

# Perceived racial discrimination may impact kidney function

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Perceived racial discrimination may contribute to disparities related to kidney disease, according to a study that will be presented at ASN Kidney Week 2014 November 11-16 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, PA.

Psychosocial factors such as perceived [racial discrimination](#) have been associated with [chronic diseases](#), but little is known about the relationship between perceived racial discrimination and kidney function decline. Researchers led by Angedith Poggi-Burke, MPH and Deidra Crews, MD, FASN (National Institute on Aging and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, respectively) studied 1,574 adults with preserved kidney function in the Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span (HANDLS) study (Baltimore City, Maryland). The team found that 20% of individuals perceived themselves to have been discriminated against 'a lot' because of their race. Such individuals were more likely to be African American and have a higher educational background, but they were more likely to be living in poverty than those who reported little-to-no perceived discrimination. Additionally, those who perceived 'a lot' of discrimination had higher systolic blood pressure but a lower prevalence of diabetes than those perceiving little-to-no discrimination.

Overall, perceived racial discrimination was linked with greater kidney function decline over 5 years of follow-up that was independent of socio-demographic, lifestyle, and health factors. When analyzed by race and sex, the link between perceived racial discrimination and kidney

function decline remained only among African American women. Systolic blood pressure was responsible for 15% of this association.

"Perceived racial discrimination may contribute to disparities in [kidney disease](#) and might exert its effect on risk of kidney function decline through stress-related pathways," said Dr. Crews. "This study can serve as a basis for future studies focusing on psychosocial stressors and their potential contributions to the initiation and progression of kidney disease."

**More information:** Study: "Association of Perceived Racial Discrimination and Kidney Function Decline among African Americans and Whites" (Abstract SA-PO856)

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

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