

# The Impact of Race/Ethnicity, Household Structure, and Socioeconomic Status on Health Status in the Midwest, 2006-2008

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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the impact of race/ethnicity, household structure, and socioeconomic status on health and assesses how household structure and socioeconomic status explain the racial/ethnic gaps in health among adults in the Midwest. Data are drawn from the Current Population Survey (CPS) for 2006-2008. Findings indicate that the odds of fair/poor health are higher for African Americans, Latinos, and other race/ethnic groups than those of non-Hispanic Whites. Also, the odds of fair/poor health are higher for single male-headed householders and single female-headed householders than they are for householders in dual-headed households. As might be expected, higher levels of education and higher incomes are associated with lower odds of fair/poor health, even after controlling for age, foreign-born status, home ownership, nonmetropolitan residence, job quality, and health insurance coverage. Findings also reveal that the gaps in health between Whites and African-Americans persist even after accounting for household structure, socioeconomic status, job quality, and health insurance coverage, and that the gaps in health between White and Latinos are fully explained by household structure socioeconomic status indicators. Of all factors, socioeconomic status indicators are the most important source of reduction in racial/ethnic gap in health. The results imply that interventions to improve socioeconomic conditions and strengthen households, especially single female-headed households, may reduce the racial/ethnic gaps in health.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jean Kayitsinga is a sociologist demographer for the Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University (MSU). He received his Ph.D. in sociology from MSU in 1999. His areas of specialization include rural sociology, sociology of families, demography, research methods, and statistical methodologies.

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