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The Netflix Effect and Defining Binge-Watching

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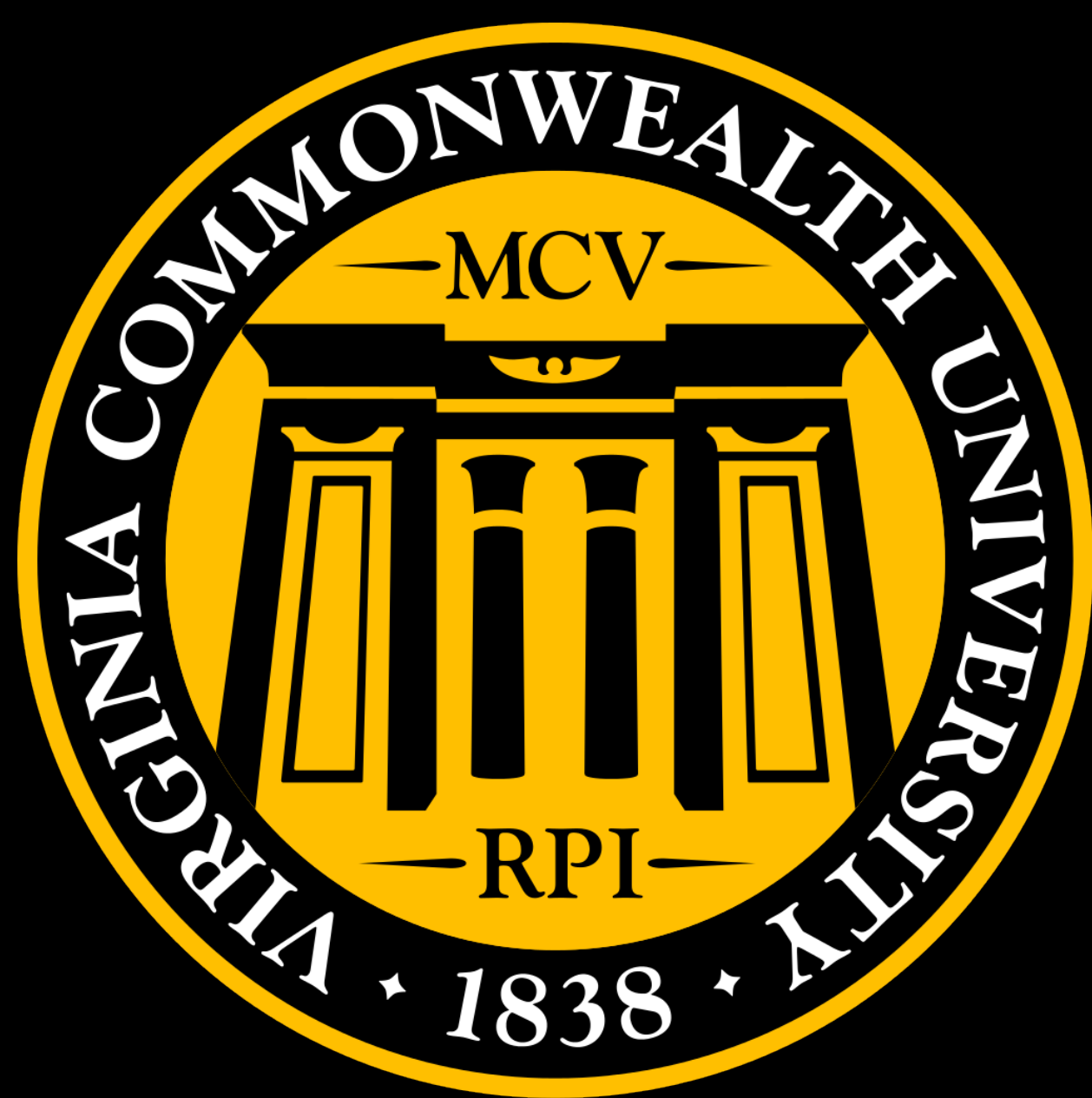
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THE NETFLIX EFFECT AND DEFINING BINGE-WATCHING

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

- With the accessibility of television programs provided by popular streaming platforms, like Netflix, consumers can watch episodes or seasons of their favorite programming in just one sitting. **This new practice of watching television has been referred to as binge-watching, and is defined by Netflix as watching two to six episodes of the same show in one sitting.**
- Netflix's definition is the most widely used definition of binge-watching, but does not account for the varying lengths of episodes for the different types of programming.
- There is a **lack of standardization** in what constitutes a television binge, like the standards that exist for other binge behaviors, and the lack of research conducted about how these new television watching practices affect health and wellness.



Reese, M. (2015). *Binge-watching* [Illustration]. Retrieved from <http://alcalde.texasexes.org/>

THESIS

- To bring awareness to television binging habits and encourage further research of this subject, I studied the neurocognitive and behavioral motivations and effects of excess indulgence to propose a new definition for binge-watching.

METHODS/DESIGN

- Considered the addictive qualities of Netflix and potential health effects of binge behavior with television
- Researched correlations between patterns of high television viewing and increased risks for disease and mortality
- Reviewed behavioral theories and correlations between binge behaviors and belongingness needs
- Analyzed and compared binge drinking to binge-watching to understand what constitutes a binge and how a standardized definition allows for generalizable research

RESULTS/DISCUSSION

- Netflix is the video streaming platform revolutionizing the way television is consumed, encouraging binge tendencies through its interface and original programming.

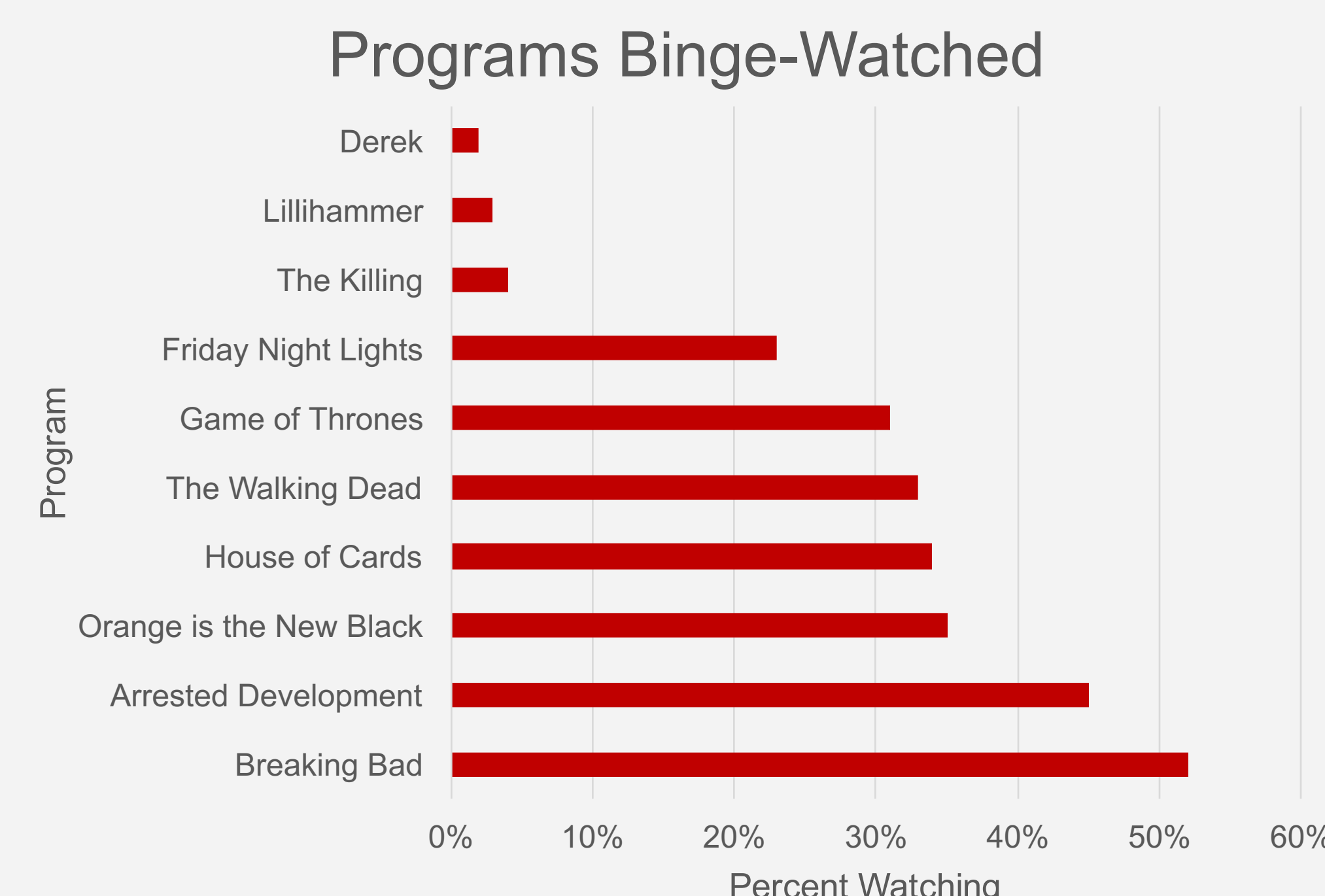
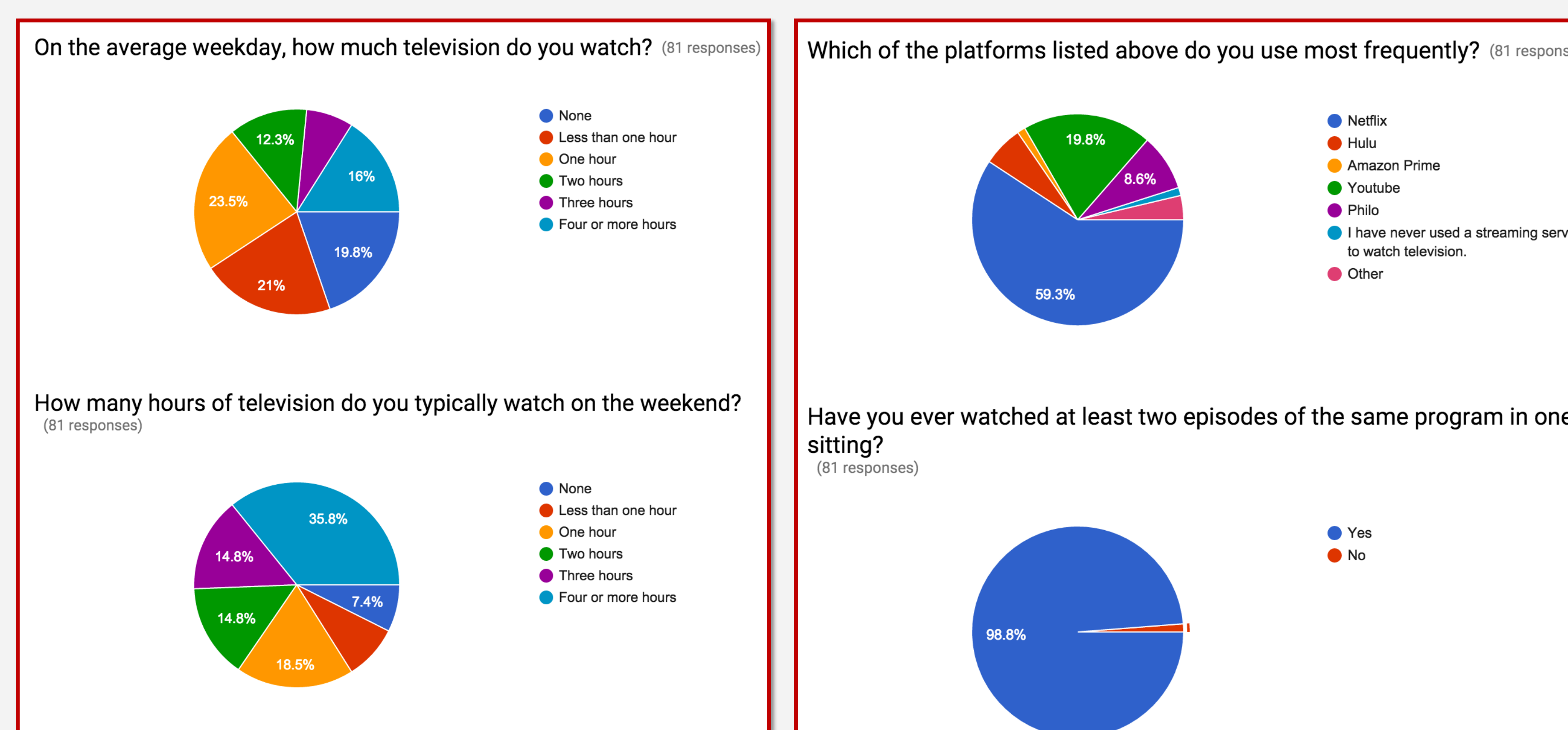


Figure 1 lists top programs frequently mentioned in news reports about binge-watching and the percentage survey participants watched these shows. Five of the shows listed are Netflix originals. [1]

- A lifestyle pattern of high television viewing is associated with increased risk of heart disease and all-cause mortality as well lower cognitive function and shortened leukocyte telomere length. These associations have been found to be independent of factors such as physical activity, family history, age, and sleep duration.
- Binge-watching tendencies and the intent to watch television for long periods of time is associated with loneliness or aroused belongingness needs. Television programs can serve as social surrogates in providing a sense of belonging. Watching or sharing programs with other people, or coviewing, also influence binge behavior.
- To understand how college students perceive the act of binge-watching, I conducted a survey based on Bonar et al.'s (2012) binge drinking survey to collect information on college students' television use and practices.



CONCLUSION

- The associations and increased risks found with high television use indicate binge-watching to be an unhealthy behavior.
- A standardized definition that appropriately defines the binge behavior in binge-watching allows for future research on the subject and encourages awareness.
- It is important to promote healthy television practices due to the lack of societal concern of the risks of binge-watching behavior.
- Further research on the motivations for and the adverse effects of binge-watching behavior need to be conducted.

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