



Reactions to research participation in adult samples of high risk exposure to childhood maltreatment

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Ethical research practice

- Minimize the risk of harm or discomfort to the participants
- Promote safety
- Minimize costs relative to benefits
- Convey information about these considerations to participants





Trauma –focused researchers

- Are confronted with concerns about whether participants experiences distress and
- secure they are sufficiently aware of potential distress to provide an informed consent to participate
- Foremost is the question of whether asking participants to disclose details about their trauma history will produce significant and potentially lasting emotional distress





Are there reasons for concern?

- A multilevel meta-analysis of more than 70 000 adult participants across 70 samples showed that:
- Trauma-related research can lead to some immediate psychological distress
- The distress was greater for individuals with a trauma history or PTSD
- Individuals generally found research participation to be a positive experience and do not regret participation, regardless of trauma history or PTSD
- There were no gender differences in reactions (Jaffe, DiLillo, Hoffman, Haikalis & Dykstra, 2015)





Childhood maltreatment

- Among interpersonal trauma, childhood maltreatment is an important area of study because of
 - high prevalence of these potentially traumatic experiences and
 - associated long-term negative consequences

- Higher levels of trauma research distress has been related to higher levels of exposure to traumatic events during childhood
(Decker, Naugle, Carter-Visscher, Bell & Seifert, 2011)





The present study

- The present study examines the associations between different levels of positive and negative reactions to participation in trauma research and the number of reported childhood maltreatment (polyvictimization) (Finkelhor, Turner, Hamby & Ormrod, 2011)





Sample in present study

- The present study is embedded in an ongoing research study assessing childhood trauma in different clinical and non-clinical samples

- N= 808 (430 women and 378 men)
Age 13-66 years, M= 27,7 SD =10,53

- Four subsamples:
 - Adolescents currently in foster care and young adults previously in foster care (n=80)
 - Patients with substance use disorders in out- or inpatient treatment (n =166)
 - Mental health patients in out- or inpatient treatment (n=453)
 - Prison inmates (n=109, only males)





Assessments

- Childhood Trauma Questionnaire Short- Form, CTQ-SF, is a 28- item instrument for self-report of childhood maltreatment (Bernstein & Fink, 1997)
- CTQ-SF assesses five types of maltreatment:
Emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse,
emotional neglect and physical neglect
- Each item is scored using Likert-type responses to create dimensional scales and four severity levels for each subscale, *none*, *low*, *moderate* and *severe* childhood maltreatment (CMT)
- In the analysis the scores are grouped in No CMT, 1- 5 Low level of CMT, 1-5 Moderate-Severe level of CMT





Assessments

- Reaction to Research Participation Questionnaire (RRPQ), 12-item version (Kassam-Adams, N. & Newman, E.,2002) ,
assesses four content areas of research participation:
 - Negative appraisal
 - Positive appraisal/personal benefit
 - Informed consent and trust in the research team
 - Understanding of his/her rights as a research participant
- Participants responded to each question using a three-point Likert-type scale,
1 (*disagree*), 2(*maybe*) 3(*agree*)

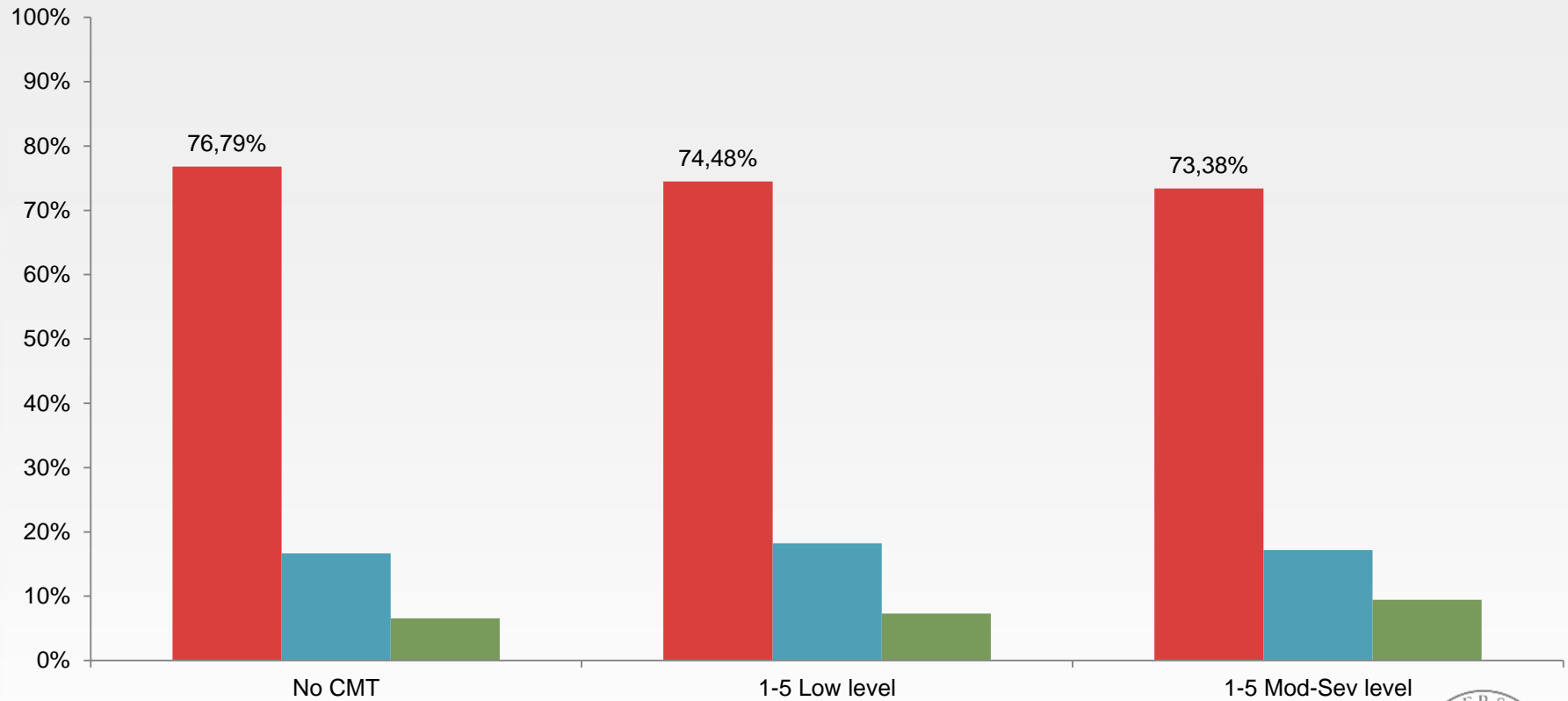


Negative appraisal of research process



1. *Being in this study was boring*

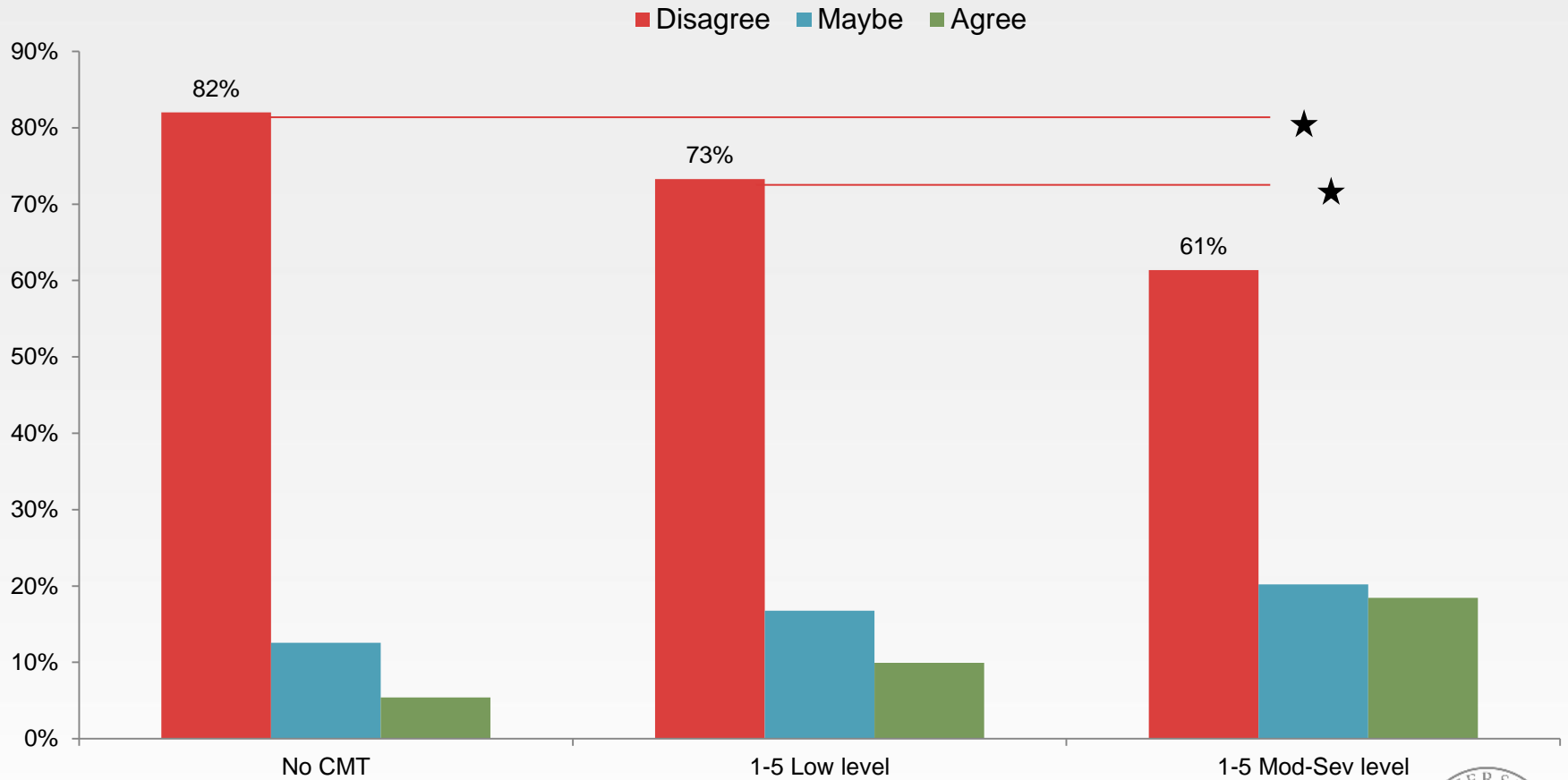
■ Disagree ■ Maybe ■ Agree



Negative appraisal of research process



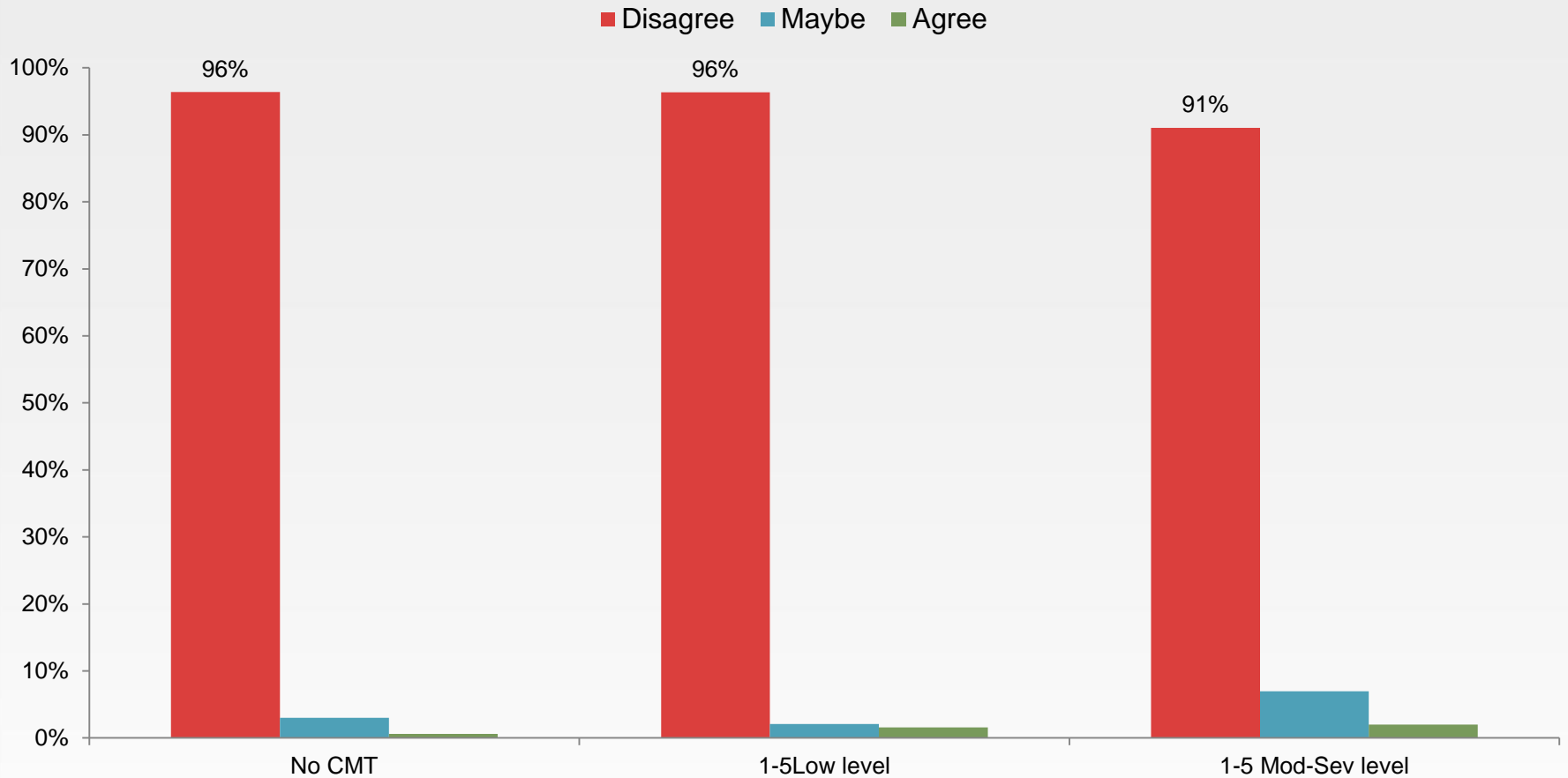
4. *Being in this study made me feel upset or sad*



Negative appraisal of research process



6. *I am sorry I was in this study*

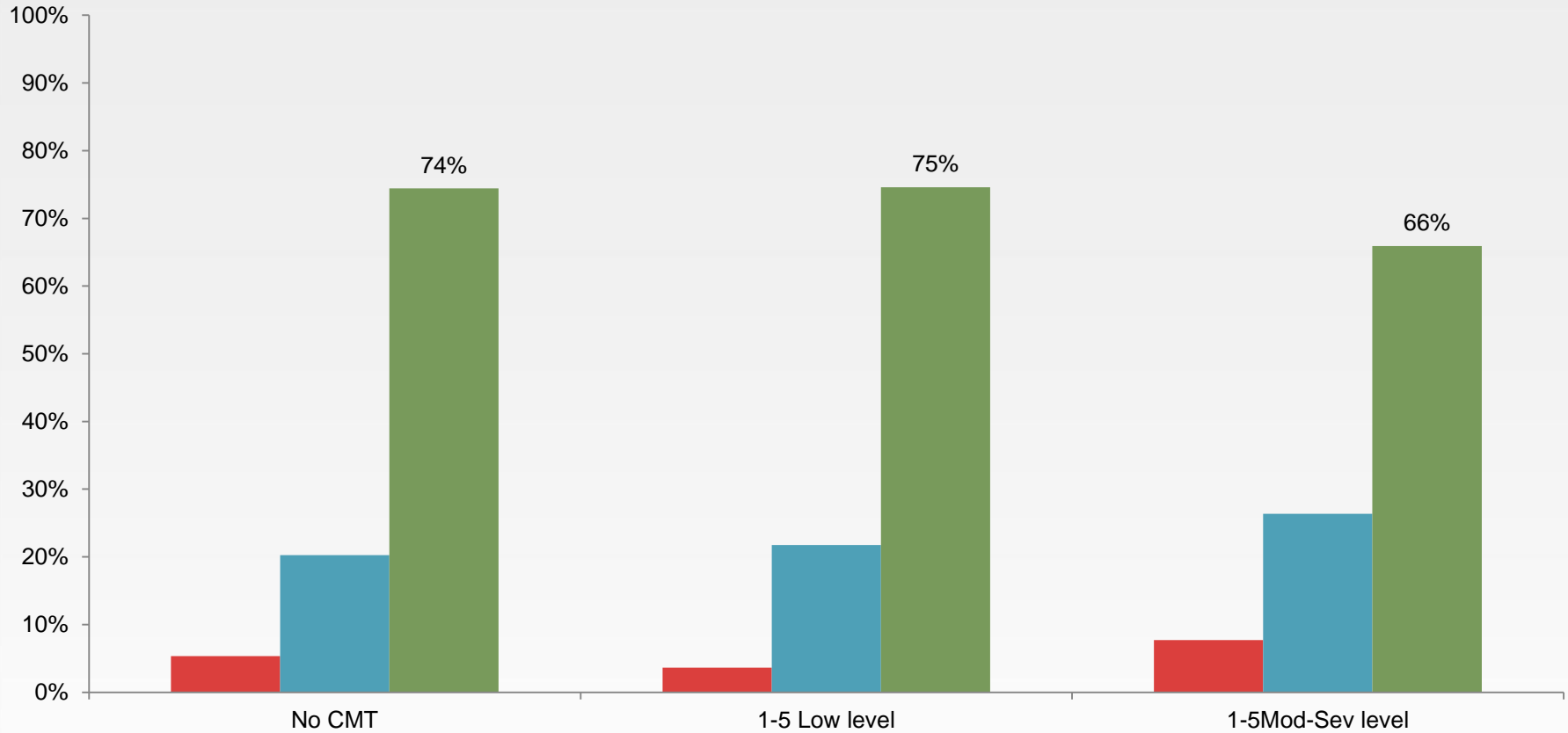


Positive appraisal/personal benefit



2. I am glad I was in this study

Disagree Maybe Agree

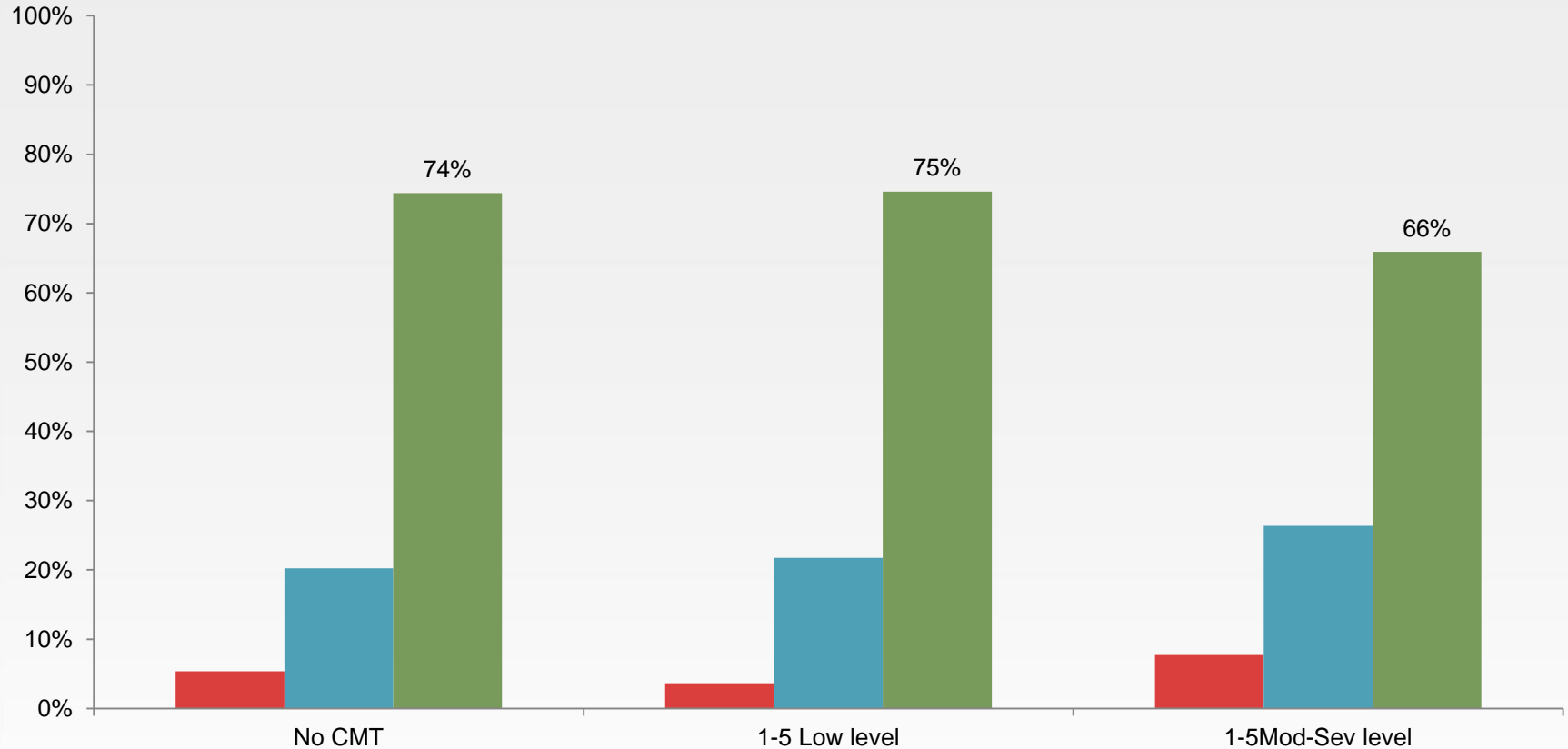


Positive appraisal/personal benefit



7. *Being in this study made me feel good about myself*

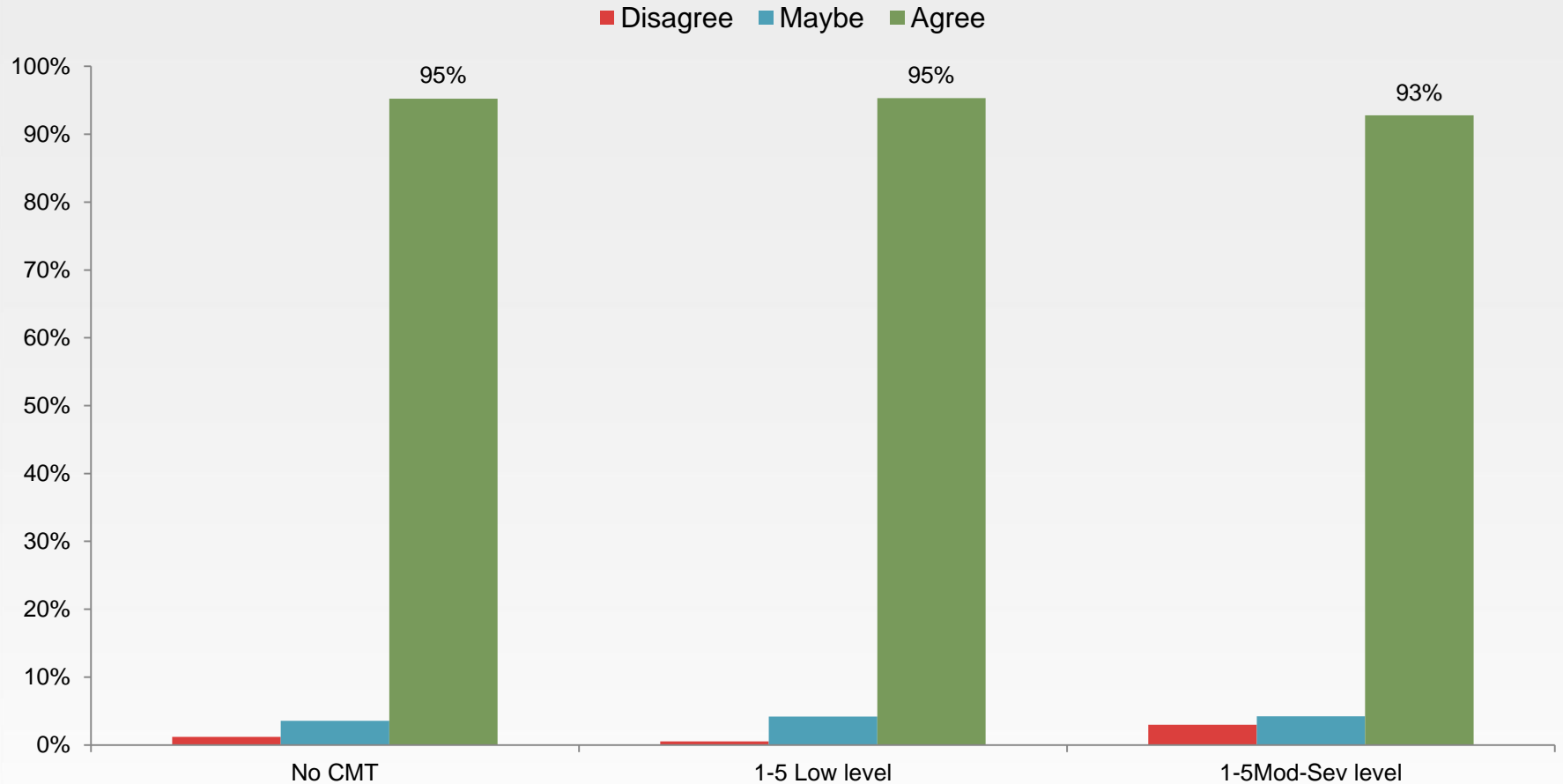
■ Disagree ■ Maybe ■ Agree



Positive appraisal/personal benefit



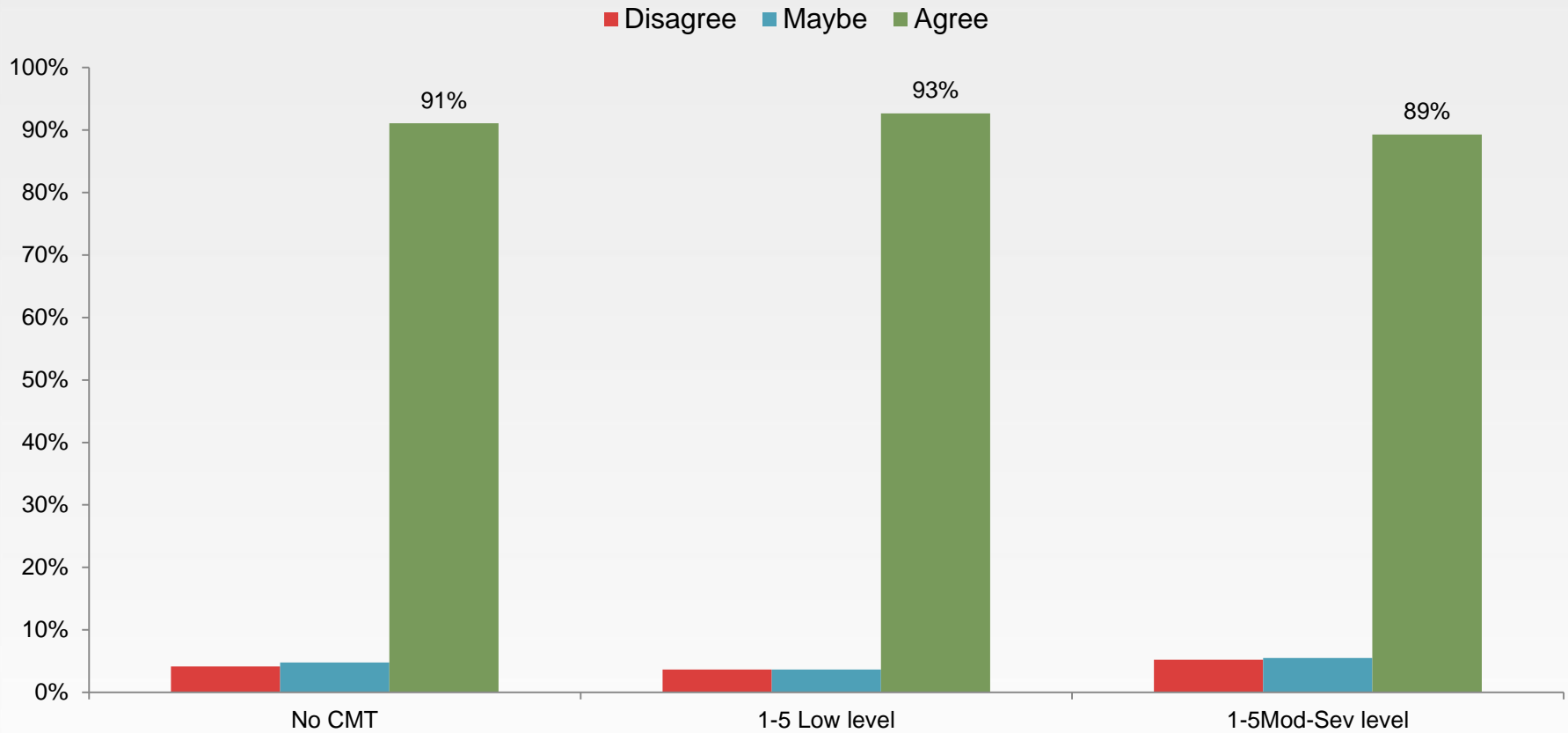
9. I feel good about helping other people be being in this study



Consent, informed choice, private issues



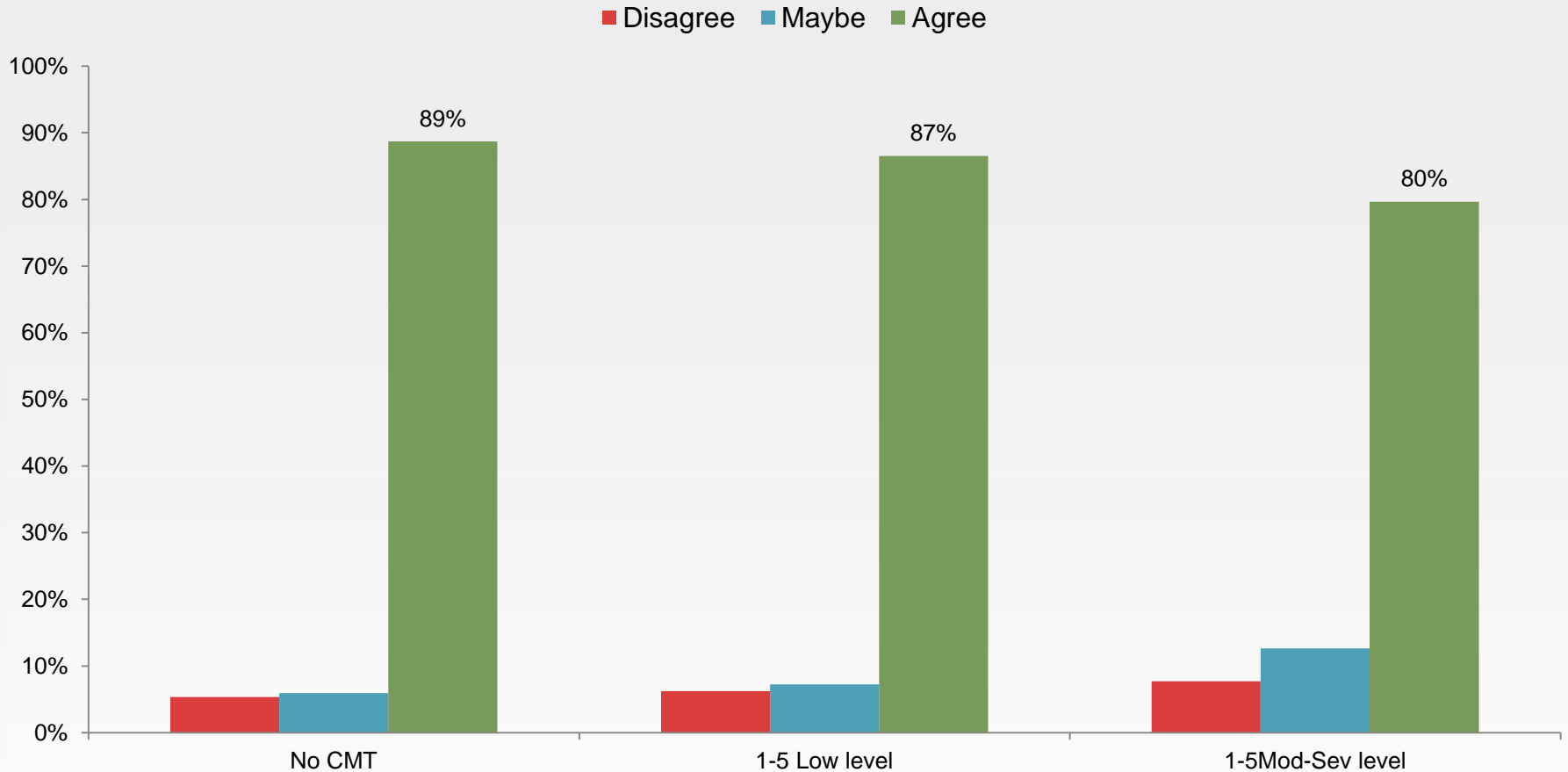
3. *It was my choice if I was in the study(I could have said no even if other people wanted me to say yes*



Consent, informed choice, privacy issues



5. The things I said will stay private (no one else will know what I said them)

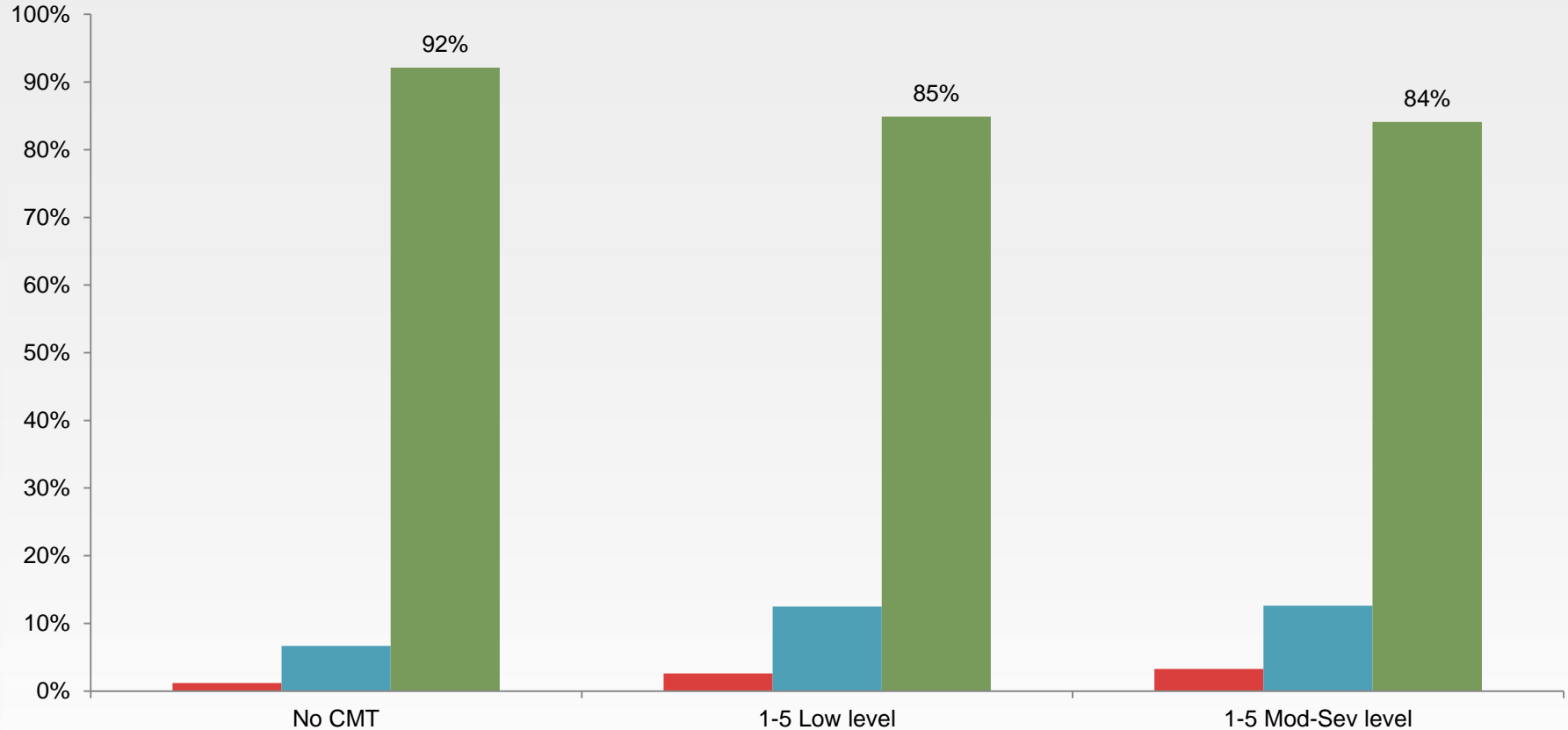


Concent, informed choice, private issues



8. *I was told the truth about the study before I started*

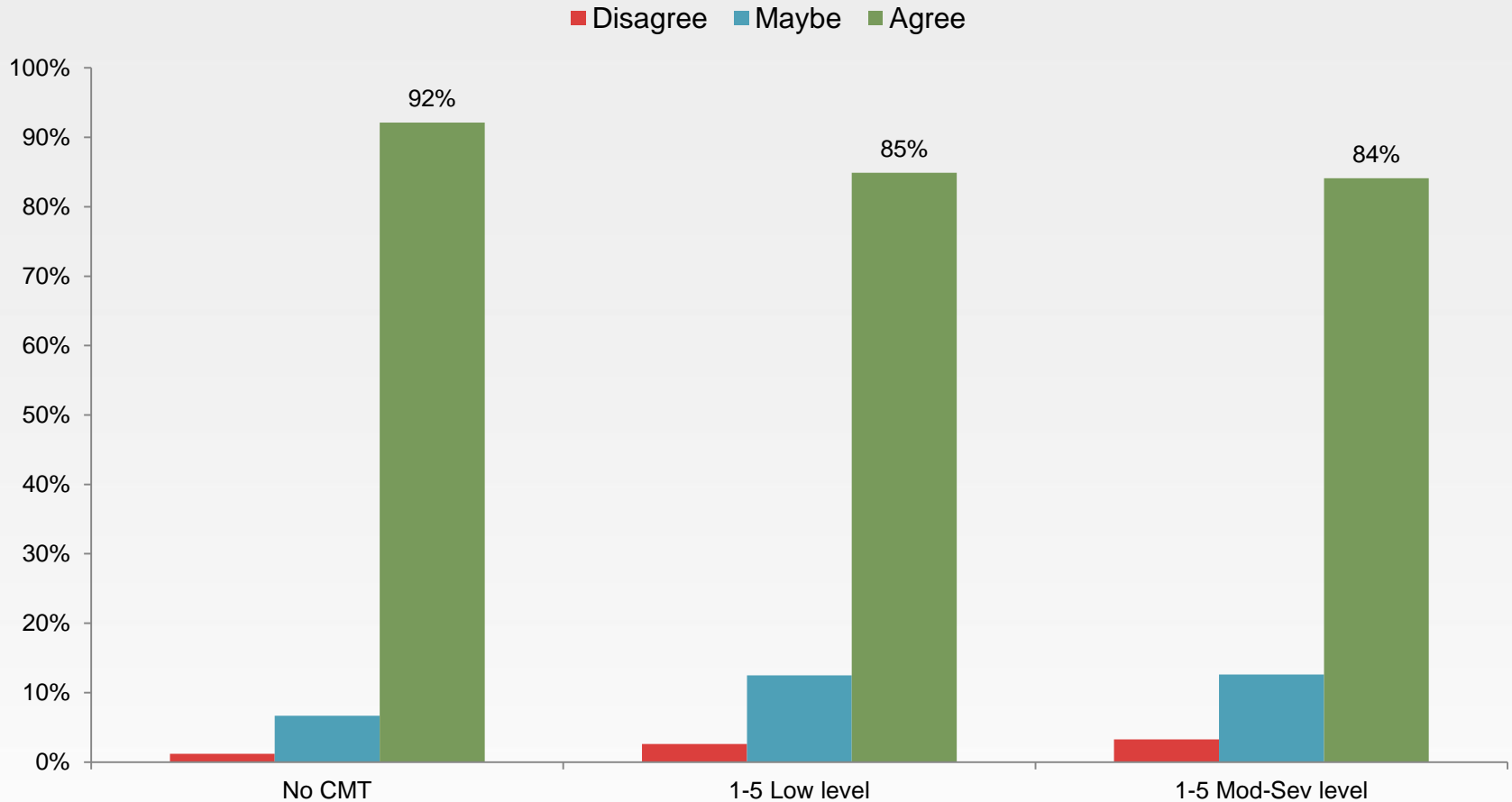
Disagree Maybe Agree



Understanding of concent form



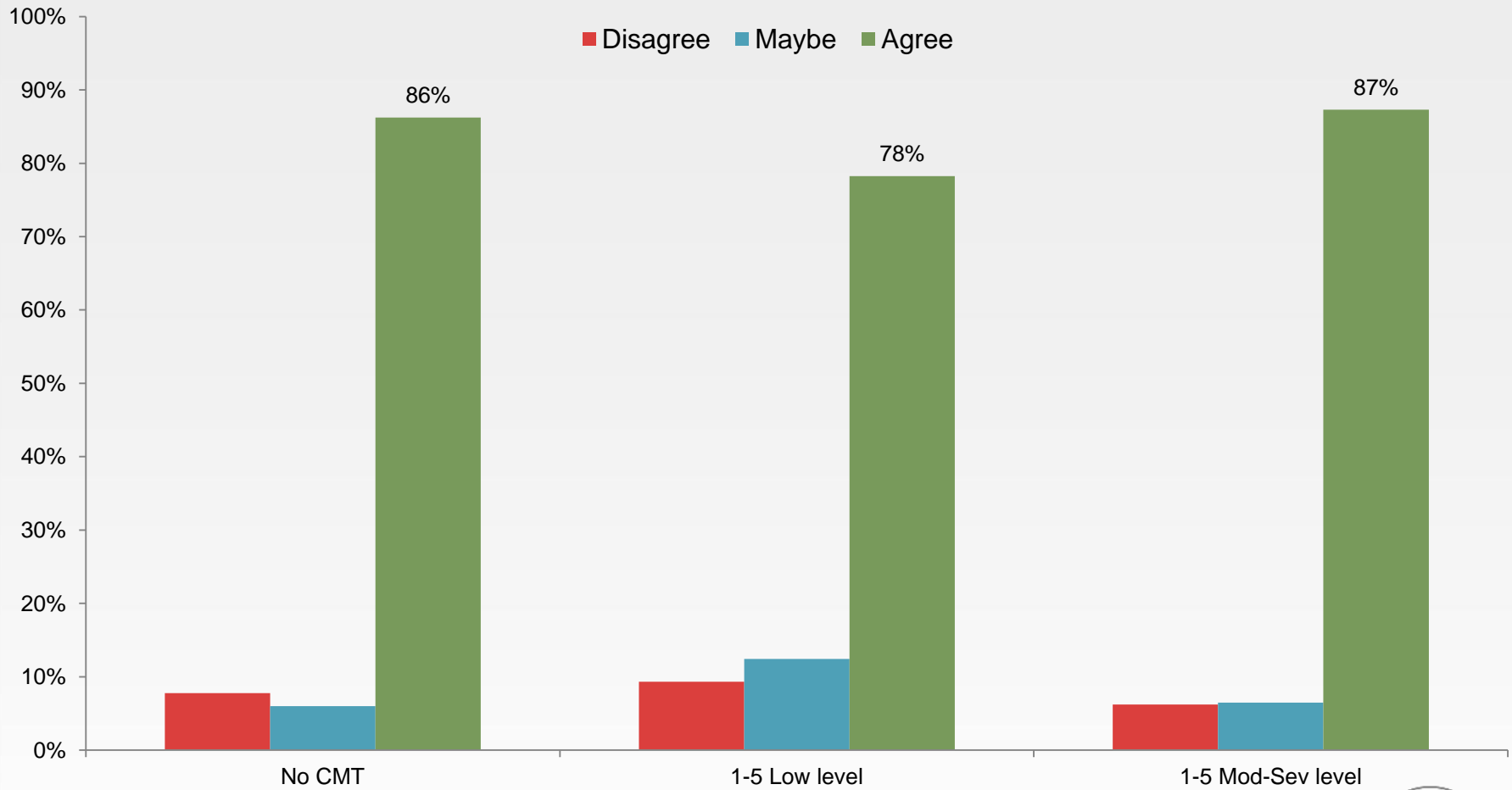
10. I knew I could skip questions or parts of the study if I wanted to



Understanding consent form



11. I knew I could stop at any time

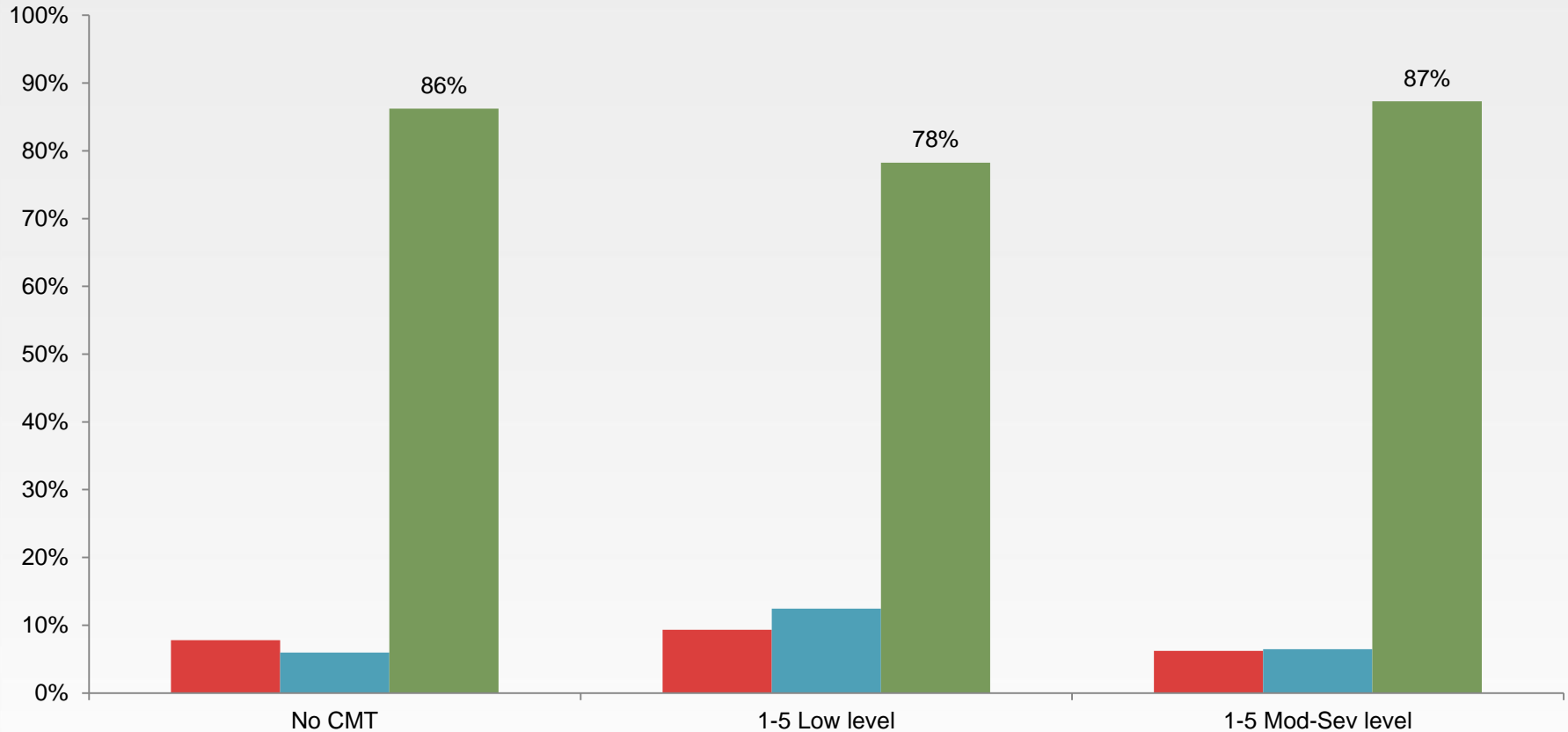


Understanding of concert form



12. I knew I could ask to take a breake whenever I wanted

Disagree Maybe Agree





Conclusion

- In line with previous studies, our findings suggest an overall positive research experience in this sample
- No association between numbers and severity of reported childhood maltreatment (polivictimization) and negative research participation were found except that:
 - Significant more participants in the group with highest level of polivictimization reported more emotional distress by participating in the study
- Our findings suggest that asking about prior trauma is well tolerated by most participants in the sample and seems to be a tolerable experience





Thank you !

