

(A pre-talk with a friend about independently reviewing the data)

Lane,

We are both research geeks to a degree. Both of us heard Scientist mention the disparity in male and female infant mortality among African Americans. I can't find any evidence that there is a gender disparity. Absolutely there is a race disparity (but attributable to racism, not any genetic/racial predisposition) but like you, my understanding of these factors could not possibly discriminate in utero based on gender. (Maybe, if black women, upon learning their baby's gender, behaved differently (and differently than white women and others)(self care, prenatal care, etc.) if that child was going to be male or female). I just don't see it. I also know no reason why male fetus would be less viable than a female fetus, this is not supported in the literature.

I think what she might have meant is male mortality after age 5. I can see how environmental and social factors could contribute to higher male mortality in childhood and adolescence, and the literature documents this, just as it documents a disparity in black male incarceration rates versus whites (but attributable to income/poverty (which is influenced by social determinants (racism again)).

Did you turn up anything different?

-xxxx

Hello Scientist,

Thanks for giving the talk for the XXX last Monday. I wanted to ask you about a point I thought you said, but I am unable to find it in your slides so I may have misunderstood.

During this talk you mentioned that male infant mortality is greater than female infant mortality, and that in the case of stressed demographics, the effect becomes amplified and even more males die. I think you might have even said that this was an in utero effect.

You had said that this was impacting blacks in America because they experience fewer opportunities to access prenatal care services, and this was contributing to an unnatural ratio of males to females in blacks where the male population is lower.

I did some online searching and was unable to find any source to support this claim, or perhaps I did not understand you correctly. Am I here now accurately restating what you said? I am looking through the handout showing the slides on which you presented and I am not seeing this claim in the slides, but I thought that is what you said, and I thought I saw this in your presentation, and I thought this is what you told me when I asked about it.

Can you confirm whether what I am saying is correct? If so, do you have a source for this?

Thanks for your attention.

Hi Lane,

You are correct that I stated that male infant mortality is higher than female but I did not make any claims about an in utero effect or any other biological variable that this may be attributed to. I am not sure why that is the case. I did, however, state that structural factors (e.g., access to care, insurance, quality of care) have been tied to the disparities we see in infant mortality in the Black community within the United States. There may be other factors that contribute to more male deaths than female deaths overall but I am unaware of these factors. I hope this clears things up.

*Social Scientist*  
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Scientist,

Can you provide a source describing the gender disparity, or at least direct me to the unsourced bit of data you gave us so that I can try to track it down myself? I am really curious as to why male infants would have greater fatality rates than female infants, and particularly whether this effect is seen in places with continual, chronic stress beyond anything the black American community ever sees, such as in developing countries.

Thanks for your attention.

The CDC is always a great source for this kind of information. Check out:  
[http://cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6001a9.htm?s\\_cid=su6001a9\\_w](http://cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6001a9.htm?s_cid=su6001a9_w)

The references at the end of the report will direct you to other useful sources.

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Scientist,

I consider myself to be fairly competent at finding data and I have done a search on this already and turned up nothing.

I appreciate your effort in giving this link to me but it seems to be unrelated to the question I asked you and I have no reason to expect the list of references would either. I am looking for a source which says something about a gender disparity for male infants having a greater risk of fatality than female infants. As best as I can tell, this report says nothing about gender.

Do you understand what I am asking? Do you have a source for this? If not, can you direct me to someone who might?

Lane,

Take a look at some of the articles referring to trends in the U.S. As I stated before I know the research on disparities, so this is what I have. I think if you dig deeper into the references provided on some of the links you might find what you are looking for. Alternately, get in touch with someone who conducts research/works in the NICU or obstetrics. They may be a better source. I understand your frustration and yes I do understand what you are asking. I have taken quite a bit of time to assist you with this and would appreciate a less adversarial tone in the future.

As an FYI...I did a search using excess male infant mortality and found the following....

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2278210/>

Using the exact terms you are searching for when doing a lit search is the best approach.

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