

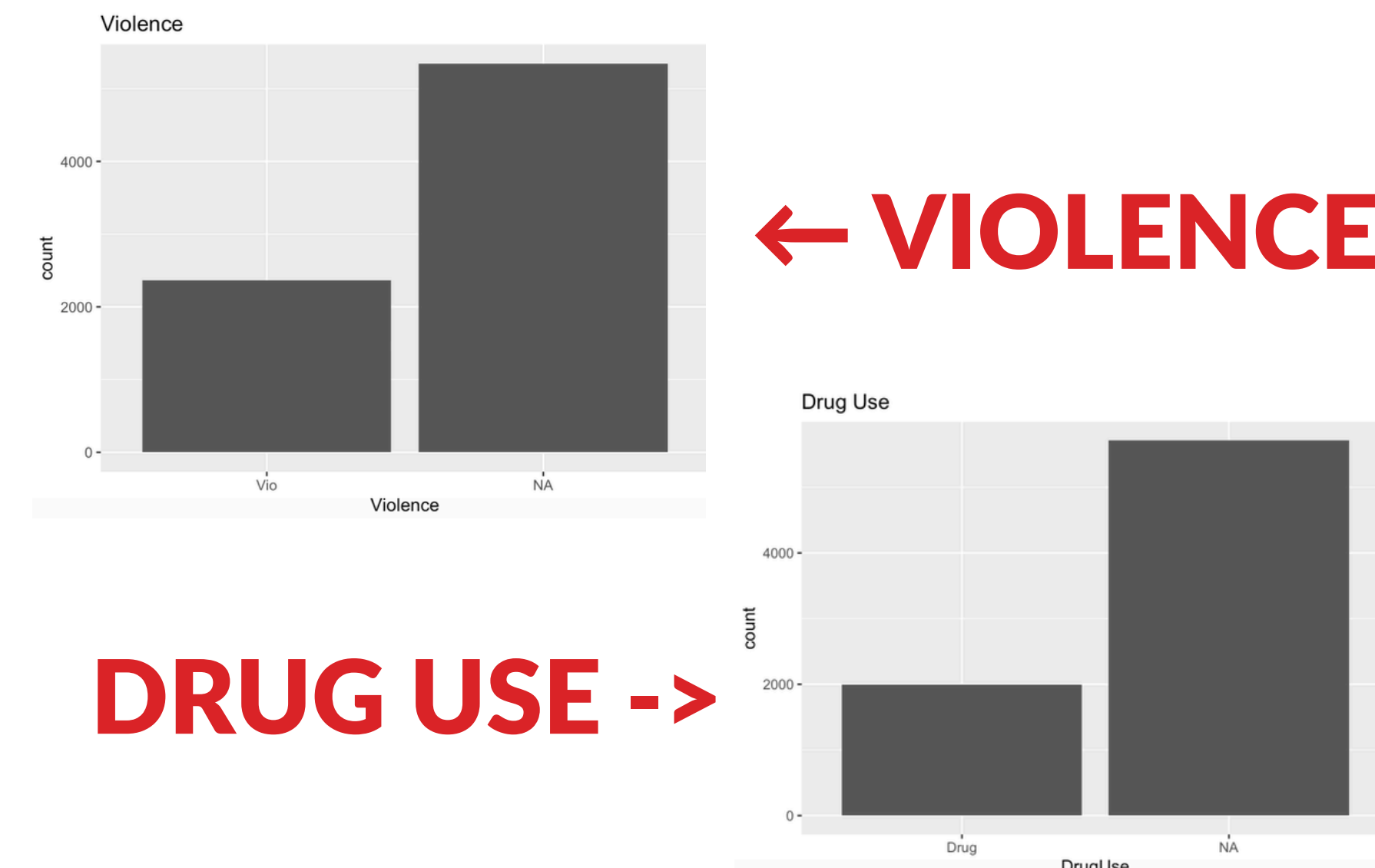
The Relationship between Violence and Drug use among Teens



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01 INTRODUCTION

- **The Problem**
 - Adolescence is the peak period for initiating substance use
- **What Is Known**
 - Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. high school students are in a physical fight each year, and up to 19% experience physical or sexual dating violence. Adverse childhood experiences are linked to higher substance use, and violence and substance use frequently co-occur.

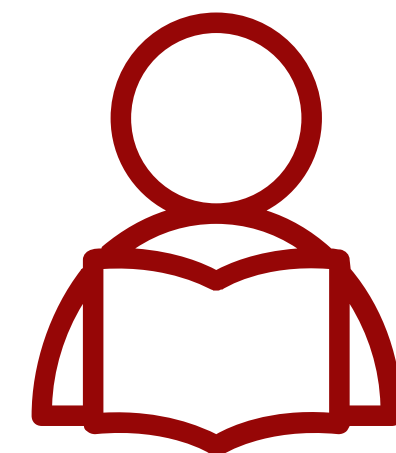


- **What Is Unknown**
 - Whether different forms of violence (e.g., physical fighting vs. sexual violence) differ in their association with probability of substance use.
 - Whether perpetrators and victims of physical violence show distinct rates of substance use.
- **Approach**
 - Examine the relationship between physical and sexual violence involvement and substance use.
 - Compare the strength of association across different forms of violence.
 - Investigate whether this association differs for perpetrators versus victims.

02

SAMPLE:

Data are from the Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey (ABES), a nationally representative survey of U.S. high school students (grades 9–12) conducted in spring 2021. A stratified random sample of public, Catholic, and private schools across all 50 states and D.C. was invited to participate. The final sample includes 3,320 students with complete data on violence exposure and substance use.



MEASURES:

- **Substance Use:** Use of drugs such as marijuana, or taken excessive amounts of addictive substances. (excluding alcohol)
- **Physical Violence Involvement:** "In the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?" (1=0 times to 8=12+ times), etc.
- **Sexual Violence Victimization:** "Have you ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?" (Yes/No), etc.

METHOD

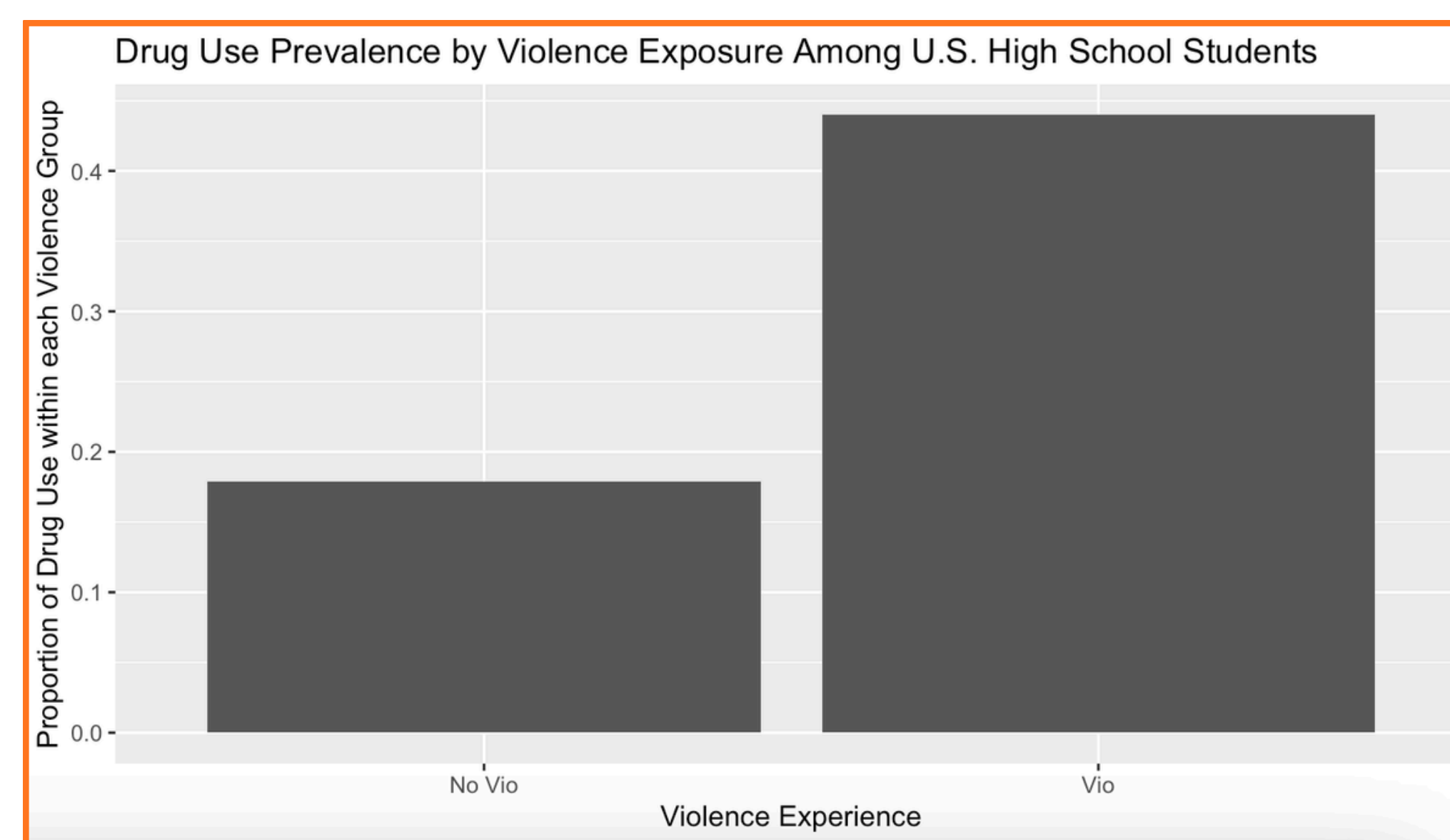
Research Question

Whether teenagers with a history of violence involvement have a higher likelihood of using drugs compared to those without such a history?

03 RESULTS

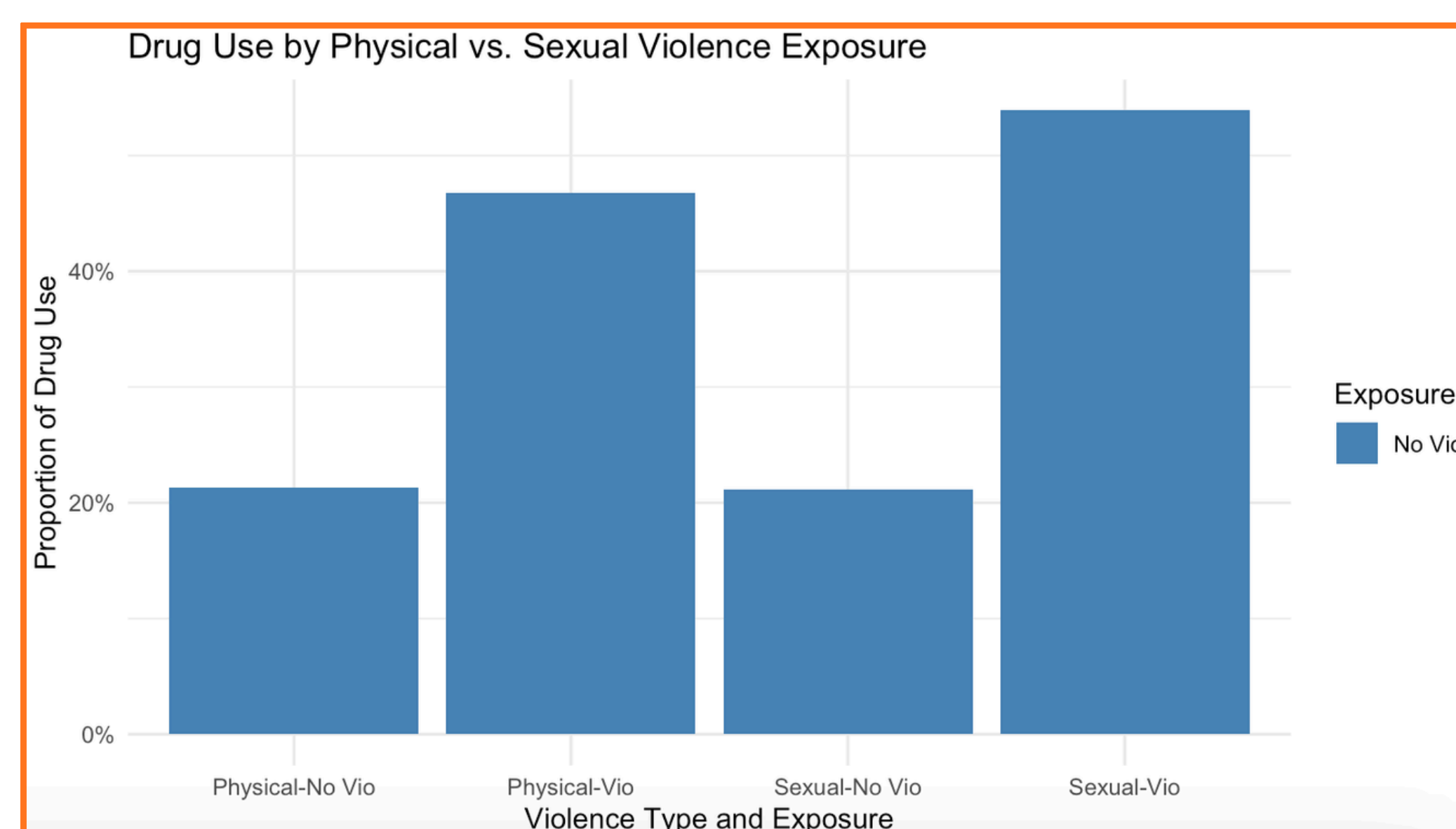
1. Violence exposure is strongly associated with drug use among high school students.

- Among the participants (n = 3,320), 44.0% of adolescents with a history of violence exposure reported drug use, compared to only 17.9% of those without exposure. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 580.13$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, violence-exposed teens had 3.6 times higher odds of drug use (95% CI: 3.24–4.01).



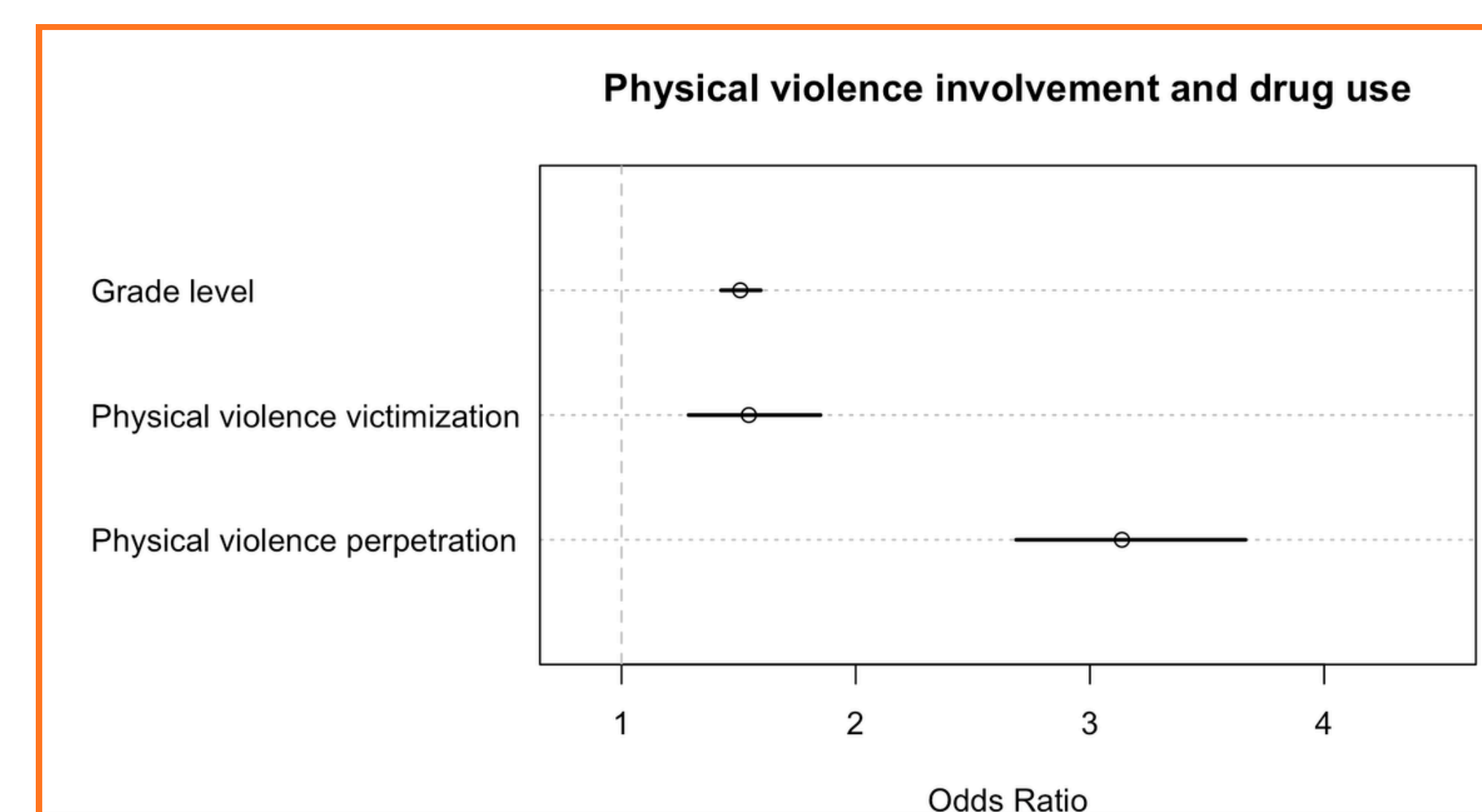
2. Drug use rates are similarly across different forms of violence.

- Grouped bar charts comparing physical and sexual violence exposure revealed that both forms were associated with substantially higher drug use rates than no exposure. Sexual violence exposure showed a slightly higher drug use rate than physical violence exposure, but the difference was minimal, suggesting that the type of violence does not substantially modify the risk.



3. Perpetrating physical violence is more strongly linked to drug use than being a physical violence victim.

- After controlling for physical violence victimization, sexual violence victimization, and grade level, physical violence perpetration was associated with 3.14 times higher odds of drug use (95% CI: 2.68–3.66, $p < 0.001$), while physical violence victimization showed a more modest association (OR = 1.54, 95% CI: 1.29–1.85, $p < 0.001$). Grade level also emerged as a significant covariate (OR = 1.51, 95% CI: 1.42–1.60).



04 CONCLUSION

- Violence exposure is strongly associated with drug use among U.S. high school students. Teens with any violence history had a 44% drug use rate compared to 17.9% among those without.
- The type of violence (physical vs. sexual) does not substantially change the risk.
- Physical violence perpetration is a stronger risk factor for drug use than physical violence victimization.
- Grade level is positively associated with drug use, indicating a higher likelihood with each increasing grade.
- These findings highlight that involvement in violence is a critical factor in adolescent substance use. This is important for prevention efforts.

05 REFERENCE

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