Infant Mortality among the Black Population as Compared to the General Population in Massachusetts

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Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) by Race
Massachusetts, 2012-2018 average

(Source: Smithwick, n.d.)
What is Infant Mortality?

Death of an infant before their first birthday.

Number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births.
What is a Health Disparity?

- Incidence
- Prevalence
- Adverse Health Conditions
- Burden of disease
- Mortality

(Health Disparities, NHLBI, NIH, 2017)
Non-Hispanic Blacks/African Americans have 2.3 times the infant mortality rate as Non-Hispanic Whites.

1. (Infant Mortality and African Americans - The Office of Minority Health, 2018)  
2. (Weller & Roberts, 2021)
Causes/Factors

1. (“Complex Justice,” 2017)  
2. (Pregnancy & Prenatal Care, n.d.)  
3. (Sockalingam & Kurdyak, 2015)
People of color are more likely to live in poverty-stricken neighborhoods by a host of historical factors that facilitate segregation.

1. (Birth-Outcomes-in-Boston-Final-Case.Pdf, n.d.)  
2. (Lange, 2021)  
3. (Houseman, 2015)
Unemployment Rates at a Local Level

Whites tend to be employed at higher rates than Blacks at every educational level.

Occupation segregation pushes black American women into low-paying jobs, where they cannot provide for their child.
White households have a median net worth of $247,500, while Black households have a median net worth of just $8.
Prenatal Care
Checkups with OBGYN, lab tests, ultrasounds, education

Postnatal Care
Checkups, screenings, education

The Expense of American Healthcare

Low Birth Weight

1. (Low Birthweight, 2021)  2. (Shop, n.d.)  3. (Rosenberg & Miles, n.d.)  4. (Staff et al., 2017)
Lack of Quality Access to Mental Health Treatment

Why?

1. African Americans Have Limited Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care, 2017
2. Why Mental Health Care Is Stigmatized in Black Communities, 2019
3. Ward et al., 2013
4. Lange, 2021
5. Racial Inequalities in Homelessness, by the Numbers, 2020
6. “Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity,” 2020

Stigma against mental health treatment

Distrust in healthcare from intergenerational trauma

Poverty rates are increasing
Maternal Mental Health Conditions Increases the Risk of Infant Mortality

### Preterm and low-weight births

- Risk factor for infant mortality
- Potential intrauterine mechanism

### Increased risk for infant mortality in normal-weight births

Mental illness increases the risk of infant mortality in normal-weight births.

A need to address maternal mental health conditions.

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1. (Adane et al., 2020)  
2. (White & Gladden, 2016)  
3. (Know the Role the Placenta Plays in Pregnancy, 2020)  
4. (“Improving Birth Equity in California’s Health Care System,” 2021)
How does this link to black mothers?

Postpartum depression rates

2. (Neighmond, 2013)
Solutions to Low Socioeconomic Status

Bring attention to wealth difference

Identify and stop implicit biases

Lessen financial instability

 Enhance support for families before and after birth

Solution to Lack of Natal Care

1. (Gorobets, November)  
2. (gioco, 2020)  
3. (Dave Gandy, 2017)  
4. (Pregnancy and HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, & TB Prevention | CDC, 2020)  
5. (Pregnancy & Prenatal Care, n.d.)
Solutions to Maternal Mental Health

Psychoeducation and community awareness

Reduce stigma

Increase maternal support

More culturally competent doctors

1. (Ward et al., 2013)
2. (Counselling for Maternal and Newborn Health Care, 2013)
3. (Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups, 2020)
4. (Mental Health Stigma, 2020)
5. (“Distribution of Allopathic Medical School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity,” 2021)
7. (The Risks for Black Women and Their Health During COVID-19, 2021)
Summary

Socioeconomic Status

Mental health

Natal Care

1. (Okhifun, n.d.)  
2. (Novoa & Taylor, n.d.)  
3. (Why Mental Health Care Is Stigmatized in Black Communities, 2019)
Thank you for listening!
Questions?
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- Neighmond, P. (2013, March 13). Postpartum Depression Affects 1 In 7 Mothers. NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2013/03/13/174214166/postpartum-depression-affects-1-in-7-women


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