

INTRODUCTION

At the 12th Street Health & Wellness Center, we understand that mental health is an essential part of a patient's overall well-being and are committed to providing comprehensive care that prioritizes mental and emotional health just as much as physical health.

Student-run free clinics play a crucial role in the US medical system, offering essential care to underserved, impoverished, uninsured, and marginalized individuals. They help patients who would otherwise turn to emergency and urgent care. Despite their importance, mental health care needs remain unmet in 96% of US counties, disproportionately affecting those with the lowest socioeconomic status. To address this gap, it's vital for SRFCs to provide mental health care to patients.

OBJECTIVE

The primary purpose of this research is to assess mental health care resources provided by 12th Street Health and Wellness Center, a SRFC, from both a staff and patient perspective. In addition, the study aims to compare responses between providers and patients to recalibrate the understanding of unmet needs.

CURRENT RESOURCES AT CLINIC

- Psychiatry Clinic Nights: Speciality clinic night last Monday of every month. Psychiatry physicians present for this clinic.
- Social Worker: Provides talk therapy and insurance expertise
- AR ConnectNow: The call center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

METHODS

- Two surveys were used: one for patients and one for volunteers.
- The patient survey included 11 questions, assessing mental health needs, and was available in both English and Spanish. Only follow-up patients were surveyed.
- The volunteer survey contained 12 questions, with one asking about their volunteering frequency. Volunteers were instructed to answer the other 11 questions based on their perception of patients' responses.

All surveys were conducted once a week from **November to March of 2023**.

RESULTS

- Among the 34 patients who completed the survey, only questions Q1 and Q2 were universally answered, with Q5 and Q10 having the most omissions. Q1 had unanimous responses, while Q8 had the highest "no" percentage. Q6 received mixed responses, and 12 patients responded to the open-ended Q11.
- Out of the 42 surveyed volunteers, all questions were answered. Most had volunteered five times or more (61.9%), followed by 2-4 times (21.4%) and once (16.7%). Q1 had the highest "yes" percentage, while Q9 and Q10 had the highest "no" percentages. Q7 was divisive, with a 50/50 split, and 21 volunteers responded to the open-ended Q11.
- The R2 value was 0.253, indicating a weak correlation between volunteers' predicted answers and patients' actual answers.

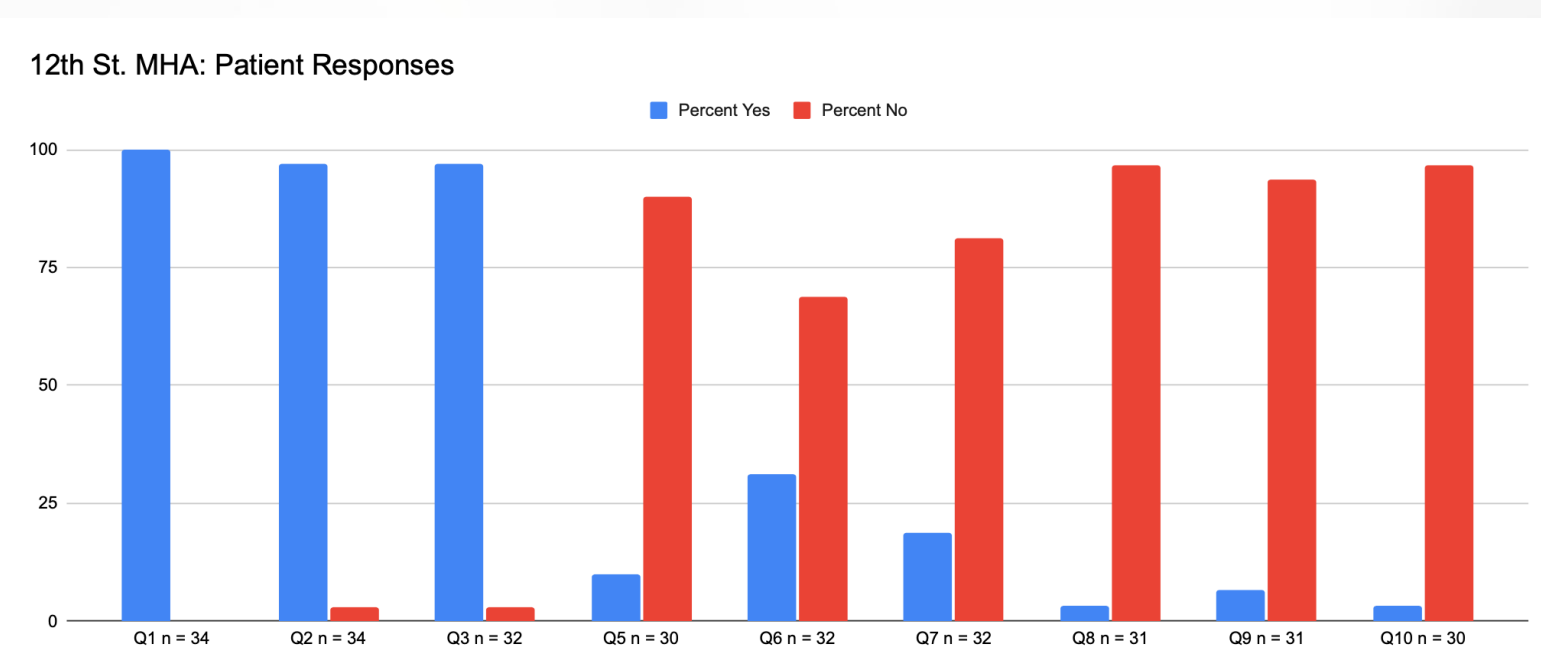


Figure 1: Patient responses

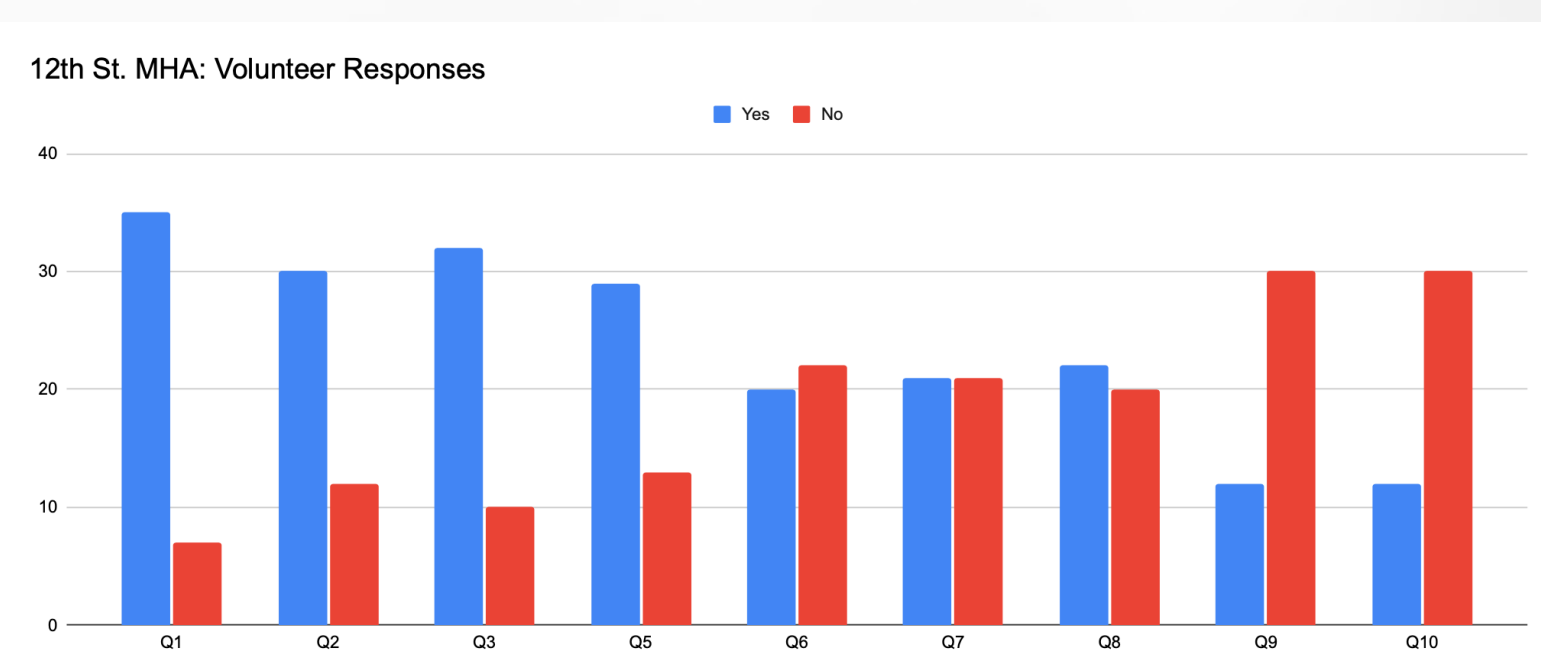


Figure 2: Volunteer responses

RESULTS CONTINUED

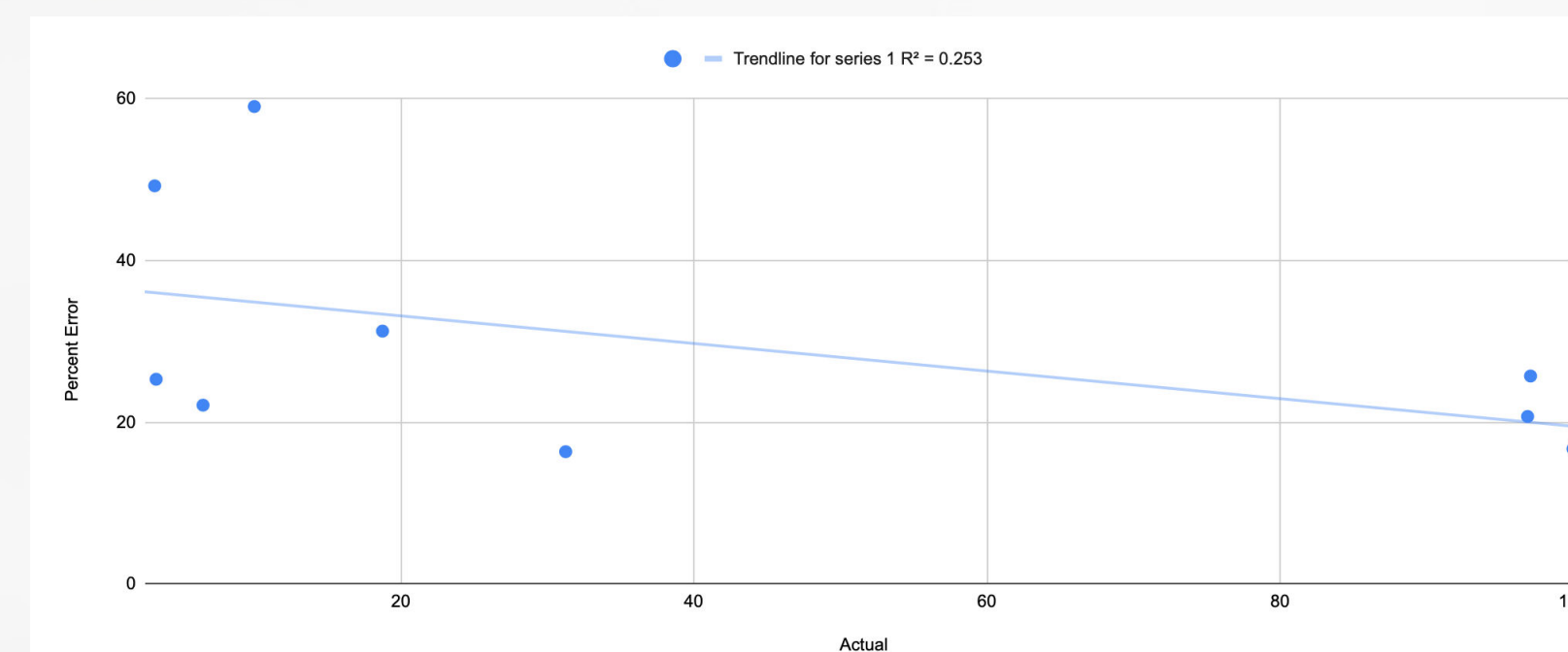


Figure 3: Percent error vs actual

DISCUSSION

- Patients appreciate the support from volunteers and the care quality but are aware of unmet needs in areas like anxiety, depression, and addiction. They seek specialists like psychologists, therapists, and counselors for better mental health care.
- Volunteers overestimate the resources available to patients, possibly due to the experienced respondents in our survey, whereas many clinic volunteers are newcomers. This highlights the importance of comprehensive training for all volunteers to understand available resources.
- The data shows that volunteers at 12th Street Health and Wellness Clinic lack a strong understanding of patients' mental health needs. This survey can guide the clinic in resource expansion and improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

At 12th Street Health and Wellness Center, we are proud of our existing mental health services but recognize room for growth. We aim to apply the findings from our needs assessment survey, focusing on educating and empowering our volunteers to provide resources for quitting tobacco, overcoming drug dependencies, and addressing alcohol issues. We also encourage proactive discussions about patients' mental health during each visit, regardless of the initial perception of their anxiety and depression levels.



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