

# Racial Disparities in Asthma Quality of Life

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# Objectives

- **Prior work:**
- **Overall quality of life differs for asthmatics vs. non-asthmatics**
- **Traditional health indicators (hospitalization, death) only affect a small percentage of people**
- **What are more sensitive measures?**

# What is the BRFSS?

- **Collaboration between state health departments and federal government**
- **Began in 1984 with 15 states (including Illinois)**
- **Full participation by 1997**

# What is the BRFSS?

- Federally(CDC) coordinated with state input
- Field implementation responsibility of states
- Variations from default permissible with input and approval from CDC
- Design : core questionnaires with modules

# Asthma Module

- **Added to alternating year core in 2000**
- **Expanded question module available**
- **Alternating year core questions asked of split sample every year in Illinois**

# Methodology

- Chicago data for 2000-2002 aggregated
- Current asthma: Yes to BOTH “have you ever had asthma” and “do you still have asthma”
- Cross- tabulations with other modules

# RESULTS

- **Total n=2,051**
- **Ethnicity**
  - **42% White**
  - **30% Black**
  - **17% Hispanic**

# RESULTS

- **Ever Asthma**
  - White - 11.8%
  - Black – 13.8%
  - Hispanic – 9.1%
- **Current Asthma**
  - White 8%
  - Black 10.4%
  - Hispanic 6.4%

# Asthma Disparities and Quality of Life

- **Total persons with asthma**
  - White 73
  - Black 67

# Asthma Disparities and Quality of Life

- **Having Health Insurance**
  - **26% of Blacks reported No Health Insurance**
  - **6% of Whites reported No Health Insurance**

Did not divide into insurance type due to sample size

# Asthma Disparities and Quality of Life

- **Blacks and Whites had similar access to health care**
  - **One Usual Place of Care**
    - **Black 85%, White 77%**
  - **Personal Doctor**
    - **Black 83%, White 81%**
  - **Avoided Dr. Because of Cost**
    - Black 16%, White 14%**

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# Asthma Disparities and Quality of Life

- The majority of the respondents reported at least one day of poor health in the past 30 days
- Blacks were not more likely than Whites to report any poor days of health, but had a longer duration of poor health
  - 8 + days of poor physical health in past month: Blacks 26%, Whites 12%

# Asthma Disparities and Quality of Life

- **Blacks were not more likely than Whites to identify themselves as having a disability, but were more likely to report longer duration recent activity limitation due to health problems**
  - **Activity Limitation due to physical or mental condition: Blacks 31%, Whites 33%**
  - **8+ days of health related activity limitation in past 30 days: Blacks 27%, Whites 13%**

# Asthma Disparities and Quality of Life

- Limited data (one year) suggests that Blacks were more likely to be sedentary or irregularly active than Whites (67% vs. 33%)
- Blacks were as likely to receive flu shots as Whites, although overall rates were under 50% (46% vs.. 42%)

# Conclusions

- **Blacks had a moderately elevated prevalence of asthma compared to Whites**
- **For asthmatics**
  - **Despite differences in insurance coverage, Blacks and Whites had similar perceived health care access, and were equally as likely to receive flu shots**
  - **Blacks were more likely to report poor health, health related activity limitation, and inactive lifestyle**

# Conclusions

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- **Most asthmatics have access to some source of care**
- **Focus on quality of care is critical to reducing asthma disparities**

# Limitations

- **Small sample size**
- **Missing data on race**
- **Non-landline coverage (no phone, mobile-only)**