



Making Sense of Cancer Science in Firefighter Health, Safety, and Wellness (HSW)

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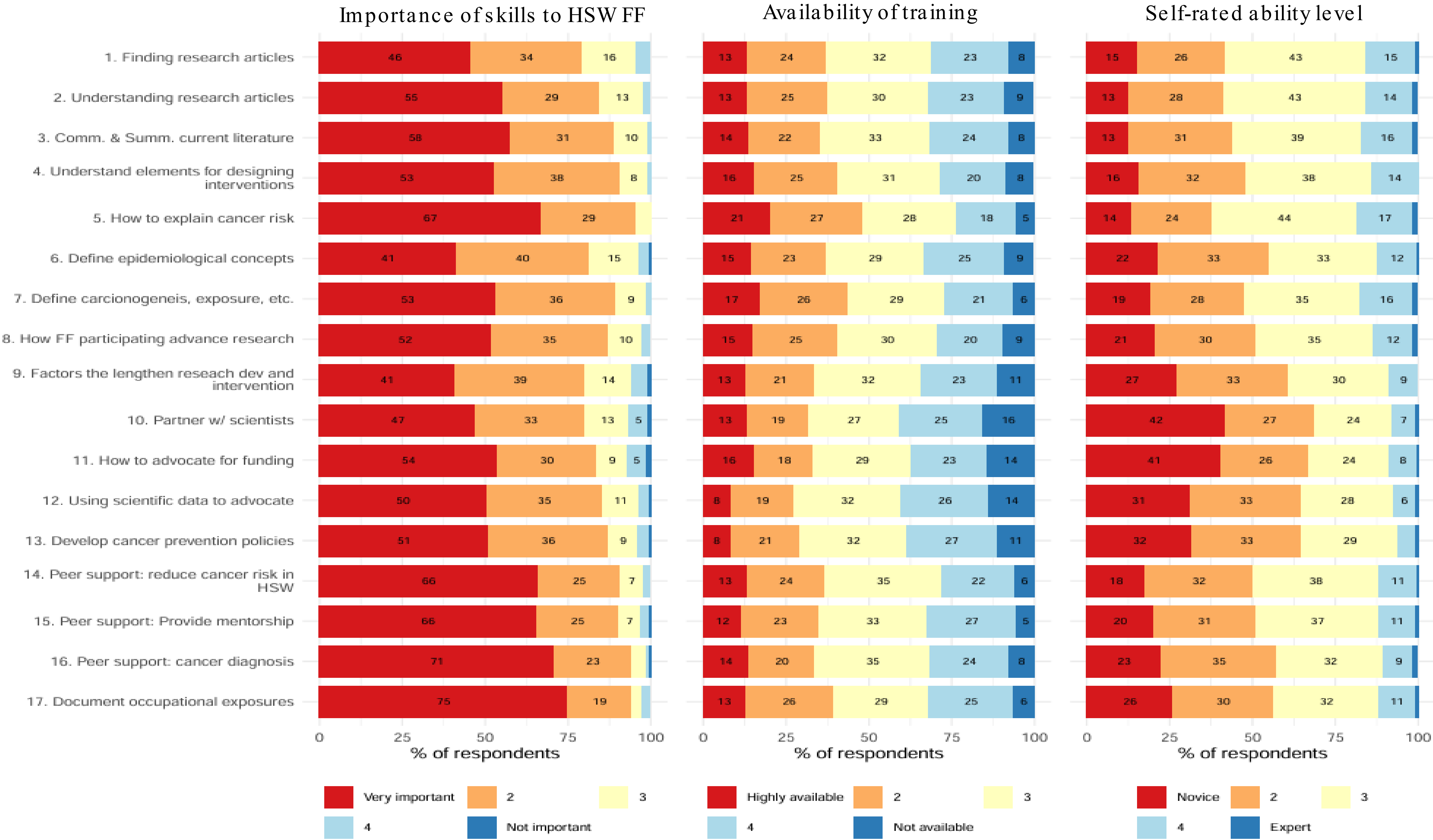
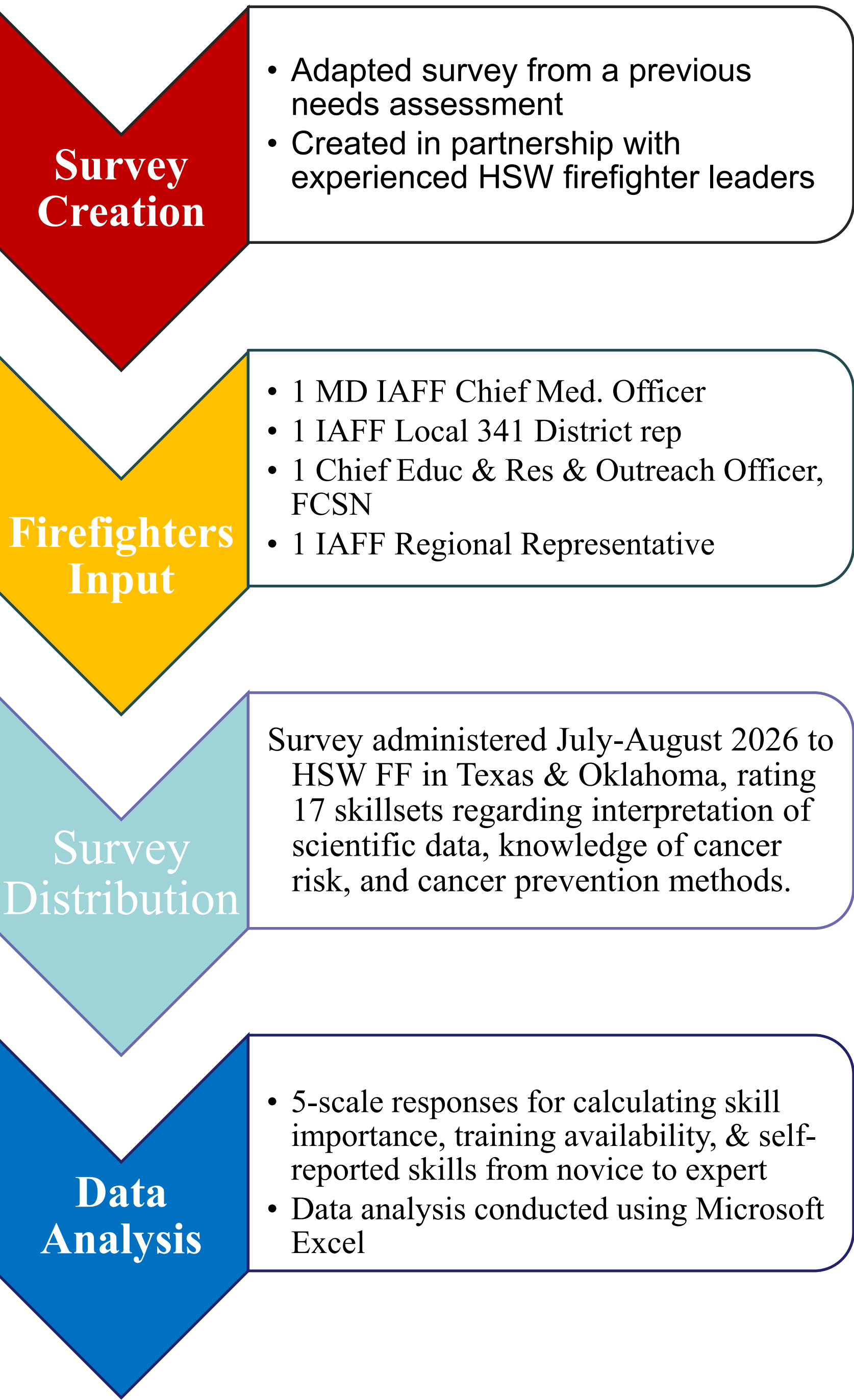


Introduction

Firefighting is classified as a Group 1, known human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).
The role of Health, Safety, and Wellness (HSW) firefighters includes reviewing and determining the effectiveness of interventions, policies, and practices to reduce health burdens in firefighters.
HSW firefighters have an interest in scientific articles regarding cancer research, but they do not always have the technical, scientific, or medical knowledge to interpret the literature.
Here we examine skill & training gaps in cancer science reported by HSW firefighters.

Overall Goal: To address training & educational gaps in cancer and science literacy for firefighters working in HSW.

Methods



Demographics for 204 HSW firefighters

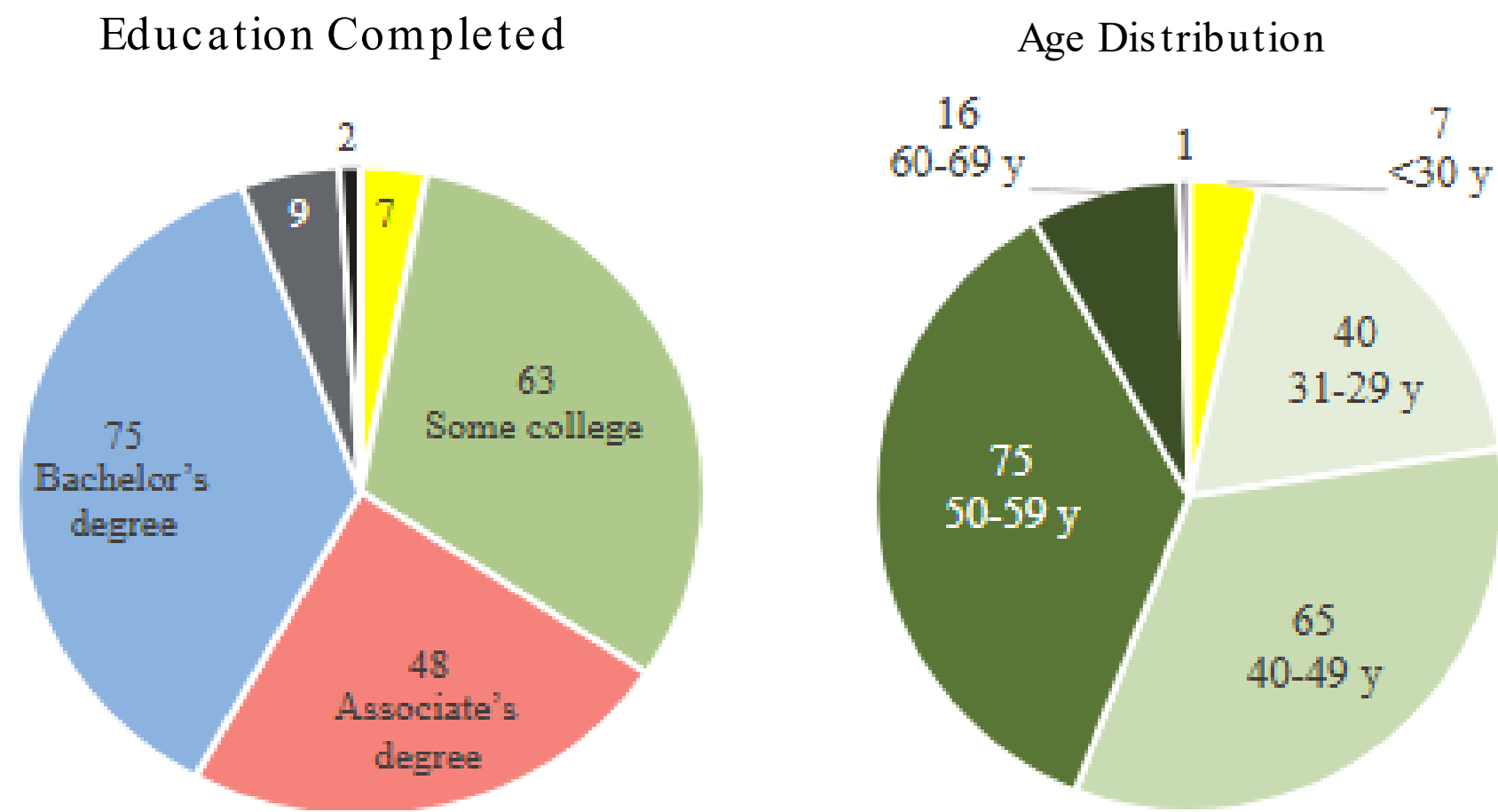
Texas: 188 (92%); Oklahoma: 16 (8%)
White: 181 (89%); Hispanic: 31 (15%)
Men: 179 (88%)
Mean years in fire service: 21.7
Median HSW experience: < 5years

Results

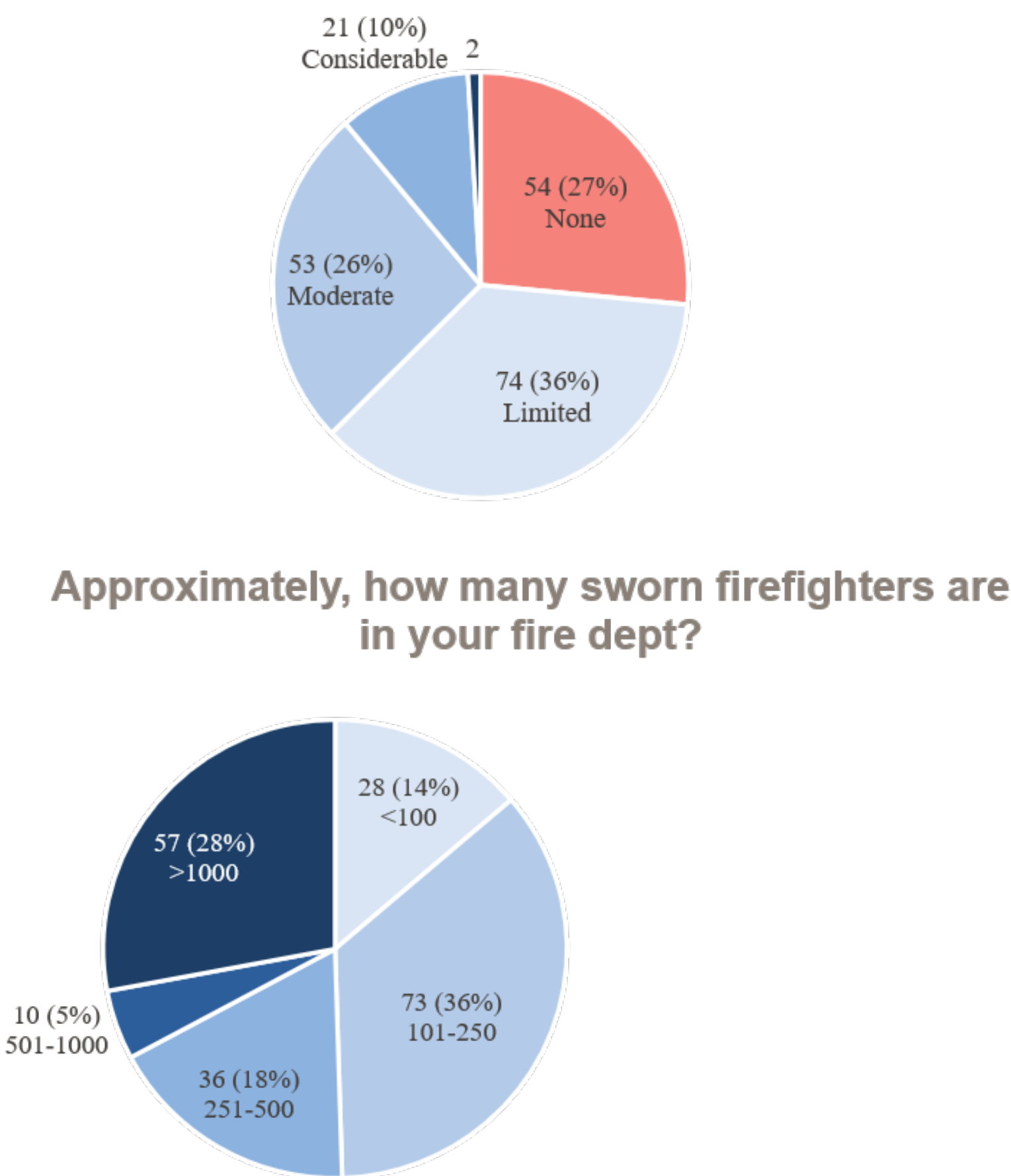
- About 88% rated all skills as important or very important; however, 32% reported limited training or no training available.
- Highly rated skills without opportunity for training included searching and advocating for funding, how to use medical and scientific data for advocacy, how to develop and implement cancer prevention policies and programs, and partnering with scientists.
- Despite 2/3 of skills rated as important with available training, 53% of participants reported being novices or beginners in such skills.

Conclusions

- Most skills rated highly important for HSW FF, but more than half of HSW FF reported being novices or beginners.
- Importantly, HSW FF in Texas and Oklahoma said that training was not highly available for a third of skills rated important for HSW FF.
- Offering more training in cancer science to FF in HSW can likely help reduce the burden of cancer within the FF population.



How much formal training have you had for this role in health, safety, & wellness? N=204



References

IARC (2023). Occupational exposure as a firefighter. IARC Monogr IdentifCarcinog Hazards Hum. 132:1–730.