The Re-emergence of Yellow Peril:

Beliefs in the Asian health hazard stereotype predict lower psychological well-being

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China is to blame because they’re the culture where people eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that.
Yellow Peril
On-point political cartoon of *Asian health hazard* themes:
Research Questions

1. What do East/Southeast Asians in North America think? Do they believe society thinks of them as “health hazards”?

2. What are the psychological implications of belief in Asian health hazard perceptions?

3. Are there cultural differences between those from the United States vs. Canada?

Lo, Padgett, Cila, Sasaki, & Lalonde (2022)
Participants

- Preregistered
- N = 703 East/Southeast Asians
- Qualtrics Panels: May 28th – June 25th 2020
- Born in US/Canada or arrived before 7 years

Histogram of Age

Map showing distribution by state:
- 24% California
- 39% New York
- 54% Ontario
- 13% Alberta
- 11% British Columbia
- 6% Hawaiʻi
Daily new confirmed cases per million people*

* Seven-day rolling average

SOURCE: OUR WORLD IN DATA

GIGI SUHANIC / NATIONAL POST
Asian Health Hazard Stereotype Scale  $\alpha = .94$

Many Americans/Canadians think that …

... East Asians tend to have unsanitary food practices
... the foods East Asians prepare are often unsafe to eat

... most East Asians will eat just about any animal
... East Asians have no issues eating exotic animals
... dangerous diseases have often come from East Asians eating exotic animals

... East Asians are mostly to blame for the international spreading of several diseases
... East Asians have a history of spreading disease internationally
... East Asians should be considered a high-risk group to their society because they bring over diseases
Outcomes and Covariates

- **Satisfaction with Life Scale** – 3 items ($\alpha = .91$)
- **Brief Symptoms Inventory–18** ($\alpha = .95$)

- Essential job
- Living with dependents
- Income loss

Diener et al., 1985; Derogatis, 2001; Torres-Harding et al., 2012
Distribution of Asian Health Hazard Mean Composite Scores

Mean Composite for Asian Health Hazard Stereotype Scale (1-7)

n = 211

n = 38

n = 454

Frequency
No differences between American and Canadians.
No differences between Chinese and non-Chinese.

Life Satisfaction

Asian Health Hazard Stereotype

Essential Jobs
Dependents
Income Loss

Distress

$p < .05$

ns
“I have heard from others around me that they think asians tend to have unsanitary practices”

“People making the assumption that just because I am ethnically Chinese, I must eat all sorts of exotic animals like bats and snakes (I don't). Even friends of mine have teased me that I must eat dogs (I don't), since *some* people in China (not all!) eat dogs and cats.”

“I know you might not view this as anything but it feels like it to me. It's been a long time since I've experienced something like this but this moment felt like yellow peril?”
Psychological well-being

Mental health symptoms
Awareness of the Asian health hazard stereotype may have unique negative psychological effects on East/Southeast Asian Americans and Canadians.
Thank you!

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Lo et al. (2022) at
Asian American Journal of Psychology