

## Rebeca Harris (2024) Abstract

**Background.** The race-based traumatic stress model proposes that psychological responses to discrimination parallel responses to traumatic stress. Cumulative discriminatory experiences and subsequent trauma symptoms may lead to prenatal inflammation, with far reaching consequences for the health of a mother and her child.

**Methods.** Latinas, primarily of Mexican and Central American heritage (n=150), completed the Everyday Discrimination Scale and the Traumatic Avoidance subscale of the Inventory of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms -II during pregnancy (24–32 weeks). Plasma levels of cytokines were measured with multiplex assays, which were aggregated into a pro-inflammatory cytokine profile (IL-1 $\beta$ , TNF- $\alpha$ , IFN- $\gamma$ , and IL-8) after a Confirmatory Factor Analysis supported this approach.

**Results.** Latina women who grew up in the US and selected the English questionnaire reported more discrimination, more traumatic avoidance symptoms, and had a more elevated cytokine profile than women who immigrated later in life. Based on a two-mediator sequential model, discrimination and traumatic avoidance symptoms sequentially provided mechanistic support for the higher levels of cytokines observed in Latinas who spent their childhood in the US.

**Conclusion.** This is among the first studies to examine the association between trauma symptoms, discrimination, and inflammation during pregnancy. In so doing, it elucidates critical pathways by which discrimination may be biologically embedded across post-migration immigrant generations.

Keywords

Latina; trauma; inflammation; discrimination; pregnancy; acculturation