

Faculty Research Lightning Talks

2019

USFSP Couples Check Up Project

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USFSP Couples Check Up Project

Lindsey M. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Psychology

Background & Rationale

- To provide feasibility data to NIH for collecting community-level couple data with 1+ heavy drinker
- To gather preliminary evidence for the perceived value of a brief intervention where couples learn to discuss alcohol constructively
- To test how conflict styles are related to the likelihood of violence in the relationship
- To test a disclosure paradigm on improving intimacy and closeness

Background & Rationale

- To provide feasibility data to NIH for collecting community-level couple data with 1+ heavy drinker
- To gather preliminary evidence for the perceived value of a brief intervention where couples learn to discuss alcohol constructively
- **To test how conflict styles are related to the likelihood of violence in the relationship**
- To test a disclosure paradigm on improving intimacy and closeness

Aim 1: ✓

- 25 couples in the lab in 2 months!
- Grant application submitted
- Couples:
 - 18+ years old
 - Married/Cohabiting 6+ months
 - AUDIT scores of 5+/8+



Participants

- ▶ $N=50$ (25 dyads)
- ▶ 54% men; 46% women
- ▶ Average age = 31 years (SD=1.0)
- ▶ Average relationship length = 6.58 years (SD=7.4)
- ▶ 17% had children
- ▶ Race:
 - ▶ 70% White
 - ▶ 26% Mixed
 - ▶ 4% Other
- ▶ 26% Hispanic
- ▶ Sexual Orientation:
 - ▶ 86% Heterosexual
 - ▶ 4% Gay/Lesbian
 - ▶ 10% Bisexual

Today's Research Question

- What is the association between how couples report resolving their disagreements and the likelihood of physical or sexual violence in their relationship?



Conflict Typologies

In our relationship, conflicts may be fought on a grand scale, and that is okay, since our making up is even grander. **We have volcanic arguments, but they are just a small part of a warm and loving relationship.** Although we argue, we are still able to resolve our differences. In fact, our passion and zest for fighting actually lead to a better relationship, with a lot of making up, laughing, and affection.

In our relationship, when we are having conflict, we let each other know the other's opinions are valued and their emotions valid, even if we disagree with each other. Even when discussing a hot topic, we display a lot of self-control and are calm. When fighting, we spend a lot of time validating each other as well as trying to persuade our partner, or trying to find a compromise.

In our relationship, conflict is minimized. We think it is better to "agree to disagree" rather than end up in discussions that will result in a deadlock. We don't think much is to be gained from getting openly angry with each other. In fact, a lot of talking about disagreements seems to make matters worse. We feel that if you just relax about problems, they will have a way of working themselves out.

We argue often and hotly. There are a lot of insults back and forth, name calling, putdowns, and sarcasm. We don't really listen to what the other is saying, nor do we look at each other very much. One or the other of us can be quite detached and emotionally uninvolved, even though there may be brief episodes of attack and defensiveness. There are clearly more negatives than positives in our relationships.

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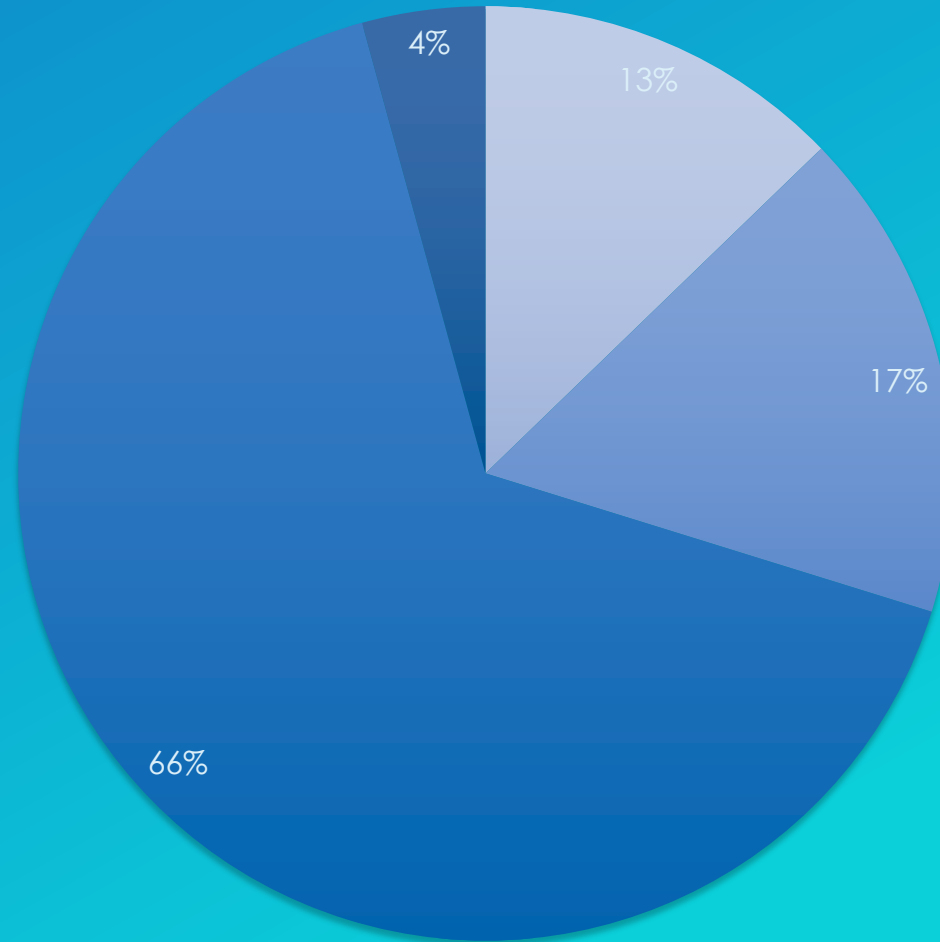
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Conflict Tactics Scale



- Physical Violence:
 - Pushed, shoved, slapped partner
 - Punched, kicked, beat up partner
 - Went to see a doctor because of a fight with partner
- Sexual Violence:
 - Insisted on sex when partner did not want to
 - Used force to make partner have sex

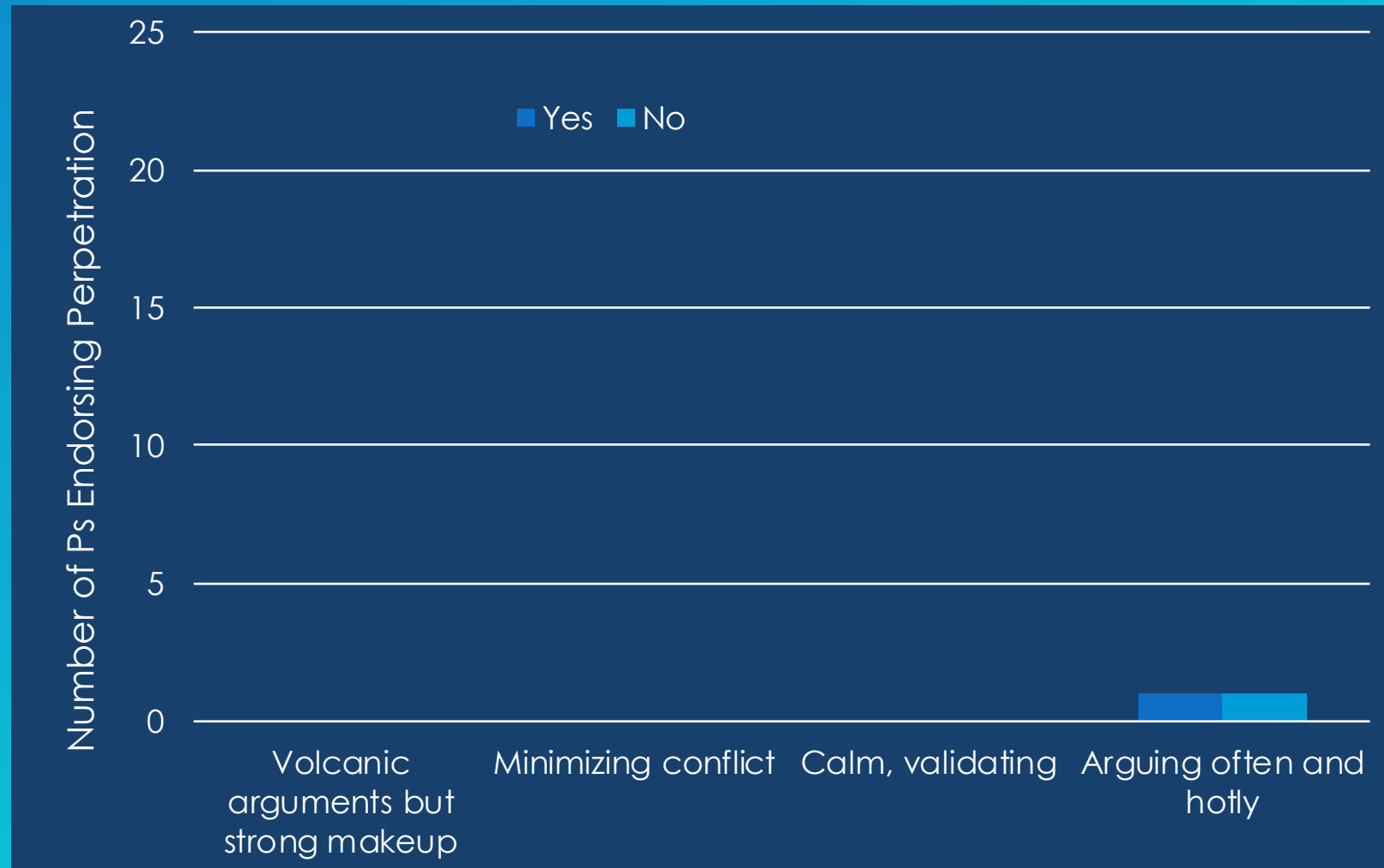
Conflict Typologies



- Volcanic arguments but strong makeup
- Minimizing conflict
- Calm, validating
- Arguing often and hotly

Physical IPV Perpetration

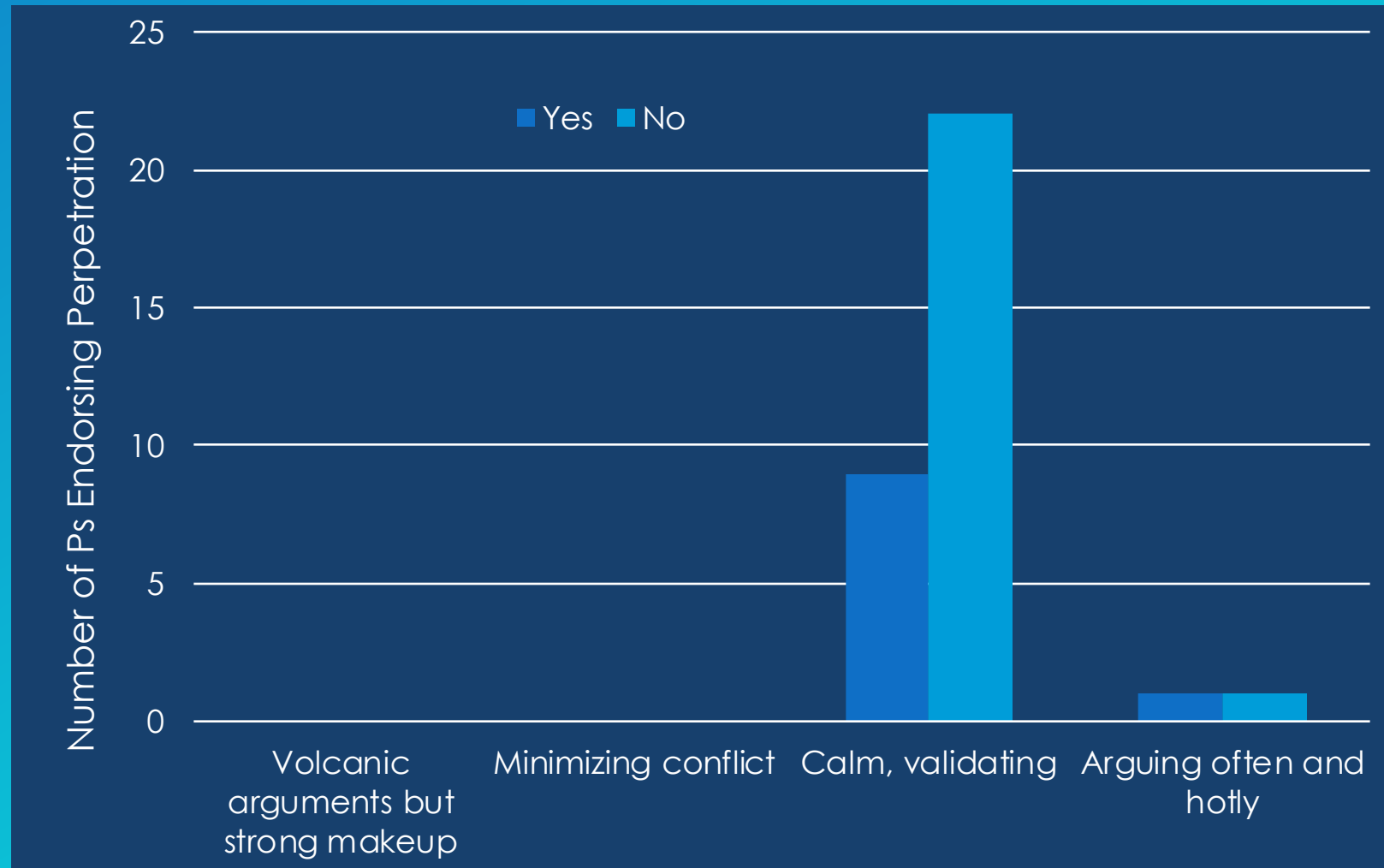
IPV Present = 1
IPV Absent = 1



$\chi^2(3)=13.38$
 $p=.003$

Physical IPV Perpetration

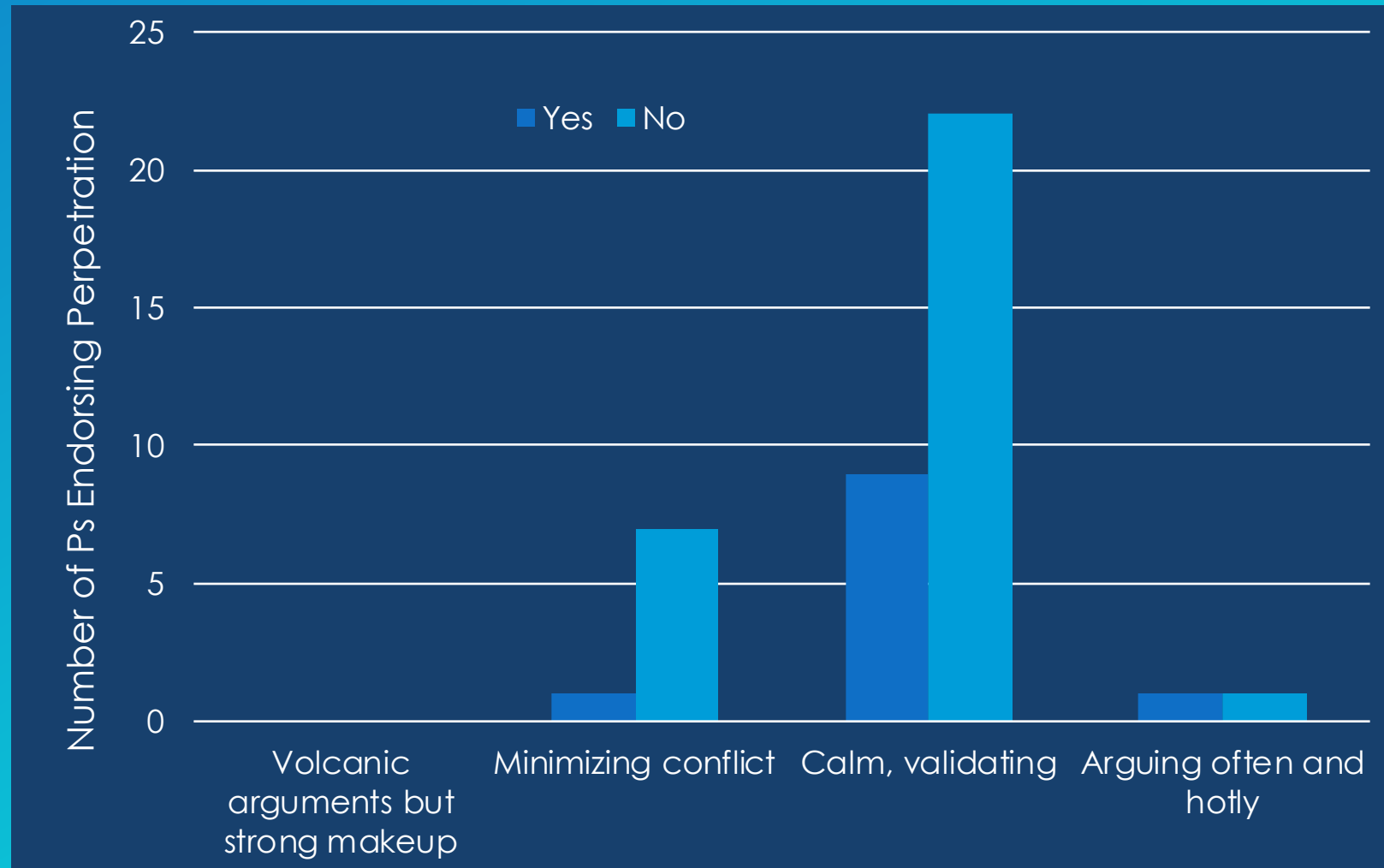
IPV Present = 9
IPV Absent = 22



$\chi^2(3)=13.38$
 $p=.003$

Physical IPV Perpetration

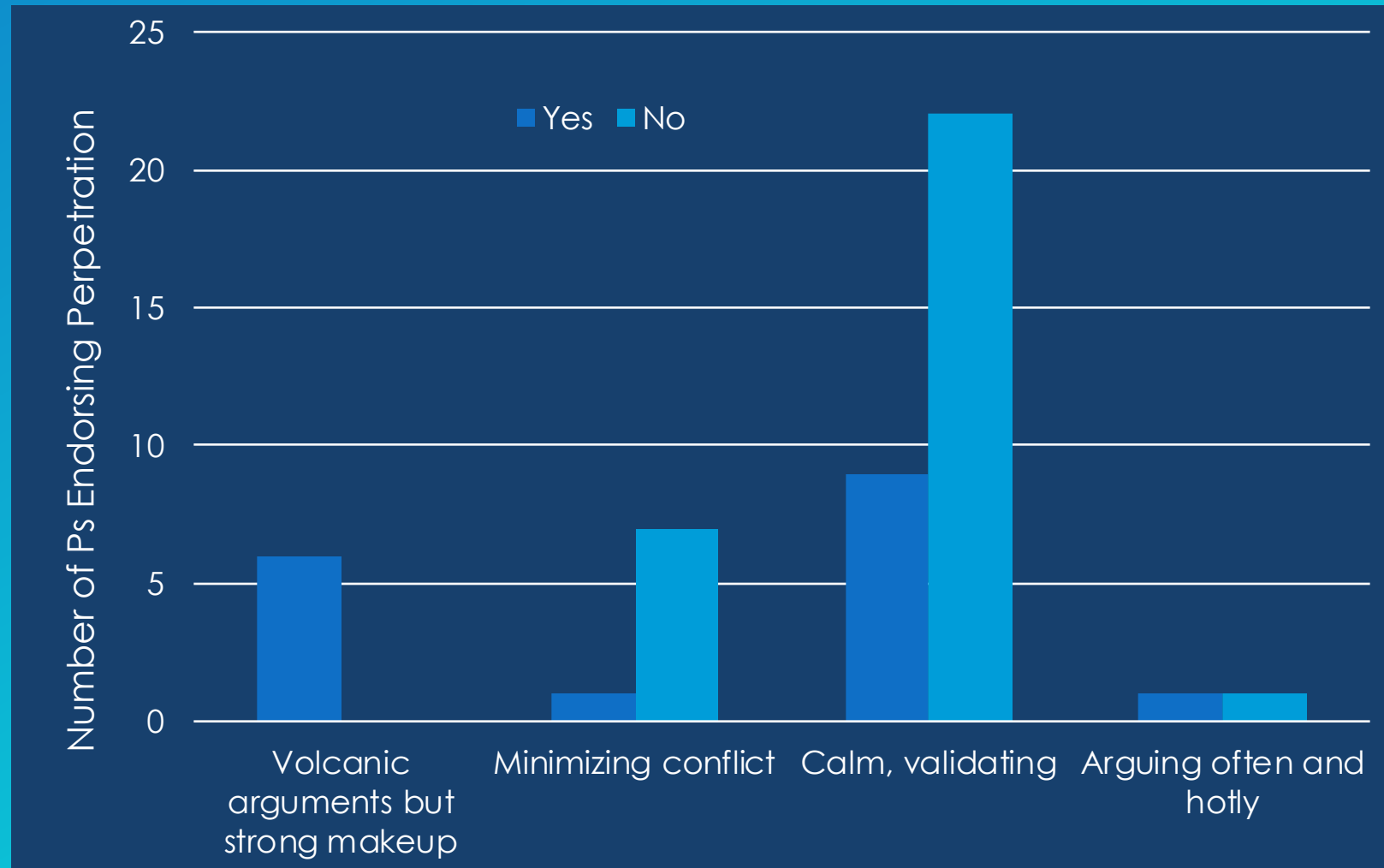
IPV Present = 1
IPV Absent = 7



$\chi^2(3)=13.38$
 $p=.003$

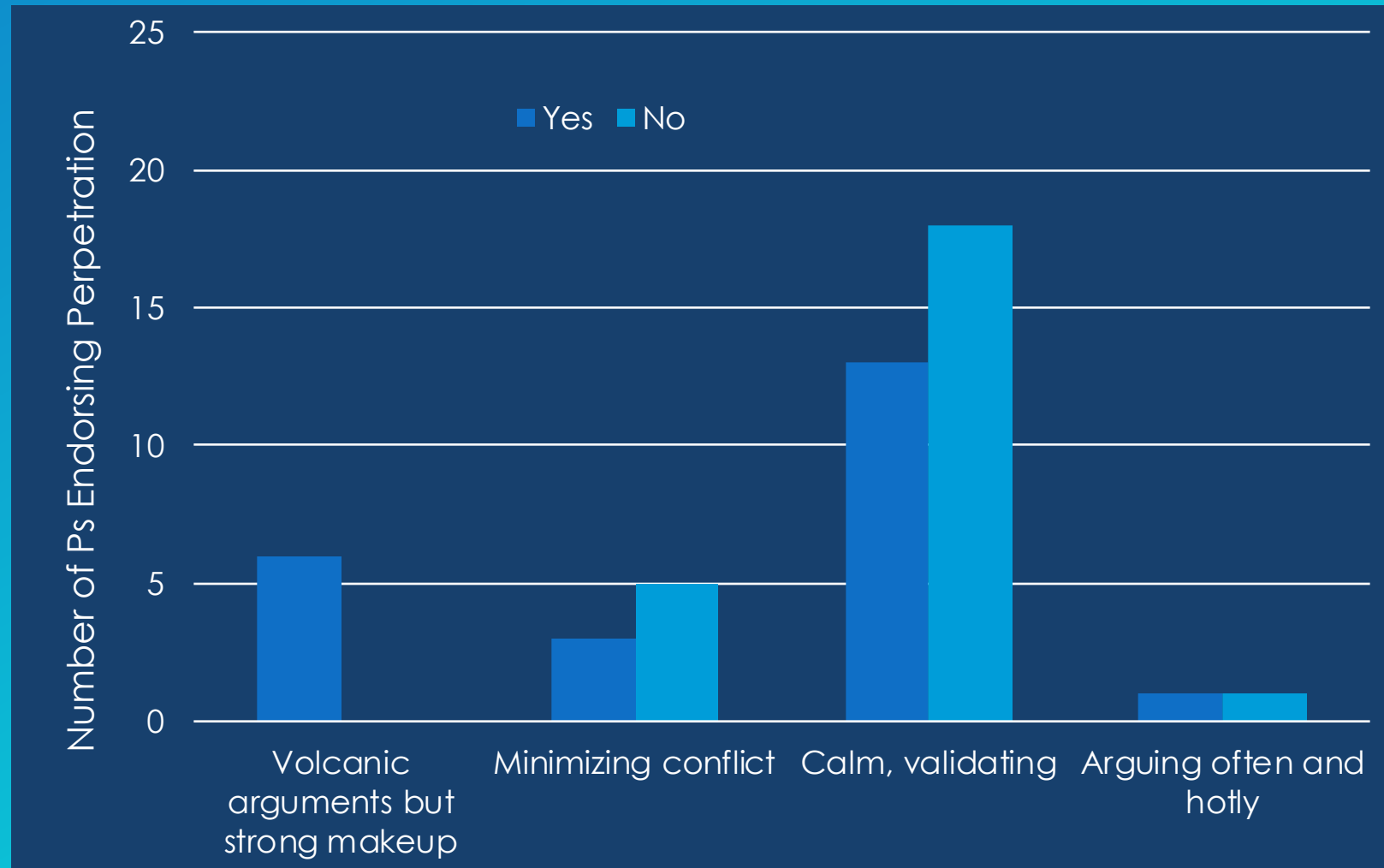
Physical IPV Perpetration

IPV Present = 6
IPV Absent = 0



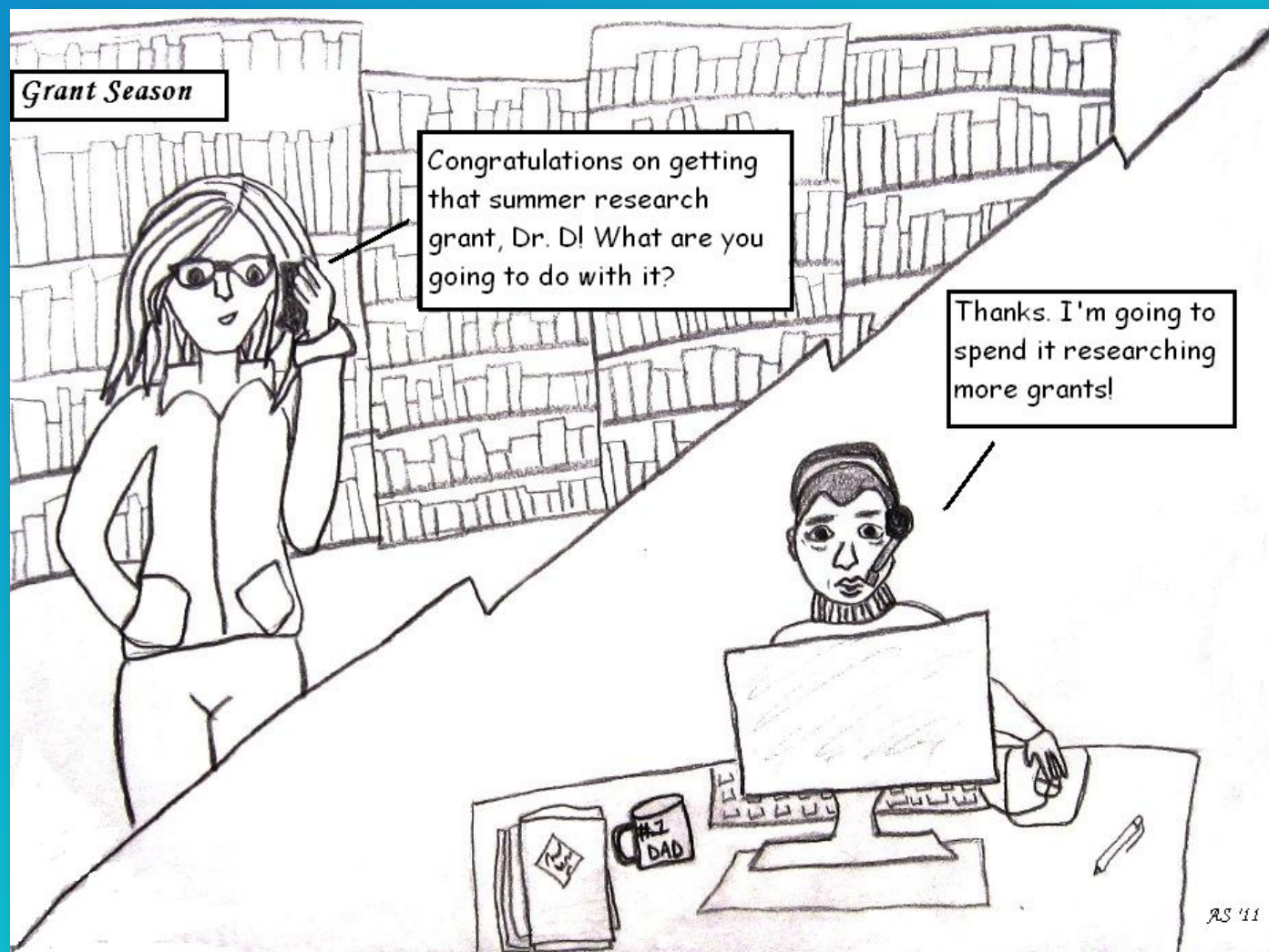
$\chi^2(3)=13.38$
 $p=.003$

Physical and Sexual IPV Perpetration



$\chi^2(3)=7.29$
 $p=.062$

Future Directions



The background is a light blue gradient with a pattern of semi-transparent, overlapping circles of varying sizes. On the left side, there is a dark blue arrow pointing to the right, with several thin, curved lines extending upwards from its base, resembling grass or reeds.

Thank you!