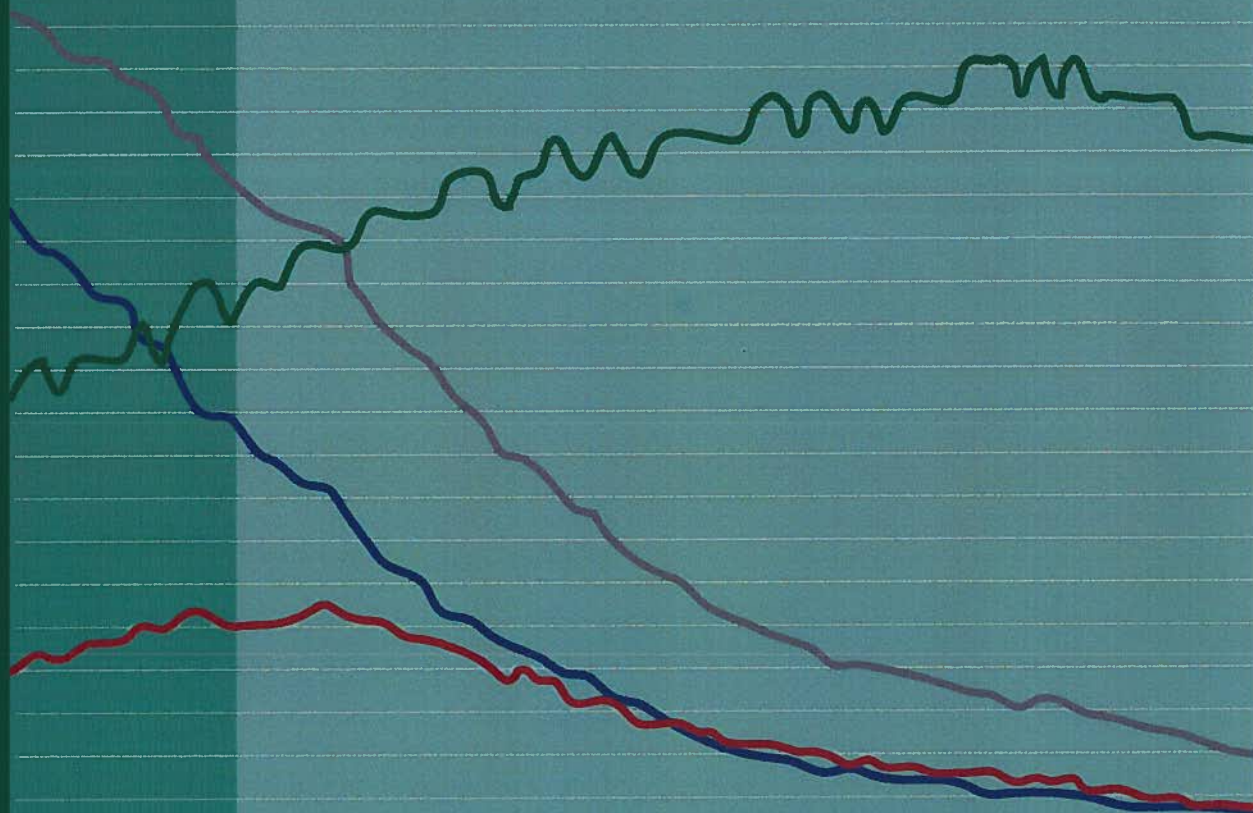


# Selected Comparisons of Measures of Health Disparities

A Review Using Databases  
Relevant to Healthy People 2010  
Cancer-Related Objectives



# Selected Comparisons of Measures of Health Disparities: A Review Using Databases Relevant to *Healthy People 2010* Cancer-Related Objectives

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## OVERVIEW

This report uses case studies to analyze the performance and appropriateness of various potential measures of health disparities. It complements a previous monograph, *Methods for Measuring Cancer Disparities: Using Data Relevant to Healthy People 2010 Cancer-Related Objectives*, which evaluated measures of disparity on theoretical grounds. The current monograph presents results from 22 separate analyses in 10 case studies and includes assessments of socioeconomic, race, ethnic, and geographic disparities in a range of cancer-related outcomes, such as mortality, incidence, risk factors, and screening. Overall, the report demonstrates that the choice of particular methods for measuring health disparities makes a substantive difference in the results and interpretation of data.

## MAJOR RESULTS

- Using different disparity measures leads to fundamentally different conclusions about progress toward eliminating health disparities, even when using the same data.
  - ▶ Relative measures of disparity often yield results opposite to those from absolute measures.
  - ▶ Population-weighted disparity measures may yield differences in either magnitude or direction compared to unweighted disparity measures.
  - ▶ Choosing a different reference group for comparison may result in observed differences in change in disparity.
- It is difficult to make an overall conclusion about disparity trends without deciding which aspects of disparity are of interest; thus, it may be useful to adopt a suite of indicators to clarify which aspects are changing over time.

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<http://seer.cancer.gov/publications>

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**Trends in Lung Cancer Incidence Among Males by Race and Trends in Overall Absolute and Relative Racial Disparity, 1990-2001**

