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## **Aggressive, Deadly Breast Cancer Attacks Black Women**

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According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in June 2006, pre-menopausal black women are more than twice as likely as white women and post-menopausal black women to develop a more aggressive breast cancer, the *Long Island Newsday* reported. The *New York Times* reported that “basal-like” tumors – which women with genetic mutations called BRCA1 tend to develop – grow fast, spread quickly and are more likely to be fatal than other subtypes of breast cancer tumors. Women with basal-like tumors are less likely to survive chemotherapy. It also cannot be treated with estrogen-blocking drugs, such as tamoxifen or raloxifene, because it isn’t fueled by estrogen. The study also stated that Herceptin, a breast cancer drug, is ineffective. Researchers examined stored tissue samples from 496 women included in a project called the Carolina Breast Cancer Study. The women who were diagnosed with breast cancer from 1993 to 1996, had an average age of 50 with 40% of them self-identified as black. The study reported that 39% of pre-menopausal black women with breast cancer had a basal-like breast cancer tumor, compared with 14% of postmenopausal black women. The *Times* reported that the study found that the mortality rate of black women who developed breast cancer, particularly under age 50, is 11 deaths per 100,000 women, compared with 6.3 per 100,000 white women. “We now know that breast cancer is not just one disease, but tumors are biologically distinct, with different prognoses,” said Lisa Carey, medical director of the University of North Carolina-Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. Although there is no treatment that specifically targets basal-like tumors, details about breast cancer allow physicians to use specific treatments to fight the disease. For more information, visit Breast Cancer Action at [www.bcaction.org](http://www.bcaction.org)