



PO Box 311020
Atlanta, Georgia 31131
404.344.9629 (Office)
404.346.7517 (Fax)
Email: info@SisterSong.net
Website: www.SisterSong.net

Black Women with Breast Cancer More Likely To Die of Disease Study Shows

© SisterSong

Originally published in *Collective Voices* Vol. 1 Issue 4, Spring 2006

In a study published in the October 2005 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the *News Daily Press* reports that black women who have breast cancer have a lower survival rate than white women with the disease. The findings state that black women are more likely to die from co-infections of other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, lupus and AIDS. Martin Tammemagi, an associate professor of epidemiology at Brock University in Canada, and colleagues examined the medical records of 264 black women and 642 white women diagnosed with breast cancer in Detroit's Henry Ford Health System between 1985 and 1990 (Tammemagi et al., *JAMA*, 10/12). Almost 23% of black women with breast cancer were diagnosed with four or more diseases, compared with an 18% co-infection rate of four or more diseases among white women, according to the study. About 37% of black breast cancer patients in the study died from those illnesses, compared with 32% of white patients. John Kessler, a physician with Virginia Oncology Associates, said drugs used to treat other diseases could interfere with surgery and chemotherapy, rendering them less effective, or possibly create complications. Kessler recommends to other physicians to monitor all conditions.