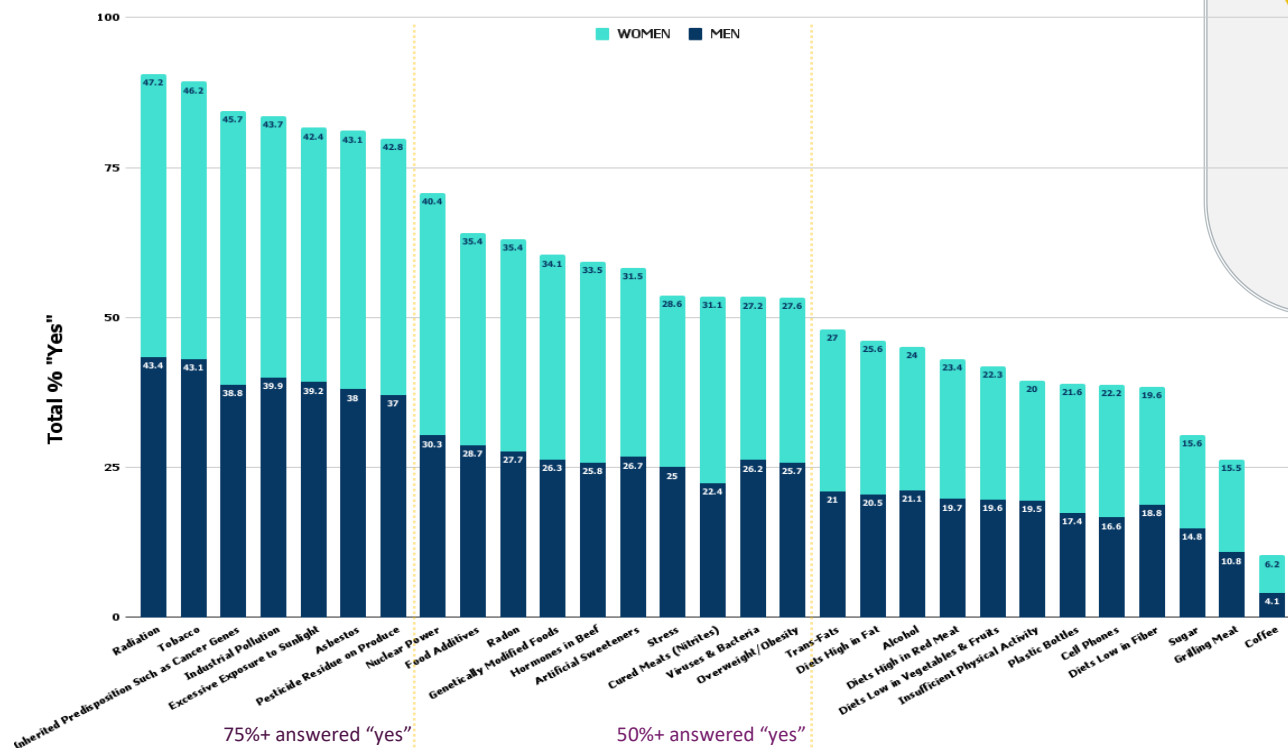# America's Knowledge and Perceptions of Cancer Risks

"Do you believe (ITEM) has a significant effect on whether or not the average person develops cancer?"
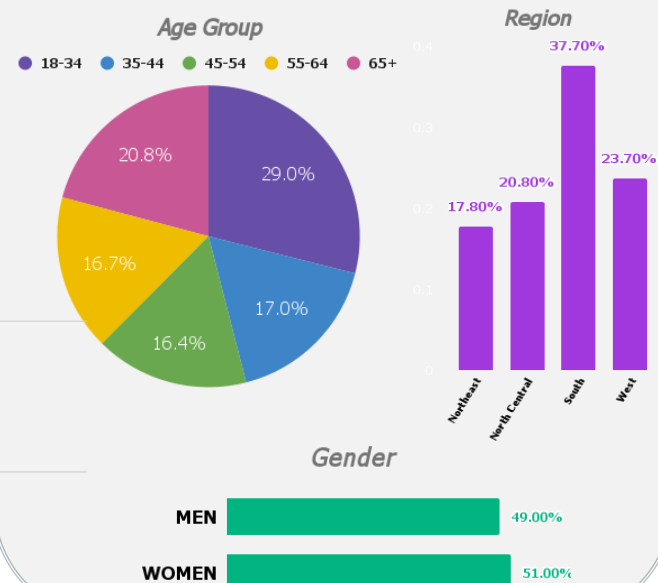
General Takeaways:

- Respondents overwhelmingly reported having knowledge of whether an item has significant impact on cancer development in the average person. However, at least 5% of participants reported that they "don't know" for 14 of the 30 items:
  - *Radon (17.2%), Trans-fats (9.3%), Hormones in Beef (7.8%), Cured Meats (7.8%), Cell Phones (7.1%), Artificial Sweeteners (6.9%), Diets Low in Fiber (6.9%), Genetically Modified Foods (6.3%), Plastic Bottles (6.3%), Food Additives (6.2%), Diets High in Fat (6%), Asbestos (5.5%), Diets High in Red Meat (5.3%), and Grilling Meat (5%)*

- Men and women disagreed on 7 items, but the differences were insignificant (p > .1)
  - *Inherited Predispositions, Genetically Modified Foods, Hormones in Beef, Cured Meats (Nitrites), Diets High in Fat, Plastic Bottles, and Cell Phones*

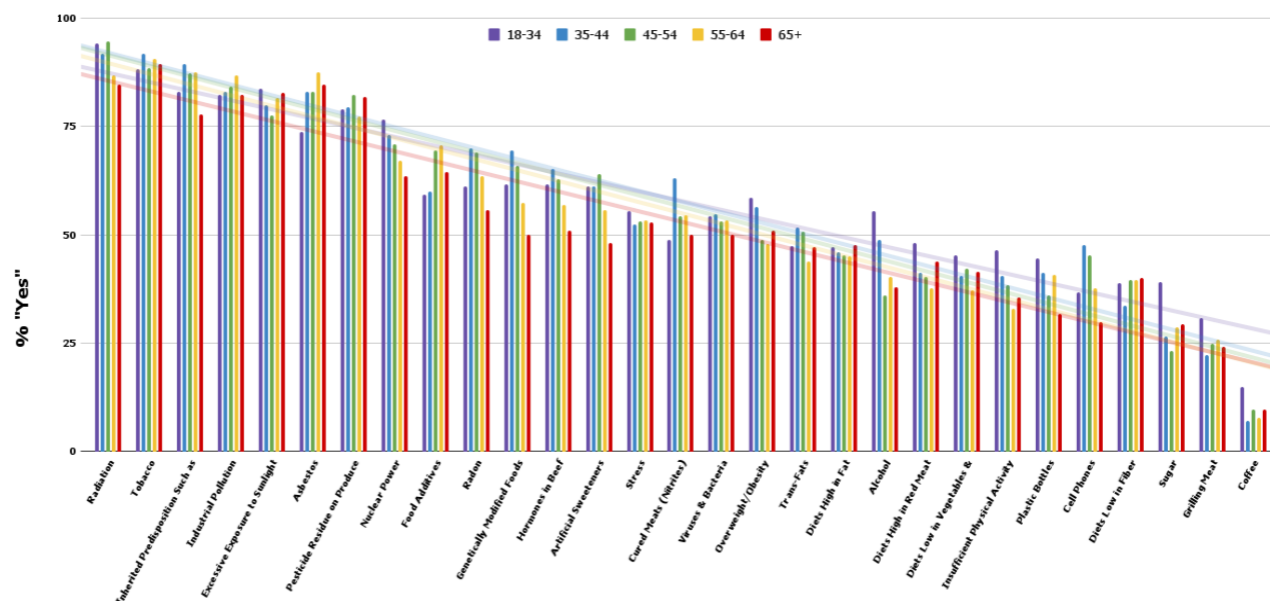*Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development by Gender*

s a m p l e   n = 1 0 0 9

Age Group
- 18-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

Pie chart: 29.0%, 17.0%, 16.4%, 16.7%, 20.8%

Region
- Northeast 17.80%
- North Central 20.80%
- South 37.70%
- West 23.70%

Gender
- MEN 49.00%
- WOMEN 51.00%

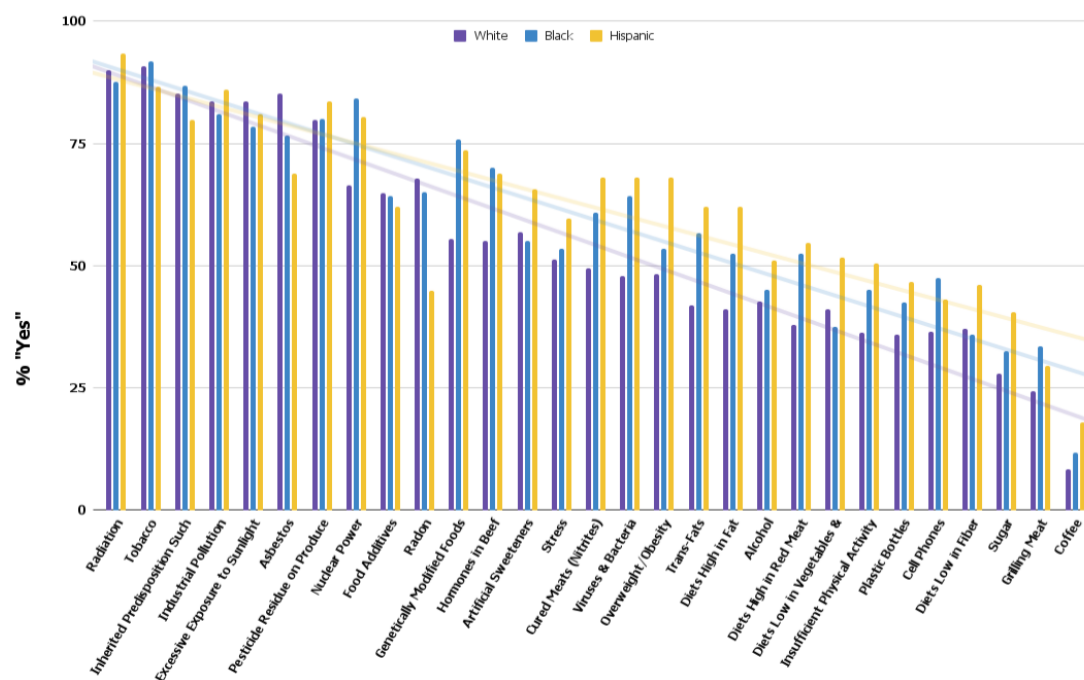Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development By Age

a g e

o Those in the 65+ age group tended to rate items "no" more frequently than the other age groups, but only to a minor degree

o 18–34-year-olds were more likely to respond "yes" to items that fell below the 50% "Yes" response threshold

r a c e / e t h n i c i t y

o Generally, Hispanic-identifying participants more frequently rated items "yes," with only a few exceptions
  – This was particularly true for items below the 75% "Yes" response threshold

o White participants were most likely to respond "no" to items below the 75% "Yes" response threshold

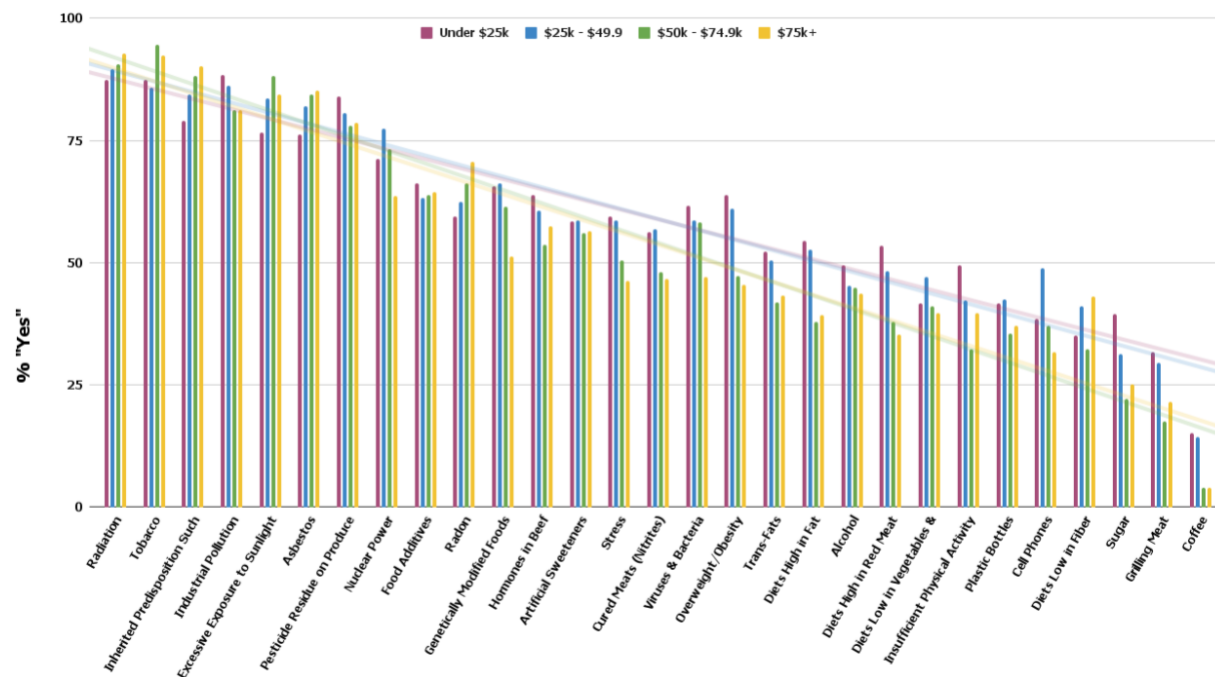Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development by Race/Ethnicity

Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development by Region
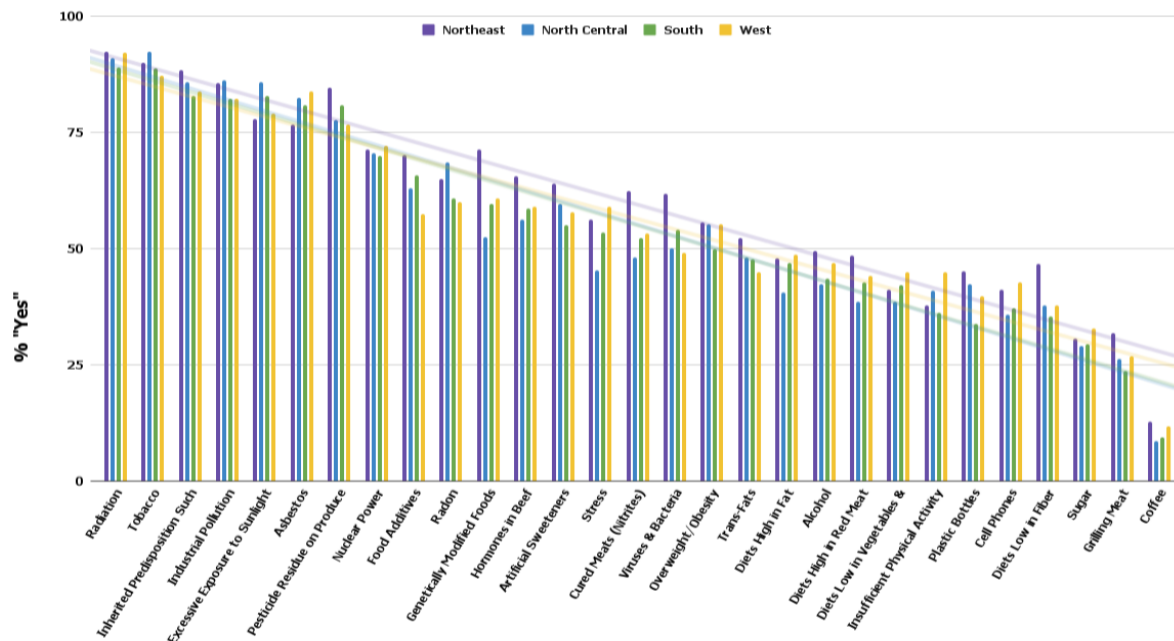
region

o Participants from the Northeast generally responded "Yes" to all items at the highest rate, followed closely by participants from the West

– Despite those general trends, there were not significant differences in perceived item significance between the four regions
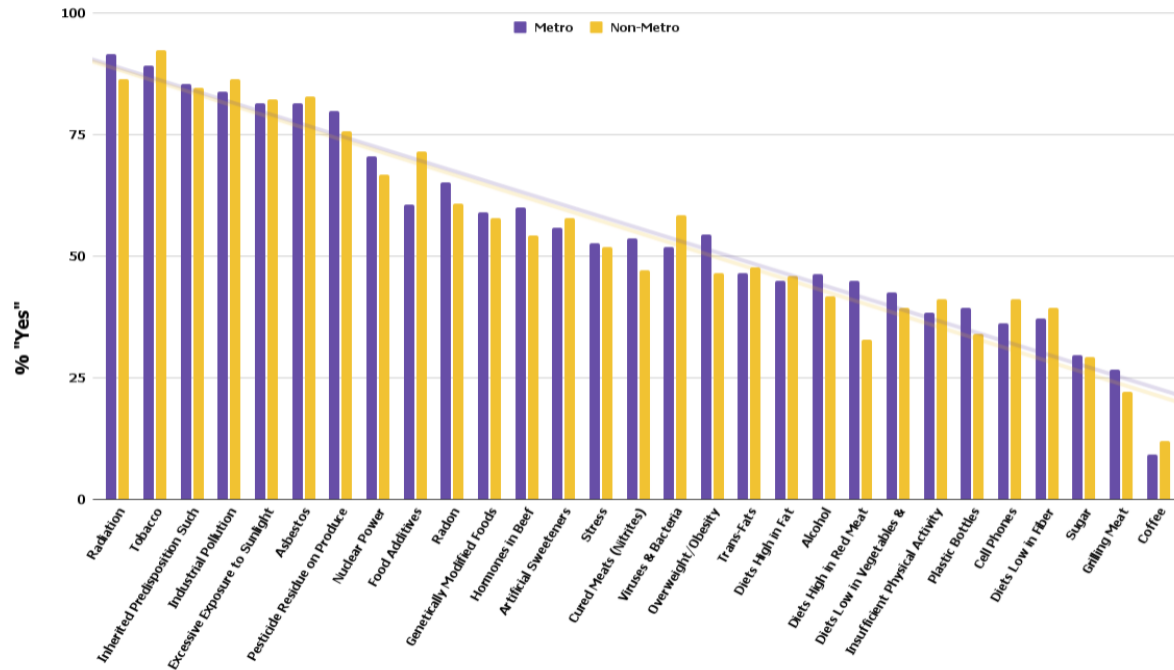
Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development by Household Income

household income

o Participants who make $50k or higher tended to have a greater consensus on the items at the top and bottom of the distribution than those who make less than $50k

Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development by Metro Status

metro status

o Whether participants live in Metro area or a non-Metro area returned no meaningful differences in ratings of item significance

o Minor differences between Metro and non-Metro participants ratings occurred for 4 variables:

– Food Additives, Viruses & Bacteria
(*Non-Metro more likely to respond "yes"*)

– Overweight/Obesity, Diets High in Red Meat
(*Metro more likely to say "yes"*)

education

o Similar to participants who make $50k or more, respondents with a college degree or graduate school experience tended to have a greater consensus on the items at the top and bottom of the distribution

– This similarity between those high in education and those on the higher side of the household income distribution is likely reflective of a correlation between those two variables

o Participants with some college experience tended to rate all items slightly higher than the other groups

Perceptions of Item Significance in Cancer Development by Education Level