Background and Significance

- Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) is an aggressive subtype of breast cancer that accounts for 15-20% of all breast cancers and is disproportionately prevalent among U.S. Black women.
- Due to these racial disparities in TNBC, previous research suggests that Black women with TNBC likely face unique barriers to care and have unmet psychosocial needs.
- Thus, there is a need for greater understanding of the treatment experience and unique needs for information and support that Black patients with TNBC may have.

Study Goal

To explore the perspectives, needs, and experiences of Black women diagnosed with TNBC.

Methods

- Our multi-method study was guided by the transformative paradigm and core principles of Black Feminist Thought.
- Study-eligible participants self-identified as a) Black/African American; b) 18 years old or older; c) being diagnosed with TNBC; d) receiving TNBC treatment in the U.S.; and e) English-speaking.
- Quantitative survey data from SHARE Cancer Support’s registry (n=49) was collected and analyzed (Aug-Oct 2022) followed by qualitative interviews (November 2022 - February 2023).
- We recruited a stratified, purposeful sample of 20 Black women from SHARE’s registry.
- Two Black researchers conducted virtual interviews with the participants via Zoom.
- Participants were compensated $175 for their time.
- We used the text analysis software NVivo® 12 for data management and thematic analysis.
- A Black Feminist lens was used to analyze codes and interpret emerging themes present across the interviews.

Results

Eight main themes emerged from the qualitative research and subsequent data analysis:

1. BLACK WOMEN WANT TO BE “SEEN” AND TREATED AS BLACK WOMEN:
   “...I think sometimes as a Black woman I feel like White people, they skip pages in the book when they’re dealing with us... And so they are treating the diagnosis, but my Black face and my needs, my side effects and things like that, I think that they just kind of nicely nod their head and move on from it.” – Dee*, 45-54 years old, Stage 2

2. KEEP THE FUTURE IN MIND:
   “I think I’ve finally gotten to the point where I can think about more years of future. You are afraid to plan too far ahead.” – TNBC1043*, 55-64 years old, Stage 4

3. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IS NOT OPTIONAL:
   “...you can have the biggest medical team in the world, if there is not a mental health professional on your medical team, you are lacking.” – Sonya Blade*, 45-54 years old, Stage 0

4. SUPPORT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED IN ALL ITS FORMS:
   “So I just know that there’s a lot of things for women of color and triple-negative that needs to be done.” – Power*, 45-54 years old, Stage 1

Recommendations: What you can do as a...

- HEALTH CARE TEAM MEMBER
  1. Avoid color blindness
  2. Clinicians need to be better educated about TNBC in Black women
  3. Acknowledge the mental exhaustion of structural racism and its potential additional impact on Black women

- BLACK WOMAN DIAGNOSED WITH TNBC (SURVIVOR)
  1. Recognize that it’s okay to not be okay
  2. Conversations about the future are necessary
  3. Surround yourself with positive others

- SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
  1. Increase awareness about TNBC, especially in Black spaces
  2. Black women need tailored support groups
  3. Advocate for more research with Black women about TNBC