Racism Is a Public Health Crisis
History, Race, and Gynecology

Maggie Unverzagt Goddard (she/her)
Brown University
Department of American Studies
Project Row Houses
From 2011 to 2016, the national mortality ratio for pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births per year was: 16.9
During 2011–2016, the pregnancy-related mortality ratios per 100,000 live births per year were:

- 42.4 deaths for black non-Hispanic women
- 30.4 deaths for American Indian/Alaskan Native non-Hispanic women
- 14.1 deaths for Asian/Pacific Islander non-Hispanic women
- 13.0 deaths for white non-Hispanic women
- 11.3 deaths for Hispanic women
During 2011–2016, the pregnancy-related mortality ratios per 100,000 live births per year were:

- 42.4 deaths for black non-Hispanic women
- 30.4 deaths for American Indian/Alaskan Native non-Hispanic women
- 14.1 deaths for Asian/Pacific Islander non-Hispanic women
- 13.0 deaths for white non-Hispanic women
- 11.3 deaths for Hispanic women
Figure 13. Severe Maternal Morbidity by Educational Attainment, New York City, 2008–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
<th>Rate per 10,000 deliveries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>137.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>114.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>152.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate or higher</td>
<td>288.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Latina</td>
<td>427.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Islander</td>
<td>171.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latina</td>
<td>244.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>403.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black non-Latina</td>
<td>251.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>361.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>333.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Disconnected Care

For women, reproductive care is disconnected from general health care

Decreased access to care and information

Negative impact on pregnancy planning and control

Improving Maternal Health in Harris County: A Community Plan. A project of The Houston Endowment, April 2018
This story has no hero. No one saved her.
Current health disparities stem from a long history of racism in medicine.
Contraceptive Trials in Puerto Rico

99% Invisible, “Repackaging the Pill”

Laura Briggs, *Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*
African-American respondents believe that it is possible for a study like the USPHS Syphilis Study to happen again, according to a 2005 article in the Journal of the National Medical Association.

Less than half of the white respondents agreed.
As a specialty, gynecology developed out of slavery.
“Gynecology was built on the backs of Black women, anyway.”

– Bettina Judd, Patient.
BIRTHPLACE OF DR. JAMES MARION SIMS

ABOUT 1 9/16 MILES WEST OF THIS SPOT STOOD THE HOUSE IN WHICH DR. JAMES MARION SIMS WAS BORN ON JANUARY 25, 1813. FATHER OF MODERN GYNECOLOGY, DR. SIMS WAS HONORED BY THE AMERICAN AND BY EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS FOR HIS SERVICE TO SUFFERING WOMEN, EMPRESS AND SLAVE ALIKE. DR. SIMS DIED IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK ON NOVEMBER 13, 1883.

ERECTED BY LANCASTER COUNTY, 1949. SPONSORED BY WAXHAW'S CHAPTER, D.A.R.
On this site in 1840s stood small hospital of Dr. J. W. Sims, in which he made surgical history with his meticulously performed operation for urinary fistula in women. A South Carolinian, Dr. Sims went to the Medical School and Jefferson Medical College in Charleston, then to the College of Physicians in Philadelphia. He practiced briefly in Washington, D.C., and Montgomery, Alabama. He contributed to many medical journals and, in 1893, founded the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Among his patients were the Emperor Norton of Japan and members of European royalty. He was also an officer of Alabama's Capitol.
The Story of my Life

By

Selma Lagerlöf

Page 184 to 364
BEYOND SIMS
COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Saturday
October 20, 2018

FREE | All Ages
Light Refreshments will be Served
1 - 3.30pm
New York Academy of Medicine
1210 8th Ave, New York, NY 10019

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

As a response to community and global activists, the statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims was finally removed from Central Park East on April 17th, 2018. Sims was a physician who gained fame in Western medicine for his experiments on African American female slaves. Join us for a community discussion and artistic expression as we work together to move beyond this painful legacy.

We invite you to come and share your thoughts. What should replace the statue?

Make your voice heard.

Drop In or RSVP at: https://bit.ly/2OwZ1ui

The New York Academy of Medicine is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) nonpartisan public charity. The Academy’s mission is to advance health and medicine for the public good through education, research, and community engagement.
Reproductive justice

“the human right to maintain bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities”
BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH BABIES
“Informed consent should be looked on as a process rather than a signature on a form.”

– American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
It is vital to know the racial history of medicine in order to actively work to reduce health disparities to reach health equity.
99% Invisible, “Repackaging the Pill”
Khiara Bridges, Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization
Laura Briggs, Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico
Dána-Ain Davis, Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth
W. Michael Byrd and Linda A. Clayton, An American Health Dilemma: Race, Medicine, and Health Care in the United States, 1900–2000
Sharla Fett, Working Cures: Health, Healing, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations
Vanessa Northington Gamble, Making a Place for Ourselves: The Black Hospital Movement, 1920–1945
Nicole Ivy, “Bodies of Work: A Meditation on Medical Imaginaries and Enslaved Women”
Bettina Judd, *Patient.*

**Jennifer L. Morgan**, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*

**Alondra Nelson**, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*

**Dorothy Roberts**, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*

**C. Riley Snorton**, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*

**Alexandra Minna Stern**, *Eugenic Nation: Faults & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*

**Paul Starr**, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*

**Harriet A. Washington**, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*