

Town of Sterling, MA Senior Center Survey

Summary of results

Presented by the Building Needs Committee
to the Council on Aging, the Finance Committee,
and the Board of Selectmen

November 17, 2009

Format of the rest of this presentation

- Part 1: Survey description
- Part 2: 2009 Survey results
- Part 3: Summary of 2005-2006 Survey results
- Part 4: Analysis of survey results

Survey description

- Survey to determine interest in Senior Center
- Based on a prior survey by the town
- One survey per household
- Survey Statistics
 - Surveys mailed out: 1079
 - Surveys returned (undeliverable): 37 (as of November 4, 2009)
 - Survey responses received: 430
- Senior Statistics
 - 911 people 60+ in town (2000 survey)
 - 1622 people 60+ in town by the end of this year

Survey Questionnaire

- Two page survey (front and back)
- Total of 17 questions
- Mailed with reply paid envelope
- Expected burden ~ 15 minutes

Survey

Town of Sterling Senior Center Survey

1. Number of people living in your household: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐more than 4
2. What is your age? ☐60-64 ☐65-69 ☐70-74 ☐75-79 ☐80-84 ☐85-89 ☐90 +
3. Are you: ☐female ☐male
4. Do you or someone in your household drive? ☐Yes ☐No
5. How often do you typically attend congregate meals at the Senior Center?
☐I don't attend ☐1 time in 6 months ☐every other month ☐every month
☐weekly ☐1 time a year ☐daily
- 5a. When you retire, how often do you think you would attend luncheons at the Senior Center?
☐daily ☐weekly ☐monthly ☐every other month
- 5b. Would you be interested in receiving Meals on Wheels? ☐yes ☐no
6. How often do you attend the weekly senior fitness classes (exercise, yoga)?
☐weekly ☐1 time a month ☐2 times a month ☐I don't attend
- 6a. What are the reasons you do not attend more often?
☐no transportation ☐lack of interest ☐poor health ☐space too crowded
☐too many interruptions ☐cost ☐other
- 6b. When you retire, would you attend the weekly senior fitness classes? ☐yes ☐no
7. Has physical access to the building and/or to the bathrooms in the Senior Center been a factor to your participation in senior events or other functions? ☐yes ☐no
8. How far would you be willing to travel to the Senior Center?
☐0-5 miles ☐5-10 miles ☐10-15 miles ☐15+ miles
- 8a. If you do not have transportation and the Senior Center provided transportation, would you attend? ☐yes ☐no
9. How important is it to have the following services near the Senior Center?
 Post Office ☐very important ☐somewhat important ☐not important
 Retail stores ☐very important ☐somewhat important ☐not important
 Church ☐very important ☐somewhat important ☐not important
 Town offices ☐very important ☐somewhat important ☐not important
 Medical offices ☐very important ☐somewhat important ☐not important

Cover letter was signed by members of the COA and Ms. Karen Phillips.

10. Please indicate your use/anticipated use of the Senior Center for each activity listed (check as many as apply)

	I use often now (weekly or more)	I use occasionally now (monthly or less)	I plan to use after I retire	I would use in a new Senior Center
Cards				
Games				
Art/Crafts				
Writing class				
Computer class				
Legal help				
Group meeting				
Conversation				
Movies				
Pool playing				
Lunch				
Scrabble				
Entertainment				
Shopping trips				
Estate prep.				
Book club				
Line dancing				
Yoga				
Tai Chi				
Tax assistance				
other				

11. In what ways do you think a new Senior Center might impact you or other seniors? (check as many as apply)

- ☐It would provide a sense of belonging in the community.
☐There would be increased social interaction with others in the community.
☐It would be nice to have a space to call our own.
☐It will have little or no impact.
☐Other _____

12. Please feel free to add any additional comments.

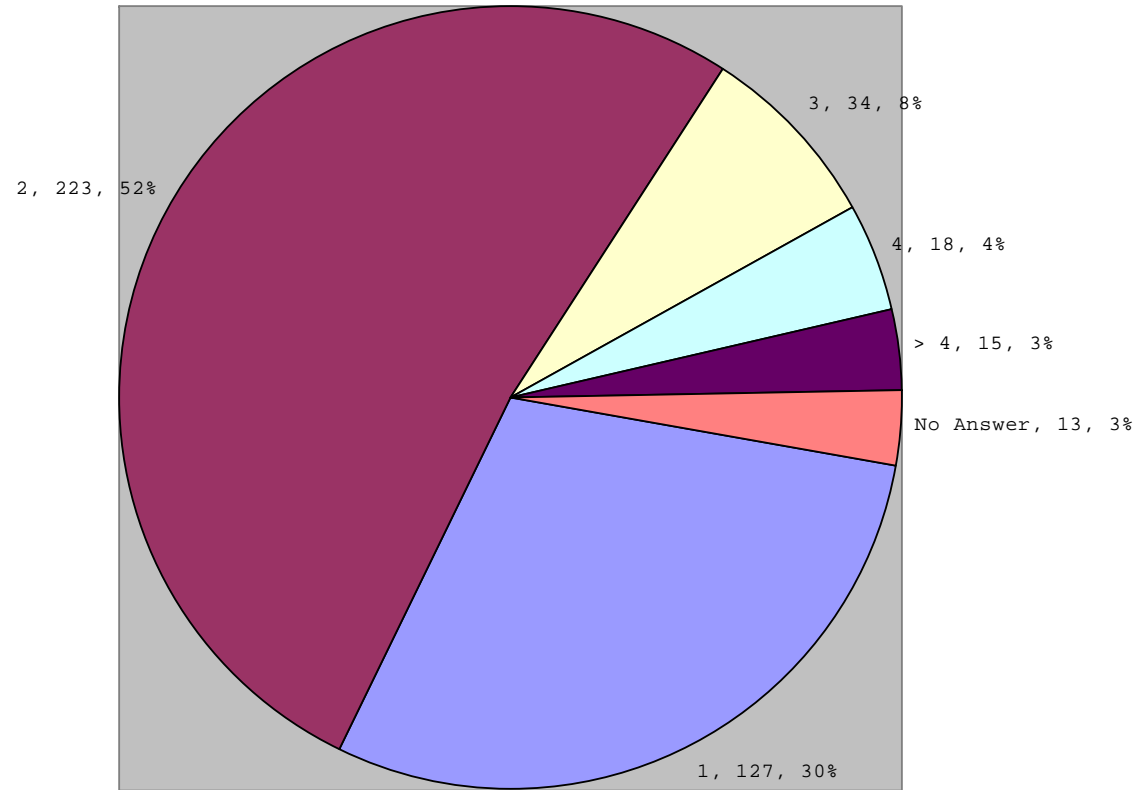
Survey Yield

- As of November 9, 2009 (the official deadline)
- A total of 430 completed surveys were received
 - Compare with 138 responses to the 2005-2006 survey
- This is a yield of ~40%
- By any measure, that is simply outstanding
- Congratulations to all who made this possible
 - Ms. Karen Phillips, Director of the Sterling Senior Center
 - The members of the COA
 - Seniors in town

Format of the rest of this presentation

- Part 1: Survey description
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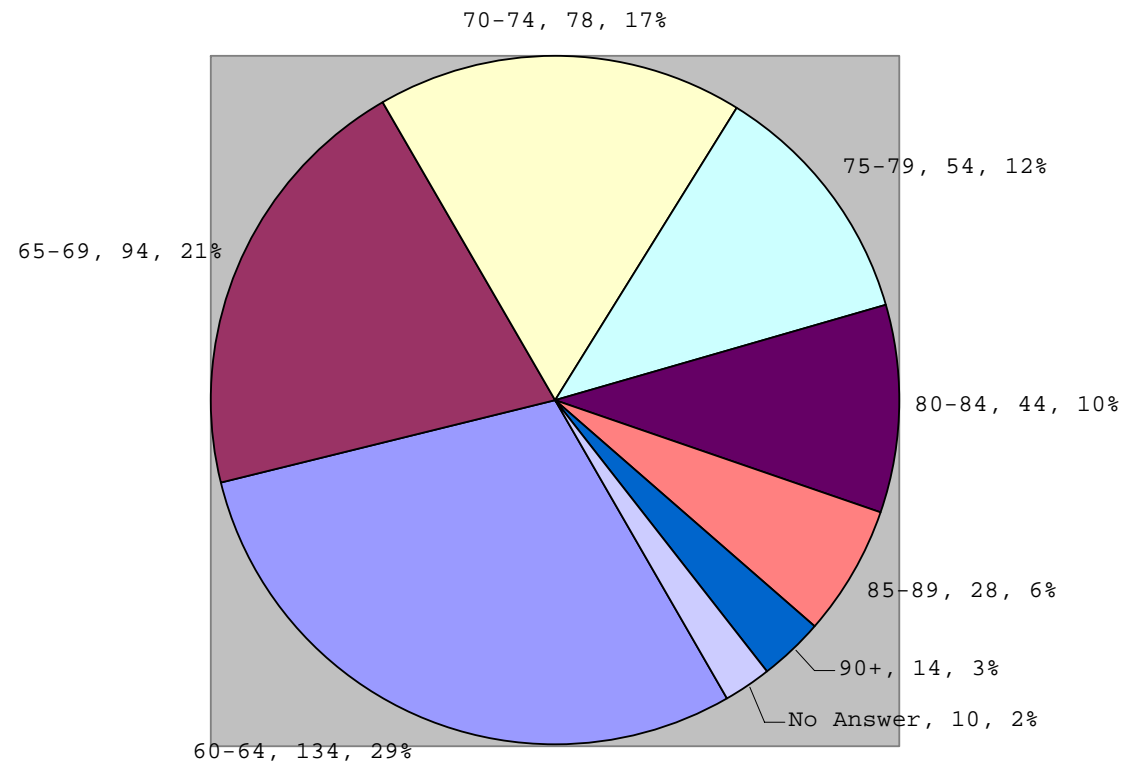
Question 1: Household size



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey).

1. Number of people living in your household: __1 __2 __3 __4 __more
than 4

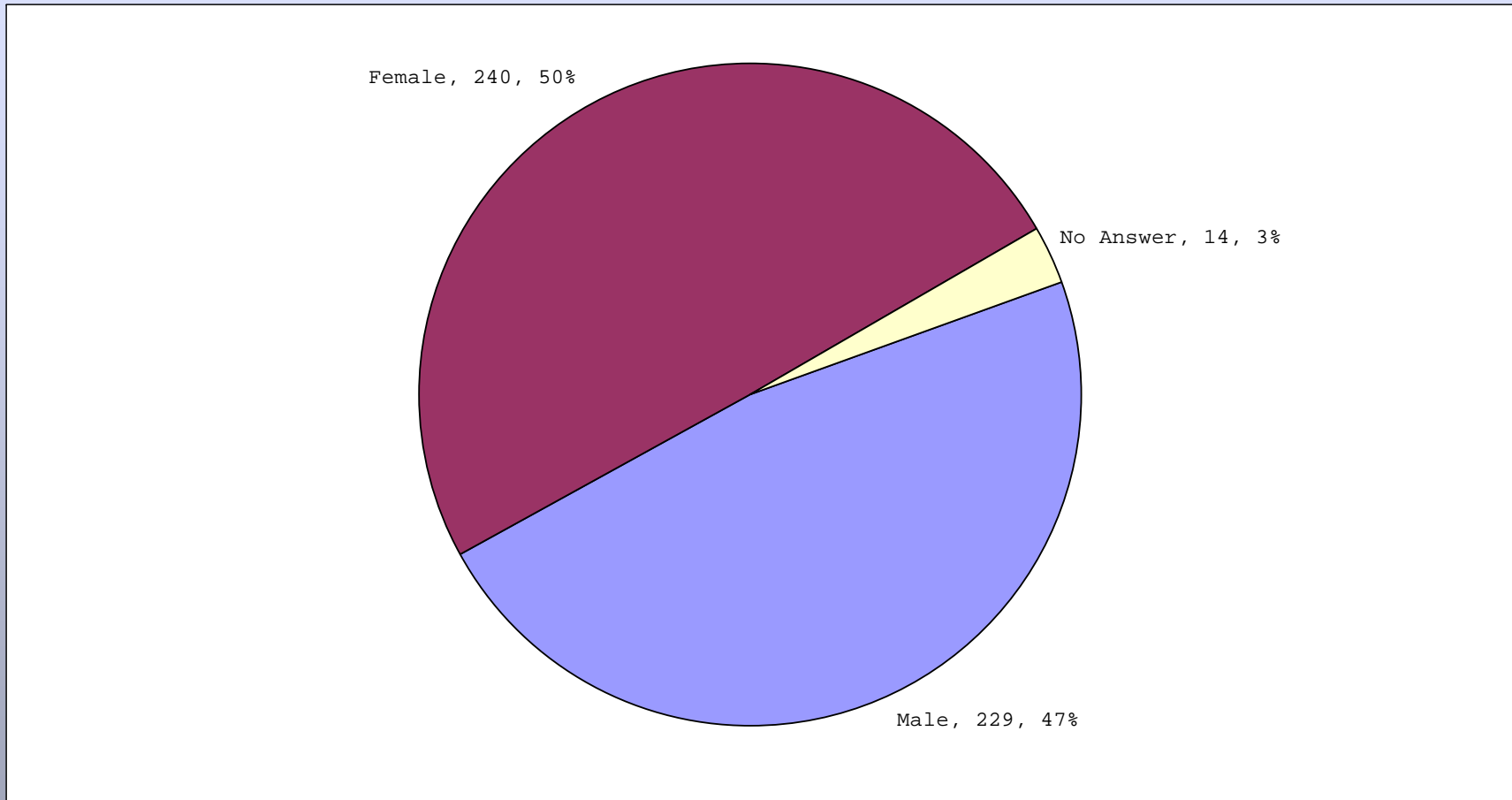
Question 2: Respondent age



As the question was ambiguous, some users chose multiple values to indicate the ages of the seniors in their household. A total of 456 responses were received with some surveys having more than one value chosen. In cases where an individual had more than one person in the household, it was not clear how many of them were seniors. Some surveys (10) did not provide an age.

2. What is your age? ☐ 60-64 ☐ 65-69 ☐ 70-74 ☐ 75-79 ☐ 80-84 ☐ 85-89
☐ 90 +

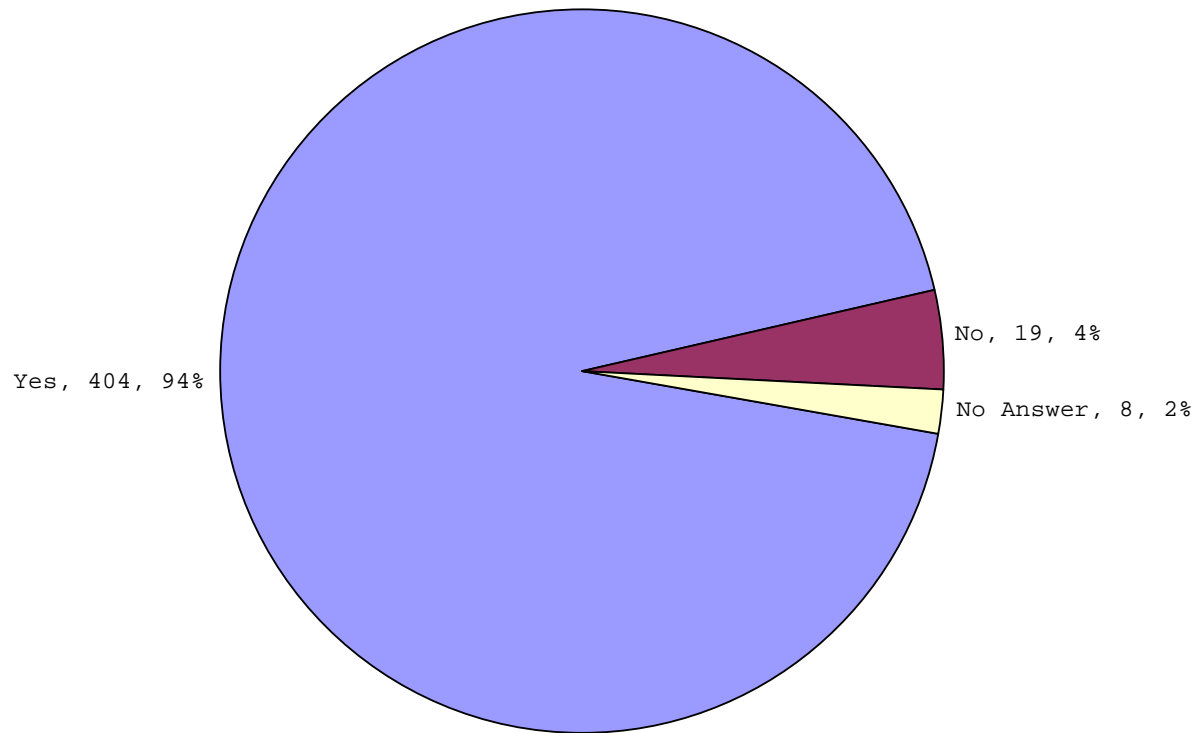
Question 3: Are you ... {Male or Female}



As the question was ambiguous, some users chose multiple values to indicate the sex of the seniors in their household. A total of 483 responses were received with some surveys having more than one value chosen. Some surveys (14) did not provide a response to this question.

3. Are you: __female __male

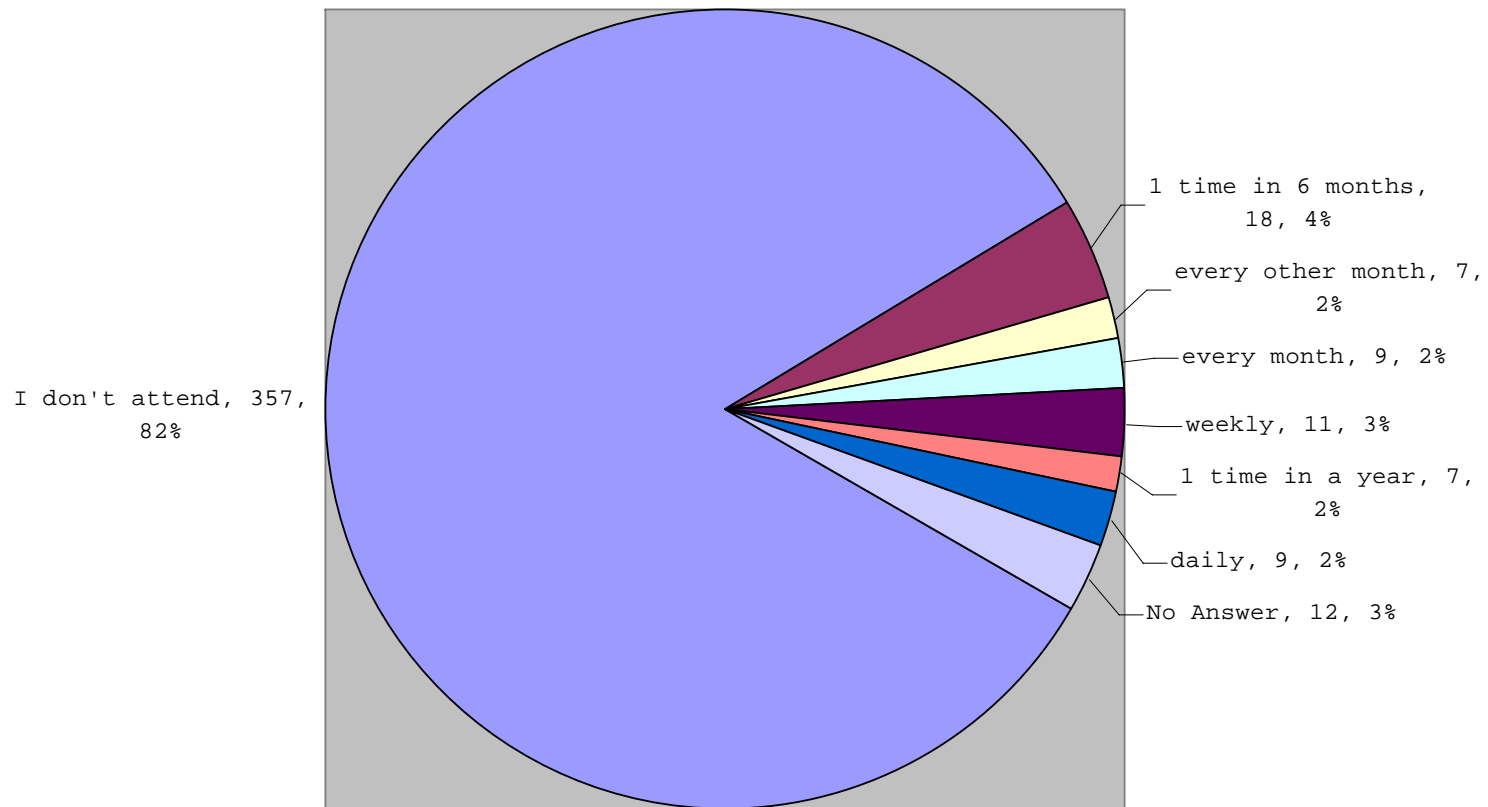
Question 4: Does someone in the household drive?



The total is 431 because one respondent chose both “Yes” and “No”, possibly to indicate that one member in the household did drive and the other did not. Or maybe it was to indicate that someone in the household drove some of the time. The respondent provided no explanation for this answer.

4. Do you or someone in your household drive? ☐ Yes ☐ No

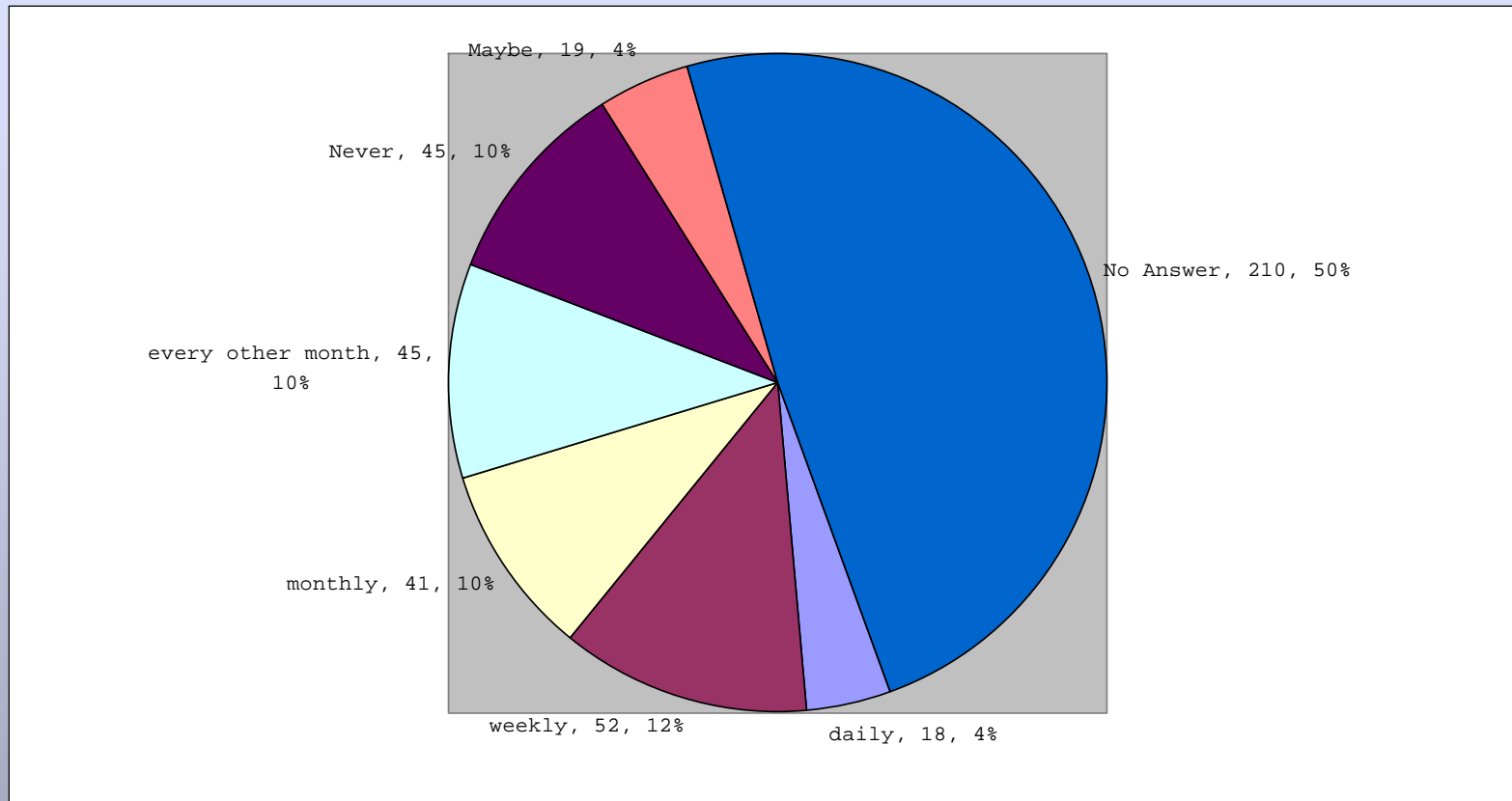
Question 5: Attendance at “congregate meals”



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). Surprisingly 357 (82%) said they did not attend.

5. How often do you typically attend congregate meals at the Senior Center?
__I don't attend __1 time in 6 months __every other month __every month
__weekly __1 time a year __daily

Question 5a: Luncheon attendance after retirement

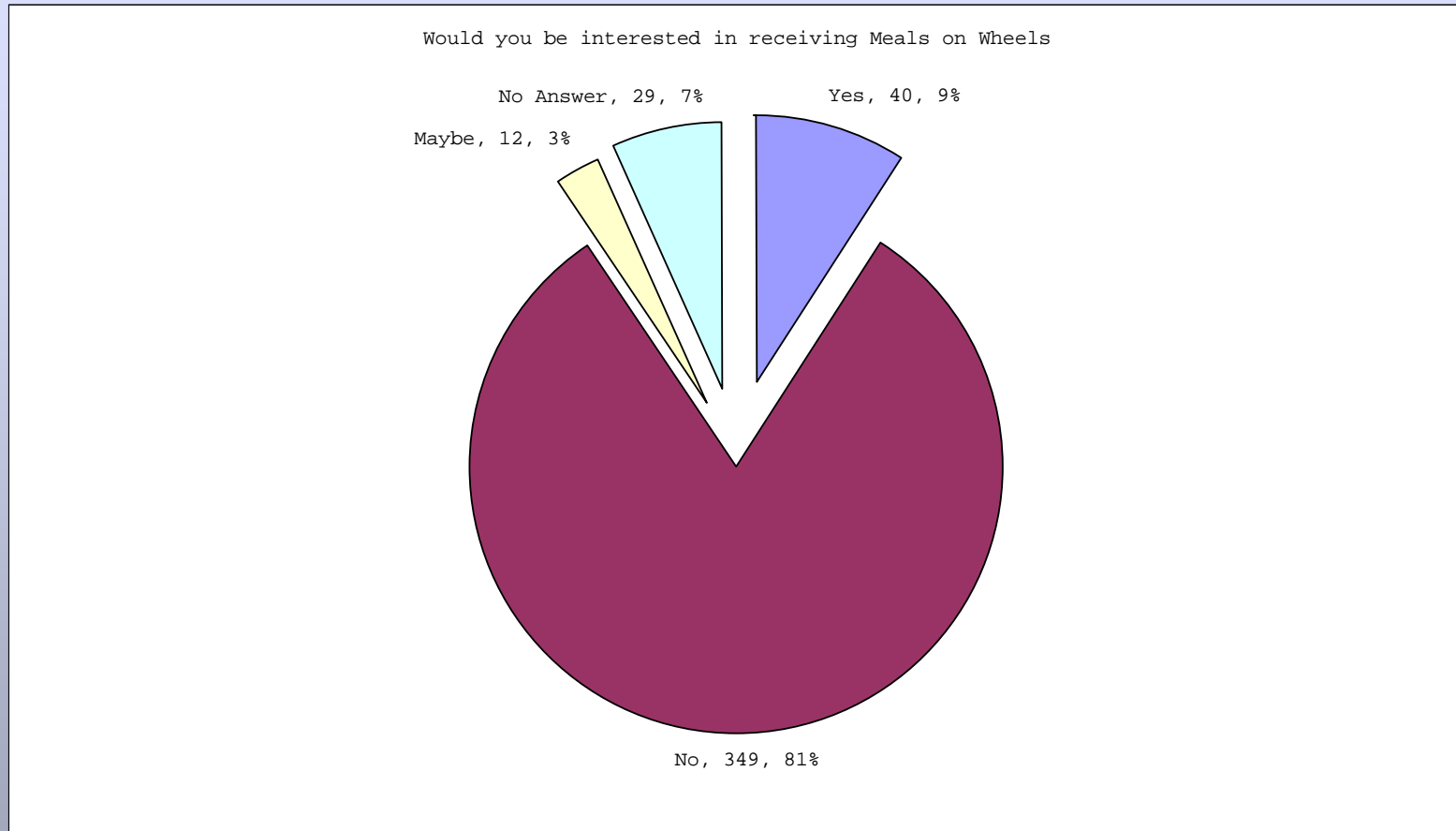


Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). Interestingly, 210 (50%) chose not to answer. Some circled the word “retire” in the question and wrote “retired” next to it. Others who didn’t like the choices (64 in total) either wrote the words “Never”, “Maybe” next to the question.

5a. When you retire, how often do you think you would attend luncheons at the Senior Center?

☐ daily ☐ weekly ☐ monthly ☐ every other month

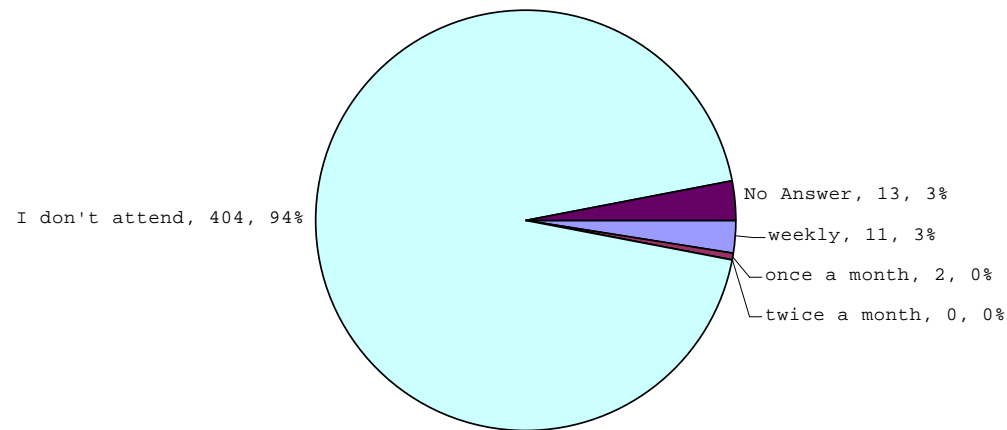
Question 5b: Interest in meals on wheels



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). Some (12) chose to qualify their response with words like “Not Now” or “Maybe” so a response was created for that during processing the surveys.

5b. Would you be interested in receiving Meals on Wheels? ☐yes ☐no

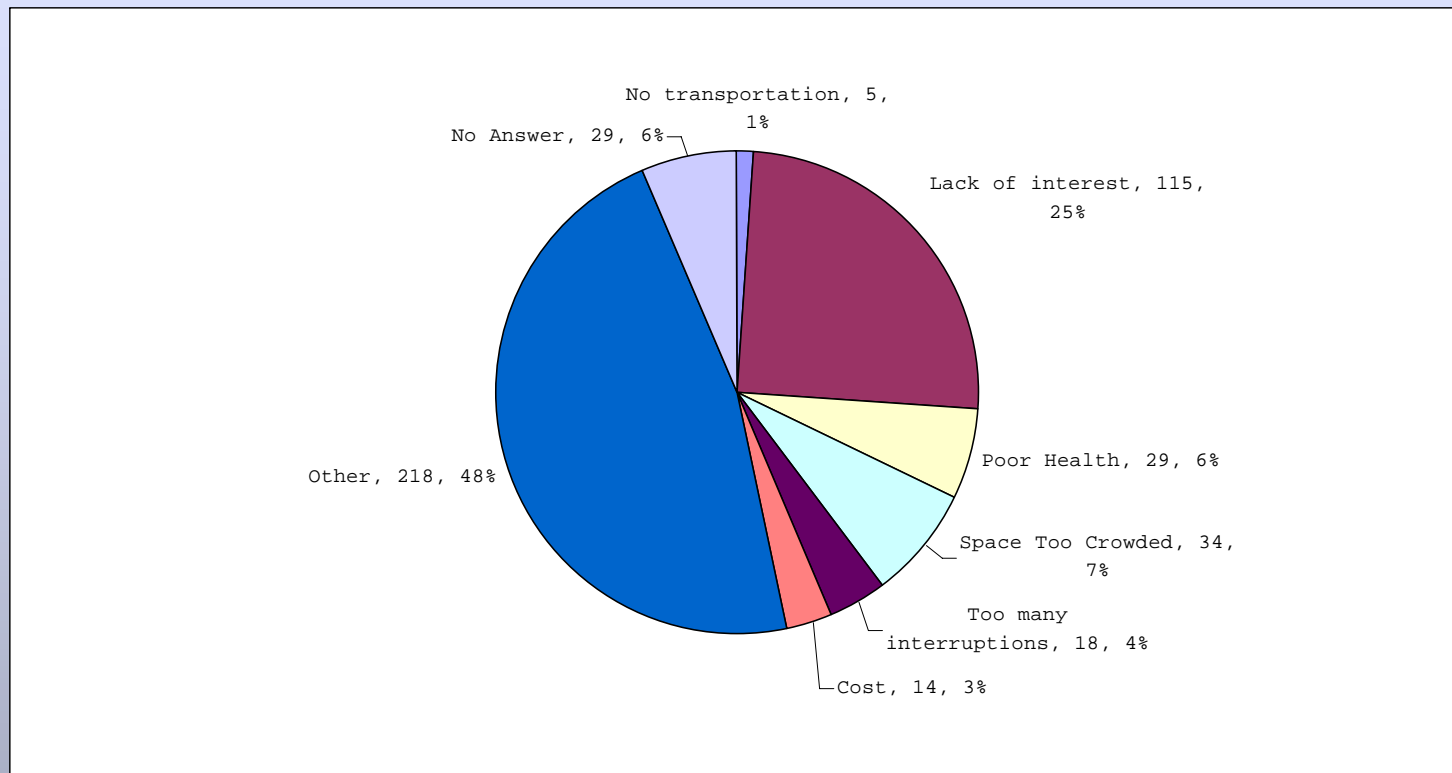
Question 6: Attendance at fitness programs



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). Surprisingly 404 (94%) indicated that they do not attend the programs.

6. How often do you attend the weekly senior fitness classes (exercise, yoga)?
__weekly __1 time a month __2 times a month __I don't attend

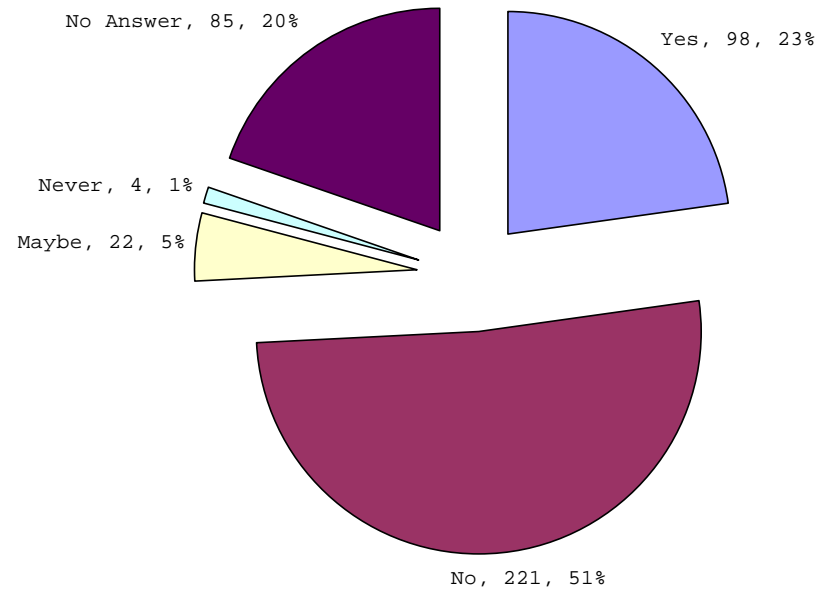
Question 6a: Reasons for (low) attendance at fitness programs.



Users could choose multiple reasons. A total of 462 reasons were recorded on the 430 surveys. Given that 29 provided no reason (401 provided reasons), this implies that 401 users provided 462 reasons. But, the most common reason was “Other”. Some penciled in their explanations of “Other”, most did not.

6a. What are the reasons you do not attend more often?
__no transportation __lack of interest __poor health __space too crowded
__too many interruptions __cost __other

Question 6b: Attending fitness programs after retirement

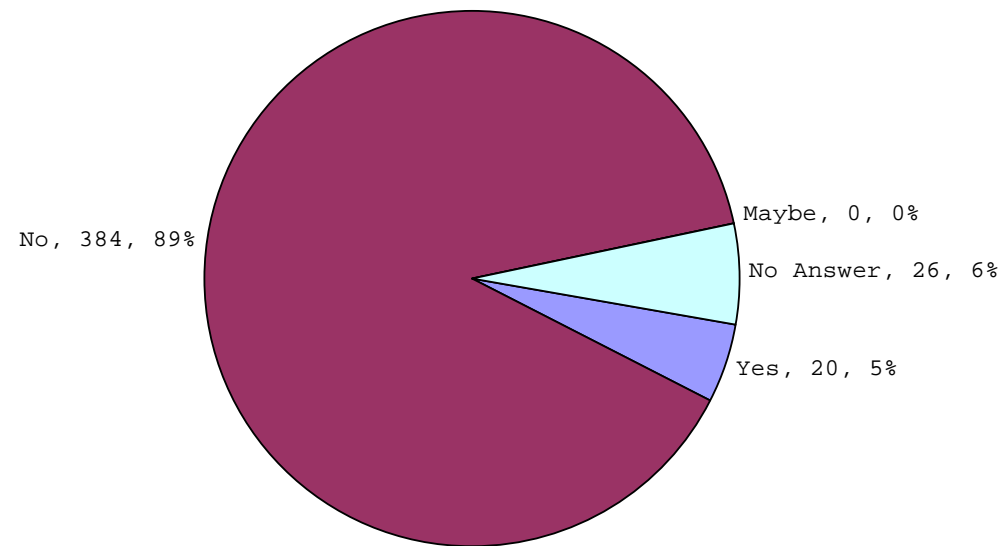


Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). As some (26) chose to pencil in responses “Maybe” and “Never”, these values were specifically recorded while processing the surveys.

6b. When you retire, would you attend the weekly senior fitness classes? ☐ yes
☐ no

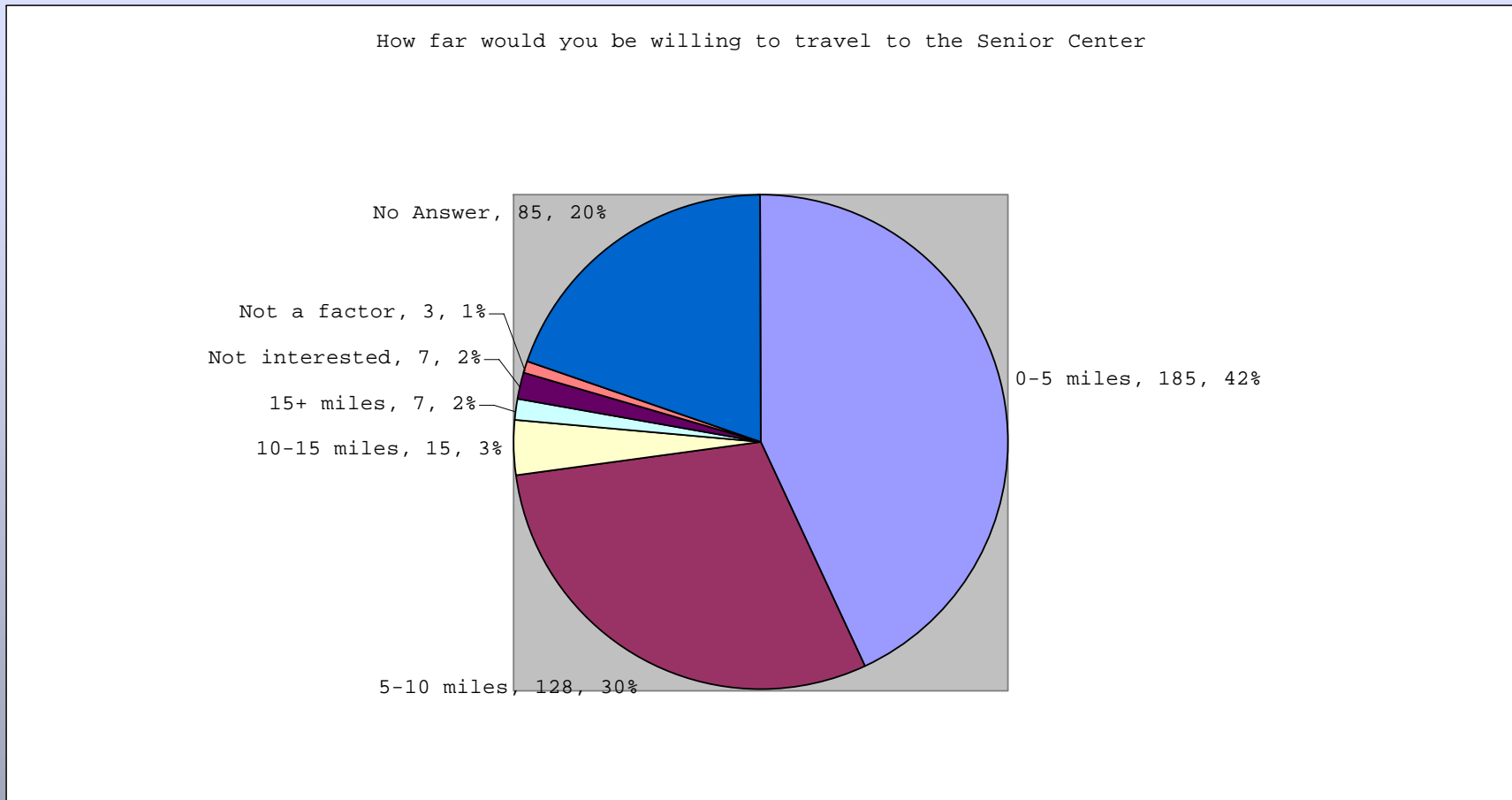
Question 7: Physical access to building

Has physical access to the building and/or to the bathrooms been a factor in your participation in senior events or other functions



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey).

Question 8: How far would you travel to senior center?

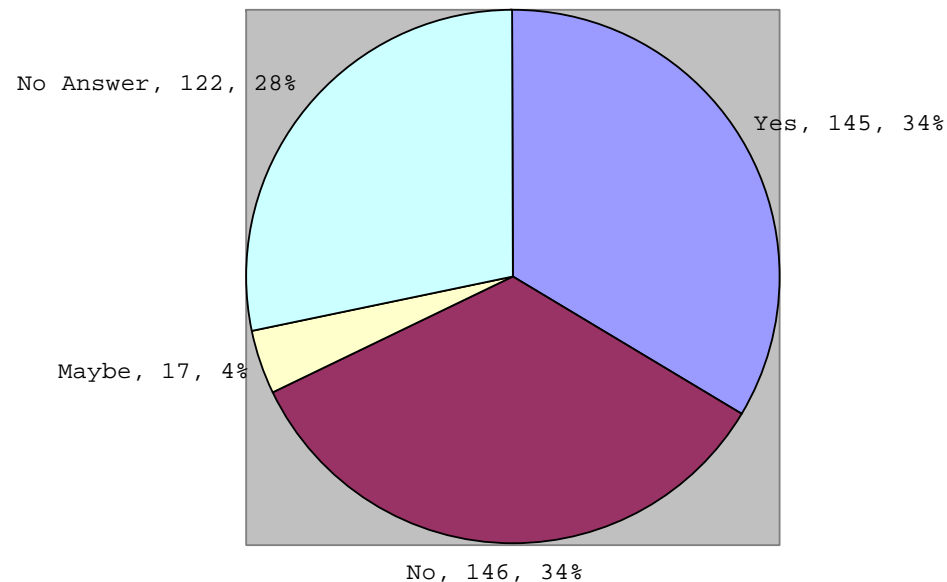


Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey).

8. How far would you be willing to travel to the Senior Center?
__0-5 miles __5-10 miles __10-15 miles __15+ miles

Question 8a: Would you attend if you got a ride?

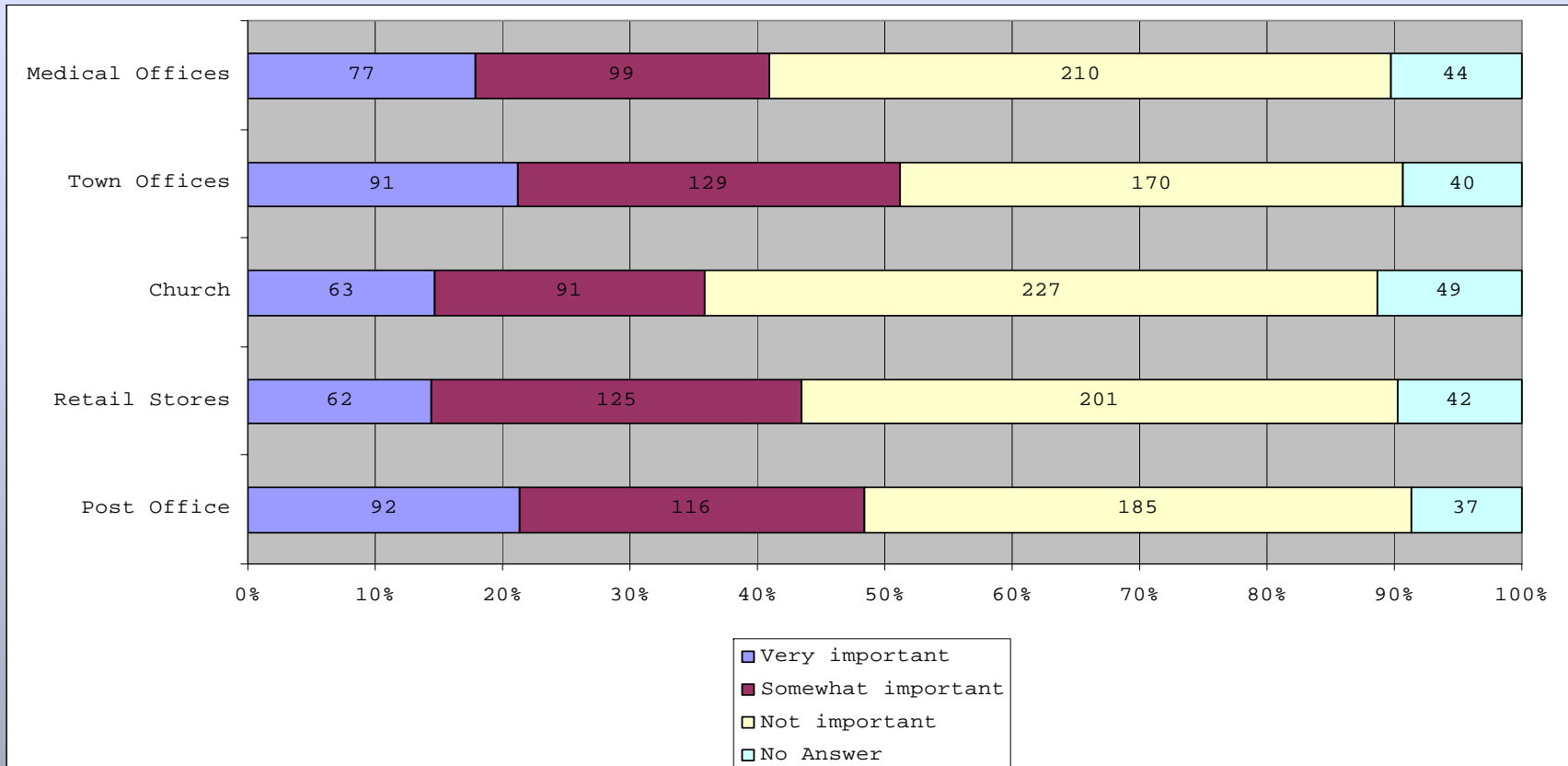
If you do not have transportation and the Senior Center provided transportation, would you attend?



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). Several chose to pencil in “maybe”.

8a. If you do not have transportation and the Senior Center provided transportation, would you attend? __yes __no

Question 9: Locality with services

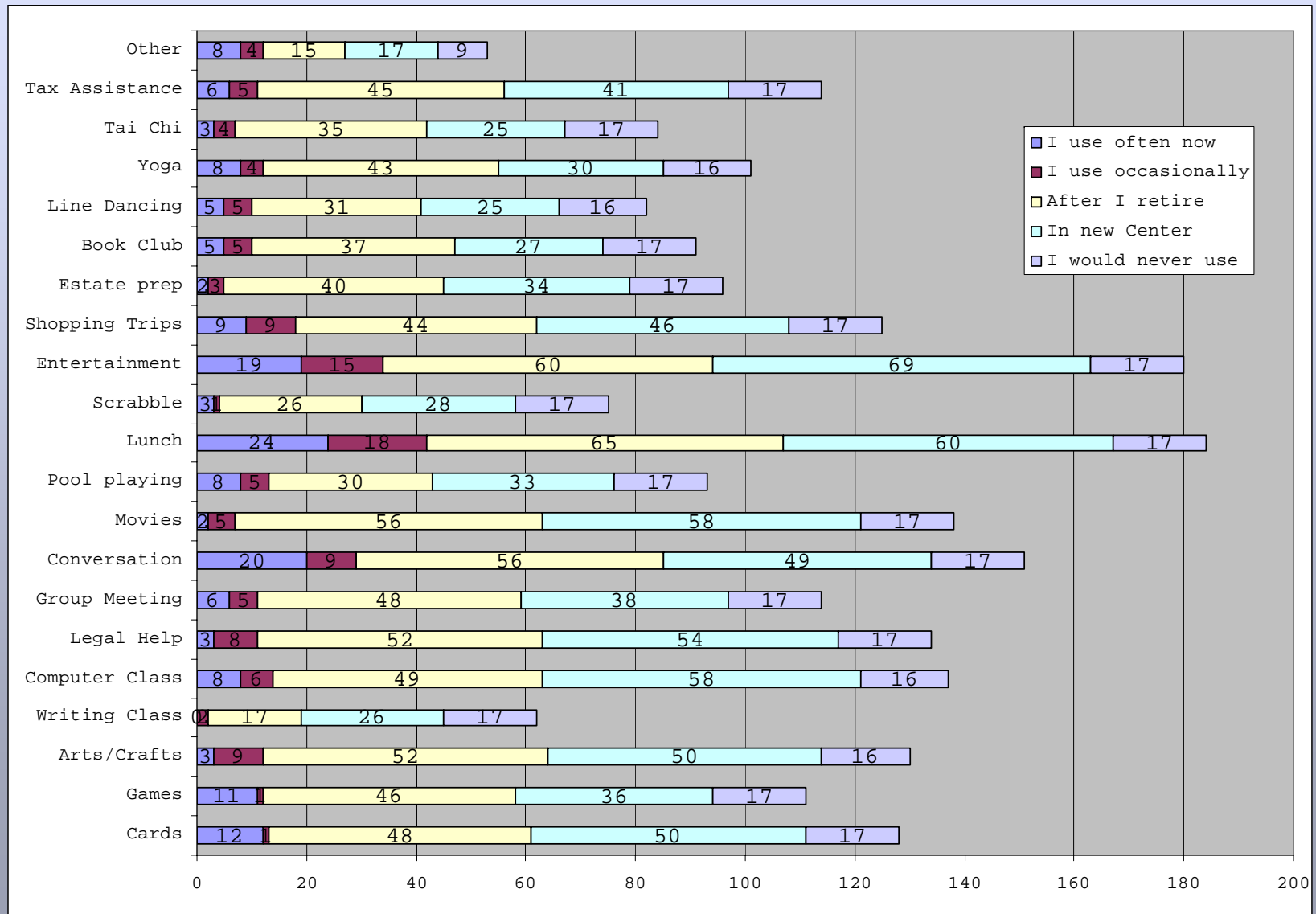


Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). The majority would like the senior center close to the Town Offices and the Post Office and are least interested in proximity to the Church. Several did not answer some or all of the questions.

9. How important is it to have the following services near the Senior Center?

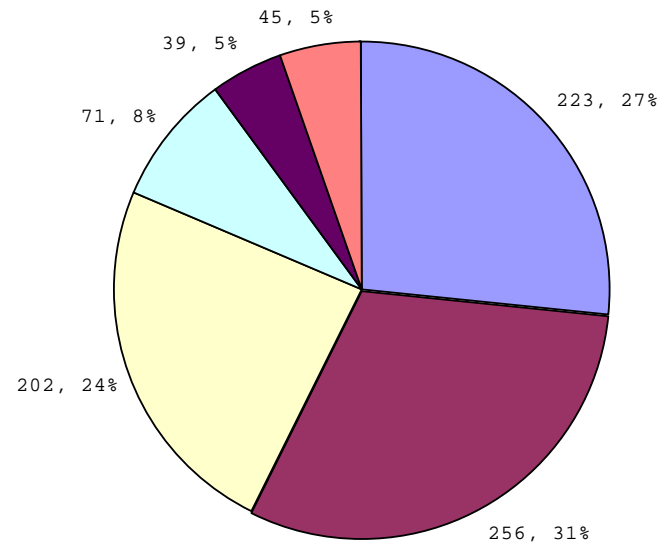
Post Office	<input type="checkbox"/> very important	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat important	<input type="checkbox"/> not important
Retail stores	<input type="checkbox"/> very important	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat important	<input type="checkbox"/> not important
Church	<input type="checkbox"/> very important	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat important	<input type="checkbox"/> not important
Town offices	<input type="checkbox"/> very important	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat important	<input type="checkbox"/> not important
Medical offices	<input type="checkbox"/> very important	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat important	<input type="checkbox"/> not important

Question 10: Things I would use



Question 11: How would a Senior Center benefit the community?

- ☐ It would provide a sense of belonging to the community
- ☐ There would be increased interaction with others in the community
- ☐ It would be nice to have a space to call our own
- ☐ It will have little or no impact
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No Answer



Users could choose only one of the options. A total of 430 responses were received (one per completed survey). Many penciled in a comment indicating that they didn't use the center but they felt that it would benefit "other seniors who did" which is what the question asked.

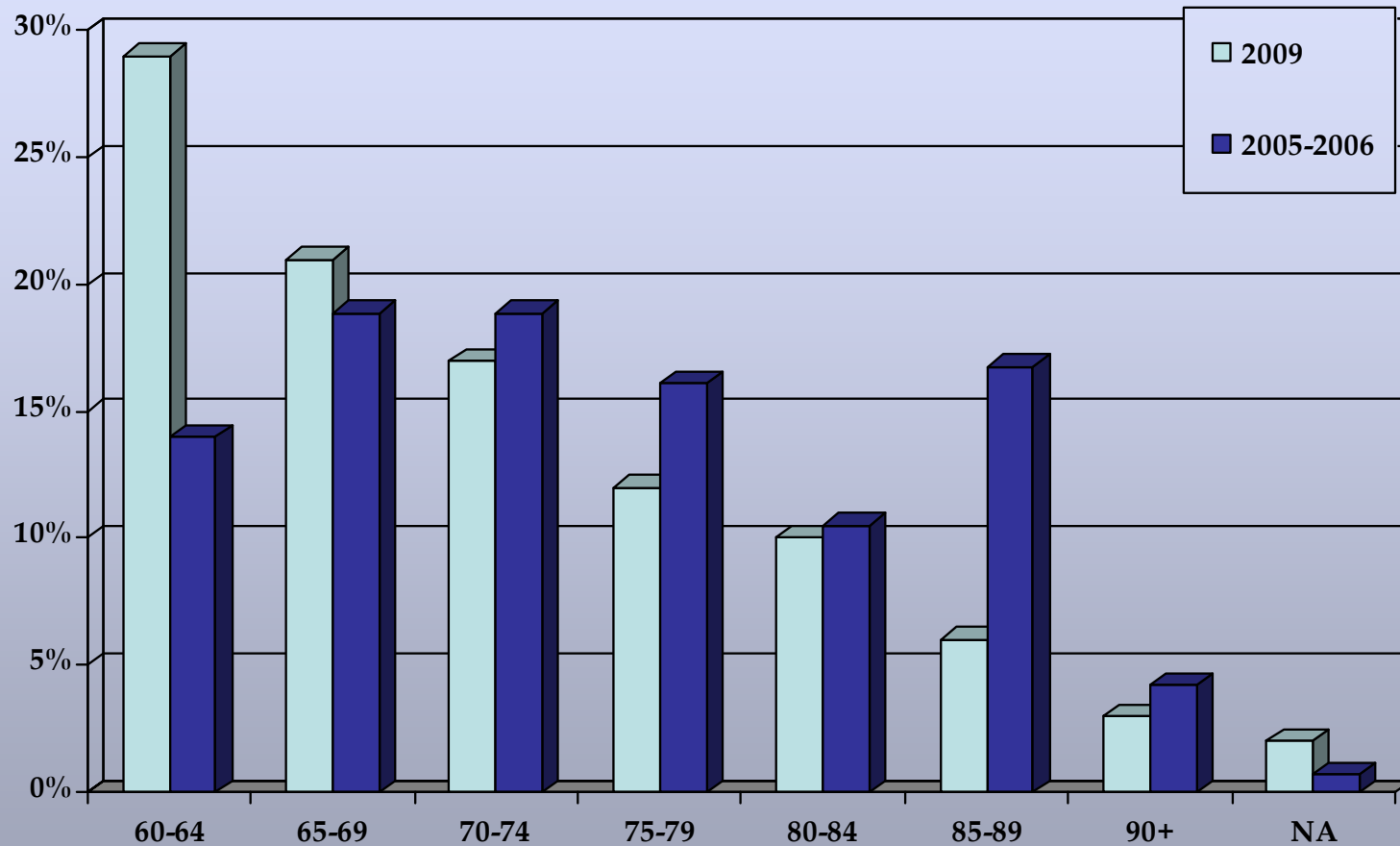
11. In what ways do you think a new Senior Center might impact you or other seniors? (check as many as apply)

- ☐ It would provide a sense of belonging in the community.
- ☐ There would be increased social interaction with others in the community.
- ☐ It would be nice to have a space to call our own.
- ☐ It will have little or no impact.
- ☐ Other _____

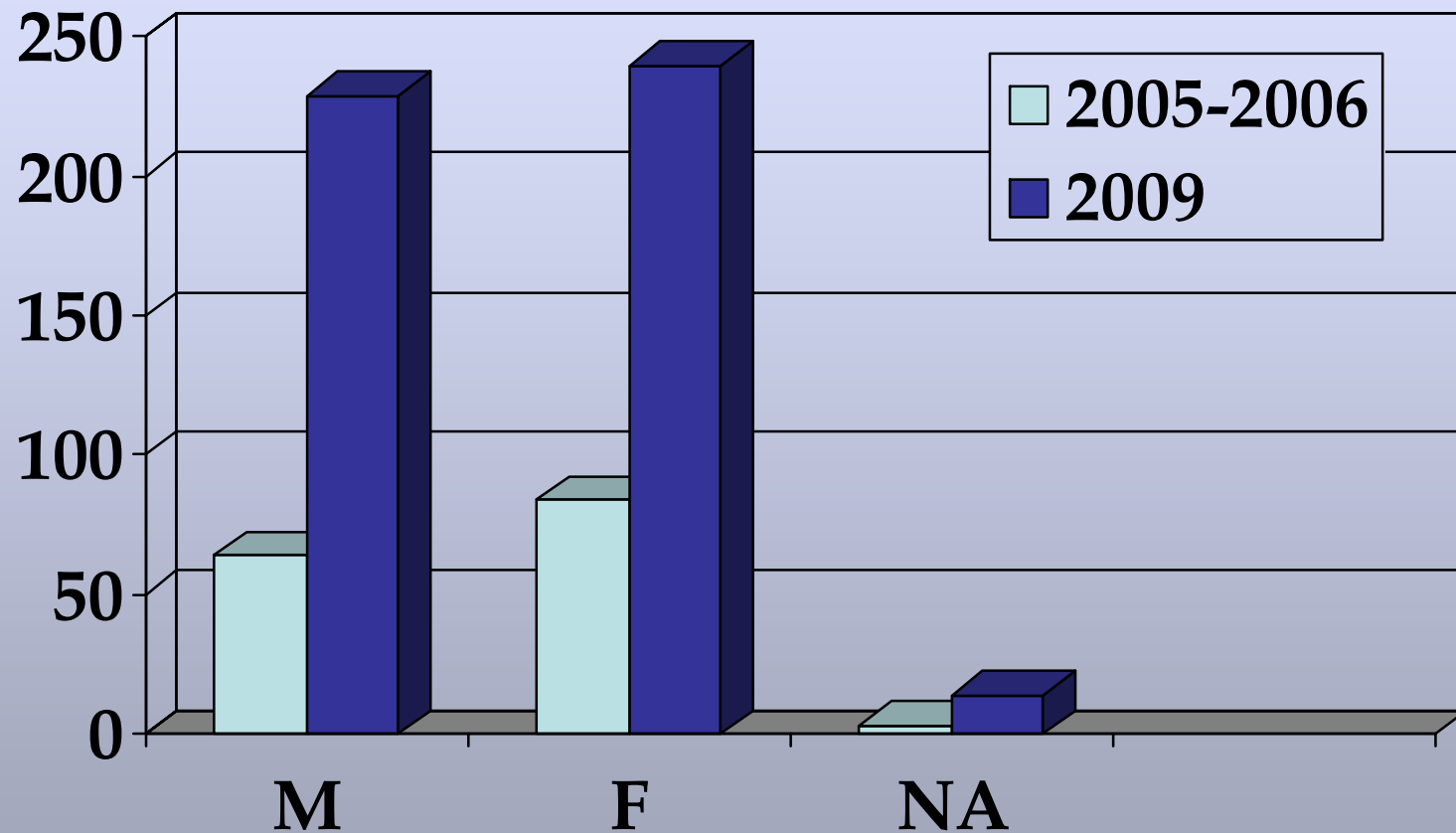
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2005-2006 Survey: Age Distribution



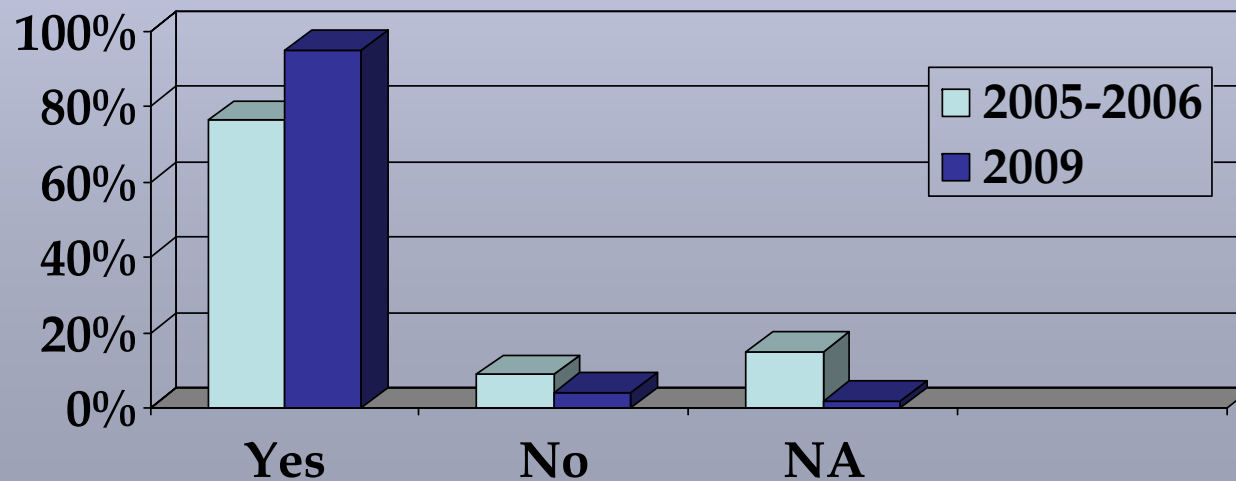
2005-2006 Survey: Sex Distribution



2005-2006 Survey: Driving

- Regarding driving at night
 - 77 said they drove at night
 - That is 62% of those who responded (77/125)
 - The question about driving at night was not in the 2009 survey

Driver in the household



2005-2006 Survey: Luncheons

- The questions in 2005-2006 were different
 - Don't typically attend (102 respondents) 77%
 - Every month (6 respondents) 5%
 - Every six months (7 respondents) 5%
 - Every year (2 respondents) 1%
 - Every other month (2 respondents) 1%
 - Most meals (1 respondent) 0.75%
 - Never (5 respondents) 4%
 - Daily (4 respondents) 3%
 - Other (4 respondents) 3 %
- Not very different from the 2009 results, in general
 - Where 83% don't attend

2005-2006 Survey: Senior Center Fitness

- The options in 2005-2006 were different
 - Don't typically (112 respondents) 83%
 - Weekly (13 respondents) 10%
 - Twice a month (1 respondent)
 - Occasionally (1 respondent)
 - As health dictates (1 respondent)
 - Uses health club (1 respondent)
 - Other (3 respondents)
 - No response (3 respondents)
- Not very different from the 2009 results, in general
 - Where 94% don't attend

Halfway point

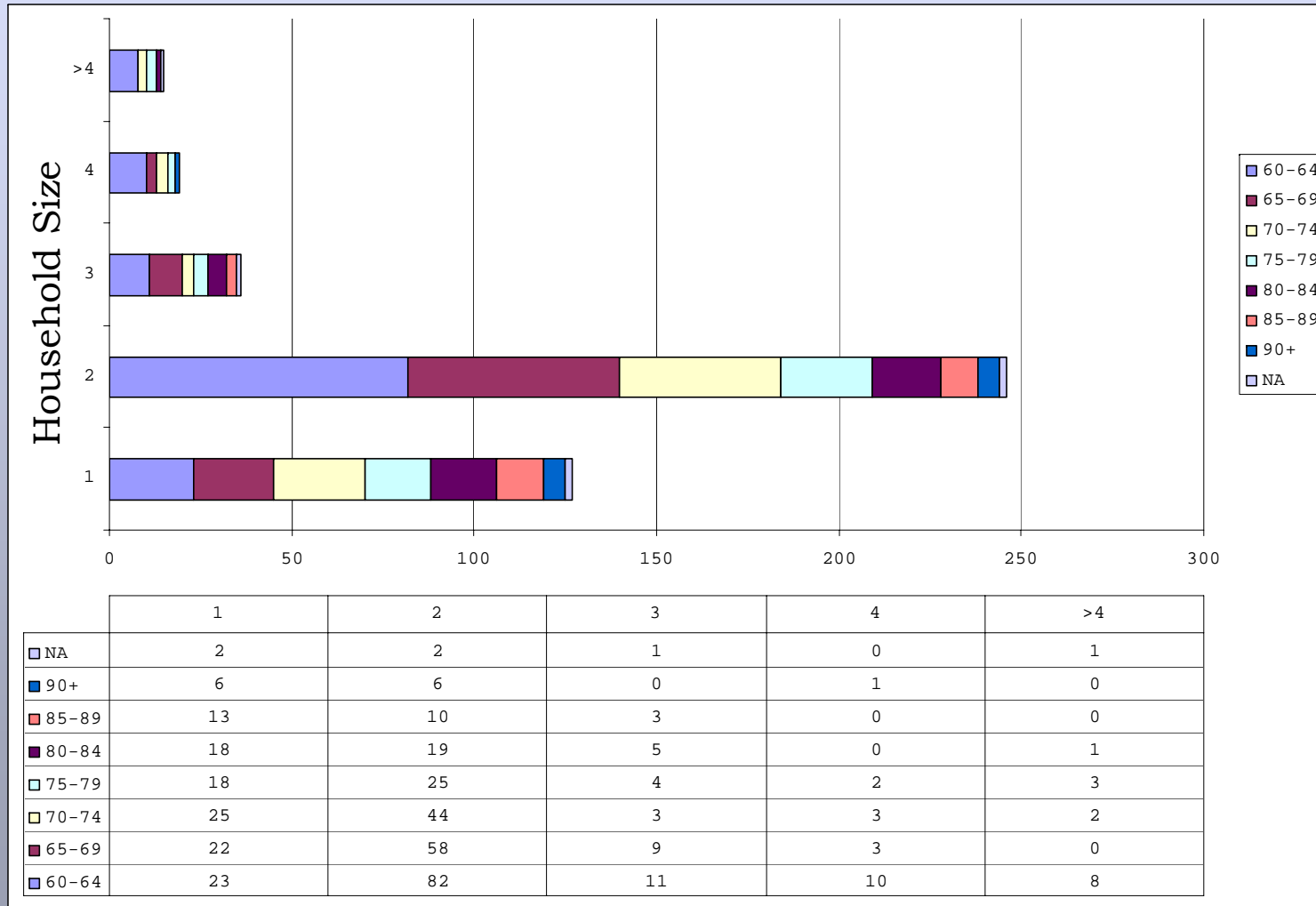
- We're not done yet, there are 20 more slides
- But, this is a good point to take a break

Format of the rest of this presentation

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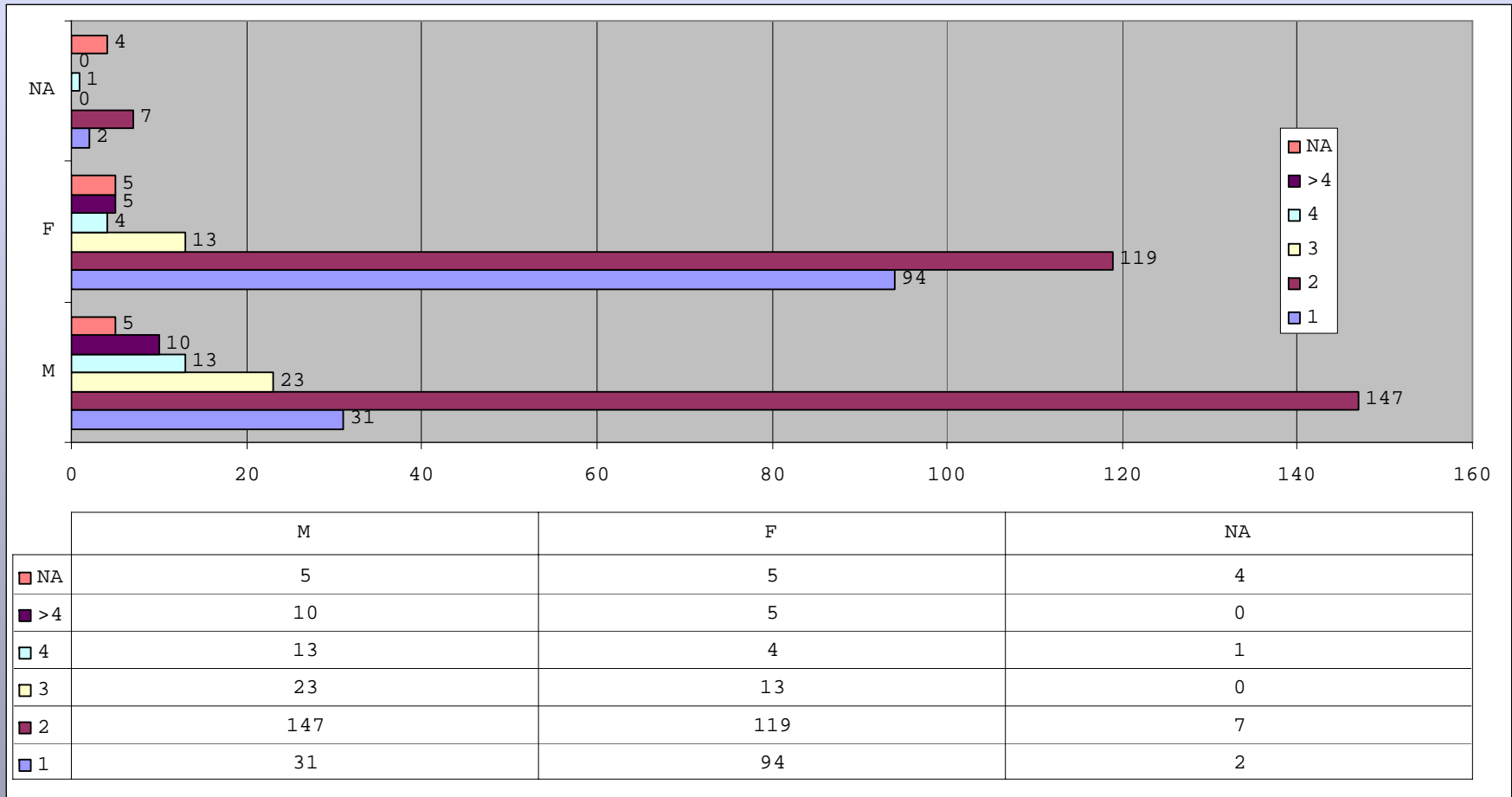
Questions 1-3: Demographic information

- Age-Household size distribution



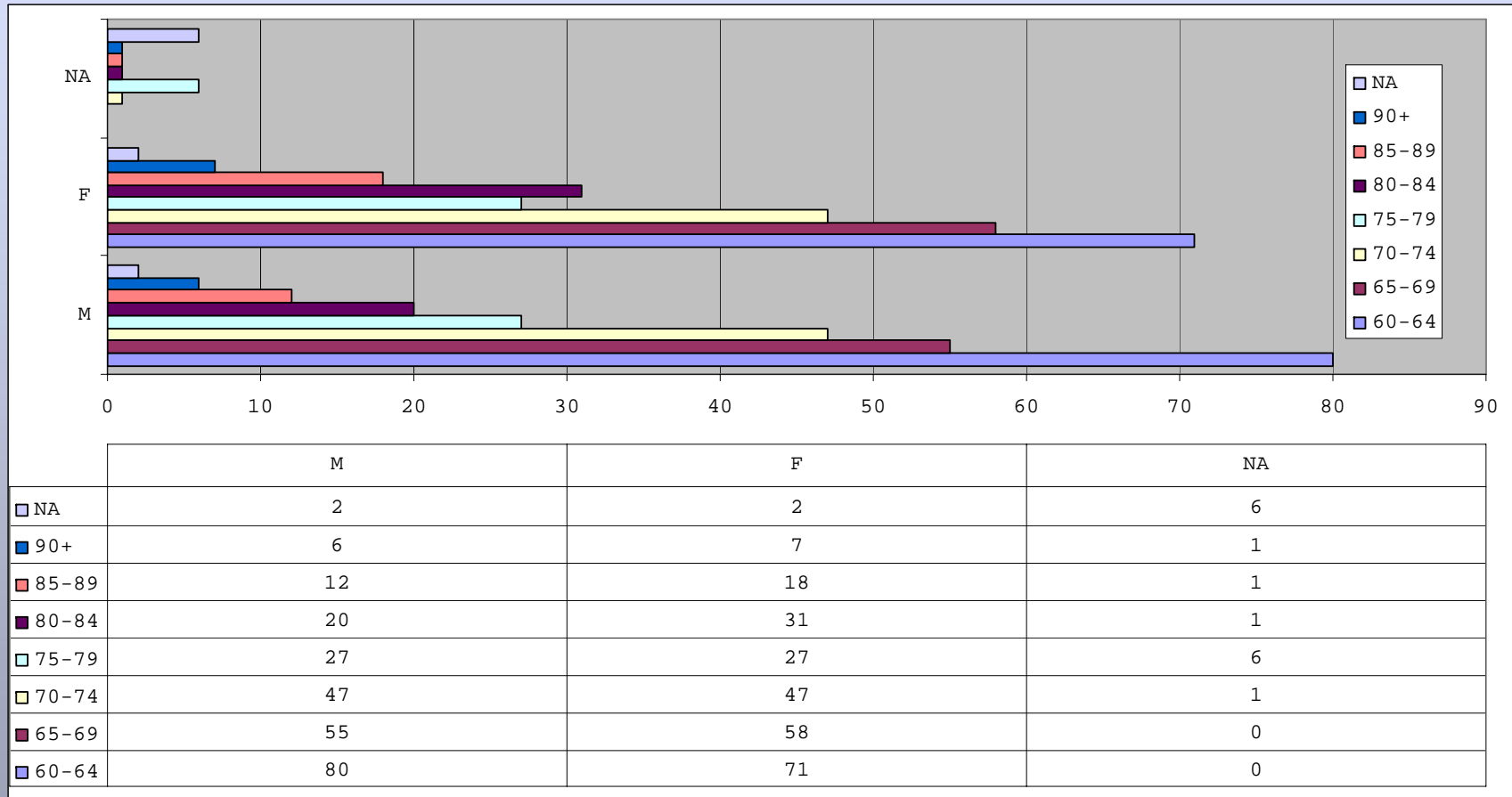
Questions 1-3: Demographic information

- Household Size – Respondent Sex distribution



Questions 1-3: Demographic information

- Respondent Age – Respondent Sex distribution



Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”

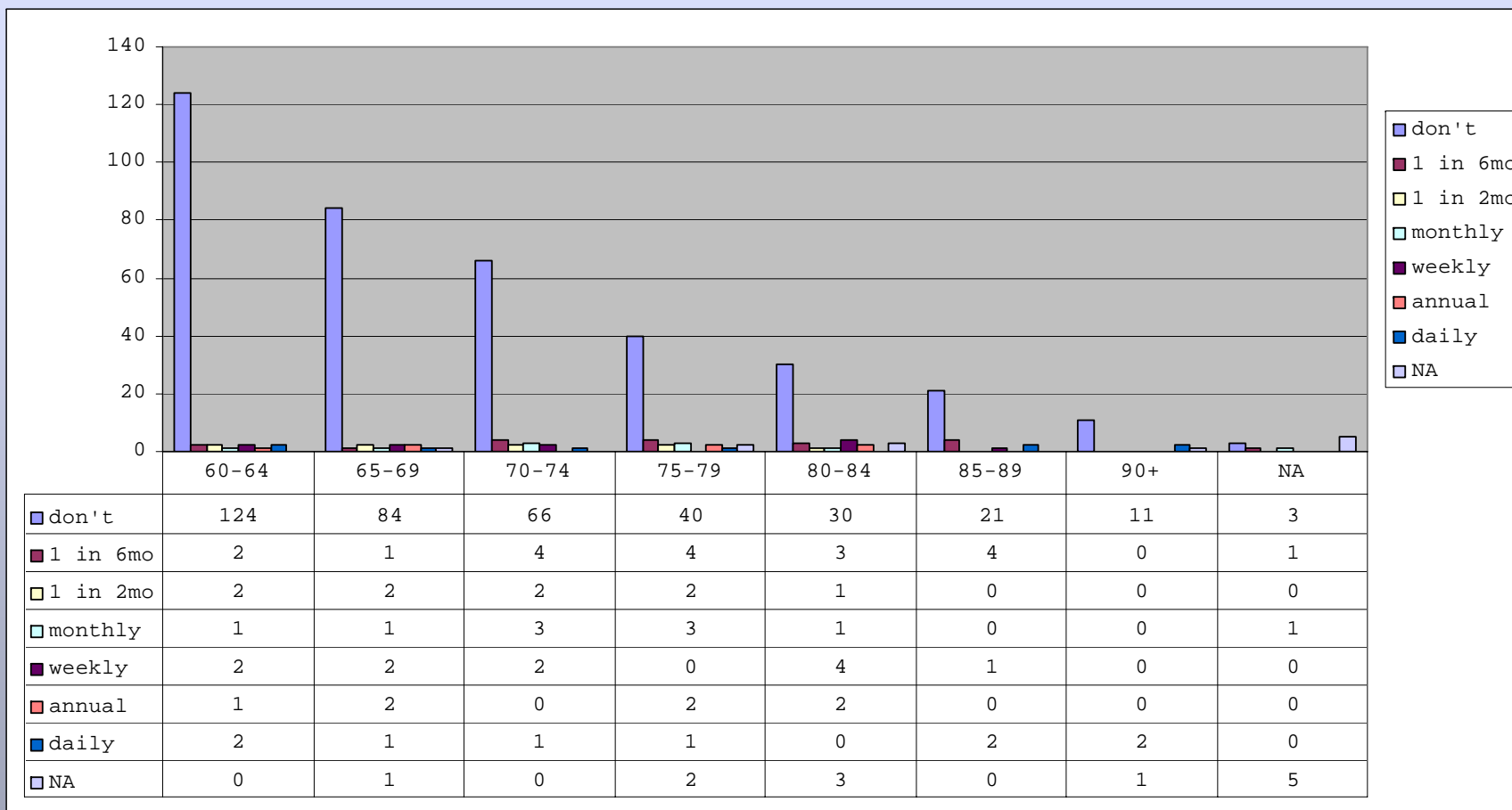


Chart shows attendance at “congregate meals” by age. The total number of responses is 456, the total number of responses to question 2.

Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”

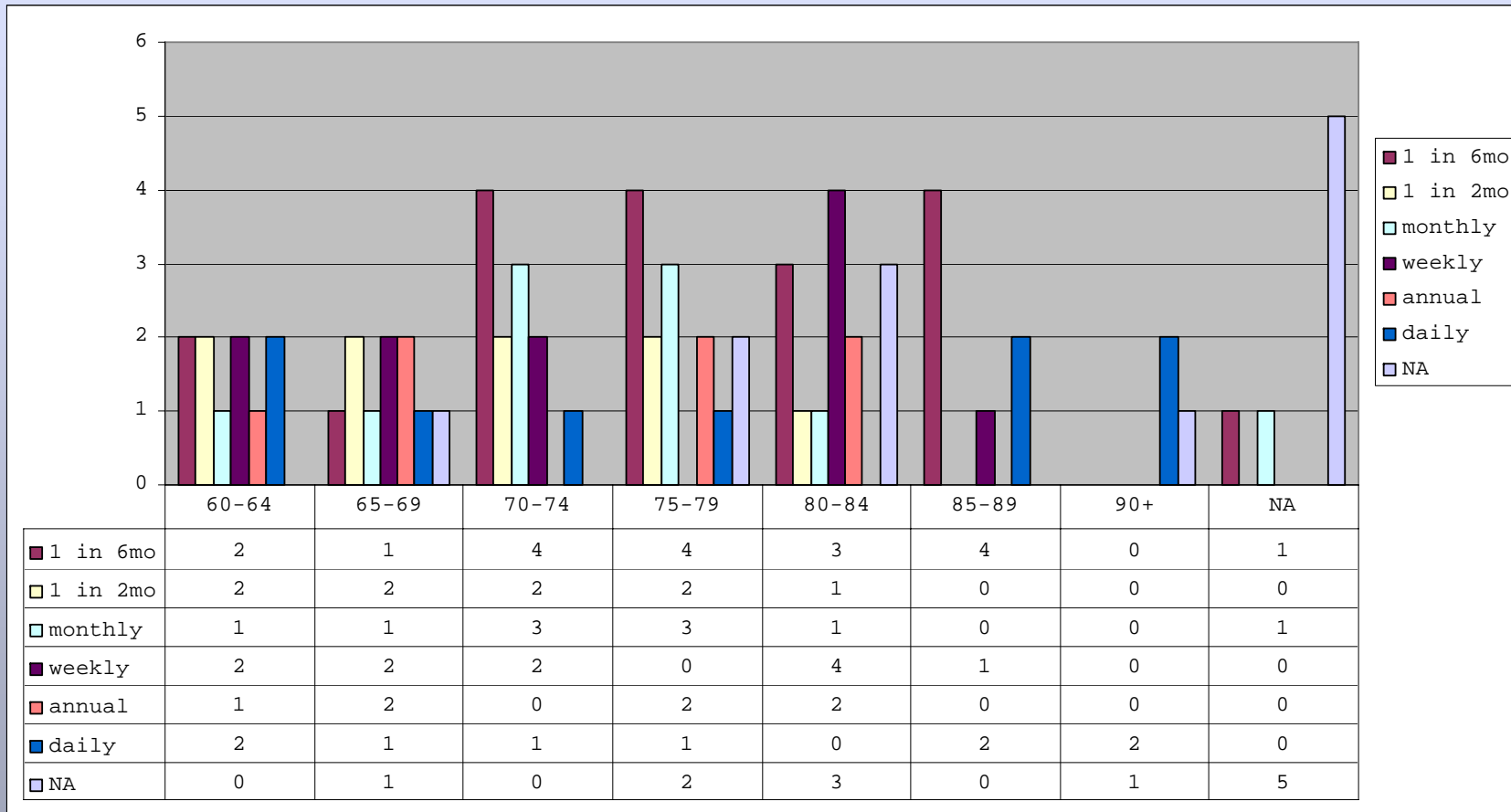


Chart shows attendance at “congregate meals” by age after eliminating those who “don’t attend”.

Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”

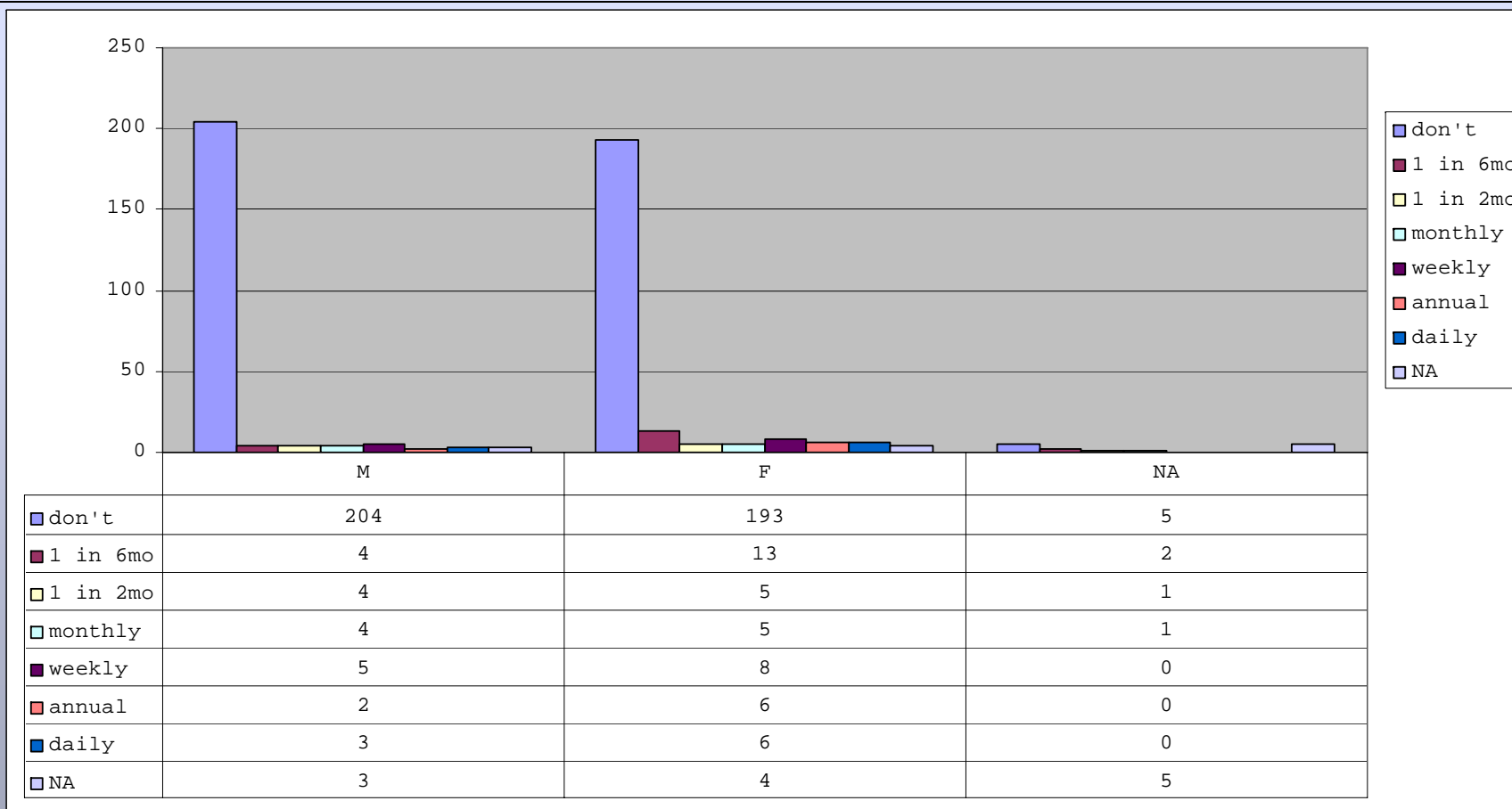


Chart shows attendance at “congregate meals” by sex. There are a total of 483 responses, the total number of responses to question 3.

Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”

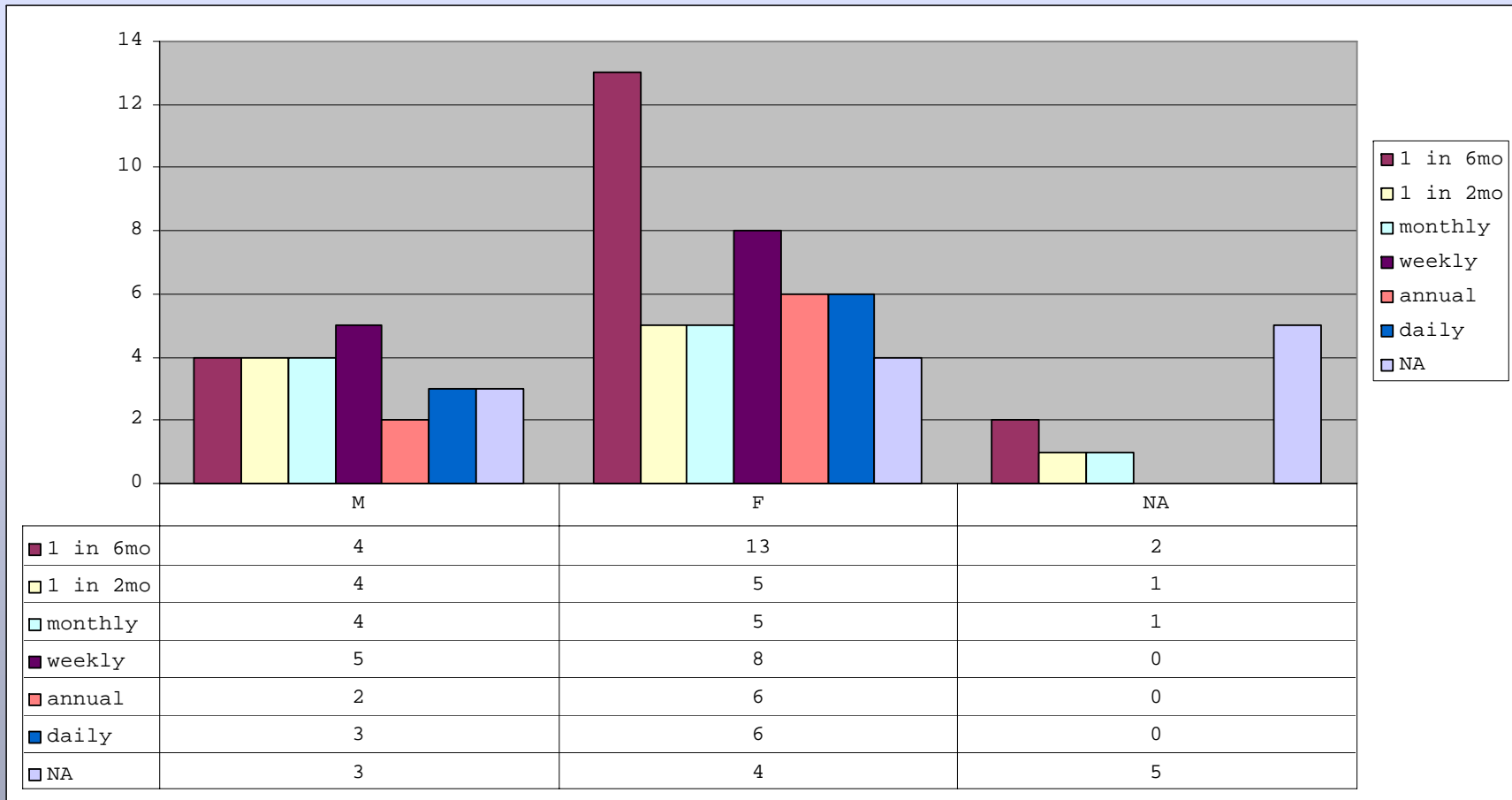
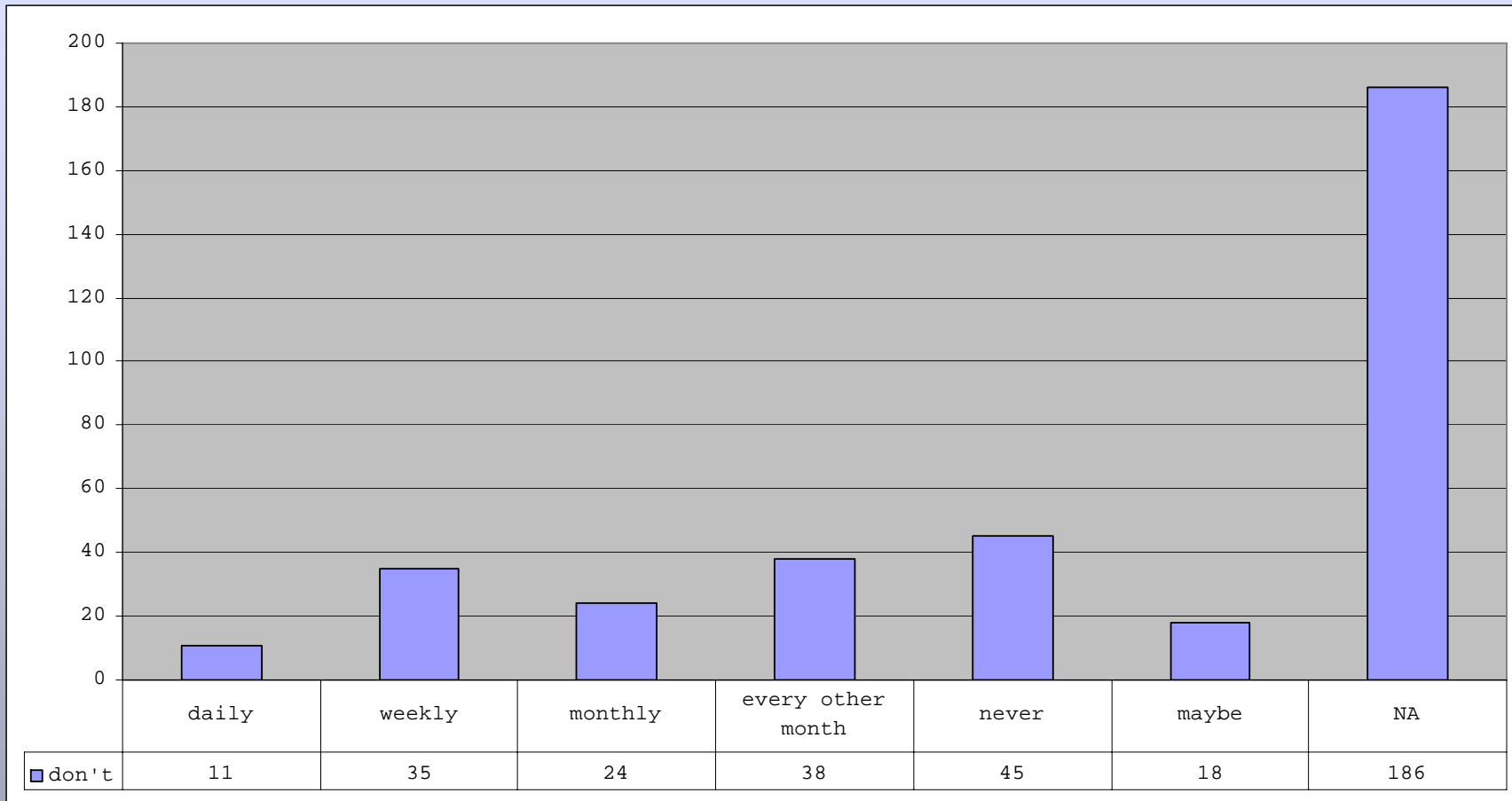


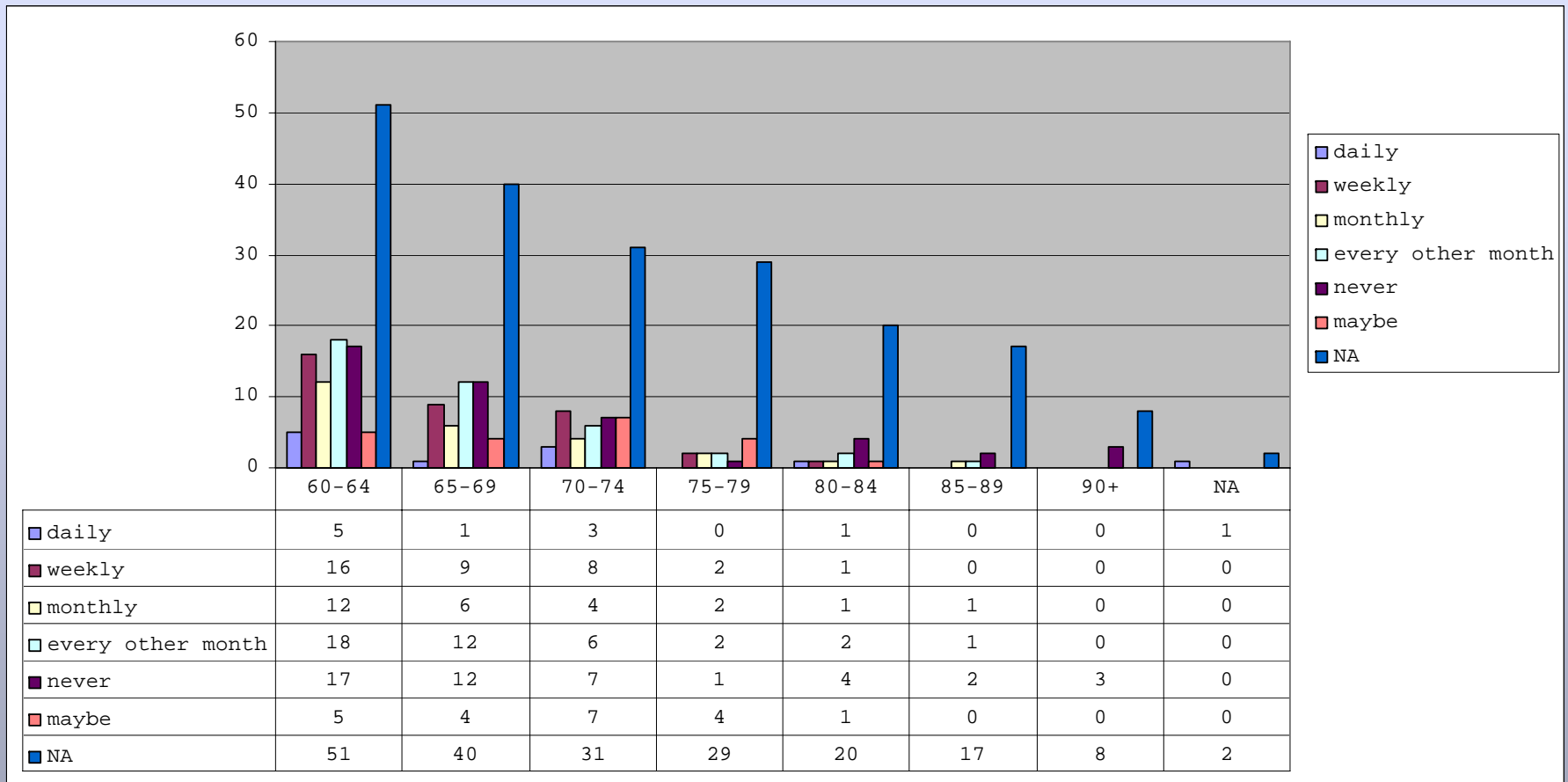
Chart shows attendance at “congregate meals” by sex after eliminating those who “don’t attend”.

Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”



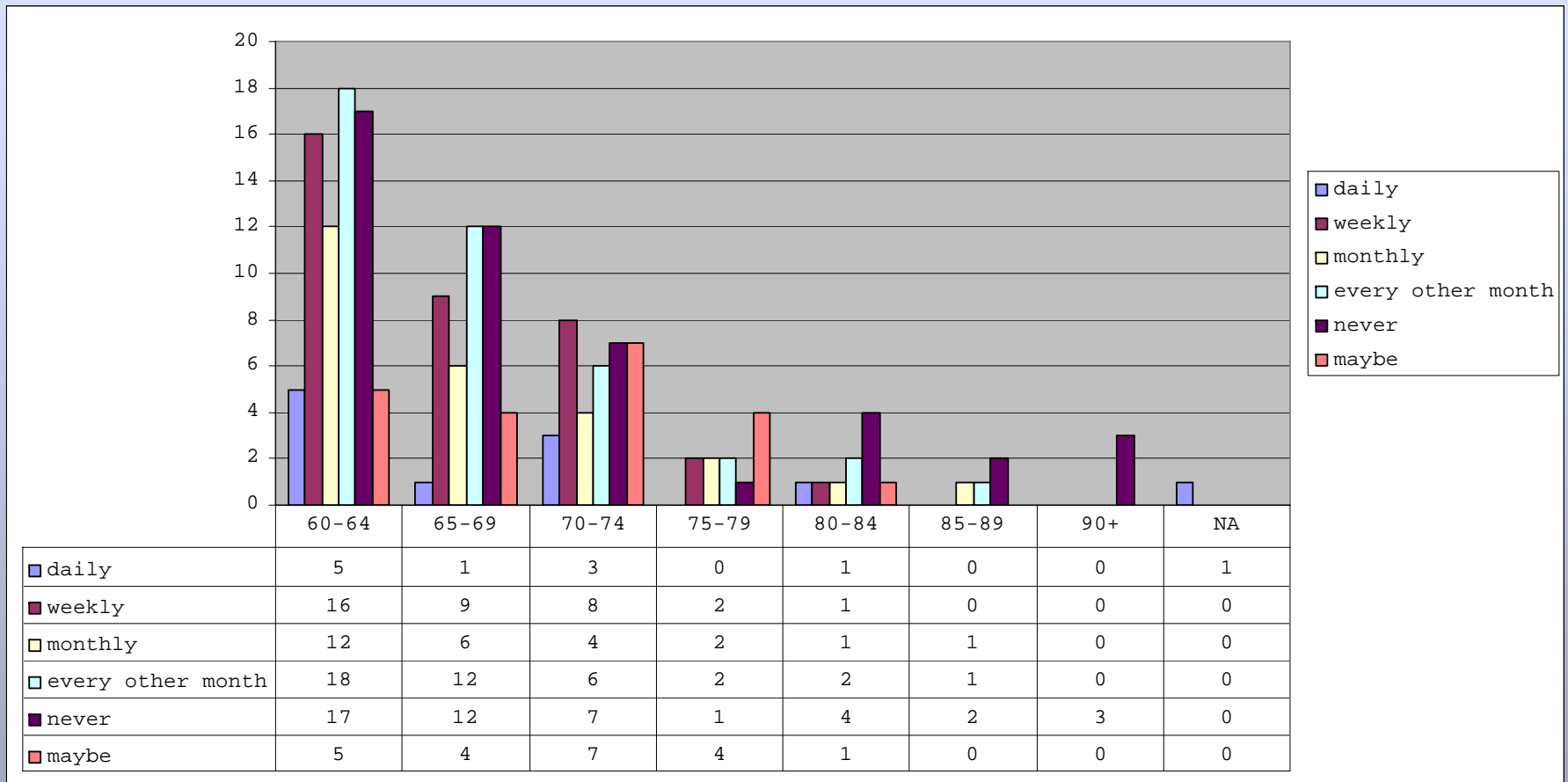
Of the 430 surveys, 357 claimed that they did not attend congregate meals (Q5). This chart shows the responses that those 357 provided to question 5a which asked how often they would attend after they retired.

Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”



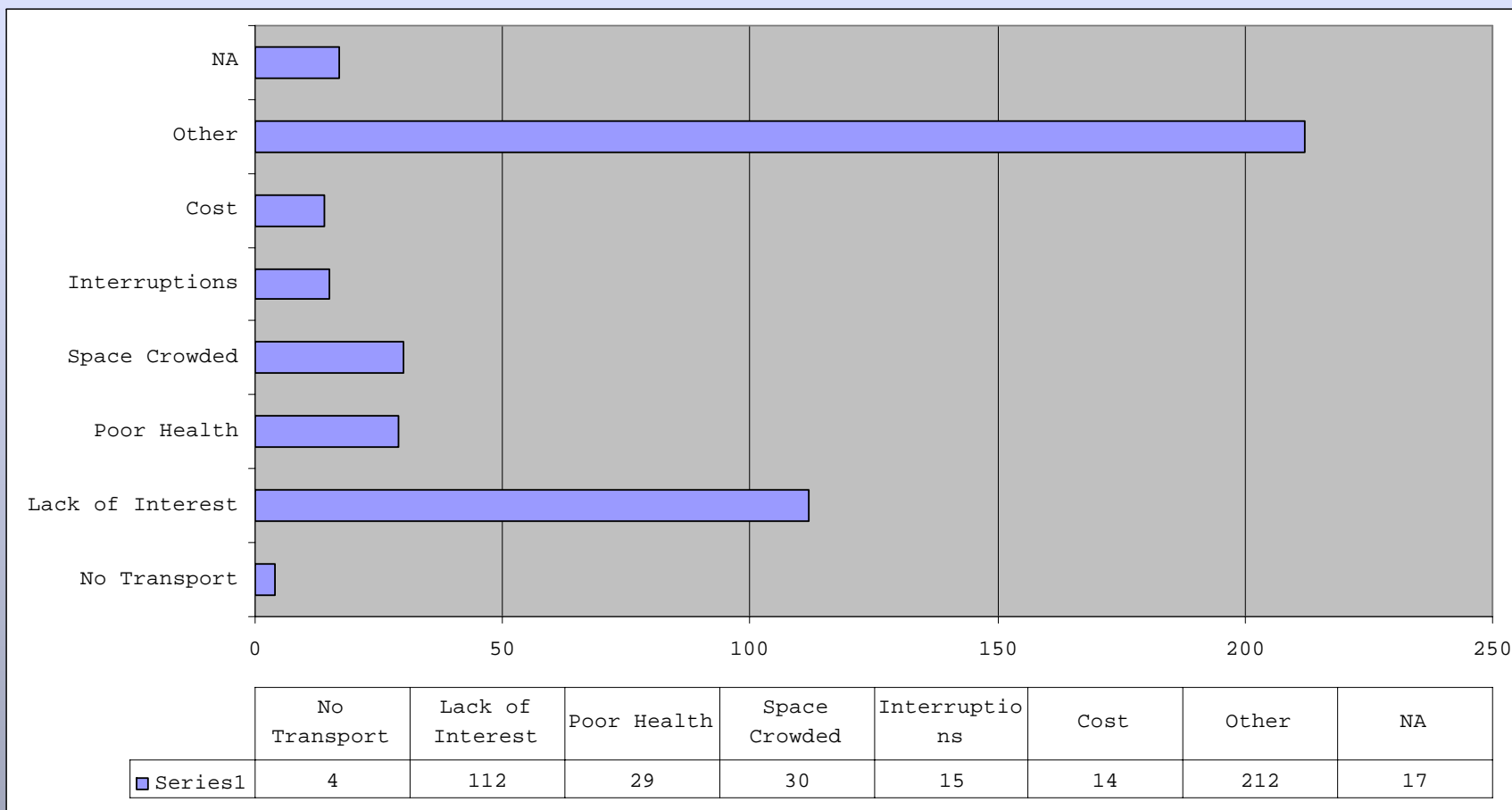
Of the 430 surveys, 357 claimed that they did not attend congregate meals (Q5). This chart shows the responses that those 357 provided to question 5a which asked how often they would attend after they retired and groups the results by the stated age. Since respondents could provide multiple ages (ostensibly for each of the members in the household) the table above shows 379 responses.

Q5 and 5a: Luncheons and “congregate meals”



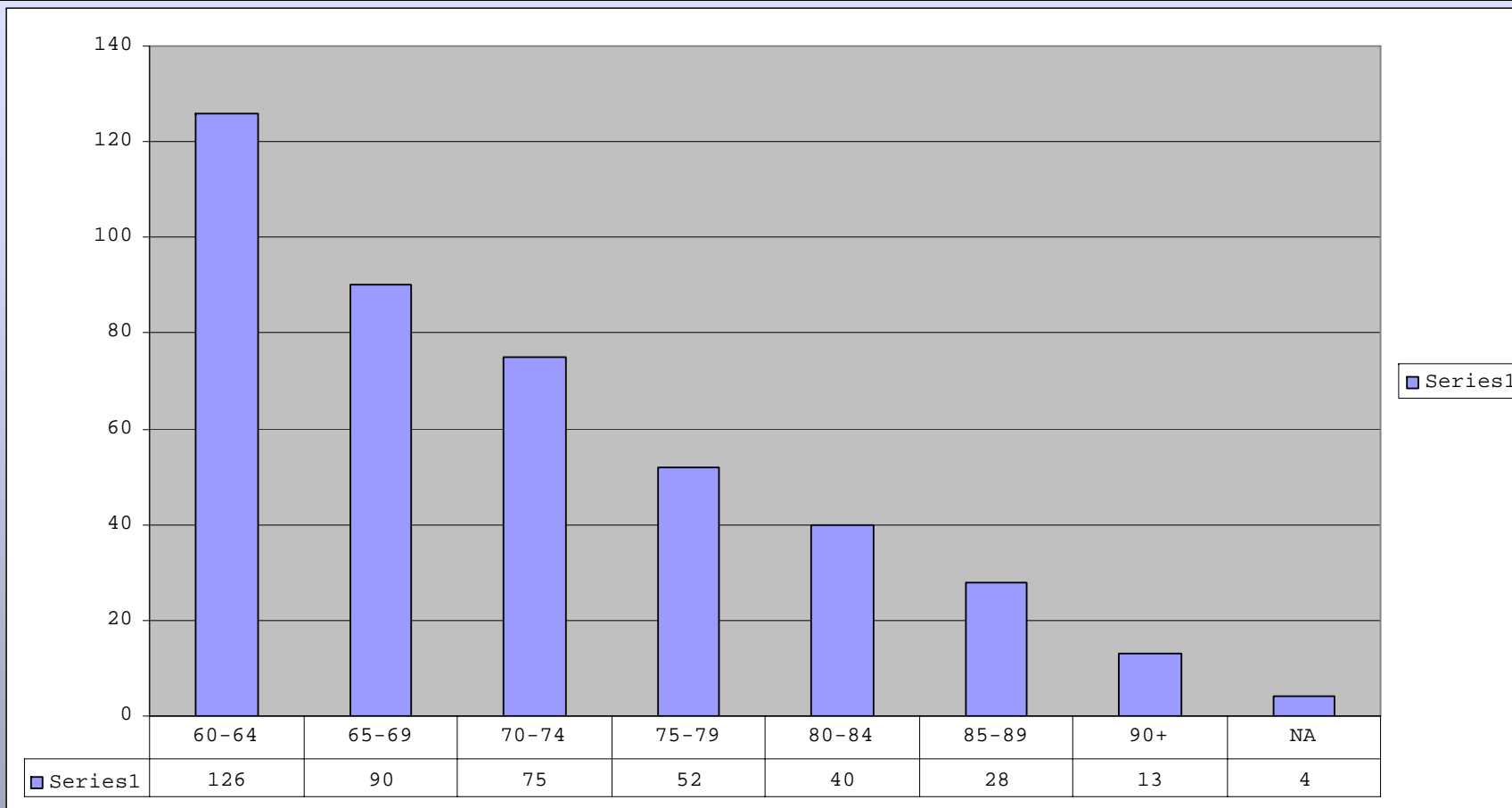
Of the 430 surveys, 357 claimed that they did not attend congregate meals (Q5). This chart shows the responses that those 357 provided to question 5a which asked how often they would attend after they retired and groups the results by the stated age and only looks at those who provided a response. Since respondents could provide multiple ages (ostensibly for each of the members in the household), this table shows a total of 181 responses.

Q6: exercise at the senior center



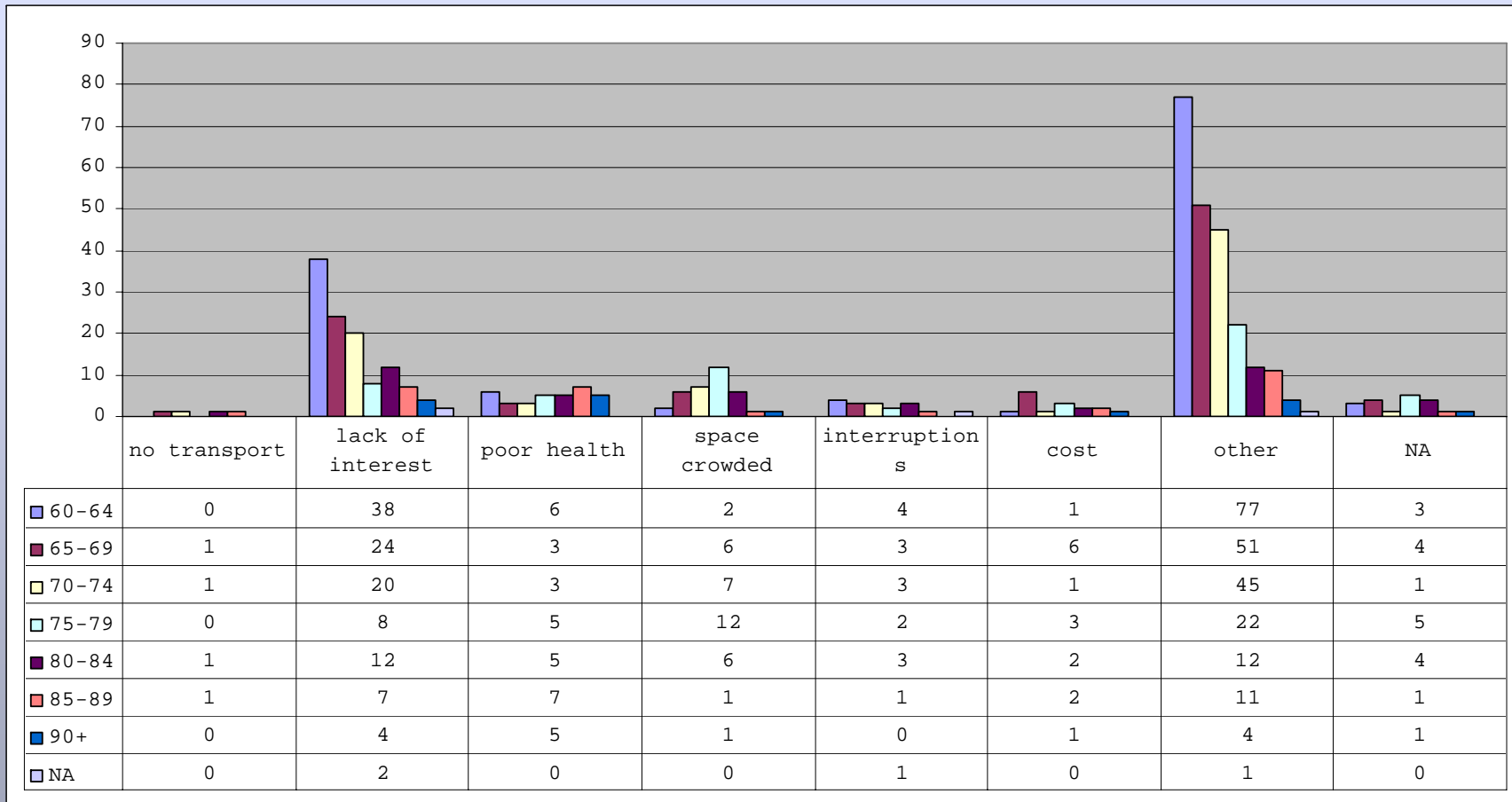
A total of 404 respondents indicated that they did not attend exercise at the senior center (Q6), two indicated monthly and eleven indicated weekly and thirteen provided no answer. This chart shows the responses that the 404 “non-attendeers” provided to Q6a, the reason for their non-attendance.

Q6: exercise at the senior center



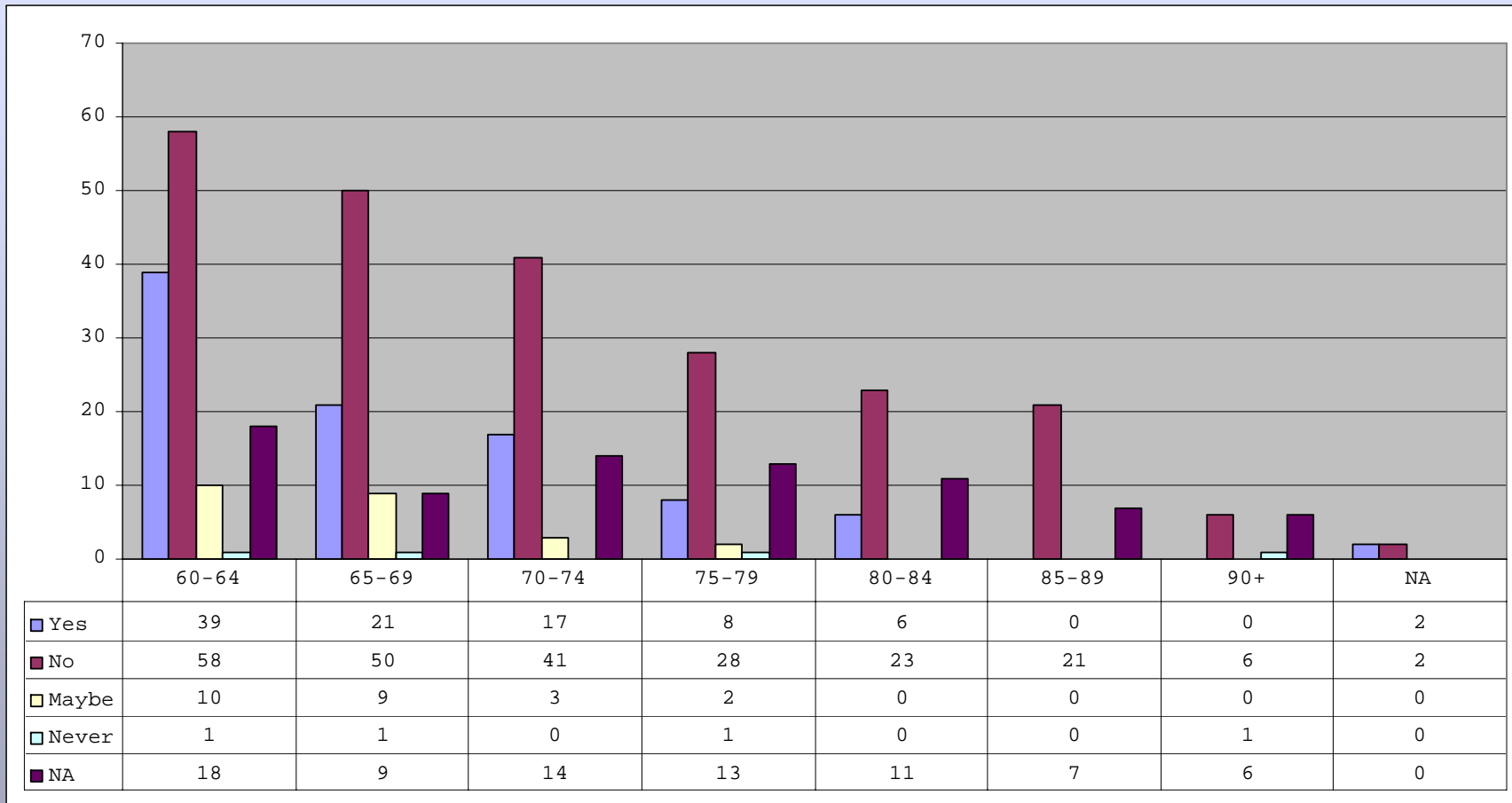
A total of 404 respondents indicated that they did not attend exercise at the senior center (Q6), two indicated monthly and eleven indicated weekly and thirteen provided no answer. This chart shows the age distribution of those who don't attend the exercise program.

Q6: exercise at the senior center



A total of 404 respondents indicated that they did not attend exercise at the senior center (Q6), two indicated monthly and eleven indicated weekly and thirteen provided no answer. This chart shows the age distribution of those who don't attend the exercise program and the reason they provided on Q6a.

Q6 and 6b: exercise at the senior center



A total of 404 respondents indicated that they did not attend exercise at the senior center (Q6), two indicated monthly and eleven indicated weekly and thirteen provided no answer. This chart shows the age distribution of and the responses that the 404 non-attendees gave to question 6b.

Current facility

- Many respondents have written comments about the current facility
 - Lack of space for some programs
 - Un-welcoming
- It is most definitely the case that the facility could be more cheerful
 - Maybe through the reduction of clutter

Attendance and participation

- The survey indicates that the regular attendance at the Senior Center is a small fraction of the seniors in town
 - Lunch attendance
 - Ten respondents indicated that they attended lunch each day (Q5)
 - Seventeen indicate that they attend lunch often (weekly or more) in Q10
 - Approximately sixty attend either weekly or monthly
 - Other programs
 - In response to Question 10, a total of 63 distinct respondents indicated that they used one or more of the facilities often (weekly or more).

	I use often now (weekly or more)	I use occasionally now (monthly or less)	I plan to use after I retire	I would use in a new Senior Center
Exercise	13	1	0	0

- The exercise program has thirteen positive respondents
- The first order of business needs to be to understand why such a small fraction of the senior population uses the facility

Attendance and participation

- A significant number of attendees penciled in telling reasons for the poor attendance
 - They were still working full time
 - They found the exercise program too easy
 - They were members of a gym
 - They found the senior center uninviting
 - The programs at the senior center did not fit their schedule
- There is an understandable increase in “promised attendance” after retirement
 - At what age do people *want to* retire?
 - At what age *can* people retire?

The programs being offered at the Senior Center

- Many respondents wrote comments about the activities
 - Suggestions for activities that are not currently available
 - Lack of attendance because current activities are not interesting
 - Current activities are targeted to a small subset of seniors
 - Not suitable for “active” seniors
- It would be worthwhile having the programs at the Senior Center reviewed and readjusted to the target audience
 - Current activities are of limited interest to the majority of survey respondents
 - Should we do something about a program where 404 of 430 respondents indicate that they don't attend?

The sentiment of the respondents

- Some felt that the town “owed” the seniors a Senior Center
 - Some specifically called out the Twin Oaks as a good location
 - Others felt that the Senior Center must be in the center of town
 - Some were relieved that the Center would not be built behind the Butterick Building
- Some felt that a new center was a waste of money
 - They suggested various things including additional storage space, utilizing the 1835 Town Hall
- Several opined that they would never use a Senior Center
- Several felt that the Senior Center was essential
- Several felt that a Community Center was more appropriate
 - It was unfair to segregate the seniors
 - The interaction between the seniors and the rest of the community would be beneficial
- Many felt that the Senior Center would be good for those who used it
 - But they (themselves) would not use it
- Not even a single respondent indicated a willingness to contribute (taxes, friends of the Senior Center) to fund the Senior Center
 - Many indicated that taxes were too high already, and that a new Senior Center would be an unwelcome burden

Discussion

**SENIOR CENTER SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT OF FINDINGS**

**SUBMITTED BY
THE BUILDING NEEDS COMMITTEE
To
THE COUNCIL ON AGING,
THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, AND
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF STERLING, MA**

**NOVEMBER 17, 2009
DOCUMENT VERSION: 40**

1 Introduction

Over the past several years a variety of different initiatives to build a senior center have been commenced in the Town of Sterling, and have met with varying degrees of progress and success.

At the meeting of the Board of Selectmen on September 2, 2009, the Building Needs Committee was asked to work with the COA and the Finance Committee and provide answers to the following questions:

1. To decide on a Senior Center versus a Community Center
2. The size needed
3. The location
4. New versus renovation
5. The design
6. To lease or buy
7. To consider type of construction (e.g. pre-fab)
8. To build in phases or all at once

In order to help answer these questions, a variety of activities was undertaken and the Building Needs Committee has been keeping the other stakeholders up-to-date on the progress of its investigations.

This write-up summarizes the information collected as part of two of those activities:

1. The previous MRPC survey (2005-2006)
2. The recent survey of seniors (October 2009)

1.1 Audience of this document

This document is written by the Building Needs Committee and addressed to the members of the Council on Aging, the Finance Committee, and the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Sterling, MA.

This document presents a short summary of the information that is part of two longer presentations prepared by the BNC and also addressed to the members of the Council on Aging, the Finance Committee, and the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Sterling, MA.

2 Survey Summary

2.1 Survey Yield

The survey in 2005-2006 received 138 responses. The Survey Results obtained from MRPC do not indicate how many survey questionnaires were sent out. Therefore a yield could not be computed.

The 2009 survey was mailed to 1079 households and 430 responses were received by November 10th, 2009 (the deadline was November 9th). This summary and the accompanying report is an analysis of those 430 responses which represent a yield of about 40% which is very good.

2.2 Survey Questions

The surveys had many sets of questions:

- Demographic
- Driving habits
- Accessibility
- Attendance at luncheons
- Attendance at exercise sessions
- Interest in other activities

2.3 Demographic information

The age distributions in the survey appear to be very different. The 2005-2006 survey had a respondent age distribution that had highest frequencies in the 65-74 year range. The 2009 survey by contrast had the highest frequency in the 60-64 range and showed a progressive reduction as age increased. The reason for this difference was not ascertained.

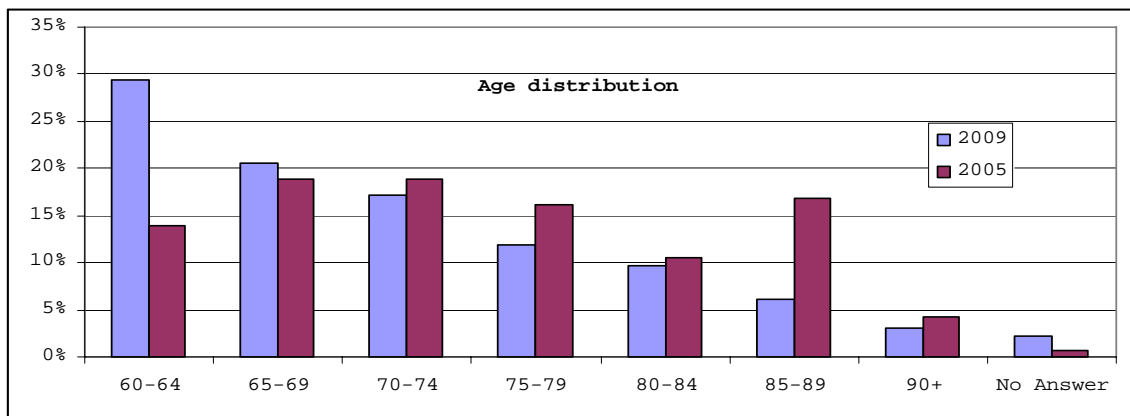


Figure 1. Age distribution in respondents

This specific aspect of the two surveys is highlighted for two reasons:

- It represents an area where the results of the 2005-2006 survey differs from the results of the 2009 survey
- Age distribution is a particularly important aspect of this analysis because the argument has been made that the pressures on the senior center will only become more acute with the retirement of the baby-boomer generation.

2.4 *Driving Habits*

The 2005-2006 survey had a question about driving at night and this question did not occur in the 2009 survey. In the 2005-2006 survey, 77 respondents indicated that they drove at night while 40 indicated that they did not and 19 provided no answer.

The age distribution in the 2009 survey had a higher representation in the 60-64 age group, and many respondents wrote in comments about being employed full time, working far away, and having an active social life. It is therefore inferred that the question (if it had been asked in 2009) would have received a higher percentage of respondents indicating that they drove at night.

2.5 *Attendance at luncheons and fitness activities*

Both surveys indicated a very low attendance percentage at both of these activities.

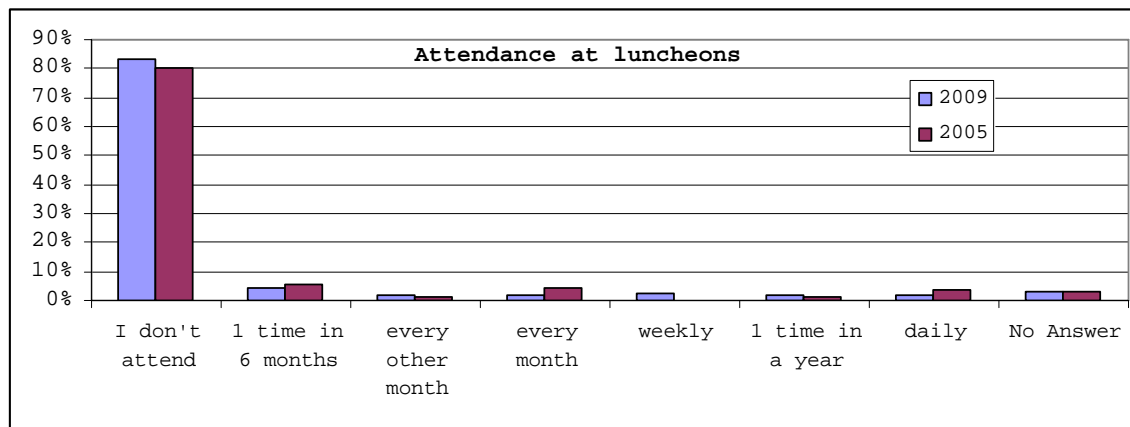


Figure 2. Attendance at luncheons

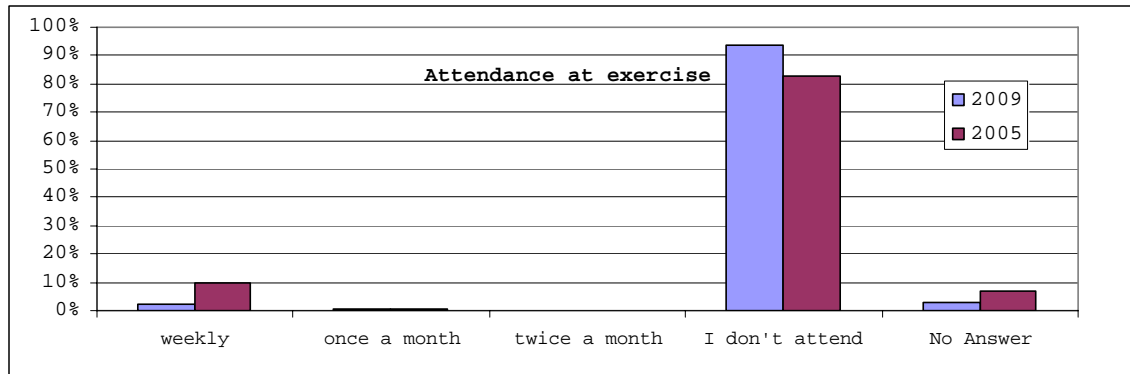


Figure 3. Attendance at exercise sessions

2.6 Further analysis of attendance at Senior Center activities

In the 2009 survey, we had an opportunity to look further at the reasons for attendance at the various activities and correlate those answers with information like age and other comments provided by respondents.

The attached presentations provide a detailed description of this in Part 3.

The distribution of luncheon attendance and age indicates that the attendance at the luncheons correlates well with the age of the respondent. As expected, there is a modest uptick in the promise of attendance after retirement. Looking at those who claim not to attend luncheons today, the majority feel that they will not attend them after they retire or may attend once every other month.

The following three figures show this.

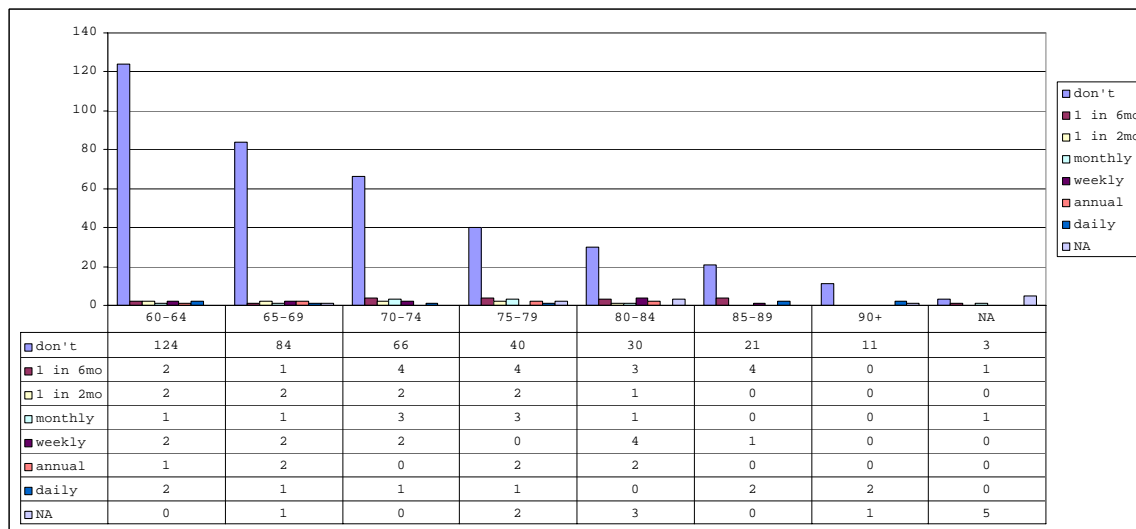


Figure 4. Shows the age distribution of attendees at luncheons

The non-attendance at luncheons correlates well with age. Since the actual questionnaires from the 2005-2006 survey were not available, this analysis could not be done on that data set.

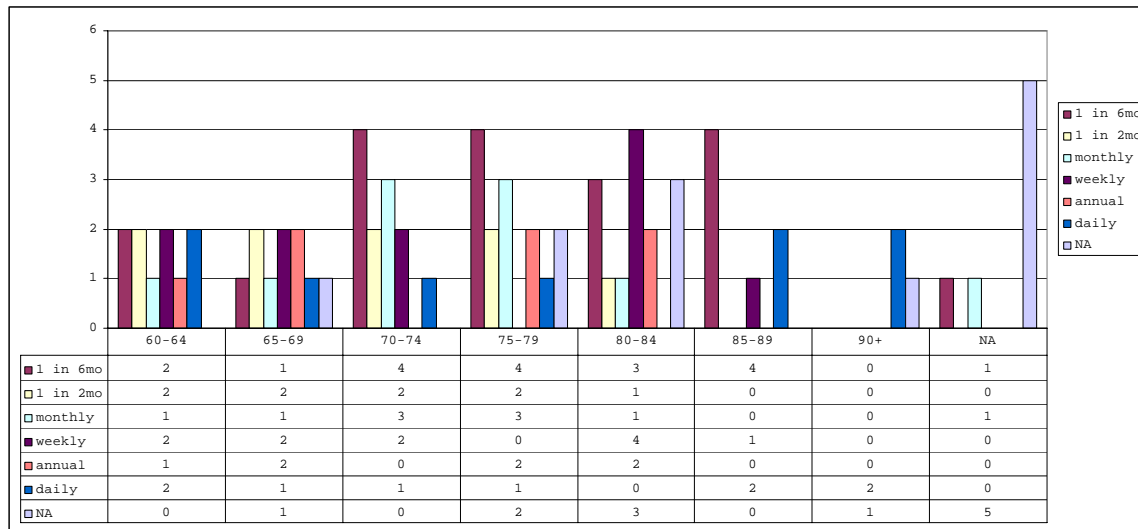


Figure 5. Similar to Figure 4, does not show those who "don't attend"

To get a better understanding of the age distribution of those who do attend, Figure 5 eliminates those who “don’t attend”. Across all stated frequencies (from daily to annual), attendance is limited to a handful in each age grouping.

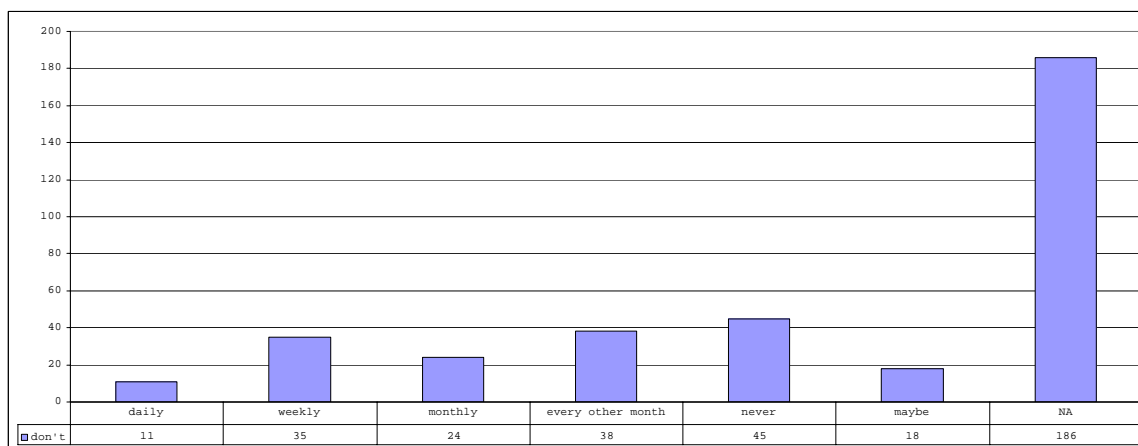


Figure 6. Shows the promised attendance at luncheons after retirement by those who don't currently attend.

This picture shows promised attendance after retirement among those who don’t currently attend. While the majority claim they will never attend, a fair number claim they will attend every month. When they will be retiring (in how many years) is something that cannot be determined.

The distribution of exercise center attendance and age similarly indicates a strong correlation. Also, as expected, there is a small uptick in the promise of attendance after retirement.

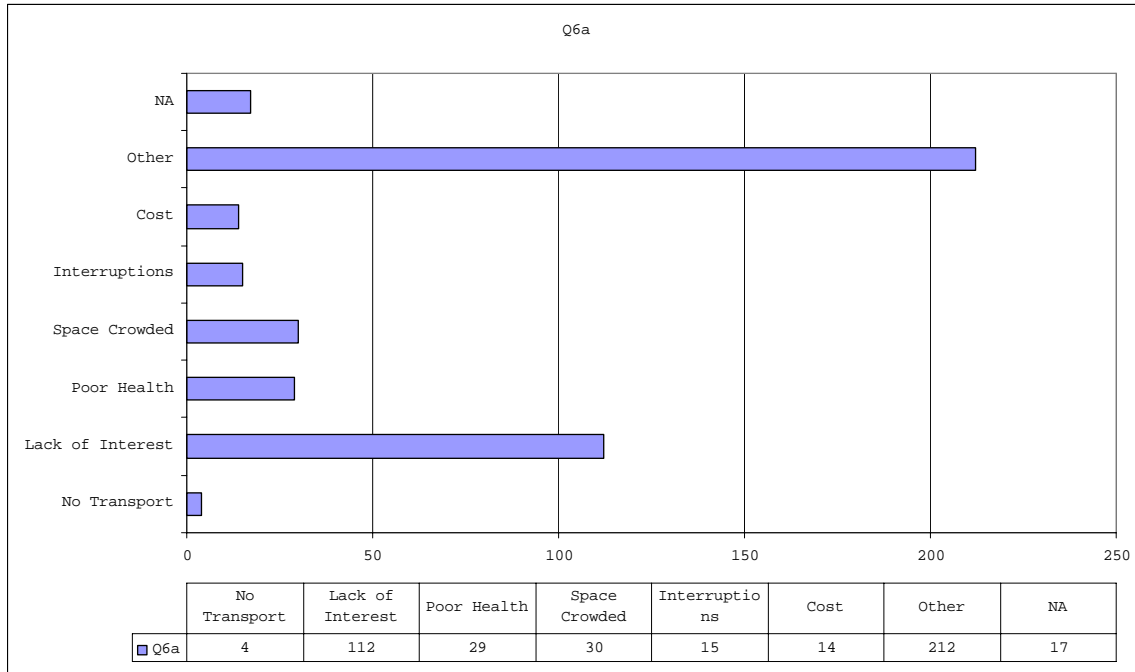


Figure 7. Distribution of answers to Q6a by those who did not attend exercise sessions

The majority who did not attend indicated “Other”. Many wrote in the reason and common reasons included “working full time”, “member of a gym”, “active, participate in other exercise activities”.

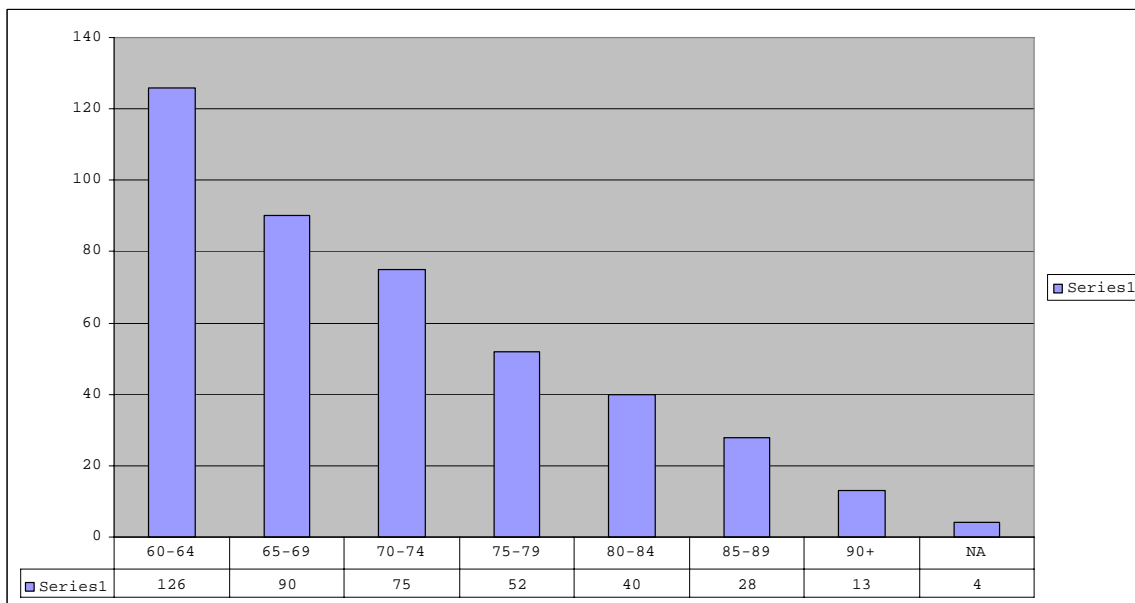


Figure 8. Showing the age distribution of those who did not attend exercise sessions.

As expected, the age and non-attendance of exercise sessions has a strong correlation.

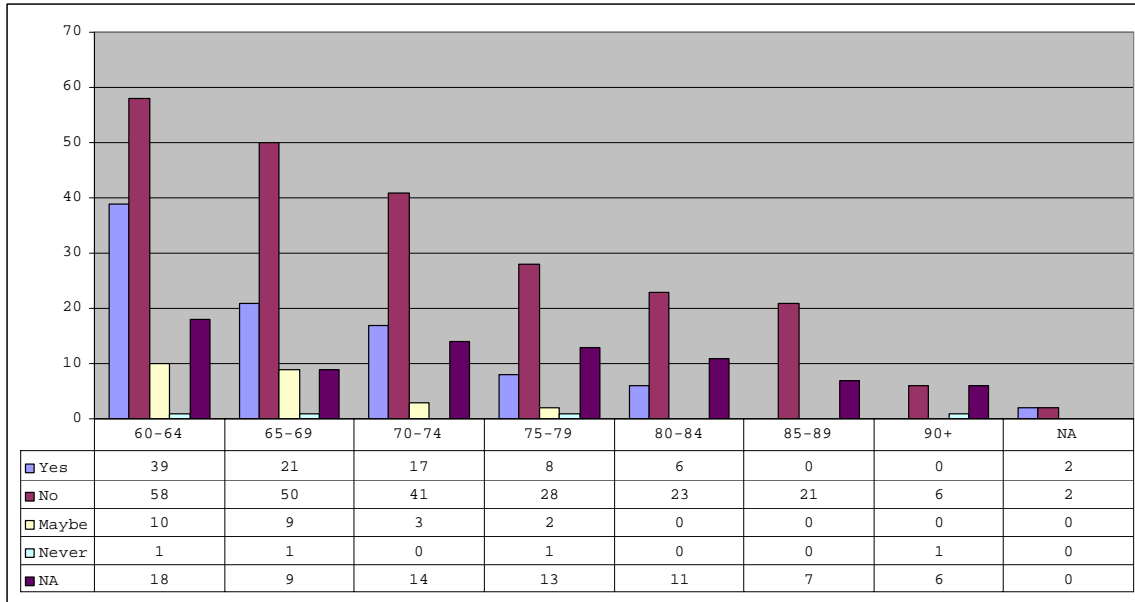


Figure 9. Showing the promise of attendance at senior center exercise after retirement by age (of those who do not currently attend).

The promise of attendance after retirement was not a strong one with most indicating that they would not attend (in almost all age categories).

3 Conclusions

Based solely on the information contained in the 430 surveys that were analyzed, one can reach the following conclusions.

1. The survey represents a fair sampling of the seniors (defined as those over age 60) in town.
2. With a yield of 40%, it is fair to conclude that the sentiment of the population will resemble the sentiment of the sample.
3. The senior center activities are offered primarily during the normal business hours of the town hall building.
4. A significant number of seniors (defined as those over age 60) are not retired and are leading active lives and are often working full time jobs. As no survey question asked the explicit question about retirement, this conclusion can only be substantiated by the answers that many people wrote in on their surveys.
5. The nature and timing of the activities at the Senior Center are not either of interest or compatible with the active and often full time work life of the seniors.
6. Attendance at Senior Center activities is therefore limited to the subset of the seniors (defined as those over age 60) who are able to participate in activities

during the normal work week and who are interested in the activities being offered.

7. Many seniors have voiced an interest in more strenuous activities including hiking, aerobics, swimming and kick-boxing. These activities are more closely related to the activities that are being planned by the Recreation Department.
8. The Senior Center activities as they are today target a group of maybe 120 to 200 seniors in town. All else being equal, a new facility would not increase attendance at Senior Center activities.
9. New activities and different hours of operation are required in order to attract a larger attendance.
 - The largest group of non-attendees at the Senior Center activities is the self-described “active adult”. Activities for this group can today be offered at other locations in town, such as the 1835 Town Hall.
 - Many seniors have voiced an interest in outdoor activities that do not require a new facility and these can be arranged right now.
10. Several seniors wrote in comments to this effect and indicated that the additional tax burden is something that would not be fair to the seniors on a fixed income. Others opined that the town should immediately build a new facility as the Town owes this to the Seniors.

It is the consensus of the BNC that at this stage, there is no justification for the town to acquire new property or consider the construction of a new facility given the small group of seniors who are currently being addressed by activities at the Senior Center.
11. There is no doubt that the space in the current facility is cramped and some activities are being conducted in less than favorable conditions.
 - Economies of space in the Butterick Building are long overdue and it is essential that space in the building be used more efficiently.
 - The Butterick Building is already ADA compliant and should be used for all activities for the seniors where accessibility is important.
 - There is a self-described group of “active seniors” who will be able to benefit from activities in the 1835 Town Hall that is clearly less compliant with the ADA.
12. A significant number of seniors commented on the choice of a “Senior Center” or a “Community Center”. As there was no question that forced an answer on this, a conclusion on this could not be reached. However there are a significant number of voices on each side; the Seniors who would like a place that they could call their own and dedicated to the activities of the

Seniors, and those who feel that it is not appropriate to segregate the seniors and that interactions with the rest of the community are valuable.

13. The BNC strongly urges the COA and the Board of Selectmen to consider a stronger integration between the activities of the Senior Center and the Recreation Department as a way to get more seniors in town involved in the activities offered by the town.

14. In the long term, if there is an increased participation in these activities, the town should consider building a community center that would be usable by all members of the community.

It is recommended that the facility chosen be one that has a large amount of space suitable for indoor and outdoor activities, walking trails or sports fields. Locations in the center of town while attractive from the point of view of accessibility to other town owned buildings will be unlikely to provide the space required for the long term growth and full enjoyment of the facility by all members of the community.