



**Sam Houston State University  
Department of Economics and International Business  
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**Are Recessions Good for Everyone's Health?  
The Association Between Mortality and the Business Cycle by Race in the U.S.**

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**Abstract:**

In this paper we study the effect of the business cycle on the mortality rate of the major racial groups in the U.S. Using county-level data from 1999 to 2005, we find that the unemployment rate is negatively related to mortality for whites and latinos but that there is not a statistically significant relationship for blacks. Moreover, the magnitude of this relationship is larger for latinos than for whites. Finally, the relationship becomes more pronounced for latinos and whites as the proportion of population of that race increases. Taken together, these findings suggest that the procyclical association between mortality and the business cycle identified in previous studies of the general U.S. population may vary by race.