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# The Physical and Mental Toll of the Recent Asian American Hate Crimes

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# The Psychological and Physical Consequences of the Recent Anti-Asian Hate Crimes

Zachary Schwedes

## **Key Words:**

Hate Crimes, Asian American, Racism, Recent, Discrimination, Political, Scapegoating, Physical Abuse, Mental Abuse, and Psychological Abuse

## **Abstract**

The United States has multiple wicked problems now, the tense political atmosphere, COVID-19, but the wicked problem that has only just been getting major media attention are the hate crimes that the Asian American community is facing. These hate crimes have been happening since March of 2020. Luckily, these hate crimes have been getting attention from Asian American actors like Olivia Munn and Daniel Dae Kim as well as the most recent deadly attack in Atlantic City. Hate crimes against the Asian American community has seen a 150% increase in large cities like New York City and Los Angeles. There are multiple possible causes of these hate crimes including former President Trump's referring to the COVID-19 pandemic as the "China-Virus" or "Kung Flu" or people scapegoating the Asian American for the COVID-19 pandemic. I think that no matter what the cause of this wicked problem, I think that it is obvious that something needs to be done regarding the hate crimes, if things don't change, then I fear that the hate crimes will continue to worsen over time.

## The Physical and Mental Tolls of the Recent Anti-Asian Hate Crimes

For over a year at this point, the Asian American Community in the United States have been under attack. Since March of last year, the start of the COVID pandemic, hate crimes both physical and verbal against the Asian American community have dramatically increased. The attacks are getting worldwide attention lately due to actors like Olivia Munn and Daniel Day Kim speaking out. In some of the larger cities in the United States like New York City of Los Angeles, hate crimes against Asians in the country have seen a large increase of 150%, compared to the amount of hate crimes before the pandemic outbreak. Something that I believe is making the hate crimes against the community worse is the stereotypes that exist towards Asians in the United States. As a community, Asian-Americans are stereotyped as the “model minority”, which means they are usually seen as the quiet and demure minority of the country and are usually less likely to report on any hate crimes against them. The hate crimes are a wicked problem that the United States is facing now, especially in the last few weeks since the massacre in Atlantic City. A wicked problem is defined by a social or cultural that is difficult to solve for multiple reasons, including incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people involved. I believe that the problem may be worse than reported because many Asian Americans do not report the crimes. Coming from a personal point of view with family

members who speak broken English, a lot of Asian Americans are afraid that if they self-report the hate crimes, it will make the situation worse

### **History of Anti-Asian Hate Crimes in the US**

Anti-Asian hate crimes are not a new wicked problem in the United States. After the attacks on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 many people in the United States harbored anger, distrust, and paranoia towards Asian Americans. ~~Which-This~~ led to many Asians being discriminated against in the United States. In an article by Jeremy Limn for [history.com](#)<sup>[VA1]</sup>, he explains much of the treatment the Asian American community faced after the attacks. “In 1941, after the attacks many people were blatantly discriminated against us, many people banned us, some people even [threw garbage at my family](#) <sup>[VA2]</sup> and I. One family even had the word “Jap” spray painted on their home for everyone to see.” (Limn). Even the United States government held some degree of paranoia against the Asian community. After the attacks the President at the time, Franklin Roosevelt declared Executive Order 9066, which placed Japanese Americans into Internment Camps for simply being Asian American.

### **The Hate Crimes: The Physical Toll and Victims**

Since last year and the start of the pandemic, hate crimes against the Asian community have greatly increased in the United States, in some cities more than 100% [Massod Farivar for voanews.com](#). There have been over 100 and counting incidents

of Anti-Asian hate crimes, with the country's larger cities seeing an increase of almost 150% compared to the hate crimes the year before. And according to the foundation Stop AAPI Hate, there have been more than 2,800 incidents of racism and discrimination between March and December of last year. With the majority of the hate crimes being verbal and physical assaults accounting for almost ten percent of the hate crimes. (Farivar).

There have been multiple accounts of Asian Americans being viciously attacked since last year. With many of the victims being unable to speak English and/or elderly Asian Americans. In some of the cases, some of the victims have been permanently scarred or even killed. According to Terry Tang, a reporter for pbs.org, even young children are not spared from the vicious attacks. According to Tang, a man named Bawi Yung was viciously attacked followed by his two young children aged three and six who were slashed with a knife in different places.

During an attack earlier this month, a gunman went and brutally shot eight female spa workers, with the majority of them being Asian American women. According to Dustin Jones, a reporter for NPR, the crime is being debated on whether to even call the recent attack a hate crime. The authorities in Atlantic City are still deciding whether or not the shootings should be classified as a "hate crime" and that they are still investigating the gunman and the situation. Now, I might be a bit admittedly biased but to me it is obvious that these murders were a hate crime. However, a member of the police force in Atlantic City blamed the hate crimes simply on the gunman having a "bad day" or a consequence

of his ongoing sex addiction. Many people suffer from both bad days and sex addictions, and they don't go around committing mass murder.

### **The Mental Toll of The Hate Crimes`**

Another consequence of the hate crimes that is hardly being discussed is the consequences, that rates of anxiety would be higher. However, with the increasing number of hate crimes in the United States against the Asian community, the community now not only has to worry about catching COVID but also being the victim of a hate crime.

According to a study by Dr. Mishal Reja reported in ABC News, he explains that because of COVID 19 related hate crimes there has been a large increase of Asian American Americans facing higher level of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental health related issues due to the ongoing hate crimes. According to Dr. Reja's article, the rates of COVID related anxiety in Asian Americans have risen by at least 45% even more in larger cities. And according to the previous article by Terry Tang, the young boys who were attacked by the knife-wielding assailant are suffering from severe PTSD. According to Yang, after the attacks on the man's young sons, they are both suffering from many symptoms of PTSD including severe anxiety and panic attacks.

### **The Cause of the Hate Crimes: "China-Virus" and Scapegoating**

The cause of the hate crimes is very apparent. When we had a President refer to the very deadly pandemic in a joking manner as the "China Virus" or the "Kung-flu". After

Trump referred to the Coronavirus as the “China Virus” he put the blame upon the Asian Community for the cause of the pandemic. Roja for abcnews.com, “When Mr. Trump called the COVID-19 pandemic the “China-Virus”, it was like he instantly made us the enemy. He put a face and a location to the virus. Which was when I and many of my other Asian American colleagues became concerned for our well-being, given some of his rabid fanbase” (47). My family and I experiencing the same COVID-19 hate crimes ourselves, being called “China-Virus Chinks” Personally, after seeing the President of the United States almost in a nonchalant manner refer to an extremely deadly pandemic as “China-Virus and Kung-Flu” I felt the same way that Dr. Roja did, for myself and my family. Dr. Roja goes on to say that the day after Trump used that term Asians had a target on their back/ “When he (Trump) first used the term China-Virus around April of last year, it was almost like we were the red rug in front of a bull. We were suddenly the bad guys.” (Roja). Another reason that I believe that the Asian Americans are being attacked is that as a community we are being scapegoated as the cause for the pandemic. Due to Trump continuing to blame the Asian community for COVID-19. According to an article by Deborah Kim, et al. she believes that the number of Anti-Asian hate crimes have grown due to what former President Trump has said about the virus itself referring to it with such as jokingly manner.

## **Conclusion**

I realize that I might be in a bit of a unique situation given that I am a part of the community that is directly affected by this wicked problem. However, I think that the vicious and deadly anti-Asian hate crimes in this country are absolutely horrifying. Being both Asian American and a father the current hate crime against my race makes me worry for myself as well as for my family. Even though it is a wicked problem that is being directed towards one minority group in the country it is one that affects all of us[VA3]. I believe that this is a problem that affects all Americans because I think we all know someone that belongs to the Asian American community or someone that has been victims of hate crimes in general. I just hope that for my sake as well as for my son's that these horrible crimes end soon and that life can go back to normal[VA4] as possible for the Asian American community.

As for a solution to the problem, I think that might be hard, because I do not think that hate crimes or hate in general are going away anytime soon in this country. However, I think that the issue needs even more attention than it is getting already. I think that we need to have more support for the victims of the Anti-Asian hate crimes as well as holding those responsible of these hate crimes accountable for their actions and not blaming the crimes on easy excuses.