

# Correlation Between Anxiety, Depression, and Adverse Childhood Experiences Among Young Adult Cannabis Consumers and Non-Consumers in South Florida: Preliminary Findings from the Herbal Heart Study

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## BACKGROUND

- Many adults aged 18-35 years, seek to utilize substances including cannabis as a means of self-treatment and coping.
- Understanding the interplay between mental health disorders and adverse childhood outcomes (ACEs) is critical for effective intervention and support strategies.

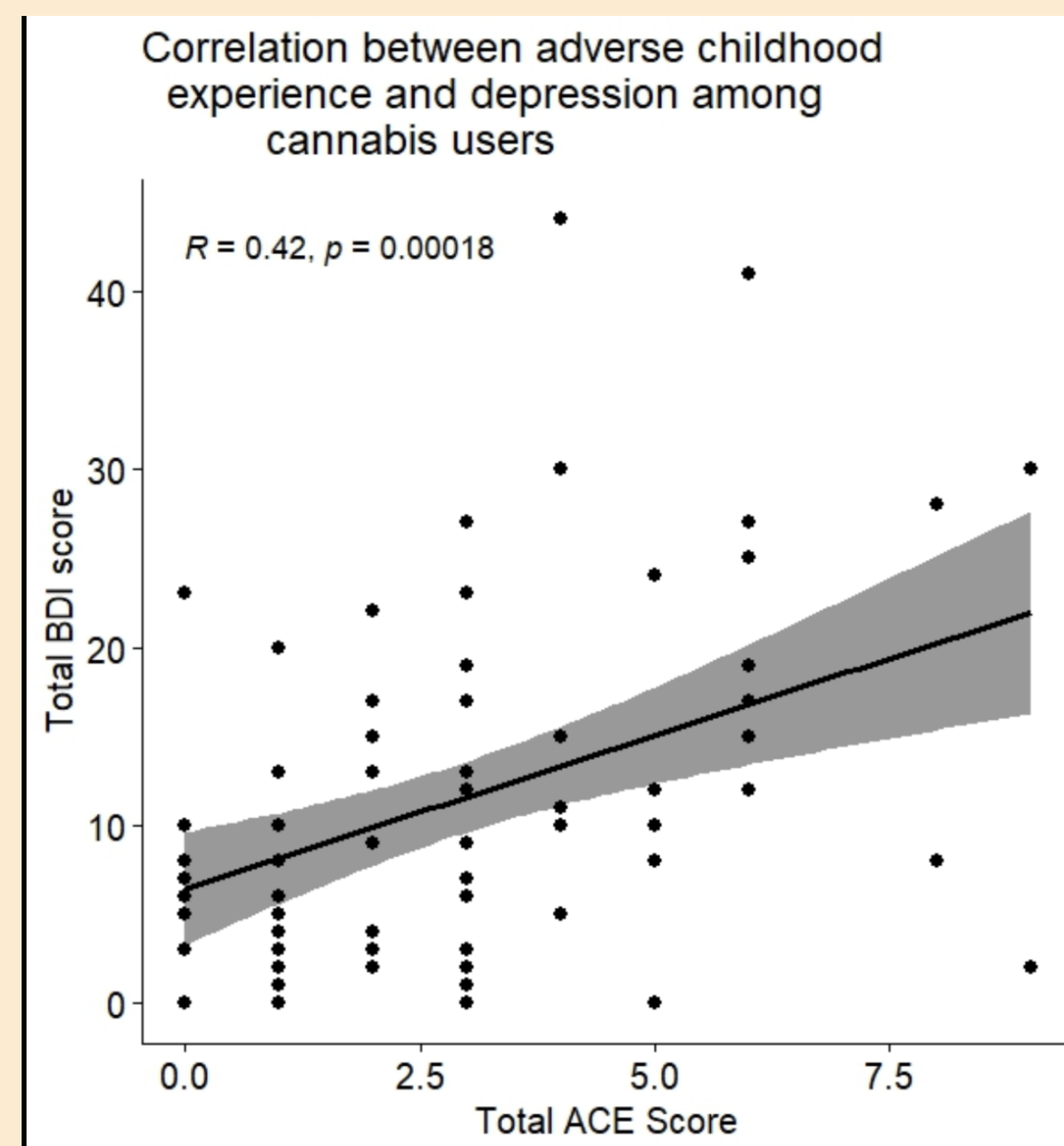
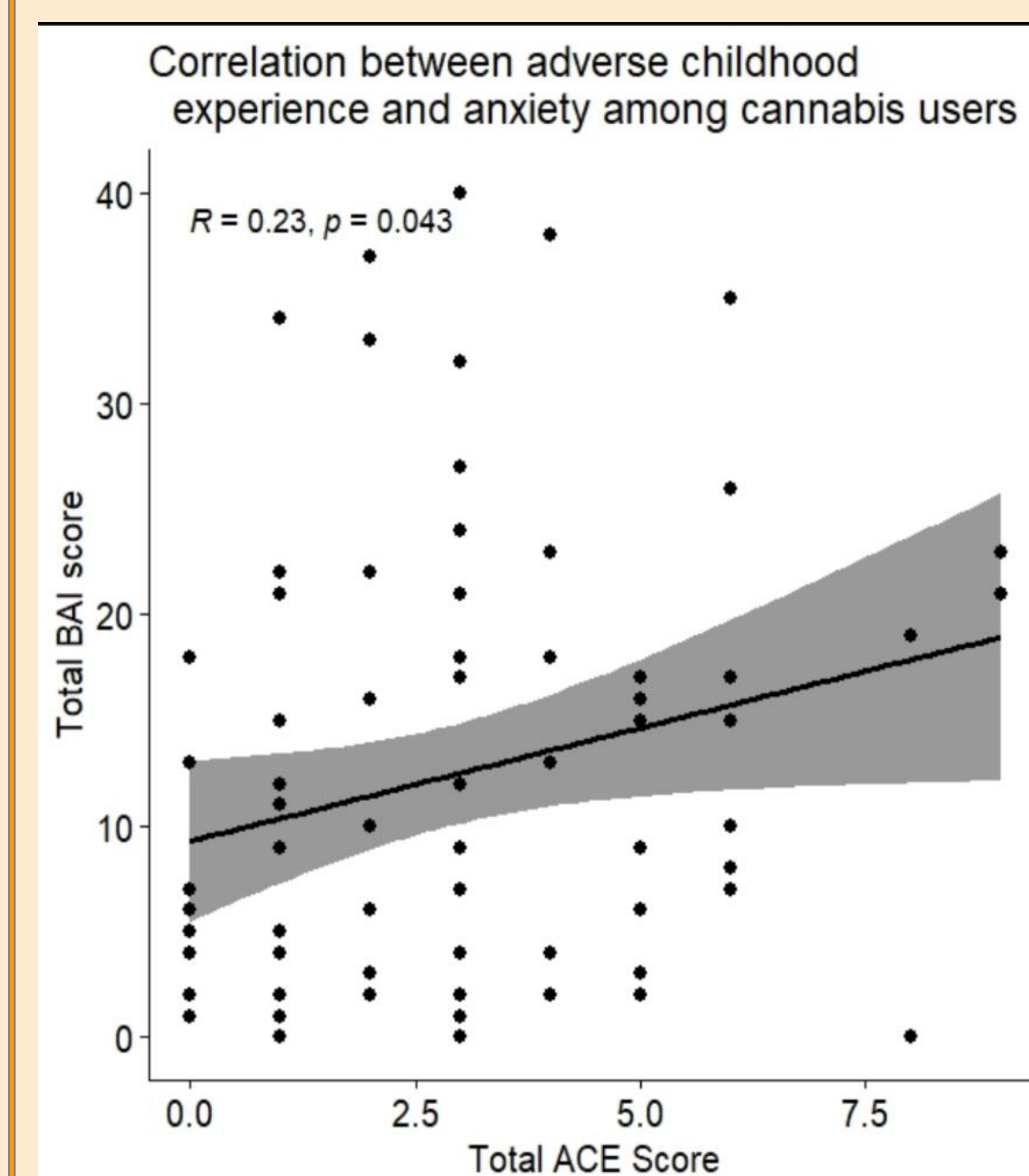
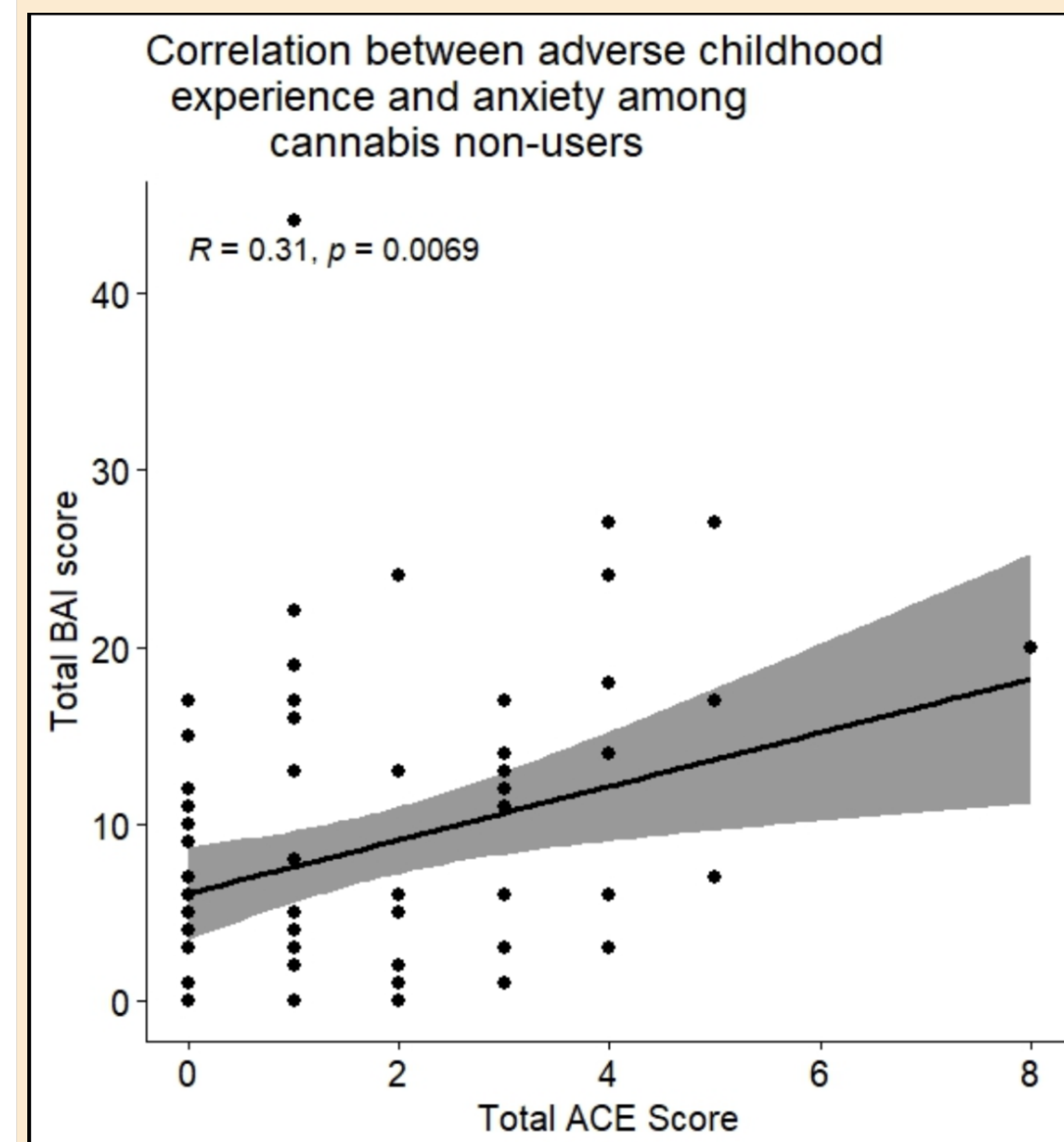
## OBJECTIVE

- Evaluate the correlation between cannabis consumption and the prevalence of mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression and anxiety, specifically in individuals with a history of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

## METHODS

- Data comes from an ongoing Herbal Heart Study cohort among 18-35 year old young adults in South Florida (N=150).
- Anxiety and depression were assessed by the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) respectively. ACEs were assessed via the 11-item ACEs questionnaire.
- Correlation analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation coefficient in R (v4.2.2) to estimate the correlation of anxiety and depression with adverse childhood experience overall and among cannabis consumers (CB+), and non-consumers (CB-).

## RESULTS



## KEY FINDINGS

- Mean age was 24.6 years old, 66.7% were female, 51.3% identified as Hispanic, and 50.7% were CB+
- In the overall sample, there was a moderately positive correlation between anxiety ( $r=0.30, p<0.001$ ) and depression ( $r=0.31, p<0.001$ ) with ACEs.
- For CB+, a weak positive correlation ( $r=0.23, p=0.04$ ) was observed between anxiety and ACE scores and CB- exhibited a moderate positive correlation ( $r=0.31, p<0.01$ ) between total anxiety and ACE scores
- A notably stronger positive correlation ( $r=0.42, p<0.001$ ) was identified between total depression and ACE scores among CB+

## CONCLUSION

- Results showed a proportional increase in anxiety with higher adverse childhood experiences among CB+ and CB-. However, CB+ had a strong positive correlation between depression and ACEs, while CB- had no statistically significant correlation.
- CB- exhibited a stronger, positively correlated relationship between anxiety and ACE scores in comparison to the CB+ group.

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