

Abstract

There is no doubt that medical trust and mistrust exists within the African American community. Mistrust could have stemmed from past experiences including the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, the use of HeLa cells, named after Henrietta Lacks, without her family knowing, and using enslaved African American women to test out gynecology procedures in the early 1800s. The purpose of this thesis is to measure the trust and mistrust African American's may have with the current healthcare systems and staff. With my personal experiences and opinions of the healthcare systems, I also know a wide range of other individuals whose trust in the healthcare system no longer exists due to mistreatment and false diagnosis. I would like to shed light on a topic that has gone unnoticed, but is recognized in our communities, but no one is raising awareness on the topic and there has not been a study done in 10 years. To help shed light on the topic, I also performed a study where data was collected and analyzed on medical mistrust in a community-based population of African American men and women and test the relationship between medical mistrust, health outcomes, and healthcare utilization. Data was collected from local churches in the East Chicago and Gary communities and community members were recruited to take a brief online survey. Results indicate an association between medical mistrust and healthcare utilization.

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