

# Framing Obesity as a Health Issue

Differences in Public and Professional  
Perceptions between Canada and the U.S.

*Theodore Kyle , Bonnie Kuehl, Nathalie Dumas, Sara F. Kirk  
April 30, 2015*

# Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

- Faculty: Ted Kyle
- Relationships with commercial interests:
  - Grants/Research Support: Obesity Action Coalition
  - Speakers Bureau/Honoraria: none
  - Consulting Fees: 3D Communications, Eisai, EnteroMedics, Novo Nordisk, The Obesity Society
  - Other: none

# Disclosure of Commercial Support

- This program has received financial support from no one in the form of anything.
- This program has received in-kind support from no one in the form of anything.
- Potential for conflict(s) of interest:
  - Ted Kyle has received nothing from any organization connected with this presentation.
  - No products will be discussed in this program.

# Mitigating Potential Bias

- We have no commercial bias to mitigate in connection with this program.

Framing Obesity as a Health Issue

# Background

# Pervasive Bias Hampers Clinical Care and Obesity-Related Policy

- Blaming people living with obesity
- Counterproductive tension between prevention and clinical care
- Dysfunctional medical dialogue

*“Our findings add to a growing body of literature that challenges a number of widely held assumptions about obesity within a health care system that is currently unsupportive of individuals living with obesity.”*

*– Kirk et al  
Qual Health Res, 2014*

# Weight Bias Compounds the Harm of Obesity



Source: UConn Rudd Center

# Understanding External Causes of Obesity Plays a Role in Bias

- People express bias when they perceive it as a choice
- People reject bias when they understand the external causes of obesity

Sources: Crandall, 1994; Crandall & Moriarty, 1995; Crandall et al., 2001; DeJong, 1993; Puhl, Schwartz, Brownell, 2005.





# Study Objectives

- **Measure the prevalence of different perceptions of obesity**
- **Look for potential differences**
  - **Between the U.S. and Canada**
  - **Between the public and healthcare professionals**
  - **Between French and English-speaking Canadians**

## Framing Obesity as a Health Issue

# Methods

# Online and Smartphone Samples Obtained via Google Consumer Surveys

## Online Sample

- **8,670 Total**
  - 2,817 CA POP
  - 3,850 U.S. POP
  - 1,000 CA HCP
  - 1,003 U.S. HCP

## Smartphone Sample

- **3,959 Total**
  - 1,000 CA-Eng POP
  - 2,000 CA-Fr POP
  - 959 CA-Fr HCP

Note: HCPs include physicians, RNs, dietitians/nutritionists, healthcare policy/mgmt

# Questions

Which phrase comes closest to describing the type of problem that you think obesity is?

- Personal problem of bad choices
- Community problem of bad food & inactivity
- Medical problem
- A totally different type of problem

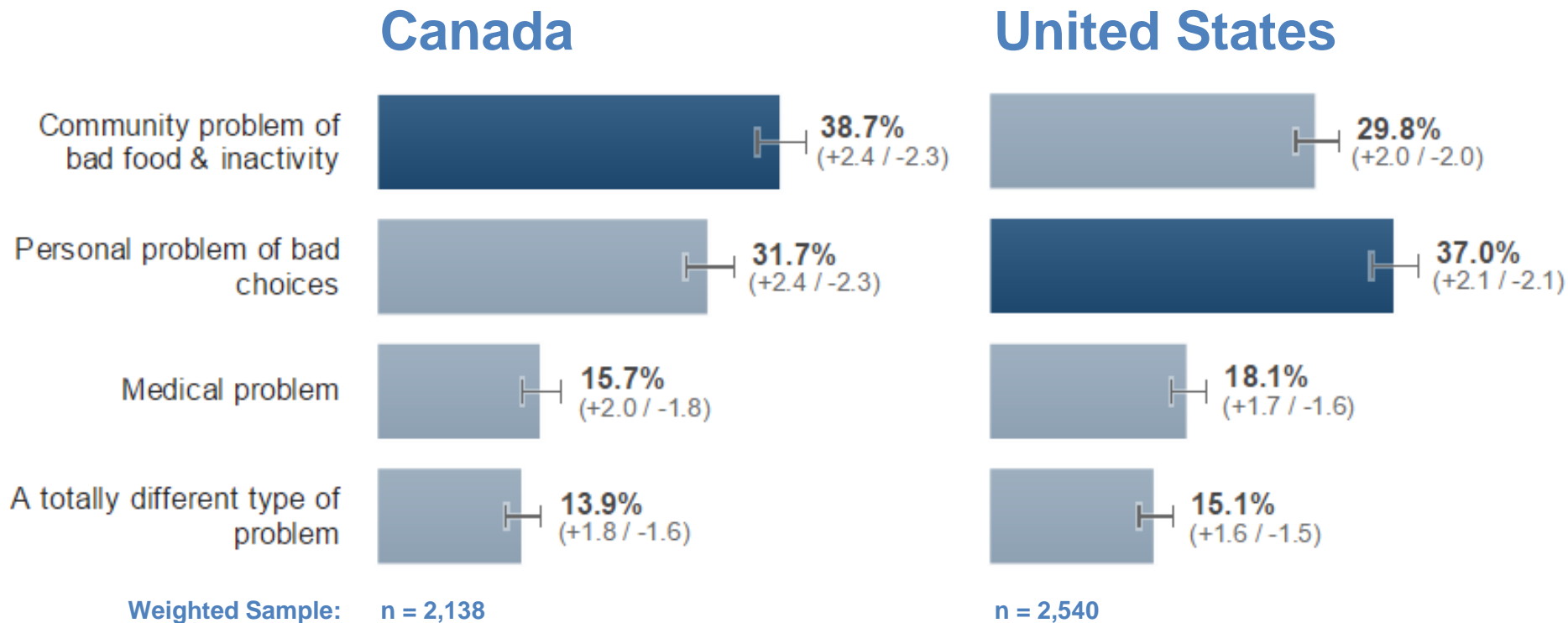
Quelle phrase tend à décrire le mieux, votre perception du genre de problème qu'est l'obésité?

- Un problème individuel fait de mauvais choix
- Malbouffe et inactivité: un problème social
- Un problème médical
- Un problème complètement différent

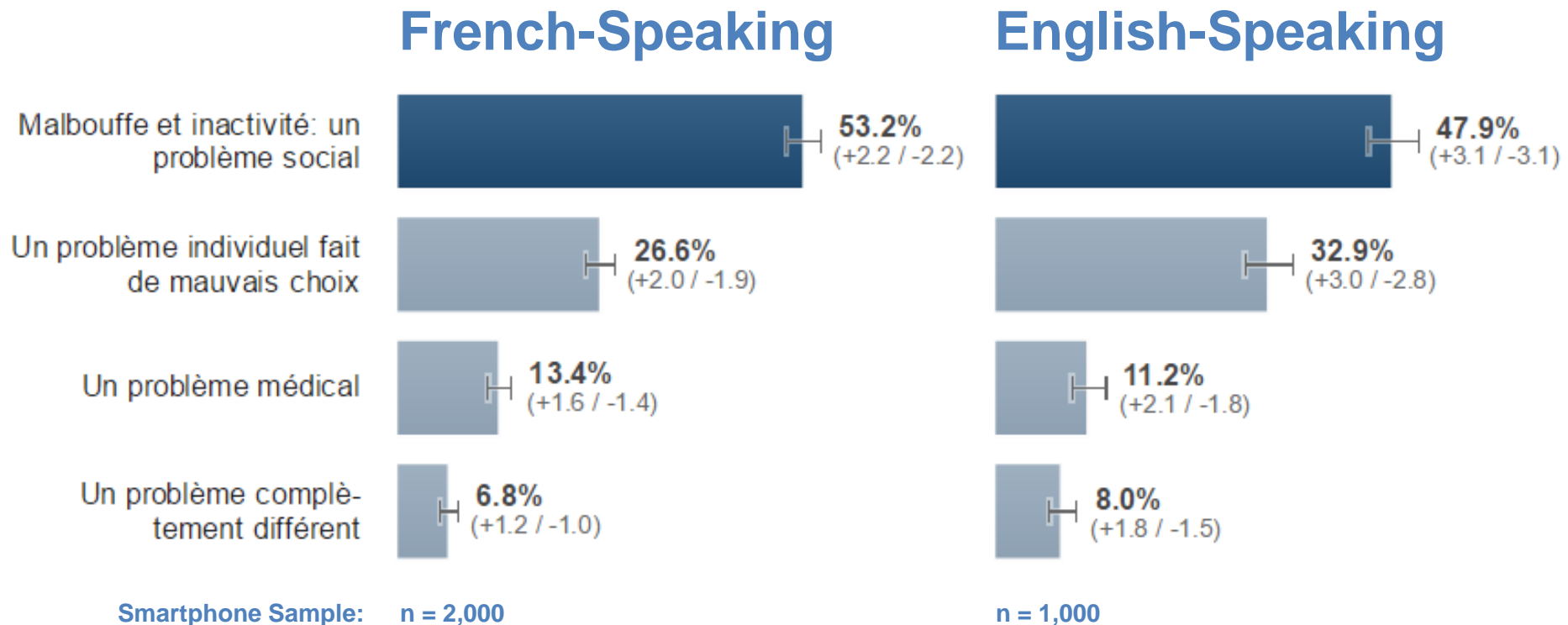
## Framing Obesity as a Health Issue

# Results

# The Canadian Public Views Obesity More as a Community Problem than the U.S.



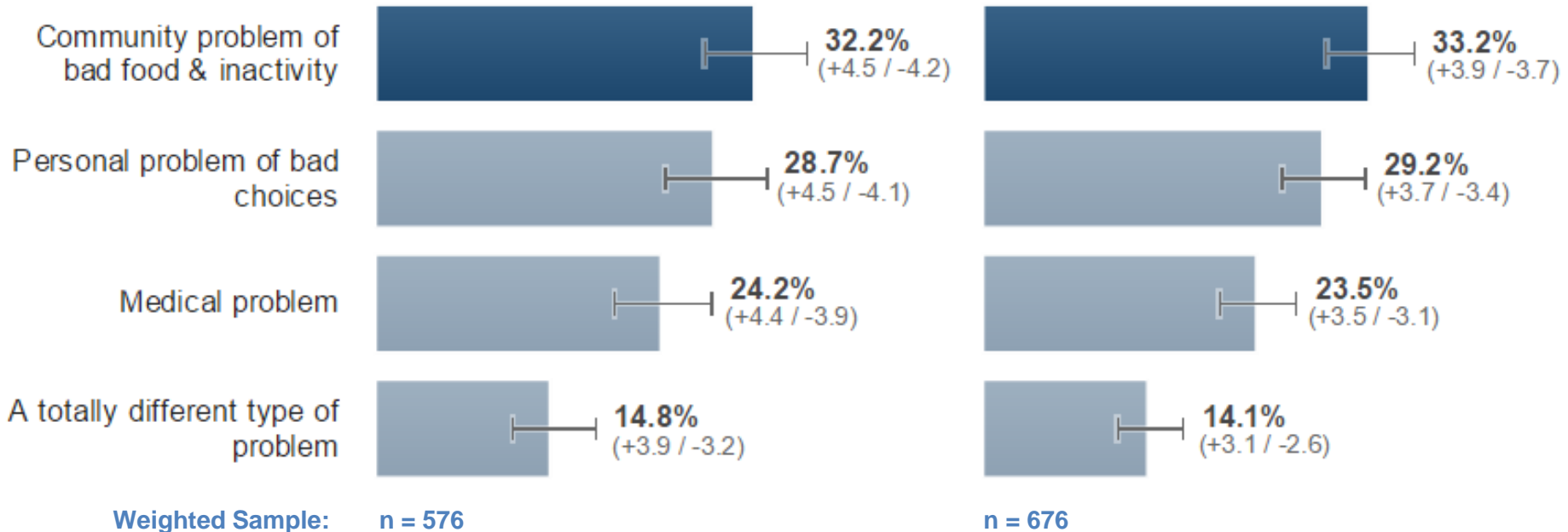
# French-Speaking Canadians Are Most Likely to View Obesity as a Community Problem



# HCPs Hold Similar Views of Obesity in Both Countries

## Canada

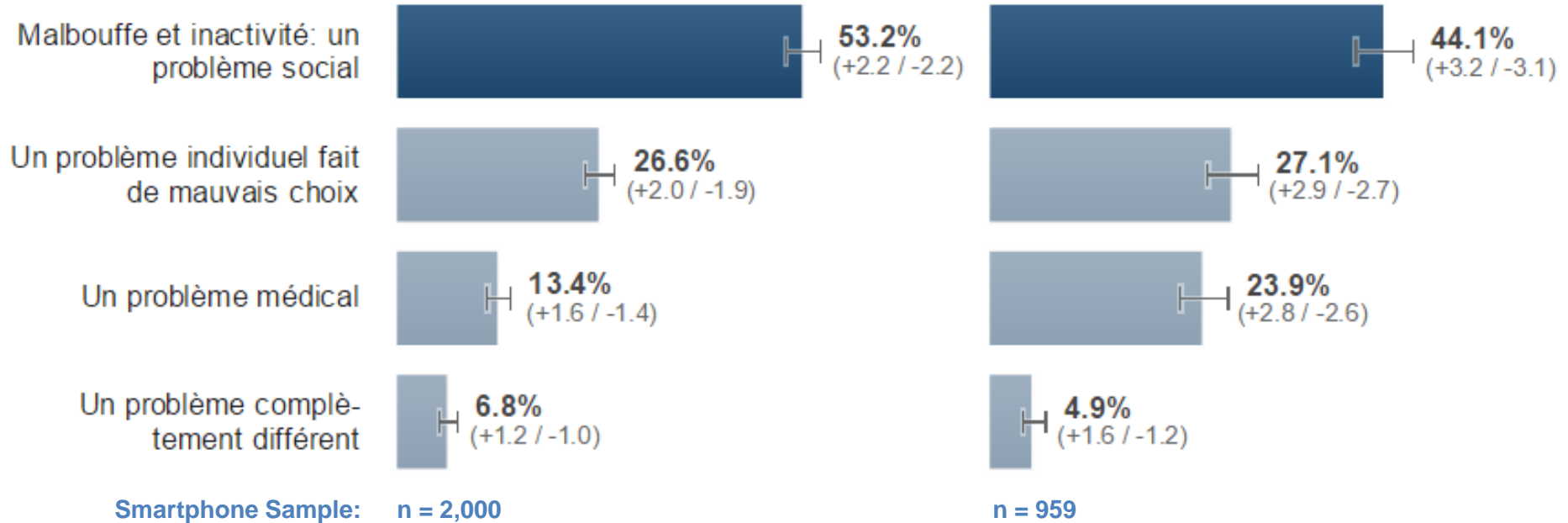
## United States





# HCPs in Canada Less Likely Than Public to View Obesity as a Community Problem

## French-Speaking Canadians



# Conclusions



- **Greater understanding of obesity as a community problem in Canada**
- **Especially among French-speaking Canadians**
- **Suggests greater appreciation for shared risks**
- **May offer opportunities for more effective strategies**
- **And for reducing bias**

# Thanks!

## Ximena Ramos Salas

# More Information

- [www.conscienhealth.org/news](http://www.conscienhealth.org/news)
-  [\*\*Facebook.com/ConscienHealth\*\*](https://www.facebook.com/ConscienHealth)
-  [\*\*@ConscienHealth\*\*](https://twitter.com/ConscienHealth)
- **For these slides:**  
<http://conscienhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/frame.pdf>