

Perceived Clinical Value and Cost Trade-off in Psychology: A Real-World Analysis Based on PROMs, PREMs, and Costs

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Introduction

Modern healthcare systems are transitioning from volume to value. In mental health, defining value requires a multidimensional approach that balances clinical outcomes, patient perception, and financial sustainability. Integrating Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) and Patient-Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) is critical to capturing the patient's voice and evaluating the holistic impact of psychotherapeutic interventions. While the clinical efficacy of psychological support is well-documented, there is a scarcity of real-world evidence that simultaneously synthesizes PROMs, PREMs, and direct costs into a single, actionable value matrix to explore the trade-offs between patient benefit and economic efficiency.

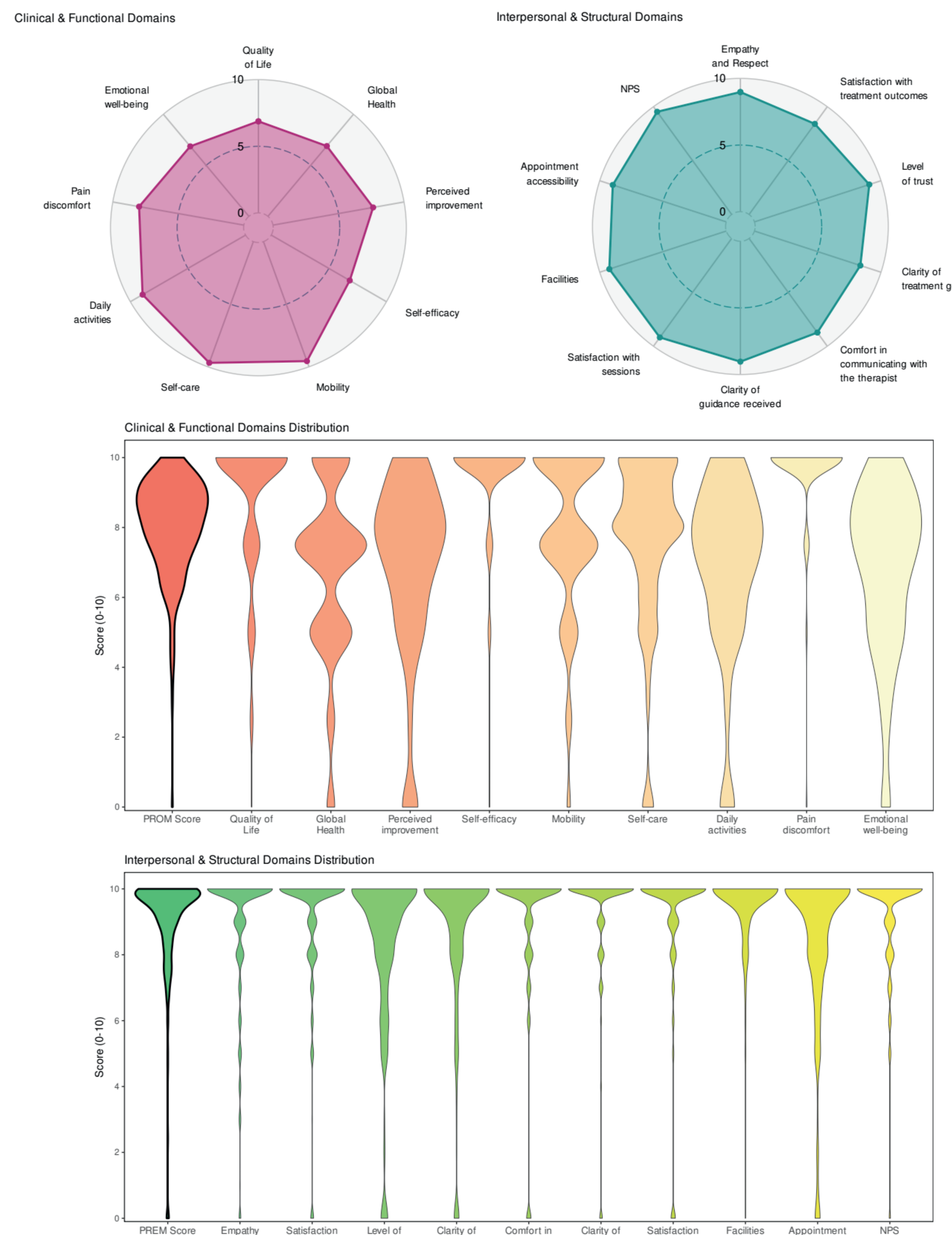
Objective

To assess the value delivered by a psychology care pathway by integrating PROMs, PREMs, and direct care costs, exploring the trade-off between perceived benefit and economic efficiency in a real-world setting.

Methodology

A retrospective real-world analysis was conducted using routinely collected data from May to July 2025 across multiple units. PROMs, PREMs, and cost data from the psychology care pathway were analyzed. An aggregated effectiveness score was constructed from patient-reported clinical outcomes and experience measures. Mean effectiveness, mean cost per patient, and cost per unit of effectiveness were calculated, and patients were classified using a value matrix. The sample included 233 patients.

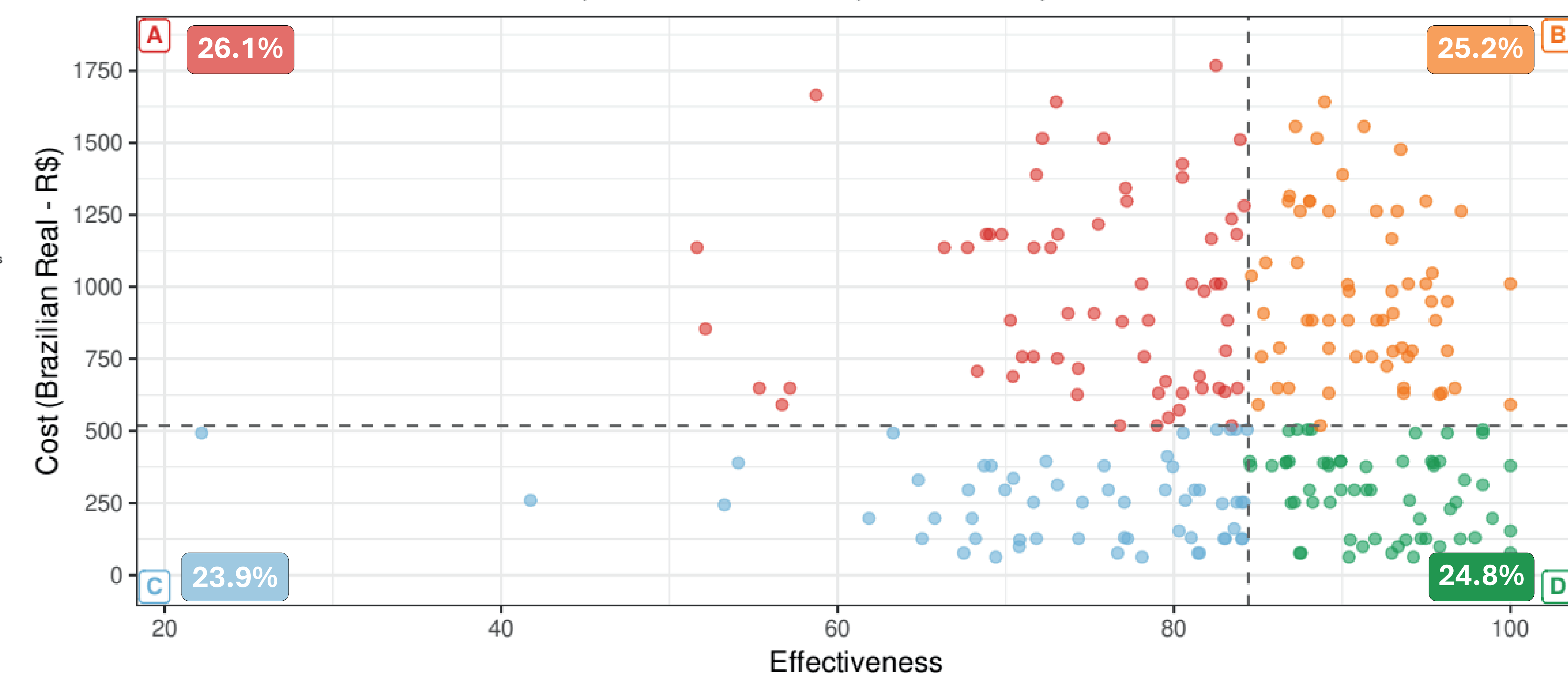
The psychology pathway showed a mean effectiveness score of 83.00, with a mean cost per patient of R\$ 638.57, resulting in a cost of R\$ 7.69 per unit of effectiveness. Relevant improvements were observed in emotional health, perceived improvement, and quality of life, with mean scores predominantly between 7 and 8 points. Patient experience measures were high, with satisfaction with results around 8.5 to 8.8 and a mean Net Promoter Score of 9.5. Most patients were positioned in the high-value quadrants of the value matrix, despite the higher cost associated with the care model.



Results

Quadrant Analysis — Cost vs. Effectiveness

Cut-off lines based on the median (Effectiveness: 84.42 | Cost: 518.72)



Mean Effectiveness Score
83.1

Mean Cost
R\$ 632.21

Incremental cost per unit
R\$ 7.6

Conclusions

The psychology care pathway delivered high value from the patient perspective, with meaningful gains in emotional health, perceived improvement, and care experience. However, this performance was achieved at a higher cost per unit of benefit. These findings highlight a clear trade-off between perceived clinical value and cost-efficiency and reinforce the need for transparent prioritization and resource allocation criteria in value-based healthcare models.

