

Racial Disparities in Treatment Seeking for Alcohol:

Differences between Black and White Women

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Black women have a lower risk than white women of developing an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) (Chartier et al, 2010). Despite having lower rates of AUD, it is less clear whether there are disparities of treatment seeking as a function of race (Chartier et al, 2010). Moreover, if such disparities exist is it due to race itself or sociodemographic factors as well as racial discrimination. In the current study, we examine the degree to which the racial disparities in the prevalence of AUD and in treatment seeking conditional upon the presence of AUD. Analysis of both types of disparities we seek to determine the extent that such disparities are due to race itself or sociodemographic variables that are strongly confounded with race.

In the study, we used data from the NESARC (National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions) III database (Grant et al, 2015). The measures we used included past year AUD diagnosis, household income, whether a participant was born in the United States, number of children, education, marital status, and a measure of life stress as well a measure of racial discrimination. We found that black women (11.14%) were diagnosed at approximately the same rate as white women (10.72%), although when adjusting for a range of covariates black women are associated with lower AUD diagnoses (OR=0.621).

Black (14.98%) and white (16.15%) women with an AUD were similar in their treatment seeking. Covariate adjustments indicate that controlling for a range of confounders unmasks the unique effects of being black both with respect to prevalence and treatment seeking.

Key words: Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), Sociodemographic, Discrimination