

## Some minorities believe they are less likely to get cancer compared to whites, study shows

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Researchers at Moffitt Cancer Center and colleagues analyzed national data to investigate the differences in cancer prevention beliefs by race and ethnicity. They found that minorities, including blacks, Asians and Hispanics, have differing beliefs about cancer prevention and feel they are less likely to get cancer than did whites. The researchers concluded that more culturally relevant information about cancer prevention and risk needs to reach minority populations.

Their study appears online in the *American Journal of Health Promotion*.

"The purpose of our study was to determine if there were racial and ethnic differences in the general beliefs and perceptions about cancer and [cancer prevention](#)," said study lead author Jenna L. Davis, M.P.H, research coordinator for Moffitt's Health Outcomes and Behavior Program. "We used the Health Belief Model, a theory that explains an individual's process for engaging in a certain health behavior or not based on their personal beliefs or perceptions."

The researchers assessed participants' beliefs regarding their risk of getting cancer, severity of cancer, and the benefit of detecting cancer early. They were also asked about their ability to prevent cancer and their understanding of screening and detection.

"We found that blacks, Asians and Hispanics were all more likely to believe that they had a lower chance of getting cancer than did whites," said study senior author B. Lee Green, Ph.D., senior member of the

Health Outcomes and Behavior Program at Moffitt. "This is significant and surprising because statistics show that racial and ethnic minorities, especially blacks, have higher [cancer mortality](#), incidence and prevalence rates than whites and also differ from whites in engaging in preventive behaviors."

Hispanics were also less likely than whites and blacks to believe that they could lower their chances of getting cancer. Regardless of race or ethnicity, participants felt that it was difficult to know which cancer prevention recommendations to follow.

"There is a need for consistent cancer prevention messages and screening recommendations, as well as opportunities to increase education on cancer prevention among all populations," Green said. "These efforts will make individuals feel more empowered to participate in cancer [preventive behaviors](#)."

Given the racial and ethnic disparity in beliefs about cancer prevention when compared to whites, the researchers concluded that their study should encourage researchers and health practitioners to design cancer education and prevention interventions that are culturally relevant for racial and ethnic minorities to better educate them about cancer susceptibility and risk.

"Research on how risk information is communicated to various racial and ethnic groups, and how these groups react to cancer risk messages, is also needed," Davis concluded.

Provided by H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute

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