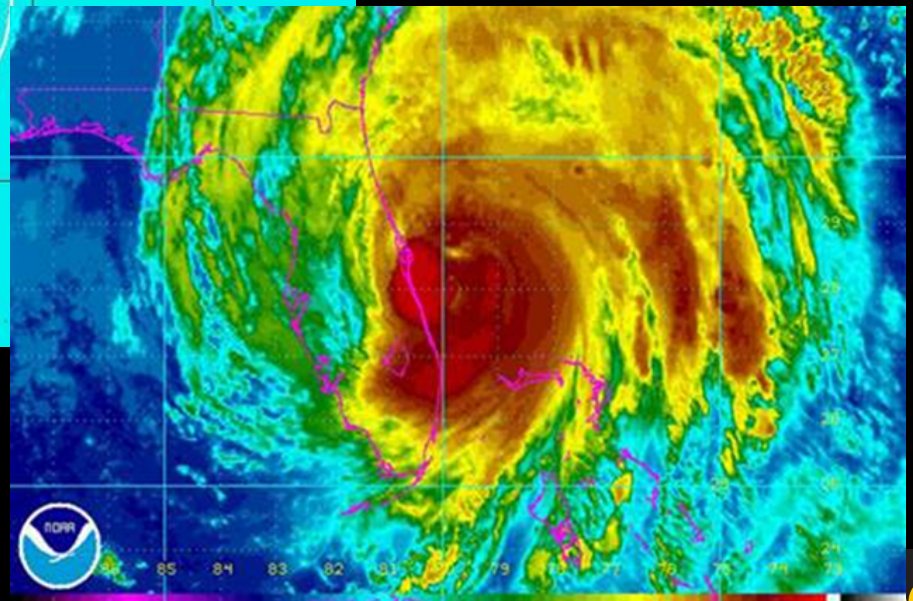# Implementing a Mixed-Methods Analytical Approach to Admissions in Physical Therapy Education

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What is the basis for your current admissions decisions?

What would it be ideally?

Why should we care?

- Physical therapy is a health profession rather than an occupation
  - Held to standards of competence and professionalism by society
- Changing health care system makes it difficult to uphold professional values and commitments
- Crucial that physical therapists continue to practice in alignment with Core Values of Professionalism in Physical Therapy

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Key question #1

- What makes a good PT?

Key question #2

- What is the mission & vision of your program?

Our Mission & Vision

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Key Question #3

- Is there anything wrong with this applicant?
  - BS Degree: Health science
  - Pre-requisite GPE: 371
  - Last 60 GPA: 3.55
  - Q GRE: 153
  - V GRE: 148

Core Values in Professionalism

- Accountability
- Altruism
- Compassion/Caring
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Professional Duty
- Social Responsibility

Expectations

- Newly graduated physical therapists should demonstrate these core values in daily practice
    - Responsibility of physical therapist education program & state licensing boards to assist in development
- Mixed evidence that some attributes cannot be taught in an academic environment
- It may be important to identify these qualities during the admissions process

Current Admission Practices

- Most programs rely on evaluation of cognitive abilities during the selection process (e.g., GRE, GPA)

- Fewer institutions assess non-cognitive attributes to make admissions decisions (e.g., professionalism, interpersonal skills)
  - According to PTCAS, only a little more than half (57%) of all DPT programs integrate an interview as part of their admissions criteria

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Current Literature

- Solid foundation regarding the relationship between cognitive traits and graduate school academic performance
  - Effects depend on metrics used in analyses

- Little long-term data on how these students perform as clinicians upon graduation

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Current Literature

- Behavioral interviews may predict success in programmatic metrics such as GPA and National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) exam performance

- It has been suggested that assessing non-cognitive traits through admissions interviews may better identify applicants who will be an effective member of the doctoring health profession of physical therapy

- Dockter M. An analysis of physical therapy preadmission factors on academic success and success on the national licensing examination. Journal of Physical Therapy Education. 2001;15(1):60.

- Hollman JH, Rindflesch AB, Youdas JW, Krause DA, Hellyer NJ, Kinlaw D. Retrospective analysis of the behavioral interview and other preadmission variables to predict licensure examination outcomes in physical therapy. Journal of allied health. 2008;37(2):97-104.

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Admissions Interviews

- Behavioral interviews developed on premise that past behavior predicts future behavior

- Provides structured method of assessing various non-cognitive attributes
  - Competency categories chosen from professional standards and desired behaviors
    - Possibly derived from program mission and/or Core Values of Professionalism in Physical Therapy

- Requires substantial resources and time from applicants and personnel from program

Admission Interviews

- Important to determine the impact of the interview on the admissions decisions to ensure burden of interview is warranted
  - Is the juice worth the squeeze?
- More research is needed to evaluate the use and potential benefit of behavioral interviews in physical therapist education admissions
- Scoring rubrics

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Admissions Interviews

- **Impact to applicant standing & ranking**

Interview Movers
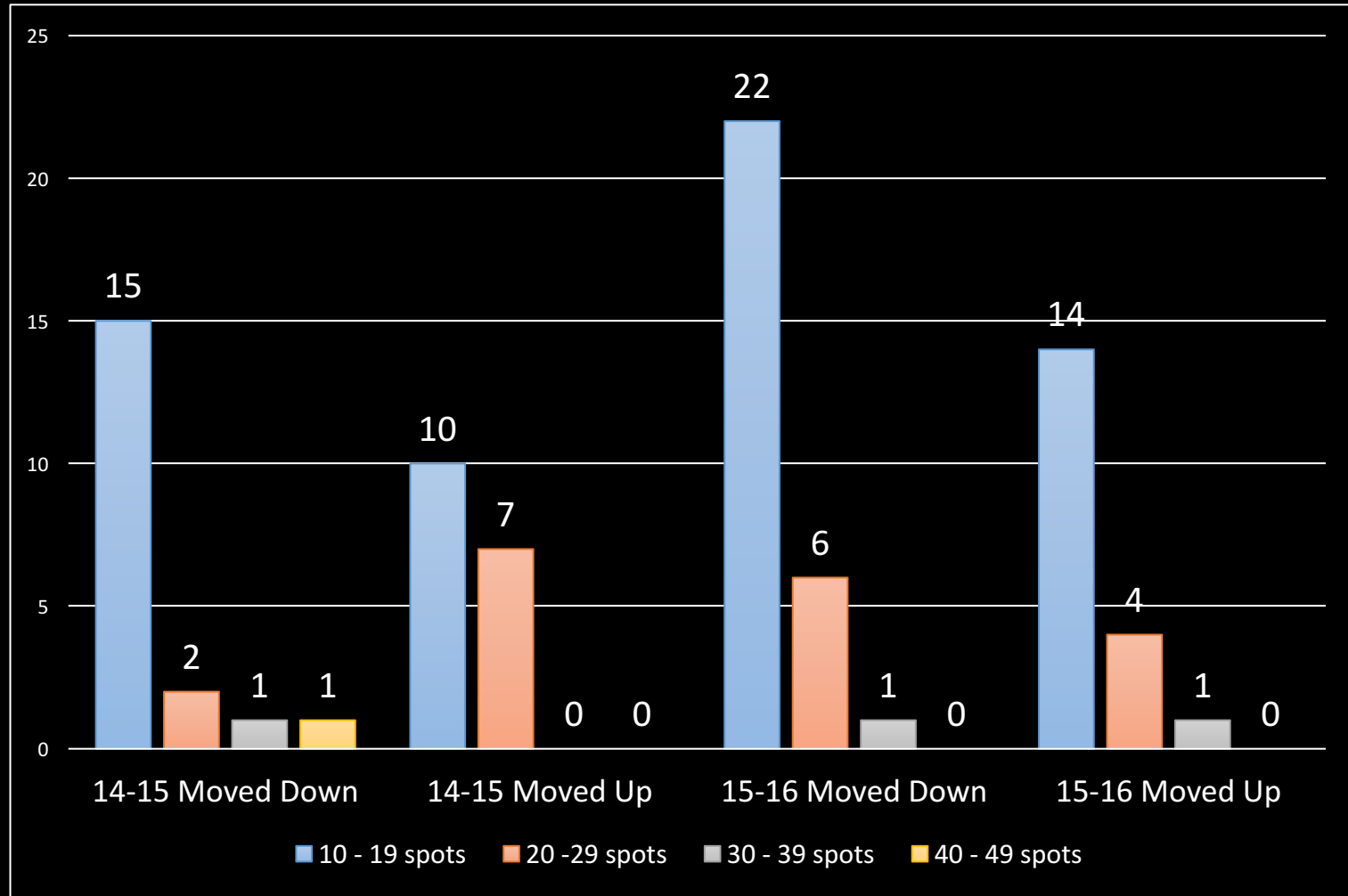
Case Studies

	Age at Application	Gender	Major	GRE	Prereq GPA	L60 GPA	PT Hours
Case 1	21	F	Ath Training	149Q/152V	2.87	3.86	178.5
Case 2	29	M	Marketing	163Q/161V	3.5	2.61	187
Case 3	21	F	Health Science	155Q/154V	3.8	3.94	487
Case 4	22	F	Health Science	157Q/153V	3.2	3.37	135
Case 5	23	F	Health Science	154Q/155V	4	3.91	101
Admitted Class Averages	24			155Q/154V	3.62	3.68	260

Note. GRE=Graduate Record Examinations, Q=quantitative, V=verbal (scores 130-170, higher score indicates better performance); prereq GPA=DPT prerequisite grade point average; L60 GPA=grade point average of last 60 credits hours taken; PT hours=number of PT observation hours.

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Implications for Admissions

- Demonstrates assessing non-cognitive traits through admissions interview can alter the composition of an incoming class

- Physical therapist education programs should consider addition of structured behavioral interview to assess non-cognitive traits

- Training and faculty development will be needed to ensure proper implementation of structured behavioral interview

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Discussion and Conclusion

- Stronger support is needed to validate non-cognitive traits as predictor of academic success and NPTE performance

- Further research is needed to determine the relationship between behavioral interviews and clinical performance

- Potential development for pre-interview screening of non-cognitive traits via survey or questionnaire at time of application

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Thank you!
Questions?

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