

Disparities of Preterm Birth in the Black Community: a systematic review of psychosocial  
factors

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Objective:* While there is no single cause that created such a huge disproportion in racial preterm birth rates, it is important to address and continue to discover all the possible contributing factors to decrease the occurrence of preterm births. This research paper focused on the heightened presence of preterm births in black mothers specifically because it is a problem with many levels affecting black women, and has a focus primarily on psychosocial factors. The decision to focus primarily on psychosocial factors relating to premature births in black women came about due to these factors often being overlooked.

*Method:* Using the University of Texas at Austin Library database, the author searched the key terms: “disparity, black women, preterm birth, infant mortality rates, labor mortalities”. The author’s search engines were Cumulated Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature [CINAHL], Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality [AHRQ], and pubmed.gov. Originally, the author had over 10,000 articles to read and extract data from. However, the author further refined my search terms to ((premature birth) OR (low birth weight)) AND (Black women) AND Intervention AND preterm birth AND (psychosocial)), and the author reduced the time gap to the last 10 years, 2011-2021. After making those changes, the author began reading and extracting data using the PICOS extraction tool.

*Results:* A total of 52 articles published from 2011 to 2021 were dissected for this review; 7 of those articles met inclusion criteria. Issues such as differences in racism, racial disparities, and marital status were examined and proven to have an effect on the stress and mental well-being of mothers. In turn creating greater frequencies of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth. As a result of these factors, Black women are more likely to experience depressive symptoms, perceived stress, and receive less social support than White women, regardless of income or social status.

*Conclusion:* The systematic review conducted will elucidate what has been discovered about the psychosocial factors that cause such high rates of black premature births. This review also discusses the issue of prematurity, what is known, why black babies should be born prematurely more than other racial groups and what the factors might be that contribute to that disparity.