

Adolescent Exposure to Cannabis Marketing: A Pilot Study

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BRANCHES

Contributing to community health

Behavioural
Research
And
Northern
Community
Health
Evaluative
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 - Department of Psychology, Lakehead University
 - BRANCHES Laboratory, Lakehead University
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Background

- In 2018, Canada legalized recreational cannabis use
 - Adults (access age 18 or 19 years, varies by province)
- Adolescent regular cannabis users are at increased risk of cognitive and affective problems
- Federal regulations prohibit cannabis marketing that:
 - Appeals to youth
 - Includes persons, celebrities, characters or animals
 - Can be seen by youth (and more!)
- Tobacco and alcohol research shows that companies ignore these laws and intentionally market their products to youth



Purpose

- Inform the development of an Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) protocol for monitoring adolescent exposure to cannabis ads
- Research questions:
 - Can we design an acceptable/feasible EMA protocol to study adolescent exposure to cannabis marketing?
 - Can we use our EMA protocol to quantify/describe:
 - How and how often cannabis ads reach adolescents?
 - Impacts of cannabis ad exposure on adolescents' expectations of and intentions to use cannabis?

Methods

- EMA app (Expiwell)
- Live, online training
 - Study app features and use
 - Identify and log range of ads types
 - Complete expectancies and intentions items
 - Respond to device-issued prompts (2x/day)
 - Measure of protocol engagement/adherence
- 9-day protocol
 - Day 4 check-in
- Virtual exit session
 - Upload data
 - Provide feedback on the protocol

Cannabis survey

[Download](#)

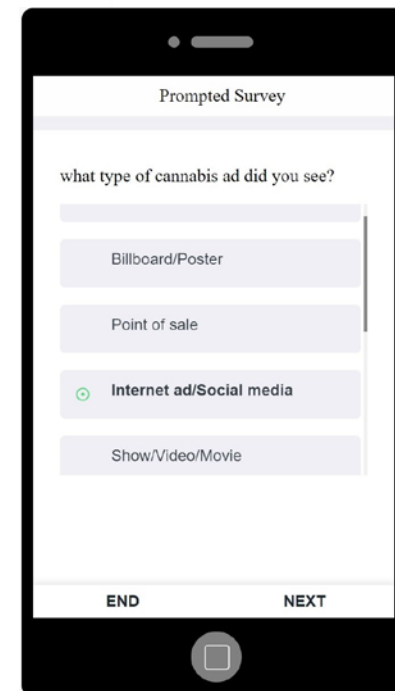
2 Surveys

Participants: 11 /

RESPONSES



Due to COVID-19, all activities moved online



A smartphone screen displaying a 'Prompted Survey' interface. The survey question is 'what type of cannabis ad did you see?'. There are four radio button options: 'Billboard/Poster', 'Point of sale', 'Internet ad/Social media' (which is selected), and 'Show/Video/Movie'. At the bottom of the screen, there are two buttons: 'END' and 'NEXT'.

Demographics

- **Eligibility criteria:**

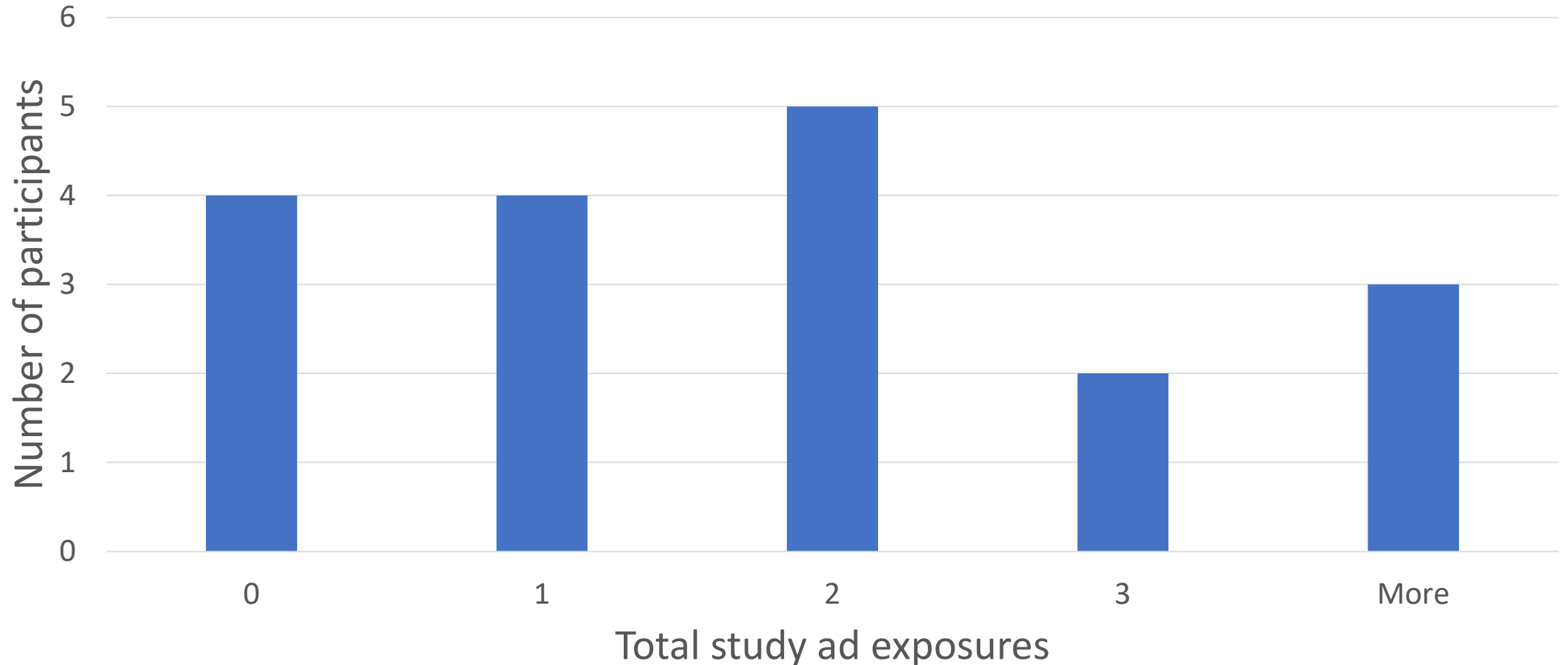
- Thunder Bay area
- 14 – 18 years
- Personal cell phone
- English

- **Recruitment:**

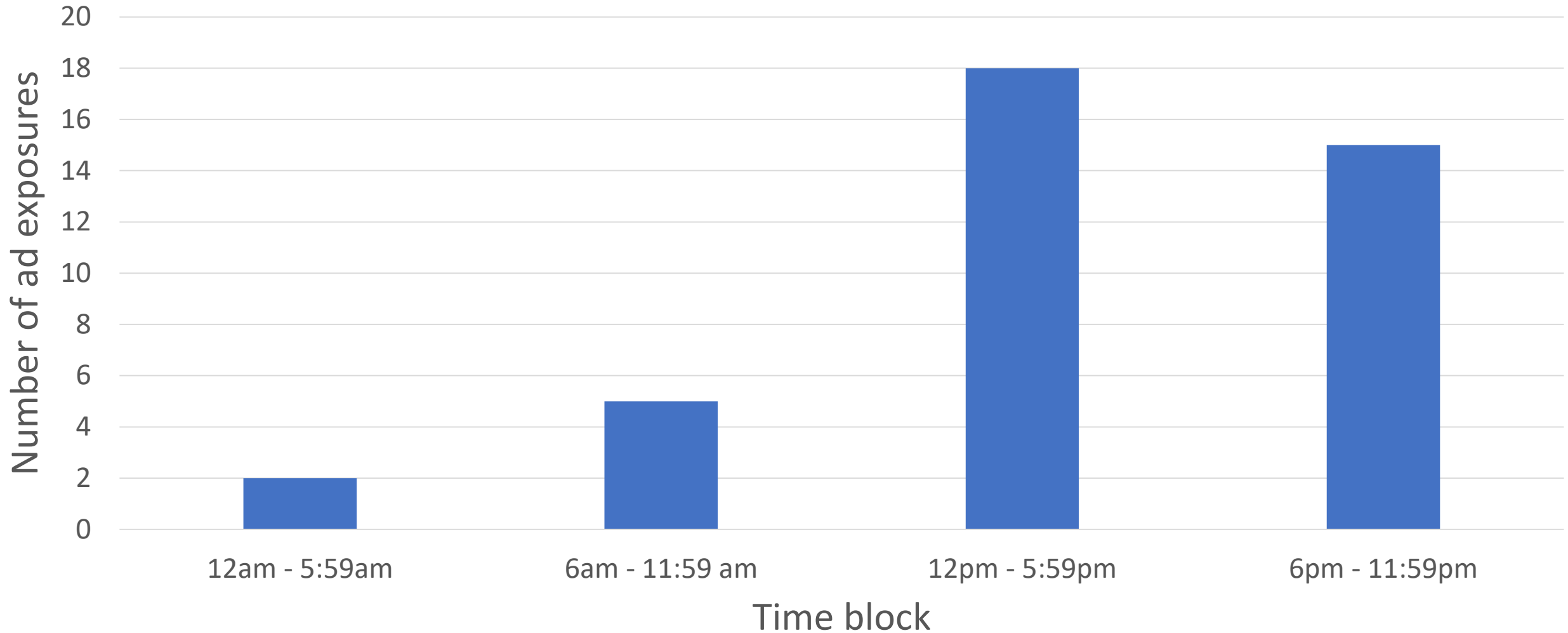
- Social media advertising (Facebook and Instagram)

	Mean	Range
Age	15	14-18
	n	%
Participant count	18	100
Gender (female)	9	50
Ethnicity (Caucasian)	13	73
School enrolment	18	100
Prior cannabis use	3	17

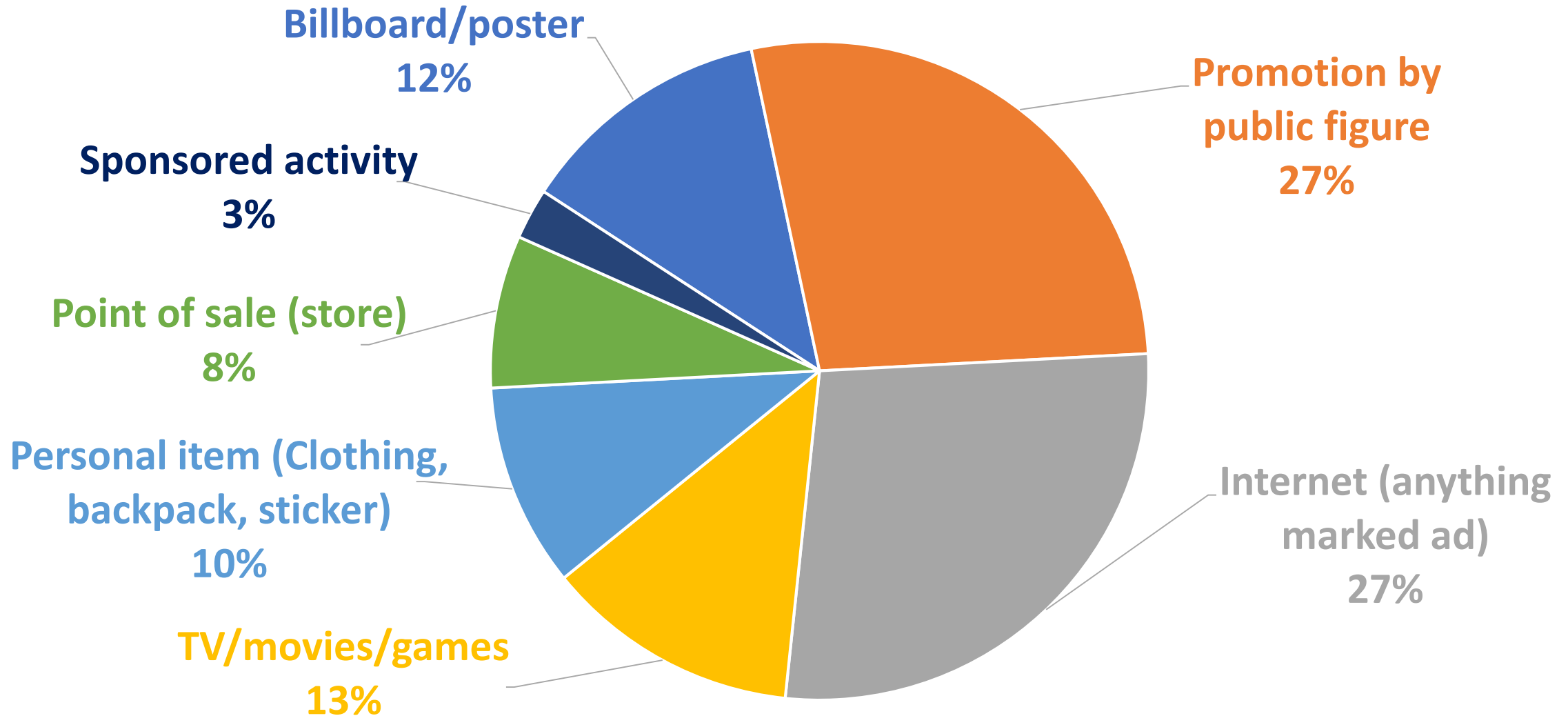
Teens recorded a total of 40 ads. Almost all teens saw some ads (~3 ads each).



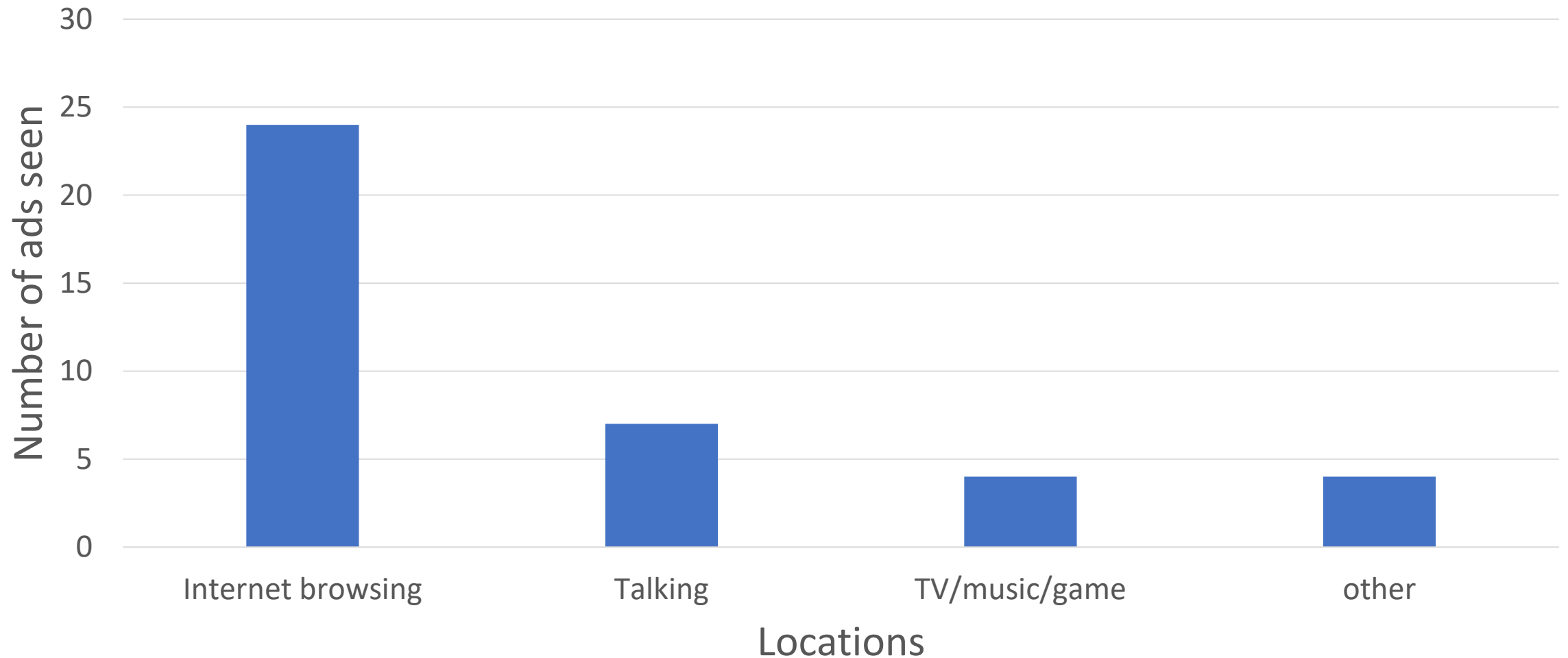
Teens saw cannabis ads in the afternoon and evening



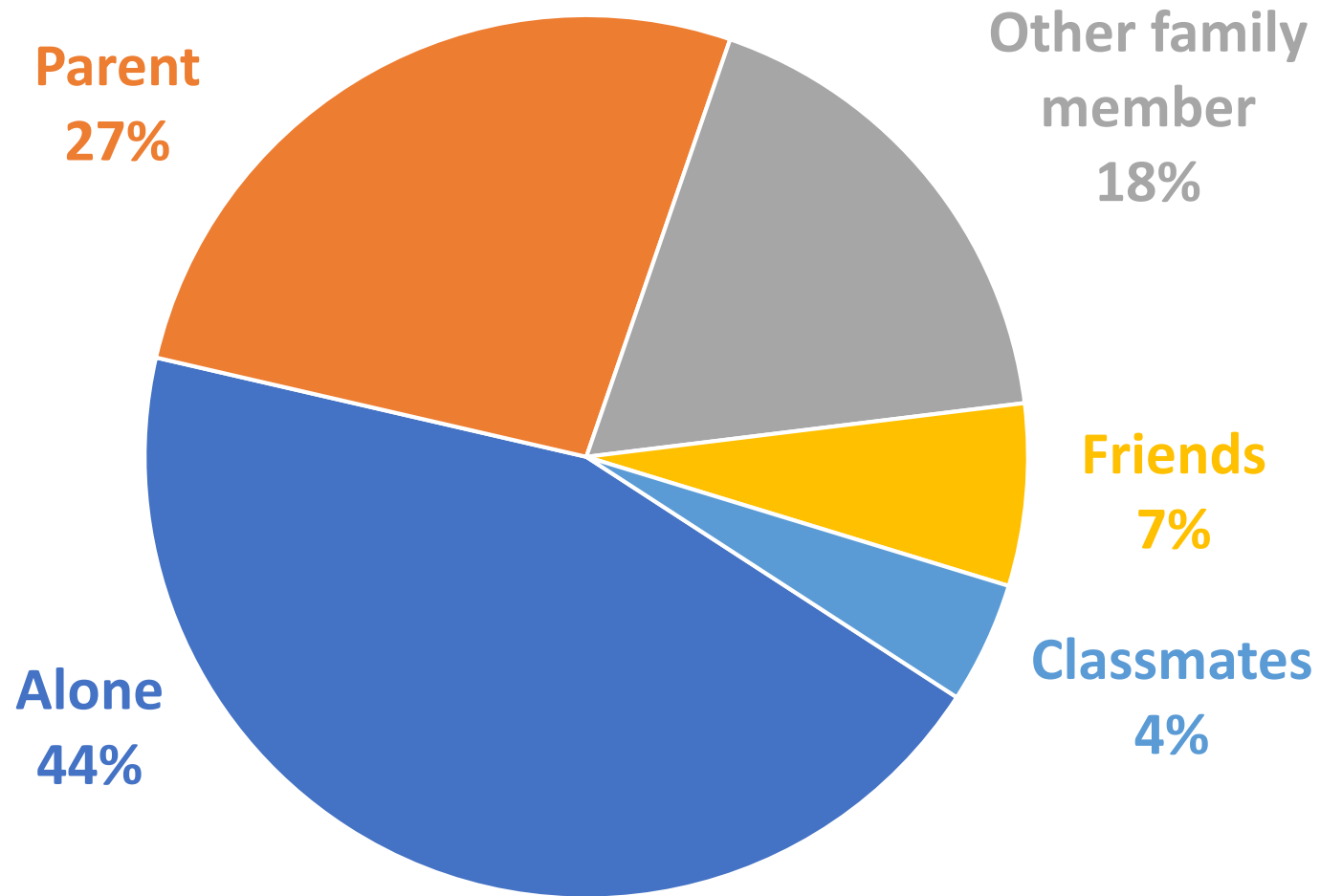
What types of ads did teens see?



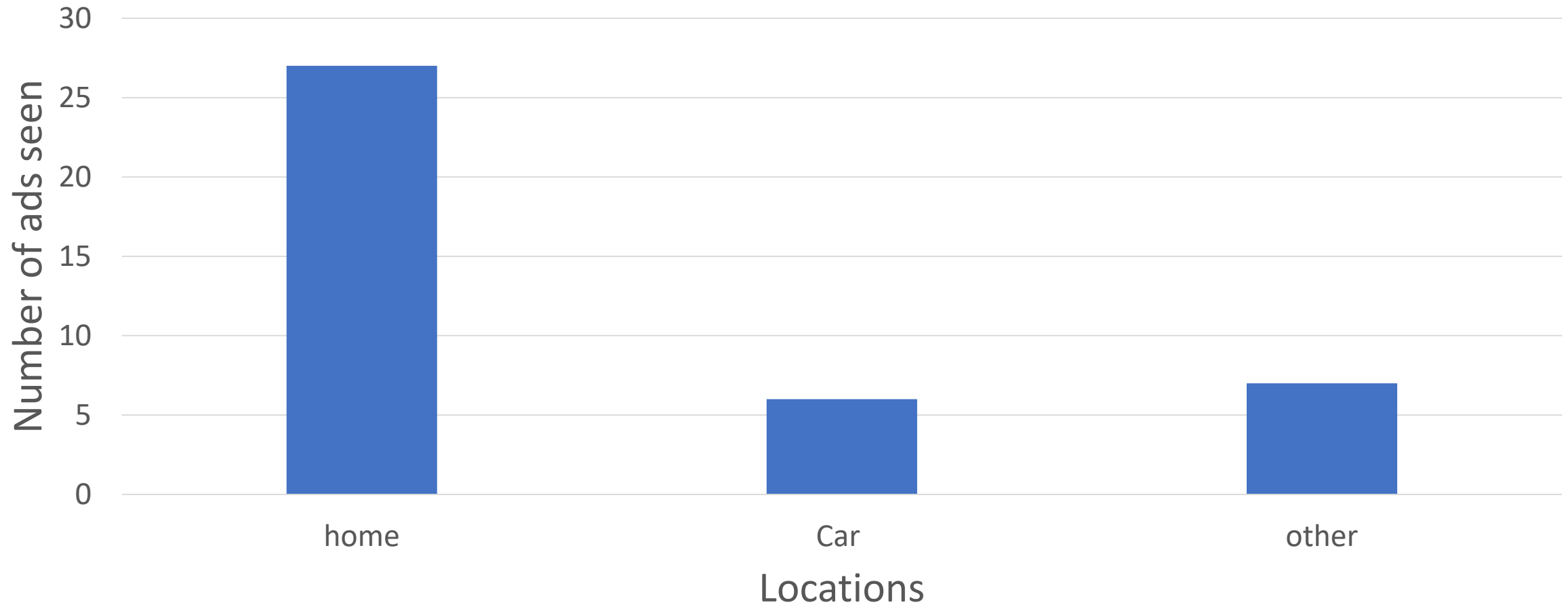
What were teens doing leading up to the exposure?



Who were teens with when they saw an ad?



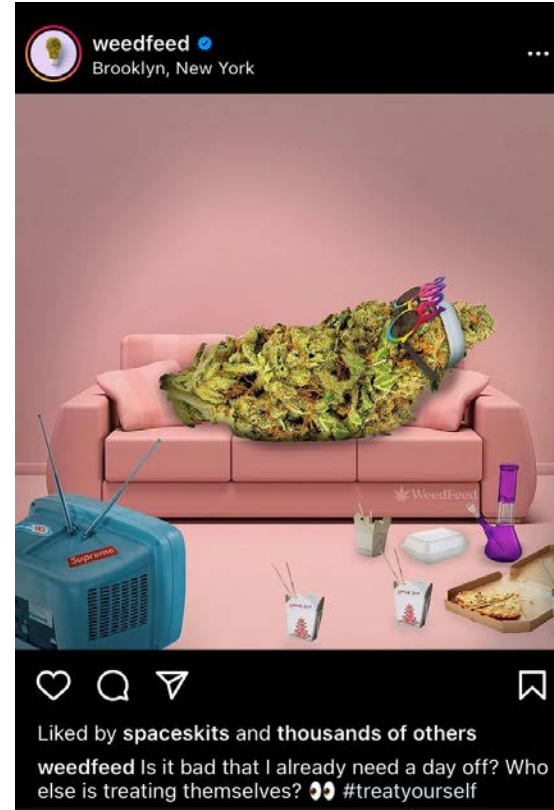
Where did teens see ads?



Some sample exposures

- Ads appearing on teens social media feeds

- Billboards in plain sight of teens



No evidence of cannabis expectancies and intentions – yet!

- Cannabis expectancy and intentions scores were similar between ad exposure assessments and device-issued random prompts
- However:
 - Small sample size
 - Few exposures
 - No capacity for between exposure-type comparisons
 - More rigorous assessment in up-coming full-scale study
 - Stay tuned!

Study design considerations and improvements

- Protocol adherence
 - Prompt response rate suggests teens actively partake in study tasks
- Protocol changes
 - Increased training to reduce participant error rate
 - Inclusion of participant location data
- Recruitment strategy
 - Recruit more teens that
 - Are not enrolled in school
 - Have used cannabis in the past
 - Identify themselves as having backgrounds other than Caucasian

Summary/What's next

- Teens reported that the protocol was acceptable, easy to use
- Preliminary data show evidence of adolescent exposure to cannabis marketing
 - Range of channels
 - Range of locations
- Just published: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2021.100383>
- New SSHRC IDG grant# 430-2020-00502 to Drs. Scharf, Koné and Klein
 - Supports a field study of n=120 participants across Ontario