

# EXPERIENCES AND WISHES FROM DANISH CANCER CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES REGARDING CAM\*

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**BACKGROUND:**

Around 200 Danish children are diagnosed with cancer every year (population: 5,5 million). The majority is affected by leukemia, brain tumors, lymphomas, kidney cancer and neuroblastoma.

Effective treatment options are offered and many children regain their health. But it is a long process. The treatments are associated with physical, mental and social side effects. Therefore many of the families choose to supplement the conventional treatment with Complementary and Alternative Medicine, CAM\*

The Danish Association for Cancer Children FCB is an independent support group, working for cancer children and their families, organizing life-affirming activities. For the past 5 years family weekends has, along with other life affirming activities, been giving possibilities to share experiences regarding CAM.

With this background, and inspired by giving reflexology to 500 family members and visiting children's hospitals in Israel, Spain and China,

Background data for the survey 26 Danish Cancer Children	
Number of boys age 0-17	13
Average age for boys	8,25 years
Number of girls age 0- 17	13
Average age for girls	8,84 years
Response rate	51%

where CAM is offered to cancer children during hospitalization, and through meetings with researchers from around the world, this survey came to life.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

To illuminate Danish children with cancer and their families' experiences and wishes regarding CAM - and to develop a model for data collection, with the possibility to be used in other countries as well.

**METHODS:**

An exploratory approach using mixed methods was done in two phases:

**Phase One:**

Focus group consisting of families to children with cancer. Exchange of experiences based on 7 questions regarding traditional/conventional treatments and CAM.

**Phase Two:**

Completion of an anonymous questionnaire, also containing 7 questions.

**RESULTS:**

With a representation of 51 families to cancer children, 26 questionnaires were filled in and returned by the families. A selection of figures is presented in this poster.

**CONCLUSION:**

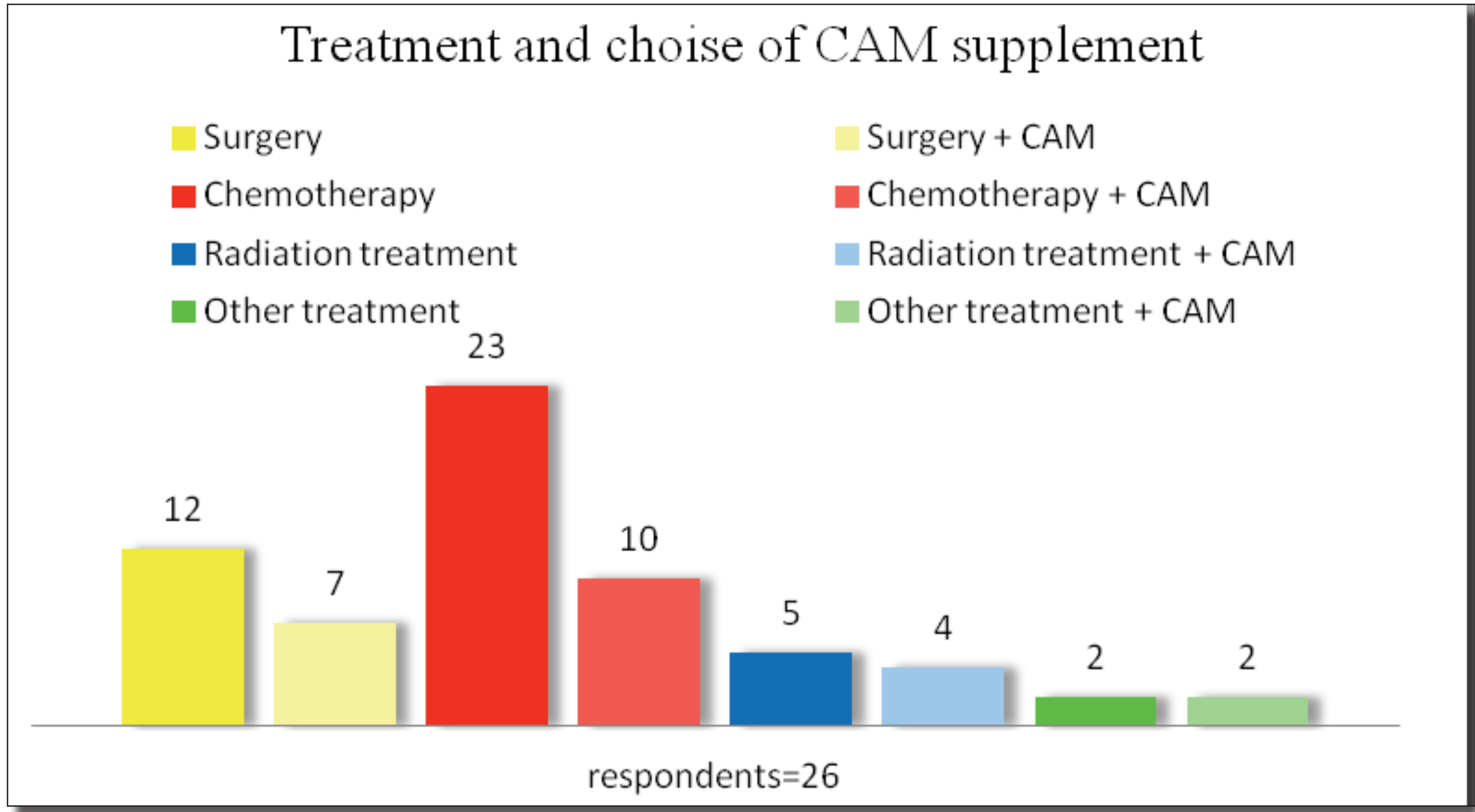
Families to children with cancer have experiences with CAM and want access to sober objective user information. They want the possibility to receive reflexology, massage and other CAM treatments during hospitalizations and while they are socially isolated at home. Many families wish to see CAM being integrated within the health services as a supplement to conventional treatment.

We hope that this pilot study will inspire for an increase interest of doing research in the field of CAM, so it's possible to get more knowledge about which CAM treatments work and why they work, especially regarding Cancer Children and families' experiences, wishes and needs.

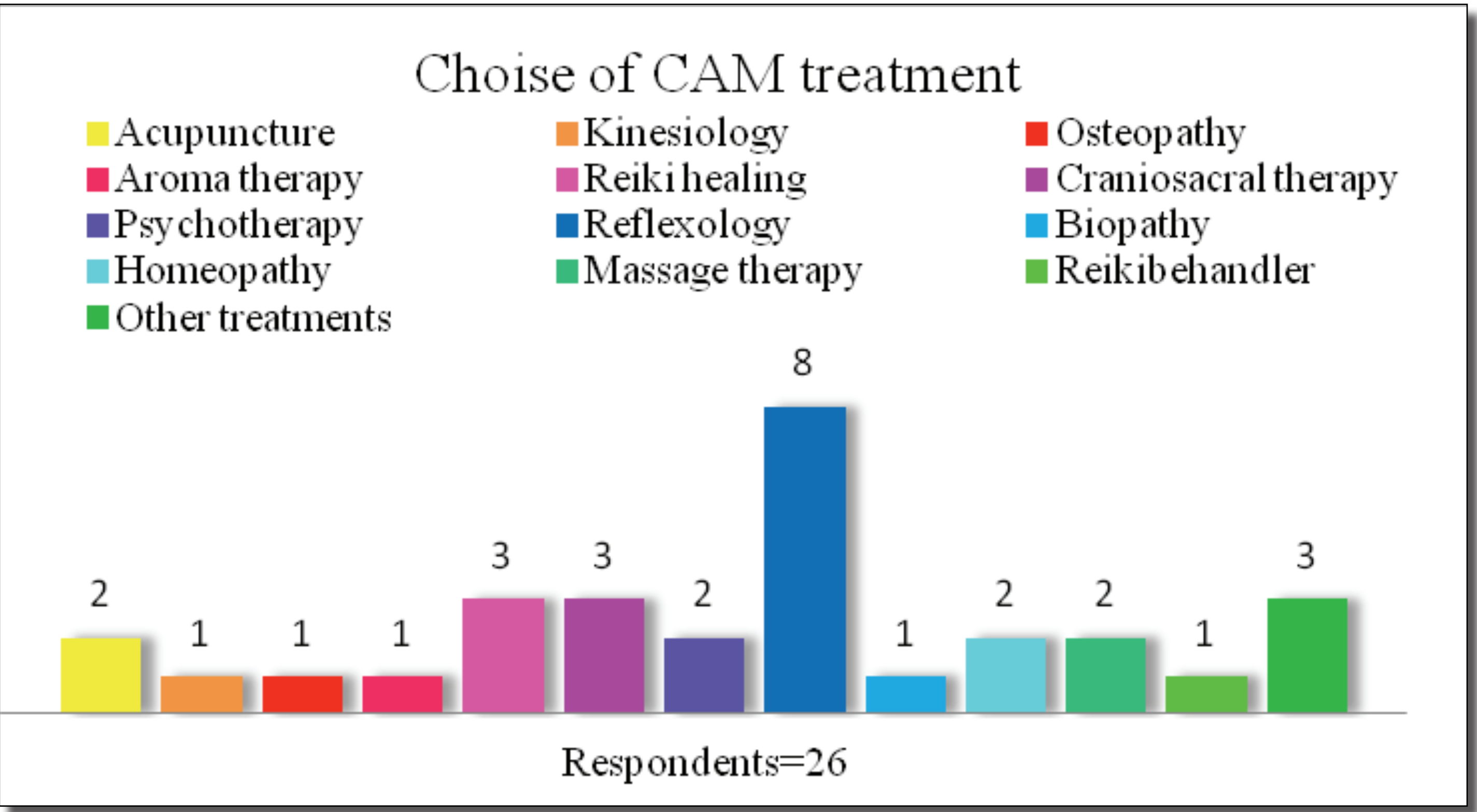


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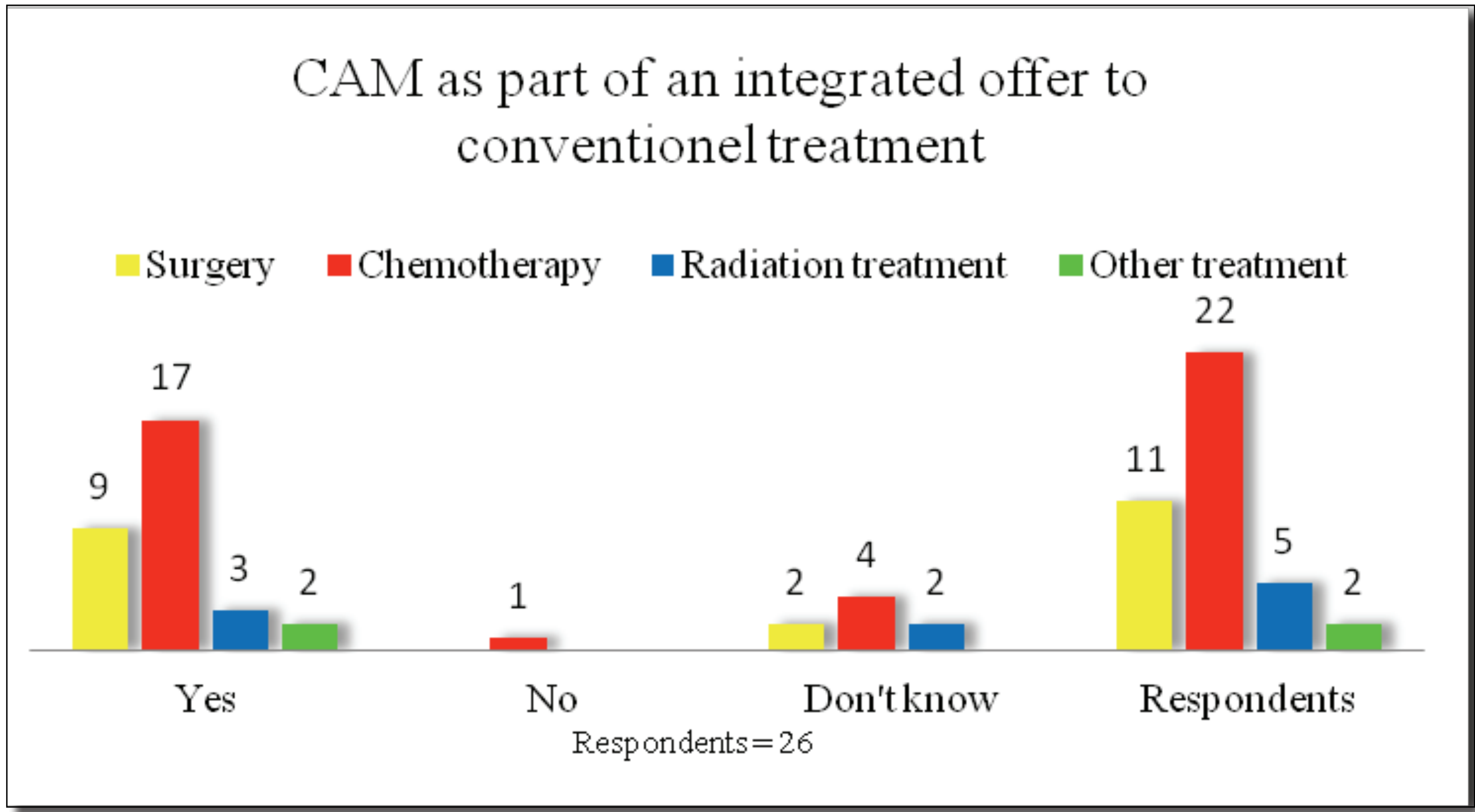
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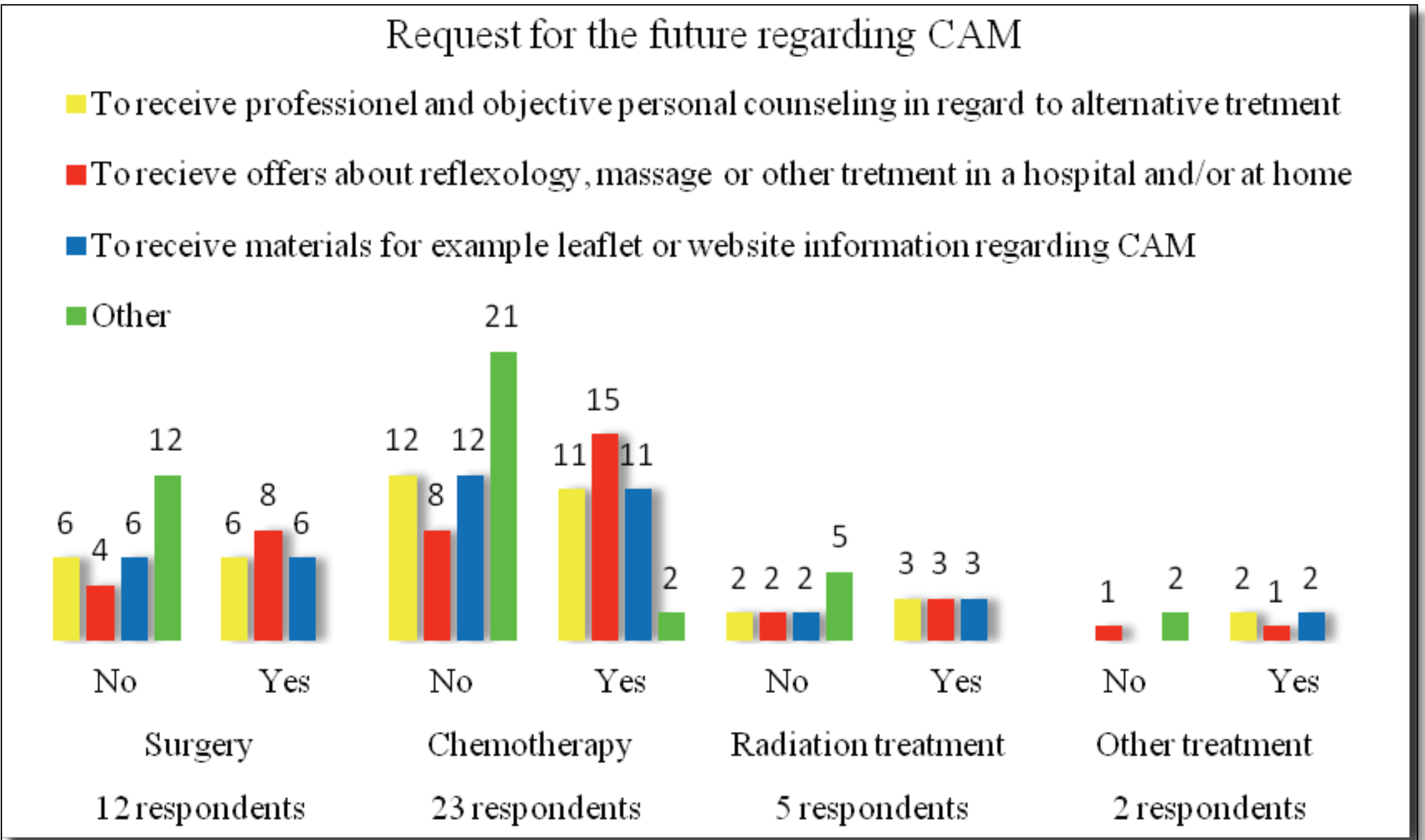
Illustrates the distribution of conventional and CAM treatment among Danish cancer children. 7 in 12 children who have had surgery, 10 in 23 children who had chemotherapy and 4 in 5 who have had radiation received additional treatment with CAM



Illustrates the CAM treatment used among Danish cancer children. 8 in 26 children have been given reflexology as supplement to the conventional treatment (some families may have used more treatments).



Illustrates the Danish families with cancer children, wishes for the possibility of having CAM to be a part of an integrated offer to conventional treatment in the healthcare system. 17 in 22 families to Danish children who received chemotherapy want. CAM (one missing respond).



Illustrates the families' wishes about future offers regarding CAM, divided into treatment groups. 15 in 23 children who have been given chemotherapy would like to be offered reflexology, massage etc.

This poster has been published for presentation at The International Research Congress on Integrative Medicine and Health, Portland, US and at The 7th European Conference of Reflexology "Children First", Luxembourg May 2012.