

UNDERSTANDING SUCCESSFUL CROWDFUNDING FOR CLEFT
AND CRANIOFACIAL MISSION TRIPS

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- Introduction
- More than 200,000 children are born with cleft lip and/or cleft palate each year, with higher mortality rates in low- and middle-income countries.¹
 - In these countries, the need for cleft lip/palate repair surgeries often exceeds available resources. To address this, volunteers and nonprofits organize international mission trips to provide care. These initiatives are expensive and rely heavily on donations.
 - GoFundMe (GFM) is a popular crowdfunding site, with international medical mission trips listed as one of their most used platforms.²
 - This study aims to identify factors contributing to the success of GFM campaigns for cleft and craniofacial surgical mission trips.

- Methods
- GoFundMe campaigns were collected from 01/17/2014 to 09/21/2024 using search terms “plastic surgery mission,” “cleft surgery mission,” and “craniofacial surgery mission.”
 - **Inclusion criteria:**
 1. Campaigns raising funds for a specific mission trip as opposed to a general organization that sponsors many trips
 2. Campaigns specifically mentioned cleft or craniofacial procedures
 - Success was defined as raising ≥ 50% of the median target amount
 - Univariate logistic regression and chi-squared analyses assessed each variable's association with campaign success
 - Categories examined included:
 - Title characteristics
 - Photo characteristics
 - Author’s affiliation
 - Use of funds
 - Geographical distribution
 - Other unique features

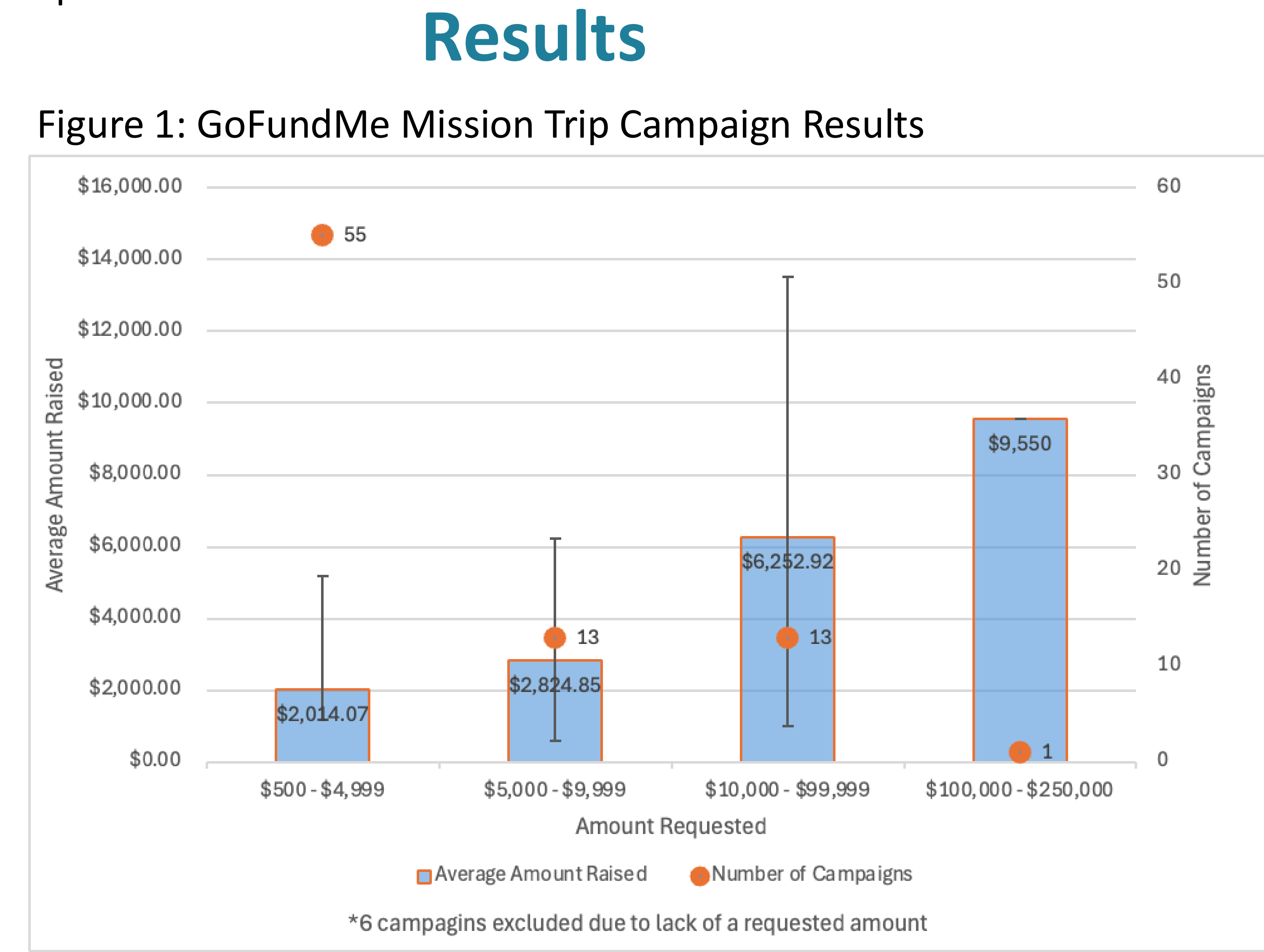
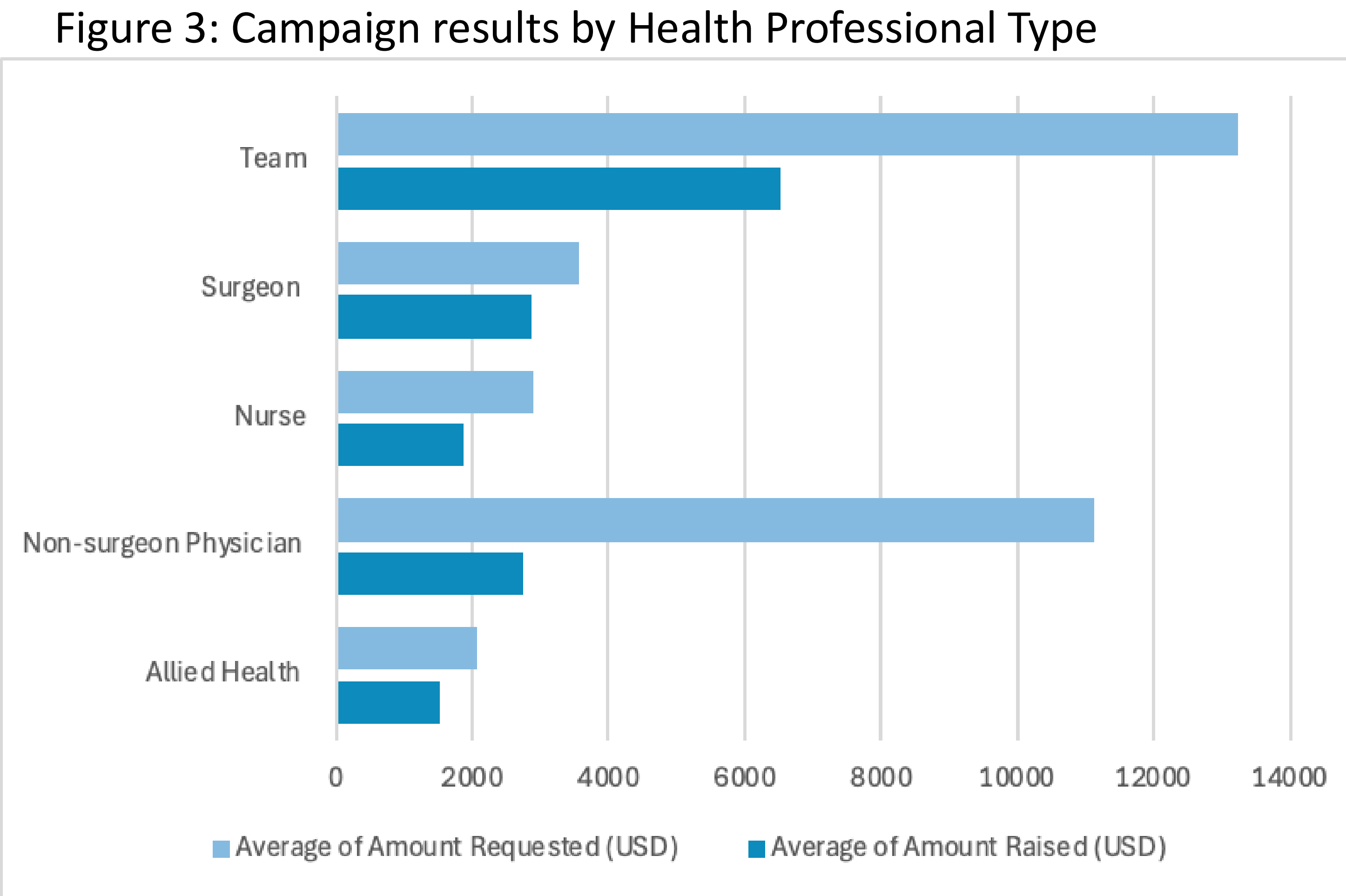
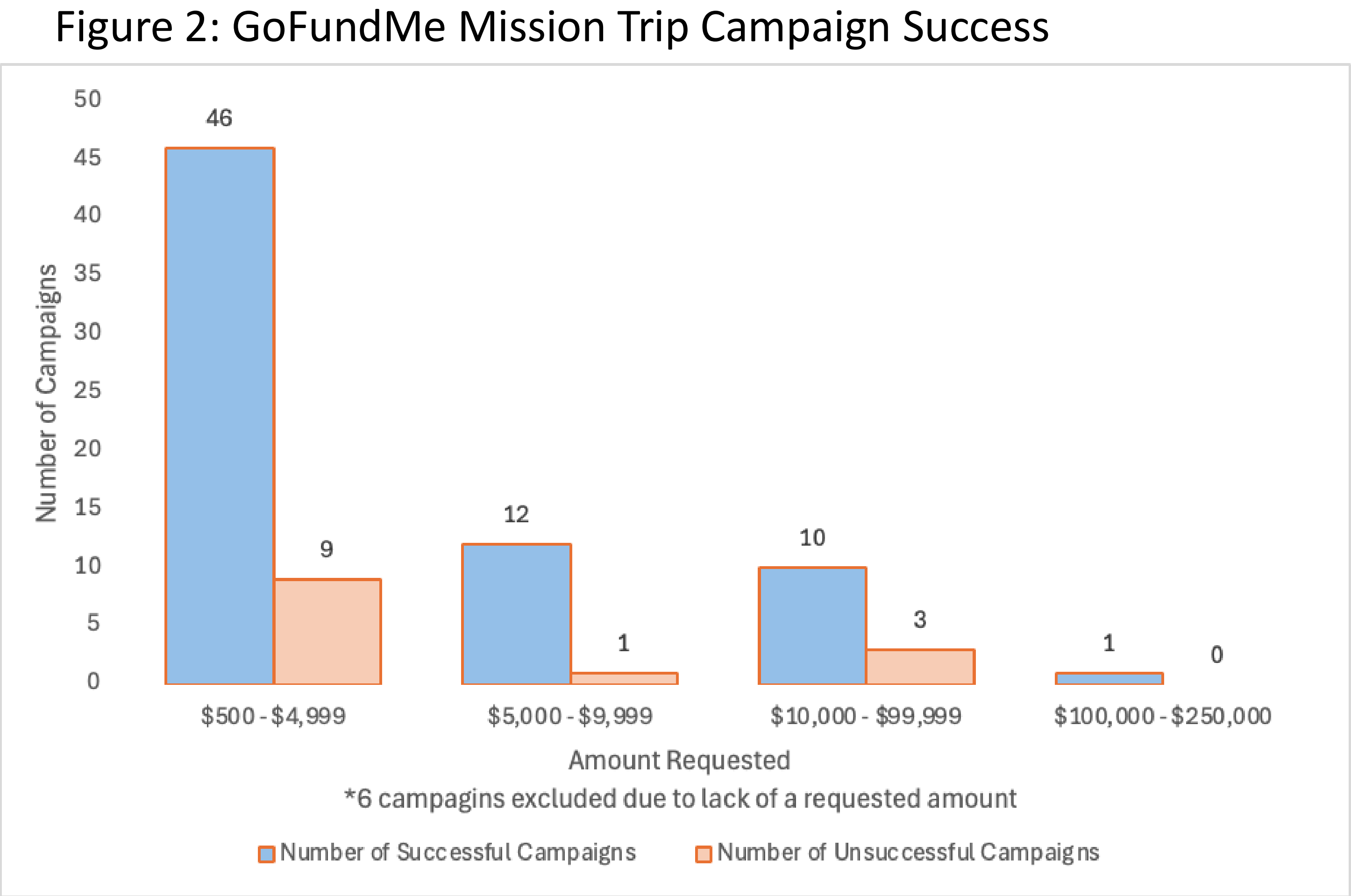


Table 1: Analysis of GoFundMe Campaign Predictors

Predictors	N (%)	X ²	p-value	OR (95% CI)
Visuals				
Posted a photo	84 (95.5%)	0.861	0.353	2.01 (0.103-39.2)
Posted more than one photo	33 (37.5%)	0.0482	0.826	1.14 (0.364-3.54)
Photo of a child	48 (54.5%)	0.0107	0.918	0.943 (0.309-2.87)
Photo of a team	28 (31.8%)	0.0191	0.89	1.09 (0.333 -3.54)
Photo of a procedure	16 (18.2%)	0.286	0.593	0.648 (0.131-3.21)
Video posted	14 (15.9%)	0.0897	0.765	0.782 (0.156-3.92)
Title				
Includes "mission"	54 (61.4%)	0.214	0.643	1.32 (0.409-4.25)
Includes location of trip	36 (40.9%)	1.28	0.258	1.95 (0.605-6.25)
Author's affiliation				
On behalf of an organization	54 (61.4%)	1.65	0.199	0.484 (0.158-1.49)
For individual needs	49 (55.7%)	0.884	0.347	1.74 (0.542-5.61)
Posted by a health professional **	41 (46.6%)	5.2	0.023	3.94 (1.15-13.6)
With religion	4 (4.5%)	3.22	0.073	5.46 (0.705-42.3)
What was asked for				
Supplies**	52 (59.1%)	4.96	0.026	0.277 (0.0854-0.896)
Lodging	20 (22.7%)	0.909	0.34	0.470 (0.0967-2.28)
Travel	50 (56.8%)	0.0895	0.765	0.844 (0.276-2.57)
Location of Mission Trip				
South America	20 (22.7%)	0.909	0.34	0.470 (0.0967-2.28)
North America	1 (1.1%)	0.208	0.648	1.56 (0.0606-40.1)
Central America	17 (19.3%)	6.26E-01	0.429	1.68 (0.461-6.11)
Asia	26 (29.5%)	0.125	0.724	0.808 (0.246-2.65)
Africa	21 (23.9%)	0.0782	0.78	1.20 (0.338-4.25)
Caribbean	2 (2.3%)	0.421	0.517	0.923 (0.0422-20.2)
Unknown	1 (1.1%)	0.208	0.648	1.56 (0.0606-40.1)
Other				
Posted link to organization's website	38 (43.2%)	3.96	0.047	0.271 (0.0707-1.04)
Uses religious wording	6 (6.8%)	6.53E-04	0.98	0.971 (0.105-8.97)
Updates include "mission accomplished"	11 (12.5%)	0.563	0.453	0.450 (0.0532-3.81)
Tax deductible donation	23 (26.1%)	0.353	0.553	0.663 (0.169-2.60)
Summary Statistics				
Word Count	280 (187)	0.491	0.624	1.00 (0.997-1.00)
Updates Posted	0.466 (1.15)	0.927	0.354	1.60 (0.593-4.31)
Amount requested	9171 (28,497)	0.336	0.737	1.00 (1.00-1.00)
Number of donations**	23.7 (13.5)	3.78	<0.001	1.169 (1.0780-1.27)

** denotes statistical significance $p \leq 0.05$
Orange highlight denotes negative impact on success, white denotes positive impact on success

- Key Facts:
- 88 campaigns from 2014 to 2024 met inclusion criteria
 - Median amount raised: \$2,129 (mean: \$2,917, range: \$0.00-\$25,695)
 - Median amount requested: \$3,000 (mean: \$9,171, range: \$500-\$250,000)
 - Total requested: \$750,861.68
 - Total raised: \$257,674.20
 - Achieved ≥50% of goal: 73 (83%)
 - 41 campaigns (46.6%) posted by a health professional



- Conclusions
- Mission trips for cleft and craniofacial surgical procedures require significant funding.
 - The feasibility of GFM to achieve fundraising goals needs further assessment.
 - It may be advantageous to advertise one’s status as a health professional when creating these campaigns.

References

1. Volk AS, Davis MJ, Desai P, Hollier LH. The History and Mission of Smile Train, a Global Cleft Charity. *Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinics of North America*. 2020;32(3):481-488. doi:[10.1016/j.coms.2020.04.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.coms.2020.04.010)
2. GoFundMe. Top Tips for Making a Big Impact with International Crowdfunding. GoFundMe. March 8, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2025. <https://www.gofundme.com/c/blog/international-crowdfunding>