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### The Evolving Concept of Neurodivergence and Challenges in Operationalizing Diversity

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# The Evolving Concept of Neurodivergence and Challenges in Operationalizing Diversity

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## Background

- Neurodivergence is a social-cultural identity often used by those with neurodevelopmental conditions (Singer, 1998)
- In the scientific literature, neurodivergence is widely operationalized as autism, ADHD, and learning conditions (Clouder et al., 2020)
- The present study investigated the proportion of college students who identify as neurodivergent and which diagnostic labels the neurodivergent and non-neurodivergent participants use to describe themselves

## Method

- 215 Binghamton University undergraduates ( $M_{age} = 18.9, SD = 1.1$ )
- Participants were recruited through SONA
- Provided with a study URL to Qualtrics
- Completed a demographics questionnaire assessing for age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and diagnostic labels

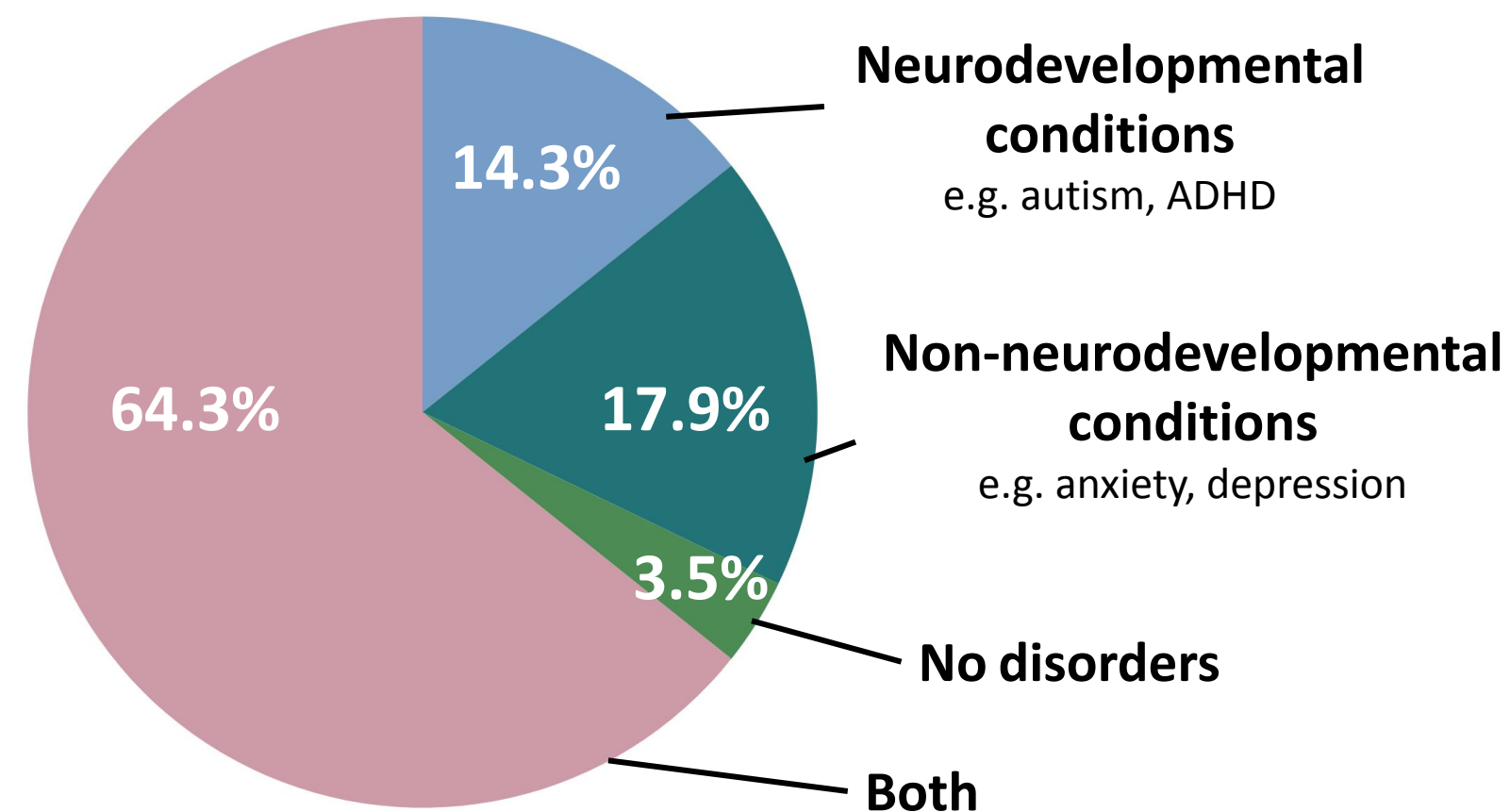
	Neurodivergent	Non-Neurodivergent
<b>N</b>	28	169
<b>Age M (SD)</b>	18.9 (0.9)	18.9 (1.1)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	20	126
Male	7	39
Nonbinary	1	2
Transgender	-	1
Prefer not to say	-	1
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Straight	13	142
LGBTQ+	12	25
Prefer not to say	3	2
<b>Race</b>		
White	18	77
Black or African American	-	6
Asian or Asian American	4	40
Hispanic or Latinx	-	8
Middle Eastern or North African	-	4
Multiracial	6	33
Prefer not to say	-	1

**Table 1: Participant Demographics**

Note. 18 participants preferred not to say whether they identified as neurodivergent

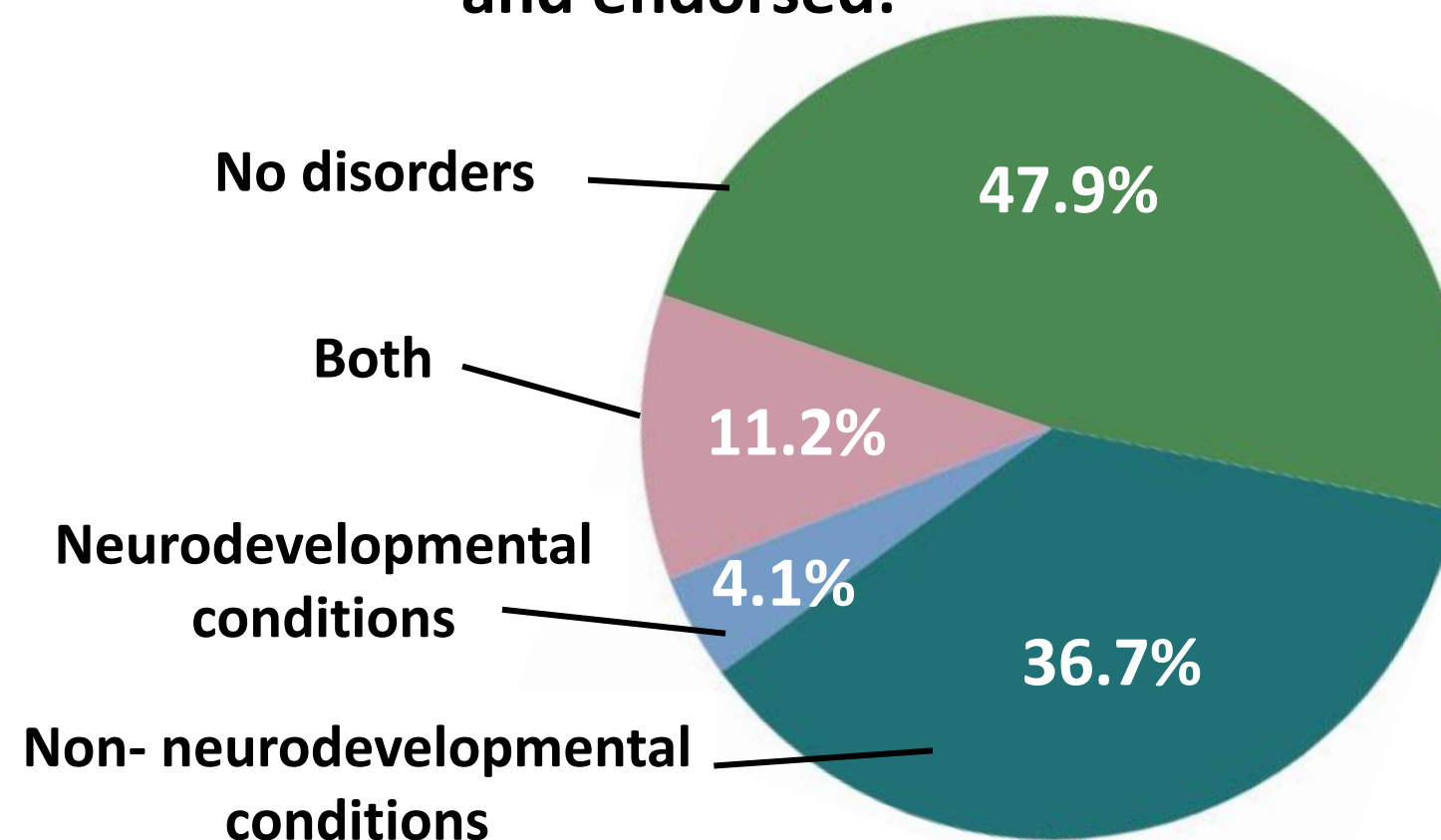
## Results

**13% of participants identified as neurodivergent and endorsed:**



**Figure 1: Types of disorders endorsed by neurodivergent-identifying participants**

**78.6% of participants identified as non-neurodivergent and endorsed:**



**Figure 2: Types of disorders endorsed by non-neurodivergent identifying participants**

## Discussion

- In the current sample, female participants identified as neurodivergent more frequently than their non-female counterparts
  - This is notable considering the finding that males are clinically diagnosed with neurodevelopmental conditions more frequently than females (Bölte et al., 2023)
- Most of the neurodivergent participants endorsed having both neurodevelopmental and non-neurodevelopmental conditions
- The findings also suggest that individuals without neurodevelopmental conditions are identifying as neurodivergent
- Further, over half of the non-neurodivergent participants endorsed having a mental health condition, with 15% endorsing having a neurodevelopmental condition
- The findings shed light on the evolving definition of neurodivergence as a social phenomenon in contrast to disorder-based research criteria

## References

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## Research Affiliations

