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Resiliency, Anxiety and Depression Amongst DPT Students - A Survey During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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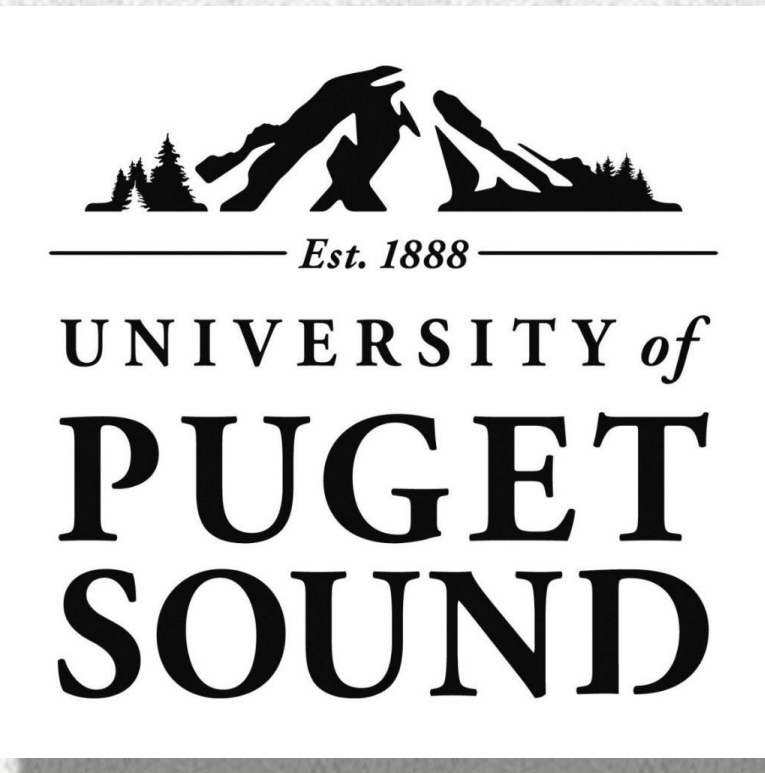
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Resiliency, Anxiety and Depression Amongst DPT Students – A Survey During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Corbitt M, SPT; Odo A, SPT; Boyles R, PT, DSc, OCS, FAAOMPT

Introduction

- Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs are challenging due to the academic rigor, fast-paced learning environment, tuition cost, and feelings of inadequacy.
- Resiliency is a product of many factors that involve the ability to cope with stressors presented in daily life.
- Higher levels of resiliency has been associated with lower levels of depression, stress, and anxiety. This negative correlation may be key for preventing burnout, increasing life satisfaction, and prolonging careers for DPT graduates.
- To date, resiliency, anxiety and depression has been studied in the general graduate health care student population, but not specifically students of physical therapy.

Purpose: To assess resiliency, anxiety and depression across three DPT cohorts at the University of Puget Sound at a single time point during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Methods

This cross-sectional study utilized an anonymous, voluntary online survey containing:

- Demographic questions
- The Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 25)
- Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)

Results

	HADS Anxiety means (SD)	p-value	HADS Depression means (SD)	p-value	CD-RISC means (SD)	p-value
c/o 2020 (n=16)	7.81 (4.02)		3.07 (2.20)		78.06 (8.25)	
c/o 2021 (n=23)	7.09 (4.25)		2.96 (2.60)		77.65 (11.92)	
c/o 2022 (n=22)	9.59 (4.59)		3.36 (3.13)		75.23 (12.47)	
overall (n=61)	8.18 (4.39)	0.15	3.07 (2.68)	0.8	76.89 (11.18)	0.99
U.S. Population					80.7	0.01

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for resiliency, anxiety, and depression. 3-way ANOVA ran comparing 3 cohorts for HADS anxiety and depression. T-test ran comparing overall CD-RISC scores to US population.

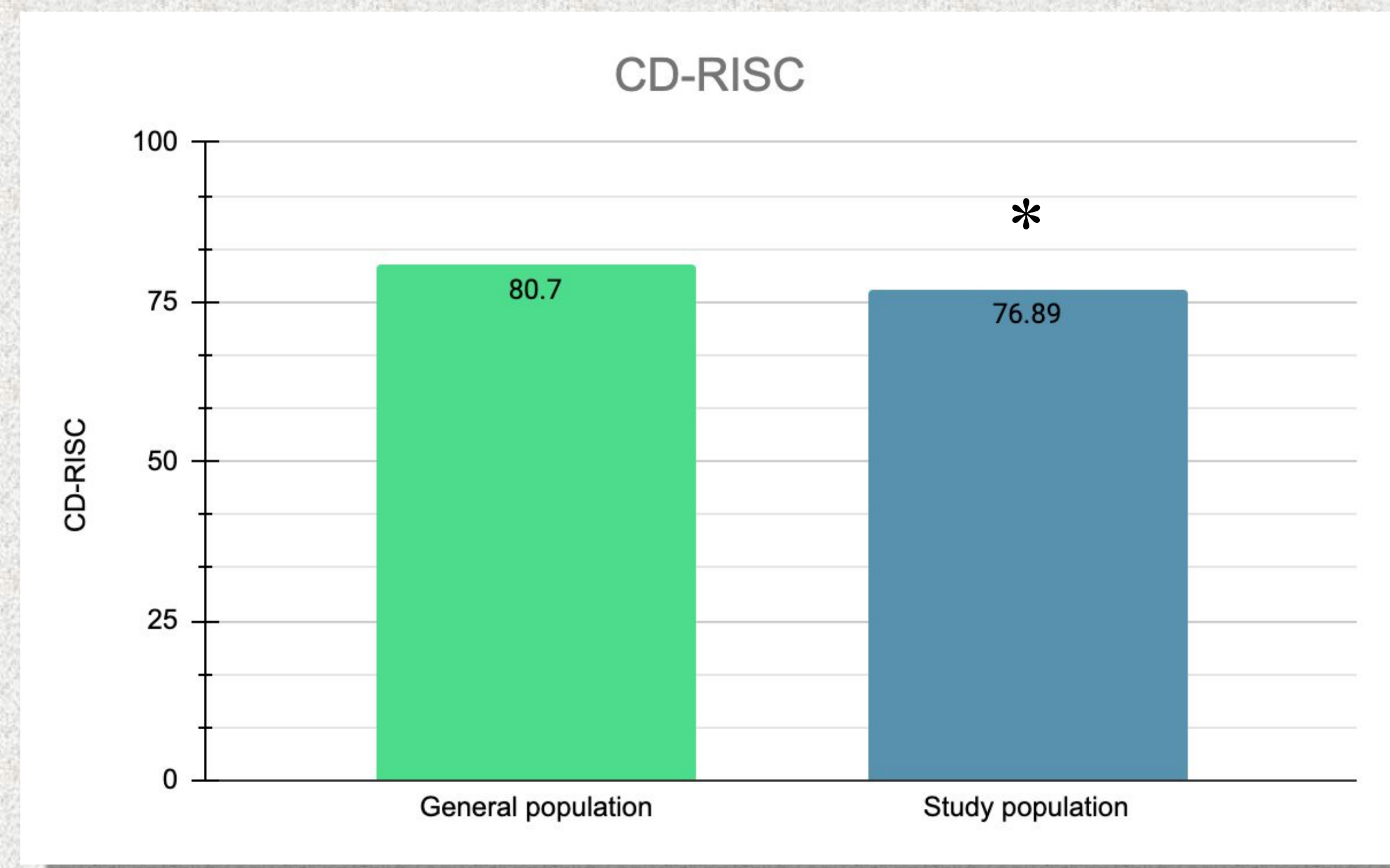


Figure 1. CD RISC scores comparing study population to general US population. Asterisk indicates statistically significant difference, p < 0.05.

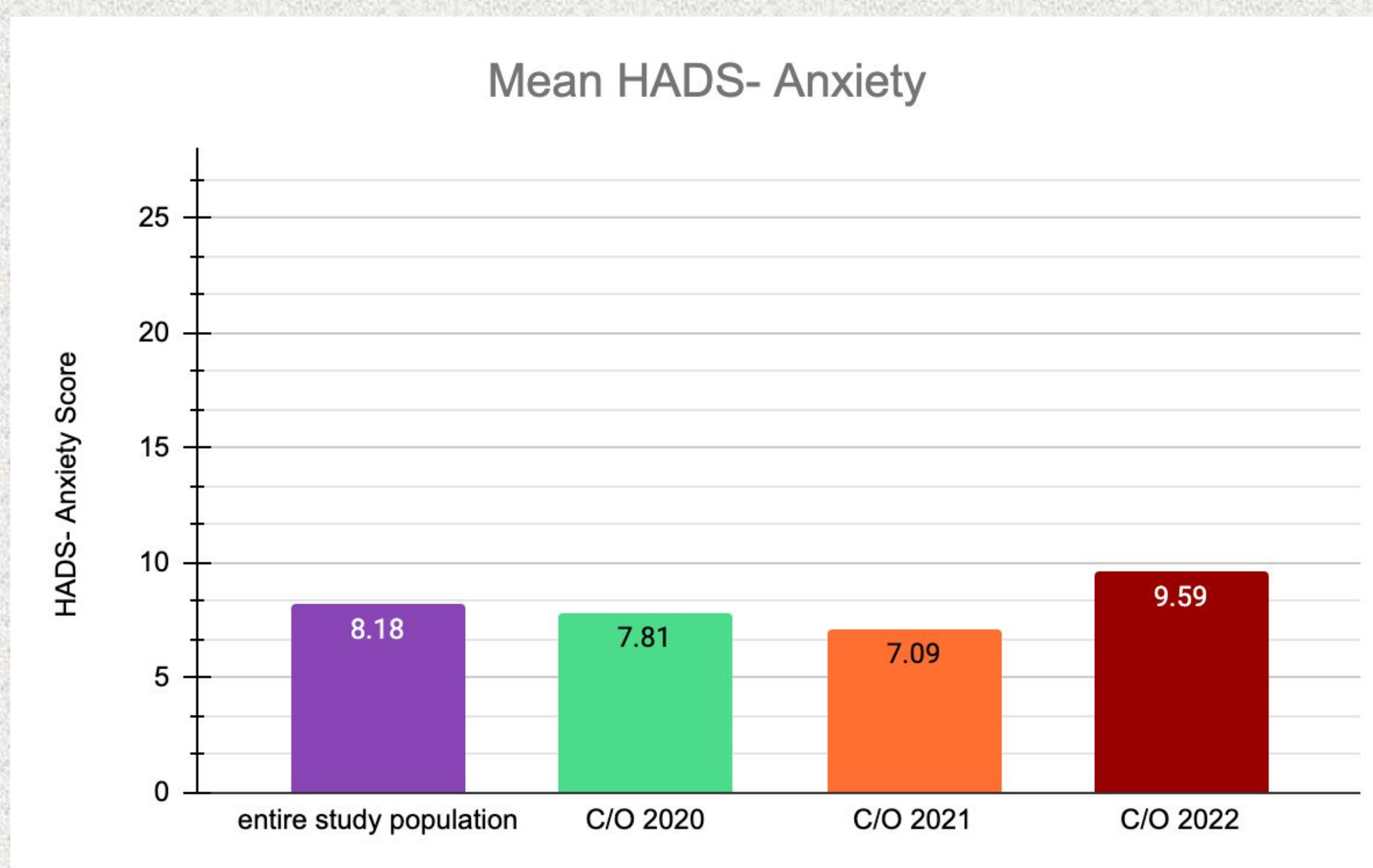


Figure 2. HADS Anxiety scores comparing the 3 cohorts with the entire subject population. Cut-off score of 8/28 indicates anxiety.

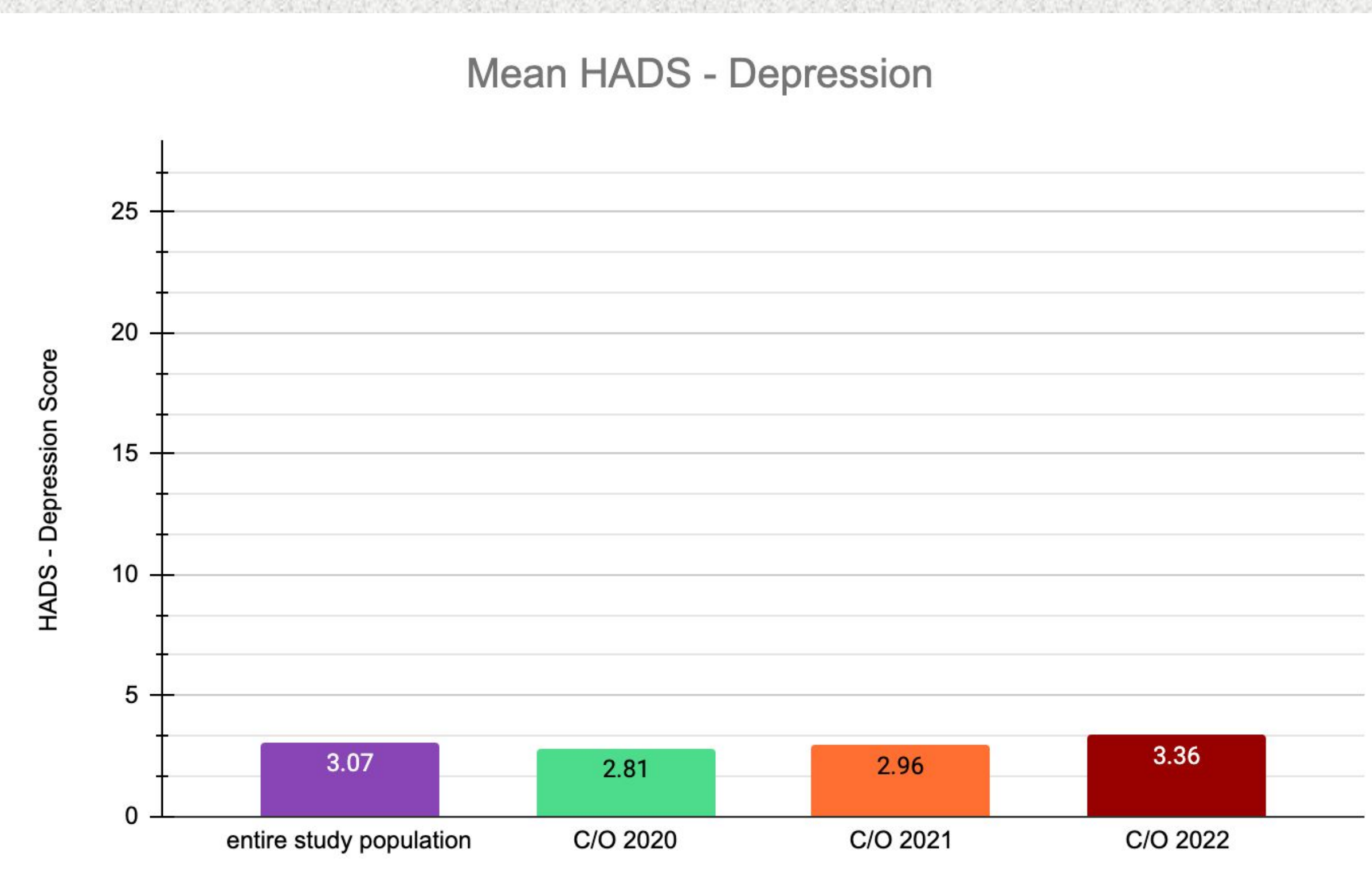


Figure 3. HADS Depression scores comparing the 3 cohorts with the entire subject population. Cut off score of 8/28 indicates depression.

Conclusion

DPT students appear to be less resilient than the general population, which is a concern, as resilience may be a buffer against workplace stress and burnout, which may negatively impact patient care.

Discussion

Study limitations include:

- No baseline data collection for anxiety, depression, resiliency.
- Highly specific population, not representative of other DPT programs.
- Data collected during COVID-19 pandemic, making it hard to compare to pre-pandemic studies.
- 56.5% student response rate.

Future research should include:

- Longitudinal study on rates of resiliency, anxiety, depression before, during, and after physical therapy school.
- Studies exploring different techniques to help decreased DPT student anxiety and depression as well as increase resiliency.
- Future studies in these areas would help inform clinical education on how to improve students' abilities to cope with the academic rigor of DPT programs.

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