

One Size Doesn't Fit All: Learnings from a Pilot Survey Assessing Preferences for Improvement vs Worsening of Healthcare Professionals

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BACKGROUND

Diseases progress differently, leading to varied treatment goals from improving symptoms to preventing decline which may affect patient expectations.

Patient-reported outcomes (PROs) are a way of capturing these varied patient expectations and experiences, providing insights into how patients perceive treatment benefits across different disease states.¹

Some PRO measures may fail to reflect what matters most to patients by treating improvement and deterioration as equivalent, even though they represent fundamentally different experiences.²

OBJECTIVE

PROs often measure changes between item responses equally, regardless of whether they represent improvement or worsening. The purpose of this pilot study is to assess preferences for achieving improvement vs preventing worsening in a sample of healthcare professionals.

METHODS

A pilot survey was developed using the physical functioning section of Short Form 36 (SF-36), which measures change equally.

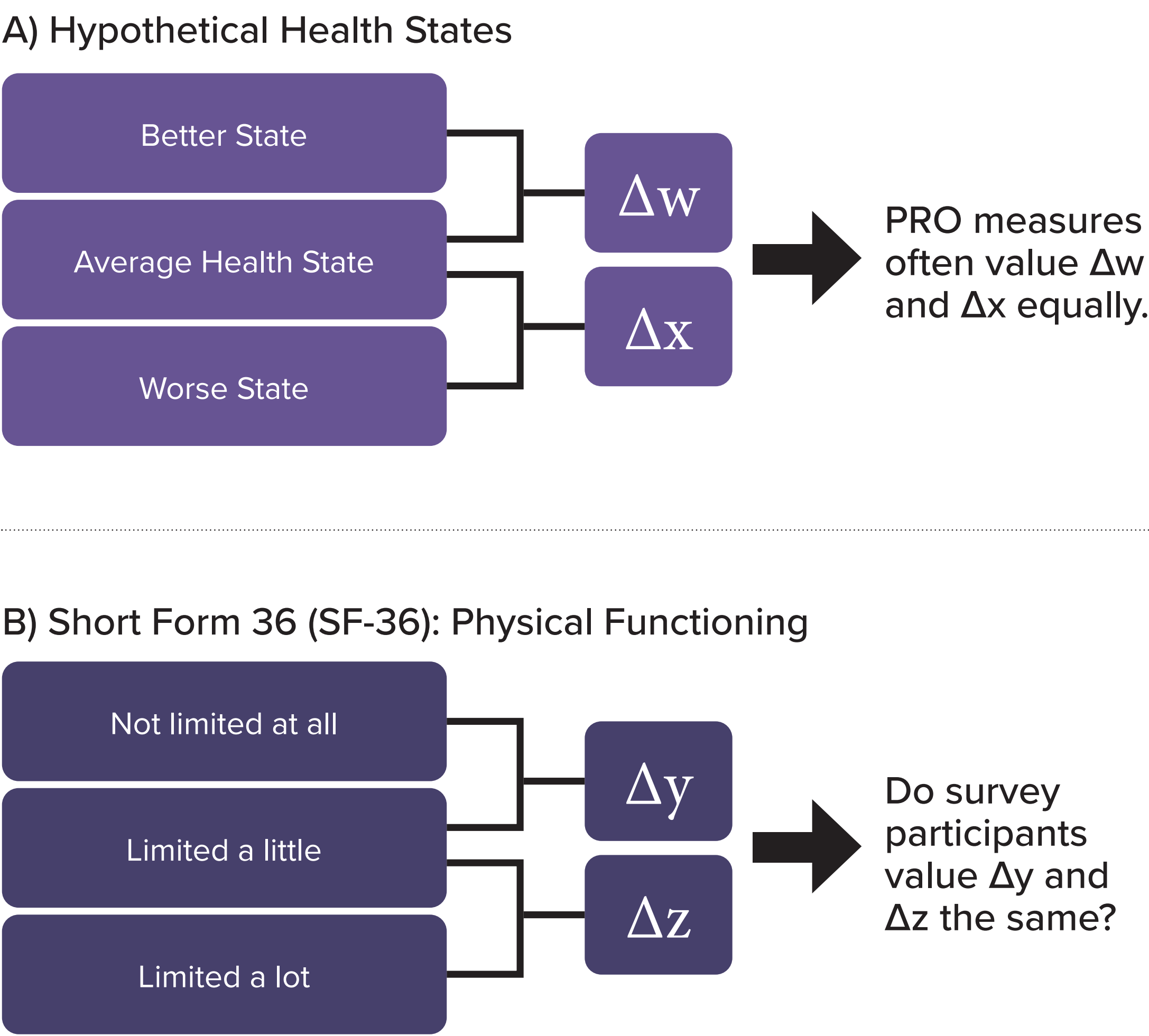
A convenient sample of health professionals within a life science consulting company were recruited to take the online survey in December 2024.

Participants were presented with hypothetical scenarios of each item:

- Participating in moderate activities
 - Participating in vigorous activities
 - Lifting/carrying groceries
 - Climbing several flights of stairs
- Climbing one flight of stairs
 - Bending/kneeling/stooping
 - Walking more than a mile
 - Walking several blocks
 - Walking one block
 - Bathing/dressing yourself

They were limited a little (mid-point) in the hypothetical scenario and asked if they valued achieving improvement (**becoming not limited at all**), preventing worsening (**becoming limited a lot**), or valued both changes equally (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Illustration of Study Concept



RESULTS

Table 1: Demographics

Parameters	N=25
Age	
Mean Age (range)	36 (24 – 59)
Gender	
Female	14 (56)
Male	11 (44)
Race/Ethnicity	
White or Caucasian	14 (56)
Black or African American	1 (4)
Asian or Asian American	8 (32)
Hispanic or Latino	0 (0)
Native American or Alaska Native	0 (0)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0 (0)
Two or more races	0 (0)
Other	2 (8)
Country	
United States	21 (84)
Canada	1 (4)
England	1 (4)
Italy	1 (4)
Spain	1 (4)
Overall Health	
Excellent	4 (16)
Very Good	14 (56)
Good	6 (24)
Fair	1 (4)
Poor	0 (4)



Participants valued achieving improvement over preventing worsening in 9 of 10 hypothetical scenarios (Figure 2).

44% vs 36%
preventing worsening vs achieving improvement

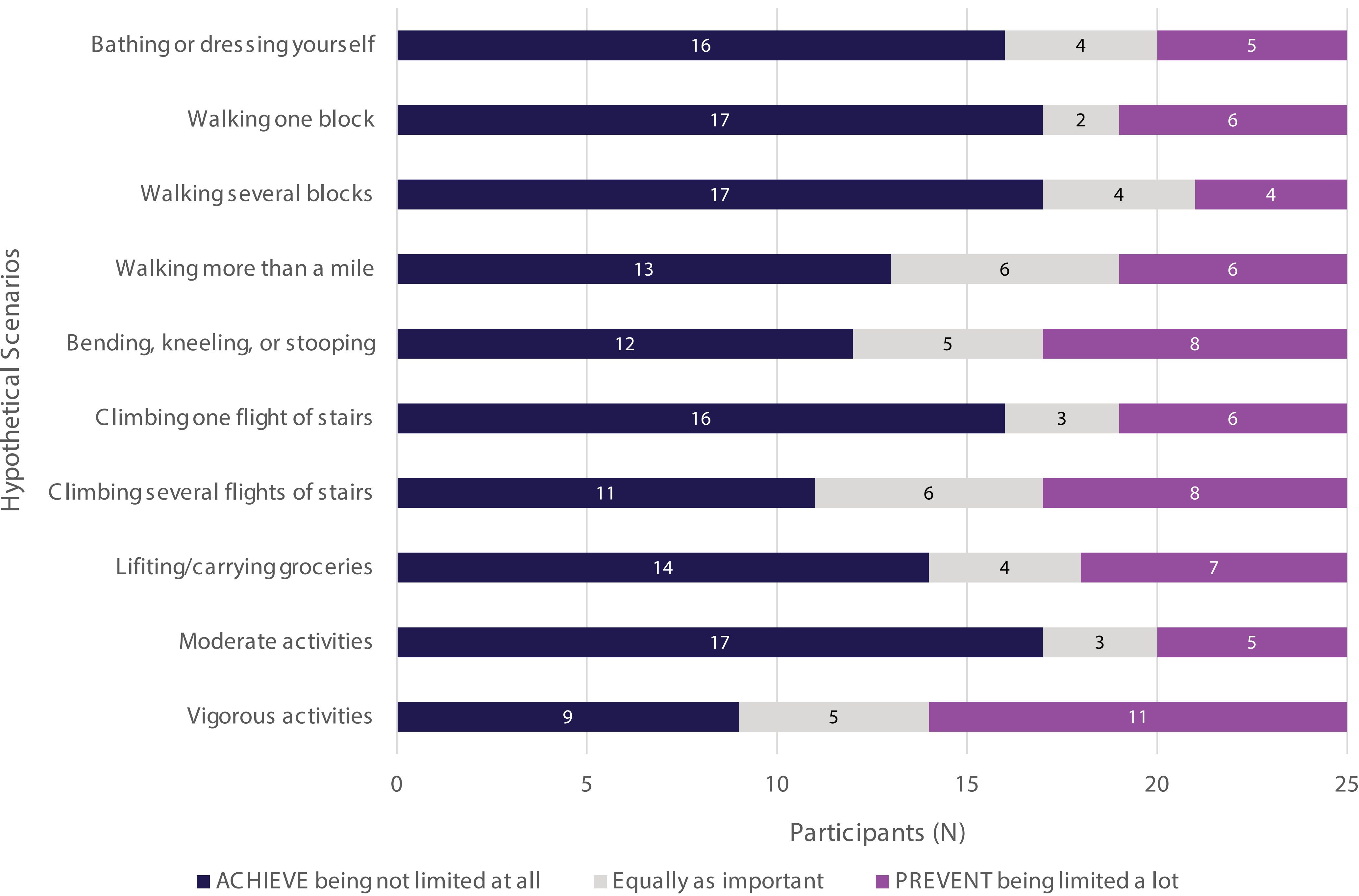
In one scenario, participating in vigorous activities, participants valued preventing worsening over improvement.



In all scenarios, valuing the preferences equally was the least common response.

Figure 2: Survey Results

Choose the option below that is most important to you for each scenario. (ACHIEVE being not limited at all, PREVENT being limited a lot, or both choices are equally as important)



LIMITATIONS

Data were collected from participants who generally self-reported their health status as their health status as at least good.

Participants were recruited from a healthcare organization, and as such, may possess a greater familiarity with the progression or regression of disease states compared to the general population.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Participants generally preferred achieving improvement over preventing worsening in hypothetical scenarios.

There is need for future research on PRO measures that can effectively distinguish between treatment benefits related to improvement vs preventing worsening.

REFERENCES

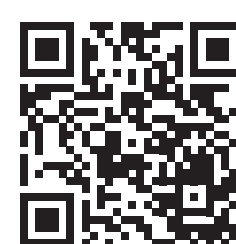
1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, Guidance for Industry: Patient-Reported Outcome Measures: Use in Medical Product Development to Support Labeling Claims. December 2009.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, Patient-Focused Drug Development: Collecting Comprehensive and Representative Input. June 2020.

ABBREVIATIONS IN TABLES AND FIGURES

PRO: Patient-reported outcome (PRO); SF-36: Short Form 36

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