

The Problem






Many children living in rural and remote communities are exposed to adverse childhood events, are underserved and under-addressed, and are subsequently at risk of negative health, developmental and behavioral outcomes.^{1,2} Occupational therapists (OTs) have a unique capacity to contribute to this best practice but are often not considered as part of the interdisciplinary team when working with this population.

Background

- Pediatric Primary Care Providers (PCPs) are well positioned to respond to pediatric health & well-being, support caregivers and prevent disease & disability.
- Most children & youth are connected to a PCP; it is a consistent point of care access for many.
- Major stakeholders such as the American Academy of Pediatrics are calling on PCPs to launch interprofessional & collaborative efforts to prevent & respond to ACEs and the health & developmental implications of such.³

Perceived Barriers of the PCP

Providers feel burdened to respond due to⁴:

-  Time Constraints
-  Limited Collaborative Interprofessional Collaboration
-  Reimbursement
-  Lack of Training
-  Insufficient Referral System

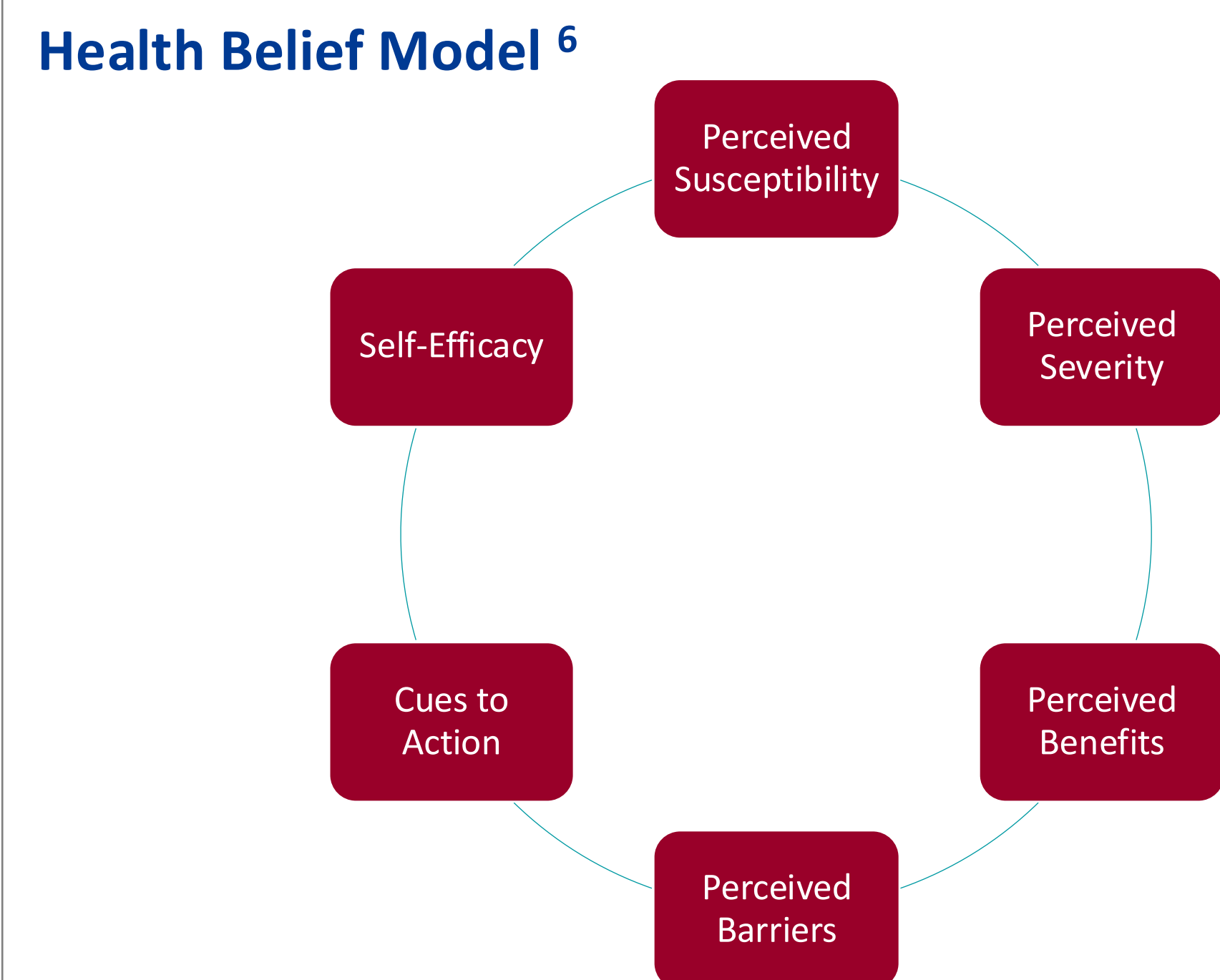
Opportunity for OT Innovation

- PCPs cannot address these issues in isolation.
- Growing evidence to support role of OT in integrated pediatric primary care; OT can provide invaluable insight to team.⁵
- OT is distinct from other primary care providers; trained to recognize the biological, physical, social & behavioral influences of occupational performance and subsequent impact on health, wellness & development.

Innovation Project



Theoretical Framework



Methodology –

Phase 1: Outreach Initiative - Parent Knowledge & Interest

Outcome Measured: Do parents & guardians demonstrate an interest in accessing OT services within the primary care setting?

Sample Selection: Non-probability sampling: self selection & snowball recruitment

Activity Design: Virtual in-service disseminated to all recruited participants

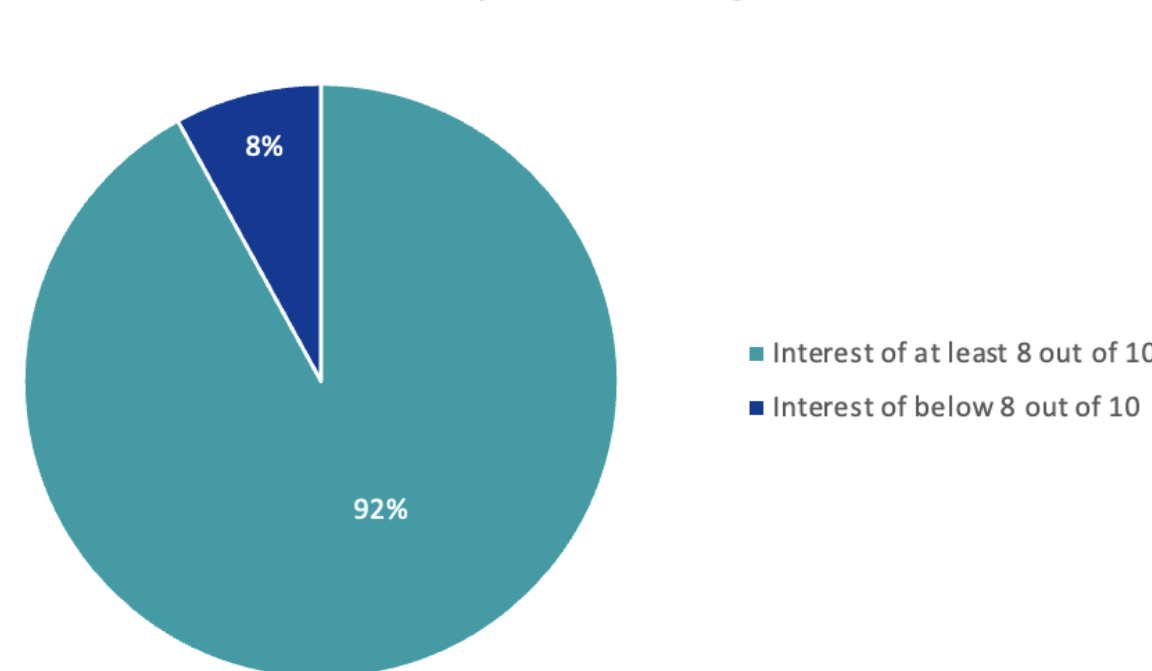
Data Collection: Mixed methods – quantitative and qualitative data via RedCap survey

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics used to understand parent/guardian interest

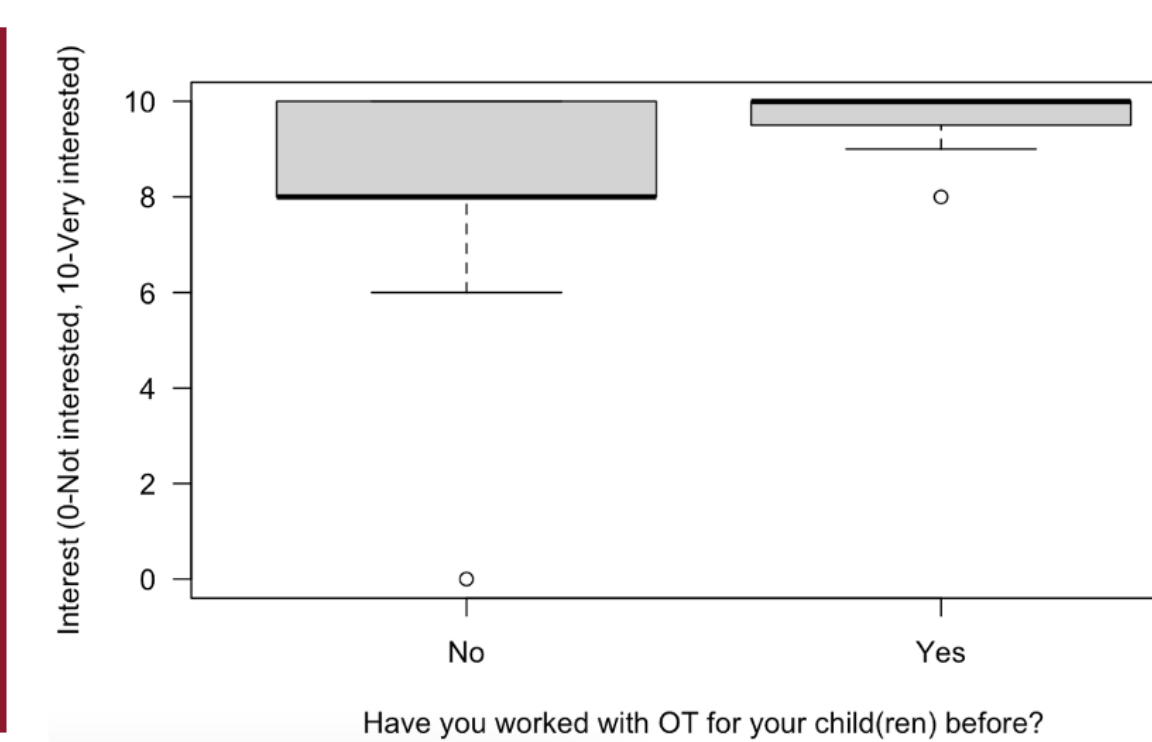


Results

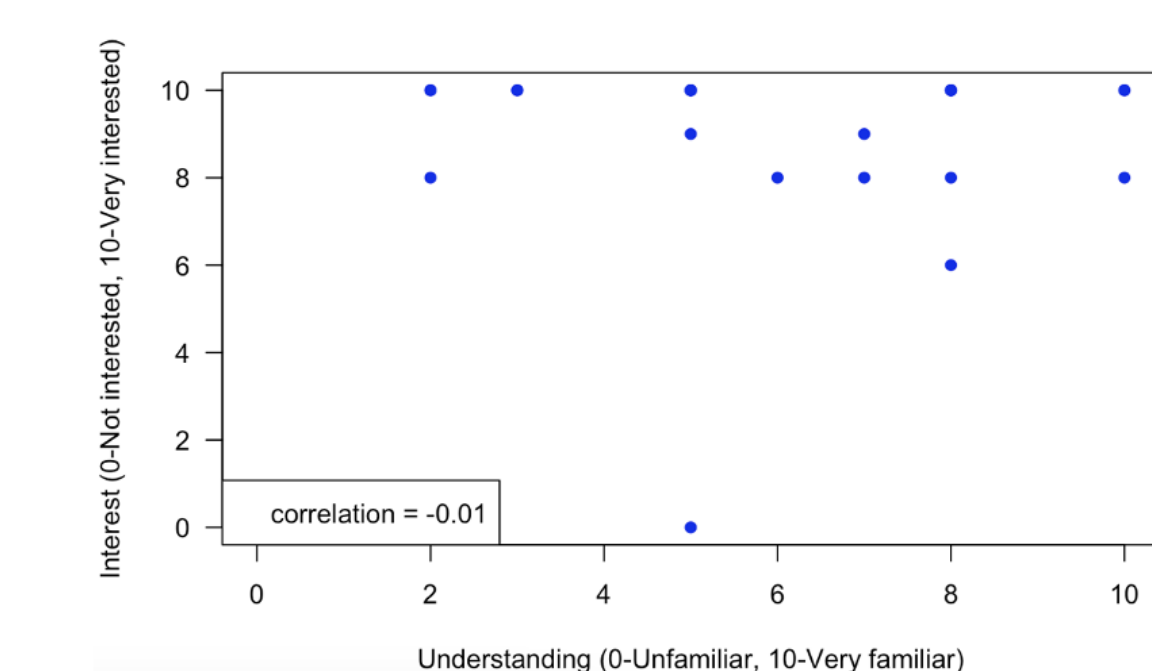
Interest in OT Utilization within Integrated Primary Care Setting



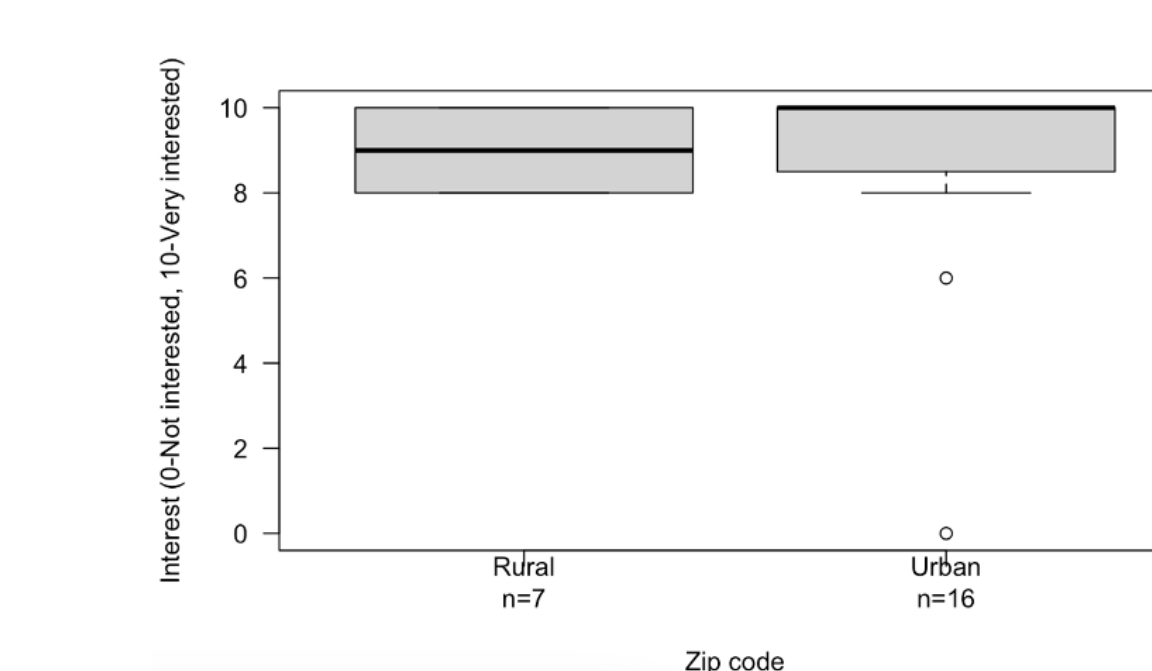
8.9/10
The average level of interest!



Interest slightly higher for those who have worked with OT before.



Interest remains consistently high independent of understanding.



Interest is similar for those living in rural and urban communities.

Discussion

The integrated pediatric primary care model, which includes occupational therapy professionals in New Hampshire, presents an innovative approach to addressing the complex health, developmental, and behavioral needs of at-risk children, especially those in rural or remote communities. By combining the traditional medical model with therapeutic services, this partnership supports a more comprehensive and holistic approach to pediatric care.

Phase 1 of this work focused on knowledge dissemination data collection specific to the parent/guardian interest in and demand for OT services in pediatric primary care. Elevating the family voice through this process is essential. Parent advocacy can serve as a compelling catalyst for engaging PCPs and building long-term interdisciplinary partnerships.

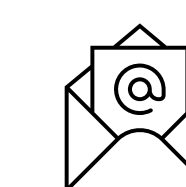
Demonstrating strong family support is a strategic step toward broader adoption of this integrated model, with the goal of improving access, equity, and outcomes for children in underserved areas.

Next Steps

- Leverage community voice & establish PCP partnerships
- Implement innovation – launch the integrated care model
- Scholarly dissemination – journal submission & conference proposal

Contact

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