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Increasing clinical trial enrollment rates of black women with breast cancer through Patient Navigation and Community Education programs

Introduction: The positive impact of clinical trials is clear in breast cancer, with a five-year survival rate of 90%. While black women represent 12% of breast cancer cases in the US, they comprise 3% of participants in clinical trials. At the Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center (VICC), black patients represent 9% of all breast cancer patients, but only 4% of those enrolled in clinical trials. This study evaluates the role of Patient Navigators (PNs) to increase knowledge of and enrollment on clinical trials among black women with breast cancer at VICC.

Methods: All black women at VICC are offered Patient Navigation (PN) services. They complete a needs assessment and are provided PN up to the duration of their treatment. Patients are also provided with educational material about clinical trials and assistance with identified needs then surveyed throughout the navigation experience.

Results: From February through May 2024, we have approached 33 patients for PN assignment. Of the 29 patients who accepted a PN, one was eligible for a clinical trial and enrolled. Of 14 patients who completed the first post-navigation survey, 12 stated PNs improved their cancer care experience, and all 14 found meetings with PNs as valuable. 11 patients reported they knew very little to nothing about clinical trials prior to PN, and 8 reported having increased knowledge following PN. Of 12 respondents, 6 reported that they would be more likely to enroll on a clinical trial because of PN, and 9 of 14 indicated they would share information about clinical trials with others.

Conclusions: With exceptional survival rates in breast cancer, it is imperative that there is equity in opportunity for enrollment in clinical trials for all patients. Patient navigation helps target barriers to access and increases knowledge of clinical trials. As accrual continues in our study, we will compare clinical trial enrollment rates among eligible black women with breast cancer during the study period with historical controls.