Blacks, Latinos Less Likely to Receive COVID Treatments

Lack of access to treatment facilities may worsen these racial disparities.

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Although people of color have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, Blacks and Latinos were less likely to receive COVID-19 treatments, such as the antiviral medications Paxlovid and remdesivir, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Black and Latino people were twice as likely to be hospitalized or die of COVID compared with white people, according to the CDC. The study found that Black patients with COVID were 36% less likely and Latino patients were 30% less likely to be treated with Paxlovid than non-Latino patients.

Paxlovid requires a prescription and can reduce the risk of hospitalization or death in those who are high risk if taken within the first five days of experiencing symptoms. People with limited access to treatment facilities or health care providers may experience difficulty getting the treatment in a timely fashion and, therefore, may face poorer outcomes.

The study found that about one in five Black and Latino patients were prescribed Paxlovid, compared with one in three white patients and one in four Asian and American Indian patients. For those ages 65 to 79, white patients were 44% more likely to receive Paxlovid compared with Black patients.

Researchers emphasize the importance of collecting demographic data that can be used to create a more equitable health care system. Experts from the Kaiser Family Foundation warn that without additional funding, access to vaccines, tests and treatments could be even more difficult for those who are uninsured.

To learn more, read "Will COVID Spike Again This Fall? 6 Tips to Help You Stay Safe," "Maternal Mortality Among Latinas Spikes" or "How Can I Tell if I Have a Cold, the Flu or COVID-19?"

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