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Diversifying the Healthcare Workforce: Transition of the Combat Medic to Baccalaureate-Prepared Nurse

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Purpose

- The purpose of this project was to explore and develop a new university pathway for military combat medics to enter the nursing profession.
- The desired outcomes of this project included a medic-nursing curriculum, an increased and enhanced nursing workforce, a transformed student body in higher education, and ultimately quality patient services.

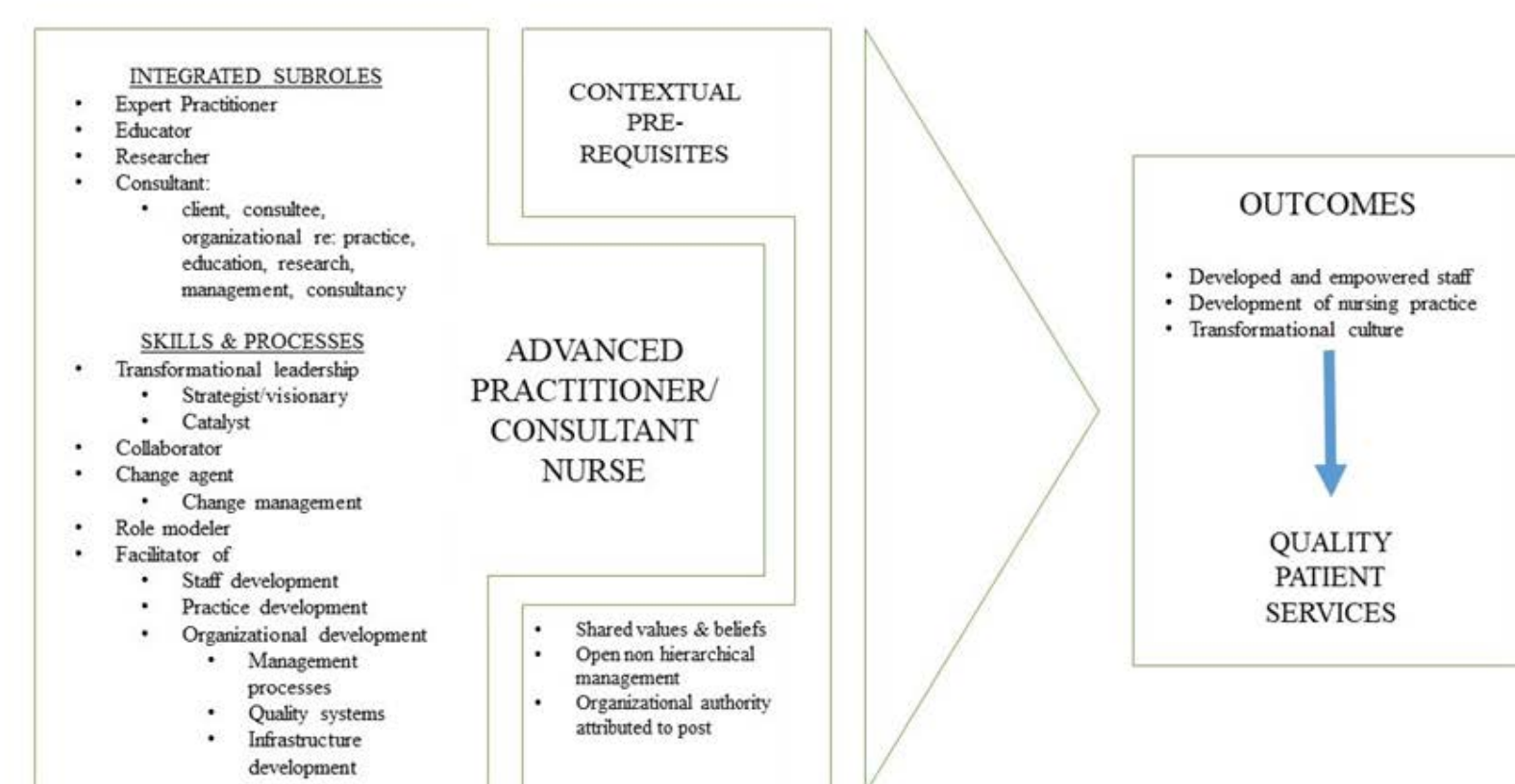


Figure 1. Advancing nursing practice: A conceptual framework for the advanced practitioner/consultant nurse (Manley, 1997).

Methods

- A comparative analysis was performed to elucidate gaps in 219 different nursing skills, didactic and general education requirements, clinical hours, and transfer credits between the United States (U.S.) Army combat medic training and the bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) curriculum at a university in Vermont.
- These gaps were analyzed and compared with state, national, and accrediting agency requirements for RN licensure.
- From this data, an accelerated entry pathway for the combat medic into a BSN program was constructed.
- Experiences of existing accelerated BSN programs for military members were explored through interviews, and university administrator and faculty member feedback was collected.
- Surveys were used to gauge the interest level of combat medics in pursuing an accelerated BSN, as well as their desired employment setting and intent to work at the bedside for two years or longer.

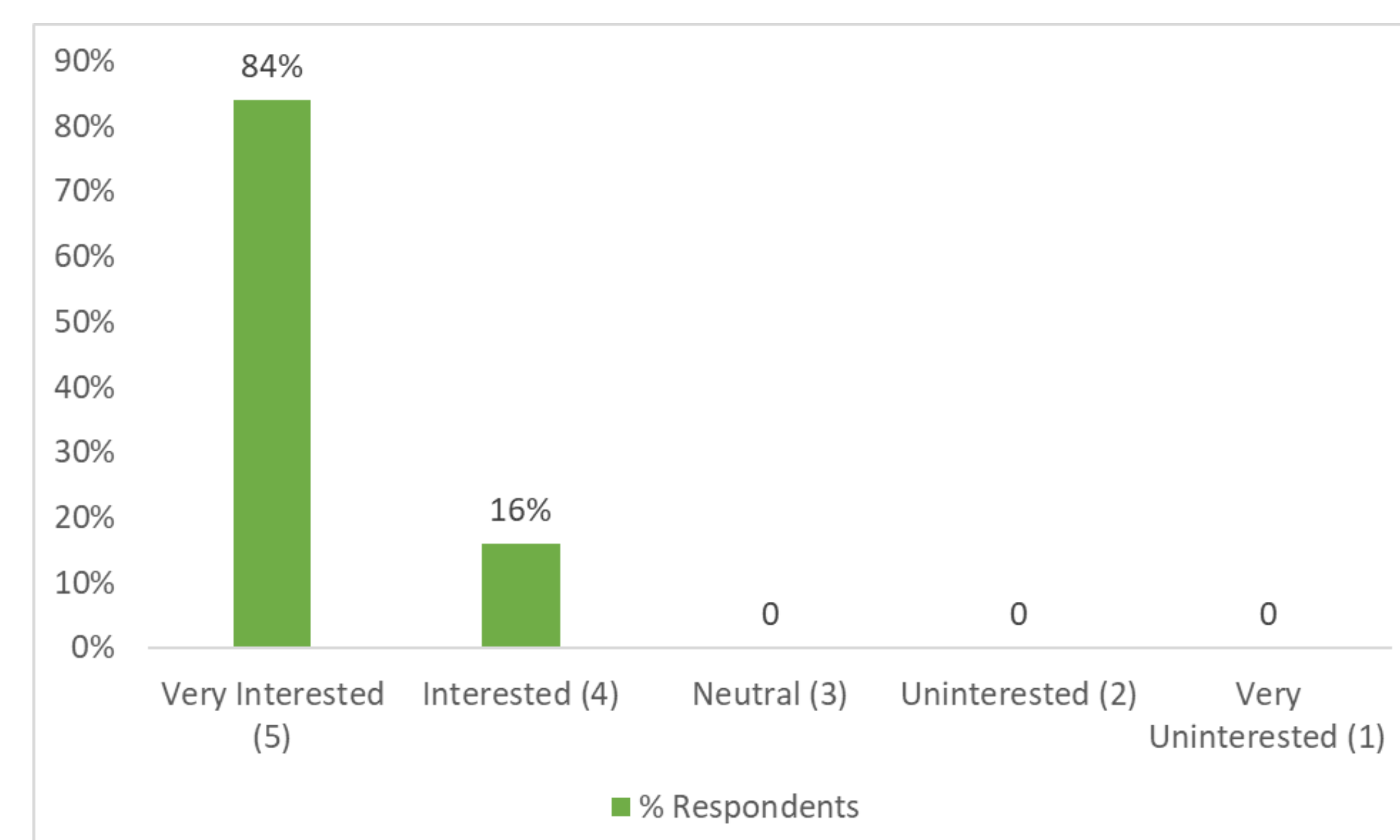


Figure 2. Interest level of combat medics in the Vermont Army National Guard in pursuing an accelerated BSN program (n=113, 18.6% response rate).

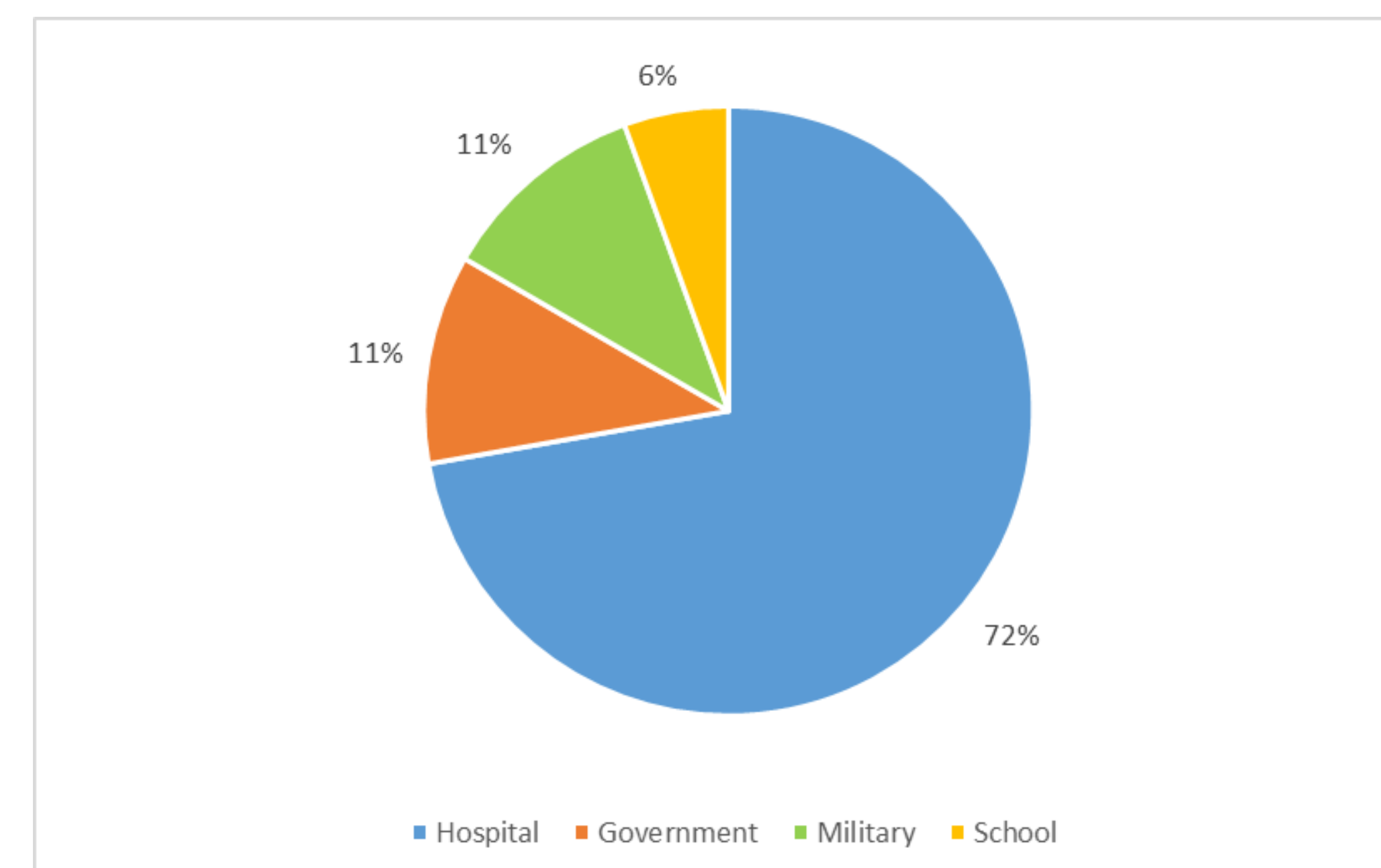


Figure 3. First choice desired employment settings as ranked by combat medics in the Vermont Army National Guard.

Conclusions

- The proposed program pathway was well-received and may offer a way to alleviate issues including nursing shortages, medic unemployment rates, patient mortality, and healthcare delivery.
- Further research is needed to determine feasibility of such an implementation.
- Plans for further research include a cost-benefit analysis, more precise sampling to gauge interest levels, and determinants of requisite supplies, physical space, clinical placements, and faculty.

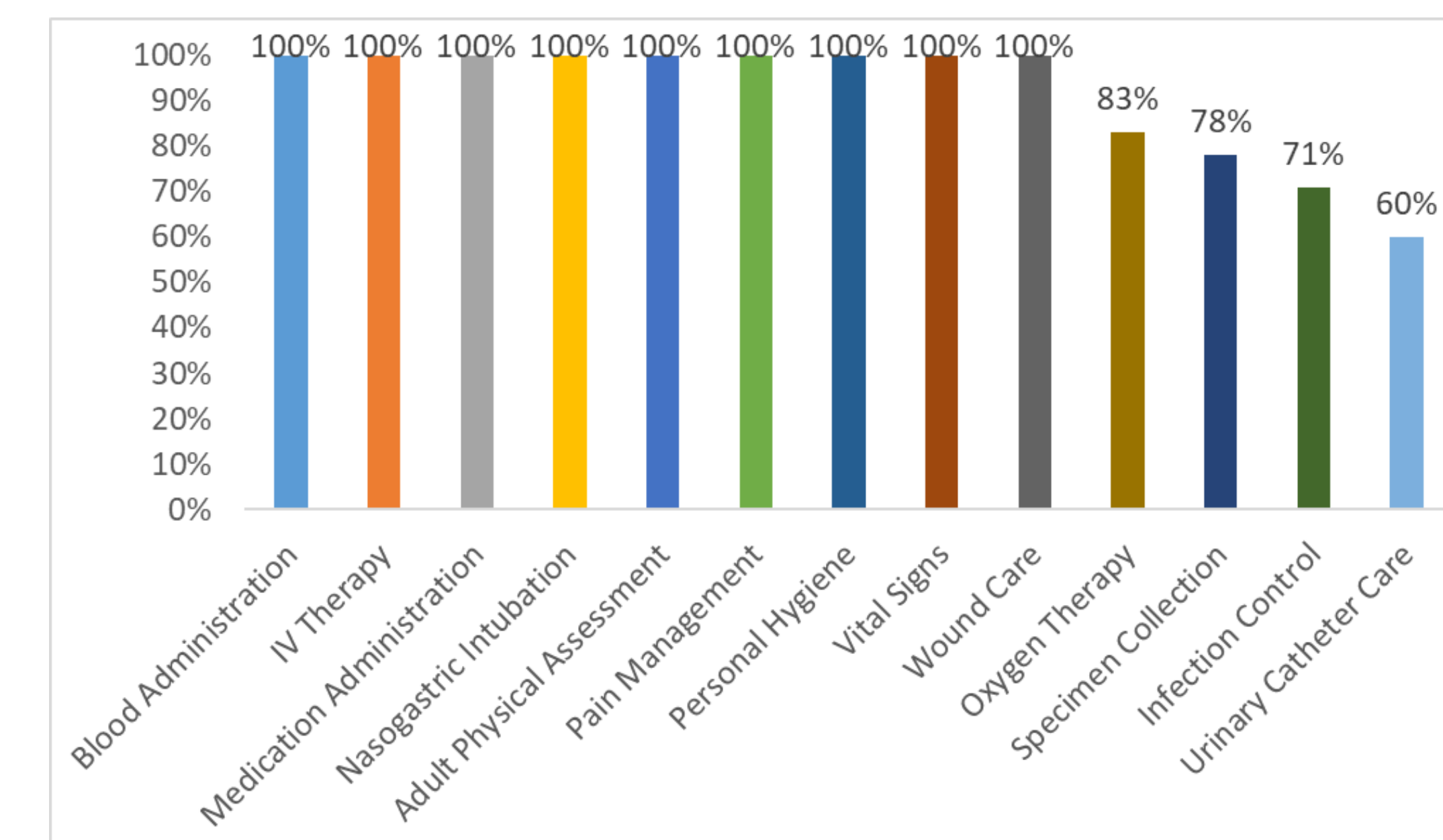


Figure 4. Demonstrated skills competencies of U.S. Army combat medics as defined by Assessment Technologies Institute™.

Results

- Two proposed entry pathways were constructed that met state, national, and accrediting agencies requirements for RN licensure.
- Program plans of study for 24- and 32-month completion were developed, dependent on student transfer credits and demonstrated nursing skill competencies.
- Of the combat medics who participated in the survey, 84% reported being very interested and 16% reported being interested in pursuing an accelerated program in nursing.
- Furthermore, 100% of combat medic participants indicated that they would remain at the bedside for two years or longer. Faculty at the university overwhelmingly supported this proposed pathway.

References



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