

Minority children less likely to have surgery than white children

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Minority children are significantly less likely to have had surgery in the

prior 12 months than White children, according to a study published in the December issue of the *Journal of Pediatric Surgery*.

Ethan L. Sanford, M.D., from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, and colleagues evaluated the odds of surgery among U.S. children in the past 12 months by race/ethnicity. The analysis included data from 219,098 children participating in the U.S. National Health Interview Survey (1999 to 2018).

The researchers found that overall, 4.9 percent of children received surgery. When adjusting for relevant covariates, Black (adjusted odds ratio, 0.54), Asian (adjusted odds ratio, 0.39), and Hispanic (adjusted odds ratio, 0.62) children had lower odds of surgery than White children. Emergent or urgent surgery was more likely among Hispanic children (adjusted odds ratio, 1.71).

"These data raise the concern that [minority children](#) are less likely to receive indicated surgery at the most opportune time. Additionally, if [surgery](#) is omitted or delayed, minority children may have worsening disease that then requires more emergent care, which carries more risk," Sanford said in a statement. "We hope that this work helps to reduce disparities in surgical access for minority children by raising awareness among clinicians, increasing monitoring so that any disparities can be identified expeditiously, stimulating rapid-cycle quality improvement when [disparities](#) are identified, and prompting further research."

More information: Ethan L. Sanford et al, Racial/ethnic differences in receipt of surgery among children in the United States, *Journal of Pediatric Surgery* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jpedsurg.2022.03.035](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpedsurg.2022.03.035)

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