

# Racialized Perceptions of Motherhood: The Pervasiveness of Implicit Biases in Race-Conscious Biomedical Research

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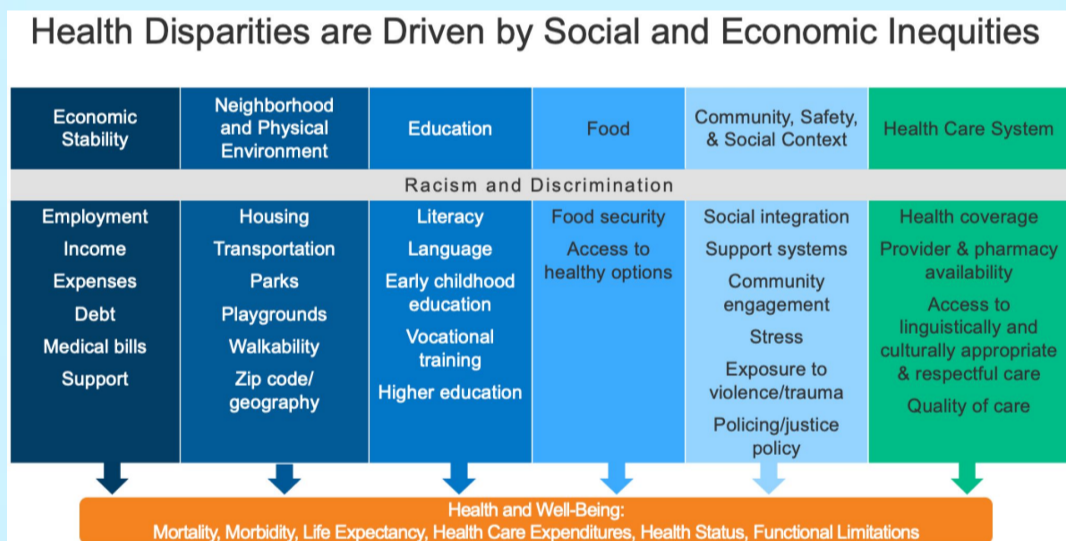


## Introduction

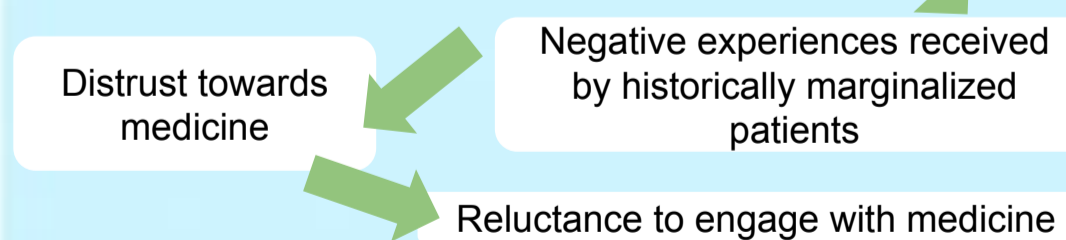
I joined a research team looking at the effects of the pandemic on parents and their children, with a focus on the effects on Black families. This poster looks at the presence of implicit biases within the scope of this research team's work.

## Background

- Racial disparities are well documented in medicine
- The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated this reality
- Racial disparities are caused by a wide-array of cultural factors, known as the social determinants of health



- Barriers to accessing healthcare contributes to such disparities
- Racism from healthcare providers is a barrier to healthcare
- Unquestioned, racist beliefs from healthcare providers OR Historical mistreatment



## Research Question

- Even in clinical research with diverse communities that aim to understand racial disparities, do implicit racial biases and stereotypes impact researchers and clinicians perceptions, despite meaningful intentions?

## Research Approach

### Methods

This poster qualitatively looks at lab interactions and quantitatively analyzes the study data.

STUDY METHODS:

- 201 non-Hispanic white and Black people who gave birth during the early months of the pandemic were interviewed/given tasks to complete with children
- 193 (98 Black parents, 95 non-Hispanic white parents) ultimately assessed on standardized scale of 0 to 3 for positive parenting factor
- Defined in protocol manual as “parent’s expression of love, respect, and/or admiration for the child”

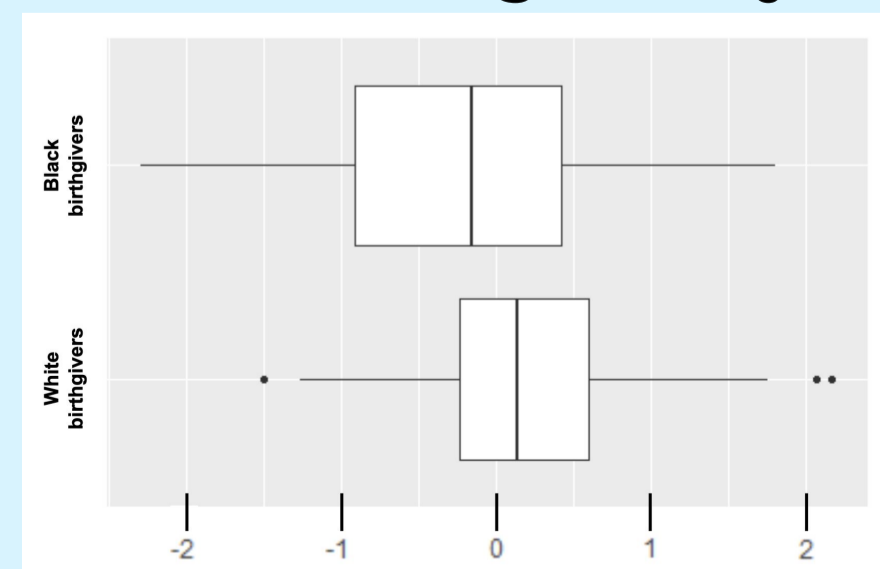
### Analyzing Study Data (Quantitative Approach)

- Conducted *t*-test, *p*-value = .05
- Hypothesis: There is a true difference of means in the mean standardized score of positive parenting between Black & non-Hispanic white mothers

$t = 2.4443$ ,  $df = 118.88$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.01598$   
 alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0  
 95 percent confidence interval: [0.06833608, 0.65140331]  
 sample estimates:

Mean x (WP)	Mean y (BP)
0.1843256	-0.1755441

### Standardized Positive Parenting Factor for Birthgivers by Race



### Inspecting Lab Interactions (Qualitative Approach)

*How do implicit biases influence researchers' approaches?*

- A concern of abuse towards Black mother was raised to physician staff (mandated reporters of abuse)
- #### Email Conversation of Report

CODER: I would just feel a lot better if someone could review the video and follow up because the way she raised her hand in the moment just didn't sit right with me.

RESEARCH COORDINATOR: I have watched a recording and I also noticed that during the Puzzle Box task, the mother raised her hand towards the child but then stopped when she looked at the camera.

*Coder is a non-Hispanic white woman, Research coordinator is a non-Black, hispanic woman.*

- Notably, the mother's face was not in frame during the task. The research coordinator's statement cannot be true.
- Ultimately, lead physicians (BW & WW) found no reportable actions from the Black mother towards her Black child after team-wide discussion

## Results

Quantitative

- Average positive parenting factor of Black mothers was **-0.17** vs. **+0.18** for non-Hispanic white mothers, a ~0.36 difference on a 6 pt. scale
- T-test concludes that the chances of this difference in means happening by chance is **1.5%**, less than *p*-value of **5%**

Qualitative

- Two non-Black research staff members erroneously reported a Black mother having intent and awareness of abuse

## Conclusions

- (Racially homogenous) coders systematically found Black parents to be less expressive of love & respect to child
- Data suggest implicit racial biases (negative stereotypes towards Black women). Study later sought more diversity in staff.
- If the matter of the qualitative study escalated, consequences would include Child Protective Services called on family, legal intervention
- Harkens to institutional over-policing of Black people, especially Black mothers

## Limitations

- This poster looks at one particular research study conducted in Philadelphia
- It is beyond the scope of this poster to systematically understand implicit bias' impacts on biomedical research

## Supplemental Materials & References



## Acknowledgements

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## Questions? Email me!

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