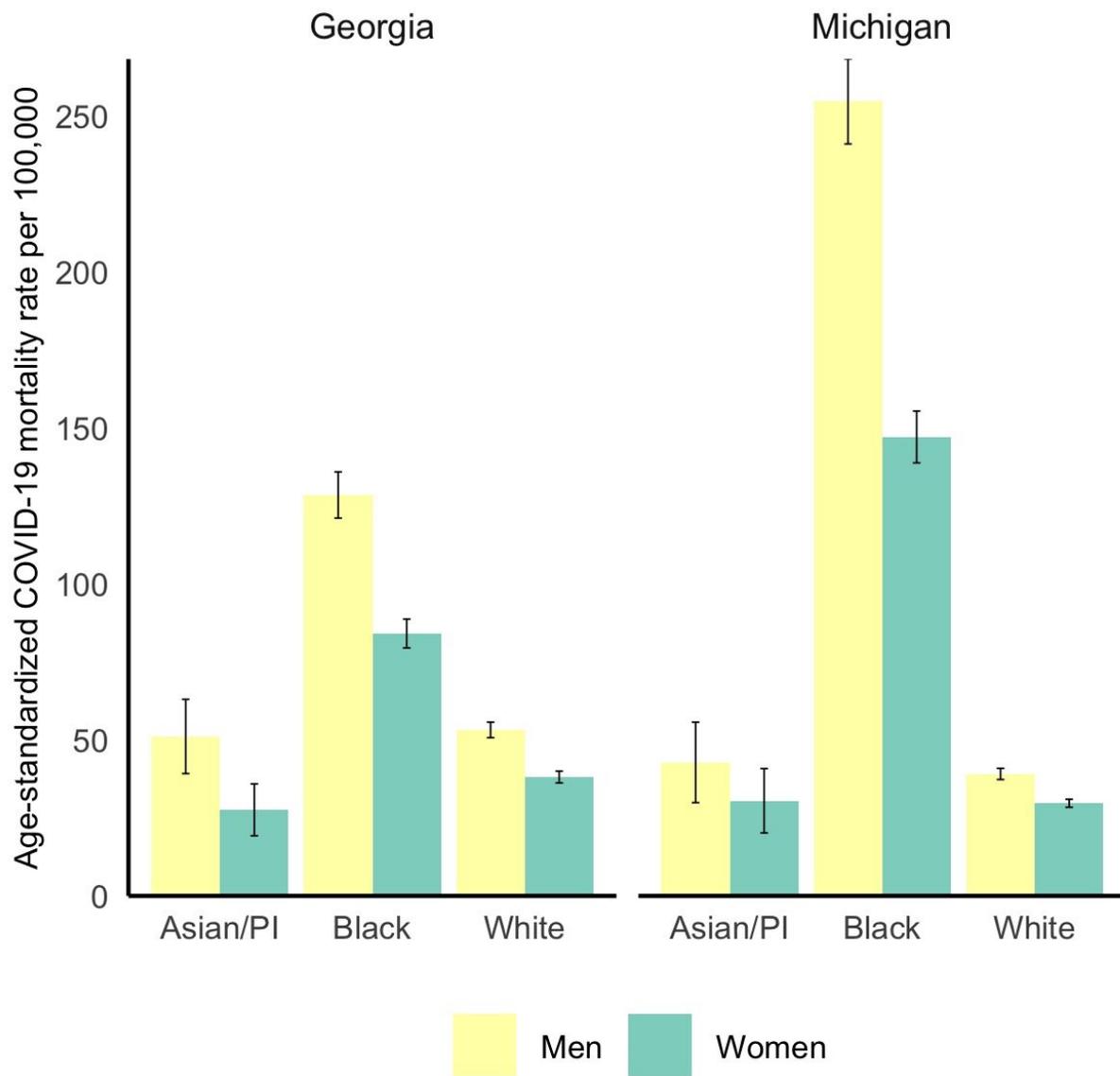


# Black women are dying of COVID-19 at rates higher than men in other racial/ethnic groups

April 6 2021



Age-standardized COVID-19 mortality rate per 100,000. Credit: GenderSci Lab at Harvard University

A new paper in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* published by the GenderSci Lab at Harvard University shows that Black women are dying at significantly higher rates than white men, and that disparities in mortality rates among women of all races are greater than those between white women and white men.

The study is the first to quantify the inequities in COVID-19 mortality looking at both race and sex group.

"This analysis complicates the simple narrative that men are dying at greater rates of COVID-19 than women," said lead author Tamara Rushovich, Harvard Ph.D. candidate in population health sciences and lab member at the GenderSci Lab.

Results show that the common belief that men with COVID-19 fare more poorly than women varies in magnitude across [social groups](#) defined by race/ethnicity.

Key findings of the study include:

- Black women have COVID-19 mortality rates that are almost 4 times higher than that of white men and 3 times higher than that of Asian men, as well as higher than white and Asian women.
- Black men have far higher mortality rates than any other sex and racial group, including over 6 times higher than the rate among white men.
- The disparity in [mortality rates](#) between Black women and white women is over 3 times the disparity between white men and

white women.

- The disparity between Black men and Black women is larger than the disparity between [white men](#) and [white women](#).

It is well understood that racism and social inequities, not genetics, are responsible for racial disparities in COVID-19 mortality. However, many researchers focus on differences in biology to explain the sex disparity in COVID-19 mortality. This paper's findings challenge the sole focus on biology as an explanation for sex differences in COVID-19 mortality and argue that societal factors related to gender in combination with racism and socioeconomic stratification are important explanatory factors.

**More information:** Tamara Rushovich et al, Sex Disparities in COVID-19 Mortality Vary Across US Racial Groups, *Journal of General Internal Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1007/s11606-021-06699-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-021-06699-4)

Provided by Harvard University

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