



A Study on the Knowledge, Awareness, Perceptions and Behaviour (KAPB) of Students of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (UWI-STA) Towards Climate Change and its Impact on Human Health

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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Climate change (CC) is defined as long-term weather changes in the Earth's climate.
- ❖ CC has been linked to increased global temperatures.
- ❖ This affects human health both directly and indirectly:
 - Directly, via increased risk of cardiovascular, respiratory, and vector-borne diseases
 - Indirectly, via reduced agricultural crop yields and accessibility to healthcare due to extreme weather events.
- ❖ Studies show that spreading awareness on the health impacts of CC encourages motivation towards mitigation (1).
- ❖ Early awareness of climate change and its health impacts is necessary for future generations to mitigate its effects.

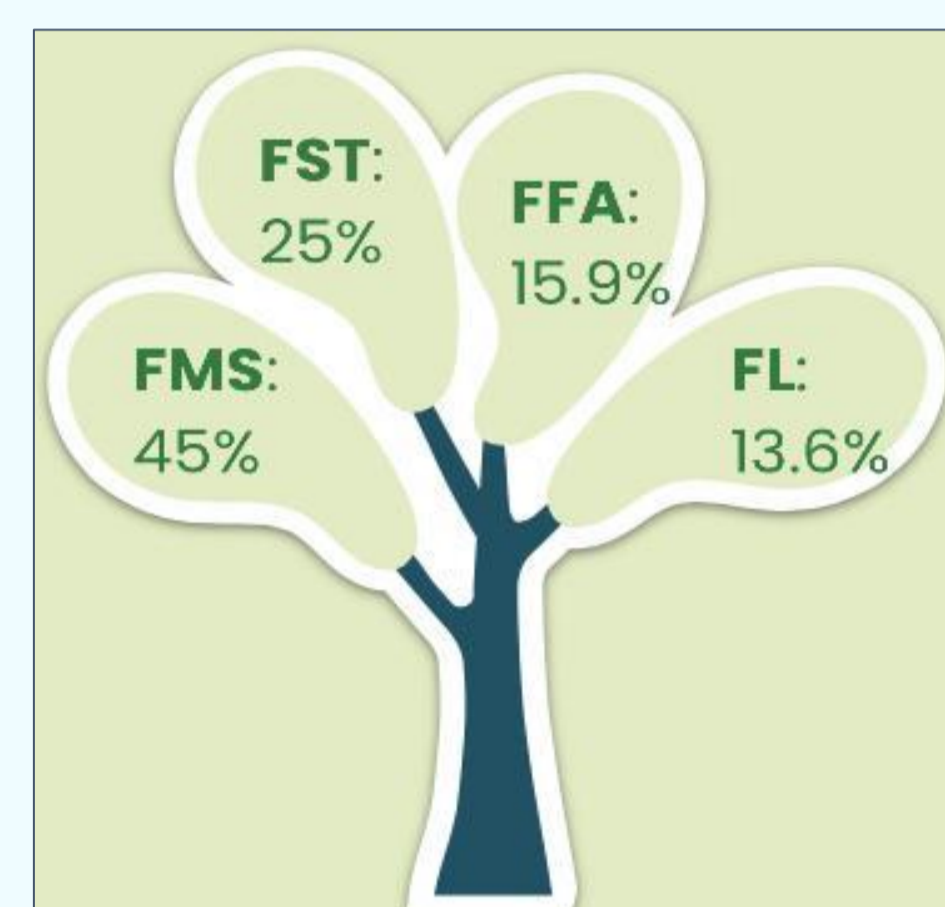
OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To determine how knowledgeable students from different faculties of The UWI-STA are on CC and its health impacts in the Caribbean.
- ❖ To identify factors (course material, media, etc.) that contribute to their knowledge on CC and its health impacts in the Caribbean.
- ❖ To identify methods to improve awareness of UWI students on CC and its health impacts in the Caribbean.

METHODOLOGY

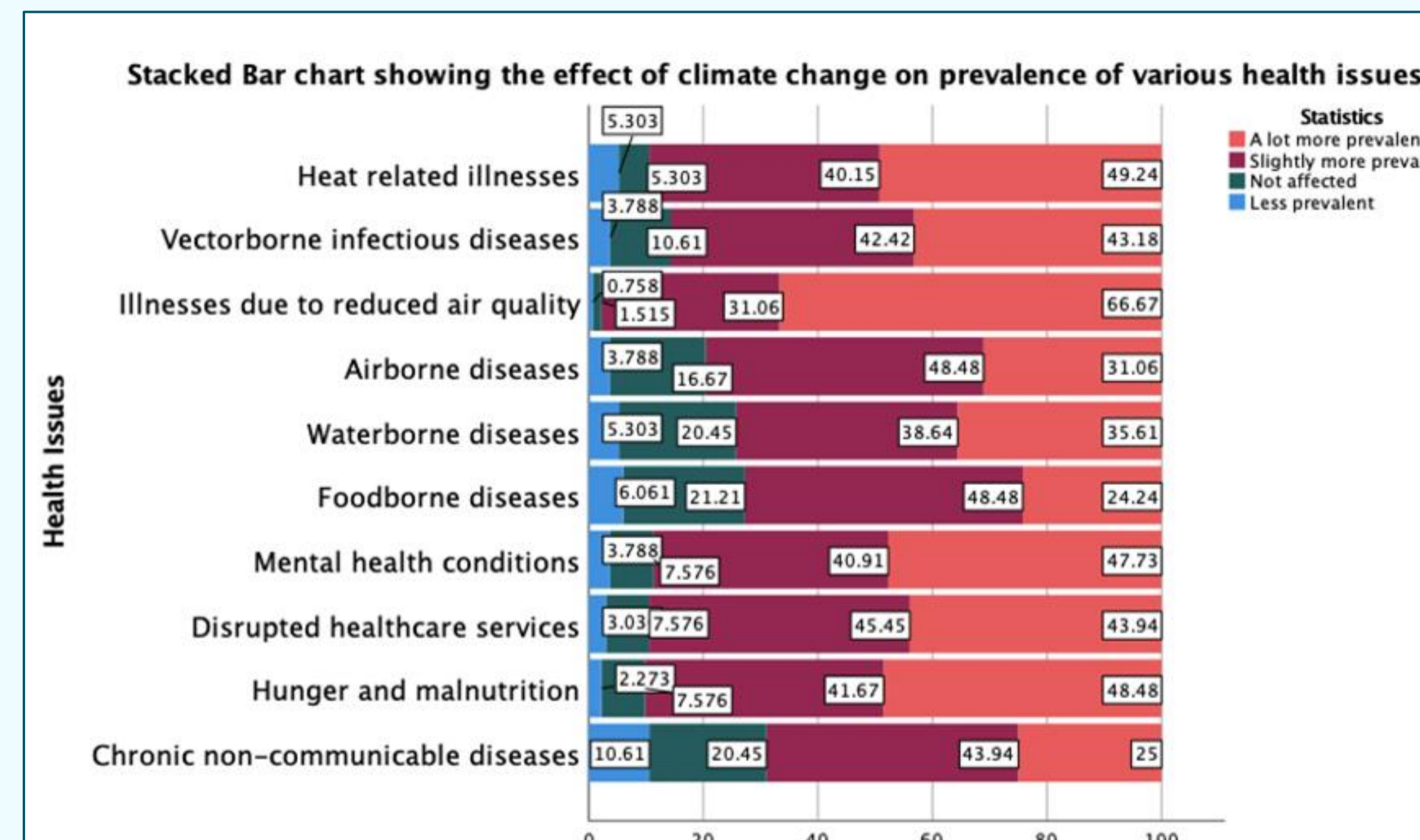
- ❖ **Study Design, Population & Setting:** Analytical, cross-sectional study carried out on 132 participants who were final year undergraduate students of 4 faculties-Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), Faculty of Law (FL), Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) and Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) at the UWI- STA.
- ❖ **Data Collection:** Questionnaires were distributed using snowball, systematic and voluntary response sampling via social media platforms, emails and UWI Marketing and Communications.
- ❖ **Data Analysis:** Statistical Package of Social Sciences, PSPPP, was used with chi-squared tests and relative risk analysis.

RESULTS

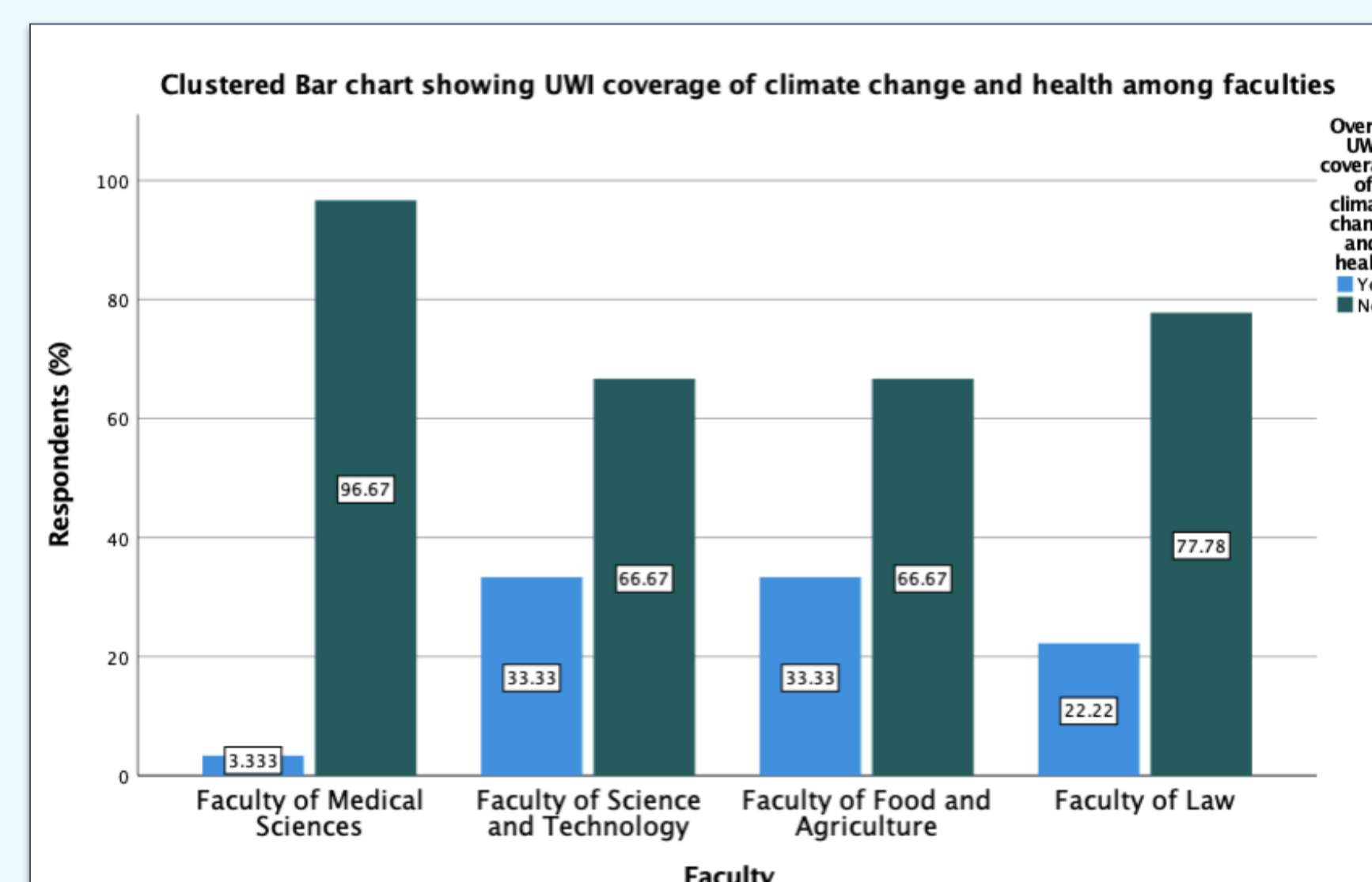


Most respondents: FMS
Least respondents: FL

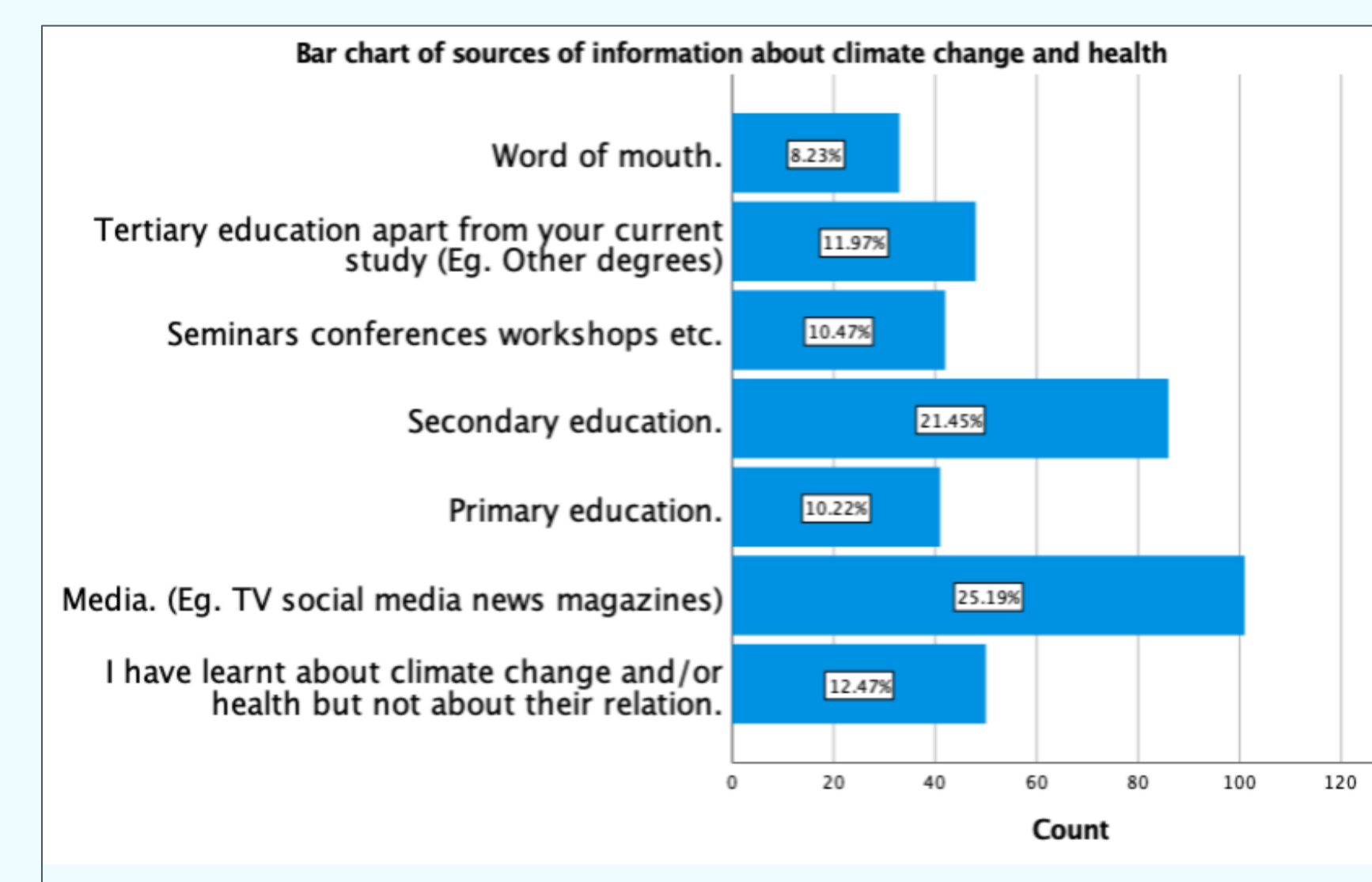
- ❖ Only 10.6% of students correctly identified the cause of CC as human only.
- ❖ This was best identified within FST (15.2%).



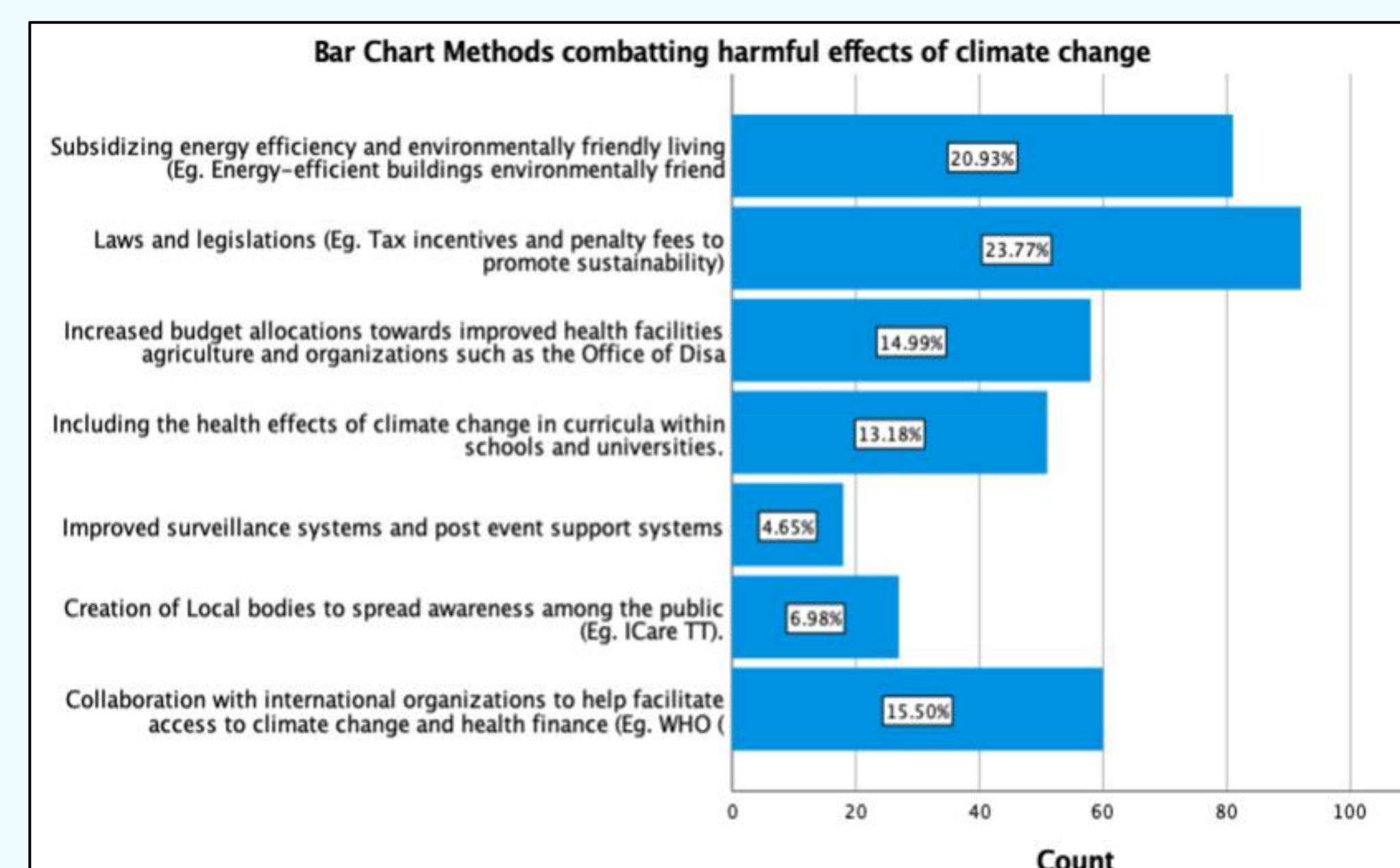
- Majority of respondents reported that CC will increase the prevalence of most health issues:
- ❖ Most *incorrectly* indicated air-borne diseases will be slightly more prevalent. Studies show it will not be affected
 - ❖ Most *correctly* indicated NCDs will be slightly more prevalent. Studies show that this is usually not recognized.



FMS students had the least coverage of CC and health in their curricula



Media was the students' primary source of information about CC and health, outside The UWI



Students considered 'Laws and legislations' as the most effective method to combat CC

Ways in which The UWI can raise awareness about CC and its link to health:

- **Hosting:**
 - seminars/webinars
 - social media campaigns
- Addition of the topic to degree curricula.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ The anthropogenic causes of CC were not well understood amongst UWI students. FFA least understood this despite covering more CC content than the other faculties.
- ❖ FMS students were more knowledgeable on mental health impacts of CC than students from other faculties.
- ❖ Around half of the UWI students reported that CC was likely to increase the prevalence of a number of health issues. They accurately recognized the increased prevalence of NCDs but were not aware that air-borne diseases would be unaffected by CC.
- ❖ FMS has no courses dedicated to climate change.
- ❖ One-third of FST and FFA respondents stated that they had covered the link between CC and health in their UWI courses even though their course outlines did not mention this coverage.
- ❖ Among and within faculties, coverage of CC and its link to health was inconsistent.
- ❖ There was no association between UWI's coverage of CC and students' knowledge of CC.
- ❖ Students' knowledge on CC stemmed primarily from the media.

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Knowledge of the links between climate change and health was limited among final year UWI students from the 4 faculties.
- ❖ Curriculum coverage of both CC and health is needed to correctly link the two.
- ❖ Curricula in the 4 faculties, especially FMS, should be urgently revised to include CC and health content.

REFERENCES

1. Halady I, Rao P. Does awareness of climate change lead to behavioral change? International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management. 2010;2(1):6-22. DOI: 10.1108/17568691011020229.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ❖ We would like to thank Ms. Marsha Ivey and Prof. Christopher Oura for their guidance in helping us complete this project.