

Coronavirus & Racism in the Healthcare Field

The coronavirus pandemic has caused the healthcare field to take a massive step forward to assist patients who are infected by the virus in the United States and across the world. One of the most important things that an individual thinks about when being tested positive for a virus is the best care available to recover as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, racism has an impact upon the treatment of African Americans in the United States' healthcare field, and the coronavirus exposes this hard truth on a much larger scale. The coronavirus has the potential of not only exposing racism in the healthcare field, but also in our current society due to the unhealthier environments, jobs, and homes that many African Americans have.

[Racial discrimination](#) occurs in a variety of different ways in the United States that puts African Americans at a disadvantage for things in which they should have equal access. Specifically, racism in the healthcare field can be commonly identified as a form of institutional discrimination, which is one of the biggest ways that discrimination enters our current society. It is important to consider how our healthcare system has been associated with racism before this pandemic began as it can allow us to make better predictions about how the coronavirus may have an effect on this situation in the future.

A [report by Martha Hostetter and Sarah Klein](#) explored disparities in health care for African Americans. They shared data produced by Nina Martin and Renee Montagne indicating that "a black woman is 22% more likely to die from heart disease than a white woman, 71% more likely to perish from cervical cancer, and 243% more likely to die from pregnancy or child birth-related causes." The same report showed that between 2005-2011, black women who were diagnosed with breast cancer had an 80% survival rate compared to the 91% survival rate of white women. According to a review on [Healthcare Provider Racism](#), professional reviewers reviewed an immense number of studies on this topic and found evidence in over two-thirds of the studies for racism among healthcare providers. This review included direct and indirect measures to look into each study that was used. These statistics show that there is clearly significant evidence that racism is affecting the treatment of African American patients.

A possible counter argument to my claim is that people may make the argument that African Americans are not treated differently in the healthcare field but have lower survival rates and recoveries due to the poor environments in which many of them live. This is definitely true! I personally agree that environmental factors have an effect on these numbers but the main reason in which African Americans do not always have the best environment, job, car, or even house is because of our racial inequalities from our

past. Our past is shaping our current society by making it more difficult for African Americans to receive equal opportunities with jobs, housing, and other things. The past is not only shaping these opportunities, but also the way African Americans are being treated in the medical field as a result of their differing circumstances. It is a strong mix between the racism that exists in the healthcare field and environmental factors in which African Americans live in.

African Americans are more likely to “provide [high risk essential services](#), including low-wage jobs that cannot be done remotely and have fewer financial resources to draw on in the event of health problems or economic disruption”. These are all factors that create the potential for many underlying diseases which as a result may lead to [higher COVID-19 African American mortality](#). In a research article called “[Racism in Healthcare](#)”, it is stated that the chronic stress induced by personal experiences with discrimination is “one mechanism by which institutional racism may affect health”. This quote is used to explain how racism itself and its impact on individuals can lead to health problems on its own. This is an additional effect on top of environmental factors and racism in the healthcare field that may possibly cause African Americans to be more susceptible to the coronavirus.

After recognizing that racism plays a role in the healthcare field and in our society today, we can recognize how some statistics already show that African Americans are being impacted by the coronavirus more significantly compared to other people. According to an article titled “[Why Coronavirus Is Killing African-Americans More Than Others](#),” columnist Jamelle Bouie writes that 70% of coronavirus deaths in Louisiana are African Americans while they are only 30% of the general population. In Alabama, African Americans hold 44% of deaths but are only 26% of the population. These statistics are heavily linked to the fact that African Americans are more likely to “work in service sector jobs, least likely to own a car and least likely to own their homes.” This means that they are most likely to be in close contact with others due to their working and traveling conditions. In addition, majority black counties have had infection rates [three times the rate](#) of majority white counties so far.

These statistics show that the coronavirus is already having a bigger impact on African Americans compared to other ethnicities in the United States. The causes are due to racism in the healthcare field, unhealthy environmental conditions, and even the effects of discrimination on health. History will always have an impact on the present! These truly show how our society and healthcare field are still in a position that requires a lot of work to be done for statistics to not show significant differences. This evidence can be used to make my strong prediction on the claim that the coronavirus

will truly expose these problems that are hidden within our society because it has the potential to provide astonishing statistics when it is over.