



The Relationship Between binge drinking and feelings of isolation in a school environment during adolescence

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Introduction

- Self perceived loneliness has been shown to be related (and a predictor) of multiple addictive behaviors, (Savolainen 2020, Bonar 2022)
- Loneliness can take different forms: social isolation, perceived exclusion, and emotional isolation it can relate in different ways to a subjects environment, specially during adolescence. (Copeland 2018).
- Studying the relationship between binge drinking as a predictor of loneliness (on a specific social setting like school) is therefore a useful approach to further the understanding on how the substance abuse relates to increased feelings of social isolation in nuanced settings.

Research Questions

- Are high school students who indulge in binge drinking more likely to feel isolated from their peers at school?
- Does the relationship between binge drinking and feelings of isolation holds true when controlling for the participants biological sex?

Methods

Sample

- Population (n= 2869) was drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescence Health (Add Health) of 1994-2008, a nationally representative, school based study sample of non-institutionalized adolescents' grades 7th-12th

Measures

- Binge drinking frequency was measured by using the question "Over the past 12 months, on how many days did you drink five or more drinks in a row?". Levels of binge drinking were assigned by creating a seven level categorical variable (0-6), where higher levels indicate higher frequency of binge drinking.
- Perceived isolation from peers at school was created "You feel close to people at your school", for which participants responded on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Because this item is reverse-worded relative to the question of interest, responses were recoded to represent perceived isolation rather than closeness. After data management, levels 1-3 were coded as "No" and 2 and 4 as "Yes".

Results

Bivariate

- A chi-square test of independence revealed that binge drinking was *not* significantly related to perceived isolation ($p = 0.052$).
- Regardless, a very subtle trend can still be seen when comparing binge freq. to feelings of isolation

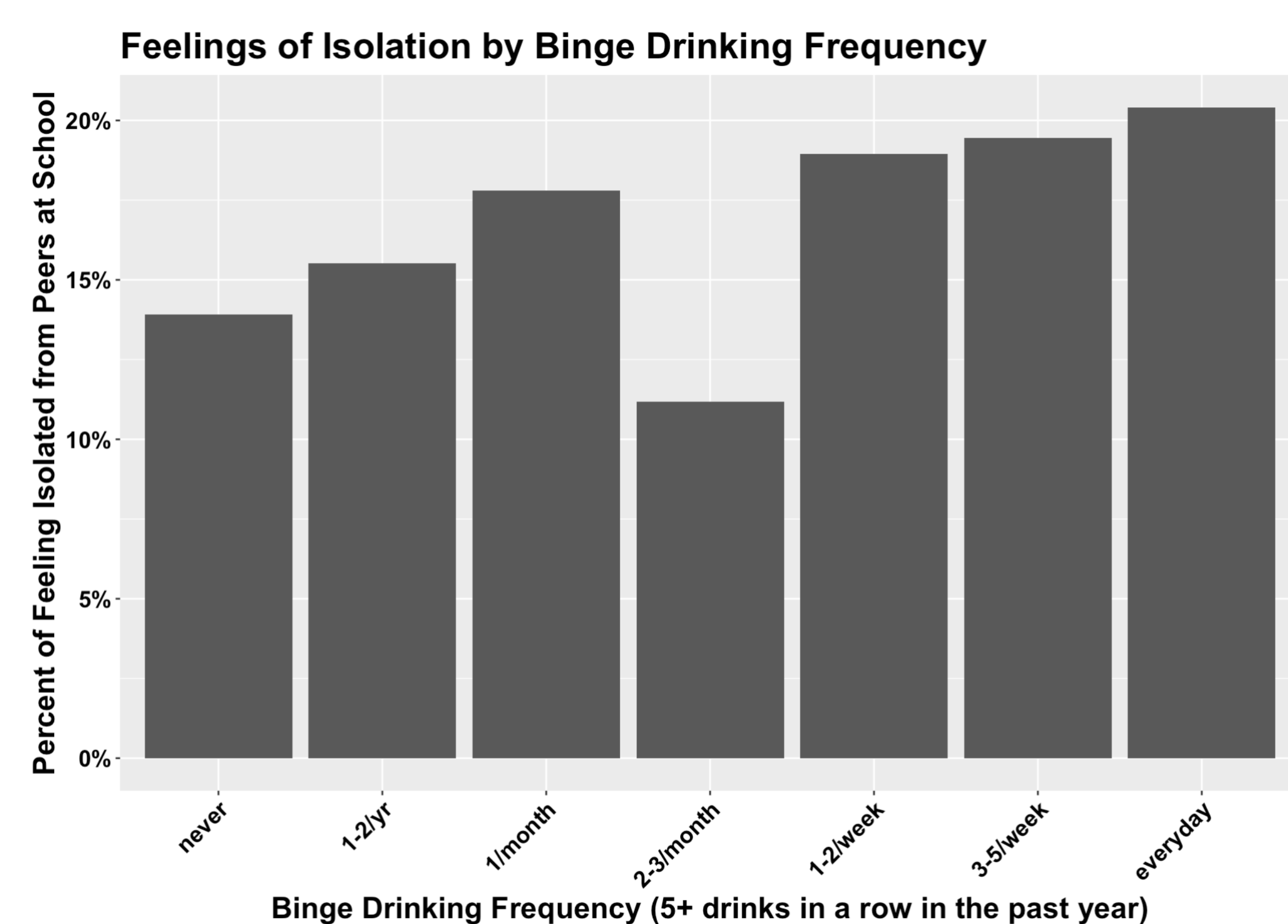


Figure 1: Chart table describing the percentage of individuals feeling isolated in relation to their binge drinking frequency.

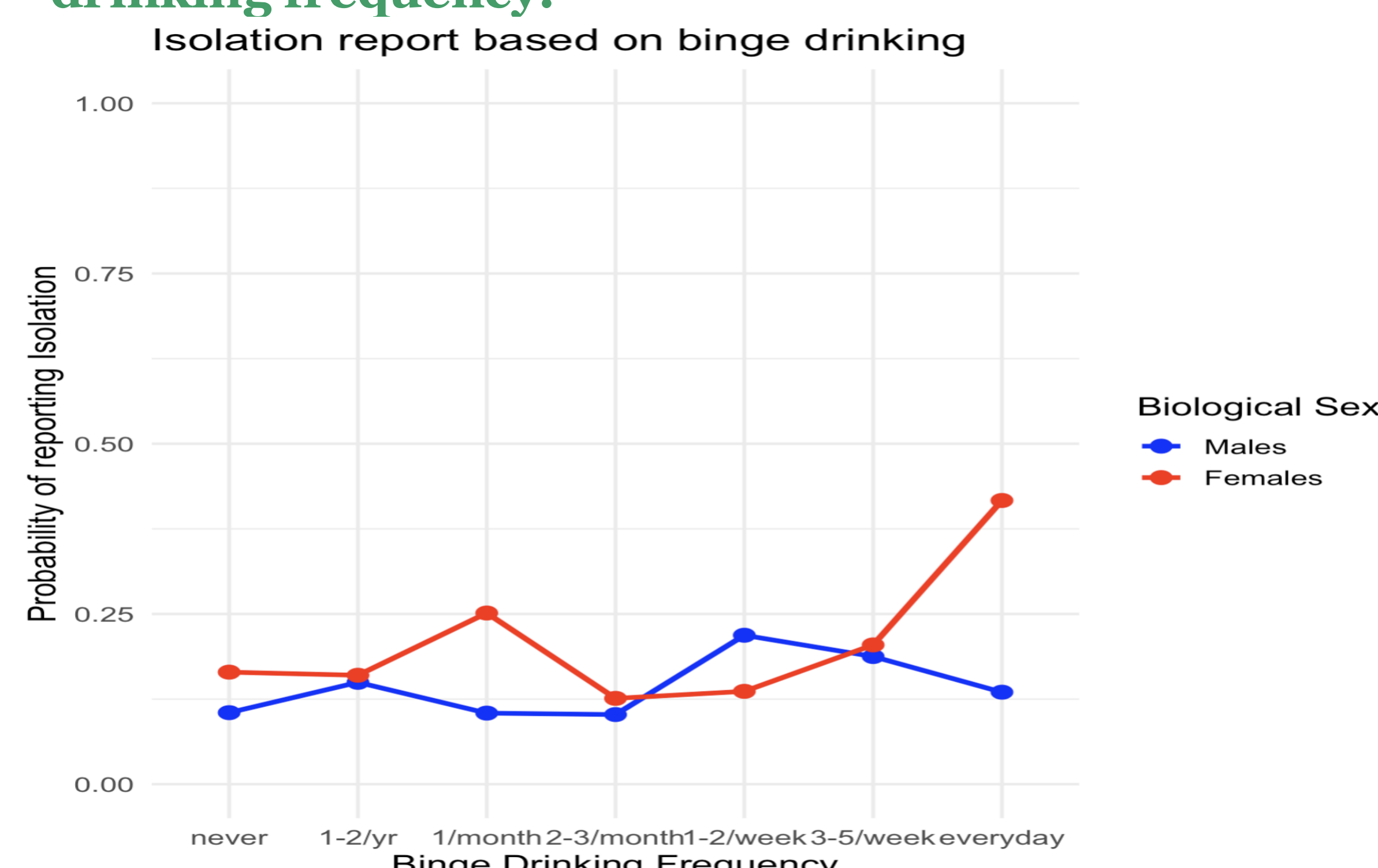


Figure 2: Line graph shows how different sex groups reported binge drinking

Discussion

- There did not seem to be a major relation between increased binge drinking and risk of feelings of isolation.
- There seems to be a correlation between binge drinking up to twice a week and expressing higher feelings of isolation for men.
- Females overall showed increased likelihood of reporting feelings of isolation but this was independent from drinking.

References

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