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The effect of discrimination on balance concentration and health-information processing and retention.

Psychology

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Previous research has demonstrated that experiencing discrimination can have negative effects on a person's psychological and physical well-being. It is suggested that this may occur by disrupting working memory. This study will examine the relationship discrimination has on one's physical performance and the ability to remember health-related information. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of six conditions, each involving two variables: whether the participant will be included or excluded from an interactive online ball tossing game called CyberBall, and whether the sex of the other game players is different from or the same as the participant's own sex. Participants excluded from a different sex group have the potential to attribute their exclusion to gender discrimination. First, the participants will take part in a balancing task to determine their initial balancing ability which will be recorded for comparison later in the study. Afterwards they will engage in the CyberBall activity. All players aside from the participant will be computerized, have been assigned race-neutral names and have been programmed to eventually stop tossing the ball to the participant (exclusion) or continue to throw the ball to the participant (inclusion) for the duration of the activity. Next, participants will be given a nutrition pregnancy brochure. Following a second phase of the balancing task, where results will be compared to initial balancing task scores, participants will be asked to take a test regarding the brochure's information. It is hypothesized that the participants who have been discriminated against will have a decrease in concentration ability demonstrated by decreased balancing performance and decreased memory retention based on the test scores. If supported, this information may suggest that racial disparities in health may partially be due to decreased information processing ability following discrimination within health care settings.