

Life Expectancy Shorter for Black People

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African Americans don't live as long as their white counterparts, according to a study published in the journal *Health Services Research* and reported by [Medical News Today](#).

For the study, researchers examined death certificate information for more than 17 million individuals in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, from 1997 to 2004. Scientists recorded sex, race and ethnicity, age at death, and the states where each individual was born, lived and died.

Researchers found the overall national life expectancy for black men was almost 68 years compared with a life span of nearly 75 years for white men. The overall life expectancy for black women was almost 75 compared with nearly 80 years for white women. And that gap was smaller between women than men in every state.

What's more, in states showing the smallest difference in life expectancy, it wasn't because African Americans lived longer; it was because whites were dying younger than the national average.

Researchers suggest government agencies use this data to track and measure disparities in health outcomes. They could then adequately focus and fund programs that help key populations. In addition, scientists suggested state governments evaluate these race-based longevity differences to formulate appropriate health policies.

It's important to note that a smaller disparity in life expectancy didn't mean that vulnerable populations were doing better, said Nazleen Bharmal, MD, lead researcher of the study and a clinical instructor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

"In our study, we show that the reason there are small disparities in life expectancy is because white populations are doing as poorly as black populations, and the goal in these states should be to raise health equity for all groups," Bharmal said.

Could disparities in wealth be causing disparities in lifespan? [Click here](#) to learn more.
