

COVID-19-Anxiety and Using Substances to Cope: Differences Across Race and Gender in a New York State College Student Sample

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College students and ...

- Substance Use

- High risk for initiation of substance use
- 75% past year alcohol use
- ~25% Heavy Episodic Drinking
 - Aka “Binge drinking”
 - 4+/5+ drinks female/male
- 35% Past year marijuana use
- Associated with academic, social, and physical consequences

- Mental Health

- Heightened mental health concerns
 - 45% reporting moderate to serious psychological distress within the past month
 - 23% reporting suicidal behavior
 - 2% reporting a suicide attempt in the past year

Substance Use and Mental Health

- Stress Coping Model
 - Cope with stress
 - Reduce negative affect
- Use of substances to cope is a **substantial risk factor** for future substance use disorder
- Early Intervention = Critical!

Impact of COVID-19

- Substance use
 - Marijuana Use
 - Alcohol Use
 - (social opportunity, accessibility)
- Consistent increase in stress and anxiety
 - College women significantly lower levels of well-being
- Racial disparities
 - Disproportionate infections and mortality
 - Increased risk: Stress, negative affect

Research Questions:

What were the prevalence rates of college student substance use during the pandemic?

Are there differences in **COVID-Anxiety** and **Alcohol Coping Motives** based on racial and gender identity, while controlling for psychological distress?

Are there differences in **COVID-Anxiety** and **Marijuana Coping Motives** based on racial and gender identity, while controlling for psychological distress?

Purpose of the Present Study

#1: Examine prevalence rates:

- Alcohol use
- Marijuana use
- Using substances to cope with COVID-stress

#2: Group Differences:

- COVID-Anxiety
- Alcohol/Marijuana Coping Motives

Method: Participants

Anonymous Online Survey: October 2020 - December 2020

N = 1,487

Race/Ethnic Background	Gender	Living Location
8.8% Hispanic or LatinX	71.4% cis-women	66% NYS Capital Region
9.8% Biracial	28.6% cis-men	
13.2% Black or African American		
13.9% Asian or Asian American	Age	
54.3% White	18 - 64 years	
	M age = 23.34	

Method: Measures

Alcohol and Marijuana Use: Individual Items + Daily Drinking Questionnaire (Collins et al., 1985)

Increased AOD: *“Have you started using substances or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19?”*

Drinking Coping Motives: Drinking Motives Questionnaire-Revised (DMQ-R; Cooper, 1994; $\alpha = .86$)

Marijuana Coping Motives: Marijuana Motives Measure (MMM; Simons et al., 1998; $\alpha = .83$)

COVID-Anxiety: Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (Spitzer et al., 2006; Keeter, 2020; $\alpha = .79$)

Psychological Distress: Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (Kessler et al., 2003; $\alpha = .91$)

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Results: Descriptive Findings

	n	Last Month Alcohol	Heavy Episodic Drinking	Last Month MJ	Increased AOD	COVID-Anxiety	Psychological Distress		
		%	%	%	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Cis-men	426	46.2	34.7	20.4	13.8	5.51	4.26	7.49	5.97
Cis-women	1061	52.7	37.3	20.5	17.9	7.55	7.55	9.65	6.18
Asian/Asian American	206	28.6	19.2	9.2	10	6.54	4.45	8.55	6.31
Black/African American	197	32.0	21.4	21.3	18.8	6.53	4.30	9.18	6.66
Hispanic/Latinx	131	41.2	57.1	25.2	14.2	6.14	3.97	7.40	5.69
White	807	62.6	38.6	21.6	16.9	7.18	4.44	9.13	6.04
Biracial	146	51.4	32	25.3	24.1	7.82	4.54	10.40	6.38

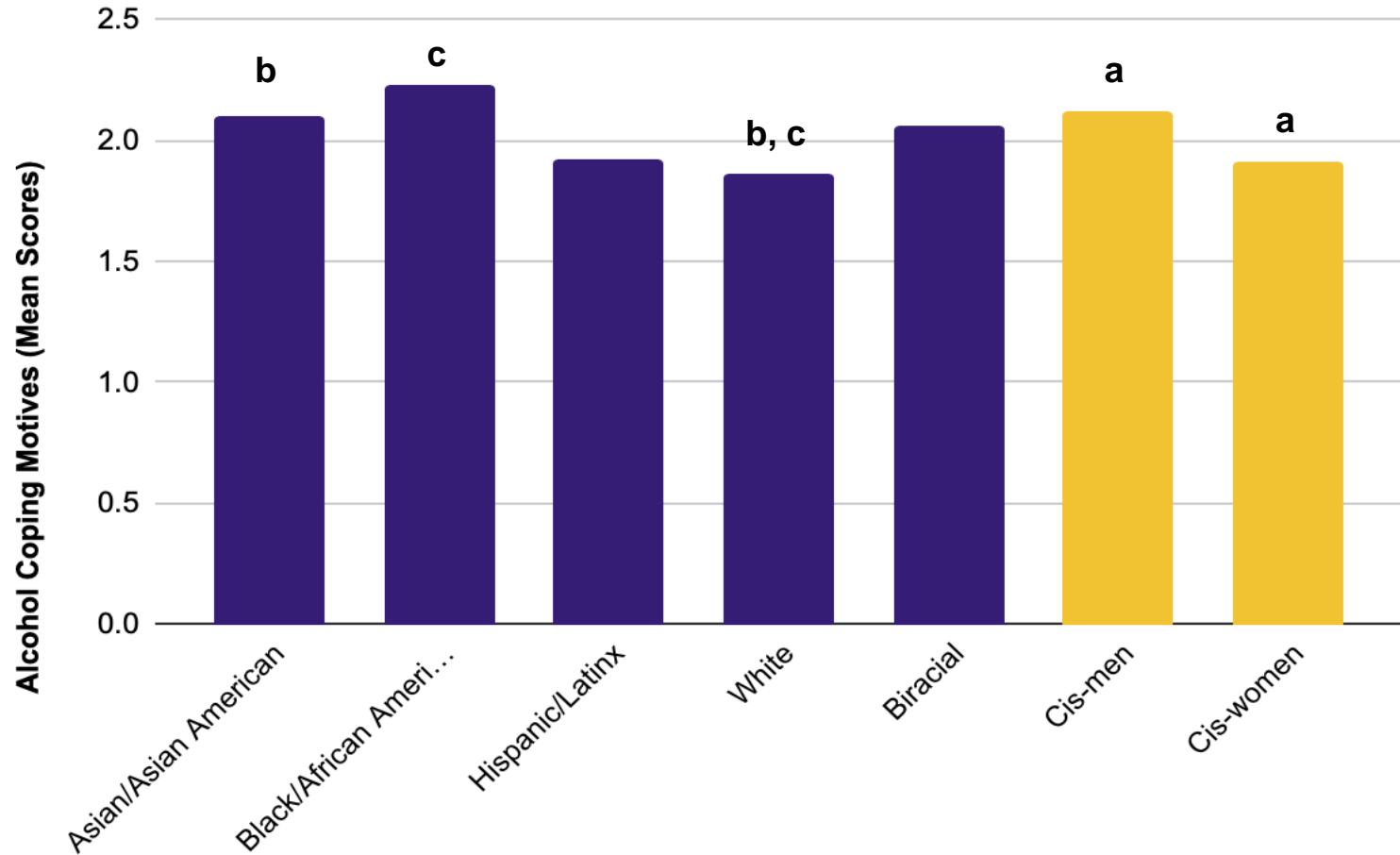
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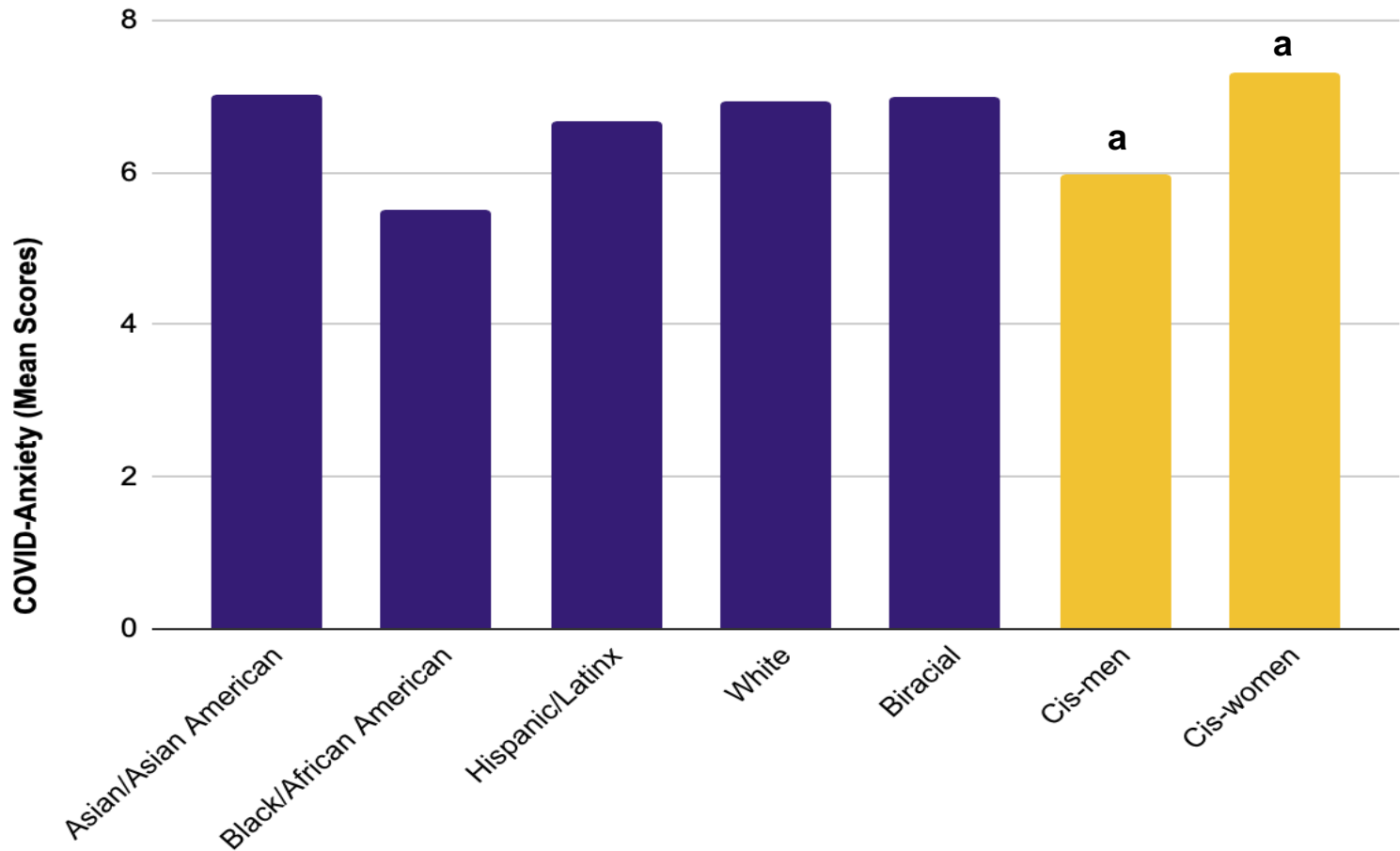
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Alcohol Coping Motives by Race and Gender



COVID-Anxiety Scores by Race and Gender Identity



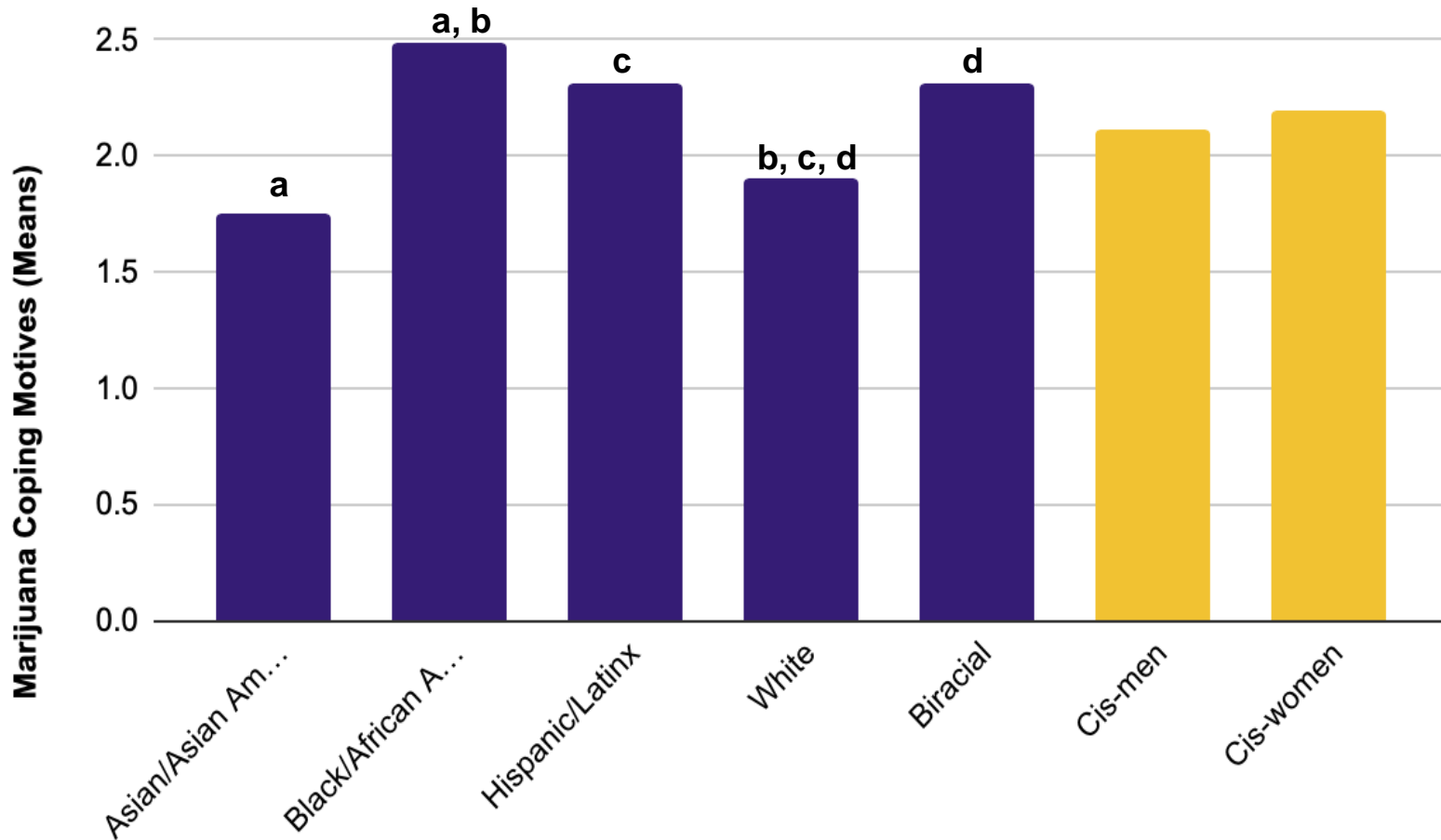
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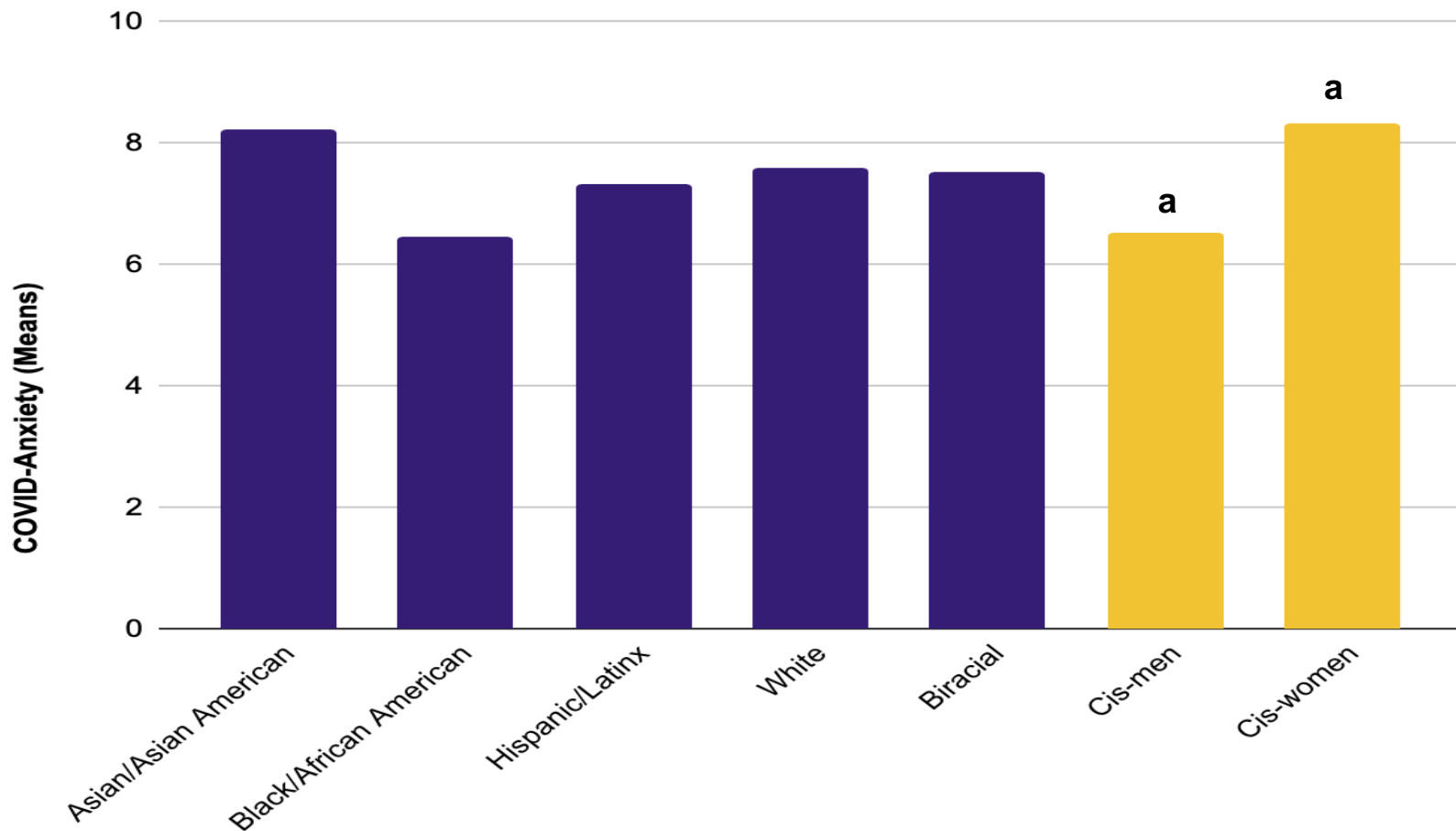
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Marijuana Coping Motives across Race and Gender



COVID-Anxiety Across Race and Gender



Key Takeaways

- Presence of gender and racial disparities in the impact of the pandemic
 - **College Women**
 - Past month alcohol use
 - Risky alcohol use
 - Psychological distress
 - COVID-anxiety
 - Increased substance use due to COVID-related stress

Key Takeaways **INSERT ANIMATIONS**

- Presence of gender and racial disparities in the impact of the pandemic
 - **Biracial Students**
 - Past month alcohol use
 - Risky alcohol use
 - Psychological distress
 - COVID-anxiety
 - Increased substance use due to COVID-related stress

Key Takeaways

Alcohol Use

- HIGHEST Frequency - White
- HIGHEST Quantity - Hispanic / LatinX

VS

Drinking to Cope

- Black / African American
- Asian / Asian American

Key Takeaways

Marijuana Use

HIGHEST Frequency - Hispanic / LatinX & Biracial

VS

Using Marijuana to Cope

- Hispanic / LatinX & Biracial
- Black / African American

Q & A