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SUGAR & MENTAL HEALTH



RESEARCH QUESTION:

What is the correlation of sugar consumption with mental health/stress in young adults?

We all crave for sugar when we see it, but why? what makes it so hard to resist, what happens in our brain?

Since sugar is everywhere we need to know how it's affecting our brain, and our health



HORMONES



Humans are already programmed to love sugar so when we eat sugar, the brain releases hormones called *dopamine* and *serotonin*.

These hormones boost your mood and stimulate the area of the brain associated with reward.

It affects the brain in a way similar to that of some drugs

- DOPAMINE- IS A NEUROTRANSMITTER USED BY THE NERVOUS SYSTEM TO SEND MESSAGES BETWEEN NERVE CELLS. IT PLAYS A ROLE ON HOW WE FEEL PLEASURE. IT HELPS US STRIVE, FOCUS, AND FIND THINGS INTERESTING. TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH OF IT CAN LEAD TO A VAST RANGE OF HEALTH ISSUES.

- SEROTONIN- IS A NEUROTRANSMITTER ALSO CALLED A HAPPY CHEMICAL BECAUSE IT CONTRIBUTES TO WELLBEING AND HAPPINESS. THEREFORE LOW LEVELS OF IT CAN CAUSE DEPRESSION, ANXIETY OR SLEEP TROUBLE.

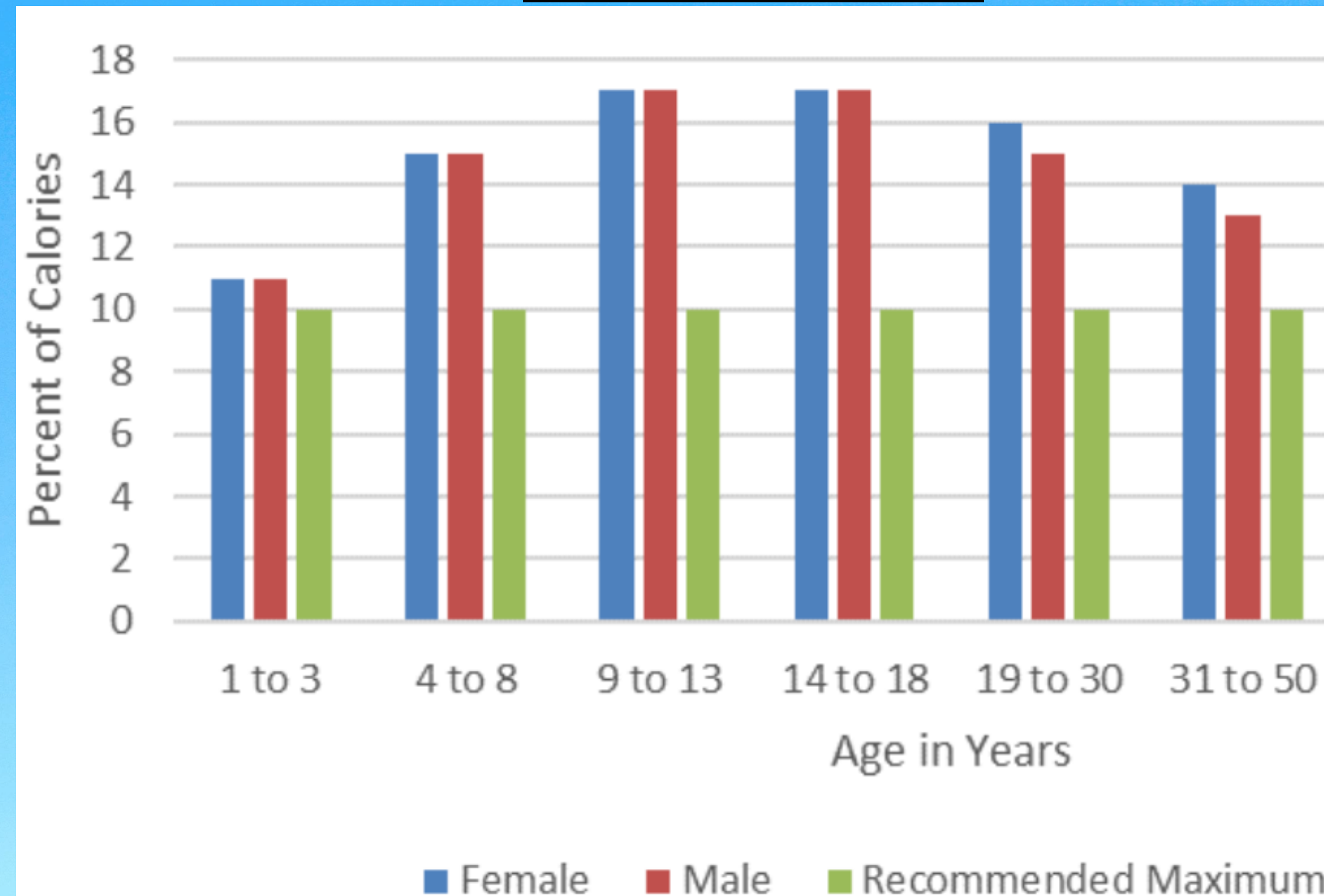
FEMALE- MALE FOOD CONS

For young adults of both genders in the U.S., the lack of a healthy diet was associated with depression/stress for 10 or more days. Stress not only increased food consumption in certain individuals but also shifted their food choices from lower fat to higher fat foods

Those with high frequency of depression and anxiety symptoms would show different diet in take characterized by lower fruit and vegetable intake and higher sugar intake

In all countries, the consumption of sweets and cakes was more common in females than in males, and conversely, the consumption of fast foods was more common in males.

PERCENT OF CALORIES FROM
ADDED SUGAR

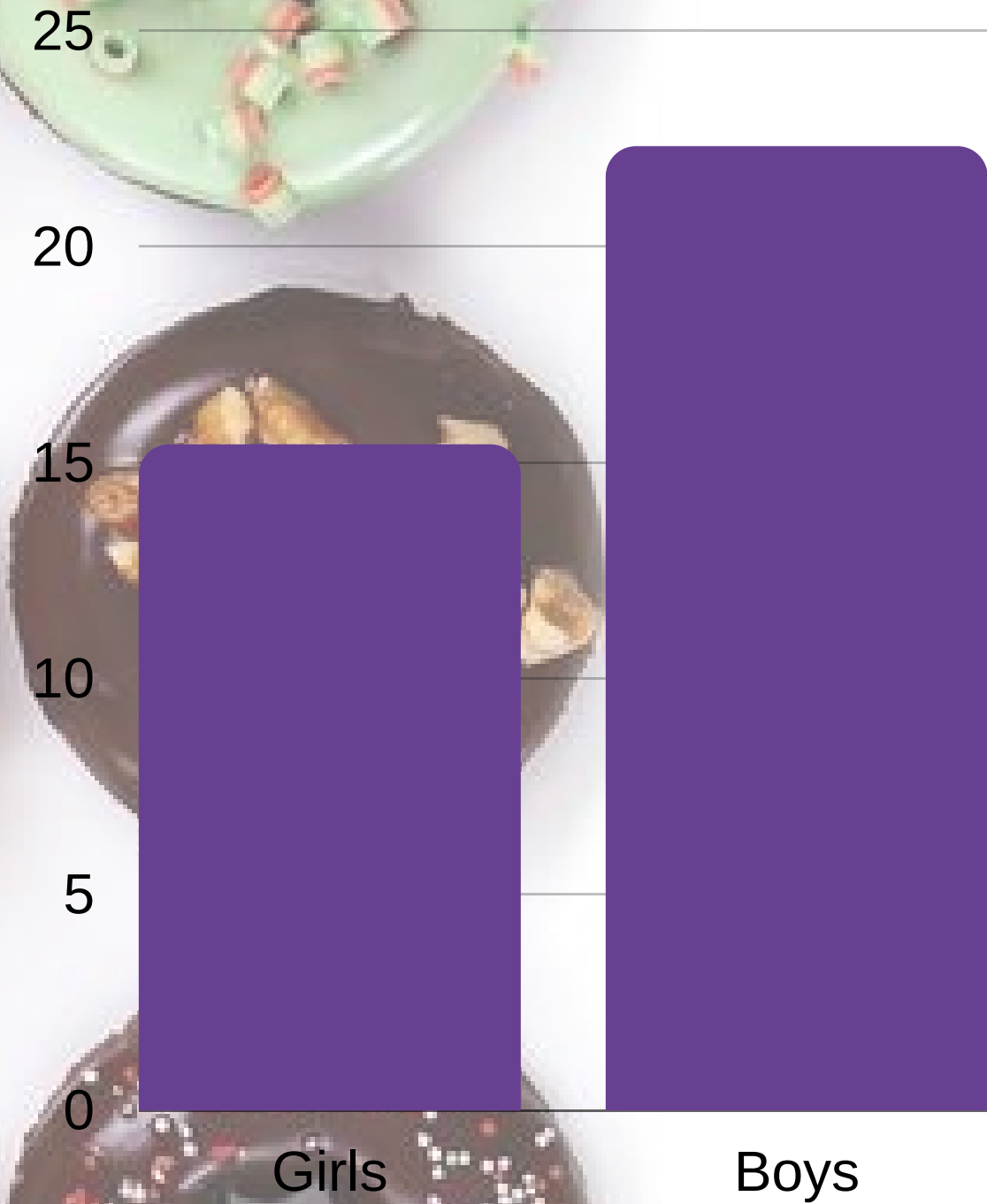


OBESITY

The easy availability and cost effectiveness of high caloric, sweetened food and beverages appear to be a contributing factor in the world wide increase in obesity

- Overconsumption of high fat/sugar contribute to the development of obesity. Neural plasticity that occurs as a result of long term sugar consumption has been shown to increase loss of control and so it lowers the ability to resist the high fat/sugar foods contributing to the obesity.

Obesity rates



RISKS
High sugar intake increases the risk of cancer, oxidative stress, inflammation, and obesity [Makarem et al., 2018], as well as impacting cognitive function and mental health [Barnes and Joyner, 2012]

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

1. Two common disorders in young adults are major depression and anxiety. These disorders are often attributed to a serotonin deficiency. The nutritional status can be influenced by various factors, including: Life stage, environment, food access.

2. College-attending young adults face a variety of risk factors for poor mental health, including high stress and high rates of food insecurity

Females tend to have more mental health disorders than males

It was found that depressed or anxious females consume greater quantities of unhealthy foods than depressed or anxious males

Prevalence of major depressive episode among adults



Solutions

Ways to reduce sugar intake

-Avoid eating/drinking foods/beverages filled with sugar

Instead consume more water, herbal teas, fruits, vegetables etc...

-Use Natural sweeteners like maple syrup, stevia, etc...

Withdrawing sugar can be hard because it can be very addictive when you eat a lot of it regularly

Ways to improve your mental health

- Omega 3 fatty acid in your diet

- Do activities you love

-Relaxation and meditations

-And limit the sugar intake

-providing access to affordable healthy foods

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Questions?