

Background

- **Health literacy** is the ability to access, understand, and apply health information to make informed health decisions¹
- **Reproductive health knowledge** is the understanding of physical, mental, and social aspects related to the reproductive system, including its functions and processes²
- **Racial/ethnic disparities** show White and non-Hispanic groups have higher reproductive health knowledge than Black and Hispanic groups^{3,4}
- Low health literacy is tied to low reproductive knowledge, difficulty using contraception, and a higher risk for STIs^{5,6}
- Research on female reproductive health knowledge, particularly among American undergraduates and minority student populations, is limited^{3,6,7,8}

Objective

To examine the associations between sociodemographic factors and literacy status regarding female reproductive health among female undergraduate students at UCSD

Methods

- **Descriptive, cross-sectional study** conducted between April-May 2025
- **22-item anonymous, online survey** via Qualtrics
- Study sample included only female undergraduate students at UCSD (N=140) recruited through convenience sampling, online and in-person outreach
 - **Exposure Variables:** Sociodemographic factors (gender identity, race/ethnicity and age)
 - **Outcome Variable:** Female reproductive health literacy measured by a 15-item scale, *Knowledge of the Female Body* (KFB)
- **KFB Scale:** Out of 26 possible points, 1 point is awarded for each correct response. Some have multiple correct responses
 - Low knowledge scores= 0-17 and high knowledge= 18-26
 - Scores were determined based on expert evaluation and existing literature on knowledge of female reproduction⁶
- SPSS v29 was used to perform a One-Way ANOVA on KFB scores by racial groups and Fisher's Exact Test for age and reproductive health knowledge level associations

Results

Table 1. Demographics of Survey Respondents (N=140)

Age (Years)	Mean (SD)
	20.3 (1.5)
Ethnicity	n
Not Hispanic or Latinx/Latine	85 (61%)
Hispanic or Latinx/Latine	55 (39%)
Race	
White Caucasian	58 (41%)
Asian	34 (24%)
Latinx/Other Hispanic Origin	18 (13%)
American Indian/Alaska Native	4 (3%)
Middle Eastern/North African	3 (2%)
Black/African American	1 (<1%)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1 (<1%)
Multiracial	21 (15%)
Gender Identity	
Cisgender Woman	134 (96%)
Non-binary/Queer	5 (4%)
Transgender Woman	1 (<1%)
Academic Year	
1st year	20 (14%)
2nd year	29 (21%)
3rd year	32 (23%)
4th year	54 (39%)
5th year	5 (4%)

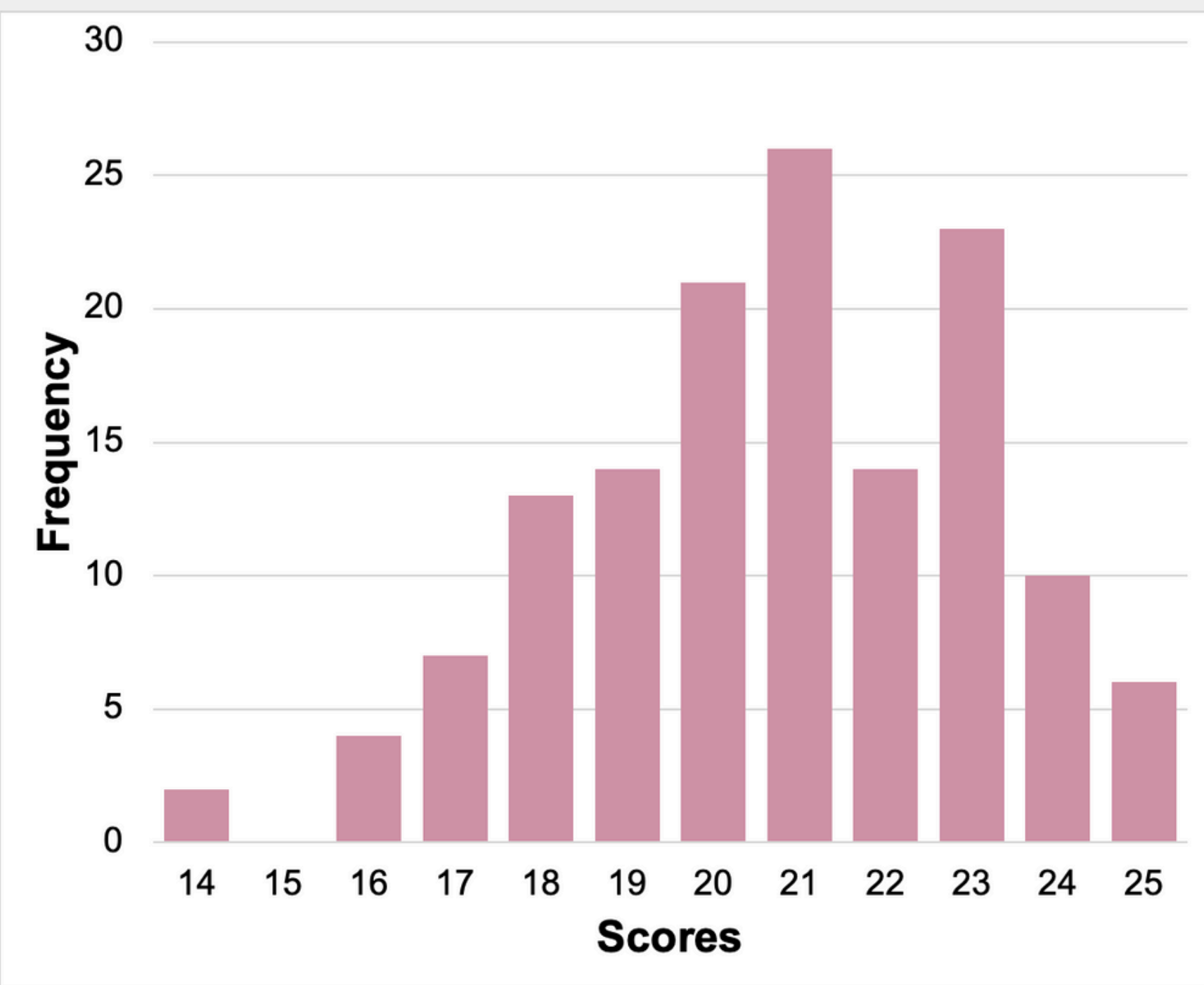
Table 2. Comparison of Means of Reproductive Health Knowledge Scores by Racial Group

Racial Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
American Indian/Alaska Native	22.75	2.63
Asian	20.29	2.34
Black/African American	21	
Middle Eastern/North African	22	2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	24	
White/Caucasian	20.81	2.44
Latinx/Other Hispanic Origin	19.78	2.29
Multiracial	21.38	2.06

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in female reproductive health scores across racial groups:

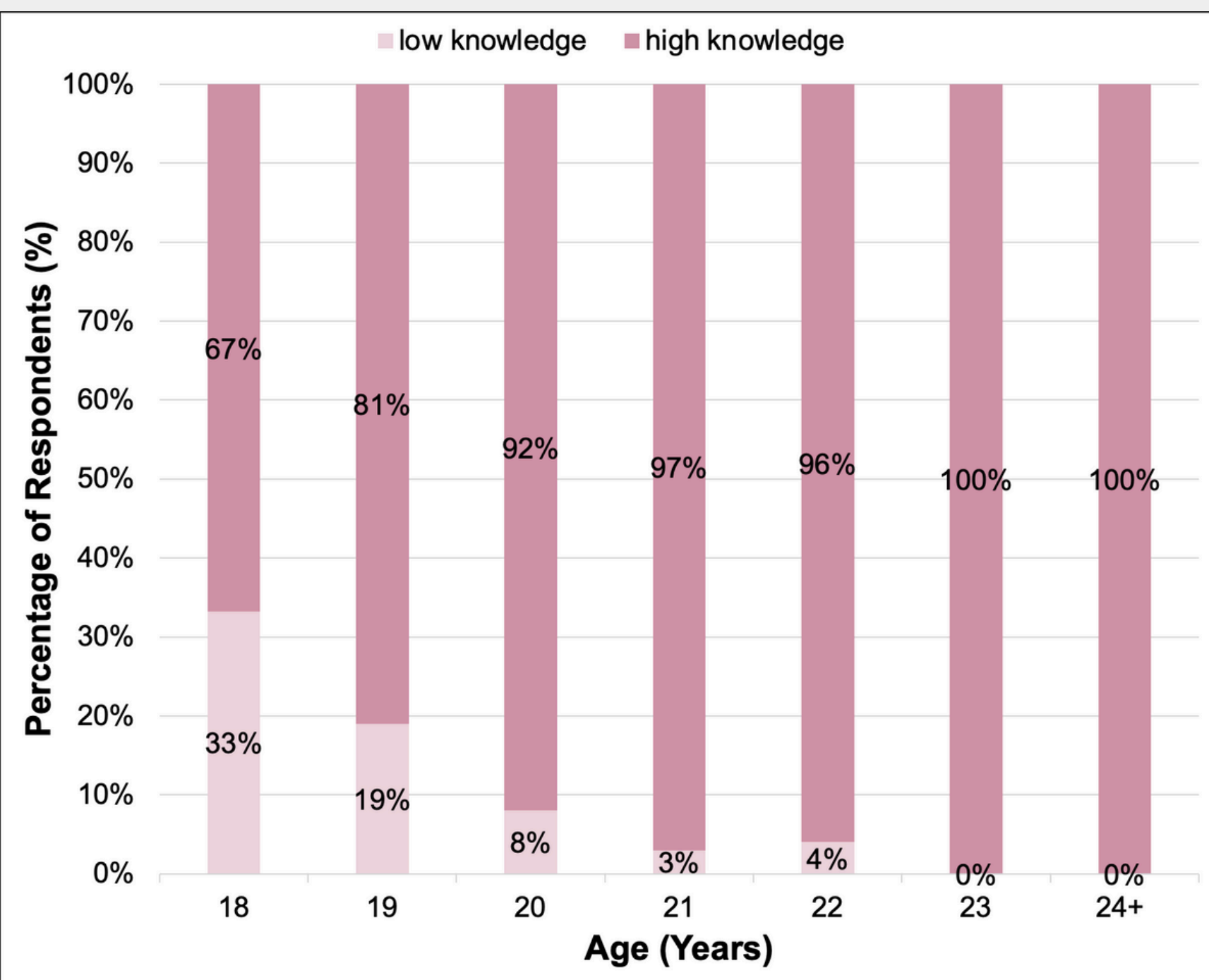
- F-statistic = 1.669
- p-value = 0.122
- **No significant differences** were found between groups

Figure 1. Distribution of Reproductive Health Knowledge Scores



Scores ranged from 14 to 25 points with a mean of 20.74 and a standard deviation of 2.379 (Figure 1).

Figure 2. Proportion of Low versus High Reproductive Health Knowledge by Age



Although the lower classmen were less knowledgeable, the Fisher's exact test indicated **no statistically significant association** between age and knowledge level ($p = 0.055$).

Conclusions

- Most female undergraduate respondents at UCSD have high reproductive health literacy, indicating that health literacy may improve with higher levels of education⁹
- While reproductive health knowledge isn't directly correlated with differences in age or racial group
 - Lower class men were found to be less knowledgeable about reproductive health, perhaps because they cannot effectively apply their reproductive health literacy
 - Students who identified as Latinx/Other Hispanic Origin scored the lowest on the KFB scale, which may reflect underlying differences as a result of cultural factors
 - Previous studies reported disparities in reproductive health knowledge, indicating the need to explore other factors contributing to reproductive health literacy gaps among female undergraduate students^{3,4}
- Study Limitations
 - Due to a non-probability sampling design, study findings are not generalizable to female students
 - Responses may be inaccurate as a result of social desirability and attentional bias

Policy Implications

- Student Health Services, SHS, could hold quarterly workshops to help students apply health literacy in practical ways, such as understanding contraceptive options
- The Office of the Chancellor could increase funding for campus resources, including SHS, to improve access to affordable reproductive health care products

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References

