

Exploring Subconscious Bias

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Abstract

Background: Implicit biases involve subconscious associations that lead to a negative evaluation of a person based on irrelevant characteristics such as race or gender. This audit of management of patients who missed appointments investigates the presence of implicit bias in our unit. Methods: We retrospectively analysed discharge rates in 285 patients who missed an outpatient appointment between from 1/4/2020 at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital. 285 patients were categorised into predefined ethnic categories: White British (WB) vs Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) vs Other White (OW) after reading the patient's names. In the same fashion, we also assigned gender. Results: We did not find differences in discharge rates among self-reported ethnic and gender groups. Patients with WB sounding names were more likely to be discharged when compared to patients with BAME sounding names (35% vs 58%). Discharge rates between males and females did not differ. Conclusion: Our results suggest that implicit bias may play a role in decision-making whether to rebook a patient after missing an appointment.

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