



# Impact of Remote Work for VA Researchers During COVID-19

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@hgrnapi

# Disclosures

Dr. Gilmartin has no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this presentation.

The contents of this presentation do not represent the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.

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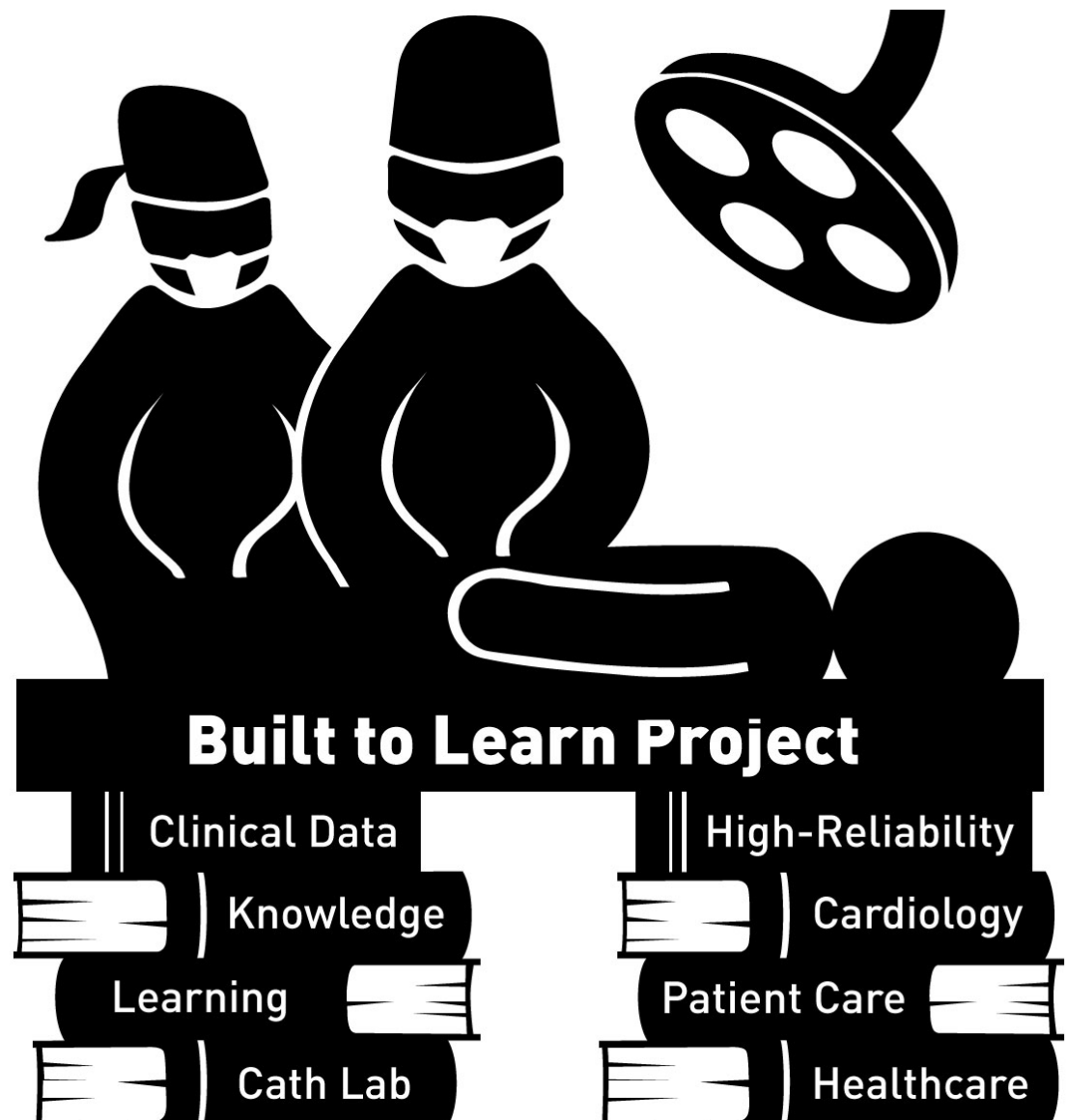
# Poll Question

- Are you working remotely today due to COVID-19 related restrictions on being in the office?
- Yes
- No
- Not working today – attending this on my day off

# Poll Question

As of today, what is the biggest barrier to your productivity and engagement during remote work? (choose one)

- No barriers – everything is going great
- Technology issues (internet, VPN, inadequate IT equipment at home)
- Children in home/homeschooling/housekeeping/meal responsibilities
- No home office/private workspace
- Missing daily face-to-face interaction (work and social) with colleagues
- Absence of daily routine
- We are living in a pandemic – that is my biggest barrier



# Building Supportive Learning Environments: Implementation Research in VA Cardiac Cath Labs

VA Career Development Award



# **Gov. Polis Announces Statewide Stay-At-Home Order, Provides Update on Colorado Response to COVID-19**

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

# **Washington Issues Stay Home – Stay Healthy Order, Strictly Limiting Business Operations**

Wednesday, March 25, 2020



**Stay at home  
to save lives.**

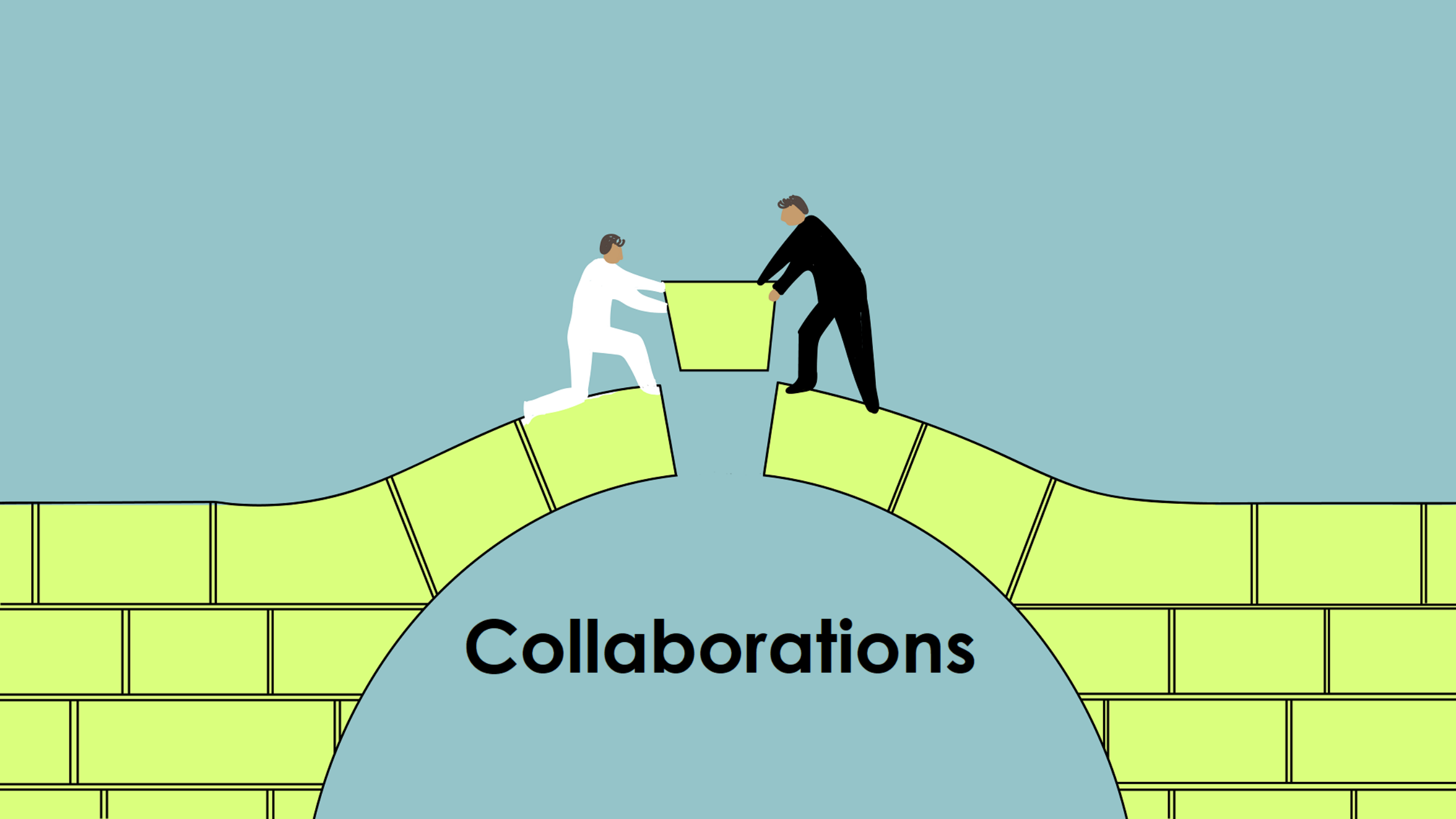
**This is not a vacation; it's a pandemic.**



# Why Researchers?







**Collaborations**



March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



# Dreams of Remote Work During COVID-19





# The Impact of Remote Work for VA Researchers During COVID-19

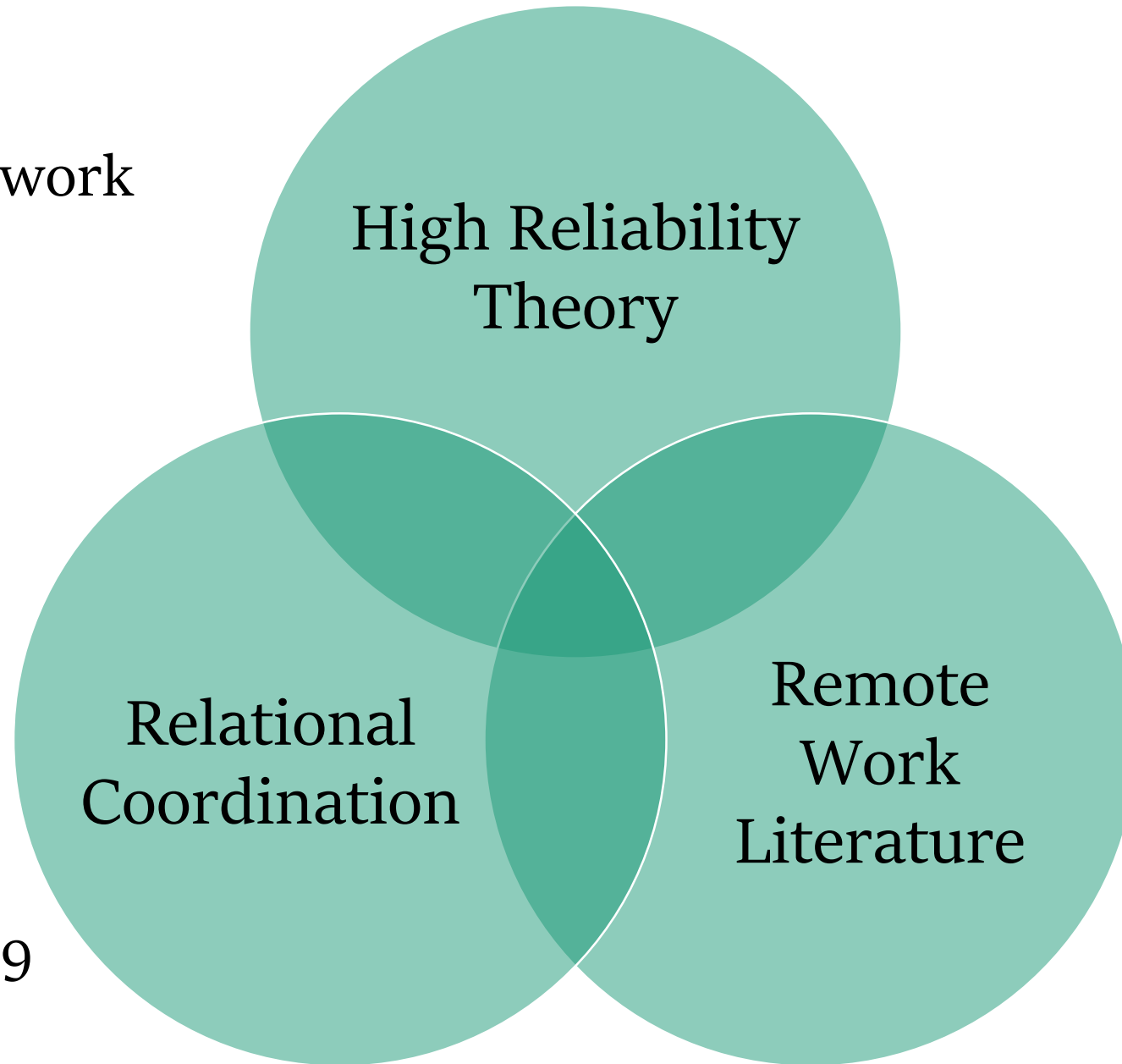
## Methods



#remote work



#medtwitter



#COVID19



#WFH

# Survey Design

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Demographics

Remote work  
experience

Interference

Barriers

Workarounds

Stop research

Strategies

Social support  
in the home

“How are you  
doing?”

# Methods & Analysis

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Pilot Test:  
Seattle/Denver  
COIN WIP

Field Test: CCTSI

VA RedCap

Funded HSR&D  
Researchers –  
ART Report

Descriptive,  
Multivariable  
logistic regression

Manifest Content  
Analysis

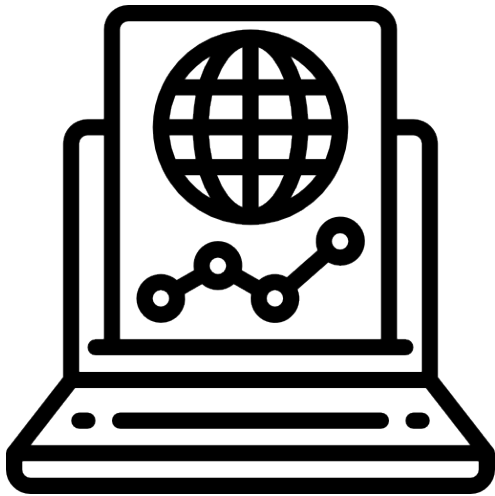




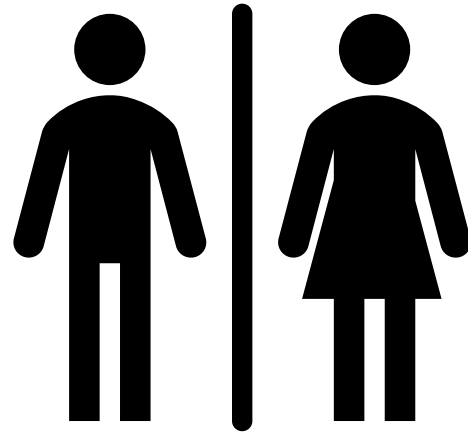
# The Impact of Remote Work for VA Researchers During COVID-19

## Results

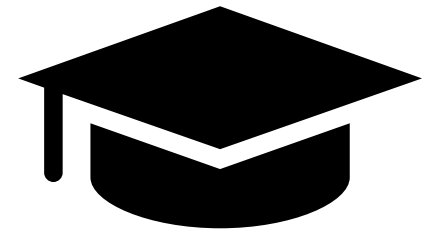
# Demographics



**473 responses**  
32% from ART list  
68% from public survey

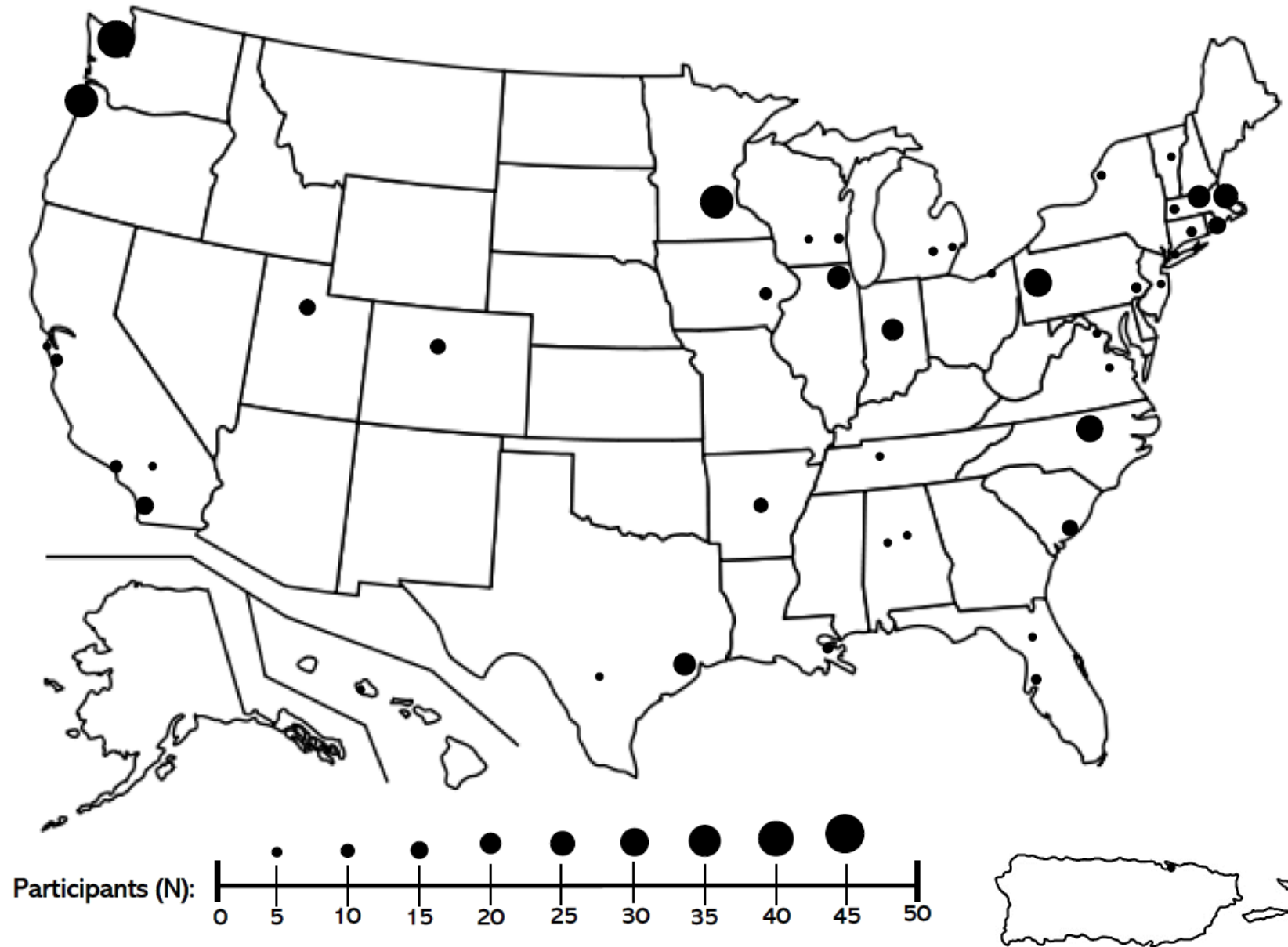


**44 years old (mean)**  
76% female  
83% white  
7% Asian or Pacific Islander  
4% Black

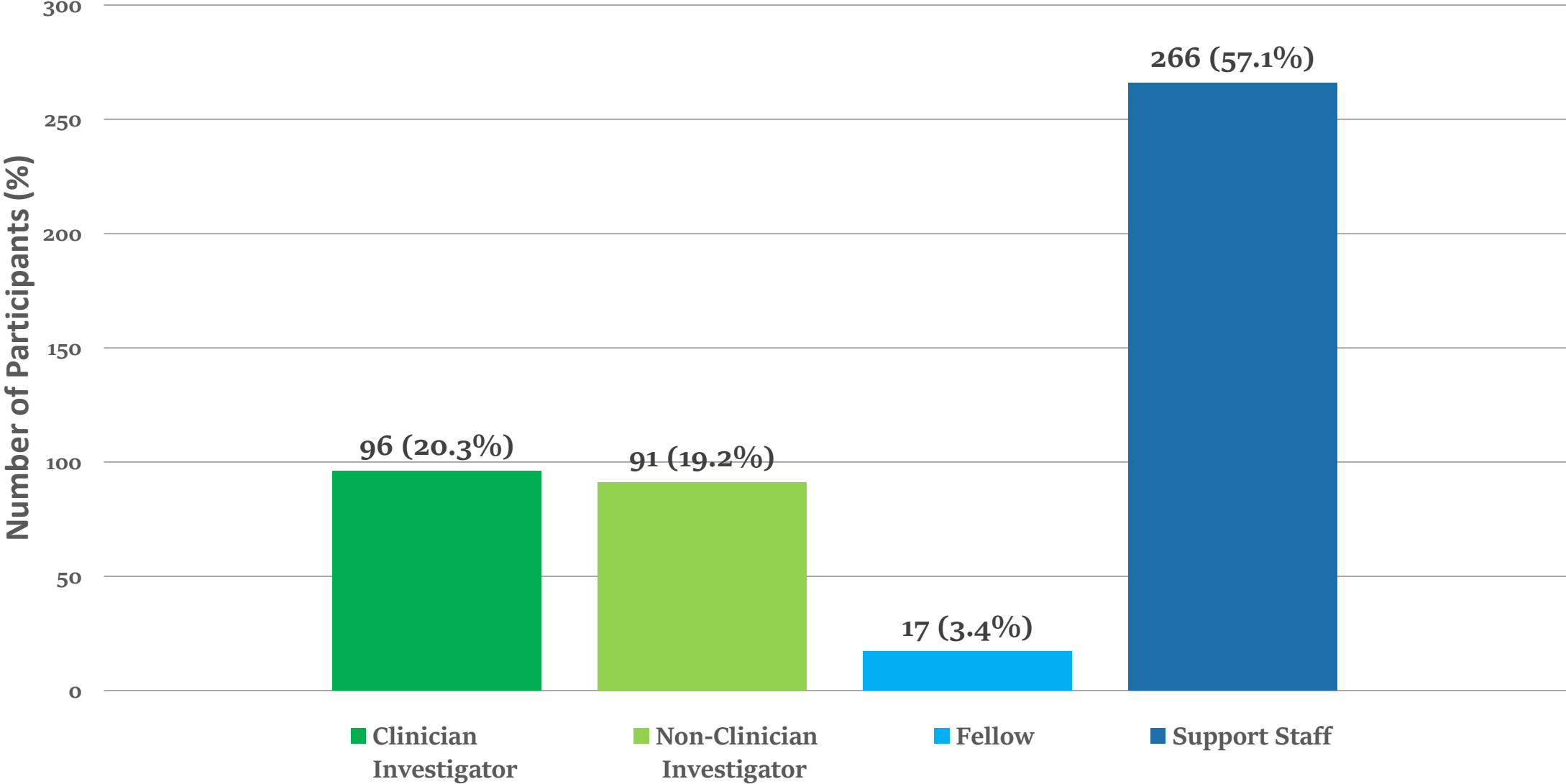


**40% PhD**  
28% Bachelors  
22% MPH  
12% MD  
5% RN/MSN

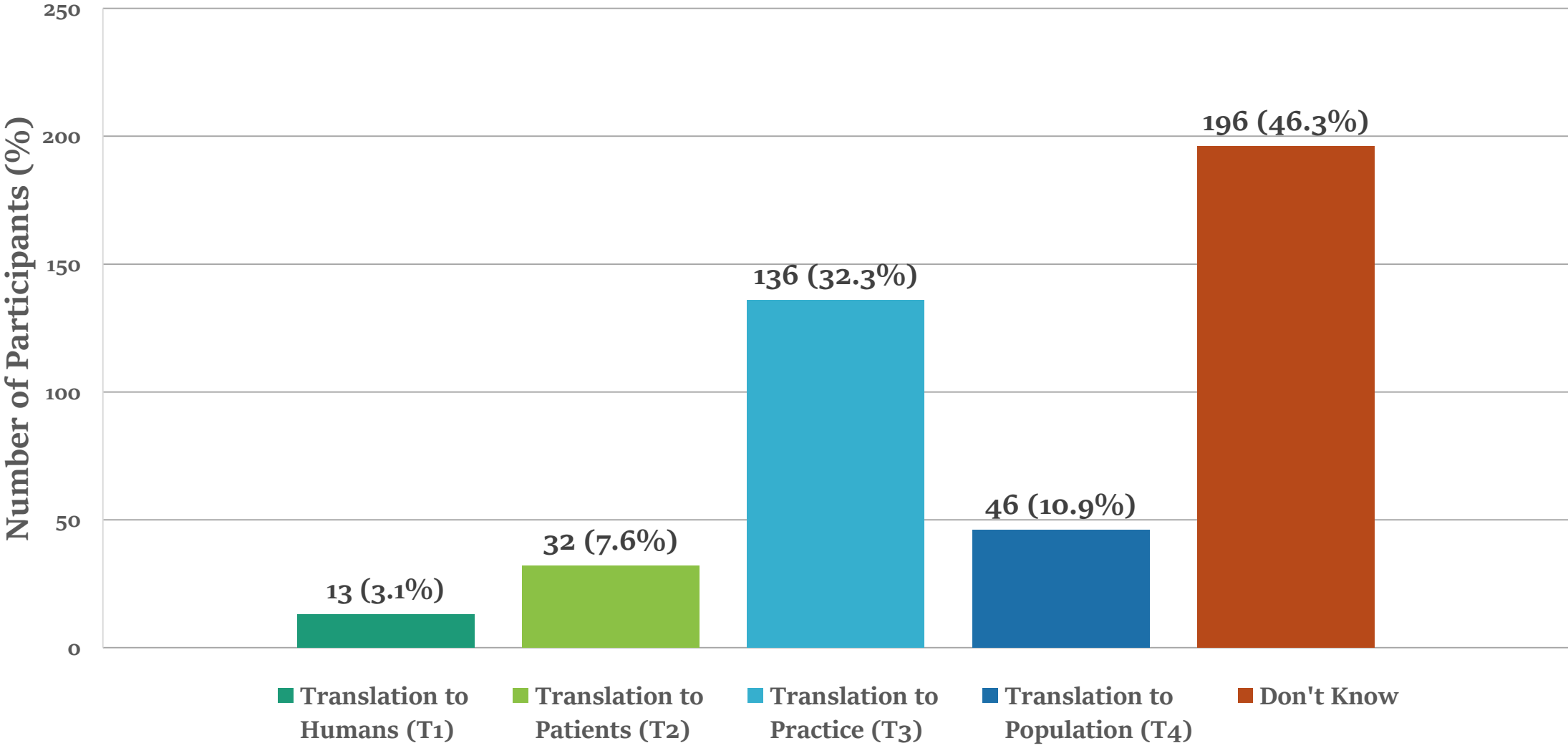
# Geographic Spread of Respondents



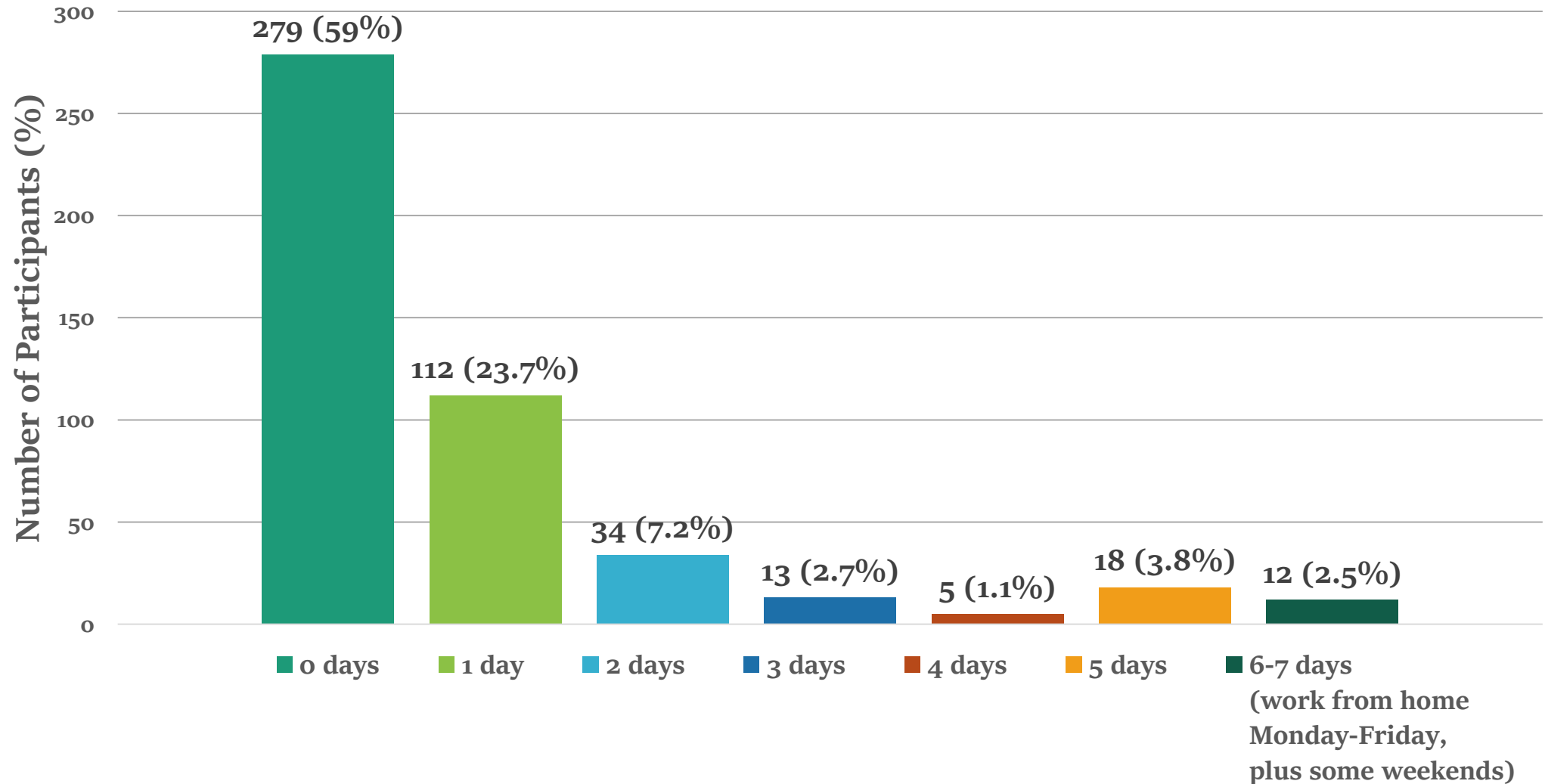
Please indicate the role you spend >50% of your time:



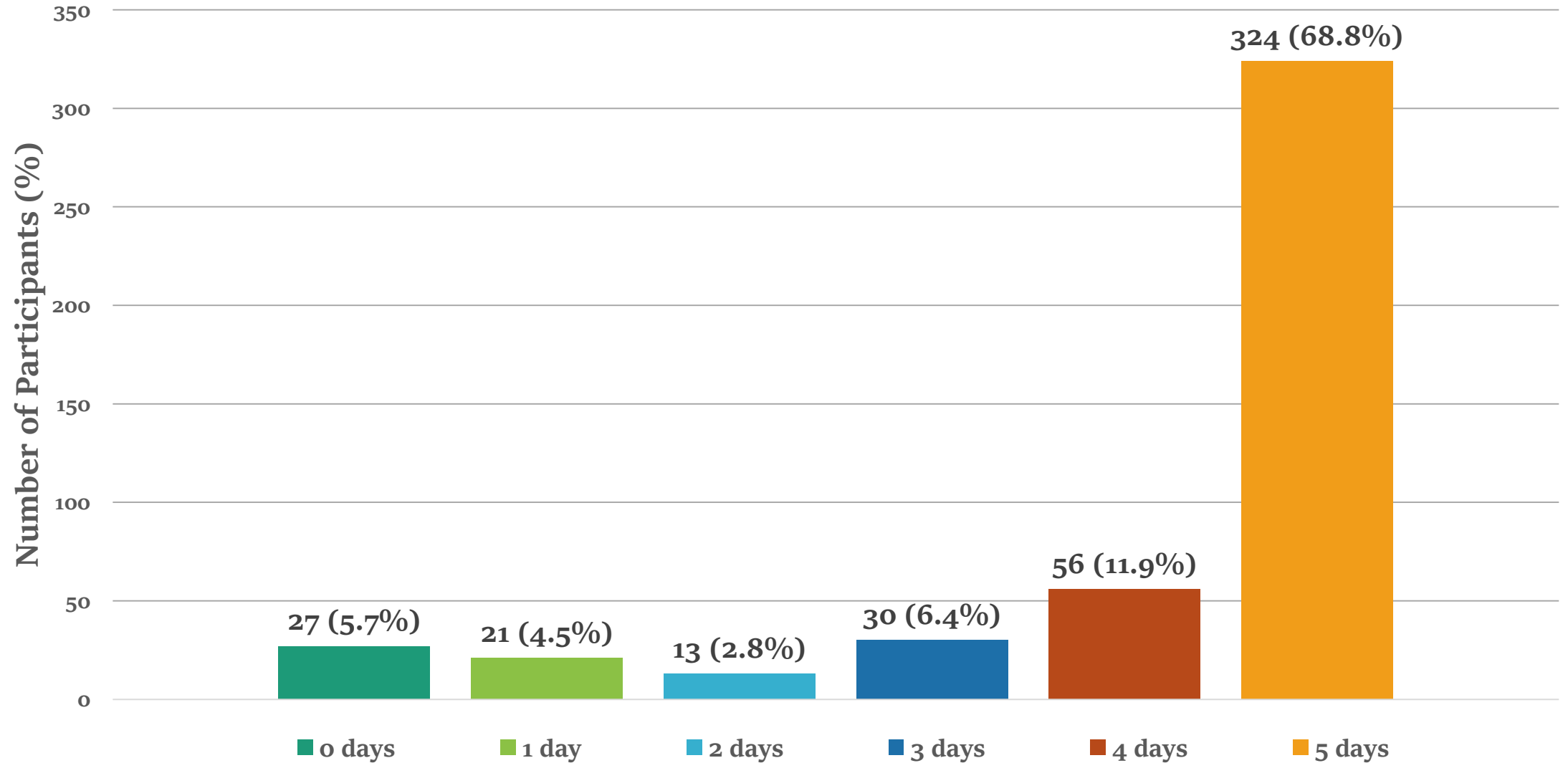
# What stage are your projects on the clinical and translational research spectrum?



# Prior to the remote work for COVID-19, how many days a week did you work from home?

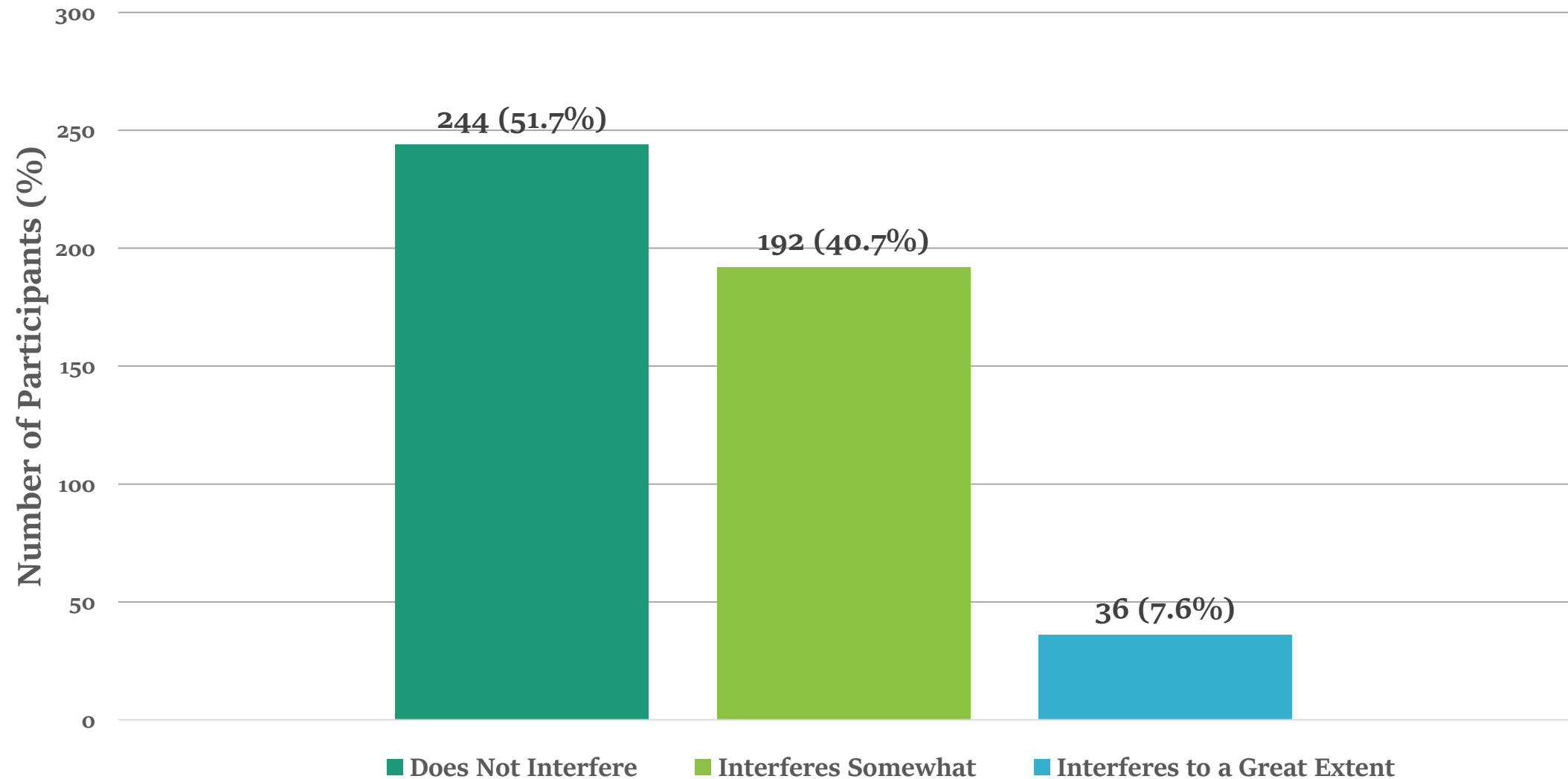


# Currently, how many days a week do you work remotely due to COVID-19?



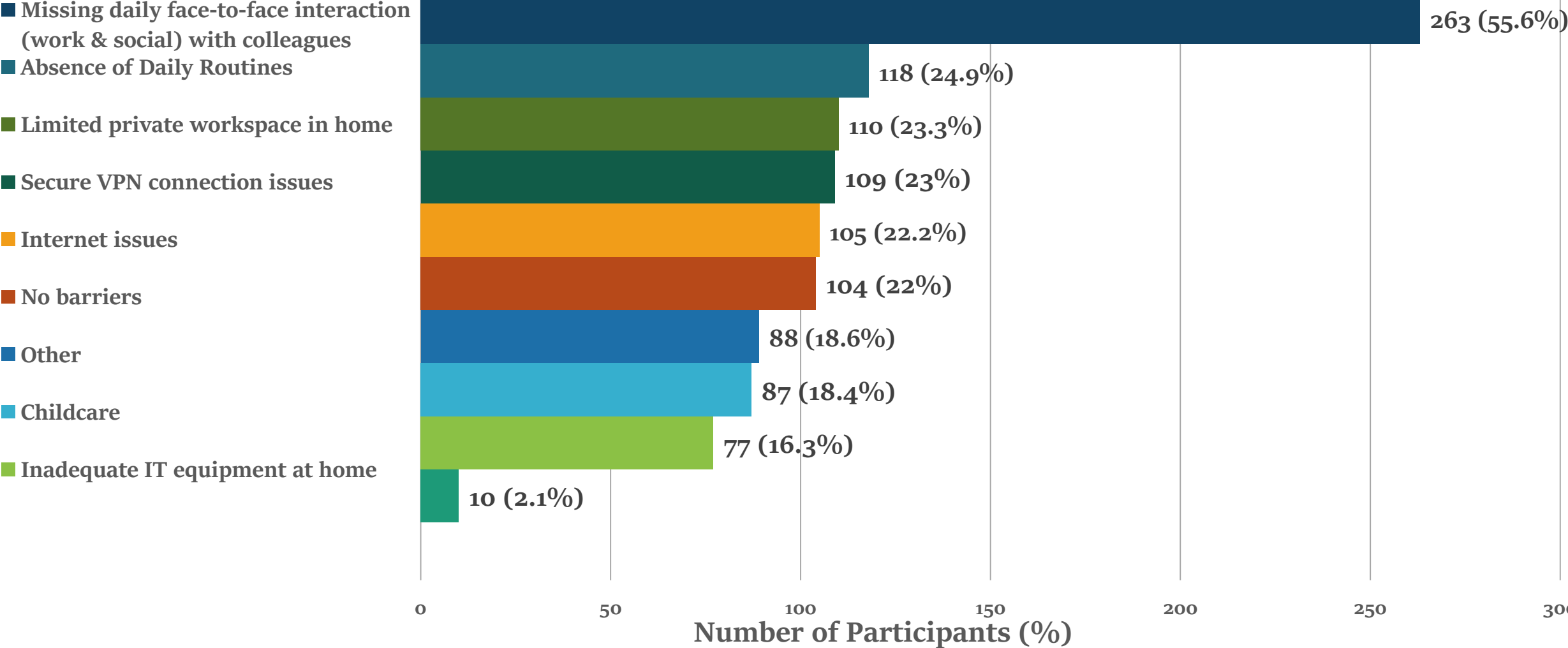


# To what extent does remote work during COVID-19 interfere with your research activities?



# What barriers to remote work are you experiencing?

\*participants checked all that apply



# Other Barriers Experienced During Remote Work

“Difficulty reaching coworkers rapidly for assistance – phone unreliable, email slow response”

“Videoconferencing not working ...”

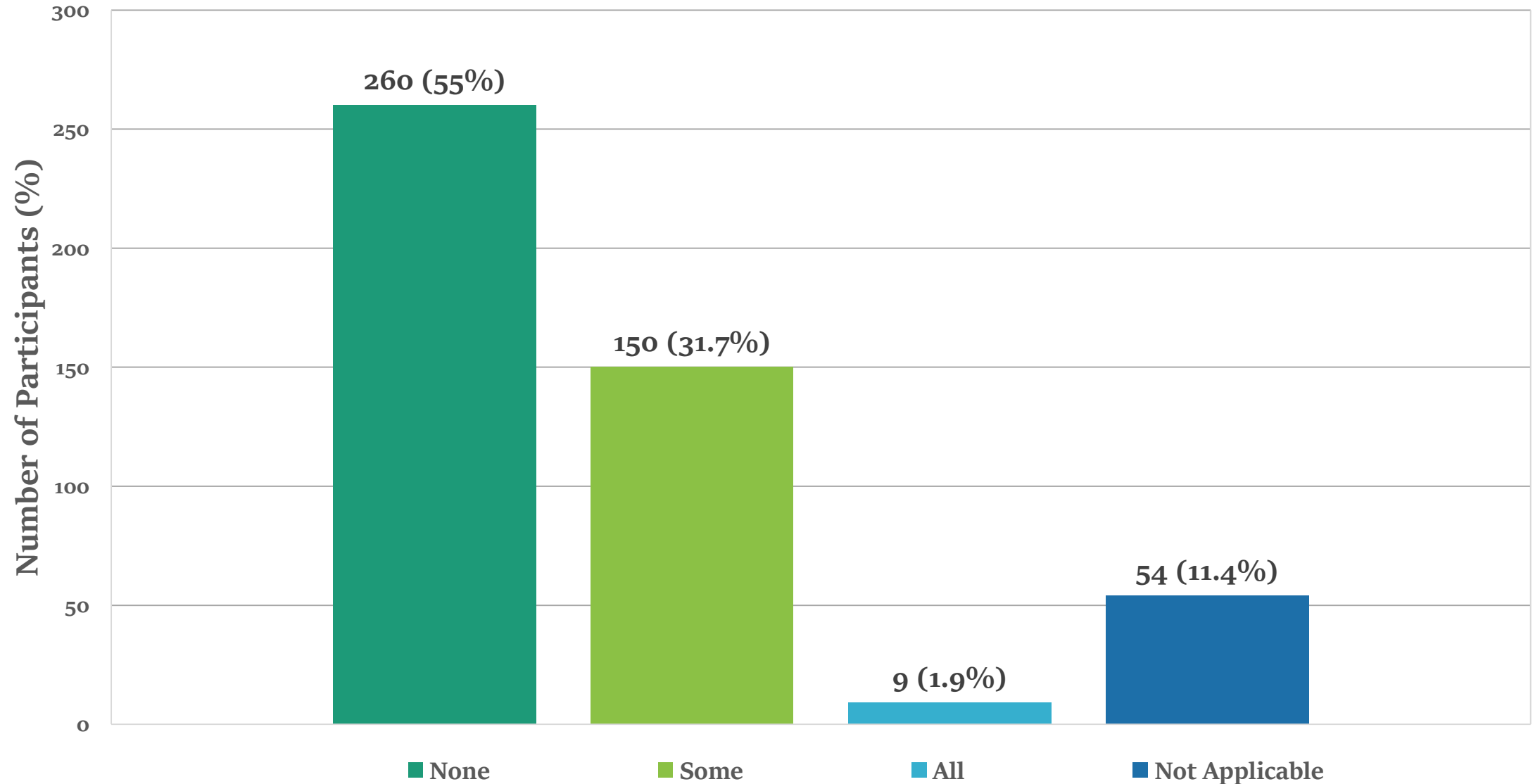
“inability to balance 'work time' from 'non-work time’

“Family members thinking I am available when I am working”

“lack of ergonomic workspace at home...”

“Not permitted to conduct audio-recorded telephone interviews with research participants from a non-VA workspace.”

# Will you be stopping any research?



# Why research is being slowed or stopped.

**“We were able to finish up any participants who were currently enrolled in our study.....”**

**“In-person research is on hold at our facility unless they have urgent benefits to the participant or are COVID-19 related (approved on an individual basis”**

**“... although we still have the capacity to perform all research tasks on our end, we've had to put some on hold.”**

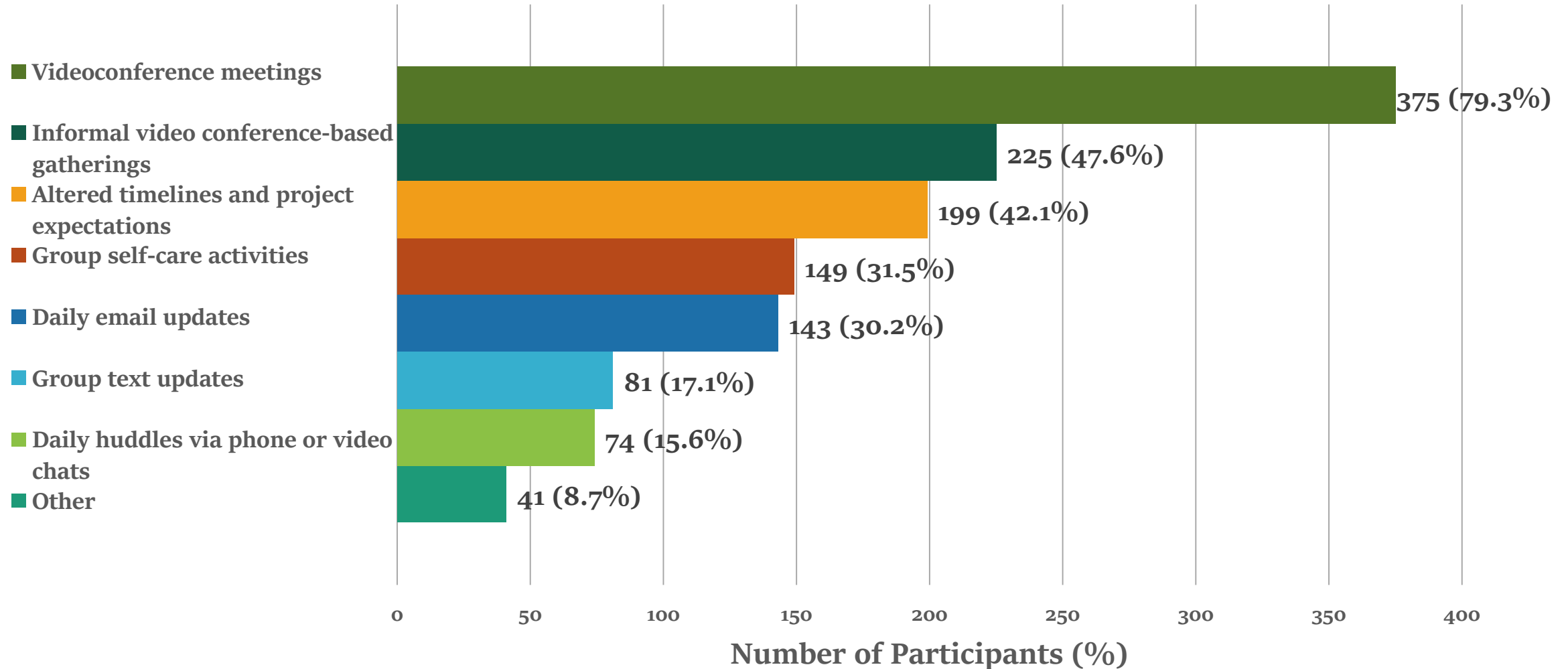
**“potential study participants are under a lot of stress and have increased workload.”**

**“ Research will continue, but there have been modifications in how we collect data...”**

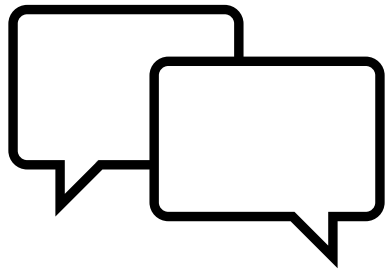
**“We put some non-COVID related research on hold so we could focus our efforts on COVID related issues instead...”**

# What strategies are being implemented to engage staff in a productive way?

\*participants checked all that apply



# What workarounds have you and/or your team created to address barriers to remote work?



Increased  
communication and  
meetings



Connect  
Phone, text, IM,  
email

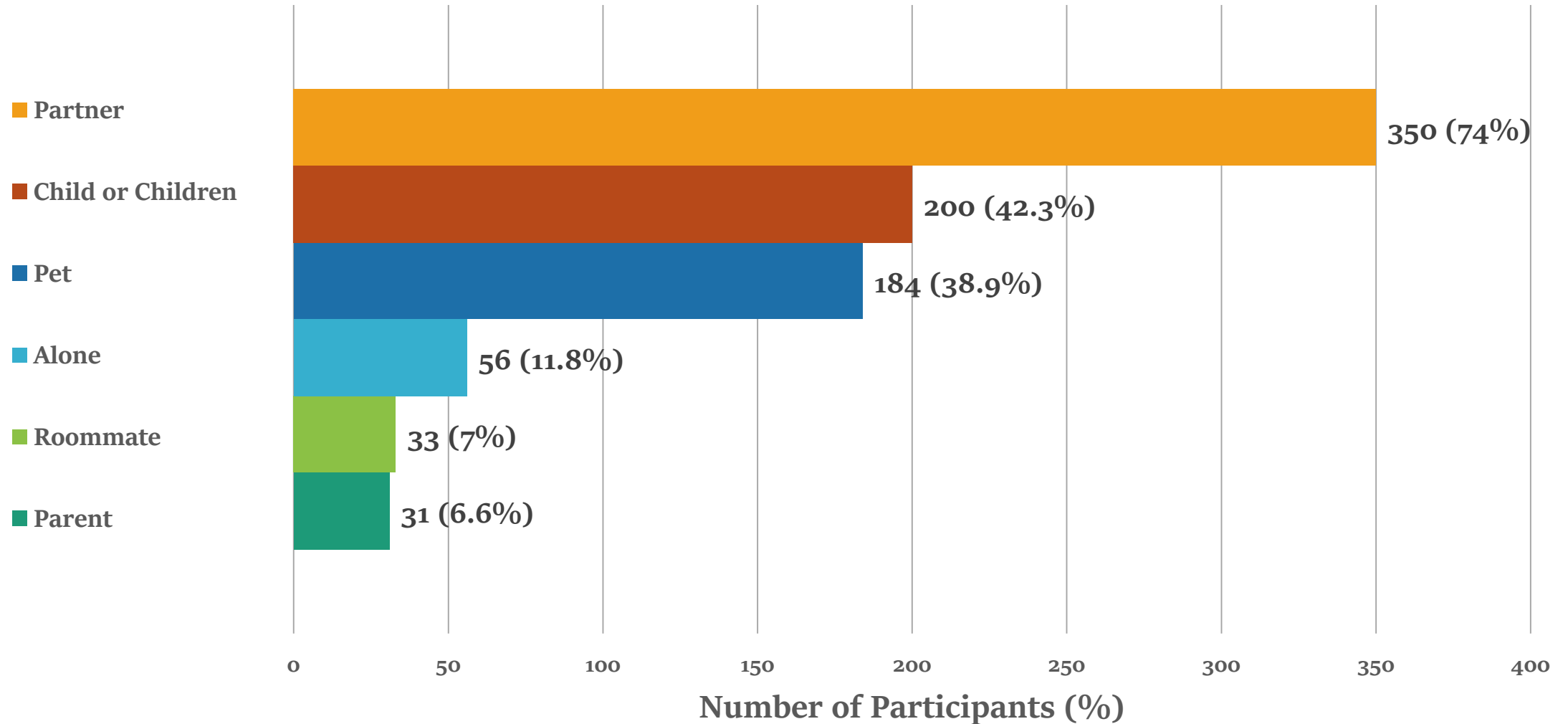


Group-focused  
social support



# Who else is in your home during the day and/or night?

\*participants checked all that apply



# Interference on Research Activities



**Clinician Investigators > Non-Clinician Investigators**

0.39 [95% CI 0.21-0.73]  $p=0.003$

**Clinician Investigators > Support Staff**

0.23 [95% CI: 0.13-0.40]  $p < 0.001$



**40-46 years > 47-56 years**

0.32 [95% CI: 0.17-0.61]  $p < 0.001$

**40-46 years > 56-78 years**

0.32 [95% CI: 0.16-0.6]  $p=0.001$

# COVID Stories

In your story, please consider including information on:

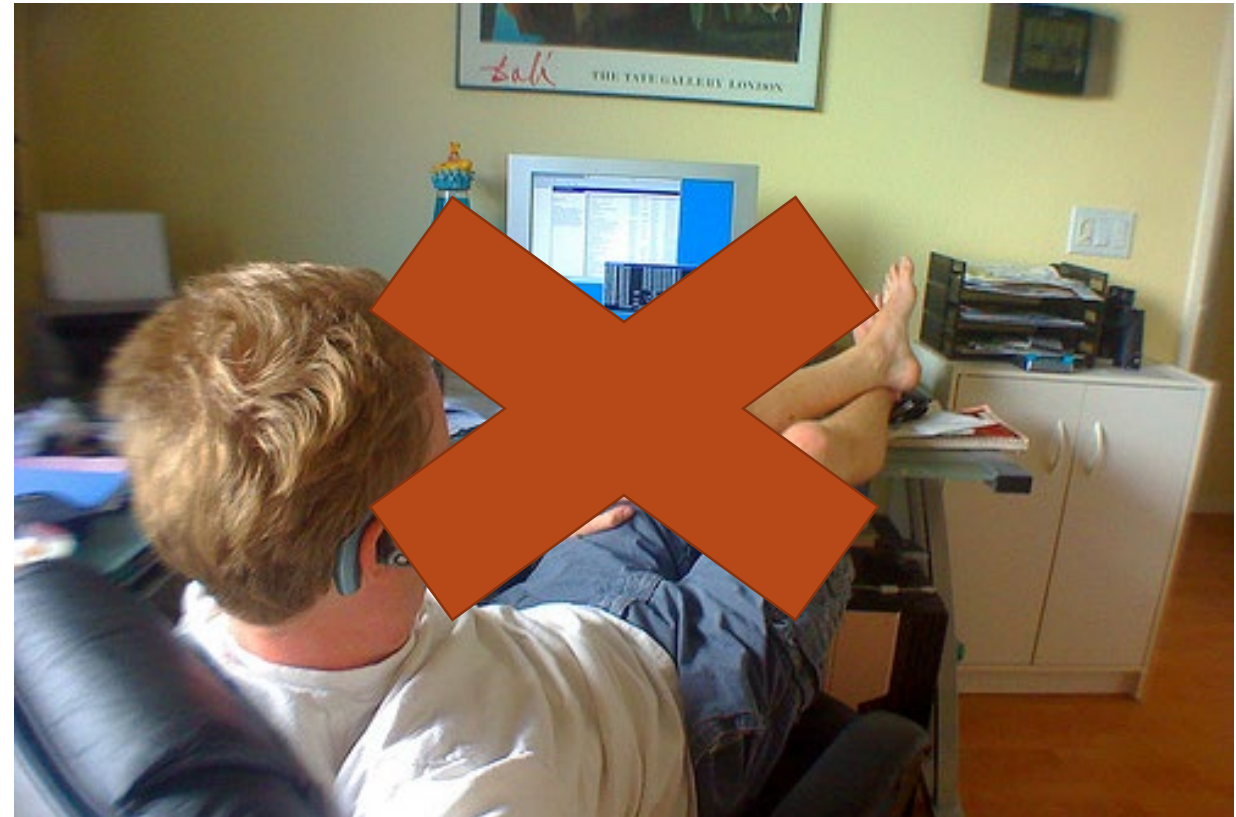
- How remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted you
- How you are adapting to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic
- How you are coping with remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Your concerns in the short and long term



# The Impact of Remote Work for VA Researchers During COVID-19

## **Discussion**

# Pipe Dreams of Remote Work During COVID-19

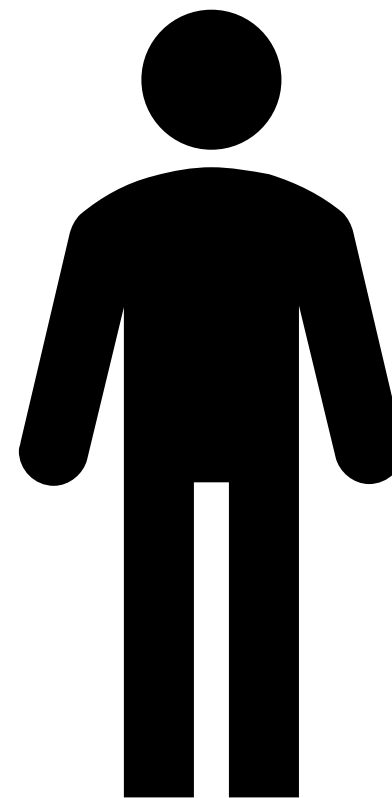
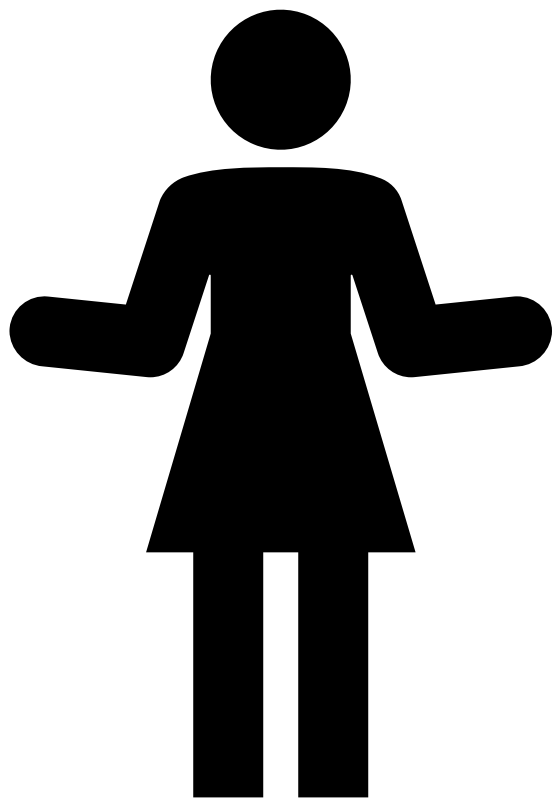


MISSING YOU...



# Women Responded More Than Men

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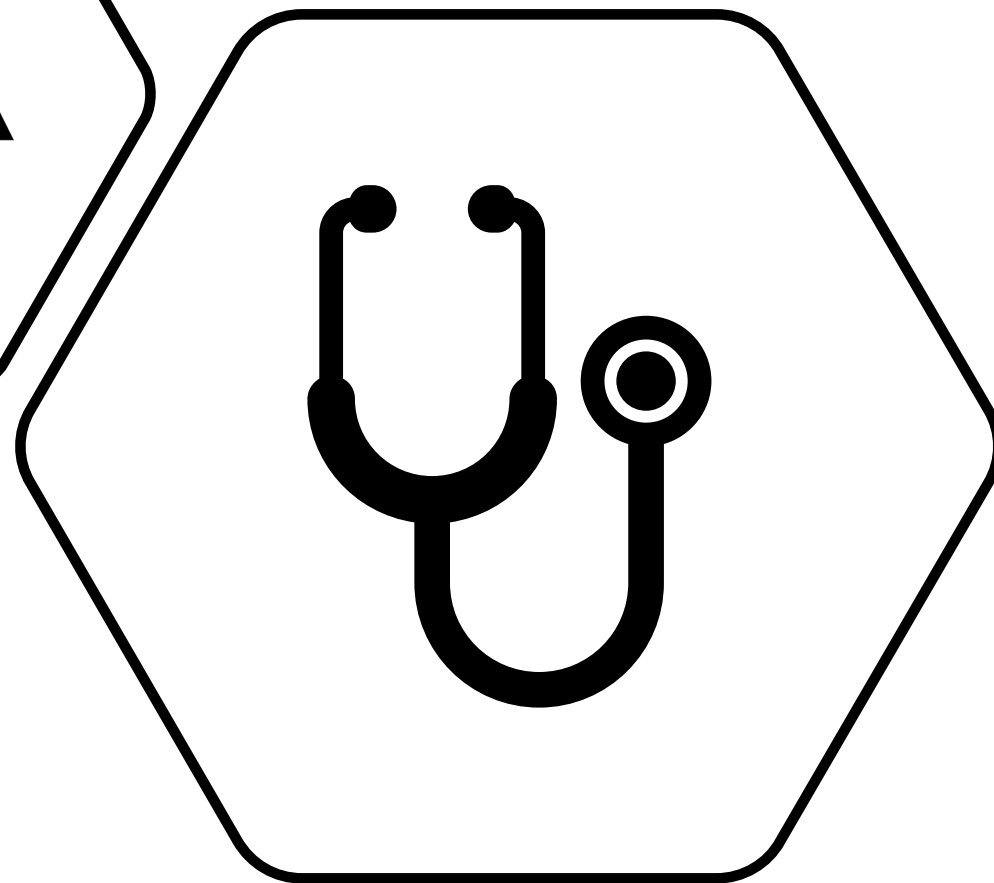
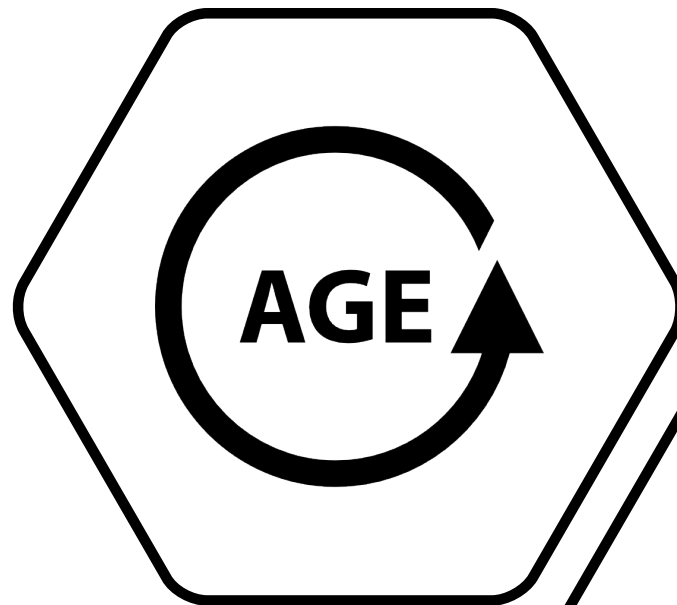
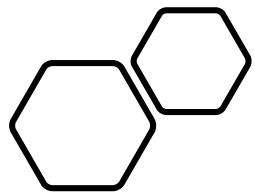




# Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women

*Although my children are elementary and middle school, they still require attention throughout the day since they have no structured activities (i.e. no camp, no babysitter).*

*The day is generally a stressful mess and we barely get by. Because my work is research and I can 'work' from home, I do so while my husband goes into the office. Like many women bearing the burden of childcare my career is slowing down.*



Higher Levels of  
Interference with Research



Call to Action

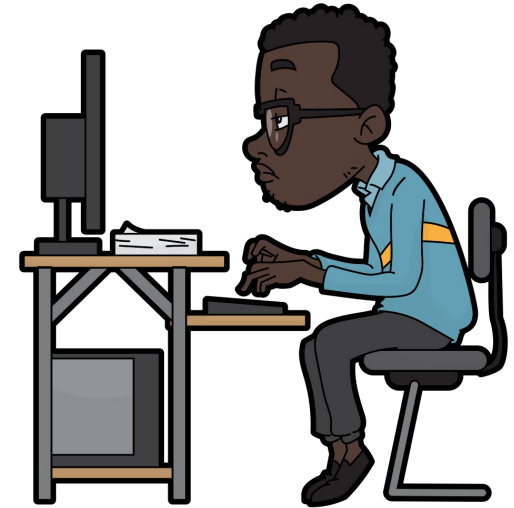
# Restructure the Nature of Remote Work



**Revisit  
Communication**



**Workflow and  
Boundaries**



**Home Office**

# Revisit our Goals



**Work & Career**



**Family & Community**

# Rethink Management



**Relatedness**



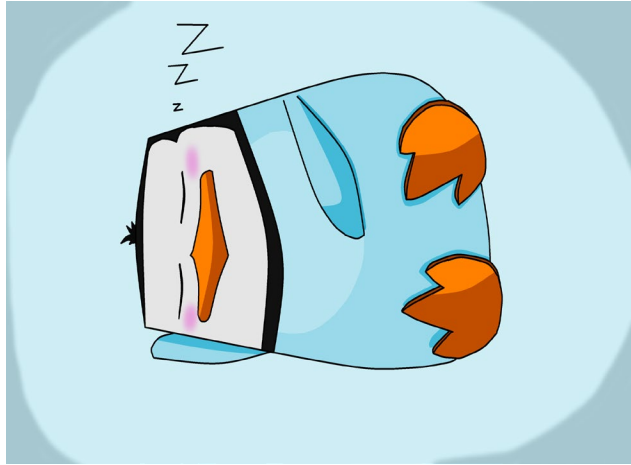
**Competence**



**Autonomy**



# Put Your Own Oxygen Mask on First



**Sleep**



**Find Joy**



**Seek Help**

*“We must approach our work with a renewed sense of purpose.”*

*There is a lot for us to do, and together, we will bring light and truth to a country and world that need both.”*

Peter Salovey - President  
Yale University  
October 2020





Thank you!

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