

COVID-19 study examines link between insurance, race and vaccination trends

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Research from recent graduate Brock Santi of the University of Hawai'i

at Manoa John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) explored the link between COVID-19, insurance coverage, race, ethnicity and vaccination, shedding light on previously unexplored aspects of the pandemic's impact in Hawai'i.

The study was [published in JAMA](#) on May 1. The study found different times during the pandemic provided disparities with different groups.

"We wanted to ensure that patients in the hospital, as soon as they were admitted for COVID-19, were receiving equal care," explained Santi, who graduated less than a year ago and is currently working with the Hawai'i Department of Health. With a focus on [internal medicine](#) and an interest in infectious diseases, he will soon begin an internship with Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i.

The study looked at more than 1,000 people. Researchers found no significant differences in outcomes based on insurance type, challenging preconceptions about health care access. However, disparities among racial and [ethnic groups](#) surfaced, with Filipinos facing a higher risk of in-hospital mortality. The availability of vaccines proved to be a turning point, significantly reducing disparities in outcomes across different ethnicities.

Santi's journey from [medical student](#) to published researcher highlights the importance of passion and dedication in pursuing meaningful research. "Find something that you're passionate about," he advises future students.

As Santi looks to the future, his enthusiasm for research remains, with plans to delve into RSV and flu research to continue making strides in understanding and combating infectious diseases.

More information: Brock M. Santi et al, COVID-19 Hospitalization

in Hawai'i and Patterns of Insurance Coverage, Race and Ethnicity, and Vaccination, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). DOI: [10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3696](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3696)

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