

Physical Therapy Expectations and Quality Measures in Acute and Chronic Musculoskeletal Conditions

J Anthony Saenz, MD, Patrick J Goetz, MD, Jason P Patel, MD, and Sommer Aldulaimi, MD

Introduction

Musculoskeletal conditions are common affecting 50% of Americans¹. Musculoskeletal disorders comprise a majority of complaints in primary care with 57.5% of patients presenting to their primary care providers to discuss their conditions². Patients with musculoskeletal disorders often seek larger improvement than attained³. We sought to show how expectations regarding treatment with physical therapy influenced post physical therapy pain and quality of life measures.

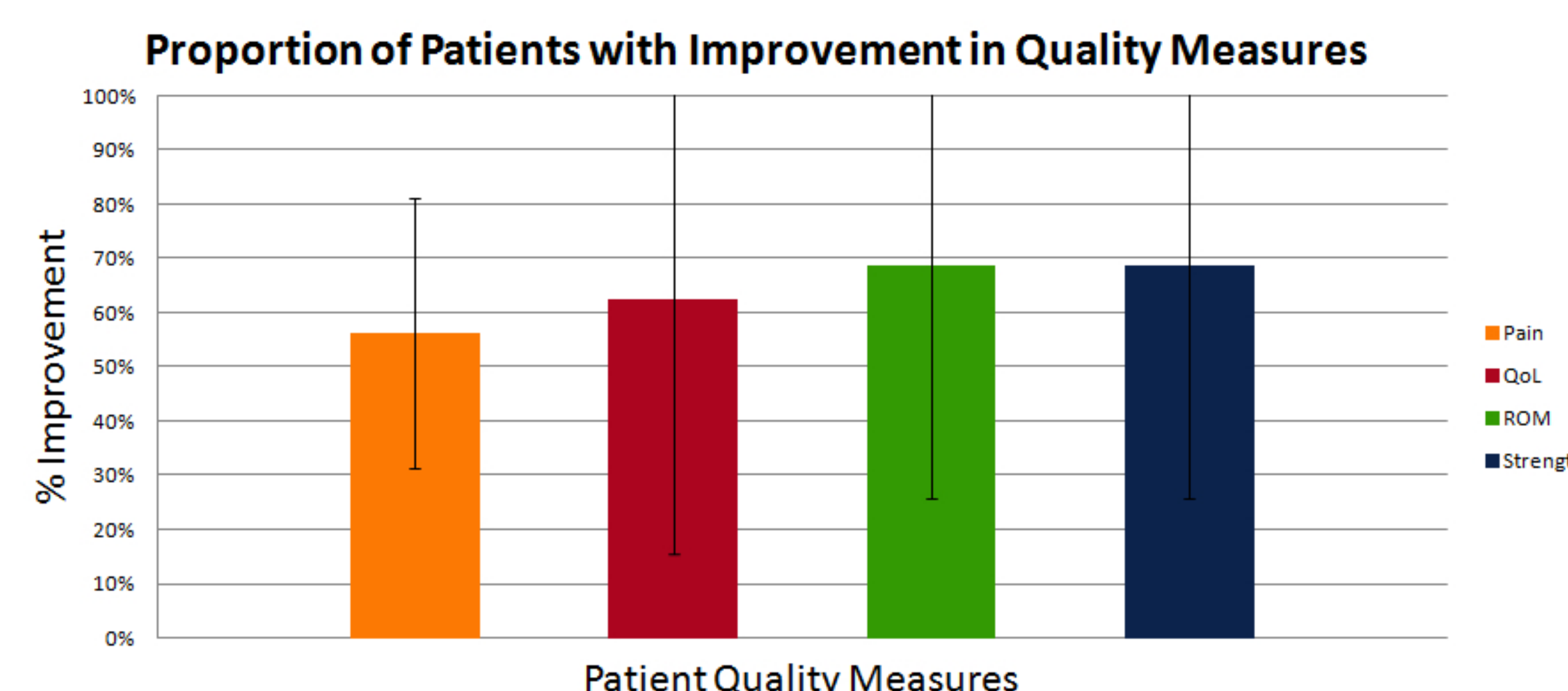
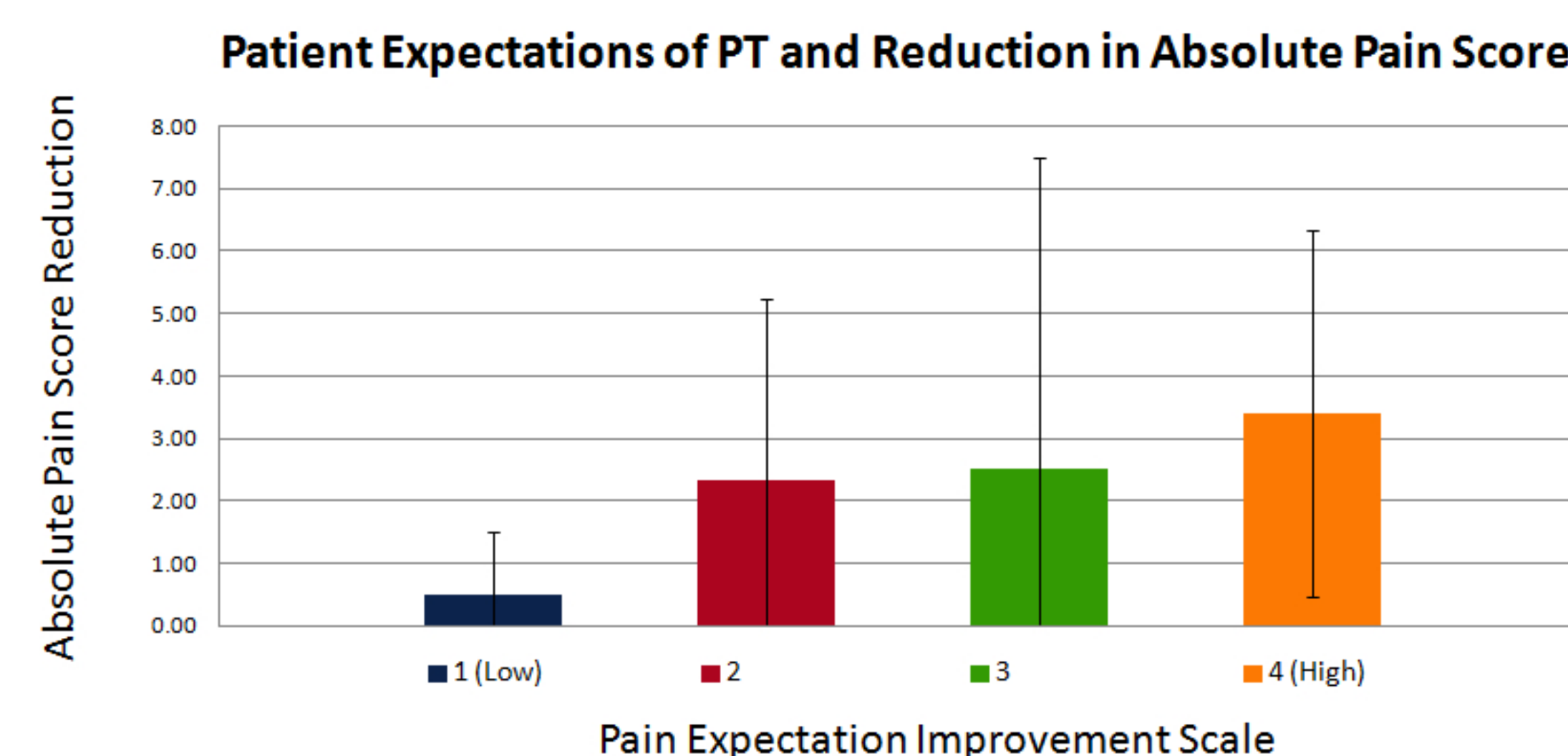
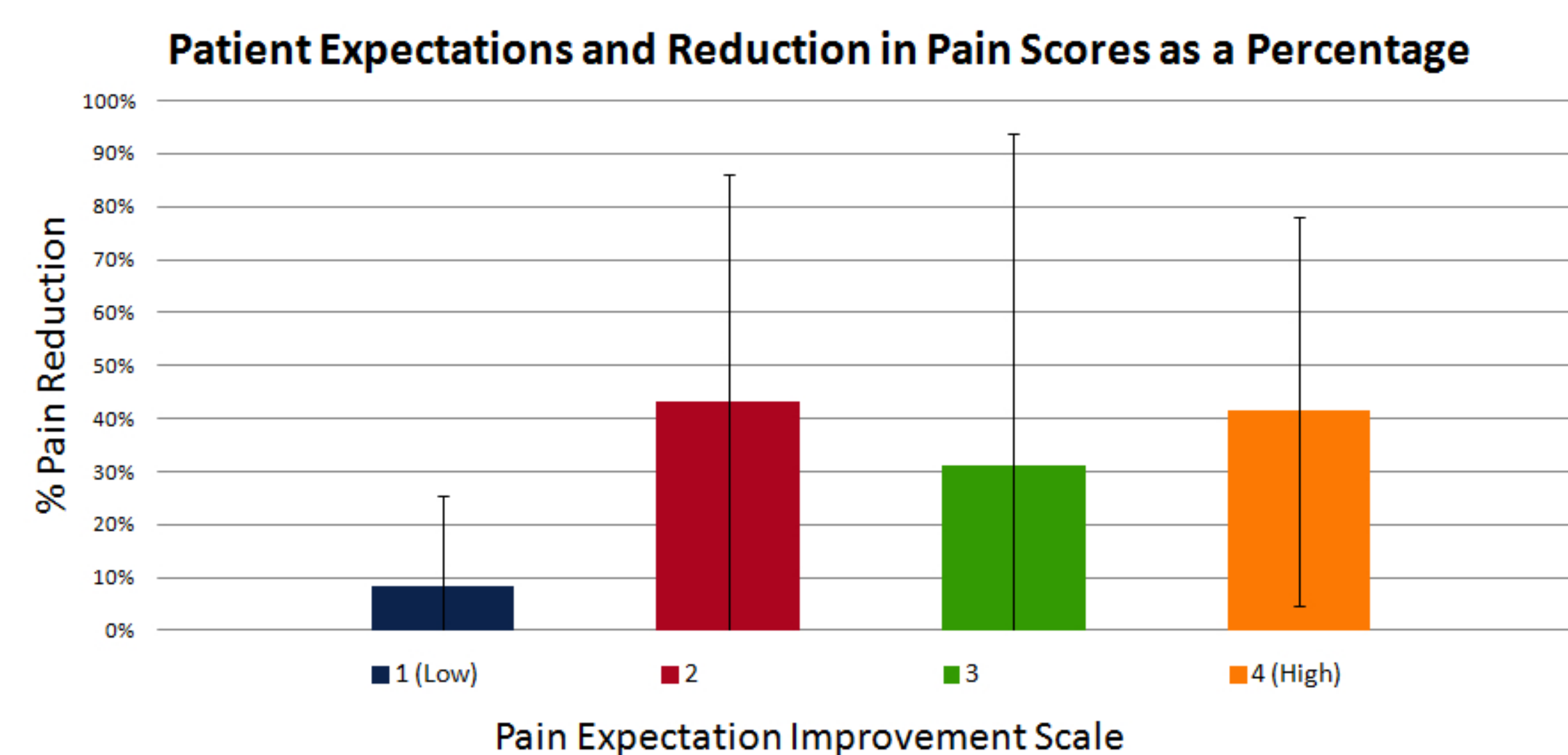
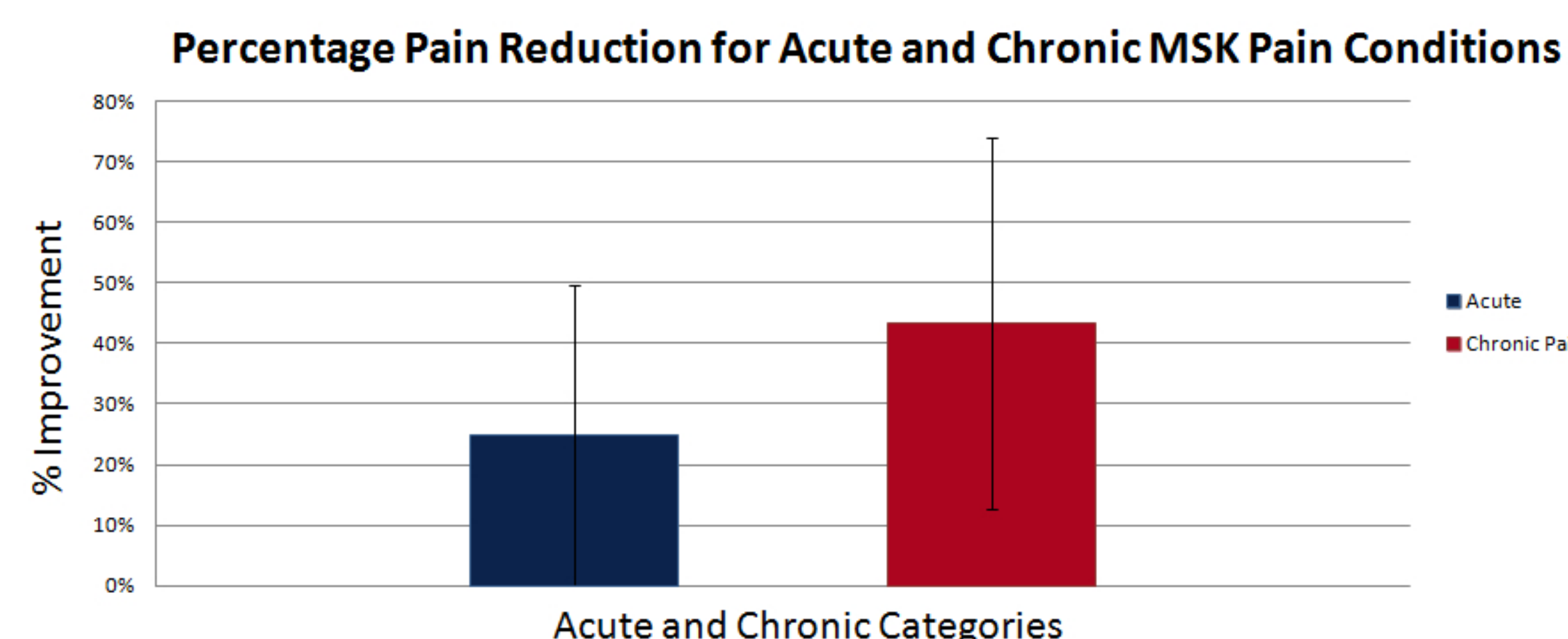
Study Aims

- 1) Determine if there is a correlation between positive expectations with treatment and reduction in pain.
- 2) Determine if pain reduction differs between acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions post-PT.
- 3) Determine patient satisfaction and likelihood of returning to PT if referred.
- 4) Determine barriers to completing PT.

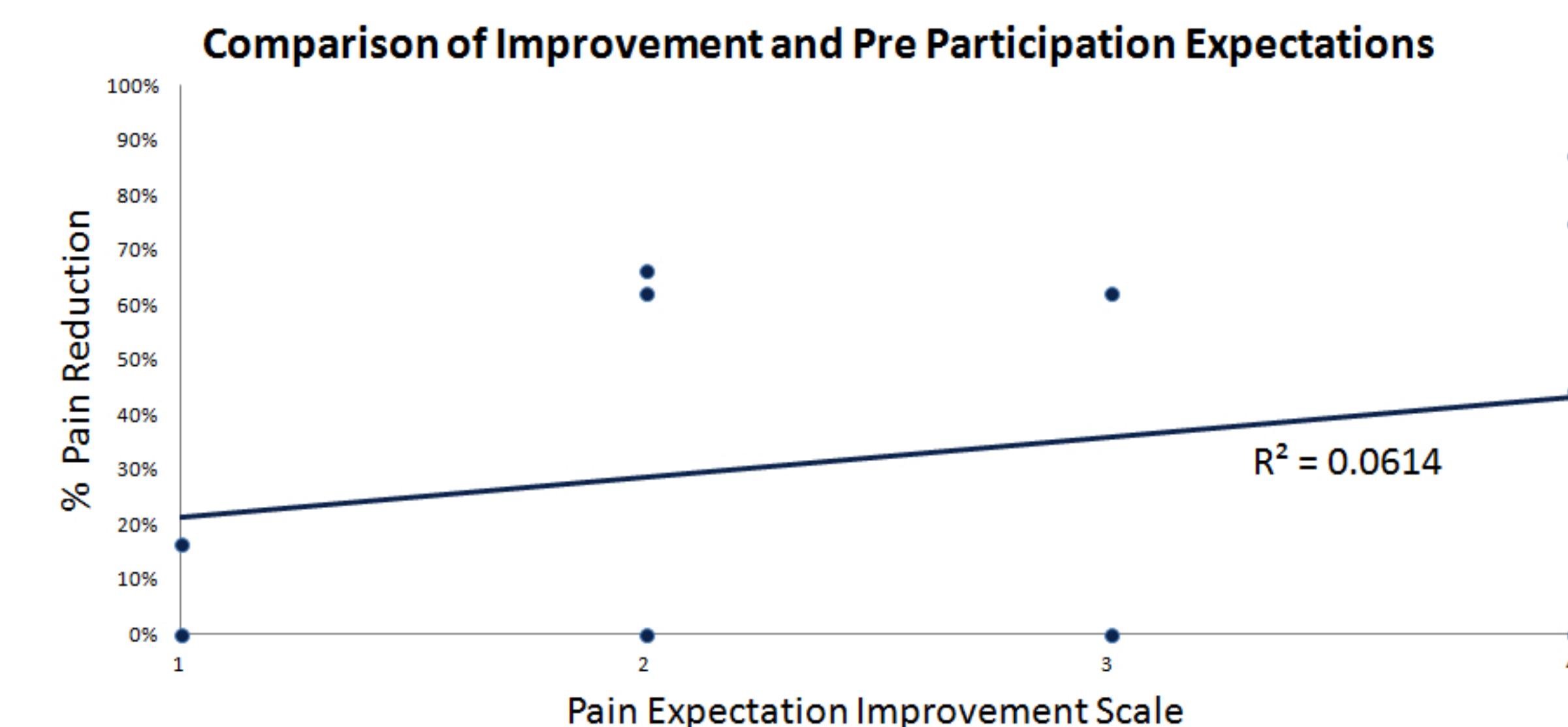
Methods

- Patients were prescribed PT for acute and chronic MSK conditions in a family medicine clinic.
- Pre-PT surveys were completed by patients and referring physicians with measures including: goals of PT, 10-point pain scale⁴, expectations of improvement, and prior PT.
- Post surveys were completed by telephone and included: total sessions attended, change in goals (worse, no change, improved), 10-point pain scale, overall satisfaction, and likeliness of returning.
- 29 surveys were distributed and 12 post-PT completed.
- Each outcome was plotted with a 95% CI.
- A Pearson-correlation coefficient was calculated showing degree of correlation.
- Two-sample t-test compared percent improvement for acute and chronic post PT conditions.

Results



Results continued



Conclusion

56% of patients that attended physical therapy experienced a decrease in overall pain and 63-69% reported improvement of strength, range of motion, and quality of life. Those that expected improvement prior to attending physical therapy were more likely to show a greater reduction in post PT pain. Those with chronic MSK pain (>6 months) reported an increased reduction in pain (42 %) as compared to those with pain that has lasted for <6 months (25%). 92% of patients were satisfied with their physical therapy experience and were likely to return if prescribed.

Study Limitations

- Small sample size due to limited referring providers.
- 17 of 29 surveys were not completed: inability to reach patient (7), insurance issue (2), unable to start PT (2), alternative therapy (2), lack of transport (1), no referral made (1) no appt scheduled (2).
- Variable number of PT sessions attended (1-8 sessions).
- Limited follow up time frame (6 months).

Future Studies

- Increased sample size with longer study duration.
- Determine difference in opiate-naive and -exposed populations.
- Check for correlation between number of PT sessions and improvement.

References

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4. 0–10 Numeric Pain Rating Scale: From McCaffery M, Pasero C. Pain: Clin Manual, St. Louis, 1999, P 16.