



Sleep quality and insomnia in people with MS

Yao Zhang¹, Ruth Bentley² and Gavin Giovannoni³

1. Department of Neurology, Peking Union Medical College Hospital, Beijing, China; 2. Oxford Health Policy Forum, Oxford, UK; 3. Queen Mary University of London, Blizard Institute, London, UK.

The problem: Sleep disorders, in particular insomnia, are common in people with multiple sclerosis (pwMS) and have a significant impact on the quality of life of pwMS. Sleep tends to be neglected in routine neurological practice. This survey documents the unmet need concerning the diagnosis and management of sleep disorders in pwMS.

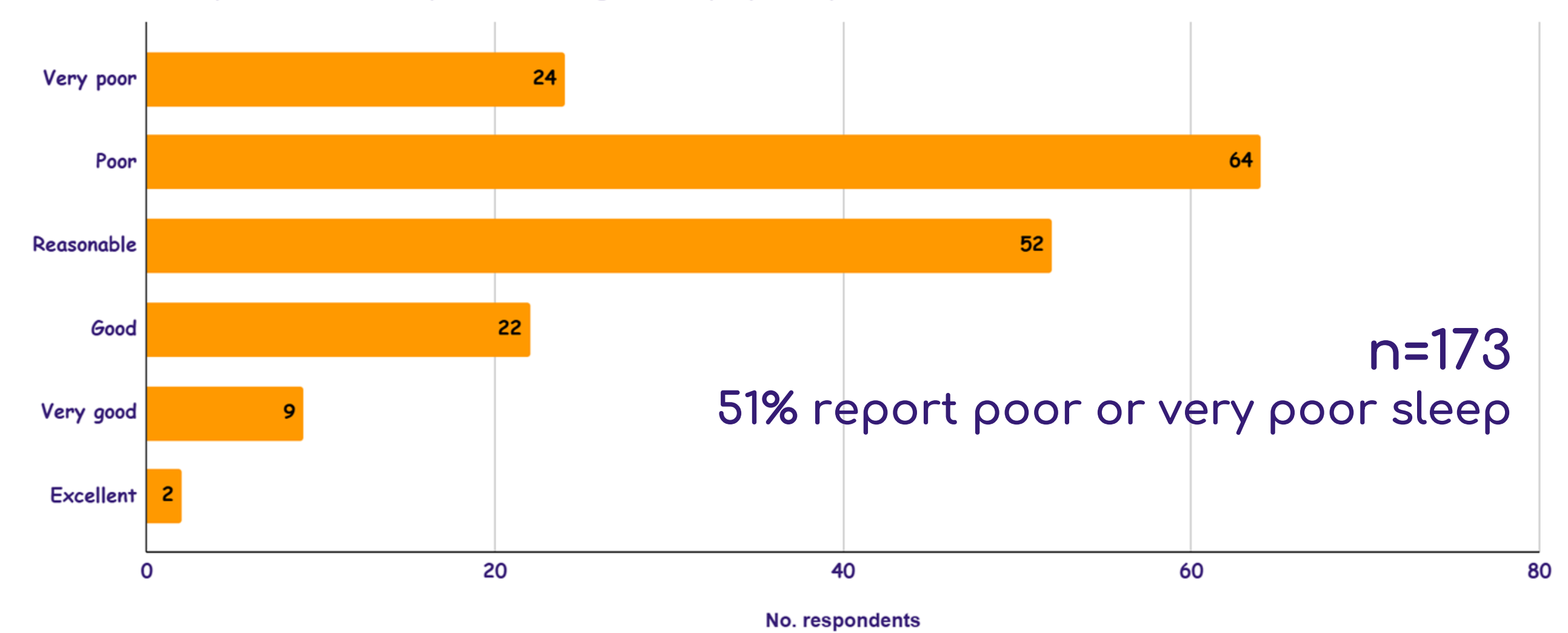
Objectives: To assess (1) how pwMS rate their sleep quality, (2) how often they are diagnosed as having a sleep disorder or insomnia, and (3) whether or not they have used pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions for their sleep disorders.

Methods: Subscribers with MS to the MS-Selfie self-management portal (www.ms-selfie.org) were invited to complete an online survey. The survey was opened on 9th September 2024 and closed on the 28th February 2025.

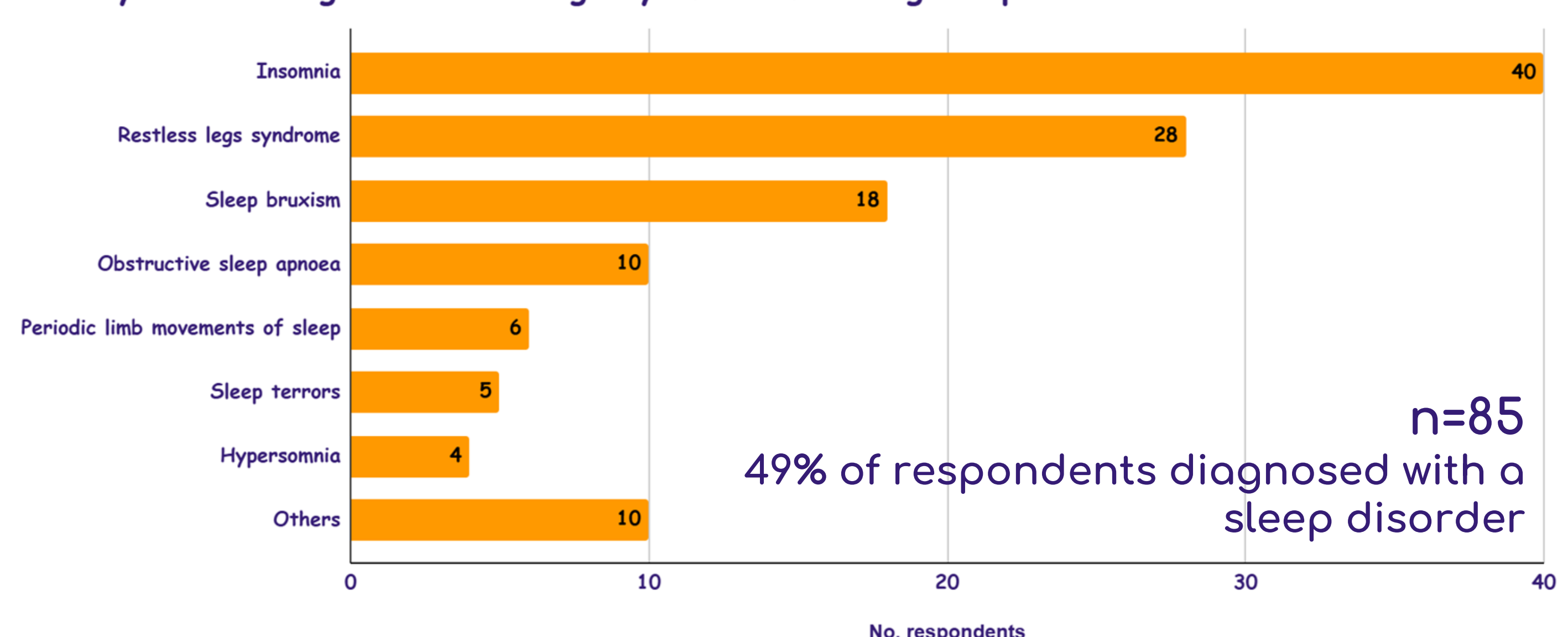
Results: By 28th February 2025, there were 173 responses. 84% of the respondents were female; their average age was 53 years (range 30-72 years). The average duration since MS symptom onset was 15 years (range 1-52 years). 54% of respondents were from the UK, 21% from the USA and the remainder from across the globe.

- 88 respondents (51%) reported their sleep as being poor or very poor.
- 85 respondents (49%) had been formally diagnosed with one or more sleep disorders.
- Only 27 respondents (16%) had had a formal sleep study, despite 85 subjects having a formal diagnosis of a sleep disorder.
- 159 (92%) of respondents had never been asked to complete a diagnostic or screening sleep questionnaire during their MS clinic visits.
- 80 (46%) respondents have taken over-the-counter medications for insomnia.

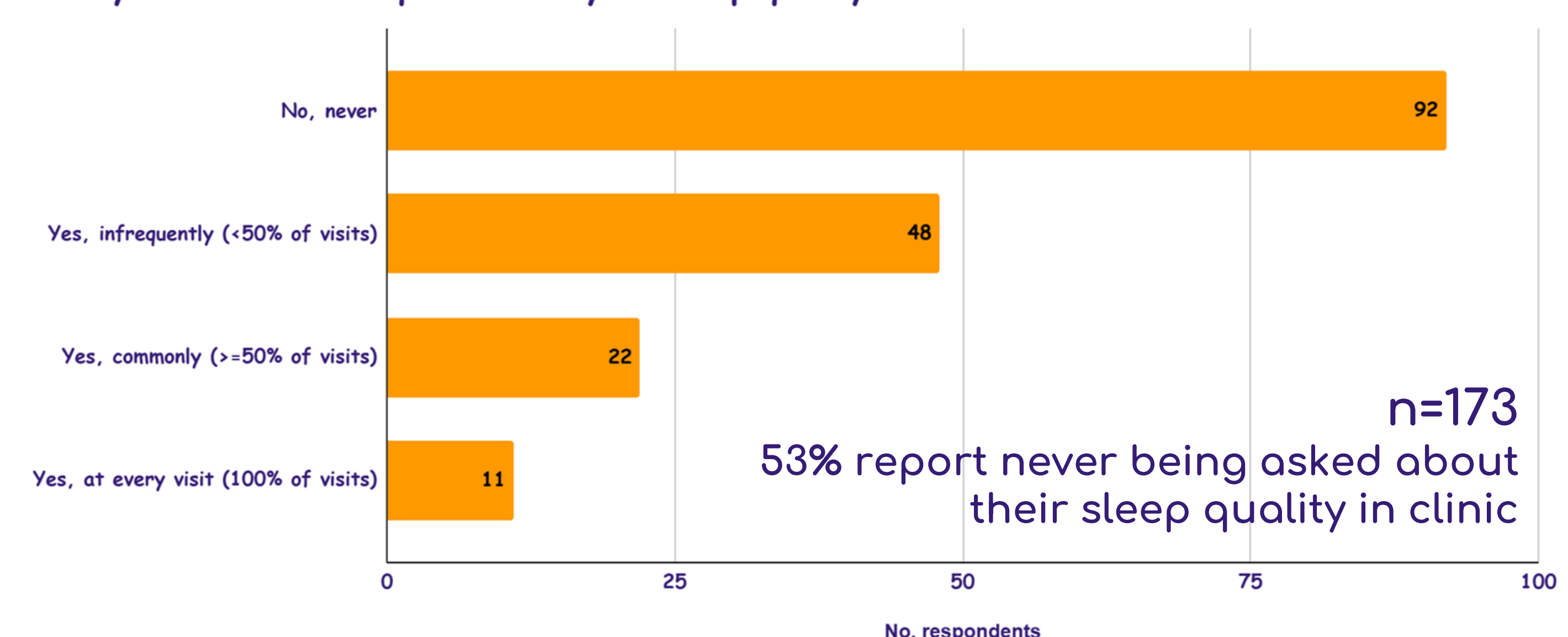
How would you describe your average sleep quality?



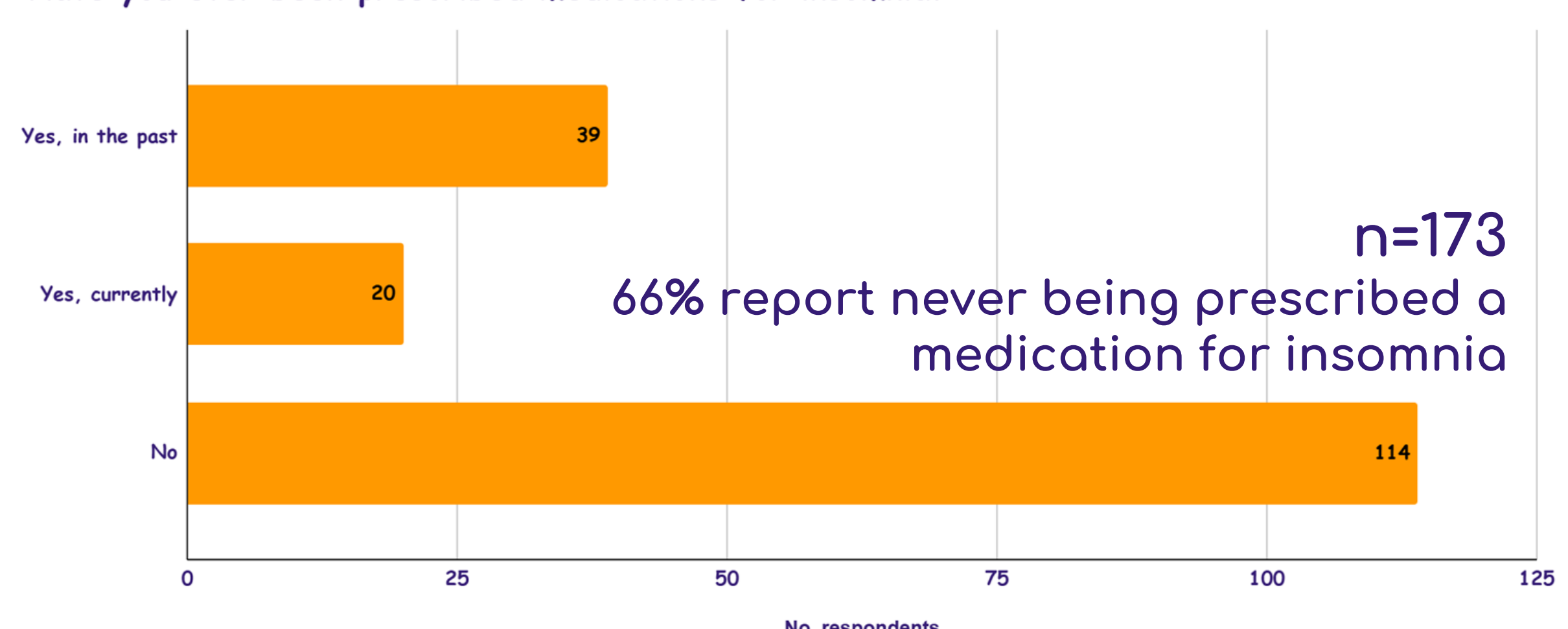
Have you been diagnosed as having any of the following sleep disorders?



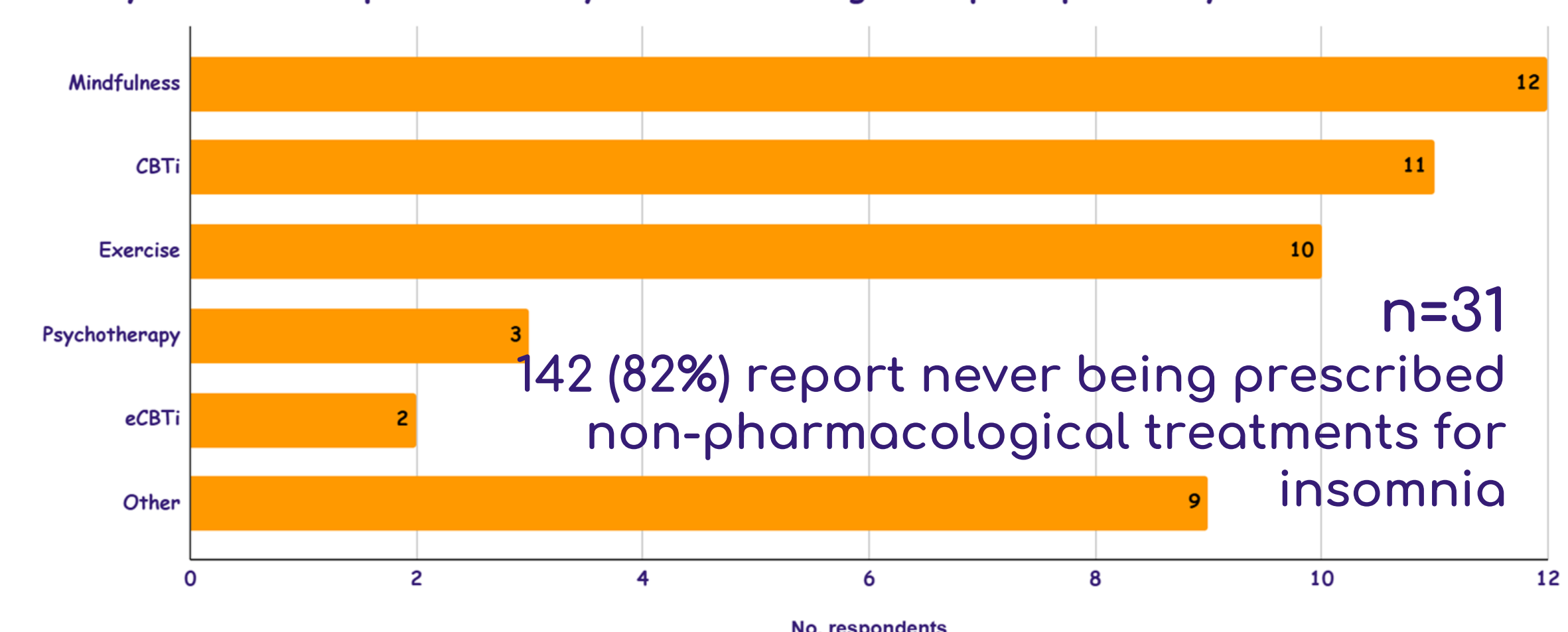
Does your MS team enquire about your sleep quality?



Have you ever been prescribed medications for insomnia?



Have you ever been prescribed any of the following therapies specifically for insomnia?



Conclusion: Most pwMS who completed this survey self-reported MS-related sleep dysfunction. The survey illustrates that MS-related sleep disorders are neglected clinically, poorly documented, poorly diagnosed and poorly managed in routine clinical practice. There is a significant unmet need to educate pwMS about sleep disorders and how to diagnose and self-manage these problems. In parallel, HCPs must incorporate screening tools for sleep disorders into routine clinical practice as an adjunct to proactively managing MS-related sleep disorders.



microsite: www.ms-selfie.org

Gavin Giovannoni, Queen Mary University of London, Blizard Institute, 4 Newark Street, London E1 2AN g.giovannoni@qmul.ac.uk

Scan for more information on insomnia in MS