**Workplace Conflict for Board Certified Behavior Analysts** Chelsea Carter, Ellie Kazemi, Shelby Jones, Christina Melanie Saez California State University, Northridge

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# Introduction

Studdert et al. (2003) defined conflict as:

“dispute, disagreement, or difference of opinion related to the management of a patient”, and “involving more than one individual and requiring some decision or action”

# Prevalence and Impact of Workplace Conflict

Prevalence of conflict

* + - Healthcare: 72% (Azoulay et al., 2009)
    - Education: 83% (Tantleff-Dunn, Dunn, & Gokee, 2002)

Negative impact of conflict

* + - Accounting
      * Lowered job satisfaction (Shafer, 2002)
      * Higher intention to leave (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Collins, 2001)
    - Education/Special Education
      * Higher burnout (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982; Crane & Iwanicki, 1986)

# Resources for Resolving Workplace Conflict

Behavior Analysis

* + - 25 Essential Skills & Strategies for the Professional Behavior Analyst (Bailey & Burch, 2010)
    - Recommendations for Detecting and Addressing Barriers to Successful Supervision (Sellers, LeBlanc, & Valentino, 2016)

Social and Educational Psychology

* + - How to deal with “difficult people” (Conlow & Watsabaugh, 2009; Harvard Business School Press, 2004)
    - Bargaining/Negotiation (Strom-Gottfried, 1998)
    - Assess & Diagnose (Gerardi, 2003)

# Purpose of Our Study

Conduct a survey using a representative sample of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) to establish preliminary information on workplace conflict for BCBAs

# Participants

National distribution through BACB Listserv:

• 15,818 BCBAs & BCBA-Ds (09/16/16)

* + - * 3,982 (25.2%) opened the email

 295 (7.4%) attempted the survey

* + - * + **209 (5.2%)** completed the survey
  1. Professional Employment Survey: A Preliminary Report (2014) – National distribution by Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA)
     + 12,588 BCBAs & BCBA-Ds received invitation
       - **925 (7.3%)** completed the survey

# Participant Demographics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Demographic Item | Median (SD) |
| **Age** | 35 (9.9) |
|  | % of Sample (N=209) |
| **Gender**  Female | 89% |
| **Degree Designation**  Behavior Analysis or Applied Behavior Analysis, Psychology with focus in ABA, or Psychology/Clinical Psychology | 52% |
| **Years with BCBA credential**  A little over 1 to 6 years | 61% |
| **Years as supervisor in ABA**  A little over 3 to 6+ years | 60% |
| **Number of clients**  6-13+ | 76% |
| **Settings where services are primarily provided**  Public School, Home-based, School + Home | 66% |
| **Highest Degree**  Master’s degree | 85% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Workload**  Full-time | 84% |
| **Primary Responsibilities**  Oversee cases & supervise interventionists, supervise the clinical team | 56% |

**Procedures**

Survey details

* + - All responses anonymous, no identifying information collected
      * IRB exempt
    - Each question included a “prefer not to state” option
    - Conflict specific questions included “do not work with this group” option
      * 25 Question Items
      * 25-30 minutes to complete

# Our Questionnaire

10 Demographic Questions (Kazemi, Shapiro, & Rylander, 2015)

* How often do you deal with conflict with…? (Studdert, et al. 2003; Breen, Abernethy, Abbott, & Tulsky, 2001; Azoulay et al., 2009)
  + 11 different individuals (e.g., teachers) with whom BCBAs may encounter

conflict

* + Likert scale 0 – 5 (e.g. 0 - Do not work with this group, 5 – Daily)
* How often is conflict unresolved with…? (Tantleff-Dunn, Dunn, & Gokee, 2002)
  + 11 different individuals with whom BCBAs may encounter conflict
  + Likert scale 0 – 5 (e.g. 0 - Do not work with this group, 5 – Daily)

# Our Questionnaire

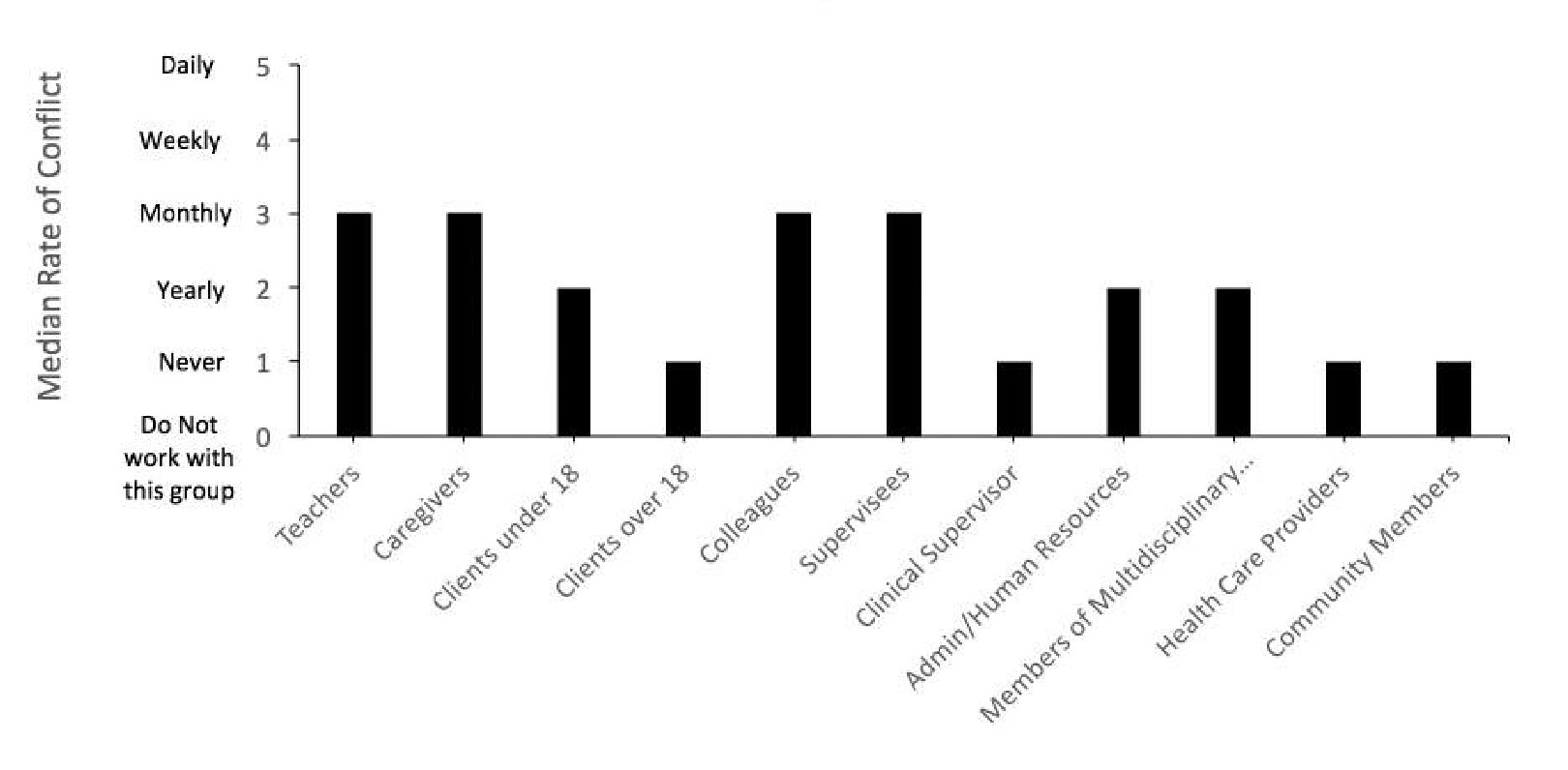
Other factors related to Workplace Conflict – 13 Total Items

* 2 items: Turnover (Kazemi, Shapiro, & Rylander, 2015; Shafer, 2002)
* 2 items: Job satisfaction (Kazemi, Shapiro, & Rylander, 2015; Shafer, 2002)
* 1 item: Lost cases
* 2 items: Prior training (Azoulay et al., 2009)

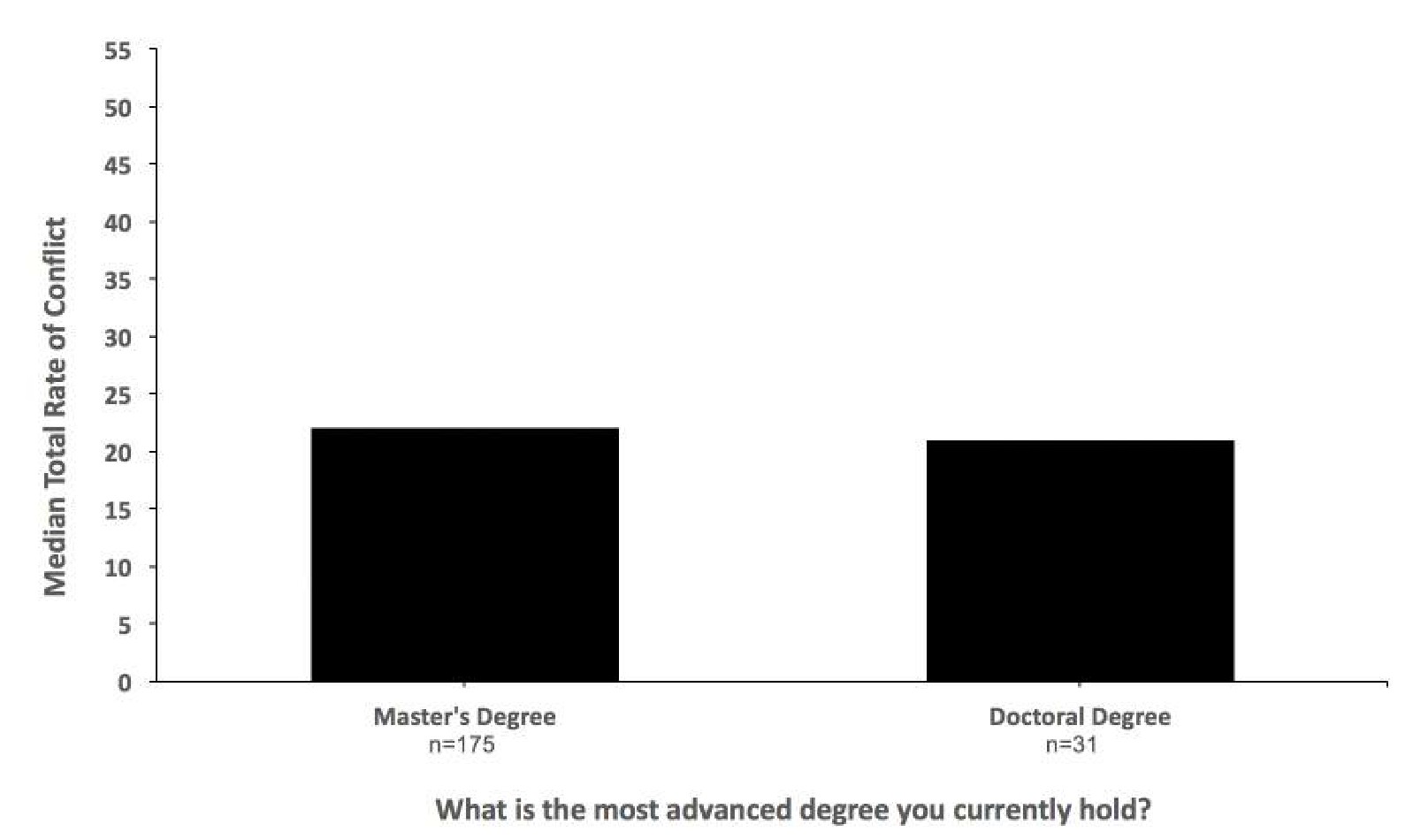
# Results

**Total Rate of Workplace Conflict**

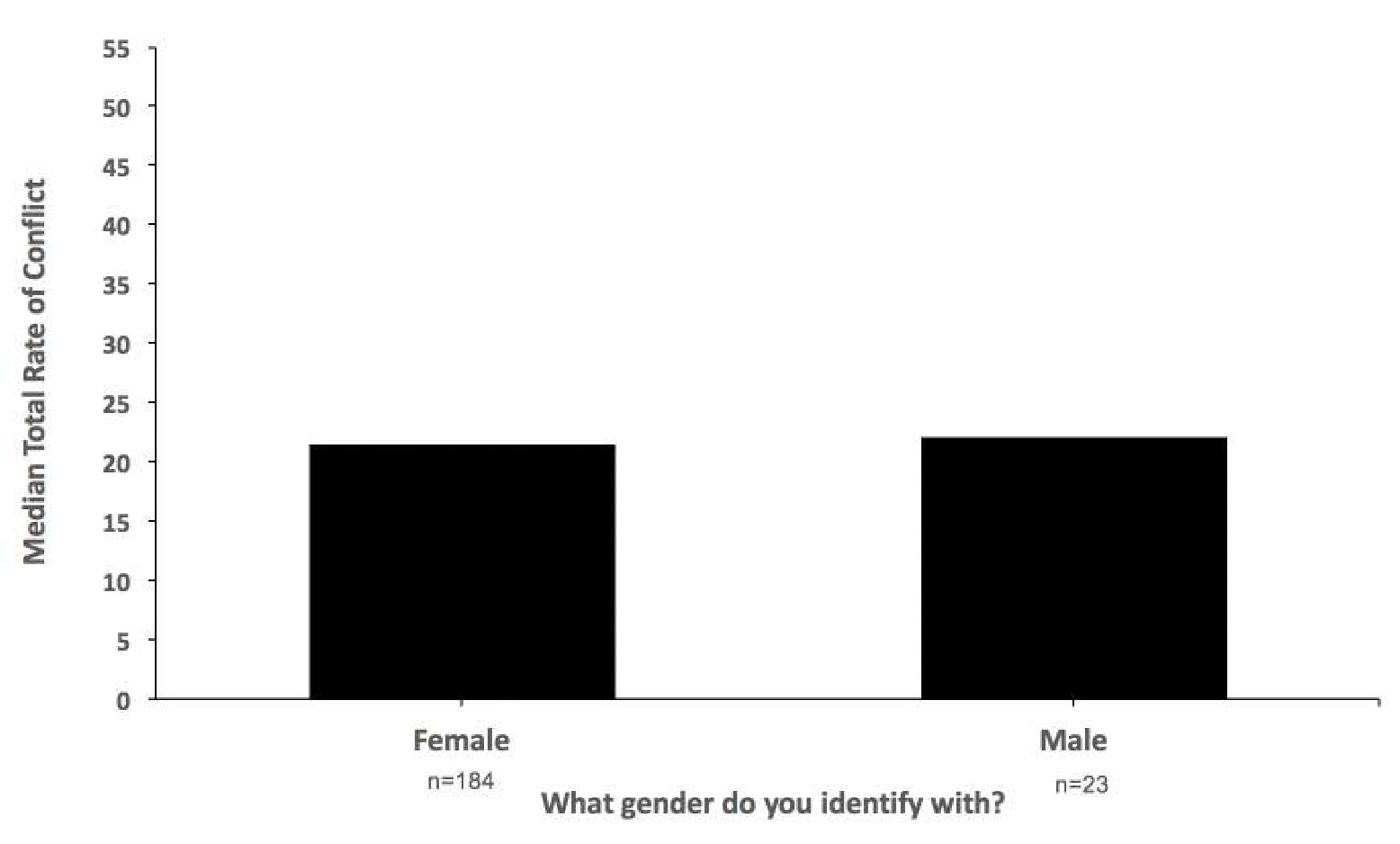
Questions: “How often do you deal with conflict with…”



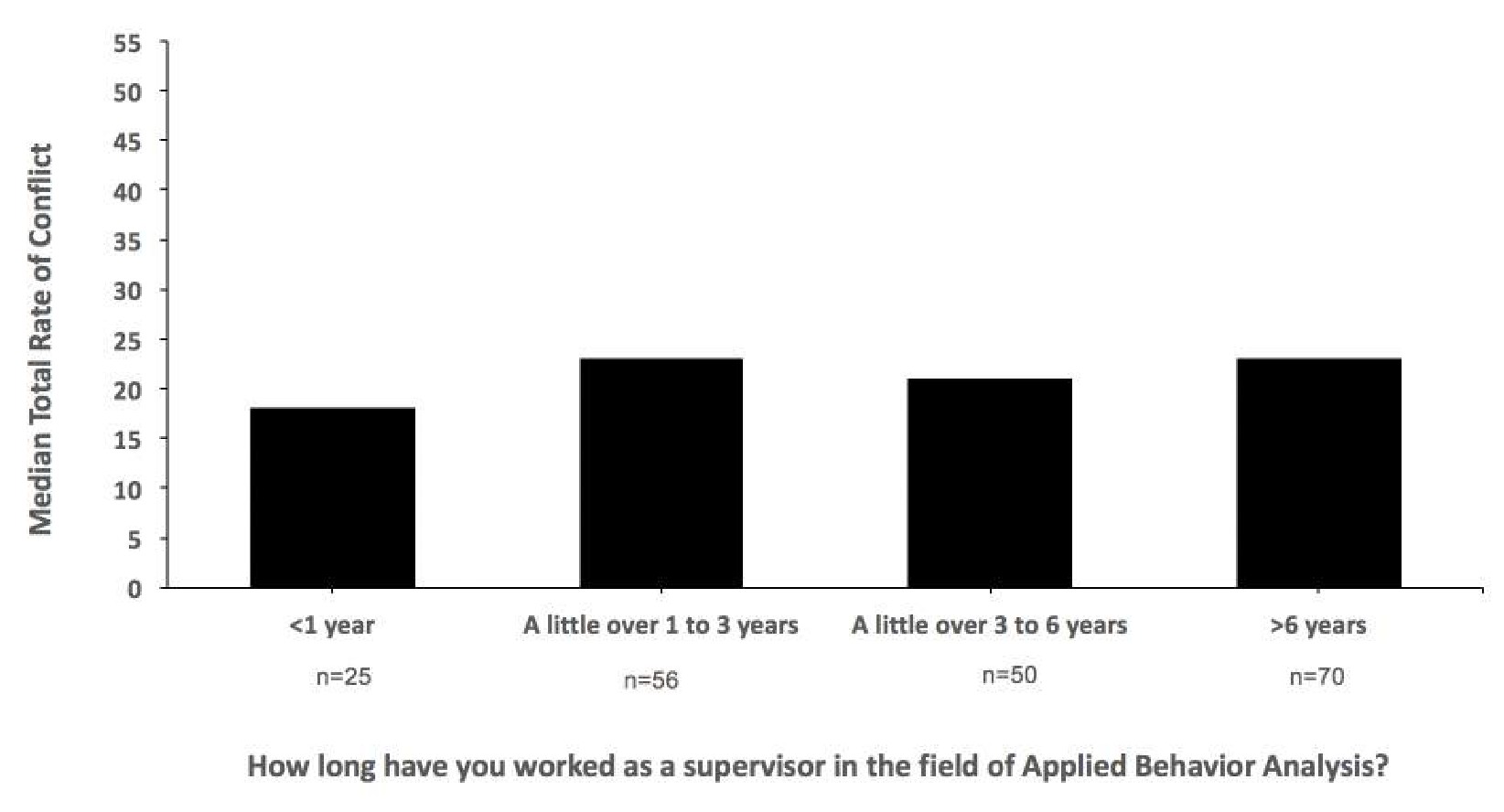
# Type of Degree Related to Workplace Conflict?



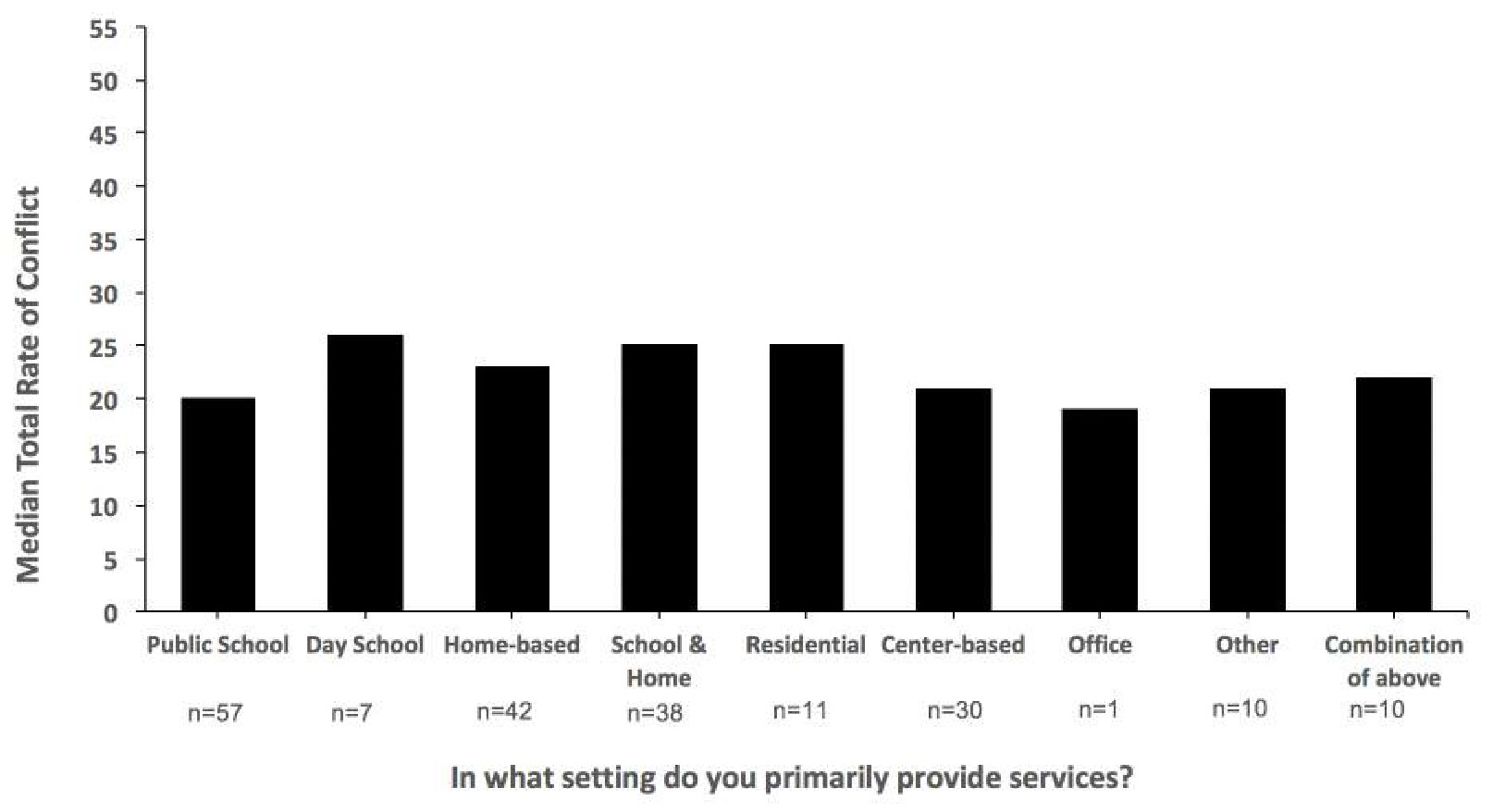
# Gender Related to Workplace Conflict?



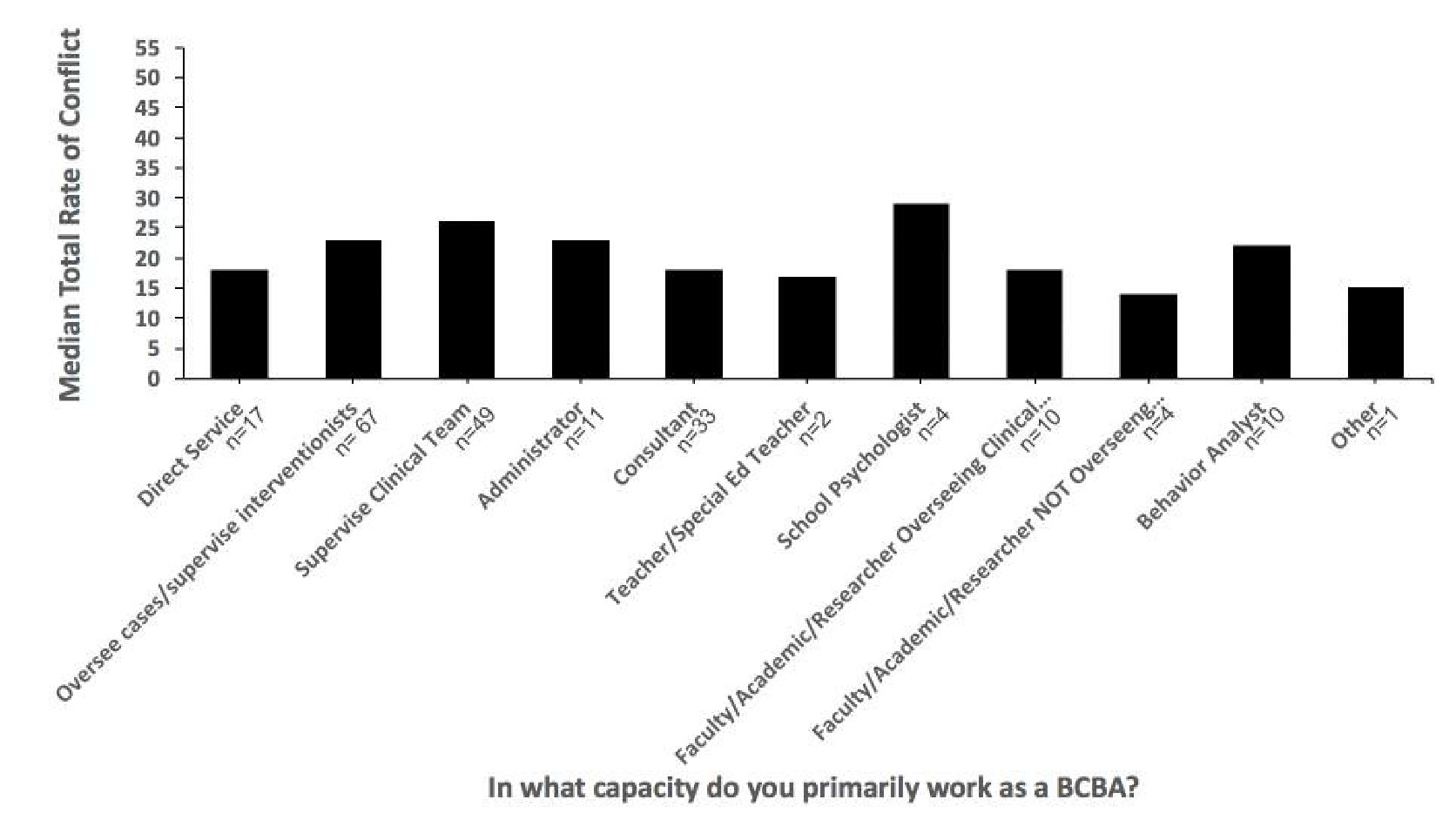
**Years of Experience Related to Workplace Conflict?**



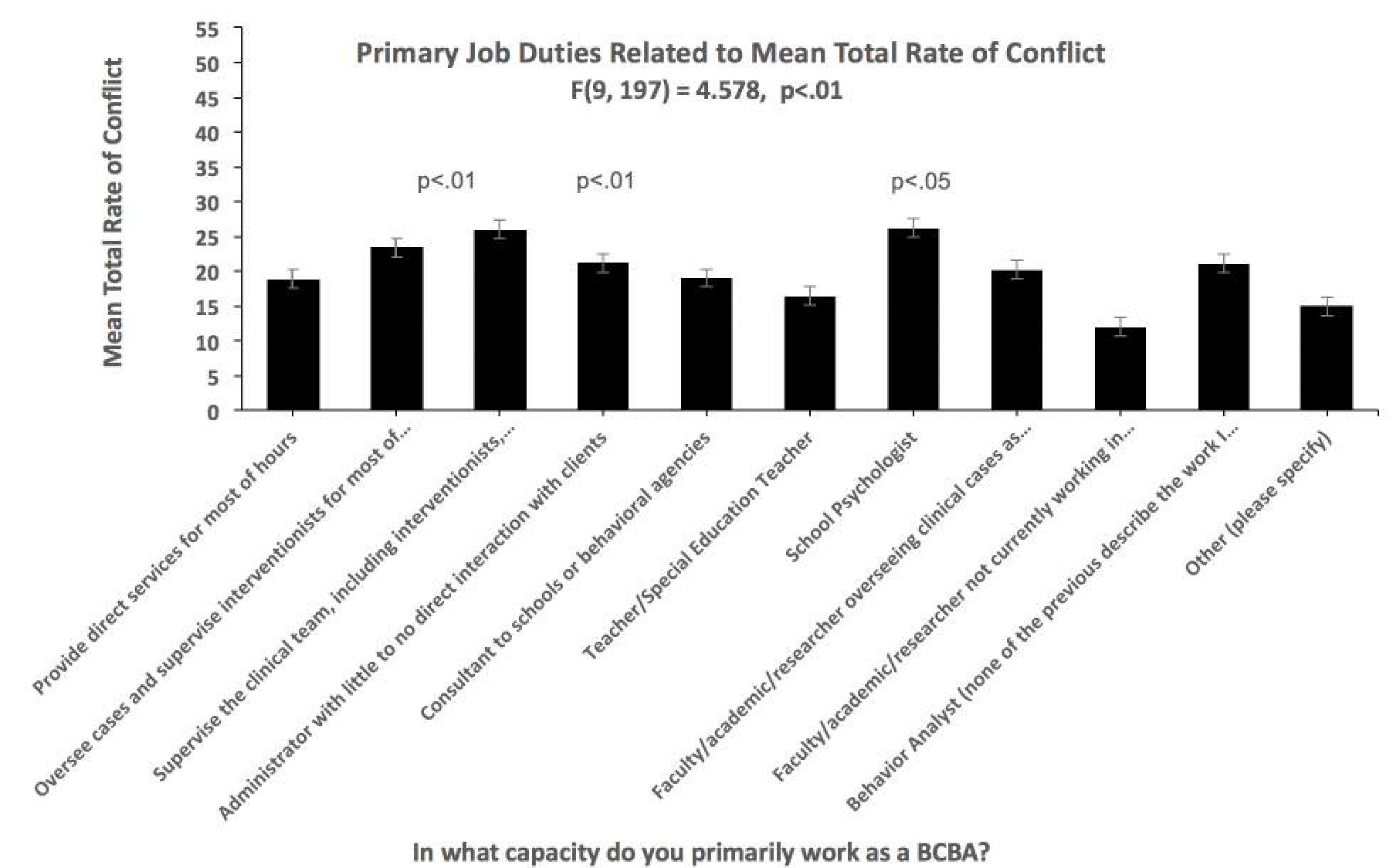
# Setting of Service Provision Related to Workplace Conflict?



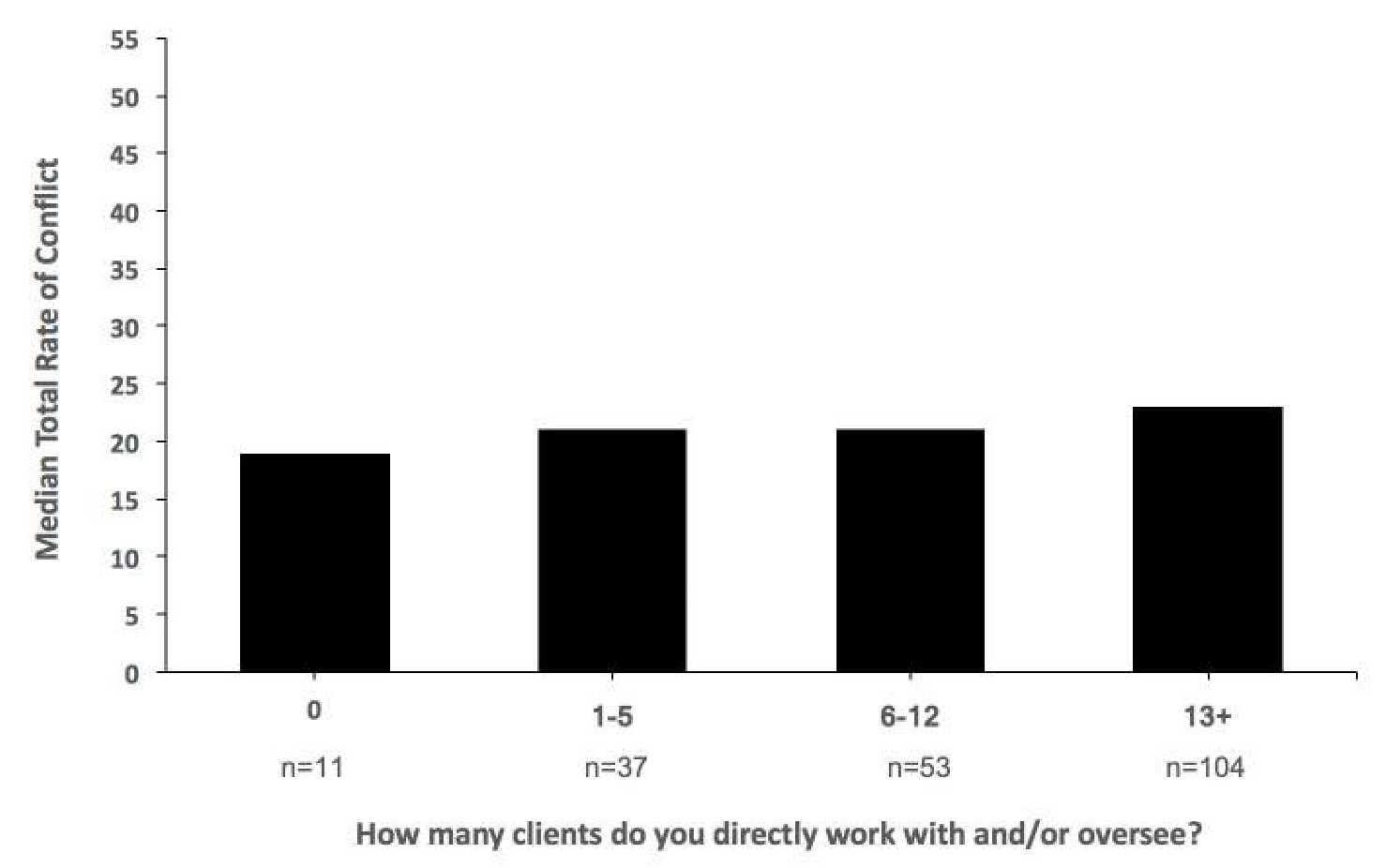
**Primary Job Duties Related to Workplace Conflict?**



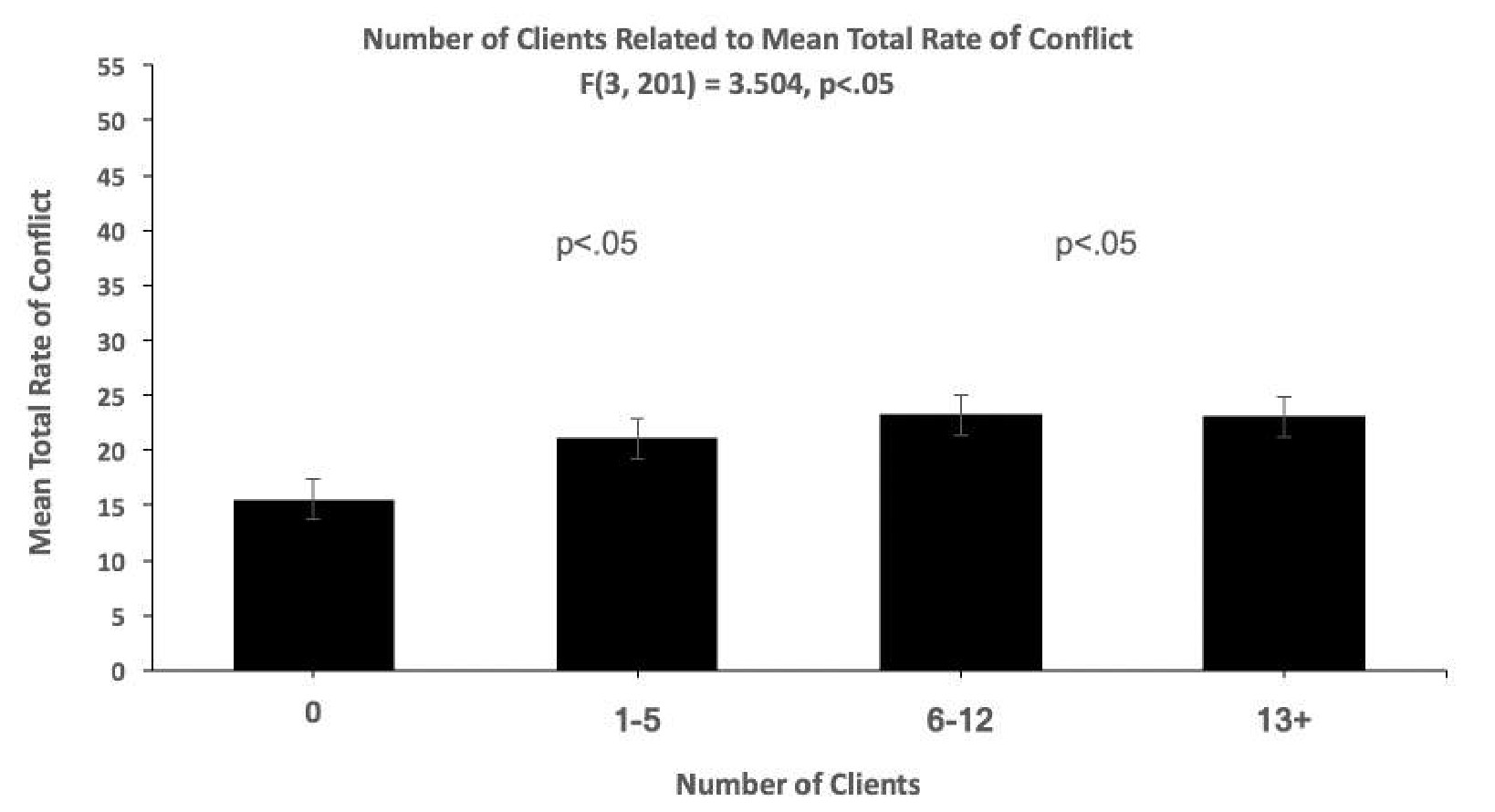
**ANOVA**



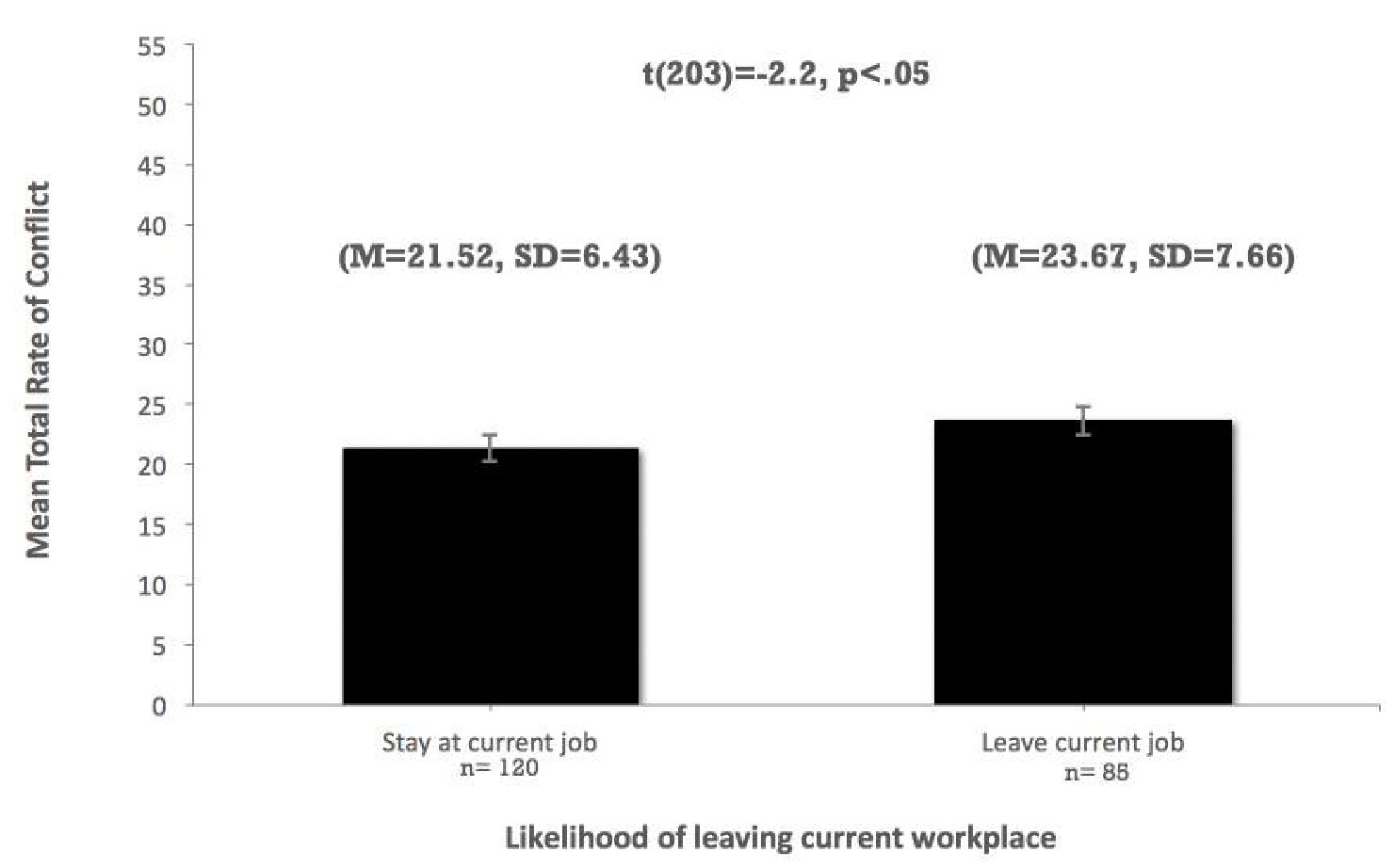
**Number of Clients Related to Conflict?**



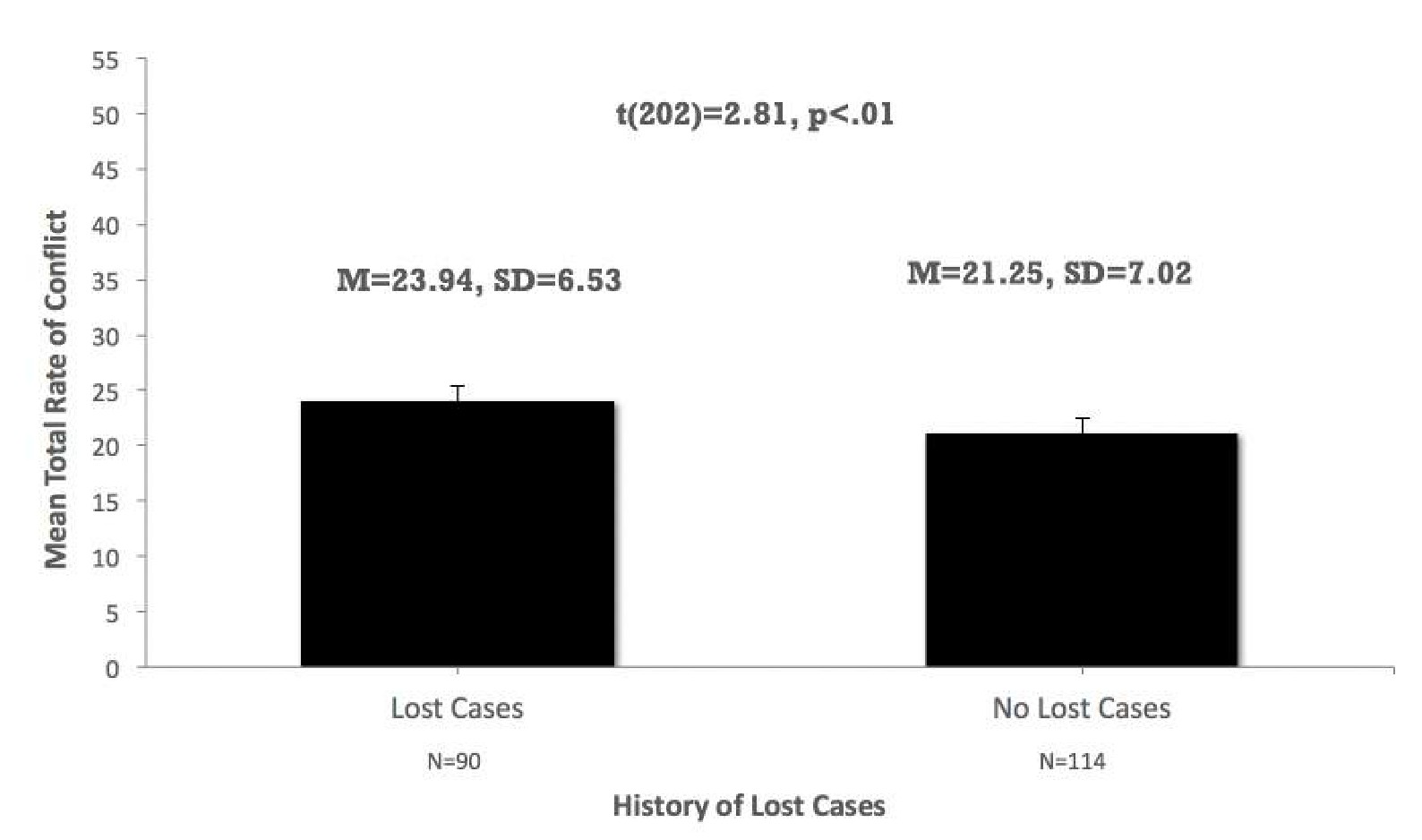
**ANOVA**



**Turnover & Total Rate of Conflict**

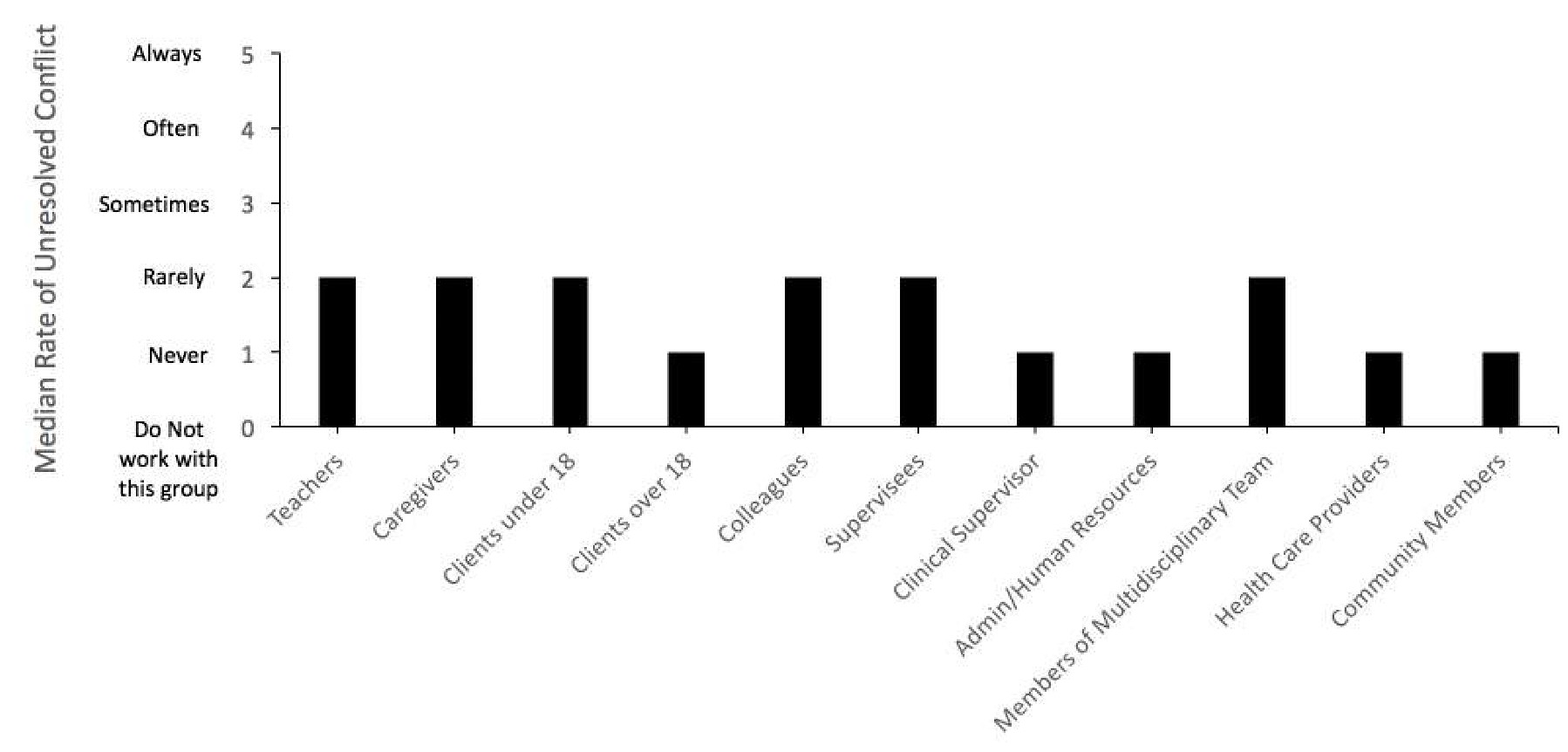


**Lost Cases**

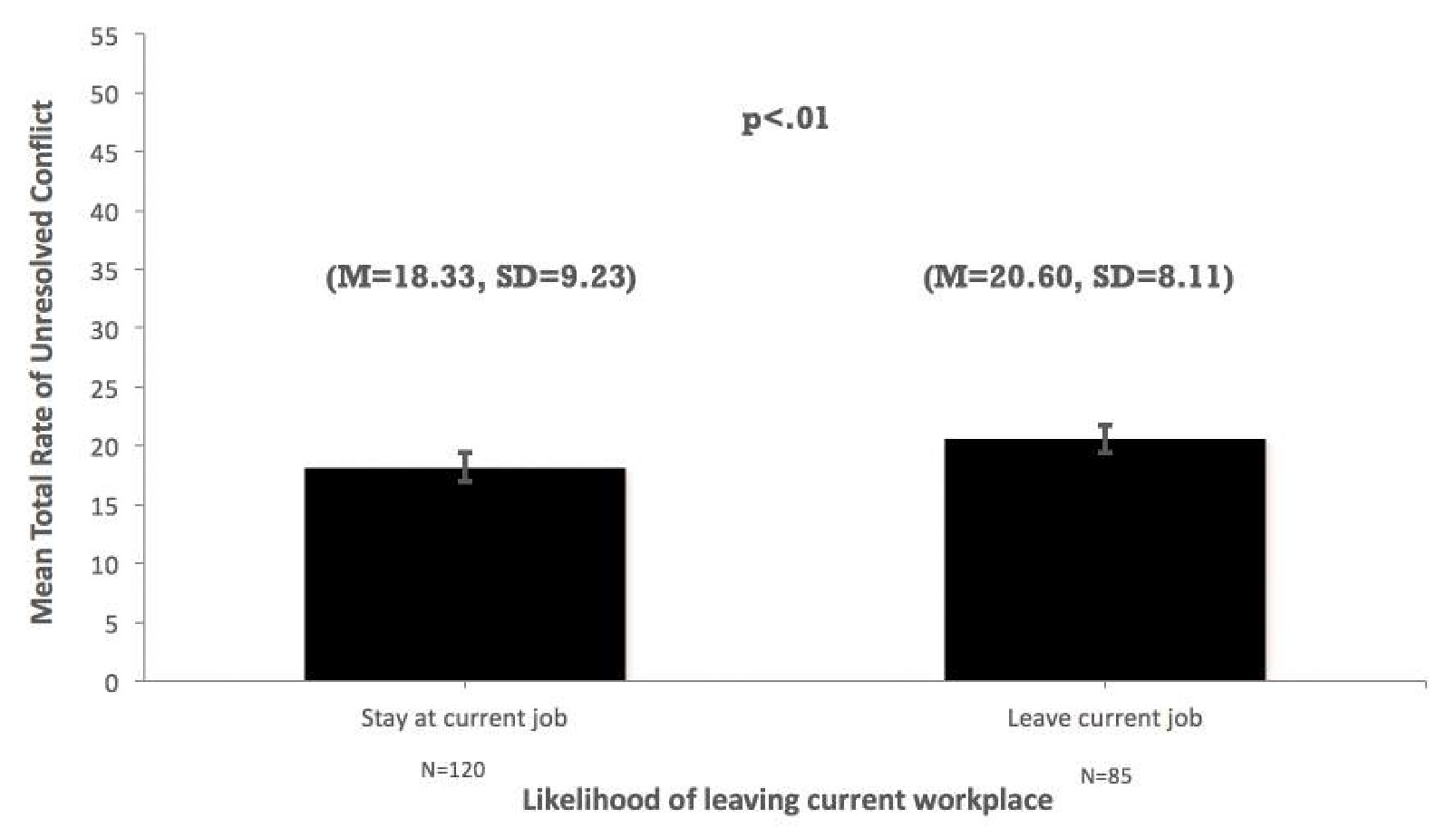


**Total Rate of Unresolved Conflict**

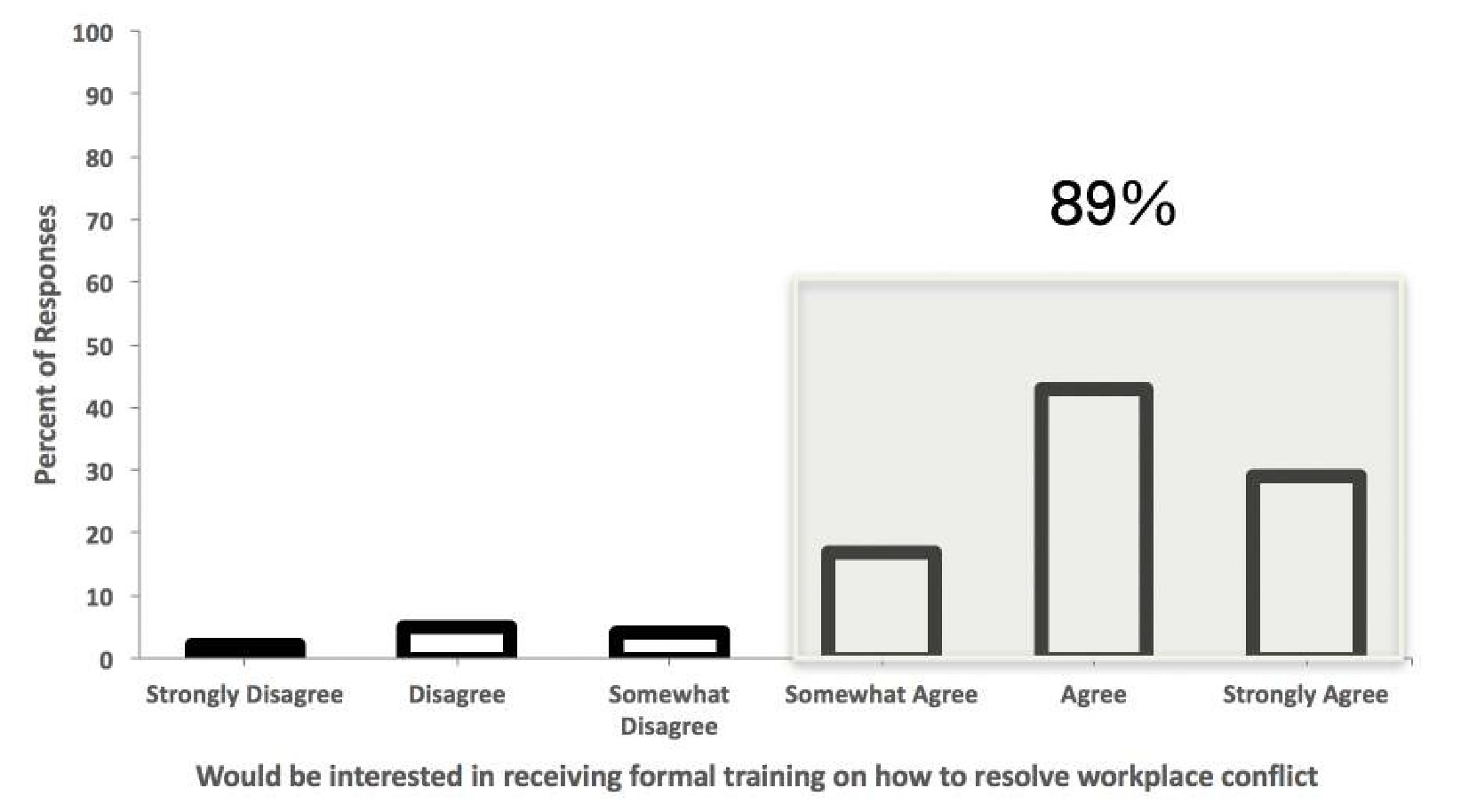
Questions: “How often is conflict unresolved with…”



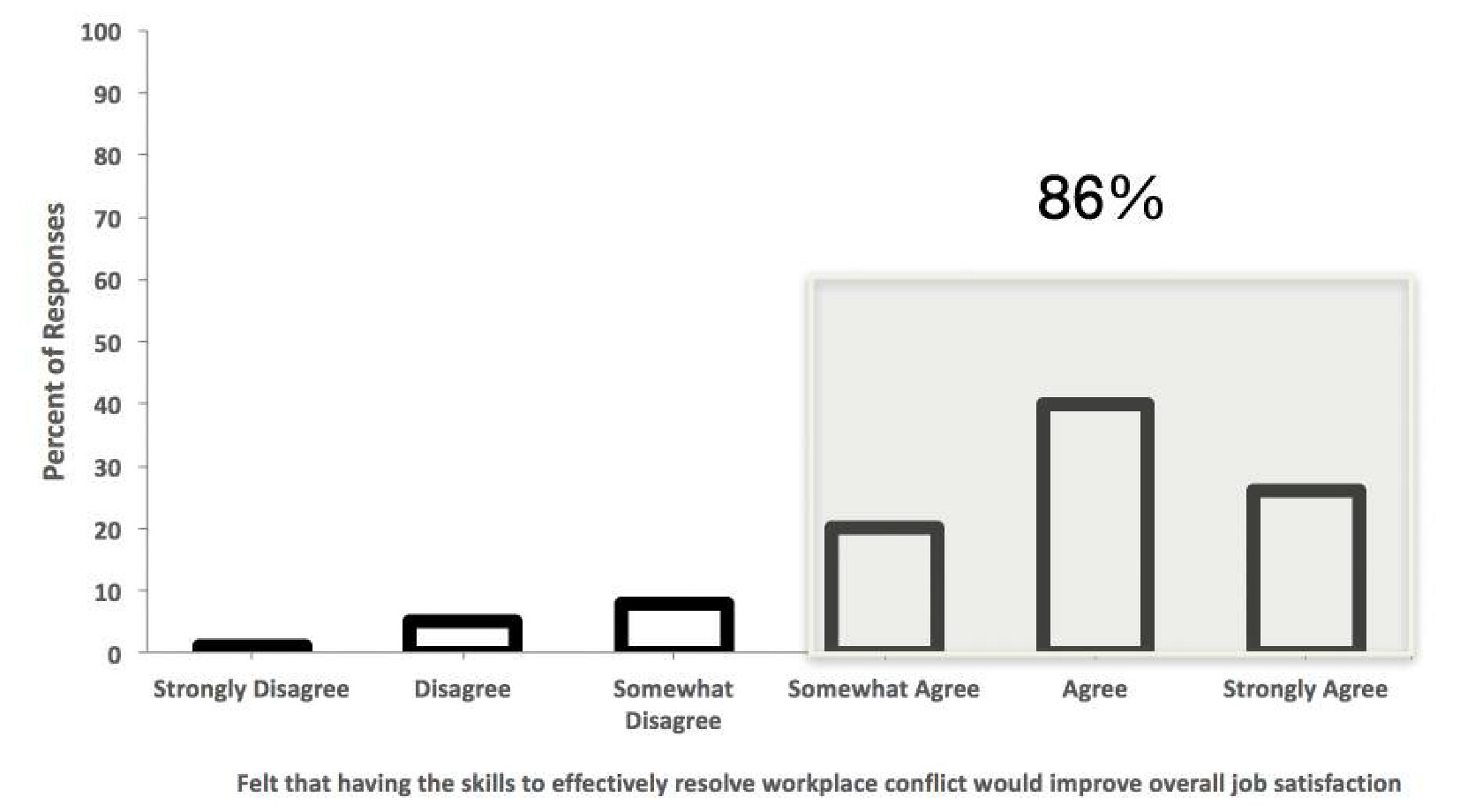
# Turnover & Total Rate of Unresolved Conflict



**Are Participants Interested in Receiving Conflict Resolution Training?**



**Do Participants Feel Conflict Impacts Job Satisfaction?**



**Conclusions – What Have We Learned About Workplace Conflict?**

* Occurs most often with teachers, caregivers, colleagues, and supervisees
* Significant group differences related to
  + Number of clients
  + Turnover
  + Lost cases
* Resolution skills would improve job satisfaction
* Interest in receiving formal training

# Limitations

* Self-report rather than direct observation
* Low response rate
  + No second wave of surveys
* Snowball sample
  + Possibly more applicable for those who find conflict interesting
* No definition provided of unresolved conflict
* No specific information on prior training obtained

# Future Directions

* Look into current models of Conflict Resolution Training
* Determine the key steps required for effective Conflict Resolution

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