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## Framing of Breast Cancer in African American magazines

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Lanise Hutchins entitled "Framing of Breast Cancer in African American magazines." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication.

Dr. Bonnie Riechert, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Dr. M. Mark Miller, Dr. Herbert H. Howard

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Dr. M. Mark Miller

Dr. Herbert H. Howard

Accepted for the Council:

Dr. Anne Mayhew  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Framing of Breast Cancer in African American Magazines

A Thesis

Presented for the  
Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lanise Hutchins

December 2002

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late aunt Catherine Louise Martin. She died of breast cancer in 1998. I hope the information in this research is a start to recognizing the limited amount information on breast cancer contained in African American magazines.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members and most of all Dr. Bonnie Riechert, my chairperson of my committee. She has been very supportive throughout my graduate years. She is a true treasure. Also, thank you to all who had to deal with me while doing this thesis. I appreciate your patience.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is a devastating and deadly disease that struck nearly two million American women in the 1990s. In 2002, breast cancer will be newly diagnosed every three minutes, and a woman will die from breast cancer every 13 minutes (National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations, 2002). All women are at risk for developing breast cancer, and the risk increases with age. Through regular self-examination and mammography, breast cancer can be detected early to increase treatment options and improve a woman's chance for survival. How does a woman get information about breast cancer? The media can be a vital conduit for health information. Since the turn of the century, there has been wide coverage of breast cancer from prevention to treatments. The media have also served as a component for breast cancer awareness by developing stories on the disease, offering air-time to allow the viewers a chance to talk to a physician from the station, and news magazines having page after page of information just to name a few. Magazines have long been a major source of information about cancer.

Women have turned to magazines to seek information about breast cancer because the magazines may provide a critical base of information that women use to evaluate acquired information when they are confronted with a problem. Andsager and Powers' research investigated the framing of breast cancer in news and women's magazines. Their research will be discussed in detail later in this study. Andsager and Powers suggested for further research to look at the frames in African American magazines. "Given the disparity in incidence rates, future research needs to examine

whether magazines aimed at women of color presented any different coverage than these mainstream magazines” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 546). This research addresses how African American (AA) magazines frame breast cancer. Breast Cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among African American women (The African American Women’s Speakers Bureau, 2001). African American females are twice as likely to die from breast cancer, although fewer actually get the disease compared to white women. In 1947, the Commission on Freedom of the Press, in its report “A Free and Responsible Press,” recommended that the news media project represented a picture of the different sectors of the population. “At the heart of the Hutchins commission report was the concern that democracy could not work effectively if the media failed to represent diverse social groups, not only weaknesses and vices, but their ‘common humanity’” (Valenzuela, 1999). Two decades later, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders created by the Johnson administration examined the causes of the civil unrests and riots in the United States during the mid –1960s. “The commission found that television and newspapers portrayed a world which was “almost totally white, both in appearance and attitude” (Valenzuela, 1999).

Since information from most, if not all, general magazines is geared towards a white audience, African American women rely on magazines by and for African Americans to report accurately certain health issues such as breast cancer. The question still remains if breast cancer information is being reported in African American magazines and if so, how is the information being framed? Are the frames of breast cancer in African American magazines similar to those of mainstream magazine? The previous studies on breast cancer in this research not only report on the accuracy of the

information, but also how the information on breast cancer was framed. Some examples of breast cancer frames are prevention, economic, personal stories, and treatment (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 540-542). Some articles draw on the negative and positive influences that drive most women to act or ignore the disease. Therefore, African American magazines will be analyzed in search for a comparable representation of breast cancer that is provided in the media.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There has been an increased interest in health information from popular literature. Because breast cancer is a leading and increasing cause of death for women in the United States, prevention, early detection, and treatment of this disease have become focal issues in women's health. Consequently, reports of risk factors and new treatments for breast cancer and the benefits and risks of mammography have been particularly prominent in the media. This print information appears to be important for health care consumers. In a Connecticut survey, about 80% of respondents rated newspapers and magazines as an important source for obtaining information about cancer. Furthermore, people who cite print media as their most useful source of information are significantly more likely to have heard of cancer screening procedures than are those who rely on their physicians as a source.

The research by Moyer, Greener, Beauvais, and Salovey investigated the accuracy of popular accounts of research pertaining to breast cancer and mammography appearing in magazines and newspapers during a 2-year period. The reports were evaluated in two ways: the adequacy of the information provided for locating the original research and the accuracy of the information conveyed concerning the research (Moyer, Greener, Beauvais, and Salovey, 1995). Newspapers were significantly less likely to contain errors than magazines. Moyer, Greener, Beauvais, and Salovey's findings indicated substantial inaccuracy in the translation of health research into popular print. The most frequent type of error was the presentation of erroneous information. This kind of error may pose serious problems in misinforming and misleading the public. On the other hand, these inaccuracies appear unintentional and do not seem to result from a desire to

sensationalize science, a criticism that has been previously leveled at health reporting in the news. “These inaccuracies seem likely to be the result of differences in the goals and the methods of journalists and scientists. Journalists must convey ideas and information in an engaging and entertaining manner, express complex information in a brief article, and face editorial pressures and deadlines” (Engel, 1990, p. 1052-1053).

In addition, complicated facets of research such as statistics, sampling, and scientific principles relevant to a particular piece of research may be difficult or too unwieldy to communicate effectively in a popular report. Moreover, newspapers and magazines are competitive, commercial ventures (Moyer, Greener, Beauvais, and Salovey, 1995). Scientists and doctors, whose training may provide little understanding of journalism, are concerned with factual issues. Furthermore, researchers may be inexperienced in expressing information to a lay audience and may not be given the opportunity to check the accuracy of a story before it goes to press (Moyer, Greener, Beauvais, and Salovey, 1995). Thus, where possible, both scientists and journalists have a role to play in improving accuracy in health promotion.

“The news media regularly disseminate the latest developments in our understanding for health and wellness issues” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 531). For diseases such as breast cancer, the media provide information about new treatments, diagnostic methods, and likely risk factors. However, complex diseases without a cure may be difficult for the news media to cover in a contextual manner due to the time, space, and budgetary constraints that journalists face. These practical restrictions, along with the tendency for news to be “fragmented and ephemeral,” may not allow readers to

place the disease in context, thus seriously diminishing the public's understanding of cancer (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 531).

Andsager and Powers examined how selected women's magazines and general news magazines framed information concerning breast cancer during the 1990s. They considered whether these general news and women's magazines are targeted more toward social or economic health. They found that news magazines were more likely to frame breast cancer in political and economic angles. "While women's magazines did not cover the insurance industry, news magazines discussed the controversy over health maintenance organizations (HMOs)" (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 546). Women's magazines framed personal stories the most. Andsager and Powers discovered the coverage did not reflect the interests of all women. "A glance at the illustrations accompanying the articles studied indicates that only one woman of color was pictured" (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 546). Andsager and Power's suggested that further research be conducted to examine whether magazines aimed at women of color presented any different coverage than the magazines in their study. Their study looked at coverage in the following publications: *Newsweek*, *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Ms.* and *McCall's*.

Since many women and their families may rely on publications listed in Andsager and Powers' study for health information, a need exists to analyze the ways in which these messages are framed. Studies on cancer in the news media suggest that journalists report on the disease in consistent ways. "Previous studies of breast cancer coverage are sparse, but research on media coverage of cancer more generally suggests that the disease

has traditionally been framed as a ‘death sentence’” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 532).

### **Framing Breast Cancer**

Entman suggests that framing entails selection and salience. “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Salience is defined as making a piece of information more visible, important, or unforgettable to the audiences. According to Entman, frames can define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. “Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience” (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

For example, breast cancer can be framed in various ways. The journalist may want to frame the urgency of breast cancer in order to get the audience to take action. A prevention frame could have a doctor describing what will happen if action to prevent breast cancer is not taken. That description may be so vivid that the audience may remember the information to protect against breast cancer. The development of a story frame by journalists may depend on several factors. “We find several kinds of judgments apparently made by journalists that filter into the news and, in turn, likely affect the movements ability to build consensus and mobilize participation” (Entman and Rojecki, 1993, p. 155).

Entman and Rojecki found judgments that journalists make in order to select and convey information:

1. Rationality-emotionality: whether the movement is driven by intellectually sound policy ideas as opposed to emotionality.
2. Expertise: whether the movement has the technical capacity to analyze and recommend valid policy.
3. Public support: how many Americans agree with movement goals.
4. Partisanship: whether movement participants seek to influence policy through the use of political strategy and power
5. Unity: the degree of agreement among those pursuing the movement goal.
6. Extremism: whether participants deviate from the mainstream
7. Power: whether the movement is likely to influence government policy

(Entman and Rojecki, 1993, p. 157).

Entman and Rojecki discussed how the nuclear freeze movement was framed and how similar and plausible framing judgments about elites were generally not conveyed. They examined *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine from the NEXIS database between 1980-1983. Judging elite sources was one of the frames analyzed, and they found that criticism of elites on the seven dimensions rarely occurred in the national sections of *The New York Times* or in *Time* magazine. There were contrasting results from the two sources. *The New York Times*' front-page coverage consisted of elite views and reactions "to a nearly invisible movement whose activities could only be discerned in less visible interior articles" (Entman and Rojecki, 1993, p. 170). *Time*'s coverage focused more on movement participants. "Nevertheless, the magazine's editors came to the same conclusions as those of *The New York Times*, that the nuclear weapons policies of the



nation should not be dictated by the anxieties of an amorphous movement, one purportedly riven by discord” (Entman and Rojecki, 1993, p. 170).

The news media tend to frame issues in various ways. News framing is, “a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Tankard and Severin, (1992), p. 277 citing Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem, 1991).

Framing is useful when examining news coverage and can also be used to determine how people process the information. “The framing of news stories may also have more subtle—and powerful—influences on audiences than bias in news stories” (Severin and Tankard, 1992, p. 278). However, journalists may not attempt to frame stories deliberately. Rather, they observe existing media accounts that have already been partially framed and presented in certain contexts. How health and/or risk issues are framed is important because “the media may affect the nature of regulation, the course of litigation, or the direction of research and development”(Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 533).

The media may tend to reinforce conventional definitions of health problems, and hence the legitimacy of various solutions. News stories about medicine “may increase or diminish the willingness of individuals to present themselves for care, and raise expectations, and dash hopes, or may provoke alarm” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 533-534). Framing risk, such as the outcome of therapies for cancer, is “unlikely to affect experience, although it can have a pronounced influence on choice” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 534). Magazines are a useful source of general information for women

who seek information about breast cancer, making the frame issue crucial in the decision-making process.

This investigation by Andsager and Powers examined seven magazines on breast cancer coverage in the 1990s. “News magazines were less likely than women’s magazines to center coverage around the issue of personal stories and more likely to include information on the insurance coverage of breast cancer treatments” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 545). However, both news and women’s magazine’s largest number of stories concerned issues related to the prevention of cancer. “Women’s magazines framed breast cancer in three general ways: coping with disease and its effects, personal experiences, and risk factors involved in cancer” (Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 545). News magazines provided basic information about cancer and its treatments, research on causes and prevention, and an economic frame focusing on insurance and political issues. How the journalist determines the frame may sometimes depend on a number of factors such as the journalist’s own personal views, gender, race, political affiliation, or influences by higher management within that department and/or the corporation as a whole.

Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer, and Phillips examined the factors affecting the framing of stories. The way in which the news media frame “race” stories may reflect more complex and subtler influences. “One structural influence that may be seen to influence the framing of race is the racial composition of the newsroom” (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p. 163). Entman (1994) explored the concept of modern racism through an examination of television news. “His analysis of network news suggested that nearly 60 percent of network news stories centered on negative news about

blacks” (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p.161). Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips set out to research the following questions:

1. What patterns are evident in the ways in which newspapers frame stories about risk and racial disparity in exposure to hazards?
2. To what extent do these patterns reflect the influence of journalistic traditions that govern the framing of stories?
3. To what extent do these patterns vary in relation to the structural character of newspaper markets and newspaper organizations?
4. To what extent is black economic or political power an influence on these patterns?

(Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p.169).

The stories they were especially interested in looking at are those where journalists emphasized the disparities between whites and blacks. They used the “papers” file within the DIALOG database to research newspapers.

They found out that 75 percent of the stories involved some degree of racial comparison. Nearly 43 percent of the headlines framed the stories in terms of disparity (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p. 172). A relatively small proportion of the headlines framed the story in terms of bias or discrimination, and just slightly more identify them as being specifically about race (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p. 172). A majority of the headlines indicated that blacks lose or experience negative outcomes (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p. 172). “Our analyses demonstrate quite clearly that the subject or theme of the story is an important determinant of the ways in which the story will be framed in the headline and in the lead” (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer and Phillips, 1997, p. 177).

With so many people in the world, there are so many different needs that cannot be met in one article. The reason for the media (television, radio, magazine, and the Internet) is that they can capture a wide range of interests, however, in different aspects and venues. Framing in any medium should portray the demographics of the audience to cover a fair and accurate assessment of the disease for those individuals. If not, there will be a false reality as to who can be affected by the disease.

### **Demographics**

From previous studies, the results from the research on the media seem not to focus on the population as a whole. The real focus seems to be on the youth, and it is strongly apparent in both anecdotes and description of images. The corresponding messages also are clear, including the predominant message that “breast cancer is an important disease because it strikes young, white women in the prime of their lives, often taking them away from productive careers and loving, caring families” (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915). This narrow focus, however, is inconsistent with the demographics of breast cancer. Racial and ethnic minority women, of course, are not immune to breast cancer. In fact, although the incidence of breast cancer is lower among African American women, their mortality rates are equal to those of white women (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915).

In addition, breast cancer in the United States is predominately a disease of post-menopausal women; less than 20% of newly diagnosed cases are in women under the age of 50, and the average age at diagnosis is 65 years (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 907). Similarly, breast cancer incidence has remained somewhat stable for women under 40 for several decades. In discussions of breast cancer, however, the popular magazine articles

paint a picture of a disease that is “out of control” in the population and is predominantly striking young pre-menopausal, white women in their prime years (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915).

The treatment and discussion of breast cancer risk factors in popular magazine articles is also interesting and revealing. “The vast majority (81%) of 91 articles in the sub-sample presented information on one or more individual behaviors or traits that are confirmed or suspected risk factors for breast cancer” (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915). While several different risk factors in articles are discussed, a core set of factors is mentioned most frequently. These factors include: family history of breast cancer, age at first birth over 30, nulliparity (woman who has never born a child), use of oral contraceptives, early menarche/late menopause, use of estrogen replacement therapy, not breastfeeding, a diet high in fat, and moderate/heavy use of alcohol (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915). In addition, after 1993, having had an induced abortion and having the breast cancer gene were risk factors that were discussed most frequently in the popular press.

Many of the risk factors are associated with reproductive control and/or associated with the lifestyle and behaviors of modern U.S. women (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915). “Those who produce popular press articles on breast cancer are compelled to tell women what they can do to prevent or control the disease; those who read the articles are compelled to listen even though there is little scientific basis for any claims regarding breast cancer prevention” (Lantz and Booth, 1998, p. 915). In regards to African American magazines, the worry lies on if the information presented is comparable to the general magazines in accuracy and adequacy.

## Age Discrepancy

Most stories in women's magazines show young women battling breast cancer, but in reality, women over the age of 50 are at the greatest risk (Davis, 2001). Breast cancer is primarily a disease of older women. By age 35, a woman has one chance in 622 of developing breast cancer (Davis, 2001). The risk rises to one in 93 by age 45, one in 33 by age 55 and one in 17 by age 65 (Davis, 2001). The "one woman in eight" figure now frequently heard refers to the lifetime risk of breast cancer for a woman who lives beyond the age of 85 (Davis, 2001). And while the incidence of breast cancer rose during the 1980s, it has leveled off in recent years, suggesting that the "epidemic," if there was one, has begun to wane. "Modern Maturity targets older women and the ages of women profiled were not older," said Wylie Burke, M.D. Ph. D., professor and chair of medical history and ethics at the University of Washington in Seattle (Davis, 2001). She did a study on how women get information about breast cancer that is in the May 2001 issue of *Effective Clinical Practice*. She also says that the media are trying to present some useful information, but in the process may be adding to [young] women's worries. In the study, a convenience sample was used to review nearly 400 articles in the United States from 1993 to 1997.

A discrepancy was found between the ages of breast cancer cases discussed in popular magazine articles compared to what the real risk is for young women. Factual information about age as a risk factor was presented in only 14% of articles and was often part of a vignette describing a woman—often a young mother—who had breast cancer. Twenty-four articles (6%) addressed fears related to abandoning young children (Davis,

2001). The effects of breast cancer diagnosis on a woman's marriage or dating relationships were explored in 10% of the articles.

The typical age for women with breast cancer in the vignettes was 41 years. In 84% of those, women were diagnosed with breast cancer before age 50. Forty seven percent of women were diagnosed before 40 years of age. Twenty-five of the women who were reported on were celebrities or otherwise newsworthy. Only 2% of the vignettes described women in their 60s, and none profiled women in their 70s or older. By contrast, 65% of breast cancer cases occur in women over the age of 60 (Davis, 2001).

A report by the Macmillan Cancer Relief concludes that the breast cancer awareness among the young is very high, thanks to the celebrity campaigns, and there is a very high degree of public interest and sympathy. This is good, because cancer is a long-term disease, so they will know what to look for when they are older. However, the problem is really reaching out to older women, the at-risk group. Previous studies have shown that women overestimate their risk of breast cancer, and especially the likelihood it will occur early in life. Burke says, "It's possible this kind of media coverage promotes that kind of concern" (Davis, 2001).

### **Celebrities' Influences**

In American society, celebrities come from all sectors—political to entertainment—and exert tremendous power within the social system. Media may grant a celebrity news status equal to that of a governor or corporate CEO; for example, Christopher Reeve continues to champion and raise money for head-injury victims. Celebrities can have a significant effect on health behavior in the United States. Celebrities are also much more likely to be associated with breast cancer. High profile campaigns featuring supermodels such as Kate Moss and backed by stars such as Geri Halliwell have helped propel breast cancer to the forefront of public awareness of the

disease. An analysis of data on approximately 160,000 American women with breast cancer who were treated in the 1980s revealed that they chose a modified radical mastectomy instead of a breast-conserving surgery (lumpectomy) after Nancy Reagan was treated (Hoffman, Howell-Petz, Goodwin, 1998, p. 762).

The scientists found that after Nancy Reagan's decision to have a modified radical mastectomy, fewer women chose to have a breast-conserving surgery. Mrs. Reagan's decision to have a mastectomy was widely criticized by the media. Public figures have been known to spark some influence on popular behavior. One of the best-known examples is fashion. This perception has led to celebrity endorsements for influencing health care behavior like safe sex and avoiding illegal drugs. Surprisingly, though, there is little information beyond the anecdotal documenting an effect of celebrity role models on medical care or health behaviors (Hoffman, Howell-Petz, Goodwin, 1998, p. 762-763). The influence of Mrs. Reagan's surgery was greatest among women who were demographically similar to her, white women aged 50-79 years, as opposed to older or younger women or nonwhite women (Hoffman, Howell-Petz, Goodwin, 1998, p. 767). The effect was more prominent in the Central and Southern regions of the country, and in counties with lower levels of education and income. Several studies have examined temporal relationships between the diagnosis of breast cancer in a celebrity and use of mammography. Medical care can be influenced substantially by the behavior of celebrity role models.

The influence is strongest among persons who demographically resemble the celebrity, and those of lower income and educational status. One can sympathize with public figures facing difficult personal medical decisions, because they have to deal with



the reality that their decisions may very well influence the behavior of thousands of others. Jill Eikenberry, 51, “L.A. Law”, has become a major spokeswoman in the war on the disease. Jill Ireland has written books about her personal battle with the disease. The National Cancer Institute’s national Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer is supported by numerous celebrities, including Dionne Warwick, Marla Gibbs, Phylicia Rashad, and Diahann Carroll, who are committed to the fight to reduce cancer mortality in the black community. Talk show host Rosie O’Donnell has emphasized the importance of mammograms on her television program.

### **Media Confusion**

Media attention to breast cancer has helped spur women to visit doctors or seek mammograms. In Corbett and Mori’s 1999 study, there was an extremely strong concurrent correlation between TV coverage and incidence and a moderate correlation between incidence two years ago and current print coverage. Breast cancer campaigns also may have served to increased incidence levels, no doubt aided by media publicity. Print media reports, some of them conflicting, concerning breast cancer and mammography have been prominent, leading to an intense and confused public reaction. Typically, new studies regarding breast cancer receive wide coverage. Women are interested in the results of the research on breast cancer prevention, and media may cover such results too eagerly.

The results—especially the headlines—can be more confusing than enlightening. For example, an article titled “Estrogen breakdown affects breast cancer risk” was about a study that examined the body’s processing of the female hormone estrogen, and how that affected the risk of developing breast cancer in pre-menopausal women (Kava,

2000). One means of processing seemed to be linked to an increased risk. The author of the study speculated that diet might affect how the hormone is processed, although their study did not address this point directly. “A story about the research of a British scientist who had reviewed both basic geological and epidemiological data on breast cancer—he was trying to find a single factor that would be instrumental in causing the majority of cases” (Kava, 2000). The Reuters headline for this story: “High-fat diet may contribute to breast cancer risk” (Kava, 2000). The author focused on dietary fat, and he suggested that while fat itself might not be a direct cause of breast cancer, he assumed that it exhausted the body of some agent that protects against the disease. The most useful way to view such work is to realize that this is an area of active research, and that definitive answers are not yet available. In the publication, “Risk Factors for Breast Cancer,” the American Council on Science and Health explains that not all the factors we see discussed in the media are well supported by the scientific evidence (Kava, 2000).

Since 1957, medical studies that possibly link induced abortions with higher rates of breast cancer have been published in medical journals (Brind, 1995, p. 40). “The first study to show a significant association between induced abortion and breast cancer was performed and published in Japan, and subsequent reports with similar reports were published overseas” (Brind, 1995, p. 40). American studies showing significant risk increases among women on the West Coast and on the East Coast were published in England. “As late as 1992, the influential *New England Journal of Medicine* published an apparently comprehensive review of breast-cancer risk factors. It made no mention of the ‘A’ word, despite the fact that 13 out of the 14 case-control studies published by that time were consistent with increased risk” (Brind, 1995, p. 40).

Four issues cloud the interpretation that abortion and breast cancer are linked:

- Difficulty in obtaining accurate recall (bias in reporting abortion statistics)
- Choice of the referent group: nulliparous(woman who has never born a child) women without a history of abortion or parous(woman who has born a child) women without a history of abortion
- Limited power to evaluate the possibility of age-specific effects (limited age range or lack of sample of sufficient size to address this issue adequately)
- Inability to confirm the reports of possible subgroups of high-risk women (inability of other investigations to confirm the findings of any one previous study that identified a subgroup of women who may have a particularly high risk.)

(Gammon, Bertin, and Terry, 1996, p. 322).

The American medical media's wall of silence on the possible link between abortion and breast cancer was first breached in December 1993. A four-year study sought to show that the pill and abortion are not linked. However, there was little coverage about the findings of this study that there is no association between the two. "It was the most authoritative investigation of its kind; it was published in a prestigious medical journal; it professed to settle a controversial public-health question; and it had the potential to affect tens of millions of American women" (Goldenberg, 1996). Only after a public relations effort by Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center and Elsevier Science (which publishes *Contraception*) did the study receive wide coverage. (NBC) "Nightly" News covered the study in 15 seconds, during which it alluded to scientists who disagreed with the findings. "Dr. Scott Ratzan, director of the Emerson-Tufts program in health communication and editor of the *Journal of Health Communication*

says, ‘Reporters and editors typically look for something that upsets the status quo, where it knocks the train off the track, and that’s a major problem with the way that health medical news is covered’” (Goldenberg, 1996).

### **Other Reported Links**

Some stories about breast cancer are focusing on links to this disease. Two interesting links were found. First, there is a growing risk for breast cancer for women who work graveyard shifts. This linkage was reported in two separate studies. Researchers at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle and at Harvard Medical Center found a strong link between nighttime light exposure and elevated cancer risk. What evidence found this to be true? “Natural production of the hormone melatonin rises sharply in the evening and peaks around midnight to 2 a.m., driven mainly by the amount of light reaching the eyes” (King, 2001). Abnormally low levels of melatonin can lead to elevated levels of the female sex hormone estrogen. In addition, high circulating levels are a known cancer risk. Scientists said, “unnatural light exposure at night—combined, perhaps, with minimal exposure to bright sunlight during the day in indoor-oriented urban societies—may go a long way toward explaining the epidemic of breast cancer in the United States and other economically advanced countries” (Hall, 2001). Second, heavy smoking is being tied to breast cancer. Heavy smoking when combined with the less potent gene-NAT2, which was believed to help neutralize toxins that entered the body through cigarette smoke, creates conditions that open up to breast cancer.

Breast cancer risk factors are intended to inform the reader, causing some action to be aware and learn how not to be at risk. The journalists who present information with

grim statistics regarding breast cancer must follow with careful advice on what the woman and in some instances, man might be able to do in response to the threat of the disease. However, the current state of knowledge regarding the causes of and risk-reducing behaviors for breast cancer is extremely limited. Anyone reading more than one popular press article knows that advice, article and expert level varies widely. Not surprisingly, there is a chance that the different amounts of information may confuse and frustrate these women who actively read these articles for information and guidance. However, African American women who look towards a medium geared for African Americans may lose sight of this information if it is not given at all.

General magazines lack the use of an AA woman identity in their articles, whether because of the assumption that whatever information presented is geared towards non-black women, or the assumption that AA women will not read that particular magazine. The rise of AA magazines is being produced in bundles to keep up with the general magazines to provide different areas of interest, except by providing an AA outlook. Is it that the information presented pertains only to a particular race in different ways? In the subject of breast cancer, it affects all women. Framing breast cancer information geared towards a diverse group of women in one magazine does not seem too hard, but it also does not exist. In AA magazines, the focus is AA women, but how it is framed is crucial to the readers receiving information about breast cancer on prevention, treatment, awareness, etc.

### **Training Students**

The beginning of reporting accurately and effectively begins with the journalist. Not only does the journalist need proper training on accuracy, but reporting on any level

of diversity. The world is diverse and contains a mixed population with various economic levels, race, education, etc. The journalist should be flexible enough to be able to report according to the diversity. AA magazines and other ethnic magazines are branching out and producing race-related stories. This brings up a question whether or not there should be diverse magazines or diverse writers.

In an effort to train students to be effective in writing about diverse persons and viewpoints, the Diversity News Program at the University of Washington School of Communications was established in 1996 to train journalism students. Valenzuela's study set out to assess the material produced during the first of the program. Valenzuela performed a content analysis examining 63 articles from a sample of the journalism students in the Diversity program. Inter-coder reliability was 89 percent. There were three techniques the Diversity program presented to the students:

1. Review of stories and perspectives that are normally not covered; topics that include issues related to ethnic minorities, women and the under-class
2. Different ways a story might be framed and the impact on how the frame is perceived; concentrated not only on negative frames like conflicts, but positive circumstances, like collaboration and cooperation among groups
3. Diverse pool of sources; In order to reflect a diversity within a population, it needs to involve different kinds of sources

(Valenzuela, 1999)

Valenzuela found that the journalism students considered diversity journalism to be centered on race and ethnicity. "Although it is positive that race and ethnicity are getting a great deal of emphasis, one negative consequence of this trend is that there are

issues that are being completely overlooked, like class and income, sexual orientation, and religion—three topics which in the sample were never the main diversity themes” (Valenzuela, 1999). Another important topic found from the student’s articles was diversity. “This points to the fact that diversity is receiving increasing attention within the university setting and that efforts are being made to talk about and organize around this issue” (Valenzuela, 1999). From Valenzuela’s research, it seems that more journalists are learning to write like the world is—diverse.

At the present time, there are many magazines produced for different reasons. There are magazines on health, entertainment, sports, etc. However, the magazines are geared toward a certain group, class, ethnicity, social level, etc. The production of AA magazines is gearing towards black America. However, the issues are for any race. The AA magazines frame issues in various ways. The focus of this study is to determine how AA magazines are framing breast cancer. The research will set out to answer these five questions:

Research Question 1: In what ways does the AA magazine frame breast cancer?

Research Question 2: How often does the AA magazine report on breast cancer?

Research Question 3: What types of influences (i.e. celebrities, personal stories, etc.) were used to deliver the story?

Research Question 4: In coverage of breast cancer in AA magazines, what proportion of stories seems to be accurate by providing a professional source with statistics?

Research Question 5: In coverage of breast cancer, how does the AA magazine compare in frames to a general news magazine (such as *Newsweek*)?

The data will be analyzed by descriptive statistics resulting in the frequencies of various categories. Tables and figures will show a comparison and a contrast of the frequencies of the AA magazines and *Newsweek* by year, month, and frame. The results of the research questions will be entered into the SPSS and presented in tables and figures. Each table will show a frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percent. Each figure will show the frequency. All tables and figures are titled.



### III. METHODS

A content analysis will be used to observe the framing of breast cancer in magazines geared towards African Americans during a 10-year period, 1990 to 2000, compared to other general magazines. These years were chosen because there have been so many changes not just with breast cancer, but also with African Americans. For example, there are more magazines being developed by and for African Americans.

In a Lexus-Nexus search, only the top four circulated AA magazines are retrieved: *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Jet*, and *Black Enterprise*. By inputting the key word--breast cancer--in the Lexus-Nexus search from January 1990 to December 2000, the AA magazine and the most cited general interest magazine, *Newsweek* articles will be studied.

#### **Emergence of African American Magazines**

Before discussing the methods, it is important to give a brief summarization of the top AA magazines today. This summary explains the history and the reasoning of starting a magazine for African Americans. The top four AA magazines are *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Jet* and *Black Enterprise* with a total circulation of more than 4 million (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2000).

#### ***Enters Ebony***

“Were it not for black publishers, African Americans would be almost nonexistent in the magazine business” (Brown, 1995). *Ebony* published its first issue in November 1945. Governmental forces harassed the black press in the 1940s. “Their editorials were offensive as they attacked treatment of black troops in training camps in the South, job discrimination in war-related industries, and the expectations of blacks as an outgrowth of this nation’s going forth once more to assist European nations to achieve democracy”

(Daniel, 1982, p. 159). John H. Johnson founded this magazine and a few years later, *Jet*. *Ebony* sought to report the success that black people were experiencing in various aspects of American life. *Ebony* considered itself comparable to *Life* magazine. “. . . Johnson established a practice of launching magazines with formulas and formats that had been used successfully by publishers for primarily white readers” (Daniel, 1982, P. 160). In imitating *Life*, *Ebony* established an unstated assumption that the United States had two different societies, a white life and a black life. Does this seem true today? From the nineties on into the millennium, there are more general magazines and more magazines geared towards a specific race. *Ebony* now has a circulation of 1,777,810 (SRDS, 2002) with 87% of the readers being black females between the ages of 18-34 (Simmons, 1999). After the first ten years of *Ebony*'s publications, Johnson included a passage that can be assumed as the decree for all new AA magazines. Johnson wrote:

*Ebony* was started ten years ago to mirror the brighter side of Negro life. On the whole, the Negro has had a good life in America during that period, and reporting on his activities has been for us both a privilege and a pleasure. Because it has filled a long felt need of the Negro life for recognition and respect, *Ebony* has succeeded beyond our fondest hopes. The chief criteria we use in determining the suitability of any story, which will appear on the pages of *Ebony*, is success and achievement in any field. In so doing, we have feature lawyers and farmers, schoolteachers and chorus girls, ministers and bellboys, scientists, and bootblacks. We believe that *Ebony* has helped the Negro gain a new respect and dignity by showing him as a fellow human being, with the same qualities and capacities as other members of his species. We believe that *Ebony* has increased the Negro's pride in himself and his heritage by presenting his historical contributions to the development of our American culture. We believe *Ebony* has promoted interracial understanding by emphasizing the positive and minimizing the negative aspects of race relations. Finally, and certainly by no means least of all, we believe *Ebony* has given hope and inspiration to our young people. By portraying through words and pictures the success stories of great Negro Americans, we have proved for our youth that their dreams, too, can come true, and that any goal in life can be achieved if we put into it enough study, work and faith. We shall in the future continue to report honestly and accurately, the noble determination of the Negro people to gain full equality.

(Daniel, 1982, p. 161-162)

### ***Jet takes off***

Since the first issue of *Jet* in October of 1951, it seemed that AA people finally had an identity in this world. With two African American magazines in circulation, more social issues becoming a focal point. “And the white press, long known for ignoring news about blacks, found itself forced to give attention to the social revolution of the 50s and 60s” (Daniel, 1982, p. 213). The Johnson Publishing Company led by John H. Johnson converted *Negro Digest* to *Jet*, the magazine that it is known as today. *Jet* has been compared to *Time* and *Newsweek*, with most of its content distributed among topics such as business, education, religion, health, medicine, journalism, politics, labor, poverty, and crime section. There are also features like personal and public affairs columns, beauty of the week; radio and television guide highlighting performances in which African Americans play principal parts. “As a weekly illustrated report to black audiences on black life in the United States, *Jet* enjoys popularity among all levels of Afro-Americans” (Daniel, 1982, p. 214). *Jet* carries a circulation of 930,058 (SRDS, 2002) with 84% of the readers being black females between the ages of 18-34 (Simmons, 1999).

### ***Touch of Essence***

*Essence* emerged into the scene as a new dimension to black magazine journalism. Jonathan Blunt, an advertisement salesman for New Jersey Bell, Clarence Smith, a salesman for Prudential Insurance, Cyril Hill, a printing expert, and Ed Lewis, a financial planner formed a partnership and sold their proposal for a black women’s magazine to influential financiers on Wall Street. All four men were invited to discuss

ideas for black business ventures at the Wall Street brokerage firm of Sherson, Hamill, and Cox. There were many talents added to the table such as author Gordon Parks' son, Gordon Parks, Jr., free-lance writer Gilbert Moore and Ida Lewis, an experienced and talented journalist with national and international reporting experience.

The team was ready to add its publication to the growing magazine industry, as another magazine geared towards African Americans, except their focus was more on the woman. "It would particularize for women the market and audience *Ebony* had cultivated for blacks in general" (Daniel, 1982, p. 171). However, *Essence* received flack from the editor of *the Journal of Black Poetry*, saying that the magazine was not worthy of pointing out black culture because it was racially mixed; the staff was African American and the promoters were white. "*Essence* replied by including in its original format black creative arts" (Daniel, 1982, p. 171). *Essence* first issue was published in May 1970. Its first issue contained photos of Rosa Parks, Shirley Chisholm, Barbara Ann Teer, and "Muslin" Woman as the "Mother of Black Nations" (Daniel, 1982, p. 214). The publisher made a statement speaking on the AA woman's intelligence as well as her physical beauty:

With the swelling wave of black consciousness around the world, you, the black woman, are at long last coming into your own. *Essence* will publish the most significant developments in public affairs, education, entertainment, and the arts as the relate to our Black community, as well as fiction, poetry, and features on Black heritage, travel and careers...*Essence* will serve as a forum for Black discussion and a showcase for Black talent.

(Daniel, 1982, p. 171)

*Essence* became the first publication to provide a look at AA women realistically. By the beginning of the 1980s, *Essence* emphasized its departments to provide information on women's interests, travel, the world of work, some labor news, and a small amount of

creative writing. *Essence* circulation is now 1, 053, 484 (SRDS, 2000) with majority of the subscribers being 75% black females between the ages of 18-34 (Simmons, 1999).

### ***Black Enterprise means business***

In August 1970 came a different genre of black journalism that was different from the literary and general-purpose periodicals in the seventies. *Black Enterprise* focuses on the practical side of the economics and its financial base is secure because it is grounded in the alignment of members of the American corporate structure and geared to American business as the center of the nation's life. "The concept of *Black Enterprise* enlarges upon the basic premises of Booker T. Washington's National Negro Business League network, strengthened by the political and social realities black and white Americans have come to accept in the latter half of the twentieth century" (Daniel, 1982, p. 59).

The view of *Black Enterprise* is looked upon as a source for practical answers and information on business trends as well as career and business opportunities. The emergence of *Black Enterprise* revolved around careful thinking and planning of an advisory board from the business and governmental sectors of American society. Many individuals and organizations were involved in the development of this magazine: Whitney Young, Jr., then director of the National Urban League; Capital Formation, the national Association of Marketing Developers; the National Business League; the congress of Racial Equality; the Organization of Industrial Centers; the Office of Minority Business Enterprise; and the Black Advisory Council of the Small Business Administration (Daniel, 1982, p. 60).

*Black Enterprise* asked the question whether the national economic system works for blacks. The magazine's purpose was published in an earlier editorial:

The economic problems of our cities, where a majority of black people live, will not yield simply because we decry conditions there. Nor will stubborn rural poverty disappear because we bemoan that fact. What has become increasingly clear is that black people need economic power if conditions are to be changed.

The routes by which blacks enter the world of business and gain economic power are many and varied. We shall examine many of them on many of these pages. We shall write about the lives of men like Albert Corley who started with \$1,000 and a dream. We shall write about those who failed, for there is profit in that story, too. We shall cover the careers of those who are "Making It" in the corporate world and the problems of the shopkeeper who wants to improve his business. We shall include the thoughts of theorists and practitioners alike. In short, *Black Enterprise* is your magazine, providing information and a wealth of shared experience for those who venture into the precarious world of business.

(Daniel, 1982, p. 60)

*Black Enterprise* is a business-orientated magazine, however it does not neglect political and social implications of black economics. *Black Enterprise* is organized into departments: "Publisher's Page (a trenchant editorial comment)," "In the News," "Washington Page," "Making It," "Travel," "Personal Finance," "On the Move," "Career Marketplace," "Classified Advertisement," "Economic Perspectives," and "Facts and Figures" (Daniel, 1982, p. 61). "With a combination of black pride, news about blacks who have made it, analysis of the economic system upon which the United States turns, articles about the economy of the black world, and provocative editorials on the political implications of black economics in the nation, *Black Enterprise* represents the final accomplishment of several early attempts to bring awareness and activism to blacks that might involve them in the ongoing dynamics of American economics" (Daniel, 1982, p. 62). *Black Enterprise* has the lowest circulation of the other AA magazines in this

research with 426, 691 (SRDS, 2000). The black female between the ages of 18-34 represented only 23% of the readership (Simmons, 1999).

With the emergence of the African American magazines and others that have followed, the AA people have something or someone to relate to, in regards to certain situations that AA people go through. More AA magazines are emerging, generating the interests of AA people in all aspects. But are the AA magazines creating enough interest for the AA people to take action against, specifically about breast cancer.

### **Research Analyzed**

Content analysis is a method best used to analyze the message content of a particular medium. “The investigator using content analysis examines the communications that have been produced at times and places of his or her own choosing” (Severin and Tankard, 1992). Two coders were used to analyze each article for the selected period from *Ebony*, *Jet*, *Essence*, *Black Enterprise* and *Newsweek*. The unit of analysis was the articles. In determining the frame of each article, terms have been adapted from Andsager and Powers’ research that investigated the frames in news and women’s magazines. Their study identified the following major frames: Cause and prevention, basic information and treatment, economic and personal stories. This study also looked at the same frames with an additional frame: celebrities. A ten-year study was conducted from January 1990 to December 2000. The coders looked at each article, coded by hand and determined the following for each magazine:

- Number of articles on breast cancer each year, week and month
- Kinds of frames present each year, week and month

- If present, sources provided with statistics, if any, and what kind: doctor, scientists, etc.
- If present, which source was used to try and influence reader: celebrity, members of family, etc.

Coding identified the presence of these frames in the AA magazines and the general news magazine. The coding sheet from each coder was inputted into the computer program called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze all the data. This computer program is easy to use and interpret. Most importantly, SPSS does all the calculations for the data. The answers to the research questions were determined from the final data of the SPSS program. The key words that make up each frame are defined below. The key words are used to easily define the frame. Again, a frame is to choose some part of a apparent reality and is made more significant in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, underlying explanation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

- 1. Cause and Prevention-** alcohol, smoking, diet, hormones, risk factors, lumps and menopause,
- (a) genetics-hereditary aspect,
  - (b) breast cancer research-breast cancer, health and women
  - (c) National Cancer Institute and studies being conducted on estrogen-replacement therapy
  - (d) Carcinogens-DDT, environment, and mortality rates,
  - (e) Tamoxifen- drug being tested for breast cancer, endometrial, ovarian, and uterine cancer.



- (f) Links- genetic makeup, abortion, smoking, emotional distress
- (g) Breast Screening-mammography, mammograms, tumors, x-ray, biopsy
- (h) Breast Implants-silicone

**2. Basic Information and Treatment-** (a) BRCA (a group of cancer-causing genes), genetics and mutation;

(b) Discrimination and employer-possible effects of discrimination in insurance coverage for women who carry the BRCA genes

(c) History- relatives,

(d) Heredity-healthy, chromosome, and diagnosis survival, odd cures, biopsy, benign, physicians

(e) Treatment-Herceptin-drug use for breast cancer treatment, HER-2, mastectomy, chemotherapy

**3. Economic-** (a) insurance-choice, cost, health care, management and health maintenance organizations (HMO's),

(b) Politics-politics, advocates, activism and AIDS, debates on what insurance companies should cover and decisions some have made regarding coverage of controversial procedures such as bone-marrow transplants-mistakes, proof, deadly and experimental

**4. Personal Stories -** (a) reflecting not only the first-person nature, but the emotions associated with them, such as anger and fear, illustrates support systems women relied upon: daughters, friends, mothers, and husband

(b) Worry-help and worried

(c) Pregnancy-baby, bodies, and birth; survival-news, drugs, and cancer

5. \***Celebrities and Events**-well known person or persons, charity, raising money, events

\*\**(Andsager and Powers, 1999, p. 540-542).*

\*This frame added to the research because by looking through the articles there were several fundraising events, celebrity sponsorships and celebrity personal stories.

\*\*More definitions added for a better understanding of each category.

#### IV. RESULTS

Research question 1: In what ways does the AA magazine frame breast cancer? The categorical frames: cause and prevention, basic information and treatment, economic, personal stories and celebrities and events are entered into the SPSS. The frequency of frames depends on the AA magazine ability to report on breast cancer in that specific frame.

Research question 2: How often does the AA magazine report on breast cancer? The analysis of this question focuses on month and year. The results from each AA magazine by month and year will determine the frequency of breast cancer articles.

Research question 3: What types of influences (i.e. celebrities, personal stories, etc.) were used to deliver the story? On this third research question, the answer depends on whether the breast cancer article is based on general information or a dominant source. If the article has a dominant source, its influence can be determined. The general information article can not determine a dominant source.

Research question 4: In coverage of breast cancer in AA magazines, what proportion of stories seem to be accurate by providing a professional source with statistics? Research Question 4 is analyzed by first determining if there are statistics in the article. If so, then what source, if any, is provided. A professional source will consist of a doctor, researcher, medical expert, etc.

The final research question: In coverage of breast cancer, how does the AA magazine compare in frames to a general news magazine (such as *Newsweek*)? The frames from the sum of AA magazines and *Newsweek* will be compiled into a table showing the frequency of each frame category.

**Table 1. Total number of breast cancer articles from each magazine, 1990-2000**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Essence	95	32.0	32.0	32.0
	Ebony	25	8.4	8.4	40.4
	Black Enterprise	4	1.3	1.3	41.8
	Jet	47	15.8	15.8	57.6
	Newsweek	126	42.4	42.4	100.0
	Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Two hundred and ninety seven articles were analyzed: 4 from *Black Enterprise*, 25 from *Ebony*, 95 from *Essence*, 47 from *Jet*, and 126 from *Newsweek* (Table 1). The unit of analysis for the comparisons was each individual article. The total number of frames totaled 314 because some of the articles contained more than one frame. Excerpts from research articles are listed below to show an example of how each frame was determined, which was by the key words. The key words are in bold for the purpose of an example. They were not in bold on the original article.

Ex. Cause and Prevention

She had her breasts reconstructed with **silicone implants**, and for five years she was pleased with the results. “The doctor said they would last me a lifetime,” she says. “I was really tickled with them. They looked so nice.” But Mahlum is now fighting an array of gruesome maladies, and she’s convinced the **implants** are to blame.

(Cowley, Springen, Hager, p.75)

Ex. Basic Information and Treatment

Now this race has ended in triumph. Last that they had discovered and isolated the **gene**, dubbed **BRCA1**. King had narrowed the search to a stretch of human chromosome 17; the consortium zeroed in on the **gene**.

(Shapiro and Springen, p. 56)

Ex. Economic

She had breast cancer, but her **health-maintenance organization**, Health Net in Woodland Hills, Calif. Refused her a **bone-marrow transplant**—even though the **HMO’s** contract covered **transplants** and \$4.8 million was sitting in its **transplant** fund on the day it turned her down. After Fox died, her family sued-and in 1993 won \$89.1 million, the largest jury verdict against an **HMO**.

(Spragin, p. 54)

Ex. Personal stories

The sun was shining brightly on the August morning that **I** drove to the hospital. **I** had an appointment to discuss the results of the biopsy done on my right breast a few days before. **I** wasn’t **worried**: When **I** was 18, a lump in my right breast had been biopsied and found benign. Now, 11 years later, **I** was sure the results would be the same.

(O’Meally, p. 44)

Ex. Celebrities and Events

**Emmy Award-winning talk show host Montel Williams** recently revealed had a double mastectomy when he was 19 years old.....**Williams**, 42, recently served as host of the Carol M. Baldwin Breast Cancer Research Fund benefit in New York, named for the mother of **famed actors Alec and Stephen Baldwin**.

(“Montel Williams,” 1998)

Coder 1 analyzed all articles and Coder 2 analyzed a random sample of the articles to determine intercoder reliability. By using Holsti’s formula, the agreement between the coders resulted in an overall percentage of 66. The agreement among the frames varied from low to high. “Holsti’s Formula: Reliability =  $2M/N1 + N2$ . Where M = coding decisions for which coders were in agreement;  $N1 + N2$  = the total number of coding decisions” (Singletary, 1994, p. 295).

The highest agreement was Celebrities with 100%. The lowest was Basic Information and Treatment with 33% agreement. Certain coded words used for this frame were not that repetitive and sometimes overlapped with the Cause and Prevention coded words. It was left up to the coders' individual discretion in which frame to place that article resulting in a low agreement for this frame. Economic had 75% agreement. Cause and Prevention resulted in 73% agreement. Personal stories was the second lowest with 66%. Each article analyzed was by hand and not by computer, which did allow for some error.

The most frequent frame from the articles was cause and prevention with 45% (Table 2). The least occurring frame was personal stories with only 6%. The year with the most articles on breast cancer was 1998 with 16.5% of the articles (see Table 3). There were more celebrities as a source in this year than any other year of the research. This could be the reason why more articles was produced this year. October is Breast Cancer awareness month, which made it have the most articles in one month with 17% in a ten-year period among the magazines (see Table 4). The percentage of sources provided with statistics was 44 (Table 5).

Statistics were present in 51% of the articles in a ten-year period (Table 6). That is more than half of the articles. The highest number in the category of sources was scientists, researcher, and chemists with 22% (see Table 7). General information was the main topic of all the articles totaling 88.2% (see Table 8) and a dominant source with the least amount, 11.8% (see Table 9). The most dominant source was the celebrity influenced articles with 7.4% (see Table 10).

**Table 2. Total number of frames from AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	Cause and Prevention	Basic Information and Treatment	Economic	Personal stories	Celebrities and Events	Total
Essence	40	20	4	16	22	102
Ebony	20	5	0	0	3	28
Black Enterprise	3	1	0	0	1	5
Jet	21	8	5	0	14	48
Newsweek	58	39	22	3	9	131
Total	142	73	31	19	49	314

**Table 3. Total number of breast cancer articles by year from AA magazines and Newsweek**

	Essence	Ebony	Black Enterprise	Jet	Newsweek	Total
1990	0	0	0	0	7	7
1991	0	0	0	0	6	6
1992	3	0	0	5	8	16
1993	7	1	0	5	15	28
1994	12	1	0	4	15	32
1995	7	3	0	5	8	23
1996	8	0	1	2	6	17
1997	18	3	0	4	16	41
1998	11	7	1	9	21	49
1999	17	5	1	5	13	41
2000	12	5	1	8	11	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>297</b>



**Table 4. Total number of breast cancer articles by month from AA magazines and Newsweek**

	Essence	Ebony	Black Enterprise	Jet	Newsweek	Total
January	5	0	0	2	7	14
February	1	2	1	6	11	21
March	2	7	0	6	13	28
April	5	0	0	4	11	20
May	12	1	0	6	15	34
June	6	2	0	4	14	26
July	8	4	0	1	6	19
August	7	0	1	0	8	16
September	7	2	0	2	6	17
October	29	7	2	3	10	51
November	7	0	0	12	11	30
December	6	0	0	1	14	21
Total	95	25	4	47	126	297

**Table 5. Total number of sources provided with statistics from AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	Sources provided with Statistics			Total
	Yes	No	Not Apply	
Essence	24	5	66	95
Ebony	13	1	11	25
Black Enterprise	1	1	2	4
Jet	23	1	23	47
Newsweek	72	12	42	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>297</b>

**Table 6. Total number of statistics present in AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	Statistics Present		Total
	No	Yes	
Essence	67	28	95
Ebony	11	14	25
Black Enterprise	2	2	4
Jet	23	24	47
Newsweek	42	84	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>297</b>

**Table 7. Found sources that were provided with statistics from AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	If Sources Provided, who is/are the source(s)				Total
	Doctor, Physician, medical expert, etc.	Scientist, Researcher, Chemist	Other	Not Apply	
Essence	8	7	8	72	95
Ebony	4	3	6	12	25
Black Enterprise	0	0	1	3	4
Jet	4	10	9	24	47
Newsweek	13	44	14	55	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>297</b>

**Table 8. Breast cancer articles based on general information from AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	Article based on general information		Total
	No	Yes	
Essence	7	88	95
Ebony	4	21	25
Black Enterprise	0	4	4
Jet	9	38	47
Newsweek	15	111	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>297</b>

**Table 9. Breast cancer articles based on a dominant source from AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	Article based on a dominant source		Total
	No	Yes	
Essence	88	7	95
Ebony	21	4	25
Black Enterprise	4	0	4
Jet	38	9	47
Newsweek	111	15	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>297</b>

**Table 10. Found dominant sources in breast cancer articles from AA magazines and Newsweek, 1990-2000**

	If based on dominant source, who is the source				Total
	Family/Friends	Celebrity	other	Not Apply	
Essence	3	2	2	88	95
Ebony	1	2	1	21	25
Black Enterprise	0	0	0	4	4
Jet	1	7	1	38	47
Newsweek	1	11	3	111	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>297</b>

## **Examining Research Questions**

To answer the first research question: In what ways does the AA magazine frame breast cancer? The total of 171 African American magazines' articles on breast cancer were analyzed. Cause and prevention appeared in 46% of the articles (see Figure 1). That is almost 50% of the articles about breast cancer from African American magazines. The cause and prevention of breast cancer is being reported in AA magazines.

The economic frame appeared less among the AA magazines. When it comes to insurance or any financial responsibility regarding breast cancer, AA magazines are not providing that source of information as much as *Newsweek*. African American women sometimes lack the funds and/or insurance to go to a doctor for treatment or prevention of breast cancer. This frame can be very helpful in decreasing breast cancer death among African American women. Celebrities and events appeared in 22% of the articles. Basic information and treatment covered 18% of the articles. Eight percent of the articles was Personal stories. The least amount of articles was the Economic frame with 4%.

The second research question: How often does the AA magazine report on breast cancer? The month and year of the total AA magazines' articles were analyzed. The research covered 1990-2000. However, the first article containing a frame of breast cancer did not appear until 1992. Only 4% of the articles was from the AA magazines that year. Articles gradually increased after 1992. The year with the most articles was 1998 with 16.9%. The articles seem to be declining after 1998. (Figure 2).

The month with the most articles was October. This month is breast cancer awareness month (see Figure 3). The percentage of articles was 24.4 during a 10-year period that appeared in October. The least amount of articles occurred in January and

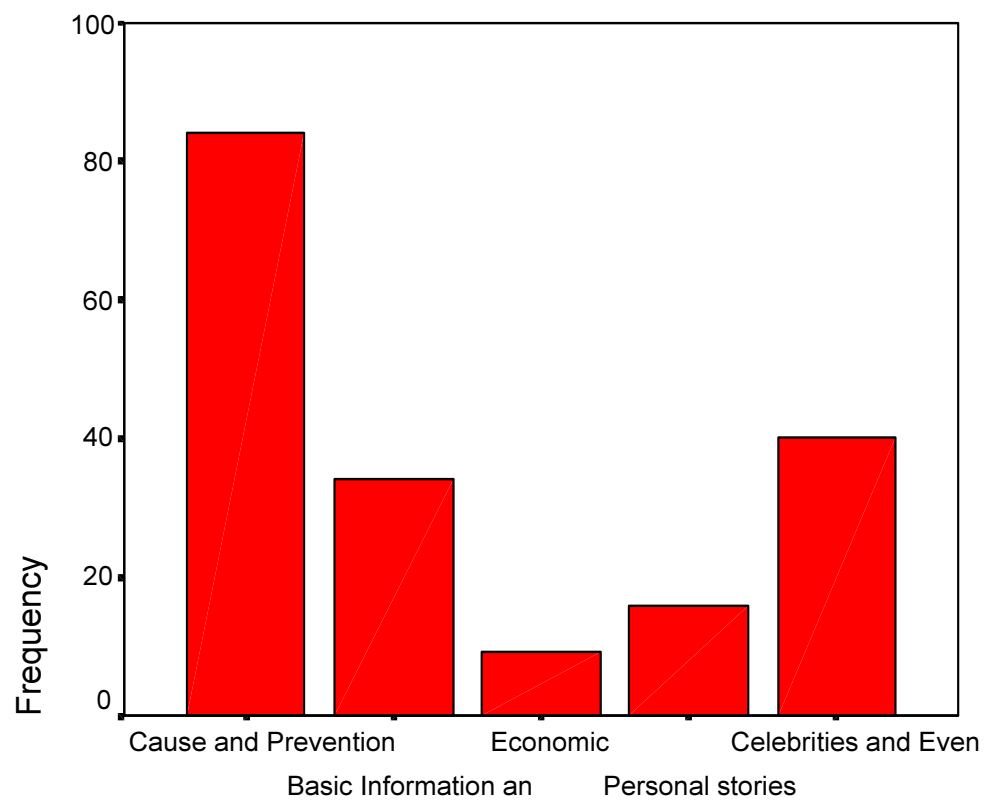


Figure 1. Frequency of AA magazine frames, 1990-2000

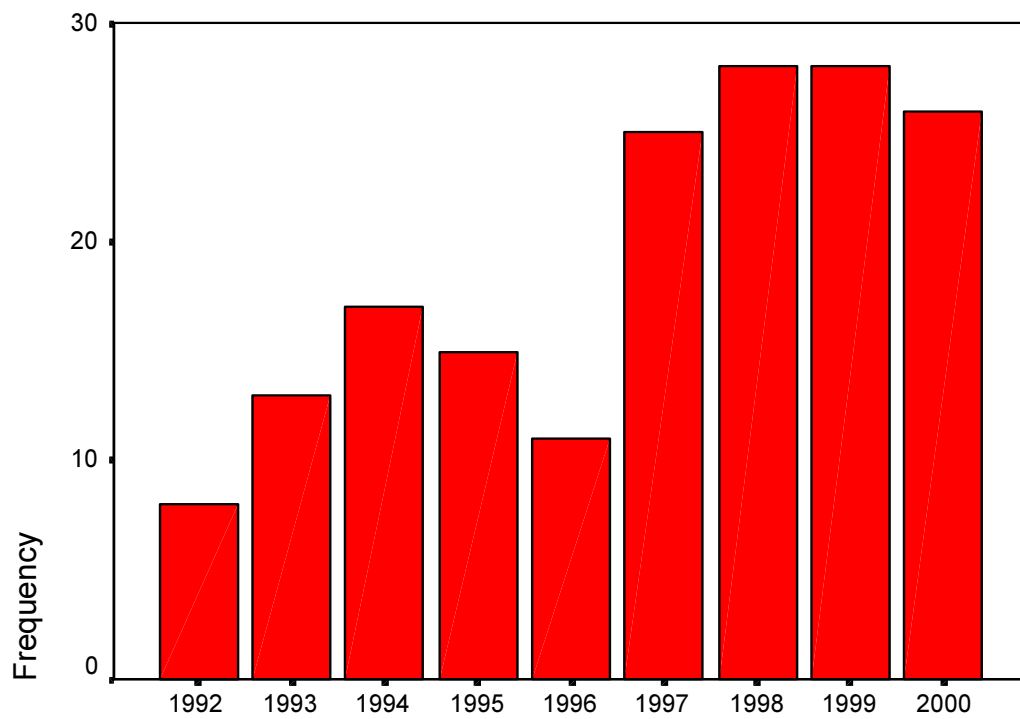


Figure 2. Frequency of AA magazine breast cancer articles by year



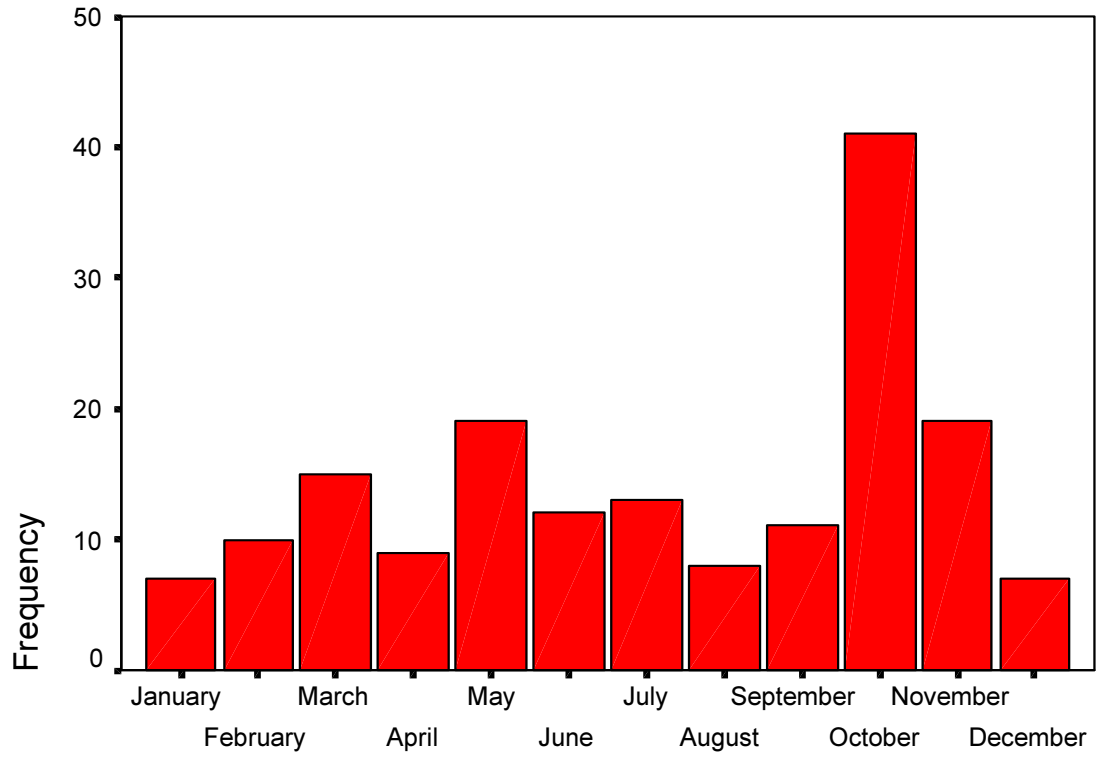


Figure 3. AA magazine breast cancer articles by month, 1990-2000

December with 4% of the articles. April (5.2%) and August (4.7%) followed with having the least amount articles occurring in a month's time. May and November had the second highest with 11% of the articles.

The third question: What types of influences (i.e. celebrities, personal stories, etc.) were used to deliver the story? Only 11.6% of the articles from the AA magazines were based on a specific dominant source. The celebrity influenced articles covered 6.4% of the articles. Family/friends source resulted in 2.9% of the articles. The source listed under other included interviews of breast cancer survivors (see Figure 4). Most of the articles were based on general information rather than a specific dominant source. There were 88% of the articles based on general information (Figure 5).

The fourth question: In coverage of breast cancer in AA magazines, what proportion of stories seems to be accurate by providing a professional source with statistics? The total number of breast cancer articles in AA magazines was 171. There were 40% of the articles that provided statistics. Of those articles, 35.5% provided a professional source. The doctor category had 9% of the articles and the scientist category had 11.7%. The other category covered 14% of the articles. The other category consisted of sources such as "according to research" without mentioning the research or "according to a study" without mentioning the study. Also, the other category produced sources like specific organizations such as National Cancer Institute and American Cancer society, but did not list a specific person from these organizations (see Table 11).

The fifth question: In coverage of breast cancer, how does the AA magazine compare in frames to a general news magazine (such as *Newsweek*)?

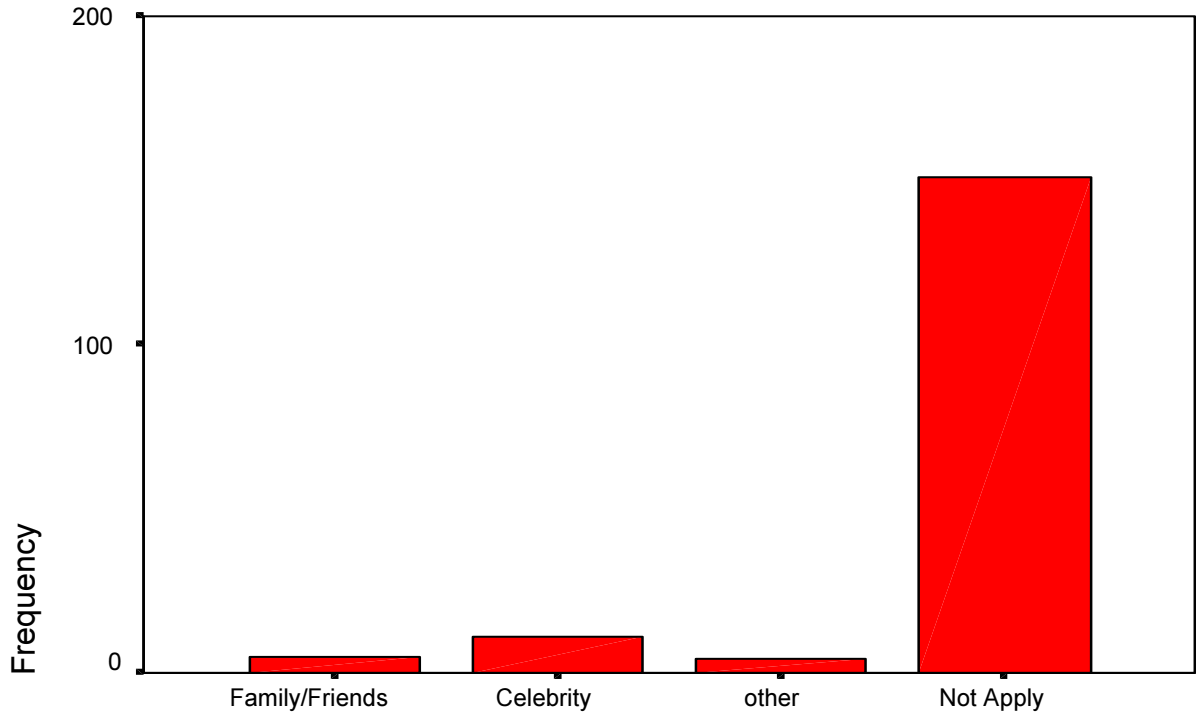


Figure 4. Found dominant sources for AA magazine breast cancer articles

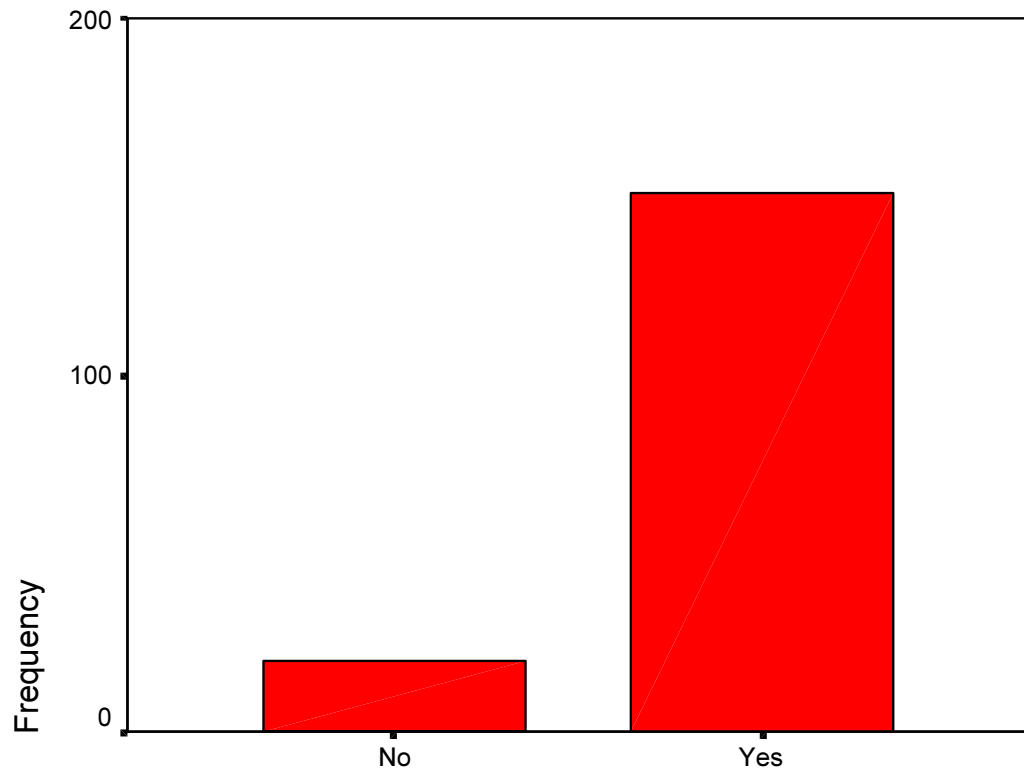


Figure 5. AA magazine articles based on general information

**Table 11. Found sources from AA magazine breast cancer articles, 1990-2000**

	If Sources Provided, who is/are the source(s)				Total
	Doctor, Physician, medical expert, etc.	Scientist, Researcher, Chemist	Other	Not Apply	
Essence	8	7	8	72	95
Ebony	4	3	6	12	25
Black Enterprise	0	0	1	3	4
Jet	4	10	9	24	47
Total	16	20	24	111	171

By examining AA magazine breast cancer articles versus *Newsweek* breast cancer articles, cause and prevention frame was the highest frame from both (see Table 12). *Newsweek* produced 44.3% of the articles containing cause and prevention as a frame. The AA magazines covered 46.2% of the articles collectively revealing cause and prevention as the highest frame. Basic information and treatment was the second most appeared frame in both *Newsweek* (29.8%) and AA magazines (18.7%). The third highest frame differs for both *Newsweek* and AA magazines. AA magazines had 22% of the articles on celebrities and events, while *Newsweek* had more economic frames (16.8%). *Newsweek* had less articles on celebrities and events (6.9%) and personal stories (2.3%). AA magazines concentrated less on the economic frame (4.9%) compared to *Newsweek* (16.8%). Personal stories was covered less in *Newsweek* (2.3%) than in AA magazines (8.2%).

**Table 12. AA magazines and Newsweek frames from breast cancer articles, 1990-2000**

	Essence	Ebony	Black Enterprise	Jet	Newsweek	Total
Cause and Prevention	40	20	3	21	58	142
Basic Information and Treatment	20	5	1	8	39	73
Economic	4	0	0	5	22	31
Personal stories	16	0	0	0	3	19
Celebrities and Events	22	3	1	14	9	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>314</b>

## V. CONCLUSION

The study shows that while four AA magazines cover breast cancer in various frames, the coverage was not as frequent as the coverage on breast cancer in *Newsweek*. The AA magazines covered the frame Cause and Prevention the most and the economic frame the least. The African American women are receiving the cause and prevention information, but lacking the economic frame, which could provide insurance information on mammogram tests and funds to help with the financial constraint that a breast cancer patient has to endure.

*Newsweek* covered Cause and Prevention the most, but the least amount of coverage was personal stories. The economic frame was the third highest covered by *Newsweek*.

While gathering the articles for the research from Lexus Nexus, the only African American magazines listed were the four most circulated: *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Jet*, and *Black Enterprise*. There could have been more African American magazines added to this research, but they were very hard to accumulate. *Heart and Soul* is a health magazine for African Americans. This magazine would have been most useful in this research had it been more accessible. African American magazines are not recognized enough compared to magazines geared towards a non-black audience. Lexus Nexus provides a listing of thousands of magazines, but only four African American magazines appear. That may be the reason why more African American magazines are established each year to cover the diversity of African Americans. There is a variety of African American magazines whose content is based solely on entertainment: *Vibe*, *The Source*, *XXL*, etc. Other magazines



are geared towards the black woman such as *Sister 2 Sister*, *Black Woman* and *Honey*, etc.

African American magazines need to focus more on the economic frame of breast cancer. There are so many African American women who are not financially able to afford treatment. Some may not have insurance and cannot go to the doctor every year. This economic frame needs to be in more of the African American magazines. Mainstream magazines like *Newsweek* do provide the economic frame as well as prevention and treatment. However, it lacks a more personal view. There are not enough survivor stories. The reader is getting the information on prevention and treatment, but not hearing enough of the breast cancer survivors from a regular Jane Doe, or a celebrity survivor. This is important because it gives a reader hope that if she does have breast cancer, there is still a possibility of survival.

In the time period studied, there were 171 breast cancer articles from four AA magazines compared to 126 breast cancer articles from *Newsweek*. This research shows that *Newsweek* is writing more about breast cancer than AA magazines. The important issue is to give the same amount information on breast cancer that the mainstream magazines provide. In comparison, it appears that AA publications should cover more stories on breast cancer.

This study focused on breast cancer articles and AA magazines' coverage. There are so many issues that deserve the right amount of coverage that mainstream magazines provide. There are health issues like diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, and other types of cancer: colon, prostate, etc. These issues should be next in researching what AA magazines are covering. Also, the AA magazine *Heart and Soul* should be researched to

determine the issues presented in it since it is a health magazine for African American females. Another good suggestion would be to compare and contrast *Heart and Soul* to a similar health magazine for non-black women. Other races are coming out with their own magazines geared towards that race and it will be interesting to find out what information is being presented to their readers.

### **Limitations of Research**

Each coder analyzed each article by hand. Human coded content analysis relies on subjective judgments, which in this research did cause error resulting in a low intercoder agreement in some of the frames. Traditional content analysis such as was used in this research is slowly fading out and there are better techniques that can be used. Computer assisted content analysis can give precise measurement of different themes and frames in text. “The lack of an effective means to accomplish this by traditional analytic methods has been noted by a number of contemporary communication researchers,” (Miller and Riechert, 2001, p.63). This modern technique, using a set of computer programs was developed by M. Mark Miller (Miller and Riechert, 2001). The computer-assisted program would have been useful in this research and is highly recommended for future content analysis research. “...frame mapping provides an efficient and precise method of probing for the particular words that occur together in some texts and do not tend to occur in other texts, then precisely quantifying and comparing those sets of terms that manifest distinctive frames,”(Miller and Riechert, 2001, p. 63).

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## APPENDIX

## Coding Sheet

Magazine:

Article:

Date:

Code frame found in article (Check the following frames found in this article). The article can contain from one to all of the words listed below the frame. The words listed below each frame have to appear more than once in order for it to be that frame. There can be more than one frame for each article.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Cause and Prevention-** alcohol, smoking, diet, hormones, risk factors, lumps and menopause,

(f) genetics-hereditary aspect,

(g) breast cancer research-breast cancer, health and women

(c) National Cancer Institute and studies being conducted on estrogen-replacement therapy

(d) Carcinogens-DDT, environment, and mortality rates,

(h) Tamoxifen- drug being tested for breast cancer, endometrial, ovarian, and uterine cancer.

(f) Links- genetic makeup, abortion, smoking, emotional distress

(g) Breast Screening-mammography, mammograms, tumors, x-ray, biopsy

(h) Breast Implants-silicone

\_\_\_\_\_ **Basic information and Treatment-** (a) BRCA (a group of cancer-causing genes), genetics and mutation;

(b) Discrimination and employer-possible effects of discrimination in insurance coverage for women who carry the BRCA genes

(c) History- relatives,

(d) Heredity-healthy, chromosome, and diagnosis survival, odd cures, biopsy, benign, physicians

(e) Treatment-Herceptin-drug use for breast cancer treatment, HER-2, mastectomy, chemotherapy

\_\_\_\_\_ **Economic-** (a) insurance-choice, cost, health care, management and health maintenance organizations (HMO's),

(b) Politics-politics, advocates, activism and AIDS, debates on what insurance companies should cover and decisions some have made regarding coverage of controversial procedures such as bone-marrow transplants-mistakes, proof, deadly and experimental

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal Stories-** (a) reflecting not only the first-person nature, but the emotions associated with them, such as anger and fear, illustrates support systems women relied upon: daughters, friends, mothers, and husband

(b) Worry-help and worried

(c) Pregnancy-baby, bodies, and birth; survival-news, drugs, and cancer

\_\_\_\_\_ **Celebrities and/or Events-** well known person or persons, charity, raising money, events

\_\_\_\_\_ **Other** (define) \_\_\_\_\_

***Circle either Yes or No for the below questions.***

**Statistics present:** Yes No

**Sources provided with statistics?** Yes No  
(If Yes, check which source was used with each statistic)

\_\_\_\_\_ Doctor, physician, medical expert, health official

\_\_\_\_\_ Scientist, researcher, chemist

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (define) \_\_\_\_\_

***Circle either Yes or No for the following***

General information (article informs the reader) Yes No

OR

Dominant Source of influence (article adds a more personal view by including names of persons) Yes No

**If so, check which of the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Family/Friends

\_\_\_\_\_ Celebrity

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (define) \_\_\_\_\_

## VITA

Born to Dennis and Patricia Hardison on January 20, 1974 in Detroit, Michigan, Lanise Annette Hardison found her love for journalism as a middle school student in Knoxville, Tennessee. She continued to nurture her talent for writing throughout the years culminating into her first published article in the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's school newspaper where she was a student from 1992 – 1996.

Lanise graduated from UT Chattanooga with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and a minor in Political Science. Her thirst for knowledge and advancement led her to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where she finished the graduate school program with a Masters of Science Degree in Journalism. During her years at UT Knoxville, Lanise was a member of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association where she served as Corresponding Secretary. As a member of the BGPSA, Lanise was able to showcase her talents in writing Poetry. It was this experience that gave her the confidence to submit two original poems to Poetry.com in which they published both pieces. The poems were selected out of thousands of other poems sent to editors of the website.

Lanise is married to Arthur R. Hutchins, Jr. They reside in Chattanooga, TN.