# Racial Disparities in HIV Care and Treatment

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According to a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report, African Americans living with HIV lag behind their white counterparts in receiving medical care and treatment for the virus.

The CDC researchers analyzed data from the National HIV Surveillance System on HIV-diagnosed adolescents and adults living in the 32 states (plus the District of Columbia) that provide complete laboratory reporting. Together, these jurisdictions account for nearly two thirds of African Americans living with diagnosed HIV.

Seventy-two percent of Blacks and 79 percent of whites who received an HIV diagnosis in 2014 were linked to care for the virus within one month of diagnosis.

In 2013, 68 percent of HIV-diagnosed Blacks in these jurisdictions received some HIV-related medical care compared with 74 percent of whites. Additionally, 54 percent of Blacks and 58 percent of whites received ongoing HIV care, and a respective 49 percent and 62 percent achieved a fully suppressed viral load.

Because successfully treating the virus prevents further transmission, the relatively low viral suppression rate among HIV-diagnosed African Americans is an apparent crux in the effort to stem the high rates of new infections seen in the overall community.

“HIV and AIDS continues to be a crisis among African Americans,” says the study’s lead author, Andre F. Dailey, MSPH, an epidemiologist at the CDC’s Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention. “High-impact prevention strategies must continue to be developed and implemented at state and local levels to accelerate progress among the African-American community—meaning more HIV testing and diagnoses; increasing the proportion of people living with HIV who are taking treatment effectively; and maximizing available prevention tools.”

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