

Black Children 3.5 Times More Likely to Die After Surgery

Even healthy African-American kids face an increased risk of death within 30 days of undergoing an operation.

July 23, 2020 By [Alicia Green](#)

It's well known that Black Americans suffer from poorer surgical outcomes compared with white Americans. Now, new findings published in the journal *Pediatrics* further spotlight this disparity by revealing that even healthy Black children are more likely to die post-surgery when compared with their white peers, reports the [Nationwide Children's Hospital](#) in Ohio.

For the study, researchers at the Nationwide Children's Hospital identified kids who underwent surgery between 2012 to 2017. These youngsters were also assigned an American Society of Anesthesiologists physical status of 1 or 2, a designation that helps doctors predict their operative risk.

Of the 172,549 apparently healthy children evaluated in the inquiry, 14% developed postoperative complications.

While healthier children are usually expected to fare well with surgeries and have low complication rates, healthy Black kids were 27% more likely to experience postsurgical problems than their white counterparts.

In addition, African-American youngsters also faced 8% higher odds of severe adverse events and almost 3.43 higher odds of dying within 30 days after surgery. (The results were still similar even after adjusting for factors such as sex, age, year of procedure, case urgency and operating time.)

Scientists stressed that race didn't cause these outcomes but marked this factor for its strong association. Their goal moving forward is to pinpoint complications that occur after surgery to see which of them drive patterns of morbidity and mortality. By doing so, researchers hope to identify ways to change postsurgical outcomes for young Black patients.

For related coverage, read "[Minority Children Die of Cancer at Higher Rates](#)" and "[Minority Kids Less Likely to Receive Proper Pain Meds in ER](#)" and "[African-American Infants More Likely to Suffer Cardiac Arrest.](#)"

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