

BACKGROUND

- Medical students on clinical rotations are often exposed to emotionally distressing cases, potentially resulting in emotional exhaustion (Richardson et al., 2016).
- While there are studies on emotional distress in providers from many specialties, very few have focused on this problem in Neurology, with even fewer focusing on medical students (Campbell et al., 2022; Haglund et al., 2009).
- Faculty at UKCOM indicated an interest in determining if emotional exhaustion was present in students on the Neurology rotation.
- Thus, we created a survey to gather real-time data on the emotional experiences of current third-year (M3) medical students following the Neurology/Emergency Medicine clerkship.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the presence of emotional exhaustion in third-year medical students during their Neurology/Emergency Medicine rotation.

METHODS

A confidential, IRB-approved survey was emailed to all M3 students at the UKCOM campuses in Lexington, Bowling Green, Northern Kentucky, and Morehead as they completed their Neurology/Emergency Medicine clerkship. The survey rolled out with the associated NBME Shelf exams.

Students provided qualitative insight into their experiences with distressing cases and coping mechanisms they used during the rotation. They also completed the ProQoL survey to provide quantitative data.

\$10 compensation upon survey completion.

Real-time feedback throughout the academic year that can guide clerkship directors as they prepare future students for the block and plan for long-term curricular interventions.

RESULTS

Preparedness in Students Who Did Not Report Emotional Exhaustion

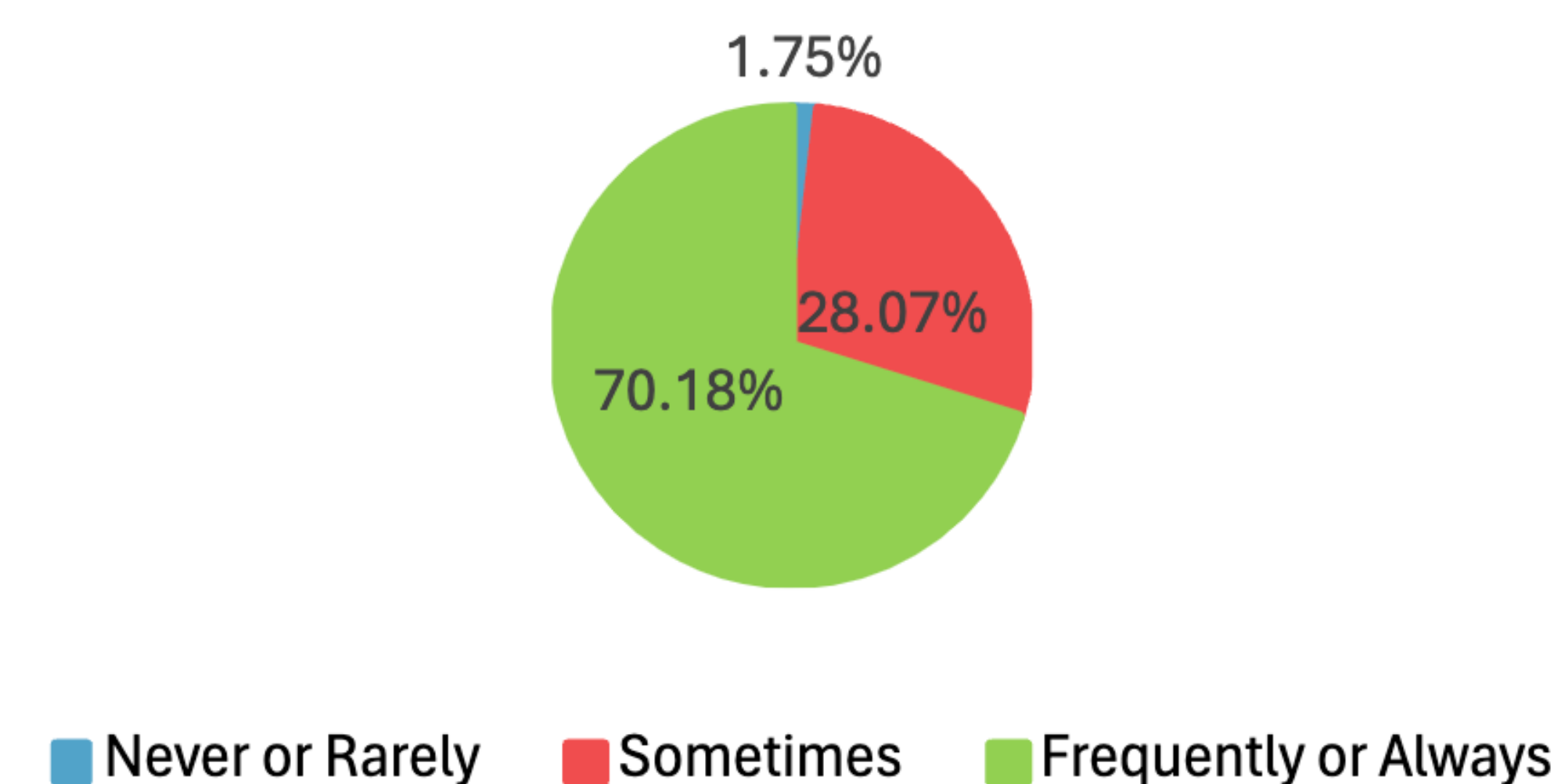


Figure 1. Preparedness in Students Who Did Not Report Emotional Exhaustion. The vast majority of students who did not experience emotional exhaustion reported frequently or always feeling prepared to handle emotionally distressing cases. Very few reported never or rarely feeling prepared.

Preparedness in Students Who Reported Emotional Exhaustion

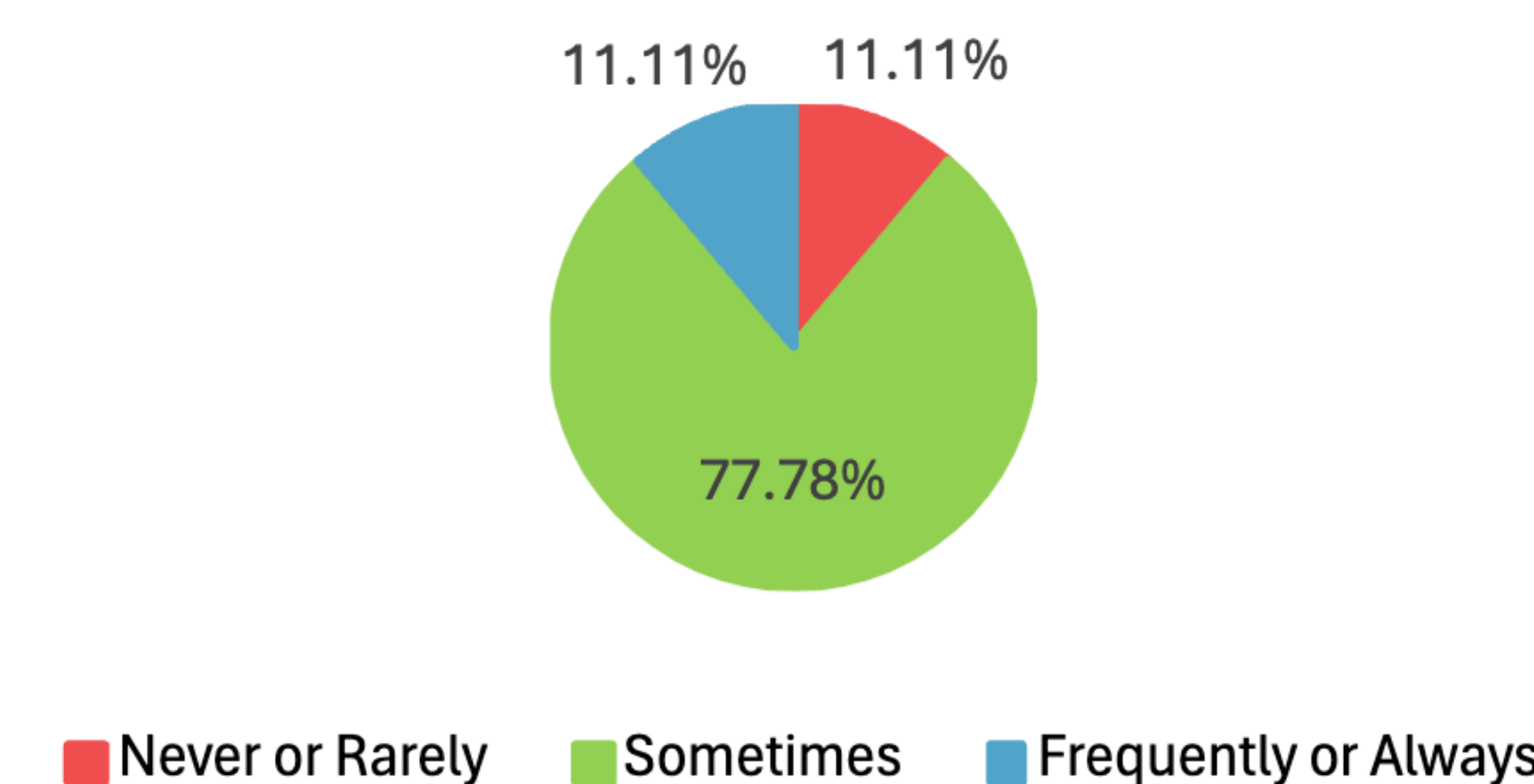


Figure 2. Preparedness in Students Who Reported Emotional Exhaustion. The vast majority of students who experienced emotional exhaustion during the rotation reported that they only sometimes felt prepared to handle emotionally distressing cases.

Hobbies/Activities Impact on Emotional Exhaustion

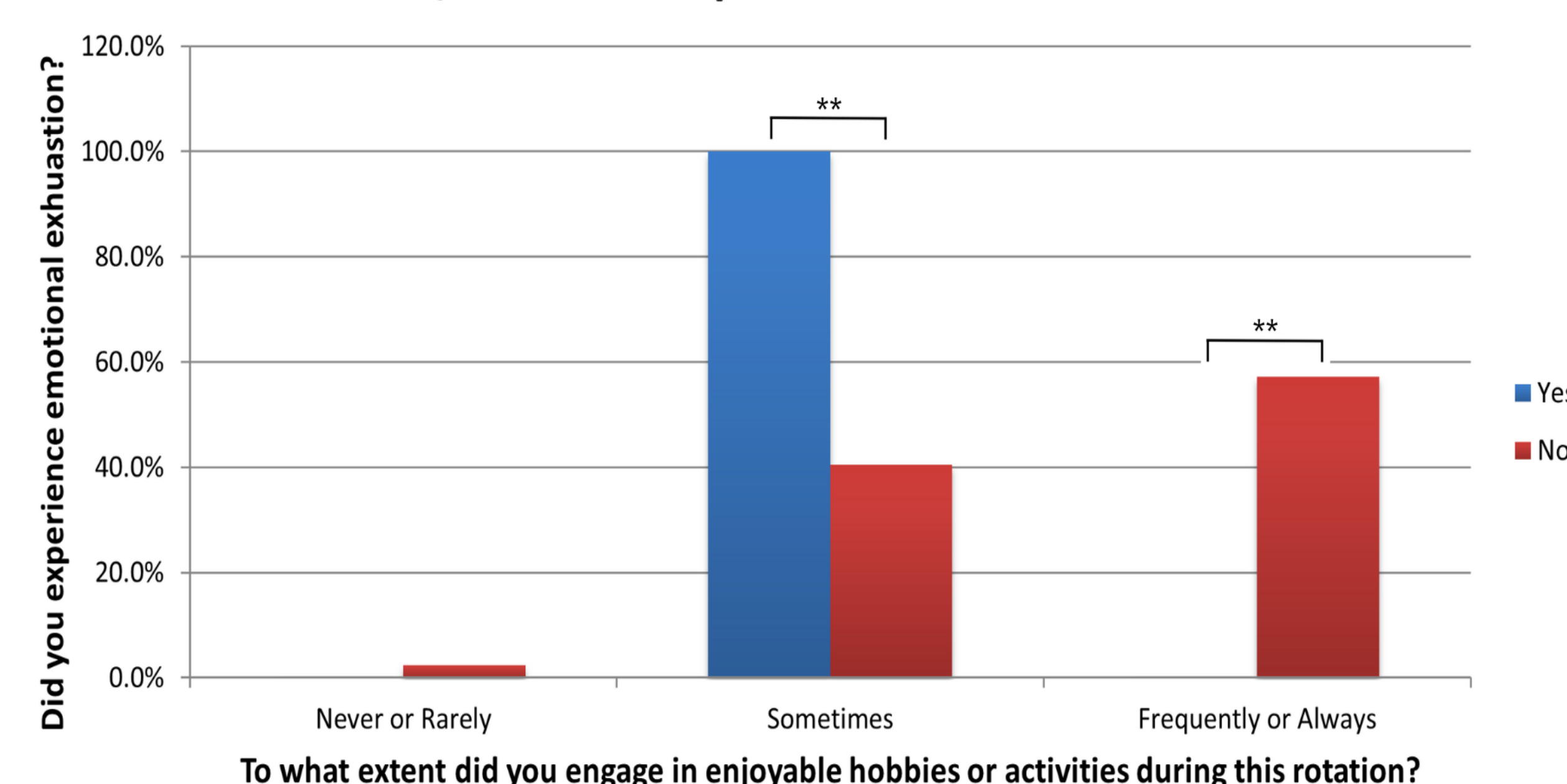


Figure 3. Engagement in Hobbies in Students Who Reported Emotional Exhaustion Compared to Those Who Did Not. Emotional exhaustion was reported less in students who frequently or always engaged in hobbies during this rotation ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, increased emotional exhaustion was seen among those who only sometimes participated in these activities ($p < 0.05$).

RESULTS cont.

Themes for Causes of Emotional Exhaustion

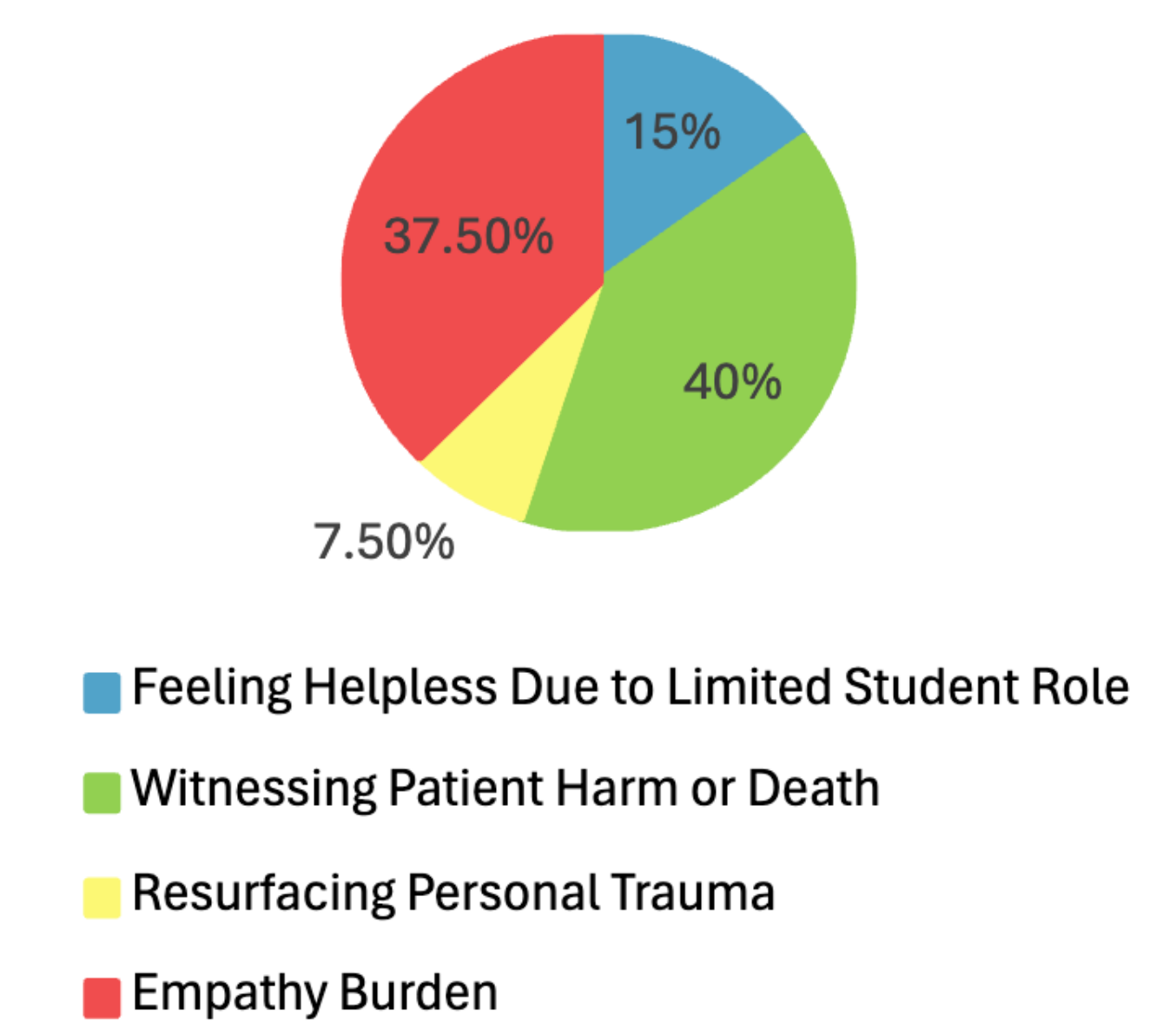


Figure 4. Themes for Causes of Emotional Exhaustion. Open response results coalesced around four consistent themes describing emotional exhaustion rooted in 1) witnessing patient harm or death; 2) empathy burden; 3) feeling helpless due to limited student role; and 4) resurfacing personal trauma.

CONCLUSIONS

- Our results indicate that prior preparation of students to handle emotionally distressing cases is vital for their success in this clerkship.
- Students who only sometimes engaged in hobbies reported emotional exhaustion while those who frequently participated in these activities did not, indicating that coping mechanisms should be encouraged during this clerkship.
- While emotional exhaustion can be experienced in different ways, we identified four common themes among the M3 students during this rotation.
- Surveys like these can be used in future research to determine what makes students feel prepared to be successful and how the curriculum can be changed to limit emotional exhaustion during this clerkship.

REFERENCES

- Campbell, J., Wasey, A., Ozuturan, I. U., & Jeanmonod, R. (2022). Compassion Fatigue and Satisfaction among Turkish Emergency Medicine Residents Using the Professional Quality of Life Scale. *Journal of emergencies, trauma, and shock*, 15(2), 77–82. https://doi.org/10.4103/jets.jets_62_21
- Haglund, M. E., aan het Rot, M., Cooper, N. S., Nestadt, P. S., Muller, D., Southwick, S. M., & Charney, D. S. (2009). Resilience in the third year of medical school: a prospective study of the associations between stressful events occurring during clinical rotations and student well-being. *Academic Medicine*, 84(2), 258-268. 10.1097/ACM.0b013e31819381b1.
- Richardson, D., Jaber, S., Chan, S., Jesse, M., Kaur, H. and Sangha, R. (2016) Self-Compassion and Empathy: Impact on Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress in Medical Training. *Open Journal of Epidemiology*, 6, 161-166. doi: 10.4236/ojepi.2016.63017.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the UK Department of Neurology for funding this project.