

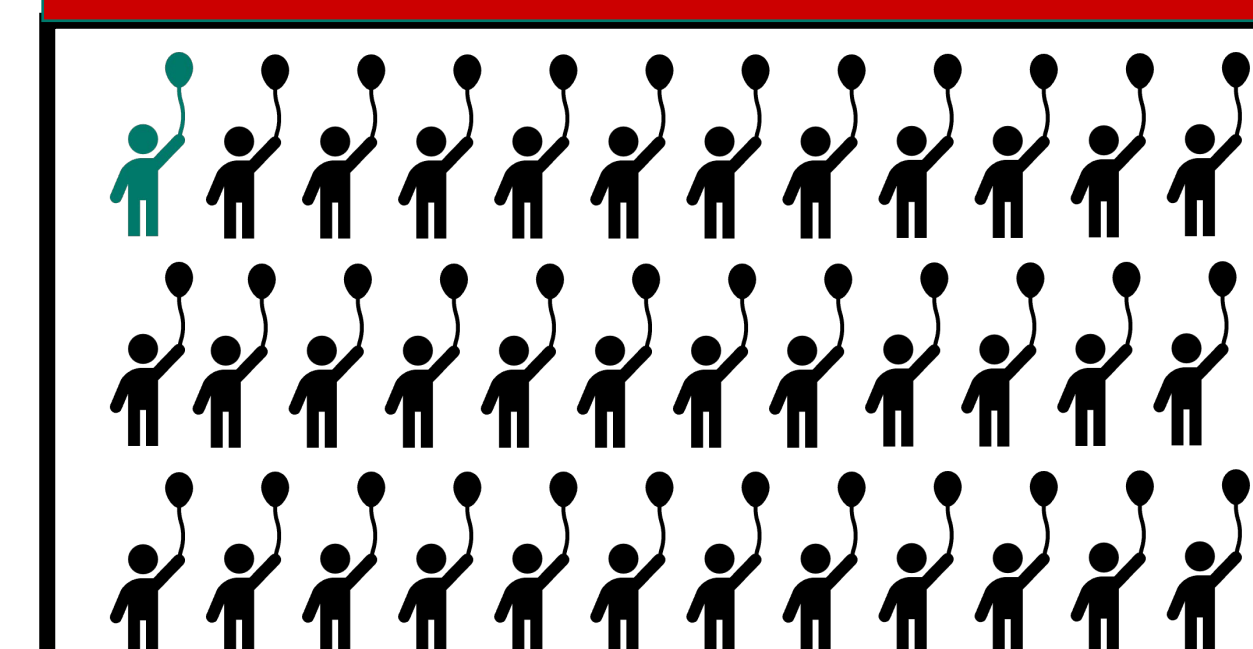


Prevalence of Depressive and Loneliness Symptoms in ASD & Non-ASD Youth by Race

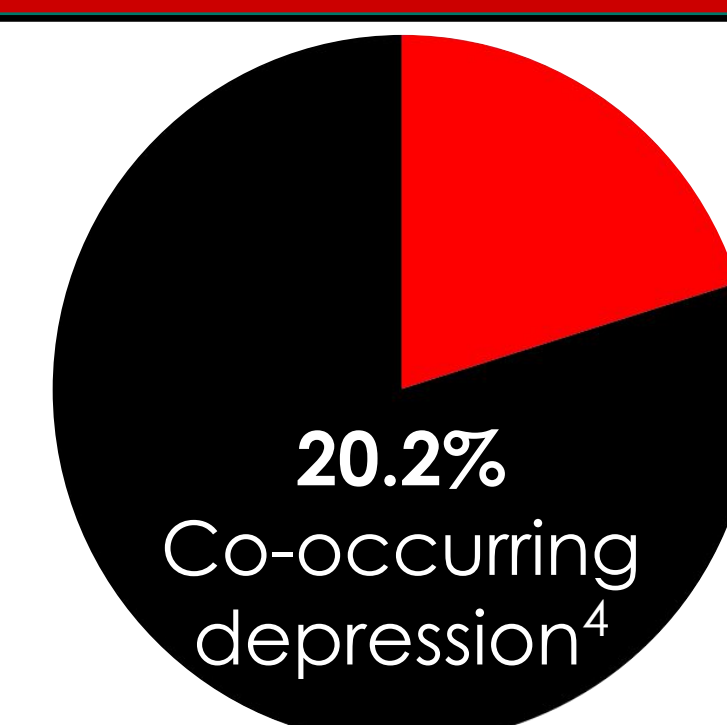


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Background and Rationale



1 in 31 youth is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)⁵



- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by persistent difficulties in social communication and the presence of restricted interests and/or repetitive behaviors²
- Individuals with ASD experience significantly elevated rates of depression and loneliness compared to their non-autistic peers
- Emerging research suggests **Black youth with ASD report higher levels of depressive symptoms than White youth with ASD⁶**; however, existing studies are limited by small sample sizes and a focus on transition-age populations.
- Racial and ethnic disparities in mental health outcomes among adolescents with ASD remain critically understudied. The current study seeks to address this gap by examining these disparities during early adolescence.

Current Study

- Examined whether depressive and loneliness symptoms varied across White, Non-Hispanic adolescents and Non-White adolescents with and without ASD
- We hypothesized:
 - Non-White adolescents would have greater average depressive and loneliness symptoms compared to White adolescents

Measures

- Depressive symptoms:** Depressive symptoms were assessed using the Child Depression Inventory-2 (CDI-2)³
- Loneliness symptoms:** Depressive symptoms were assessed using the Asher Loneliness Scale¹
 - Lower scores indicate more loneliness

Methods

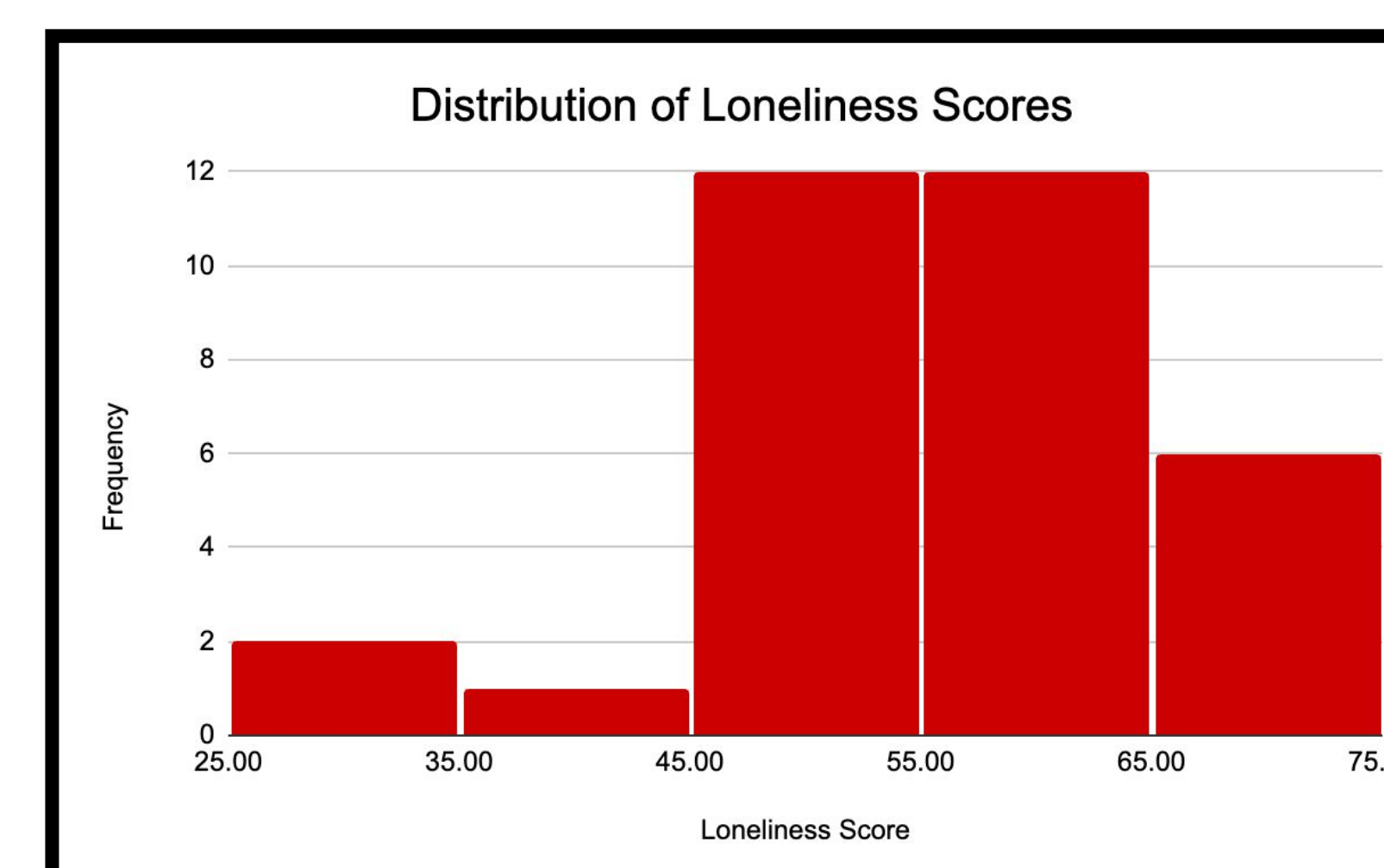
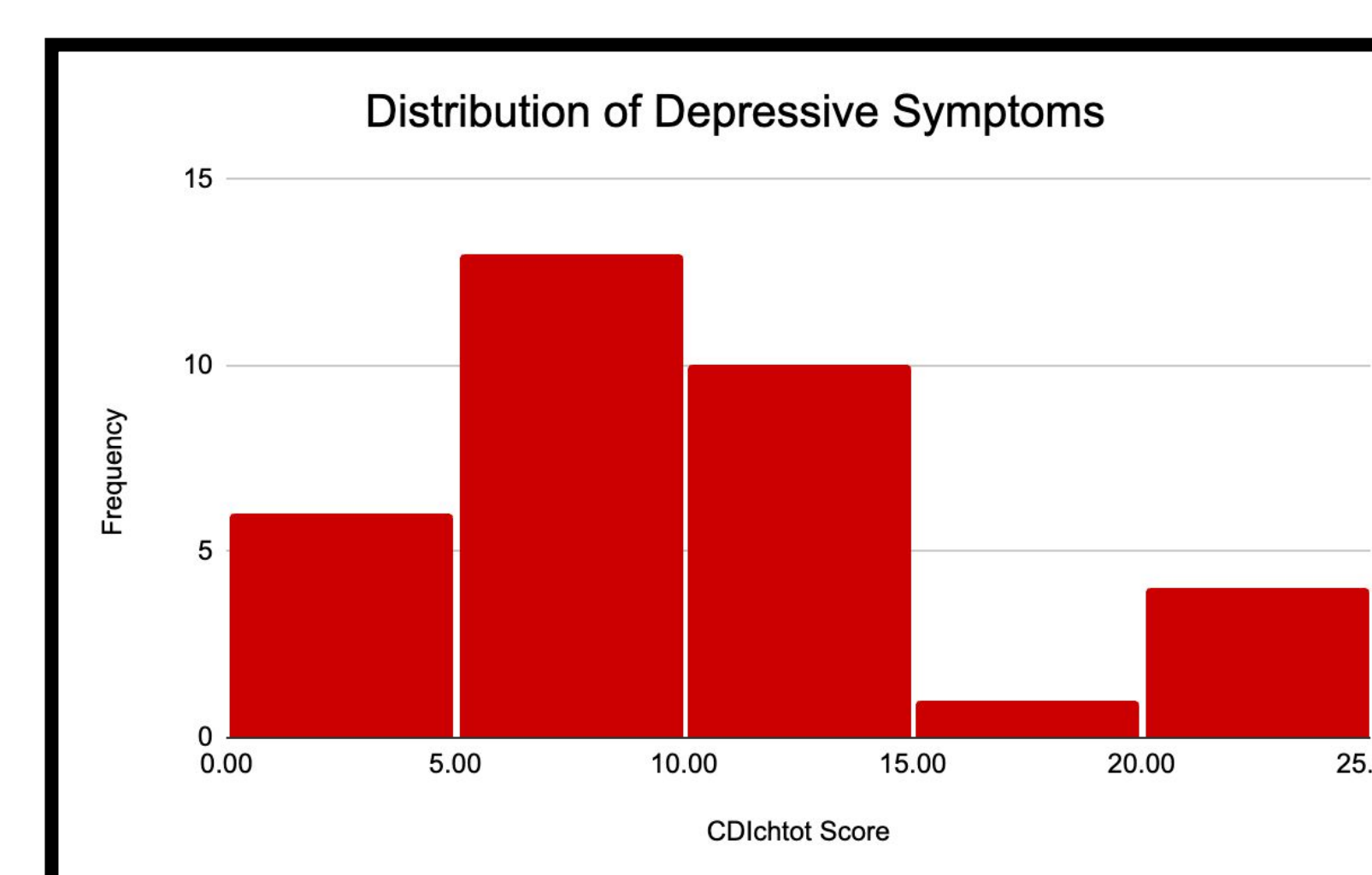
Participants

- 34 youth aged 11 – 14 years** ($M_{age} = 12.7, SD = 1.1$)
 - With a diagnosis of ASD (autistic, $n = 18$)
 - Without a diagnosis of ASD (non-autistic, $n = 16$)

Variable	Autistic (n = 18)	Non-autistic (n = 16)
Race		
-White	61 (11)	25 (4)
-Black or African American	22 (4)	25 (4)
-Asian	5 (1)	31 (5)
-More than one race	11.1 (2)	19 (3)
Ethnicity		
-Hispanic or Latino(a)	5 (1)	19 (3)
-Not Hispanic or Latino(a)	94 (17)	81 (13)
Age (M) in years	12.8	12.7
Child Gender		
-Male	61 (11)	13 (2)
-Female	33 (6)	88 (14)
-Non-binary	5 (1)	0

Procedures

- This project is part of a larger study, which aims to assess behavioral and biological indicators of anxiety in autistic and nonautistic youth (ADORA)
- The data for this project was collected during the behavioral visit
- Participants completed questionnaires measuring depressive and loneliness symptoms, based on their experiences over the past two weeks



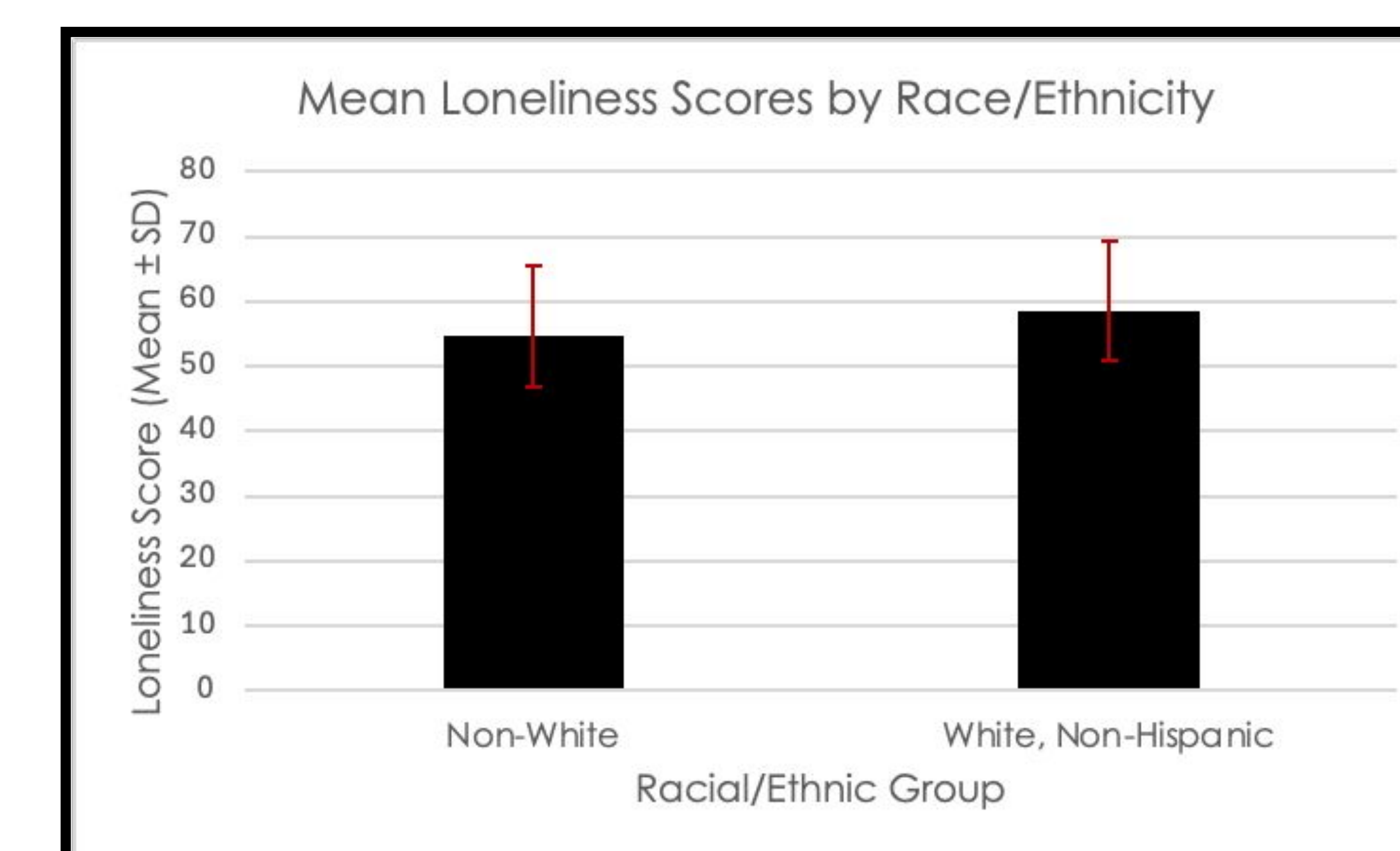
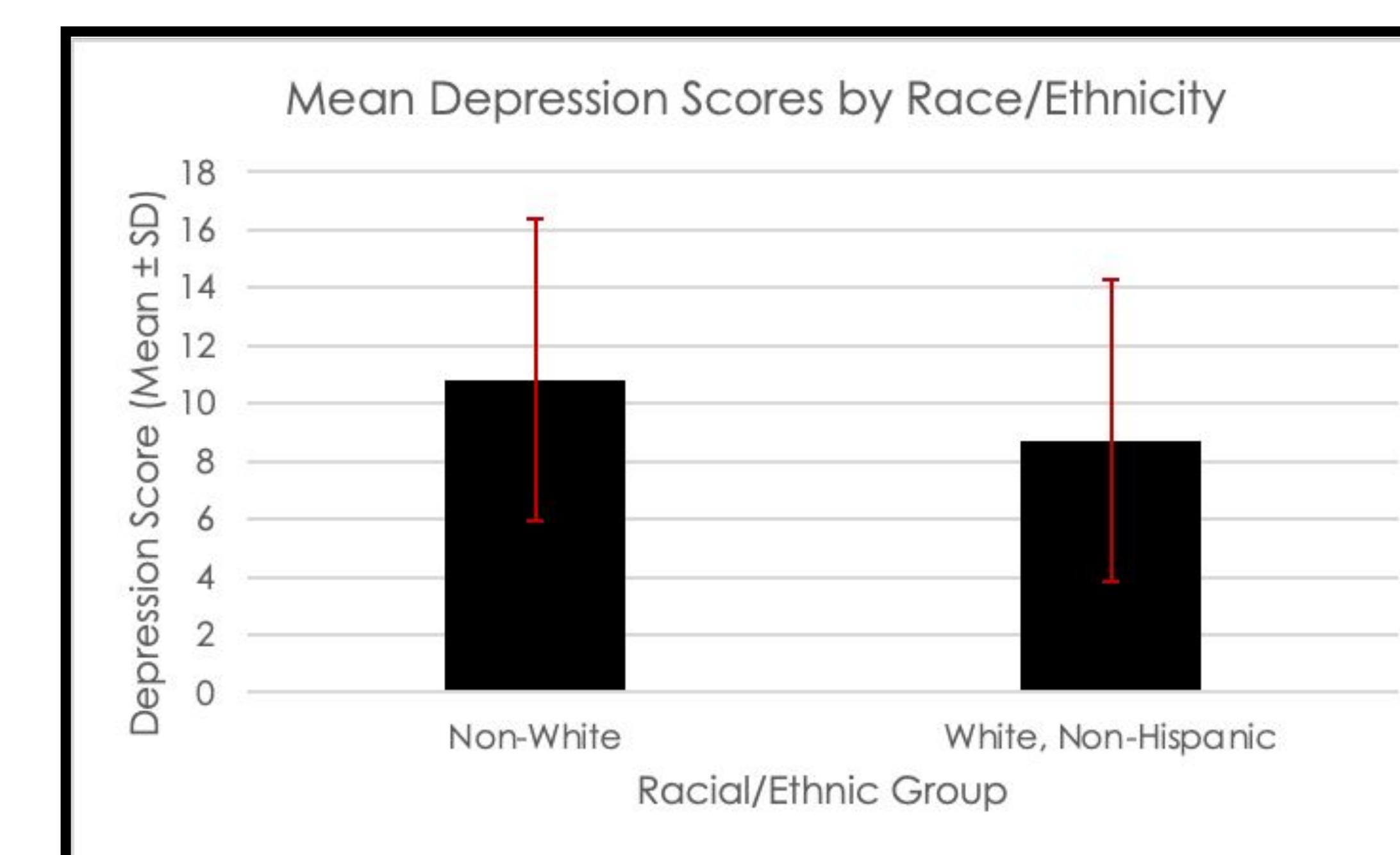
Note. Lower scores indicate more loneliness.

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Preliminary Results & Future Directions

Results

- There was no significant association found between groups regarding average depression scores ($p = .27$) or average loneliness scores ($p = .27$)



Discussion

- Future analyses should explore social determinants, including socioeconomic and environmental influences in shaping mental health outcomes among autistic youth of color as well as continue to recruit a larger sample.

References



Contact Information

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