

# Similarities and Differences between Intra- and Interprofessional Conflicts in Healthcare: Implications for Training

## Background

Interactions between healthcare professionals range from effective collaboration to conflicts. These interactions may affect the provision and safety of patient care. Learning to effectively collaborate is integral to health professionals' education.

**Our goal was:**

1. To compare characteristics of intra- versus interprofessional conflicts in clinical settings.
2. To inform interprofessional training programs.

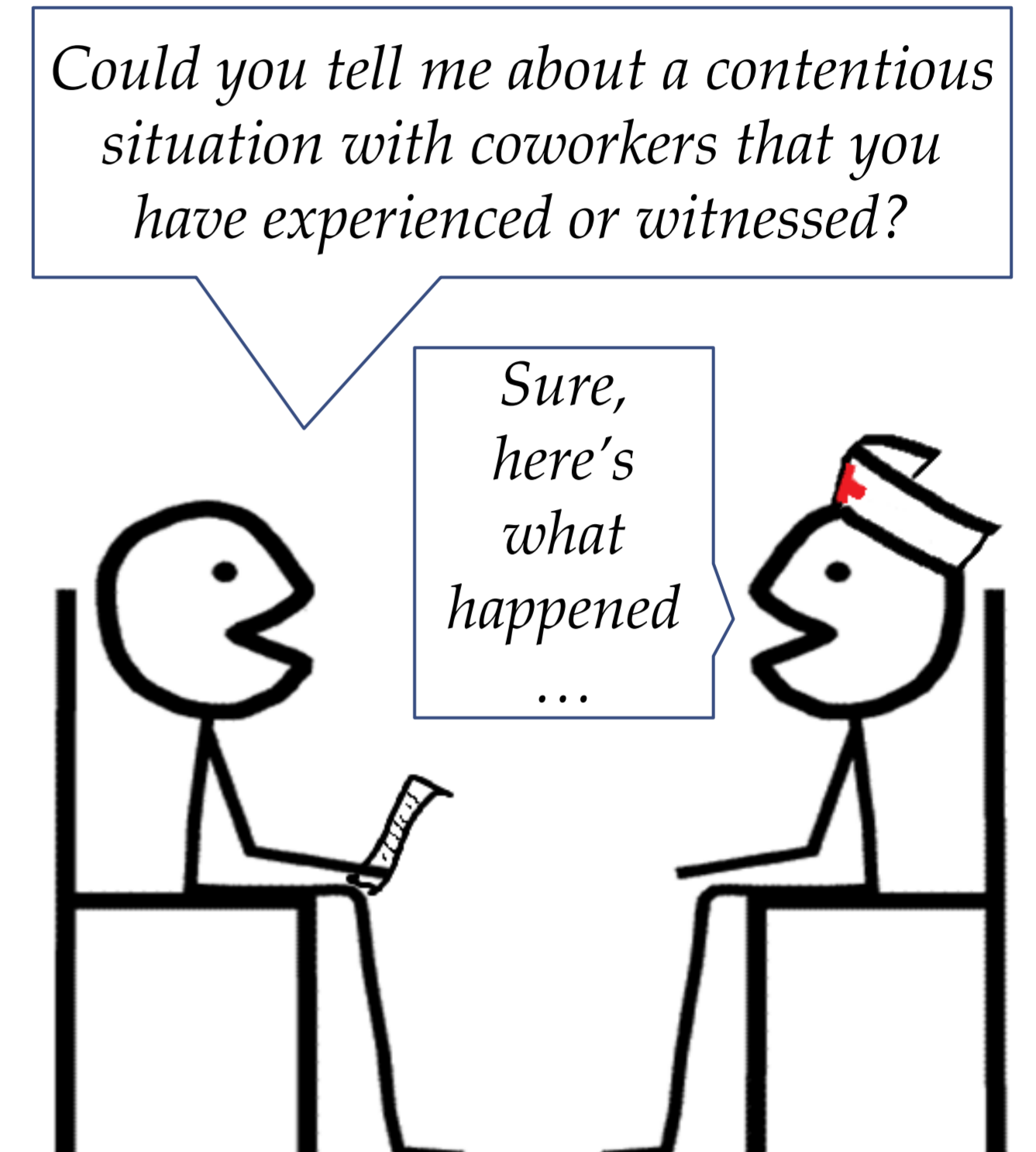
## Methods

### Data Collection

- **Semi-structured interviews** with a convenience sample of volunteer physicians (n=43) and nursing professionals (n=39).
- **Four departments at the Geneva University Hospitals:** internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, and surgical units.

### Data Analysis

- **Content analysis** to identify characteristics of conflicts.
- **Descriptive and inferential statistics** on conflict characteristics to compare intra- and interprofessional conflicts.

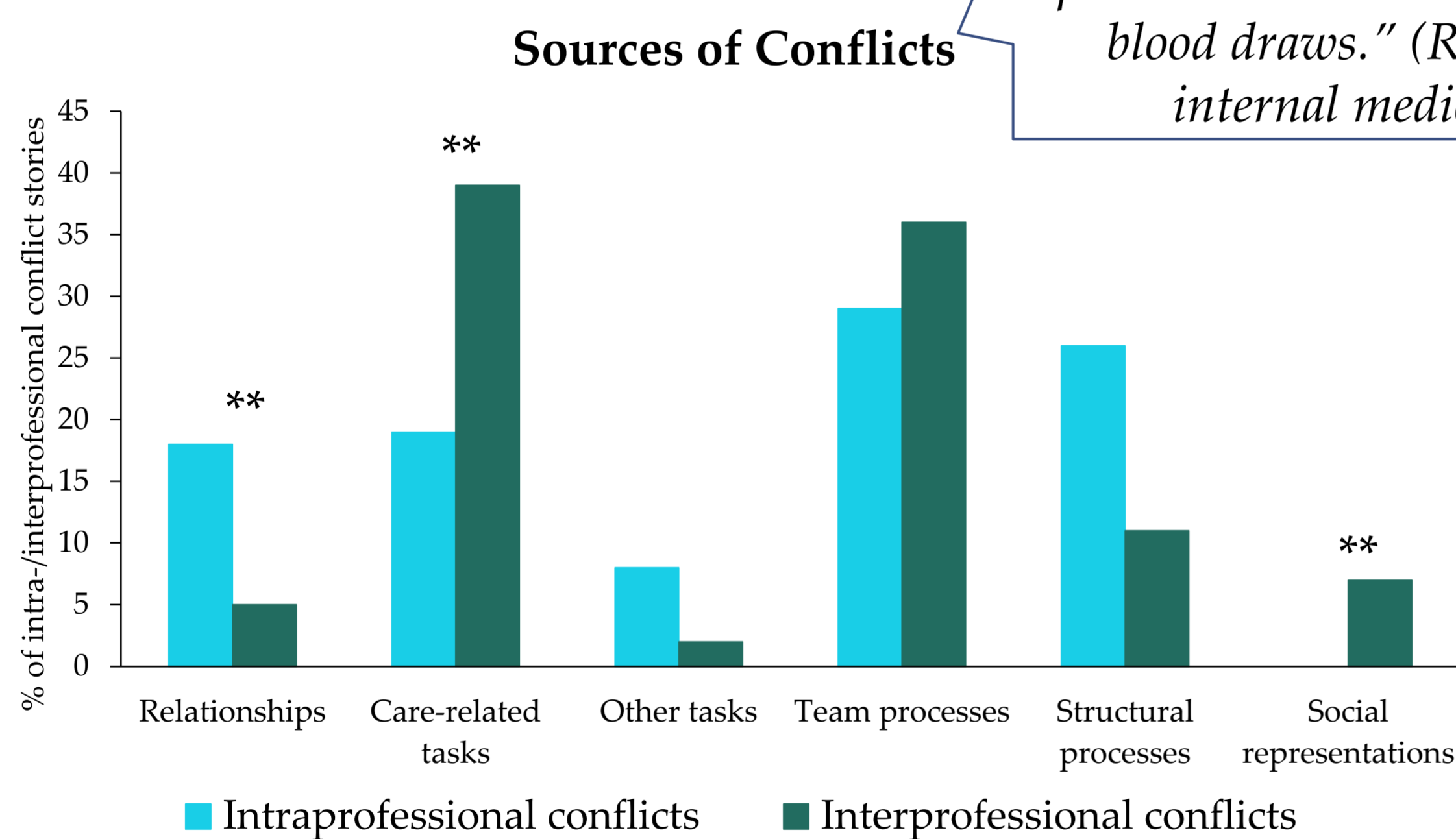


## Results

**130 conflict stories shared by 82 participants.**

- 43% interprofessional conflicts.
- 24% intraprofessional conflicts, same level of hierarchy.
- 33% intraprofessional, different levels of hierarchy.

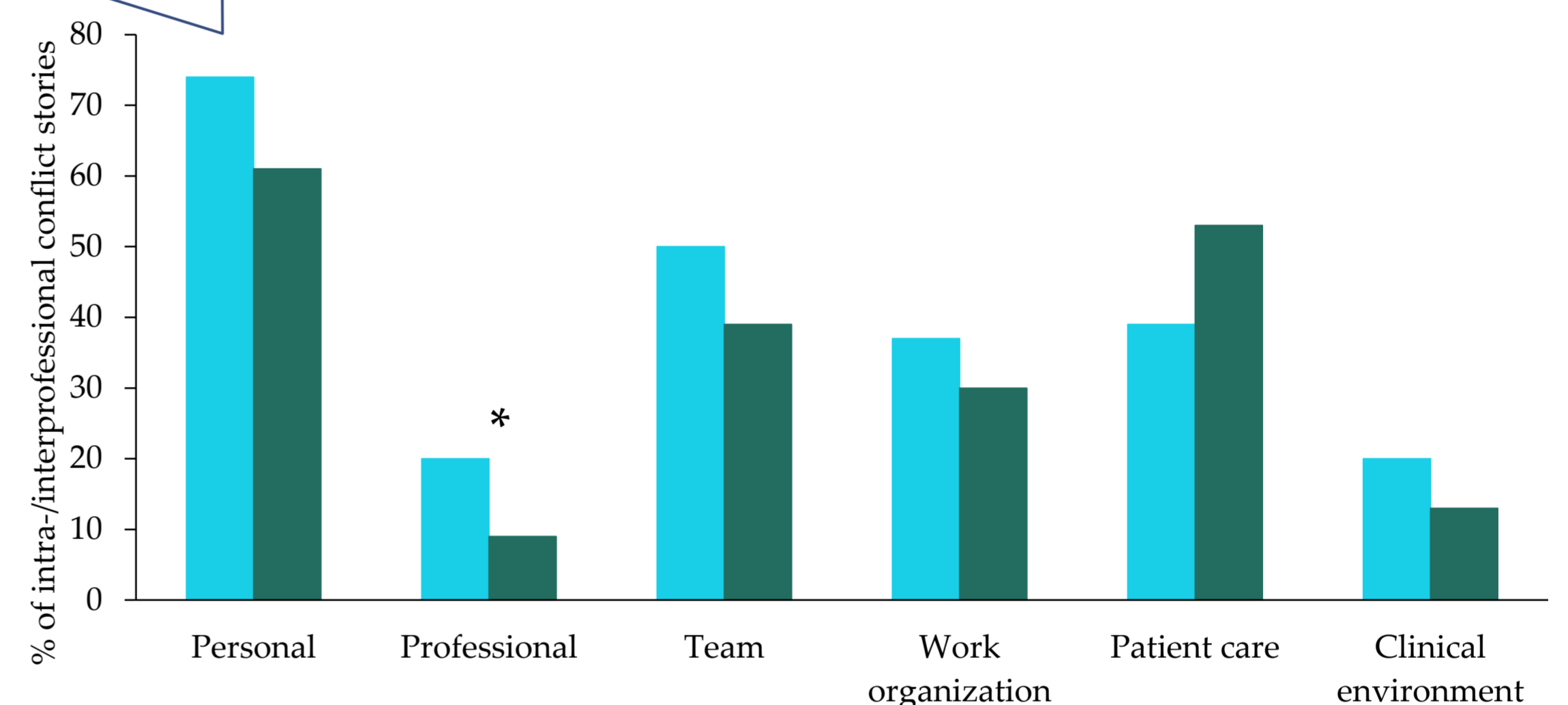
*Afterwards, I think I was ashamed, I didn't want to see anyone for two weeks (laughter). Whenever I saw the attending physician, I would hide. (Resident, family medicine)*



Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$

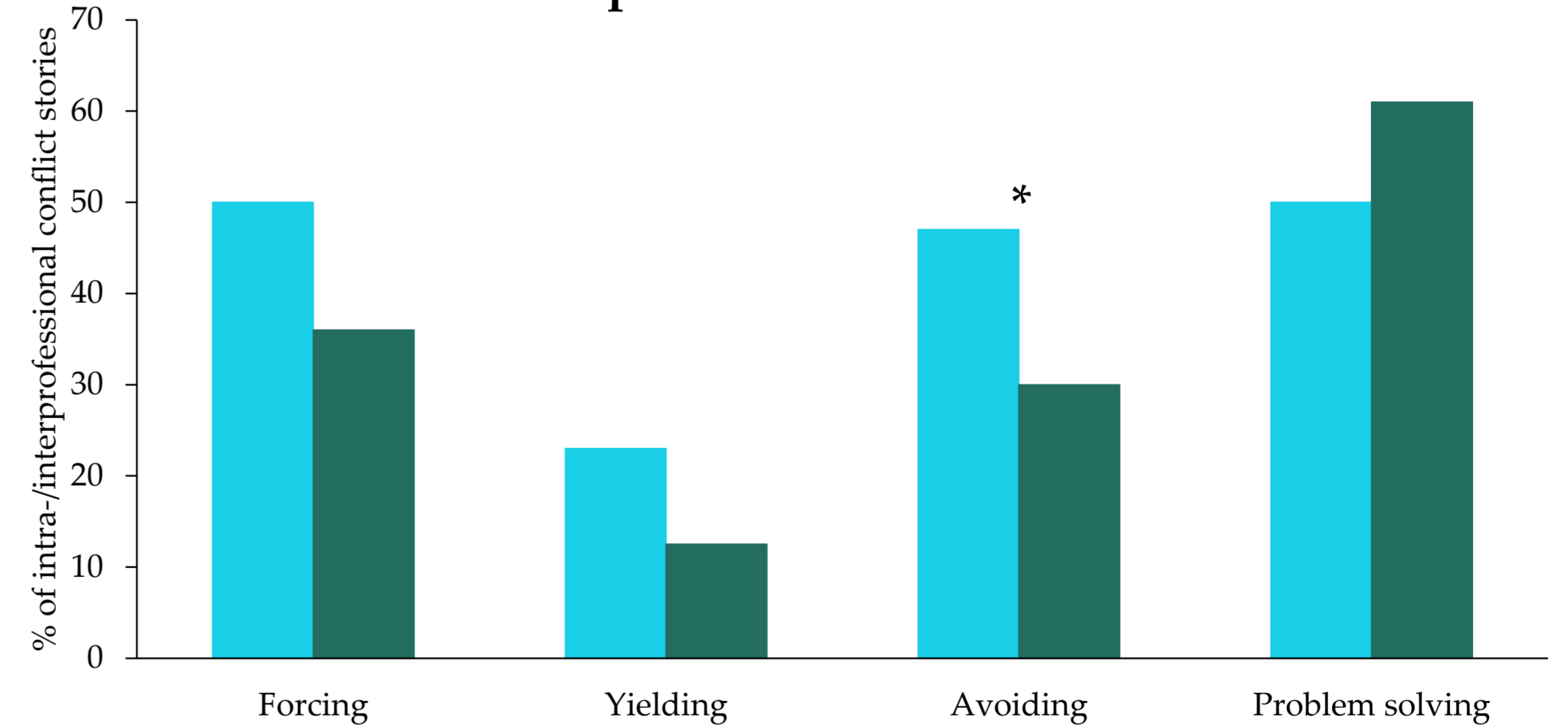
*I said to the nurse "listen, she needs a hemoglobin test at 8 pm, because she's lost a lot of blood and we can't leave her like that." And the nurse said "but you're the one who makes the patients anemic with all your blood draws." (Resident, internal medicine)*

### Consequences of Conflicts



*My supervisor and the head of the department asked me to come in. We discussed the problem, and then they told me "okay, we'll let it go this time." (Nurse, surgical units)*

### Responses to Conflicts



## Conclusions

We have identified **differences** between intra- and interprofessional conflicts, particularly for conflict sources.

- Relationships tend to cause more intraprofessional conflicts.
- Patient-related tasks tend to cause more interprofessional conflicts.
- Social representations tend to cause more interprofessional conflicts.

We also identified **similarities** between intra- and interprofessional conflicts, particularly for conflict consequences and responses to conflicts.

## Take-Home Messages

Our study provides a deeper understanding of healthcare professionals' interactions in the clinical setting. It stresses the need to address both intra- and interprofessional conflicts in health professionals' education, specifically through interprofessional conflict management training.