



The Association Between Parental Relationships and Binge Drinking Behavior in Adults

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Introduction

- Poor parental support and worse relationships with parents correlate positively with alcohol use disorders in both adults and adolescents (Gorka 2014, Surkan 2012).
- Previous research studies have found relationships between parental support and excessive drinking behavior, many focusing on adolescent subjects (Caldwell 2004, Wills & Cleary 1996, Clark, Thatcher, & Maisto 2004).
- There is little data regarding the possible association between frequency of communication with parents during adulthood and binge drinking behavior

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between parental closeness and binge drinking behavior in adults?
- Is frequency of communication with parents associated with binge drinking behavior in adults?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=2964) were drawn from the fifth wave of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent to Adult Health, which represented the population of adults ages 30s and 40s in the United States who had been followed since adolescence (grades 7-12)

Measures

- Binge drinking behavior was measured with the question "during the past 12 months, on how many days did you drink [female:4/male:5] or more drinks in a row?". Responses had levels 0-6, corresponding to "none" up through "every day or almost every day". Scores were categorized into the two levels: absence coded as 0 (responses of 0-2) and presence being coded as 1 (responses 3-6) of binge drinking behavior.
- Closeness with parents was assessed with the question "how close do you feel to your (father/mother) figure??" Possible responses ranged from 1 (not at all close) to 5 (very close).
- Frequency of communication with parents was assessed with the question "How often do you and your father figure see each other, talk on the telephone, exchange letters, exchange email, text message, or communicate via social media, such as Facebook?" Possible responses ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (almost every day).

Results

Bivariate

- Chi-square: frequency of communication with father figure and binge drinking behavior were significantly associated ($p=0.02118$). Post-hoc test with Bonferroni correction revealed a significantly greater probability of binge drinking behaviors among participants with communicating with father level 3 when compared to level 5 ($p=0.0134$), and level 6 ($p=0.0426$).
- Chi-Square: binge drinking and closeness with father figure ($p=0.6407$), closeness with mother figures ($p=0.3008$), and frequency of communication with mother figures ($p=0.2941$) were all insignificant.

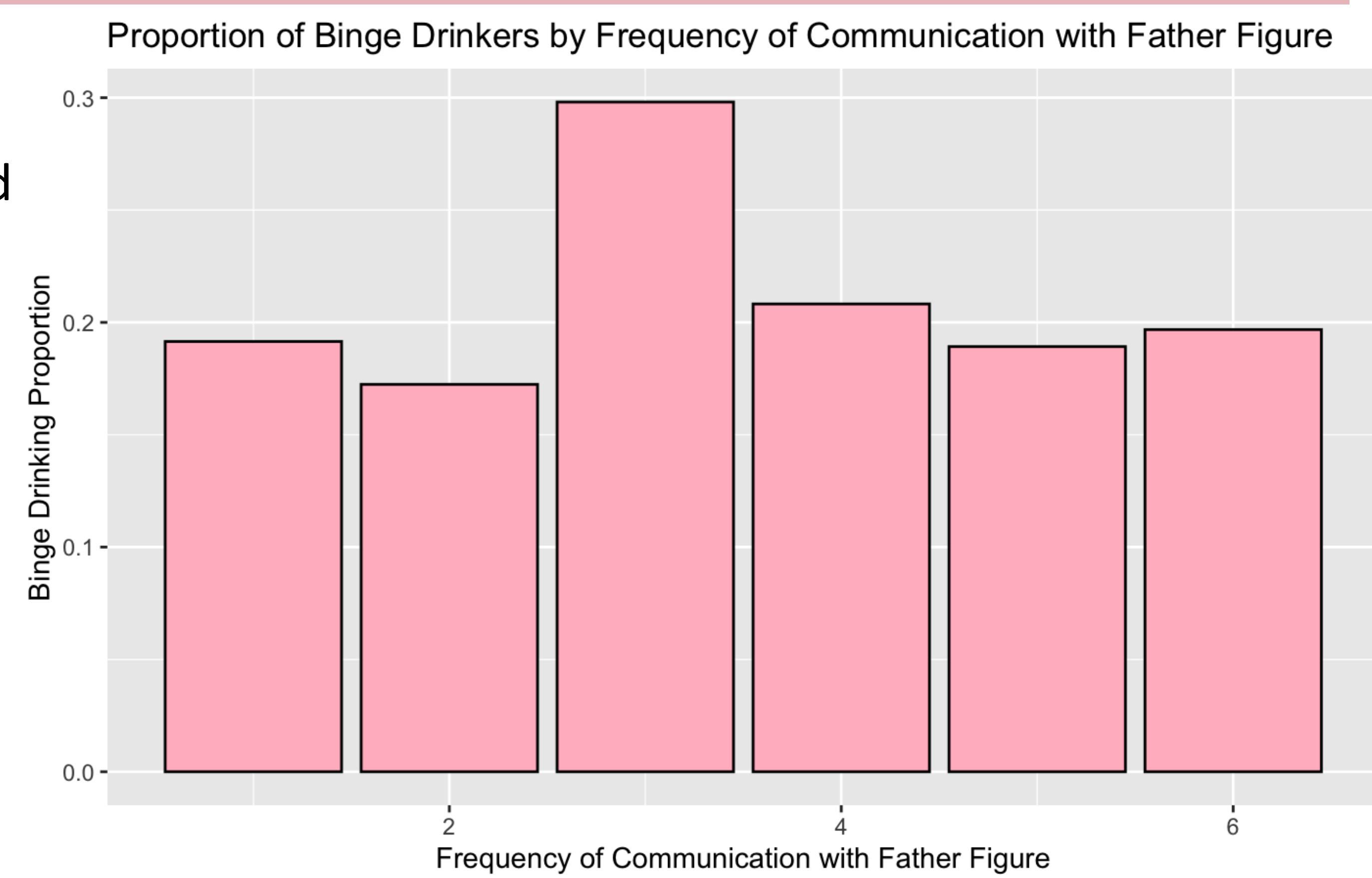


Figure 1: The Proportion of Binge Drinkers by Frequency of Communication with Father Figures

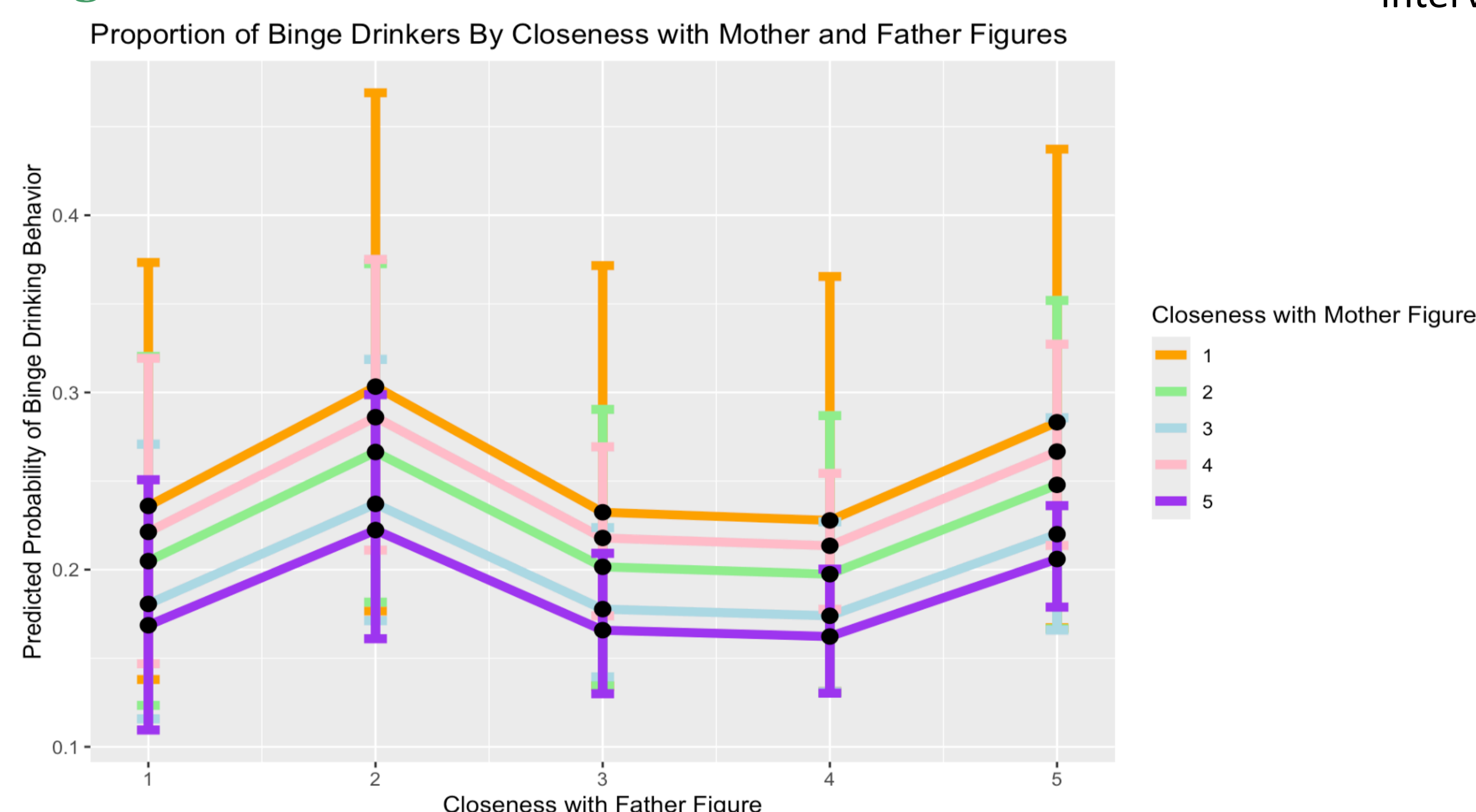


Figure 2: Likelihood of Binge Drinking Behavior Based on Closeness with Father Figures and Closeness with Mother Figures

Multivariate

- Logistic regression analyses showed that levels of closeness with father figures of 2, 3, 4, and 5 were not significantly different in binge drinking likelihood from closeness level 1 when controlling for closeness with mother figures (Fig. 2).

Discussion

- Although insignificant, the multiple regression graph shows that as closeness with mother figures increases, probability of engaging in binge drinking tends to be lower regardless of closeness with father figures, suggesting maternal relationships could be more influential for binge drinking behavior.
- A more focused study could further investigate the difference shown in the graph and look at whether other variables (for example presence of mothers and fathers in a participant's childhood home, relationships with siblings and other family members etc) could affect this relationship and possibly reveal a significant association.
- Communicating with fathers a few times a year is associated with greater probability of binge drinking when compared to high levels of communication. These findings may contribute to possible interventions for groups vulnerable to binge drinking.

References

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