

A Guide to Racial and Ethnic Minority Health Data and Publications on the State Center for Health Statistics Web Site (www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/)

This guide is intended to make it easier to find racial and ethnic minority health data on the State Center for Health Statistics (SCHS) web site. Data are identified where racial or ethnic differences are featured. Publications are identified where a *primary* focus is racial or ethnic comparisons. However, please note that other publications on the SCHS web site also contain important information on the health of racial and ethnic minorities. Finally, a few links to other related web sites are presented.

Race is considered a “marker” for certain health problems. Race or ethnicity *per se* does not cause a particular health problem or status. It is likely that factors such as income, education, access to health care, stress, and racism are among the major causes of the poorer health of minorities on many health measures, compared to whites. Few sources of health data record these types of health information, though most do have information on race or ethnicity. Showing data by race can identify specific areas of disparities and can help target resources and interventions to populations most in need.

In most data collected by the SCHS, race and ethnicity are reported as two separate dimensions. The major racial categories are white, African American, American Indian, and Asian. Ethnicity is defined as Hispanic and non-Hispanic. Thus persons of Hispanic ethnicity may be of any race, though in North Carolina most Hispanics are classified as white.

In the data on the SCHS web site, “minority” race or “other races” is often shown as a single category. African Americans comprise about 90 percent of persons of minority races in North Carolina. It would be desirable to have more information for specific minority racial groups, such as American Indians or Asians, and for persons of Latino ethnicity. But data limitations, unreliable population estimates, and small numbers of events for these groups make it difficult to produce reliable information for many indicators, especially at the county level. One SCHS report, titled *Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in North Carolina* (referenced below), makes an effort to break the health data out into more detailed racial and ethnic categories at the state level. The SCHS will be updating this report with more recent data, with an estimated completion date of June 2004.

Following is a description of and links to items related to the health of racial and ethnic minorities, organized by the headings at the left of the SCHS main web page: Health Data, Publications, and Related Links. If a data topic does not include racial or ethnic differences or if a publication does not emphasize racial or ethnic comparisons, it is not mentioned here.

Health Data

BRFSS

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: Data in the 1999 publication (see Annual Reports) are broken out by white and African American; 2000 data (see Annual Survey Results) are broken out by white and African American; 2001 data are broken out (at the state level) by white, African American, and other minorities; 2002 data are broken out (at the state level) by white, African American, Asian, Native American, and other minority races. At the state level, the 2001 data are broken out by Hispanic and non-Hispanic and the 2002 data are broken out by Hispanic—English speaking, Hispanic—Spanish speaking, and non-Hispanic. Broader racial groups are used for the results for selected counties.

The BRFSS program has committed to collecting more minority health data through over-sampling certain geographic areas, conducting Spanish interviews, and increasing the sample size for smaller minority groups such as Native Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. With many more interviews completed in 2001 and 2002, the BRFSS has been able to provide much more detail on minority health issues. All of the 2002 BRFSS survey results were tabulated separately for African Americans by gender, age, education, household income, and geographic areas.

Cancer

Cancer Incidence in North Carolina, County-Specific Numbers: Some of the data are broken out by white and minority.

N.C. Cancer Incidence Rates: Rates are broken out at the state level by white and minority and by white male, white female, minority male, and minority female.

N.C. Cancer Mortality Rates: Rates are broken out at the state level by white and minority and by white male, white female, minority male, and minority female.

Poster Presentations (see Other Data): One poster is titled *Hispanic Cancer Cases: Are We Coding Them Correctly?*

County-level Data

County Health Data Book: Selected data are broken out by white and minority, or white and black.

PRAMS

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System: Data are broken out by white, African American, and other minorities (state level).

Vital Statistics

North Carolina Vital Statistics, Volume 1: Population, Births, Deaths, Marriages, Divorces: Numbers and rates are broken out by white and minority, for the state and each county.

North Carolina Vital Statistics, Volume 2: Leading Causes of Death: The top ten causes of death are ranked for whites, blacks, American Indians, and Hispanics (statewide).

Basic Automated Birth Yearbook, North Carolina Residents (BABY Book): Numbers of live births in various categories are broken out by white and minority, for the state and each county.

Detailed Mortality Statistics, North Carolina Residents: Number of deaths by cause of death and age group are broken out by white male, white female, minority male, and minority female, for the state and each county.

North Carolina Reported Pregnancies: Numbers and rates are broken out by white and minority, for the state and each county.

Infant Mortality Statistics: Data are broken out by white and other races. State and county data are included.

Publications (By Title/date)

1997 Titles

[SCHS Study 105](#) – Racial Differences in Risk Factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: A Case-Control Study in North Carolina

[Smoking in Pregnancy in North Carolina: Maternal Characteristics and Trends, 1988-1994](#)

[SCHS Study 107](#) – A Report on Selected Findings from the North Carolina Birth Cohort Study

1998 Titles

[North Carolina Minority Health Facts: African Americans](#)

1999 Titles

[North Carolina Minority Health Facts: American Indians](#)

[North Carolina Minority Health Facts: Hispanics/Latinos](#)

[SCHS Study 112](#) – Infant Mortality and Low Birthweight in North Carolina: The Last 10 Years

[SCHS Study 114](#) – Multiple Deliveries in North Carolina: Trends and Outcomes

2000 Titles

[Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in North Carolina](#)

[CHS Study 122](#) – Prenatal WIC Participation in Relation to Low Birth Weight and Medicaid Infant Costs in North Carolina – A 1997 Update

2001 Titles

[CHS Study 125](#) – Enhanced Surveillance of Maternal Mortality in North Carolina

2002 Titles

[SCHS Study 129](#) – Healthy Life Expectancy in North Carolina, 1996-2000

[SCHS Study 130](#) – Years of Potential Life Lost by Sex, Race, and Ethnicity, North Carolina, 2000

[SCHS Study 134](#) – Cervical Cancer Disparities Between African-American Women and White Women in North Carolina, 1995-1998

2003 Titles

[A Health Profile of Older North Carolinians](#)

[A Review of Available Data on the Health of the Latino Population in North Carolina](#)

[Cervical Cancer in North Carolina: Incidence, Mortality, and Risk Factors](#)

[Differences in Use of Health Services Between White and African American Children Enrolled in Medicaid in North Carolina](#)

[Infant Mortality, Low Birth Weight, and Prematurity Among Hispanic, White, and African American Women in North Carolina](#)

[Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in North Carolina – Report Card 2003](#)

[The Health of North Carolinians: A Profile](#)

Related Links

See particularly the links to the web sites of the North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, the UNC Minority Health Project, and the U.S. Office of Minority Health Resource Center (click on “Related Links” above).

See also the web site of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs at <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/doa/cia/indian.htm>. The LINKS section at the bottom includes an address for 2000 census data on the population of specific Indian tribes in North Carolina and other states.

For questions or further information about minority health data or publications at the State Center for Health Statistics, contact Paul Buescher at (919) 733-4728 or paul.buescher@ncmail.net.