
Summary of Health Outcomes: Minorities Fare Worse Than the White Majority

The following is a narrative summary of differences in health outcomes between minorities and the white majority, where at least one minority group's outcomes are substantially poorer than those of the white majority. All figures are excerpted from tables appearing elsewhere in this report. In each instance, the group with the least desirable outcomes is highlighted in bold type.

Among Children

Child health is one area where minorities trail the white majority on a number of broad indicators, though areas of strength also emerge, such as low infant mortality rates among Hispanics/Latinos. **African Americans have the worst infant mortality rate, at 15.1 per 1,000 live births.** That's followed by Native Americans at 11.9, whites at 6.4, Asians at 6.1, and Hispanics at 5.8. Thus, the African-American rate is 160 percent higher than the Hispanic rate.

A similar pattern emerges among low birthweight babies—an important contributor to infant mortality. **African Americans have the highest percentage of low birthweight infants at 13.8 percent.** That's followed by Native Americans at 10.2 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders at 7.8 percent, whites at 7.2 percent, and Hispanics/Latinos at 6.2 percent. The African-American rate is more than twice that of Hispanics/Latinos.

However, a paradox emerges in the percentage of women with late prenatal care (after first trimester or no prenatal care). Here, **Hispanics/Latinas are most likely to be late in receiving prenatal care, at 31 percent,** despite having the lowest infant mortality rates. Native Americans are next at 24.9 percent, followed by African Americans at 24.7 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders at 17.0 percent, and whites at 12.1 percent.

Child fatalities—that is deaths of children ages 1–17 per 100,000 population—are another health indicator where rates are elevated for some minority groups. **The Native American child fatality rate is highest at 53.8,** followed by African Americans at 37.5, whites at 30.4, Hispanics/Latinos at 29.2, and Asians/Pacific Islanders at 28.7. The Native American rate is 87.5 percent higher than that of Asians.

In addition, **teenage pregnancy** is an important indicator of child health. **Hispanic/Latina teenagers ages 15–17 have the highest teen pregnancy rates per 100,000 population at 90.0.** That's followed by African Americans at 72.4, Native Americans at 63.2, and whites at 38.0. Asians had too few episodes of teen pregnancy to provide accurate rates.

Finally, there is the percentage of **children who are obese.** **Hispanic/Latino children have the highest rates of obesity at 17.0 percent,** followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders at 14.3 percent, African Americans at 14.1 percent, whites at 13.6 percent, and Native Americans at 13.1 percent. The Hispanic/Latino rate is 25 percent higher than that of whites and 30 percent higher than that of Native Americans.

Among Adults

Adult health is another area where the majority white population consistently ranks higher in terms of desirable health outcomes, though every racial or ethnic group has areas of strength. Consider the **percentage of adults who self-report being in fair or poor health.** **Among Native Americans, more than a quarter, or 25.8 percent,** say they are in fair or poor health. Among African Americans, 21.0 percent believe themselves to be in fair or poor health, while only 15.7 percent of whites, 11.6 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, and 10.2 percent

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of Asians/Pacific Islanders feel this way about their own state of health. The Native-American rate is 153 percent higher than the Asian/Pacific Islander rate.

Death rates from heart disease illustrate the health concerns of Native Americans, as they **have the highest death rates from heart disease per 100,000 population at 312.3**. The African-American death rate is next highest at 308.7, while the white rate is 249.6 and the immigrant-heavy Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino rates are 83.1 and 78.5, respectively. The Native-American rate is nearly three times higher (298 percent) than the Hispanic/Latino rate.

African Americans have the highest rate of stroke deaths per 100,000 population, at 98.9. That's followed by Native Americans at 74.6, whites at 70.1, Asians/Pacific Islanders at 42.2, and Hispanics/Latinos at 31.4. The African-American rate is 215 percent higher than that of Hispanics/Latinos.

African Americans also have the highest rate of diabetes deaths per 100,000 population, at 169.5, followed closely by Native American deaths at 154.6. The white death rate due to diabetes is 78.1, while the Asian rate is 41.6, and the Hispanic/Latino rate is 41.2. The African American rate is 117 percent higher than white rate.

AIDS deaths per 100,000 population represent another area where African-American rates are elevated compared to other racial and ethnic groups. In fact, **at 21.2, the African-American rate greatly exceeds that of any other racial or ethnic group**. Hispanic/Latino rates are next highest at 4.1, followed by Native Americans at 3.3, whites at 1.6, and Asians at 0.7. The African-American rate is 12 times higher than that of whites and 24 times higher than that of Asians. Both Hispanic/Latino and Native American death rates are more than twice as high as those of whites.

Cancer is another disease for which **African-American death rates are disproportionately high**. Consider **prostate cancer deaths per 100,000 males**. The **African-American prostate cancer death rate, at 79.6**, is higher than the Native American rate of 52.0, the white

rate of 28.2, the 11.0 Asian rate, and the 7.6 Hispanic/Latino rate. The African-American rate is 182 percent higher than the white rate and more than 10 times higher than the Hispanic/Latino rate. **Colo-rectal cancer deaths per 100,000 population** also are elevated for **African Americans at 27.0**, followed by whites at 18.6, Native Americans at 16.1, Hispanics/Latinos at 9.3, and Asians/Pacific Islanders at 8.0. The African-American rate is 68 percent higher than that of Native Americans, and 45 percent higher than that of whites. **Breast cancer deaths** claim disproportionate shares of **African-American women, at 35.5 per 100,000 population**. That's compared to a white rate of 24.4, a Native American death rate of 24.0, the 10.4 Hispanic/Latina rate, and a 6.7 rate for Asians and Pacific Islanders. The African-American rate is 430 percent higher than the Asian rate and 41 percent higher than the white rate.

Sexually transmitted diseases are another area of concern in adult health. **African Americans have the highest rates of HIV and AIDS cases per 100,000 population, at 66.5**, followed by Native Americans at 17.8, Hispanics/Latinos at 16.4, Asian/Pacific Islanders at 8.7, and whites at 6.3. The African-American rate is more than 10 times higher than white rate.

Native Americans have the highest rates of early syphilis cases per 100,000 population at 101.7, compared to African Americans at 37.5, Hispanics/Latinos at 13.2, and whites at 2.7. Asians did not have enough reported cases to calculate an accurate rate. The Native-American rate is more than 37 times higher than that of whites.

Chlamydia cases per 100,000 population are highest for African Americans at 837.2. Hispanics/Latinas have the next highest rates at 389.2, followed by Native Americans at 261.2, Asians/Pacific Islanders at 185.2, and whites at 99.7. The African-American rate is 740 percent higher than the white rate.

Elevated rates of sexually transmitted diseases for minorities may reflect a reporting bias as disproportionate numbers of minorities receive services at local health departments or other government-funded clinics. These facilities are thought to report their cases of sexually

transmitted disease more faithfully than the private sector.

However, it is difficult to argue with mortality statistics that show African Americans and Native Americans have death rates higher than those of the white majority across a broad range of causes for which prevention and early detection are key to survival. These include heart disease for Native Americans, stroke and diabetes

deaths for African Americans, and African-American death rates from the most lethal forms of cancer that exceed all other racial and ethnic groups. Low death rates from heart disease and cancer may be misleading for Asians and Hispanics/Latinos, as these populations include disproportionate numbers of young immigrants.

—Mike McLaughlin

the White Majority,” p. 49). For example, the African-American infant mortality rate (or the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births) is more than twice that of whites. For Native Americans, the rate of deaths of children ages 1–17 is 76.9 percent higher than that of whites, and the teen pregnancy rate among Hispanics/Latinas is 137 percent higher than that of white teenage girls. Among adults, African Americans

have a 25 percent higher rate of heart disease deaths and a 41.8 percent higher rate of stroke deaths than do whites. Diabetes death rates among African Americans are 117 percent higher than those of whites, and AIDS death rates are more than 12 times higher. Hispanics/Latinos are more likely to die in fatal car crashes or be the victims of homicides than whites. In addition, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Native



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