

Background

Literature shows the impact of perceived discrimination, defined as the perception of individuals of unfair treatment based on characteristics and identities, on both physical and mental health along with the utilization of healthcare services. However, little literature exists on the quality and quantity of tools of measurement for perceived discrimination.

Objective

The purpose of this study is to examine the current tools of measurement for perceived discrimination. Specifically, to investigate the number of tools of measurement available, similarities and differences between different tools available, and possible gaps in these tools of measurement. By investigating current tools of measurement improvements may be made in the collection and analysis of such data.

Methods

A literature search for measures of perceived discrimination was conducted. Instruments were included if they met the criteria of providing broad reasons for discrimination and not being limited to a specific setting. This excluded instruments that measured discrimination in the workplace or healthcare, discrimination limited to race, and other specified modifications of the primary three instruments. Three instruments were identified as meeting said criteria.

Results

Table 1: Perceived Discrimination: Instruments, Variable Measured, Frequency, and Scale

Instrument	Original Study	Variable Measured	Frequency	Scale
Everyday Discrimination Scale	Williams, Jackson, & Anderson (1997)	Discriminatory Events or Actions	Day to Day	Almost Everyday- Never
Major Experiences of Discrimination	Williams et al. (2008)	Discriminatory Events	Lifetime	Past Week- More Than a Year Ago
Heightened Vigilance Scale	DAS (1995) and YES (2000) Study	Worry	Day to Day	Very Often- Never

Table 2: Perceived Discrimination: Instruments, Original Study, and Reason for Discrimination

Variable Measured	Instrument	Original Study	Reason for Discrimination
Perceived Discrimination	Everyday Discrimination Scale	Williams, Jackson, & Anderson (1997)	Ancestry/National Origins, Gender, Race, Age, Religion, Height, Weight, Physical Appearance, Sexual Orientation, Education/Income Level, Physical Disability (optional)
	Major Experiences of Discrimination	Williams et al. (2008)	Ancestry/National Origins, Gender, Race, Age, Religion, Height, Weight, Physical Appearance, Sexual Orientation, Education/Income Level
	Heightened Vigilance Scale	DAS (1995) and YES (2000) Study	N/A

Results

There are three main instruments of measurement for perceived discrimination due to broad reasons for said discrimination. All instruments function on a self-report model and have proven, via a small number of studies, to be valid instruments to measure perceived discrimination across multiple populations.

Conclusion and Implications

Due to the subjective nature of perceived discrimination and the self-reporting model of all instruments mentioned, there is possibility of variance in reporting and validity. As we strive to become less discriminatory and more inclusive as a society these instruments may need to be adapted to better suit modern situations of discrimination.



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