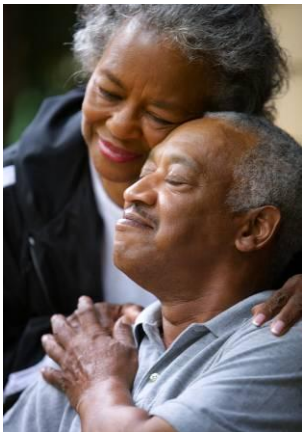
The American Cancer Society

Cancer Disparities

In Culturally Diverse Communities

Racial and ethnic minorities and the medically underserved are more likely to develop cancer, and die from it, than the general U.S. population.

Cancer health disparities are defined as differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of cancer and related adverse health conditions, beyond what would be expected under equitable circumstances that exist among specific population groups in the United States.



African Americans

For a full report, please see:
The American Cancer Society's *Cancer Facts & Figures for African Americans 2011-2012*.

Mortality:

- African Americans have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial and ethnic group in the U.S. for most cancers.
- Although the overall racial disparity in cancer death rates is decreasing, in 2007, the death rate for all cancers combined continued to be 32% higher in African American men and 16% higher in African American women than in white men and women.
- African Americans are less likely than whites to survive 5 years after a diagnosis with most forms of cancer, at any stage of diagnosis.
- About 65,540 African Americans are expected to die from cancer in 2011.

Diagnosis:

- About 168,900 new cancer cases were expected to be diagnosed among African Americans in 2011.
- The most commonly diagnosed cancers among African American men are prostate (40%), lung (15%), and colon and rectum (9%). Among African American women, the most common cancers are breast (34%), lung (13%), and colon and rectum (11%).

Changing Trends:

- Death rates among African Americans for all cancers combined have been decreasing since the early 1990s. The decline has been larger among men than among women.

Terminology

Incidence: The number of people newly diagnosed with cancer in a given time period.

African Americans, continued

Cancer Types:

- An estimated 26,840 new cases of **breast cancer** are expected to occur among African American women in 2011.
- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second most common cause of cancer death (surpassed only by lung cancer) among African American women.
- Incidence rates of breast cancer are higher among African American women under 45 as compared to white women under 45.
- African American women have a lower incidence rate of breast cancer than white women---YET African American women are more likely to die of breast cancer than white women.
- An estimated 16,650 cases of **colorectal cancer**—the third most common cancer among African American men and women--are expected to occur in 2011.
- An estimated 35,110 cases of **prostate cancer** are expected to occur in 2011, accounting for 40% of all cancers diagnosed in African American men.
- It is estimated that one in five African American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

Terminology

Prevalence: The total number of people who have cancer at any point in time.

Asian Americans

For more information, please see:

"Cancer Incidence, Mortality, and Associated Risk Factors Among Asian Americans of Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese Ethnicities."

Incidence and Mortality:

- Asian Americans have the lowest cancer incidence and death rates when compared to non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, and Hispanics in the US.
- However, cancer is the leading cause of death among Asian Americans, with heart disease being first among all other racial and ethnic groups.

Geographic Differences:

- Cancer affects Asian Americans in very different ways, based on country of origin.

Lower screening rates:

- According to the Intercultural Cancer Council, Southeast Asian women have higher invasive cervical cancer rates and lower Pap testing frequencies than most other ethnic groups in the U.S.
- Young Asian women have lower participation in breast self examination and pap tests.

Terminology

Mortality: Lives lost to cancer within a given time.

Hispanics/Latinos

For a full report, please see:
The American Cancer Society's *Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanics/Latinos 2009-2011*.

Incidence:

- About 47,900 new cancer cases in men and 51,000 cases in women were expected to be diagnosed among Hispanic/Latinos in 2009.
- The four most common cancers (breast, prostate, colorectal, and lung) account for almost half of all cancer cases among Hispanic/Latinos.
- Hispanic/Latinos are more likely to be diagnosed at a later state of the disease.

Mortality:

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death for Hispanic/Latinos in the US, accounting for about 20% of all deaths.
- About 14,400 Hispanic/Latino men and 14,400 Hispanic/Latino women were expected to die from cancer in 2009.
- Overall, about 1 in 2 Hispanic/Latino men and 1 in 3 Hispanic/Latino women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime.

Cancer types:

- Hispanic/Latinos have lower incidence rates for all cancers (the number of people newly diagnosed) when compared to whites.
- However, Hispanics have higher rates of cancers for uterine cervix, liver, gallbladder, and stomach cancers.
- Breast cancer is more frequently diagnosed at a later stage in Hispanic/Latino women than in non-Hispanics, which results in few options for life-saving cancer treatment. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis for Hispanic/Latino women.
- Colorectal cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in both Hispanic/Latino men and women.

Access to care:

- Hispanic/Latinos are less likely to have health insurance than any other racial or ethnic group.
- The proportion of Hispanic/Latino women under age 65 who report no regular source of medical care is almost twice that of non-Hispanic white women.

Geographic Differences:

- Cancer rates can differ among Hispanic/Latinos depending on their country of origin.

American Indians/Alaska Natives

For more information, please see:

"*Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, 1975-2004, Featuring Cancer in American Indians and Alaska Natives*."

Geographic Differences:

- Cancer types and rates differ among different parts of the country.

Mortality:

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death among American Indians and Alaska Natives over the age of 45, according to the Intercultural Cancer Council.
- American Indians and Alaska Natives have higher mortality rates for kidney cancer than in any other racial or ethnic population.

Diagnosis:

- Lung and colorectal cancer incidence rates for American Indian/Alaska Native men and women are significantly higher than they are for white people.
- American Indian/Alaska Native women in all regions of the US are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with late stage breast or cervical cancer that is more difficult to treat.
- From 1999 to 2004, new diagnoses for cancers of the kidney, stomach, liver, cervix, and gallbladder were higher in American Indian/Alaska Native than in white populations.
- Most groups of American Indian/Alaska Natives are less likely than whites to be diagnosed in the early stages of colorectal cancer.

Access to Care:

- Access to health care is a problem for American Indians/Alaska Natives, who are second only to Hispanics in lacking health insurance, according to the Intercultural Cancer Council.

For more information on the work of the Health Equity Department
to reduce cancer disparities, please contact us:

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American Cancer Society®

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by finding cures, and by fighting back.

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