The Effects of Spending Time With Friends on Mental Health Among Young Men and Women

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Research Questions
- How does actively spending time with friends relate to good mental health?
- Does this relationship vary by biological sex?

Significance
- Friendship is an integral part of life that shapes who we are as people.
- There is a growing concern that young people tend to isolate themselves, which may negatively impact mental health (Lempinen et al., 2018).
- Mental health is becoming a greater concern in the United States (Miller & Rice).

Background
- When friends get together and/or talk, they tend to share positive experiences with each other. This is proven to improve psychological wellbeing (Demir, Dogan, & Procsal, 2013).
- Same-sex friendship is shown to affect men’s mental health more than women’s (Robinson et al., 2018).

Hypotheses
- There is a positive relationship between the weekly number of days spent with friends and enjoyment of life.
- Men are more likely to be affected than women.

Dependent Variable
Figure 1. Enjoyment of Life in the Past 7 Days
- Less than most of the time
- Most of the time

Independent Variable
Figure 2. Number of Days Spent Hanging Out and/or Talking With Friends in the Past 7 Days
- 0-2 Days
- 3-6 Days
- 7 Days

Control Variable
Figure 3. Gender
- Male
- Female

Analytical Plan
- Cross-tabulations and Chi-square tests using SPSS

Results
Figure 4. % Young Adults Enjoying Life Most of the Time by Number of Days Spent with Friends in the Past 7 Days
- 0-2 Days
- 3-6 Days
- 7 Days

Chi-square tests were significant at $p < .001$ for both men and women.

Summary of the Findings
- Friendship has a significant effect on mental health for the better. The more one spends time with his/her friends, the more one will find themselves enjoying life.
- While males are more likely than females to report enjoying life, the effects of friendship on enjoyment are similar for both males and females.

Implications
- Spending time and/or talking to friends has the potential to deter mental illness.

References