

Self-perceived Discrimination in Foreign-born Workers in Spain

Andrés A. Agudelo-Suárez^{1, 2, 3}, Elena Ronda-Pérez², Diana Gil-González², Carmen Vives-Cases^{2, 4}, Juan Gómez-Salgado⁵, Ana M. García^{6, 7}, Emily Felt³, Fernando G. Benavides^{3, 4}.

¹ Faculty of Dentistry- University of Antioquia. Medellin, Colombia

² Preventive Medicine and Public Health Area. University of Alicante, Spain.

³ Centre for Research in Occupational Health. Pompeu Fabra University. Barcelona, Spain.

⁴ CIBER of Epidemiology and Public Health (CIBERESP), Spain.

⁵ Environmental Biology and Public Health Department. University of Huelva, Spain.

⁶ Preventive Medicine and Public Health Department. University of Valencia, Spain

⁷ Trade Union Institute for Work, Environment and Health (ISTAS), Spain.

Background: Discrimination has been considered by international organisations as a strong determinant of health inequalities. Immigrants constitute a population that is especially vulnerable to various types of discrimination. This study aims to explore the relationship between an immigrant's country of origin and self-perceived discrimination.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey (n=2,350) was conducted amongst a non-random sample of workers (43% women- 78% immigrants), born in Spain (SP) and foreign-born (FB) from Ecuador, Morocco, Romania and Colombia, living in four Spanish cities: Barcelona, Huelva, Madrid and Valencia (2008-2009). The survey examined the demographic, working and health conditions of participants. Self-perceived discrimination was determined by answers to the question: "Have you ever felt discriminated?" (Yes/No) with 9 non-exclusive alternatives of response: when looking for a job, on the street (in public spaces), by the boss, by workmates, by public and private institutions, at the workplace, due to modes of dress, because of sex/gender, and on the basis of physical appearance or skin colour. Association between country of origin and self-perceived discrimination were established by means of odds ratios (OR; 95%CI).

Results: In all areas the prevalence of foreign-born workers reporting discrimination was higher than in autochthonous workers. Immigrants were more likely to report feeling discriminated due to physical appearance (OR 11.71 95%CI 6.74-18.63); on the street (OR 6.52 95%CI 4.92- 8.63),

and when looking for a job (OR 4.12 95%CI 3.25-5.22). In case of discrimination by gender or sex no significant association was found (OR 1.19 95%CI 0.85-1.66).

Conclusion: Immigrant workers seem to feel more discriminated in various settings than their Spanish counterparts, and further study is needed to determine the relationship between this discrimination and disparities in occupational health indicators in the host society.