

POLICYLAB

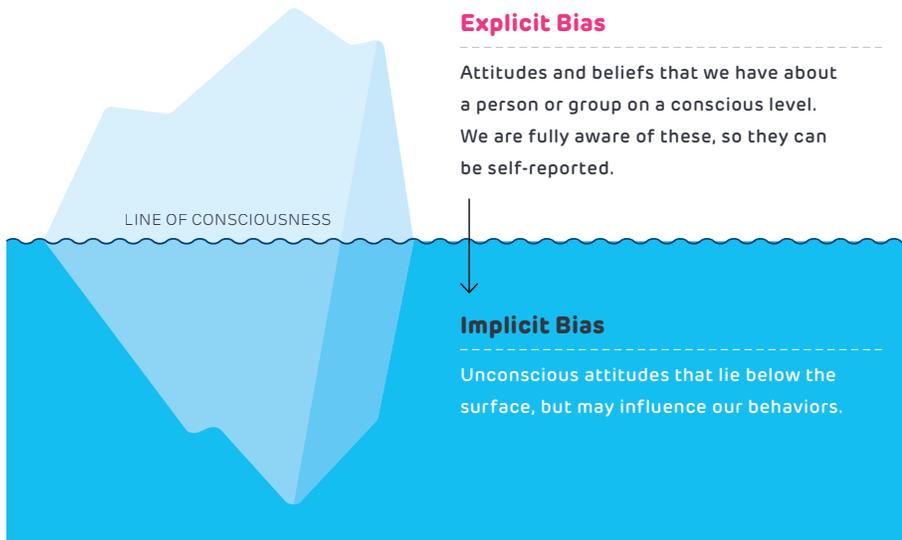
RESEARCH AT A GLANCE | SPRING 2017

A SYNOPSIS OF EMERGING POLICYLAB RESEARCH

EXAMINING PHYSICIAN IMPLICIT RACIAL BIAS AGAINST CHILDREN

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM:

Implicit bias refers to unconscious attitudes that lie below the surface, but may influence our behaviors.



In the clinical setting, implicit racial bias may impact:

- *Patient-provider communication*
- *Disparities in treatment*
- *Patient-family satisfaction with medical encounter*
- *Adherence to treatment recommendation*

Although it is widely understood that most physicians, similar to the general population, have implicit racial biases against black adults, no one has studied physician implicit racial bias towards black children. Investigating implicit bias against black children will help advance our understanding of factors that may contribute to child health inequities.

WHAT WE ASKED:

Do physicians working in a pediatric emergency department (ED) have less implicit racial bias against black children than they have against black adults?

Is there a difference in implicit racial bias based on the physician's own personal characteristics such as their race, gender, medical specialty or year of training?

WHAT WE DID:

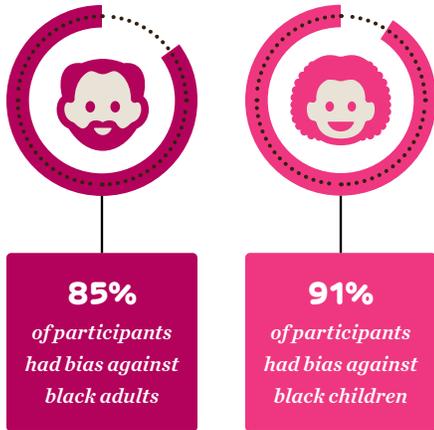
We administered both Child and Adult Race Implicit Association Tests (IATs) to 91 resident physicians in a large pediatric ED in western Pennsylvania. The Race IAT is a tool that requires the user to rapidly sort pictures of black and white faces with categories of pleasant or unpleasant words (i.e. wonderful or happy versus evil or horrible). Based on the responses and decision-making time, the test determines if the user has an automatic preference towards one race or another.

CHILD RACE IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TESTS (IATS)

Black								
White								
Good	Joy Love Wonderful Pleasure Laughter Happy							
Bad	Terrible Horrible Evil Awful Agony Hurt							

WHAT WE FOUND:

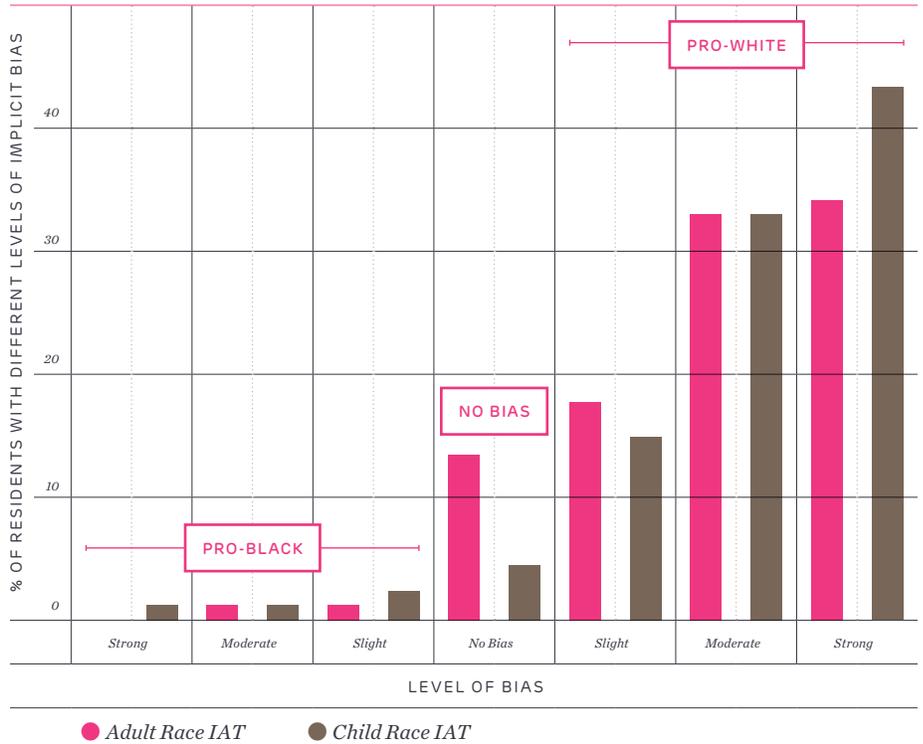
Most resident physicians in our study had pro-white/anti-black bias on both the Adult Race IAT and Child Race IAT, which reflects other research on implicit bias on the general population.



Neither Adult Race or Child Race IAT scores varied by resident personal characteristics. Pediatric residents in our study had similar implicit biases as resident physicians from other specialties (i.e. emergency medicine residents, family medicine residents).

Physicians in our study had similar scores on the Adult and Child Race IAT, indicating comparable levels of bias against black adults and black children.

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPLICIT BIAS TOWARDS ADULTS AND CHILDREN



WHAT IT MEANS:



STUDY METHODS

We used computer-based instruments to investigate the implicit racial bias of resident physicians working in a large urban pediatric emergency department (ED) in western Pennsylvania. This ED handles over 70,000 annual visits, of which 61.5% involve patients who are non-Hispanic white, 33.5% non-Hispanic black, 0.9% Asian and 0.6% Hispanic.

Residents completed electronic instruments assessing demographic characteristics and implicit racial bias using both the Adult and Child Race IATs. Residents self-reported their race, ethnicity, age, gender, specialty and training year.

We used linear models to analyze Adult Race, Child Race and Difference IAT Scores (calculated by subtracting Adult IAT scores from Child IAT scores). We also examined the association of demographic characteristics—such as race/ethnicity, age, gender, specialty and training year—with Adult, Child and Difference IAT scores using separate linear models.

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RELATED POLICYLAB WORK

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PUBLICATION

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The mission of PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is to achieve optimal child health and well-being by informing program and policy changes through interdisciplinary research. PolicyLab is a Center of Emphasis within the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute, one of the largest pediatric research institutes in the country.

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