

Mate consumption: a popular tradition in Uruguay present in the new generations

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Objective: To determine the pattern of mate consumption in teenager students in the Department of San José, Uruguay.

Material and Methods: Descriptive, cross-sectional study of a non-random sample of 49 students between 14 and 19 years of age attending a Technical School in San José, Uruguay. The information was collected through an online self-administered survey. Consent of a responsible adult and the student's assent were required. Registration and submission of the questionnaire was done via internet through a blog designed for the purpose.

Results:

Mate is a traditional beverage in Uruguay



Drank with a metal straw ("bombilla")



Made by infusion in hot water of dried and grinded leaves of *Ilex paraguariensis*

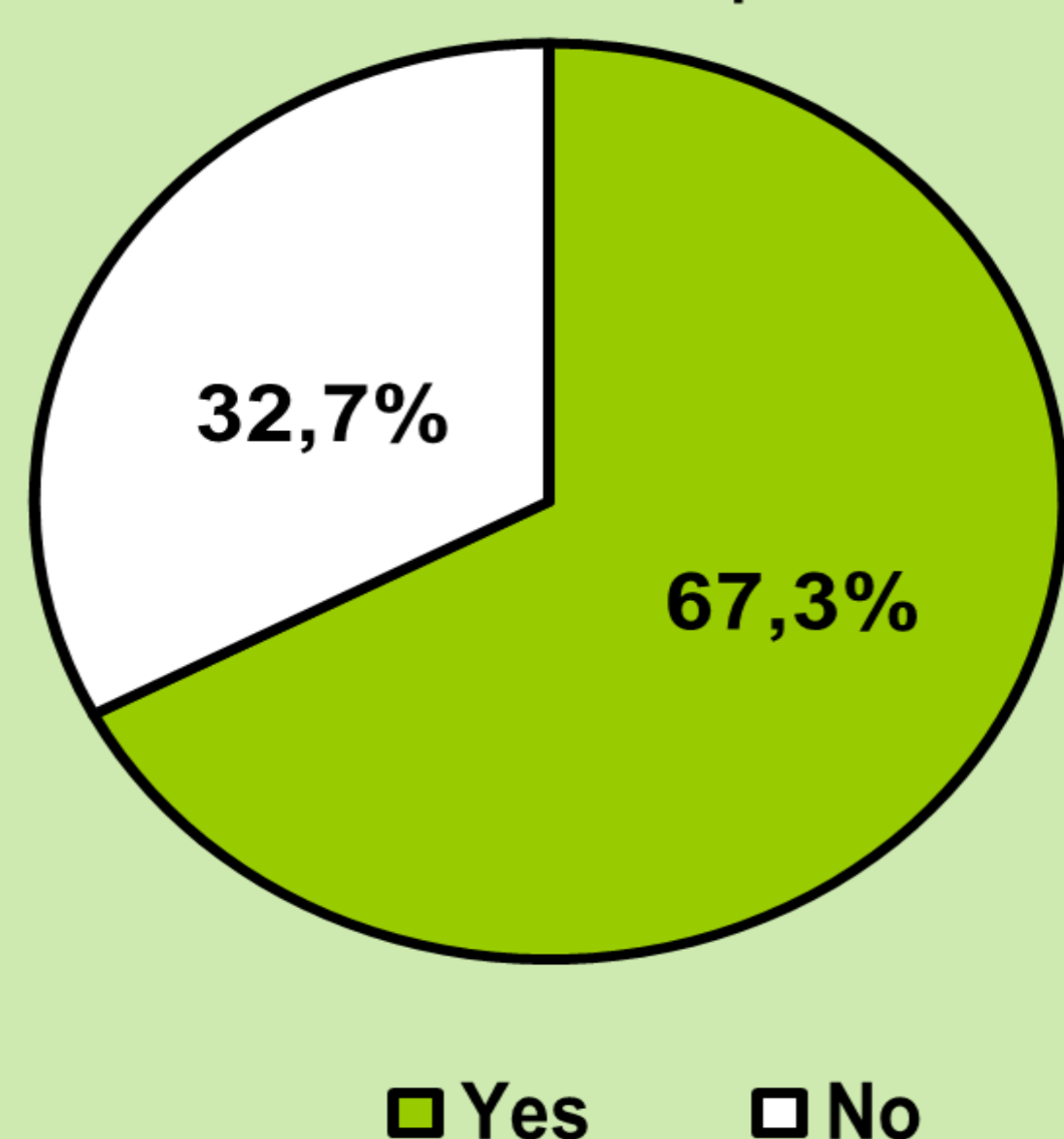


The receptacle used is usually a gourd made from the fruit of *Legenaria vulgaris*

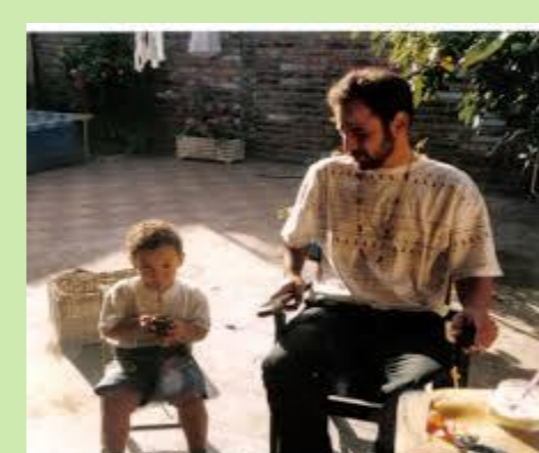
Mate was consumed by more than half of the respondent students (67.3%), particularly by females.



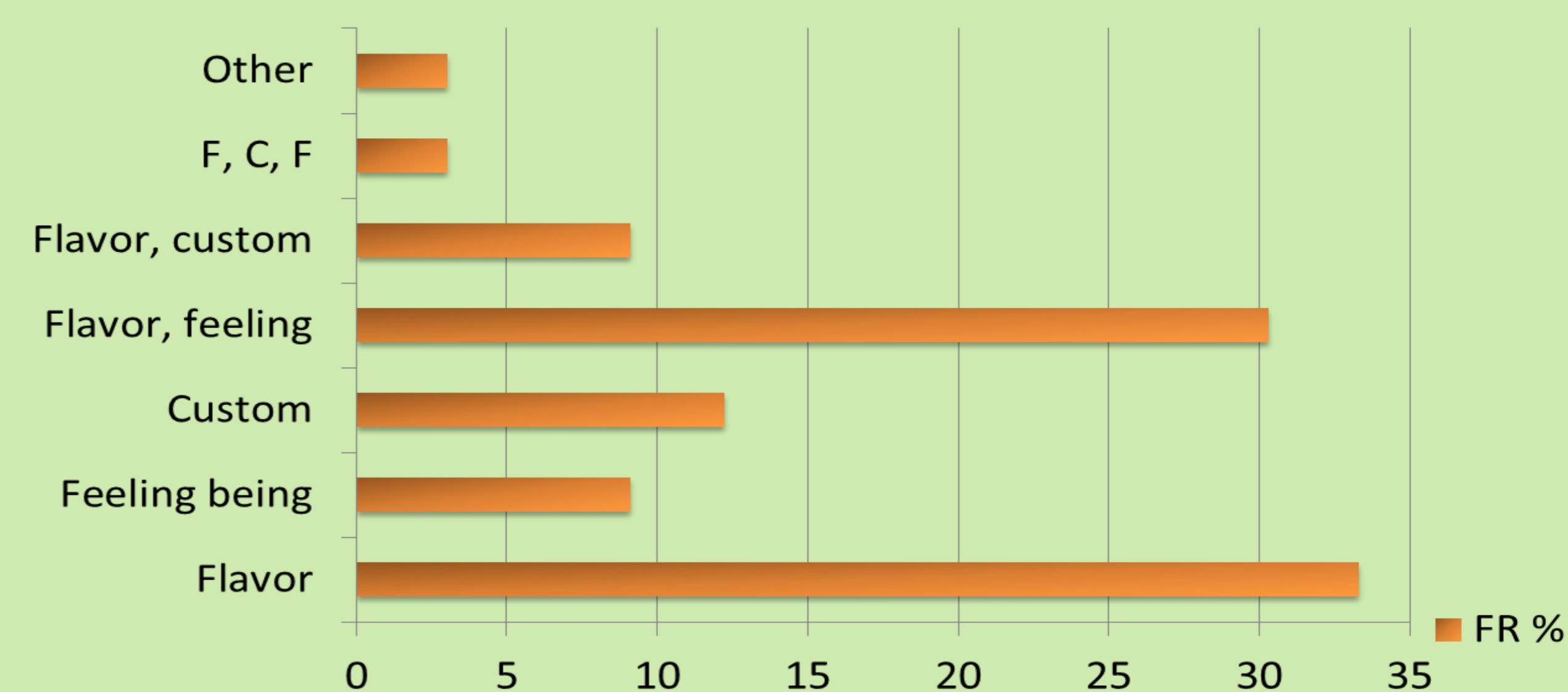
Distribution of students according to consumption



Among those drinking mate, 54.5 % started this habit at 9-13 years of age, and 15.2 % at 4-8 years of age. 25% acquired this habit at home



The main reason for consuming mate was flavor, followed by the feeling of well being.



Nine out of ten consumed mate daily, drank between half to one liter of the infusion, and 10% used very hot water.

43.1 % preferred the bitter natural flavor, which is due to the tannins of the mate leaves, while 15.2 % used sweeteners (table 1).

Most of the students (60.4 %), consumed plain mate leaves while the rest used a combination of mate leaves and other medicinal herbs (table 1).

The afternoon was the preferred time of the day for consumption.

More than half consumed mate in the company of friends and family, and 45 % ate cookies and/or pastries at the time of mate consumption (table 1).



Table 1-Consumption mode

Mode	FR%
Mate type	
Bitter	24,2
Sweeteners	15,2
Bitter y sweeteners	33,3
Bitter and others	9,1
Bitter, sweeteners and others	18,2
Plain mate type	
Leaves mate	63,6
Leaves mate and other medicinal herbs	36,4
Consumed amount (ml)	
≤ 500	33,3
500-1000	57,6
>1000	9,1
Consumed mate with food	
Yes	45,4
No	54,6
Consumed mate in the company	
Yes	51,5
No	48,5

Conclusion: The amount and patterns of mate consumption in this population age group in Uruguay indicate the need of further studies of the potential nutritional and health effects. Mate consumption has a social and emotional role which is transmitted throughout generations.