

Racial disparities in outcomes for pregnant and postpartum veterans and their infants

May 24 2023



journal dedicated to the diseases and conditions that hold greater risk for or are more prevalent among women, as well as diseases that present differently in women. Credit: Mary Ann Liebert Inc., publishers

A new study showed that despite there being no significant racial disparities in access or use of care during the perinatal period among veterans using Veterans Administration care, Black veterans were more likely than white veterans to experience postpartum re-hospitalization and to have a low-birth-weight infant. The study is published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Women's Health*.

Jodie Katon, Ph.D., MS, from VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, and coauthors, reported that Black [veterans](#) were 67% more likely than white veterans to have a postpartum re-hospitalization and 67% more likely to have a low-birth-weight infant.

"Cumulatively, our findings underscore the idea that access is necessary but not sufficient for ensuring health equity," concluded the investigators.

"The good news from this study, that access and use of perinatal care did not significantly differ between Black and white veterans using Veterans Administration care, is tempered by the racial disparities in outcomes for mothers and infants. More research is needed to explain these disparities," says Journal of Women's Health Editor-in-Chief Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA.

More information: Jodie G. Katon et al, Assessing Racial Disparities in Access, Use, and Outcomes for Pregnant and Postpartum Veterans and Their Infants in Veterans Health Administration, *Journal of Women's Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2022.0507](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2022.0507)

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Citation: Racial disparities in outcomes for pregnant and postpartum veterans and their infants (2023, May 24) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-05-racial-disparities-outcomes-pregnant-postpartum.html>

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