Breast cancer comparisons between African American and Caucasian women in Southern states

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Abstract: Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, excluding non-melanoma skin cancers. Caucasian women are more likely to develop breast cancer than African American women. In this study, trends in incidence and mortality of female breast cancer in the United States and four neighbor Southern states: Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee by race, age, and year were analyzed. Also trends in mammography screening and how it relates to breast cancer incidence and mortality trends in African American and Caucasian women were studied. Total incidence cases are lower in African-American than Caucasian women, while mortality cases are higher in African American women. From 1999-2007, Louisiana and Tennessee had the highest breast cancer incidence rates, while Mississippi had the lowest breast cancer incidence rates in both African-American and Caucasian women. Louisiana had the highest mortality rates in African-American women but the lowest mortality rates occurred in Caucasian women; however, Tennessee had the lowest mortality rates in African American women. Data indicates the younger age groups are less likely to die from breast cancer than their older counterparts. The state of Alabama had more deaths in Caucasian women ages 25-44 than in African American women. African American women have higher breast cancer mortality rates than Caucasians. Researchers try to explain the increased mortality rates of African American women by examining how race and locale affect stage at diagnosis. Clinical trials have shown that mammography screening can effectively reduce breast cancer mortality. However, the response or access to medical care, as well as disparities in the quality of health care, may largely account for the diverging breast cancer mortality trends among African American and Caucasian women.

Keywords: Breast Cancer, Incidence, Mortality, Mammogram, United States, Southern States

Acknowledgement: The project described was supported by Grant Number G12RR013459 from the National Center of Research Resources.