

# Exploring Mental Health during Trump’s 2025 Presidency



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## Background

- Political polarization has contributed to mental health issues among college activists, with 60% reporting stress, exhaustion, and burnout from political involvement (Connor et al., 2023).
- 50% of politically engaged students report high stress; 12 million young people have had suicidal thoughts linked to politics (Smith et al., 2022).
- Political media exposure is linked to higher anxiety and depression, as 1 in 5 Americans report harassment over political views (Smith et al., 2022).

## Objective

This study aims to examine how political events during Trump’s 2025 presidency affects anxiety among politically active UC San Diego (UCSD) students.

## Methods

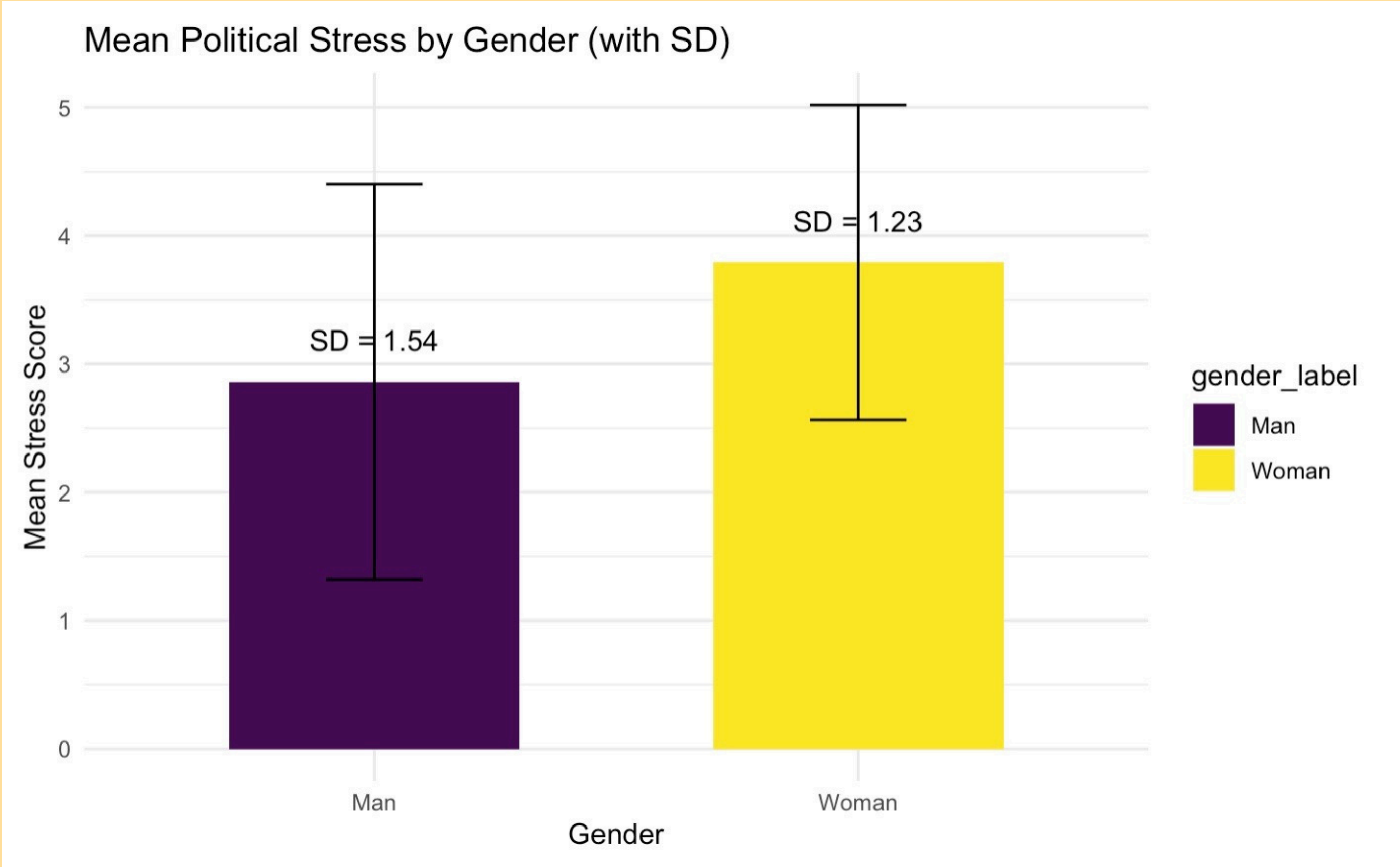
- Cross-sectional study using an anonymous 15-item Qualtrics survey
- Questionnaires included unmodified and modified GAD-7 surveys for the study
  - N=208 Participants were recruited from April to May 2025 via emails, social media, flyers, and text.
  - Eligible participants were UC San Diego undergraduates aged 18+ who completed the survey
  - Analysis conducted with R Statistical Software

Table 1.

Demographics (n=208)	
Gender	
Man	72 (35%)
Woman	129 (63%)
Other	3 (1.5%)
Prefer not to say	1 (0.5%)
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian	1 (0.5%)
Black/African American	132 (63%)
Latinx	3 (1.4%)
Multiracial	17 (8.2%)
No Answer	3 (1.4%)
Other/Prefer not to say	6 (2.9%)
Pacific Islander	22 (11%)
White	24 (12%)
Political Party	
Democrat	88 (43%)
Republican	8 (3.9%)
Independent	4 (2.0%)
Libertarian	2 (1.0%)
Green	46 (23%)
Other	44 (22%)
No Response	12 (5.9%)
Mean (SD); n (%)	

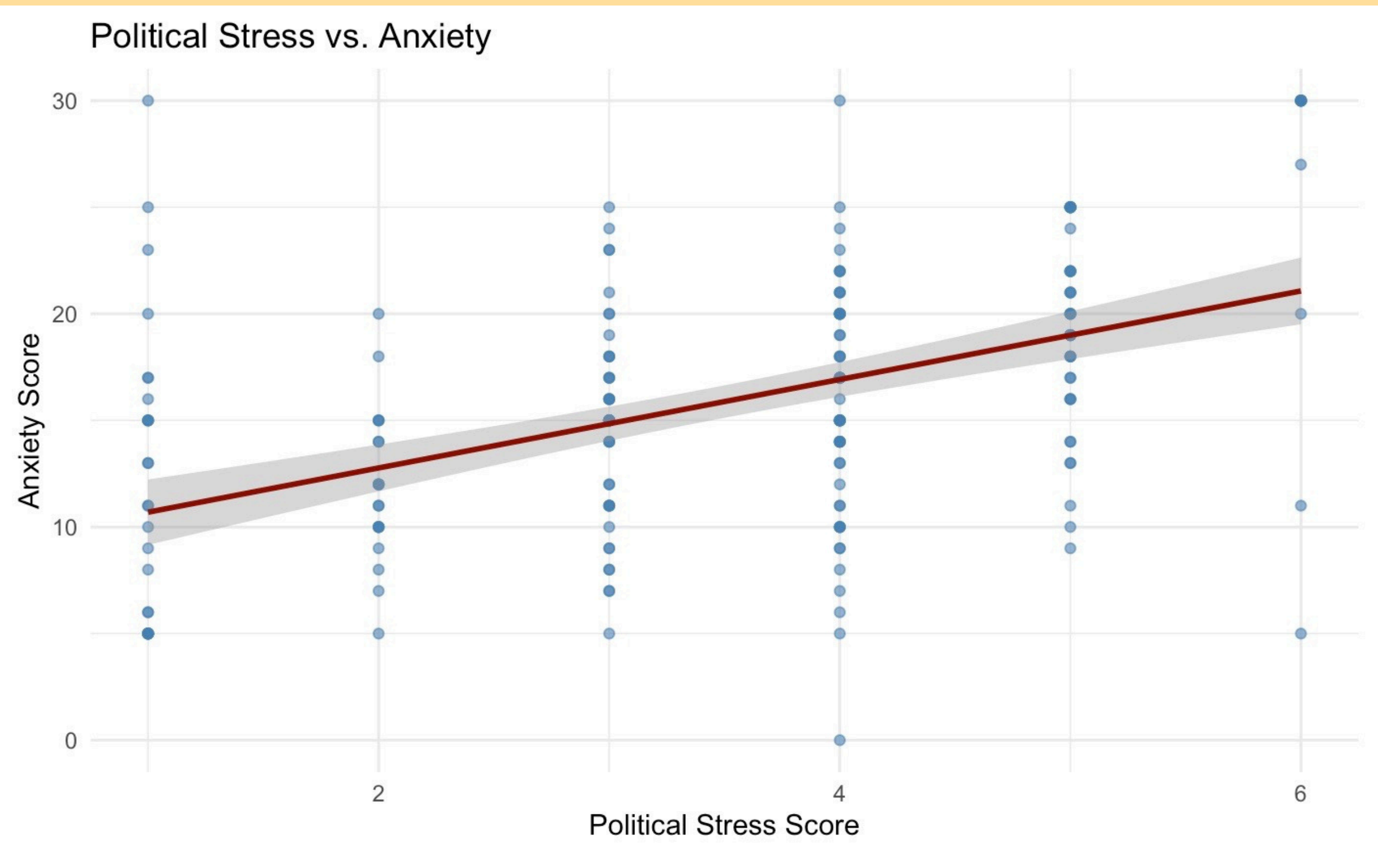
## Results

Figure 1. Mean Political Stress Scores by Gender



Mean political stress scores by gender, with standard deviation (SD) error bars. Women reported higher mean political stress ( $M \sim 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) compared to men ( $M \sim 2.8$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ).

Figure 2. Relationship Between Political Stress and Anxiety



Scatterplot showing a positive relationship between political stress and anxiety scores.

## Conclusions

- Political stress is significantly associated with increased anxiety and sleep difficulty among UCSD students.
- Experiencing political stress was a significant factor in poor mental health outcomes.
- Women reported significantly higher political stress levels than men ( $p < 0.001$ ), and students experiencing high political stress were 5.7 times more likely to report nervousness ( $p < 0.001$ ).
- Political engagement wasn’t a direct predictor of anxiety, but higher involvement was linked to greater stress.
- This study and its findings are specific to undergraduate students at UC San Diego, which may limit generalizability to broader student populations.

## Policy Implications

- UCSD should expand Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and develop targeted programs to support students during politically charged times.
- Creating inclusive, supportive settings for students to engage in respectful discussions across political perspectives can promote mutual understanding and help reduce stress related to political polarization.

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## Survey



## References

