



Predictors of Late-Onset Alcohol Use in Older Adults

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Acknowledgements

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National Institute on Drug Abuse – Nursing Research Training Grant in Substance Abuse: Elaine Thompson, PhD RN

de Tornyay Center for Healthy Aging



Problem

- Abstainers or non-problem drinkers in late middle adulthood (50 to 60 years of age)
- Increased alcohol consumption in older adulthood (60+ years of age)
 - 15.4% heavy alcohol users
 - 30% late-onset
- Health consequences: cognitive changes, sleep difficulty, falls, malnutrition & depression



Purpose

- Multiple transitions as people age:
 - Work, Family Life, Social & Environment
- Examine these ecological or contextual influences (positive and negative) on alcohol use as adults experience turning points and change with older adulthood



Research Questions

- 1. What are the patterns of change in alcohol consumption during the older adulthood transition across ecological domains?
- 2. When do older adults change their alcohol use during the older adulthood transition across ecological domains?



Sample

- Health & Retirement Survey
 - 27,000+ nationally interviewed every 2 years
 - 2,000+ variables – health, retirement, economics
 - 50% are non-users of alcohol
 - Gender evenly distributed



Methods

- Secondary analysis of Health & Retirement Survey dataset
- Advantages of longitudinal data
 - Cohorts cover:
 - Post-Depression: 1931-1941 (51-61 years old)
 - WWII Baby: 1942-1947 (46-51 years old)
- Training at University of Michigan Institute for Social Research

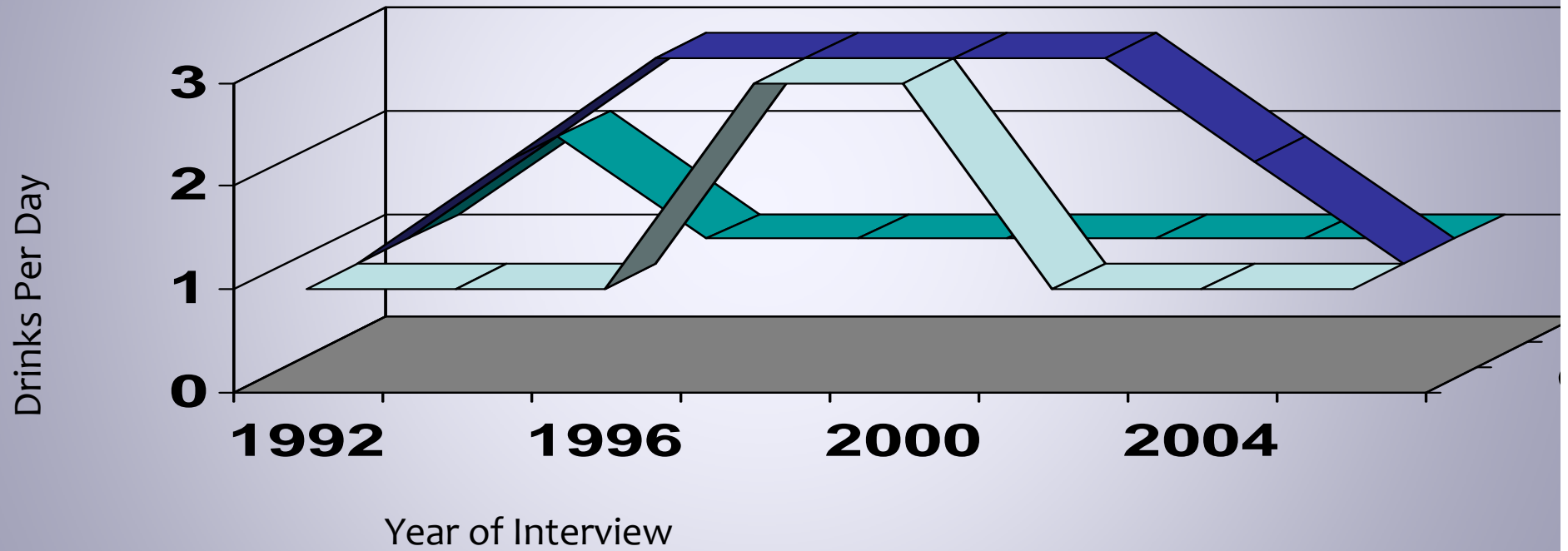


Analysis

- 1. Latent Growth Curve Modeling – trajectories of alcohol use over time based on social and environmental predictors
- 2. Survival Analysis – follow cohorts over time to see when alcohol use changes



Example



Conclusions & Implications

- Which older adults should be targeted.
- What type of programs may be most helpful.
 - 1° or 2° Prevention or Intervention
- Factors that might need to be addressed within the program.
- When older adults should be targeted.



Insights

- Misinformation about what is a safe and healthful level of alcohol consumption for older adults.
- Hidden nature of alcohol use among older adults.
- Lack of research into co-occurring alcohol use and depression in older adults.



Thank You!

