**Why are Black Moms Dying?**

**Kayana Ward, MD**

---

**Abstract**

This paper will investigate the maternal mortality and morbidity data in the United States, while focusing on the increasing health disparities plaguing black moms. It will include a literature review regarding the potential contributing factors to the widening gap in outcomes in addition to assessing the interventions and health policies that are currently in place to improve the care that Black women receive.

**Objectives & Goals**

1. Investigate the data regarding maternal disparities and the means by which social structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving equity at organizational, community, and societal levels
2. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
3. Evaluate current policies for their impact on public health and health equity
4. Implementation of systematic structure changes

**Methods**

- PubMed & Google Scholar
- Review of articles published from 2015-2021
- Topic regarding Maternal Health Disparities in the United States
- Maternal Mortality and Morbidity
- Factors responsible for Maternal Health disparities
- 9 articles reviewed

**Results**

All 9 articles agreed that the disparities in the health and care for black mothers is worsening.

All 9 articles reviewed agreed that Black women have an increased risk of morbidity and mortality in the United States.

**Maternal death rates by race, 2018**

**PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS**

- **White Women**: 13
- **American Indian/Alaska Native Women**: 30
- **Black Women**: 41

**Discussion/Conclusion**

Black women are leading with the highest rates of maternal morbidity and mortality throughout the country.

The understanding and acknowledgment of how inequities based upon race and gender can affect the outcomes in Black women are instrumentally the key to closing the disparity gap in maternal mortality and morbidity.

The development of the Mothers and Offspring Mortality & Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA) Act and State-wide Maternal Mortality Review Boards are recent efforts for equitable care and accountability.

The change needed is the following:

1. Systematic policy, resource, funding
2. Institutional-education of providers, more diverse pool of providers
3. Individual-education and support

**Clinical Relevance**

Addressing the health care disparities in the care of black women is important for moral and financial reasons.

The economic burden of maternal morbidity and mortality is billions of dollars each year (Cres-Perry et al., 2021).

Their loss of life affects the future lives of their families (psychologically), in addition to the workforce and economy.

**Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank Drs. Enike, LaRosa, Dalnou

---

**References**