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The Relationship between Adults Education Level and Their Mental Health Status

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Introduction

- Research has shown that those with a higher education are more likely to seek out sources to help them with mental disorders (Ibrahim, et al., 2019; Neimeyer, et al., 2011).
- Previous studies have found that students with a lower GPA show signs of depression, anxiety and eating disorders (Eisenberg, Glocberstein & Hunt, 2009).
- There is a gap in investigating the relationship between education level and an adult's mental health experiences.
- This study will provide insight to the relationship between an adults education level and their mental health.

Research Questions

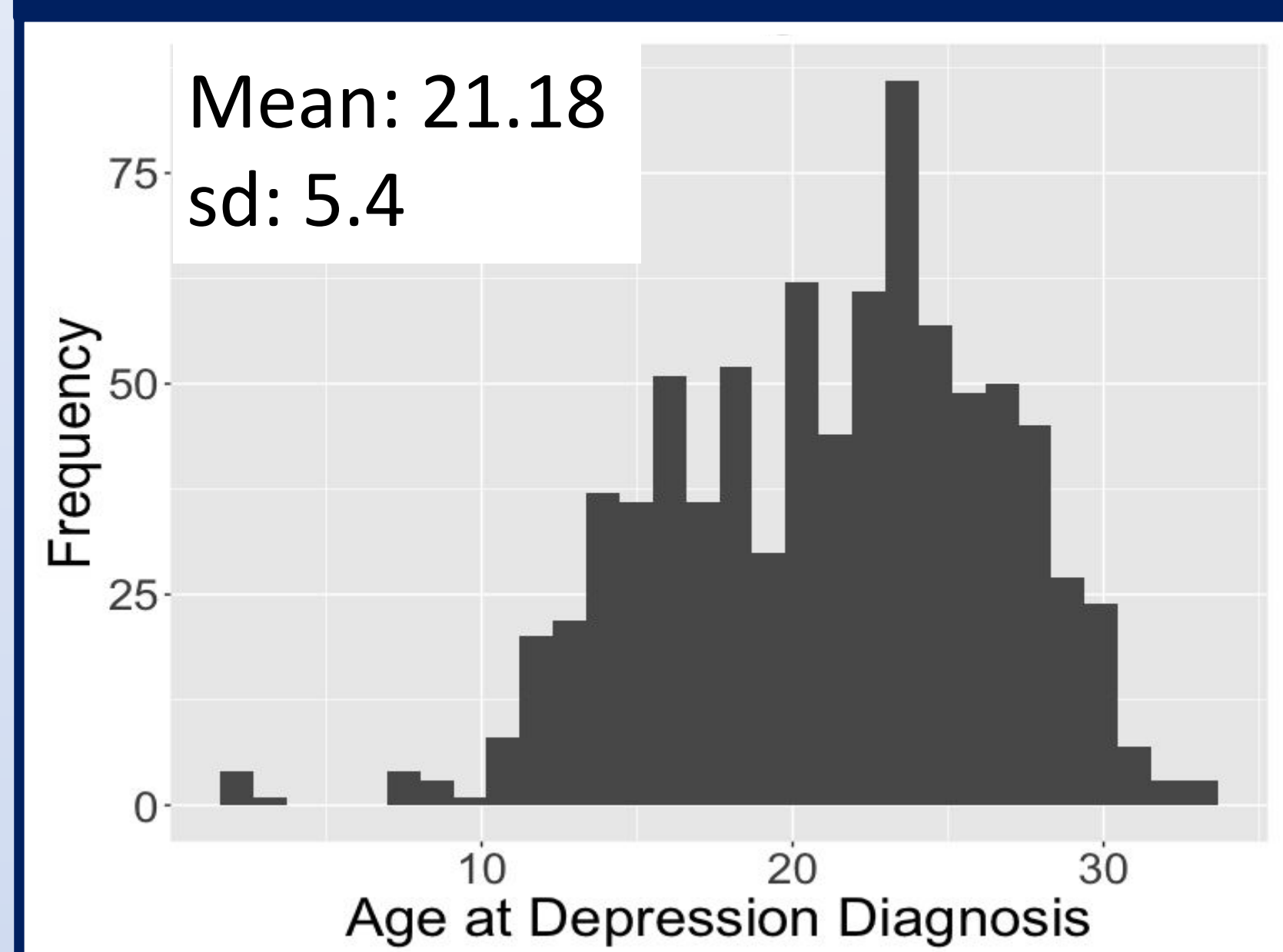
- 1) Is there a relationship between an adult's education level and whether they are diagnosed with depression?
- 2) Do adults with a lower education level have a higher chance of developing signs of depression?
- 3) Does this relationship change depending on biological sex?

Methodology

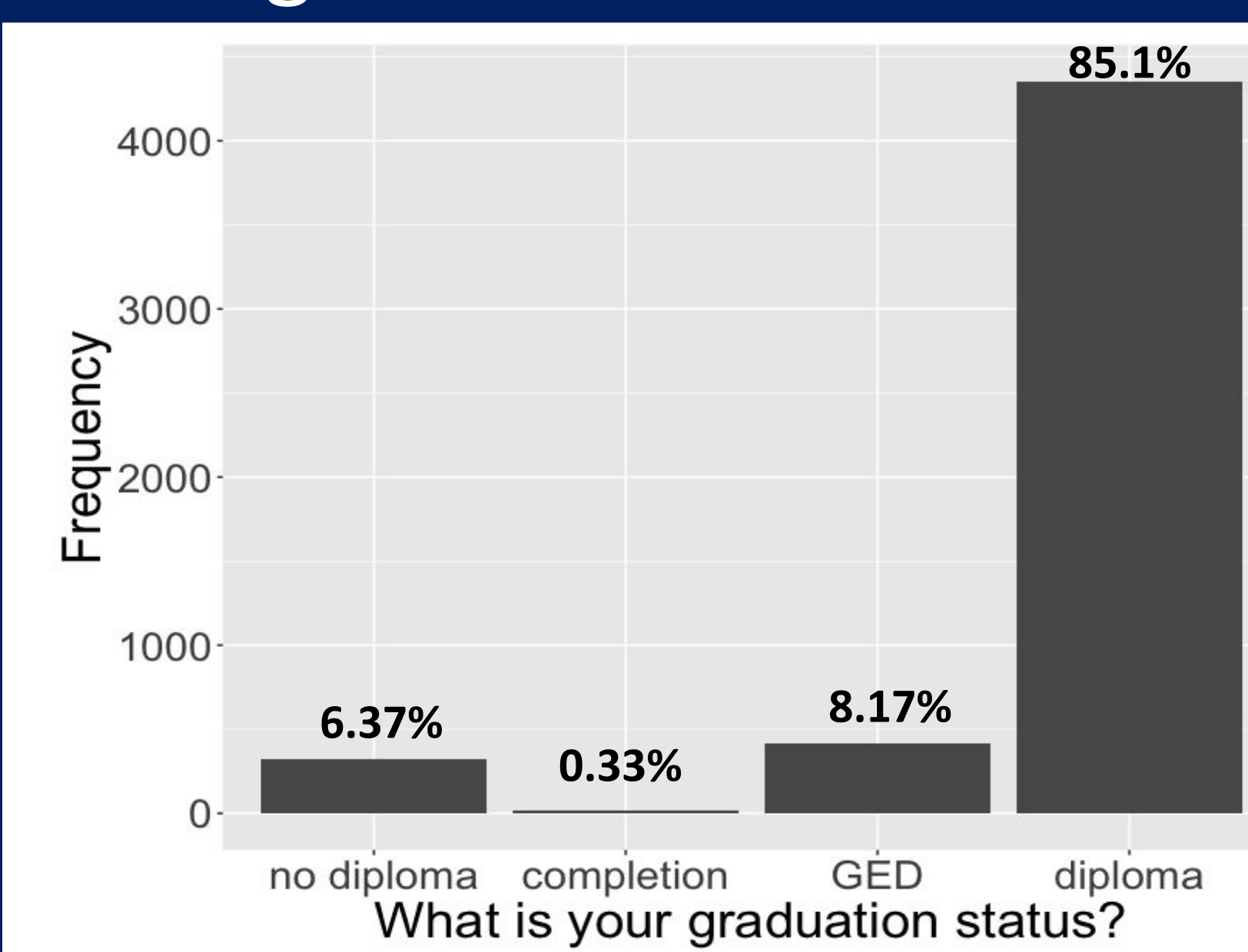
- Sample: Add Health Wave IV: 5,114 participants between 25 and 34; 62% White, 23% Black, 5% multiracial, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Indian or Native American, 6% Other
- Information was gathered from a group of adolescents (12-21) and when they were in adulthood (25-34).
- Procedure: 90 minute computer assisted interview

Question	Response Variables
What is your high school graduation status?	"no diploma," "completion," "GED," "diploma"
Which of the following best describes your desired level of education?	"will never achieve," "might achieve," "achieved"
Do you have feelings of depression?	"strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," "strongly agree"
Has a doctor ever told you that you have depression?	"no," "yes"
How old were you when you were diagnosed with depression?	"2 years" up to "33 years"

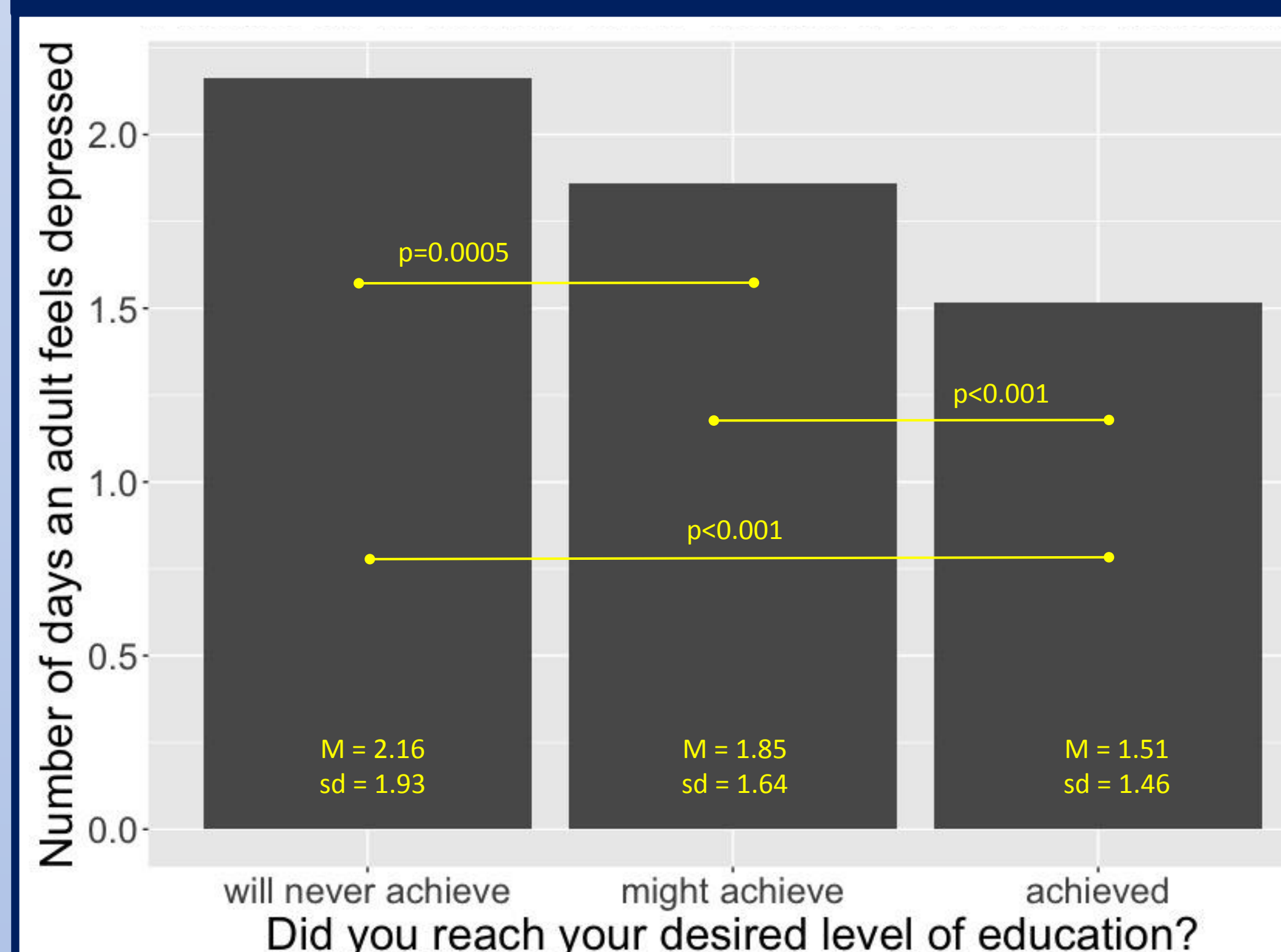
How old were you when you were diagnosed with depression?



What is your high school graduation status?

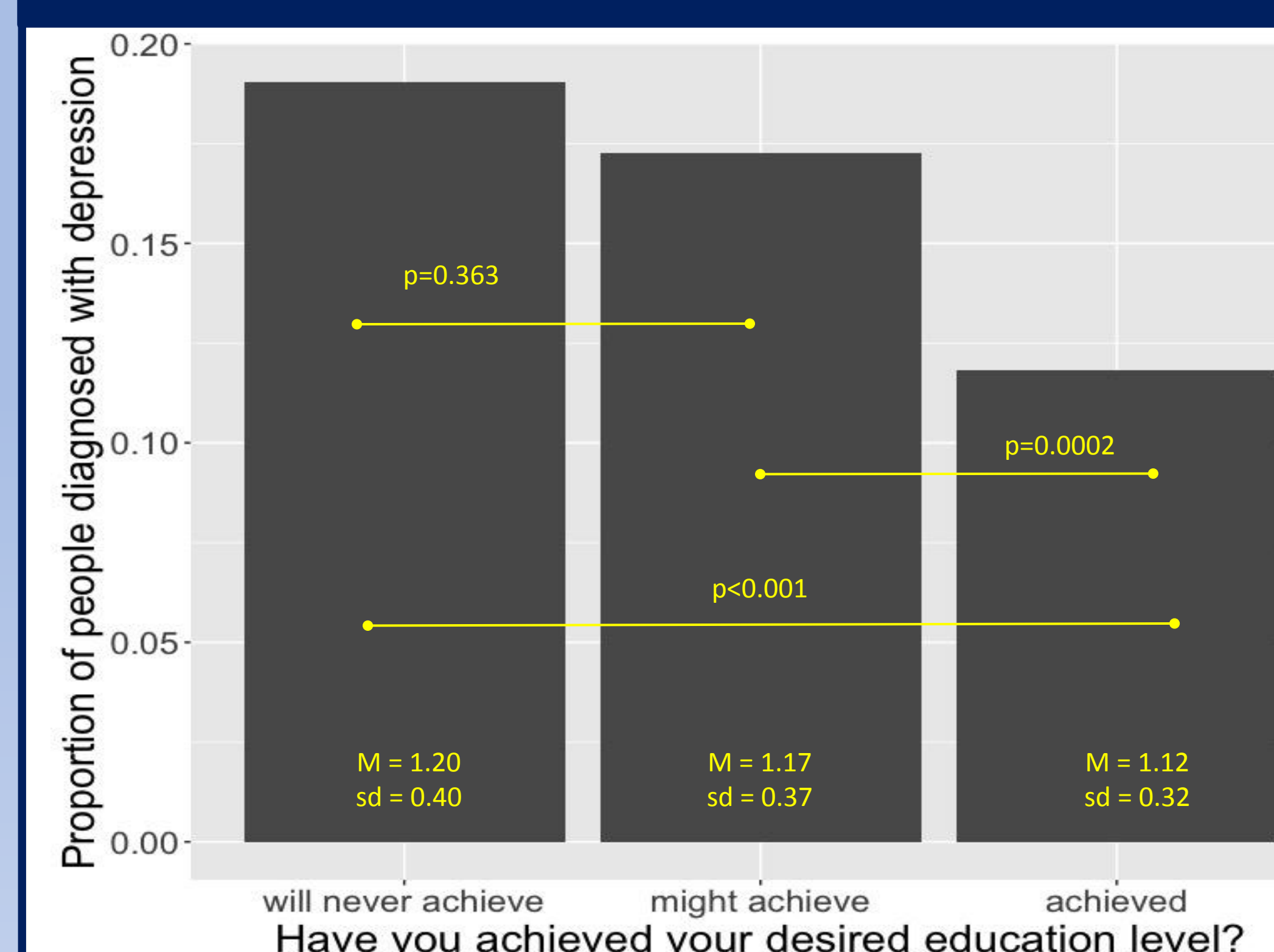


Is there a relationship between those who reach their desired level of education and have feelings of depression?



- ANOVA: $F(2, 5095) = 32.15, p < .001$
- In general, those who achieve their desired education have less feelings of depression.

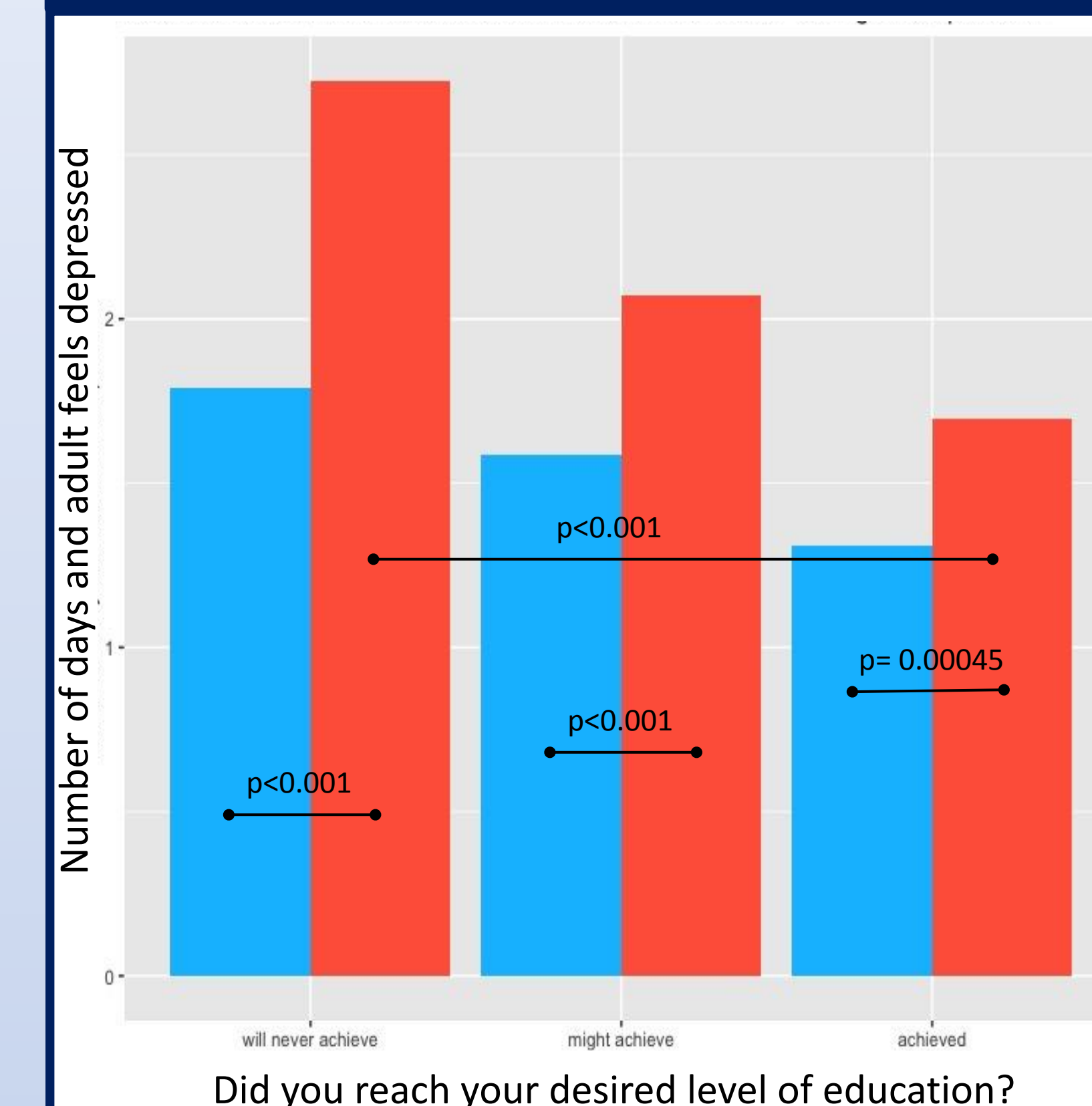
Is there a relationship between those who have reached their desired education level and those who have been diagnosed with depression?



Chi square
 $\chi^2(3) = 22.891, p < .001$

In general, those who reported not achieving their desired education are more likely to be diagnosed with depression.

Is there a relationship between reaching desired level of education and developing signs of depression and does this relationship differ for males and females?



Desired education level:
 $F(2,5095)=32.15, p < .001$

Biological sex:
 $F(1,5092)=121.9, p < .001$

Significant interaction:
 $F(2,5092)=4.83, p = 0.008$

When an adult has depressive feelings is related to desired level of education. It is also related to biological sex. As one gets closer to their desired level of education they are more likely to have less feelings of depression. Females are more likely to reach their desired education and have less depressive feelings.

Take Home Message

- 1) There is evidence that shows those who have a higher level of education are less likely to be diagnosed with depression.
- 2) The relationship between education and depression is stronger in females than it is in males

Discussion

- An adult's educational background impacts their mental health.
- Adults with a higher level of education are less likely to be diagnosed with depression and less likely to be diagnosed at a young age.
- Future research could focus on teaching students about mental health and being more open about mental health.

References

- Ibrahim, N., Amit, N., Shahr, S., et al. (2019). Do depression literacy, mental illness beliefs and stigma influence mental health help-seeking attitude? A cross-sectional study of secondary school and university students from B40 households in Malaysia. *BMC Public Health*, 19, 544. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-019-6862-6#Abs1>
- Eisenberg, D., Golberstein, E., & Hunt, J. (2009). Mental health and academic success in college. *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 9(1). <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.2202/1935-1682.2191/html>