

The Impact of Racism and Family Rejection on Sexual and Gender Minority Stressors and Mental Health

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- Universities and staff across the nation
- Study participants
- Dr. Jessica Fish and other faculty and student researchers on this project
- The National Academies Division of Behavioral and Social Science and Education Board on Children, Youth, and Families

Parent Project Background

Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic...

- SGM college and K-12 students were hypothesized to be a hyper-vulnerable population amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Potential of returning to homes where they could face elevated SGM stressors (e.g., family rejection and identity concealment) and mental health burden.

Parent Study Design and Aim

Parent Project Aim:

- To examine the relations between SGM-related stressors (e.g., family rejection, identity concealment, internalized homophobia and transphobia) and mental health among SGM university students in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Design:

- A nonprobability, cross-sectional online survey was conducted between May 27th and August 14th, 2020
- A total of $N=824$ SGM student respondents were recruited.

Current Study Aims

Overall Aims: to examine racism, SGM stressors (e.g., family rejection, LGBTQ victimization, identity concealment, internalized homophobia and transphobia) and mental health among SGM SOC in the context of COVID-19

- **Study 1:** Changes in frequency of racism and SGM-related stress since the start of the pandemic → psychological distress
- **Study 2:** Relationships between racism, family rejection, identity concealment, and internalized homophobia

The current **analytic sample** is a subsample of $n=200$ SGM SOC.

Theoretical Frameworks

Intersectionality framework (Collins, 2019; Crenshaw, 1991)

- Illuminate the ways in which individuals positioned at the intersections of multiple marginalized identities (e.g. SGM SOC) experience various forms of overlapping oppression and marginalization.

Minority Stress Framework (Meyer, 2003; Testa et al., 2015)

- Stress that arises from anti-SGM prejudice, bias, and stigma
- Structural → external → internal

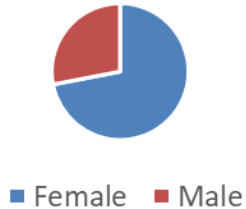
Measures

- COVID-19 Context – all measures worded to determine whether stressors (e.g., racism, SGM-related stress, family rejection) had increased since the start of the pandemic.
 - “Have you felt this way more often since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?” (1 = yes, 0 = no)
 - **Racism:** *LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale* (Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni, & Walters, 2011)
 - **SGM Stressors:** Family Rejection, Internalized Homophobia, Internalized Transphobia, Identity Concealment, LGBTQ Victimization
 - *Sexual Minority Adolescent Stress Inventory* (Schrager, Goldbach, and Mamey 2018)
 - *Daily Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire* (Balsam, Beadnell, and Molina 2013)
 - *Gender Minority Stress and Resilience Scale* (Testa et al. 2015)
 - *LGBT Minority Stress Measure* (Outland 2016)
 - **Psychological Distress:** *Kessler-10* (Kessler et al., 2002)

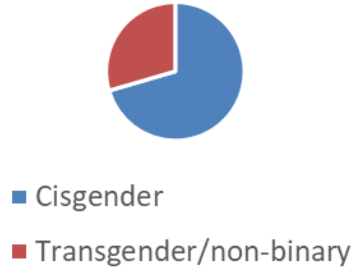


Sample Demographics

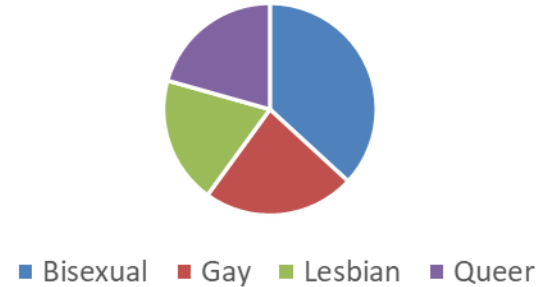
Sex Assigned at Birth



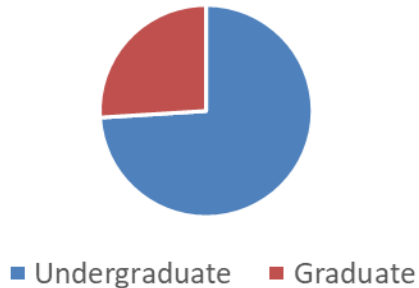
Gender



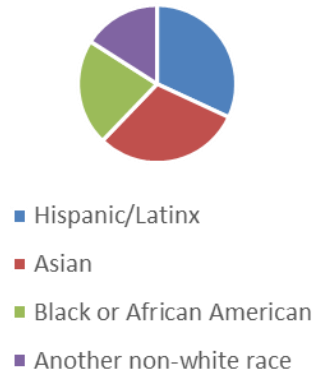
Sexual Orientation



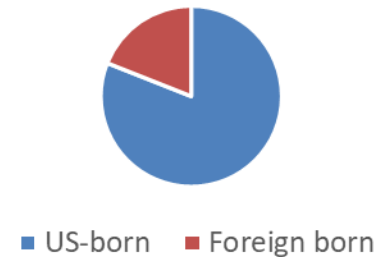
Educational Program



Race/Ethnicity



Nativity



Study 1

RACISM AND SGM STRESS

Rationale and Background

- ~41% of all U.S. young adults are enrolled in college; nearly half are POC. (Espinosa et al., 2019)
- Young adulthood is a time of vulnerability for poor mental health and elevated substance use, particularly for SGMs. (Fish et al., 2019, 2020a, 2020b)
- Disproportionate burden of COVID-19 on communities of color. (Czeisler et al., 2020; Liu & Modir, 2020; Moore et al., 2020)
- University students who hold both racial and sexual and gender minority (SGM) identities may have compounding experiences of vulnerability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - SGM stressors (e.g., family rejection, concealment, internalized homo-/transphobia), racism, mental health burden, social and economic stressors

Study 1 Aims

We sought to examine...

1. Whether increased frequency of *racism* and SGM stressors since the start of COVID-19 predicts current *psychological distress*
2. How the relationship between increased *SGM stressors* since the start of COVID-19 and current *psychological distress* change when adjusting for experiences of *racism*
3. Whether increased *racism* moderates the associations between increased *SGM stressors* since the start of COVID-19 and current *psychological distress*.

Levels of Psychological Distress, Racism, and SGM Stressors

Psychological Distress: M (SD): 17.44 (8.36)

Increases in:

Family Rejection: 65%

LGBTQ Victimization: 5.5%

Internalized Homophobia: 36.5%

Internalized Transphobia (only trans): 61%

Identity Concealment: 57.5%

Racism: 67.5%

Study 1 Results

- Independent Effects were all significantly associated with greater psychological distress
 - Racism ($B = 5.73, p < .001$)
 - Family rejection ($B = 6.14, p < .001$)
 - Internalized homophobia ($B = 4.67, p < .001$)
 - Internalized transphobia ($B = 7.85, p < .001$)
 - Identity Concealment ($B = 6.08, p < .001$)

Study 1 Results

- Dual Effects Models controlling for racism
 - Family rejection ($B = 4.78, p < .001$)
 - Internalized homophobia ($B = 3.36, p = .005$)
 - Internalized transphobia ($B = 5.82, p = .004$)
 - Identity Concealment ($B = 4.51, p < .001$)

Study 1 Results

- Moderating effects of increased racism on the associations between each SGM stressor and psychological distress were not significant.
 - Family rejection X racism ($p = .093$)
 - Internalized homophobia X racism ($p = .317$)
 - Internalized transphobia X racism ($p = .935$)
 - Identity Concealment X racism ($p = .114$)

Study 2

IMPACT OF FAMILY REJECTION ON INTERNALIZED SGM STRESSORS

Rationale and Background

- **65%** of sample reported increased family rejection during COVID-19
- **67.5%** of sample experienced an increase in *racism*
- Given the high prevalence of family rejection and racism among LGBTQ college students of color, it is important to investigate how these stressors interact with other SGM stressors.

Study 2 Aims

We sought to examine...

- The impact of changes in family rejection and racism during COVID-19 (external stressors) on internalized homophobia and identity concealment (internalized stressors)
 - Bivariate relationships between identity concealment, racism, family rejection and internalized homophobia
 - Effects of racism and family rejection on internalized homophobia and identity concealment after adjusting for social isolation, living with parents, out to parents, age, sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual orientation, parental financial dependence, educational program, race, and ethnicity

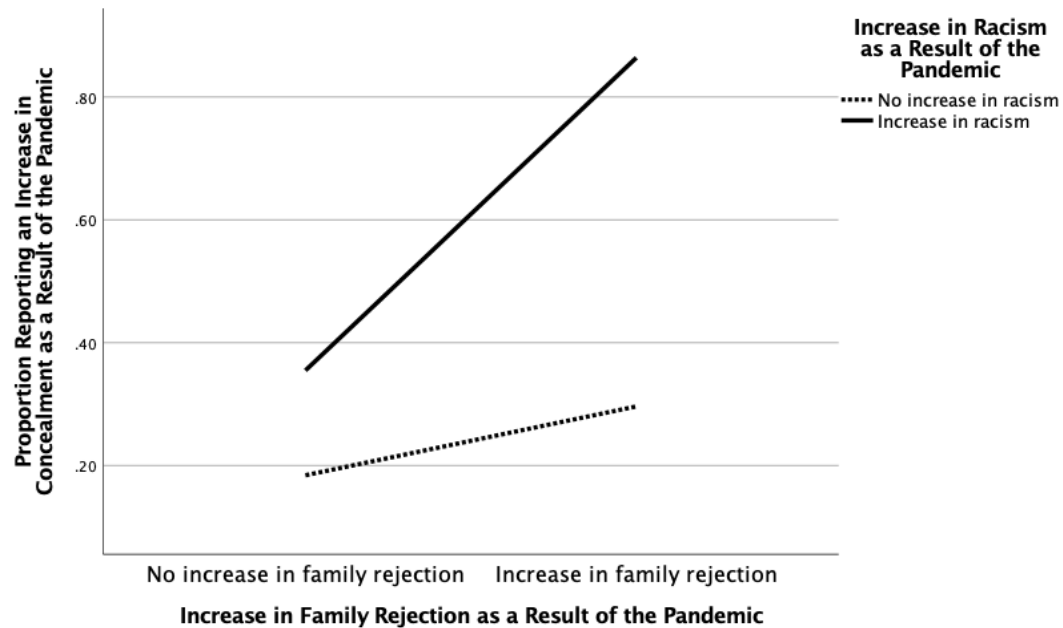
Study 2 Results

- Bivariate relationships between family rejection, identity concealment, internalized homophobia, and racism were all significantly and positively related to each other.

	Racism χ^2	Family Rejection χ^2	Internalized Homophobia χ^2	Identity Concealment χ^2
Racism	-	23.30***	15.92***	46.69***
Family Rejection	23.30***	-	17.41***	44.52***
Internalized Homophobia	15.92***	17.41***	-	17.36***
Identity Concealment	46.69***	44.52***	17.36***	-

Study 2 Results

- Identity Concealment



Study 2 Results

- Internalized Homophobia
 - Increased racism
 - $aOR = 3.62, SE = 0.48, CI: (1.42, 9.20), p = .007$
 - Increased family rejection
 - $aOR = 2.91, SE = 0.45, CI: (1.20, 7.05), p = .018$
 - Covariates
 - Being out to parents [$aOR = .407, SE = 0.42, CI: (0.18, 0.92), p = .031$]
 - Social Isolation [$aOR = 1.40, SE = 0.12, CI: (1.11, 1.76), p = .004$]
 - Interaction of racism and family rejection was not significant

Public Health and Practical Significance

- Clear and unique impacts of both racism and SGM-related stressors on SGM SOC mental health
- Universities and mental health stakeholders must acknowledge and address the specific stressors experienced by SGM SOC amid COVID-19
 - Increase access to affirming and culturally sensitive MH services / providers on and off campus
 - Increase training and resources that ensure a public and mental health workforce that is well-equipped to address needs related to racism and SGM stressors
 - Increase engagement of SGM SOC in MH services through affirming practices and allyship

Conclusion

- Racism and SGM stressors are **interlocking**, and reflect stress that is both related to racial and SGM identities
 - Both of which impact mental health
- Increased racism and family rejection during COVID-19 were associated with victimization, internalized stigma and concealment for SGM SOC
 - May further exacerbate mental health
- Mental health services / resources need to acknowledge and address the **multifaceted nature** of pandemic-related stressors – particularly for SGM SOC

Thank You!

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