



# **The Relationship between dementias and zip codes in the US: The African American community and higher rate of Alzheimer's disease**

Dr. Yogesh Shah MD, MPH  
Memory Clinic  
Broadlawns Medical Center

# African Americans and Alzheimer's

- African Americans make up **14.4%** of the U.S. population
  - **33% of the national cost** for dementia care.

- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/mapping-americas-diversity-with-the-2020-census/>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/>

By **2030**, nearly **50% of** Americans with Alzheimer's will be **AA** or **Latino**.

# African Americans and Alzheimer's

- **65 %** know someone with Alzheimer's
- **80%** have some barriers to support
- **55%** think significant memory loss is a natural part of aging

**Dementia is not a  
normal part of aging**

**Why & what can we do?**

# Dementia risk in AA

- **Chronic conditions**
  - vascular conditions and dementia
- **Delayed diagnosis**
- **Zip code and dementia**
  - Social Determinants Of Health**  
**SDOH**

# Vascular disease and dementia

- Vascular disease:
  - Hypertension (HTN)
  - Diabetes (DM)
  - Stroke (CVA)



# Hypertension (HTN)

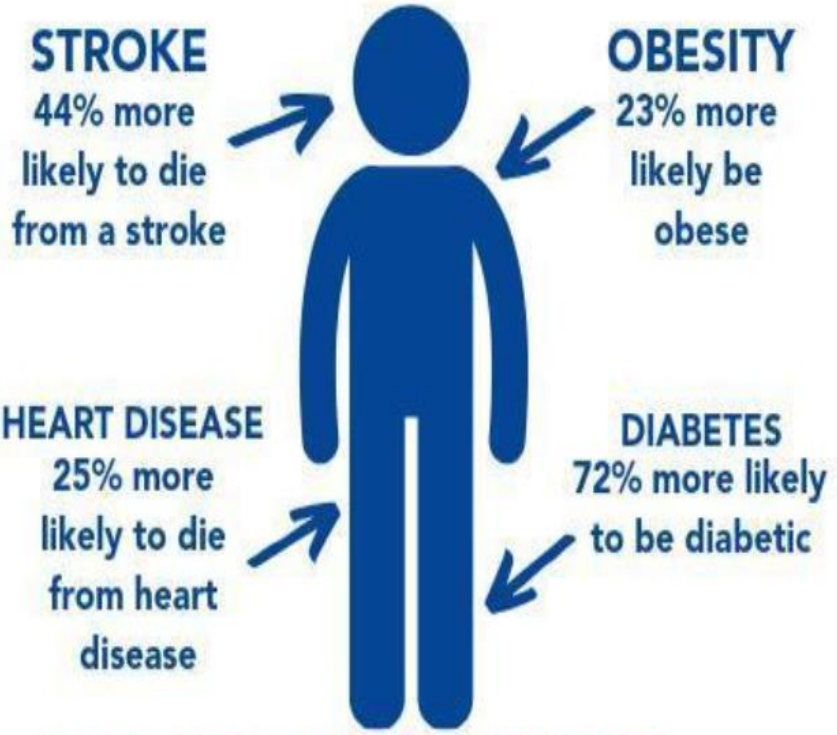
- **65% percent** of AA Medicare beneficiaries have hypertension, compared to **51%** white.
- **AA are also at higher risk of stroke.**

# DM

- African-Americans have **70% higher** risk of type 2 diabetes.

# AFRICAN AMERICANS

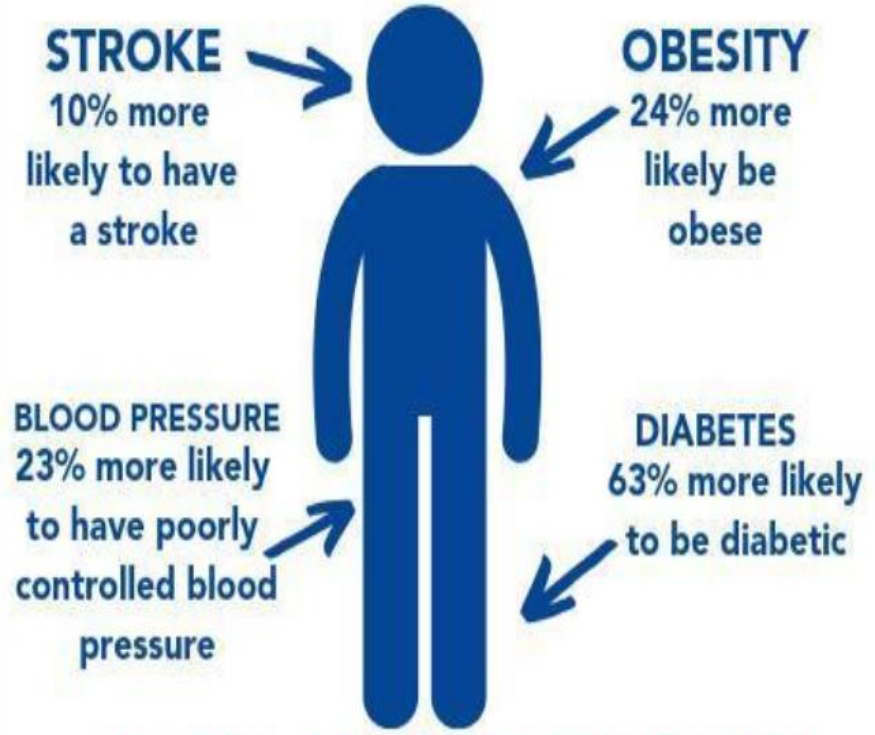
## HEALTH DISPARITIES



**2X AS LIKELY TO HAVE ALZHEIMER'S**

# LATINO AMERICANS

## HEALTH DISPARITIES



**1.5X AS LIKELY TO HAVE ALZHEIMER'S**

# Dementia risk in AA

- **Chronic conditions**
  - vascular conditions and dementia
- **Delayed diagnosis**
- **Zip code and dementia**
  - Social Determinants Of Health**  
**SDOH**

## Delayed Dx

- African-Americans tend to be diagnosed at a **later stage**.

# Dementia risk in AA

- **Chronic conditions**
  - vascular conditions and dementia
- **Delayed diagnosis**
- **Zip code and dementia**
  - Social Determinants Of Health**  
**SDOH**

# **Zip code and dementia**

# Zip code and Dementia

- AA were **40 percent** more likely to develop dementia if they'd been born in a state with **high infant mortality**.
- White people's risk of dementia wasn't affected by their place of birth.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6374212/>



# SDOH and Dementia

- Stress and Poverty may explain high rates of Dementia In African-Americans

Universal free higher education

Early life

Less education

7%

% Percentage reduction in dementia prevalence if this risk factor is eliminated

Single Payer Healthcare

Midlife

8%

Hearing loss

3%

Traumatic brain injury

2%

Hypertension

1%

Alcohol >21 units per week

1%

Obesity

Living Wage

5%

Smoking

4%

Depression

4%

Social isolation

2%

Physical inactivity

2%

Air pollution

1%

Diabetes

Later life

Universal free technical training program

Potentially modifiable  
40%

# **Dementia Friendly Practices**

# Faith Communities

- Dementia-friendly faith communities can provide an important **spiritual respite**.
- Raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote support in your community and others by spreading dementia-friendly principles.

# Dementia Friendly Practices

## Communication Skills

- Greet people warmly even if you think they do not remember you.
- Keep communication simple
- Be aware of the person's and your own body language
- Avoid arguing with or embarrassing.

# Dementia Friendly Practices

## **Environmental tips**

- Wear name tags.
- Be positive and focus on strengths
- Provide a quiet area
- Display signs that clearly identify areas

# Dementia Friendly Practices

## **Engage**

- Organize meaningful activities
- Offer shorter, simpler services.

# Dementia Friendly Practices

## Individualize

- Learn how the spiritual beliefs of the person with dementia may affect their perceptions of dementia.
- Be open-minded to how the person talks about his/her spirituality.



Dr. Shah

515-282-5700

- Reference:
- <https://uihc.org/news/racial-health-disparities-highlighted-covid-19>
- <https://khn.org/news/article/poll-nearly-half-of-american-adults-now-want-the-covid-vaccine-asap/>