Reviewer's report

Title: Perceived racial discrimination, response to unfair treatment, and coronary calcification in asymptomatic adults - the North Texas Healthy Heart Study

Version: 1 Date: 11 November 2009

Reviewer: Yin Paradies

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This is a well-written paper that adds an important finding to research on the health effects of racial discrimination. It has a few areas for improvement that should be addressed before publication.

Minor Essential Revisions

p. 5 The authors note that discrimination is ‘conceptually defined as a source of chronic stress. However, it has also been studied as an acute and lifetime stressor. See (Pascoe and Richman 2009) for details. This paper should be cited as the first meta-analysis in this area along with the following review: (Williams and Mohammed 2009)

p. 5 Reference (28) should be cited after this sentence: ‘However, investigations of racial discrimination and subclinical CVD are limited. The authors should also cite at this point (and perhaps others) the following relevant study: (Friedman et al. 2009)

p. 5 & p. 14: In addition to (14), there are other studies that support the distinction between active and passive coping which should be cited here. See (Williams and Mohammed 2009) and (Brondolo et al. 2009a)

p. 10 As noted in (33), you should refer to ‘self-reported discrimination’ rather than ‘perceived discrimination’ as because while self-reported experiences must be perceived, not all perceived experiences are necessarily reported, depending upon individuals’ willingness or ability to report them.

p. 11 The authors should provide a little more detail on how they examined interaction between key variables and also how they determined that there were no collinear relationships.

p. 11 A mediation analysis is not a ‘sensitivity analysis’ and should not be referred to as such. More detail on what criteria were used to determine mediation is required in the Methods.

p. 14 ‘those experiencing discrimination were approximately 3 times more likely to have CAC present’ When using logistic regression and hence odds ratios it is best to report that ‘the odds of having CAC present were approximately 3 times higher for those experiencing discrimination’ Given that about 30% of respondents reported discrimination, the odds ratios reported would differ
considerably from the equivalent relative risk.

Reference to discrimination as a stressor in the Introduction and Conclusion may benefit from reference to the following publication: (Brondolo et al. 2009b)


Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests