

A MOTHER IS A
MOTHER IS A
MOTHER

THE DISPARITY OF BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH WITHIN THE MEDICAL FIELD



By Chess Cabrera

WHEN DOES OUR CONVERSATION BEGIN?

In the upsurge of the Black Lives Matter movement since May 2020, the primary focus from the media is a chain of newfound empathy that an innocent life has been taken from the hands that were supposed to serve and protect, and keep our communities alive and thriving.
But where is the conversation on the black lives that have been lost to doctors, who's jobs were also to protect their patients' lives?
To every black mother who suffered a stillborn child because the doctors refused to acknowledge her symptoms until it was too late?
To every black child who grows up without a mother because she was more likely to die during childbirth than her white counterparts?
Their lives matter too.

MATERNAL HEALTH RISKS

WHAT HEALTH RISKS
DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECT BLACK
WOMEN?

Uterine Myoma

Also known as "fibroids," is a chronic illness that causes abnormal growths that grow within the uterus characterized by abdominal distention, painful and heavy menstruation, and pelvic pain. Some doctors still believe that black people have a higher pain tolerance and are therefore being 'dramatic' when it comes to symptoms.

Somehow, black women are 3 times more likely to get uterine myoma.

Premature Delivery

If the delivery of a baby is before the 37th week of pregnancy, the baby is premature - which offers a variety of different issues for the baby as the earlier a baby is born, the higher the risks. According to the CDC, black women accounted for 4% more premature births than white women

Cervical Cancer

Per estimate, of the American Cancer Society medical journal Cancer, 10.1 out of 100,000 black women will die of cervical cancer - for white women, this is approximately 3.2-4.7 out of 100,000.

A study in Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology (2016), when looking at 16,000+ patients of cervical cancer, white women were the majority who received care based on the National Cancer Institute guidelines

"BUT SOME
OF THESE
AREN'T
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MOTHERS
TO DEAL
WITH?"

CORRECT

so why discuss 'black maternal health'?

While uterine myoma and cervical cancer do not solely affect mothers, they still do.

A common treatment for serious uterine myoma is to treat it with radiofrequency ablation or undergo a hysterectomy, which completely removes the uterus from the body - making it impossible to have a baby. If a black woman's health is ignored, or her medical problems are written off as either hysteria or some other illness rather than what it actually is, a black woman's choice to be a mother is taken away from her. Another issue of 'mistreating' or 'misdiagnosing' fibrosis is the fact that the illness can cause miscarriages - also taking away a black life simply because they didn't believe in a black mother's voice.

After examination of Maryland's Cancer Registry, black women are more likely to go through radiation and chemotherapy than their white counterparts that would've gone into surgery for cervical cancer.

But again - why go into 'black mothers matter'?

Because they do.

Every statistic has a person behind it. That is someone's mother or someone's sister. **It was someone's daughter, girlfriend, neighbor, coworker, friend.** They're a part of a number in a sentence, but they meant something to someone; and their lives and their health did not deserve to come second.

A MOTHER IS
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A MOTHER

From the moment she notices
something is wrong

From the moment her perils are
first ignored

From plastering on a smile
through the pain

From the moment she holds her
baby in her arms

To finally getting to the doctor
after too long

To the moment they "just didn't
catch it in time"

To her family being unable to deny
the truth

To her baby carrying her to her
unnecessarily early grave

SOURCES!

HERE ARE A FEW RESOURCES
TO FURTHER INVESTIGATE
THE NEED FOR THE ADVOCACY
OF BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH

Links

<https://www.self.com/story/black-women-health-conditions>

<https://bwhi.org/blogs/>

<https://blackhealthmatters.com>

<https://blog.blackgirlhealth.com>

<https://daniaauthentic.com>

<https://www.drtiffanylester.com>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/discrimination-black-womens-health/>

Instagram

Christina Rice - @christinamrice

Dr. Tiffany Lester - @drtiffanylester

Amira Rasool - @amirarasool

Black Girl In Om - @blackgirlinom