

# Childhood Overweight Bias: Perceptions of Student Nurses within the Clinical Major

Moudi Albargawi MSN, RN, Pamela Treisman, BS, RN, Julia A. Snethen, PhD, RN (PI),  
 Ruth Treisman, MS, APRN, Aaron Buseh, PhD, MPH, MSN, & Sheryl Kelber, MS, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, College of Nursing

## Introduction

### Background and Significance

- Overweight in children is a health concern in the United States
- Nurses can be instrumental in the prevention or management of overweight in children
- Nurses may have perceptions about childhood overweight that are not evidence based, which could influence their practice
- Ensuring nurses' receive evidence-based information on overweight children in nursing school can help to prevent misperceptions when nurses' begin their professional practice.
- Little is known about nursing students' perception of children who are overweight, and how it might differ based on their academic level within the nursing major.

### Purpose

- To explore student nurses in the clinical majors perceptions of overweight children.

## Method

### Design

- Study is part of a larger research project
- Cross-sectional

### Conceptual Framework

- Bronfenbrenner's Social-Ecological Model

### Location

- Large Midwestern College of Nursing

### Instruments

- Questionnaire
  - Fat Phobia Scale-The Short Form (Bacon, Scheltema, & Robinson, 2001)
  - 14 items, Likert Scale
  - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.867

### Data Analysis

- Independent Sample t-test
- Cross-tabulation



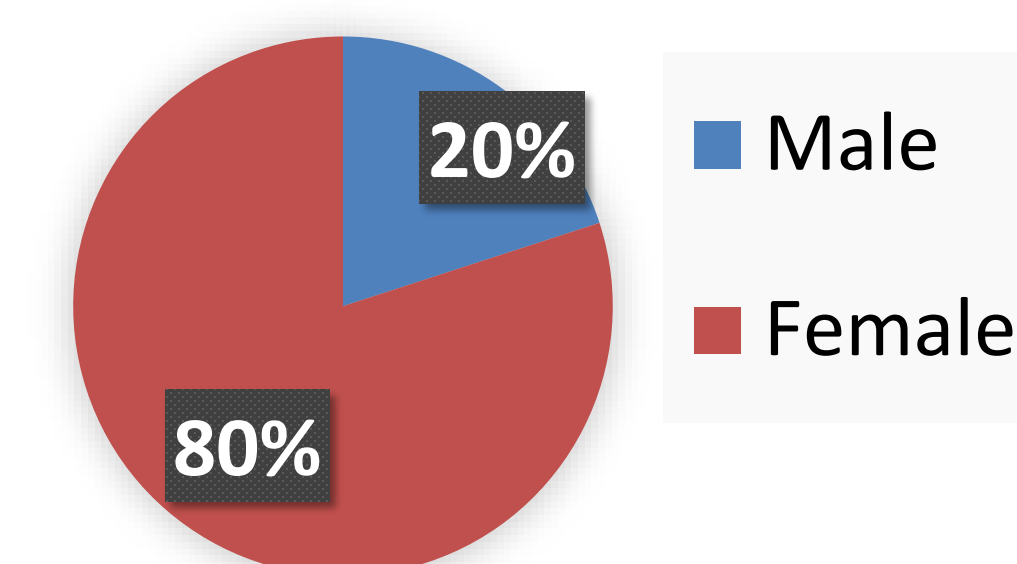
## Findings

### Sample (N = 212)

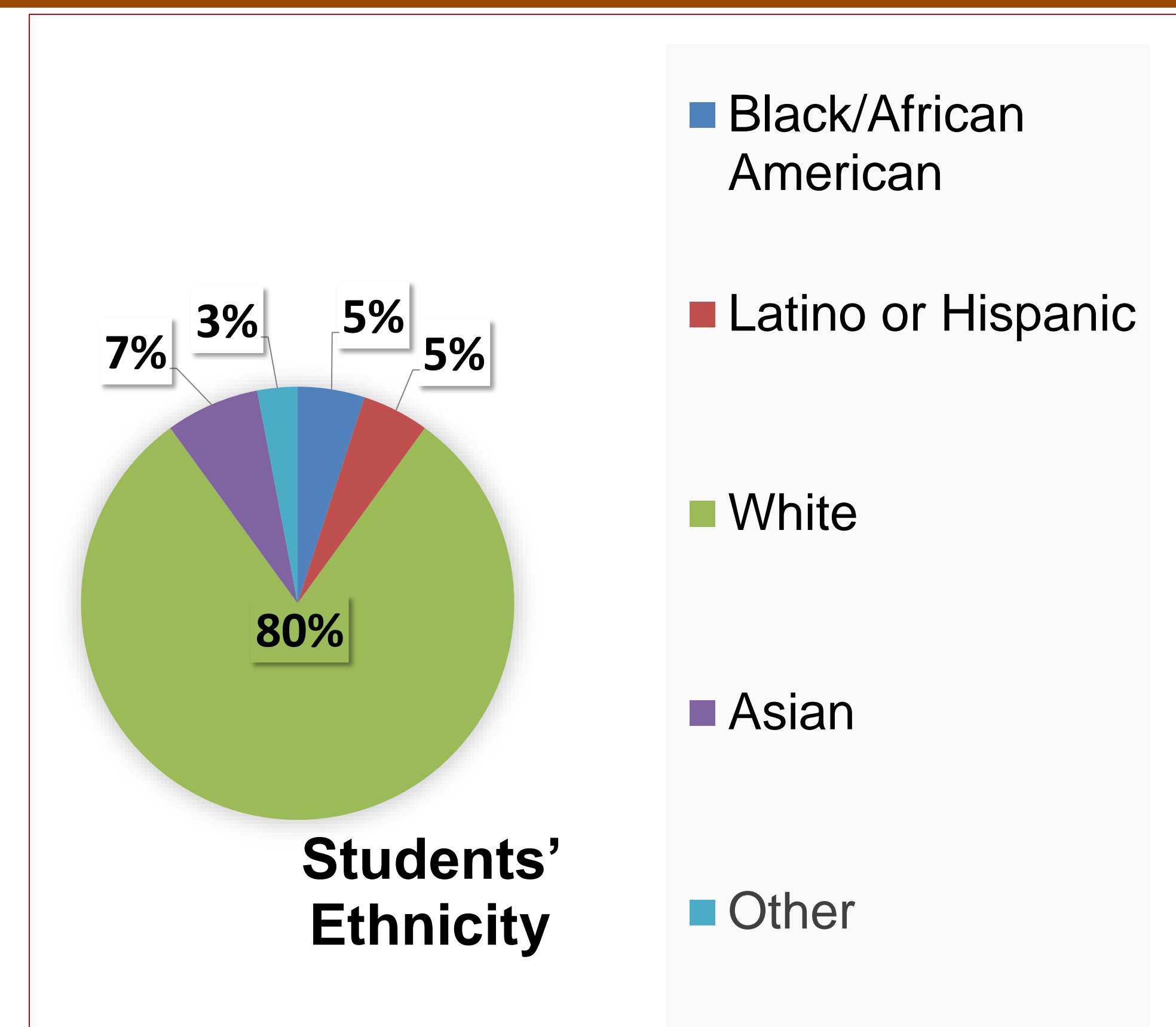
- Purposive sample; Student Nurses in the Clinical Major
- Academic level: Junior (n = 103); Senior (n = 109)



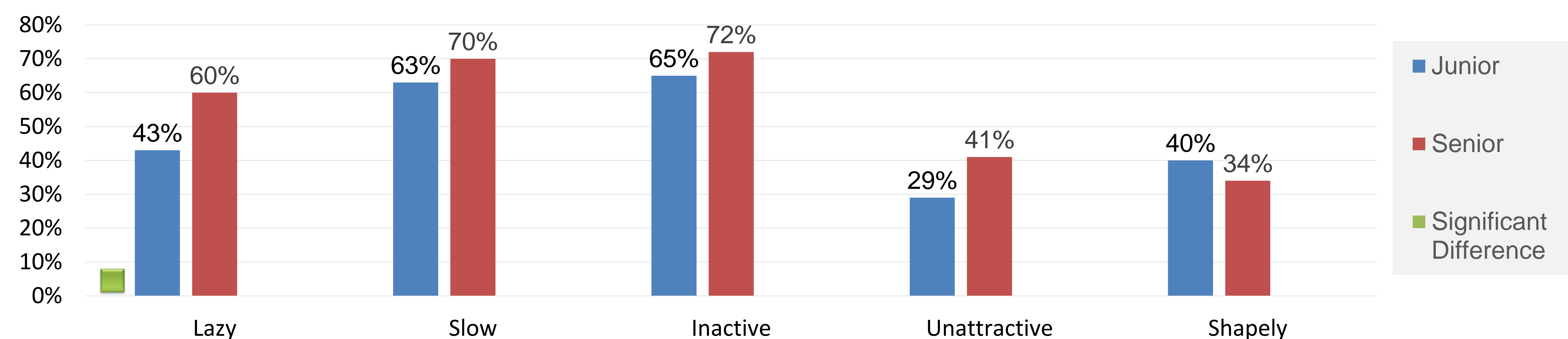
### Students' Gender



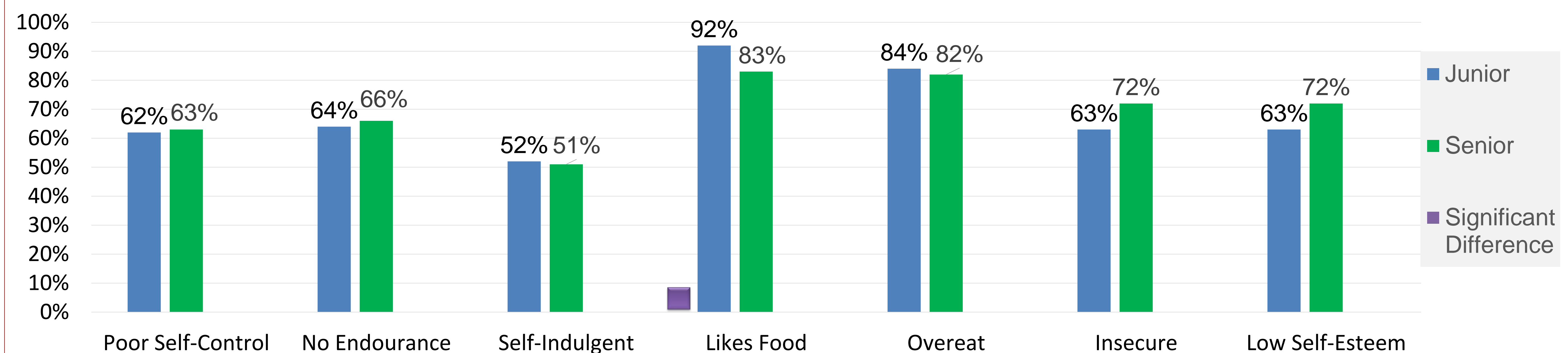
Junior and Senior nursing students reported similar negative perceptions of overweight children ( $t(211) = 1.566, p = 0.119$ ).



### Students' Perceptions of Physical Attributes of Children who are Overweight



### Students' Perceptions of Psychosocial Attributes of Children who are Overweight



## Discussion

### Implications for Nursing

- Findings suggest that student nurses in the clinical major, regardless of junior or senior academic level, report having negative perceptions about children who are overweight.
- It might be beneficial to ensure that student nurses receive evidence-based information about children who are overweight.

### Further Research

- Examine students' perception about overweight children following receipt of evidence based information on children who are overweight

- Examine cross-cultural perceptions of student nurses across academic levels about overweight children.
- Conduct a longitudinal study to identify the trends in student nurses' perception about overweight children across academic levels.

### Conclusion

- Responses indicated that the majority of students had perceptions of overweight children that are not evidence based.
- Senior and junior level nursing students had similar negative perceptions about children who are overweight.