

Evaluating the Role of Shame in the Relationship Between Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Social Phobia

Natalie Aller, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

Introduction

- Patients with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) are more likely to experience impairment in social relationships, self-expression/improvement, and overall health (Antony, et al. 1998).
- Feelings of implicit shame are often worse for individuals who suffer from OCD and can lead to other mental illnesses such as generalized anxiety and depression (Clerkin et al., 2015).
- Many anxiety disorders share similar aspects of phenomenology (Cuzen et al., 2013).
- OCD or OCD related disorders may be significantly associated with an individual's anxiety about socializing.

Research Questions

- Are OCD and social phobia comorbid?
- Does the embarrassment of compulsive behaviors (shame implications) moderate the relationship between OCD and a lifetime of social phobia?

Methods

Sample

- Data for this study were drawn from the sample from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), a study based on the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States aged 18 years and older.
- The final sample size for this study was 43,093 participants.

Measures

- The present study evaluates three categorical variables from the NESARC dataset, with 1 indicating yes and 0 indicating no to each inquiry.
- The variables in question are:
 - Diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder
 - Diagnosis of social phobia- lifetime (non-hierarchical)
 - Fear of embarrassment over compulsive behaviors as the onset of a panic attack (feelings of shame)

Results

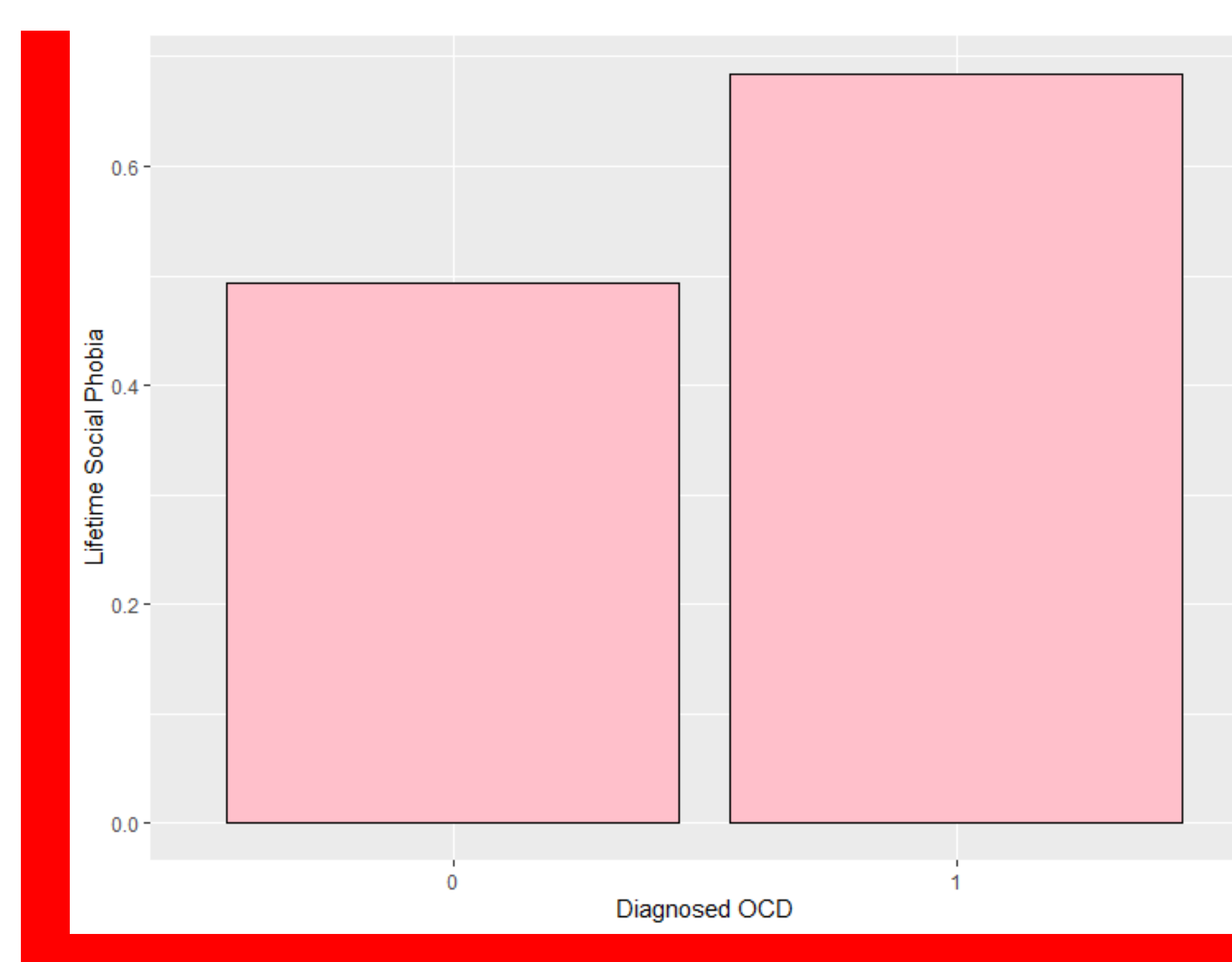
Univariate

- 7.6% of respondents were diagnosed with OCD.
- 4.8% of respondents indicated that they experience embarrassment of their compulsive behaviors.
- 4% of respondents indicated that they have experienced social phobia their whole lives.
- 24.5% of respondents indicated that they are afraid of or often avoid social situations.

Bivariate

- A Chi Square Test of Independence showed that an **OCD diagnosis** is significantly and positively associated with a **lifetime diagnosis of social phobia** (p-value = 4.346e-11, Figure 1).
- 68.5% of respondents with social phobia also suffer from OCD.

Figure 1. Proportion of respondents who suffer from both OCD and Social Phobia (0=no, 1=yes)



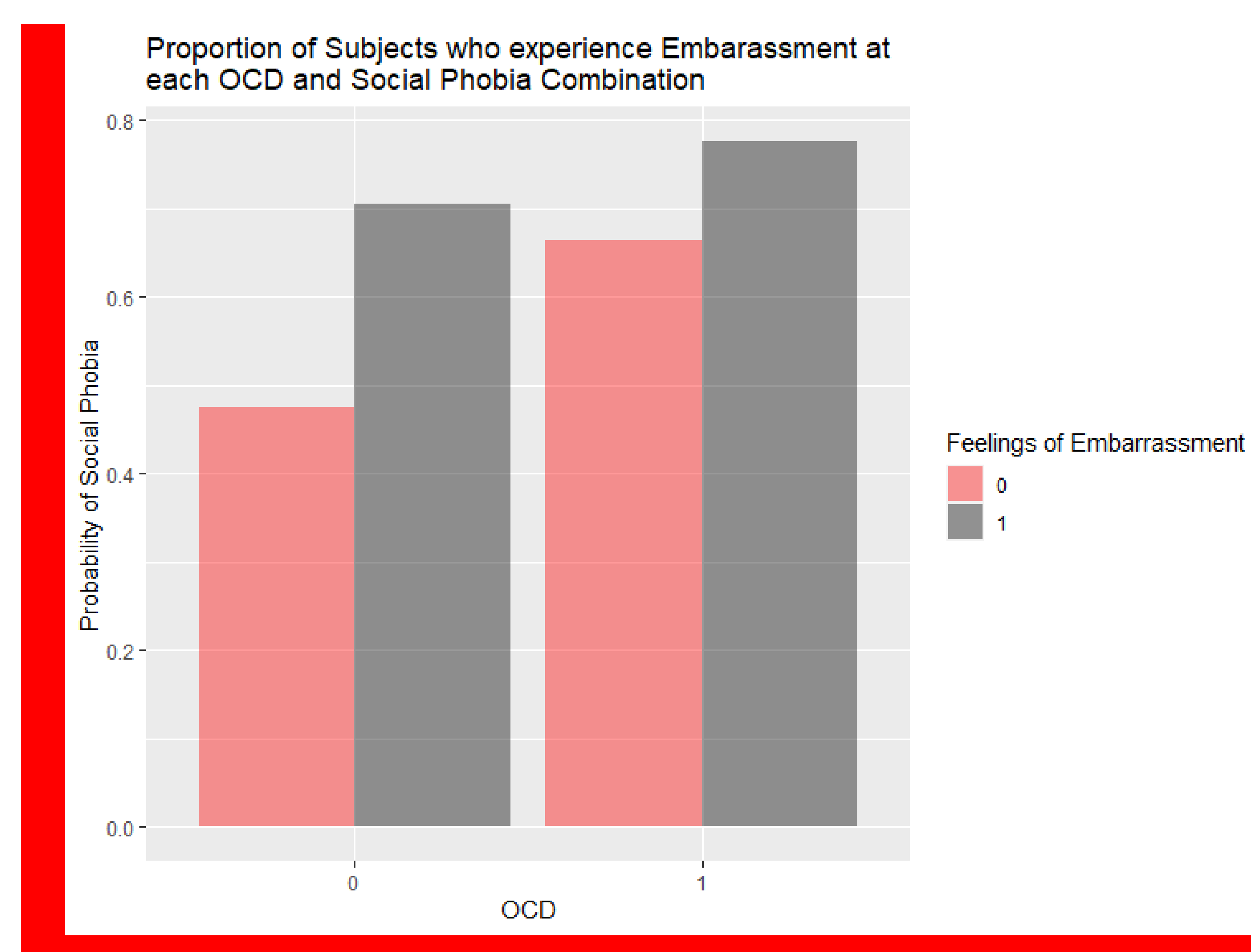
- A Chi Square Test of Independence additionally showed that both **OCD** and **social phobia** are significantly and positively related to the **embarrassment of compulsive behaviors**.

- **74.7%** of respondents with social phobia also experience shame, while only **58.2%** of respondents with OCD also experience shame related to their compulsive behaviors.

Figure 2. Analyzing if embarrassment of compulsive behaviors is a moderating variable between OCD and social phobia (0=no, 1=yes)

Multivariate

- Embarrassment of compulsive behaviors **does not** appear to moderate the relationship between an OCD diagnosis and a lifetime of social phobia (p-value > 0.05).
- However, there is a greater disparity between experiencing shame for those who **do not** suffer from OCD, and these respondents consequently experience social phobia on a larger scale (Figure 2).



Discussion

- Those who have OCD are also likely to suffer from social phobia.
- Though many OCD and socially anxious patients experience embarrassment from their compulsive behaviors, the relationship between the two diagnoses are often comorbid without shame implications.
- Social phobia is significantly greater for those who feel shame about their compulsions, though this difference is not necessarily related to having diagnosed OCD.
- Further research is needed to determine preventative measures for those who suffer from OCD or social phobia because the comorbidity between the two disorders is positive and significant.

Works Cited

- Antony, Martin M., et al. "Illness Intrusiveness in Individuals with Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, or Social Phobia." *The Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease*, vol. 186, no. 5, 1998, pp. 311–315., doi:10.1097/00005053-199805000-00008.
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- Clerkin, Elise M., et al. "Specificity of Implicit-Shame Associations." *Clinical Psychological Science*, vol. 2, no. 5, 2014, pp. 560–575., doi:10.1177/2167702614524944.