

Disparities in Cancer

Some potential reasons for disparities in cancer incidence and death rates

- **Frequency of Medical Care.** African-American, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native women age 40 and over are less likely than white women to have mammography.¹¹
- **Unequal Care.** White men are more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer in earlier stages than African-American men.¹¹ Minorities are more likely to be diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer and colorectal cancer than whites.¹¹
- **Geography.** Living in rural areas can make it difficult to travel to distant cancer care providers.¹⁰
- **Health Literacy.** Many minority groups cannot access screening and treatment because of language and cultural barriers.¹
- **Poverty.** The American Cancer Society estimates that the cancer survival rate of poor individuals is 10 to 15 percent lower than those of other Americans.⁵ Low income women are less likely to have mammography and Pap test screening.⁵
- **Education.** Women with low-education levels are less likely to have mammography and Pap test screening.⁵
- **Environmental Risks.** A recently study showed that women with higher blood levels of certain pesticides have twice the risk of developing breast cancer than other women. Many minorities work on farms and have higher exposures to these pesticides which puts them at higher risk for breast cancer.²

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/omh/AMH/factsheets/cancer.htm>
2. <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/factsheets/disparity/women.htm>
3. http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/targets/ha2010/PDFs/22_Cancer.pdf
4. "Healthy People 2010: An Overview," www.healthypeople.gov.
5. "Rural Poor and the Medically Underserved & Cancer," Intercultural Cancer Council, <http://iccnetwork.org/cancerfacts/ICC-CFS6.pdf>.
6. <http://healthdisparities.nih.gov/whatare.html>
7. <http://www.hrsa.gov/OMH/OMH/disparities/pages09to14.pdf>
8. <http://hab.hrsa.gov/publications/august2002.htm>
9. http://crchd.nci.nih.gov/chd/racial_ethnic_disparities.html
10. <http://crchd.nci.nih.gov/chd/barriers.html>
11. "National Healthcare Disparities Report," US Dept Health and Human Services, December 2003, Prepublication Copy.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, causing more than 500,000 deaths each year. Each year, cancer costs the United States an estimated \$180.2 billion.¹

Cancer incidence rates vary based on a person's race and ethnicity

- **African-Americans.** African-Americans have a 10 percent higher cancer incidence rate than whites.¹¹ African-American men have higher incidence rates of lung, prostate, colon, and rectum cancers than white men.¹
- **Hispanics.** Hispanics have higher rates of cervical, esophageal, gallbladder, and stomach cancer than whites.¹¹ Hispanic women have higher incidence rates of cervical cancer than other groups.⁶
- **Asians.** Asians have higher incidence rates of stomach and liver cancer than other groups.¹¹ The incidence rate for cervical cancer in Vietnamese women is nearly five times the rate for white women.⁴
- **Native Hawaiians.** Native Hawaiian men have higher incidence rates of lung cancer than white men.⁶
- **Alaska Natives.** Alaska Natives have higher incidence rates of colon and rectum cancers than whites.⁶
- **Whites.** Whites have higher incidence rates of leukemia than blacks and the highest incidence rates of melanoma among all groups.¹¹

Cancer death rates also vary by race and ethnicity

Death rates from cancer are per 100,000 people:

- 121 for Hispanics.
- 125 for Asian/Pacific Islanders.
- 127 for American Indians/Alaska Natives.

- 198 for whites.
- 250 for African-Americans.¹¹
- **African-Americans.** African-Americans have a cancer death rate that is around 35 percent higher than it is for whites. African-American men have a cancer death rate that is about 50 percent higher than it is for white men.⁶
- **Alaska Natives.** Alaska Natives have a 40 percent higher cancer death rate than whites.³

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DIABETES diet disability
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diversity education
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ethnicity exposure faith
community financial
need goals grassroots
health insurance
healthcare providers
heart disease higher
rates healthy hispanic
american hypertension
HIV/AIDS insurance
infant mortality
initiative intervention
language barriers LEAD
life expectancy lifestyle
low birthweight
literacy malnutrition
medicare/medicaid men
mental health native
american nutrition
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overweight pollution
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