



Background



- Patient initiation for routine checkups at preventative healthcare services are underutilized among college students¹
- Only **34.7%** of young adults sought out **eye care** and **58.4%** visited a **dentist** in the **past 6-12 months**^{2,3}
- Only **32%** visit college health care centers due to health beliefs and barriers⁴
- **11.4% - 29.4%** increase in **uncontrolled hypertension** in young adults from 2015 to 2018⁵
- The **Health Belief Model** links **health perceptions** and **perceived barriers** as determinants for visiting preventative health services⁶
- Current literature does not address the **attitudes towards eye and dental preventative care** and **frequencies of those visits**

Objective



To determine the relationship between **students' perceptions towards preventative health care** (primary, dental, eye care) and the **frequencies of how often students seek out preventative health care services**

Methods



- Cross-sectional study targeting undergraduate and graduate students at UC San Diego (N = 75)
- **Snowball sampling** (text messages) and **convenience sampling** (social media: reaching out to student organizations via Instagram)
- **27-item anonymous Qualtrics survey** measuring:
 - Demographics, Beliefs and Visitation (General Wellness, Dental, Vision), Barriers to Care
- **Exposure Variables:** Perception on importance of preventative health care/services
 - Composite scores from **4-point Likert scales** ranging 1-4 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)
 - Scores ranged from 4 to 16 points
- **Outcome Variable:** Frequency of Preventative Service Visitation
 - Categories based on number of visitation: 0 - 5+ times
- **SPSS v.29** was used to conduct **Ordinal Logistic Regression** and **Pearson Correlations**

Results

Table 1. Demographics of Study Participants (N = 75)

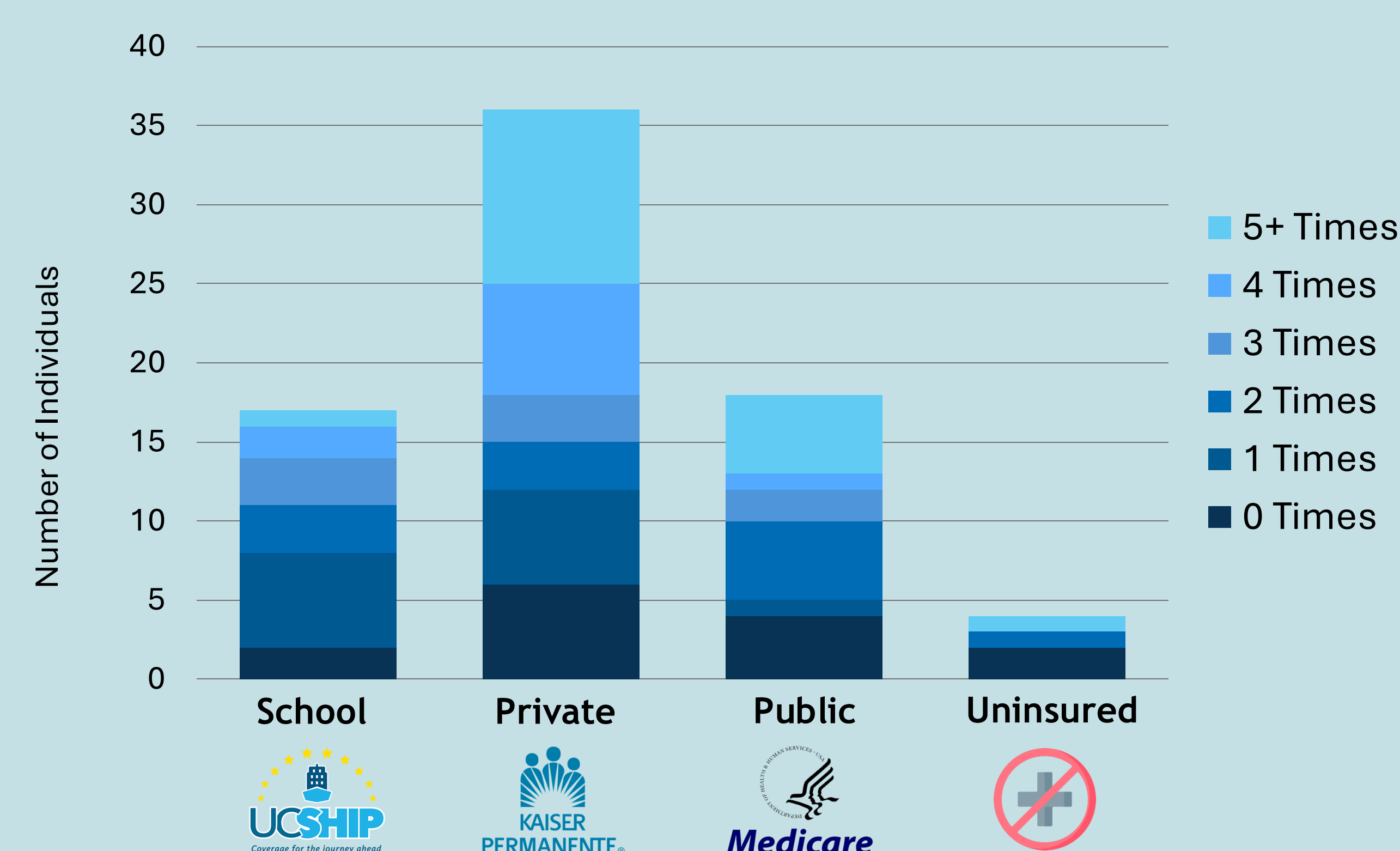
Sample Demographics	n (%)
Gender	
Female	52 (69)
Male	21 (28)
Non-Binary	2 (3)
Ethnicity	
Asian	51 (68)
Hispanic or Latino	11 (15)
Other (Mixed or Unlisted)	8 (11)
White	5 (6)
College Year	
1st year (Freshman)	9 (12)
2nd year (Sophomore)	15 (20)
3rd year (Junior/1st Year Transfer)	16 (21)
4th year+ (Senior/ 2nd Year Transfer)	27 (36)
Graduate	8 (11)
Housing Status	
Off-Campus	41 (55)
On-Campus	34 (45)
Insurance Types	
Private	36 (48)
Public	18 (24)
School	17 (23)
Uninsured	4 (5)

Table 2: Ordinal Logistic Regression for Association between Perception Score and Frequency of Visitation

Type of Health Service Sought	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
General Wellness	OR = 0.62	[0.11, 3.69]	p = 0.602
Dental Care	OR = 0.61	[0.26, 1.41]	p = 0.246
*Eye Care	OR = 0.17	[0.06, 0.50]	p = 0.001

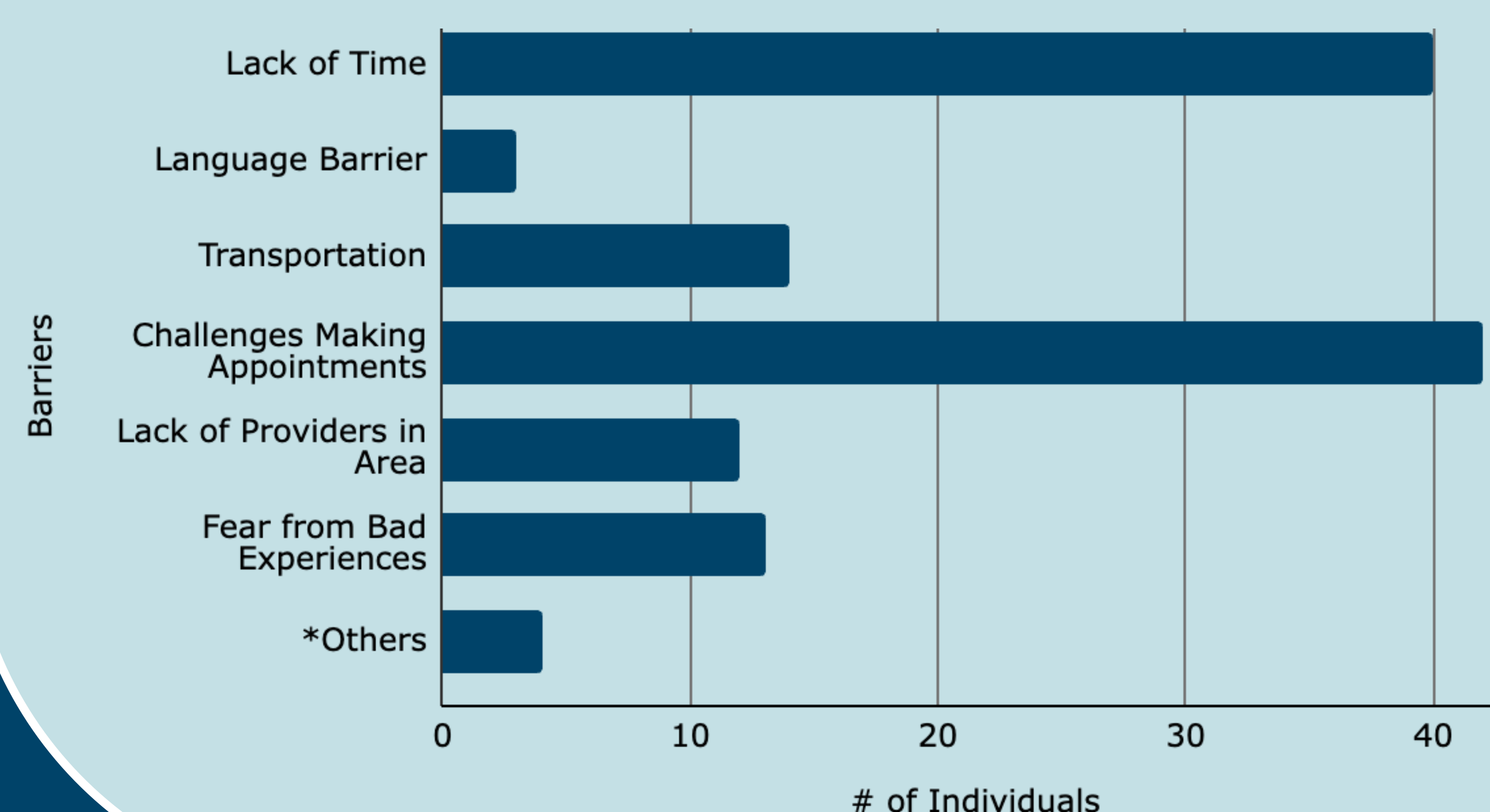
*Individuals with lower perception scores of preventative eye care had significantly lower odds of being in a higher category of eye care visitation frequency compared to those with higher perception scores.

Figure 1. Frequencies of Preventative Eye Care Visitations in the past 5 Years and Insurance Type



*Pearson Chi-Square test [$\chi^2(15, N = 75) = 18.016, p = 0.262$] showed no statistical significance was observed between insurance type and frequency of preventative eye care visitation.

Figure 2. Different Barriers to Accessing Preventative Health Services



Additional Findings

- 1 **77% of participants reported 1 or more barriers** to accessing preventative health services.
- 2 Other perceived barriers include:
 - Trouble with payment
 - Being away from home
 - Not prioritizing seeking health services
 - Having no insurance
- 3 Individuals with **private insurance** have **more preventative eye care** visitation compared to other insurance types

Conclusions



- Student's perception of preventative eye care services was a **significant predictor** for frequency of **eye-related** preventative care visitation, supporting the link between attitude and action for eye care
- **No association** between perception of **general wellness/dental care** and frequency of visitation
 - Stronger emphasis on **general wellness and dental** for school requirements (e.g. required vaccinations, etc.) → higher utilization regardless of perception score
- **Eye care** was found to be **underutilized**, aligning with previous findings²
 - Not generally thought to be part of routine of care compared to general wellness and dental, utilized mainly when **acute symptoms arise**
- **Type of insurance** is **not associated** with how frequently students seek out preventative eye care services
- Top two reported barriers were **challenges to booking appointments** and a **lack of time to seek care**, aligns with existing literature⁶
 - **Common perceived barriers** under the Health Belief Model included **difficulties in scheduling preventative services** and **availability of seeking treatment**

Policy Implications



- Student Health Services should further develop:
 - Marketing strategies to **emphasize eye care** (e.g., distribution of educational infographics and social media posts)
 - **Expansion of health care hours and accessibility** of online scheduling services for on-campus student health
 - Host **pop-up clinics around campus residential areas** to incentivize students to seek **convenient care** (e.g. graduate housing)

Acknowledgments & References

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