



Disparities in Prevalence of Physical and Cognitive Disabilities among Blacks in the United States: Examining the Effects of Nativity

**Mesfin S. Mulatu, Ph.D., M.P.H.
The MayaTech Corporation**

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Foreign-Born Blacks in the US

- 36.2 million people (12.9%) of the total US population reported that they were Black (Census 2000)
- Only about 7% of Blacks are foreign-born, but the diversity in nativity/ethnicity has been increasing over the years
- More importantly, foreign-born Blacks account for a significant share of the increase in the total Black population



Nativity, Race/Ethnicity, and Health

- Foreign-born individuals tend to have lower prevalence of various health problems, including disability, compared to their US born counterparts
- These advantages, however, are often not well studied among Blacks
- Health advantages of foreign-born have been explained in various ways:
 - Healthy immigrant/ positive selection effect
 - Favorable lifestyle/cultural practices
 - Stronger social network, family support, & social capital



Study Aims

- To compare the patterns of disabilities among native and foreign-born Blacks in the United States
- To examine if differences in rates of disabilities are accounted for by acculturation, socio-economic status, and other demographic characteristics



Data Source

- Data from the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) were used for this study
- The ACS is:
 - A new data collection survey used by the Census Bureau
 - Provides annual estimates of population/housing characteristics at the national, state, and local levels
- ACS 2006:
 - Collected between January-Dec. 2006
 - Covers the total population, including those in group quarters
 - Public access data file contains 2,923,336 person records from households and 81,151 person records from group quarters



Analytical Sample

- **We included:**
 - All native Blacks (Hispanic and non-Hispanic)
 - All Blacks born in Caribbean Islands and Latin America
 - All non-Hispanic Blacks from Europe & Sub-Saharan Africa
- **We excluded:**
 - All Blacks born in PR, USVI, and territories
 - All Blacks born in Asia, North Africa, & Oceania
 - Hispanic Blacks born in Europe & Sub-Saharan Africa
- **Comparison Groups:**
 - Native, non-Hispanic Blacks and/or Whites



Table 1. Distribution of Analytical Sample by Racial/Ethnic and Nativity Groups

	N	% Total Sub-Sample	% Total Black (N=212,298)
White: Native, Non-Hispanic	1,600,07	88.3	-----
Blacks: All Native +	212,298	11.7	-----
Native, Non-Hispanic	189,836	10.5	89.4
Native, Hispanic	1,615	0.1	0.8
Europe-Born, Non-	936	0.1	0.4
Caribbean-Born, Non-	11,204	0.6	5.3
Caribbean-Born, Hispanic	667	0.0	0.3
L America Born, Non-	1,462	0.1	0.7
L America Born, Hispanic	671	0.0	0.3
SS Africa Born, non-	5,904	0.3	2.8

Hispanic



Measures of Disability

- **Six items to capture degrees of disability**
 - ***Impairment:***
 - 1) Sensory disability
 - 2) Physical disability
 - 3) Mental disability
 - ***Activity limitations:***
 - 4) Self-care limitations
 - ***Participation restriction:***
 - 5) Going outside-home disability
 - 6) Employment disability
- **Overall dichotomous measure**



Covariate and Control Variables

- **Acculturation**
 - Years lived in the United States
 - Other language spoken at home
 - English language skills
- **Socio-economic status**
 - Level of education
 - Total earnings
 - Poverty status
- **Demographic characteristics**
 - Age, gender, and marital status
 - Region of residence



Analysis

- **Descriptive and bivariate comparisons**
 - To compare the patterns of overall and specific types of disabilities among Blacks
 - To explore the patterns of demographic, socio-economic and acculturation related variables among Blacks
- **Logistic Regressions**
 - To determine unadjusted and adjusted odds of Blacks compared to native-born non-Hispanic Whites
 - To determine unadjusted and adjusted odds of foreign-born Blacks compared to native-born non-Hispanic Blacks



Findings: Background Characteristics

- **Acculturation Differences:**
 - Foreign-born Blacks lived 17.4(SD=12.4) yrs in the US
 - 48.5% of the foreign-born Blacks and only less than 3% of native Blacks spoke another language at home
- **Socio-Economic Differences:**
 - Foreign-born Blacks tend to be more educated and have higher income than native non-Hispanic Blacks
- **Demographic Differences:**
 - More foreign-born Blacks tend to live in the NE (42.4 vs. 13.0%); more native Blacks in the South (61.4 vs. 43%)
 - More foreign-born than native Blacks were married (51.1 vs. 34.7%)
 - Foreign-born are younger than native Blacks (M=43.8 vs. 45.6 yrs)



Findings: Patterns of Disability

- **Nearly one in five (19.7%) of the subsample reported one or more disabilities**
 - Most common are physical impairments and work-related limitations
- **Comparison of unadjusted rates suggest significant variation by nativity, ethnicity, and race**
 - Lowest rate among non-Hispanic Blacks born in SS Africa (8.2%) and highest among non-Hispanic US-born Blacks (25.3%)
 - Patterns of differences are similar by type of disability



Table 2. Prevalence of Disabilities among Foreign-Born Blacks and Native Blacks and Whites

	SE	PH	CO	SLF	OU	WR	DIS
White: Native, Non-Hispanic	6.0	13.2	6.5	4.3	6.5	12.5	19.2
Blacks: Native, Non-	6.1	17.6	10.0	6.7	9.2	17.3	25.3
Native, Hispanic	4.4	11.0	9.1	4.0	6.5	11.4	19.7
Blacks: All Foreign-Born	3.2	7.9	4.4	2.8	4.3	7.4	12.5
Europe-Born, Non-His	2.1	6.5	5.3	2.8	3.9	6.9	10.6
Caribbean-Born, Non-	3.5	8.9	4.9	3.2	4.9	8.3	13.5
Caribbean-Born,	7.5	14.7	8.5	5.4	7.6	13.6	22.2
Latin Am-Born, Non-	3.8	10.6	6.2	4.9	6.4	10.8	16.7
Latin Am-Born,	4.5	10.4	4.5	2.4	3.9	7.6	16.1
SS Africa-Born, non-	2.1	4.5	2.3	1.4	2.5	4.3	8.2
Blacks: All Native + Foreign	5.8	16.6	8.7	6.3	9.4	16.3	24.0

Born



Black vs. White Comparisons

- **Disparities in Overall Disability**
 - Non-Hispanic native Blacks were more likely than Non-Hispanic Whites to have a disability
 - Most foreign-born Black groups were less likely than Non-Hispanic Whites to have a disability
 - Foreign-born advantage persisted only for non-Hispanic Caribbean- and SS Africa-born Blacks
- **Disparities in Specific Disabilities**
 - Mixed findings for non-Hispanic native Blacks:
 - higher physical, self-care, and work disabilities
 - lower sensory and mental disabilities
 - Non-Hispanic Caribbean and African-born Blacks had consistently lower disabilities



Table 3. Odds of US- and Foreign-born Blacks having a Disability Compared to US-Born, Non-Hispanic Whites

	OR	<i>p</i>	OR	<i>p</i>
Blacks: Native, Non-	1.44	.000	1.11	.000
Native, Hispanic	1.07	.295	1.10	.175
Europe-Born, Non-His	.46	.000	.85	.193
Caribbean-Born, Non-	.66	.000	.75	.000
Caribbean-Born,	1.15	.169	.97	.833
Latin Am-Born, Non-His	.83	.012	.91	.320
Latin Am-Born,	.83	.082	.93	.557
SS Africa-Born, Non-His	.38	.000	.71	.000



Native vs. Foreign Born Black Comparisons

- **Disparities in Overall Disability**
 - All foreign-born Blacks as well as native Hispanic Blacks were less likely than native, non-Hispanic Blacks to have a disability
 - Foreign-born advantage persisted only for non-Hispanic Caribbean-, Latin American- and SS African-born Blacks
- **Disparities in Specific Disabilities**
 - Non-Hispanic Caribbean and African-born Blacks had consistently lower disabilities
 - Non-Hispanic Latin America born-blacks had also lower rates on sensory, physical, going-out disabilities



Table 4. Odds of US- and Foreign-born Blacks having a Disability Compared to US-Born, Non-Hispanic Blacks

	OR	<i>p</i>	OR	<i>p</i>
Blacks: Native, Hispanic	.75	.000	1.02	.790
Europe-Born, Non-His	.32	.000	.82	.124
Caribbean-Born, Non-	.46	.000	.69	.000
Caribbean-Born,	.80	.023	.88	.348
Latin Am-Born, Non-His	.58	.000	.81	.042
Latin Am-Born,	.58	.000	.87	.278
SS Africa-Born, Non-His	.27	.000	.65	.000



Summary

- US-born, non-Hispanic Blacks are significantly more likely than US-born, non-Hispanic Whites to have a disability
- **In contrast, non-Hispanic Blacks born in the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa were less likely than US-born, non-Hispanic Whites to have a disability**
- Comparison between Black groups confirmed that non-Hispanic Blacks from the Caribbean, SS Africa and Latin America were less likely to have disabilities
- **No advantage of being native Hispanic Black nor of being Blacks born in Europe**



Implications

- Blacks in the United States are increasingly heterogeneous and that their levels of health, disease, and disability may vary by nativity and ethnicity
- **Treating Blacks as a monolith group may lead to an underestimation or overestimation of health outcomes and potentially erroneous conclusions**
- Research into better conceptualization and measurement of ethnicity, nativity, and race would improve our understanding social disparities in



Limitations

- **These analyses are conducted with un-weighted data**
 - Do not account for errors associated with sampling design
 - Not to be taken as national estimates
- **Classification of Blacks can still be refined**
 - Foreign-born Blacks from some specific regions and countries (e.g., Jamaicans, Nigerians, E Africans)
- **ACS data on disabilities may be limited**