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An Exploration of Student Backgrounds and Mood

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Background

- People within the minority populations displayed higher levels of depression rates compared to people within the white populations (Dunlop et al., 2003).
- Low incomes have shown higher rates of depressive symptoms for individuals in low socioeconomic backgrounds (Nomoto et al., 2015).
- Previous natural disasters have led to higher depression rates. This is presented in Hurricane Katrina and the AIDS pandemic (Davis et al., 2010).
- The global pandemic shows depression rates among low social class and minority backgrounds (Jones et al., 2011).

Research Question

Q1: Do people of minority backgrounds have higher rates of depression compared to people who are white?

H1: Participants who come from minority backgrounds will have a higher score on the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety and Stress Survey) compared to participants who are white.

Q2: Do people of lower socioeconomic backgrounds have higher rates of depression compared to people of higher socioeconomic backgrounds?

H2: Students who come from a lower social class will have a higher score on the DASS-21 compared to students who come from a higher social class during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

Participants

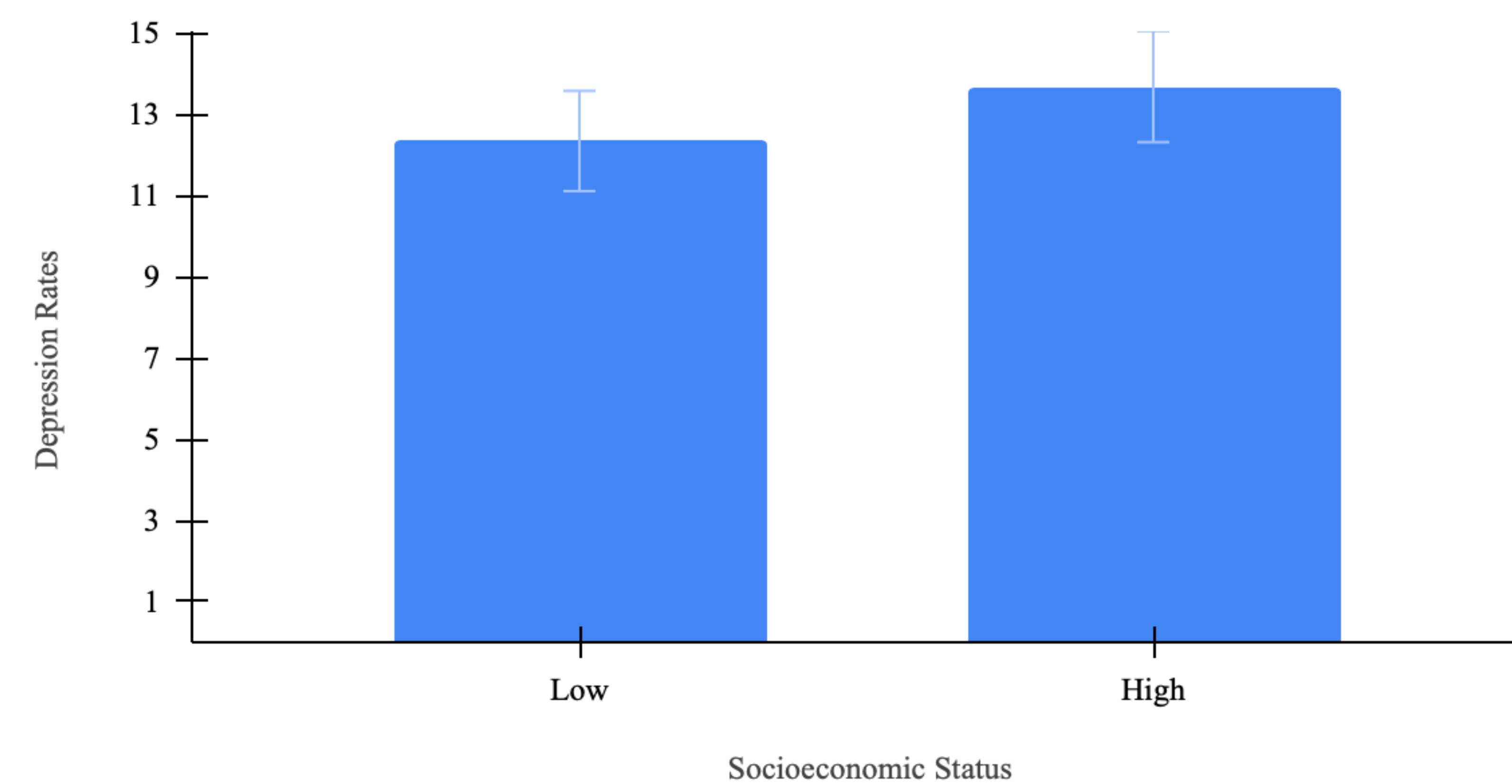
- Eighty-one undergraduate Longwood students voluntarily signed up through Sona Systems and participated in the study for extra credit in their class

Materials & Procedure

- Survey was made through Google Forms and administered on Sona Systems
- First section was a self-evaluation on depression
- Second section was a self-evaluation of socioeconomic class
- At the end, there was a few demographic questions
- Participants were debriefed about the nature of our study

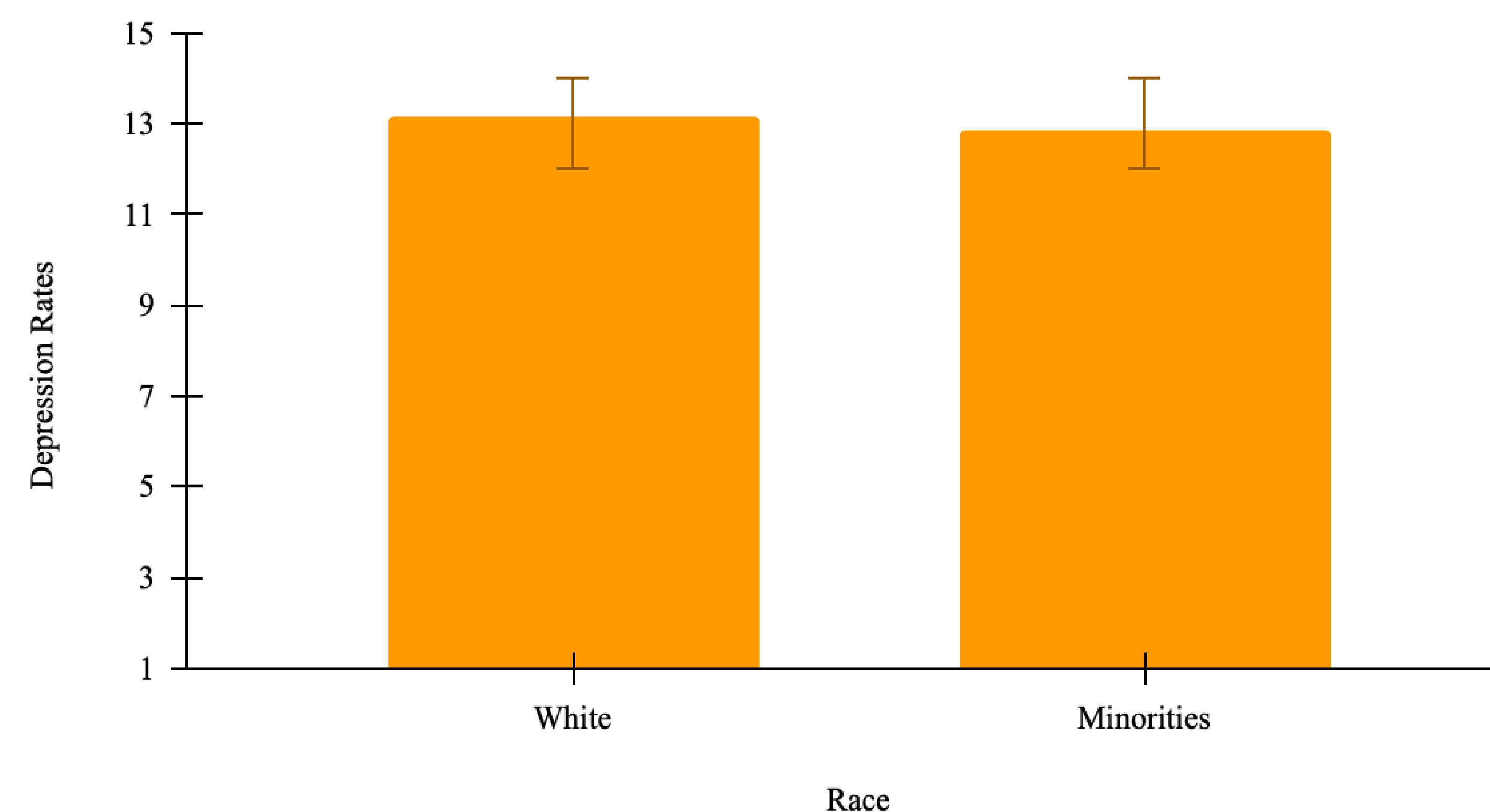
Results

Figure 1
Depression Rates Among Different Socioeconomic Status



Note. This figure demonstrates that participants with higher socioeconomic status had slightly higher rates of depression than participants in a lower socioeconomic status.

Figure 2
Depression Rates Among Different Races



Note. This figure demonstrates that participants who are white had relatively the same depression rates as participants in minority backgrounds.

Results Cont.

- Non-significant main effect of Socioeconomic background, $F(1,77) = .582, p = .448$
- Non-significant main effect of Race, $F(1,77) = .026, p = .873$

Discussion

- Results suggest students from minority backgrounds did not display a higher score on the DASS-21
- Students from lower social class did not display a higher score on the DASS-21 compared to students of a higher social class
- Previous research does not support the hypotheses

Limitations

- Lack of diversity within the Longwood student population
- Participants not answering the questions honestly
- Participants possibly unaware of how much their parents make

Future Directions

- Not limit to only university students
- Carry out the study in an area with a wide variety of diversity

References

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