Black Women Express Worries About Health Care, Racism in National Survey

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A countrywide survey of black women finally lets sistas speak for themselves, and the results are varied. Findings showed many African-American women consider focusing on their careers and living a healthy lifestyle as very important, while nearly half said that they worried about being discriminated against, according to a new Kaiser Family Foundation study reported by the Washington Post.

For the survey, developed by Kaiser and the Post, researchers interviewed a nationally diverse sample of 1,936 adults, ages 18 and older, by phone. (Participants who self-identified as both black and Hispanic were included in black women and men's results.) Interviewers asked participants about a range of issues, including health care.

When interviewers asked about general health issues, significantly more black women said that "living a healthy lifestyle" was very important to them compared with white women or black men. In addition, black women and men reported feeling they did not get the health care they need, compared with white counterparts. What's more, black men and women were also more likely than their peers of other races to worry about contracting HIV or having a family member receive an HIV/AIDS diagnosis.

But other results demanded more nuanced interpretation. For example, although findings showed 85 percent of the black women interviewed reported being satisfied with their own lives, one-fifth said they felt they were treated with less respect than other people. In addition, half of the black women surveyed said they believed racism was a "big problem" in the country.

In general, although survey findings offered insights into the beliefs and concerns of many black women, the poll also confirms that more research is needed to understand the complexities of African-American perspectives on health and mental wellness.

Have you heard Queen Latifah's perspective on mental health and self-esteem? Click here to read her no-nonsense advice to women.

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