

“Evolving gynaecological surgical simulation training post-pandemic” The South West of England Experience

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Objective

This project aims to improve gynaecological surgical simulation training in the South West of England. Initially, a survey was designed to establish trainees’ perception regarding gynaecological simulation across all hospitals in Peninsula Deanery following COVID-19 pandemic.

Barriers encountered by trainees and suggestions to improve simulation training were explored through a regional survey. Following the survey results, a local and regional surgical simulation programme was developed.

Introduction

Developing a regional, structured surgical simulation training program is a principal recommendation highlighted in the RCOG Gynaecological Surgery Recovery Plan (Published in 2021). There is good evidence to suggest that laparoscopic simulation shortens the learning curve and reduces adverse events.

A survey was developed as a tool to collect trainees’ views of their training experience in gynaecological simulation regionally.

Peninsula Association for Gynaecological Endoscopic Simulation (PAGES) has been founded by a network of simulation leads and trainee representatives across the deanery to promote training in gynaecological surgery and develop a teaching programme for surgical simulation.

The Survey Methods

An online 17-question survey was designed using SurveyMonkey®. This was distributed to the current South West Peninsula Obstetric & Gynaecology trainees.

The responses were collected over a two-week period with a reminder sent out one week before the closing date.

A total of 24 responses from ST1-ST7 trainees across four hospitals in the deanery were collected.

The Survey results

- Distribution of survey responses according to training grade (Total of 24):**
Four trainees were (ST1-ST2 grade)
Thirteen trainees were (ST3-ST5 grade)
Seven Trainees were (ST6-ST7 grade)

- 92% of trainees had access to a laparoscopic trainer. Two thirds of trainees had access either to a standard box trainer or augmented reality simulator in their units.
- 70% of trainees had access to a hysteroscopy simulator.

- About 50% of trainees had the option to hire a home laparoscopic simulator at their hospitals.

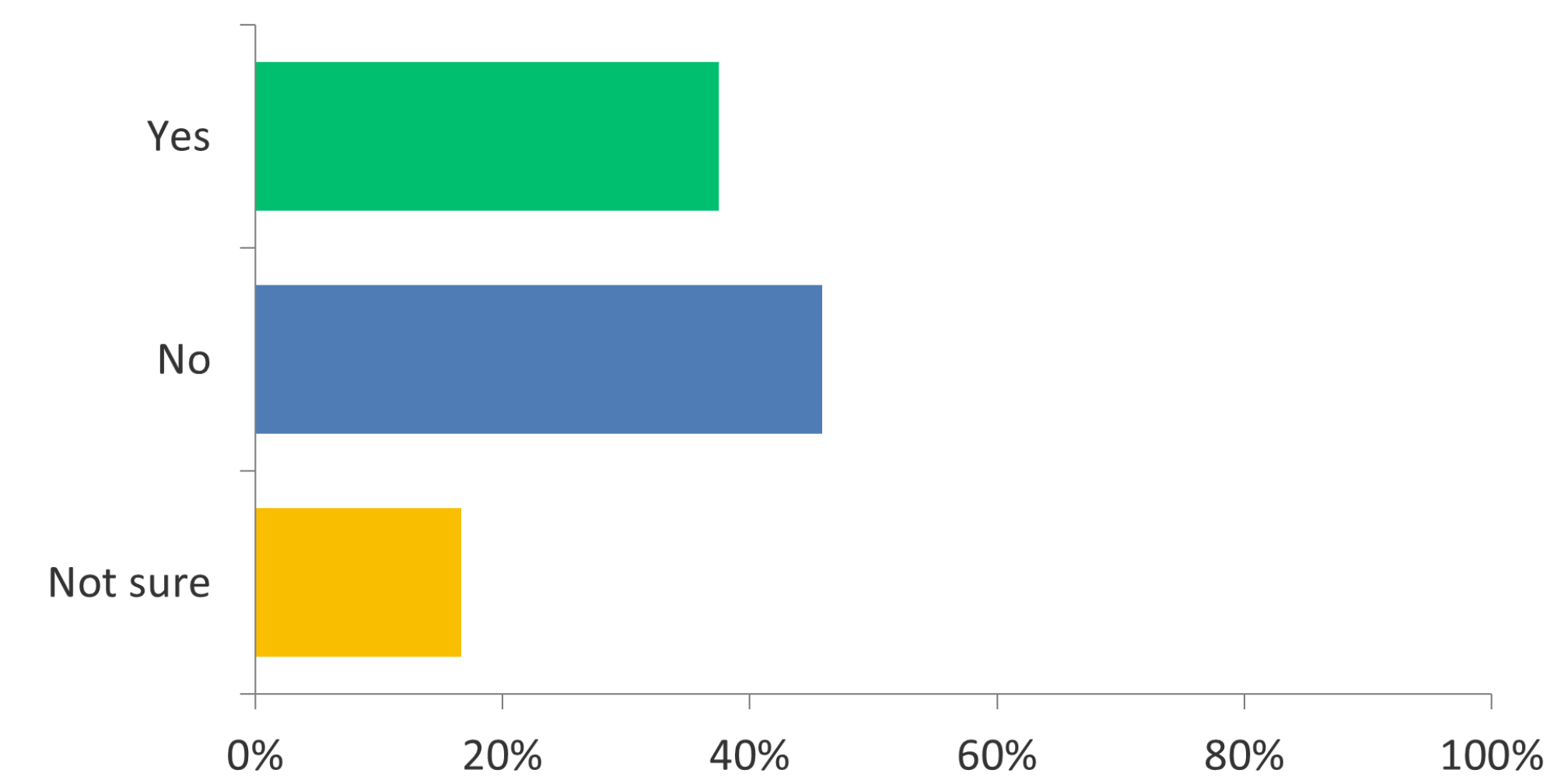
- Although two thirds of trainees had a dedicated simulation suite at their current hospital, they did not have a structured simulation training programme.
- In the last 12 months, how often had trainees used a gynaecology endoscopy simulator (laparoscopy and/or hysteroscopy)?**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Every day	0%	0
A few times a week	0%	0
About once a week	8.33%	2
A few times a month	8.33%	2
Once a month	4.17%	1
Less than once a month	58.33%	14
Never	20.83%	5
TOTAL		24

- About two thirds of trainees did not have senior and/or consultant supervision for simulation training.
- Only one third of trainees knew their gynaecology simulation lead at their hospitals.

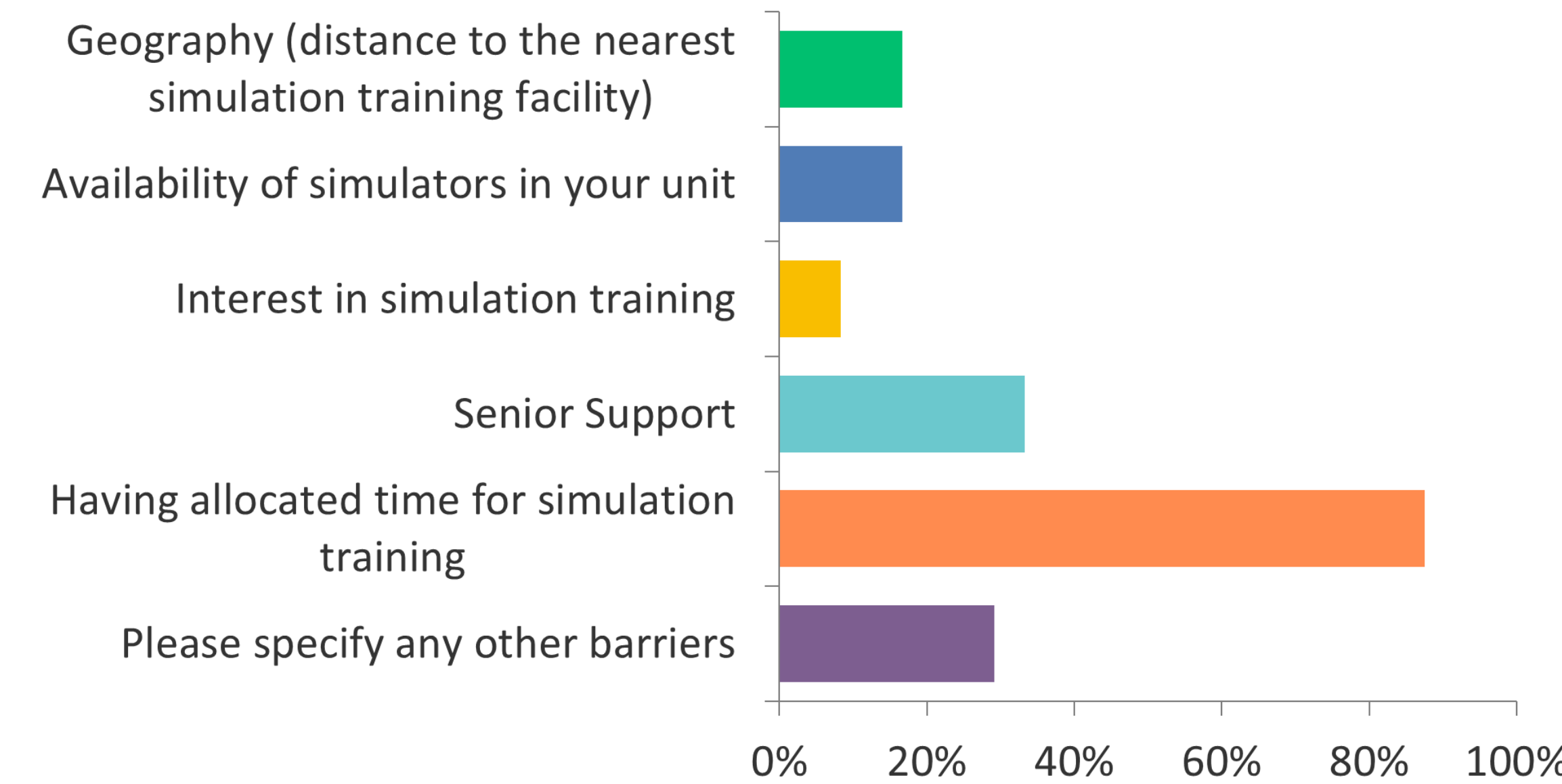
The Survey results (cont.)

- Use of simulation-based assessments e.g. LapPass?**



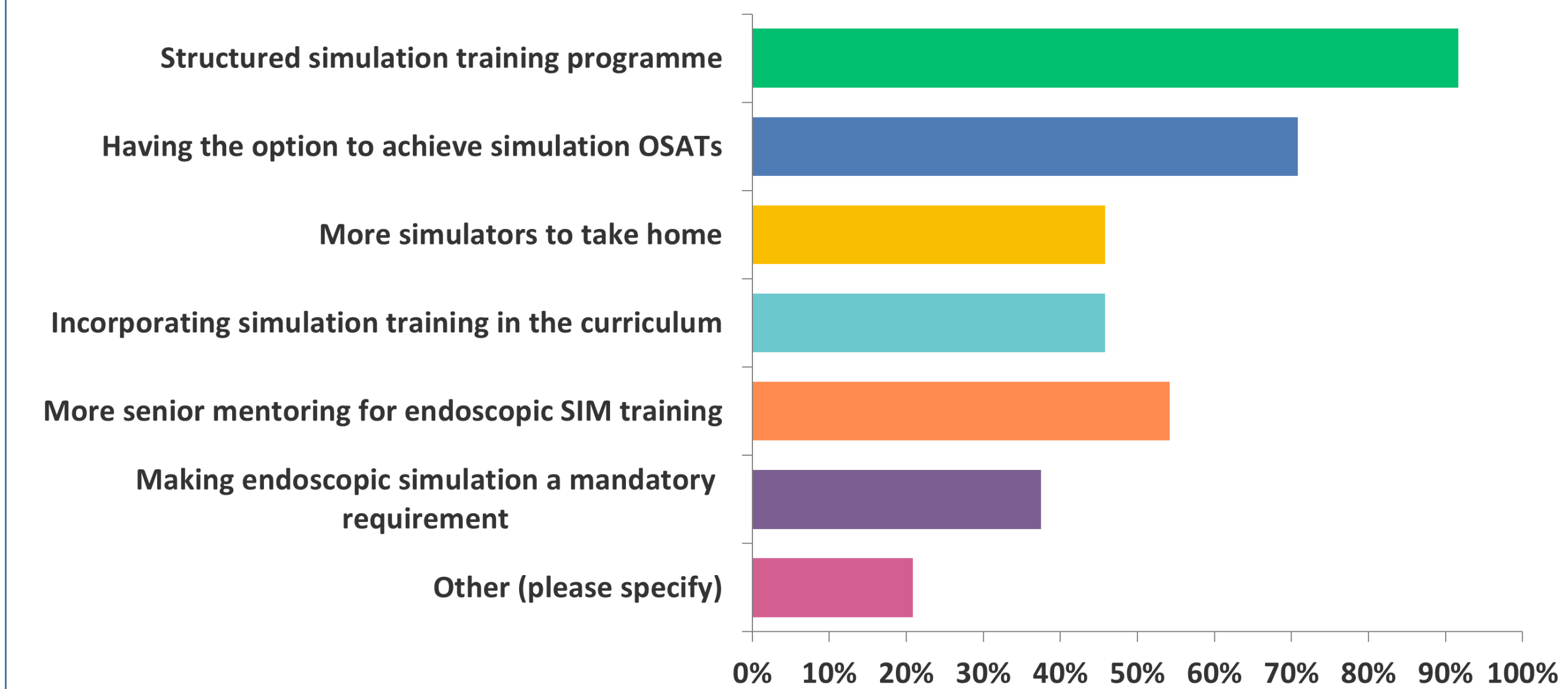
- Two thirds of trainees agree laparoscopic simulation has improved their procedural skills in operating theatre.

- Difficulties or barriers in using the simulator at your unit ? You could choose more than one option.**



- Other barriers** included missing or faulty equipment, difficulty operating the simulator, less than full time training, simulation suite far away from labour ward to be used during working hours.

Suggestions to improve gynaecology endoscopic simulation training generally



- Other suggestions:** dedicated time for simulation training and senior support

Conclusion

Although our survey results demonstrated adequate provision of simulation facilities across the deanery. Nevertheless, it has also showed a real need to implement a structured surgical simulation programme with allocated training time, objective assessments and senior supervision and co-ordination.

Therefore, ‘Surgical Champions’ were assigned to each hospital to set up internal simulation training within their local hospital and liaise with the wider PAGES network to arrange regional courses.

Regular local simulation sessions are arranged every six weeks to cover different gynaecological endoscopic skills. Four regional laparoscopic courses are planned throughout 2023.

LapPass® is being used regionally as a simulation assessment, however, further work is suggested to integrate a national validated simulation curriculum and OSATS.