

# Racial, ethnic disparities seen in postpartum emergency visits

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Black and Hispanic patients consistently experience higher odds of

postpartum emergency departments visits in New York state, according to a study published online March 21 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Haley Zarrin, from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, and colleagues sought to identify patient and hospital characteristics associated with postpartum emergency department visits. The analysis included data from 608,559 obstetric discharges from acute care hospitals in New York state from 2014 to 2016.

The researchers found that the median birth hospital postpartum emergency department visit rate was 6.3 percent. Asian patients had the lowest postpartum emergency department visit rates (3.99 percent), while Black patients had the highest (9.15 percent). Compared with White patients, odds of postpartum emergency department visits were greater for Black patients (odds ratio [OR], 1.31) and Hispanic patients (OR, 1.19). Compared with commercial insurance, odds were also higher for those with Medicare (OR, 1.55), Medicaid (OR, 1.37), or self-pay insurance (OR, 1.50). Compared with hospitals with more than 2,000 annual births, odds of a postpartum emergency department visit were higher for births that occurred at hospitals with fewer than 500 births per year (OR, 1.25). Odds were also higher for births that occurred at safety-net hospitals (OR, 1.43) and hospitals disproportionately serving racial and ethnic-minority populations (OR, 1.14).

"These findings support the urgent need to mitigate structural racism underlying maternal health disparities," the authors write.

**More information:** Haley Zarrin et al, Patient Sociodemographics and Comorbidities and Birth Hospital Characteristics Associated With Postpartum Emergency Department Care, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.3927](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.3927)

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