

What Do We Know and What Do We Need To Know About Health and Marriage in the African American Community



A Discussion of the Complex Interactions of
Marriage, Health, Race, Gender and Class

**AAHMI Connecting Research to Practice Conference
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Marriage Health Race Gender Class

- Wood, Goesling, & Avellar
- Healthy People 2010
- The State of Black America 2007
- Fein, Gubits, Gennetian, and Yumoto (forthcoming)
- TRIM3/March Current Population Survey

Marriage Health Race Gender Class

Marriage and Health (Wood, Goesling, & Avellar)

- Marriage reduces heavy drinking and total consumption
- Marriage reduces marijuana use
- Marriage does not reduce smoking
- Marriage increases weight but effect on obesity unknown
- Marriage reduces physical activity
- Marriage decreases depressive symptoms
- Divorce and not being married increases depressive symptoms
- Depressive symptoms do not affect likelihood to marry

Marriage Health Race Gender Class

Marriage and Health (Wood, Goesling, & Avellar)

- Married people live longer
- Married men report being healthier
- Divorced women report being less healthy
- Marriage increases health insurance coverage
- Marriage decreases the risk of losing insurance
- Marriage increases preventive care
- Marriage reduces health care cost possibly by shortening a variety of health care stays

Marriage Health Race Gender Class

Marriage reduces heavy drinking and total consumption

- Marriage benefit is for both Whites and Blacks, men and women, and for those with lower and higher education
- Black teenagers drink less than white teenagers.
- In general alcohol consumption is higher for men than women, and about the same for adult Black and White men and lowest for Black women.
- Husbands' substance abuse (all kinds) associated with wives' poorer quality marriage and marital instability

Marriage Health Race Gender Class

Married people live longer

- Likely applies to both Blacks and Whites
- But married Whites still live longer than married Blacks
- Married women live longer than married men
- Once past 75 or so age-based age adjusted death rates for Blacks and Whites converge
- Substantial difference in age adjusted death rates between Blacks and Whites for children, adolescents and adults.

Marriage Health Race Gender Class

Marriage increases private health insurance coverage

- Finding not differentiated by race.
- Employment ratio slightly higher for whites than blacks.
(63.8 versus 58.5)
- Overall percent with private health insurance payments higher for whites than blacks (65.8% versus 51%).
- For married Blacks, 73% of husbands and 58% of wives work full time, for Whites 80% of husbands and 40% of wives were full time.
- 83% married Whites versus 68% of married Blacks have full family private health insurance coverage.



Marriage Health Race Gender Class

- Marriage Matters for African American Health
- Marriage Cannot Eliminate Other Underlying Disparities that affect Health and Access to Care



Marriage Health Race Gender Class

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