

Sociodemographic Variations in Perceived Social Support Among Adults with Depression in the United States: Results From the National Health and Wellness Survey

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Background

- Depression, a prevalent mental-health condition, is associated with substantial health and economic burden.¹
- While social support can improve resilience and mitigate depression symptoms, adults with depression may differ in their access to such support.²

Objective

This analysis aimed to identify sociodemographic variations in perceived social support among US adults with depression.

Methods

- Data from the 2024 US National Health and Wellness Survey (NHWS), a cross-sectional nationally representative online survey of adults (aged ≥18 years), were analyzed.
- Participants who self-reported being diagnosed with depression by a physician were included in analyses.
- Patient-reported outcomes included food/financial insecurity and the Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey (mMOS-SS)³.

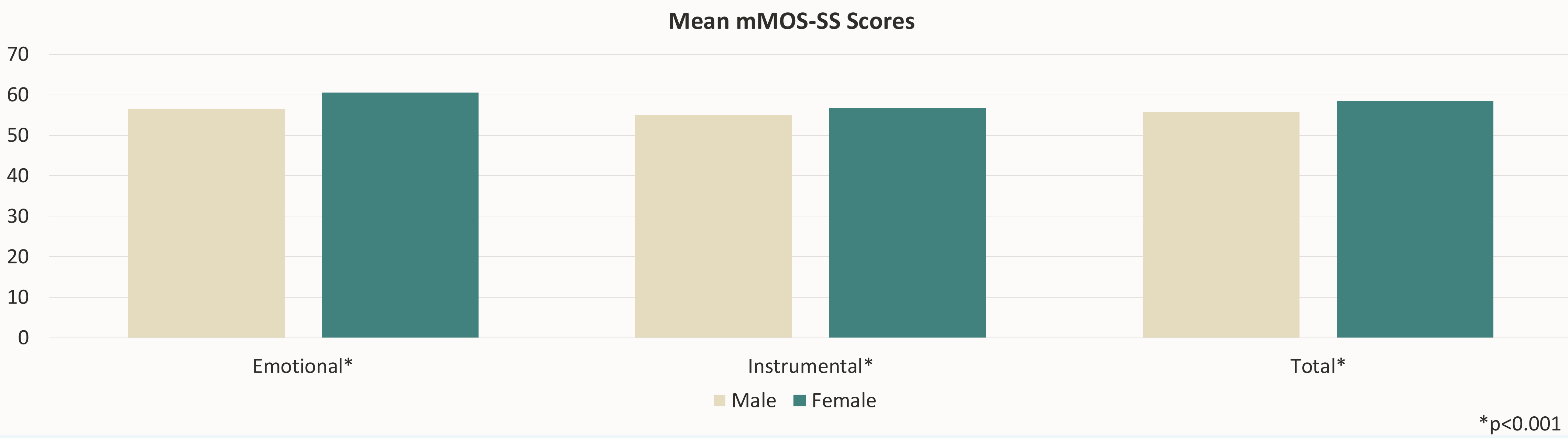
- mMOS-SS³ is an 8-item measure assessing perceived emotional and instrumental support. Higher mMOS-SS Total scores and Emotional and Instrumental subscale scores indicate greater social support.
- Scores range from 0 to 100.
- Food/financial insecurity was measured by the response to the following statement in NHWS: “worried whether my / our food would run out before I / we got money to buy more”.
- Outcomes were compared by age group (18-25, 26-49, ≥50), sex, race (Black, white, other), and ethnicity (Hispanic, non-Hispanic) using two-sample t-tests/one-way analysis of variance tests.
- P-values <0.05, 2-tailed, were considered statistically significant.

Results

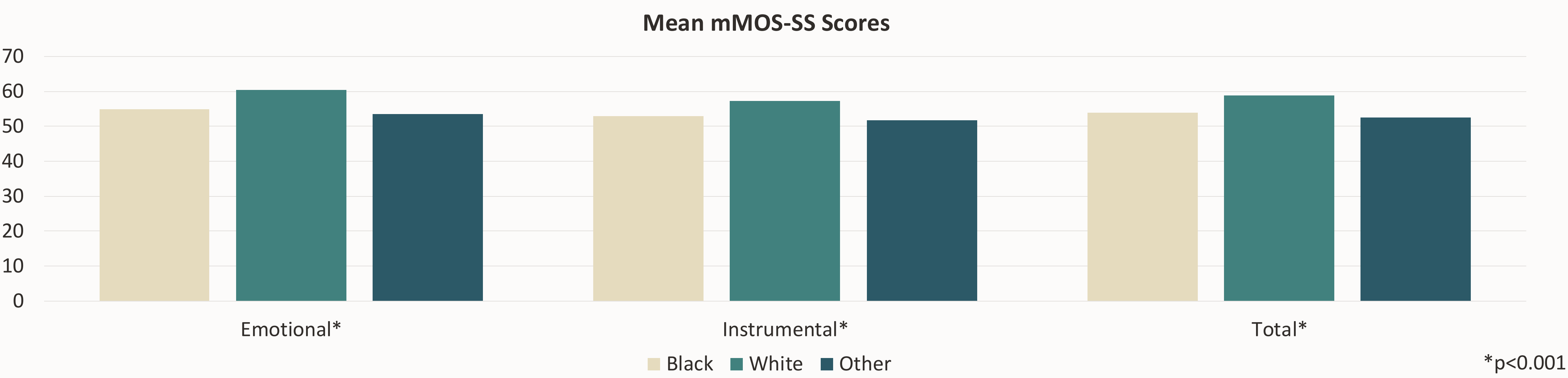
- Among adults with depression (N=15,444), most were female (64.9%), white (76.6%), and non-Hispanic (87.8%).
- Overall, 11.0%, 44.7%, and 44.4% were aged 18-25, 26-49, and ≥50 years, respectively.

Demographics, n (%)	Adults diagnosed with depression (N=15,444)
Age group	
18-25	1693 (11.0%)
26-49	6898 (44.7%)
50+	6853 (44.4%)
Sex	
Female	10020 (64.9%)
Male	5424 (35.1%)
Race	
Black	2420 (15.7%)
White	11824 (76.6%)
Other	1200 (7.8%)
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	1888 (12.2%)
Non-Hispanic	13556 (87.8%)

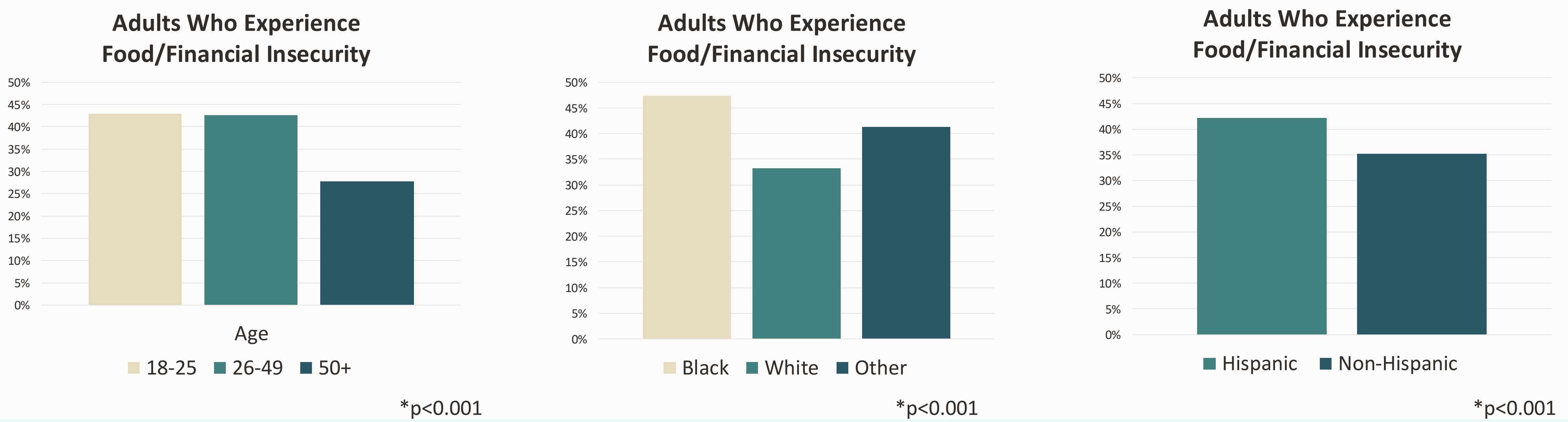
- Males had lower mean Emotional subscale scores (56.5 vs 60.5 females).



- Black or other race adults had lower mean Total (53.9, 52.6 vs 58.9 white), Emotional, and Instrumental subscale scores (all, p<0.001); scores were similar by age and ethnicity.



- Adults aged 18-25 and 26-49 (42.9%, 42.6% vs 27.7% ≥50 years) reported greater food/financial insecurity (p<0.001).
- Black and other race adults (47.4%, 41.3% vs 33.2% white) reported greater food/financial insecurity (p<0.001).
- Hispanics (42.2% vs 35.2% non-Hispanic) reported greater food/financial insecurity (p<0.001); food/financial insecurity was similar by sex.



Conclusion

- Perceived social support varied by sex and race; however, meaningful differences were not observed by age and ethnicity.
- Food/financial insecurity differed by age, race, and ethnicity.
- Among US adults with depression, males may require additional emotional support; racial minorities may need both instrumental and emotional support.
- Furthermore, younger and racial-ethnic minority adults may need societal support to mitigate food/finance-related challenges.

References

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