

Black-white disparities in heart disease mortality have increased from 1968-2015 according to MMWR Surveillance Summary

April 12 2018, by Melva Robertson



Researchers at the Emory Rollins School of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published an *MMWR Surveillance Summary* that found black-white disparities in heart disease mortality-have increased for populations age 35 and older in the U.S. over a 47-year period.

Miriam Van Dyke, doctoral student in the Department of Epidemiology, is first author on the summary. Michael Kramer, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology is a co-author.

The authors analyzed data from the National Vital Statistics System from 1968-2015 and looked at variations in data at the national level, as well

as state-by-state, to determine trends in black-white disparities in [heart disease](#) mortality over time.

"It's interesting that large increases in the national black-white ratio of heart disease mortality began in the mid-1970s," says Van Dyke. "Those large increases were followed by small but steady increases until approximately 2005. Since 2005, the black-white [disparity](#) in heart disease death rates has modestly narrowed. Despite the modest declines, in 2015, heart disease rates were 21 percent higher among blacks than among whites."

The MMWR Surveillance Summary Report was written to increase awareness of continued disparities in heart disease death rates between blacks and whites both nationally and for most states. The geographic pattern of heart disease death rates for both races has changed over time. While the majority of states saw an increase in the ratio of black-white [heart disease mortality](#) between 1968 and 2015, a few states had either little change in the black-white ratio or a small decrease in the black-white ratio (e.g. Delaware and Kentucky).

The authors urged that in addition to using evidence-based strategies, standard treatment protocols, and culturally relevant tools to promote heart-healthy living, ensuring that [heart disease](#) prevention and treatment efforts are designed to benefit all groups equally is an important goal.

More information: Miriam Van Dyke et al. Heart Disease Death Rates Among Blacks and Whites Aged ≥ 35 Years—United States, 1968–2015, *MMWR. Surveillance Summaries* (2018). [DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.ss6705a1](#)

Provided by Emory University

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