

Disparities in asthma prevalence, attacks, ED use examined during pandemic

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Black adults and children have the highest prevalence of asthma, although the disparities between Blacks and whites narrowed from 2019 to 2022, according to a research letter published online Dec. 19 in the

Annals of Internal Medicine.

Adam Gaffney, M.D., M.P.H., from Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts, and colleagues examined disparities in asthma morbidity nationwide using data from 120,698 adults and 30,708 children in the 2019 to 2022 National Health Interview Survey.

The researchers observed a slight increase in [asthma prevalence](#) among adults, from 8.0 percent in 2019 to 8.7 percent in 2022, which was driven by increases among white adults. Throughout the study period, Hispanic adults had the lowest prevalence and Black adults had the highest, although over time, there was a decrease seen in the adjusted difference between Black and white adults.

Overall, the asthma attack rate remained stable, but the relative adjusted differences between Black and white adults decreased. Asthma emergency department visit rates decreased overall; rates were consistently higher among Black than white adults, although the difference narrowed over time.

The prevalence of asthma was stable among children and was consistently highest among Black children. Asthma attacks decreased slightly through 2021, then increased, especially among whites, and emergency department visit rates decreased from 17.3 to 12.1 percent from 2019 to 2022, which was driven by decreases in Black and Hispanic [children](#).

"The narrowing asthma morbidity [disparities](#) through the pandemic suggest opportunities for mitigation; for example, improving [environmental conditions](#) or developing and equitably delivering vaccines against respiratory pathogens," the authors write.

More information: Adam Gaffney et al, Asthma Disparities in the

United States Narrowed During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings From a National Survey, 2019 to 2022, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.7326/M23-2100](https://doi.org/10.7326/M23-2100)

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