CHILDHOOD CONDUCT PROBLEMS AND ADULT ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS IN SINGAPORE

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Introduction / Issues

Previous findings in community samples suggest an association between childhood conduct problems (CP) and subsequent alcohol use disorders (AUD). However, limited data exists for Singapore's AUD population. This study investigated clinical profile differences between AUD adults with and without a history of childhood CP presented for treatment at a tertiary psychiatric hospital.

Method / Approach

Participants included 337 patients (299 males, 38 females) who visited the National Addictions Management Service (Singapore) outpatient clinic from January 2013 to December 2014 and were diagnosed with AUD. Variables explored included demographics, clinical information (Table 1), Personal Well-being Index (PWI) and drinking behaviour indicators. One-way ANOVA was used for analyses. PWI was measured on a scale of 0 (No satisfaction at all) to 10 (Completely satisfied).

Table 1
Demographic and baseline characteristics of AUD patients

		N = 337
		M (SD)
Age		43.51 (12.61)
		N (%)
Gender	Male	299 (88.7)
	Female	38 (11.3)
Ethnicity	Chinese	159 (47.2)
	Malay	28 (8.3)
	Indian	127 (37.7)
	Others	23 (6.8)
Marital Status	Married	150 (44.8)
	Single	187 (55.2)

Key Findings

There were 13.4% patients who reported current or past drug use. Results revealed that AUD patients with childhood CP had significantly higher alcohol consumption, $F(1,315) = 9.33$, $p = .002$ and started drinking earlier in life, $F(1,318) = 5.48$, $p = .02$ (Fig. 1).

Overall, their perceived well-being was significantly lower than those without childhood CP, $F(1,334) = 11.92$, $p = .001$, reporting lower scores in the domains of satisfaction with achievement in life, $F(1,334) = 4.92$, $p = .027$, satisfaction with personal relationships $F(1,334) = 9.53$, $p = .002$, satisfaction with safety $F(1,334) = 6.42$, $p = .012$, satisfaction with feeling part of the community $F(1, 334) = 5.78$, $p = .017$ and satisfaction with future security $F(1, 334) = 8.27$, $p = .004$. Mean scores are provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Means of alcohol consumption patterns and PWI

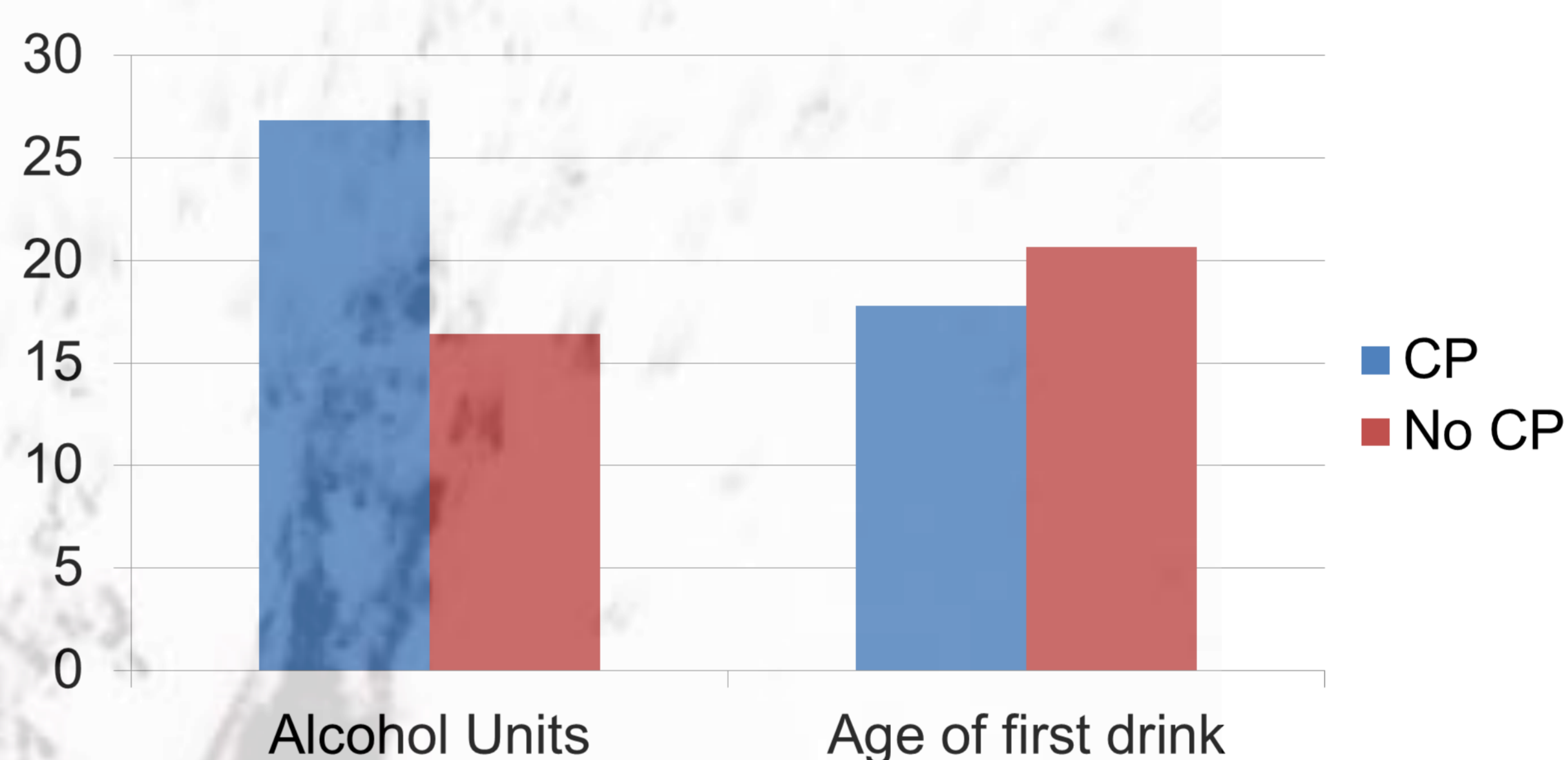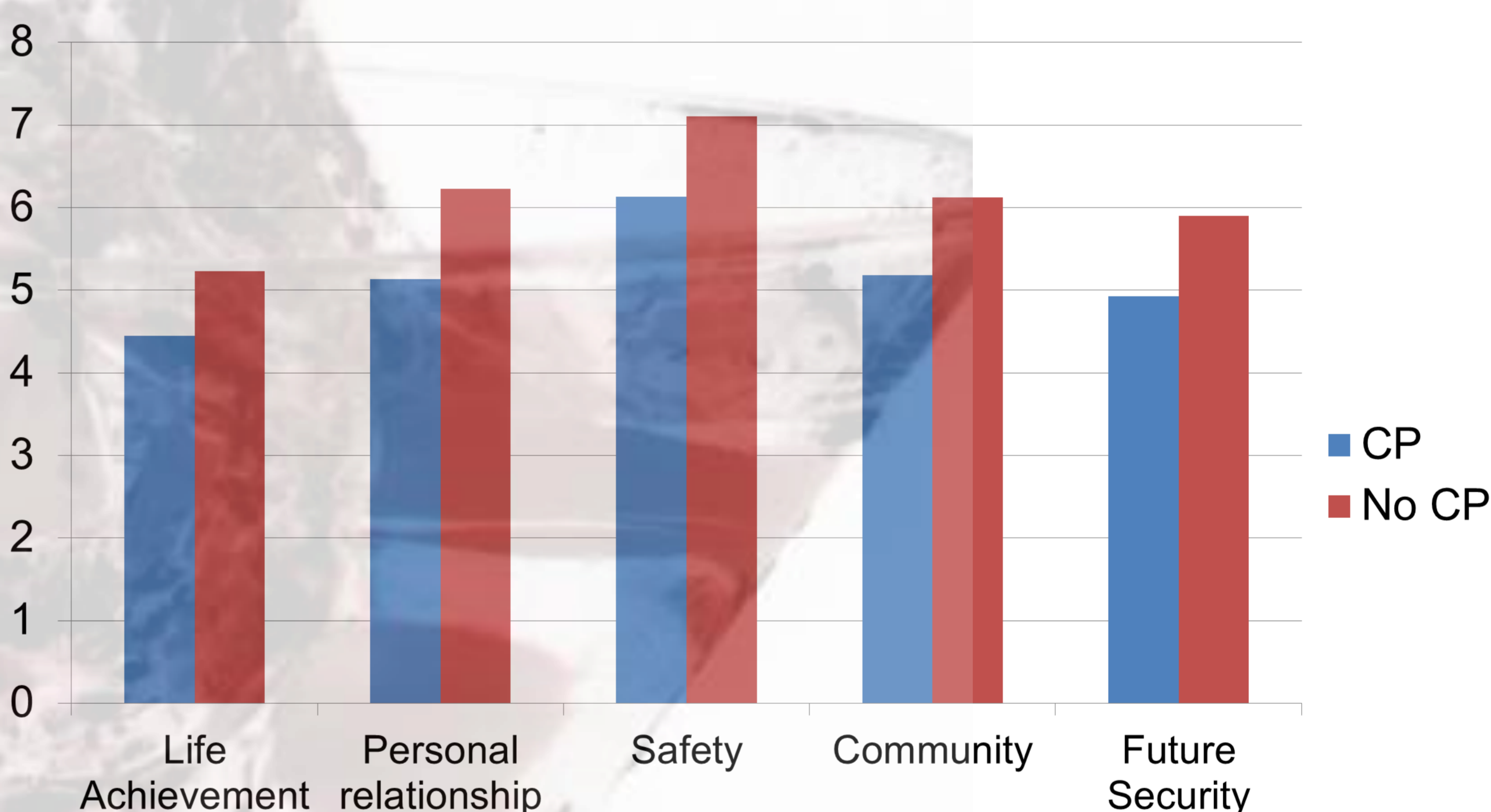|	CP (N = 67)	No CP (N = 270)
	M (SD)	**M (SD)**
Alcohol Units	26.85 (43.07)	16.40 (16.60)
Age of first drink	17.77 (8.55)	20.66 (8.92)
PWI Total	52.57 (16.90)	60.93 (17.92)
Life Achievement	4.45 (2.45)	5.23 (2.63)
Personal relationship	5.13 (2.84)	6.23 (2.54)
Safety	6.13 (2.98)	7.10 (2.75)
Community	5.18 (3.24)	6.12 (2.78)
Future Security	4.93 (2.61)	5.90 (2.44)

Fig. 1 Alcohol consumption patterns

Fig. 2 PWI domain scores

Discussions and Conclusions

Management and treatment of AUD patients with childhood CP may be more challenging and requires more monitoring given the earlier age use and higher alcohol consumption. Areas of rehabilitation should also focus on improving their sense of well-being in other aspects of their life. Professionals working with children and adolescents who are showing signs of behavioural problems should monitor them for potential alcohol use and any subsequent changes in alcohol consumption. This would help identify problematic drinking within this population sooner.