

Introduction

- Child sexual abuse is a worldwide concern, with prevalence's ranging between 14.4% for women and 5.8% for men.¹
- Sexual abuse is a risk factor for poor mental and physical health throughout the life course.¹⁻⁷
- Given these consequences, it has been hypothesized that child sexual abuse could lead to poorer socioeconomic outcomes.
- The current literature on child sexual abuse and economic outcomes has major shortcomings:
 - Timing of the economic measure.⁸⁻¹⁰
 - Participant attrition.⁸⁻⁹
 - Self-reported measures of socioeconomic outcomes.^{7,8}
 - Unvalidated self-reported measures of child sexual abuse.⁸
 - Only using retrospective questionnaires to measure child sexual abuse.^{8,9,11}

Study aims:

- Examine the associations between child sexual abuse and participants' employment earnings at 33-37 years old obtained from tax return records.
- Investigate whether the characteristics of the sexual abuse (type, severity, and chronicity) were associated with employment earnings among those with self-reported abuse.

Methods

- Participants were drawn from the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Kindergarten Children (QLSKC), a longitudinal cohort of 3017 boys and girls attending kindergarten in French-speaking schools during the 1986–87 and 1987–88 school years.
- Information on child sexual abuse was obtained retrospectively at 22 years old via five questions adapted from the *Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire*¹² and from the *Sexually Victimized Children Questionnaire*,¹³ as well as prospectively via Youth Protection records.
- Adult employment earnings were obtained annually from 18-37 years old from government tax return records.

Results

Table 1. Association of child sexual abuse with annual employment earnings at mid-adulthood (33-37 years), N = 3020.

	Differences in employment earnings ^a
	Adjusted for family socioeconomic characteristics ^{b,c}
	B [95%CI]
Missing retrospective report, but no official report, n = 1,340 (44.3%)	-1,906 [-3,912 to 98]
Retrospectively reported sexual abuse, n = 340 (11.3%)	-4,031 [-7,134 to -931]
Officially reported sexual abuse, n = 20 (0.7%)	-16,042 [-27,465 to -4,618]

Note. Boldface indicates statistical significance ($P < 0.05$).
^aBased on imputed values. All amounts are in US dollars. Dollar amounts have not been adjusted for inflation.
^bEstimates are beta coefficients from Tobit regression, with 95% confidence intervals. All three models were adjusted for cohort membership (disruptive vs. representative sample).
^cAdjusted for characteristics including child's sex, maternal and paternal education, parental earnings, parental mean age at childbirth, and family unit (single- or two-parent family).

Table 2. Association of characteristics of child sexual abuse with annual employment earnings at mid-adulthood (33-37 years), n = 350.

	Differences in employment earnings ^a
	Adjusted for family socioeconomic characteristics ^{b,c}
Type	
Intra-familial (vs. extra-familial abuse)	-4,696 [-9,316 to -75]
Severity	
Sexual touching (vs. non-contact)	3,515 [-9,456 to 2,427]
Penetration/attempted penetration (vs. non-contact)	-6,188 [-12,248 to -129]
Chronicity	
Multiple episodes (vs. one episode)	-2,081 [-8,056 to 3,892]

Note. Boldface indicates statistical significance ($P < 0.05$).
^aBased on imputed values. All amounts are in US dollars. Dollar amounts have not been adjusted for inflation.
^bEstimates are beta coefficients from Tobit regression, with 95% confidence intervals. All three models were adjusted for cohort membership (disruptive vs. representative sample).
^cAdjusted for characteristics including child's sex, maternal and paternal education, parental earnings, parental mean age at childbirth, and family unit (single- or two-parent family).

Conclusions

- This is the first longitudinal study to investigate associations between child sexual abuse (retrospective and official reports) and long-term employment earnings by mid-adulthood.
- It was found that adults who retrospectively self-reported having experienced intra-familial sexual abuse, penetration/attempted penetration, or official reports earned less at ages 33-37 than individuals not sexually abused.

Strengths:

- Large population-based cohort.
- Use of retrospective and official report.

Limitations:

- Only 20 participants identified by CPS for sexual abuse.
- Fewer male victims of child sexual abuse.

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics for employment earnings from 18 to 37 years old by sexual abuse group (N = 3,020)^a

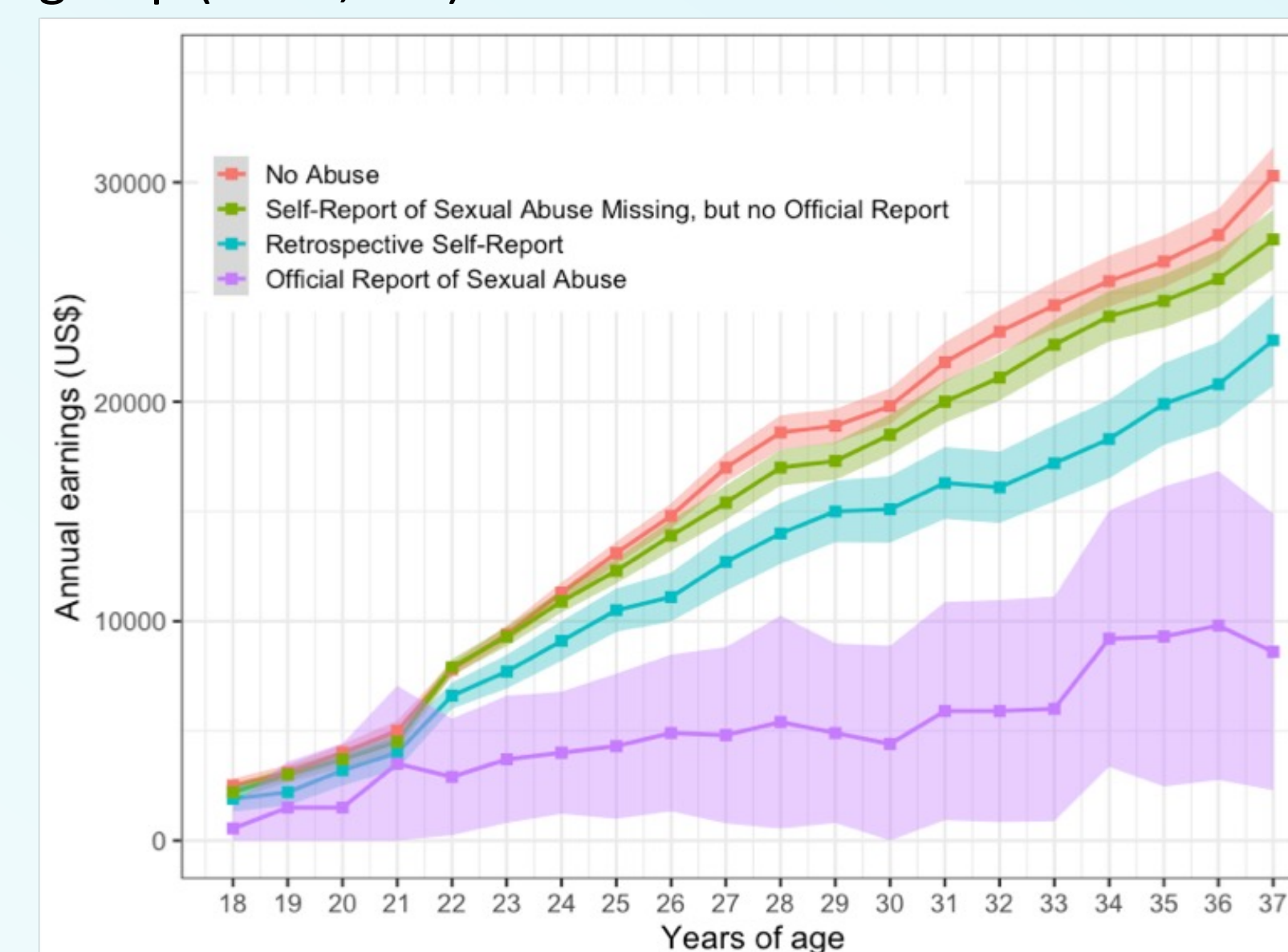
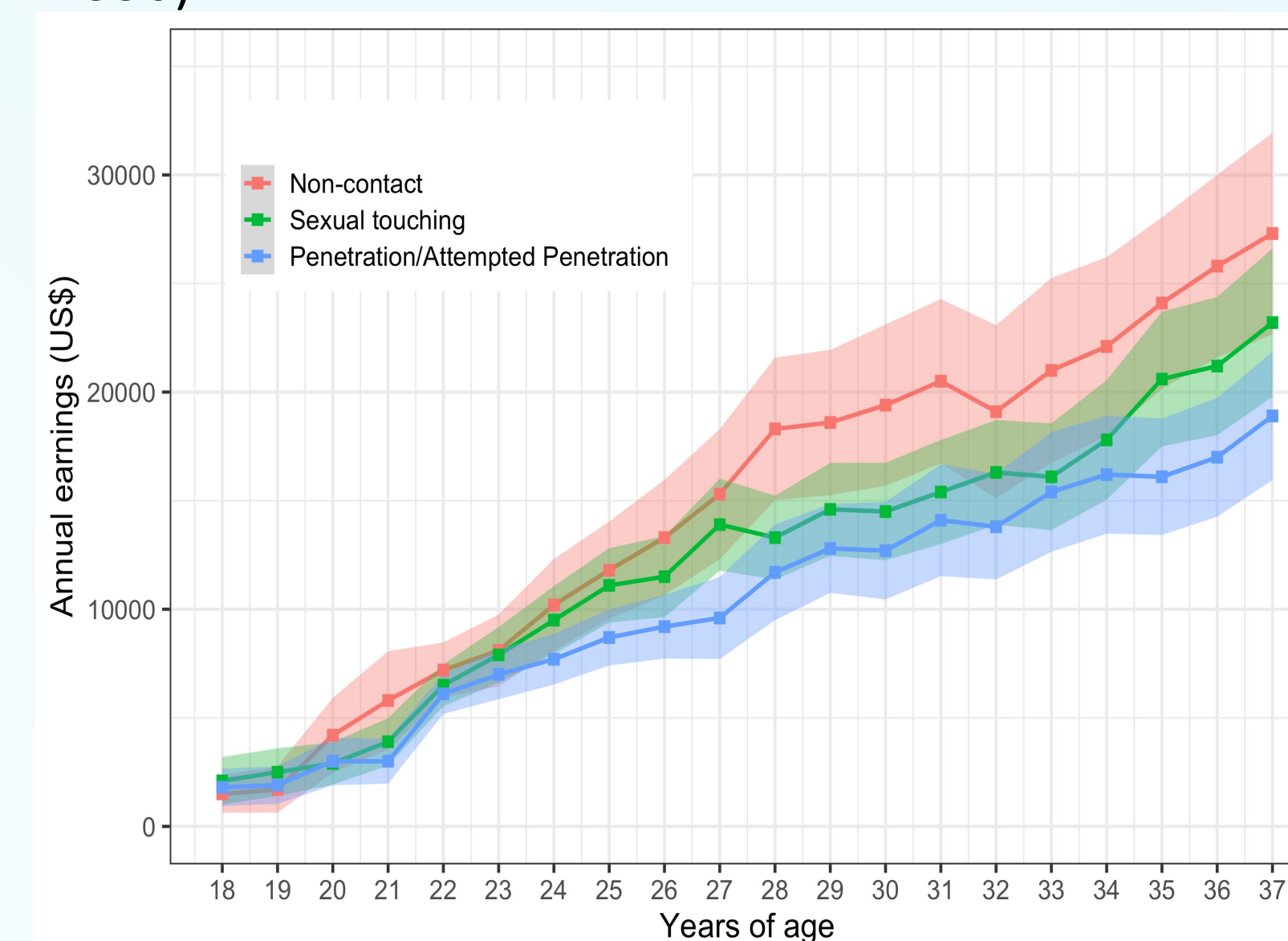


Figure 3. Descriptive statistics for employment earnings from 18 to 37 years – Severity of abuse (n = 350)^a



^aIn accordance with Statistics Canada data protection requirements, displayed counts are rounded to base 10; employment earnings are rounded to the nearest 100. Dollar amounts have not been adjusted for inflation.

Figure 2. Descriptive statistics for employment earnings from 18 to 37 years – Chronicity of abuse (n = 350)^a

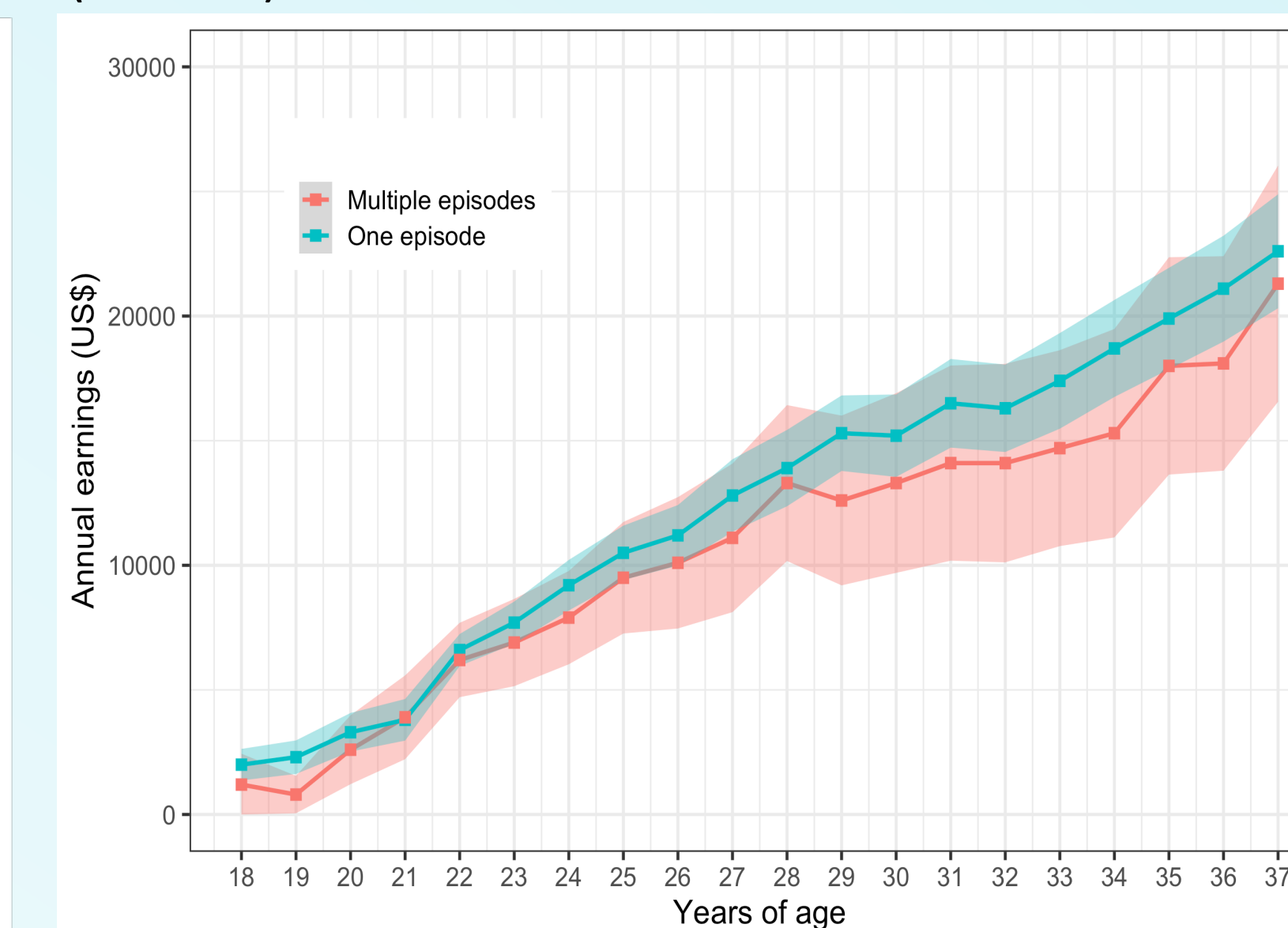
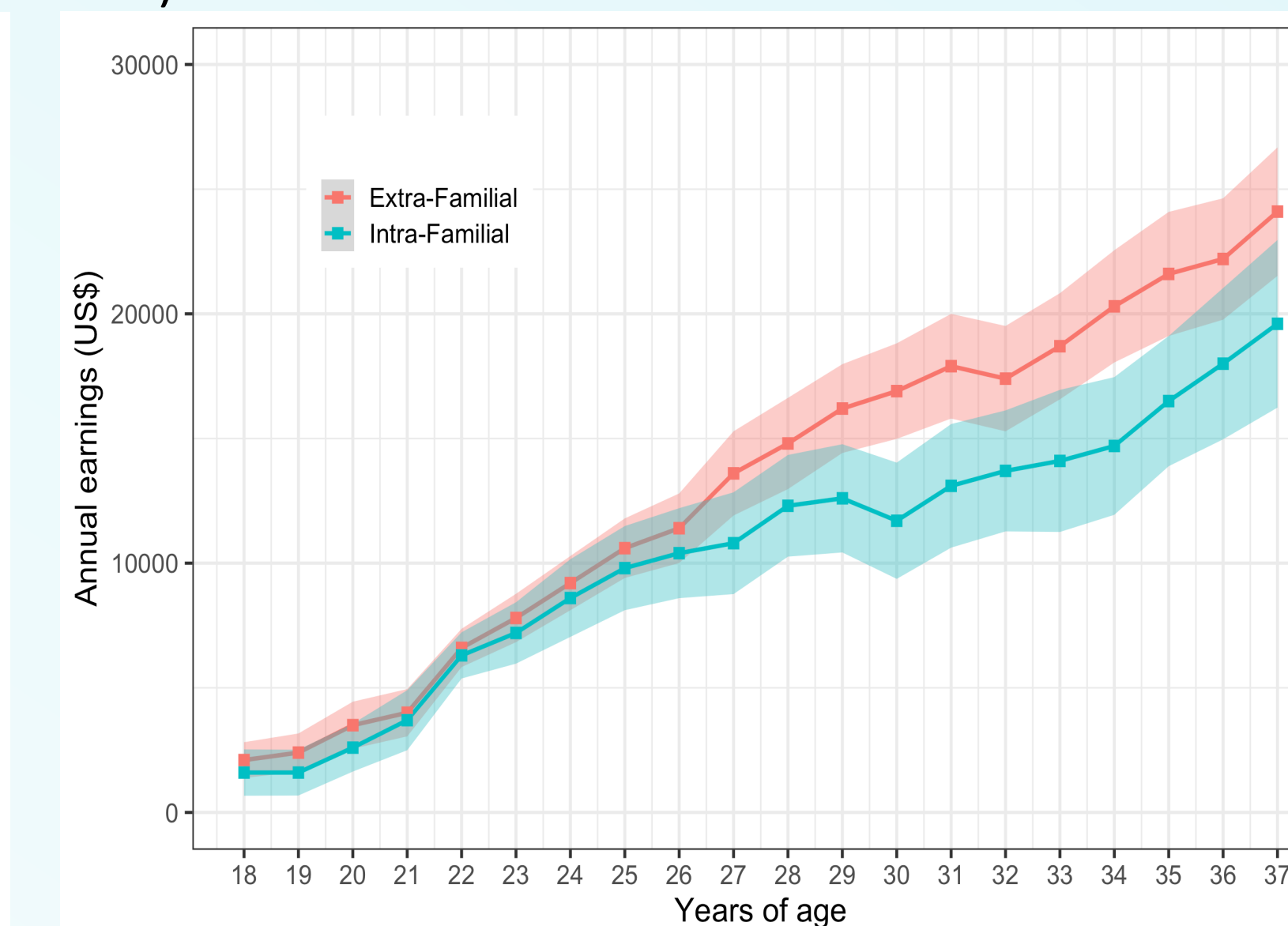


Figure 4. Descriptive statistics for employment earnings from 18 to 37 years – Type of abuse (n = 350)^a



Discussion

- Our findings suggest that child sexual abuse may contribute to socioeconomic inequalities in mid-adulthood. Such inequalities were especially pronounced for the most severe forms of abuse (official reports to CPS, intra-familial abuse, and with penetration).
- As earnings is a marker for healthy aging,¹⁴ longevity,¹⁵ and can protect against the intergenerational continuity of child sexual abuse and maltreatment¹⁶ helping victims of sexual abuse to maximise their economic potential would contribute to resilient functioning and yield important social and economic returns for individuals and more largely, society.

References

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