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Do People on Boise State University's Campus Follow Mask Protocols?

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Abstract

We are experiencing troubled times with the Coronavirus pandemic. There has been an incredible number of deaths across the world, with 1,963 deaths in Idaho as of April 01, 2021 (coronavirus.idaho.gov, 2021). To curb the spread of disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have established recommendations for all Americans, including wearing a face-covering (over nose and mouth) in public and maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet between people (CDC, 2020). The research project focused on whether adults on campus at Boise State University were following social distancing protocols and wearing masks. Based on the observations, we can conclude that the majority of individuals on campus wear their masks correctly. Women are more likely to wear their masks correctly than men. Individuals that were wearing business attire are more likely to wear their masks correctly. These findings suggest that mask adherence is acceptable at this time. The university should continue its current level of efforts in encouraging the mask policy. A limitation of this study was that we focused on inside the buildings and not outside.

Do people on Boise State University's campus follow mask protocols?

PRESENTER:

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BACKGROUND:

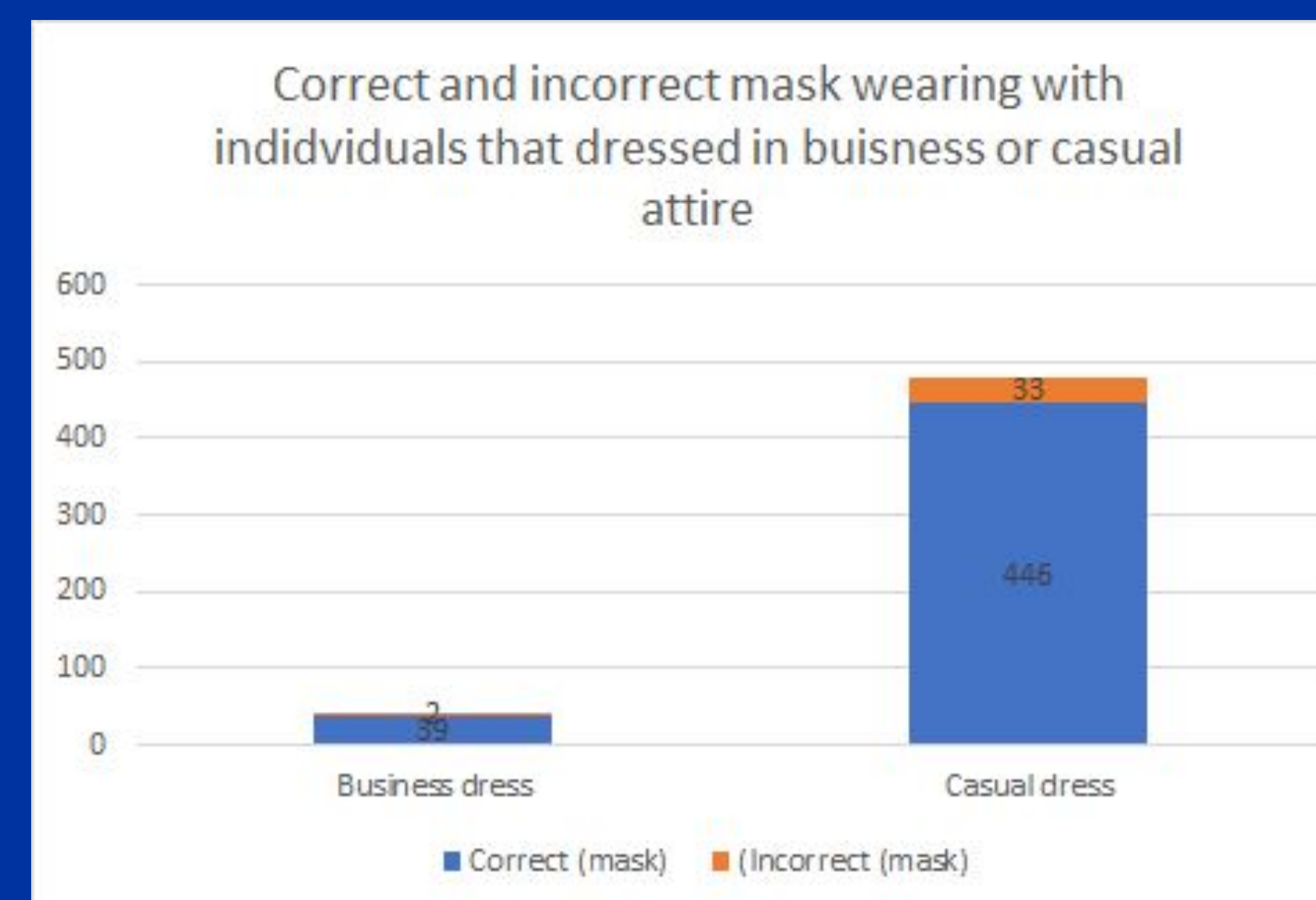
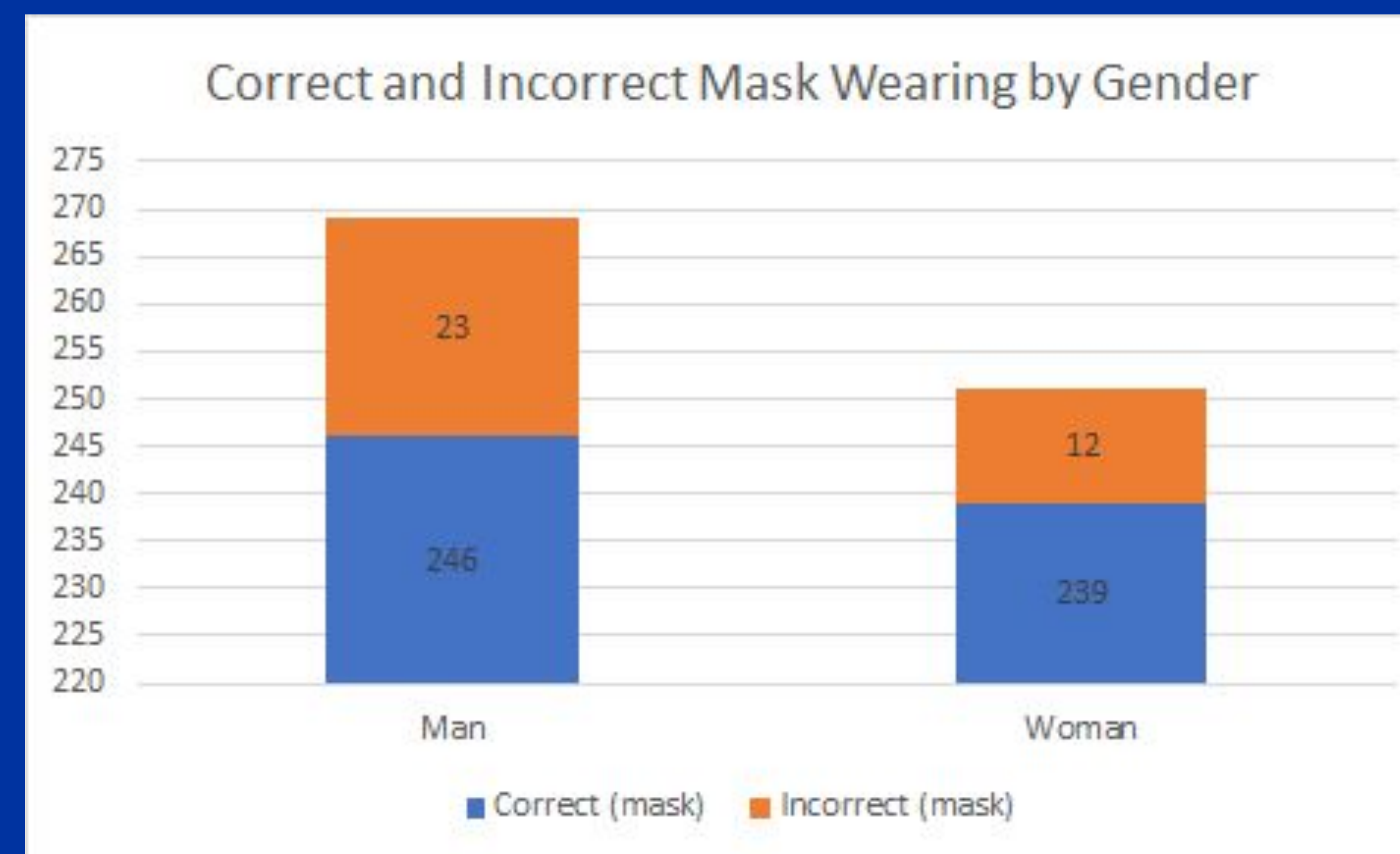
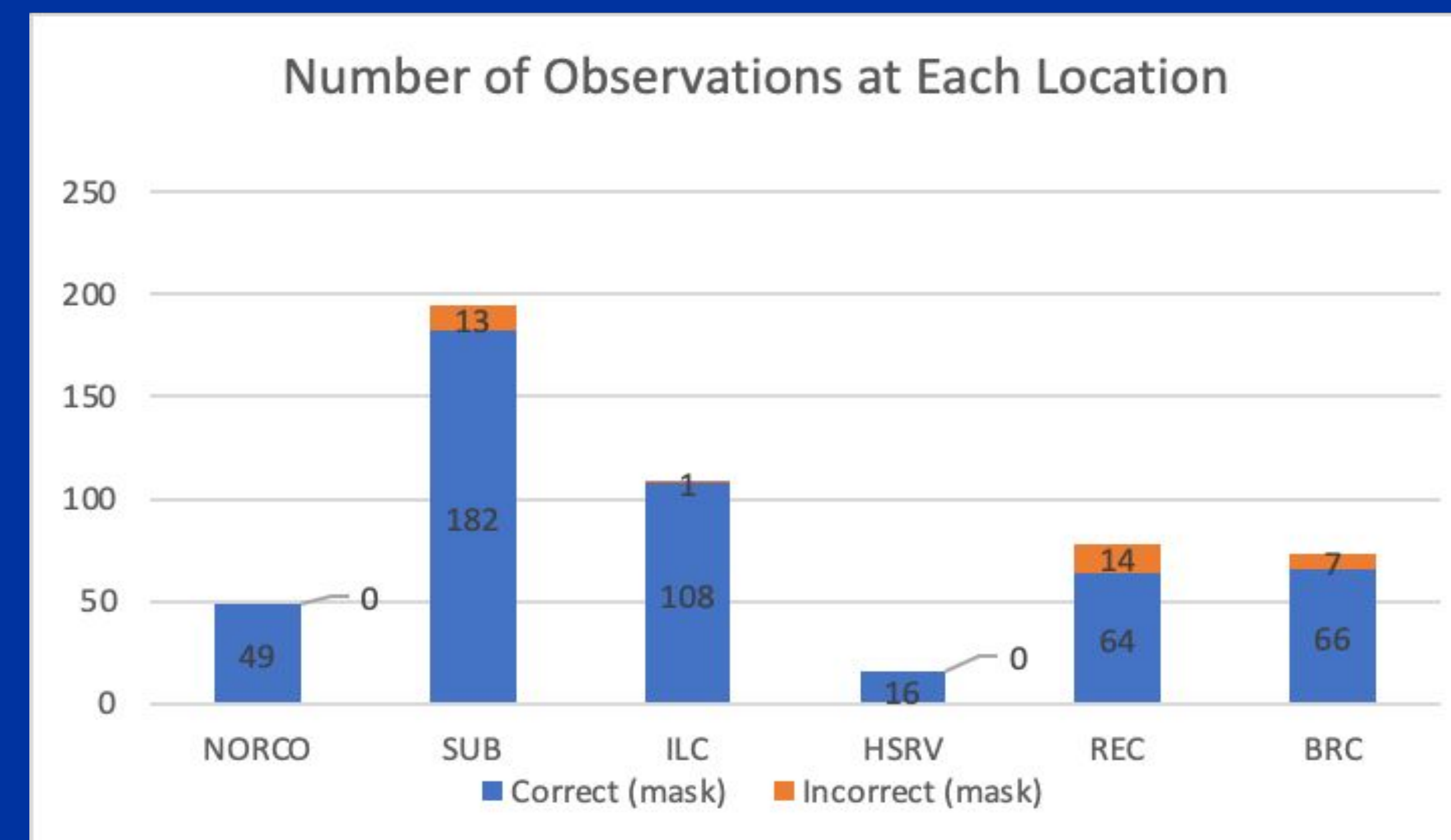
We are experiencing troubled times with the Coronavirus pandemic. There has been an incredible number of deaths across the world, with 1,963 deaths in Idaho as of April 01, 2021 (coronavirus.idaho.gov, 2021). To curb the spread of disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have established recommendations for all Americans, including wearing a face-covering (over nose and mouth) in public and maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet between people (CDC, 2020).

Boise State University has remained open for students, staff, faculty, and classes during the fall 2020 semester and everyone on campus is required to wear a face-covering and maintain physical distance, per CDC guidelines. Yet, each week students, faculty, and staff who live or work on campus test positive for the Coronavirus (Boise State University, 2020). Given the continued spread of infection, even with protocols in place, we wonder if students, faculty, staff, and visitors on campus are following the protocols accurately.

METHODS:

This study was approved by a Boise State University's Institutional Review Board and given an exempt status. The research project focused on whether adults on campus at Boise State University were following social distancing protocols and wearing masks. Each observation was conducted for half an hour (including both day and night times) and recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet included observations of the individuals observed with notes of whether each individual was social distancing, wearing a mask, or is either male or female (based on the observer's best guess of how the person appears), and if they were wearing business or casual clothing. 520 individuals were observed at the Health Science Riverside (HSRV) building, the Interactive Learning Center (ILC) building, the NORCO building, the Student Recreation (REC) center, the Student Union building, and the Boise River Cafe (BRC) on Boise State University's campus.

The majority of individuals on campus are wearing their mask correctly.



RESULTS:

Of the 520 observations, 269 (51.7%) were men. Of those not wearing a mask correctly, 23 (65.7%) were men, versus 34.3% women. The difference between the portion of men and women wearing masks incorrectly was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Of the 520 observations, 41 (7.9%) were wearing business attire. Of those not wearing a mask correctly, 33 (94.1%) were not wearing business attire. The difference between the correct masks wearing proportion between those wearing a business attire and those not wearing business attire is small but statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Of the six locations, two locations were at 100% correct mask wearing (the Norco building, and HSRV). Of the six locations, the Rec Center had the most number of observations that were not wearing their mask correctly.

Of the total number of observations, 485 (93.3%) of the observations were wearing their mask correctly.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the observations, we can conclude that the majority of individuals on campus wear their masks correctly. Women are more likely to wear their mask correctly than men. Individuals that were wearing business attire are more likely to wear their masks correctly. These findings show that mask adherence on campus is adequate at this time. The university should continue with the current level of effort in encouraging the mask policy.

A limitation to this study was that we focused on individuals inside the building and not outside.

References

- Boise State University. (2020, November 30). *Boise State COVID-19 Dashboard*. Retrieved from Boise State University: <https://www.boisestate.edu/coronavirus-response/dashboard/>
- CDC. (2020, November 30). *Coronavirus (COVID-19)*. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
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