African Americans Are Woefully Underrepresented in Cancer Trials

Rates of participation by Blacks would need to more than triple to match their share of the population living with cancer.

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African Americans remain vastly underrepresented in clinical trials backing the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of cancer therapies, Healio reports.

Publishing their findings in the Annals of Internal Medicine, researchers analyzed African-American representation in pivotal cancer trials supporting FDA approvals between 2014 and 2018, which between them included 61,763 participants.

The study authors divided the percentage of African-American partcipants in these trials by the percentage of the population of people with any specific cancer who are Black. If this so-called participation-to-prevalence ratio (PPR) were between 0.8 and 1.2, this would indicate that Blacks were represented in clinical trials at a proportion similar to that seen in the real-world cancer population.

Overall, 7.44% of the clinical trial participants were Black, which meant a PPR of only 0.31 for all types of cancer combined. The PPR for breast cancer was 0.29, while it was 0.18 for prostate cancer, 0.15 for lung cancer and 0.12 for blood cancers.

According to the study's lead author, Samer Al Hadidi, MD, MS, of Baylor College of Medicine, factors impeding representational participation among Blacks in cancer clinical trials include distrust of the medical system and bias against African Americans by those running such trials, as well as socioeconomic factors.

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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