

# Empathy levels among Canadian paramedic students: a cross sectional survey.

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## Background

- Empathy is an important factor in communication between healthcare provider and patient.
- Previous studies have shown that empathy can improve patient care.
- Empathy improves patient satisfaction and buffers healthcare provider burnout.

## Objectives

This study aimed to determine the empathy levels displayed by paramedic students towards patients with various medical conditions.

## Methods

The Medical Condition Regard Scale (MCRS) was used to measure empathy levels in these students across five medical conditions: physical disability, intellectual disability, suicide attempt, mental health emergency, and substance abuse.

Cross sectional design of a convenience sample of first and second year paramedic students at Fanshawe College

Figure 1. Empathy scores across medical conditions

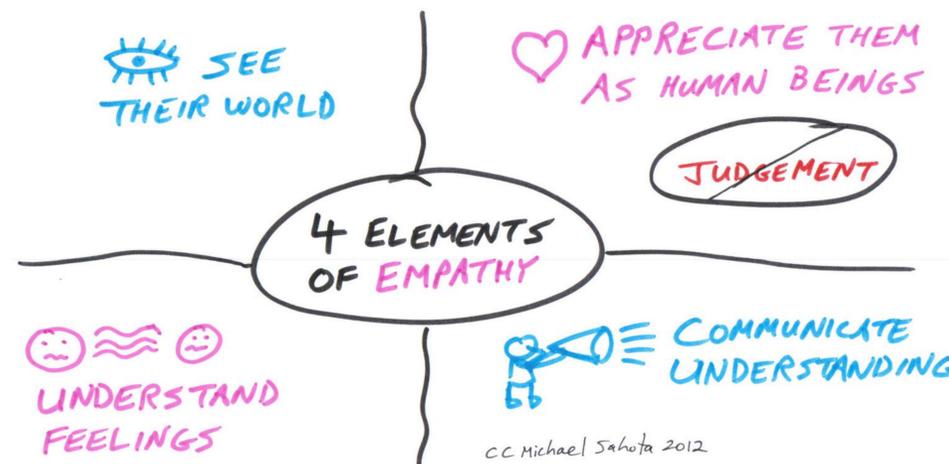
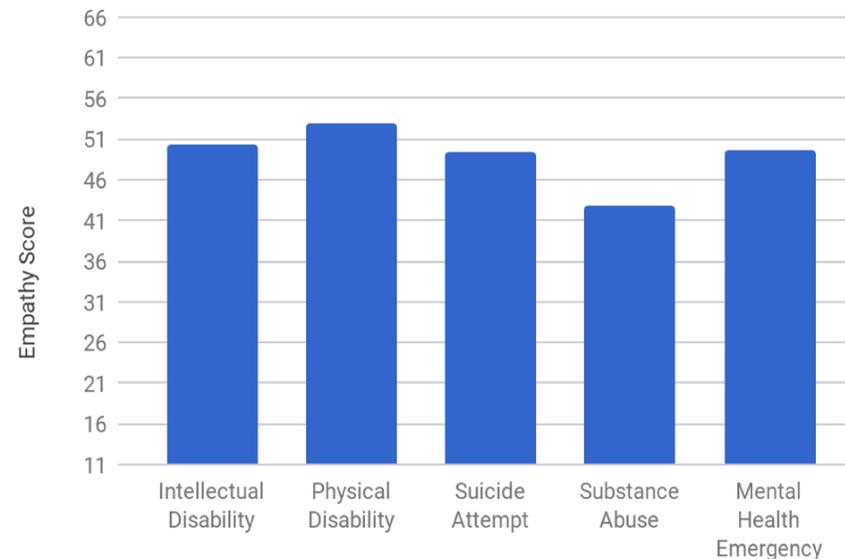
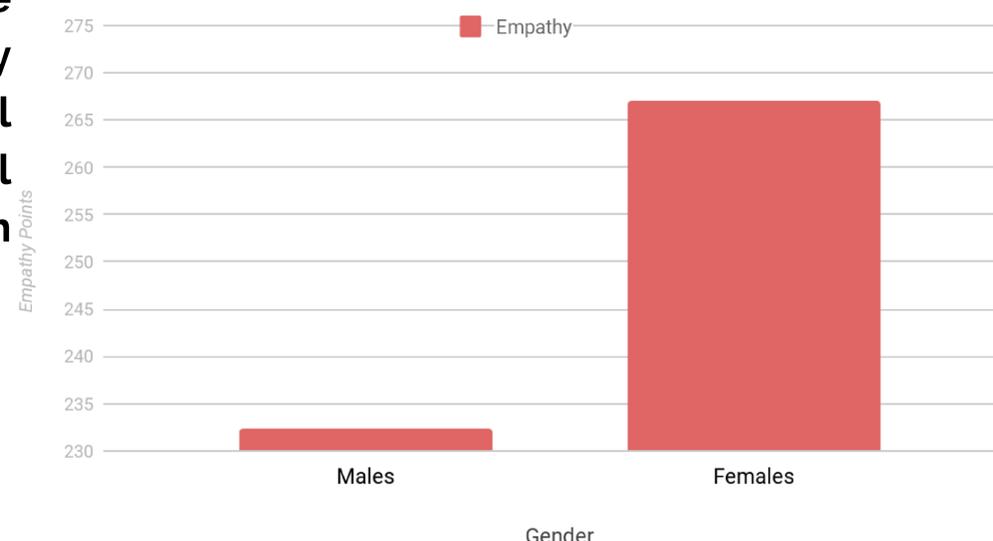


Figure 2. Empathy scores by gender



## Results

- 43 students participated in the study; 27 males and 15 females (1 unknown).
- Substance abuse had the lowest mean score (42.88, SD±10.62) (Fig. 1)
- Physical disability had the highest (53.0, SD±7.22).
- Females demonstrated a higher mean empathy score of 266.40 (SD±29.99, p=0.001) and higher mean scores across four of the five medical conditions (Fig. 2)
- First years had a higher mean score (p=0.049).
- There were no significant differences between age groups.

## Conclusion

- Paramedic students demonstrated varying levels of empathy toward certain medical conditions.
- Male students are less empathetic than their female peers, and second year students are less empathetic than first years.
- These results are consistent with existing findings in Australian paramedic students.
- Our results suggest that paramedic students may benefit from focused empathy education and training, as self-reported by survey respondents.



# References

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