ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Health Discrimination and Perception of Individuals with Medical and Mental Needs
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ABSTRACT: Health discrimination, or the process of disadvantaging an individual based on a medical diagnosis and its associated stereotypes, is an increasing global problem. Like most forms of prejudice, this form of discrimination originates through the innate ability to make quick assumptions about other people. However, this process exacerbates stereotypes which hinder individuals' attempts to function independently. Prejudice from health is especially complex to study because each condition has different assumptions associated with it and each person is impacted differently by a diagnosis. While there is a significant amount of research about the retrogressive impacts on health discrimination, literature examining the origins of personal bias that triggers the phenomena is not as comprehensive. We decided to see if individuals displayed stereotypes after viewing media clips which portrayed negative perceptions of individuals with medical and mental needs. We tested this concept using three lower division psychology courses from a small liberal arts college. Each class saw a media clip which corresponded with three different health conditions: physical need, mental need, and a combination of physical and mental need. Data were obtained through surveys designed for each media a clip and analyzed to see if negative perceptions existed in participants.