



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Changes in Alcohol Use & Parenting Behaviors during COVID-19:  
Using EMA to Assess Real-Time Behaviors

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# Background

- Heavy alcohol use is related to child abuse and neglect
  - Evidence for physical abuse stronger
  - Neglect when measure by child welfare involvement
- Drinking context matters

But, does drinking increase use of aggressive discipline, including corporal punishment and psychological aggression?



# Background

- COVID-19 – The perfect ‘powder keg’
  - Virtual school and lack of child care = greater stress
  - Stay-at-home orders = social isolation
  - Unemployment = financial distress



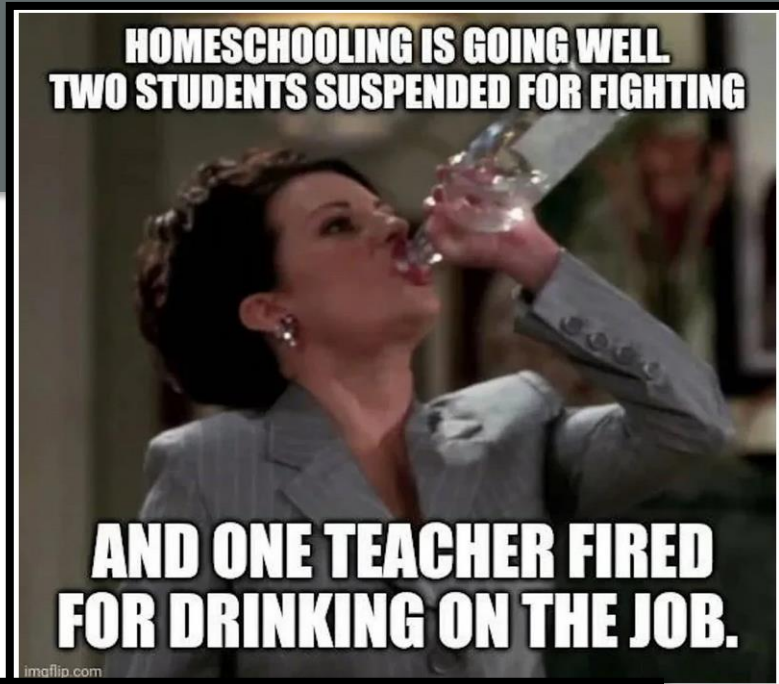
# Background

- Drinking has increase among mothers during COVID-19
  - Drinking among women already increasing from 2002-2013
    - 16% increase in proportion of women drinking
    - 58% increase in heavy drinking
  - Alcohol more accessible during pandemic (carry out at restaurants, delivery with food)
  - **Drinking rates increased by 323% among women with children less than 5**



# Background

- Greater marketing of alcohol the alcohol industry to women
  - Untapped profit potential
  - #winemom



Day 12 of social distancing: Questioning how much longer this can go on.





# Methods

- Online baseline survey
  - Social support
  - Alcohol and drug use
  - Parenting behaviors
- 14-day geographical Ecological Momentary Assessment
  - 3 brief daily surveys
  - 10 am, 3 pm, and 9pm
  - Parenting behaviors and stress



# Methods

- Recruitment through social media and word of mouth
- $n = 342$
- Focal child
  - Between 2 and 12 years old
  - Most recent birthday, if more than one
- Resulted in largely white, middle-class, highly educated sample of mothers



# Study 1

Covariates:

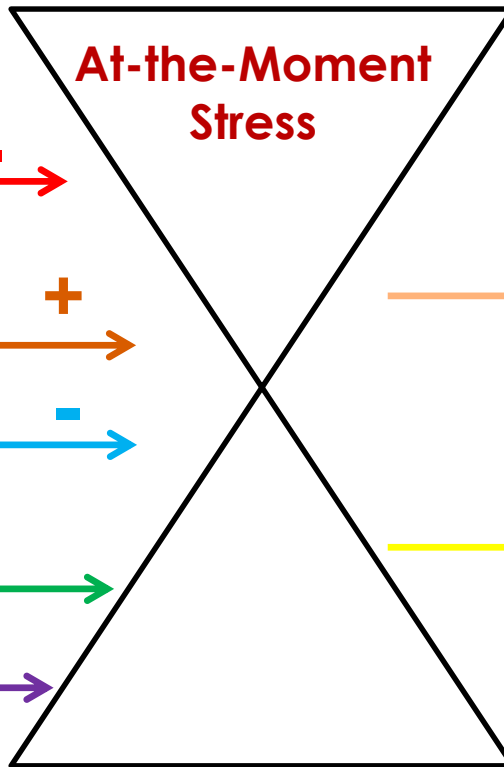
9 p.m. survey

Child present

Work

Weekends

Children 10 - 12



Parenting:

# Study 2

Aggressive Discipline

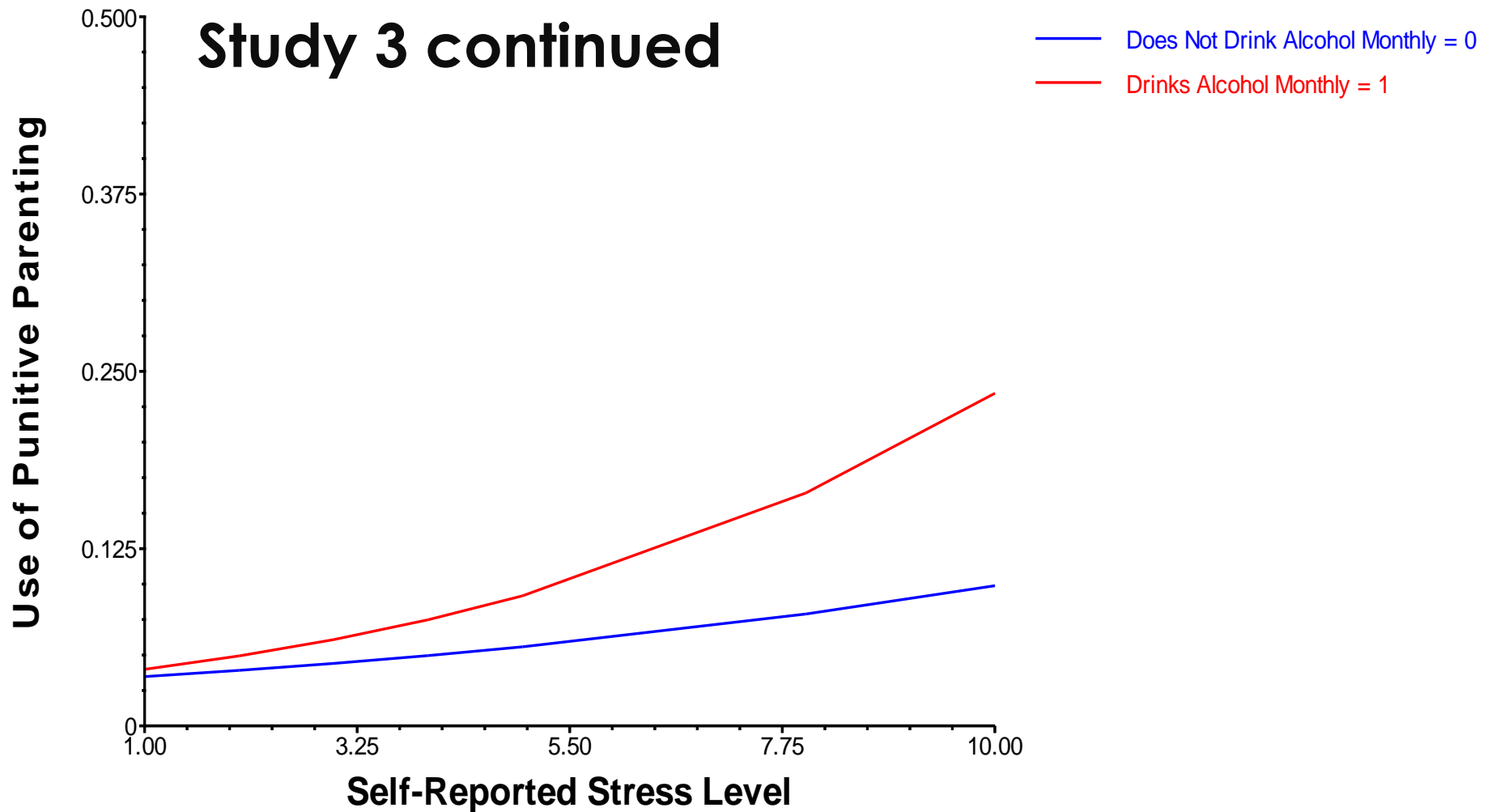
# Study 3

Punitive Parenting





# Study 3 continued





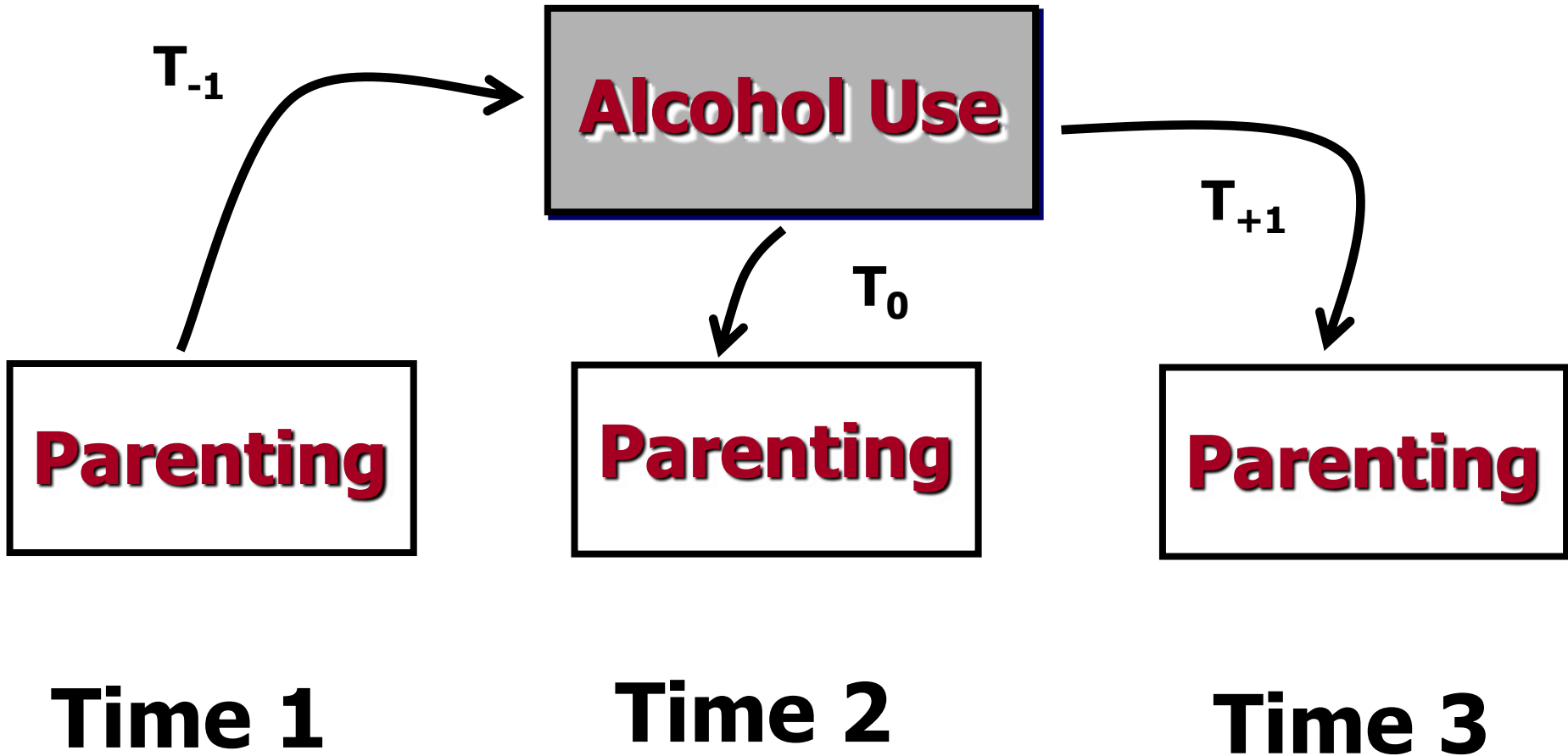
## Alcohol Use Wave 2

- Asking about daily alcohol use in gEMA
  - Did you drink alcohol during the last 7 days?
  - On what days did you drink alcohol (Sun – Mon)?
  - During what time frames did you drink alcohol?
- Time frames correspond to brief daily surveys



## How well did it work?

Drinking Frequency (Baseline)	Daily Drinking (EMA)
Weekly	91.2%
Monthly	54.7%
Yearly	22.2%
Past 12-month abstainer	2.6%
Lifetime abstainer	0%





## What did we find?

- During EMA with alcohol use reported, parents less likely to use non-punitive discipline
- In next EMA time period (usually the next morning), parents less likely to use positive parenting behaviors
- Not directly related to aggressive discipline EXCEPT on day of Super Bowl



## Alcohol Use Wave 3

- Daily questions about alcohol use
- 10 am survey the following day
  - Did you have at least one alcohol drink yesterday?
  - What time frames?
  - How many drinks in each time frame?
  - Who were you with when drinking?



# Alcohol Measures Across Waves

## Main Alcohol Measures by Wave of Data Collection

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Graduated Drinking Frequencies and Continued Volume (Baseline)	X	X	X
AUDIT (Baseline)		X	X
Daily Drinking Patterns (EMA)		X	X
Daily Quantity (EMA)			X



# Comparisons Over Time using EMA

Entire sample:

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
With Child	91.4%	84.8%	76.9%
At Home	89.5%	82.3%	68.5%
Stress Level	3.26	3.32	3.40

Parents with focal child 2 to 4 years:

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
With Child	93.3%	84.3%	80.1%
At Home	89.3%	81.2%	74.5%
Stress Level	3.54	3.76	3.62





# Parenting Behaviors Over Time using EMA

Entire sample:

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Punitive	6.4%	4.8%	4.2%
Non-Punitive	46.0%	33.2%	30.3%
Positive	--	82.3%	78.9%

Parents with focal child 2 to 4 years:

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Punitive	7.4%	6.7%	5.2%
Non-Punitive	54.3%	45.4%	44.5%
Positive	--	82.4%	82.3%



# Alcohol Use Over Time

Entire sample:

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Alcohol use during EMA	--	5.4%	7.2%
Average number of drinks	1.51 (baseline)	--	1.74 (EMA)

Parents with focal child 2 to 4 years:

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Alcohol use during EMA	--	5.7%	7.0%
Average number of drinks	1.52 (baseline)	--	1.61 (EMA)



## What does it mean?

- Mothers still more likely to be caregivers and were disproportionately affected during COVID-19
  - Alcohol use may affect attentiveness of parents
  - “Designated” parent



# What does it mean for research?

- Punitive discipline and alcohol use relatively rare
  - Need larger sample sizes to have power to fully assess the relationship
  - Frequent drinking vs. infrequent drinking may have differential effects on parenting



## Next Steps

- Methods paper comparing alcohol use in baseline to EMA
- Examine how location context (using geographic data) affects these relationships
- Based on findings here, look at these relationships among parents of young children



## Next Steps

- In Wave 3, we have interviewed partners of our original participants (increases # of fathers)
- Summer 2022, collecting data from a more diverse sample of parents (race/ethnicity and low income)
- Expanding the study to marijuana use with recruitment of parents at marijuana dispensaries



Questions?