Prevalence and Predictors of Everyday Discrimination in Canada:

Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey

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Introduction

Discrimination impacts many areas of life including health, social and economic participation (Paradies et al. 2014; Pascoe and Smart 2009; Krieger 2014). There are 13 grounds for discrimination protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act (Government of Canada 2017) and the recognition of these types of discrimination is evident in the launch of Ontario Government's Anti-Racism Directorate within the Cabinet and in the identification of racism as a major issue in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The mechanisms through which discrimination exerts an impact on health are complex and include changing life opportunities, psychological and social development, physiological reactivity, access to and quality of health care, and exposing individuals and communities to other social determinants. Gender, sexual preference, age, language, disabilities, racialized/Indigenous status, immigration status and social class influence perceptions and experiences of discrimination (Paradies et al. 2014).

National research on discrimination in Canada has been slim (Hyman and Wray 2013; Veenstra 2009; Veenstra 2011; Veenstra and Patterson 2016a; Veenstra and Patterson 2016b; Siddiqi et al. 2016). There are many reasons for this including the fact that discrimination is a complex, contextually dependent phenomenon which poses significant measurement challenges (Williams and Mohammed 2009; Paradies et al. 2014; Shavers et al. 2012; Lewis et al. 2015). For example, discrimination may occur at different levels and may be structural or interpersonal, intentional or unintentional, and perceived or not perceived (Jones 2000; Williams and Mohammed 2013). The majority of population-based surveys that measure discrimination only focus on a subset of discrimination experiences, perceptions of interpersonal discrimination, and use a variety of instruments ranging from single item questions to multi-item validated questionnaires (e.g., Borrell et al. 2010; Kim and Williams 2012; Schunck et al. 2015). To address the need for better data on a broader range of everyday discrimination experiences in Canada and a greater understanding of the impacts of discrimination on health outcomes, a Rapid Response Module (RRM) on discrimination was added to the 2013 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), using a Canadian modification of the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS), which was developed in the USA (Williams et al. 1997). This paper reports the prevalence of everyday discrimination experienced by Canadians and uses multivariate regression analysis to explore its socio-demographic and health related predictors. The implications of these findings for social policy are discussed.

Methods

Data and Sample
The main source of data for this research is the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), a national, cross-sectional, population-based, voluntary survey that collects information on the health status, health care utilization and health determinants of Canadians. (Statistics Canada 2014a). The Everyday Discrimination Scale was added to the 2013 annual CCHS survey as part of a Rapid Response Module (RRM; Statistics Canada 2014b).

The target population includes individuals 12 years of age and older living in private households in the ten provinces. Although the CCHS usually also surveys individuals from the three territories, the RRM excluded individuals living in these areas. The sample also excluded individuals living in First Nations reserve communities and other Aboriginal settlements in the provinces. Roughly one quarter of the total Indigenous population in Canada lives in First Nations reserve communities (Statistics Canada 2013). The survey also excluded full-time members of the Canadian Forces, the institutionalized population and persons living in the Quebec health regions of Région du Nunavik and Région des Terres-Cries-de-la-Baie-James. These latter exclusions represent less than 3 per cent of the Canadian population aged 12 and over (Statistics Canada 2014a).

The CCHS uses a multistage sampling design. Households were sampled using three sampling frames including an area sampling frame, a telephone sampling frame, and a random digit dialing sampling frame. Out of 31,506 households selected for the study, 24,029 households agreed to participate, resulting in a household response rate of 76.3 per cent. One eligible respondent within each household was then selected to participate. Data collection was conducted between July and October, 2013. A total of 18,979 interviews were conducted, resulting in an overall study response rate of 63.1 per cent (Statistics Canada 2014b).

Interviews were mainly conducted in English or French either by telephone or in-person using computer-assisted interviewing (CAI). The Research Ethics Board at Toronto Public Health at the City of Toronto approved this study.

Measures

Discrimination was measured using a modified version of the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) (Williams et al. 1997) that assesses the self-reported frequency with which participants experienced acts of discrimination in their day-to-day life and the reasons for their discriminatory treatment (Table 1). The reliability and validity of the EDS has been reported in many studies and it has been used widely in the US and international settings (Kim et al. 2014; Krieger et al. 2005; Clark et al. 2004; Jang et al. 2010). The five-item version of the EDS was adapted for the Chicago Community Adult Health Survey (Sternthal et al. 2011).

Table 1: Questions assessing everyday discrimination in the Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

"In the following questions, we are interested in your opinion on how often other people have treated you unfairly because of such things as your gender, race, age or appearance. In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you?"

| 1) You are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people are
2) You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores
3) People act as if they think you are not smart
4) People act as if they are afraid of you
5) You are threatened or harassed | The response options included:
• At least once a week
• A few times a month
• A few times a year
• Less than once a year
• Never |

Respondents who reported at least one act of discrimination were then asked:
"What do you think the reasons might be for you to have had these experiences? Was it...your race, your gender, your age, your weight, your religion, your sexual orientation, a physical disability, something else related to your physical appearance, your income, a mental health issue, or other?" Respondents could report more than one reason.

The frequency of each of the five acts of discrimination was examined by collapsing the response options into the following three categories: at least once per year, less than once per year, and never. A binary variable was also constructed assessing the presence or absence of 'any' discrimination. Respondents who reported 'never' to all five acts of discrimination were assigned to the 'no' category, while those who reported experiencing at least one act of discrimination were assigned to the 'yes' category. Binary variables were also constructed assessing the presence or absence of each type of discrimination (e.g., racial discrimination, gender discrimination etc.).

The socio-demographic variables included in this study were: Region of residence, gender, age group, education, annual gross household income in Canadian dollars, racialized/Indigenous identity, immigration status, language most often spoken at home, and sexual orientation. The socially relevant health variables examined were: respondent's opinion of their own weight, difficulty with daily activities, and self-rated mental health.

Statistical Analyses

All analyses were conducted using the overall Canadian sample. The internal consistency of responses to the five-item EDS for the Canadian sample was assessed using Chronbach's alpha (i.e., alpha reliability). Descriptive statistics (prevalence and 95 per cent confidence intervals) were used to present sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, prevalence and frequency of discrimination for each of the five EDS items, and the prevalence of discrimination by attribution (e.g., because of race, gender, etc.). To test whether the prevalence of discrimination varied as a function of sociodemographic and health characteristics, we examined the bivariate associations between specific types of discrimination (for example, discrimination due to race) and the relevant social variable (for example, racialized/Indigenous identity, immigration status and language most often spoken at home). The bivariate associations were tested using the designed-based Pearson Chi-squared tests.

Logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine the unadjusted and adjusted relationships between 'any' everyday discrimination and the sociodemographic variables. The variables were added to the model in steps. Model 1 includes region, gender, age group, racialized/Indigenous identity, and language spoken most often at home. Model 2 also includes these variables, with the addition of the socio-economic variables (i.e., household income and education). Sexual orientation was excluded from the regression analysis because this question was only asked of individuals between the ages of 18 and 59. Both models were checked for multicollinearity using the variance inflation factor (VIF) and it was not found to be of concern. The largest VIF was 3.18. A p-value of 0.05 was considered statistically significant and we present both odds ratios (OR) and 95 per cent confidence intervals (CI).

All analyses were weighted according to guidelines put forth by Statistics Canada. To ensure that the standard errors were correctly calculated given the complex sampling design, bootstrap weights developed for the CCHS were used. All analyses were conducted using the survey commands of Stata software version 14.2 (StataCorp 2013).

Results

There were 18,979 respondents to the 2013 CCHS RRM. A total of 3.58 percent (N=680) individuals were excluded from analyses examining specific type of discrimination because of missing data on the type of/reason for discrimination. Findings on the internal consistency of the scale indicated that the EDS had acceptable reliability with α=0.71.

Table 2 presents an overview of survey respondents by gender, age group, level of education, household income, racialized/Indigenous identity, immigrant status, language spoken most often at home, and sexual orientation.

Table 2: Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents in the Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

Socio-Demographic Characteristic	Percent	95 Percent CI
Gender		
Male	49.4	(49.4, 49.4)
Female	50.6	(50.6, 50.6)
Age group		
12 to 29	26.6	(26.6, 26.6)
30 to 49	31.3	(30.6, 32.0)
50 to 69	31.3	(30.5, 32.1)
70 and older	10.8	(10.4, 11.1)
Education		
Less than high school	18.9	(18.1, 19.7)
High school graduate or some post-sec	25.0	(24.0, 26.0)
Post-secondary graduate	56.2	(55.0, 57.3)
Household income		
$0 to $29,999	15.4	(14.6, 16.3)
$30,000 to $49,999	17.3	(16.4, 18.2)
$50,000 to $79,999	23.6	(22.6, 24.6)
$80,000 or more	43.7	(42.4, 45.0)
Racialized/Indigenous identity		
White	76.3	(74.7, 77.8)
Black	2.7	(2.2, 3.2)
East Asian/Southeast Asian	7.3	(6.2, 8.5)
South Asian/West Asian/Arab	6.7	(5.8, 7.7)
Latin American/Multiple/Other	3.6	(3.1, 4.0)
Aboriginal	3.5	(3.2, 3.9)
Immigrant status		
Non-immigrant	75.7	(74.1, 77.2)
Long-term immigrant (> 10 years)	16.2	(15.3, 17.2)
Recent immigrant (≤ 10 years)	8.1	(7.2, 9.2)
Language spoken most often at home		
Official language only (E/F)	81.0	(79.4, 82.5)
Official and non-official language	9.3	(8.4, 10.1)
Non-official language (neither E/F)	9.8	(8.7, 11.0)
Sexual Orientation*		
Heterosexual	97.4	(96.9, 97.8)
Lesbian/gay/bisexual	2.6	(2.2, 3.1)

* Respondents aged 18 to 59

Table 3 presents information on the individual item responses to the five items comprising the EDS, as well as a derived variable describing the experience of 'any discrimination' based on these five items. Findings showed that 46.2 per cent of the respondents reported experiencing discrimination at least once in their day-to-day life.

Table 3: Prevalence of discrimination by EDS items, Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

Prevalence of Everyday Discrimination Scale items	Percent	95 Percent CI
Treated with less courtesy or respect than other people are		
At least once a year	21.2	(20.3, 22.1)
Less than once a year	14.0	(13.1, 14.8)
Never	64.9	(63.7, 66.0)
Receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores		
At least once a year	11.1	(10.4, 11.9)
Less than once a year	7.8	(7.2, 8.4)
Never	81.1	(80.2, 82.0)
People act as if they think you are not smart		
At least once a year	13.5	(12.7, 14.2)
Less than once a year	7.4	(6.8, 8.1)
Never	79.1	(78.1, 80.1)
People act as if they are afraid of you		
At least once a year	9.1	(8.4, 9.9)
Less than once a year	4.8	(4.3, 5.4)
Never	86.0	(85.2, 86.8)
You are threatened or harassed		
At least once a year	6.0	(5.5, 6.5)
Less than once a year	5.4	(4.9, 5.9)
Never	88.7	(88.0, 89.4)
Any act of discrimination		
No	53.8	(52.6, 54.9)
Yes	46.2	(45.1, 47.4)

Table 4 presents data on the prevalence of specific types of everyday discrimination experienced in the population. Altogether, 8.8 per cent of all respondents reported experiencing everyday discrimination because of their age, 7.1 per cent because of their race and 6.7 per cent because of their gender; 17.9 per cent of respondents reported experiencing everyday discrimination for 'other' reasons.

Table 4: Prevalence of discrimination by attribution, Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

Prevalence attributing discrimination to:	Percent	95 Percent CI
Race	7.1	(6.3, 8.0)
Gender	6.7	(6.1, 7.3)
Age	8.8	(8.3, 9.4)
Weight	3.4	(3.0, 3.9)
Religion	1.8	(1.5, 2.2)
Sexual orientation	0.7	(0.5, 0.9)
Physical disability	1.1	(0.9, 1.4)
Physical appearance	4.9	(4.4, 5.4)
Income	1.5	(1.3, 1.8)
Mental health issue	1.1	(0.9, 1.3)
Other	17.9	(17.0, 18.9)

* Excludes those who reported experiencing discrimination but the reason for discrimination was unknown (n=680).

Table 5 presents data on the prevalence of specific types of everyday discrimination experienced by different population groups. For example, it examines the proportion of everyday discrimination attributed to race across relevant socio-demographic characteristics such as racialized/Indigenous identity, immigrant status and language spoken most often at home. The prevalence of everyday discrimination attributed to race was significantly higher for respondents who self-identified as Black (30.8 per cent), East Asian/Southeast Asian (28.1 per cent), South Asian/West Asian/Arab (20.9 per cent), Aboriginal (14.6 per cent) and other racialized group (22.5 per cent) compared to those who self-identified as White (2 per cent). Females were significantly more likely to report experiencing everyday discrimination attributed to gender than males (11.5 per cent, 1.7 per cent respectively). Among the age groups considered, 17.8 per cent of young people 12 to 29 years reported experiencing age-related discrimination compared to 4.3 per cent of respondents aged 30 to 49 years and 6.0 per cent of respondents aged 50 to 69 years. This proportion increased slightly among respondents 70 and older (8.1 per cent).

Respondents who reported themselves as being overweight or underweight reported a significantly higher prevalence of everyday discrimination attributed to weight (6.8 per cent, 5.4 per cent respectively) compared to respondents who reported their weight as being 'just about right' (0.9 per cent). Discrimination attributed to sexual orientation was significantly more prevalent among those who reported being gay, lesbian, or bisexual (25.0 per cent) compared to those who reported being heterosexual (per cent suppressed due to high coefficient of variation). The prevalence of everyday discrimination attributed to a physical disability was significantly higher among respondents who reported difficulty with daily activities often (7.1 per cent) or sometimes (0.8 per cent) compared to respondents who never experienced activity limitations (0.2 per cent). The proportion of everyday discrimination attributable to income varied significantly across household income groups but the magnitude of the differences was small. Income discrimination was significantly higher among the lowest income group (2.9 per cent) compared to the two highest income groups (0.9 per cent, 1.3 per cent). The prevalence of everyday discrimination attributed to a mental health issue was also significantly higher among respondents who reported that their mental health was fair/poor (10.4 per cent) compared to respondents who rated their mental health as good (1.6 per cent) or excellent/very good (0.2 per cent).

Table 5: Prevalence of specific types of discrimination by relevant socio-demographic and health characteristics, Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

Type of discrimination and socio-demographic characteristics	Percent	95 Percent CI	Chi-square (p-value)
Racial Discrimination			
Racialized/Indigenous identity			
White	2.0	(1.6, 2.5)	138.88 (<0.0001)
Black	30.8 E	(22.9, 40.0)	
East Asian/Southeast Asian	28.1	(22.6, 34.2)	
South Asian/West Asian/Arab	20.9	(16.6, 26.1)	
Latin American/Multiple/Other	22.5	(17.0, 29.0)	
Aboriginal	14.6	(11.5, 18.5)	
Immigrant status			
Born in Canada	3.5	(3.0, 4.0)	153.73 (<0.0001)
Recent immigrant (≤ 10 years)	16.7	(14.0, 19.8)	
Long-term immigrant (> 10 years)	21.7	(17.4, 26.8)	
Language spoken most often at home			
Official language only (E/F)	3.9	(3.4, 4.4)	127.94 (<0.0001)
Official and non-official language	21.0	(16.5, 26.2)	
Non-official language (neither E/F)	20.9	(16.9, 25.6)	
Gender discrimination			
Gender			
Male	1.7	(1.3, 2.3)	231.28 (<0.0001)
Female	11.5	(10.5, 12.6)	
Age discrimination			
Age group			
12 to 29	17.8	(16.1, 19.5)	107.05 (<0.0001)
30 to 49	4.3	(3.5, 5.3)	
50 to 69	6.0	(5.2, 6.9)	
70 and older	8.1	(6.9, 9.5)	
Discrimination because of weight			
Opinion of own weight			
Underweight	5.4 E	(3.3, 8.8)	93.40 (<0.0001)
Just about right	0.9	(0.7, 1.2)	
Overweight	6.8	(5.8, 8.0)	
Discrimination because of sexual orientation*			
Sexual orientation			
Heterosexual	--F		772.55 (<0.0001)
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	25.0 E	(17.5, 34.3)	
Discrimination because of a physical disability			
Difficulty with daily activities			
Never	0.2 E	(0.1, 0.3)	207.58 (<0.0001)
Sometimes	0.8 E	(0.5, 1.3)	
Often	7.1	(5.4, 9.3)	

Table 5: Prevalence of specific types of discrimination by relevant socio-demographic and health characteristics, Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

Type of discrimination and socio-demographic characteristics	Percent	95 Percent CI	Chi-square (p-value)
Income discrimination			
Household income			
$0 to $29,999	2.9	(2.1, 3.9)	5.55 (0.0009)
$30,000 to $49,999	1.7 E	(1.1, 2.6)	
$50,000 to $79,999	0.9 E	(0.6, 1.5)	
$80,000 or more	1.3 E	(0.9, 1.9)	
Discrimination because of a mental health issue			
Self-rated mental health			
Excellent/Very good	0.2 E	(0.1, 0.3)	226.44 (<0.0001)
Good	1.6	(1.2, 2.2)	
Fair/Poor	10.4 E	(7.4, 14.3)	

*Respondents aged 18 to 59 years
ᴱHigh sampling variability associated with estimate (coefficient of variation between 16.6 percent and 33.3 percent)
ᶠVery high sampling variability; estimate not released (coefficient of variation 33.4 percent or higher)

Table 6 presents the unadjusted and adjusted ORs and the 95 per cent CIs for 'any discrimination' from the weighted logistic regression for both Models 1 and 2. Results from Model 2 show that respondents living in Quebec had a 43 per cent lower odds and respondents living in the Western region had a 16 per cent higher odds of reporting experiencing any discrimination compared to respondents living in Ontario. Females had a 13 per cent higher odds of reporting experiencing any discrimination compared to males. The odds of reporting any discrimination also increased with younger age. Young adults 12 to 29 years had more than 4 times the odds, adults 30 to 49 years had more than 3 times the odds and adults 50 to 69 had more than twice the odds of reporting experiencing discrimination compared to seniors 70 years and over. Individuals who identified as Black had a 79% higher odds of reporting discrimination compared to individuals who identified as White. Other racialized groups had a 61 per cent higher odds, and Indigenous individuals had a 73 per cent higher odds. However, recent immigrants had a 31 per cent lower odds of reporting experiencing any discrimination compared to those born in Canada. Respondents with less than a high school education had a 22 per cent lower odds of reporting experiencing discrimination compared to respondents with a post-secondary education. Respondents with a household income under $30,000 had an 18 per cent higher odds of reporting experiencing discrimination compared to respondents with household incomes $80,000 or more.

Table 6: Logistic regression of socio-demographic correlates of 'any' discrimination, Canadian Community Health Survey Rapid Response Module, 2013

Socio-demographic characteristics	Unadjusted		Adjusted§			
			Model 1		Model 2	
	OR	(95 Percent CI)	OR	(95 Percent CI)	OR	(95 Percent CI)
Region						
Ontario (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Quebec	0.58***	(0.51, 0.66)	0.57***	(0.49, 0.66)	0.57***	(0.50, 0.66)
West (Man., Sask., Alta., B.C.)	1.18**	(1.06, 1.32)	1.18**	(1.05, 1.33)	1.16*	(1.03, 1.31)
East (N.L., P.E.I, N.S., N.B.)	0.93	(0.82, 1.05)	0.94	(0.82, 1.08)	0.94	(0.82, 1.08)
Gender						
Male (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	1.10	(1.00, 1.21)	1.16**	(1.04, 1.28)	1.13*	(1.02, 1.26)
Age group						
12 to 29	4.49***	(3.91, 5.17)	4.50***	(3.86, 5.24)	4.49***	(3.79, 5.31)
30 to 49	3.59***	(3.13, 4.13)	3.74***	(3.22, 4.34)	3.57***	(3.04, 4.19)
50 to 69	2.22***	(1.93, 2.55)	2.25***	(1.95, 2.59)	2.16***	(1.87, 2.51)
70 or older (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Racialized/Indigenous identity						
White (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black	1.62*	(1.08, 2.42)	1.71*	(1.12, 2.59)	1.79**	(1.17, 2.74)
East Asian/Southeast Asian	1.05	(0.82, 1.36)	0.94	(0.70, 1.28)	0.99	(0.73, 1.34)
South Asian/West Asian/Arab	1.20	(0.95, 1.51)	1.06	(0.79, 1.41)	1.05	(0.79, 1.41)
Latin American/Multiple/Other	1.73***	(1.28, 2.35)	1.61**	(1.15, 2.24)	1.61**	(1.15, 2.25)
Aboriginal	2.34***	(1.90, 2.87)	1.72***	(1.40, 2.11)	1.73***	(1.41, 2.13)
Immigrant status						
Born in Canada (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recent immigrant (≤ 10 years)	0.92	(0.76, 1.13)	0.71*	(0.54, 0.93)	0.69**	(0.52, 0.91)
Long-term immigrant (> 10 years)	0.93	(0.80, 1.08)	0.98	(0.80, 1.20)	0.95	(0.77, 1.17)
Language spoken most often at home						
Official language only (E/F) (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Official and non-official language	1.22*	(1.00, 1.50)	1.04	(0.81, 1.34)	1.07	(0.83, 1.37)
Non-official language (neither E/F)	0.81	(0.65, 1.01)	0.77	(0.57, 1.03)	0.79	(0.59, 1.07)
Education						
Less than high school	0.82**	(0.72, 0.92)			0.78**	(0.67, 0.90)
High school graduate or some post-sec	1.17**	(1.05, 1.31)			1.06	(0.94, 1.20)
Post-secondary graduate (ref)	-	-			-	-
Household income						
$0 to $29,999	0.86*	(0.75, 0.99)			1.18*	(1.01, 1.38)
$30,000 to $49,999	0.77***	(0.68, 0.88)			0.99	(0.86, 1.14)
$50,000 to $79,999	0.91	(0.80, 1.02)			1.04	(0.92, 1.19)
$80,000 or more (ref)	-	-			-	-

§ N=18,502. N=18,226 when income and education are added to the model
* p<0.05   ** p<0.01   *** p<0.001

Discussion

Findings indicate that the proportion of the Canadian population that reported experiencing any discrimination was very high (46.2 per cent). Although the CCHS survey did not ask about specific forms of discrimination (i.e., racial discrimination, gender-based discrimination, age-based discrimination, homophobia, etc), the data set was unique in that it permitted respondents to report why they experienced discrimination and to determine the prevalence of different forms of discrimination in population sub-groups. Our findings confirm that discrimination is more frequently experienced among self-defined members of a particular social group on the grounds of their human rights classification. The significant predictors of experiencing everyday discrimination were age group, racialized/Indigenous identity, gender, immigrant status, education, household income and region. The largest odds ratios of experiencing everyday discrimination was among younger age groups; youth and young adults (12-29 years) had 4.49 times the odds of experiencing any discrimination compared to seniors 70 years of age and over.

While lower than the prevalence of everyday discrimination reported in the U.S. by Kessler et al. (1999) (61 per cent), the proportion of Canadians experiencing discrimination is substantially higher than previous reports of discrimination in Canada using a single item measure (Du Mont and Forte, 2016). It has been argued that the use of a single question on discrimination fails to capture specific experiences of interpersonal discrimination that are chronic and cumulative and have a more profound impact on health than acute life events (Williams et al. 2003; Lewis et al. 2015; Williams et al. 1997; Williams et al. 2008; Tabibnia et al. 2008; Williams and Mohammed 2009). A major advantage of the EDS is that it includes multiple items, which may provide a broader and more reliable assessment of people's experiences of discrimination compared to single-item measures.

It was not surprising that Indigenous populations in Canada experience a significantly higher odds of everyday discrimination compared to White Canadians. Examples of racism in the Indigenous population are abundant and include negative and stereotypic attitudes, the dominance of western knowledge systems, overt aggression, overt and subtle discriminatory behaviours, as well as historic and current colonial processes and policies including the Indian Act, residential schools, and ongoing disproportionate family disruption by child protection agencies (Reading 2013; Allan and Smylie 2015). On the other hand, recent immigrants experience a significantly lower odds of experiencing everyday discrimination compared to non-immigrants. This was surprising given recent Canadian immigrants are at high risk of economic exclusion despite their high levels of educational attainment (Picot and Hou 2003; Galarneau and Morissette 2008). Social and economic exclusion is strongly associated with perceived discrimination and inequitable health outcomes (Echenberg 2009).

The socio-economic heterogeneity within groups at high risk of experiencing discrimination must be acknowledged and more research is necessary to better understand the social and economic contexts in which certain Canadians experience discrimination and the factors contributing to group differences (Mossakowski 2003; Rumbaut 1994). For example, Nangia (2013) speculated that higher rates of perceived discrimination among younger and midlife adults may be attributed to increased exposure to discrimination through their participation in education, the work force, sports, and other social activities (Nangia 2013). There is some research that suggests that perceptions and experiences of discrimination increase over immigrant's length of stay due to both a greater recognition of discriminatory behaviour, as well as increased exposure to discrimination over time (Gee et al. 2006).

Several limitations of this paper are noted. The Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) (Williams et al. 1997) was developed based on qualitative work with African Americans, and may not reflect the major forms of everyday discrimination experienced among non-racialized and/or non-African-American population groups in Canada. Some of the items on the scale better capture racial discrimination (e.g., people act as if they are afraid of you) than other forms of discrimination related to gender or disability. It is also possible that there may be differential underreporting of discrimination experiences among different population groups due to varying levels of discomfort or perceived risk in disclosing these experiences in a government survey. Although a sample size of almost 19,000 participants is more than adequate to examine population demographic and health indicators in broad population groups, it was insufficient to identify the prevalence and predictors of everyday discrimination among population subgroups characterized by multiple identities or to address the heterogeneity within groups (e.g. Indigenous).

Conclusion

In conclusion, discrimination is a significant challenge in contemporary Canadian society. Our findings suggest that experiences of everyday discrimination are widespread and closely associated with socio-demographic and health factors, notably geography, gender, age, racialized/Indigenous identity, immigration status, education and income. Understanding the prevalence and predictors of discrimination can help inform the development of social and economic policies aimed at reducing population inequities.

This study supports the adoption intersectional approaches and multidimensional measures of discrimination to fully capture the experiences of everyday discrimination among individuals with multiple and intersecting identities and regional origins. Clearly more research is necessary to focus and address the needs of youth/young adults who currently represent an at-risk group for mental health and economic marginalization and to investigate other differences observed. Findings could also be used to inform the development of evidence-based social policies and approaches aimed at reducing the risk of everyday discrimination among individuals and communities at highest risk.

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