

Reducing Loneliness During COVID-19

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Overview

- ❖ Loneliness
 - ❖ Suicidal Ideation
 - ❖ Video Calling Frequency
- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Method
 - ❖ Participants
 - ❖ Procedure
 - ❖ Analysis
- ❖ Results

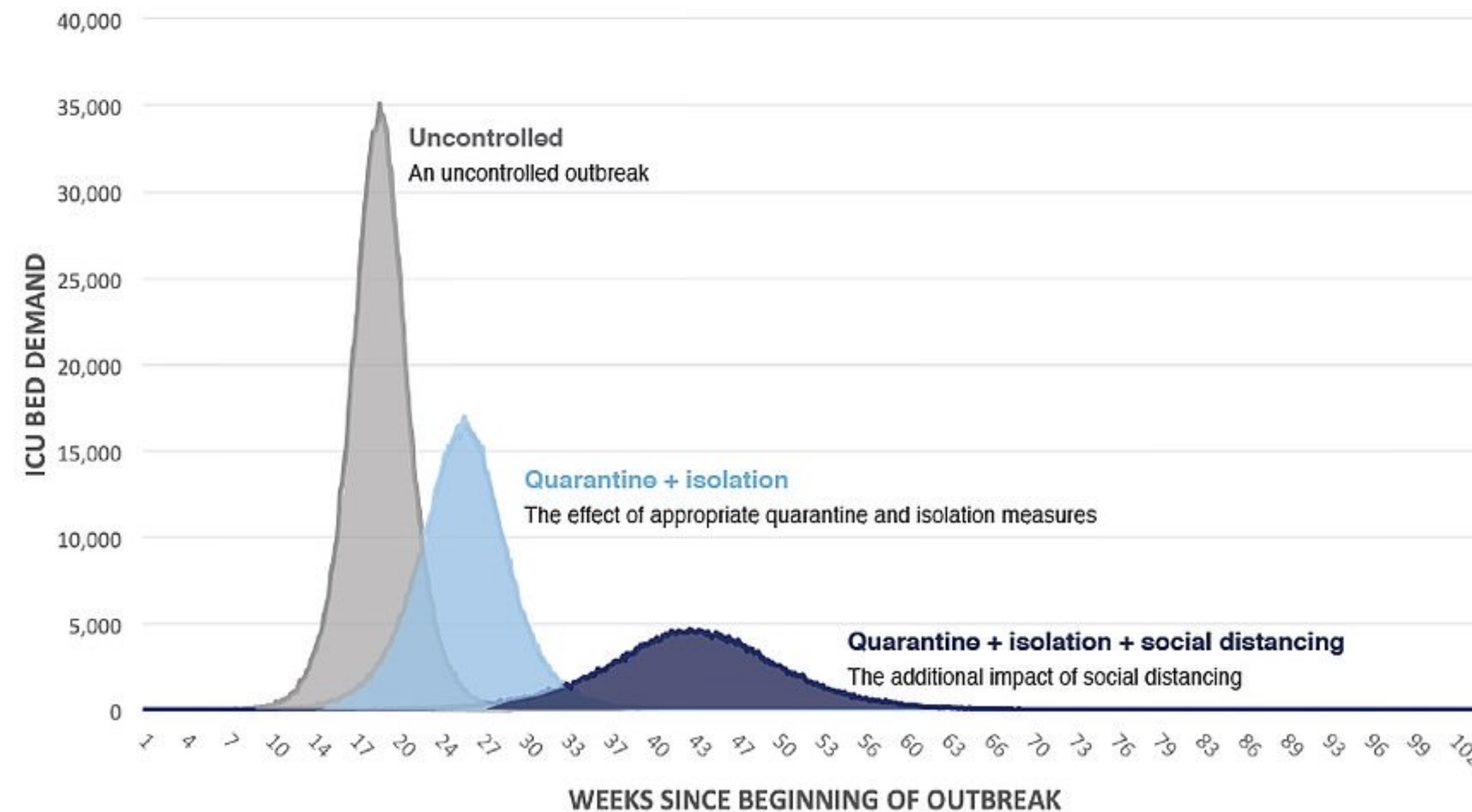


Defining Loneliness

Loneliness is a distressing state resulting from perceptions of inadequacy regarding social contact and/or emotional support (de Jong Gierveld et al., 2006).



Impacts of Isolation and Loneliness during COVID-19

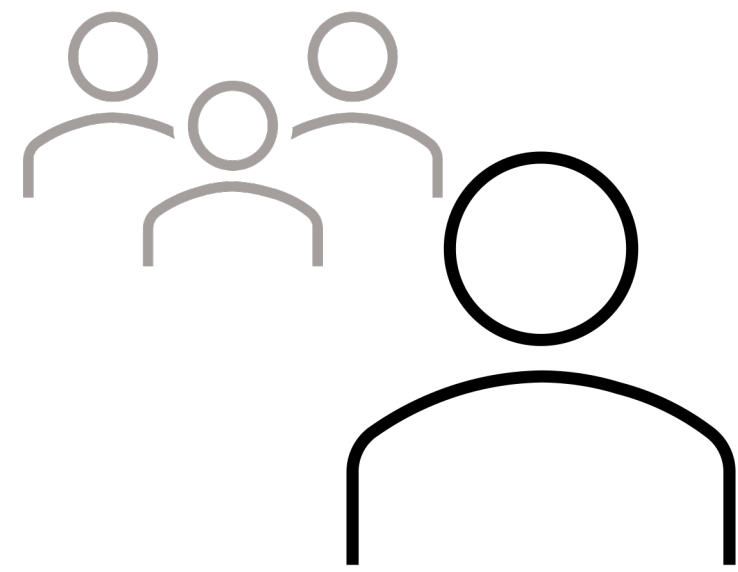


Loneliness is associated with increased rates of:

- ❖ Premature mortality
- ❖ Immune suppression
- ❖ Cognitive decline
- ❖ Cancer
- ❖ Cardiovascular Disease
- ❖ Diabetes
- ❖ Hypertension
- ❖ Emphysema
- ❖ Mood disorders
- ❖ Suicidal Ideation/behavior

91% of global population had experienced isolating pandemic measures (Connor, 2020)

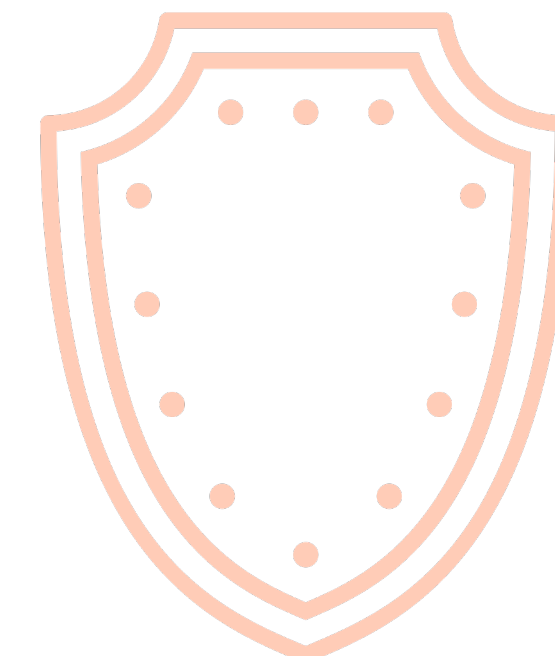
Loneliness and Suicidal Ideation



IMPACT OF LONELINESS



DEFINING SUICIDAL IDEATION



SUICIDE PREVENTION

BENEFITS

- ❖ Increased access to social supports
- ❖ Presence of non-verbal behaviour

DETRIMENTS

- ❖ Uncertain access to social support
- ❖ Strained or altered communication



**CAN
VIDEO CALLING
HELP?**

Suicidal Ideation and Video Calling

The effectiveness of video calling frequency is limited by the factors instigating its use

Effectiveness may vary:

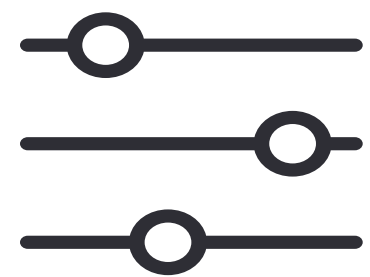
- ▶ Different populations, different social experiences
- ▶ Acute vs. resolving vs. ongoing vs. supported difficulties



Our Objectives



Is Video Calling Frequency associated to Levels of Loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic?



Is the Relation between Loneliness and Video Calling *Dependent* on Suicidal Ideation Experience?

Method

PARTICIPANTS

- ❖ Online, international survey: 6,442 Canadians, 17 years or older, August to September 2020

MEASURES

- ❖ 3-item Revised-UCLA Loneliness Scale (Hughes et al., 2004)
- ❖ SI experience: “Yes, in the past” (25.56%), “Yes, currently” (3.79%), “No” (67.37%)
- ❖ Video calling frequency: 0 (Not at All) to 3 (Several Time a Day)

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON CANADIANS

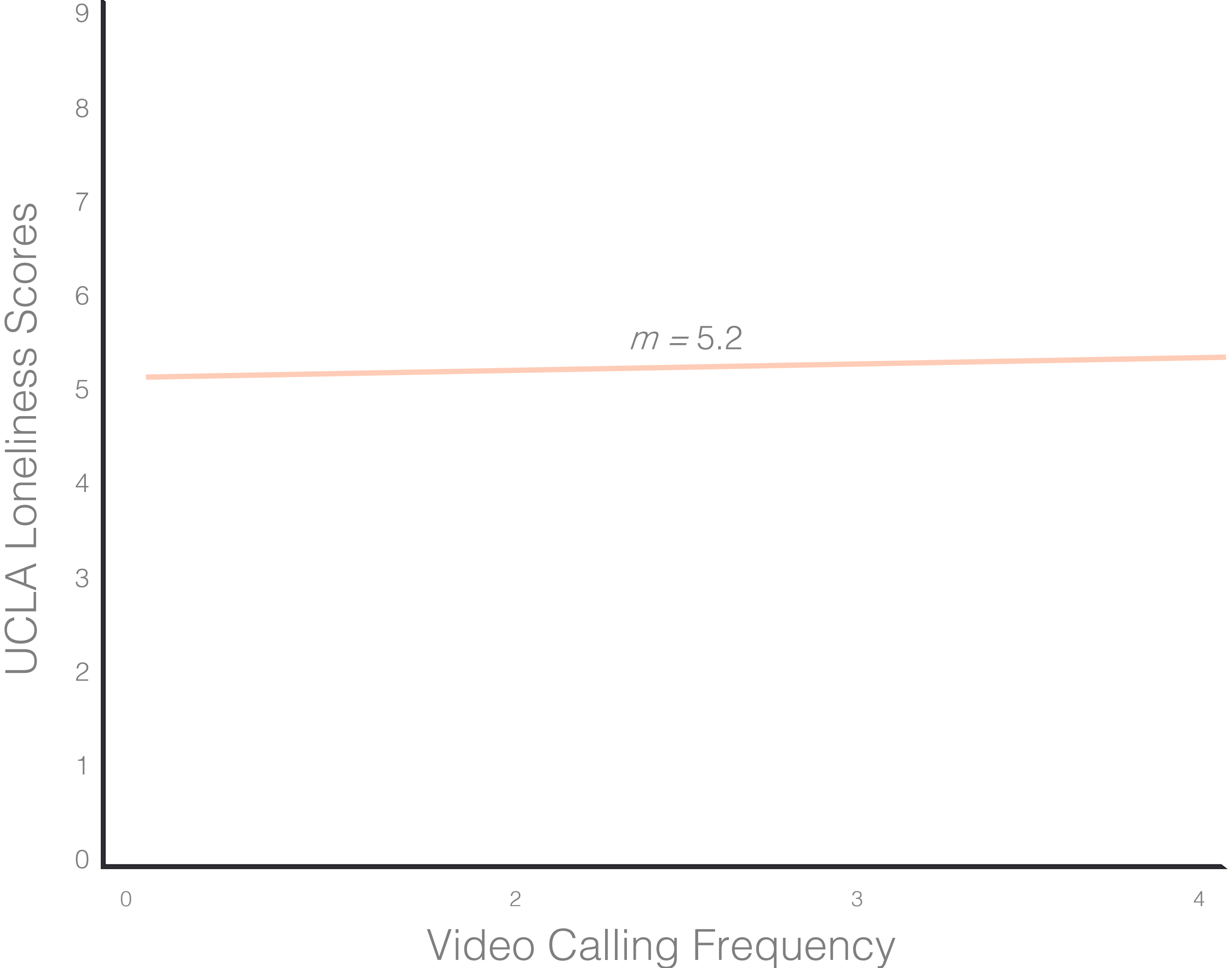


ANALYSIS

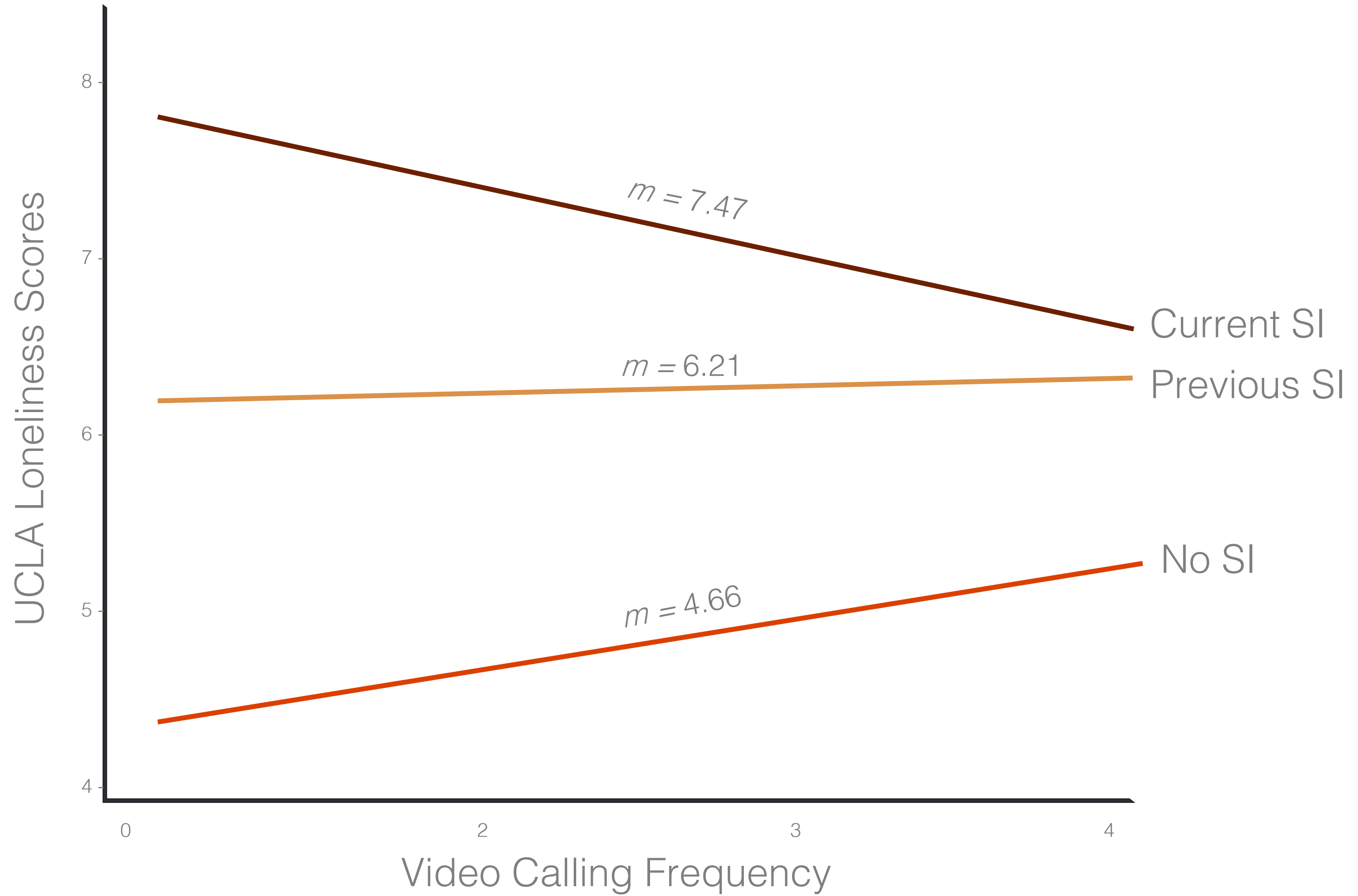
- ❖ A moderated hierarchical linear regression model

SI = Suicidal Ideation

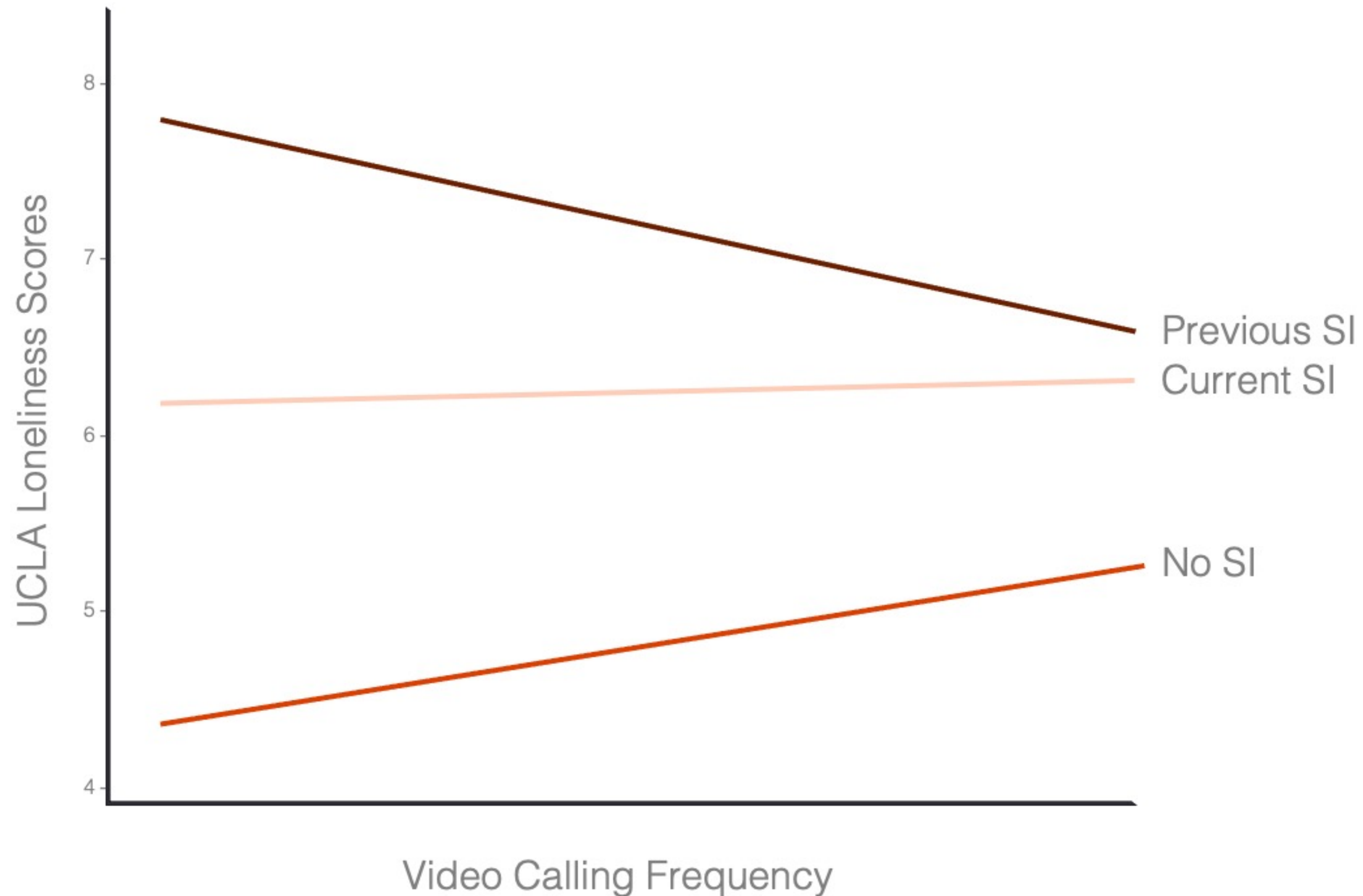
Associations between Loneliness and Video Calling Frequency



Associations between Loneliness and Video Calling Frequency, Grouped by Suicidal Ideation Experience



Associations between Loneliness and Video Calling Frequency, Grouped by Suicidal Ideation Experience



Why the Difference?

DIFFERENCES IN VIDEO CALLING USE

Individuals with current SI were 4.8% more likely to never video call, when compared to the other groups.

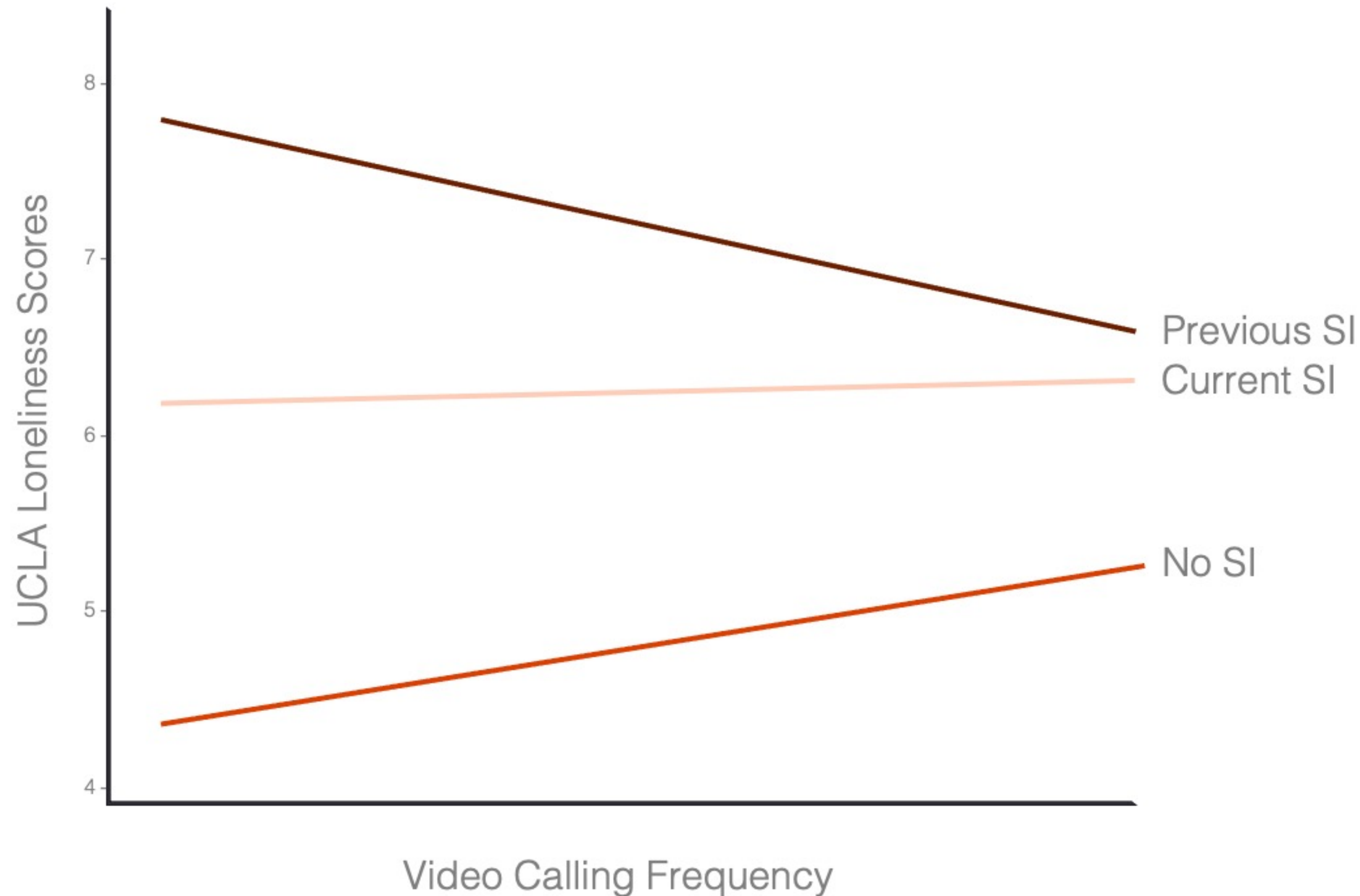
DIFFERENCE IN SOCIAL SUPPORT

Mean scores of social support:

- ❖ Current suicidal ideation: $m = 4.07$
- ❖ Previous suicidal ideation: $m = 4.79$
- ❖ No suicidal ideation: $m = 5.3$

Why the Difference?

Associations between Loneliness and Video Calling Frequency, Grouped by Suicidal Ideation Experience



WORSENING SUICIDAL IDEATION

Worsened SI: mean loneliness score = 7.68

Improving SI: mean loneliness score = 7.05

ALTERED RELATIONSHIPS

Within each group:

- ❖ 34.2% with previous SI reported feeling isolated
- ❖ 46.2% with current SI reported feeling isolation
- ❖ 40.1% with no SI reported no change

Discussion

Loneliness and Suicidal Ideation

- ❖ Current SI are likely impacted severely by isolation and low social support

The Use of Video Calling

The usefulness of video calling varies depending on the reasons for its use:

- ❖ Frequent video calling may be beneficial for isolated individuals, such as those with current SI, improving acute disruptions in their social access and support
- ❖ For those with previous or no SI, increased video calling may not be as effective, because these populations may not be as isolated

Discussion

Future Directions

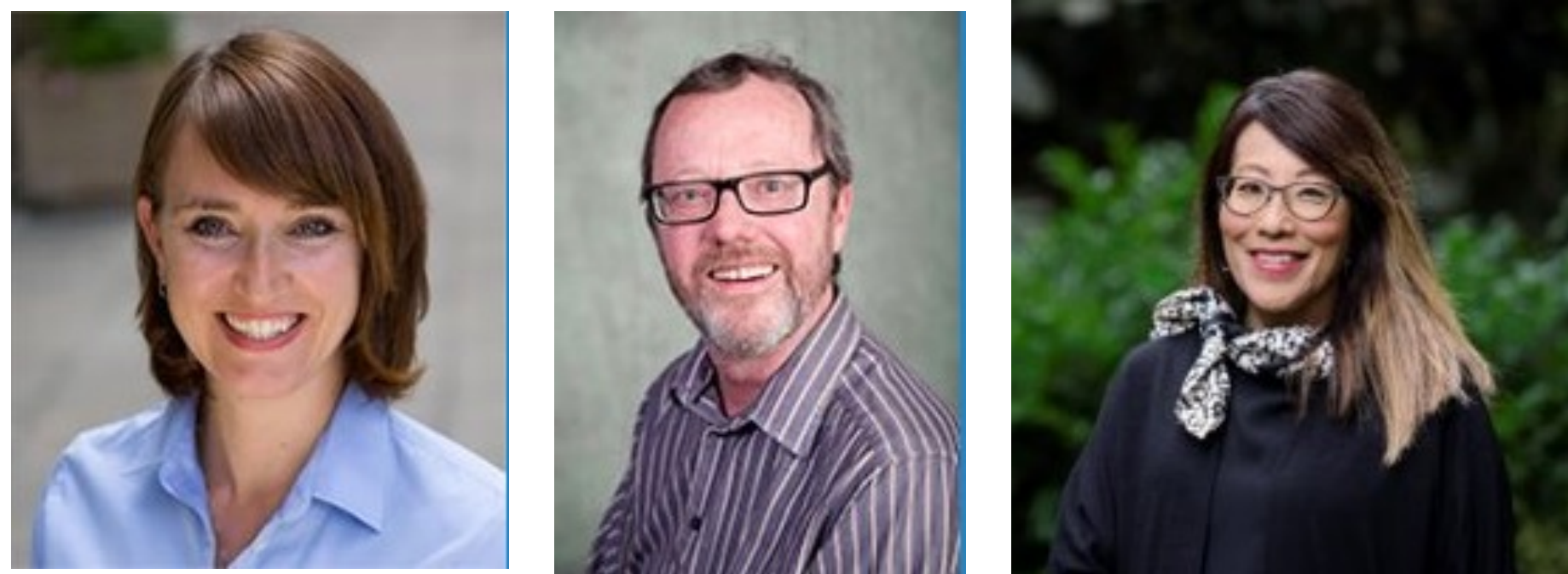
- ❖ Our study supports previous findings regarding loneliness, COVID-19, and SI
 - ❖ Kilgore et al., 2020; Kovaks et al., 2021
- ❖ More research is needed:
 - ❖ Research should consider why these groups might use video calling differently
- ❖ Applicable Services:
 - ❖ For individuals with current SI, future directions could consider creating easily accessible opportunities for frequent video calling with others, such as 24/7 mental health services.

Acknowledgements

Our Team



Our Collaborators



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