



# The Relationship between Social Anxiety and Alcohol Consumption and its Association with Marital Status



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## Introduction

- Social anxiety disorder, defined as an immense fear of social interactions and being perceived negatively, affects around 13% of Americans (Leichsenring, Leweke 2017).
- People with social anxiety disorder can often also be diagnosed with other conditions, one of the most common ones being alcohol abuse and reliance (W. Magee, Eaton, Wittchen, McGonagle, & Kessler, 1996).
- A study with individuals' mean age in the early 30s revealed that 50% of respondents with social anxiety disorder had never been married (Sanderson, Di Nardo, Rapee, & Barlow, 1990).

## Research Questions

- Do people with social phobia consume more alcohol?
- Does a higher consumption of alcohol have a negative effect on one's marital status?
- Is the presence of social phobia and a higher alcohol consumption associated with marital status?

## Methods

### Sample

- Respondents (n=43,093) were drawn from the U.S. National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), conducted between 2001-2002. It is a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults in the U.S.

### Measures

- Respondents were labeled as alcoholics based on four common symptoms of alcoholism
- Respondents were considered married, or "together", if they are married or currently living with someone as if married. Respondents were considered "separate" if they are divorced, widowed, separated, or never married

## Results

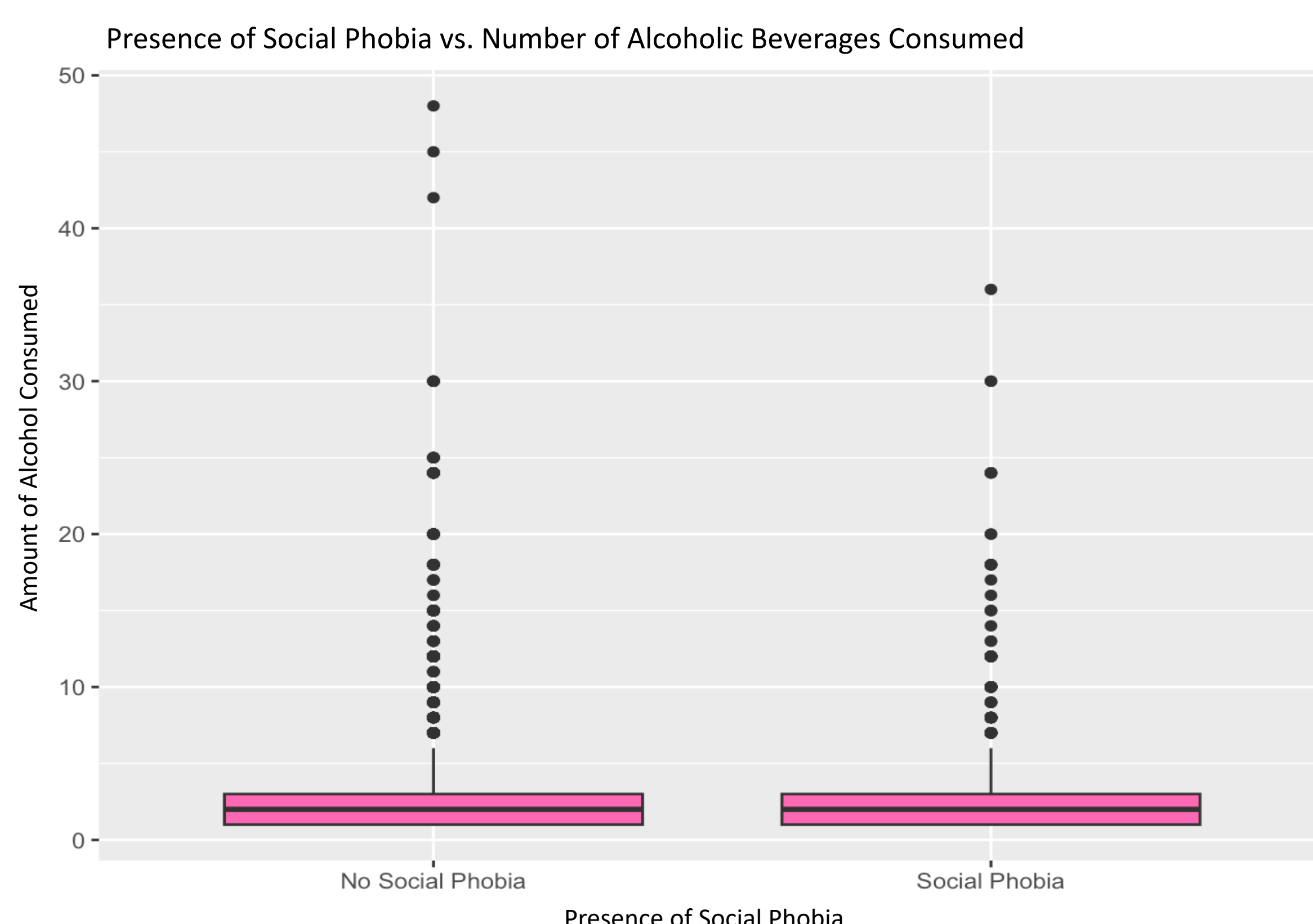


Figure 1: Association Between Presence of Social Phobia and Amount of Alcoholic Beverages Consumed on Days When Consumed Alcohol in the past 12 months

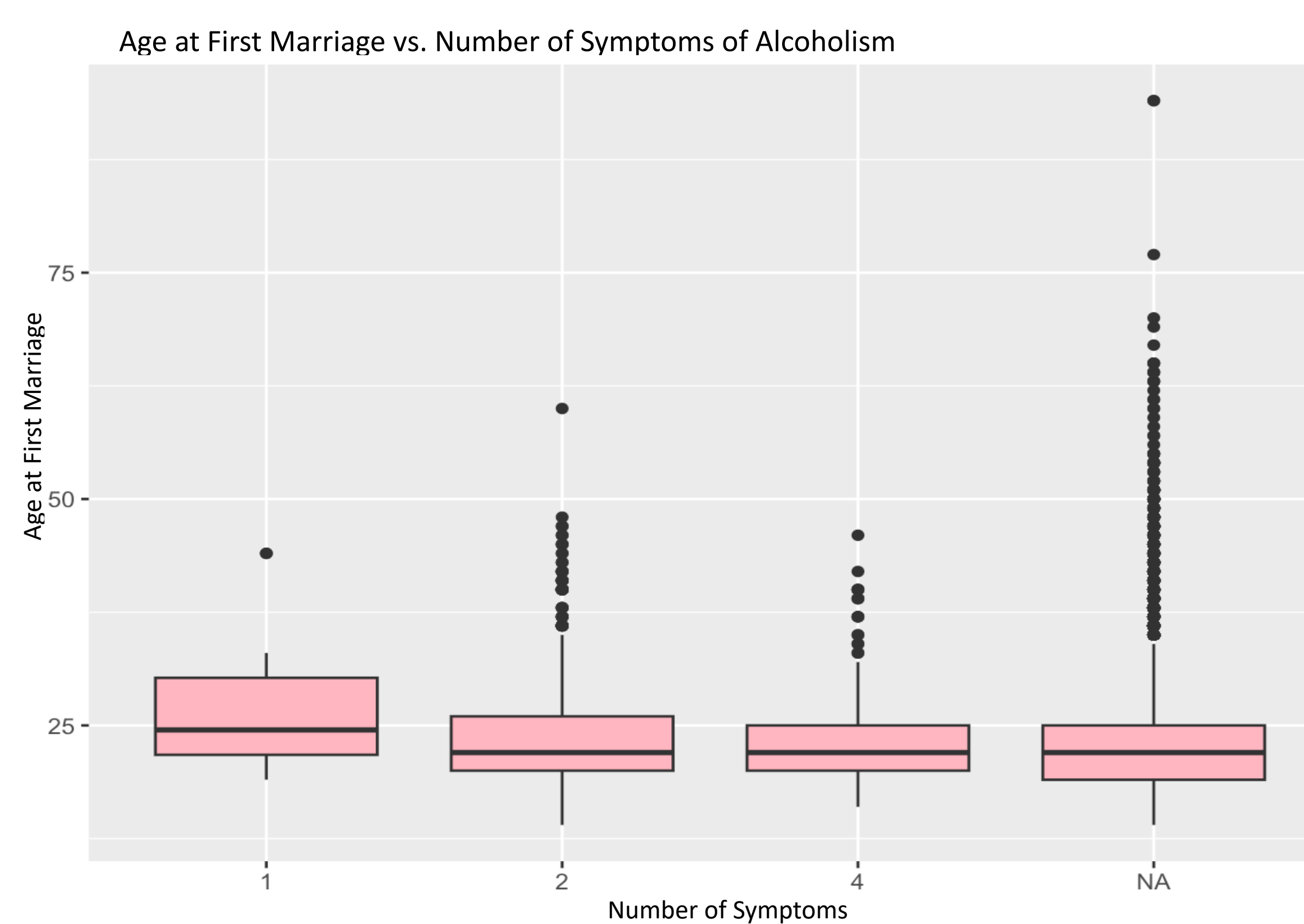


Figure 2: Association Between Number of Symptoms of Alcoholism and a Respondent's Age at First Marriage (the mode of respondents for 1 symptom is significantly less than that for 2 and 4)

### Bivariate

- ANOVA testing analysis showed that the presence of social phobia is **marginally** significantly associated with the number of alcoholic beverages consumed on days when consumed alcohol ( $p=0.058$ ).
- ANOVA testing analysis showed that the number of alcoholism symptoms were **not** significantly associated with the age at a respondent's first marriage ( $p = 0.55$ ).
- Most respondents that may be considered alcoholic had two symptoms of alcoholism.

### Multivariate

- Multiple regression analyses showed that social phobia is significantly associated with the age at which someone gets married ( $\text{Beta}=0.355$ ,  $p = 0.0055$ )
- Analysis also showed that people who are not alcoholics are likely to get married earlier ( $\text{Beta}=-0.559$ ,  $p=6.31e-10$ )
- Individuals who are alcoholics are likely to get married slightly later than those who are not.

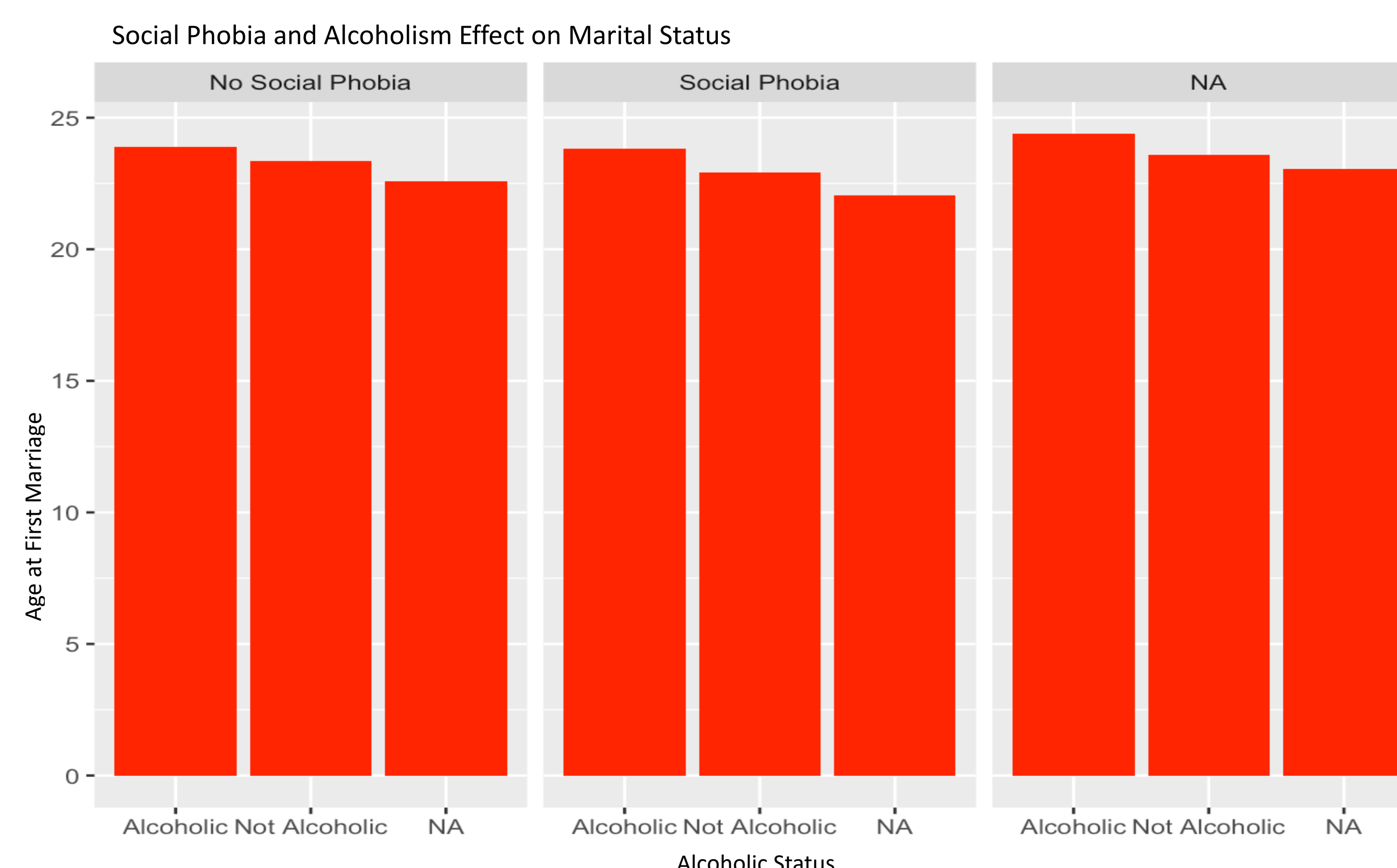


Figure 3: Association Between Presence of Social Phobia and Alcoholic Status on Average Age at which a Person Had Their First Marriage

## Discussion

- People who have any symptoms of alcoholism are likely to have two symptoms of the four included in the data: in the past year, drinking 3 or more times per week, consuming 2+ drinks on days when drank, drinking at home alone 1+ times per week, or drinking before 3:00 pm 2+ times per week
- The average age of marriage among people with symptoms of alcoholism is higher than that of those without alcoholism
- The number of alcoholic drinks consumed does not seem to differ greatly among people with and without social phobia

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