

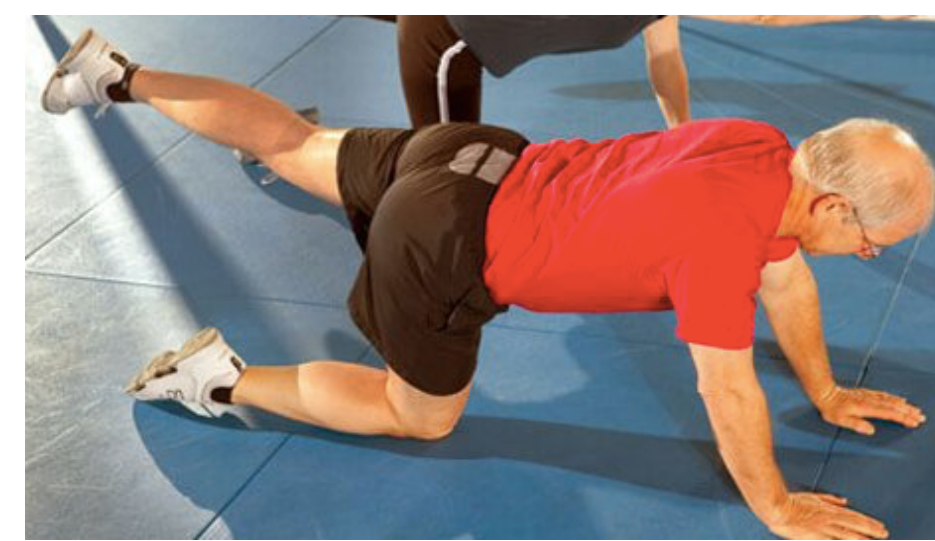
An Assessment of Physical Therapy Students' Attitudes and Readiness to Manage Patients with Chronic Pain

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Opportunity

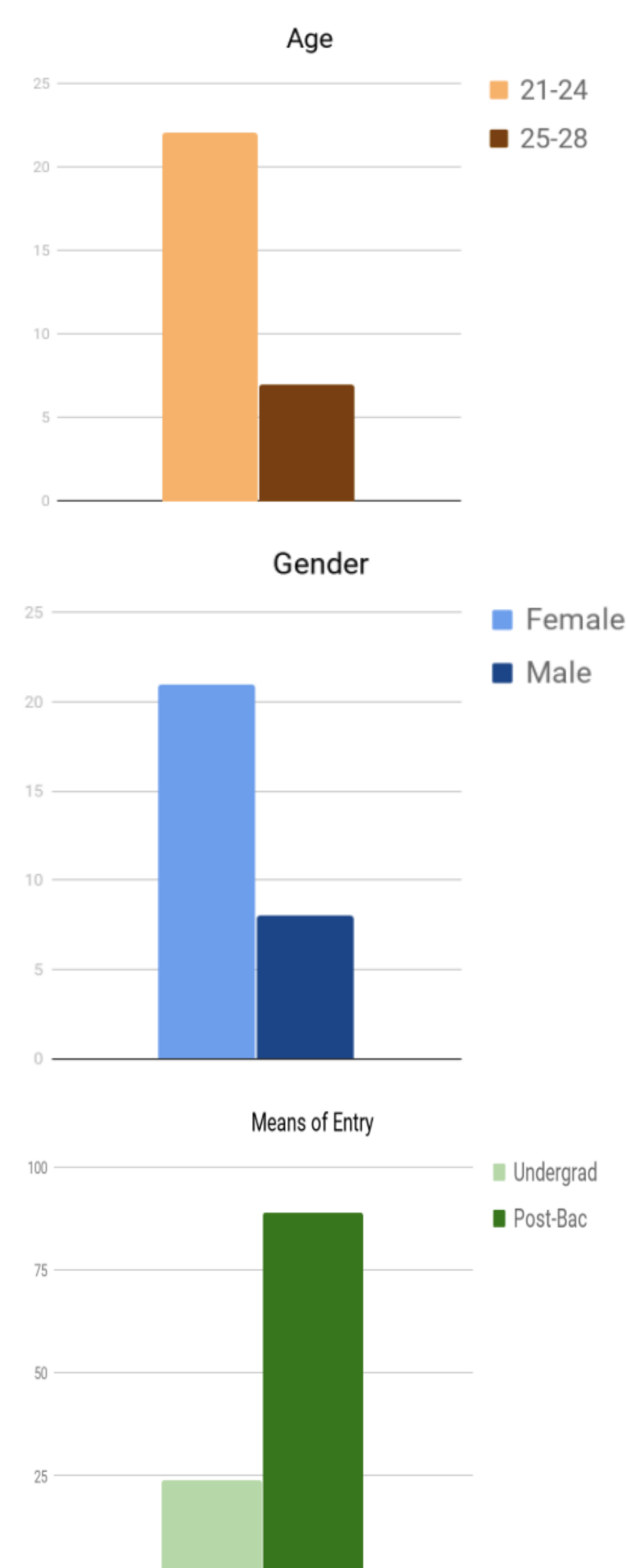
- 30% of the US population is affected by chronic pain
- Healthcare costs of over \$635 billion/year.
- Healthcare professionals need to be equipped with pain management strategies, including Pain Neuroscience Education (PNE), to replace the overuse of medication.
- This study evaluated readiness, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about the use of PNE for the treatment of chronic pain.
- Determine the need for curricular enhancements to prepare NUDPT students to utilize PNE to treat pain.



Approach

- Mixed methods
- Northeastern University Doctor of Physical Therapy (NUDPT) class of 2019 (n=99) surveyed
- The survey included material from:
 - HC-PAIRS to assess beliefs about the relationship between impairment and pain
 - NPQ to assess knowledge about the physiology and experience of pain
 - Open-ended questions to gather students' perceptions about their readiness to utilize PNE
- Five PNE experts and two NUDPT alumni reviewed the survey to ensure readability and accuracy. A response rate of 30% (n=29) was achieved.

Results



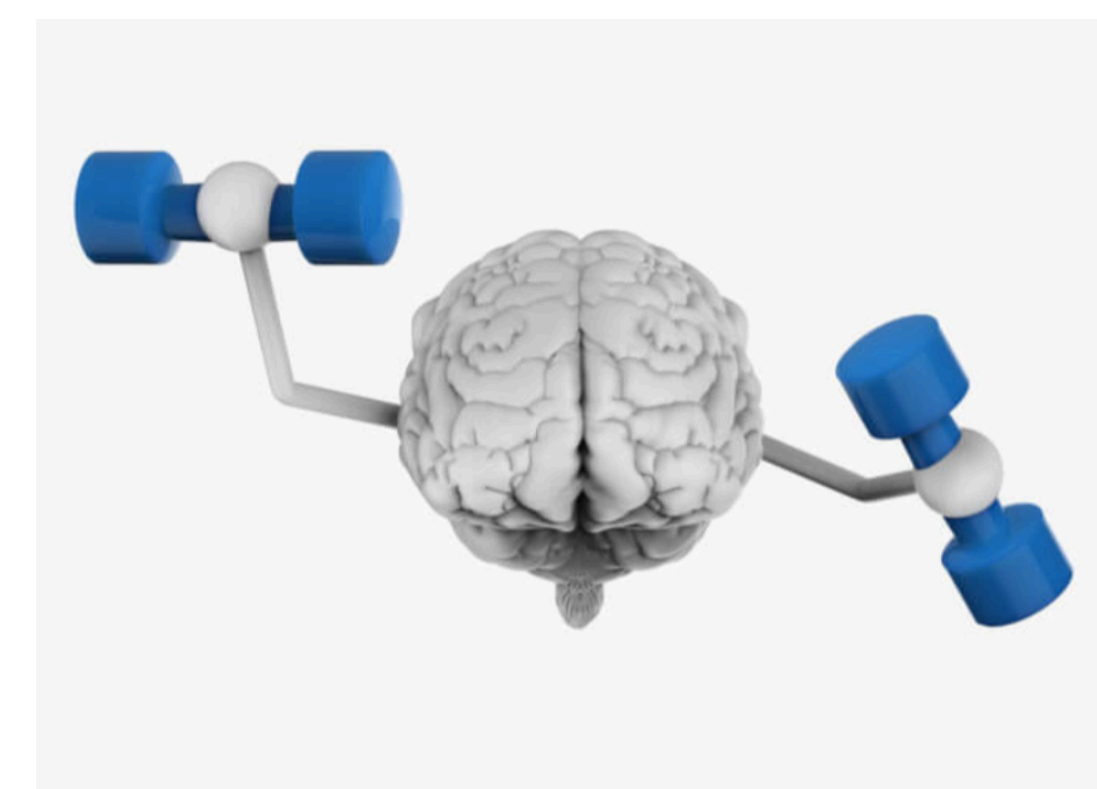
| Attitudes and Beliefs about Chronic Pain | | |
|---|------------|-----------------|
| Clinical Exposure to Chronic Pain | N (%) | HC-PAIRS Scores |
| <25% | 27% (n=6) | 52.3(+/-) 7.1 |
| >25% | 73% (n=16) | 52.5(+/-) 7.9 |
| There was no significant difference in HC-PAIRS mean scores between respondents who had more overall experience and exposure to patients with chronic pain compared to those who had less experience. | | |

| Readiness to Manage Patients with Chronic Pain | |
|--|------------|
| Question | N (%) |
| Felt prepared to manage chronic pain | 62% (n=18) |
| Felt prepared to utilize PNE | 26% (n=6) |
| Felt comfortable using PNE | 52% (n=11) |

| Knowledge of Chronic Pain | | |
|---|------------|------------------|
| Clinical Exposure to chronic pain | N (%) | NPQ Scores |
| <25% | 28% (n=7) | 81.2% (+/-) 7.3 |
| >25% | 72% (n=18) | 67.7% (+/-) 10.8 |
| There was a significant difference in mean NPQ scores between respondents who had more overall experience and exposure to patients with chronic pain compared to those who had less experience. p=.006. | | |

Impact

- The unique feature about this research is: This research explored PT students' attitudes, knowledge, and readiness to treat chronic pain
- Problem solved: Revealed the need for curricular enhancements to improve students' knowledge and readiness to treat chronic pain
- Value: PNE is a highly effective adjunct for PT management of pain and may reduce patients' reliance on opioids.
- Looking ahead: This study will be expanded to evaluate PT programs nationwide to ensure students are adequately prepared to treat patients with chronic pain.



**NORTHEASTERN
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