

MSU-Bozeman Off-Campus-Living Student Knowledge Survey

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Abstract

Using an online and anonymous survey, firsthand information from current student renters was gathered in order to understand and remedy some of the health issues most common in Bozeman's college renter community. Not surprisingly, the heavily taught-about health risks were familiar to the respondents, and the less discussed risks were unknown. Possible informational resources were also identified as potentially useful or disregarded, allowing the university to fine tune its future actions with this issue.

Introduction

Poor housing conditions and adverse health effects are proven to be correlated time and time again. The most common health risks are respiratory illnesses such as asthma, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, neurological damage, and general injury. All of these ailments can be connected to the presence of mold, lead paint, or asbestos, different pest infestations, and inadequate fire, carbon monoxide, food and water safety. With this survey, an idea of which of these issues are most prevalent within the Bozeman community was created, as well as solutions addressing the gaps in awareness.

Methods

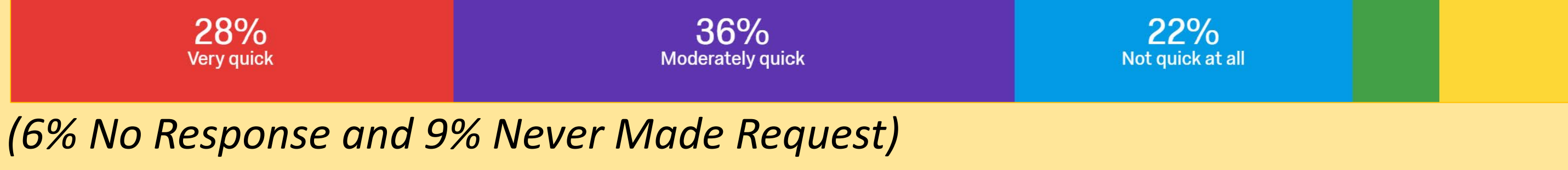
Using the online interface Qualtrics to create the survey, it was distributed via email in small groups to a scientifically selected group of 1000 students with the additional benefit of earning ChampChange. The survey itself focused heavily on familiarity with common health risks associated with households, but also inquired into the knowledge of renters' services provided by the university, as well as interest in potentially provided services. After having the survey open for 15 days, and sending out one reminder email after 11 days, there was a 23% response rate from all students, and a data report was generated using Qualtrics' software. Without receiving data for current medical issues present in the households, correlations between health risks and currently affected health are difficult to make; however, knowing which risks lack suitable awareness allows new information to be appropriately distributed.

Results

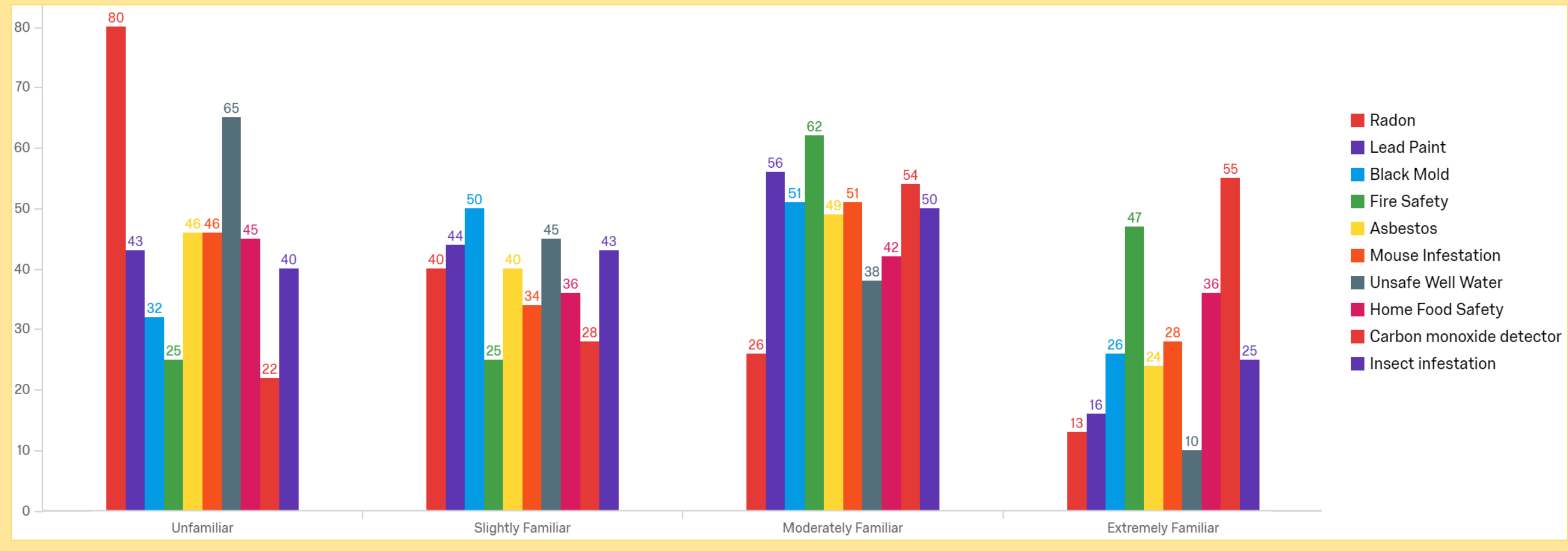
Respondent Demographics

82% are current *undergraduate students and renters*, **51%** rent from *private landlord*, **40%** rent from *rental agency*

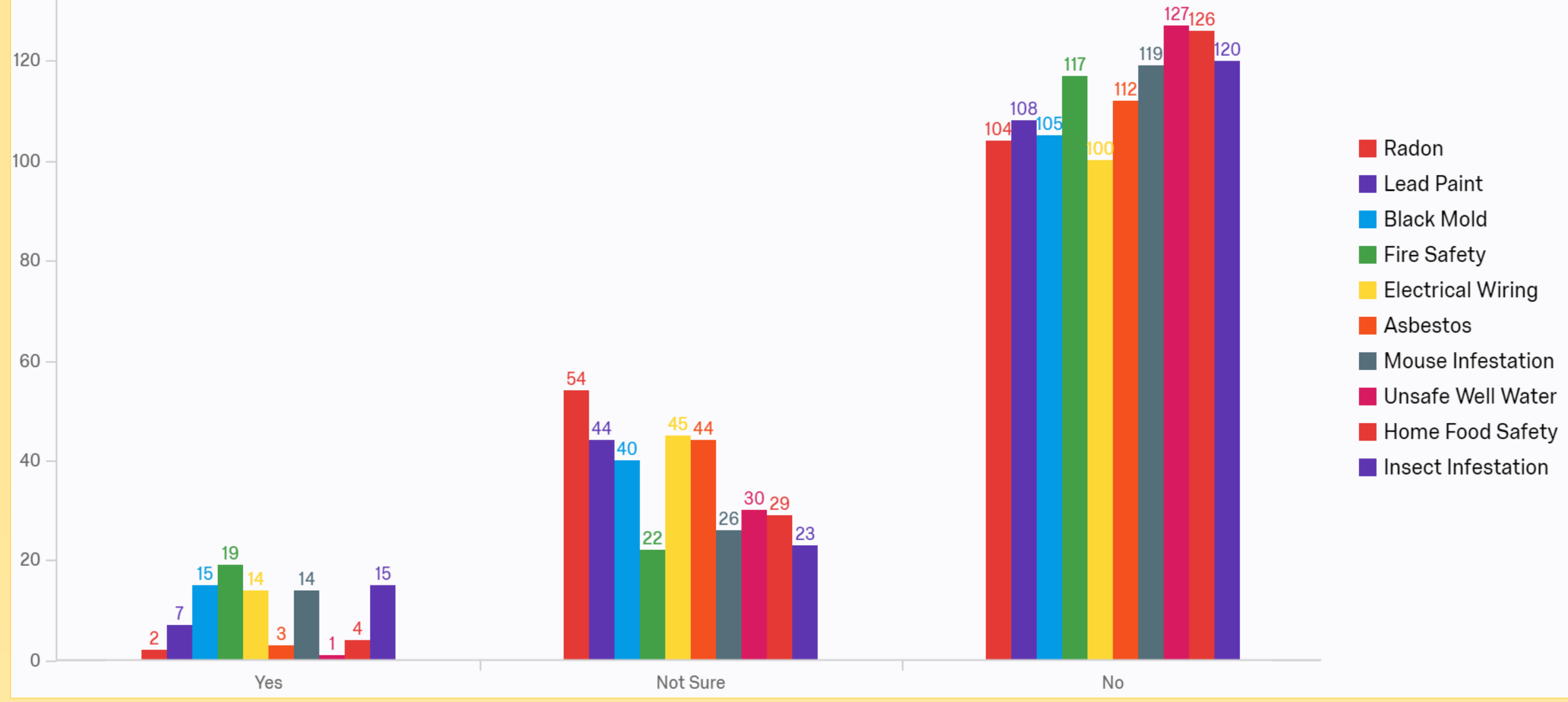
Maintenance Response Time:



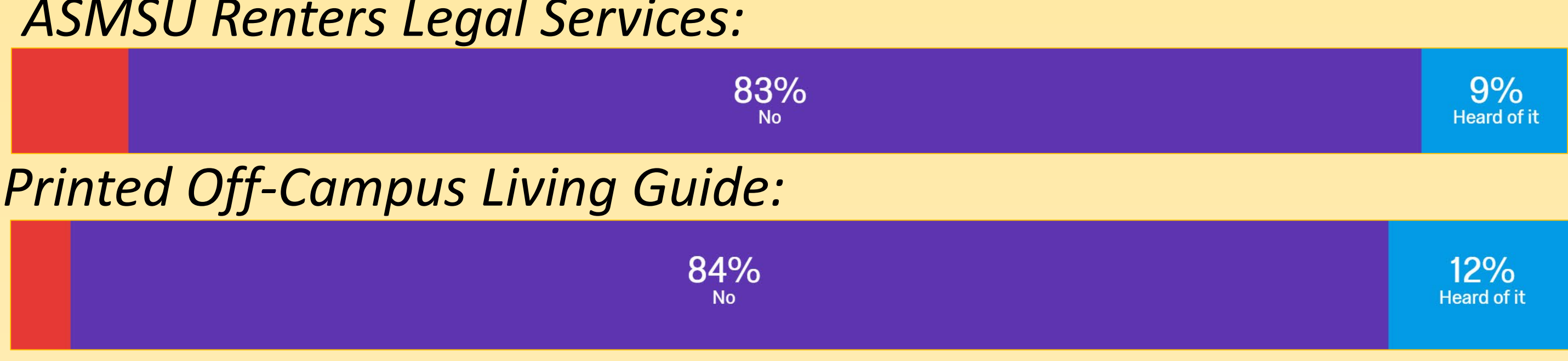
Familiarity with Common Household Triggers



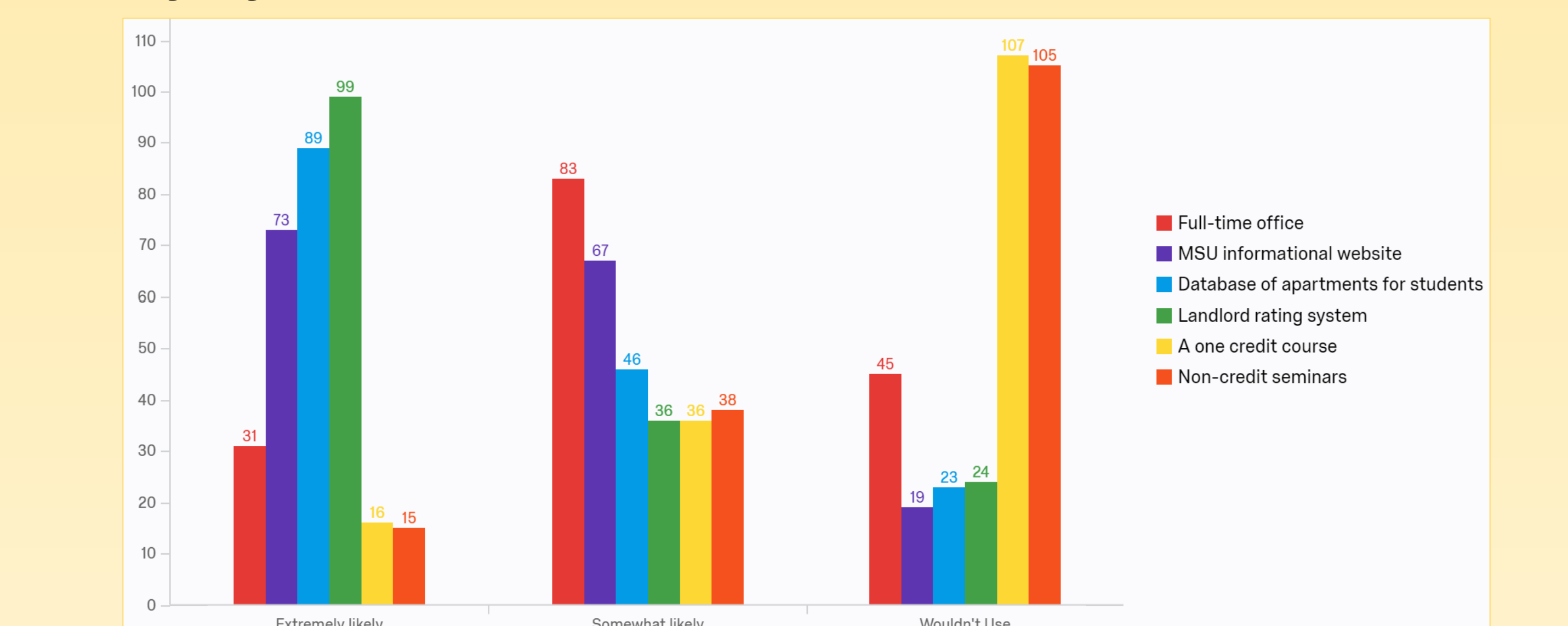
Currently Known Household Triggers in Residence



Familiarity with Preexisting Informational Resources



Utility of Potential Resources



Discussion

The most common triggers found in Bozeman households prove to be *black mold* and inadequate *fire safety*, but there is an uncertainty of *radon* presence. Luckily, there is a significant portion of households with none of these triggers present, indicating that the quality of living in most of these houses is fairly high. In terms of familiarity, many of the respondents were *moderately familiar* with all of these triggers, leaving *radon* the most *unfamiliarity*. This result affirms education on most of these issues, but a moderate or lack of familiarity implies room for growth in understanding. Unsurprisingly, *fire* and *carbon monoxide safety* were the most *familiar* health risks, most likely due to the fact that these issues are the most heavily taught about. The lack of awareness surrounding preexisting resources verified that most of the rental services provided by the university are woefully under-advertised, a notion that can easily be dealt with. The potential resources that garnered the most support were the *informational renters' website*, *database of housing units*, and the *landlord rating system*. These answers provide a starting point for the university to bolster their informational services with. On the flip side, the *one-credit course* and *non-credit seminars* were not popular with the respondents, allowing the university to save their funds and time without bothering to implement these programs.

Conclusion

The data acquired from the survey expressed a generally strong knowledge of common housing health risks, with a disparity in attention to MSU-provided resources. The addition of some of the potential resources would conceivably broadcast more useful information to the relevant student population.

Acknowledgments

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