Living kidney donor evaluation in Australia:

A national survey of guideline availability & use, and long-term follow-up practice

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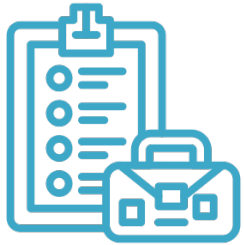
Donor safety is crucial and requires thorough evaluation and follow-up

- LDKT offers superior outcomes for recipients, but requires careful donor selection to ensure donor safety
- Aus lacks national guidelines for donors outside ANZKX, potentially leading to inconsistent acceptance criteria, reduced donor and recipient confidence, and inequities in access to transplantation.
- Long-term follow-up is critical for donor safety yet is grossly underreported in Australia
  - <3% of living kidney donors in Australia have adequate follow-up data recorded in ANZLKD (2004–2021)



David NG et al, 'Registry-Based Living Kidney Donor Follow-Up in Australia: An ANZLKD Analysis 2003–2021', *Nephrology*, 2025

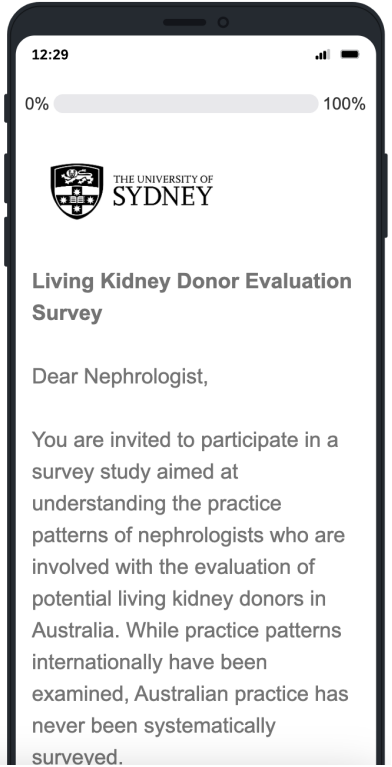
AIMS

1. Assess Australian nephrologists' need, awareness, and use of living donor **guidelines**

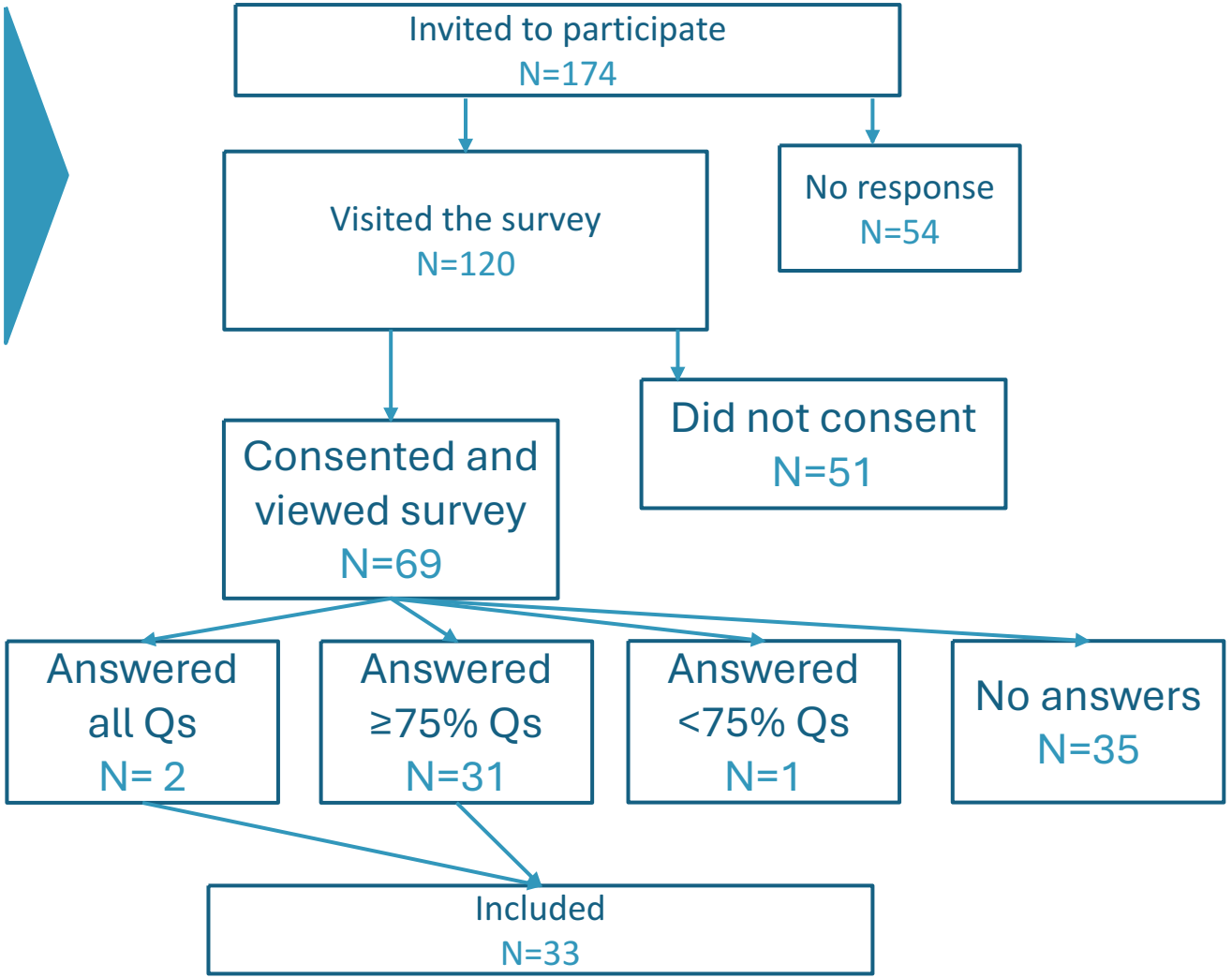
2. Evaluate current practices, responsibilities, and barriers to conducting and reporting long-term **follow-up** of living kidney donors.

Survey Methods

- A national, cross-sectional, anonymous web-based survey
- Survey collected demographic information and details about the assessment and evaluation of potential living kidney donors.
  - Topics selected through literature review and content experts
  - Questions were grouped into 6 sections: demographics, guideline use, risk assessment, resources, follow-up, and challenges.
  - A survey link was disseminated Feb-April 2024 to a convenience sample of nephrologists through TSANZ and ANZSN.



Study design and recruitment flow chart



Participant demographics

Characteristic		Count (%)
Total number of participants (answered ≥75% of questions)		33
Australian state or territory where nephrologist works	New South Wales	18 (37%)
	Victoria	5 (10%)
	Queensland	4 (8%)
	Western Australia	3 (6%)
	South Australia/Tasmania	3 (6%)
Nephrologist type	Transplant nephrologist	17 (52%)
	General nephrologist	16 (48%)

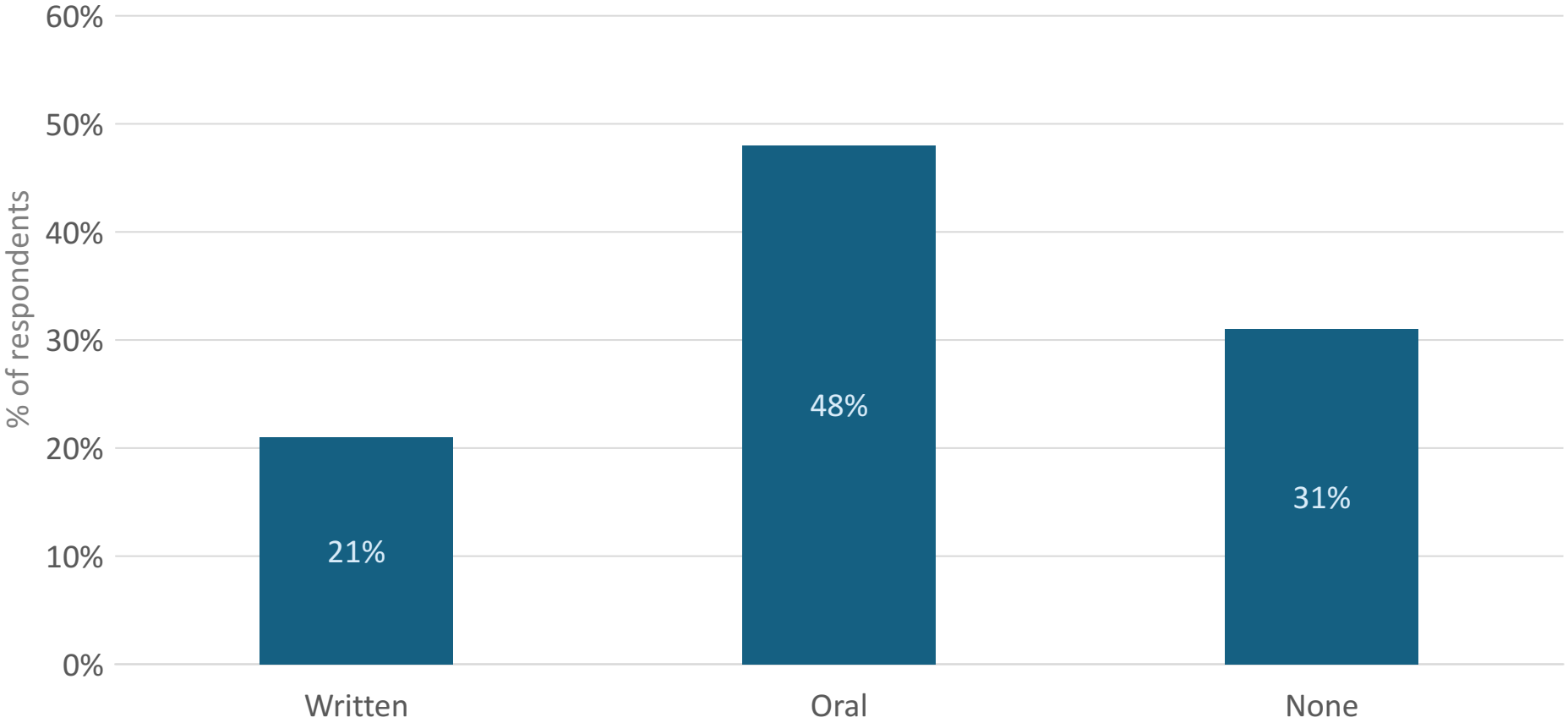
Living kidney donation in Australia

Guidelines

Follow-up practices

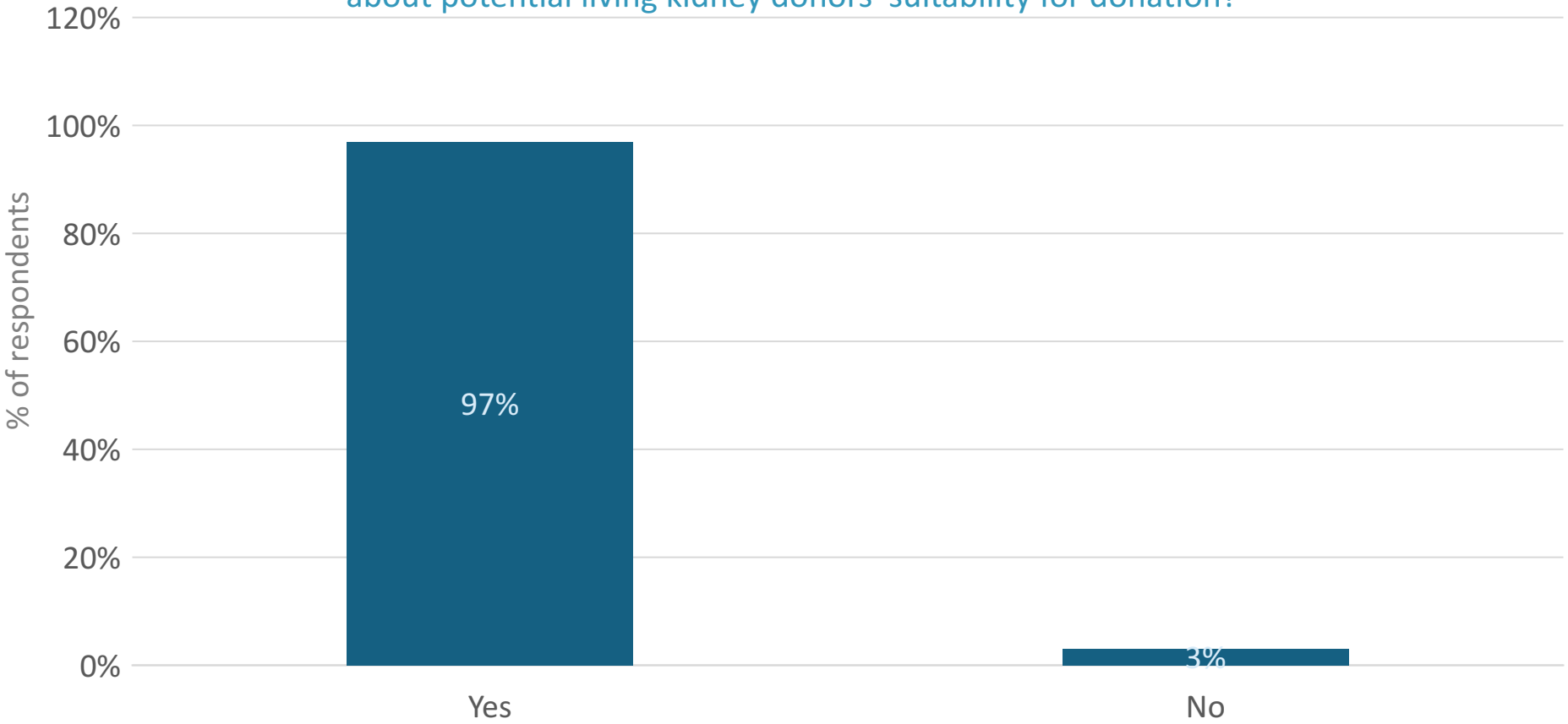
Most centres do not have written guidelines

"Does your unit have unit specific living kidney donor eligibility guidelines?"



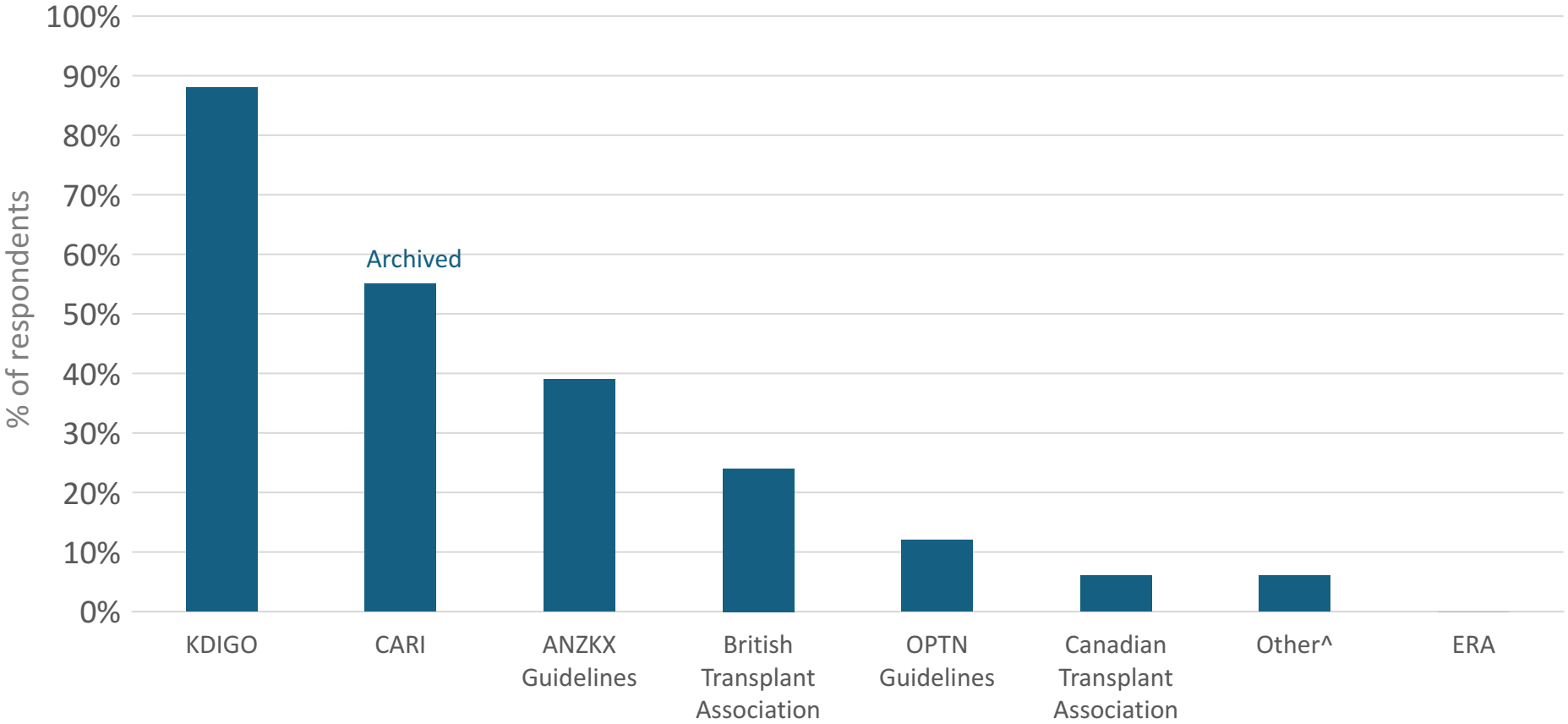
Respondents find guidelines helpful

"Do you refer to any national or international living kidney donor guidelines in coming to decisions about potential living kidney donors' suitability for donation?"



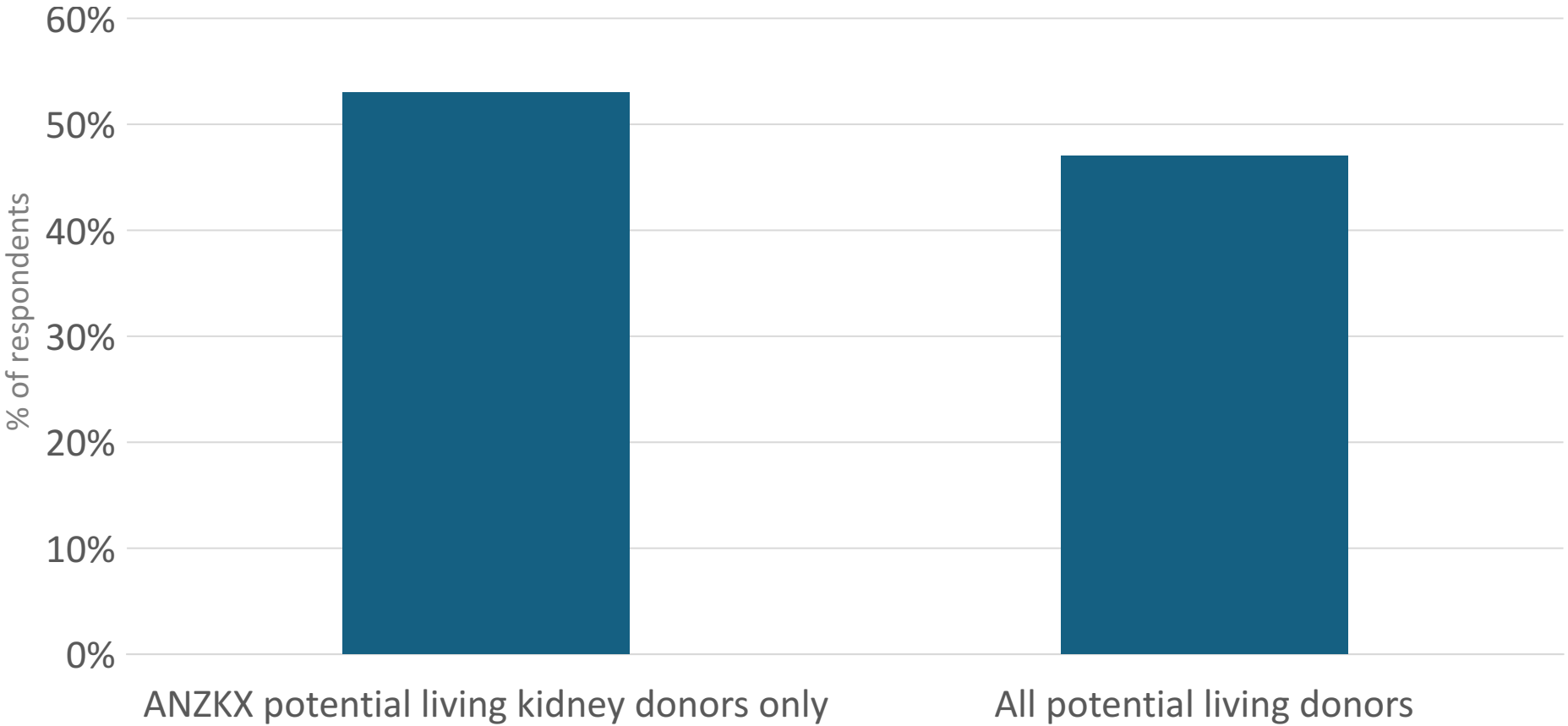
Respondents draw from a variety of guidelines

"Which guidelines do you refer to?"



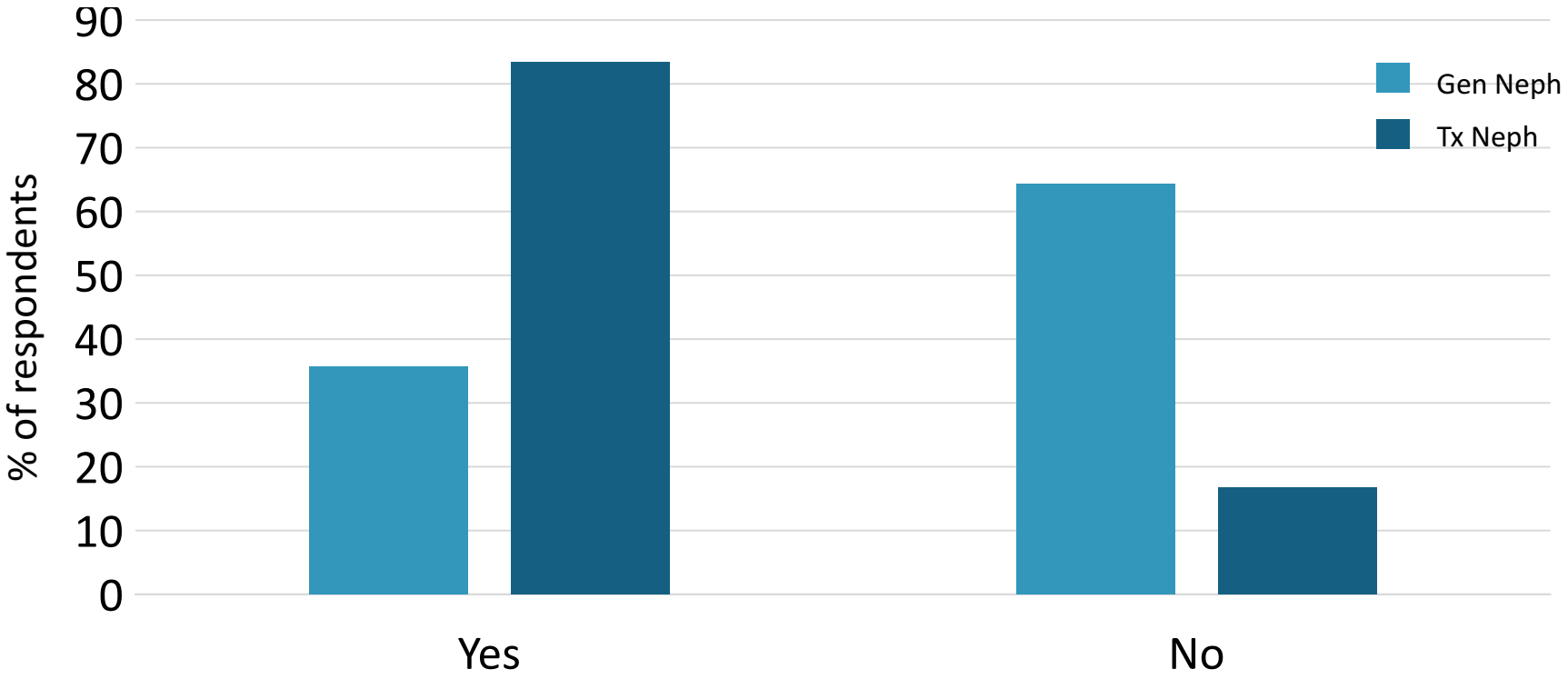
The ANZKX use speaks to a greater need

"For those that use the ANZKX Guidelines do you refer to the ANZKX guidelines for"



Awareness of support mechanisms for living donors was suboptimal

"Are you aware of the Australian Government's Supporting Living Organ Donor's Program?"



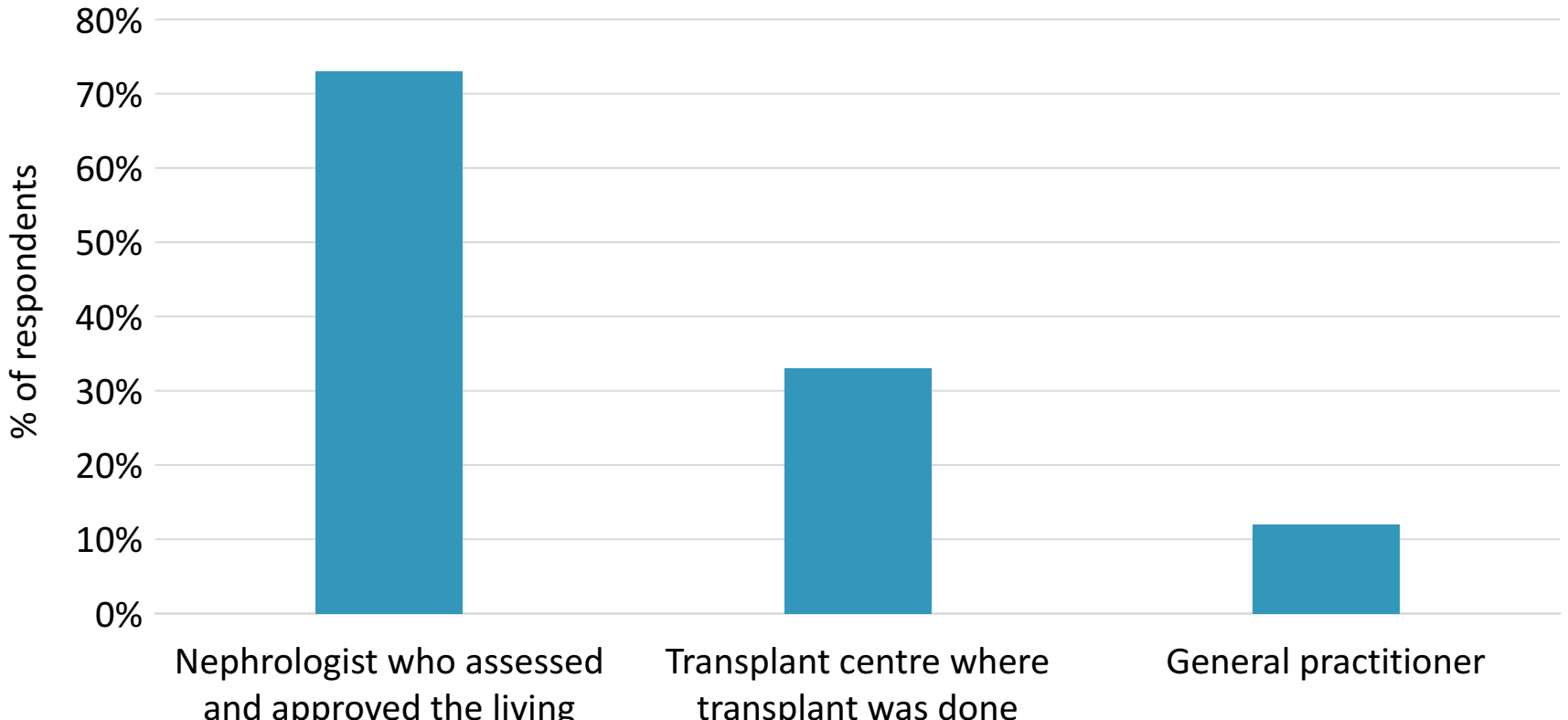
Living kidney donation in Australia

Guidelines

Follow-up practices

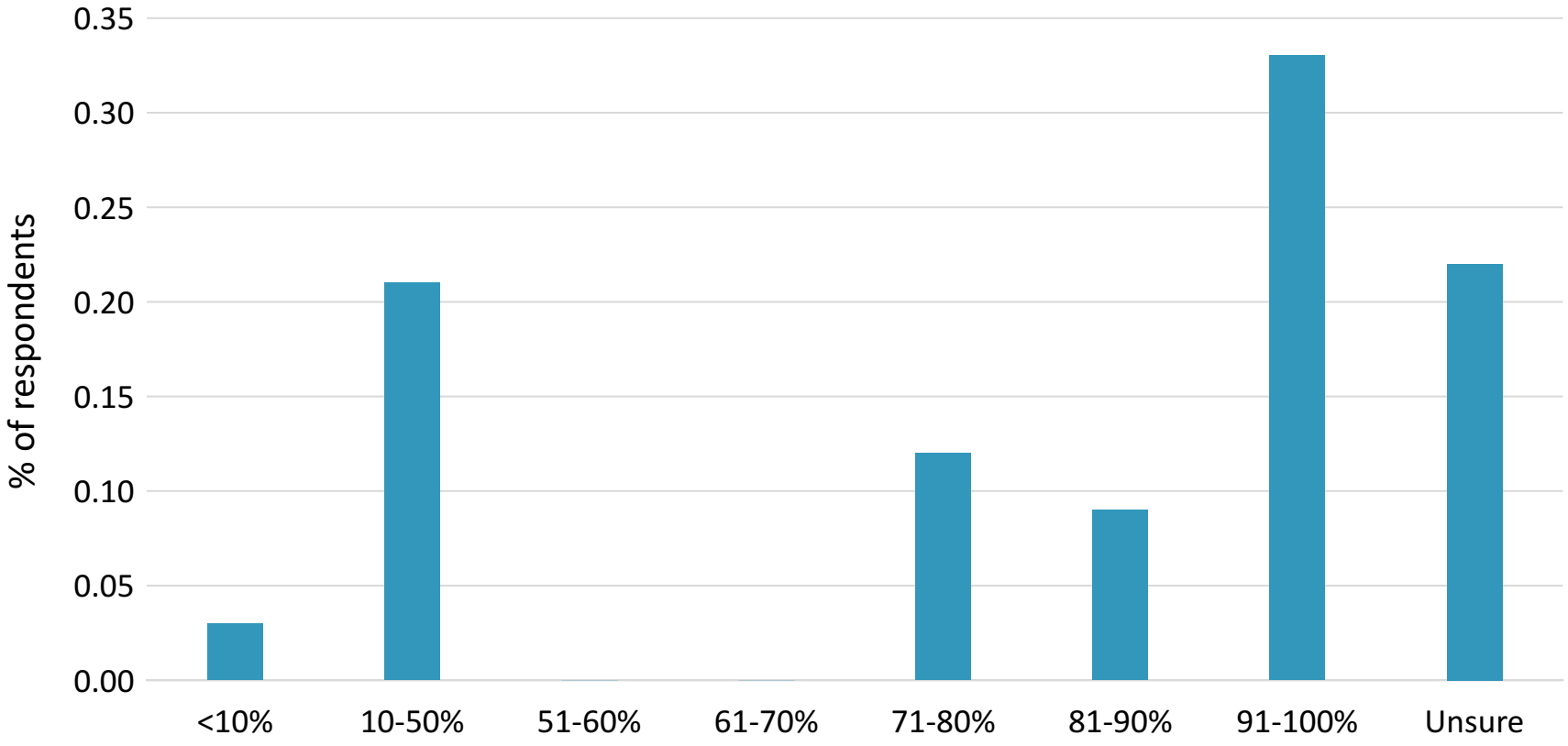
Respondents felt responsibility lay with assessing nephrologist

"Who is responsible for ensuring living kidney donor follow up? (select all that apply)"



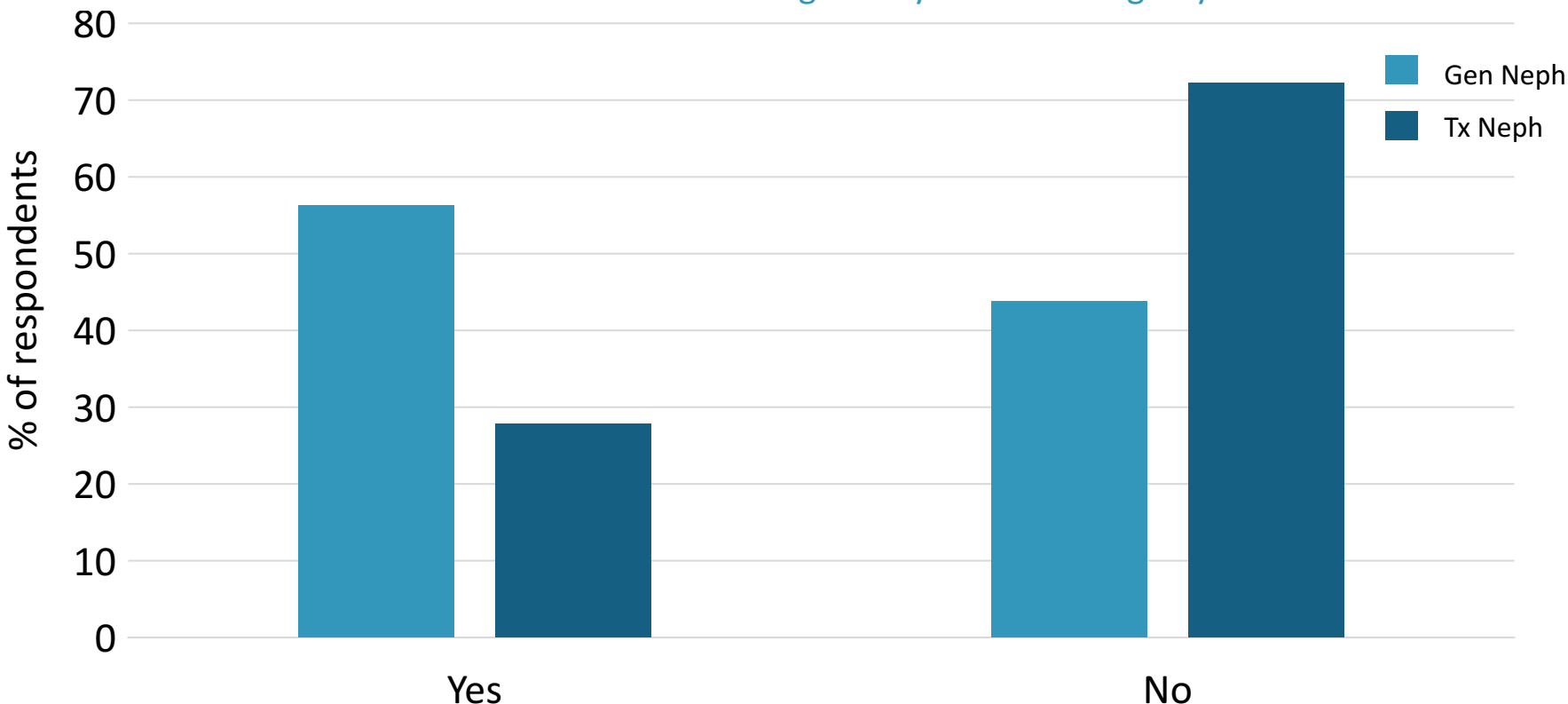
Follow-up varied

"What portion of your prior living kidney donors are followed up at your unit?"



Many struggle with reporting living donor follow-up data

"Has your unit faced any challenges in reporting living kidney donor follow up data to the Australia and New Zealand Living Kidney Donation Registry?"



Many struggle with reporting living donor follow-up data

”What challenges have you encountered?”

Challenge	% of respondents
Locating donors/lost to follow-up	36%
Unaware that this was a task to do	29%
Lack of time to complete and lodge	21%
Infrastructure and staff resources	14%
No response	7%

Conclusions

- There is an **urgent need to standardise living kidney donor transplantation practices in Australia**.
- While most nephrologists reference international guidelines such as KDIGO, there is inconsistency in how local guidelines are defined, maintained, and applied.
- **Reliance on archived or external sources underscores the need for comprehensive, up-to-date national guidelines**.
- Standardised, written protocols would reduce variability in donor assessments, enhance donor safety, and promote equity across programs.
- **Addressing identified gaps through coordinated strategies - including clinician education, national guideline development, resource provision, robust follow-up protocols, and improved registry reporting - will improve transparency in clinical decision-making and strengthen Australia's living donor framework**.