

Pain Dismissal, Anxiety, and Depression in Emerging Adults with Chronic Pain

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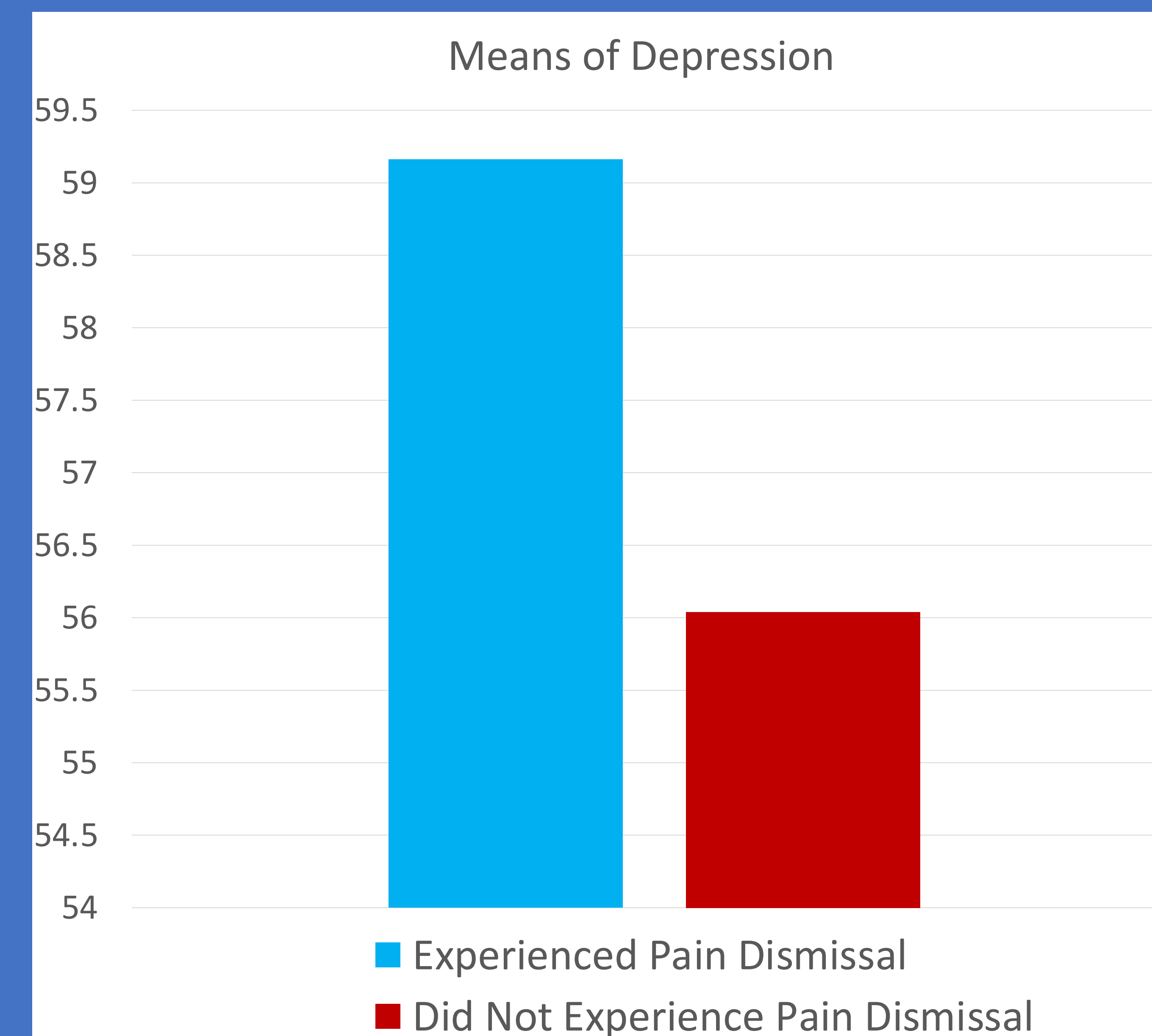
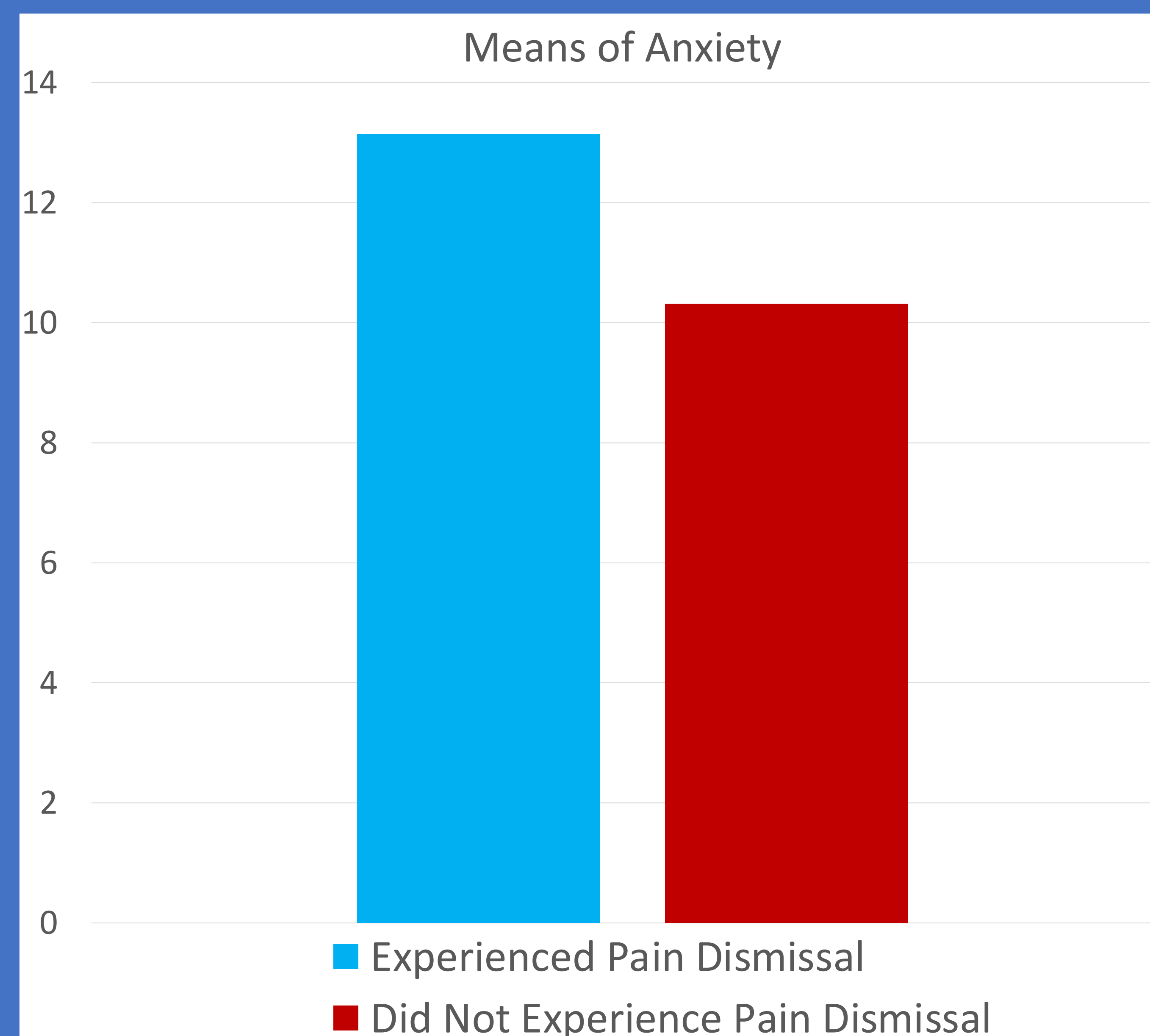
BACKGROUND

- An estimated 12% of emerging adults experience chronic pain (Murray et al., 2022).
- Many emerging adults with chronic pain who elect to disclose their symptoms or pain status experience someone denying their issues, otherwise known as pain dismissal.
- Individuals with chronic pain are at increased risk for anxiety and depression.
- The current study determines if anxiety and depression symptoms are higher among emerging adults with chronic pain who have experienced pain dismissal.

METHODS

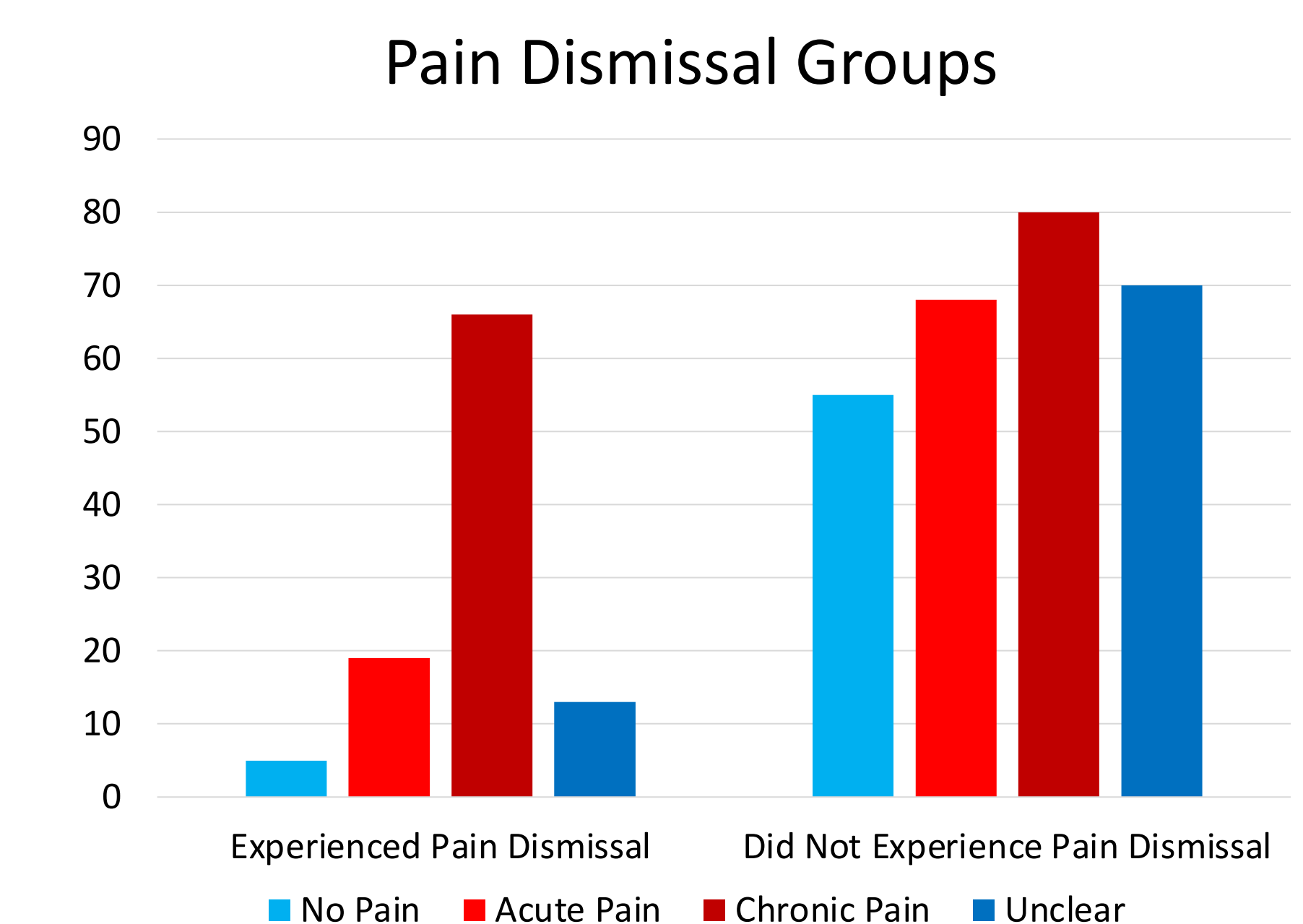
- Participants ($N = 419$; $m_{age} = 19.44$, $SD_{age} = 1.51$) enrolled in a Midwestern United States University completed an online survey about their health. Most participants were assigned female at birth ($n = 332$, 79.2%), identified as women ($n = 309$, 73.7%), and were of Caucasian background ($n = 388$, 92.6%).
- Chi-square analyses compared pain dismissal between those with chronic, acute, and no pain.
- Within the chronic pain group, t-test analyses compared those who had and had not experienced pain dismissal in terms of their scores on the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale and the PROMIS Depression Short Form 8A.

Chronic pain in emerging adults, coupled with dismissal of their pain from others, is associated with higher symptoms of anxiety and depression.



RESULTS

- Emerging adults with chronic pain experienced pain dismissal more than those with no pain or acute pain ($\chi^2(3) = 41.34$, $p < .001$).

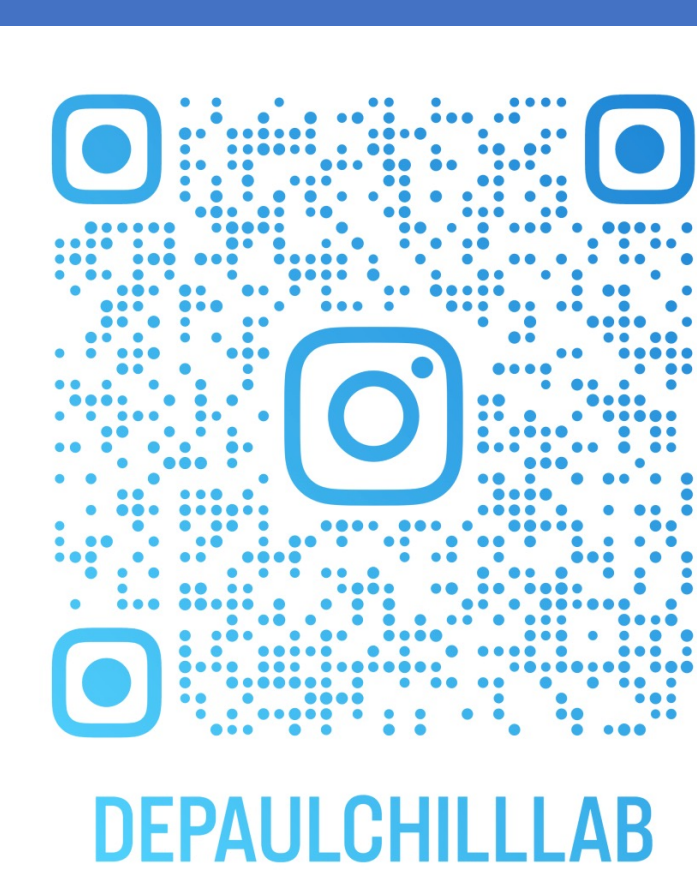


DISCUSSION

- Future studies should explore the reasons why emerging adults with chronic pain feel that they are not believed by others.
- The relationships between anxiety and pain dismissal as well as depression and pain dismissal could be bidirectional.
- Research is limited since the survey was conducted with college students only, this sample does not make up the entire emerging adults with chronic pain population.
- Social support (friends, peers, parents) is important for this population.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I would like to thank all contributors as well as my mentor Dr. Susan Tran of the Pediatric CHILL Lab at DePaul University.



Lab Instagram

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Abstract

