

Background

- Ensuring optimal care in any healthcare setting is dependent on the personal safety of the provider.
- OSHA reports nearly 75% of violent workplace assault occurs in the healthcare setting.^{1,2}
- According to OSHA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare workers are at four times higher risk of serious injury due to assault in the workplace.
- The nature of workplace abuse can be not only physical, but also verbal, or emotional, and can result in a range of severely detrimental effects.³
- Several factors, such as long wait times, insufficient on-site security, and workers being in an isolated area can contribute to pharmacy personnel being at higher risk of abuse.^{2,4}

Objective

To assess the experience of pharmacy personnel with regards to workplace abuse, whether observed or personally affected, including the nature and impact of abuse.

Methods

Study Design

- A cross-sectional survey-based study, participants composed of pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians
- The study protocol received exempt status approval by the Institutional Review Board.
- Participants were recruited via school mailing lists, social media, and preceptor contacts to complete the online survey using the Qualtrics platform.
- Study period: September 2019 – December 2019

Inclusion Criteria

- Individuals with workplace experience in the pharmacy setting aged 18 to 89 years old.

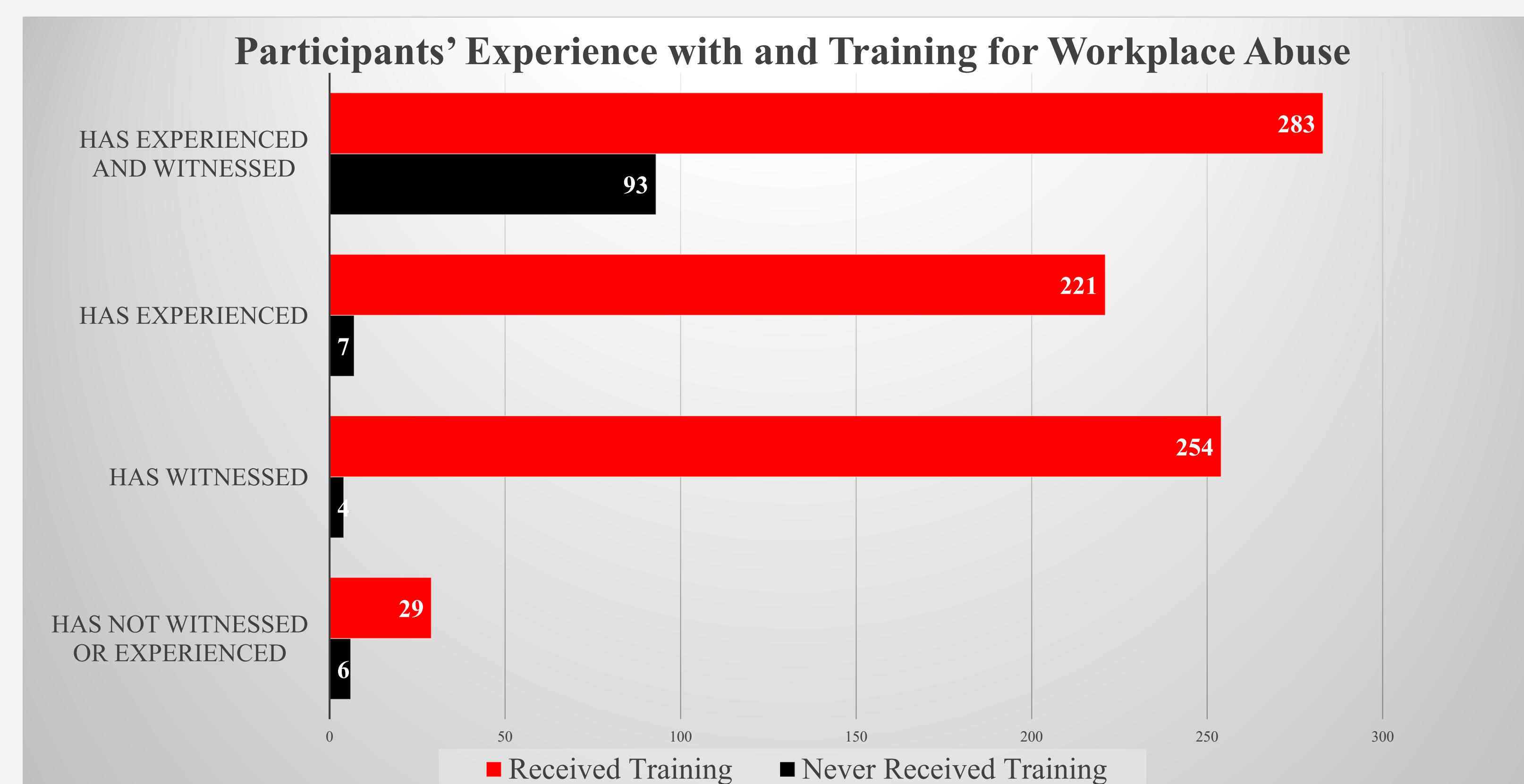
Information Collected

- Demographics: gender, years of pharmacy experience, practice setting, state in which the participant practices, and approximate population of service area.
- Type of abuse experienced directly by the individual or observed abuses of others in the workplace.
- Receipt of workplace abuse training.
- Strategies used in response to incidents of abuse in the workplace.

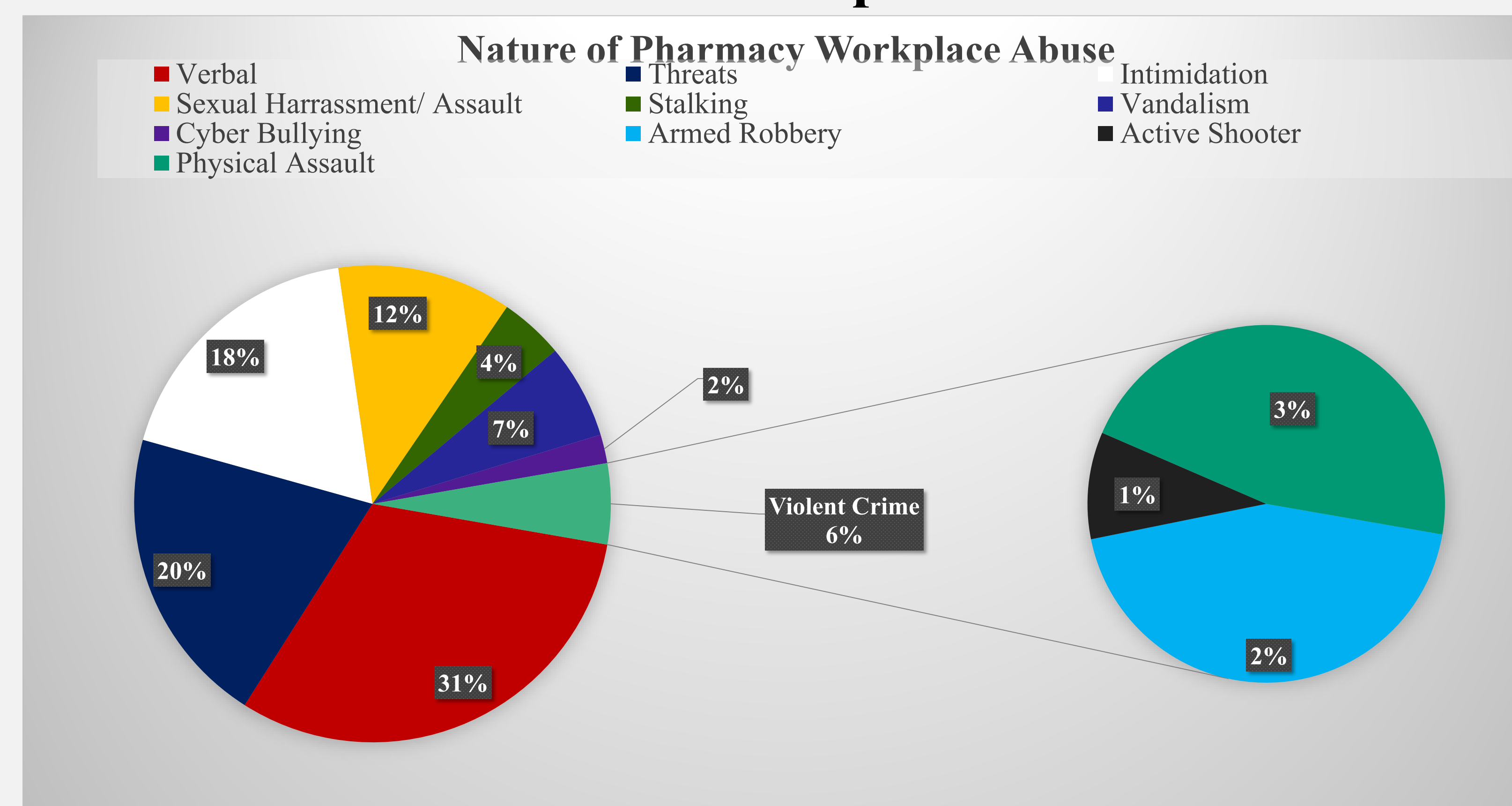
Results

Baseline Characteristics (n=386)			
Characteristic	N, (%)	Characteristic	N, (%)
Sex		Years of Service	
Female	273, (71)	≤ 4	89, (23)
Male	97, (25)	5-9	101, (26)
Position		10-19	85, (22)
Pharmacist	270, (70)	20-29	39, (10)
Student Pharmacist	89, (23)	≥ 30	36, (9)
Pharmacy Technician	21, (5)	Practice Setting	
Service Area Population		Community	237, (61)
Urban (≥ 50,000)	61, (46)	Health System/Hospital	103, (27)
Suburban (2500-50,000)	73, (54)	Academia	34, (9)
Rural (< 2500)	16, (12)	Ambulatory Care	27, (7)

Participant Experience with Abuse

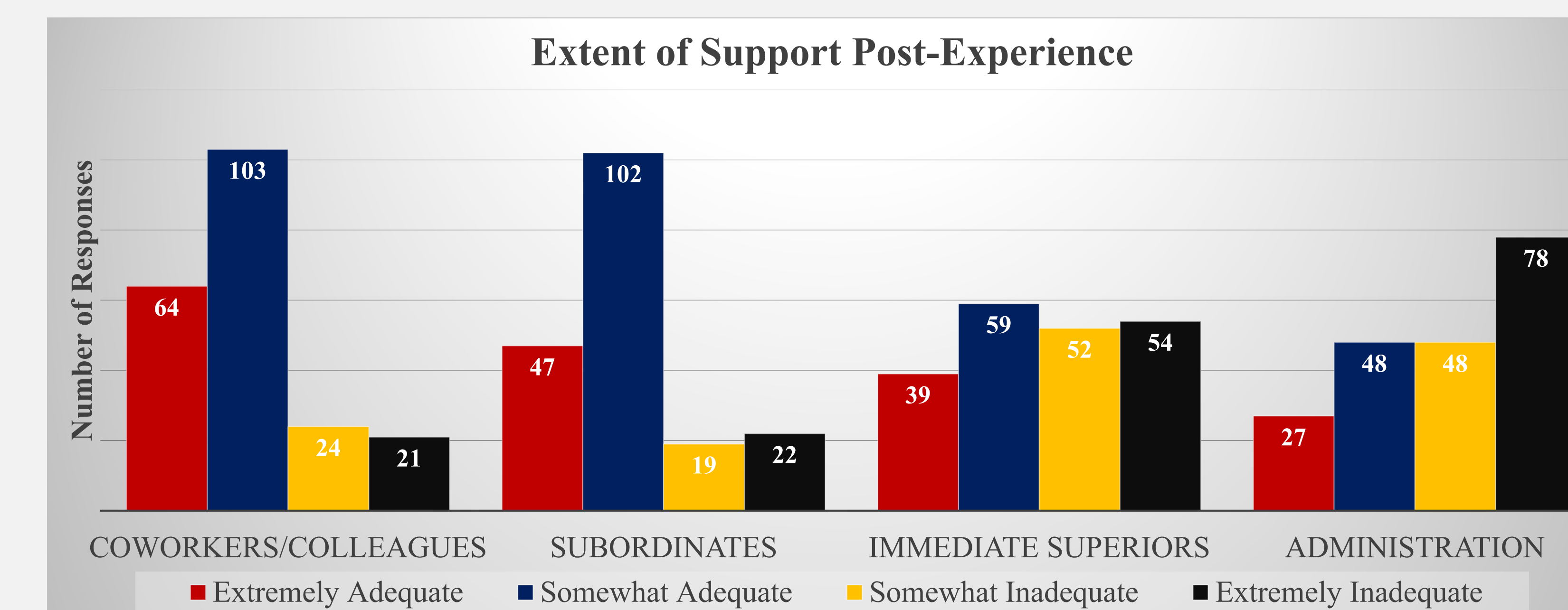


Nature of Workplace Abuse



Results (continued)

Extent of Support Post-Experience



- Among all responses, 83% of participants (n = 321) reported personally experiencing one or more form of abuse and 91% (n = 351) had witnessed the abuse of someone else.
- The most commonly reported case was verbal abuse, followed by personal threats, non-sexual intimidation, and sexual harassment.
- Violent crimes were reported at a rate of 6% and encompassed armed robbery at 2% (n = 41), active shooter event at 1% (n = 9), and physical assault (non-sexual with no firearm) at 3% (n = 43).

Limitations

- Potentially reduced external validity due to difficulty in recruiting participants from outside Illinois and St. Louis area.
- Additional demographic questions added after initial survey launch, and a portion of responses had been collected, potentially skewing residence data.

Conclusions

- This study indicates that there is a high prevalence of workplace abuse experienced by pharmacy workers.
- Despite the current high prevalence of perceived workplace abuse in the pharmacy setting, adequate training and reporting procedures remain inconsistent.
- Increased awareness, education, and training are necessary to prevent and optimize the management of personal safety violations in the pharmacy workforce.

References
1. SEA_59_Workplace_violence_4_13_18_FINAL.pdf. https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA_59_Workplace_violence_4_13_18_FINAL.pdf. Accessed December 3, 2019.
2. OSHA3826.pdf. <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3826.pdf>. Accessed December 3, 2019.
3. Stress-Related Health Harm from Workplace Bullying | <https://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/impact/physical-health-harm/>. Accessed December 3, 2019.
4. Levens H. Workplace Violence in Health Care: Recognized but not Regulated. :14.