Abstract

To assess whether differences exist in experiences of discrimination, perceptions of physical attractiveness, socioeconomic position, and mental health according to student's skin color. Materials and Methods. The population included students from a public university in Mexico City. The following three groups were created based on skin color: white, light brown, and brown. By means of regression models, we evaluated whether differences in mental health according to skin color could be due to experiences of discrimination, perceptions of physical attractiveness, and/or socioeconomic position. Results. Students with brown skin had lower levels of self-esteem and vitality and higher levels of fatigue and alcohol consumption. These differences were explained by more frequent experiences of discrimination and because students with brown skin perceived themselves as less attractive. Conclusions. This is one of the first studies to document the possible effects of racism on mental health among the urban population. Verification of these findings in representative samples is required.

Keywords

Racism, mental health, discrimination, self concept, beauty, Mexico.