

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: COVID: HITTING BLACK AMERICANS HARD
REPORT: MB #4760

BACKGROUND: A newly identified coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, has caused a worldwide pandemic of respiratory illness, called COVID-19. Symptoms include cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sore throat, unexplained loss of taste or smell, diarrhea and headache. COVID-19 can be severe, and some cases has caused death. COVID-19 is spread through droplets released into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Diagnosis may be difficult because mild cases of COVID-19 may appear like the flu or a bad cold. A laboratory test can confirm the diagnosis. As of now, there is no specific treatment for the virus. People who have COVID-19 should be treated with supportive measures that relieve symptoms. For severe cases, there are additional options for treatment, including research drugs and therapeutics. To protect yourself from the coronavirus it's crucial to have good hygiene, respiratory etiquette and social and physical distancing.

(Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus>)

CORONAVIRUS RACIAL DISPARITIES: Current data suggests a disproportionate amount of illness and death among racial and ethnic minority groups. Health differences between racial and ethnic groups are often due to economic and social conditions. In public health emergencies, these conditions can isolate people from the resources they need to prepare and respond to outbreaks. Factors include living conditions, work circumstances, underlying health conditions and barriers to getting health care. Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations in emergencies includes improving day-to-day life and harnessing the strengths of these groups.

(Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>)

HOW TO FIGHT CORONAVIRUS RACIAL DISPARITIES: Fair housing policies, improving employment opportunities and taking steps to mitigate economic inequality will benefit people of color in the next health emergency, but there are ways to reduce sickness and mortality in minority populations during COVID-19. There is a need for new approaches in promoting social distancing messages on social media. The messages should be translated into multiple languages in a culturally sensitive manner, and at a literacy level that allows those at risk to understand the information. The messaging should address the stigma associated with COVID-19, which prevents symptomatic people from seeking medical attention until they are dangerously ill. Making COVID-19 testing available for those who do not have primary care physicians or transportation is key. Transportation must be provided to testing sites, and the test sites need to be set up directly in community hot spots so that symptomatic individuals and their contacts can be easily tested. A key to improving the disparity is gathering more accurate race, ethnic and neighborhood-specific data and knowing who is being affected by the coronavirus and who is bearing the most burden is critical to addressing disparities in testing and treatment.

(Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities>)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com