



The Association Between Depression and Poor Appetite Among African American Female Adolescents

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Introduction

- African Americans have historically been marginalized and left out of the community conversation when talking about the relationship between depression and poor appetite (Walker et al., 2010).
- Depression is known to have several roots. It is typically thought of as strictly biochemical-based or emotionally-rooted. But, beliefs about an individual's sex could also play an important role.
- The vast majority of research has talked about the relationships between poor appetite and obesity and death rates amongst Black Americans (Lincoln et al., 2014; Sterling et al., 2018).
- In the past, most of the research done has focused on males and excluded females from the study. Here, a new methodological framework will be presented.

Research Questions

- Is depression associated with poor appetite?
- Does depression and poor appetite differ for individuals based on their race and sex?
- Are race and sex significantly associated with whether a participant felt depressed?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=6,504) were drawn from the 1994-2008 U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) a nationally representative survey of adolescents in grades 7-12 in the United States that were followed over time.

Measures

- Poor appetite was assessed by asking the question "Please tell me how often have you had poor appetite in the past 12 months?" Each response was coded on a scale of 0 to 8. Responses ranged from 0 (never) to 8 (don't know).
- Beliefs about depression were assessed similarly, using a question about the frequency the respondent experienced depression. Responses ranged from 0 to 8.
- Sex and respondents' racial identity were coded dichotomously.

Discussion

- Race and sex may not be related to depression and poor appetite.
- Most of the work done on this topic has utilized a unimodal approach to understanding the association between depression and poor appetite.
- Politicians, psychiatrists, and researchers might use this information to address the problem of diet and healthy eating habits among Black Americans (i.e. ethnonutrition).
- Further research is needed to determine what interventions would be most effective in reducing depression and poor appetite among Black American females.

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Kanter, W., Jonathan, Busch, M., Andrew, Weeks, E., Cristal, & Landes, J., Sara (2008). The Nature of Clinical Depression: Symptoms, Syndromes, and Behavior Analysis. *The Behavior Analyst*, 31,1-21.

Lincoln, K.D., Abdou, C.M., & Lloyd, D. (2014). Race and socioeconomic differences in obesity and depression among Black and non-Hispanic White Americans. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 25(1), 257-275. doi:10.1353/hpu.2014.0038

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Results

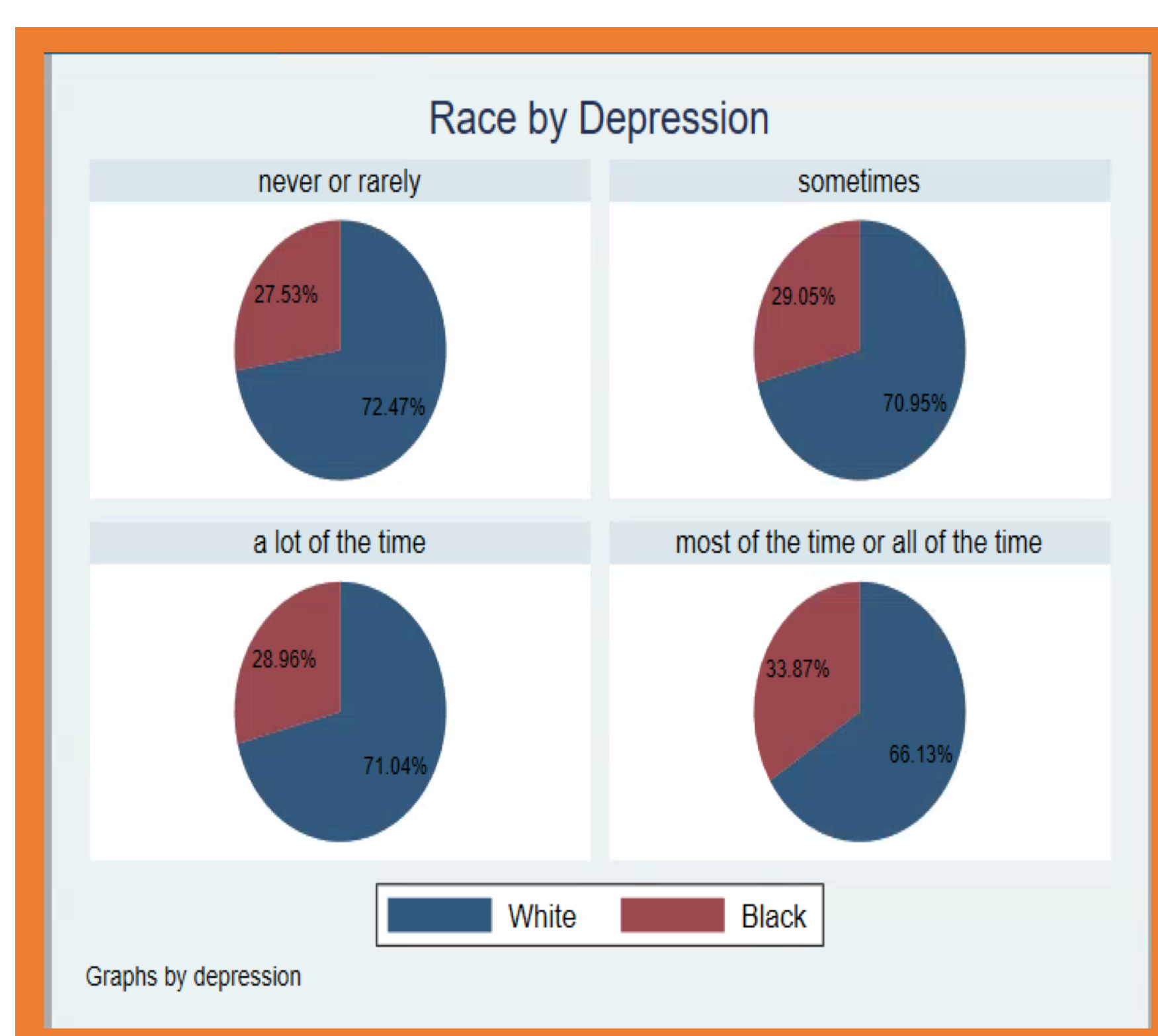
Univariate

- **23%** of respondents identify as Black.
- **62%** of respondents indicated that they are female.

Bivariate

- Chi-Square Analysis showed that there **is a significant association between depression and poor appetite** (Pearson $\chi^2(3)=6.5e+03$, $p=0.00$).
- Bonferroni post-hoc test confirmed that there is a **significant relationship between depression and poor appetite** for all levels of depression ($p=0.00$).

Figure 1. Racial Identity by Depression



- Additionally, Chi-Square analysis showed that respondents who were Black **were not significantly more likely to feel depressed** (Pearson $\chi^2(3)=2.4200$, $p=0.49$).

Multivariate

- Racial identity **does not appear to moderate the relationship between depression and poor appetite**.
- After controlling for sex and racial identity, **depression is significantly associated with poor appetite** ($B=0.56$, $p=0.00$).

Figure 2. Depression and Poor Appetite Use by Racial Identity

