

NEBRASKA COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT: African American Community Listening Session Summary

November 2021

Two listening sessions were conducted among female and male cancer survivors and care givers in Nebraska. Perceptions of the community's health were mixed, with males rating health status higher than females (Fig 1). Cancer is an important health concern (Fig 2).

Most participants receive cancer-related information from family or friends, healthcare providers, and the internet. My Sister's Keeper, an Omaha-based breast cancer support organization, was mentioned by both females and males as an important community resource.

Cancer Treatment Experience

Clear patient-provider communication and shared decision making are important and include the need for education. Patients want to "be heard" and be able to ask questions. Staff and support services are important components of the cancer experience.

Table 1. Factors impacting colorectal cancer screening

Theme	Quotes
Mistrust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I don't think that Black people trust the health system." "A lot of historical angst." "They are not going to right away listen to information from the doctor or the public."
Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...black people...[have] bias against the recommended testing. So you know nobody likes a colonoscopy." "Some physician bias for additional resources like Cologuard in that they don't trust that."
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Not everybody maybe has health insurance coverage or is aware of how to apply for Medicaid or any those other things." "There is that gap of when you lose health insurance. It is so expensive to have health insurance, so I think that accessibility is a huge issue."
Lack of awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Lack of importance regarding education of regular screening." Irregular use of medical services (only go when really ill, lack of regular check-ups; mentioned by several participants)
Fear and avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colonoscopy "kind of scares you away from even having to go get checked out."

Figure 1: Mixed impressions of the community's health status

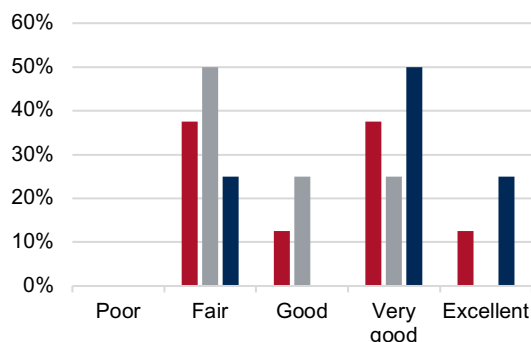
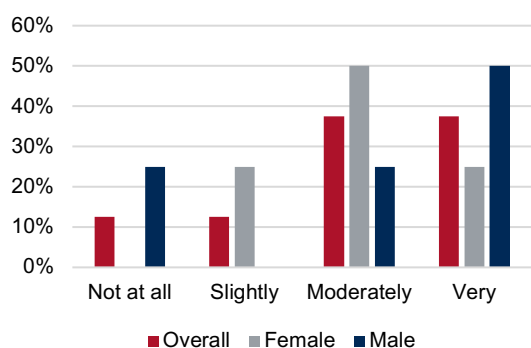


Figure 2: Cancer is an important concern in the community



Recommendations

- Build trust between the medical community and the African American community
- Healthcare networks need to be more visible and network more with minority communities, participating in community events and health fairs.
- Normalize routine check-ups, even at young ages. "I didn't realize how important it was to get checked regularly."
- Support network is an avenue for education and sharing resources.
- Need for cancer support groups and psychological services. "Knowing you're not alone is really important when you are dealing with grief like this."
- Need to overcome disease fatalism: "Diagnosis is not a death sentence...[Care navigator] was able to convince at least 7 to 10 women not to kill themselves."

"Words have power, and you can't just tell me I've only got three years to live."

Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Screening

Factors impacting colorectal cancer screening are presented in Table 1.

Participants suggested educating the community about CRC screenings, and educating providers about alternatives to colonoscopy. Have cancer survivors present messaging such as "advocate for going to the doctor" and "diagnosis is taking that step to live."