

# FACTSHEET

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## Race, Ethnicity, and Alzheimer's

**Whites make up the majority of the over 5 million people in the United States with Alzheimer's. But, combining evidence from available studies shows that African-Americans and Hispanics are at higher risk.**

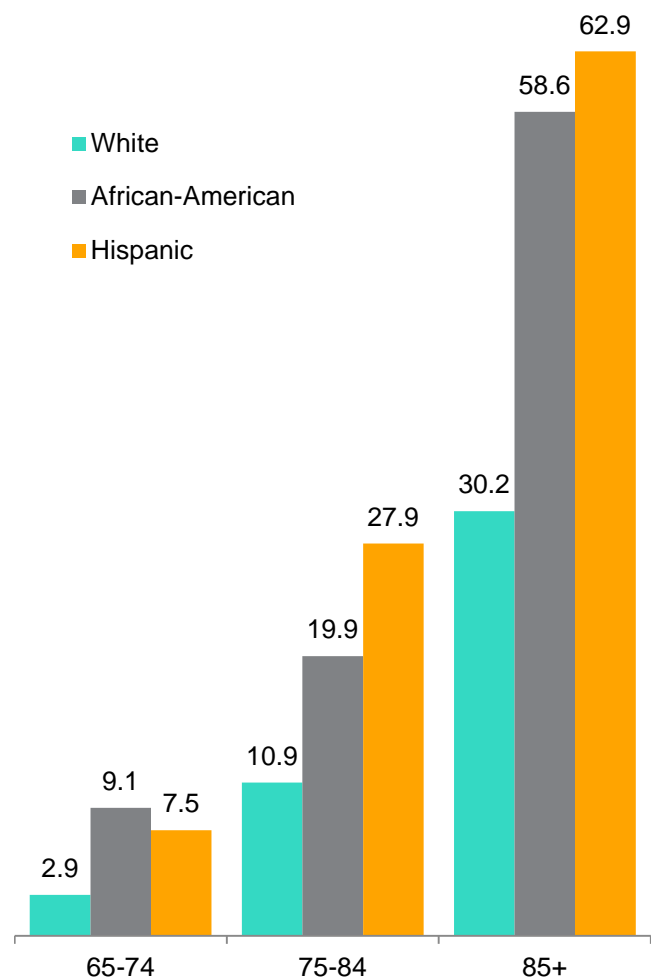
- African-Americans are about *two times* more likely than white Americans to have Alzheimer's and other dementias.
- Hispanics are about *one and one-half times* more likely than whites to have Alzheimer's and other dementias.

**Although the rate of Alzheimer's and other dementias in African-Americans is higher than in whites, they are *less likely* than whites to have a diagnosis of the condition.**

- While African-Americans are two times more likely than whites to have Alzheimer's and other dementias, 2014 Medicare data show they were only 36 percent more likely to have a diagnosis.
- According to data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), both African-Americans and Hispanics with cognitive impairment are less likely than whites to say that a doctor has told them they have a "memory-related disease."

### Proportion of People Aged 65 and Older with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias

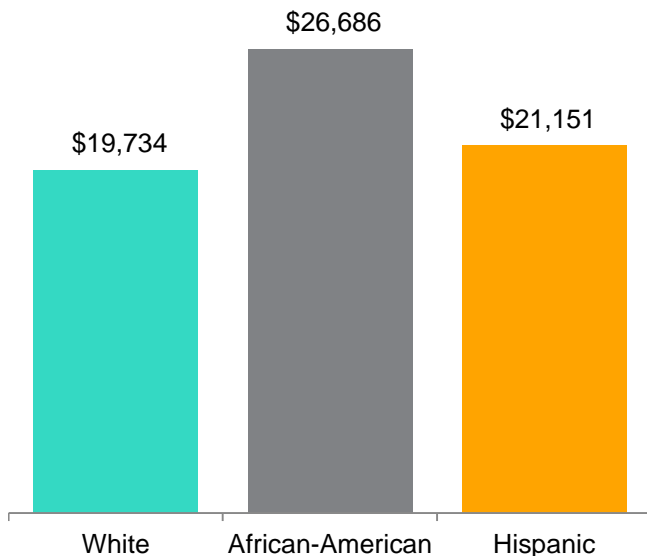
Washington Heights-Inwood Columbia Aging Project



**When they are diagnosed, African-Americans and Hispanics are typically diagnosed in the later stages of the disease, when they are more cognitively and physically impaired – and therefore need more medical care.**

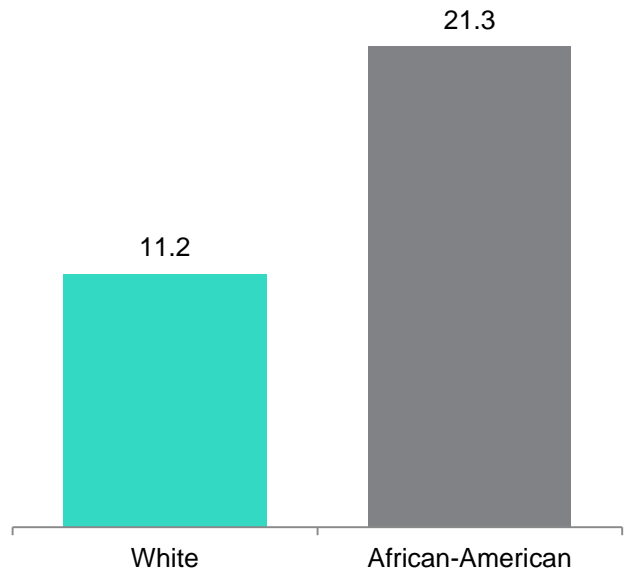
- As a result, African-Americans and Hispanics diagnosed with Alzheimer's use substantially more hospital, physician, and home health services – and incur substantially higher costs for those services – than whites with Alzheimer's.
- In 2014, average per-person Medicare payments for African-Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias were 35 percent higher than those for whites with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Medicare payments for Hispanics with Alzheimer's and other dementias were 7 percent higher than those for their white counterparts.

**Total Average Medicare Payment per Beneficiary 65 and Older with a Dementia Diagnosis, 2014**  
(in 2016 dollars)



**Proportion of Americans Aged 71 and Older with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias**

Aging, Demographics, and Memory Study (ADAMS)



**Genetic factors do not appear to account for the greater prevalence of – or the greater risk for developing – Alzheimer's.**

- High blood pressure and diabetes are suspected risk factors for Alzheimer's and other dementias among all groups. But, high blood pressure and diabetes are more prevalent in the African-American community, and diabetes is more prevalent in the Hispanic community.
- These conditions, among others, may contribute to the greater prevalence of Alzheimer's and dementia among these groups.
- Better management of these conditions – especially if treatment were begun in people who have these conditions in midlife – may help reduce Alzheimer's and dementia risk among African-Americans and Hispanics.