



Gender Differences in the Association between Alcohol Abuse and Domestic Violence



Becca Dibble, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

Introduction

- DV tends to have serious physical and psychological negative effects on the victim(s). It can result in death and incapacity, as well as other health problems such as chronic pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse, and depression (Alhabib, Nur, & Jones, 2009).
- Studies have shown that cases of domestic violence are drastically higher in substance abusers than those who are not, as alcohol has been shown to aggravate the behavior of the perpetrator (Bhatt, 1998).
- The literature has well established a disparity in gender among DV victims. However, not much research has been conducted on examining the association between levels of alcohol abuse and domestic violence among males and females.
- Policy implications that support the reduction of things such as drinking, aggressive behavior, and conflict will potentially have beneficial effects (Leonard, 2009).

Research Questions

- Are high levels of alcohol abuse associated with high levels of domestic violence?
- Does the association between level of alcohol abuse and frequency of domestic violence differ for individuals based on their gender?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents were drawn from the first wave of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC)
- Included a participant pool of 43,093 individuals of 18 to 24 years of age, consisting of non-institutionalized civilians living in households and selected group quarters in the U.S.

Measures

- Alcohol abuse frequency was measured with the question "how many episodes of alcohol abuse have you experienced?". Responses varied with values between 1 and 98. This was then coded categorically by collapsing responses. 3 categories were created in order to measure 3 different levels of alcohol abuse; low, medium and high.
- Presence of domestic violence was measured with the question "have you ever gotten into a fight that involved swapping blows with someone like a husband, wife, boyfriend or girlfriend?". Responses varied from "no," "yes", or "unknown"
- Gender was coded dichotomously

Results

Univariate

- 9.77% of respondents indicated that they have gotten into a physical altercation with a partner
- After coding out the missing data, 78.15% of respondents indicated a high frequency of alcohol abuse
- 57.03% of respondents were female

Bivariate

- Chi-Square analysis revealed a significant association between alcohol abuse (categorical explanatory) and experiences of abuse (categorical response) ($P=0.000$, $p\text{-value}<0.001$).
- A logistic regression revealed that men are 0.8 times less likely to report being in a physical altercation with their partner

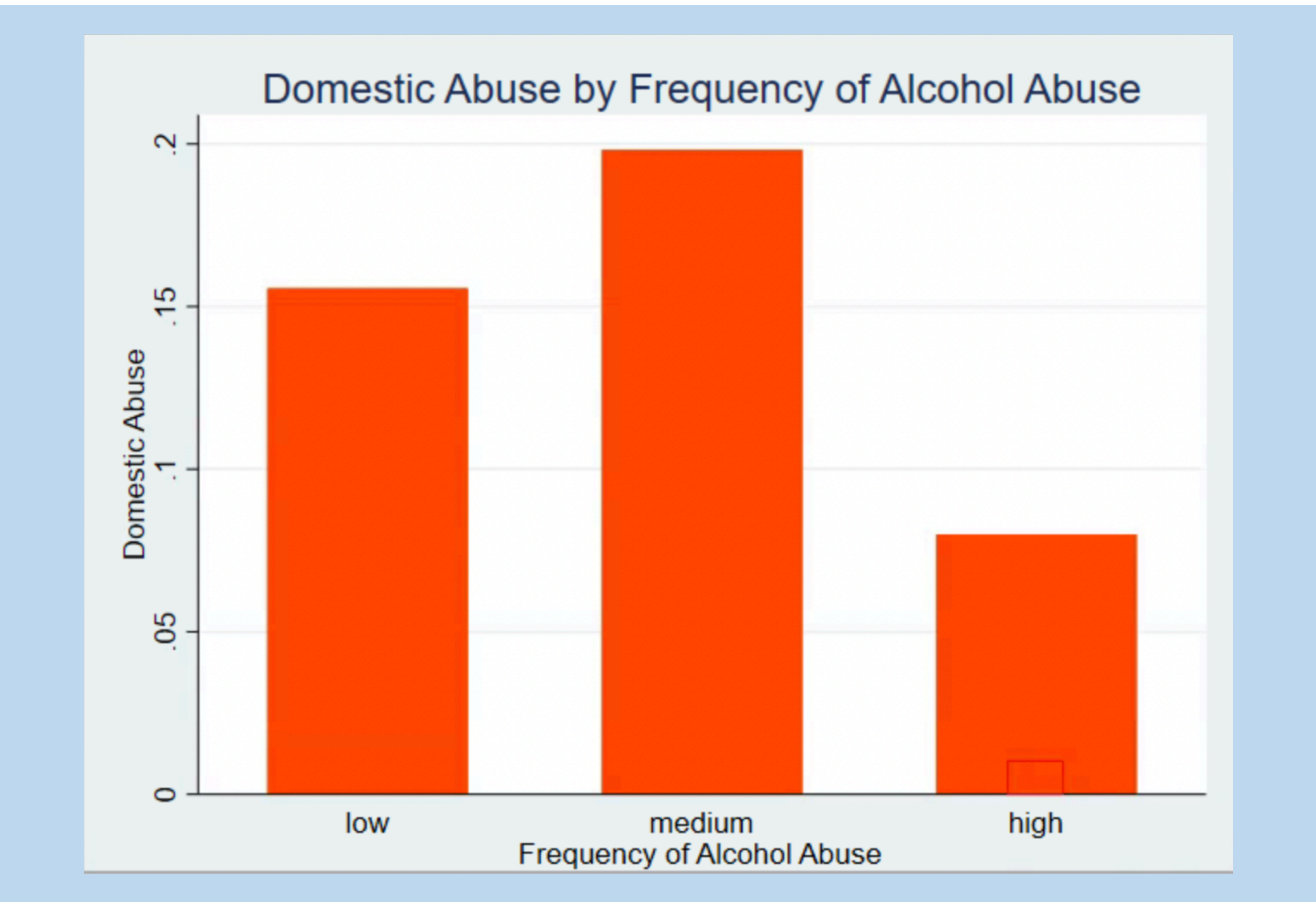


Figure 1. Mean of domestic violence by the level frequency of alcohol abuse episodes

Multivariate

- Gender is a moderator for the association between alcohol abuse and domestic violence (Figure 2).
- After controlling for gender, domestic violence is significantly associated with frequency of alcohol abuse ($B=1.35$, $p<0.001$).
- Those with medium alcohol abuse have an expected odds of domestic abuse that is 1.4 times higher than those with low alcohol abuse holding all other variables fixed.

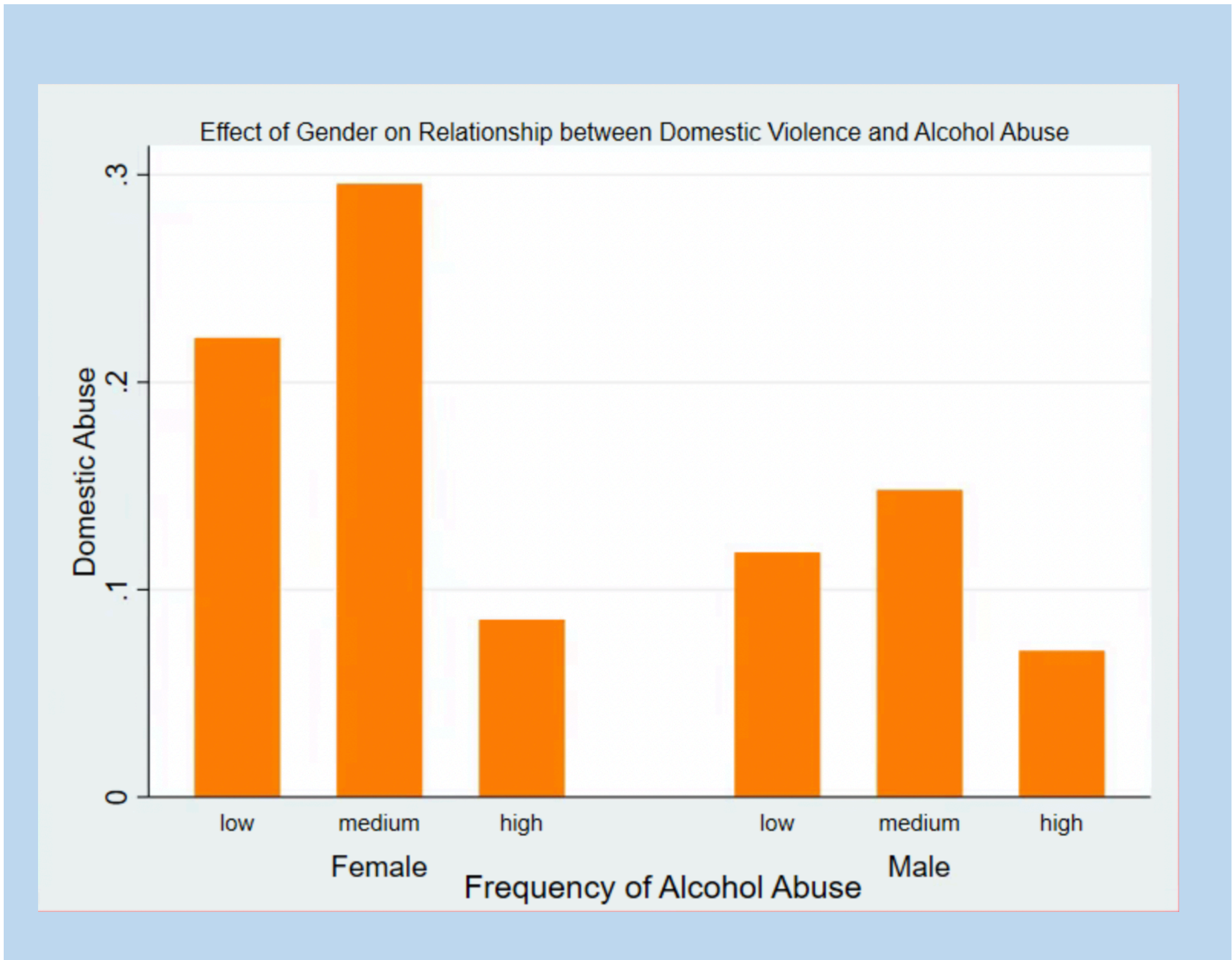


Figure 2. Relationship between alcohol abuse and domestic abuse by gender

Discussion

- Gender may affect the relationship between frequency of alcohol abuse and domestic violence
- Possible errors in the data could stem from the fact that participants self-reported their level of alcohol abuse which could be response bias
- Psychologists, therapists, and domestic violence victims themselves, could use this information to help indicate warning signs of abuse, as well as help rationalize the trauma
- Further research is needed to determine what interventions would be most effective in reducing domestic violence when being confounded by alcohol abuse