

Should doctors, scientists stop grouping us by race?

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More than a decade after leading geneticists argued that race is not a true biological category, many studies continue to use it, harming scientific understanding and possibly patients, researchers argued in [a provocative essay](#) in Science.

“We thought that after the Human Genome Project, with [its leaders] saying it’s time to move beyond race as a biological marker, we would have done that,” said Michael Yudell, a professor in the Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University and coauthor of the Science paper calling on journals and researchers to stop using race as a category in genetics studies. “Yet here we are, and there is evidence things have actually gotten worse in the genomic age.”

Categorizing someone as “black” can affect medical care, research has shown. Doctors might miss cystic fibrosis in “black” patients because it is considered a “white” disease, [a 2015 study](#) suggested. Similarly, because blood disorders called thalassemias are considered a Mediterranean/white disease and sickle-cell anemia a black disease, they are sometimes misdiagnosed when they strike the “wrong” racial group, Yudell and his colleagues wrote.

The reason scientists still use race as a way to group people — asking, for instance, which genetic variants are more common in this or that race — is that many still consider the concept useful if imperfect, said geneticist Neil Risch of the University of California, San Francisco, and president of the American Society of Human Genetics.

Read full, original post: [Should biologists stop grouping us by race?](#)