

Introduction of Craniosacral Therapy and its acceptance as a pain relief method among elderly in Hong Kong

Mr CHAN Wing Leung, BSc (Hons) in Chinese Medicinal Pharmacy,
Department of Food and Health Sciences
Supervisor: Ms Florence YIP Wing Man, Lecturer

Background

Craniosacral therapy (CST) is a gentle, non-invasive, hands-on technique that involves placing hands on the body to address tension in the connective tissue known as fascia. Fascia is a tissue network found throughout the body, surrounding organs, glands, nerves, muscles, blood vessels, the brain, and the spinal cord.

The therapy focuses on improving cerebrospinal fluid circulation and influencing rhythms within the nervous system. It is intended to support the body's natural processes related to health and wellbeing.

Given the absence of surveys or reports concerning public understanding and acceptance of CST, particularly among elderly in existing literature, this pilot study seeks to assess public awareness of CST as a complementary treatment from a novel perspective.

Objectives

- To collect preliminary data from elderly via craniosacral therapy introductory talk regarding pain relief in selected non-government organization community centre in Hong Kong for analyzing the cognition and acceptance of the above therapy, treating as one of the complementary and alternative medicine methods for pain relief.
- To explore potential development of craniosacral therapy being the alternative and complementary medicine in Hong Kong and discuss future studies about the possibility of adding alternative therapies in our primary health system.

Methodology

Study design : A cross-sectional study

- ➔ Aged over 60 with the return of completed questionnaire
- ➔ Community centre with elderly service in Sham Shui Po: An Introductory talks on craniosacral therapy (CST)
- ➔ Self-administered and structured Pre and Post Questionnaires.
PSEQ* was also used for understanding of the pain confidence level of the subjects.
*Remark: PSEQ - Pain Self-efficacy Questionnaires
- ➔ Demographic Data:
Current Health condition
Pain confidence level
Awareness and Attitude of Craniosacral Therapy with relevant data about pain management

Discussion

Since complementary and alternative treatment/medicines is an uncommon intervention to be employed in Hong Kong, the significance of this project study is to raise public awareness of complementary and alternative treatments/medicines with potential health benefits, especially for pain relief among the elderly, and hopefully to encourage healthcare policy review by relevant stakeholders.

Conclusion

This study indicates that most elderly individuals in Hong Kong are unfamiliar with the craniosacral therapy. After a one-and-a-half-hour session of introductory health talk, they expressed interest and willingness in accepting CST as one of the pain relief therapy. This therapy shows potential as a complementary pain relief method for older adults. More future research, particularly randomized controlled trials, is proposed to be deployed to confirm its effectiveness, clarify pain mechanisms associated with aging, and develop safer treatments. Future studies should also evaluate cost-effectiveness before broader implementation.

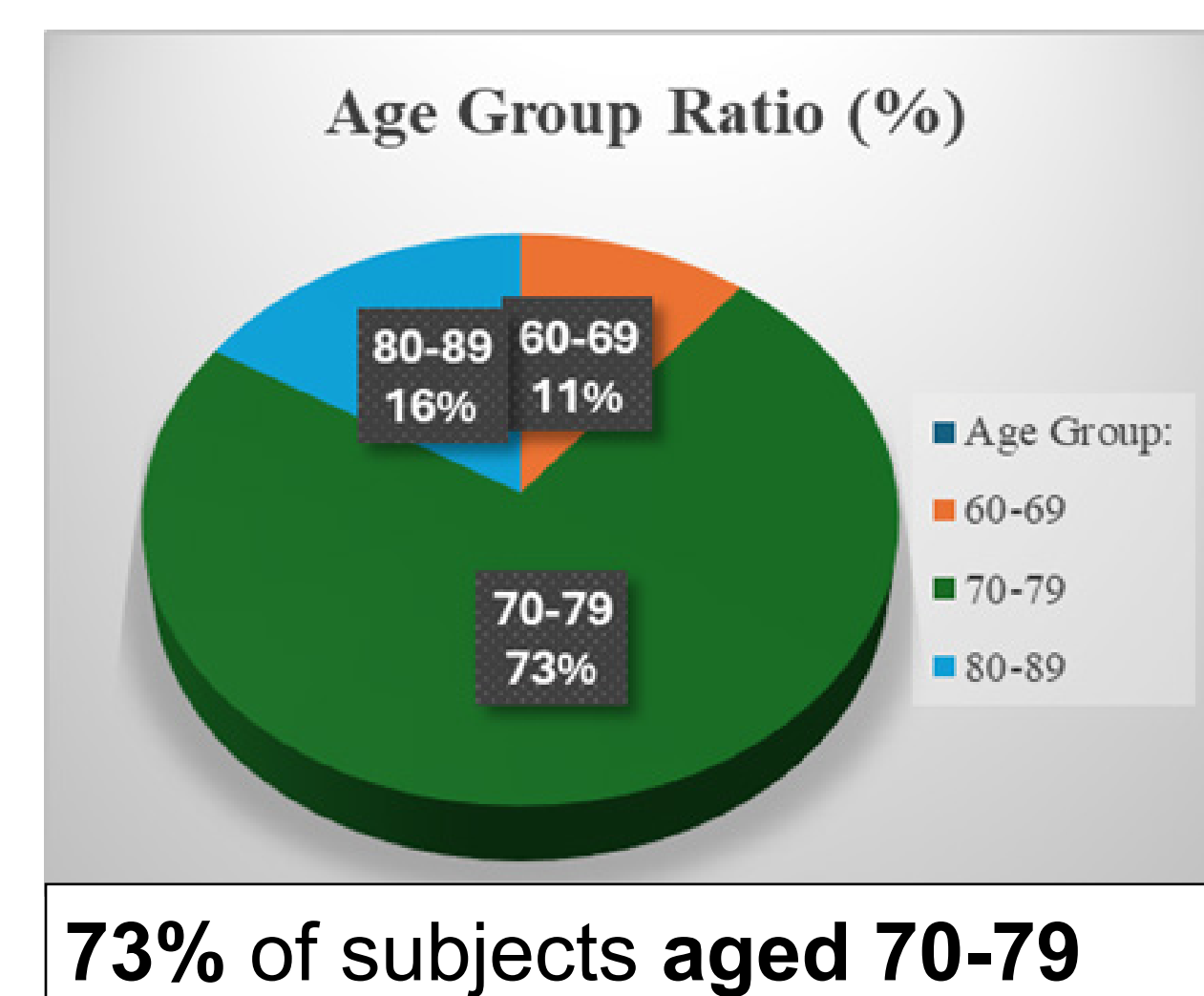
References:

- Haller, H., Dobos, G., & Cramer, H. (2021). The use and benefits of Craniosacral Therapy in primary health care: A prospective cohort study. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2021.102702>
- World Health Organization. (2019). WHO global report on traditional and complementary medicine 2019. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo>.

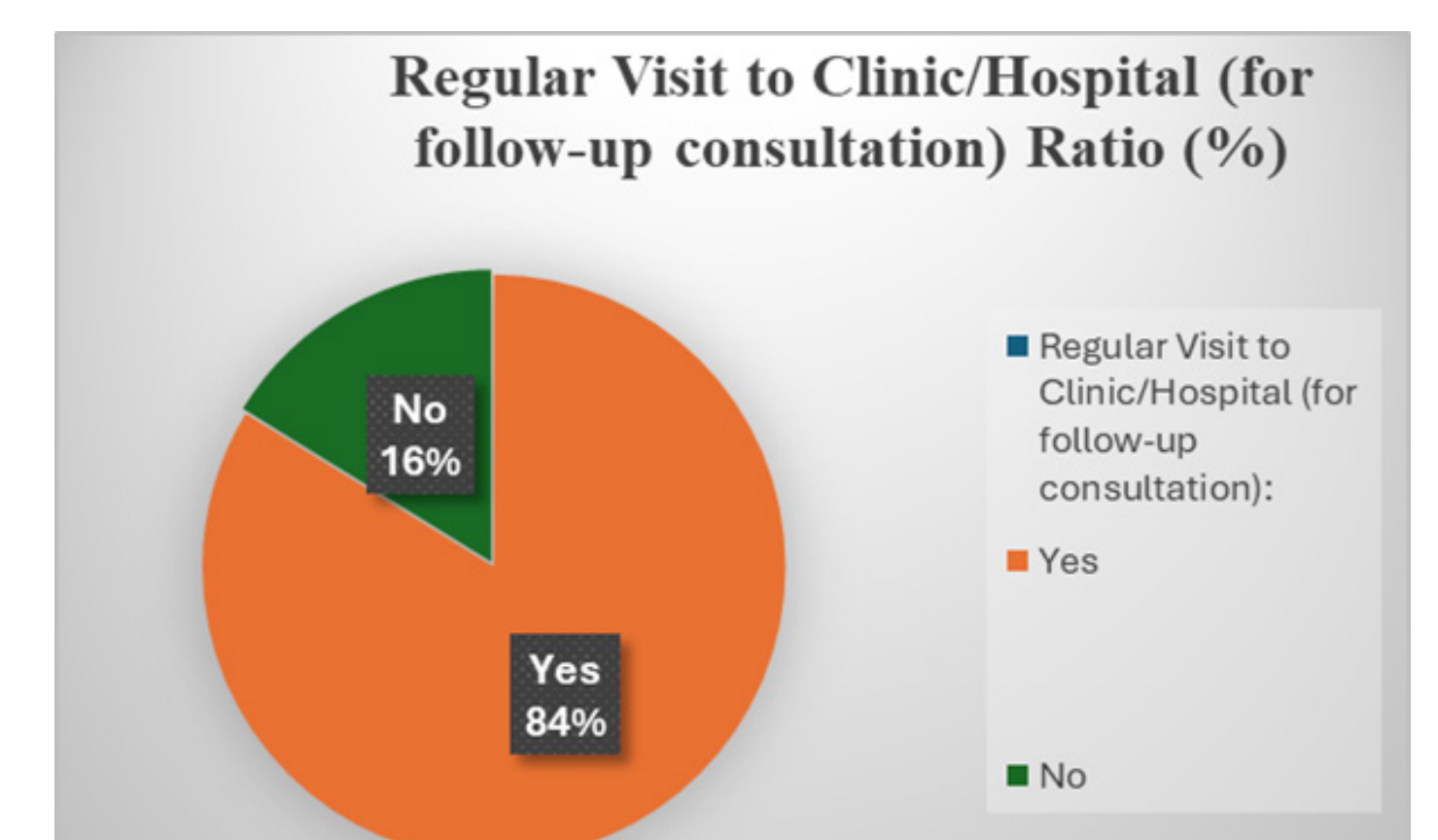
Results

Data from Pre-talk Questionnaires

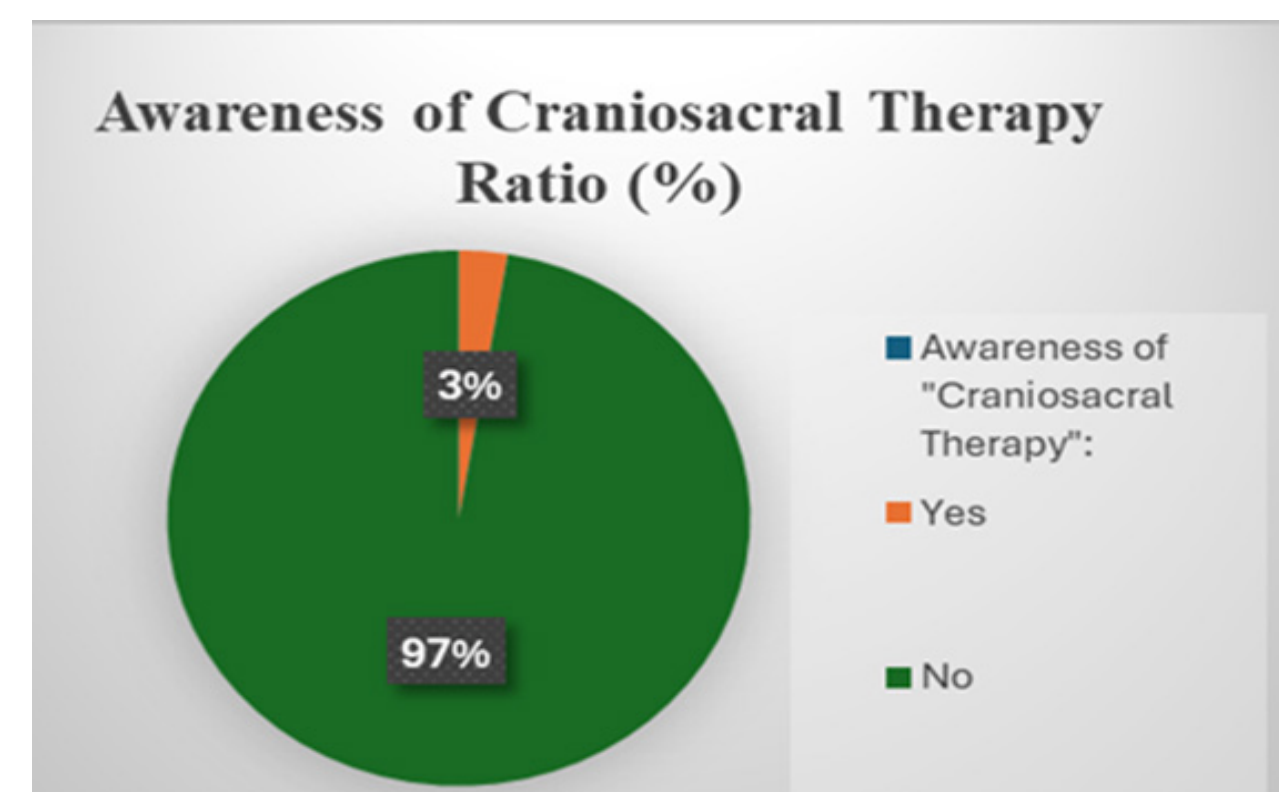
Relevant Demographic Data



73% of subjects aged 70-79



84% of subjects had regular visits to Clinic/hospital for follow-up consultations



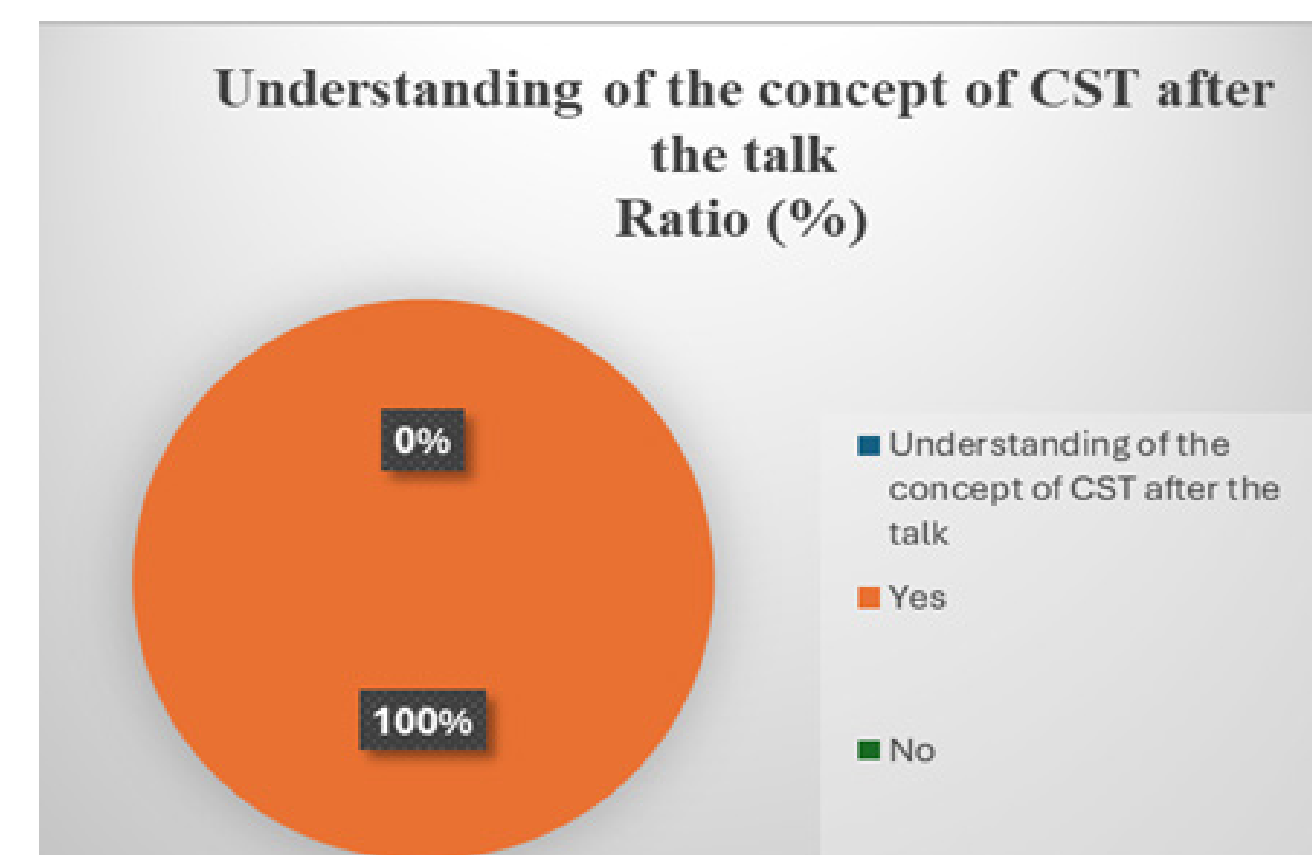
97% of subjects have not heard of craniosacral therapy before the talk

Pain confidence level:-

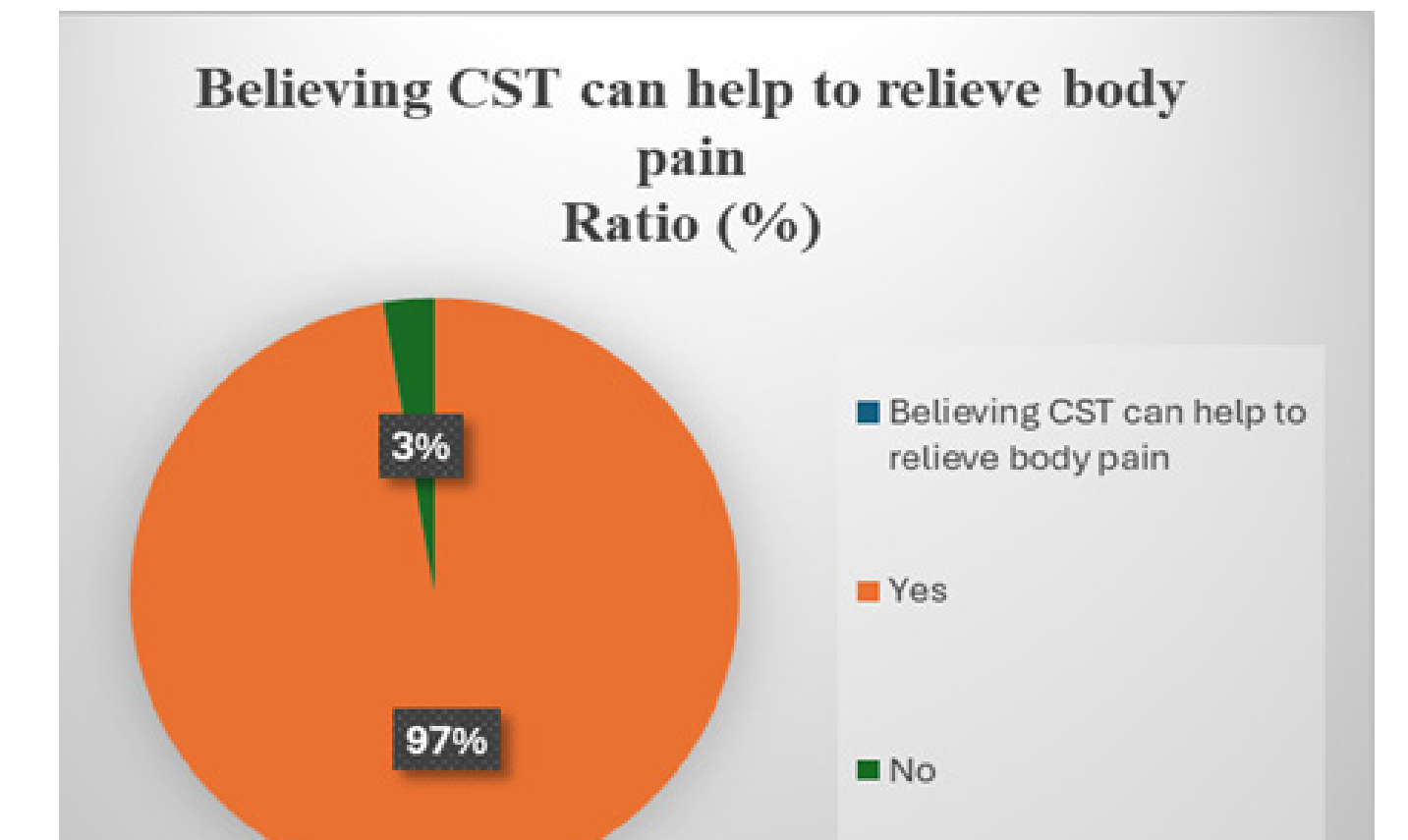
Assessment via Pain Self-efficacy Questionnaires (PSEQ) – 10 items

The mean total PSEQ scores were 40.14 (SD=12.33), with a median value of 40, indicating that the subjects had moderate pain-confidence level compared to a maximum score of 60.

Data from Post-talk Questionnaires



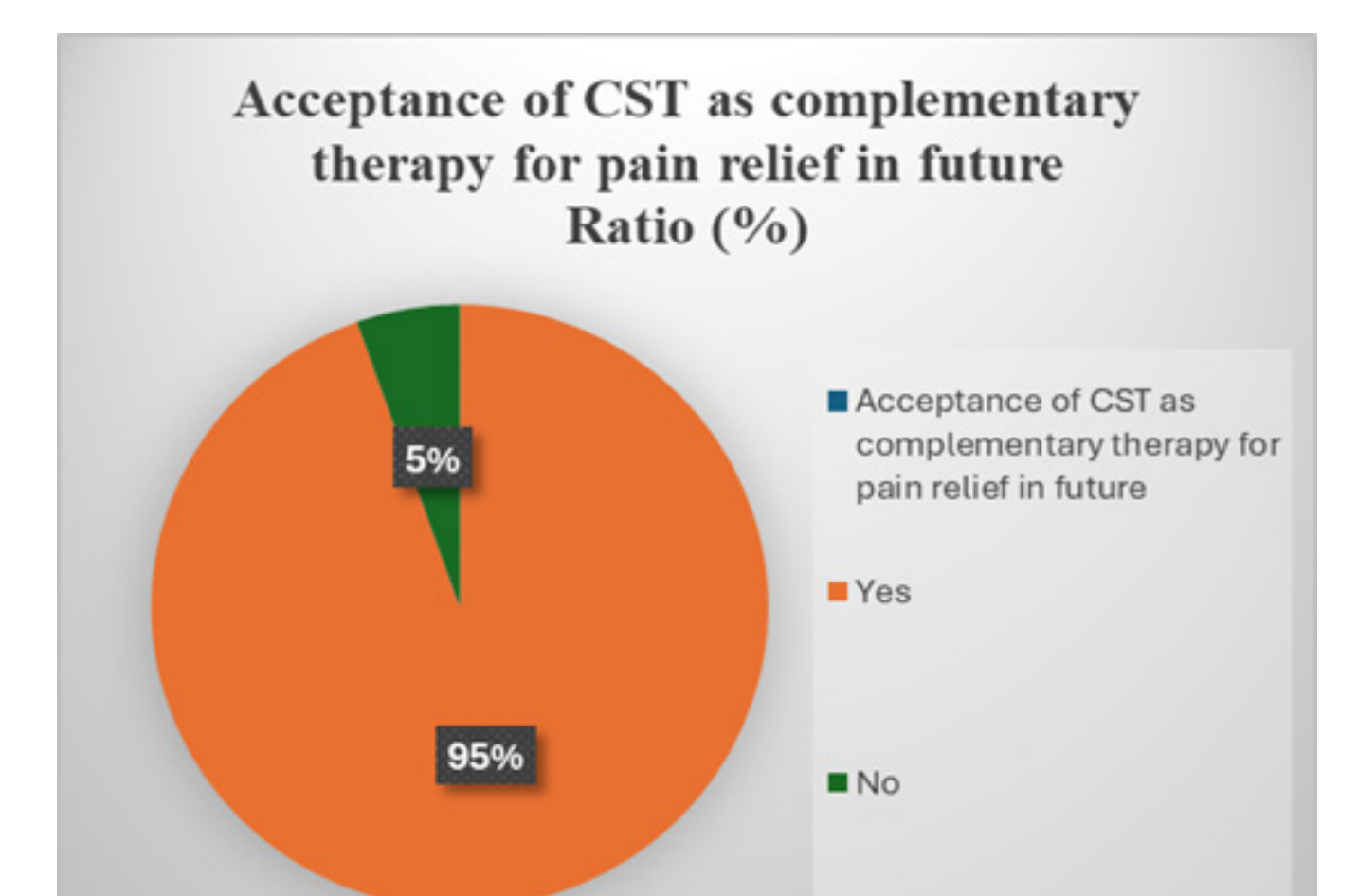
All subjects showed their understanding of the CST concept after the talk



97% of subjects believed CST can help relieve body pain



Craniosacral Therapy introductory talk in Sham Shui Po Community Centre



95% of subjects accepted CST as complementary therapy for pain relief in the future