

MICROAGGRESSION: HEALTH CONSEQUENCES AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIES IN SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS

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Background: There is existing literature identifying that due to a lifetime of microaggressions, with constant need to assess the mentality and intentions of people of power, resulted in emotional draining, psychological distress and feelings of socially ineptness for people of color. Microaggression, the term introduced by Chester Pierce, specific for experiences in the African American population, has now evolved to describe similar exchanges experienced by other marginalized groups.

Aims/Issues of Focus: We seek to examine the increasing incidence of microaggressions directed towards persons of South Asian origin, particularly in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method/ Propositions: We will review the existing literature on microaggressions towards people from the South Asian community across the age span, explore concepts like model minority myths, and spokesperson phenomena. We will also review existing evidence-based literature on microaggressions against better researched groups and extrapolate from it about ways it applies to Asian and South Asian groups.

Results/Potential Outcomes: Asians, particularly East and South Asian Americans are known to be at high risk of prejudice and microaggressions in multiple community settings. Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been reports of over 1700 anti-Asian incidents of microaggression, bullying, harassment or violence.

Discussion/Implications: While systemic racism has seen changes in America since the civil war, the overt racism in the form of microaggression and its forms microinsult, microinvalidation and microassault have been pervading the lives of people of color. There is some literature that discuss the effects of microaggression on South Asians with development of identity, acculturation issues, interracial tensions, leading to mental health issues like depression, anxiety. Through this symposium, we shall facilitate an interactive discussion of strategies to counter microaggressions that can be used at the community and systems level.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Cite existing evidence-based literature on Asian American hate/microaggressions.
2. Describe the physical health and mental health consequences of microaggressions.
3. Discuss various strategies for South Asian communities to overcome Microaggressions.