

## Purpose

The purpose of this pilot study is to create and validate bullying vignettes and evaluate their effect on emotions, specifically negative affect.

## Background

- Workplace bullying has been reported among nurses<sup>1,2</sup>
- Research has shown health care workers' perception of the relationship between inappropriate behaviors and patient care and outcomes such as errors, adverse events, and patient deaths<sup>3-7</sup>, but no direct correlation has been made
- Due to ethical implications, cause and effect research is lacking
- Research has shown that workplace bullying evokes negative emotions<sup>8</sup>
- While negative emotions have been shown to be associated with less accurate performance and low levels of attention and motivation,<sup>9</sup> it is not known how negative affect due to exposure to bullying influences cognitive performance
- According to the Affective Events Theory (AET) the effect of workplace events, such as the acts of colleagues<sup>10</sup> on cognition is mediated by emotional responses<sup>11</sup>
- Vignettes may be used to simulate exposure to bullying. A vignette is defined as "...a brief, carefully written description of a person or situation designed to simulate key features of a real world scenario"<sup>12</sup> p. 162

## Methodology

### Phase 1:

- 21 written workplace bullying vignettes created
- Five content experts reviewed vignettes for relevance, severity and realism
- Data analysis resulted in the selection of 11 vignettes

### Phase 2:

- IRB approval was obtained
- A convenience sample was used; participants were recruited from a college of nursing and offered a \$10 gift card
- Research hosted on Qualtrics
- Participants completed the negative affect (NA) scale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)<sup>12</sup> before and after reading each vignette

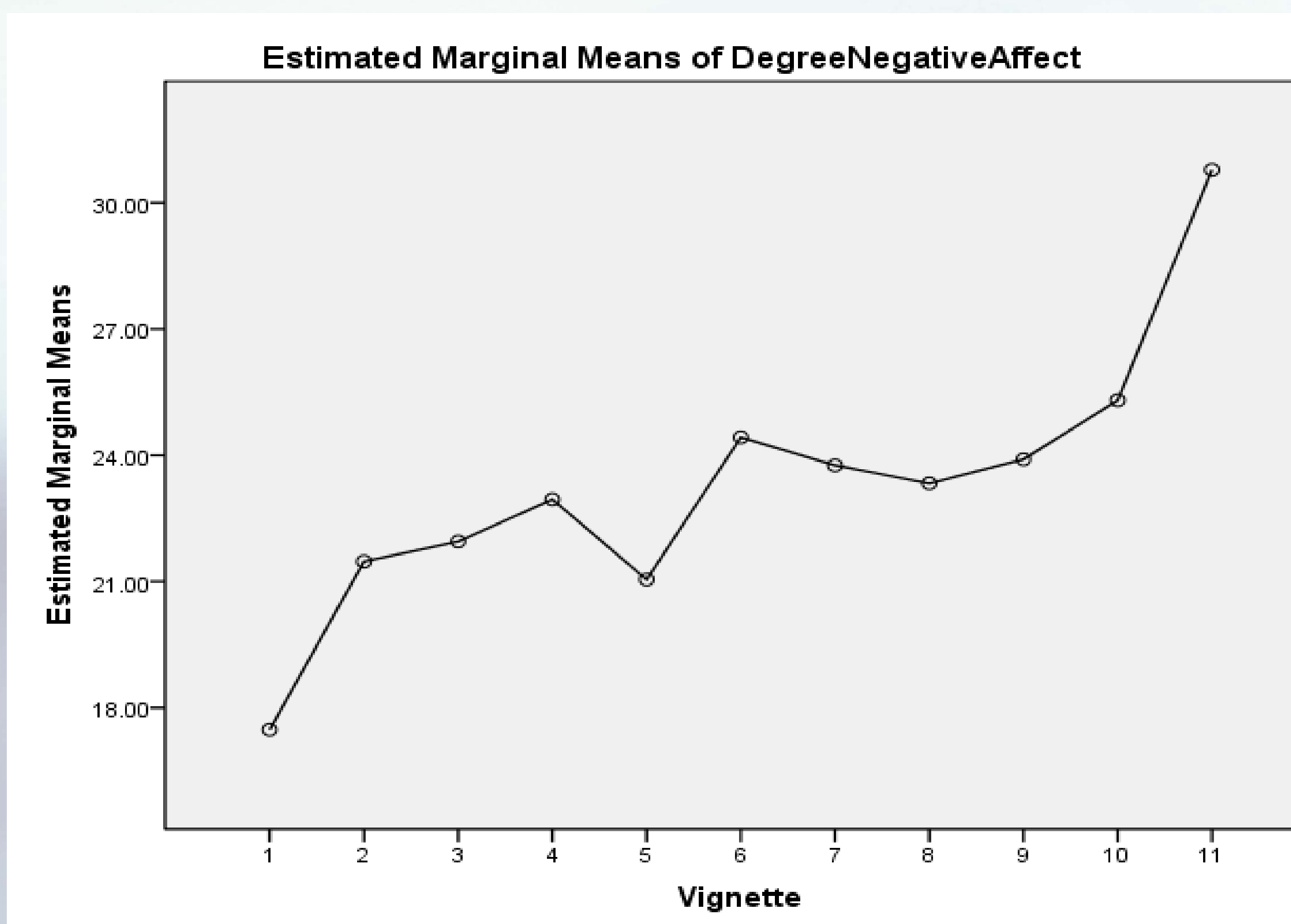
### Demographic Summary, n=50

Males: 1 (2%); Females: 49 (98%)

Average age: 27.62 years

Undergraduate: 29 (58%); Graduate: 21 (42%)

Table of Mean Scores



## Results

- One-way repeated measures ANOVA conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in Negative Affect over the course of the 11 vignettes.
  - There were no significant outliers and the data was normally distributed, as assessed by boxplot and Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p > .05$ ), respectively.
- The assumption of sphericity was violated, as assessed by Mauchly's test of sphericity,  $X^2(54) = 114.339$ ,  $p < .000$ . Therefore, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied ( $\epsilon = .572$ ).
- The vignettes elicited statistically significant changes in Negative Affect over time,  $F(5.716, 234.371) = 24.770$ ,  $p < .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .377$ , with Negative Affect increasing from 17.47 (SD = 4.702) after the first vignette to 30.79 (SD = 6.58) after the 11<sup>th</sup> vignette (95% CI, 9.788 to 16.831),  $p < .000$ .
- Post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni adjustment revealed several additional statistically significant differences between vignettes 1 through 11. However, the largest change was seen between the first and the 11<sup>th</sup> vignette.

## Discussion

- Written vignettes shown to have content validity
- Exposure to bullying, through reading of vignettes, increased negative affect
- Future research will use the vignettes to test the effect of bullying exposure on cognitive performance as measured through working memory capacity.