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## Racial disparities in surgical outcomes of patients with Inflammatory **Bowel Disease**

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#### ABSTRACT

Background: Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) has not historically been a focus of racial health disparities research. IBD has been increasing in the black community. We hypothesized that outcomes following surgery would be worse for black patients.

Methods: A retrospective cohort study of death and serious morbidity (DSM) of patients undergoing surgery for IBD was performed using data from the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP 2011-2014). Multivariable logistic regression modeling was performed to evaluate associations between race and outcomes.

Results: Among 14,679 IBD patients, the overall rate of DSM was 20.3% (white: 19.3%, black 27.0%, other 23.8%, p < 0.001). After adjustment, black patients remained at increased risk of DSM compared white patients (OR: 1.37: 95% CI 1.14-1.64).

Conclusions: Black patients are at increased risk of post-operative DSM following surgery for IBD. The elevated rates of DSM are not explained by traditional risk factors like obesity, ASA class, emergent surgery, or stoma creation.

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#### Introduction

Over the past 50 years, the incidence and prevalence of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), which includes both Crohn's disease (CD) and ulcerative colitis (UC), has increased and now affects over 1.5 million patients in the United States. 1-3 While IBD has not previously been recognized as a disease affecting minority populations, there has been an increased incidence in black and hispanic populations in recent years.<sup>4–8</sup> Specifically; Ogundi et al. reported that African American children with CD or UC were onefourth greater than other IBD cohorts followed over the past 10 years.<sup>9,10</sup> Despite this increased incidence in black populations, there remains limited and inconsistent information regarding the characteristics, medical utilization, and surgical outcomes for minority IBD patients.

Racial disparities in surgical care outcomes are ubiquitous and contribute to mortality and morbidity in various conditions. Black

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patients have been shown to receive fewer diagnostic evaluations and fewer therapeutic interventions. 11,12 An extensive body of research highlights poorer surgical outcomes and higher postoperative morbidity and mortality for black patients when compared to white patients. 13,14

In an effort to determine if racial disparities exist in patients diagnosed with IBD, we examined death and serious morbidity (DSM) and 30-day postoperative complications in IBD patients who received a surgical procedure. We hypothesized that black patients would have worse outcomes following surgery compared to white patients.

#### Materials and methods

We performed a retrospective cohort study using data from the 2011-2014 American College of Surgeons National Quality Improvement Project Participant Use File (ACS-NSQIP PUF). This database collects from more than 400 participant hospitals across the country and includes approximately 136 variables describing patient characteristics, historical features, process variables, and outcomes. We included all patients age >18 years with IBD, including both CD and UC, using the following International

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Statistical Classification of Diseases (ICD-9) diagnosis codes: 555, 555.0, 555.1, 555.2, 555.9, 556, 556.8, 556.9, 556.1–556.6.

Our initial inclusion criteria identified 14,877 IBD cases. Patients were excluded if they underwent an anorectal surgery, endoscopic alone, and non-small bowel or non-colon surgery procedures ( $n\!=\!40$ ). Additionally, patients were excluded for either having another surgical procedure within 30 days prior, disseminated cancer, chemotherapy, central nervous system tumor, ventilator dependence, or pregnancy ( $n\!=\!158$ ). After these exclusions, our final analytical cohort included 14,679 patients.

The primary outcome was DSM within 30 days of the surgical procedure. Serious morbidity was defined as the occurrence of one or more complications including: sepsis, organ space infection, acute renal failure requiring dialysis, septic shock, pulmonary embolism, coma, stroke, intubation for greater than 48 h, hemorrhage requiring transfusions of greater than four units, cardiac arrest requiring resuscitation, or myocardial infarction.<sup>15</sup> In order to characterize the observed outcomes, we also looked at the following individual complications: return to OR, septic shock, blood transfusions, urinary tract infection, venous thromboembolism (VTE) and wound infection.

Our primary demographic classification was patient race (white, black, or other). "Other" race consisted of Pacific Islanders, Asians, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives. The following patient characteristics were included in the study: age category (18–35; 36–55; 56–75; 76+), gender, condition (CD or UC), year of operation, and emergency status (emergent or elective). ASA Physical Status Classification level was included in an effort to adjust for severity of illness. Additional comorbidities such as obesity, smoking, steroid use, weight loss, acute renal failure, dialysis, ascites, history of cardiac issues, bleeding disorders, blood transfusions, and diabetes were included for risk adjustment. Preoperative albumin, creatine, and white blood cell and platelet counts were also included for risk adjustment. We classified the

types of IBD procedures by the approach (laparoscopic versus open), intestine type (small, appendix, large, rectum) and procedure type (stoma, resection, repair, other, etc) (See Table 1 for codes used). Patients were also classified by the creation of any ostomy for risk adjustment separately from the procedure type classification.

Analytic strategy

Descriptive statistics were performed. Univariate analysis for each covariate upon race was examined using the chi-square test for categorical variables. Variables shown to be significant in univariate analysis (P  $\leq$  0.1) were selected for inclusion in a multivariable logistic regression model to evaluate the adjusted association between DSM and race. The same procedure was performed for the secondary outcomes analysis as well. The study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board of the University of Pennsylvania for exemption from continuing review. All analyses were performed with STATA 13.1 (Stata Corp, College Station, TX).  $^{16}$ 

#### Results

Of the 14,679 patients in our analytic cohort, the majority of patients were white (83.1%), with a median age of 41 (IQR 29–51). Black patients represented 7.1% of the cohort while other race patients constituted 9.9%. A majority of the study cohort were diagnosed with CD (57.6%) while UC comprised the remaining 42.4%.

As seen in Table 2, black patients were younger, more likely to be female and more likely to present emergently when compared to white patients. Black patients also had a greater percentage of CD when compared to both white and patients of other races (74% versus 57% white and 50.9% other; p < 0.001). Black patients were more likely to go to surgery after 6 days in the hospital than white patients. The majority of the comorbidities were evenly distributed between races with black patients having a higher rate of smoking

**Table 1**Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes used to identify procedure approach and type.

Procedure Approach	Intestine Type	Procedure Type	CPT Codes
Laparoscopic Open	Small	Ostomy	44186,44187
		Resection	44202,44203
		Repair	44227
		Other	44180, 44238
	Appendix	<b>2</b> .	44970, 44979
	Large	Ostomy	44188
	ъ.	Resection	44212, 44204, 44205, 44206, 44207, 44208, 44210,44211, 44212, 44213
	Rectum	Resection	45397, 45395 45400, 45400, 45400
		Repair Other	45400, 45402, 45499 44239
	Small	Enterolysis	44005
	Silidii	•	44015, 44300, 44310,44312, 44314, 44316,44620,44625, 44626
		Ostomy Resection	44120, 44121, 44126,44127, 44128, 44125, 45136
		Volvulus	44120, 44121, 44120,44127, 44128, 44123, 43136
		Ladd procedure	44055
		Enteroenterostomy	
		Stricturoplasty	44615
		Fistula Takedown	44640,44660, 44661
		Other	44010, 44020, 44021, 44110, 44111, 44135, 44137, 44602,44603, 44680, 44700, 44800,44820,44850,44899,49000
	Appendix	Other	44900,44901,44950, 44955,44960
	Large	Ostomy	44320,44322,44340,44345, 44346
	Luige	Partial Colectomy	44139, 44140,4414,44143,44144,44145,44146,44147, 44160,
		Total Colectomy	44150, 44151, 44152, 44153, 44155,44156,44157,44158
		Fistula Takedown	44650
		Other	44025, 44604,44605, 44701
	Rectum	Proctectomy	45110,45116,45119,45121,45123
		Stricturoplasty	45150
		Fistula Takedown	45800, 45805,45820, 45825,
		Other	45126, 45130, 45135, 45160, 45171, 45172, 45500, 45505,45520, 45540,45541, 45550,45560,45562,45563, 45170,45190,44799

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