Physical activity and mental health in Canadian seniors: A cross-sectional study using the Canadian Community Health Survey

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SYNOPSIS

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CPAG) suggest that seniors participate in 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each week; however, Canadian seniors have not been meeting these guidelines. Exercise improves physical and mental health, and maintenance of these throughout ageing is important. The impact of exercise participation on the mental health of Canadian seniors remains unknown. This study aimed to investigate the association between exercise participation and mental health in Canadian seniors using data from the 2017-2018 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Bivariate and logistic regression models were used to investigate the effect of exercise participation on perceived mental health. CCHS respondents over 60 years old (N=25,806) were included for analysis. Respondents physically active below CPAG were older, and less likely to be male, injured, or employed than respondents who met CPAG. The unadjusted odds of a respondent who met CPAG reporting Excellent-Good mental health were 1.38 (95% CI: 1.24, 1.54) times that of a respondent below CPAG. After adjusting for age, sex, race, injury, and employment, the odds ratio was 1.56 (95% CI: 1.37, 1.78). Sensitivity analysis showed missingness did not impact effect measures meaningfully. Employment status was an effect modifier, and the adjusted odds ratios for employed and unemployed respondents were 1.09 (95% CI: 0.85, 1.40) and 1.81 (95% CI: 1.55, 2.12), respectively. Findings suggest that exercise participation at CPAG levels by Canadians aged 60 years and above may improve perceived mental health.

LOAD LIBs & DATA

Libraries

```
library("checkpoint")
checkpoint("2021-01-01") # checkpoint used to ensure reproducibility
library("dplyr")
```

```
library("ggplot2")
library("tidyr")
library("forcats")
library("tableone")  # Used for creating table one
library("kableExtra")  # Used to present table one in markdown
library("Publish")  # Used for displaying regression outputs
```

Data

You can download the CCHS 2017-18 dataset here.

It has 113,290 observations (respondents) and 1051 variables:

```
load("cchs1718_original.RData")
dim(cchs1718_original)
## [1] 113290 1051
```

CREATE ANALYT. DATASET

Selecting variables

Only 7 out of 1051 variables from the original CCHS dataset are selected.

Redefining levels of variables

```
"Very good",
                                                 "Good") ~ "Excellent-Good")) %>%
# Explanatory variable: Physical activity indicator
mutate(physicalAct = case when(
 PAADVACV == paste0("Physically active below ",
                      "recommended level from CPAG") ~ "below act. level",
 PAADVACV == paste0("Physically active at ",
                     "/ above recommended ",
                     "level from CPAG") ~ "above act. level")) %>%
# Covariate: Age
mutate(age = case_when(DHHGAGE == "Age between 12 and 14" ~ "12-14",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 15 and 17" \sim "15-17",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 18 and 19" ~ "18-19",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 20 and 24" ~ "20-24",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 25 and 29" ~ "25-29",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 30 and 34" \sim "30-34",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 35 and 39" \sim "35-39",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 40 and 44" \sim "40-44",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 45 and 49" \sim "45-49",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 50 and 54" \sim "50-54",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 55 and 59" ~ "55-59",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 60 and 64" \sim "60-64",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 65 and 69" \sim "65-69",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 70 and 74" \sim "70-74",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age between 75 and 79" ~ "75-79",
                       DHHGAGE == "Age 80 and older" ~ "80+")) %>%
# Covariate: Sex
rename(sex = DHH_SEX) %>%
# Covariate: Race
mutate(race = case_when(
 SDCDGCGT == "White" ~ "White",
 SDCDGCGT == "Non-white (Aboriginal or Other Visible Minority)" ~ "Non-white")) %>%
# Covariate: Injuries:
mutate(injury = case when(
  INJDVSTT == "No injuries" ~ "No injuries",
  INJDVSTT == "Injury limiting activities only" ~ "Limiting activities only",
  INJDVSTT == "Treated injury (not limiting activities) only" ~
    "Treated injury only",
  INJDVSTT == "Injury limiting activities and treated injury" ~
    "Limiting activities and treated injury")) %>%
# Covariate: Employment status
mutate(employed = case_when(MAC_010 == "No" ~ "No",
                            MAC_010 == "Yes" ~ "Yes"))
```

Dropping unwanted vars.

We only keep the redefined variables:

Making as factor

We convert all variables into factors to specify our desired reference levels.

```
cchs_withExclusions <- cchs_withExclusions %>%
  mutate(pMentalHealth = factor(pMentalHealth, levels = c("Fair-Poor",
                                                           "Excellent-Good"))) %>%
  mutate(physicalAct = factor(physicalAct,
                              levels = c("below act. level",
                                         "above act. level"))) %>%
  mutate(age = factor(age, levels = c("12-14", "15-17", "18-19",
                                      "20-24", "25-29", "30-34",
                                      "35-39", "40-44", "45-49",
                                      "50-54", "55-59", "60-64"
                                      "65-69", "70-74", "75-79",
                                      "80+"))) %>%
  mutate(sex = factor(sex, levels = c("Female", "Male"))) %>%
  mutate(race = factor(race, levels = c("White", "Non-white"))) %>%
  mutate(injury = factor(injury,
                         levels = c("No injuries",
                                    "Limiting activities only",
                                    "Treated injury only",
                                    "Limiting activities and treated injury"))) %>%
  mutate(employed = factor(employed, levels = c("No", "Yes")))
```

Inclusion/exclusion status

Only those respondents above 60 years old are included in our study. Additionally, all observations with missing values for either the explanatory variable (physical activity) or the outcome (perceived mental health) will be removed from the analytic sample.

Coding included/excluded

```
## excluded included
## 87484 25806
```

Included vs. excluded

Included and excluded groups were not different with regard to sex (included: 53.9% female; excluded: 53.6% female; p = 0.51); however, excluded respondents were more likely to be of non-white racial background (15.3% vs. 5.6%, p < 0.001), employed (77.9% vs. 39.3%, p < 0.001), and have activity-limiting injuries (15.1% vs. 10.5%, p < 0.001).

```
test_result <- chisq.test(table("Inclusion" = cchs_withExclusions$inclusion,</pre>
                                 "Sex" = cchs withExclusions$sex))
test_result
\mathbf{Sex}
##
##
   Pearson's Chi-squared test with Yates' continuity correction
## data: table(Inclusion = cchs_withExclusions$inclusion, Sex = cchs_withExclusions$sex)
## X-squared = 0.42712, df = 1, p-value = 0.5134
test_result$expected
##
             Sex
               Female
## Inclusion
     excluded 47018.5 40465.5
##
     included 13869.5 11936.5
##
prop.table(test_result$observed, 1)
##
             Sex
## Inclusion
                 Female
                              Male
     excluded 0.5369210 0.4630790
##
     included 0.5392544 0.4607456
```

Race

```
##
## Pearson's Chi-squared test with Yates' continuity correction
## data: table(Inclusion = cchs_withExclusions$inclusion, Race = cchs_withExclusions$race)
## X-squared = 1596.3, df = 1, p-value < 2.2e-16
test_result$expected
##
             Race
## Inclusion
                White Non-white
     excluded 69833.86 10511.136
     included 21485.14 3233.864
##
prop.table(test_result$observed, 1)
##
            Race
                  White Non-white
## Inclusion
   excluded 0.84611363 0.15388637
     included 0.94413204 0.05586796
temp <- cchs_withExclusions %>%
  mutate(injury = case_when(
    injury %in% c("Limiting activities only",
                  "Limiting activities and treated injury") ~ "Limiting act.",
    injury %in% c("No injuries", "Treated injury only") ~ "Not limiting act."))
test_result <- chisq.test(table("Inclusion" = temp$inclusion,</pre>
                                "Race" = temp$injury))
test_result
Injury
##
## Pearson's Chi-squared test with Yates' continuity correction
## data: table(Inclusion = temp$inclusion, Race = temp$injury)
## X-squared = 354.63, df = 1, p-value < 2.2e-16
test_result$expected
            Race
## Inclusion Limiting act. Not limiting act.
## excluded 12302.252
##
     included
                 3631.748
                                   22136.25
```

```
prop.table(test_result$observed, 1)
##
             Race
## Inclusion Limiting act. Not limiting act.
                                     0.8484654
     excluded
                  0.1515346
                                     0.8949472
##
     included
                  0.1050528
test_result <- chisq.test(table("Inclusion" = cchs_withExclusions$inclusion,</pre>
                                 "Race" = cchs_withExclusions$employed))
test_result
Employment status
##
```

```
##
   Pearson's Chi-squared test with Yates' continuity correction
##
## data: table(Inclusion = cchs_withExclusions$inclusion, Race = cchs_withExclusions$employed)
## X-squared = 11073, df = 1, p-value < 2.2e-16
test_result$expected
##
             Race
## Inclusion
                     No
                             Yes
##
     excluded 22682.125 52360.88
     included 6014.875 13885.12
##
prop.table(test_result$observed, 1)
##
             Race
## Inclusion
                              Yes
                     No
     excluded 0.2214863 0.7785137
##
     included 0.6068342 0.3931658
```

Applying the inclusion criteria

```
cchs <- cchs_withExclusions %>%
 filter(inclusion == "included") %>%
 droplevels() %>%
                    # dropping extra levels
 select(-inclusion) # dropping extra variables
```

Level counts

##

The number of respondents in each level of our variable is as below:

```
table(cchs$pMentalHealth, useNA = "ifany") # Outcome: Perceived mental health
##
       Fair-Poor Excellent-Good
##
                           24456
##
             1350
table(cchs$physicalAct, useNA = "ifany")
                                               # Explanatory var: Physical activity
##
## below act. level above act. level
               9156
                               16650
##
table(cchs$age, useNA = "ifany")
                                               # Age
##
## 60-64 65-69 70-74 75-79
                             80+
## 7426 7453 5117 3089 2721
table(cchs$sex, useNA = "ifany")
                                               # Sex
##
## Female
           Male
## 13916 11890
table(cchs$race, useNA = "ifany")
                                               # Race
##
##
       White Non-white
                            <NA>
##
       23338
                  1381
                            1087
table(cchs$injury, useNA = "ifany")
                                               # Injuries
##
##
                              No injuries
                                                        Limiting activities only
##
                                    21966
                                                                            2554
##
                      Treated injury only Limiting activities and treated injury
##
                                     1095
##
                                     <NA>
##
                                       38
table(cchs$employed, useNA = "ifany")
                                               # Employment status
##
##
      No
         Yes <NA>
## 12076 7824 5906
```

STUDY POPULATION

Of the 113,290 observations collected in the 2017-2018 CCHS, the final analytic sample included 25,806 (22.7%) observations from respondents over 60 years old who provided valid responses to explanatory and outcome variables. Excluded observations consisted of 70,715 (62.4%) observations from respondents under 60 years old, 16,030 (14.1%) invalid observations for whether a respondent met CPAG recommendations, which include participants who did not report physical activity minutes, and 739 invalid observations (0.7%) for perceived mental health status.

```
cchs exclusionType <- cchs withExclusions %>%
  mutate(inclusionType = case_when(age %in% c("60-64", "65-69", "70-74",
                                              "75-79", "80+") ~ "included",
                                   TRUE ~ "excluded_age"))
cchs_exclusionType <- cchs_exclusionType %>%
  mutate(inclusionType = case_when(inclusionType == "excluded_age" ~ "excluded_age",
                                   !is.na(physicalAct) ~ "included",
                                   TRUE ~ "excluded_physicalAct"))
cchs_exclusionType <- cchs_exclusionType %>%
  mutate(inclusionType = case_when(inclusionType == "excluded_age" ~ "excluded_age",
                                   inclusionType == "excluded_physicalAct" ~
                                                       "excluded_physicalAct",
                                   !is.na(pMentalHealth) ~ "included",
                                   TRUE ~ "excluded_pMentalHealth"))
cchs exclusionType %>%
  count(inclusionType) %>%
  mutate(Percentage = round(n / sum(n) * 100, 1))
```

```
## # A tibble: 4 x 3
##
     inclusionType
                                 n Percentage
     <chr>
                             <int>
                                         <dbl>
## 1 excluded_age
                             70715
                                          62.4
## 2 excluded_physicalAct
                             16030
                                          14.1
## 3 excluded_pMentalHealth
                               739
                                           0.7
## 4 included
                             25806
                                          22.8
```

2 above act. level 16650

Within the analytic sample, n = 9,156 (35.5%) respondents did not meet CPAG recommendations, while n = 16,650 (64.5%) were physically active at or above CPAG levels:

64.5

After re-coding CCHS perceived mental health answer options into two categories (Excellent-Good, including "excellent", "very good", and "good", and Fair-Poor, including "fair" and "poor"), 24,456 (94.8%) respondents reported Excellent-Good and 1,350 (5.2%) respondents reported Fair-Poor mental health:

```
cchs %>%
  count(pMentalHealth) %>%
  mutate(Percentage = round(n / sum(n) * 100, 1))
## # A tibble: 2 x 3
##
     pMentalHealth
                        n Percentage
##
     <fct>
                                <dbl>
                     <int>
## 1 Fair-Poor
                     1350
                                  5.2
## 2 Excellent-Good 24456
                                 94.8
```

The Fair-Poor perceived mental health group comprised 6.30% of those that did not meet CPAG recommendations, and 4.64% of those who participated in physical activity at or above recommended CPAG levels:

```
## Perceived Mental Health
## Physical Activity Fair-Poor Excellent-Good
## below act. level 6.30 93.70
## above act. level 4.64 95.36
```

TABLE ONE

Comparing Respondents who did and did not meet CPAG Recommendations:

Respondents who were physically active below CPAG recommendations were older (see **Table 1** below; p < 0.001), less likely to be male (40.0% vs. 49.4% male; p < 0.001), less likely to be injured (p < 0.001), and less likely to be employed (36.7% vs. 40.6%; p < 0.001) than were respondents who were physically active at or above CPAG recommendations. Respondents were similar in terms of racial background (5.5% vs. 5.7% non-white, including Aboriginal or other visible minority racial background; p = 0.509).

```
table_one_object <- CreateTableOne(vars = c("age", "sex", "race",
                                             "injury", "employed"),
                                    strata = "physicalAct",
                                    data = cchs,
                                    testApprox = chisq.test,
                                    argsApprox = list(correct = TRUE),
                                    testExact = fisher.test,
                                    testNormal = oneway.test,
                                    argsNormal = list(var.equal = FALSE),
                                    testNonNormal = kruskal.test)
table_one_printed <- print(table_one_object,</pre>
                           catDigits = 1,
                           contDigits = 1,
                           pDigits = 3,
                            # Supress printing in console:
                           printToggle = F)
# Creating a dataframe of the printed table one:
table_one <- as.data.frame(table_one_printed) %>%
  add_rownames(var = "Variable") %>%
  select(-test)
```

(UN)ADJUSTED ANALYSES

Here are our unadjusted and adjusted models based on complete cases. The unadjusted odds of a respondent who was physically active at or above recommended CPAG levels reporting Excellent-Good mental health were 1.38 (95% confidence interval, CI: 1.24, 1.54) times that of a respondent who was physically active below recommended CPAG levels. After adjusting for age, sex, racial background, injury, and employment status, the odds ratio (OR) increased to 1.56 (95% CI: 1.37, 1.78).

Table 1: Table 1: Participant characteristics: CanadianCommunity Health Survey participants aged 60 years and above who did and did not participate physical activity as recommended by theCanadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CPAG).

Variable	below act. level	above act. level	p
n	9156	16650	
age (%)			< 0.001
60-64	2247 (24.5)	5179 (31.1)	
65-69	2399 (26.2)	5054 (30.4)	
70-74	1863 (20.3)	3254 (19.5)	
75-79	1231 (13.4)	1858 (11.2)	
80+	1416 (15.5)	1305 (7.8)	
sex = Male (%)	3660 (40.0)	8230 (49.4)	< 0.001
race = Non-white (%)	477 (5.5)	904 (5.7)	0.509
injury (%)			< 0.001
No injuries	7903 (86.4)	14063 (84.6)	
Limiting activities	852 (9.3)	1702 (10.2)	
only			
Treated injury only	349 (3.8)	746 (4.5)	
Limiting activities	38 (0.4)	115 (0.7)	
and treated injury			
employed = Yes (%)	2380 (36.7)	5444 (40.6)	< 0.001

Bivariable Analysis

```
## Variable Units OddsRatio CI.95 p-value
## physicalAct below act. level Ref
## above act. level 1.38 [1.24;1.54] <1e-04</pre>
```

Multivariable Analysis

##	Variable	Units OddsRatio CI.95	p-value
##	physicalAct	below act. level Ref	
##		above act. level 1.56 [1.37;1.78]	< 1e-04
##	age	60-64 Ref	
##		65-69 1.81 [1.56;2.10]	< 1e-04
##		70-74 2.72 [2.25;3.27]	< 1e-04
##	sex	Female Ref	
##		Male 1.10 [0.96;1.25]	0.167725

##	race	White	Ref		
##		Non-white	0.82	[0.63;1.07]	0.145659
##	injury	No injuries	Ref		
##		Limiting activities only	0.50	[0.42;0.59]	< 1e-04
##		Treated injury only	0.91	[0.66;1.24]	0.536891
##	L	imiting activities and treated injury	0.42	[0.23;0.75]	0.003639
##	employed	No	Ref		
##		Yes	1.97	[1.70:2.28]	< 1e-04

EVALUAT. MISSINGNESS

Amount of missingness

The number of missing values and the percentage of the dataset missing for each variable is:

```
## # A tibble: 7 x 4
    rowname n_missing nrow pct_missing <chr> <dbl> <int> <dbl> <int> <dbl>
##
##
## 1 pMentalHealth 0 25806
## 2 physicalAct 0 25806
## 3 age 0 25806
## 4 sex
                                                   0
                                                   0
                                                   0
## 4 sex
                              0 25806
                                                   0
                          1087 25806
## 5 race
                                                   4.2
## 6 injury
                                                   0.1
                            38 25806
## 7 employed 5906 25806
                                                  22.9
```

Dummy-coded missingness

We added the missing values as another factor level to the dataset:

An example to show what happened after dummy coding was applied:

```
table(cchs$race, useNA="ifany")
##
##
       White Non-white
                              <NA>
##
       23338
                   1381
                              1087
table(cchs_missing$race, useNA="ifany")
##
##
       White Non-white
                          Missing
##
       23338
                   1381
                              1087
```

Sensitivity analysis

As confounding variables racial background (4.2% missing), injury (0.1% missing), and employment status (22.9% missing) contained missingness, a sensitivity analysis was performed to assess how the relationship between physical activity and perceived mental health status would change once missingness was included in the model with dummy coding:

		**	011 0	QT 05	-
##	Variable		OddsRatio	CI.95	p-value
##	physicalAct	below act. level	Ref		
##		above act. level	1.42	[1.27;1.60]	< 1e-04
##	age	60-64	Ref		
##		65-69	1.75	[1.52;2.02]	< 1e-04
##		70-74	2.56	[2.14;3.06]	< 1e-04
##		75-79	0.37	[0.05;2.68]	0.3252058
##		80+	0.24	[0.03;1.71]	0.1538558
##	sex	Female	Ref		
##		Male	0.97	[0.87;1.09]	0.6169584
##	race	White	Ref		
##		Non-white	0.79	[0.63;1.00]	0.0478628
##		Missing	0.60	[0.48;0.75]	< 1e-04
##	injury	No injuries	Ref		
##		Limiting activities only	0.51	[0.44;0.60]	< 1e-04
##		Treated injury only	0.79	[0.61;1.02]	0.0702304
##		Limiting activities and treated injury	0.40	[0.24;0.67]	0.0004708
##		Missing	0.23	[0.10;0.52]	0.0005065
##	employed	No	Ref		
##		Yes	1.97	[1.71;2.27]	< 1e-04
##		Missing	7.54	[1.05;54.04]	0.0443673

Adjusting for age category, sex, racial background, injury, and employment status, a respondent who met CPAG recommendations was found to have 1.42 (95% CI: 1.27, 1.60) times the odds of reporting having Excellent-Good mental health status than those of a respondent who did not meet CPAG recommendations. The calculated effect measure stayed almost the same after considering missingness. Therefore, we continued with complete case analysis.

EFFECT MODIFICATION

Employment status was assessed for effect modification. If respondents were employed and met CPAG recommendations, they had 1.09 (95% CI: 0.85, 1.40) times the adjusted odds of reporting Excellent-Good mental health than those who did not meet recommendations. For those who were unemployed and who met CPAG recommendations, the OR was 1.81 (95% CI: 1.55, 2.12).

For those employed:

```
publish(model_employedYes)
```

##	Variable	Units	OddsRatio	CI.95	p-value
##	physicalAct	below act. level	Ref		-
##		above act. level	1.09	[0.85;1.40]	0.5192917
##	age	60-64	Ref		
##		65-69	1.58	[1.21;2.07]	0.0008293
##		70-74	2.38	[1.48;3.84]	0.0003619
##	sex	Female	Ref		
##		Male	1.36	[1.08;1.72]	0.0092084
##	race	White	Ref		
##		Non-white	1.08	[0.66;1.78]	0.7591004
##	injury	No injuries	Ref		
##		Limiting activities only	0.52	[0.38;0.70]	< 1e-04
##		Treated injury only	1.36	[0.71;2.58]	0.3543500
##		Limiting activities and treated injury	0.58	[0.21;1.63]	0.3031385

For those unemployed:

publish(model_employedNo)

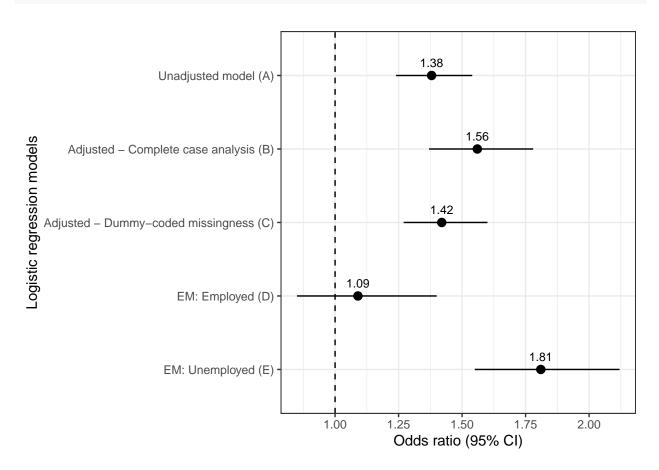
```
##
       Variable
                                                   Units OddsRatio
                                                                         CI.95
                                                                                  p-value
##
    physicalAct
                                       below act. level
                                                               Ref
##
                                       above act. level
                                                              1.81 [1.55;2.12]
                                                                                  < 1e-04
##
                                                   60-64
                                                               Ref
            age
                                                   65-69
                                                              1.93 [1.62;2.31]
##
                                                                                  < 1e-04
##
                                                   70-74
                                                              2.86 [2.33;3.51]
                                                                                  < 1e-04
##
            sex
                                                  Female
                                                              Ref
##
                                                    Male
                                                              0.99 [0.85;1.16]
                                                                                  0.91938
##
           race
                                                   White
                                                               Ref
                                                              0.72 [0.53;0.98]
                                                                                  0.03508
##
                                              Non-white
         injury
                                            No injuries
##
                                                               Ref
##
                               Limiting activities only
                                                              0.50 [0.40;0.62]
                                                                                  < 1e-04
##
                                    Treated injury only
                                                              0.78 [0.55;1.12]
                                                                                  0.18021
##
                Limiting activities and treated injury
                                                              0.36 [0.17;0.74]
                                                                                  0.00566
```

FOREST PLOT

Odds ratios of the five logistic regression models resulting from exploration for missingness and effect modification are depicted in the figure below:

```
label <- c("Unadjusted model (A)",</pre>
            "Adjusted - Complete case analysis (B)",
           "Adjusted - Dummy-coded missingness (C)",
           "EM: Employed (D)",
           "EM: Unemployed (E)")
mean \leftarrow c(1.38, 1.56, 1.42, 1.09, 1.81)
lower \leftarrow c(1.24, 1.37, 1.27, 0.85, 1.55)
upper \leftarrow c(1.54, 1.78, 1.60, 1.40, 2.12)
df <- data.frame(label, mean, lower, upper)</pre>
# reverses the factor level ordering for labels after coord_flip()
df$label <- factor(df$label, levels=rev(df$label))</pre>
fp <- ggplot(data=df, aes(x=label, y=mean, ymin=lower, ymax=upper)) +</pre>
  geom_pointrange() +
  geom text(aes(label=mean),
            position = position_dodge(width = .9),
            vjust = -1,
            size = 3) +
  geom_hline(yintercept=1, lty=2) + # add a dotted line at x=1 after flip
  coord_flip() +
                                       # flip coordinates (puts labels on y axis)
  xlab("Logistic regression models") + ylab("Odds ratio (95% CI)") +
  theme bw()
```

print(fp)



The end!