



Health Disparities: African American Mothers

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NRSE 3525 – 941: Health Promotion and Research



Introduction and Purpose

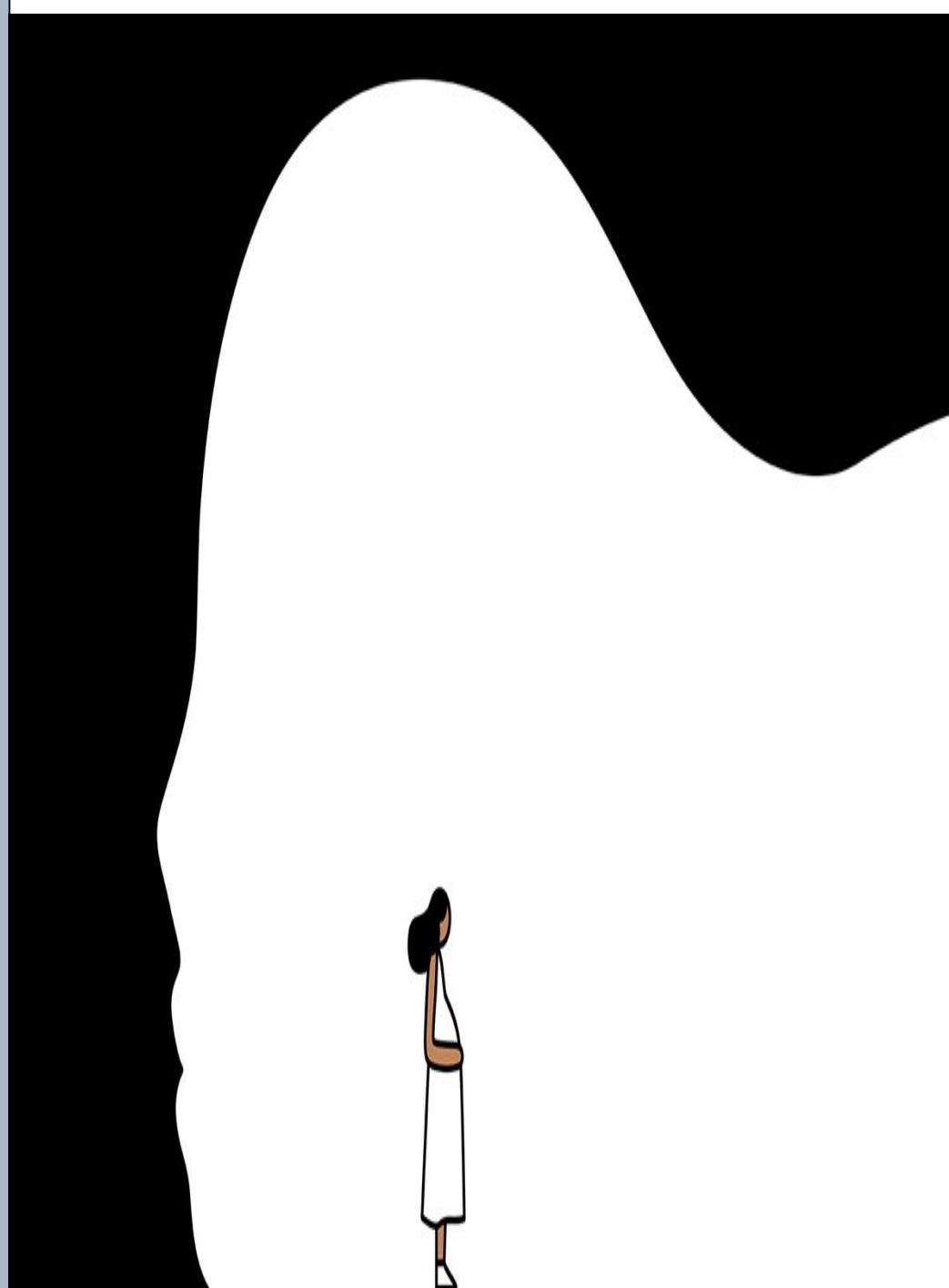
The evident disparity within races among African American mothers has been seen throughout the years. African American mothers are not receiving the same amount of quality care and support resulting in negative effects. Through various studies, it has been proven that African American mothers and their infants are not receiving the same amount of quality care as mothers of other races (Orchard et al., 2017). Unfortunately, this issue has increased over the years resulting in more African American mothers being harmed. Postpartum depression affects more African American mothers than any other race (Ceballos et al., 2016). Also, some of these mothers lack information on breastfeeding, and they would benefit if nurses taught and encouraged it more (Johnson et al., 2015). These health disparities among African American mothers are increasing resulting in suffering and sometimes loss. It is entirely preventable if they were as educated and cared for by the nurses. In relation to these issues, racism plays a role in the unfair treatment these women are sadly receiving. Several more unjust and horrifying factors contribute to this issue. They are looked over and not paid the same amount of attention which is resulting in intense pain and loss for the new African American mothers.

Background

Maternal issues have never been a popular matter to the general public which can be arranged by giving emphasis to the ongoing situation. Within maternal matters, African American mothers are absolutely anguished. Studies show that African American women and their babies are disproportionately dying in labor. While it is understood that issues like implicit bias, medical racism, and lack of quality care contribute to the deaths of these women, there is still much to learn about this ongoing issue within the healthcare system. There are more potential variables that could be contributing to these health disparities. These variables could be the neighborhood they reside in, the number of African American patients that certain hospitals serve, and so on. These African American women and their infants have been suffering due to these unfair circumstances, and it is important for people to become aware to prevent awful events from taking place. The ignorance within society and issues such as these must cease in order to influence, empower, and inspire citizens and authorities that possess the ability to establish a new and strengthened system for all African American Mothers.

Significance

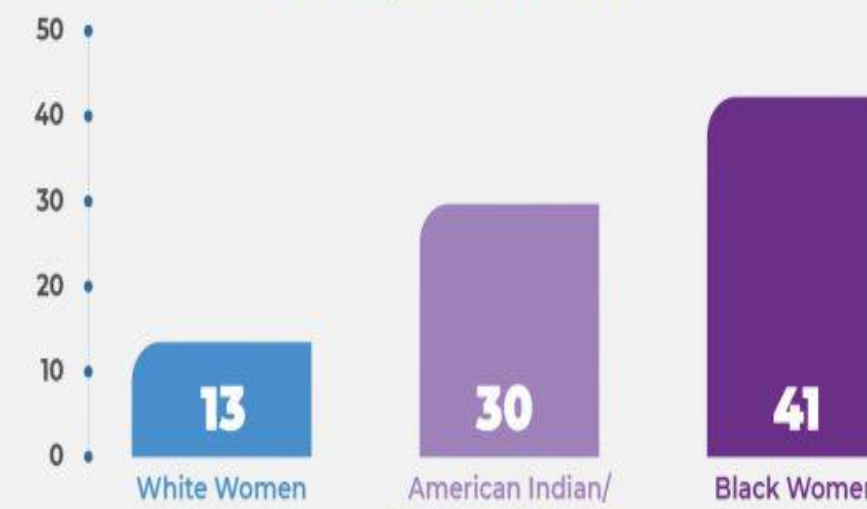
As the medical field continues to evolve with many new discoveries, the wellbeing of African American mothers do not appear to incline with the modernity of recent generations. In addition to this statement, this group of individuals seem to be the most prominent in adversities when it comes to pregnancy and childbirth. As African Americans are part of society, and a large percentage at that, this issue is crucial to discuss and be made aware of. The significance regarding this matter is large when studies are being dissected and interpreted. For example, locations with high populations exhibiting racial prejudice can affect the manner and quality care African American mothers may receive during the whole childbirth period. Aside from racial prejudice, other studies experimenting with different variables that may reveal what contributes to disparities in African American Mothers' gestation mostly have outstandingly disappointing results.



Seervai, S. (2019, October 18). *How Our Health Care System Treats Black Mothers Differently* | Commonwealth Fund. www.commonwealthfund.org. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/podcast/2019/oct/how-our-health-care-system-treats-black-mothers-differently>

PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS

PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS



Full report: bit.ly/maternaldeath

PatientEngagementHIT. (2020, August 21). "First Do No Harm:" *Combatting Black Maternal Health Disparities*. PatientEngagementHIT. <https://patientengagementhit.com/features/first-do-no-harm-combatting-black-maternal-health-disparities>

Literature Review Methods

To find the most reliable material, each peer reviewed evidence-based article was reviewed for relevancy to health disparities among African American mothers. The four articles that were chosen for this poster came from PubMed, Google scholar, or ETSU's Sherrod library's numerous other data bases. Using these resources and search engines, we were able to find reliable articles, studies, and journals on the health disparities among African American mothers. Evidence-based articles were chosen for this study based on the relevancy, if it was peer reviewed, and the year it was published. The articles were released between four and six years ago. Articles that have not been peer reviewed, were older than six years, and came from an unreliable source were excluded in order to keep our research up to date and accurate.

Findings

The life of an African American mother is clearly filled with trials and tribulations. Birth outcomes for African American mothers have stark differences in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups. African American mothers are also more likely to be affected by postpartum depression than their Caucasian counterparts (Ceballos et al., 2016). African American mothers are more than three times more likely to die during childbirth than white mothers, and African American babies are more likely to be either born premature or underweight (PatientEngagementHIT, 2020). Overall, African American mother are not receiving equal quality health care and other injuries across the board resulting in preventable deaths (Orchard et al., 2017).

Nursing Implications

Nurses have a responsibility to advocate for their patients. It is important that every patient is treated with the same quality of care. Access to postpartum care like effective contraception and medical counseling decrease the negative effects for African American mothers postpartum (Thiel et al., 2017). As a nurse, it is our responsibility to try to understand our patients and lead them in the right direction (Johnson et al., 2015). Breastfeeding can lead to many positive effects, so it is important to promote and encourage breastfeeding. Postpartum depression is more common in African American mothers than any other race, and it is important to establish a solid support system and provide resources for these women (Ceballos et al., 2016). Each patient deserves to be treated the same regardless of race (Orchard et al., 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, statistics show clear evidence of racial health disparities, specifically among African American women. These women have higher chances of both infant and maternal mortality. Overall, these disparities put pregnant African American woman at a disadvantage compared to their white counterparts. More research needs to be done on not only the contributing factors to these rates, but also the long-term negative effects these disparities can potentially cause. Most importantly, health care providers must work together to close the gap in these health disparities among African American mothers.

References

