

Is the Increased Consumption of Alcohol and Nicotine in College Students Associated with Increased Cancer Risk?

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to gauge the habits of college students regarding alcohol consumption, vaping, and smoking and how these activities influence cancer risk. The researchers hope this study will provide implications on possible future interventions for this population. Knowing the cancer-related risk factors associated with alcohol and nicotine consumption can also help reduce cancer diagnoses in the future.

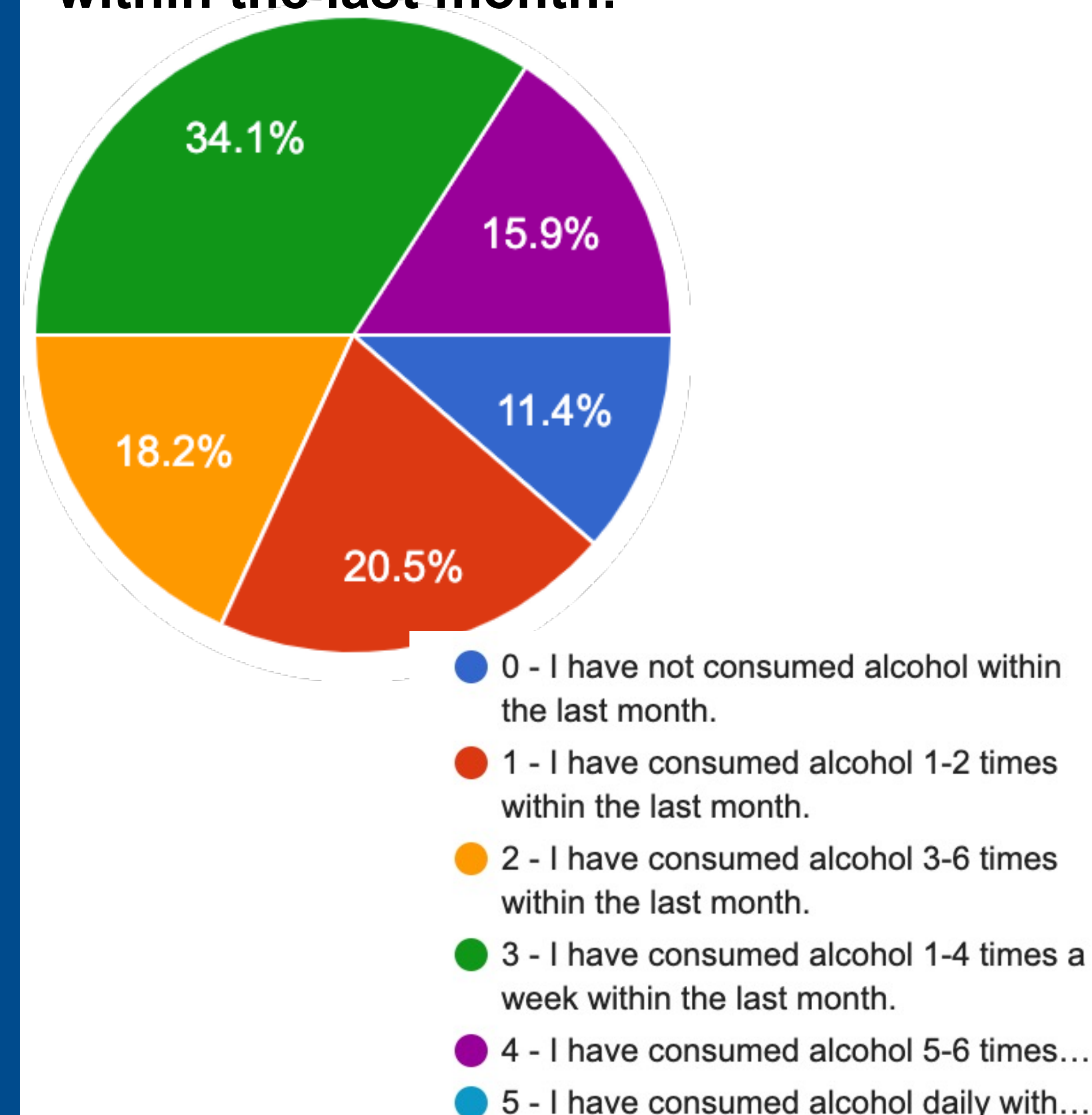
METHODS

The participants for the study included 44 University of Dayton undergraduate students aged 18-23 and of all genders. They completed a Google Form from March 26th – April 5th, 2023. The questionnaire contained demographic questions, family history questions, and questions answered using a Likert Scale indicating the frequency of their alcohol and nicotine consumption. The participants also optionally indicated at what age they began consuming alcohol and nicotine (if applicable). The results were analyzed to examine the alcohol and nicotine consumption habits of different groups of participants.

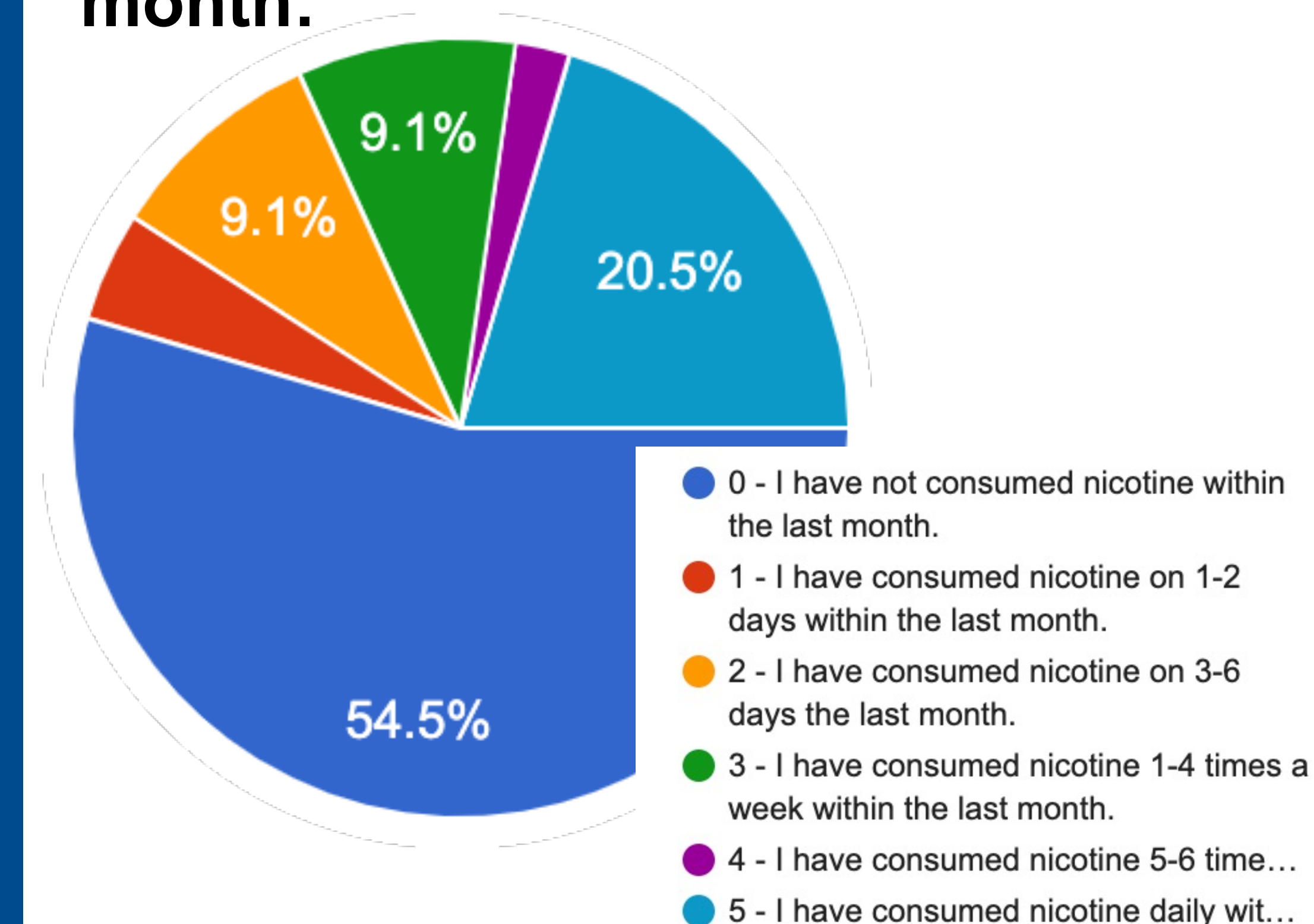
RESULTS

The collected data were analyzed by sorting the participants into groups based on the following: current grade level, place of residence (on-campus or off-campus/commuter), gender, family alcohol consumption history, family nicotine consumption history, and family cancer diagnosis history. The family history questions included the participants' immediate and extended family members. The scores that participants indicated on the Likert Scales pertaining to their alcohol and nicotine consumption habits within the last month were averaged and put through a two-tailed t-test. These results indicated that only one of the comparisons was significantly different: participants with one extended family member who has received the diagnosis of 'alcoholic' had higher alcohol consumption habits than participants with no extended family members receiving this diagnosis. It is important to note that the most common Likert Scale score for alcohol consumption in all participants was a 3 and the most common score for nicotine consumption was a 0. The Likert Scale scores for alcohol and nicotine consumption in all participants are depicted in the pie charts.

Indicate on the following scale how frequently you have consumed alcohol within the last month:



Indicate on the following scale how frequently you have consumed nicotine (vapes/e-cigarettes, cigarettes, cigars) within the last month:



CONCLUSIONS

Because the participants in the study were so young, none of them have received a cancer diagnosis within their lifetime. Therefore, the results are unable to depict a relationship between increased alcohol and nicotine consumption in college students and cancer risk. This study aims to be preliminary and later built upon in the future. Education on the potential cancer-related risks associated with high levels of alcohol and nicotine consumption should be provided to students to prevent future cancer diagnoses. This education and preventative care is currently lacking and should be improved upon (Kang et. al, 2014 and Krenik-Matejcek et. al, 2017).

REFERENCES

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