

Home-Based Exercise in Older Adults with Multiple Sclerosis: Descriptive Results



from an Online Survey of Barriers, Preferences and Beliefs

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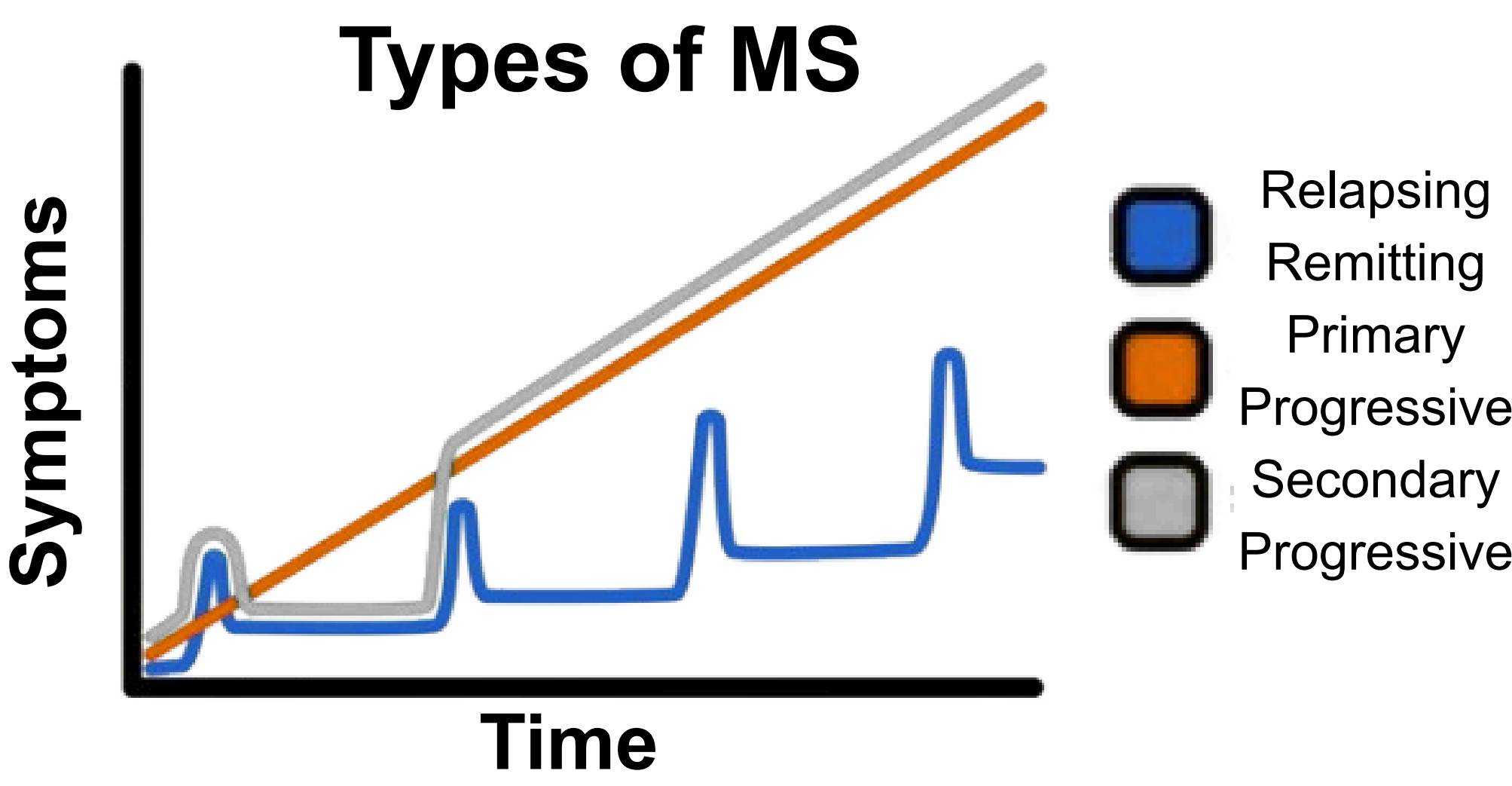


Introduction

- Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic autoimmune disorder affecting over 22.8 million people worldwide.
- In the U.S., over 1 million adults live with MS, and one-in-four are over 60 years old.
- MS reduces physical activity and quality of life through muscle weakness, mobility limitations, pain, and balance deficits.
- Although home-based exercise is a practical, cost-effective management approach, its effectiveness depends on individual preferences, perceived barriers, and exercise beliefs.

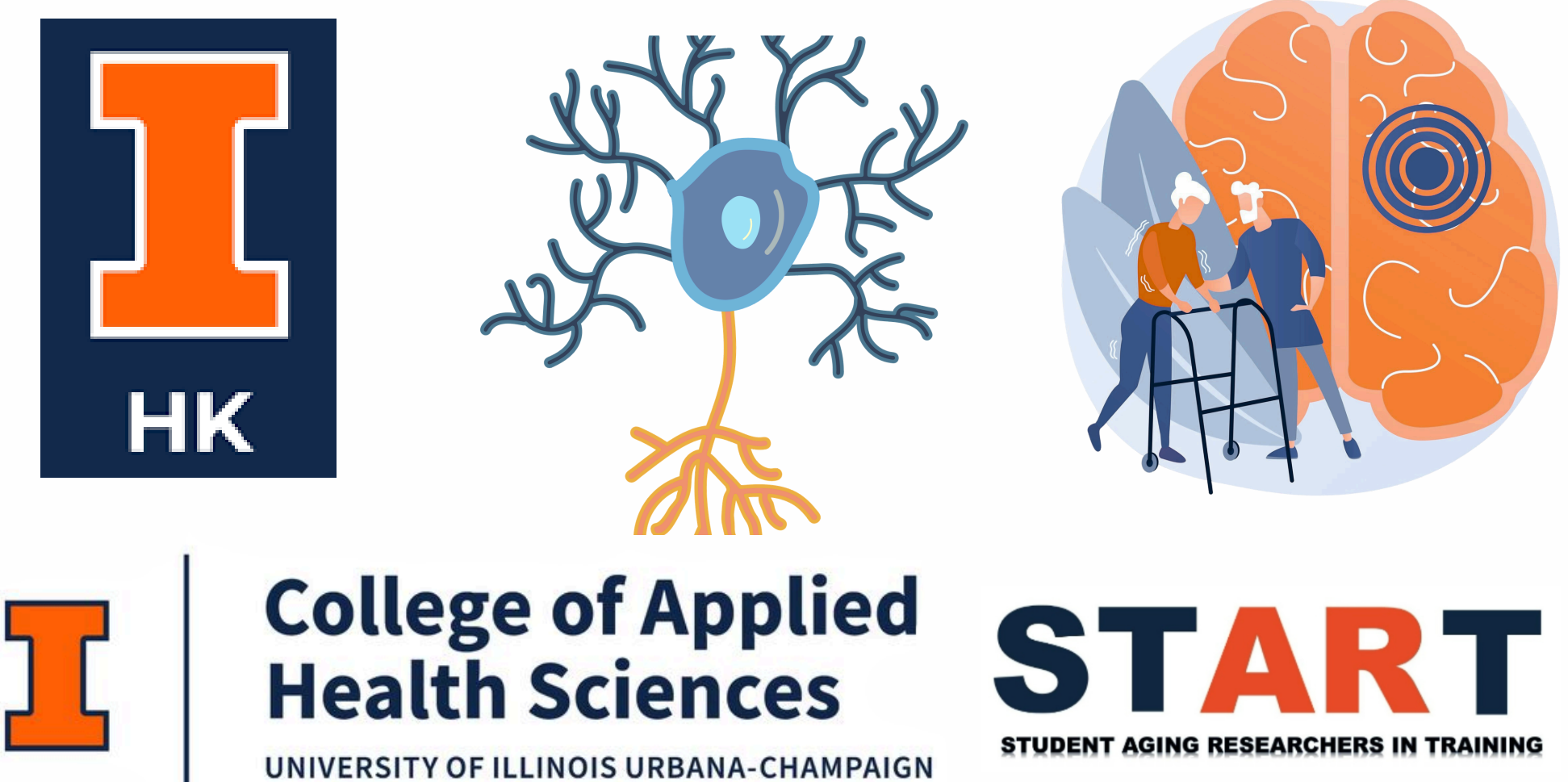
Purpose

- This study explored barriers, preferences, and beliefs related to home-based exercise in older adults with MS.



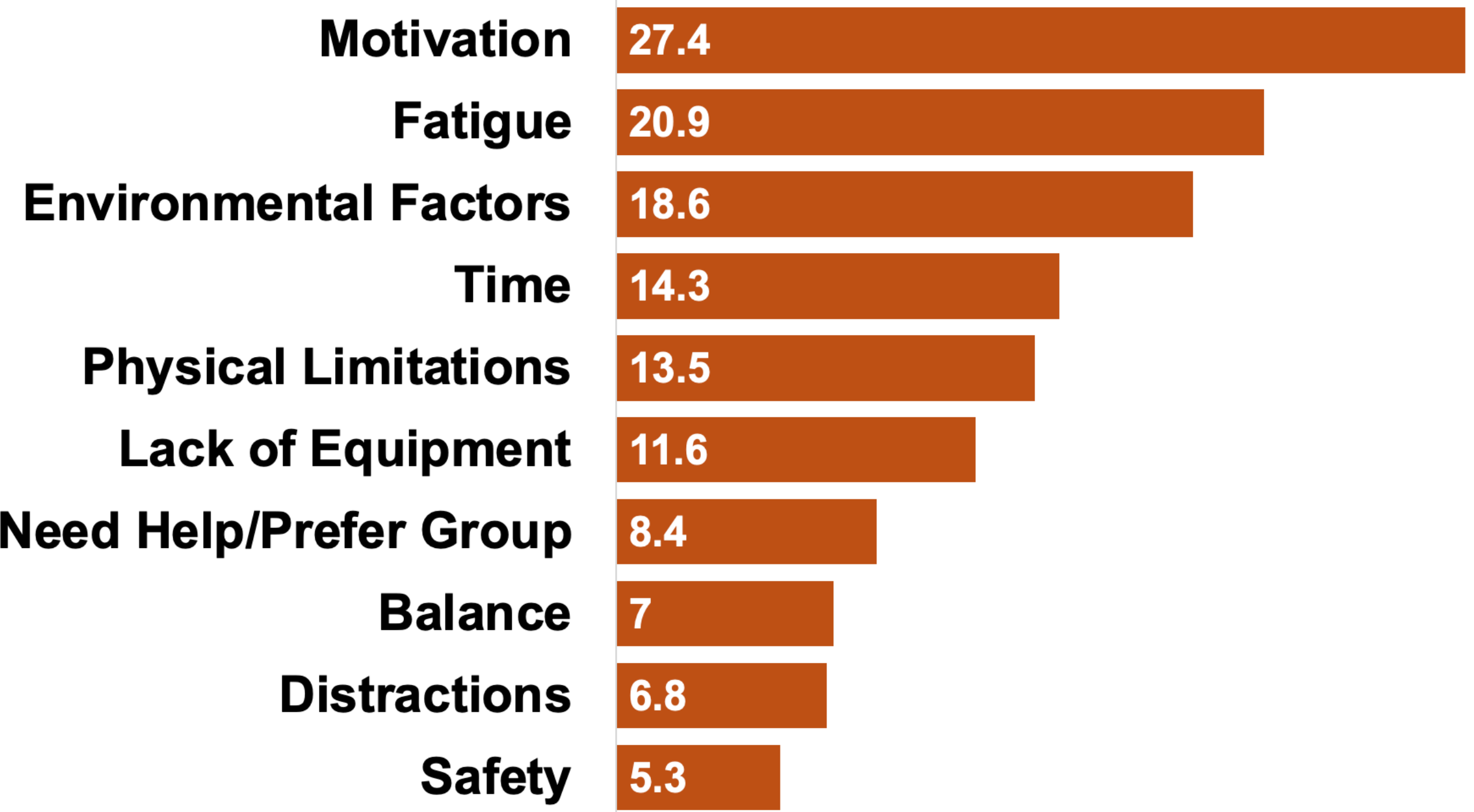
Method

- A survey administered via Qualtrics during the spring 2025 semester collected data on demographics, symptoms, exercise preferences, and barriers to home-based exercise among older adults with MS.
- Distribution occurred through multiple channels, including the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Great Illinois Chapter.

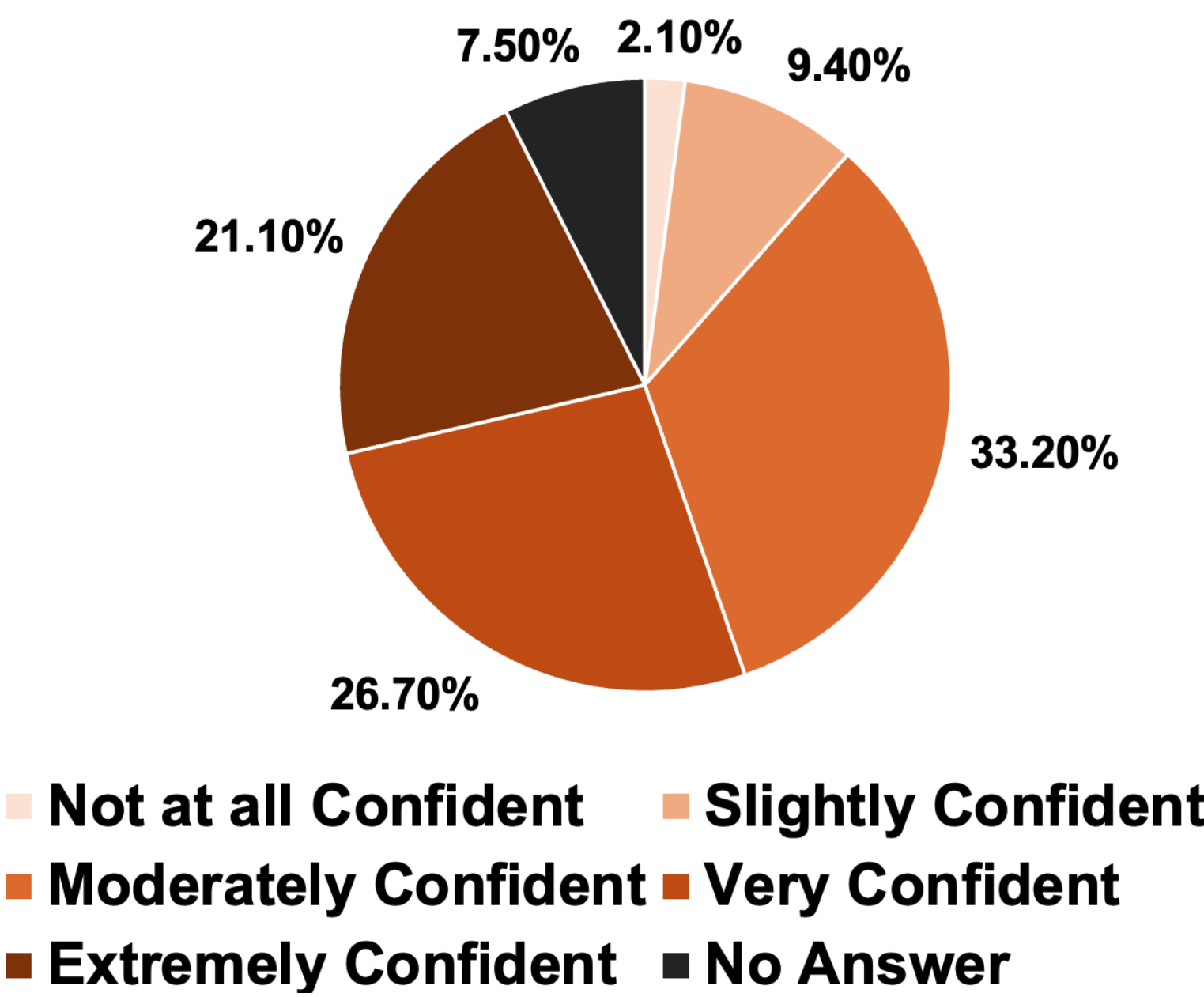


All numbers depicted represent percents of responses

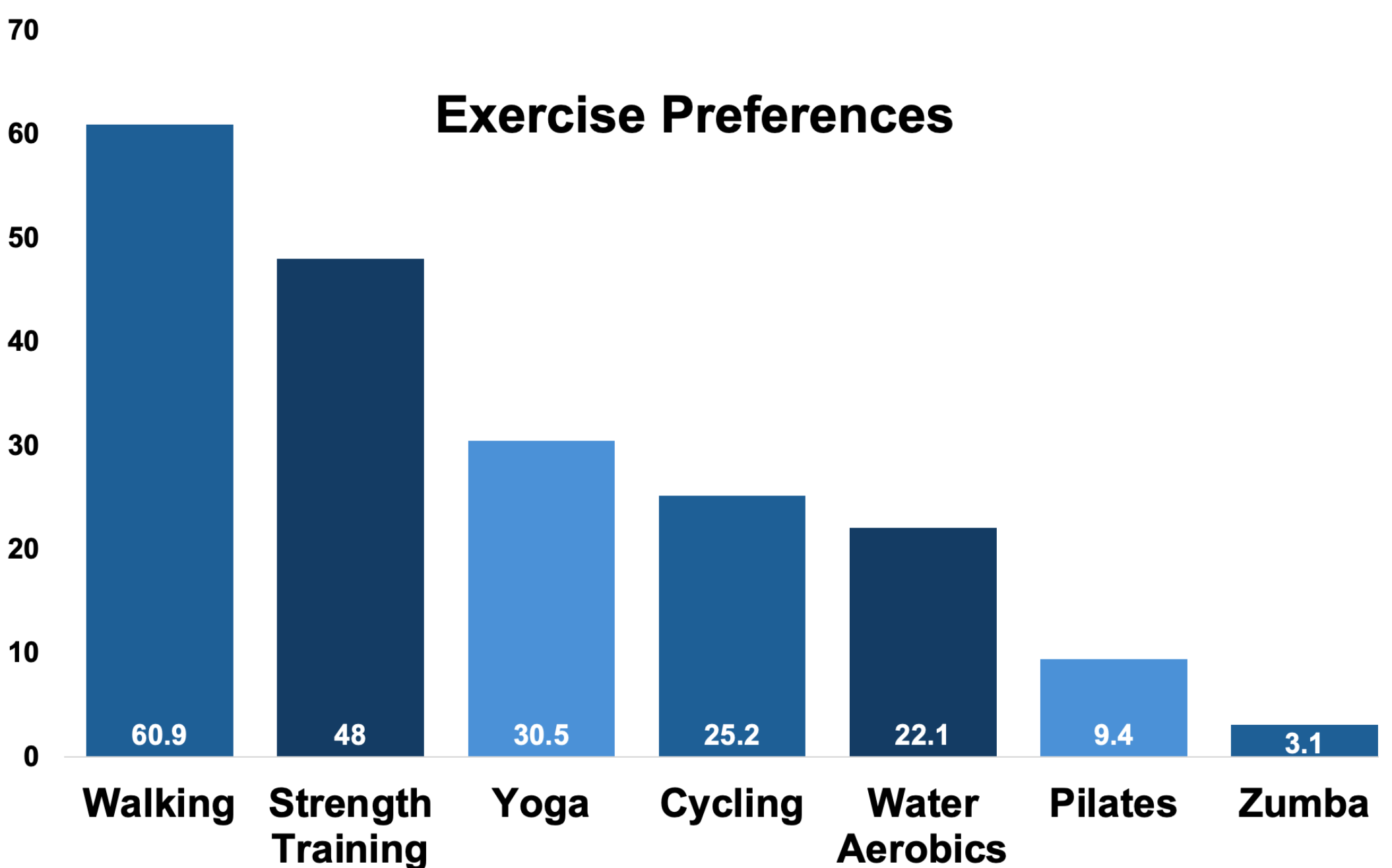
Top 10 Barriers to Exercising at Home



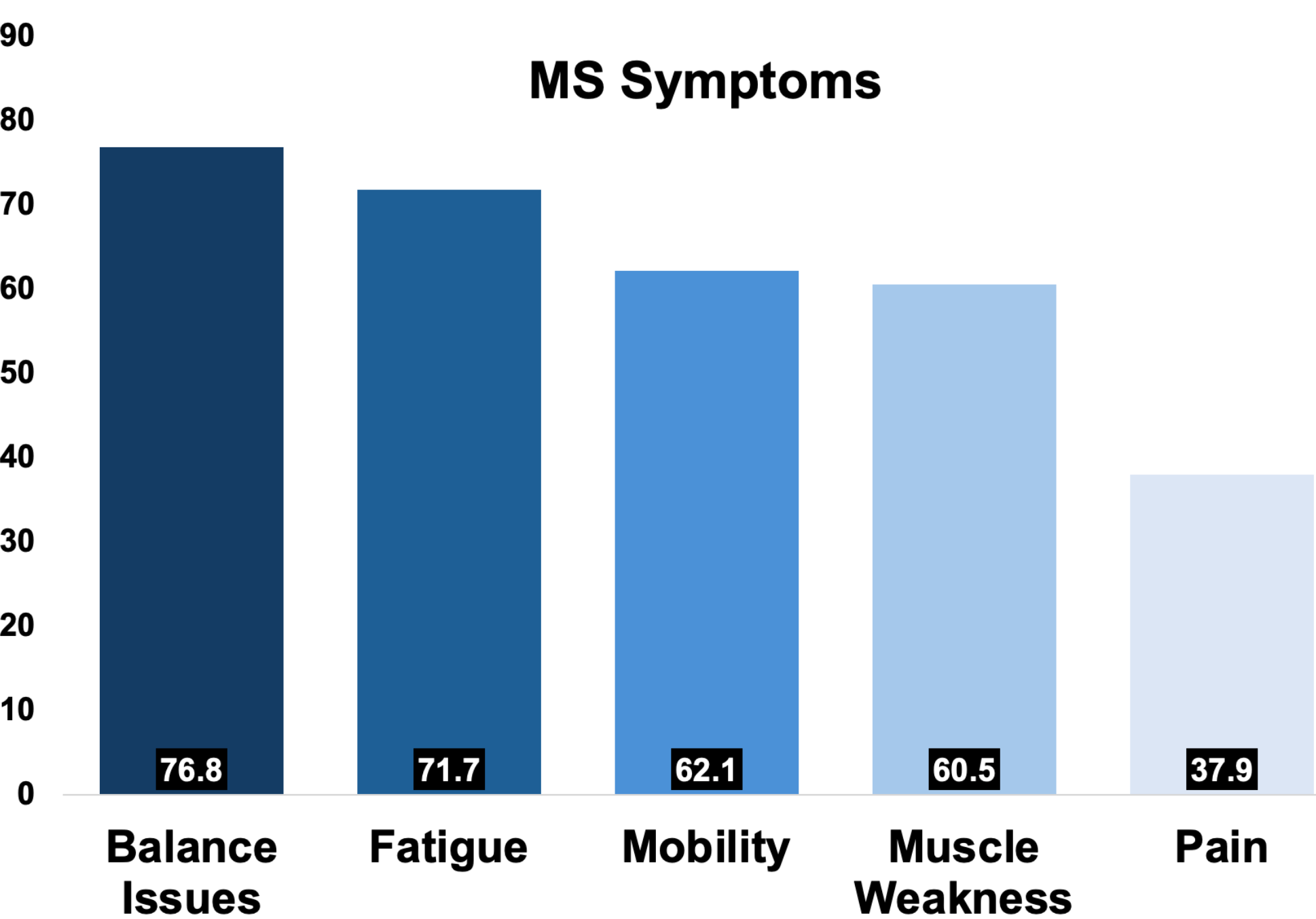
Confidence Level of Exercising at Home



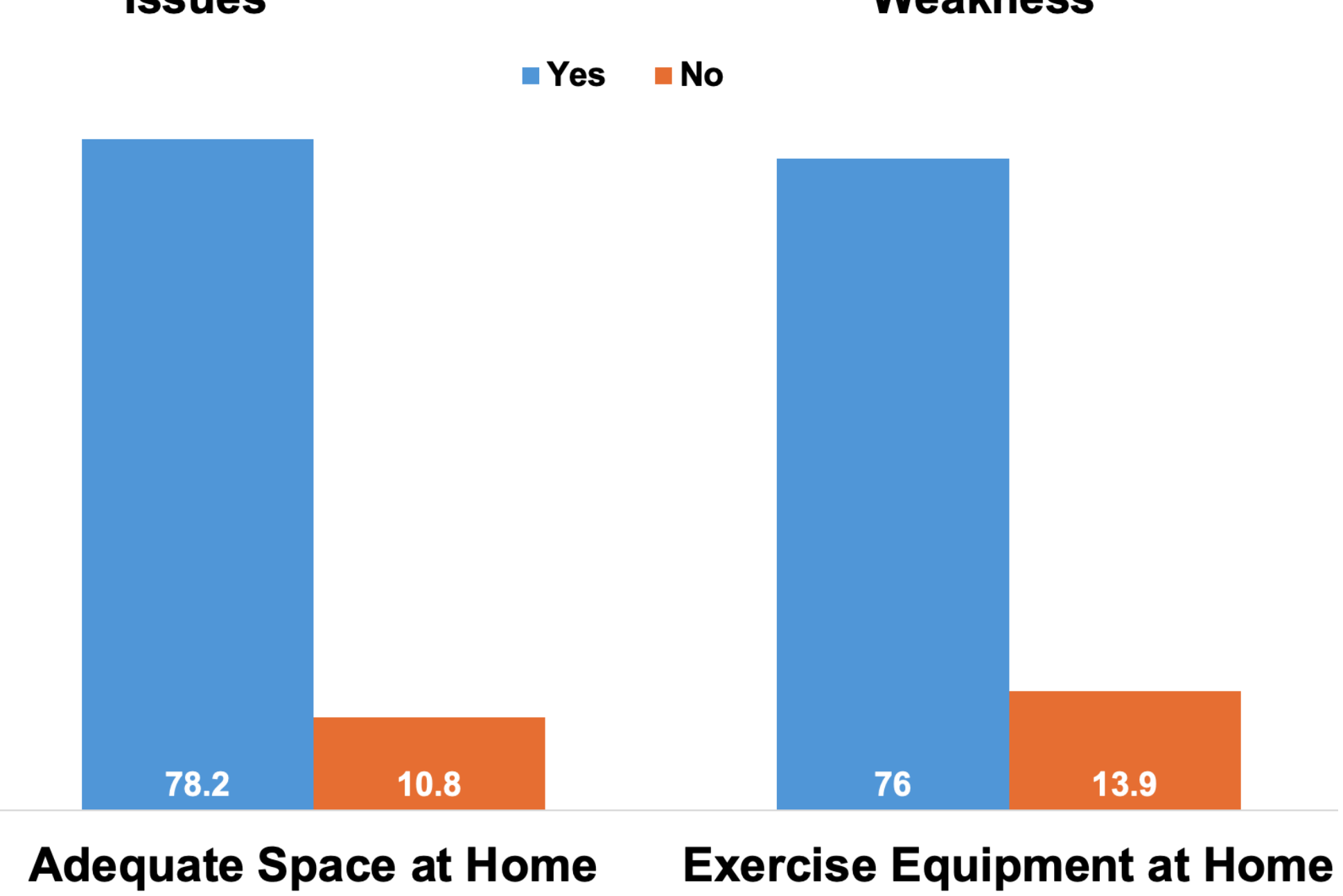
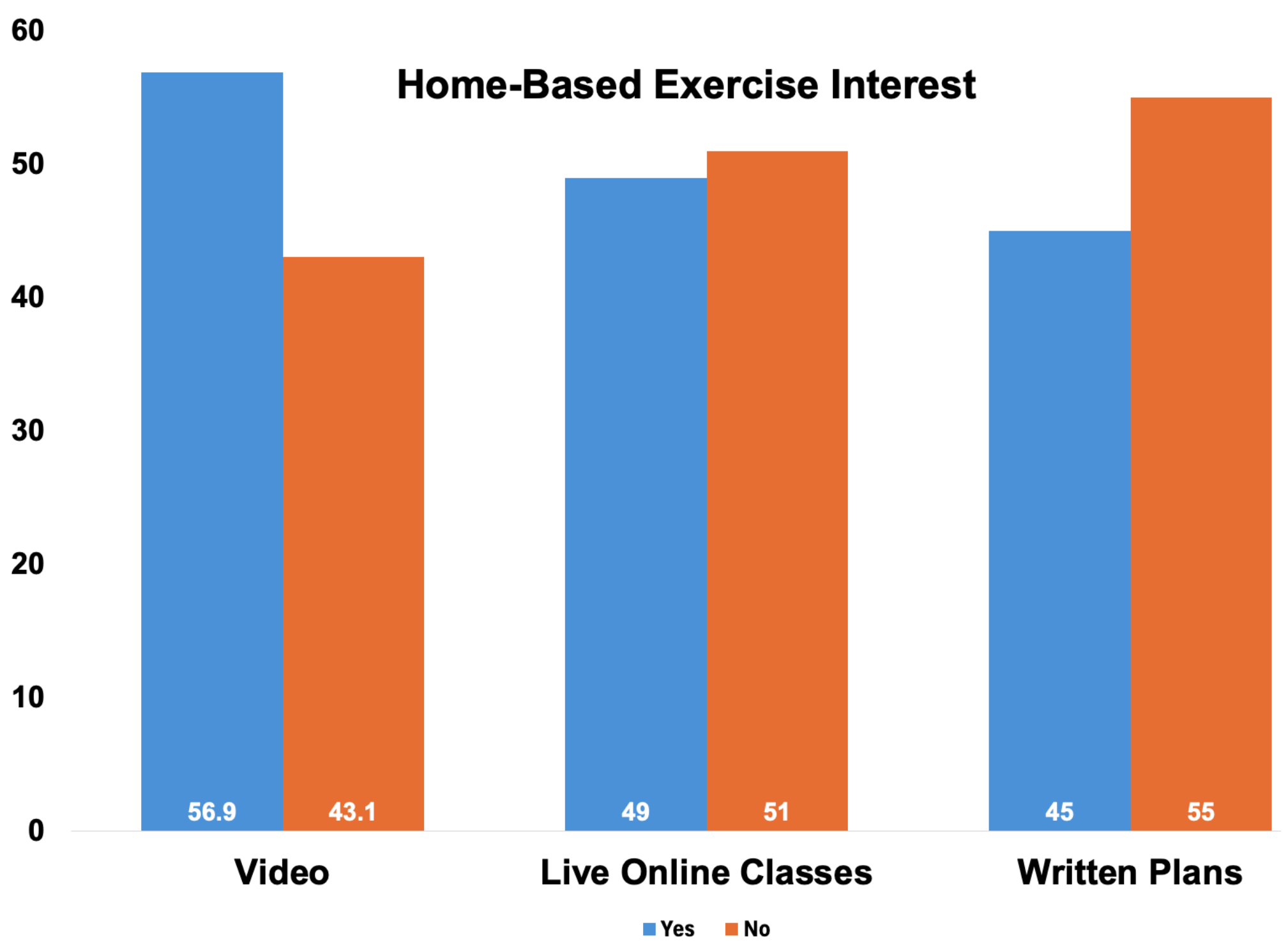
Exercise Preferences



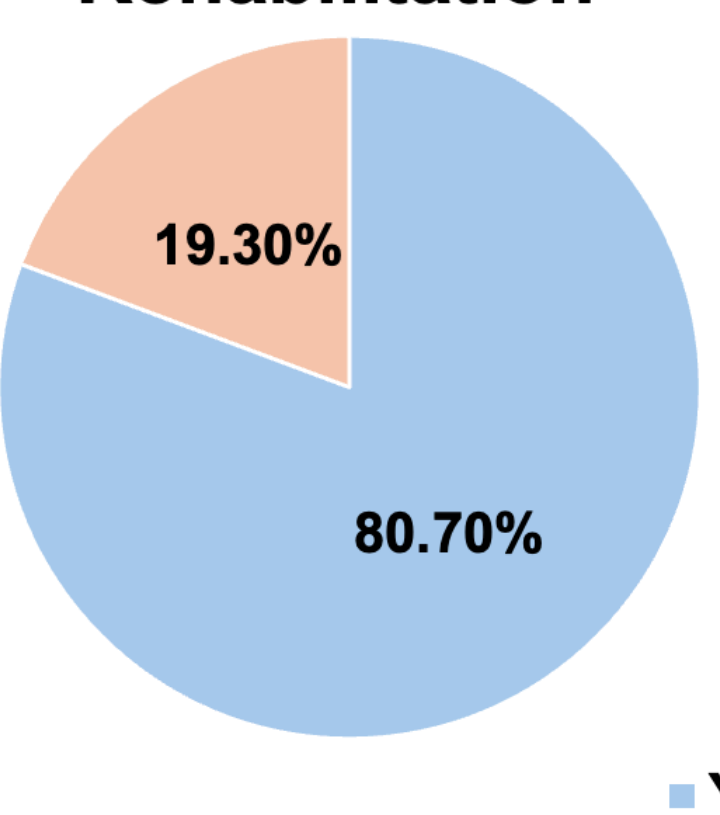
MS Symptoms



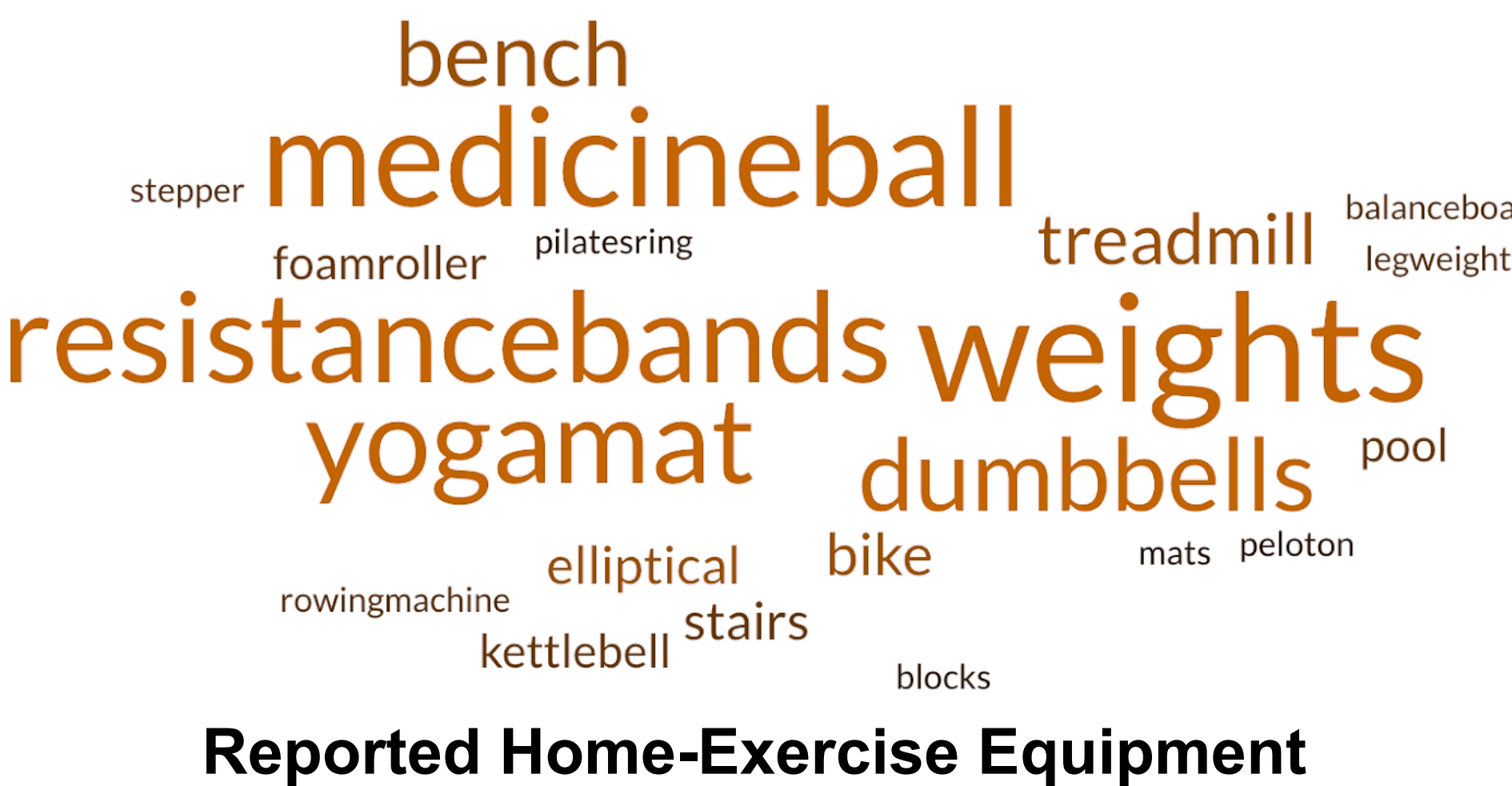
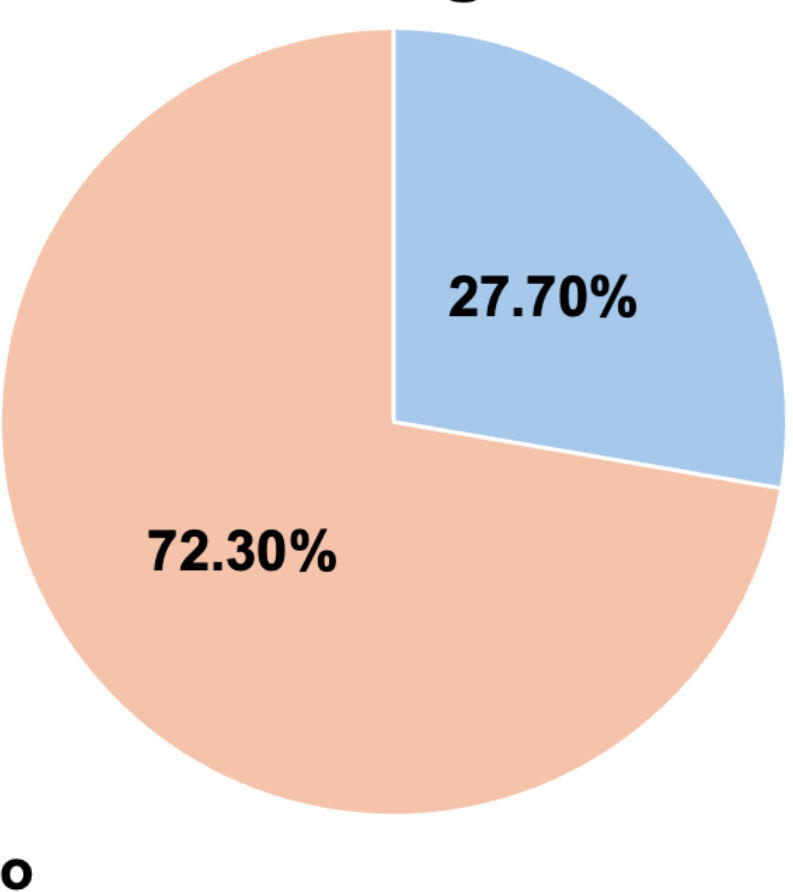
Home-Based Exercise Interest



Perceived Effectiveness of Home-Based Rehabilitation



Safety Concerns for Exercising at Home



Results

	N=583
	Number (%)
Age, years	64.9 (6.7)
Gender, n (%) ^x	
Female	460 (78.9%)
Male	121 (20.7%)
Race/Ethnicity, n (%) ^x	
Caucasian	506 (86.8%)
African American	48 (8.2%)
Latinx/Hispanic	12 (2.1%)
Other	15 (2.9%)
Marital Status, n (%) ^x	
Married	361 (61.9%)
Single	67 (11.5%)
Divorced/Separated	100 (17.2%)
Widow	52 (8.9%)
Education, n (%) ^x	
Under High School	7 (1.2%)
High School	27 (4.6%)
Some College	119 (20.4%)
College Degree	231 (39.6%)
Masters	157 (26.9%)
PhD	40 (6.9%)
MS Type, n (%) ^x	
Relapsing-Remitting	315 (54%)
Primary Progressive	97 (16.6%)
Secondary Progressive	157 (26.9%)
Disease Duration, years	22.7 (11.7)
Disability Level ^{x*}	
Mild	235 (40.3%)
Moderate	271 (46.5%)
Severe	71 (12.2%)
Assisted Device, n (%) ^x	
Cane	181 (31%)
Walker	165 (28.3%)
Crutches	14 (2.4%)
Ankle Brace	27 (4.6%)
Drop Foot Brace	87 (15%)
Exercise Participation, days/wk	3.5

* Self Reported

^x Missing Data

Conclusion

- Findings suggest that older adults with MS perceive home exercises as safe and effective, yet motivational challenges and fatigue remain barriers to participation.
- Despite the symptoms, most participants did not express safety concerns, indicating an opportunity to expand accessible home-based programming, targeting common MS symptoms.