Social Justice Attitudes and Health: A Cross Sectional Study

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Introduction
• Increasingly, social justice is being considered as a key factor associated with health outcomes.
• This study explored perceptions of social justice, perceived discrimination in the health care (HC) setting, and utilization of HC.

Methods
• First, a survey was created based on a review of existing literature. The survey assessed attitudes toward social justice (Social Justice Scale, SJS), experiences of perceived discrimination in the HC setting, and socio-demographics.
• The study was approved by the University of Rhode Island’s (URI) Institutional Review Board.
• URI students were recruited via email / word of mouth.
• Interested students provided informed consent online and then completed the survey via Qualtrics, an online survey tool.

Analysis
• Data were analyzed using SPSS.
• Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample.
• Correlations, ANOVA, and T-tests assessed the relationship between study variables, with significance set as p <.05.

Results
Participants
• n=31 provided informed consent; n=3 did not complete the survey. Therefore, the analytical sample = 28
• See Table 1 for sample demographics

Results (continued)
Perceived discrimination
• 6.4% (n=2) agreed they had been discriminated against due to race in a HC setting.
• 3.2% (n=1) strongly agreed that language barriers had been a problem for their HC.
• 12.8% (n=4) agreed that there was 1+ time that they felt they would have gotten better HC if they were another race/ethnicity.
• 53.6% (n=15) agreed that having staff trained to be sensitive to racial issues would improve their HC experience.

Social Justice Scale (SJS)
• Mean score = 68.5 (S.D. 13.7); Possible range from 11 to 77.
• The ANOVA determined there was no difference in SJS by:
  - time since last HC visit (<12, 12-36, 36+ months), and
  - income (Fig. 1).
• The T-test identified a significant difference in mean SJS score by 1st-generation college student status (Fig. 2).

Discussion
• In this exploratory study, several participant reported experiencing discrimination in a HC setting, which is notable.
• The study identified a significant difference in SJS by 1st-generation student status, with 1st generation students having a higher mean score than students who are not 1st generation students. It is possible that SJS scores are associated with race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
• A larger scale study and further analysis could investigate the HC experiences of first-generation students at URI.

Limitations
• Small sample
• Self-reported data
• Unknown where perceived discrimination in a HC setting occurred

Strengths
• One of the first studies to explore this topic among college students
• Large portions of first-generation college students.

Literature Referenced