

Work conditions and job satisfaction among occupational therapists in Chile: A cross-sectional study

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Agenda

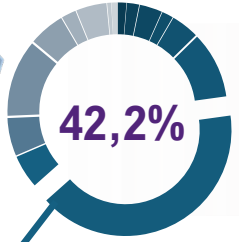
- Context
- National Survey
 - Strategy
 - Main finding



Background



Population
19,5 M 7th in LATAM (20)



lives in Santiago



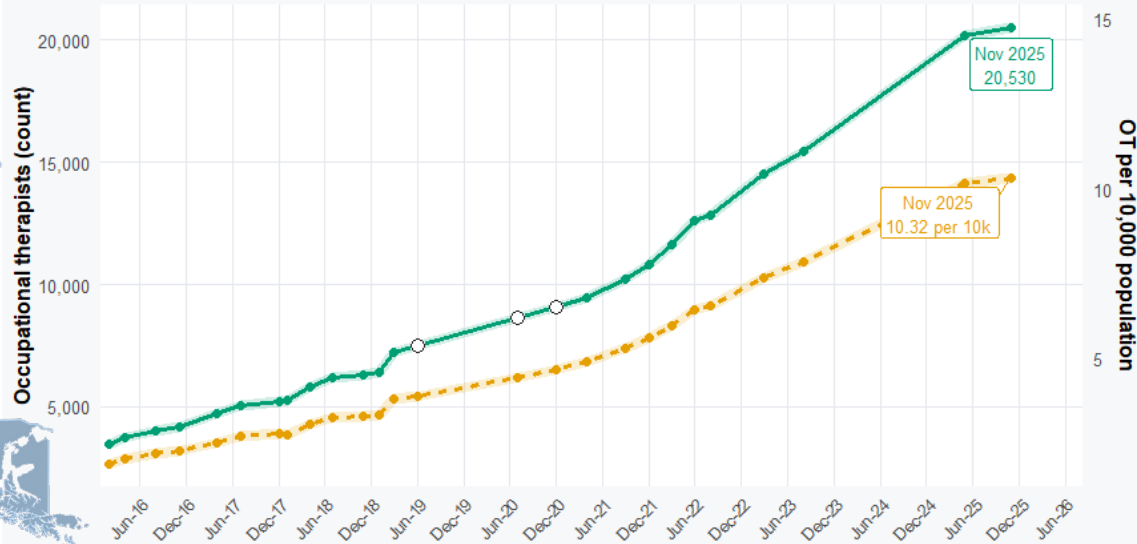
(2016-2025)

497% ↑

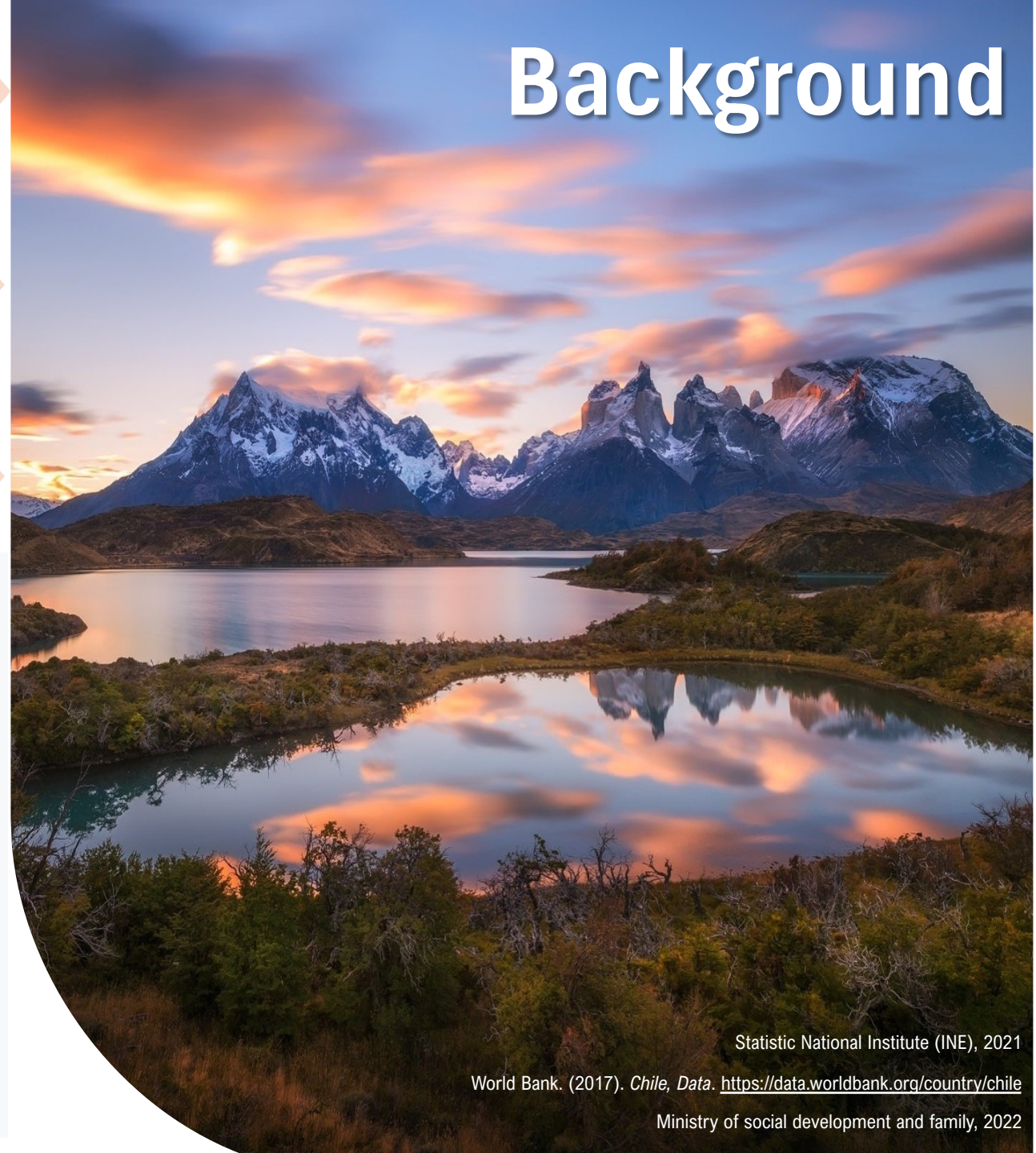
Occupational therapists in Chile (2016–2025)

Left axis: total count • Right axis: per 10,000 population • Hollow points = imputed months

— OT count — OT per 10k



Source: user-provided registry snapshots (2016–2025). Chart: Sebastian Gallegos-Berrios



Statistic National Institute (INE), 2021

World Bank. (2017). *Chile, Data*. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/chile>

Ministry of social development and family, 2022

Background

Occupational Therapy in Chile



First OT program

1963



Bachelor's degree

1995

5-years program



Registered OT

20K+

10,5/100k Hab



OT students

14K+



OT programs

71



WFOT approval

32/71



COLTO Chile. (2023). Colegio de Terapeutas Ocupacionales AG

Health Superintendency. (2022). Estadísticas de prestadores individuales de salud [Statistics of individual health practitioners].

Gómez Lillo, S., Ríos García-Huidobro, M. a. C., Doñez Quiroz, E., & González Reyes, M. a. C. (2012). Antecedentes, creación y desarrollo de la terapia ocupacional en Chile : 50 años de historia (1a. ed. ed.)

Background

Global Strategy for the Occupational Therapy Workforce: Framework of *Strategic Directions*



Gap

Rapid workforce growth; national distribution and numbers remain unclear.

Strong urban (Santiago) concentration; regional inequities likely persist.

Precarious contracts, multi-job holding, and income variability

Chilean occupational therapists' job satisfaction remains largely unknown.

Psychosocial risks and harassment undermine wellbeing and retention.

Sexual harassment and workplace violence hinder safety, satisfaction, and retention.

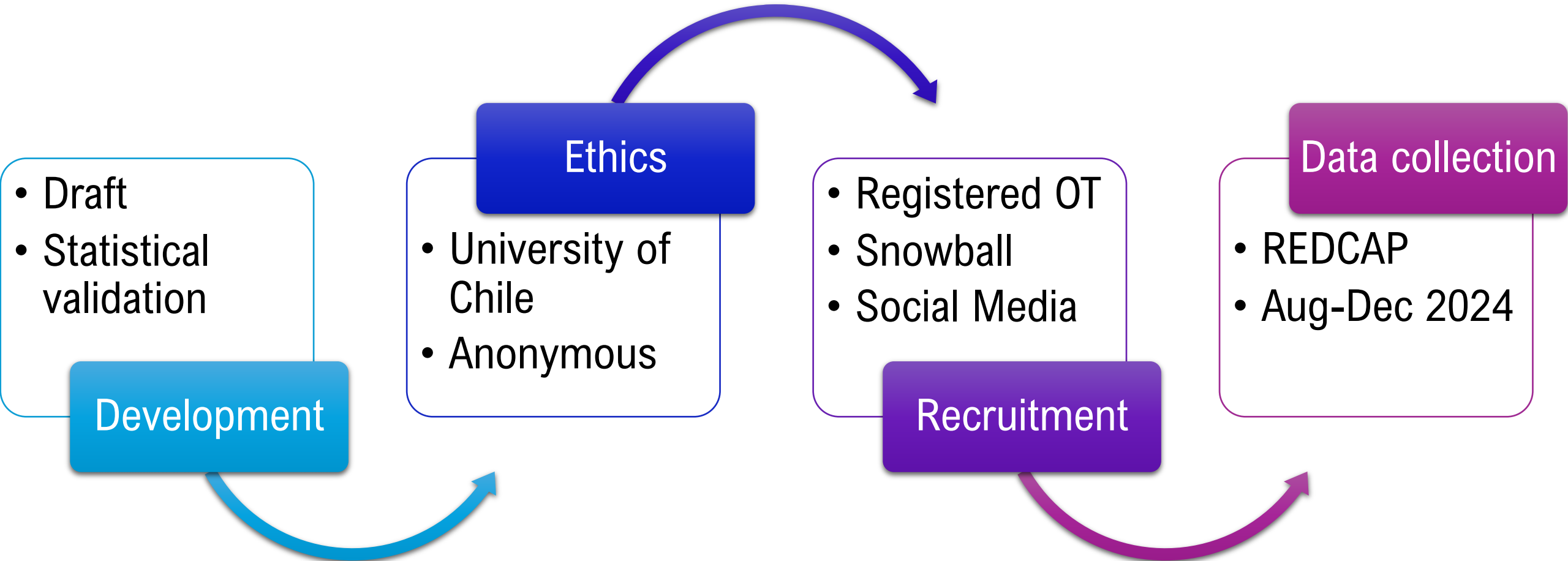


Methods



Domains

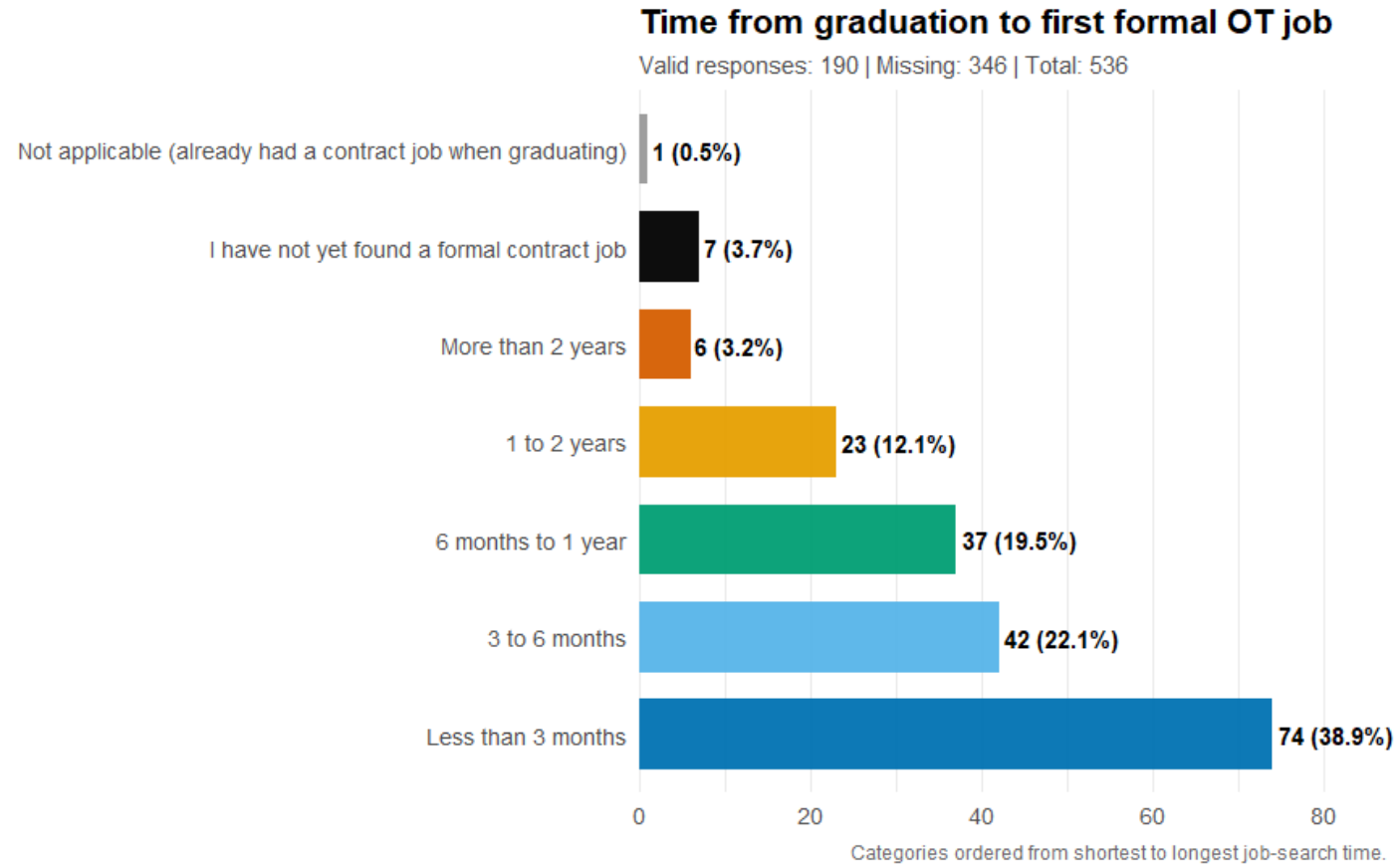
Methods



Results

Overview of key demographic and work-related characteristics

Variable	Category / Statistic	n	%
Gender (N = 190)	Female	156	82.1
	Male	31	16.3
	Transgender	2	1.1
	Other	1	0.5
Currently a caregiver (N = 189)	Yes	51	27.0
	No	138	73.0
Age (years) (N = 185)	M (SD)	30.77	8.13
	Median	30	—
Years since graduation (2026 – graduation year) (N = 182)	M (SD)	86.0	—
	Median	8	—
Academic degree (N = 190)	Occupational therapist (no academic degree)	45	23.7
	Bachelor's degree	104	54.7
	Master's degree	40	21.1
	Doctorate	1	0.5
Currently working as an OT (N = 181)	Yes	171	94.5
	No	10	5.5
Employment situation (multiple response) (N = 189)	Full-time contract	85	45.0
	Part-time contract	65	34.4
	Self-employed	71	37.6
	Unemployed / seeking work	7	3.7
	Prefer not to answer	1	0.5

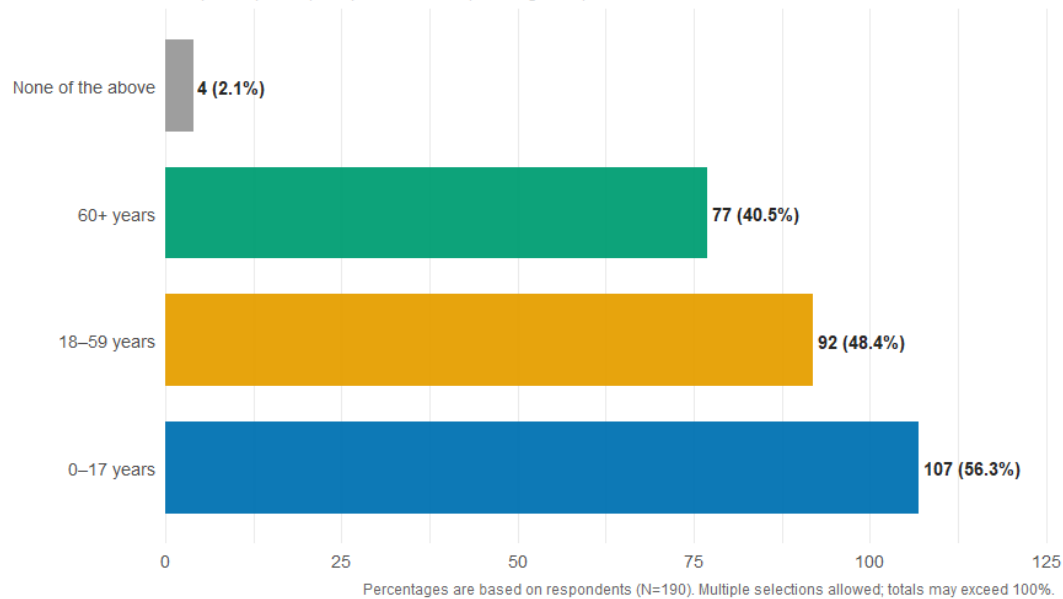


Results

Main areas of Occupational Therapy practice in Chile & specialization by life-course stage

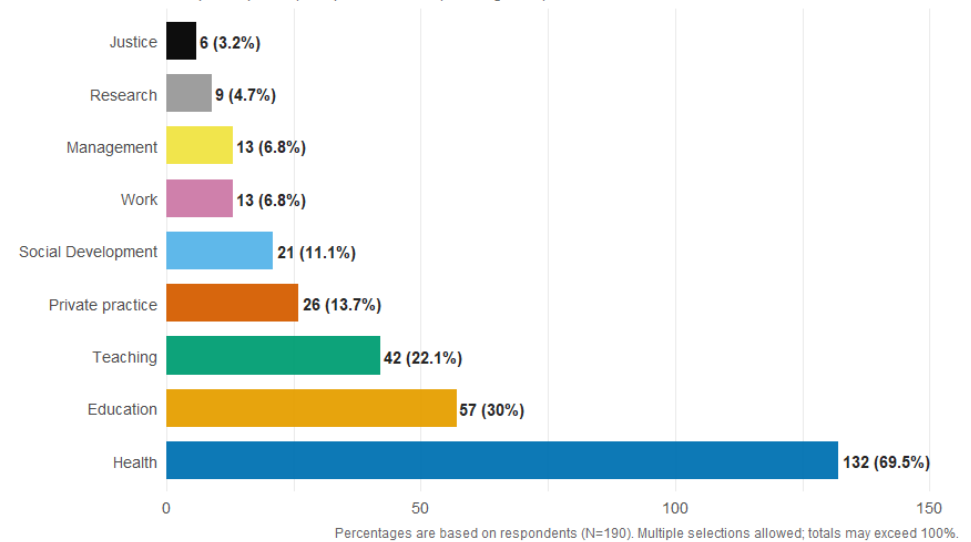
Specialty by life-course stage

Multiple response | Respondents: 190 | Missing: 346 | Total: 536



Work area as an occupational therapist in Chile

Multiple response | Respondents: 190 | Missing: 346 | Total: 536

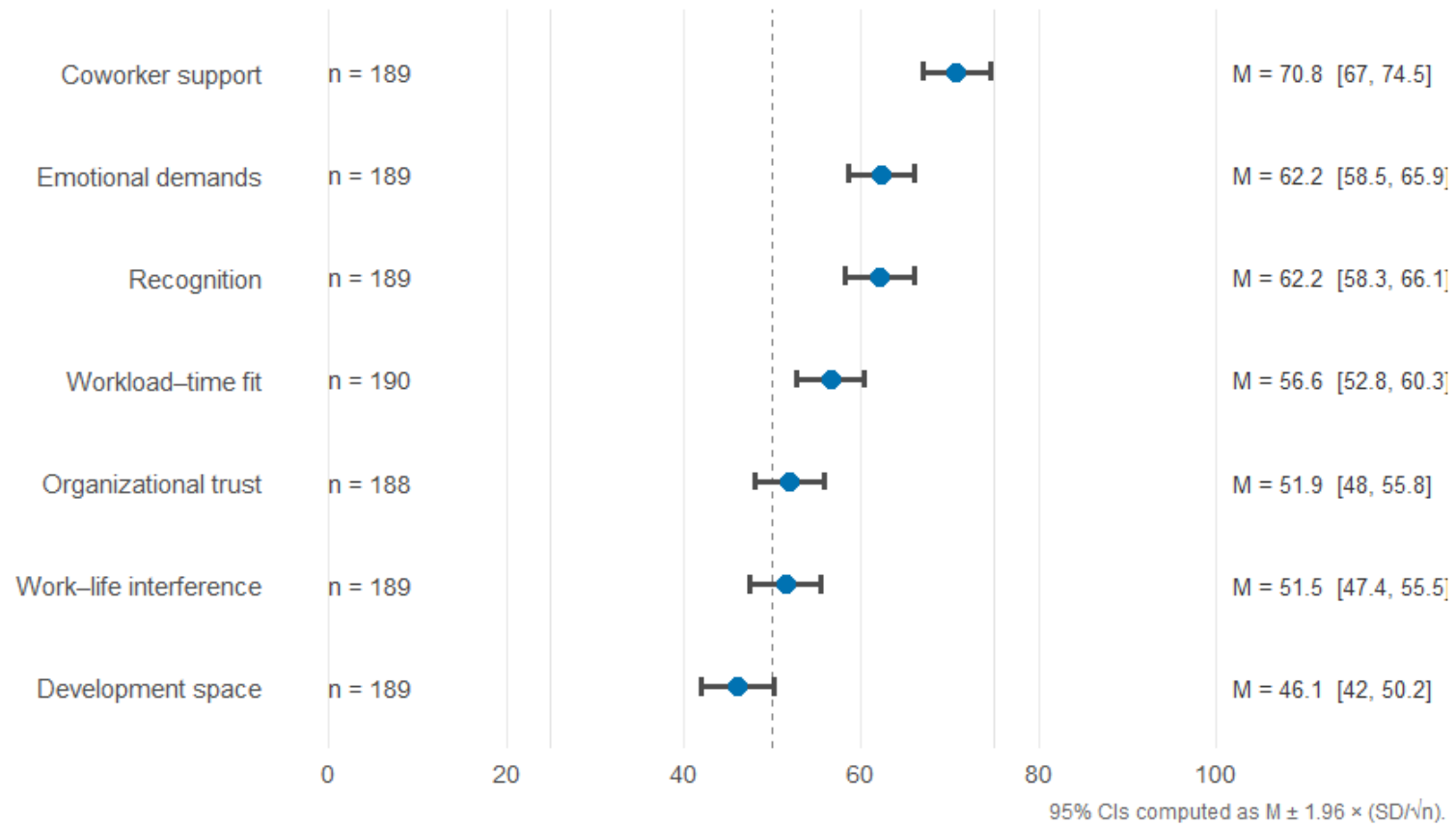


Results

Psychosocial Work Factors

Psychosocial work factors (0–100 scale)

Dots show mean scores; horizontal lines show 95% confidence intervals. Dashed line marks 50.

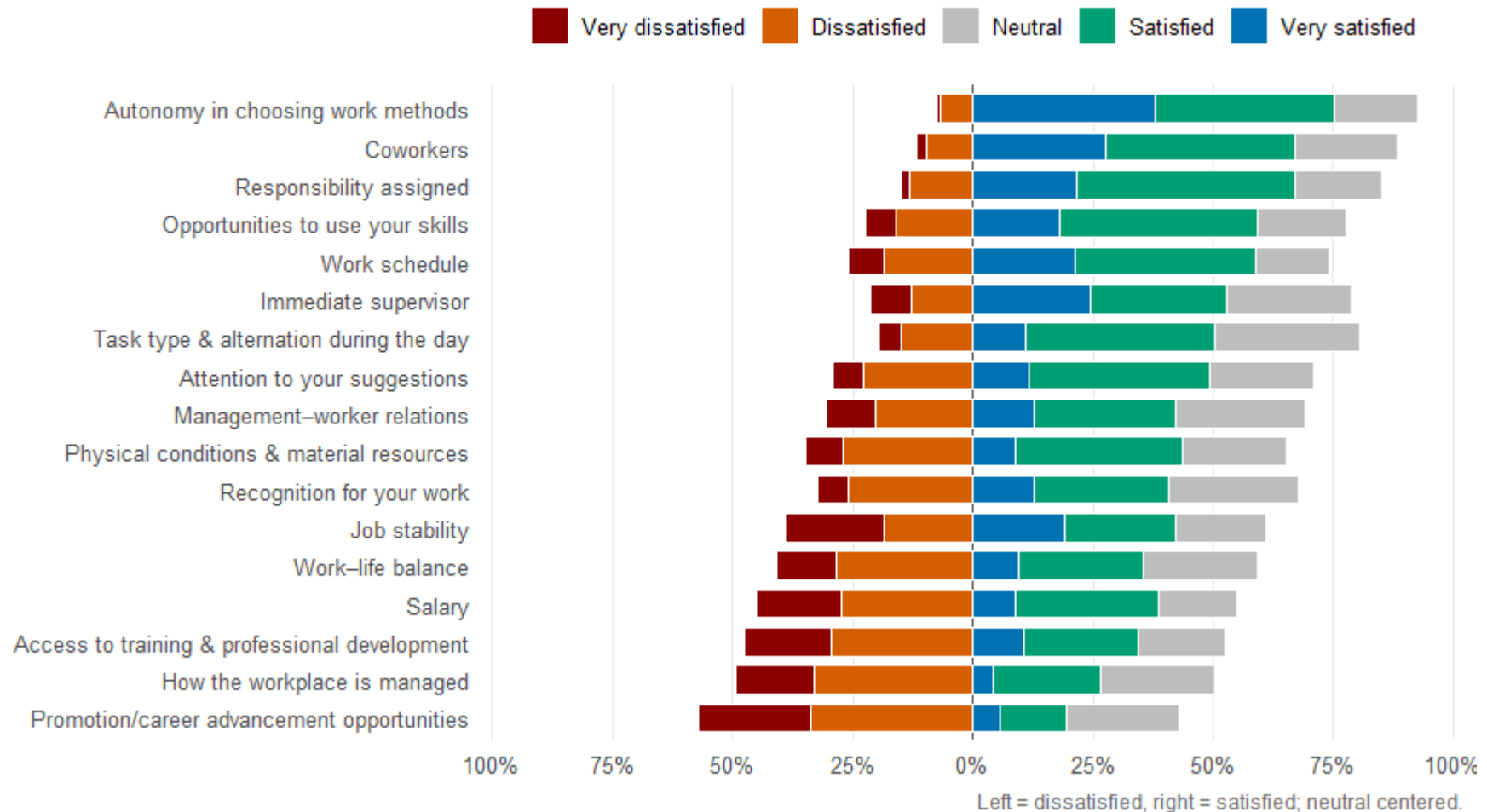


Results

Dissatisfaction and satisfaction patterns

Job satisfaction facets (diverging Likert, %)

Percentages are computed within each item (valid responses only). Items are ordered by r



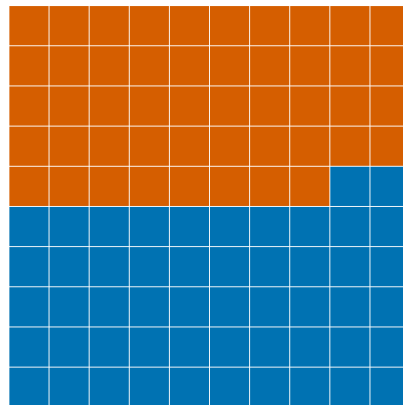
Results

Harassment prevalence

In your professional career, have you experienced workplace harassment in any job as an occupational therapist?

Harassment experienced (lifetime)

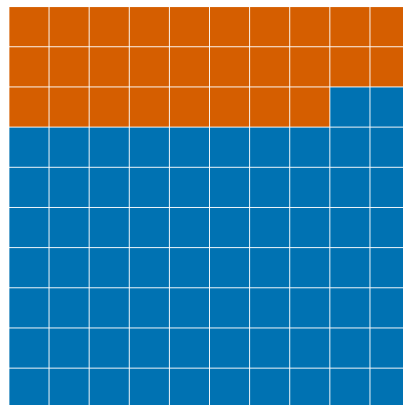
Yes: 92/190 (48.4%)



Waffle chart, each square ≈ 1 percentage point.

Harassment experienced (last 12 months)

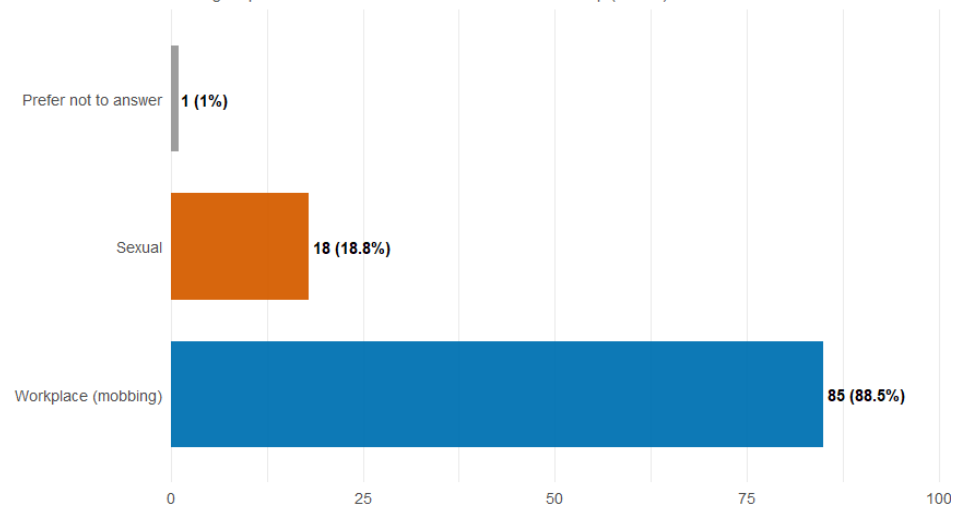
Yes: 54/190 (28.4%)



Waffle chart, each square ≈ 1 percentage point.

Type of harassment experienced

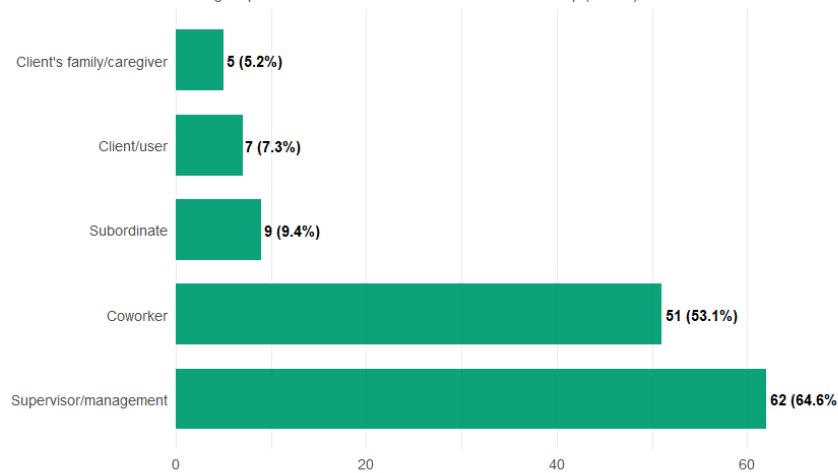
Among respondents who answered the harassment follow-up (N = 96).



Percentages shown over N = 96. If multiple selections were allowed, totals may exceed 100%.

Relationship to the harasser (multiple response)

Among respondents who answered the harassment follow-up (N = 96).



Multiple selections allowed; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

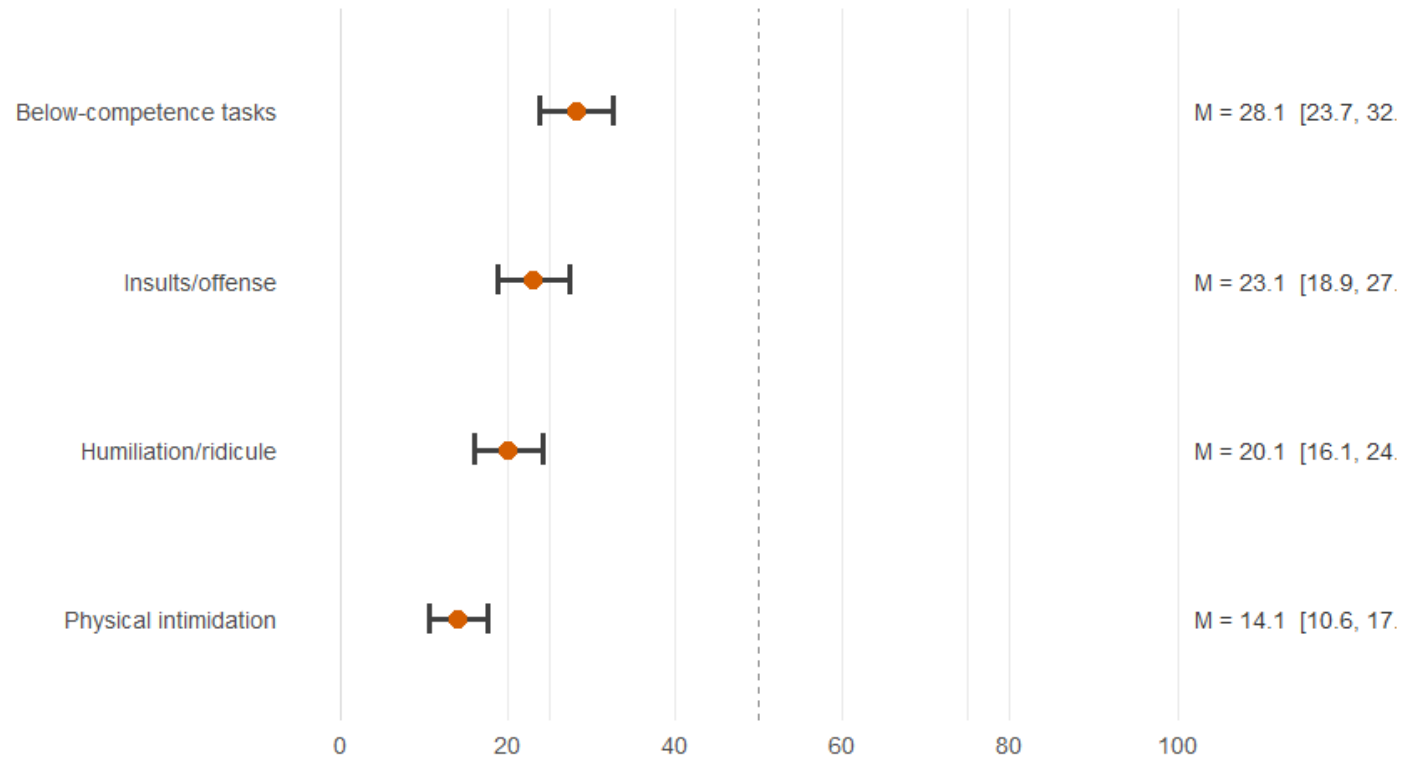
Have you experienced any workplace harassment in the past 12 months?

Results

Specific Workplace Harassment Behaviors

Workplace harassment behaviors (0–100 scale)

Dots show mean scores; horizontal lines show 95% confidence intervals. Dashed line marks 50.



95% CI computed as $M \pm 1.96 \times (SD/\sqrt{n})$. Higher scores indicate more frequent experiences.

Discussion

Rapid labor market entry:

Most participants obtained a formal OT job within the first 6 months, and the vast majority are currently employed.

Support vs. structure:

Coworker support is high, but **professional development opportunities are limited**, and several organizational factors sit around the midpoint.

Satisfaction pattern:

People are more satisfied with **autonomy, coworkers, and responsibilities**, but more dissatisfied with **salary, promotion opportunities, training access, and management**.

Harassment is common and ongoing:

Nearly half report harassment over their career, and almost one-third in the last 12 months.

Organizational roots:

Harassment is mainly **workplace/mobbing**, often involving **supervisors and coworkers**, suggesting a need for stronger institutional prevention and accountability.

Conclusion

Workforce distribution

Map regional gaps to target equitable access

Design rural incentives and tele-rehab deployment

Build a minimum workforce dataset; monitor shortages

Employment conditions

Benchmark salaries, contract types, and multi-job holding.

Identify drivers of turnover and time-to-fill vacancies.

Inform fair staffing ratios and procurement across services.

Psychosocial safety

Quantify workplace violence and sexual harassment burden.

Prioritize prevention, reporting systems, and leadership training.

Reduce burnout and absenteeism; improve retention and morale.

Job satisfaction

Track satisfaction by sector, region, and career stage.

Link satisfaction to quality of care and patient outcomes.

Design career pathways, mentorship, and continuing education that work.



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DE CHILE



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UST
UNIVERSIDAD SANTO TOMÁS

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