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Eliminating the Racial Gap in Infant Mortality Is Achievable, University Study Says

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Joedrecka S. Brown Speights, associate professor of family medicine and rural health at the Florida State University College of Medicine, is the lead author of new [research](#) that shows an encouraging trend regarding a lowering of the infant mortality rate for African Americans.

In 2013, the non-Hispanic Black infant mortality rate in the U.S. was 11.1 per 1,000 live births, compared with 5.1 for non-Hispanic Whites. Nationally, the Black rate has remained at least double the White rate for decades.

But Professor Brown Speights' study shows that in 18 states, the racial gap in infant mortality rates is on track to be eliminated by the year 2050. The study notes that if the racial gap was eliminated, an estimated 4,000 lives of Black babies would be saved.

"Racial equality in infant survival is achievable," Dr. Brown Speights said. The researchers did not determine why some states are making progress and others are not. These reasons must be explored in future research studies.

Dr. Brown Speights joined the faculty at Florida State University in 2012. She is a graduate of Florida A&M University in Tallahassee and the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.

The study, "State-Level Progress in Reducing the Black-White Infant Mortality Gap, United States, 1999-2013," was published in the *American Journal of Public Health*. It may be accessed [here](#).

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