



# The Association Between Low Expectations, Depression and Delinquency



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## Introduction

- The United States of America has the highest rates of juvenile delinquency among developed countries. (Chen et al., 2016)
- Juvenile depression is a mental health condition that is not recognized and treated enough in this country. (Tendon DS et al., 2009)
- Delinquency had a weaker association with community violence exposure when the adolescent reported high expectation for the future. (Chen et al., 2016)
- The co-occurrence of delinquency and depression have been positively linked to high failure expectations ( a negative view on one's own future) across a 2-year period. (Overbeek et al., 2006)
- Future Expectation paired with community violence exposure can predict delinquency. (Chen et al., 2016)

## Research Questions

- Is low expectations positively associated with depression and delinquency?
- Is depression positively or negatively associated with delinquency?

## Results

### Univariate

- 17.5% of respondents committed an act of delinquency .
- 5.4% of respondents thought they had no change to get into college.
- 6.8% of respondents felt depressed a lot of the time.

### Bivariate

- Chi-Square analysis showed that depression and low expectations were associated with delinquency, but the analysis did not show whether the association was positive or negative ( $P < .0001$ ).
- Measure for delinquency had to be changed to a binary variable for Chi-Square analysis indicating whether the respondents committed an act of delinquency or not to increase the sample size.
- Bar graphs show that individuals with a high low expectation score is more likely to commit acts of delinquency.
- Bar graphs show that individuals with a high depression score is more likely to commit acts of delinquency.

### Multivariate

- Multiple linear regression analysis showed that depression does not have a linear relationship with delinquency, but higher levels of depression tend to lead higher levels of delinquency.
- Low future expectation does not have a clear linear relationship with delinquency, in fact of levels are statically insignificant. But there is a trend of higher levels of low future expectation tend to lead to more delinquency.

## Methods

### Sample

- The sample of this study has about 6,400 adolescents in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade that was surveyed from different regions of the country with diverse racial and socioeconomic statuses.
- Data was drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescence to Adult Health (ADDHEALTH) that was conducted from 1994 to 2008.

### Measures

- Low expectation was measured by combining variables from the expectation scale, in which respondents answered questions using a 5-point scale (where 1 is low and 5 is high). The two variables that are combined for low expectation are "how likely is it that you will go to college?" and "You will be killed by age 21."
- Delinquency was measured by combining variables from the delinquency scale, in which respondents answered questions on a 4-point scale (where 0 is never and 3 is 5 or more times). The three variables that were combined are "In the past 12 months, how often did you deliberately damage property that didn't belong to you", "How often did you get into a serious physical fight", and "How often did you sell marijuana or other drugs."
- Depression was measured by combining two variables from the feeling scale in the codebook that were measured on a 4-point scale (where 0 is rarely and 3 is most of the time). The two variables that were combined were "You feel as good as others" and "You felt depressed".

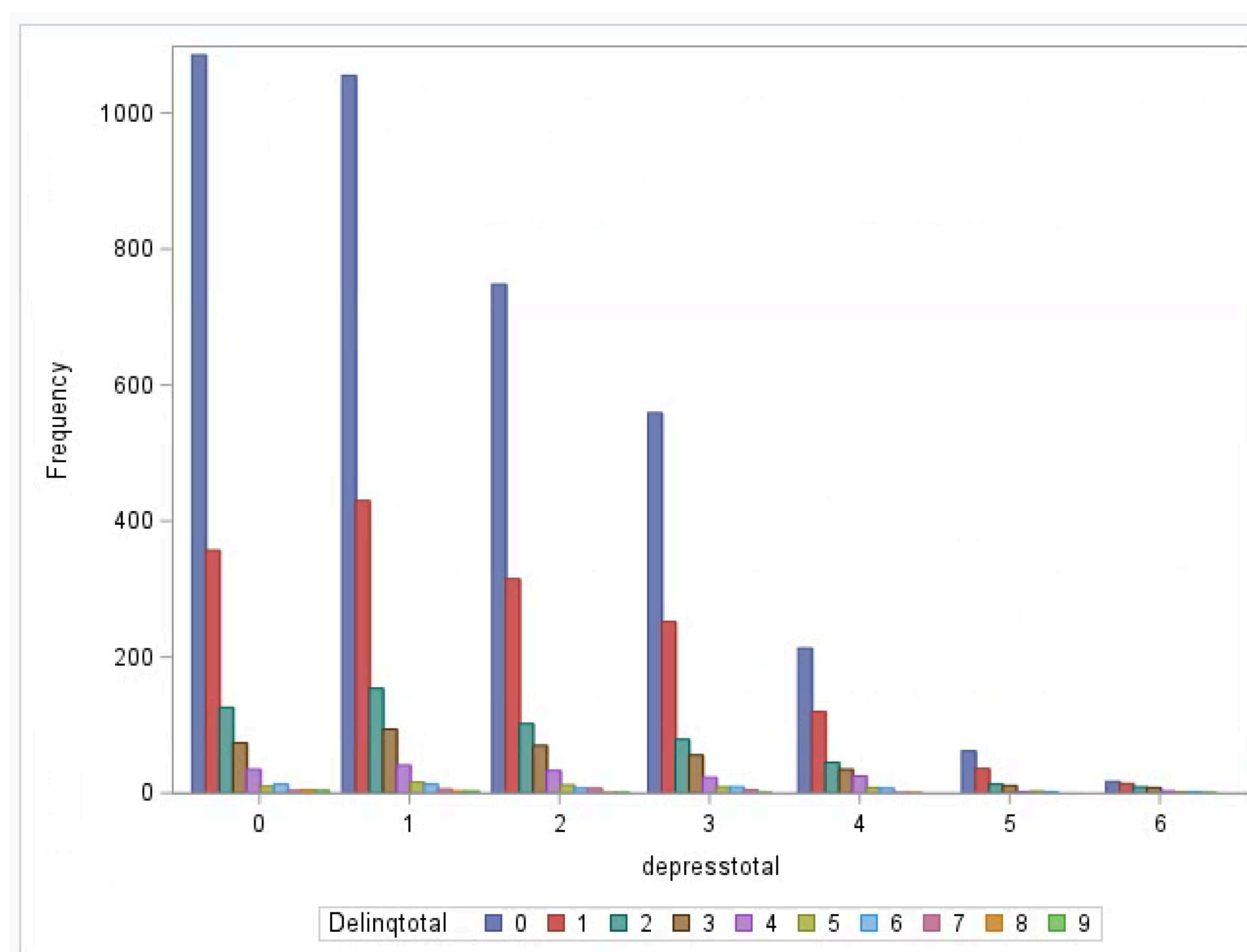


Figure 1: Graph showing each the frequency of each delinquency level (y-axis) on each depression level (x-axis).

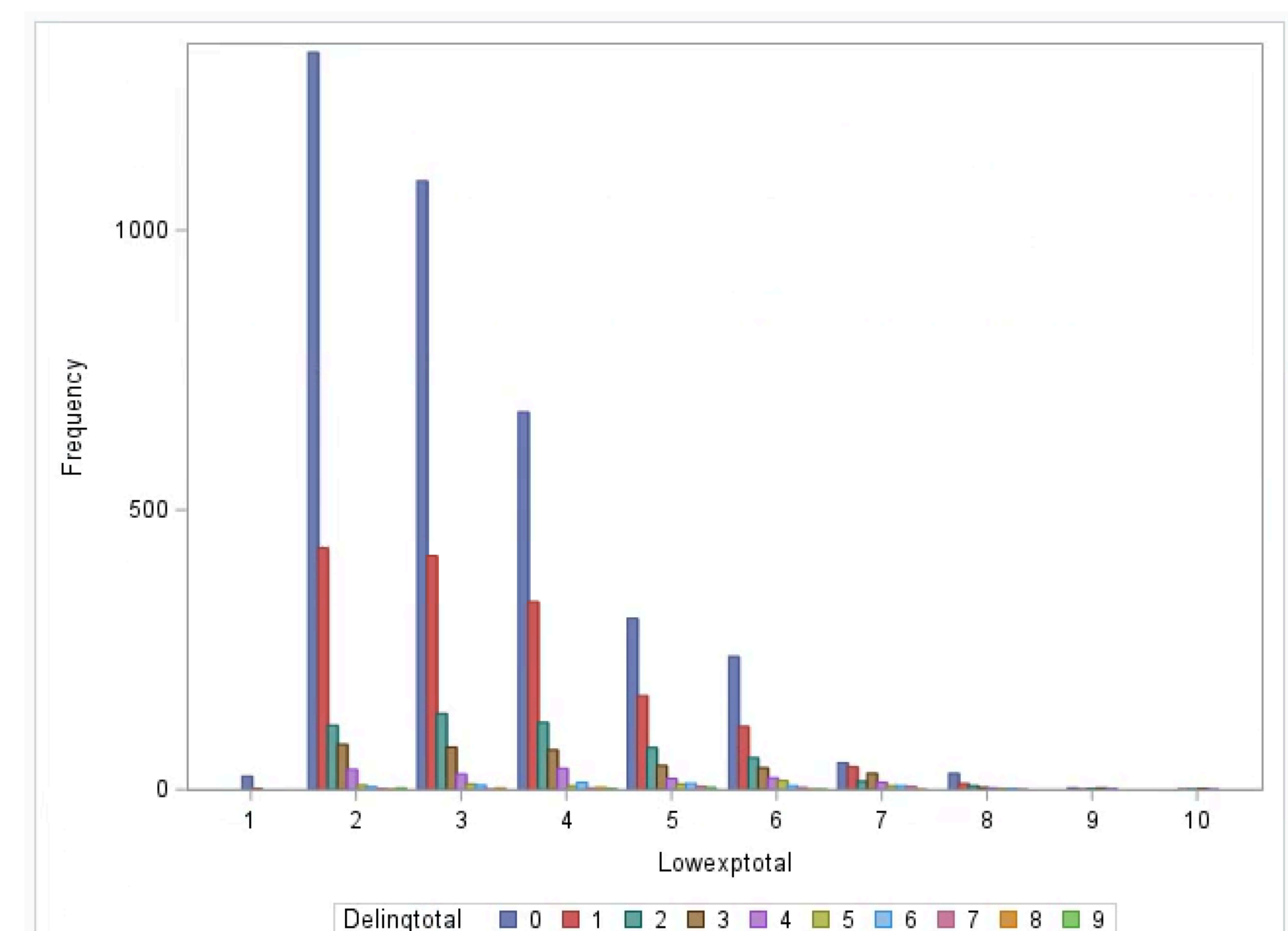


Figure 2: Graph showing each the frequency of each delinquency level (y-axis) on each low expectation level (x-axis).

## Discussion

- Low expectation and depression have a relationship with delinquency.
- Juvenile facilities might use this information to work on more preventative ways to deal with teens, rather than punishment.
- It is not clear that higher levels of depression or low expectation will lead to higher levels of delinquency.
- The sample size of adolescents who committed acts of delinquency need to be bigger in further study.
- Further research is needed to see whether low expectation or depression has a negative or positive relationships.

Chen,P, Voisin, D. R., & Jacobson, K. C. (2016) *Community violence Exposure: Examining a Spectrum of promotive factors. Youth and Society* 48(1), 33-37

Overbeek, G., Kerr, M., Stattin, H., Meeus, W., & Engels R. C. M. E. (2006). *Co-occurrence of depressive moods and delinquency in early adolescence: The role of failure expectations, manipulateness, and social contexts. International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 30(5) 433-443

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