

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.
- Study period: September 2019 – December 2019

Inclusion Criteria

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

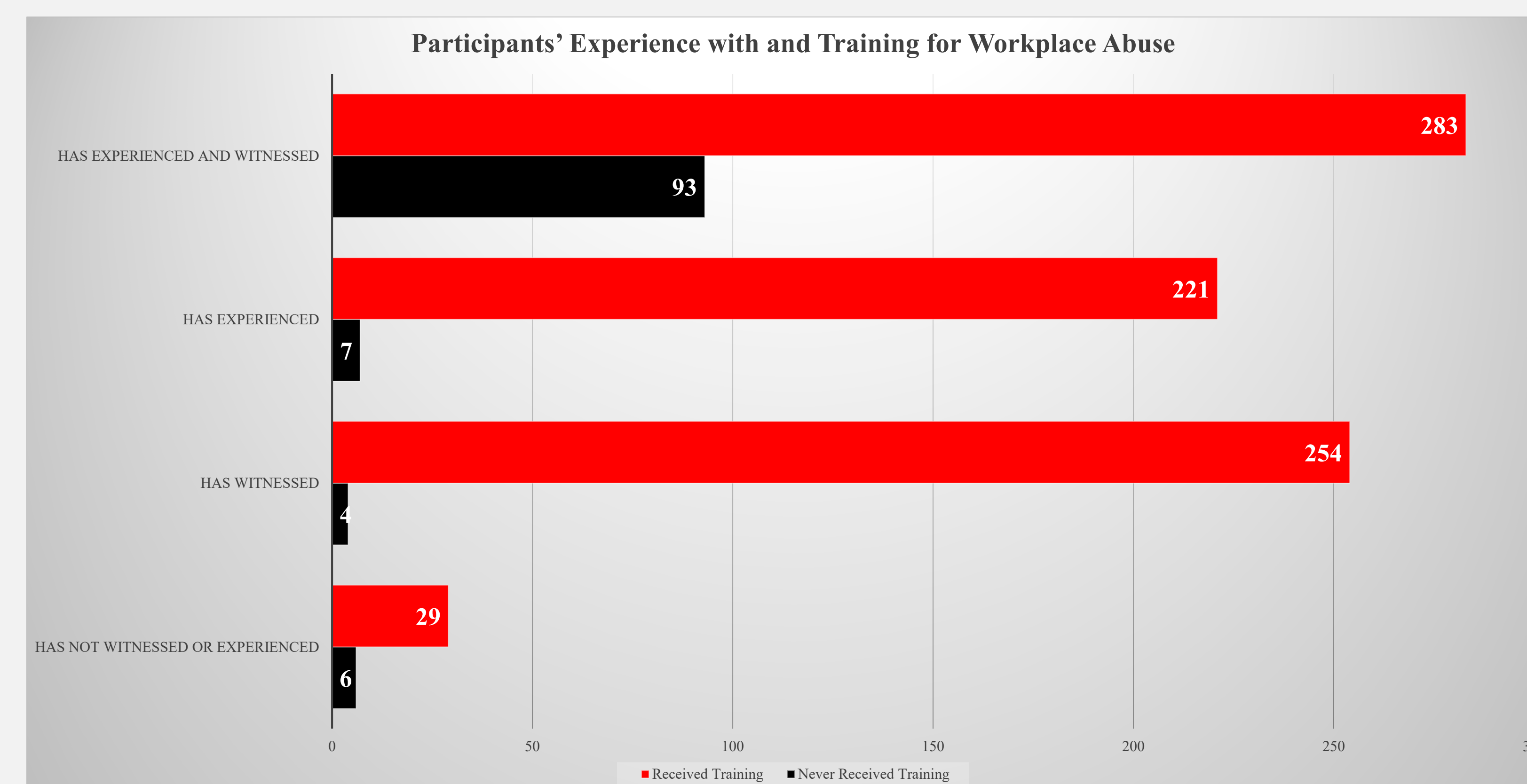
Information Collected

- Demographic information including gender, years of pharmacy experience, practice setting, state in which the participant practices, and approximate population of service area.
- Survey included questions regarding participants' experience with verbal abuse, threatening behaviors, cyber-bullying, vandalism and theft, armed robbery, active shooter incidents, physical assault, sexual harassment, intimidation, and stalking as well as their level of training regarding workplace abuse and how the incident was handled before and after occurring.

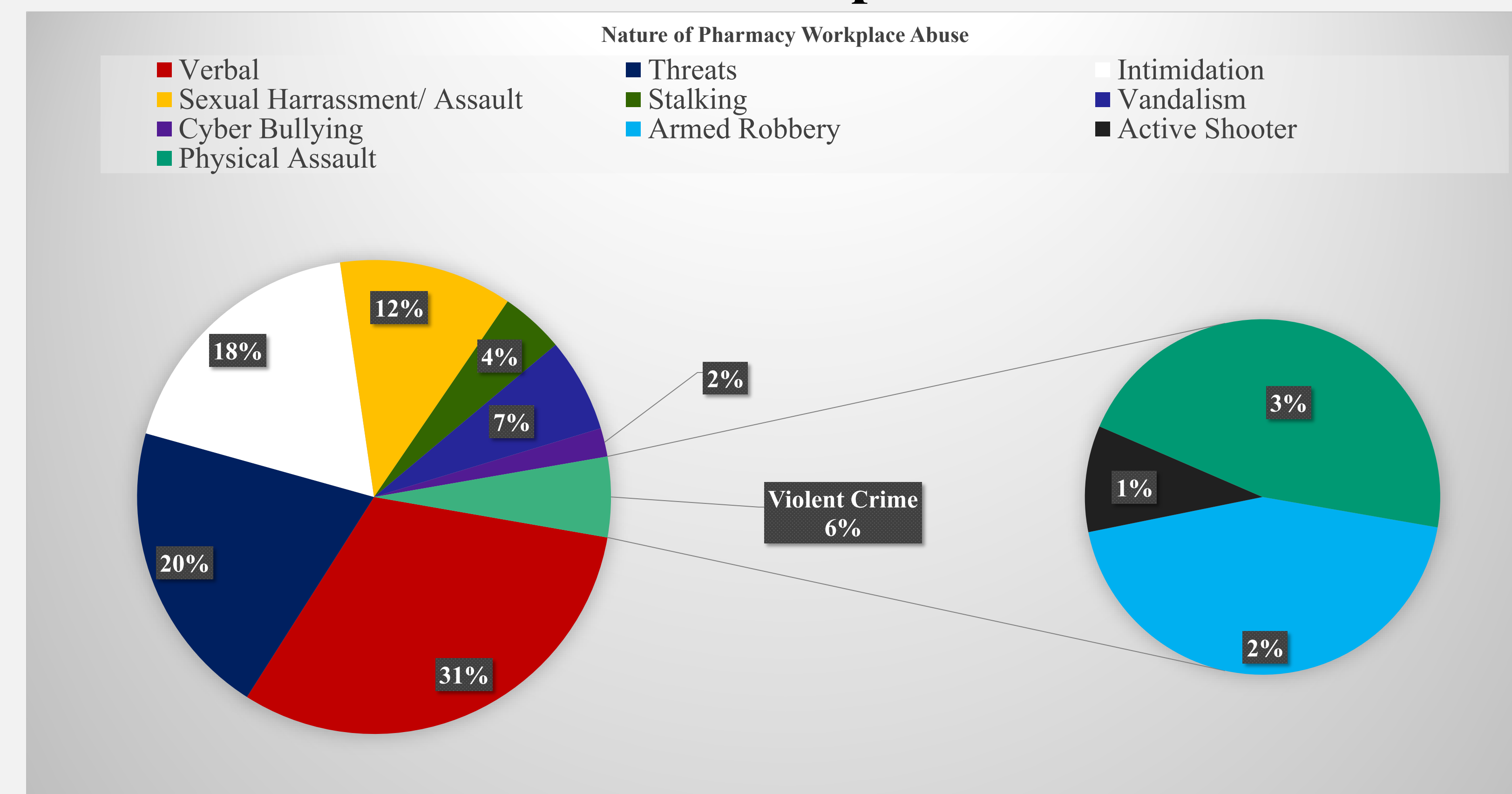
Results

Baseline Characteristics (n=262)			
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

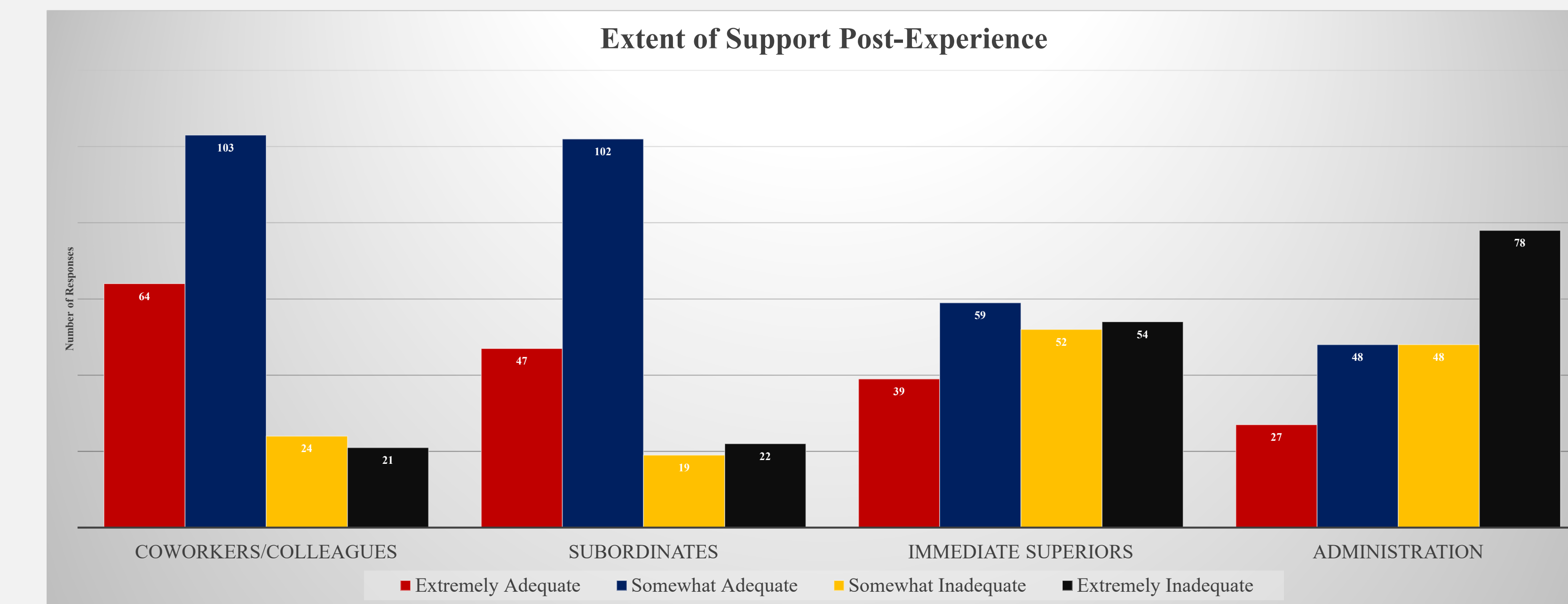


Nature of Workplace Abuse



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 most participants being residents of the St. Louis area.
- Additional demographic questions added after publishing and responses had already been collected, potentially skewing residence data.

Conclusions

- Despite the current high prevalence of perceived workplace abuse in the pharmacy setting, adequate training and reporting procedures are inconsistently available to these personnel.
- Improved awareness of the importance of properly addressing safety concerns in pharmacy practice would prove beneficial to those at risk.

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.