

Naming and Measuring the Impacts of Racism on Health

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Why discuss racism?

- To eliminate racial disparities in health, need examine fundamental causes
 - “Race” is only a rough proxy for SES, culture, or genes
 - “Race” precisely measures the social classification of people in our “race”-conscious society
- Hypothesize racism as a fundamental cause of racial disparities in health



What is racism?

A system

What is racism?

A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value

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A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of phenotype ("race")

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What is racism?

A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of phenotype ("race")

- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
- Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources

Levels of racism

- Institutionalized
- Personally-mediated
- Internalized

Institutionalized racism

- Differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society, by “race”
- Examples
 - Housing, education, employment, income
 - Medical facilities
 - Clean environment
 - Information, resources, voice
- Explains the association between SES and “race”

Personally-mediated racism

- Differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of others, by “race”
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Examples
 - Police brutality
 - Physician disrespect
 - Shopkeeper vigilance
 - Waiter indifference
 - Teacher devaluation

Internalized racism

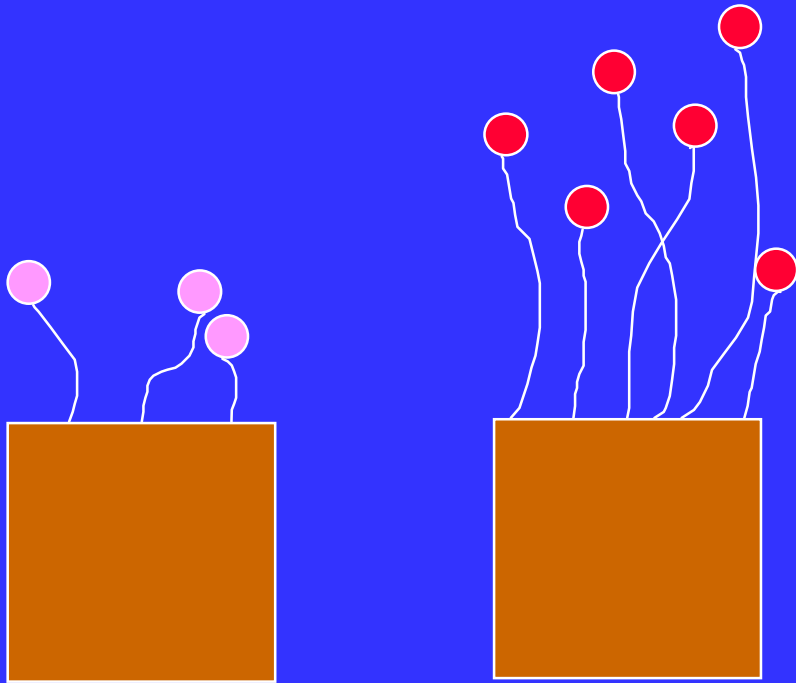
- Acceptance by the stigmatized “races” of negative messages about our own abilities and intrinsic worth
- Examples
 - Self-devaluation
 - White man’s ice is colder
 - Resignation, helplessness, hopelessness
- Accepting limitations to our full humanity



Levels of Racism:

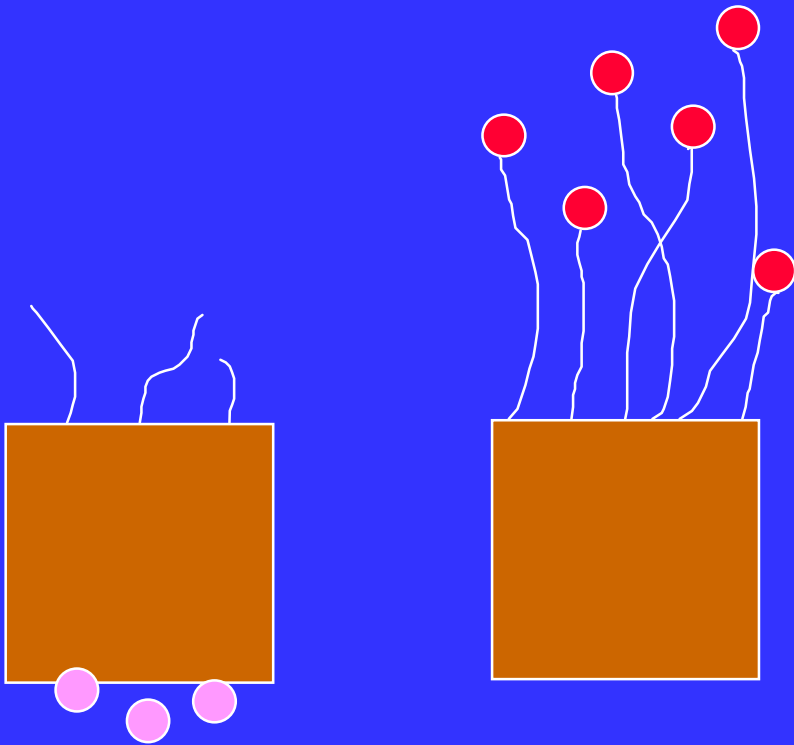
A Gardener's Tale

Institutionalized racism



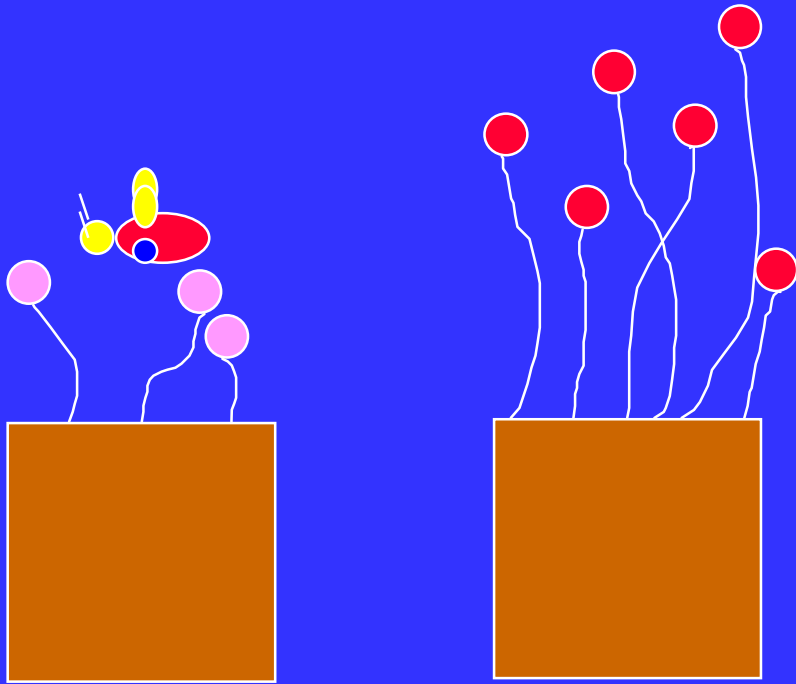
- Initial historical insult
- Structural barriers
- Inaction in face of need
- Societal norms
- Biological determinism
- Unearned privilege

Personally-mediated racism



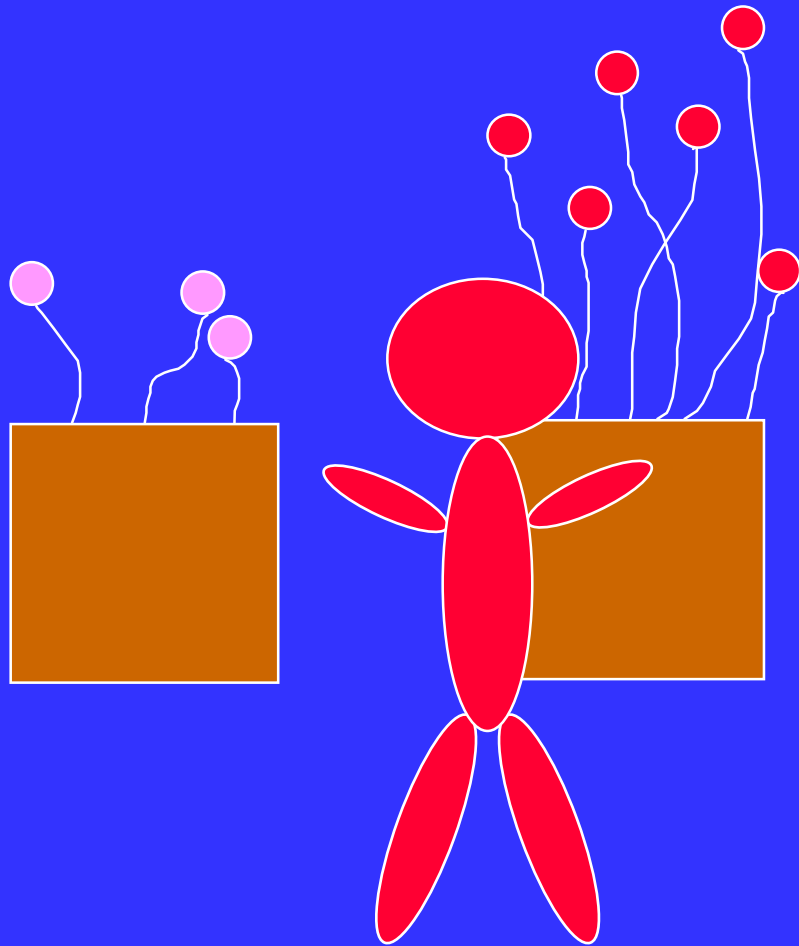
- Intentional
- Unintentional
- Acts of commission
- Acts of omission
- Maintains structural barriers
- Condoned by societal norms

Internalized racism



- Reflects systems of privilege
- Reflects societal values
- Erodes individual sense of value
- Undermines collective action

Who is the gardener?



- Power to decide
- Power to act
- Control of resources

Dangerous when

- Allied with one group
- Not concerned with equity

“Reactions to Race” module

Piloted on 2002 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System by:

California

Delaware

Florida

New Hampshire

New Mexico

North Carolina

Question 1

How do *other people* usually classify you in this country?

Would you say White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, or some other group?

Two measures of "race"

How self-identify

How usually classified by others

	White	Black	Hispanic
	22,417	2,198	2,694
White	95.2	0.9	3.0
Black	0.2	93.4	1.0
Hispanic	3.0	2.2	93.4
...	1.6	3.5	2.6

Two measures of "race"

How self-identify

How usually classified by others

White Black Hispanic . . .

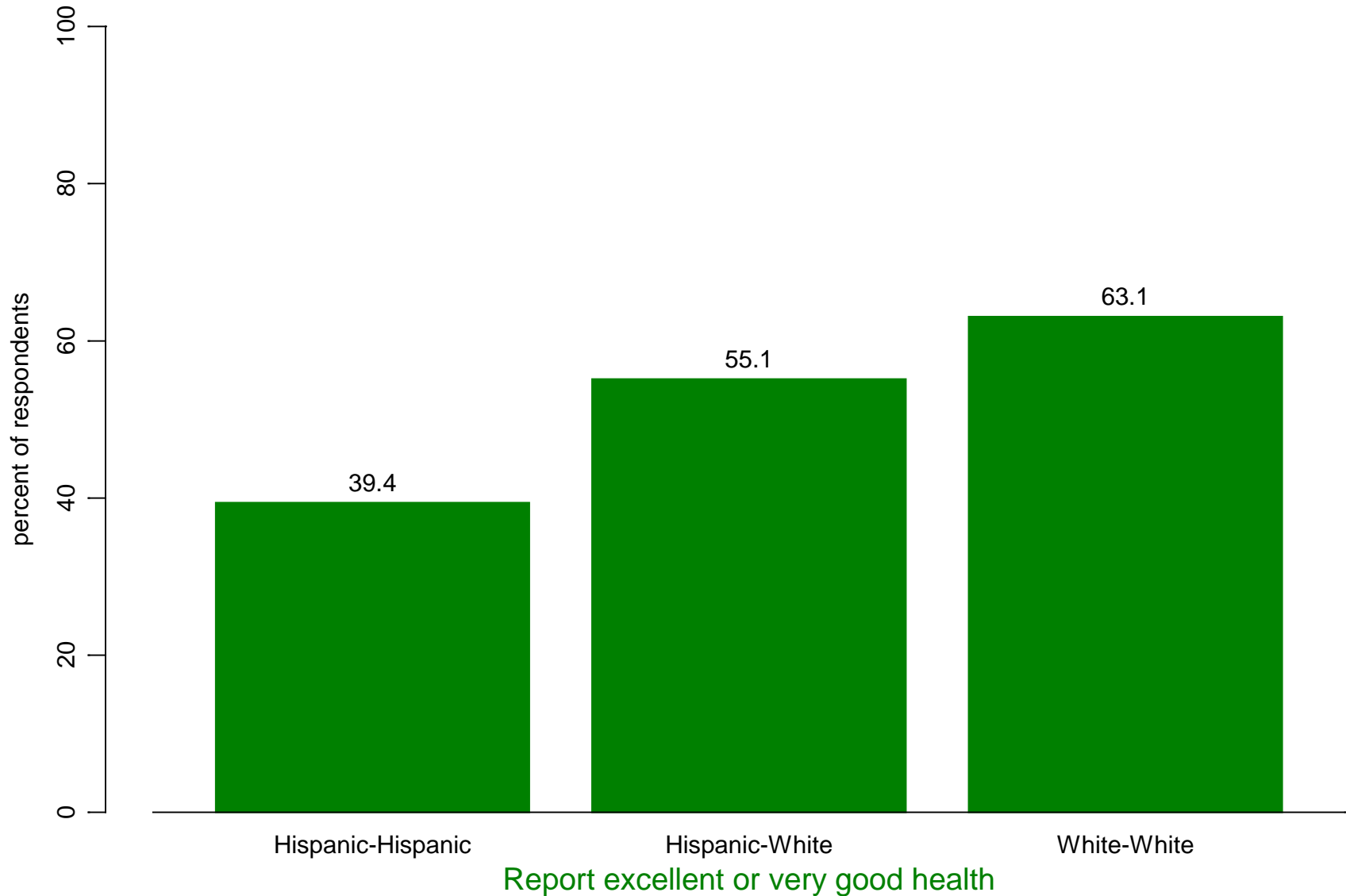
White 21,658	98.6	0.1	0.4	0.9
Black 2,197	1.6	93.5	1.2	3.7
Hispanic 3,398	20.0	1.4	74.0	4.6

General health status

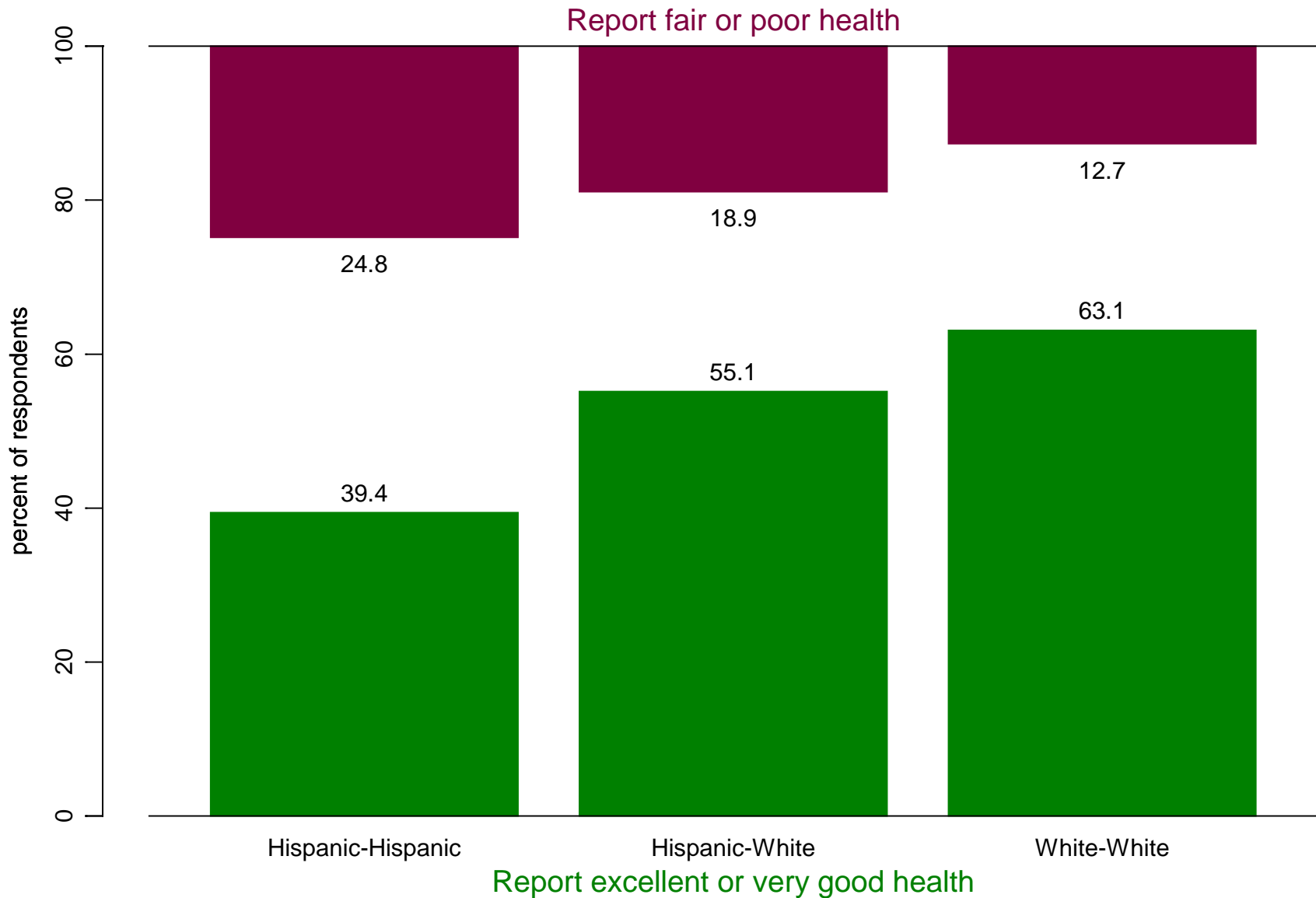
Would you say that in general your health is:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

General health status, by self-identified and socially-assigned "race"



General health status, by self-identified and socially-assigned "race"



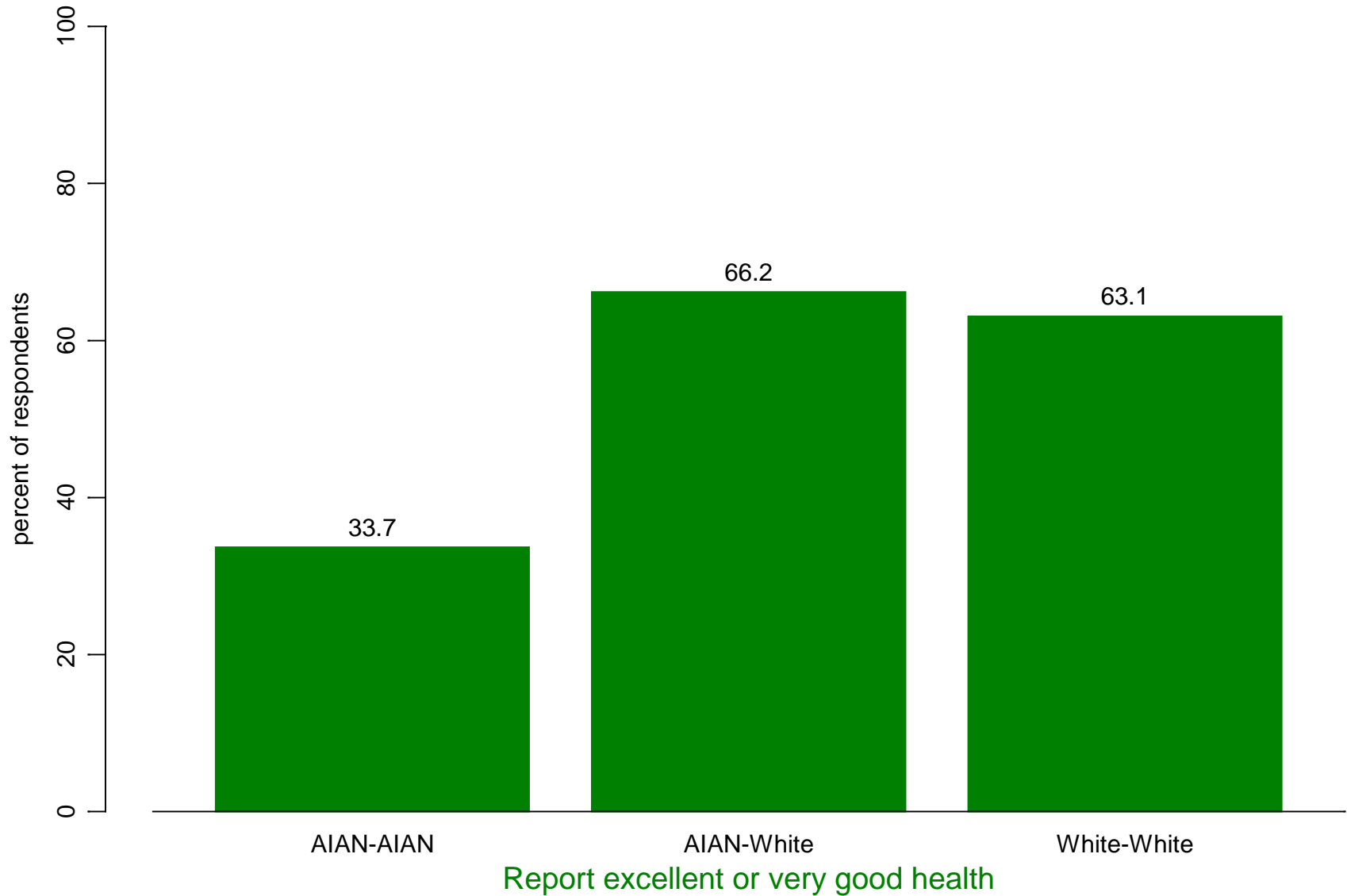
How self-identify

How usually classified by others

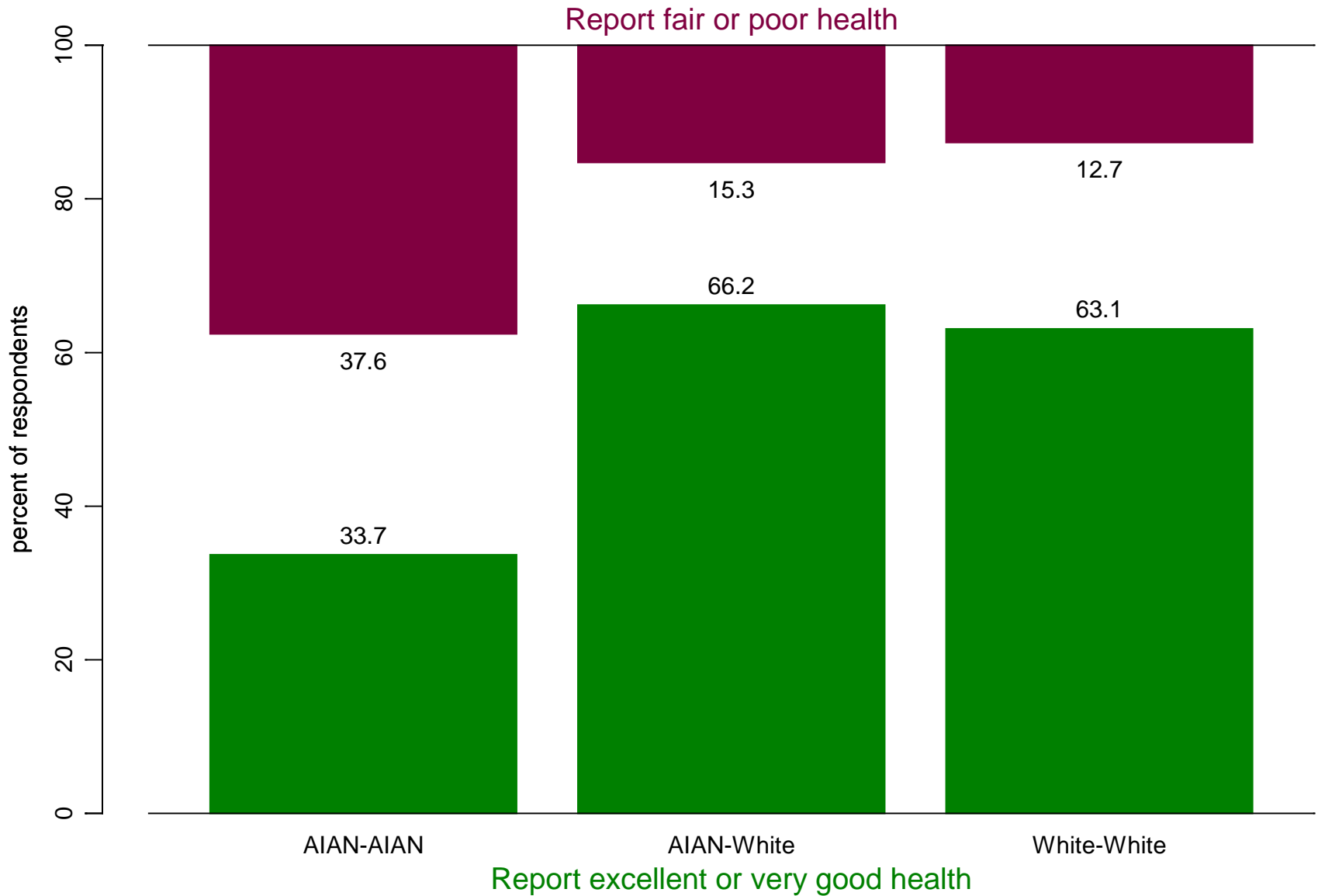
Asian NHOPI AIAN White ...

Asian 477	85.5	1.0	0.4	3.6	9.5
NHOPI 49	14.3	32.7	8.2	16.3	28.5
AIAN 479	0.6	1.7	57.8	24.4	15.5

General health status, by self-identified and socially-assigned "race"



General health status, by self-identified and socially-assigned "race"

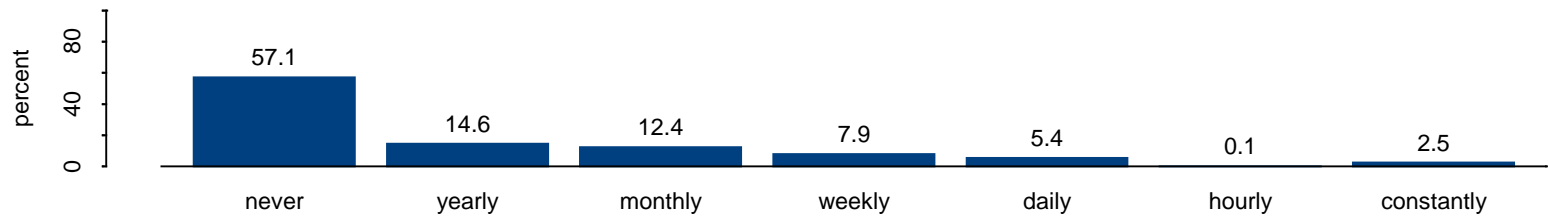


Question 2

How often do you think about your race?

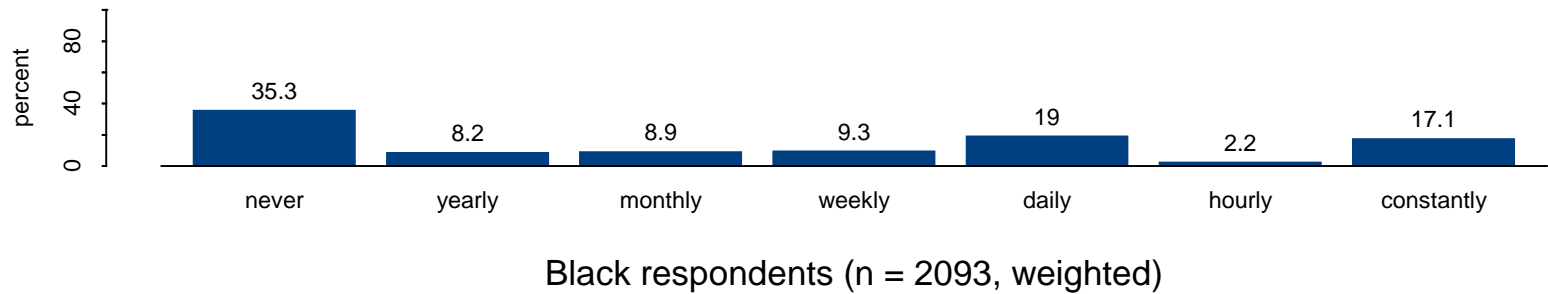
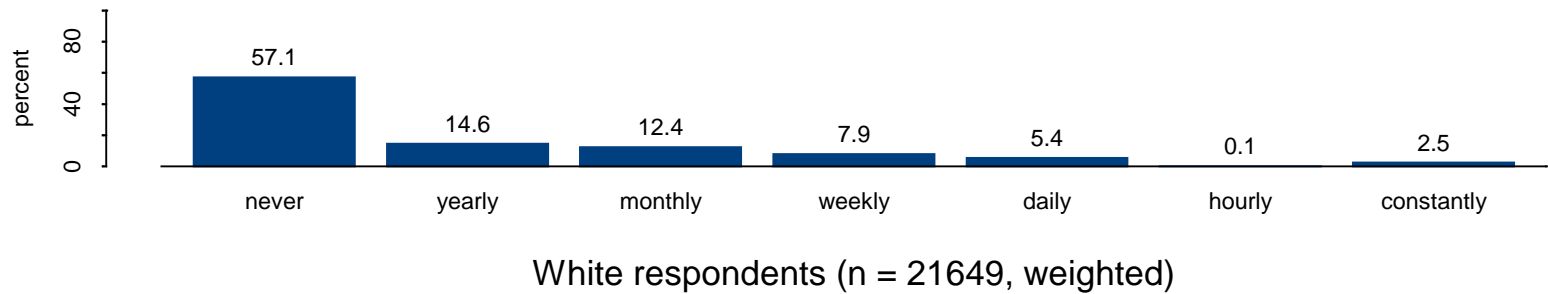
Would you say never, once a year, once a month, once a week, once a day, once an hour, or constantly?

"How often do you think about your race?", all six states, 2002 BRFSS

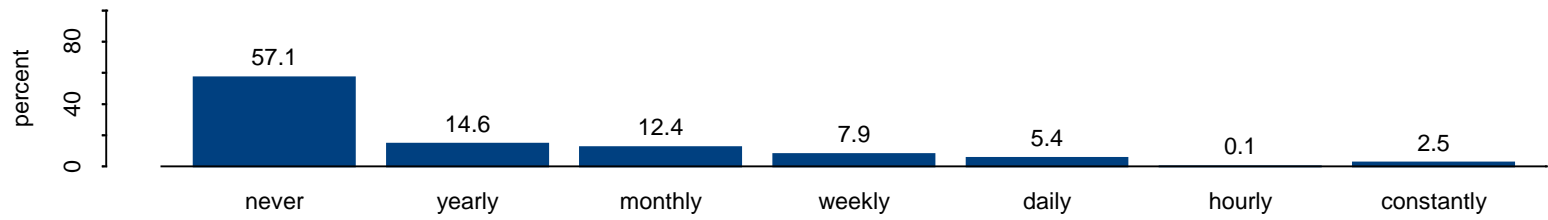


White respondents (n = 21649, weighted)

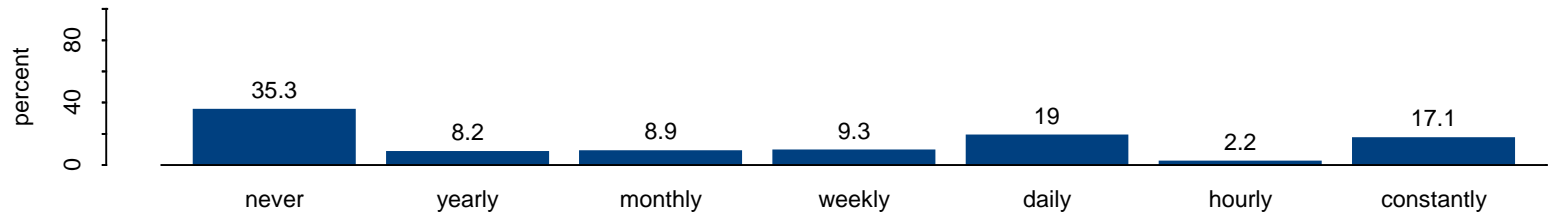
"How often do you think about your race?", all six states, 2002 BRFSS



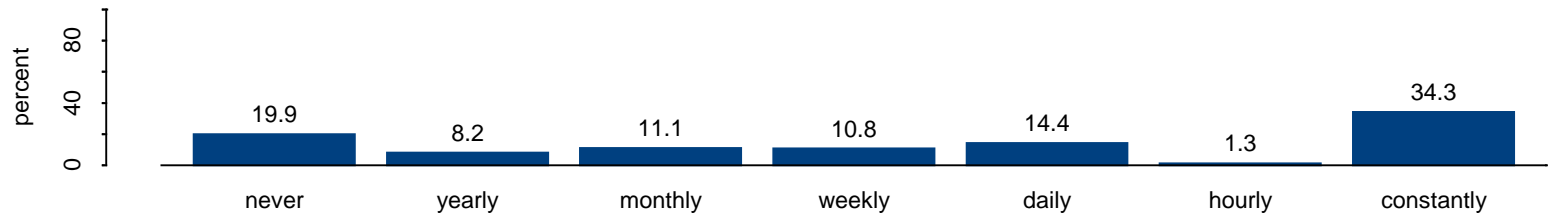
"How often do you think about your race?", all six states, 2002 BRFSS



White respondents (n = 21649, weighted)

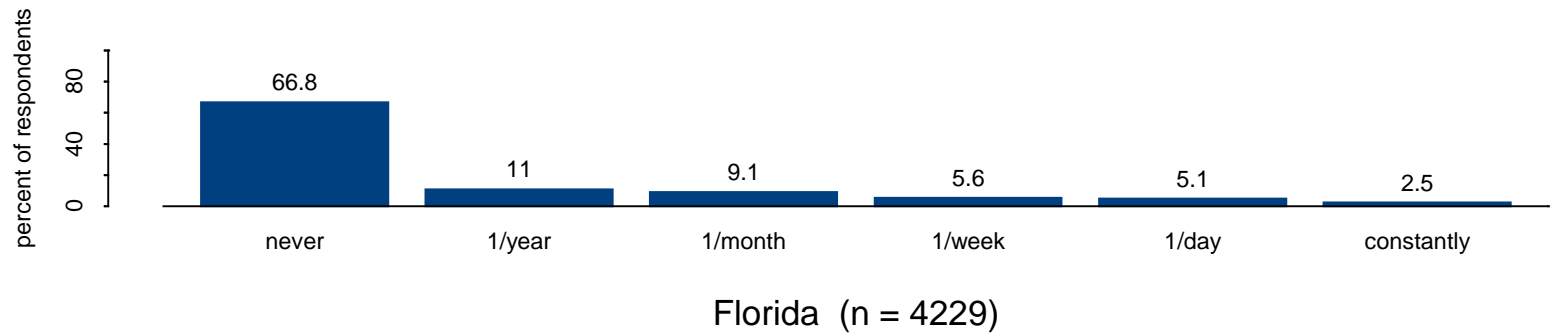
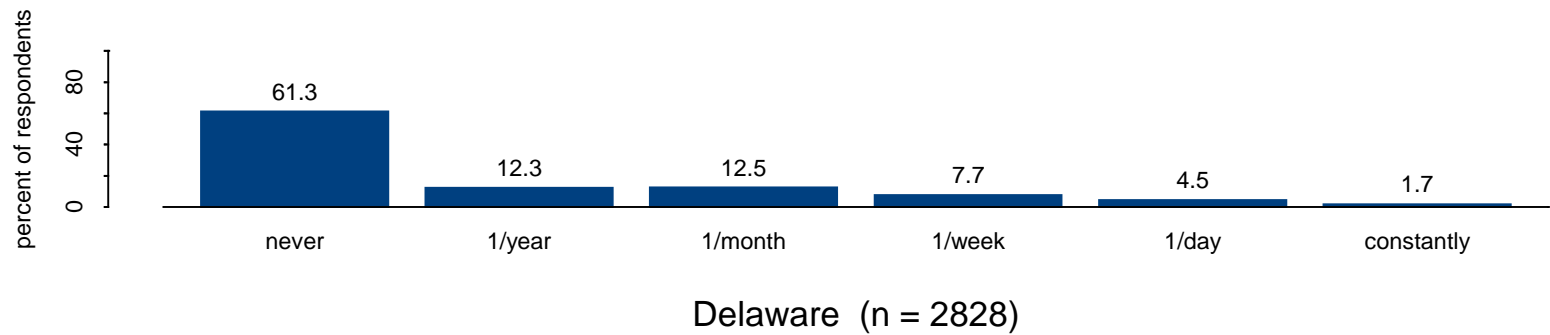
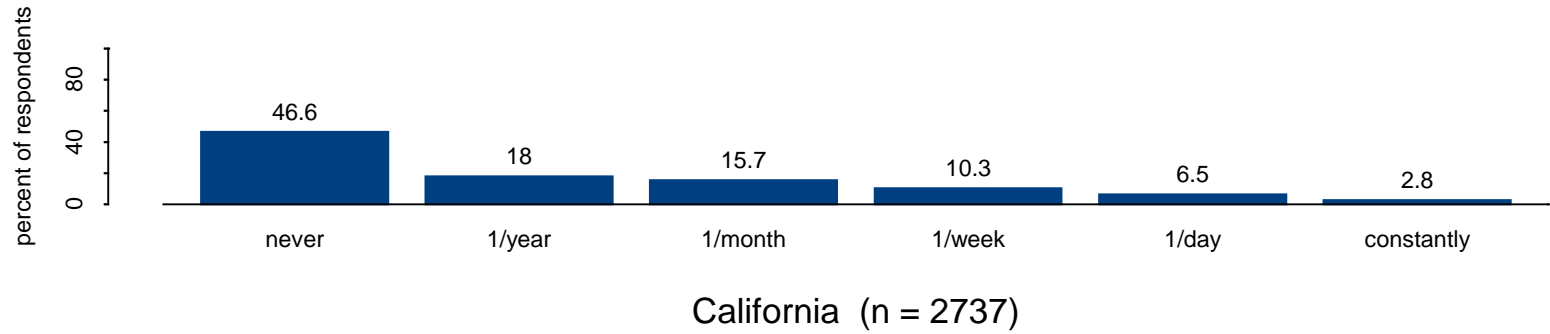


Black respondents (n = 2093, weighted)

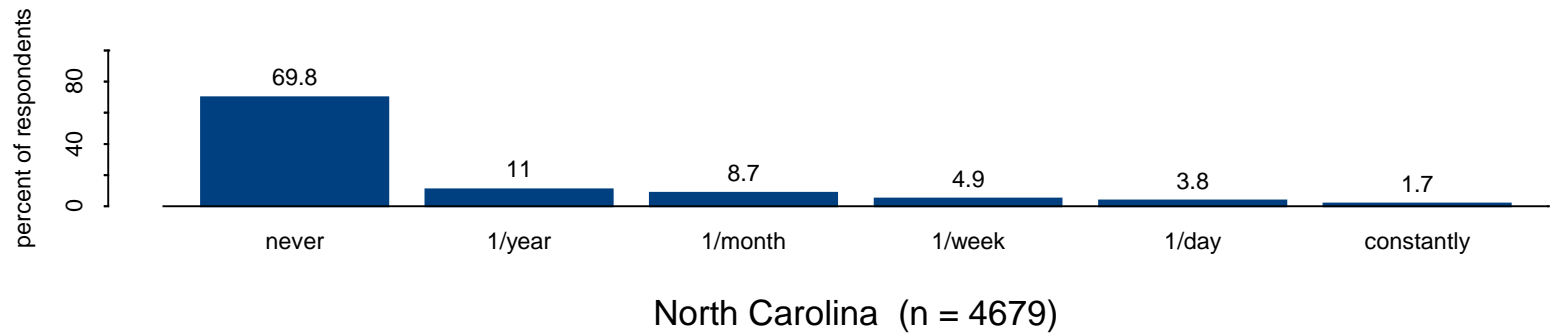
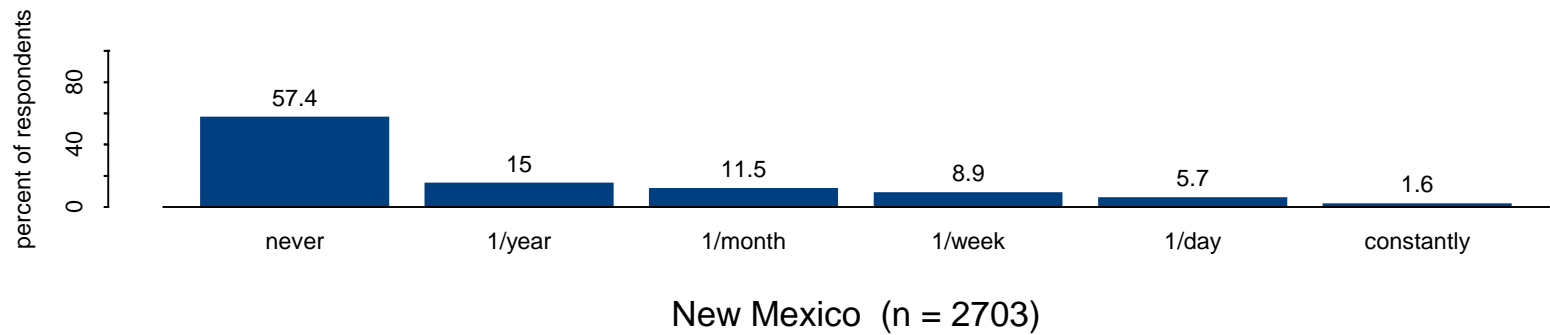
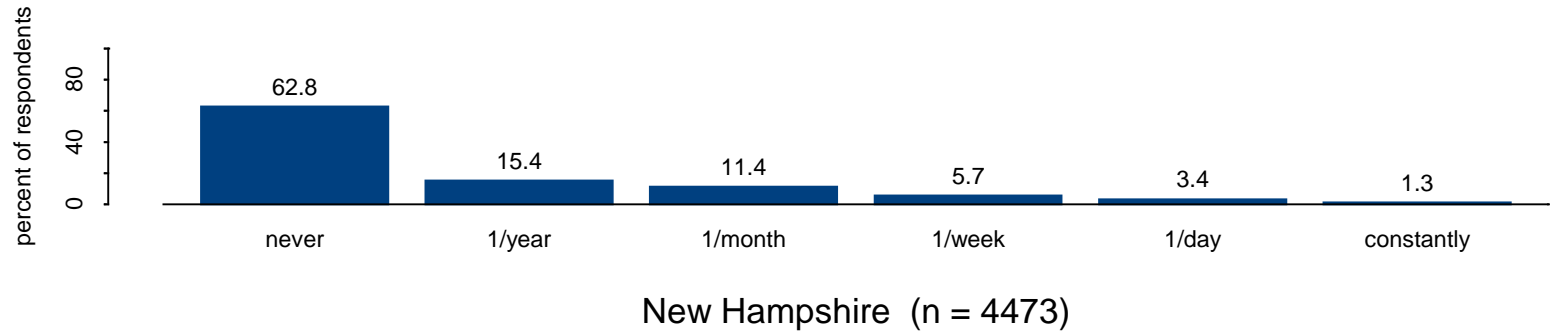


Hispanic respondents (n = 2619, weighted)

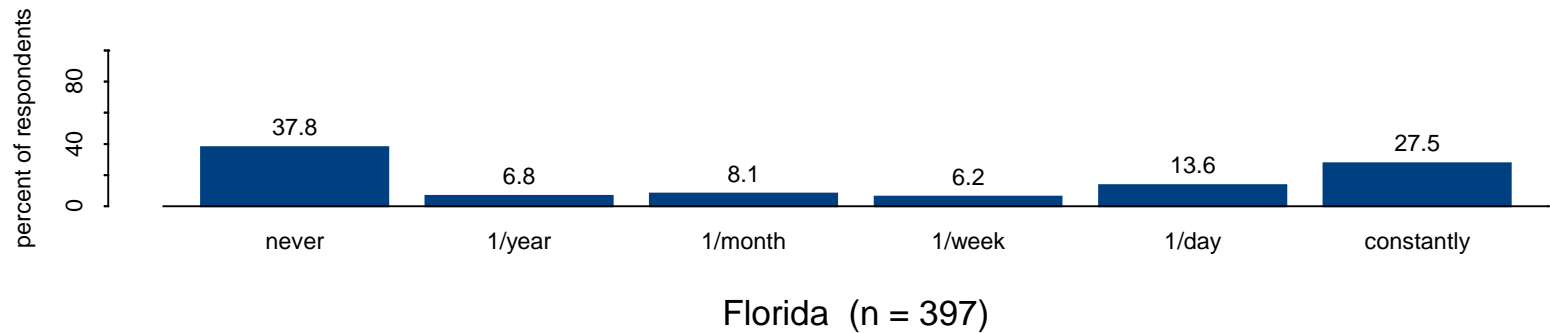
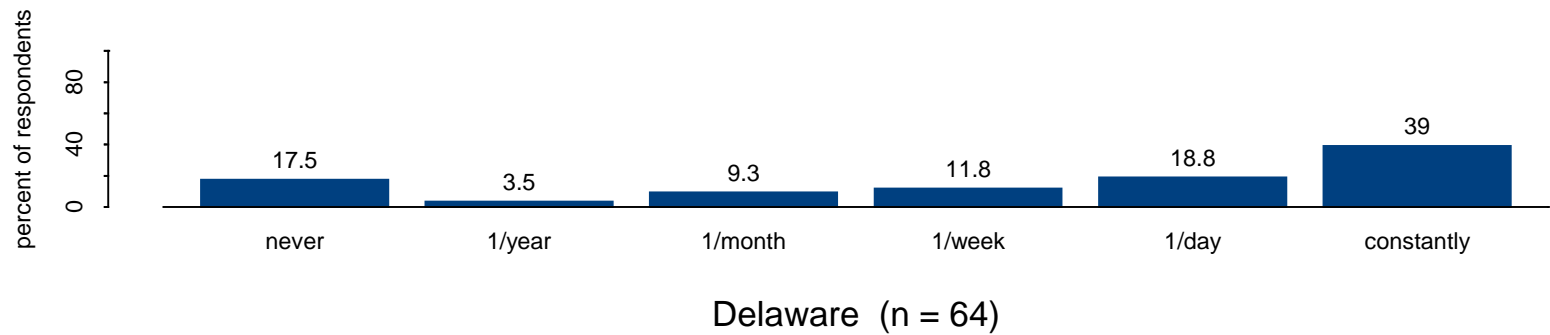
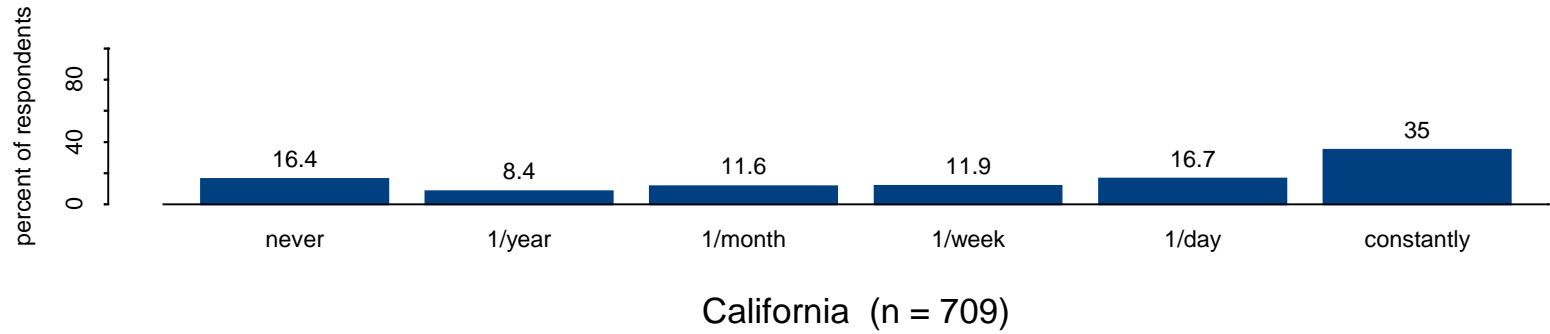
How often do you think about your race? White respondents, 2002 BRFSS



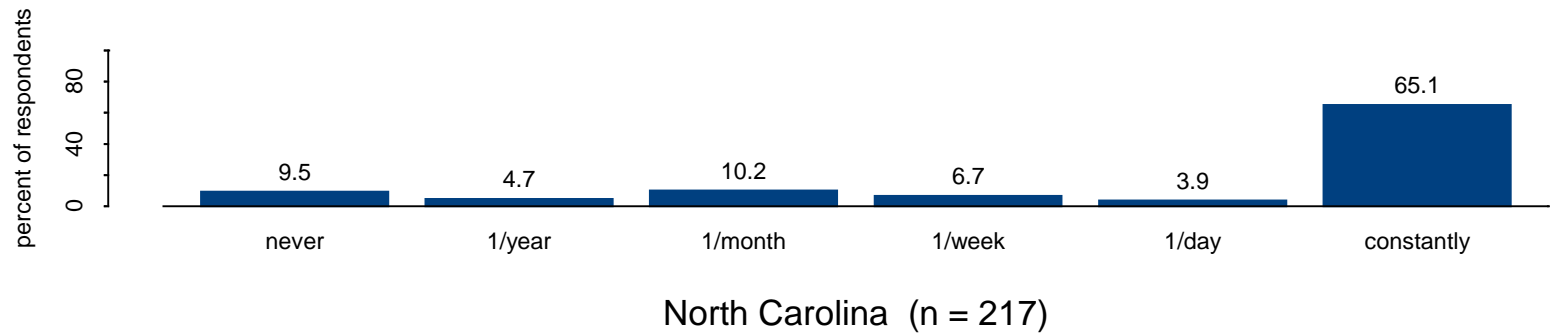
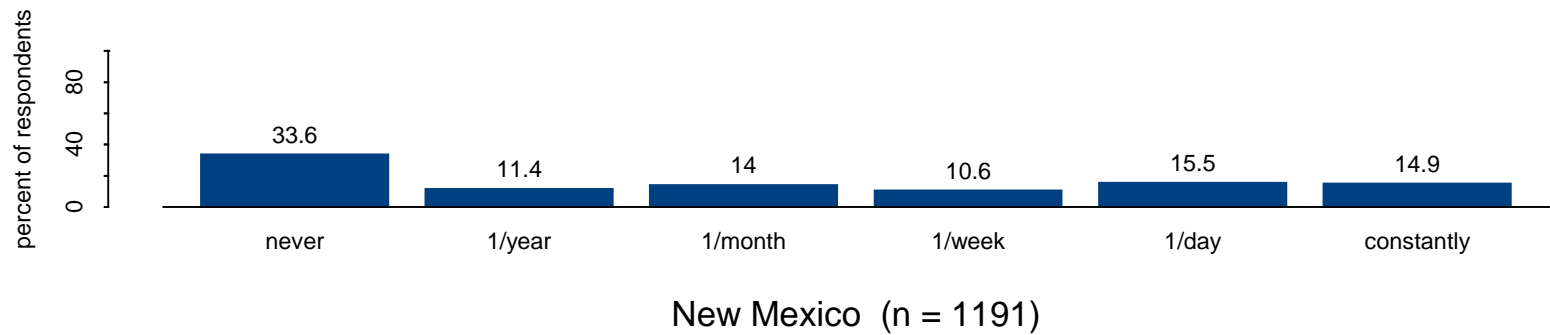
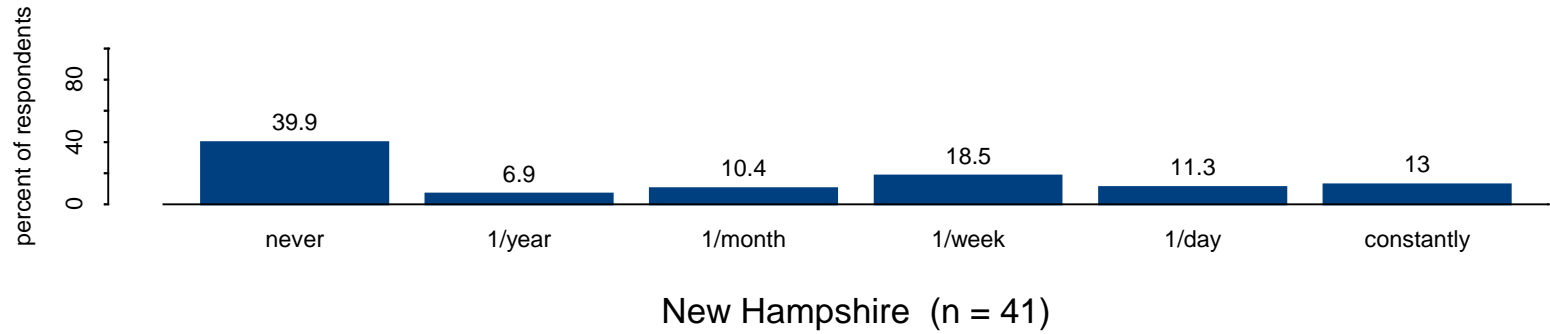
How often do you think about your race? White respondents, 2002 BRFSS



How often do you think about your race? Hispanic respondents, 2002 BRFSS



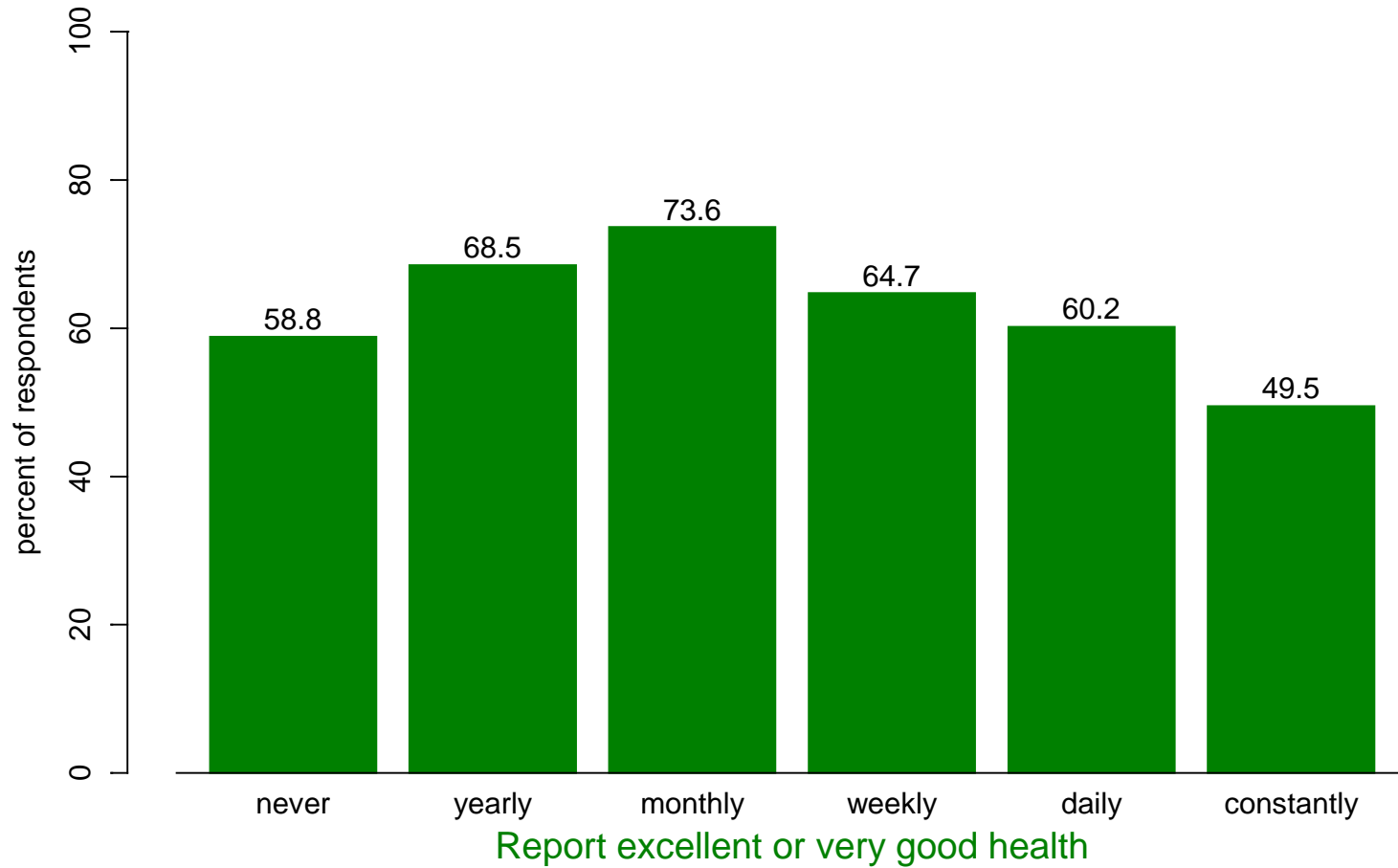
How often do you think about your race? Hispanic respondents, 2002 BRFSS



Racial climate

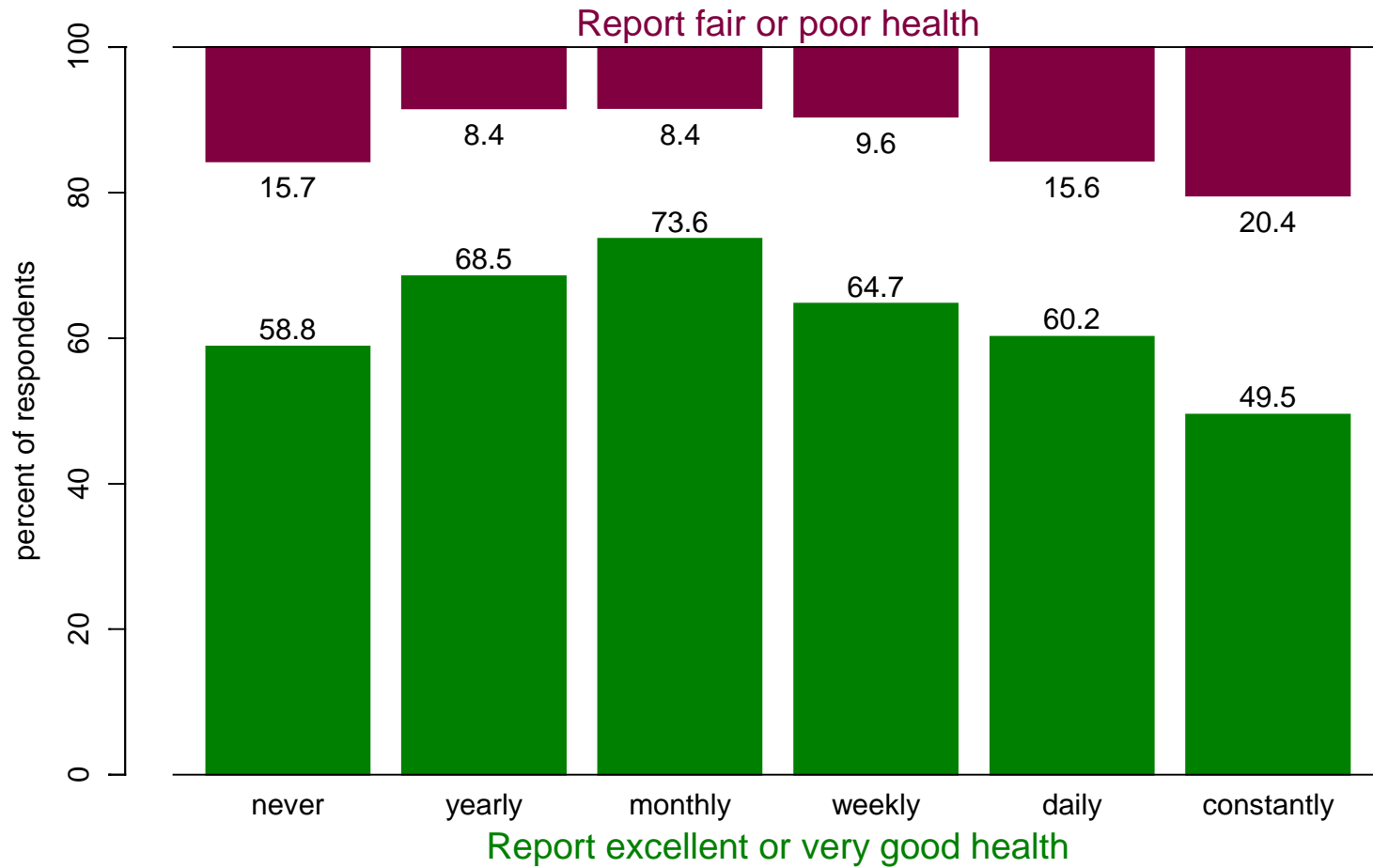
- Pertinence of “race” as a basis for classification
- Rules for “racial” classification
 - Number and names of categories
 - Sorting rules
- Opportunities and value accorded the different “racial” groups
- Affects how often you think about your “race”

General health status, by "How often do you think about your race?"



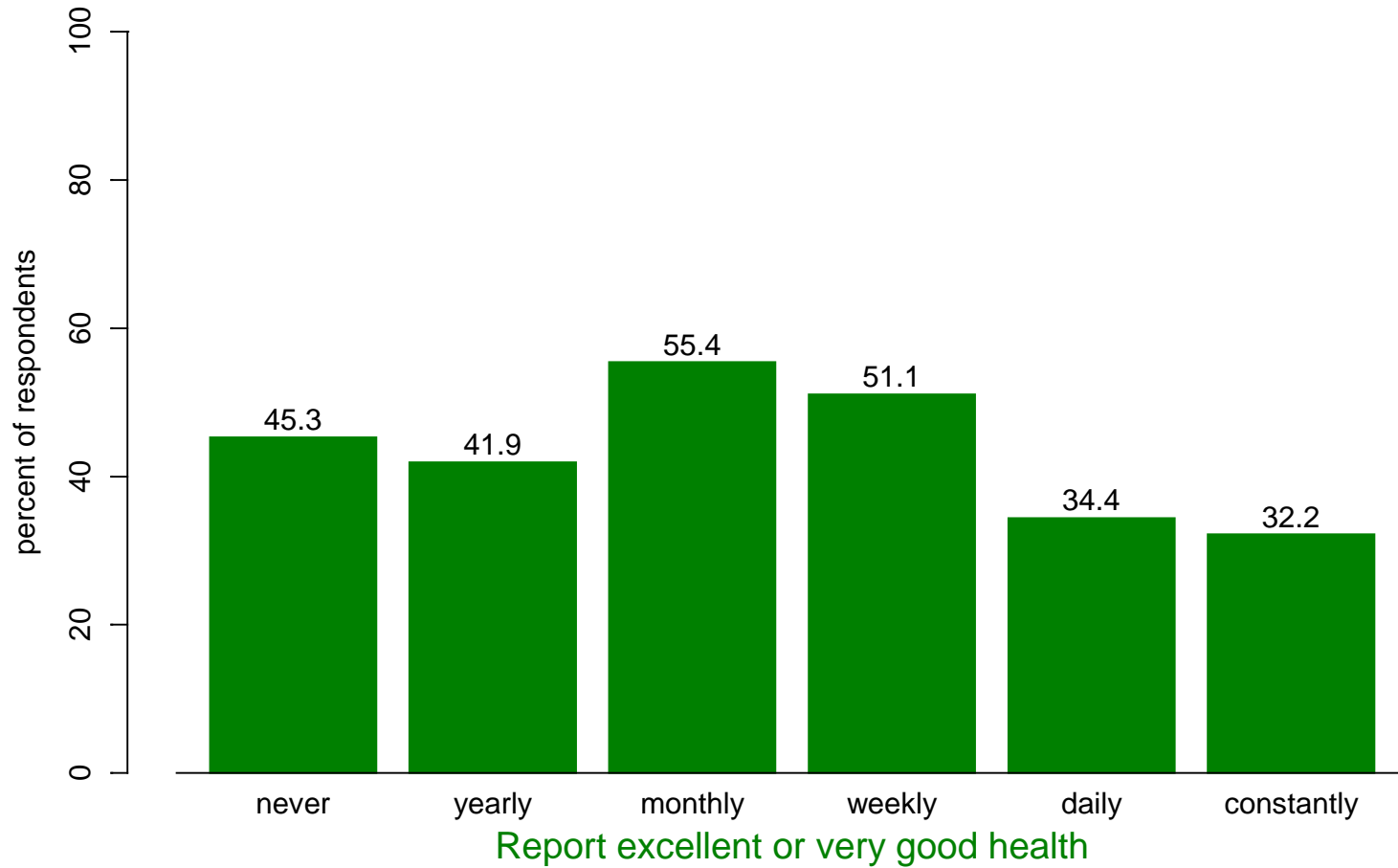
White respondents, all six states, 2002 BRFSS (n = 21649, weighted)

General health status, by "How often do you think about your race?"



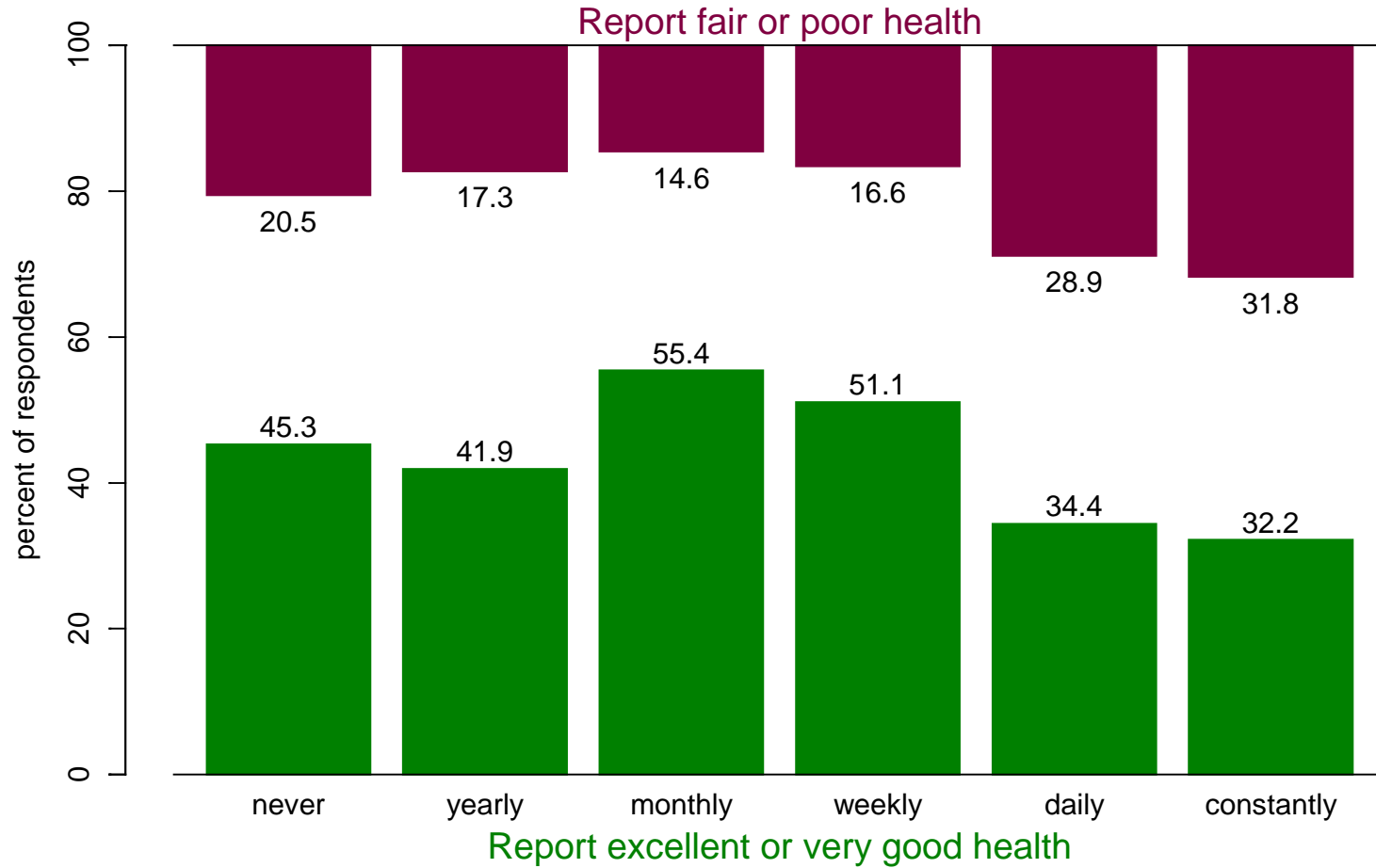
White respondents, all six states, 2002 BRFSS (n = 21649, weighted)

General health status, by "How often do you think about your race?"



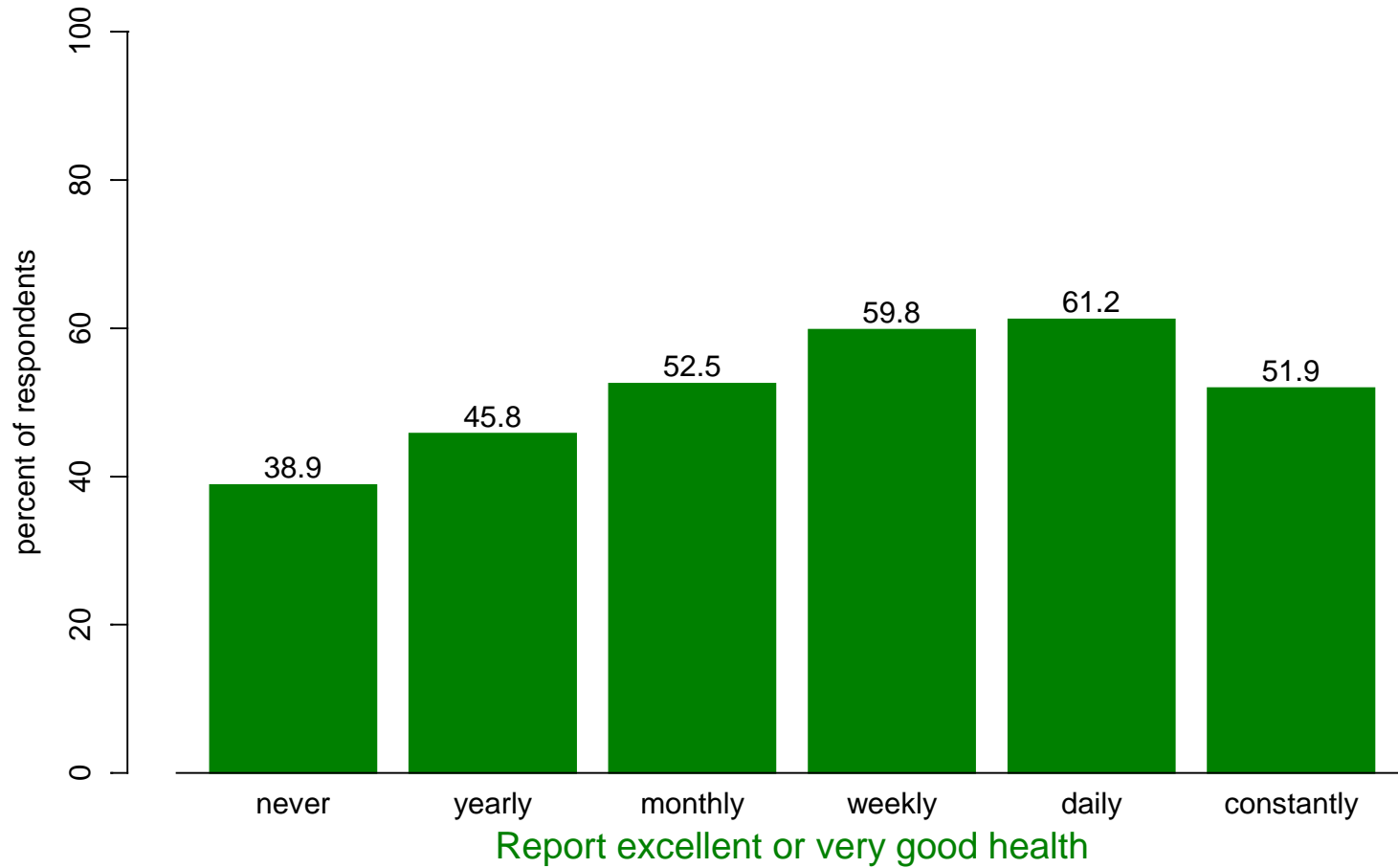
Hispanic respondents, all six states, 2002 BRFSS (n = 2619, weighted)

General health status, by "How often do you think about your race?"



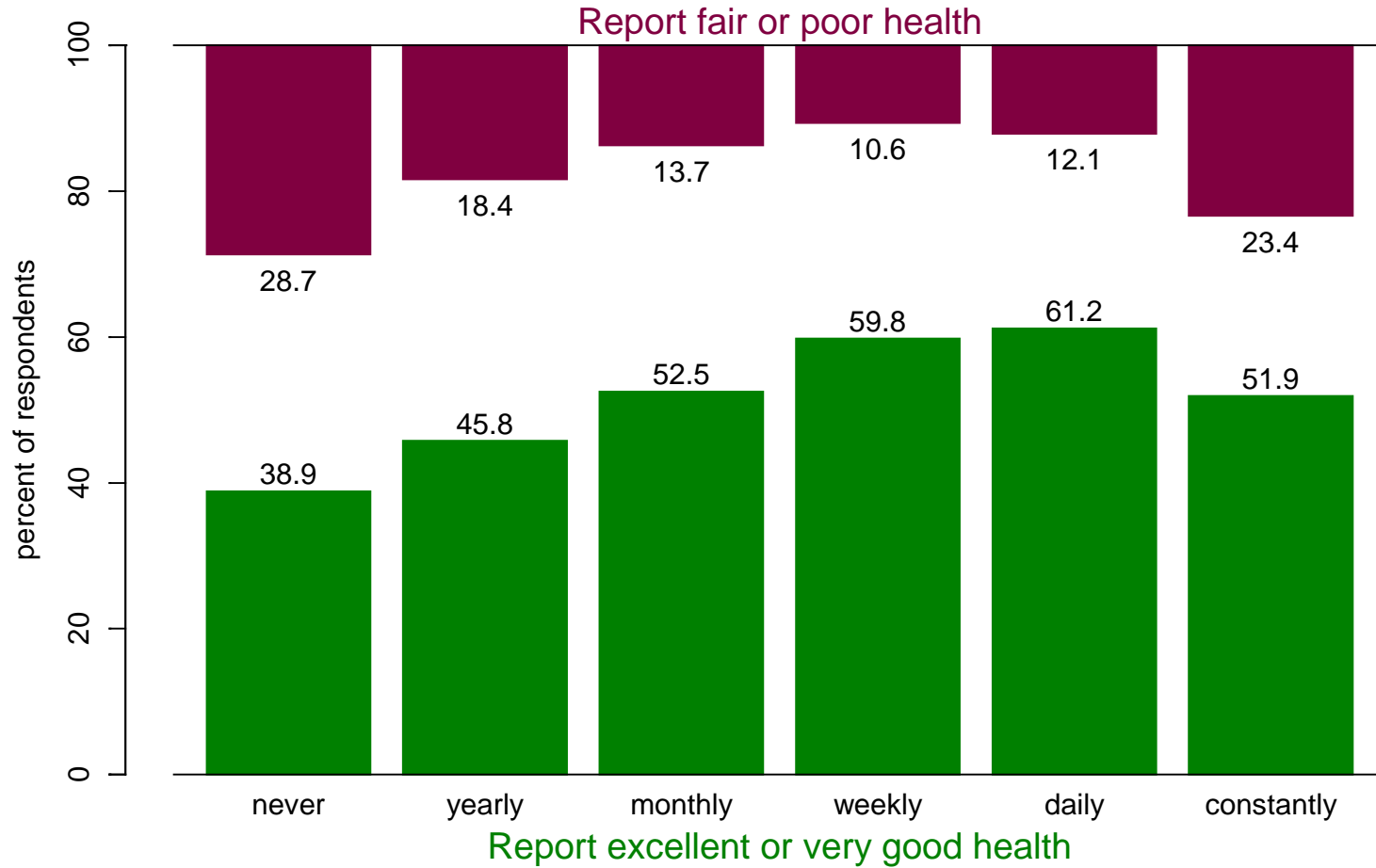
Hispanic respondents, all six states, 2002 BRFSS (n = 2619, weighted)

General health status, by "How often do you think about your race?"



Black respondents, all six states, 2002 BRFSS (n = 2093, weighted)

General health status, by "How often do you think about your race?"



Black respondents, all six states, 2002 BRFSS (n = 2093, weighted)

Question 3

[For those who are employed for wages, self-employed, or out of work for less than one year]

Within the past 12 months at work, do you feel you were treated worse than, the same as, or better than people of other races?

Question 4

Within the past 12 months when seeking health care, do you feel your experiences were worse than, the same as, or better than for people of other races?

Question 5

Within the past 30 days, have you felt emotionally upset, for example angry, sad, or frustrated, as a result of how you were treated based on your race?

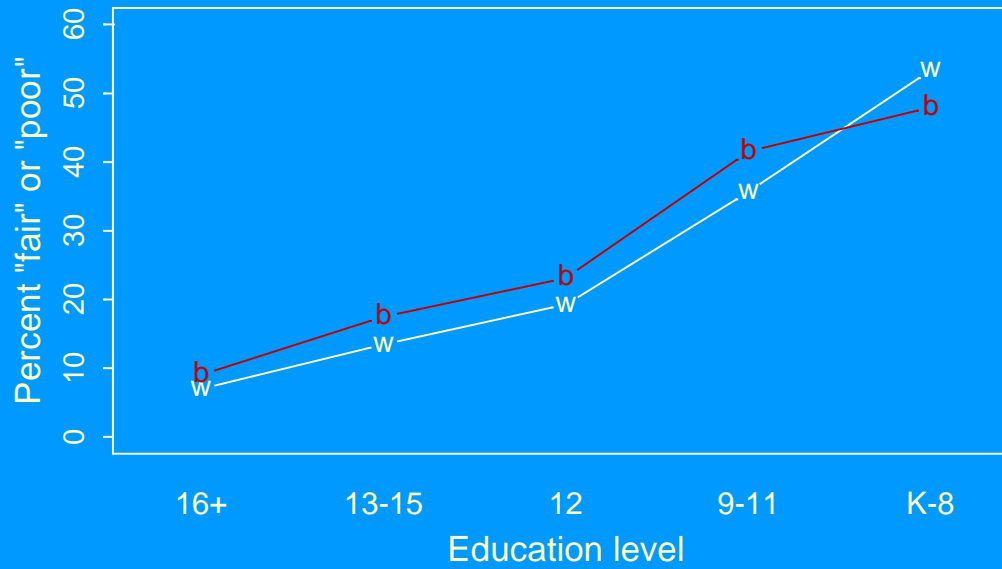
Question 6

Within the past 30 days, have you experienced any physical symptoms, for example a headache, an upset stomach, tensing of your muscles, or a pounding heart, as a result of how you were treated based on your race?

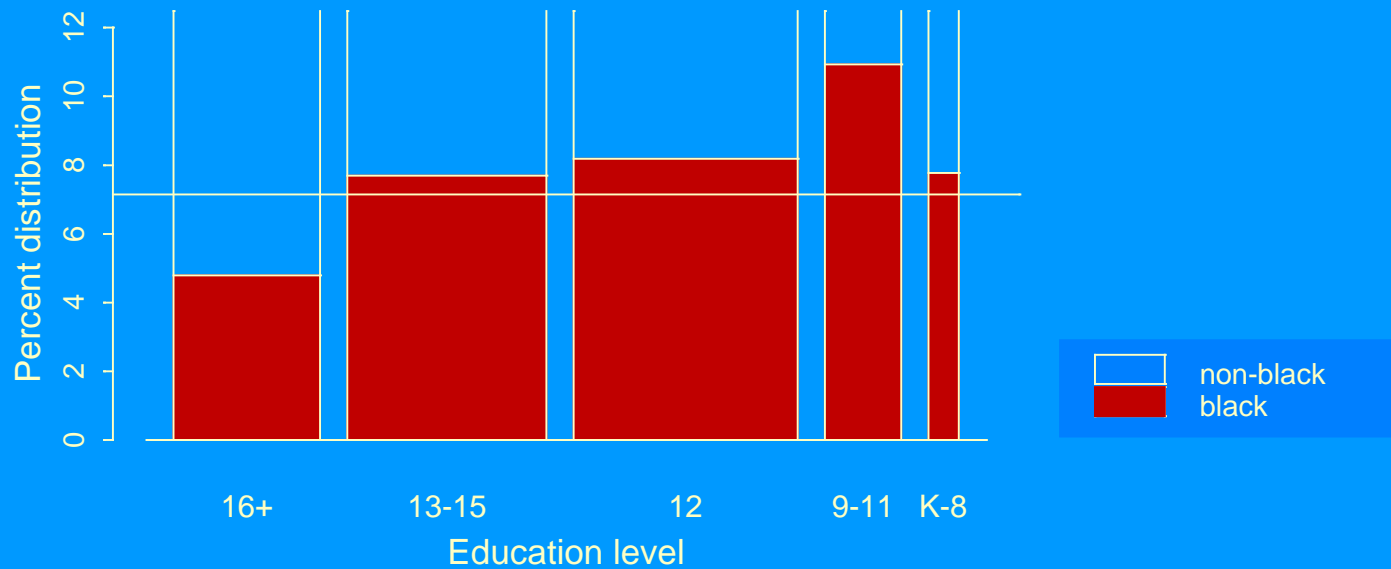
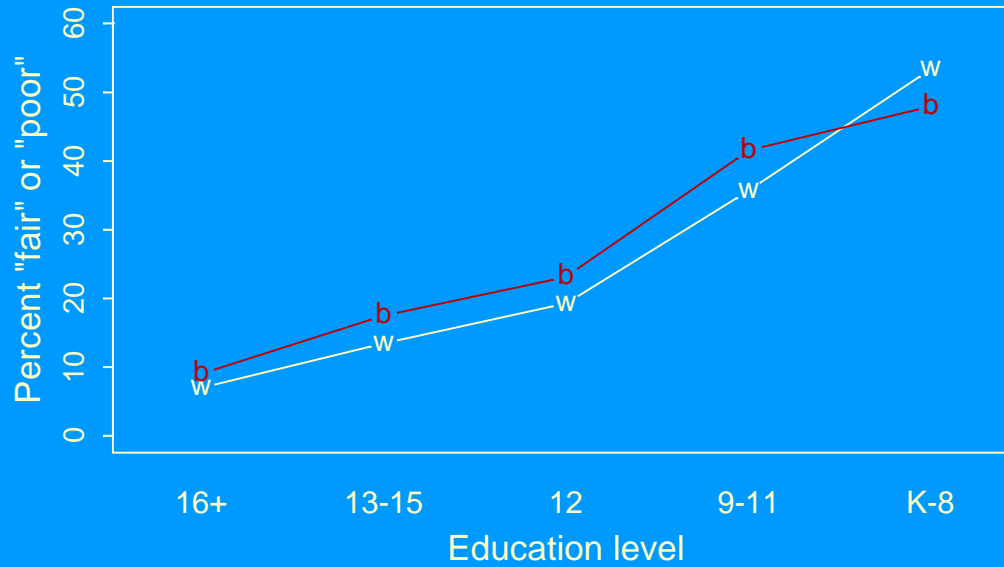
States using "Reactions to Race"

Arkansas			2004	
California	2002			
Colorado			2004	
Delaware	2002		2004	2005
District of Columbia			2004	
Florida	2002			
Mississippi			2004	
New Hampshire	2002			
New Mexico	2002			
North Carolina	2002			
Ohio		2003		2005
Rhode Island			2004	
South Carolina		2003	2004	
Wisconsin			2004	2005

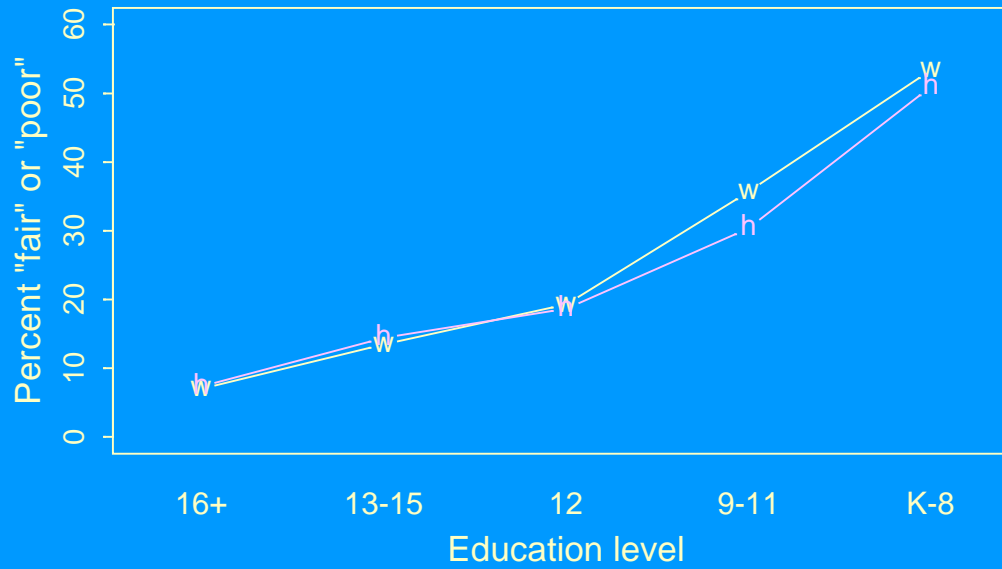
General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



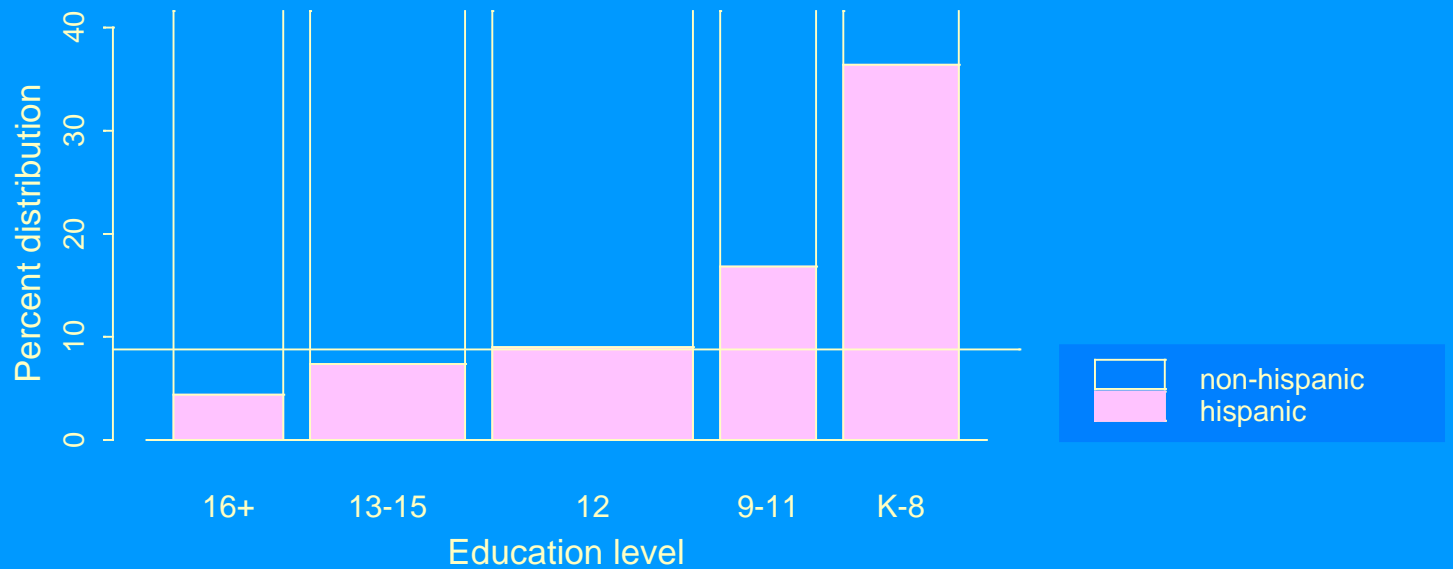
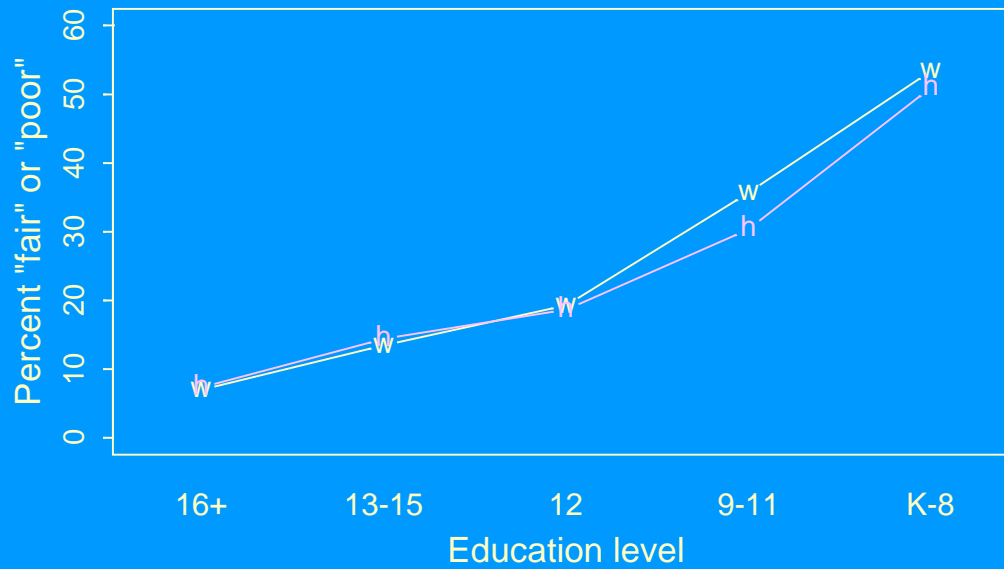
General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



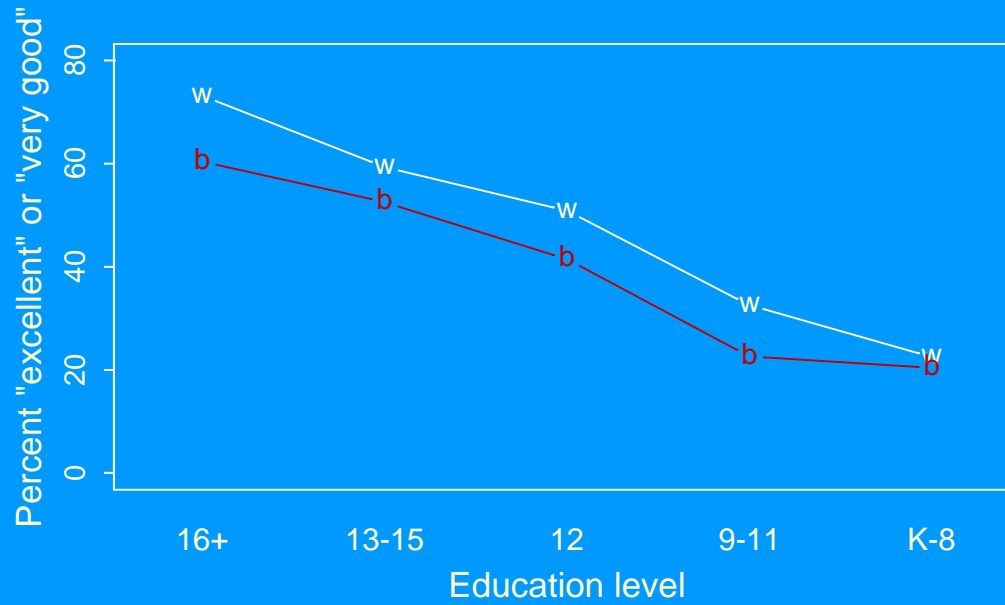
General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



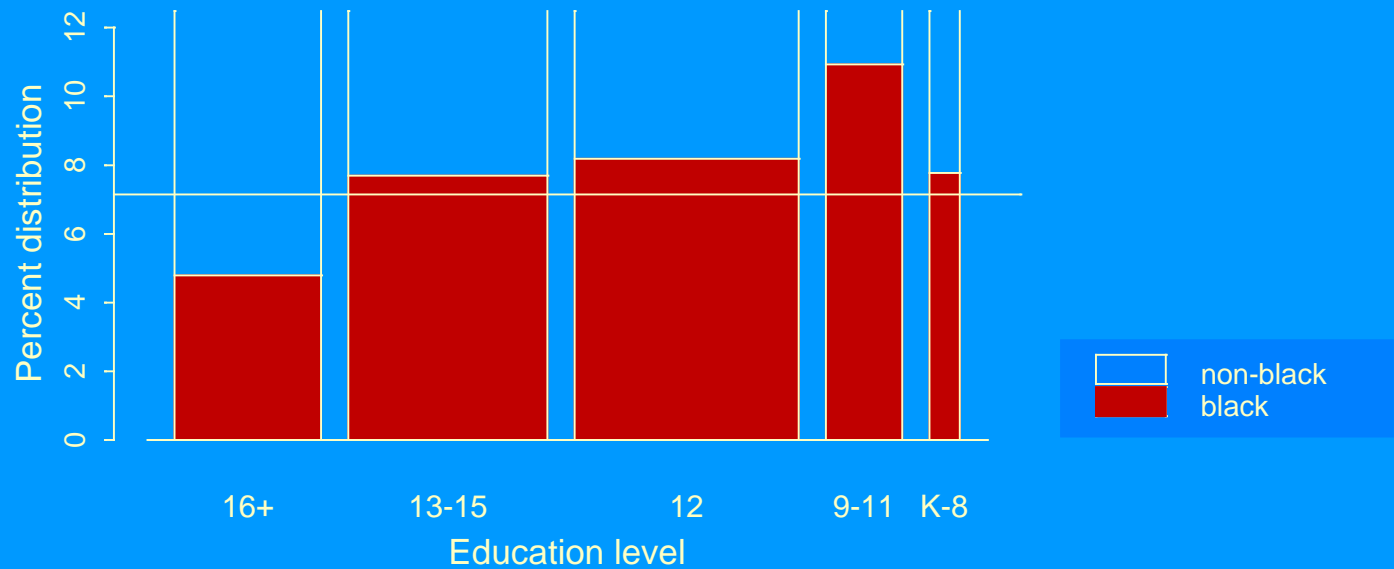
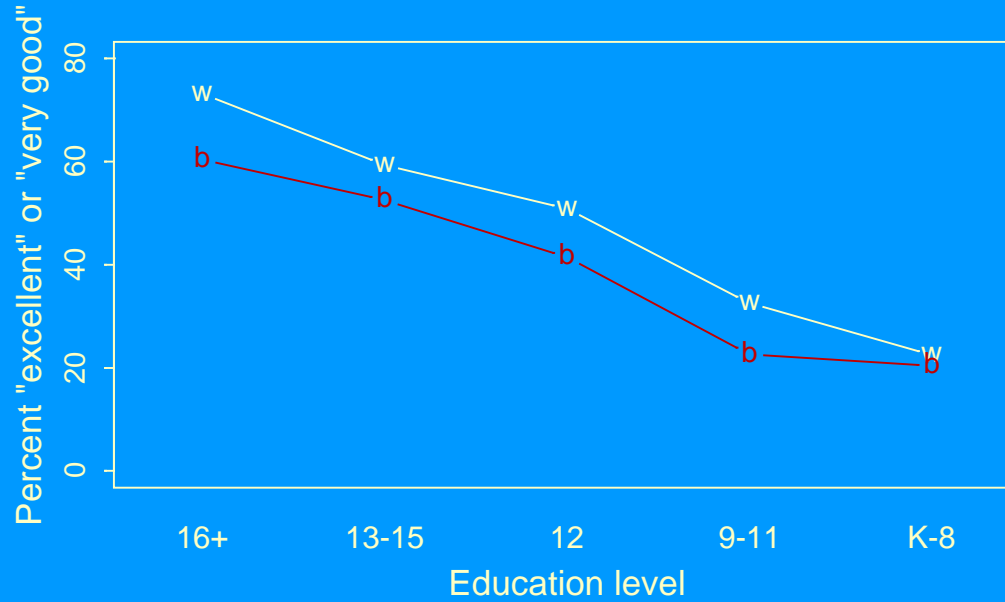
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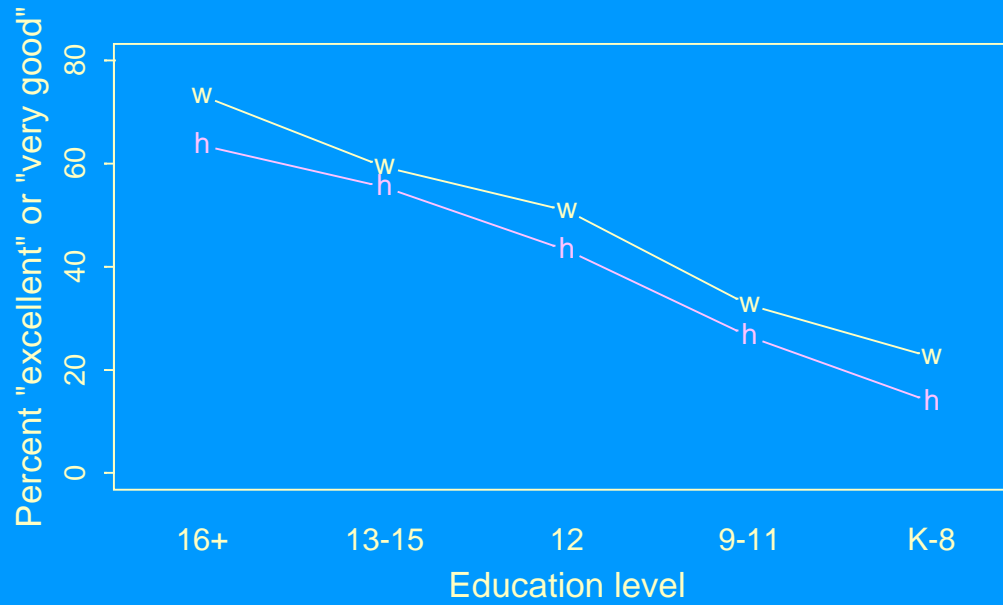
General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



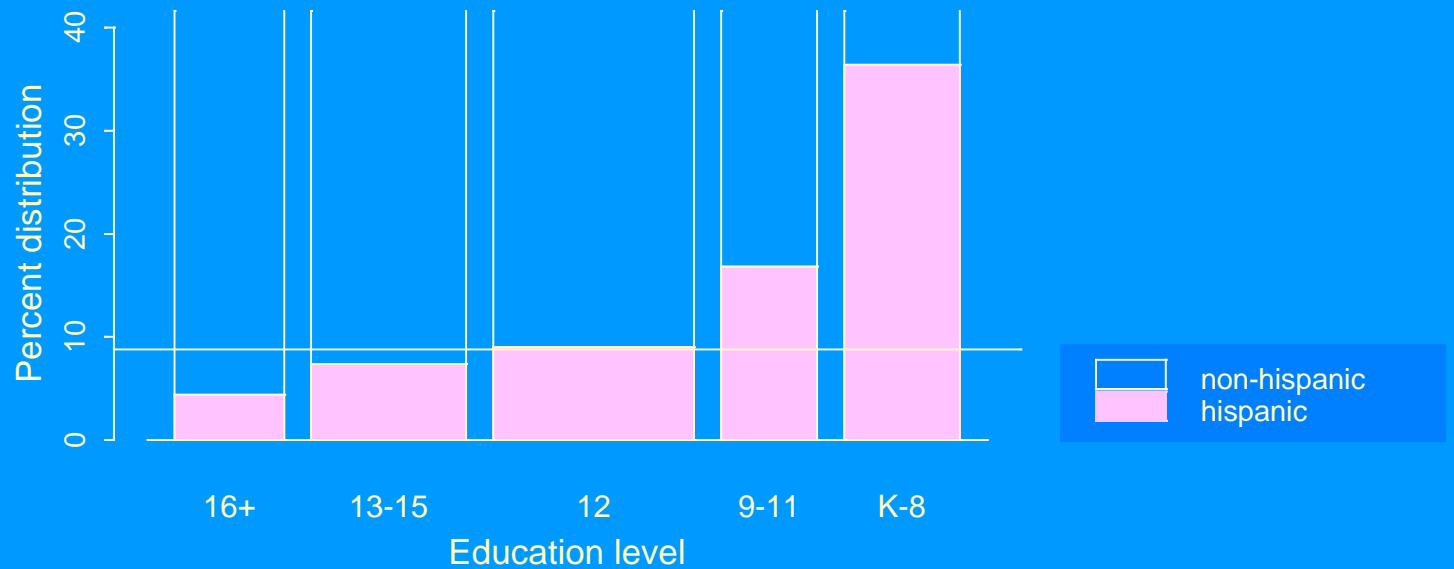
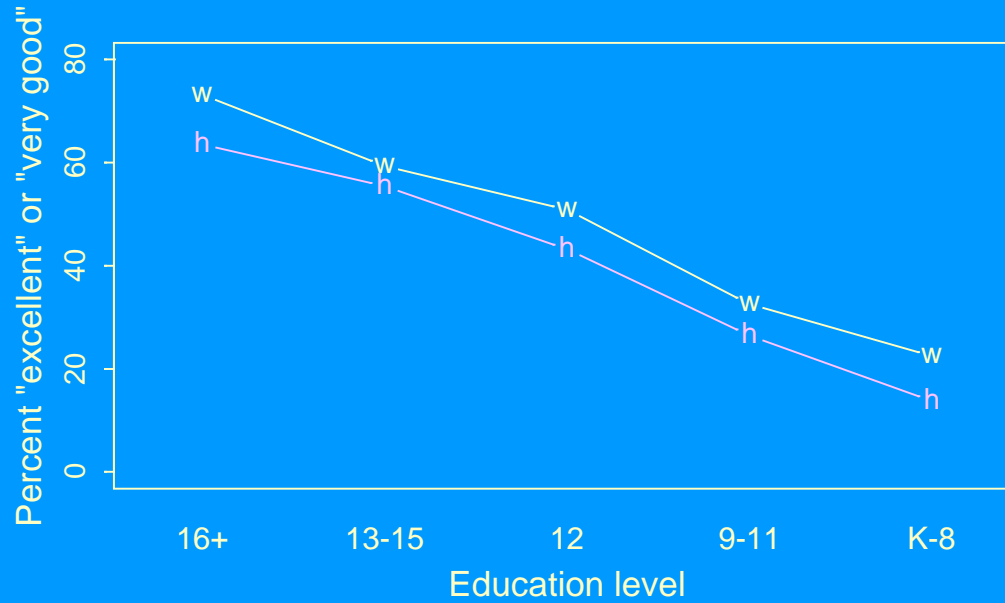
General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



General health status by education, 2002 BRFSS



Measuring institutionalized racism

- Scan for evidence of “racial” disparities
 - Routinely monitor outcomes by “race”
 - “Could racism be operating here?”
- Identify mechanisms
 - Examine structures and written policies
 - Query unwritten practices and norms
 - “How is racism operating here?”

Policies of interest

- Policies allowing segregation of resources and risks
- Policies creating inherited group-disadvantage
- Policies favoring the differential valuation of human life by “race”
- Policies limiting self-determination

Our tasks

- Put racism on the agenda
 - Name racism as a force determining the distribution of other social determinants of health
 - Routinely monitor for differential exposures, opportunities, and outcomes by “race”

Our tasks

- Ask, “How is racism operating here?”
 - Identify mechanisms in structures, policies, practices, and norms
 - Attend to both what exists and what is lacking

Our tasks

- Organize and strategize to act
 - Join in grassroots organizing around the conditions of people's lives
 - Identify the structural factors creating and perpetuating those conditions
 - Link with similar efforts across the country and around the world

Resources

Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale.

Am J Public Health 2000;90(8):1212-1215.

"Race", Racism, and the Practice of Epidemiology.

Am J Epidemiol 2001;154(4):299-304.

Confronting Institutionalized Racism.

Phylon 2003;50(1-2):7-22.

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