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Black-White Differentials in Cause-Specific Mortality in the United States during the 1980s: The Role of Medical Care and Health Behaviors

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine black-white differences in cause-specific mortality during the 1980s when black-white disparities in mortality widened in the United States. We focus on deaths due to causes of death amenable to medical intervention, those due to health behaviors or residential location, and all other causes combined. At younger ages, we treat cardiovascular disease, stroke, and forms of cancer not amenable to medical or behavioral intervention as distinct causes. We conduct separate analyses by gender and age group. Causes of death amenable to medical intervention and those linked to health behaviors and residential location accounted for over 50% of the absolute black-white difference in male and female mortality at ages 25-44 and 45-74, but somewhat less than 50% of the black-white difference in female mortality at these older ages. The relative black excess risk was most pronounced for causes amenable to medical intervention with and without intervention, and for socio-demographic characteristics.

Keywords

Mortality, Death, Causes of death, Blacks, Whites, African Americans, Medical Care, Health behavior, Disparities, Whites, Residential location, Disease, Health Behaviors, Socio-demographic characteristics, Socioeconomic differences, Race, Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Health outcomes, Health surveys, Public health, National Longitudinal Mortality Study, Current Population Surveys, National Death Institute, International Classification of Disease