

## INTRODUCTION

- Food systems transformation is rapidly occurring in Tanzania, fostering challenges on planetary health, including public health - especially malnutrition.<sup>1,2</sup>
- In the past decade, food environments have shifted into more processed and western-orientated foods, losing traditional knowledge and practices including changes in dietary behaviors.<sup>3</sup>
- Understanding health information is crucial for individuals to adopt healthy lifestyles.<sup>4</sup>
- The FoCo-Active project assessed food choices, physical activity (PA) levels, and general health literacy (HL) to address malnutrition.
- **The aim of this study was to assess and compare the HL in Tanzanian men and women and in rural and urban areas, respectively to develop a context adapted HL Program to strengthen individuals' competencies in making informed dietary and physical activity choices.**

## METHODS

- A cross-sectional survey was applied in **rural** (Mkuranga) and **urban** (Ilala) areas of Tanzania (March 2023).
- A multi-stage sampling with stratification was employed with a total of 714 participants (68% females, mean age M=38.0):
- urban n=520 (71% females, mean age M=36.9)
- rural n=194 (59% females, mean age M=40.8)
- A modified Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLS-EU-Q-47) was used to gather information on the general HL of participants.



Figure 1: A modified HLS-EU-Q47 - rural area



Figure 2: A modified HLS-EU-Q47 - urban area

## REFERENCES

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## RESULTS

- Overall, 63.6% of participants showed insufficient HL.
- Women (68.4%) demonstrated a higher prevalence of limited HL compared to men (53.6%;  $p < 0.001$ ).
- Additionally, 74.5% of rural participants had insufficient HL versus 59.9% in urban areas ( $p < 0.001$ ).

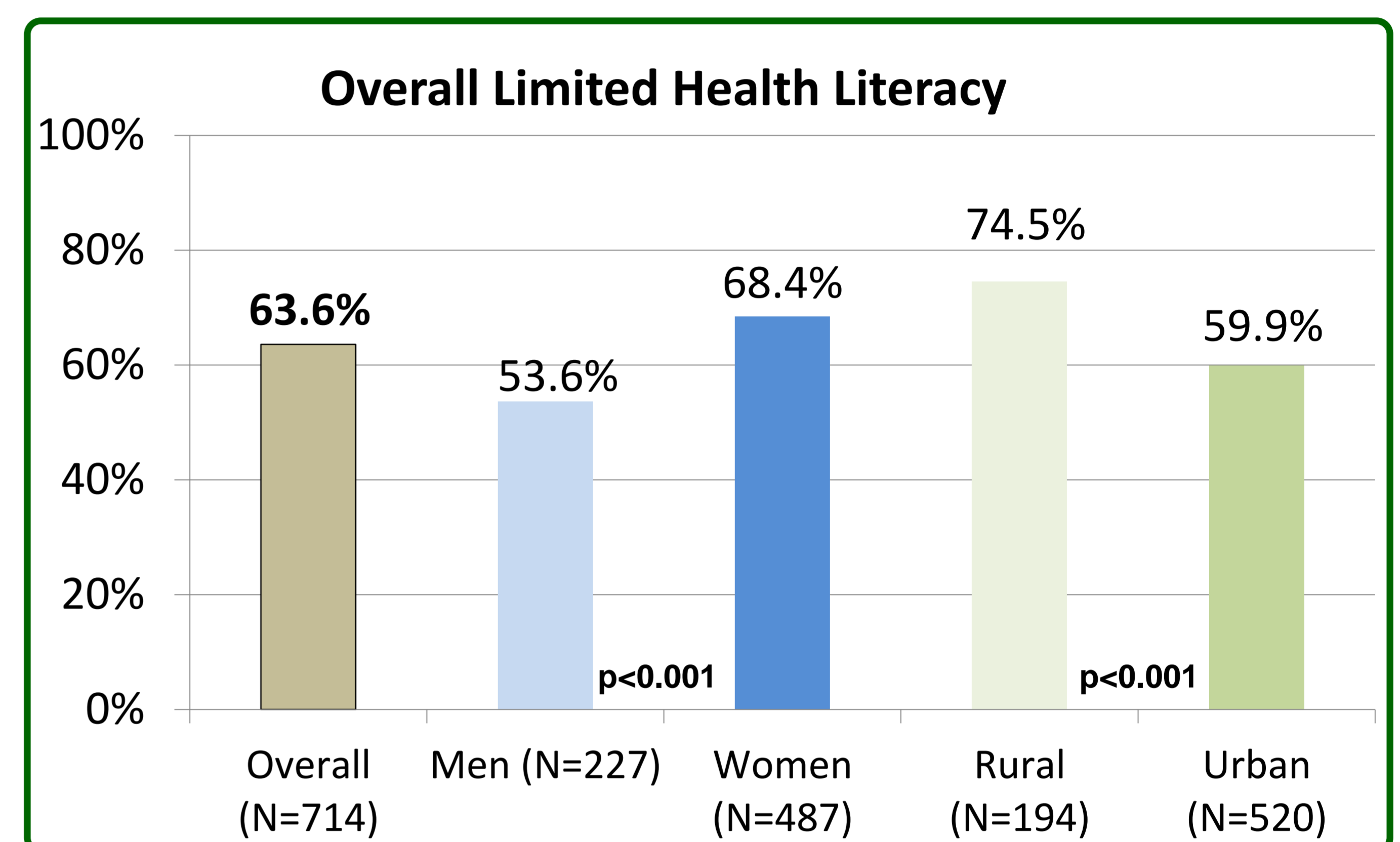


Figure 3: Health literacy across region and gender

## CONCLUSION

- The findings indicate a deficiency in HL within the Tanzanian population, with rural populations and women being disproportionately affected.
- The FoCo-Active project responded with a context-adapted HLP that integrates culturally appropriate education. The HLP goes beyond classical education by integrating additional lifestyle-related factors such as PA, sedentary behavior, hygiene, and self-organization. It aims to develop transferable, practical solutions for everyday health-related decision-making - co-designed with local stakeholders - the program aims to empower individuals and communities.



Figure 3: Active lifestyle training during the HLP



Figure 4: Health food production training by using flat garden during the HLP

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