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## How Positive and Negative Emotions are Regulated by and Associated with Stigma in University Students with and without Mental and Physical Chronic Health Conditions

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# How Positive and Negative Emotions are Regulated and Associated with Stigma in University Students with and without Mental and Physical Chronic Health Conditions

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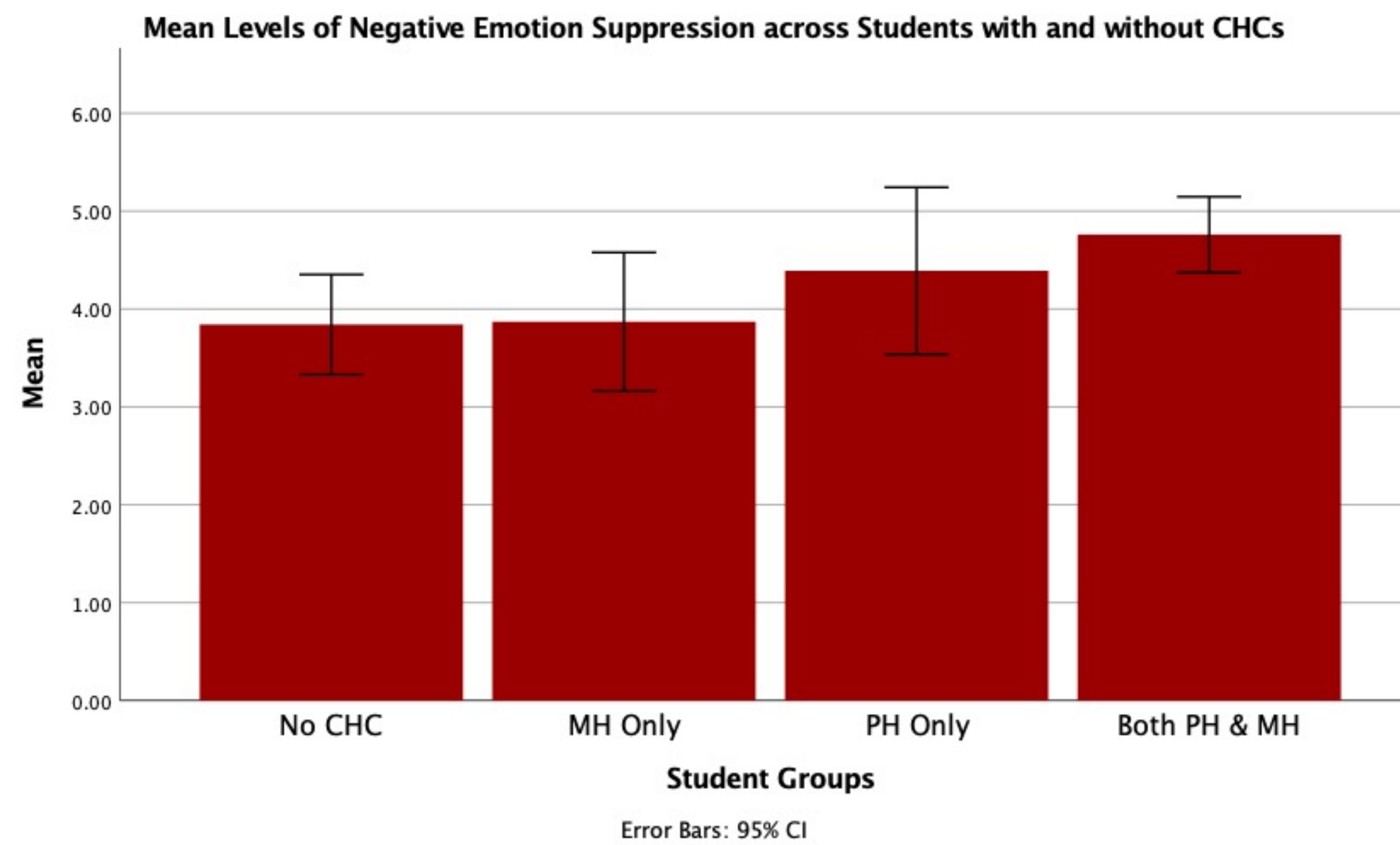
## INTRODUCTION

- Over a third of undergraduate students report having one or more chronic health conditions (CHC).
- CHC-related stigma may lead to reduced quality of life (QOL) and academic performance.
- There is limited research on how (a) positive emotion regulation differs between students with and without CHCs and (b) whether positive and negative emotion regulation are differentially associated with stigma awareness and internalized stigma among students with CHCs.
- Research in this area has focused primarily on negative emotion regulation.
- The present study examined whether positive, negative, and neutrally-worded emotion regulation differed across students with and without CHCs.

## METHOD

- Secondary data analysis of cross-sectional data collected from EWU students without CHCs (n = 51) and with CHCs (n = 150).
- Assessments included Stigma Consciousness (stigma awareness), Self-Stigma Scale (internalized stigma).
- Responses from the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire were separated into positive, negative and neutrally-worded emotional regulation subscales.
- ANOVAS and t-tests assessed mean differences between groups on levels of emotion regulation.
- Pearson correlations assessed associations between positive, negative, and neutral emotion regulation with stigma awareness and internalized stigma.

## RESULTS



Emotion Regulation	MH Only		PH Only		MH/PH	
	Stigma Awareness	Internalized Stigma	Stigma Awareness	Internalized Stigma	Stigma Awareness	Internalized Stigma
Reappraisal: Positive	.12	.10	-.07	-.32	-.11	-.17
Reappraisal: Negative	-.06	.18	.03	-.39	-.23*	-.18
Reappraisal: Neut	-.24	-.01	.18	-.17	-.12	-.23*
Suppression: Positive	.05	.48**	-.07	.21	.20	.28**
Suppression: Negative	-.27	.22	-.03	.41	.13	.19
Suppression: Neutral	-.04	.33	-.08	.05	.12	-.01

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## DISCUSSION

### Key Findings

- Students with co-occurring mental and physical CHCs reported significantly greater negative emotion suppression compared to students with only mental CHCs and those without CHCs.
- Positive emotion suppression was positively correlated with internalized stigma in students with mental CHCs, regardless if it was only or co-occurring with physical CHCs.
- This study fills a gap in the literature on emotion regulation in populations that report experiencing stigma.
- This study highlights the importance of assessing positive and negative emotion regulation separately.

### Limitations

- Unequal group sizes. Additionally, unknown confounding factors possible.
- Survey-based study (response biases)
- Cross-sectional design (causality not inferred)

### Directions for Further Research

- Further research assessing positive and negative emotion regulation separately can provide critical information into the relationship between positive emotion suppression and internalized stigma in students with mental CHCs with or without co-occurring physical CHCs.

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