

Social Relationships and Depression Among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks



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Objectives

- ❑ To review the social support and mental health literature.
- ❑ To describe our study.
- ❑ To offer implications for research and programs to improve the mental health of Black Americans.

Race, Ethnicity & Mental Health

- ❑ Ascertainment of the causes of disparities in mental health has been elusive and complex.
- ❑ Culture, race, and ethnicity are vital considerations when assessing the prevalence of mental disorder among racial and ethnic groups.

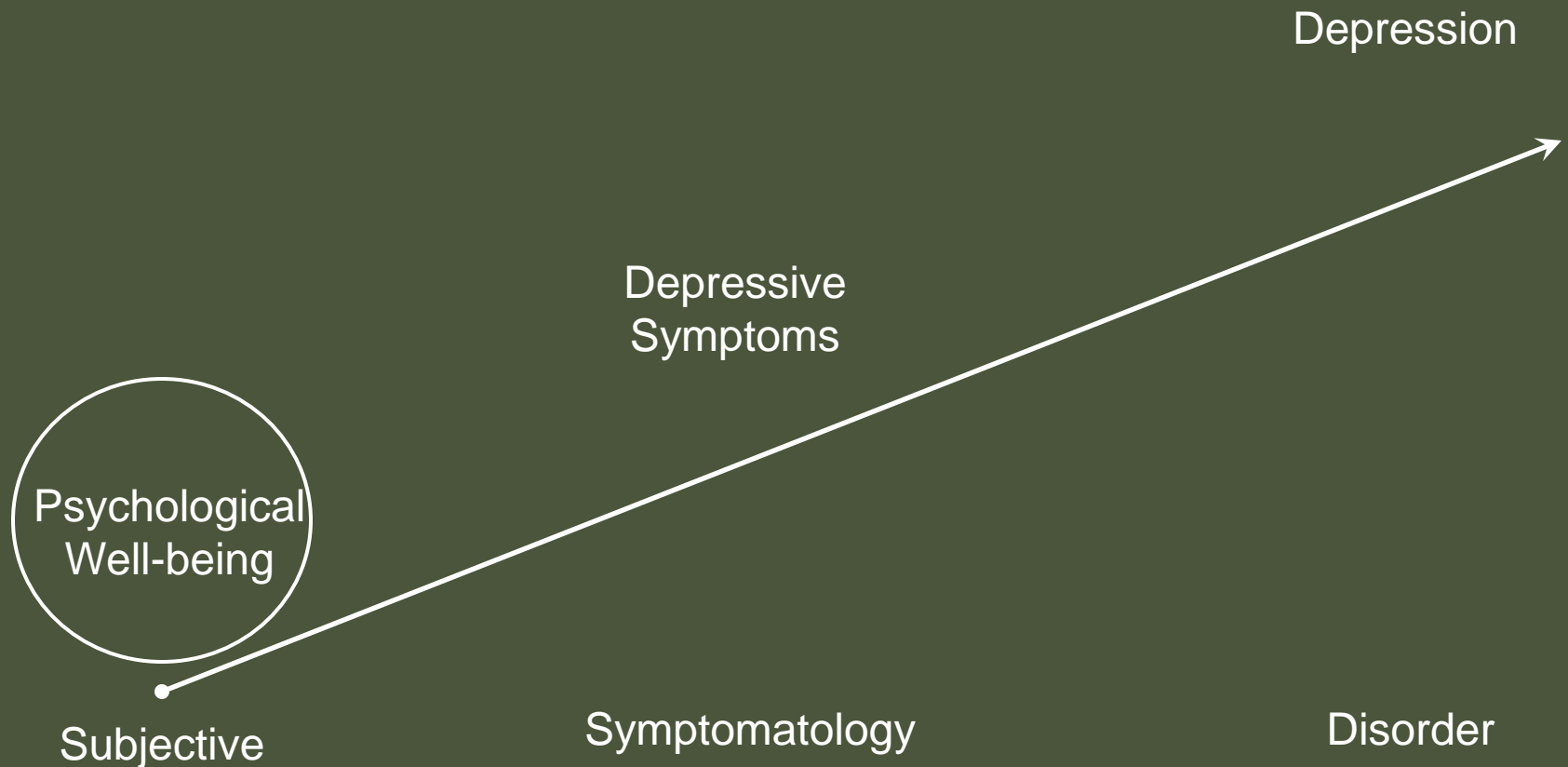
Race, Ethnicity & Mental Health

- ❑ Past studies on race, ethnicity and depression have yielded critical insights about mental illness in diverse communities.
- ❑ Most studies treat racial groups as homogeneous categories.
- ❑ Within-group differences are important.

Race, Ethnicity & Mental Health

- Available studies of race, ethnicity and the prevalence and persistence of depression have produced inconsistent findings.

Mental Health Disparities



Caribbean Blacks

- ❑ Most studies ignore the cultural and economic diversity among the Black American population.
- ❑ Black Americans are becoming more diverse each year, fueled by the immigration of Blacks of Caribbean descent.



Caribbean Blacks

- ❑ 1990: Blacks in the U.S. totaled about 30 million.
- ❑ 2000: 36.2 million.
- ❑ Of the nearly 4% of Blacks who were foreign born, 60% were from the Caribbean.
- ❑ They make up 25% of the Black American population in major cities such as Boston, New York, Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

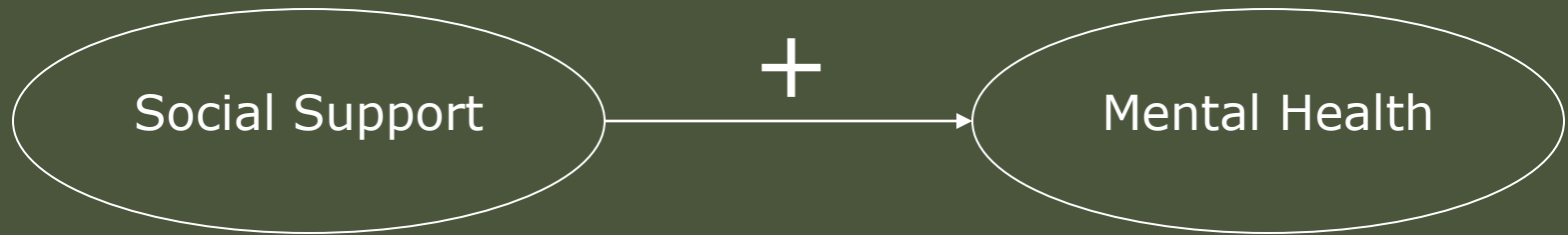
Caribbean Blacks

- ❑ Caribbean Blacks have higher levels of *psychological distress* compared to U.S.-born Blacks.
- ❑ Higher *depressive symptoms* and *depression* among Caribbean immigrants compared to the general population (in England).
- ❑ Lower rates of *depression* among Caribbean-born women compared to their U.S.-born counterparts.

Social Support & Depression

- ❑ Social support may explain the lower prevalence, but higher persistence and impairment from depression.
- ❑ Social support a protective factor, but difficult to maintain when ill.
- ❑ Social support may not be an effective buffer against some risk factors.

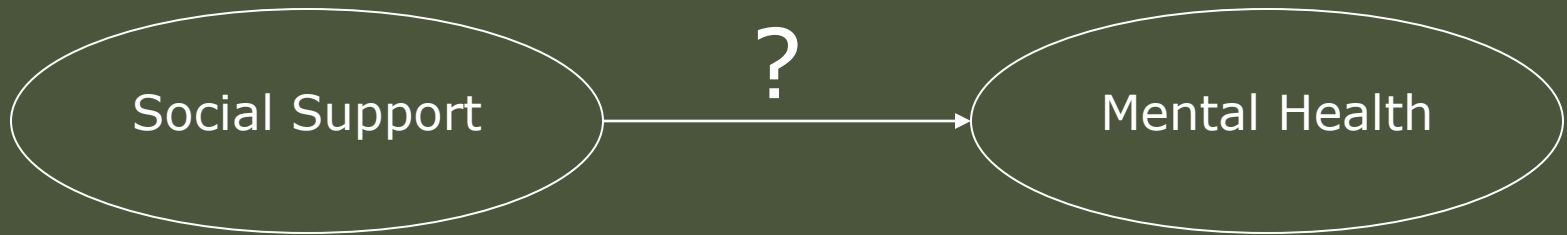
Social Support: Protective Factor



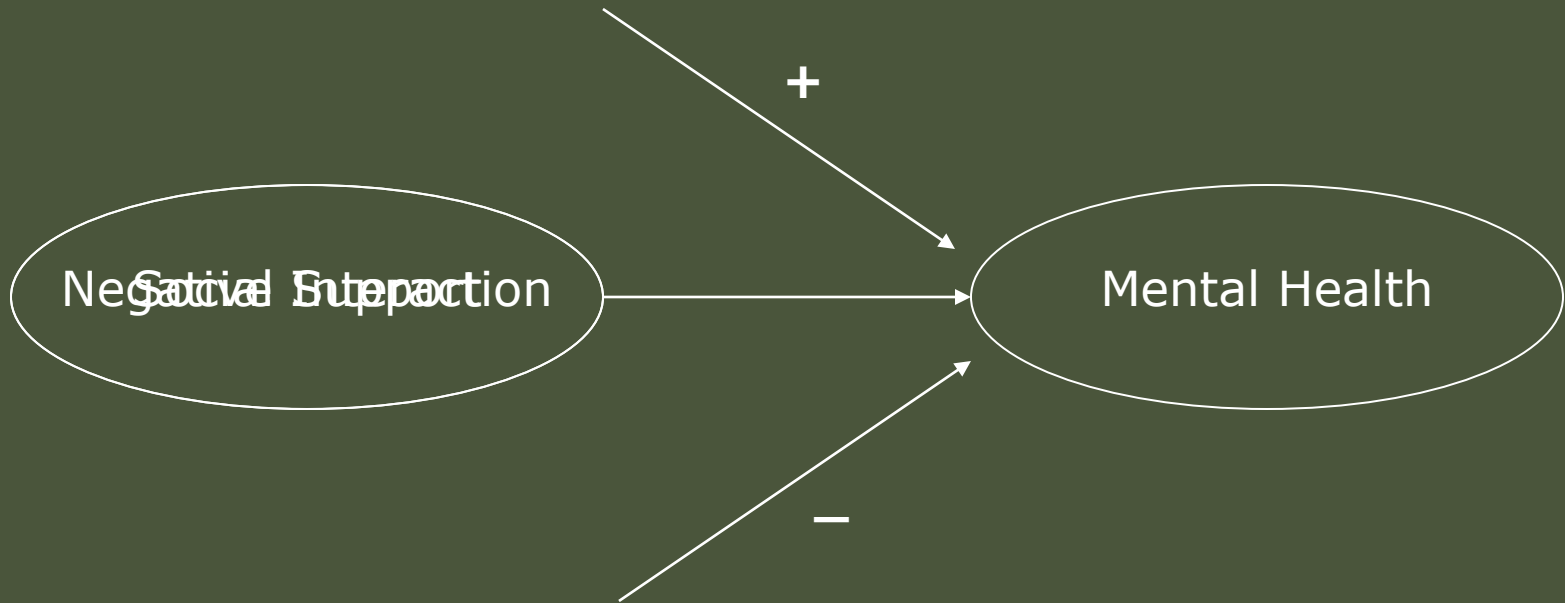
Social Support & Depression

- ❑ The quality and quantity of support is associated with depression.
- ❑ Low levels of social support is the most important risk factor for depression among African Americans.
 - ❑ controlling for medications, environmental factors, functional status, biomedical factors, and health service utilization characteristics.

Social Support: Protective Factor?



Dual Nature of Social Relations



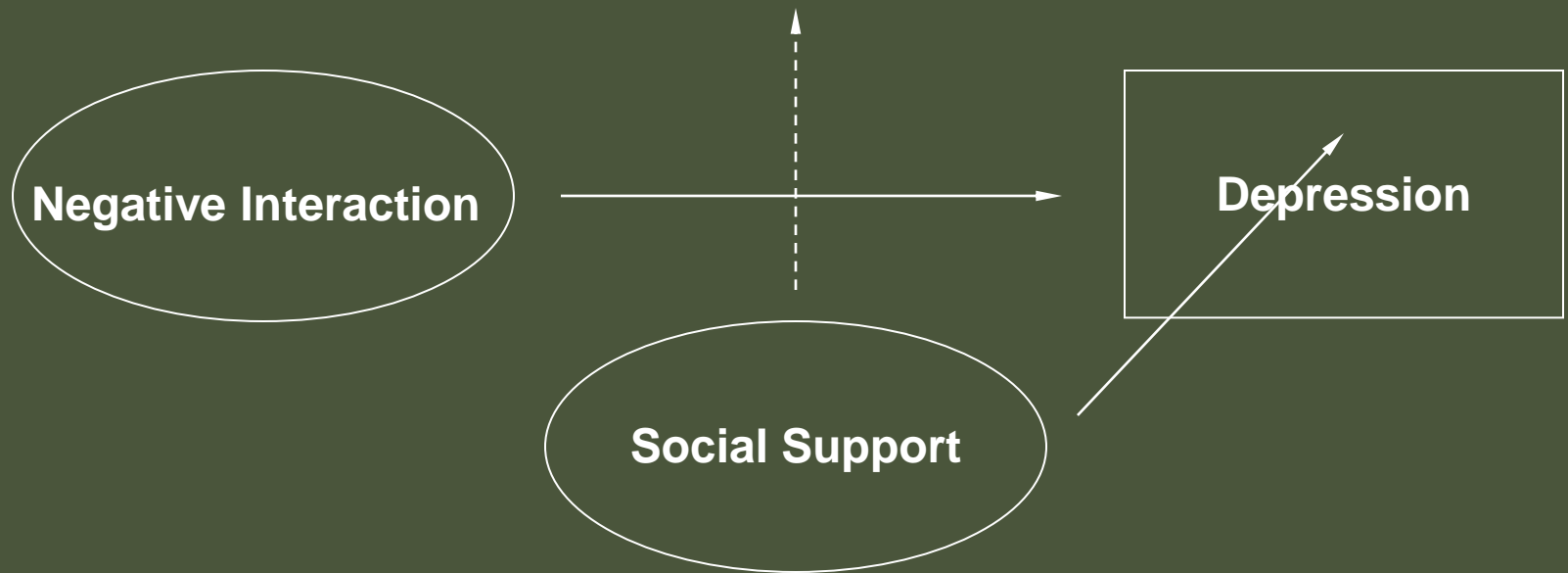
Negative Interactions and Depression

- ❑ Negative interactions are a direct source of stress that have serious consequences for physical and mental health.
 - Characterized by conflict, excessive demands and criticism.
- ❑ Negative interactions not systematically examined in diverse populations.

Research Question Guiding this Study

- ❑ What are the relationships among social support, negative interaction and depression among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks?
- ❑ Does social support buffer the impact of negative interaction on depression?

Conceptual Model



Analytic Approach

- Logistic Regression
- SAS-callable SUDAAN
- All analyses weighted and took into account complex survey design characteristics.

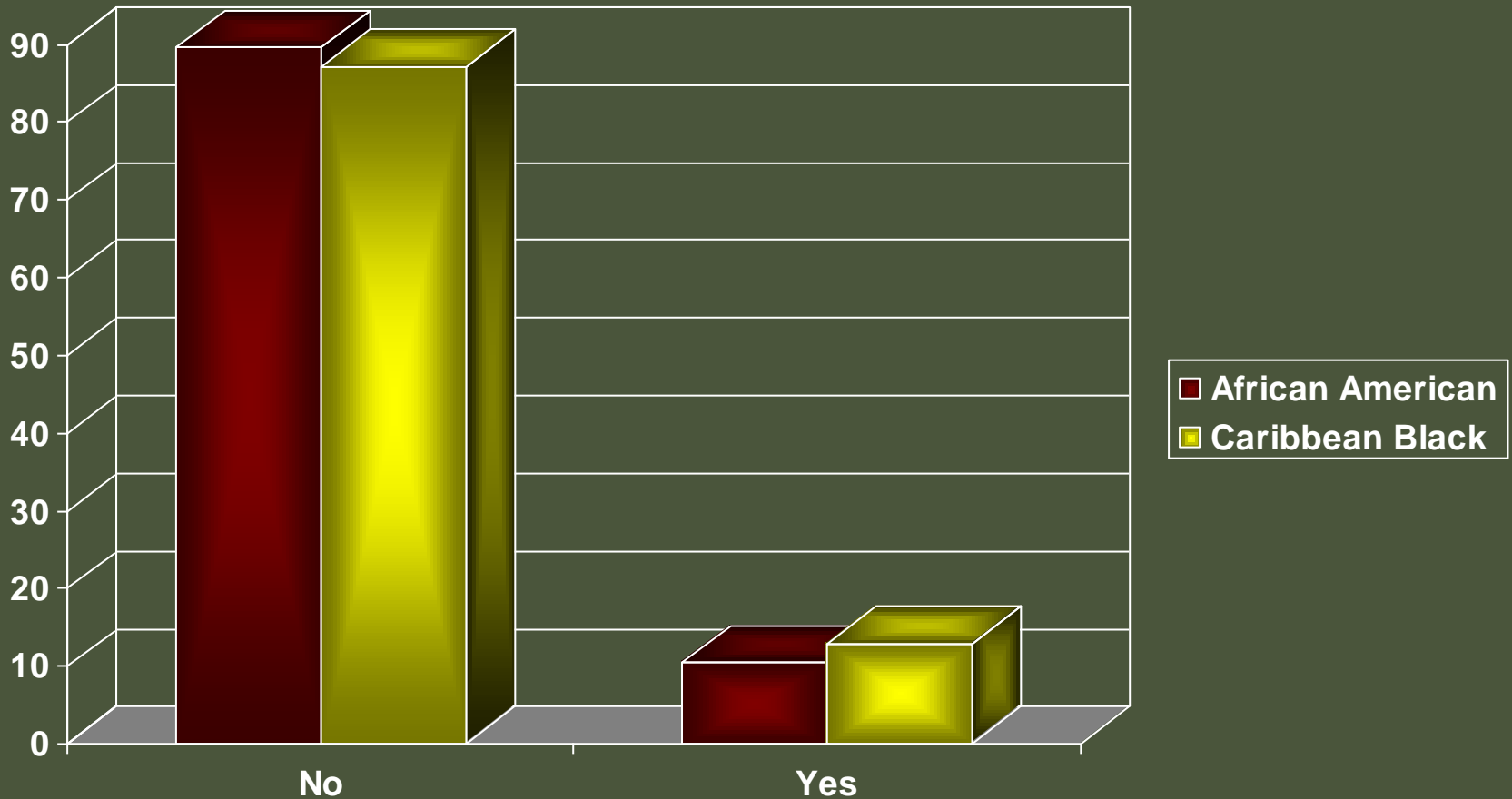
Data

- The National Survey of American Life (NSAL)
 - Face-to-face interviews
 - 3,570 African Americans
 - 1,621 Blacks of Caribbean descent
 - Response rate
 - 70.7% for African Americans
 - 77.7% for Caribbean Blacks
- Includes the first major probability sample of Caribbean Blacks ever conducted.

Distribution of Sample Sociodemographic Characteristics

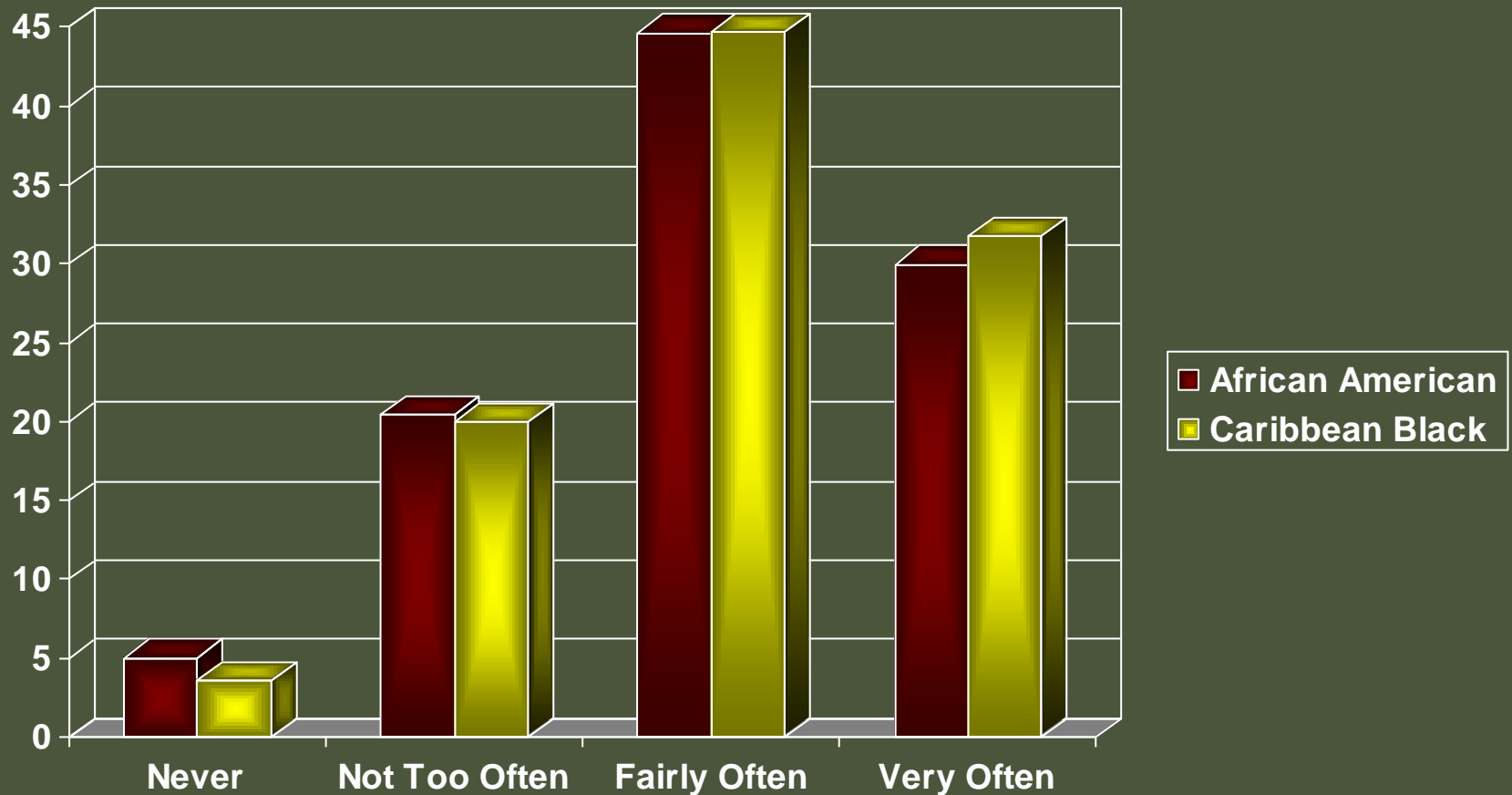


Lifetime Major Depression



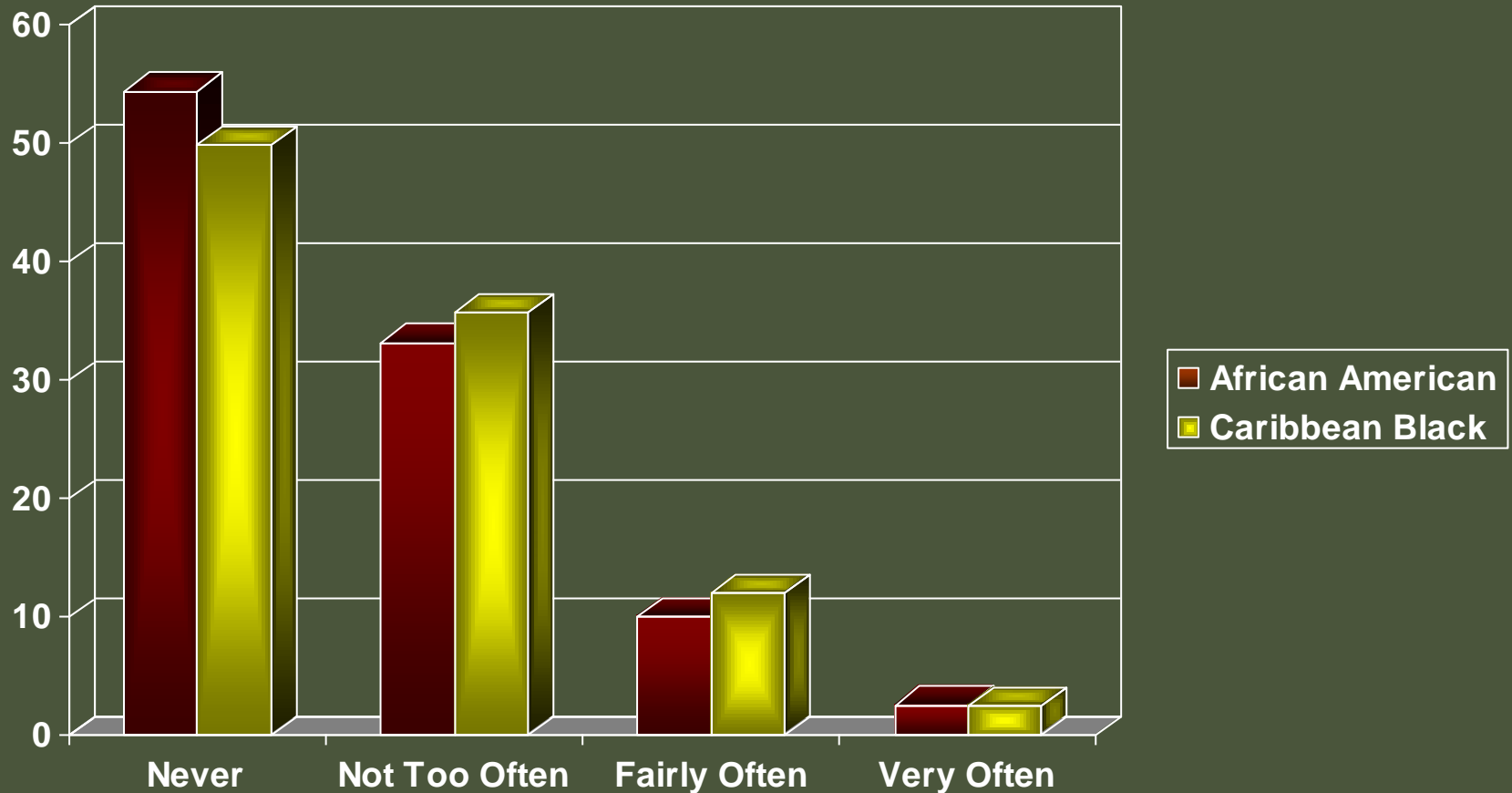
Depression: Depressive disorder measured using the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview for lifetime major depression (*the occurrence of the problem in one's lifetime*).

Social Support



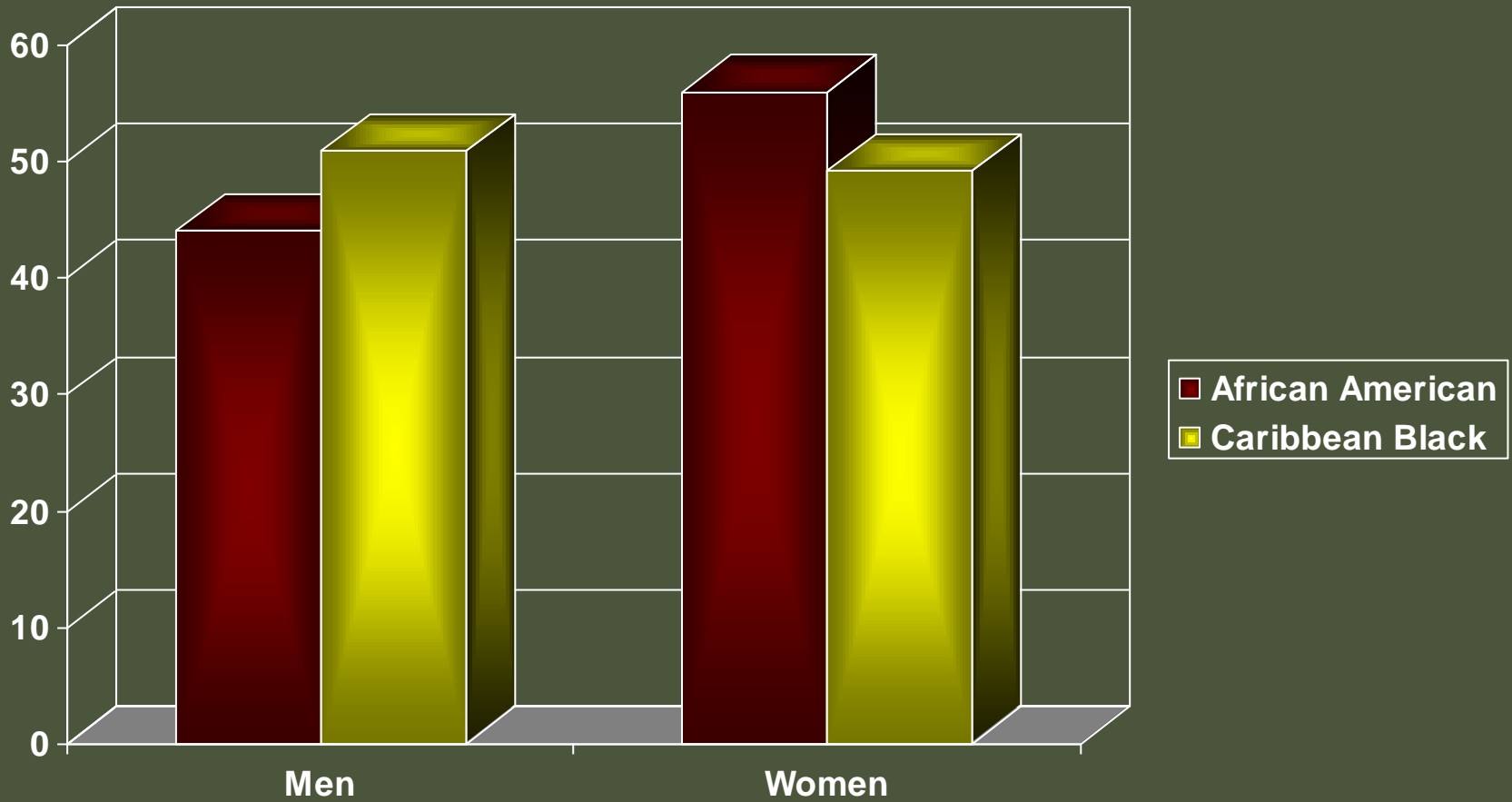
Social support: "How often does your family make you feel loved and cared for?; How often does your family listen to you talk about your private problems and concerns?; How often does your family express interest and concern in your well-being?"

Negative Interaction

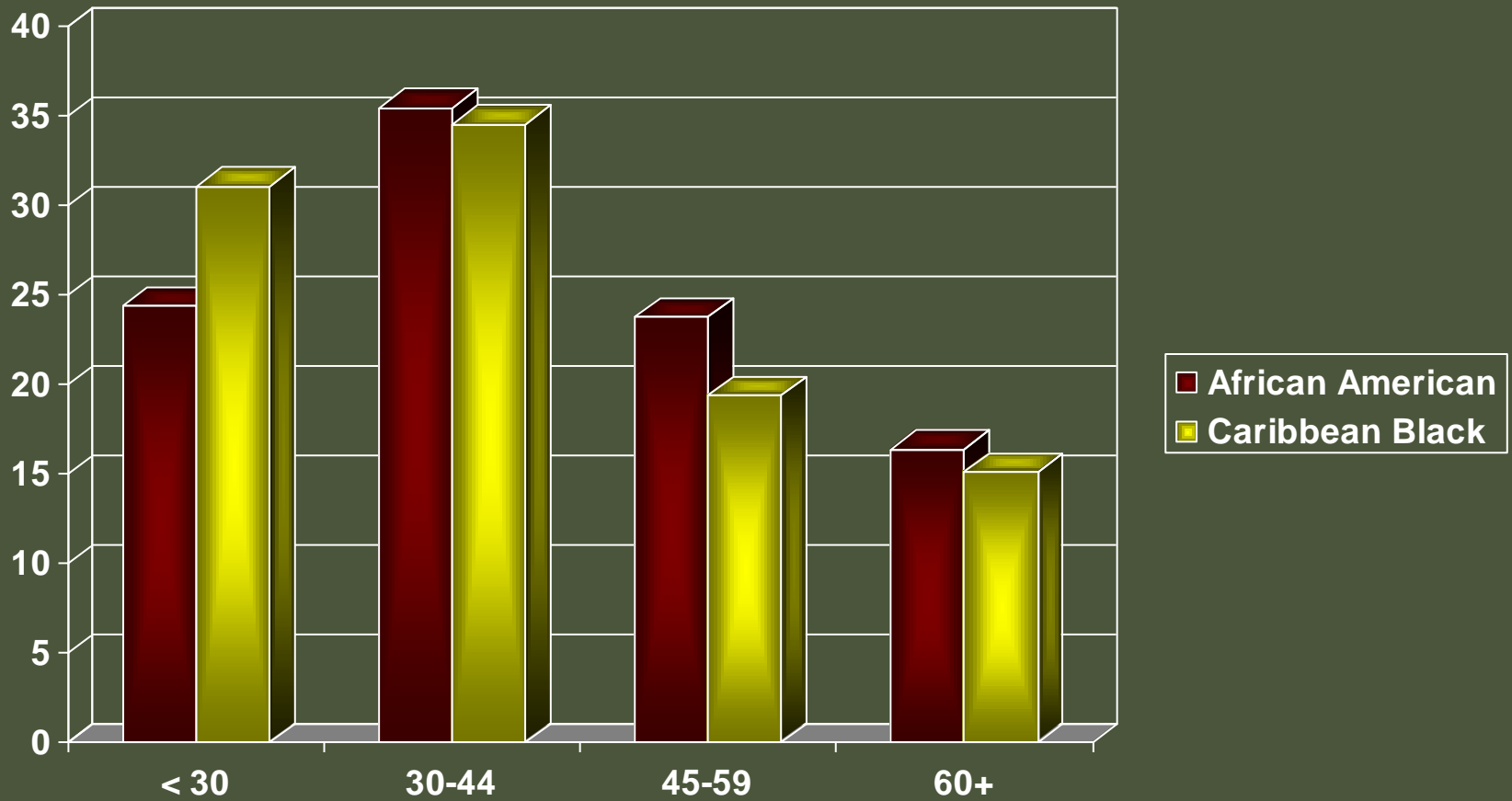


Negative interaction: "How often does your family make too many demands on you?; How often does your family criticize you and the things you do?; How often does your family try to take advantage of you?"

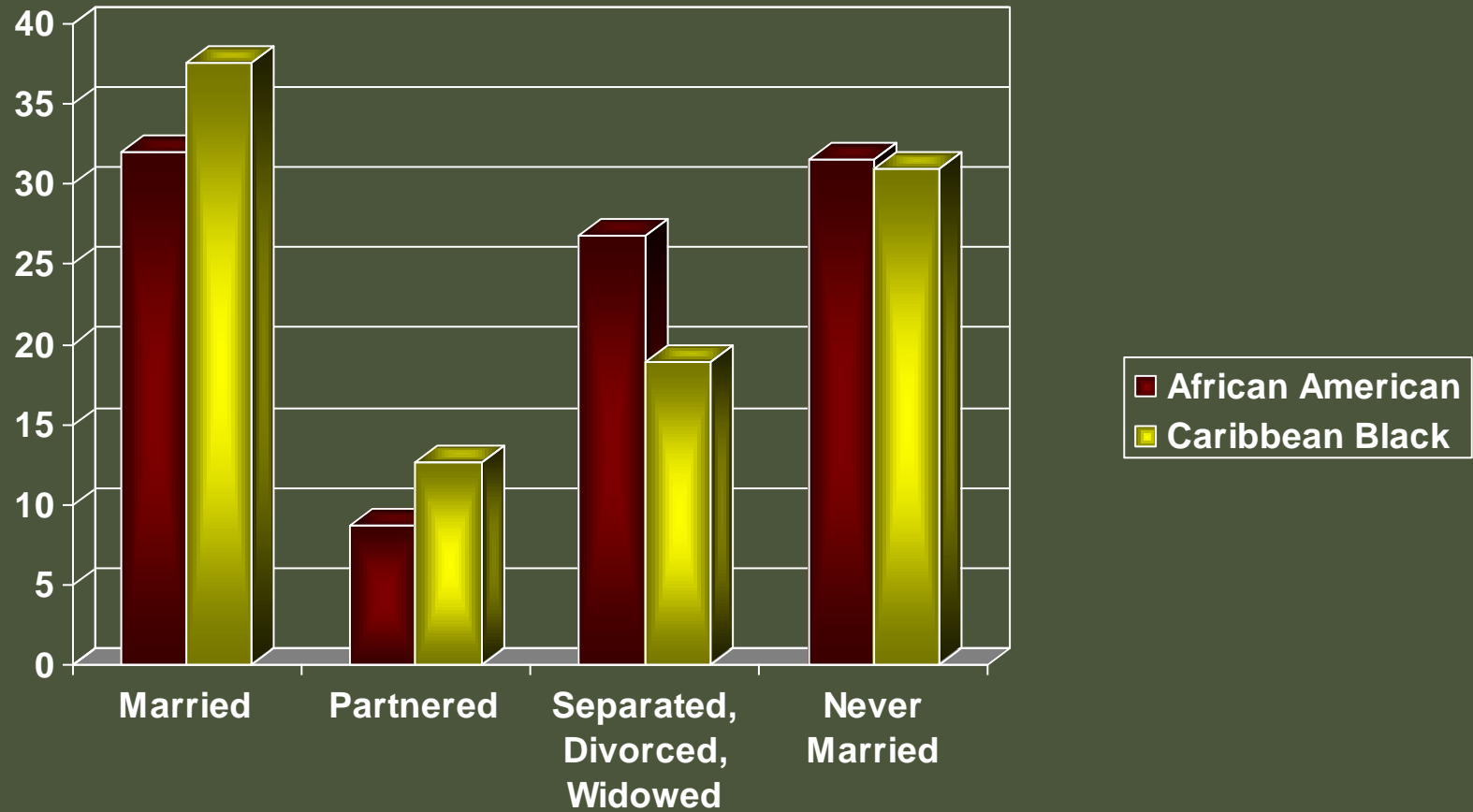
Gender



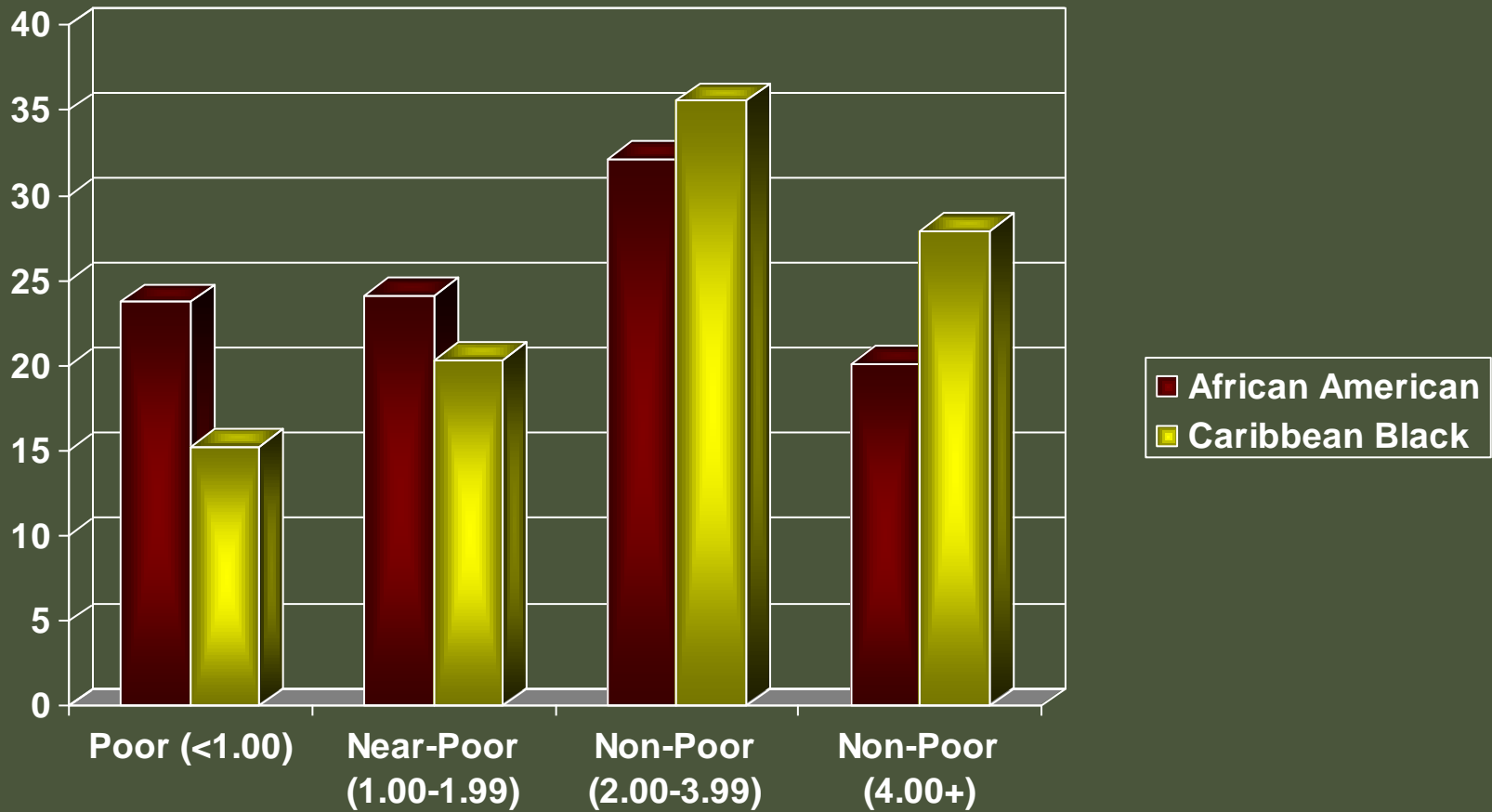
Age Group*



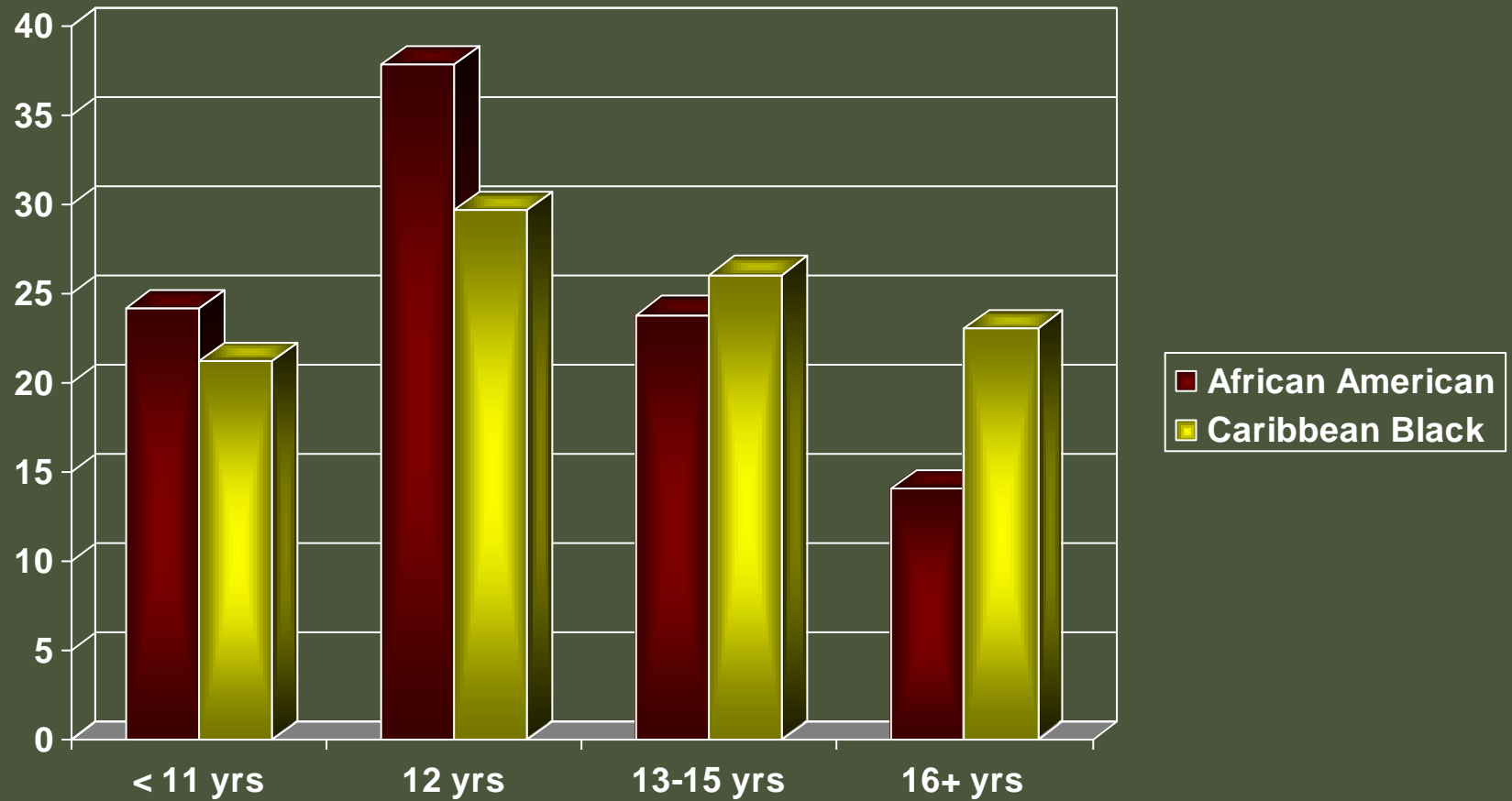
Marital Status*



Poverty Level*



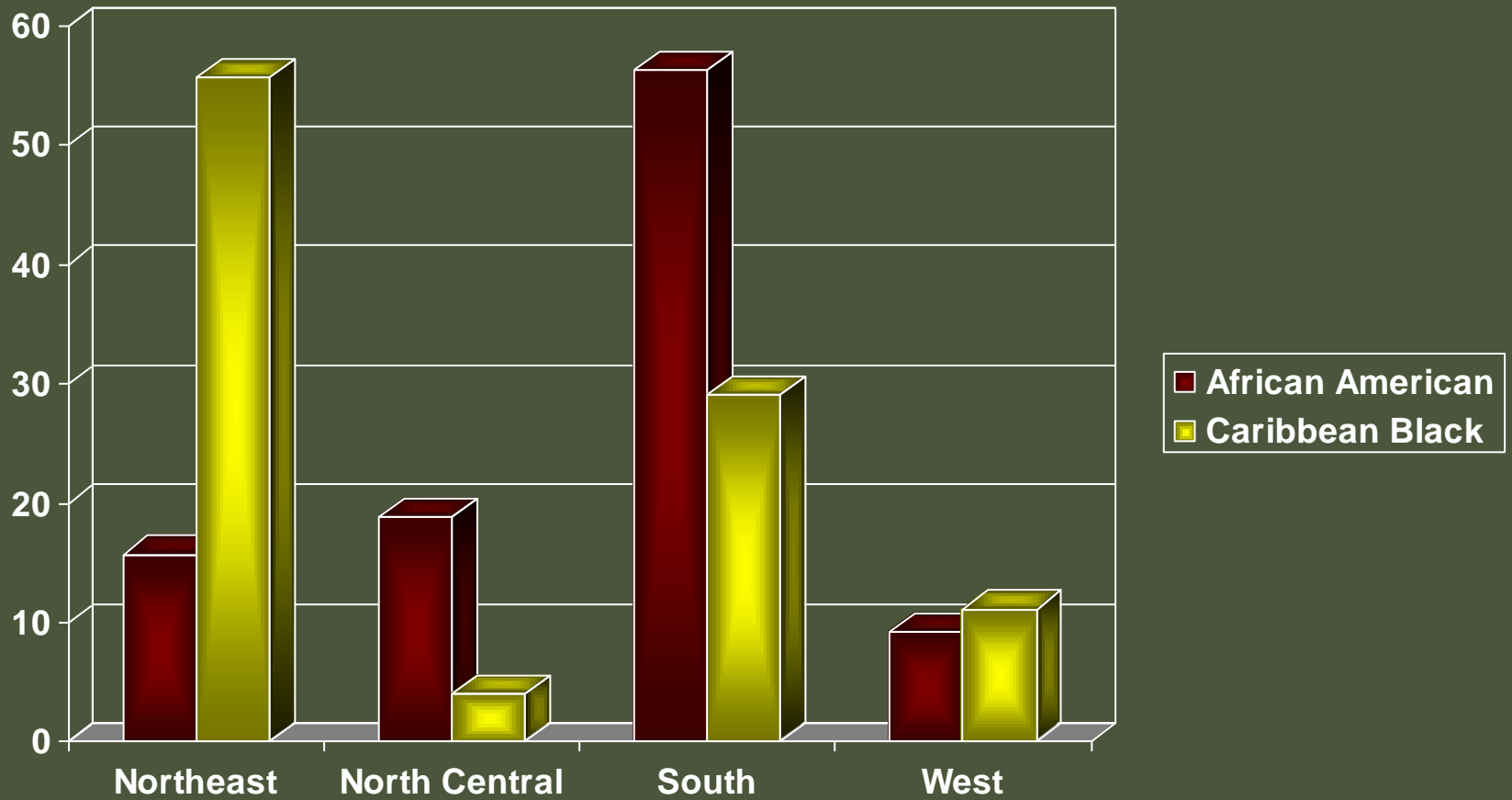
Education*



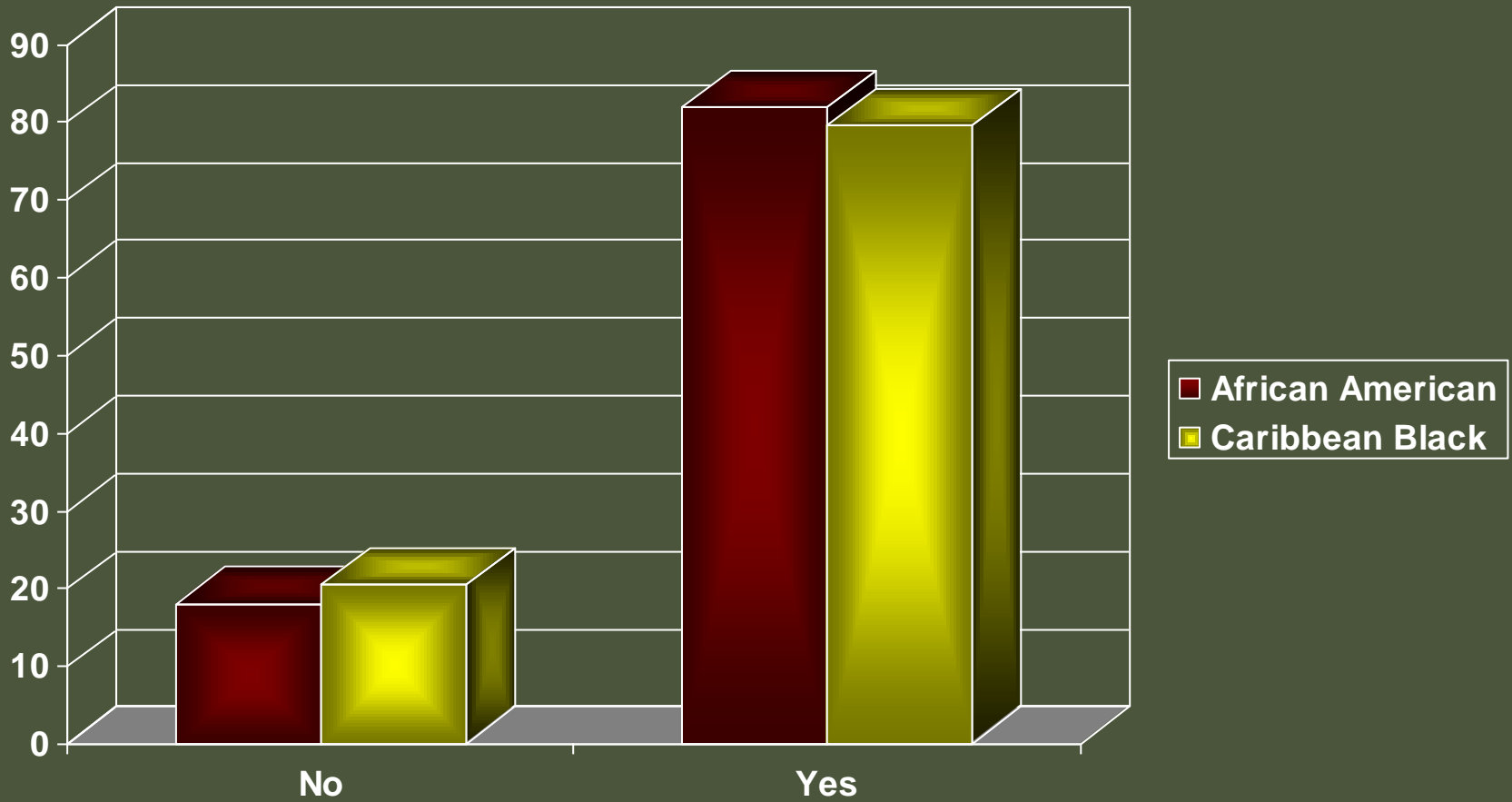
Work Status*



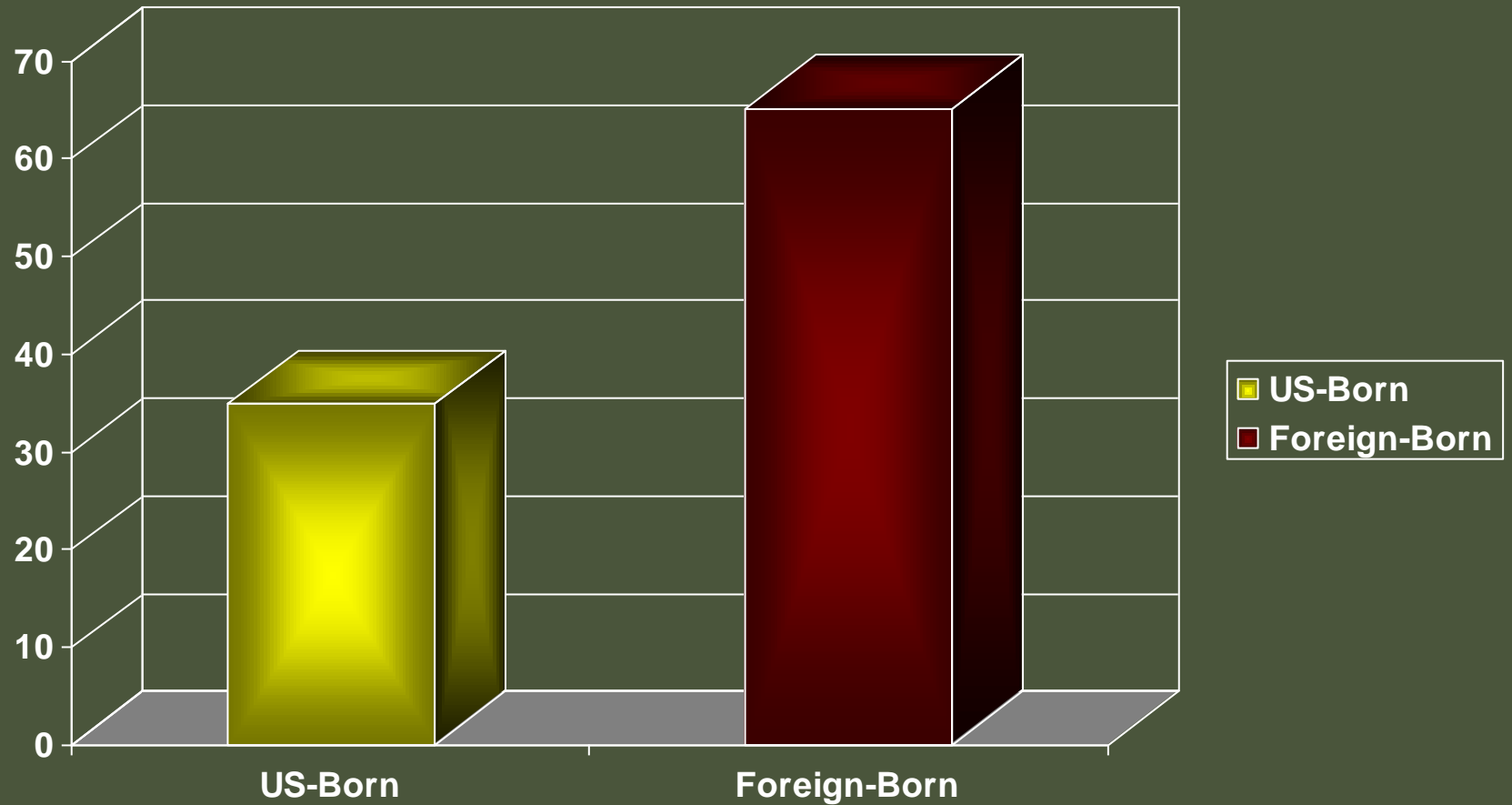
Region*



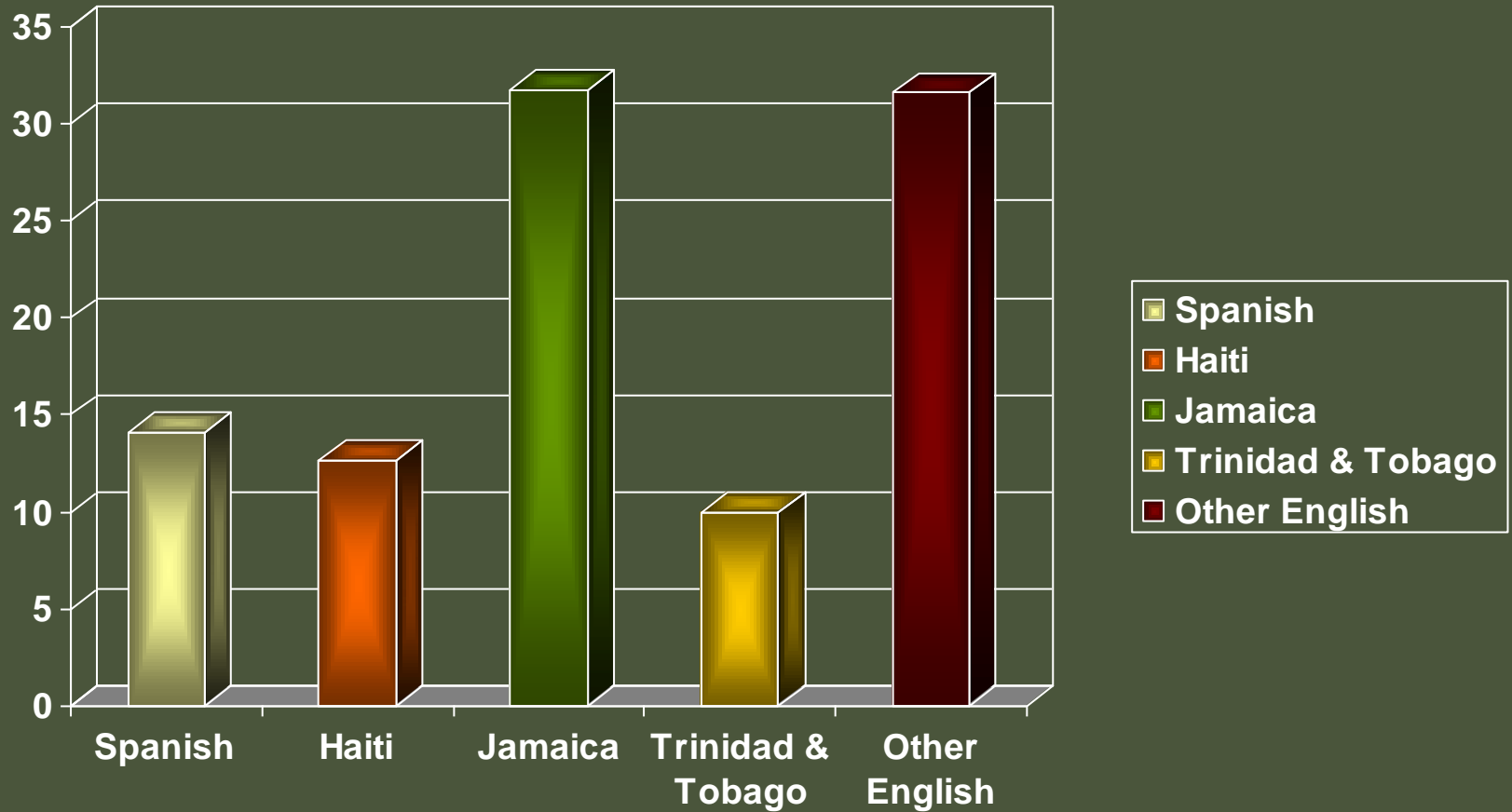
Insurance



Caribbean Blacks: Nativity



Caribbean Blacks: Ethnicity



Results



	African Americans OR (95% CI)	Caribbean Blacks OR (95% CI)
Negative Interaction	1.48 (1.30, 1.68)	1.67 (1.21, 2.31)
Social Support	0.80 (0.67, 0.96)	0.72 (0.40, 1.29)
Gender: Women vs. Men	1.81 (1.40, 2.33)	1.42 (0.65, 3.11)
Age	0.99 (0.97, 1.00)	0.99 (0.96, 1.03)
Marital Status		
Partnered vs. Married	1.06 (0.59, 1.91)	2.17 (0.78, 6.03)
Sep/Wid/Div vs. Married	1.75 (1.13, 2.70)	2.95 (0.69, 12.68)
Never Married vs. Married	1.14 (0.79, 1.64)	3.89 (1.93, 7.87)
Poverty Level		
Near Poor (1.0-1.9) vs. Poor (<1.0)	0.83 (0.57, 1.20)	1.44 (0.57, 3.59)
Non-Poor (2.0-3.9) vs. Poor (<1.0)	1.23 (0.86, 1.76)	0.96 (0.42, 2.19)
Non-Poor (4.0+) vs. Poor (<1.0)	0.99 (0.66, 1.48)	0.60 (0.21, 1.69)
Education		
12 yrs vs. < 12 yrs.	0.79 (0.55, 1.13)	1.29 (0.47, 3.59)
13-15 yrs vs. < 12 yrs	0.82 (0.51, 1.31)	1.83 (0.55, 6.09)
16+ yrs vs. < 12 yrs	1.04 (0.61, 1.78)	2.85 (1.05, 7.76)
Work Status		
Unemployed vs. Employed	1.14 (0.76, 1.71)	0.53 (0.29, 0.96)
Not in Labor Force vs. Employed	0.89 (0.62, 1.28)	0.54 (0.27, 1.05)
Insurance: Yes vs. No	0.87 (0.57, 1.33)	0.87 (0.37, 2.09)
Region		
Northeast vs. South	1.80 (1.43, 2.27)	0.44 (0.23, 0.84)
North Central vs. South	1.97 (1.49, 2.60)	0.19 (0.03, 1.20)
West vs. South	0.94 (0.58, 1.50)	1.39 (0.35, 5.42)
Social Desirability	0.21 (0.11, 0.41)	0.37 (0.04, 3.02)
Nativity: Foreign-born vs. US-born		0.56 (0.25, 1.24)
Ethnicity		
Spanish vs. Jamaica		1.69 (0.58, 4.92)
Haiti vs. Jamaica		1.15 (0.42, 3.14)
Trinidad/Tobago vs. Jamaica		1.69 (0.75, 3.81)
Other English vs. Jamaica		2.50 (1.40, 4.45)

Interaction between Social Support & Negative Interaction

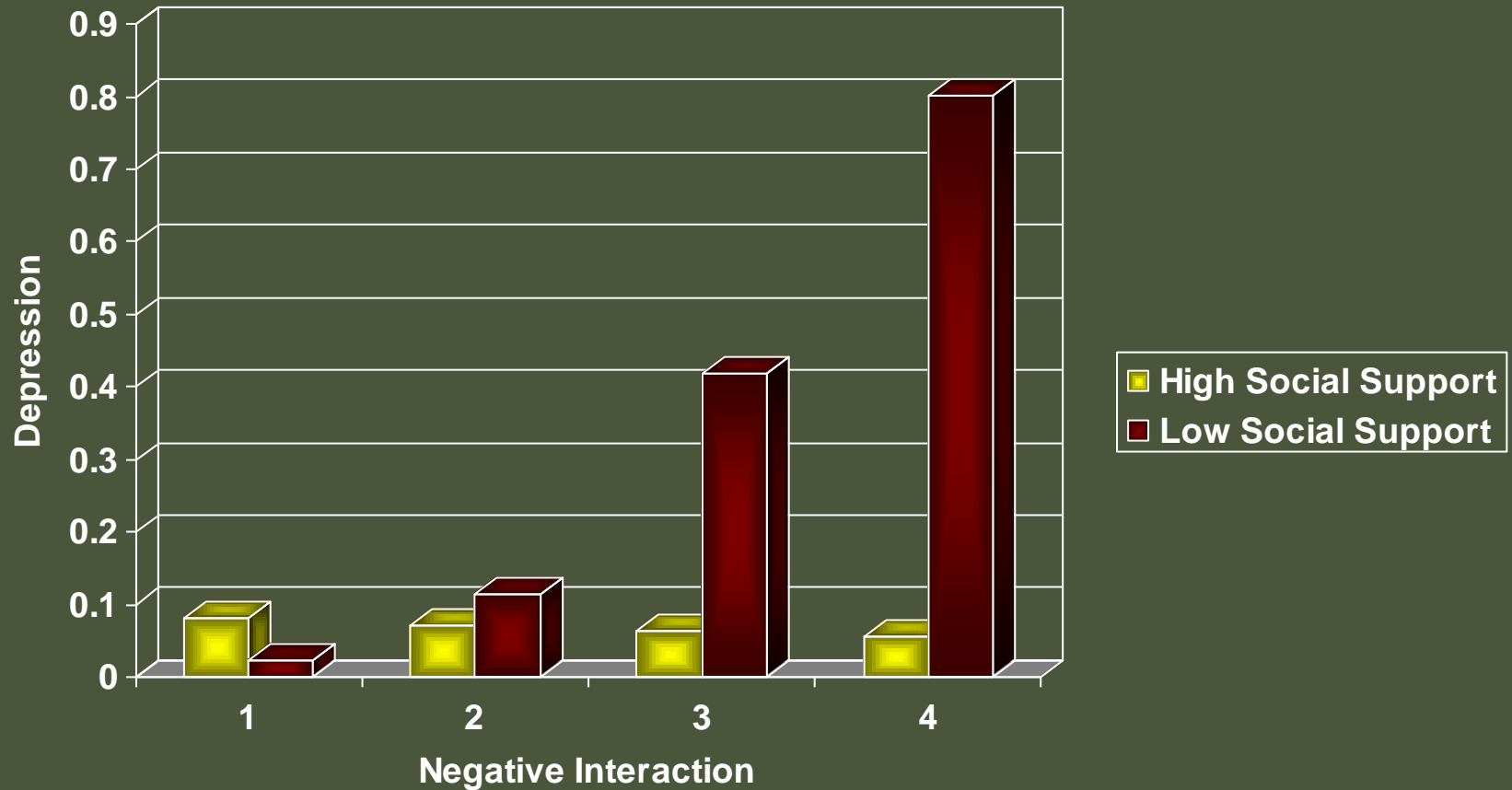
- African Americans, no significant interaction:

$$t = 0.21, 1 \text{ df}, p = 0.83$$

- Caribbean Blacks, significant interaction:

$$t = 8.50, 1 \text{ df}, p = .005$$

Probabilities of Depression among Caribbean Blacks



Summary of Findings:

African Americans & Depression

- ❑ Negative interaction was associated with higher odds of having a history of major depression.
- ❑ More social support received was associated with lower odds of having a history of depression.
- ❑ Social support does not buffer the impact of negative interaction on depression.

Summary of Findings:

Caribbean Blacks & Depression

- ❑ Negative interaction was associated with higher odds of having a history of major depression.
- ❑ More social support received was not significantly associated with having a history of major depression.
- ❑ Low levels of social support exacerbate the impact of negative interaction on depression.

Study Implications

- Findings highlight the need to consider the heterogeneity within the Black population.
- Findings have implications for the use of social networks in the prevention and treatment of depression Black Americans.

Study Implications

- ❑ We need to consider the type and quality of family interactions in describing the epidemiology of mental health problems experienced by Black Americans.
- ❑ Social support and negative interactions should be measured and assessed separately as independent predictors of depression.
- ❑ Programs that foster social support may protect against poor mental health among African Americans, and buffer the deleterious effects of negative interactions among Caribbean Blacks.

Thank you

