

The Impact of the Overturn of Roe v. Wade on Genetic Counseling Students' Decision of Program Selection and Ranking: A Multi-Perspective Survey of Genetic Counseling Students and Program Leadership

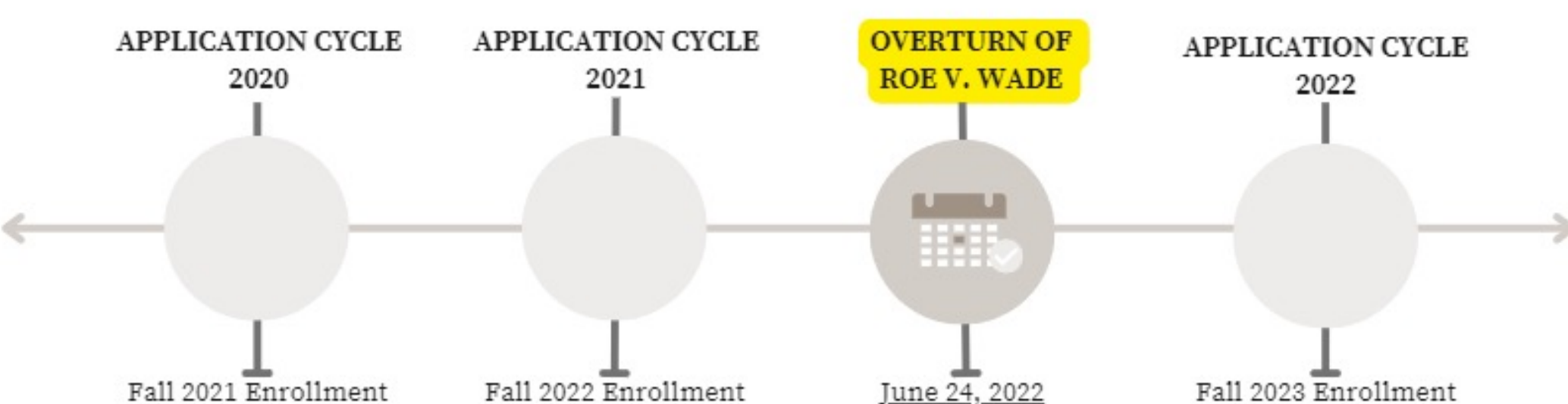
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Introduction

- Since the landmark decision in the Roe v. Wade ruling in 1973, the Constitution of the United States has protected women's right to an abortion and built the foundation for a woman's reproductive rights by allowing safe and legal access to abortions for all women.
- Genetic counselors play a vital role in prenatal diagnosis, including but not limited to explaining the benefits and limitations of various prenatal genetic screening and diagnostic testing options, addressing potential risks associated with prenatal testing, and helping individuals, couples, and/or families understand their personal and/or family's chance to have a fetus affected with a genetic condition (Genetics, 2017).
- On June 24, 2022, the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization in a 6-3 decision, ultimately taking away the federal constitutional right to an abortion (Kaufman et al., 2022).



- As states continue to implement changes to their legislation regarding pregnancy termination, it is important to understand how restrictions on abortion access will affect students' decisions on program selection and the potential impact that it will have on genetic counseling programs across the United States.

Materials and Methods

- A total of two surveys were created, one for United States-based genetic counseling program leadership, and the other for current students and alumni admitted into an accredited genetic counseling program during the application cycles from 2020 to 2022.

References

1. Genetics, C. o. (2017). Committee Opinion No. 693: Counseling About Genetic Testing and Communication of Genetic Test Results. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 129(4), e96-e101. <https://doi.org/10.1097/aog.0000000000002020>
2. Kaufman, R., Brown, R., Martinez Coral, C., Jacob, J., Onyango, M., & Thomasen, K. (2022). Global impacts of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization and abortion regression in the United States. *Sex Reprod Health Matters*, 30(1), 2135574. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2022.2135574>

State Categorization

Abortion Restrictions Across Genetic Counseling Program States as of December 2022

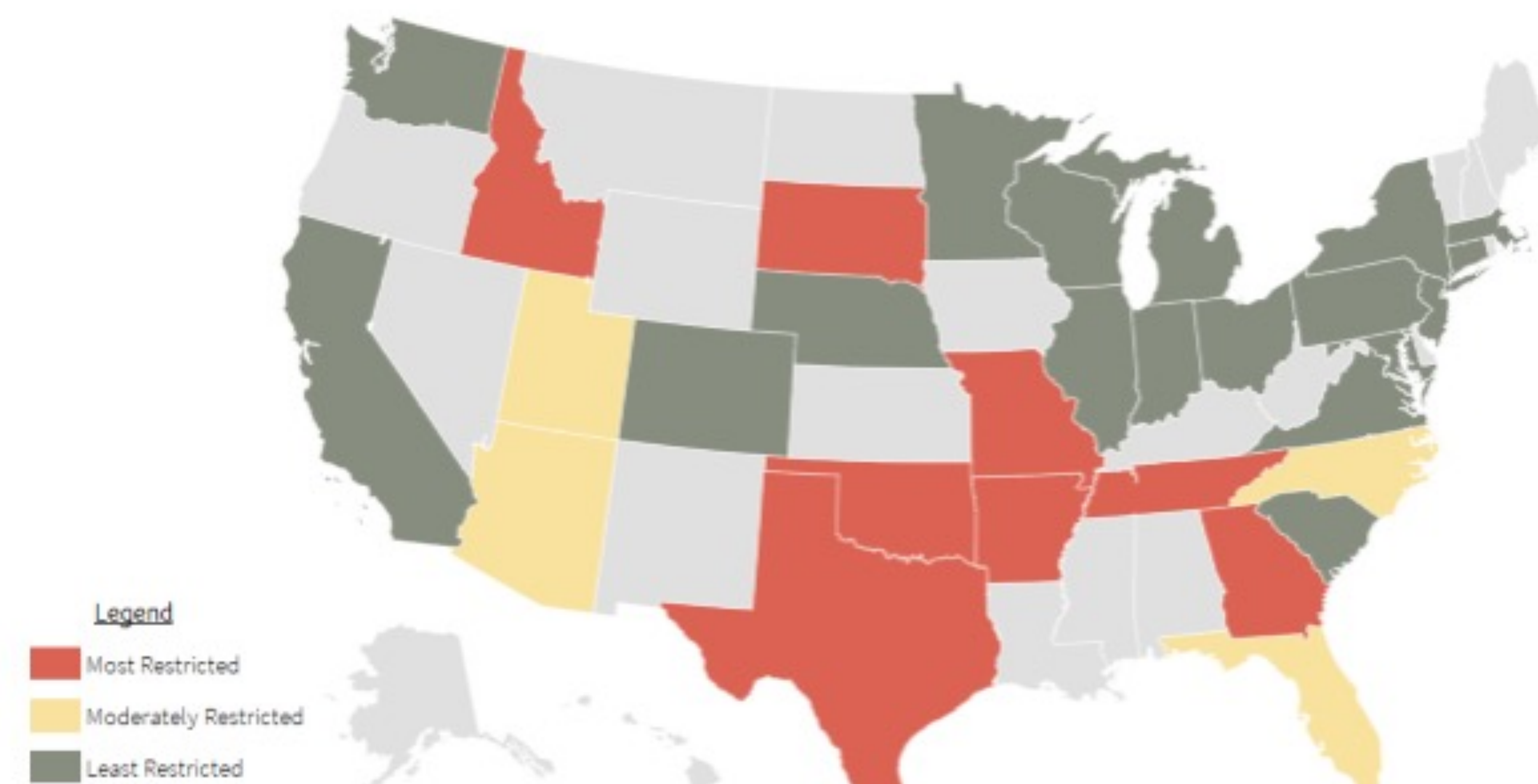


Figure 1: Map of the United States depicting the varying levels of abortion restrictions as of December 2022 in genetic counseling programs states

Discussion

- The reversal of Roe v. Wade did not play an influential role in students' decision to apply and/or rank genetic counseling programs, therefore did not impact change in applicant percent trends in genetic counseling programs based in the United States.
- The most influential factors that contribute to participants' decision to apply to various genetic counseling programs include geographical location (92.0%), program's values and culture (85.9%), interaction with program leadership and faculty (80.3%), financial considerations (77.9%), and clinical rotations (77.3%).
- Additionally, this study identified five of the most influential factors that contribute to a students' decision to rank various genetic counseling programs which include program's values and culture (89.7%), clinical rotations such as the variety and length (87.4%), interactions with program leadership and faculty (86.6%), geographical location (86.3%), and the program's reputation (81.1%).
- Lastly, the findings indicate that while state abortion laws may not be the foremost concern for many applicants, there is an increasing trend towards considering them during the decision-making process of applying and ranking various genetic counseling programs, notably since the overturn of Roe v. Wade.

Results

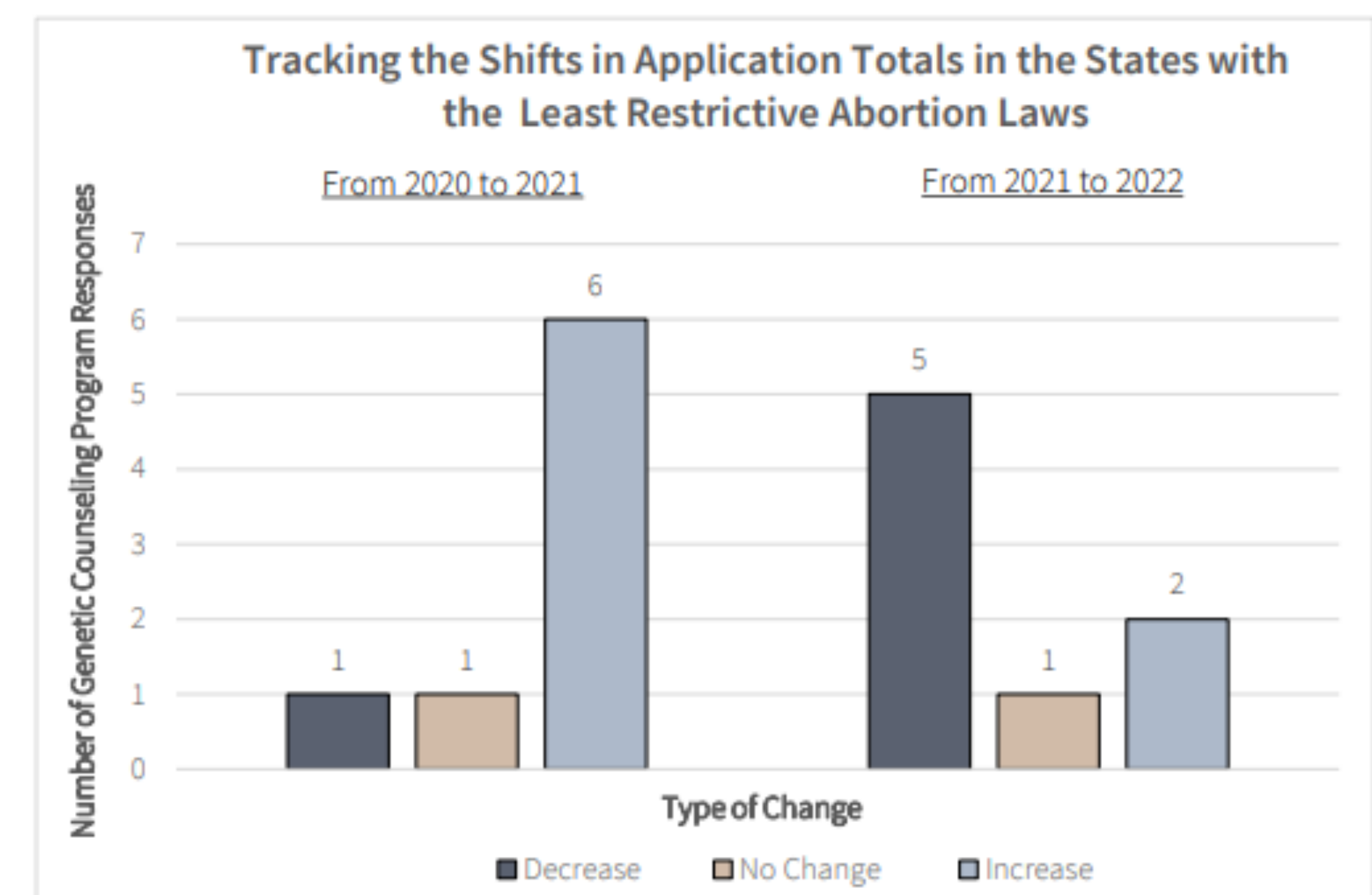


Figure 2 shows the changes in application cycle trends from 2020—2022 application cycles in the least restricted group

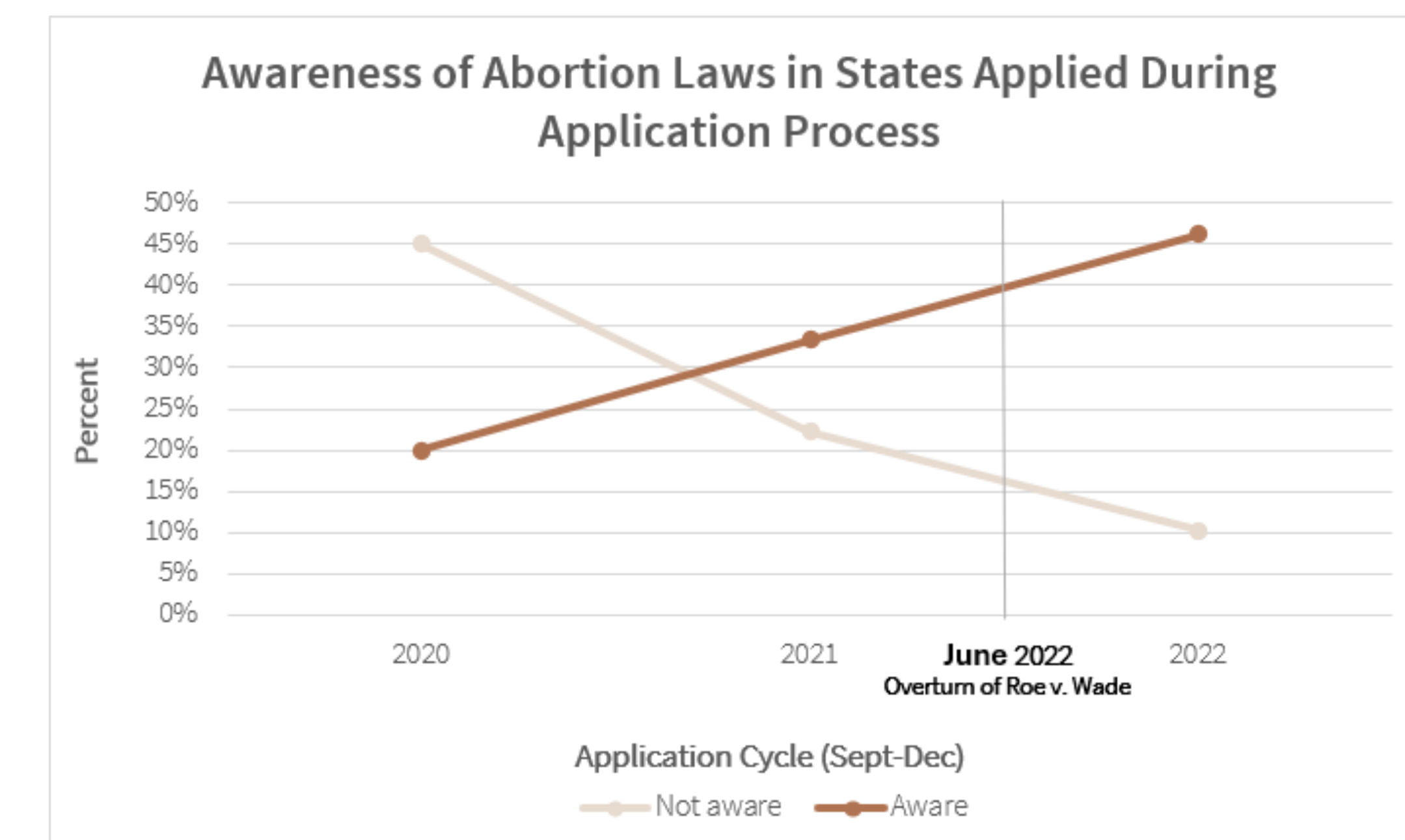


Figure 3: Participants were asked about their awareness of the abortion laws, specifically in the states where the genetic counseling program(s) were located at the time of applying

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