

factsheet

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Race, Ethnicity, and Alzheimer's Disease

Whites make up the great majority of the over 5 million people in the United States with Alzheimer's disease. But, combining evidence from available studies shows that African-Americans and Hispanics are at higher risk.

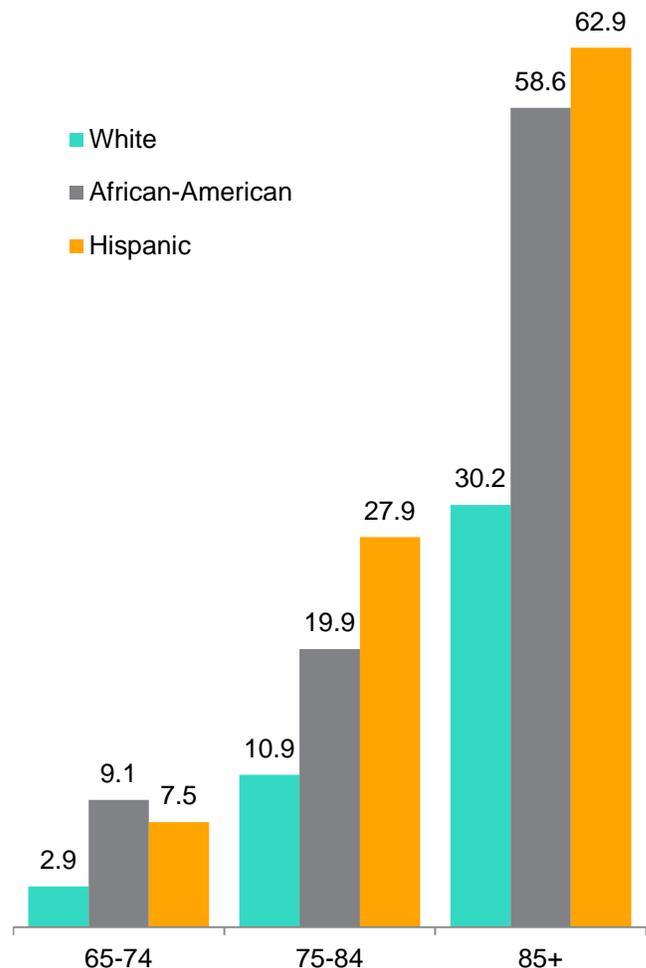
- African-Americans are about *two times* more likely than white Americans to have Alzheimer's and other dementias.
- Hispanics are about *one and one-half times* more likely than whites to have Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Although the rate of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in African-Americans is higher than in whites, they are *less likely* than whites to have a diagnosis of the condition.

- While African-Americans are two times more likely than whites to have Alzheimer's and other dementias, 2013 Medicare data show they were only 36 percent more likely to have a diagnosis.
- According to the 2006 Health and Retirement Study (HRS), both African-Americans and Hispanics with cognitive impairment are less likely than whites to say that a doctor has told them they have a "memory-related disease."

Proportion of People Aged 65 and Older with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias

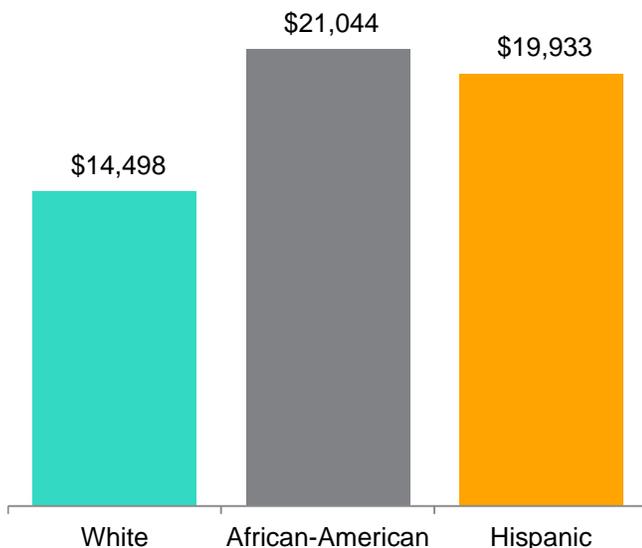
Washington Heights-Inwood Columbia Aging Project



When they are diagnosed, African-Americans and Hispanics are typically diagnosed in the later stages of the disease, when they are more cognitively and physically impaired – and therefore need more medical care.

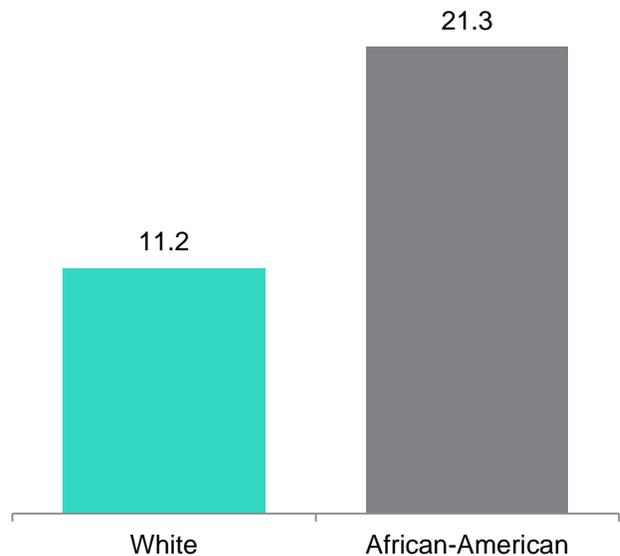
- As a result, African-Americans and Hispanics diagnosed with Alzheimer's use substantially more hospital, physician and home health services – and incur substantially higher costs for those services – than whites with Alzheimer's.
- In 2006, Medicare payments for African-Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias were 45 percent higher than those for whites with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Medicare payments for Hispanics with Alzheimer's and other dementias were 37 percent higher than those for their white counterparts.

Total Average Medicare Payment per Beneficiary 65 and Older with a Dementia Diagnosis, 2006



Proportion of Americans Aged 71 and Older with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias

Aging, Demographics, And Memory Study (ADAMS)



Genetic factors do not appear to account for the greater prevalence of – or the greater risk for developing – Alzheimer's.

- High blood pressure and diabetes are suspected risk factors for Alzheimer's and other dementias among all groups. But, high blood pressure and diabetes are more prevalent in the African-American community, and diabetes is more prevalent in the Hispanic community.
- These conditions, among others, may contribute to the greater prevalence of Alzheimer's and dementia among these groups.
- Better management of these conditions – especially if treatment were begun in people who have these conditions in midlife – may help reduce Alzheimer's and dementia risk among African-Americans and Hispanics.