Latinas Face Higher Risk of Breast Cancer Treatment Delays

March 21, 2011

Minority women with breast cancer may face higher treatment delays after their initial diagnoses—and these delays may affect their survival rates, according to a study published in the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* and reported by HealthDay News.

For the study, researchers looked at the records of more than 250,000 women from the National Cancer Database, examining the link between race and treatment delay for women diagnosed with Stage I to Stage III breast cancer.

Researchers found that Latina and African-American women faced higher risks of 30-, 60- and 90-day delays compared with white women. Moreover, researchers found that 59.3 percent of Latina women and 62.4 percent of African-American women received a diagnosis of Stage II or Stage III cancer (compared with 48.9 percent of white women). This is important because an advanced diagnosis is linked to lower survival rate.

“I was surprised at how strong the associations between race and ethnicity and the risk of 60- and 90-day delays were,” said lead author Stacey Fedeway, an epidemiologist at the American Cancer Society.

The risk of a 60-day treatment delay for Latinos with private insurance was 57 percent higher when compared with whites, and 76 percent higher for African Americans. Doctors have commented that while receiving a breast cancer diagnosis is not an absolute emergency, getting into treatment as soon as possible should be a priority.

“Unfortunately, access to the health care system is an issue,” said Peter Ravdin, MD, director of the Breast Health Clinic at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. “However, most women want to get a positive course of action started as soon as it is safe, and most health care teams try to see that such therapy starts as soon as all the information needed for treatment planning is available.”

Fortunately, the study found that the majority of patients (60 percent), received treatment within an average of 34 days.

“It’s a positive sign that breast cancer patients are being treated in a timely manner,” Fedeway

said. “However, more work needs to be done to determine and alleviate the patient and structural barriers preventing select subsets of breast cancer patients—particularly Hispanic and black patients—from receiving timely treatment.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/Latinas-Breast-Cancer-20108-3555