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Mental Health of Caregiving Grandparents

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Purpose

To assess the mental health of full-time custodial grandparents as compared with part-time caregiving grandparents

Background

Grandparents are stepping up to help raise their grandchildren while:

- Both parents hold two or more jobs
- Divorce rates are increasing
- Single parents are working outside of the home
- Substance abuse &/or child neglect /abuse are present

Mental health stressors :

- Strained relationships with adult children
- Responsibility of raising another family at an increased age
- Legal issues with adult children

Previous research suggests that caregiving grandparents may have lower levels of mental health

Methods

Conceptual Framework:
Pender's Health Promotion Model
Comparative Descriptive Design

Sample:
•11 frontier grandparents (5 grandfathers & 6 grandmothers)
•6 full-time custodial
•5 part-time caregiving

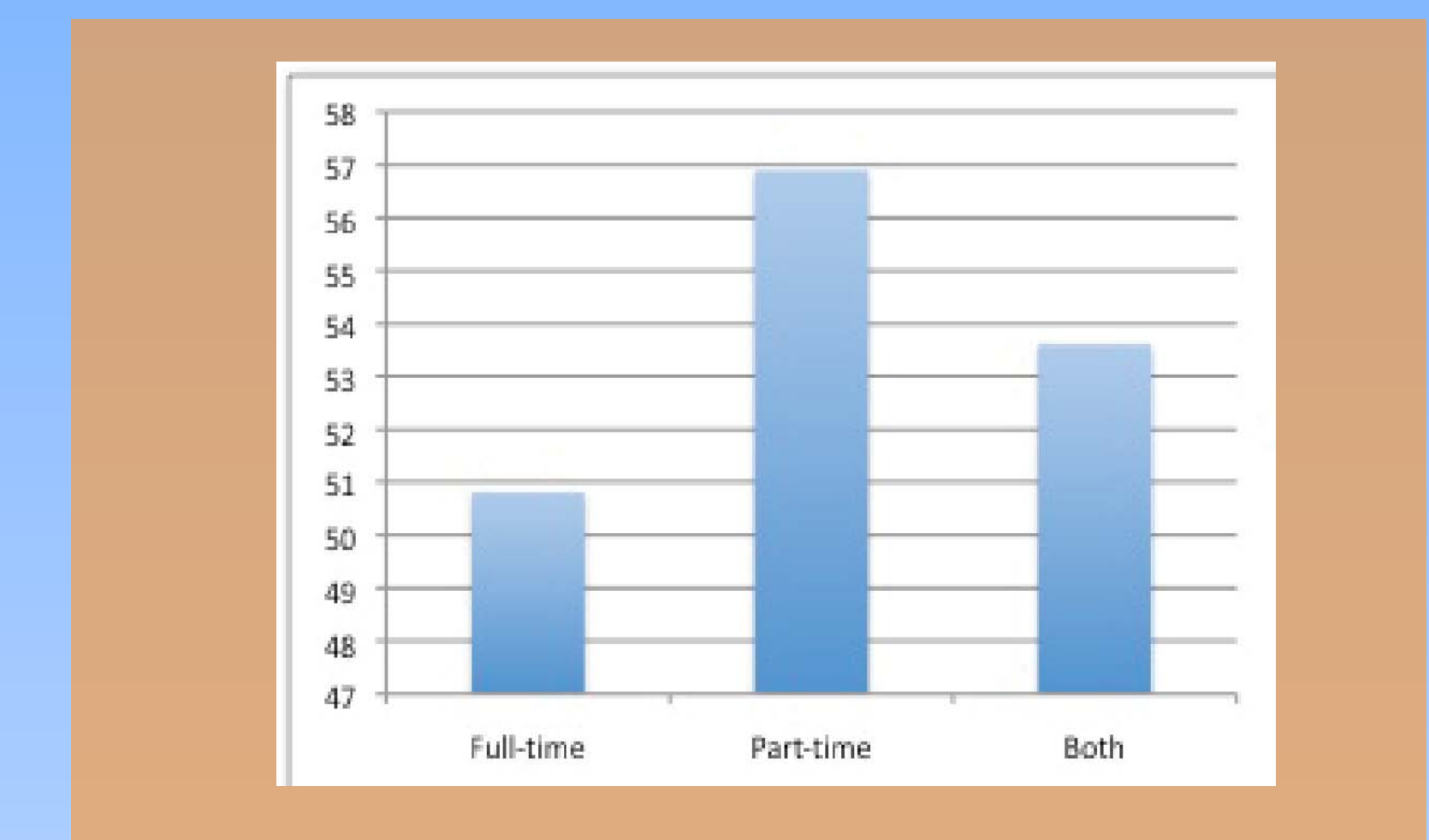
Instrument:
SF-36 Health Survey (composite mental health score)

Analysis:
Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U



Results

No statistically significant difference in mean mental health scores between caregiver groups



(range = 45 - 60, norm = 50)

Implications

Limitations

- Small sample size

Findings suggest

- Frontier grandparents' mental health is higher than the norm
- No difference between full-time & part-time caregiving grandparents' mental health

Differs with previous grandparent & rural/frontier research

Caregiving may promote mental health in frontier grandparents

