

REPORT



on the use of the SCforH
guidelines in the context of
higher education courses for
health promoters, physical
educators, and sport and
exercise practitioners in
Europe



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Introduction

The Sports Club for Health (SCforH) movement began in Finland in the early 2000's as researchers and practitioners recognised the potential for sports clubs and associations to act as settings for health promotion. Specifically, SCforH supports the provision of health-enhancing sports activities to benefit individuals and sports clubs/associations. SCforH guidelines have been developed (2017) and have been widely disseminated in a report form. These include guiding principles of SCforH, benefits of the approach, as well as an approach to application in sports clubs/associations. In the interim, SCforH has continued to develop and this current Erasmus Project aimed to improve the implementation of SCforH in EU member states including the development of an online SCforH learning tool.

The particular aim of this work package was to foster implementation of SCforH content and the learning tool in curricula in relevant higher education programmes across Europe. The various elements included (i) the identification of tertiary education courses (health promotion, physical education, sport, and exercise science), (ii) the compilation of a database of courses and academic staff contact details, (iii) communication to these individuals in relation to the SCforH online course and its implementation in their module/programme, (iv) completion of the online course by lecturers, researchers and students and, (v) engagement in a survey to evaluate the impact and experience of the SCforH learning tool.

Methods

Study design and participants

As part of our 2020-22 Sports Club for Health (SCforH) project, a newly designed SCforH online learning course was created, and intended for dissemination among academic staff in higher education or research institution, and students from 36 European countries.

A database of academic staff was generated, emails were generated and contact was initiated. In addition, a questionnaire-based, cross-sectional study on the awareness and use of the Sports Club for Health approach was prepared for implementation through the online learning course. All participants were invited to consent to participate in the survey.

Representatives of 27 EU member states at the time, 4 candidate countries (Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey), Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK were asked to complete the survey. Out of 513 directly invited participants, 322 agreed to participate in the study, moving through the SCforH online learning course and providing their responses to the survey. The sample included higher education teachers and researchers, and higher education students. Sample responses are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The study was supported and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Kinesiology, Zagreb University (number: 10/2021).

Figure 1 shows 916 student attendees on the project, none were directly invited rather they were invited through an academic staff member.

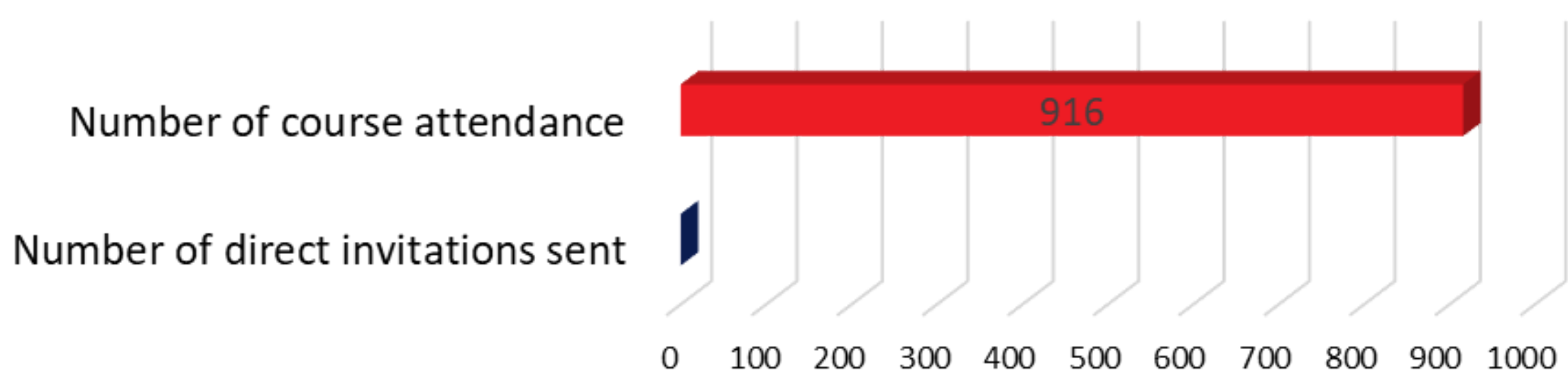


Figure 1. Invitations sent and course attendance among students



Figure 2 shows a 63% response rate for directly invited academic staff.

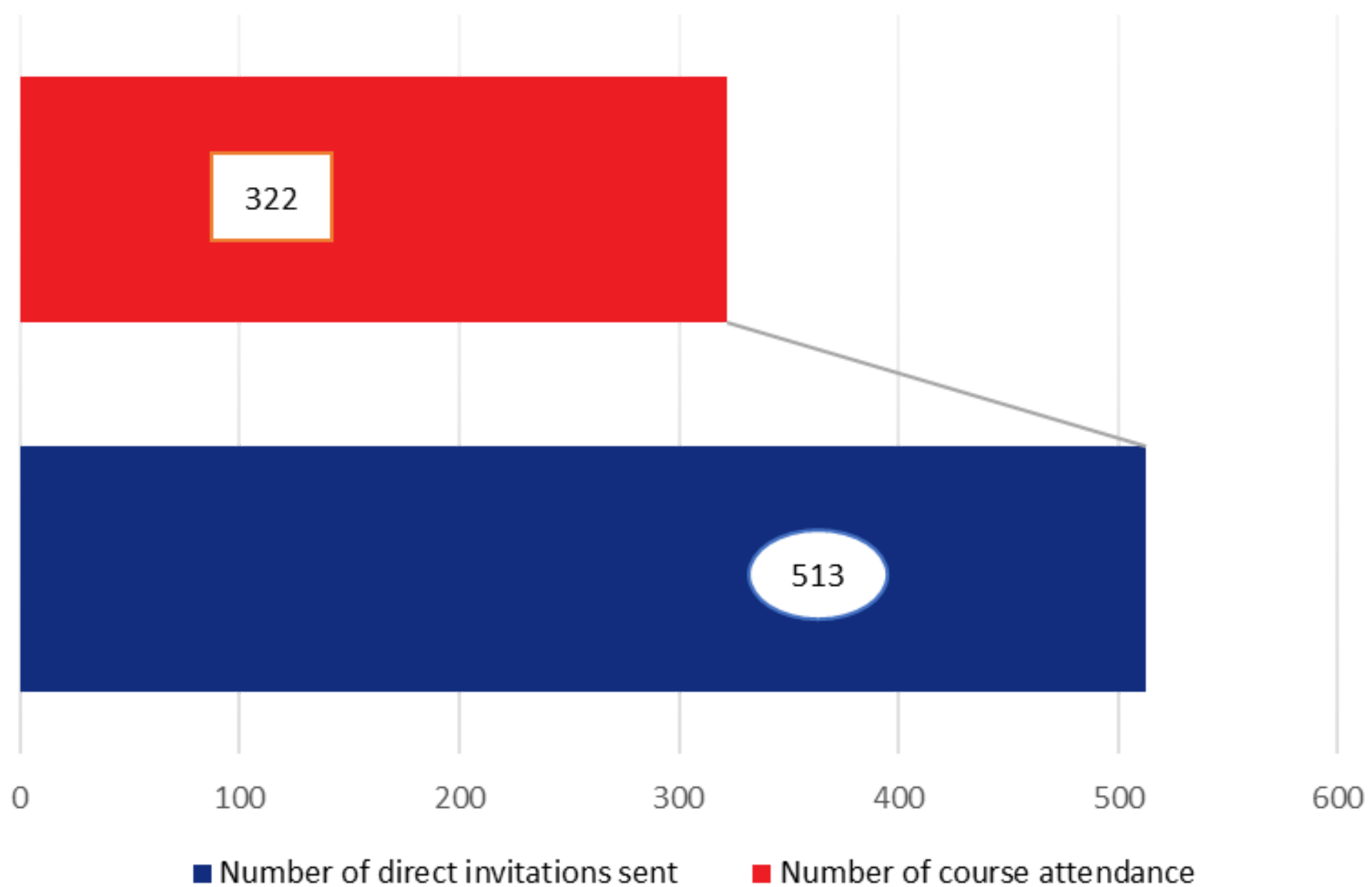


Figure 2. Invitations sent and course attendance of academic staff in higher education or research institution

Measures

Each course participant provided the following data:

- the organisation type and name
- the country in which their organisation's headquarters are located

Higher education teachers and researchers provided additional data on:

- their understanding of the existence of the initiatives from their countries that were taken to promote the use or implementation of "Sports Club for Health Guidelines" among sports clubs taken by higher education institutions;
- their awareness of the SCforH Guidelines prior to attending the course;



- the initiatives taken by their organisation to promote the use or implementation of the 'Sports Club for Health Guidelines' among sports organisations or sports clubs in their country;
- teaching or managing any tertiary degree subjects at their institution related to the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA);
- existence of SCforH guidelines and SCforH online course in their curriculum; and
- their intention to implement (or keep implemented) SCforH guidelines and SCforH online learning course in the curriculum of their subject(s)

Data analysis

We presented the existence of initiatives to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines among sports clubs for each country, and we calculated the overall percentage of initiatives taken by higher education institutions. We calculated the percentages of: (i) awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to attending the course, and (ii) initiatives taken from the participant's organisation to use or implement SCforH guidelines. The data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel, version 2209 (Build 15629.20208 Click-to-Run).



Results

Distribution of initiatives taken by the higher education institutions to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines among sports clubs for each country and overall is presented in Table 1.

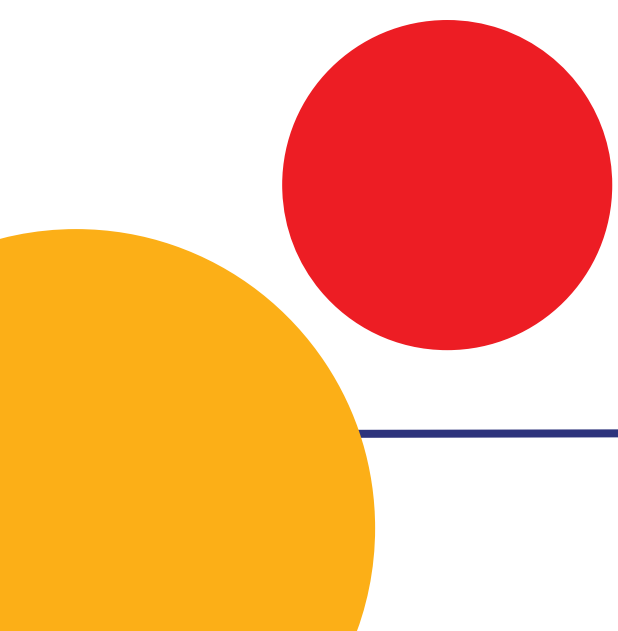
Table 1. Initiatives to promote SCforH guidelines reported by the higher education institutions in 36 European countries

Country	Initiatives to promote SCforH guidelines by higher education institutions
Albania	/
Austria	Yes
Belgium	Yes
Bulgaria	/
Croatia	Yes
Cyprus	No
Czech Republic	Yes
Denmark	No
Estonia	No
Finland	Yes
France	No

Germany	No
Greece	Yes
Hungary	Yes
Iceland	/
Ireland	No
Italy	Yes
Latvia	Yes
Lithuania	/
Luxembourg	Yes
Malta	No
Montenegro	No
Netherlands	No
North Macedonia	Yes
Norway	No
Poland	Yes

Portugal	Yes
Romania	Yes
Serbia	Yes
Slovakia	/
Slovenia	Yes
Spain	Yes
Sweden	Yes
Switzerland	Yes
Turkey	Yes
United Kingdom	No
Overall (% Yes)*	64.5

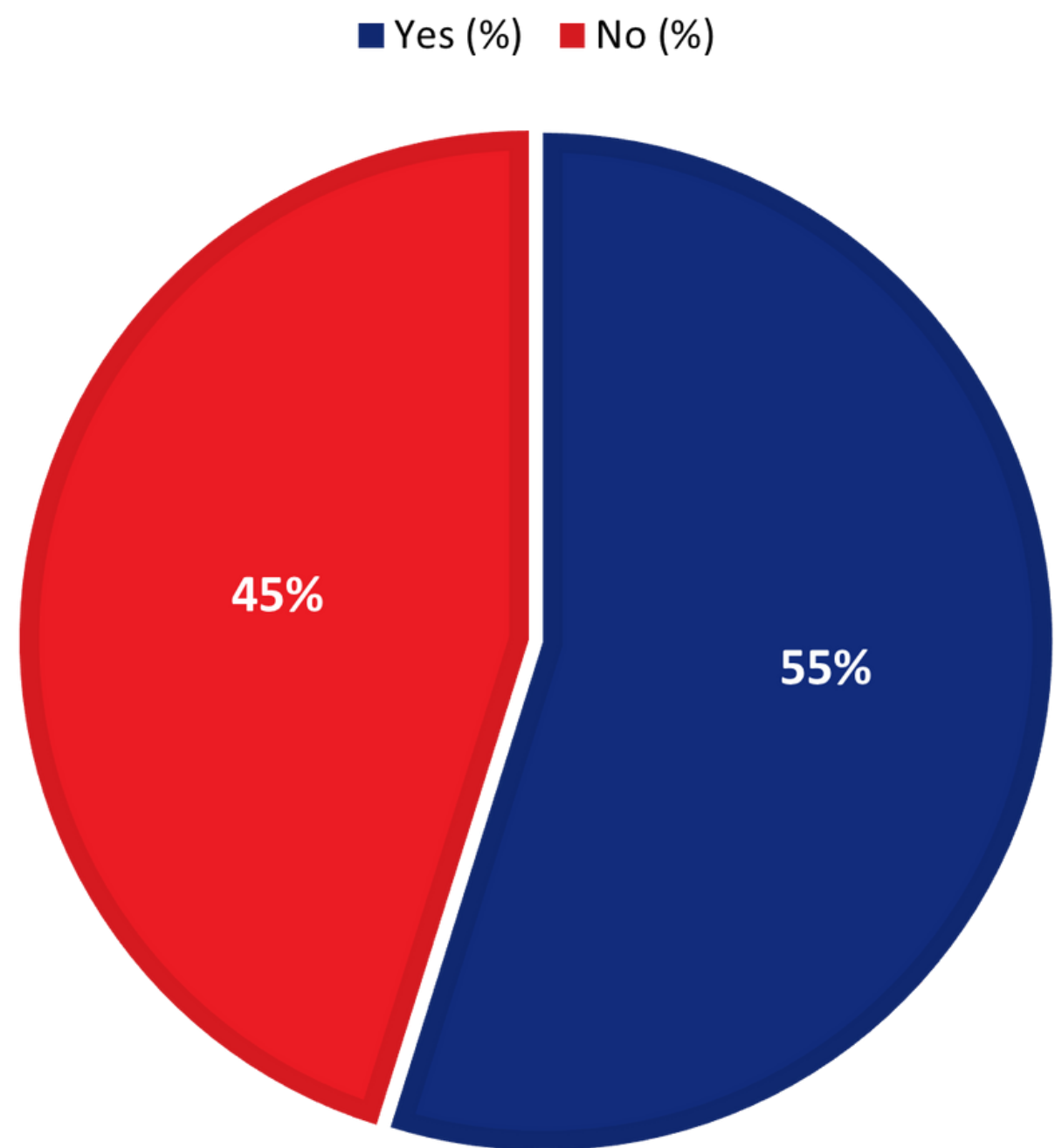
* % of those who replied to the question, /= no reply





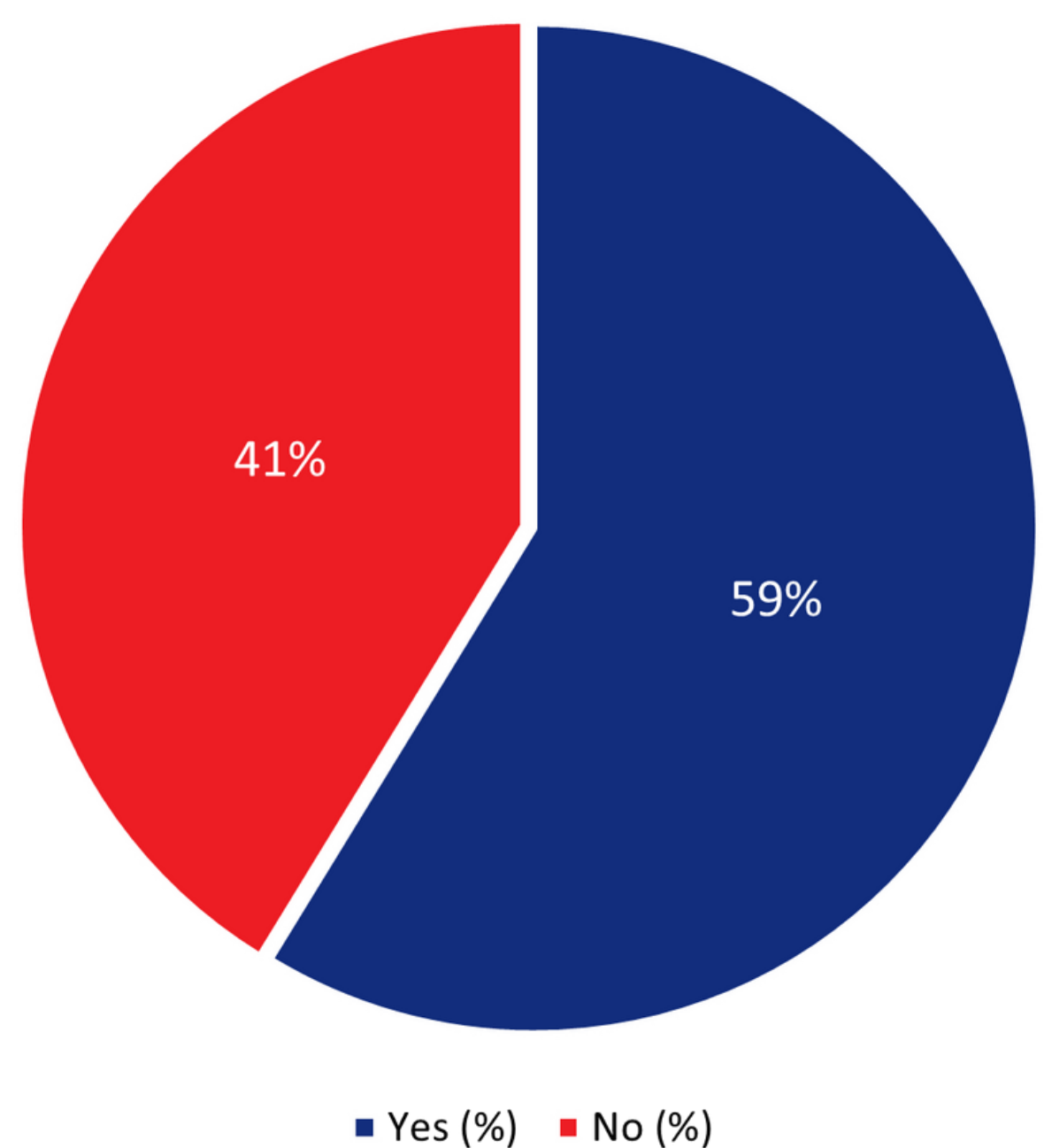
According to the responses received from 29 European countries, 54.8% academic staff in higher education or a research institution were aware of the SCforH guidelines prior to the course. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to the online course among academic staff in higher education or research institution



According to the responses received from 25 European countries, 58.8% of academic staff in higher education or a research institution reported using or implementing the SCforH guidelines (Figure 4).

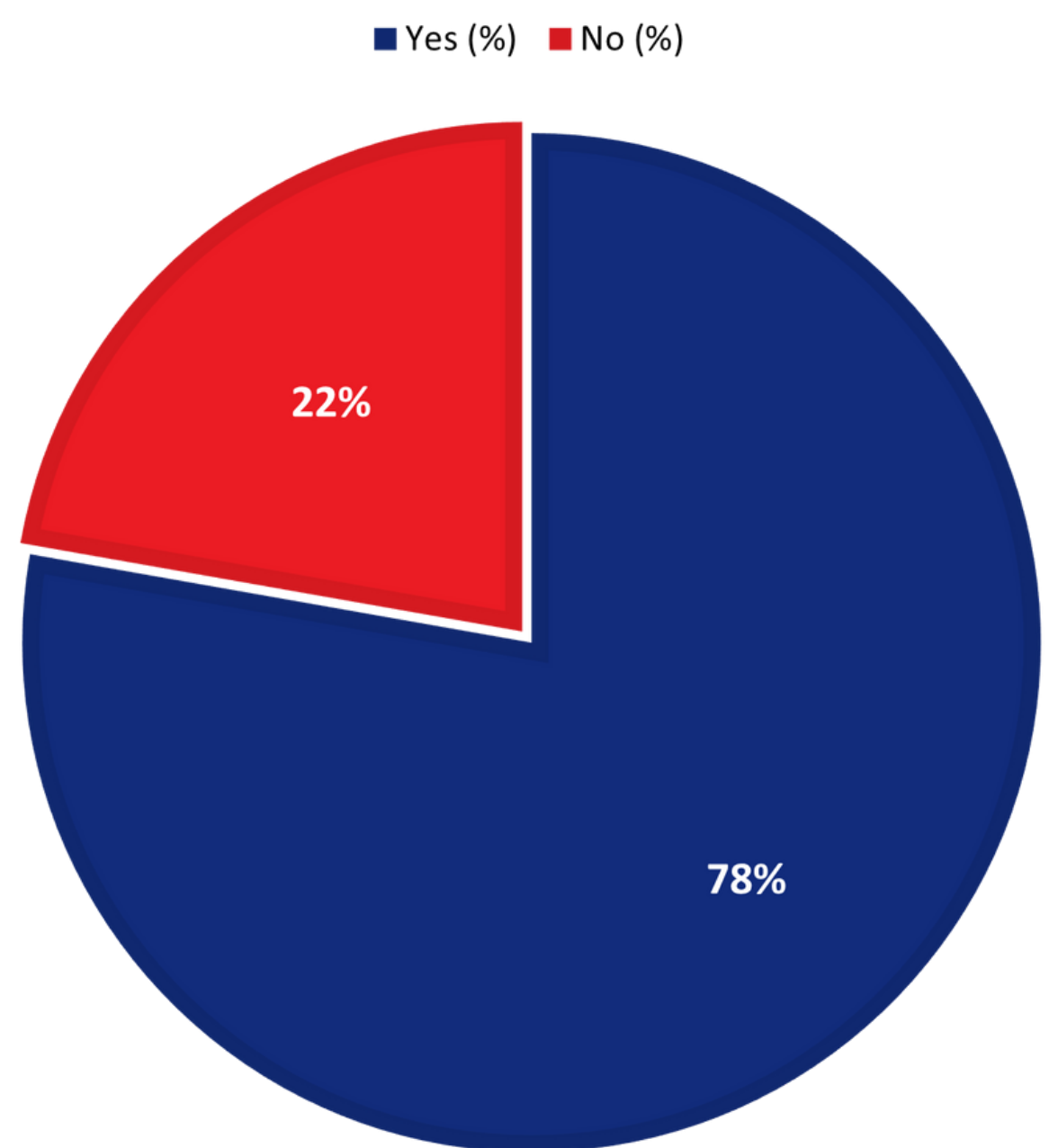
Figure 4. Implementation and use of the SCforH guidelines among academic staff in higher education or research institution





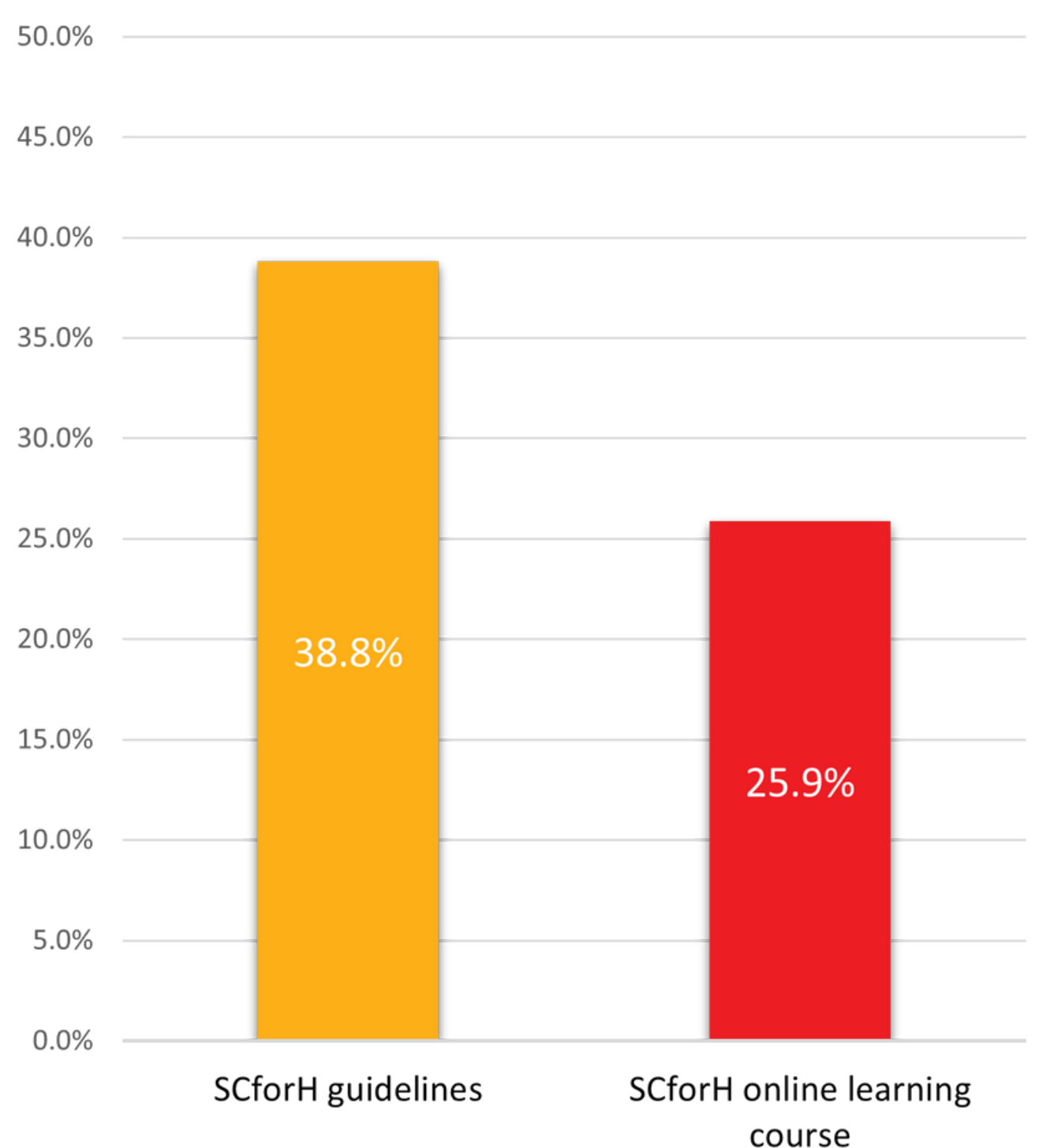
77.8% of higher education teachers from 29 European countries indicated that they teach or manage some tertiary degree subjects at their institution related to HEPA (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Academic staff that are teaching HEPA related subjects



Moreover, the SCforH guidelines and the SCforH online learning course were implemented by 38.8% and 25.9% of academic staff in 28 European countries, respectively, as part of the curriculum in their subject(s) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Implementation of the SCforH guidelines and online learning course in the curriculum of subjects led by academic staff





Finally, from 28 European countries, 61.4% of academic staff said that they intend to implement (or keep implementing) SCforH guideline related content, whereas 59.1% intend to implement (or keep implementing) the SCforH online learning course, in the curriculum of their subject(s) (Figure 7).

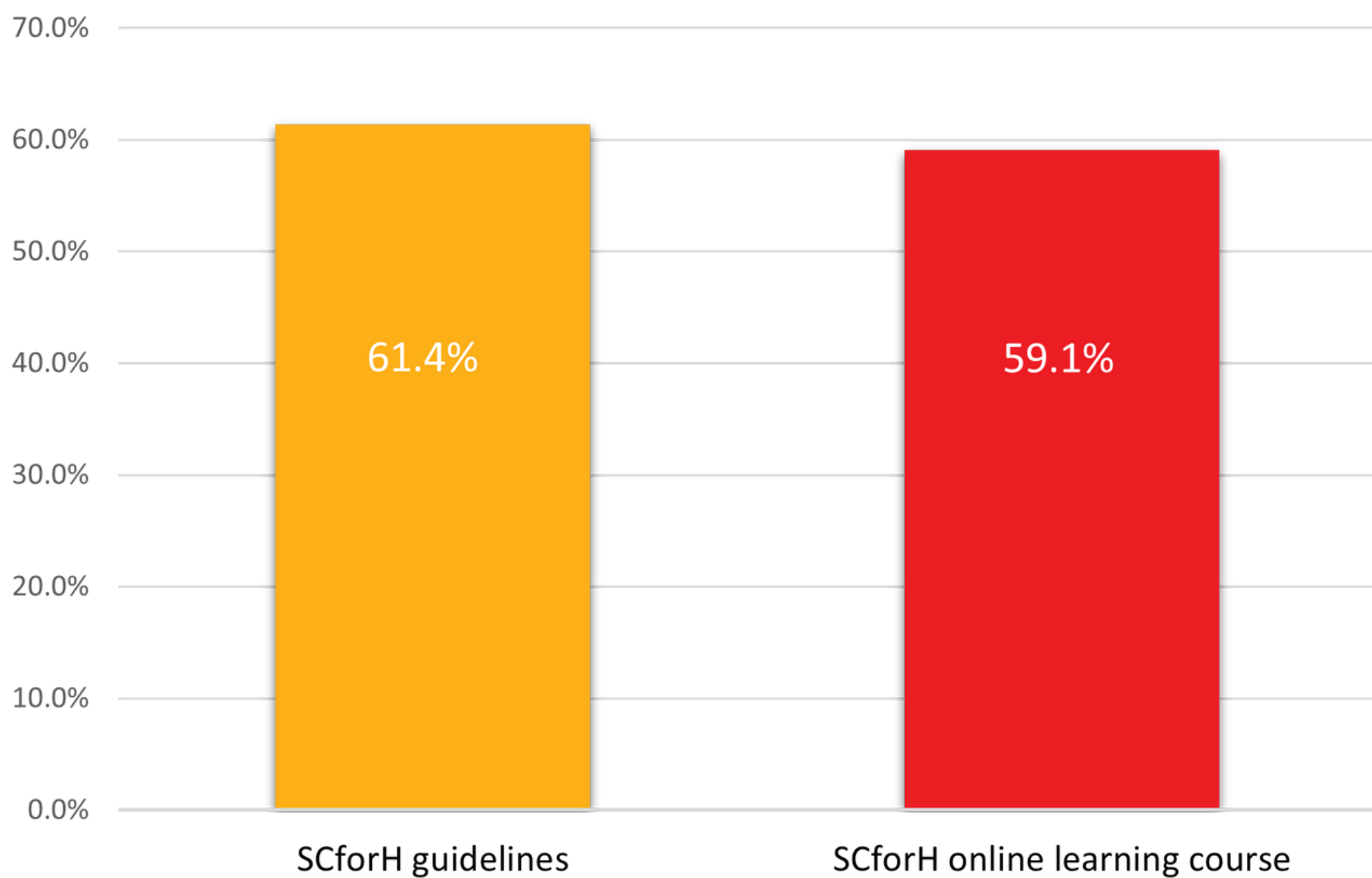


Figure 7. Intention to implement the SCforH guidelines and online learning course in the curriculum of subjects led by academic staff

Conclusions

- **Reach:** engagement with higher education staff was strong with a 63% response rate from those directly invited to complete the online learning tool. 78% of this group were directly involved in modules related to health promotion/physical education/sport and exercise science. Subsequent dissemination to students was low, suggesting that perhaps the online tool was not shared with students due to scheduling/timing issues.
- **Awareness:** over half of the academic staff were aware of SCforH initiatives in their institution with 58% currently using the guidelines in their courses. It was also noted that SCforH initiatives are delivered in higher education initiatives in 65% of EU countries.
- **Implementation:** while engagement with students was low, the strong current implementation and, more importantly, the intention to embed SCforH guidelines and the online learning course in subjects is a positive outcome and reflective of the high participation rate of higher education staff.
- **Resources:** the database of contact points for relevant health/sport/physical education-related programmes in higher education institutes across Europe is a valuable resource that can support future dissemination of SCforH.
- **Sustainability:** the high intention to embed the SCforH guidelines and online learning tool suggests good sustainability for the learning tool in the higher education sector across Europe. Engagement rates will continue to be monitored to capture this engagement.

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Sports Club for Health



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