

Summary of Findings:

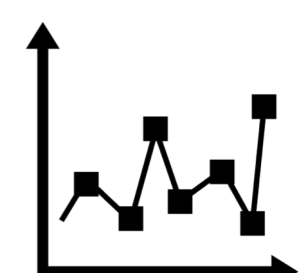
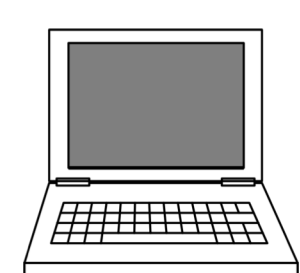
A community of practice using virtual platforms was **implemented** to support school-based occupational therapists use of research in daily practice

Participants' attitudes towards the use of virtual platforms was **evaluated** using mixed-methods survey with data analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis

Results indicate participants found the virtual platform **convenient** to attend, helpful in **reducing common barriers** to research utilization and **unique** in its ability to create a group of diverse participants, both in geographic location and clinical experience

Introduction

- A virtual community of practice (CoP) comprised of school-based occupational therapists was founded by Dr. Morris from Oct 2021- June 2022 to promote research utilization in daily practice
- There are multiple barriers that prevent occupational therapists from incorporating new research into their daily practice.¹ The main three research barriers² are:



1. Lack of time 2. Limited access to research 3. Lack of research skills

- CoP is a *knowledge translation* activity = processes that supports the uptake of new and best evidence into health professions, including occupational therapy³
 - Knowledge translation activities could take the form of journal clubs, small group workshops, or communities of practice (CoP)⁴
- While knowledge translation activities typically occurred in a face-to-face format, COVID-19 has sparked a transition to utilizing virtual platforms,⁵ including Zoom and Canvas, which were used for this CoP

Implementation & Evaluation

Implementation of CoP

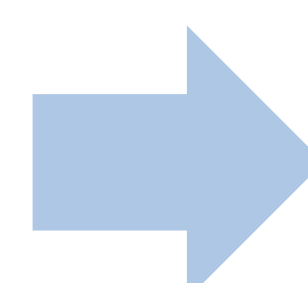
- Co-facilitated CoP from January- April with Dr. Morris through leading monthly discussions, preparing resources and modules and assisting participants in literature search and research appraisal process

Evaluation of participants' attitude towards virtual platform use

- Conducted research on CoP population to answer 2 research questions:
 - 1. What are school-based occupational therapists' (SBOTs) preferences for virtual or face-to-face platforms when participating in a CoP?**
 - 2. Do CoPs using virtual platforms reduce any of the primary barriers to research utilization?**
- Cohort design using a 6-question mixed methods survey instrument to gather quantitative and qualitative data among sample of SBOTs currently enrolled in current CoP
- Data analyses using descriptive statistics and conventional content analysis

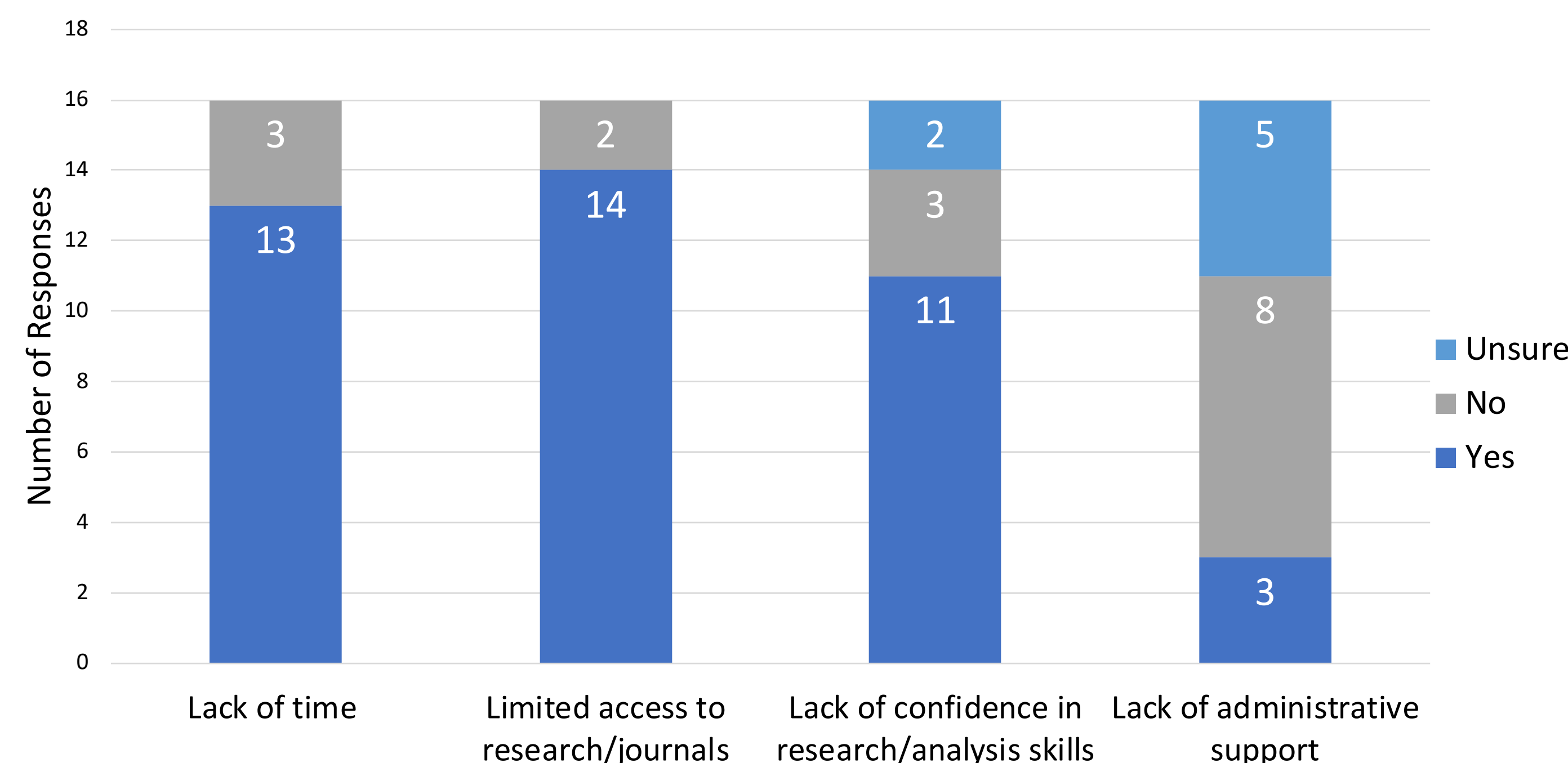
Results

61.5% survey response rate = **16 respondents** of 26 CoP participants



100% female
Mean of 13.0 (SD = 8.7) years practice experience
Mix of masters, bachelors and doctorate degrees

Graph 1. Responses to question "Has the virtual platform removed any of the established barriers to research implementation?"



63%

Of participants rated the virtual format as **very or extremely important** when deciding to enroll in this CoP

81%

Of participants **strongly agreed** that the virtual format has been convenient to attend

Three main themes emerged from one open-ended question on use of virtual platforms for the CoP:



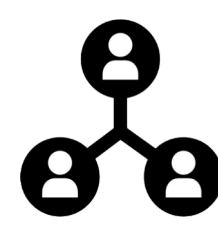
Benefits of connecting with therapists from across the country

10/13 responses



Logistical advantages of a virtual platform

6/13 responses



Lack of intimate social connections

4/13 responses

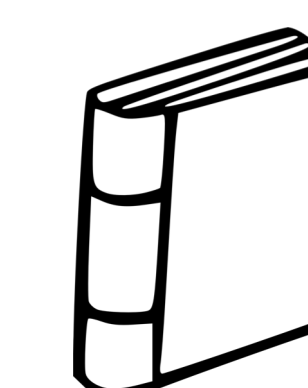
Discussion

- The virtual platform was an influential factor in participants' decisions to enroll in the CoP
- Our study produced similar results to research in other allied health professions⁶ by concluding respondents found participation in knowledge translation activities using a virtual platform convenient to attend
- The virtual CoP was **most successful** in removing the research implementation barriers of limited access to research databases and lack of time. Lack of administrative support remained a barrier to utilizing research for majority of participants.
- Participants' **diversity** in geographic location, uniquely afforded by virtual platforms, was seen as a **strength** by majority of respondents.
 - Qualitative data suggests this diversity in setting and experience generated more nuanced, richer conversation when discussing research & its implications for practice change
- Our study found participants held **overall positive attitudes** towards the use of virtual platforms for this CoP and also indicated the platform as helpful in reducing some of the main barriers to research implementation.

DEC Student Outcomes



Manuscript writing experience



Involvement in professional publication process



Leadership skills

References

- Upton, D., Stephens, D., Williams, B., & Scurlock-Evans, L. (2014). Occupational therapists' attitudes, knowledge, and implementation of evidence-based practice: A systematic review of published research. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 77(1), 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.4276/030802214X1388768533554>

Supplemental material and full references:

