

THE INFLUENCE OF MASS MEDIA'S MISREPRESENTATION

**The Influence of Mass Media's Misrepresentation of African-Americans Health Disparities
During COVID-19 on Nursing Students**

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Abstract summary :

Expect your views towards social media to be challenged as we analyze the misrepresentation of minorities during COVID-19. African-Americans account for a more COVID-19 deaths in the US despite comprising less of the population. We will discuss the influence of media and sociodemographic factors on nursing student's perception of risk.

Abstract

Social media sites that were initially developed to connect friends and family have become a platform for some media personalities to manipulate stereotypes and purposefully misrepresent minority populations. The media also plays a role as educator and influencer on how we view the rest of the world. In 2020, COVID-19 and racial discourse saturated the media and impacted our beliefs and opinions about the virus and racial discrimination.

African-Americans comprise 13% of the US population yet represent the majority of the mortality due to COVID-19. The idea of "priming" a population for an expected response was first introduced by Albert Bandura and is something that can be induced by exposure to the media.

Therefore, we sought to assess the impact of mass media on nursing students' perception of risk for COVID-19, while also accounting for sociodemographic differences.

Two videos were developed using media clips, one with predominantly white individuals and the second video exemplifying the black experience with Covid. After consenting to participate in the study, nursing students were randomized to view either the predominantly white or Black media representation of COVID. Students provided baseline information on their level in the nursing program, the diversity of where they grew up, the type of news they

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consumed, and the Coronavirus Racial Bias Scale (CRBS). We completed descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to analyze differences between groups.

We found the mean age of participants (N=70) was 21.1, a majority of students identified as white (55.7%), 31.4% as Asian, 4.3% as Black, and 8.6% as multiracial or other. One-third of our participants identify as Hispanic (N=23) and a majority (62%) of participants received their news from social media platforms followed by online news (20%). Students grew up in predominantly suburban communities (64%) while (40%) grew up in communities more diverse than our University population. Black nursing students had the second lowest score for cyberbullying (mean= 2.37) in relation to COVID-19 second to only white students (mean=2.30). Asian, Hispanic, and multi-racial students reported the highest CRBS scores (mean=3.29, 2.84, and 2.53 respectively). Though the videos ($\beta = 0.107, p = 0.397$) and preferred source of news ($\beta = -0.05, p = 0.718$), had no significant impact on the student's CRBS scores; Asian ($\beta = 1.59, p < 0.001$) and Hispanic ($\beta = 0.98, p < 0.001$), students had significantly higher CRBS scores and the overall model was significant [$R^2 = 0.711, F(10, 53) = 13.03, p < 0.001$]. There were some other interesting responses related to specific questions. For example, 62% of white nursing students indicated they strongly disagree or disagree with the idea that their race/ethnicity will not receive worse COVID care than other groups. However, these students also didn't think that the media displayed negative bias towards them. Although these students are aware of their privilege and the disparity in healthcare they do not seem to have an issue with how the media portrays them.