

Race-based medical differences: Alzheimer's blood tests designed for white patients less accurate on blacks

Several blood tests used to diagnose Alzheimer's disease are less accurate for African Americans than white patients, according to research from Washington University.

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The tests measure concentrations of specific proteins that form sticky plaques and tangles in the brain, causing the memory-robbing disease.

But when Washington University researchers tested the accuracy of leading Alzheimer's blood tests, they found three out of four performed differently depending on the patient's race.

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More than 6 million people in the U.S. had Alzheimer's disease in 2021, based on federal data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Black patients are about [twice as likely](#) to develop the disease and other related forms of dementia and often have more severe symptoms.

But nearly all of the research and clinical testing used to develop Alzheimer's blood tests has involved white patients, said Rebecca Edelmayer, who leads scientific engagement for the [Alzheimer's Association](#) and was not involved in the study.

"We need to be able to understand what these technologies are telling us across different races and ethnicities and people from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to make sure that the diagnoses are actually predictive of the type of disease they have in their brain," Edelmayer said.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)