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Relationship Between Binge Drinking, Food Restriction, and Mental Health in College Students

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Binge Drinking, Eating Patterns, and Mental Health

Abstract

- Binge drinking is a prevalent problem among college students and it is impacting many aspects of lives.
- This study focuses on the detriments of binge drinking on college students' nutrition and mental health.
- An anonymous online survey was administered through Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Discord. The survey included basic demographic questions and questions on frequency of drinking, eating habits while drinking, typical daily food consumption, and mental-well being. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze data in SPSS version 25.0.
- There is an association between binge drinking, food choices, and mental health among college students. Because of the effects of binge drinking, it is important to be conscious of drinking habits to protect physical and mental health.

Introduction

Eating habit changes that are made due to alcohol consumption have coined the name "drunkorexia". Before drinking, both genders decrease their food consumption. Women often limit food intake to balance the calories consumed while drinking, while men eat less so that they can feel the effects of alcohol at a faster rate (Wilkerson 2017). However, food consumption often increases after alcohol use. Binge eating and binge drinking have related tendencies and mindsets, and it demonstrates that emotions play a part in both (Escrivá-Martínez 2020). In addition, research has found that students who binge drink are 1.2 times more likely to undergo psychological distress (Tembo et al., 2017).

Methods

Demographic	Males and Females; College Students (18-22 yrs old)
Number of Participants	236
Survey	Binge Drinking and Nutrition Assessment
Deliverance	Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) and group chats (Discord, IMessage)

Results

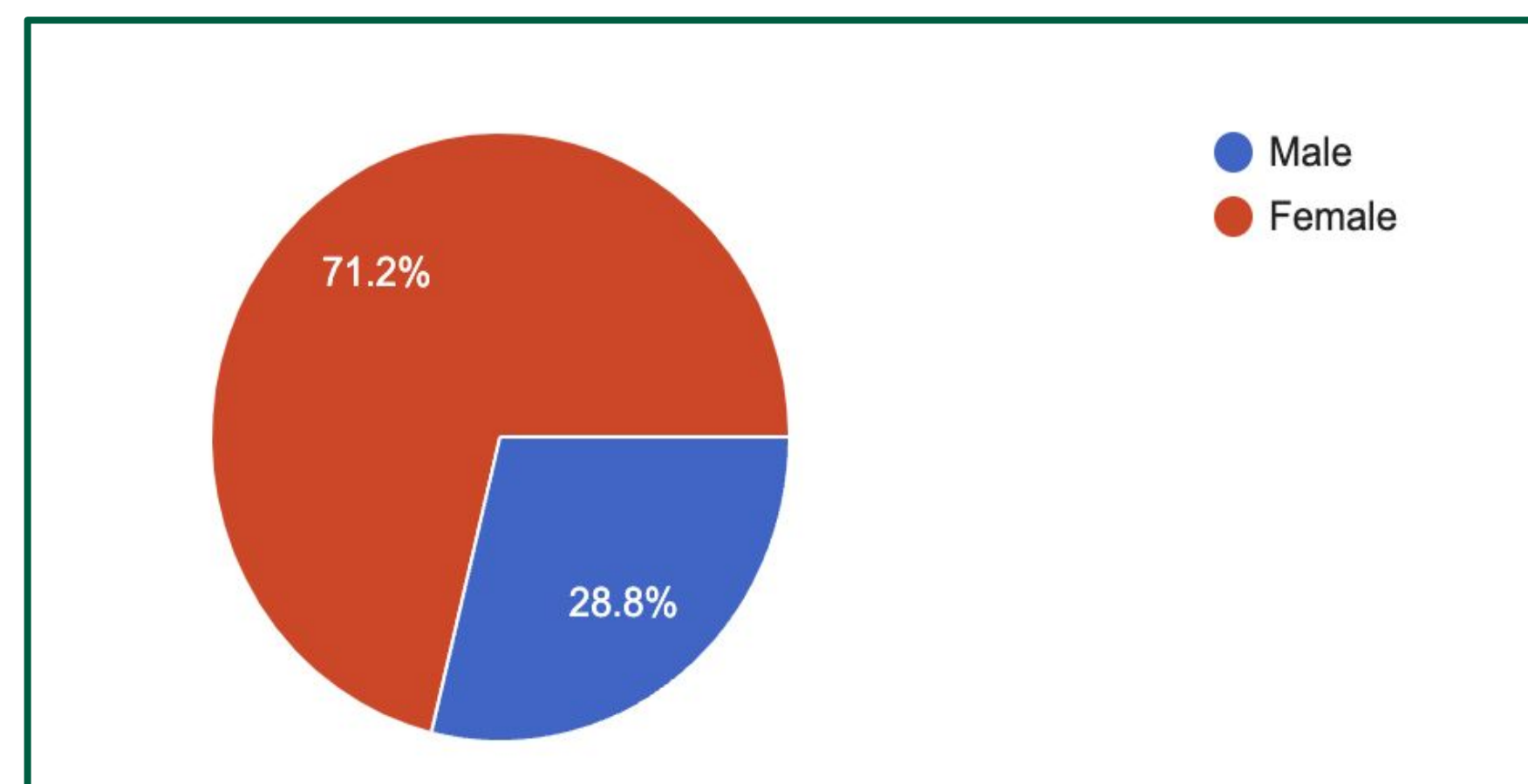


Figure 3. Report of the number of male versus female respondents to the survey.

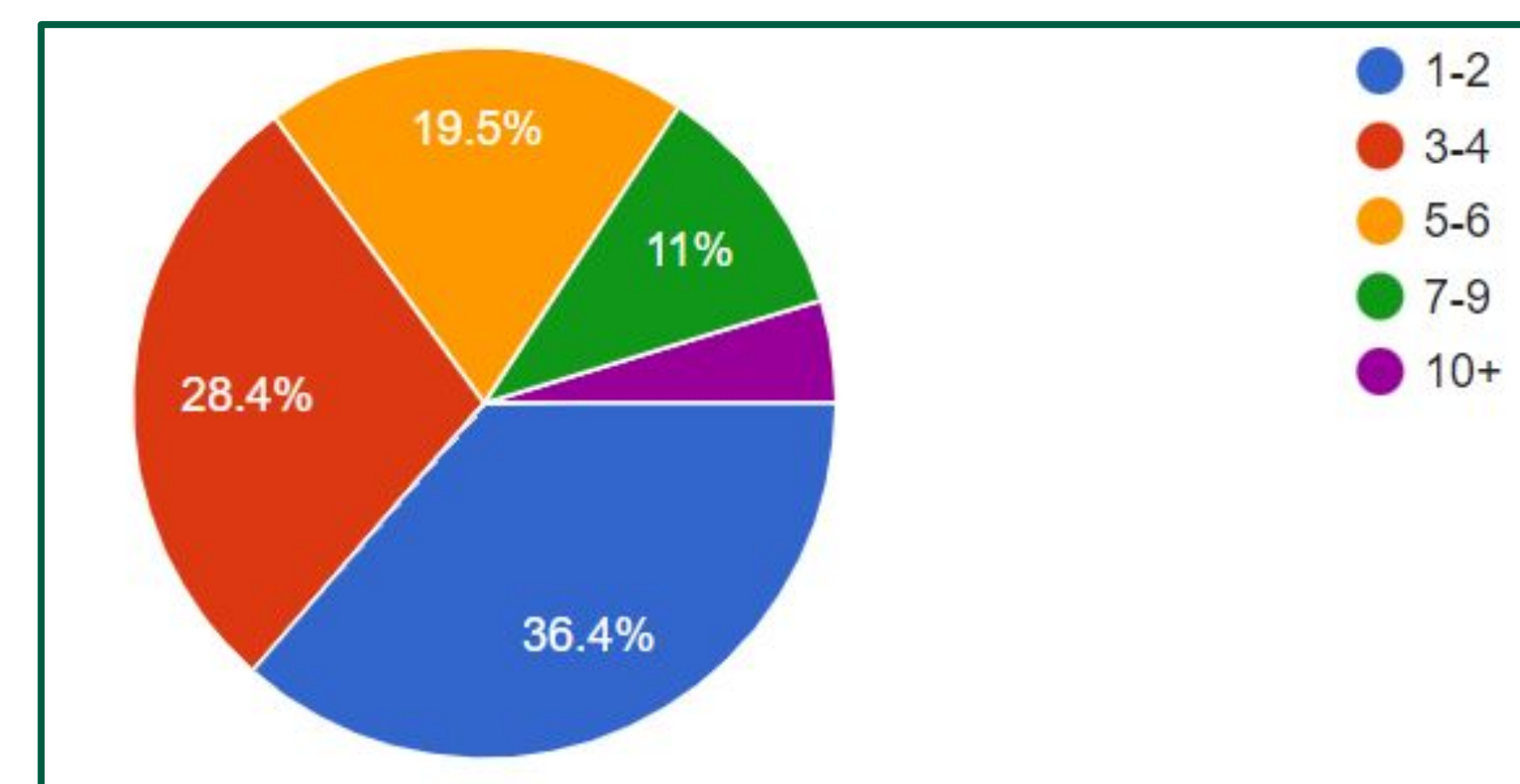


Figure 2. Report of how many alcoholic drinks are consumed on a typical day when drinking.

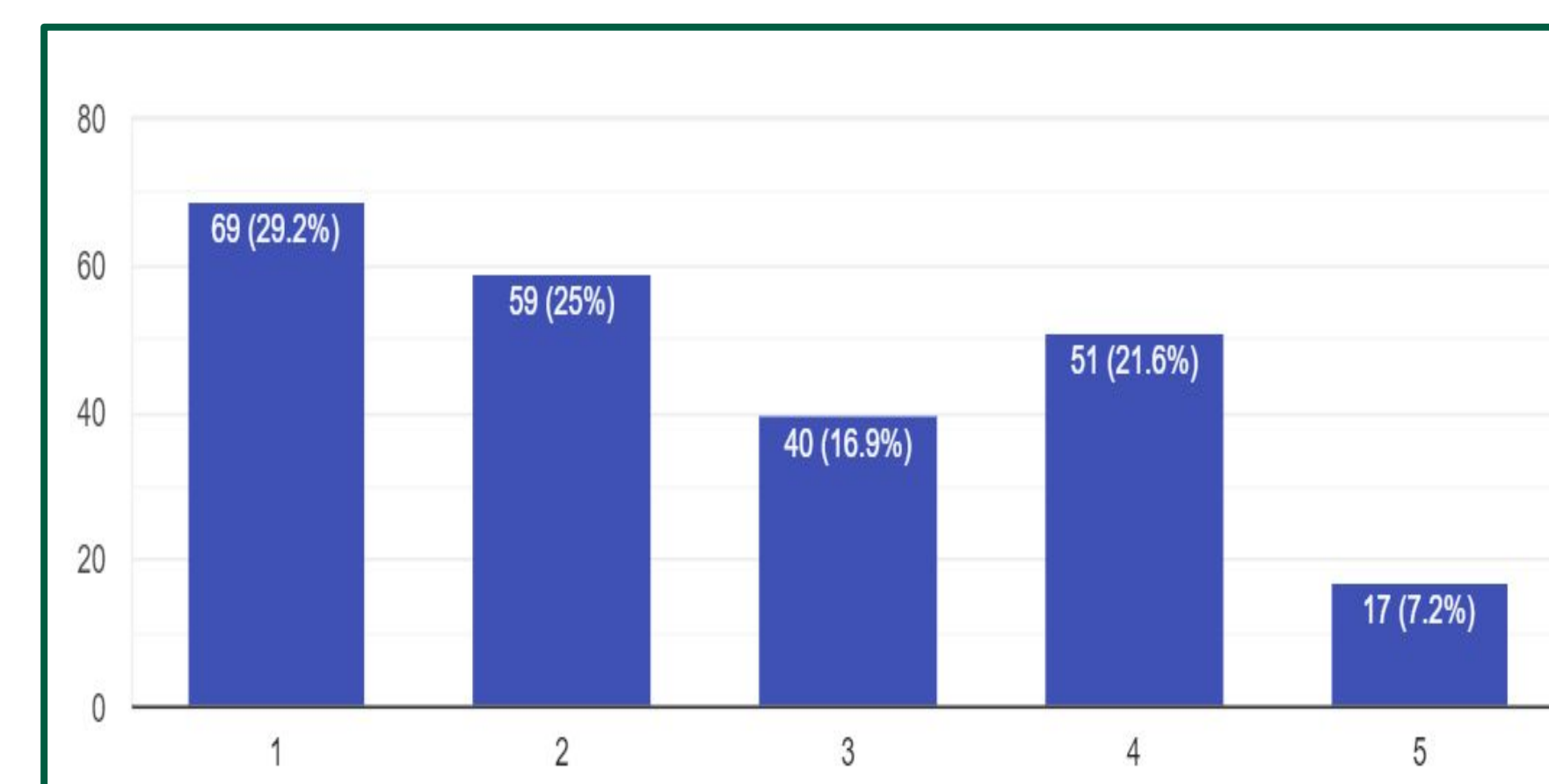


Figure 1. Report on how often more food is consumed than usual after a day of drinking. 28.9% reported that this happens most of the time or all of the time.

1. Binge drinking and frequency of drinking

- Positive correlation between having 4 or more drinks in one sitting and drinking often
- $r = 0.465$; $N = 236$; $p = 0$

2. Conscious monitoring of diet before drinking and feeling "alone/lonely"

- Positive correlation between consciousness of eating habits prior to drinking and feeling alone/lonely
- $r = 0.195$; $N = 236$; $p = 0.003$

3. Binge drinking and eating more than usual after drinking

- Positive correlation between having 4 or more drinks and eating more than usual after drinking on a day alcohol will be consumed
- $r = 0.266$; $N = 236$; $p = 0$

Discussion

Binge Drinking and Nutrition

College students who binge drink are more likely to frequently (2 - 4+ times per week) consume an alcoholic beverage. Those who binge drink are also more likely to eat less than usual before drinking, but will eat more than usual after drinking.

Nutrition and Mental Health

Students who monitor their eating habits prior to drinking are more likely to feel "alone or lonely". Students who monitor their eating habits after drinking are more likely to feel "overwhelmed".

Binge Drinking and Mental Health

College students who binge drink are more likely to feel like "everything they do is an effort".

Conclusion

- In conclusion,
 - Students who binge drink are more at risk of drinking frequently, abuse alcohol as a coping mechanism, and have inconsistent eating habits.
 - Symptoms of poor mental health such as feeling overwhelmed and lonely are associated with monitoring of eating habits.
- Further research could separate the study groups by gender since the number of drinks that defines binge drinking differs between males and females.

Limitations

In the survey, there is a question that asks how many alcoholic drinks are typically consumed in one sitting. Two of the answer choices were 3-4 drinks or 5-6 drinks. However, 4-5 drinks is considered binge drinking so the data collected on binge drinkers may include individuals who don't binge drink.

References

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