



## **INTERNATIONAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE: IMPROVING LIVES AROUND THE WORLD AND REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS**



Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism is an international charitable organization bringing together people of different languages and cultures through the practice of Taoist Tai Chi® arts.

In 2016-2017 we administered a health questionnaire with more than 18,000 participants responding from 24 countries.

Countries with up to 200 Responses	
<b>Aruba</b>	<b>Italy</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Norway</b>
<b>Costa Rica</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	
Countries with 201 to 1,000 Responses	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>	
Countries with more than 1,000 Responses	
<b>Australia</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>United States</b>

The information in this document represents all of the participating countries in a summary of findings from the survey results and selected comments from participants.

The health questionnaire was completed anonymously and voluntarily by participants regardless of their duration of practice.

The individual stories are powerful and pulled together they provide a more complete picture of how Taoist Tai Chi® arts contribute to our communities.

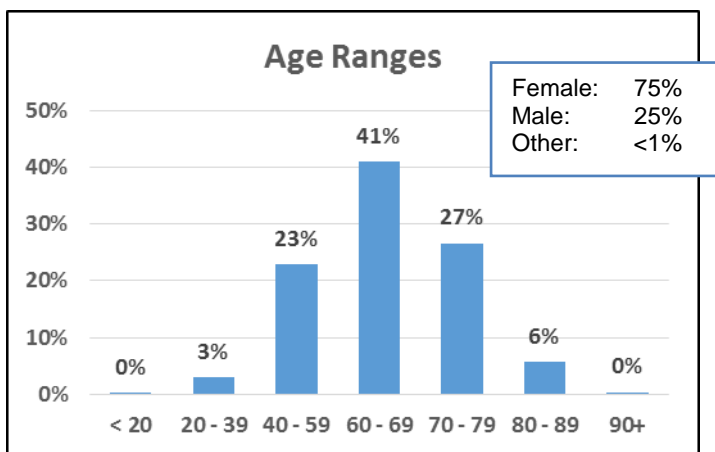
“We knew anecdotally from classes that such benefits exist, but this unprecedented survey drew many responses and is very heartening and important for policy makers to contemplate,” says Marsha Eberhardt, President.

Master Moy Lin Shin, a Taoist monk, dedicated his life to alleviating suffering by helping others cultivate themselves through the Taoist arts. In 1970, he immigrated to Canada where he immediately began teaching Taoist Tai Chi® arts.

Today, inspired by this vision, our Board of Directors along with many dedicated volunteers continue to make these arts available to our worldwide community in 26 countries.

## International Summary Findings 2016 – 2017

The health questionnaire was designed to allow respondents to share as much of their experience of the practice of Taoist Tai Chi® arts as possible. Not all respondents answered all questions and many questions allowed for multiple responses.

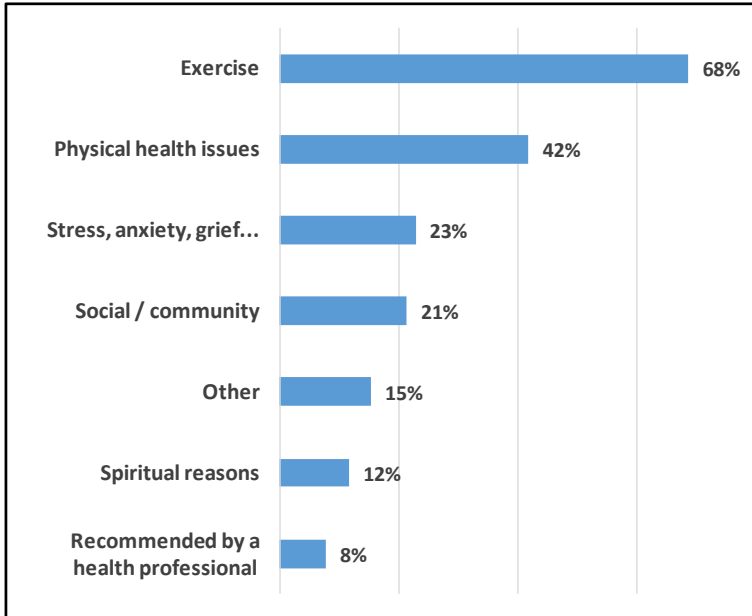


“Through tai chi I am very mobile for my age of over 90 years and still very independent for the daily life.” (*age range 90+*)

“Choosing Taoist Tai Chi was one of the best decisions in my life. It changed my life for the better... Better contact with my own body, greater openness to people and self-confidence, and greater ability to be present in the moment.” (*female, age range 20-39*)

“I am at peace with my health and my life and I became more tolerant of others...I want this feeling, health, sense of well-being and happiness for the rest of my life. Thanks for the gift!!!” (*male, age range 60-69*)

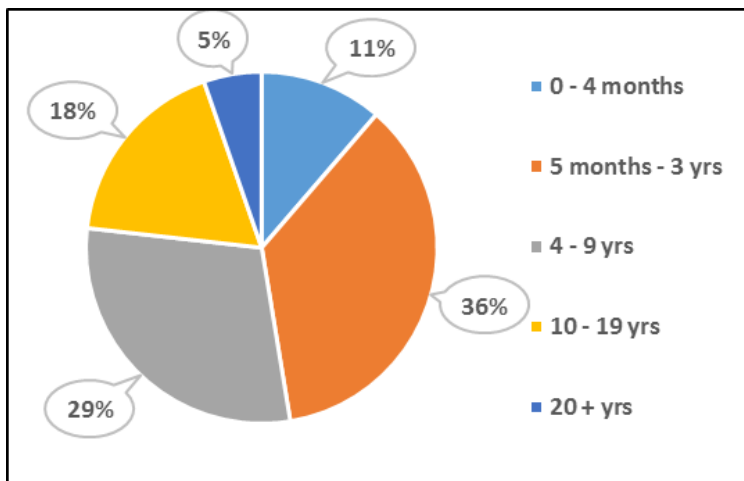
## Why did you start practising?



“I was advised by my [doctor] to join a tai chi class. It is the best thing I have ever done, my only regret is that I didn't join thirty years or more ago, while I could have felt the benefits in my younger years... Tai chi helps in every possible way.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

“This is the best decision of my life that I joined tai chi. I enjoy the health benefits as well as social, and emotional. I have more pain free days and am able to keep up with active grandchildren. Thank you.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

## How long have you been practising?

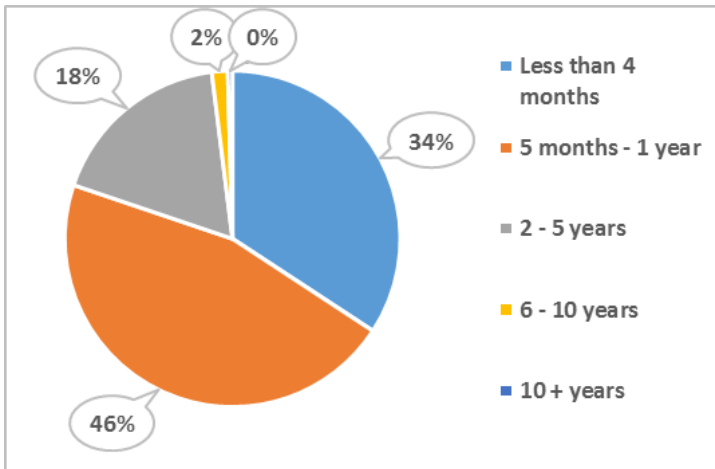


“I very much feel that the impact of tai chi on my health has been cumulative. Within the first classes I could feel looser, slightly more energised and oiled in the joints. After 6 years I feel the depth of improvement to my physical and mental health is significantly more improved when I do my tai chi. I feel much less anxious after having done some tai chi.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

“Practising tai chi for so many years has enabled me to get through my life when it was filled with stress and anxiety.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

“In the twenty years I have watched many people just come to life with the friendship and sense of community (belonging) over and above the physical benefits of the practice. This is and of itself is satisfying to my ‘soul’.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

## How soon after you started your practice did you experience any improvement in your health?



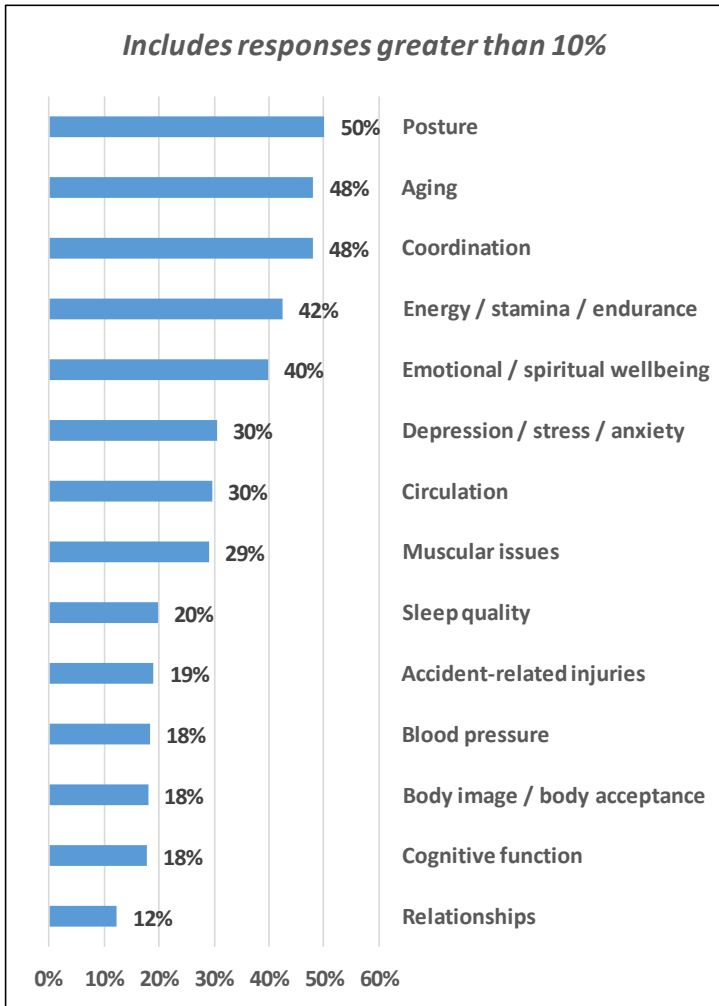
“I started tai chi using crutches to walk. After the beginners class I was significantly better and after 2 years no longer needed to use a wheelchair at all. Soon after I stopped using my crutches.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“After 6 months of practice I started to feel big changes. Muscles inflammation reduced, less pain, better sleep quality. Little by little I stop taking certain pills, because I noted that I no longer needed them. My mood has changed a lot and also my interpersonal relationships have changed.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“Frozen shoulder. One year regained full mobility after intensive practice, i.e. 8 hours per week.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

“I was using a walker when I was introduced to tai chi - three weeks later I was standing and taking part in all movements.” (*female, age range 80-89*)

## Would you say that your practice has had a positive impact on any of the following?





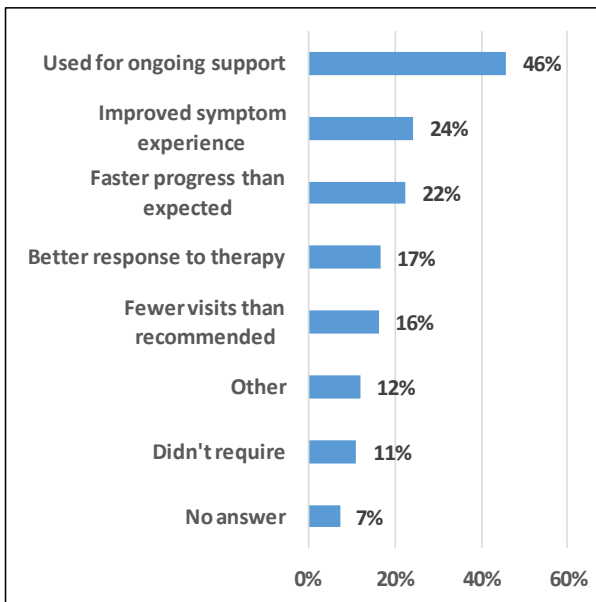
## Has your health been impacted by any of the following conditions?

	Number	Percentage
Accident-related injuries	3,429	19%
Arthritis	6,007	34%
Asthma / lung disorder	1,500	9%
Back / spine issues	7,383	42%
Balance issues	5,508	31%
Brain injury / concussion	434	2%
Cancer	1,284	7%
Chronic pain	2,298	13%
Depression / stress / anxiety	4,474	25%
Diabetes	939	5%
Epilepsy	93	1%
Fibromyalgia / chronic fatigue	855	5%
Foot issues / plantar fasciitis	2,699	15%
Gastrointestinal disorders	1,944	11%
Headaches / migraines	1,604	9%
Heart problems	1,319	7%
High blood pressure	3,793	21%
Joint problems / TMJ	4,318	24%
Mobility issues	1,763	10%
Multiple Sclerosis	184	1%
Osteoporosis	2,123	12%
Parkinson's disease	223	1%
Sleep disorders	1,861	11%
Stroke / blood clots	397	2%
Varicose veins	1,228	7%
Prefer not to say	72	0%
None of the above	1,388	8%
Other	902	5%

## Has your condition required that you access therapeutic services such as physiotherapy and rehabilitation?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	8,430	52%
No	7,777	48%

How did your practice impact your use of those services?



“My physiotherapist encourages me to practice tai chi to maintain my back.” (*male, age range 40-59*)

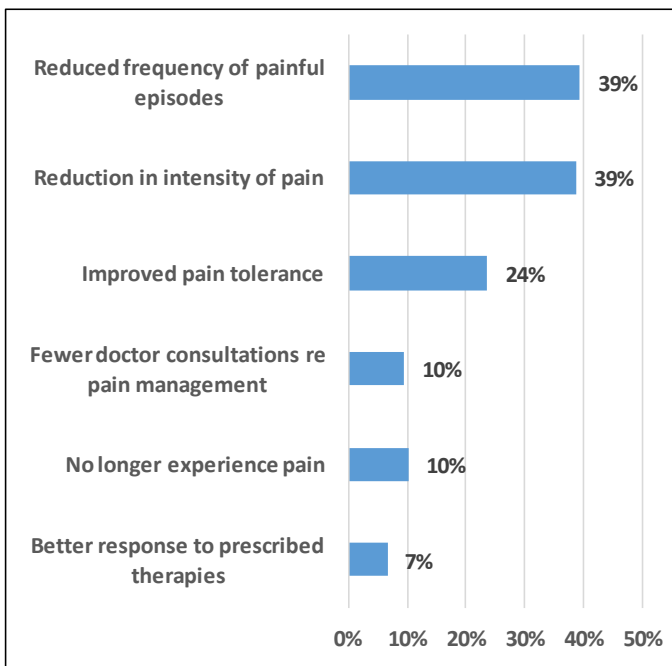
“I stopped doing psychotherapy and I think that practice has given me confidence, has calmed me, so that I can stop therapy.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“My neurologist is a firm believer in tai chi to help with Parkinson’s.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

## Do you experience pain as part of your health condition(s)?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	9,849	60%
No	6,567	40%

As a result of your practice, how has the pain changed?



“The best part is that my pain from the rheumatism is much less than before, more energy in the day, big effect in my daily life - also in my work.” (*no gender identified, age range 60-69*)

“Helped with lower back pain from gardening, made weeding easier.” (*male, age range 60-69*)

## Is medication normally required for your health condition(s)?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	8,978	54%
No	7,500	46%

As a result of your practice, how has your use of medication changed?

Responses	#	%
Reduced levels of medication	1,944	22%
Fewer doctor consultations re medication	970	11%
Better response than expected	720	8%
Side effects of medication better managed	624	7%
Medication no longer required	544	6%
Other	2,589	29%
No answer	2,673	30%

“No high blood pressure anymore, no medication anymore.”  
(female, age range 40-59)

“Before practising Taoist Tai Chi I received 4 shots of cortisone in my spine for herniated disc treatment. Since I started practising the pain episodes have diminished to the point that I no longer require any treatment.” (female, age range 60-69)

“Significantly reduced medication for chronic asthma.” (female, age range 80-89)

“When I first started tai chi 2005... I was in constant pain for over ten years. I could shuffle along and had to wear morphine patches. Gradually I was able to take part in continuing classes and a workshop or two and weaned myself off the morphine. Thanks to tai chi I can walk without pain and lead a most enjoyable life...” (female, age range 70-79)

## As a result of your practice, have you avoided surgery (hips, knees, carpal tunnel...)?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	1,669	21%
No	6,161	79%

“Ligaments in both knees were heading towards surgical repair. This has not been needed since starting tai chi.” (*age range 70-79*)

“My surgeon told me I would need a knee replacement in ten years. That was 30 years ago. I have never had one and my knees have improved.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“Knee surgery due to rupture of meniscus. I did not have to go through that because thanks to tai chi I learned to have a better posture and that provided almost total relief.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

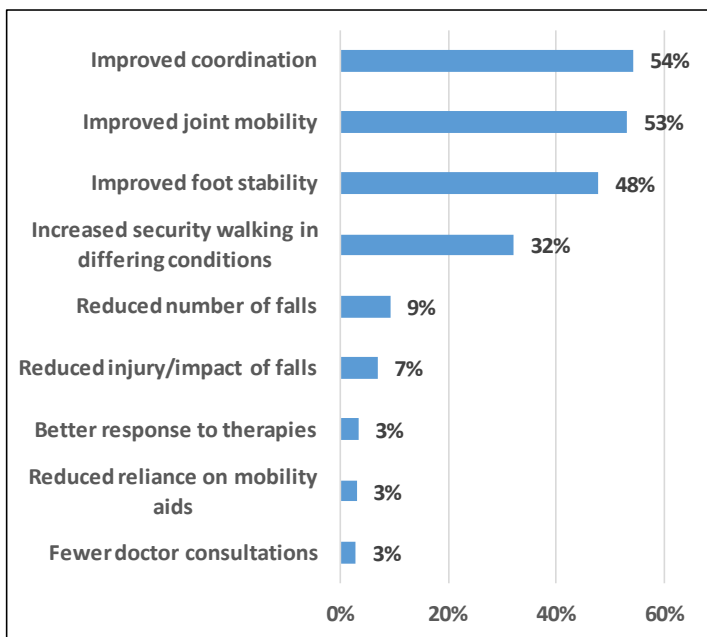
“Surgery to remove 3 herniated discs. With tai chi practice the surgery was cancelled.” (*male, age range 60-69*)

“Hip replacement suggested 20 years ago no longer considered. Carpel tunnel surgery cancelled.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

“I had separated rotator cuff (shoulder) tendons for years prior to my practice of these arts. I was scheduled for surgery. Surgery is no longer necessary as my shoulders are no longer locked and frozen.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

## Has your practice improved your balance?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	14,092	94%
No	863	6%



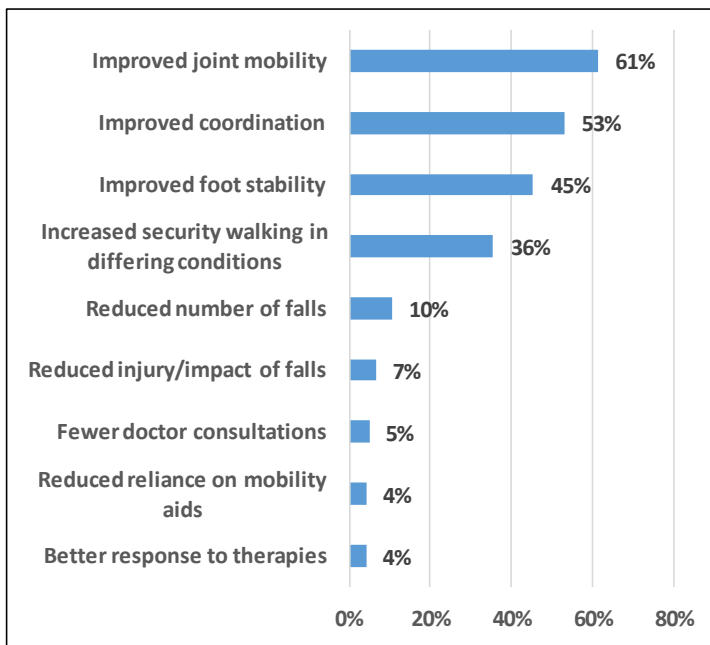
“Have a lot more balance and energy. Which is very important in MS.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

“I move differently. My weight is more evenly distributed in my feet. I turn using my whole body. When I trip or slip, I recover before I fall. My joints are stronger.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“I always fell a lot. Now I've found a lot more balance through tai chi.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

## Has your practice improved your mobility?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	10,233	83%
No	2,111	17%



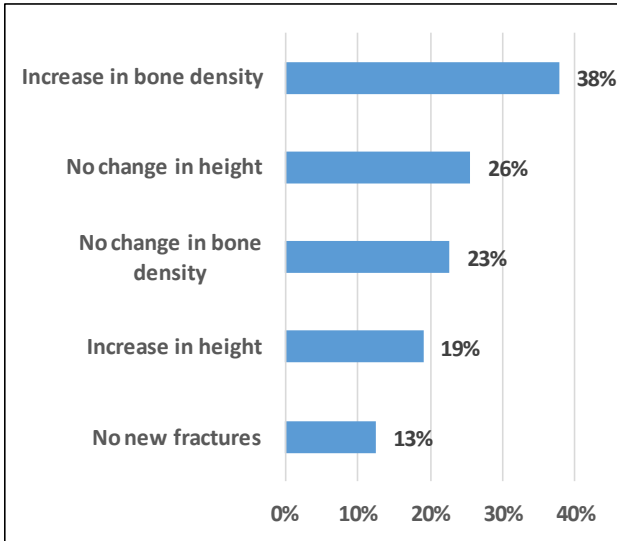
“I have experienced difficulty walking and standing after prolonged periods of having to sit for long times. Tai chi helped me to become mobile again.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

“When I started, I could not stand for more than about 30 seconds without my walker. Now, on most days, I can get around without any mobility aids! I credit tai chi with giving me my life back and I will continue to do tai chi for life!” (*female, age range 20-39*)

“Repetitive strain injury - surgery not required because tai chi has helped both pain and mobility.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

## Has your practice affected your bone density?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	2,208	58%
No	1,593	42%



“Increased bone density from 25 to 27.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“Osteoporosis – what I lost I gained back and the bone density is increasing.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

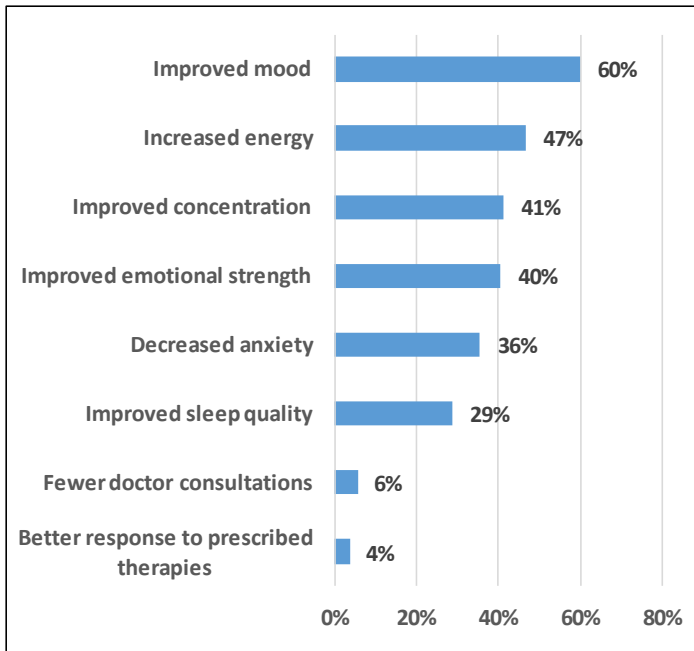
“My bones were described as 'brittle' after chemo and radiation; now normal for a woman of my age.” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“My physician is pleased that I am participating in tai chi as a preventative/proactive approach to my health – stability, coordination, weight-bearing (re: my osteoporosis).” (*female, age range 60-69*)



## Has your practice affected your mental health?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	11,476	86%
No	1,811	14%



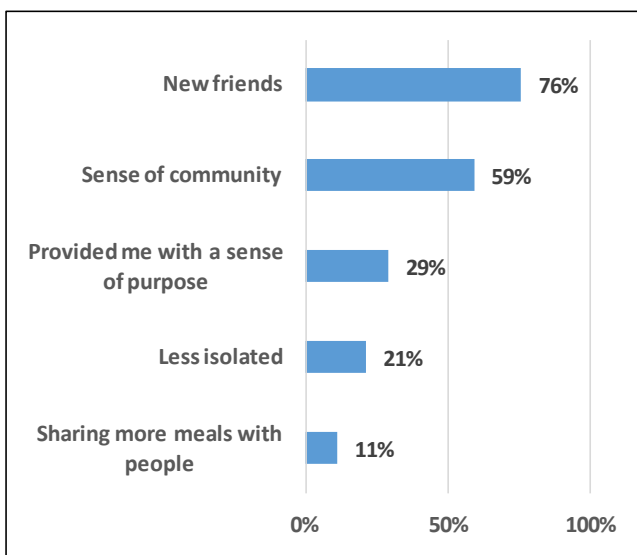
“With a busy job, I have found more balance and peace since I have been doing tai chi.” (*male, age range 40-59*)

“Taoist Tai Chi has helped me walk without pain..., but to me the most dramatic result of doing Taoist Tai Chi is that I am no longer depressed and anxious. Conditions that hampered my life a lot for a long time. I have not needed therapy or medication for years.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

“Practice has helped reduce and relieve stress, anxiety and provided relaxation.” (*male age range 20-39*)

## Has your practice impacted your social situation?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	11,383	78%
No	3,235	22%



“Instilled a sense of new hope in my life, I had previously lived a very small and lonely life suffering in isolation with my multiple disabilities.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

“Greater sense of community. Satisfaction in helping others. I handle better the anxiety.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

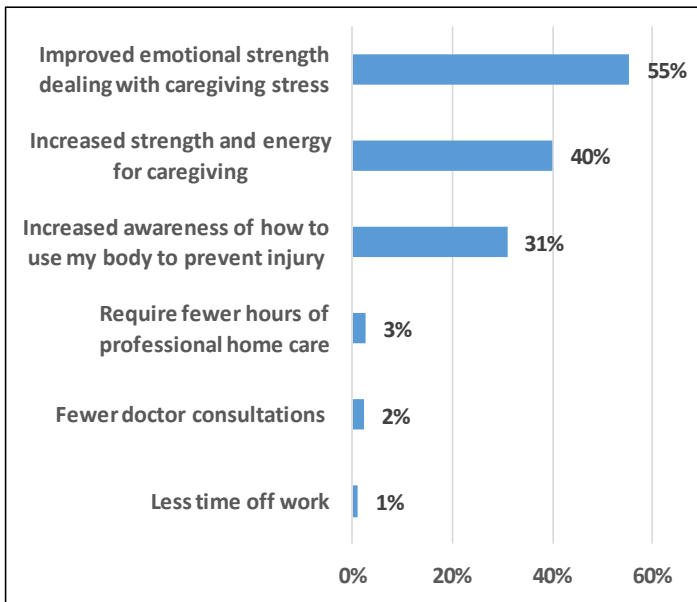
“My relationship with others, my family relationships, my self-control have improved enormously. I increased my confidence and learned to handle administrative aspects that put me off.” (*male, age range 20-39*)

“I feel less lonely, I have found new friends and I have received health benefits both in my body and my mind.” (*male, age range 80-89*)

## Are you a caregiver for a loved one?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	1,910	11%
No	15,604	89%

## How has your practice impacted your care situation?



“More patient with person who I help. More insight into others.”  
*(female, age range 60-69)*

“Being a carer I am more relaxed to be caring. Noticeable extra flexibility in hips and lower back.” *(male, age range 40-59)*

“As a caregiver, it is important to me to improve my own health, to improve balance, strength to be able to keep on as a caregiver.” *(female, age range 70-79)*

## Questions related to Home Care:

	Yes Responses
Do you require professional home care?	245
Do you require a family member/friend to provide you with care?	388
As a result of your practice, have you experienced any changes in your home care needs?	380

“I am able to do tasks at home more easily.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

“My wife stated that tai chi has transformed my personality. I have become calmer and I do not get as up-tight as I used to. Since her dealings with personal health issues, particularly a rare form of cancer, I believe that tai chi and the tai chi family has given me respite from the many curves this journey has taken us. We both have become stronger in our care for each other and tai chi is definite catalyst. Thank you.” (*male, age range 60-69*)

“Before practising tai chi I needed a lot of help, now I don’t need help, I’m self-sufficient.” (*female, age range 70-79*)

## **More stories shared on the questionnaire by our international community ...**

“Taoist Tai Chi provides an oasis of calm and serenity that keeps me sane in work and home. The flexibility and strength it has given me, mentally and physically means I now know I can cope with whatever life throws at me.” (*male, age range 40-59*)

“Tai chi is a fountain of youth... feel younger and look younger. Same wrinkles but moving well makes so much difference. It is great to be in 60s and be able to move so freely ” (*female, age range 60-69*)

“I started practising in a state of chronic exhaustion, the improvement was quick and impressive. A great overall wellness, enhanced agility.” (*female, age range 40-59*)

“It has helped me no end. I no longer feel as if I'm at the mercy of the universe, that I can take more control of my own situation. It makes a huge difference.”  
(*female, age range 60-69*)

“Increased sense of peace. Able to calm self with practice. Much better balance in all activities.”  
(*female, age range 40-59*)

“An amazing art that has given me so much health in mind, body and spirit, so happy and blessed to be a member of this Taoist Tai Chi.”

*(female, age range 40-59)*

“The exercise definitely supports memory. It is important to do it regularly, if it is possible twice a day. I cannot imagine my life without it.” *(female, age range 60-69)*

“My body feels softer, more relaxed and I enjoy movement more. My mind and attitude to life have also changed and I feel more relaxed about a lot of things. I feel privileged to have found this way of life.”

*(female, age range 60-69)*

“I realized my own ability to self-care.”

*(female, age range 40-59)*

“The practice has given me greater inspiration for volunteering and helping others which changes my outlook on interacting with others”

*(male, age range 40-59)*



## **FUNG LOY KOK INSTITUTE OF TAOISM**

### **For more information**

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**Email**     **[headoffice@taoist.org](mailto:headoffice@taoist.org)**  
**Call**        **+1 (416) 656-2110**

“I do not feel as ‘stressed out’. I can converse more ‘quietly’ and with less emotions. Tai chi has given me a form of inner peace. I look forward to every class.”  
*(male, age range 40-59)*