

Effects of Depressive Symptoms and Inflammation on Social Behavior



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Introduction

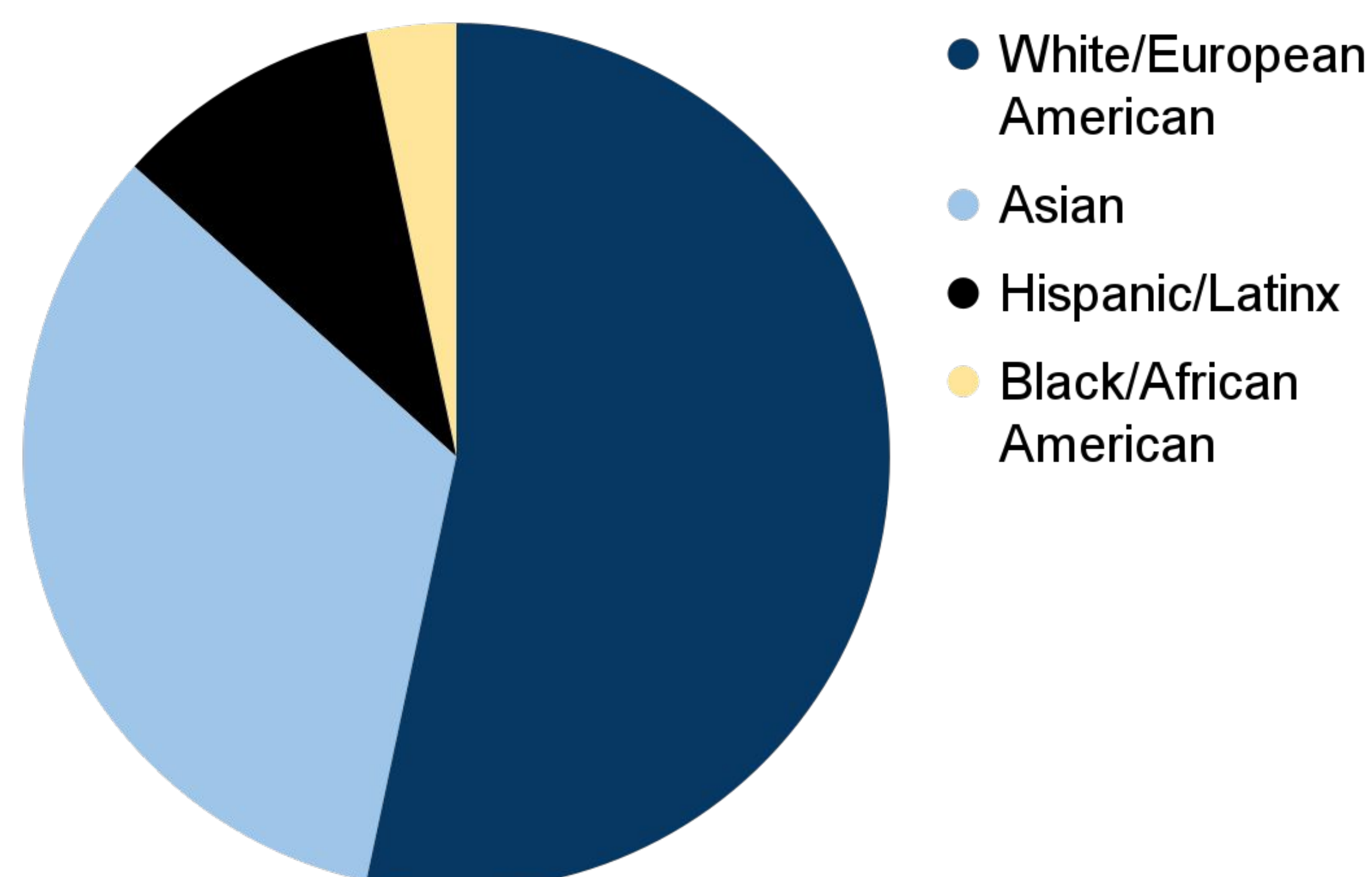
- Depression, inflammation, and social behavior are highly interconnected
- Higher depressive symptoms are associated with less rewarding and fewer social interactions
- Depressed individuals have higher levels of inflammation compared to healthy controls
- Emerging research has shown that inflammation differentially facilitates different social behavior depending on social target (e.g., social approach toward close others; social withdrawal from strangers)

Research question: How do depressive symptoms moderate the relationship between inflammation and social behavior?

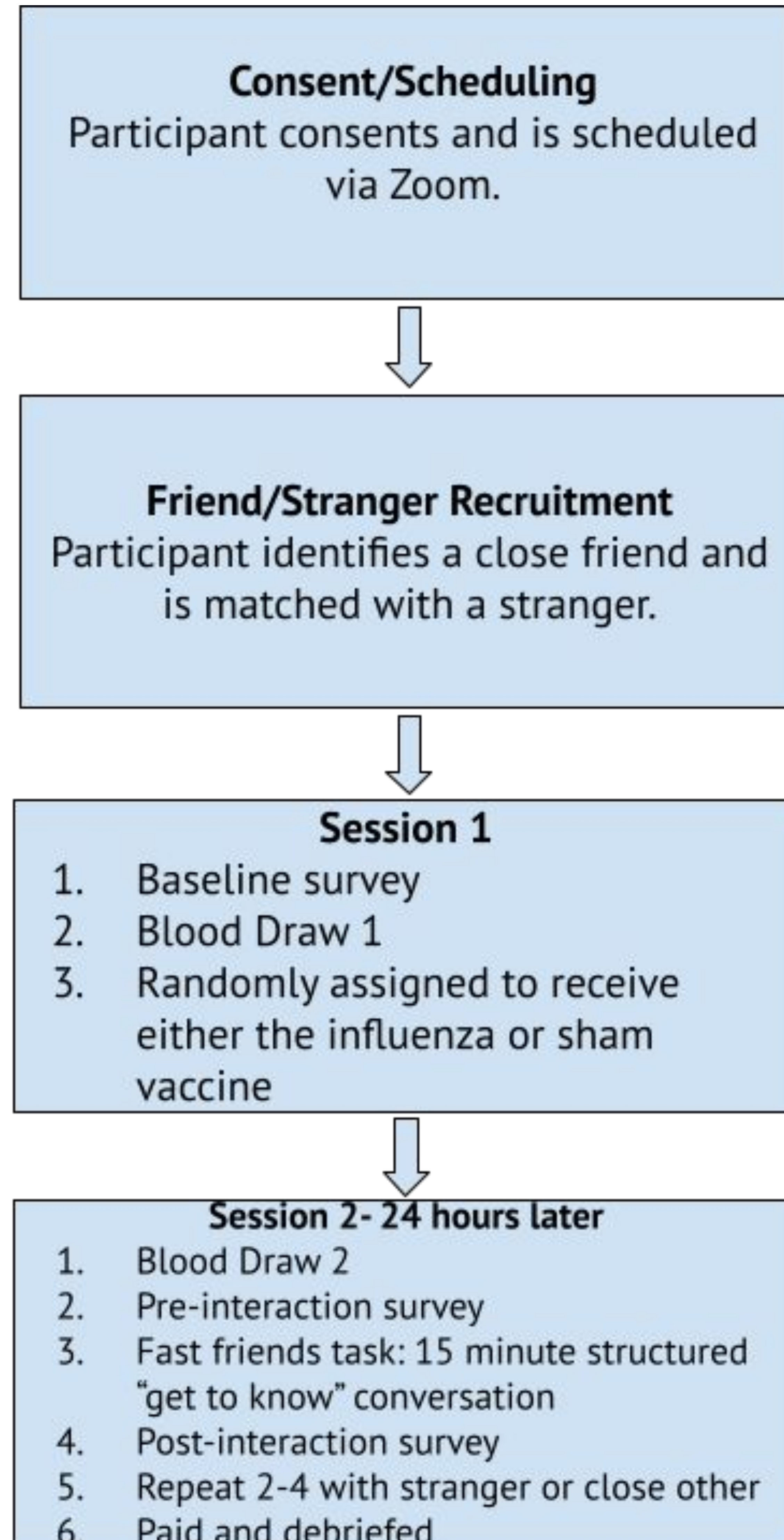
Hypothesis: Participants with low levels of depressive symptoms interacting with a friend (v. stranger) would experience the greatest enjoyment and connection from those interactions when in the vaccine condition compared to the sham condition.

Methods

N=28 undergraduate students, (71.4% female)



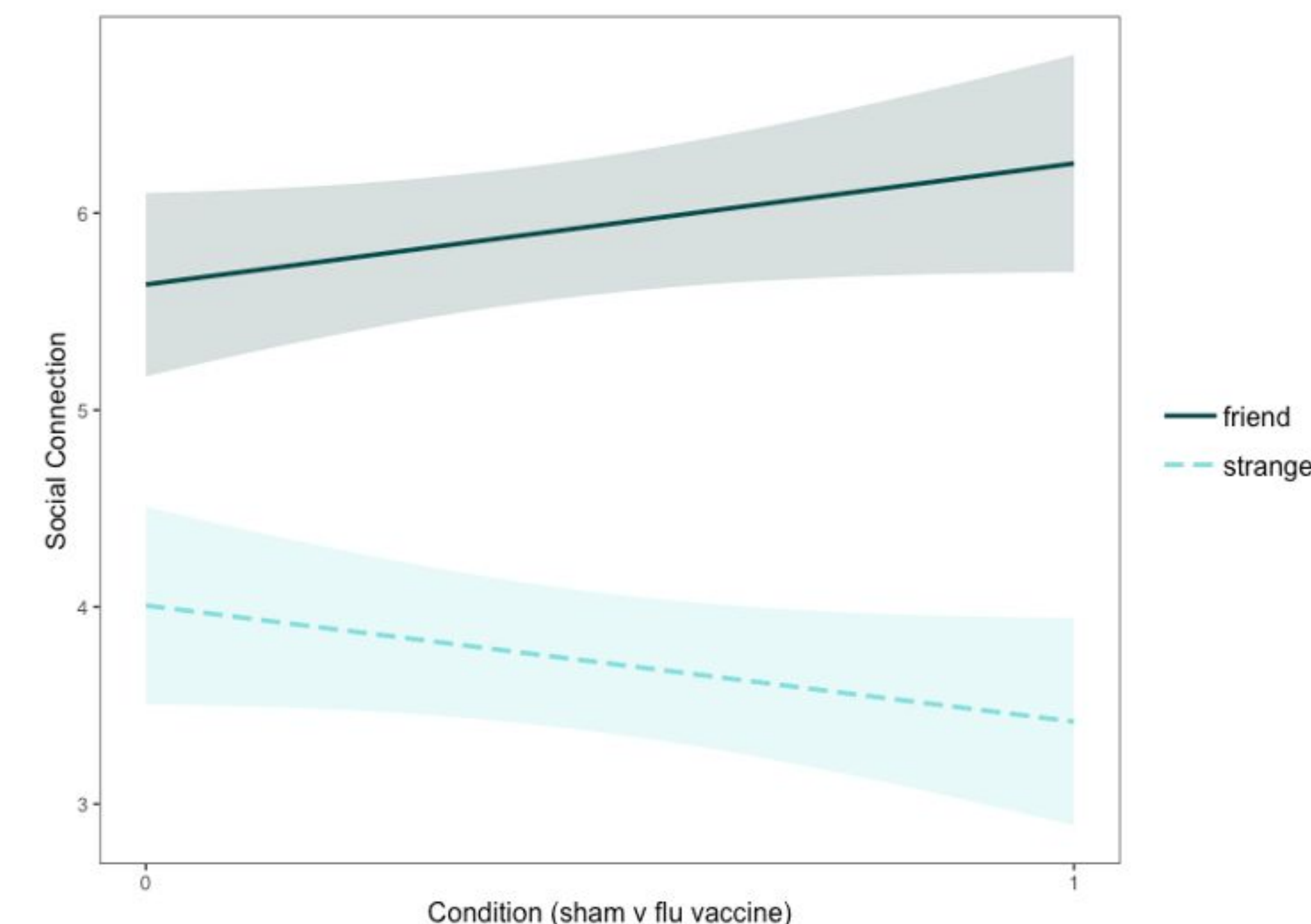
Procedure



- Depression Measure (baseline)
 - Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)
- Post-Interaction Measure
 - Enjoyment/Liking
 - Social Connection

Results

- Main effect of relationship type on post-interaction feelings - greater enjoyment and connection during interaction with close friend
- Depressive symptoms were not a significant moderator in any interaction



Relationship type interacted with condition to predict post-interaction feelings

Discussion

- The present study explored the effects of depressive symptoms and inflammation on social behavior toward different social targets (friend vs. stranger)
- Despite the link between depression, inflammation, and social behavior, depressive symptoms were not a moderator
- The study should be replicated in a clinical sample to increase variance

References available upon request. Contact Sarah Barnes, seb0321@live.unc.edu for more information