

HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY BODY



DIFFERENCES IN STRESS AND DIETARY PATTERNS BETWEEN OFF AND ON CAMPUS STUDENTS

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BACKGROUND

- Prolonged stress affects college students' eating habits, as they face high levels of stress from academics, life changes, and finances.
- College students experience higher stress levels compared to the general population, leading to increased consumption of unhealthy snacks, fast food, and convenience meals
- Stress and poor diet can be a factor in a number of health issues, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate how stress experienced in UC San Diego students influences food choices and dietary patterns
- To gain insight into how on and off campus living contribute to stressors that affect dietary patterns

METHODS

Questionnaire Development

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 was used to assess dietary intake

Data Collection

Flyers containing a QR code link to questionnaire was distributed to campus clubs, FMPH introductory classes, and posted throughout the UC San Diego campus

Sample

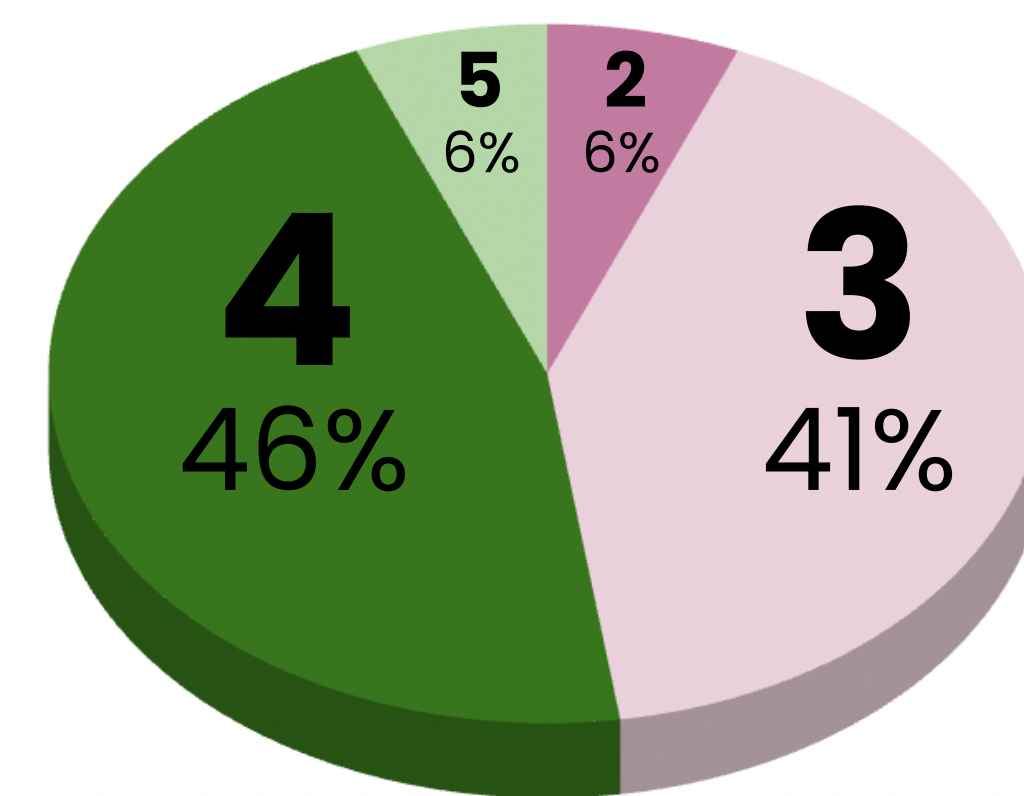
Data from 128 undergraduate UCSD students responses were collected and analyzed using Qualtrics and Excel

Analysis

Independent T-tests used to compare on-campus vs off-campus students responses; Two Pearson correlation coefficient tests to find a correlation between stress and living situation

RESULTS

GENERAL STRESS LEVEL OF UCSD STUDENTS



ON-CAMPUS GENERAL STRESS AVG:



OFF-CAMPUS GENERAL STRESS AVG:



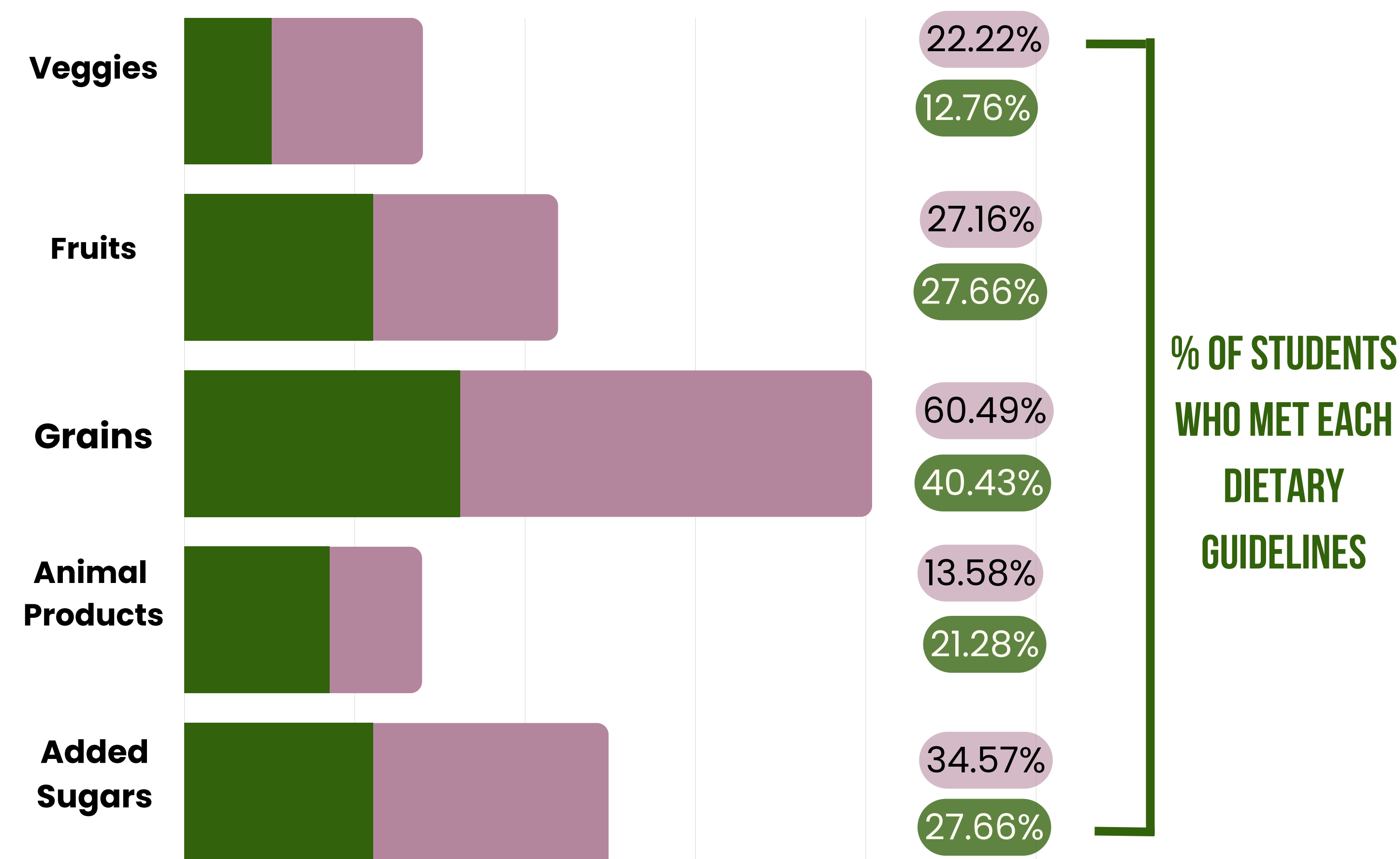
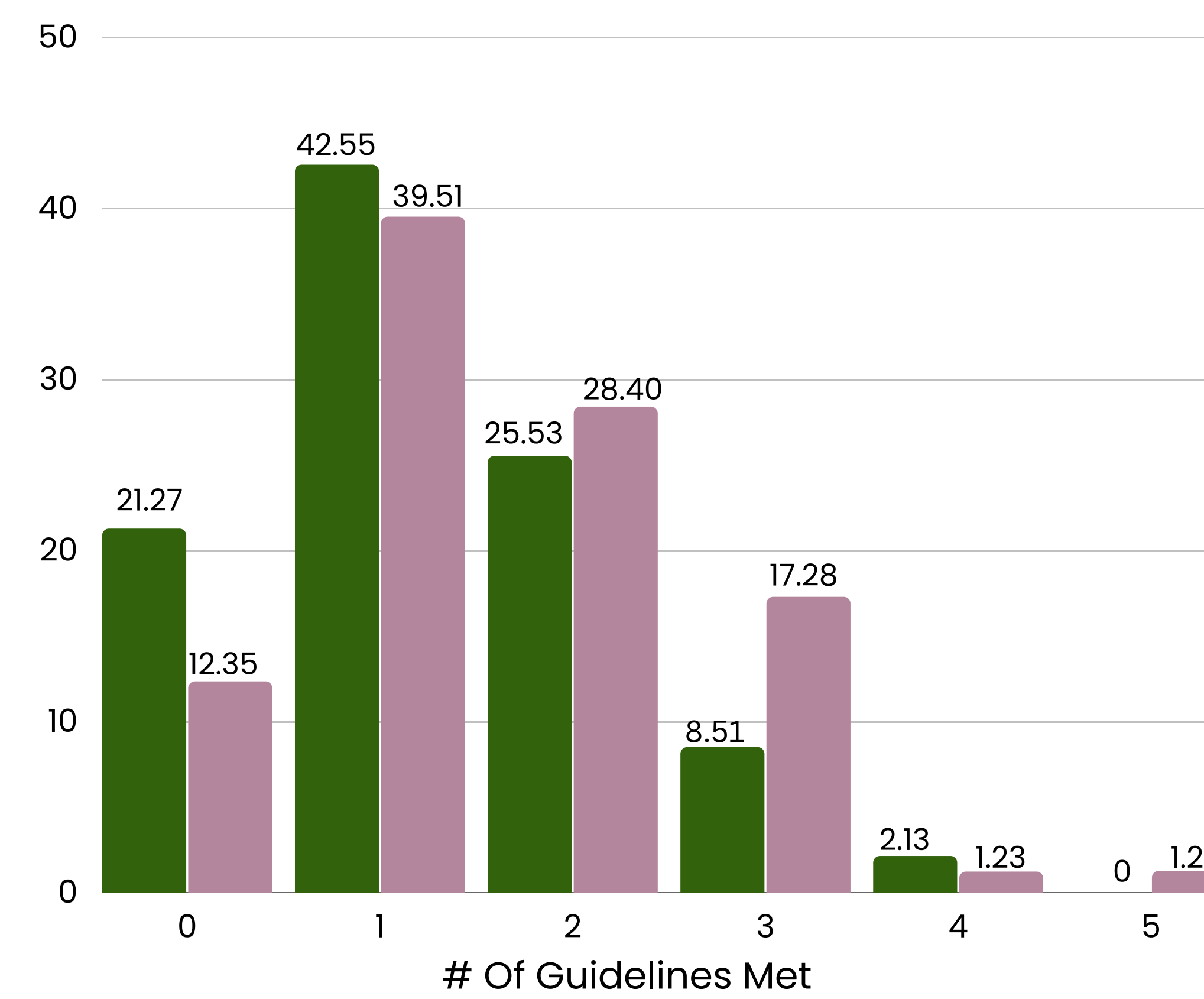
2-mild stress, 3-moderate stress, 4- high stress, 5- extreme stress

PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO MET A CERTAIN NUMBER OF GUIDELINES

LEGEND:

Students met the guidelines for the following categories if they consumed:
 > 1 cup of vegetables
 > 1 cup of fruits
 > ½ a cup of grains
 < 3 oz of animal products
 < 12 oz of added sugars

■ On Campus
 ■ Off Campus



CONCLUSION

- In general, both on-campus and off-campus students showed significant deficits in meeting the nutritional requirements for each category
- Conducted Pearson correlation coefficient between stress and meeting dietary guidelines for on and off campus finding a very weak negative correlation
- Independent t-tests on the proportion of students who met the guidelines for each dietary category sampled for had a significant difference between on and off campus for each dietary guideline



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 🏠 Students can benefit from stress-relief programs on campus or diet programs that give students the opportunity to gain free access
- 💡 Improve on-campus educational resources and dining hall options to meet more dietary guidelines
- 🍲 Increase access and awareness for food pantries within the campus for all students
- 📖 Food frequency questionnaire or 24-hour recall would be a better assessment of UCSD students' dietary patterns.