

Brief survey on mental wellbeing and COVID-19

FAI CIMP

September 2020 / February 2021



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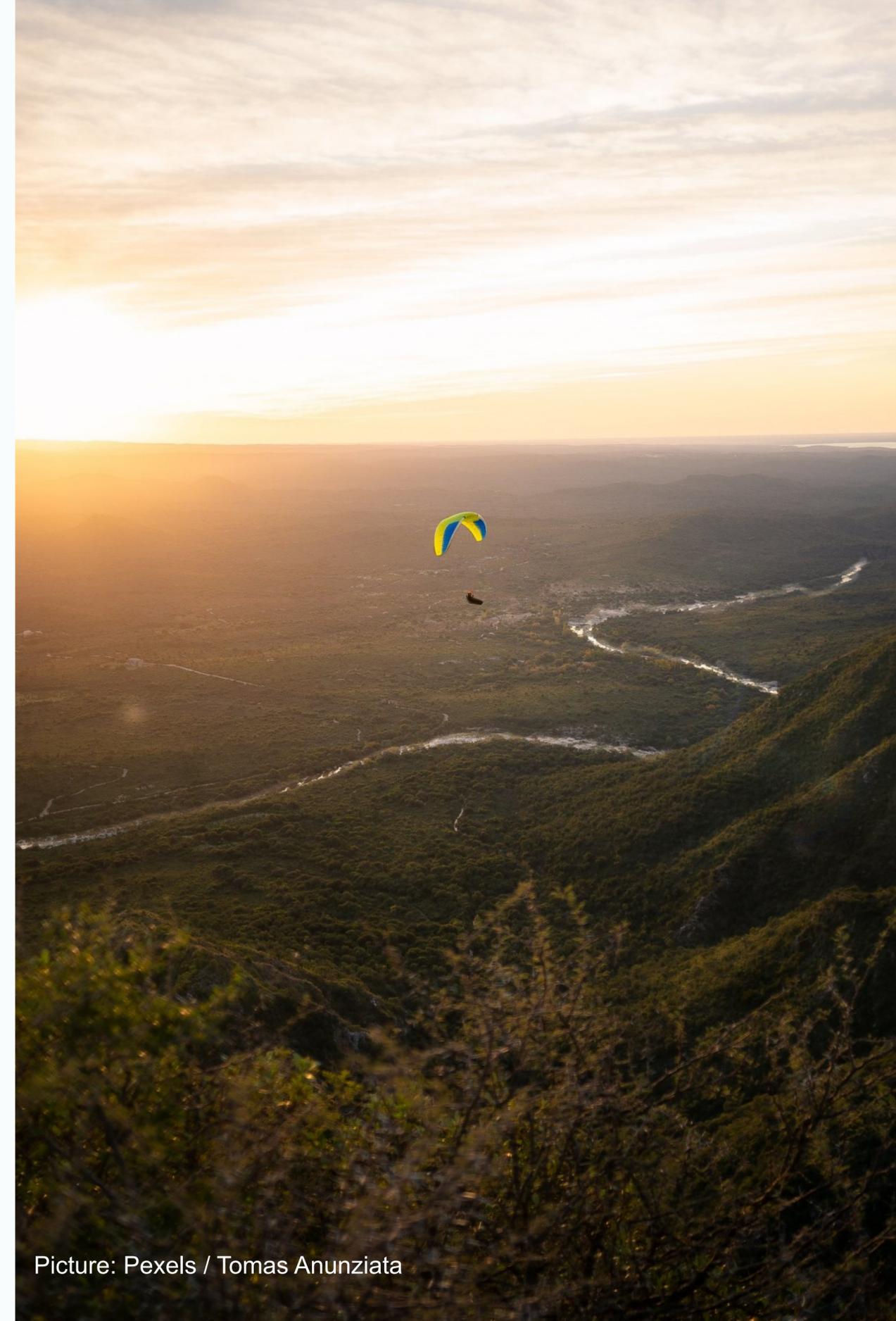
Country delegate Finland

Licensed Psychologist



Background and execution of survey

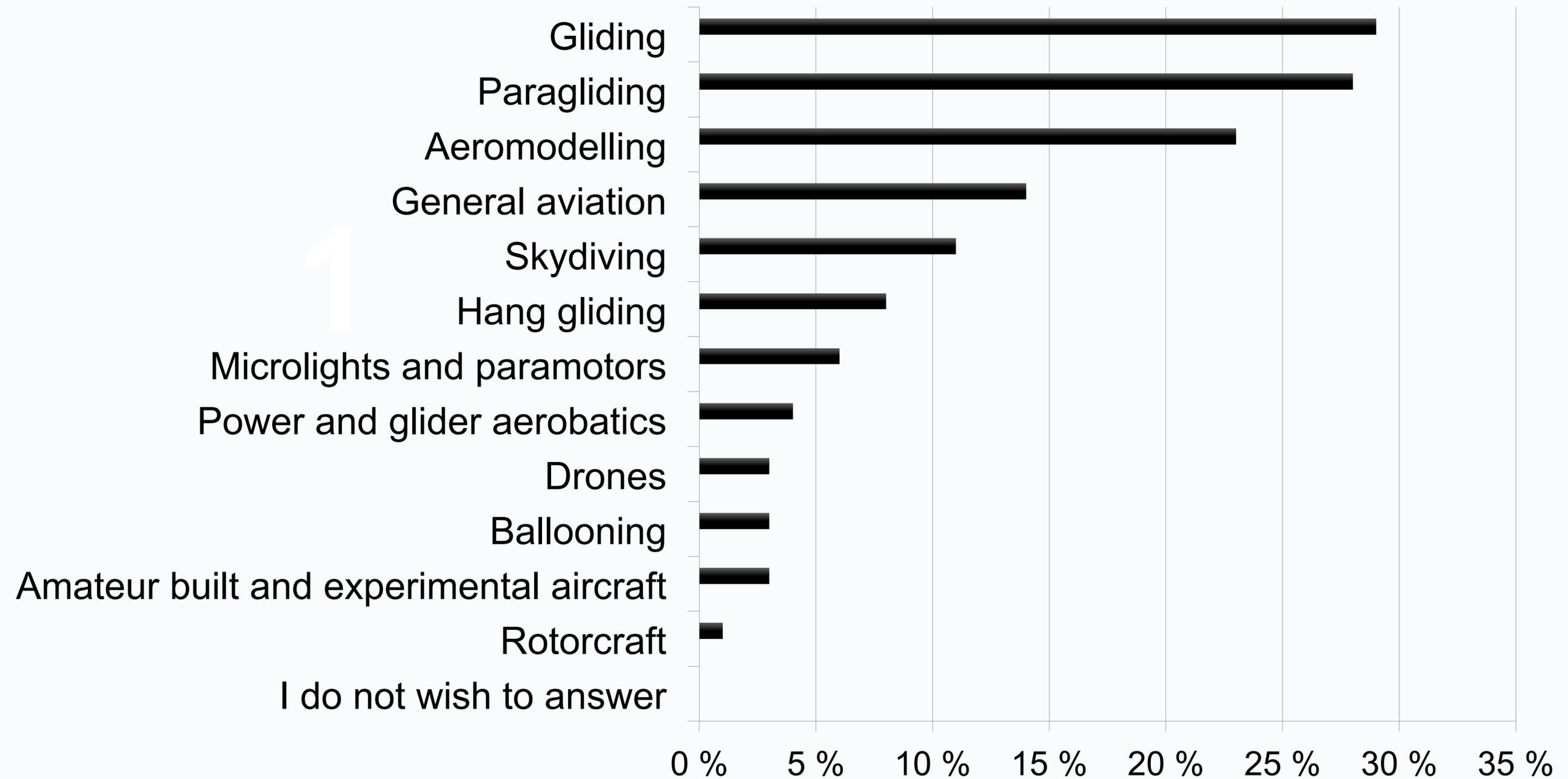
- **CIMP board interest for insight into impact of COVID-19 on mental wellbeing in air sports**
- **lack of previous data**
- **decision for a brief online survey to form an overview**
 - **a couple of structured and open questions**
- **number of respondents globally = 638**
 - **over and under representation?**
 - **data from September**
- **comprehensive statistical analysis not available nor feasible due to distribution, type of data**
- **interesting data nonetheless**



Picture: Pexels / Tomas Anunziata

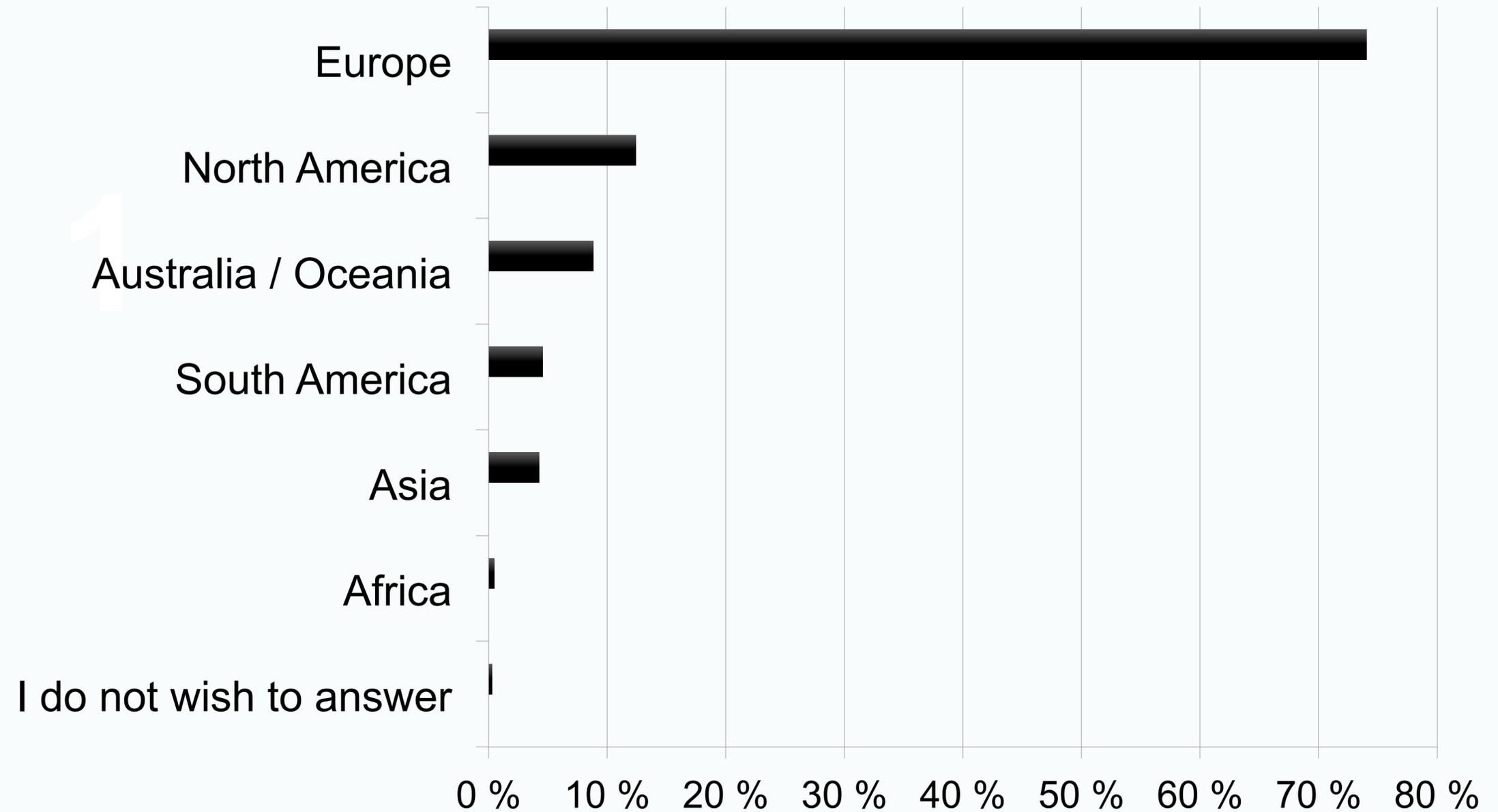
Respondee sports

Multiple options allowed: n=638, selected=846



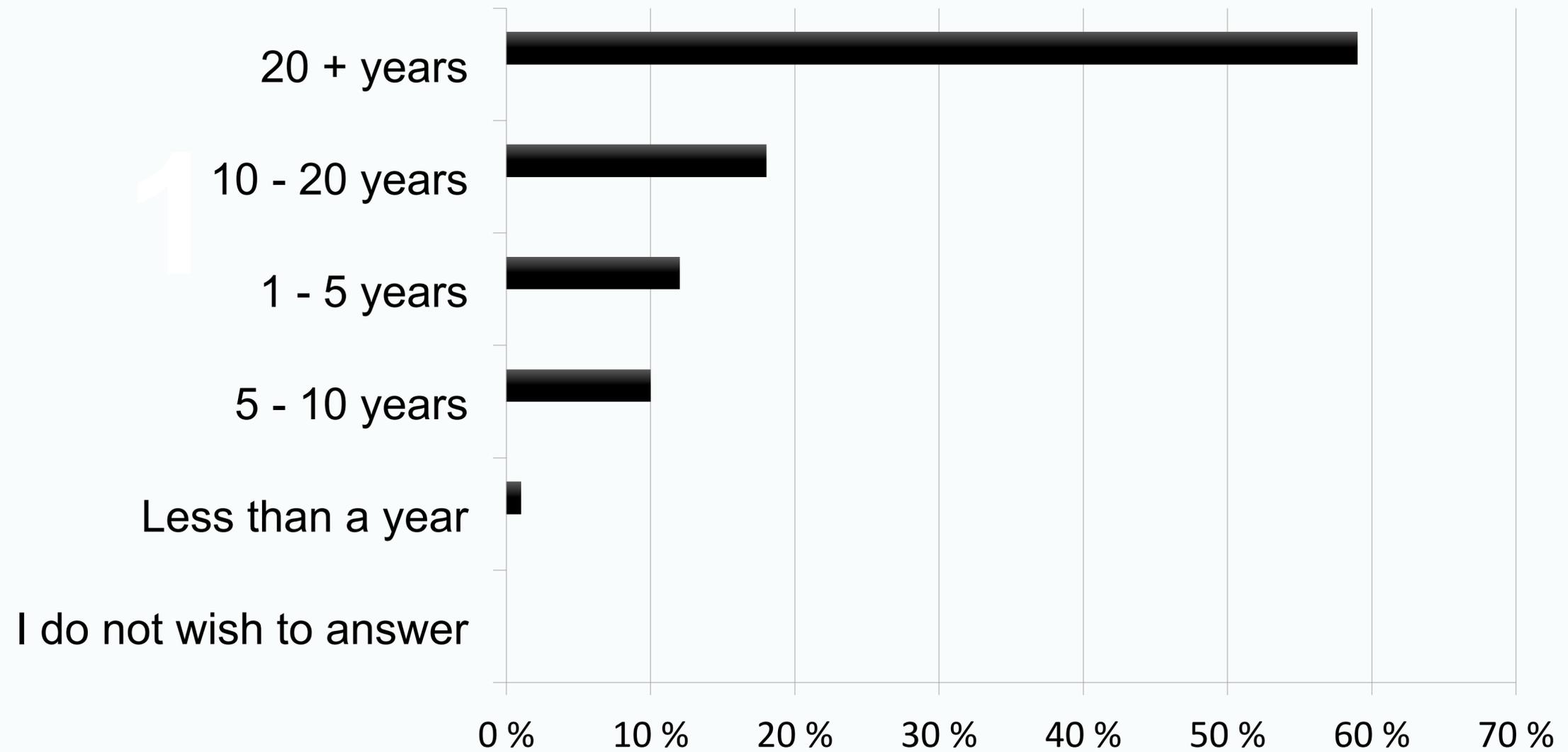
Respondee area

Multiple options allowed: n=636, selected=667



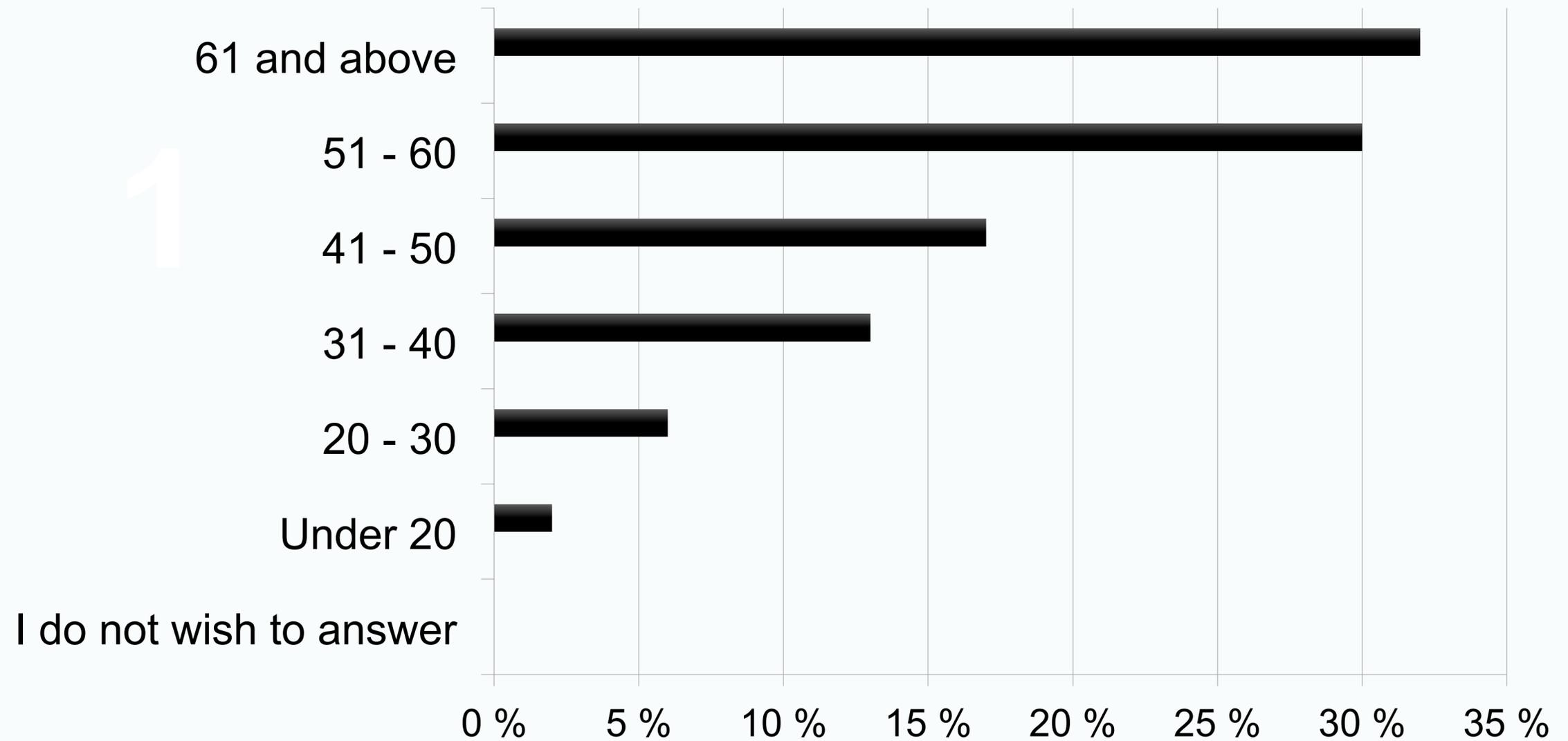
Respondee experience in air sports

n=636



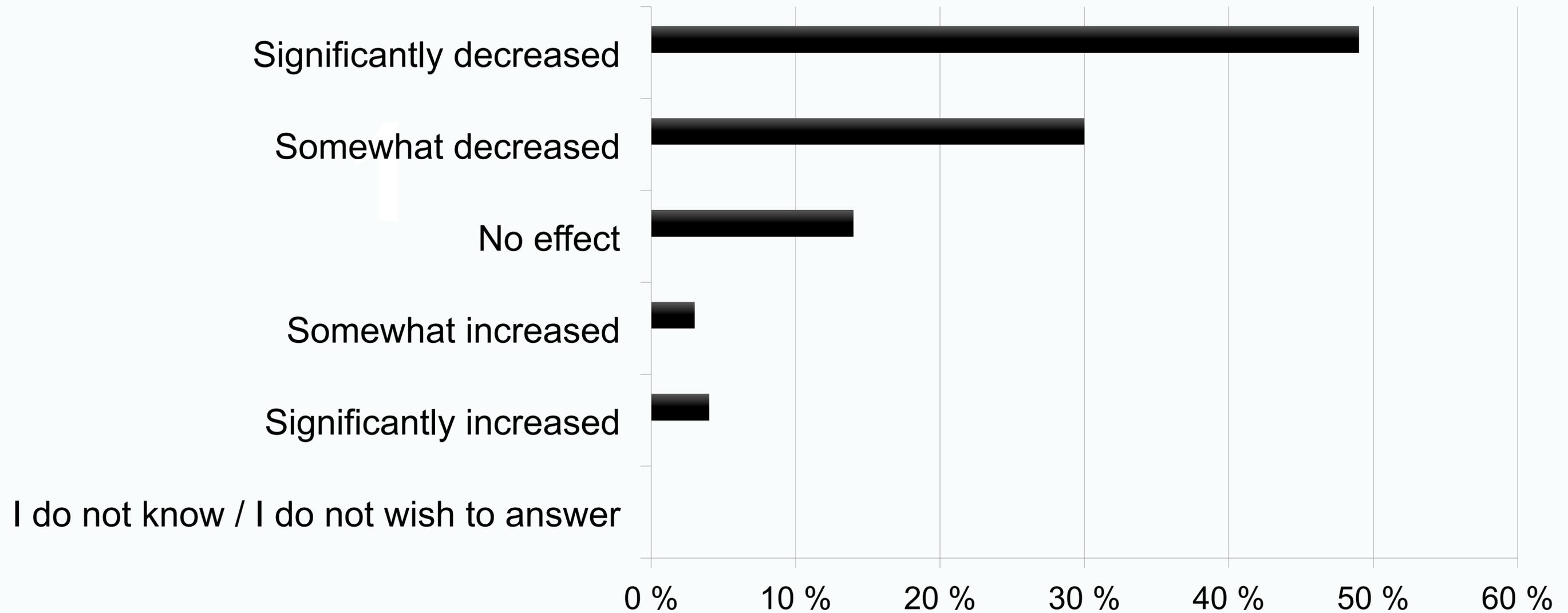
Respondee age

n=637



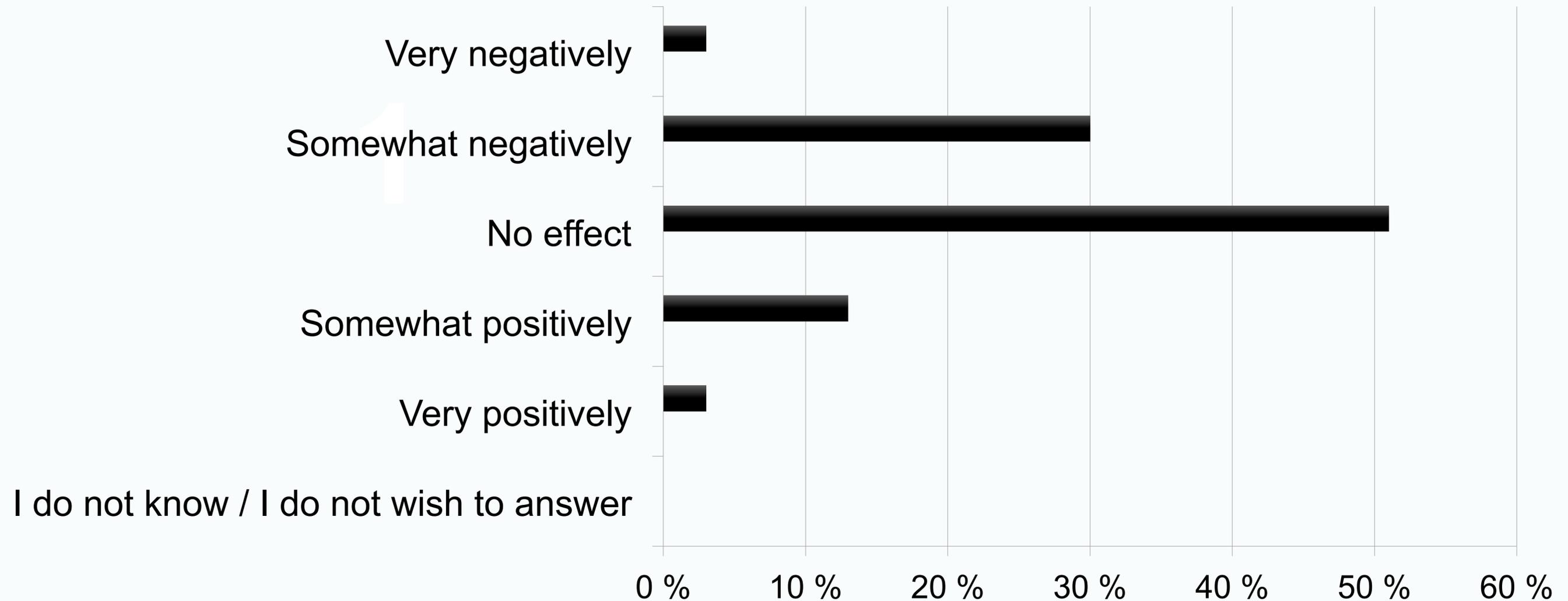
COVID-19 impact on participation in air sports

n=637



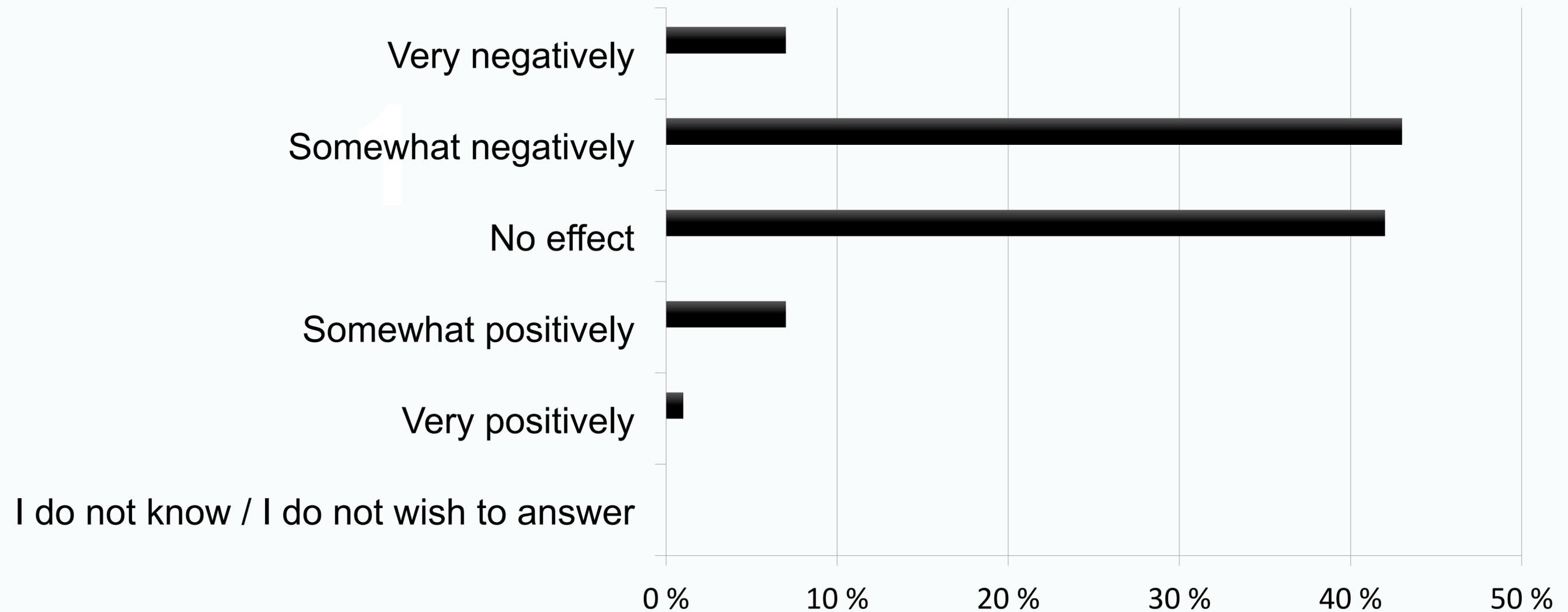
COVID-19 has affected my physical wellbeing

n=637



COVID-19 has affected my mental wellbeing

n=636



Observations from data

Age seems to be the most relevant background factor

All age groups seem to be somewhat equally affected by decrease of activity

- the oldest and middle-aged seem to have been least able to maintain, increase activity
- increased activity only for the healthiest with most free time & economic means, good location, solo / socially distanced / outdoors sport? (small n=46 for *increased activity*)

Effects of COVID-19 on physical wellbeing correlate with mental wellbeing

- negative physical wellbeing = **78 % negative effect on mwb**, 3 % positive
- positive physical wellbeing = 38 % negative effect on mwb, **27 % positive**
- no effect on physical wellbeing = 35 % negative effect on mwb, 6 % positive

The older you are, the less negative effect on mental wellbeing?

- From almost **70 % negative effect** in the youngest groups to about **45 %** in the oldest

The most active report the least negative effect on mental wellbeing

- only **32 %** negative, though very small n=25 for *significantly increased activity*

Reported factors on physical wellbeing

Positive factors

more rest, less stress

more free time

better life balance

more outdoors

more exercise

better sleep

better diet

stopped drinking

new hobbies

Negative factors

closed gyms

loss of muscular strength

weight gain

less active

more indoors due to lockdown

loss of routines

no airtime

more alcohol

worse sleep

fear of leaving home

financial stress, loss of job

Reported factors on mental wellbeing

Positive factors

changed view on life
time to reflect
less obligations
more time with family
more time in solitude
less general stress
preference to work from home
slower life
broadened interests
more introspection
more time to work out
more time in nature
more time to read

Negative factors

isolation
less social contacts
financial stress, loss of job
no travel
no flying
loss of sense of freedom
fear of infection
frustration, anger (on restrictions)
no real holidays
always alert
increased anxiety, worrying
depression (also before covid)
apathy, boredom

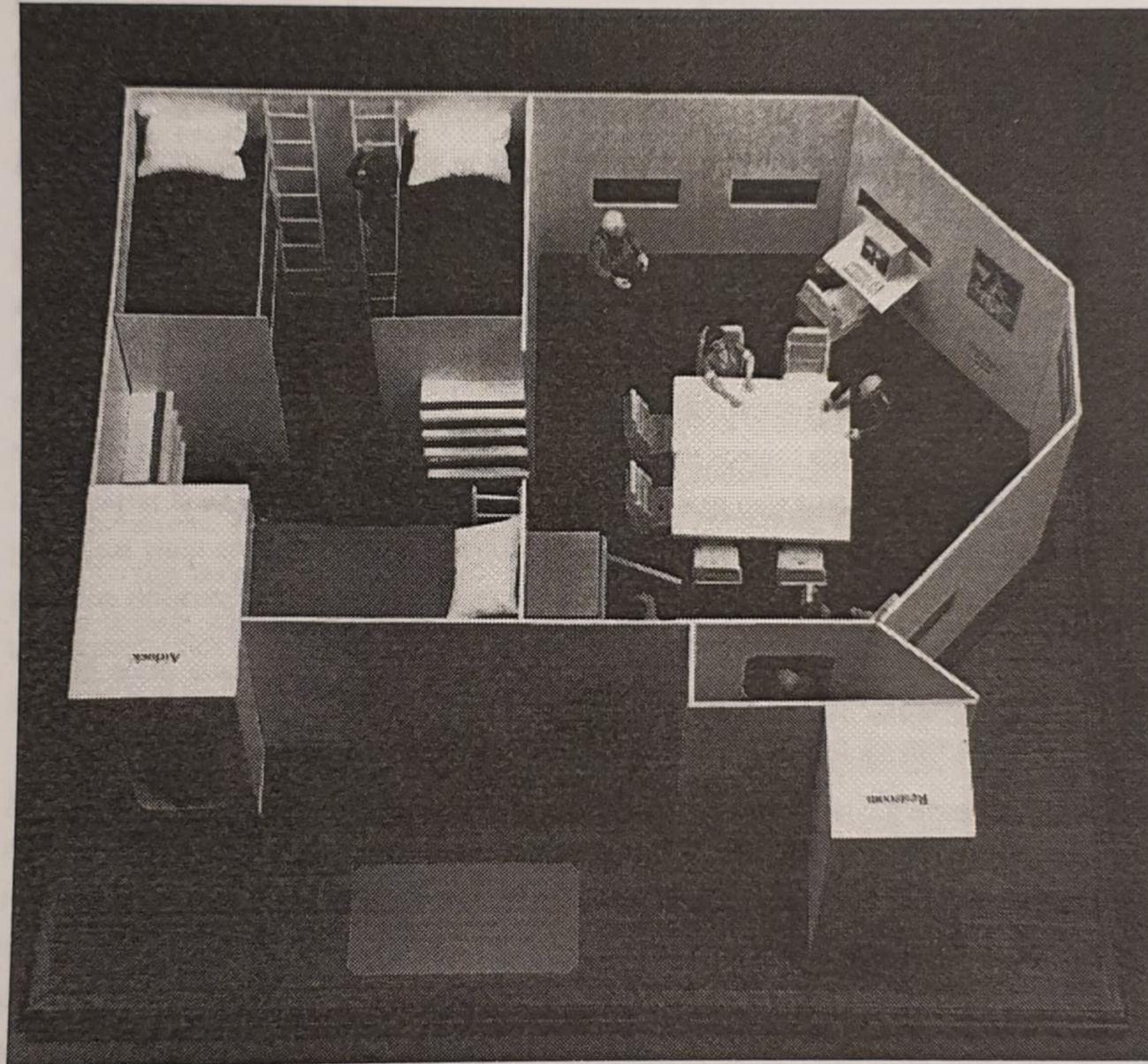


Figure 1. A scale model of the spacecraft simulator used in the study conducted in the Aerospace Psychology Laboratory at Claremont McKenna College.

“One important fact, which has emerged during decades of research, is that in the study of capsule environments there are few main effect variables.

Almost every outcome is due to an interaction among a host of physical and social environmental variables and personality factors.

Thus, -- we must remember that how people experience an environment is more important than the objective characteristics of the environment.”

The Environmental Psychology of Capsule Habitats, Suedfeld & Steel, 2000



General takeaways for better wellbeing

Ability to maintain sense of control and coherence

Functional coping methods

Staying (physically) active

Staying socially active

Ability to proceed with own interests despite restrictions

Economic stability

Emotional stability: more open, more optimistic, less neurotic



Reported issues on wellbeing in air sports

Supportive factors

need and passion to fly

most important hobby

helps keep calm and happy

provides adrenaline, freedom

regular activity, peer interaction

importance of staying active

risk management, awareness of

importance of following rules

good training and support

being able to maintain mental focus (alertness)

risk awareness



Reported issues on wellbeing in air sports

Negative factors

uncertainty about future

too many/changing rules, no more fun

general stress, financial etc. burdens

closed sites, not able to fly

others' negligence of social distancing

loss of confidence

loss of ability to maintain fitness

loss of enthusiasm due to lack of activities

afraid to be honest about mental health

aging participants

risk of lack of concentration

afraid of accident

fear of flying due to past incidents

“flying while stoned on weed”

directly covid related

other factors of interest



Reported issues on wellbeing in air sports

Deniers and speaking for others

“not slowfakes but well-adjusted aging males”

“should be no issues”

“there are no issues”

Taboo topics?



Suggestions on improving wellbeing

Providing sense of control:

Offer social and physical activity

- emphasize social aspect / camaraderie of clubs, more peer support
- build ability to help people meet each other and fly again
- organize gettogethers etc. activity (outdoors?)
- simulator flights
- mentoring system / flying with more experienced pilots
- flying with others in general

Communicate and deliver on risk awareness

- clear, realistic and easy to apply rules for social distancing, masks etc.
 - in different sports
 - in clubs' common areas
- emphasis on cleanliness
- refresher training / checklists to help decrease mental workload in general and especially when returning to flight after long break

Communicate optimism and predictability, stability

- "easy to approach" regulations (guides)?



Suggestions on improving wellbeing

Providing sense of control continued:

Build awareness and acceptance through training and comms

- strengthen supportive, positive environment in clubs, competitions
- talk about mental wellbeing issues, "fit to fly"
- offer training in fear management
- offer training in mental strength and specific topics of each sport
- offer coaching, psychological support
- offer (and require?) training in risk management
- organize safety seminars
- provide written guides and first-person experiences
- support and promote beneficial activities (other sports, meditation etc.)
- provide content for all ages, backgrounds and experience levels
- dialogue within clubs etc. for further insight

Q & A

