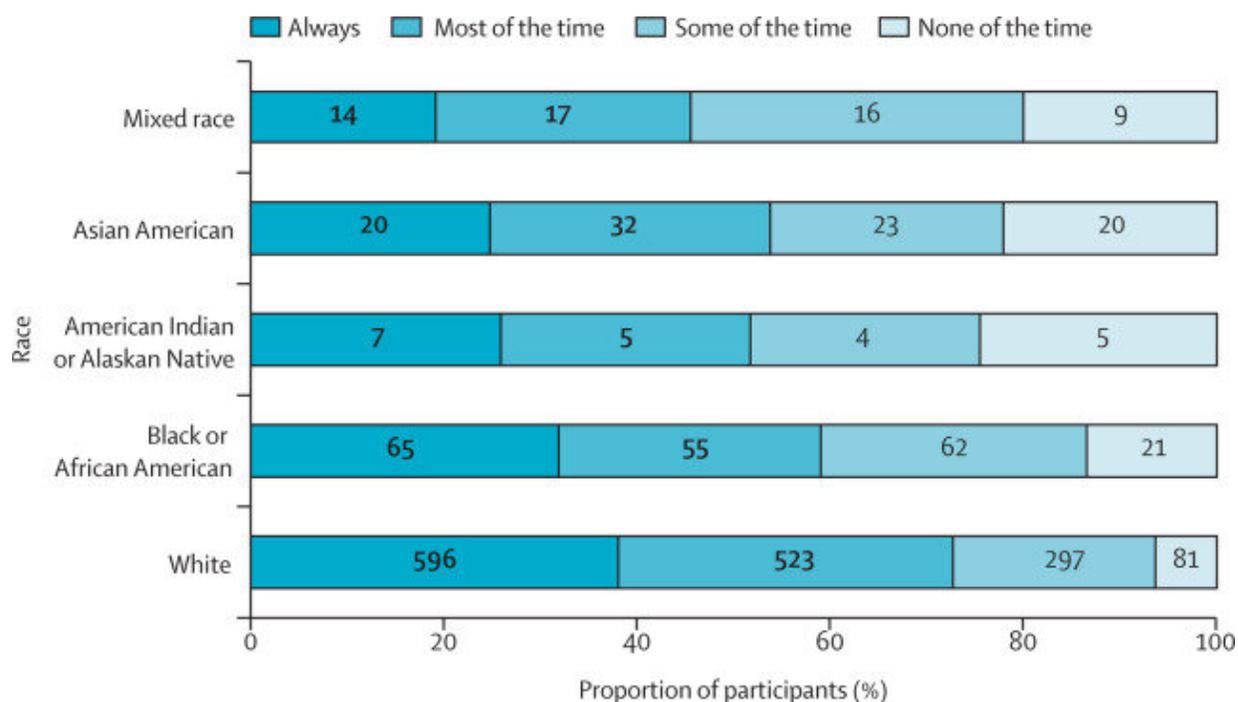


# Studying racial and ethnic differences in perception of provider competence

September 28 2021, by Christopher Gardner



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Patients who identify as racial and ethnic minorities prefer medical providers who share and understand their culture, but those patients are not as likely as others to access providers who can provide such care, according to a new study co-authored by two Yale Department of Psychiatry researchers.

The findings, published September 23 in *Lancet Psychiatry*, are among the first to demonstrate patient preferences for cultural competence among people with symptoms of depression and anxiety, according to the authors, including Ayana Jordan, MD, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, and Albert Powers, MD, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry.

The authors say the results highlight the importance of incorporating culturally competent and humble interactions in [psychiatric care](#).

"We hope that our paper convinces physicians and other providers to obtain the training in cultural competency necessary to take best care of all patients with anxiety and depression, especially those from racial and ethnic minoritized populations who see this as vital to their care," Jordan said.

Previous studies investigated racial and [ethnic differences](#) and implicit biases in patient-provider interactions. Jordan said the new study adds to the existing literature by underscoring the importance of taking patient perspectives into account.

"We believe that our findings offer a framework for mental health providers to approach delivering better care for patients who identify as racial/ethnic minorities, which will allow for better therapeutic relationships and improve outcomes in psychiatric care," she said.

The study involved 3,910 patients who participated in a recent U.S. National Health Interview Survey. Findings suggest that racial and ethnic disparities exist in how patients perceive their providers' cultural competence; those disparities are especially pronounced in patients with depression.

Future efforts to rectify [racial disparities](#) should emphasize cultural

competence and humility in training, the authors wrote. In addition, efforts should be made to diversify the healthcare workforce, according to the authors.

**More information:** Hatice Nur Eken et al, Racial and ethnic differences in perception of provider cultural competence among patients with depression and anxiety symptoms: a retrospective, population-based, cross-sectional analysis, *The Lancet Psychiatry* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/S2215-0366\(21\)00285-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00285-6)

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