

Racial differences in knowledge and beliefs about Alzheimer disease

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Key Words:

health literacy, dementia, international study

Research aim:

we examined differences between African Americans and whites with regard to their attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about Alzheimer's Disease.

Results/Conclusion:

After controlling for potentially confounding covariates, the 2 groups differed in terms of the following: (1) their knowledge about the disease (eg, recognizing that AD is not a part of normal aging); (2) concern about AD (eg, worry about developing the disease); (3) beliefs about putative causes of AD (eg, stress); and 4) beliefs about the effectiveness of various options for reducing risk of and treating AD (eg, physical activity).

Implications:

Findings suggest that AD outreach and education efforts may do well to take into account divergent illness perceptions across racial and ethnic groups. Further research is needed to confirm these findings in more representative samples and to identify factors that explain these racial differences.

Cultural Group(s):

African Americans, White Americans

Location of study:

United States

Age group:

mean age 57

Number included in study:

301

Type of participants:

community members (47% African American), with overrepresentation of caregivers and first-degree relatives of people with Alzheimer's Disease (62% of sample).

Research approach:

Mixed methods

Type of data:

Primary

Secondary data sources used:

Specific scales or analytical techniques used:

Implications/ Recommendations:

Notes: