

Jessica Catalano Healthcare Studies

Introduction

Recovery Centers of America (RCA) is a substance abuse center that is located in Danvers, MA. RCA answers the phone and admits patients 24/7, 365 days a year. RCAs treatment includes a 12-step program, which helps patients achieve and maintain recovery.

- RCA offers both inpatient and outpatient treatment programs for those suffering from substance abuse, as well as medically monitored detox. RCA can also assist patients with Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT)
- Inpatient treatment lasts about 30 days.
- RCA provides individual and group therapy, as well as family programs which include family therapy.
- RCA provides every patient with a care team which includes a therapist, a recovery counselor and a case manager. RCA has nurses on site 24/7.
- RCA offers an alumni association for those who have completed treatment.

Project Objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- identify any stigma that the patients on Unit 1 of RCA Danvers had experienced involving their addiction.
- to see if stigma had any affect on a patient and their recovery
- identify any barriers to recovery that were caused by stigma.

Related Literature

“The stigma against people with substance use disorders is a set of negative attitudes and stereotypes that can create barriers to treatment and make these conditions worse. Although substance use disorders are chronic, treatable medical conditions, studies show people who have them often face stigma and discrimination in part because others do not understand these disorders or how they can be effectively treated.” (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2022) (What is stigma against substance abuse and addiction? Why does it occur?)

“People with substance use disorders may face mistreatment, stereotyping, and negative bias from society, including in healthcare settings. These challenges may lead them to avoid seeking medical help. In fact, in 2021, about 10.4 percent of people who felt they needed substance use treatment but did not receive it in the past year said they did not seek treatment because they feared attracting negative attitudes from their communities” (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2022) (How does stigma affect people with a substance use disorder?)

Methodology

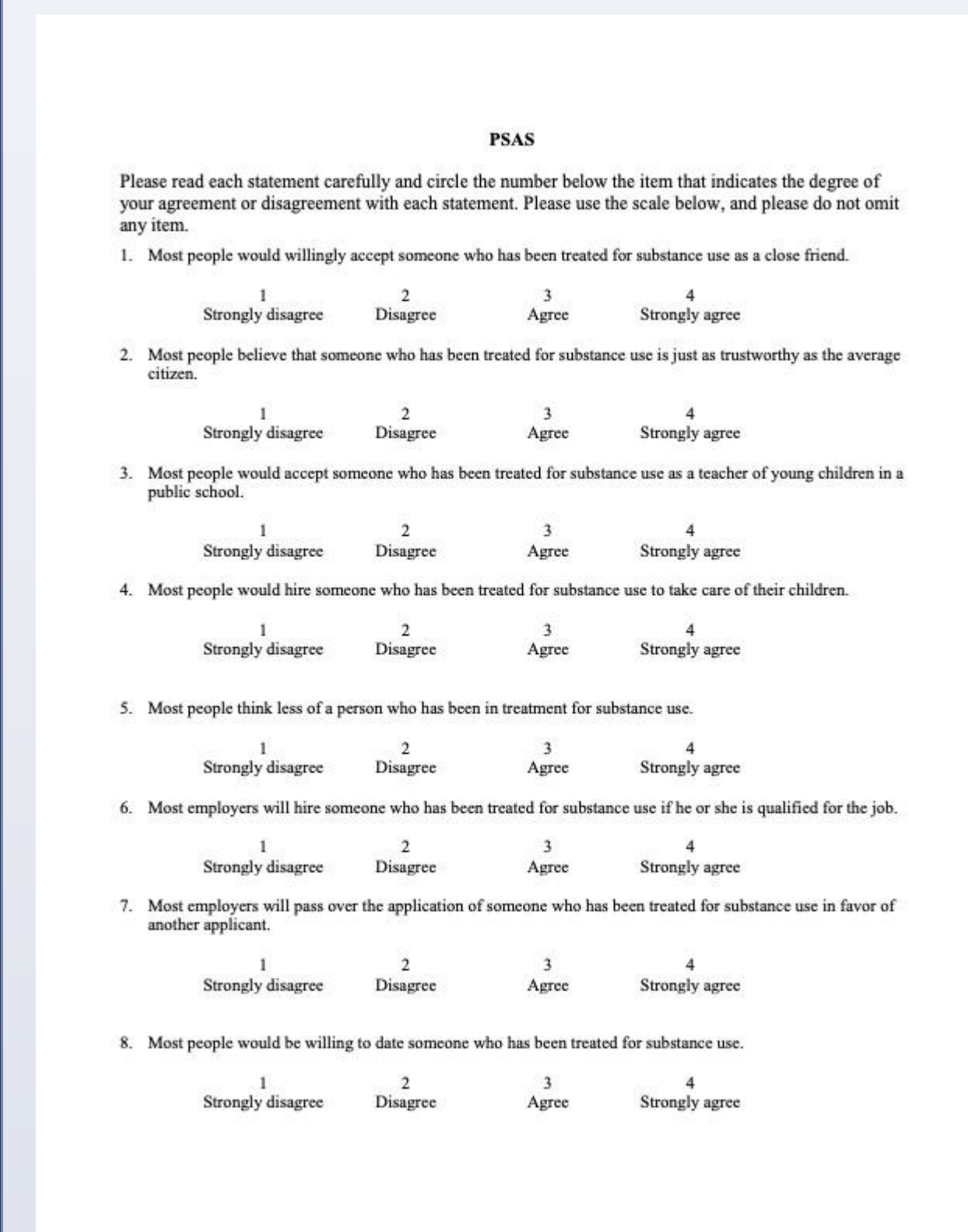
Patients from Unit 1 were asked to complete the following surveys:

- The Perceived Stigma of Substance Abuse Scale (PSAS) survey
- The Illicit Drug Use and Stigma Scale Survey.

Both surveys were given to 15 patients from Unit 1
Out of the 15 patients, 9 returned completed surveys.

Both of these surveys were created by someone else, sources are under reference section.

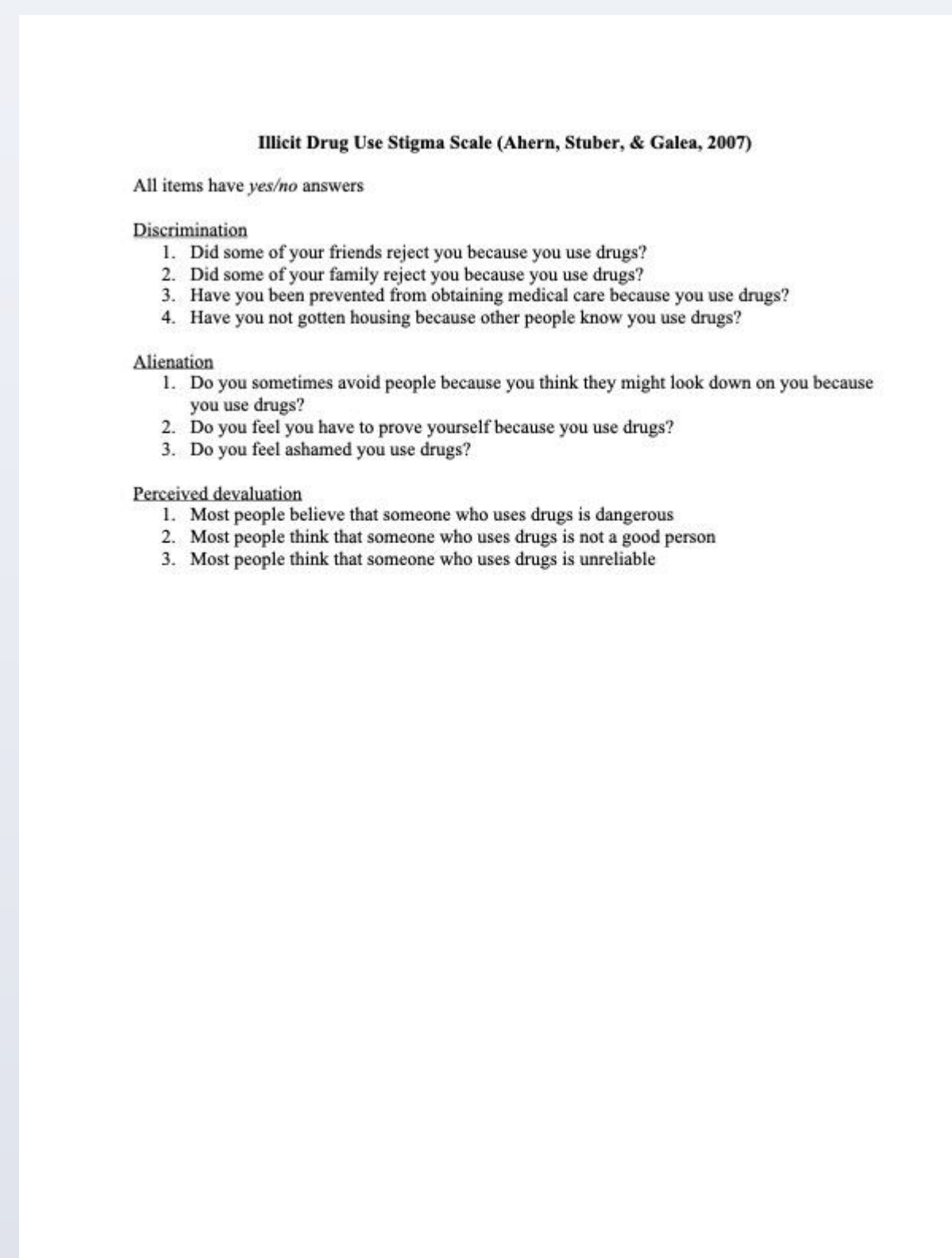
Perceived Stigma of Substance Abuse Scale (PSAS) Survey



PSAS
Please read each statement carefully and circle the number below the item that indicates the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement. Please use the scale below, and please do not omit any items.

- Most people would willingly accept someone who has been treated for substance use as a close friend.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most people believe that someone who has been treated for substance use is just as trustworthy as the average citizen.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most people would accept someone who has been treated for substance use as a teacher of young children in a public school.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most people would hire someone who has been treated for substance use to take care of their children.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most people think less of a person who has been in treatment for substance use.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most employers will hire someone who has been treated for substance use if he or she is qualified for the job.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most employers will pass over the application of someone who has been treated for substance use in favor of another applicant.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree
- Most people would be willing to date someone who has been treated for substance use.
1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree

Illicit Drug Use and Stigma Scale Survey



Illicit Drug Use Stigma Scale (Abern, Steber, & Galea, 2007)
All items have yes/no answers

Discrimination

- Did some of your friends reject you because you use drugs?
- Did some of your family reject you because you use drugs?
- Have you been prevented from obtaining medical care because you use drugs?
- Have you not gotten housing because other people know you use drugs?

Alienation

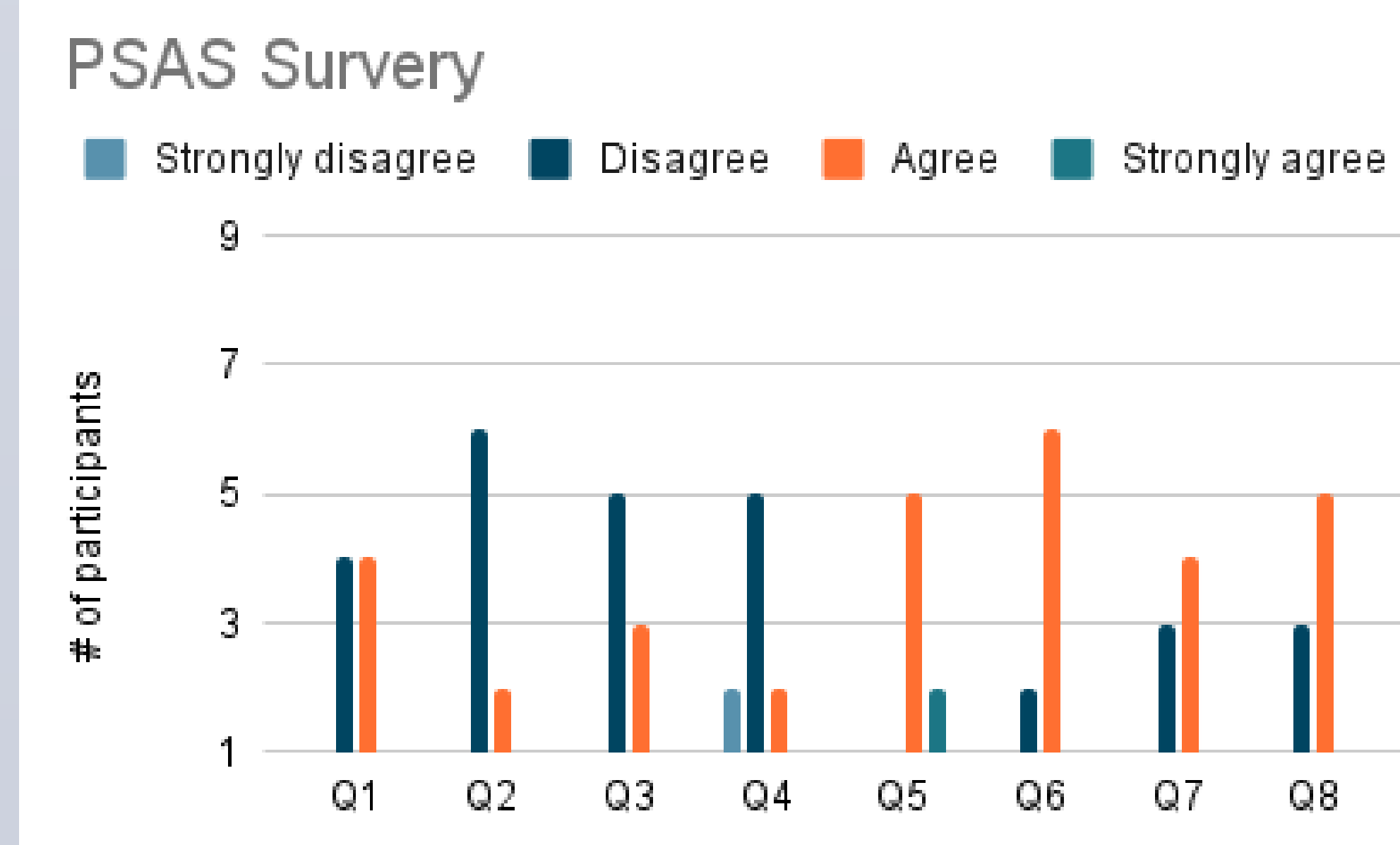
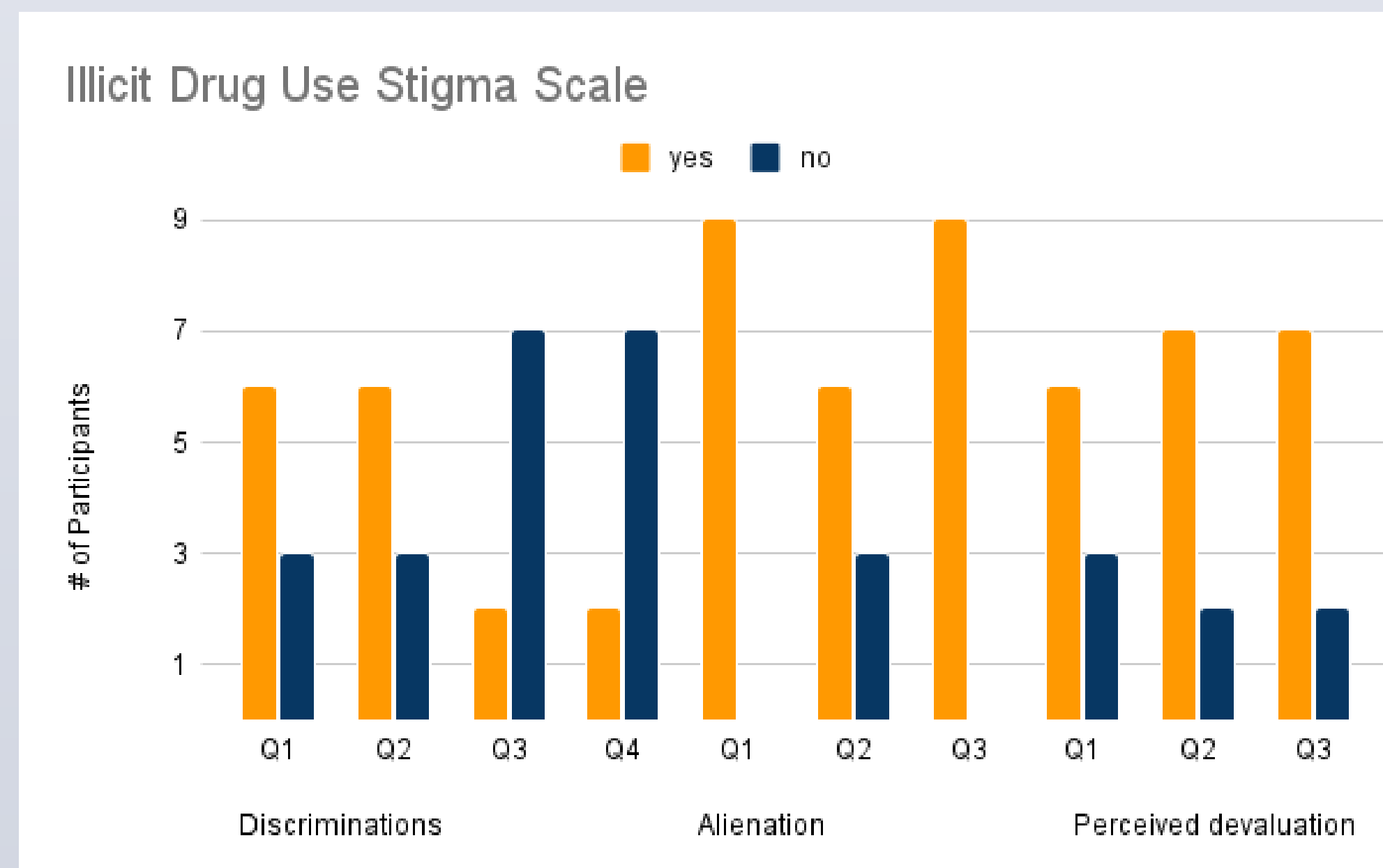
- Do you sometimes avoid people because you think they might look down on you because you use drugs?
- Do you feel you have to prove yourself because you use drugs?
- Do you feel ashamed you use drugs?

Perceived devaluation

- Most people believe that someone who uses drugs is dangerous
- Most people think that someone who uses drugs is not a good person
- Most people think that someone who uses drugs is unreliable

Results

- Based on the data collected from the surveys of 9 completed, there was a range of what each patient has experienced regarding stigma.
- The following questions from the Illicit Drug Use Stigma Scale received a “yes” response from all participants:
 - “Do you sometimes avoid people because you think they might look down on you because you use drugs?”
 - “Do you feel ashamed you use drugs (or alcohol)?”
- There was a range in the responses received, but it is clear that all patients have experienced stigma of some type because of their disease.



Conclusions

- Even with the range of results received from the surveys, it appears that all individuals who completed the surveys have experienced stigma involving their addiction in some way.
- More education about substance use disorders should be provided to people in hopes they can understand the illness better.
- I think that everyone, specifically older adults or healthcare professionals should receive more education on substance use disorders.
- Having people understand the illness better can help reduce the stigma those with substance use disorders face.
- Reducing stigma around substance use disorders may allow more people with the illness to seek treatment and start their recovery process.

Acknowledgments

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Recovery Centers of America (RCA) Danvers

References

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