

# The impact of lower total knee replacement rates in black Americans

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It's known that racial minorities in the United States undergo fewer total knee replacements (TKRs) for knee osteoarthritis, but it's unclear how this affects their quality of life. A new study published in *Arthritis Care & Research* indicates that, on a population level, Black Americans lose 72,000 quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) due to racial disparities in the lower rate of TKRs offered and acceptance, and higher rates of complications.

Assessing QALYs gains from current TKR utilization per 100 persons, Black males gained 4.8 QALYs, Black females gained 8.2 QALYs, White males gained 12.6 QALYs, and White females gained 15.7 QALYs. (A QALY is a year of life adjusted for its quality or its value. A year in perfect health is considered equal to 1.0 QALY.)

"Total knee replacement is a commonly used surgery that has remarkable impact on quality of life improvement. This is the first study that translates lower utilization of TKR by [racial minorities](#) into tangible losses in patients' well-being due to underuse of this highly efficacious procedure," said senior author Dr. Elena Losina, of Brigham and Women's Hospital.

**More information:** Hannah M. Kerman et al, Disparities in total knee replacement: Population losses in quality-adjusted life years due to differential offer, acceptance, and complication rates for Black Americans, *Arthritis Care & Research* (2018). [DOI: 10.1002/acr.23484](https://doi.org/10.1002/acr.23484)

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