Knowledge, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Intentions Regarding Risk and Prevention of Cervical Cancer Among Hispanic Adolescents

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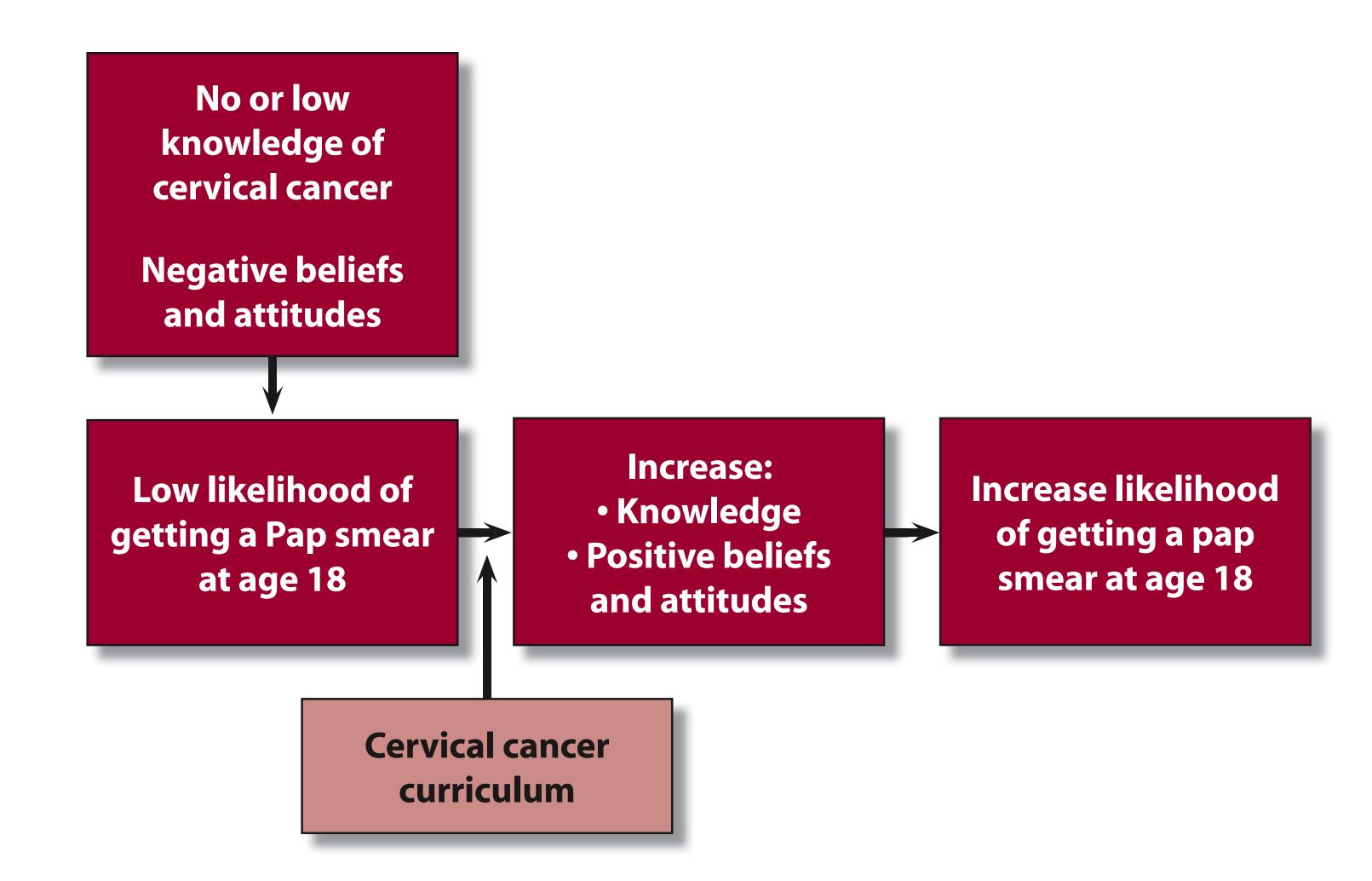
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MOTIVATION

- Underutilization of screening services is thought to be a key factor related to the higher incidence of cervical cancer among Hispanic women.
- In-depth interviews with Hispanics in the Yakima Valley, Washington suggested that fewer Hispanics than non-Hispanics had ever received a screening test for cervical cancer.
- Classroom-based interventions on cervical cancer may be valuable for promoting cervical cancer screening among young women for several reasons:
 - They capture women who are eligible to receive initial screening tests.
- They provide education to all economic segments of women, including those who may underutilize health care systems.

OBJECTIVE

• Examine whether a one-hour cervical cancer curriculum results in changes in adolescents' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes toward cervical cancer and screening, and affects their stated likelihood of having a Pap smear by age 18.



METHODS

- A one-hour cervical cancer curriculum was developed for high school students which included:
 - A presentation about how cancer develops and what are the risk factors and prevention strategies for cervical cancer, a video graphic of the Pap test procedure, and a section addressing barriers to screening called "concerns among adolescents" were included.
 - A role-play section allowing groups of students to work together to create a skit about cervical cancer and screening.
 - A question and answer session for discussing students' written questions after the presentation.
- Students from health classes at two high schools in the Lower Yakima Valley, Washington were assigned to the intervention or control group.
- Students in the intervention group received the cervical cancer curriculum; those in the control received a breast cancer curriculum.
- Pre- and post-tests were administered, containing questions related to knowledge, beliefs, attitudes about cervical cancer and screening and the likelihood of getting a Pap test by the age of 18.

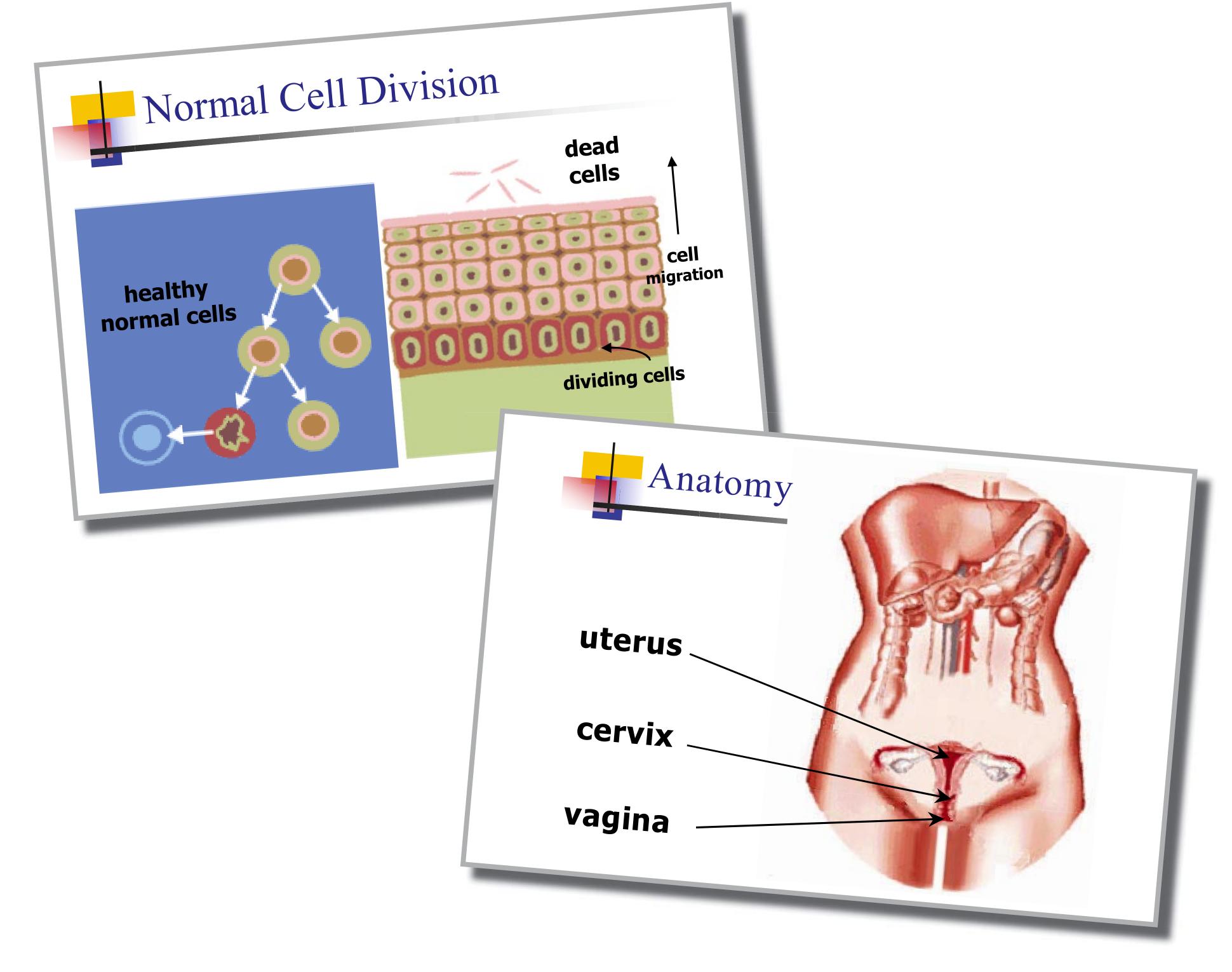
RESULTS

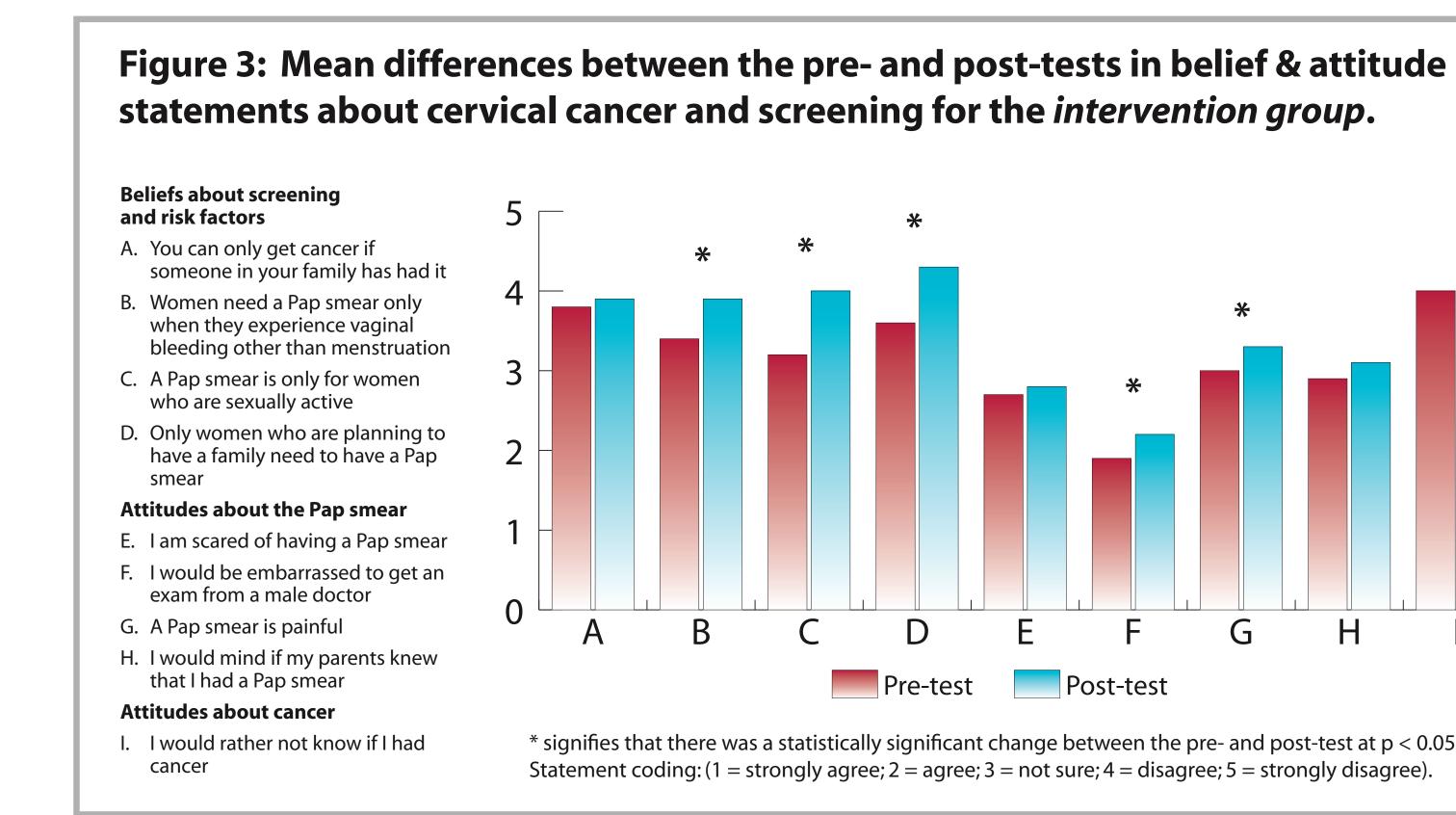
Sample Characteristics

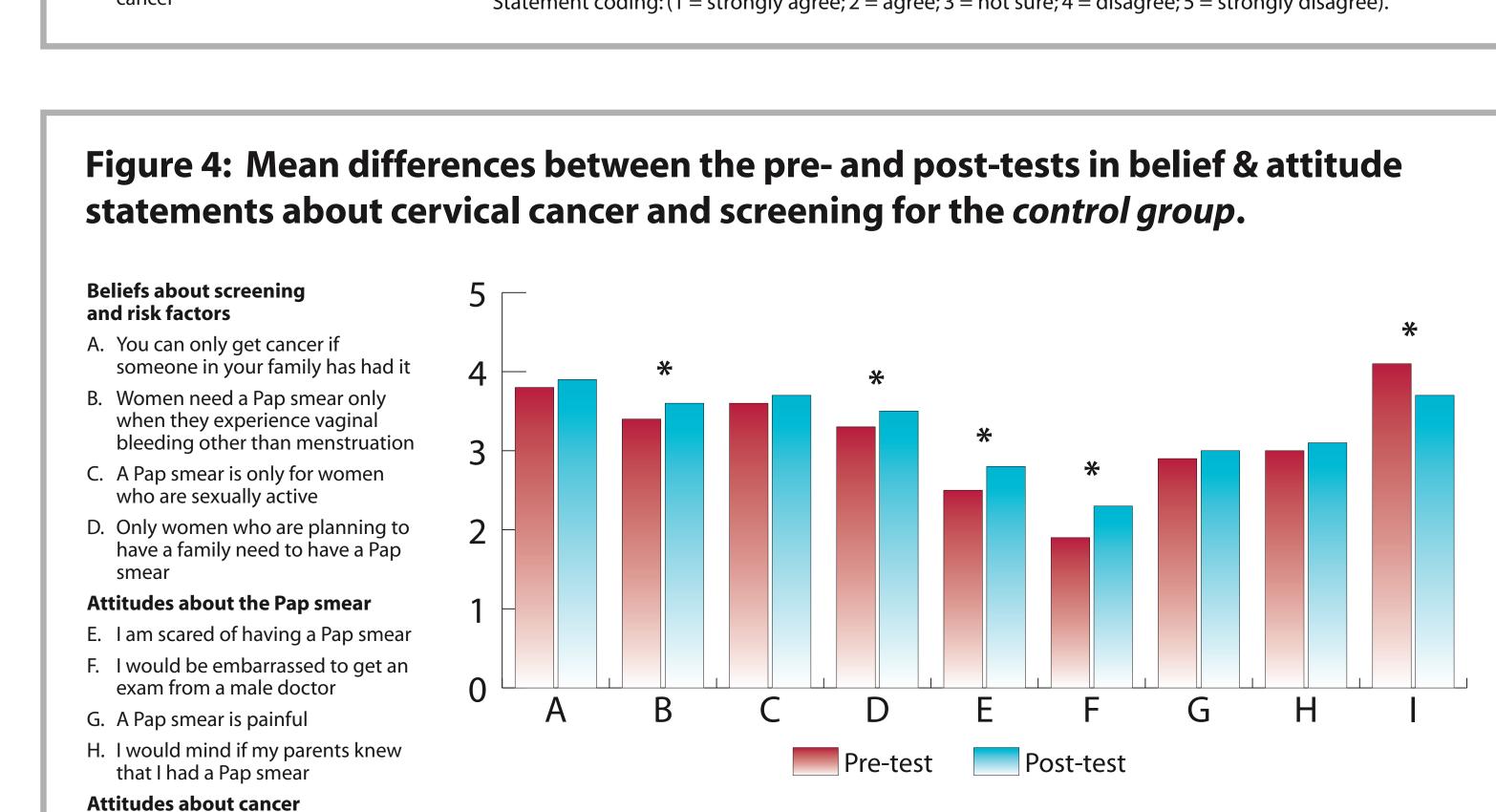
- Data from 142 female participants were included.
- The mean age was 15 years and 71% of the students were Hispanic.
- In the pre-test, low percentages of women had heard of a Pap test: 17 (25.4%) said that they had heard of the Pap smear in the intervention group vs. 27 (38.0%) in the control group.
- Also a low percentage had had a Pap smear: 4 (5.6%) in the intervention group compared to 2 (2.8%) in the control group. Only half of students (50%) in both groups answered this question.

Likelihood of Getting a Pap Smear

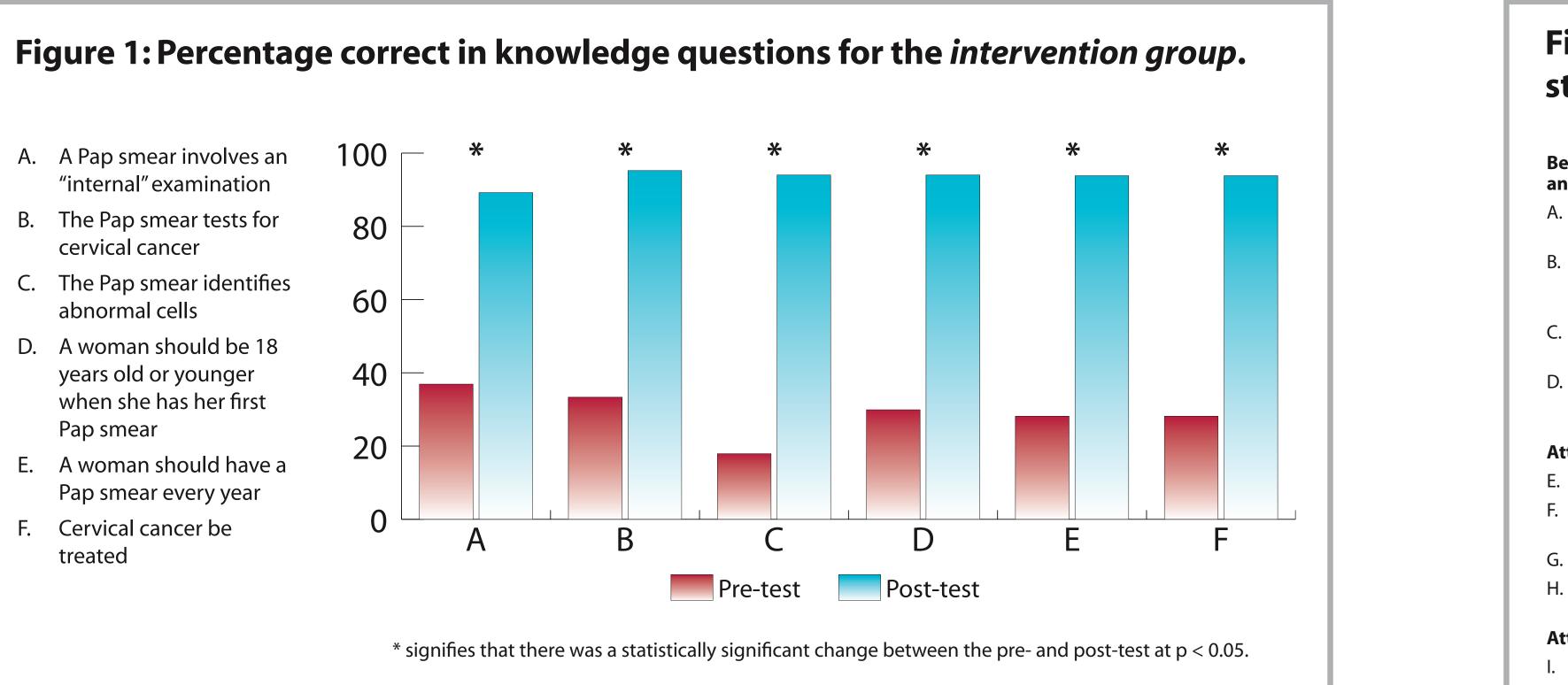
• Students who received the curriculum were significantly more likely to report that they would have a Pap test by the age of 18 [a 0.4 point difference in the mean, from the pre- and post-test was noted in the intervention group compared to a 0.1 difference in the mean of the control group on a 5 point scale (5 = very likely; 4 = likely; 3 = not sure; 2 = unlikely; 1 = very unlikely)]

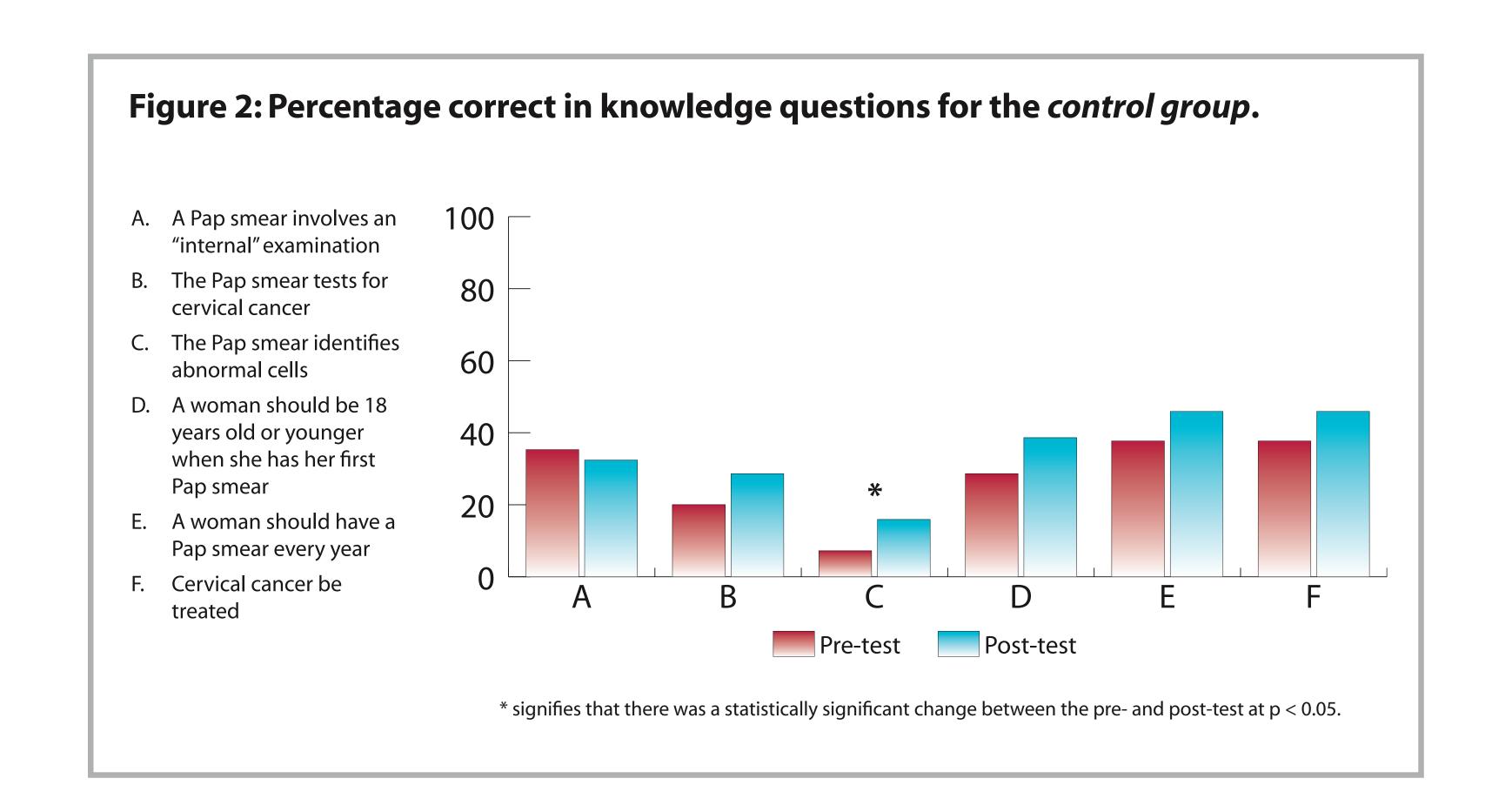






Statement coding: (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure; 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree).





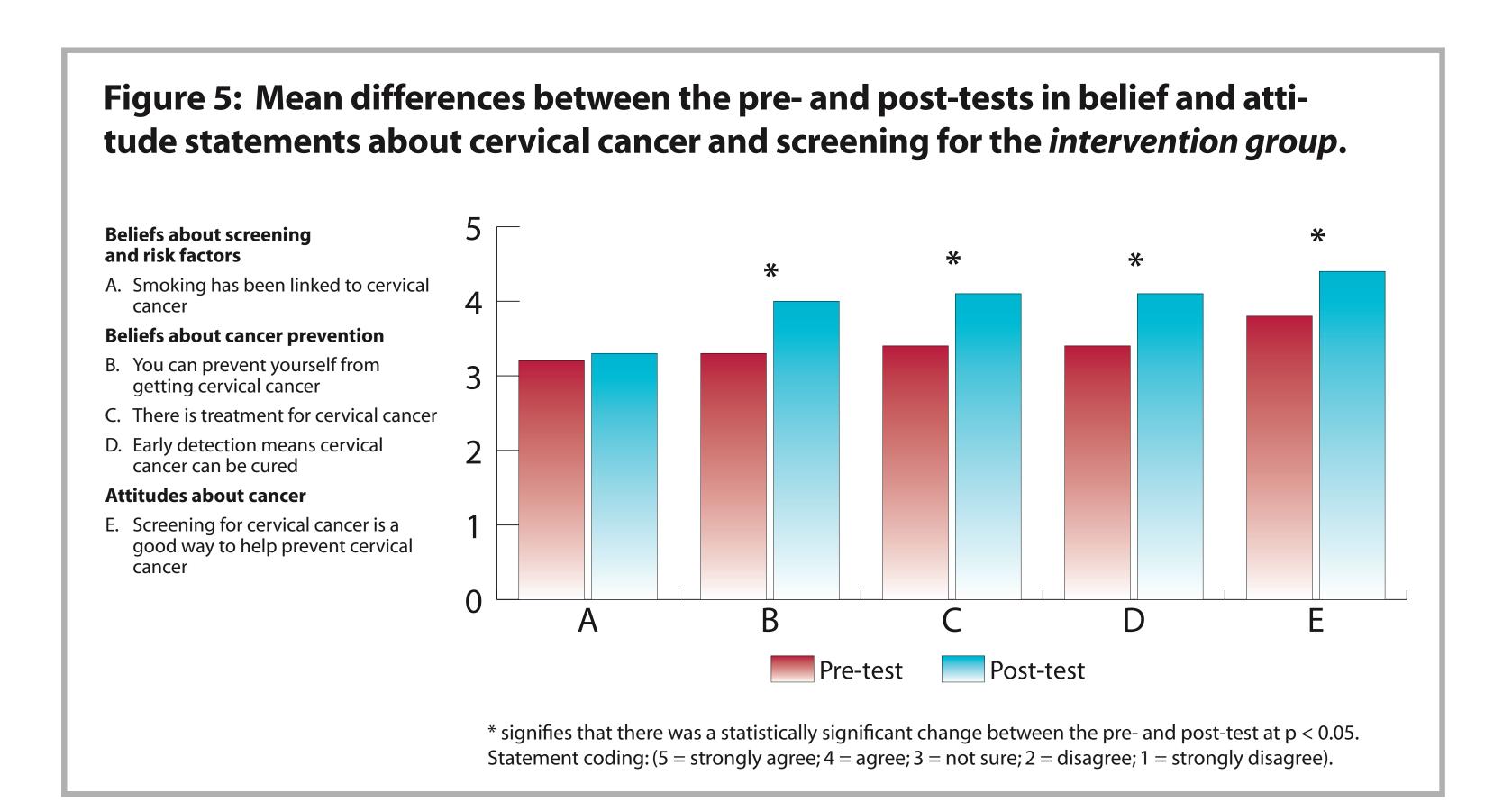


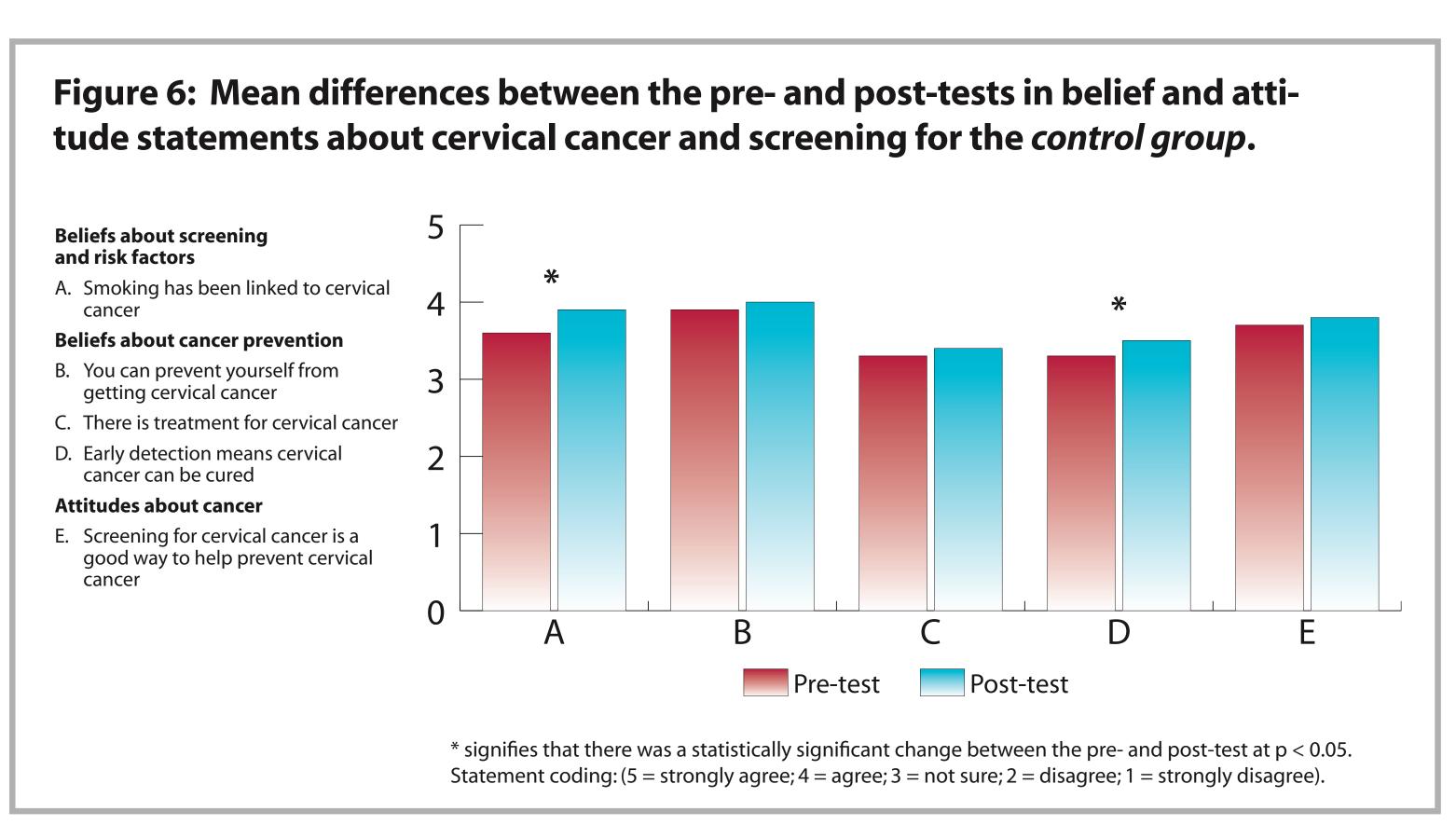




I. I would rather not know if I had







CONCLUSIONS

- A one-hour instructional curriculum on cervical cancer prevention improved knowledge and led to more positive changes in beliefs and attitudes among predominantly Hispanic adolescent females in two high schools located in a rural setting.
- This study demonstrated that the self-reported likelihood of obtaining a Pap smear by age 18 significantly increased after students participated in the curriculum.
- This study provides information for related curriculum development aimed at Hispanics adolescents.
- Future research should focus on understanding the long-term changes in knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes related to cervical cancer screening among adolescents and how their intentions affect future screening practices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

It is important to reach diverse populations in order to increase overall health of women in this country, particularly those known to have greater barriers to accessing preventive health services. This study demonstrates that a one-hour curriculum can inform young women about screening as a lifetime behavior while eliminating barriers related to beliefs and attitudes.