

One in five chronic disease patients report discrimination in health care

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Credit: University of California - Berkeley

Almost one in five older patients with a chronic disease reported experiencing health care discrimination, according to the results of a large national survey analyzed by the UC Berkeley School of Public Health.

The survey asked 13,867 participants about their experience with discrimination by doctors and hospitals between 2008 and 2014. Black patients, the study found, were the most likely to report discrimination by race, while white and Hispanic patients reported that they were discriminated more often based on their age, weight or income.

The results, published December 15 in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, suggest that many patients bring memories of difficult experiences to their interactions with doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals.

"Providers should be aware that a large fraction of patients will have experienced some form of discrimination in a health care setting," said Amani Nuru-Jeter, associate professor of epidemiology and community health sciences at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health and senior author of the study. "Just by recognizing how common these experiences are for patients, clinicians may be able to offer better care."

The participants were all 54 or older and had at least one of the following chronic conditions: hypertension, diabetes, cancer, lung disease, a heart disease, or stroke. The results of the survey were analyzed in partnership with UC San Francisco and Stanford University.

More information: Thu T. Nguyen et al. Trends for Reported Discrimination in Health Care in a National Sample of Older Adults with Chronic Conditions, *Journal of General Internal Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s11606-017-4209-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-017-4209-5)

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