



Diversity Committee

Asthma Fact Sheet

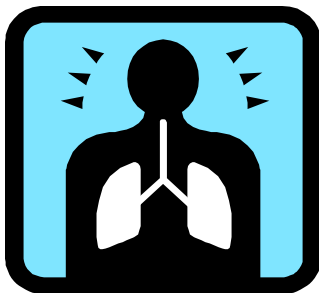
According to the American Lung Association (2007) in 2004 it was estimated that 20.5 million Americans currently have asthma and of these, 11.7 million Americans had an asthma attack. Asthma can be a life threatening disease if not properly managed.

What Is Asthma?

Asthma is defined as a “chronic inflammatory pulmonary disorder that is characterized by reversible obstruction of the airways” (Merck Medicus, 2001).

Environmental Triggers

- Allergens
pollens, mold spores, pet dander and dust mites
- Cleaning solutions
- Air pollution
- Tobacco smoke
- Exercise
- Exertion
- Weather changes
- Strong emotions related to stress, anxiety may also contribute to the onset of asthma symptoms (WebMD, 2007).



Asthma cannot be cured, but most people with asthma can control it so that they have few and infrequent symptoms and can live active lives.

Racial Disparities

African Americans

African Americans have the highest asthma rates than any other ethnic group (ALA, 2007)

Rates

- Prevalence rate almost 38 percent higher than among Whites
- 4.8 million African Americans diagnosed with asthma in their lifetime
 - 3.4 million currently have asthma
 - 2 million experienced an asthma attack in the past year
- In 2001, African Americans were three times more likely to die from asthma than were Whites

Hispanic/Latino

Rates

- over 2.9 million Hispanic Americans had been diagnosed with asthma in their lifetime.
- Over 1.7 million Hispanic Americans reported that they currently have asthma
 - 1.1 million of them experienced an asthma attack in the past year
- Asthma prevalence rates in Hispanics were significantly lower than in non-Hispanic African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites (ALA, 2007)

(accurate data is unavailable for Asian Americans/
Pacific Islanders/American Indians)

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Need for improvement in the delivery of care

- African American and poor children are at higher risk for:
 - activity limitation, more severe activity limitation, and relative underuse of ambulatory health care
- African American children living in poverty are at highest risk. Targeted interventions to reduce the burden of asthma morbidity in this population are likely to reduce disparities in asthma morbidity and overall childhood asthma morbidity.

Study Highlight

The University of Pennsylvania Hospital analyzed records of 7,726 white, African-American and Hispanic children up to age 19 who were admitted to Pennsylvania hospitals in 2001 for asthma symptoms. “Ninety percent of the African-American children had an emergency asthma condition compared with 60 percent of white and 64 percent of Hispanic children. African-American children were more than twice as likely to have severe asthma symptoms as whites” (Fauntleroy, 2007).

Black and Latino children had a more severe asthma status and lower frequency of use of preventive asthma medications than white children within the same managed Medicaid populations. Increasing the use of preventive medications is a natural focus for reducing racial disparities in asthma.

Asthma Incidence

- Estimated 1.7 million diagnosed African Americans had an [asthma attack](#) in America 1998 (CBCF Health Organization, 2004)
- 26% higher rate of [asthma attacks](#) in African American children than white in America (CBCF Health Organization, 2004)

Asthma Current (Prevalence) & Mortality¹

Table adapted from the American Lung Association 2007
Note: prevalence rate is in parentheses

	Total	White	Black
Males	8,461,150 (62.2)	6,479,924 (59.4)	1,386,899 (84.9)
Females	11,564,566 (81.0)	9,001,143 (79.0)	1,968,759 (105.0)
Total	20,025,716 (71.8)	15,475,067 (69.4)	3,355,658 (95.7)

References:

- American Lung Association. (2007). *Asthma Fact Sheet*. Retrieved May 10, 2007 from <http://www.lungusa.org/>
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