



The Relationship Between The Presence of an Alcoholic Parent and Self-Reported General Health in Adulthood



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Introduction

- In the United States nearly 8 million children live with parents with alcohol substance abuse disorders. (Lipari and Van Horn, 2017)
- Existing research has established that it is possible that growing up with an alcoholic parent is likely to negatively affect adult children's with causing depression and anxiety.
- There remains a large gap in research which utilizes nationally representative data in order to assess broader long-term physical health implications for adult children of alcoholic parents. (Baker, Stabile, and Deri, 2004)
- The goal of the present analysis is to deepen the understanding and broaden the scope of knowledge on the population of adult children of alcoholics. This study will investigate the effect of alcoholic parents on self-perceived general health of adult children later in life.

Research Questions

- Are adults who grew up in households with alcoholic parents more likely to report that they have poor physical health?
- Is this relationship at all dependent on the adult's current recorded income?

Methods

Sample

- Data was drawn from the first wave of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), a nationally representative survey of the civilian, non-institutionalized adult population of the United States. The complete NESARC sample includes approximately 43,000 adults aged 18 years and older.

Measures

- Participants respond to the question in the category "Presence of Alcoholic Parent." If the participant responds, "Yes," to either the presence of an alcoholic father or an alcoholic mother, their data was recorded as positive for "Presence of alcoholic parent."
- Participants responded to the prompt: "Self-Perceived Current Health." Current health was measured on a scale from 1-5 (1. Poor - 5. Excellent).
- Participants reported their total household income within 5 categories. (1. 5,000-15,000 - 5. 200,000 or more)

Results

Bivariate

- This ANOVA analysis shows a significant association between the presence of an alcoholic parent and self-reported general health because of a calculated p-value < 0.05.
- The r-squared value of 0.002 implies the independent variable of presence of an alcoholic parent does not explain a significant portion of the variance in self-reported general health.

Multivariate

- After controlling for income the relationship between presence of an alcoholic parent and self-reported general health remains significant with p-values of < 0.05.
- The r-squared value is still 0.002 which means that while the relationships remain significant, additional confounding variables must be added in order to make the model more precise.

Mean of Self-Reported General Health by Presence of Alcoholic Parent

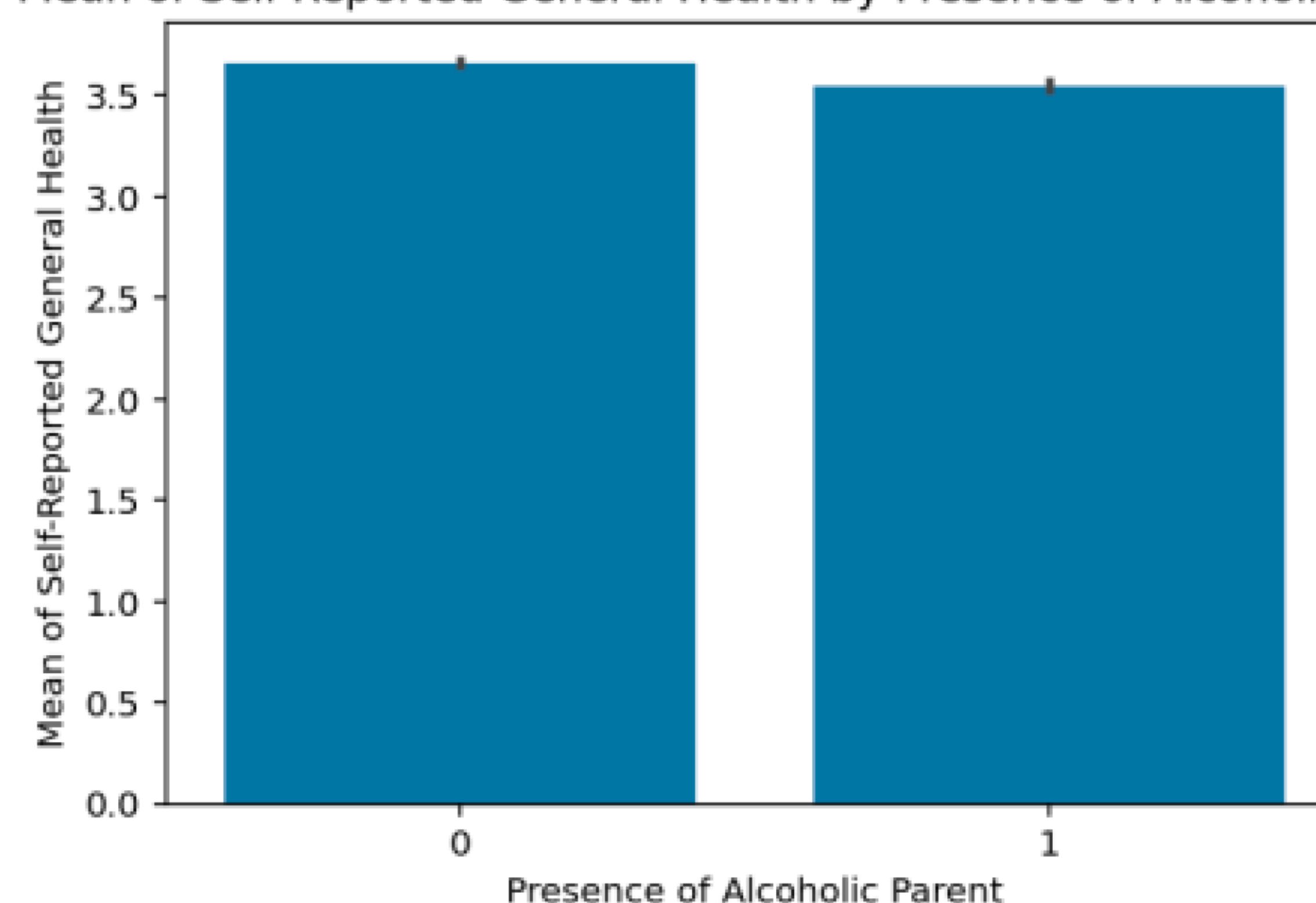


Figure 1: Mean of Self-Reported General Health by Presence of Alcoholic Parent

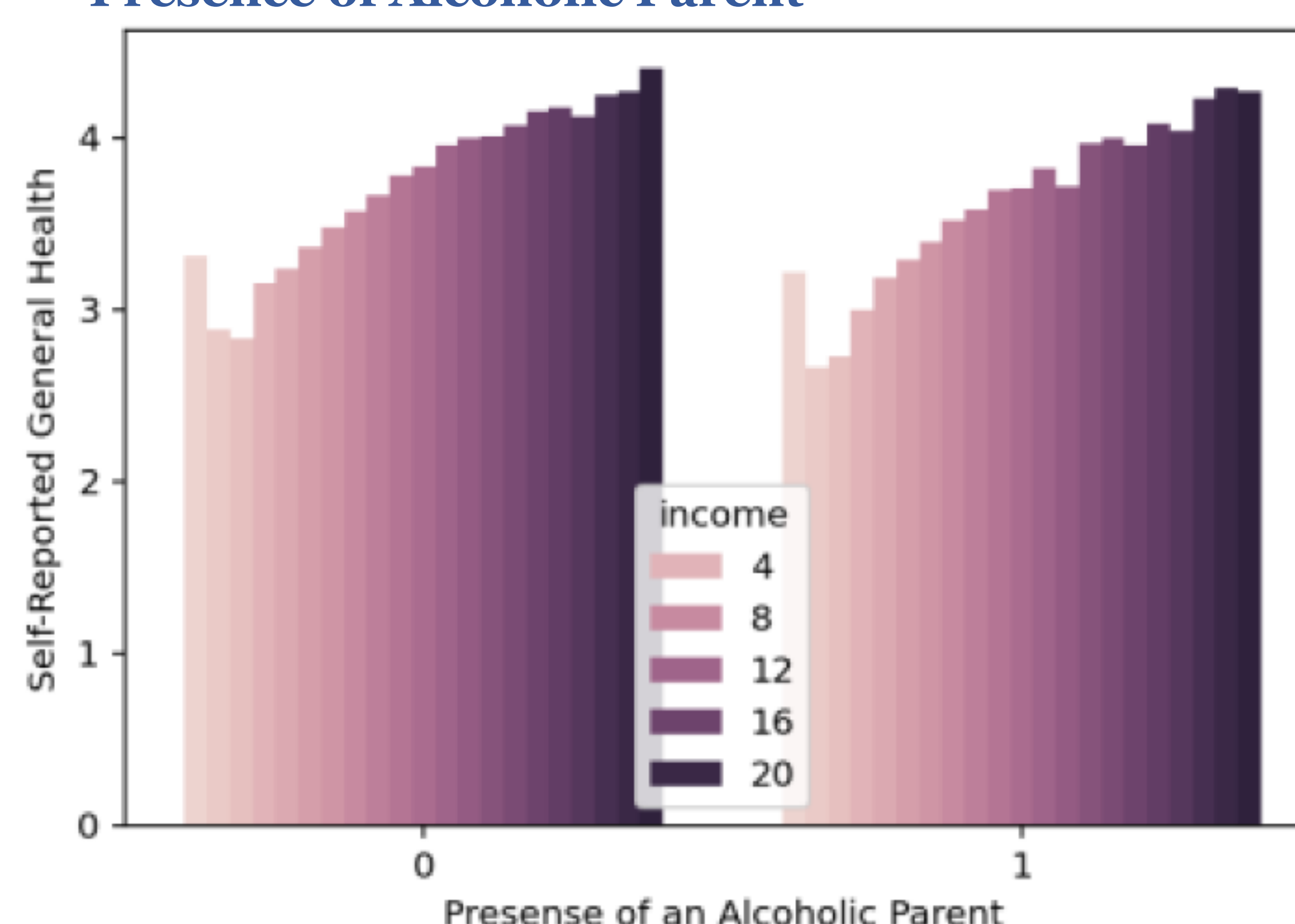


Figure 2: The Association Between the Presence of an Alcoholic Parent and Income on Self-Reported General Health

Discussion

- The results of this study indicate that adults who grew up with an alcoholic parent report significantly poorer self-perceived general health, even when controlling for current income. Although the effect is statistically significant, the very small R-squared value suggests that parental alcoholism explains only a small portion of the overall variation in adult health outcomes.
- This underscores that additional social, environmental, and psychological factors likely contribute to long-term health among adult children of alcoholics and should be explored in future research.
- These findings highlight the importance of early prevention and family-based interventions, as well as continued support for individuals from families affected by alcohol use disorders.

References

Baker, Michael, et al. "What do self-reported, objective, measures of health measure?" *The Journal of Human Resources*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2004, p. 1067, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3559039>.

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