



11th

Canadian Conference on Dementia

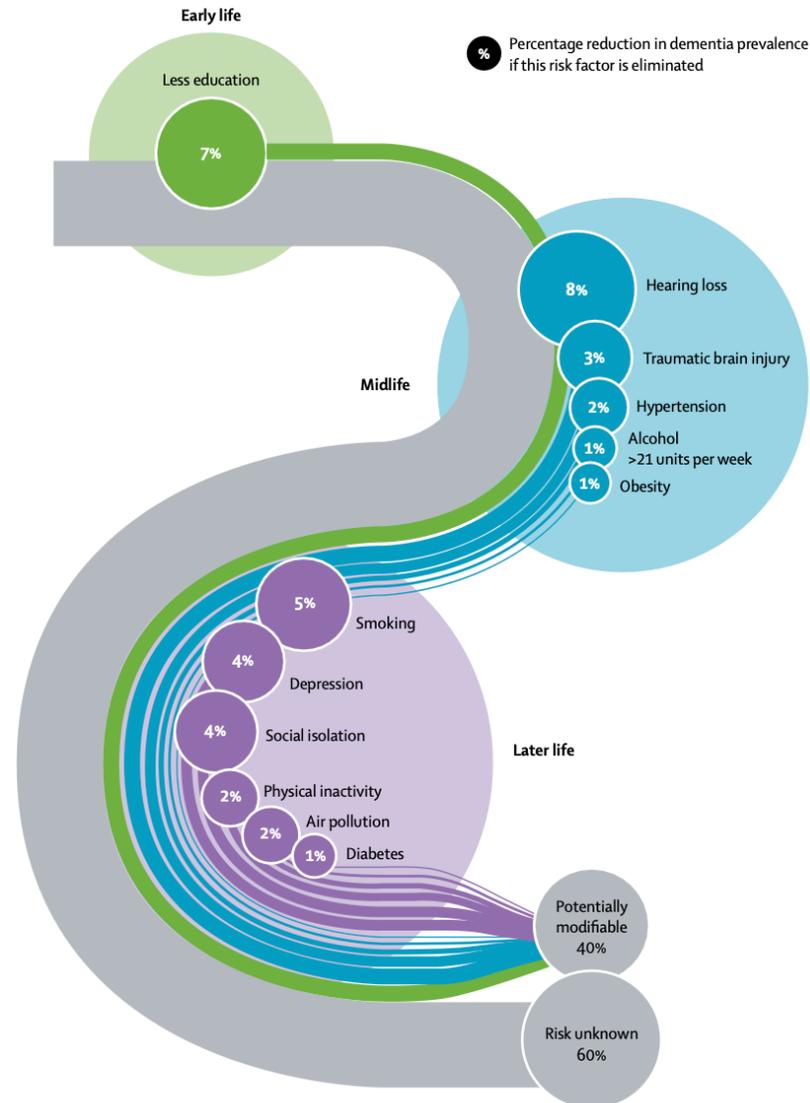
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Awareness of Dementia Risk Factors Among Adults in Canada

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Up to 40% of dementia cases could be prevented through lifestyle changes



Livingston et al., 2020, *The Lancet Commissions*

International studies have shown that the public has low awareness of dementia risk factors



Socio-demographic characteristics may affect knowledge of risk factors



Sex



Education



Ethnicity



Urban/rural residence



Socioeconomic status

Study Aims

- 1) Establish the level of knowledge of risk factors for dementia among adults living in Canada
- 2) Investigate whether level of knowledge differs across demographic groups

Methods

Participants

- 18+ years old
- Recruited via hospital network, word of mouth, and online advertisements

Procedure

- 10-minute online survey
- At the end of the survey, participants were provided with the answers and an easy-to-read tip sheet outlining actionable strategies to reduce dementia risk



Section 3: Dementia Risk Factors

Please indicate whether each of the following factors **INCREASE** the likelihood of developing dementia.

- Please select **TRUE** if you think the factor **INCREASES** the likelihood of developing dementia (i.e., it is a risk factor).
- Please select **FALSE** if you think the factor has **NO IMPACT** on the likelihood of developing dementia (i.e., it is not a risk factor).
- Please select **DON'T KNOW** if you are **UNSURE** if the factor increases the likelihood of developing dementia.

1. Having a parent with dementia

* must provide value

True False Don't Know

reset

2. High blood pressure (hypertension)

* must provide value

True False Don't Know

reset

3. High cholesterol

* must provide value

True False Don't Know

reset

4. Heart disease

* must provide value

True False Don't Know

reset

5. Gingivitis (gum disease)

* must provide value

True False Don't Know

reset

Methods - Dementia risk factors survey

20 true risk factors:	
Having a parent with dementia	Sleep apnea
High blood pressure	Multiple head injuries
High cholesterol	Hearing loss
Heart disease	Being a woman
Gingivitis	Smoking cigarettes
Having a stroke	Heavy alcohol use
Chronic kidney disease	Air pollution
Diabetes	Physical inactivity
Obesity	Low level of education
Depression	Loneliness

13 false risk factors:	
Chickenpox	Breast cancer
Wearing a tight hat	Arthritis
Poor eyesight	Pneumonia
Using over-the-counter painkillers	Wearing blue clothes
Exposure to aluminum	Excessive UV / sun exposure
Using hair dye	Being born in July
Vitamin C deficiency	

9 Ways to Decrease Your Chances of Developing Dementia

KEEP YOUR HEART HEALTHY



- Conditions that are harmful to your heart are also harmful to your brain, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, being overweight, and type 2 diabetes.
- Keep up with routine doctor visits, so these conditions can be monitored regularly.
- If you have been prescribed medication for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, take as directed.
- Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly can decrease your chances of developing these conditions.

QUIT SMOKING

- It is never too late to stop smoking.
- Speak to your doctor about resources to help you quit smoking.
- Call the Government of Canada's pan-Canadian, toll-free quitline at 1-866-366-3667.



EAT A HEALTHY DIET

- Eat a healthy balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables, fish, nuts, and legumes.
- Eat less meat, sugar, and saturated fats.

ENGAGE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Make exercise a regular part of your daily life.
- Engage in activities that increase your heart rate, such as brisk walking, jogging, cycling, or swimming.
- Add strengthening or toning activities at least twice per week, such as yoga, tai-chi, or gardening.



KEEP YOUR BRAIN ACTIVE



- Play challenging games, such as bridge or chess. Learn a new instrument or language. Complete a crossword puzzle or jigsaw puzzle. Read a book. Socialize with family and friends.
- Choose activities that you enjoy. This will ensure you do the activities often and keep your brain active.

SOCIALIZE WITH OTHERS

- Stay socially active. Connect often with your friends and family. Meet new people.
- Volunteer in your community. Join a club or exercise class.
- Your local community centre can be a good resource for social activities in your area.



PROTECT YOUR HEARING AND TREAT HEARING LOSS



- To decrease hearing loss, limit your exposure to loud noises.
- If you have hearing aids, wear them every day.
- Speak to a doctor if you are experiencing hearing difficulties.

PROTECT YOUR HEAD

- Avoid head injuries.
- Wear a seat belt in the car and wear a helmet when riding a bicycle, skiing, or skating.
- Reduce your risk of falling. Be aware of tripping hazards and use hand railings for extra support. If you have a cane or walker, use it at all times.



LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



- People with a history of depression have a higher chance of developing dementia.
- Speak to a healthcare professional if you have symptoms of depression or anxiety, or if your symptoms worsen.
- If you have a treatment plan, make sure to follow it.



This document is for educational purposes.

This information should not be used in place of recommendations made by a health care professional.

Tip sheet
provided to
participants

All participants	N = 4,411
Age, mean \pm SD, range	62.10 \pm 15.41, 18-102
Sex, N (%)	<i>Female: 3107 (70.4%)</i> <i>Male: 1292 (29.3%)</i> <i>Other: 12 (0.3%)</i>
Ethnicity, N (%)	<i>White: 3510 (79.6%)</i> <i>South Asian: 299 (6.8%)</i> <i>Other: 602 (13.6%)</i>
Highest level of education, N (%)	<i>Post-Secondary: 3826 (86.7%)</i> <i>High School or less: 576 (13.1%)</i> <i>Unknown: 9 (0.2%)</i>

All participants	N = 4,411
Province, N (%)	<i>Ontario: 4090 (94.2%)</i> <i>B.C.: 75 (1.7%)</i> <i>Alberta: 51 (1.2%)</i> <i>Other: 128 (2.9%)</i>
Background in healthcare, N (%)	<i>Yes: 1101 (25.0%)</i> <i>No: 3310 (75.0%)</i>
Area of residence, N (%)	<i>Urban: 3974 (90.7%)</i> <i>Rural: 409 (9.3%)</i>

Overall Performance

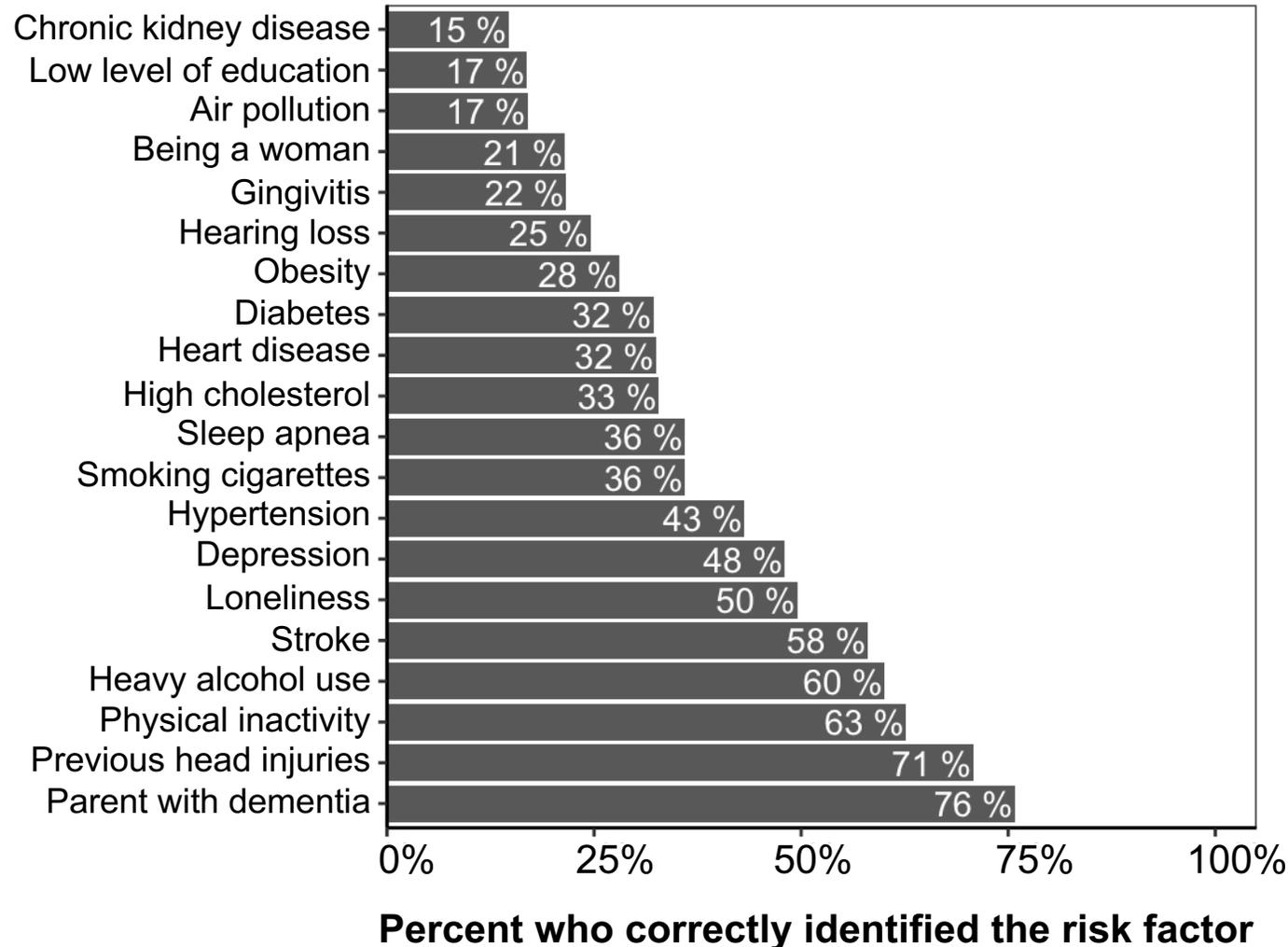
Main metric: Percent correct

- “Don’t Know” responses were considered incorrect

On average, participants correctly identified:

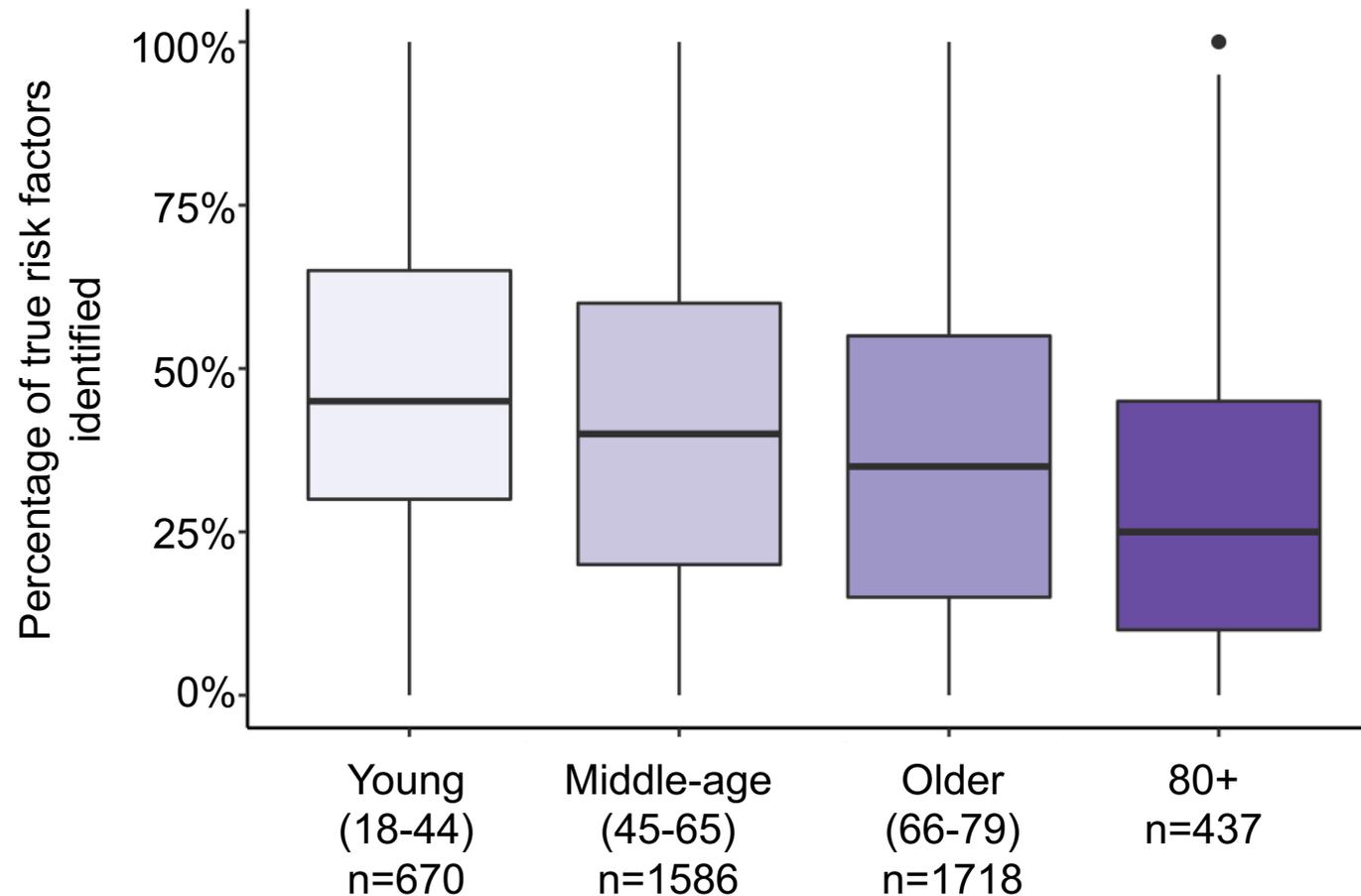
- 40% true risk factors (8/20)
- 62% false risk factors (8/13)

Majority of true risk factors were not well known



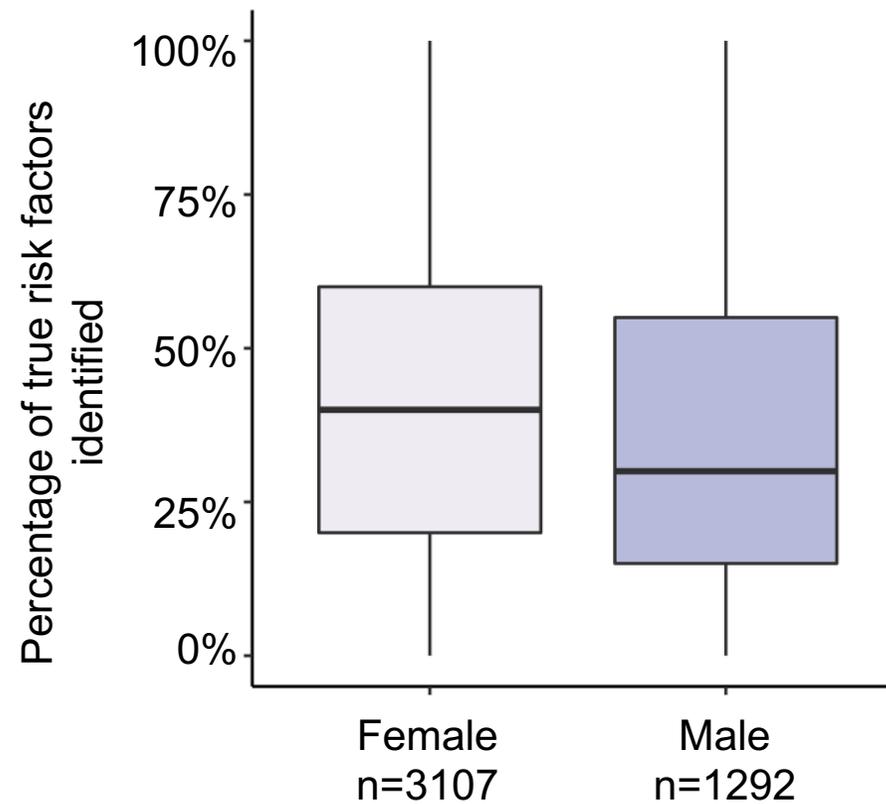
Knowledge decreased with age

Age, $H(3) = 160.52, p < .001$



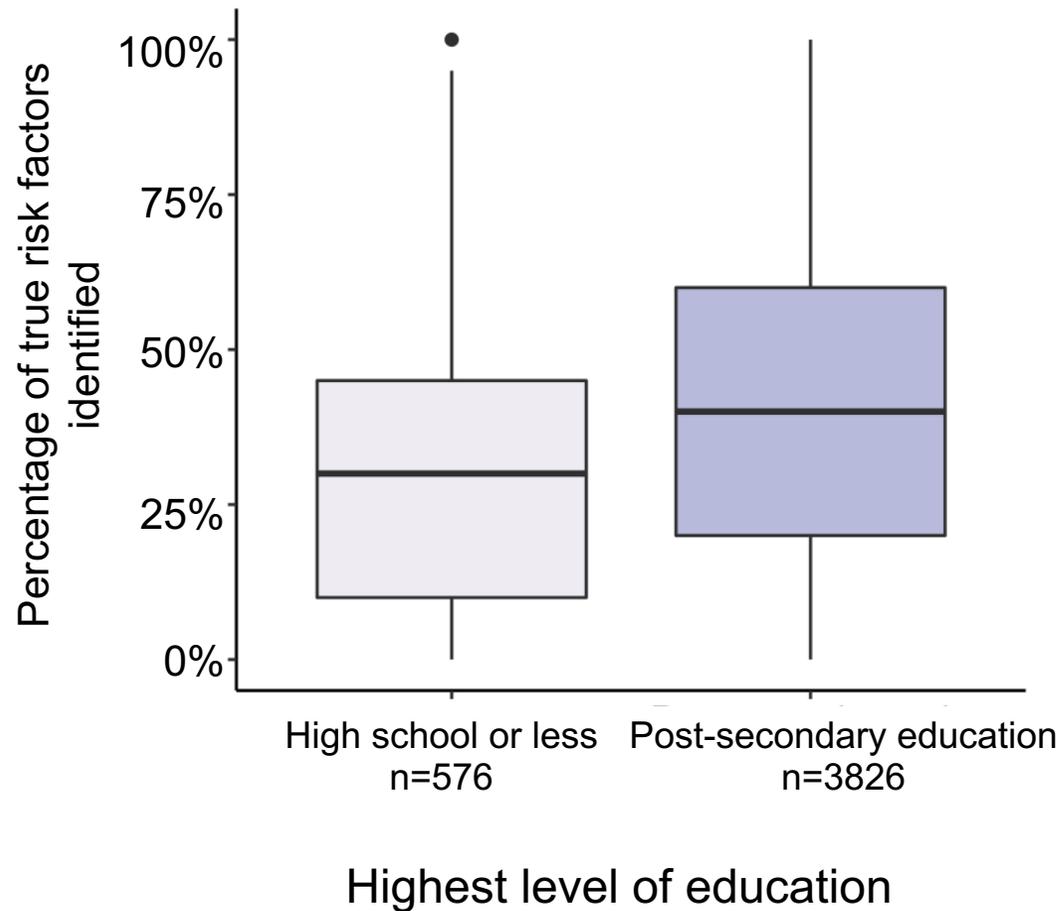
Female participants had higher knowledge

Sex, $H(1) = 45.61, p < .001$



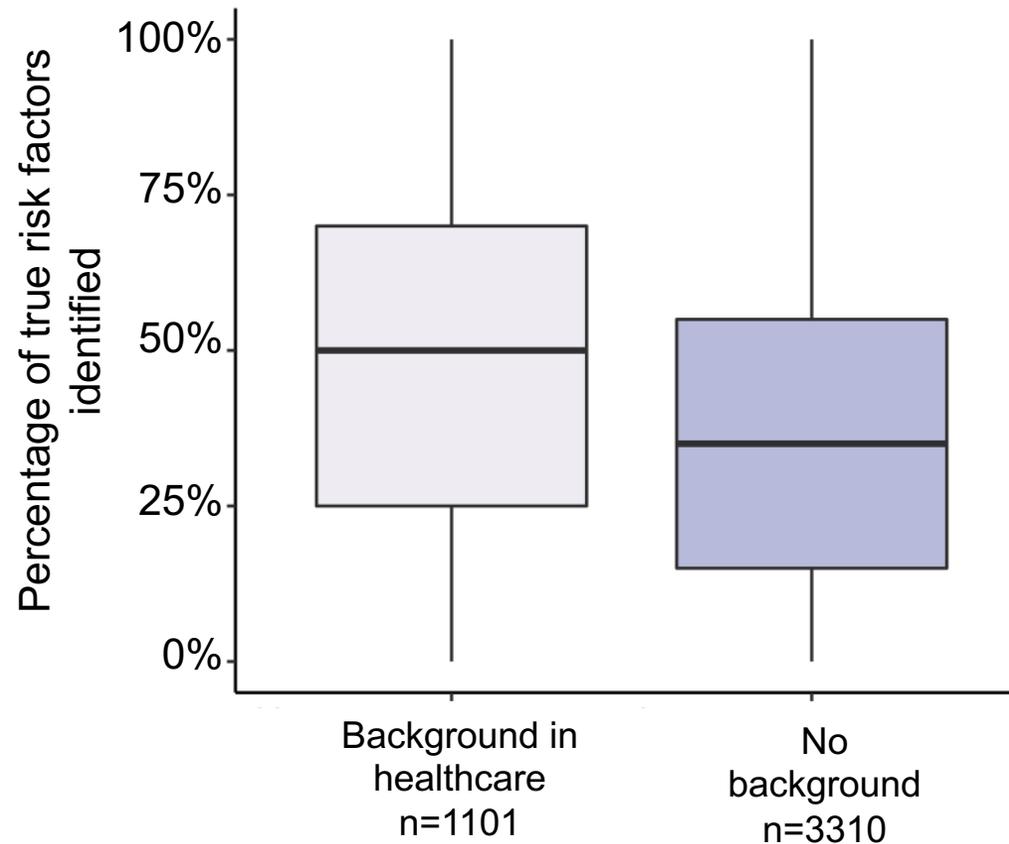
Higher educational attainment was associated with higher knowledge

Education, $W = 858446$, $p < .001$



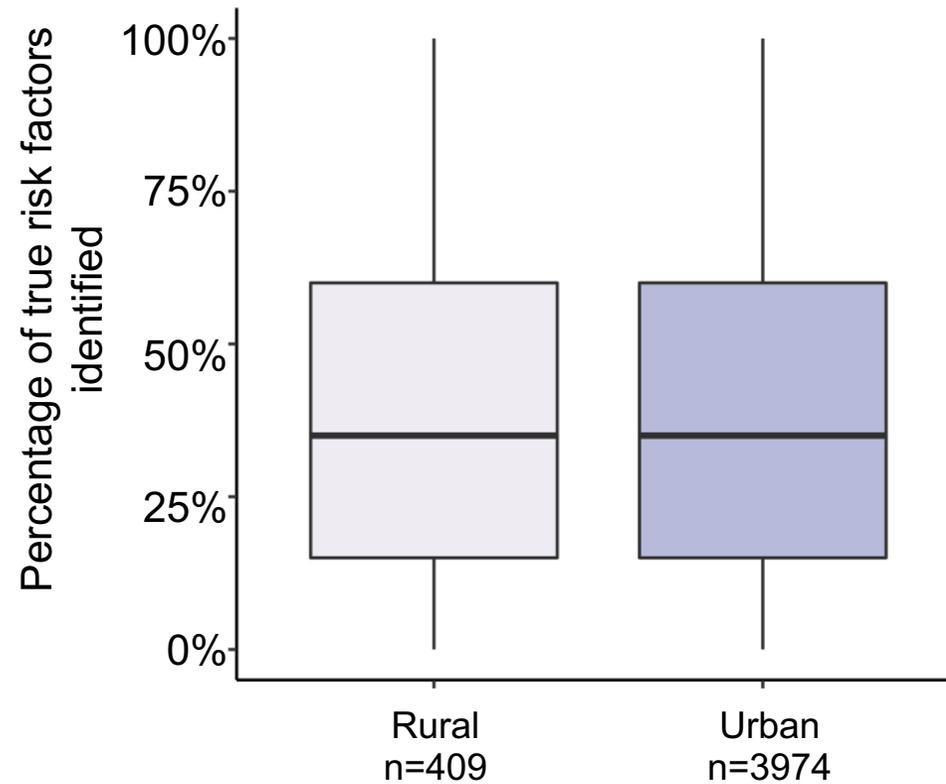
A background in healthcare was associated with higher knowledge

Healthcare, $H(1) = 209.74, p < .001$



Knowledge did not differ by area of residence

Residence, $W = 794728$, $p = .461$



Summary

- There was a lack of awareness of most dementia risk factors, notably: chronic kidney disease (15%), low level of education (17%), and air pollution (17%)
- Awareness of risk factors differed by:
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Education
 - Healthcare background

Conclusions

- This work suggests that Canada should invest in inclusive educational campaigns and/or public health initiatives focused on risk factors for dementia, with consideration of groups who could benefit most
- Future work will further investigate how demographic characteristics relate to level of knowledge, and how to help Canadians make behavioural changes to reduce their risk of dementia

Please Share Widely



We are actively recruiting participants.

Please feel free to participate and share widely!

You can also access the survey here:

<https://redcap.link/shsc-dementia>

Thank you!



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