

ASTHMA: IT'S WHERE YOU LIVE

NOT JUST RACE | New research on lung disorder hints geography may play bigger role than ethnicity

Where you live in Chicago appears to have a big impact on whether your kids develop asthma.

That's according to a new study that links asthma to neighborhood even more strongly than to race or income.

While African-American children were the most likely to have asthma overall, asthma rates in predominantly black neighborhoods varied from 4 percent of the population to 44 percent. Among whites, it was 2 percent to 30 percent, depending on where they lived. Among Hispanics, it was 0 percent to 29 percent.

The research, published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, was based on a survey of nearly 49,000 Chicago public school students.

Earlier studies found that minority children in urban areas are at higher risk for asthma than whites.

But the new study, done by researchers from Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine and other institutions, indicates black and Hispanic children in some neighborhoods fare better than whites in others, suggesting geography might play an even bigger role than ethnicity.

"Race definitely plays into asthma," lead researcher Dr.



Raymond Pickett (from left), 8, and his sisters Ciara, 10, and Jazmine, 12, all have asthma. They live in a ZIP code, 60644, with one of the city's highest asthma rates. | KIETH HALE-SUN-TIMES

Ruchi Gupta said. But "the fact that a neighborhood could be adjacent to a neighborhood and have a huge degree of difference . . . [says] there's something else going on."

Parts of Roseland, for instance, had a much lower percentage of children with asthma than neighboring Pullman, Gupta noted. Both neighborhoods are predominantly black.

Children from 287 Chicago communities, as defined by the Metro Chicago Information Center, were included in the study.

"Even in one neighborhood, there are pockets of low and high," said Gupta, a pediatrics faculty member at Children's Memorial Hospital and the Feinberg school.

Researchers found that income didn't account for disparities. Gender, age and having family members with asthma had an impact, though not enough to explain the differences.

Several factors appear to trigger asthma in kids, including air pollution, exposure to dust mites and cockroaches, obesity and diets low in antioxidants. Many kids with asthma also live with smokers.

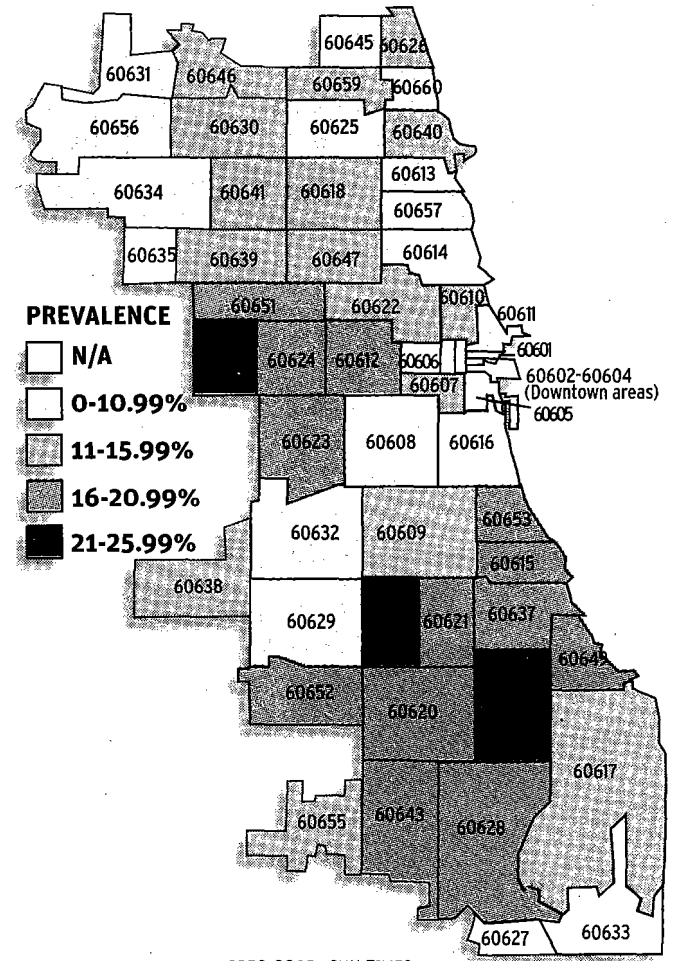
Lynda Pickett, of Austin, has three children with asthma. Her ZIP code, 60644, has one of the city's highest asthma rates.

"I don't understand that," Pickett said. "It makes me want to find another neighborhood to live in, so that maybe their asthma would be better."

CHILD ASTHMA RATES BY ZIP CODE

A new study indicates that child asthma rates vary widely by neighborhood. Results are only for ZIP codes where at least 15 children responded to the survey.

ZIP	Prevalence
60601	8
60605	9.65
60607	12.26
60608	10.34
60609	13.81
60610	11.38
60611	10.91
60612	17.11
60613	7.92
60614	10.84
60615	18.85
60616	9.07
60617	14.71
60618	11.47
60619	23.15
60620	18.09
60621	19.65
60622	14.04
60623	17.98
60624	17.99
60625	10.55
60626	14.17
60628	19.27
60629	9
60630	12.18
60631	9.18
60632	7.91
60634	8.92
60636	21.39
60637	17.66
60638	12.92
60639	12.26
60640	13.7
60641	12.84
60643	16.29
60644	22.76
60645	9.66
60646	11.93
60647	15.65
60649	18.36
60651	17.47
60652	17.84
60653	20.26
60655	15.26
60656	9.84
60657	10.49
60659	11.61
60660	9.46



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