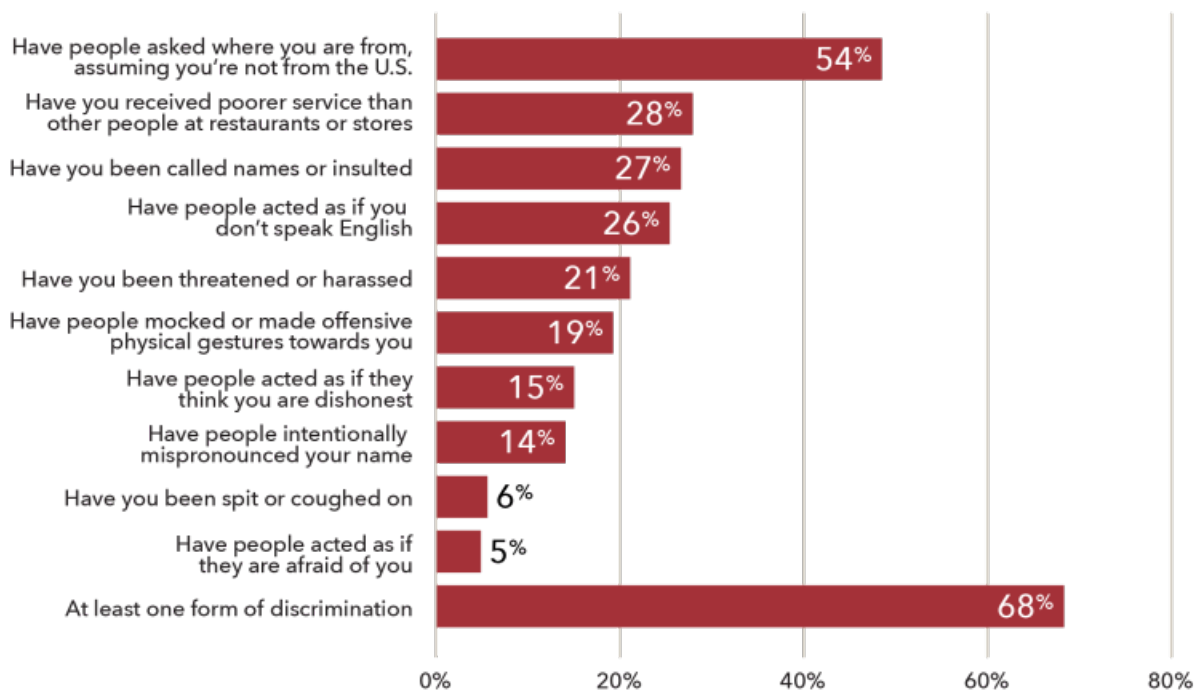


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By Don Sapatkin

Chinese Americans say discrimination is taking a toll on their mental health

When Asian Americans became targets of discrimination and violent hate crimes during the pandemic, governments and civic organizations made concerted efforts to tamp down the ugliness. The issue has since fallen off the national radar screen, but the bias, particularly against Chinese people, has not – and it has taken a toll on the mental health of the roughly 5 million Chinese Americans living in the U.S., [according to a new survey report](#).



Source: The State of Chinese Americans

Many factors are contributing to the hostile atmosphere reported by those surveyed: deteriorating relations with China, increasing negative mentions of the country by politicians, legislation in multiple states barring Chinese citizens from purchasing land, and highly publicized demands by politicians of both parties to ban the social media platform TikTok unless its Chinese-owned parent company divests it.

Plenty of independent research links discrimination and stigma to stress and higher risk of mental

health problems. The new report bears this out: Half of the Chinese Americans surveyed said they felt hopeless in the 30 days before taking the survey, 43% reported they felt depressed to the extent that nothing could cheer them up, and 39% said they have felt worthless. Mental wellness struggles were especially pronounced among younger people, women, and those who reported regularly facing racial discrimination.

The survey, released by the Committee of 100, a nonprofit group of Chinese American leaders, and the research organization NORC at the University of Chicago, sampled 504 Chinese American adults, roughly three-quarters of whom were born outside the U.S. (and the vast majority of whom are now citizens). In March, when the survey was conducted, more than 80% said they were at least a little concerned about the language used by presidential candidates when talking about China and U.S.-China relations, and 61% say that the U.S. news media's reporting on those topics negatively affects how strangers treat them.

In addition, 68% said they experience at least one form of discrimination in an average month, 27% say they are verbally abused and 21% say they are threatened or harassed. The report recommended greater investment in mental health services and resources for Chinese American communities. [Federal data](#) from 2018 showed that Asian Americans as a whole were 60% less likely to seek mental health services than other racial groups.