

Background

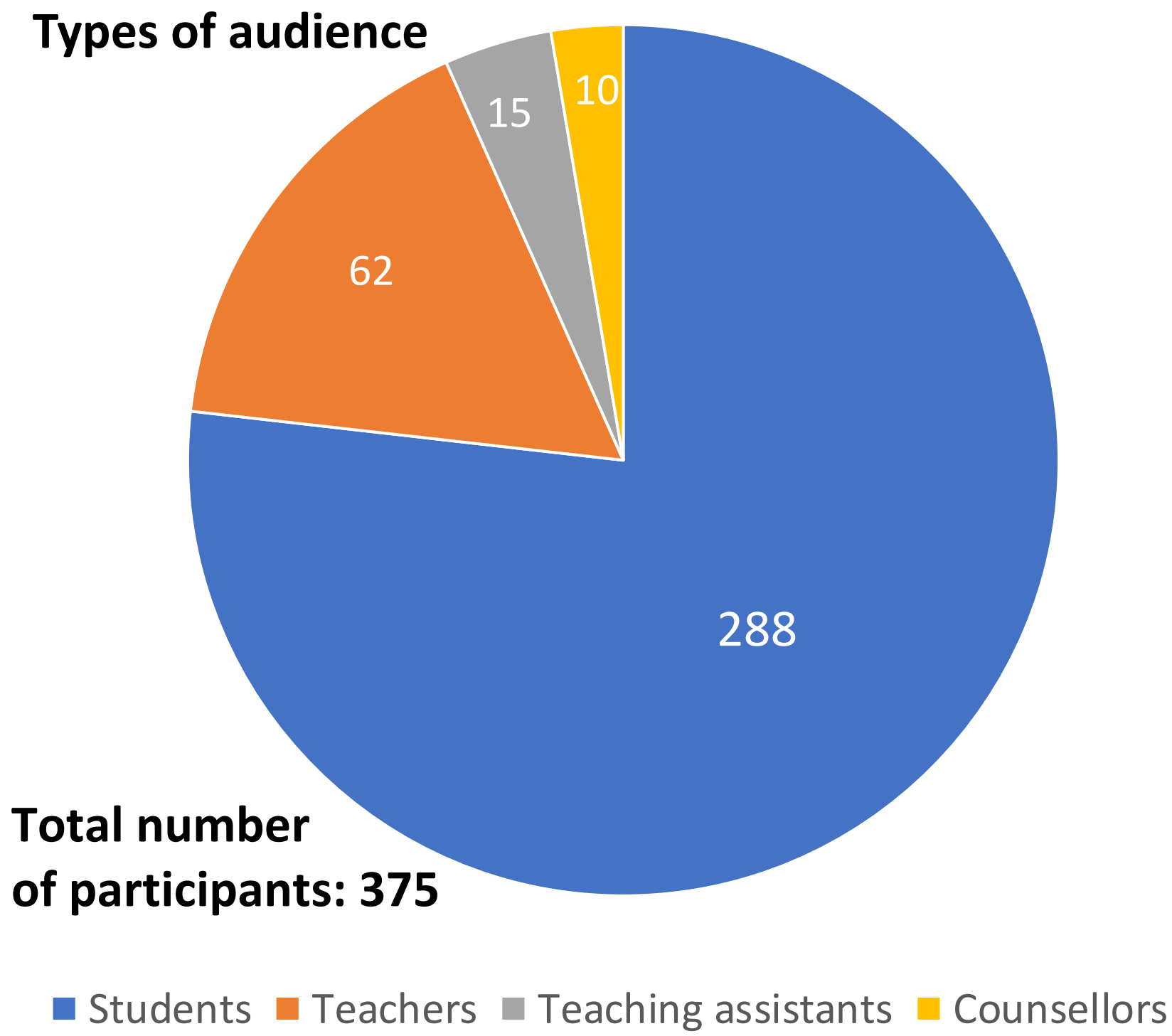
- Educational outreach is an in-school intervention, enabling students and educators to learn about TS, OCD and co-morbidities.
- The knowledge imparted in an in-service presentation helps address the educational barriers students with TS and OCD face, and it has the potential to improve the student's focus and motivation in the classroom.
- Providing psychoeducation about tic disorders increases knowledge and changes attitudes and behaviours towards individual with TS.
- It is important to study how in-service presentations functionally impact students at school. ¹

Methods

- Presentations were devised on the basis of need:
 - Garnered from parent conversations at the Tourette syndrome clinic at the Alberta Children's Hospital.
 - Requested by parents or schools via our website.
- All presentations were related to TS.
- Between December 2020 and December 2022, 16 in-service presentations were delivered: 15 online and one in person.
- Parents participated in a post-presentation interview

	Structure of Presentation
1	Tic phenomenology/psychoeducation
2	OCD phenomenology/psychoeducation
3	Interactive empathy activity
4	Classroom Strategies – teachers only

Types of audience



Presentations: types of schools

Elementary – Grades 3 to 6
Junior High – Grade 9
Senior High – Grade 9 -12

Results

1

Communicating with schools

- Convincing school boards, school principals and classroom teachers of the importance of the educational outreach program to teaching and learning was challenging.
- Parental assistance, advocacy and persistence in maintaining line of communication with school were essential.
- Imperative to make contact with gatekeepers: president of Alberta Teacher's Association, school counsellors.

2

Post-presentation parent interviews

Theme 1: The effect on teacher awareness of tics

- Teachers more willing post-presentation to admit their lack of knowledge.
- Classroom conversations on tic disorders and OCD were generated more frequently.
- Discernible alteration in teaching strategy.

Theme 2: Family dynamics at home

- A renewed impetus by child to reflect and talk about tics
- Positive correlation between knowledge learnt at presentation and being calm
- Normalizing – presentation brought about a tacit permission of all family members to discuss tics

Theme 3: The effect on child with tics

- Learning about their own tics through presentation: providing a meta-language for tics and increasing child's confidence.
- School is a safer place as psychoeducation is disseminated amongst peers.
- Improvement in relationships with other students in class.

Theme 4: Altered classroom dynamics

- Increasing acceptance and tolerance of tics by classmates.
- Some of the positivity generated was undone by some individuals in class who responded adversely.

Conclusions

- The educational outreach program underlined the positive impact knowledge of tics has in improving the child's well being in the classroom and therefore their learning chances.
- Gaining access to school is challenging and best facilitated by building on parents' existing relationships with school personnel.
- The dynamic of the classroom changes after a presentation due to better informed teachers, more tolerant classmates, and a child with who is increasingly uninhibited about discussing their tics at home and at school.

"Teacher says, 'We do allow her to take a little bit of extra time or if she needs in a quiet place'"

"I think having the teacher on board and just know a little bit more...is amazing and so incredibly supportive."

"It's helped a lot in that way to open a conversation for us and to make it (tic disorder) okay to talk about."

"With the knowledge that we have now and having watched your presentation in school, there's just a sense of calm because all of us just know so much more about it."

"I find very rarely does she say she's scared to go to school now"

"She always had a kind of aversion to the boys and she's actually become quite close with a lot of them, like they play on the playground and they talk and she tries to get in touch with them outside of school"

"In the presentation you did talk a little bit about how kids will sometimes keep it in, and they can kind of hold back. He will tell me now 'mom, I actually learned how to do that' and he will actually explain to me how he's doing it and so I don't think he was aware necessarily before."

"The day at school has just more accepting and become easier, maybe they're aware of his tics...there's a definite change."

"Some of them (classmates) fed off it a little bit and it resulted in some increased anxiety."

References

1 Nussey et al., 2013