# Strategies for clients re-engaging in care: the 4D (welcome back culture) strategy

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# HIV care and treatment: it's a lifetime journey

- Being on ART is a journey
- Expect clients to disengage
- Clients have valid reasons for interrupting treatment
- The reasons might be provider-, client-, or systems-related
- Disengagement from care sometimes reflects inefficiencies in our systems and services

## PLOS ONE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Why do patients interrupt and return to antiretroviral therapy? Retention in HIV care from the patient's perspective in Johannesburg, South Africa

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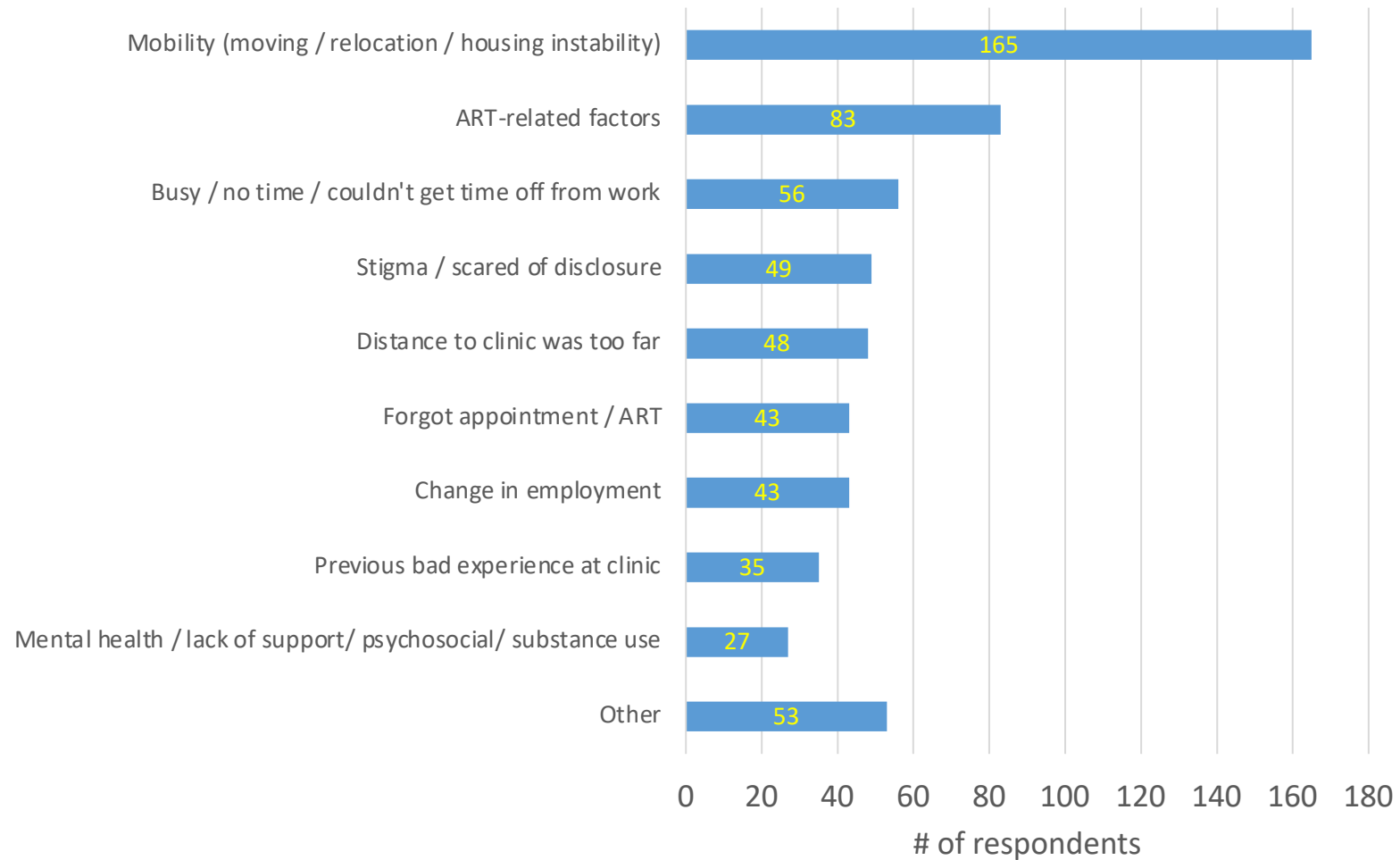


# of respondents

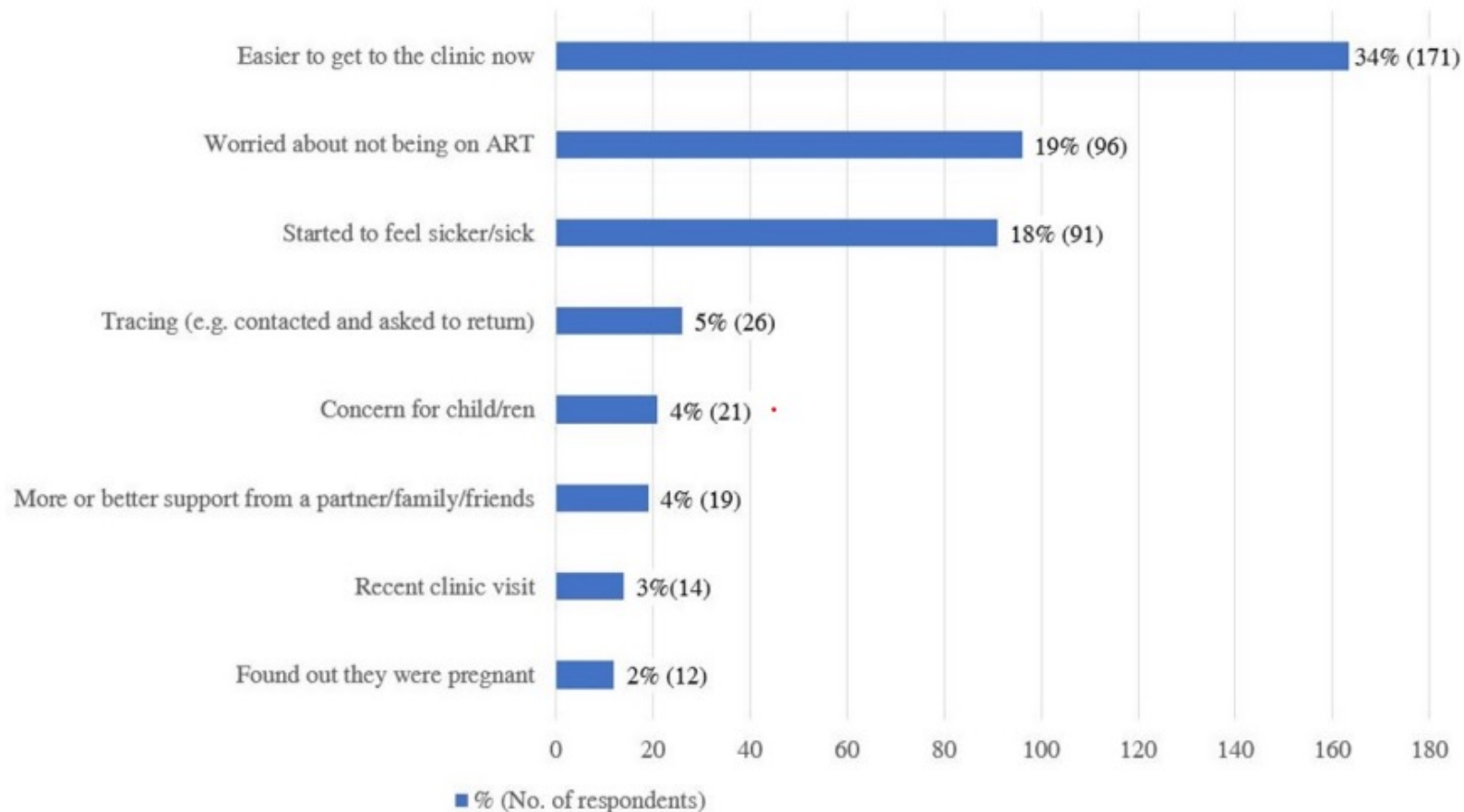# Reasons for returning to care| A South African study



Fig 2. Reasons for returning to care % (No. of respondents). [a] Participants could choose multiple responses.

# Strategies for retaining clients in care

- LH has a fully functional retention program called Back to Care (B2C) program

- B2C team at Umodzi Family Centre comprises of 4 Tracers and 14 Retention assistants

- Tracing of clients who drop out of care is done using 2 modes -  (1) phone tracing and (2) physical tracing

- Despite the successes the team has achieved, they still faced challenges

- Clients who were successfully traced and promised to come back to the facility faced hostile reception at the clinic

- Some clients were made to wait long hours to access the service as the providers decided to help those who came on their appointment day first

- This led to the introduction of the "**welcome back culture**" initiative

# The concept of 4D strategy

- Clients are always willing to continue treatment, but they face issues on the way

- Majority understand the implications of interrupting treatment, but are afraid to return

- Those who gather courage to come to the facility face a harsh welcome by healthcare workers

- The way we receive these clients will determine whether they continue interrupting treatment or get re-established

- Sometimes providers might not know what do to prevent further dis-engagements

- There is a need to have a client-centered approach for all clients re-engaging in care

# 4D CONCEPT

LIGHTHOUSE

DEFLATE

DISCUSS

DIRECT

DECORATE

1

2

3

4

LIGHTHOUSE

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# The Concept of 4D strategy



**1st D:** | Deflate the fears of returning to care

**2nd D:** | Discuss the reasons for interrupting treatment

**3rd D:** | Direct the client to appropriate services

**4th D:** | Decorate the client for continuing treatment

# 1st D: **Deflate** the fears of the returning clients

❖ As health workers, it is our responsibility to alleviate the fears of our clients

❖ Celebrate and appreciate clients for re-engaging in care

❖ Treat the client as a lost sheep that has been found

❖ Assure the client that we are here for their service

❖ Make sure the client understands that being on ART is a journey and there is nothing to fear when returning

❖ Ask the client to list the reasons for dis-engaging from treatment

❖ Let the client explain how each reason affects his/her commitment to treatment

❖ Take every reason seriously no matter how petty it might appear in your own understanding

❖ Categorize the reasons based on whether they are provider-related, client-related or a third person-related

❖ Analyze whether the reasons are short-term, medium-term or long-term

❖ Exercise empathy and avoid judgmental sentiments

Based on the raised and discussed reasons, provide client centered services

Explore the possibility of offering the following services:

1. Multi-month scripting/Nurse led Community ART Program – A client traveling long distances/frequent visits

2. Comprehensive adherence counselling - Treatment illiteracy

3. Adolescent Services - A teen busy with school

4. Kindergarten Clinic - A busy mum with an under 5 kid

5. Psychosocial counselling – A client presenting psychosocial issues
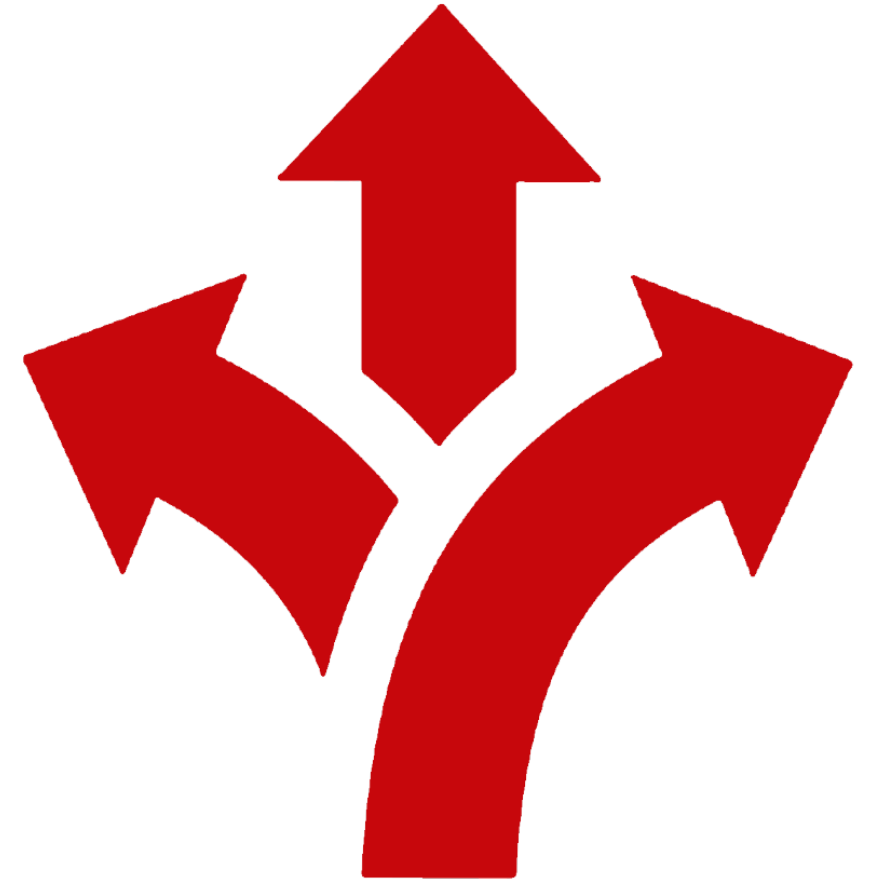
# 4th D: **Decorate** the client for remaining in care

- ❖ Praise the client who initially interrupted treatment but now continues to remain in care

- ❖ Celebrate clients that have achieved viral load suppression

- ❖ Consider giving them rewards such as a present or certificate of acknowledgement for doing well on treatment

# Welcome back culture at Umodzi Family Centre | implementation plan June 2021

As a new concept, we started from scratch

✓ Established a dedicated team (nurses, clinicians, RAs, tracers, receptionists, psychosocial counsellors, M and E, etc.)

✓ Modified the client flow for clients returning to care

✓ Developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

✓ Developed M and E tools

# Welcome back culture at UFC |data collection form

## Data collection form for clients re-engaging in care

| Date | ARV No. | Client Name | Sex | Age | Location | Phone | Def/missed | Reason for TX interruption | Intervention | Next apt. Date |
|------|---------|-------------|-----|-----|----------|-------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|      |         |             |     |     |          |       |           |                            |              |                |
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|      |         |             |     |     |          |       |           |                            |              |                |

# Welcome back culture |
# Data from June 2021 to January 2022

| TX interruption status | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Missed appointment (MAP)** | 180 (52.9%) | 177 (53.6%) | **357 (53.3%)** |
| **Defaulted (DEF)** | 160 (47.1%) | 153 (46.4%) | **313 (46.7%)** |
| **Total** | **340 (50.7%)** | **330 (49.3%)** | **670 (100%)** |

- 670 clients interrupted treatment between June 2021 – Jan 2022:
  - 53.3% missed appointments and 46.7% defaulted
  - No major difference between male and female clients
- **Missed appointment** = defined as didn't show up for > 14 days
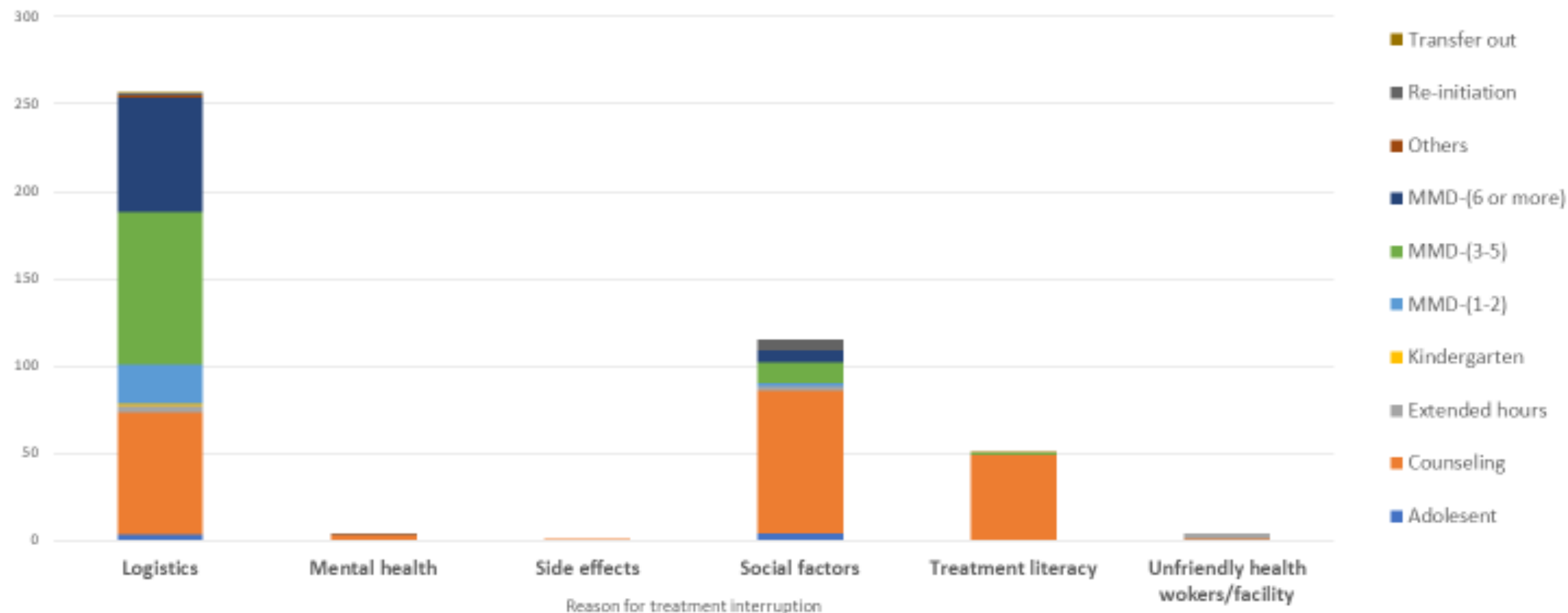- **Defaulted** = defined as didn't show up for > 60 days

# Age distribution of DEF and MAP |
## Most clients interrupting treatment = 20-49 years



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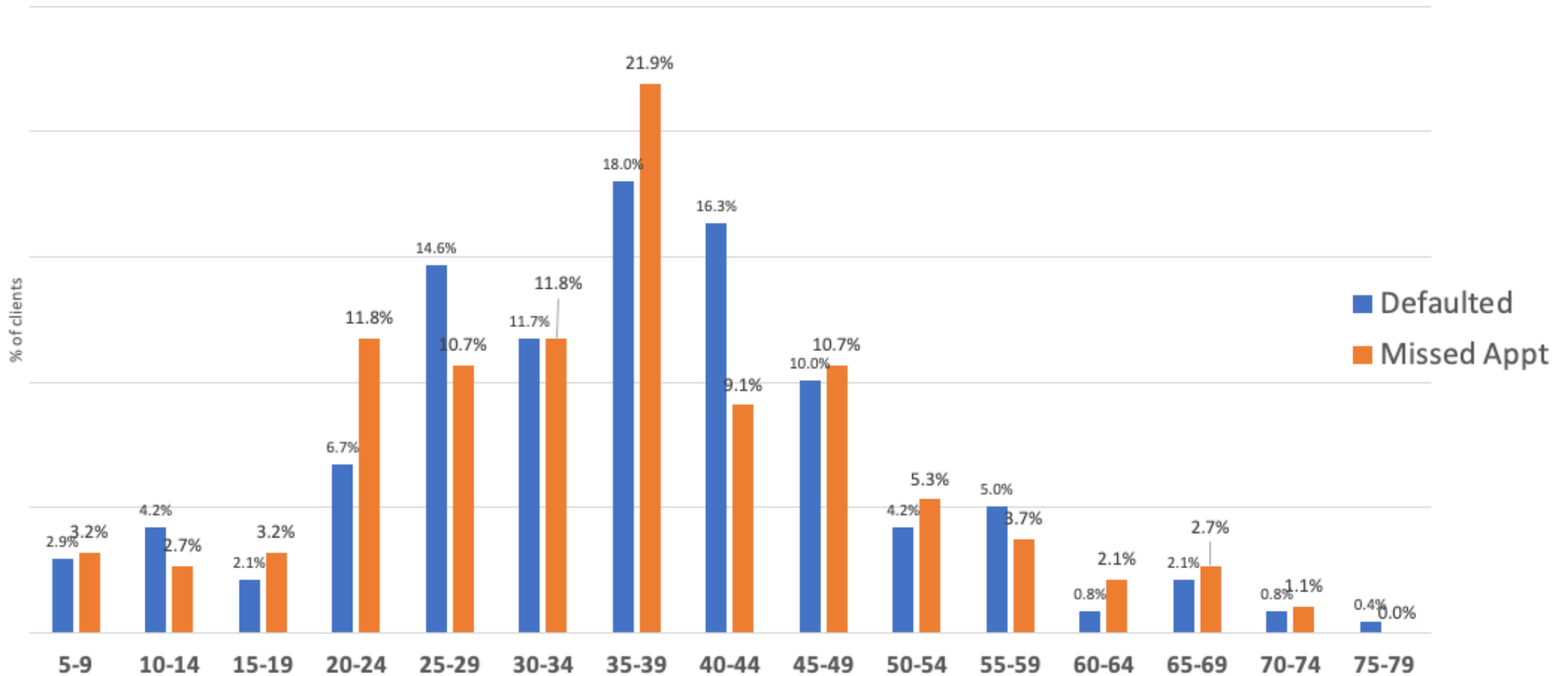
# Logistics, social factors and mental health are the main reasons for treatment interruption



Reasons for Treatment Interruption

- 0.93%
- 11.81%
- 26.62%
- 0.23%
- 0.93%
- 59.49%

- Logistics- travel, transport, work
- Mental health
- Side effects
- Social factors- domestic issues,religious etc
- Treatment literacy
- Unfriendly health wokers/facility

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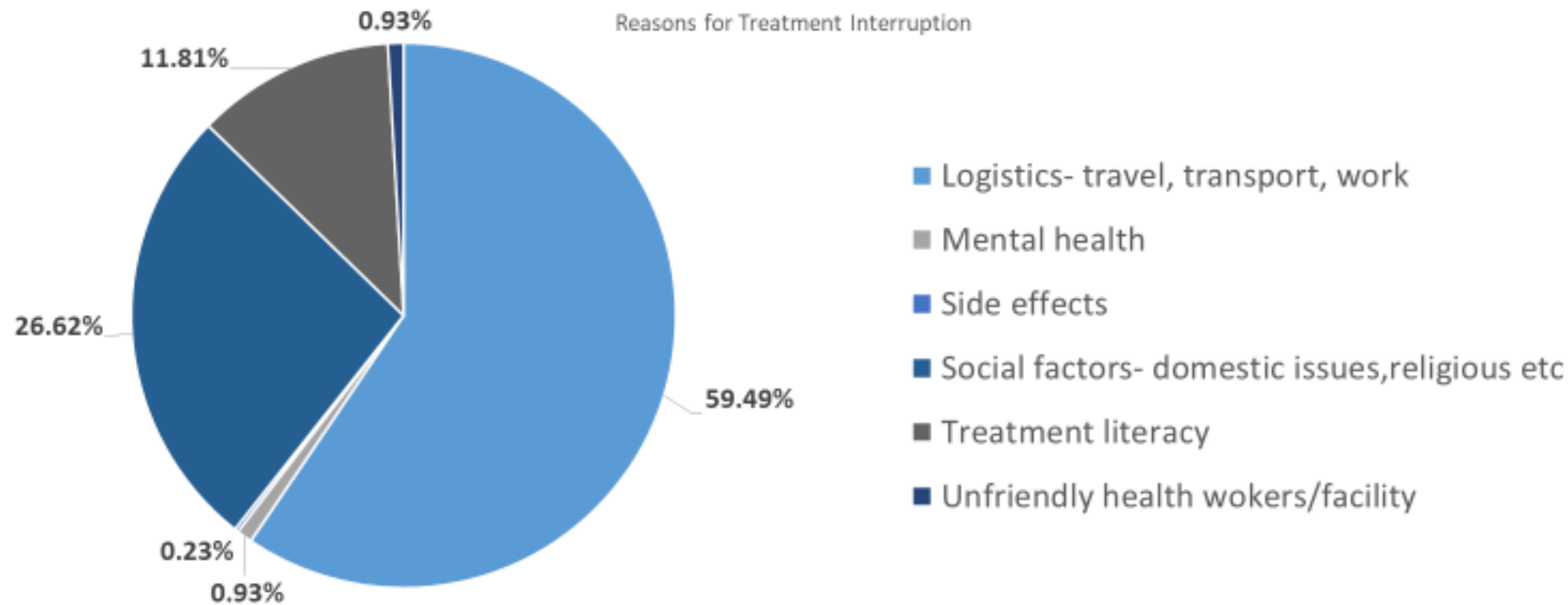
# Type of service provided for each reason established | 60% of clients with logistical challenges received MMD



Legend:
- Transfer out
- Re-initiation
- Others
- MMD-(6 or more)
- MMD-(3-5)
- MMD-(1-2)
- Kindergarten
- Extended hours
- Counseling
- Adolesent

X-axis: Reason for treatment interruption
Categories: Logistics, Mental health, Side effects, Social factors, Treatment literacy, Unfriendly health wokers/facility

# Proportion of clients who reported on their next appointment date | 83% of clients reported on their next appointment date after receiving welcome back culture service
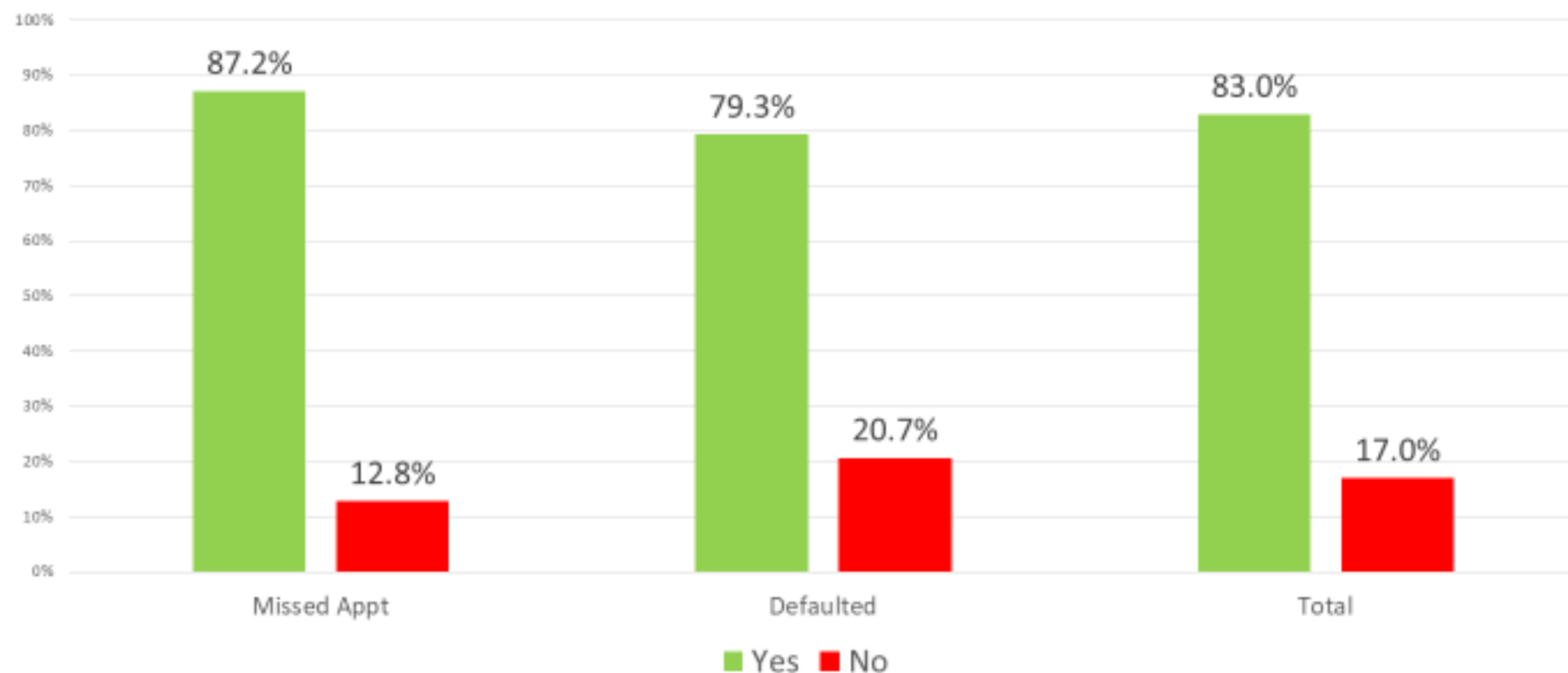
# Summary

- ART is a life-long commitment and journey, expect clients to disengage along the way

- Clients are willing to return to care but are usually afraid to do so

- Client may have valid reasons for interrupting treatment

- Logistics and social-economic factors are key reasons clients decide to interrupt treatment

- Welcome back culture initiative through 4D strategy aims at optimizing and providing client centered care to prevent further treatment interruption

- Let us treat all clients re-engaging in care as lost sheep and celebrate when they come back

# Thank you

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