

ASTHMA

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways characterized by episodes of wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. This disorder may be aggravated by allergens, environmental tobacco smoke and air pollution, poor housing conditions (mold, cockroaches, and dust mites), infections of the respiratory tract, and exercise.³¹ However, by taking certain precautions, persons with asthma may be able to effectively manage this disorder and participate in daily activities.

In 2008–2010, women were more likely to have asthma than men (9.7 versus 5.7 percent, respectively); this was true at all income levels and for all racial and ethnic groups. Among women, asthma prevalence decreased as income

increased: 13.2 percent of women with household incomes below 100 percent of poverty reported having asthma, while 8.4 percent of women with incomes of 400 percent or more of poverty did so. Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic women of multiple races were most likely to have asthma (19.2 and 17.9 percent, respectively), while non-Hispanic Asian and Hispanic women were least likely to have asthma (5.6 and 7.6 percent, respectively; data not shown).

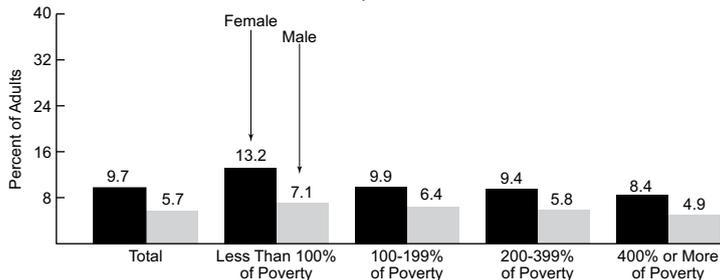
A visit to the emergency room due to an asthma attack may indicate that asthma is not being effectively controlled or treated. In 2008–2010, 22.7 percent of women with an asthma attack in the past year sought emergency care for their condition. The proportion of

women suffering an asthma attack who visited the emergency room varies with race and ethnicity, as well as household income. With regard to race and ethnicity, non-Hispanic Black and women of multiple races were most likely to have visited an emergency room (39.0 and 36.3 percent, respectively), while non-Hispanic White women were the least likely to have done so (17.4 percent).

The likelihood of women with asthma visiting an emergency room decreases as household income increases: nearly one-third of women with household incomes below 100 percent of poverty visited an emergency room in the past year (32.8 percent), compared to 17.5 percent of those with incomes of 400 percent or more of poverty (data not shown).

Asthma* Among Adults Aged 18 and Older, by Poverty Status** and Sex, 2008–2010

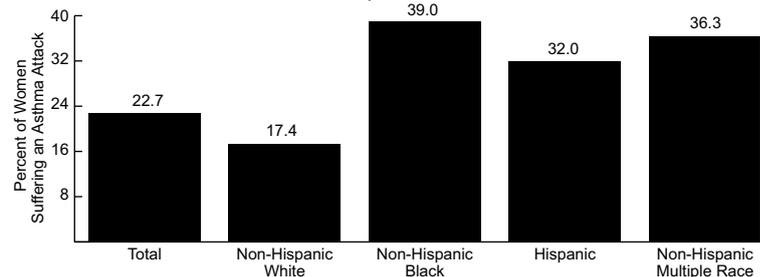
Source II.8: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*Reported that (1) a health professional has ever told them that they have asthma, and (2) they still have asthma. **Poverty level, defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, was \$22,314 for a family of four in 2010.

Emergency Room Visits Among Women Suffering an Asthma Attack* in the Past Year, by Race/Ethnicity,** 2008–2010

Source II.8: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*Reported that (1) a health professional has ever told them that they have asthma, and (2) they had an asthma attack in the past year. **The sample of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, and non-Hispanic Asians was too small to produce reliable results.