

Racial Stratification in the Accumulation of Health and Human Capital from
Adolescence into Young Adulthood

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Jennifer Buher Kane
Carolina Population Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Kathleen Mullan Harris
Department of Sociology and Carolina Population Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

S. Philip Morgan
Department of Sociology and Carolina Population Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

David K. Guilkey
Department of Economics and Carolina Population Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

* Direct correspondence to Jennifer B. Kane, Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 123 W. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; Phone: (919) 843-6257; Fax: (919) 966-6638; Email: jbkane@unc.edu. This research uses data from Add Health, a program project directed by Kathleen Mullan Harris and designed by J. Richard Udry, Peter S. Bearman, and Kathleen Mullan Harris at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and funded by grant P01-HD31921 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, with cooperative funding from 23 other federal agencies and foundations. Special acknowledgment is due Ronald R. Rindfuss and Barbara Entwisle for assistance in the original design. Information on how to obtain the Add Health data files is available on the Add Health website (<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth>). This research received support from the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (K99 HD075860, PI: Kane; T32 HD007168, PI: Halpern; R24 HD050924, PI: Morgan). Opinions reflect those of the authors and not necessarily those of the granting agencies.

ABSTRACT

Social inequalities in health and human capital are well-documented, but less research has examined the developmental stage when such inequalities likely emerge: the transition to adulthood (THA). Recent work proposed and tested a path model tracing the development of health and human capital across the THA. We build on this work by examining how race stratifies these pathways. Couched within a cumulative dis/advantage framework, we propose that race exerts both an initial disadvantage and continuing influence on health and human capital across the THA, via disparate mechanisms. We test this supposition using an autoregressive structural equation model, with multiple time-varying instrumental variables to statistically identify health and human capital at each time point, and population-based data (Add Health). Results provide support for this notion and reveal complex ways in which these influences operate in conjunction with one another to stratify health and human capital pathways across the THA by race.