

SOCIAL RISK FACTORS

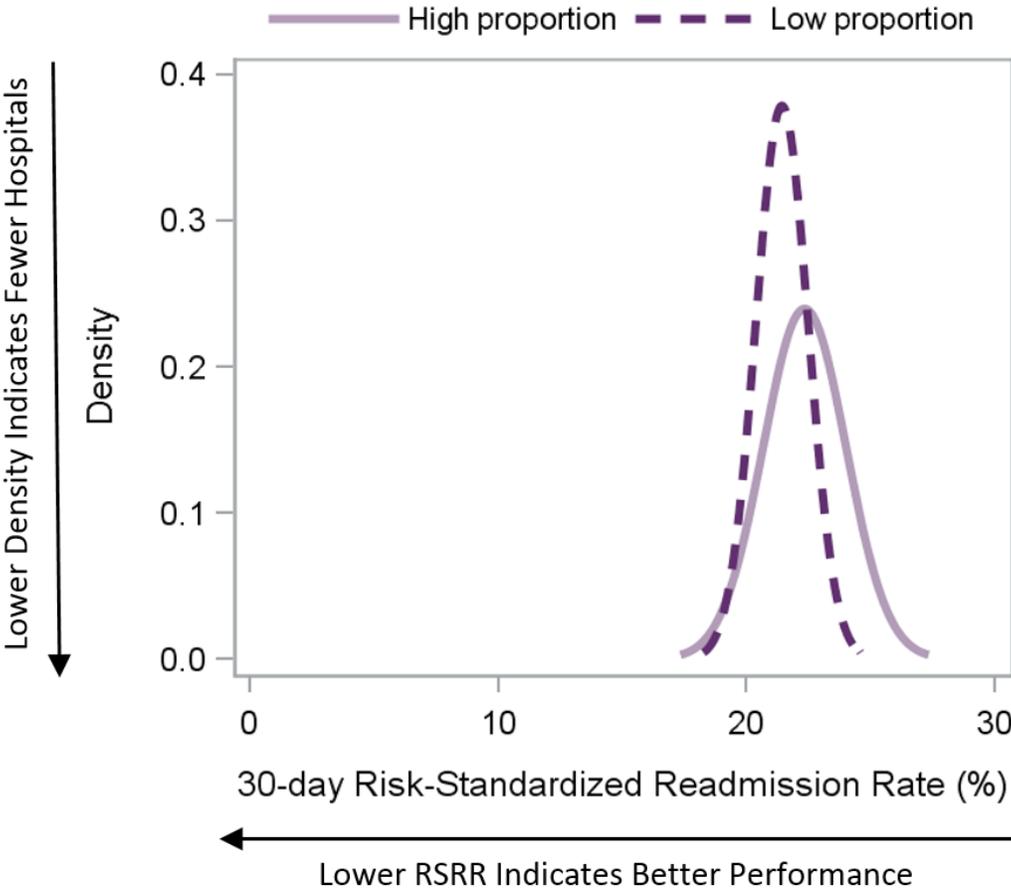
► **Performance on the heart failure readmission measure:** Hospitals that serve high and low proportions of African-American patients.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) evaluates hospital performance in relation to the proportion of African-American patients served in order to monitor patterns, changes, and potential unintended consequences in the measure results. This information allows CMS to better understand the current state of care within U.S. hospitals.

The heart failure readmission measure includes Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) beneficiaries aged 65 or older and assesses the occurrence of unplanned readmission for any cause within 30 days after discharge from a hospitalization for heart failure [1].

CMS began publicly reporting 30-day risk-standardized readmission rates (RSRRs) following hospitalizations for heart failure in 2009 [2]. Publicly reported measure results are updated annually on the [Hospital Compare](#) website. The heart failure readmission measure has been included in the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP) since 2012 [3].

FIGURE I. Distributions of heart failure RSRRs (%) for hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients, July 2013-June 2016.



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Variation in RSRRs reflects differences in performance among hospitals; lower RSRRs suggest better quality and higher RSRRs suggest worse quality. To understand how caring for African-American patients might impact a hospital's RSRR, we examined RSRRs among hospitals with high and low proportions of African-American patients. We compared the heart failure RSRRs for the 500 hospitals with 0% African-American Medicare FFS patients to the 371 hospitals with the $\geq 22.3\%$ African-American Medicare FFS patients for the July 2013 – June 2016 reporting period. We defined hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients as those that fall within the lowest and highest deciles of all hospitals with 25 or more qualifying discharges (N= 3,710). The proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients for each hospital was determined using the Medicare Part A Inpatient Claims from 2015. All hospitals with 0% African-American patients were included in the lowest decile. To ensure accurate assessment of each hospital, the heart failure readmission measure uses a statistical model to adjust for key differences in patient risk factors that are clinically relevant and that have a strong relationship with the readmission outcome [1].

TABLE I. Distributions of heart failure RSRRs (%) for hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients, July 2013-June 2016.

	Heart failure RSRR (%)	
	Hospitals with low proportions (0%) of African-American patients n = 500	Hospitals with high proportions ($\geq 22.3\%$) of African-American patients n = 371
Maximum	25.0	28.7
90%	22.7	24.5
75%	22.1	23.4
Median (50%)	21.4	22.2
25%	20.8	21.2
10%	20.2	20.3
Minimum	18.2	18.2

The median heart failure RSRR for hospitals with low proportions of African-American patients was 21.4% (interquartile range [IQR]: 20.8%- 22.1%). The median heart failure RSRR for hospitals with high proportions of African-American patients was 22.2% (IQR: 21.2%- 23.4%; Figure 1 and Table 1).

Hospitals with low proportions of African-American patients had a median heart failure RSRR that was 0.8 percentage points lower than hospitals with high proportions.

1. Jaymie Simoes, Jacqueline N. Grady, Jo DeBuhr, et al. 2017 Condition-Specific Measures Updates and Specifications Report Hospital-Level 30-Day Risk-Standardized Readmission Measures: Acute Myocardial Infarction – Version 10.0 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – Version 6.0 Heart Failure – Version 10.0 Pneumonia – Version 10.0 Stroke – Version 6.0. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier4&cid=1219069855841>. Available as of April 4, 2017.

2. Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program Overview. QualityNet website. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier2&cid=1138115987129>. Accessed March 1, 2017.

3. Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program Overview. QualityNet website. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier2&cid=1228772412458>. Accessed March 1, 2017.