

Racism linked to depression and anxiety in youth

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An international review led by the University of Melbourne has found children and young people experience poor mental health, depression and anxiety following experiences of racism.

The first of its kind, the review showed 461 cases of links between [racism](#) and child and youth health outcomes.

Lead researcher Dr Naomi Priest at the McCaughey VicHealth Centre for Community Wellbeing at the University of Melbourne said the review demonstrated racism as an important factor influencing the health and wellbeing of children and youth.

"The review showed there are strong and consistent relationships between [racial discrimination](#) and a range of detrimental [health outcomes](#) such as low self-esteem, reduced resilience, increased behaviour problems and lower levels of wellbeing."

The most common types of racism the studies investigated were interpersonal experiences of racism – between people rather than institutional or systemic racism.

Associations between racism and behaviour problems, pregnancy and [birth outcomes](#) were common. The studies reviewed found children whose mother experienced racism during pregnancy were more likely to have poorer birth outcomes.

Most studies reviewed were conducted in the US with younger people aged 12-18.

The three most common ethnic/racial groups represented in the studies were African American, Latino/a and Asian, including East Asian, South Asian and other Asian.

Dr Priest said the review identified an important issue that needed to be addressed in society, schools and communities to improve child and youth health.

"We know that children who experience poor [health](#) and wellbeing are less likely to engage in education, employment and other activities that support them to lead healthy and productive lives and to participate

meaningfully in the community," she said.

The review was conducted in collaboration with Deakin University and University College London.

The research will be published in the October edition of the internationally top ranking social science journal *Social Science & Medicine*.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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