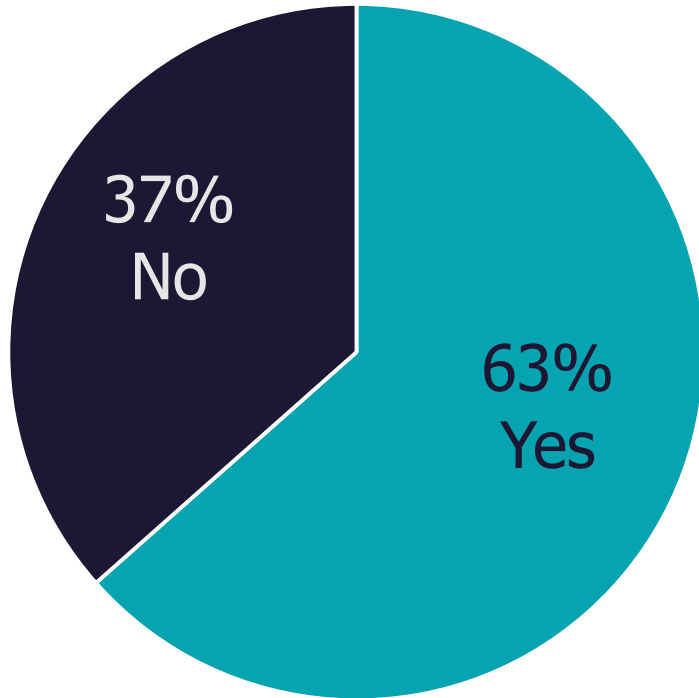
56% of member organisations overall reported that AT provision meets needs in their country well, or very well.

Significant difference when compared by World Bank income classification (2018).

Higher income associated with better met needs.



Specific legislation and/or regulation regarding AT provision



Significant difference between presence of legislation/ regulation compared by income classification. Higher income associated with the existence of legislation/regulation of AT provision.



63% of member organisations shared future plans for AT provision

Examples shown according to how well current need for AT in that country is being met:

Very well	Well	Not well	Poorly
Using local materials	Training	Training	Position statement
Position statement	Values	Networking - GATE	Training
Promotion	Legislation	Collation (providers)	Working group
Competency profiles / Training	Recognition (insurance)	Promotion	Practice guidelines
Training	Weekly clinic	Audit	
	Online services	Online services	



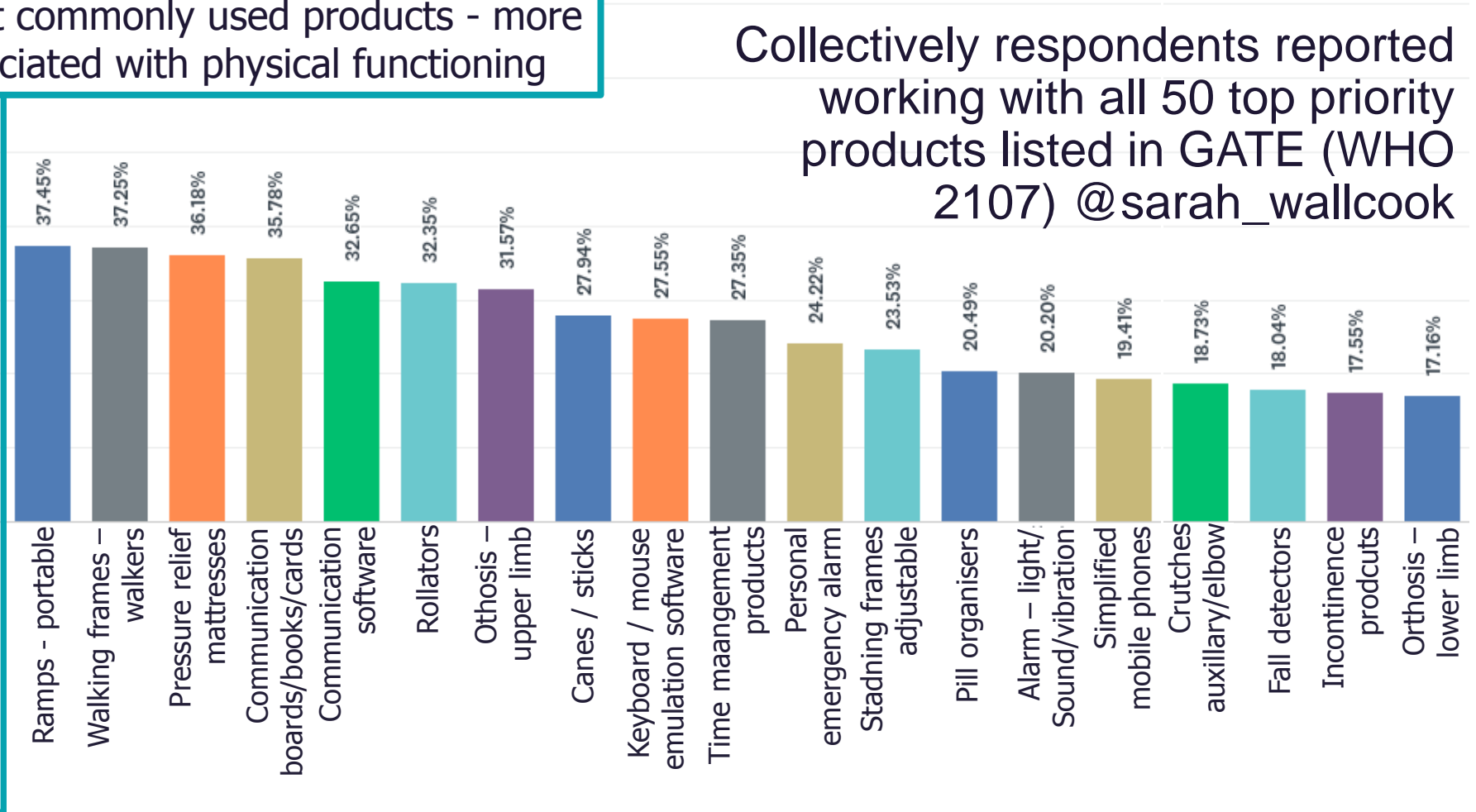
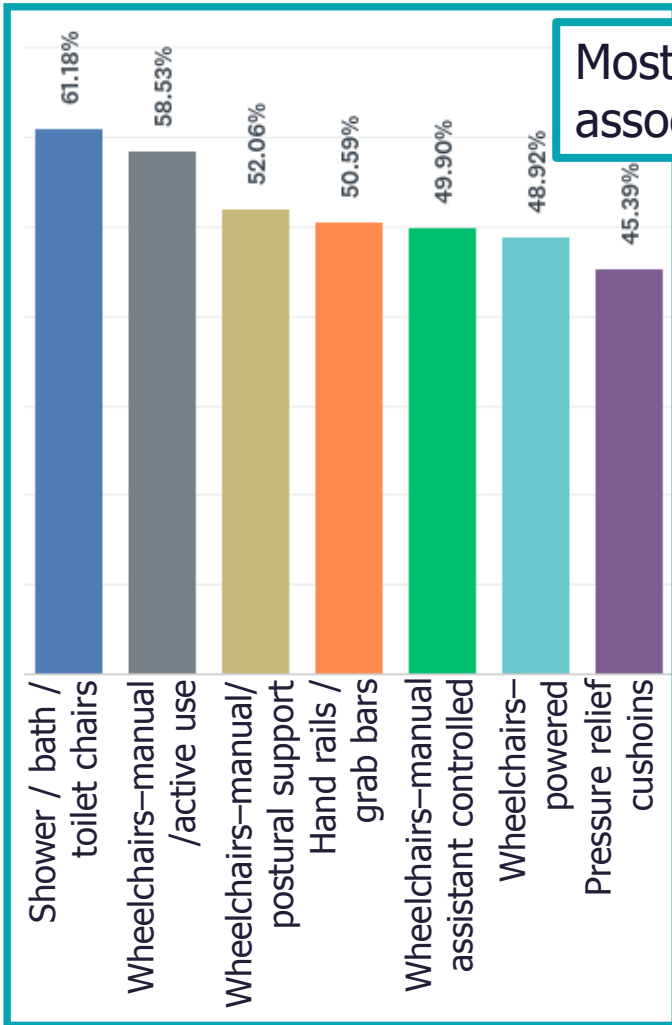
Practice Implications



1. WFOT will support member organisations to target standards of AT provision across lower and higher income countries.
2. Identify the variability of legislation and training requirements and how this impacts quality of AT provision.
3. For advocacy efforts, research is needed to identify whether occupational therapists are indeed the principle profession facilitating access to AT.
4. WFOT recognize international variability and empower member organisations to develop locally specific strategies to increase access to AT.

The AT products that respondents work with

Most commonly used products - more associated with physical functioning



Collectively respondents reported working with all 50 top priority products listed in GATE (WHO 2107) @sarah_wallcook

Top responses shown. Proportion response <15% excluded



The AT products that respondents work with

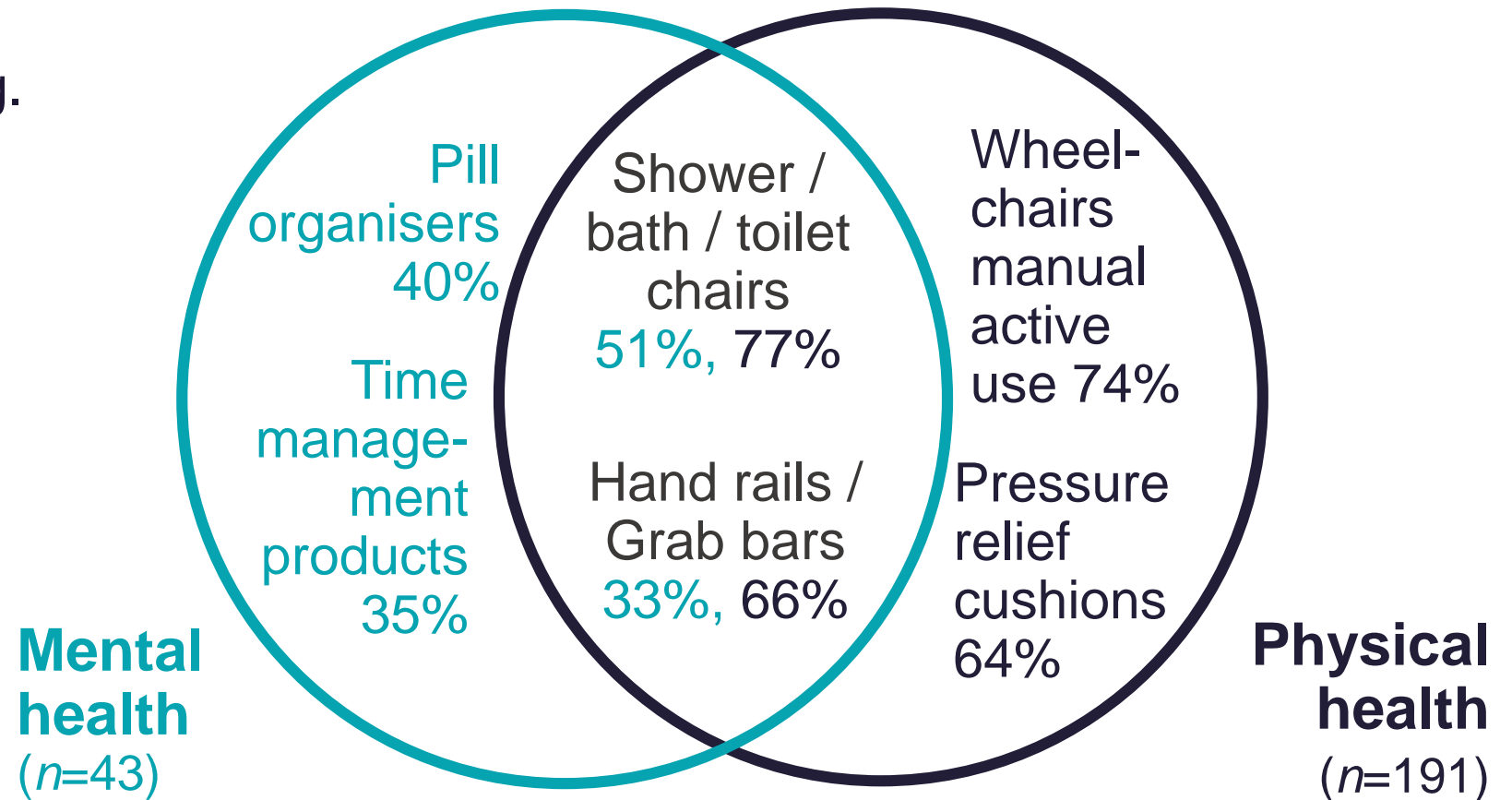


Comparison of products by setting

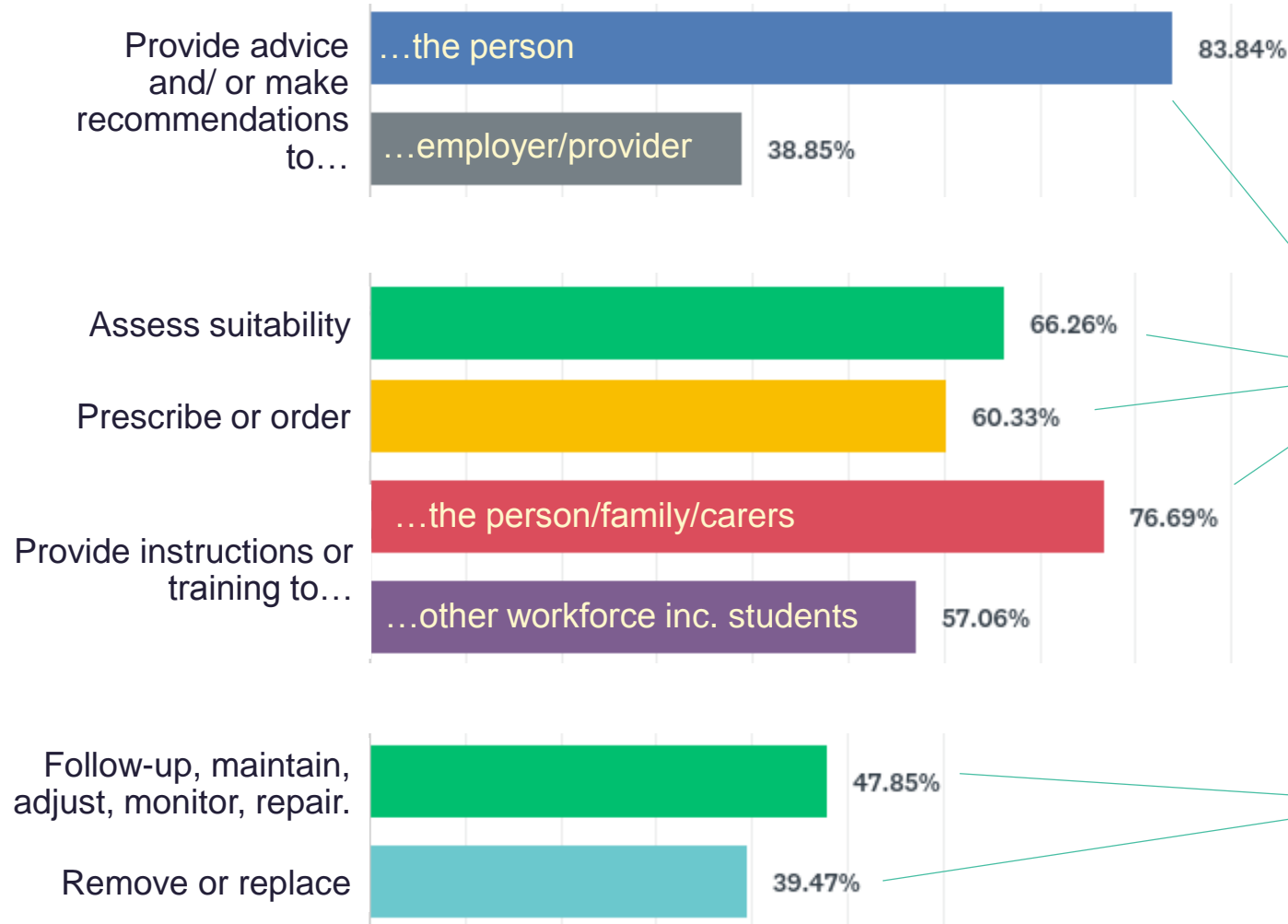
In many instances products varied significantly by setting.

Products traditionally associated with physical or cognitive functioning were used across setting boundaries.

Figure shows the overlap between top 4 products in community or inpatient mental health and community or inpatient physical health.



Steps to AT provision



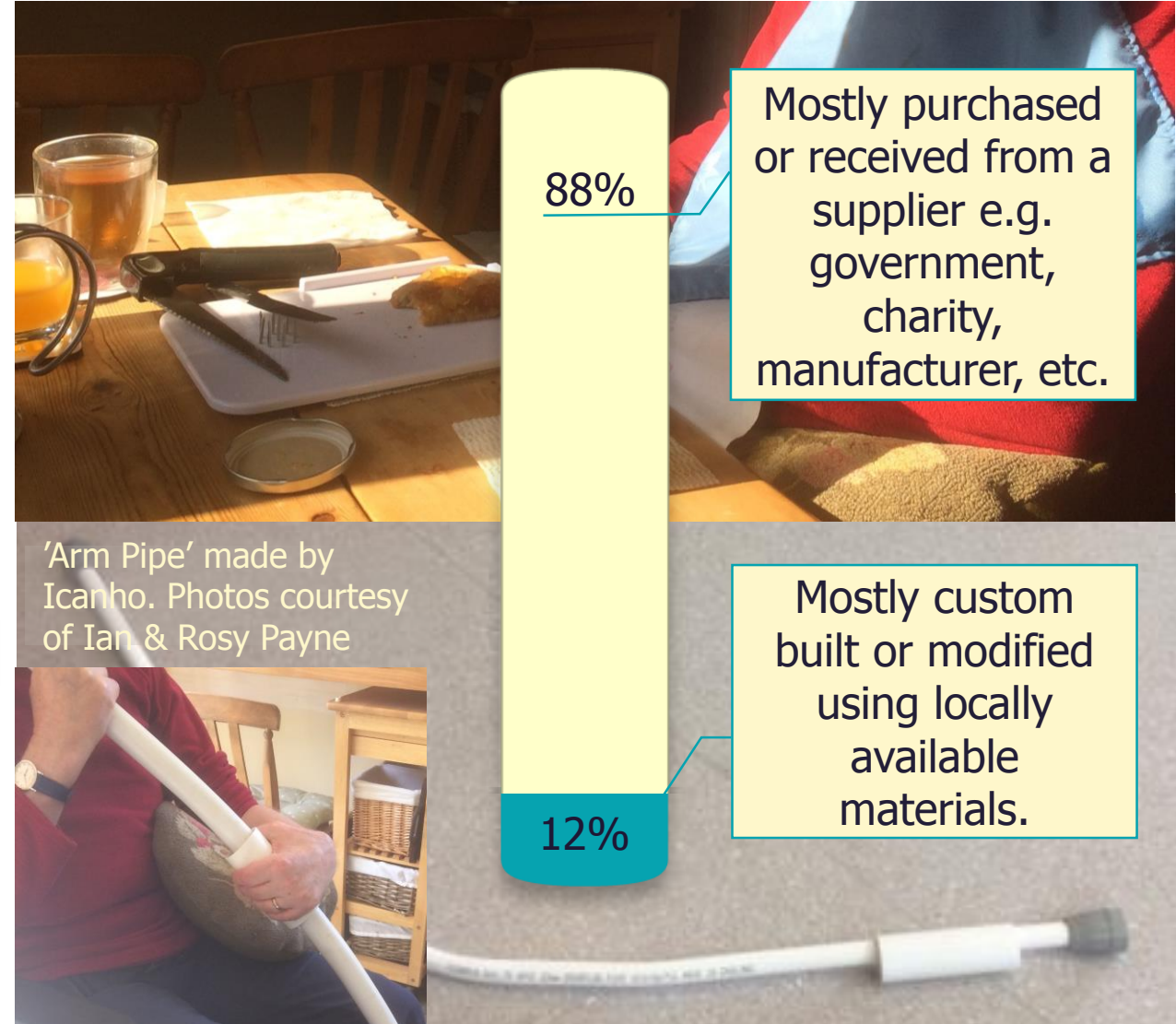
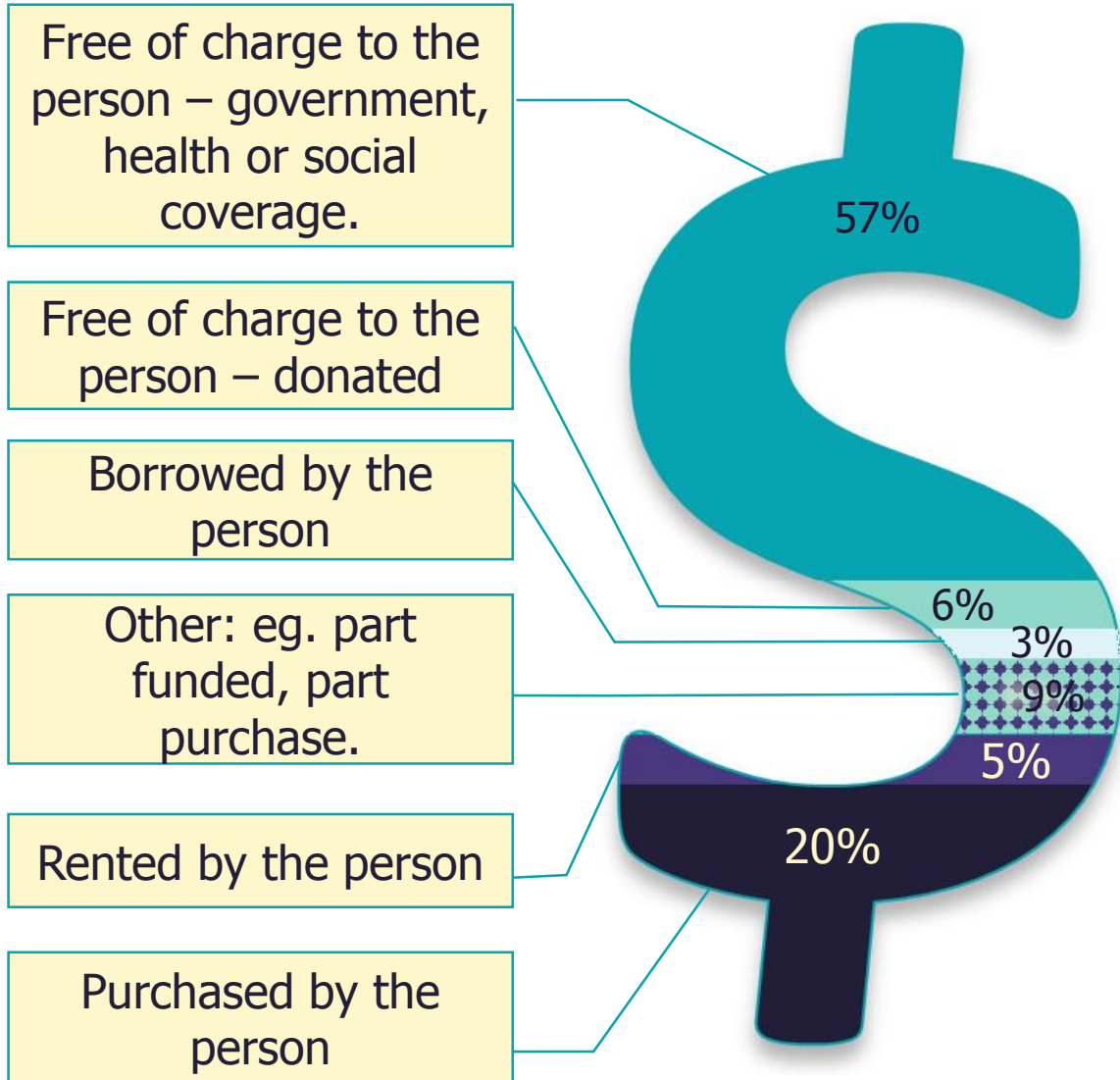
Collectively, respondents were engaged in all 15 aspects of AT provision

There were higher responses for the earlier stages of the provision process

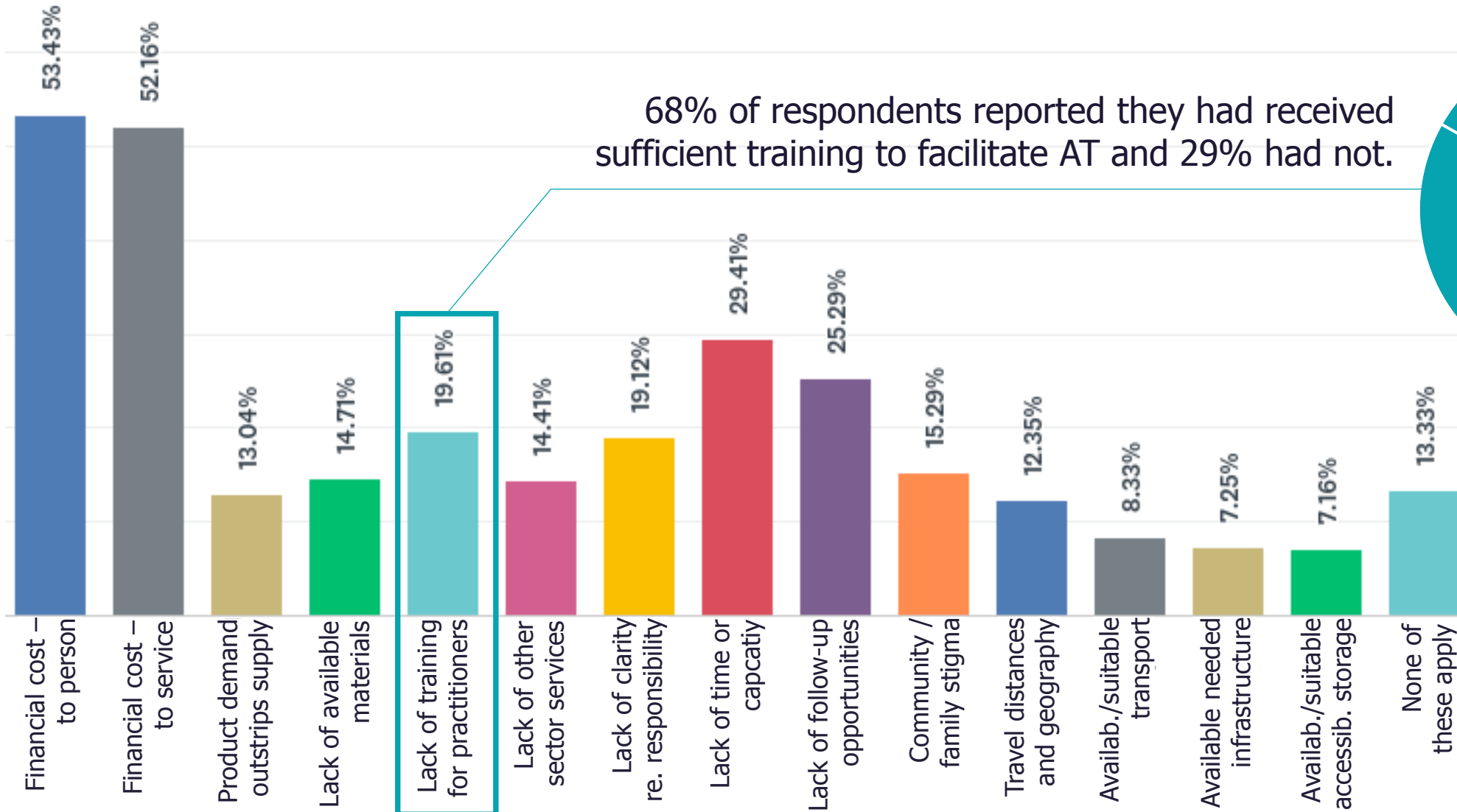
Mid to later parts of the process received lower responses



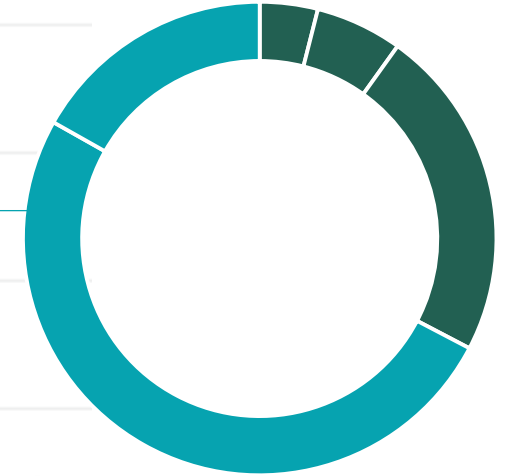
Cost and supply routes of products



Barriers to AT provision

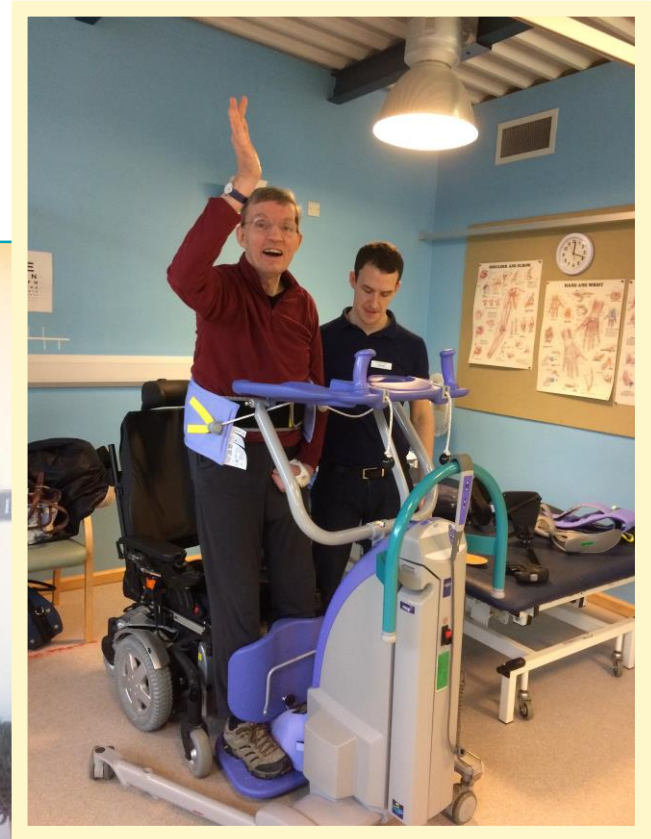
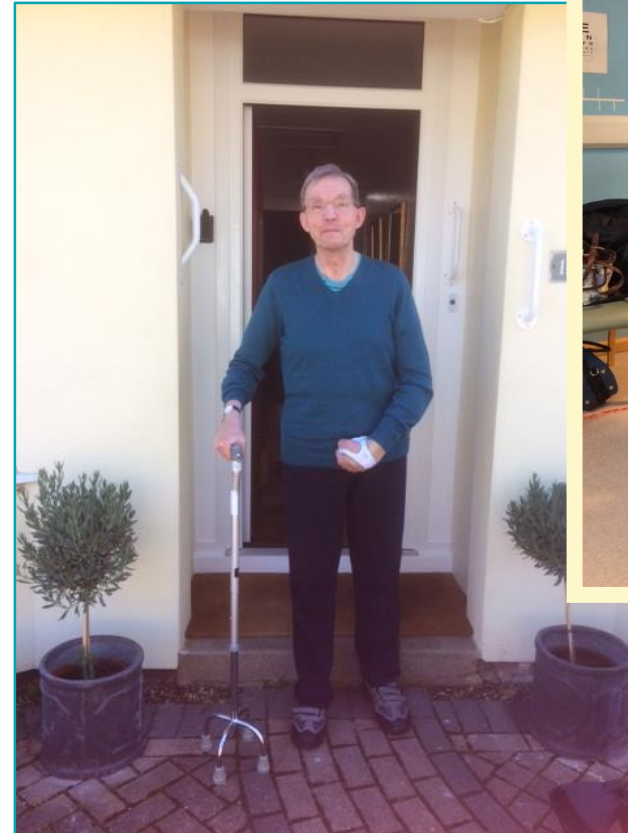


68% of respondents reported they had received sufficient training to facilitate AT and 29% had not.



Practice implications

1. WFOT encourages organisations to scope and review community needs in relation to the match of AT products provided.
2. WFOT supports organisations to enact internationally recognised, contextually relevant, culturally sensitive best practice in AT provision.
3. WFOT recognizes the challenges and complexity of providing high quality, affordable AT and support organisations to deploy local strategies which increase access to AT.



Photos with kind permission:
Ian & Rosy Payne

Summary

WFOT have raised awareness of global AT provision with respect to occupational therapy and highlighted the opportunities that the profession has to build its global role in providing increased access to high quality, affordable AT.



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