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Studying the Effects of Race on the Duration of Child Mentoring Matches

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Purpose of the Study



Background: Mentoring is commonly used as a formal intervention for vulnerable populations of children. Several factors are considered when forming matches, but there is little agreement on what factors need to be most considered. Racial identity is one factor of matches that has been researched with varied results.

Research Question: Is there a difference in the longevity of child/adult mentoring matches who identify as the same race and pairs who identify as different races.

Methodology

- Secondary data analysis of a random sample of 100 case files from a local mentoring agency
- From the random sample, 37 mentoring pairs were matched race and 63 mentoring pairs were non-matched race
- Survival analysis was completed to compare the duration (in days) of mentoring matches for same race and cross race pairs

Conclusions

- At this particular agency, race does not serve as a predictor for the duration of matches.
- More research needs to be done to evaluate what considerations should be taken when creating mentoring pairs.



Limitations

- The confidence intervals are wide indicating less precision. This is a result of low power from a sample size that is small.
- The analysis does not consider other variables that may affect the length of matches including: gender, age of mentors and mentees, the number of hours the pair meet monthly, major life changes of the participants, etc.
- To protect the anonymity of participants, the study does not indicate individual race, only if participants identify as the same race. This prevents the study from being able to identify any differences in matches with children with racial minority identities.
- Duration of the match is not the only way to measure the success and impact of the match.

Results

Table One

Case Processing Summary

matched race	Total N	N of Events	Censored	
			N	Percent
0	37	35	2	5.4%
1	63	59	4	6.3%
Overall	100	94	6	6.0%

In Table One, 0 indicates a same race pair and 1 indicates a mixed race pair. "N of Events" indicates the number of matches that have been completed, while "censored indicates an ongoing match.

Table Two

Means and Medians for Survival Time

matched race	Mean ^a				Median			
	Estimate	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Estimate	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0	743.274	114.254	519.337	967.211	471.000	88.675	297.198	644.802
1	883.497	113.158	661.707	1105.286	581.000	64.624	374.337	627.663
Overall	837.678	84.365	672.322	1003.034	473.000	57.800	361.280	584.720

The results in Table 3 show no significant overall difference in the number of days matched between the two groups. As can be seen in the graph, both groups of matches have similar durations.

Figure One

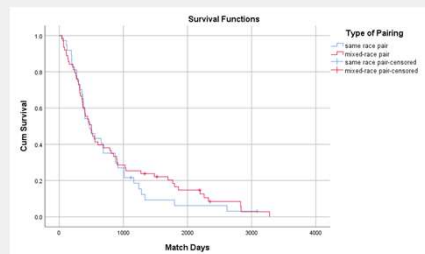


Table Two indicates that there is a 30 day difference in the length of matches for same race pairs (0) and mixed-race pairs (1). The 95% Confidence Intervals are each almost 300 days wide and overlap.

Table Three

Overall Comparisons

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Log Rank (Mantel-Cox)	.326	1	.568

Test of equality of survival distributions for the different levels of matched race.

Implications for Practice/Research



Children from various types of vulnerable populations can benefit from having consistent adult mentors in their lives. It is important that research stays up-to-date and informs the matching process to promote consistent and supportive relationships and environments.

- The results showed the difference was not significant. Considering limitations of the study, more literature should be reviewed. Mentoring agencies should take child and caregiver wishes into account.
- Further research should investigate how factors like age, racism, motivations for mentoring, training, and hours spent together affect the duration of the match.