



Depression and Alcohol Abuse: Ethnic Differences in the Moderating Role of Hope and Hopelessness

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ABSTRACT

- Depression is often complicated by and may contribute to comorbid alcohol use and abuse.
- Ethnic differences in rates of depression and substance abuse exist; however, less is known about ethnic differences in risk and protective factors for alcohol abuse in the context of depression.
- We examined the moderating role of trait hope and hopelessness on the relationship between symptoms of depression and severity of alcohol abuse, in an ethnically diverse sample.

INTRODUCTION

- Depression is a significant public health problem; one outcome is increased alcohol consumption (Koff, 2007; Maclean, 2004; Taylor, 2000; Golding et al, 1993; Golding et al, 1990).
- Rates of depression and substance abuse often differ between ethnic groups. (Koff, 2007; Larino, 1997).
- Hispanics are at higher risk for depression than Whites and at higher risk for alcohol use than Blacks and Asians (Guião, 2004). Blacks are at greater risk for comorbid depression and substance abuse than other ethnic groups (Maag, 2005; Boohar, 2004; Pavkov et al, 1993; Pavkov et al, 1992).
- Differences may also exist in risk and protective factors for the association between depression and alcohol use across ethnic groups (Becker et al, 2007).
- For instance, anger and hopelessness are traditional risk factors often associated with depression and alcohol abuse, and have been shown to differ across ethnic groups (Waddell, 2005; Murphy, 1999).
- Abuse of alcohol in the context of depressive symptoms may be attenuated by the presence of positive emotional and cognitive characteristics (Irvin, 1996); however, we know of no other studies that have examined hope as a moderator of the association between depression and alcohol use.
- We examined the association between depressive symptoms and alcohol use and abuse, and the potential moderating effects of trait hope and hopelessness, in an ethnically diverse sample.

METHODS

Participants:

- Undergraduates (N = 385); 69% Female
- 25% Black, 41% Hispanic, 18% White; 6% Asian
- Mean Age = 19.61 (SD=3.12)

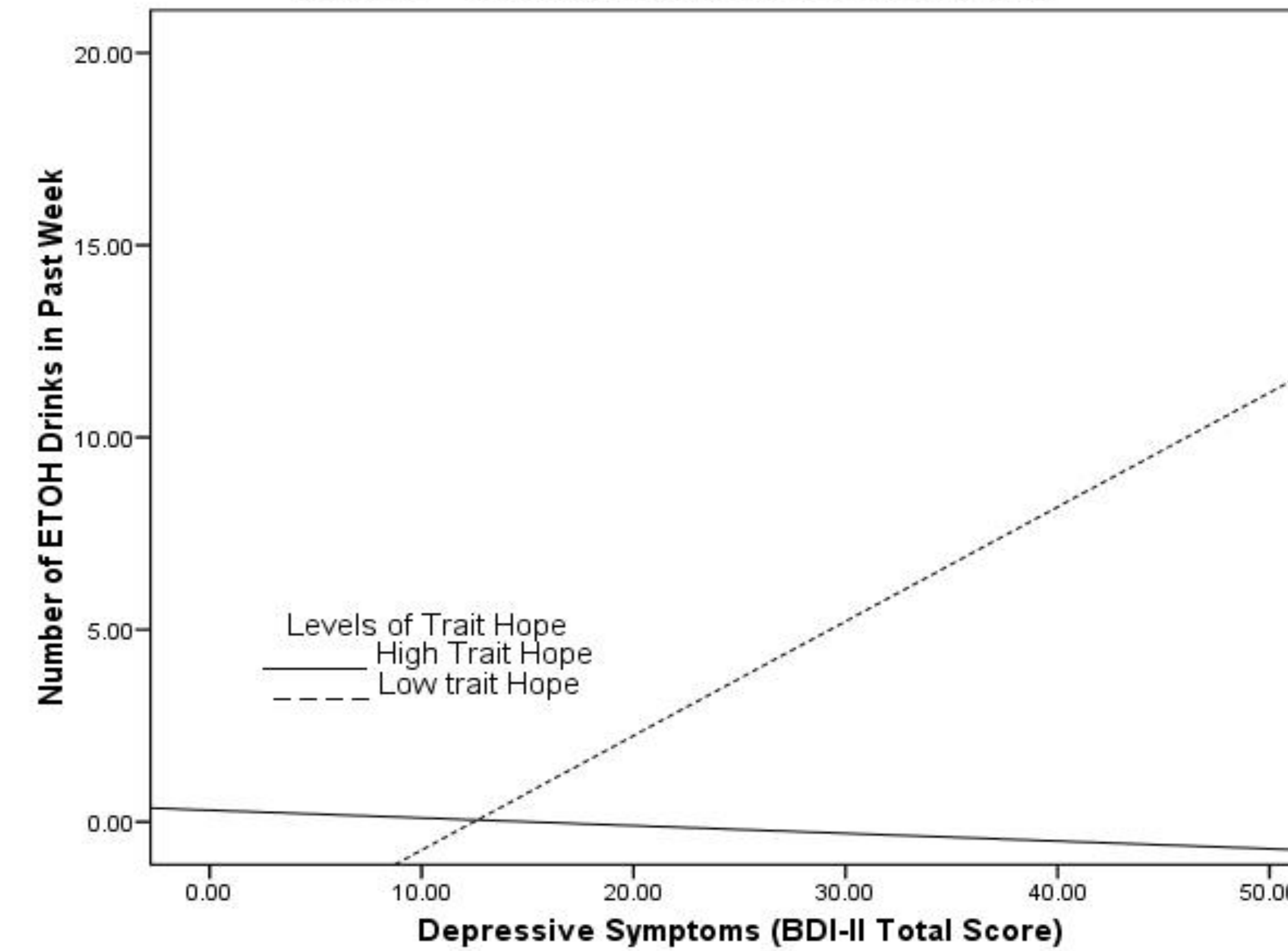
Measures:

- Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II)
- Goals Scale (Trait Hope)
- Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS)
- Alcohol Screen (BPD-2)

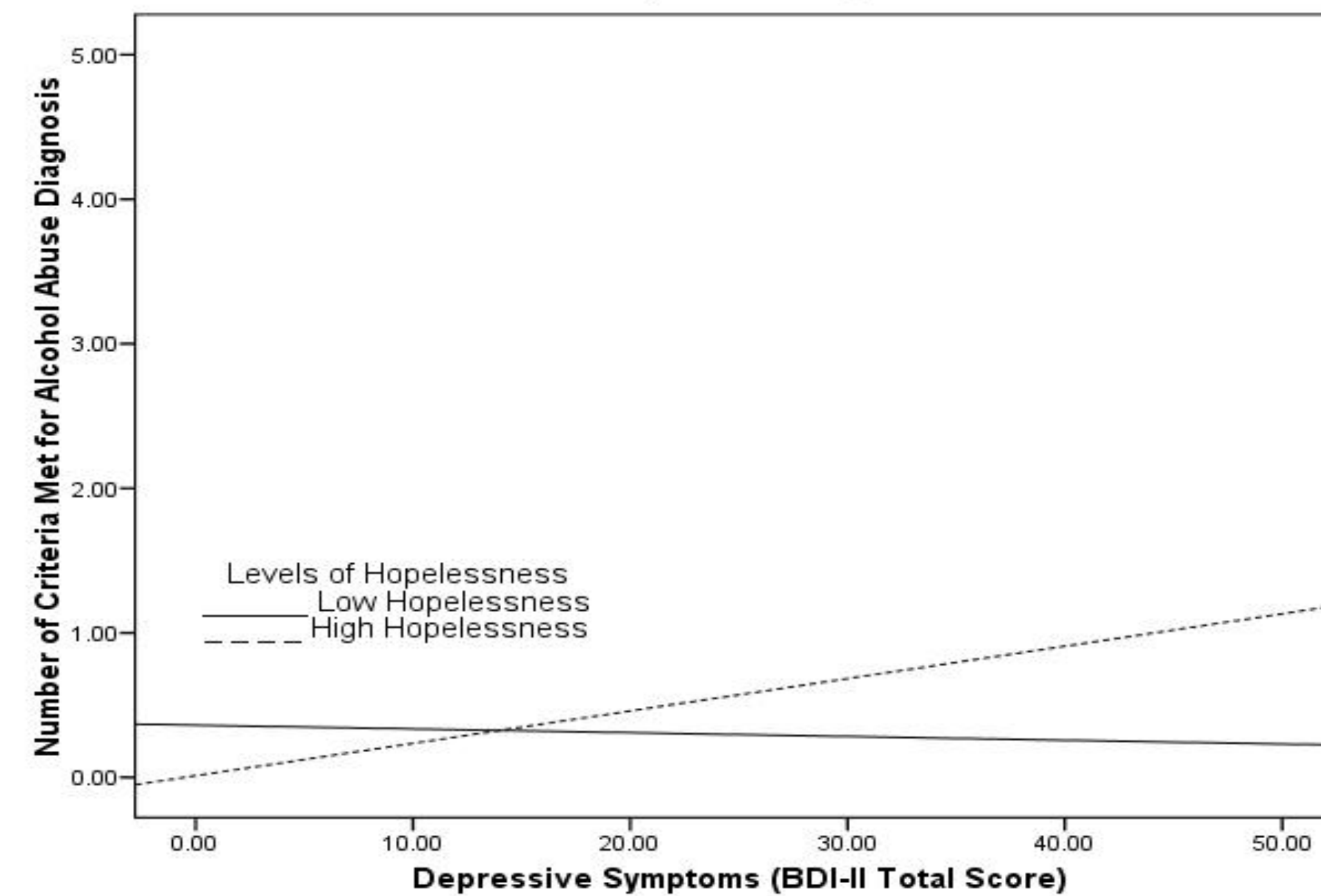
ANALYSES

- Hierarchical, Multivariate Linear and Logistic Regressions, controlling for age and gender.

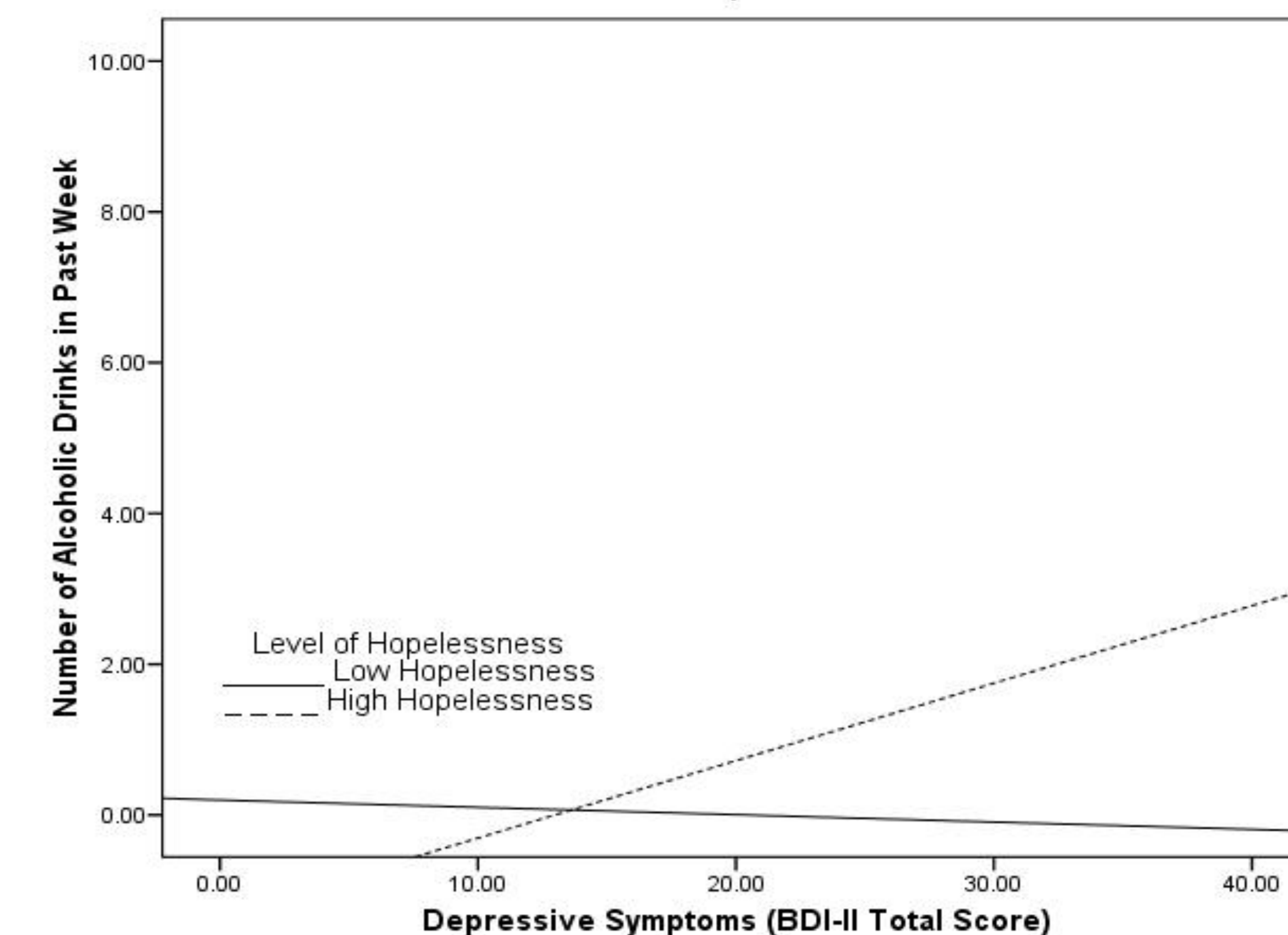
Trait Hope Moderates Depression and Number of ETOH Drinks in Past Week for Black and Asian Participants [Model I - Trait Hope Only; BHS Not Included]



Hopelessness Moderates Depression and Number of Criteria for Alcohol Abuse for Hispanic Participants



Hopelessness Moderates Depression and Number of Drinks in Past Week for Black Participants



RESULTS

Model I - Trait Hope Only (No BHS):

All Ethnicities:

- Trait hope moderates depression and number of criteria met for an alcohol abuse diagnosis, $p = .05$.

Black and Asian Participants:

- Trait hope moderates depressive symptoms and number of drinks of alcohol in last week, $p < .05$.

Model II - Hope & Hopelessness in Model:

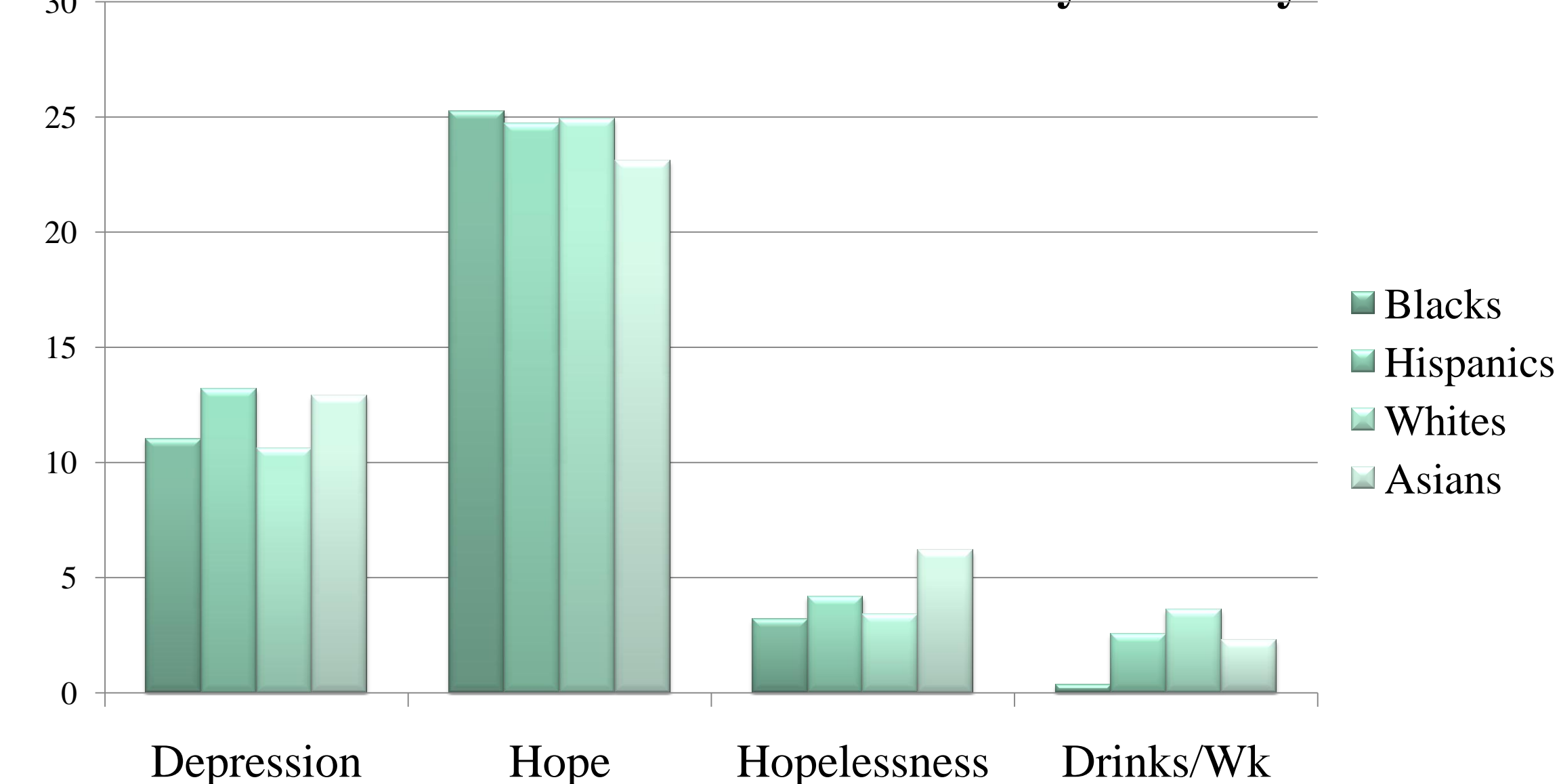
All Ethnicities and Black Participants:

- Hopelessness moderates association of depression and number of drinks in last week, $p = .05$.

Hispanic Participants:

- Hopelessness moderates depression and number of criteria met for an alcohol abuse diagnosis, $p < .05$.

Predictor and Outcome Variables by Ethnicity



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DISCUSSION

- We examined the moderating role of trait hope and hopelessness on the association of depressive symptoms and alcohol use and abuse, finding ethnic variations.
- In a univariate model (hope only), hope moderated depression and alcohol abuse symptoms for all subjects, and moderated depression and number of drinks in the last week for Black and Asian participants.
- In a multivariate model (hope and hopelessness), hopelessness moderated the association between depression and number of drinks in the last week for all subjects and for Black subjects, and moderated depression and alcohol abuse criteria for Hispanics.
- Significant clinical trends existed for hope as a moderator of depression and alcohol abuse symptoms for Whites ($p=.06$), and as a moderator of depression and drinks in the last week and year for Hispanics ($p=.06$); and, for hopelessness as a moderator of depression and drinks in past week for Asians ($p=.07$).
- Motivation for use of alcohol may differ across ethnicities. For instance, psychological variables may play a significant role for Whites, whereas social reasons may influence alcohol use by non-Whites (Spada et al, 2004; Nakashima et al, 2000).
- Cultural background may also influence the manner in which trait hope, and hopelessness, is experienced or conceptualized (Chang & Banks, 2007) and may, therefore, differentially moderate alcohol use.

LIMITATIONS

- Cross-sectional data preclude the ability to examine causal effects; prospective research is needed.
- College sample limits generalizability; future research should utilize clinical and community samples.

IMPLICATIONS

- In treatment, clinicians should promote protective factors, such as trait hope, while reducing risk factors such as hopelessness.
- Differential approaches may be required depending on the ethnic and cultural background of the patient.
- Future research is necessary to better understand ethnic and cultural variations in risk and protective factors for alcohol abuse, and to facilitate improved medical, functional, and psychological outcomes.