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Introduction :

Conversation groups are considered to be a **best practice option for communication therapy**¹, with research suggesting that therapy experienced in a group environment can lead to communication improvements which exist beyond a clinical setting².

Aim:

The aim of this research was to **evaluate the experiences** of attending a conversation group set up as part of a **novel collaboration** between the NHS and Cardiff Metropolitan University, and to use the opinions shared to inform future service provision.

Method:

Eight patients with acquired communication disorders as a result of a neurological condition, including stroke, attended a 6-week block of group sessions. Sessions were run by a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) with the support of Student SLTs. Participants identified personal facilitators and barriers to their communication and resulting strategies were implemented in functional group tasks. The therapeutic focus of the group hoped to bridge the gap between inpatient/community 1:1 rehabilitation and third sector community-based groups.

Patient reported experience measures (PREMs) were completed at the end of the blocks.

Qualitative comments were also collected as part of the therapy outcome measures.

Results:

All participants reported a **positive change** in their communication. Returned online outcome measures stated that **participants would recommend the conversation group** to family and friends. One participant comment, and the attrition in attendance of another, suggested a disconnect between the provision of aphasia-friendly resources for individuals with purely motor speech disorders.

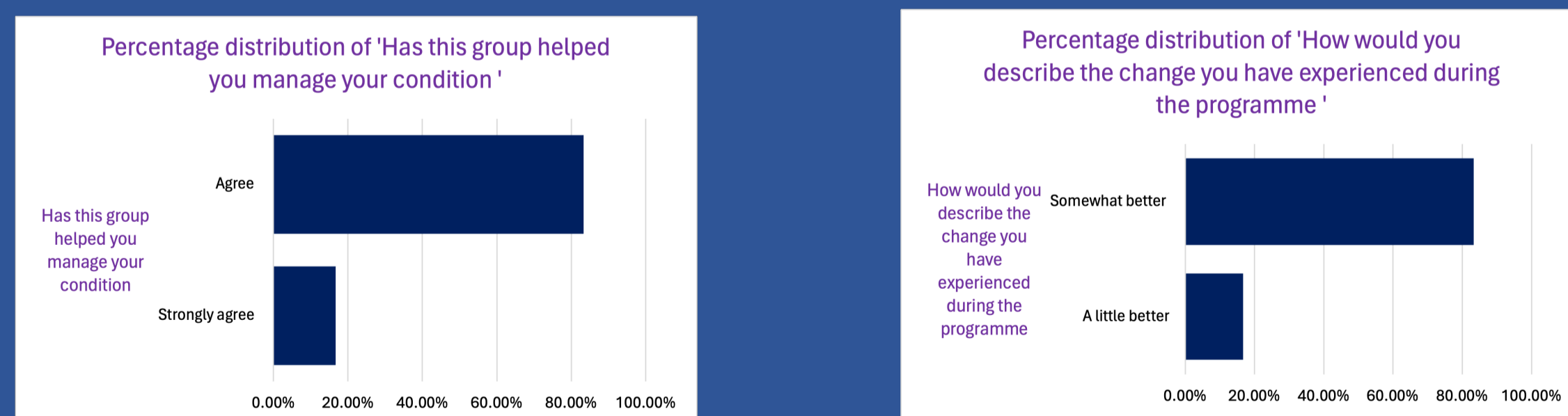


Figure 1: Results from PREMs

Conclusion:

The **findings** presented here **highlight the benefits** of attending community-based therapeutic conversation groups for individuals with acquired communication disorders. Sharing their experiences places **patients at the centre of service design**, with the potential for higher attendance rates and better engagement with interventions. Future research could also explore the students' experiences of supporting the groups and the value of this model of collaborative prudent working for the benefit of patients and staff alike.

Future Plans:

- Use the data to **inform future group provision** and **support business plans** for further investment in these invaluable holistic therapeutic interventions.
- **Showcase this innovative project**, which emphasises the benefit of a successful collaboration between NHS services and Education and provides a unique opportunity to introduce students to cross-boundary collaborative working at an under-graduate level.
- **Explore sustainability** of the groups through closer relationships with third sector organisations.

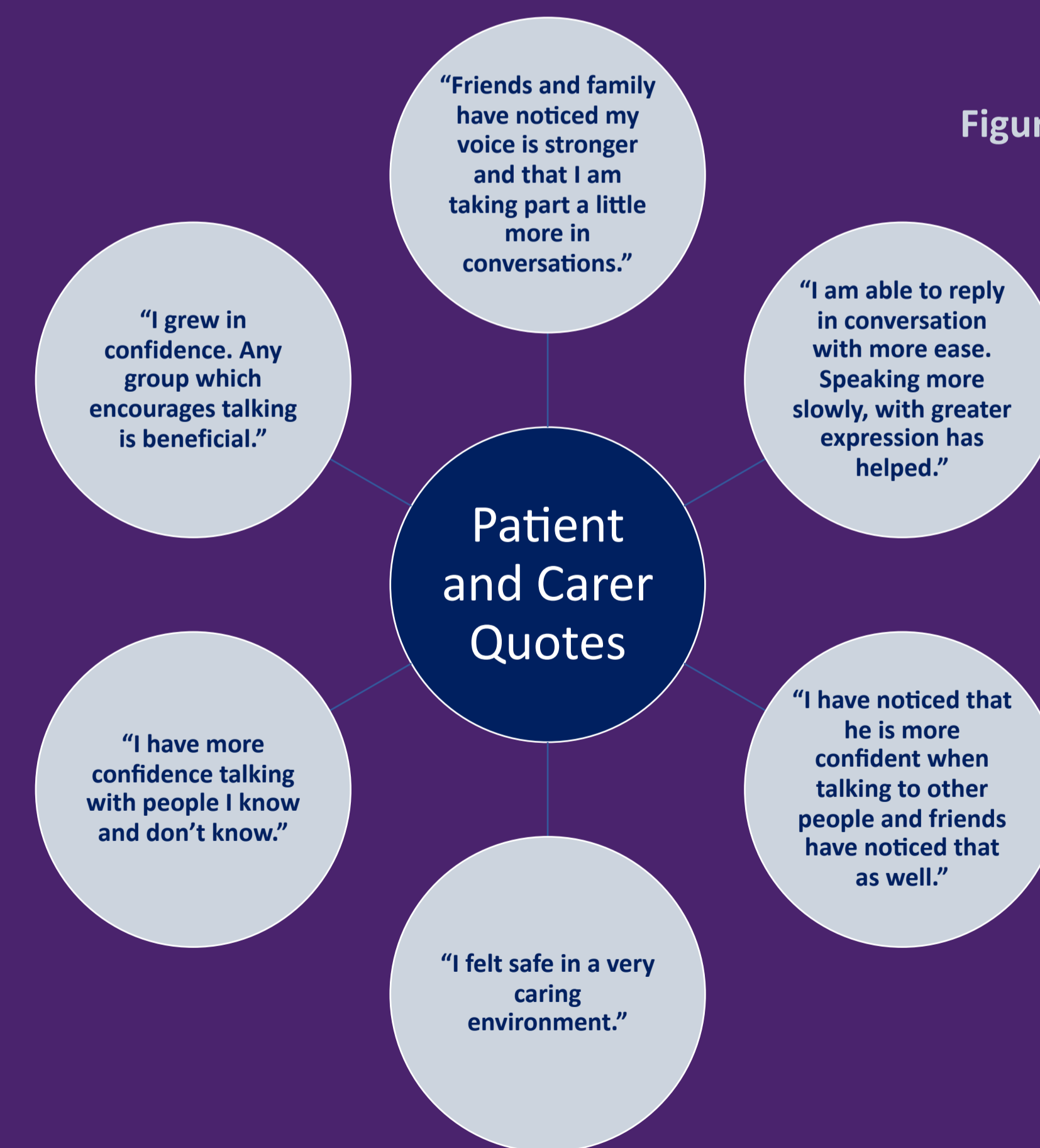


Figure 2: Results from PREMs



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Acknowledgements: Sincere thanks to the Students of CMU, the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board Adult Speech and Language Therapy Department and the Bevan Commission for their support.