



California Asthma Quick Facts

Asthma Mortality Varies in Asian and Hispanic Race/Ethnic Groups

<http://www.californiabreathing.org>

California Department of Public Health

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Summary

- The overall Asian/Pacific Islander (API) asthma death rate was 21.7 per million. API subgroup rates ranged from 12.9 for Japanese to 45.0 for Native Hawaiian/PI. The Native Hawaiian/PI death rate is double the rate for the API group overall.
- The overall Hispanic asthma death rate was 10.1 per million while subgroup rates ranged from 9.5 for Mexican to 16.7 for Puerto Rican/Cuban.
- Important differences between racial/ethnic subgroups are masked when they are combined into a single group.
- The considerable variation in asthma mortality rates among Hispanic and API subgroups is consistent with other asthma outcomes.
- These findings should be used to target and enhance comprehensive asthma management and community-level interventions for particularly vulnerable populations.

Asthma Mortality in California

Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease that affects nearly five million people in California. Although there is currently no cure, people with asthma can live healthy lives with proper asthma management, regular access to care, and avoidance of triggers known to cause exacerbations. Deaths due to asthma are rare and result from severe, uncontrolled disease. The overall asthma death rate in California between 2000-2004 was 15.7 per million residents. It has been shown that asthma death rates vary substantially by race/ethnicity, gender, and age, with the greatest disparities occurring between racial/ethnic groups. Though asthma disparities among the major racial/ethnic groups are well documented, information on asthma outcomes for subgroups of minority races are seldom reported.

Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders

Nearly half of California's population is of Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander (API) descent, and approximately one third of all Hispanics and API residing in the United States live in California. Furthermore, Hispanics and API are the fastest growing racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. It is projected that by 2050, Hispanics will become the largest minority group, constituting 22.5% of the total population, followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders at 10.3%.

Within the broader Hispanic and API groups are numerous subgroups whose demographics and health status vary substantially from one another. For this study, asthma death rates in Hispanic and API subgroups in California were examined for the years 2000-2004.

There were significant variations among the subgroups when age-adjusted asthma death rates were compared. Within Hispanic and API groups, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Filipino, and Puerto Rican/Cuban subgroups had high asthma death rates that were obscured when combined into the broader categories (see Figure 1).



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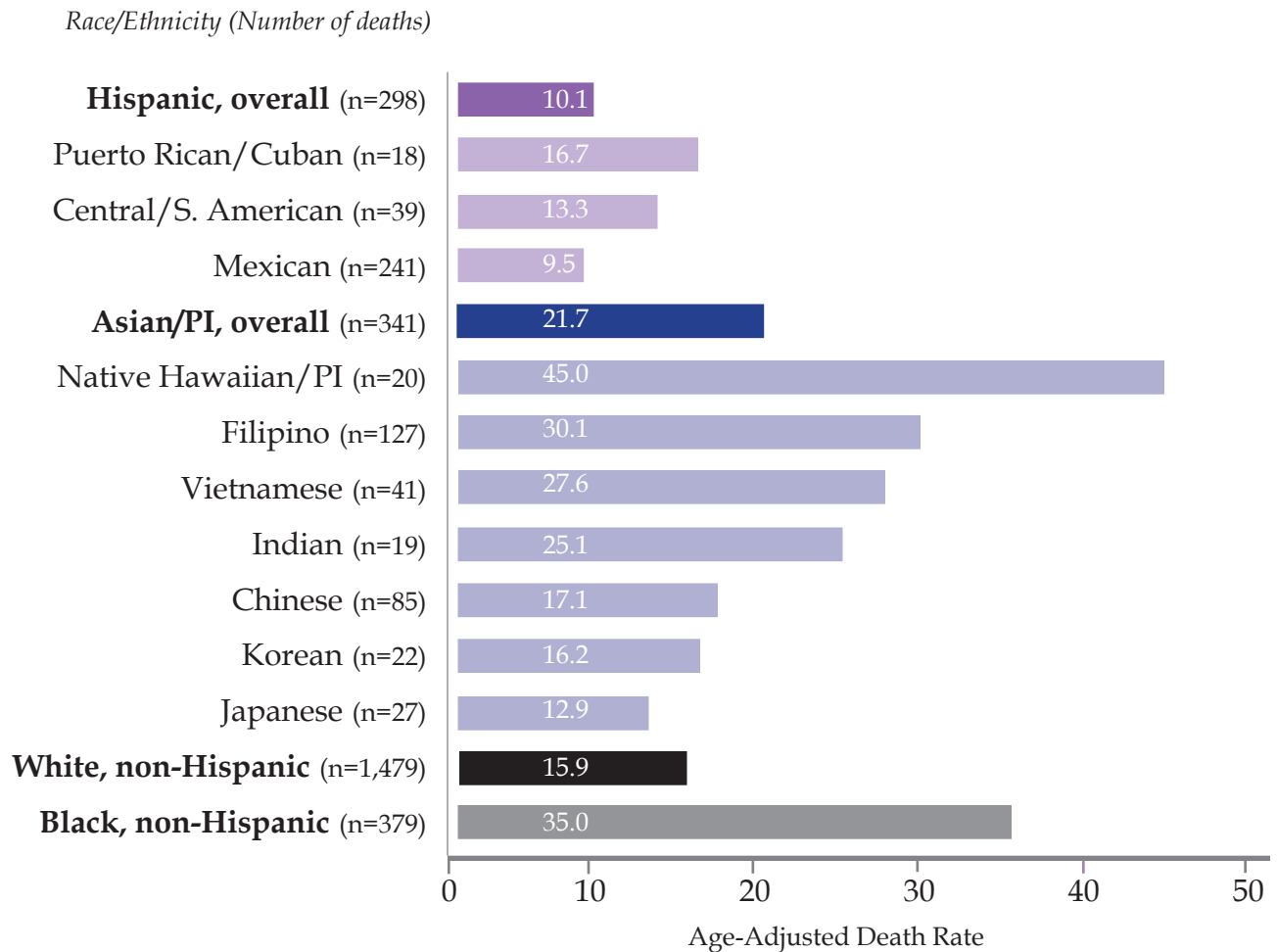
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Figure 1: Age-adjusted asthma deaths per million California residents, by race/ethnicity, 2000-2004 combined



Methods

Counts of asthma deaths for 2000-2004 were obtained from the California Department of Public Health, Center for Health Statistics. Population denominators were obtained from the U.S. Census and California Department of Finance. 2000 Census proportions of racial/ethnic subgroups were used to estimate subgroup denominators for the years 2001-2004, since the information was not available for these years. Due to the rare nature of asthma deaths, many of the reported rates are based on small numbers of events. As a result, death rate estimations from 2000-2004 may not be representative of other years. All rates were age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population. Race/ethnicity groups that were unspecified or did not fit into the listed categories were not included in this analysis.