

Nothing about us without us: Including disability in psychological science

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COMMENT

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Increasing disability inclusion through self-relevant research

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- Stigma against conducting self-relevant research (Devendorf et al., 2023)
- Self-relevant research is actually common in psychology
 - WEIRDA researchers study WEIRDA samples
- But we only call it “me-search” when it is done by minorities
- Self-relevant research can promote the inclusion of minoritized researchers and build valid and representative research

Positionality statement

- Disabled, White, straight cisgender woman
 - Moebius syndrome
 - Having a unique manner of communication led me to psychology

What is disability?

- *Disability* = Physical or mental impairments X social barriers (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)
- Disability is broader than you think
 - Stereotypical disabilities
 - Wheelchair use, blindness...
 - Also disabilities...
 - Invisible disorders, communication disorders, facial differences



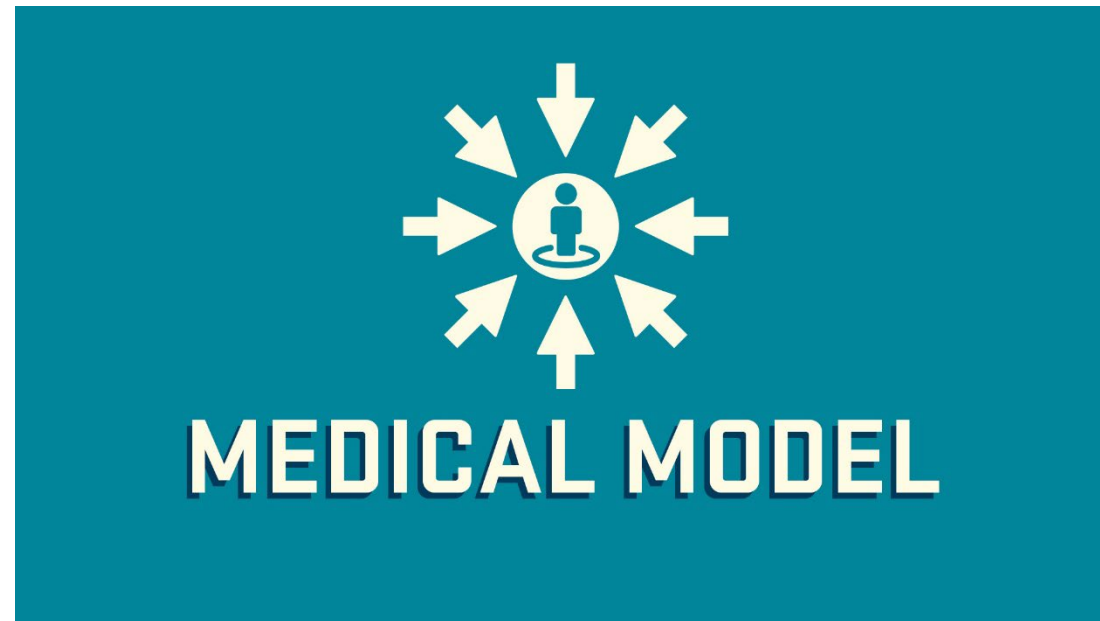
A forgotten minority

- Largest minority group in US
 - 19% of population (Brault, 2012)
- Intersects with all other identities
- Only minority group you can be born into or join at any time



Medical model

- Involves a dysfunction, abnormality, or pathology in the *individual*
- Responsibility of individuals, family, and healthcare professionals



Social model

- Society causes disability, and the “problem” lies in society, not the individual
- Social and physical architecture built on the assumption that everyone can walk, hear, and see



Disability representation in higher education

BRIEF REPORT

Disability Models and Attitudes Among College Students With and Without Disabilities

Kathleen R. Bogart, Samuel W. Logan, Christina Hospodar, and Erica Woekel
Oregon State University

- 11% of undergrads are disabled (National Council on Disability, 2015)
 - Underrepresented but still a substantial minority
- Disabled undergrads 16% less likely than nondisabled undergrads to complete degree (National Council on Disability, 2015)
- Students' disability attitudes create a culture of inclusion or exclusion for students with disabilities (Fleming et al., 2017)

Do disabled and nondisabled students have different model beliefs?

- Actor-observer bias
 - Actors (disabled people) make external attributions
 - Likely to see environmental barriers
 - Observers (nondisabled people) make internal attributions
 - Likely to attribute the cause of problems to a disabled person rather than their environment (Dunn, 2010)



MEDICAL MODEL



SOCIAL MODEL

Hypotheses

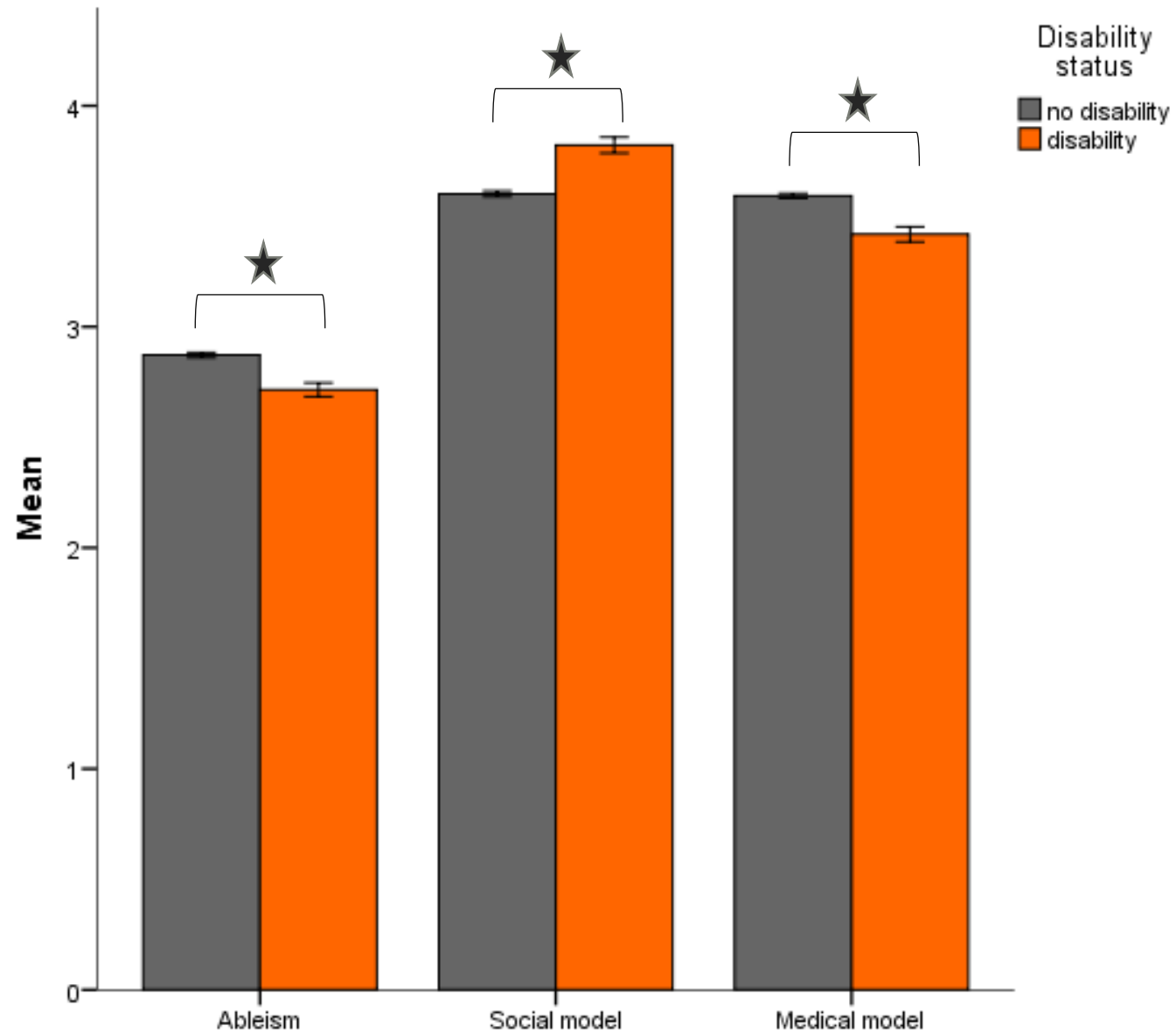
- Disabled students will have less ableist and medical model beliefs and stronger social model beliefs than nondisabled students
- Model beliefs will mediate differences in ableism between disabled and nondisabled students

Bogart, K. R., Logan, S. W., & Hospodar, C., & Woekel, E. (2019). Disability models and attitudes among college students with and without disabilities. *Stigma and Health*, 4(3), 260–263.

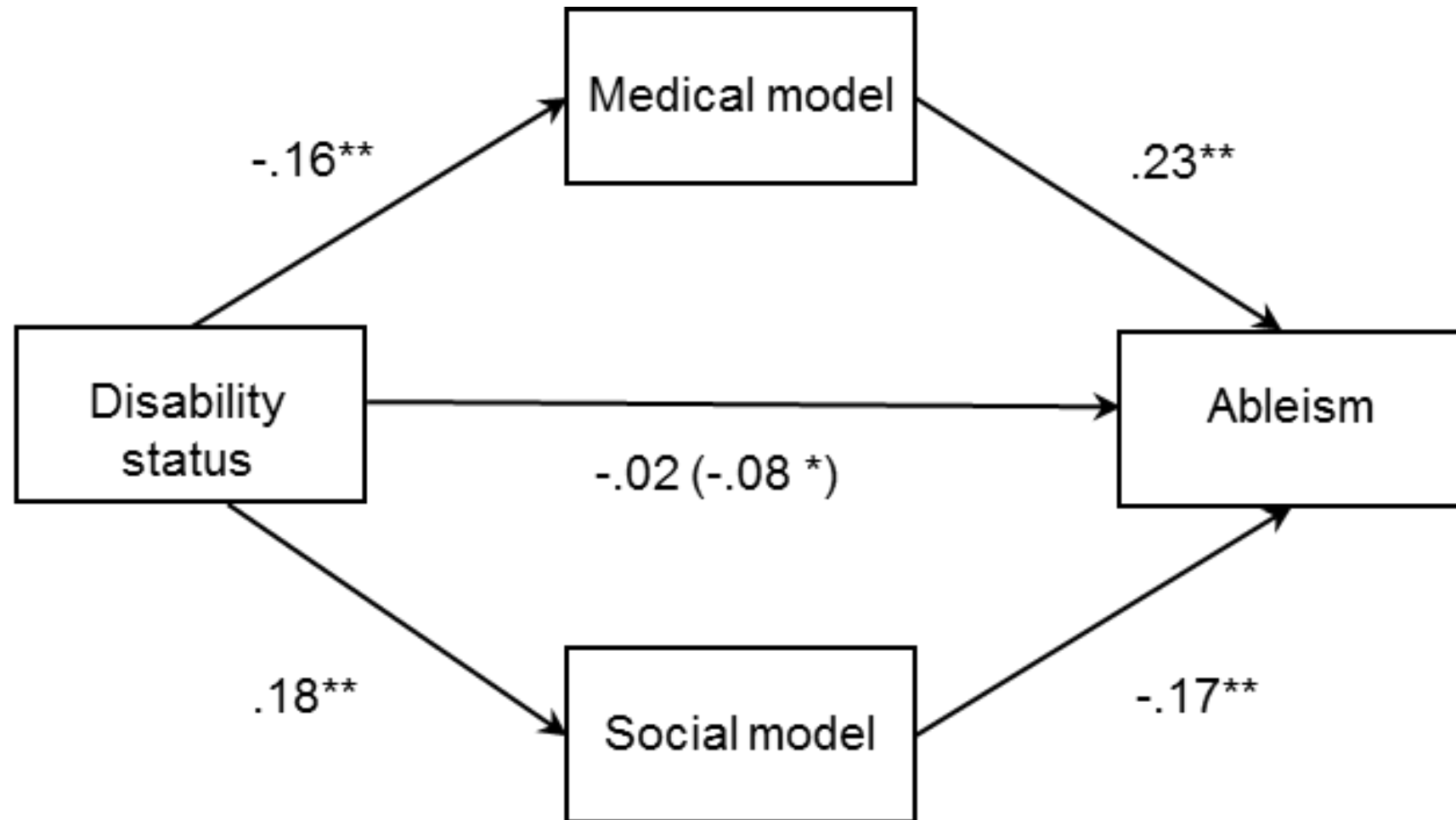
Method

- Convenience sample of a required undergrad OSU course
 - 1,762 participants (215 with and 1,548 without disabilities; 54% female; 80% White)
 - Survey measures
 - Ableism: Attitudes Toward Disabled People Scale (ATDP; Yuker et al., 1970)
 - E.g. "Disabled people do not usually make much of a contribution to society"
 - Social and Medical Model scales (Darling, 2013)
 - E.g. "All buildings should be accessible to people with disabilities"
"People should try to overcome their disabilities"

Results



Mediational model



Discussion

- Students with disabilities hold stronger social model, weaker medical model, and less ableist beliefs than those without disabilities
- Medical and social model beliefs mediated the differences in ableism between students with and without disabilities
- Cultural mismatch in disability models and attitudes
 - Social model representation might help

Bogart, K. R., Logan, S. W., & Hospodar, C., & Woekel, E. (2019). Disability models and attitudes among college students with and without disabilities. *Stigma and Health*, 4(3), 260–263.

Teaching About Disability in Psychology: An Analysis of Disability Curricula in U.S. Undergraduate Psychology Programs

Teaching of Psychology
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top.sagepub.com


Nicole M. Rosa¹, Kathleen R. Bogart², Amy K. Bonnett²,
Mariah C. Estill², and Cassandra E. Colton²

- 98 “Top Undergraduate Institutions” according to U.S. News and World Report 2013
- Content analysis of course catalog descriptions of undergraduate psychology classes
 - 3 coders rated number of disability-related courses (Krippendorff’s $\alpha = .66-.90$) and social ($\alpha = .86$) and medical model ($\alpha = .76$) content



Universities offering a disability course by category

	Total ($n = 98$)	Percentage
Psychiatric	98	100
Cognitive	72	73
Other	29	30
Chronic	33	34
Intellectual	19	19
Sensory	18	18
Physical	8	8

Results

- Courses contained significantly more medical model ($M = 3.38, SD = 1.19$) than social model content ($M = 1.70, SD = 1.04$), $t(681) = 23.04, p < .001, d = 1.50$

Rosa, N., Bogart, K. R., Bonnett, A. K., Estill, M. C., & Colton, C. E., (2016). Teaching about disability in psychology: An analysis of disability curricula in U.S. undergraduate psychology programs. *Teaching of Psychology*, 43 (1), 59-62.

Discussion

- Disability topics are underrepresented in psychology undergrad curricula, and when they are covered, it is predominantly from a medical model perspective
 - Surprising because social psychology focuses on social construction of other minority groups
- Only 2% of psychology faculty at APA-accredited programs reported a disability (Andrews & Lund, 2015)
- Intro psych textbooks have limited and stereotypical disability portrayals (Goldstein et al., 2009)

Resisting ableism

Resisting ableism

Barriers

- Solo status
- Most disabilities are invisible and many choose not to disclose
- Leaky pipeline
 - Missing role models, lived experience expertise

Facilitators

- Social model encourages cross-disability solidarity
- “Coming out”
 - Increases visibility, representation, social support
- Include disability in diversity initiatives

Resources

- Disability Advocacy and Research Network (DARN)
 - A community for psychologists and students who have and/or specialize in disability
 - [Darndisability.org](https://darndisability.org)



Thanks!



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Psychology Today Blog
Disability is Diversity



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