Asian-American and European-American college students differ in their daily experiences of depression

BACKGROUND: Presentations of depressive symptoms vary across Asian versus Western cultural contexts (Kalibatseva & Leong, 2011; Ryder & Chentsova-Dutton, 2012). Correlates of depression are time-varying and context-dependent. Yet, few studies have examined variations in the sociobehavioral correlates of depression in these two groups with an ecological framework.

METHODS
- Sample of 56 Asian-American (AA) and 38 European-American (EA) college students (Total N = 94).
- CES-D completed at baseline.
- Perceived social support, positive/negative mood, and withdrawal behaviors were measured daily for 14 days.
- Data analyzed with hierarchical linear modeling (HLM).

RESULTS
- Higher levels of baseline depression were associated with:
  - Lower levels of daily perceived social support (b = -0.29, SE = 0.04, p < .001),
  - Lower levels of daily positive affect (b = -0.44, SE = 0.12, p < .001),
  - Higher levels of daily negative affect (b = 0.28, SE = 0.07, p < .001)
  - Higher likelihood of endorsing withdrawal behaviors (b = 0.07, SE = 0.03, p < .05).
- Ethnicity significantly moderated the effects of depression on perceived social support more strongly for European Americans (b = -0.29, SE = 0.04, p < .001) than Asian Americans (b = -0.11, SE = 0.03, p < .001).
- Ethnicity also moderated the effect of depression on positive affect (b = 0.32, SE = 0.15, p < .05), such that:
  - depression predicted reduced positive affect for European Americans (b = -0.44, SE = 0.12, p < .001), but not Asian Americans (b = -0.12, SE = 0.10, p = .24).

IMPLICATIONS:
Results support previous findings on differences in the experience of depression in Asian-American vs European-American populations and have implications for assessment and intervention for depressed mood in Asian American populations.