



A Scoping Review on the Homelessness Crisis in Black Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Are Justice and Equity Met?

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Background

- Discrimination in housing sales, rising home prices and the increasing Black-white wage gap make housing unaffordable for many black families and residents.
- COVID-19 has cause catastrophic job loss and economic hardship.
- After the pandemic, we can estimate an increase in evictions and a rise in homelessness.

Objectives

- To conduct a scoping review to fill the information gap regarding issues of justice and equity as it relates to the homelessness crisis for the Black community during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The specific review questions to be investigated are:
 - Which risk factors to homelessness are disclosed?
 - How has COVID-19 increased these risks?
 - What current policies are there to mitigate these risks?
 - What future policies are suggested to mitigate these risks?
 - Are policies to mitigate the risks rooted in equity and justice?

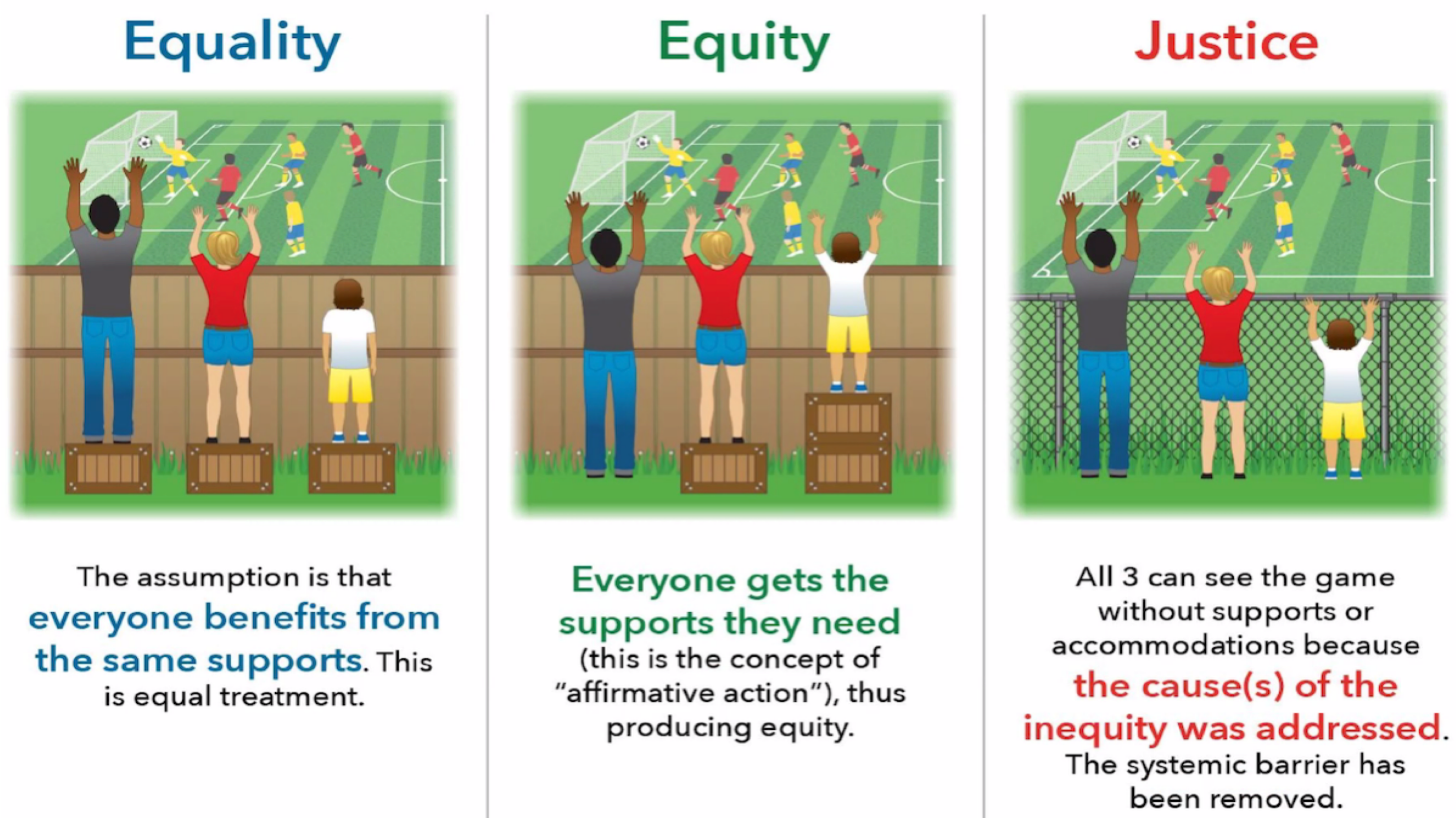


Figure 1: Only through justice can there be true liberation for all people. (<https://www.csdecatur.net/Page/3061>).

Methods

- Multiple databases were searched for relevant studies.
- Studies were screened based on relevance as well as our inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- We extracted data on study characteristics including:
 - Ethnicity
 - Pathways to homelessness
 - COVID-19 and homelessness
 - Economic responses
 - Future strategies
 - Equity and justice assessment

Results

Author	Ethnicity studied	Pathway to homelessness	COVID-19 and homelessness	Responses	Future strategies	Equity	Justice
Review 1: Benfer, E. A. et al.	Black Latinx	1. Shortage of affordable housing 2. Discriminatory housing	1. Unprecedented unemployment 2. Unprecedented wage loss 3. Increased COVID-19 infection rates	1. Eviction moratorium 2. CARES Act 3. CDC eviction moratorium	1. RAP*/ Eviction Diversion 2. Access to Health Care 3. Civil right to counsel	Yes	Yes
Review 2: Maness, S. B et al.	Black	1. Housing discrimination 2. Discriminatory hiring and pay 3. Difficult to accumulate wealth due to systemic racism	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	1. Systemic changes to eliminate systemic racism and improve SDH 2. Implement widespread societal change	Yes	Yes
Review 3: Mehdiapanah, R.	People of color	1. Shortage of affordable housing 2. Discriminatory housing policies	1. Record unemployment rates 2. Economic uncertainty 3. Disruptions to work/unpaid sick time	Not mentioned	1. Public Health Research surveys on financial strain due to COVID-19 2. Surveys on financial strain due to COVID-19	Yes	No

Table 1: Data extraction table demonstrating study characteristics.
*RAP: Rental Assistance Program
Yes: Study mentioned health inequity/the health equity gap or a form of justice (social, health, racial) in their respective columns.

Discussion

- Our findings demonstrate that research regarding homelessness in the Black community as a result of the economic crisis of COVID-19 is limited and only included 3 studies.
- General risk factors to homelessness include shortage of affordable housing and discriminatory housing policies.
- With the addition of record unemployment and wage loss, COVID-19 has increased the risk of homelessness.
- The Eviction moratoria and the CARES Act have attempted to provide equity, but have not provided justice.
- Black people are dying at 1.5x the rates of whites (figure 2) and independent of race, being homeless increases COVID transmission opportunities.
- It is important for new economic COVID-19 relief strategies to be rooted in both equity and justice to protect this vulnerable community.

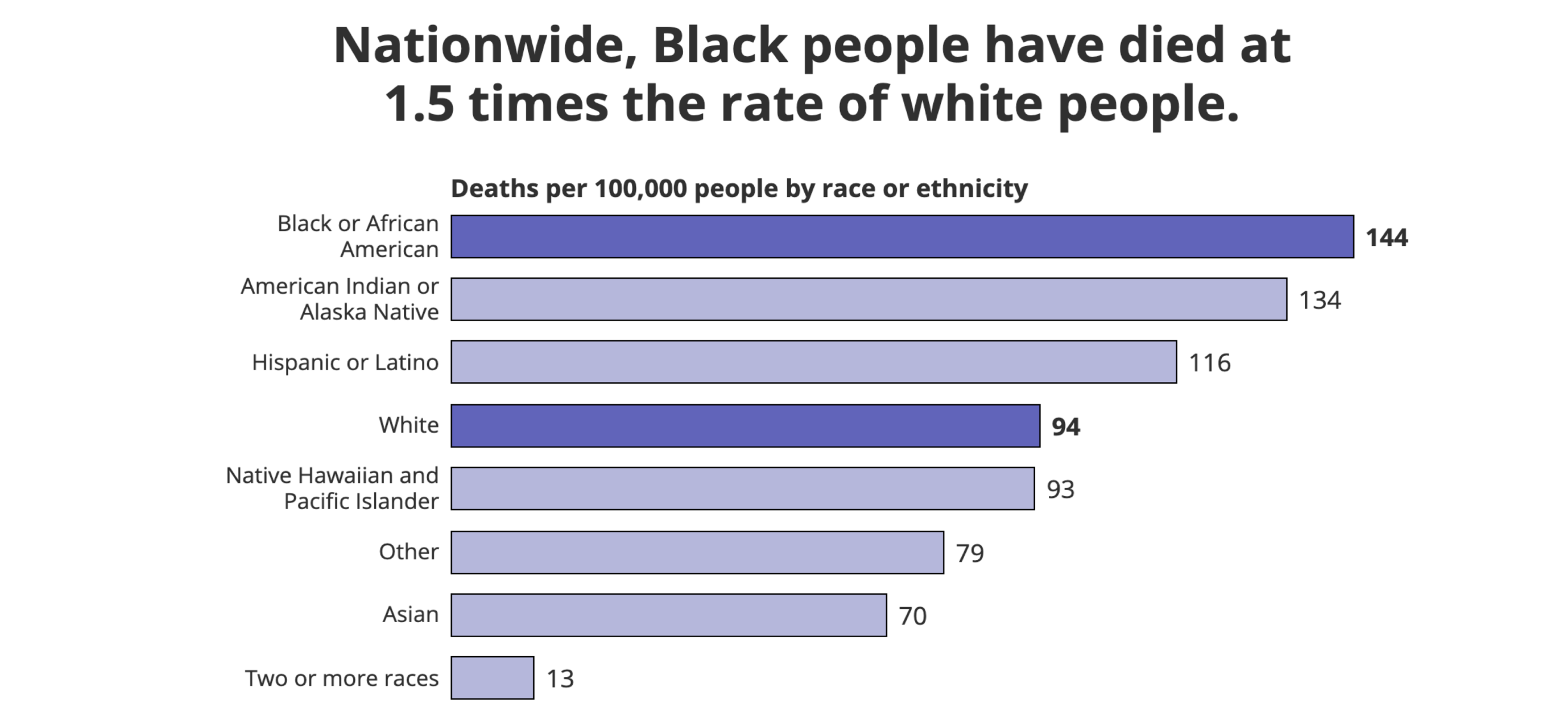


Figure 2: Blacks die at 1.5 times the rates of whites from COVID-19. (Covidtracking.com)

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