

Public Abstract

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Title:Information Processing of Religious Symbols in Breast Cancer Advertisements Among African American Women

African American women are dying disproportionately from breast cancer compared to other ethnicities as it is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among this group (American Cancer Society, 2007). Even though the death rate has decreased, the survival rate of African American women with breast cancer compared to White women continues to decrease (American Cancer Society, 2005).

Research to date has been increasing as to how religion and spirituality in particular impact health behavior among African American women. Recent studies have shown cultural tailoring to be important when creating promotional public health materials to individuals via direct marketing and the internet (Kreuter, Skinner, Steger-May, Holt, Bucholtz, Clark, & Sanders-Thompson, 2003). However, very little research has investigated the roles of religion and spirituality in advertising health messages via the mass media to African American women.

Practical implications of the study include the branding of the church as a socially desirable commodity. The benefits of this type of branding may position the church sponsor as not only a producer of healthy products but also a marketer of cancer prevention information. Ultimately, theoretical and practical implications of this study can assist researchers and health communicators who wish to investigate the issue of religious effects in health information targeting African American women.