



Language Analysis of Abortion Stances on Instagram

Uma Graz¹, Avery Salerno², Angie Calvin²

¹Pace Academy - Atlanta, Georgia

²University of Wisconsin – Madison

School of Medicine and Public Health, Department of Pediatrics



INTRODUCTION

- The overturn of Roe v Wade in June 2022 disrupted abortion access in many US states
 - Teens under 20 years old make up 12% of the total abortion-receiving population
- Past studies have found that TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram are commonly used to discuss abortion
- The differences in language used in discussion of pro-life and pro-choice abortion posts on social media remain unclear

The purpose of this study is to better understand trends in language used under pro-choice and pro-life abortion posts.

METHODS

- **Design:** Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count
- **Setting:** Instagram
- **Post Selection Process**
 - Using the *top most recent* filter, the first 20 posts under both the Pro-Choice and Pro-Life Hashtags were selected
 - In terms of *demographics*, the number of comments and likes per post were recorded (Minimum of 20 comments per post for *inclusion*)
- **Comment Selection Process**
 - 10 comments were collected per each post
 - After initial collection, each comment with less than 30 characters was *excluded*
 - The cleaned data for the Pro-Choice/Pro-Life comments were run through LIWC with the following variables below
- **Analysis:** the mean scores for LIWC variables were compared

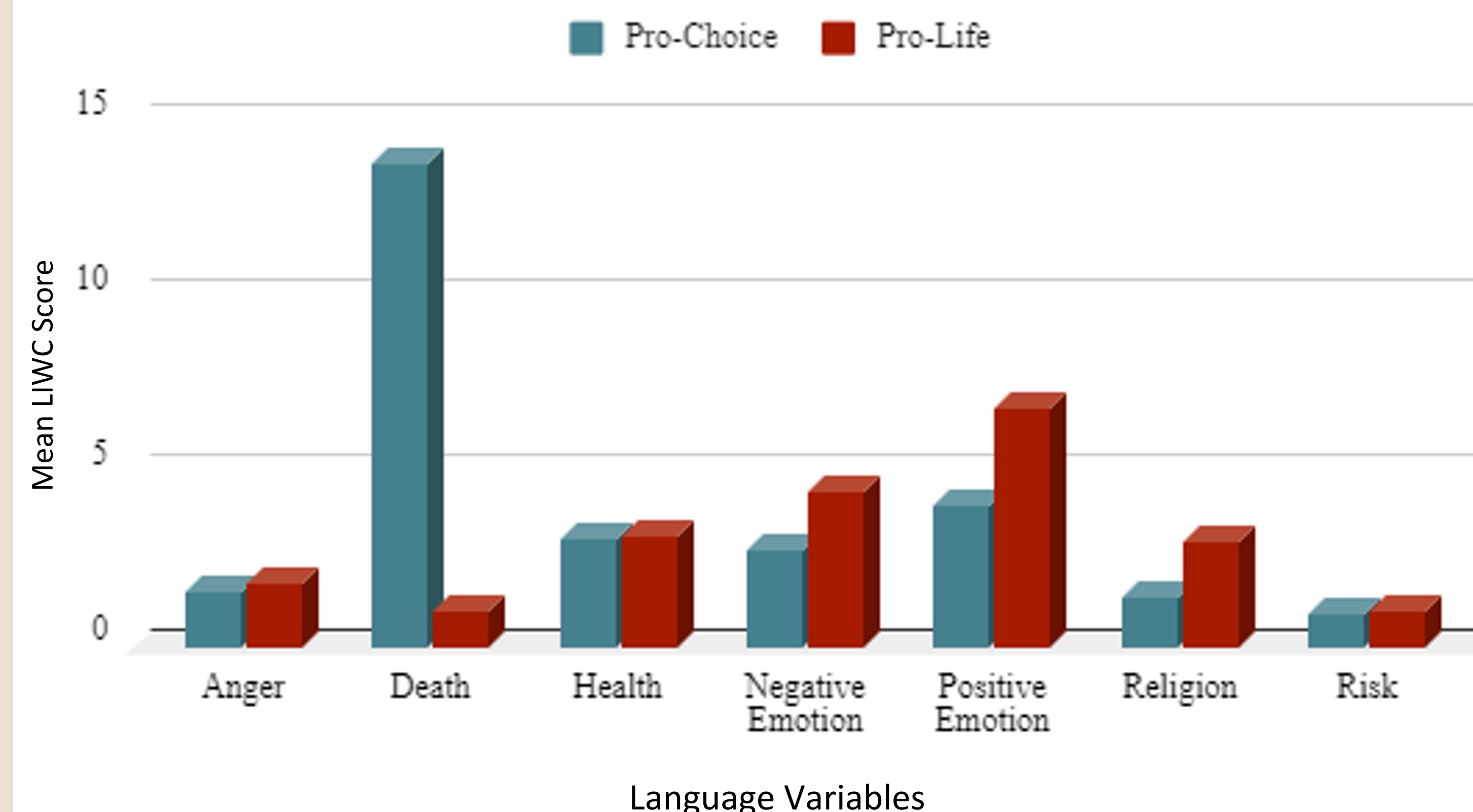
Variable	Included Words
Anger	Hate, kill, annoyed
Negative Emotion	Hurt, ugly, nasty
Positive Emotion	Love, nice, sweet
Health	Clinic, flu, pill
Risk	Danger, doubt
Religion	Altar, church
Death	Bury, coffin, kill

RESULTS



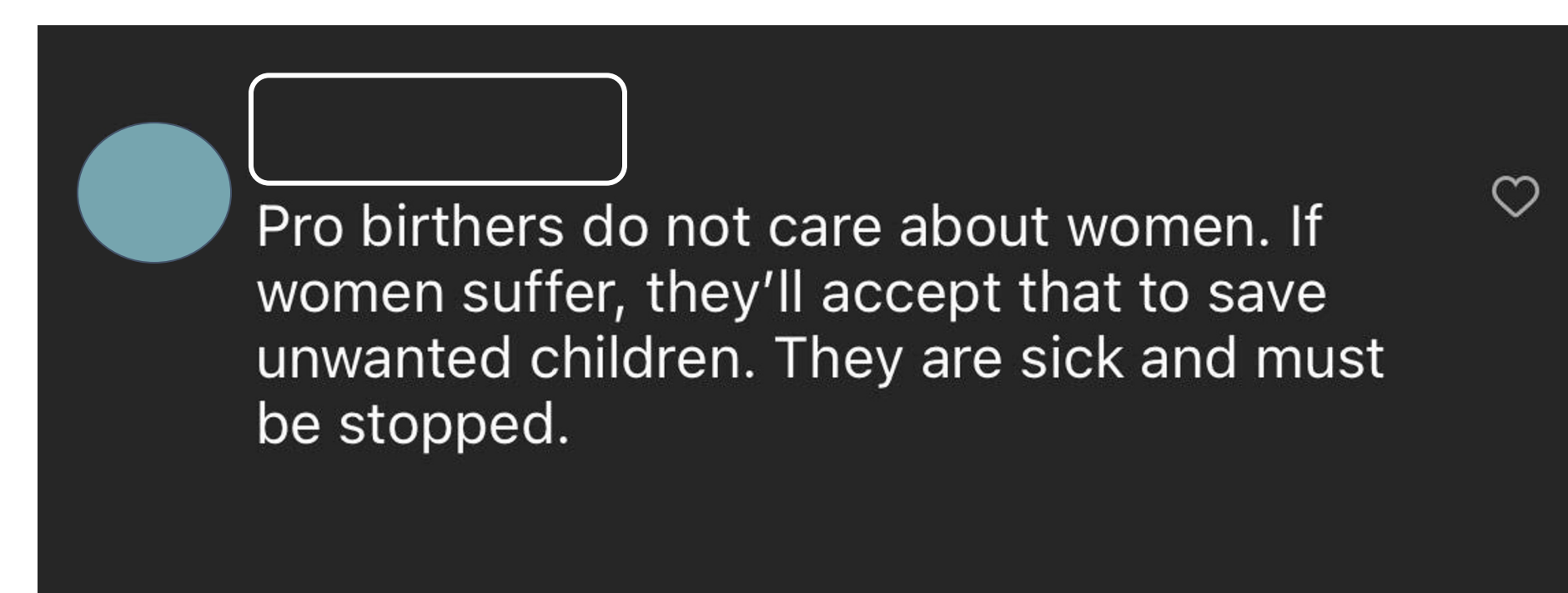
	Average # of Likes	Average # of Comments
#Pro-Choice Posts	5060.95	105.8
#Pro-Life Posts	4708.35	137.8

Prevalence of language variables in comments under pro-life and pro-choice posts

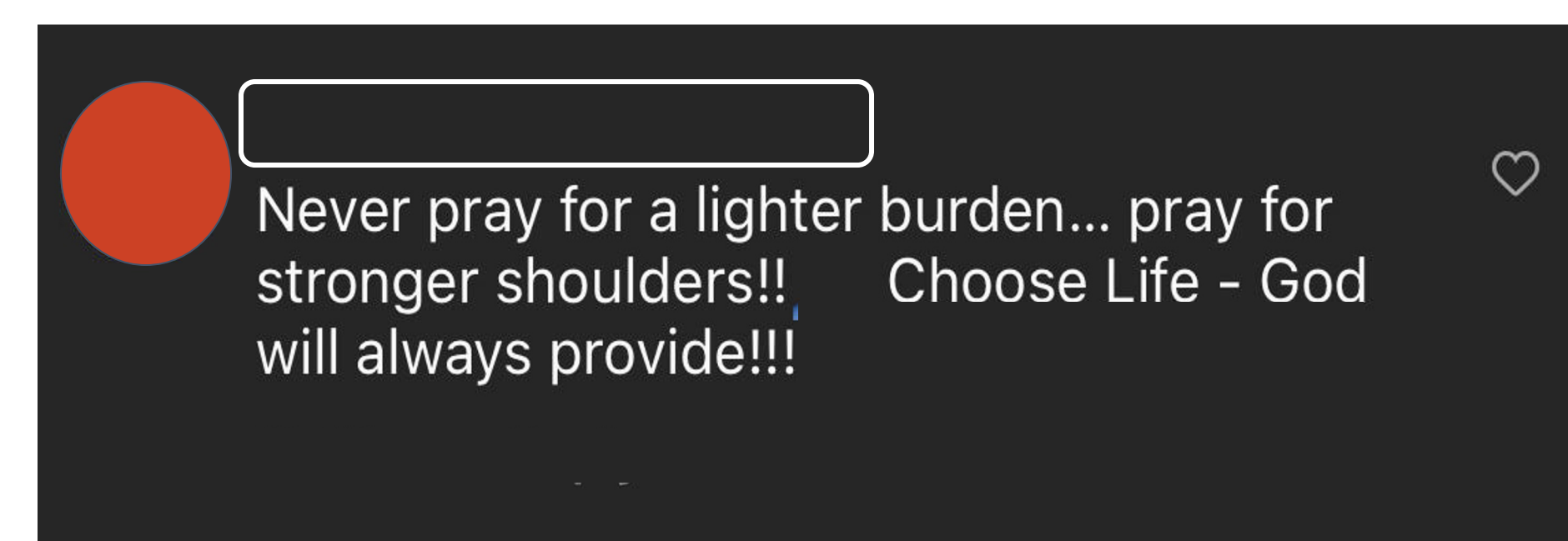


- Comments under pro-life posts used more positive language, negative language, angry language, health-related language, risk related language, and religion related language
- Comments under pro-choice posts used far more death related language

Example Pro-Choice Post Comment:



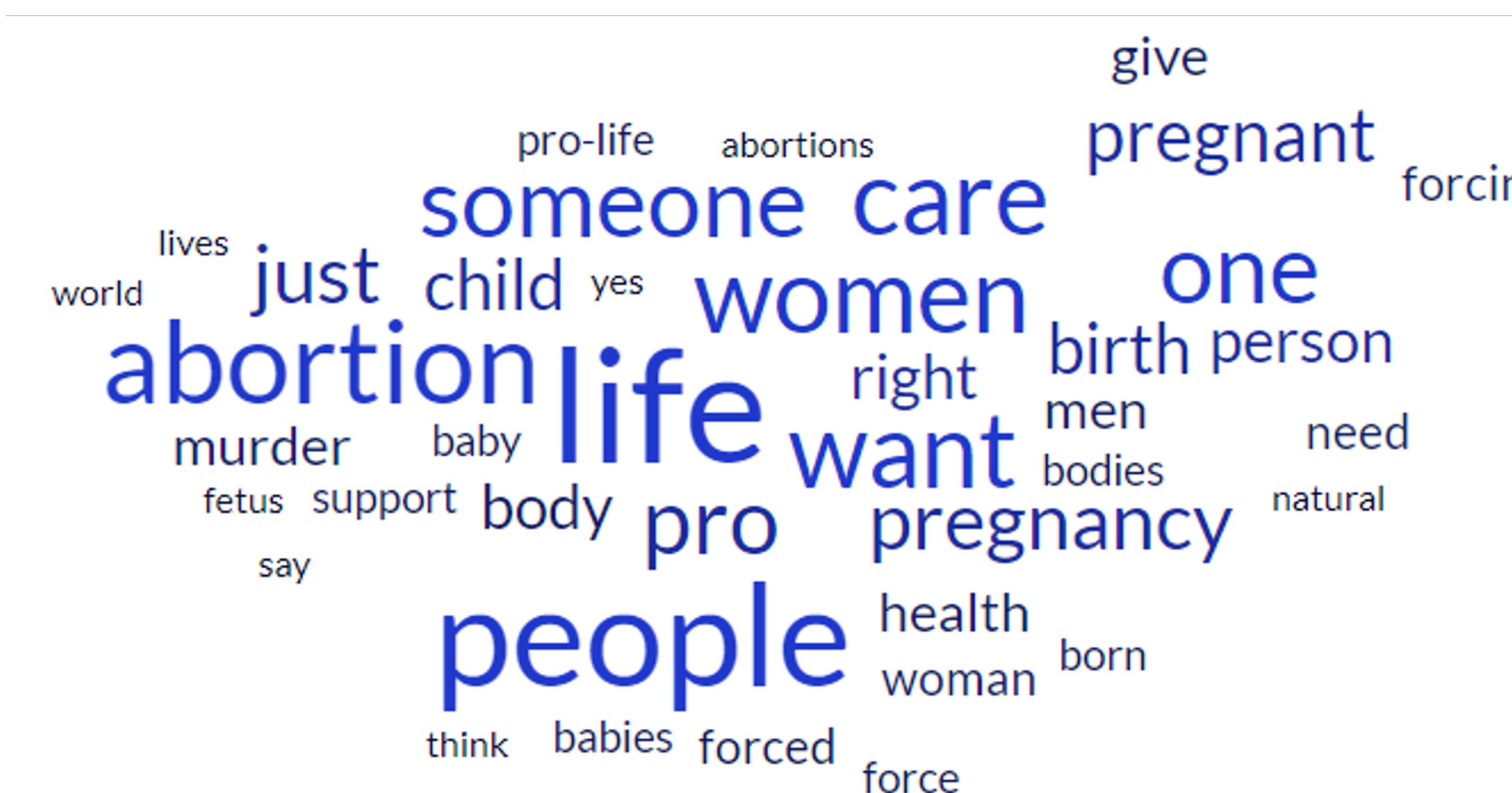
Example Pro-Life Post Comment:



Pro-Life Comment Word Cloud



Pro-Choice Comment Word Cloud



CONCLUSIONS

- There was a higher prevalence of death related language under pro-choice posts than pro-life posts
 - This might have been in reference to the mortality of the mother
- There was moderately more positive, negative, and religion related language under pro-life posts
- The prevalence of anger, health, and risk related language was very similar across both groups
 - This finding could inform efforts to facilitate cross-stance discourse, focusing on themes like health and risk that are important to both groups
 - Health and risk could have been in reference to the mother and child's mortality and wellbeing
- A future study could pilot test facilitated conversations between people with pro-choice and pro-life abortion stances, focusing on health and risk
- A limitation of this study was the use of only two hashtags for post selection, which may not fully capture the breadth of abortion discourse on Instagram

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you so much to my advisors, Avery Salerno and Angie Calvin, for helping me establish my topic and guiding me through this exciting new experience!

Also, thank you to my peers who gave me great feedback during the research process.

Finally, many thanks to the SMAHRT program for creating this opportunity and providing me with so many new skills!

CONTACT

Uma Graz
uma.graz@gmail.com

Megan A. Moreno, MD, MSEd,
MPH
moreno@wisc.edu

<http://smahrtresearch.com/>

