



General practitioners' use of physical activity on prescription (PAP): the case of Belgium

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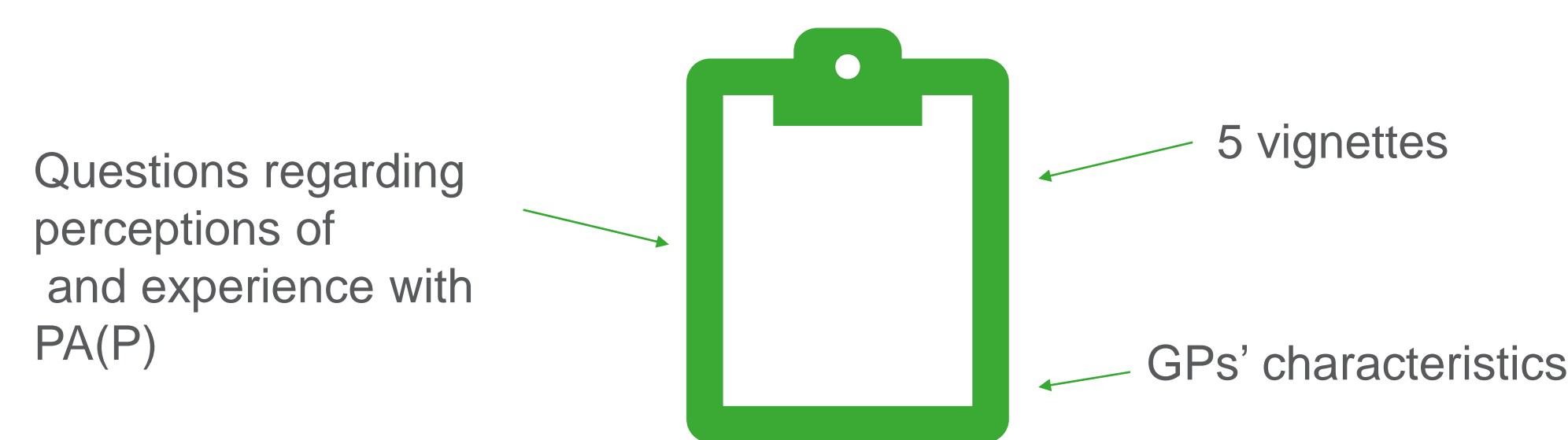
Key message

PAP is identified by Belgian GPs as a non-medical therapeutic strategy to counter health risks due to inactivity, especially if health issues could be remedied by increasing PA and/or patients have a CD.

- In Belgium, 29.5% of Belgians self-declared having at least one chronic disease.
- Almost 30% of the population above 15 years old is at health risk due to physical inactivity
- Physical activity (PA) reduces 19.5% of the attributable burden of chronic diseases (CDs).
- Physical Activity on Prescription (PAP) is proven to positively impact PA levels in patients. Furthermore, General Practitioners (GPs) are often prescribers.

How responses were collected

The survey, available in French and Dutch, was co-constructed with experts (41 ordinal or multiple choices questions). **Distribution occurred between 28/12/2022 and 07/04/2023** via Sentinel GP network, newsletters (SSMG and Domus Medica) and local partners involved in PAP.



About respondents

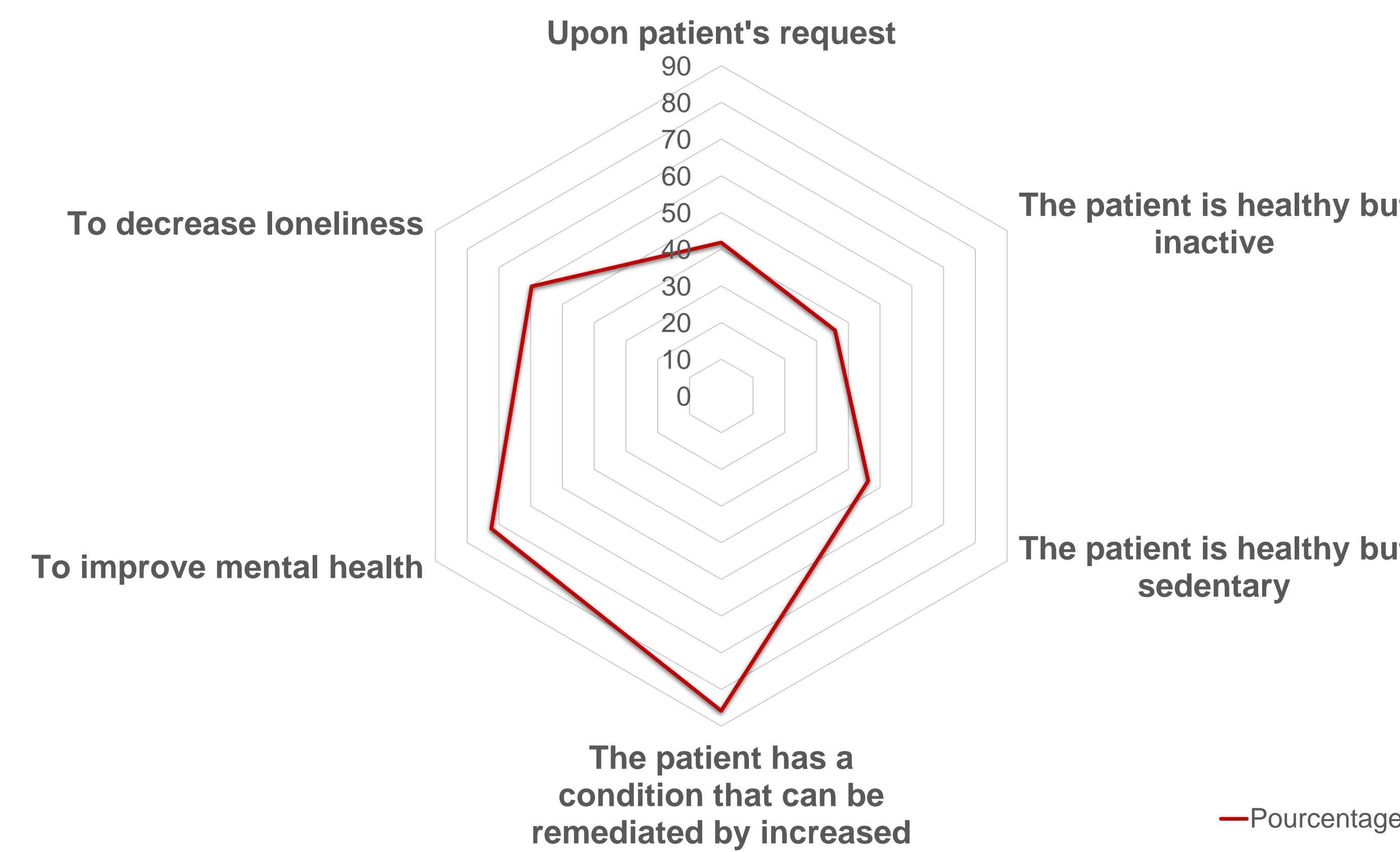
- 204 respondents of which **134 have completed the entire survey.**
- 13.4% of GPs worked in duo practices, **24.6% in multidisciplinary group practices**, 29.9% in group practice with more than 2 GPs, and **32.1% in solo practices.**



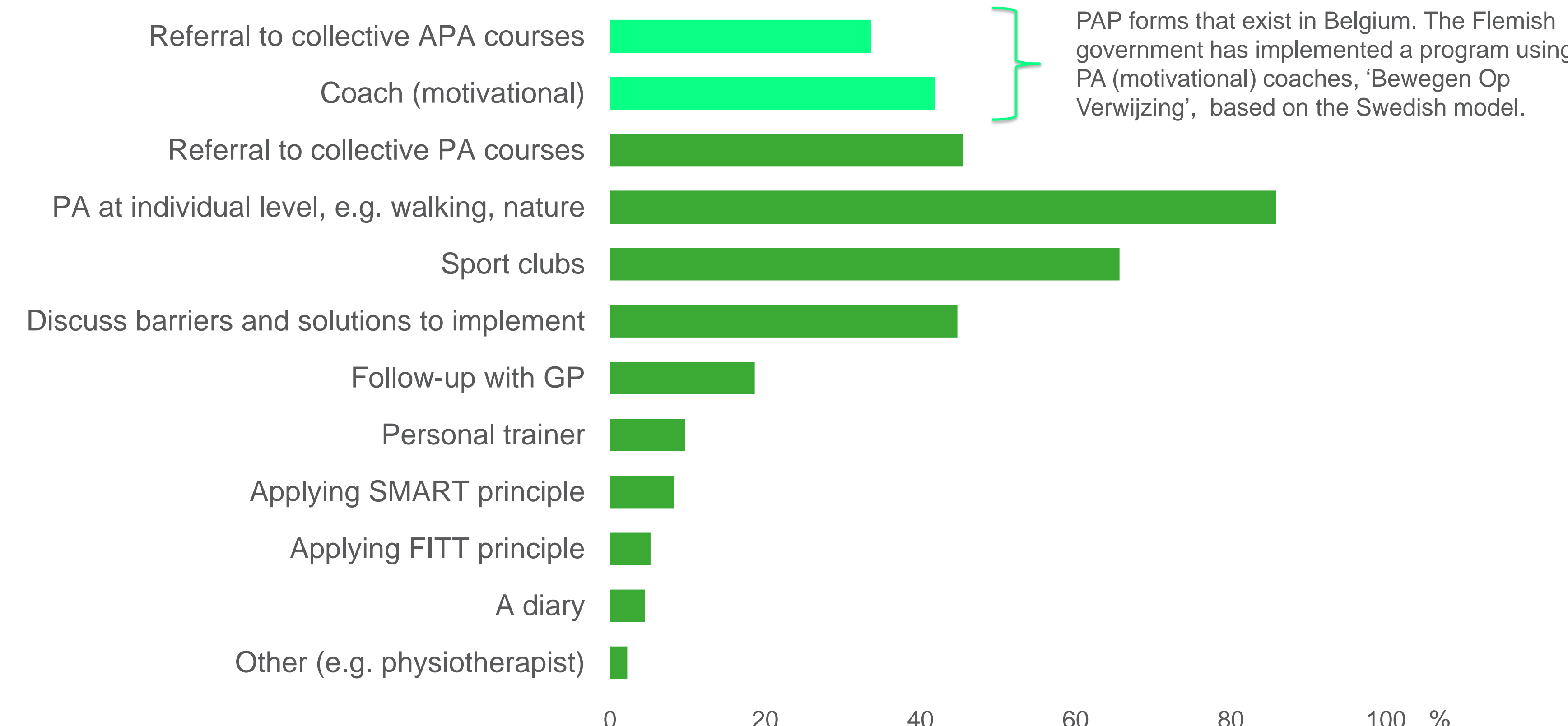
Figure 1: Age and sex distribution among respondents

Why general practitioners use PAP?

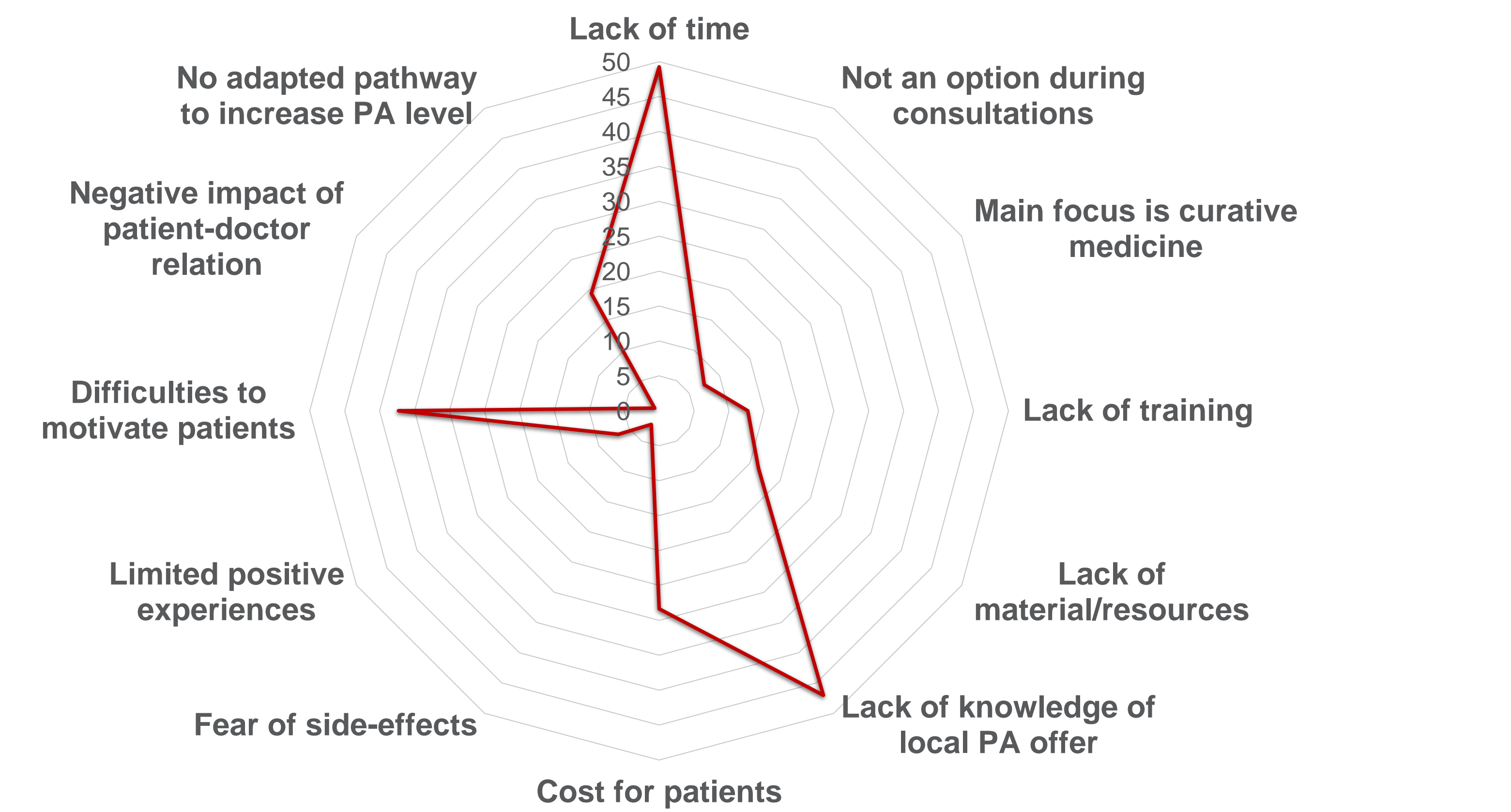
75.4% GPs mentioned chronic diseases as a motivation to use PAP. Other motivations were: mental health (75.4%), fall prevention (67.9%), sedentary behaviors (65.7%), physical inactivity (60.4%), adherence to guidelines (22.4%).



Forms of prescription to promote PA



Perceived barriers to PAP according to GPs



Conclusion

The majority of responding GPs linked PAP with CDs. Although there is no national implementation and regulation of PAP, overall **GPs used (were ready to use) PAP** in their practice. Lack of **training (12.7%)**, **time (49.3%)**, and knowledge of **local PA offer (74%)** were cited as barriers to using PAP.

REFERENCES

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- Lundqvist S, Börjesson M, Larsson MEH, Cider Å, Hagberg L. Which patients benefit from physical activity on prescription (PAP)? A prospective observational analysis of factors that predict increased physical activity. BMC Public Health. 2019;19(1):482.

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