

Assessing Resources and Benefits During the Admission and Academic Processes for Veterans and Military Members at Pharmacy Schools in the USA

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BACKGROUND

- Military members often face significant challenges while transitioning from military service to civilian life, however, education is often seen as a crucial transitioning tool
- Federal government provides veterans/military members with financial support, educational benefits, and post-graduate assistance programs that encourage them to pursue education
- Barriers to accessing benefits could potentially hinder veterans/military members from effectively utilizing these benefits and access to education

OBJECTIVE

- To identify and evaluate benefits offered for veterans/military members by pharmacy schools in the USA
- To recognize potential obstacles in locating various benefits and ensure that veterans/military members are adequately guided throughout the admission and educational process
- To assess the need for additional widgets that could be added to the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SIUE SOP) website

METHODS

Study Design

- Exploratory review

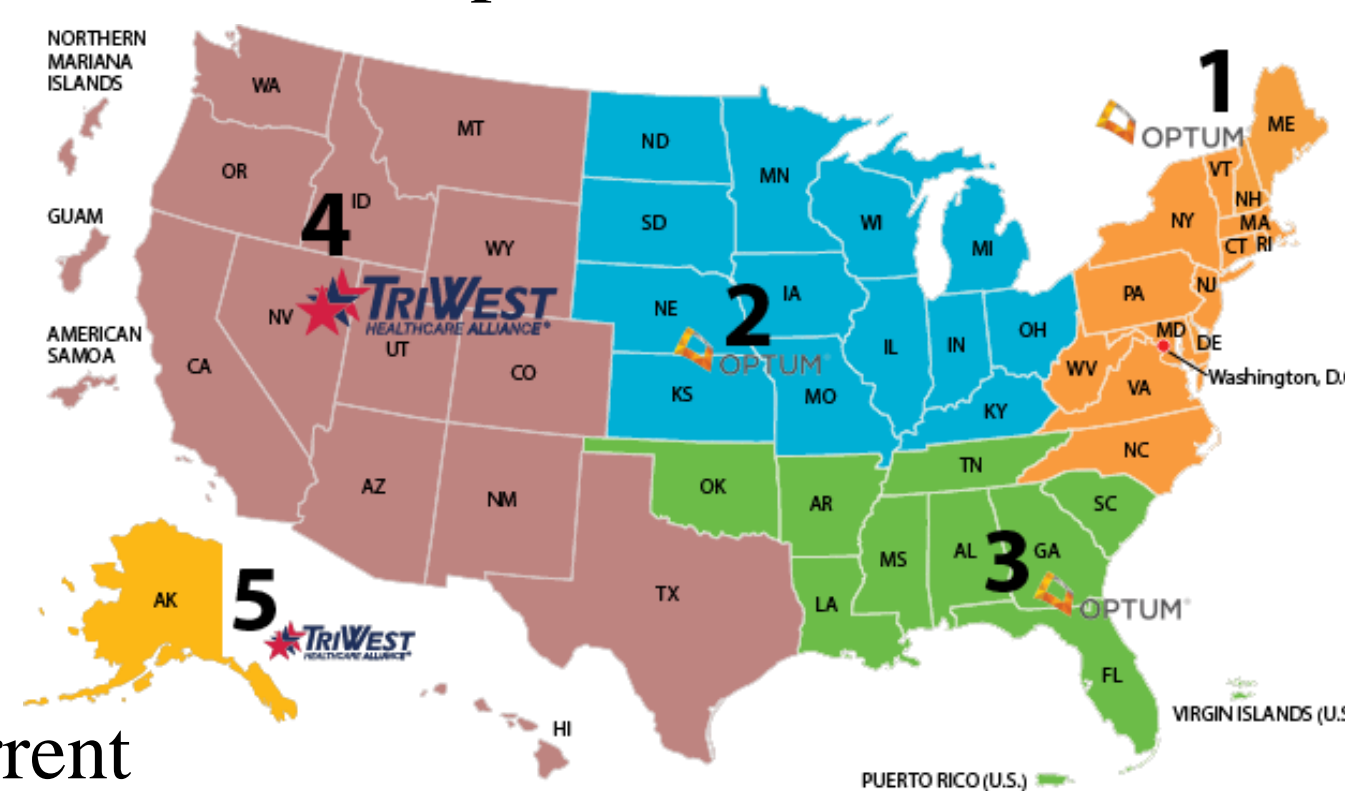
Inclusion criteria

- Pharmacy schools of the USA
- Current and former veterans/military students from the SIUE SOP

Search strategies and inclusion criteria

1st part of the research

- Pharmacy schools were searched via the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) school locator
- 141 pharmacy schools were searched and reviewed for presence of veterans/military benefits between May and August of 2022
- The data was compared among VA regions



2nd part of the research

- 11-question survey was distributed to current and former veterans/military students of the SOP SIUE to gather feedback on how the SIUE SOP website and admission process can be improved
- Survey was distributed via social media and personal emails

Study measures

- Presence of direct/indirect link for veterans/military members benefits
- Single-answer feedback on ease of navigating and accessing information on the SIUE SOP website
- Ranking feedback on incorporation of additional features to the SIUE SOP website

Data collection and analysis

- Microsoft Excel was used to analyze descriptive statistics
- Chi-square, z-test used to determine a statistical difference
- Qualtrics software was used to administer the survey and for data collection

Definitions

- Direct web link for benefits – a direct hyperlink for benefits found on the pharmacy school website without utilization of search engine tool
- Indirect web link for benefits – a hyperlink found on the school of pharmacy website using a search engine tool

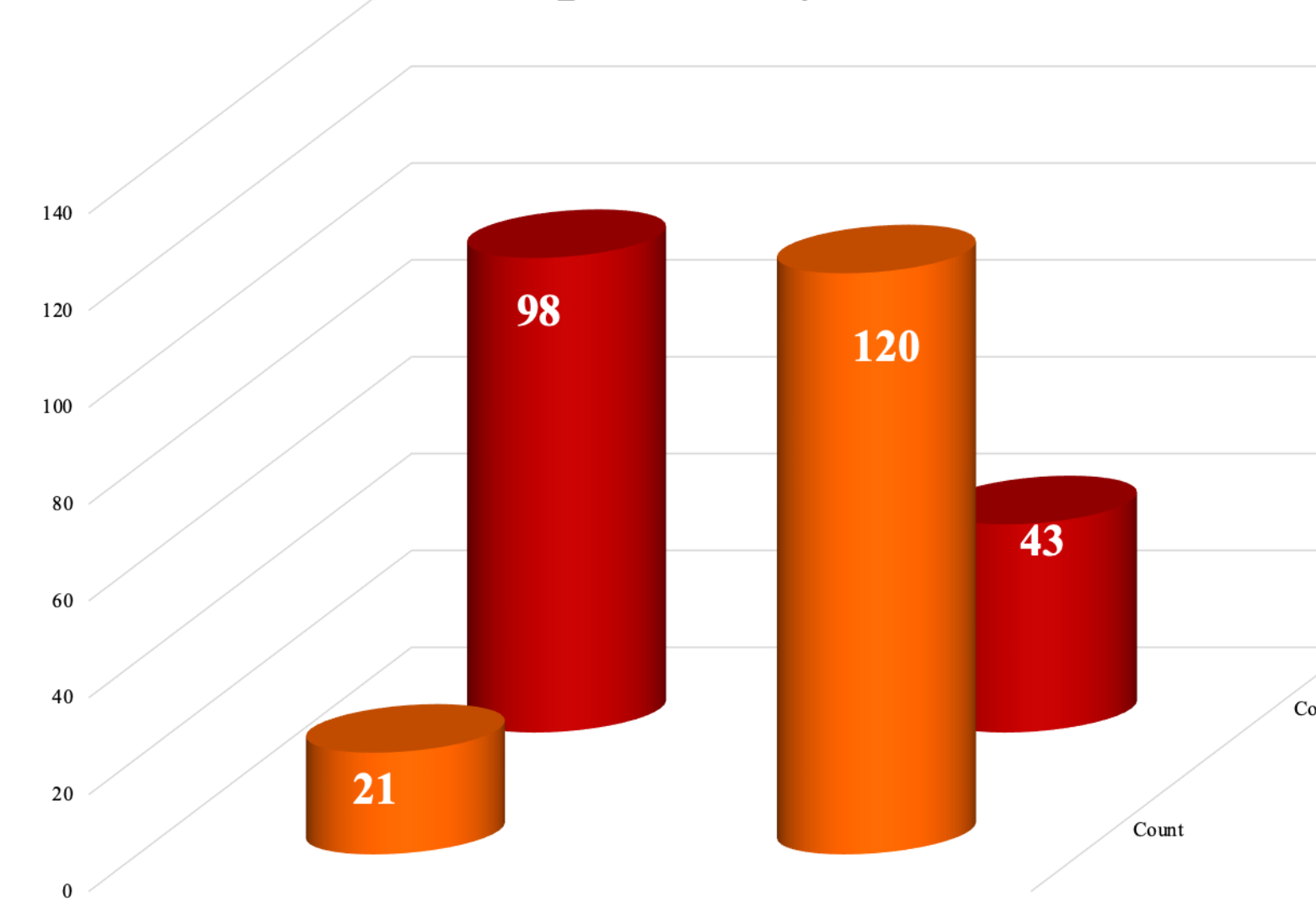
RESULTS

1st Part of the Research – Systematic Review

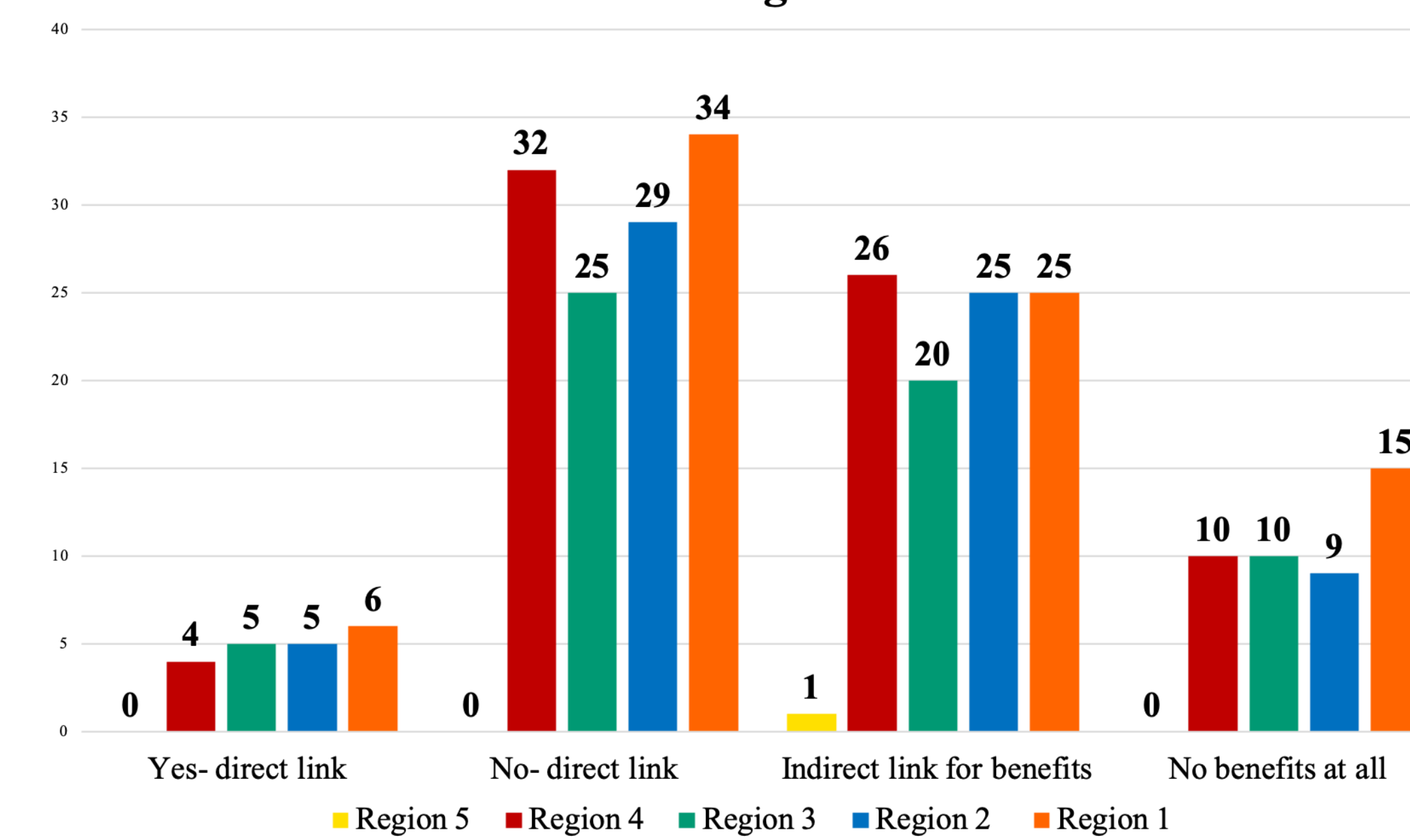
Table 1 – Results from the primary part of the research (N=141)

	All Schools, N=141, # (%)	VA Region 1, N=40, # (%)	VA Region 2, N=34, # (%)	VA Region 3, N=30, # (%)	VA Region 4, N=36, # (%)	VA Region 5, N=1, # (%)
Existence of a direct web link for Veterans/military members benefits on school of pharmacy website						
Yes	21 (15%)	6 (15%)	5 (15%)	5 (17%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)
No	120 (85%)	34 (85%)	29 (85%)	25 (83%)	32 (89%)	0 (0%)
Existence of indirect web link for Veterans/military members benefits that was located using a search engine tool						
Yes	98 (70%)	25 (63%)	25 (74%)	20 (67%)	26 (72%)	1 (100%)
No	43 (30%)	15 (38%)	9 (26%)	10 (33%)	10 (28%)	0 (0%)

Comparison of direct vs indirect links for VA benefits at pharmacy school websites



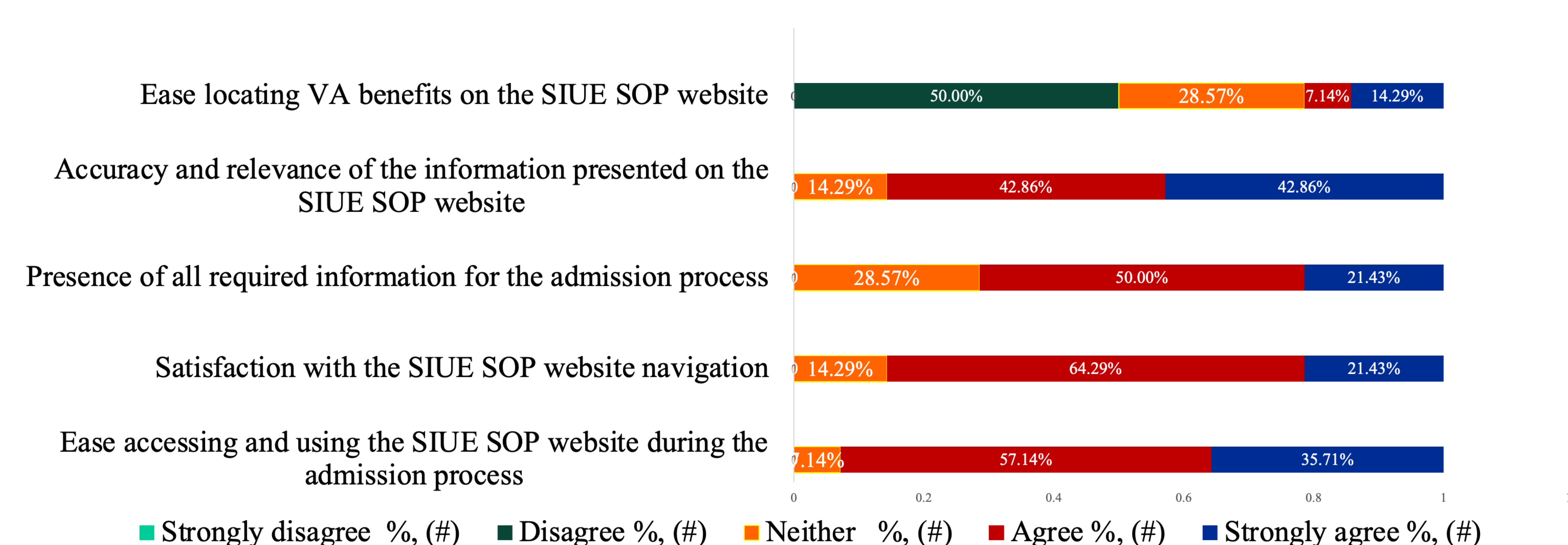
VA Regions



2nd Part of the Research – Survey

Table 2 – Assessing relevance, accessibility, ease of navigating benefits at the SIUE SOP website (N=14)

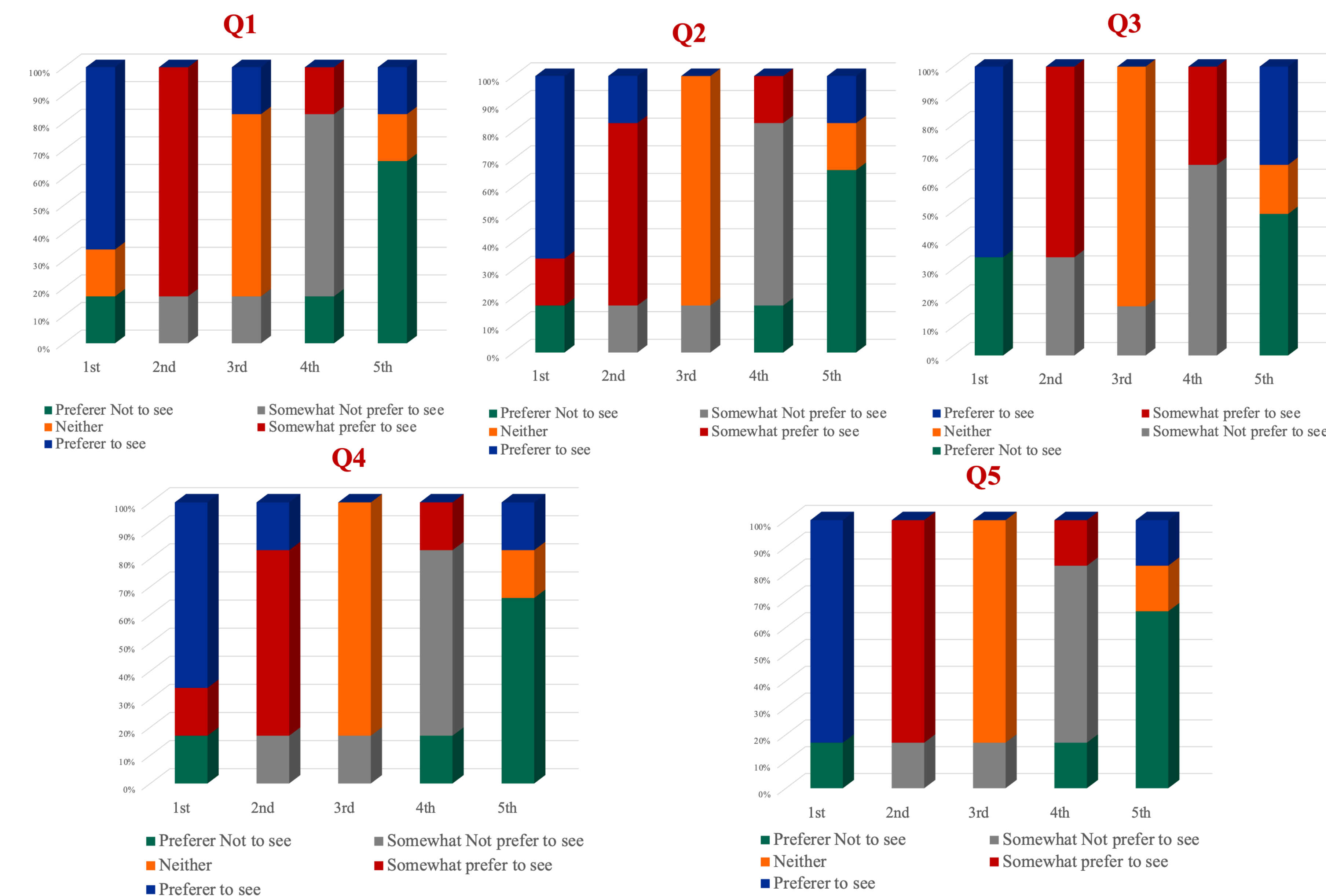
N=14	Strongly disagree %, (#)	Disagree %, (#)	Neither %, (#)	Agree %, (#)	Strongly agree %, (#)
Ease locating VA benefits on the SIUE SOP website	-	50.00% (7)	28.57% (4)	7.14% (1)	14.29% (2)
Accuracy and relevance of the information presented on the SIUE SOP website	-	-	14.29% (2)	42.86% (6)	42.86% (6)
Presence of all required information for the admission process	-	-	28.57% (4)	50.00% (7)	21.43% (3)
Satisfaction with the SIUE SOP website navigation	-	-	14.29% (2)	64.29% (9)	21.43% (3)
Ease accessing and using the SIUE SOP website during the admission process	-	-	7.14% (1)	57.14% (8)	35.71% (5)



RESULTS

Table 3- Assessing the need for improvements at the SIUE SOP website (N=6)

N=6	Preferer Not to see	Somewhat Not prefer to see	Neither	Somewhat prefer to see	Preferer to see
1. Presence of admission checklist “From Start to Finish” on the SIUE SOP website	5 th ranking 66%	4 th ranking 66%	3 rd ranking 66%	2 nd ranking 83%	1 st ranking 66%
2. Presence of a Point of contact at SOP that will guide through the application process and VA benefits process	5 th ranking 66%	4 th ranking 66%	3 rd ranking 83%	2 nd ranking 66%	1 st ranking 66%
3. Presence of a list of available scholarships offered for Veterans/Military members on the SIUE SOP website	5 th ranking 49%	4 th ranking 66%	3 rd ranking 83%	2 nd ranking 66%	1 st ranking 66%
4. Presence of a direct link for VA benefits and requirements on how to obtain them	5 th ranking 66%	4 th ranking 66%	3 rd ranking 83%	2 nd ranking 66%	1 st ranking 66%
5. Presence a direct link to campus resources and benefits	5 th ranking 66%	4 th ranking 66%	3 rd ranking 83%	2 nd ranking 83%	1 st ranking 83%



CONCLUSION

- Having a direct link for benefits at a school of pharmacy website could significantly assist prospective veterans/military students in accessing their benefits
- Direct point of contact within a pharmacy school, an admission checklist, a list of available scholarships, and a direct link for benefits are desired attributes that could be added to the SIUE SOP website
- These features could assist veterans in finding all available benefits and support them in their pursuit of pharmacy school applications.

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1. 2021 demographics report: Profile of the military community. Military OneSource. Accessed 12 Jun. 2022. <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2021-demographics-report.pdf>.
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4. “Your VA Transition Assistance Program (TAP) - Outreach, Transition and Economic Development.” Accessed 12 Jun. 2022. [https://www.benefits.va.gov/transition/tap.asp#:~:text=The%20Transition%20Assistance%20Program%20\(TAP,%20years%20prior%20to%20retiring.](https://www.benefits.va.gov/transition/tap.asp#:~:text=The%20Transition%20Assistance%20Program%20(TAP,%20years%20prior%20to%20retiring.)