



Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor Re: Racial disparities in burn patients despite insurance coverage



We read with interest the article on racial disparities among burn patients independent of insurance coverage.¹ As the authors note, this is the first study to analyze racial differences in burn patient mortality separately by insurance categories. We thank the authors for their contribution and efforts to elucidate the causes of this important gap in patient outcomes.

The authors describe that one limitation of the study was the incomplete data on comorbidities and pre-existing conditions. It is also noted that African American burn patients are more likely to have multiple comorbidities that may complicate the clinical course. We wonder if using the ASA classification system from patient records could help to stratify patients in the future, in order to control for prior health status and comorbidity severity as potential confounders influencing mortality rates.

Although the authors controlled for insurance type, African Americans may be more likely to live in low-income communities with delayed prehospital care and hospitals that have overall poorer patient outcomes. We ask the authors to what extent, if any, this may contribute to their findings.

Additionally, some studies have shown an association between greater patient-physician race concordance and better patient outcomes.^{2,3} While there are limitations to the registry dataset, we ask the authors if they were able to identify a relationship between racial disparities in burn patient mortality and hospitals with greater patient-physician race concordance.

Finally, the authors note that in the Workers' Compensation and Medicare categories, it appears the Hispanic group has a protective

effect in terms of odds of mortality, with an odds ratio of 0.54 in both categories. We ask the authors if they are able to propose any potential explanation for that effect or for the apparent inconsistency in that group.

References

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Lauren Okafor, Miriam Nathan*

Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine, Quinnipiac University, USA

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: Miriam.nathan@quinnipiac.edu (M. Nathan).

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