

WE ACT

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE





**How does environmental racism impact
brain health?**

STRUCTURAL RACISM

The totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination, via mutually reinforcing inequitable systems that in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources



Inequitable Systems



LEAD EXPOSURE

Housing is a major factor in lead exposure, especially in older homes that haven't removed lead paint

Lead can be found throughout a child's environment.



1 Homes built before 1978 (when lead-based paints were banned) probably contain lead-based paint.



When the paint peels and cracks, it makes lead dust. Children can be poisoned when they swallow or breathe in lead dust.



2 Certain water pipes may contain lead.



3 Lead can be found in some products such as toys and toy jewelry.



4 Lead is sometimes in candies imported from other countries or traditional home remedies.



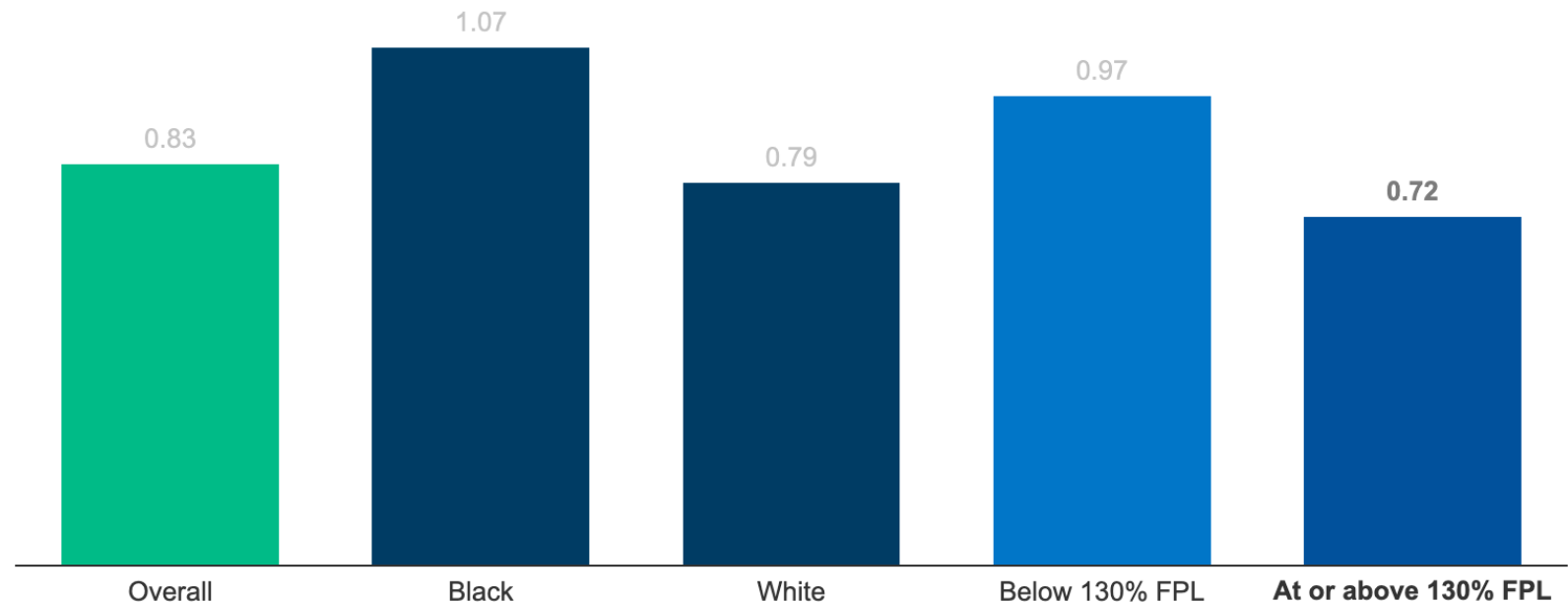
5 Certain jobs and hobbies involve working with lead-based products, like stain glass work, and may cause parents to bring lead into the home.

LEAD EXPOSURE

- Lead is a neurotoxic heavy metal
- There is no safe level of lead exposure
- Even small amounts of lead can lead to harmful and irreversible effects to a child's developing brain
- National data from 2011-2016 show 1.35x higher blood lead levels in Black children (age 1-5yrs) compared to white children in the US

Black and Lower Income Children are at Increased Risk for Lead Exposure

Mean Blood Lead Levels in Children Ages 1 to 5, 2011-2016



NOTE: Data from the 2011-2016 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Data were only reported for non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, and Mexican American. The mean blood lead level for Mexican American children was 0.78 over the period. FPL refers to federal poverty level.

SOURCE: Ruckart PZ, Jones RL, Courtney JG, et al. Update of the Blood Lead Reference Value — United States, 2021. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2021;70:1509–1512. • PNG

MERCURY EXPOSURE

- Mercury is a neurotoxic heavy metal
- Mercury is a common ingredient in skin lighteners and brighteners marketed to women of color
- Mercury can affect learning and memory in infants and children
- Mercury can vaporize and exposure entire families



Figure 3. Skin lighteners in a beauty supply store window on 144th Street and Broadway. Caro White products (bottom shelf), have been found to contain mercury [5].

TOXIC BEAUTY PRODUCTS IN NORTHERN MANHATTAN



25% of all survey respondents reported using **skin lighteners** in their lifetimes; among Asian respondents, use was higher at **57%**.



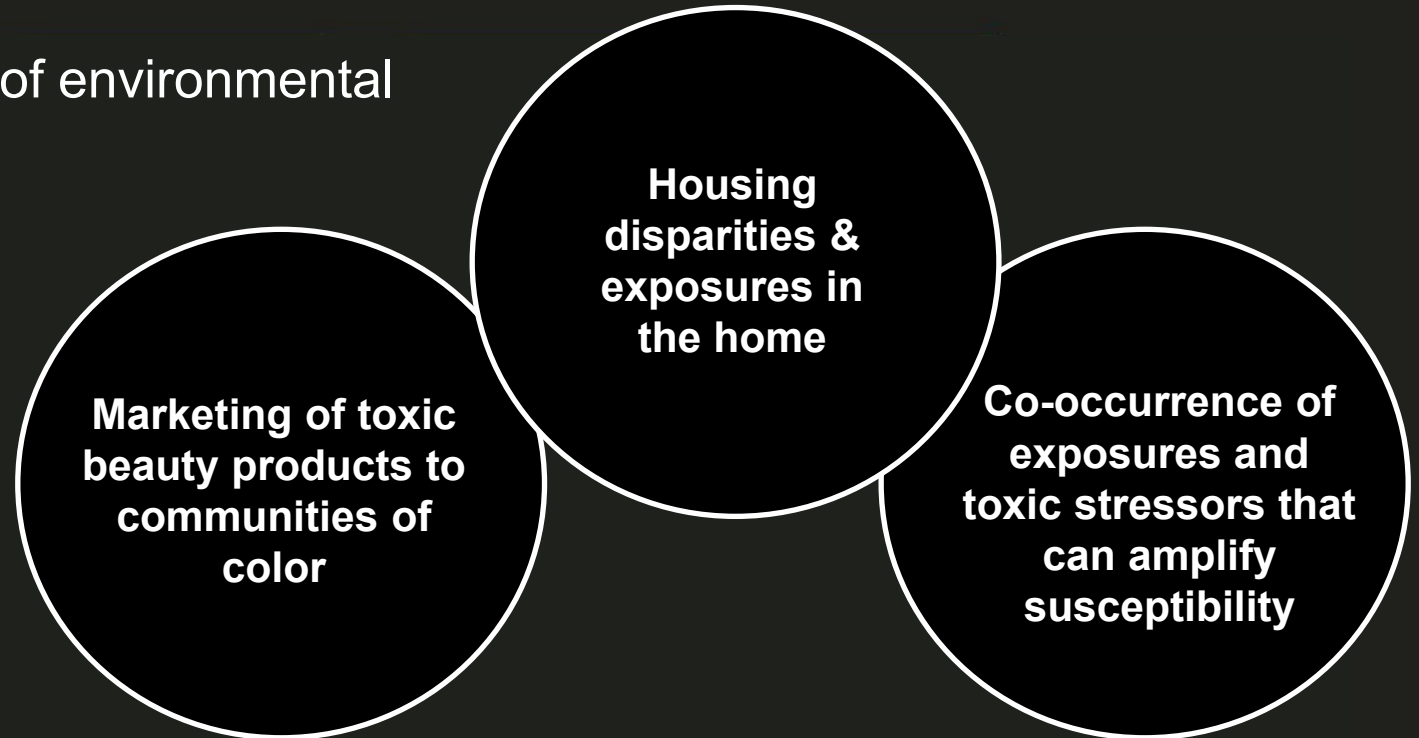
Respondents who **thought other people believe that lighter skin makes women look more beautiful or younger** were more likely to **currently use skin lighteners** than women who did not have these beliefs.

297

Femme-identifying individuals and women were surveyed in nine NYC neighborhoods:

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF NEUROTOXINS & OTHER HARMS

Neurotoxin exposure and the burden of environmental racism follows children to school



FEDERAL POLICIES

- Equitable Implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act
- Justice40 Initiative Implementation
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & Equitable Clean Energy Siting and Transmission
- Voting Rights for a Fair Democracy
- Environmental Justice For All Act
- Multi-Pollutant Standards
- Fighting Liquified Natural Gas Infrastructure
- Expanding and Improving the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Heating and Cooling Relief Act (H.R. 6437)
- Out of Gas, In With Justice Pilot Program
- Frontline Climate Corps
- Safer Beauty Bills Package
- Lead Service Line Replacement Project
- Electric School Buses



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