



**Undergraduate student researchers**

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**Introduction**

**College students & mental health:** College students report alarmingly high rates of perceived loneliness, anxiety, depression, and sadness, and recent studies indicate that these rates have been rising. In an attempt to combat this crisis, interventions that potentially promote mental health may provide significant benefits for college aged students.

**Indoor climbing & health:** Climbing has been suggested as one such possible intervention. The state of Utah boasts unrivaled access to world-class climbing that everyone – from hobby climbers to first-rate athletes – may benefit from.

**Purpose**  
To evaluate whether indoor climbing promotes mental and social health among young adults.

**Hypothesis**  
The collaborative and trust intensive relationship of top roping will yield positive effects in fields of perceived social and mental health.



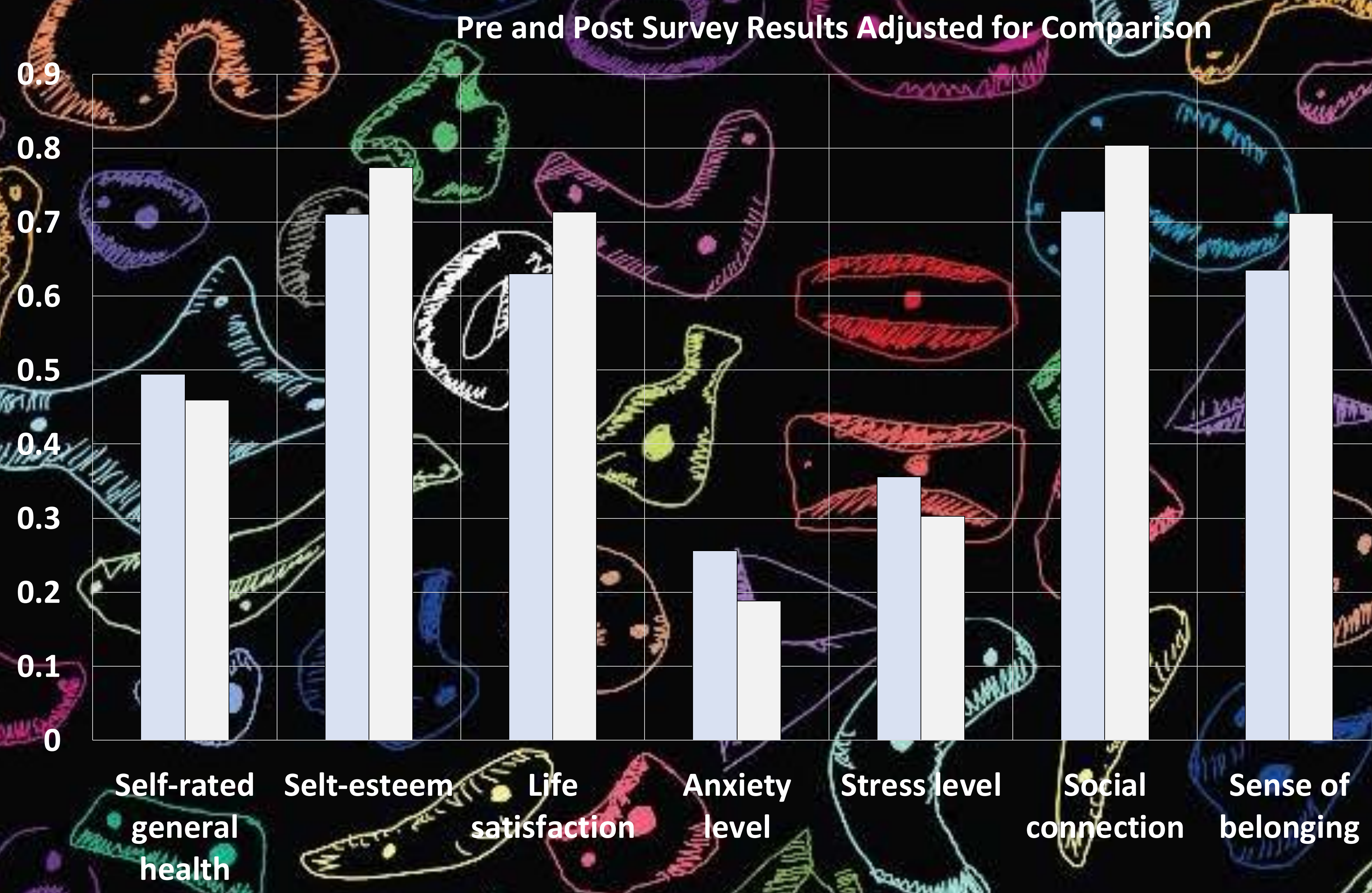
**Results**

**Participant characteristics**  
Age – mean 20.45 (SD=1.76)  
Gender – male (43.3%), female (46.7%), other (10%)  
Race – white (73.3%), Asian (10%), Hispanic (6.7%)  
US born – 100% In state – 90%  
Living arrangement – with family/relative (53.3%), with friend/roommate (20%)  
Year in school – junior (40%), sophomore (20%), first-year (16.7%), senior (16.7%)

**Results of pre- & post-tests (perceived changes)**  
**IMPROVED**  
Self-rated general health p = <.001  
Self-esteem p = <.001  
Life satisfaction p = 0.012  
Social connection p = 0.026  
Sense of belonging p = <.001  
**REDUCED**  
Stress level p = <.001  
Anxiety level p = <.001

**Conclusions**

Indoor climbing may be an effective intervention to improve mental and social health among college students.



**Results from qualitative data (participants' voices)**  
"I think that's been the biggest thing I've noticed mental health wise is having an outlet and a social setting and a really supportive environment to go and like challenge yourself and sometimes fail"  
"When I'm climbing, I'm not as focused on other things that are bothering me"

**Recommendations & Future Research**

- Recommendations**
- Make indoor climbing more accessible for college students.
  - Offer University-based indoor climbing programs.
- Future research**
- Larger number of participants in multiple locations.
  - Long-term follow-up.



**Acknowledgements**

This project was supported by 1U4U Innovation Funding & Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP).