

SURVEY & ANALYSIS

Healthcare professionals reveal what they **really think of virtual events**

And why event professionals should not aim
to save the past

WWW.KENES.COM



Content remains the king,
but delivery is the new
reigning queen.

Executive summary

Successful virtual events start with superb content, delivered through a user-friendly platform designed for interaction and to stimulate adult learning. The new pricing methods are tier-based and tied to the presented science, creating value for the event owner, the meeting participant, as well as the sponsors and exhibitors. The scientific program is structured over a longer period of time, extending the life of the congress and allowing for custom learning paths to be built. The session formats are a mix of pre-recorded and live content, in-depth sessions, and bite-sized overview videos. The interaction between all stakeholders is designed and enhanced with the use of technology. The support to healthcare professionals (HCPs) remains and is now focused on allowing undisturbed time to fully submerge into the virtual experience. This is what a targeted Kenes Group survey reveals.



Survey specifics

In light of the dramatic effect that COVID-19 is having on scientific meetings, Kenes Group reached out to past participants, in order to better understand how healthcare practitioners feel about virtual events. As a professional congress organiser (PCO) that is dedicated to medical and scientific meetings, the survey reached 809 past delegates from 112 countries on 6 continents to get truly global feedback on the pressing question of effective virtual conferences.

In order to cross-check the validity of the received answers, Kenes Group combined it with three virtual medical meetings and their post-conference evaluations, with a total attendance of over 5,500 participants, gaining additional 1,872 survey responses. The analysed data sets hold identical questions, making the comparison of opinions possible, and adding data from confirmed participants of virtual meetings.



Results snapshot

1,872
Post-event
evaluation: virtual
event attendees

809
Kenes Group
Survey: healthcare
professionals

20+
KG Survey:
therapeutic areas
represented



The open questions in the survey gave the opportunity to healthcare professionals to share additional thoughts on virtual events. A few HCPs informed us that they prefer in-person events because they enjoy: the dedicated time and space to dive deeper into the scientific content; the better networking and human interaction which is spontaneous; the added value of listening to an in-person presentation; strengthening relationships with colleagues, to name a few.

This paper analyses what constitutes an ideal virtual event for healthcare professionals.

Having said that, there is also overwhelming feedback received from virtual participants in the post-event evaluations, on the benefits of virtual events. The top reasons to enjoy this type of event seems to be the flexibility given in terms of time management, or understanding complex content with the option to stop and rewind; saving time that would be spent in travelling to-from the conference destination; the possibility to listen to all the content, that usually would be often presented in concurrent sessions, to name a few. The availability of the content and the option to view it on-demand are also strong points for virtual scientific meetings.



The insights from this analysis give event professionals clarity into what HCPs want from virtual events.

Participant details

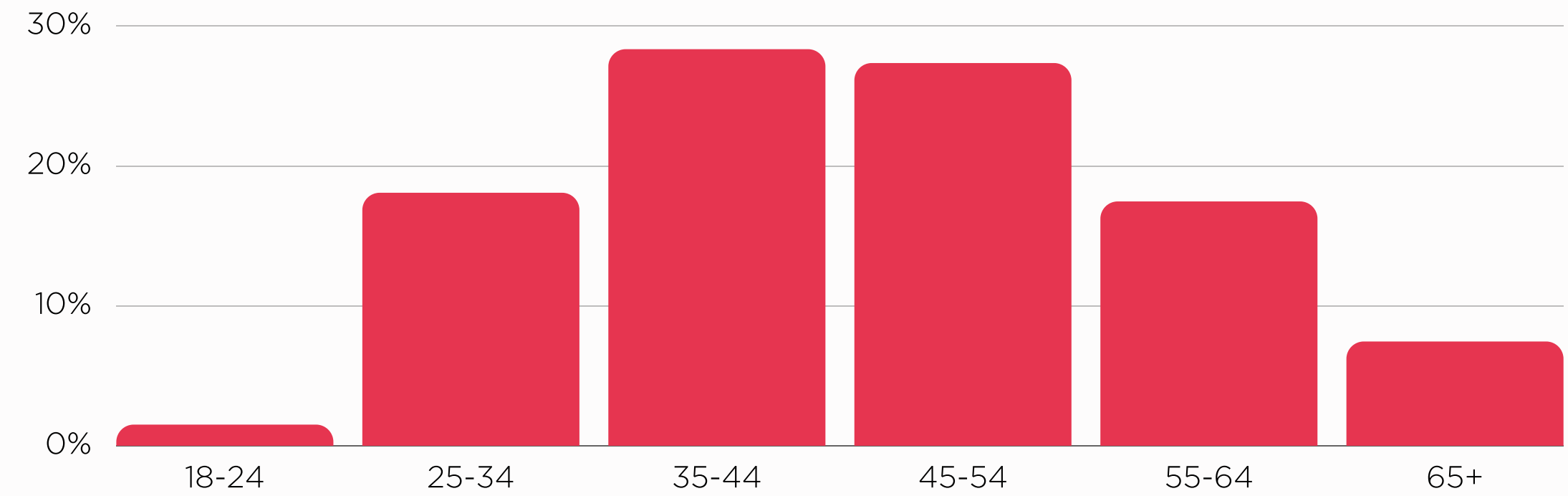
The Kenes Group survey was conducted at the beginning of July 2020 and reached 809 past delegates from 112 countries on 6 continents. 475 respondents were certified healthcare professionals, 287 were academia, with only 47 respondents that did not qualify or specify their designation. Over 20 therapeutic areas were listed, with the top three being psychiatry (16% of total), paediatrics (14%), and diabetes/endocrinology (12%). The data set from the post-event evaluations ensures that the results are representative of healthcare professionals who have experienced a virtual congress.

All graphs in this paper clearly mark if they are from the initial Kenes Group survey (Kenes Group Survey) or an average representation of the evaluations (Post-event evaluation average), or a specific data set from these events.

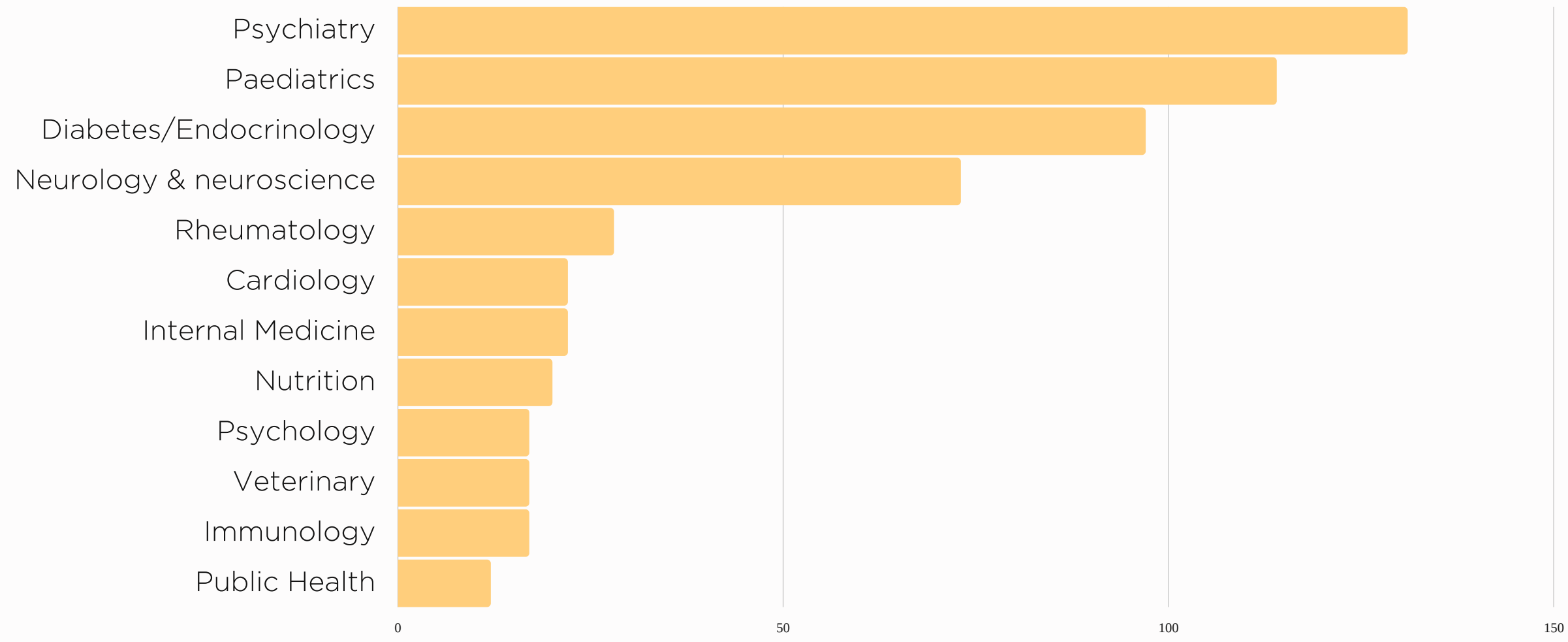


Participant demographics

Kenes Group Survey: Age range



Kenes Group Survey: Therapeutic area



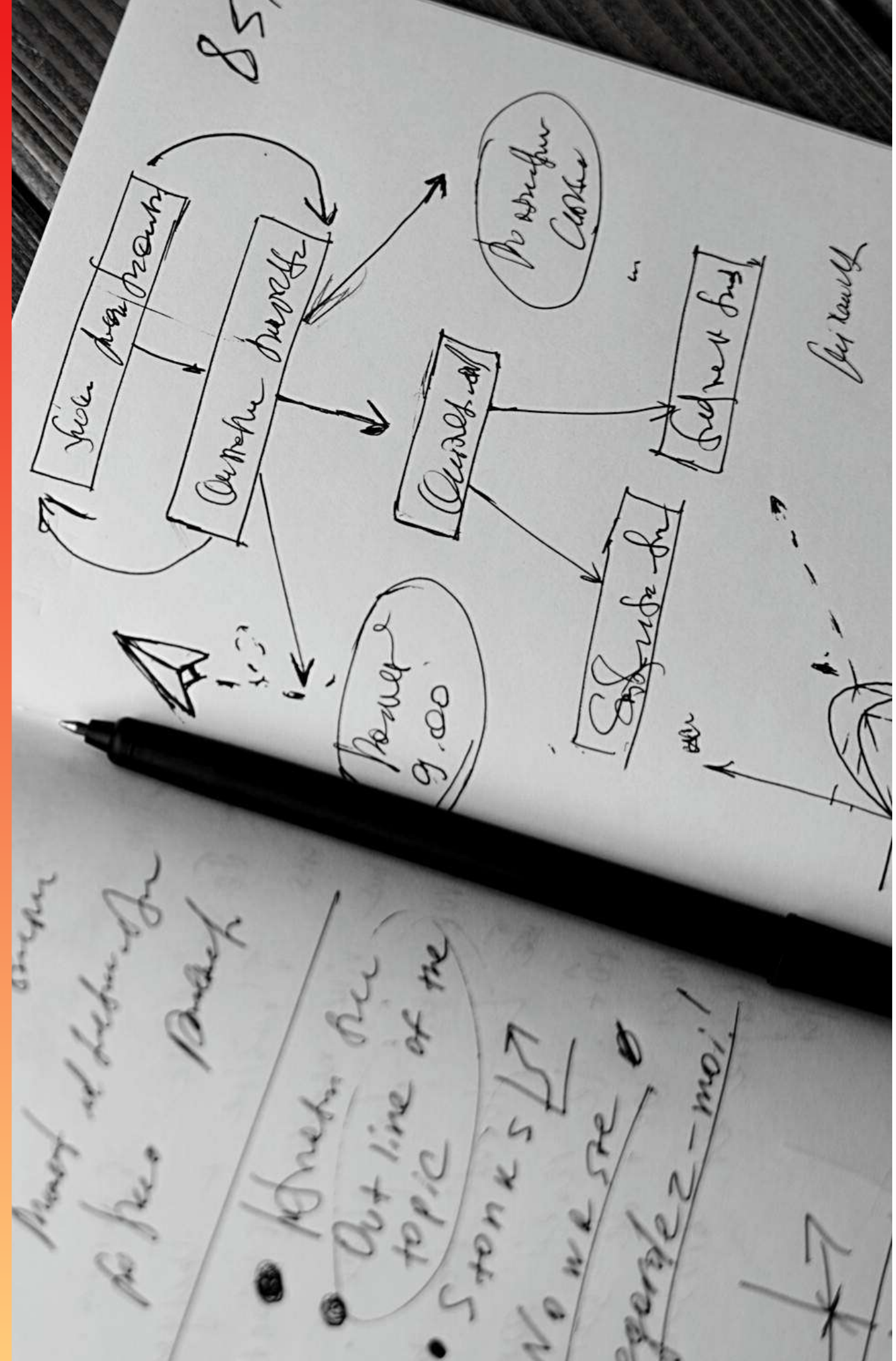
Before the event



Time off

One of the very first differences between in-person and virtual events is where the content is consumed. In the case of face-to-face meetings, delegates are expected to travel to the conference site. Virtual events, however, can occur wherever the participant decides.

Kenes Group asked the survey respondents if their virtual attendance came with the same understanding from their employers in terms of dedicated time off away from their practice. 63% said that it was an option to get such conference days. A total of 42% of participants in the Kenes Group virtual events stated that their employers take care of their fees. This leads us to believe that if time off is requested it would be granted, in order for the employers to receive a maximum return on their investment. There is still a large percentage of delegates remaining in need of assistance in order to manage their time.



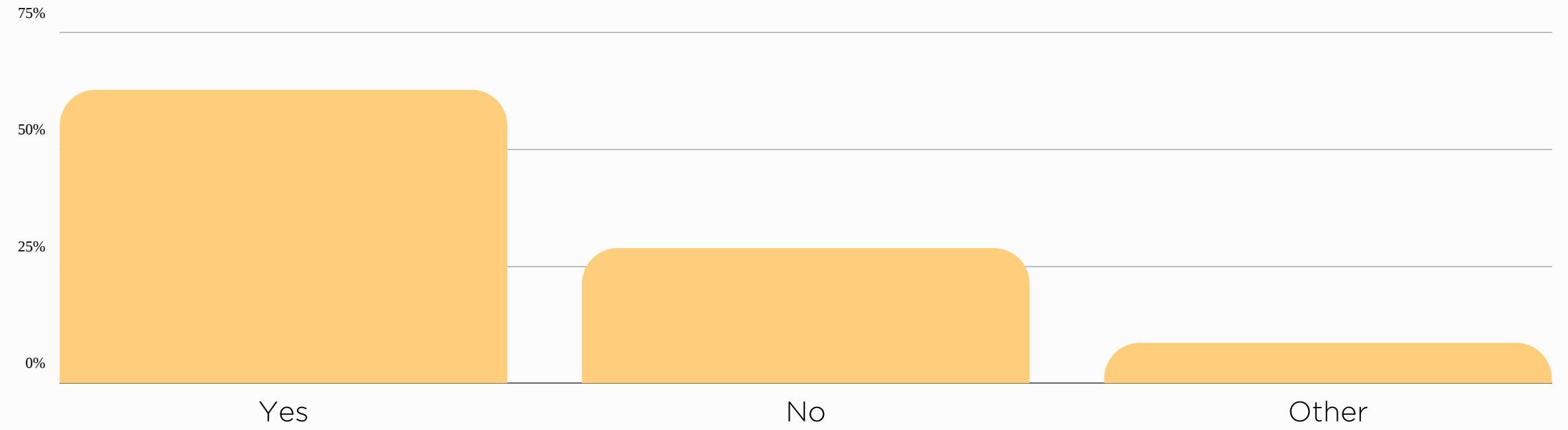
Before the event

63%

take time off to attend virtual meetings and events

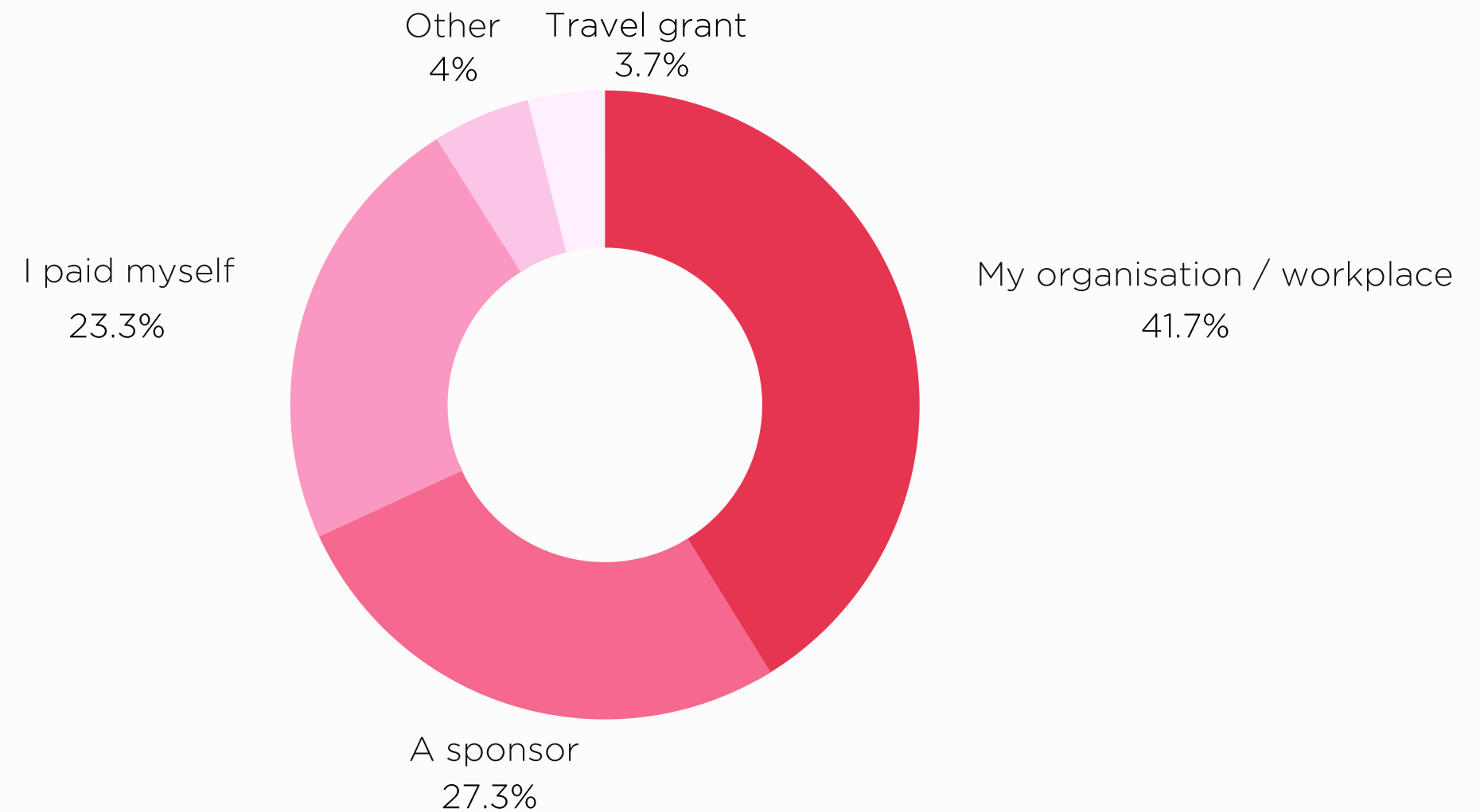


Kenes Group Survey: Do you take/get conference days (time-off from work) to attend virtual conference?



Post-event evaluation average: Who paid for your attendance?

Time off



Registration fees

Speaking of registration fees, 45% of respondents noted in the Kenes Group survey, that they cover them on their own. 30% were supported by their employer only 15% used industry grants or sponsorships. The correlation with the post-event evaluations, where 42% had their employers cover the event registration, would suggest that it depends if respondents thought of a potential event or one that they already participated in. It is important to mention that there were delegates that reported withdrawn grants as a result of COVID-19.

There is a lot of speculations on what delegates expect to pay for a virtual event compared to an in-person one. In the Kenes Group survey, 41% of respondents said that they expect fees of virtual events to be about 50% lower, followed by 25% who said they expect it to be 80% lower. In terms of a fee structure, 63% of participants at one of the virtual Kenes Group events agreed that one registration per person that includes access to all content, with additional fees for pre/post-conference sessions, is a good option for them.



Registration fees

compared to in-person events

50%
lower

41% of respondents
expect that



80%
lower

25% of respondent
see that as fair



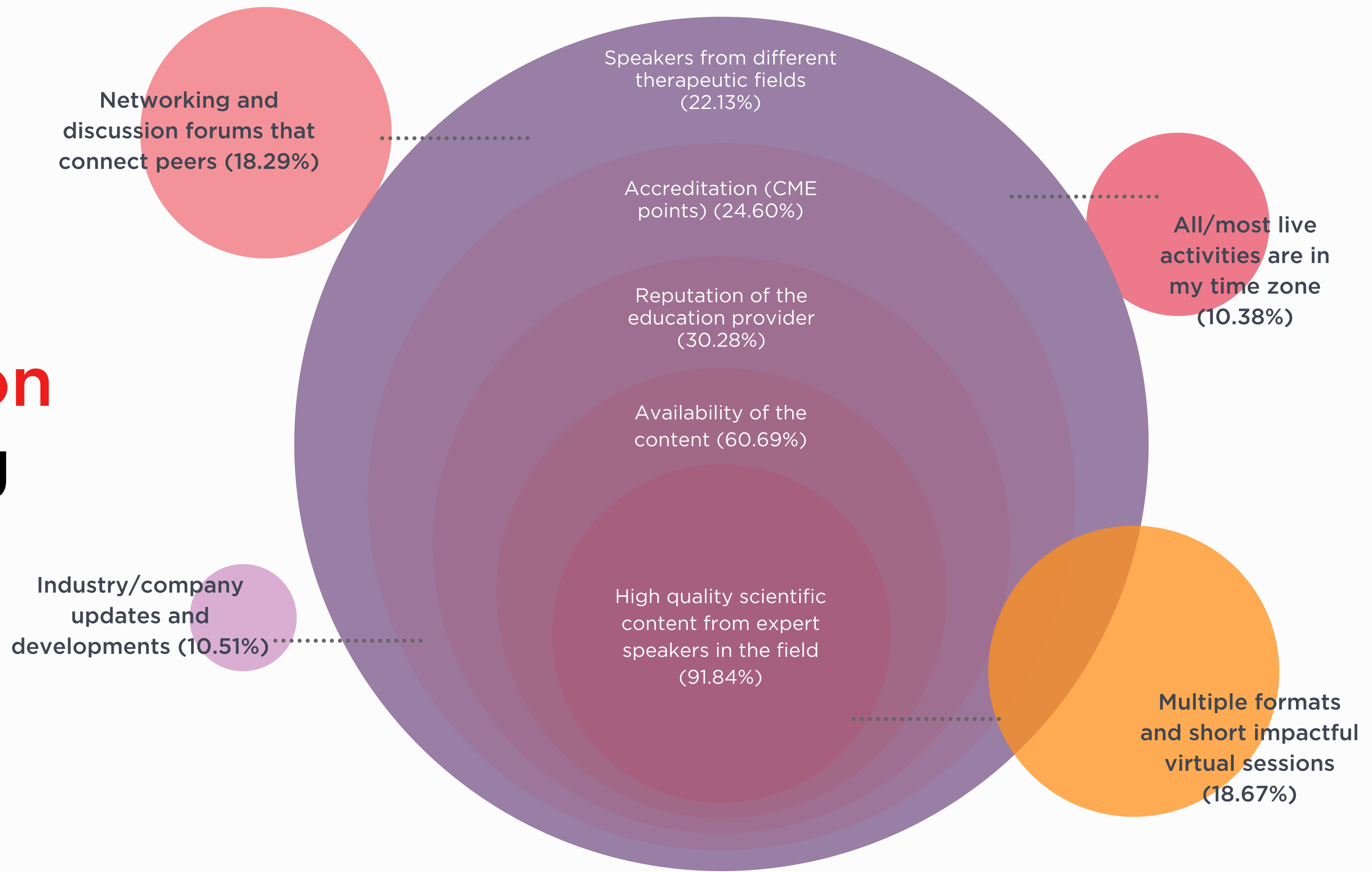
Decision **making**

The Kenes Group survey asked participants which were the key factors for them when deciding on attending a virtual event. HCPs selected their top three options, with the most valued being: high-quality scientific content from expert speakers in the field (92%); availability of the content (sessions on-demand and enduring materials) (61%); and reputation of the education provider (association/society) (30%).

Accreditations, such as the provision of continuing medical education (CME) points came fourth with 25%. These results were all well supported with the post-event evaluations, where a total of 75% of all respondents stated that they were looking to expand their knowledge in the field, stating that content comes first, no matter the discipline. 60% of HCPs said that CME is an important reason to attend an event. One of the Kenes Group conferences included a similar question in their evaluation, where respondents rated as their top choice the plenary and late-breaking sessions, followed by the concurrent sessions and roundtable discussions.



Decision making



During the event

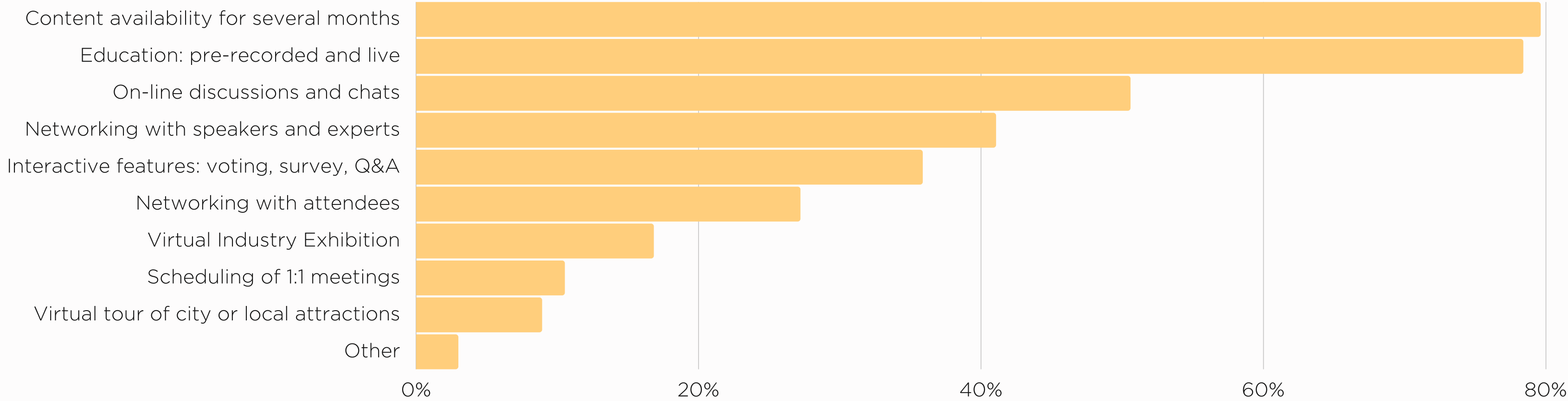


Technical **elements**

Once the participants have taken the decision to take part in a virtual event, the Kenes Group survey investigated what would be the most important technical elements in the event platform, that would attract delegates. Certainly, a platform should be user friendly, easy, and intuitive to navigate, and without any technical issues, as mentioned in the post-event evaluations.



The top three technical features rated were: content and materials available online for several months (80%); education: pre-recorded sessions and live streaming (78%); and on-line discussions and chats (51%). It should be pointed out that 41% put networking with speakers and experts in fourth place. One of the Kenes Group virtual meetings also analysed this topic in its post-event evaluation and the top five supported the findings of the Kenes Group survey. On-demand concurrent sessions for easy access during and after the conference was top-rated, closely followed by recorded (on-demand) sessions with live speaker Q&A following the recording or at a different time; chat rooms for conference sessions and oral presentations; audience response participation (polling); and ePoster presentations.



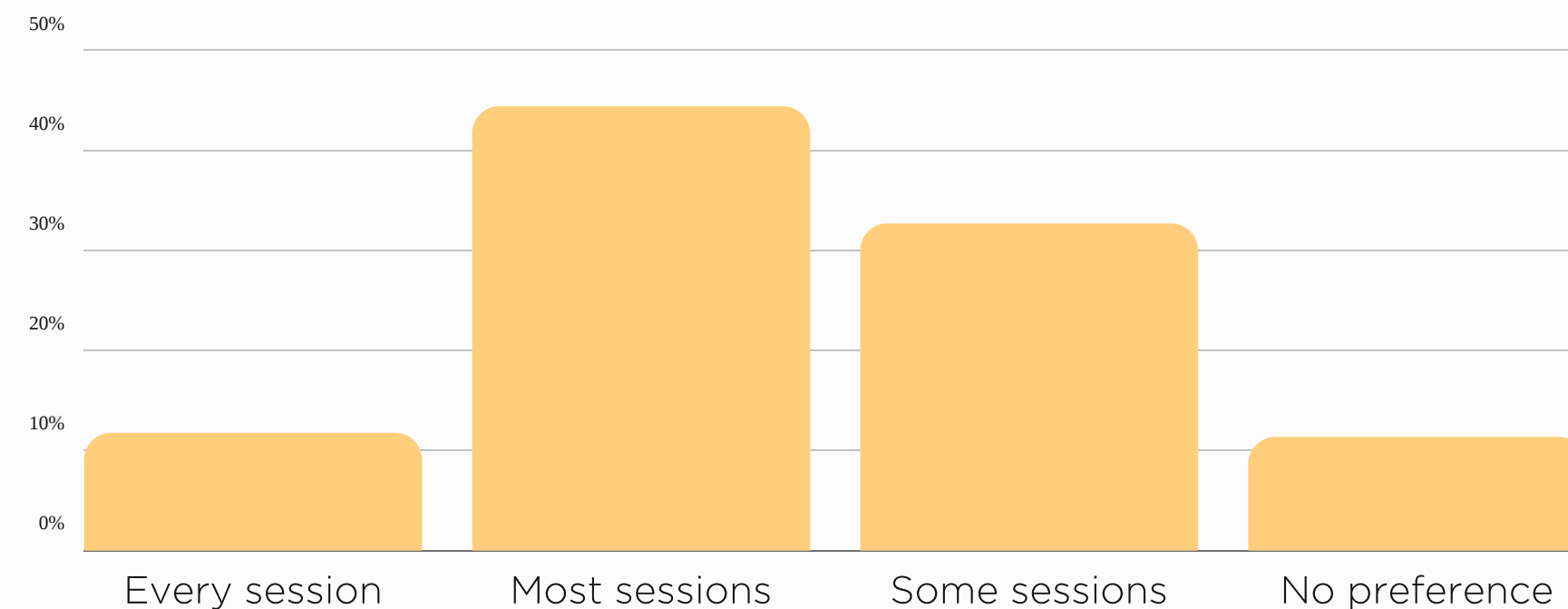
Kenes Group Survey: Once you have decided to attend, what are the technical features that are most important to you in the virtual platform?



Online activities

Healthcare professionals also rated what activities could improve their learning. The top three were webinars (pre- and post-event) with 80%, followed by eLearning courses (66%), and short videos on emerging topics (48%).

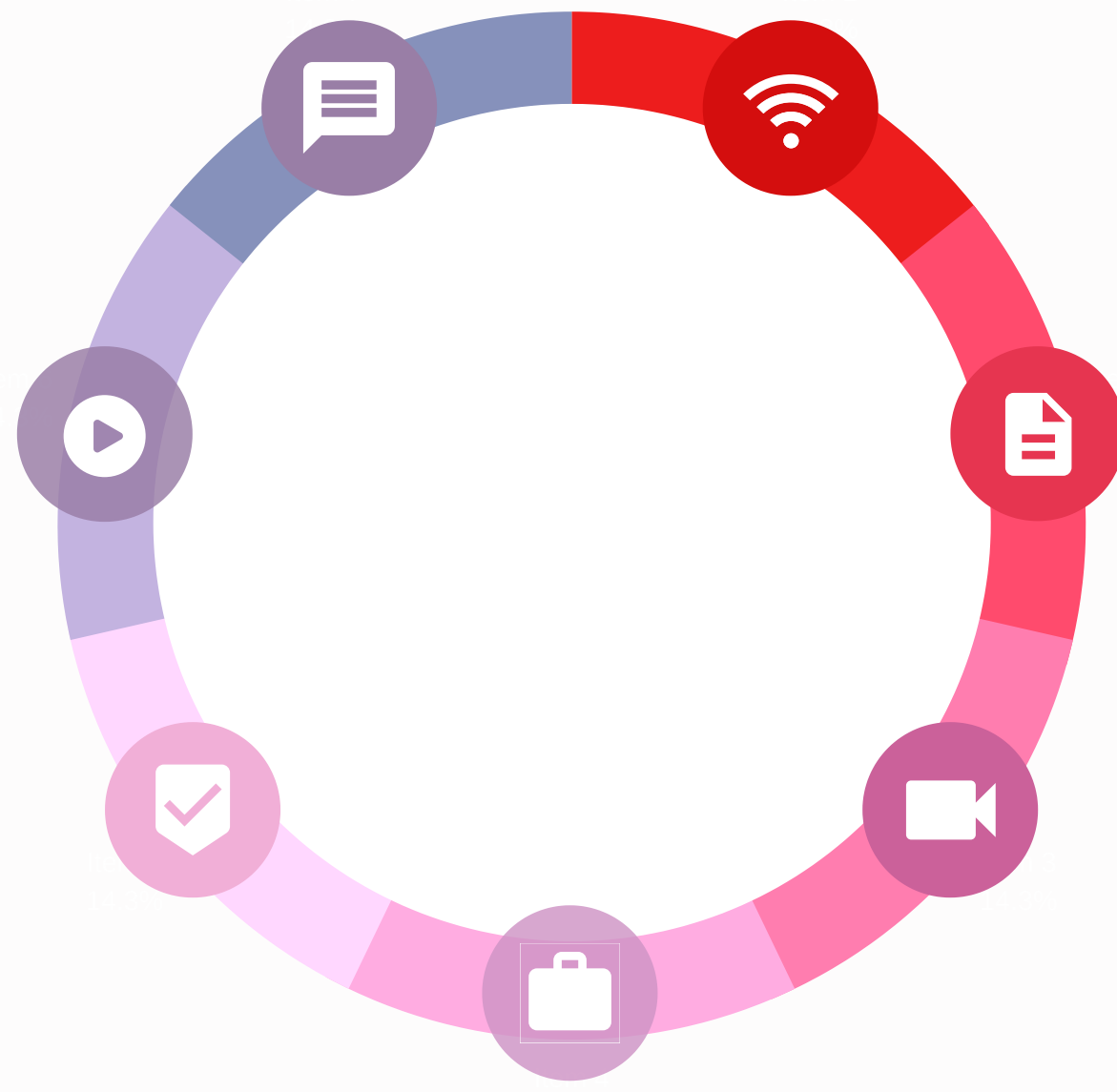
According to the post-event evaluation, 44% of participants expected most sessions to be interactive. 36% confirmed that with the Kenes Group survey. 39% of HCPs pointed out that online discussions throughout the year were important to them, as well as micro-learning activities (32%).



Post-event evaluation average: How much interactivity are you expecting in virtual Conference sessions?

Improving learning

- 39%** Online discussions (throughout the year)
- 32%** Micro-learning activities (5/10-min long videos)
- 23%** CME accredited materials from the meeting
- 12%** Materials from pharma companies/exhibitors



- Webinars (pre- and post-event) **80%**
- e-Learning courses **66%**
- Short videos about emerging topics **48%**

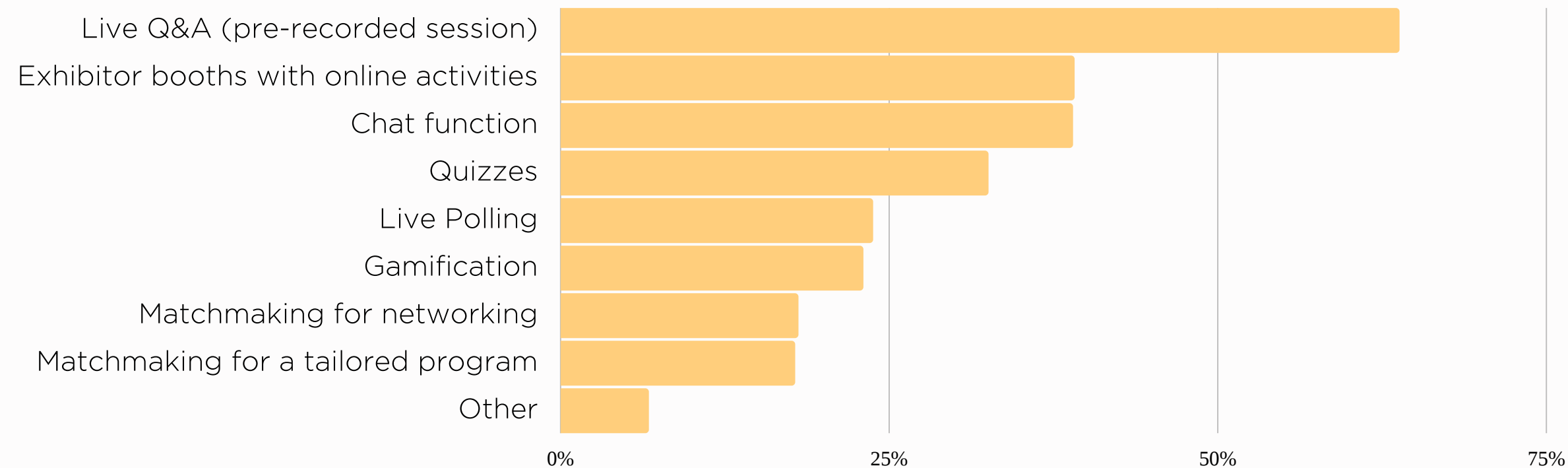
Exhibition **area**

With exhibitors having to adapt to present their company's products and services differently, the Kenes Group survey asked what engagement elements would encourage participants to spend more time in this part of the platform. What the respondents rated as top three were: live questions & answers session (with a pre-recorded session) (64%); exhibitor booths with online activities (e.g. competitions, materials) (39%); and having a chat function with other delegates/exhibitors/speakers (39%). 52% of post-event evaluation responses rated that their aim at the virtual exhibition was to get a general overview of the companies' products or services; and 38% were looking for information about new products.

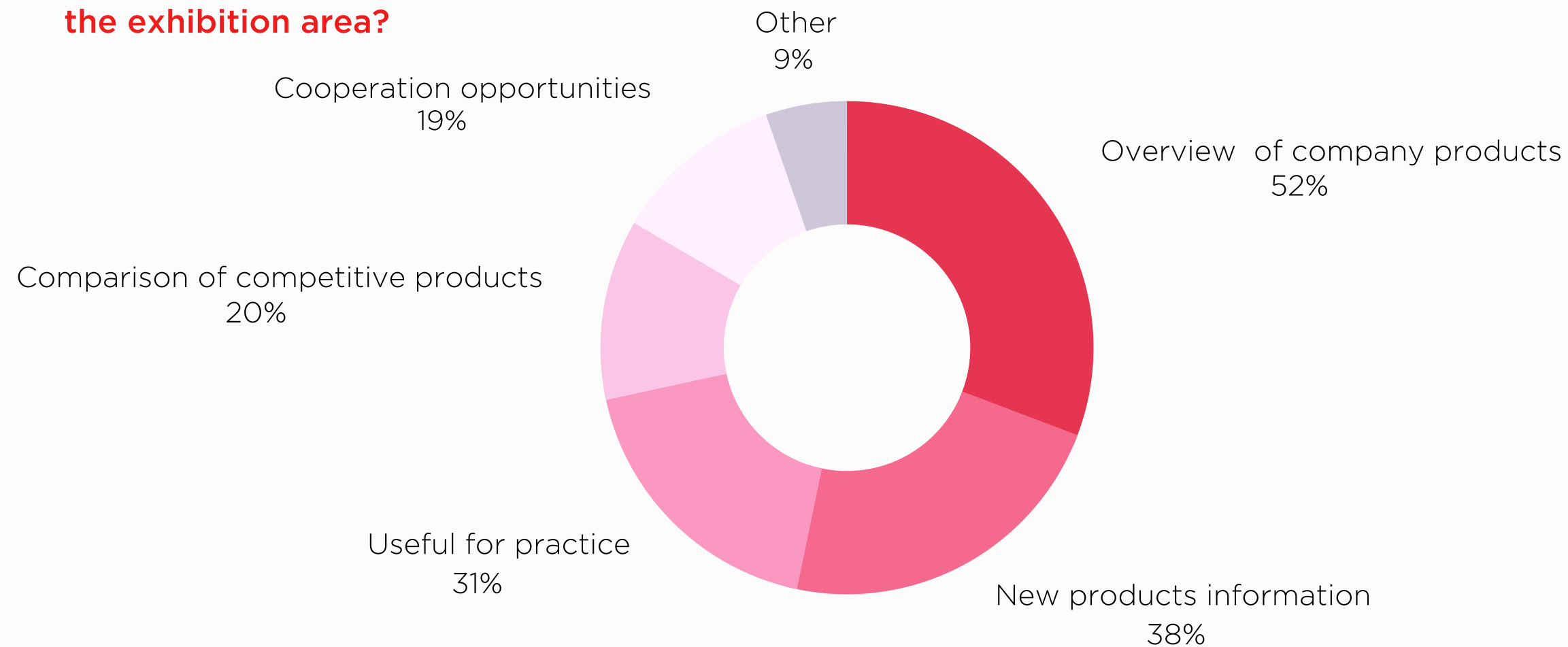


Exhibition area

Post-event evaluation average: What engagement elements encourage you to spend time in the exhibition area during the virtual conference?



Post-event evaluation average: What expectations were met during your virtual visit to the exhibition area?





Virtual success



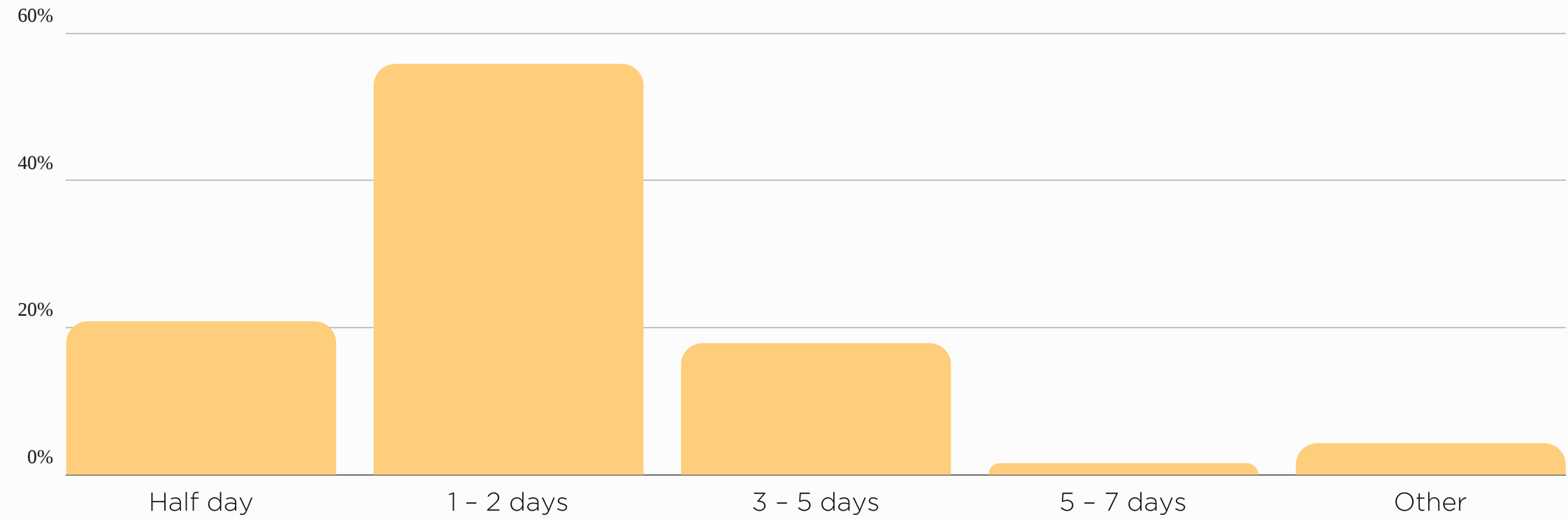
Event length

A crucial question that has occupied event professionals since virtual events became the only reality is the ideal length of an online event. 56% of respondents in the Kenes Group survey selected between 1-2 days as their preferred duration, followed by 21% interested in half-day events. This correlates to the large number of healthcare practitioners that believe in the value of webinars, as seen in another question, where 80% put the activity in the first place as an effective format that improves learning.

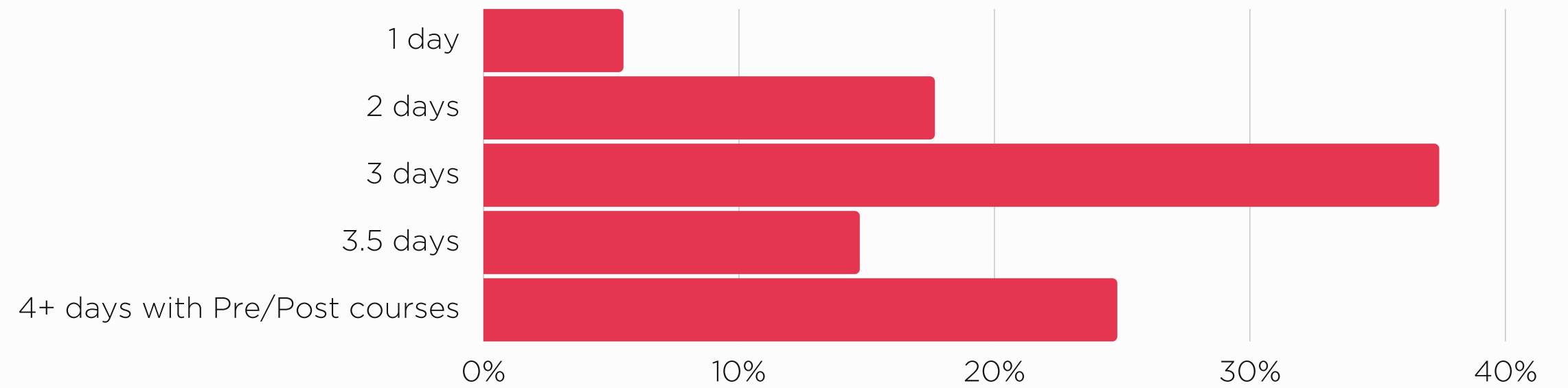


Event length

Kenes Group Survey: What is the ideal length of a virtual conference?



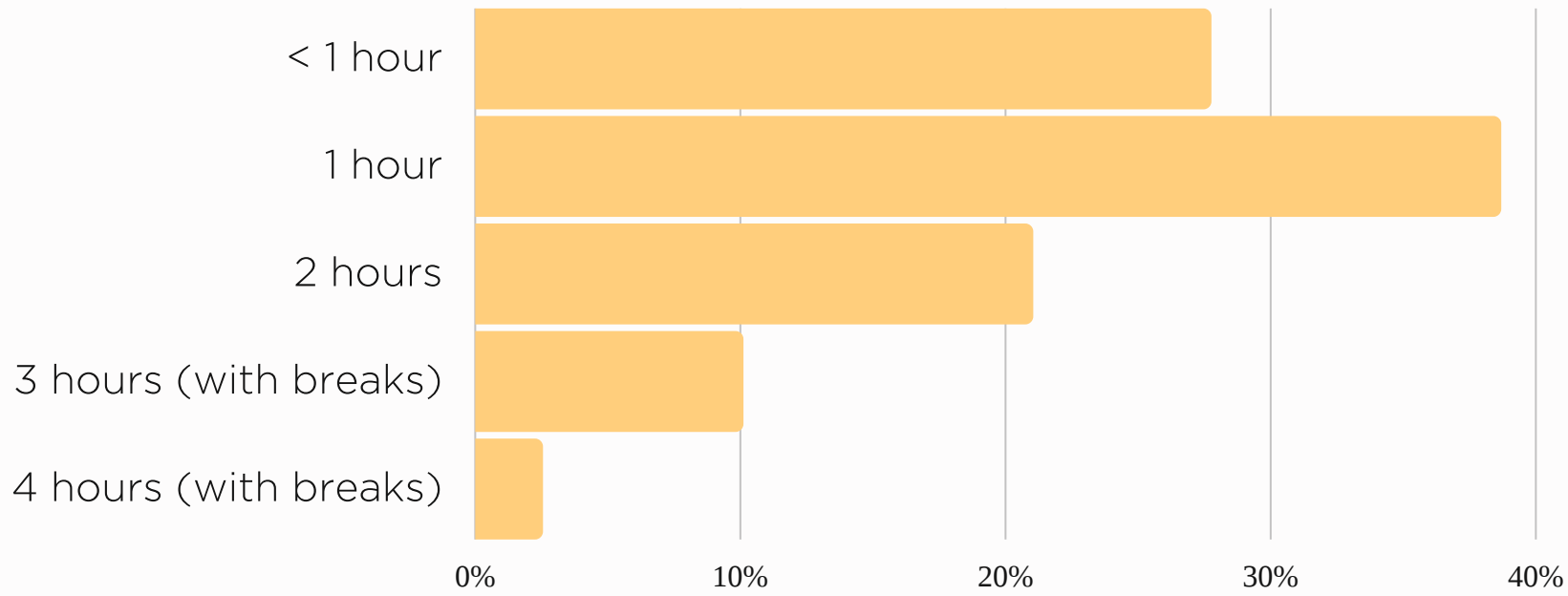
Post-event evaluation: If the conference is held virtually in its usual format (5 days of consecutive activities each day), how many days would you commit to participating?



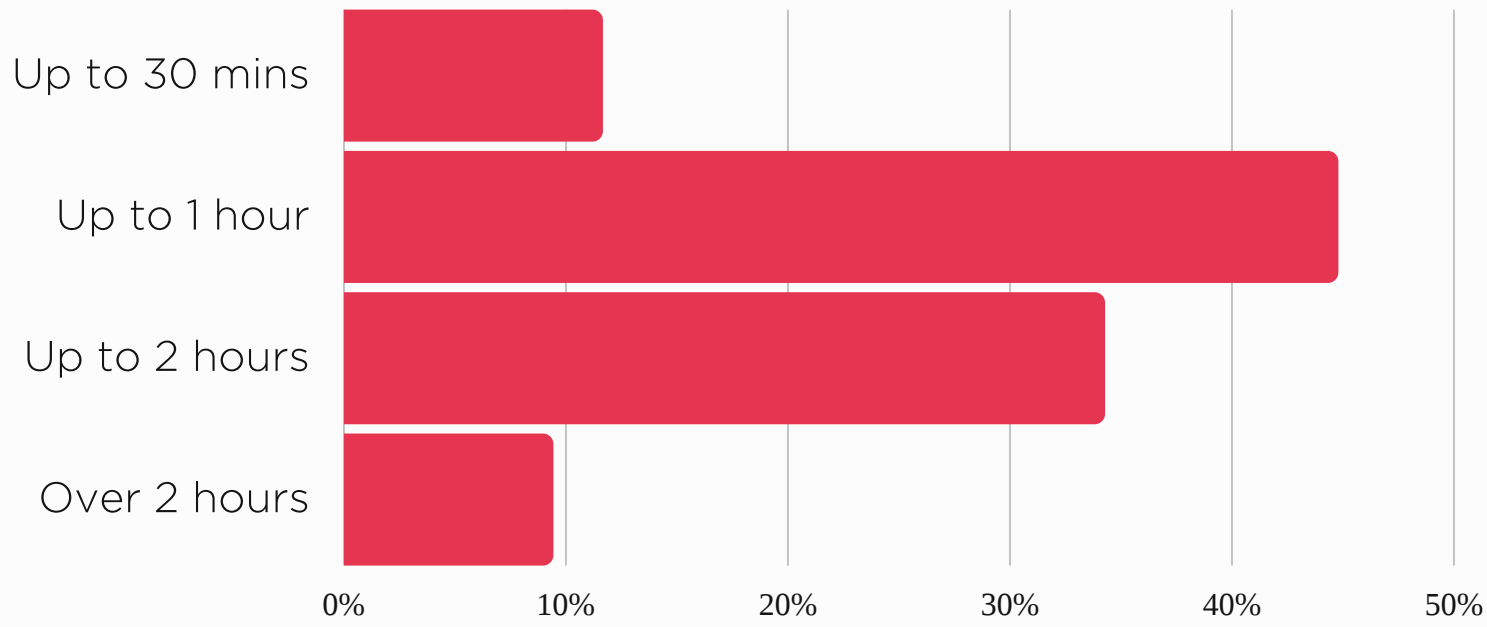
Session length

The ideal length of time spent in one session online is up to one hour, according to 45% of respondents. Virtual event participants supported that statement where 39% said that the ideal session length is 1 hour.

Post-event evaluation: The length of a typical virtual conference session should be:



Kenes Group Survey: How much time would you spend attending one virtual session?



Inherit the future don't aim to save the past

While healthcare practitioners, as well as event professionals, adjust to virtual events, the format shows a lot of promise. Ground-breaking science continues to reach HCPs online, even professionals across disciplines. With an extended event life, there are more opportunities for all stakeholders - the event owner, supporters, participants, and organisers too. And because we find ourselves in this unique moment in time, let this be a reminder that we need to inherit the future rather than aim at saving the past.



The Ideal Virtual Event



LENGTH

- If specific - 3 half-days long
- Starting on Monday
- Lectures of about one hour and available on-demand



FEEES

- Consider lowering the fees compared to an in-person event or a different scheme
- There should be options for grants/scholarships



CONTENT

- High-quality content from various speakers
- Engaging sessions and discussions
- Include pre- and post-event webinars
- CME accreditation
- Active exhibitors



PLATFORM

- Open for months
- Pre-recorded and interactive live streams
- Online chats
- Opportunity to interact with speakers
- 1:1 meetings in between live content days



ACTIVITIES

- Webinars
- eLearning
- Range of short & detailed videos
- Online discussions
- Micro-learning
- Simulations
- ePoster presentations

EMPOWERING KNOWLEDGE



Rue François-Versonnex 7
1207 Geneva, Switzerland

T: +41 22 908 0488

E: info@kenes.com

W: www.kenes.com

© Kenes Group. All rights reserved

Experience advanced virtual
education and networking.
Anytime. Anywhere.

We offer the full solution and
service as well as the technology.