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Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking among First-Year University Students: Prevalence, Risk Factors and the COVID-19 Health Crisis Effect



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Aims

To identify the prevalence and risk factors of AUD and BD as well as the COVID-19 effect among first-year students.

Introduction

- Heavy alcohol use is considered as a major public health issue¹ and take various forms:
 - the **Alcohol Use Disorder** (AUD) with three levels (no, moderate and severe trouble).
 - the **Binge Drinking** (BD) which is a consumption pattern characterized by alternating periods of drunkenness and abstinence.
- Several risks factors have been identified, especially anxiety and depressive disorders, and these psychological disorders:
 - have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic².
 - are more prominent during the transition to adulthood like a first-year university³.

Methods

Participants:

2247 first-year students
(18.14 years, $SD = 0.53$, 32.75% men).

Research methodology:

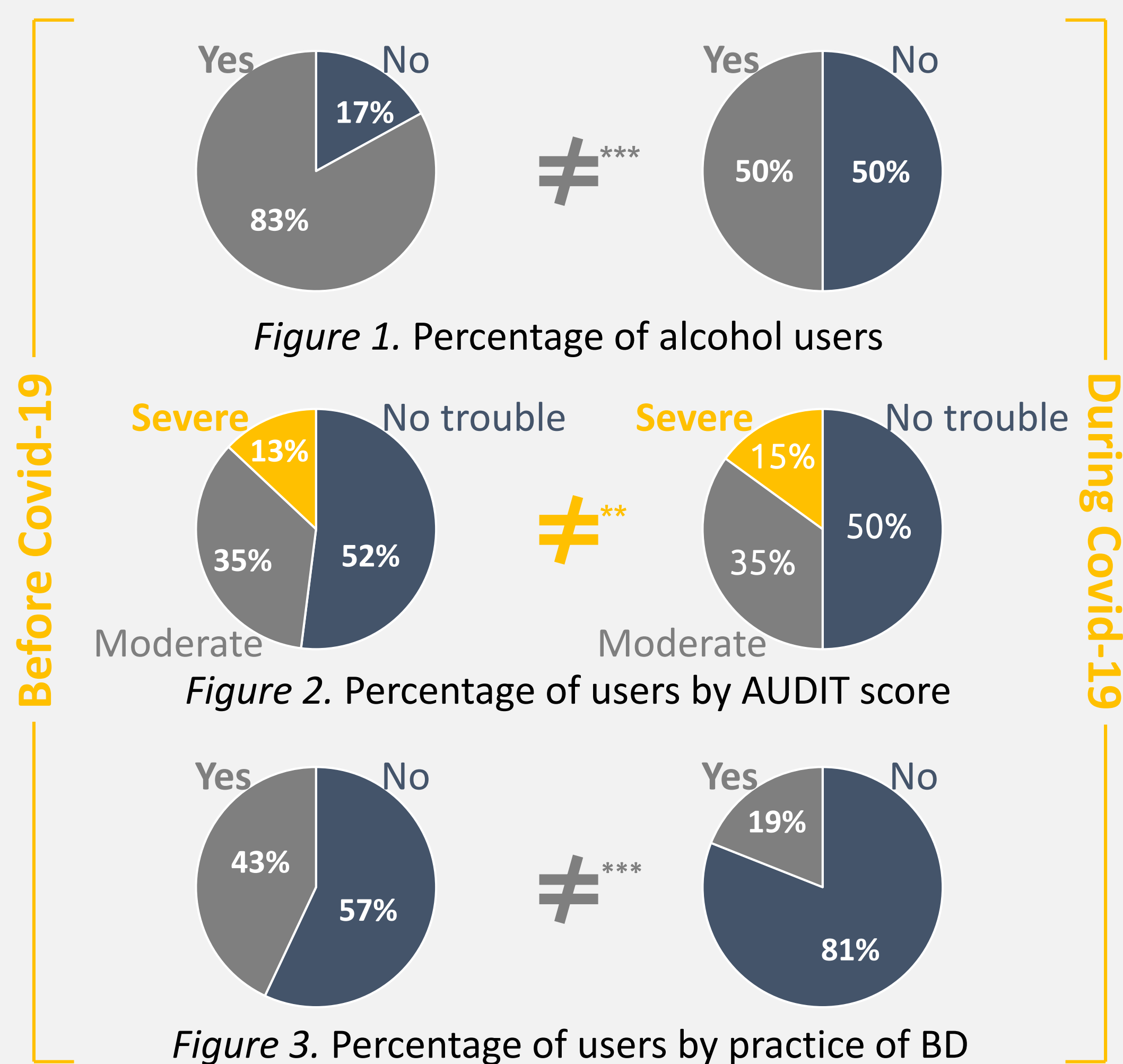
Online survey between 2017 and 2020 created with the Limesurvey[®] application.

Measures:

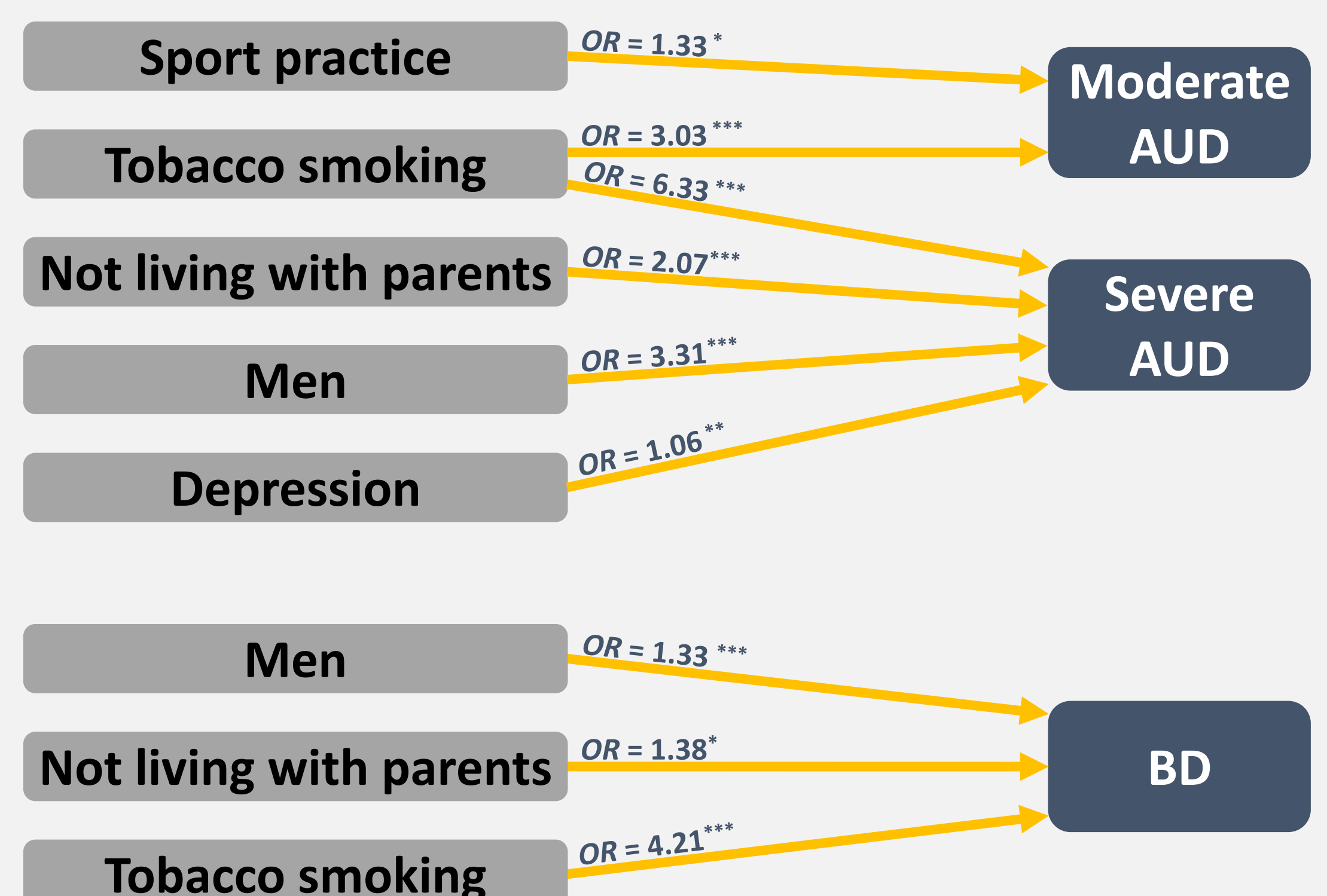
- Socio-demographics variables
- Practice of sport
- Year of responses (2017-2019 versus 2020)
- Alcohol related variables
- Psychological measures

Results

Prevalence and COVID-19 Effect



Risk factors



* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Conclusions

- High AUD prevalence is observed among first-year students.
- Common risk factors are evidenced for AUD and BD regardless of the period (tobacco smoking, not living with parents and sex).
- During the health crisis, changes in alcohol consumption are reported with either reduced alcohol use and BD among some students or increase in AUD severity among others who continued to drink.
- Future research should investigate why some students may benefit from the health crisis while others did not, focusing on distinct psychological profiles of alcohol users.

References

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