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Brief communication

Race in association with physical and mental health among former professional American-style football players: findings from the Football Players Health Study

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Race differences in health are pervasive in the United States. American-style football players are a racially diverse group with social status and other benefits that may reduce health disparities. Whether race disparities in health exist among former professional football players, and whether they differ by era of play, is unknown.

Methods: We examined the association of self-reported race with health outcomes (e.g., physical and cognitive function, pain, depression, and anxiety), among 3747 participants in the Football Players Health Study, comprising former National Football League players who played since 1960. We conducted analyses stratified by age.

Results: Black players had increased risk of all five adverse health outcomes versus white players (risk ratio range = 1.36 to 1.89). Native Hawaiians and men of other races had greater risk of all health outcomes except impaired physical functioning, compared with white players (risk ratio range = 1.25 to 1.64). No clear patterns were observed by era of play. In general, race disparities were not accounted for by health-related exposures during playing years. Adjustment for current BMI somewhat attenuated associations. *Conclusions:* Social and economic advantages of playing professional football did not appear to equalize race disparities in health.

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Race differences in health are well-documented in the United States, in part driven by conscious and unconscious biases, which have led to inequities in neighborhood environment, medical care, and socioeconomic position [1,2]. Professional American-style

football players are a racially diverse group exposed to high levels of physical trauma during their playing years, which may cause lasting pain, physical impairment and neurocognitive dysfunction [3–5]. At the same time, professional football players generally

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have social status and other benefits not typically available in the general population. Former National Football League (NFL) players are more than twice as likely to be college graduates than U.S. men [5,6] and have higher median income than the U.S. population [5]. Advantages associated with playing professional football may reduce race disparities in health, in particular among more recent players, who played when black coaches and high-salary players (e.g., quarterbacks) were rapidly increasing in the NFL [7,8].

In the present study, we examined five important determinants of health-related quality of life in a cohort of former NFL players, the Football Players Health Study (FPHS). We investigated whether selfreported physical functioning, pain interference in daily life, cognition-related quality of life, and indicators of depression and anxiety differed by race. We further examined whether exposures during playing years, including seasons of play, playing position, concussion symptoms, surgeries, BMI, use of performanceenhancing drugs, and pain medication accounted for possible differences.

Methods

Sample

The FPHS recruited men who were on an NFL team between 1960 and 2015 [9]. We sent a questionnaire to 13,200 men for whom we obtained valid home or email addresses. At the time of this analysis, 3794 men (28.7%) had responded. Compared with former players in the Pro Football Reference (PFR) data set [10], our sample was somewhat older (FPHS, median birth year = 1962, interquartile range (IQR) = 1951–1974; PFR, median = 1967, IQR = 1954–1981) and had slightly longer careers (FPHS, median = 6, IQR = 4–9; PFR, median = 4, IQR = 2–8). The Harvard School of Public Health Institutional Review Board approved the study.

Measures

Race

Players were asked "Which category best describes your race?" with response options: black/African American, white, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian, and other. Among men who endorsed only one category, few endorsed American Indian/Alaskan Native (n = 10), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (n = 23), Asian (n = 2), or other (n = 43). Therefore, we grouped these for analysis as "Hawaiians and men of other races" to reflect the most prevalent categories. Ninety-six men endorsed more than one race. For main analyses, we first categorized these men as black if they endorsed black and any other category, then "Hawaiians and others" if they endorsed American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian, or other [11–14]. We created an additional coding scheme including a "multiracial" category. Forty-seven men did not select a race and were excluded.

Professional football exposures

Players were asked to indicate the positions and number of seasons they played professionally. We obtained number of games played and started from PFR [10]. We queried 10 football-related concussion symptoms during playing years and calculated the mean frequency across items (Supplemental Methods). The number of types of surgeries occurring during playing years was queried (Supplemental Methods). BMI was calculated from self-reported height and weight during playing years. Prescription pain medication use greater than or equal to 1/week was yes/no. Use of performance-enhancing drugs during playing years was any/none.

Health outcomes

Physical functioning was measured by the PROMIS Physical Functioning Scale 6b, which queries day-to-day physical functioning (e.g., "Are you able to do chores such as house work or yard work?") [15]. The PROMIS Pain Interference Scale 6b assessed past 7-day pain interference in daily life [16]. The short form of the Quality of Life in Neurological Disorders, Applied Cognition-General Concerns (Neuro-QOL) assessed cognition-related QOL [17]. Eight items queried past 7-day cognitive difficulties (e.g., "I had to read something several times to understand it"). Both PROMIS scales and the Neuro-QOL were standardized to the U.S. population and dichotomized at greater than or equal to 1 SD to indicate moderate or severe impairment based on published guidelines [17,18].

The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ)-4 queried two past-2week depression symptoms and two anxiety symptoms. Responses dichotomized at greater than or equal to 3 for each [19,20]. Men were considered to have indicators of either disorder if they met the PHQ-4 cutoff or were currently taking medications for that disorder.

Current health-related factors

Current BMI was calculated from self-reported weight and height. Current alcohol use of greater than or equal to 14 drinks/ week was considered higher-risk drinking [21]. Smoking was never, past, or current. Lifetime chewing tobacco was ever/never. Current marital status was married, divorced/separated/never married, or widowed. Age at return of questionnaire was self-reported.

Analyses

We examined the prevalence of health outcomes, football exposures (e.g., seasons of play, position), and current health-related factors (e.g., BMI, substance use) by race. We calculated associations among the five continuous health outcomes using Spearman's rho.

To ascertain whether health outcomes differed by race, we first estimated risk of each of the health outcomes in association with race in age-adjusted models. To investigate whether race differences in health varied by player's age, we tested race-by-age interaction terms for each outcome and estimated associations stratified at the median of players' ages at questionnaire (younger: <54 years, older: \geq 54 years), which operates as a surrogate for era of play. Next, to determine whether football-related exposures during playing years might account for possible race differences in health outcomes, we fit four additional models for each health outcome, sequentially adding the following football-related exposures: 1) seasons of play and playing position; 2) concussion symptoms; 3) number of types of surgeries, regular use of pain medication, playing BMI, and use of performance-enhancing drugs. We additionally examined games played and games started as indicators of football exposure. Finally, for each health outcome, we fit models further adjusted for current health-related factors individually and together.

Former quarterbacks, kickers, and punters in the NFL are nearly all white; therefore, we conducted additional analyses excluding these men. We examined associations of race with health outcomes using the alternative coding including a multiracial category. To investigate potential participation bias, we compared the racial distribution of the FPHS to that of a prior stratified random sample of pension-eligible NFL retirees [5]. Risk ratios (RRs) were estimated with PROC GENMOD (SAS 9.4).

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Table 1

Football exposures and current health-related factors by race, Football Players Health Study, 2015–2018, n = 3747

n = 1423 $n = 109$ $n = 2215$ Age, y, mean (SD) 49.0 (12.4) 49.0 (14.7) 55.3 (14.6) Health outcomes 1 <t< th=""><th>γ, mean (SD) h outcomes</th><th>n = 1423</th><th><i>n</i> = 109</th><th>n = 2215</th></t<>	γ, mean (SD) h outcomes	n = 1423	<i>n</i> = 109	n = 2215
Age, y, mean (SD) 49.0 (12.4) 49.0 (14.7) 55.3 (14.6) Health outcomes	y, mean (SD) h outcomes			
Health outcomes 32.8 (467) 22.9 (25) 19.7 (435) Pain interference in daily life 42.3 (601) 41.3 (45) 28.7 (636) Pain interference in daily life 56.1 (706) 51.4 (56) 411 (000)	h outcomes	49.0 (12.4)	49.0 (14.7)	55.3 (14.6)
Impaired physical function 32.8 (467) 22.9 (25) 19.7 (435) Pain interference in daily life 42.3 (601) 41.3 (45) 28.7 (636) Poor compition related quality of life 55.4 (706) 51.4 (56) 41.1 (000)				
Pain interference in daily life 42.3 (601) 41.3 (45) 28.7 (636 Poor compliant plated quality of life 55.1 (706) 51.4 (55) 41.1 (000)	paired physical function	32.8 (467)	22.9 (25)	19.7 (435)
Poor compition related quality of life $561(706)$ $514(56)$ $411(000)$	n interference in daily life	42.3 (601)	41.3 (45)	28.7 (636)
FOUL COGINICIDI-TETALEU QUAITLY OF INC 30.1 (790) 31.4 (30) 41.1 (909	or cognition-related quality of life	56.1 (796)	51.4 (56)	41.1 (909)
Indicators of depression 31.6 (449) 31.1 (34) 19.0 (420	icators of depression	31.6 (449)	31.1 (34)	19.0 (420)
Indicators of anxiety 32.7 (466) 34.8 (38) 21.2 (469	icators of anxiety	32.7 (466)	34.8 (38)	21.2 (469)
Football exposures	all exposures			
Age at first organized football, y, mean (SD) 11.5 (3.3) 12.2 (3.4) 11.9 (3.0)	e at first organized football, y, mean (SD)	11.5 (3.3)	12.2 (3.4)	11.9 (3.0)
Seasons in the NFL, mean (SD) 6.7 (3.4) 6.9 (3.5) 6.8 (3.9)	sons in the NFL, mean (SD)	6.7 (3.4)	6.9 (3.5)	6.8 (3.9)
Games started, mean (SD) 33.8 (48.9) 25.3 (44.9) 32.0 (47.8)	nes started, mean (SD)	33.8 (48.9)	25.3 (44.9)	32.0 (47.8)
Games played as nonstarter, mean (SD) 27.9 (26.8) 31.9 (44.1) 32.5 (40.3)	nes played as nonstarter, mean (SD)	27.9 (26.8)	31.9 (44.1)	32.5 (40.3)
Position in NFL	ition in NFL			
Kicker/punter, % (N) 0.1 (1) 5.8 (7) 5.1 (112	licker/punter, % (N)	0.1 (1)	5.8 (7)	5.1 (112)
Quarterback, % (N) 0.6 (8) 5.5 (6) 6.6 (147	Luarterback, % (N)	0.6 (8)	5.5 (6)	6.6 (147)
Wide receiver, % (N) 13.4 (190) 3.7 (4) 7.1 (158)	Vide receiver, % (N)	13.4 (190)	3.7 (4)	7.1 (158)
Tight end, % (N) 5.0 (71) 2.7 (3) 8.8 (194)	ight end, % (N)	5.0 (71)	2.7 (3)	8.8 (194)
Running back, % (N) 16.9 (241) 12.8 (14) 11.0 (244)	unning back, % (N)	16.9 (241)	12.8 (14)	11.0 (244)
Offensive line, % (N) 8.8 (125) 24.8 (27) 29.5 (654)	Iffensive line, % (N)	8.8 (125)	24.8 (27)	29.5 (654)
Linebacker, % (N) 16.0 (228) 18.4 (20) 16.5 (365	inebacker, % (N)	16.0 (228)	18.4 (20)	16.5 (365)
Defensive back, % (N) 25.2 (359) 11.9 (13) 8.1 (179)	efensive back, % (N)	25.2 (359)	11.9 (13)	8.1 (179)
Defensive line, % (N) 14.1 (200) 13.8 (15) 11.2 (248)	efensive line, % (N)	14.1 (200)	13.8 (15)	11.2 (248)
Special teams	cial teams			
Did not play often, % (N) 71.0 (1011) 73.3 (80) 76.9 (1702)	Vid not play often, % (N)	71.0 (1011)	73.3 (80)	76.9 (1703)
Strength, % (N) 3.7 (52) 6.4 (7) 7.5 (167)	trength, % (N)	3.7 (52)	6.4 (7)	7.5 (167)
Speed, % (N) 25.3 (360) 20.2 (22) 15.6 (345	peed, % (N)	25.3 (360)	20.2 (22)	15.6 (345)
Concussion symptoms, highest quartile, % (N) 25.9 (369) 40.4 (44) 23.3 (516)	cussion symptoms, highest quartile, % (N)	25.9 (369)	40.4 (44)	23.3 (516)
BMI during NFL playing years	I during NFL playing years			
<30 kg/m ² , % (N) 59.9 (852) 35.8 (39) 44.6 (988	$(30 \text{ kg/m}^2, \% \text{ (N)})$	59.9 (852)	35.8 (39)	44.6 (988)
\geq 30 kg/m ² , % (N) 28.3 (403) 45.9 (50) 39.1 (867	$\frac{1}{2}$ 30 kg/m ² , % (N)	28.3 (403)	45.9 (50)	39.1 (867)
\geq 35 kg/m ² , % (N) 11.8 (168) 18.4 (20) 16.3 (360	235 kg/m ² , % (N)	11.8 (168)	18.4 (20)	16.3 (360)
Number of surgery types during playing years, mean (SD) 1.4 (1.3) 1.3 (1.2) 1.4 (1.2)	mber of surgery types during playing years, mean (SD)	1.4 (1.3)	1.3 (1.2)	1.4 (1.2)
Regular use of prescription pain medication during playing years, % (N) 32.8 (466) 30.2 (33) 26.1 (578)	ular use of prescription pain medication during playing years, % (N)	32.8 (466)	30.2 (33)	26.1 (578)
Use of performance-enhancing drugs during playing years, $%(N)$ 14.2 (202) 16.5 (18) 16.9 (375	e of performance-enhancing drugs during playing years, % (N)	14.2 (202)	16.5 (18)	16.9 (375)
Current health-related factors	nt health-related factors			
Current BMI	rent BMI			
<25 kg/m ² , % (N) 3.7 (4) 6.0 (132	$(25 \text{ kg/m}^2, \% (\text{N}))$	4.5 (64)	3.7 (4)	6.0 (132)
$\geq 25 \text{ to } < 30 \text{ kg/m}^2, \% (\text{N})$ 37.0 (527) 36.7 (40) 44.4 (983	$_{2}25 \text{ to } <30 \text{ kg/m}^2$, % (N)	37.0 (527)	36.7 (40)	44.4 (983)
$\geq 30 \text{ kg/m}^2 \text{ to } <35 \text{ kg/m}^2$, % (N) 33.6 (478) 32.1 (35) 36.2 (801	$\frac{1}{2}30 \text{ kg/m}^2$ to <35 kg/m ² , % (N)	33.6 (478)	32.1 (35)	36.2 (801)
≥35 kg/m², % (N) 24.9 (354) 27.5 (30) 13.5 (299	235 kg/m², % (N)	24.9 (354)	27.5 (30)	13.5 (299)
Smoking	oking			
Never, % (N) 86.7 (1234) 85.3 (93) 81.2 (1794)	lever, % (N)	86.7 (1234)	85.3 (93)	81.2 (1798)
Past, % (N) 8.9 (126) 13.8 (15) 16.5 (365)	ast, % (N)	8.9 (126)	13.8 (15)	16.5 (365)
Current, % (N) 4.4 (63) 0.9 (1) 2.4 (52)	urrent, % (N)	4.4 (63)	0.9 (1)	2.4 (52)
Regular chewing tobacco use, ever, % (N) 12.8 (182) 24.8 (27) 22.6 (182)	ular chewing tobacco use, ever, % (N)	12.8 (182)	24.8 (27)	22.6 (182)
Heavy alcohol consumption, % (N) 8.4 (119) 6.4 (7) 16.5 (366)	avy alcohol consumption, % (N)	8.4 (119)	6.4 (7)	16.5 (366)
Married, % (N) 66.4 (945) 82.6 (90) 84.3 (186	rried, % (N)	66.4 (945)	82.6 (90)	84.3 (1865)

Results

Playing position differed strongly by race, with black players more than twice as likely as white players to play running back or defensive back. More white than black players had high or very high BMI during their playing years (55.4 vs. 40.1%) and were more likely currently to be heavy drinkers, have used chewing tobacco, and be married. Minority players reported the highest quartile of concussion symptoms more often than white players and had greater prevalence of current obesity. All five adverse health outcomes were more prevalent among minority players than whites (Table 1). Health outcomes were moderately to highly correlated (Spearman's rho range: -0.45 [anxiety and physical functioning] to -0.80 [pain interference and physical functioning], eTable 1).

In age-adjusted models, black and Hawaiian and other players were at significantly higher risk of all five health outcomes compared with white players, except the association of Hawaiian and other players with high pain interference did not reach statistical significance (black, RR range = 1.36-1.89; Hawaiian, RR

range = 1.25-1.64, Table 2). Age-by-race interaction terms were statistically significant only for cognition-related QOL (older black players had worse OOL that younger black players, compared with white players, p-interaction = 0.03) and borderline statistically significant for physical functioning (older vs. younger black players had better functioning, compared with white players, pinteraction = 0.14). Older versus younger minorities had greater risk of depression and anxiety compared with white players, and lower risk of pain interference, although these differences were not statistically significant and confidence intervals were highly overlapping (eTable 2). In analyses examining football exposures and current health-related factors as possible explanatory variables, associations of race with health outcomes did not substantially differ in models further adjusted for seasons of play and playing position (Table 2, model 2), nor did models which included games played and games started. Further adjustment for concussion symptoms accounted for part of the increased risk among Hawaiian and other players (RR range = 1.09-1.41, Table 2, model 3). In models fully adjusted for football exposures, black players

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Table 2

Race and risk of poor health outcomes with further adjustment for football-related exposures and current health-related factors, former NFL players, Football Players Health Study, 2015–2018, n = 3747

Football exposures and current health-related factors	Model 1: Adjusted for age	Model 2: Model 1 further adjusted for NFL seasons, playing position	Model 3: Model 2 further adjusted for football-related concussions§	Model 4: Model 3 further adjusted for PEDs, pain meds, and BMI during playing years	Model 5: Model 4 further adjusted for current health factors (BMI, tobacco and alcohol use, marital status)
	Risk ratio (95% confi	dence interval)			
Impaired physical functioning					
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.89 (1.69, 2.12)	2.03 (1.79, 2.31)	2.04 (1.81, 2.29)	1.98 (1.76, 2.23)‡	1.63 (1.43, 1.86)‡
Hawaiian, other races	1.31 (0.92, 1.85)	1.29 (0.92, 1.81)	1.12 (0.80, 1.56)	1.13 (0.82, 1.55)	0.99 (0.72, 1.37)
Pain interference in daily life					
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.53 (1.40, 1.68)‡	1.55 (1.40, 1.71)‡	1.57 (1.43, 1.72)‡	1.52 (1.39, 1.67)‡	1.34 (1.21, 1.47)‡
Hawaiian, other races	1.49 (1.18, 1.89)‡	1.46 (1.16, 1.84)†	1.30 (1.04, 1.62)*	1.32 (1.05, 1.65)*	1.20 (0.96, 1.51)
Poor cognition-related quality of life					
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.36 (1.27, 1.46)‡	1.29 (1.20, 1.39)‡	1.32 (1.20, 1.45)‡	1.30 (1.19, 1.44)‡	1.22 (1.11, 1.35)‡
Hawaiian, other races	1.25 (1.03, 1.51)*	1.20 (1.00, 1.46)	1.09 (0.91, 1.31)	1.10 (0.93, 1.31)	1.06 (0.89, 1.27)
Indicators of depression					
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.67 (1.48, 1.87)‡	1.62 (1.43, 1.84)‡	1.68 (1.44, 1.97)‡	1.65 (1.41, 1.93)‡	1.47 (1.24, 1.73)‡
Hawaiian, other races	1.64 (1.23, 2.20)‡	1.58 (1.18, 2.11)†	1.41 (1.08, 1.83)†	1.43 (1.10, 1.86)†	1.36 (1.04, 1.79)*
Indicators of anxiety					
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.47 (1.31, 1.64)‡	1.40 (1.24, 1.59)‡	1.44 (1.29, 1.62)‡	1.41 (1.26, 1.58)‡	1.30 (1.15, 1.48)‡
Hawaiian, other races	1.56 (1.19, 2.05)†	1.50 (1.14, 1.97)†	1.35 (1.06, 1.73)*	1.36 (1.07, 1.73)*	1.31 (1.03, 1.68)*

PEDs, performance-enhancing drugs.

For cognition-related quality of life and depression, Models 3, 4, and 5 have a race-by-concussion-quartile interaction term.

* P < .05.

[†] P < .01.

 $^{\ddagger} P < .001.$

 $^{\$}$ Impaired physical functioning, pain interference in daily life, and poor cognition-related quality of life were defined as \geq 1 standard deviation worse than the population mean. Men were considered to have indicators of depression if they had a score \geq 3 on the PHQ-2 or current antidepressant use. Men were considered to have indicators of anxiety if they had a score \geq 3 on the GAD-2 or current antianxiety medication use.

remained at significantly higher risk than white players for all outcomes (P < .001 for all), and Hawaiians and players of other races remained at significantly higher risk for pain interference (P < .05), depression (P < .01), and anxiety (P < .05, Table 2, model 4). Further adjustment for current BMI, substance use, and marital status attenuated associations, with current BMI accounting for most of this attenuation (Table 2, model 5).

In analyses including a multiracial category, multiracial players were at elevated risk of impaired physical functioning, pain interference, and depression, compared with white players (RR range = 1.40–1.70, eTable 3). Results were very similar in sensitivity analyses excluding kickers, punters and quarterbacks. The racial distribution of the FPHS was similar to that of a prior stratified random sample of pension-eligible NFL retirees (FPHS: 59% white, 38% black, 3% players of other races; random sample, weighted: 57% white, 41% black, 2% players of other races) [5].

Discussion

We found substantial differences by race in the five health outcomes we examined. Black men were approximately 50% more likely than white men to have pain interference in daily life, indicators of depression, and indicators of anxiety, 89% more likely to have impaired physical functioning, and 36% more likely to have poor cognition-related quality of life. Hawaiians and men of other races similarly had higher risk of all adverse health outcomes, except impaired physical functioning. We had mixed findings in age-stratified analyses, with no clear indication that racial disparities were smaller among younger players.

Greater experience of concussion symptoms during playing years accounted for some increased risk for Hawaiians and others, but not black men, compared with white men. Other NFL exposures did not substantially account for race differences in health. Black men had higher current BMI than white men, and this difference statistically accounted for a portion of the racial differences in health. Our data are cross-sectional, thus it is possible that high BMI among black men may have led to adverse health outcomes [22]; conversely, poor health may have preceded and led to weight gain [23].

Our data suggest that former NFL players who are black, Hawaiian, or other races experience racial disparities in health that are prevalent in the general U.S. population. Prior studies have similarly found race differences in mortality among high-status persons, including male physicians (black men, mean age at death = 68.7 years vs. white men = 73.0 years), lawyers (black, mean age at death = 62.0 years, white = 72.3 years), and other professionals [24]. A study of former professional basketball players found a 77% greater risk of death for black vs. white players, equal to 18 months of life, although this was narrower than the black-white longevity difference in the general population [25].

Additional potential explanations for the differences in health outcomes by race that we found include experiences of discrimination before, during, or after NFL playing years [26–28]. Experience of racism is associated with poorer mental and physical health, increased health risk factors [29,30], and higher mortality [31,32]. In addition, after their years in the NFL, black men may receive poorer quality health care than white men, as numerous studies have documented disparities in quality of health care [33]. Finally, minorities may have had lower NFL salaries and lower current socioeconomic status than white men. Low socioeconomic status is associated with poorer health independently of race [34,35].

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Our study has important limitations. Our study response rate was moderate. If participation in our study was associated with both current health and race, our findings may be biased. However, the race distribution of our sample was similar to that of a prior study of former NFL players, suggesting there was not differential participation by race [5]. Football exposures were measured retrospectively by self-report. Health outcomes were also by selfreport, although we used well-validated measures.

In conclusion, we did not find evidence that socioeconomic benefits of playing in the NFL equalized race-related health disparities. Further understanding of the experiences of minorities before, during, and after their time in the NFL may potentially lead to interventions to protect their physical and neuropsychiatric health.

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Appendix

Supplemental Methods

Concussion symptoms were measured with the question, "While playing or practicing football, did you experience a blow to the head, neck, or upper body followed by: headaches, nausea, dizziness, loss of consciousness, memory problems, disorientation, confusion, seizure, visual problems, and feeling unsteady on your feet." Response options for each symptom were no, once, 2-5, 6-10, or 11+ times. We coded these as 0, 1, 3.5, 8, and 13 and calculated the mean across all 10 items.

Experience of 7 types of surgeries during playing were: anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction, neck, back, knee, ankle, shoulder, and hand surgery.

eTable 1

Correlations among the five health outcomes, Football Players Health Study, 2015–2018, n=3747†

	Physical functioning	Pain interference	Cognition QOL	Depressive symptoms	Anxious symptoms
Physical functioning	1.0	-0.80*	0.56*	-0.50*	-0.45*
Pain interference	_	1.0	-0.64*	0.58*	0.54*
Cognition-related quality of life	_	_	1.0	-0.65*	-0.64*
Depressive symptoms	_	_	_	1.0	0.75*
Anxious symptoms	—	—	_	_	1.0

* P < .0001.

[†] Physical functioning and cognition-related quality of life are scored so that higher scores indicate better health. Pain interference in daily life, depression, and anxiety are scored so that higher scores indicate poorer health.

eTable 2

Analyses by median age at questionnaire, Football Players Health Study, 2015–2018[§]

	Analysis 1: Restricted to men age <54 years, $n = 1925$	Analysis 2: Restricted to men age \geq 54 years, $n = 1869$
Impaired physical functioning		
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	$2.04(1.70, 2.45)^{\ddagger}$	1.73 (1.49, 2.01) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	1.11 (0.61, 2.01)	1.52 (1.00, 2.30)
Pain interference in daily life		
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.57 (1.38, 1.80) [‡]	1.41 (1.24, 1.60) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	$1.59~(1.15,~2.19)^{\dagger}$	1.41 (1.00, 2.00)
Poor cognition-related quality of life		
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.24 (1.13, 1.37) [‡]	1.48 (1.33, 1.63) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	1.19 (0.93, 1.53)	1.30 (0.96, 1.76)
Indicators of depression		
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.53 (1.30, 1.79) [‡]	1.83 (1.54, 2.17) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	1.58 (1.09, 2.31)*	1.69 (1.06, 2.70)*
Indicators of anxiety		
White	1.0 [Reference]	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1.35 (1.17, 1.56) [‡]	1.61 (1.35, 1.93) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	1.43 (1.02, 2.01)*	1.78 (1.14, 2.79)*

* *P* < .05.

† P < .01.

 $^{\ddagger} P < .001.$

 $^{\$}$ All models adjusted for age at questionnaire. Impaired physical functioning, pain interference in daily life, and poor cognition-related quality of life were defined as ≥ 1 standard deviation worse than the population mean. Men were considered to have indicators of depression if they had a score ≥ 3 on the PHQ-2 or current antidepressant use. Men were considered to have indicators of anxiety if they had a score ≥ 3 on the GAD-2 or current antianxiety medication use.

eTable 3

Race and risk of poor health outcomes, including a multiracial category, Football Players Health Study, 2015–2018

		Adjusted for age
	N	RR (95% CI)
Impaired physical functioning		
White	2215	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1358	1.90 (1.70, 2.13) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	78	1.27 (0.83, 1.93)
Multiracial	96	1.52 (1.05, 2.19)*
Pain interference in daily life		
White	2215	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1355	1.54 (1.40, 1.69) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	78	1.49 (1.13, 1.96) [†]
Multiracial	96	1.40 (1.07, 1.84)*
Poor cognition-related quality of life		
White	2210	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1354	1.37 (1.28, 1.47) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	78	1.21 (0.96, 1.52)
Multiracial	96	1.21 (0.98, 1.49)
Indicators of depression		
White	2215	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1356	1.67 (1.48, 1.88) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	78	1.49 (1.03, 2.14)*
Multiracial	96	1.70 (1.25, 2.31) [‡]
Indicators of anxiety		
White	2214	1.0 [Reference]
Black	1357	1.49 (1.33, 1.66) [‡]
Hawaiian, other races	78	$1.54(1.12,2.11)^{\dagger}$
Multiracial	96	1.29 (0.94, 1.77)

Impaired physical functioning, pain interference in daily life, and poor cognitionrelated quality of life were defined as ≥ 1 standard deviation worse than the population mean. Men were considered to have indicators of depression if they had a score ≥ 3 on the PHQ-2 or current antidepressant use. Men were considered to have indicators of anxiety if they had a score ≥ 3 on the GAD-2 or current antianxiety medication use.

* *P* < .05.

[†] P < .01.

 $^{\ddagger} P < .001.$