What's on "GymTok"?

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INTRODUCTION

- The pandemic was associated with high rates of teens signing up for gym membership, an increase since pre-COVID.

- Given that 67% of adolescents report TikTok use, many may be exposed to gym and fitness-related content on social media.

- Few studies have examined how gym related content is displayed on TikTok

The purpose of this study was to understand what types of health messages are present in fitness and gym-related videos on TikTok, and how teens interact and engage with this content.

METHODS

We used content analysis in an observational study. Subjects were TikTok videos posting about gym experiences or "gym culture". **Inclusion criteria for videos:**

- Have at least 1 million views
- Recommended by TikTok to justify their large reach
- Top 25 videos per hashtag with duplicates omitted

For each video we assessed views, likes, and comments. If the video content included a health message, it was categorized under the following variable categories:

|	
Social Gym	Content depicting usage of the gym socially
Informational	Content related to how to do certain exercises and what exercises are best for certain goals
Nutritional	Advice related to optimal diet for specific goals in the gym
Steroid	Content references use of steroids in some form
Supplement	Content discussing the use of non-steroid supplements, i.e creatine, caffeine

TikTok videos were sampled from the hashtags: #gym #fitness #gymtok #gymhumor.

We analyzed this data by assessing the frequency of each type of video as well as the differences between hashtags. We also calculated the average views, likes, and comments on different types of videos.
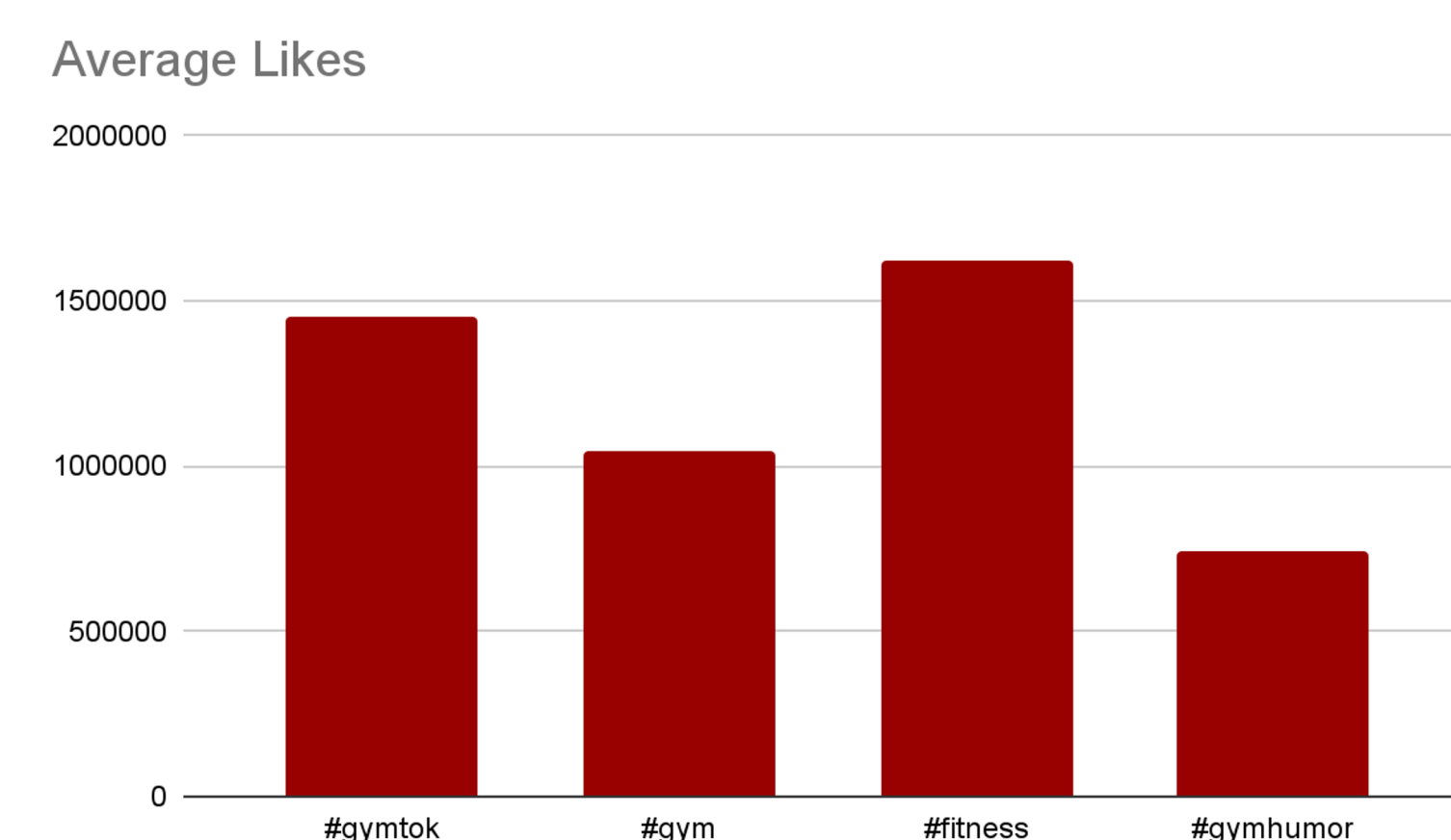
RESULTS

Content of Videos Across Hashtags

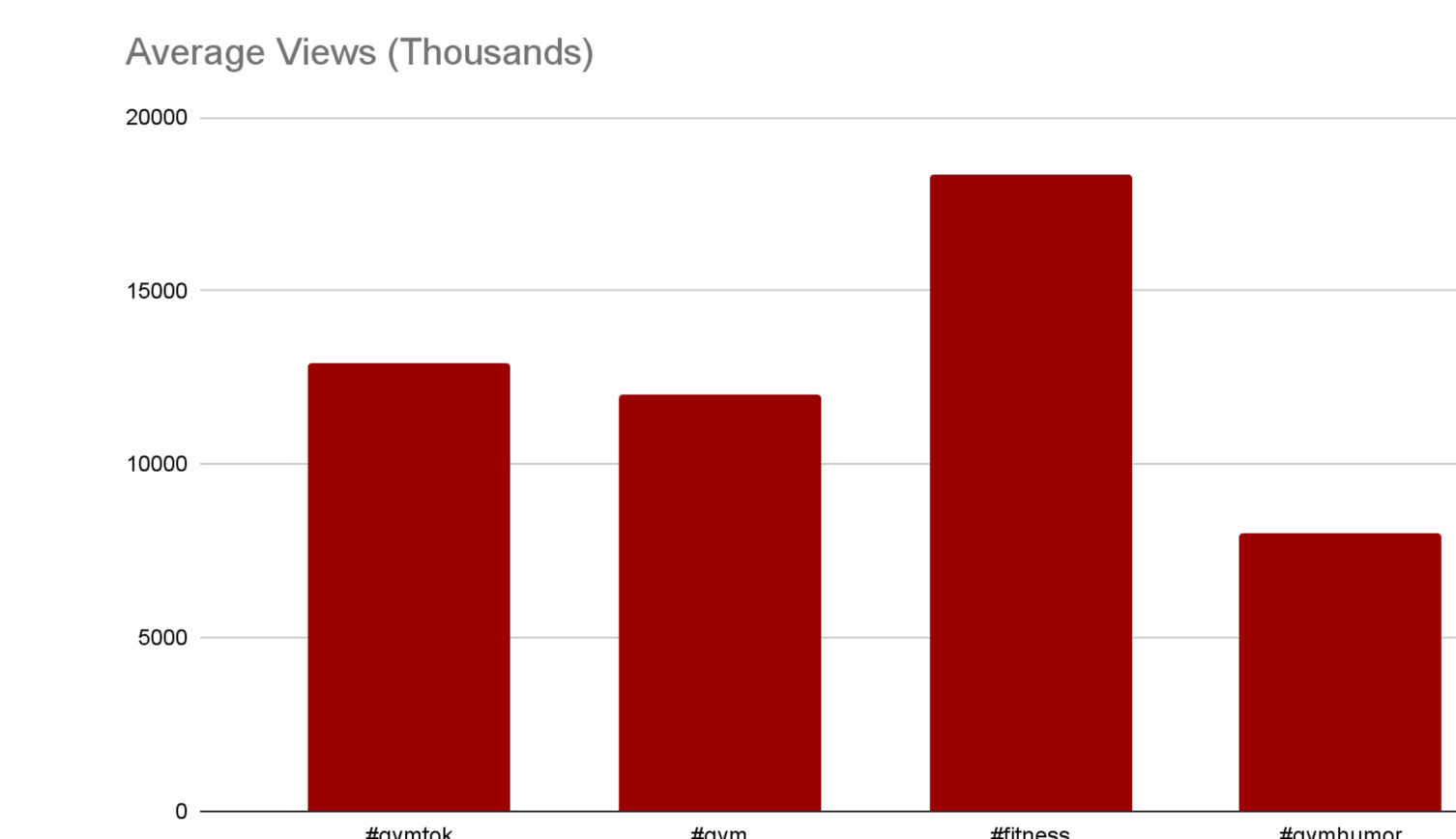| Sample Size	Mean Likes	Mean Views	Mean Comments
100	1215000	12826250	5685

Video Type
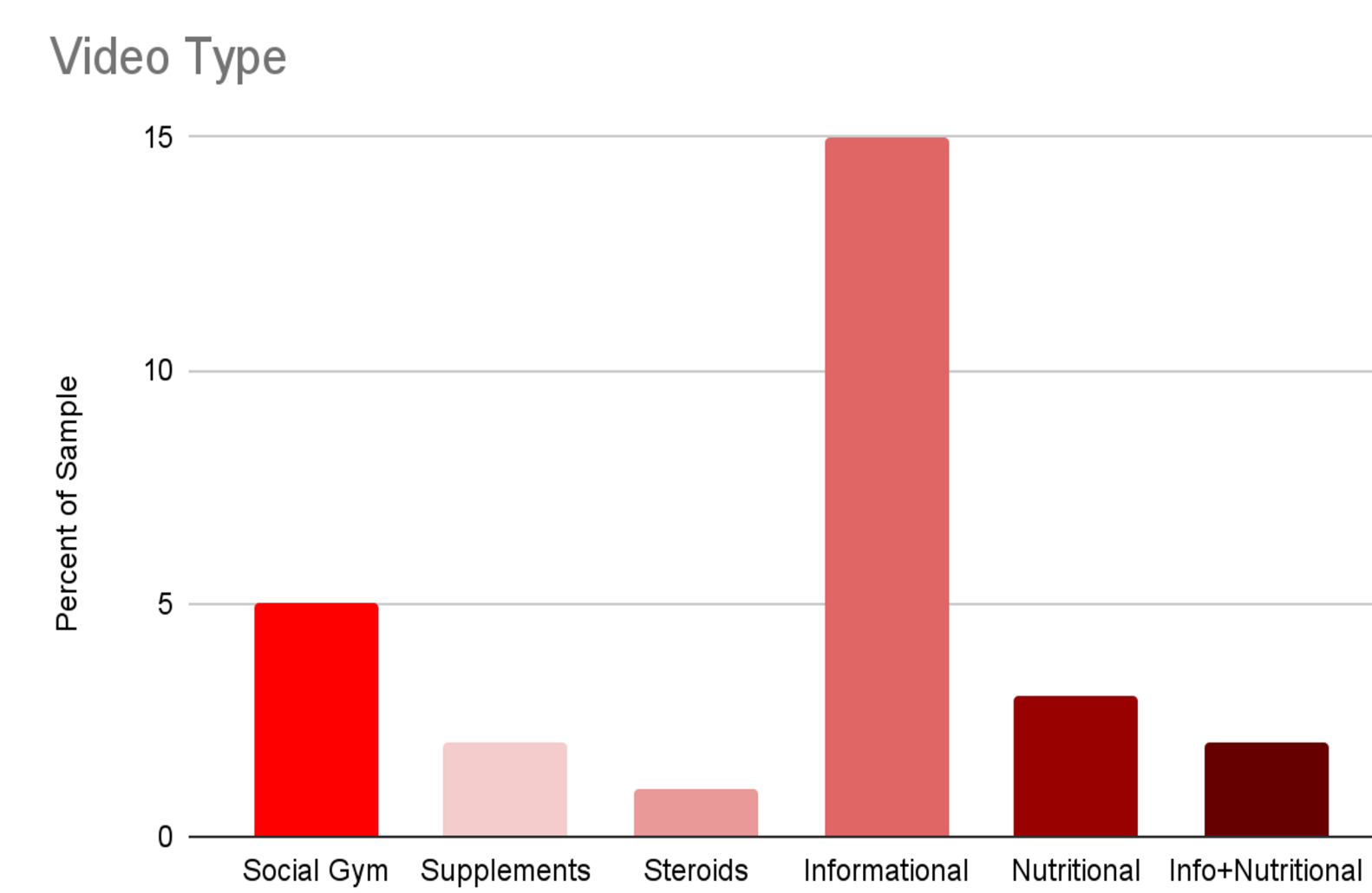
In the overall sample, 28% of videos were content that promoted a health message relating to fitness.
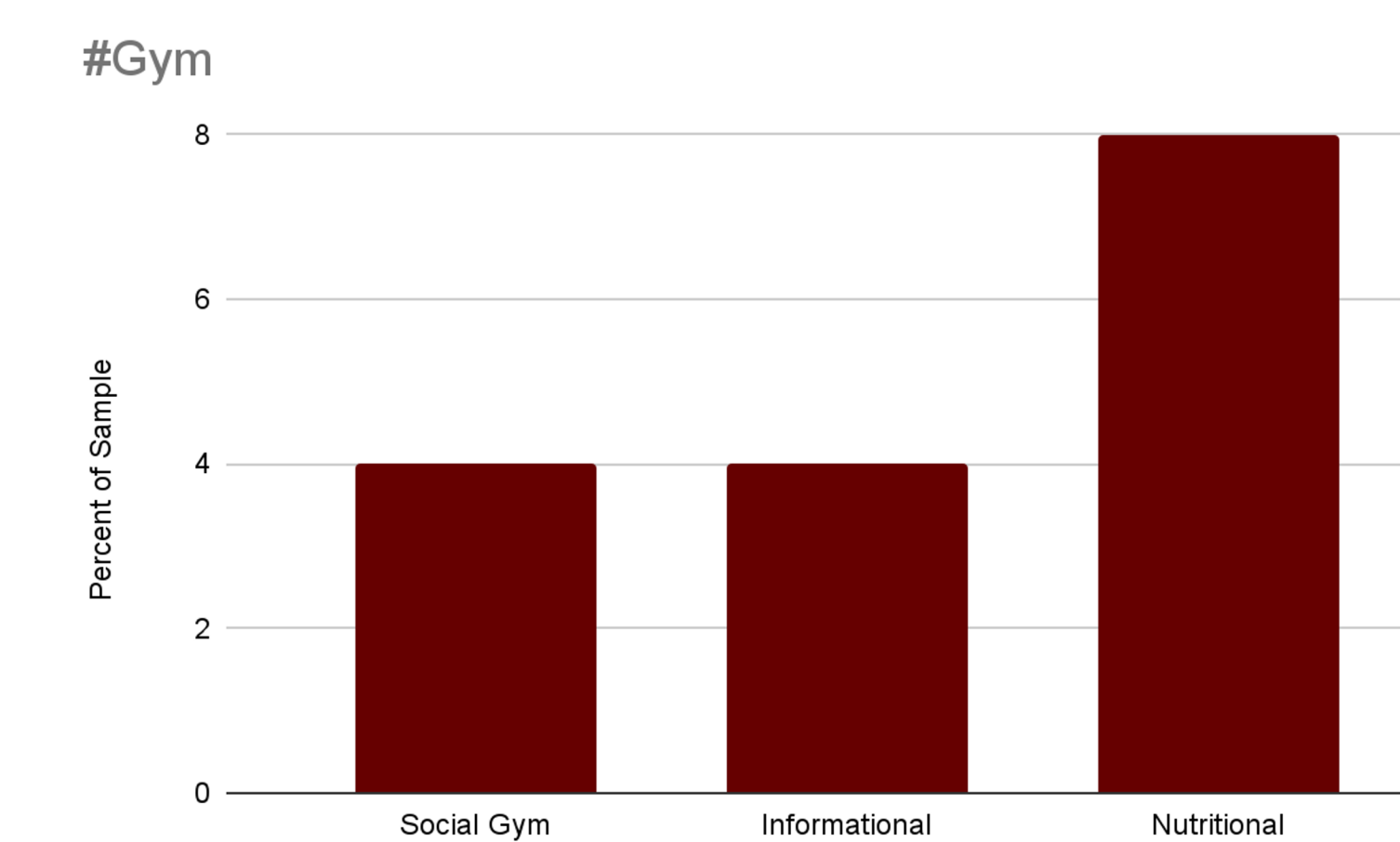
Differences in Engagement by Hashtag

Average Likes

Average Views (Thousands)

#Fitness had the highest average views and likes in the sample.
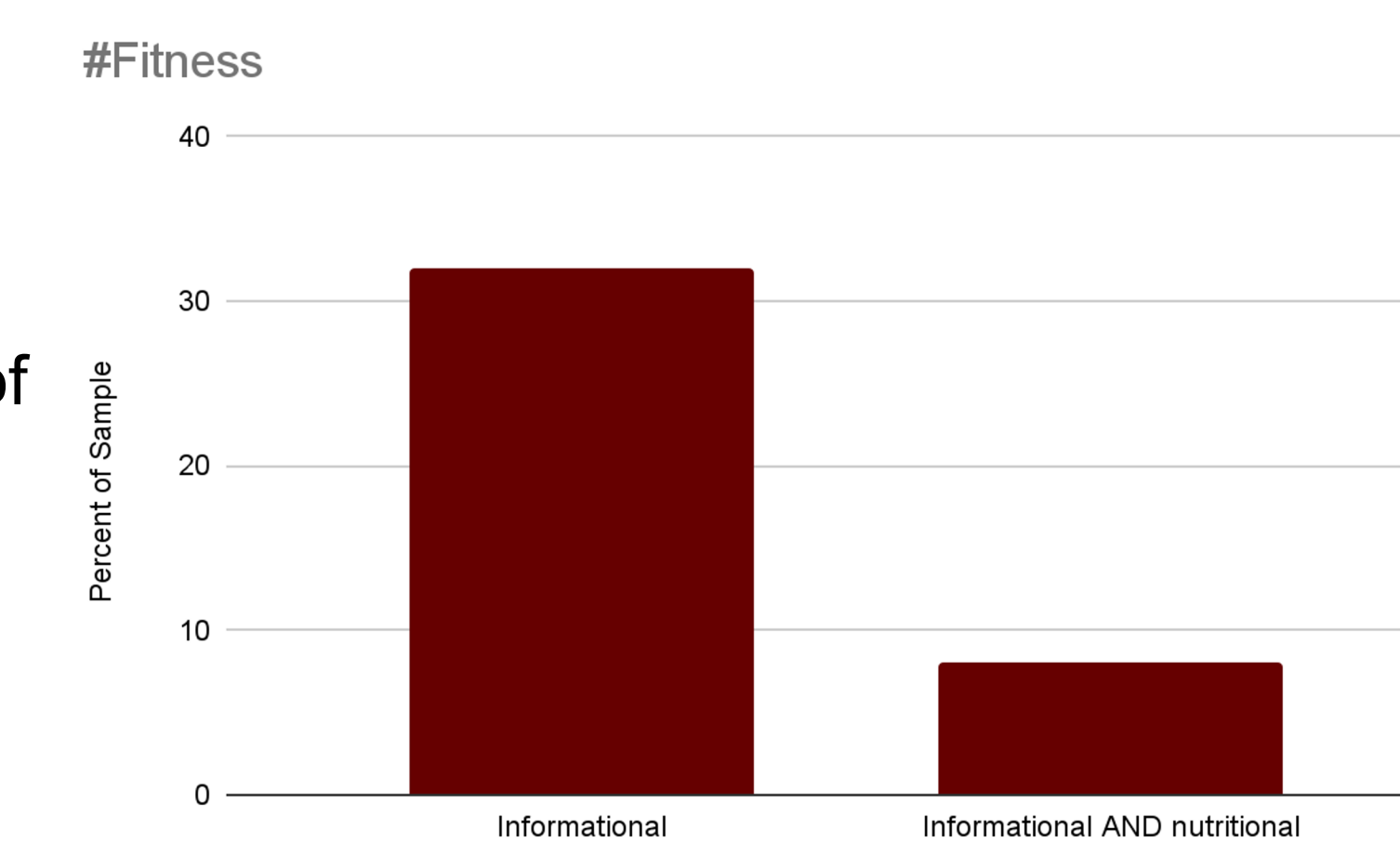
Average Comments

#Gymtok had the highest average comments per video, more than #gym and #gymhumor combined.
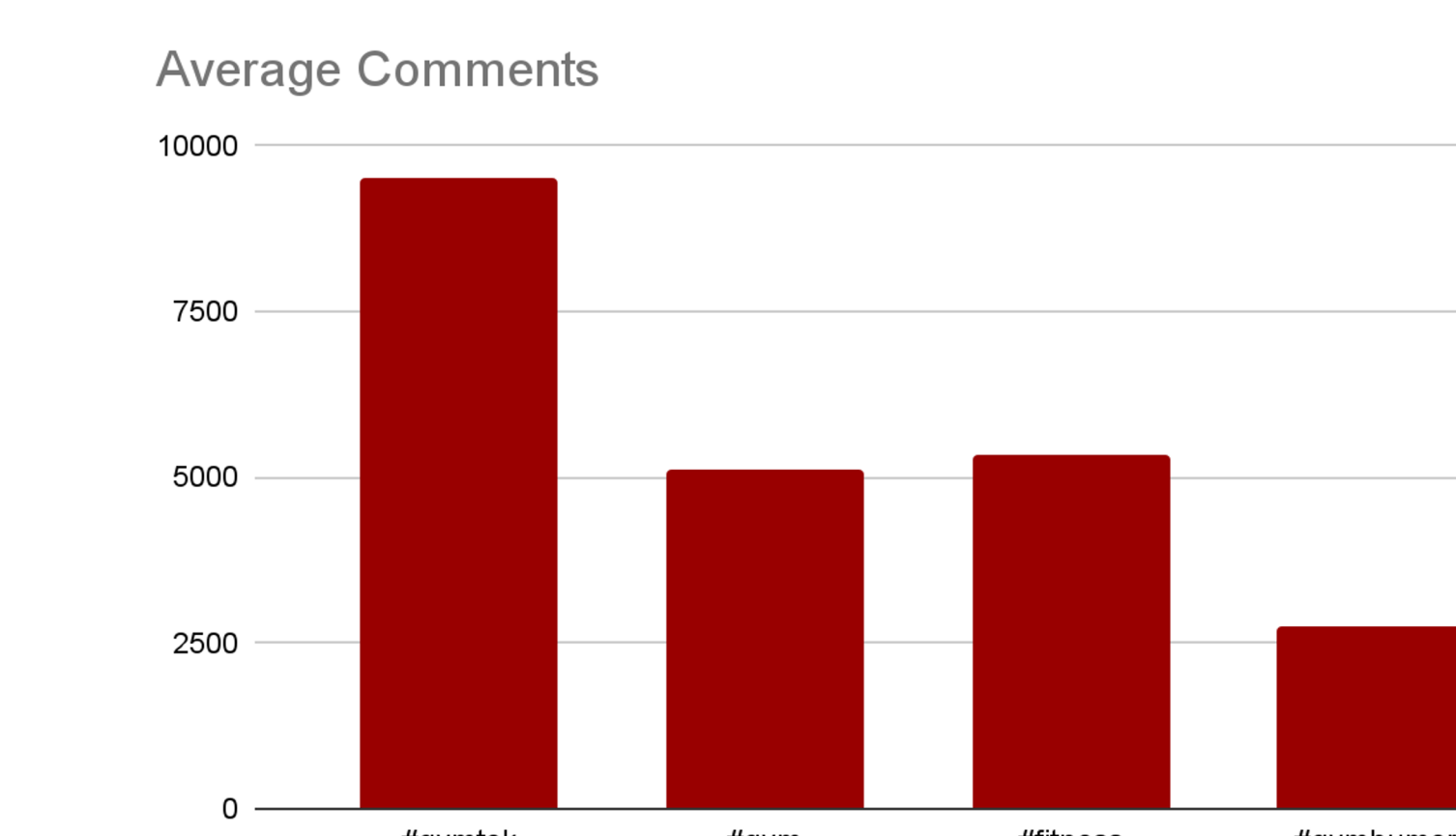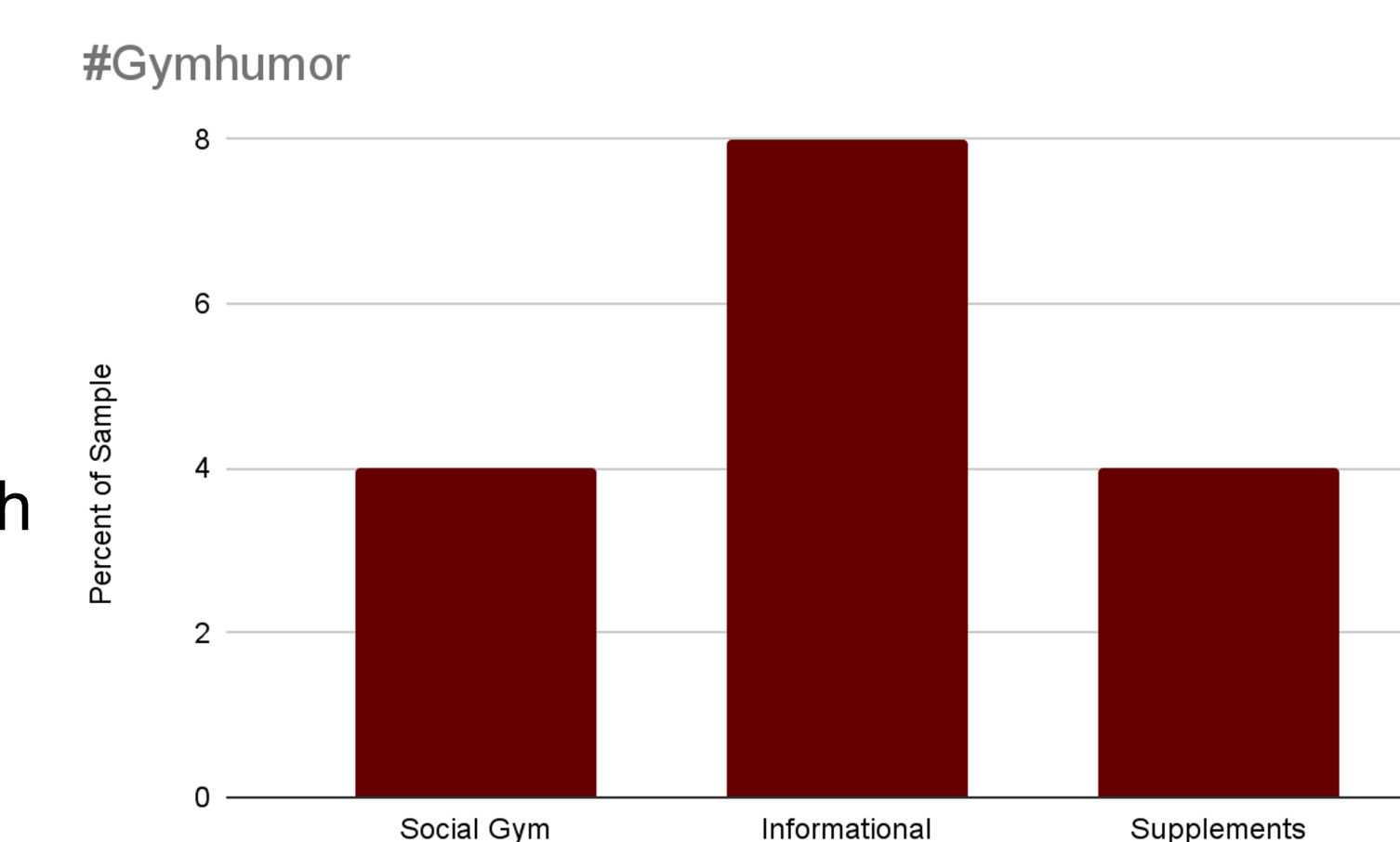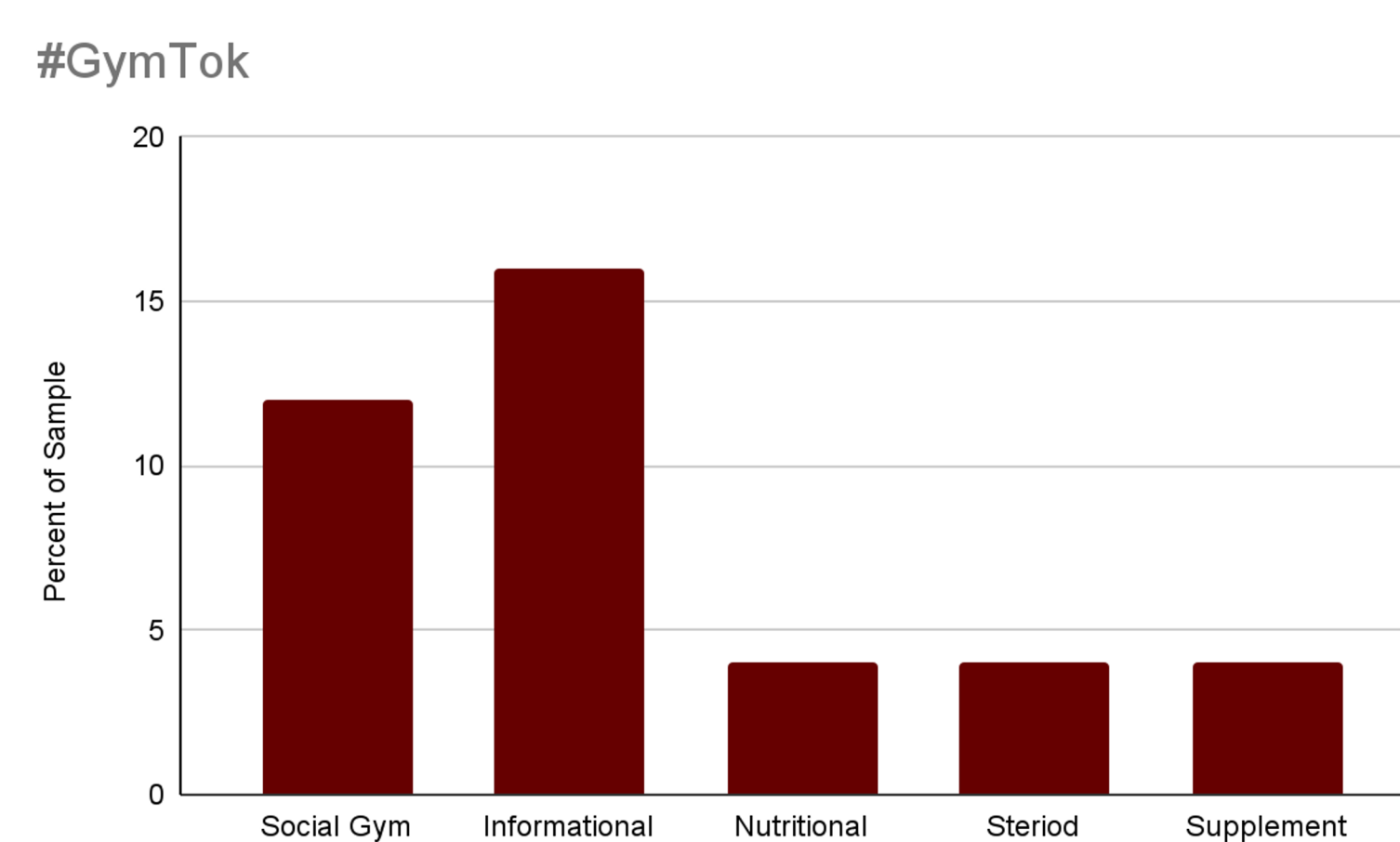
Content in Each Hashtag

#Gym

For #Gym the most common health related video type was nutritional content.

#Fitness

#Fitness had 40% of videos providing information on exercises and/or nutrition.

#Gymhumor

#Gymhumor had overall only 16% of content being health related.

#GymTok

#Gymtok had more informational content than any other category of content.

CONCLUSIONS

- Approximately 9.5% of viewers "liked" the sampled videos, which is over double the TikTok average of 4%, suggesting higher than average engagement with this content.
- #Fitness and #GymTok each had higher health related content compared to #Gym or #Gymhumor.
  - #Fitness was all informational based content suggesting that it is a more learning and information centered domain.
  - #GymTok included the most variety of content, coupled with its higher average comments, implies it has a more diverse viewership.
- The vast majority of health related content sampled was informational content related to exercises.
  - #Gym as the only hashtag where nutritional content was more common than exercise information.
- Steroids and supplements were least commonly mentioned.
- A study limitation is not knowing the age of the viewers, meaning the data in this study represents a larger demographic.
- Future research should explore the differences in engagement based on content type and by viewer age group to better understand implications of this growing lifestyle trend on youth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GymTok

#Gym
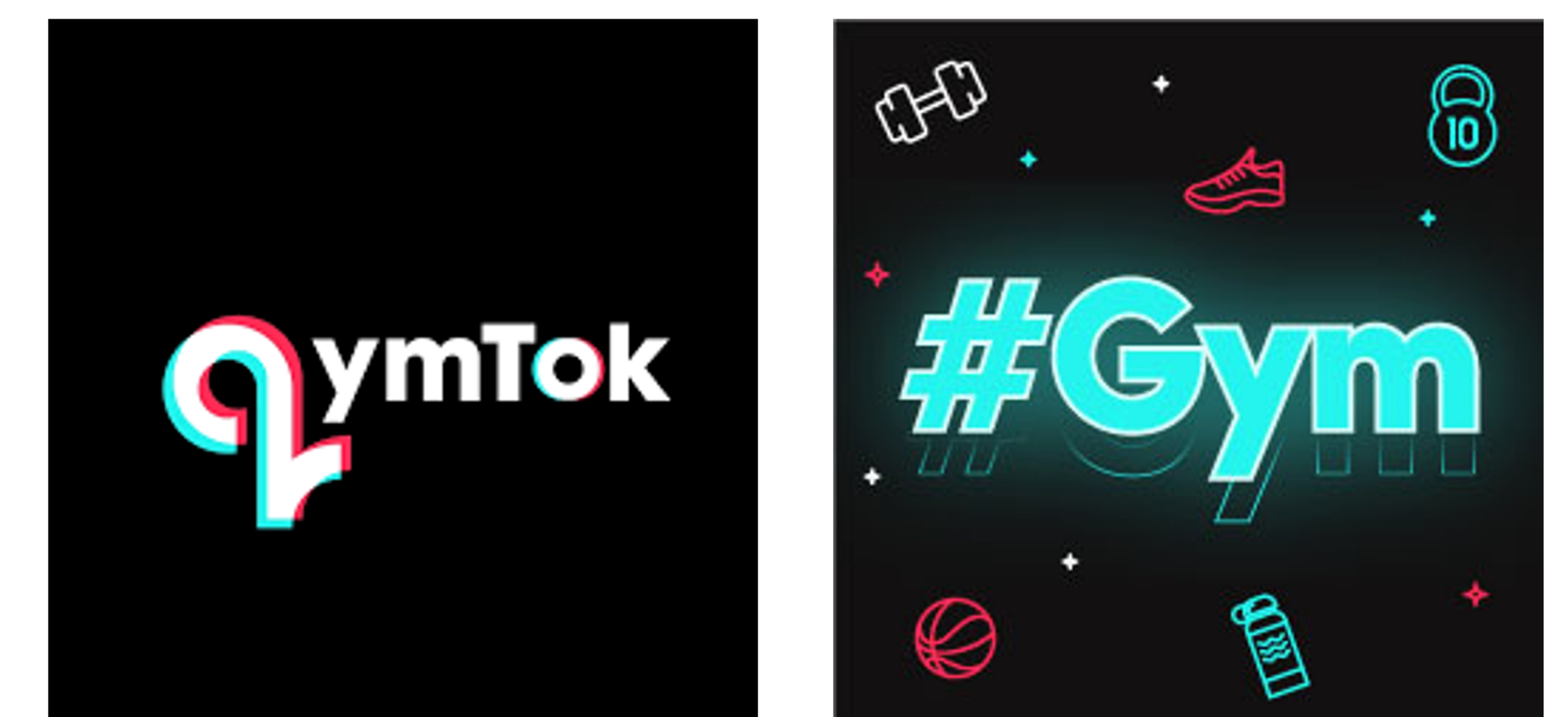
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