African American Healthy Marriages Initiative (AAHMI)

BUILDING STRONG AND HEALTHY FAMILIES: CONNECTING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE CONFERENCE

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH
Health and Relationships

In Sickness and Health

A plenary session discussion

By
Larry LeFlore, Ph. D.
Chair and Professor
Department of Family Sciences
Texas Woman’s University
Marriage is good for African Americans

Marriage seems to be highly beneficial for African American males throughout the life course.

African American females also appear to derive very important benefits from marriage, but the benefits are smaller than those for males.

Marriage is profoundly important to the economic well-being of African American families.

There are racial differences in the consequences of marriage.
Marriage is good for African Americans*

Marriages of African Americans are, on average, of lower quality than those of women; African American men receive a smaller marriage only in terms of their satisfaction with family life.

Racial differences in the prevalence of “very happy” marriages are apparently central to overall racial differences in well-being. (On average, African Americans report being “less happy” than whites.)

Marriage appears to inhibit crime.

Parental marriage shapes child well-being.

Some General Perimeters

Illness and health among African Americans

Marriage and cohabitation and African Americans
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General Assumptions about relationships

Commitment
Intimacy
Presentation Objectives

• Increase knowledge about the prevalence of marriage and cohabitation among African Americans.
• To increase knowledge about the prevalence of illnesses among African Americans.
• To increase knowledge about current research on the impact of illnesses on relationships.
• To increase your awareness of possible models for couples as they cope with illness by one partner.
• To motivate persons to be inquisitive and engaged in research or rigorous programs evaluations (whenever possible) for the purpose of adding to the body of evidence based programs that may be of value to African Americans.
Major Foci

Prevalence of Select Chronic Diseases Among African Americans

Prevalence of cohabitation among African Americans

Prevalence of marriage among African Americans
Major Foci

The impact of Illnesses on Marriages/Relationships

From The Literature
Illnesses Among African Americans

Mental Health Illnesses
Depression
Bipolar Disorder
General Anxiety Disorder
Clinical depression:

- More than ups and downs;
- It is not a personal weakness, gracelessness, or faithfulness;
- It is a serious medical illness.
- It is not normal.
- It is a “whole body” illness that affects your mood, thoughts, body and behavior.
- Every year more than 19 million Americans suffer from some type of depressive illness.
Bipolar Disorder:
- An estimated 2.3 million Americans have bipolar disorder (also called manic-depressive illness).
- Although African Americans have the same rate of bipolar depression as other Americans, African Americans are less likely to receive a diagnosis and treatment for this illness.
General Anxiety Disorder

- GAD is diagnosed when a person worries excessively about a variety of everyday problems for at least 6 months.

- GAD affects about 6.8 million adult Americans¹ and about twice as many women as men.
Chronic Diseases

*Diabetes*
*HIV AIDS*
*Heart Disease*
*Cancer*
Diabetes

- Roughly 2.6 million or 11 percent of African Americans have diabetes; 35 to 40 percent don’t even know it.
- African Americans are twice as likely to develop diabetes compared to non-Hispanic whites.
- Twenty-five percent of all African Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 have diabetes.
Diabetes

- Twenty-five percent of African American women have diabetes

- African American women are twice as likely to suffer from diabetes-related blindness and they are 1.5 to 2.5 times more likely to have lower limb amputations; 2.6 to 5.6 times more likely to suffer

- Diabetes is one of the five leading causes of death for African Americans
As the pie chart below shows, in 2005, about half (49%) of the people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS were black (according to information from 33 states). Children are included in these data.
HIV AIDS
Blacks and African Americans

Account for 49 percent of HIV and AIDS cases
Have shorter survival times
and
HIV/AIDS is a Leading cause of death
HIV AIDS

Among men, 41% of men living with HIV/AIDS were Black in 2005

Among women, 64% of women living with HIV/AIDS were black in 2005
Heart Disease

African Americans adults are:

less likely to be diagnosed with coronary heart disease, however they are more likely to die from heart disease.

are 40% more likely to have high blood pressure, they are 10% less likely than their non-Hispanic White counterparts to have their blood pressure under control.

In 2004, African American men were 30% more likely to die from heart disease, as compared to non-Hispanic white men.

African Americans were 1.4 times as likely as non-Hispanic whites to have high blood pressure.
Heart Disease

Age-adjusted percentages of coronary heart disease among persons 18 years of age and over, 2006

Non-Hispanic Black       6.1
Non-Hispanic White        6.6
Non-Hispanic Black/Non-Hispanic White Ratio 0.9

# Heart Disease

**Age-Adjusted Heart Disease Death Rates per 100,000 (2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>342.1</td>
<td>236.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>268.7</td>
<td>175.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Non-</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic White Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus07.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus07.pdf)
In 2003, the death rate for all cancers combined continued to be 35% higher in African American men and 18% higher in African American women than in white men and women.
Cancer Among African Americans

152,900 new cancer case were expected to have been diagnosed among African Americans in 2007
### Figure 1. Leading Sites of New Cancer Cases and Deaths Among African Americans, 2007 Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>Breast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,870 (37%)</td>
<td>19,010 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung &amp; bronchus</td>
<td>Lung &amp; bronchus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,490 (15%)</td>
<td>9,060 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon &amp; rectum</td>
<td>Colon &amp; rectum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,880 (9%)</td>
<td>8,580 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney &amp; renal pelvis</td>
<td>Uterine corpus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,280 (4%)</td>
<td>3,420 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hodgkin lymphoma</td>
<td>Pancreas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,640 (3%)</td>
<td>2,310 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral cavity &amp; pharynx</td>
<td>Non-Hodgkin lymphoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500 (3%)</td>
<td>2,240 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancreas</td>
<td>Myeloma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,090 (3%)</td>
<td>1,920 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary bladder</td>
<td>Uterine corpus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,050 (3%)</td>
<td>1,220 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myeloma</td>
<td>Oral cavity &amp; pharynx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,940 (2%)</td>
<td>840 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver &amp; intrahepatic bile duct</td>
<td>Ovary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,880 (2%)</td>
<td>1,770 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sites</td>
<td>All sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83,240</td>
<td>69,660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes basal and squamous cell skin cancers and in situ carcinoma except urinary bladder.

Note: Estimates are rounded to the nearest 10.

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In Sickness And In Health

Marital Adjustment

Commitment to the Relationship

Sustaining the marital relationship:
  Love
  Affection
  Intimacy
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Ambiguous Loss*


Perceiving a person as physically absent, but psychologically present

Perceiving a person as physically present, but psychologically absent
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Research findings

Meeting each others’ emotional needs may result in better adjustment when coping with chronic illness.


Research Findings

- Caregiver Roles and Role Strain
- Open, honest communication
Research Findings

- Marital quality prior to diagnosis of Chronic Disease
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