

Deaf Mental Health: Examining Mental Health Clinicians' Knowledge of Treating Deaf Patients

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Motivation

- Around 1.9% of the U.S. population is deaf, making for a deaf population around the size of the city of Los Angeles^{1,2}
- Depression and anxiety disorders may occur at higher rates in deaf adults compared to hearing adults. According to the estimated rate in one study, around 1.6 million deaf adults in the U.S. likely have depression or anxiety disorder (1/4 the population of L.A.)³
- Yet, this large section of the population is consistently given inadequate mental healthcare⁴

Reasons for Inadequate Mental Healthcare Found in Previous Research

- Clinicians not knowing their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Lack of clinician knowledge about deaf experiences
- Lack of clinician knowledge about the interpreting process
- Lack of clinician knowledge about sign languages

Research Question(s)

- How does mental health clinicians' knowledge about those four areas stack up against previous studies of physicians in general?
- How much do mental health clinicians know about how deafness impacts mental health work specifically?
- Is there a correlation between knowledge and training/percentage of deaf people in their area/education level?

Literature Review

- There have been very few studies that have asked physicians in general (not specifically mental health clinicians) about their knowledge around treating deaf patients
- 36% of physicians reported knowing little or nothing about their responsibilities under the ADA⁵
- 71% of participants provided incorrect answers about who makes decisions about reasonable accommodations for patients with disabilities⁵
- A survey like this has not been done on mental health clinicians in specific

Methodology

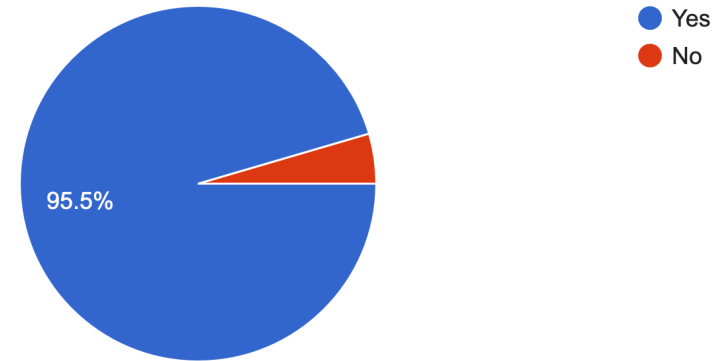
- A **survey consisting of 71 questions** was sent out over email to mental health clinicians from the following states: AR, KY, ME, MI, MT, NM, NJ, OK, WV using emails from the publicly-accessible APA Psychologist Locator
- Sent to 634 Clinicians
- Survey consists of 5 sections:
 - Experience with Deafness
 - ADA-Related Questions
 - Deaf Culture/Experience Knowledge Questions
 - Questions Specific to Mental Health
 - Personal and Professional Characteristics
- Participants had the option to opt in for an **interview over Zoom**
- After the study concludes taking new responses, 10 of the participants will receive \$50 Amazon gift cards

Preliminary Findings

- Survey was sent 1/29, first follow-up email sent 2/5
- 22 Responses to the General Survey
- 10 People Opted-In to a Zoom Interview
- 3.6% Email Bounce Rate

24. For academic purposes, the next couple of sections will ask you about your knowledge of the ADA and deafness and mental health. Please do not ..., please select "No", to move to the next session.

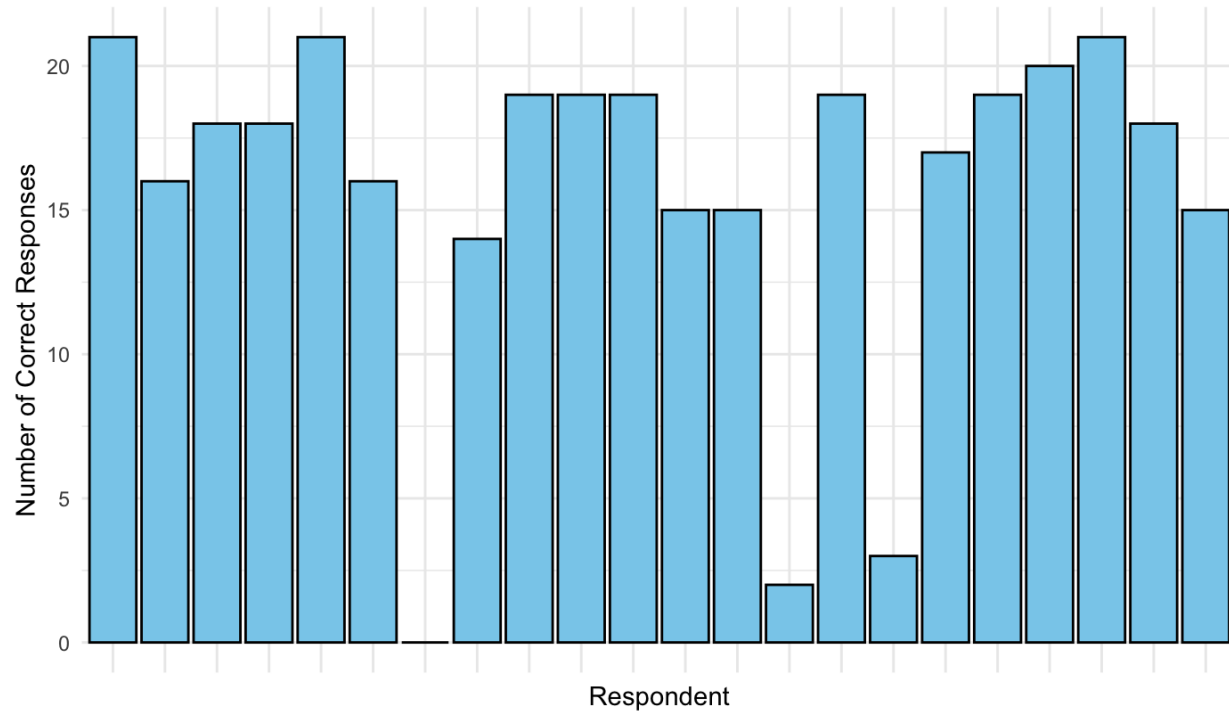
22 responses



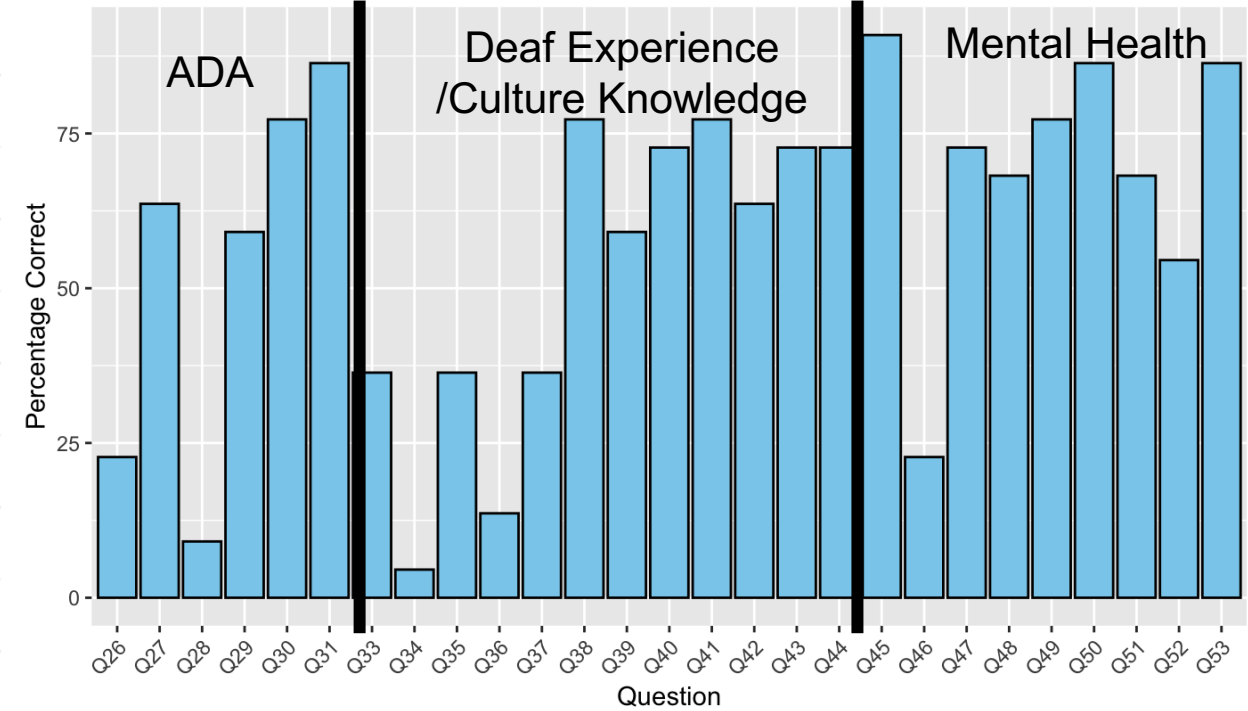
Preliminary Findings



Correct Responses for Each Respondent (Out of 27)

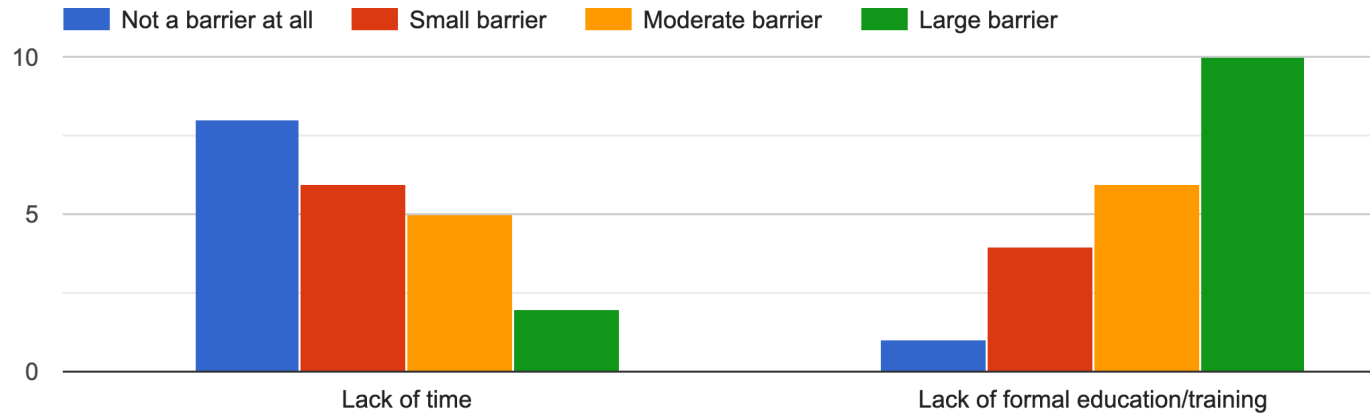


Percentage of Correct Responses for Each Question



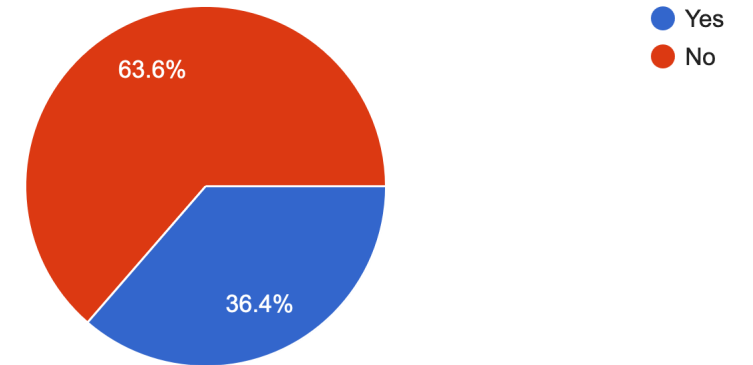
Preliminary Findings

Lack of formal education seems to be a relevant barrier for proper care

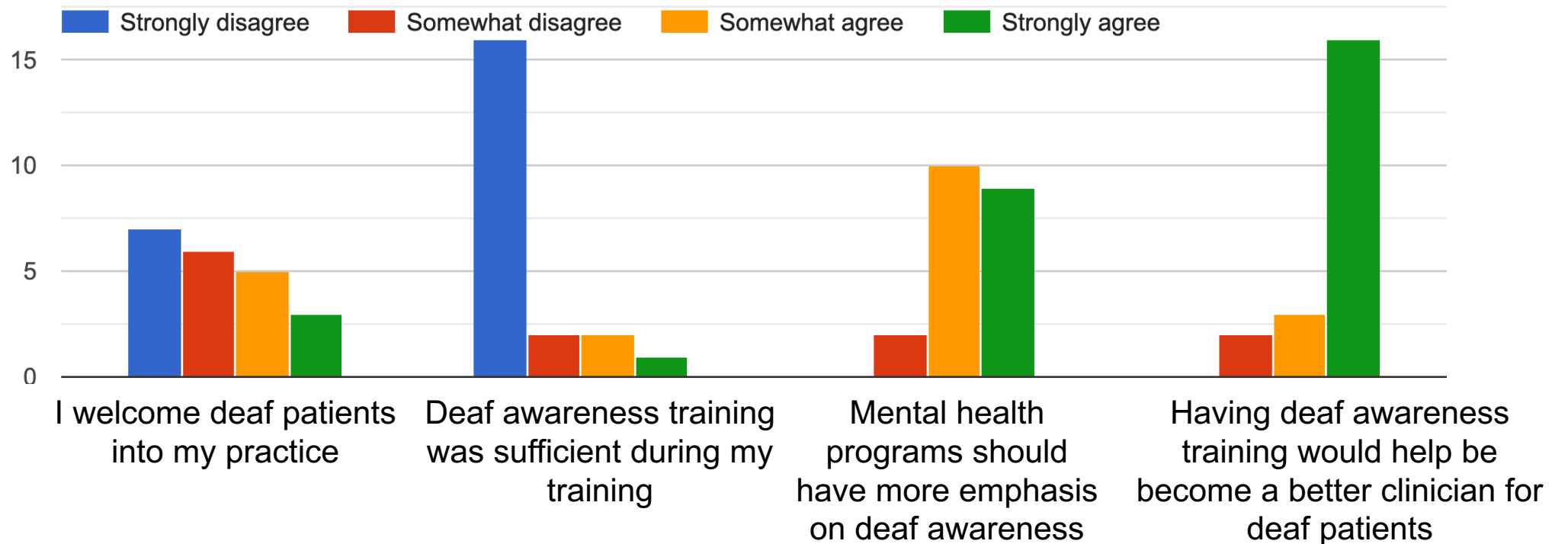


15. Did you have any Deaf awareness training in your education?

22 responses



Preliminary Findings



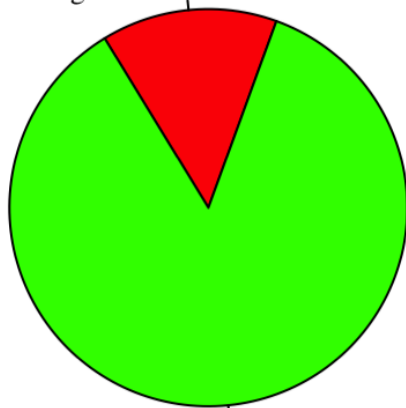
Concerns

- Since some people didn't fill out every question in the test section, I cannot omit NA variables and preserve the data
- Clinicians still not understanding that you do not need to have deaf patients to fill out the survey
- Low response rate

Lack of Attention

If you are reading this question, answer 'Do not know'

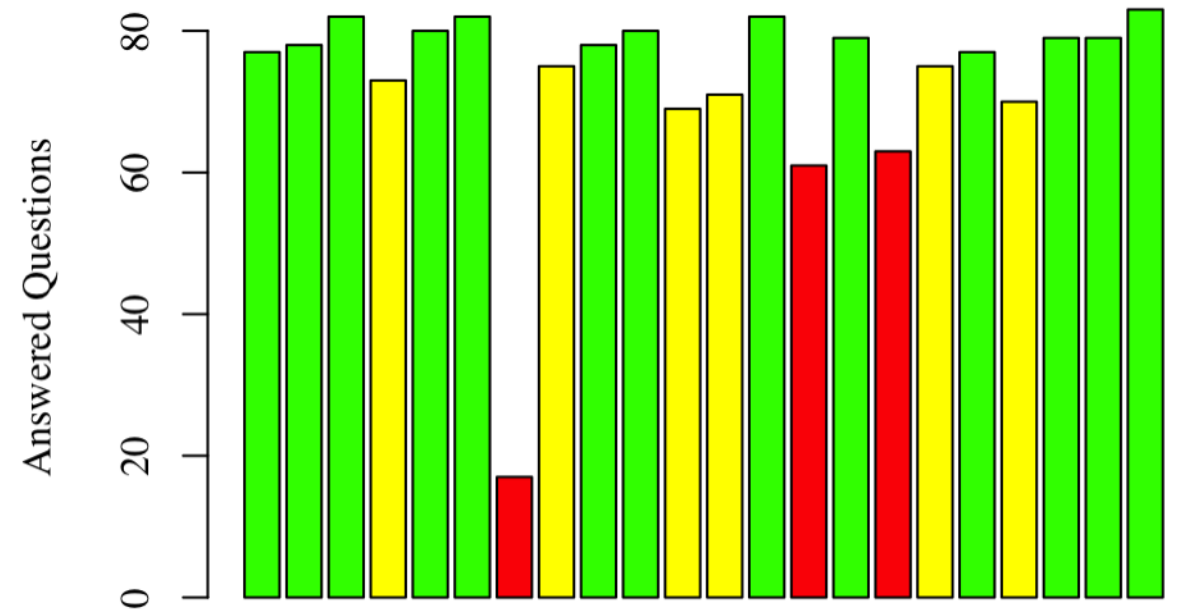
A. Deaf patients are discriminated against : 3



C. Do not know : 18

Difficult Interpretation of Missing Answers

Answered Questions



References

- [1] National Deaf Center (2021). Research & Data. <https://nationaldeafcenter.org/resources/research-data/>
- [2] U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). City and Town Population Totals: 2020-2022. Retrieved December 10, 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html#v2022>
- [3] Kushalnagar, P., Reesman, J., Holcomb, T., & Ryan, C. (2019). Prevalence of Anxiety or Depression Diagnosis in Deaf Adults. *Journal of deaf studies and deaf education*, 24(4), 378–385. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enz017>
- [4] Hamerdinger, S. H., & Crump, C. J. (2022). Sign language interpreters and clinicians working together in mental health settings. *The Routledge Handbook of Sign Language Translation and Interpreting*.
- [5] Iezzoni, L. I., Rao, S. R., Ressler, J., Bolcic-Jankovic, D., Agaronnik, N. D., Lagu, T., ... & Campbell, E. G. (2022). US Physicians' Knowledge About The Americans With Disabilities Act And Accommodation Of Patients With Disability: Study examines what physicians know about the Americans With Disabilities Act and what is done to accommodate patients with a disability. *Health Affairs*, 41(1), 96-104.