

Exploring the Wellness Behaviors of Health Science Librarians

As members of a helping profession, librarians make a point of being kind to others. But as Julia Sollenberger said in her 2017 Janet Doe lecture:

“How kind are we to ourselves?”

We translated that query into this research question:

“Is having access to high-quality health information associated with a high level of wellness behaviors among health science librarians?”

Background and Significance

- Chronic, non-communicable diseases are associated with many causes of disability and poor health. Worldwide, “non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading causes of death and disability globally, killing more than three in five people worldwide and responsible for more than half of the global burden of disease.” (Kaiser Family Foundation Global Policy Fact Sheet / accessed online February 1, 2019)
- Risk factors for many of these noncommunicable conditions can be reduced through lifestyle changes including healthy eating, exercise, and community connections. (Kaiser Family Foundation Global Policy Fact Sheet / accessed online February 1, 2019)
- If a correlation between access to good quality health information and performance of healthy behaviors can be established, then providing more access to this information might have a positive effect on the wider community***

Methods

We developed a mixed-method study with these features:

- Seven demographic items
- Two workplace wellness items
- Three items that assessed access to health information and awareness of healthy behavior recommendations
- Seven specific healthy behavior practice items
- Three open-ended questions designed to learn about the barriers, facilitators, and possible connections between the profession of librarianship and the practice of wellness behaviors

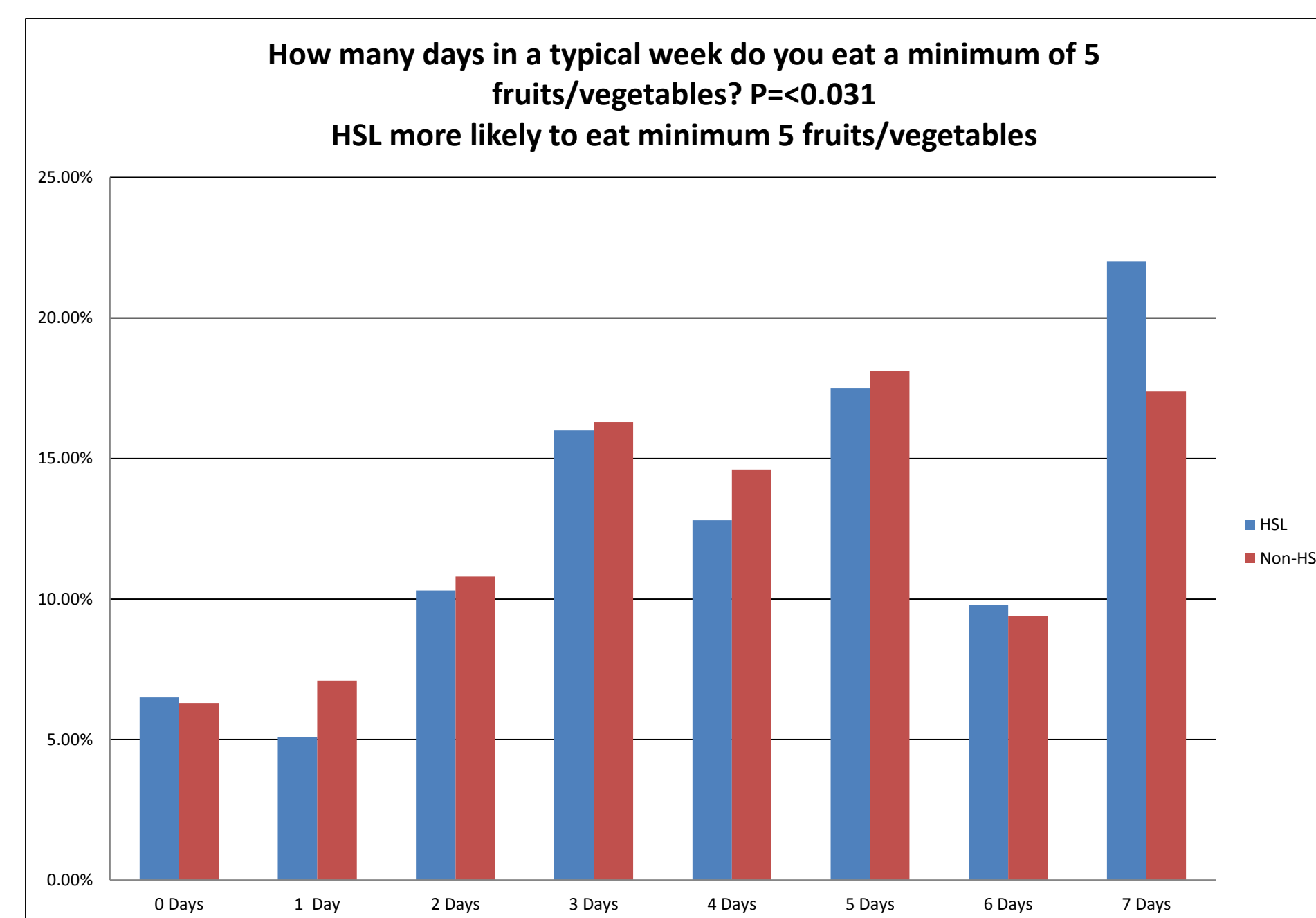
We deployed the survey:

- We opened the survey on March 7, 2018 and closed it on April 25, 2018
- 49 library associations agreed to help us distribute our survey via email
- These organizations represented public, school, academic, and health science libraries
- MAC-MLA grant funding to offer token incentives to participate

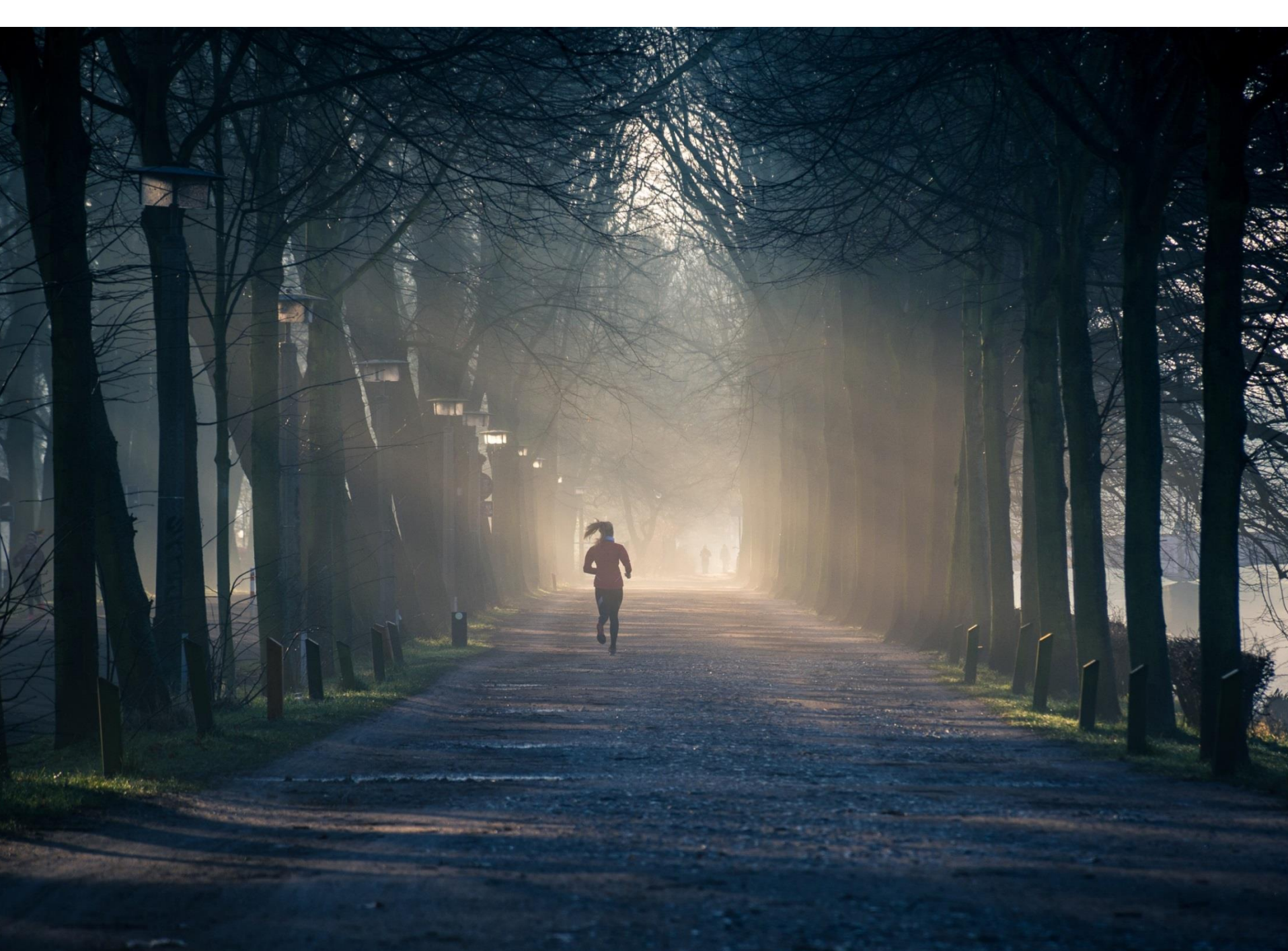
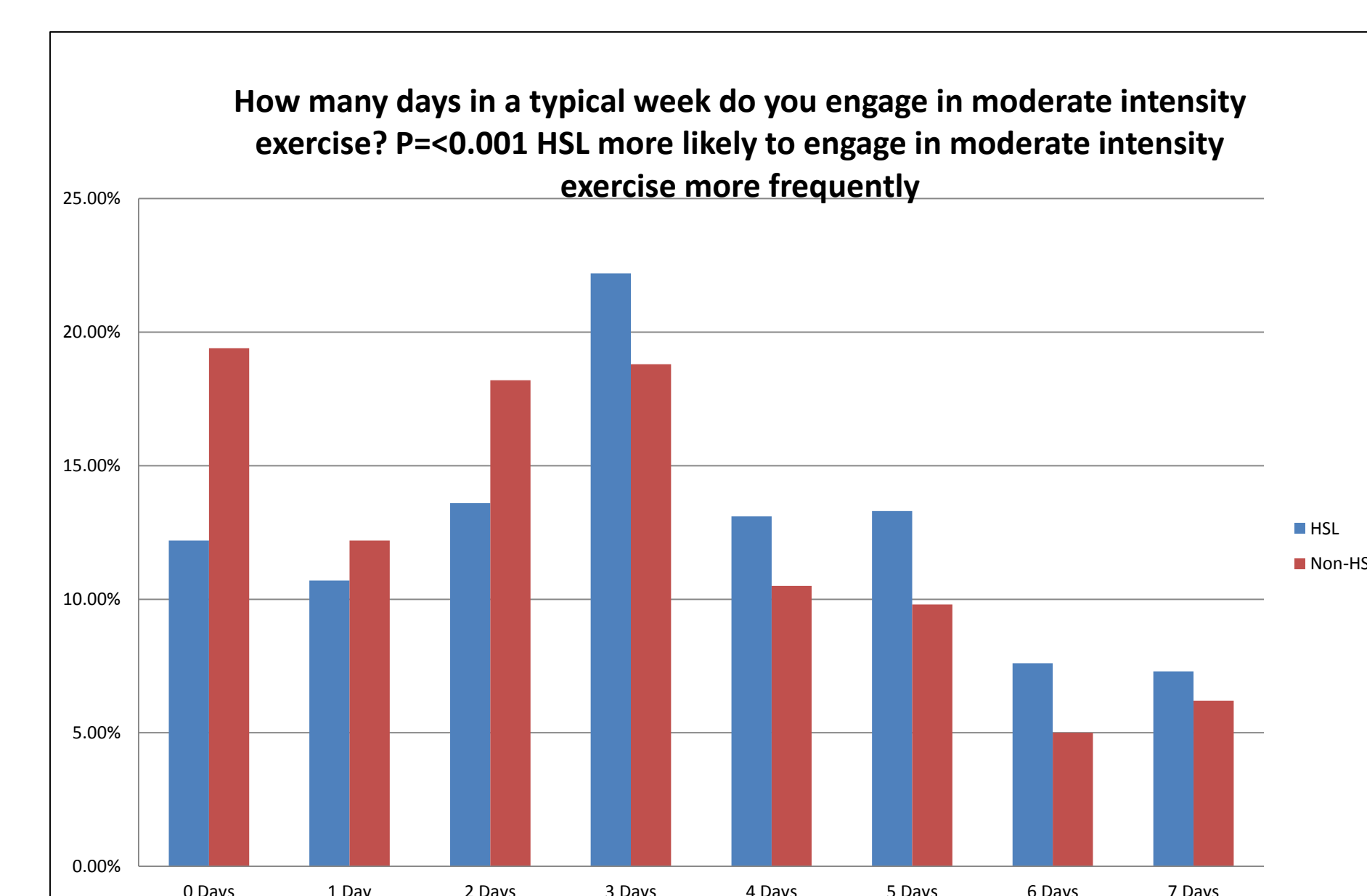
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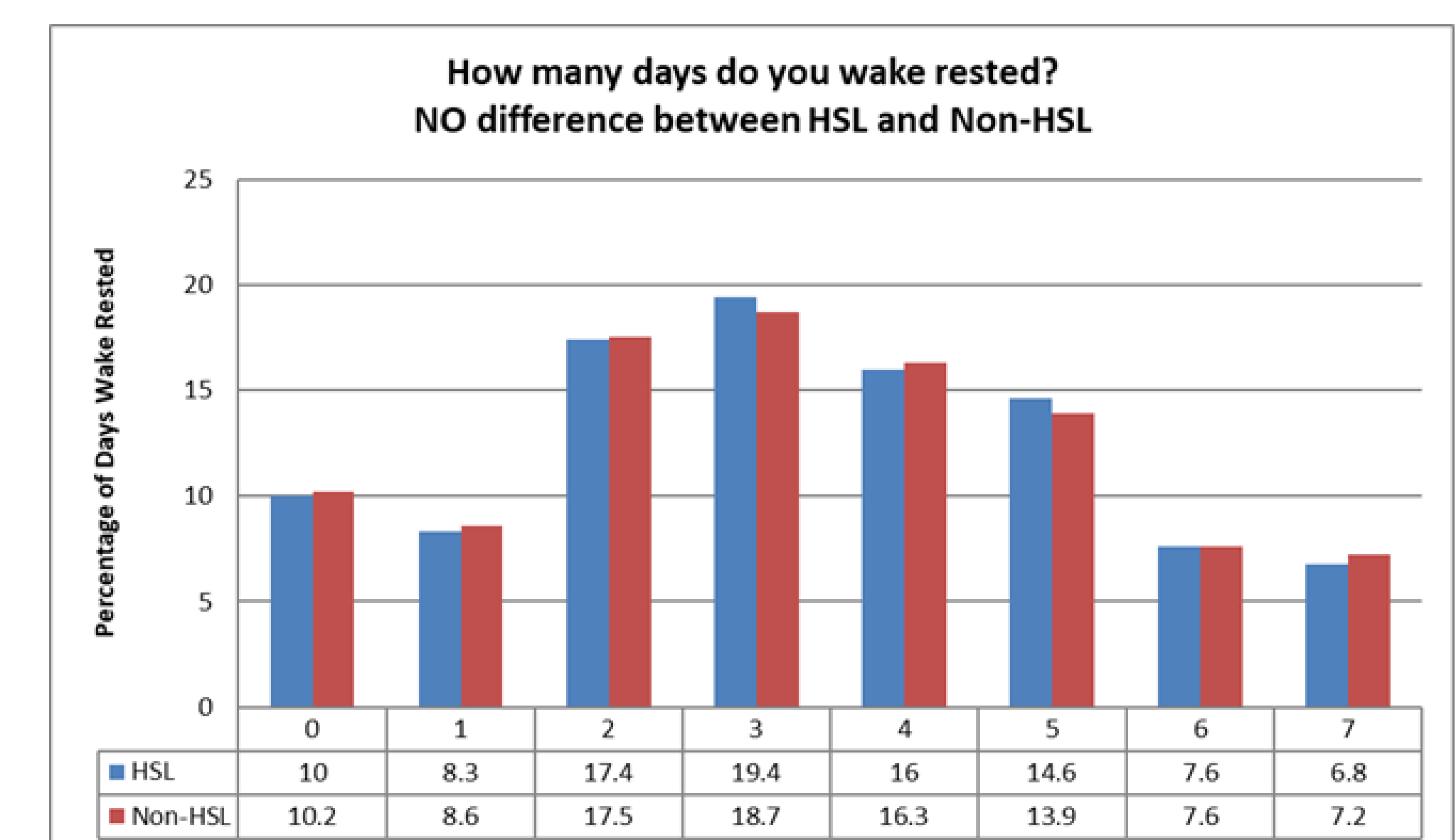
Health Science Librarians are MORE likely to regularly eat fruits and vegetables



Health Science Librarians are MORE likely to engage in regular exercise



Only 7% of all librarians, HSL and non-HSL alike, wake rested every day!



Preliminary Summary of Results

Quantitative Results:

- NO significant demographic differences between HSL and non-HSL librarians
- HSL more likely to have access to high quality health information
- HSL more likely to frequently access quality health information
- Access to high quality health information and frequency of access to health information weakly correlated to some wellness behaviors

Qualitative Results:

- Lack of time, overwork, stress, and fatigue were frequently listed as barriers to wellness activities
- Librarianship skills of access, appraisal, and application of information were listed as connections between wellness activities and the profession



Vegetable and Sleep photo: Fred King

Exercise Photo from Leap Health
<https://leaphealth.com.au/exercise-for-the-individual/backlit-exercise-fog-878151/>