

Sport in European Prisons

research team:

Jikkemien Vertonghen

Marc Theeboom

Kristel Beyens

Kris Hermans

Gino Campenaerts

exploratory study commissioned by EPAS

pictures: © De Rode Antraciet



Vrije
Universiteit
Brussel

research team

- **Vrije Universiteit Brussel** (Belgium)
 - Department of Sport Policy and Management (Research Group 'Sport and Society')
 - Jikkemien Vertonghen
 - Marc Theeboom
 - Department of Criminology (Research Group 'Crime & Society')
 - Kristel Beyens
- **De Rode Antraciet** (Belgium)
 - Kris Hermans
 - Gino Campenaerts



aim and method

- to examine **how sport** is currently **structured** and **organised** in prison environments of the Council of Europe member states
- **online questionnaire**
 - developed by EPAS
 - delivered to member states:
 - Directors of Prison Administration and Probation
 - Members of the Council for Penological Co-operation
 - data analysed by a research team from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and De Rode Antraciet vzw

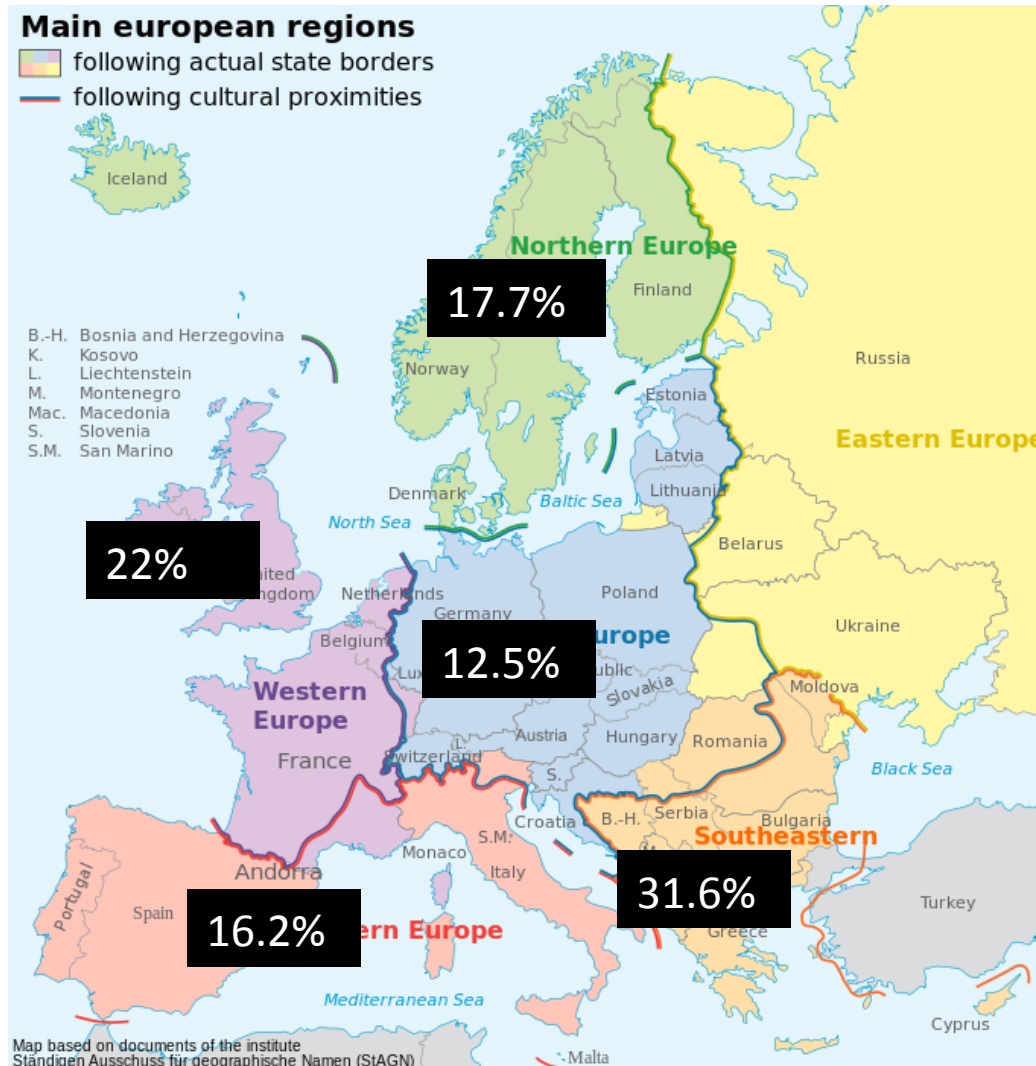
themes

- general data
- legislation
- sports facilities
- sports programme
- objectives/outcomes
- staff/guidance
- evaluation
- future

respondents (N=136 / 32 countries)

	n	%
• senior management official (director, dept. head, ...)	47	34.6
• prison officer	26	19.3
• sport instructor	16	11.7
• head of rehabilitation/education department	15	11.0
• sport coordinator	8	5.9
• health/education teacher/coach	8	5.9
• juridical-Pedagogical officer	6	4.4
• advisor	6	4.4
• unknown	4	2.9

geographical distribution



data analysis

- descriptive statistics
- if relevant:
 - non-parametric statistics (chi-square, Kruskal Wallis or Mann Whitney test)
 - independent variables:
 - geographical location
 - prison size
 - start of sports programme
 - 'sports' budget

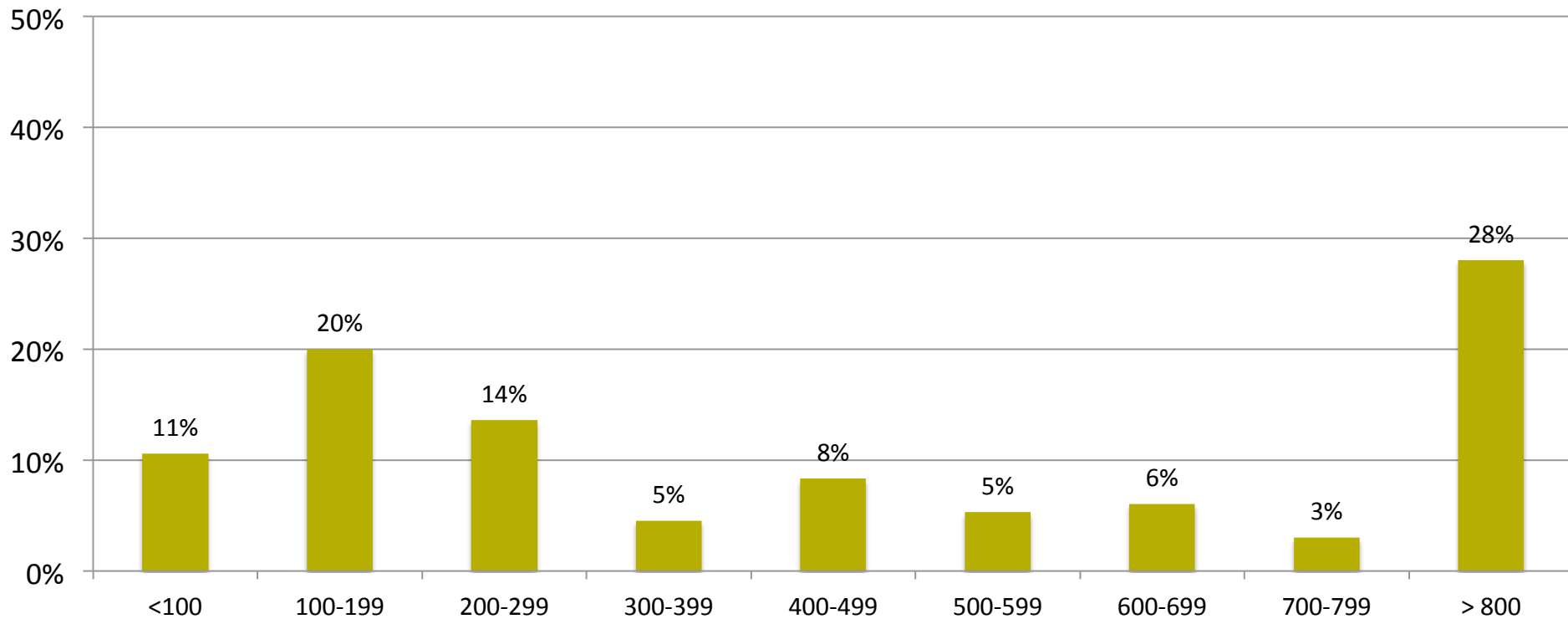


© Katrien Torfs

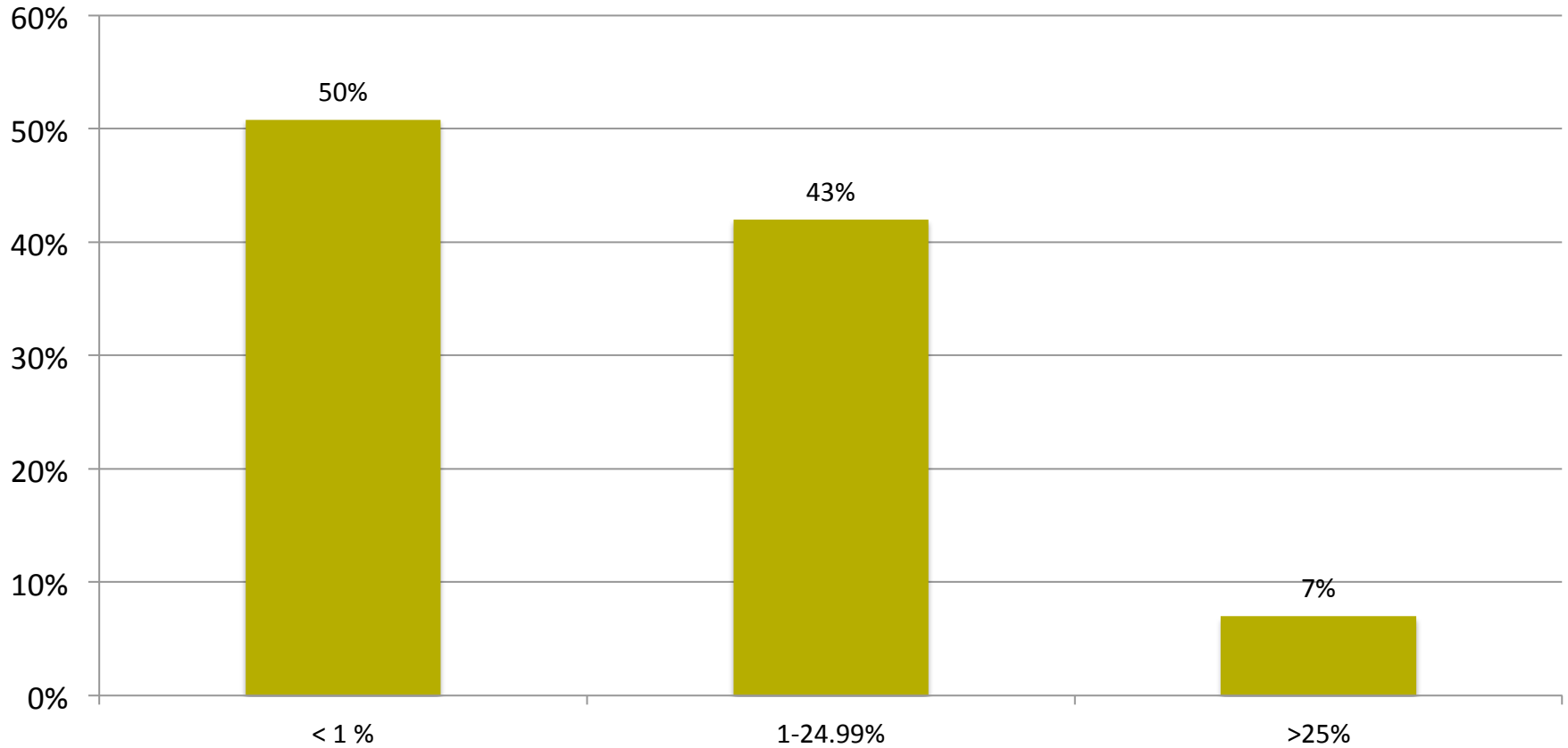
RESULTS

1. General data

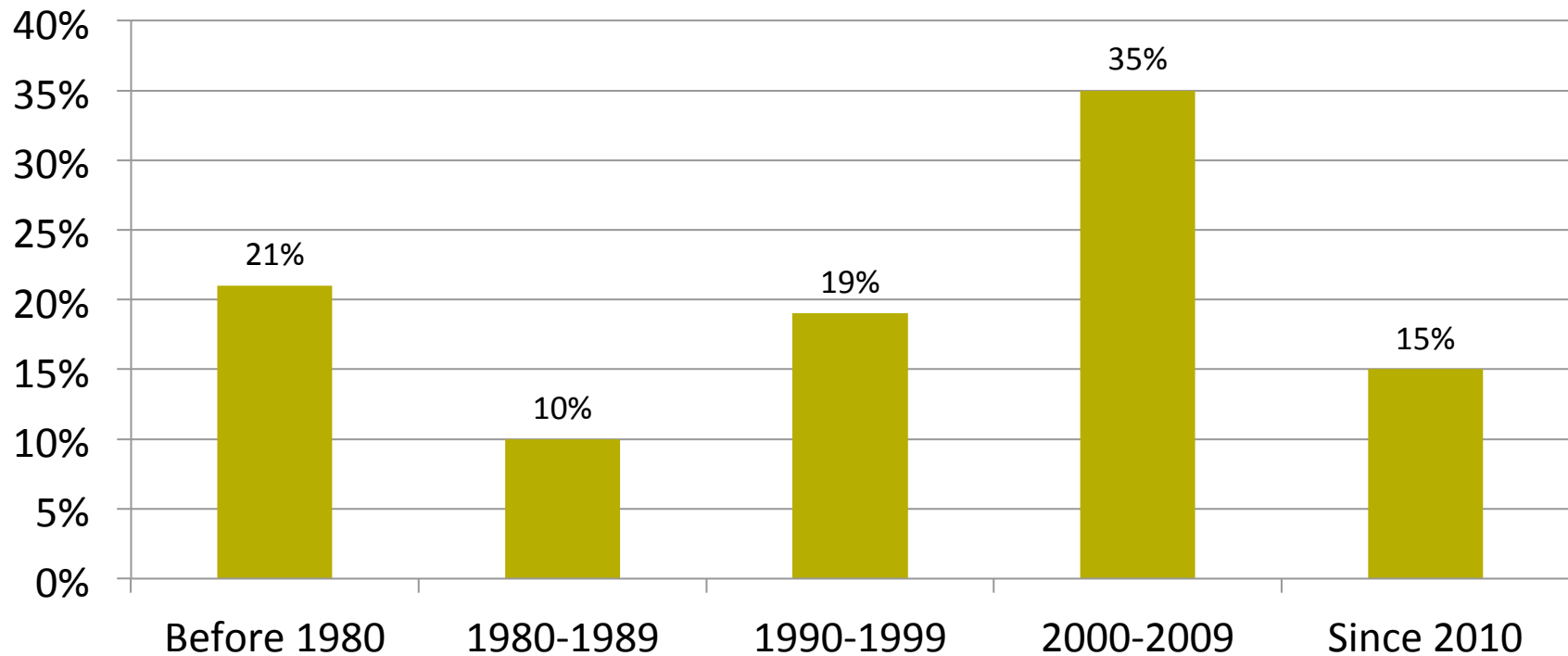
"How large is the population of the prison?"



“What is the percentage of female prisoners of the total prison population?”

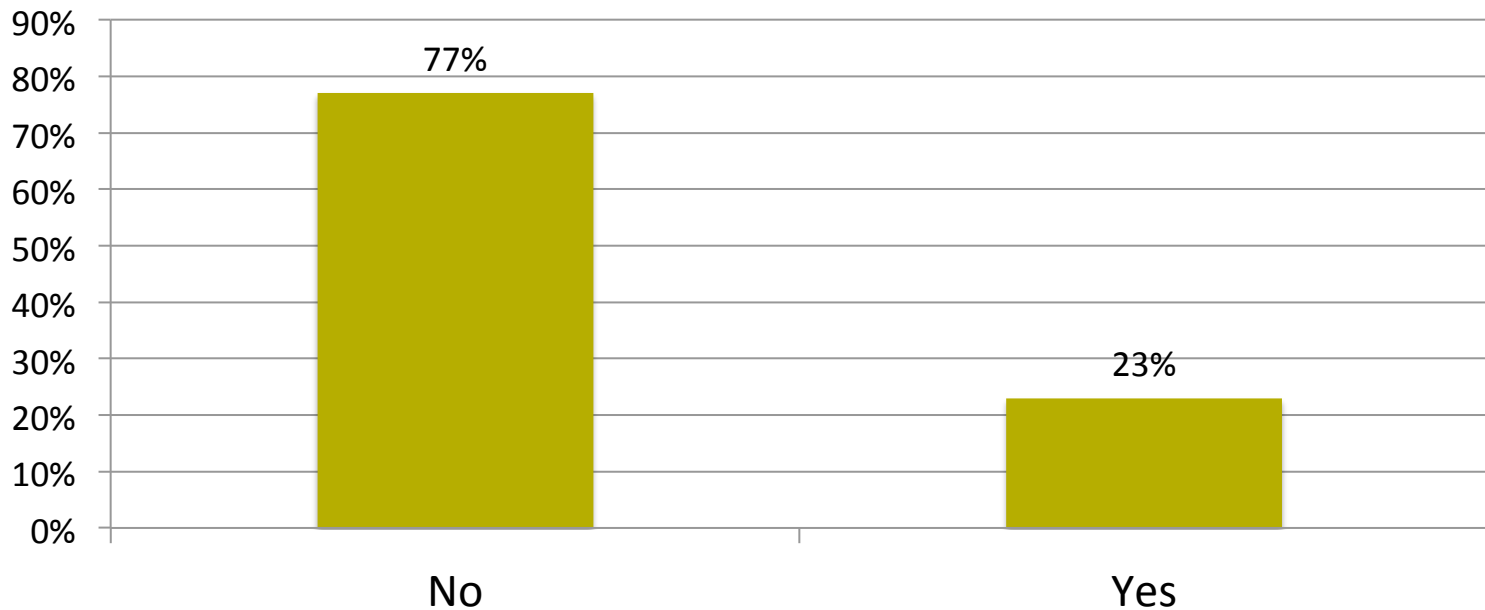


"When did you start with a meaningful sports programme?"



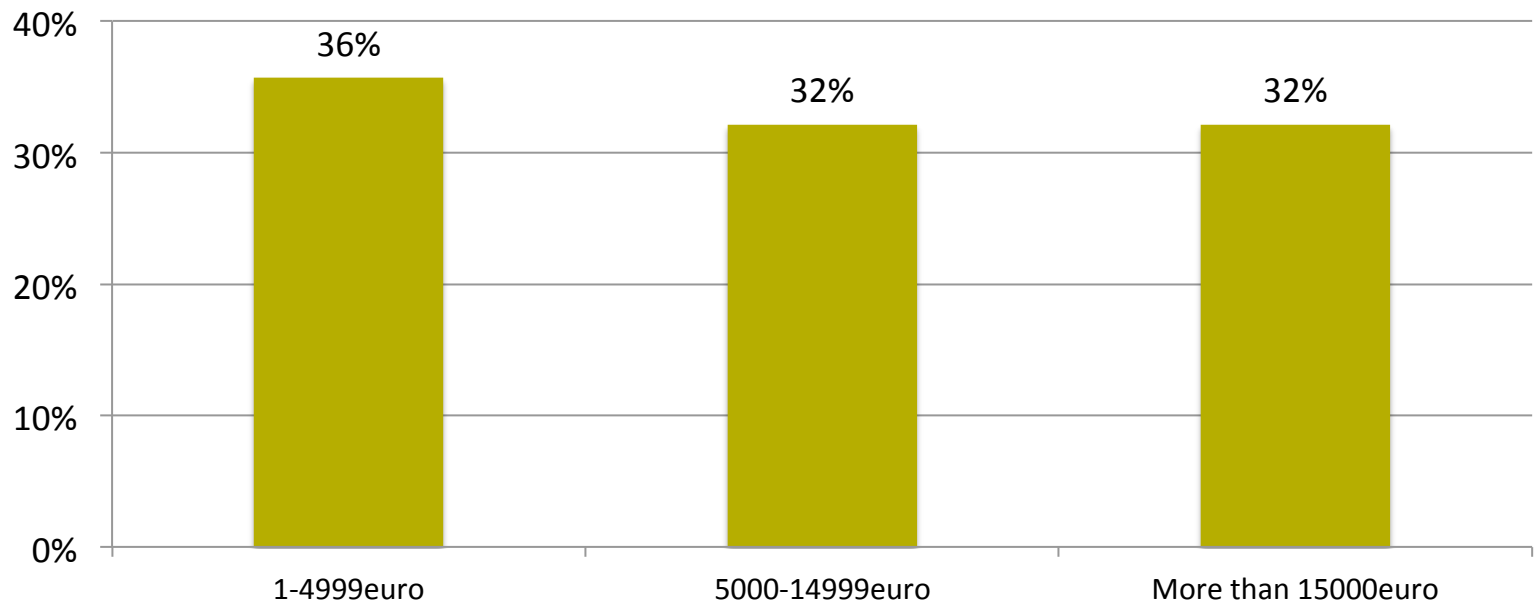
"Do you have a special (yearly) budget for sport?"

"Special budget?"

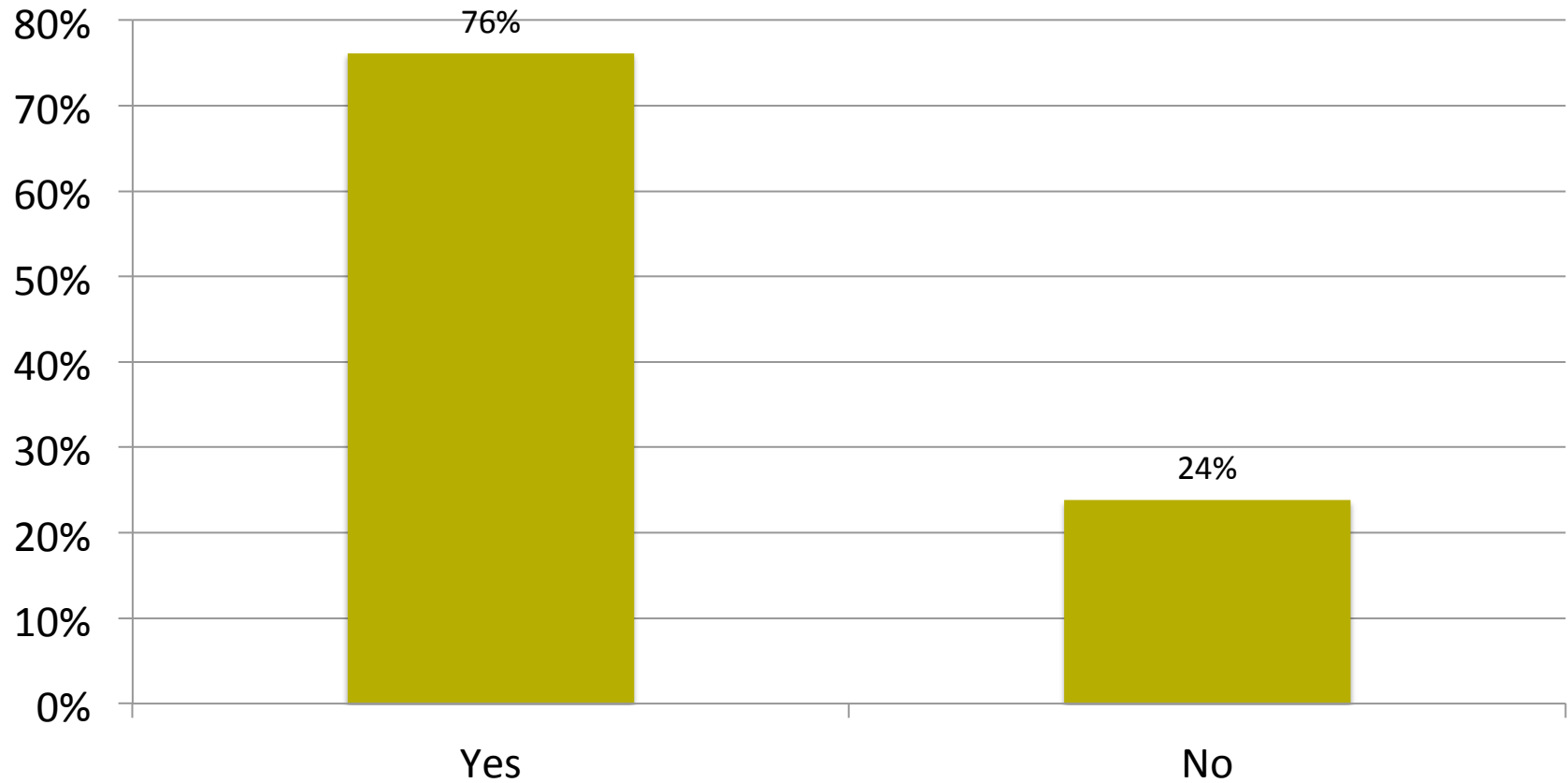


"Do you have a special (yearly) budget for sport?"

"If yes, how much?"



"Is sport part of a rehabilitation plan?"



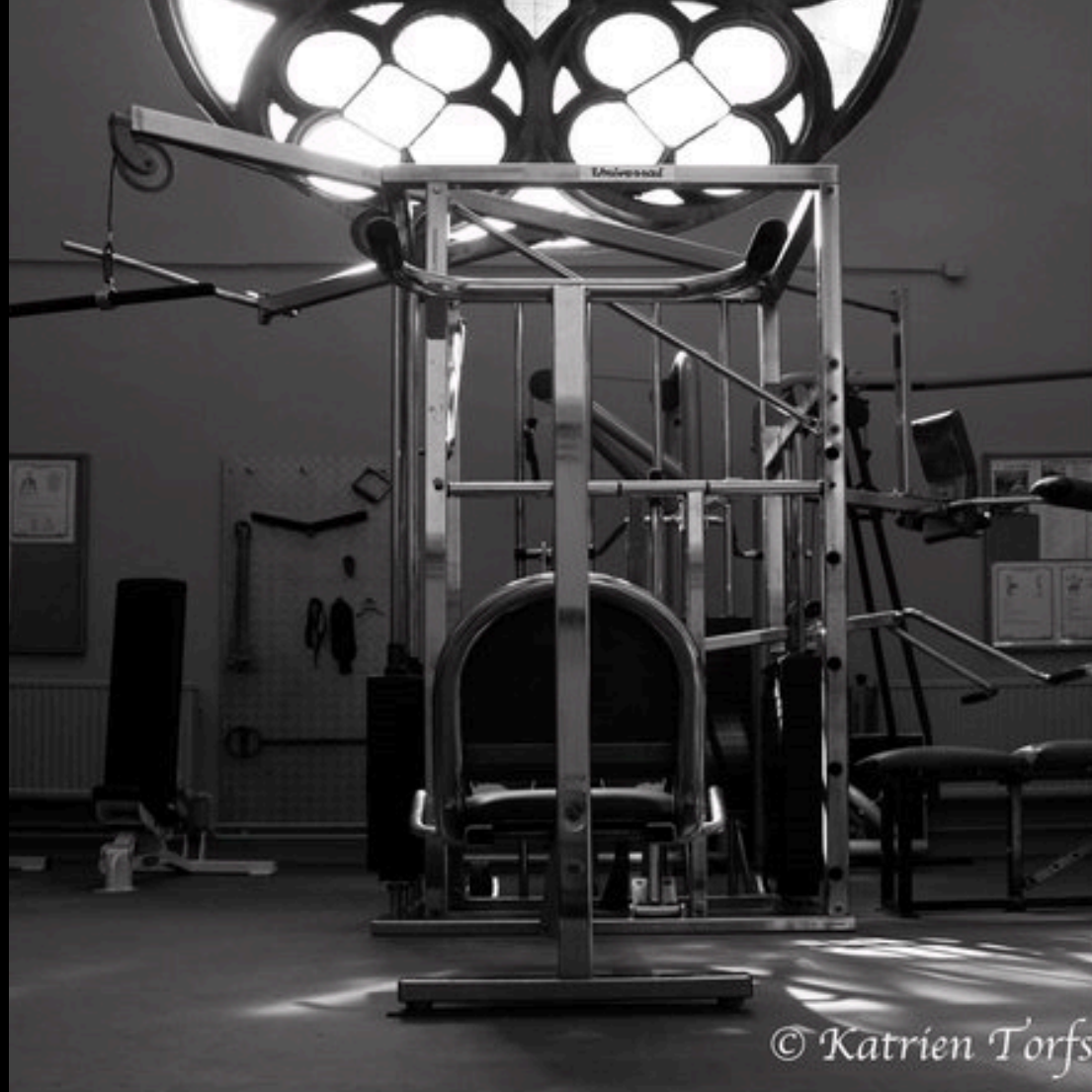


RESULTS

2. Legislation

"What laws or decrees regulate sports provision in prisons?"

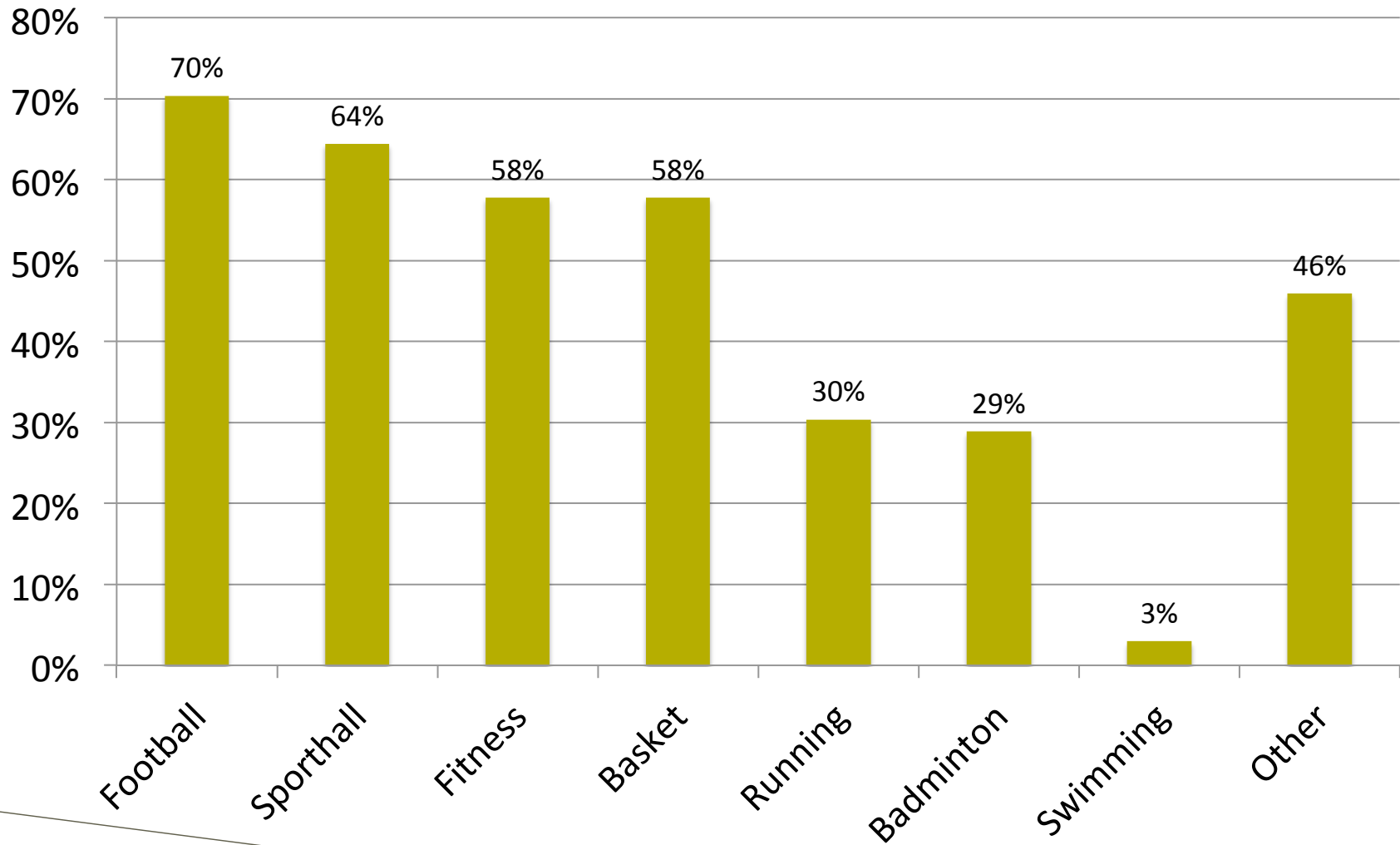
- national law or decree (65%)
- internal prison regulations (12%)
- no legal or other forms of regulation (7.5%)



RESULTS

3. Sports facilities

"Does the prison offer sports facilities?"

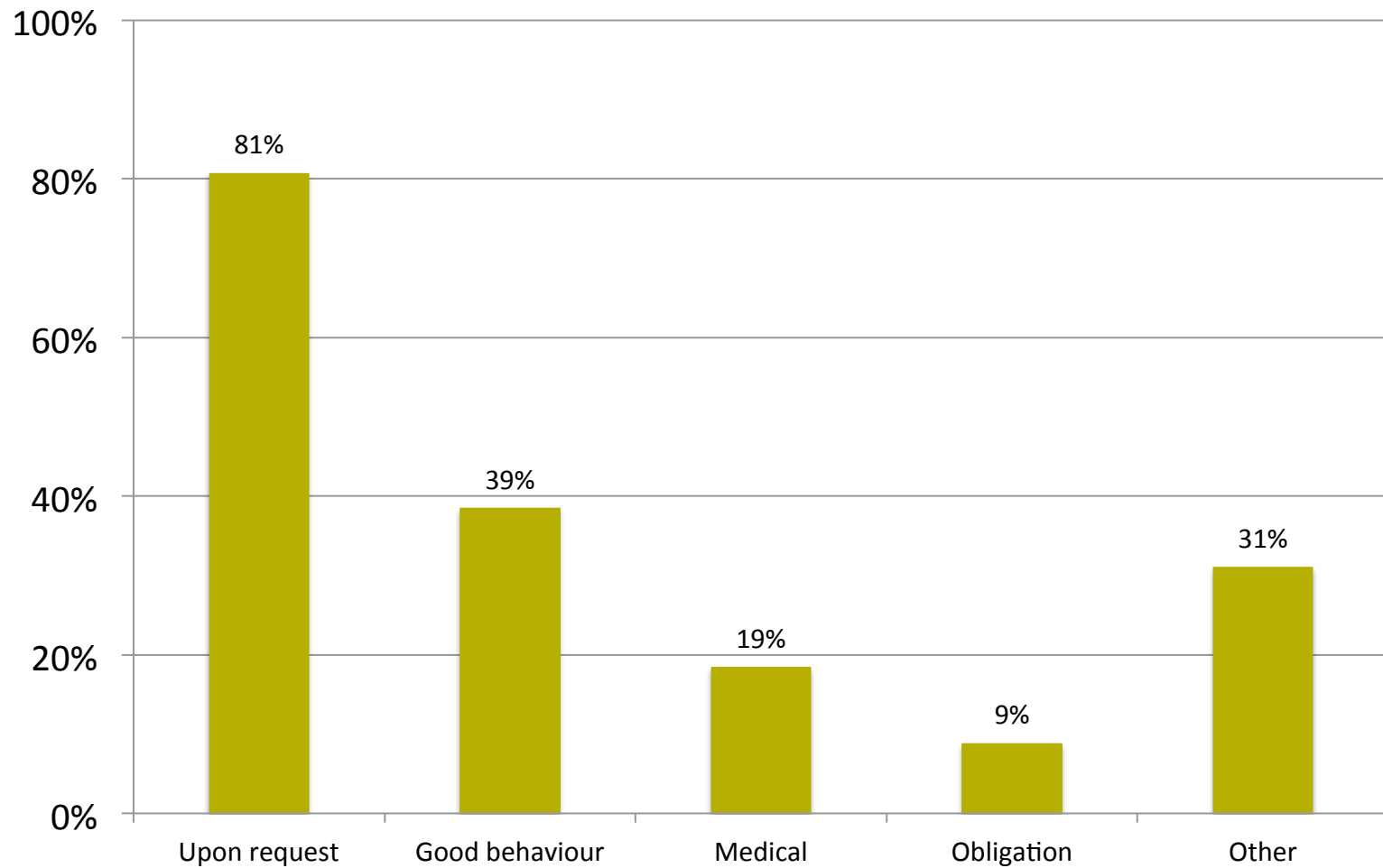


"Does the prison offer sports facilities?"

OTHER	%
Volleybal	11.8
Table tennis	11.5
Tennis	7.4
Outside court	5.1
Polyvalent room	5.1
Cycling	3.7
Weightlifting	3.7



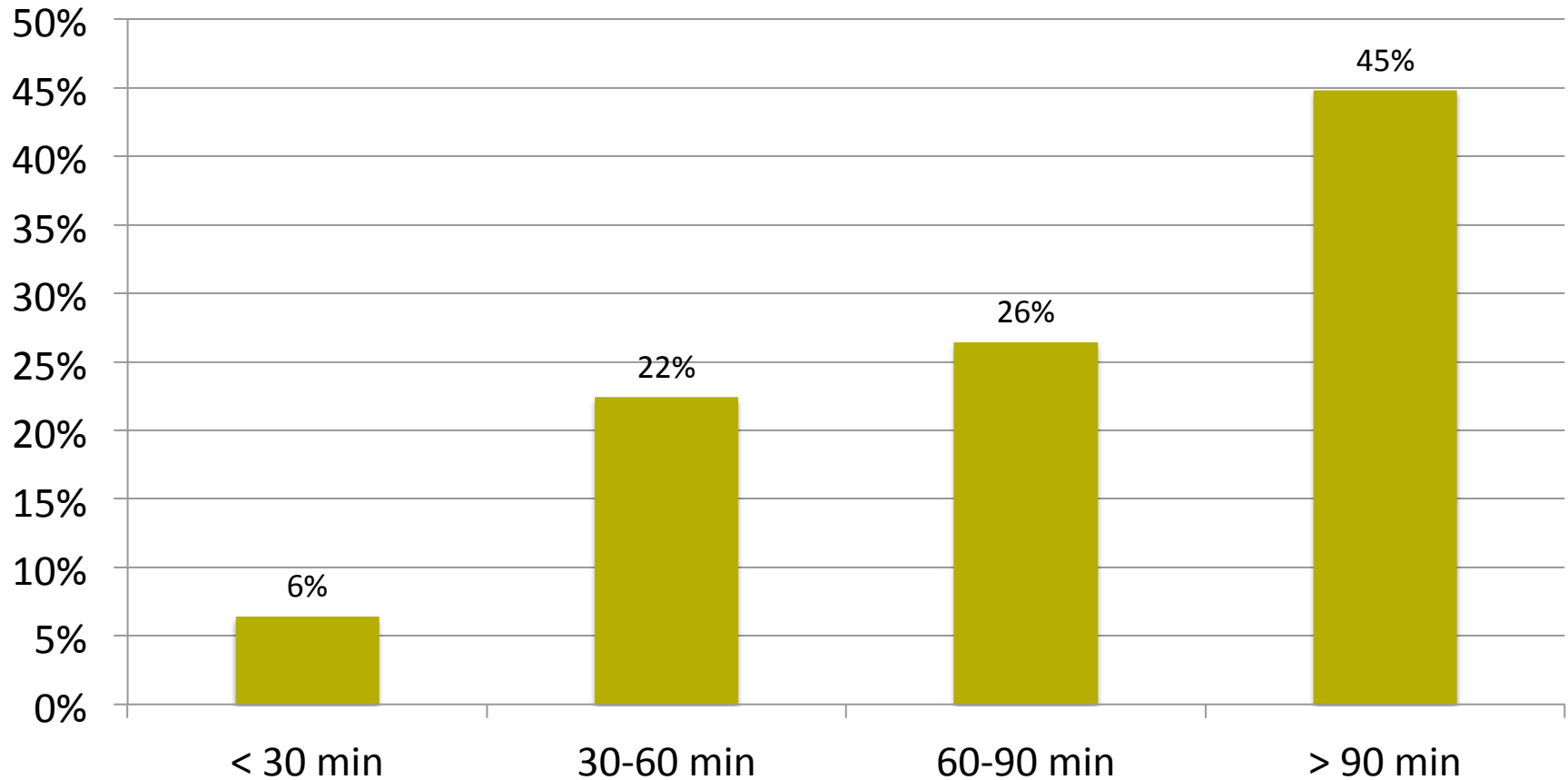
"What are the conditions for the use of facilities?"



"What are the conditions for the use of facilities?"

OTHER	%
Part of a larger programme	14.7
Depending of the day/week schedule	6.6
Free access	2.9
Security reasons	1.5
Voluntary	1.5

"How long can prisoners use the sports facilities per day?"

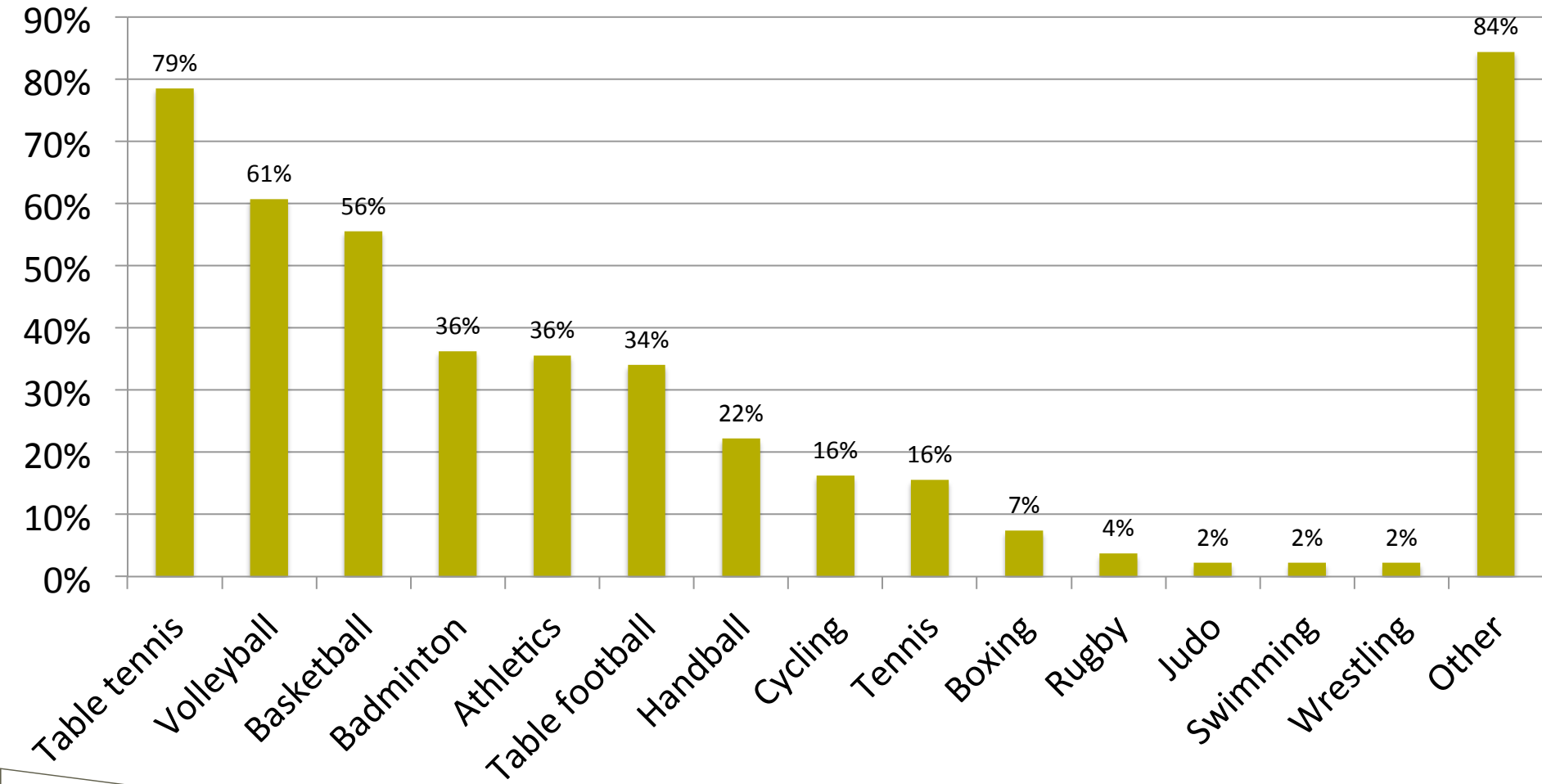




RESULTS

4. Sports offer

"Which sports disciplines are offered?"



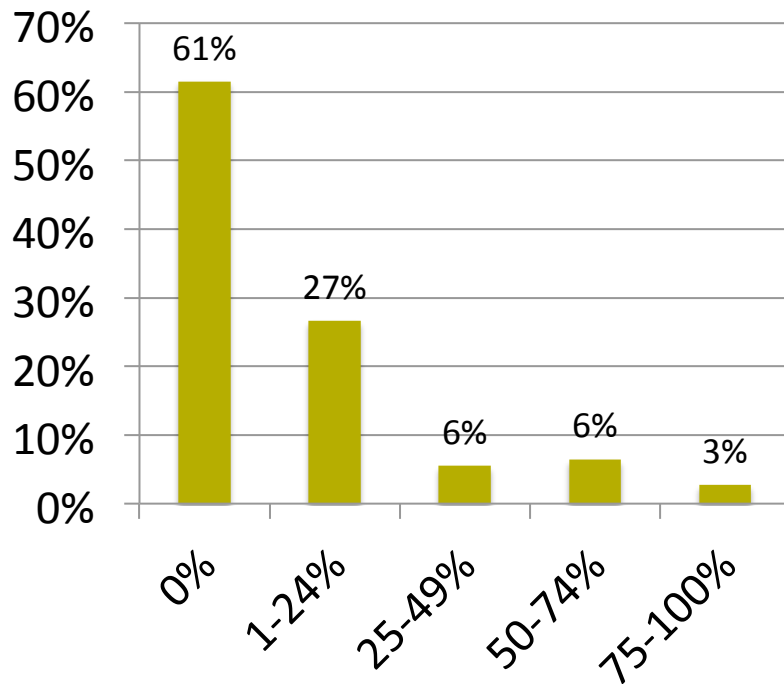
"Which sports disciplines are offered?"

OTHER	%
Football	60.3
Fitness	31.6
Gymnastics	6.6
Chess	6.6
Hockey	4.4
Foot-tennis	4.4
Pool	2.9
Yoga	2.9

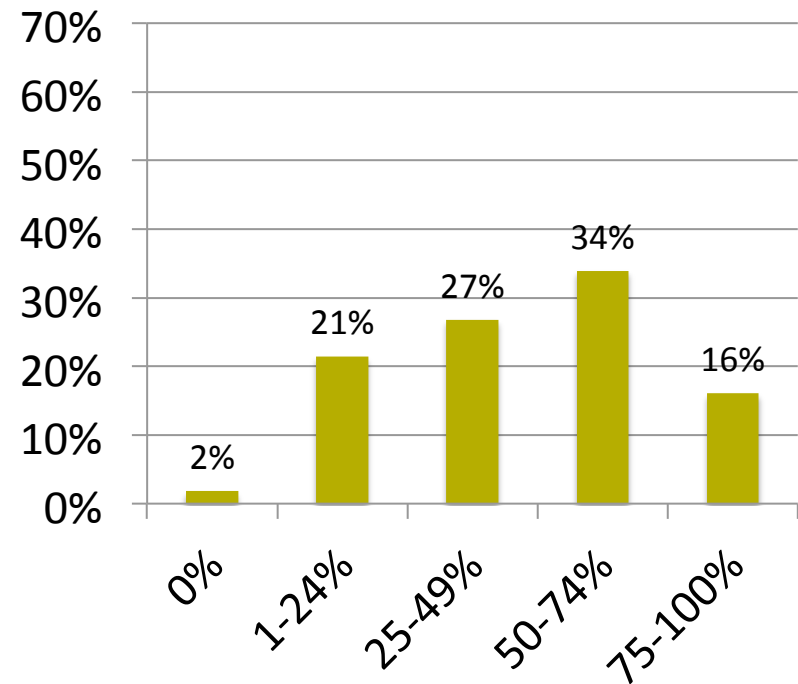


"What are the percentage rates for female/male prisoners doing sport on regular basis (at least 30' / day)?"

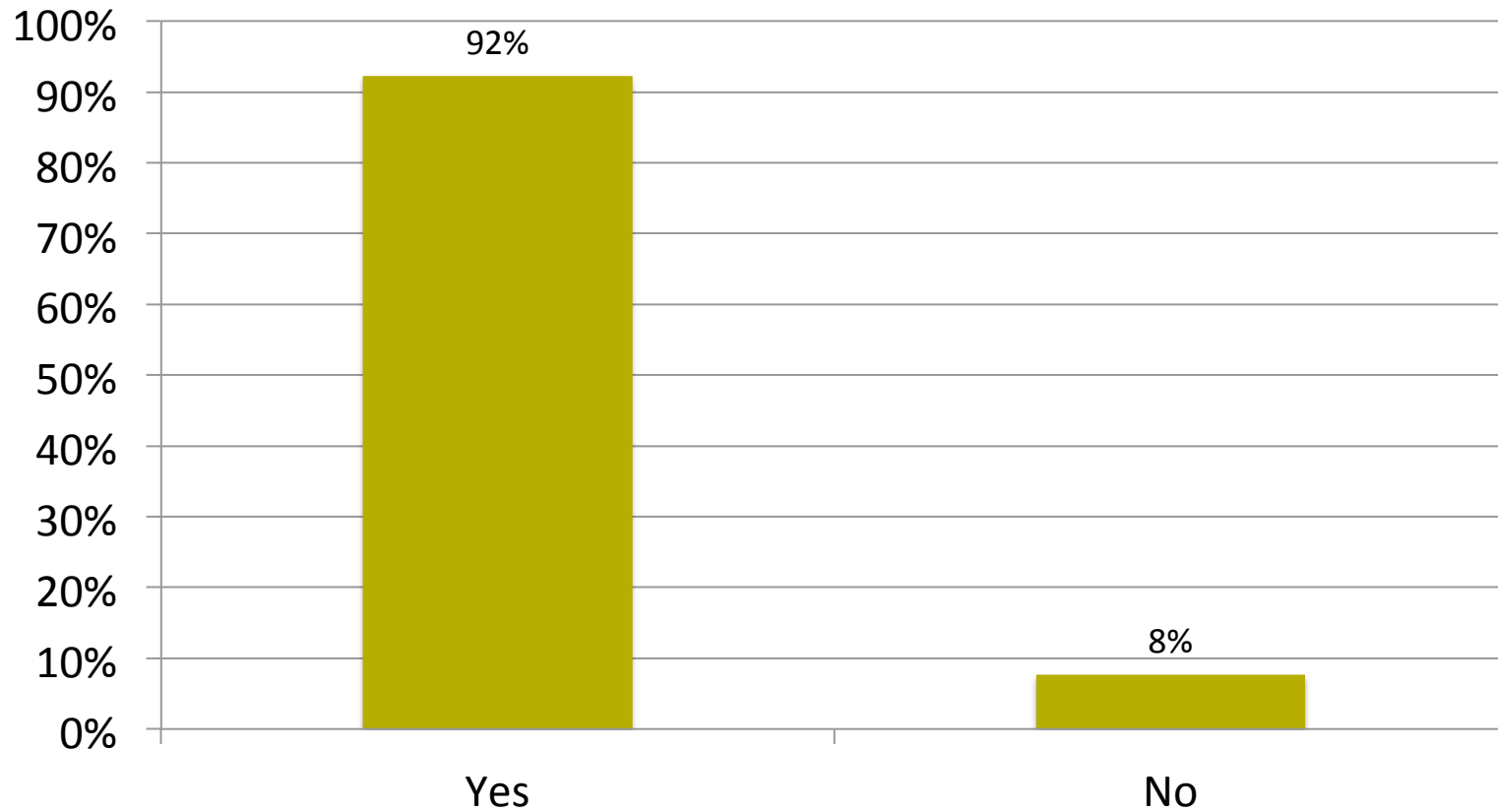
Female



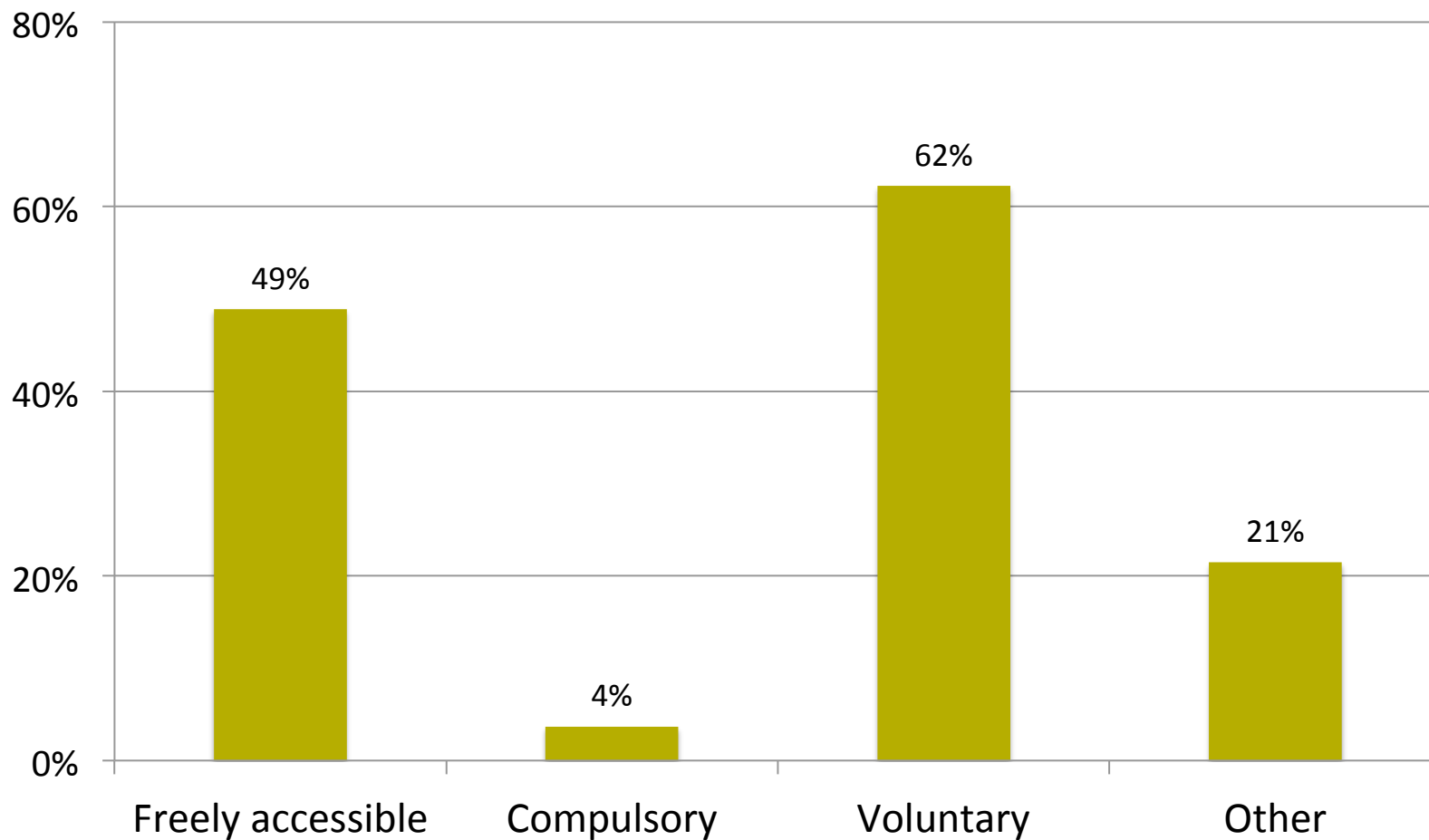
Male



"Is the sports offer open to all prisoners?"



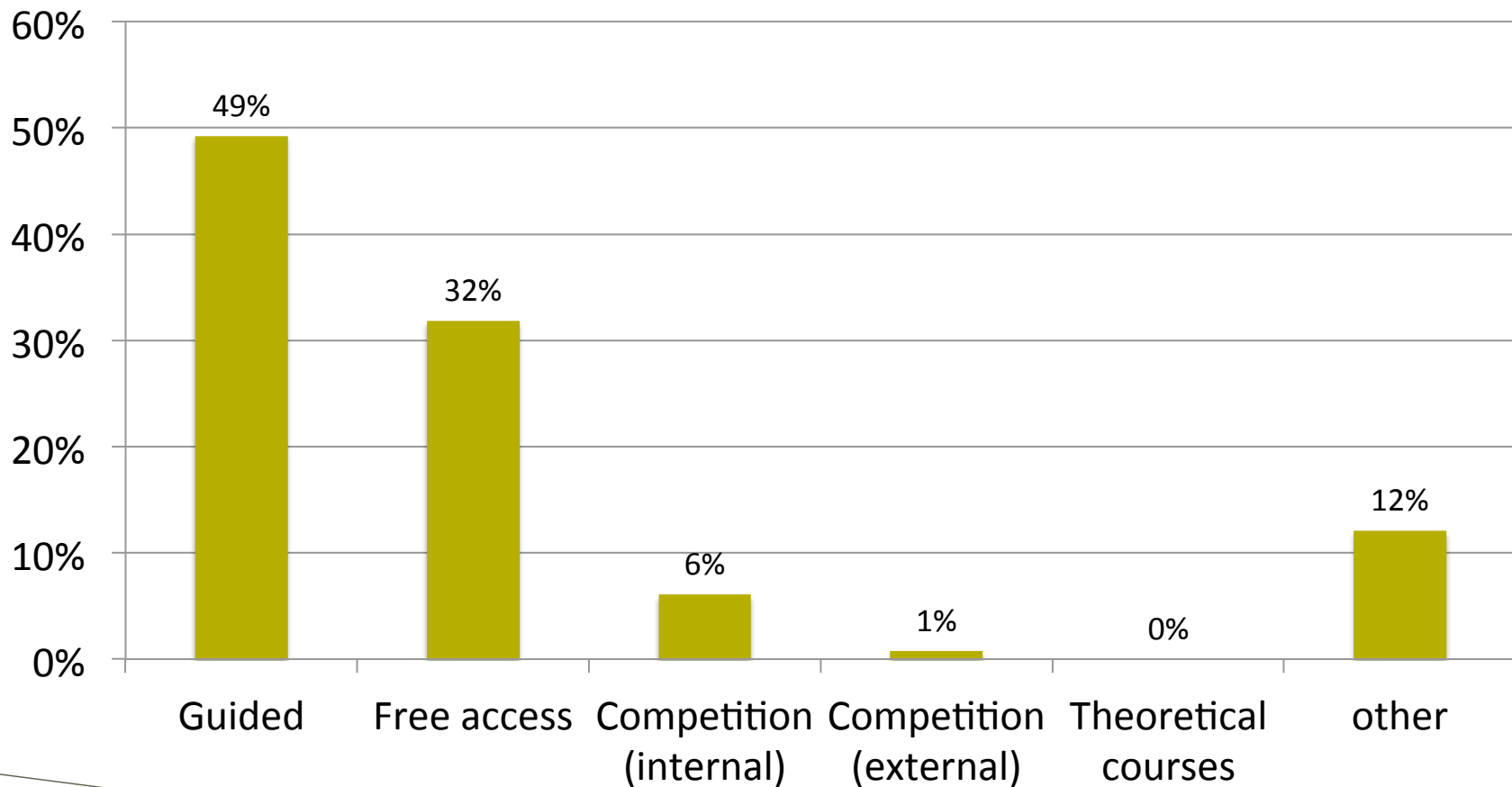
"Is the sports offer ... ?"



"Is the sports offer ... ?"

OTHER	%
On medical advise	9.6
According to a programme	4.4
Voluntary by subscription	2.9
Limited by capacities	0.7

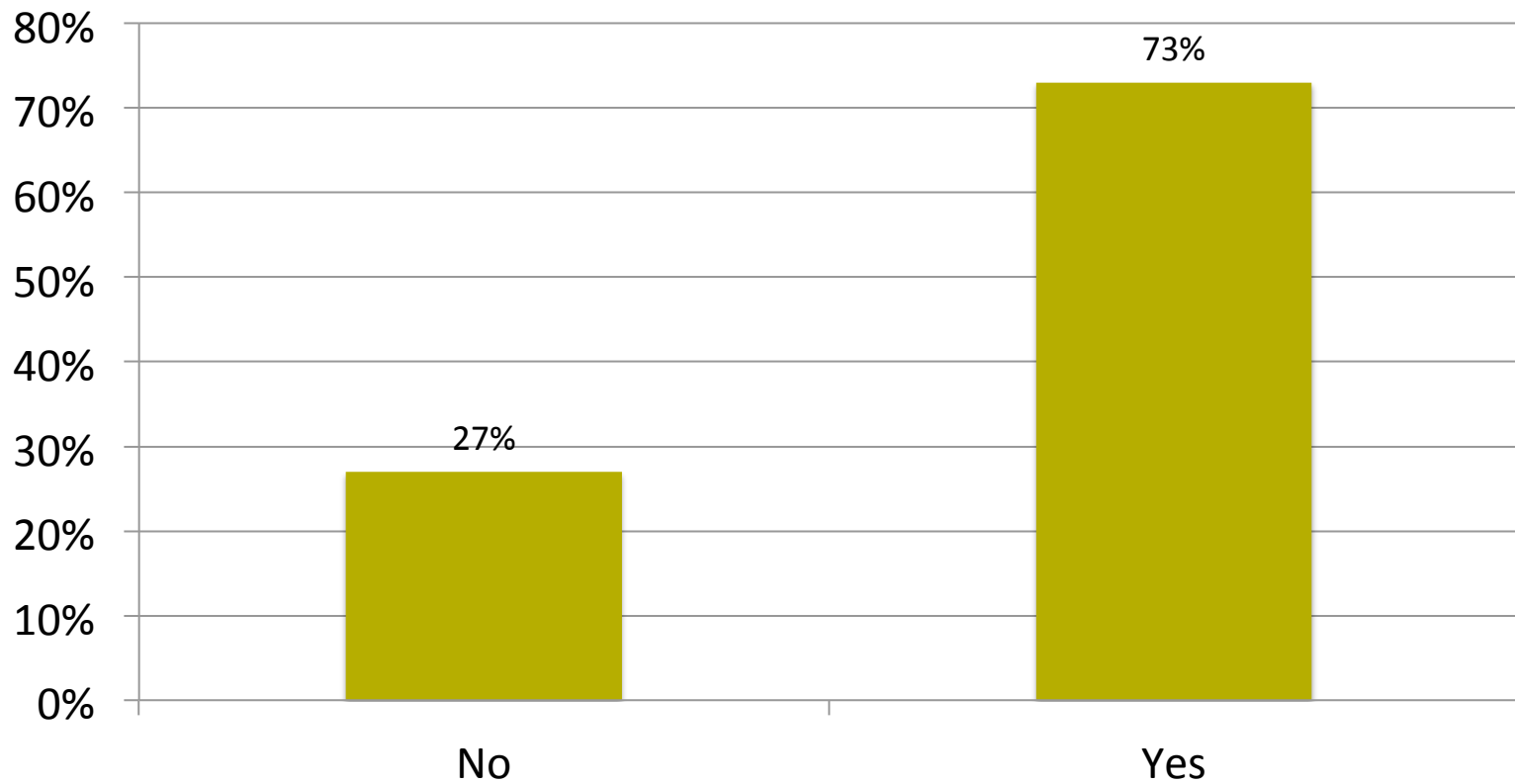
"How is the sports programme offered?"



"Have you identified specific target groups for the sports programme(s) offered?"

yes	%
Youth	8.9
Female	5.6
Person with health problems	5.6
In general educ. programmes	3.3
Older inmate	3.3
Addict	3.3
Sedentary	2.2
Internees	1.1

"Are there specific rules of conduct for the prisoners who participate in sports?"



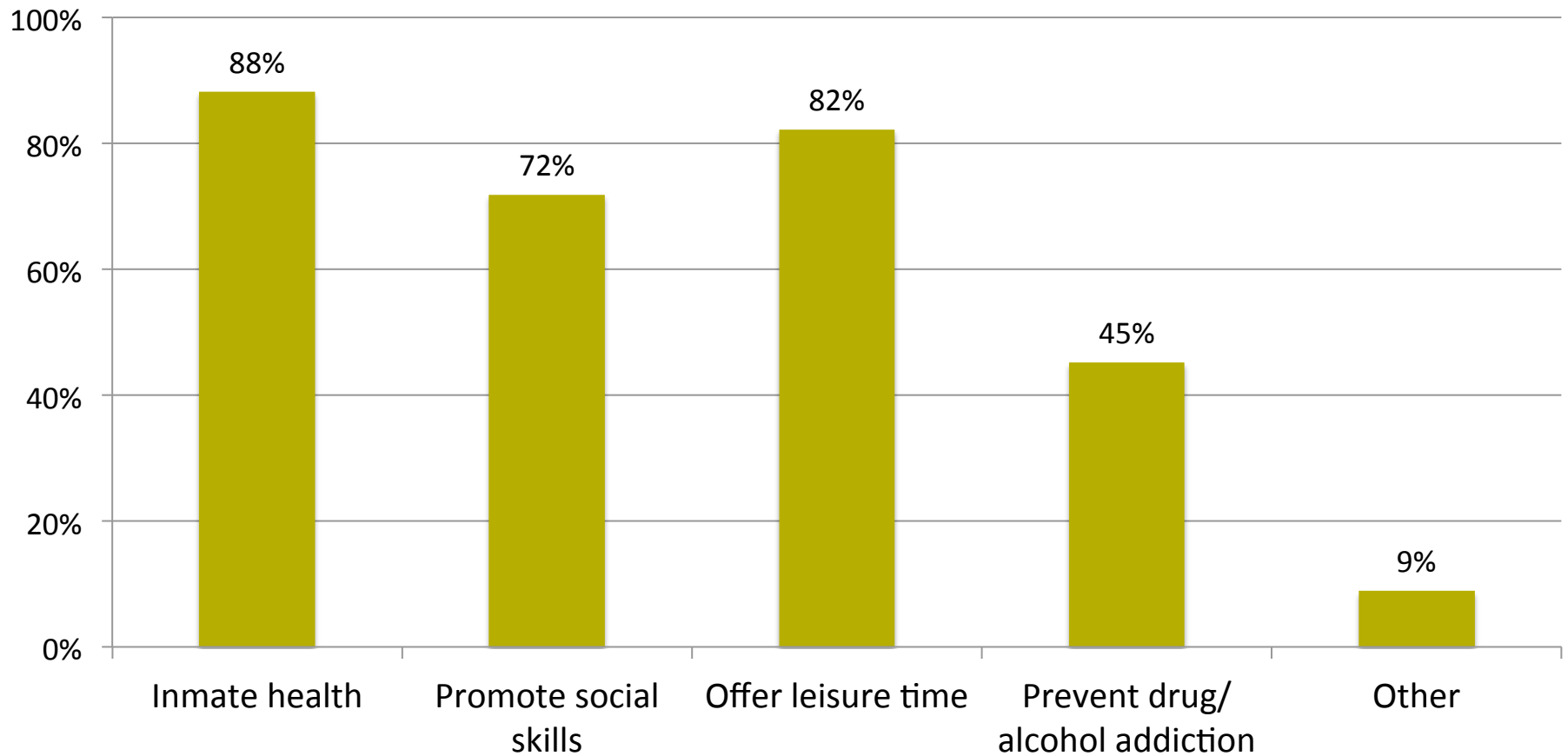


© Katrien Torfs

RESULTS

5. Objectives/outcomes

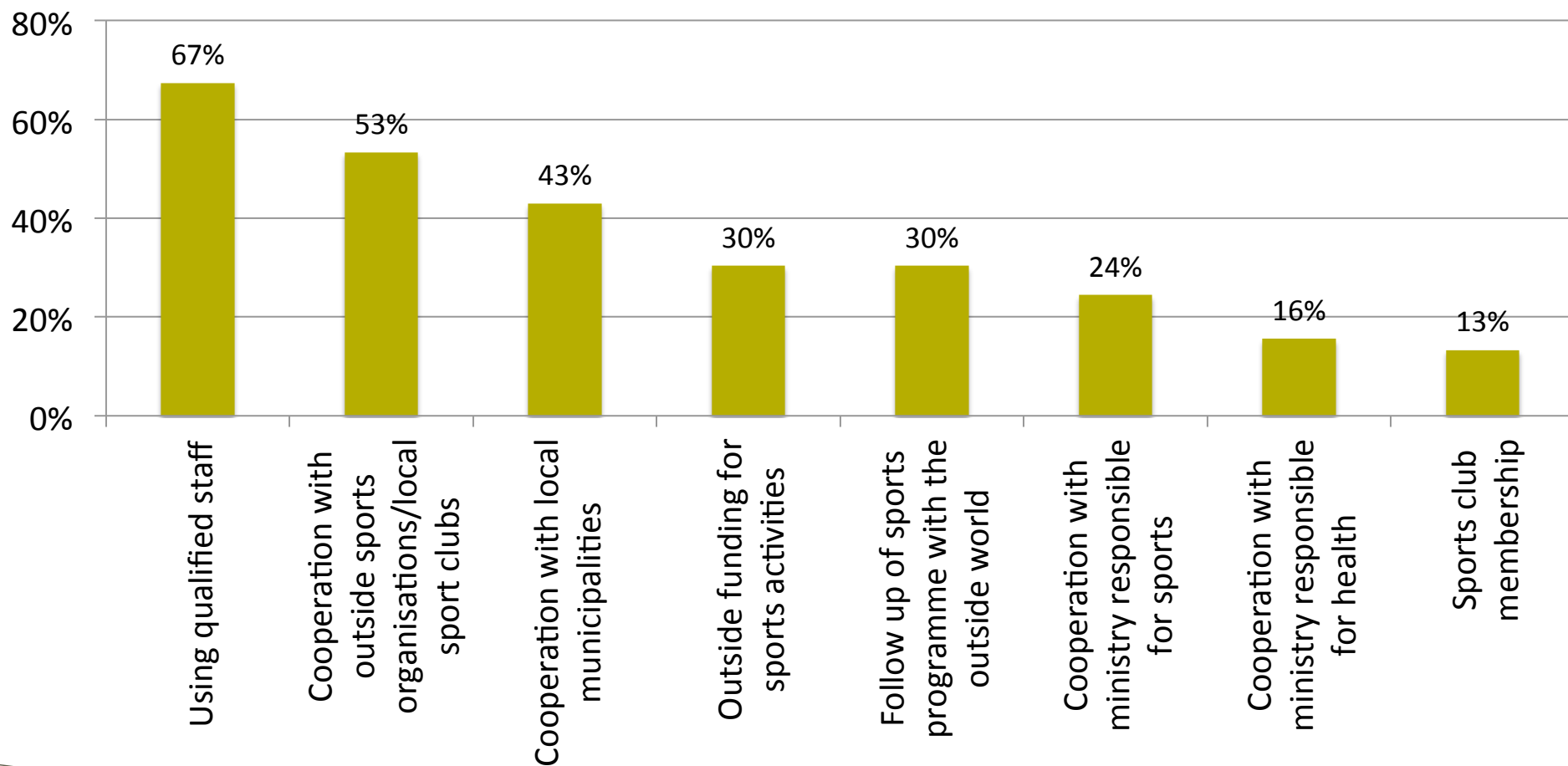
"Which objectives are pursued with the sports programme?"



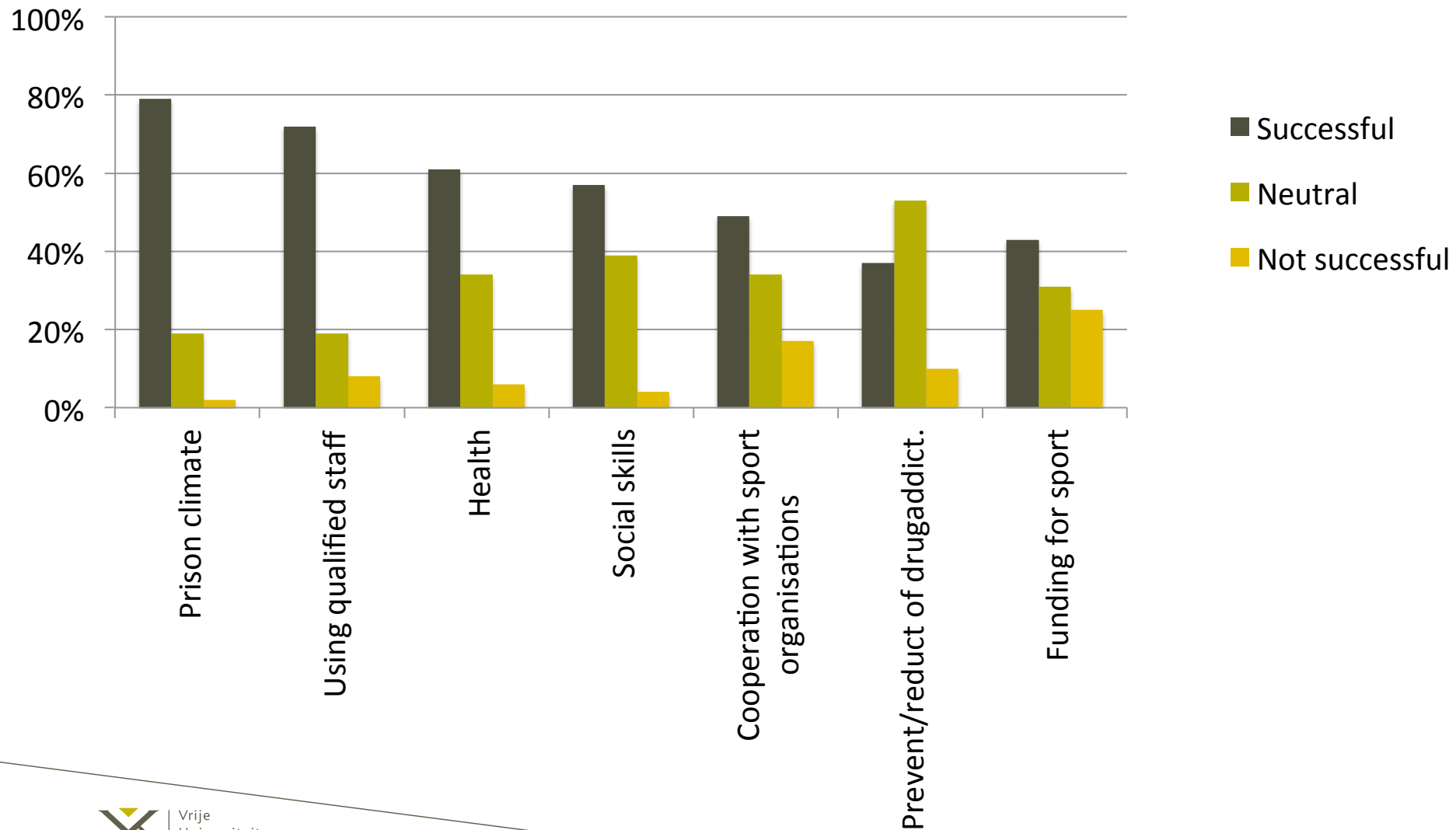
"Which objectives are pursued with the sports programme?"

OTHER	%
Positive social-psychological outcomes (decrease aggressiveness; improve mental health; sport as a tool for rehabilitation and reintegration)	3.7
Create positive prison climate (respect, discipline, ...)	2.9
Healthy lifestyle	1.5
Create new interests and habits	0.7

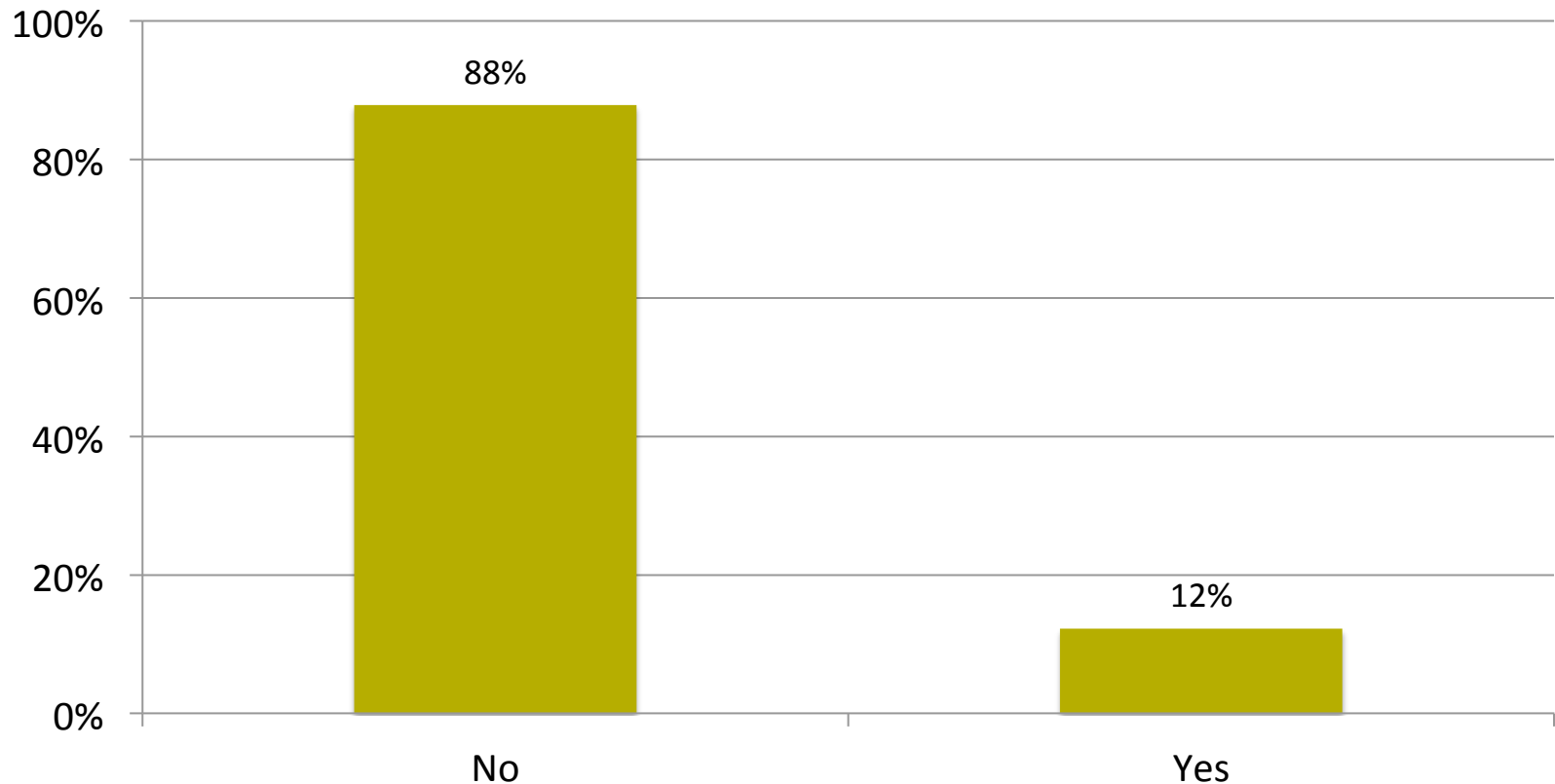
"How are these objectives achieved?"



"How successful have the following objectives been achieved?"



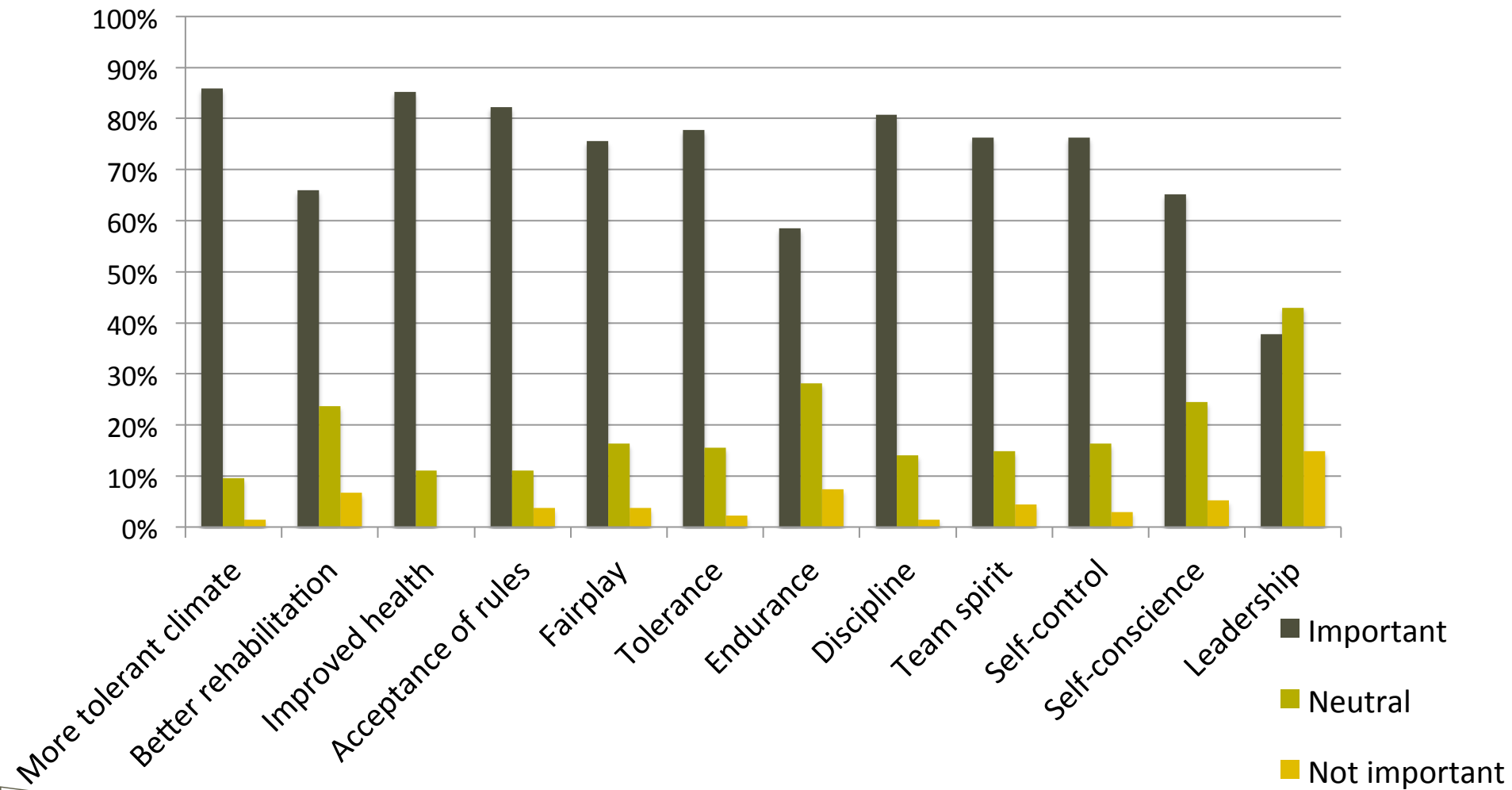
"Have you observed any negative impact regarding sports and inmates?"



"Have you observed any negative impact regarding sports and inmates?"

If yes, which?	%
• Use of anabolic steroids	25
• Injuries	25
• Sports can turn into a negative "addiction"	19
• Peer pressure, bullying, mobbing,...	6.3

"How has sport impacted the behaviour of prisoners?"



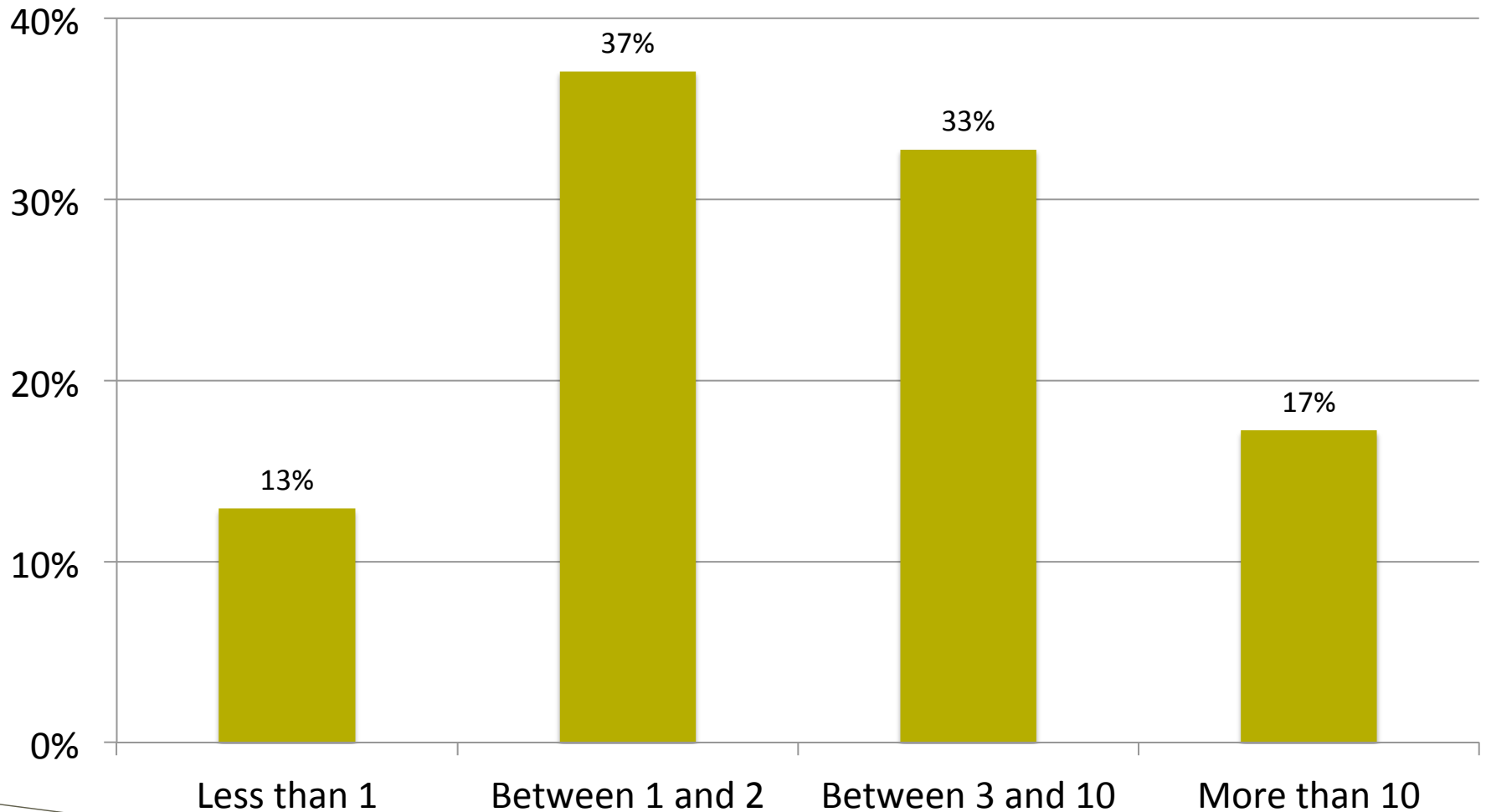


© Katrien Torfs

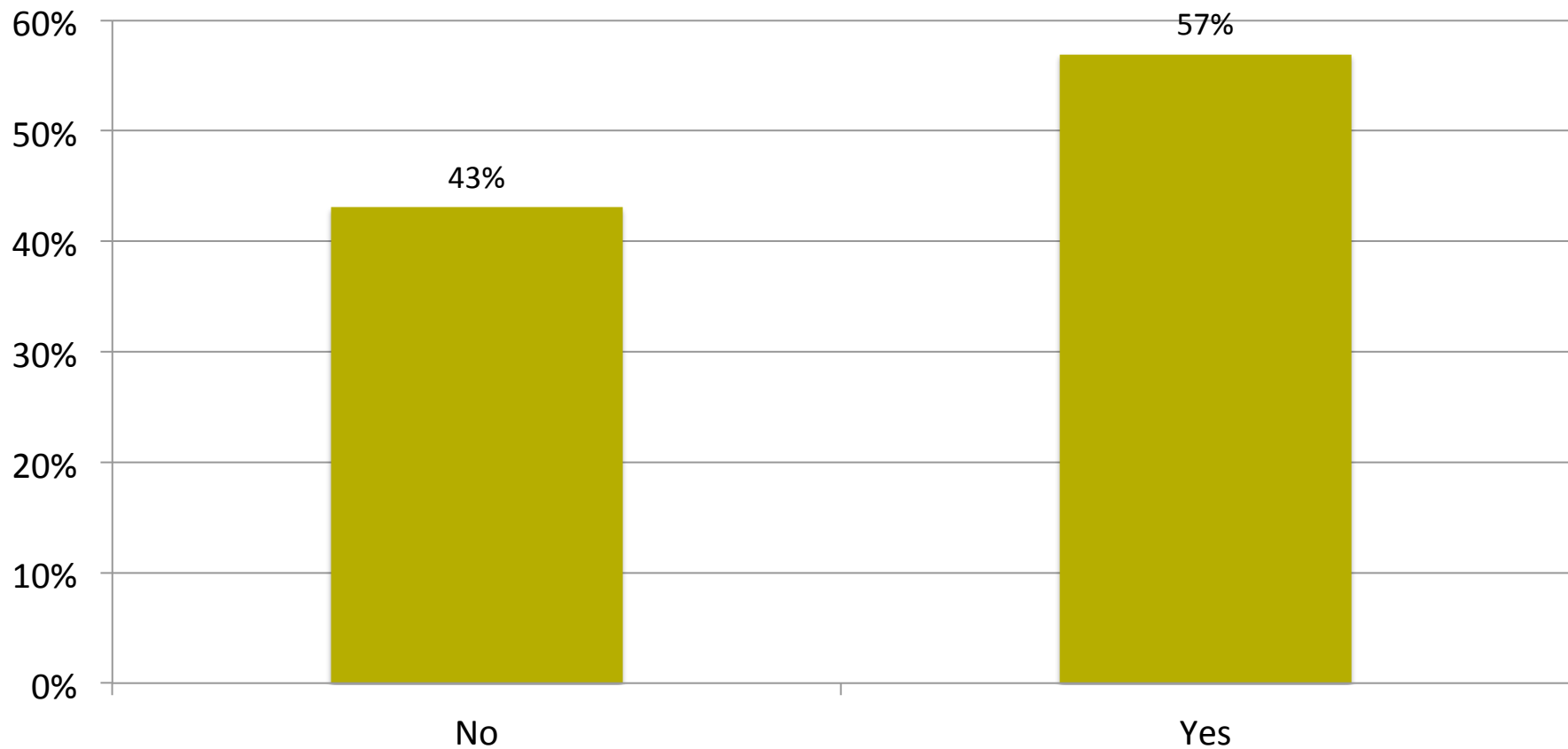
RESULTS

6. Staff/guidance

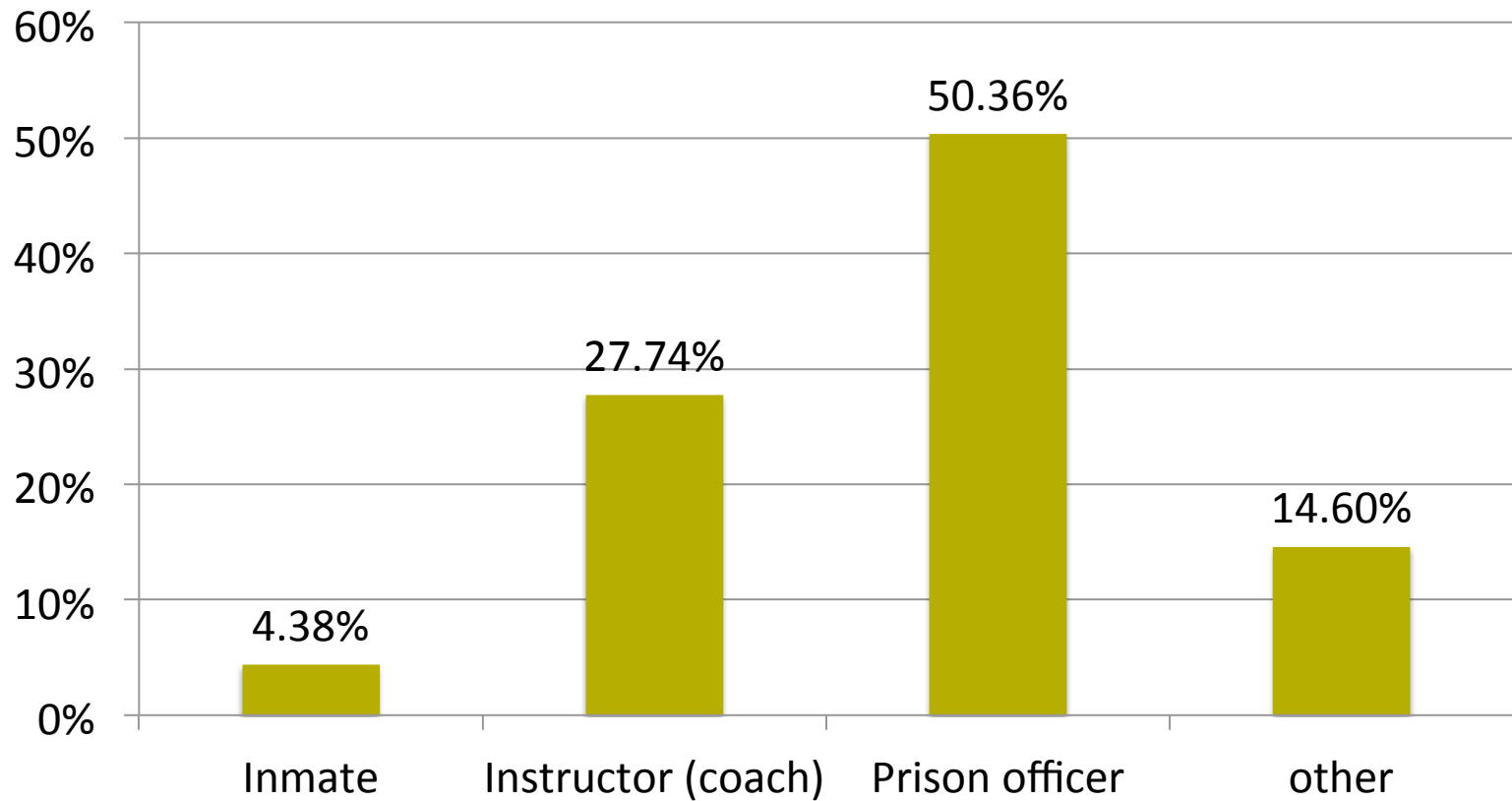
"How many staff is involved in the provision of the sports offer?"



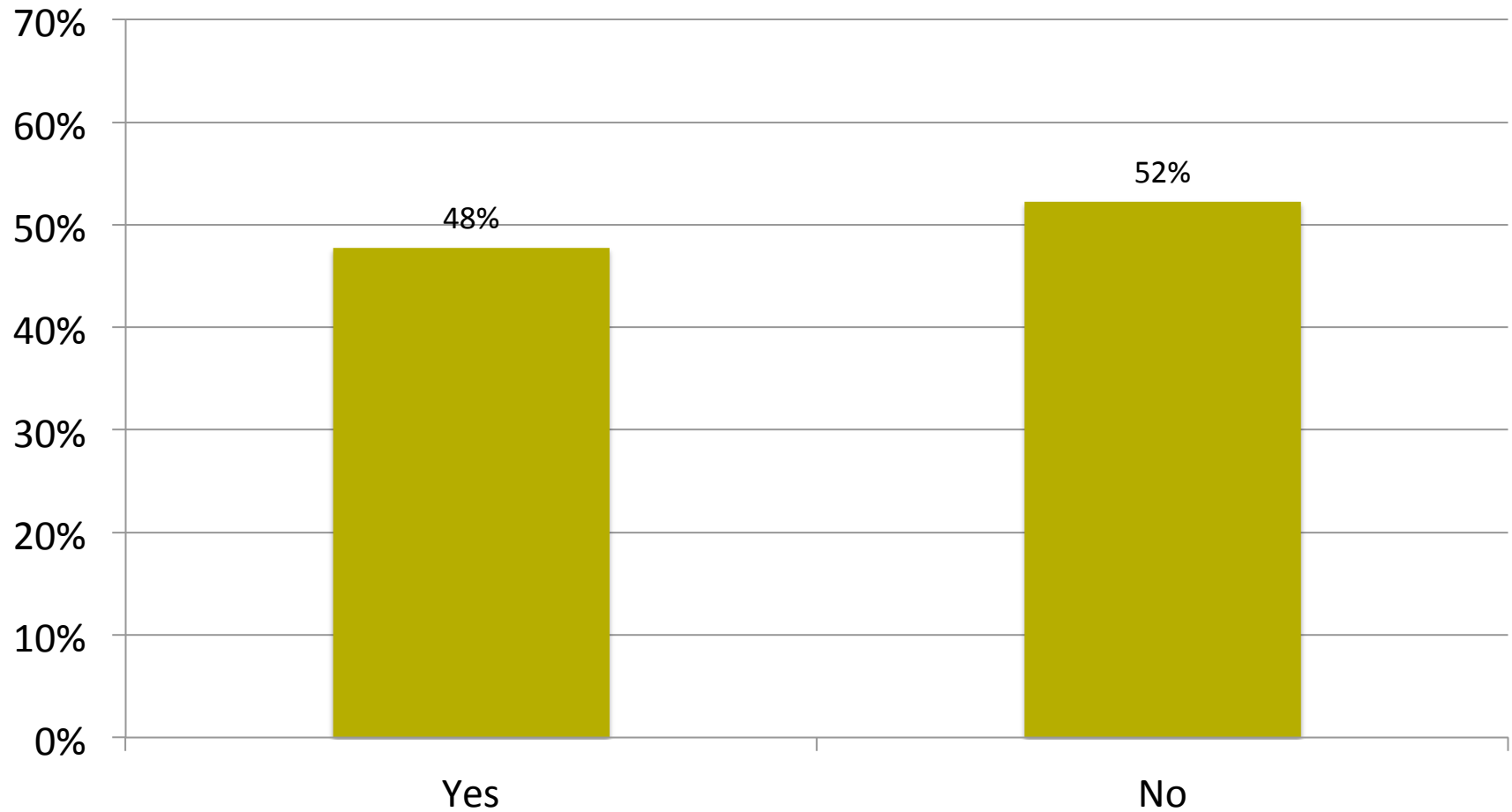
"Is a person, task force or organisation directly responsible for designing a policy regarding sport in prison?"



"Who is guiding the sports programme?"



"Does your prison cooperate with sports clubs?"

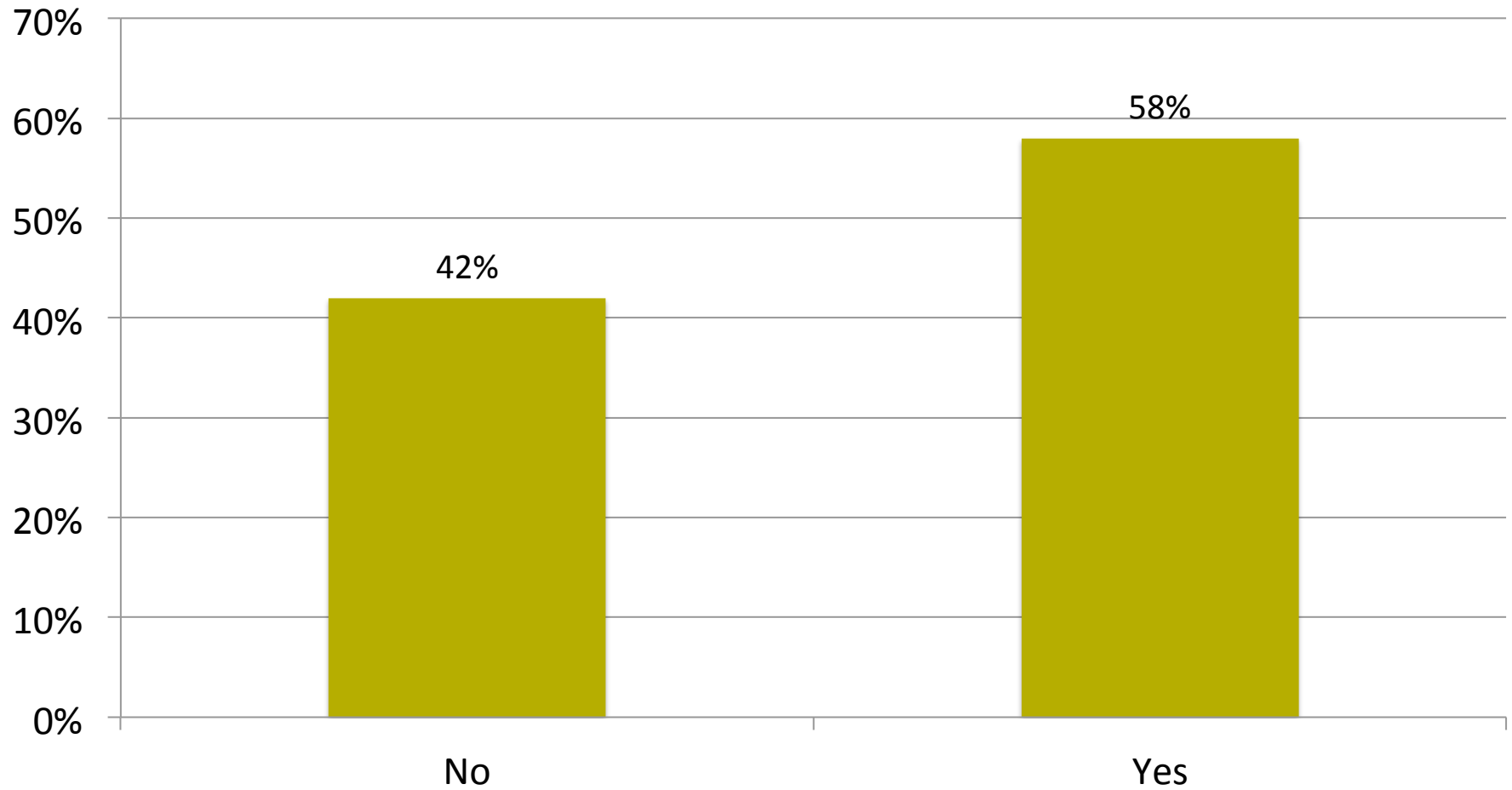




RESULTS

7. Evaluation

"Do you evaluate the sports programme?"



“If yes, which main results did these evaluations deliver?”

- positive (79.8%)
- negative (2.9%)
- needs (17.3)

positive results (%)

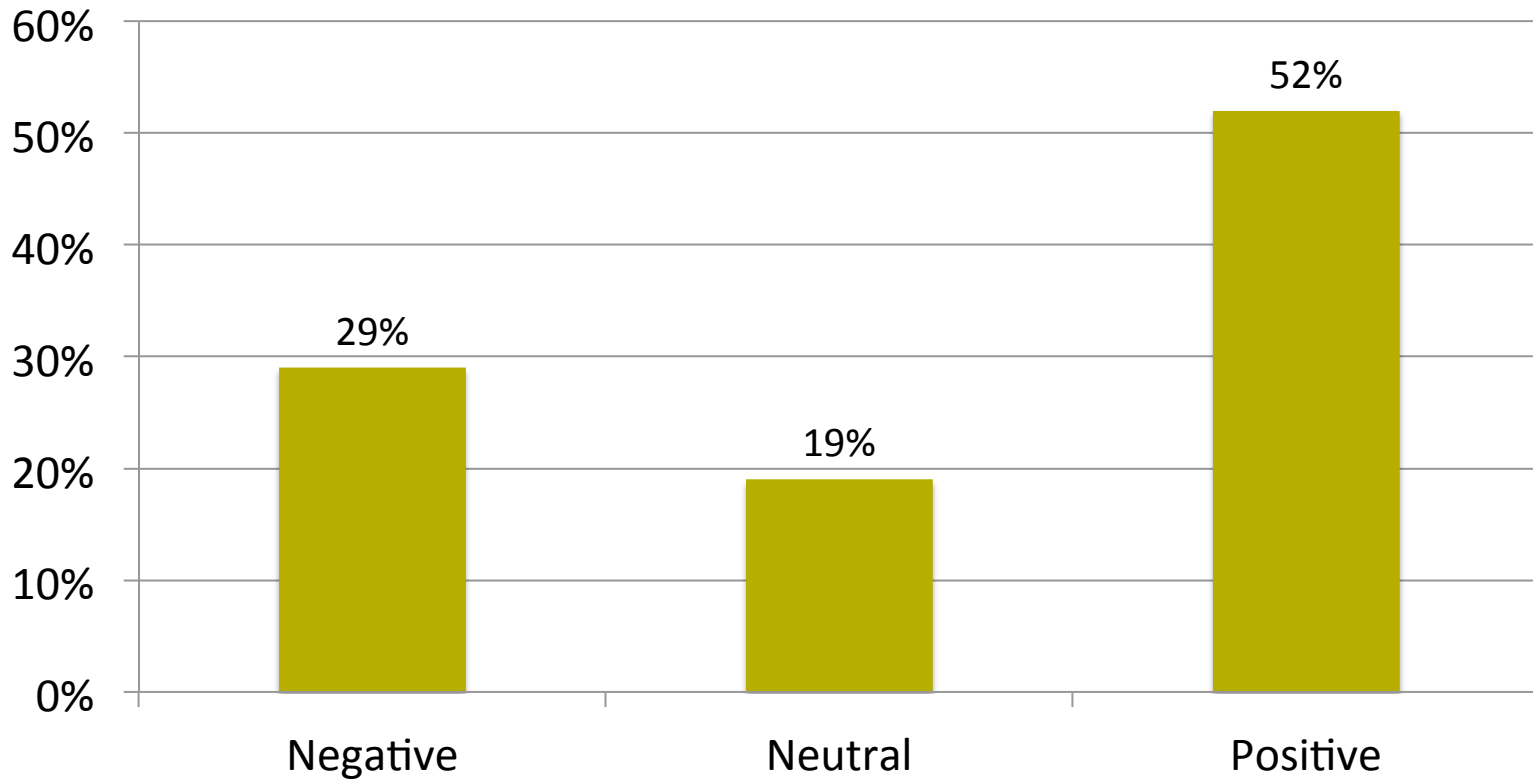
• Positive socio-psychological outcomes among inmates	32.6
• Better prison climate in general	28.9
• Better sports programme	13.2
• More sports involvement among inmates	10.8
• Positive in general	8.4
• Better community relations	4.8

negative results / needs

negative results	n
• There are waiting lists	2
• Inmates seem quite set in their ways and not willing to try out new things	1

needs	n
• Adaptation of the sports programme	14
• More support (professional - financial – sports technical)	4

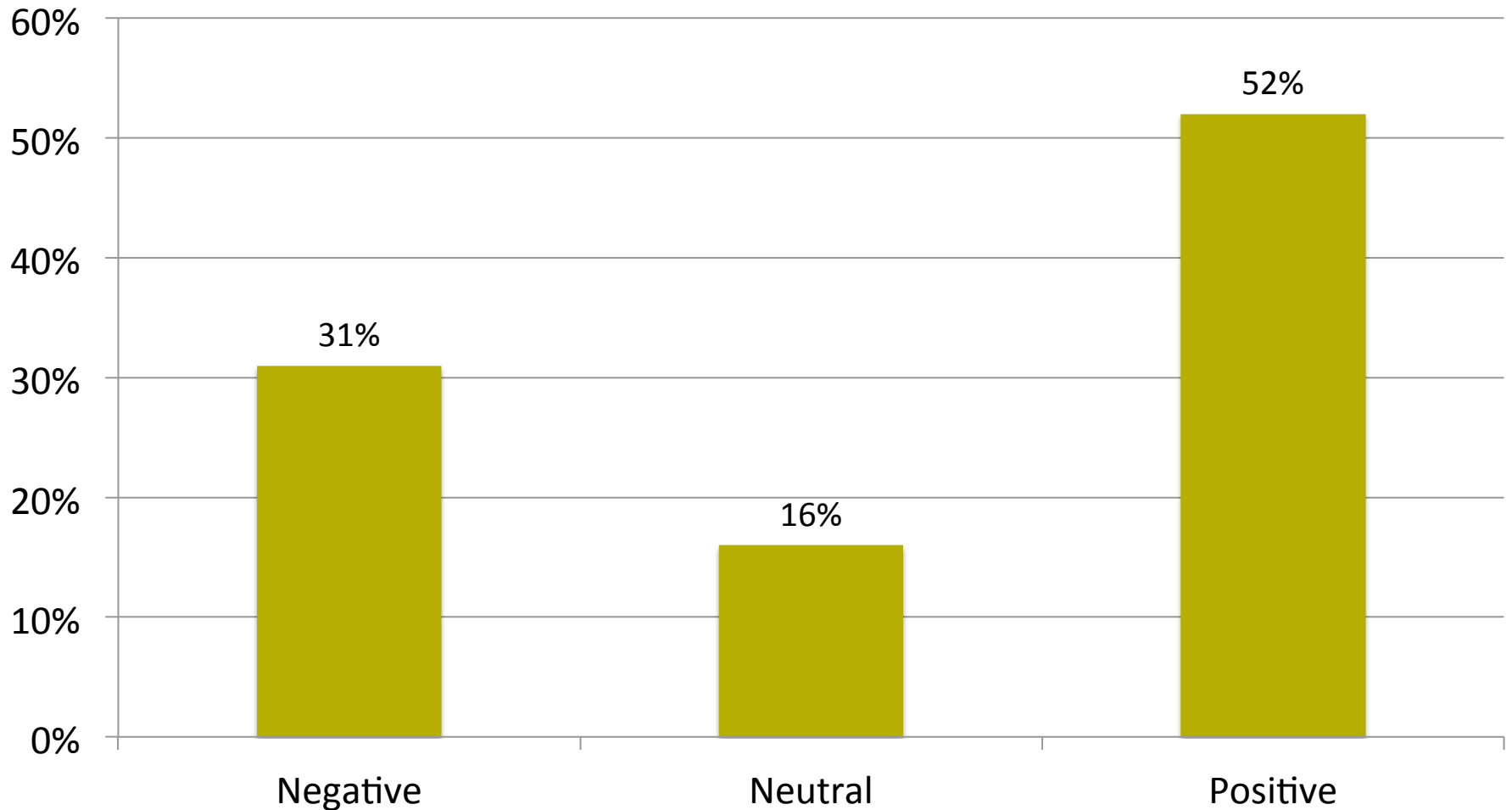
"How do you evaluate the quantity of the sports infrastructure?"



"How do you evaluate the quantity of the sports infrastructure?"

Comments	n
Lack of sports infrastructure	4
Insufficient equipment	2
Limited financial resources	1
Seeking continued improvement	1

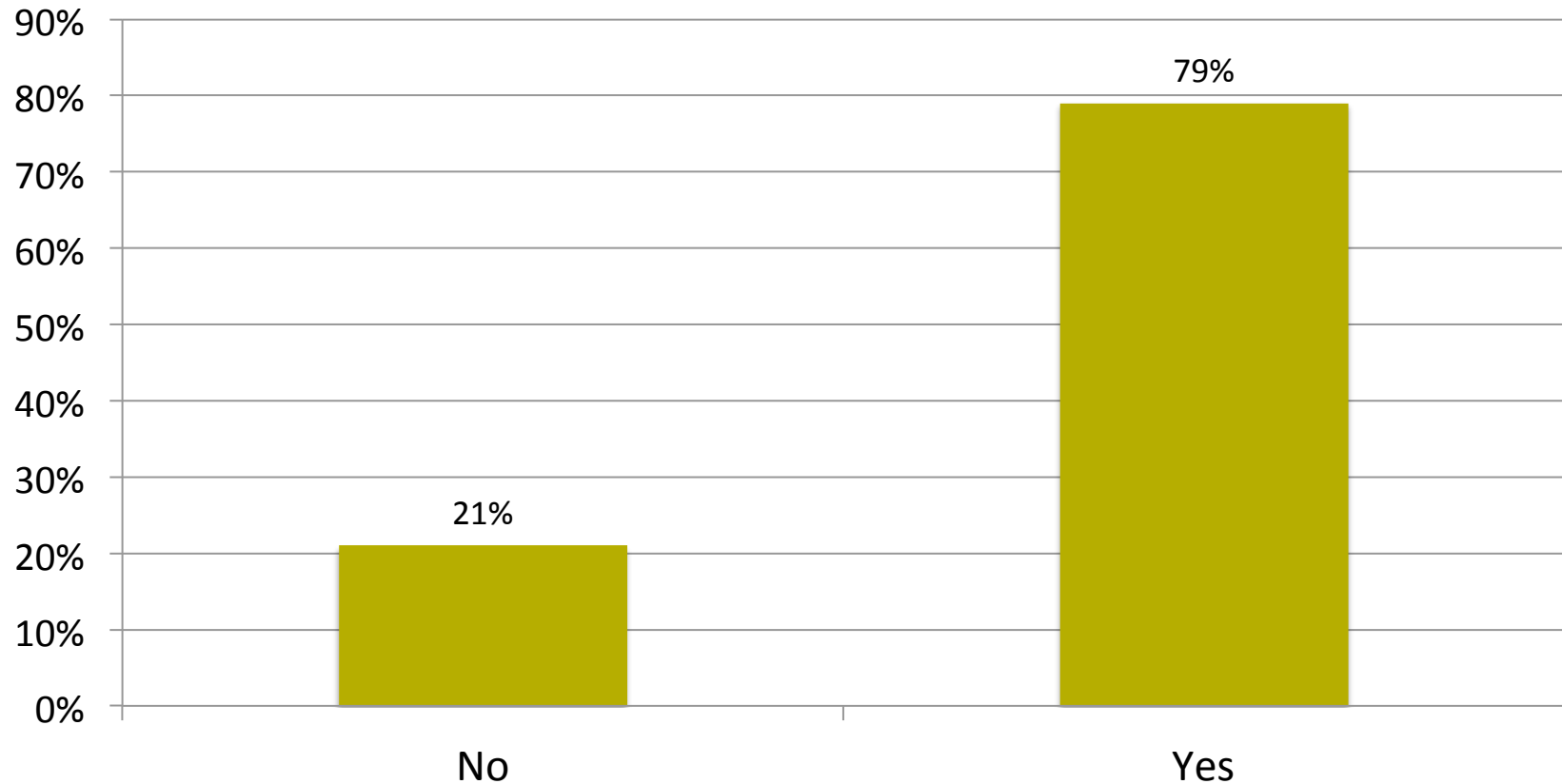
"How do you evaluate the quality of the sports infrastructure?"



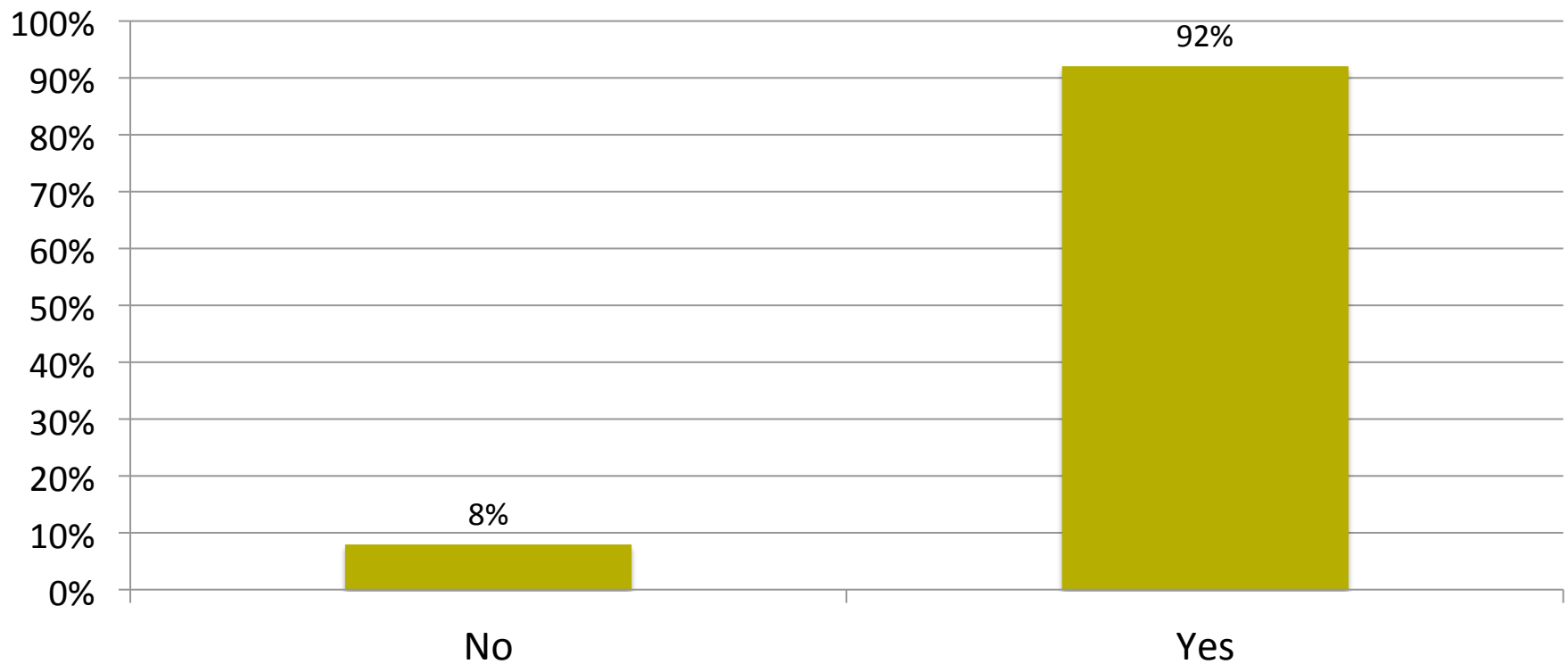
"How do you evaluate the quality of the sports infrastructure?"

Comments	n
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Insufficient facilities (old, not enough, not very sustainable, bad condition)	6

"Is the sports offer valued by the staff in the prison system in general?"



"Is the sports offer valued by the prisoners in the prison system in general?"



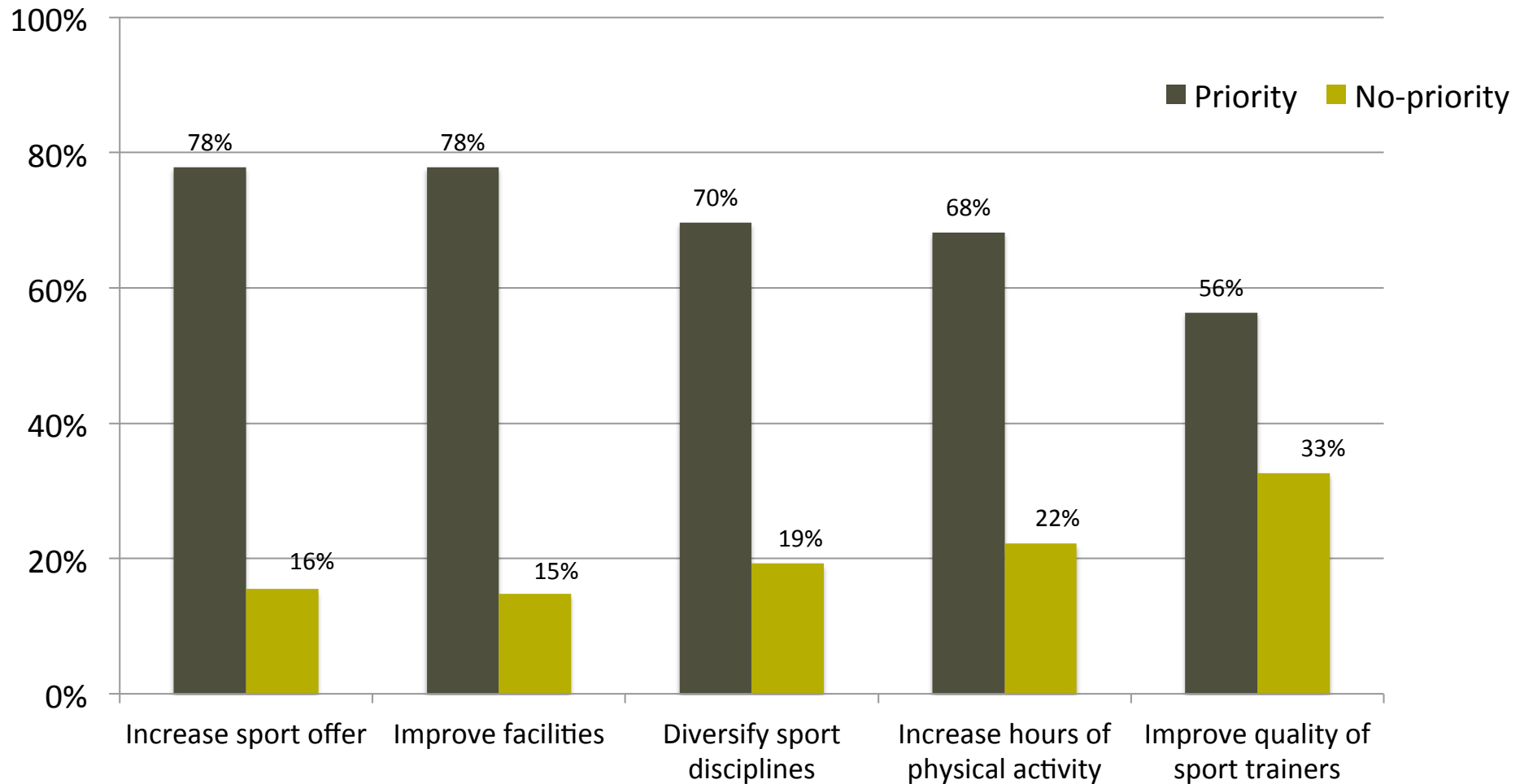


© Katrien Torfs

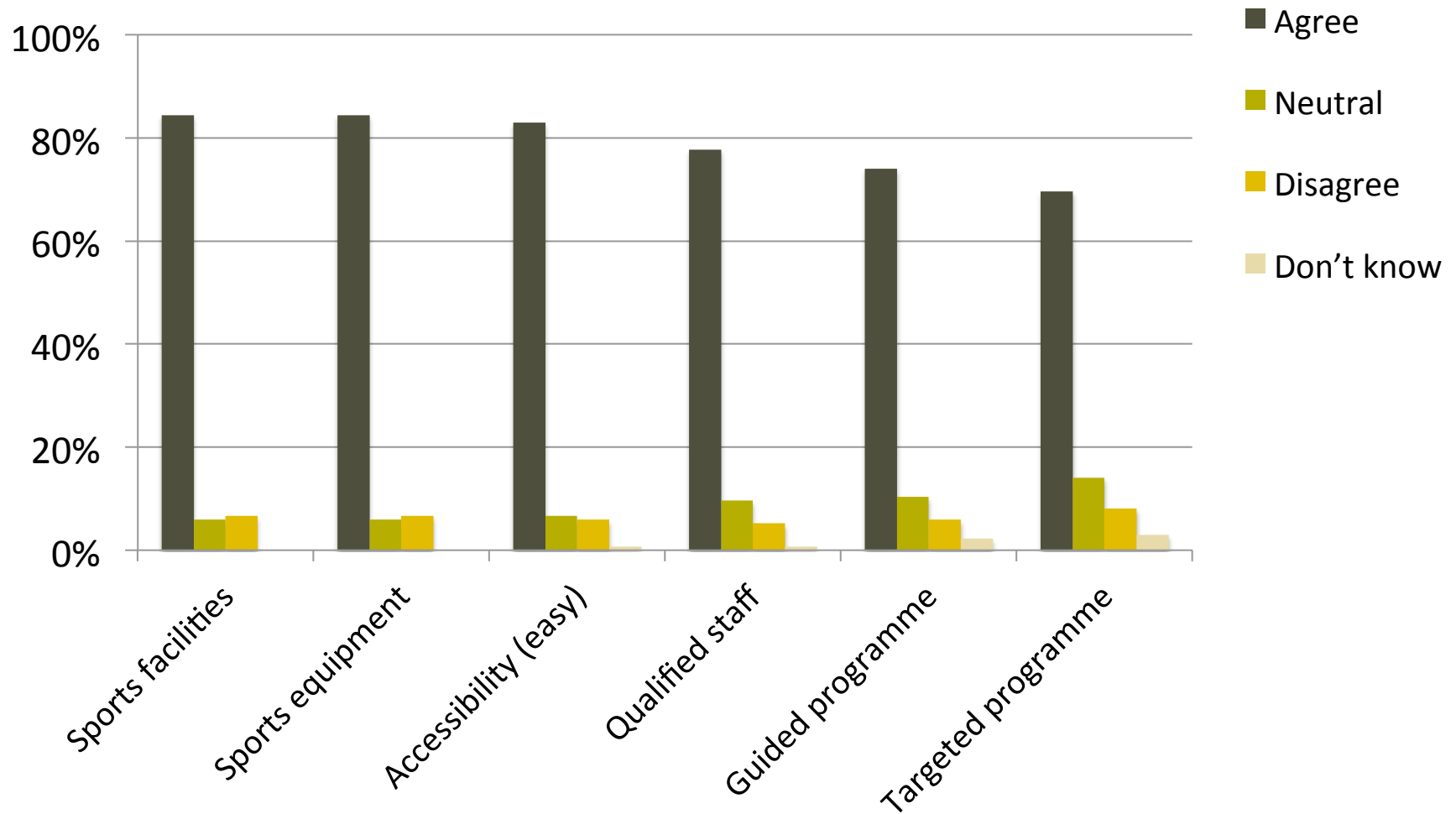
RESULTS

8. Future

"How do you intend to further develop the sports activities in your prison?"



"What are the success factors for sports programmes in prison?"



"Do you know any good practices of sports offers within the penitentiary system?"

- 22.1% referred to **good practices** primarily regarding specific competitions or events for inmates (and also staff) and collaboration with external partners

"Do you have any recommendations for policy makers with regard to sport in prisons?"

- 49 recommendations were formulated
 - ➔ mostly about **investments** in general (30.6%); sports infrastructure/equipment (30.6%) and qualified staff (18.4%)

Contact

Department of Sports Policy and Management

(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

www.vub.ac.be/SBMA

Jikkemien.Vertonghen@vub.ac.be

Marc.Theeboom@vub.ac.be