

# Analysis shows that life expectancy varies widely by race/ethnicity group and by state

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A cross-sectional time-series analysis found that disparities in life expectancy compared to White Americans have increased for Black and Hispanic Americans. The authors report that life expectancy remains

lowest for Black Americans in almost every state. The findings are published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Researchers from the University of Washington studied death records and Census data to estimate [life expectancy](#) for selected race/ethnicity groups in [states](#) from 1990 to 2019. The researchers analyzed life expectancy data for the 3 largest race/ethnicity groups by state: Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black, and non-Hispanic White Americans. They found that although mean life expectancy in the United States increased from 1990 to 2010, it has remained flat since 2010. The data showed significant differences across race/ethnicity subgroups between and within states when life expectancy was examined by race/ethnicity groups rather than the average for an entire state. Although disparities across states as a whole decreased within each of the race/ethnicity groups studied, disparities across states increased over the past 3 decades. Over the same period, the racial/ethnic disparities in life expectancy decreased for most of the 23 states studied but increased for females in 7 states and males in 5 states. Life expectancy improved but remains lowest for non-Hispanic Black people for almost every state.

An accompanying editorial, authors from Washington University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill suggests that the results of this study highlight how stark differences in social and physical environments can drive health, well-being, and risk for death. The authors add that the recommendations made by the White House Equitable Data Working Group and the [policy statement](#) on racism from the American College of Physicians are important steps towards increasing access to and availability of the data necessary for measuring equity and inequity across and within all demographic groups. The authors call for future research to unpack the complex web of factors driving health and well-being by enabling better understanding of the places where they see persistent health disadvantage and advantage and the state-based explanations for these increasingly important differences

determining population risk and resilience.

**More information:** Study:

<https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M21-3956>

Editorial: <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-1777>

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