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Occupational Therapists' Perceptions of Sensory Processing Evaluation Methods

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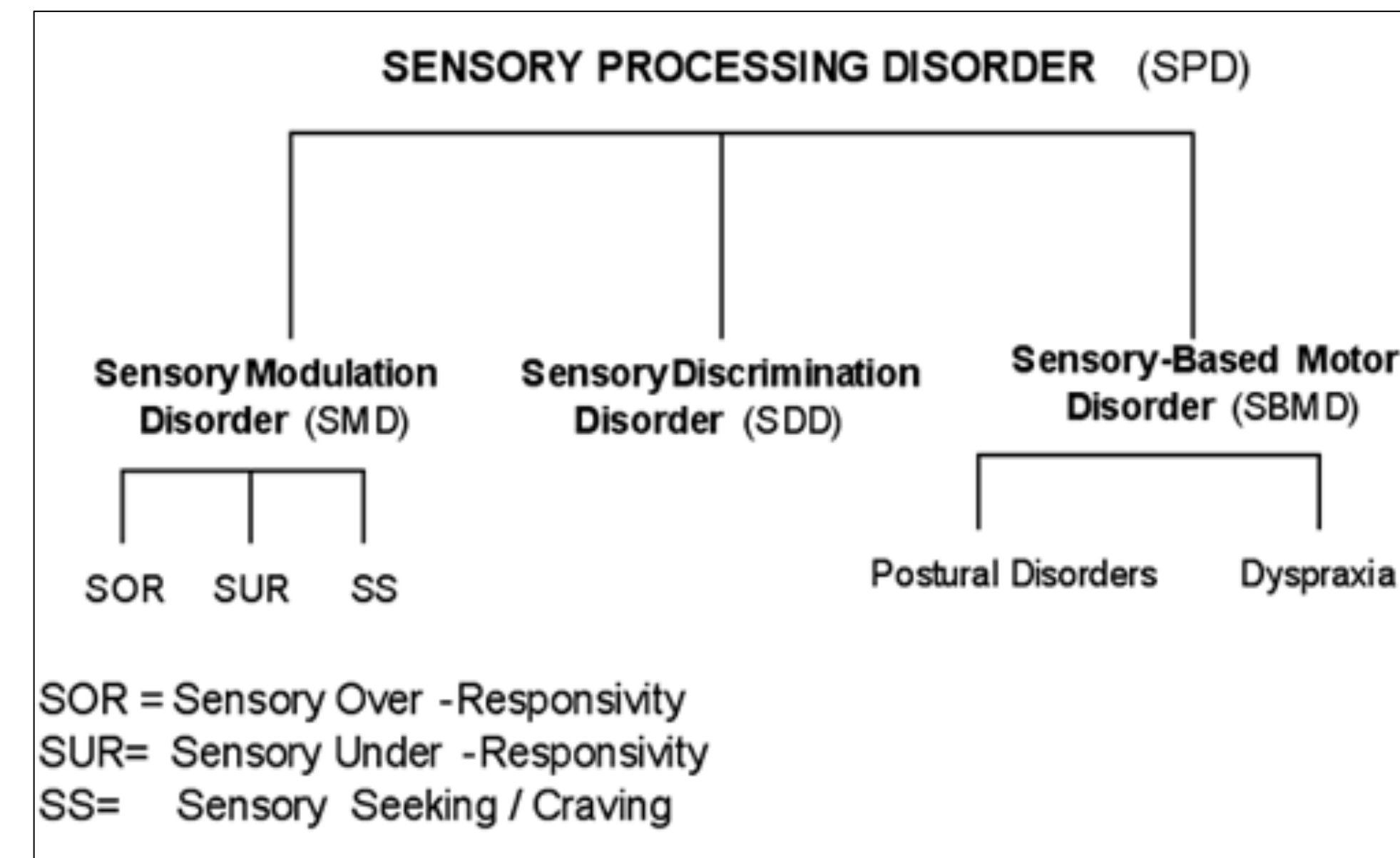


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BACKGROUND

- Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a challenging, complex process (Costa-López et al., 2021)
- 5% - 16.5% of the general population are impacted by sensory challenges and needs (Miller et al., 2017)
- Limitations of research & resources in quality SPD evaluation process by OTs for clients and families (Asaba et al., 2017; Schaaf & Case-Smith, 2014; Schoen et al., 2021)
 - Lack of open discussion to discuss assessment tools
 - Lack of research on exploration of OTs' experiences
 - Lack of quality in OT and client- and family-centered care



(Miller et al., 2017)

PURPOSE

- Obtain OTs perceptions and clinical reasoning skills when evaluating clients and families impacted by sensory processing challenges.
- Increase OTs' clinical performance and level of confidence
- Bring awareness and advocacy for OTs
- Quality evaluation = Quality therapy

METHODS

- Mixed-Methods:** survey & interview
- Inclusion Criteria:**
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Ages 25-65
 - Knowledgeable in sensory processing
- Recruitment Method:** Star Institute, other non-affiliated outpatient pediatric clinics, and public platforms

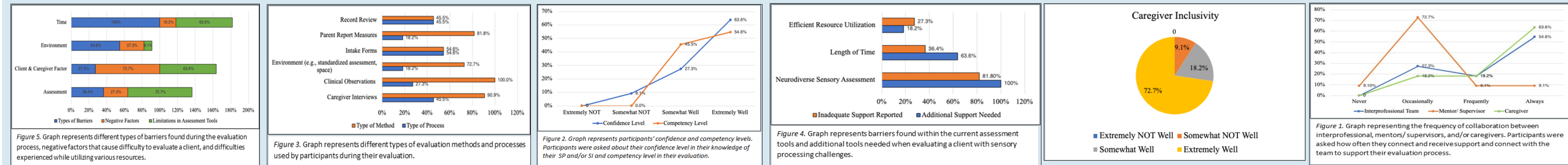
RESULTS

Themes		
Evaluation setting is a primary influencer	Limitations of Standardized & Non-Standardized Assessments	It takes a village to evaluate a child
Subthemes: Time Factor Client Factor Environmental Factor	Subthemes: Neurodiversity Strength-Based Normative Criteria-Based	Subthemes: Caregivers/ Parents Mentors/ Supervisors Interprofessional Teams

Qualitative Results

Time Factor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"So you learn to establish that therapeutic relationship first 5 or 10 min right when you see them and... having all those materials from the get-go right when they arrive. It is a good way to start that therapeutic relationship with a child and the parent because you do not have a lot of time"	Neurodiversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"...acknowledging neurodiversity from a sensory perspective...is the kind of work that just does not lend itself well to a structured rigid medical model...Unfortunately right now that makes it largely inaccessible to the people who really need it...[and] there are other professionals that just do not have the breadth of understanding..."	Caregivers/ Parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"I always feel really good when I get the feedback from the parent or from the team that they are finally starting to connect some of the dots [and]... those connections.""...there could be a benefit to doing an assessment with a parent as well during the evaluation process...within the sensory- based clinical setting. There is a good chunk of the concerns that are brought to the table by the parent, but actually have more to do with their own dysregulation and their own understanding or interpretation of their child's presentation. There is so much education that happens in there..."
Client Factor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"I definitely have had assessments that started in a more dysregulated place because a [client] is maybe nervous or maybe they are very dependent on their parent first...""...overall regulation for the client... how comfortable are they, how easily are they able to adapt? Are they triggered by a particular input or by certain types of activities that are really overwhelming, or they [sic] know that they are not going to be successful and so they shut down or avoid?"	Strength-Based: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"A bit more strength-based data to emerge [and] not necessarily just getting deficit scores or things that are far out of the normal...but what are those client profile strengths, what are the things that are meaningful for them..."	Interprofessional Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"I receive a referral, [and] we send paperwork to the family so that they can complete an intake form... aside from insurance and all those different pieces a health and developmental history along with areas of concerns."
Environmental Factor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"We are working in their world, but in an assessment, very often, they are coming into our space."	Normative Criteria-Based: <ul style="list-style-type: none">"There might be a physical limitation [for] the clients that we are working with [who] are not necessarily able to participate in all of the different assessment tasks. The same thing can be said for the overall cognitive development of a client [who is] going to attend and process verbal directions on a standardized protocol"	

Quantitative Results



DISCUSSION

- High demands in assessments tools and evaluation process have been noted
- Increase number of barriers and limitations were found
- Working with clients with sensory processing challenges require flexibility & multiple tools to help better assist clients and caregivers

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- More strength-based and neurodiverse tools are needed
- Caregiver support is important in the process of evaluation
- Clinical reasoning and evaluation methods were consistent throughout all participants

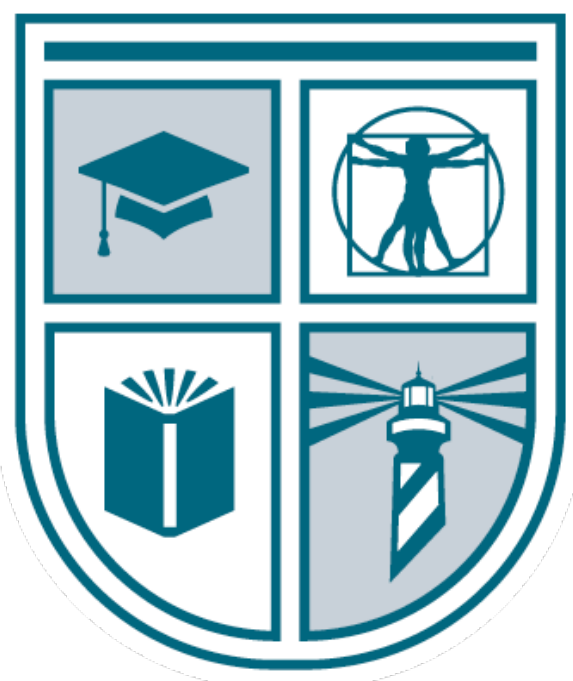
REFERENCES



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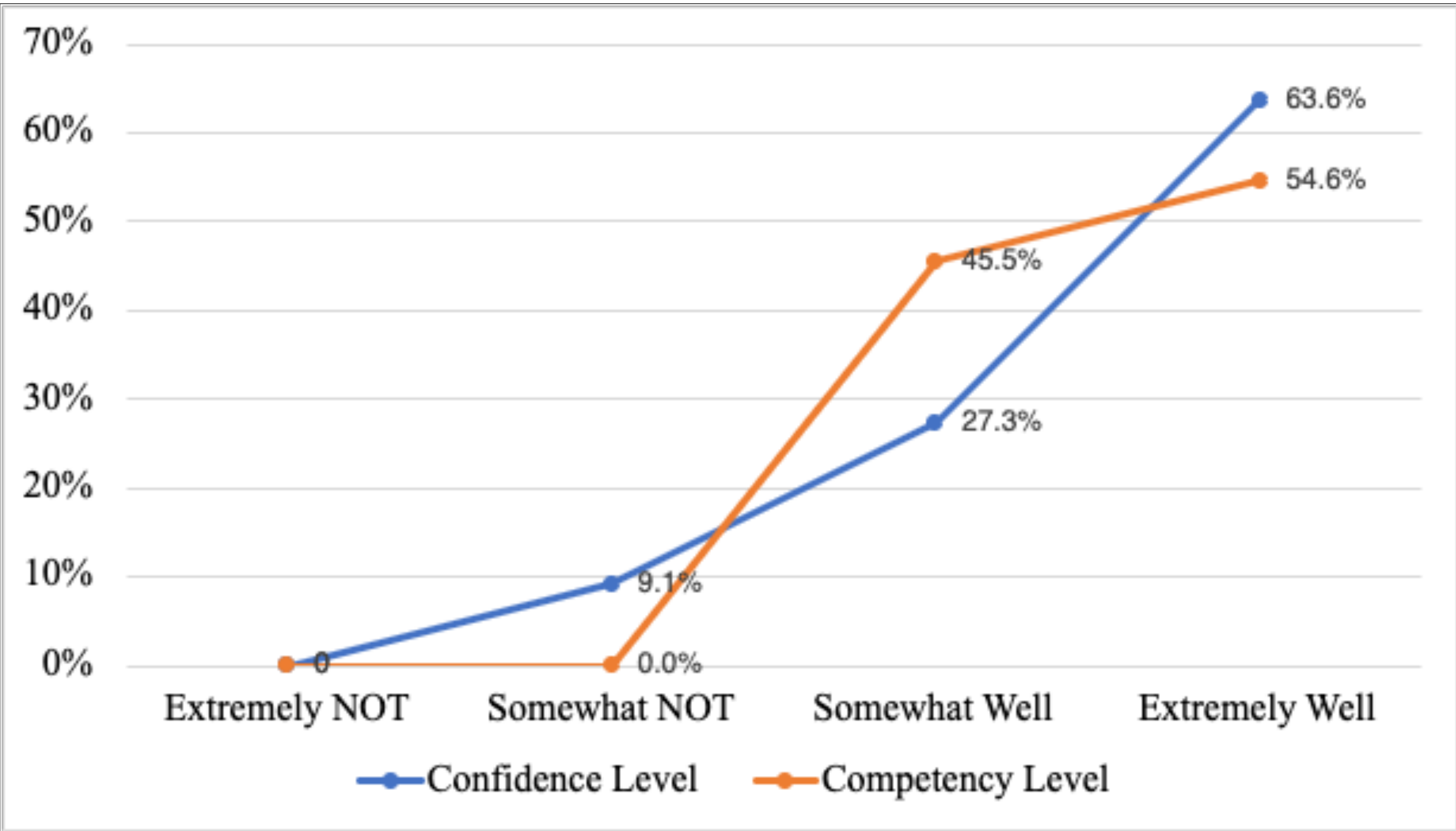
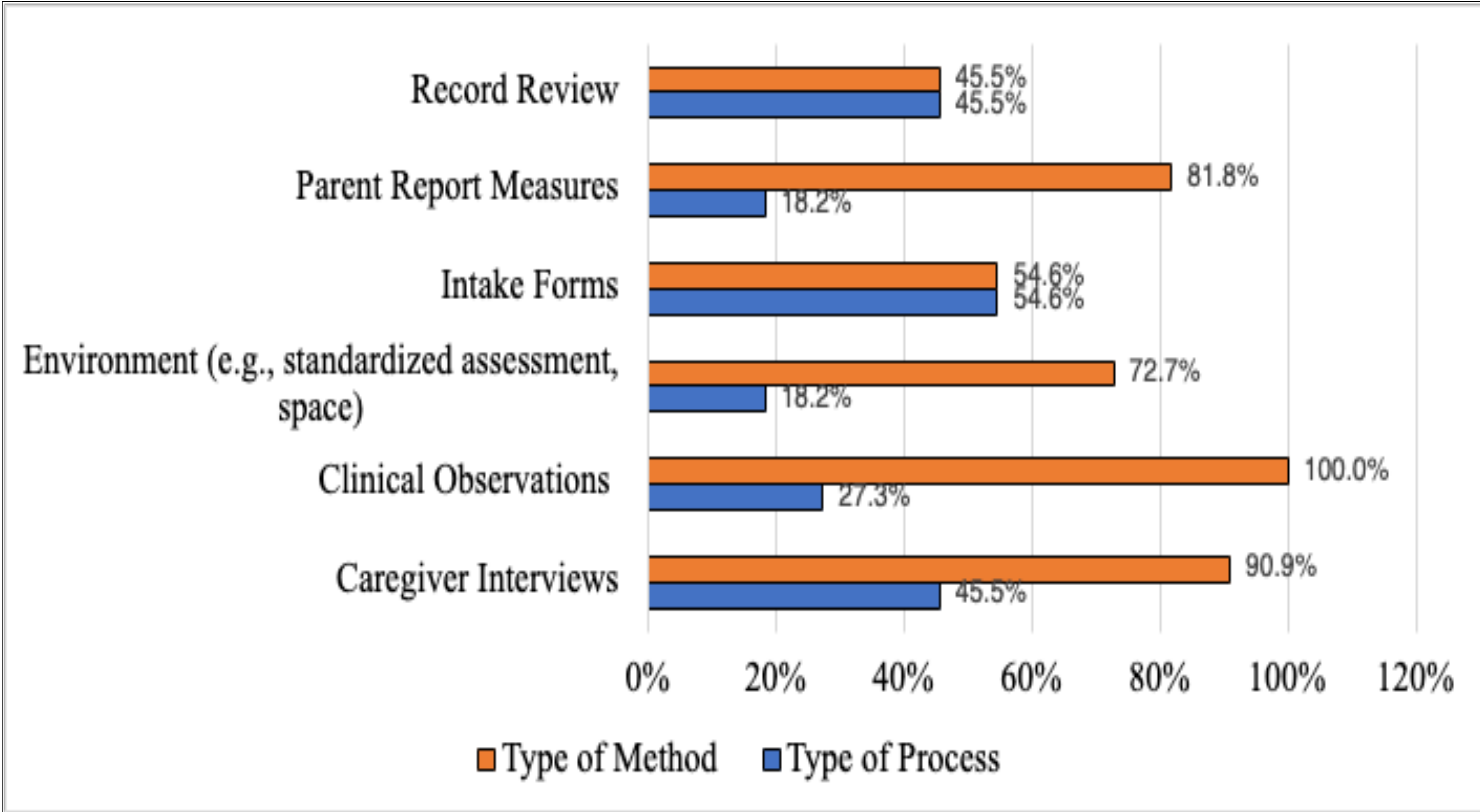
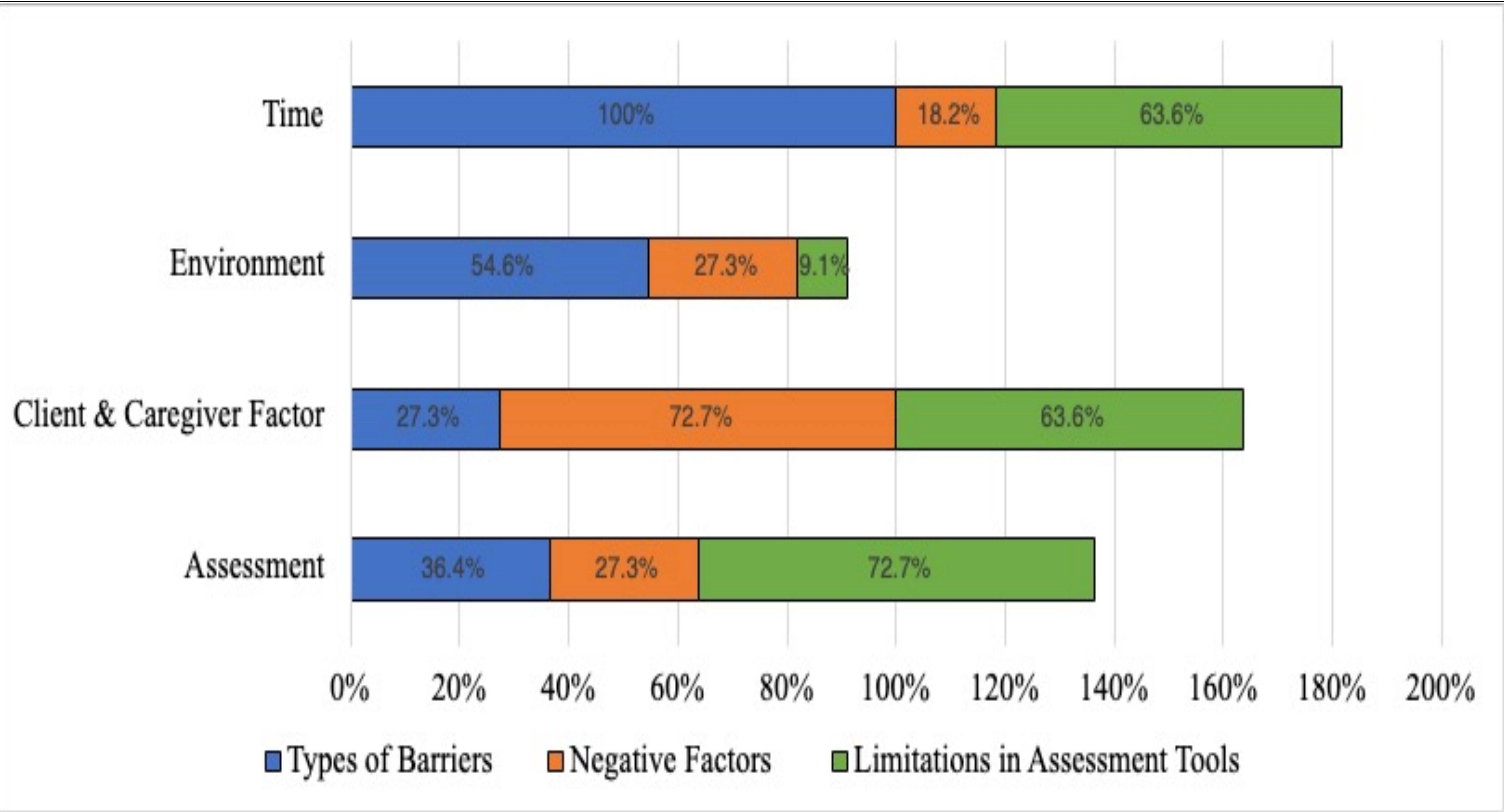
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