

Understanding perceptions of physical harm among young adults using a geospatial mobile dating app

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Introduction

- Young adults may have increased risk of physical and sexual violence during college years
- Mobile dating apps increase relationship options for young adults
- Mobile dating app features such as matching based on shared contacts, may influence perceptions of how potential dates may result in physical harm

Objective

- Explore perceptions of physical harm among users of a specific mobile dating app and how these risk influence their behaviors

Methods

• Students 18-24 years at a large urban university (N=1,322)

• Online, self-administered survey

Who?

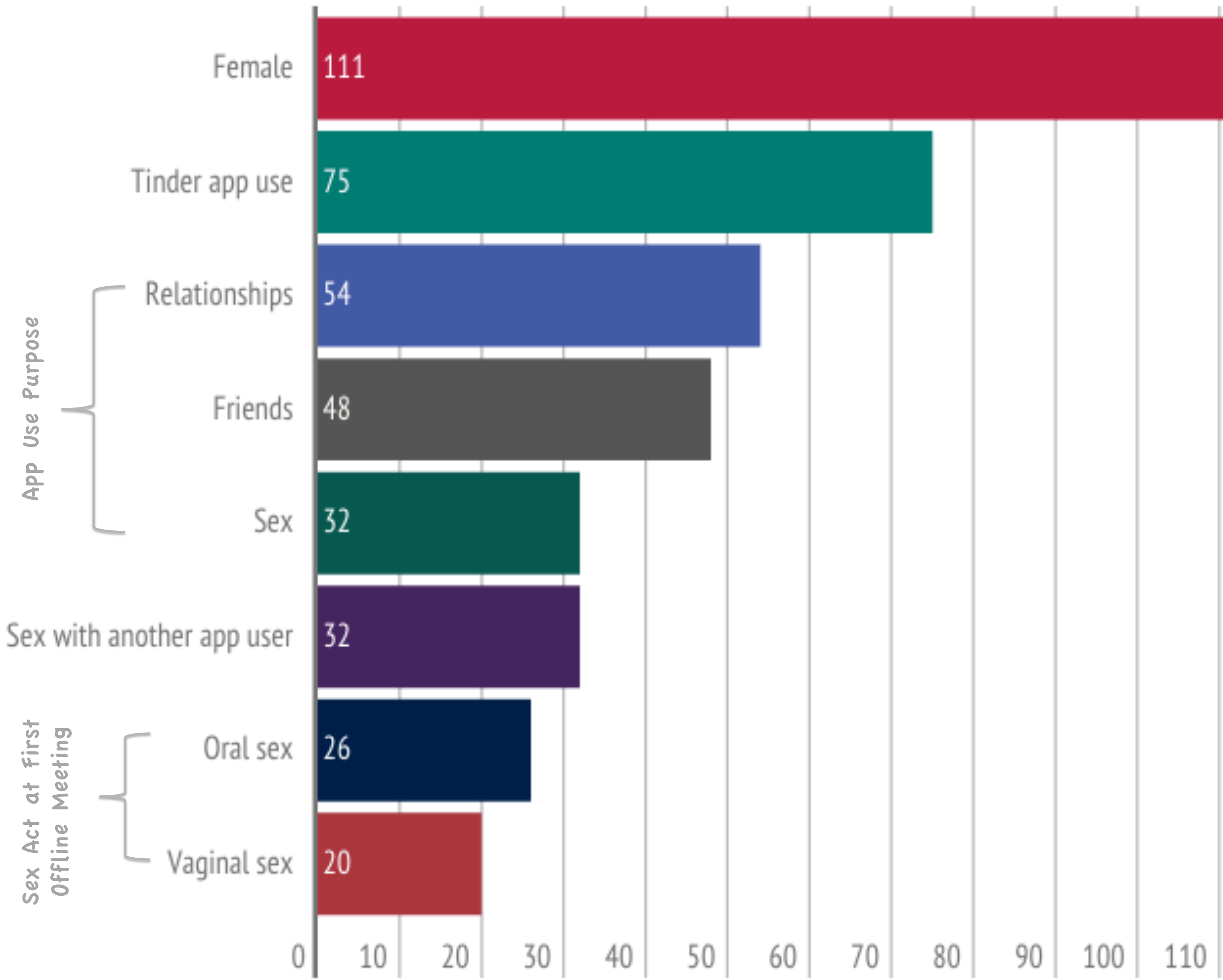
What?

• Tested the association between mobile dating app use and perceptions of harm from other app users

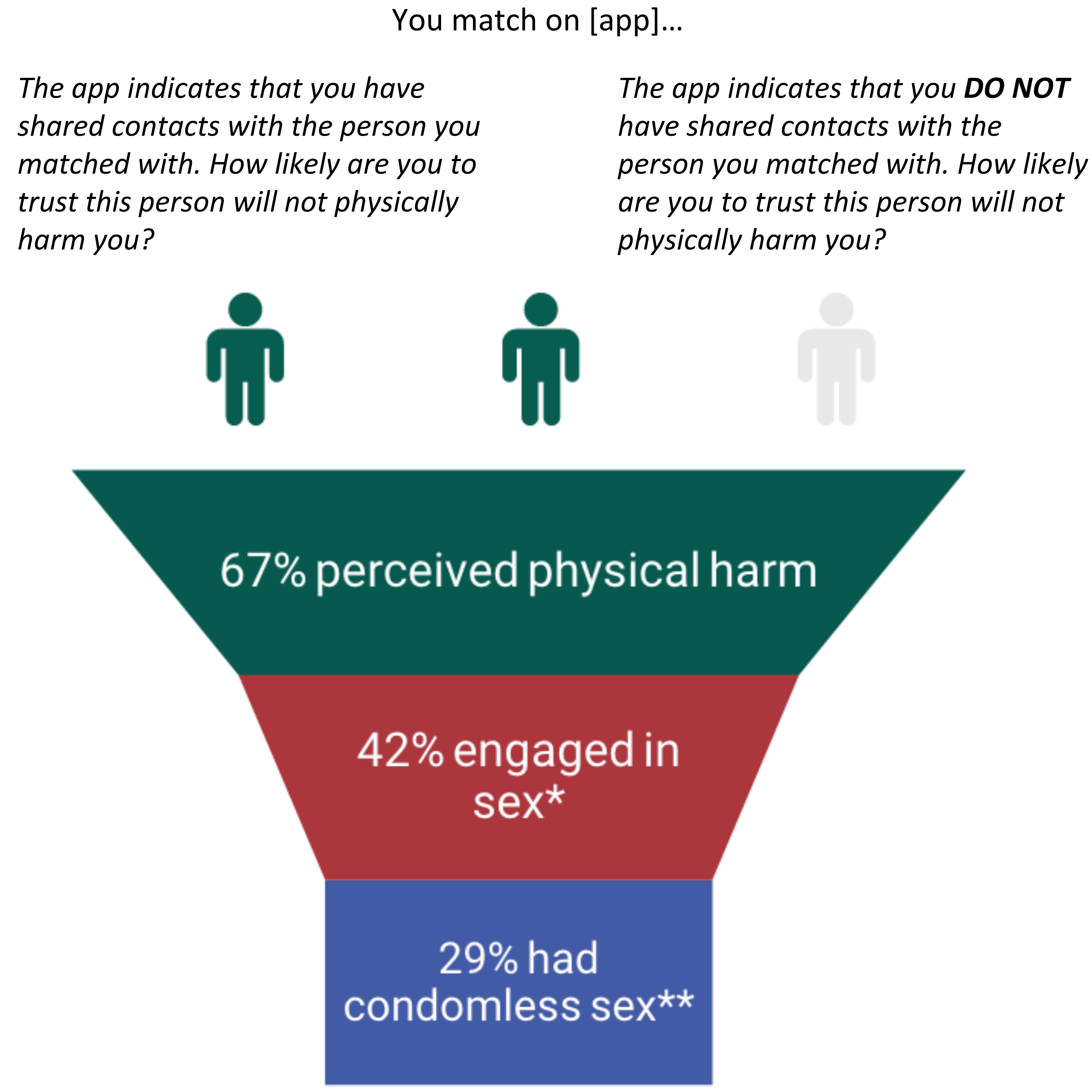
How?

Results

Characteristics of Sample Participants (n=161)



Perceptions of Physical Harm and Behaviors



*At first offline encounter with another app user
 ** At first sex encounter with another app user

Conclusions

- Mobile app users expressed safety concerns to e-dating scenarios regarding offline meetings with potential dates
- Although participants had safety concerns, more than a third of the respondents engaged in sexual activity early in offline encounters
- Casual sex encounters with people met on an app may increase risk of physical and sexual violence
- Findings suggest that the mobile app's social features may change how perceived harm affects sexual risk behaviors

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