

Systemic Racism in Health Care


A history of racial bias and discrimination in the U.S. health care system, filled with inhumane scientific experiments and unequal treatment and neglect during slavery and in modern day medicine, have created a major distrust in the medical industry amongst the Black population.

—New England Journal of Medicine


Click or tap button to read "Beyond Tuskegee—Vaccine Distrust and Everyday Racism"



Studies show one quarter of Black people express high mistrust of physicians.
—American Cancer Society



* Over 50% of surveyed medical students and residents believed one or more false statements regarding differences in how Black people perceive pain (e.g., they have thicker skin or less sensitive nerve endings)
—American Cancer Society



In Georgia, Black teens who reported high levels of discrimination by the age of 20 also had higher levels of stress hormones, higher blood pressure, more inflammation and higher levels of obesity
—National Institute of Health



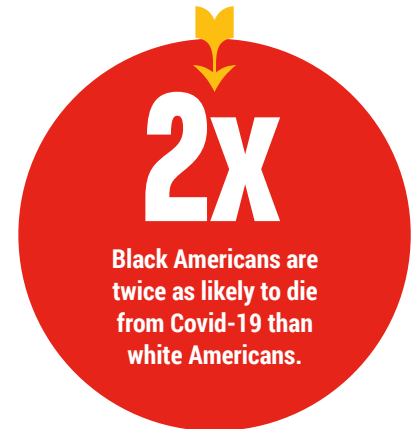
Pregnant Black women who reported high levels of discrimination were more likely to give birth to babies who weighed less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces, putting them at risk of a range of serious health complications
—American Journal of Public Health



These biases about pain lead doctors to under prescribe and undertreat Black patients who describe the same symptoms as white patients.

“There has never been any period in American history where the health of Blacks was equal to that of whites. Disparity is built into the system.”

— Evelyn Hammonds, Harvard science historian, to *The New York Times* as part of the “1619 Project”



The Black-White Health Gap —by the Numbers

The life expectancy of Black Americans is 3 to 4 years shorter than white Americans.



Black people have higher rates of cancer, asthma, influenza, pneumonia, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and homicides due to environmental and social injustices.



They are two to three times as likely as white people to die of preventable heart disease and stroke due to undiagnosed deficiencies and other health stressors.



Black Americans are two to three times more likely to die in childbirth than white Americans.



Compared with white children, Black children are three times as likely to lose a mother by age 10. Black adults are twice as likely to lose a child by age 30 and a spouse by 60.



Click or tap button to learn more about Covid-19 deaths by race & ethnicity

Empathy Heals

■ A Stanford study estimates that pairing Black patients with Black doctors could decrease the black-white mortality gap due to heart disease by 19%.
 –University of Michigan Health

■ A study shows Black men with Black doctors were more willing to have preventative screenings and procedures.
 –National Bureau of Economic Research

■ Black newborn mortality is cut in half when a Black doctor cares for the mother and her child.
 –Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

■ IMPaCT, a human-centered hiring practice that focuses on inclusive and holistic hiring of healthcare workers resulted in 65% shorter hospital days for a patient.
 –Harvard Business Review



Black women are 41% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women, despite lower incidence of the disease. Find out more



How Stories Can Help

The systemic hurdles Black doctors and patients face cost jobs and lives. A Media Impact Project report shows narratives in TV around these hurdles affect audiences' views of hospitals and health care. Dr. James Carter, a cardiologist at the University of Colorado Hospital, saved a Black female patient who had been discharged from the ER twice with stroke symptoms but no diagnosis. On the third visit, she was surprised to know there was a Black doctor in the hospital and Dr. Carter diagnosed her stroke correctly.
 –haverford.edu



Black people have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial/ethnic group in the United States for most cancers. –American Cancer Society

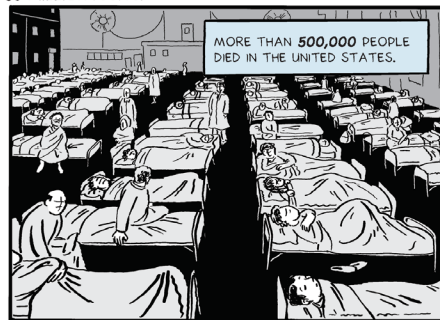
LINKS TO RESOURCES

The New England Journal of Medicine • American Cancer Society • National Institute for Health • University of Michigan Health Lab • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) • The Washington Post • The Brookings Institution • National Bureau of Economic Research • The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences • Harvard Business Review • Media Impact Project • Haverford College • Harvard Kennedy School



Check out “A Tale of Two Pandemics: Historical Insights on Persistent Racial Disparities,” by Josh Neufeld.

THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC OF 1918-1920 INFECTED MORE THAN A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, KILLING UP TO 50 MILLION PEOPLE.



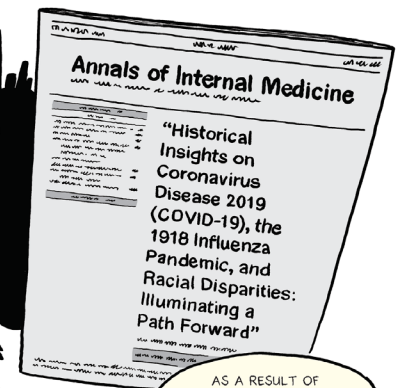
RELIABLE STATISTICS ARE HARD TO FIND, BUT IT'S EVIDENT THAT BLACK AMERICANS DIED FROM THE FLU AT HIGHER RATES THAN WHITE AMERICANS.



WORKING TOGETHER AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, DOCTORS LAKSHMI KRISHNAN, S. MICHELLE OGUNWOLE, AND LISA A. COOPER WROTE ABOUT THE RACIAL DYNAMICS OF THE 1918 PANDEMIC...



CONTAGION... AUGMENTED BIOLOGICALLY DETERMINISTIC BELIEFS, INCLUDING THAT BLACKS WERE INNATELY IMMUNE TO CERTAIN DISEASES.



AS A RESULT OF BIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF [BLACK] IMMUNITY THAT USED TO CIRCULATE IN THE WHITE COMMUNITY, AND THEN GET REPACKAGED IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY, THESE STORIES ENDURE.



Click or tap button to see Josh Neufeld's comic

