

Canadian Nutrition Undergraduates' Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions Of Carbohydrates

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Introduction

- Communication of evidence-based nutrition information by health professionals plays an important role in improving Canadians' health. Students gain knowledge from nutrition courses and develop critical thinking skills required for future careers.
- However, students and health professionals may also be influenced by competing messages on the internet, mainstream media and social media that often communicate opinions not always based on best-available science.

Purpose

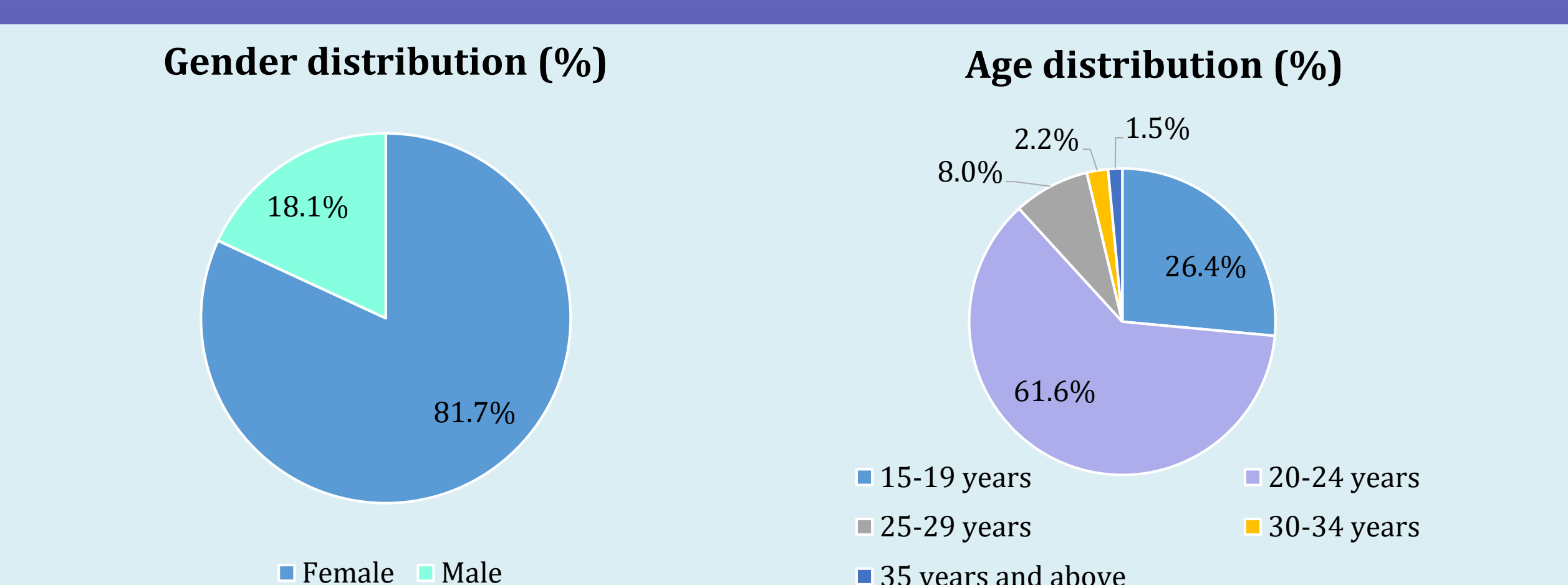
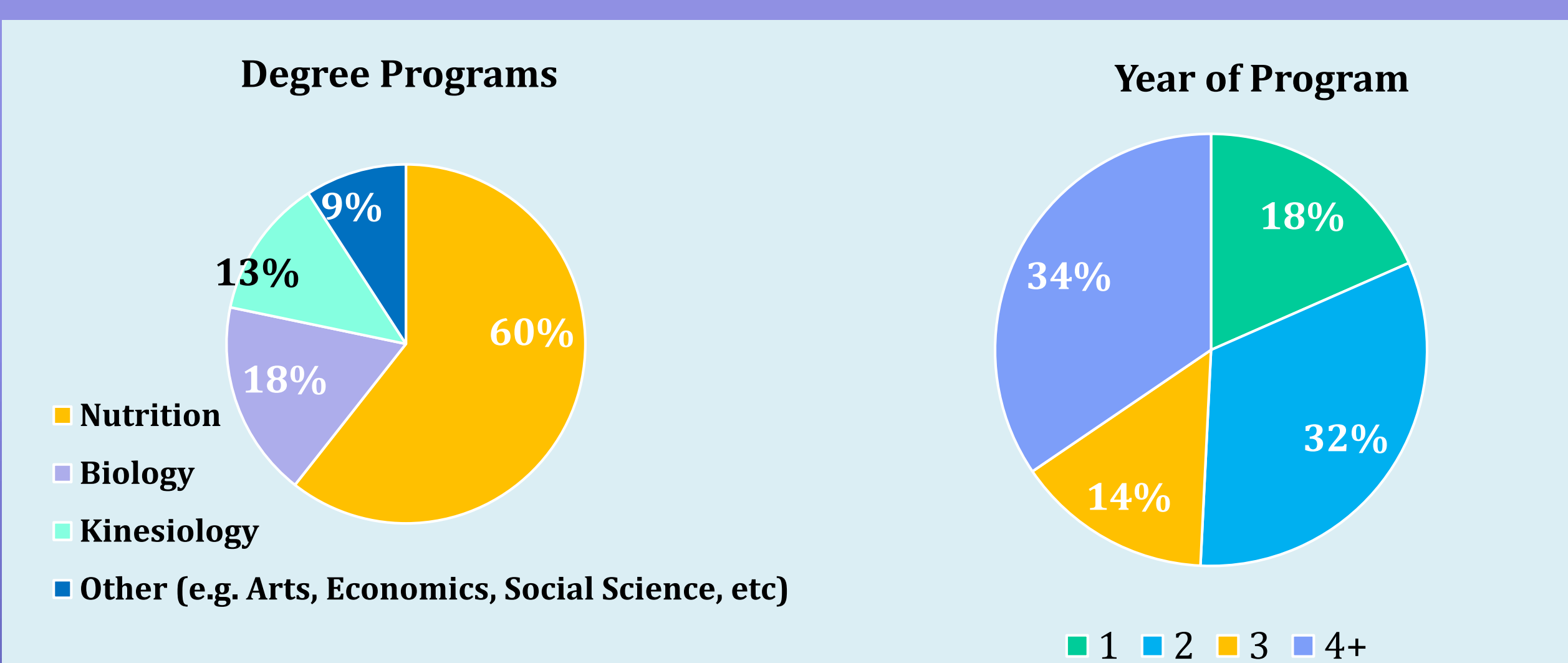
The objective of this study was to assess knowledge and attitudes/perceptions of carbohydrates (including sugars) among students enrolled in undergraduate nutrition courses in Canada.

Methods

- Cross-sectional questionnaires were distributed in nutrition courses to undergraduate students at different stages of their training at seven Canadian universities in 2016.
- The questionnaire contained 32 questions including student demographics, knowledge of carbohydrates, and perceptions of topics on carbohydrates and health.

Results

- A total of 1207 students taking a nutrition course participated in the study between January 2016 and February 2017, 60% of whom were enrolled in a nutrition degree program.

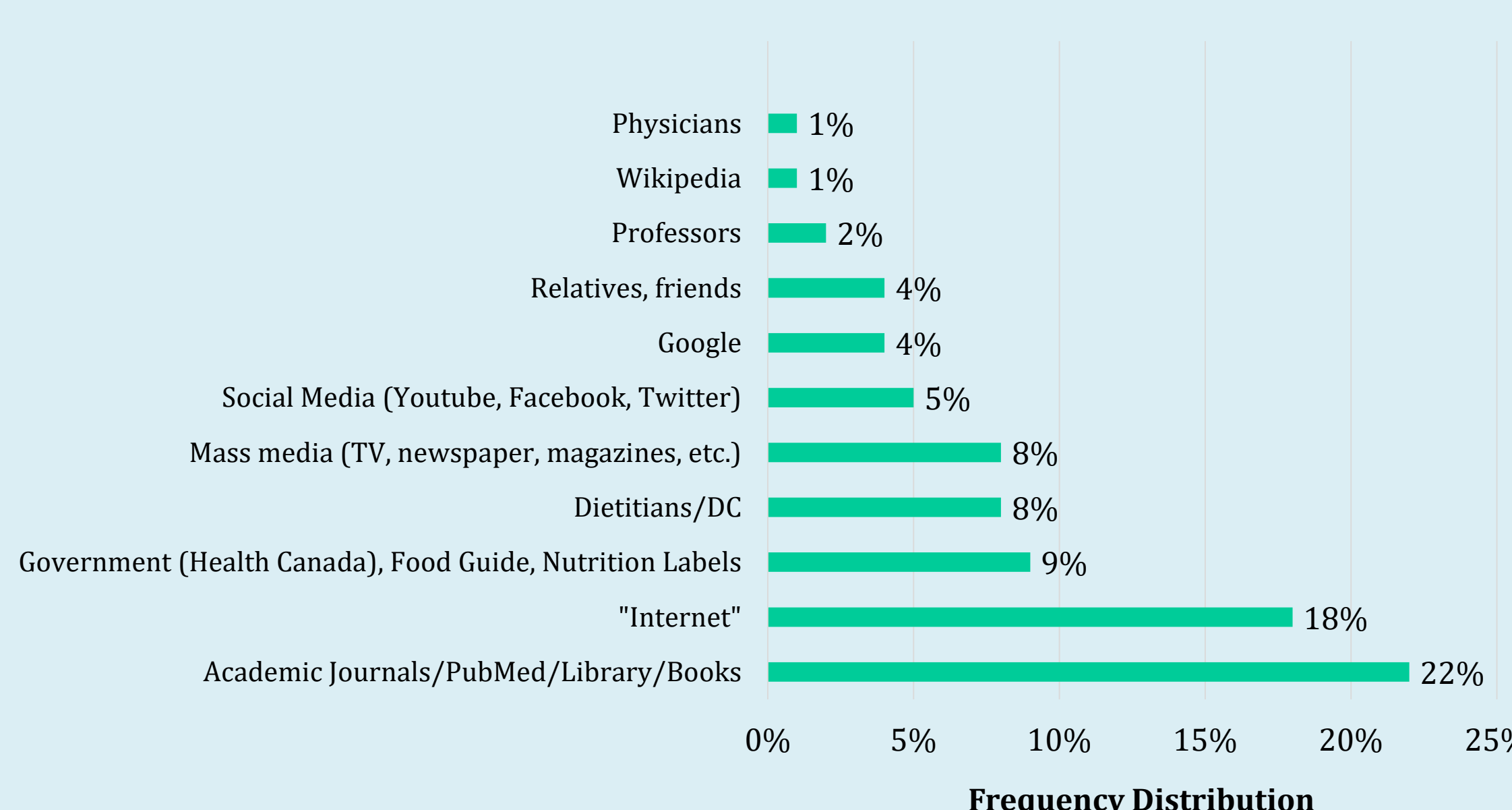


Results

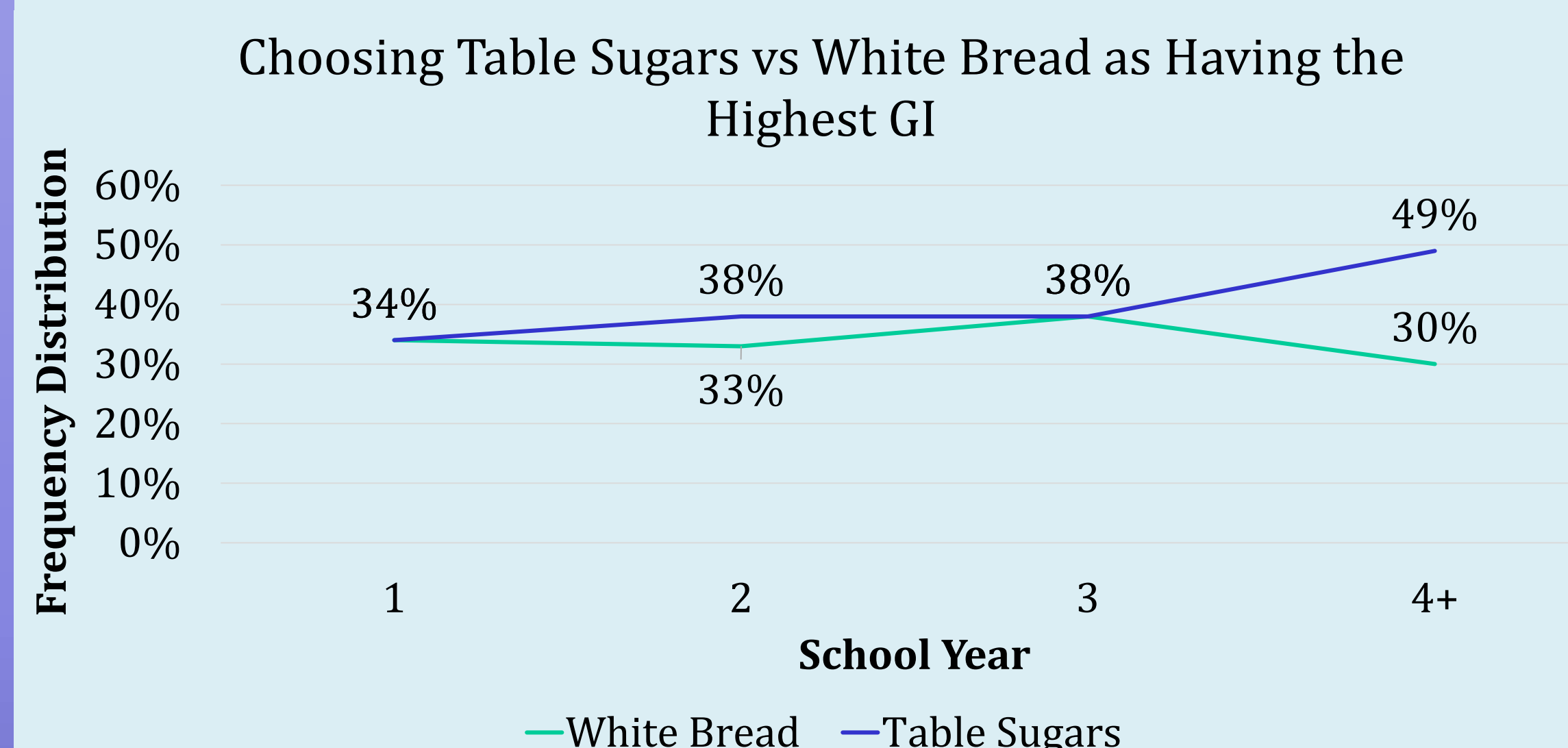
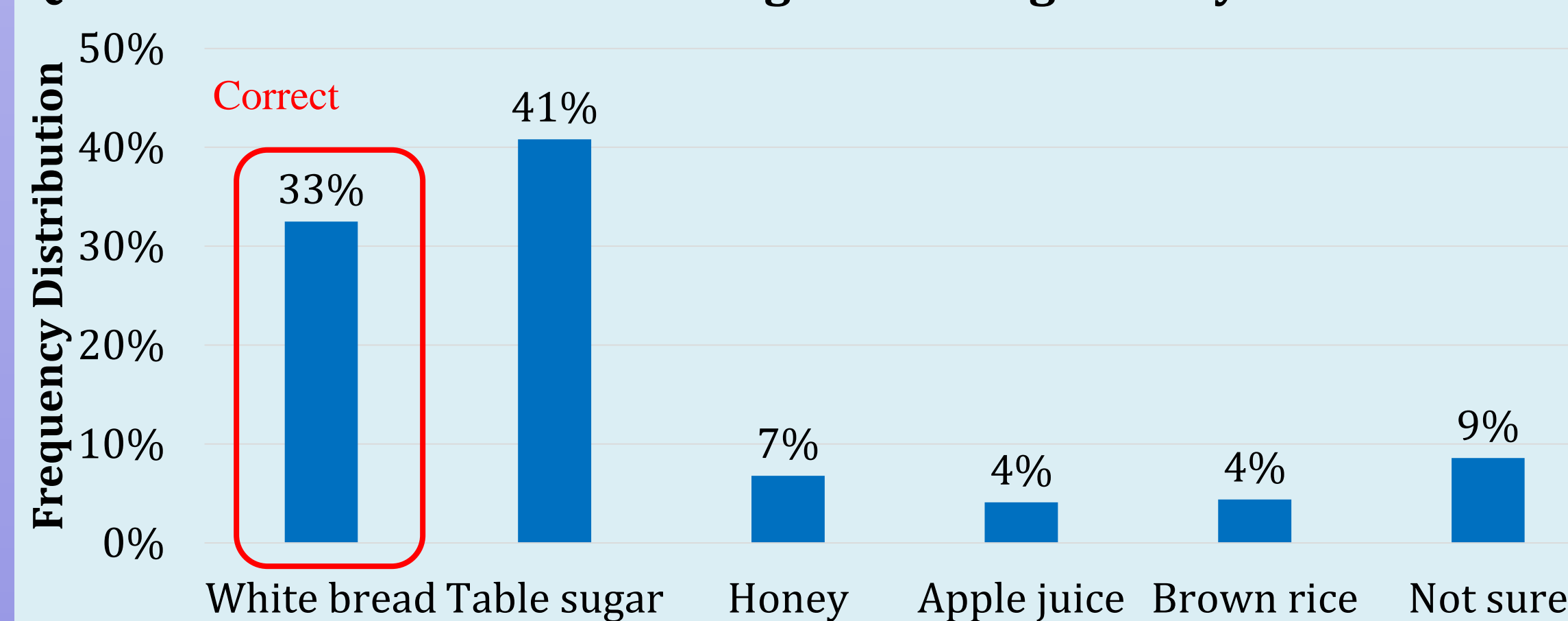
Question: In addition to text books and lecture notes, what are the top 3 sources you would obtain nutrition related information from? (**Open-ended**)

- Internet-based sources are the main sources where students obtain nutrition information
- Senior students were more likely to obtain information from more credible sources such as registered dietitians, government, scientific journals compared to junior students

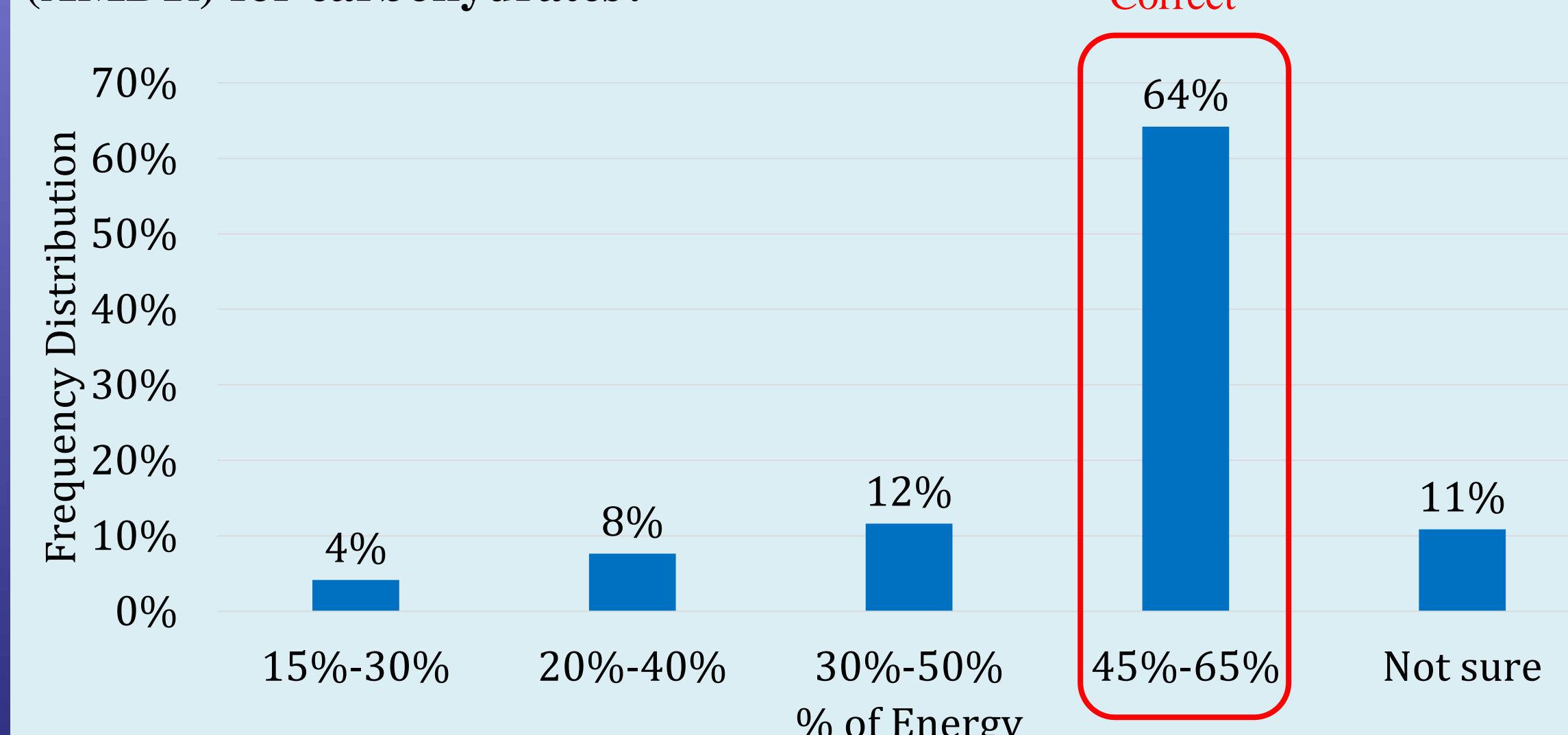
Sources of Nutrition Information



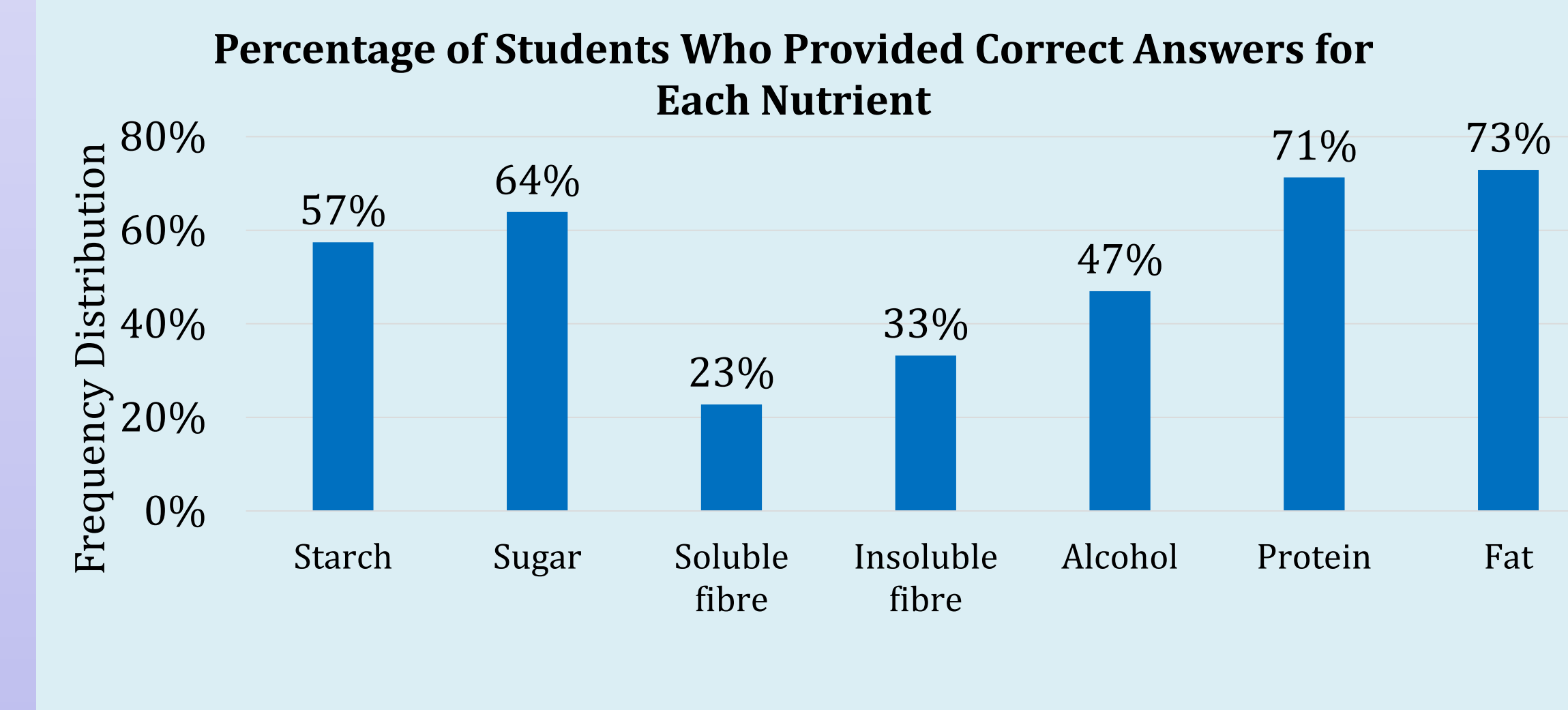
Question: Which of the following has the highest Glycemic Index?



Question: What is the Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range (AMDR) for carbohydrates?

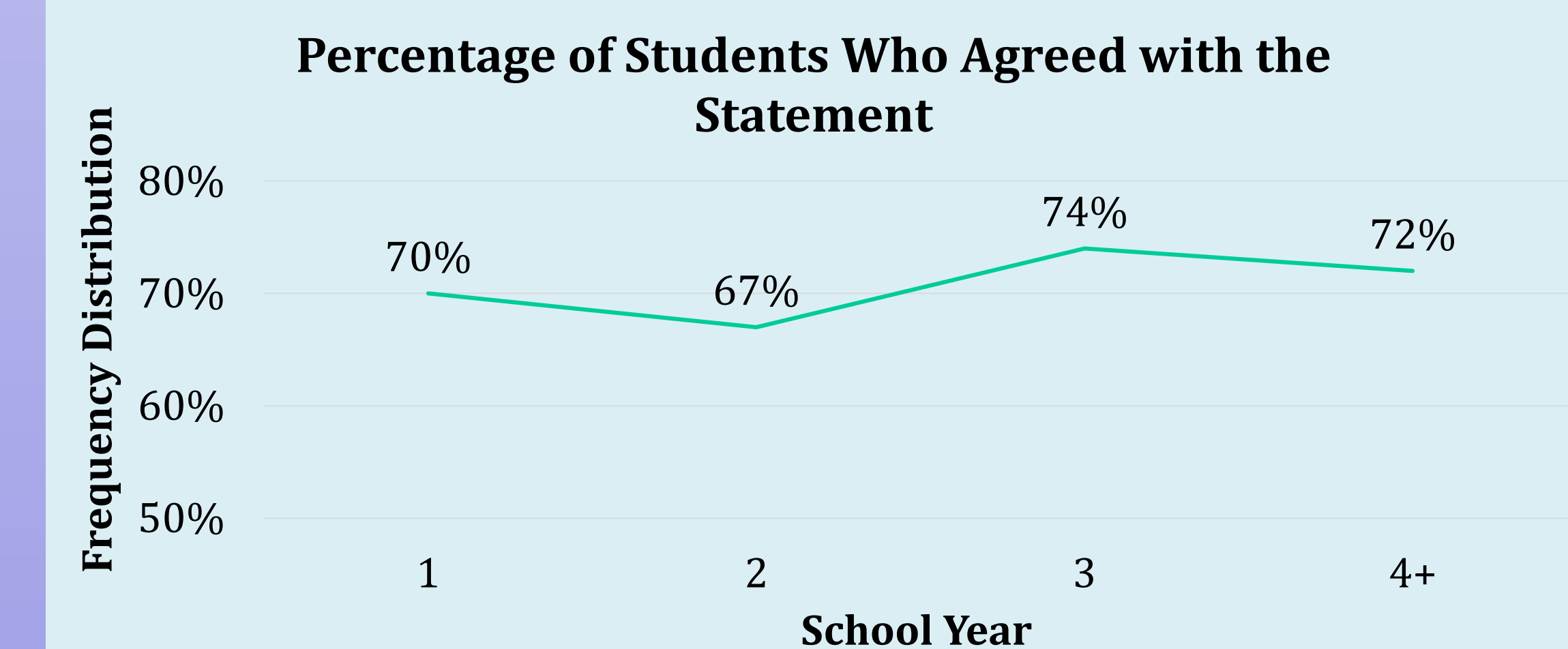


Question: How many Calories per gram do the following provide? (**Open-ended**)

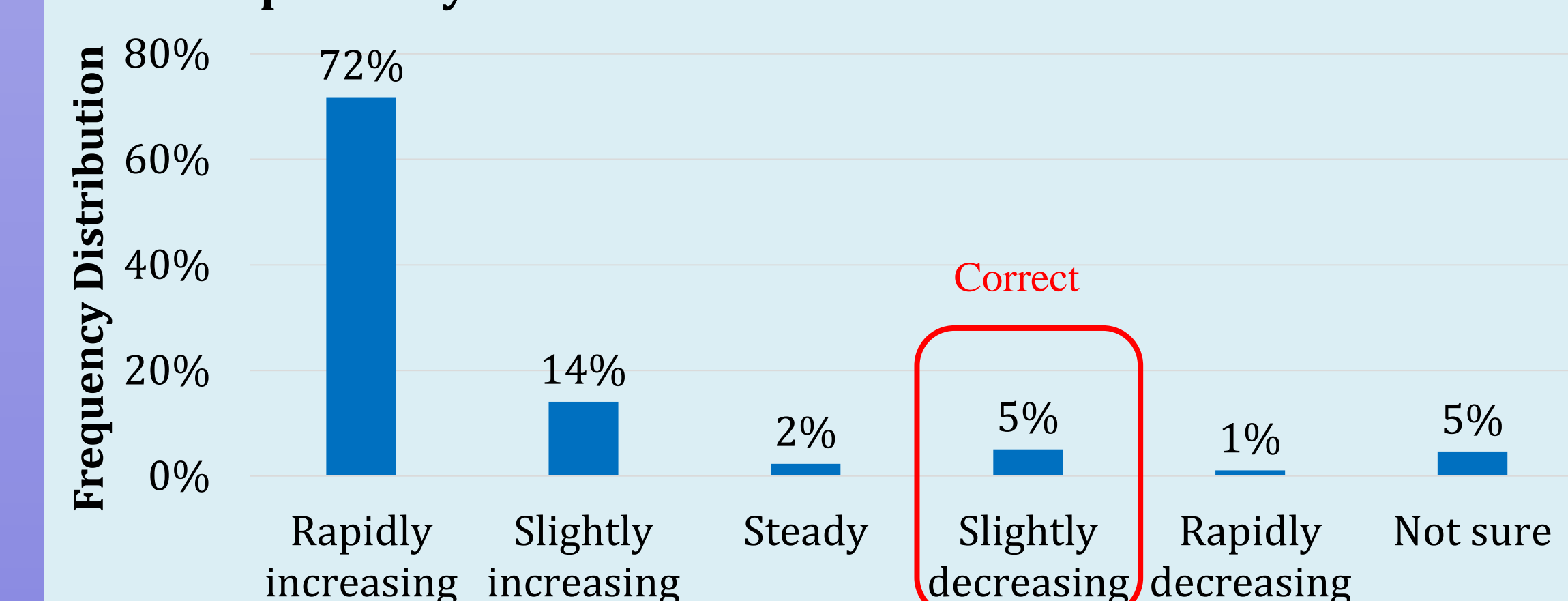


Question: Do you agree with the following statement:

Added Sugars are more likely to contribute to weight gain than other Caloric sources in the diet.



Question: Added sugars consumption in Canada has been _____ over the past 20 years.



Conclusions

- Knowledge gaps on carbohydrate and sugars were identified.
- Perceptions of sugars-related health topics were generally negative, many reflecting information and opinions communicated online, in mass and social media sources.
- These knowledge gaps highlight the importance of critical thinking when students learn basic food chemistry and metabolism of carbohydrate, and warrant greater emphasis on addressing knowledge gaps, and ensuring nutrition curricula are based on current, high quality evidence.
- The importance of accessing nutrition information from credible sources needs to be reinforced throughout the degree program.