Rumination is an emotion regulation style characterized by repetitive and passive dwelling on negative thoughts and feelings following stressors. It is disproportionally reported by women relative to men and is known to have mental health consequences (e.g., depression). Gender differences in rumination may stem in part from the fact that women are more likely to experience unique stressors such as lower income levels that increase women’s risk for rumination. However, the lack of empirical examination of this possibility highlights a gap in the research that requires further exploration.

This study aimed to clarify the association between gender and rumination, and to examine the influence of income on this association.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between gender and income. Linear regressions examining whether gender, income, or their interaction predicted levels of rumination.

613 undergraduate students enrolled at the University of British Columbia (UBC) (n= 613; 72.9% woman, 22.6% men, 3.9% other gender identities)

Participants completed questionnaire measures of rumination, income level, and gender as a part of a broader study.

The relation between gender and income was significant, $X^2(2, N = 372) = 6.33, p = .042$. Men were more likely than women to report income levels greater than 100k per year.

However, we did not observe gender differences in rumination, $B=0.68, ps>.277$.

Our findings were consistent with past findings of gender disparities in income, highlighting men’s increased likelihood of reporting higher income levels, particularly those exceeding 100k per year.

Despite gender differences in income levels, neither gender nor income independently predicted levels of rumination among the participants. Furthermore, interactions among gender and income did not significantly influence rumination levels.

It may be that gender differences more directly impact mental health outcomes.

Participants belonging to the “other gender identities” category often select multiple gender identities, which poses difficulties in accurately presenting their experiences in analyses, but it should be noted that visual inspection of the data showed higher levels of rumination for when they reported income less than 50K.

Through the categorization of individuals who identified with other gender identities aside from men or woman or have chosen multiple gender identities, the unique experiences and perspectives of these participants may be obscured or overlooked. This approach fails to capture the diversity within the “other gender identities” category.

Future work could investigate how income level moderates the association of gender and rumination in other populations.