# Depression, Microaggressions, and Sexual Risk-Related Behavior: Evidence for the Mediating Effect of Depression

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## Introduction

- Depression has been previously linked to experiencing microaggressions, as well as risky sexual behaviors.
- Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities (intentional or unintentional) that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color (Sue et al., 2007).
- According to the U.S. CDC, a greater percentage of African Americans reported feelings of sadness, (4.3 vs 2.6), hopelessness (2.1 vs 1.9), & that "everything is an effort" (10.3 vs 6.1) compared to with counterparts (CDC, 2017).

## Aim

- To investigate the potential mediating effect of depression as it relates to microaggressions and sexual risk-related behavior among a non-clinical sample of African American young adults.

## Method

- 84 sexually active African American young adults
- Age M=21 years old, s=1.2 years).
- Measues
  - Microaggressions Scale (RMAS)
  - Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II)
  - Sexual risk-related behaviors: condom use frequency, multiple concurrent sexual partners, and sex while under the influence of drugs or alcohol (scale: 1-5)
- Private online adminsitration

Table 1.

Regression Results on the Preliminary Test of Mediation for c & b Paths

| | Multiple concurrent sexual partners | | Sex under the influence of drugs/alcohol | | BDI-II | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | Sig. | b | Sig | b | Sig. |
| RMAS: Low-Achieving/ Undesirable Culture | .21 | .04* | .35 | .03* | -- | ns |
| RMAS: Sexualization | .37 | .004** | .19 | .007** | .31 | .004** |
| RMAS: Environmental Invalidations | .15 | .009** | .20 | .02* | .25 | .01** |

## Results

- The RMAS Sexualization subscale and Environmental Invalidations subscale significantly predicted multiple concurrent sexual partners, sex under the influence, & depression, independently.
- Depression significantly predicted multiple concurrent sexual partners when controlling for Sexualization ($p<.01$).
- Depression significantly predicted sex under the influence when controlling for Environmental Invalidations ($p=.05$).

Table 2. Depression as a Mediator for Microaggressions & Sexual Risk-Related Behavior

| | Multiple concurrent sexual partners | | Sex under the influence of drugs/alcohol | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | Sig. | b | Sig. |
| (M) BDI-II | .09 | .002** | .2 | .05* |
| (X) RMAS: Sexualization | .16 | .05* | .14 | .03* |
| (M) BDI-II | .39 | .003** | .33 | .01** |
| (X) RMAS: Environmental Invalidations | .11 | .04* | .28 | .06± |

## Conclusion

- Future research will test a fully-powered mediation model using an independent sample.
- Applicable for psychologists, counselors, and therapists who work with this population.
- Understanding how patients, participants, and clients interact with and are viewed and treated in their everyday lives may lend insight for more comprehensive client care, better depression management, and risk-related behavior choices.