

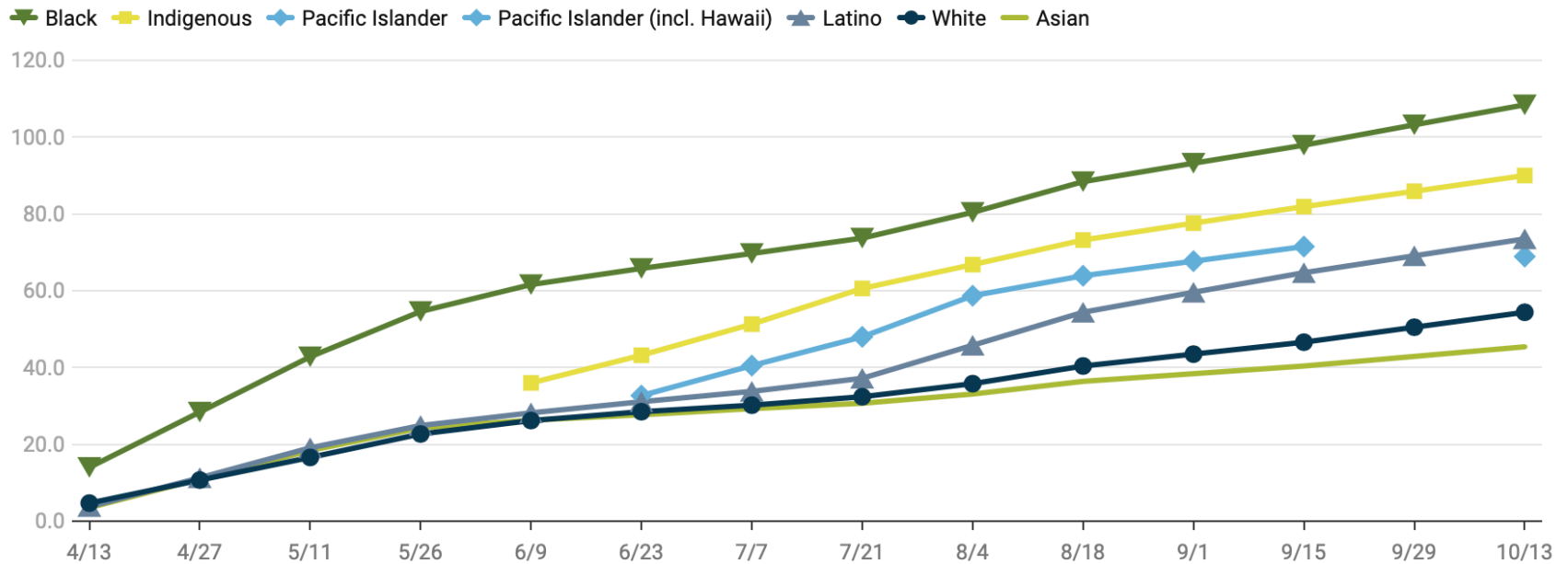
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Racial disparities in bereavement due to COVID-19 and implications for mental health

Disparities in COVID-19 mortality

Black & Indigenous Americans experience highest death tolls from COVID-19

Cumulative actual COVID-19 mortality rates per 100,000, by race and ethnicity, April 13-Oct. 13, 2020



Note: All intervals are 14 days apart, except for 5/11-5/26, which is a 15-day period. 9/1 and 9/29 data has been interpolated. Pacific Islander data prior to 10/13 did not include Hawaii, as it was not releasing data; its inclusion resulted in an overall drop in the Pacific Islander rate, which begins a new series at 10/13.

Source: [APM Research Lab](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datavrapper](#)

Bereavement and mental health

- Positive association between bereavement and mental health outcomes such as depression and anxiety
 - May also lead to physical health consequences
- COVID-19-related bereavement may be associated with increased suicidal ideation
- Relatives who do not have the opportunity to say goodbye to loved ones are at increased risk of depression

Aims

- 1) To describe the burden of COVID-19 bereavement by race and ethnicity
- 2) To evaluate the extent to which COVID-19 bereavement is associated with depression and anxiety

We speculate that an excess burden of death due to COVID-19 may put bereaved individuals at elevated risk for impaired mental health and may exacerbate racial disparities in mental health.

Methods

UNDERSTANDING AMERICA STUDY

UNDERSTANDING CORONAVIRUS IN AMERICA

[NATIONAL SAMPLE](#)[CALIFORNIA](#)[LOS ANGELES COUNTY](#)[STATE TRACKER](#)[SURVEY METHODS](#)[DETAILED DATA](#)[CONTACT US](#)

- Wave 13 (September 2 – September 30, 2020)
- Inclusion criteria:
 - Participants with complete race, age, exposure, and outcome data
- Exclusion criteria:
 - Participants who report >999 close contacts

Methods

	<p>Aim 1: To describe the burden of COVID-19 bereavement by race and ethnicity</p>	<p>Aim 2: To evaluate the extent to which COVID-19 bereavement is associated with depression and anxiety</p>
Exposure	Race/ethnicity	Bereavement
Outcome	Bereavement (loss of ≥ 1 close friend or family member)	Depression/anxiety (score of 6+ on PHQ-4)

Methods

- *How many close friends or family do you have? Only include people who are still alive, regardless of where they live.*
 - *Of these people, how many do you think have been infected with the coronavirus?*
 - *Of these people, how many do you think have been hospitalized from the coronavirus?*
 - ***Of these people, how many do you think have died from the coronavirus?***

Methods

- Over the past fourteen days, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge				
Not being able to stop or control worrying				
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless				
Little interest or pleasure in doing things				

Methods

- **Aim 1:** To describe the burden of COVID-19 bereavement by race and ethnicity
 - Negative binomial regression model:
 - Offset by log of # of close contacts
 - Adjusted for age and sex
- **Aim 2:** To evaluate the extent to which COVID-19 bereavement is associated with depression and anxiety
 - Longitudinal analysis:
 - Linear model w/ individual and wave fixed effects
 - Adjusted for job loss

Results

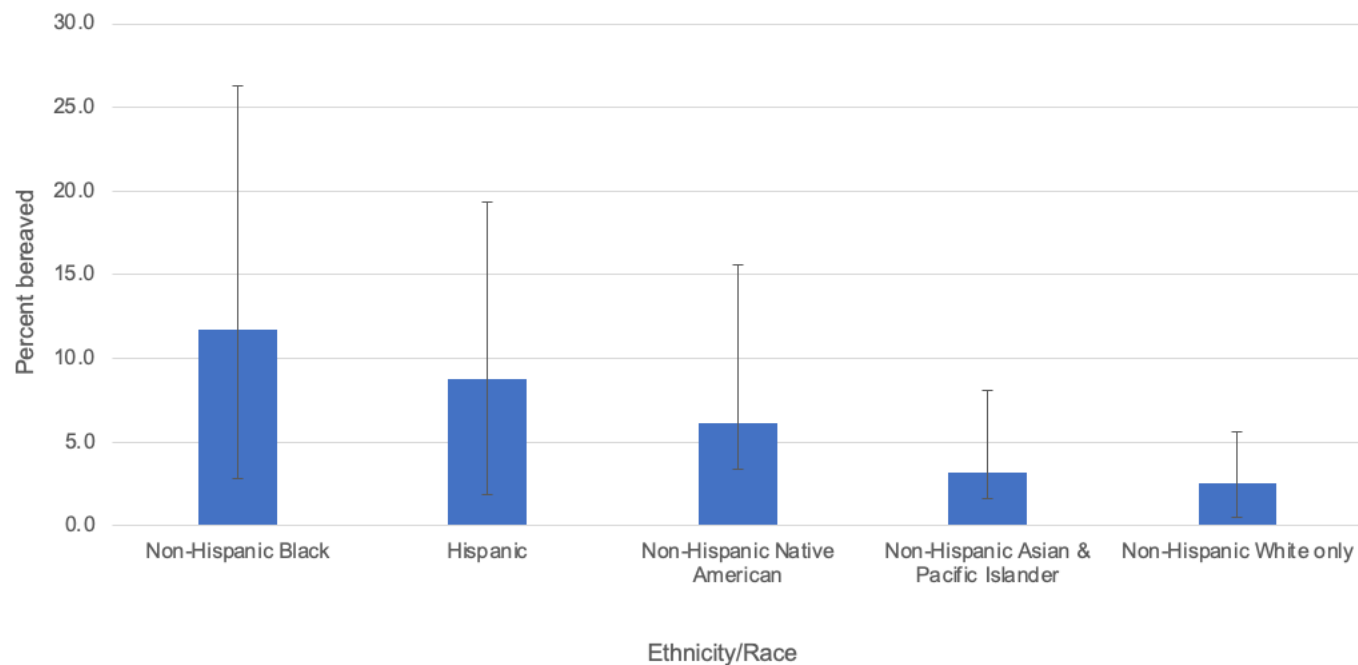
Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Characteristic	No. (<i>n</i> = 6132)	%
Male gender	2553	41.63
Age category (years)		
18-24	240	3.91
25-34	833	13.58
35-44	1186	19.34
45-54	1130	18.43
55-64	1287	20.99
65+	1456	23.74
Ethnicity/Race*		
Non-Hispanic White only	4121	67.20
Non-Hispanic Black	510	8.32
Non-Hispanic Asian & Pacific Islander	436	7.11
Non-Hispanic Native American	196	3.20
Hispanic	912	14.87

* Race categories are not mutually exclusive

Results

Figure 1. Participants who report at least one death due to coronavirus among family members/close friends



Results

- Bereavement among Hispanic participants was 4.2 times (95% CI: 3.1, 5.8) that of non-Hispanic white participants
- Bereavement among non-Hispanic Black participants was 4.1 times (95% CI: 2.8, 5.8) that of non-Hispanic white participants
- Bereavement was associated with a 2.4 percentage point (95% CI: 0.6 to 4.1 percentage points) increase in depression and anxiety
 - 16% relative increase

Discussion

- Little existing research with which to compare our findings
- Impact of collective and generational trauma among marginalized communities fueled by systemic racism
- Cultural differences between perspectives on grief, resilience, and mental health

Limitations

- Measures rely on self-report

Conclusion

- Racial disparities exist in COVID-19 bereavement
- Bereavement is associated with depression and anxiety

Acknowledgements

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Thank you!