COVID-19 More Severe for Some Minorities at Different Stages of the Disease

Black patients are more likely to require hospitalization, while Asian patients are at greater risk of dying in the hospital.

October 19, 2020 By Alicia Green

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the coronavirus has affected minorities more than white people. Now, new findings published in the journal EClinicalMedicine further highlight racial disparities in connection with COVID-19, showing that Black and Asian patients bear an increased risk for severe disease at different stages of the illness as compared with their white counterparts, reports King's College London.

For the study, researchers reviewed data from 1,827 adults who were admitted to King's College Hospital in London with COVID-19 diagnoses between March 1 and June 2. Investigators checked mortality in this group, while also comparing about 872 admitted patients with a group of matched controls who resided in the same region of inner Southeast London.

Of the 872 admitted patients, 41% were Black, 33.7% were white, 12.6% were mixed race/ethnicity and 5.6% were Asian.

The findings showed that Black people and those of mixed ethnicity faced a threefold higher risk of requiring admission to the hospital for COVID-19 than white individuals living in the same region. After adjusting for coexisting conditions and poverty, Black patients still exhibited a 2.2- to 2.7-fold higher risk of hospital admission. But their survival rates didn't significantly differ from those of white patients.

Hospital admission rates for Asian patients were similar to those for white patients. However, Asians were more likely to die in the hospital and to need to be admitted to the intensive care unit than people from the other groups.

In addition, researchers noted that minority patients were 10 to 15 years younger than white patients with more comorbidities, in particular diabetes. This led scientists to conclude that such health problems, along with socioeconomic issues, contributed to COVID-19's impact on minority communities.

Still, scientists believe that other factors, such as those connected with biology, may also play a key role in how the virus affects people of different ethnicities in disparate ways.

One expert, Ajay Shah, a professor of cardiology and the head of the School of Cardiovascular Medicine & Sciences at King's College, suggested that biological factors are important and that we may need different treatment strategies for different ethnic groups.

For related coverage, read "Minorities Are Underrepresented in COVID-19 Clinical Trials" and "How States Are Addressing COVID-19 Racial Disparities."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.covidhealth.com/article/covid19-severe-minorities-different-stages-disease