



CWHS

# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 2009 CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

National studies have reported rates of racial discrimination ranging from 30 to 84 percent,<sup>1-3</sup> demonstrating that racial discrimination continues to be a regular part of life for many adults in the general population.<sup>4</sup> Racial discrimination has been studied as a possible reason for the health disparities reported between races and ethnicities. Research has shown more than 100 studies that link racial discrimination to physical health for African Americans/Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics.<sup>5</sup> However, the rates of discrimination have been shown to differ depending on the characteristics of the respondents.<sup>6</sup> Knowing the characteristics of people who report racial discrimination is important because it enables researchers to identify subgroups who may experience higher levels of discrimination.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this data point was to obtain the prevalence of racial discrimination and the characteristics related to racial discrimination among California women.

In 2009, 4,924 respondents to the California Women's Health Survey, were asked: *Have you ever experienced discrimination because of your race or ethnicity?* In addition, women reported their age (analyzed as age group); race/ethnicity; marital status; whether they were limited in any way because of physical, mental or emotional problems; employment status; education; sexual orientation; and health insurance status. Hispanic women were also asked what language they read or spoke. Federal poverty level (FPL) was calculated (at or below 200 percent the FPL vs. above 200 percent of the FPL) and differences in levels of racial discrimination were examined. Responses were

weighted in these analyses by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population. Differences between groups were evaluated using Chi square statistics.

## Highlights

- Of respondents ages 18 and above, 771 women (19.9 percent) reported having ever experienced racial discrimination.
- Women ages 30 to 39 reported higher rates of racial discrimination (27.6 percent) than women ages 50 to 59 (25.5 percent); women ages 40 to 49 (23.5 percent); women ages 18 to 29 (22.2 percent); and women ages 60 and older (14.8 percent;  $P < .001$ ).
- African American/Black women reported higher rates of racial discrimination (65.9 percent) than Asian/Other women (33.7 percent); Hispanic women (23.8 percent); and White women (14.4 percent;  $P < .0001$ ) (Figure 1).
- Women who were separated or divorced reported higher rates of racial discrimination (34.2 percent and 27.4 percent, respectively) than women who were part of an unmarried couple (25.1 percent); never married (23.6 percent); married (22.2 percent); and widowed (11.6 percent;  $P < .05$ ).
- Women who noted being limited because of physical, mental or emotional problems reported more racial discrimination (27.5 percent) than women without these problems

## *Prevalence of Racial Discrimination and Its Characteristics Among California Women, 2009*

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**Public Health Message:**  
*Considering the relationship between discrimination and health, knowing the characteristics of women who report more discrimination can assist in tailoring interventions to subgroups that are more impacted by racial discrimination.*

## Prevalence of Racial Discrimination and Its Characteristics Among California Women, 2009

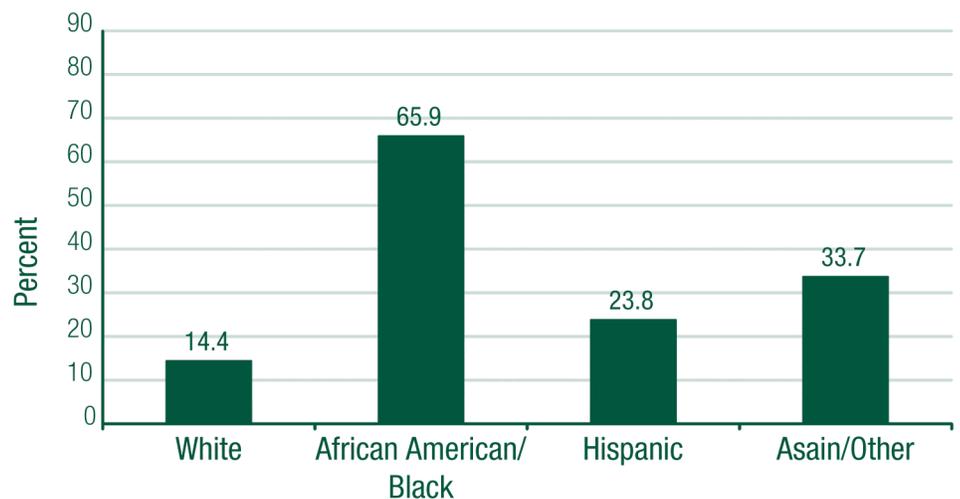
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(21.7 percent;  $P < .01$ ) (Figure 2).

- Among Hispanic women, those who reported speaking and reading English better than Spanish noted the highest rate of racial discrimination (39.7 percent), while women who only spoke and read Spanish reported the lowest rate (17.1 percent;  $P < .001$ ) (Figure 3).
- Students reported the highest rate of racial discrimination (33.6 percent), while retired women reported the lowest rate (13.5 percent;  $P < .0001$ ).
- Women with a college or postgraduate degree reported higher rates of racial discrimination (27.8 percent) than women with a high school degree/some college/technical school (20.5 percent) and women with less than a high school degree (18.1 percent;  $P < .0001$ ).
- Bisexual women reported the highest rate of racial discrimination; however, data were unreliable due to the small sample size for gay or lesbian women and those who noted being unsure.
- No significant difference was found in FPL and health insurance status between women who reported racial discrimination, compared with those who did not.

Figure 1

### California Women Who Reported Experiencing Racial Discrimination by Race/Ethnicity,\* 2009



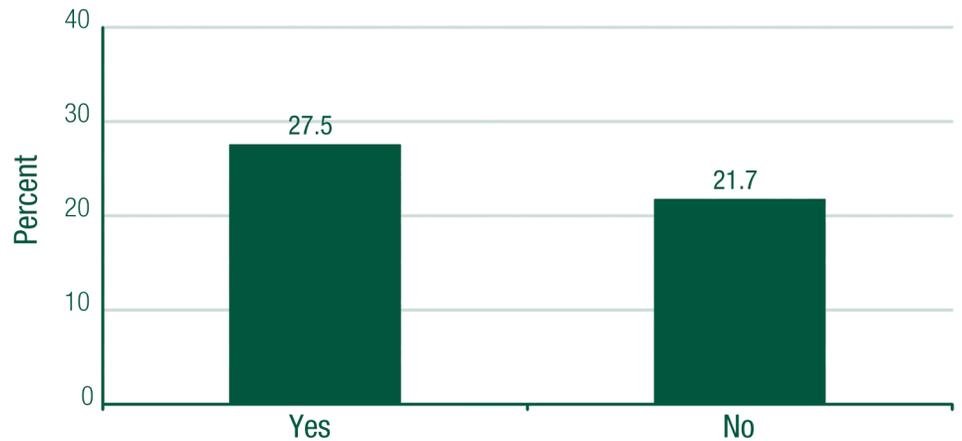
\* $P < .0001$

Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2009.

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Discrimination and Its  
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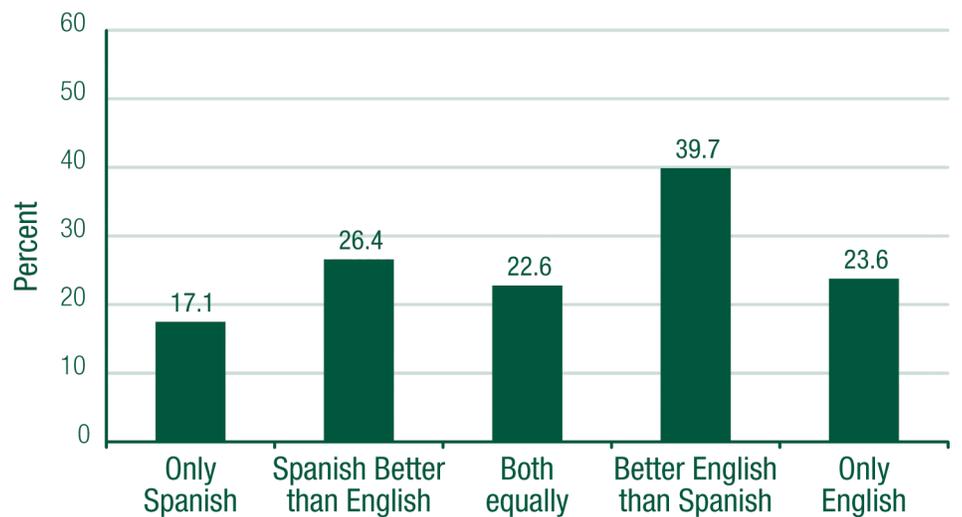
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Figure 2  
**Racial Discrimination Rates for California Women by Whether  
They Reported Any Physical, Mental, or Emotional Problems,\*  
2009**



\*  $P < .01$   
Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2009

Figure 3  
**Racial Discrimination Rates of Hispanic California Women by  
Language Spoken,\* 2009**



\* $P < .001$   
Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2009

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