

Project REACH: A culturally-tailored mHealth intervention to improve health outcomes among black women with breast cancer

Nicole Whitehead, Ph.D., Lauren Hearn, M.S., Zachary Mannes, B.S., & Allyson Diggins, M.A.
Department of Clinical and Health Psychology

Of those diagnosed with breast cancer, Black/African American (Black) women have the highest morbidity and mortality rate of all races and ethnicities. Despite having a lower breast cancer incidence rate than White women, the mortality rate for Black women is 41% higher. Low health literacy and low cancer knowledge among Black breast cancer survivors have been associated with poor patient-provider communication, passive participation in treatment decision-making, poorer overall health and higher mortality rates. Additionally, Black women may experience social disconnection after breast cancer diagnosis due to treatment-related side-effects, appearance concerns, fear of stigma and unsupportive family and friends. Project REACH (Recover, Empower, Adapt, Cope and Heal) combines culturally-tailored breast cancer information with support into a digital format for broad reach. Using 10, short, highly engaging films, this intervention delivers breast cancer health information content and structured support to participants' cell phones over a ten week period. In collaboration with clinicians at the UF Health Breast Center, Project REACH recruits Black women diagnosed with breast cancer within the past six months. At baseline and post-intervention assessments, breast cancer knowledge, patient-provider factors, and health-related quality of life are assessed. The goal of this pilot work is the creation of an effective mHealth (mobile health) intervention with broad national reach that will increase engagement in care and improve morbidity and mortality outcomes in Black women diagnosed with breast cancer.