

# The Relationship Between Religion and Adolescent Depression

## Research Questions

- Does religious attendance impact adolescent depression?
- Does importance of religion to the adolescent moderate the relationship between religious attendance and depression?

## Hypotheses

- Religious attendance will be negatively associated with depression.
- Relationship will be strongest for those who say religion is important to them.
- Depressive conflict will arise in adolescents who attend frequently, but do not find religion important.

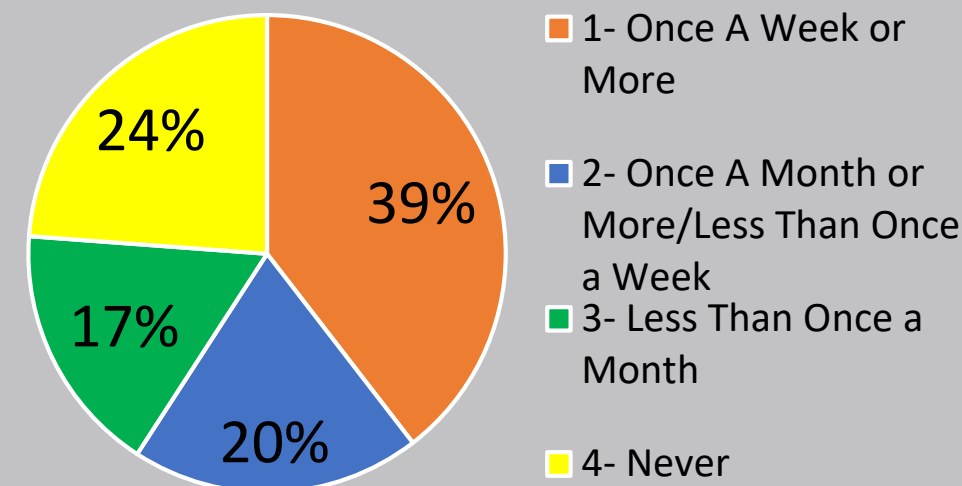
## Background

- 3.2 million adolescents in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode (MDE) in 2017 (McCance-Katz, 2017).
- Youth were at higher risks of an MDE when religion was not important to them or their friends (Topalian et al., 2019).

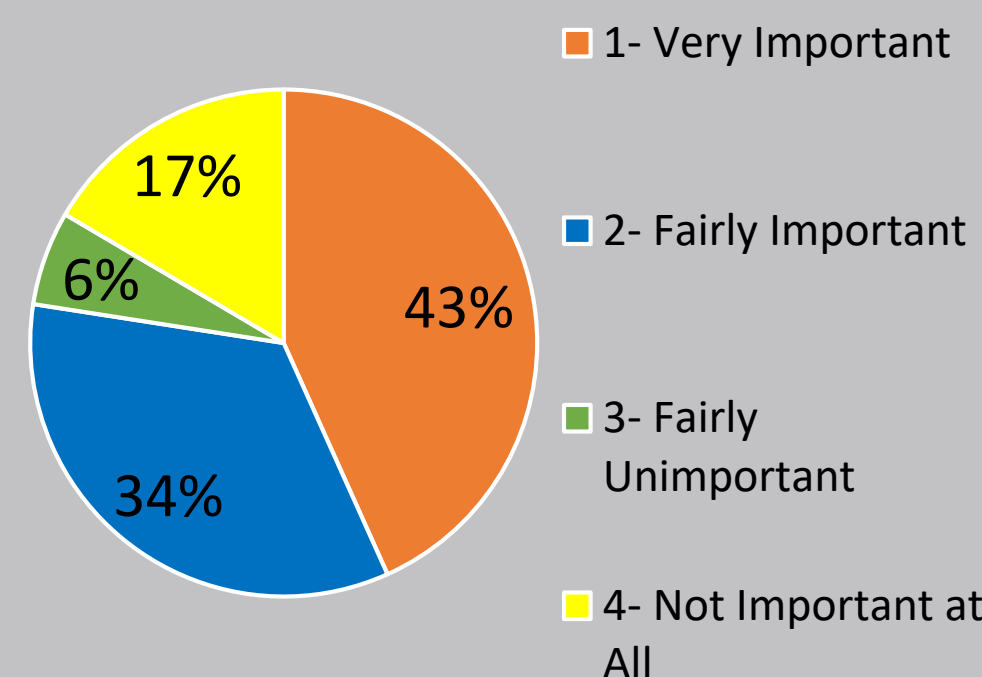
## Data

- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)
- Wave I (1994-1995)
- Grades 7-12

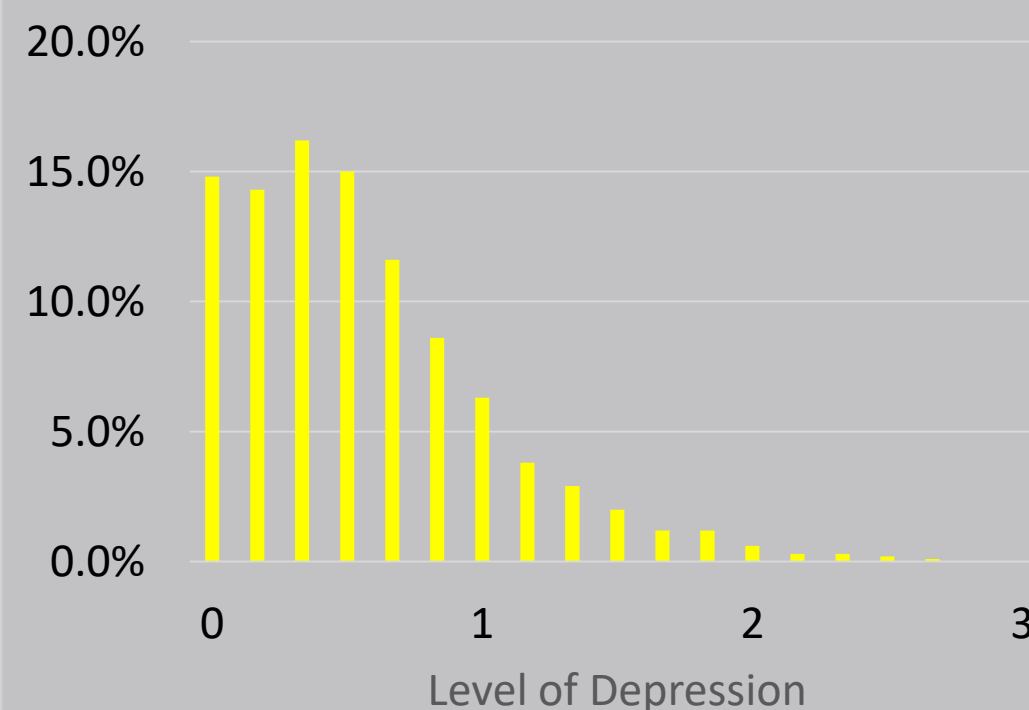
## Religious Service Attendance



## Religious Importance

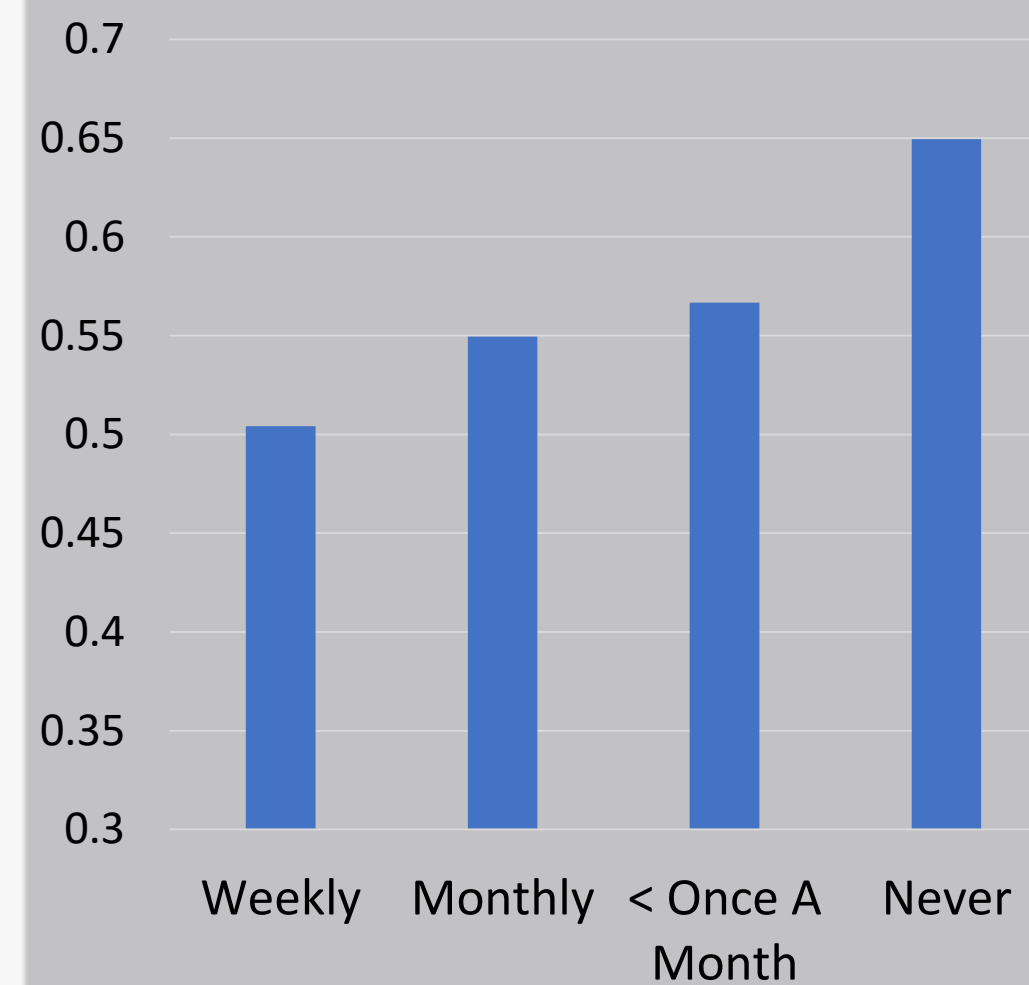


## Depression Scale



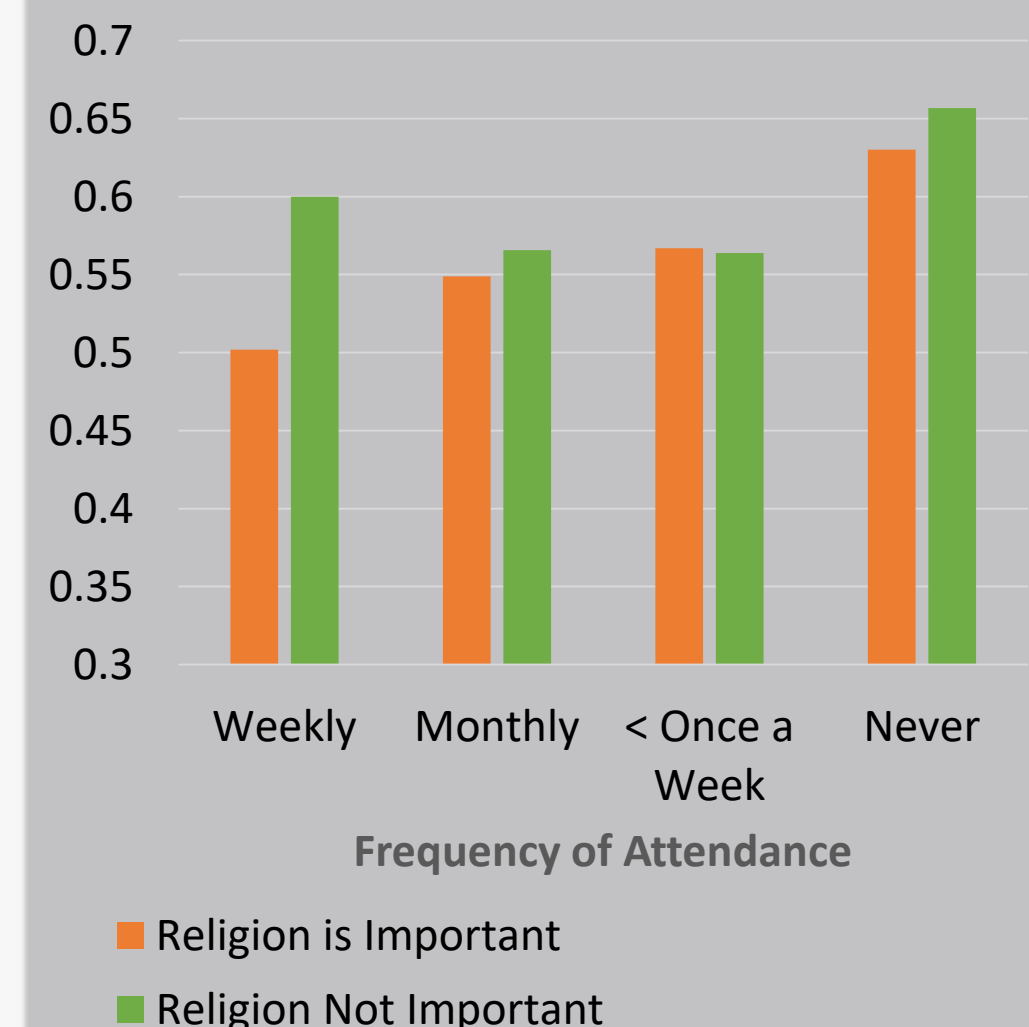
## Results

### Depression by Religious Attendance



\* T-test significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

### Mean Depression by Religious Attendance and Religious Importance



## Summary of Findings

- Depression decreases as religious attendance increases.
- Hypotheses were supported.
- Exception is those who frequently attended religious services but found no importance in religion – their depression was higher.

## Limitations and Future Research

### Limitations:

- Research conducted in mid 1990s – results may differ in more contemporary sample.
- The definition of “important” is subjective.

### Future research:

- Take into consideration gender, SES, parental influences.
- Look at differences across different religions.

## References

- McCance-Katz. (2017). "The National Survey on Drug Use and Health: 2017." *Rockville, Maryland, USA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.*
- Topalian, King, & Vidourek, R. A. (2019). "Religiosity and Depression among a National Sample of Adolescents." *American Journal of Health Studies, 34(1).*