NIH Grant to Address Social Media Impact on Black Women

The grant recipient will assess the ways social media influences Black women's health.

October 6, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

Kalynda C. Smith, PhD, the Kathy R. Hairston College of Health and Human Services at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), has been awarded a four-year grant to study the impact of social media on the Black women's health.

The National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases awarded Smith the $545,686 grant for her study "How Health and Weight Management Social Media Messages Targeting African American Women Impact Health Behaviors."

Smith, an assistant professor in the Hairston College's Department of Psychology, aims to assess the effects of social media on the diet and exercise habits of Black Generation Z women. Smith will work with and mentor four Black/African-American psychology undergrads and two students in the master's in health psychology program.

"These women have been exposed to social media messages the majority of their lives, compared with older groups, but there is little research that examines how these messages influence their self-presentation, self-esteem and health habits," Smith said in an NC A&T news release.

While many studies in recent years have supported the link between social media use and decline in mental health, particularly in young adults, Smith says her study "will address how social media can be used as a preventative measure to address chronic conditions, like diabetes, that disproportionately affect the Black/African-American community in the United States."

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