

Introduction

- Depression is a mental health illness where symptoms can include: loss of interest in certain activities, sadness, and suicidal thoughts or actions.
- Depression can also intervene with a student's academic performance and their ability to create a social circle.
- College students experience mental health burdens as they transition to adulthood, while experiencing changes such as academic pressure, new found autonomy, and building new relationships.
- Young adults tend to feel shame around their feelings of loneliness causing them to develop internal stigma.
- Loneliness may put students at higher rates of depression which could impact the overall well-being of students.

Objectives

- To determine the association between feelings of loneliness and symptoms of depression among UC San Diego undergraduate students.

Methods

- We conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the association between feelings of loneliness and symptoms of depression.
- We conducted an anonymous online survey among undergraduate college students and shared the survey link through several social media platforms.
- The online Google form questionnaire was distributed to UC San Diego undergraduate students from January to February 2024 and got a total of 87 respondents. (n = 87).
- Fisher's exact chi-squared tests were conducted using SPSS.

Results

Table 1. Student Demographics (N=87)

Sex	
Female	75 (86%)
Male	12 (14%)
Race	
White	23 (27%)
Black or African American	1(1%)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3(4%)
Asian	18(21%)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1(1%)
Hispanic/ Latino	39 (45%)
Other	2 (2%)
Current year in College	
Undergraduate 1st	17 (20%)
Undergraduate 2nd	20 (23%)
Undergraduate 3rd	15 (17%)
Undergraduate 4th	(37%)
Undergraduate 5th or more	3 (3%)
First- generation status	
First-generation	58 (67%)

Figure 1. Student answers to how often they think college students feel down, depressed, or hopeless.

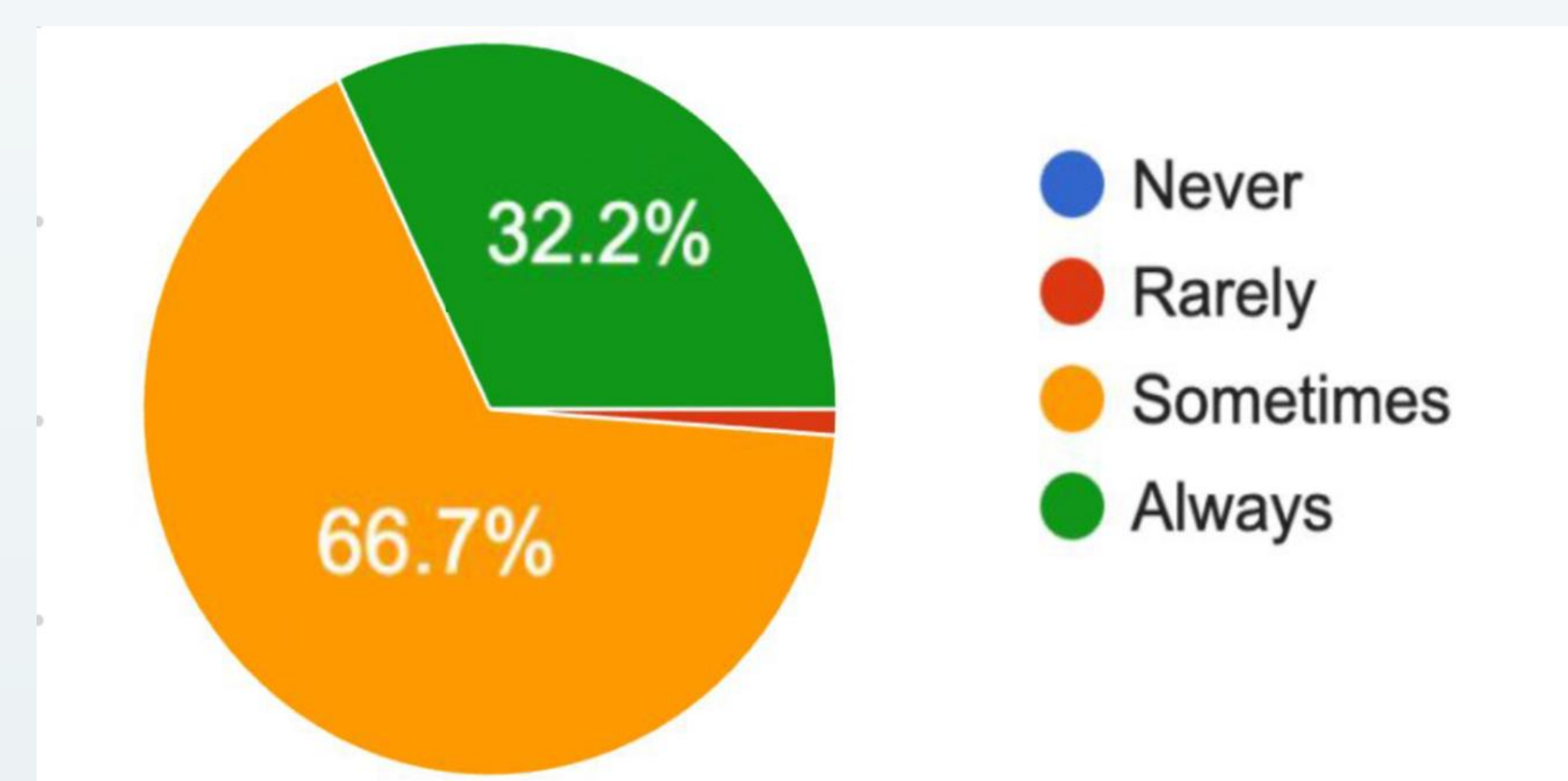


Figure 2. How often do you think college students feel isolated or disconnected from their peers?

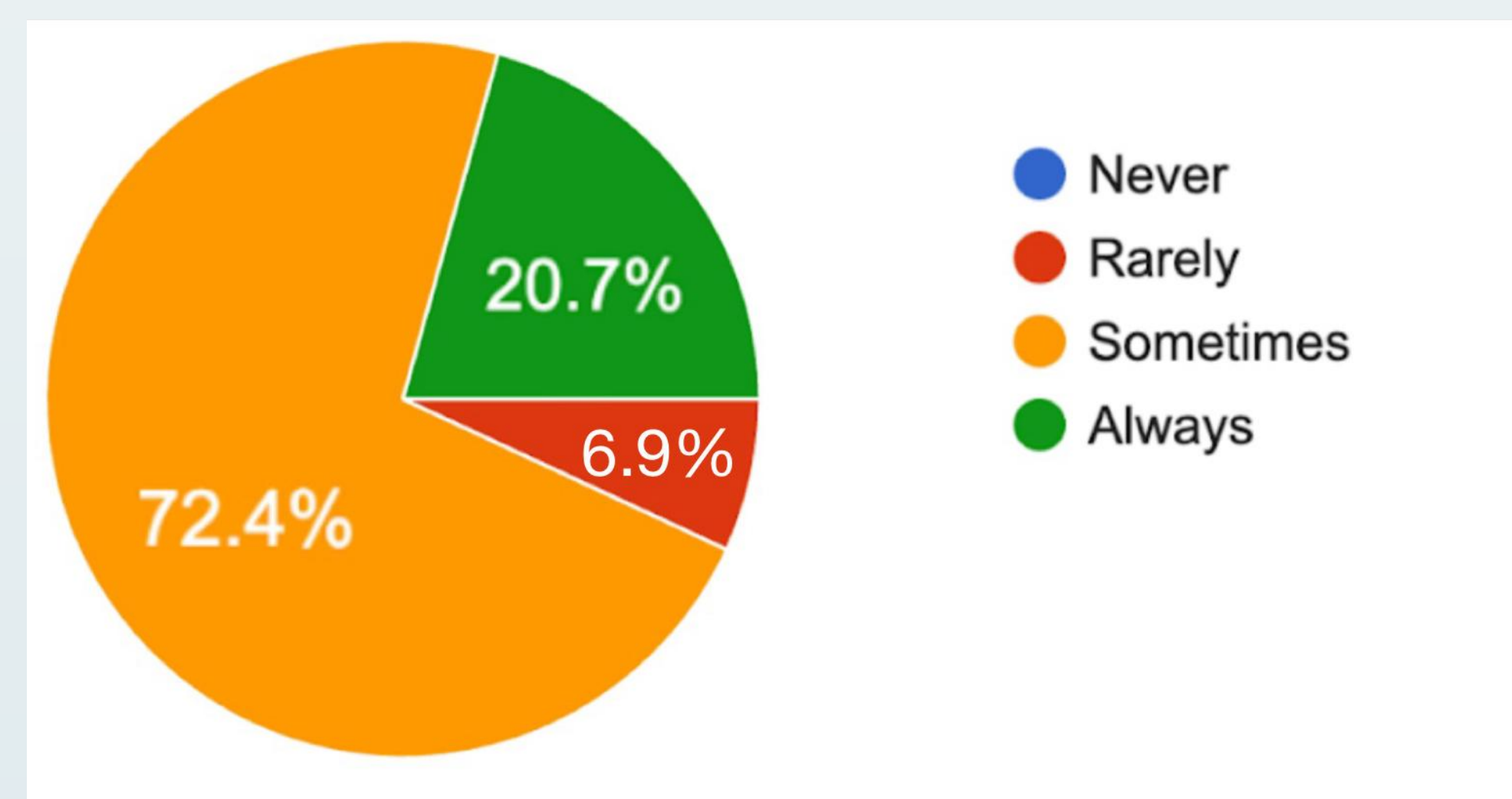
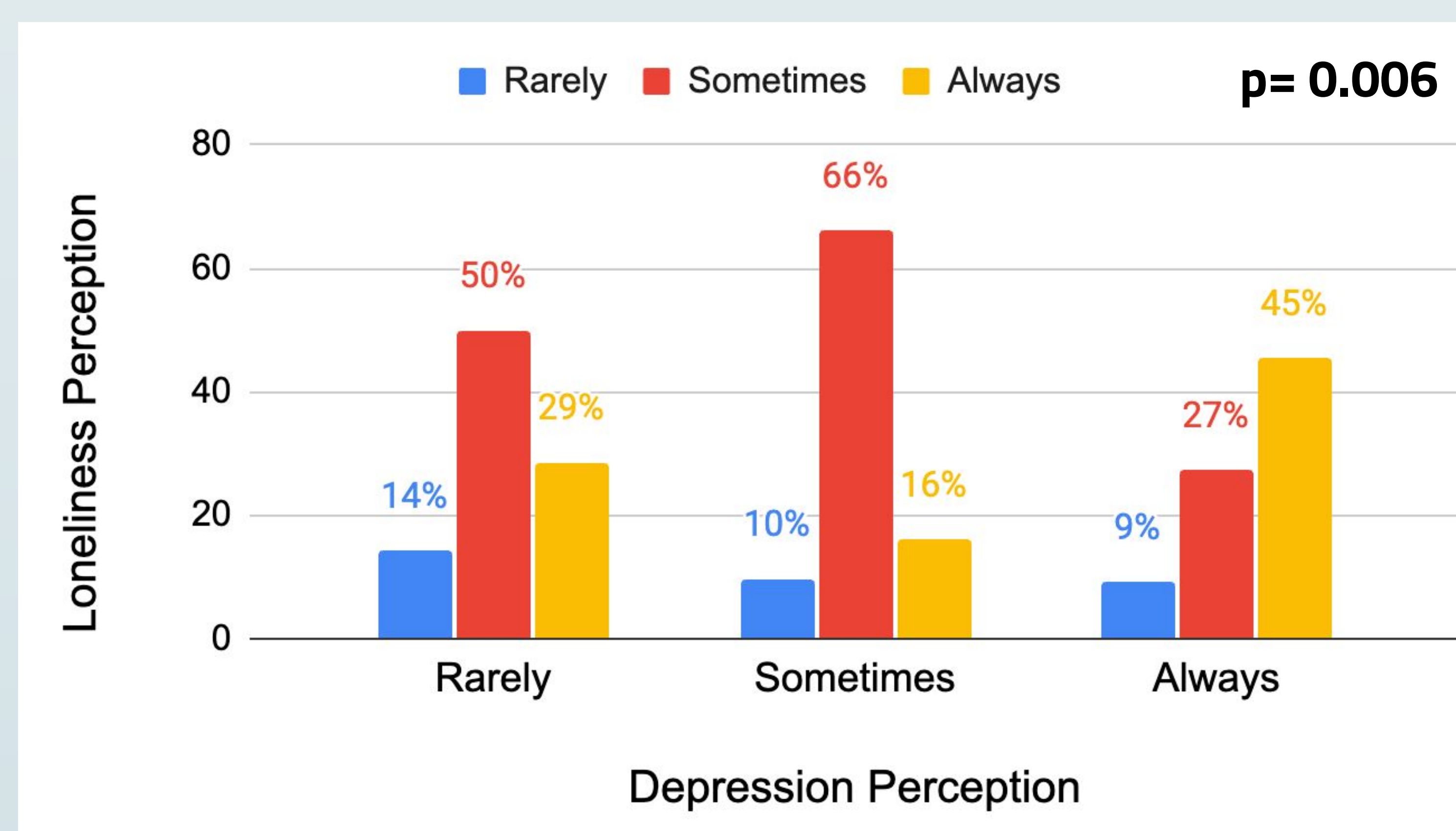


Figure 3. Loneliness Perceptions vs. Depression Perceptions



Conclusion

- Our research found that the majority college students have high perceptions of college students feeling isolated from their peers.
- A majority of students expressed high perceptions of both loneliness and depression, demonstrating that feelings of loneliness may be a risk factor for depression.

Policy Implications

- More comprehensive policies are needed to improve and address the high perception of loneliness and depression among college students.
- Increase mental health resources and their accessibility to all students, including first-generation students.
- Implementing activities where students seeking company can come together and collaborate to bring awareness to this issue at hand.

Acknowledgements

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References

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