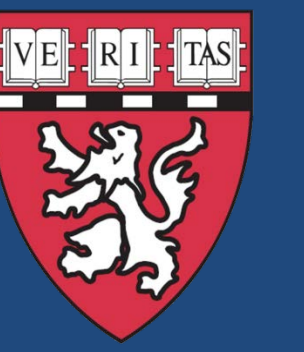


Alcohol use beliefs and behaviors of parents of medically vulnerable youth



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Background and Objective

- Alcohol use is prevalent among youth with chronic medical conditions¹ and can exacerbate disease by interacting with medications and undermining treatment adherence.^{1,2}
- Parents' alcohol use and their beliefs regarding their child's alcohol use may provide an important context within which youth make decisions about drinking.
- We sought to describe parent beliefs about their medically vulnerable adolescents' alcohol use, testing whether parents' own alcohol use was related to beliefs about their child's drinking.

Methods

- Parents of teens with diabetes or rheumatic conditions were recruited from U.S. national disease advocacy networks to take an online survey.
- Descriptive statistics were generated for the overall sample and chi-square test to assess differences between groups.
- Multivariate logistic regression used to examine associations between parent beliefs in relation to their own alcohol use, adjusting for covariates.
- Heavy alcohol use defined as 4+ drinks on 1 or more occasion in the past 30 days.

Results

- 374 responses by parents of teens with diabetes/rheumatic conditions (61.2%/38.8%).
- Majority of parents were white/non-Hispanic (90.4%), female (92.0%), average age of 45.7 years.
- 24.1% of parents reported heavy alcohol use.

- Heavy alcohol use differed by parent education level ($p < .0001$).
- 81.6% of parents perceived any number of drinks to be risky/dangerous for their child.
- Parents' perceived riskiness of alcohol use for their child varied by parents own drinking behaviors ($p < 0.0001$).

Figure 1: Parent beliefs stratified by parent self-reported alcohol use

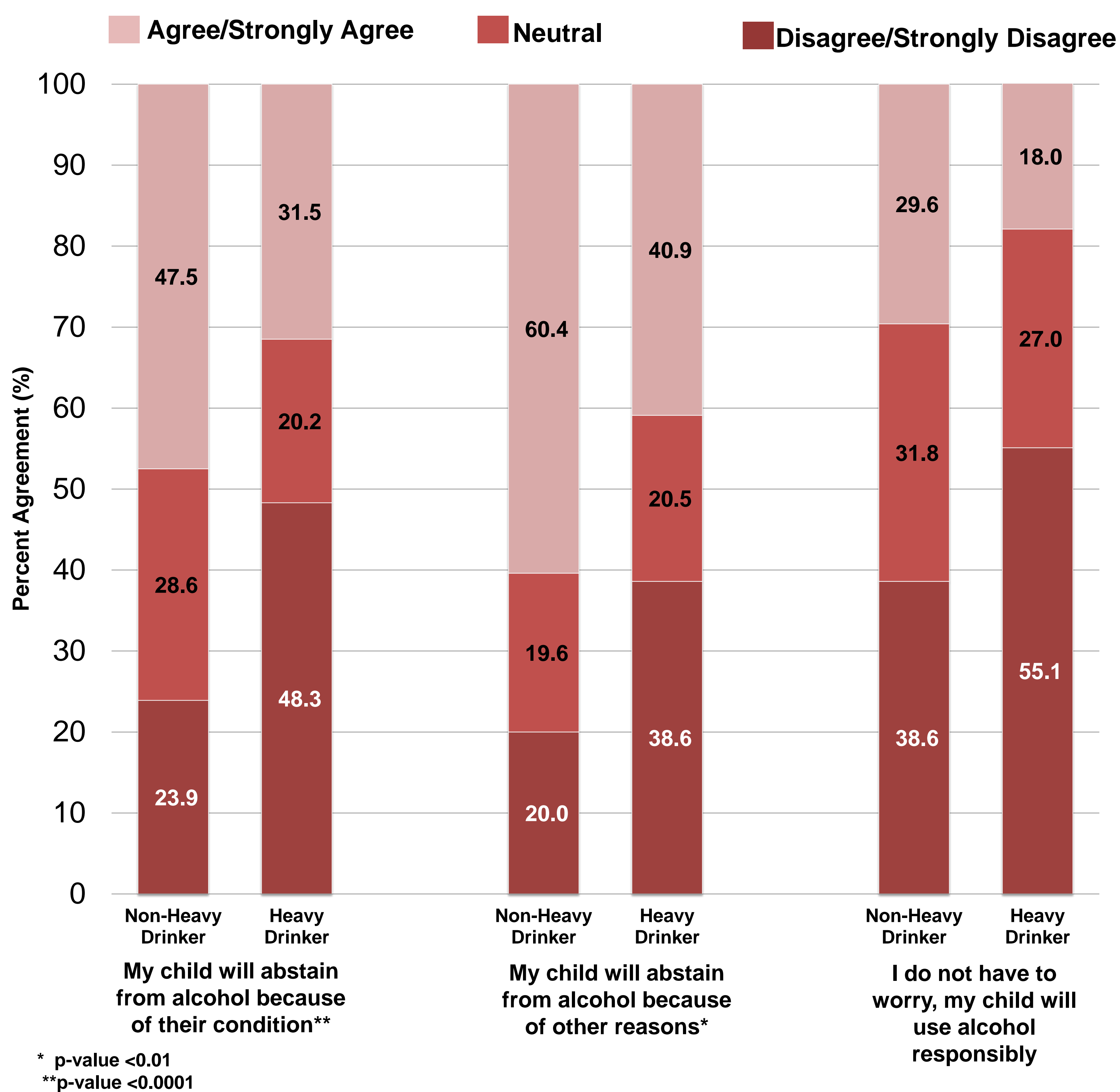
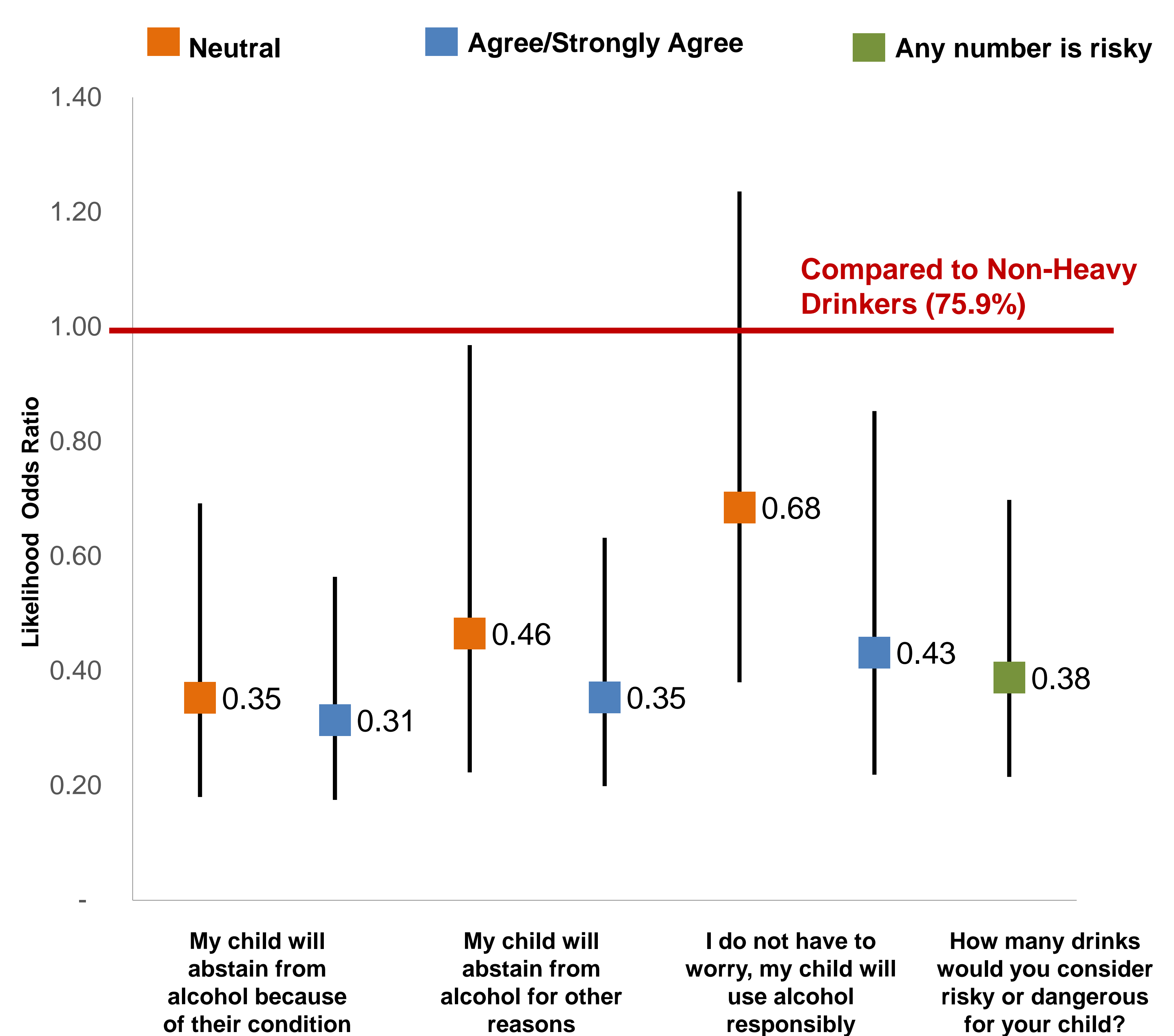


Figure 2: Likelihood of beliefs for parents who reported heavy drinking



Discussion

- Nearly one-quarter of parents report heavy alcohol use, and this home drinking environment shapes parents' views and potentially the role they play in their child's drinking.
- Parents alcohol consumption was associated with their beliefs about their child's alcohol use.
- Parents with lower alcohol consumption were more likely to view alcohol use as risky for their child, and believe that their child would abstain from alcohol use.

Conclusion

- Parents behaviors and beliefs regarding alcohol are part of the multifactorial environment in which medically vulnerable youth develop and should be considered in the context of tailored prevention.
- Efforts are needed to address parental misconceptions regarding harm of alcohol use in children with chronic disease.
- Future studies should assess if child's beliefs/concerns regarding alcohol use parallel that of their parents.

Contact and Funding

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