Racism as a determinant of indigenous health and wellbeing

Professor Yin Paradies
Deputy Director

Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation
What is racism?

- Racism is the inequitable distribution of opportunity, benefit or resources across ethnic/racial groups.
- Racism occurs through avoidable and unfair actions that: (i) further disadvantage minority ethnic/racial groups; or (ii) further advantage dominant ethnic/racial groups.
- Racism is expressed through attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, norms and practices and may be either intentional or unintentional. (Paradies et al. 2009)
What is racism?

- Racism is treating someone unfairly because of where they come from, the colour of their skin and their accent.

- Racism is about what people think, believe and their emotions such as fear and anxiety. It is also about the way our society operates beyond individuals.

- Anyone can engage in racism and anyone can experience racism. By no means is it the case that only White people can be racist!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internalised racism</th>
<th>Interpersonal racism</th>
<th>Systemic racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of attitudes, beliefs or ideologies about the inferiority of one’s own ethnic/racial group</td>
<td>Interactions between people that maintain and reproduce avoidable and unfair inequalities across ethnic/racial groups</td>
<td>Requirements, conditions, practices, policies or processes that maintain and reproduce avoidable and unfair inequalities across ethnic/racial groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing that Indigenous people are naturally less intelligent than White people</td>
<td>Being racially abused when walking or driving in the street</td>
<td>Indigenous Australians are 2-3 times more likely to be arrested and charged with an offence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But what is racist?

**NOT RACIST/ DISCRIMINATORY**
- Telling a Muslim woman that she is exotically beautiful
- Saying “he’s a good runner because he’s black”
- Asking a colleague to speak on behalf of their whole culture

**Somewhat racist**
- Ringing the bank to complain that the call centre is staffed by Indian people
- Universities must enrol a certain number of Indigenous students
- Indigenous people are more likely to be stopped and questioned by police

**Racist**
- An African taxi driver is assaulted by two Anglo-Australian men
- Someone missing out on a job because they are Aboriginal
- Universities must enrol a certain number of Aboriginal students
- Universities must enrol a certain number of Asian students
- Indigenous people are more likely to be stopped and questioned by police
- Telling a Muslim woman that she is exotically beautiful
- Asking a colleague to speak on behalf of their whole culture

**Actions labelled as racist are seen to involve an intent to cause harm, or the unjust treatment of people based on their race.**

Actions that were seen to disadvantage Anglo-Australians are also seen as racist

(Sweeney Research 2010)
What is direct racism?

- Telling someone to go ‘home’ to their country when Australia is their home and sometimes they were even born in this country.

- Security guards following people around in shops and searching their bags just because they are Black.

- Thinking that someone is stupid because they can’t speak English very well.
What is indirect racism?

- Not letting school students wear head coverings
- Thinking that everyone should speak English in public places
- Having mostly or only white people on TV shows and in computer games etc.
Tolerated, but not Preferred: Troubling the Unconscious of Televisual Multiculturalism

Nafissa D. Thompson-Spires

Vanderbuilt University

Canadian televisual exports make up at least 30 percent of the original content on US cable television. And from many angles, Canadian youth-television series look more diverse, more positive, and more attentive to interracial and interethnic issues than do similar US series. This article explores Canadian representations of interracial relationships and situates them within readings of Canada’s official multicultural policy. It argues that much of this surface-level positivism about race reveals unconscious anxieties that ultimately manifest in drastic ways of treating “diversity” or “multicultural” subjects.
Privileges of whiteness

- Can you identify with this list?
- Do you agree with this list?
- Do only White people get these privileges?
- How do these privileges relate to class, nationality, gender, sexuality etc.?
We're lucky to be the majority.
We're lucky we don't get stared at every single time we walk into a room.
We're lucky car doors don't get locked when we walk by.
We're lucky people don't see us, not as a color.
We're lucky we don't get followed by security when we go to the store.
We're lucky that it's easier to get a job, a bank loan, and approval in general.
We're lucky we don't have our purse searched when we leave the mall, or our car searched because we're in the wrong neighborhood.

If you're not sure what to say, visit UnFairCampaign.org

It's hard to see racism when you're white.
# Self-reported racism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Prevalence of racism %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATSIHS 2004-5</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>single item</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATSISS 2002-3</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>single item</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAACHS 2001-2</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>single item</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATSISS 2008</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>multi-item</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunn et al. 2003</td>
<td>Qld/NSW</td>
<td>single item</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSIC 2009</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>single item</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larson et al. 2007</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>single item</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradies et al. 2008</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>multi-item</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest et al. 2007</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>multi-item</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziersch et al. 2008</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>multi-item</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpersonal Racism Against Indigenous people

- 5000 respondents in the 2001 NSW/Qld Racism Survey and 4000 respondents in the 2006 Victorian Racism Survey were asked:

- Would you be concerned if a close relative were to marry an Indigenous person?

- 28% in NSW/Qld and 25% in Victoria expressed concern at such an occurrence.
Employment

- Booth et al. (2009) sent over 4000 fictional resumes to employers in response to job advertisements with ethnic-specific and Indigenous names.

- The study found that in order to get as many interviews as an Anglo applicant, Indigenous, Chinese and Middle Eastern applicant must submit 35%, 68% and 64% more applications, respectively.
Experiences of racism in last twelve months

Percent of respondents

- Names, teasing or comments: 92.3%
- Ignored: 85.8%
- Sworn at/verbally abused: 84.1%
- Less intelligent: 81.9%
- Left out: 79.9%
- Spit or something thrown: 67.4%
- Don't belong: 66.0%
- Property vandalised: 54.7%
Quality of healthcare

Smedley et al. 2002
Racism and ill-health

(Paradies et al. 2013)
Australian adult health

- Poor self-assessed health status, psychological distress, diabetes, smoking and substance use in the NATSIHS (Paradies 2007)

- Depression, poor self-assessed health status and poor mental health in the DRUID study (Paradies & Cunningham 2006, 2012)

- Mental ill-health in the Adelaide Indigenous Urban Location and Health project (Ziersch et al. 2011)

- Reduced general physical and mental health in a rural Western Australian town (Larson et al. 2007)
LEAD: racism & mental health

Figure 6: Experiences of racism and mean K5 score

- Mean K5 score
- Threshold for high psychological distress
Australian child health

- Alcohol consumption, cigarette and marijuana use as well as emotional/behavioural difficulties and suicidal thoughts in the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (Zubrick et al. 2005)

- Anxiety, depression, suicide risk, mental ill-health and poor oral health in the Aboriginal Birth Cohort study (Jamieson et al. 2011; Priest et al. 2011)

- Poor general/mental health and depression among Indigenous youth in Victoria (Priest et al. 2011)
U.S. findings

- Self-reported hypertension (Kaholokula et al. 2010) and lower average cortisol (Kaholokula et al. 2012) among Native Hawaiians after adjusting for confounding

- Longitudinal association with substance abuse among Navajo adolescents (Galliher et al. 2011) and diabetes among two ‘American Indian tribal groups’ (Jiang et al. 2008)

- Longitudinal problem alcohol use via decreasing positive school attitudes and increased feelings of anger and perceived delinquent friendships among North American Indigenous adolescents (Cheadle & Whitbeck 2011)
NZ findings

- Lower cervical and breast cancer screening rates among Maori women (Harris et al. 2012a)

- Lower mental health, chronic mental health disorder, poor/fair general health, lower physical health, CVD, smoking, drinking (Harris et al. 2012b)

- Depression and cigarette smoking among Maori high school students (Crengle et al. 2012)
Canada/Norway findings

- PTSD and problem gambling among Aboriginal, Metis and Inuit adults in Edmonton, Canada (Currie et al. 2012)

- Poorer self-reported health (Hansen et al. 2010) and psychological distress (Hansen et al. 2012) for Sami

- Twice as likely to report CVD due to marginalisation, including ethnicity-based discrimination (Eliassen et al. 2013)
Implicit Association Test
What is implicit race bias?

- Implicit bias is a form of subtle bias that occurs automatically, with little conscious control, sometimes despite well-intentioned efforts to be nonracist. It occurs more often in high pressure and ambiguous situations.

- For example, the sight of a dark-skinned person may trigger beliefs about aggressiveness or criminality, which act as filters through which that person’s actions are interpreted.

- Implicit bias affects most people in societies across the world.

(Nier et al. 2011)
6 RACIAL DISPARITIES IN NYPD STOP & FRISK

Don’t Want to Get Stopped by the NYPD? STOP BEING BLACK

There were 601,285 stops in 2013:
- 52% Black people
- 9% White people

Top reason for being stopped: 32%
- “furtive movements”

Number of stops with Black people including: up against the wall/on the ground/had a gun/baton or pepper spray drawn 28,359
- 76%

How many of these were NOT arrested afterwards?
- 32,375

Percentage of all Black people stopped that did NOT have any contraband on them:
- 98%

Steps with Black people were for: having a “suspicious bulge”
- (one) found to have a pistol.

Racism Still Exists RISE racismstillexists.tumblr.com
Implicit racism

- Implicit bias is associated with teacher’s differential expectations for students depending on their race/ethnicity.

- Students who displayed a ‘Black’ walking style were perceived by teachers as lower in academic achievement, highly aggressive, and more likely to need special education.

- IAT predicted mock jurors views of the evidence while 87% of 85 White judges displayed a strong White preference in the IAT Black judges had no clear preference.

(Staats 2013)
Implicit racism

- Unconscious healthcare provider bias has been found to lead to poorer clinical decisions for African Americans (Green et al. 2007)

- Poor visit communication and poor ratings of care (Cooper et al. 2012)

- An implicit association of certain diseases including obesity and drug use with African Americans (Moskowitz et al. 2012)

(Shavers et al. 2012; Paradies et al. 2014)
Healthcare provider racism can lead to poorer self-reported health status, lower perceived quality of care, under-utilisation of health services, delays in seeking care, failure to follow recommendations, societal distrust, interruptions in care, mistrust of providers and avoidance of health care systems.

Unconscious healthcare provider bias has been found to lead to poorer clinical decisions for African Americans.

(Shavers et al. 2012; Paradies et al. in press)
The Health Sector (Oz)

- Five studies have shown disparities in medical care experienced by Indigenous patients in Australia.

- These studies found that Indigenous patients with the same characteristics as non-Indigenous patients were about a third less likely to receive appropriate medical care across all conditions (Cunningham 2002) as well as for lung cancer (Hall et al. 2004) and coronary procedures (Coory & Walsh 2005) in particular.

- Indigenous patients were only one-third as likely to receive kidney transplants (Cass et al. 2003).
‘Non-clinical factors’ may be contributing to ethnic differences in caesareans for Maori women (Harris et al. 2006)

Hospital care received by Maori is marginally poorer than that received by other (Davis et al. 2006)

Lower intervention for Maori cardiac patients compared to others (Westbrooke et al. 2001)
Healthcare provider racism

- In the 2004-5 NATSIHS, 4.2% of Indigenous adults reported that they received worse treatment when seeking health care in last year compared to non-Indigenous people while 4.3% in the 2008 NATSISS reported discrimination by doctors, nurses or other staff at hospitals or surgeries in the last year.

- 5.0% of Maori adults reported racial discrimination in the 2006/07 NZ Health Survey (Harris et al. 2012) while 7.1% of American Indians/Alaskan natives reported healthcare discrimination (a quarter due to race/ethnicity) in the 2001 California Health Interview survey (Johansson et al. 2006).
Healthcare provider racism

Emerging evidence from the Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) program in Victoria indicates that Indigenous people who experiencing racism in health settings are almost twice as likely as those experiencing racism in other settings to suffer from high or very high psychological distress.

(Kelaher et al. MJA provisionally accepted)
Conclusion

- Racism is an established determinant of health

- Indigenous people experience high levels of racism in a range of key settings

- There is considerable evidence that contemporary forms of racism are associated with ill-health for indigenous peoples in a number of countries
Questions

Contact: yin.paradies@deakin.edu.au