

Men's and Women's Health Issues in Duval County

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Estimates for Life Expectancy in 2008 rank the U.S. poorly in comparison to other industrialized countries. Specifically, men are ranked 28th and women are ranked 24th in the world for life expectancy.¹ Men and women share many health concerns; however, both tend to have unique factors that contribute to poor health outcomes. For example, prostate cancer/disease, a major health issue, is unique to men's health; however, a wide range of conditions including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers occur in both men and women but tend to affect them differently. Women may also respond to treatments and prevention strategies differently than men. Men may experience different symptoms than women for the same health issues. Men tend to lead less healthy lifestyles than women and not seek medical help when necessary, and men engage in more risky behaviors and men largely define themselves by their work, potentially leading to additional stress in all aspects of their lives. In addition, some medical concerns are more common in women than men such as depression, obesity, and osteoarthritis. Even though women live longer than males and are more likely than men to seek medical care, women have major problems accessing care due to the lack of job related health insurance.^{2,3}

The relatively poor health of both men and women in the U.S. and Florida is even worse in Duval County. A number of factors such as lack of access to health care, social determinants creating health disparities and high risk behaviors contribute to poor health status for much of our adult population. For example, 10.1% of women in Duval County do not have health insurance and 21.8% do not have regular health care providers.⁴ Lifestyle factors, especially smoking, affect a woman's chance of developing diseases, that were previously thought to occur more in men.⁵ Overall in Duval County, lifestyle factors affecting women most are tobacco use, obesity and diabetes, where rates are higher than in Florida and the U.S.⁴ Also in Duval County, women have higher rates of all cancers, lung cancer, breast cancer, diabetes related deaths, stroke, HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases than women living in Florida and the U.S.^{6,7}

These disparities are even more pronounced when race is considered. For example white and black women have major differences in years of potential life lost (YPLL). YPLL is an estimate of premature mortality that has been defined as the number of years of life lost among persons who die before a predetermined age, which is 75 in the state of Florida. Notable disparities in YPLL between black and white women were perinatal period conditions (often occurring before 1 year of age), heart disease, HIV/AIDS, Homicide, intentional injuries and mental and behavioral disorders. Differences in YPLL between races are not as significant in diseases where death typically occurs at an older age. However, deaths that occur in younger ages show more dramatic disparities. For example, the years of potential life lost due to HIV/AIDS was 946.2 per 100,000 black females under 75 years compared to 58.5 per 100,000 for white females, which is more than 1,500% higher.^{2,3,6}

In addition to deaths and YPLL, disparities in access to health care and disease prevention among race are also profound. According to the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 17.9% of black women have no health care coverage compared to only 10.7% of white women, and 20.5% of black women have no personal health care provider compared to 13.1%

of white women. In addition, 21.9% of black women have high cholesterol compared to whites (36.8%), and 31.7% of have high blood pressure compared to 27.4% of white women.⁴ Women in the urban core (Health Zone one) with the highest percentage of blacks, the lowest median income, and the highest poverty rates in Duval County compared to all other health zones,^{5,6} have breast cancer death rates that are 27.8% higher than the next highest health zone, Females who live in Health Zone 1 are also more likely to die from health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and even violence than in any other health zone.

Men in Duval County have similar outcomes as women for certain diseases such as cancer, lung cancer, diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, and HIV infection. Men in Duval County have higher rates of unintentional injury deaths, homicide, suicide, all cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, and HIV infection than men in Florida and the U.S.^{2,6} Lifestyle factors are critical. Men in Duval County have higher rates of smoking, heavy or binge drinking, overweight, high cholesterol, and diabetes than men in Florida and the U.S.^{4,7} Notable disparities in YPLL for black men are evident with 2,966.6 YPLL per 100,000 population under 75 years compared to 259.7 per 100,000 for white men, which is more than 1000% higher. Also alarming, the YPLL for HIV/AIDS among blacks was 973.8% higher than for whites.^{2,6}

According to the 2007 BRFSS, 19.9% of black men have no health care coverage compared to only 9.2% of white men, and 28.2% of black men have no personal health care provider compared to 18.7% of white men. In addition, black men had higher rates of tobacco use, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol compared to white men. In addition to race, disparities also exist regarding location of residence.⁴ Males who live in Health Zone 1 are more likely to die from health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and violence than in any other health zone. Specifically, the prostate cancer death rate, unique only to men, is also higher in Health Zone 1, with a rate of 49.6 per 100,000 compared to the 34.4 per 100,000 in the next highest health zone.^{2,6}

Our goal of improving people's health is challenged by the social, behavioral and access issues that undermine health. While the science of medicine continues to improve, many segments of our population do not receive the benefits of these scientific advances. Substantially improving people's health requires the development of effective population-based as well as individual interventions to overcome these barriers that are as much social, behavioral and economic as they are medical in nature.

Sources:¹Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>²Institute for Health, Policy and Evaluation Research, Center for Health Statistics Report on Men's Health. Volume 7, Issue 2, 2008³Institute for Health, Policy and Evaluation Research, Center for Health Statistics Report on Women's Health. Volume 7, Issue 3, 2008⁴Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Duval County, 2007, http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctrl/epi/BRFSS_Reports/2007BRFSS/Duval.pdf⁵Torpy, J.M, *JAMA* (2006), 295.CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/Women/improve/index.htm>⁶Florida Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics, 2007⁷Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Florida, U.S, 2007, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/>.

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