



Survey of reasons Veterans don't use Complementary and Integrative Health Services

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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

1) [Registry](#) of Current Research on Veterans and Complementary and Integrative Health Therapies and Chiropractic Care

- Intended to facilitate research collaboration and enable clinicians, researchers, and policy makers to be informed of the research being conducted on CIH therapies and chiropractic care among Veterans. Includes studies that were active as of January 2016 and later, and provides information on the PI's name, institution, study title and years of funding.

2) [Library](#) of Research Articles on Veterans and Complementary and Integrative Health Therapies and Chiropractic Care

- Contains hundreds of articles organized by therapy, which include acupuncture, Battlefield Acupuncture, biofeedback, chiropractic care, guided imagery, clinical hypnosis/hypnotherapy, massage therapy, meditation, mindfulness, Tai Chi/Qigong, and yoga
- Can also be organized by outcomes that include pain, anxiety, depression, PTSD, substance/opioid abuse, stress and well-being, insomnia and sleep, suicide-related issues, Veteran caregiver well-being and VA employee well-being, and general CIH use or implementation.

3) HSR&D CIH Research listserv

- Used to disseminate key information about the VA's provision, effectiveness, and implementation of CIH therapies and other CIH-related news. To join the listserv, email request to michael.mcgowan3@va.gov

4) HSR&D CIH Research [Cyberseminar Series](#)

- CIH Research Cyberseminars are held monthly and invite both VA and non-VA researchers to present to up to about 500 clinicians, researchers, and leaders across the VA enterprise and external stakeholders. Presentations are related to CIH use, effectiveness, implementation, and/or broader VA policies and practices involving CIH.

Disclosures

- No conflicts of interest
- The views expressed are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Dept. of Veterans Affairs or US government
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Outline

1. Background
2. Survey development
3. Survey administration
4. Results
5. Conclusions

Background

Promising evidence relating CIH to reduced opioid use in chronic pain among Veterans

- Reduced use of opioids among Veterans with chronic pain who used Whole Health services including CIH compared to those who did not¹
- Reduced incidence of opioid initiation among Veterans with MSD exposed to CIH² compared to those not exposed
- Faster rate of opioid taper among Veterans with LTOT exposed to any CIH³

¹Bokhour BG, Hyde JK, Zeliadt S, Mohr DC. Whole Health System of Care Evaluation- A Progress Report on Outcomes of the WHS Pilot at 18 Flagship Sites 2020. Veterans Health Administration, Center for Evaluating Patient-Centered Care in VA (EPCC-VA).

²Goulet et al. Association of Complementary and Integrative Health Interventions with Opioid Use among Veterans with Musculoskeletal Disorders and PTSD. https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/archives/6304-notes.pdf

³Black et al. Association Between Exposure to Complementary and Integrative Therapies and Opioid Analgesic Daily Dose Among Patients on Long-term Opioid Therapy. The Clinical Journal of Pain 38(6):p 405-409, June 2022.

Background

Among our cohort of ~300,000 Veterans on long-term opioid therapy for chronic pain, CIH modality use differed by:

- Sex
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Rural residence
- Year of cohort entry (2017-2021)
- Baseline pain scores
- Daily opioid dose

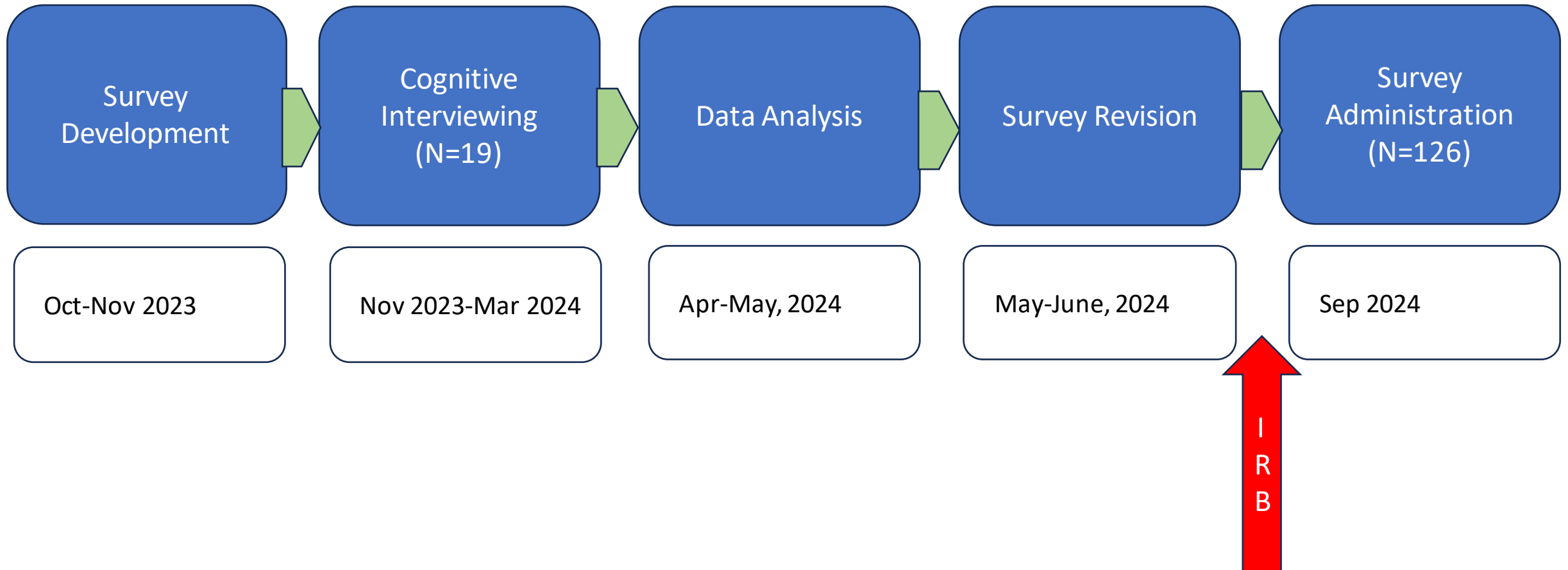
Research Questions

Among Veterans on long-term opioid therapy, what are barriers to use of CIH?

Do barriers differ by CIH modality?

Do barriers differ by Veteran characteristics?

CIH Use Survey Flow



Screening questions

For each of the services listed below, please select the response that best fits your experience:

Modalities

- Acupuncture
- Biofeedback
- Chiropractic care
- Guided Imagery
- Clinical Hypnosis
- Therapeutic Massage
- Meditation
- Tai Chi/Qi Gong
- Yoga

Response Options

- Never heard of it
- Heard of it but never tried it
- Tried it but didn't continue
- Used it regularly or somewhat regularly

Location of CIH use

For each of the following CIH that you have used at least once, please indicate where you used each service (check all that apply):

- Used at VA or Vet Center
- Used in community with a non-VA provider
- Used at home

Reasons never tried CIH modality

Domain	Item	Domain	Item
Information	I don't know enough about it	Support from others	Family/friends would not support it
	I didn't know/think I was eligible for it		My provider didn't seem to really support it/value it/know about it
	Didn't know how to get started		
Access	Too costly	Format-specific	Not comfortable with format (group, individual)
	Couldn't get a doctor's referral		Not comfortable with format (telehealth, in-person)
	My VA doesn't offer it		Not comfortable with format (co-ed vs. same sex)
	Not available at convenient location/don't have transportation	Personal	Uncomfortable with/dislike/afraid of technique
	Not available at convenient time		I'm not interested in this
	No option for childcare		I can't fit it in my schedule
	Physical/health limitations		I don't want to take services from Veterans who are worse off than me
Effectiveness	Didn't believe it would improve my health or condition	Belonging/Inclusion	Other reason (open ended)
	Concerned it would make my condition worse		Never considered using it for myself
	Worried about how long it would take to feel better		Not available in a space where I feel safe and accepted
			Would feel like an "outsider"/I didn't belong
			I don't know anybody who has used it

Reasons tried but didn't continue CIH modality

Domain	Item	Domain	Item
Access	Too costly	Support from others	Family/friends did not support it
	Not available at convenient location/didn't have transportation		My provider didn't seem to really support it/value it/know about it
	Not available at convenient time	Format-specific	Wasn't comfortable with format (group, individual)
	No option for childcare		Wasn't comfortable with format (telehealth, in-person)
	Physical/health limitations		Wasn't comfortable with format (co-ed vs. same sex)
Effectiveness	Didn't improve my health or condition	Personal	I was uncomfortable/disliked/afraid of technique
	Made my condition worse		I wasn't interested in it/not what I expected
	Worried about how long it would take to feel better		I couldn't fit it in my schedule
Belonging/Inclusion	I didn't feel safe/accepted		Other reason (open ended)
	Felt like an "outsider"/I didn't belong		

CIH Use Survey Administration

Sample

- Stratified random sample N=3000 from retrospective cohort of 280,000+ Veterans on LTOT
- No evidence of CIH use in EHR 2016-2022
- Stratified on sex and race

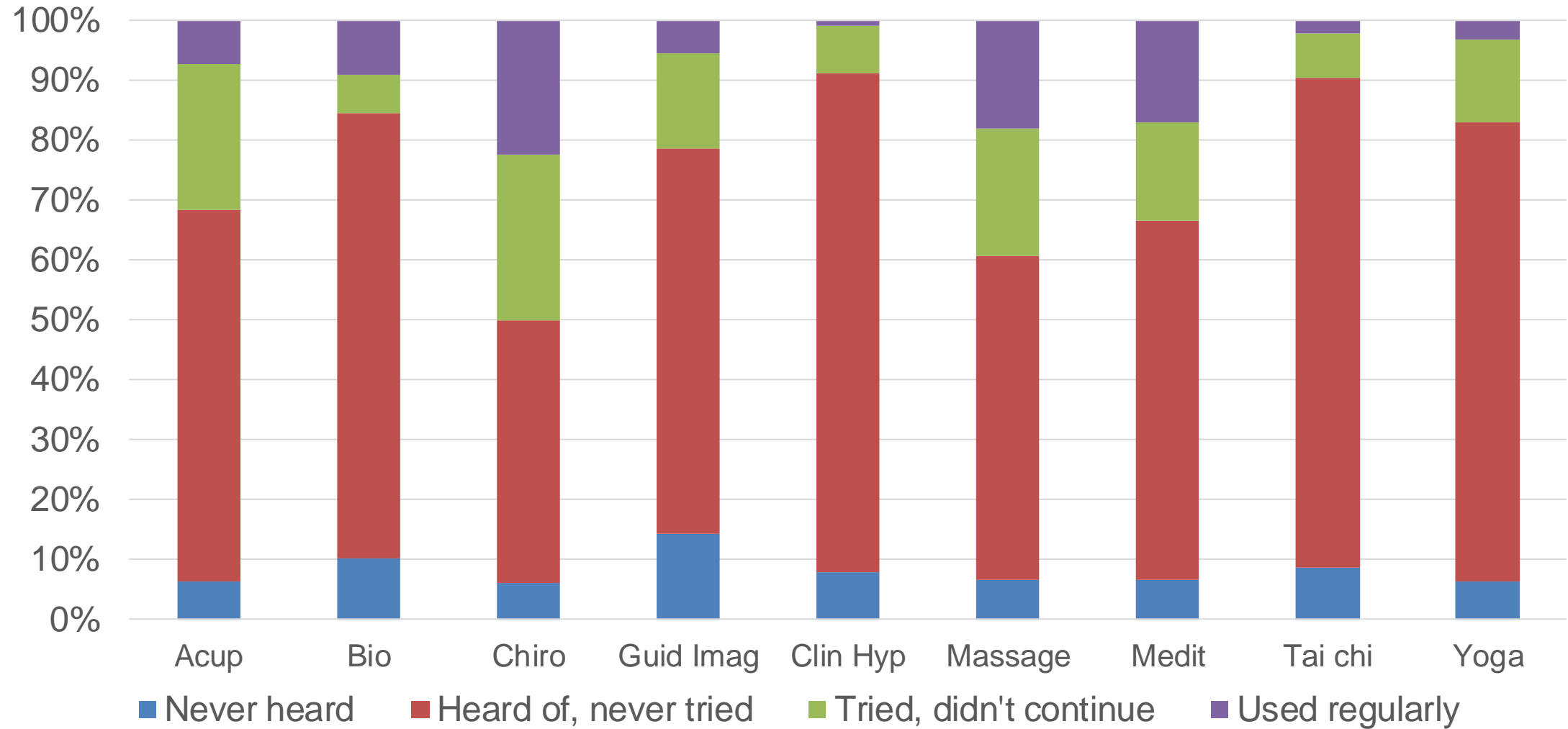
Method

- Sent letter with unique REDCap survey link
- Option to complete by phone with Coordinator
- \$50 for participation
- Limited to N=125 respondents
- September 10-17, 2024

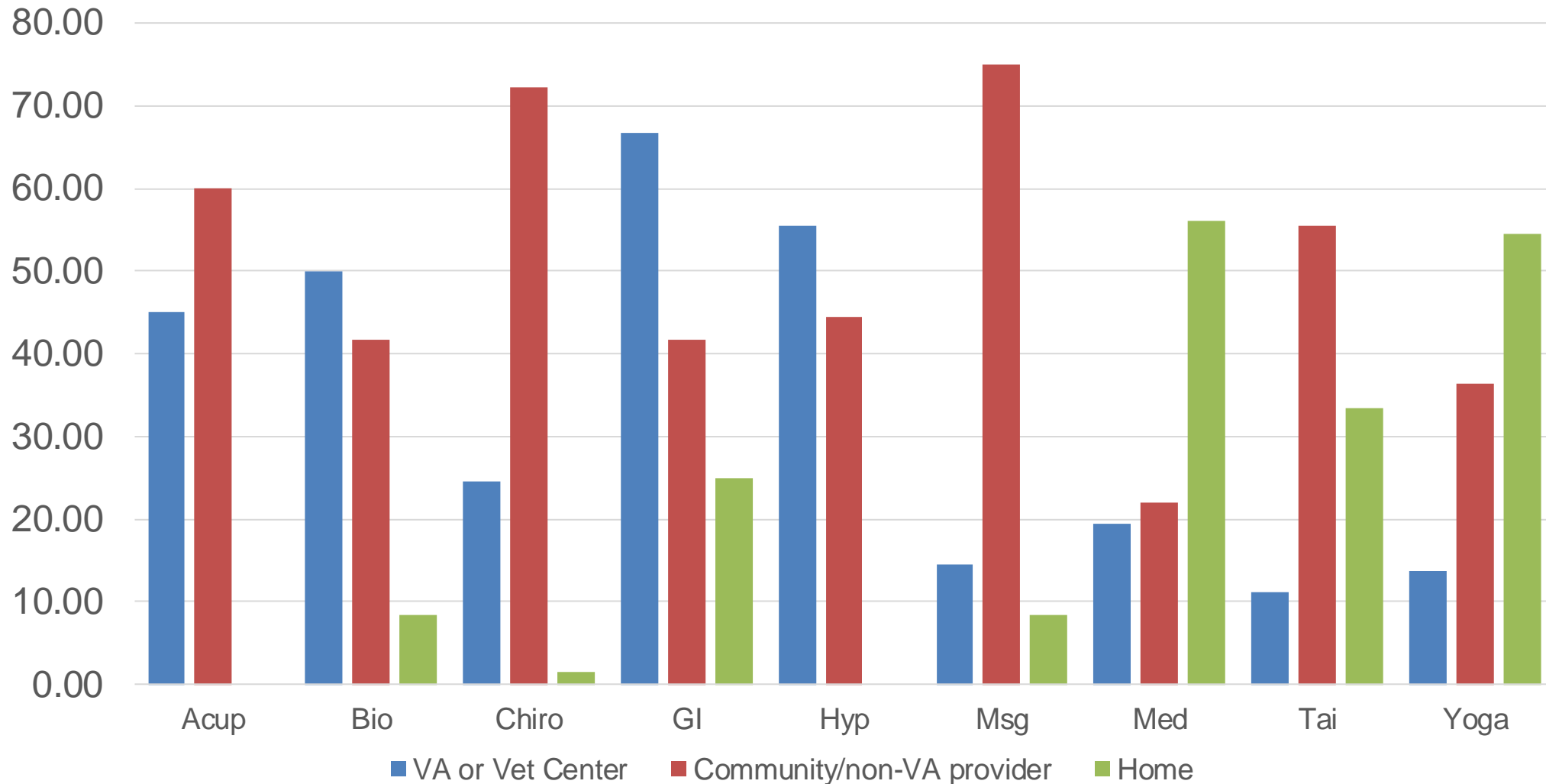
Respondents (N=126)

Characteristic	Percent or Mean (SD)
Sex	
Women	58
Men	41
Binary/Other	1
Age	63.57 (10.87)
Race	
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
Asian	3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
Black or African American	30
White	60
More Than One Race	1
Prefer not to answer	6
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	6
Other	94

A minority of the sample had tried any modality except chiropractic care

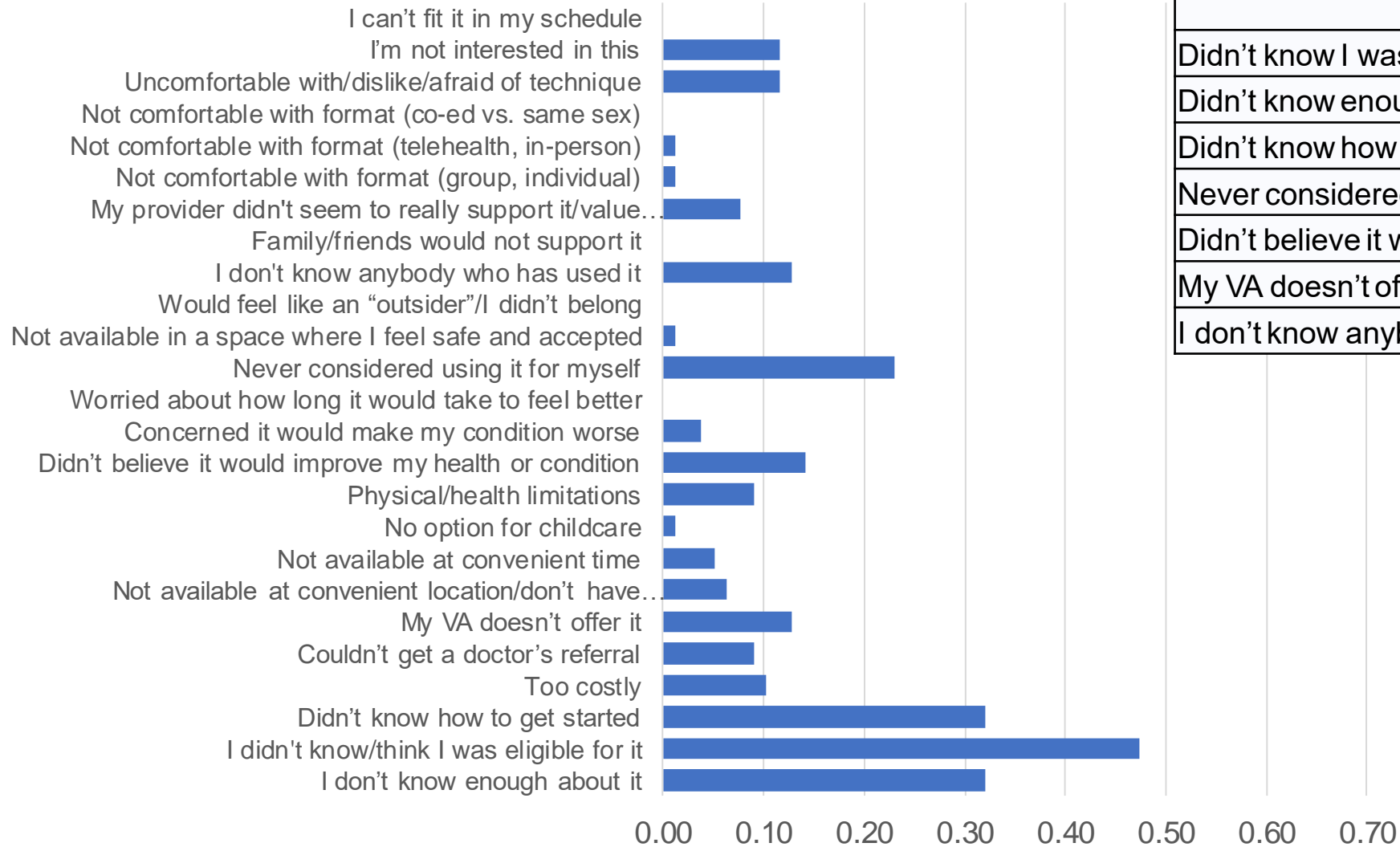


Among Veterans who had used any CIH, location differed by modality



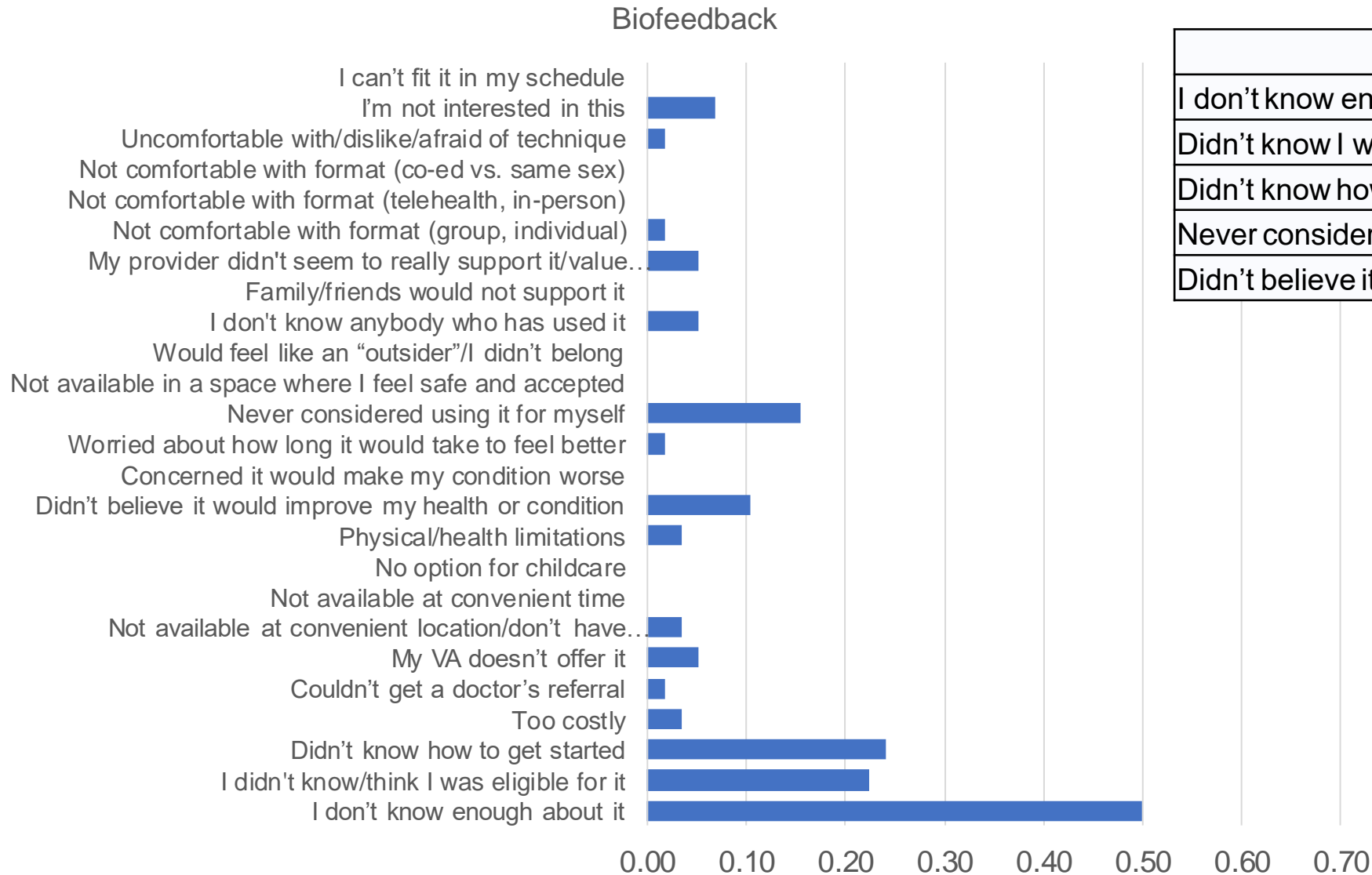
Reasons I never tried Acupuncture (N=78)

Acupuncture



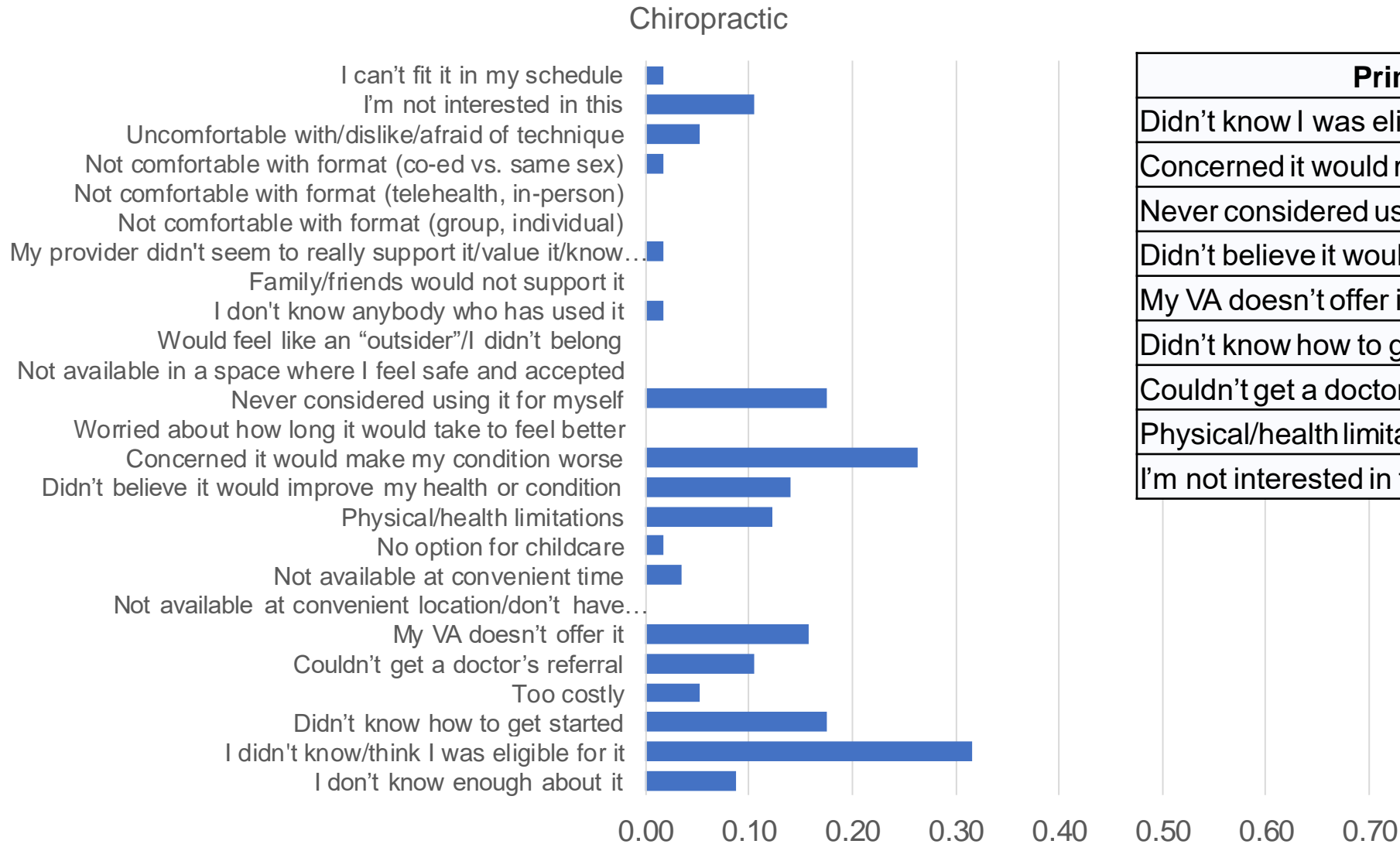
Primary reasons
Didn't know I was eligible
Didn't know enough about it
Didn't know how to get started
Never considered it for myself
Didn't believe it would improve my health/condition
My VA doesn't offer it
I don't know anybody who has used it

Reasons I never tried Biofeedback (N=58)



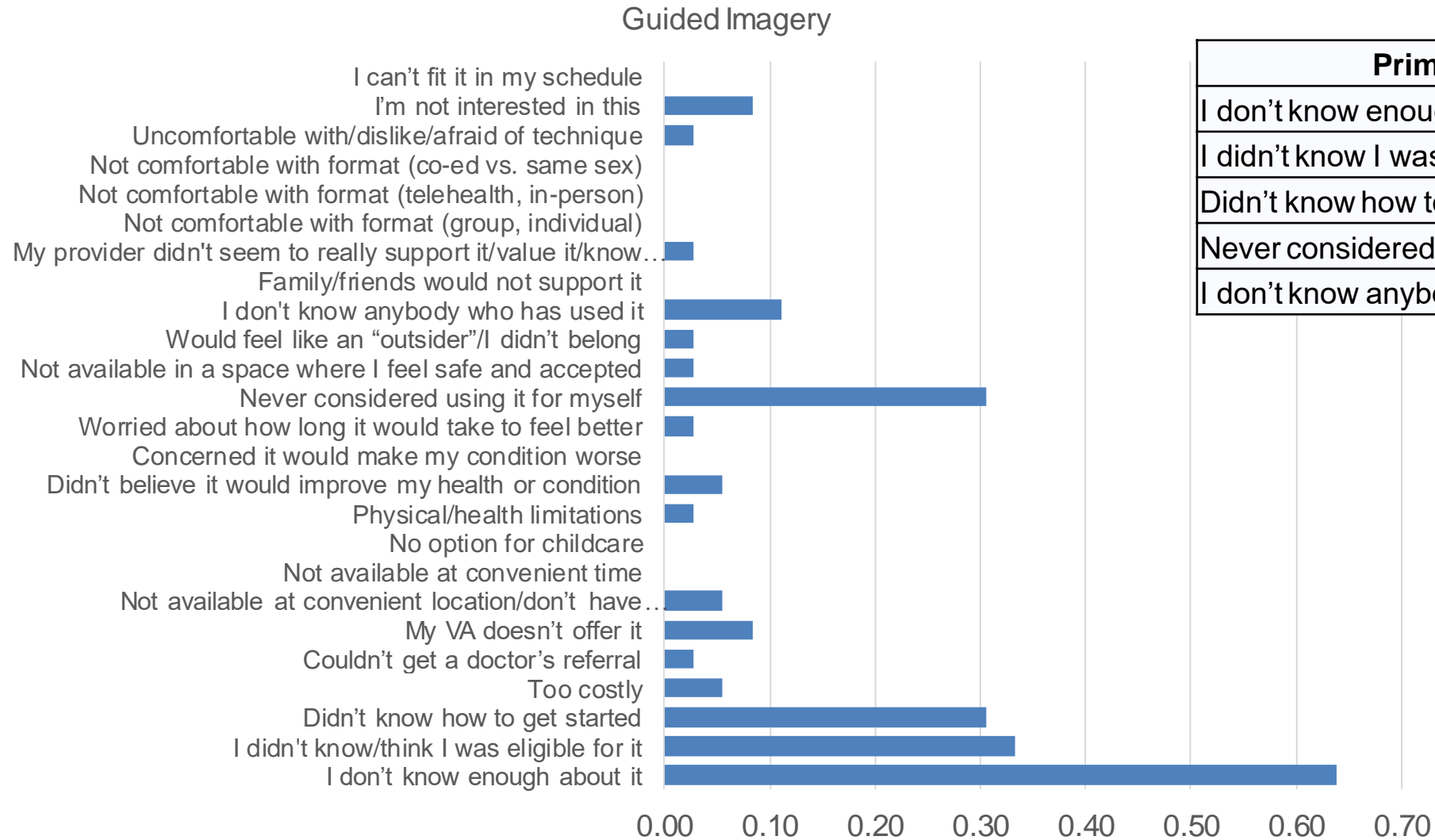
Primary reasons
I don't know enough about it
Didn't know I was eligible
Didn't know how to get started
Never considered using it for myself
Didn't believe it would improve health/condition

Reasons I never tried Chiropractic Care (N=57)



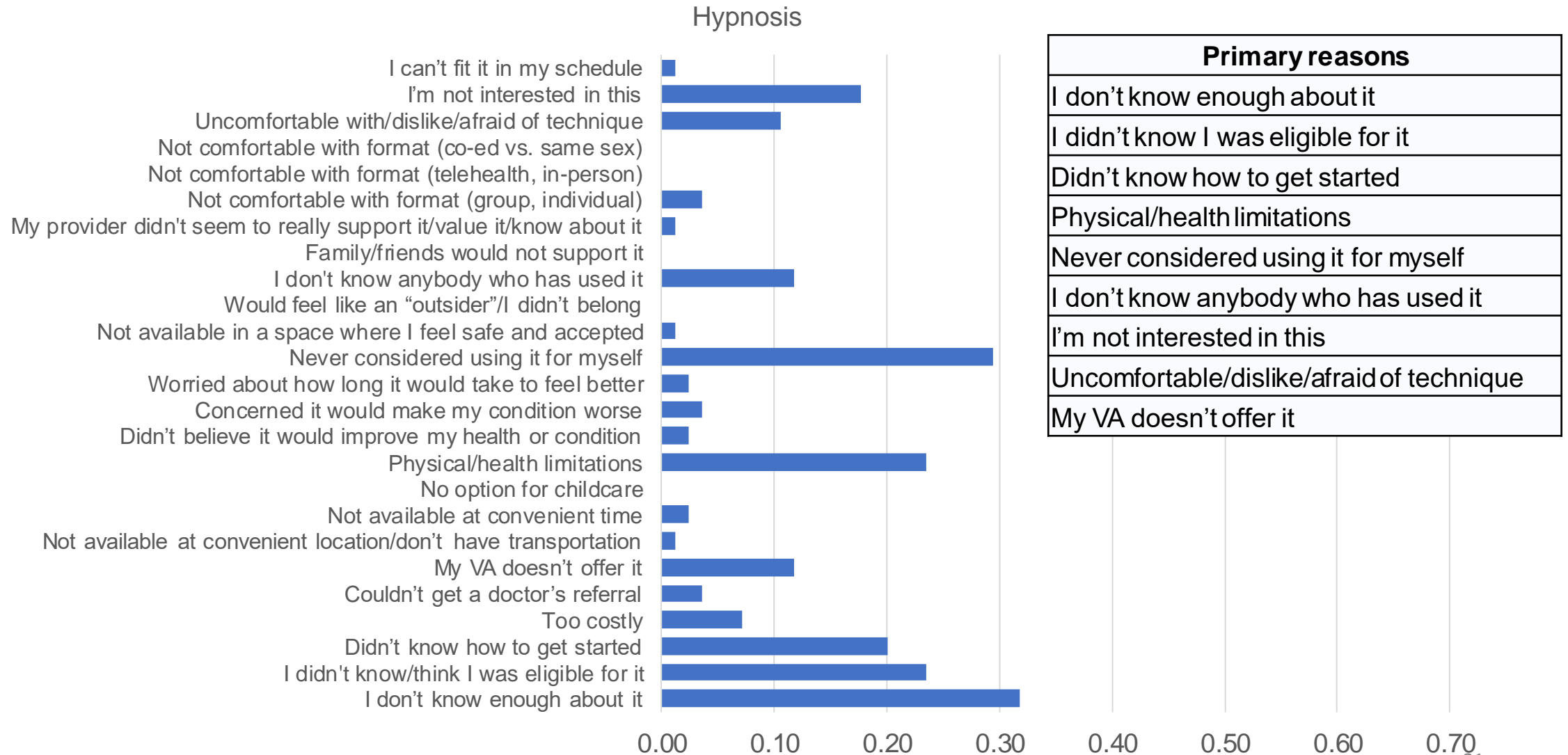
Primary reasons
Didn't know I was eligible
Concerned it would make condition worse
Never considered using it for myself
Didn't believe it would improve condition
My VA doesn't offer it
Didn't know how to get started
Couldn't get a doctor's referral
Physical/health limitations
I'm not interested in this

Reasons I never tried Guided Imagery (N=36)

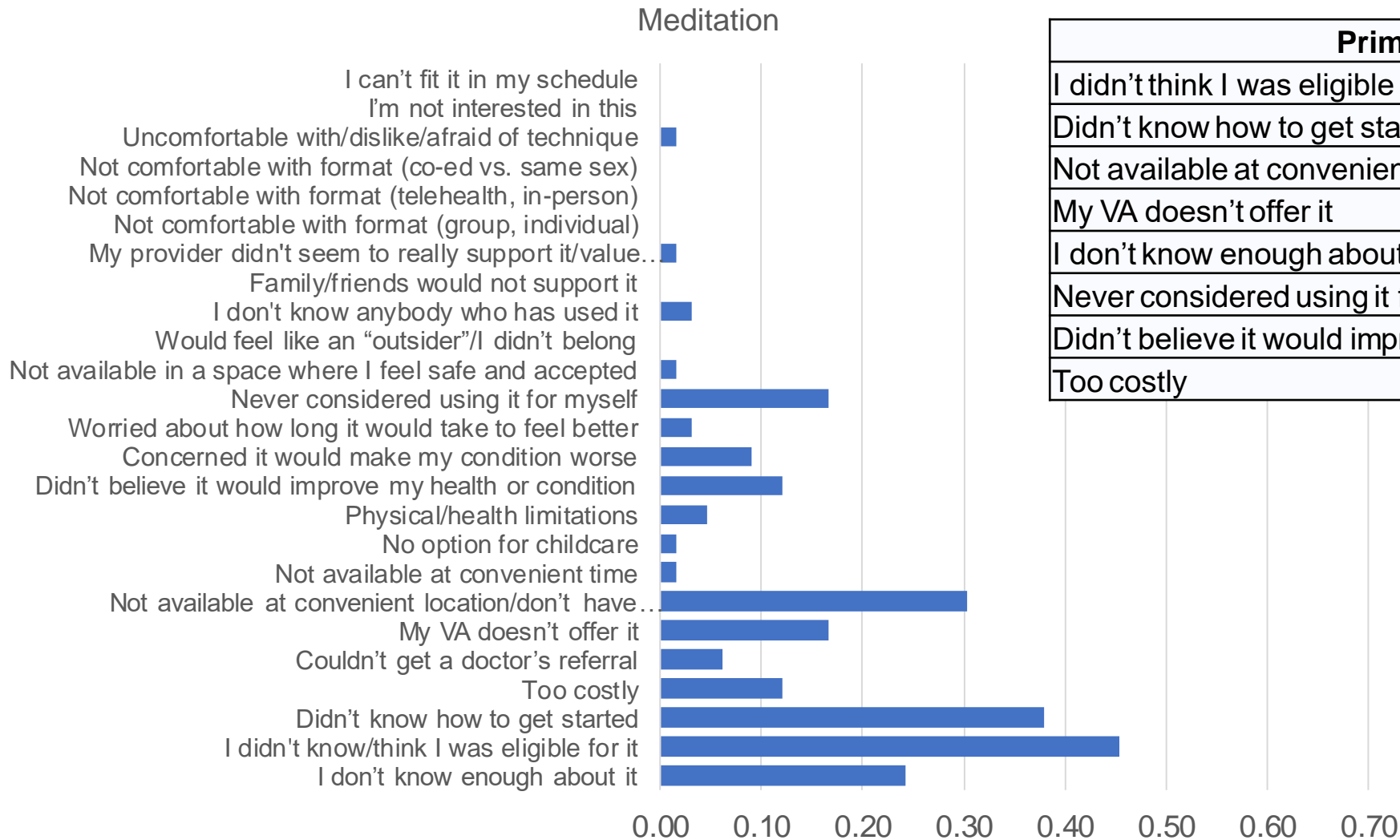


Primary reasons
I don't know enough about it
I didn't know I was eligible
Didn't know how to get started
Never considered it for myself
I don't know anybody who has used it

Reasons I never tried Clinical Hypnosis (N=85)

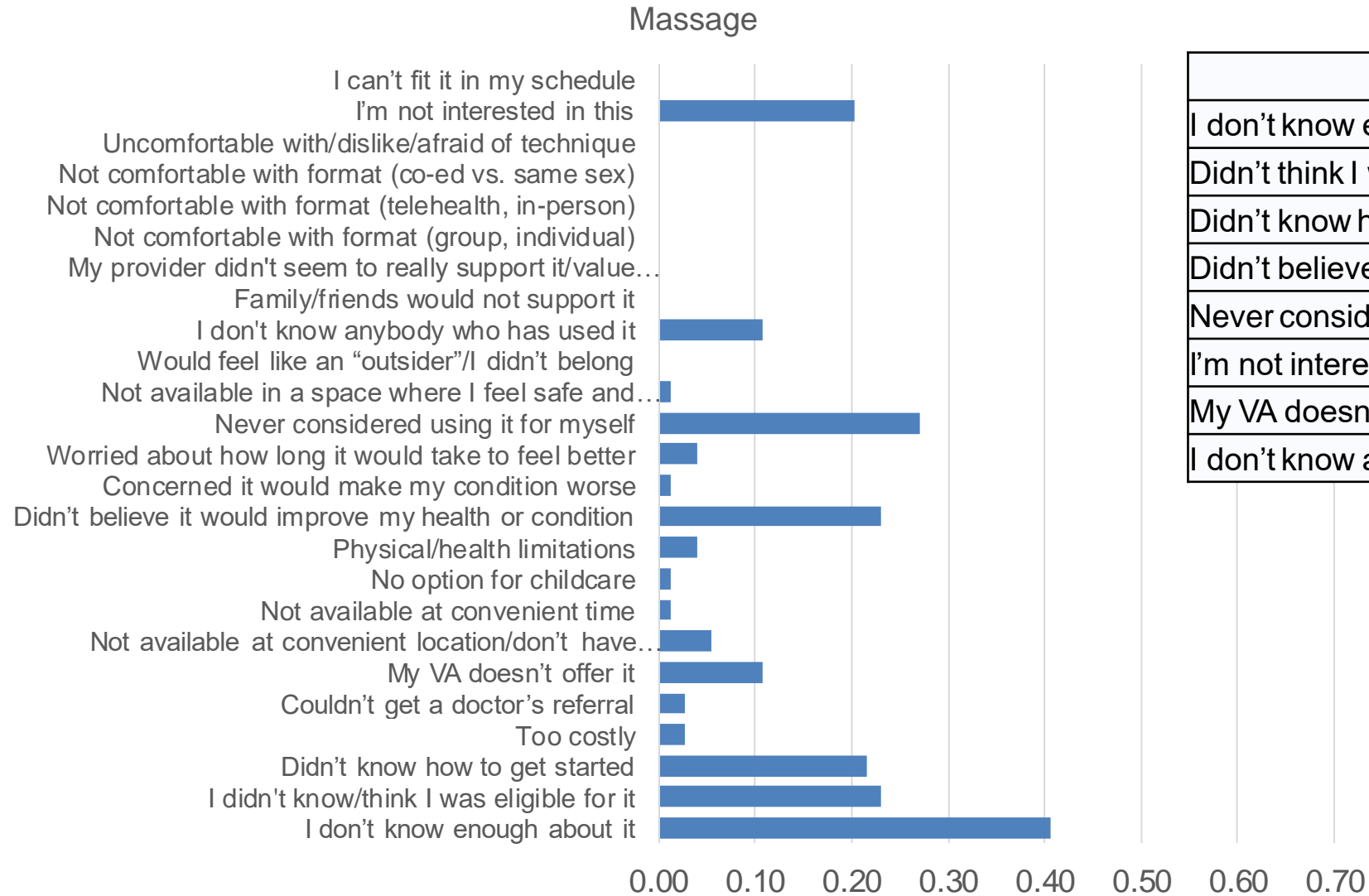


Reasons I never tried Therapeutic Massage (N=66)



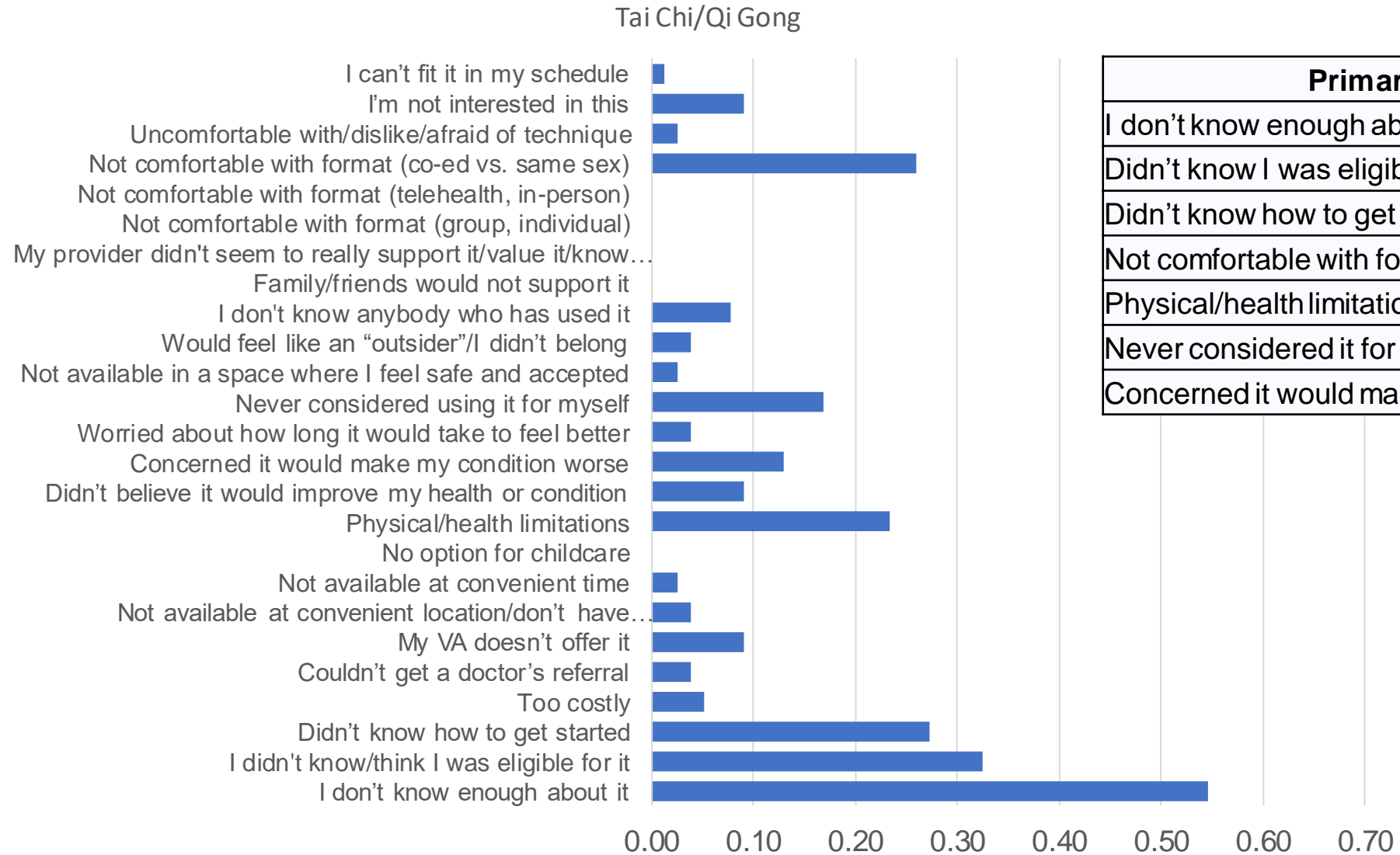
Primary reasons
I didn't think I was eligible
Didn't know how to get started
Not available at convenient location
My VA doesn't offer it
I don't know enough about it
Never considered using it for myself
Didn't believe it would improve my health or condition
Too costly

Reasons I never tried Meditation(N=74)



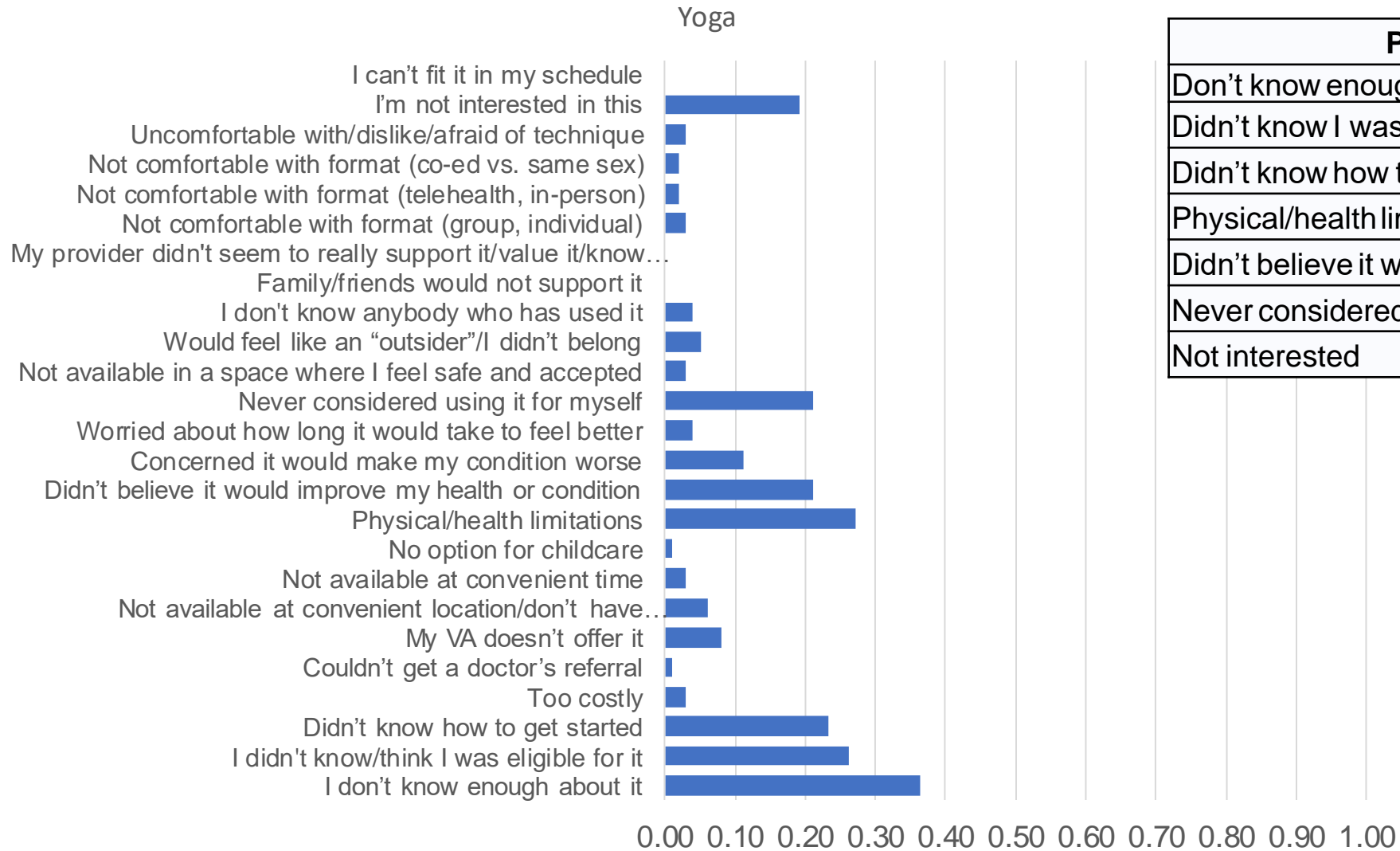
Primary reasons
I don't know enough about it
Didn't think I was eligible
Didn't know how to get started
Didn't believe it would improve health/condition
Never considered it for myself
I'm not interested in this
My VA doesn't offer it
I don't know anybody who has used it

Reasons I never tried Tai Chi/Qi Gong (N=77)



Primary reasons
I don't know enough about it
Didn't know I was eligible
Didn't know how to get started
Not comfortable with format
Physical/health limitations
Never considered it for myself
Concerned it would make my condition worse

Reasons I never tried Yoga (N=99)

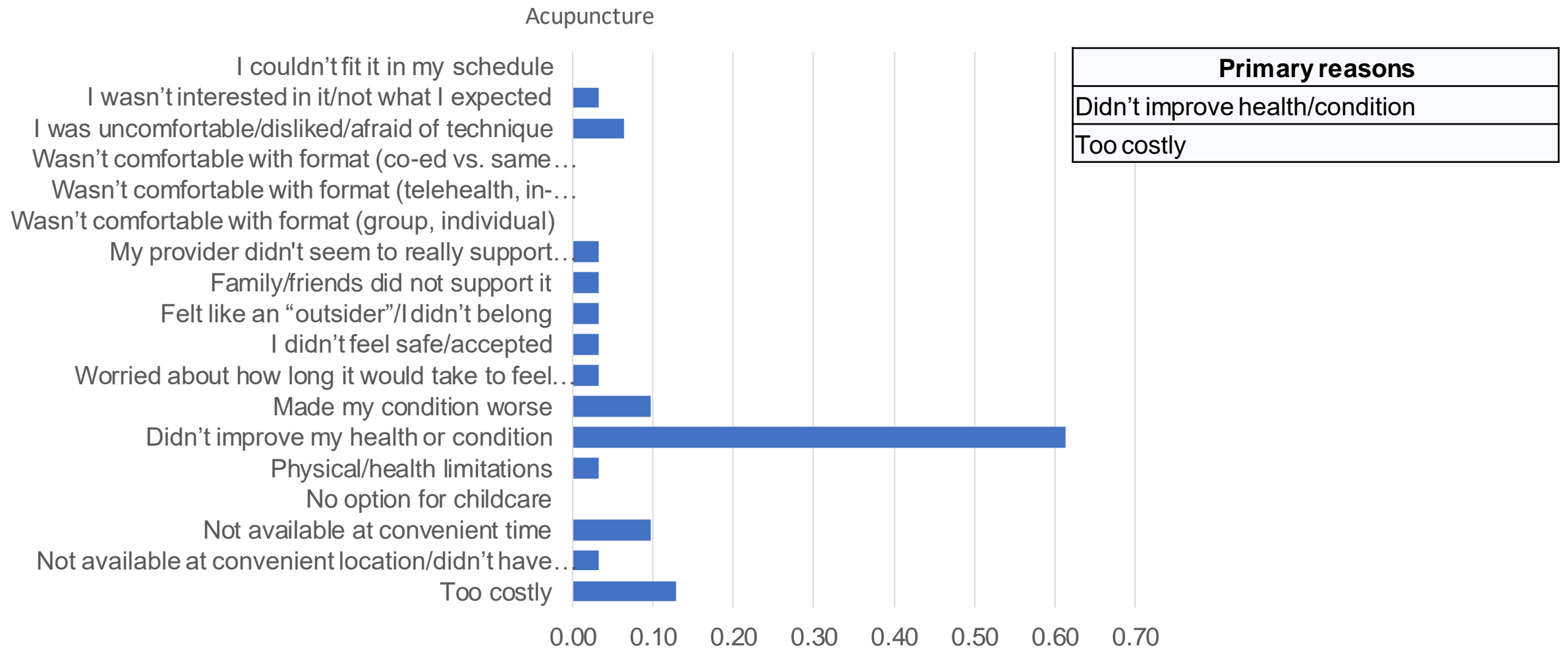


Primary reasons
Don't know enough about it
Didn't know I was eligible
Didn't know how to get started
Physical/health limitations
Didn't believe it would improve health/condition
Never considered for myself
Not interested

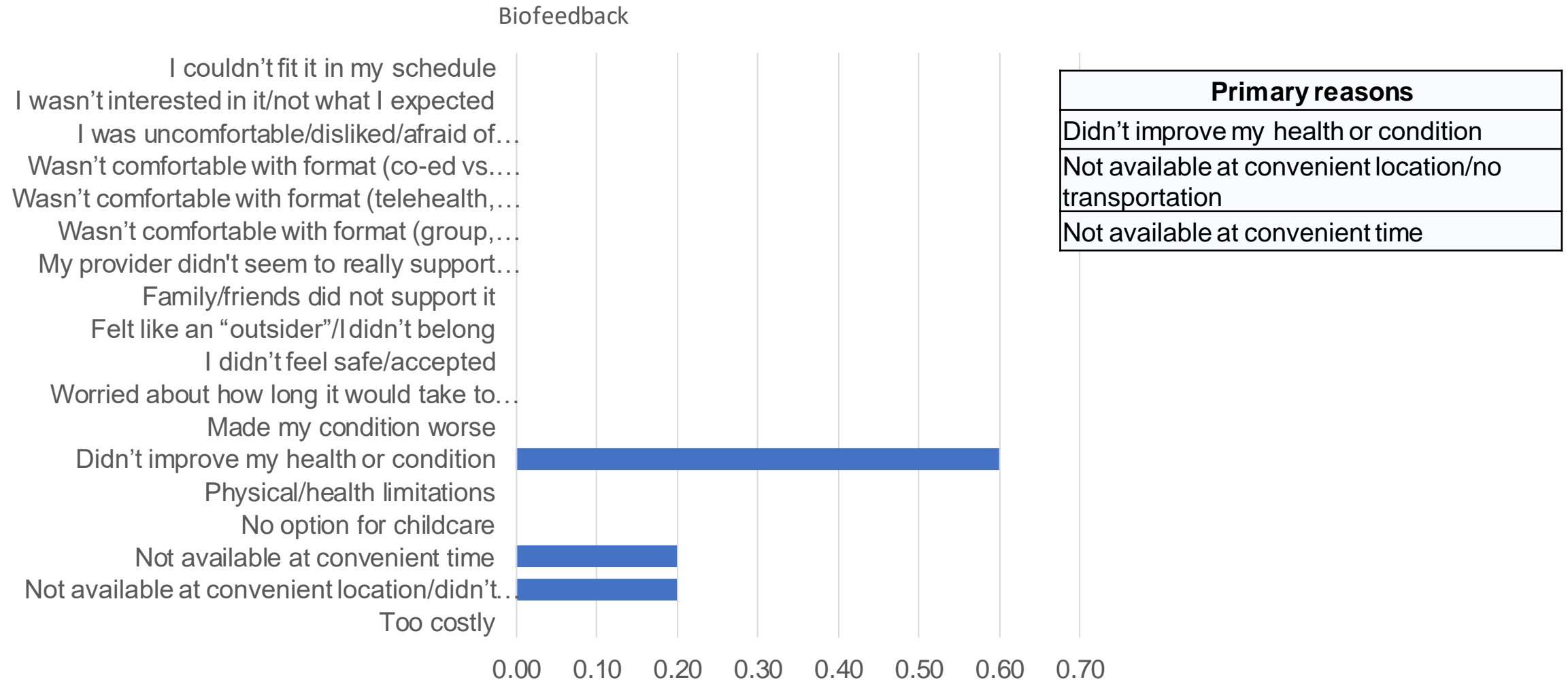
Summary: Primary barriers to trying a CIH modality related to lack of information and access

Domain	Item	N	Acup	Bio	Chiro	GI	Hyp	Mass	Med	Tai Chi	Yoga
Information	Didn't know I was eligible	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Information	Didn't know how to get started	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Belonging	Never considered it for myself	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Information	Don't know enough about it	8	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Effectiveness	Didn't believe it would improve my health or condition	6	X	X	X			X	X		X
Access	My VA doesn't offer it	5	X		X		X	X	X		
Belonging	I don't know anybody who has used it	4	X			X	X		X		
Access	Physical/health limitations	4			X		X			X	X
Personal	I'm not interested in this	4			X		X		X		X
Effectiveness	Concerned it would make my condition worse	2			X					X	
Access	Couldn't get a doctor's referral	1			X						
Format	Uncomfortable/dislike/afraid of technique	1					X				
Access	Not available at convenient location/no transportation	1						X			
Access	Too costly	1						X			
Format	Not comfortable with format (co-ed vs. same sex)	1								X	

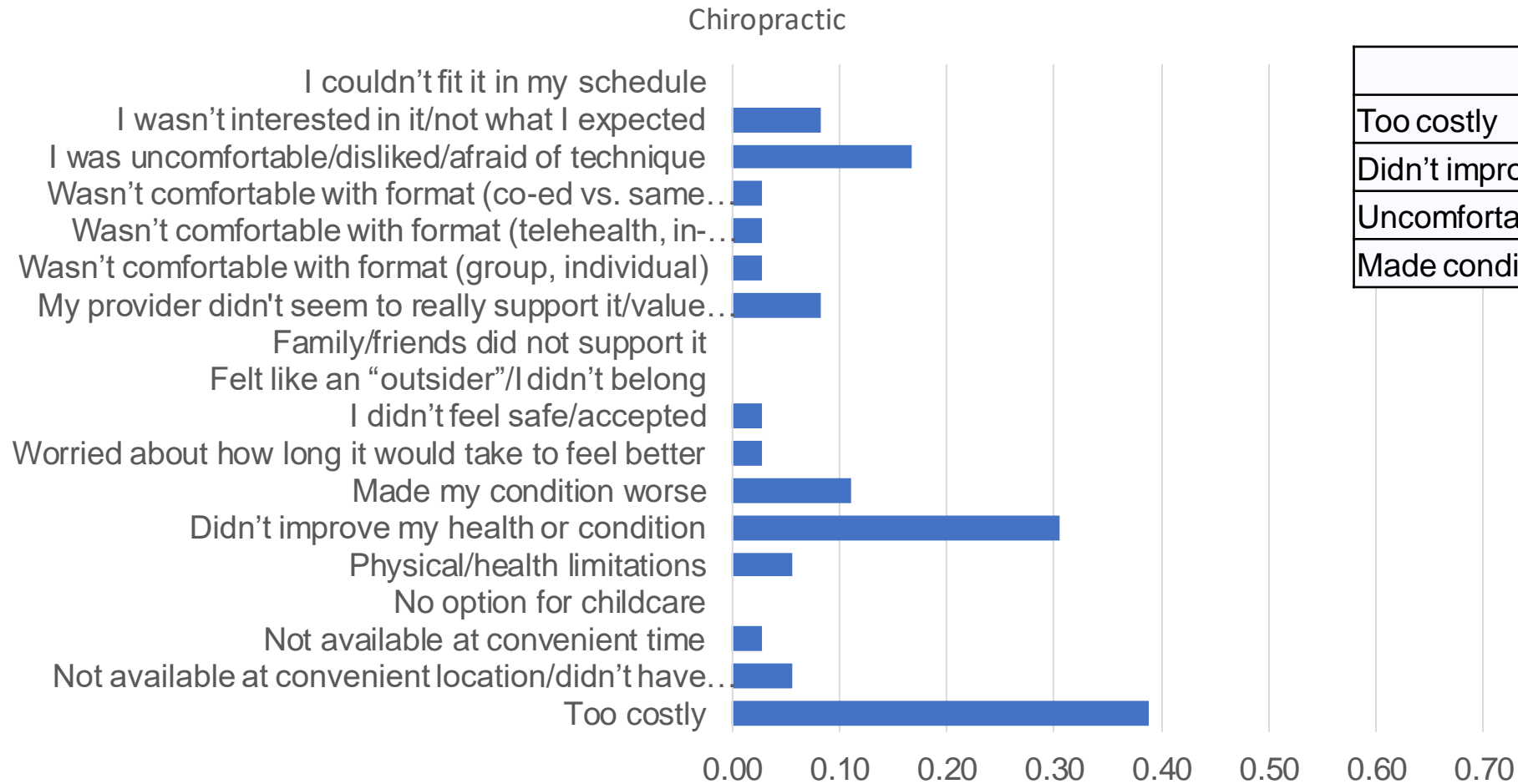
Reasons I tried but didn't continue Acupuncture (N=31)



Reasons I tried but didn't continue Biofeedback (N=5)



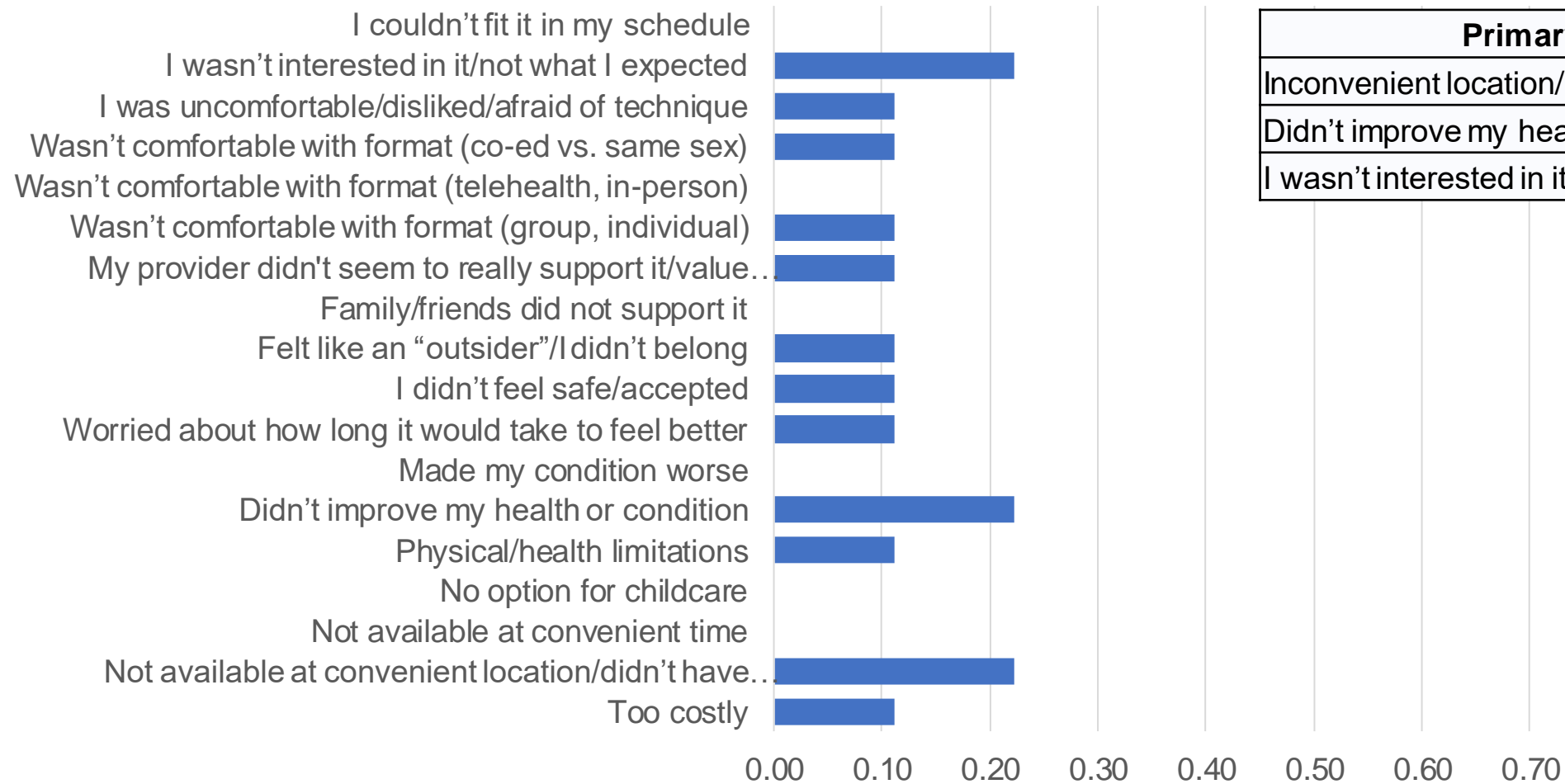
Reasons I tried but didn't continue Chiropractic Care (N=36)



Primary reasons
Too costly
Didn't improve health/condition
Uncomfortable/disliked/afraid of technique
Made condition worse

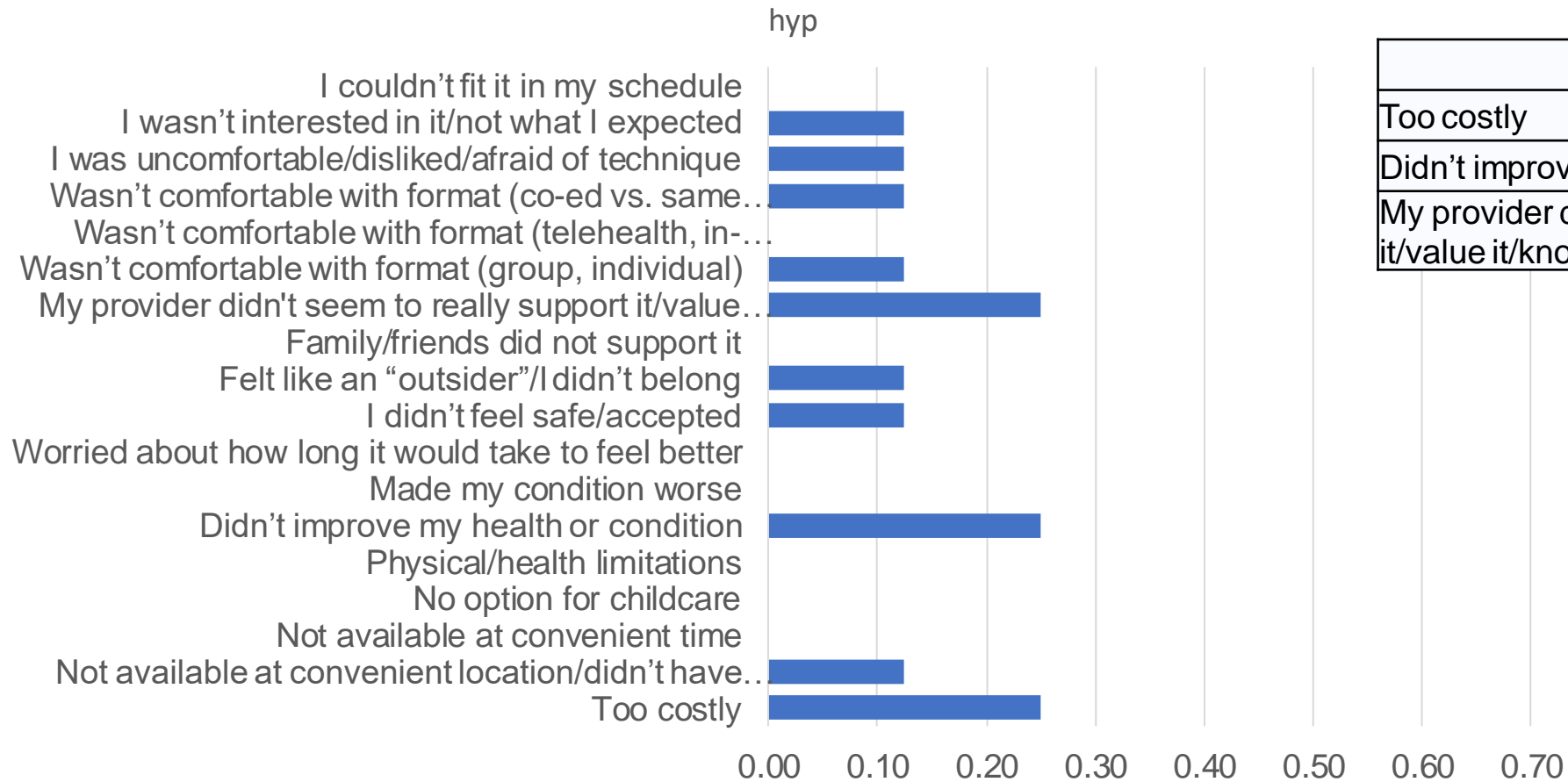
Reasons I tried but didn't continue Guided Imagery (N=9)

Guided Imagery



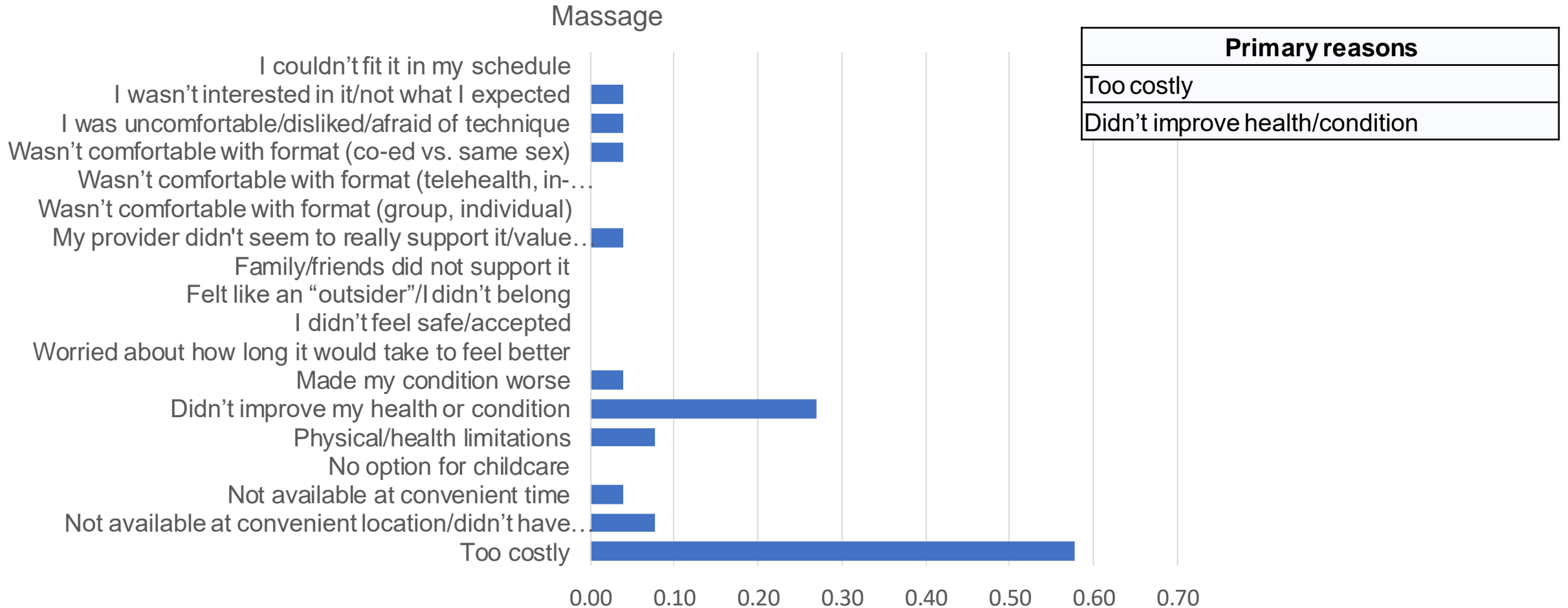
Primary reasons
Inconvenient location/no transportation
Didn't improve my health or condition
I wasn't interested in it/not what I expected

Reasons I tried but didn't continue Clinical Hypnosis(N=8)

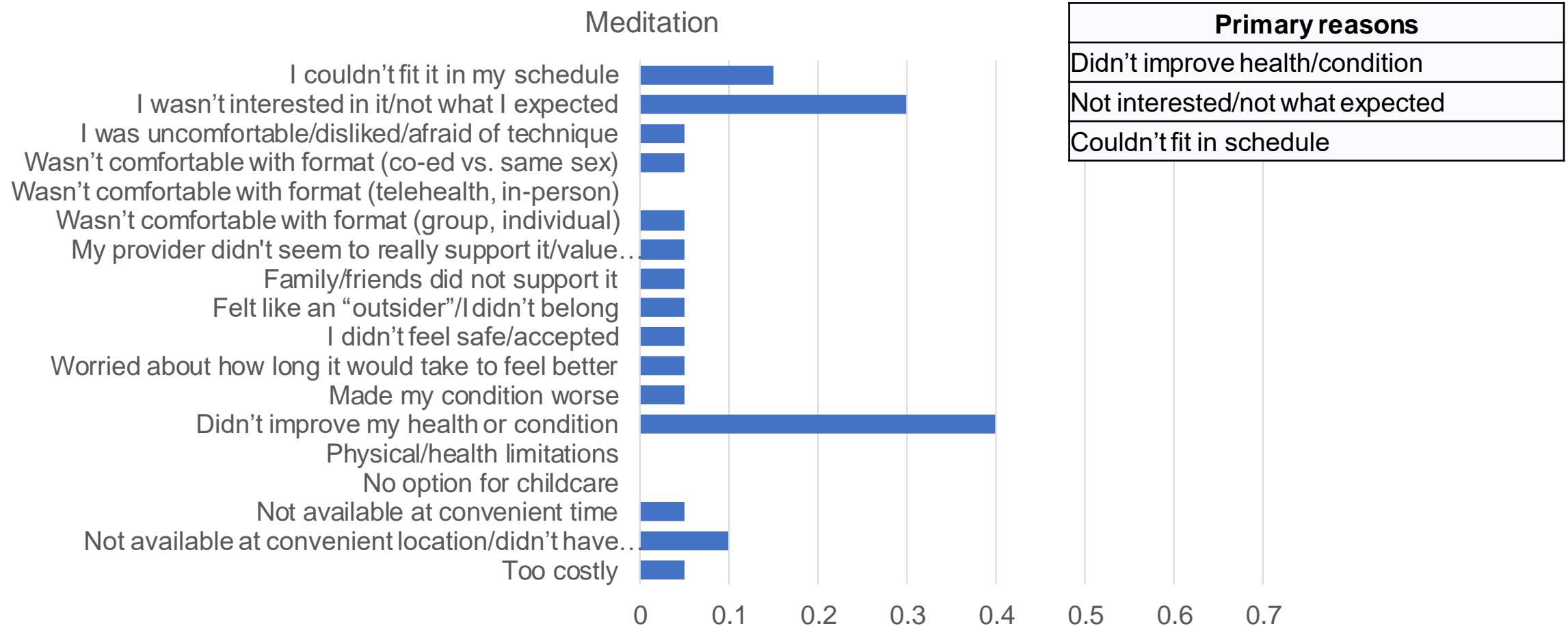


Primary reasons
Too costly
Didn't improve my health or condition
My provider didn't seem to really support it/value it/know about it

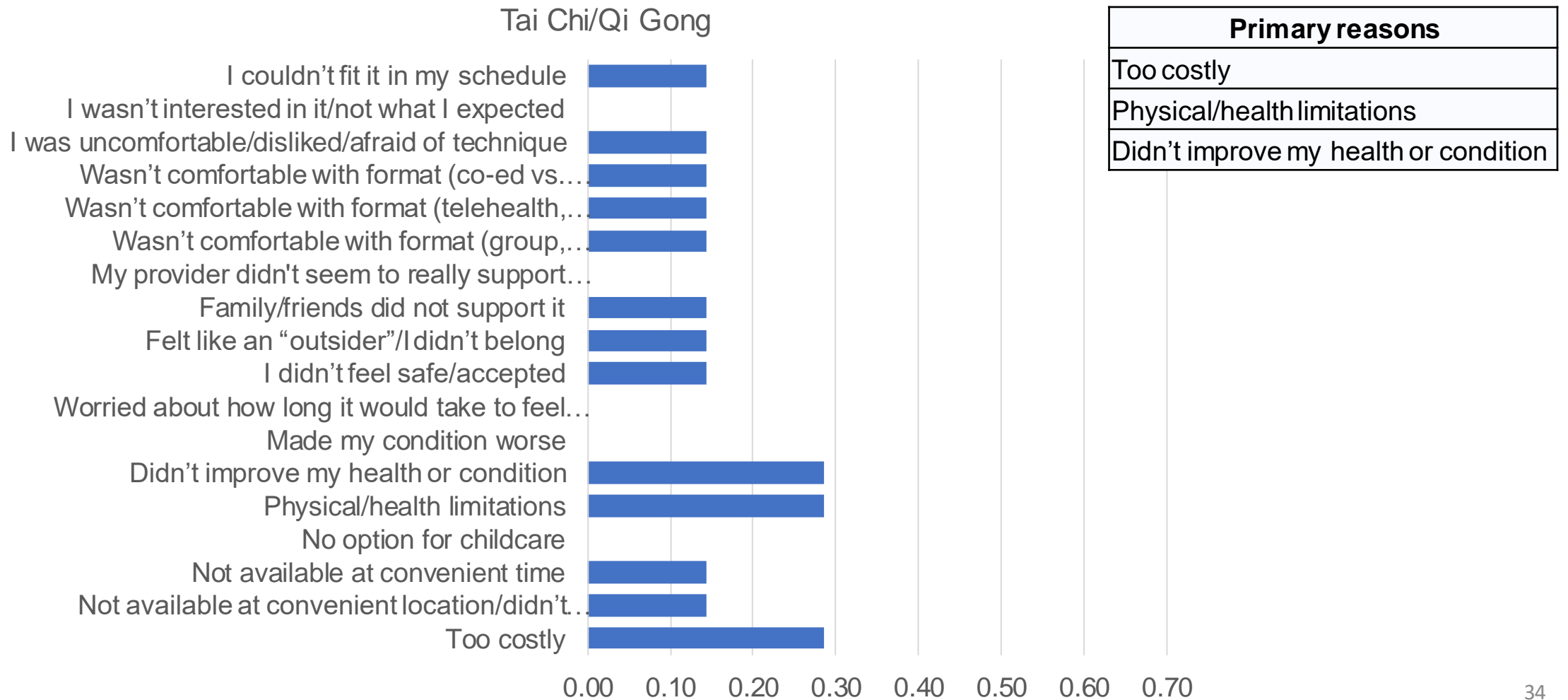
Reasons I tried but didn't continue Therapeutic Massage (N=26)



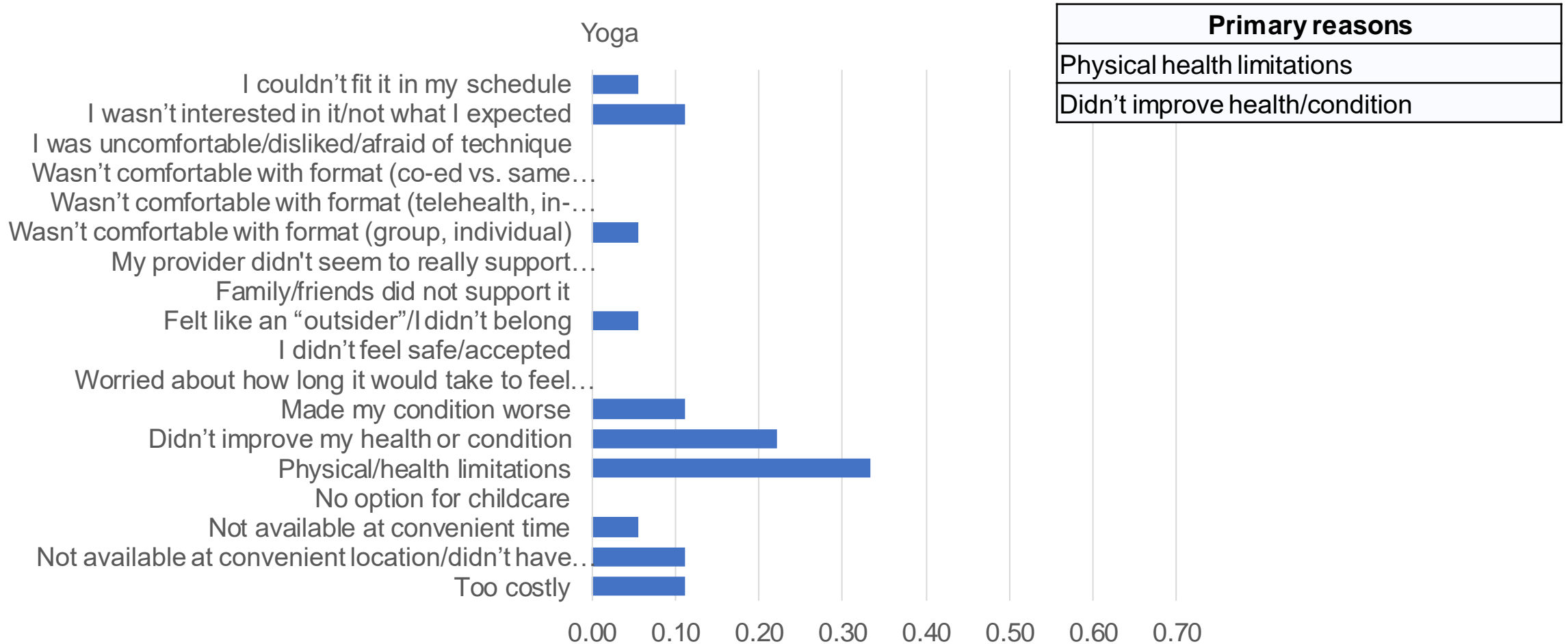
Reasons I tried but didn't continue Meditation (N=20)



Reasons I tried but didn't continue Tai Chi/Qi Gong (N=26)



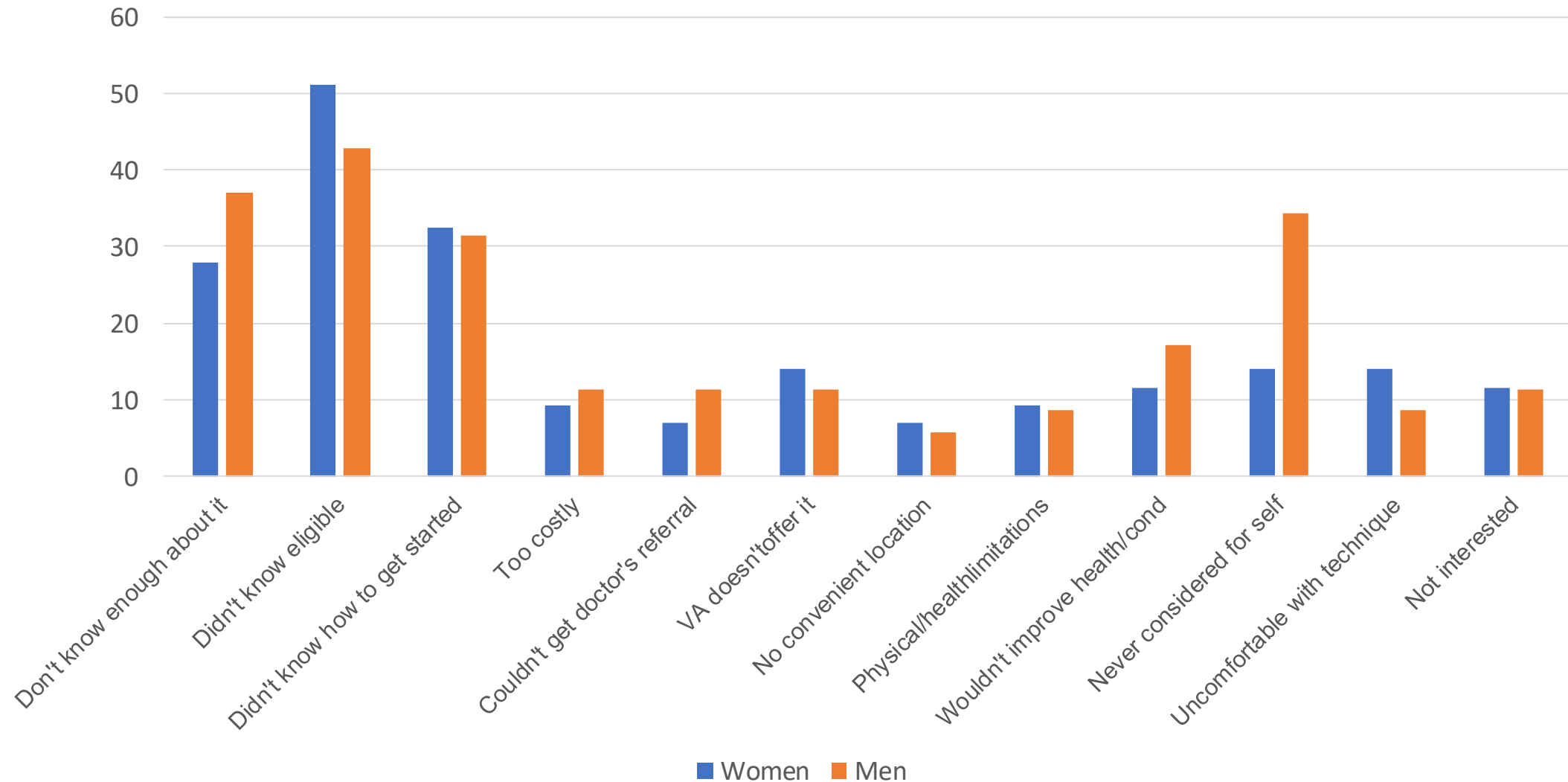
Reasons I tried but didn't continue Yoga (N=26)



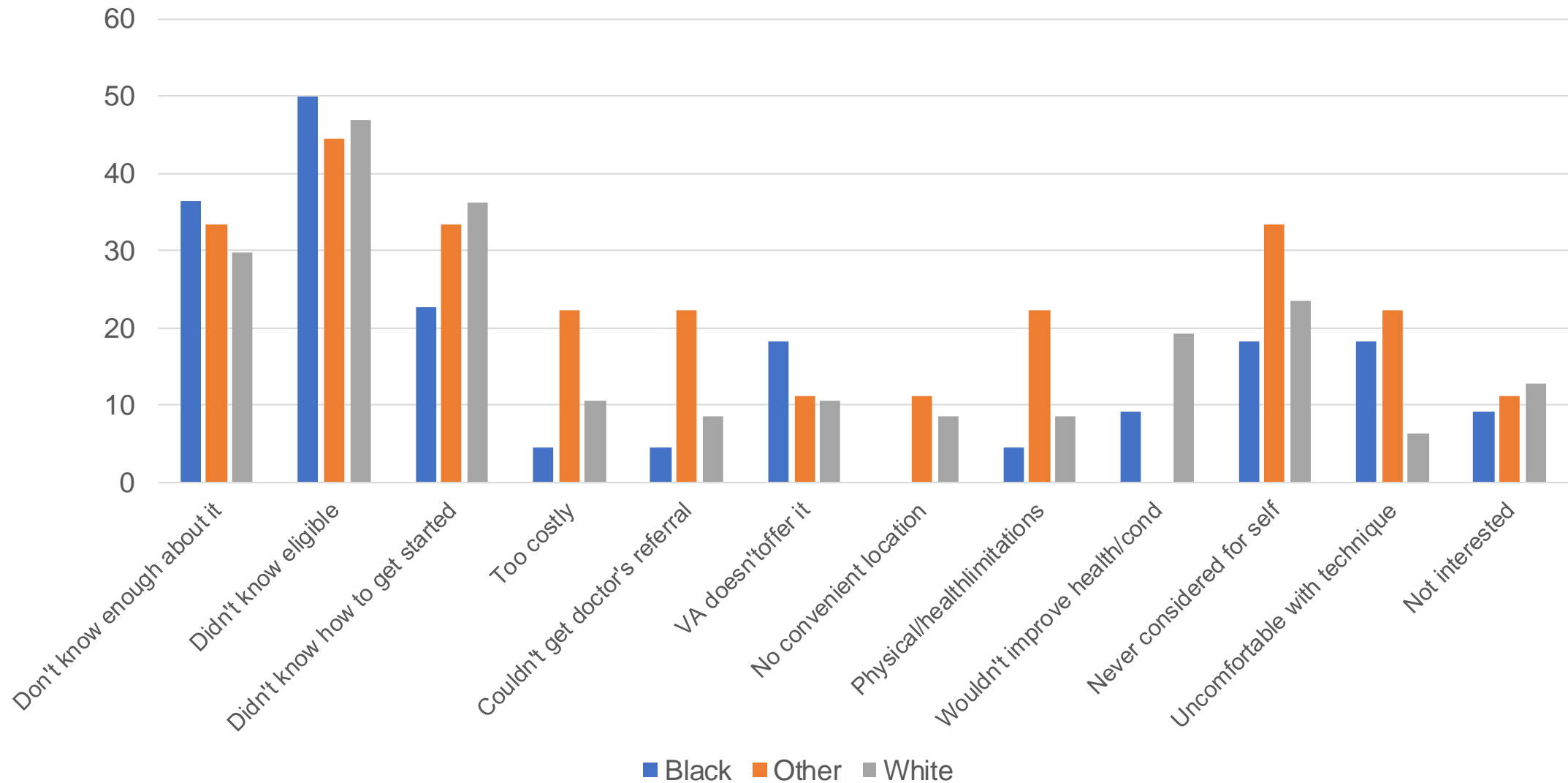
Summary: Primary barriers to continuing a modality related to effectiveness and cost

Domain	Item	N	Acup	Bio	Chiro	GI	Hyp	Mass	Med	Tai Chi	Yoga
Effectiveness	Didn't improve health/condition	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Access	Too costly	5	X		X		X	X		X	
Access	Not available at convenient location/no transportation	2		X		X					
Access	Physical/health limitations	2								X	X
Personal	Not interested/not what I expected	2				X			X		
Access	Not available at convenient time	1		X							
Support from others	Provider didn't support/value/know about it	1					X				
Personal	Uncomfortable/dislike/afraid of technique	1			X						
Effectiveness	Made condition worse	1			X						
Personal	Couldn't fit it into schedule	1							X		

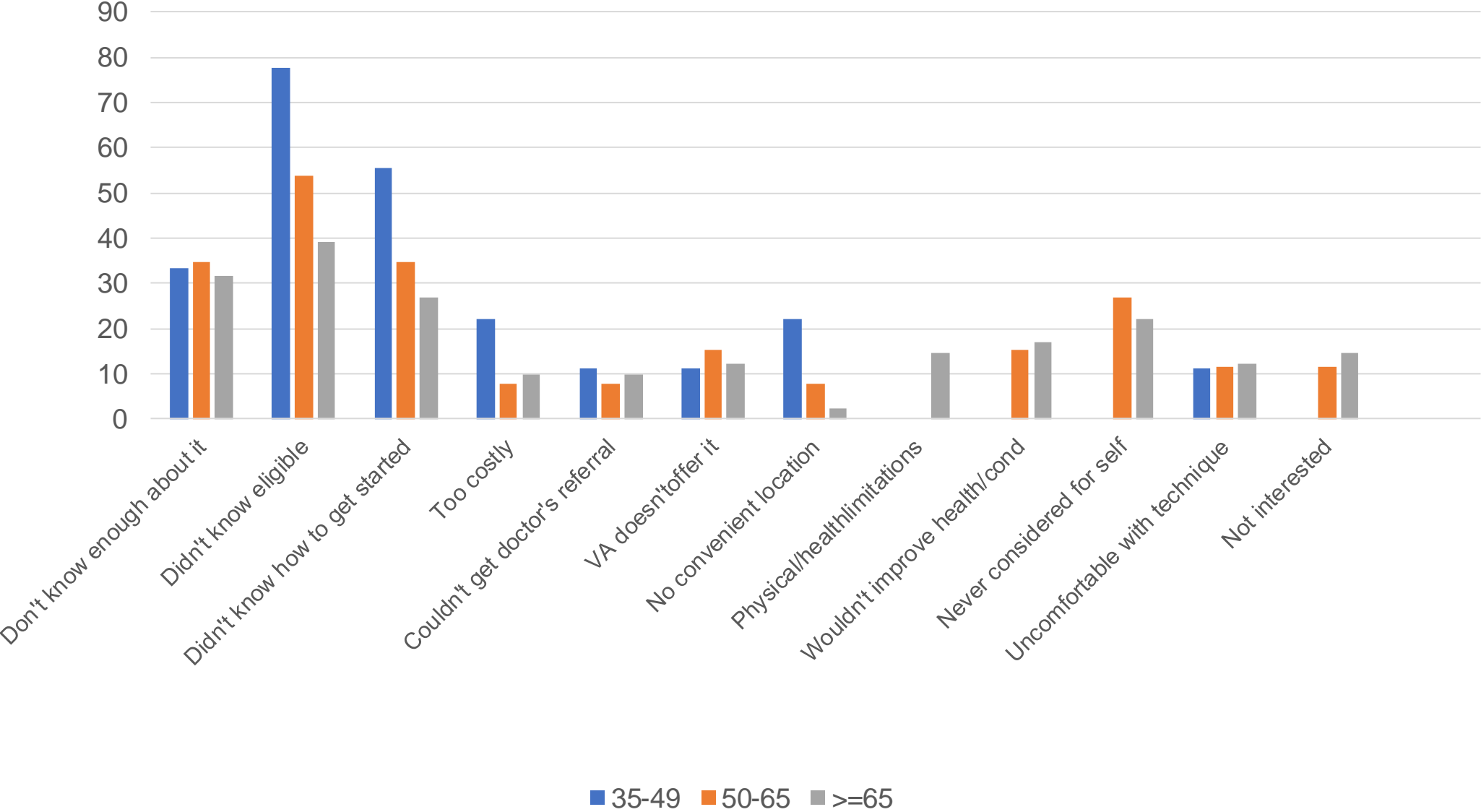
Barriers to CIH use across modalities by sex



Barriers to CIH use across modalities by race



Barriers to CIH use across modalities by age group



Conclusions

- Veterans had some exposure to CIH
- The majority of modalities were accessed in the community or at home
- Efforts to broaden Veterans' exposure to CIH should target information dissemination and access
- Barriers related to concern for worsened condition, discomfort with technique or format, and cost appear modality-specific
- Efforts to maintain Veterans' engagement in CIH should address issues of cost
- Further research is needed regarding Veterans' perceived lack of therapeutic effectiveness
- Further research is needed regarding suggested differences in barriers by Veteran characteristics; targeted implementation strategies by age group may be warranted

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Pain Management, Opioid Safety, and Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Pharmacy Benefits Management