

TRADIES NATIONAL HEALTH SURVEY

Understanding how
tradies manage pain



AUSTRALIAN
PHYSIOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION



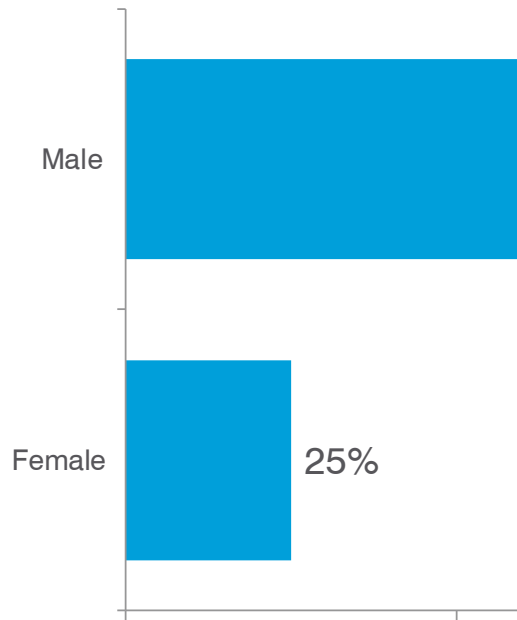
TRADIES
NATIONAL
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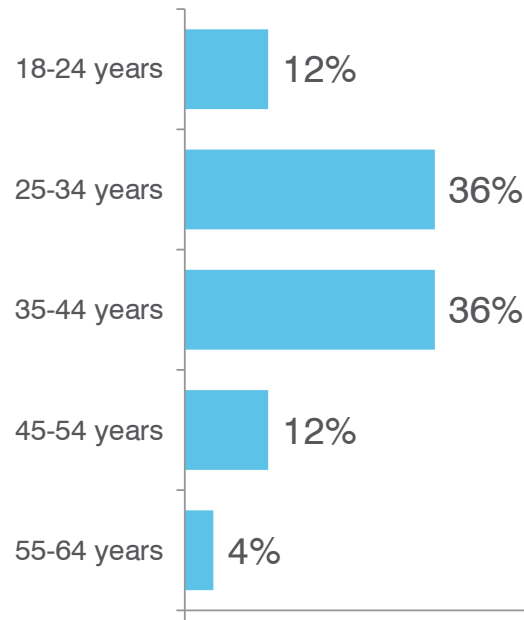
Who we spoke to...

Sample demographics

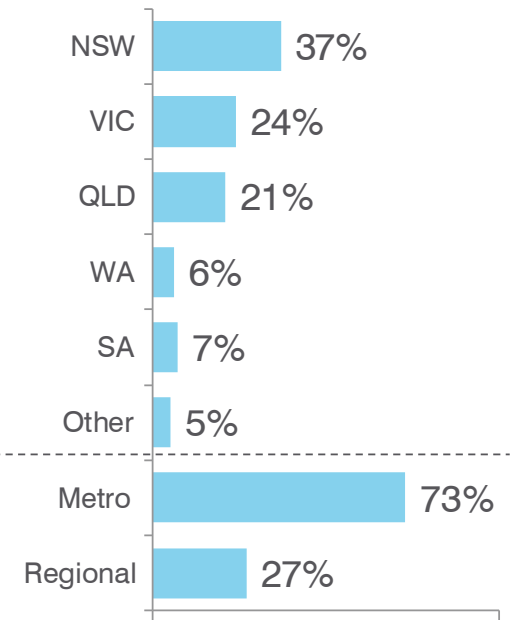
Gender



Age



Location

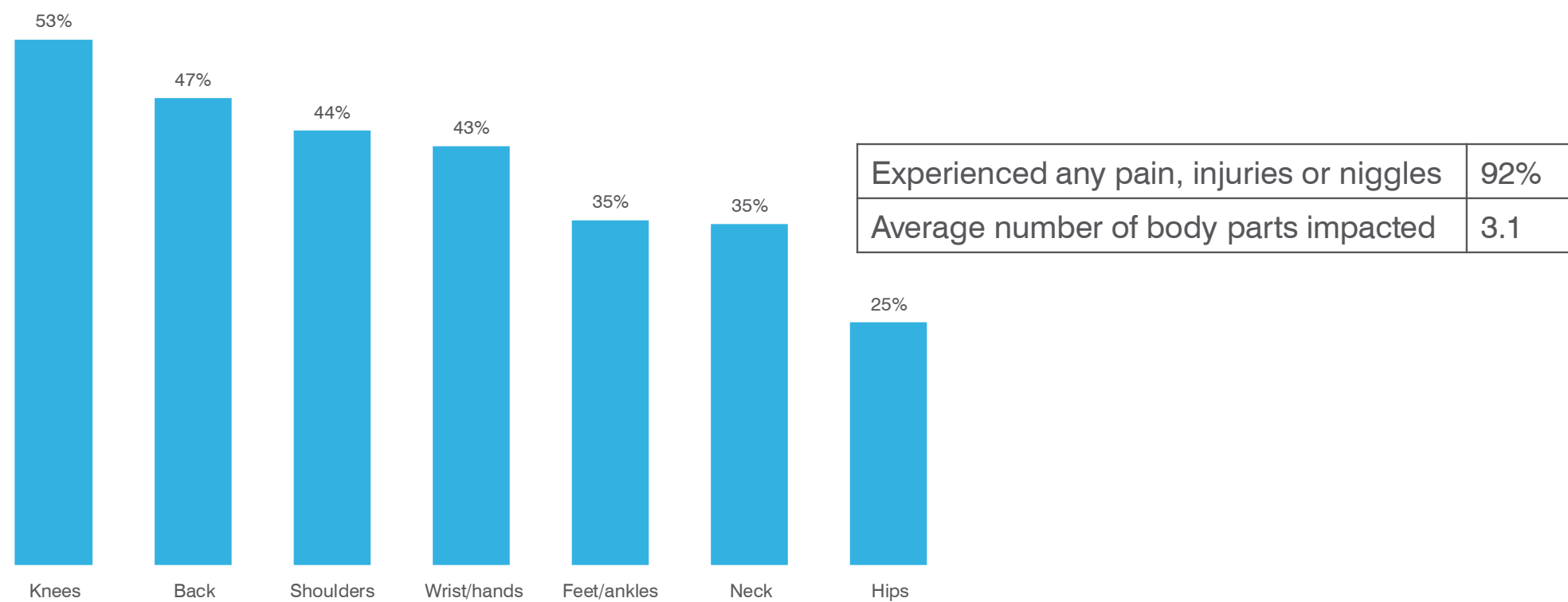


Base: total sample
n=519, weighted

A representative sample of Australian tradies.

More than nine in 10 tradies have experienced a pain, injury or niggle in the past year

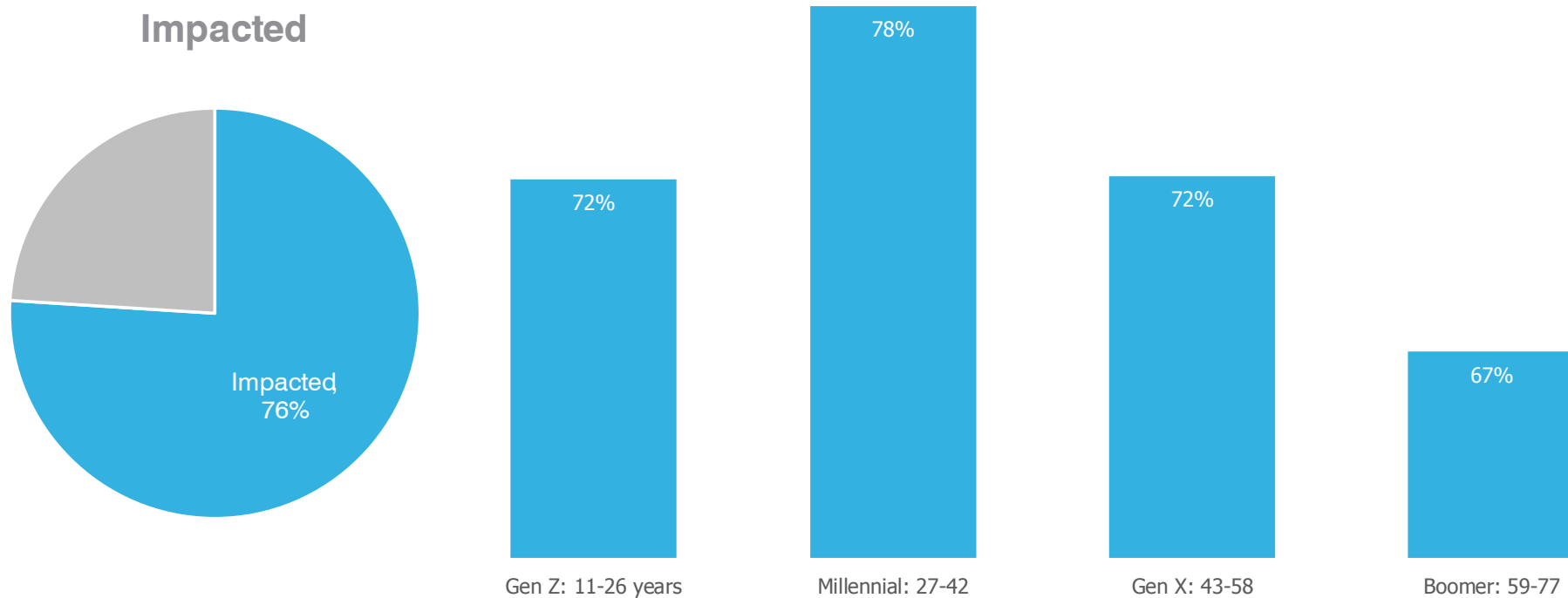
On average, respondents had had three different kinds of physical injuries or issues in that time, with knee and back pain being the most common



Q1 - Over the past 12 months have you ever had any pains, injuries or niggles in any of the following joints?

And more than three in four tradies have experienced pain or discomfort that stops them enjoying life

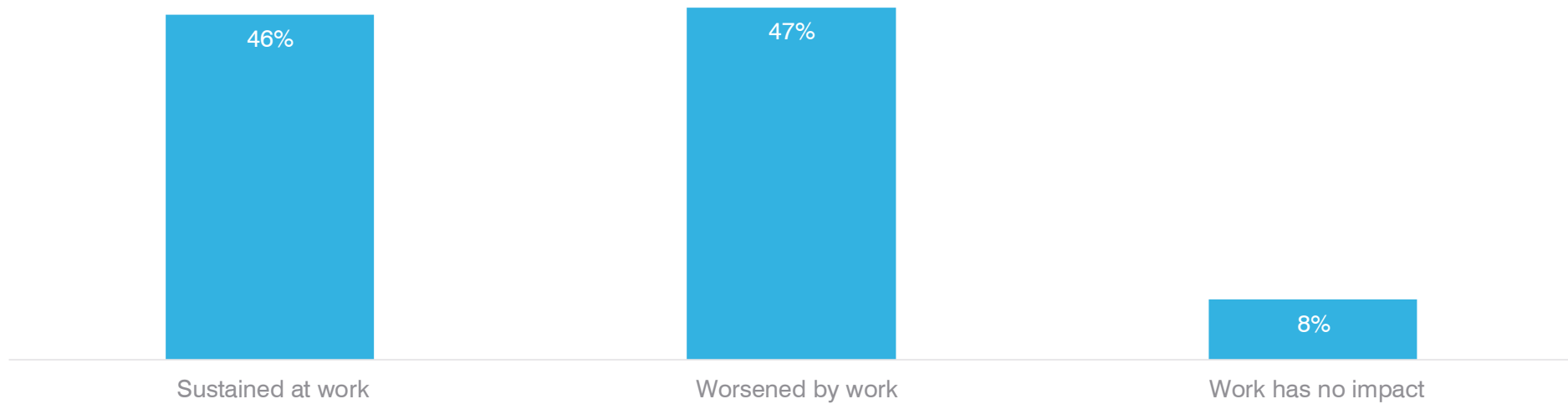
Millennial tradies were the most likely to be experiencing pain, whilst older tradies were the least likely



Q2B - Have you had any pain or discomfort after work that stops you doing the things you love and enjoy?

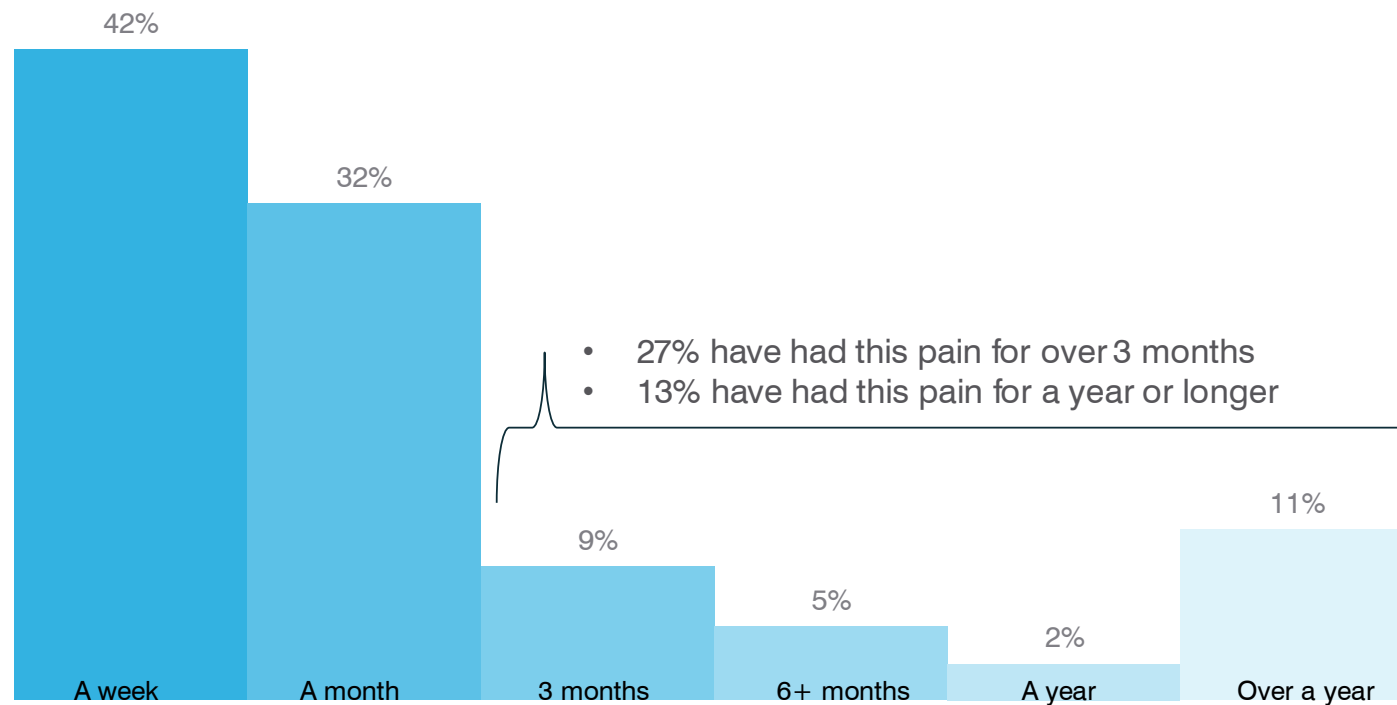
Work has caused or worsened over 90% of those injuries

Whilst slightly more injuries are sustained outside of work; those who injured themselves elsewhere almost always considered work to be making those issues worse



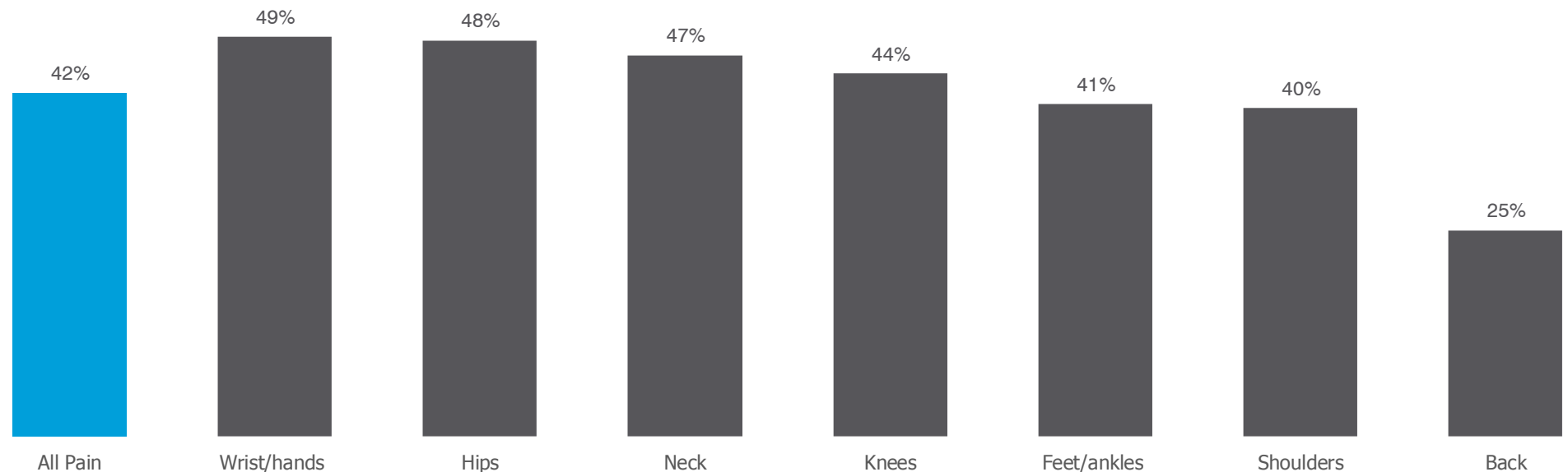
Q4 - Did you sustain or worsen the injury at work?

The average pain has been around for 13 weeks: with 27% having been in pain for longer than three months



Almost half of respondents described their pain as severe with wrist/hand injuries being the most painful

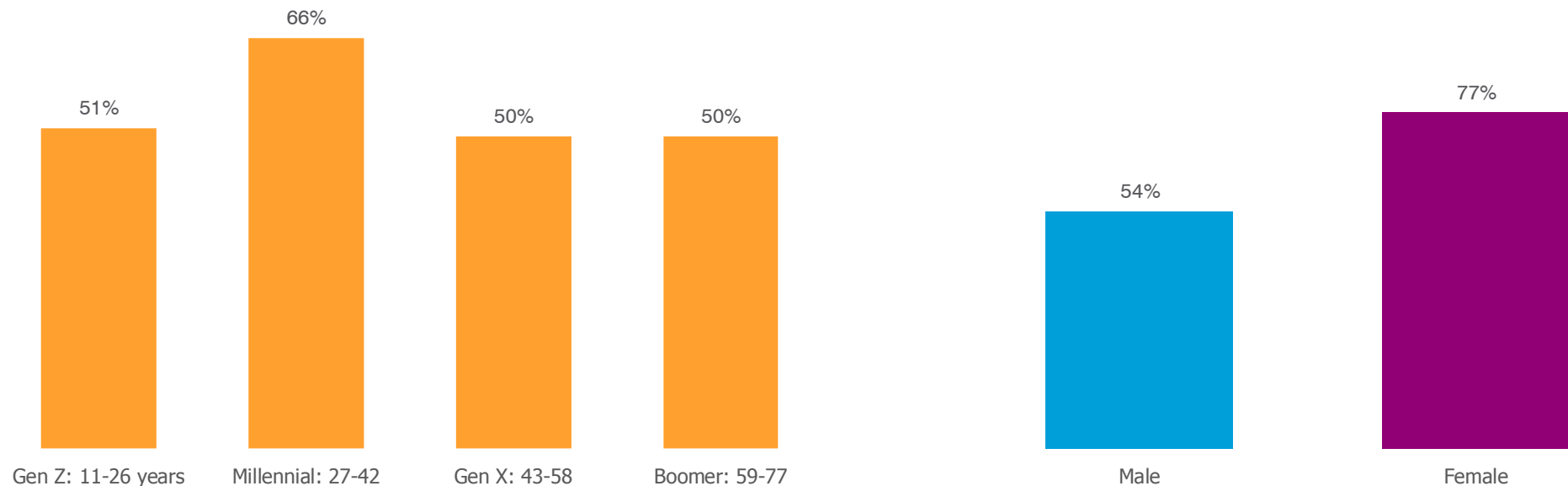
Back injuries, whilst second most common, were also the least painful



Q3A - How severe is each pain? Summary of 4 and 5 out of 5 on severity scale

Millennials were not only the most likely to sustain injuries, but to be severely impacted by them

Females were significantly more likely to describe their pain as severe



Almost 9 in 10 said they needed to take medication or self medicate to manage the pain

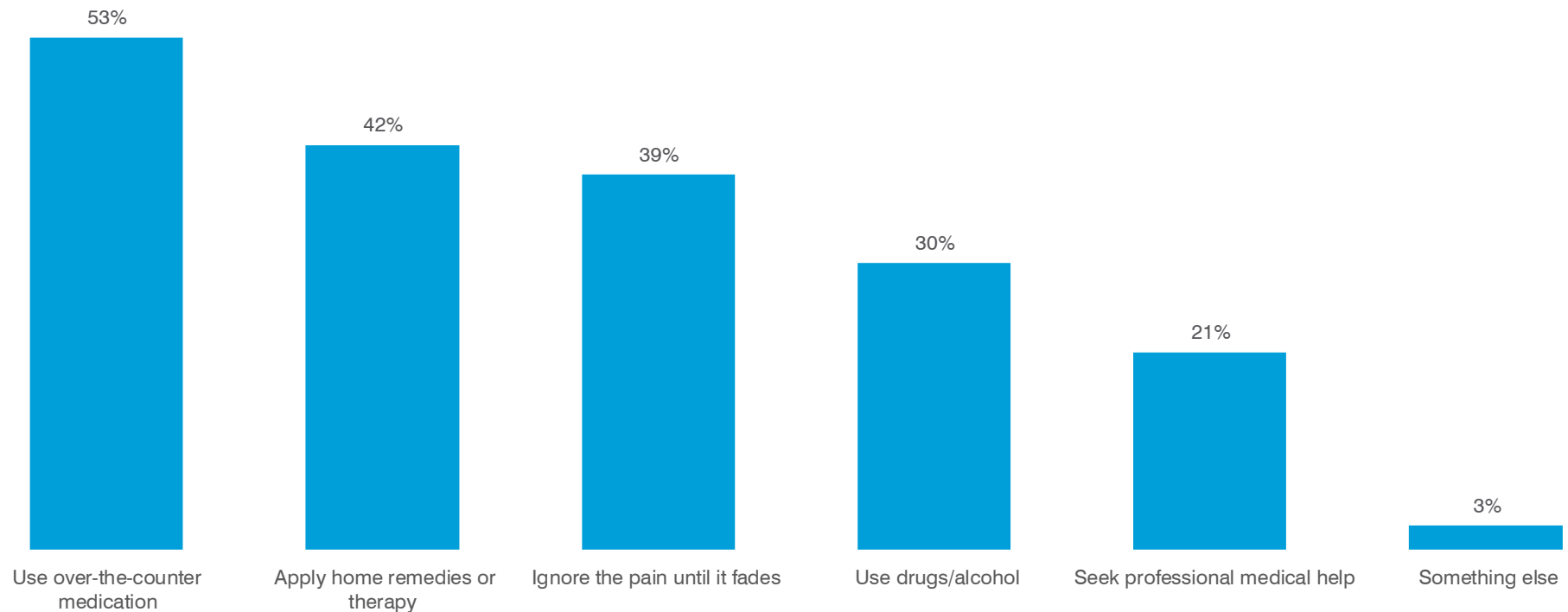
Despite this more than half said they had not taken any time off work for the pain, despite 84% saying they were cancelling or reducing personal activities for the pain



Q5 - What things does your discomfort, pain or niggles cause you to do?

Whilst over-the-counter medication was their go-to coping strategy, 39% were also ignoring the pain and hoping it would go away by itself

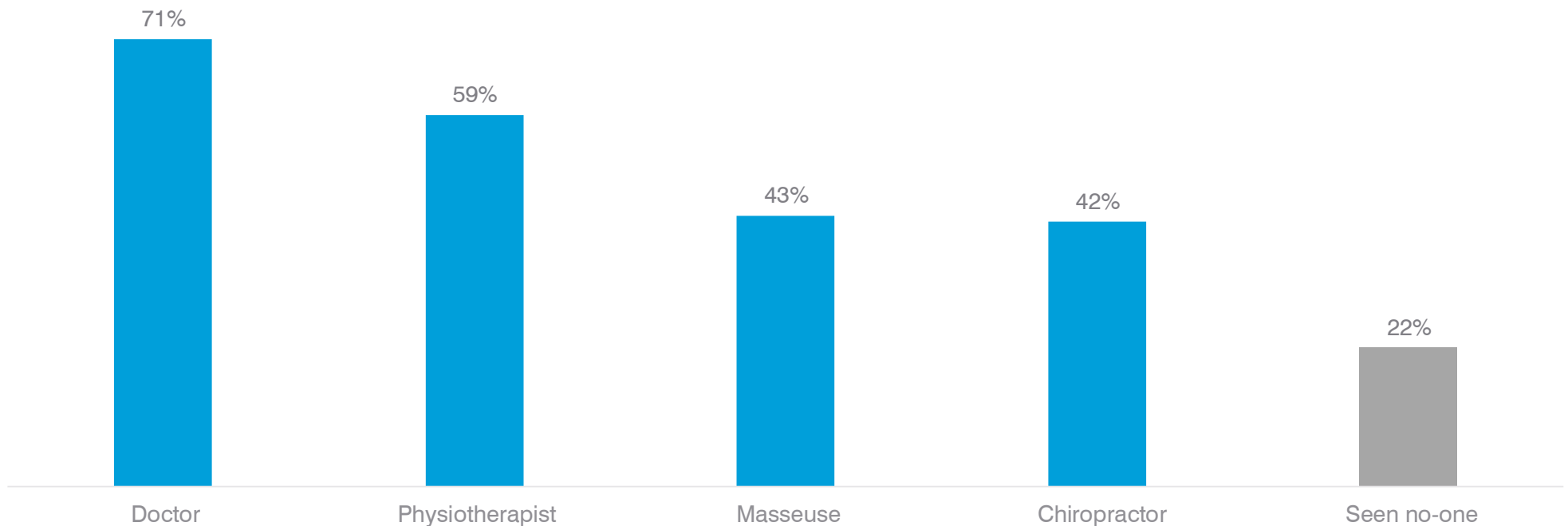
And almost one in three were using drugs or alcohol to manage the pain, making them more likely to take negative health actions rather than seek professional help



Q15 - When pain strikes after a workday, what is your usual coping strategy?

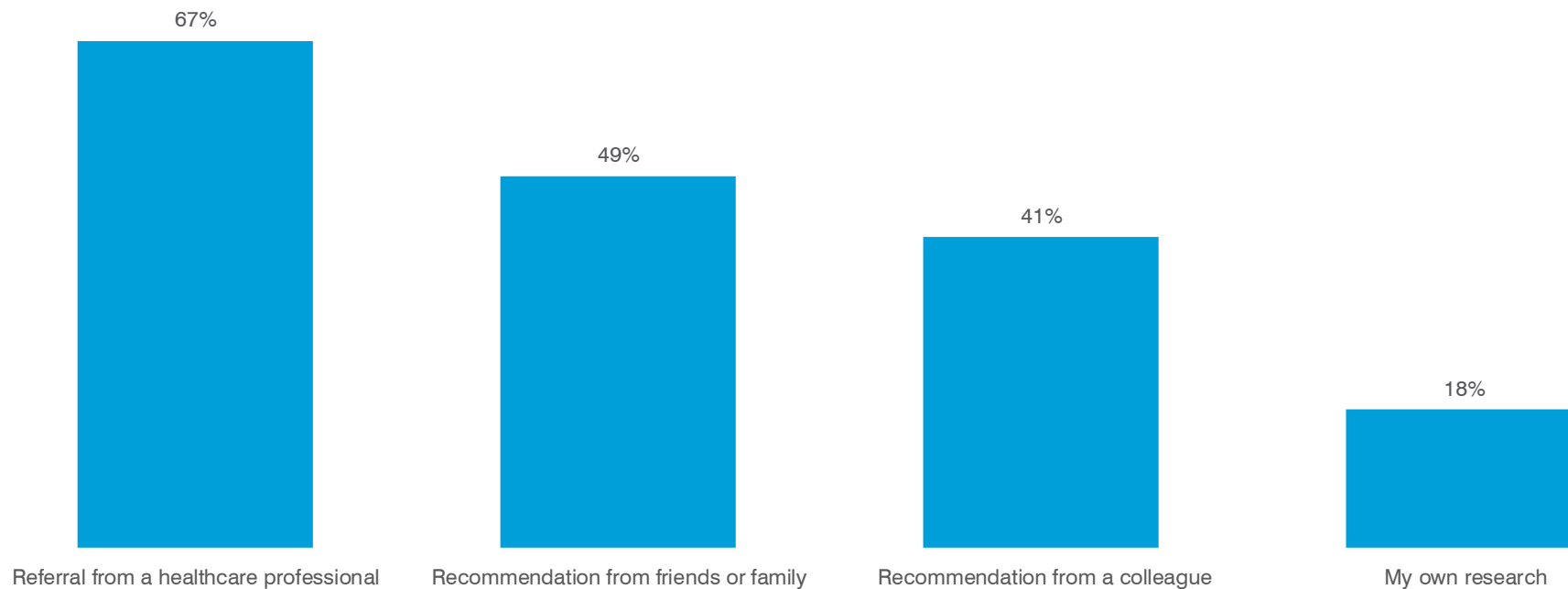
Despite how much these injuries are impacting respondents, 22% had seen no-one about them

Almost everyone who had seen someone, had visited their doctor. The next most trusted expert being their physiotherapist



Q6 - Have you seen any professional about these injuries?

More than half of doctor visits about pain are resulting in a referral to a physiotherapist

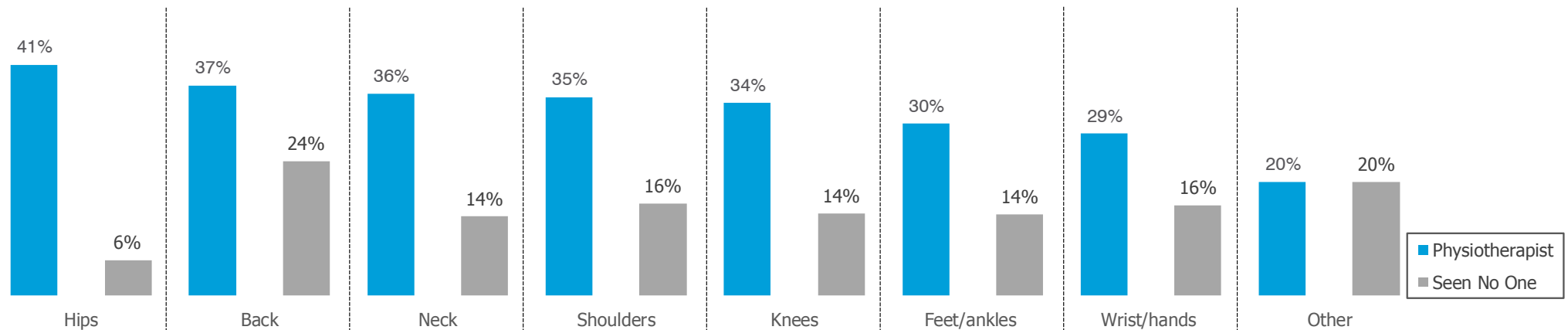


67% of visits to a physiotherapist were due to a referral from their doctor. That means 40% of all tradies with issues saw a physiotherapist because their doctor recommended it. Which is 56% of those who visited their doctor for the pain.

Q8 - What made you seek out physiotherapy treatment? Summary

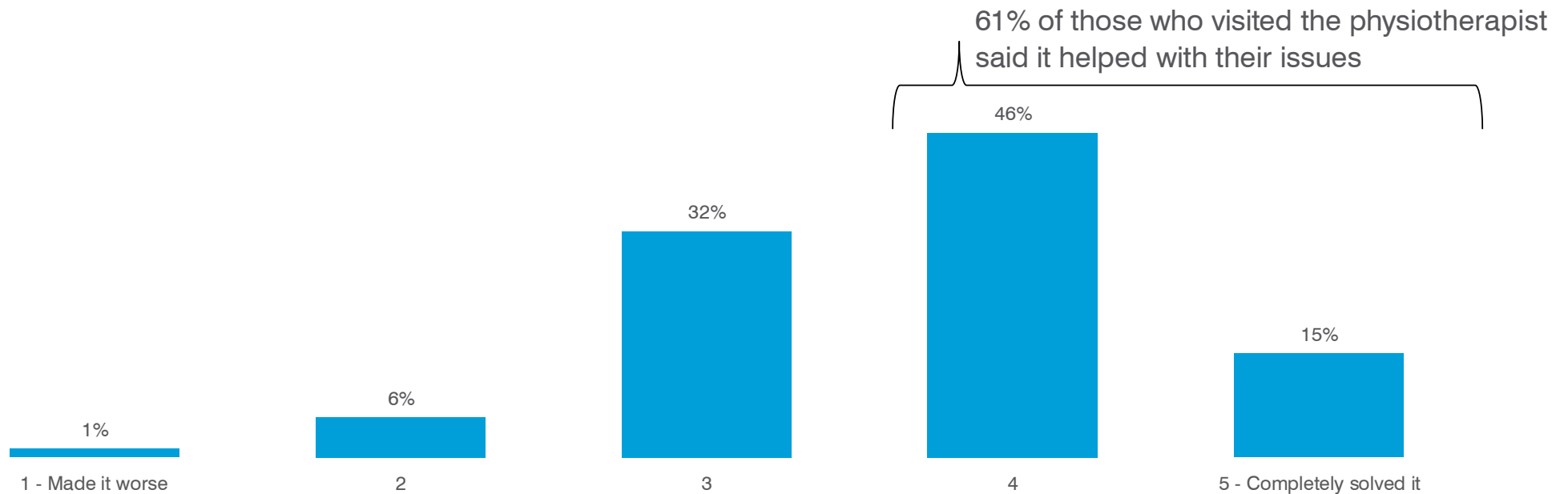
Tradies were most likely to see their physiotherapist about hip pain, and least likely to see them about wrist/hand issues (despite these being the most painful issues)

Back injuries are the most likely to result in not seeing anyone, likely because the pain is considered to be less severe



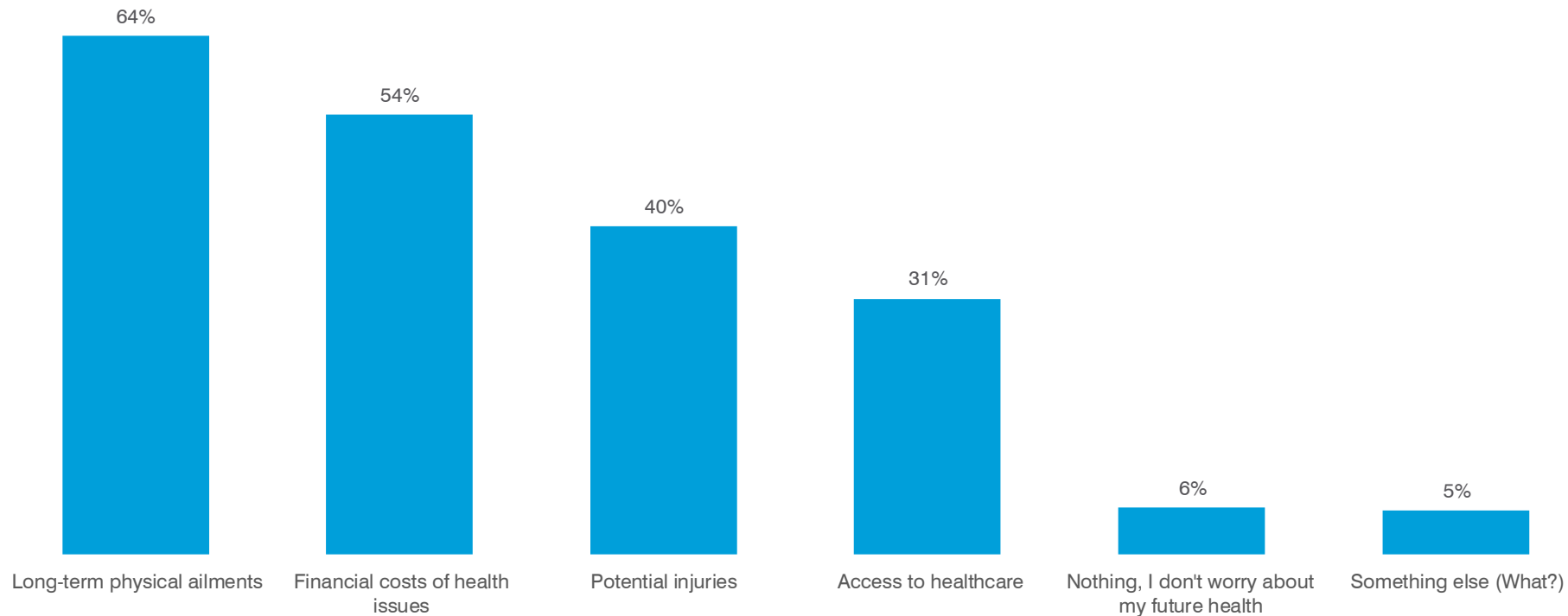
Q6 - Have you seen any professional about these injuries? Summary

Seeing a physiotherapist had a significant impact on almost two in three of those with injuries



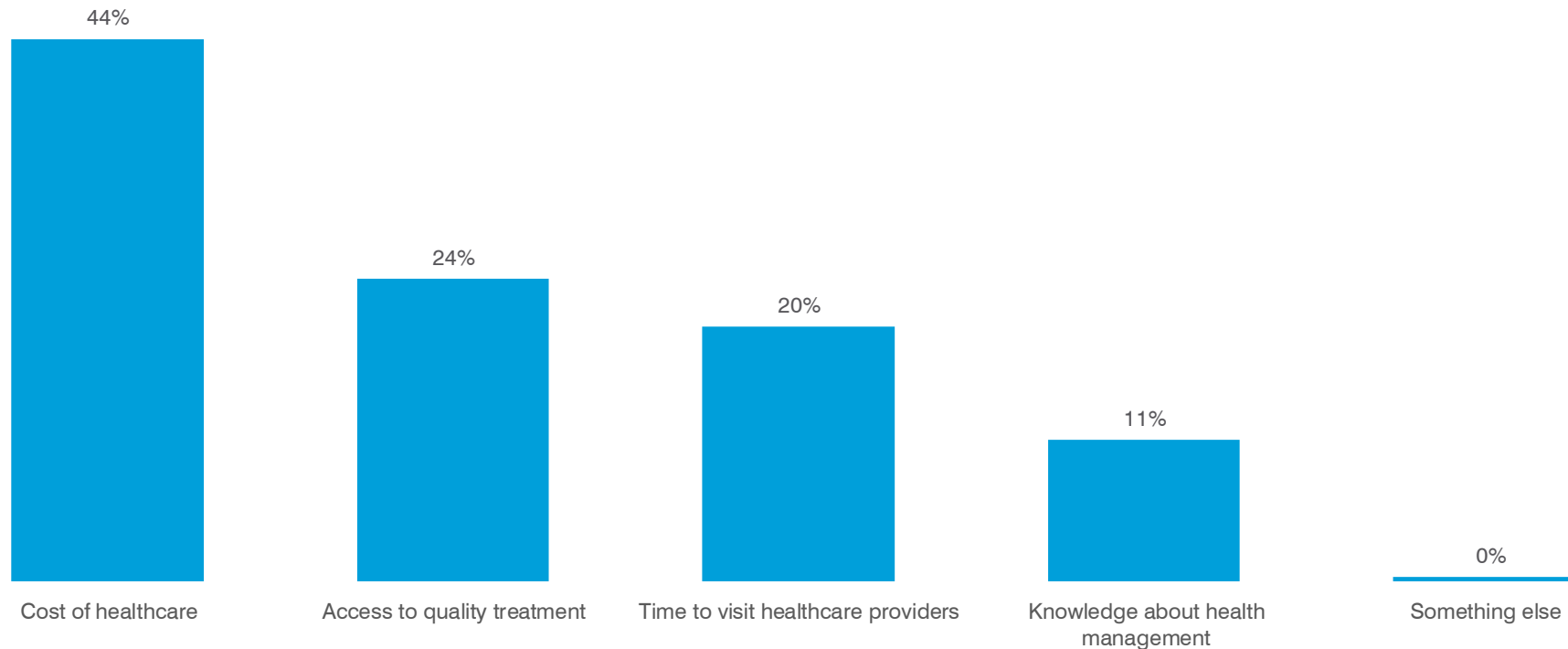
Q7A - You have indicated that you have seen a physiotherapist about your injuries. Did seeing a physiotherapist work? Summary

Almost two in three tradies are worried about long term impacts from physical injuries and ailments: making it their number one concern



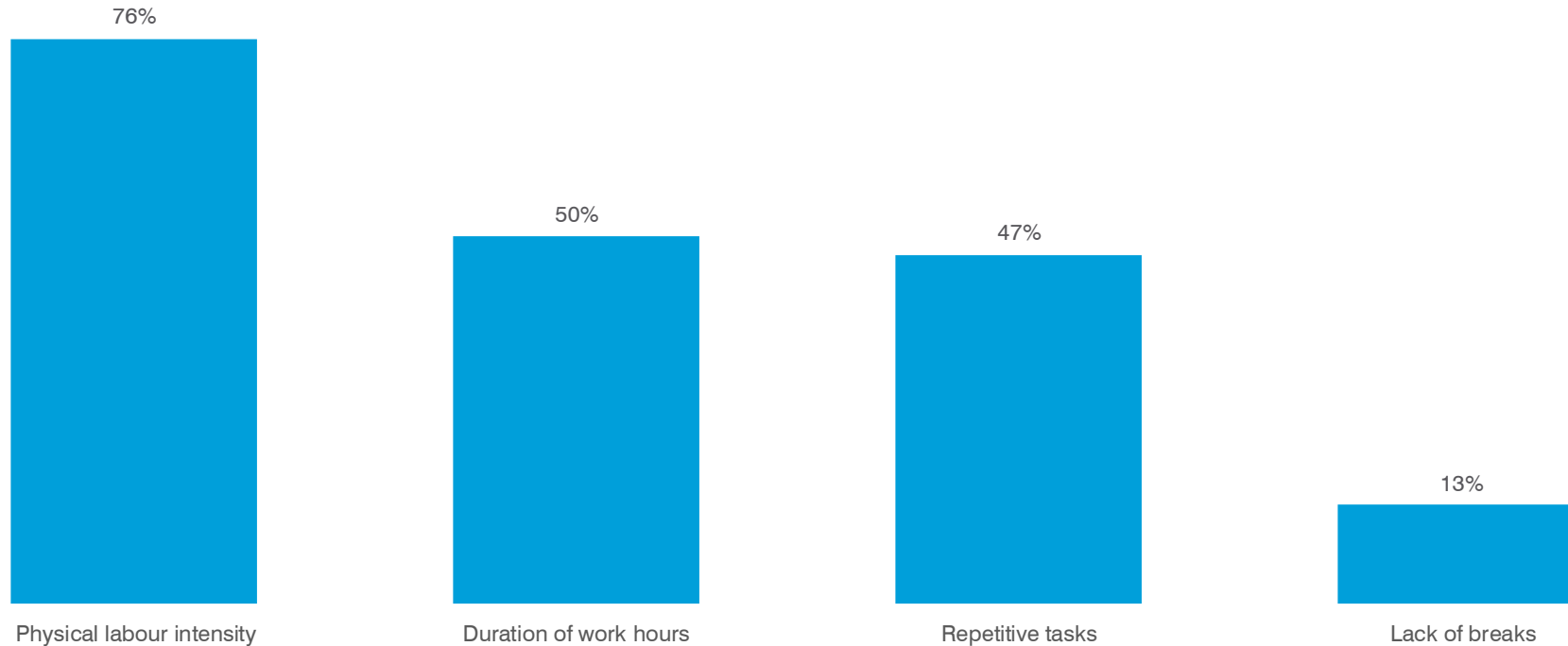
Q10 - Which of the following worries you about your future health?

The respondents voted the cost of healthcare the one barrier they wished they could remove in their quest for a healthier life



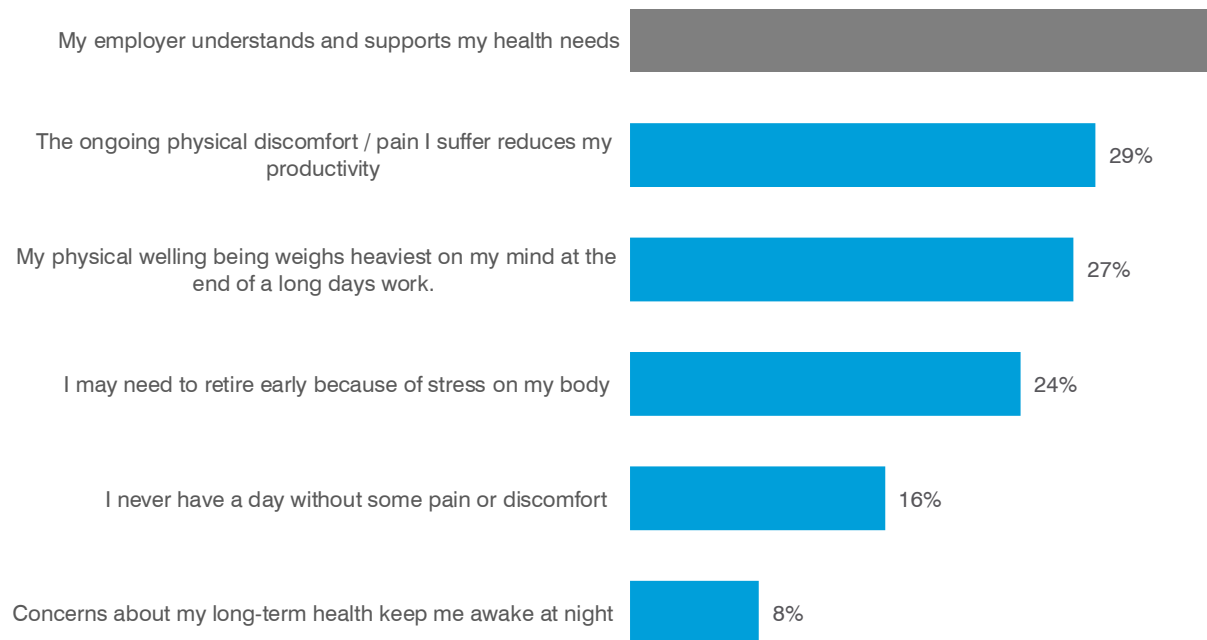
Q13 - If you could eliminate one barrier to a healthier life, what would it be?

The physical intensity of the work causes the biggest concern; but half were also concerned with long hours and repetitive tasks



Q14 - Which aspects of your daily work routine do you think impact your health the most?

And they don't feel their employers understand or support their wellbeing: which is causing them further stress

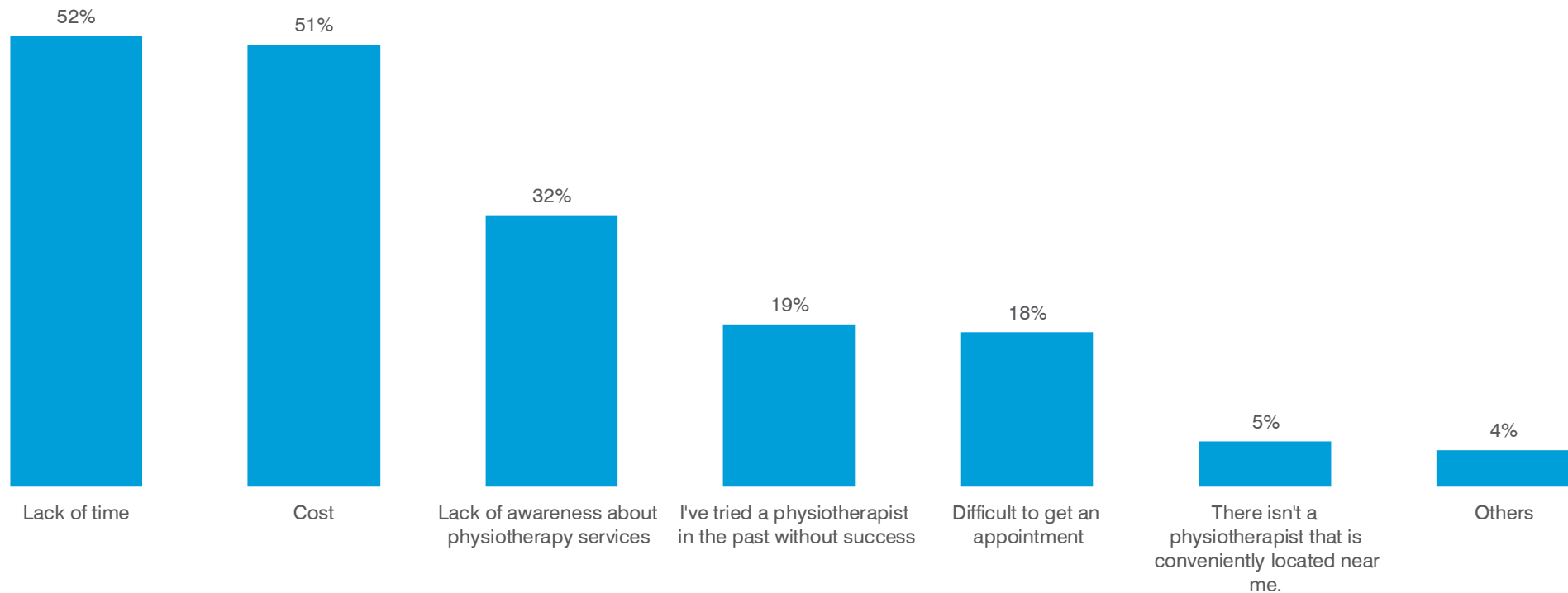


- 79% said they experienced at least one of
- Reduced productivity
 - Being concerned about the physical toll of their work on their body
 - Believing this would make them need to retire early
 - Concerns about long term health issues keeping them awake at night

Only 35% felt their employers understood or supported them in these issues

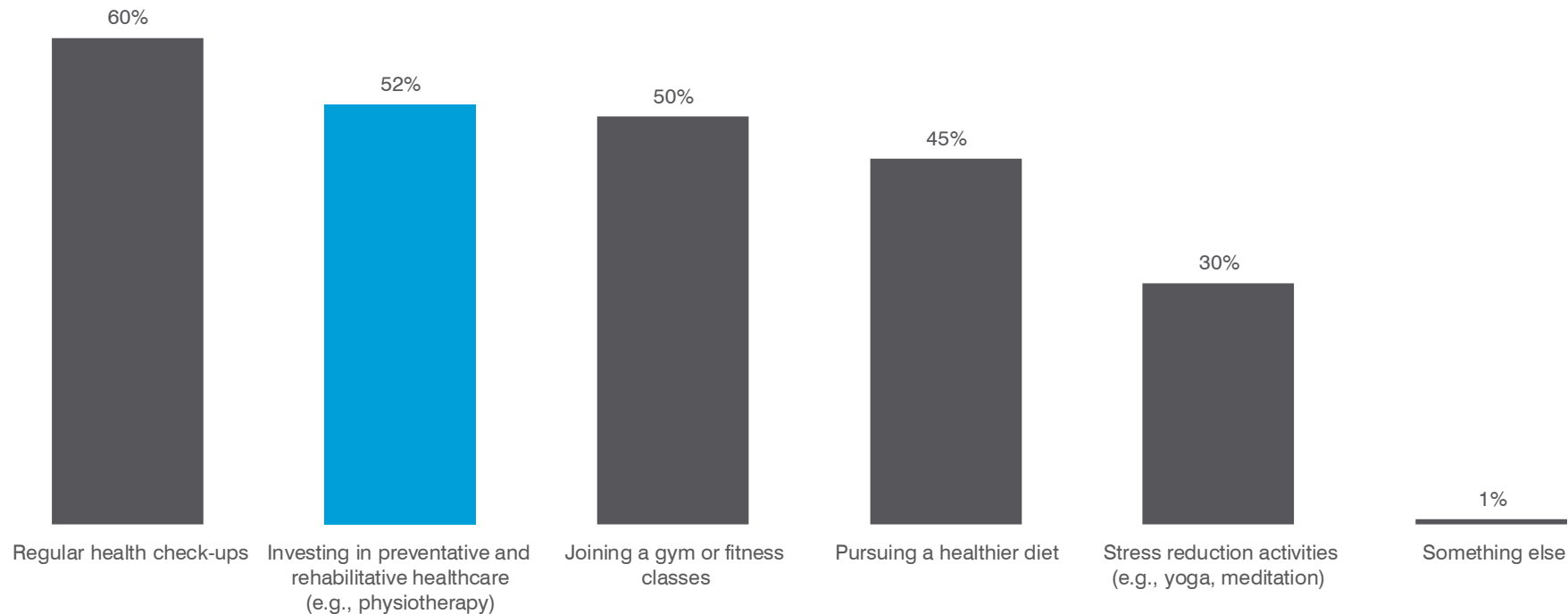
Q12 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Summary

Time and money are the main reasons tradies in pain do not visit a physiotherapist



Q7B - Why haven't you seen a physiotherapist about your injuries?

And more than half would invest in both preventative and rehabilitative physiotherapy if they had more time and money



Q11 - If you had more time and money, how would you invest in improving your health? Summary

Methodology Reference



Antenna, an independent consumer research agency on behalf of Australian Physiotherapy Association, conducted an online **AntennaPoll survey** of n=519 Australian tradies and handy persons.

The survey was conducted between 18 May and 3 June 2024

The survey data collection was national, and respondents were sourced using an accredited online research access panel.

Data was weighted for representation against country census data.



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