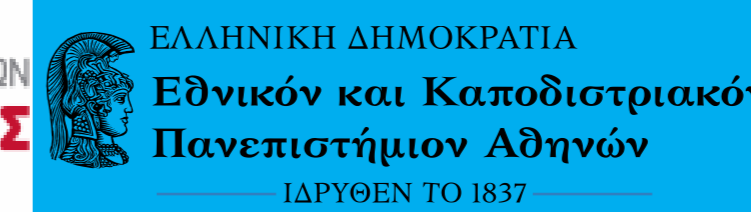


Myalgic Encephalomyelitis in Long Covid – Is it just fatigue?



2025 International Forum on COVID Rehabilitation Research

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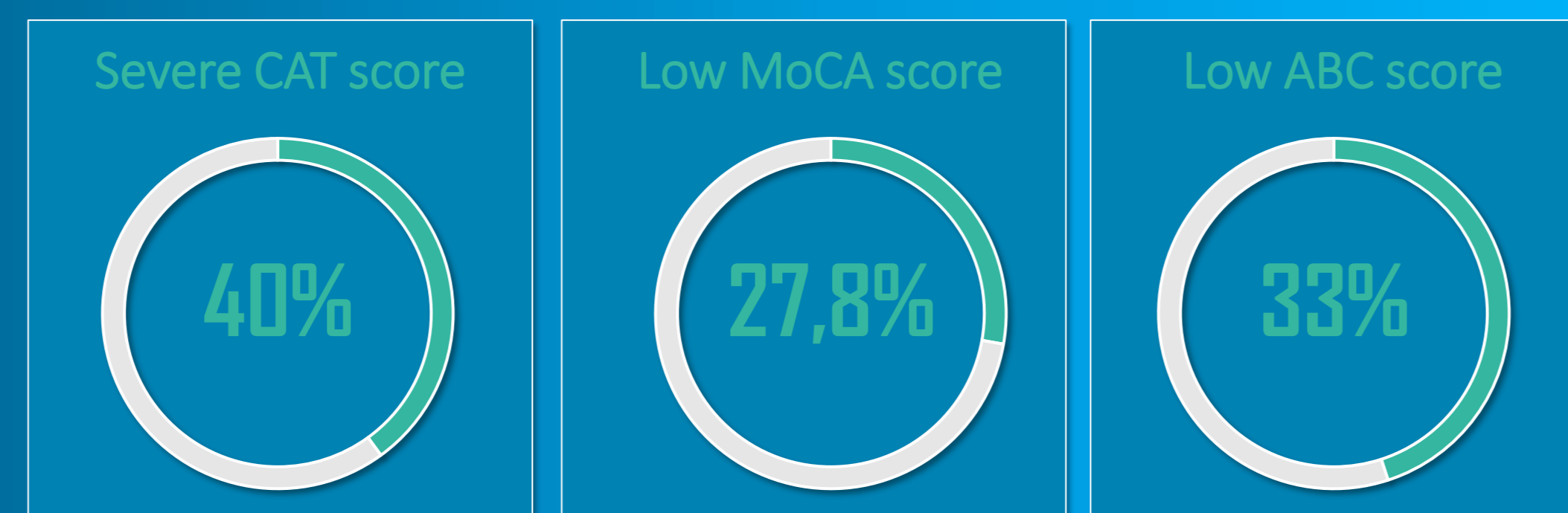
Background & Objectives

- 400 million individuals with Long Covid worldwide¹
- 1 tril \$ of financial burden¹
- 51% of them with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.)²
- Common symptom: **Post Exertional Malaise (PEM)** with prolonged exacerbation of symptoms after increase in activity
- Aim was to describe the level of function & characteristics of Long Covid (LC) patients with M.E.

Methods:

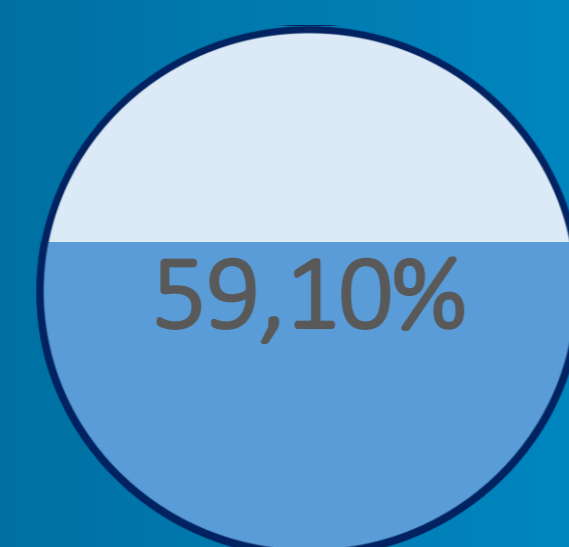
- 35 patients attending our Long Covid clinic, who satisfy the Canadian Consensus Criteria for ME/CFS
- Scales used:
 - Quality of life: SF-36*, EuroQoL-5D-5L,
 - Fatigue: Fatigue Severity Scale,
 - Balance: ABC* scale,
 - Cognitive function: MoCA*,
 - Dyspnea: CAT*.
 - Cardiovascular autonomic dysfunction: modified Ewing battery.
- Comparison with already published general population cohorts

Fatigue is not the only severe clinical presentation

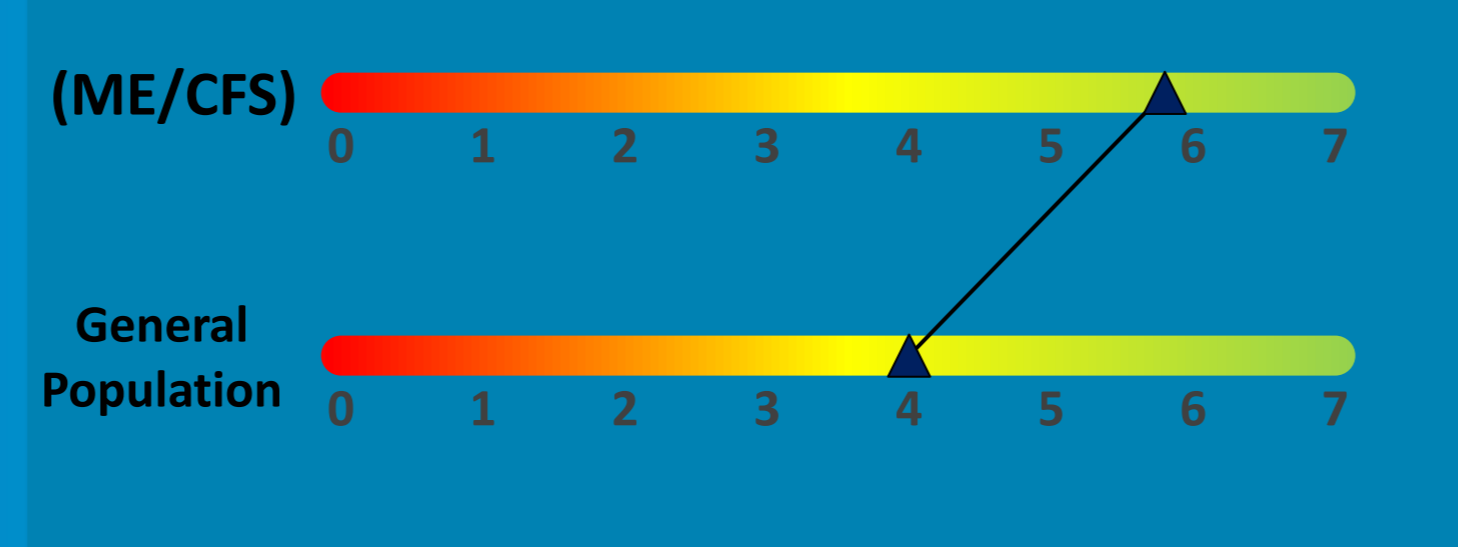


Graph 1. From left to right ratio of severe dyspnea, in CAT (score>20), cognitive impairment in MoCA (score<26), balance impairment in ABC scale (score <67).

Results



Graph 2 Comorbid Dysautonomia



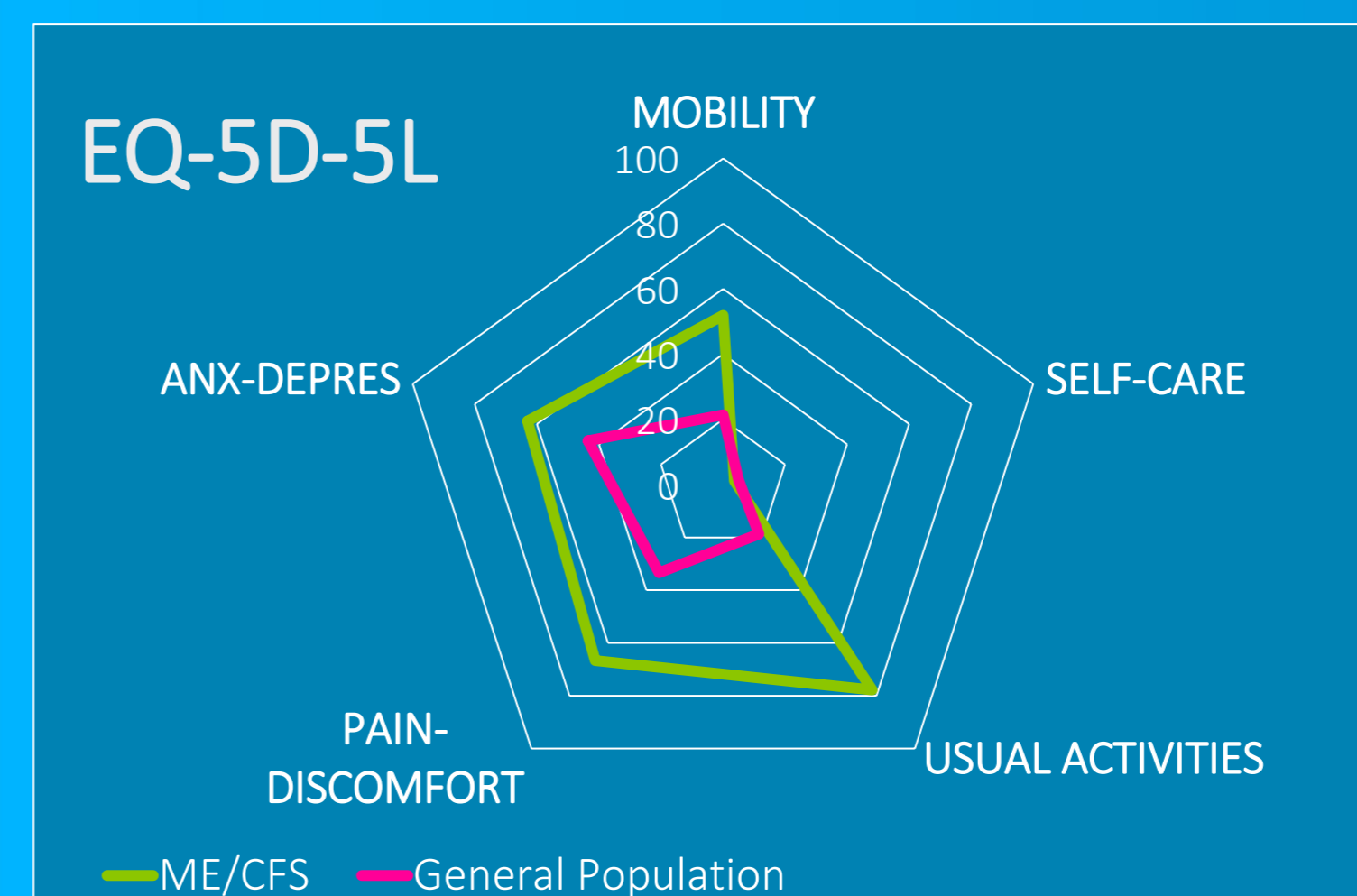
Graph 3. Mean FSS score in patients and general population.

Table 1. Demographics

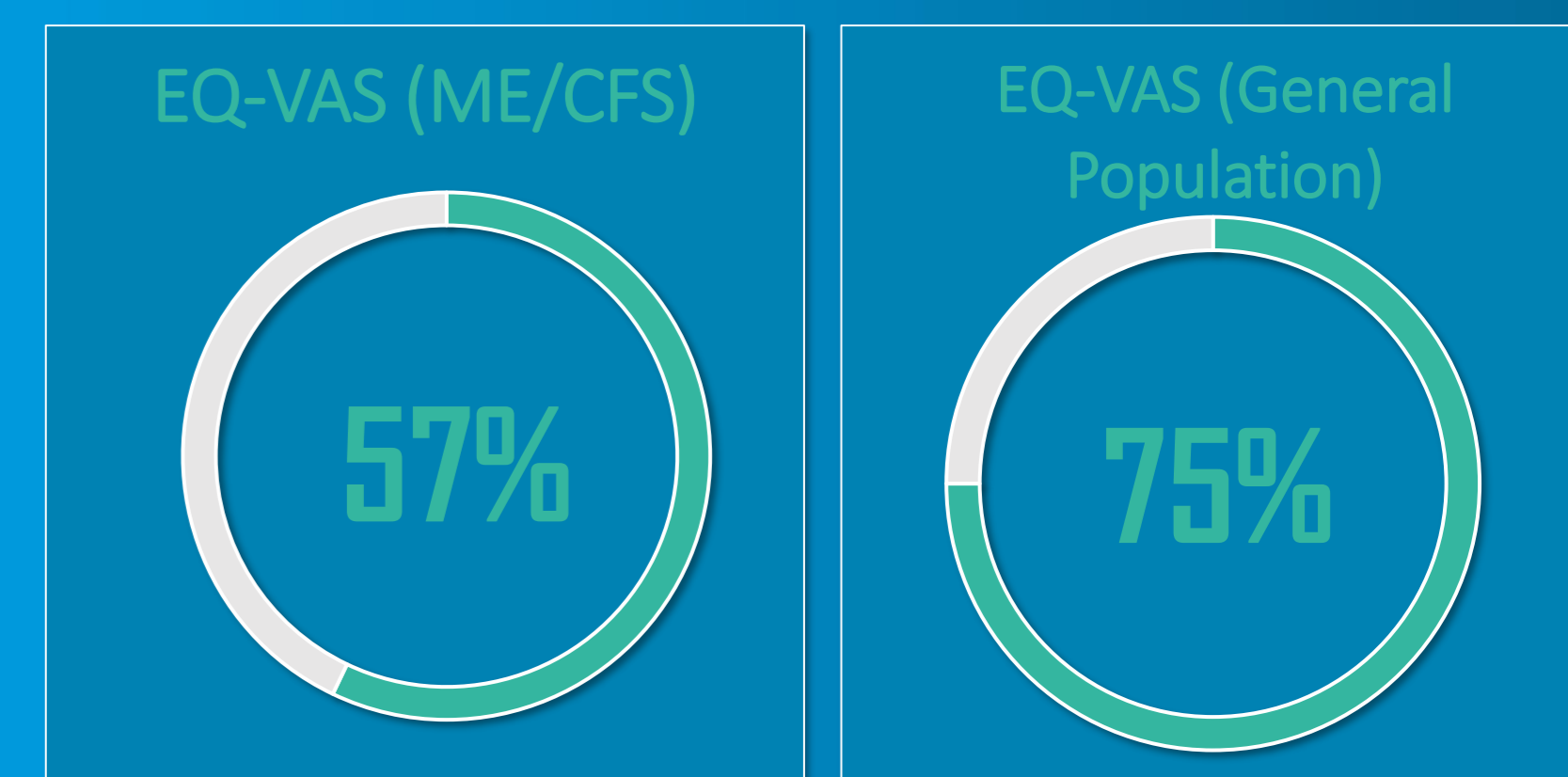
Sex (n, %)	♂ 5 (14%) ♀ 30 (86%)
Age (years, SD)	46,5 (±11,6)
Initial Severity	
Hospitalized (n, %)	4 (11,4%)
Mild disease (n, %)	31 (88,6%)
LC duration (days, SD)	703 (±358)

*SF-36: 36-item Short Form survey,
*ABC scale: Activities specific Balance Confidence Scale,
*MoCA: Montreal Cognitive Assessment Scale,
*CAT: COPD Assessment Test

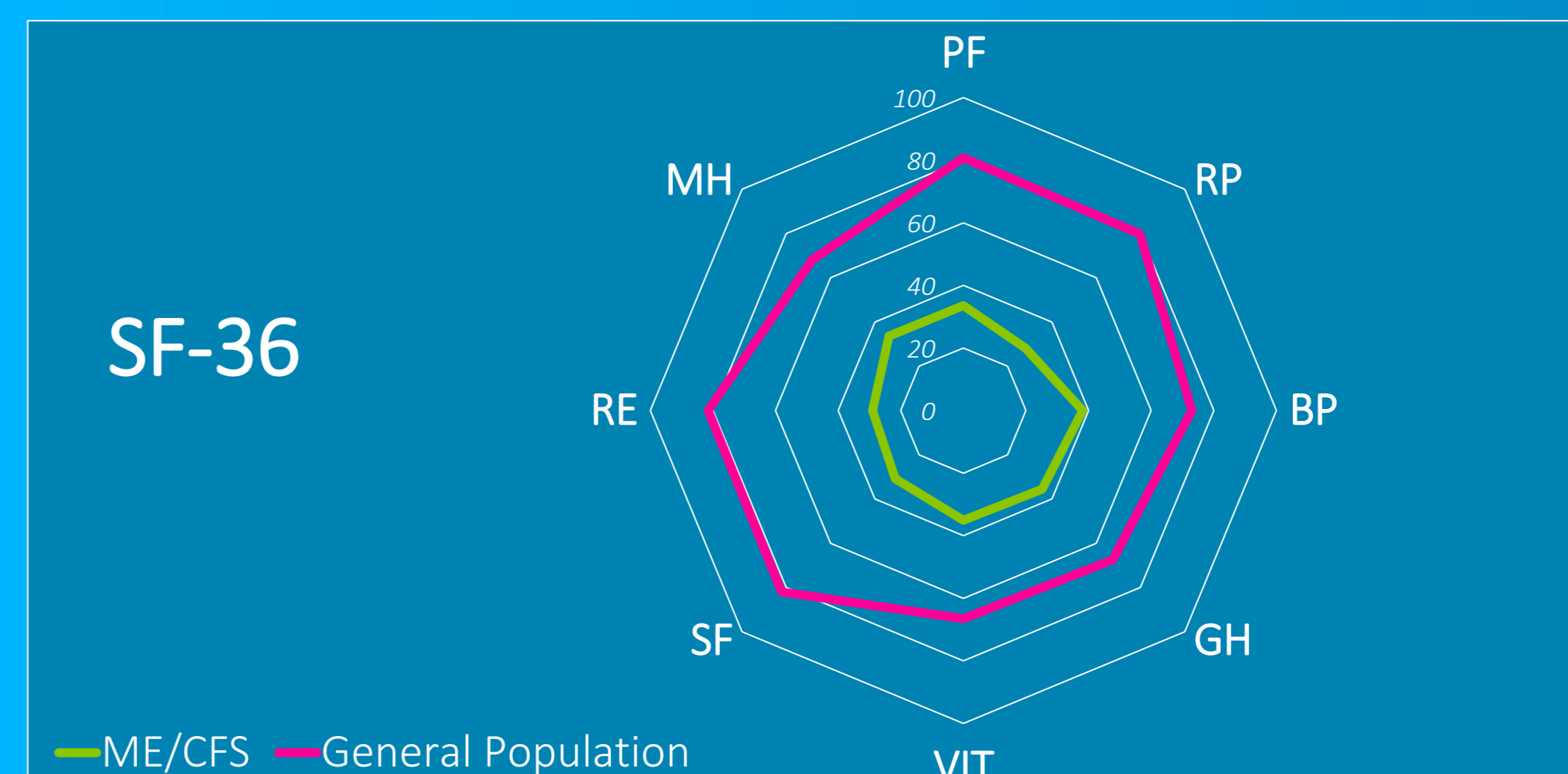
Quality of Life much lower than general population values



Graph 4. Ratio of patients with impairment of medium severity or worse, in comparison with normative values



Graph 5. Mean EuroQoL-VAS in patients in comparison with general population



Graph 6. Mean PF-Physical Functioning, RP- Role Physical, BP- Bodily Pain, GH- General Health, VIT- Vitality Scale, SF- Social Functioning, RE- Role Emotional, MH- Mental Health in comparison with the general population

Conclusions:

- QoL in our ME sample is worse than sensory disability, cancer, rheumatological diseases³
- Combination of cognitive symptoms, dysautonomia, malaise and balance impairment^{4,5,6,7}
- **Need for individualized interventions & support**

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