

Tracking Substance Use and Mental Health in Adolescents

Julianna Lee, Dr. Alyssa Harlow, Dr. Denise Tran, Dr. Adam Leventhal

USC Institute of Addiction Science, Bridge Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA



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ADVANCE Study Abstract

Background: There is an abundance of studies surrounding the mental health and substance use of adults, however, minors – specifically high-schoolers– are underrepresented in this research. Politicians have emphasized a ‘mental health crisis in America.’ If true, further investigation is needed on the well-being of American teenagers.

Objectives: The purpose of this research is to find out the attitudes, behaviors, and factors contributing to mental health and substance use.

Methods: The ADVANCE study collects school-based data from partnered high schools around Southern California. Surveys are sent out twice a year to a sample size of about 3000 students during their time in high school.

Results: Data displayed was collected from one high school in Southern California. 296 valid responses were collected in Fall 2022 and 277 valid responses were collected in Spring 2023.

Conclusions: Substance use increases as students approach their senior year. The amount of students with anxiety and depression symptoms lowers as the effects of the pandemic waver off.

Results: Mental Health

In Spring 2023, students who screened positive* for significant levels of...

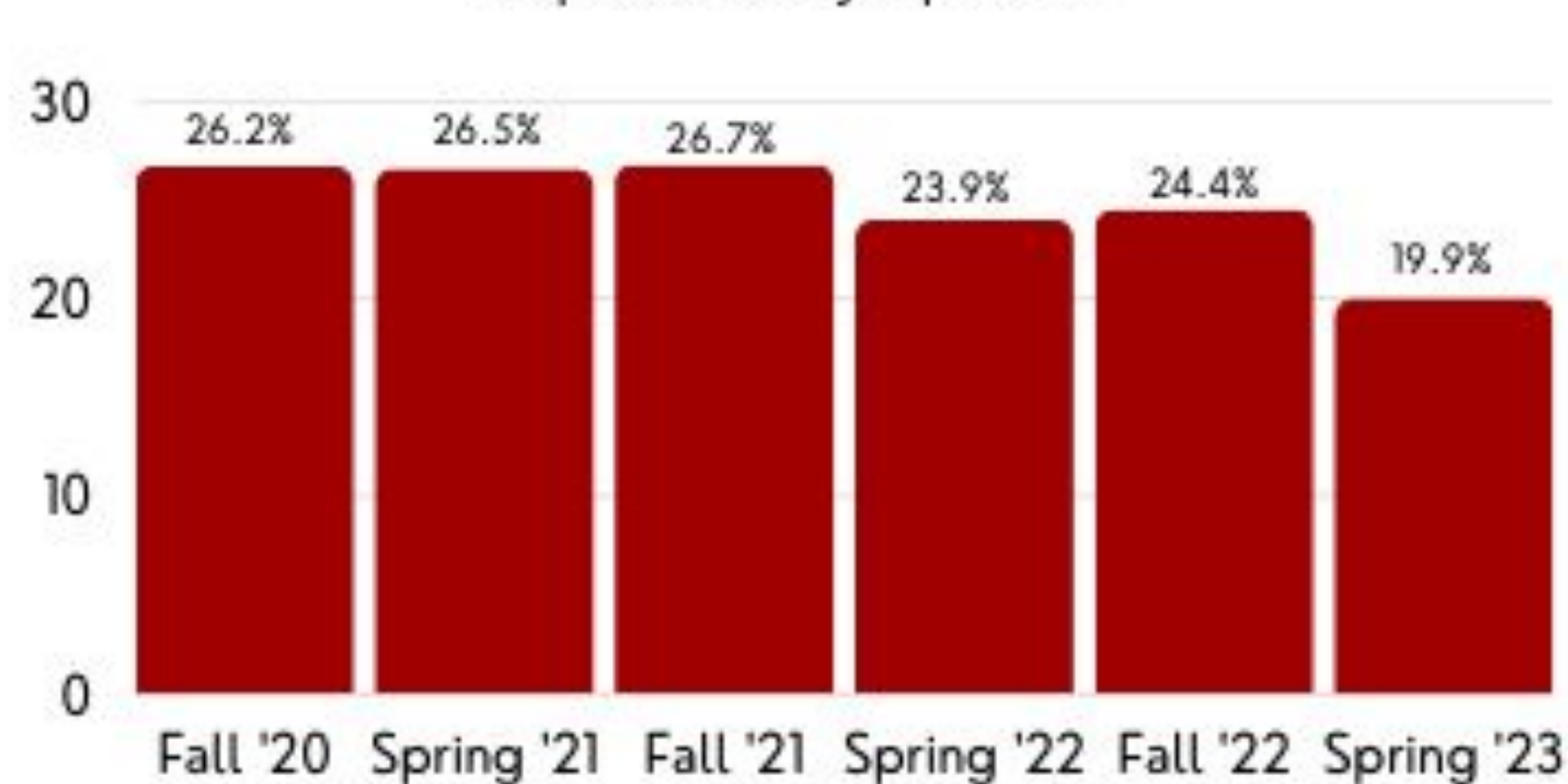
OCD Symptoms ADHD Symptoms Sleep Problems



Anxiety Symptoms



Depressive Symptoms



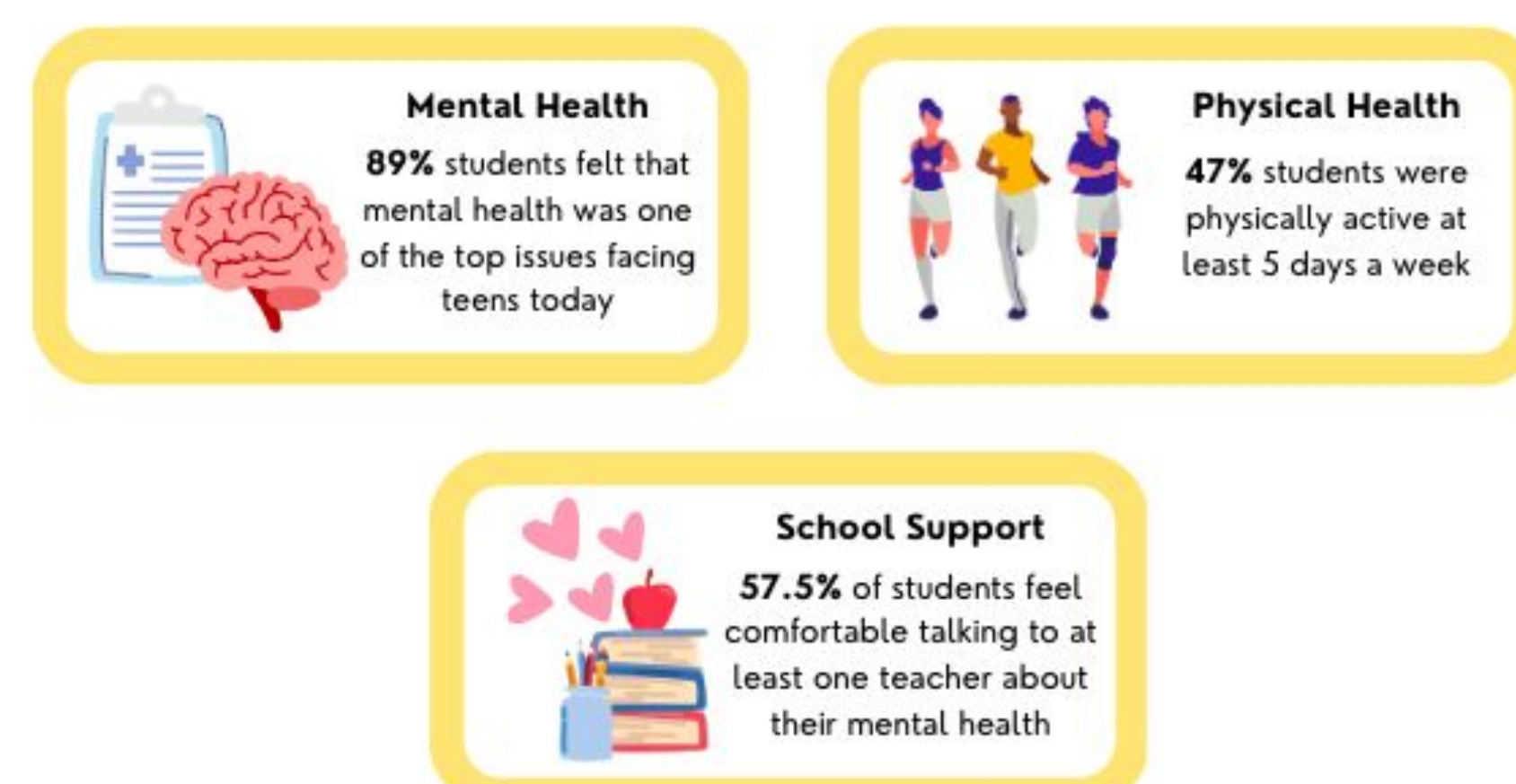
Methods

Measures: The demographics (gender identity, race/ethnic identity, sexuality) of the participants are recorded. The study examines the prevalence of symptoms of conditions such as OCD and ADHD, as well as other problems: lack of sleep, depression, and anxiety. Marijuana, nicotine³, and alcohol use are surveyed as well; participants are asked to specify their devices, dosages, or products. Stressors like discrimination², shootings¹, and violence are contributing factors to mental health and substance use.

Procedures: Data collectors went on-site and administered surveys by laptop. Absent students received remote service.

Analysis: 23.9% of students at this school have vaped nicotine and 29% of the participants have used marijuana. 89% of students felt that mental health was one of the top issues facing teenagers today. Only 57.5% of students felt comfortable talking to at least one teacher about their mental health. 47% of students were reported to be physically active at least 5 days a week.

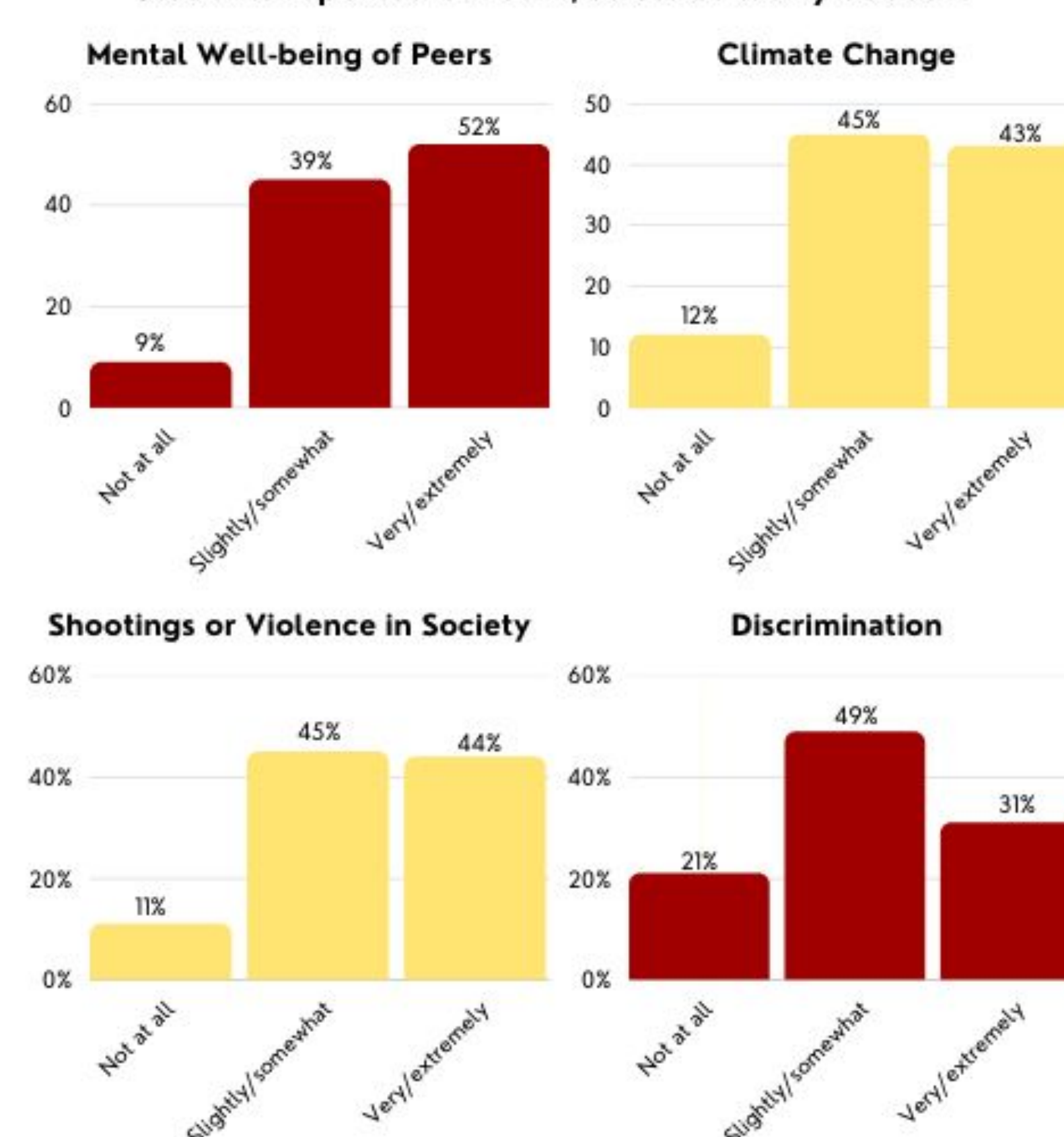
Results: Societal Concerns



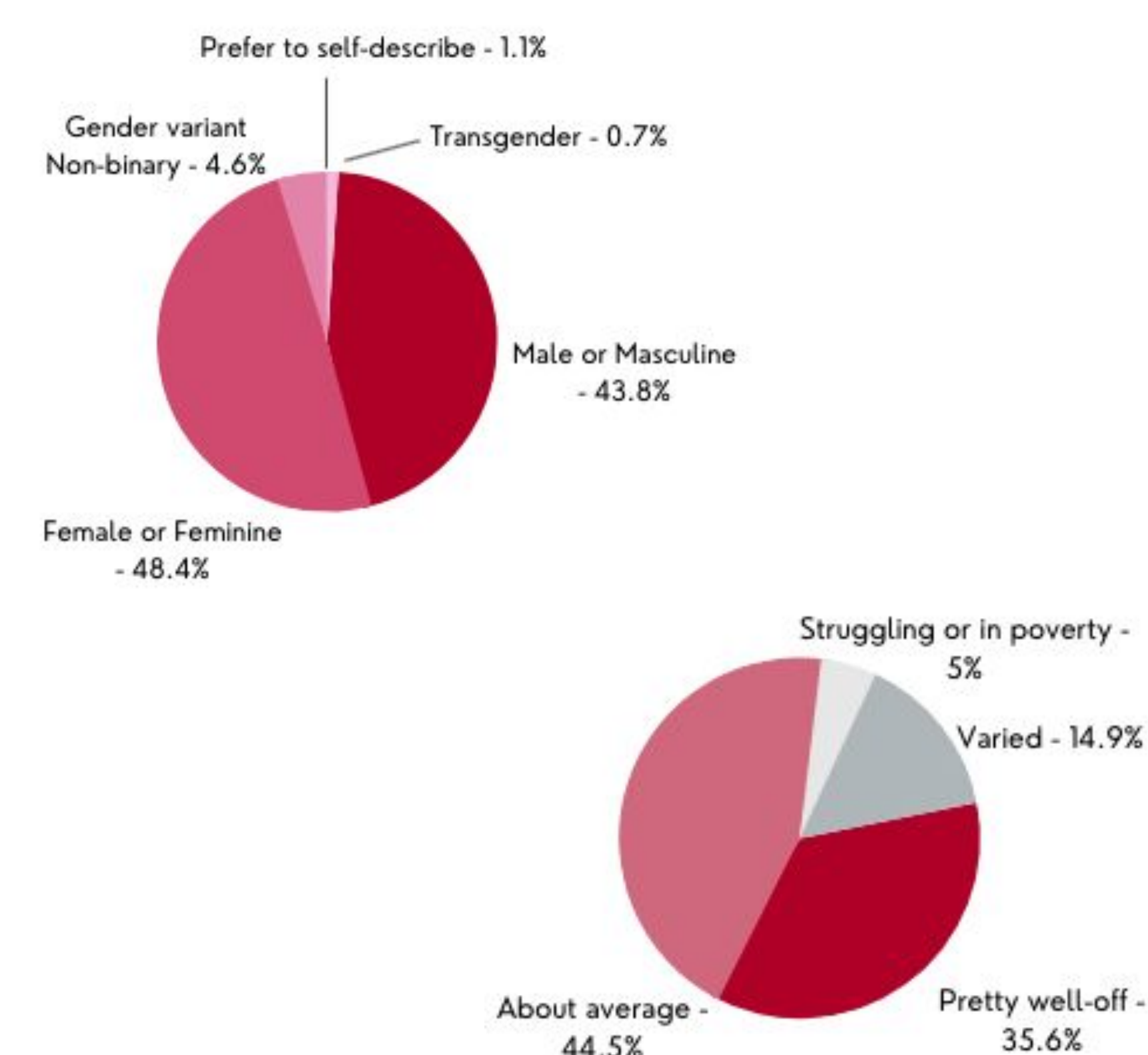
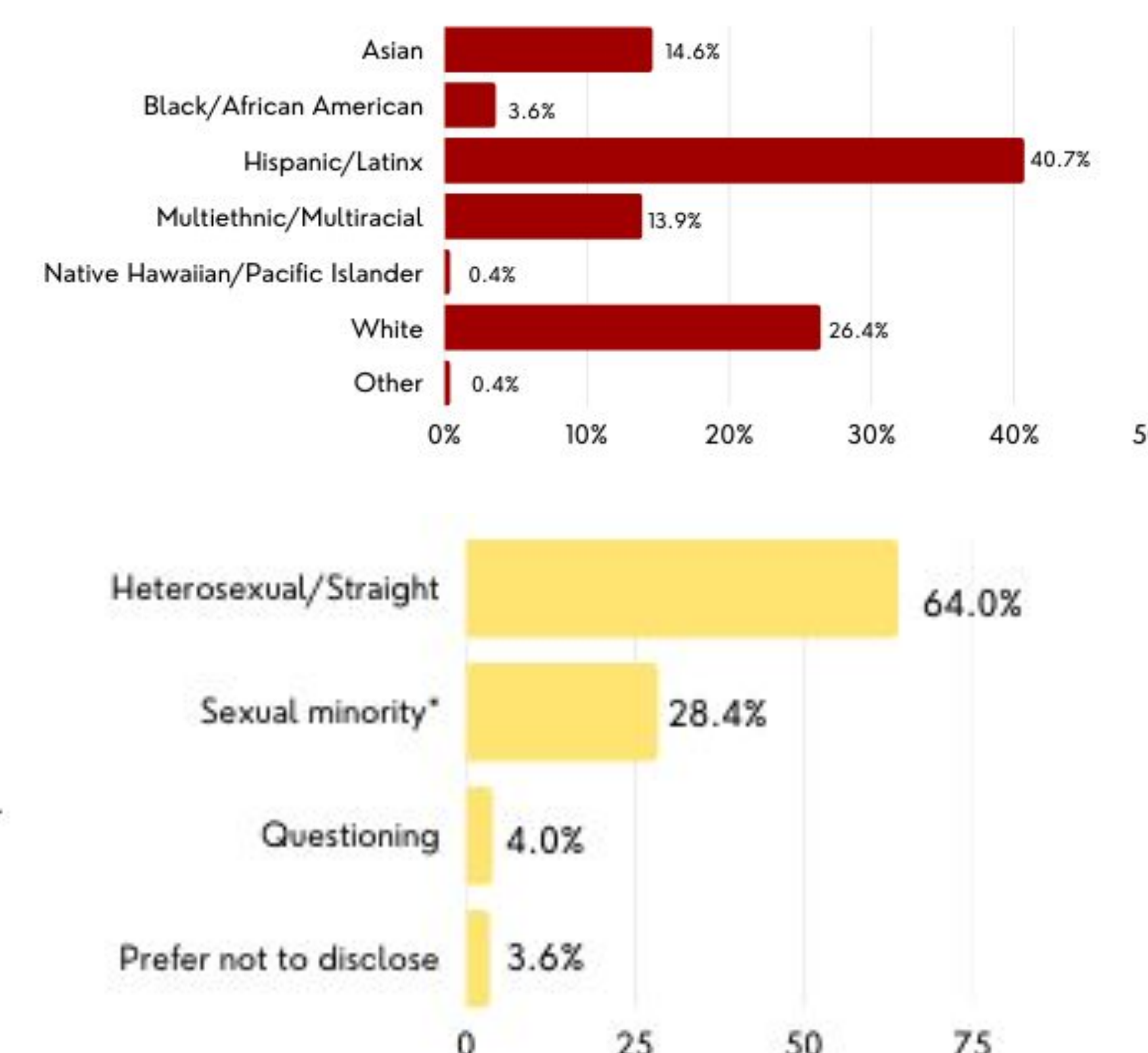
Participants feel academic stress or pressure from...



Students reported concern, stress or worry about...



Demographics

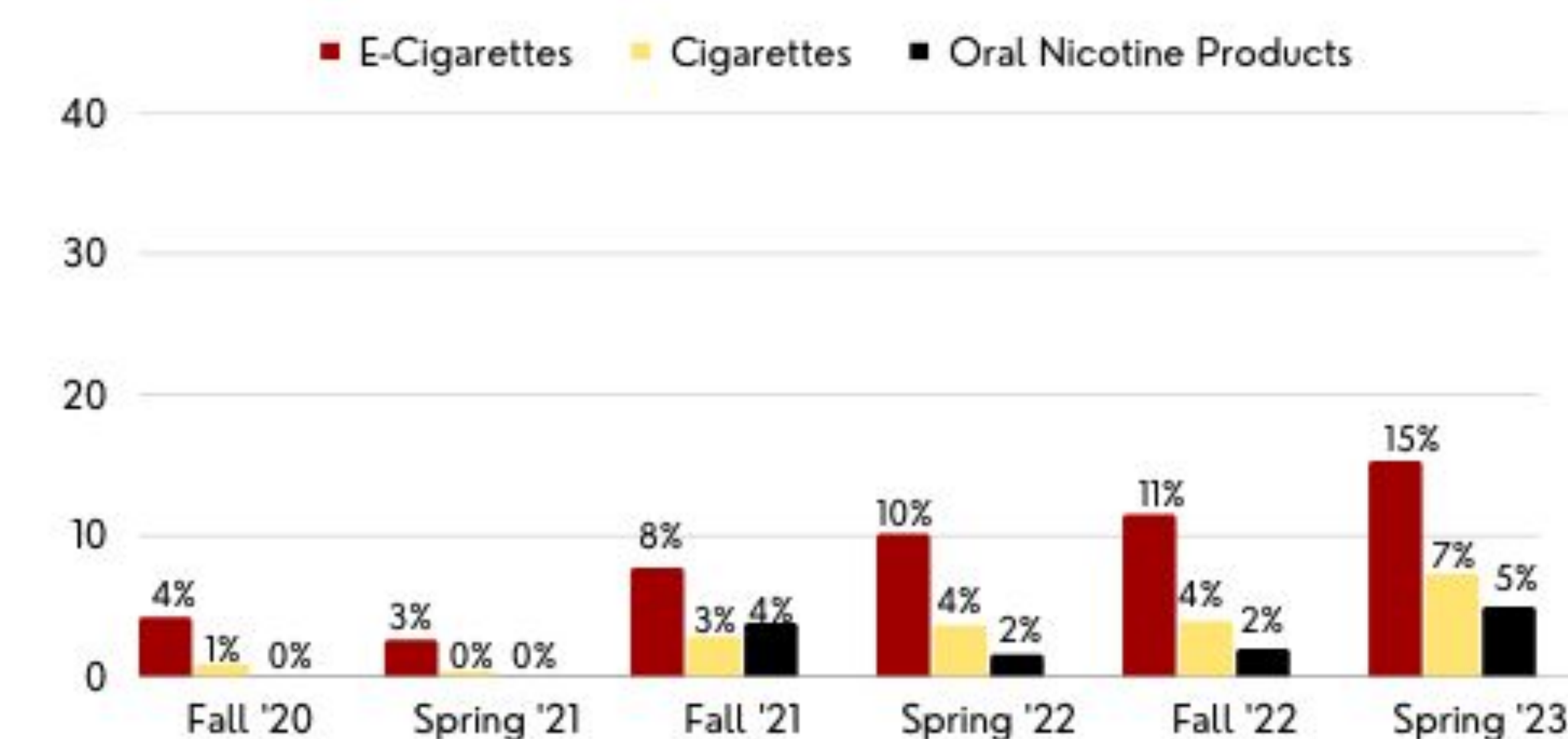


References

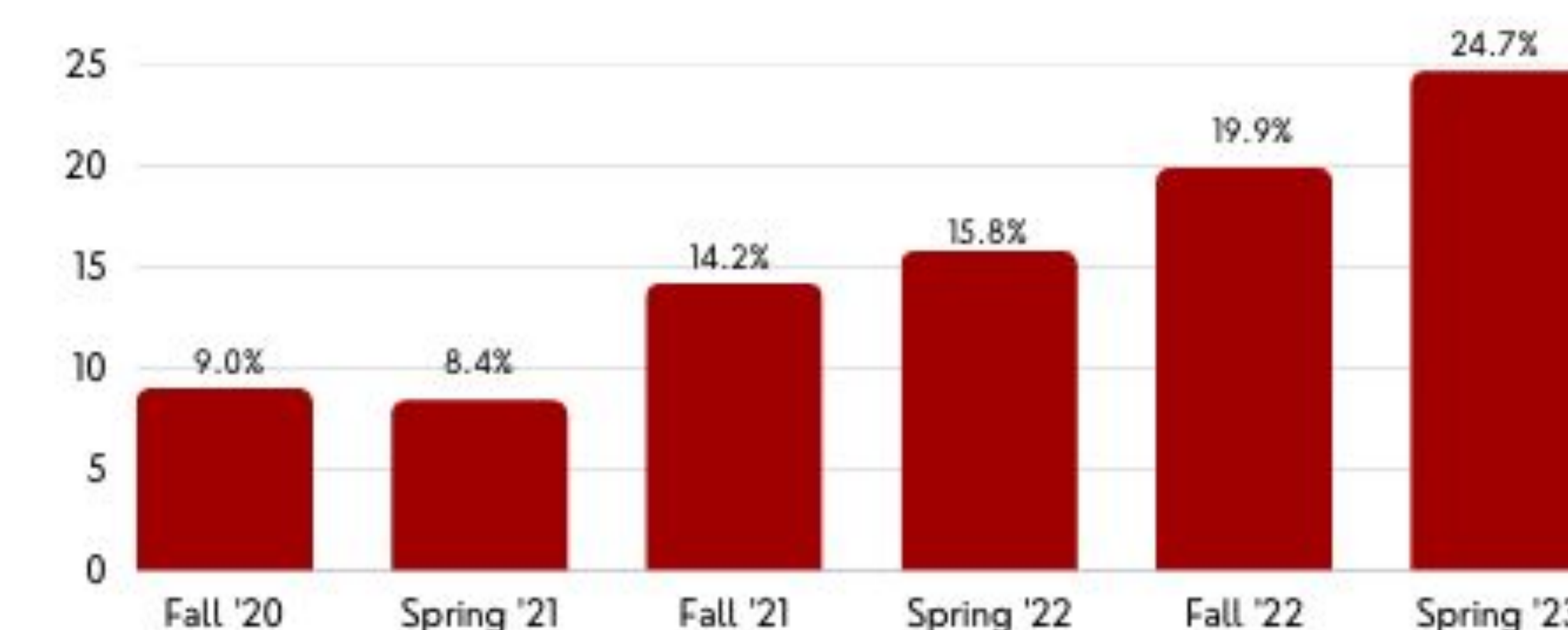
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Results: Substance Use

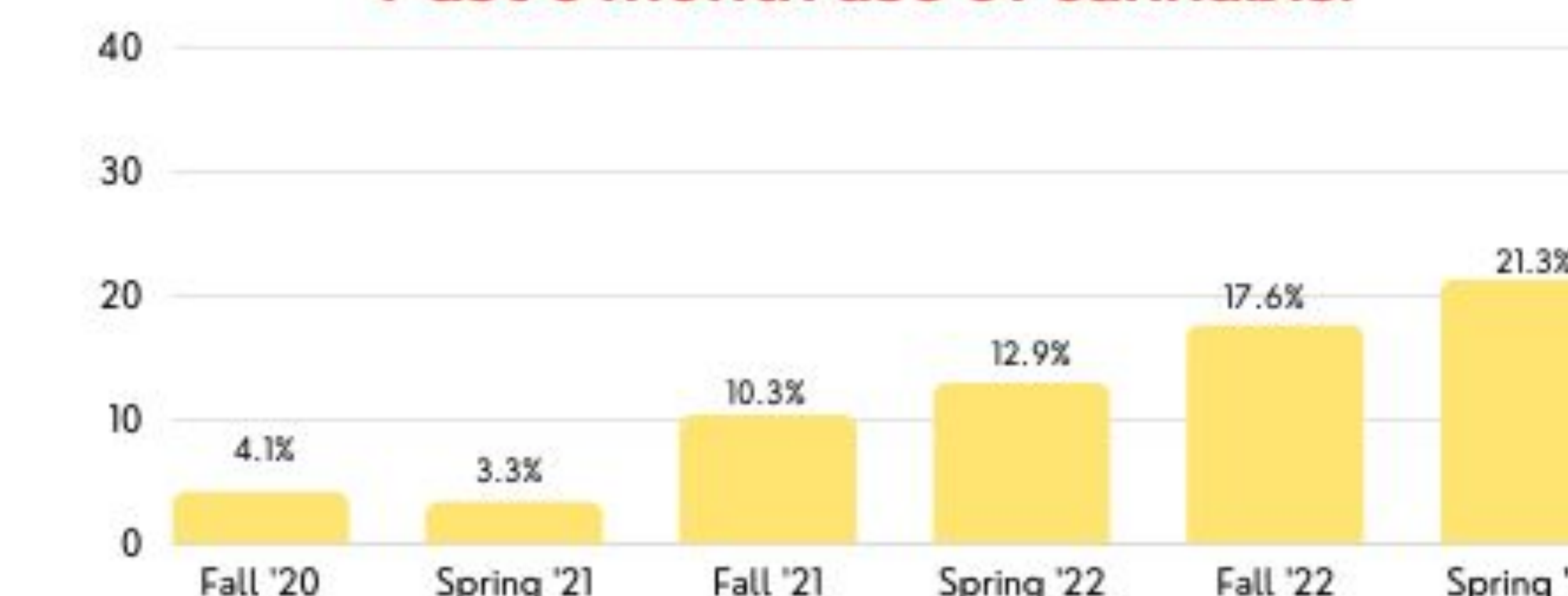
Past 6 month use of...



Past 6 month use alcohol:



Past 6 month use of cannabis:



Summary

- 8-16.2% of students were screened positive for significant levels of anxiety symptoms and 19.9-26.7% was the figure for depression.
- More than a third of students screened positive for significant levels of ADHD and sleep problems.
- 23.9% of students reported seeing a school counselor or psychologist this past year; 15.1% reported seeing a therapist outside of the school setting.
- By Spring 2023, 24.7% of students had drunk alcohol, 21.3% used marijuana, and 15% had used e-cigarettes in the past 6 months.
- Students that identified as a man or a sexual minority were more likely to use cannabis.
- Reported concerns and stress were academic stress, social media, the mental well-being of peers, climate change, shootings or violence in society, and discrimination.

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bridge.usc.edu/bugs