

White EMS Savior

How EMS Textbooks Perpetuate a Lack of Diversity in the EMS Workforce

Department of Emergency Medical Services
 Jamie Kennel, PhD, NRP; Chris Hamper BS, NRP

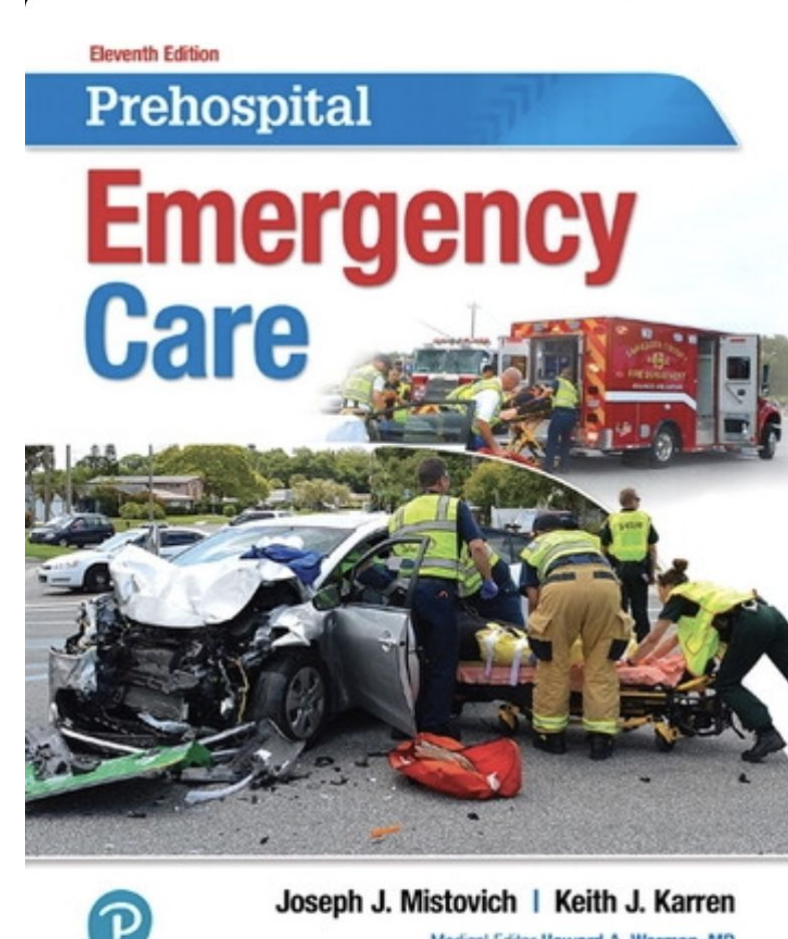
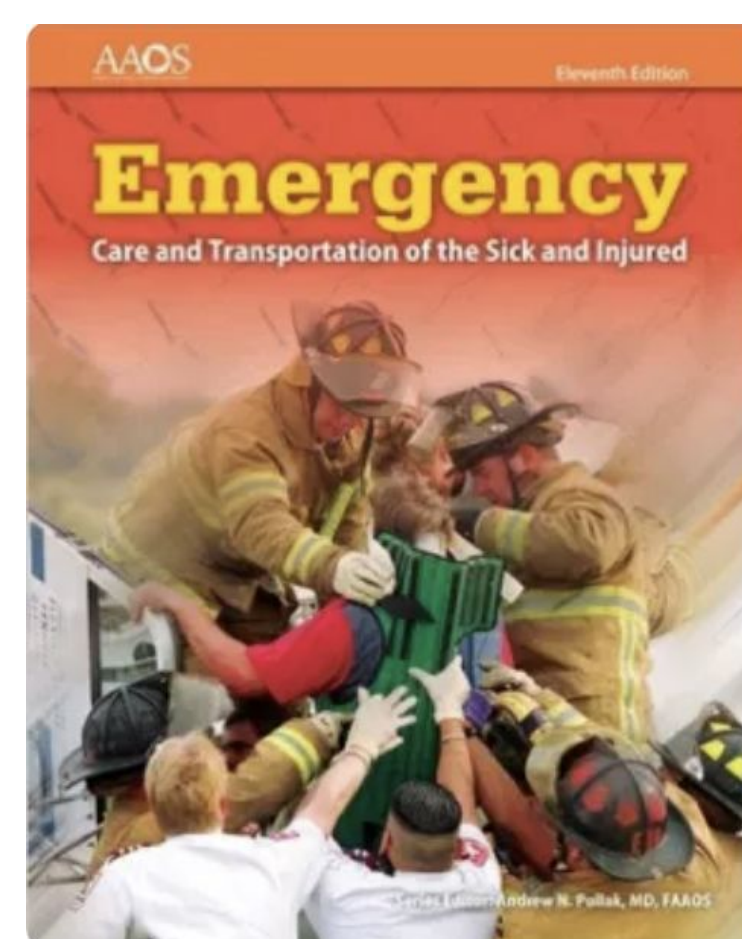


Introduction

The emergency medical services (EMS) workforce continues to be predominantly white and male but aspires to increase racial diversity.^{1,2}

Studies examining the imagery used by various medical education textbooks are less likely to depict racial and ethnic minority groups as medical experts³.

One of the several mechanisms needed to facilitate increased workforce diversity is the ability of racial and ethnic minority groups to 'see' themselves within the industry.



Objectives

This study examines the racial and ethnic composition of the imagery used in two popular emergency medical technician (EMT) textbooks.

Acknowledgements & References

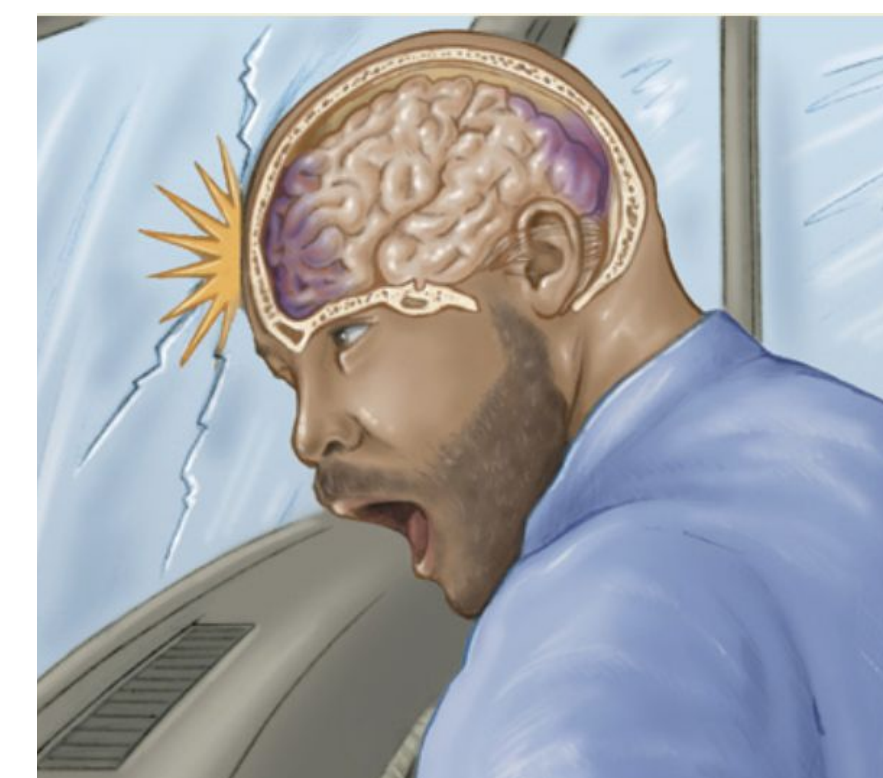
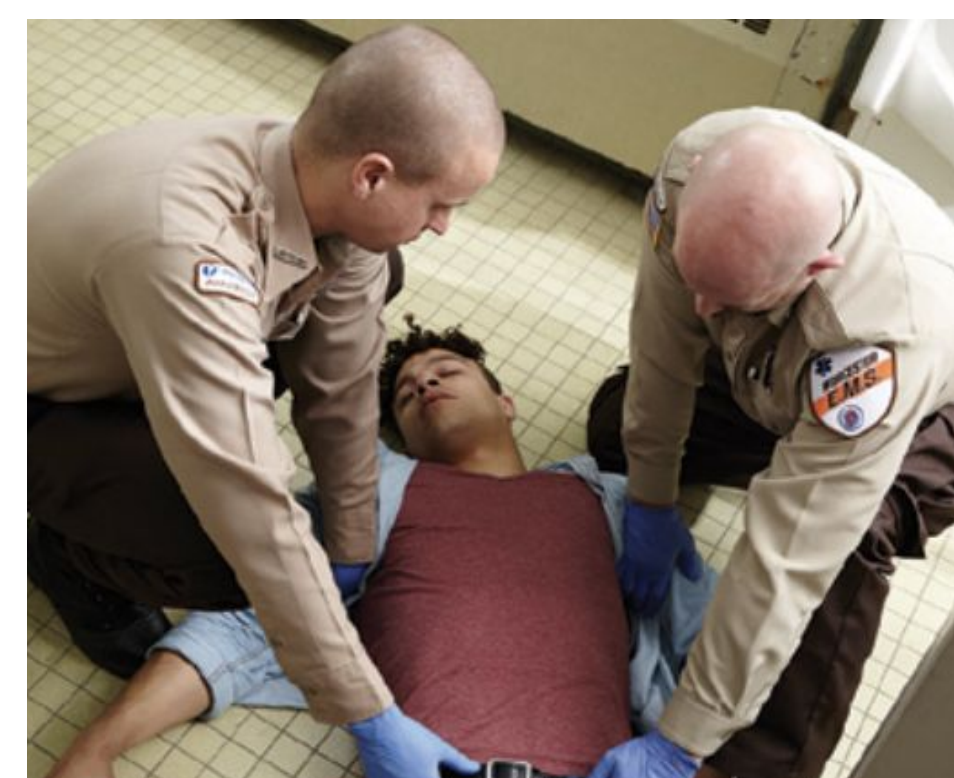
Secondary authors include a group of ten paramedic students:

- Wilson Morris
- Becky Sparks
- Carmen Smith
- David Olivera
- Josh Michlitsch
- Jonny Starr
- Kendal Summar-Womack

QR To References

Method

Two teams of researchers characterized the demographic composition of every image within each set of textbooks. Of the 5,842 total images in the selected textbooks, 5,144 (87%) images displayed sufficient attributes (e.g. faces) to confidently categorize 2,651 separate individuals and provide a characterization of their race and ethnicity as well as their primary role (EMS provider, police, patient, etc.)



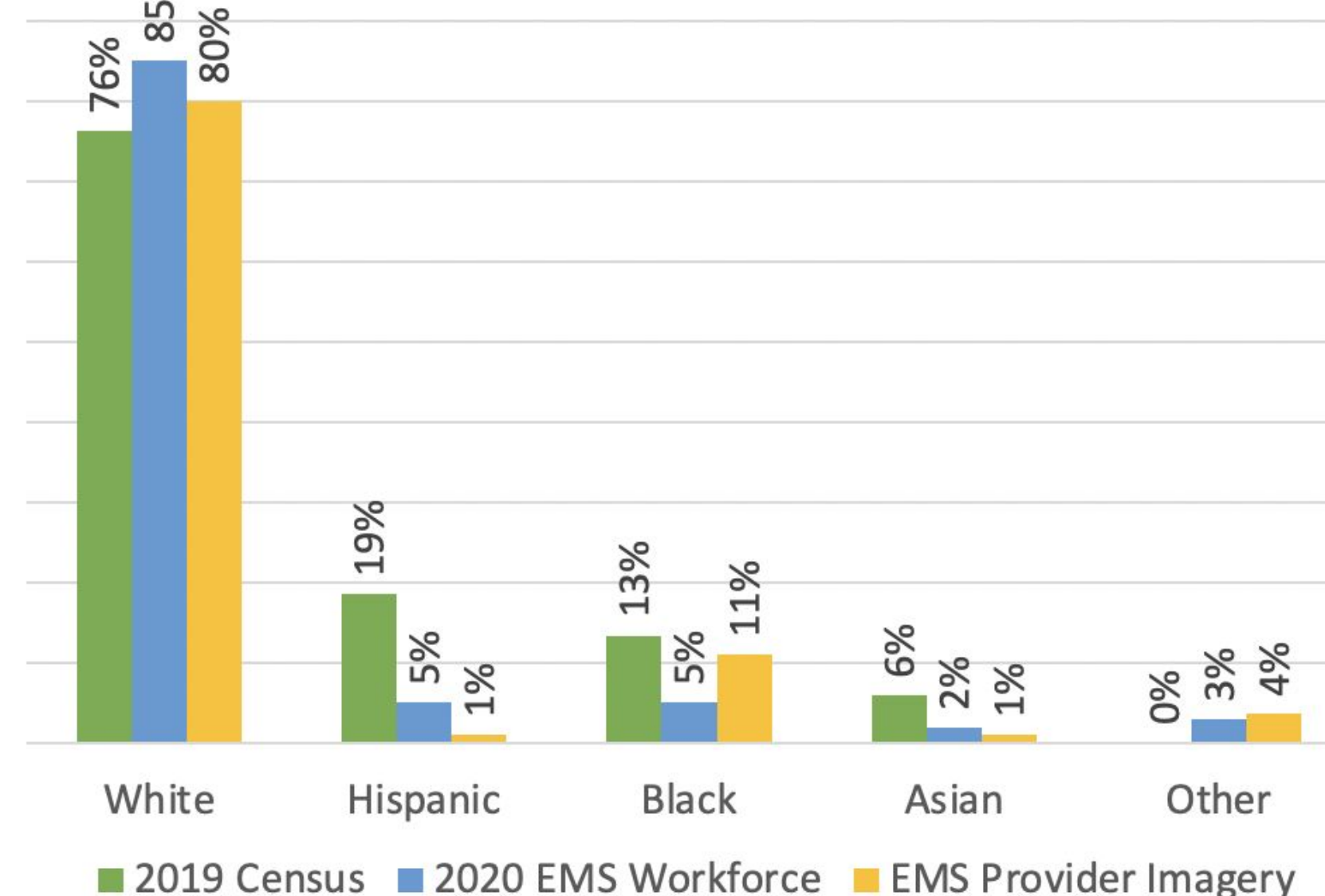
Images from Prehospital Emergency Care 11th edition

Results

We uncovered two important findings.

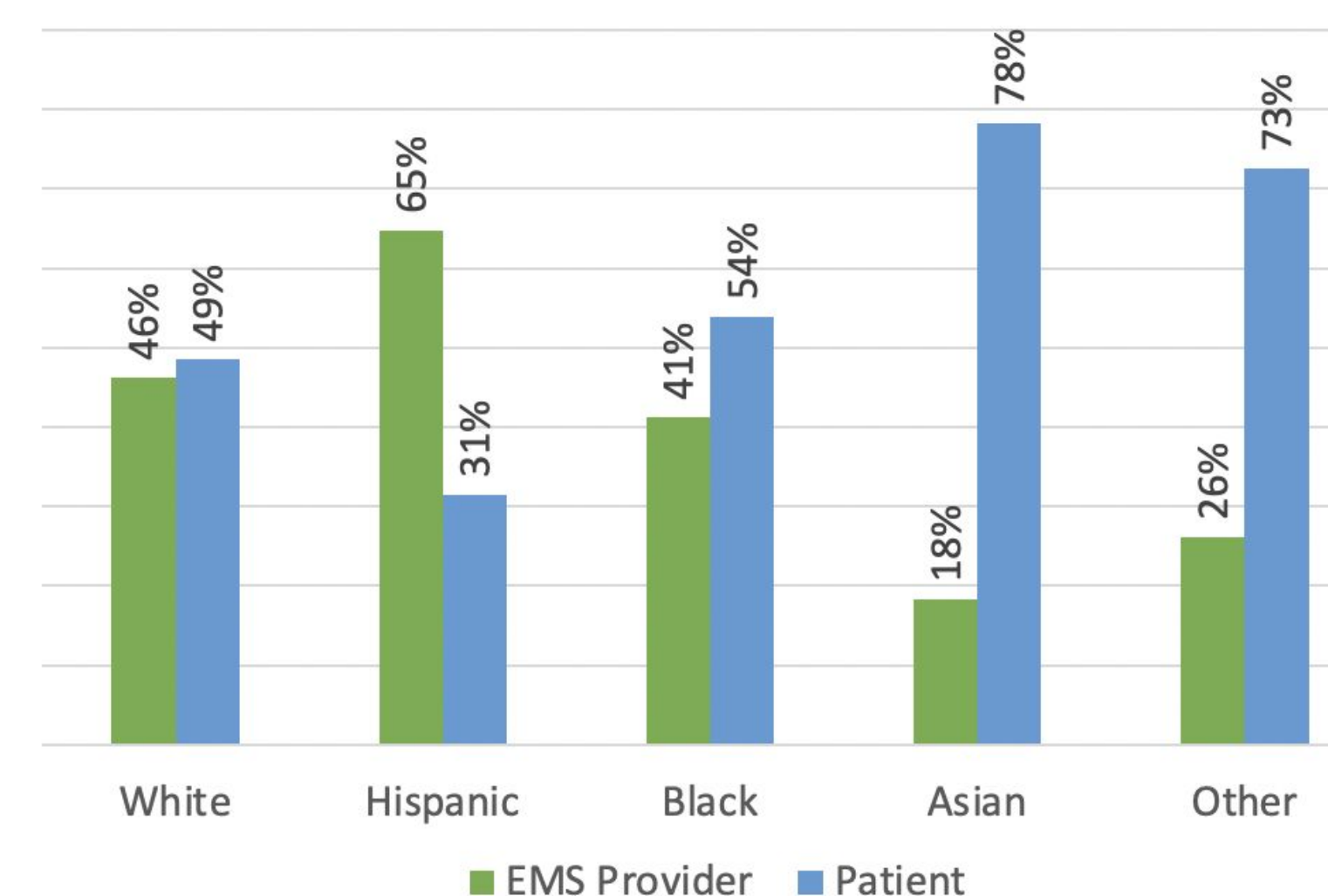
First, when considering all the images used in the textbooks, individuals characterized as racial and ethnic minorities were significantly underrepresented compared to both census and EMT workforce proportions.

Fig. 1 Population, Workforce and Textbook Image Comparison by Race



Second, not all racial and ethnic groups were equally likely to be depicted as EMS providers.

Fig. 2 Role Comparison by Race



When adjusting for differences in age and gender, compared to White EMS providers:

- **Black individuals were 22% less likely** to be portrayed as an EMS provider
- **Asian individuals were 65% less likely** to be portrayed as an EMS provider
- **Hispanic individuals were 92% more likely** to be portrayed as an EMS provider

Conclusions

These primary national EMT textbooks used around the country to recruit and train tomorrow's EMS leaders are placing some racial and ethnicities in the roles as EMS providers and not others. This is directly counter to the EMS industry's desire to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce by showcasing racial and ethnic minorities as EMS providers.

Further, these national textbooks work to reinforce EMS industry expectations regarding which candidates represents a good 'fit' for EMS agencies and which do not.

Take-Aways

Educators:

- Be mindful and deliberate in using materials that have racial and ethnic minorities in EMS front line and leadership roles

Agency Hiring Managers:

- Ensure your outreach staff is diverse so candidates can 'see' themselves in your organization
- Ensure that hiring and interview panels are diverse to create more opportunities for your future EMS leaders to see themselves at your agency

Publishers:

- Take an active and deliberate role to equally depict all race/ethnic groups as EMS providers.
- Given the predominantly White EMS workforce, consider over-representing non-white groups as EMS providers in order to overcome past inequalities and current workforce disparities.