

Stressors and Coping Strategies in Children Practicing Judo and Their Non-practicing Sports Peers

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Introduction

The age of 10 to 15 is a period of intense psychosocial changes, often accompanied by increased emotional tension. To date, there is a lack of in-depth analyses comparing stress responses and coping strategies between physically active children and their peers not engaged in regular sports practice.

Aim

The aim of this study was to compare young athletes practicing judo with those not involved in any sports in terms of stressors, symptoms, and coping strategies.

Methods

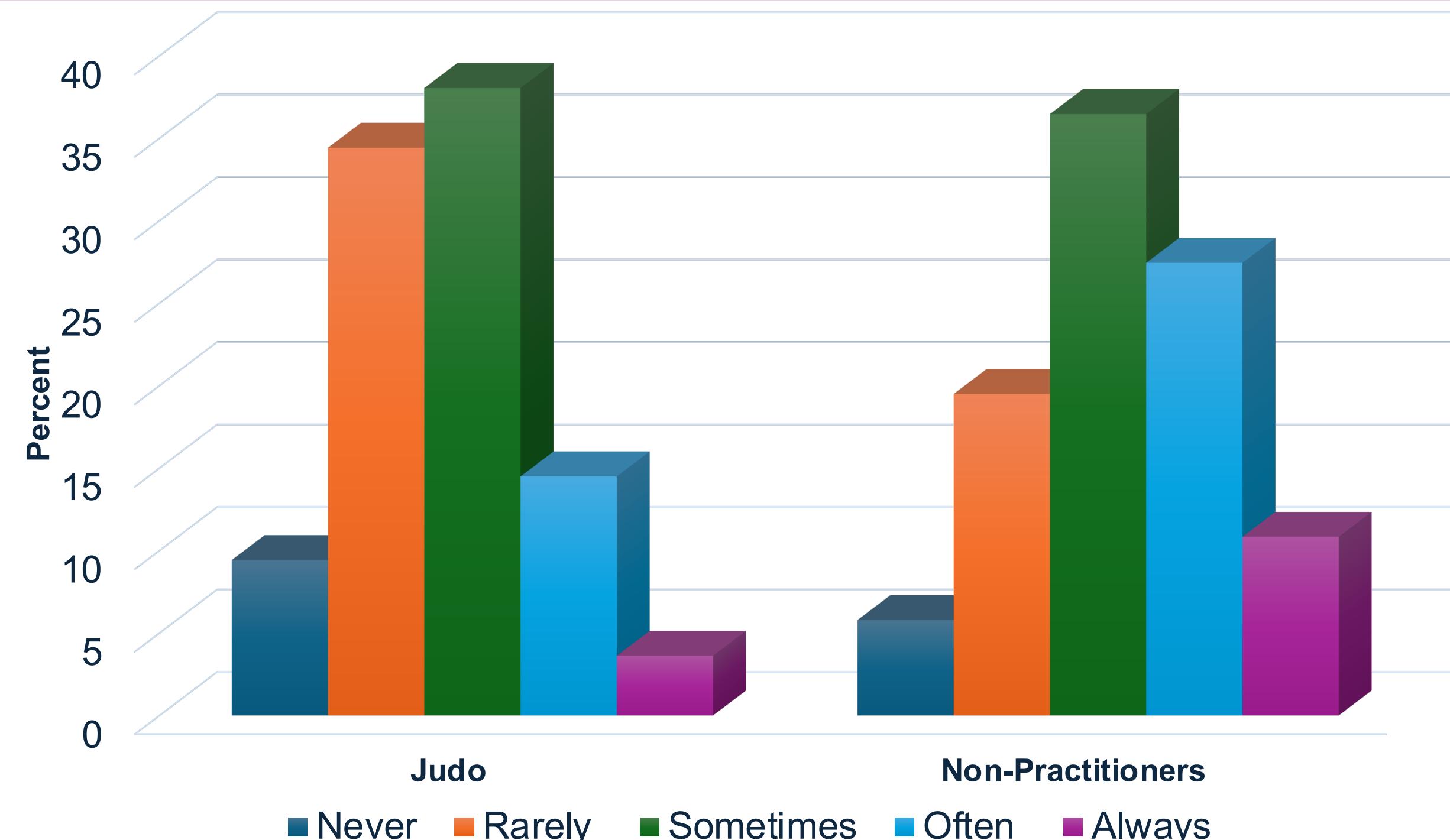
Stress coping strategies were assessed using the standardized "How do you cope?" (JSR) questionnaire developed by Juczyński and Ogińska-Bulik (2012), along with an original survey including questions on stressors sources, symptoms, and responses.

Material

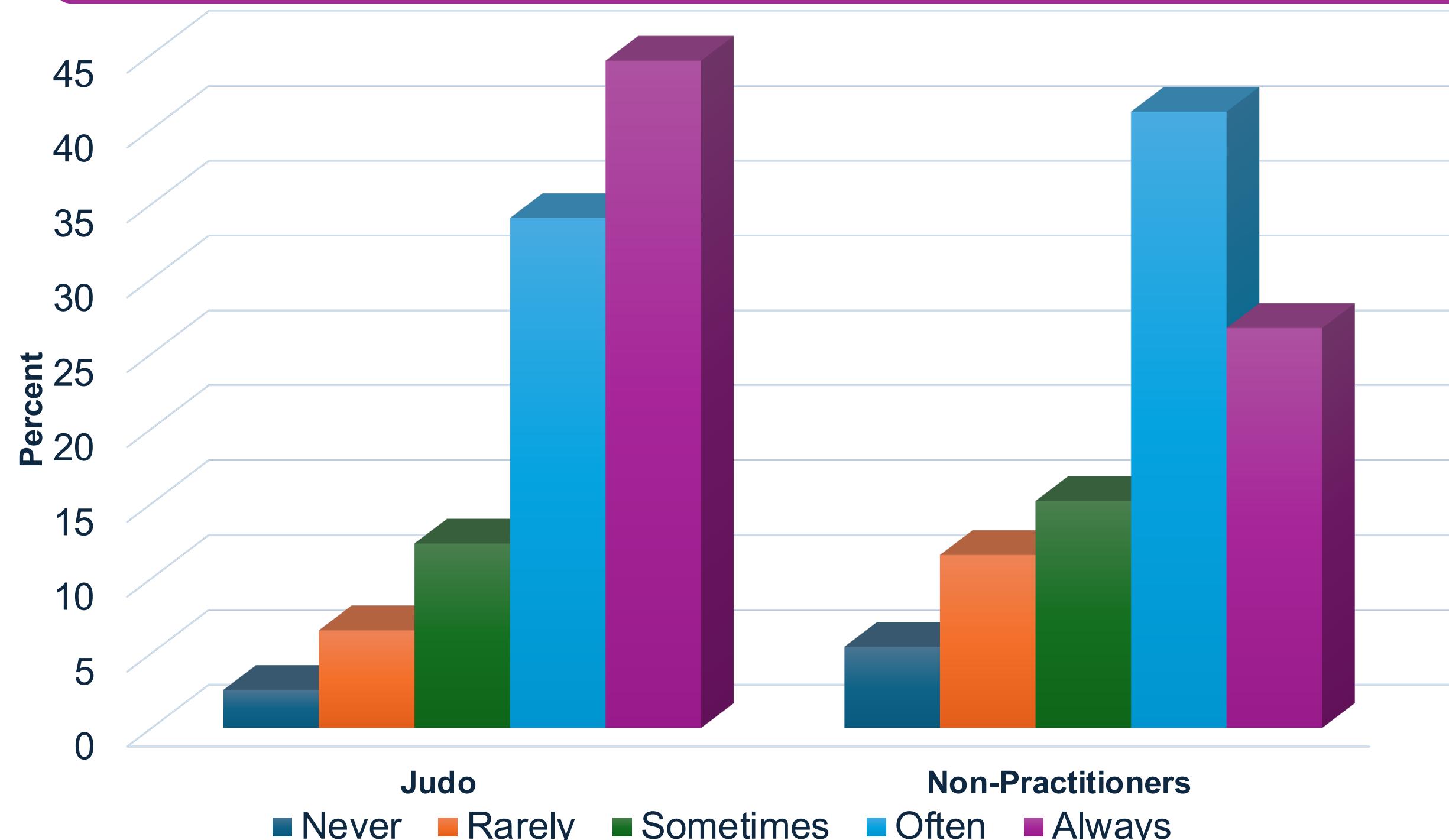
A total of 553 (Males = 293 Females = 260) children students aged 10 to 15 (Mage= 11.90) participated in the study, including 276 children who regularly practiced judo and 277 peers not engaged in any sports discipline.

Results

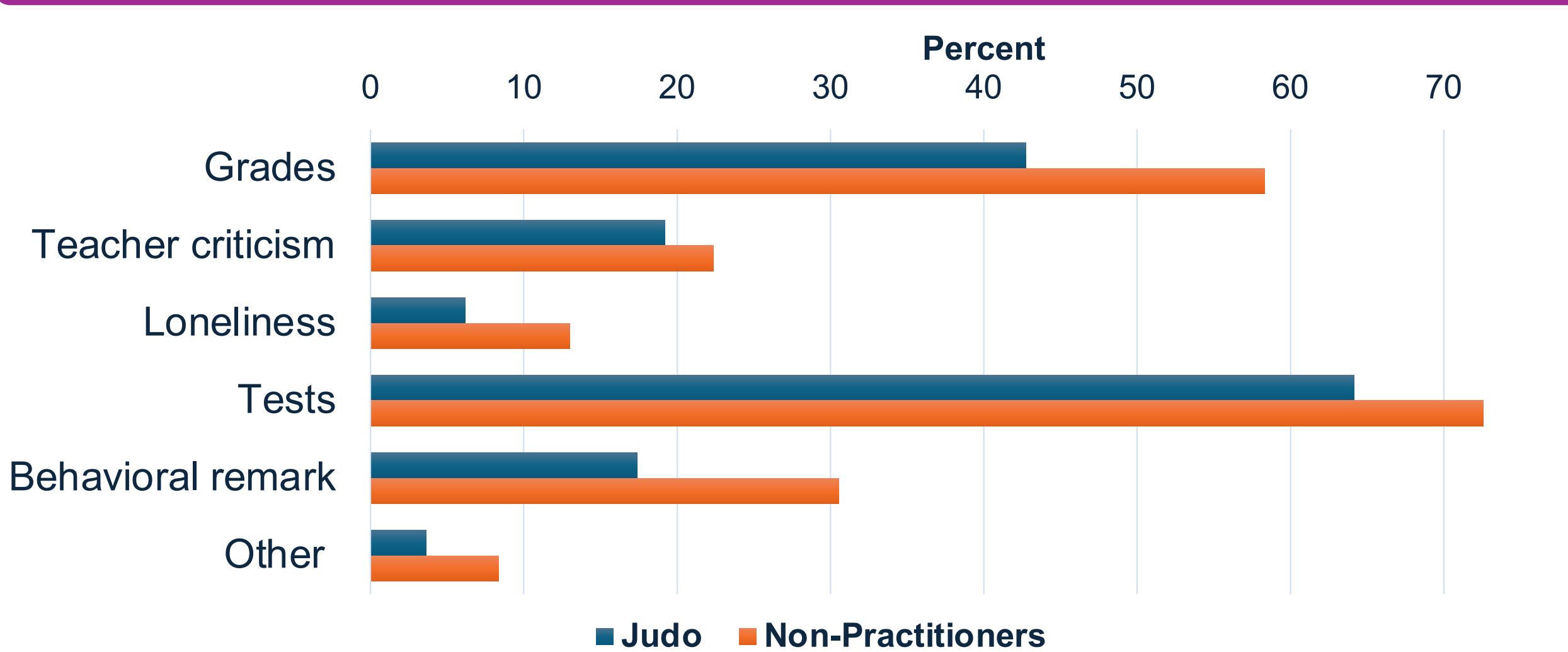
Perceived Stress at School



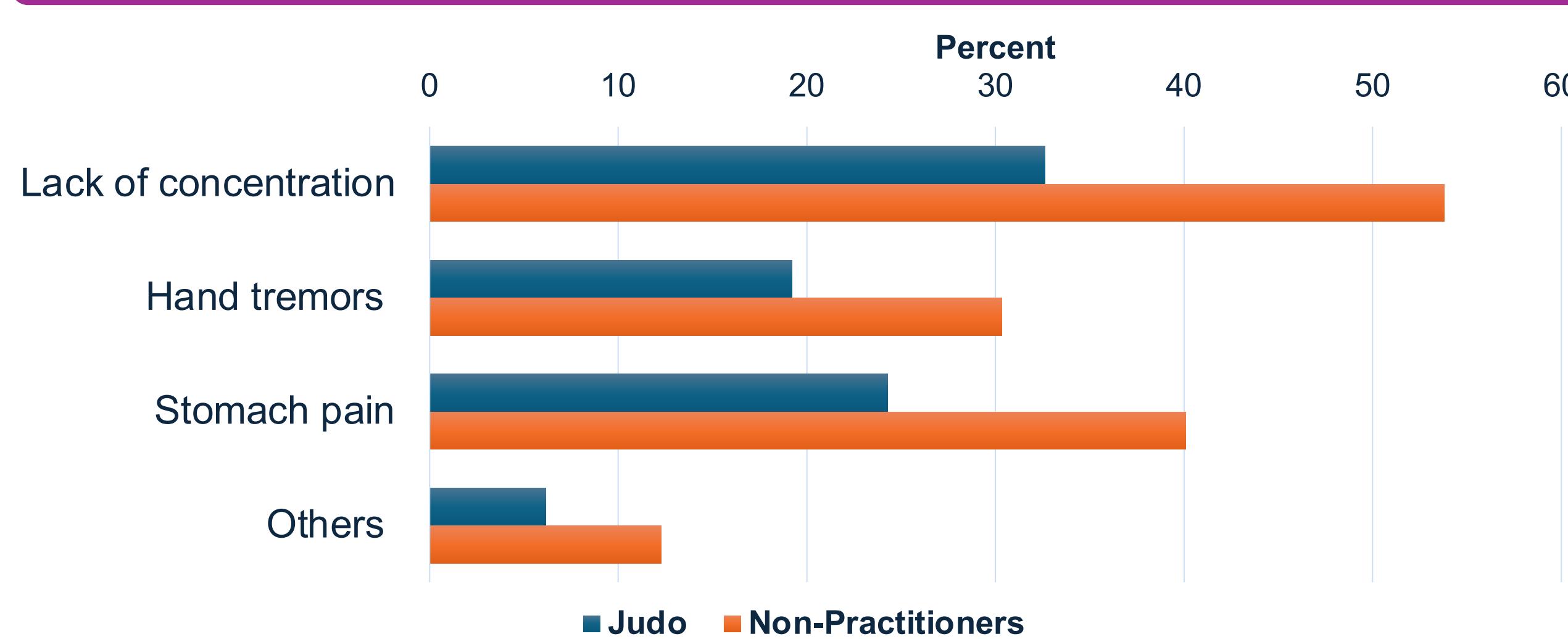
Sense of Safety at School



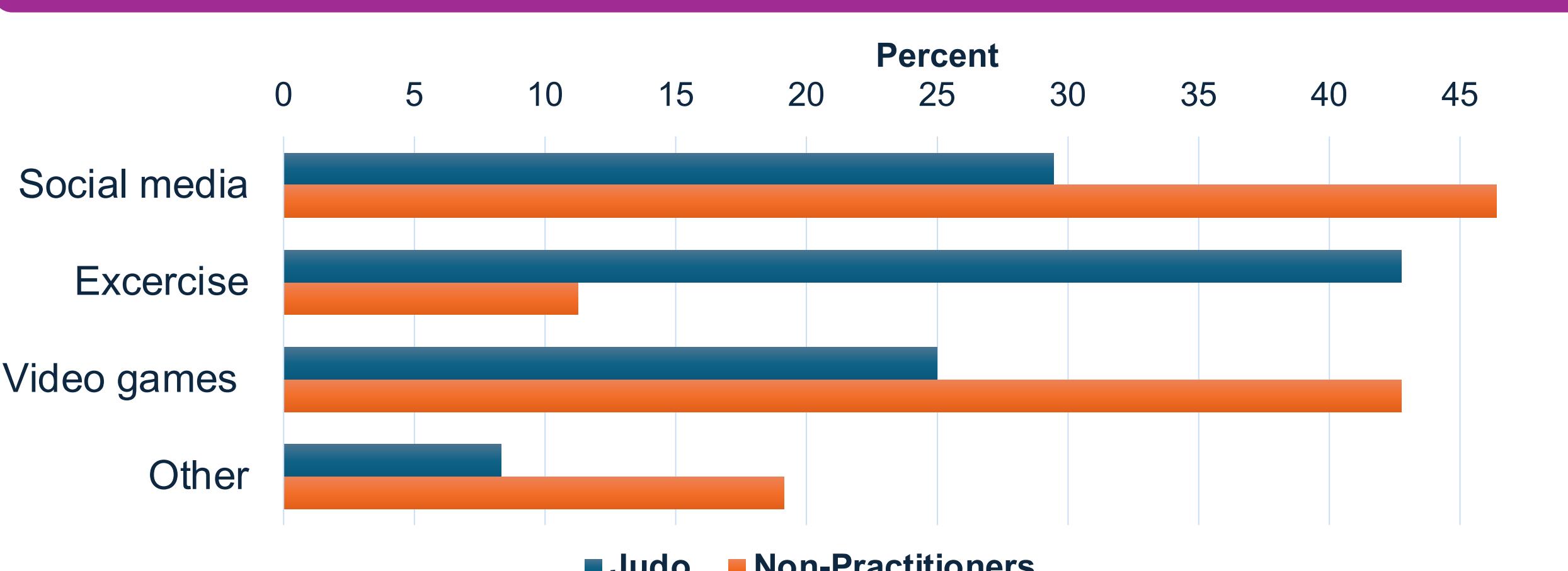
Causes of Stress



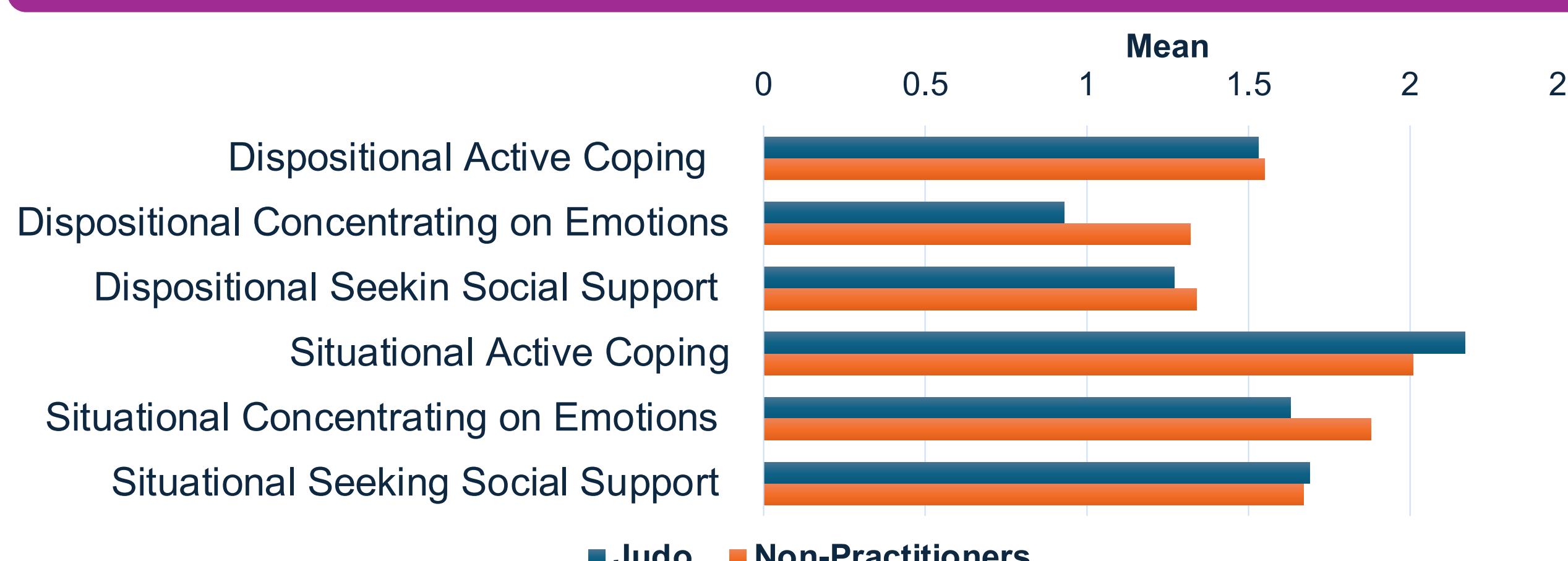
Symptoms of Stress



Stress Management Strategies



Coping Strategies



- Judo practitioners reported significantly lower levels of school-related stress than their non-training peers ($p < 0.001$).
- Judo students also felt safer at school ("always": 44.6% vs. 26.7%; $p < 0.001$).
- School stressors were more frequently reported by non-training children ($p < 0.05$).
- Psychosomatic symptoms like lack of concentration (53.8% vs. 32.6%), stomach pain (40.1% vs. 24.3%) were also more common in the control group ($p < 0.01$).
- Judoists were more likely to cope through physical activity (42.8% vs. 11.3%; $p < 0.001$), while non-training students more often used social media (46.4% vs. 29.5%) and video games (42.8% vs. 25.0%; both $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion

- The study demonstrated that regular judo practice is associated with lower levels of school-related stress, a lower incidence of psychosomatic symptoms, and more active stress-coping strategies in children and adolescents compared to their non-practicing peers.
- Implementing structured sports programs—with particular emphasis on disciplines such as judo—into the educational system could serve as an effective preventive mental health tool, fostering psychological resilience and supporting healthy emotional development in children.

