



# The U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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Were the men purposely infected with the disease? [^](#)

No. According to [a journal article](#) about the study, published in 1936, the 399 men in the syphilitic group were initially recruited because they already had late-latent syphilis. The 201 men in the control group did not have the disease.

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Was the Tuskegee community aware of the study? [^](#)

Tuskegee community members were aware of the study but understood it to be a special government health care program. <sup>1</sup>

According to the Assistant Secretary for Health and Scientific Affairs' Ad Hoc Advisory Panel's [published report](#), "... the Macon County Health Department and Tuskegee Institute were cognizant of the study."

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Why was the U.S. Public Health Service's Syphilis Study at Tuskegee unethical? [^](#)

There is no evidence that researchers obtained informed consent from participants, and participants were not offered available treatments, even after penicillin became widely available.

You can learn more about changes made to standard research practices after Tuskegee in [Research Implications](#).

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Were women involved in the study? [^](#)

No women were included in the study. The study was limited to Black men 25 years of age or older. However, as a result of lack of treatment, some women contracted syphilis from men who participated in the study's syphilitic group.

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Where can I find a list of the names of the study participants? [^](#)

The National Archives, Southeastern Region, maintains a list of [Tuskegee patient medical files](#).

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Where can I find photos related to the study? [^](#)

The National Archives maintains [photos related to the study](#).

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## How much money did the study participants receive from the 1974 out of court settlement? ^

The \$10-million settlement was divided into four categories:

1. Living syphilitic group participants received \$37,500.
2. Heirs of deceased syphilitic group participants received \$15,000.
3. Living control group participants received \$16,000.
4. Heirs of deceased control group participants received \$5,000. <sup>2</sup>

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## References

<sup>1</sup> Vonderlehr to Clark, October 20, 1932, Records of the USPHS Venereal Disease Division, Record Group 90, National Archives, Washington National Record Center, Suitland, Maryland.

<sup>2</sup> Gray, Fred D. *The Tuskegee Syphilis Study: An Insider's Account of the Shocking Medical Experiment Conducted by Government Doctors against African American Men.* Montgomery: Fred D. Gray, 2013.



## Related Resources

[Health Equity Events, Forums, and Continuing Education](#)

[Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation](#) 

[The National Archives – USPHS Syphilis Study at Tuskegee](#) 

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