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THE “PRIVILEGE” OF HEALTH

Alexandria Staton

Mentor: Virginia Slachman

Racial inequality in the food system is reflected in food injustice, environmental injustice, and the death rates due to diet related diseases, such as certain cancers and heart disease, of African Americans compared to Caucasians. A plant-based diet has been proven to have the ability to prevent and in some cases reverse the effects of certain diseases; however, sustaining a nutritionally adequate plant-based diet is not plausible for African Americans more so than their Caucasian counterparts due to the limited access to resources in many predominantly African American communities. This is reflected in a larger percentage of African Americans living in food deserts and areas with inadequate public transportation than Caucasians. African Americans are also more likely to live in an area subject to the environmental injustice of animal agriculture polluting their air or water supply, in ways such as run off from hog farms or lack of waste treatment from factory farms. Through analyzing multiple studies, it is evident that their inability to access the most cost effective form of disease prevention along with the environmental injustice in these communities are considerable reasons why African Americans are dying from diet related diseases more than other races. In a time where many people's health care is at risk of being taken away, it is important to identify other, cost effective ways for people to manage their health as well as make these options more available to all groups.