UTERINE FIBROIDS: HEALTH DISPARITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETIOLOGIES

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Abstract: Uterine leiomyomas or fibroids are a benign uterine disease found in over twenty five percent of all women and over fifty percent of African American women. It is the leading cause of hysterectomies and a major cause of morbidity and lost days at work for women. The etiology of uterine fibroids is unclear, but it has a strong association with endogenous estrogens. We hypothesize that environmental estrogens may play a role in fibroid development. To that end we have elucidated a molecular mechanism that distinguishes the response to estrogen in immortalized uterine smooth muscle cells and uterine leiomyomas cells. We are currently determining if this molecular mechanism can explain a role for environmental estrogens in the etiology of fibroids.