Students from Asia comprise the largest subset of international students in US colleges and universities. However, their mental health and experiences of discrimination have been rarely studied. Asian female international students bear three types of minority status and experience unique stressors based on their gender, race, and nationality. This study was designed to understand Asian female international students’ perception of discrimination based on their multiple minority status and how it is related to mental health. Students from two large midwestern universities were asked to fill out an online survey through www.surveymonkey.com that requires about 20 minutes to complete. Participants reported their experiences of sexism, racism, and national discrimination based on their gender, race, and nationality, as well as perception of loneliness and satisfaction with life. Final sample is 213 female international students who identified themselves as Asian. The average age of participants is 24.1 (SD = 5.53). The length of living in the US ranged from 0 to 12, with a mean of 2.82, SD of 2.36. The country with the greatest number of participants was China (63.7%), followed by South Korea, Taiwan, India, and Malaysia. In general, students perceived higher levels of discrimination related to their race and nationality than gender. On the scale from 1 to 6, students reported a mean score of 1.50 regarding perceived discrimination as women, a mean score of 3.91 on a scale from 1 to 7 regarding their experiences of discrimination as Asian, and a mean score of 3.53 regarding their experiences of discrimination as their national citizen.

Among the items measuring perceived sexism, “hearing people making sexist jokes or degrading sexual jokes” were reported most frequently. Regarding racial discrimination, “I feel that society treats me according to racial stereotypes” and “I am viewed negatively because of my race” were rated highest frequency. Regarding nationality discrimination, the items “no matter how adjusted to American ways I am, I will be seen as a ‘foreigner’ by Americans” and “in my study or work environment I follow American ways and standards, but at home I follow many customs of my country of origin” were given the highest score. International students also reported substantial loneliness (mean = 2.46 on a scale from 1-4) and psychological stress (mean = 2.33 on a scale from 1-4). Correlation analysis has shown that all three types of perceived discrimination were significantly related to perceived loneliness and subjective life satisfaction. Specifically, perceived discrimination is positively associated with loneliness and negatively associated with life satisfaction. Implications on international student mental health and counselors’ competency when working with this population will be discussed at the presentation.