

Improving Health Behaviors of Pediatric Cancer Survivors with Obesity During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Barriers, Opportunities, and Measurement Considerations



Marilyn Stern,^{1,2} Heewon L. Gray,¹ Sandra Soca Lozano,¹ Acadia W. Buro,² Rachel Sauls^{1,2}

¹ University of South Florida, ² H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center



MOFFITT
CANCER CENTER

Results suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted pediatric cancer survivors' **lifestyle behaviors, recruitment, and engagement**. Nevertheless, preliminary findings suggest that participants are making positive health behavior change.

Background

- Prevalence of overweight/obesity in pediatric cancer survivors (PCS) is 40-50%, yet few behavioral RCTs target this high-risk population
- Little research is available on healthy lifestyle interventions for PCS during the pandemic

Purpose

Examine the impact of COVID-19 on participants and research staff in our multi-site randomized controlled trial, NOURISH-T+ and whether an intervention targeting parents as agents of change can promote healthy eating and exercise in PCS

Methods

SAMPLE

- 116 dyads of PCS (M=10 years) and their parents
- Mean baseline child BMI%ile: 95th

INTERVENTION

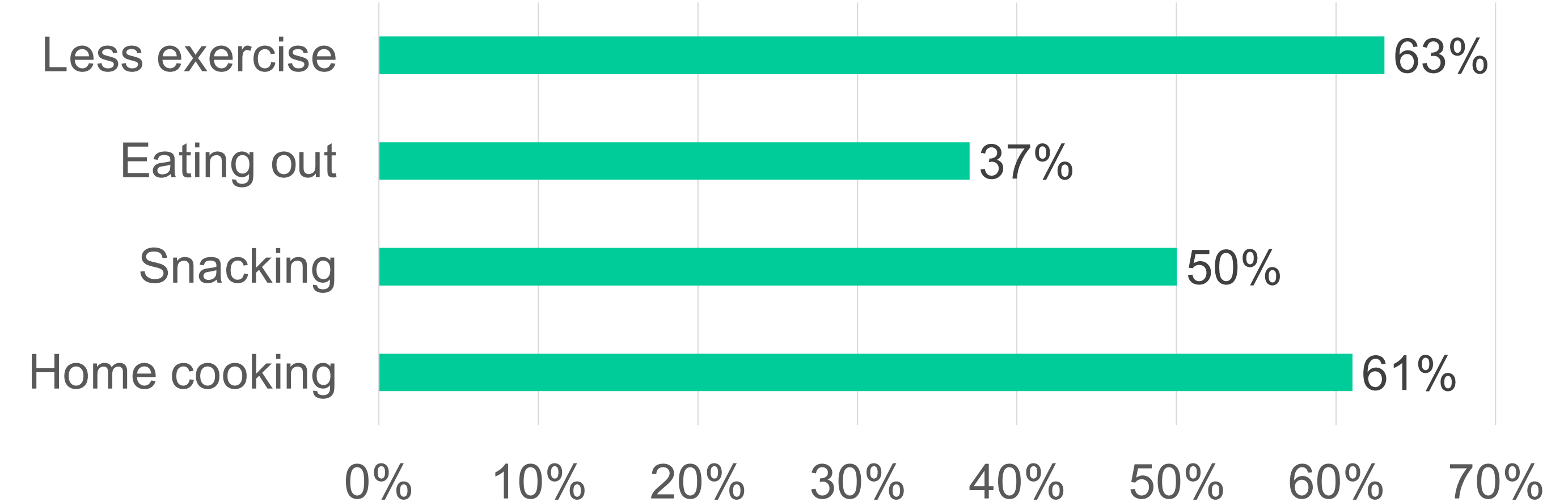
- NOURISH-T+: 6-week manualized healthy eating & exercise intervention sessions vs. 1 session Enhanced Usual Care via Zoom

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

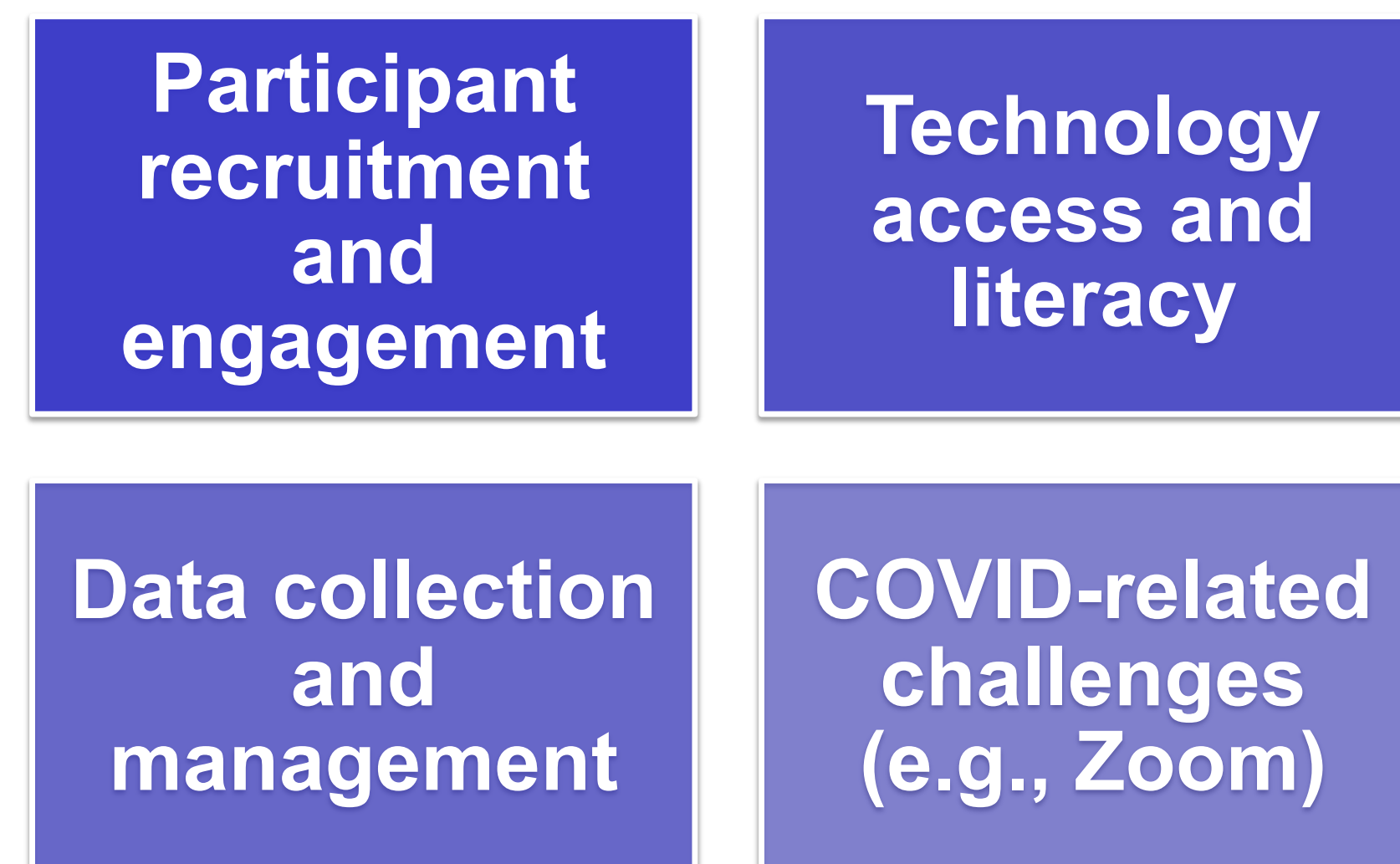
- Descriptive statistics of post-assessment surveys (baseline demographics, COVID-19 factors, lifestyle behavior changes)
- Thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from research staff

Results

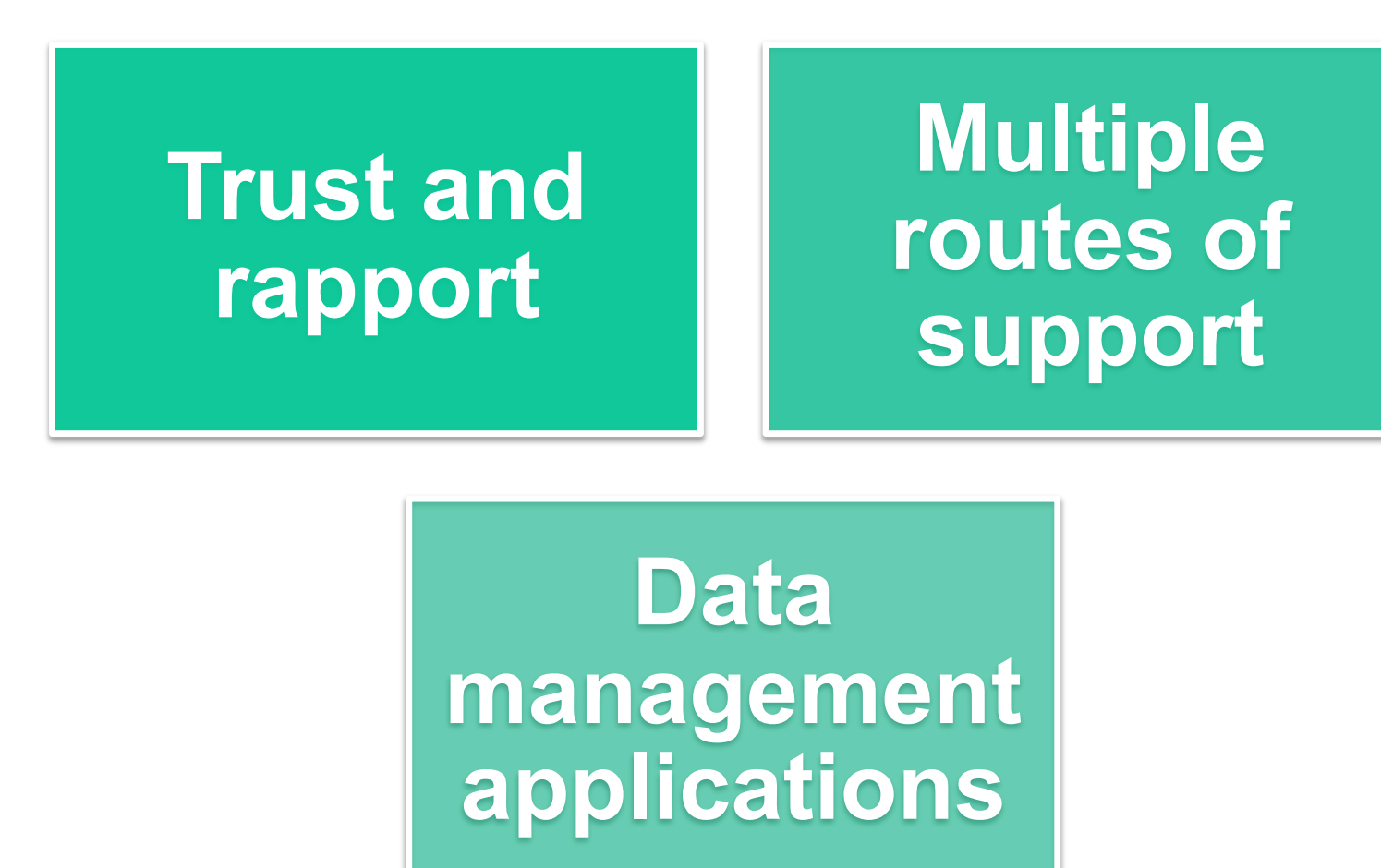
BEHAVIOR CHANGES DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



BARRIERS DUE TO COVID-19



STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS



BEHAVIOR CHANGE

“This program motivated me to join a water aerobics class that I love. I am drinking more water and eating more fruits. My son is playing outside more [now] that the weather is nice and is back in school. He is also drinking more water and eating healthier. We are keeping more fruits, cheese, and baby carrots around for snacks” – Parent

Conclusion

- COVID-19 should be considered at multiple timepoints throughout the analysis of trials implemented during this time due to the pandemic's unique effects on trial implementation and participant experiences