

## Testimonial injustice: linguistic bias in the medical records of black patients and women.

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Beach MC, Saha S, Park J, et al. Testimonial injustice: linguistic bias in the medical records of black patients and women. J Gen Intern Med. 2021;36(6):1708-1714. doi:10.1007/s11606-021-06682-z.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/testimonial-injustice-linguistic-bias-medical-records-black-patients-and-women>

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Physician [language choice](#) can reflect [implicit biases](#), which can compromise patient care. In this study, researchers conducted a content analysis of 600 clinic notes to explore how physicians communicate disbelief in medical records and racial and gender differences in the use of such language. Three linguistic features suggesting disbelief were identified: (1) use of quotes (e.g., patient had a “reaction” to the medication), (2) use of judgement words – such as “claims” or “insists” – that imply doubt, and (3) reporting patient experiences as [hearsay](#) (e.g., “the patient reports that the symptom started yesterday”). The researchers found that these linguistic features were more common in notes written about Black patients compared to white patients; no gender differences were identified.