



Institute for Health
Metrics and Evaluation

Estimating the lifetime exposure and co-occurrence of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children using the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC)

SVRI oral presentation


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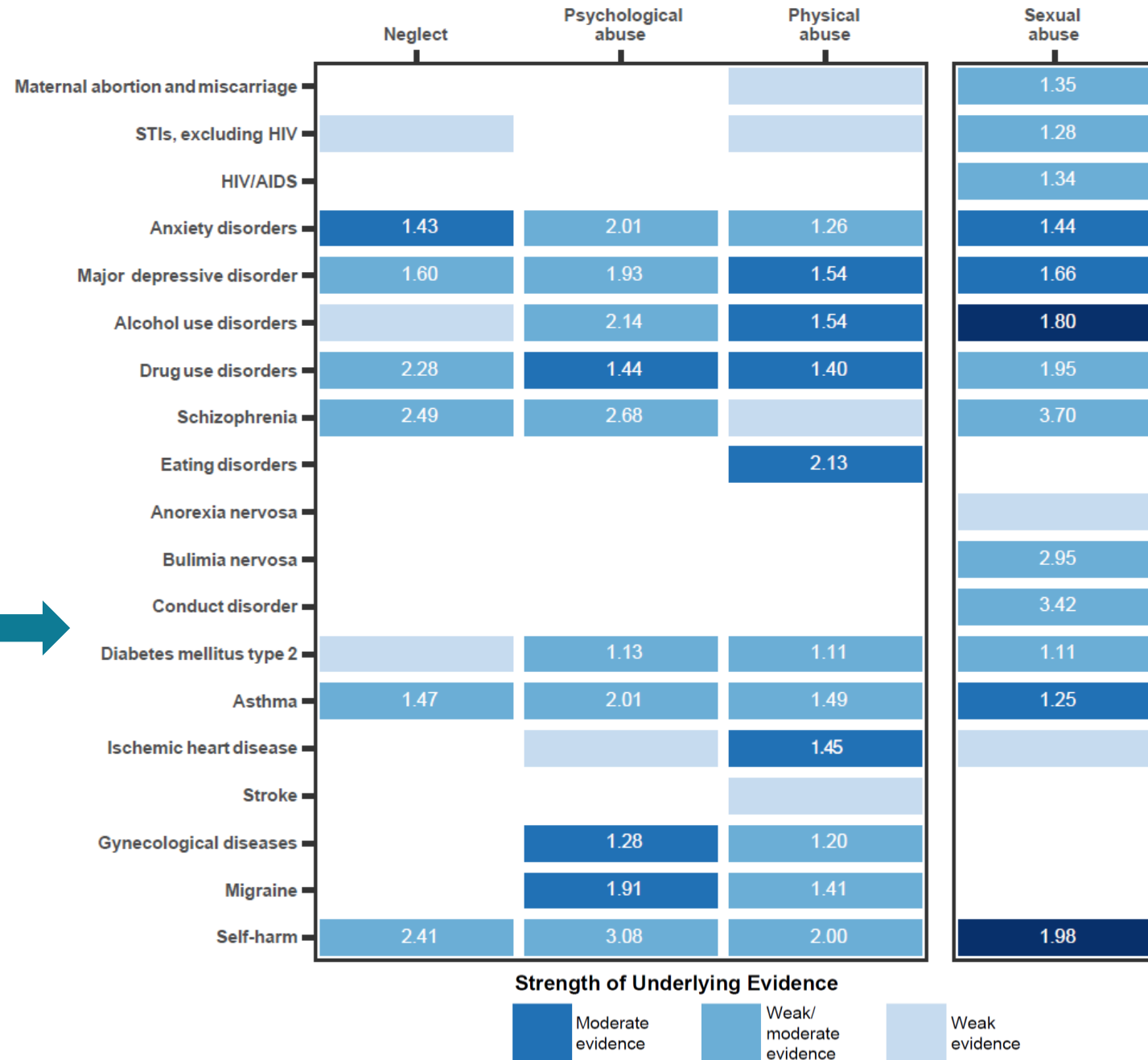
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Outline

- Background
- Aim
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Background

- Violence against children (VAC) affects around 1 billion children who experience physical, sexual, emotional or neglect each year (Hillis et al. 2016).
- Our meta-analysis on the effects VAC on health show  (Flor et al. 2024) .
- Little use of longitudinal studies to study VAC (Guedes A. et al. 2016, WHO 2020).



Aim

We aim to compare estimates of physical, psychological, sexual, and co-occurrence of violence against children cumulative prevalence by respondent in a longitudinal study.

Methods: Data

The ALSPAC study, a 30-year prospective birth cohort study that recruited pregnant women with expected due dates between April 1991 and December 1992 in Avon county, England.

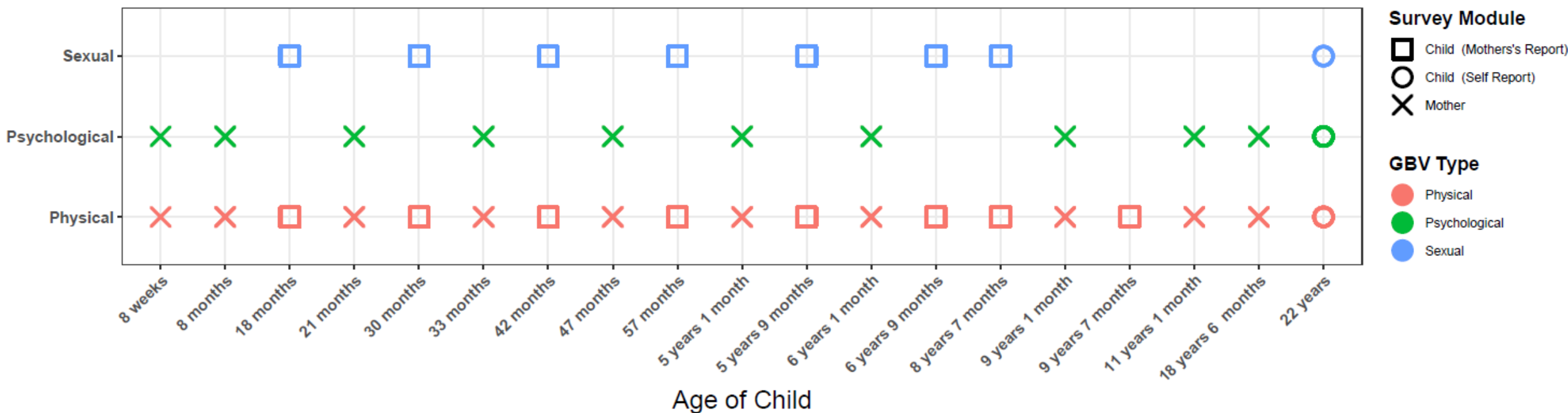
Covered three health administration districts within the South-West Regional Health authority: Population of around 0.9 million people in 1991.

Data from a variety of sources such as **self-completion questionnaires**, medical and education records, ad hoc visits to participants households, biological samples, and in-depth interviews

- Mothers
- Partners
- Children
- Mothers on behalf of children

Methods: Survey rounds

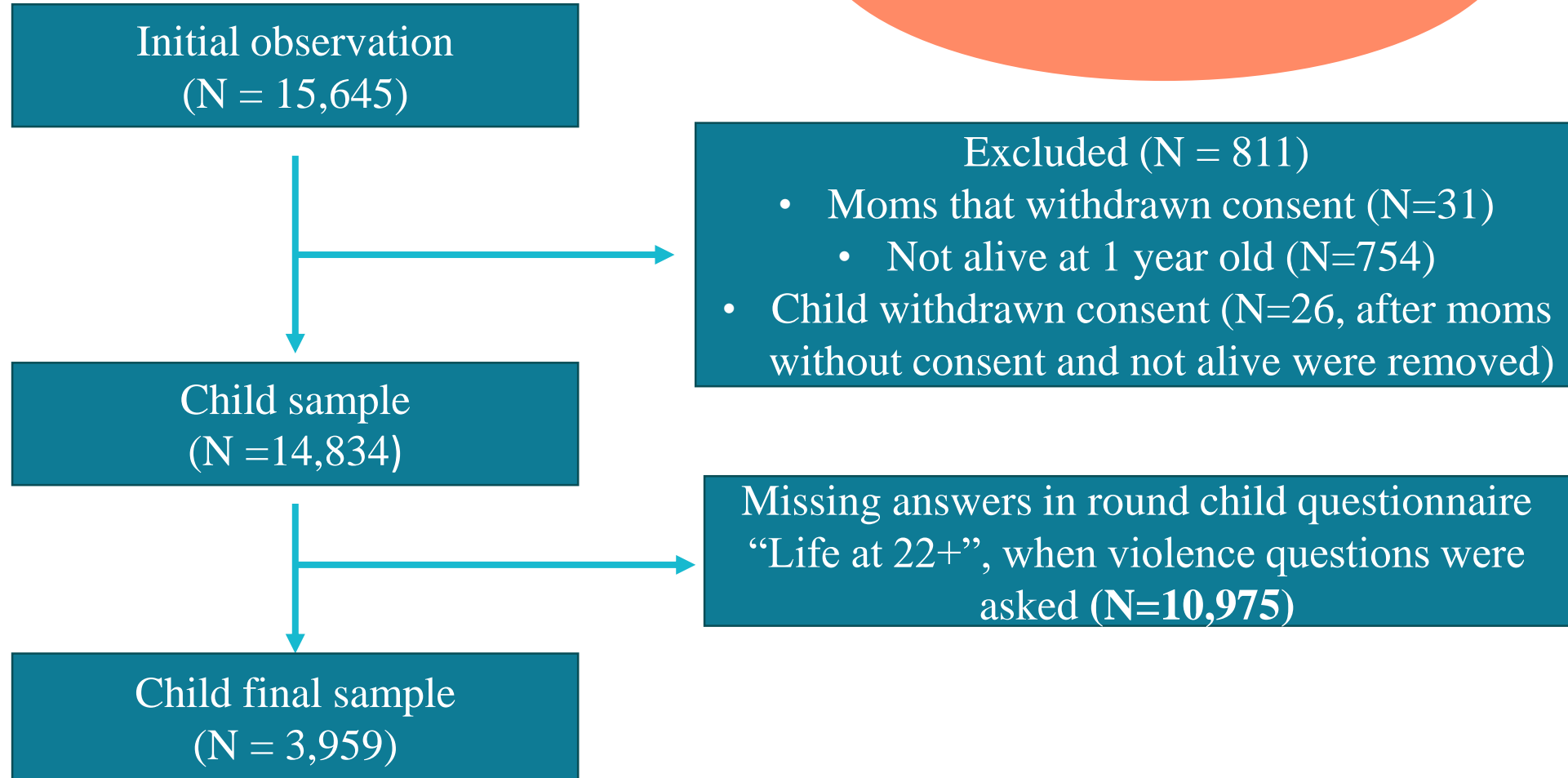
Questions used: Types of Violence by Age of Child



Methods: Questions

| Sexual violence | Psychological violence | Physical violence | Resp. |
|---|--|--|--------|
| <p>Before the age of 11/between the ages of 11 and 17, were you touched in a sexual way by an adult or an older child or were you forced to touch an adult or older child in a sexual way when you did not want to?</p> <p>did an adult or an older child force you or attempt to force you into any sexual activity by threatening you or holding you down or hurting you in some way when you did not want to?</p> | <p>...how often did an adult in your family (anyone you consider to be a family member):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shout at you b. Say hurtful or insulting things to you e. Punish you in a way that seemed cruel f. Threaten to kick, punch, or hit you with something that could hurt you or physically attack you in another way | <p>...how often did an adult in your family (anyone you consider to be a family member):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Push, grab or shove you d. Smack you for discipline g. Actually kick, punch, or hit you with something that could hurt you or physically attack you in another way h. Hit you so hard it left you with bruises or marks | Child |
| <p>Below are listed some events that might upset some children. Please state whether any of these happened: E6. She was sexually abused</p> | <p>Since the last time we interviewed you: You/Your partner was emotionally cruel to your children?</p> | <p>Since the last time we interviewed you: You/ your partner was physically cruel to your children?</p> | Mother |

Methods: Observations



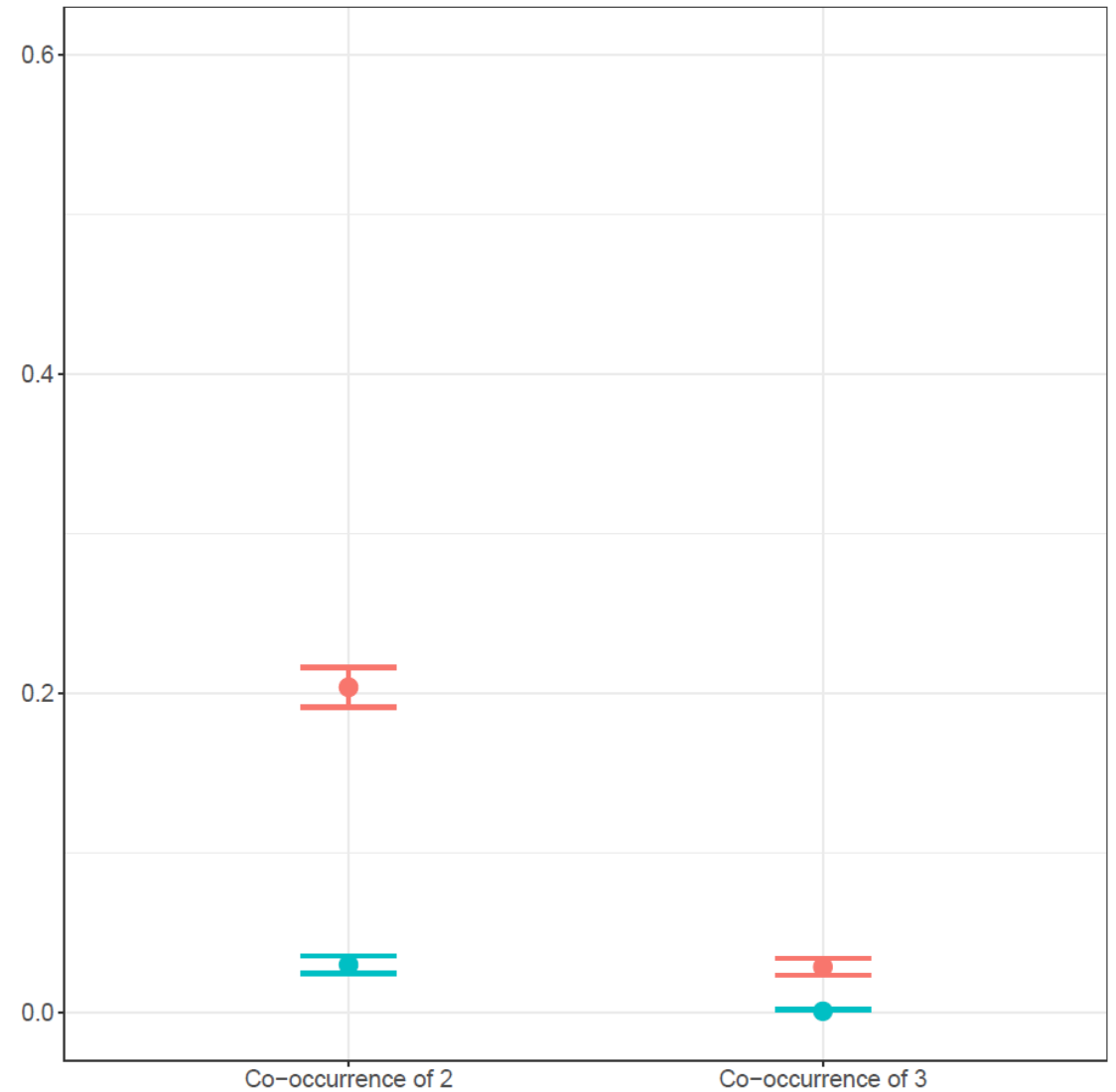
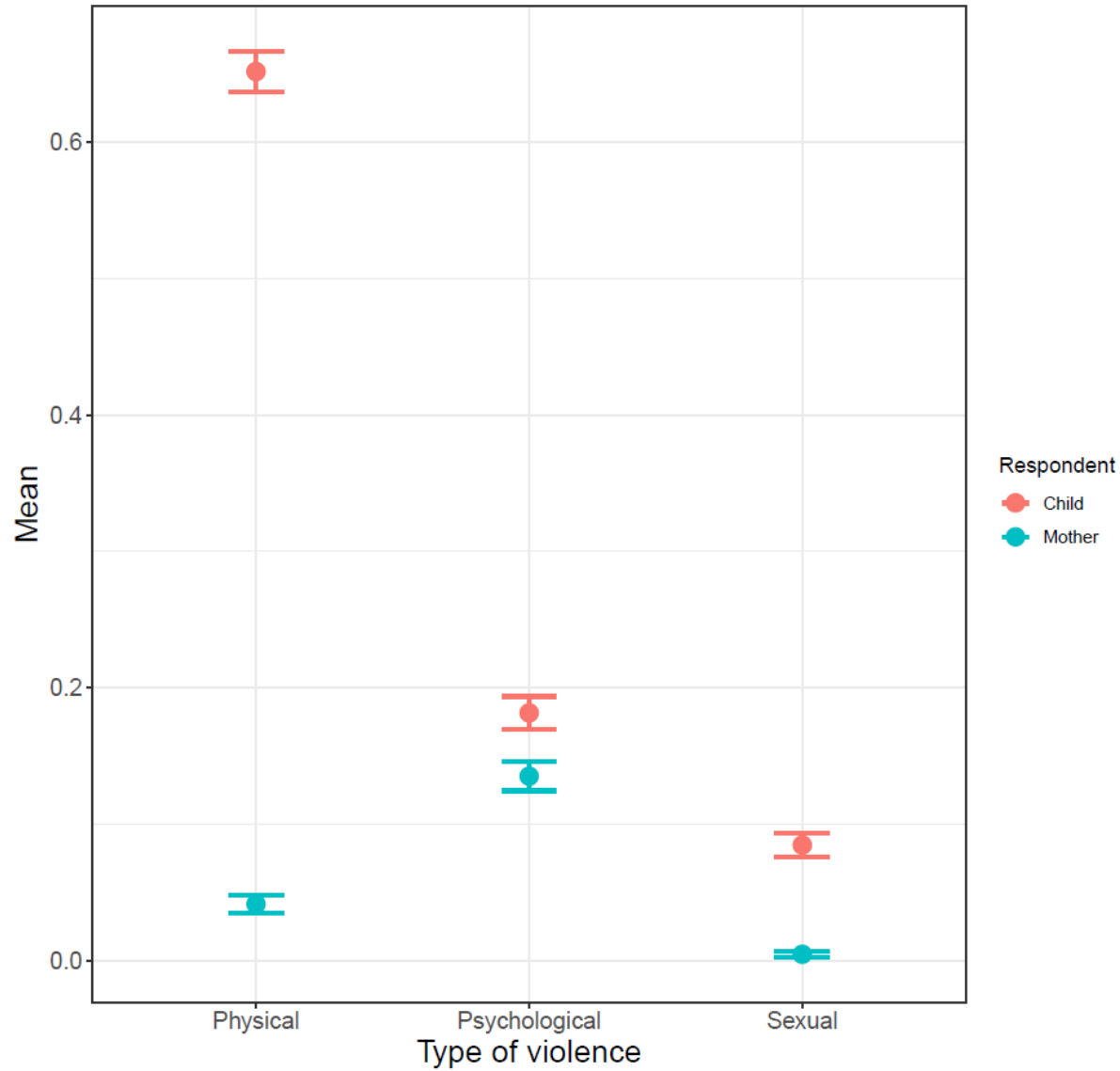
Very large attrition!

Methods: Prevalence definition

- Exposure to sexual and physical violence is defined as occurring if respondent said yes to questions **no matter the frequency**, and if **any** of the acts were experienced by the child.
- When the child is the respondent, exposure to psychological is defined only if respondent said **at least one of the acts happened often or very often**. When the mother is the respondent exposure to psychological violence is defined if she replied yes.
- Co-occurrence is defined as experiencing two types of violence (e.g. physical and psychological) or all three types of violence
- When thinking about the mothers report on violence, the prevalence reflects whether she replied yes in any of the rounds. In other words, we are looking at the cumulative experience of violence.

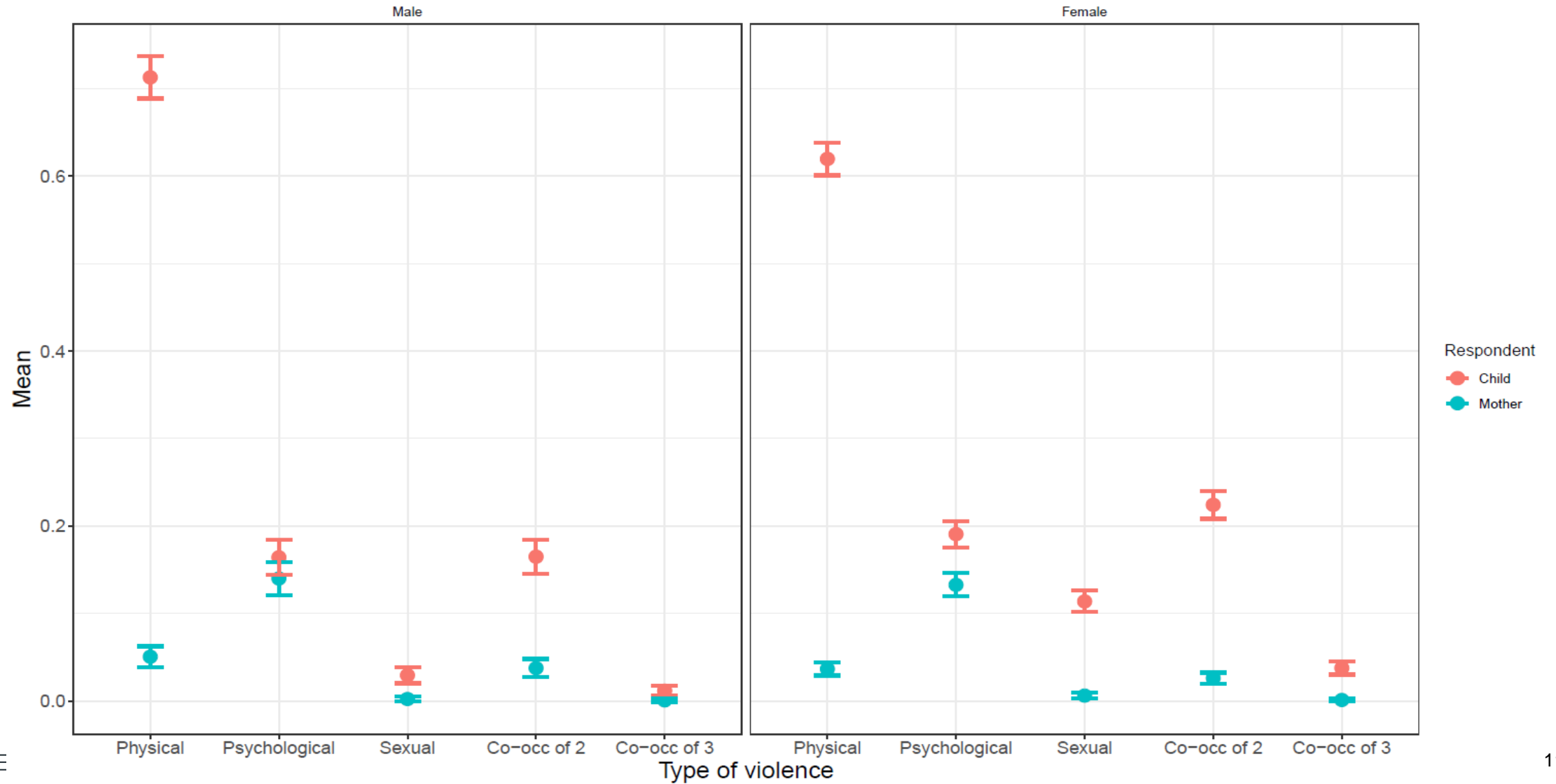
Results

Cumulative prevalence of child abuse by 22 years of age



Results by child sex

Cumulative prevalence of child abuse by 22 years of age



Recommendations and impact

- When comparing retrospective answers to prospective answers, the prevalence estimates on violence are higher when the person affected responds for themselves.
 - The use of the word “cruelty” in questions is subject to the respondent’s interpretation.
 - The reporting of violence in child surveys can be coming from adults in the family beyond the parents (e.g. grandparents, uncles, etc)

We should take into account underreporting from parents surveys when studying prevalence of VAC and effects on its health and development outcomes.

There is a misperception between parents and children on what constitutes physical and psychological violence. We should tackle social norms around punishment.

References

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