

Large US study targets prostate cancer in black men

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(HealthDay)—Black men in the United States have higher rates of

aggressive prostate cancer than other males. Now, a \$26.5 million study is underway to figure out why.

The U.S. National Institutes of Health and the Prostate Cancer Foundation have launched the study to investigate social, environmental and genetic factors behind this [disparity](#).

"No group in the world is hit harder by [prostate cancer](#) than men of African descent, and, to date, little is known about the biological reasons for these disparities, or the full impact of environmental factors," Dr. Jonathan Simons said in an NIH news release. He's president and CEO of the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

Compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the United States, [black men](#) disproportionately experience aggressive [prostate](#) cancer—meaning tumors that grow and spread quickly.

Black American men have about a 15 percent chance of developing prostate cancer, compared to about a 10 percent chance for white men, according to the news release.

And black men also have a higher prostate cancer death risk than white men— 4 percent versus 2 percent, respectively.

The NIH agencies supporting the new research are the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the U.S. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. A team of scientists nationwide will conduct the research.

"Understanding why African-American men are more likely to be diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer than men of other racial and ethnic groups is a critical, unanswered question in cancer disparities research," said Dr. Ned Sharpless, director of the NCI.

"This large, collaborative study can help the cancer research community better understand and address these disparities," he said.

The study aims to enroll 10,000 black men with prostate cancer. It will investigate possible links between aggressive disease and social/environmental factors such as discrimination, early life adversity, and segregation.

The researchers will also analyze DNA and tumor samples to identify gene variants associated with aggressive prostate [cancer](#). Then they'll explore how those gene variants may interact with the social/environmental factors.

The scientists hope that unraveling all these complex interactions will allow for the development of tailored approaches to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

More information: The American Cancer Society has more on [prostate cancer](#).

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