

Introduction

According to the Center for Disease Control findings released in 2014, one child out of 68 is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), an increase of approximately 120% from 2002. CAPTAIN was created to address this ever expanding need for services with a focus on evidence-based practices (EBPs) for individuals with autism using a train-the-trainers model. It is a multi-agency network established from earlier efforts with California's participation in the CDC Regional Act Early Summit (2009) and the OSEP funded National Professional Development Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC-ASD) Training and Technical Assistance Grant (2010-2012). CAPTAIN is a statewide initiative with three primary goals:

- 1) To increase knowledge about ASD and EBPs through systematic dissemination of information;
- 2) To increase implementation and fidelity of EBPs in schools and the community;
- 3) To increase inter-agency collaborations to leverage resources and standardize processes.

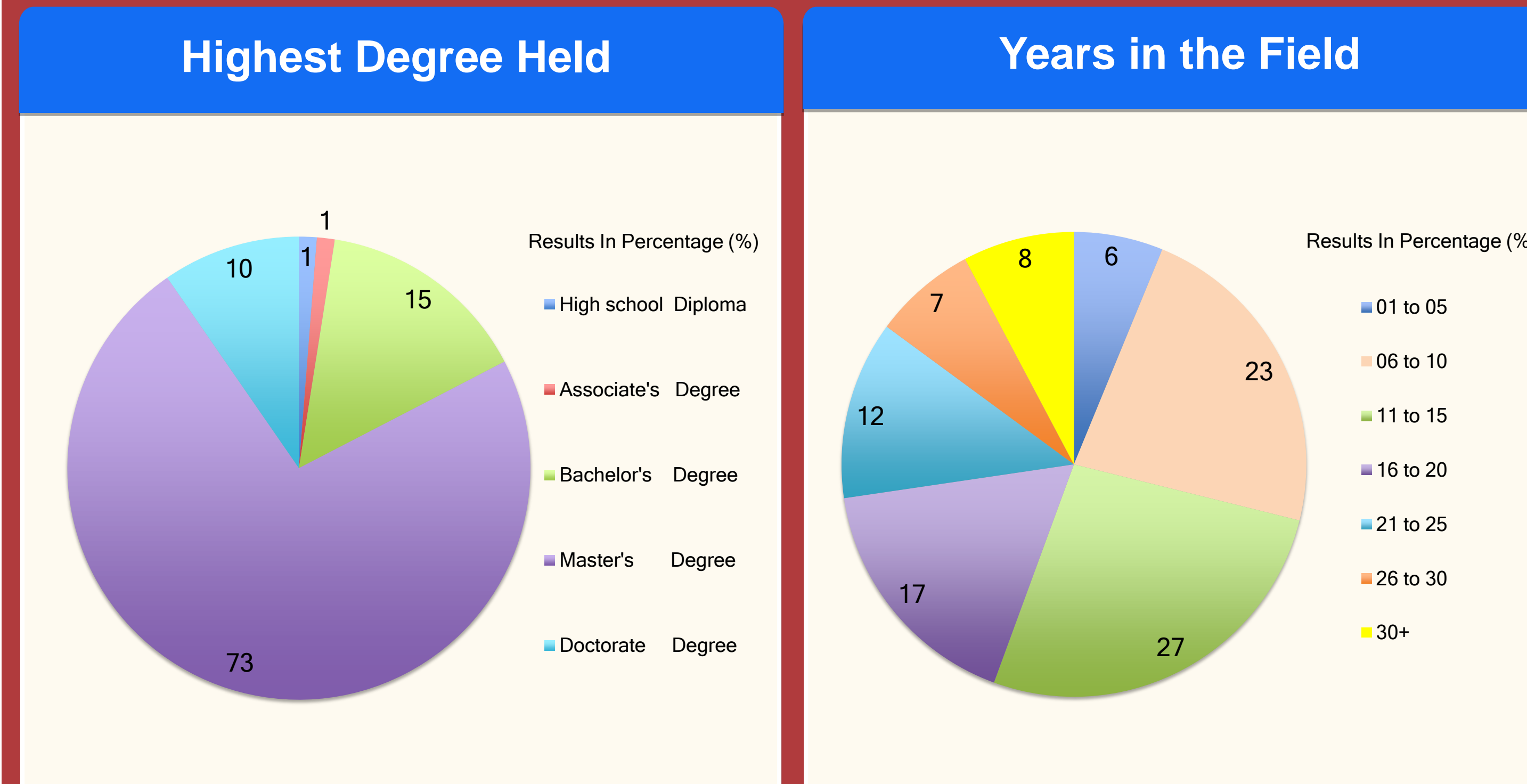
CAPTAIN is composed of over 350 participants. Key stakeholders include California's School District Special Education Plan Areas (SELPAs), California's network of Regional Centers, and California's network of Family Resource Centers. A core Leadership Committee composed of representatives from these key stakeholder groups as well as California's UCEDDs, California's Department of Education Diagnostic Centers and California's Department of Disability Services provides strategic planning and oversight of CAPTAIN activities. Each stakeholder group nominates its own members to participate in annual educational summits and regional meetings to disseminate and implement information on ASD and EBPs. This format allows for the strategic leveraging of each agency's current infrastructure as well as providing flexibility for unique regional needs.

Methods

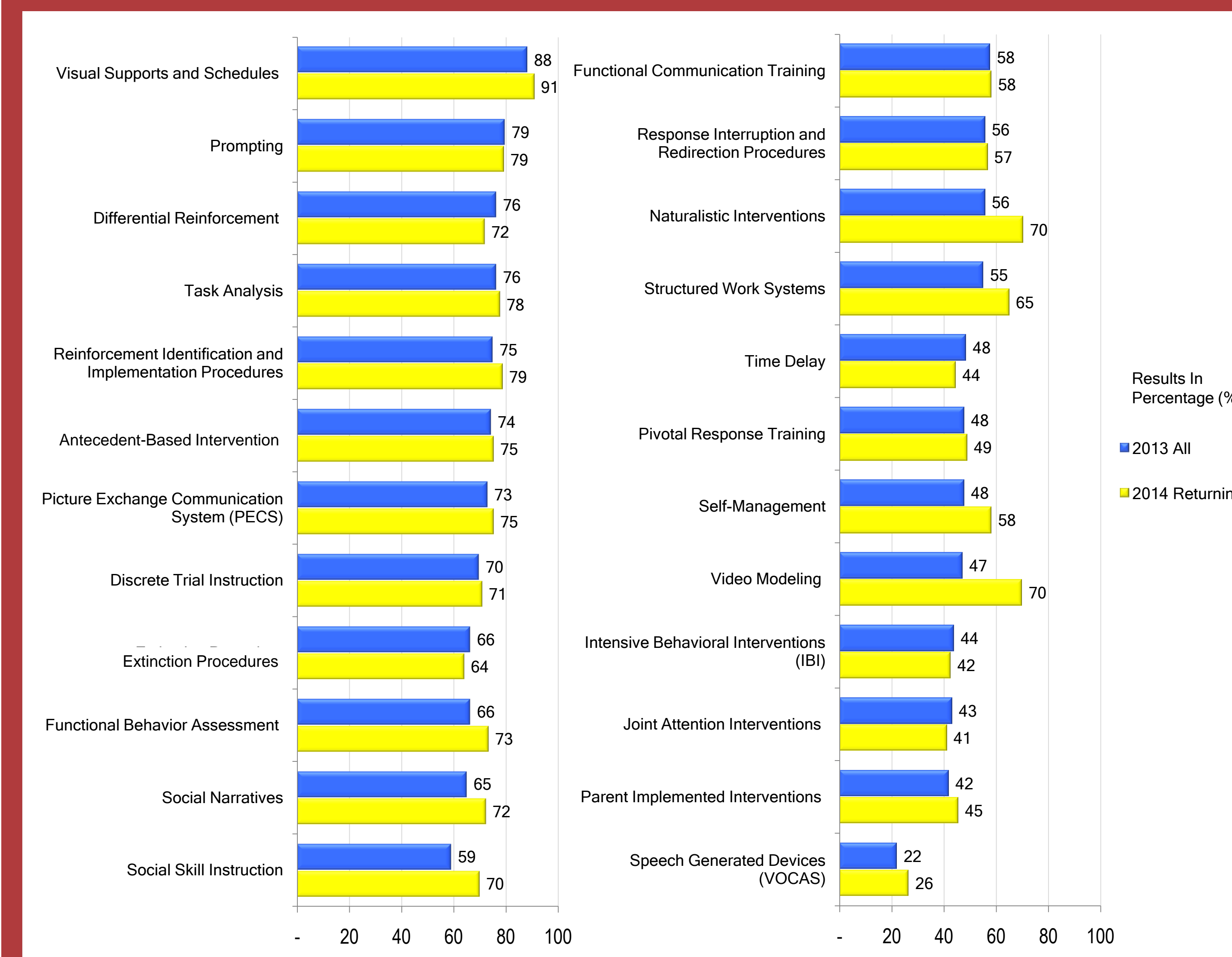
CAPTAIN participants completed a 33 item online survey prior to the annual summits in 2013 and 2014. A Likert scale was used, and results were analyzed to collect participant demographics and a comparative measurement for Year One and Year Two knowledge and implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs) for autism as defined by the NPDC-ASD. Analyses of CAPTAIN cohort responses from both years measured their content knowledge of EBPs, use of standardized protocols for treatment, and summative evaluation of treatment efficacy.

Results

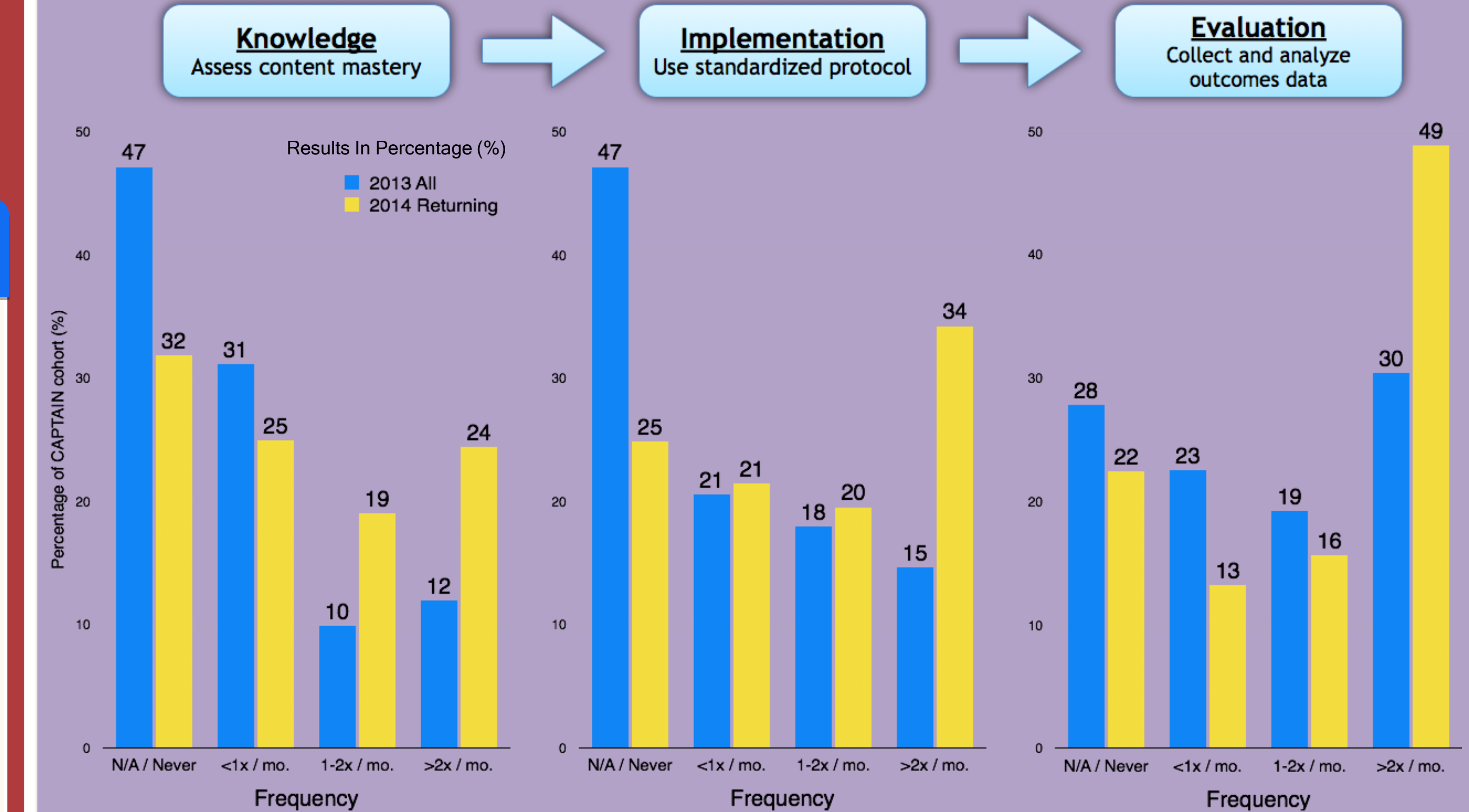
Demographics of Participants



Knowledge and Implementation of EBPs



Ensuring Treatment Fidelity



Discussion

CAPTAIN is focused on enacting systems level change across California by disseminating and implementing information on evidence-based practices (EBPs) in autism through a systematic statewide initiative. Survey data on participant demographics, EBP competency and treatment fidelity show promising results.

CAPTAIN has successfully achieved the following:

- Recruited a highly qualified and well experienced group of administrators and professionals who work with individuals with autism;
- Facilitated a higher competency level in use of EBPs through its educational summit;
- Improved adherence to fidelity measures within the CAPTAIN cohort.

These findings show the immediate impact that CAPTAIN training efforts made in increasing competency levels and implementation in EBP use for professionals working across the state of California. The next phase is to have this process become a routine step in the administration of EBPs in autism.

Systems level change: the power of knowledge, implementation and evaluation