

6-4-2012

Epidemiology News

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Georgia Southern University, "Epidemiology News" (2012). *Epidemiology News (through 6/2018)*. 2.
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Disparities in Breast Cancer

June 4, 2012



Dr. Talar Markossian and Dr. Robert Hines at Georgia Southern University Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health examined “Disparities in Late Stage Diagnosis, Treatment, and Breast Cancer-Related Death by Race, Age, and Rural Residence Among Women in Georgia.” The objectives of this study were to examine the outcomes of late stage breast cancer diagnosis, receiving first course treatment, and breast cancer-related death by race, age, and rural/urban residence in Georgia. The authors used cross-sectional and follow-up data (1992-2007) for Atlanta and Rural Georgia cancer registries that are part of the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program.

Multilevel modeling and Cox proportional hazard models revealed that compared to whites, African American women had significantly increased odds of late stage diagnosis and unknown tumor stage, decreased odds of receiving radiation or surgery, and increased risk of death following breast cancer diagnosis. Increased age was significantly associated with odds of late/unknown stage at diagnosis, worse treatment, and survival. Women residing in rural areas had significantly decreased odds of receiving radiation and surgery with radiation, and for receiving breast-conserving surgery compared to mastectomy. Efforts are needed to alleviate disparities in breast cancer outcomes in hard-to-reach populations.

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