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Perceived & Personal Mental Health Stigma

Katie White

Utah State University, a01955569@usu.edu

River Jarman

Utah State University, riverjarman@usu.edu

Brenden Jones

Utah State University, brendenjones.work@gmail.com

Gabrielle Archambault

Utah State University, 13gabrielle13@gmail.com

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Perceived & Personal Mental Health Stigma

an exploration of stigmatizing beliefs in college students

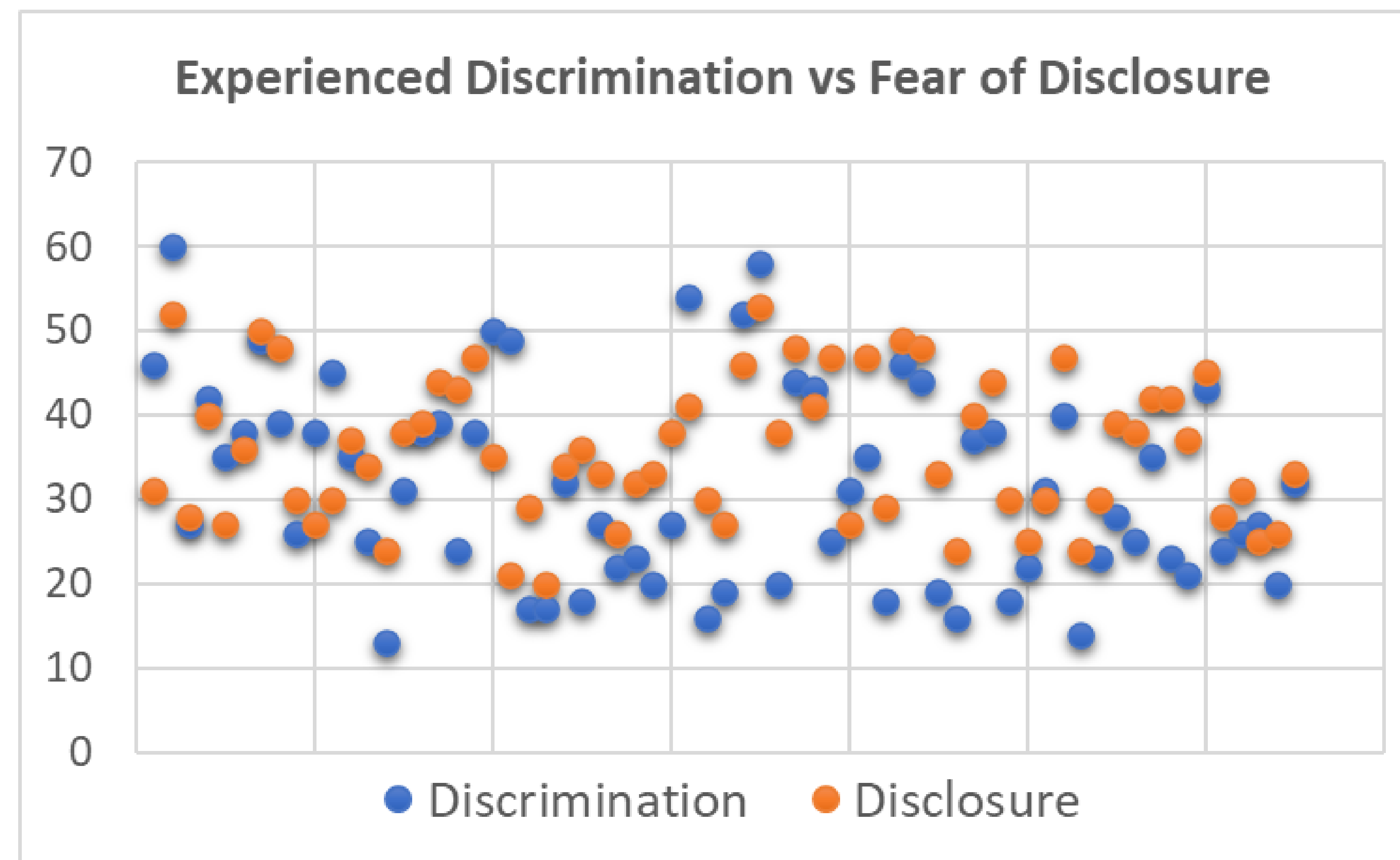
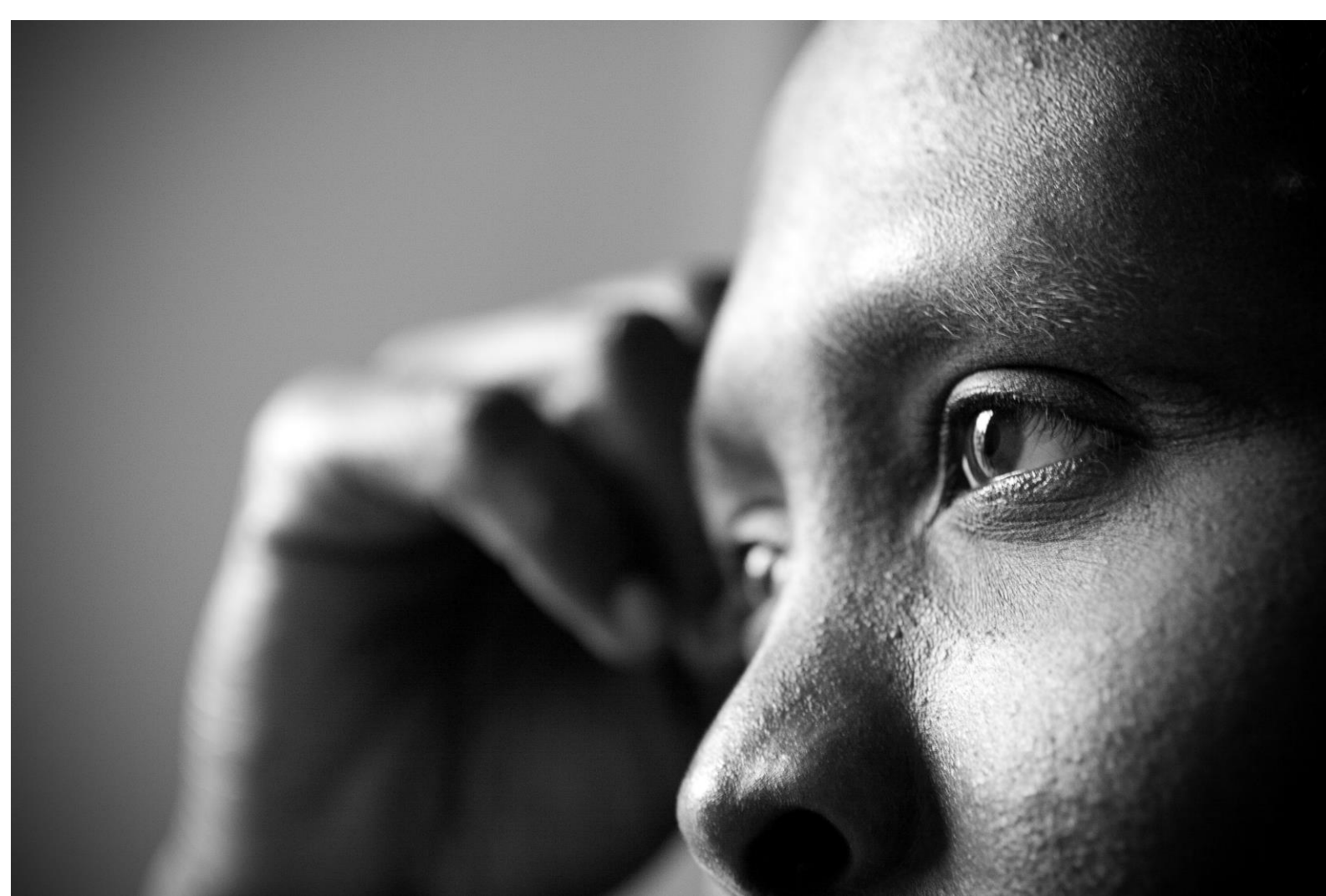
Introduction

Stigmatizing beliefs regarding mental health and illness have been a pervasive issue for centuries. Public stigma can have a profound effect on people struggling with their mental health.

Studies have shown that stigma significantly influences whether a person will seek treatment for their mental health struggles.

People can experience stigma differently and to different degrees. Research shows that background factors, such as culture and religion, can affect perspectives on mental health and illness.

Our research explores varying aspects of stigma as a baseline assessment of students at Utah State. Our study focused on students who reported having struggled with their mental health at one time or another.



T-test on the discrimination section and disclosure section determined $p < 0.05$

Methods

We composed a three-part questionnaire, including demographics, to survey students at Utah State about mental health and illness.

Day's Mental Illness Stigma Scale was used to measure stigmatizing beliefs about people with a mental illness.

The Mental Health Stigma Scale was used to measure personal and perceived stigma.

Data were analyzed through Excel and descriptive statistics were generated.

Results

Results were broken down into ten sections: treatability, relationship disruption, hygiene, anxiety, visibility, recovery, professional efficacy, discrimination, disclosure, and positive aspects.

Many participants reported positive attitudes toward their own mental health problems and scored on the lower end for stigmatizing beliefs.

Despite a positive outlook, many participants also reported fear of having other people find out about their mental health problems.

“Stigma develops when persons hold negative stereotypes regarding mental illness. These stereotypes results in prejudice which further lead to discrimination.”

Rohit Garg. (2019). A cross-sectional study of self-stigma and discrimination among patients with depression

Conclusion

This study adds to our understanding of specific stigma beliefs, specificity being key to pinpointing where intervention could be useful.

These data are limited due to volunteer bias and homogeneity of the sample. Still, the exploratory nature of this study provides direction for further research.

- **Future studies** could explore the fear of disclosure.
- Investigate the high scores on the visibility section of our questionnaire.
- Qualitative studies of students experiencing mental health problems could give insight into discrimination and prejudice on campus.