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Summary results of the rapid Assistive Technology Assessment (rATA) in Uganda

2023



In July 2023, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uganda, with support from Learning, Acting, and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLAB-HS) conducted a national rapid Assistive Technology Assessment (rATA)¹ household survey to measure access to and uptake of quality and affordable assistive technology (AT).

In the district of Iganga, Uganda, a client watches as a rehabilitation professional adjusts his prosthetic limb for the appropriate fit. (This individual was not a rATA survey respondent.)
Photo courtesy of ReLAB-HS

This brief highlights current met² and unmet needs for assistive products in Uganda and summarises the barriers to access and user satisfaction.³

The results are based on the data collected from 16,733 individuals aged 5 years and above from 3,188 unique households. The survey covered 301 enumeration areas from 50 randomly selected districts in 15 sub-regions of Uganda in 2023. It was carried out by teams of trained enumerators under the expert supervision of epidemiologists and rehabilitation/AT professionals.

Key findings

4%

of respondents currently use assistive products.

33%

of assistive products were purchased out of pocket by users.

87%

of respondents reported that affordability was the biggest barrier to accessing assistive products.

21%

of respondents reported their needs for assistive products were not met.

27%

of assistive products were provided to users by nongovernmental organisations or charities.

65%

of users were satisfied with their assistive products.

¹World Health Organization. "rapid Assistive Technology Assessment tool (rATA)." World Health Organization. June 2021.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-MHP-HPS-ATM-2021>.

²"Met" need is comprised of respondents who have an assistive product and reported no other needs for assistive products.

³The full rATA report is available on the Ugandan Ministry of Health website: <https://library.health.go.ug/community-health/rehabilitation-and-disability-services/uganda-rapid-assistive-technology>.

Functional limitations

11%

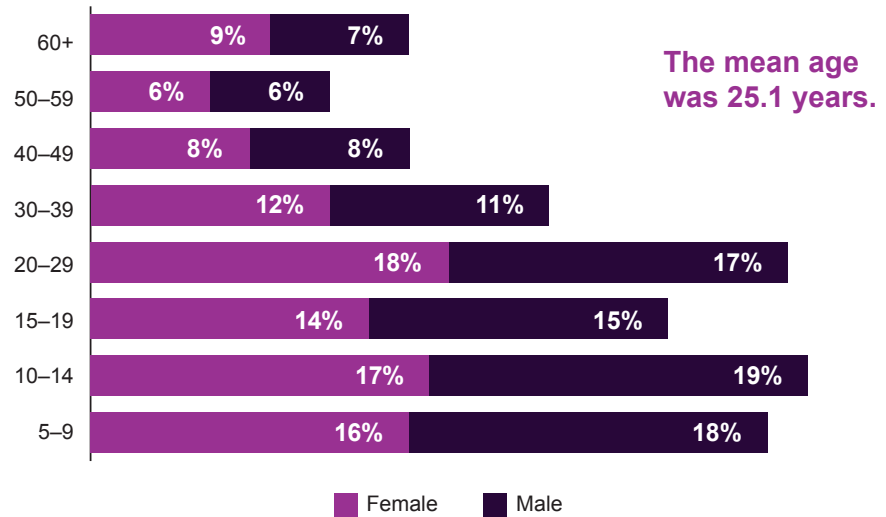
Individuals who reported “A lot of difficulty” or “Cannot do at all” in at least one domain

24%

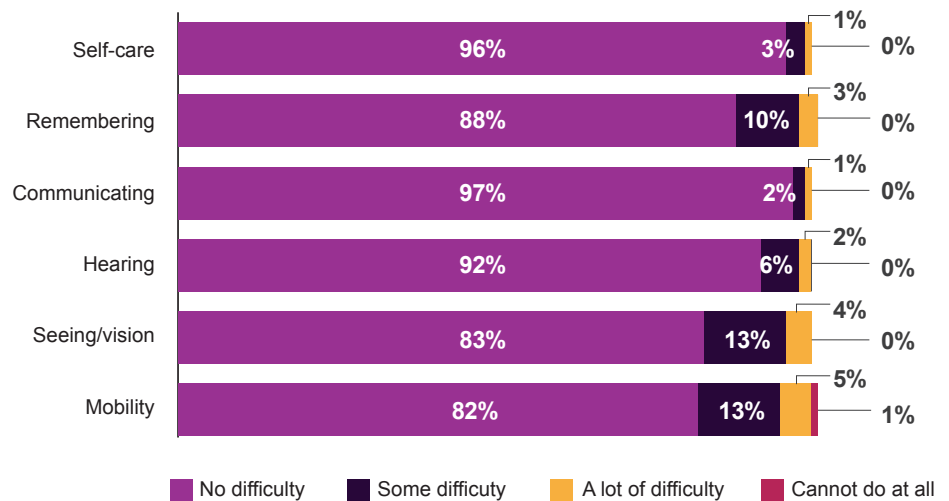
Individuals who reported having “Some difficulty” in at least one domain

Demographics of survey respondents

Percentage of survey respondents by age and sex



Percentage of individuals who experience functional difficulty, by domain

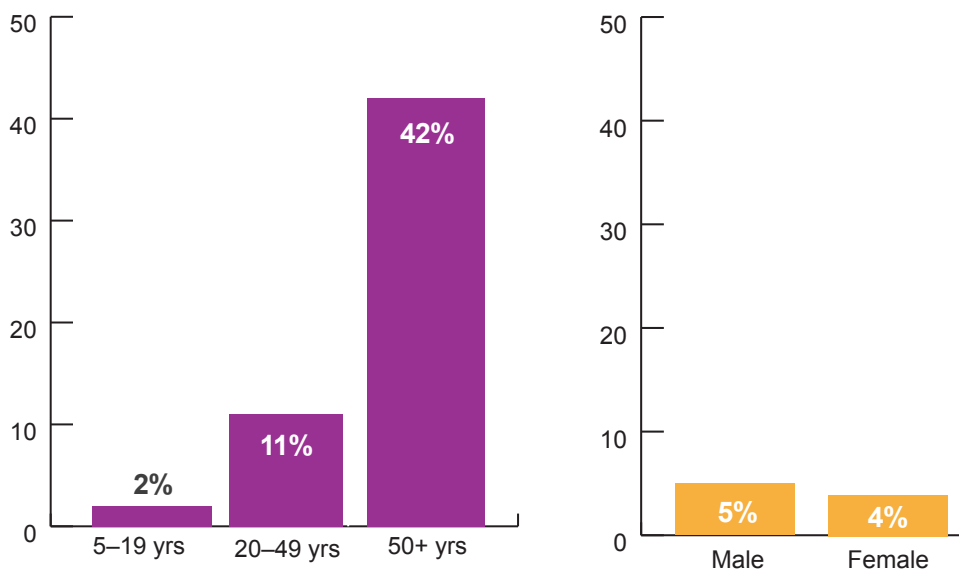


*The domains of “Remembering” and “Mobility” exceed 100% due to a rounding error.

Access to assistive products

- A small percentage of the population reported using assistive products (4%), with the greatest use reported by older persons aged 50 years and above and individuals with self-care, visual, and mobility functional limitations.
- Reported use was the lowest in Busoga and Bukedi sub-regions (3%), while the Kigezi sub-region reported the highest assistive product use (8%).
- Individuals reported using multiple assistive products, with spectacles (40%) and canes (37%) being the most commonly used assistive products.
- Users reported accessing assistive products from different sources, with the majority being accessed from nongovernmental organisations (NGOs)/charities or self-made.
- The majority of the assistive products were purchased out of pocket by either users (33%) or their families/friends (30%), and the minority ($\leq 1\%$) were covered by insurance or employers.

The percentage of individuals using assistive products at the time of data collection by age group and sex



Use of assistive products

4%

of individuals reported using assistive product(s) at the time of data collection

Top 5 assistive products used by individuals



40%

Spectacles low vision, short/long distance



37%

Canes/sticks/tripods/quadripods



9%

Axillary and elbow crutches



3%

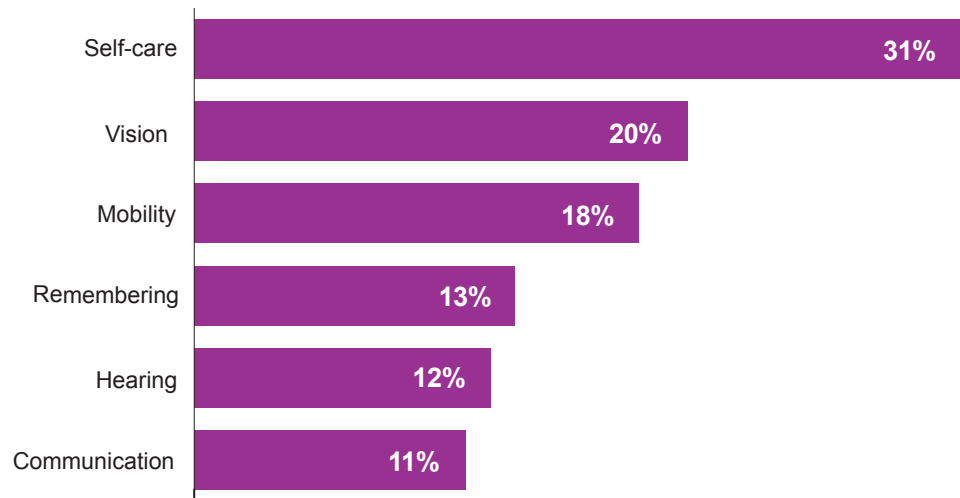
Manual wheelchairs



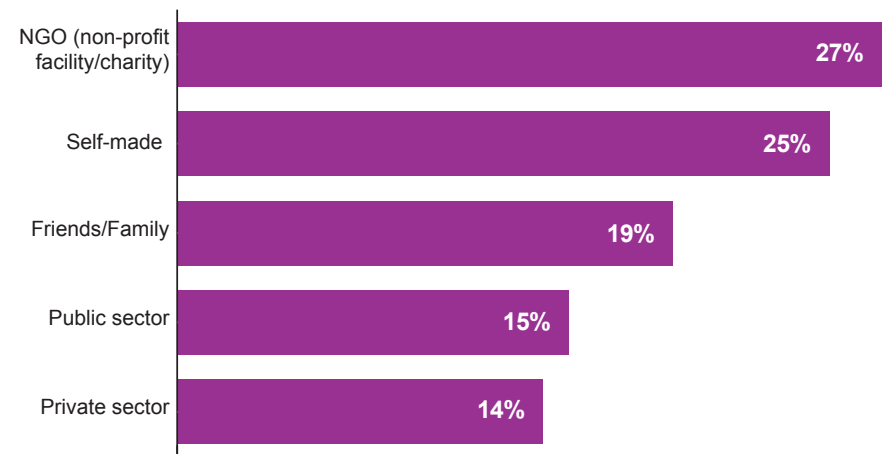
3%

Orthoses (spinal)

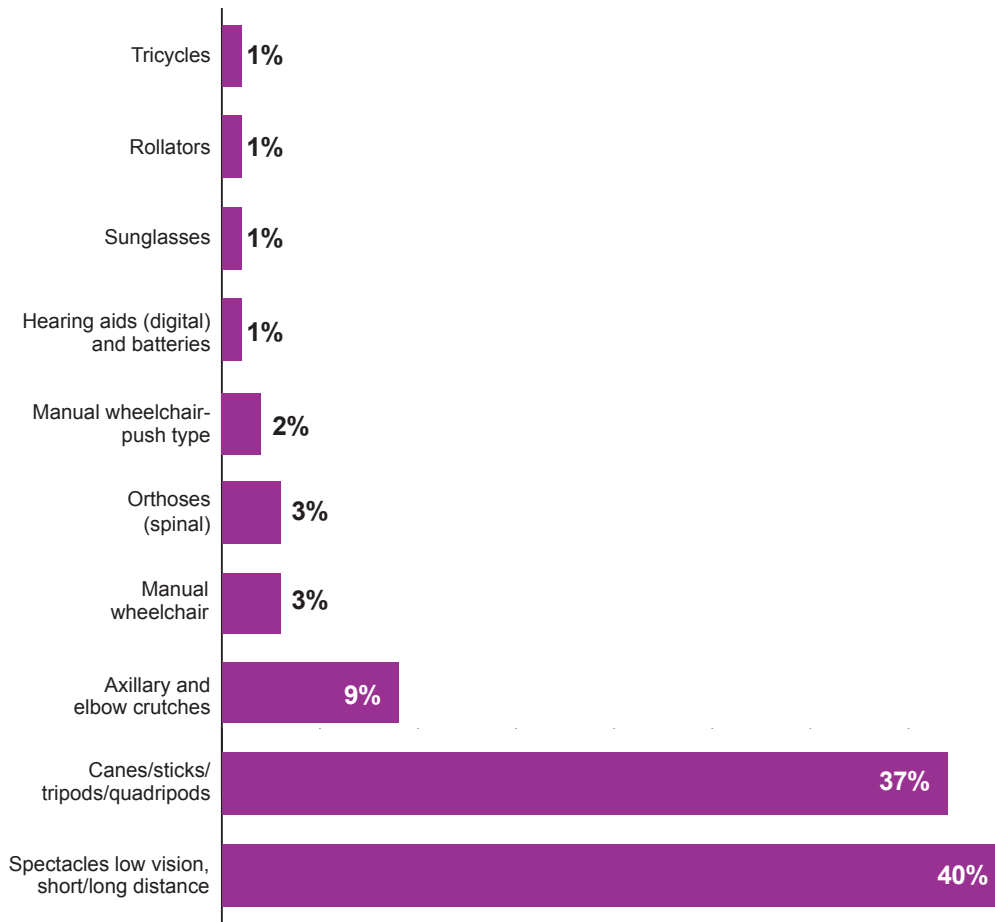
Percentage of individuals with functional limitations in different domains using assistive products at the time of data collection, by domain



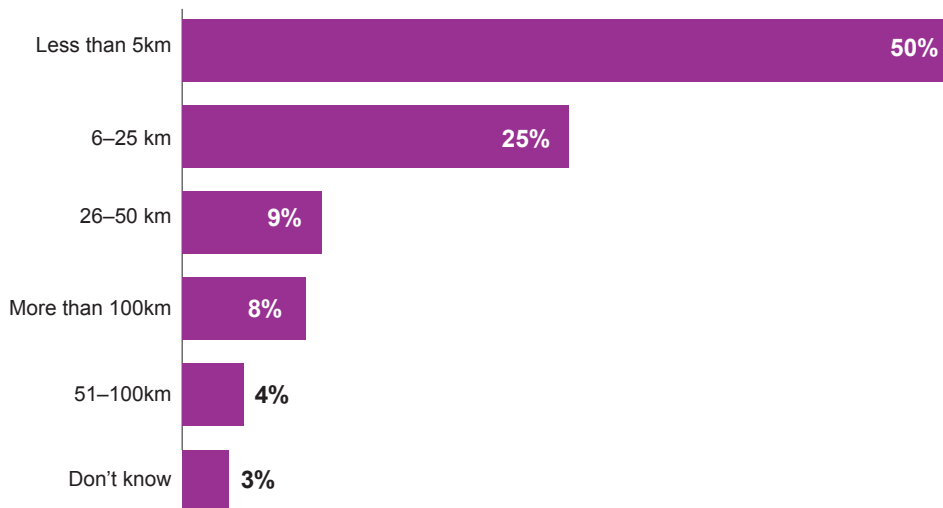
Sources of assistive products



Top 10 most used assistive products



Distance traveled to access assistive product



Cost of assistive products

For the individuals who reported paying for assistive products out of pocket, the average amount spent on assistive products in the last 12 months prior to data collection was UGX 175,965 (USD 46.92).

1 in 5

Ugandans over five years old do not have the assistive product(s) they need.

Unmet needs

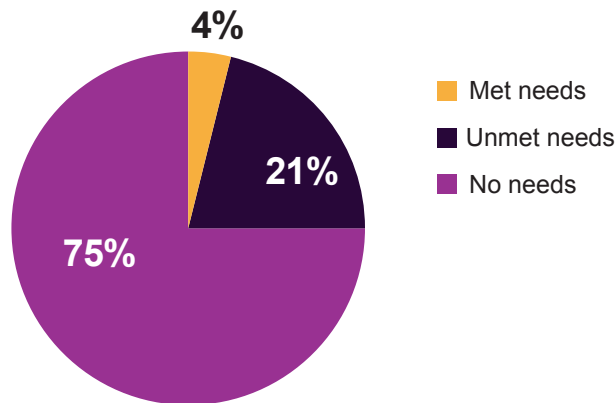
Though the unmet need was greatest among older age groups (aged 50 and above) it was high among those aged 30-39 (21%) and 40-49 (35%).

Gaps in access to assistive products

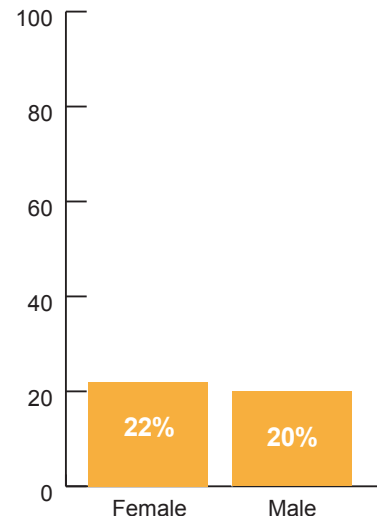
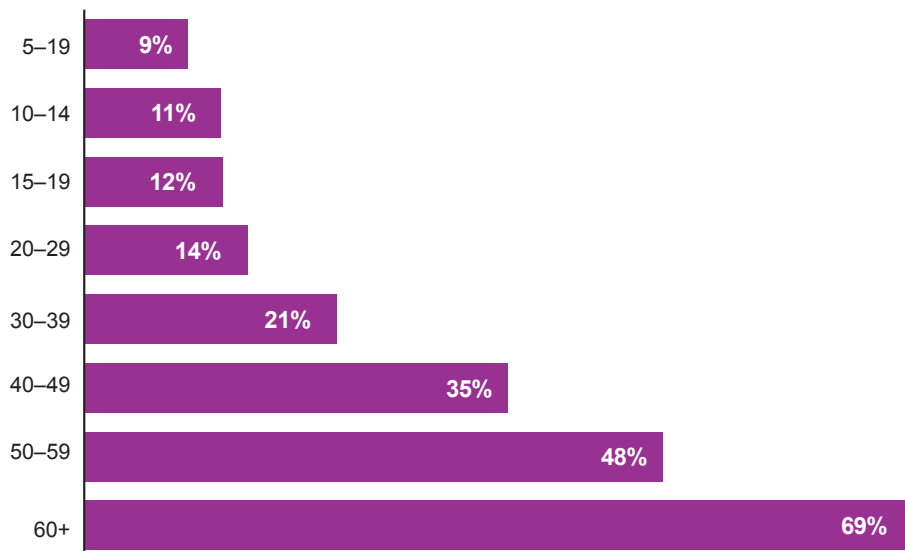
- Among those who reported needs for assistive products, the met need was low (4%), whereas the unmet need was high (21%).
- The unmet need was highest in the Lango sub-region (32%) and lowest in Kampala (13%).
- The unmet need was high for all functional domains and increased with age and level of functional limitations.
- Several barriers to accessing assistive products were identified, with affordability of the products being the most common (87%).

Demand for assistive products

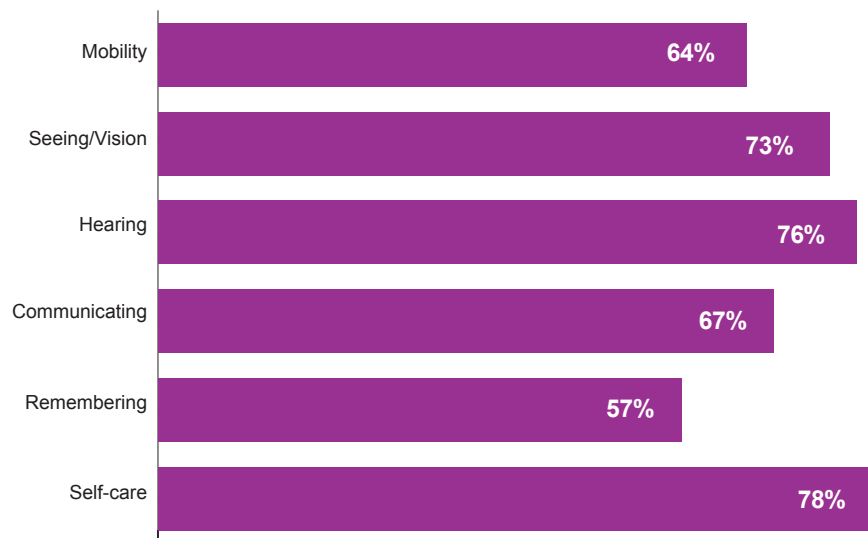
Percentage of individuals who reported needs for assistive products



Percentage of individuals who reported unmet needs for assistive products by age group and sex



Percentage of individuals with functional limitations in different domains who reported unmet needs for assistive products, by domain

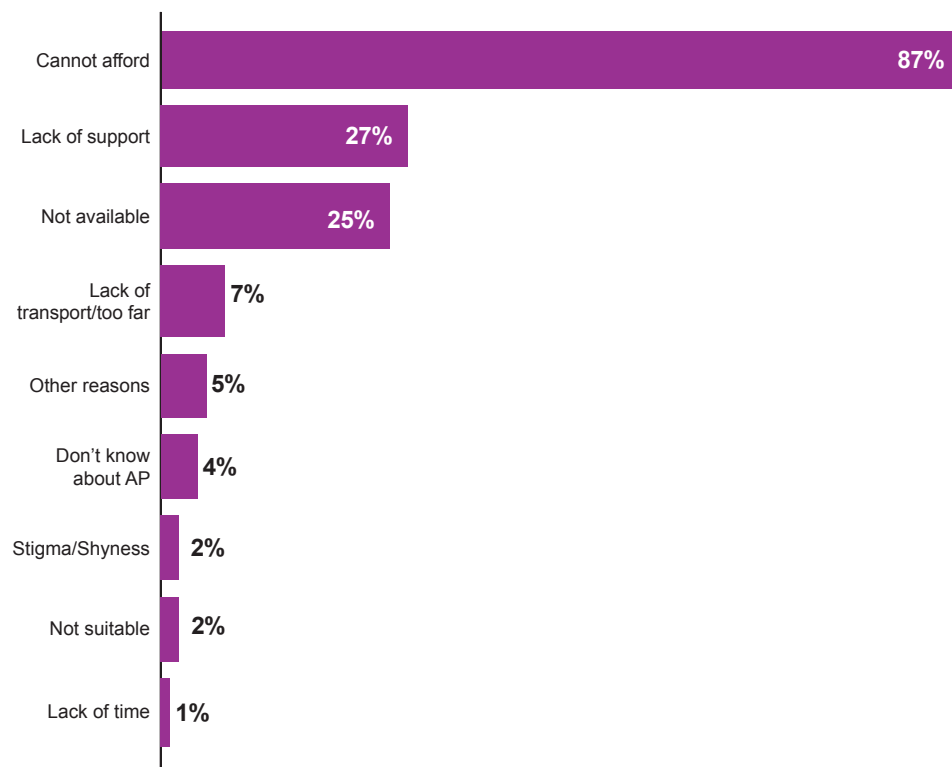


Unmet needs

78%

Unmet needs were high across all domains, with the highest prevalence among individuals experiencing difficulties in carrying out self-care activities.

The most common barriers to accessing new assistive products or replacements



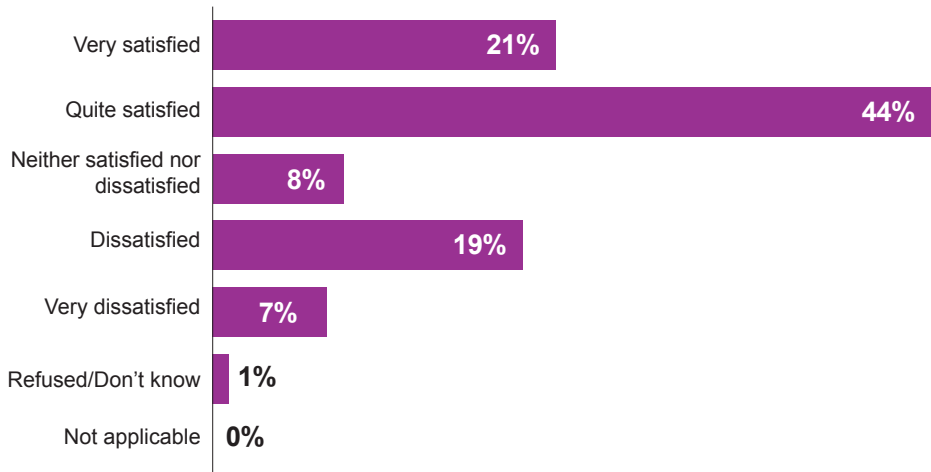
Among assistive product users who reported dissatisfaction with assistive products, the top five reported reasons were:

- Pain/discomfort
- Fit/size/shape
- Durability
- Safety
- Appearance

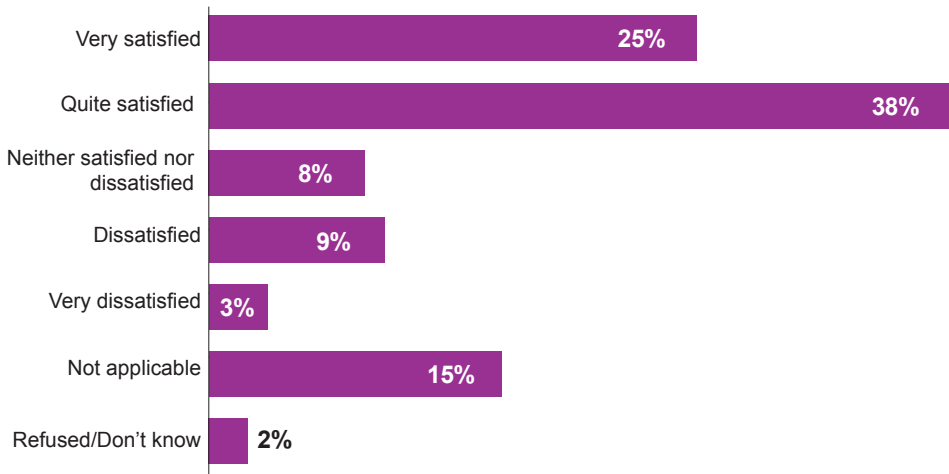
Satisfaction with assistive products

- The majority of the assistive product users reported being satisfied with their assistive products, the training they received for how to use them, and maintenance services.
- Users identified several factors for assistive product dissatisfaction, with pain and/or discomfort being the leading cause.
- Most of the assistive product users reported that their assistive product was both suitable and useful.

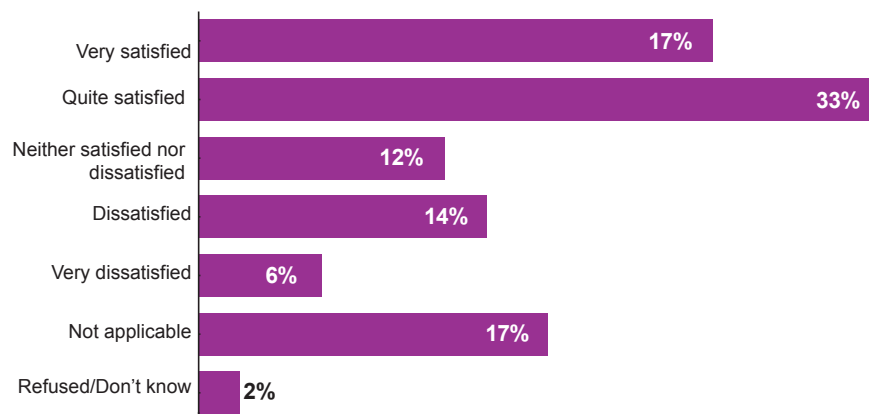
Overall satisfaction with assistive products



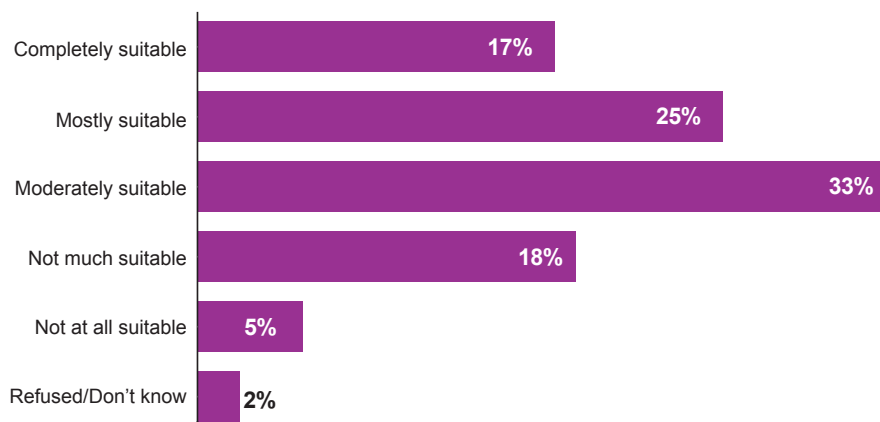
Satisfaction with assessment and training for assistive product use



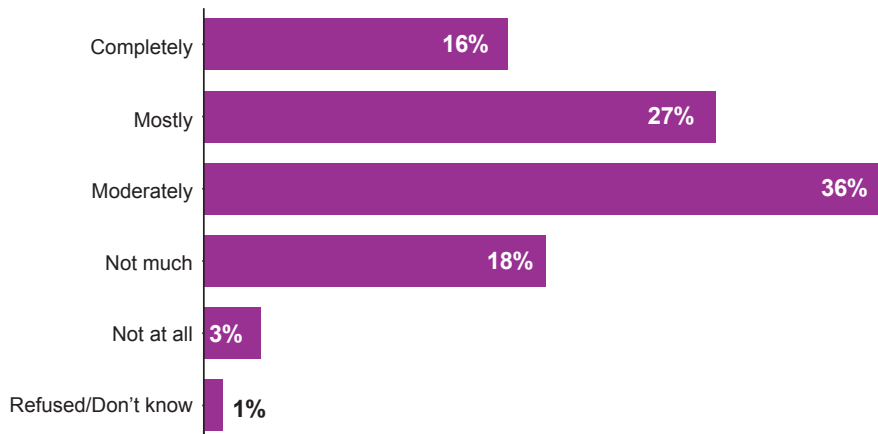
Satisfaction with product repair, maintenance, and follow-up services



Suitability of assistive products to users' homes and surrounding environments



Usefulness of assistive products in allowing users to live and function independently



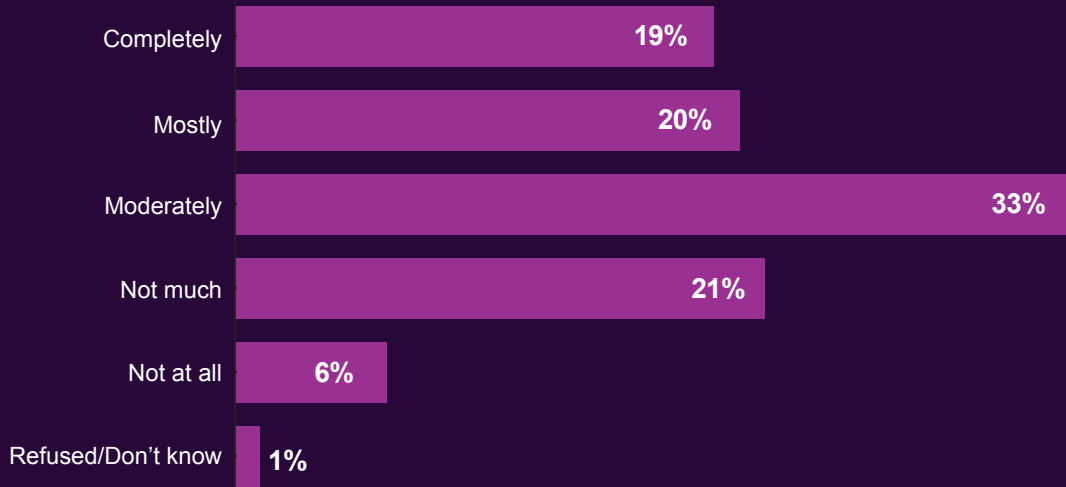
Among assistive product users who reported dissatisfaction with assistive product assessment and training, the top five reported reasons were:

- Quality of care
- Procedure
- Costs
- Distance/time
- Waiting time

Among assistive product users who reported that a product was not useful in helping them function independently, the top five reported reasons were:

- Pain/discomfort
- Fit/size/shape
- Durability
- Accessibility at home
- Safety

Usefulness of assistive products in places users want to visit (e.g., public places)



Our partners

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