



Background

Depression is one of the most prevalent mental health issues in the United States that disproportionately affects college students.¹

Previous research has shown that ethnicity plays a role in worsening the symptoms of depression for these students, as their background produces stress due to cultural stigma.²

College students who identify as minority race/ethnicity experience microaggressions and discrimination, increasing their risk of depression.³

Limited research has been done to examine the association between college students' identity as a minority race/ethnicity and their susceptibility to depression.

Objectives

To determine whether there is an association between racial ethnic minority identity and perception of depression among undergraduate college students.

Methods

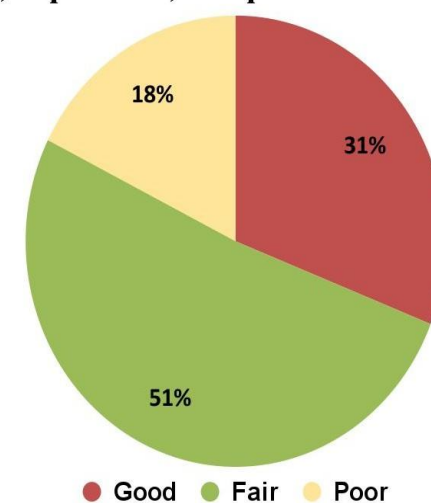
In February 2024, a cross-sectional survey study (exposure: racial/ethnicity; outcome: depression) (N=183) was conducted at UC San Diego.

An online 10-question survey was created via Qualtrics and distributed to undergraduate students through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Discord, etc.

Fisher's exact chi-squared tests were conducted to measure the association between race/ethnicity and depression using SPSS.

Table 1. Characteristics Demographics (N=183)	
Race/Ethnicity N (%)	
Asian	109 (58%)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2 (1%)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1 (0.5%)
Black or African American	9 (5%)
Hispanic or Latino	59 (31%)
White Non-Hispanic	36 (19%)
Other	7 (4%)
Generational Status N (%)	
First Generation College Students	116 (64%)
Non-First Generation College Students	66 (36%)
Grade Level N (%)	
First Year	12 (6%)
Second Year	24 (13%)
Third Year	38 (21%)
Fourth Year	92 (50%)
Fifth Year or more	17 (9%)

Figure 1. Non-White students rate mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions



Results

Figure 2. College students identifying as a racial/ethnic minority may be more reluctant in seeking mental health support

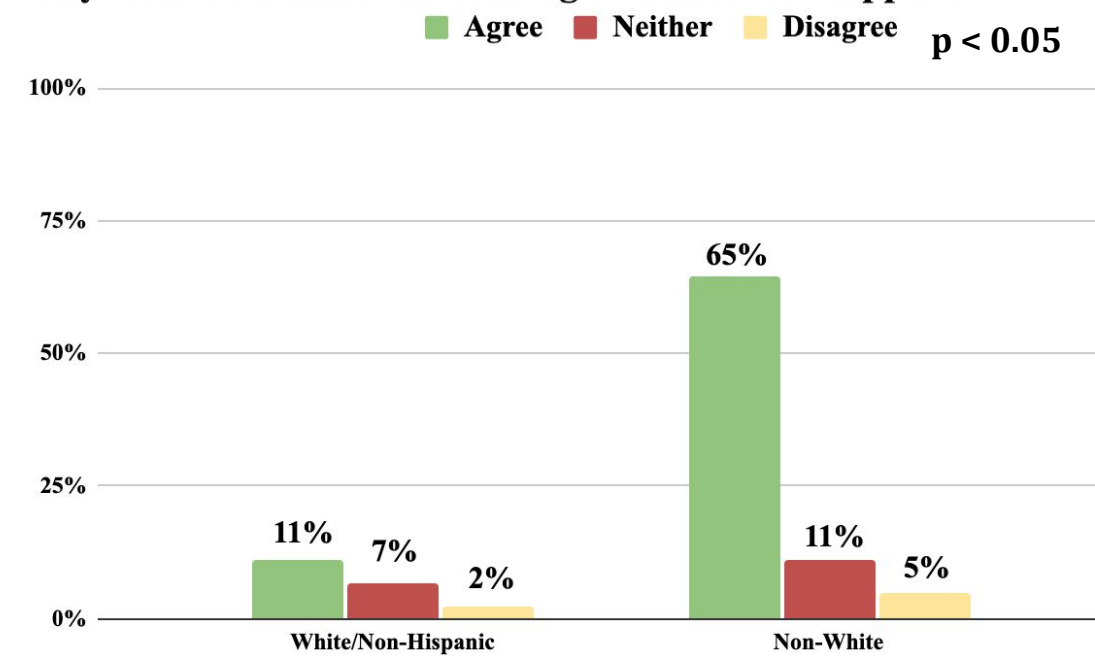


Figure 3. College students identifying as a racial/ethnic minority have experienced challenges related to acculturation or cultural adaptation

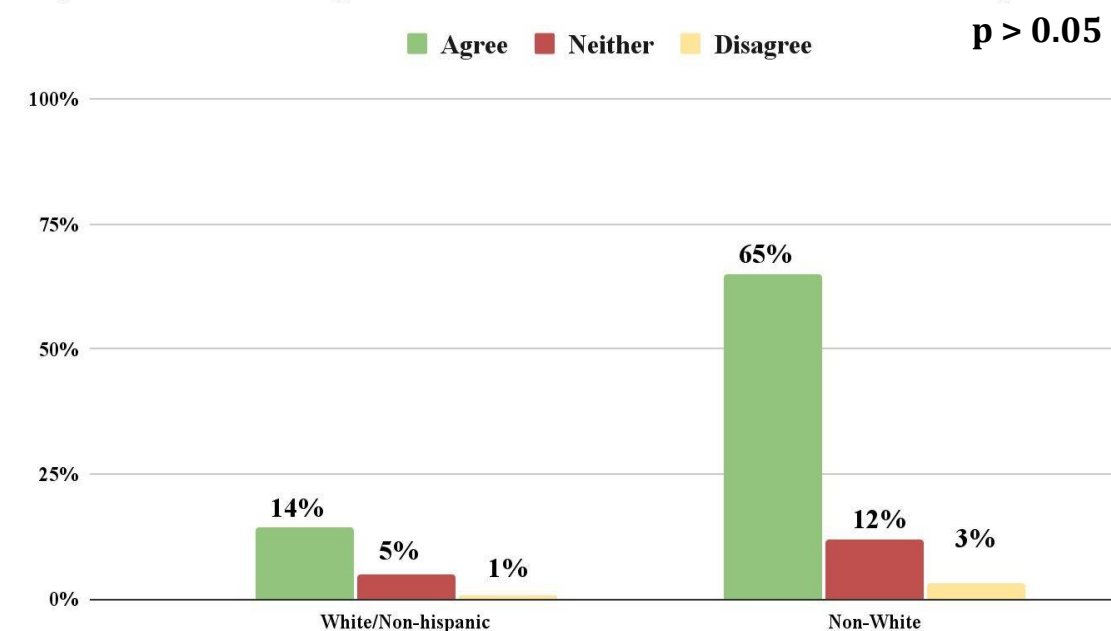
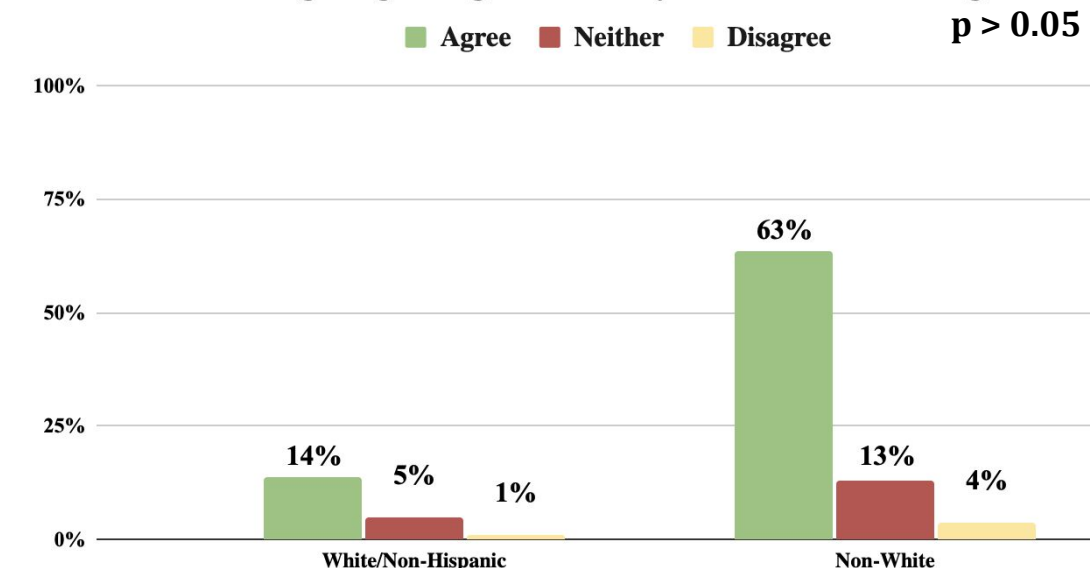


Figure 4. College students identifying as a racial/ethnic minority have a difficult time navigating college which may contribute to feelings of isolation



Conclusions

While there is no significant association between minority identity and perceptions of depression and feelings of isolation, those who identified as a minority expressed more reluctance to seek mental health support.

Policy Implications

Developing a more inclusive environment for students whose identity classify as minority race/ethnicity.

Campus initiatives should increase the diversity of mental health professionals on college campuses to reflect the student population better.

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