



The Association between Adolescent Relationships with Parents and Binge Drinking Behavior

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Introduction

- Studies show that there is a hereditary link in susceptibility to alcoholism (Fletcher et al 2002), and thus some adolescents have a genetic predisposition to this debilitating disease. There are also many studies that suggest that factors such as familial behavioral patterns, mental health issues, or socioeconomic status can increase rates of alcohol abuse (Kenkel et al. 1994).
- There are many areas of concern surrounding alcohol abuse, and binge drinking is a widespread problem that is especially pertinent for adolescents (G eraldine et al. 2014).
- Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more alcoholic beverages in a day, and it has been shown to be extremely harmful to the developing brain, in addition to increasing susceptibility for alcoholism into adulthood. (Committee on Substance Abuse. 2010).
- Strained family relationships and poor examples of parental behavior have been linked to alcohol and substance abuse, but it remains unclear whether adolescent-parent relationships have and influence specifically on binge drinking behavior during adolescence.

Research Questions

- Is there an association between relationships between adolescents and their parents and engagement in binge drinking behavior?
- Does the association between relationships with adolescents and their parents and engagement in binge drinking behavior differ based on sex?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=6,504) were drawn from the first wave of the in-home questionnaire from the longitudinal study of adolescent health from 1994-2008.

Measures

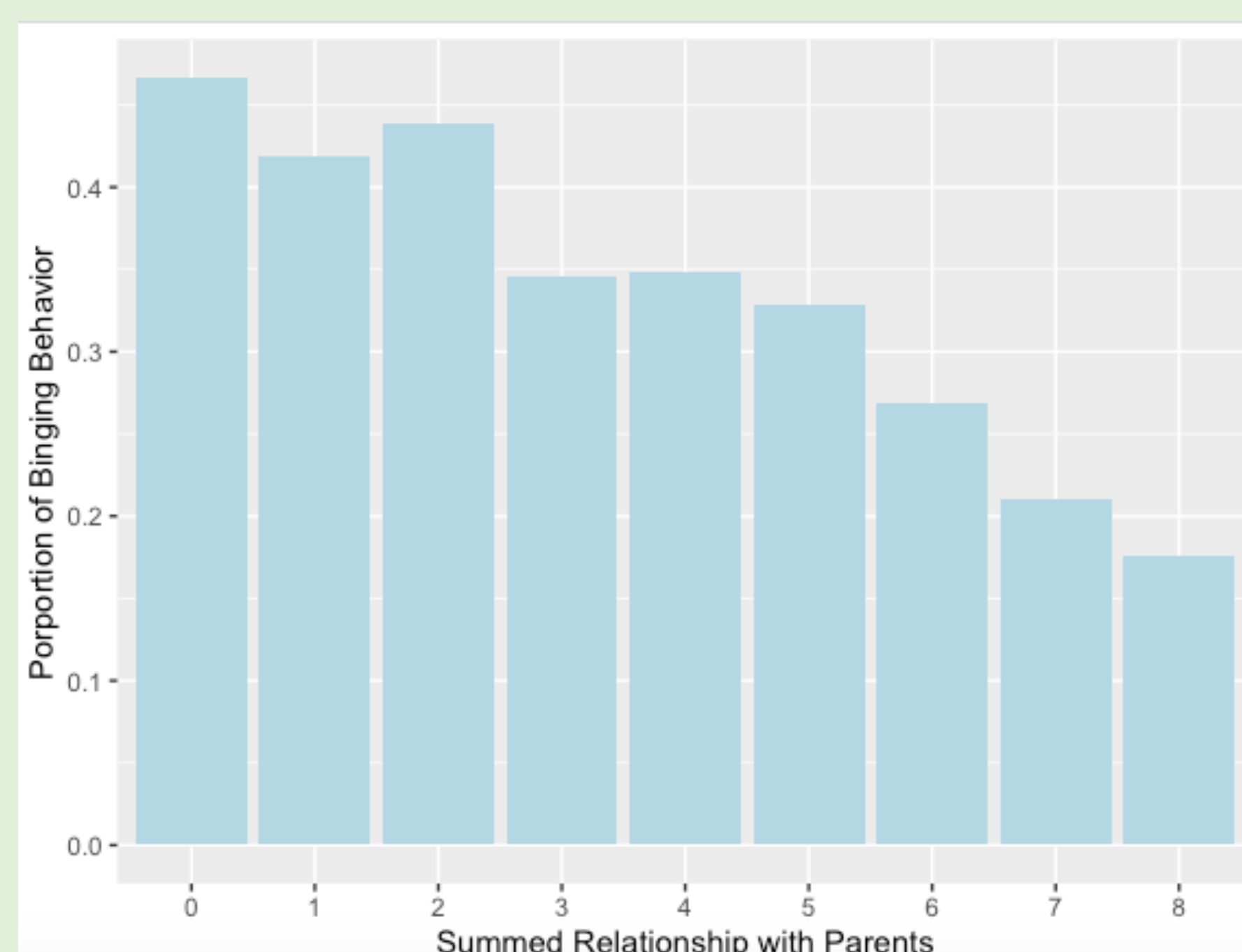
- Binge drinking behavior was measured with the question "Over the past 12 months, on how many days did you drink 5 or more drinks in a row?" This variable was coded dichotomously in terms of whether the participant had binge drank on 1 or more days in the past year.
- Participant relationships with their parents were measured on a scale with how satisfied the participant is with their relationship with their mother and with their father.
- The responses to relationship with mother and relationship with father were summed to create a variable for an overall satisfaction of relationship with parents (0 at the lowest cumulative satisfaction, 8 at the highest).

Results

Univariate

- 21% of participants are very satisfied with their relationships with both their mother and their father.
- 25.6% of participants engaged in binge drinking behavior in the last 12 months.

Figure 1. Mean Parent Relationship Score vs Proportion of Participants Engaging in Binge Drinking Behavior



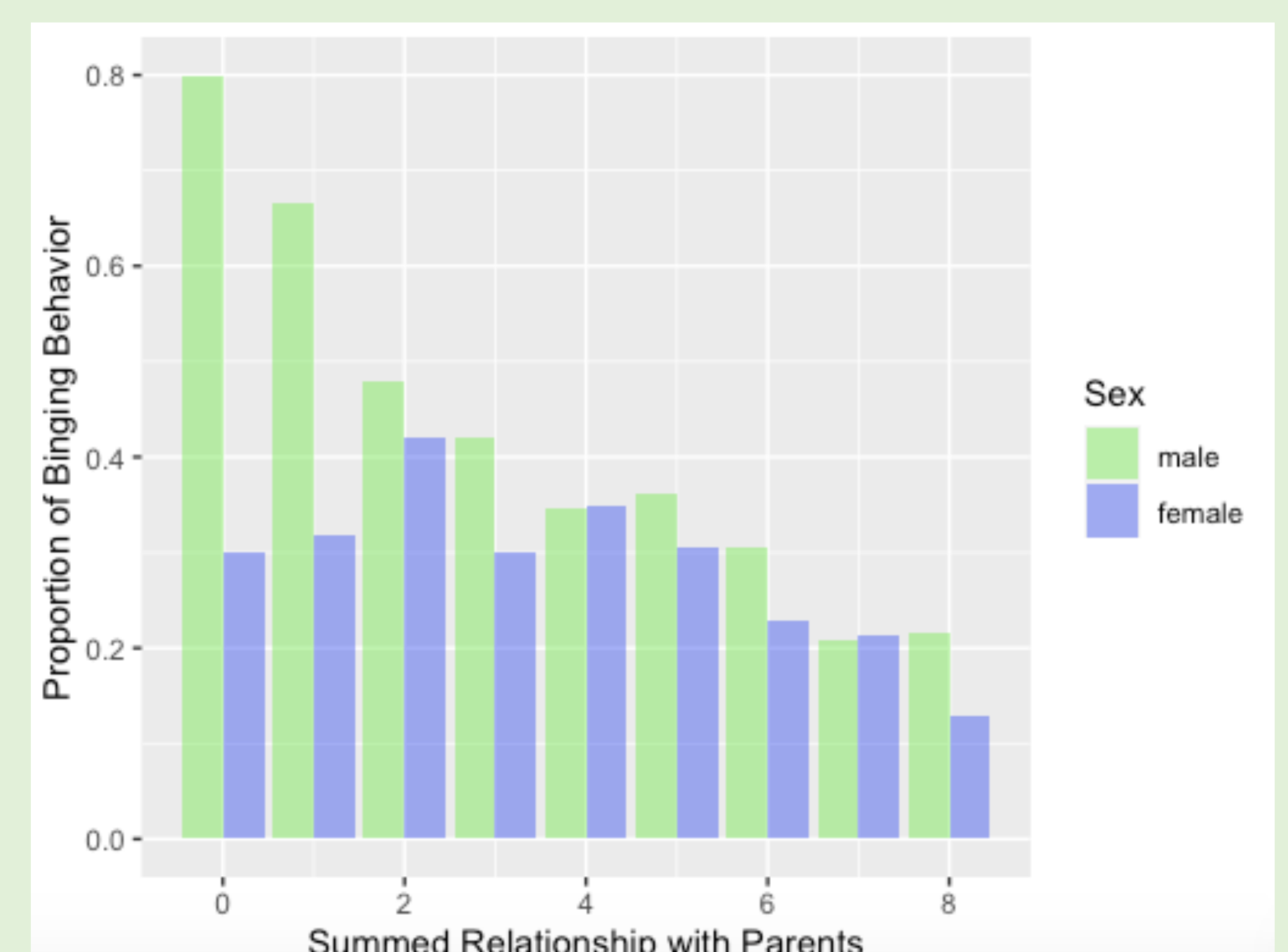
Bivariate

- A logistic regression analysis further revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between **relationship with parents score** and **binge drinking behavior**
- (odds ratio = 0.8, p<0.001)

Multivariate

- Sex does appear to be a moderating variable in the association between binge drinking behavior and adolescent and parental relationships (Figure 2).
- After controlling for sex, summed relationship with parents is significantly associated with engaging in binge drinking behavior. (odds ratio = 0.8, p<0.001)

Figure 2. Proportion of Subjects Who Binge Drink at Each Relationship with Parents and Sex Combination



Discussion

- Adolescents who have poor overall relationships with their parents may be more likely to engage in binge drinking behavior than those who are more satisfied with their parent relationships.
- Biological males with poor parental relationships may be more likely to engage in binge drinking behavior than biological females.
- Family counselors and child psychiatrists could use this information to implement preventative measures, and to educate on the dangers of binge drinking when children have strained relationships with their parent or parents.
- Further research is needed to determine if a poor relationship with a particular parent (mother or father), or a missing parent, has a greater influence on the child's engagement with binge drinking.