

The Relationship Between Stress and the Diagnosis Of Lupus Among Black Women in Their Reproductive Years

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Introduction

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that affects the immune system. Nearly 90% of people living with Lupus in the United States are women (Lupus Foundation of America). Lupus is more common, occurs at a younger age, and is more severe in African American women. As many as 1 in 250 African American women will develop lupus at some point in their lives (Lupus Foundation of America). This study will explore the relationship between stress and the diagnosis of Lupus among black women in their reproductive years (ages 18-45).

Methods

This questionnaire used was conducted by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a collaborative effort between all states and territories of the United States of America and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). SPSS was then used to analyze the relationship between stress and the diagnosis of Lupus. This was done by evaluating socioeconomic factors that may lead to stress such as income and education level. Mental health status was evaluated as well.

Results

The results of the study showed that Black women who were older in age, were single, did not graduate high school, and made between \$25,000-\$34,999 annually were more likely to have an arthritic diagnosis than their respective reference groups.

1

There is a significant relationship between Black women who were diagnosed with an arthritic condition and stress.

2

There is a significant relationship between women diagnosed with an arthritic condition and demographic factors :

- **Age**
- **Marital Status**
- **Education Level**
- **Household Income**

What Does This Mean?

There is a need for interventions that aim to help Black women learn stress-management techniques at earlier ages and better quality.

Allocating special funds to early diagnosis, prevention, and prompt management of autoimmune and arthritic conditions.

Need for Black doctors and doctors that are culturally competent and recognize and take Black women's pain seriously.

Discussion & Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, programming and interventions should aim to help Black women learn stress-reduction techniques at earlier ages, helping Black women navigate the work environment better. For those who are uninsured, underinsured, and/or living beyond the federal poverty level, allocating special funds towards early diagnosis, prevention, and prompt treatment of autoimmune and arthritic conditions would be of use. Lastly, there is a need for more black physicians and for more culturally competent physicians who have the ability to recognize and take Black women's pain seriously.