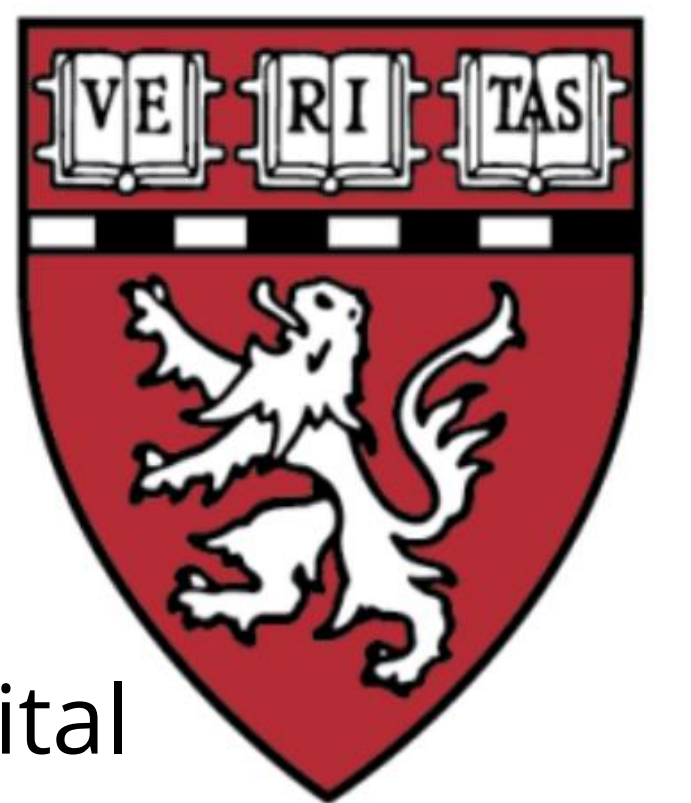




From guardian-inflicted violence to self-inflicted violence: The effects of early-life physical abuse on self-injury during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Anthony Menor¹, Ritika Rastogi¹, Hyeouk "Chris" Hahm², Cindy H. Liu^{1,3}

¹Department of Pediatrics, Brigham and Women's Hospital, ²School of Social Work, Boston University, ³Department of Psychiatry, Brigham and Women's Hospital

Background & Aims

- Exploring intergenerational transmission of violence
- Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) — a form of violence to oneself to cope with negative emotions and distress
- The COVID-19 Pandemic — a global stressful event



Study Aims: **1)** Examine the association between childhood verbal and physical abuse (VA & PA) and NSSI in young adults during the pandemic; **2)** Investigate the moderating role of psychological adjustment to the pandemic

Methods

Data: COVID-19 Adult Resilience Experiences Survey (Spring 2022)

Analysis: Cross-sectional, Block-wise Logistic Regression Analysis

Primary Predictors: Verbal and Physical Child Abuse (Y/N)

Outcome: "Since the pandemic started (March 2020), did you start experiencing any of the following? Nonsuicidal Self-injurious Behavior (e.g., cutting, burning)"

Covariates: Sociodemographic and Psychological Factors (Table 1)

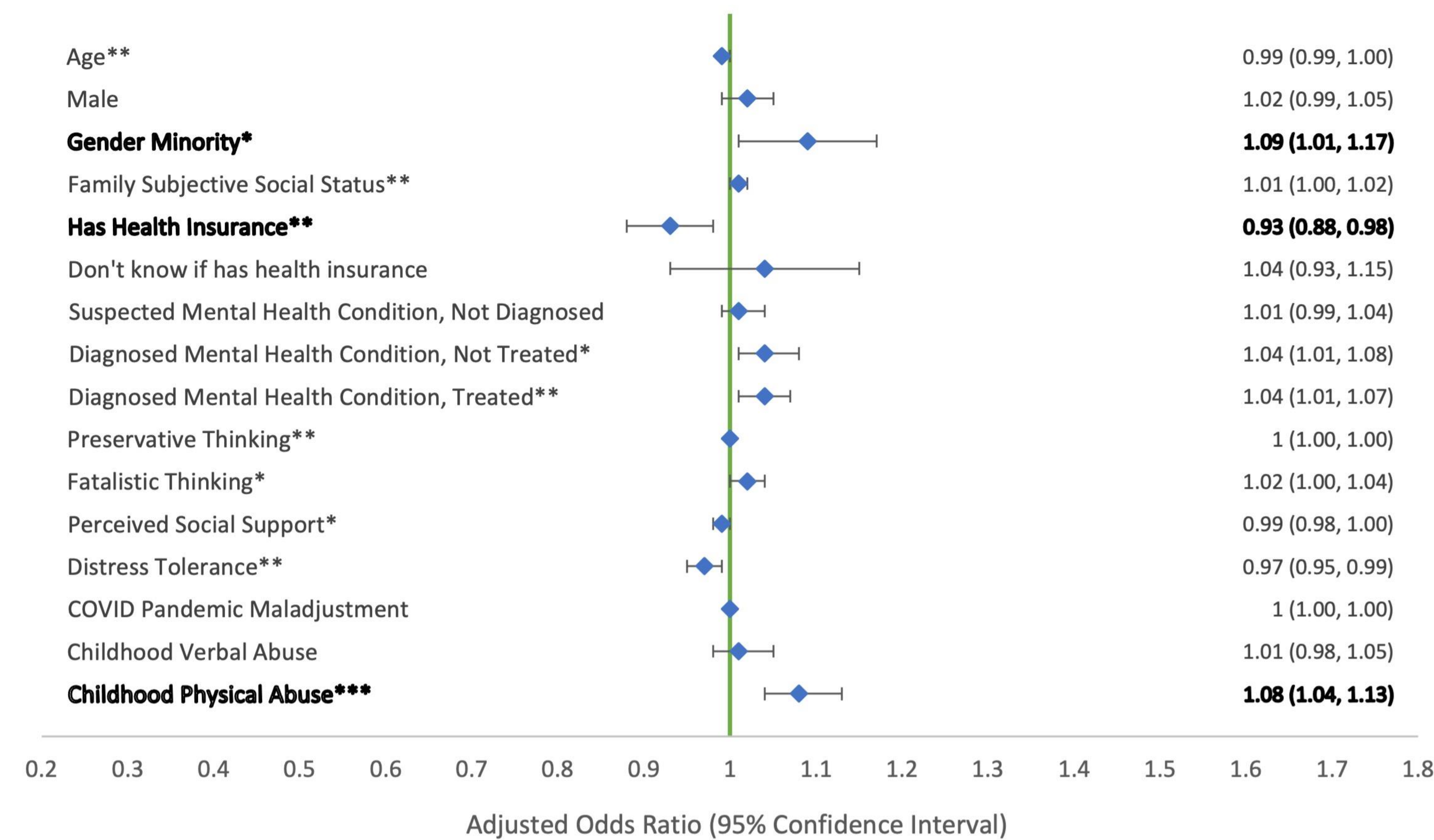
Sample Characteristics

Table 1. Demographic & Variable Descriptives (N = 1917)

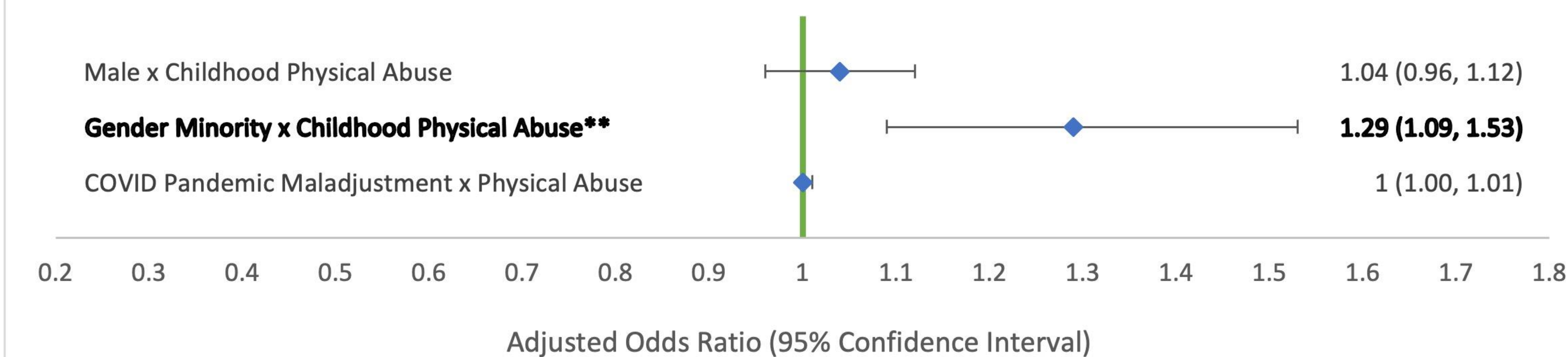
Factors	Means (range) or %
Age (years)	26.04 (19.78 -32.99)
Gender	
Women	71.8%
Men	24.9%
Other	3.3%
Health Insurance	
No	7.7%
Yes	90.5%
Don't Know	1.8%
Family Subjective Social Status	5.69 (1-10)
Mental Health Diagnosis (at least 1 condition)	
None	33.2%
Suspected, Not Diagnosed	50.6%
Diagnosed, Not Treated	19.2%
Diagnosed, Treated	31.2%
Preservative Thinking	25.79 (9-45)
Fatalistic Thinking	2.95 (1-5)
Perceived Social Support	5.25 (1-7)
Distress Tolerance Scale	3.146 (1-5)
COVID Pandemic Maladjustment	20.48 (7-35)
Childhood Verbal Abuse	34.5%
Childhood Physical Abuse	20.8%
Self-Injury	10.4%

Results

Model 1: Fully Adjusted Model Predicting Self-Injury During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Model 2: Fully Adjusted Model + Interactions (simple effects not shown)



*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Main Effects

- **Childhood PA but not VA associated** with an 8% increase in likelihood of NSSI
- **COVID Maladjustment not associated with self-injury**
- **Gender minorities had increased odds of NSSI (9%)**
- **Health Insurance was protective** with a 7% decrease in odds of NSSI

Interaction Effects

- **Amongst gender minorities, the association between childhood PA and self-injury was highest in analysis (OR = 1.29, p < 0.01, 95%[1.09 - 1.52]).**
- **COVID-related maladjustment did not have moderating effect**

Discussion & Implications

- Physical forms of abuse may be particularly critical to prevent subsequent physical self-injury (e.g., cutting, punching, burning)
- Cannot assume stressful natural hazard events like COVID pandemic will lead to self-harm tendencies.
- Possibly more salient are deep-rooted effects of early-life trauma.
- Gender minorities (e.g., transgender, non-binary) may require targeted care and support to prevent NSSI — especially those who have been physically abused
- Studies have found evidence that gender minorities are at high risk of child abuse and self-injury.
- To our knowledge, this is the first study to test the interaction effects of child abuse and gender minority identification on NSSI¹⁻³



Limitations

- Convenience sampling & mostly women
- Cross-sectional and no pre-pandemic measure
- Self-reported data
- Gender, family subjective social status, mental health diagnoses, and distress tolerance evaluated in different waves

References

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