



2023 Asia Occupational Therapy Associations Exchange Meeting

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Occupational Therapy in Korea

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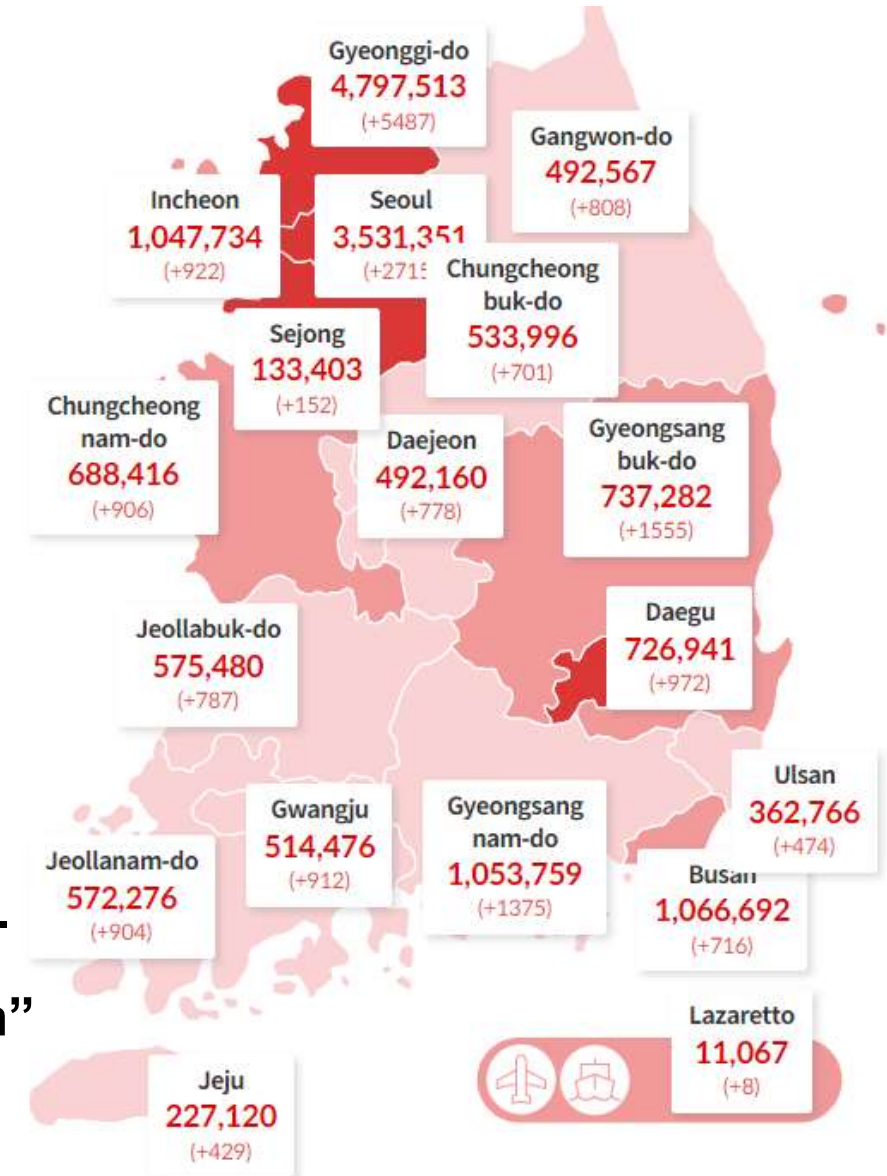
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COVID-19 Situations in Republic of Korea

- 2020. 01. 20, First confirmed case
- In Korea (2023.08.31),
 - Confirmed cases: 34,571,873
 - Cumulative number of deaths: 35,934
- 2022. 05, Social distancing lifted
- 2022. 09, Mask wearing in outdoors lifted
- 2022. 10, PCR testing after entry lifted
- 2023. 03. 20, Mask wearing indoor also lifted
- 2023. 05. 05, WHO announced the lifting of the COVID-19 “Public Health Emergency of International Concern”





New COVID-19 cases in Korea

700,000

2020. 02 - In Daegu, Kyungbuk

600,000

500,000

400,000

300,000

200,000

100,000

0



- Case incidence peaked on February 29th, 2020, **Daegu and Cheongdo** were declared “special disaster regions”
- Mainly affecting and spread by the **shincheonji religious group** based
- Designated and operated as a dedicated hospital for COVID-19
- Support for health care workers in Daegu/Gyeongbuk region to prevent the spread of COVID-19



Special disaster regions in 2020: Daegu & Gyungbuk

- Occupational Therapists under the COVID-19
 - Were member of management support team at COVID-19 infectious disease hospital
 - Had to work infection control at infectious disease hospital
 - Conduct an initial interview for confirmed patients in an ambulance
 - Delivery some food and croceries for patients and medical staff





Change and Challenges of KAOT

- Related COVID-19 Support Project
 - Hand out to encouraging package gift (vitamins, snacks, drinks)
 - Diverse group meeting for organize the COVID-19 protocol and alternative clinical training program
 - Conduct virtual seminars for related COVID-19
 - Held a meeting to support and care for the disabled





Prolonged the COVID-19

- Impacted not only the physical but also psychological health¹
- Resulted in significant deterioration of mental well-being among the general population¹
 - Anxiety, fear, depression, insomnia
- Occupational therapists are typically classified as second-line medical workers and do not directly care for people with COVID-19²
 - Increase their infection risk and have a negative impact on their mental health



COVID-19 pandemic impact on rehabilitation staffs

- Impacted to occupational therapists in Japan ¹
 - Increased in anxiety, depression, insomnia
- Affected to physical therapists in Korea²
 - Reported having symptoms of anxiety and depression ²
 - Showed fatigue, occupational burnout and occupational stress ³

**It has not been reported how COVID-19 impacts
the mental health of Korean occupational therapists**

- Moreover, therapists were forced to layoff or their employment status was unstable in Korea

1. Ishioka T. et al. American Journal of Occupational Therapy. 2021

2. Yang S.Y. et al. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2020

3. Lee S.Y. et al. PNF and Movement. 2021



Research of the impact on OT in Korea

To investigate the mental health and employment impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on occupational therapists in Korea





Survey

700,000

600,000

500,000

400,000

300,000

200,000

100,000

0



- Online survey for study: Google forms
- Survey peoriods: 2022. 03. 10 – 2022. 05. 27.
- Survey items

- Sociodemographics
- Lifestyle
- Psychological symptoms
- Employment conditions

- Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS-K)
- Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS-K)
- Insomnia Severity Index (ISI-K)



Survey items

- Designated as a dedicated hospital for the COVID-19?
- Is there any COVID-19 quarantine guidelines?
- Regularly check about the COVID-19 information?
- Changes related to commuting due to impact of COVID-19
 - Commuting hours, transportation ways, ect
- Changes in work resulting from COVID-19
 - Working hours, workload, day off, layoff, job transition, ect
- Salary reduction or change, employment instabilities
- Provided protective equipments
- Influences on attitude towards intervention of patients
- Anxiety, Depression, Insomnia



Results

- Participants features – general information

Features (n=1,014)		No. (%)
Gender	Female	685 (67.6)
	Male	329 (32.4)
Age (Mean = 32.5 yrs)	20's	314 (30.9)
	30's	577 (56.9)
	40's	118 (11.6)
	50's	5 (0.6)
Level of education	< Bachelor's	242 (23.8)
	Bachelor's	576 (56.8)
	M.S	173 (17.0)
	Ph.D	23 (2.4)
Marital status	Married	376 (37.0)
	Unmarried	638 (63.0)



Results

- Psychological status

Presence of anxiety, depression, and insomnia	Cutoff score	No. (%)
Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS-K)	≥40	479 (48.5)
Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS-K)	≥50	272 (27.58)
Insomnia Severity Index (ISI-K)	≥10	581 (58.9)

Mean score of anxiety, depression, and insomnia	Mean	Range
Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS-K)	40.8	22-79
Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS-K)	44.5	21-80
Insomnia Severity Index (ISI-K)	10.3	0-28



Results

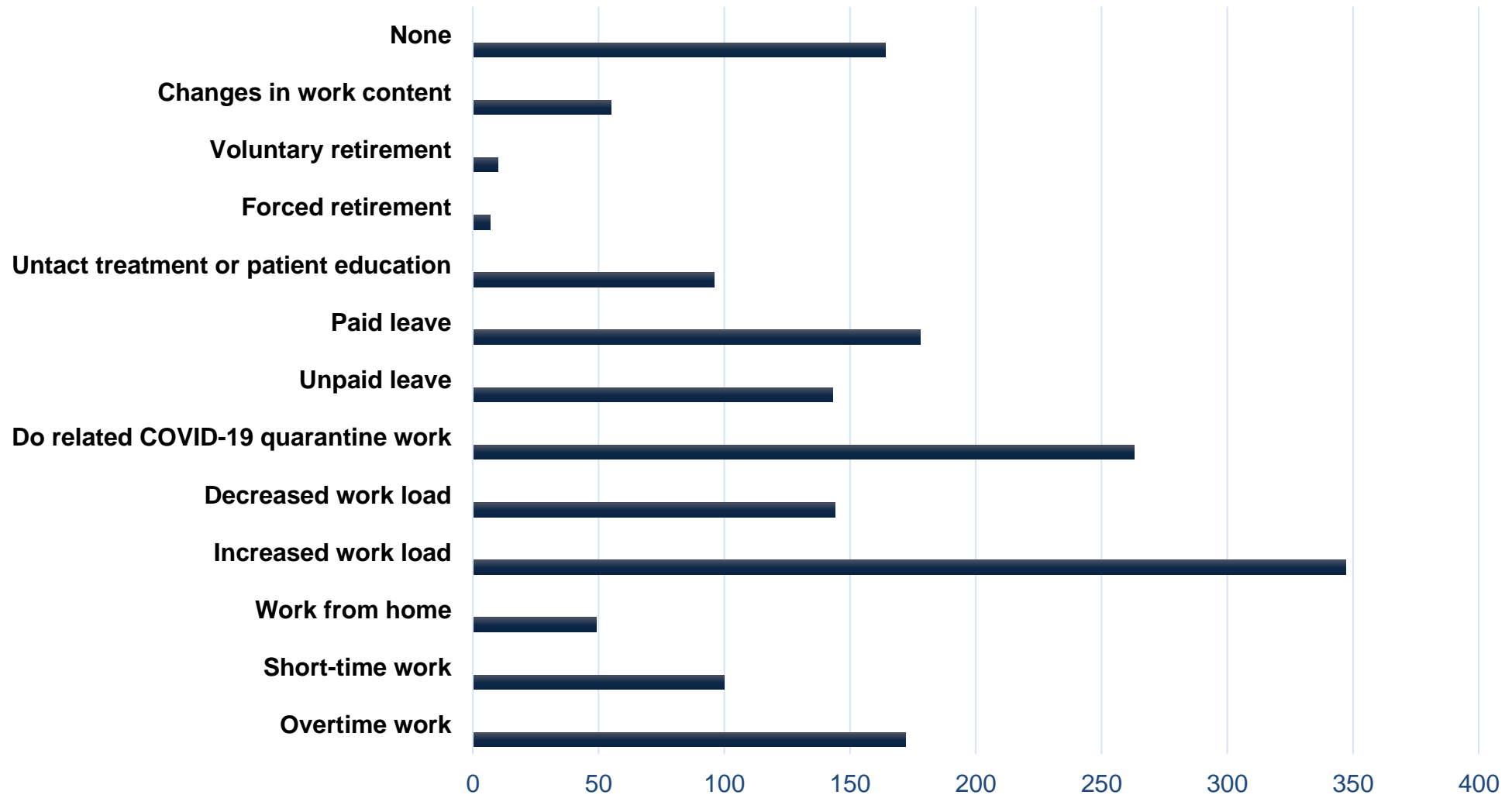
- Participants features – employment condition

Features (n=1,014)		Number (%)
Clinical experiences (mean 6.4 yrs)	<1 year	18 (1.8)
	1–5 years	512 (51.9)
	6–10 years	212 (21.5)
	10-20 years	222 (22.5)
	>20 years	22 (2.3)
Employment status	Full-time	803 (79.2)
	Part-time	211 (20.8)
Job title	Head of department	40 (3.9)
	Team leader	190 (18.7)
	General therapist	762 (75.1)
	Internship, freelancer, ect.	22 (2.3)
Dedicated hospital for COVID-19	Yes	199 (19.6)
	No	816 (80.4)



Results

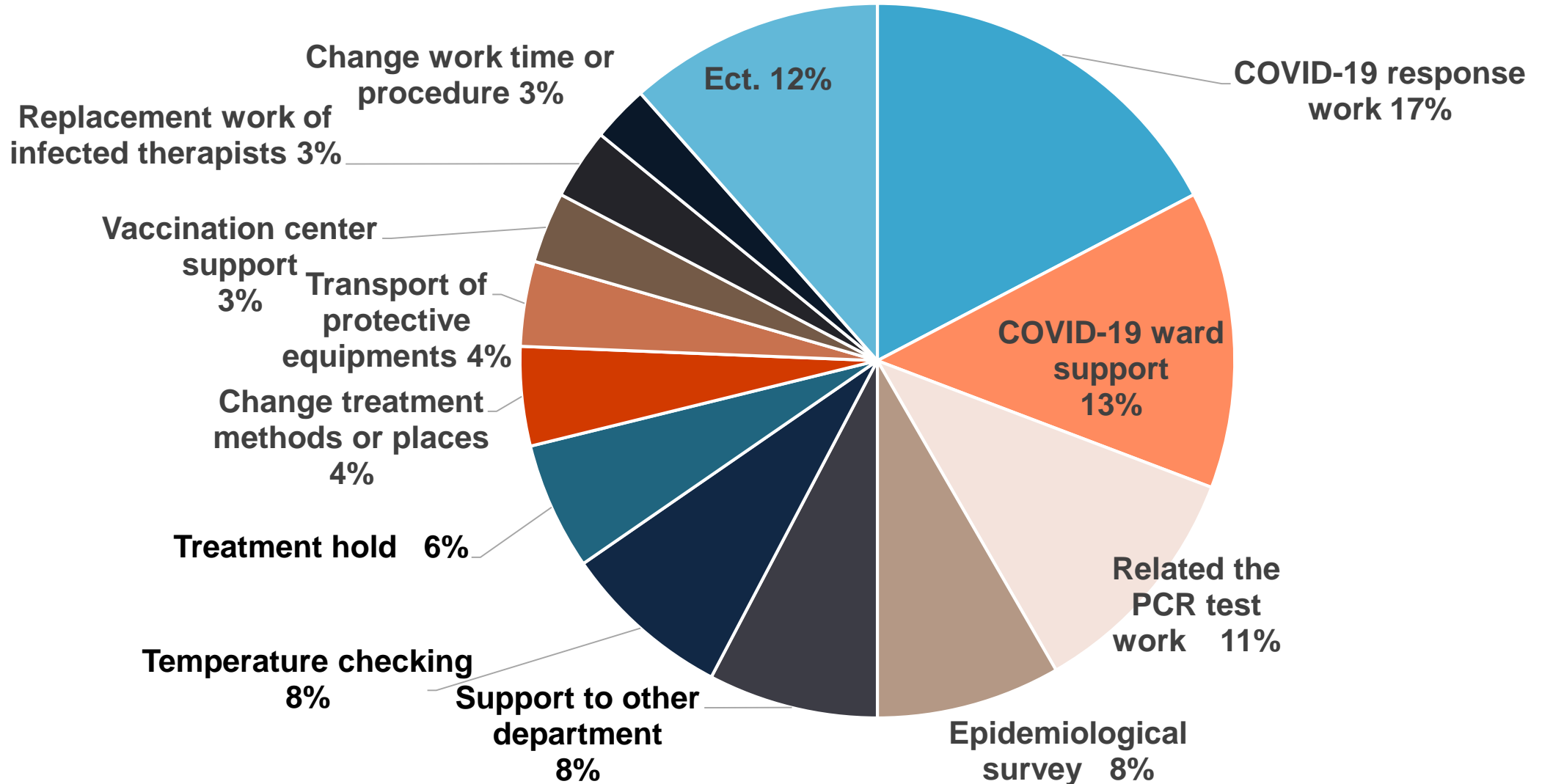
- Effects of COVID-19 on work life (multiple checks)





Results

- Effects of COVID-19 on work life - changes in work content





Results

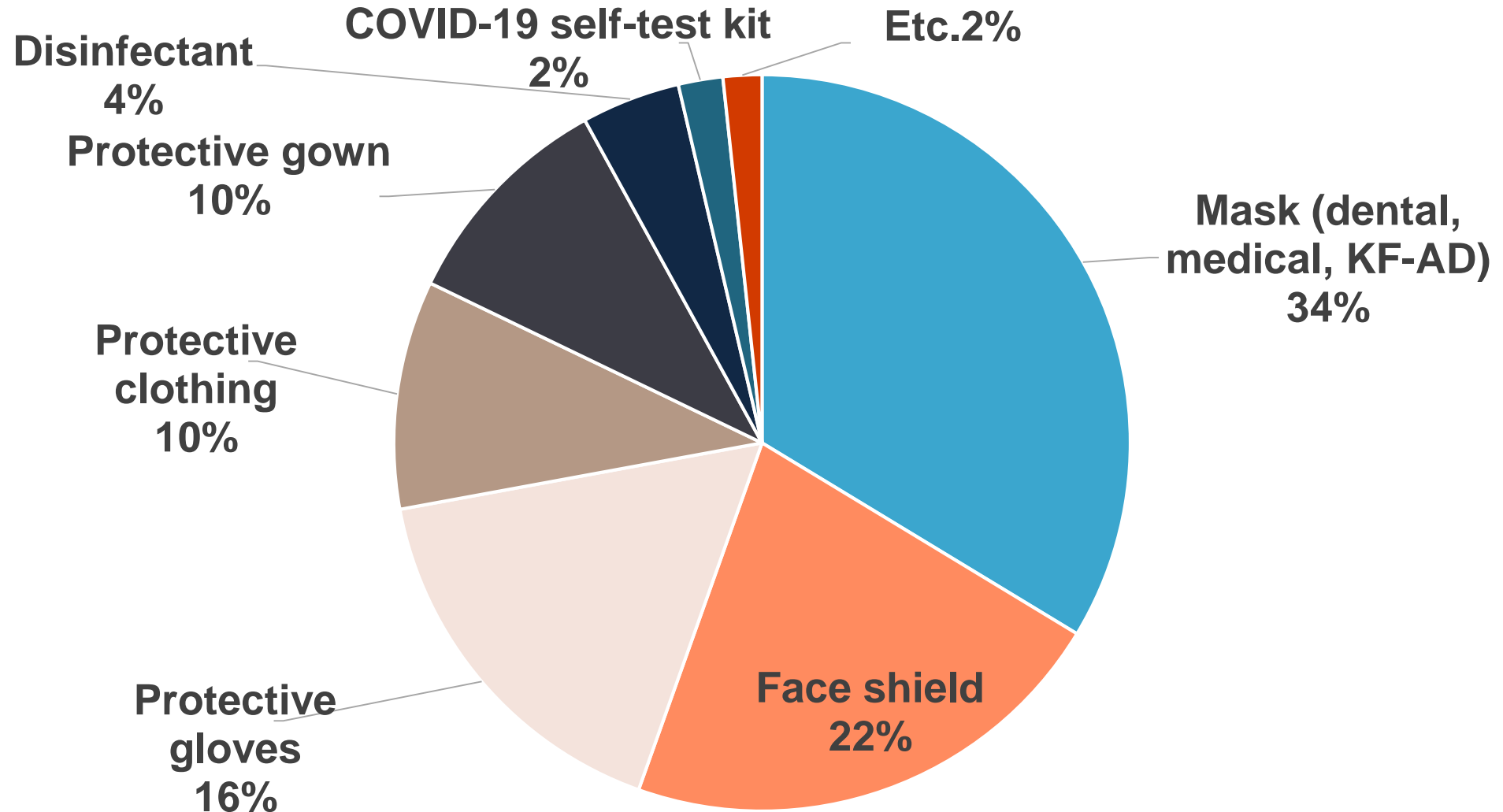
- Effects on employment / Effects of COVID-19 on work

Features (n=1,014)		Number (%)
Reduced annual salary	Yes	162 (16.0)
	No	852 (84.0)
Provided protective equipments	Yes	663 (65.4)
	No	351 (34.6)
Employment instability	Yes	449 (44.3)
	No	565 (55.7)
Instability about occupational therapist work	Yes	569 (56.1)
	No	445 (43.9)
Turnover intention	Yes	413 (40.7)
	No	601 (59.3)
Affected by the attitude toward patients treatment or motivation for treatment	Yes	635 (62.6)
	No	379 (37.4)
Decreased communication with patients	Yes	518 (51.1)
	No	496 (48.9)



Results

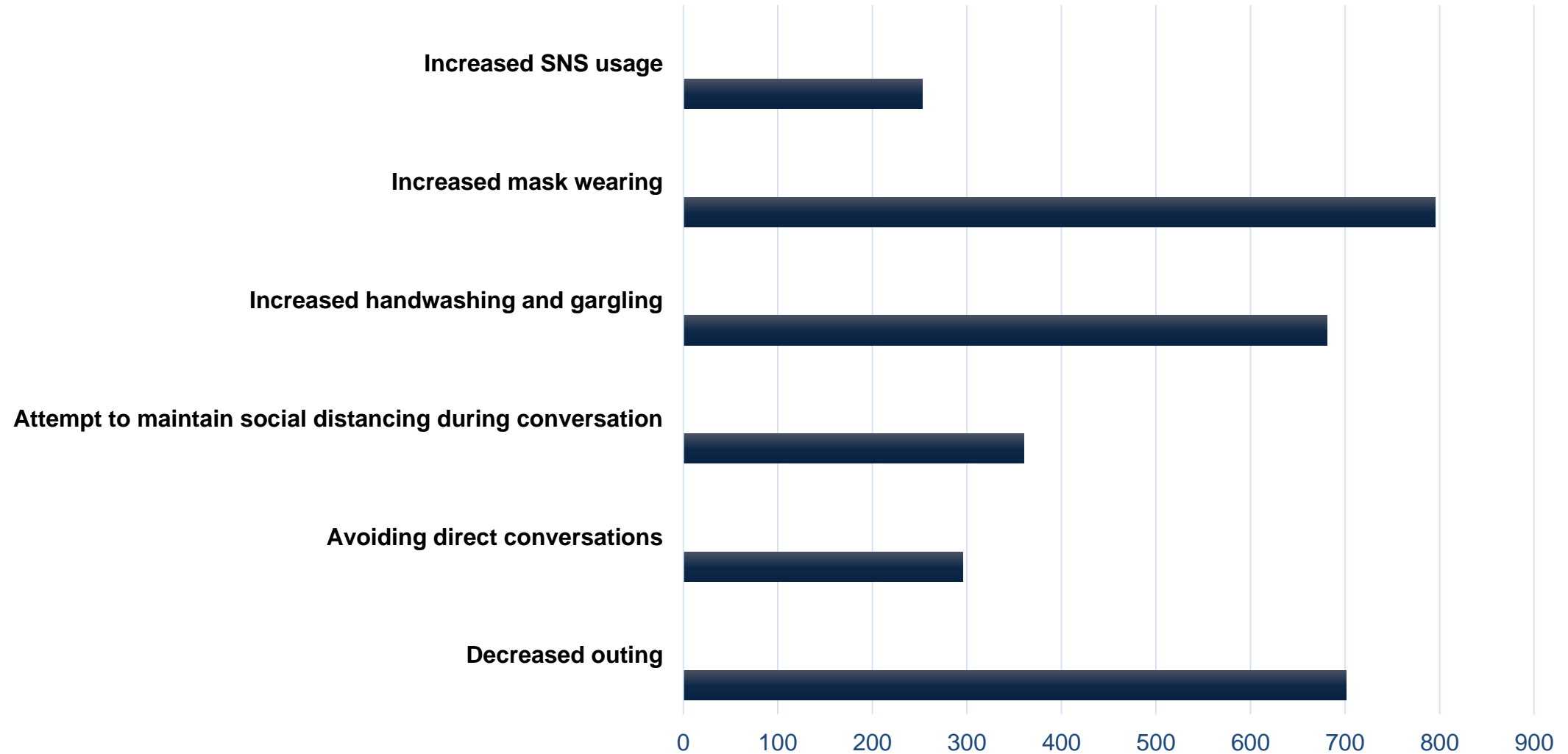
- Provided protect equipments





Results

- Effect of the COVID-19 on daily lifestyle (multiple checks)





Take Home Message

- The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused lots of serious emerging challenge for the general public and health professionals worldwide
- Occupational therapists may continue to suffer from psychological symptoms, occupational burnout and employment instability.
 - Necessary to make an effort to protect OTs, and need to research regarding the mental health and QoL of OTs in Korea
- For the future, it is necessary to discuss the OT work system and policy preparation for next pandemic or disaster



Thank you for listening !

