



FLORIDA STATE
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An Examination of Family Cancer and Health Communication among College Students and their Families

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Objectives

1. Discuss topics of avoidance regarding family cancer and health communication.
2. Differentiate which family members college students are comfortable with sharing health and illnesses information.
3. Identify if college students are more comfortable sharing health and illness within or outside of the family.



Cancer and Health Communication in Families





Background-Cancer

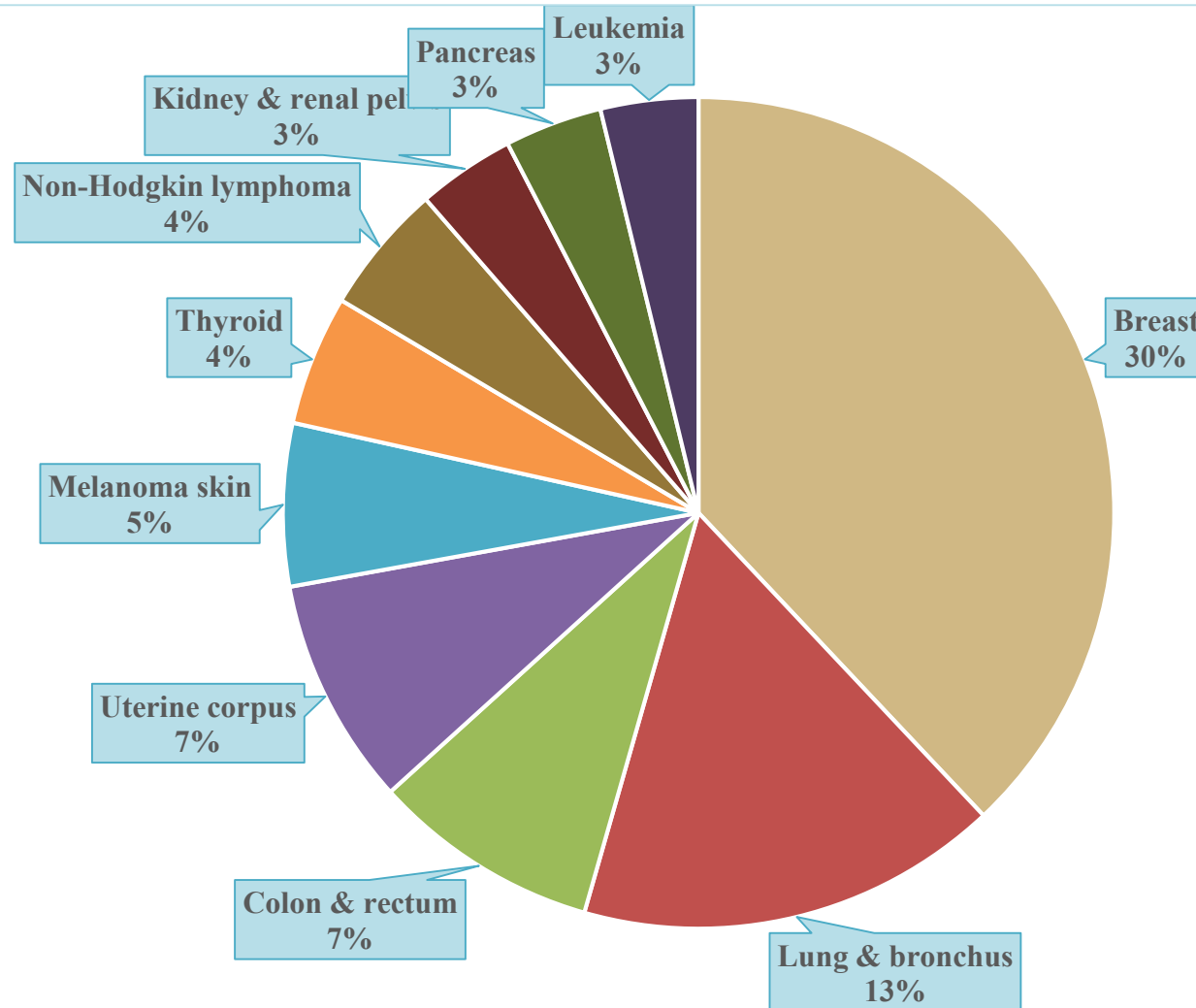
- In the United States, 1 in 3 individuals will be diagnosed with cancer. ¹
- Despite the prevalence of cancer among many populations, there still exists a negative stigma about the illness.
- Stigma, creates barriers among families to discuss the diagnosis, treatment, and or quality of life for individuals living with cancer..





Leading Sites of New Cancer Cases- 2019

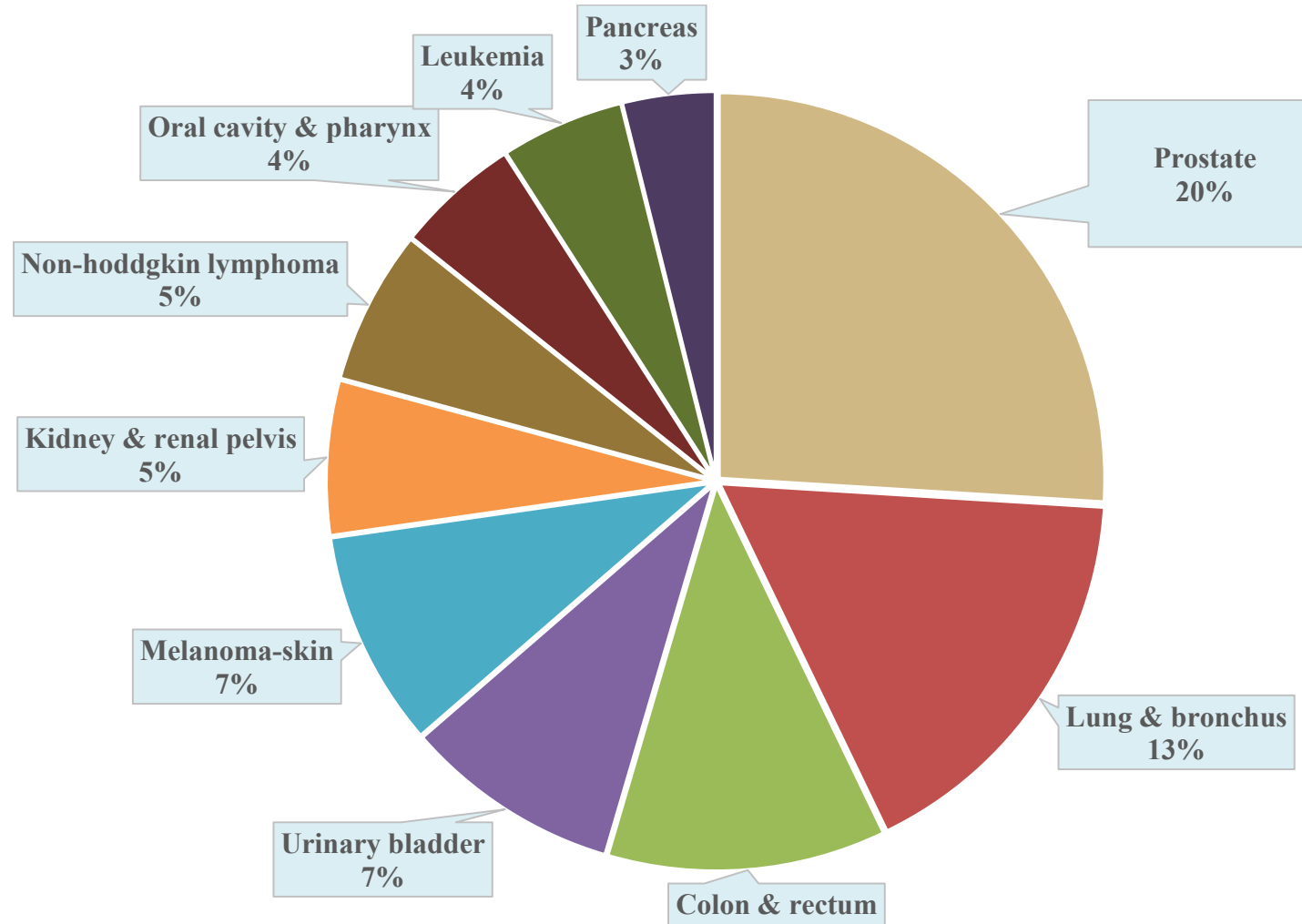
Estimates- Females ²





Leading Sites of New Cancer Cases- 2019

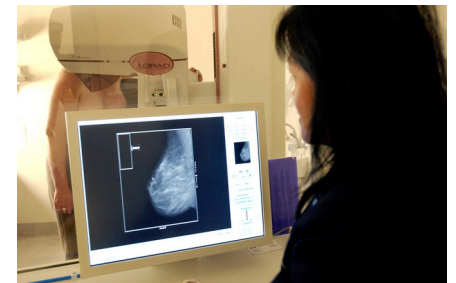
Estimates- Males ²





Background-Cancer

- Early detection and prevention of cancers such as, cervical, lung, and breast cancer, recognized and supported by the American Cancer Society.
 - Healthy People 2020 recognizes early screening and prevention
- Screening affords early detection, before symptoms arise and the cancer has metastasized.
- The role of genetics and the ability to screen for various genes is an increasing pertinent topic.³
- Cancer of the breast, colon, prostate, and ovaries are just a few that are known to have an increased risk of occurring among family members.⁴





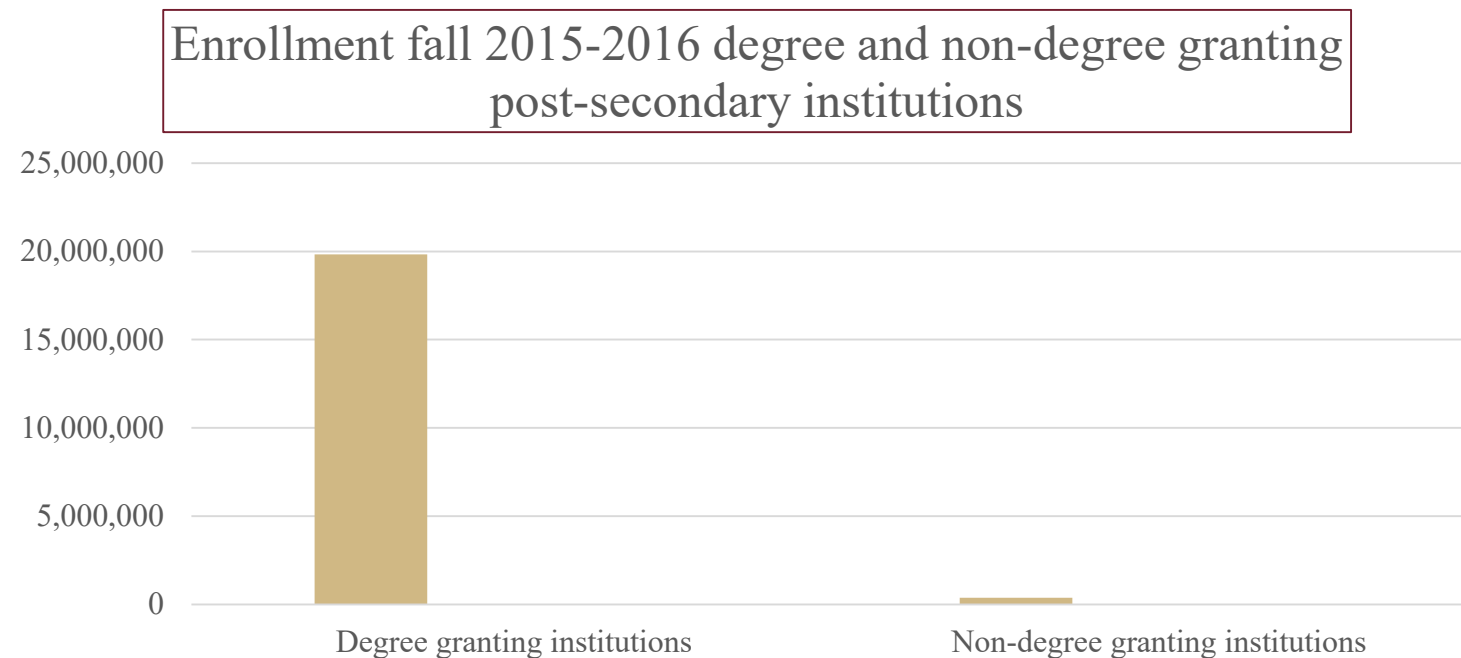
Background-Cancer²

Common Types of Cancer	Estimated New Cases 2019	Estimated Deaths 2019
1. Breast Cancer (Female)	268,600	41,760
2. Lung and Bronchus Cancer	228,150	142,670
3. Prostate Cancer	174,650	31,620
4. Colorectal Cancer	145,600	51,020
5. Melanoma of the Skin	96,480	7,230
6. Bladder Cancer	80,470	17,670
7. Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma	74,200	19,970
8. Kidney and Renal Pelvis Cancer	73,820	14,770
9. Uterine Cancer	61,880	12,160
10. Leukemia	61,780	22,840
-	-	-
Cancer of Any Site	1,762,450	606,880



Background-College Students

- As of fall 2016, there were approximately 20 million undergraduate students enrolled in post-secondary institutions.⁵





Background-Family, Cancer and Health Communication

- Family has a central role for the development of health risk behaviors which could prevent cancer.⁶
- Research indicated communication serves as an integral foundation of the family unit.⁷
- Discussions of health information within families is essential for surveillance of preventable cancer.⁸
- Family is critical within the field of health communication and research focused on cancer prevention.⁹





Background-Family, Cancer and Health Communication

- Family discussions on cancer and health improved college students ^{10,11}
 - skin cancer risk discussions
 - skin cancer screening
 - breast self-screening behaviors
 - testicular self-screening behaviors
- Young adults in college are often undergoing a vital period of time wherein healthy behaviors are established. ¹²



Background-Family, Cancer and Health Communication

- Research implied cancer risk behaviors:
 - increased alcohol consumption
 - tobacco usage
 - unhealthy dietary practices
 - and lack of exercise seemed to be prevalent among college students in the United States. ¹²
- Engagement in the precursors of chronic diseases places college students in a position to make lifestyle changes that can significantly impact their life in subsequent years.





Purpose

To identify topics of cancer and health communication avoidance among college students, within their families, and differentiate which family members or friends the college students are comfortable with sharing health and illnesses information.



Methodology

- Cross-sectional design
- November 2016 to April 2017
- Undergraduate college students at a public university
- Inclusion criteria:
 - currently enrolled full or part-time undergraduate students,
 - 18 years of age and older,
 - able to speak and read English,
 - and access to an electronic device with internet service.



Methodology

Questionnaires:

- Demographics
- Family Cancer and Health Communication Questionnaire (FCHCQ)
- Data Collection:
 - Online platform, Qualtrics
- Statistics:
 - Descriptives, reliability of the FCHCQ



Results

Participant Demographics (N = 327)

Variable	N	%
Sex		
Male	72	22
Female	255	78
Age		
<= 24	318	97.2
>=25	9	2.8
Hispanic or Latino		
Yes	71	21.7
No	256	78.3
Race		
White	266	81.3
Black or African American	35	10.7
Asian	19	5.8
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	4	1.2
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	0.9



Results

Family Cancer and Health Communication Item Characteristics (N = 327)

Item	N	M	SD	Item-total correlation
1. In my family, we can openly talk about health issues	327	4.34	0.94	0.54
2. My family does not talk about health-related issues with people outside the family	327	3.21	1.15	0.39
3. I would feel comfortable talking to my family about a diagnosis of cancer	327	4.24	0.97	0.45



Results

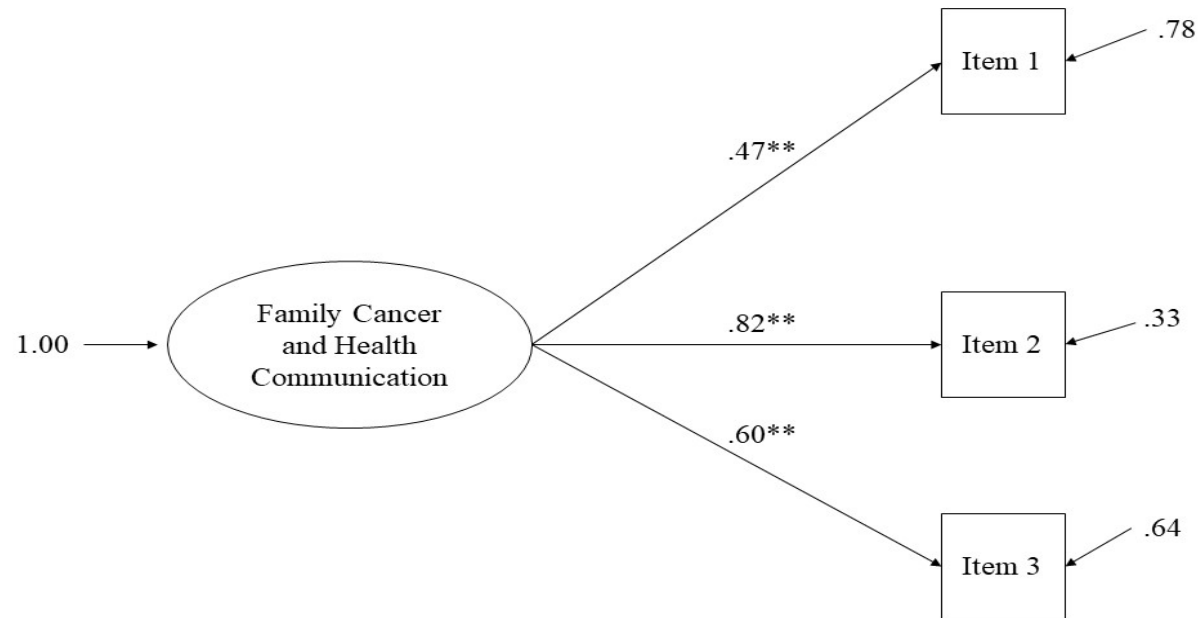
Item Statistics for Cancer Perception

Item	Mode	Median	M	SD
I do not feel comfortable being around an individual with cancer	5=strongly disagree(42%)	4	4.07	1.08
Individuals with cancer usually have a decreased quality of life	2=Agree (48%)	2	2.66	1.16
When I think of cancer, I think of death	2=Agree (48%)	2	2.63	1.11
Individuals with cancer often have pain and feel depressed	2=Agree (54%)	2	2.32	0.91



Results

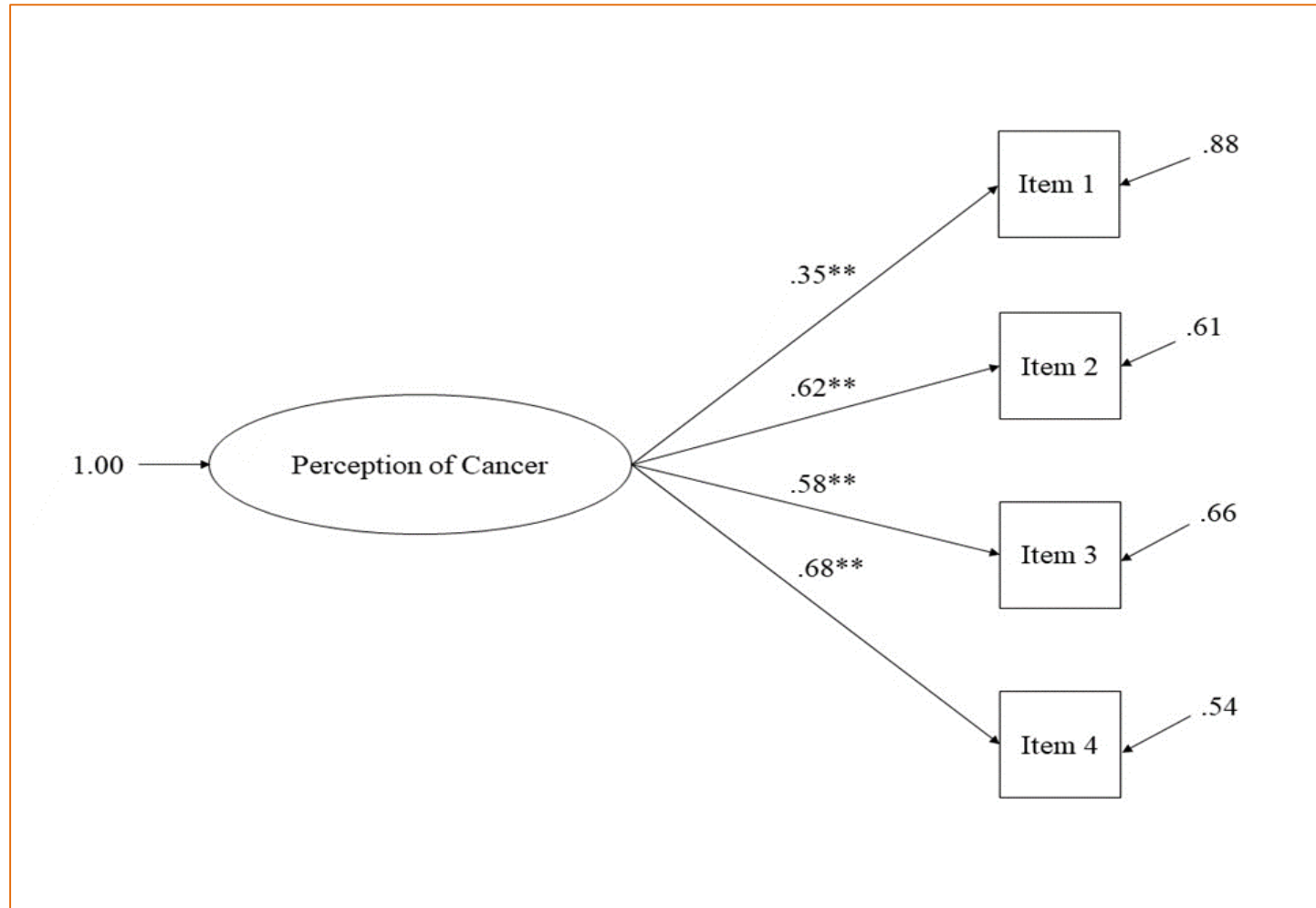
CFA Model for Family Cancer and Health Communication Items





Results

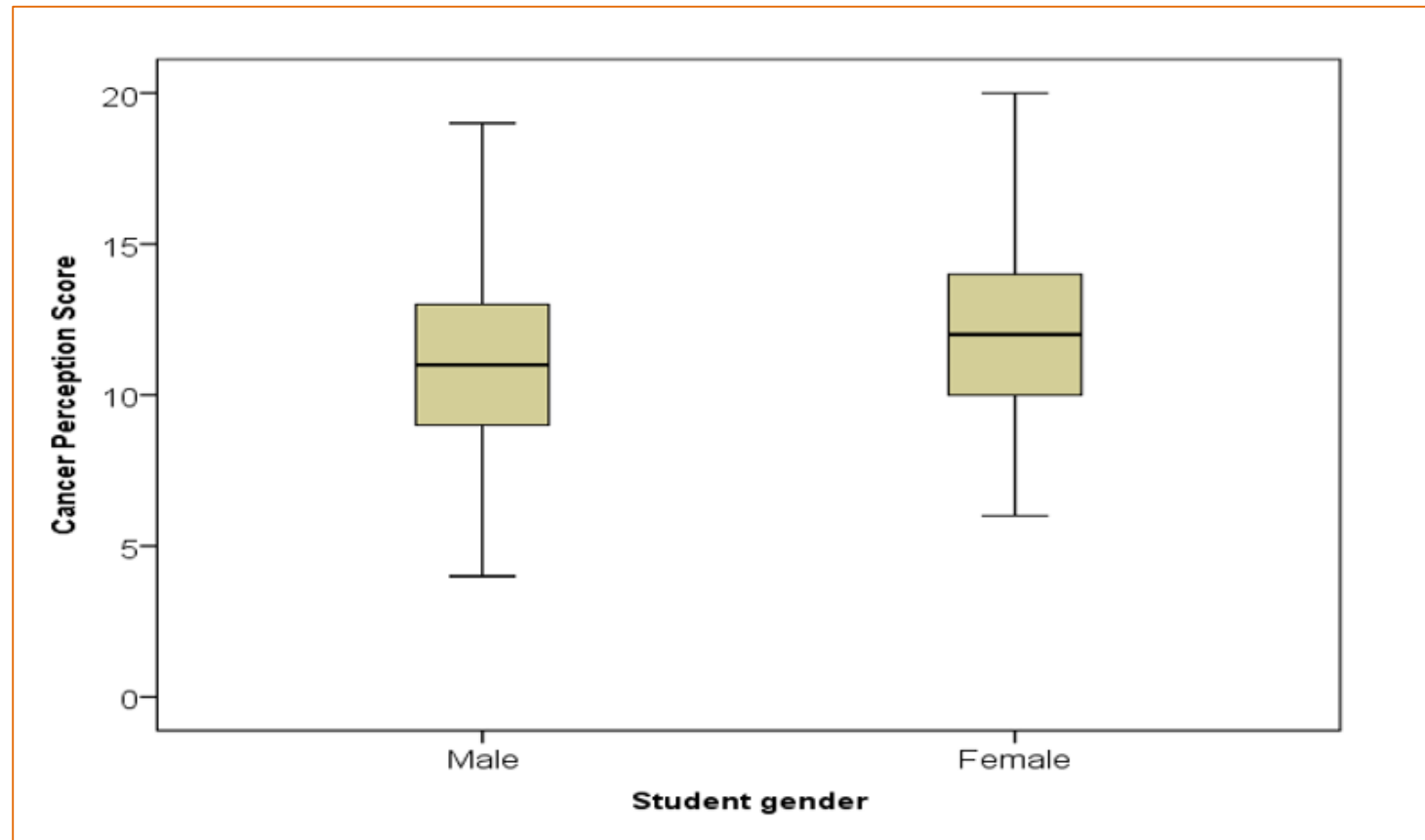
One-factor CFA Model for Perception of Cancer Items





Results

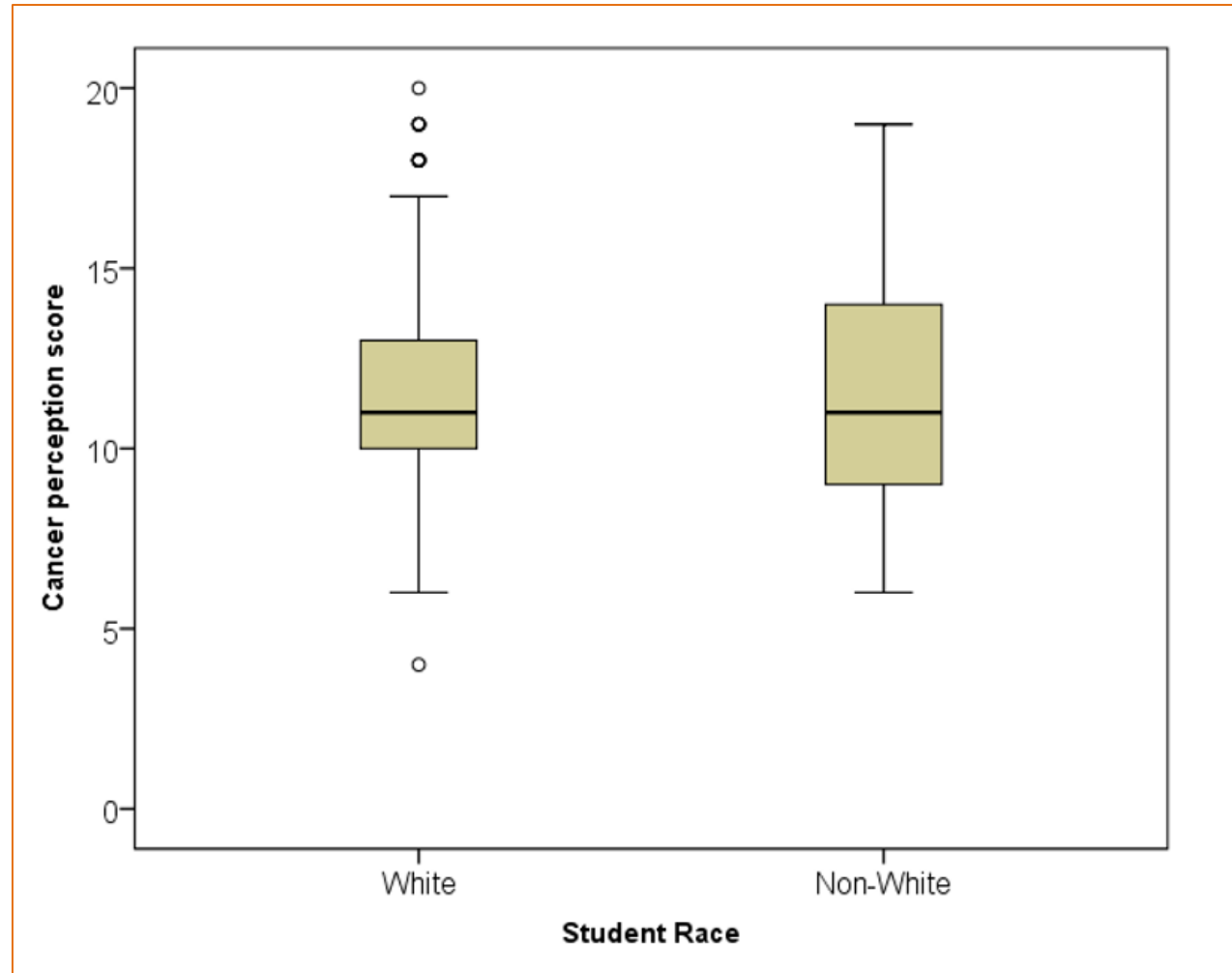
Cancer Perception scores- Gender





Results

Cancer Perception Scores- Race





Results

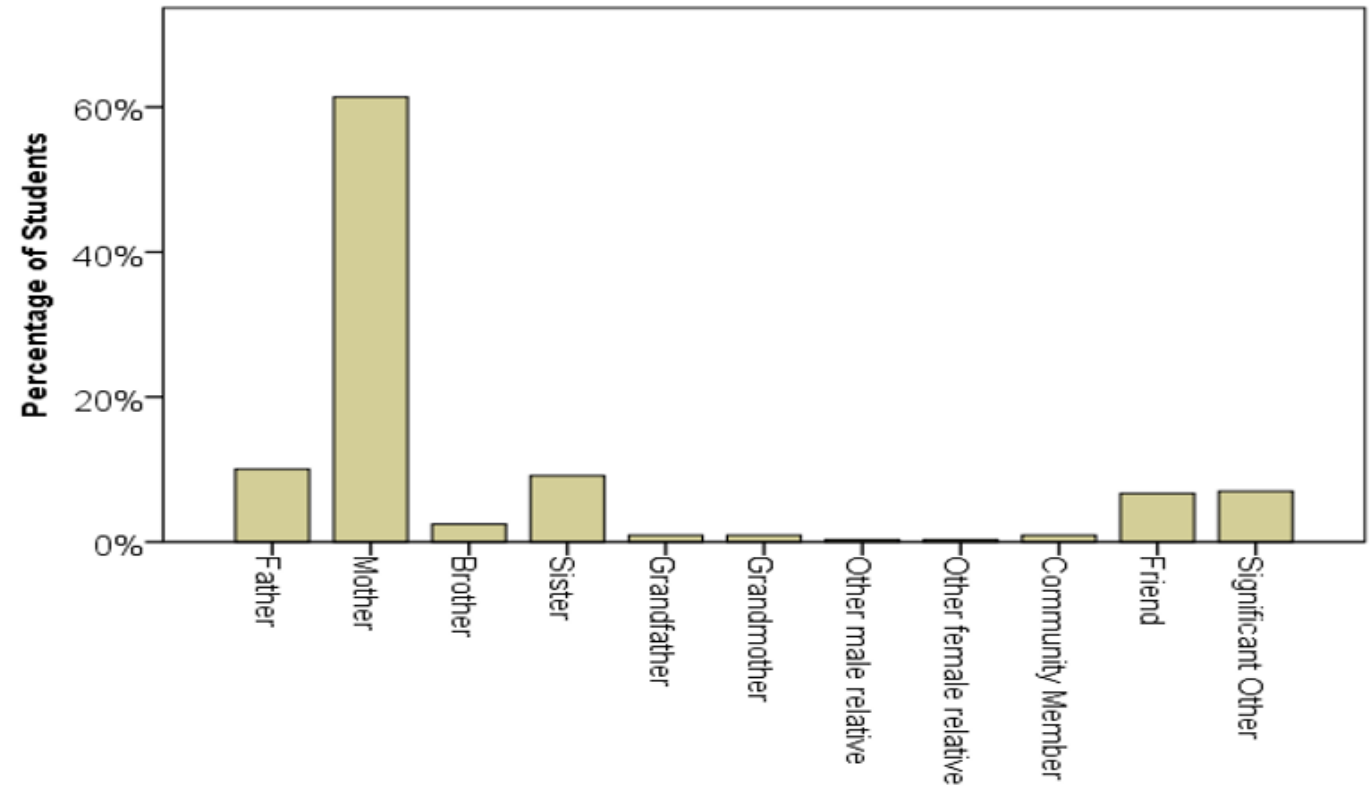
Topics of Avoidance within Families of College Students

Topics of avoidance in the family	Responses	Percent of Cases
Death	67	20%
Illness/Sickness	32	10%
Sex	216	66%
Marriage	38	12%
Relationships	58	18%
Homosexuality	102	31%
Money/Finances	94	29%



Results

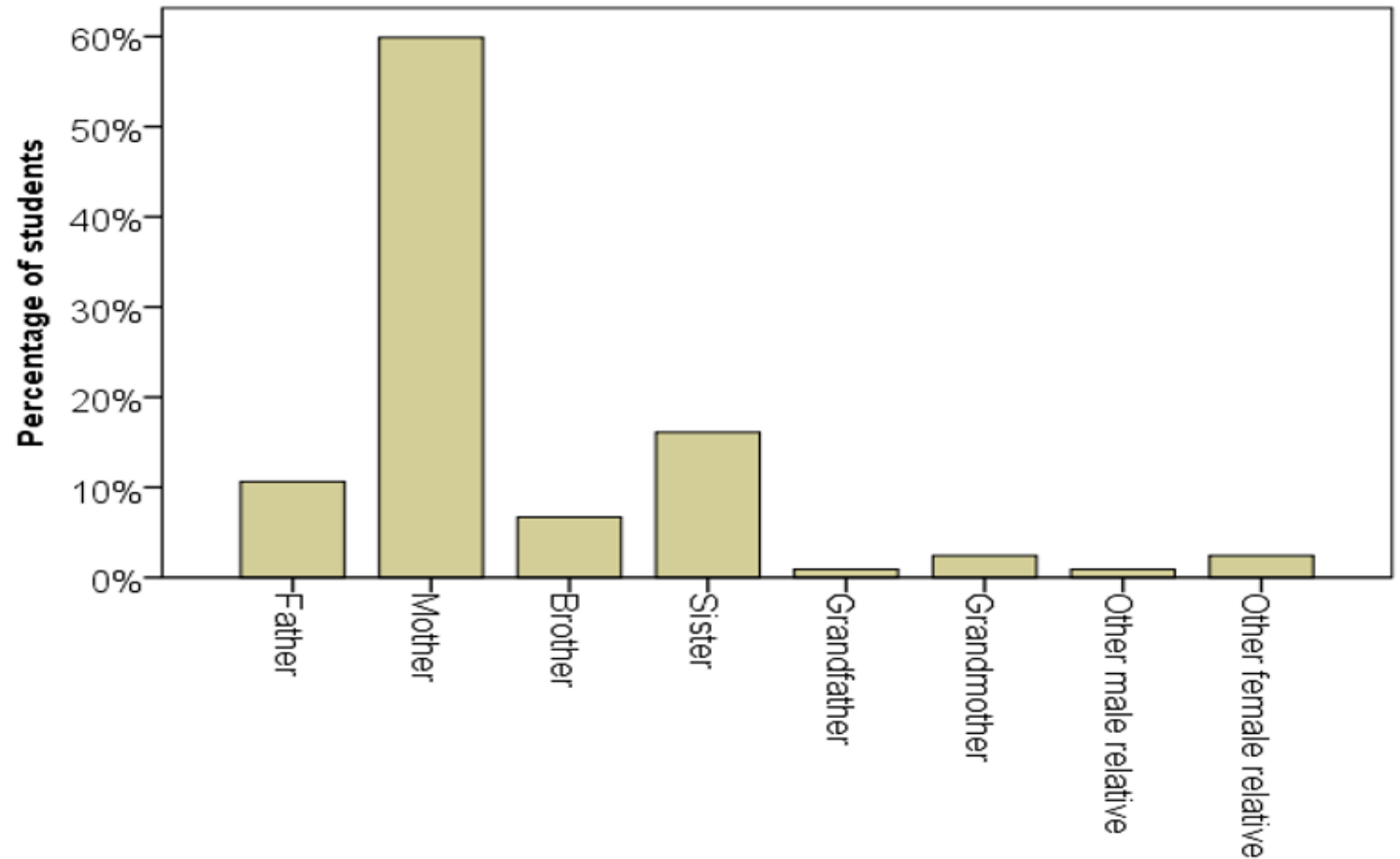
Comfort with Discussing Health Related Issues/Diseases with Family and Friends





Results

Comfort with Discussing Health Related Issues/Diseases with Family Members





Conclusion

- Topics of avoidance centered on sex, sexuality, and financial matters.
- Females, (mothers and sisters) were viewed as most comfortable to discuss health and illness issues.
- Families with a history of cancer provide an avenue for discussing cancer and cancer risk in the family. ⁶
- Previous research posits, cancer education among college students can be a method to promote a desire for lifelong learning about cancer and the promotion of preventive behaviors and screening among young adults. ¹³



Limitations

- Homogenous sample
 - mostly female 78%
 - White 81%
- One university for sample
- New questionnaire



Future Directions

- Revision of the FCHCQ
 - Additional questions
 - Include section on family history
 - Implement at multiple universities
- Qualitative methodology
- Interventions to promote and increase discussions on cancer, general health, and illness within families.



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