

Addressing Collaboration Barriers Associated with Doula Care: The Promotion of Social Justice in a Maternity Unit

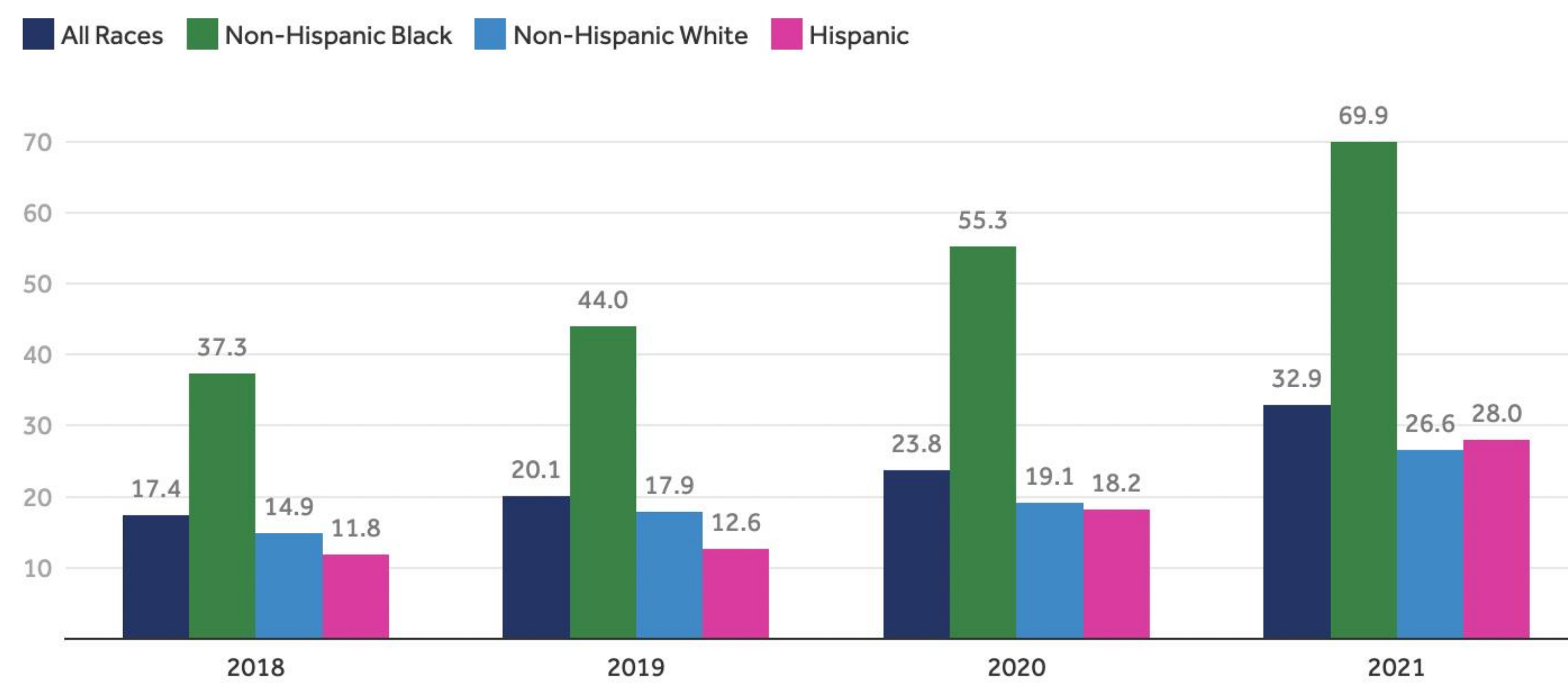
Pragati Desai, MSN, MA, RN; Erica Greathouse, MSN, BA, RN; & Elizabeth Polinard, PhD, RN



Background

- Maternal mortality rates in the US outrank those of other industrialized nations
- Doula care reduces health disparities among underserved populations
- Doulas enhance overall maternal well-being by providing emotional, informational, and physical support before, during, and after childbirth
- Doula support can reduce birth complications, interventions, and maternal mortality rates
- To reduce undesirable maternal and fetal outcomes, a Maternal Level IV hospital in Central Texas is in the process of initiating a free-to-patient doula program

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births, by race and ethnicity, 2018-2021



Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC) National Vital Statistics System • Get the data • PNG

Purpose

- To develop a multifaceted understanding of collaboration barriers to accepting doulas as vital members of the healthcare team
- To identify collaborative solutions to aid in building a solid foundation to integrate doula care at the hospital

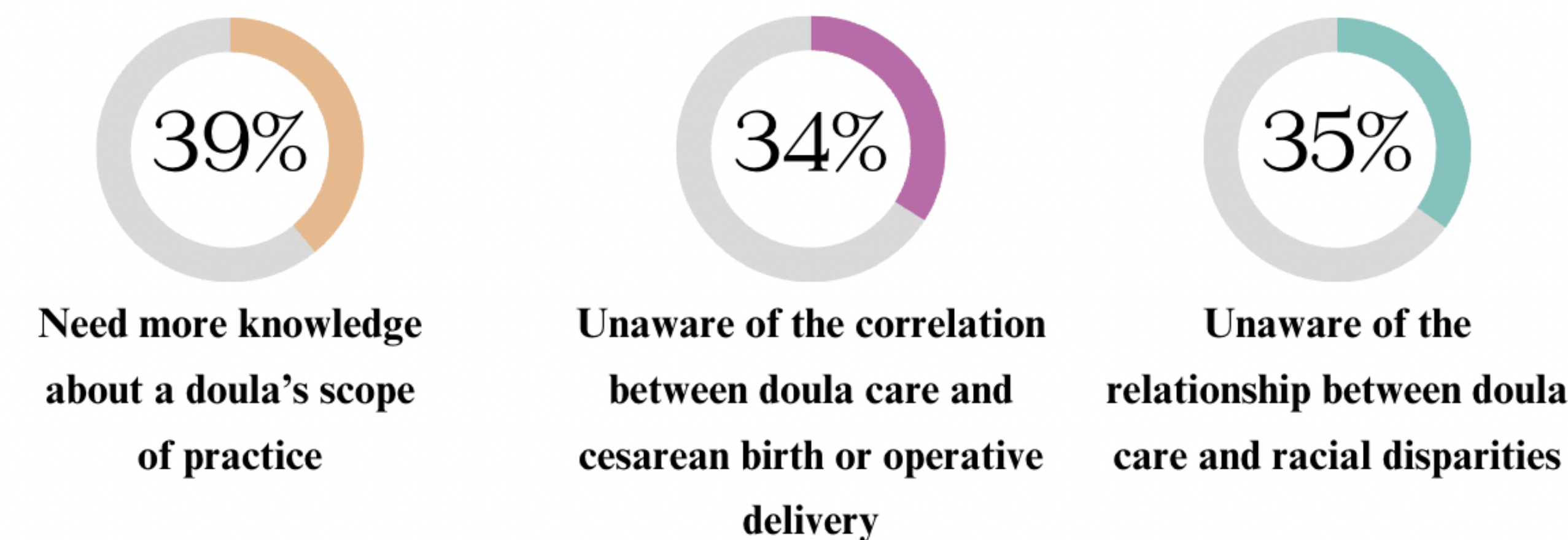
Methods

Integrative Review: A literature review of full-text articles was conducted in July, 2023
Databases and keywords: CINAHL and PubMed were used with search terms: “physician or nurse,” “doula,” and “collaboration or relationship”
Number of articles: Eight articles were analyzed for common themes
Survey: A 15-item survey was generated using Google Forms and distributed to 240 perinatal staff
Data: Survey results were evaluated and used to develop questions for a doula-led panel discussion. Panel discussion findings are included in the Results section.

Results

Approximately ¼ of the 240 perinatal hospital staff responded to the survey questions. The survey assessed familiarity with doulas, knowledge of the benefits doulas can provide, and feelings about working with doulas.

Survey Results 61 respondents



Key Panel Discussion Themes

Thirty-five physicians, nurses, and doulas participated in the panel discussion.

Communication

Doulas facilitate communication and develop trusting relationships with clients

Partnership

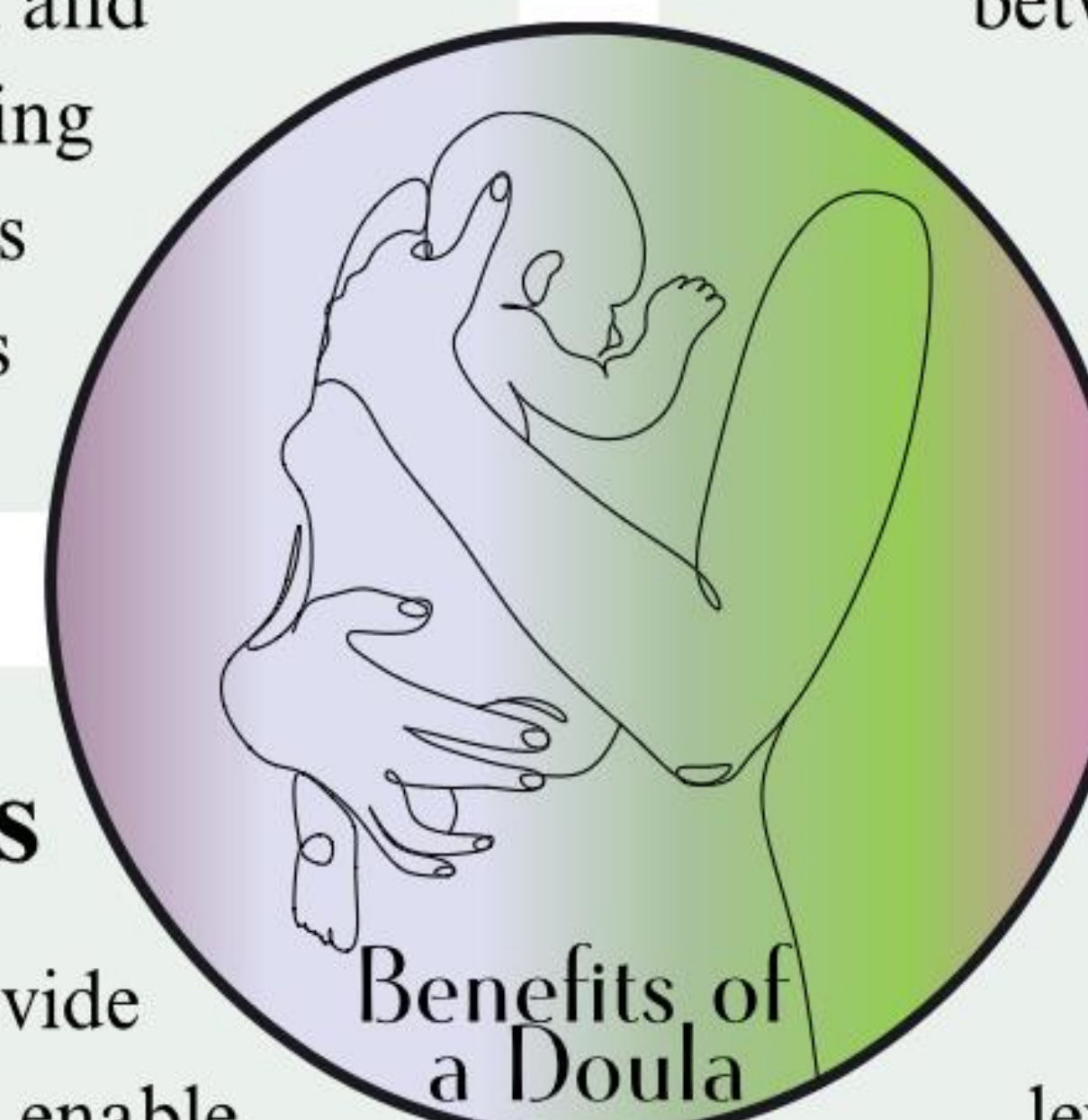
Doulas serve as liaisons between medical staff and clients

Decisions

Doulas provide education and enable clients to be empowered to partake in shared decision-making

Knowledge

Medical staff can leverage the diverse knowledge doulas possess based on varied experiences



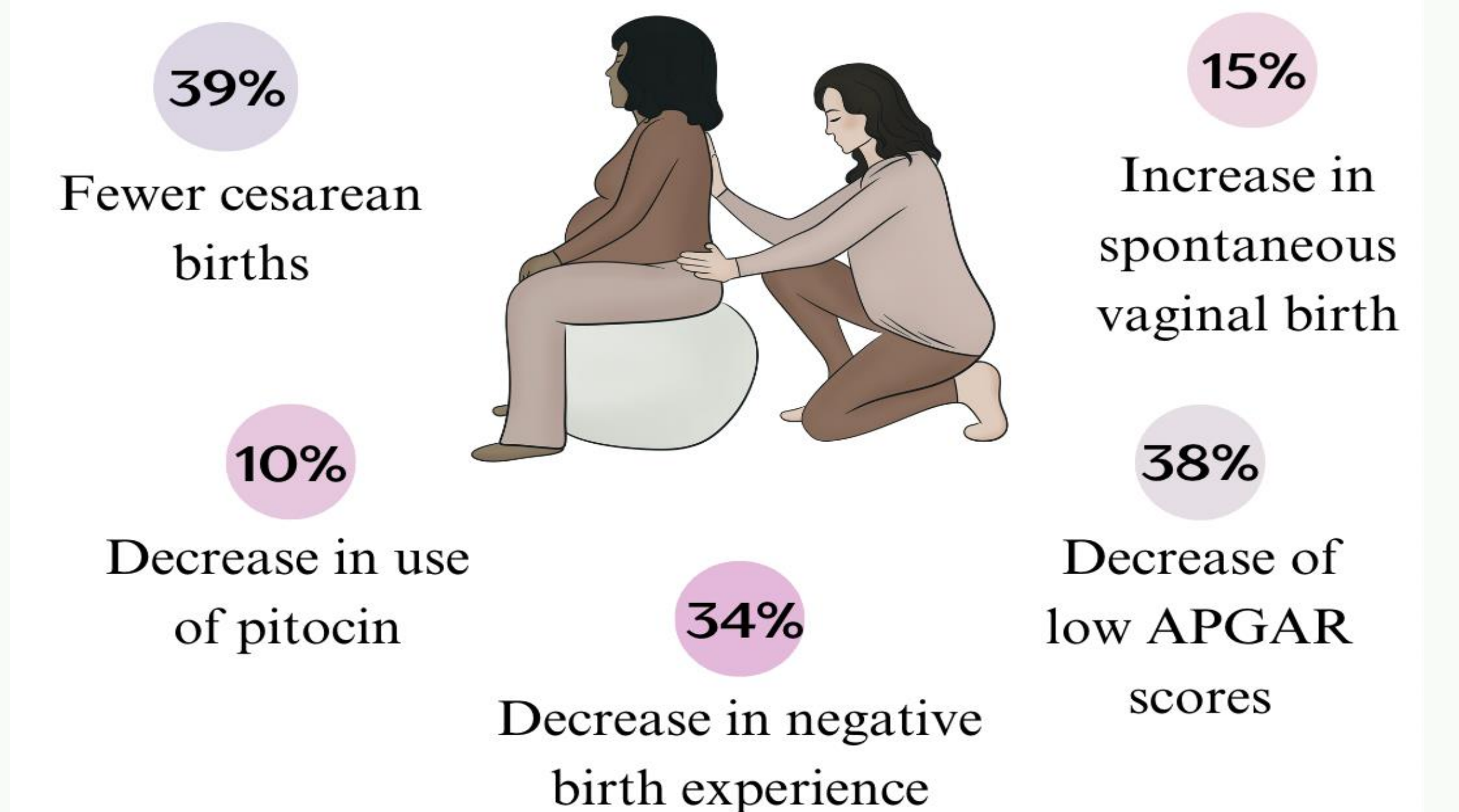
Conclusions & Implications for Future Practice

Project Summary:

- Strengths
 - Identifies current misperceptions of the role of doulas in the hospital setting
- Limitations
 - Panel scheduling (panel discussion during the day shift may be inconvenient/inaccessible to those working the night shift)
 - Self-selected survey sample; purposive panel selection
 - Participants had varied exposure to doula care
- Recommendation
 - Continued survey distribution and analysis to identify collaboration barriers

Because the free-to-patient doula program proposes to enhance maternal and fetal health outcomes, it is critical to recognize doulas as essential contributors to the care team.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF DOULA CARE



Acknowledgements & References

We want to thank the hospital physicians, nurses, and doulas who participated in our project, as well as Drs. Janice Hernandez, Nico Osier, Lisa Morris, and Linda Yoder at UT Austin's School of Nursing for guiding and supporting us in our work.

A special thank you to our preceptor, Dr. Elizabeth Polinard, for investing in us every step of the way!



Scan for references