

Black, Hispanic women report more pain postpartum but receive less opioid medication

7 November 2019

Non-Hispanic black and Hispanic women were significantly more likely to report pain scores ranging from five to 10 when compared to non-Hispanic white women during the postpartum period.

9,900 deliveries at Northwestern Memorial Hospital from December 1, 2015, through November 30, 2016.

Provided by Northwestern University

Despite reporting higher [pain scores](#), black and Hispanic women received significantly fewer morphine milligram equivalents (a measurement of opioids) than white patients and were significantly less likely to receive a prescription for an opioid at postpartum discharge.

"Our study shows black and Hispanic women experience disparities in [pain management](#) in the postpartum setting," said Dr. Nevert Badreldin, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and a Northwestern Medicine physician. "These disparities cannot be explained by less perceived pain."

The study will be published November 6 in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Following delivery, women commonly utilize [pain medication](#) to manage pain associated with cramping, vaginal lacerations, surgical and musculoskeletal pain.

The reasons for the disparities are likely complex, Badreldin said. "One way to address them would be to encourage more standardized approaches to postpartum pain management," she said.

"Acknowledging the presence of racial and ethnic disparities in postpartum pain management is the first step to addressing why it exists and how we can stop it," she said.

The study looked at a retrospective cohort study of

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