

The Association Between Alcoholism and Depression

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Introduction

- Prolonged abusive drinking habits have catastrophic effects on one's health, both physically and mentally. Depression is often associated with other health problems, including alcoholism and cognitive disorders (Rains & Ditzler, 1986).
- There are stigmas surrounding depression, so many individuals who suffer from depressive symptoms develop to alcoholic tendencies.
- A complementary role depression might play is a driving factor for increased sensitivity to alcohol dependency, over an individual's drinking habits alone (Anderson & Braun, 2016).
- The association between alcoholism and depression can help recognize both disorders, mitigating individuals' likelihood of developing both depression and alcoholic tendencies.

Research Questions

- Does the association between alcoholism and depression differ for individuals based on their sex and age?
- How does an individual's mental health affect his/her likelihood of developing alcoholic tendencies?

Methods

Sample

- Young adults (age 18 to 25) who reported daily smoking in the past year (n=1320) were drawn from the first wave of the National Epidemiologic Study of Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC).
- NESARC is a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults in the U.S.

Measures

- Lifetime psychiatric disorders were assessed using the NIAAA, Alcohol Use Disorder and Associated Disabilities Interview Schedule – DSM-IV (AUDADIS-IV).
- The alcohol section asked questions that handle the frequency, patterns, and quantity of alcohol use in participants. The question about current alcohol use explored in the current analyses include frequency of current binge drinking episodes. The alcoholism variable used is leveled 0-10, each increasing level signifying increased alcoholic tendencies.
- The depression variable was taken from NESARC's mental health section that measures the presence or absence of depression in individuals.

Results

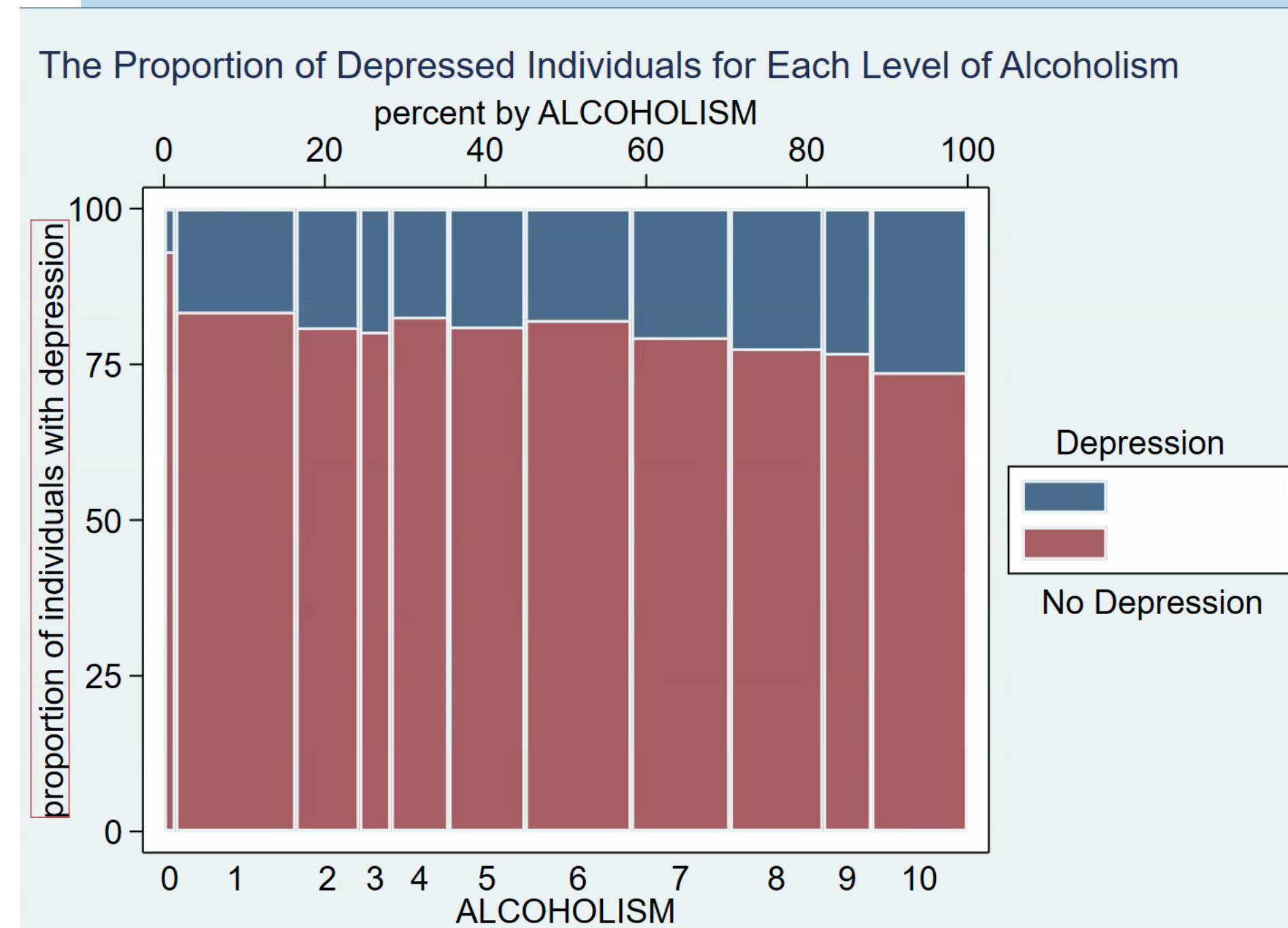
Univariate

- 11.96% of individuals suffered from the most severe alcoholic tendencies, measured by the highest group within the alcoholism variable
- 18.19% of the individuals have depression

Bivariate

- A Chi-Square test showed that **the presence of alcoholic tendencies** were significantly and positively associated with **the presence of depression** ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 1. The Proportion of Individuals with Depression In Each Level of Alcoholism

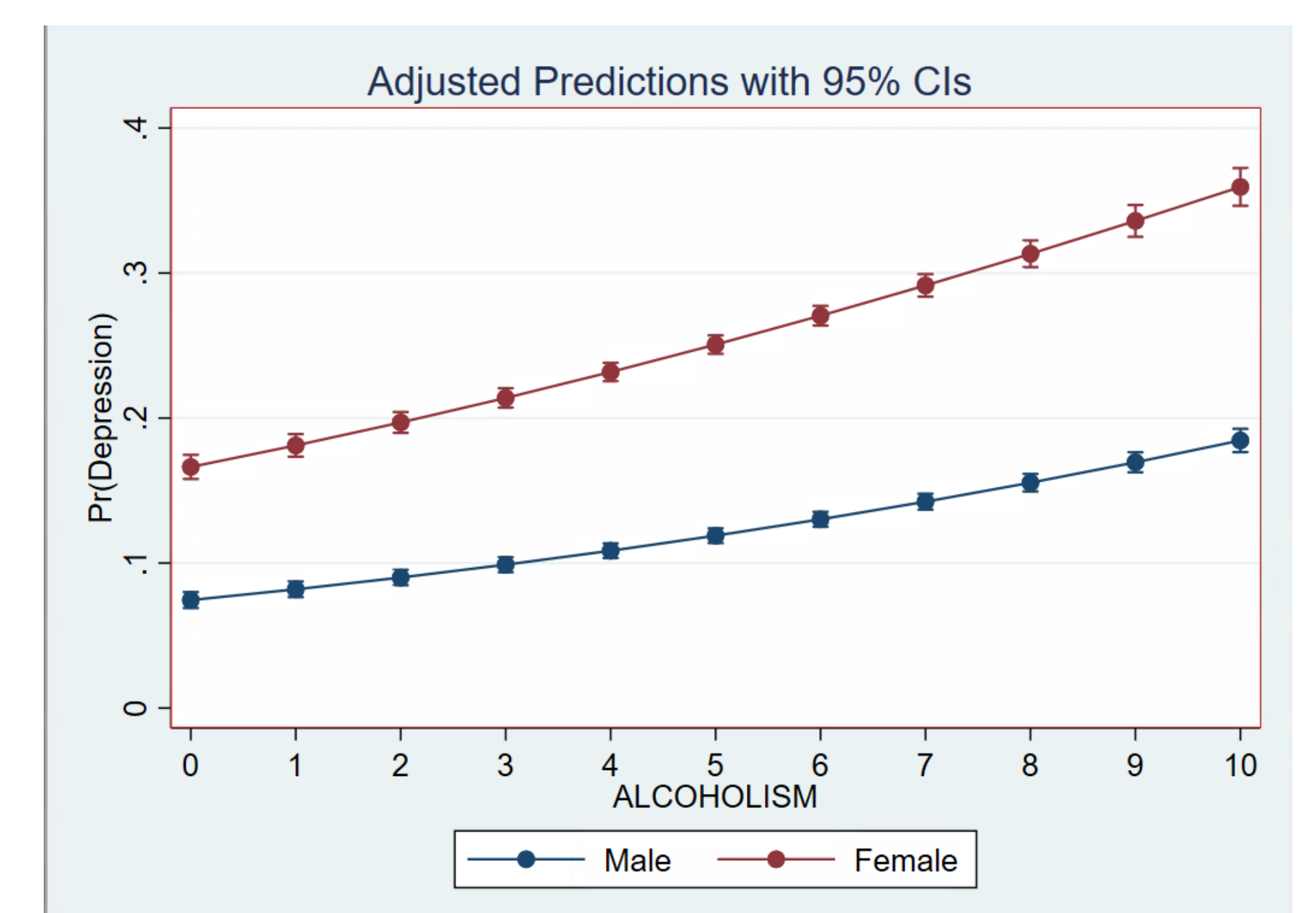


- Bivariate graphs visually represent the relationship between alcoholism and depression based on each increasing level of alcoholism.
- Depression and Alcoholism are significantly positively related ($p < .05$) for every level.

Multivariate

- Sex does not appear to moderate the relationship between alcoholism vs. depression; however, females are predicted to have a higher average rates of depression (Figure 2).
- Logistic regression showed that alcoholism and depression are significantly related ($\beta = 1.06$, $p = .00$). After controlling for sex and age, the presence of depression is significantly associated with alcoholism ($B = 1.1$, $p < 0.001$).

Figure 2. The Association Between Alcoholism And Depression Based On Sex



Discussion

- Having depression affects one's likelihood of developing alcoholic symptoms.
- Although age and sex both affect the association between alcoholism and depression, the two are still significantly related.
- Recognizing and understanding the relationship between alcoholism and depression will help doctors understand and adjust treatment for individuals who suffer from alcoholic tendencies to avoid the development of depression.
- Further research is needed to determine what interventions would be most effective in reducing the chances of developing alcoholism and other harmful lifestyle choices.
- Because older individuals suffer from cognitive disorders that can mask their alcoholism and mental health problems, further research is required to examine the relationship between alcoholism and depression amongst individuals over 60 years.

