

COVID-19 RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCED BY CHINESE AMERICAN FAMILIES

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- **Overview**

The current COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increase in anti-Asian racism and Xenophobia in United States, and the use of the terms “Chinese Virus,” “Wuhan Virus,” and “Kung Flu” has been said to encourage these negative sentiments.

As of June 9, 2020, nearly 1,900 incidents of anti-Asian American discrimination incidents across the United States have been documented by the Stop AAPI Hate reporting center since the outbreak of the COVID-19, with the terms “China” or “Chinese” specifically involved in more than one quarter of the incidents reported.

Our study is the first to examine various forms of racial and ethnic discrimination experienced by Chinese American families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research is led by Dr. Charissa Cheah, Professor of Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), Dr. Cixin Wang, Assistant Professor of School Psychology at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD), and Dr. Shimei Pan, Assistant Professor of Information Systems at UMBC.

Data were collected through an online survey completed by 543 Chinese American parents and 230 of their children aged 10- to 18- years old across the United States between March 14th to May 31st, 2020.

Overall, the results of our survey revealed that a high percentage of Chinese American families reported experiencing various types of racial discrimination due to the COVID-19 pandemic at least one time. These findings urgently call for timely interventions delivered in family, school, and community settings to decrease the fear, stigmatization of, and discrimination against Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans.

- **Who was surveyed?**

- See Table 1 for detailed information. Reporting parents were mostly mothers, foreign-born, living in the Southern region of the United States and had college degrees. On average, parents were in their 40s and had lived in the United States for more than 16 years. Almost all the youth were U.S.-born.

- **Key Findings**
 - Over 3 in 4 surveyed Chinese American parents and youth reported witnessing racial discrimination on a monthly or weekly basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic online and in person.
 - A considerable percentage of Chinese American parents and youth (30% - 50%) reported that they were the direct targets of racial discrimination on a monthly or weekly basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic online and in-person.
 - About 1 in 2 parents and youth were worried about how they would be treated in public and the majority of parents and about 50% the youth were worried about being targeted and for their safety due to the U.S. government's use of terminology like the "China Virus" or the "Wuhan Virus".
 - Over 50% of Chinese American parents and youth agreed that Americans believed that Chinese people and culture were a threat to public health in the U.S. (health Sinophobia), and that these sentiments were depicted in U.S. media (media Sinophobia).

- **Key Conclusions and Recommendations**
 - Chinese American families are experiencing racism and racial discrimination at multiple levels (interpersonal, institutional, collective) and forms (in person, online) during COVID-19.
 - Public health strategies are urgently needed to decrease the fear and stigmatization of, and discrimination against Asian Americans.
 - Schools should proactively develop strategies to address racism targeting Asian American youth as their reenter in the Fall whether in person or online
 - Healthcare professionals must attend to the racism-related experiences and mental health needs of Asian American families, especially youth, via educating and making appropriate mental health referrals

Funding Information:

This work was supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 2024124. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Acknowledgement

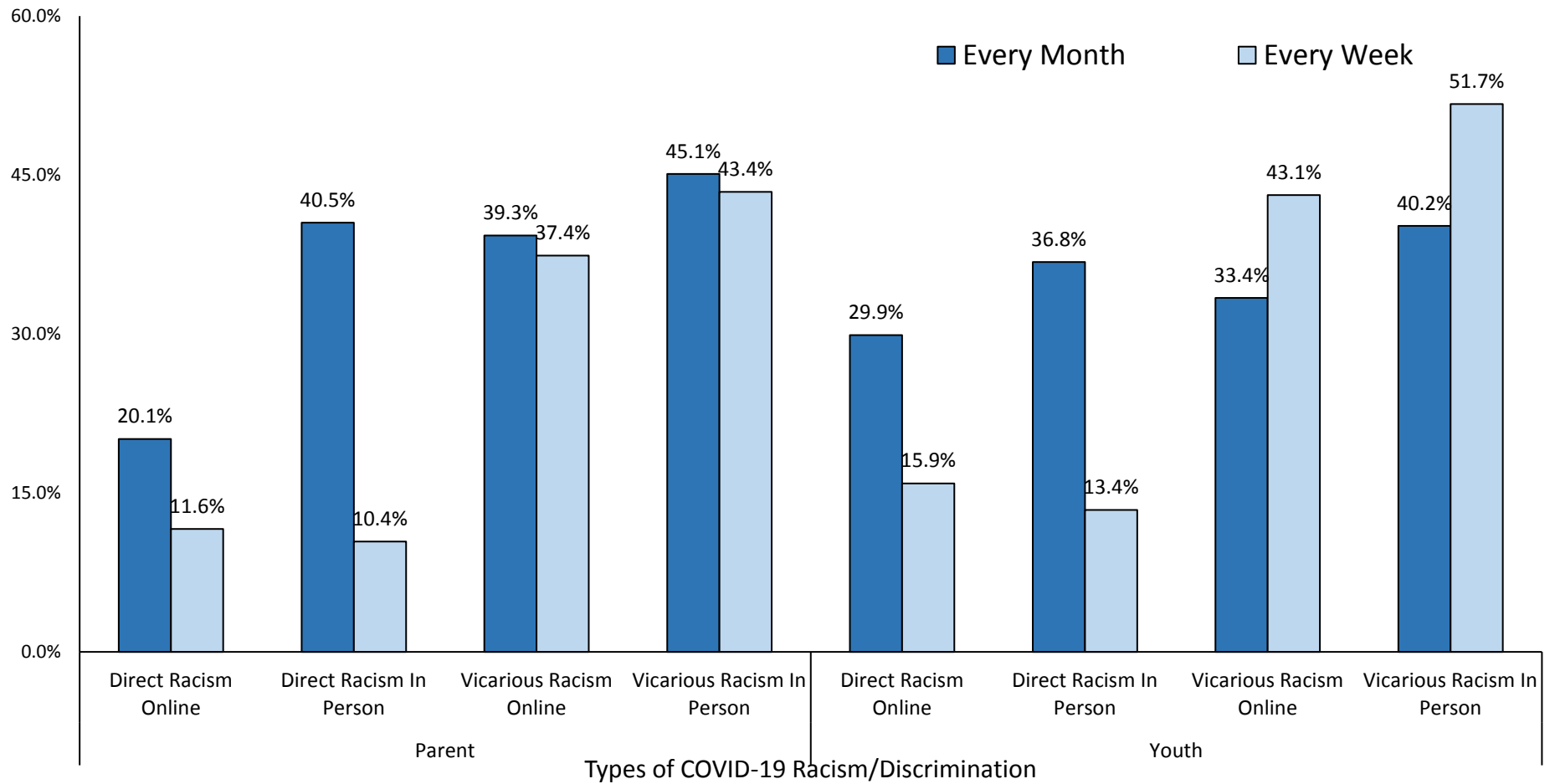
This report was prepared by Charissa S. L. Cheah, Huiguang Ren, and Xiaoli Zong

Suggested Citation

Cheah, C. S. L., Wang, C., Ren, H., & Zong, X. (2020). *COVID-19 racism and racial discrimination experienced by Chinese American families*. Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

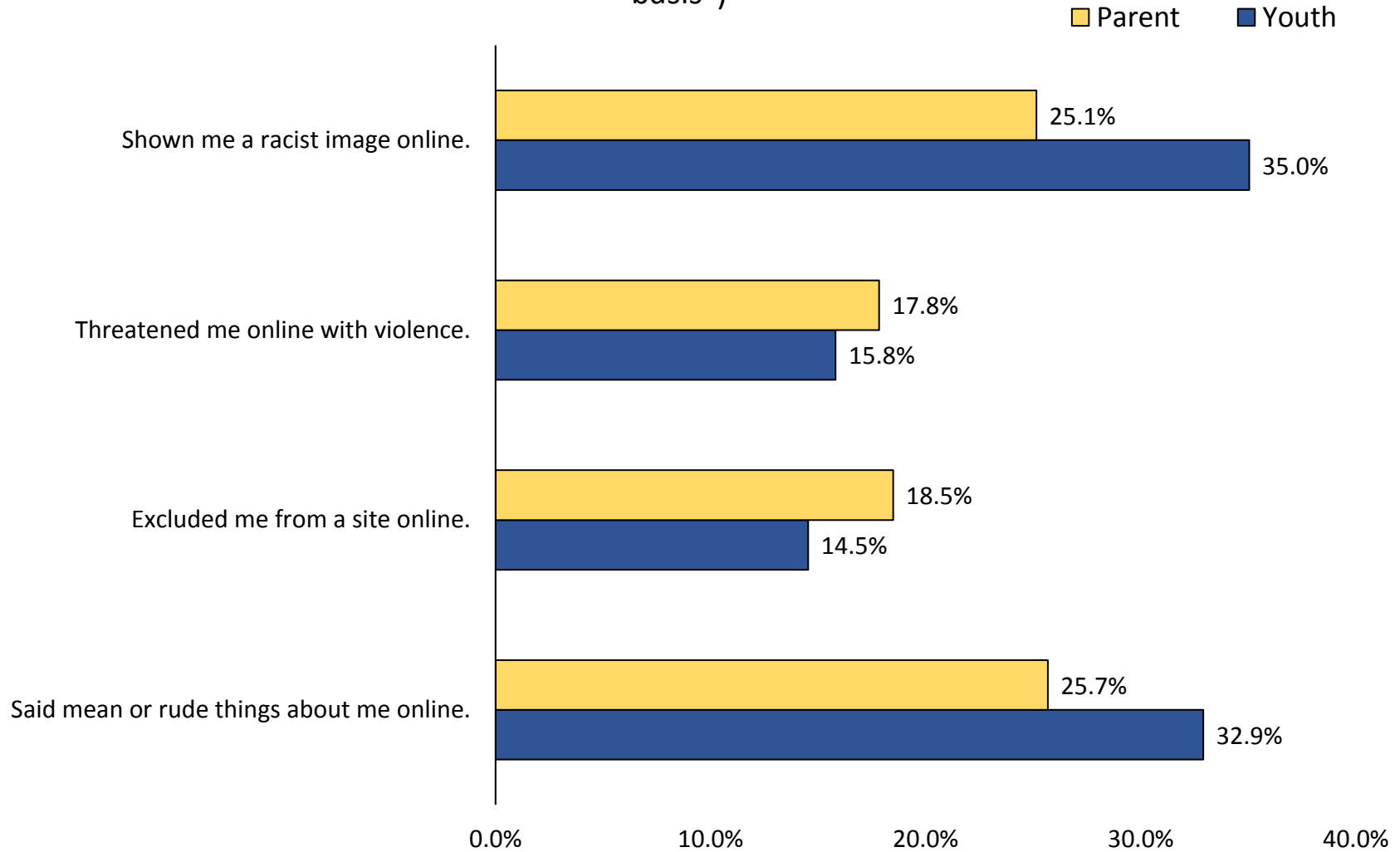
- Racial Discrimination Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Overall Percentages)**

Graph 1: Respondents Who Experienced Each Form of Racial Discrimination Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic Every Month or Week



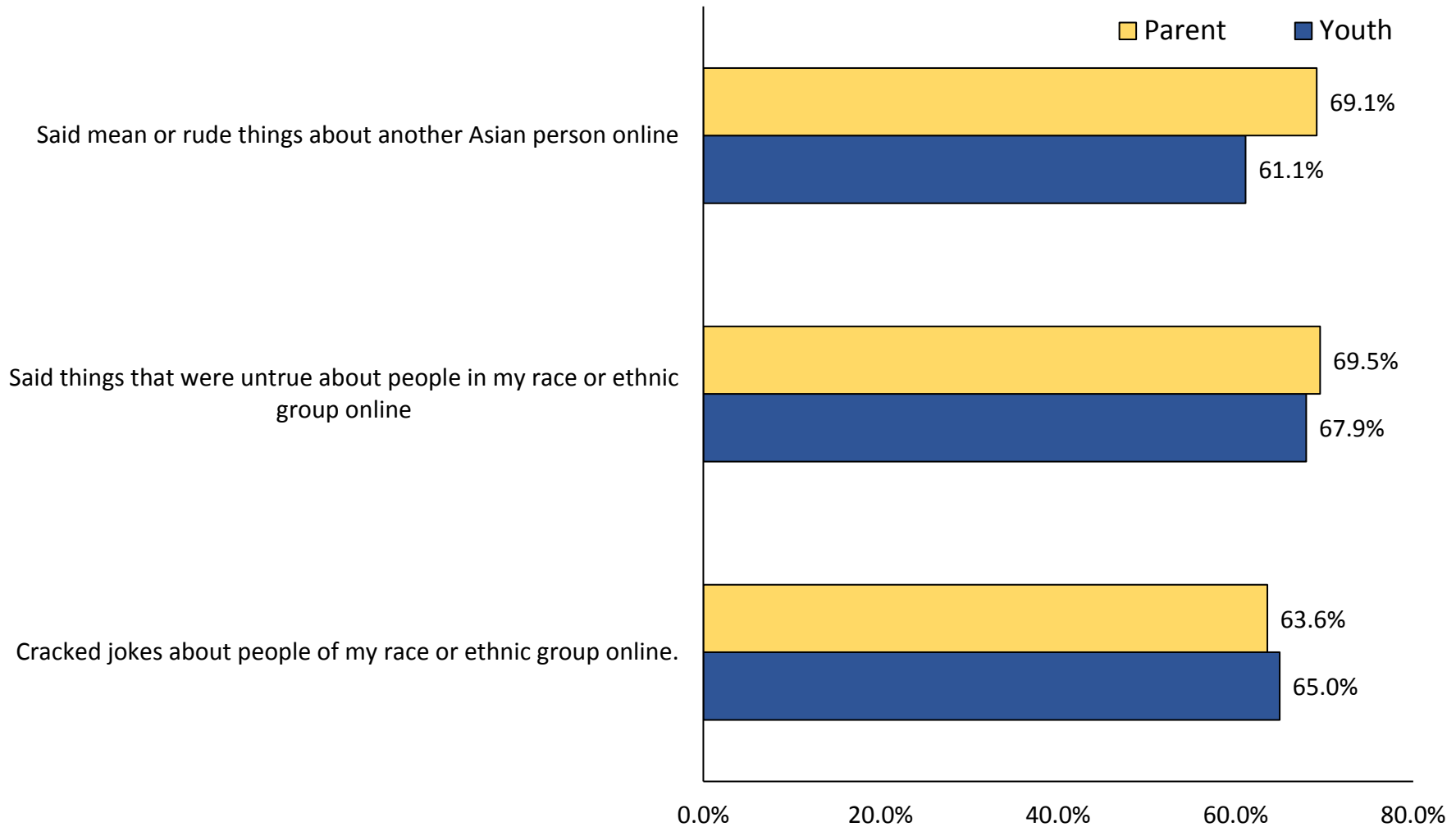
Online Racial Discrimination Directed at the Respondents (Direct) - Item Percentages

Graph 2: "Because of COVID-19, people have..."
(Respondents who said the incident "happened on a monthly or weekly basis")



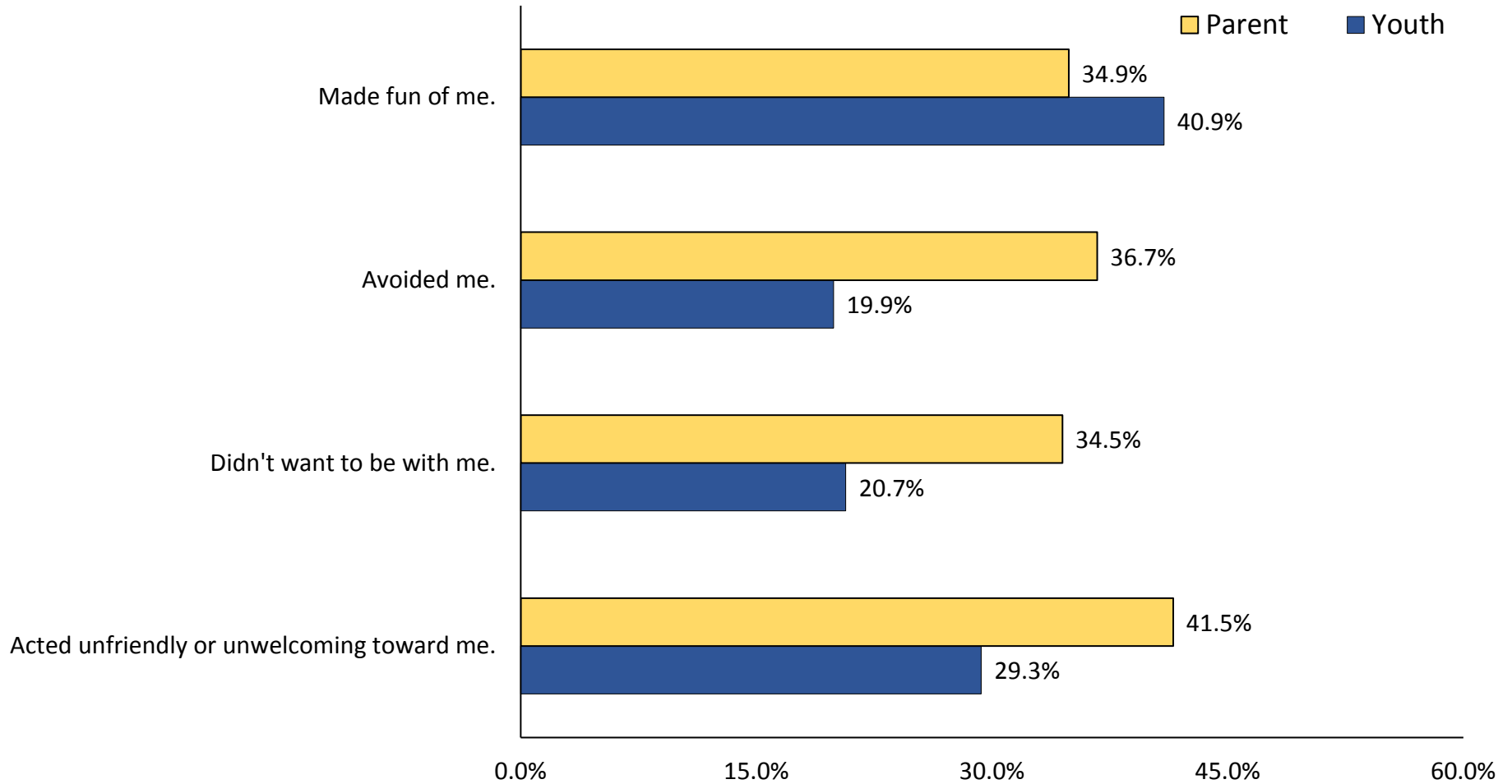
Online Racial Discrimination Directed at Other Chinese/Asians (Vicarious) - Item Percentages

Graph 3: "Because of COVID-19, people have..."
(Respondents who said the incident "happened on a monthly or weekly basis")



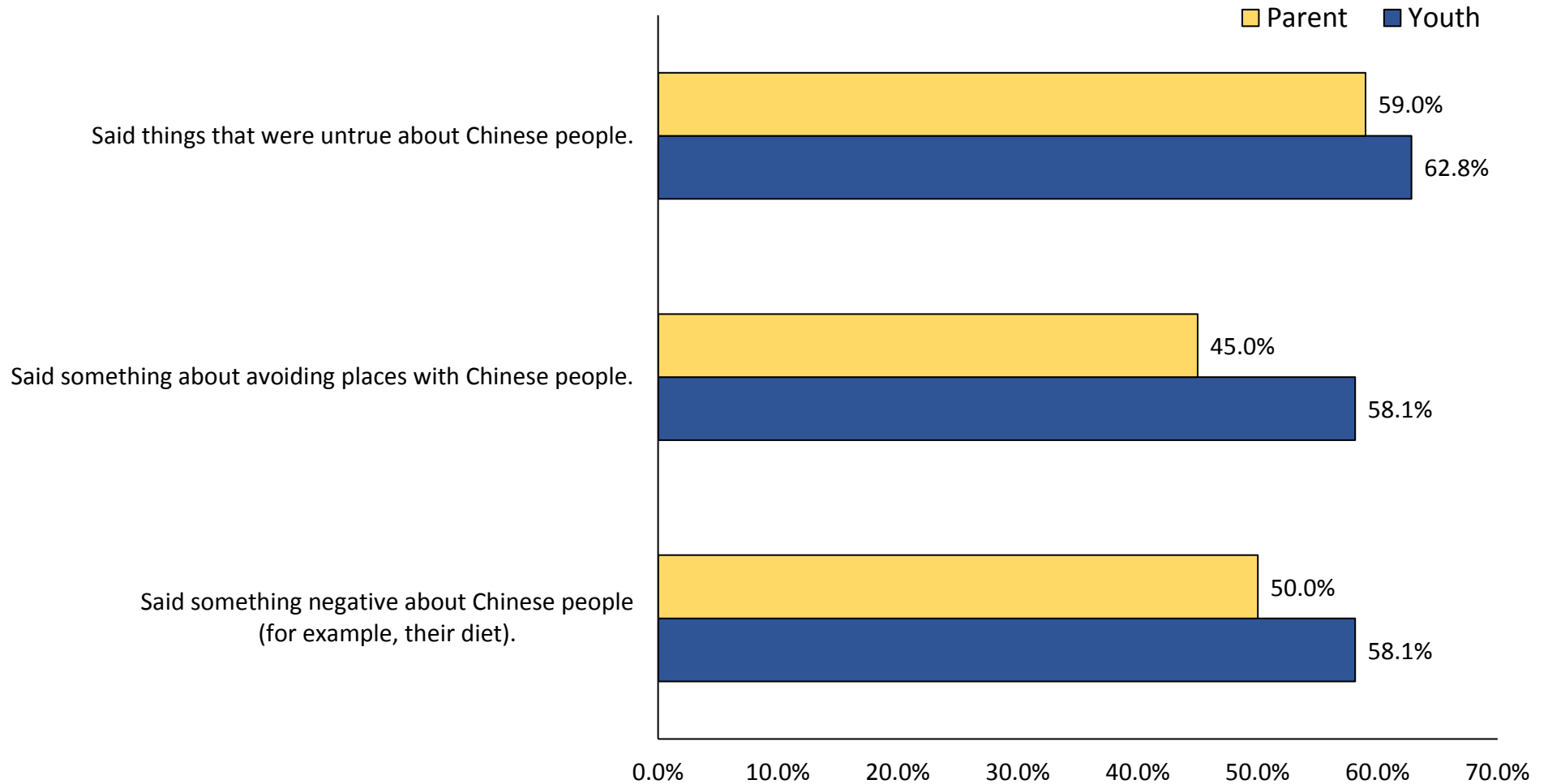
▪ In-Person Racial Discrimination Directed at the Respondent (Direct) - Item Percentages

Graph 4: "During the COVID-19 outbreak, people... because of my Chinese background"
(Respondents who said the incident "happened on a monthly or weekly basis")



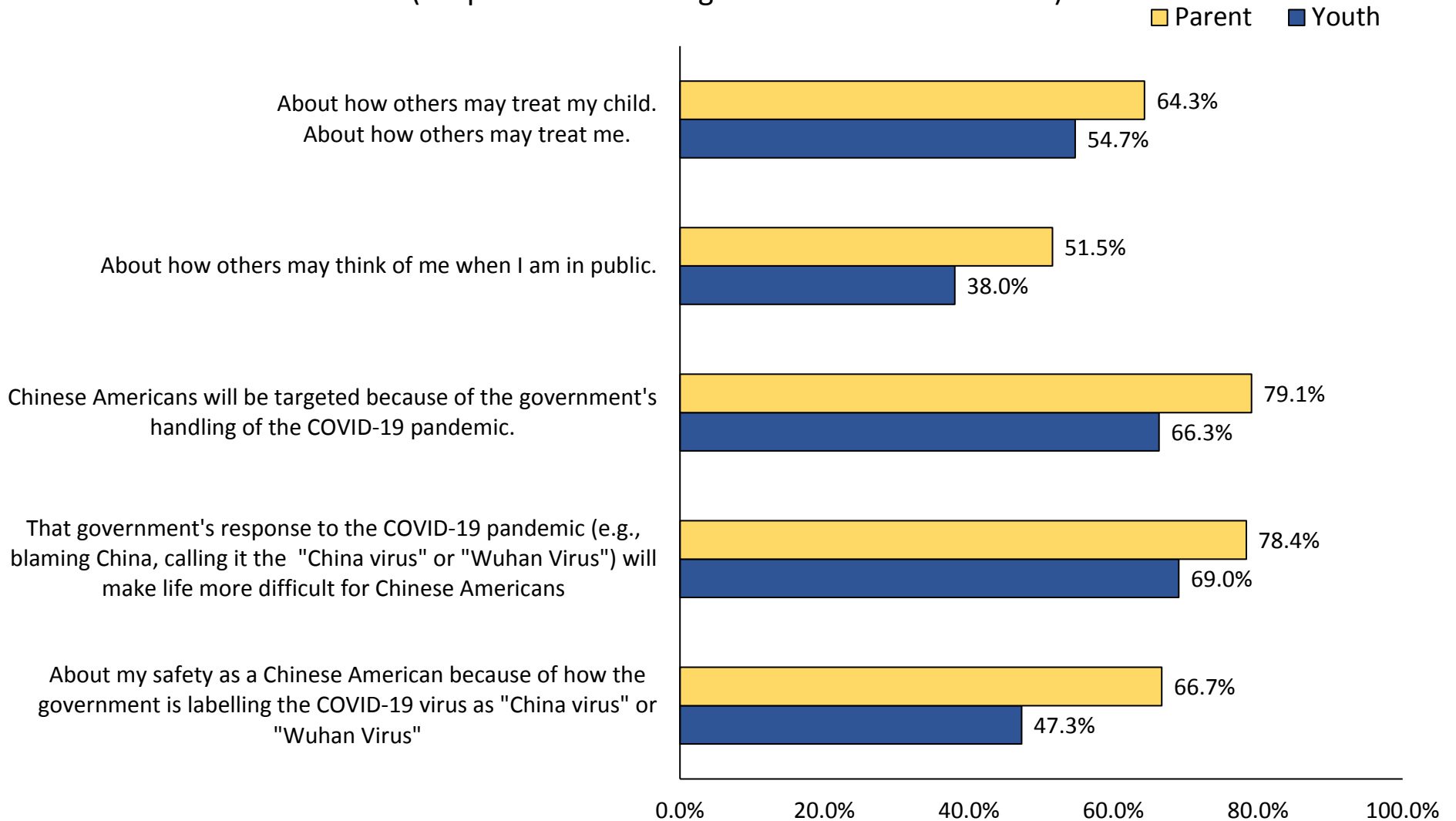
▪ In-Person Racial Discrimination Directed at Others (Vicarious) - Item Percentages

Graph 5: "Because of COVID-19, people..."
(Respondents who responded "It happened and I was upset")

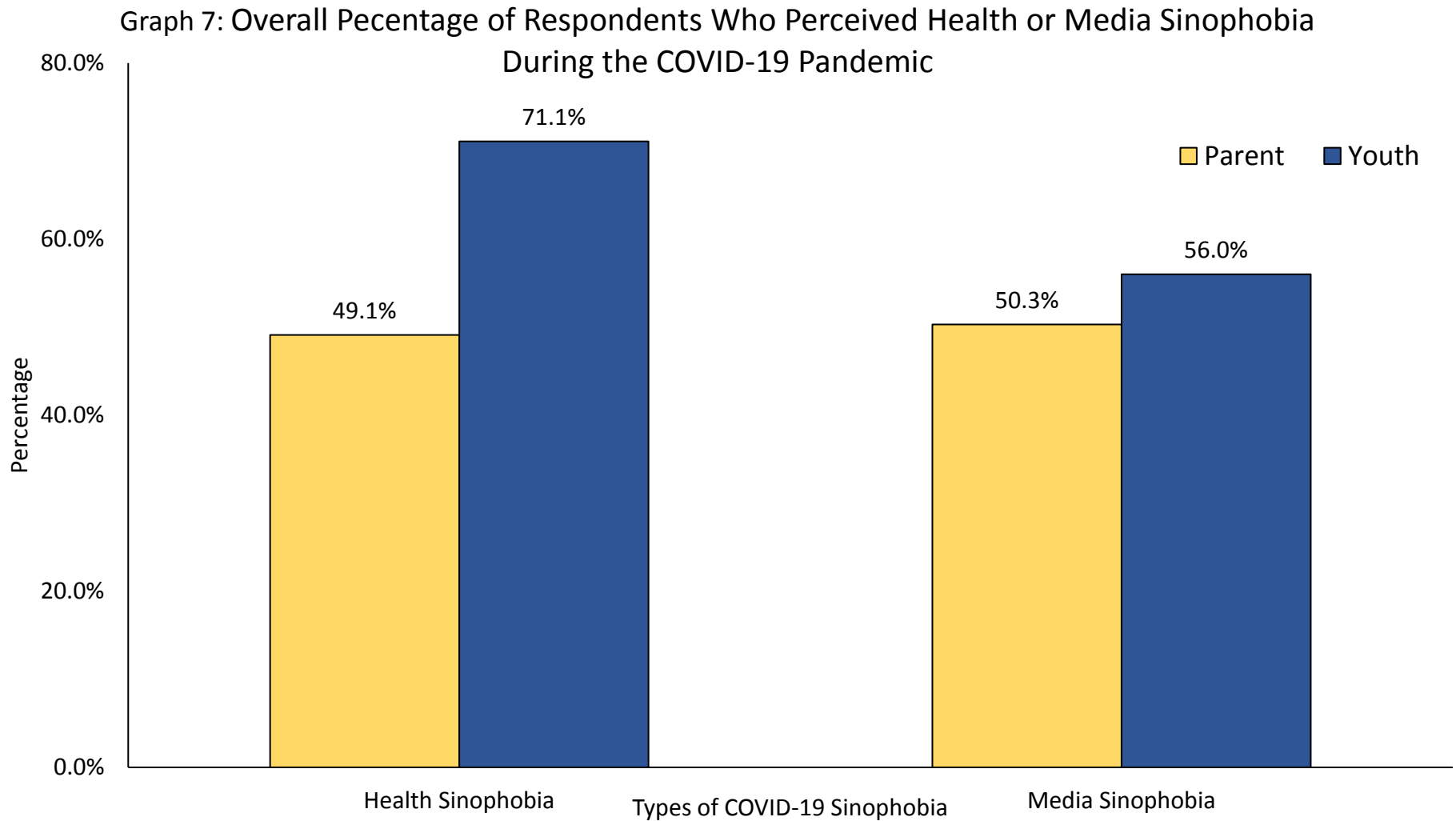


Worries About Treatment by Others – Overall Percentages

Graph 6: "Because of COVID-19, I am worried..."
(Respondents who "Agreed" with the Statement)



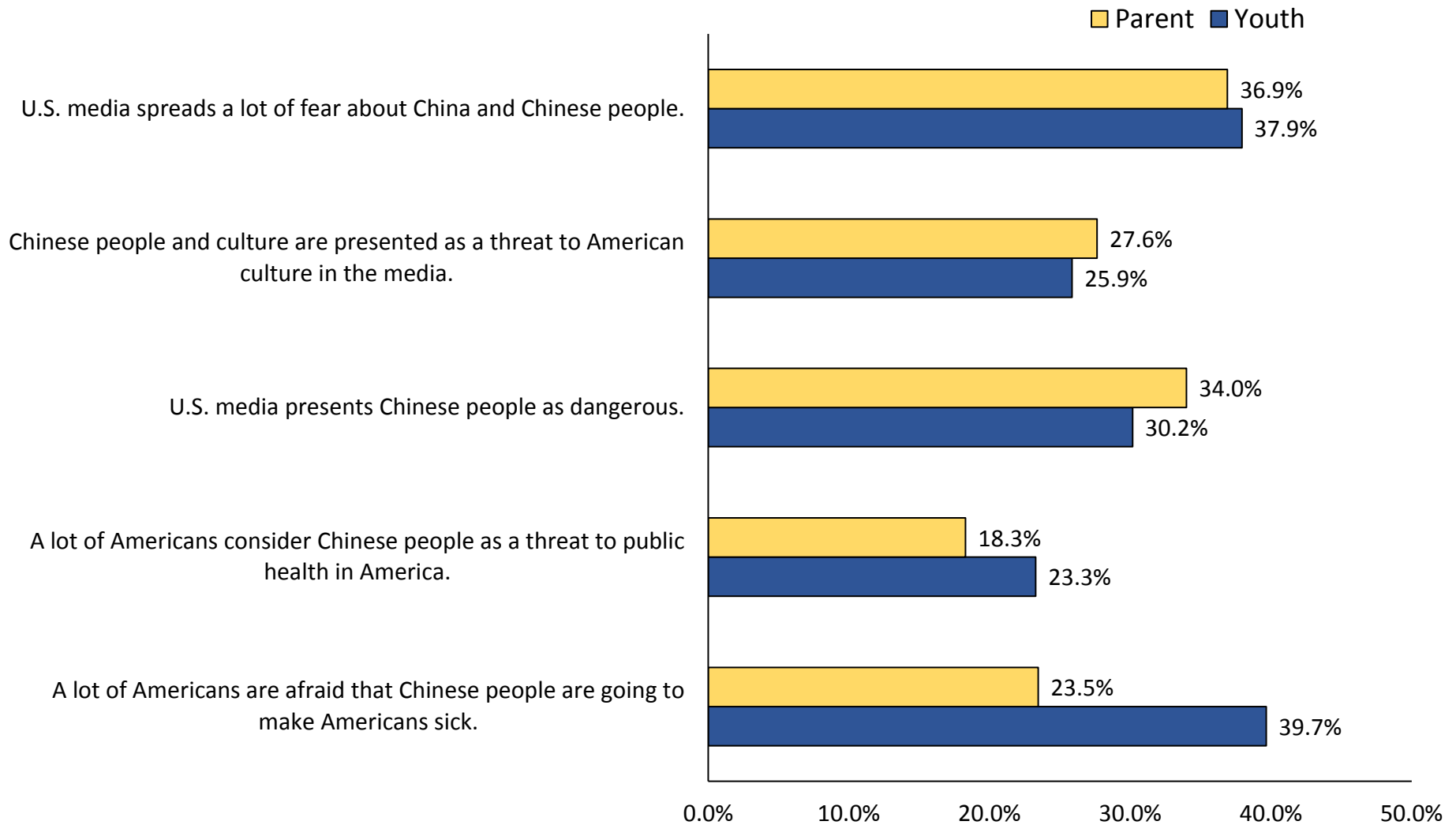
▪ Sinophobia - Overall Percentages



Note. Sinophobia refers to the fear and/or dislike of China, its people, and/or its culture broadly held by Americans. In particular, Health-related Sinophobia refers to the idea that Chinese are considered a health threat to American society, and the Media Sinophobia refers to the perpetuation of Sinophobia spread by U.S. media.

▪ Sinophobia - Item Percentages

"Because of COVID-19, ..."
(Respondents who "Agreed" with the statement)



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Table 1. *Statistics of demographic characteristics and variables of interest in the two samples*

	Parent Sample (N = 543)		Parent-Child Sample (N = 230)	
	Parent	Child	Parent	Child
Demographic Characteristics				
Age mean (SD)	43.44 (6.47)	11.80 (4.04)	46.09 (5.14)	13.83 (2.53)
Age range	28 – 64	4 - 18	33-64	10 - 18
Years in the U.S. Mean (SD)	16.80 (9.62)	10.26 (4.70)	18.52 (8.48)	12.33 (3.93)
Nativity (%)				
Foreign born	96.14	23.56	97.84	21.40
U.S. born	3.86	76.44	2.16	78.60
Education (%)				
Less than high school graduate	7.73	-	5.63	-
High school graduate	6.81	-	6.06	-
Some college	4.60	-	2.60	-
College graduate	20.63	-	20.35	-
Graduate/Professional degree	60.22	-	65.37	-
Marital status (%)				
Married or remarried	90.07		89.65	
Divorced, separated, or widowed	9.93		10.35	
Parent occupation (%)				
Administrators, professionals, and large business owners	53.03		62.89	
Technicians and small business owners	17.61		13.57	
Skilled workers	10.37		9.05	
Temporary workers	5.49		3.63	
Homemaker or unemployed	13.50		10.86	
Region (%)				
Northeast	16.94		9.17	
South	68.49		78.17	
Midwest	5.83		6.11	
West	8.74		6.55	
Reporter (%)				
Mother	78.31		79.74	
Father	21.79		20.26	
Child gender (Female %)	46.51		48.28	