

# LINKS BETWEEN DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION IN AFRICAN AMERICAN COUPLES

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# Background

- Bidirectional associations between depression and relationship satisfaction for self and partner (e.g. Davila, Bradbury, Cohan, & Tochluk, 1997; Whisman & Uebelacker, 2009)

- *associations for African American (AA) couples?*
- *role of experiences of discrimination?*

# Current Study

Use longitudinal, dyadic approach to:

- *examine depressive symptoms-marital satisfaction link among AA couples*
- *explore moderation by discrimination*

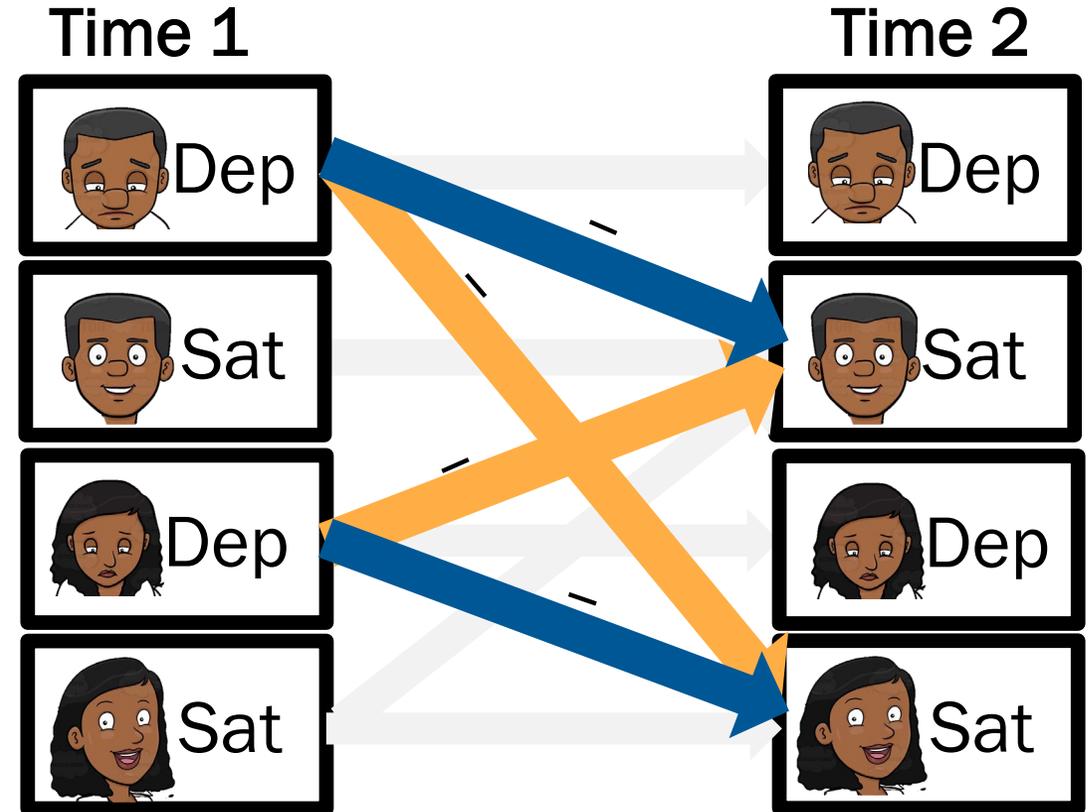
# Method

- Data: 168 married or cohabitating heterosexual, AA couples over one-year span (McHale et al., 2006)
- Data Analysis: autoregressive cross-lagged model using Actor-Partner Interdependence Model within Structural Equation Modeling framework
  - *main effects model*
  - *moderation by discrimination*

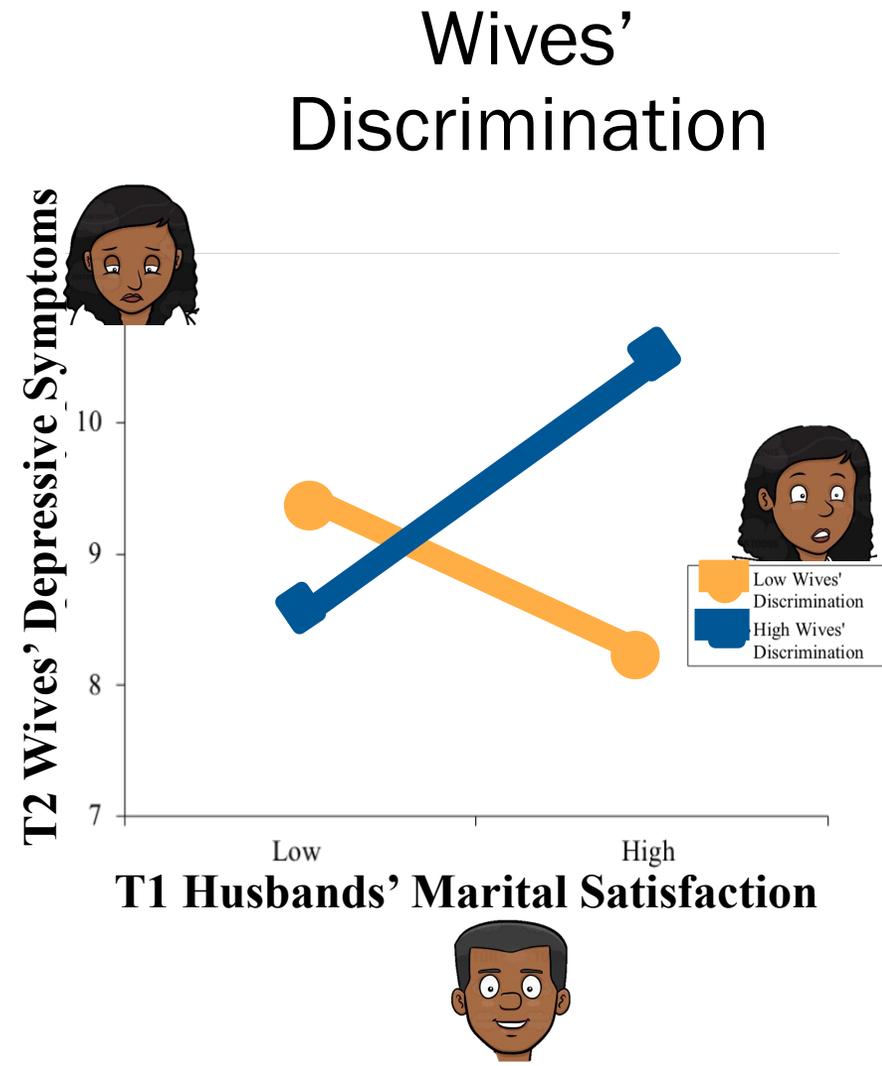
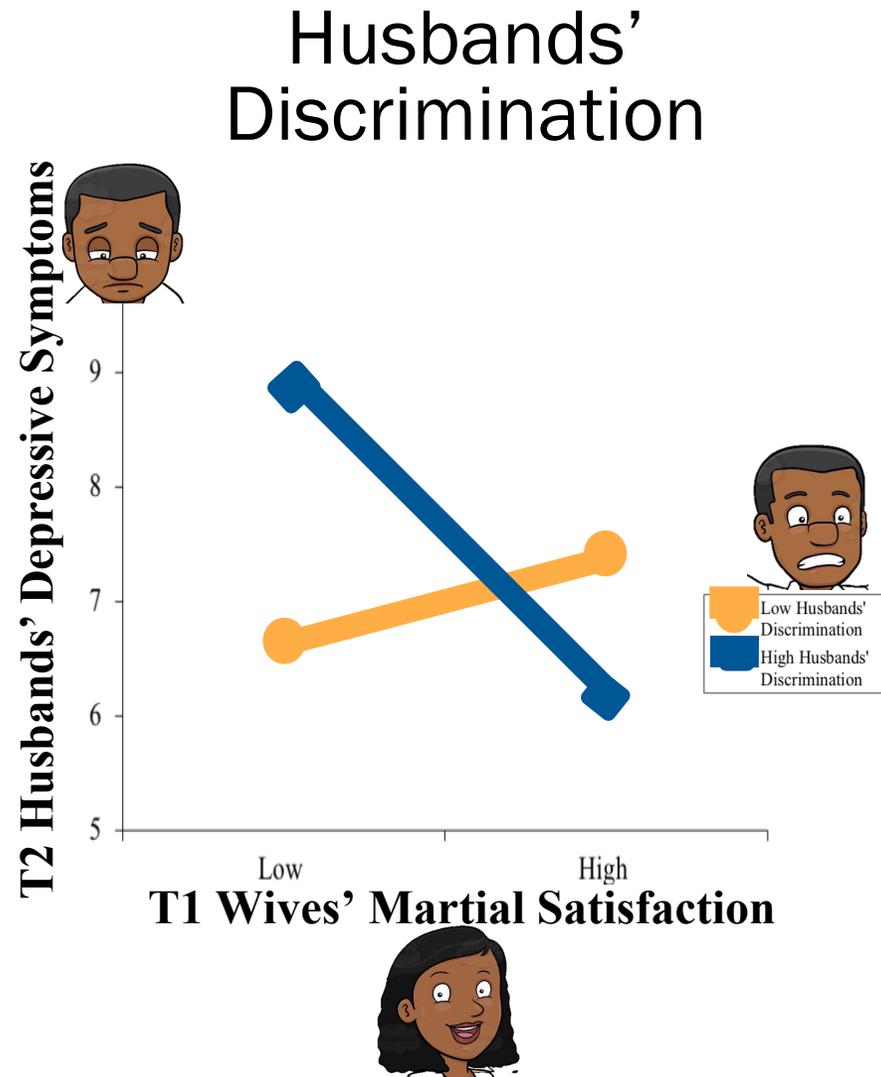
# Results

For both husbands and wives:

- Depressive symptoms prospectively predicted lower satisfaction for both self and partner
- Satisfaction did not predict depressive symptoms



# Results: Moderation by Discrimination



# Summary

- Depressive symptoms → Lower satisfaction
  - *consistent with interpersonal theories of depression* (Coyne, 1976; Hammen, 2006)
- In presence of discrimination, effect of satisfaction on depressive symptoms differs by gender
  - *consistent with Black Superwoman schema and tend-and-befriend theory* (Woods-Giscombé, 2010; Taylor et al., 2001)
  - *greater research on discrimination and gender dynamics in AA couples*

# Questions for Discussion

- What are the possible mechanisms through which depressive symptoms impact the couple relationship, and which are particularly relevant for AA couples?
- How can we best adopt an intersectional perspective when studying the effects of racial trauma for AA couples?