

# SOCIOCULTURAL TAILORING IN BREAST CANCER WEBSITES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

Brandi Herrman-Rose

Dr. Shelly Rodgers, Thesis Supervisor

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine breast cancer websites to determine the extent to which sociocultural cues, relevant to African Americans, are used to convey information in websites. Sociocultural factors include collectivism, spirituality/religiosity and racial pride. This study uses a unique search option to determine the extent to which breast cancer websites target African American women with these sociocultural cues.

African American women are a high-risk segment for breast cancer; therefore, it is important to examine the extent to which message cues that resonate with this segment are used in breast cancer websites. The study adds to existing literature by comparing the presence of sociocultural factors in government, nonprofit and commercial websites that provide information about breast cancer. The goal is to determine whether or not differences exist in both the frequency and type of sociocultural factors on these sites. The method was a content analysis of 50 breast cancer websites.

Ethnic targeting of African Americans was present in some of the websites coded, though the use of targeting varied from zero to 2,672. There was limited use of sociocultural cues; collectivism was the most dominant cue used, followed by spirituality and racial pride. There were no instances of religiosity. In short, while there is a moderate use of targeting, sociocultural cues that resonate with African Americans are largely absent in breast cancer websites.