



## **Delays In Time To Follow Up For Breast Abnormalities As Related To Race, Mental Illness And Substance Abuse**

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### Background:

Delays in the diagnosis of breast cancer may lead to later stages, worse outcomes and more costly care. Race and socioeconomic factors have long been implicated in such delays. We set out to quantify such delays looking at race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status and history of mental illness or substance abuse.

### Methods:

This is a retrospective cross-sectional chart review of 546 women of who received BIRADS 0, 4 or 5 on mammography in 2014. Patients' race, history of current or former substance use and history of mental illness have been recorded and the number of days between the time of mammogram to recommended diagnostic study was documented. Subjects with prior history of breast cancer were excluded. The average follow-up for each subgroup was calculated and analyzed using a Student's t-test.

### Results:

The average time from mammogram to recommended follow up is 34.17 days (n=469). African-American (n=345) patients average was 38.09 days, significantly longer (p= .0001) than 23.27 days for all others(n=124). No statistically significant differences were demonstrated for 49 Substance abusers (39.39 vs 31.80 days, p = .15) and 135 individuals with mental illness (33.67 vs 33.15 days, p=.89).

### Conclusions:

We report on a large difference in the time to biopsy or additional imaging in our African-American patients compared to other ethnicities. Such delay may reflect socioeconomic differences, attitudes to medical treatment or bias. This phenomenon needs further study and we must consider devising new tools or outreach programs to improve compliance.