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Black women at higher risk of triple-negative breast cancer

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A new analysis of data from a nationwide hospital-based dataset shows that black women have higher odds of being diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer—a subtype associated with poorer prognosis—than do white women, regardless of socioeconomic status (SES). The report was published in the June issue of *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*.

The goal of the study, by researchers from the American Cancer Society, was to estimate the odds of breast cancer subtypes in minorities versus non-Hispanic whites stratified by SES. The authors used the National Cancer Data Base to identify breast cancer cases diagnosed in 2010 and 2011, the only 2 years since US cancer registries began collecting HER2 results. Breast cancer cases were classified into five subtypes, based on hormone receptor (HR) and HER2 status: HR+/HER2-, HR+/HER2+, HR-/HER2+ (HER2-overexpressing), HR-/HER2- (TN), and unknown.

Odds ratios (ORs) for non-HR+/HER2-subtypes to HR+/HER2- for racial/ethnic groups were estimated using polytomous logistic regression. A composite of insurance status and areal-level incomes were used to control for and stratify by SES.

Non-Hispanic black and Hispanics were 84% (OR=1.84; 95% CI 1.77-1.92) and 17% (OR=1.17; 95% CI 1.11-1.24) more likely than white women to have TN subtypes of breast cancer versus HR+/HER2-, respectively. Odds of being diagnosed with HER2-overexpressing subtype versus HR+/HER2- were 1.45 times greater in Asian/Pacific Islanders than in non-Hispanic white women (OR=1.45; 95% CI 1.31-1.61). The researchers found similar ORs for race in high and low strata of SES.

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