**Is Health Affected by Living In a High Poverty Neighborhood?**

Muriel C. Rice, Mona Newsome Wicks, and Shelly White-Means.

Abstract

Research suggests individual social and economic characteristics and neighborhood conditions negatively influence health status. This analysis compared reported health risk behaviors, preventive health care practices, overall health status, and quality of life of African American public housing residents living a high poverty neighborhood with African American congregants who attended churches in but lived outside of this disadvantaged neighborhood. Data are from a health risk appraisal survey. Results indicated the overall health status of public housing residents was no worse than the older more educated and affluent congregants. More congregants were obese but both groups consumed high fat diets, failed to achieve recommended levels of physical activity, and underutilized preventive breast care behaviors. Gender, education, and food consumption patterns significantly influenced health. Findings provide additional evidence to drive policy changes and community-engaged program development that address complex factors challenging the health of African Americans residing in high-poverty segregated urban cities.

Key words: health disparities, high poverty, health status, health risk behaviors