

## Abstract

Neglect is the most common form of child abuse. In 2005, of the approximately 899,000 children in the United States who were reported as victims of abuse and neglect, it is estimated that approximately 78 percent of cases involved neglect; 62.8 percent of cases were neglect alone. An estimated 32 percent of child fatalities were exclusively attributed to neglect. Given the prevalence of neglect, it is common to hear reference to a "neglect of neglect" among practitioners and researchers. This vague but catchy phrase poses many complex issues, some of which have been addressed in the literature. Yet the criticism persists as a commonly accepted fact. This research addresses two aspects of the "neglect of neglect" in its most simplistic form. First, do practitioners believe that neglect is being neglected in their community? We ask them, what strategies are in place to address neglect in their community and are those strategies reasonably successful. Second, is there a disparity between research and practice? Are publications, both research and informational, proportional to the incidence of neglect, or is neglect being neglected by researchers? The comparison of survey results with mapping of the literature will offer insights regarding the need for further research, more effective dissemination of information, and/or changes in local practices pertaining to neglect.

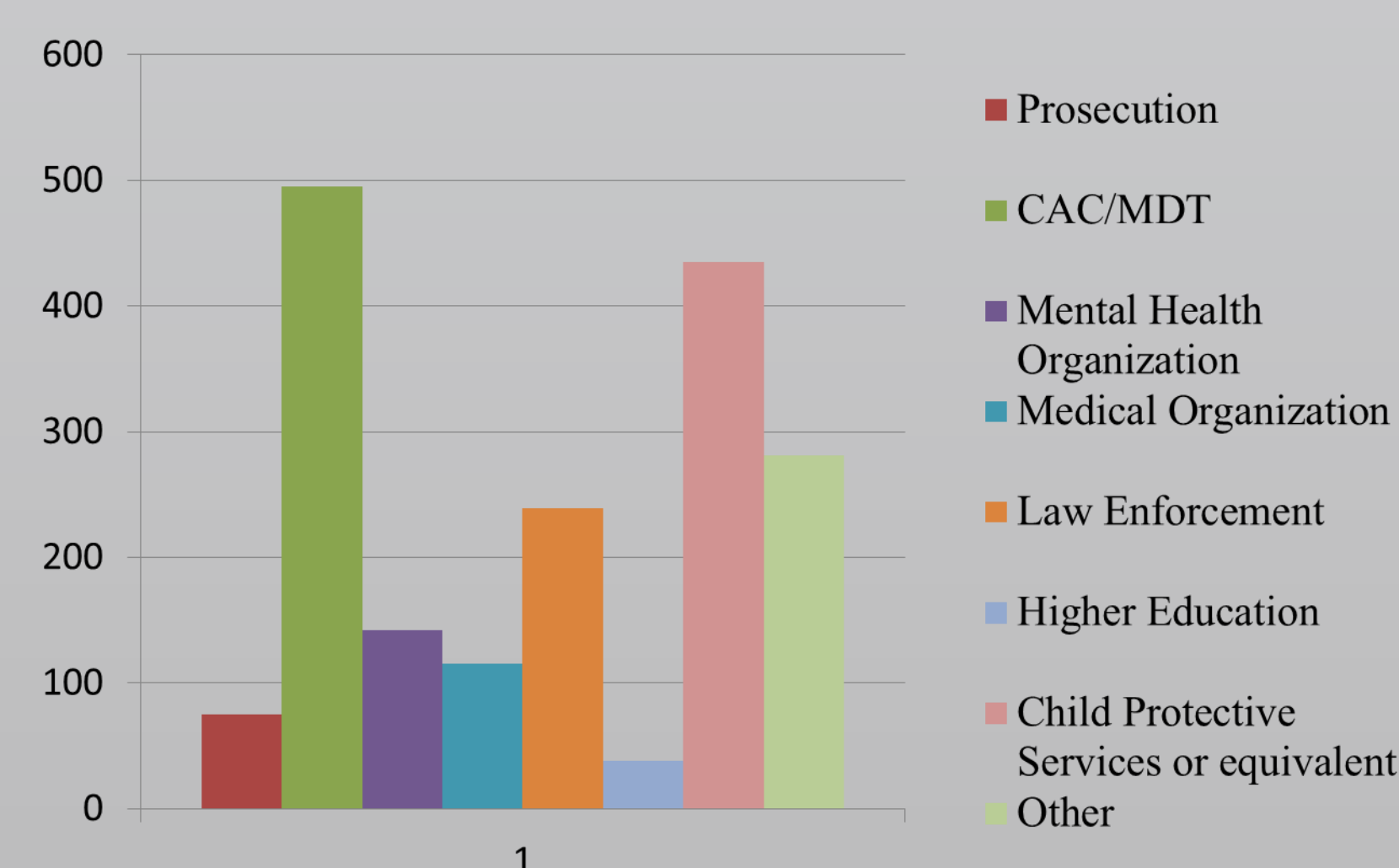
## Objectives

- Practitioner assessment of the adequacy of professional information pertaining to neglect
- Determine the prevalence of professional literature on neglect
- Map the scope of topics pertaining to neglect in the literature

## Method

- Survey of U. S. child maltreatment professionals (N=1,724) to determine their opinions on the number of research publications and training opportunities regarding child neglect.
- Review of the research literature on child neglect, 2000-2012.

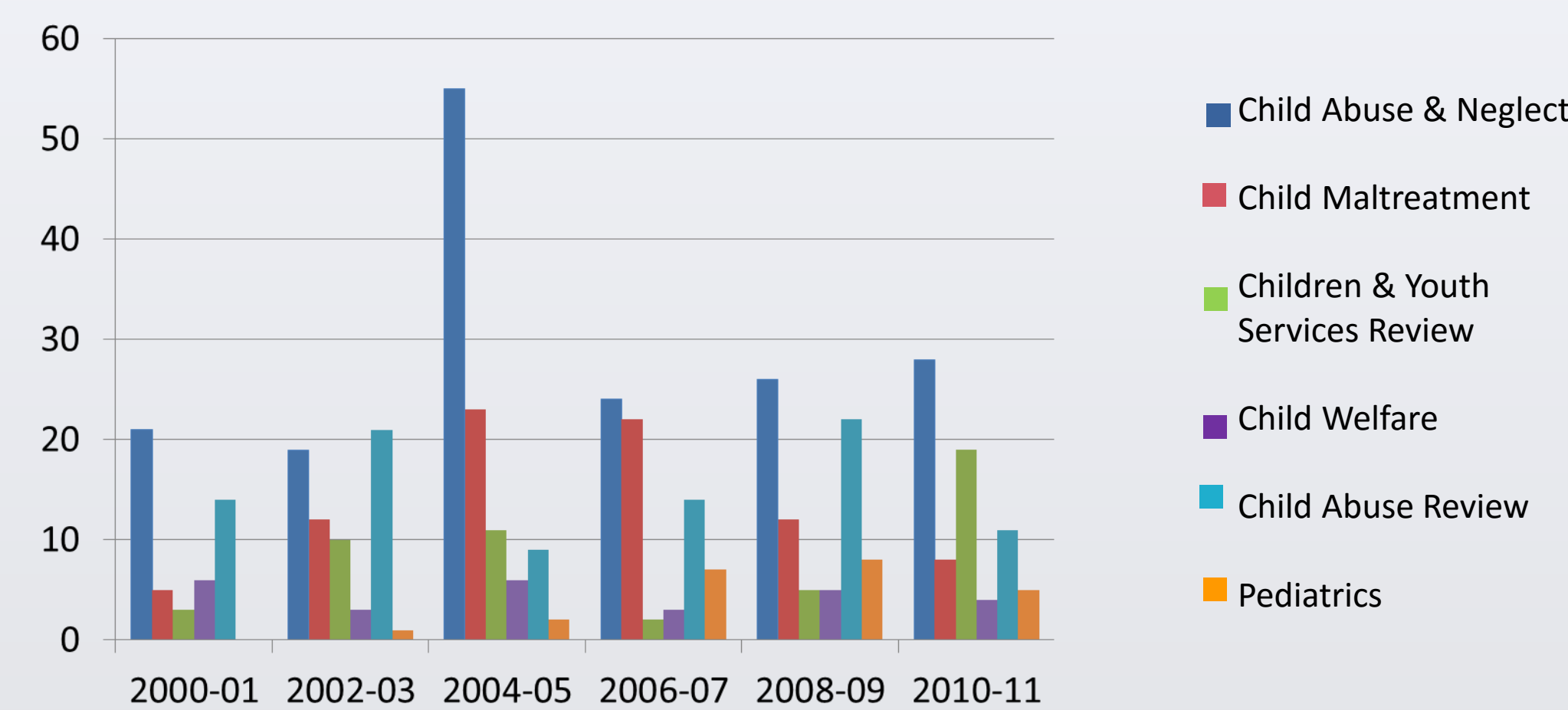
**Table 1. Respondent Primary Work Affiliation**



We surveyed over 22,000 professionals working in child maltreatment fields. The 1,724 respondents represent a broad cross section of professionals. Respondents designating CACs and MDTs as their primary affiliation accounted for 29% of the survey participants. Law enforcement and child protective services were well represented among respondents, as were educators. Despite the low response rate, the participants represent a broad spectrum of professionals.

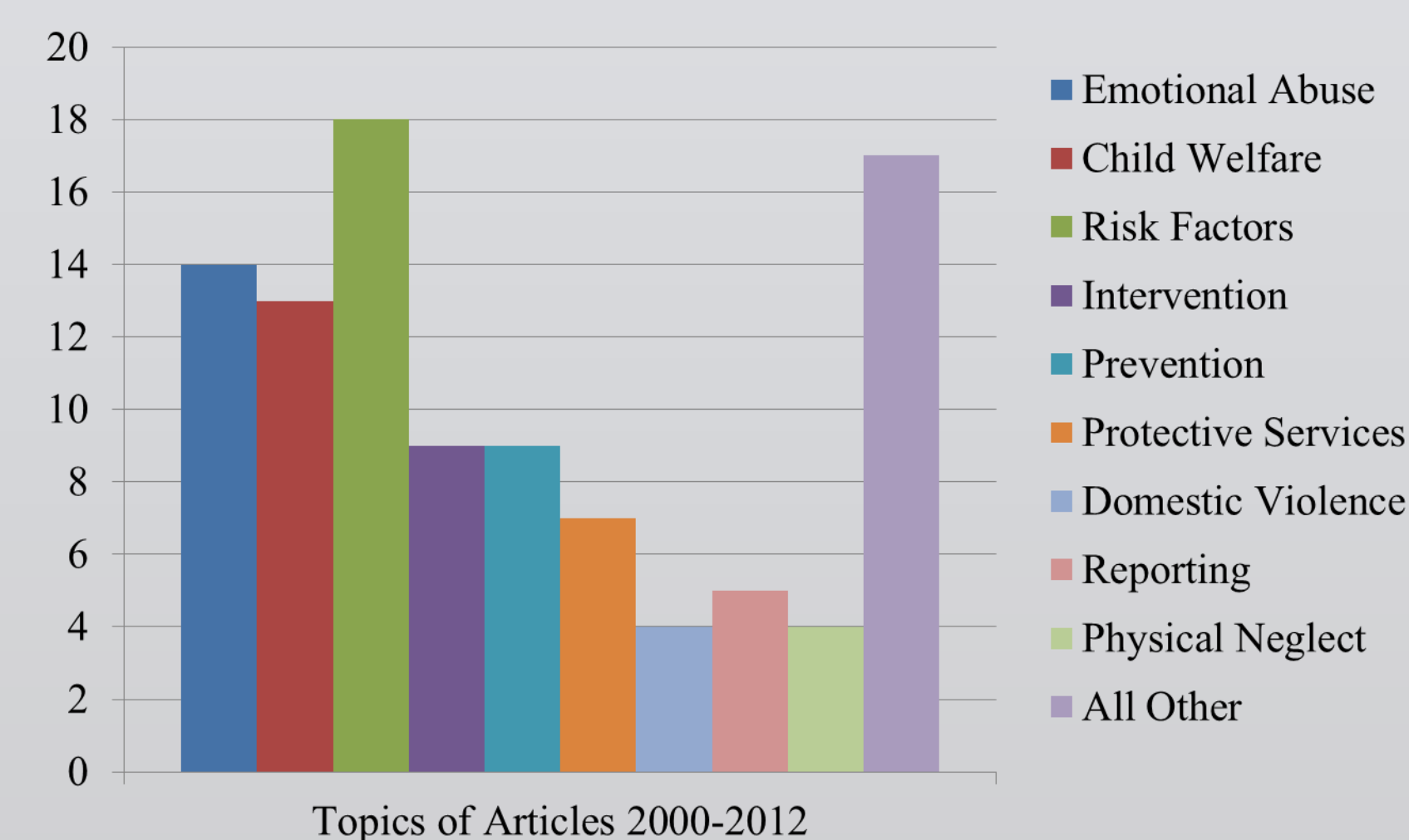
## Results

**Table 2. Journals Containing Child Neglect Articles**



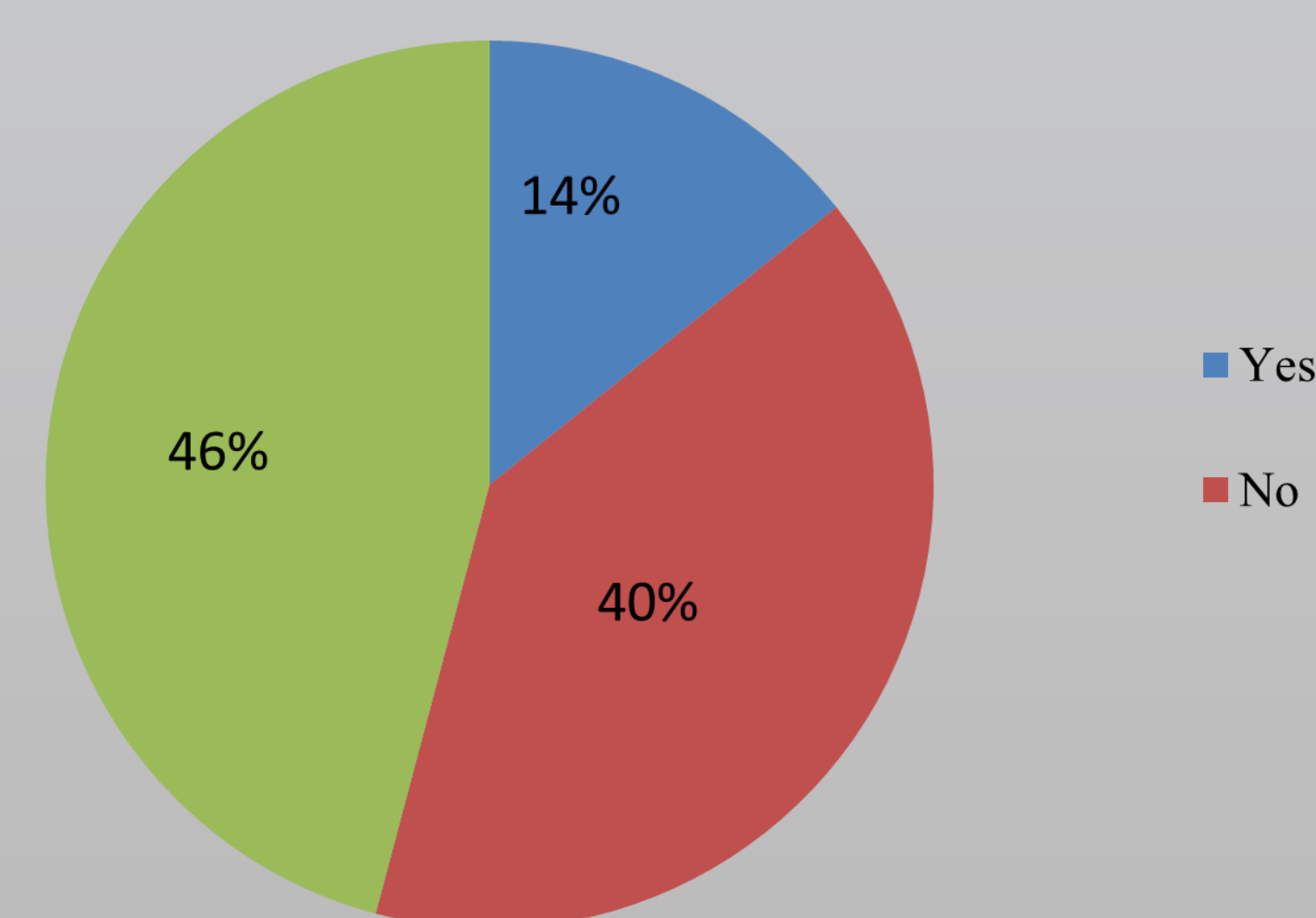
We identified 467 English language articles that concentrated primarily on child neglect published in six primary journals from January 2000 through December 2011. Of those, 184 (39%) were published in *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 95 (20%) appeared in *Child Abuse Review*, and 85 (18%) were found in *Child Maltreatment*. Another 103 (22%) of the articles were published in the journals *Children & Youth Services Review*, *Child Welfare*, and *Pediatrics*.

**Table 3. Child Neglect Articles by Subject**



A broad spectrum of topics pertaining to child neglect appeared in the journal literature from January 2000 through May 2012. For this study, we sorted the articles by primary subject. Of the 467 articles from the six primary journals containing articles on child neglect, 84 (18%) emphasized risk factors, 65 (14%) dealt with emotional abuse, and 61 (13%) considered neglect within the context of child welfare.

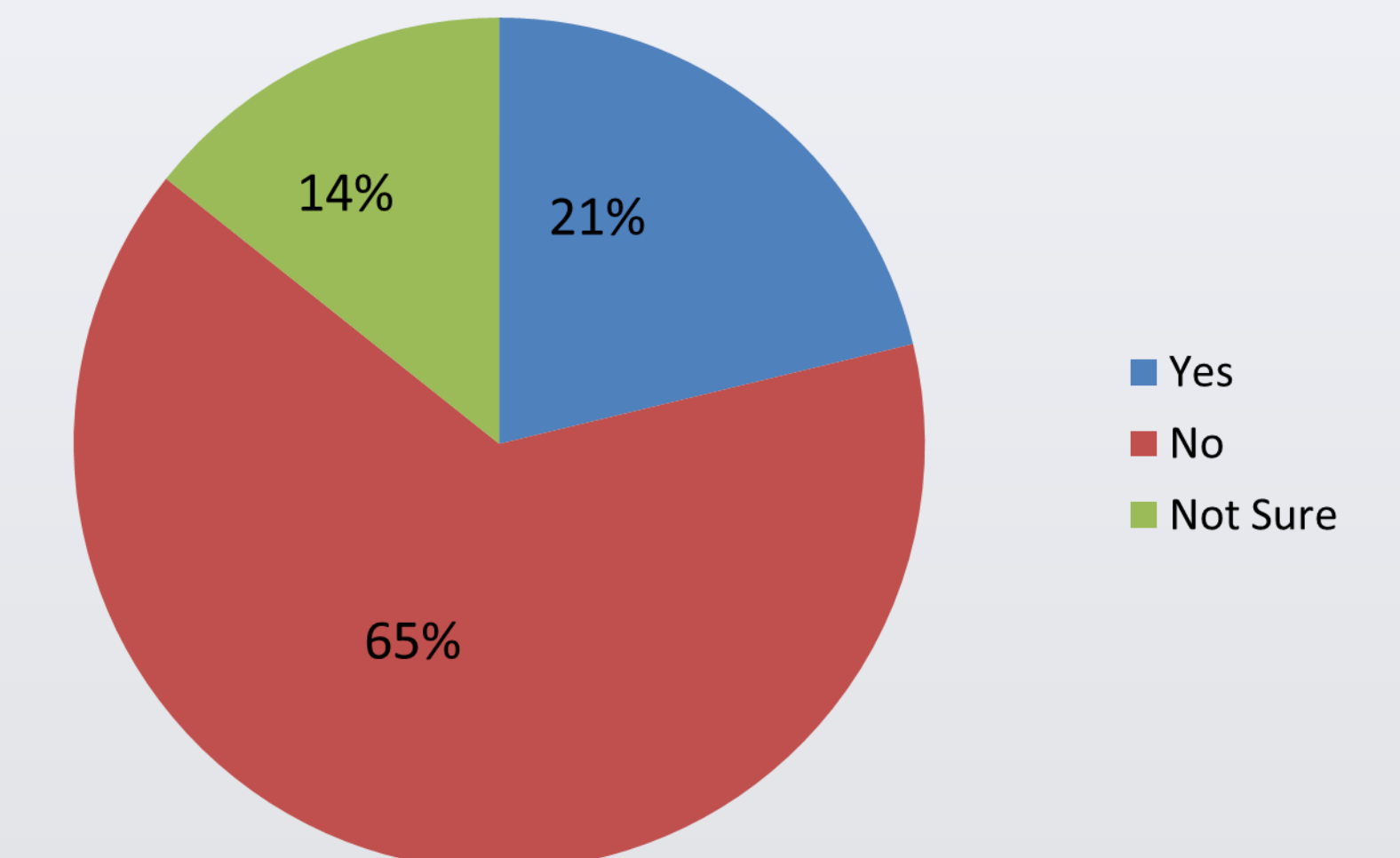
**Do you think that the published professional literature since the year 2000 adequately addresses the issues related to child neglect?**



Survey participants were asked whether they thought the literature adequately discussed the issues pertaining to child neglect. Of the 1,718 respondents, only 245 (14%) believed the literature adequately covered the issues related to child neglect, while 685 (40%) indicated that the literature was inadequate. The remaining respondents, 788 (46%) were not sure.

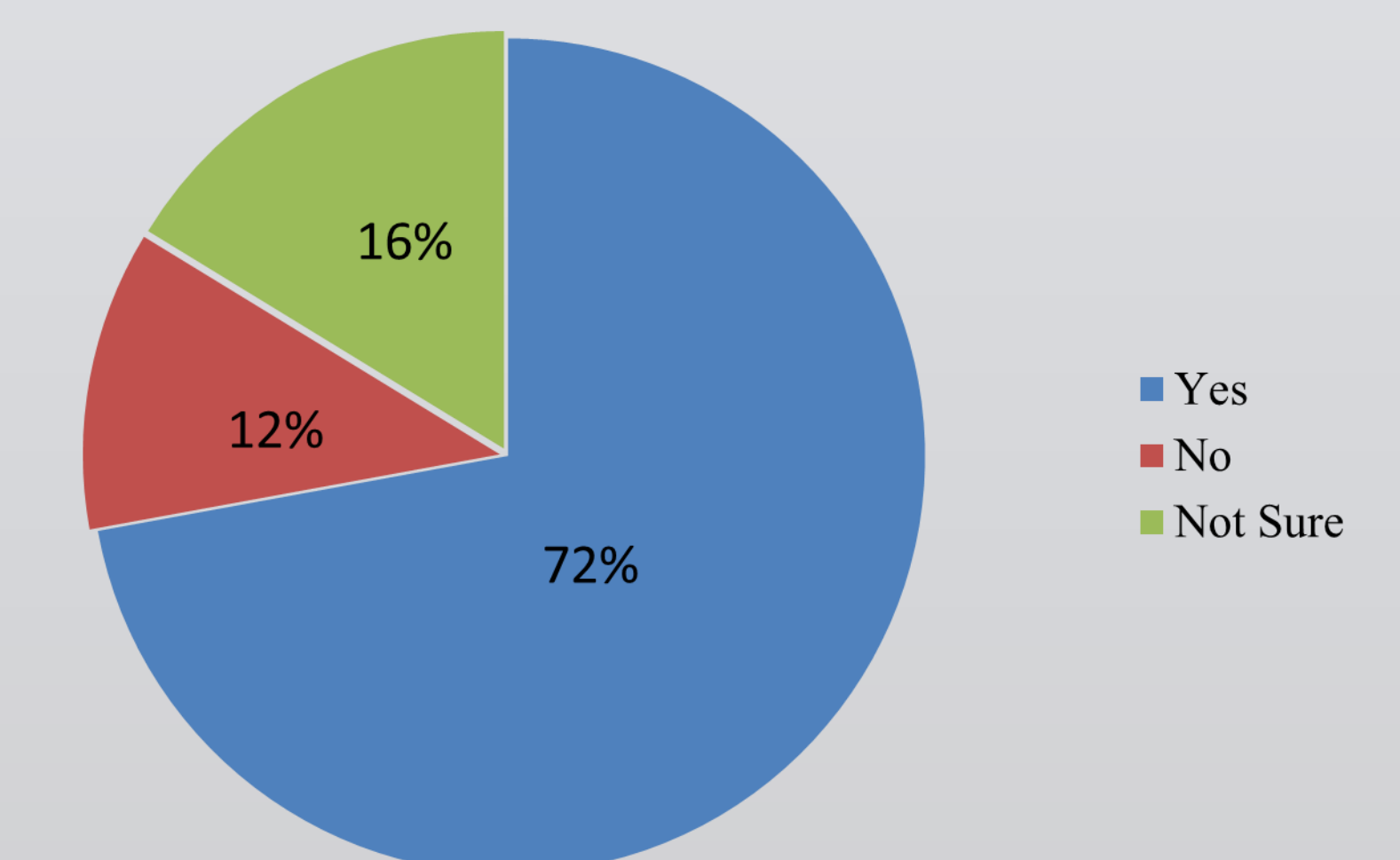
## Results

**Do you think that the current availability of professional training opportunities adequately address issues related to child neglect?**



Survey participants were asked whether professional training opportunities on child neglect issues were available. The vast majority, 1117 (65%), reported a dearth of adequate training opportunities. Only 361 (21%) indicated that there were adequate training opportunities available to them. The remainder, 240 (14%) were unsure.

**Is There a Neglect of Neglect?**



Survey participants were asked whether they thought there is a neglect of neglect. A resounding 1214 (72%) of the 1,684 respondents stated that there is a neglect of neglect. Only 195 (12%) said there was not, while 275 (16%) were unsure.

## Implications for Research

Neglect is the most prevalent form of child abuse by far. This study determined that there were several hundred articles whose primary topic of discussion was child neglect. Although the total number of articles is not trivial, it represents only a small portion of the professional literature pertaining to child abuse. Are the quantity, quality and scope of research and publication on neglect sufficient to address the issue?

## Questions for Further Research

- Do professionals in the field have adequate access to the published literature?
- Is the "neglect of neglect" attributable primarily to inadequate translation of research into practice?
- Should child neglect receive greater emphasis in research and publication?

## Acknowledgments and Contacts

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