

4221 - Racial Discrimination and Interpersonal Violence in Asian Adolescents in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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 BCEC - 257A

Session: COVID-19 in Pediatric & Adolescent Populations

Program: Epidemiology

Abstract

Background: Racial discrimination targeting Asians in the U.S. has sharply increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite its well-established link with psychological/physical health outcomes, little is known about how racial discrimination relates to interpersonal violence, particularly in adolescents.

Objective: This study examined cross-sectional and temporal associations between racial discrimination and interpersonal violence (i.e., bullying victimization, bullying perpetration, and fighting).

Methods: Waves 3 (W3, 2020) and 4 (W4, 2021) data of a randomized clinical trial of a school-based violence prevention program were examined. This study used the Asian adolescent subsample ($n = 344$), including 166 (48.3%) females with an average age of 14.43 years in W3 ($SD = .51$).

Results: At W3, 18.3% of Asian adolescents reported experiencing verbal harassment (VH) due to their race and 16.0% reported being treated worse than people of another race. Multilevel multivariate logistic regression analysis found both VH ($AOR=4.65$, 95% CI:1.85,11.65) and worse treatment ($AOR=4.86$, 95% CI:1.62,14.55) were cross-sectionally associated with higher likelihood of being bullied by peers, controlling for age, gender, living situation, and intervention effects. Furthermore, VH experiences increased the likelihood of Asian adolescents bullying others ($AOR=3.49$, 95%CI:1.86,6.55) cross-sectionally. Temporarily, adolescents who experienced VH were more likely to engage in fighting ($AOR=4.79$, 95%CI:1.21,18.96) one year later, even after controlling for demographic characteristics and prior year fighting behaviors. No significant cross-sectional association was identified for fighting nor temporal association for bullying.

Conclusions: Findings suggest racial discrimination experiences can contribute to

interpersonal violence. It is vital for violence prevention to include components to address racial discrimination.

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