



Discrimination and Substance Use Patterns among Youth of Color in Urban Neighborhoods with Concentrated Disadvantage

Lynissa R. Stokes, Ph.D., Namita Dwarakanath, MPH(c),
 Barbara J. Fuhrman, Ph.D., Elizabeth Miller, MD, Ph.D, and Ashley V. Hill, DrPH, MPH
 Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC;
 Department of Pediatrics, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA



BACKGROUND

- Experiences of discrimination are common among minority youth.
- Exposure to discrimination may increase risk for health-compromising behaviors, including substance use.
- Few studies have examined gender differences in experiences of discrimination and if such experiences are related to substance use.

OBJECTIVE

To compare gender differences in associations between discrimination and past 30-day substance use in a sample of predominantly Black youth.

METHODS

Study Design:

- 531 male and 188 female 13 to 19-year-old youth ($M_{age} = 15.43$ and 15.12 years old, respectively; $p = .02$)
- Predominantly Black (80.2% and 72.3%, respectively)
- Data are from two randomized trials of gender-specific, community-based violence prevention programs conducted in urban, low resource neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, PA (Manhood 2.0 and Sisterhood 2.0)

Measures:

Lifetime Discrimination

- 10 items (refer to Table 2 for sample items)
- Response options = No ("0") or Yes ("1")
- Each response added to create total score

Past 30-Day Substance Use

- # of days smoked cigarettes, had at least 1 drink of alcohol, used marijuana
- Response options dichotomized as Not at all ("0") or Yes ("1") per substance

Control Variables:

Participant age and parental/guardian level of education

RESULTS

Table 1. Past 30-Day Substance Use by Gender (% Reporting Yes)

	Manhood 2.0	Sisterhood 2.0	Comparison
Cigarettes (or other tobacco products)	23.4%	14.0%	$\chi^2(1) = 7.15, p = .008$
Alcohol (at least 1 drink)	23.4%	22.5%	<i>ns</i>
Marijuana Use	34.6%	42.5%	<i>ns</i>



Table 2. Lifetime Discrimination by Gender (% Reporting Yes)

For each of the following situations, think whether you have ever felt discriminated against because of the color of your skin, language or accent, or because of your culture? ^a	Manhood 2.0 Participants	Sisterhood 2.0 Participants
Been accused of something you didn't do?	67.6%	69.6%
Has someone been rude to you?	56.1%	67.4%
Been called an insulting name? ^b	53.1%	65.2%
Had the feeling that someone was afraid of you? ^b	53.4%	62.8%
Been treated badly or unfairly by a teacher?	52.4%	59.9%

^aContact the first author at stokeslr@upmc.edu for a complete list of the discrimination items.

^bRepresents gender difference in rank order.

Table 3. Odds of Past 30-Day Substance Use by Lifetime Discrimination – Manhood 2.0 Participants

	Smoking	Alcohol	Marijuana
Variable	AOR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)
Participant Age	1.21 (1.06-1.38)**	1.25 (1.10-1.42)**	1.23 (1.10-1.38)**
Parent/Guardian Education	.95 (.84-1.06)	.98 (.88-1.10)	1.02 (.92-1.12)
Lifetime Discrimination	1.04 (.97-1.12)	1.00 (.93-1.07)	1.04 (.98 – 1.11)

Table 4. Odds of Past 30-Day Substance Use by Lifetime Discrimination – Sisterhood 2.0 Participants

	Smoking	Alcohol	Marijuana
Variable	AOR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)
Participant Age	.90 (.65-1.25)	.99 (.75-1.30)	1.07 (.85-1.34)
Parent/Guardian Education	.85 (.65-1.09)	1.05 (.85-1.30)	.99 (.83-1.19)
Lifetime Discrimination	1.01 (.94-1.10)	1.11 (.98-1.27)	1.12 (1.01-1.25)*

* $p = .05$; ** $p = .01$

DISCUSSION

- Male youth were more likely than female youth to report past 30-day cigarette smoking
- Both groups reported similar levels of past 30-day drinking and marijuana use
- Experiences of lifetime discrimination were similar for both groups, with a few exceptions
- Age was associated with increased odds of past 30-day substance use for male youth
- Lifetime discrimination was associated with increased odds of past 30-day marijuana use for female youth

Implications for Future Research:

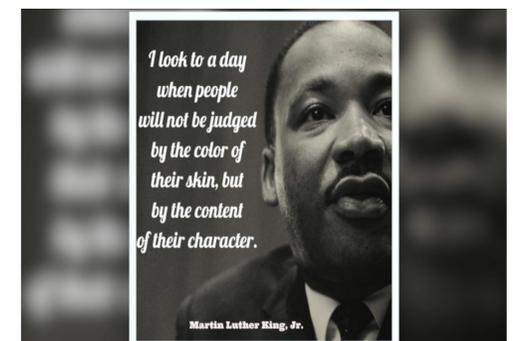
The finding that lifetime discrimination was associated with increased odds of marijuana use for female, but not male youth, warrants further exploration

Possible gender differences in how discrimination is appraised and managed might help explain these findings

Future studies that include measures of stress appraisal and coping strategies would be beneficial

Limitations:

- Cross-sectional design precludes assessing causality;
- Neighborhoods were all in and around Pittsburgh, limiting generalizability
- Small sample size for Sisterhood 2.0 compared to Manhood 2.0 participants



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding: National Institutes of Health (T32HD087162, R01AA023260, PI: Miller)