

2021 WHRI Digital Health Survey





Background:

2021 Digital Health Survey

Between May 7 to June 22, 2021, the WHRI conducted a digital survey among WHRI members and staff to identify priorities for digital health research programs and activities.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the uptake of digital tools among WHRI members during the pandemic.
2. Understand the range and scope of ongoing and new digital health research projects by WHRI members.
3. Identify how WHRI can support existing digital health projects and catalyze new digital health research to improve health for women and other marginalized genders, and newborns.

Findings will be used to inform WHRI's digital health strategy and programs moving forward.

Method

SURVEY TOOL

The survey tool was based on the 2019 Digital Health Scan questionnaire and was developed further to explore how COVID-19 has affected interest in and support needs for digital health research.

The survey was built on the digital survey platform tool REDCap.

SURVEY COLLECTION

The online survey was piloted among a few WHRI researchers involved in digital health projects and revised according to pilot participant suggestions.

The target population for the survey was **WHRI members and staff.**

In total, 104 respondents completed the survey.

SURVEY PROMOTION

Target respondents were invited to take the 2021 Digital Health Survey using the following digital methods:



Targeted emails, e-blasts, and email newsletters

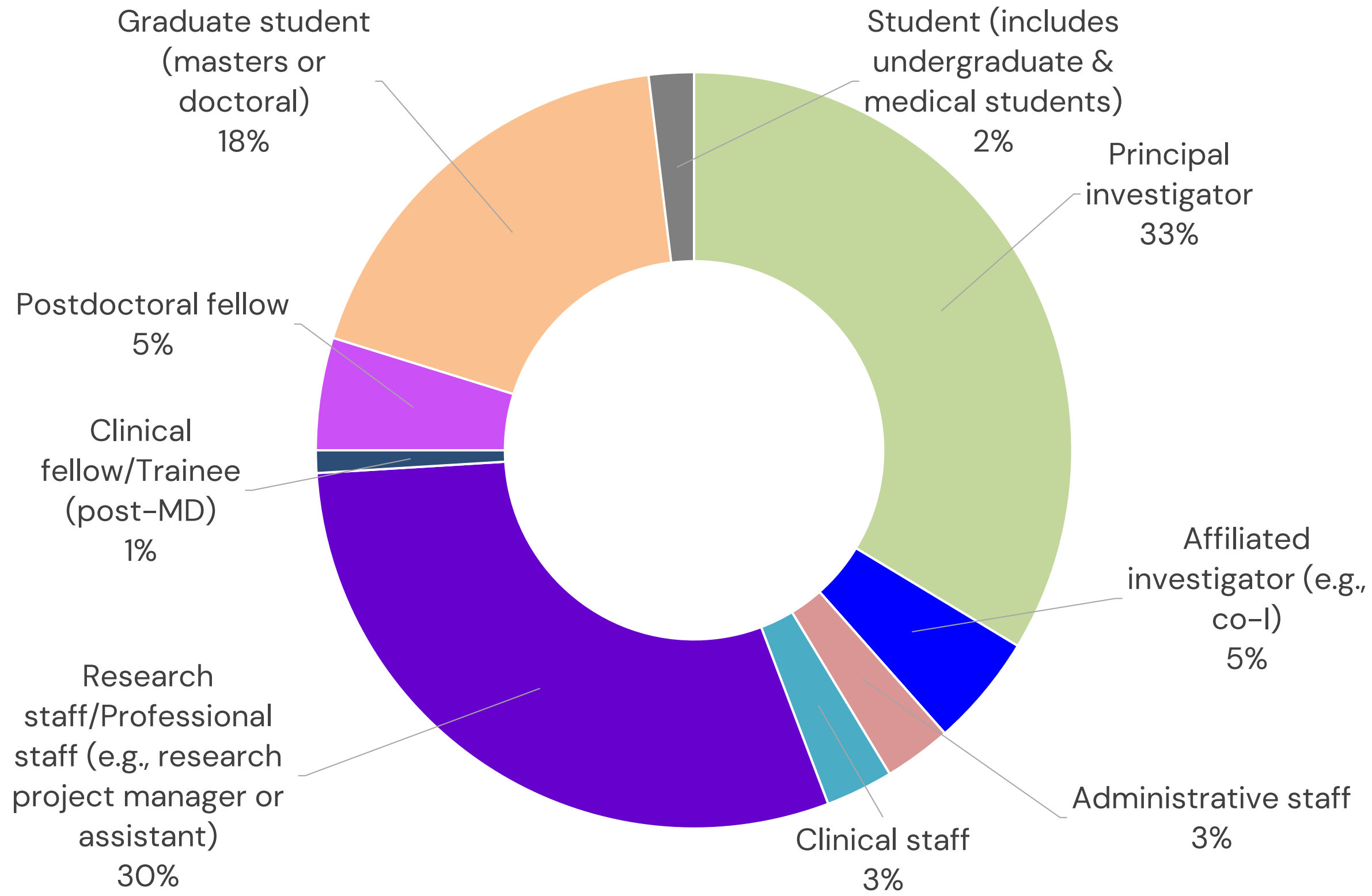


Social media stories and posts

RESULTS



Among the sample, 95% reported being a WHRI member. Most respondents were research investigators, staff, or graduate students.



WHRI members and staff revealed widespread interest in digital health, with 80% either currently involved or intending to be involved in a digital health project.

During COVID-19...

31% Started a new digital health research project

33% Continued an existing digital health research project

0% Have stopped a digital health project as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

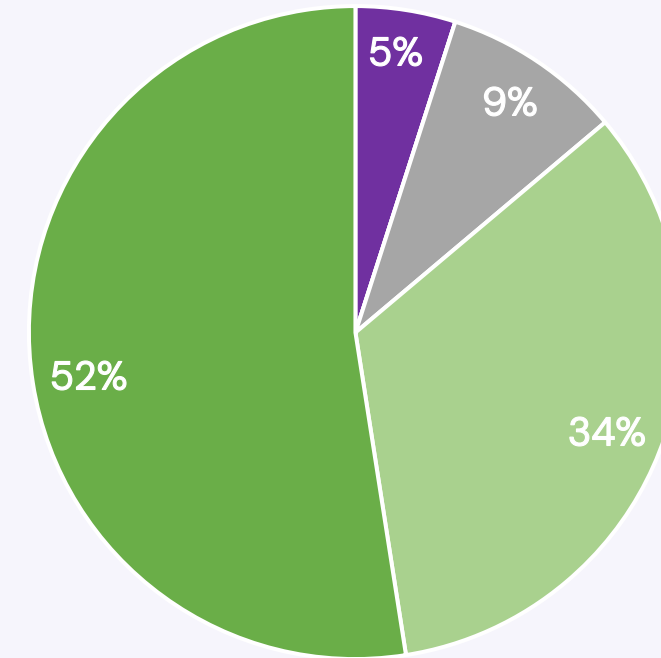
19% Were not involved but interested in exploring opportunities to incorporate digital health technologies in their current research project

21% Were not involved but interested in starting a new digital health research project

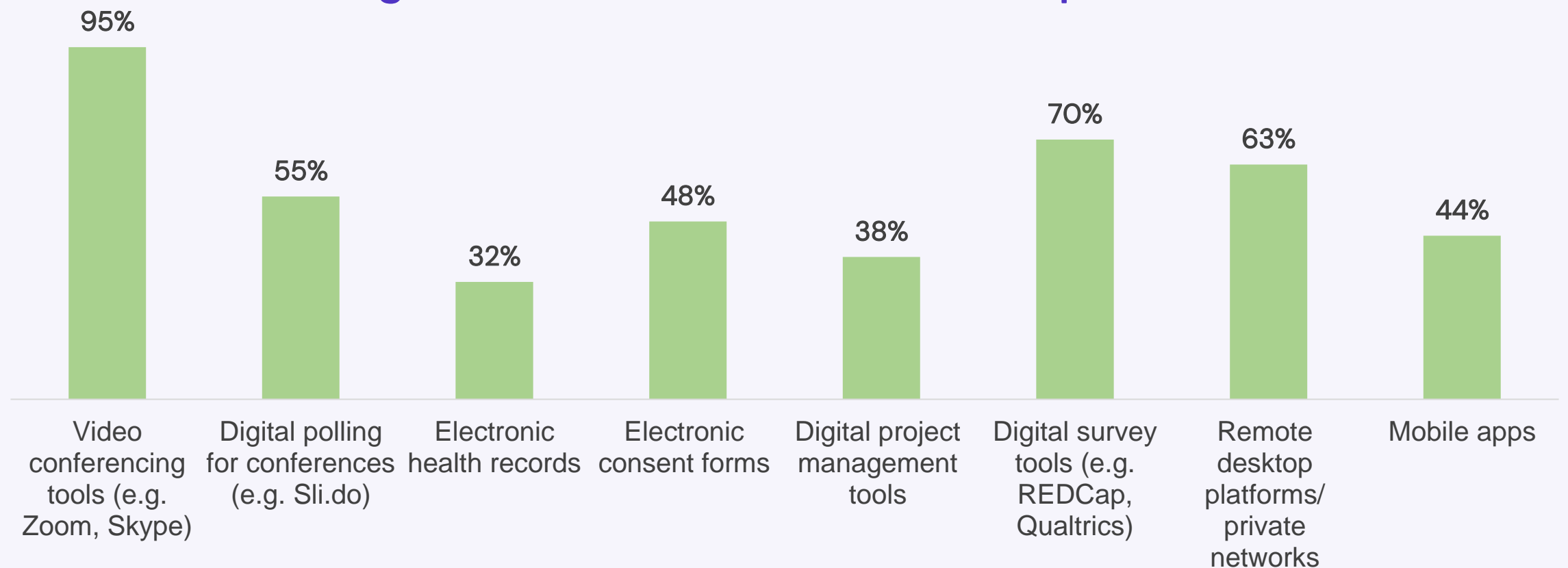
20% Were not involved and did not intend to be involved in a digital health research project

WHRI researchers reported an increased use of digital tools for their work and research during COVID-19

How has the use of digital tools in your research or practice changed now compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic?



Digital tools used for research and practice

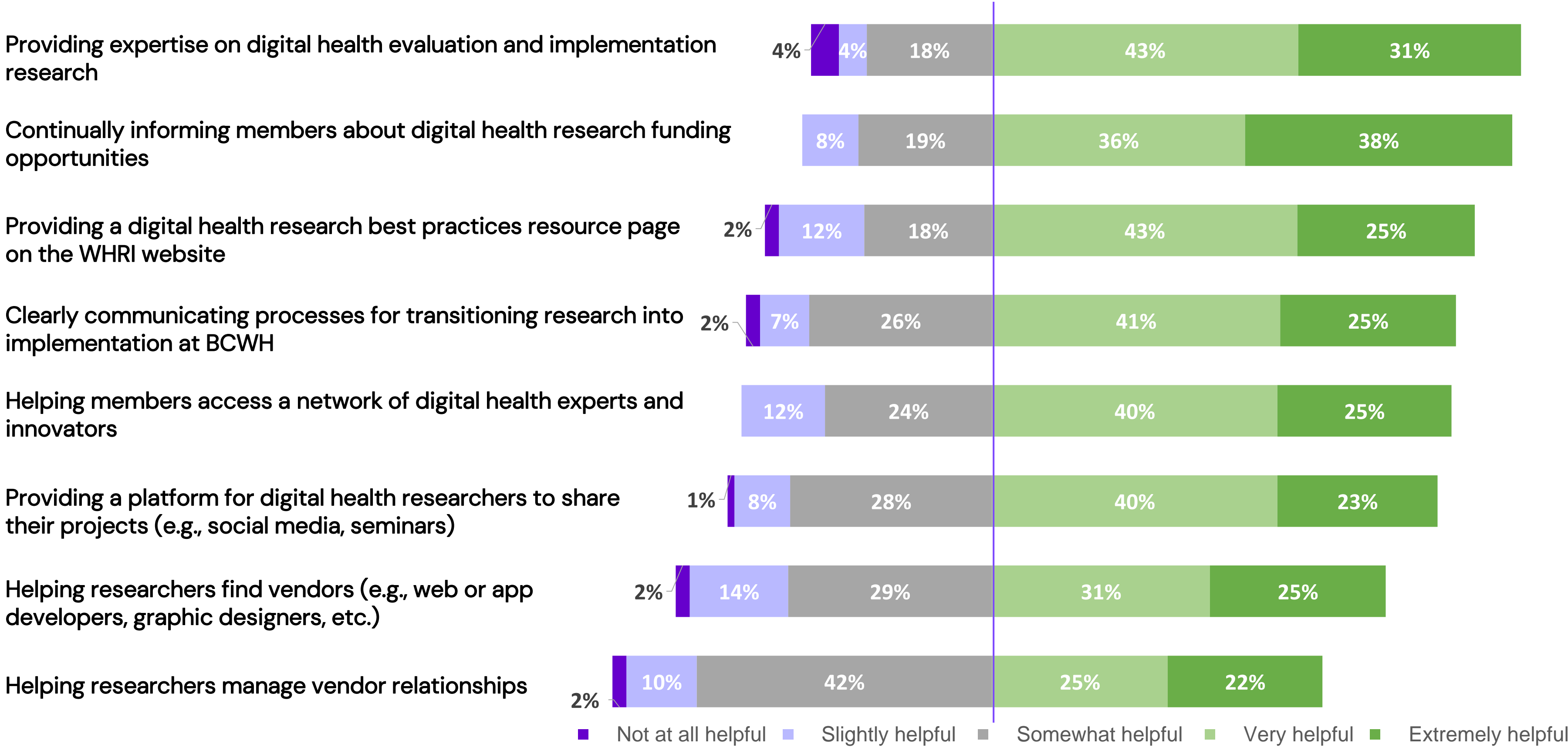


Open text responses provided further insight into how workflows and research changed due to COVID-19

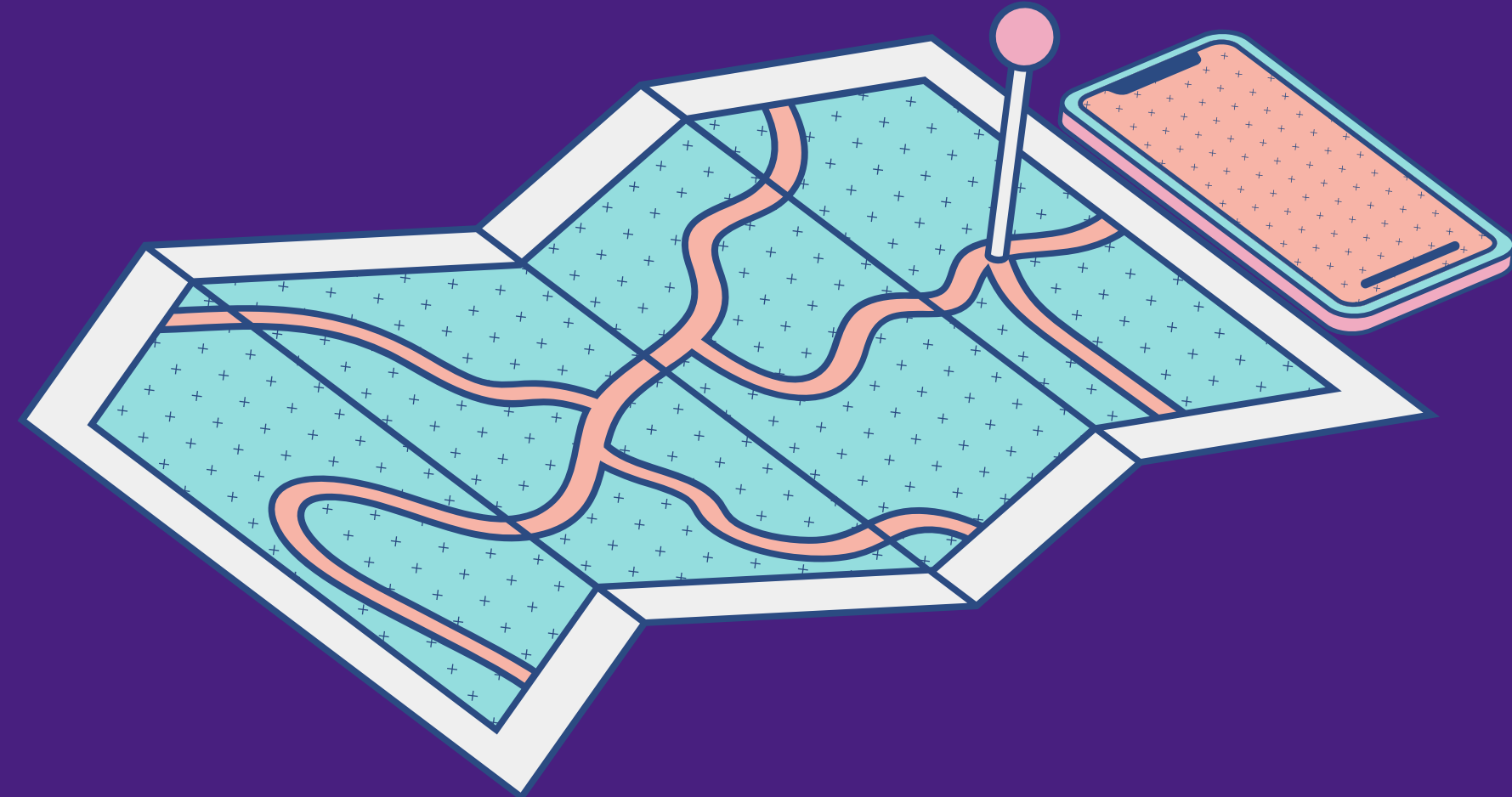


Open text question identified changes in how research was conducted during COVID-19, such as **virtual communication and adopting new workflows which leveraged digital tools**, instead of in-person or paper-based methods and processes. Researchers also noted that the **pandemic led to a perceived greater technological acceptance and new opportunities to explore digital health research** and care delivery. While in some cases, respondents shared that the digital transition increased their burden due to regulatory and process changes, more administrative workload, and fatigue from virtual work, others noticed that digital processes led to efficiency of time and financial resources.

Respondents revealed that the WHRI can support digital health projects by...



NEXT STEPS



Recommendations:

Create an accessible touchpoint for WHRI members interested in digital health research. Increase awareness about support from the incoming Digital Health Research Manager.

Develop a digital health hub on the WHRI website, where prioritization of content and its organization is based on the most helpful resources identified and developed with KT and SBCC best practices.

Leverage the 2021 Digital Health Week to showcase WHRI-led digital health projects and provide events/workshops that members reported being interested in.

Grow the WHRI's network of digital health experts, technologists, and women's and neonatal health researchers.

Be flexible and aim to meet researchers' needs. Continually survey WHRI members and stakeholders to understand challenges and facilitators to provide digital health support which is responsive, informed by data, and provides value to members.

QUESTIONS?

For any questions, please contact WHRI's Digital Health Research Manager, Candice Taguibao, at candice.taguibao@cw.bc.ca