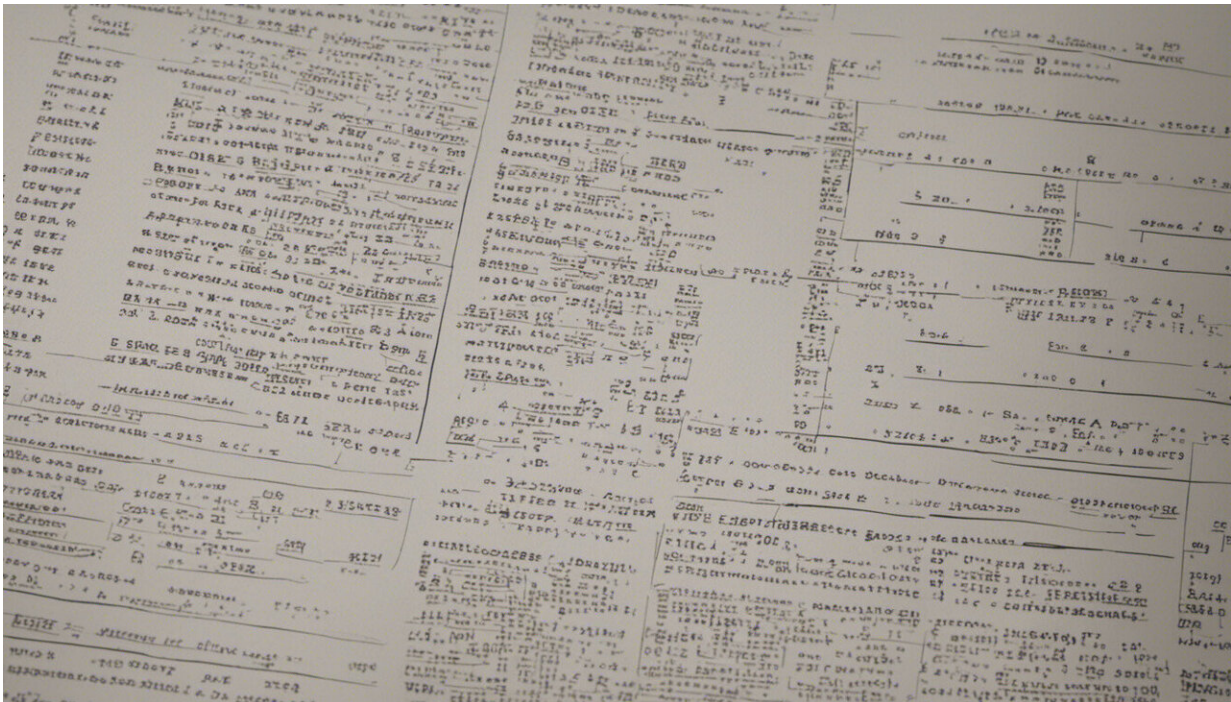


Racial differences exist in reports of workplace drug testing

September 26 2013, by Helen Dodson



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

(Medical Xpress)—Drug testing occurs more often in workplaces where racial and ethnic minorities are employed, according to a new study by Yale School of Medicine. The study appears online in the Early View of the *American Journal on Addictions*.

The prevalence of [workplace drug testing](#) for current and new [employees](#) has been increasing since the 1980s. Research a decade ago demonstrated increased reports of workplace drug testing among non-white workers and by employees in certain "blue-collar" professions. The Yale research team's objective was to discover if such [discrepancies](#) persist, and if so, among which ethnicities, income levels, and occupations.

The researchers analyzed nearly 70,000 responses in a recent [federal government](#) survey from individuals who reported whether drug testing took place in their workplace. Among these individuals were both part- and full-time employees, and those of white, black, or Hispanic race and ethnicity. They were all older than 18. Employees worked in both "white collar" jobs, which included executive, administrative, managerial, and financial positions, and "blue collar" posts, which included technical, transportation, and trade- and craft-related jobs.

Among the findings:

- 48.2% were employed in a workplace that performs drug testing;
- Nearly half of these were individuals aged 18 to 25;
- 63% of black workers were employed in a workplace that performs drug testing, whereas only 46% of white workers were;
- 54% of blue collar employees were employed in a workplace that performs drug testing, but only 44% of white collar employees were;
- 71% reported working in large companies, defined as 100 or more employees.

In analysis of the reporting, being of black race was significantly associated with employment in a workplace that performs drug testing among executive, administrative, managerial, and financial workers, as well as technicians and other support occupations. Hispanic ethnicity was

associated with increased employment in a workplace that performs drug testing among technical and other support occupations.

There are public health and equality implications in these findings, the authors write. First author, William Becker, M.D., assistant professor at Yale School of Medicine, said, "The results obtained from workplace drug testing may have major health-related consequences for employees, so an equitable testing system is critical to avoid burdening vulnerable employees with a disproportionate share of the risk."

Provided by Yale University

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