

Mindfulness and the GP: Attitudes of GPs towards the scope for Mindfulness practice as one of a range of strategies used by GPs to maintain their own mental health



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Background/Introduction

- ICGP 2011 Forum: G.P's front of house dealing with groundswell of Socio-economic distress
- Well trained to treat patients but poorly skilled at managing their own stress levels
- Active management of stress:
 - > Useful
 - > Almost mandatory to preserve professionalism
- SELF CARE IS NOT SELFISH!!!!
- One such Strategy is Mindfulness Practice: established 32 years ago by Dr. Jon Kabat Zinn.

What is Mindfulness?

◎ Central hypothesis:

- > Augmenting levels of awareness
- > Proactive notice and response to shifts in body-mind wellness
- > Paying attention to the present moment
- > Inviting awareness and observation into all aspects of life



Mindfulness Course

- ◉ 8 weeks
- ◉ Sessions are held once a week for two hours.
- ◉ The course employs a multipronged approach consisting of
 - > Meditation
 - > Yoga
 - > Breathing exercises
 - > Body scan

Previous Research

- ◎ **ICGP Stress Reduction and Mindfulness training course for Irish G.P's evaluation study**
 - > Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire
 - > Rita Doyle, Debbie Correll
- ◎ **“Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Health Care professionals- Results from a Randomised Control Trial”**
 - > Shapiro, Shauna L
- ◎ **“Cultivating mindfulness in health care professionals: A review of empirical studies of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)”**.
 - > Irving JA, Dobkin PL, Park J.

Aim

- To explore where mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Practice might fit within a range of strategies used by General Practitioners in order to maintain their own individual mental Health.



Objectives

- ◎ **Explore current practices** utilised by G.P's to maintain mental health in Workplace
- ◎ **Assess the awareness** of G.P's specifically towards Mindfulness based Practices and the availability of such training in Ireland.
- ◎ **Gauge the attitudes** of G.P's towards Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Practices



Methodology



- ◉ Quantitative Cross- sectional descriptive study
- ◉ group level (General Practitioners)
- ◉ Main method used :
 - > **Self-complete questionnaire**
- ◉ Phone-call → Postal Distribution
- ◉ Piloted Questionnaire on 6 local GPs.

Methodology

- ◎ **Reference Population :** Irish General Practitioners
- ◎ **Sample Population:** 200 G.P's from HSE South Region (Cork, Kerry, South Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow)
- ◎ **Sample Size:** 200 G.P's –combat issue of non-response
- ◎ **Source of selection:** Local Health Offices within HSE website
- ◎ **Method of Selection:** randomly using a random number generator to avoid **Selection Bias**

Questionnaire

- ◉ Constructed by myself and Professor Colin Bradley
- ◉ 24 questions
- ◉ 3 sections
 - > Section1:Demographics
 - > Section2:Various strategies currently utilised by GPs
 - > Section3:Explanation of Mindfulness and awareness of GPs of same.
- ◉ 3.5 minutes to complete

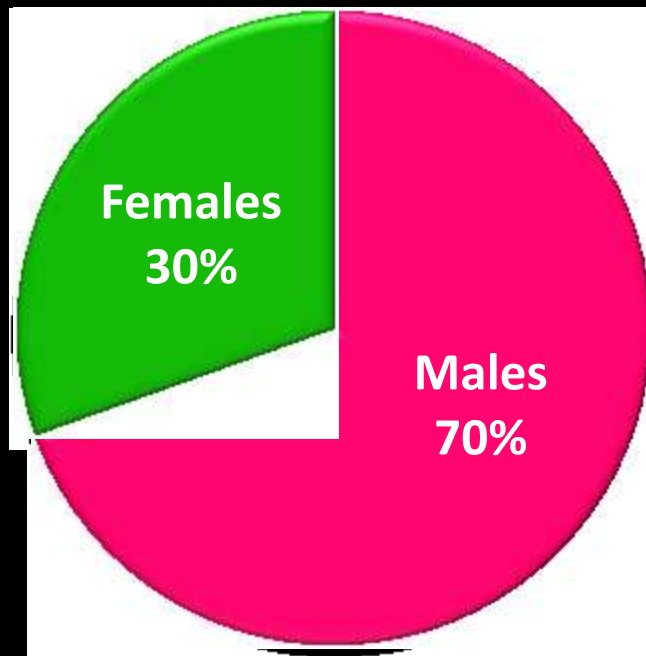
Questionnaire

- ◉ A combination of closed-ended questions and five-point Likert scales
- ◉ closed-ended questions were chosen in order to retrieve greater amounts of information in a convenient way for participants and to facilitate analysis of the retrieved data.
- ◉ Questionnaires were posted to the 200 GPs with:
 - > enclosed stamped addressed envelope for return
 - > Cover letter explaining my project

Results

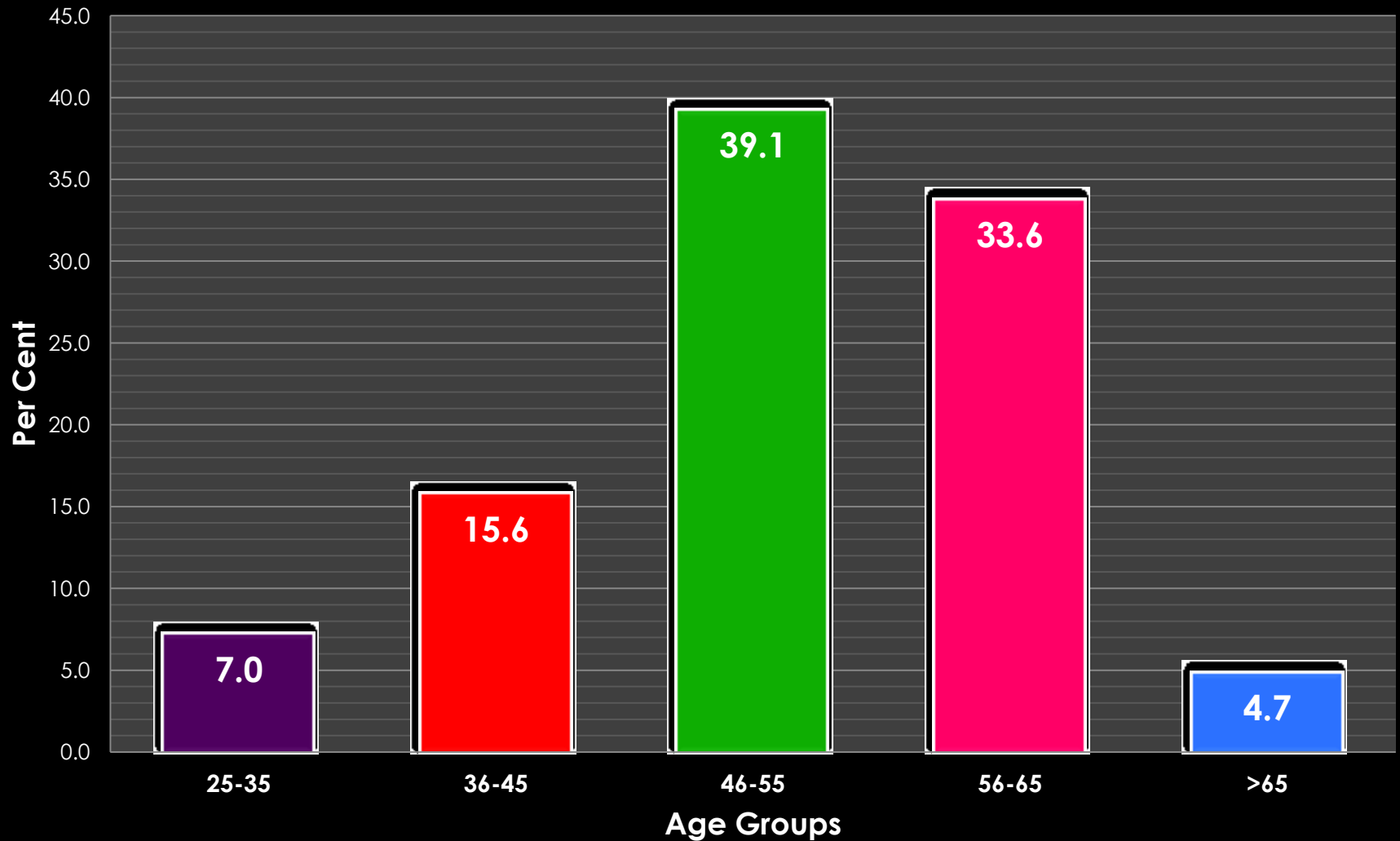
- 128 GPs resonded.
- 64% Response rate.

Gender of Respondents

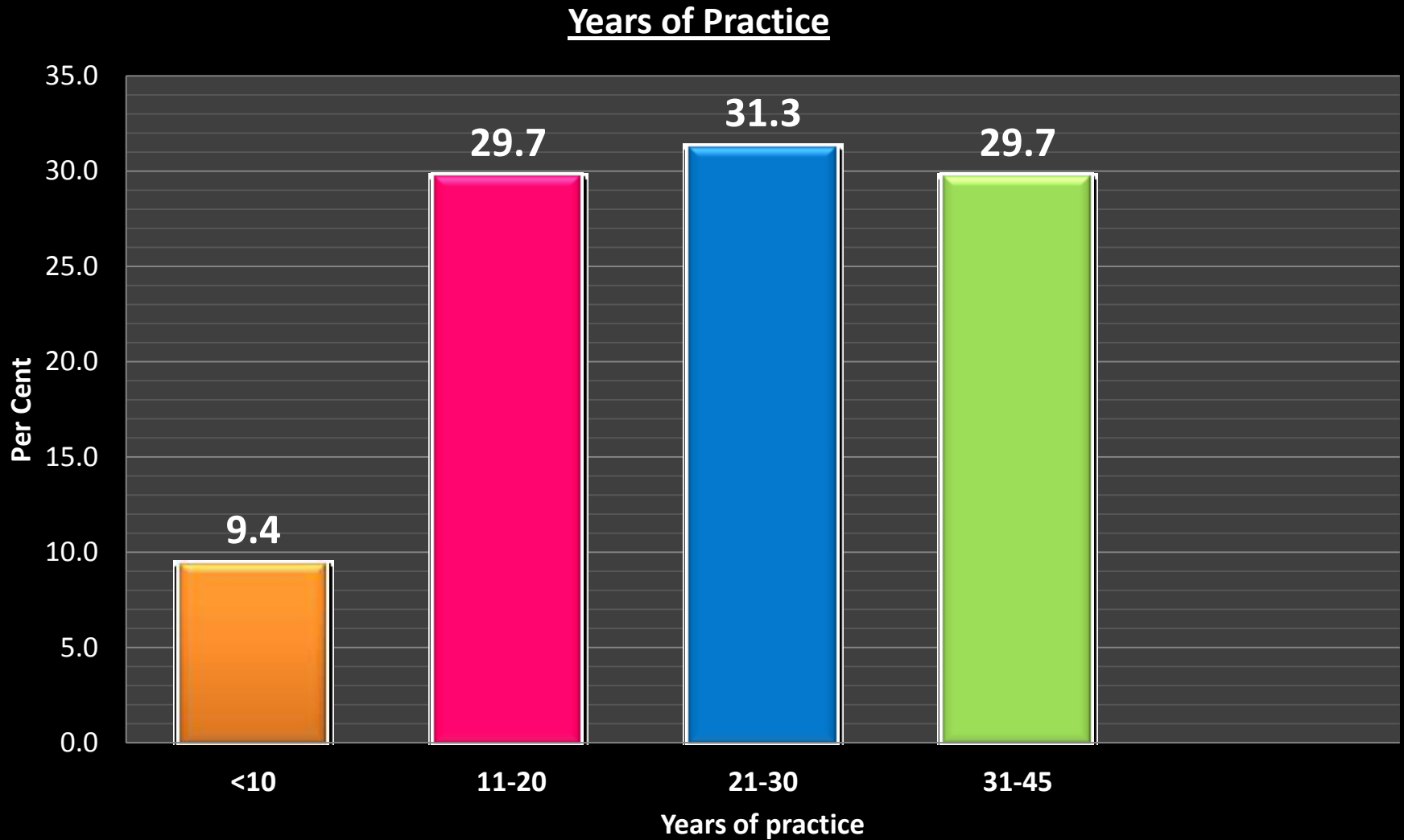


Interesting demographics

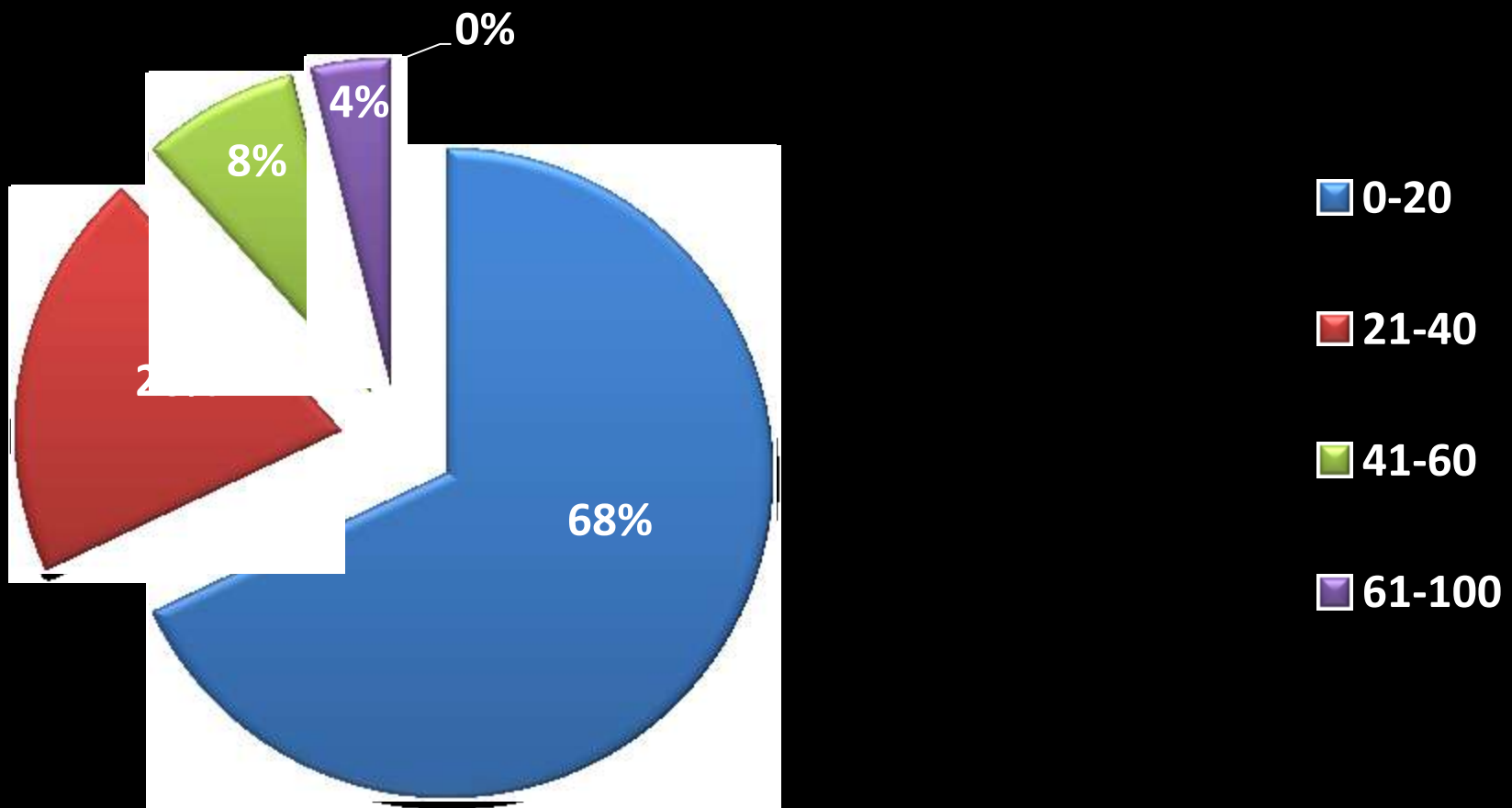
Age Groups of Respondents



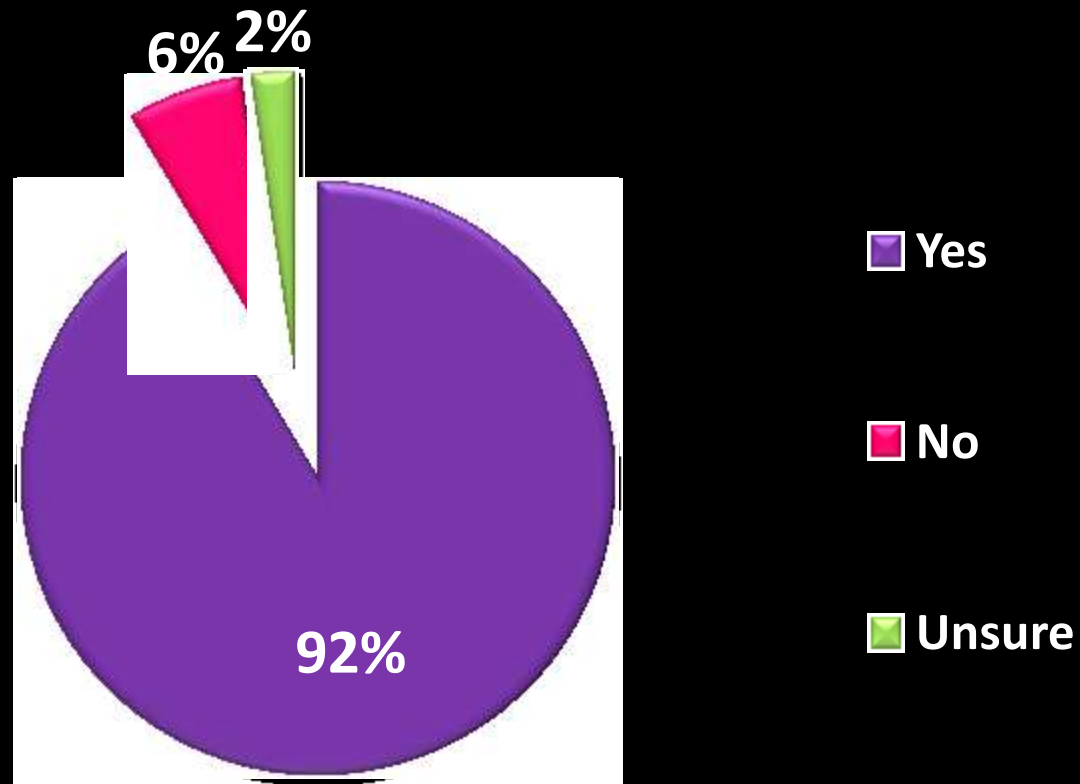
Years of Practice



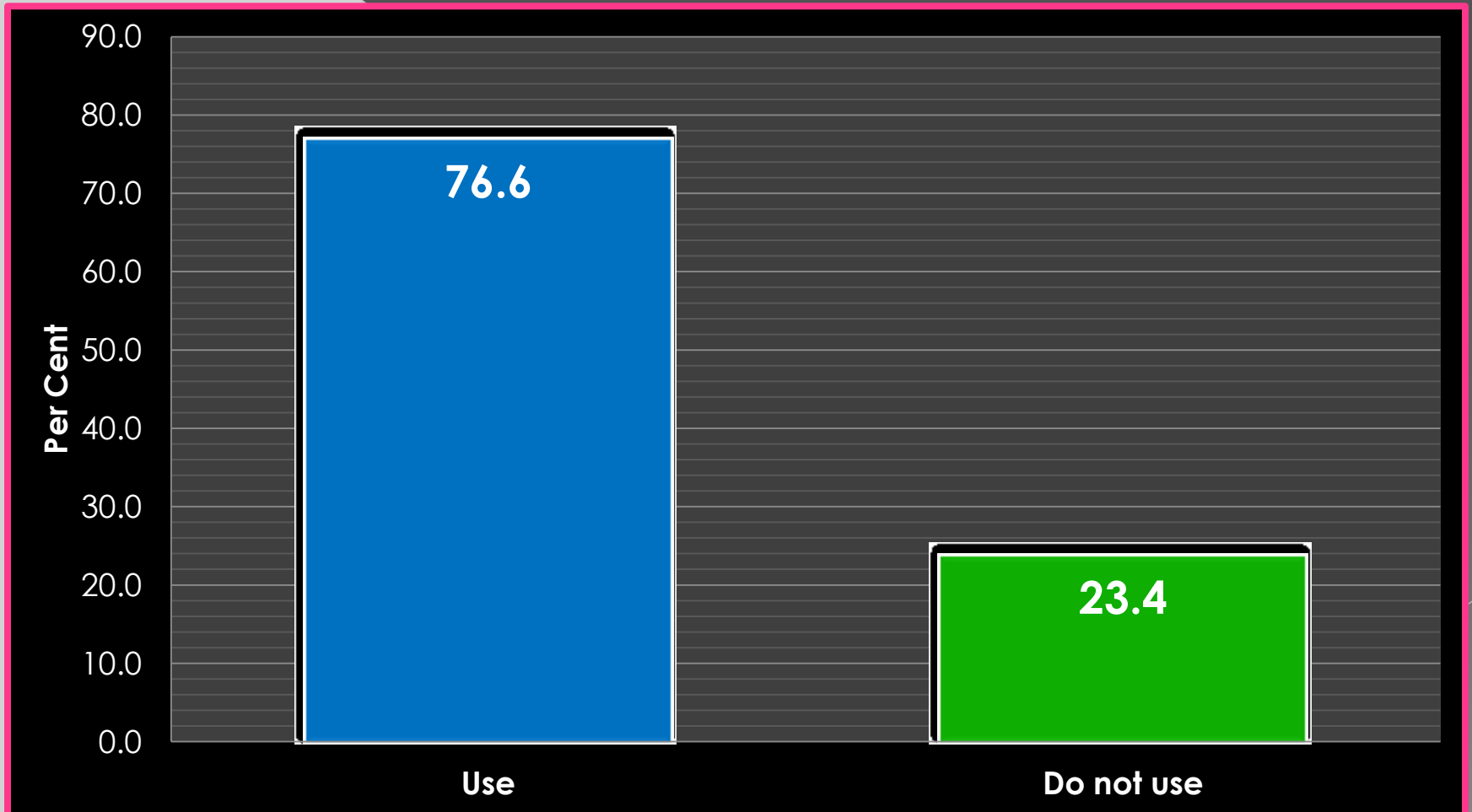
Proportion of Respondents who felt stress at different percentage levels



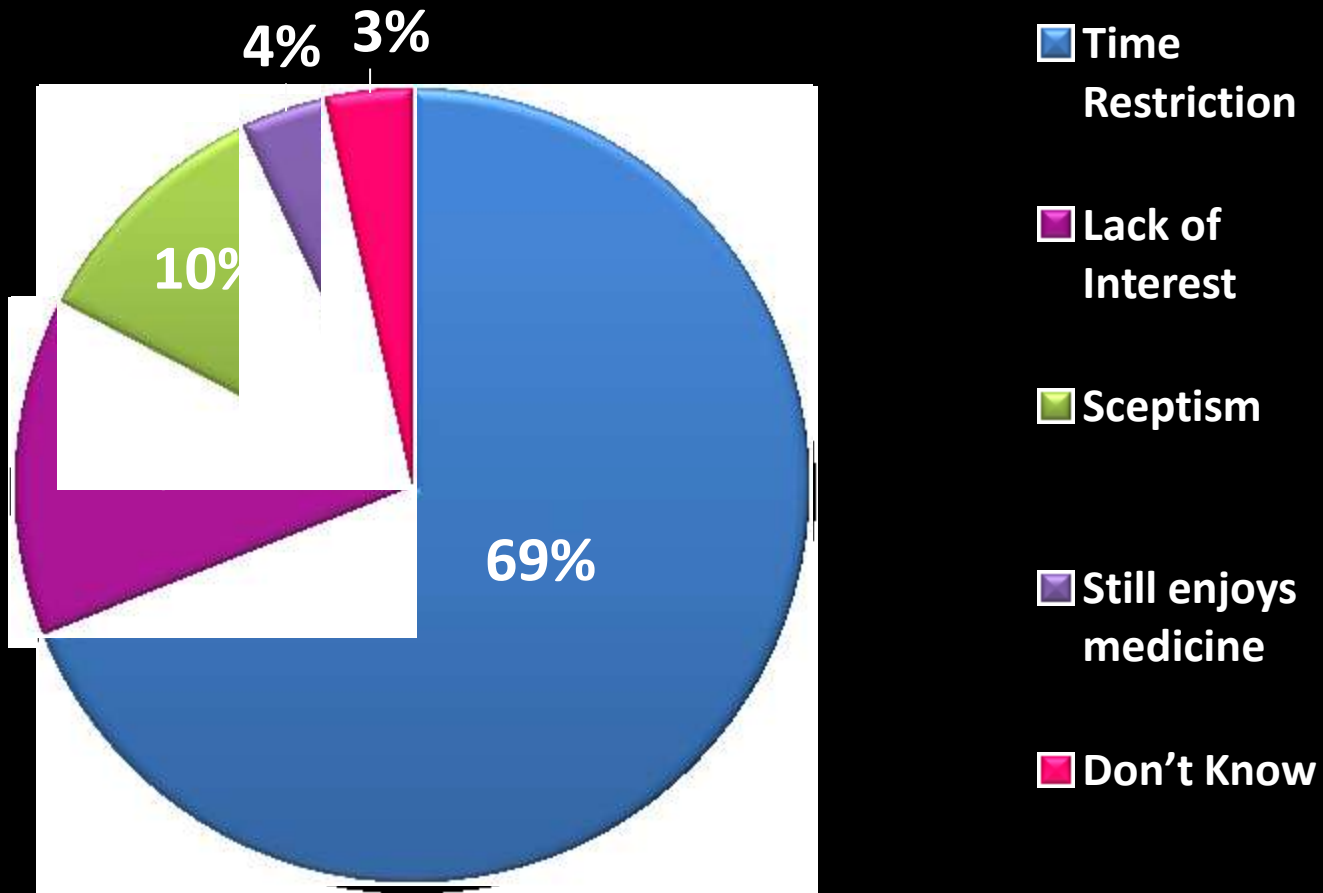
Proportion of respondents who feel it is important to practice strategies to maintain mental health



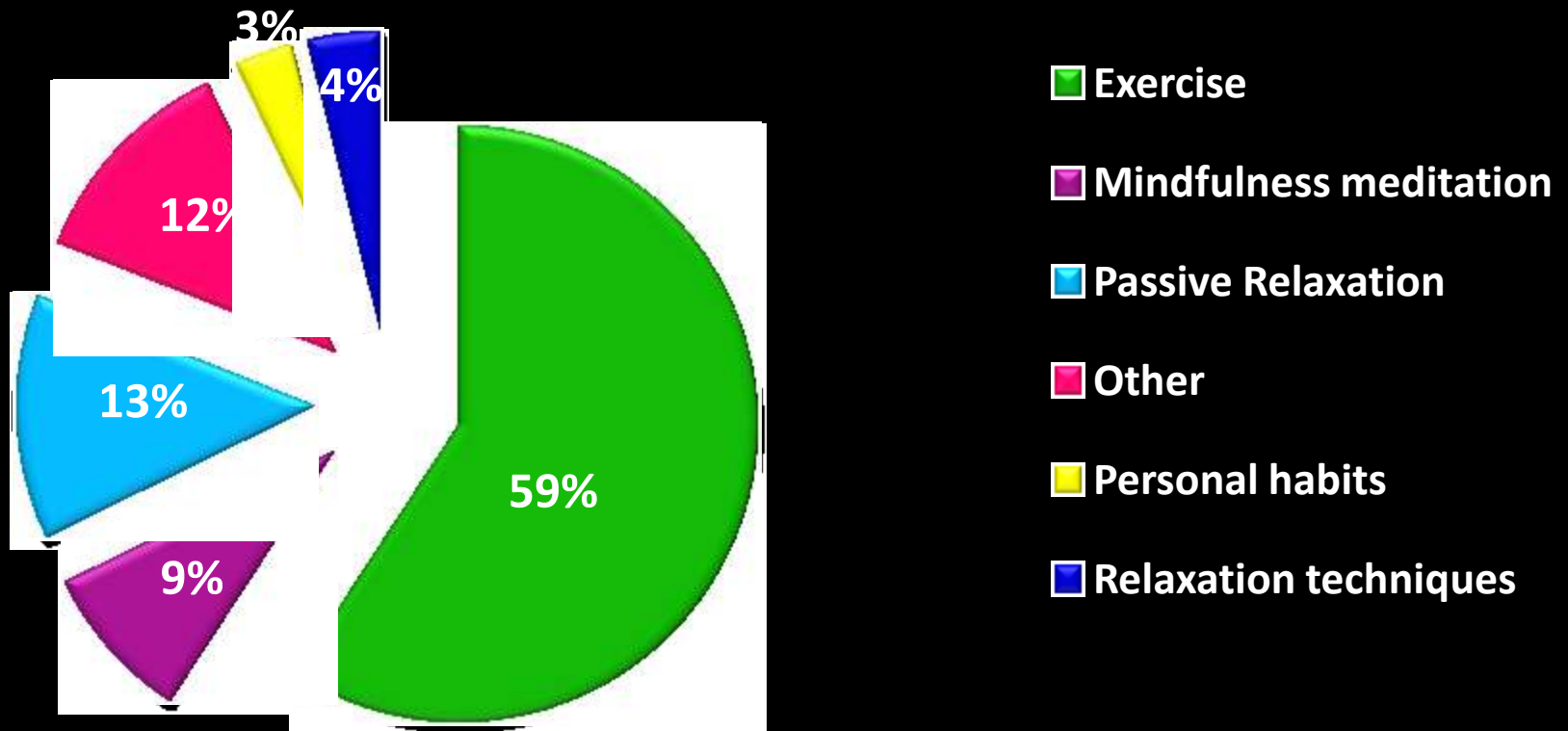
Proportion of respondents who actively practice strategies



Reasons for non-practice



Most frequent activity practiced by respondents



Category composition

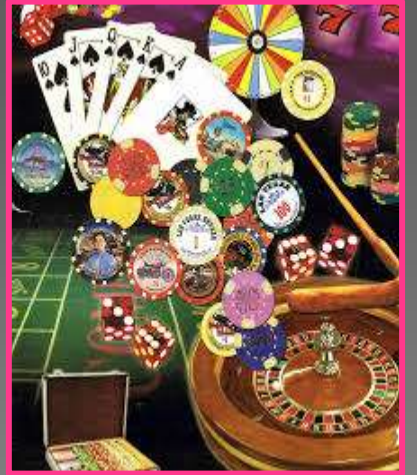
“Other” n=15

- AA meeting
- Alcohol
- Voluntary work
- Friends/Colleagues/Family time
- Regular holidays
- Prayers
- Gardening
- Fishing



“Personal habits” n=4

- Excessive eating
- Sleeping
- Ignoring stress
- Gambling



Relationship between those who currently use Mindfulness and Description of Practice

- GPs working in an urban setting were statistically significantly more likely to be currently using Mindfulness to manage their stress than those who are working in rural or mixed urban/rural areas. **(26% vs. 2% vs. 4%)** ($p=0.002$).

| <u>Description of Practice</u> | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| | Urban | Rural | Mixed U/R | Total |
| Uses Mindfulness No | 14 (74%) | 40 (98%) | 65 (96%) | 119 |
| Yes | 5 (26%) | 1 (2%) | 3 (4%) | 9 |
| TOTAL | 19 | 41 | 68 | 128 |

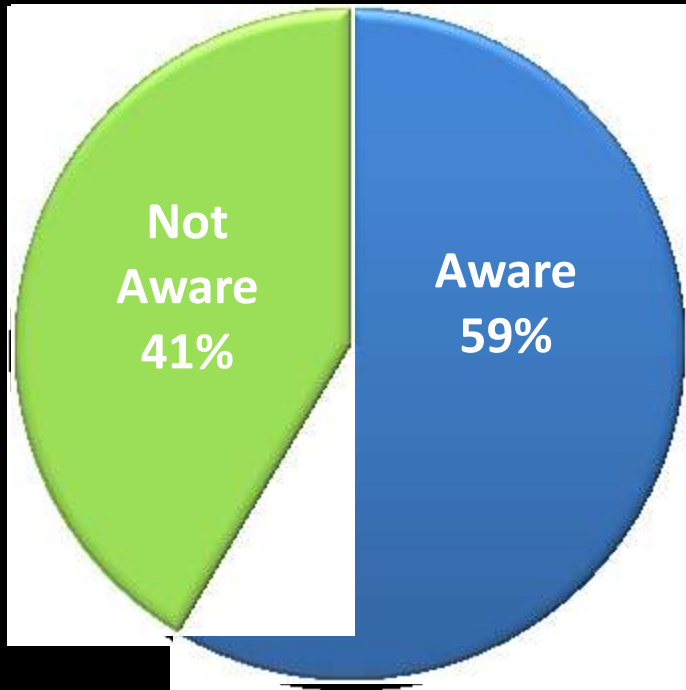
Relationship between those who use Mindfulness and other variables

- No statistically significant difference exists between those who currently use Mindfulness in terms of the following variables:

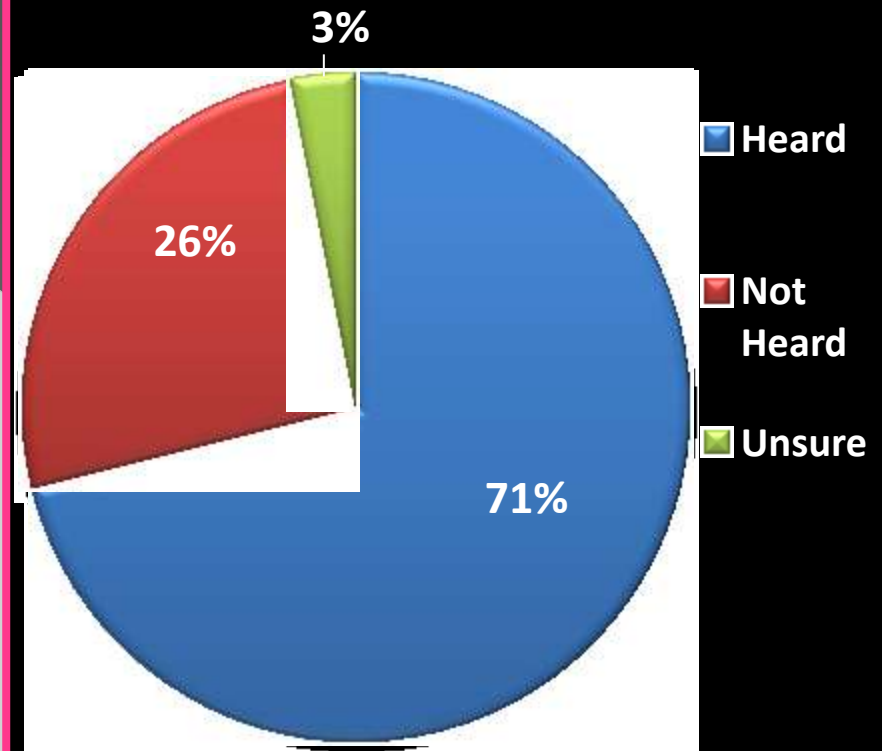
| Variable | P-Value |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Gender | 0.376 |
| Percentage Stress Levels | 0.282 |
| Age Group | 0.545 |
| Marital Status | 0.936 |
| Type of Practice | 0.760 |
| Years of Practice | 0.828 |
| Religious Affiliation | 0.140 |

Awareness of Mindfulness

Proportion of Respondants who are aware of the meaning of Mindfulness

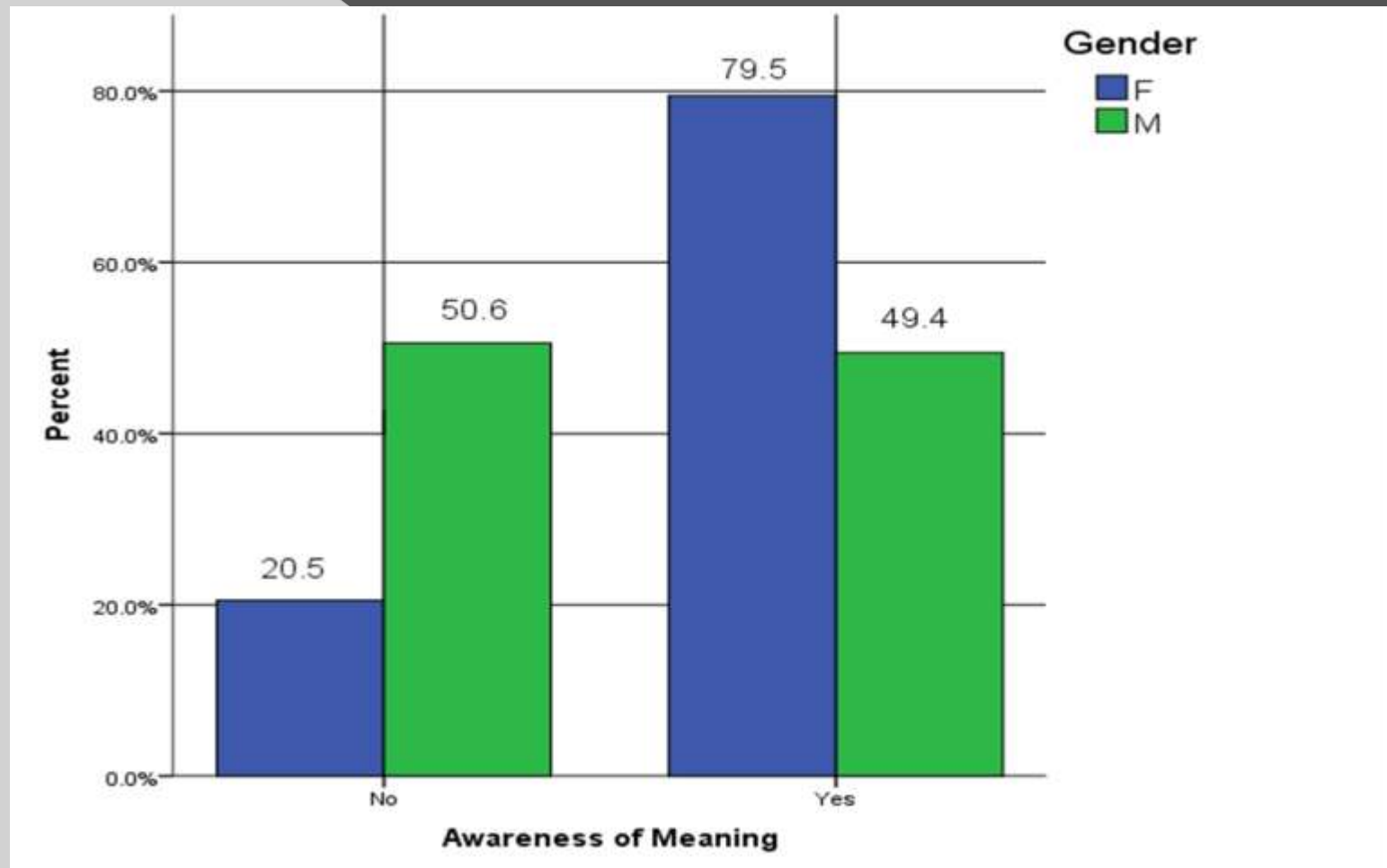


Proportion of Respondants who have heard of Mindfulness



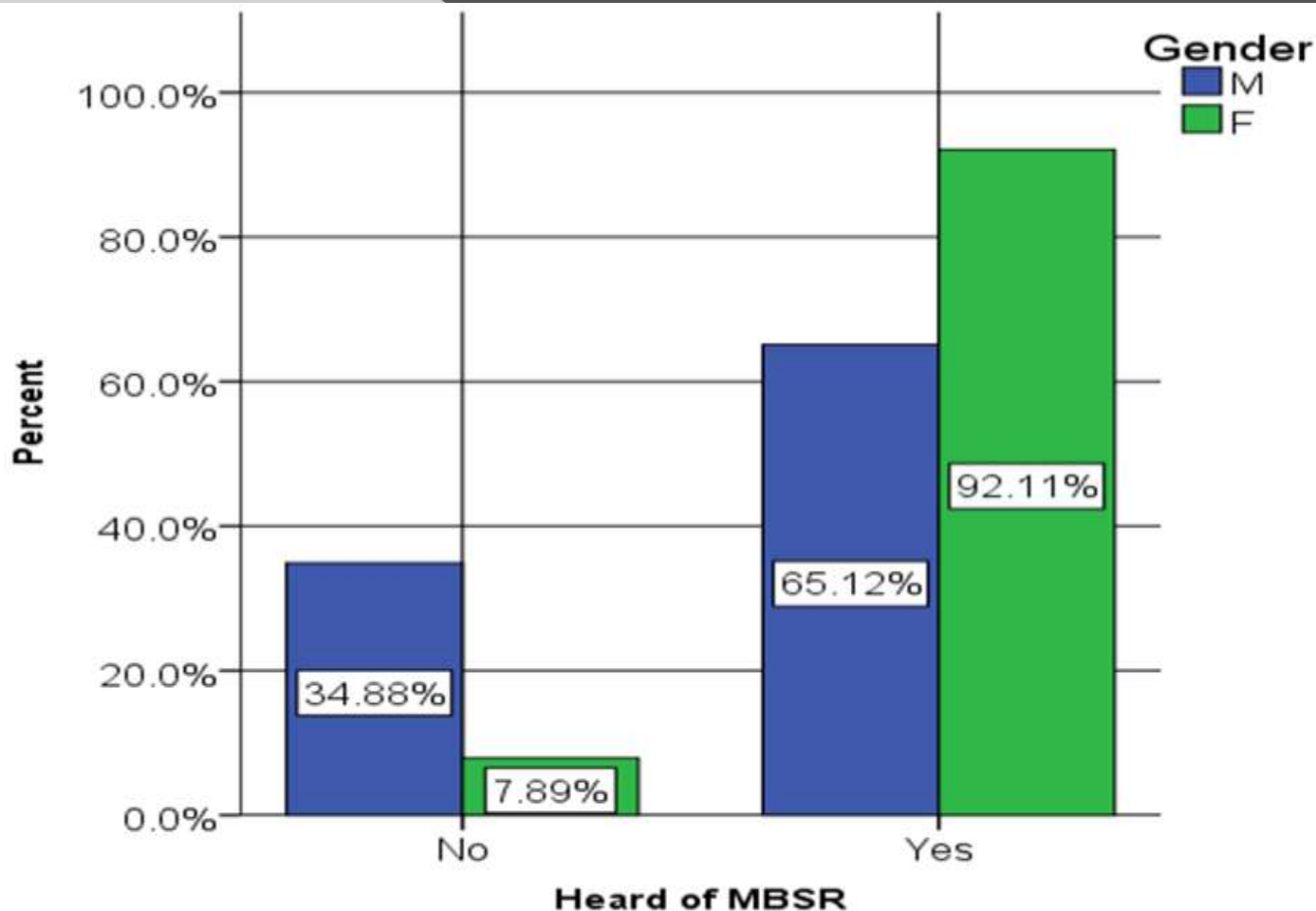
Relationship between Gender and awareness of the meaning of Mindfulness

- ◉ Females are more likely to be aware of the meaning of Mindfulness than males (79.5% vs 49.4%, $p=0.003$)



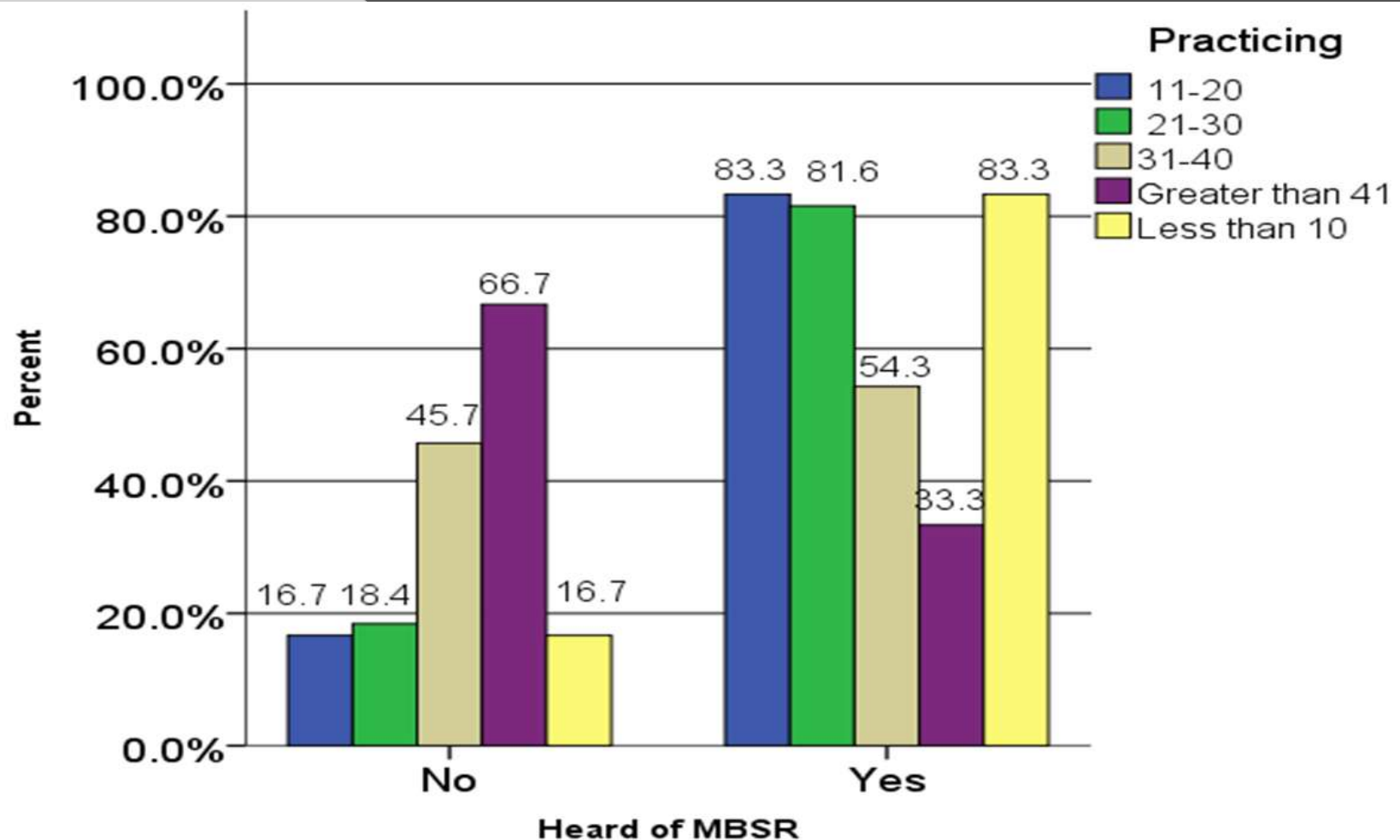
Relationship between Gender and those who had heard of Mindfulness

- Over 90% of the females had heard of Mindfulness compared with 65.1% of the male sample ($p=0.004$)

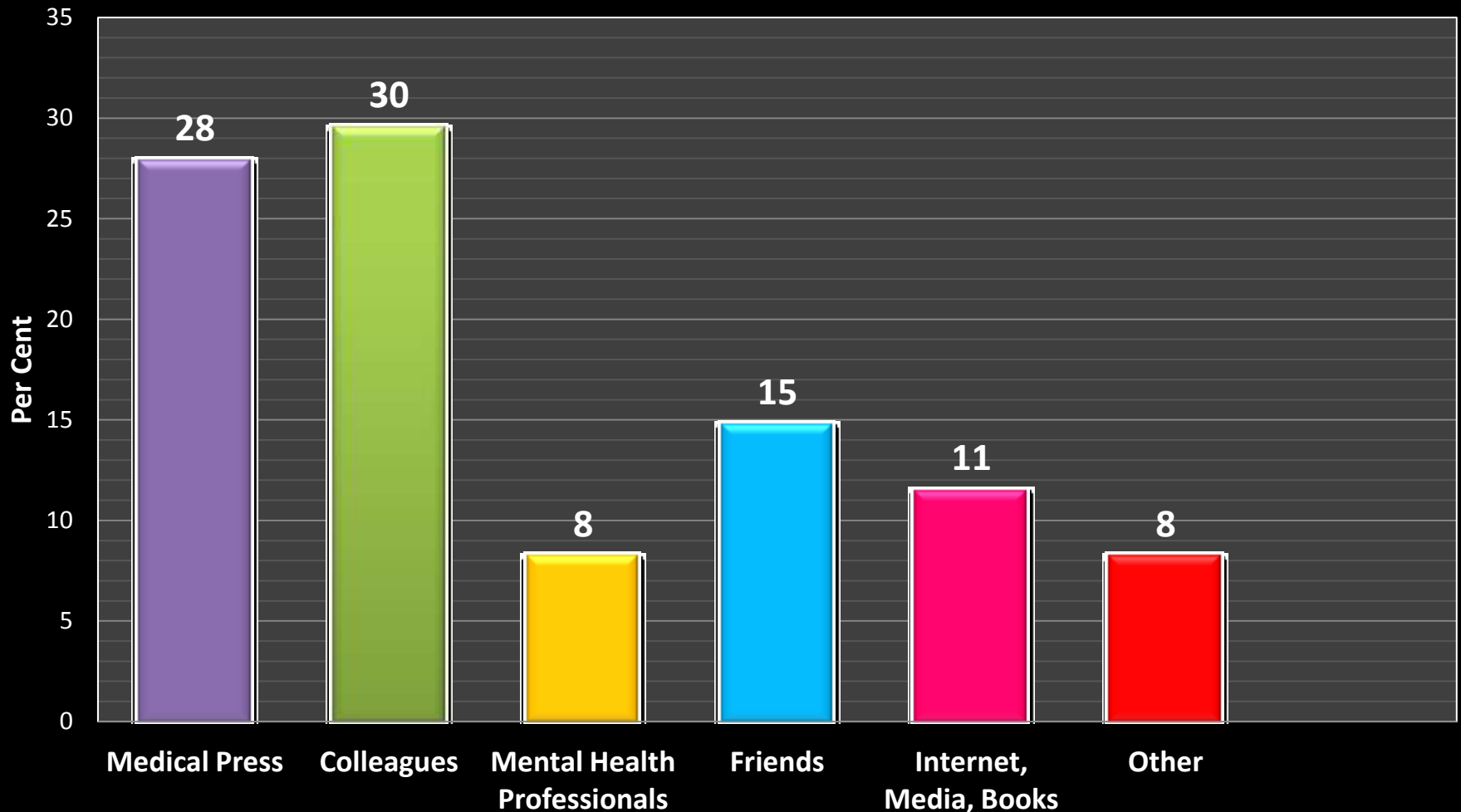


Relationship between years of practice and those that had heard of Mindfulness

- Those in practice less than 30 years appear more likely to have heard of Mindfulness than both older categories ($p=0.013$)



Sources of information on Mindfulness

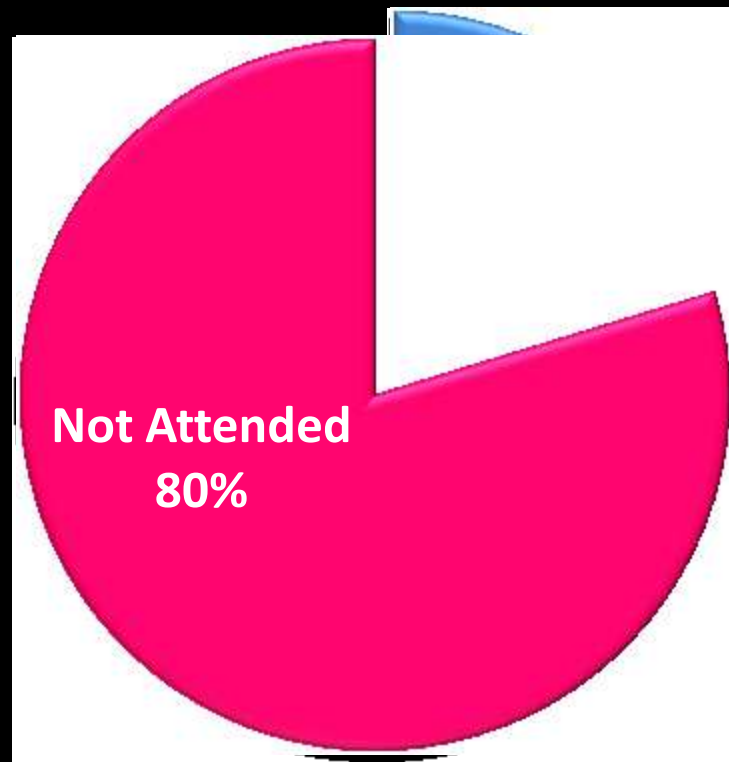


“Other” Category

◎ 10/91

| <u>Source</u> | <u>Number (n)</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Family members | 2 |
| Lectures | 1 |
| ICGP Summer School | 2 |
| Workshops | 3 |
| Pub encounter | 1 |
| Patient | 1 |

Proportion of Respondents who have attended a Mindfulness seminar or course

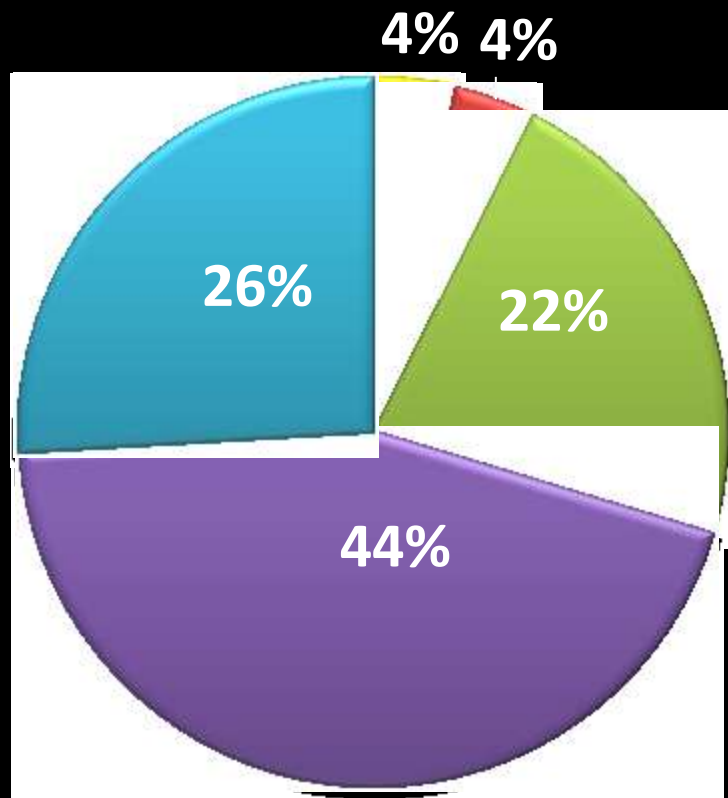


Relationship between type of practice and those that have attended a Mindfulness course or seminar

- Those in urban practices were significantly more likely to have attended an MBSR course or seminar (42.1%) than rural (9.8%) or mixed practices (20.6%)
- P=0.015**

| | Attended MBSR course or seminar | Have not attended MBSR course or seminar |
|-------|---------------------------------|--|
| Urban | 14 42.1% | 11 57.9% |
| Rural | 4 9.8% | 37 90.2% |
| Mixed | 14 20.6% | 54 79.4% |

Level of Satisfaction of Respondents after Mindfulness Course



Very dissatisfied

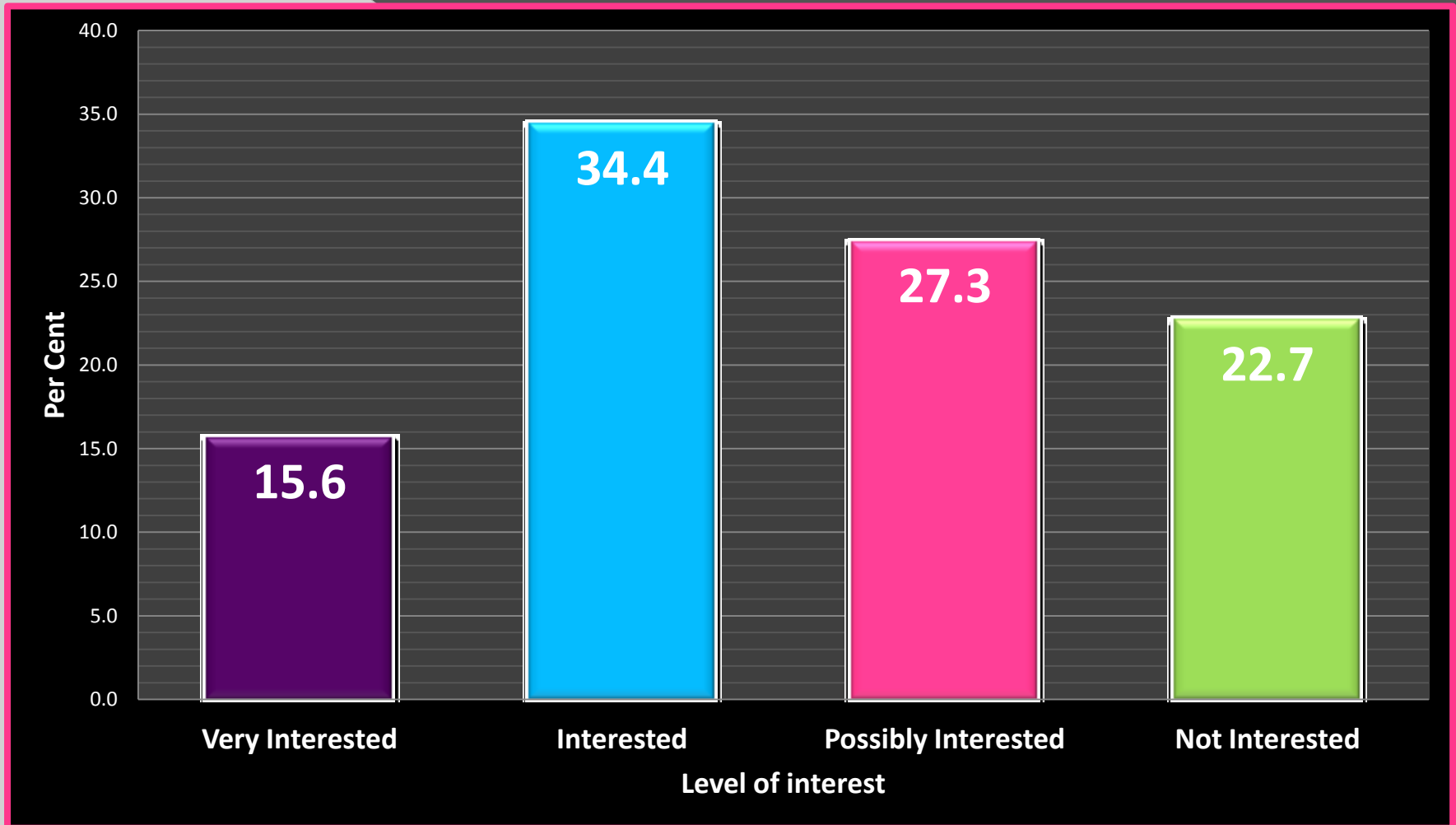
Dissatisfied

Neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very satisfied

Level of interest among respondents in attending a Mindfulness seminar or course



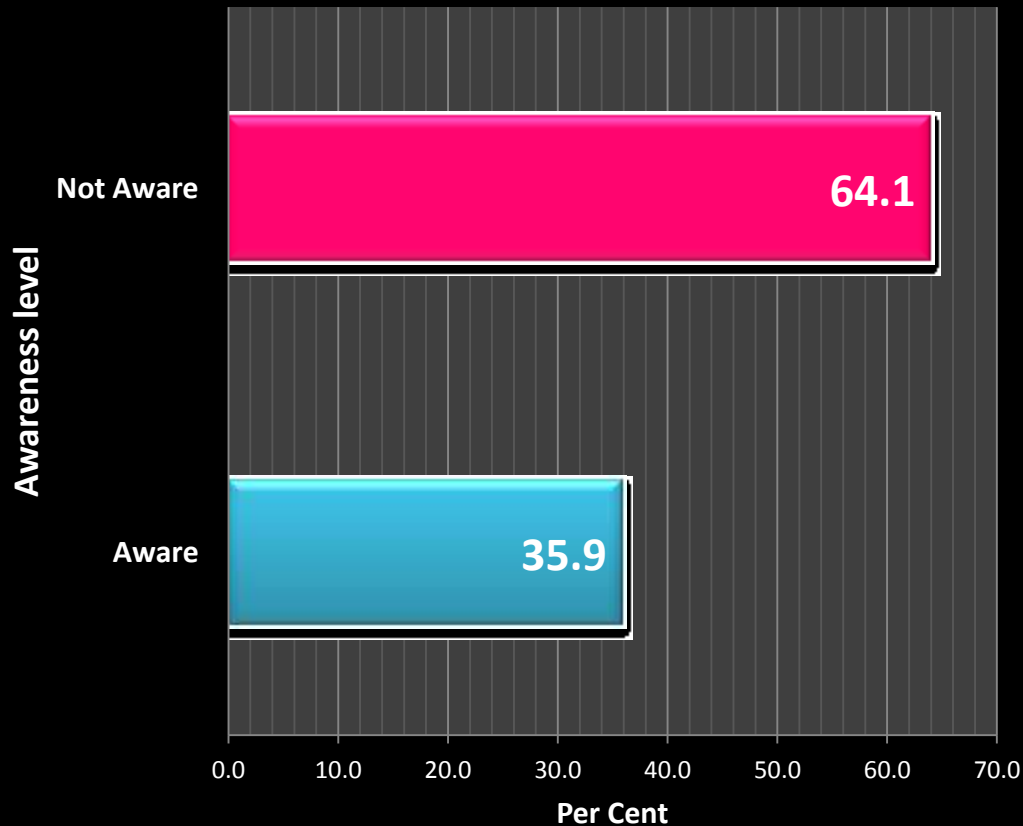
Relationship between level of interest and the variables

- No significant relationship exists between interest level and any of the following variables ($p > 0.05$)

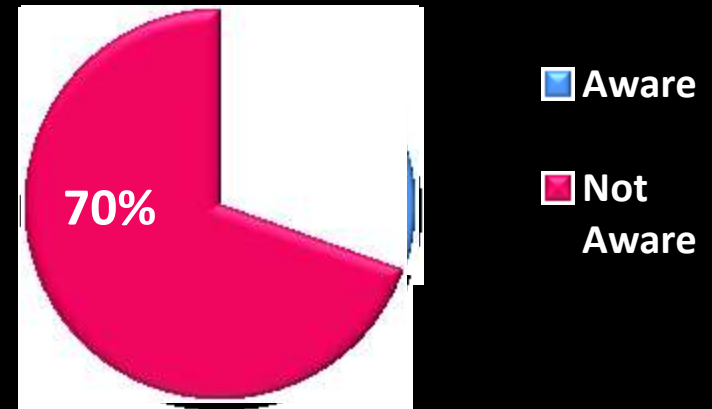
| Variable | P-value |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Gender | 0.107 |
| Age Group | 0.719 |
| Percentage Stress levels | 0.100 |
| Marital Status | 0.867 |
| Type of Practice | 0.819 |
| Description of Practice | 0.145 |
| Years of Practice | 0.178 |
| Religious Affiliation | 0.069 |

Awareness of Mindfulness courses

Awareness of Respondants of ICGP Mindfulness Stress Reduction course

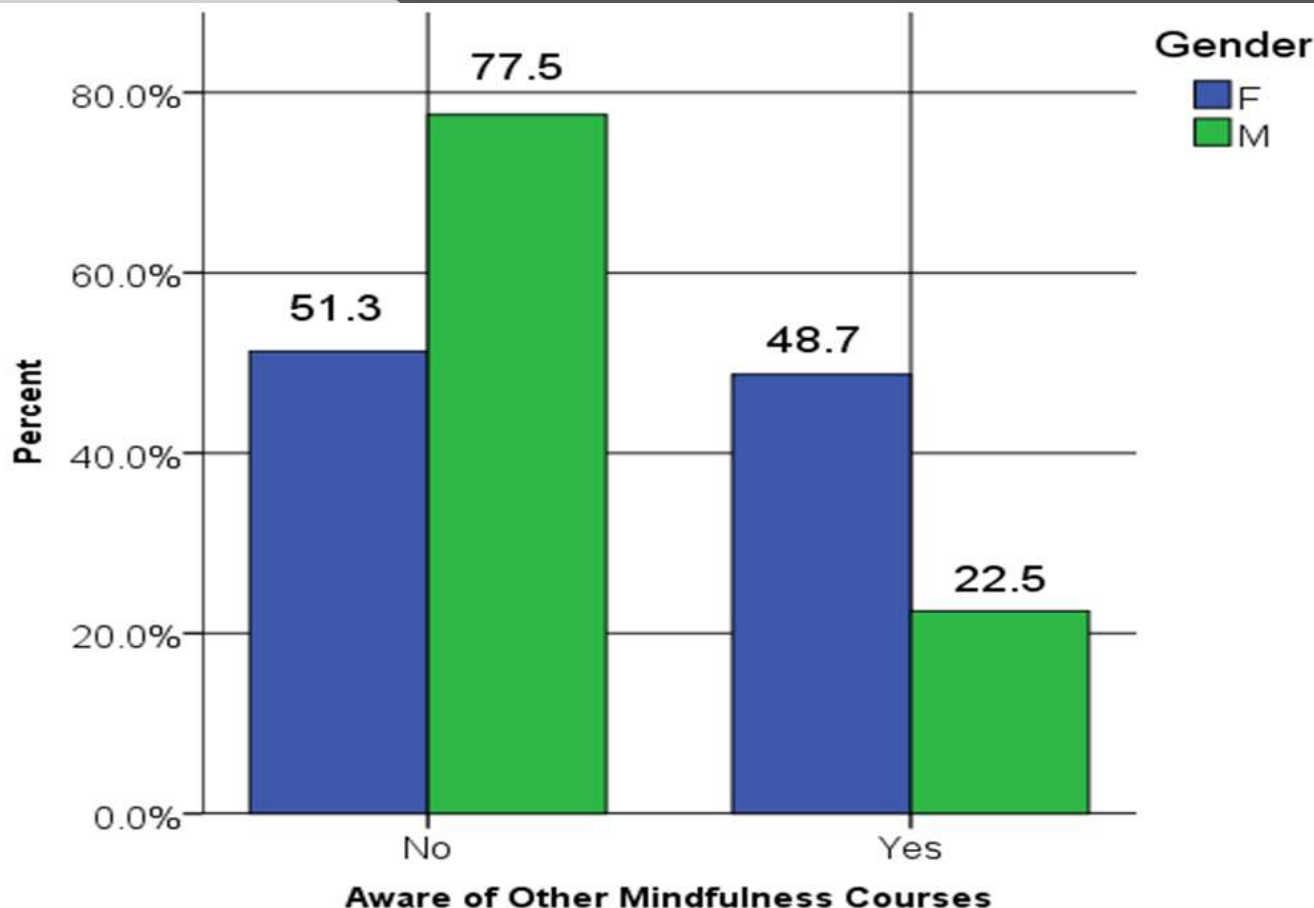


Awareness of Respondants of other Mindfulness Courses



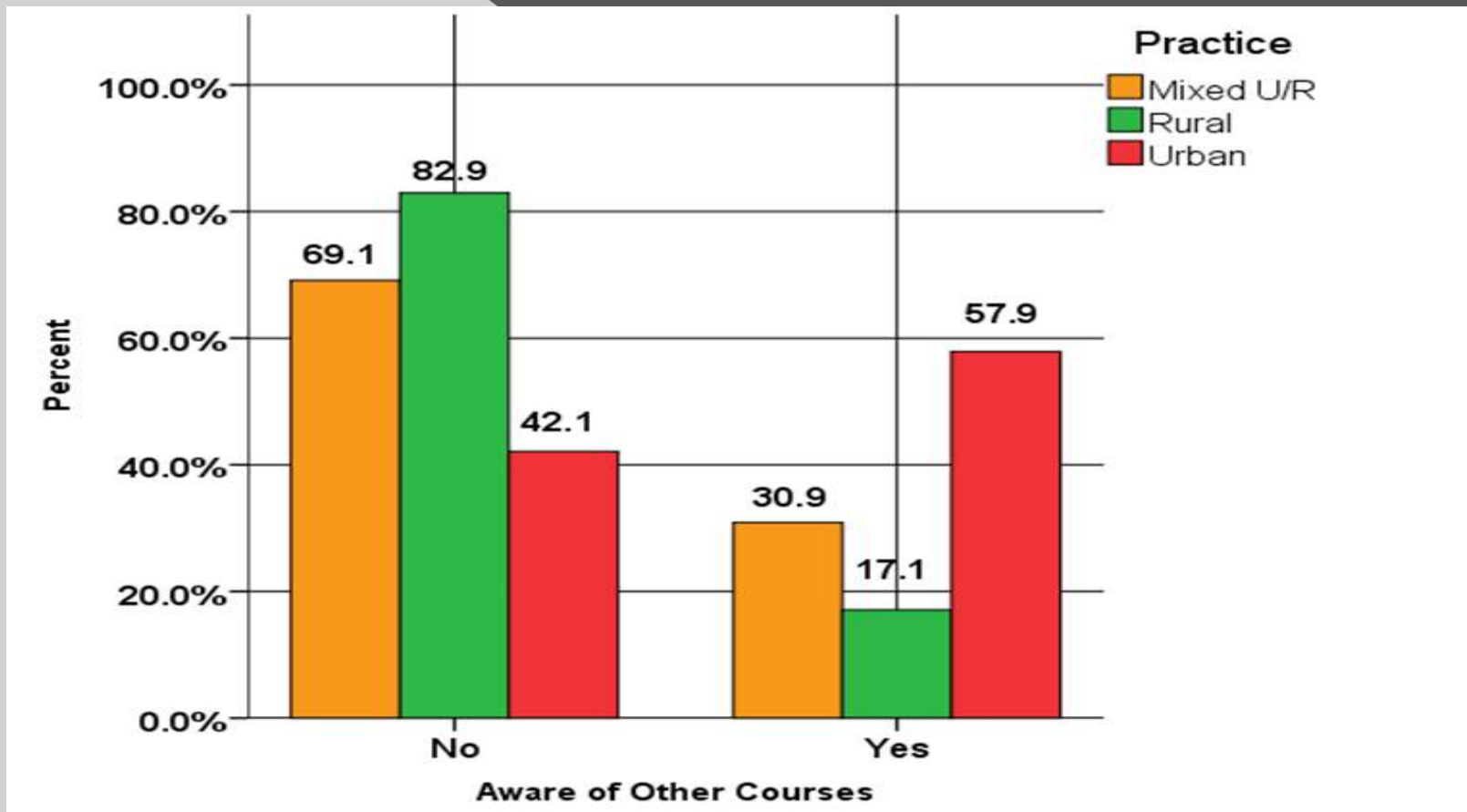
Gender and awareness of available Mindfulness courses

- A statistically significant difference exists between awareness of available Mindfulness courses and Gender($p = 0.006$). Females (48.7%) were more likely to be aware of available MBSR courses than the males (22.5%). $P = 0.006$



Type of practice and awareness of available Mindfulness courses

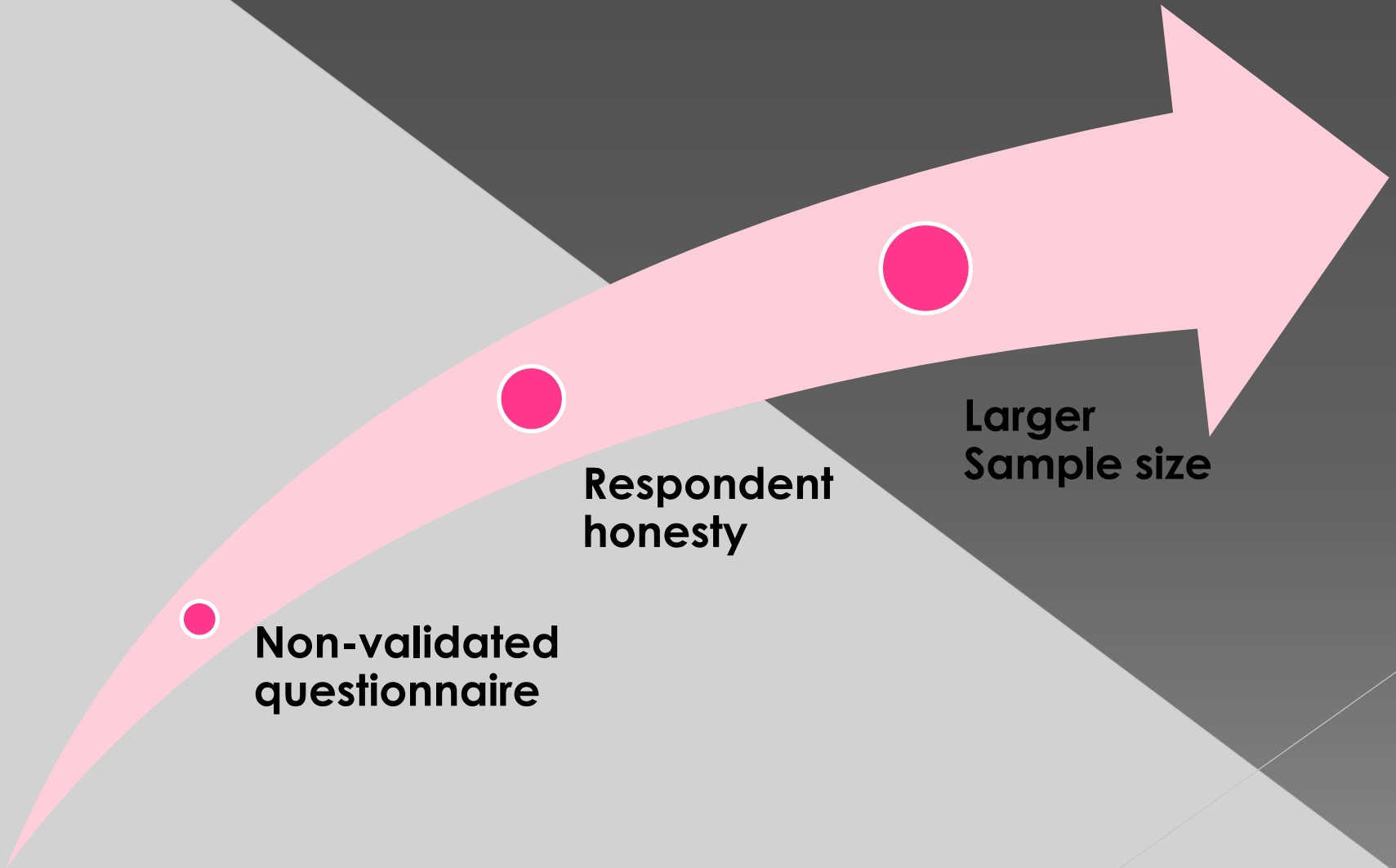
- Those in an urban (57.9%) setting were more likely to be aware of other courses than those in a rural setting (17.1%).
 $P=0.006$



Conclusions

- A significant proportion of GPs have experienced stress beyond a level at which they can comfortably cope.
- The majority of GPs feel it is important to practice strategies in order to maintain their mental health.
- Mindfulness Based practices are not currently utilised by the majority of GPs.
- The majority of GPs were not aware of available MBSR courses in Ireland
- A significant proportion of GPs have expressed an interest in attending a Mindfulness based course.

Limitations



**Non-validated
questionnaire**

**Respondent
honesty**

**Larger
Sample size**

References

- ◉ Correll D, Doyle R. Stress Reduction and mindfulness training for Irish GPs. ICGP Forum-Hot topics in your Hand, Summer School 2011: 11-12
- ◉ Martin P. A mindful approach to coping with illness. Forum-Journal of the Irish College of General Practitioners, Volume 28, Number 9, September 2011, 61-62.
- ◉ Shapiro SI, Astin JA, Bishop SR, Cordova M. Mindfulness based stress reduction for health care professionals, results from a randomised trial. *International Journal of Stress Management* 2005; 12:164-176.
- ◉ Irving JA, Dobkin PL, Park J. Cultivating mindfulness in health care professionals: A review of empirical studies of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*. Elsevier Publishing 2009;15: 61-66

Questions?

