

Prostate Cancer and Black Men

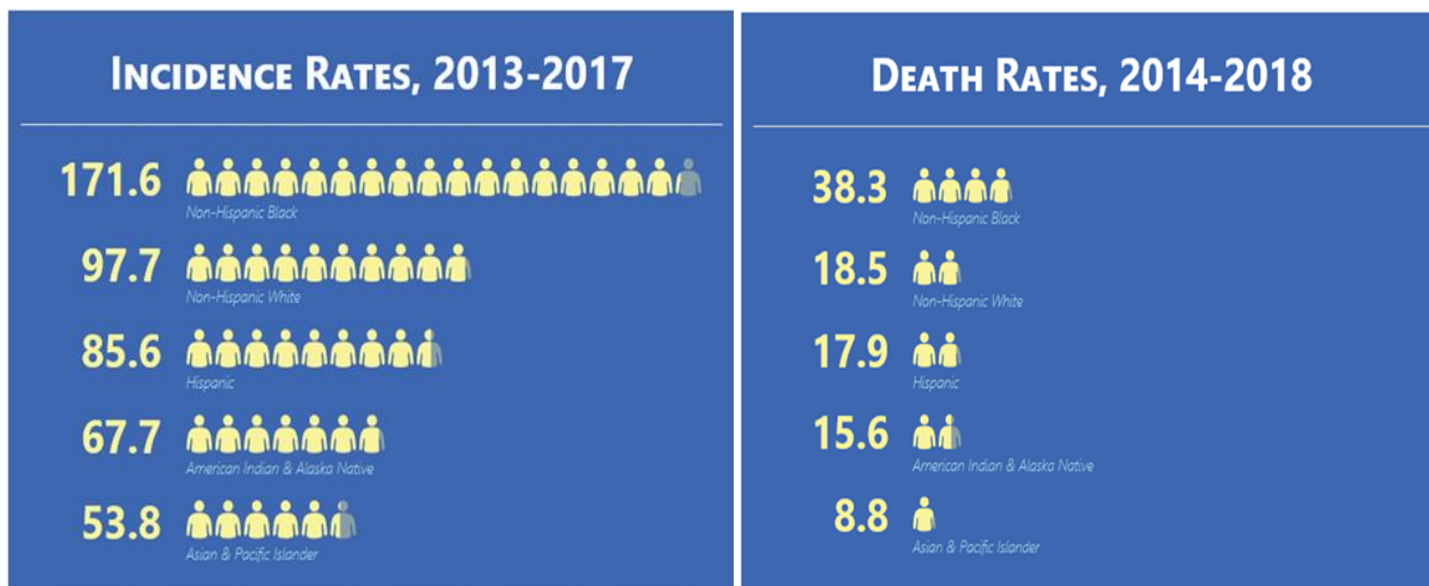


THE FACTS

In 2021, an estimated 248,530 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the US and 34,130 men will die from prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Black men.ⁱ Black men are over twice as likely to die from prostate cancer compared to every other racial and ethnic group and they are also more likely to be diagnosed at an advanced stage.ⁱⁱ Black men with lower-grade (less aggressive) disease are actually more likely to die from prostate cancer than white men.ⁱⁱⁱ The reasons for this are complex and include interactions between social, behavioral and biological factors.

Self-reported screening rates with prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing among Black men are slightly lower (33%) than what is observed in White men (37%) and shared decision making - when a doctor and a patient discuss the uncertainties, risks, and potential benefits of prostate cancer screening - is often lacking.^{iv} The discussion should also include the patient's health status, values, and preferences. Given the higher incidence and mortality rate for Black men, the lower screening rate is a cause for concern.



Source: American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2021. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2021.

THE CHALLENGES

While routine PSA testing was previously recommended as a screening tool for prostate cancer, no organization currently recommends routine screening for individuals of average risk due to concerns of overdiagnosis. Many organizations recommend a model of informed decision making between an individual and their provider to decide if screening is appropriate and desired. If an individual is diagnosed with prostate cancer, choosing among treatment options is complicated because not every individual with prostate cancer needs to be treated right away based on the aggressiveness of the cancer. The correct interpretation of PSA testing results and decision-making for treatment are important.

Informed decision making is a critical yet not well understood component to the screening and treatment of prostate cancer and tools to determine whether an individual's prostate cancer is likely to be aggressive or would benefit from treatment need to be improved.

Given the significant disparities in prostate cancer incidence and survival, special focus should be placed on ensuring diversity in prostate cancer clinical trials and identifying high risk cancers and their treatments. Proportional representation from diverse ethnic and racial groups can shed light on any variations in disease progression and treatment response between groups. Additionally, participants in cancer clinical trials have an opportunity to gain access to the newest developments in cancer treatment. Black men, however, are underrepresented in prostate cancer clinical trials given their proportion of the U.S. population with the disease.^v Currently clinical trials for drugs or devices typically do not require specific minimum racial or demographic participation levels to be considered for approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Beyond clinical trials for approval, products treating or diagnosing prostate cancer should continue to be studied once on the market to identify any potential differences in efficacy for Black men.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The higher incidence and mortality rates for Black men for prostate cancer are exceptionally concerning. While routine screening using PSA testing is not currently recommended, individuals should have an opportunity on a regular basis to undergo a PSA test if they choose to do so based on shared decision making with their physician. In addition, research - including clinical trials - on the risk, screening, diagnosis, and treatment of prostate cancer must be more inclusive of Black men in order to reduce these disparities.

ⁱ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2021. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2021.

ⁱⁱ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2021. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2021.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mahal BA, Berman RA, Taplin M, Huang FW. Prostate Cancer-Specific Mortality Across Gleason Scores in Black vs Nonblack Men. *JAMA*. 2018;320(23):2479-2481

^{iv} American Cancer Society. Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Facts & Figures Tables and Figures 2020. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2020.

^v Unger, J. M., Hershman, D. L., Osarogiagbon, R. U., Gothwal, A., Anand, S., Dasari, A., Overman, M., Loree, J. M., & Raghav, K. (2020). Representativeness of Black Patients in Cancer Clinical Trials Sponsored by the National Cancer Institute Compared With Pharmaceutical Companies. *JNCI cancer spectrum*, 4(4), pkaa034. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jncics/pkaa034>.