



SELF

STUDY OF
ENVIRONMENT,
LIFESTYLE & FIBROIDS

1-877-692-SELF (7353)

www.DetroitSELF.org

Spring 2022

Dear SELF Participant,

I hope you and your families have had a safe and happy spring! Our study team is continuing to review your data and we hope to share some exciting findings soon! Additionally, please be on the lookout for emails regarding our new SELF COVID-19 study. We are trying to learn more about how these unprecedented times have impacted you, your families, and your community. As always, I sincerely thank you for your dedication to SELF: Study of Environment, Lifestyles and Fibroids.

In this issue of the newsletter, we highlight concerning findings on the increasing rates of breast and uterine cancer in young Black women. We also discuss the importance of prioritizing your mental health. We have also included exciting study updates and reminders.

Thank you for being part of SELF.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donna Baird
SELF Principal Investigator

Study Updates

- » 1331 participants have completed all Follow-up 4 activities.
- » 218 participants have completed The Study of Ovarian Aging and Reserve (SOAR) clinic visits. If you are interested in learning more about SOAR, or to determine if you are eligible, give us a call at **313-874-7962** or send us an email at **SOAR@hfhs.org** and a member of the Henry Ford team will contact you.
- » **New Study:** Ever wonder what affects your menstrual cycles? Us too! Help us learn how vitamin D might improve menstrual cycle health. Low vitamin D levels may affect ovulation, cause long menstrual cycles, or lower chances of getting pregnant. Visit **www.invitedtrial.net** for more information, and tell a friend!

Reminders

- » We will continue to share SELF findings and regular study update mailings (three times per year). Please call us at **1-877-692-SELF (7353)** or send an email to **info@DetroitSELF.org** if your contact information changes, so that you will not miss these important updates.
- » Let us know if any contact information changes for **your secondary contacts**.
- » If you live out-of-state and will be in the Detroit area, please reach out to us as soon as you have your dates, so that we can schedule you for a SELF visit. **To thank you for your continued participation and time completing this visit, you will receive a \$150 gift card.**
- » Please keep an eye on your email for an invitation to complete a short questionnaire regarding your COVID-19 experience. All SELF participants who complete the survey will receive a \$30 Visa gift card, sent directly to their email.



Any Questions?

Call us at
1-877-692-SELF (7353)

or send an email to
questions@DetroitSELF.org

Rates of Breast and Uterine Cancer are Increasing in Young Black Women in the US

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in US women. About one in eight women (white or Black) are expected to get breast cancer during their lives. However, compared to white women, Black women have higher rates of premenopausal breast cancer, higher rates of metastatic breast cancer (i.e., spreading beyond the breast), and higher death rates from breast cancer (Figures 1 and 2). Mammogram screening can find early tumors, often before it spreads to other organs, but the screening is not standard for women under 40 or 45 because risks of the radiation from the exam may outweigh any benefits. As can be seen from Figure 1, Black women tend to have breast cancer at earlier ages than whites, and can be diagnosed and die from the disease even before mammogram screening is typically recommended. Dr. Julie Palmer and colleagues recently developed a method to help predict risk for Black women and validated it on data from the Black Women's Health Study. It may be particularly helpful for the younger women who do not typically get mammograms. Factors associated with increased risk that are used in the risk calculator are having a sister or mother with breast cancer, a breast biopsy, five or more years of oral contraceptive use, early age at first menstrual period, and lack of breastfeeding. The calculator can be found at: www.bu.edu/slone/bwhs-brcarisk-calculator/.

Uterine cancer is the second most common cancer among US women, and it has been increasing in the last decades. Historically, this has been considered a disease of postmenopausal women, but a growing number of premenopausal women are being diagnosed. Abnormal uterine bleeding is a key symptom leading to diagnosis and treatment. For postmenopausal women not taking hormones, uterine bleeding is quite recognizable. In contrast, it can be less identifiable in premenopausal women. For them it can appear as prolonged menses or bleeding between periods, but these are often due to other factors, not uterine cancer. Some data show higher incidence of uterine cancer for white women compared to Black women. However, Black women, with an elevated risk of uterine fibroids, have more hysterectomies than whites, but those without a uterus will not develop uterine cancer. When this is taken into account, Black women have similar or higher rates than whites. Also, even among women over 50, most of whom would be postmenopausal, Black women are diagnosed at later stages of the cancer (suggesting delayed diagnoses), and death rates are higher [Figure 3]. Though the data for the most recent years are not yet available, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have further increased disparities in both breast and uterine cancer deaths.

Figure 1: Breast Cancer Diagnoses

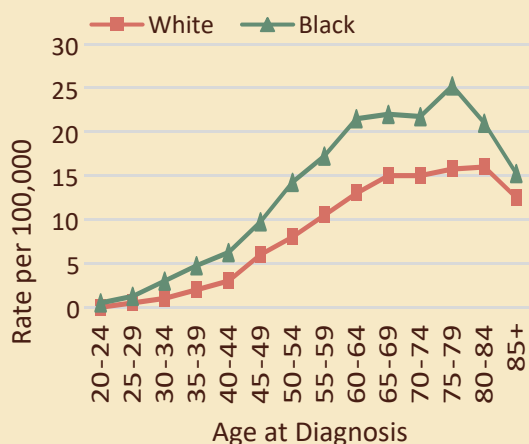


Figure 2: Breast Cancer

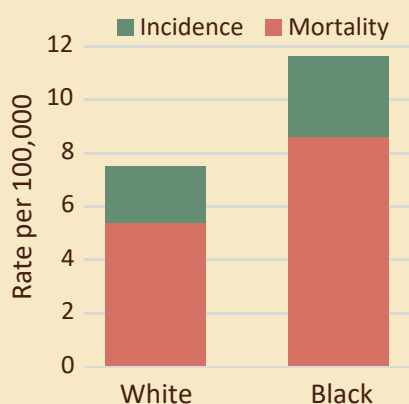
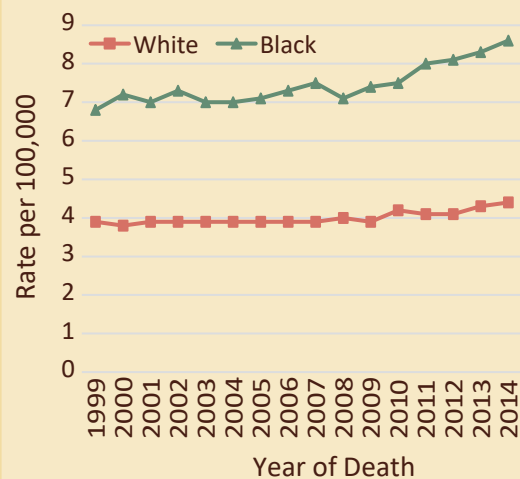


Figure 3: Uterine Cancer Deaths



It's true that everyone experiences temporary periods of sadness, and times of worry and nervousness. But what about when those feelings won't go away? Too often, women of color try to muscle their way through depression and anxiety on their own, says Erica Richards, chair and medical director of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health at Sibley Memorial.



Make Mental Health Your Priority

Compared to their Caucasian counterparts, African-American women are only half as likely to seek help. Part of the challenge in getting care is the cultural belief that only people who are "crazy" or "weak" see mental health professionals. Women should be reminded that attending to their own needs, whether physical or emotional, doesn't make you weak. It makes you better.

Although there's no replacement for the help you can get from a mental health professional, you can also safeguard your emotional health through these self-care practices:

- » **Get good rest:** Aim for at least seven hours of sleep each night. Lack of sleep destabilizes your mood, making everything you do less effective.
- » **Move more:** Exercise 30 minutes every day for better health and a boost of feel-good endorphins that can help some people manage or prevent depression symptoms.
- » **Eat well:** A healthy mix of fruits, vegetables and protein keeps energy levels steady, helping you better manage the ups and downs of your day.
- » **Connect:** Schedule time with a friend every week, even for a quick cup of coffee or a walk. Many studies have shown that social support improves women's mental well-being, helping to reduce stress and the effects of depression.
- » **Meditate:** Johns Hopkins researchers found that people who took an eight-week course in mindfulness meditation were able to improve their depression, anxiety and pain symptoms.
- » **Know your limits:** As much as possible, decline requests that create unnecessary stress, such as hosting parties or planning events. Setting boundaries at work, such as not checking email after a certain time, can also help reduce stress.

Signs of Depression and Mood Disorders

- » Sleeping more or less than usual
- » Increased or decreased appetite
- » Feeling worthless, hopeless or empty
- » Mood swings
- » Feeling disinterested and unable to enjoy things that usually bring pleasure
- » Feeling out of control
- » Difficulty concentrating

If you or a loved one have experienced these or other symptoms for two weeks or longer, you should seek help from a health professional. Remember, there are millions of people with depression who are getting treatment and living successful lives. Join them and take control of your health.

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/mental-health-among-african-american-women>

References

- Racial/ethnic differences in the outcomes of patients with metastatic breast cancer: contributions of demographic, socioeconomic, tumor and metastatic characteristics
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30293212/>
- CDC: Uterine Cancer Rates by Race and Ethnicity
<http://medbox.iiab.me/modules/en-cdc/www.cdc.gov/cancer/uterine/statistics/race.htm>





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Are masks still required for visits?



Yes, masks are still mandatory for clinic visits. If you forget your mask, a member of the Henry Ford study staff will provide one for you when you enter the building.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

Please call us at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) if your phone numbers, mailing address or email address changes.



National Institute of
Environmental Health Sciences



**HENRY
FORD
HEALTH**

What SELF Participants are saying...

- » I enjoyed Rita! She was great!!
- » Debbie was very nice and so was the ultrasound tech.
- » Always great experience. Love the employees and the service.

Thanks for the kudos!

Newsletter Suggestions

We want to hear from you! What would you like to see in future SELF newsletters?
Submit your ideas and suggestions to info@DetroitSELF.org.