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#### 250037 Discrimination, Mental Health, and Work Performance Among Chinese Immigrants in Food Service

*Sunday, October 30, 2011*

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**Background and Objective:** Immigrants compared to native workers experience increased occupational health disparities, thought to be amplified by minority and immigrant associated discrimination. Research, based primarily on bivariate associations, suggests that discrimination creates social contexts that increase risk for both mental health and worker performance problems. This study expands our knowledge of contextual influences using a multivariate approach to identify mechanisms by which discrimination influences worker performance. **Methods:** Participants ( $n=60$ ) included Chinese immigrants in food service. Each completed a comprehensive in-person interview, with scales using Likert-type response options. Using multiple regression analysis, we tested the direct and mediation effects of mental health problems on work performance loss, controlling for relevant covariates (e.g., gender, education, citizenship, insurance, health). **Results:** On average, participants had lived in the US 10.4 years ( $SD=9.6$ ); 55% understood some spoken English; and 47% were female. Eighty percent worked in varied positions in full-service restaurants. Social discrimination predicted mental health problems as well as work performance loss ( $\beta=.45$ ;  $\beta=.38$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Mental health problems were observed to partially mediate the influence of social discrimination on work performance. **Conclusion:** This study integrates existing lines of research that examine relationships among discrimination, mental health, and work performance. The meditational analysis highlights the impact of discrimination on worker performance, and the relevance of mental health in this process. The findings warrant further research to elucidate whether or not mental health promotion, through policy and/or targeted intervention, is efficacious for preventing or reducing work performance loss among Chinese immigrant workers exposed to discrimination.

#### **Learning Areas:**

Advocacy for health and health education  
Occupational health and safety  
Other professions or practice related to public health  
Public health or related nursing  
Social and behavioral sciences

#### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to: 1. Describe the mechanism of social discrimination on Chinese immigrant workers' work performance. 2. Identify the relevance of study results to occupational and public health practice and research that will promote Chinese and other immigrant workers' work performance

**Keywords:** Immigrants, Occupational Health

#### **Presenting author's disclosure statement:**

**Qualified on the content I am responsible for because:** I am the PI of the grant that supports this study.

**Any relevant financial relationships?** No

I agree to comply with the American Public Health Association Conflict of Interest and Commercial Support Guidelines, and to disclose to the participants any off-label or

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experimental uses of a commercial product or service discussed in my presentation.

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