

Examining Racial Disparities in Disability and Contributing Factors – Stroke & Dementia

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UMMS Capstone for Impact

Branch: Systems Based, Hospital Based

Project Summary

Prior literature has shown that African Americans suffer greater poststroke disability than do whites. Blacks not only experience more strokes but also more dementia than whites. Both stroke and dementia are leading contributors to functional disability, particularly amongst the elderly population. Therefore, we sought to examine whether disparities in disability between blacks and whites could be explained by stroke, dementia, or some interaction between these two pathophysiologic processes. To explore this question, we used a nationally representative database called NHATS (National Health and Aging Trends Study) to perform a cross-sectional study.

Action Items/Outcome

This summer/fall, I worked on an extensive literature search to characterize our research question. I then wrote up a detailed analysis plan, which we forwarded to our data analyst. The analysis was finished by the beginning of this year, and since then we have reviewed the results with the analyst for accuracy/integrity. We are now ready to start writing the manuscript, which I will be primarily responsible for with mentorship and guidance from Drs. Lesli Skolarus and Jim Burke.

Conclusion/Reflection

We will likely aim for publication in Stroke or another similar journal. This project has been very exciting for me, as I am very interested in the factors that give rise to disability, particularly those that differentially affect the races. I hope to continue this type of work in my career, and this project has been a good introduction to the field.