

AFRICAN-AMERICANS & CANCER

WHO WE ARE

In 1999, nearly 35 million African Americans constituted almost 13% of the total United States population. Most African Americans reside in the South (55 percent), 19 percent live in the Northeast, 18 percent in the Midwest and 8 percent in the West. In 1999, 33 percent of the African American population was under age 18, compared with 24 percent of the non-Hispanic White population. In March 1999, their unemployment rate was more than twice that for Whites (9 percent and 4 percent, respectively). Married-couple families were less likely than their White counterparts to have an annual income of \$50,000 or more. The poverty rate is higher for African Americans than for Whites (26 versus 8 percent, respectively). The African American community is equally as diverse as other ethnic and racial populations, and includes people from Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, the West Indies and other parts of the Caribbean.

In African Americans, about 130,800 new cancer cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2001. Further, cancer is the second leading cause of death, surpassed only by heart disease. In 2001 it is estimated that 63,500 African Americans will die from cancer. In general, African Americans with cancer have shorter survival than Whites at all stages of diagnosis. ⁽¹⁾

STATISTICAL CANCER FACTS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

- ◆ Among African American children, ages 1-14 years, cancer ranks third among the leading causes of death surpassed only by accidents and homicides. ⁽¹⁾
- ◆ Lung cancer among African Americans accounts for the largest number of cancer deaths among both men (30%) and women (21%), followed by prostate cancer in men (19%) and breast cancer in women (19%). ⁽¹⁾
- ◆ For both African American men and women, cancer of the colon and rectum and cancer of the pancreas rank third and fourth as leading causes of cancer death. ⁽¹⁾
- ◆ In 2001, the most commonly diagnosed cancer in African American men is expected to be prostate cancer (37%), followed by cancers of the lung (15%), and of the colon and rectum (9%). ⁽¹⁾
- ◆ In 2001 the most common cancers among African American women will be breast cancer (31%), followed by lung (12%) and colon and rectum cancers (12%). ⁽¹⁾



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Project Director
Nicholas K. Iammarino, PhD
Research Assistant
Jose Canseco
Editorial Assistant
Patricia Chalela, MPH



AFRICAN-AMERICANS & CANCER

- ◆ During the period 1989-1994, Whites experienced higher 5-year relative survival rates for all cancers than African Americans, regardless of stage at diagnosis. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Cancers among African Americans are more frequently diagnosed after the cancer has metastasized and spread to regional or distant sites. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among African American women, exceeded only by lung cancer. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ In 2001, approximately 19,300 new cases are expected among African American women while 5,800 are expected to die from breast cancer. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Despite the stabilization of rates, cancer mortality among African American women is still approximately 28% higher than White women. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Colon and rectum cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death among both African American men and women. An estimated 6,800 African Americans are expected to die from these types of cancers in 2001. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ African Americans have the highest death rate from colon and rectum cancer of any racial or ethnic group in the US. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Death rates for cancer of the colon and rectum among African Americans are about 30% higher than among Whites and more than two times higher than for Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Hispanics. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Colon and rectum cancer is the third most common cancer incidence among African Americans, both men and women. In 2001, 14,100 African Americans (6,500 men and 7,600 women) are expected to be diagnosed with the disease. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ According to data for patients diagnosed during 1989-1996, the 5-year relative survival rate from colon and rectum cancer among African Americans was 52%, compared to 62% among Whites. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in African Americans, and is expected to cause 9,800 deaths in men and 6,300 deaths in women in 2001. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Cancer of the lung is the second most common cancer in African Americans with about 10,600 African American men and 7,600 African American women expected to be diagnosed with it in 2001. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ African American men have significantly higher lung cancer incidence rates than other racial and ethnic populations. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among African American men with approximately 6,100 African American men expected to die from it in 2001. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ African American men have far higher death rates from prostate cancer than any other racial or ethnic group. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Approximately 25,300 newly diagnosed cases of prostate cancer are expected to occur in 2001, accounting for 37% of all cancers diagnosed among African American men. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Although prostate cancer incidence rates are high in Whites, the rate for African Americans is 60% higher. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ The overall 5-year relative survival rate for prostate cancer among African American men is 87%. Survival rates for Whites are considerably higher than those of African Americans. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ Both incidence and mortality rates from lung cancer are higher among African American men than in Whites, even though they begin smoking at an older age and smoke fewer cigarettes per day. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ During the period 1960-1962, 42% of African American women were overweight, compared with 22% of African American men. ⁽¹⁾ By 1998, 64% of African American women were overweight and 32% were characterized as obese. ⁽¹⁾
 - ◆ For all cancer sites combined, cancer death rates among African Americans are higher than other racial or ethnic populations in the US. ⁽²⁾
 - ◆ African American women who are diagnosed with breast cancer are less likely than White women to survive five years after diagnosis, the rate among African American women is 71%, compared to 86% among Whites. ⁽²⁾
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AFRICAN-AMERICANS & CANCER

- ◆ When colon and rectum cancer among African Americans is detected at a localized stage, the survival rate is 84%; however, only 33% of cancers are detected at a localized stage. ⁽²⁾
- ◆ In 1997, African American high school students were somewhat less likely to eat fruits and vegetables and more likely to eat high-fat foods compared to White students. ⁽³⁾
- ◆ National data suggest that the prevalence of smoking among African American youth is on the rise. According to the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBSS), cigarette smoking increased in 1999 among African American high school students approximately 34% among males and 23% among females. ⁽³⁾
- ◆ Nearly 31% (30.7 %) of African Americans have incomes below the poverty level. ⁽⁴⁾
- ◆ Minorities with cancer often suffer more pain due to under-medication. Nearly 62% of patients at institutions serving predominately African American patients were not prescribed adequate analgesics. ⁽⁵⁾
- ◆ In 1995, 5.7 million African Americans were smokers in the United States. ⁽⁶⁾ In 1997, 32.1% of African American men and 22.4% of women reported that they were current smokers. This prevalence of smoking is considerably higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal of 12%. ⁽⁷⁾
- ◆ Data from the 1998 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) show that more than one-third of African American adults (33.8%) reported no leisure-time physical activity with African American women more likely than men to be physically inactive (39.9% versus 25.9% respectively). ⁽⁸⁾
- ◆ Twenty-eight percent of African Americans reported having a proctoscopic examination within the past five years. Although the rate of colorectal screening tests has improved, the percentage of African Americans being screened still remains low. ⁽⁹⁾

Additional facts and information on African American populations can be found at <http://iccnetwork.org/cancerfacts>

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