The Psychophysiological Impact of Discrimination

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African Americans experience disproportionately high rates of cardiovascular health complications compared to European Americans, characterized by early signs of vascular dysfunction and elevated blood pressure. Paradoxically, African Americans exhibit higher cardiac vagal tone, as indexed by heart rate variability, a known cardio-protective factor. This apparent contradiction, termed the *Cardiovascular Conundrum*, highlights gaps in our understanding of the physiological mechanisms at play. This presentation explores the complex interplay between discrimination and brain-body regulation, offering novel insights into the Cardiovascular Conundrum and its implications for reducing disparities in cardiovascular health outcomes.

Short bio

Julian F. Thayer, Ph.D., is a distinguished psychologist and researcher renowned for his work in psychophysiology, particularly the interplay between the autonomic nervous system, health, and emotional regulation. He is a Professor of Psychological Science at the University of California, Irvine, and a former Distinguished University Professor of Psychology at The Ohio State University. Dr. Thayer's research explores the impact of stress, emotion, and discrimination on physical and mental health, focusing on heart rate variability (HRV) as a key indicator of cardiovascular functioning. He has published extensively in leading journals and is recognized as one of his field's most highly cited researchers.

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