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## Health Matters: Minorities and Cancer

Triston Sanders - Medical Anchor

Cancer affects people of all racial and ethnic groups, but some minorities have higher incidence and mortality rates compared to other groups. At this point, the reason for this difference is not entirely known.

In this Health Matters, Triston Sanders takes a look at minorities and cancer to see that education about screenings and early treatment of cancer in every community is needed.

When Wilbert Brown went in for his yearly physical he was not expecting to get any bad news. He was shocked to learn that he had prostate cancer.

Wilbert says, "Well, there was really no symptoms that I noticed and luckily I said that I was doing the exams every year, so he found it."

The death rate for African-American men with prostate cancer is twice that of Caucasian men. For a long time it was thought that this type of cancer in African-Americans was just more aggressive and less resistant to treatment.

Dr. David Cho, a radiation oncologist at Capital Regional Medical Center, says, "More recent research has shown that if they get the same treatments upfront, if they get the same surgeries upfront, that they do equally as well."

Understanding why survival is poor among some ethnic and racial minority groups is leading to new programs nationwide to address the problem and educate everyone that early detection and treatment is key to surviving cancer.

"A lot of the education and getting the information out to rural communities, undereducated and underserved communities is a big part of trying to fix the survival disparities seen in minorities."

This information shows us that cancer in minorities isn't based on a biological difference in the cancer itself. Surviving the disease is based more on a socio economic impact of screening, early diagnosis and treatment.

The American Cancer Society recommends African-American men to begin screening for prostate cancer at age 45, or even younger if they have several relatives who have had prostate cancer.

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