Examining Physician Implicit Racial Bias Against Children

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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 and adherence to treatment recommendations. 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.

In this PolicyLab *Research at a Glance* brief, Dr. Tiffani Johnson studied whether pediatric residents working in an emergency department have less implicit racial bias against black children than adults. She also studied whether there was any difference in implicit racial bias based on the physicians' characteristics such as race, gender and medical specialty. Investigating implicit bias against black children will help advance our understanding of factors that may contribute to child health inequities and ultimately help combat them.

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