



Helping Yourself to Help Others

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF EMPATHY ON
PROVIDERS IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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Introduction

- Integrating areas of study
- Impact of empathy

Problems Found



- Impact of empathy on medical providers
- Navigating vicarious trauma and challenging experiences encountered on the job



Literature Review

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EMPATHY VS CLINICAL EMPATHY

Empathy: acknowledging, defining, and understanding the feelings and perspectives of another person

Clinical Empathy: "detached empathy," identifying emotions without attempting to understand

Effects: negative mental health practice, decreases strength of provider-patient relationship



SOCIAL WORK PEER PROCESSING

Supervision: practice of peer support, opportunity to process emotions related to on the job stressors

Effects: reduces rates of stress, increases job satisfaction levels, increase quality of work



Research Objectives



Providers' use of clinical and true empathy

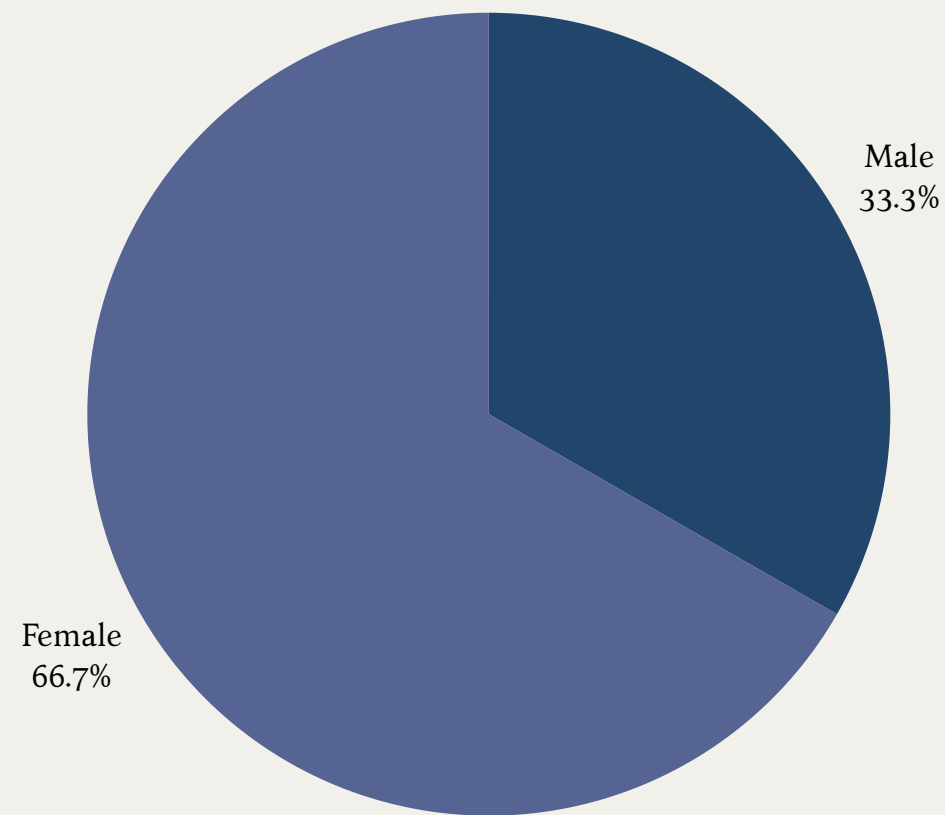


Feelings of support for mental health of providers within the healthcare system



Integration of mental health practices within the medical field

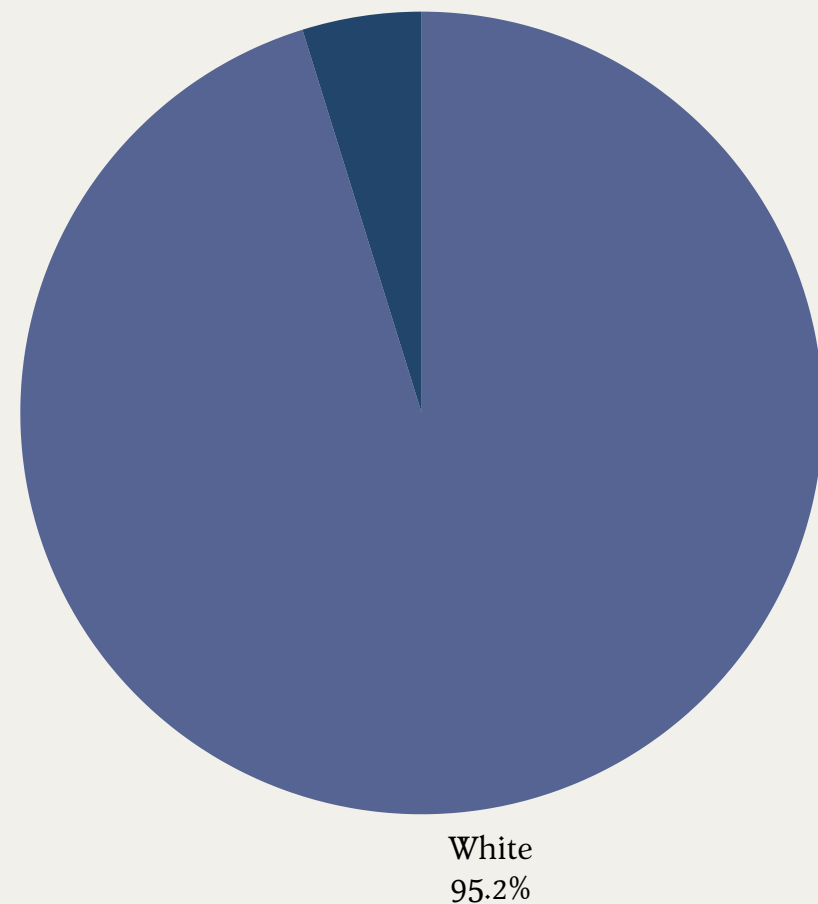
Methodology



- 21 medical providers including physicians, registered nurses, PAs, nurse practitioners, and medical students
- 66.7% female, 33.3% male, 95.2% White, 4.8% Asian
- 23.9 average years of employment

Sample

Asian or Pacific Islander
4.8%



- 21-item survey
- Likert scale, hypothetical scenarios, open response
- Quantitative and qualitative data

Survey

- Independent samples t-test
- Demographic frequencies and descriptives
- Analysis of trends and patterns

SPSS

Main Findings

Clinical Empathy:

Providers who chose to utilize clinical empathy rather than true empathy did so due to fear of burnout

When presented with an emotionally challenging job related experience:

Process with a Peer: 17 providers
Process with a Mental Health Practitioner: 2 providers
Neither/No Response: 4 providers

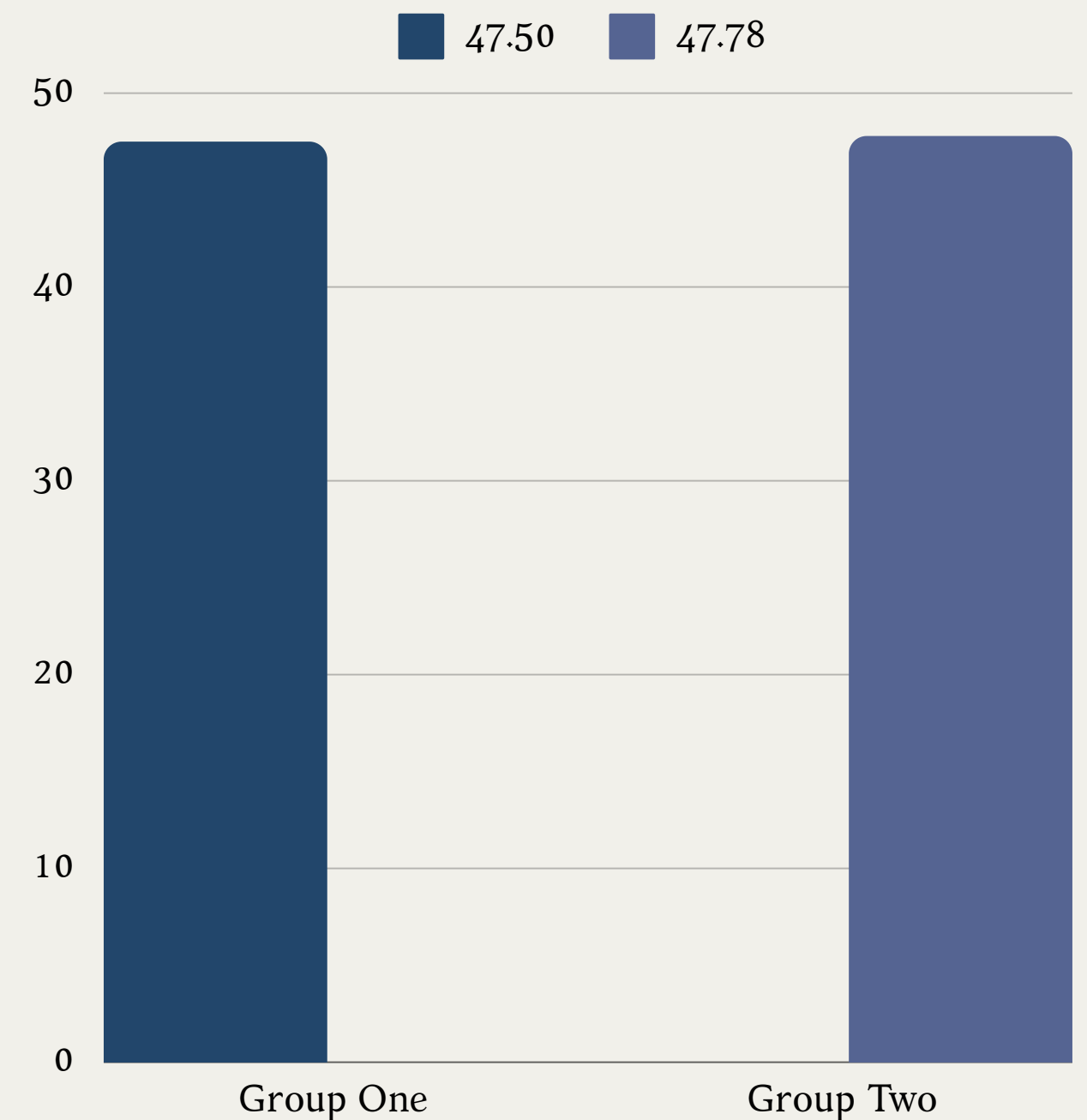
When given the option of an on-site mental health practitioner:

Would Utilize: 12 providers
Would Prefer a Peer: 8 providers
Would Not Utilize: 1 provider

Mental Health Support in the Healthcare System:

Feel Unsupported: 13 providers
Feel Support has Improved: 4 providers
Feel Supported: 3 providers
No Response: 1 provider

Empathy Scores Between Professions





Conclusions

Limitations

- Lack of diversity in sample population
- Limited sample size
- Social desirability effects

Results

- High rates of empathetic practices
- Increase need for mental health services in healthcare system