



An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a Game-Based Intervention for Childhood Conduct Problems



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BACKGROUND

- Conduct problems (CP) are persistent behaviors that violate societal norms and the rights of others
- CP have deficits in empathy, social skills, and appropriate emotional responses.
- CP place children at a heightened risk for unfavorable outcomes in adolescence and adulthood.
- Current treatments for CP are effective, though they are expensive and there are barriers to access.

GOAL: Identify a simple, inexpensive, at-home intervention for conduct problems

STUDY AIMS

Aim 1: Does playing a social skills board game predict a reduction in conduct problems relative to a math board game condition and a control condition?

Aim 2: Is this relationship moderated by CU traits?

HYPOTHESES

Aim 1: Children in the social skills board game condition will experience the greatest reduction in CP

Aim 2: This relationship will not be moderated by CU traits.

METHODS

- N: 135 (ages 5-6, $M_{age} = 5.48$, 58% female)
- 3 conditions:
 - Social Skills Board Game: N = 45
 - Math Board Game: N = 46
 - No Board Game: N = 44
- Questionnaires of interest: ICU and SDQ

A social skills board game did not prevent or reduce conduct problems, but baseline CU traits predicted levels of conduct problems at follow-up.

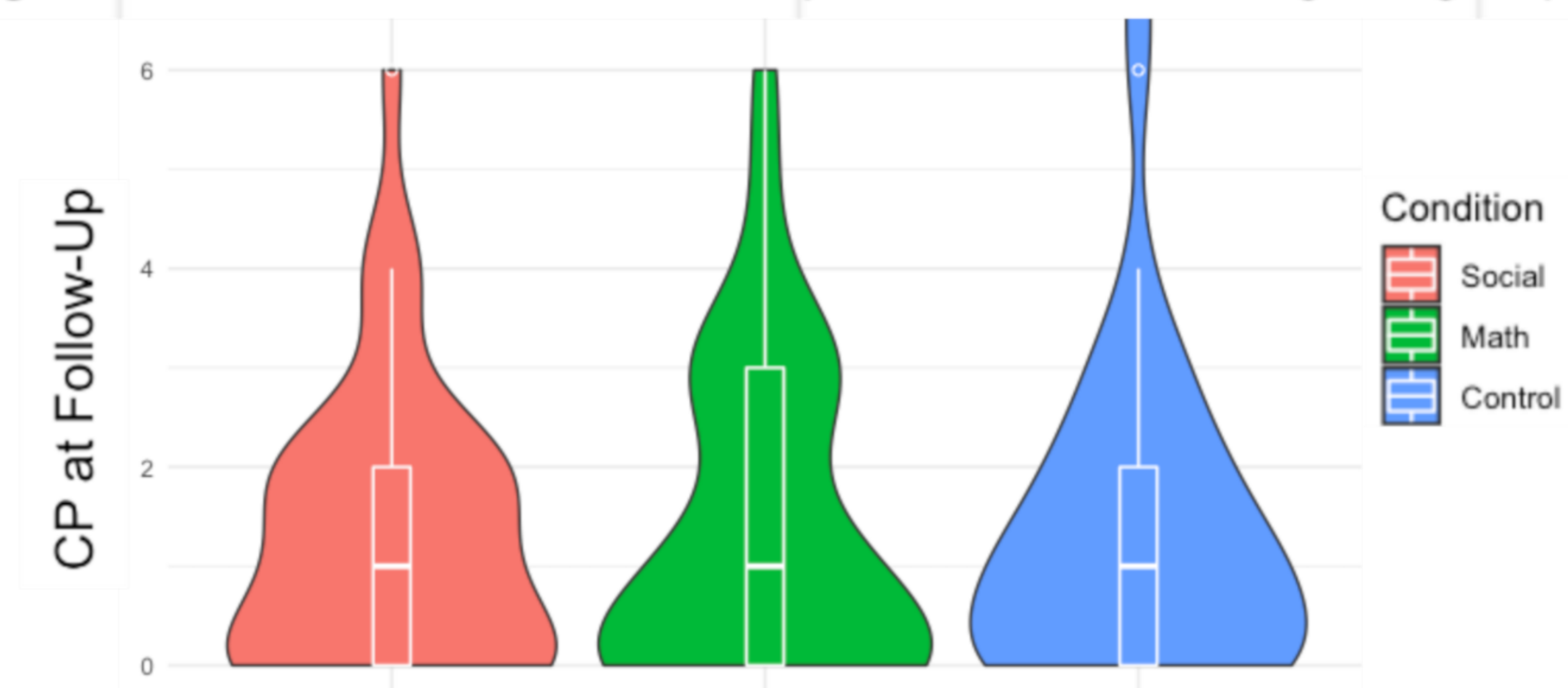


RESULTS

Aim 1: There were no significant effects of the social skills board game on conduct problems [$F(2) = 0.012$, $p = .988$].

Aim 2: CU traits did not moderate this relationship, but there was a significant effect of CU at T1 on CP at T2 [$F(1) = 4.112$, $p = .045$]

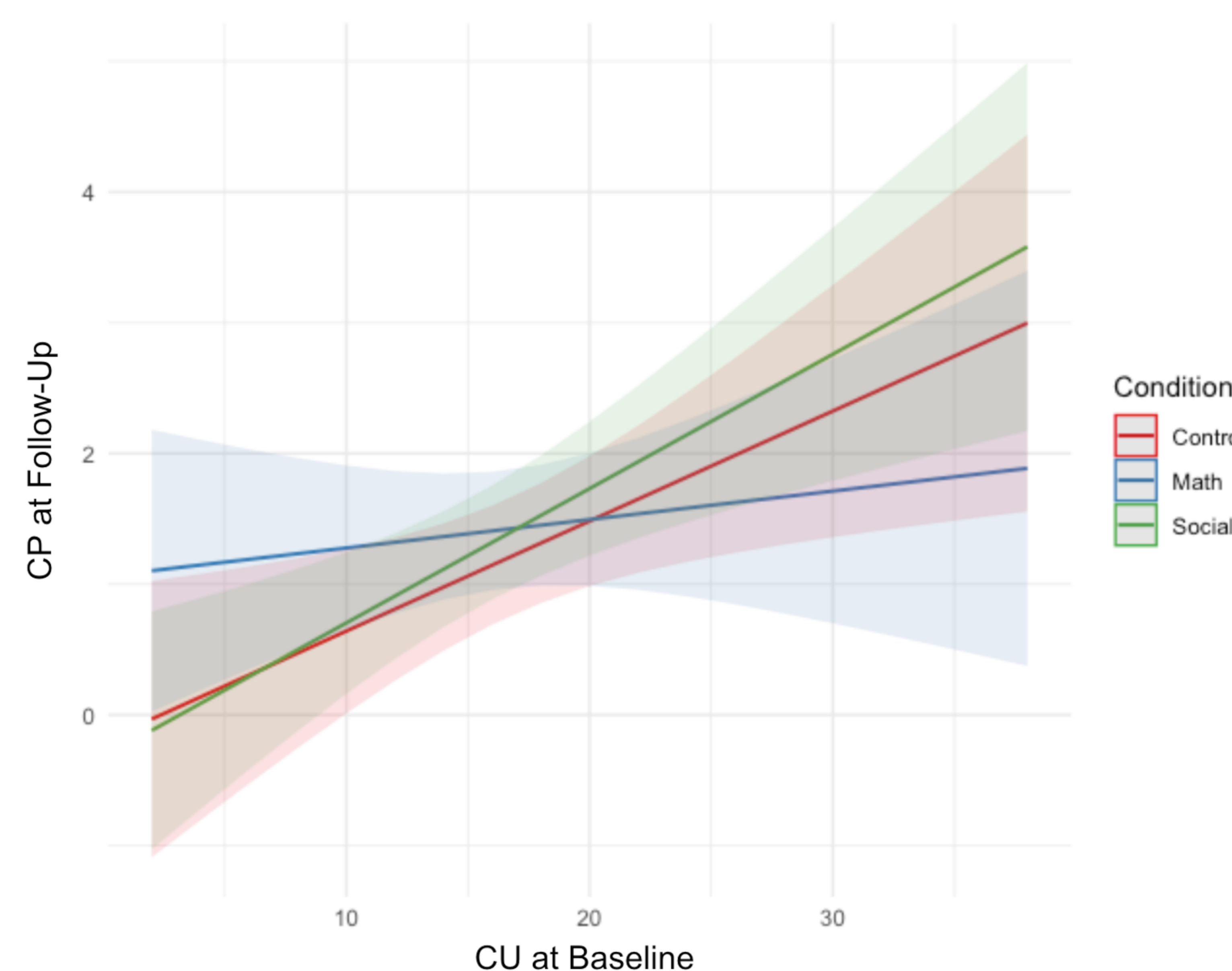
Figure 1: Levels of CP at Follow-Up were similar among the groups



CONCLUSIONS

- Playing a social skills board game did not prevent or reduce CP in this sample.
- CU traits did not moderate this relationship, in that the intervention was not especially ineffective for children with CU traits.
- However, baseline CU traits predicted CP at follow-up, suggesting that children with CP and CU traits may need a more tailored intervention.
- A lack of significant findings might be due to the sample being a community sample rather than a clinical sample, a short treatment time, or the stress imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2: Baseline CU traits are predictive of CP at Follow-Up



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