

Title: For low-income women receiving prenatal care, race matters

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Abstract

Introduction: In the United States (US), Black women suffer disproportionate poor birth outcomes, including increased morbidity and mortality for mothers and babies. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) serve under-resourced populations in the US and these populations are at higher risk for poor birth outcomes. Little is known about how race and ethnicity affect perinatal risk factors for women who receive care at FQHCs. The purpose of this study is to explore racial/ethnic differences in women receiving prenatal care in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

Methods: We conducted a retrospective secondary analysis of 17,086 prenatal women receiving care at FQHCs between 2012–2017.

Results: Compared to both white and Latinx pregnant women, Black women were less likely to initiate prenatal care in the first trimester and less likely to be partnered during their pregnancy. Black women are at greater risk for elevated pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI) compared to White women and more at risk for hypertension compared to Latinx women.

Conclusion: This study highlights prenatal differences in Black, white and Latinx women. Education on the importance of first trimester entry into prenatal care, adequate social support and healthy nutrition are important to include in the care of Black women of childbearing age.