

**“Just respect. I am a human being...treat me like that, talk to me like that”:**

## **Islamophobia and the Healthcare System**

### **Abstract**

Islamophobia is a growing public health issue in White, Christian-majority countries, including the United States (Samari et al., 2018). I conducted a systematic review of published literature, which yielded little data regarding Islamophobia as a whole and even less so for Islamophobia in health. Although research is minimal, Islamophobia negatively disrupts health systems at the individual, interpersonal, and structural levels (Samari, 2016). This paper advances the understanding of Islam and common misconceptions of the religion and its practice. Further, Islamophobia is defined and explored through the experience of three Black Muslim women in health care environments. I used a semi-structured format to conduct a virtual interview with each woman. Interviews were later transcribed and one interview was translated from Arabic to English, remaining as close to the English meaning in Arabic as the English language allowed. The initial intention of this research was to examine the influence of wearing the hijab on Muslim women’s health care encounters. Importantly, however, aspects of care such as the idea of race and respect proved to be significant and were not always related to wearing the hijab. Additionally, findings highlight how demonization of Muslims contributes to adverse health outcomes, and how recognition of the way White supremacy operates within health care and daily life can mitigate these negative effects.