

But What If I Hate It?

The Intersection of Collegiate and Career Pathways in Kinesiology

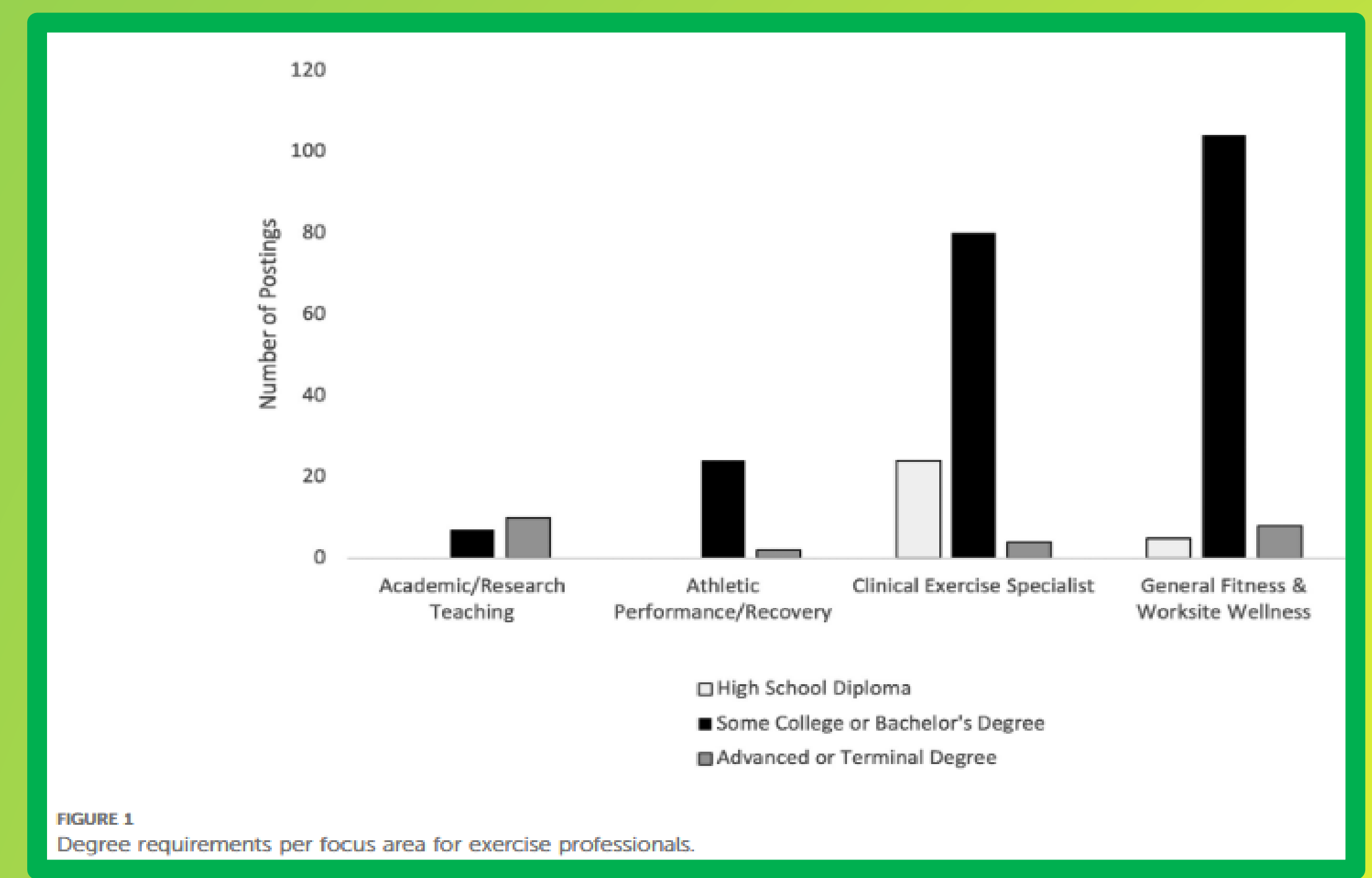
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Introduction

- How does kinesiology education align with workforce demands, professional identity, and future opportunities?
- By definition; a kinesiologist uses movement-based science to improve health, fitness, recovery, and performance through personalized research and exercise.
- Kinesiology has evolved into a diverse and interdisciplinary field that integrates knowledge from physiology, biomechanics, psychology, and sociology to study human movement.
- There is ongoing uncertainty about how kinesiology translates into clear career pathways.
- Inconsistencies in degree structure, professional identity, and career pathways create challenges for student recruitment, workforce development, and professional recognition.

The Beginnings of Kinesiology

- Origins of kinesiology began in the late 19th century at the intersection of physical culture and medicine, where movement was studied by Swedish Physiotherapists for health and sport performance (Ottosson 2010).
- Paradigm shift; society began approaching pharmacology with mechanical bodily motion and physiotherapy.
- Foundational texts; kinesiology is scientific and applied, influencing areas such as health promotion, sport performance and rehabilitation (Knudson & Brusseau, 2025; Oglesby et al., 2021).



The Intersection of Collegiate and Career

- 70% of pathways on Canadian university websites, it is recommended that more training or schooling is necessary to maximize that pathway choice (Nagpal et al. 2025).
- Most frequently suggested pathways were education, coaching, health and wellness promotion, physiotherapy, and medicine.
- A drift away from physical education teaching and more towards the health field.
- University online are outdated and should better reflect kinesiology as a standalone profession.

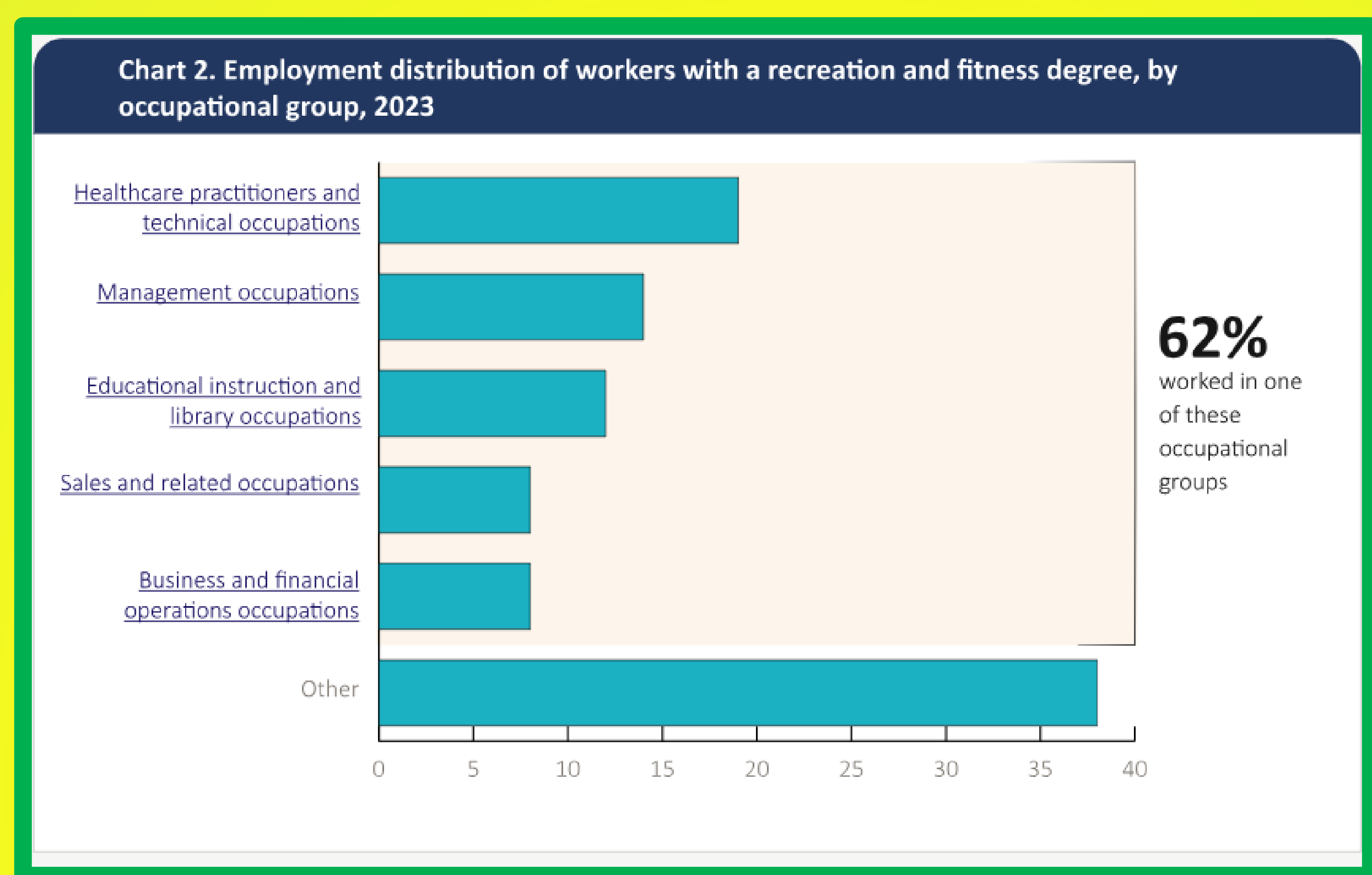
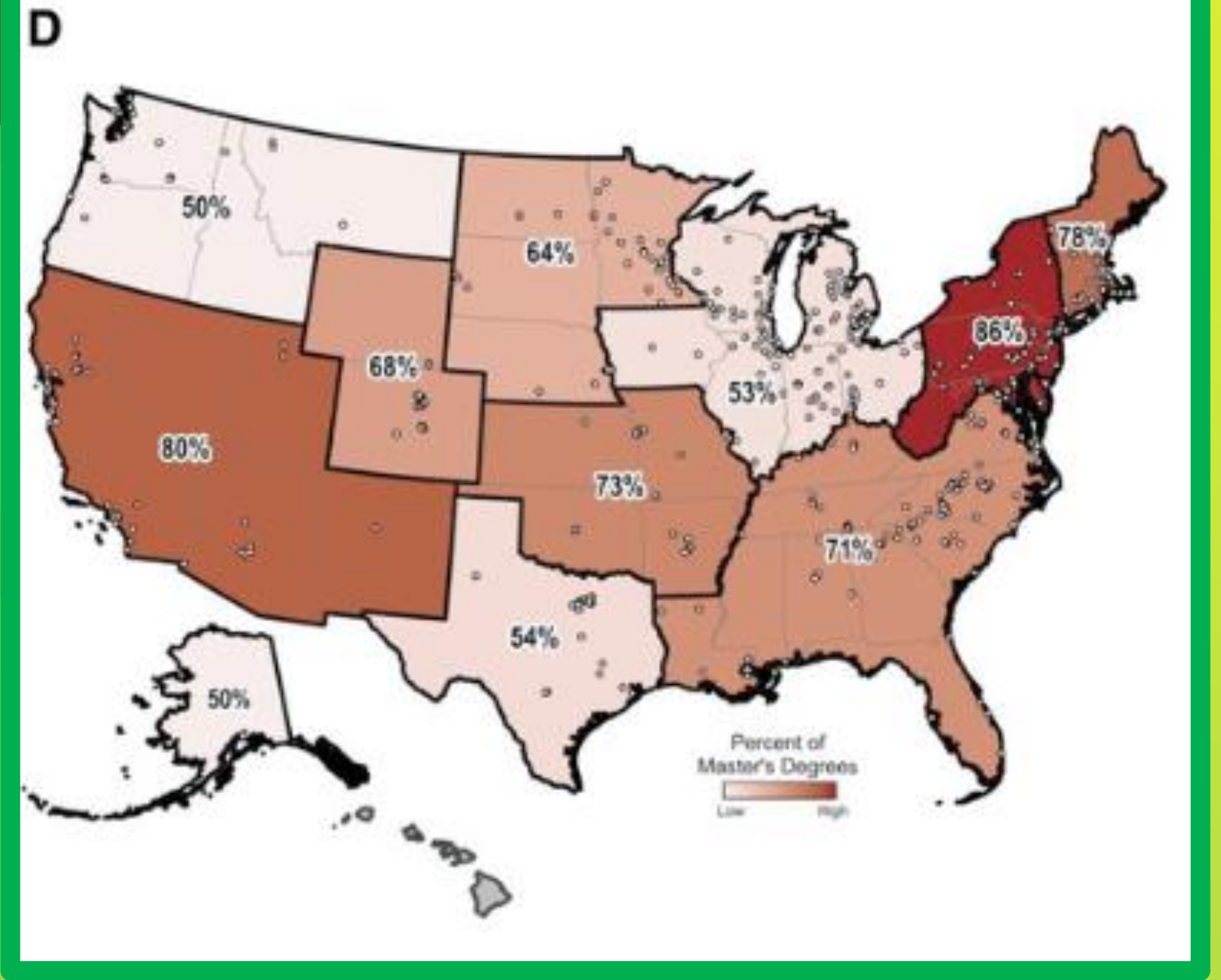
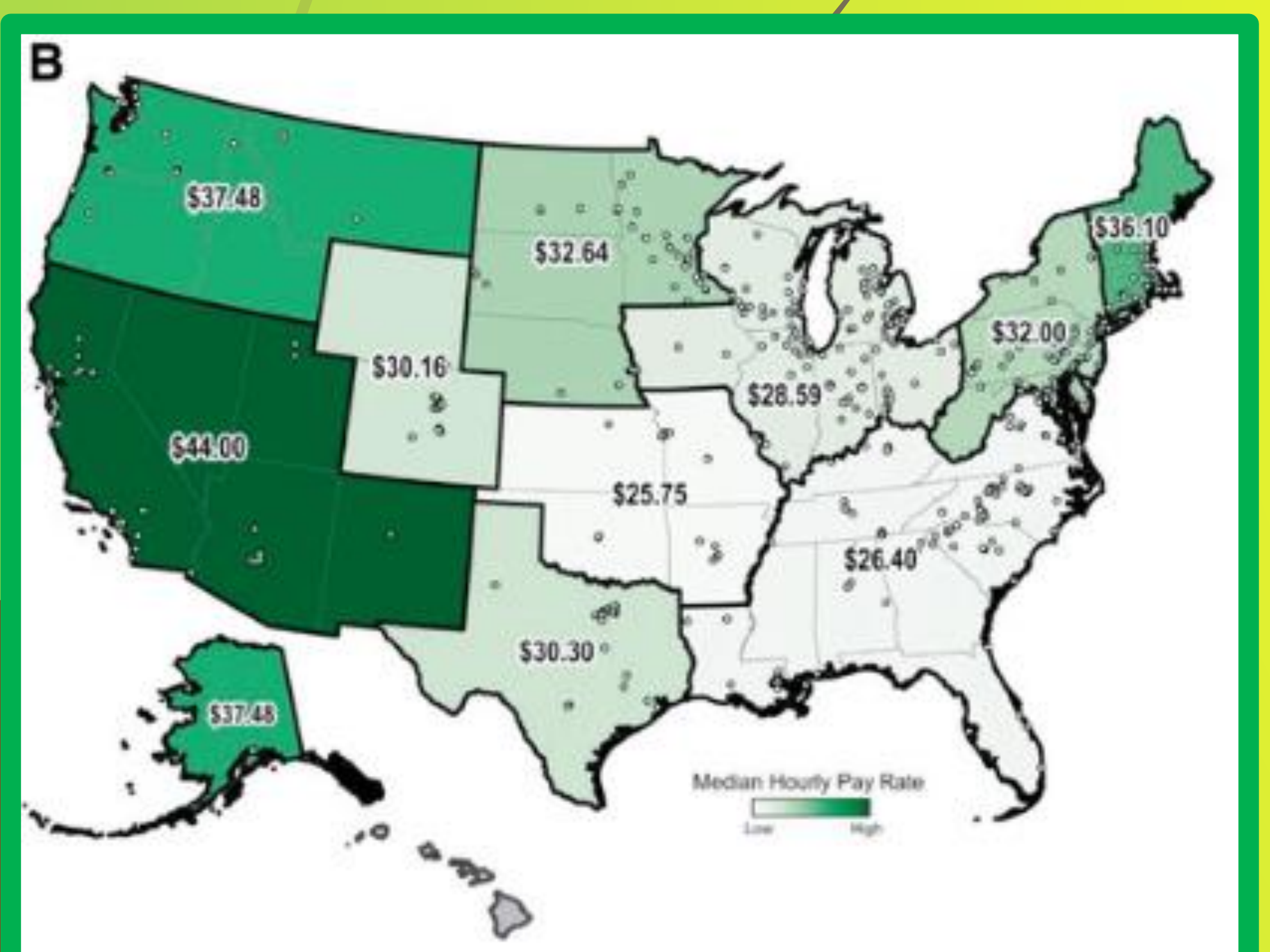


TABLE 2-1 The Evolution of SHAPE America

1885	Association for the Advancement of Physical Education
1886	American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education
1903	American Physical Education Association
1937	American Association for Health and Physical Education
1938	American Association for Health and Physical Education and Recreation
1974	American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
1979	American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
2013	Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America

Figures from Oglesby et al. 2021



Kinesiology Worldwide

- Great variance of differing career pathways postgraduate of a kinesiology degree and how they are defined as well as the professional development and support they receive is varied greatly from region to region on a global scale.
- The way these pathways are currently characterized may not fully reflect the evolution of kinesiology as a profession or the expanding roles of kinesiologists and clinical exercise physiologists within healthcare.
- Inconsistencies in how kinesiology is approached in both educational pathways and post graduate career options when they are compared in different developed nation.

Name groups defined by frequently used terms in their name	USA	Europe	χ^2	p-level
Sport	46	54	2.62	.15
Physical education	172	29	100.32	.0001
Movement science(s)	8	5	0.33	.58
Kinesiology	145	3	134.44	.0001
Exercise	112	10	55.89	.0001
Other	114	21	90.23	.0001
Summary	597	122	184.48	.0001

Figures from Čustonja et al. (2009).

Methods

Search Terms Used on Google Scholar and Cal Poly Humboldt Library Databases:
 "career pathway + kinesiology degrees"
 "career pathways+ job market trends + kinesiology"
 "career pathway + kinesiology degrees"
 "worldwide + kinesiology+ trends+ career"

Conclusion

- "The exercise science and clinical exercise science programs tend to place significant emphasis on exercise physiology. While the physiological sciences play a critical role in the exercise science major, this training appears to come at the cost of other essential knowledge areas, such as the biophysical and behavioral sciences" (Asif et al., 2022; Ives, 2003; Warburton et al., 2013).
- Inconsistencies run throughout kinesiology educational programs and their alignment with focus of postgraduate career pathways.
- It is an important viewpoint to take in the whole picture yet much more research and advancement is needed to not only see a full picture but also improve upon it to better our kinesiology horizons.

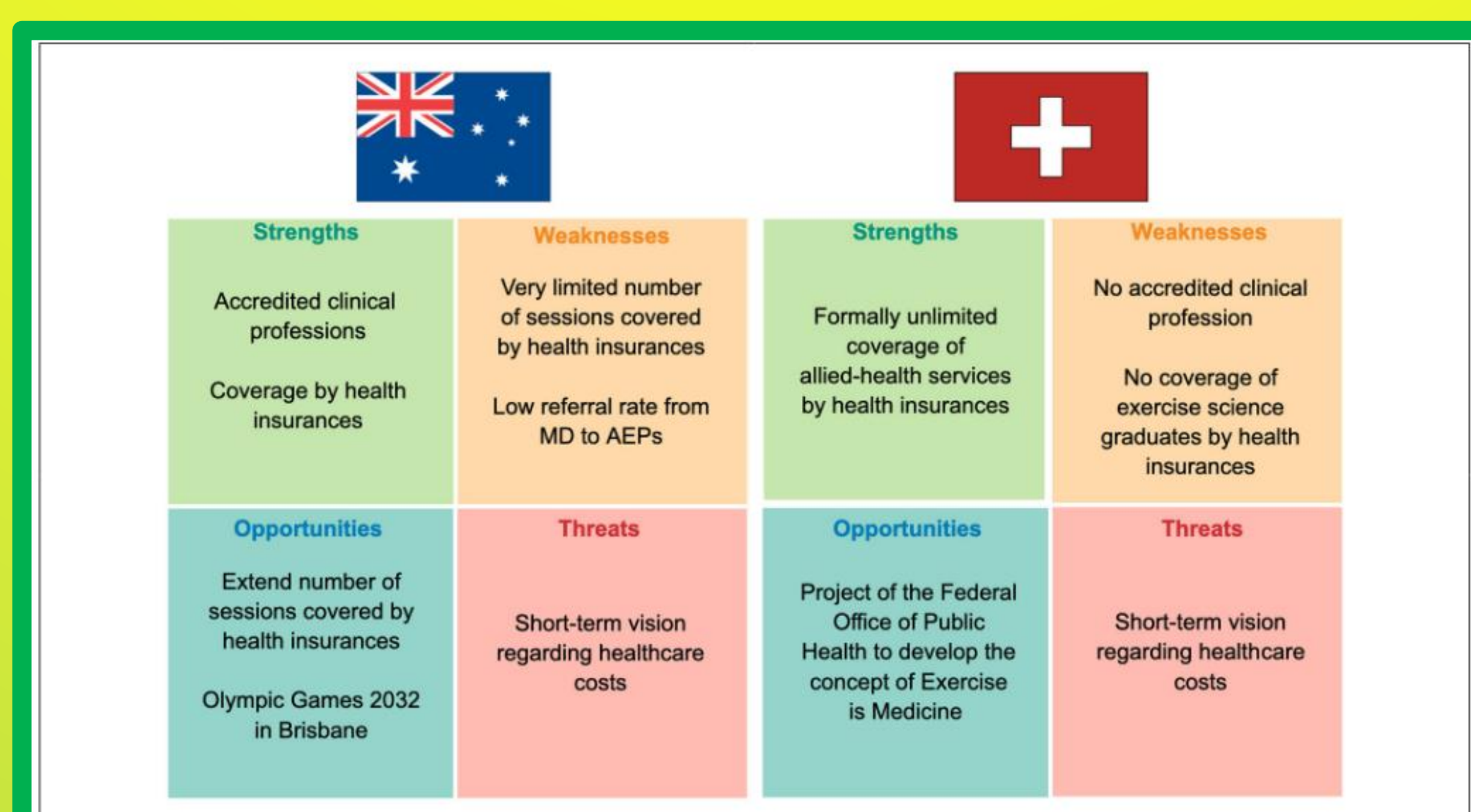


FIGURE 1 | Exercise science graduates in the Australian and Swiss healthcare systems: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis. MD, medical doctor; AEP, accredited exercise physiologist.

Figure 1 from Carrard et al. (2022).

References

