

Mortality Dynamics of the US Population by Race and Hispanic Origin:
1984-1999

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The changing composition of the US population in terms of Race and Hispanic Origin has prompted interest in the demographic parameters of its constituent Race/Origin categories. The present analysis is devoted to Race/Origin profiles of mortality. Two key questions are of particular interest: 1) the resemblance between age-sex profiles of mortality of various Race/Origin groups; and 2) whether the Race/Origin mortality profiles appear to be converging or diverging over time.

Analysis of longterm trends in the population of Hispanic origin has been handicapped by constraints on data availability. It was not until 1997 that all States had included an item identifying Hispanic origin on their death certificates. These data constraints, although imposing, are not insurmountable. The states with the largest Hispanic Origin populations (e.g. California, Texas, New York) were distinguishing Hispanic Origin in their death registers as early as 1984. Administrative estimates of US state populations by race, Hispanic origin, age and sex are available throughout the 1984-1999 period. The observed ethnic mortality differentials between those states reporting hispanicity of mothers throughout and other states as of the time when they began registering hispanicity can be applied to the administrative estimates for earlier years to derive indirect estimates of mortality patterns in nonreporting states via a methodology akin to Indirect Standardization.

The proposed paper shall present 1980-1999 time series of age and sex-specific mortality rates, together with life table measures of longevity, by single-year ages, for three broad Race/Origin categories: Hispanics, Black Non-Hispanics, and all other Non-Hispanics. The extent to which the Race/Origin profiles of mortality resemble one another shall be assessed by the component methodology of decomposing differences in life expectancy into the contributions of various age categories developed by Arriaga (1984). The same methodology applies to the crucial question of convergence in Race/Origin mortality patterns or lack thereof. The recent contribution of Vaupel and Romo (2003) shall be employed to express rates of convergence over time.