



Insurance Status, Socioeconomic Position, and Unmet Need for Substance Use Disorder

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Introduction

- Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a major Public Health concern in US, with increasing need for treatment services
- Despite need, many report unmet treatment due to cost barriers
- Access shaped by socioeconomic/structural boundaries
 - Income, insurance, education, demographic differences
- Unsure if income alone explains unmet need, or if insurance, education, demographics are more important

Research Questions

- What factors predict unmet need for SUD treatment?
- Is income or insurance status a stronger predictor of unmet need?
- How do education and demographic characteristics influence unmet treatment need?

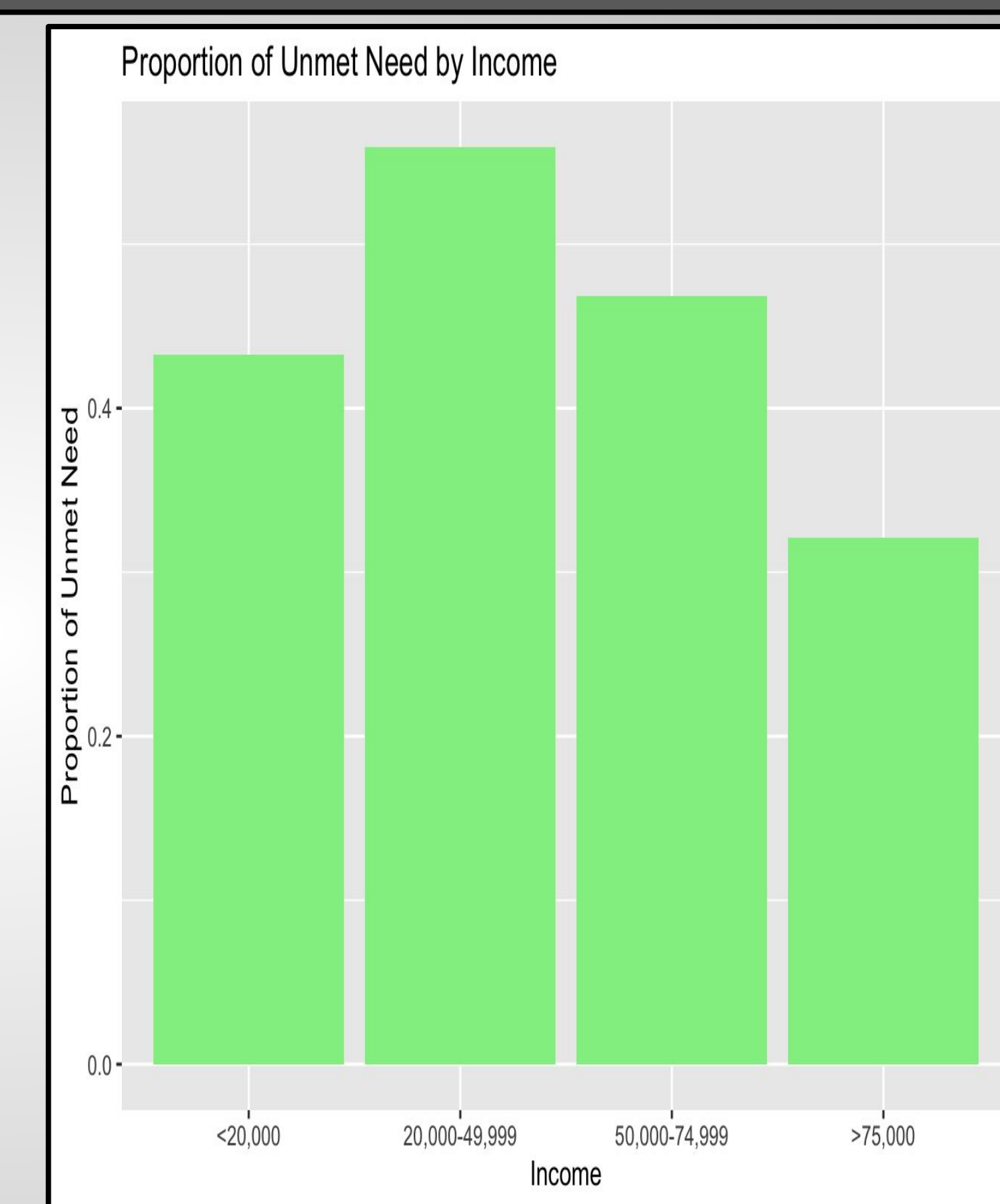
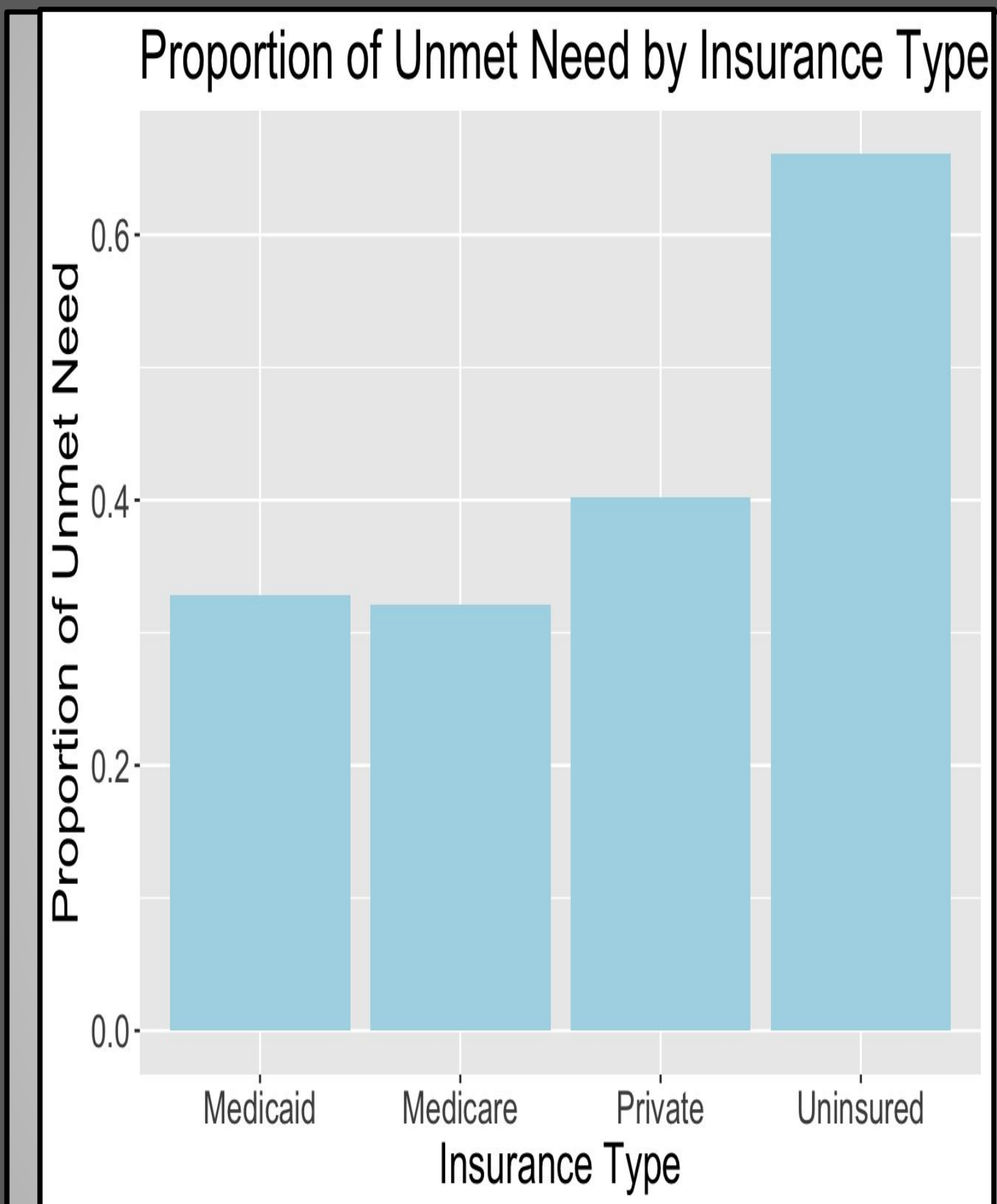
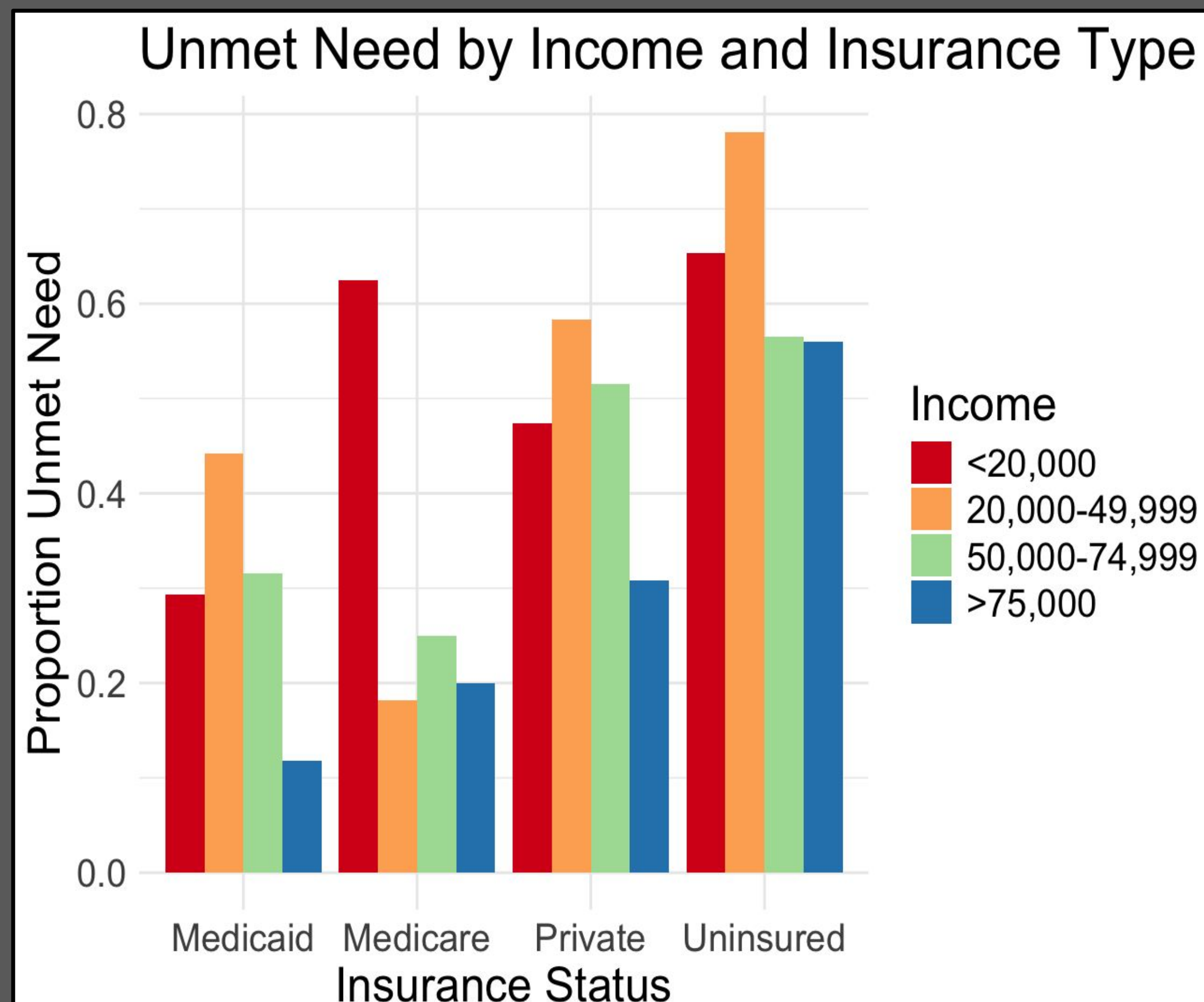
Data/Methods

- National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH 2024)
- Population: individuals reporting a need for substance use disorder treatment
- Sample: Respondents who reported sought treatment, received or did not receive
- Main Exploratory: Income, Insurance Status/Type
- Covariates: Sex, Education, Age

Results

- Substantial proportion of respondents reported unmet treatment due to cost
- **Bivariate Analysis:**
 - Individuals earning \$20k–\$49k had higher odds of unmet need
 - OR \approx 1.67, $p < 0.05$
 - Insurance status is strongly associated with unmet need
 - Chi Squared: 20.075, $p=0.0001638$
 - Uninsured individuals exhibit the highest levels of unmet need.
 - Higher income groups: Not statistically different from lowest income

- **Multivariate Analysis:**
 - Controlling for demographics
 - Insurance status remains a significant predictor
 - Education is significantly associated with lower unmet need
 - Males have higher odds of unmet need than females
 - It is suggested that insurance moderates the effects of income



Discussion/Implications

- Highlights the role of insurance coverage in shaping access to SUD treatment.
- Income often assumed to be a primary barrier, its effects are inconsistent once insurance is taken into account.
- Regardless of income level, uninsured individuals face the highest proportion of unmet need
- Education also appears to reduce unmet need, potentially by improving individuals' ability to navigate healthcare systems or access resources.
- These findings suggest that structural barriers are more important than income alone in determining access to treatment.
- Expanding coverage may reduce unmet need
- Policies targeting access
- Increase in health literacy

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