

# Examining the Influence of Social Media on Decision-Making for Breast Reconstruction Among People of Color

Jayla Allums, BS<sup>1\*</sup>, Johna Joseph, BA<sup>1\*</sup>, Fatoumata Sylla, BA<sup>1</sup>, Sammer Marzouk, MA<sup>1</sup>, Rolando Casas Fuentes, BS<sup>1</sup>, Raiven Harris, BA<sup>1</sup>, Tokoya Willams, MD<sup>1</sup>, Robert Galiano, MD, FACS<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, Illinois, USA \*All Authors Contributed Equally

## Background

The rates of postmastectomy breast reconstruction (PMBR) surgery receipt have steadily risen in recent years. Patients preparing to undergo breast reconstruction (BR) have increasingly turned to social media to gather information, share experiences, and seek support<sup>1</sup>. However, recent studies have reported a lack of inclusion of dark-skinned and nonwhite individuals on plastic surgeons, social media platforms<sup>2</sup>.

## Research Objectives

In this study, we aimed to investigate whether this trend of underrepresentation influenced social media use across race/ethnic groups in a racially diverse group of breast cancer survivors preparing to undergo breast surgery.

## Methods

This study included data from a sample of 413 females with a history of surgical intervention for breast cancer obtained from May 2023- June 2023. A racially and ethnically diverse population was sampled, including 250 white, 99 African American, 29 Hispanic, 24 Asian, and 11 American Indian/Alaska Native women. Conducted by Kantar, Lightspeed LLC, the computer-based survey combined a 45-item questionnaire, developed with the BRAVE Coalition, and the 13-item Satisfaction with Breasts subscale of the BREASTQ. It focused on informational sources such as social media and patient surgeon-race concordance relating these to the decision to undergo BR.

Figure 1. Social Media as a Decision Aid for BR

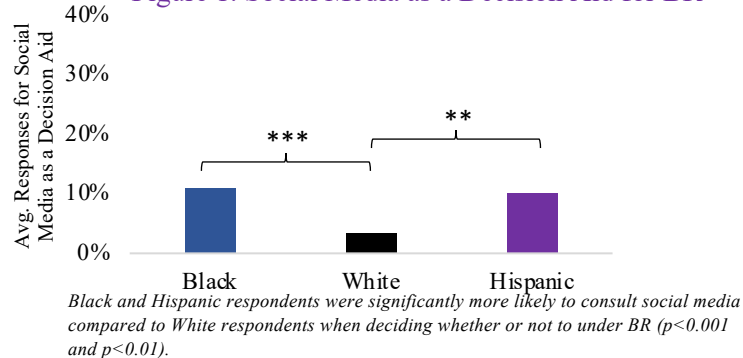


Figure 2. Social Media as Information Source for BR

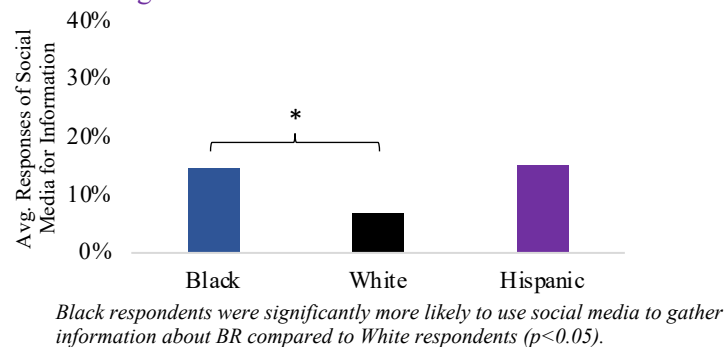
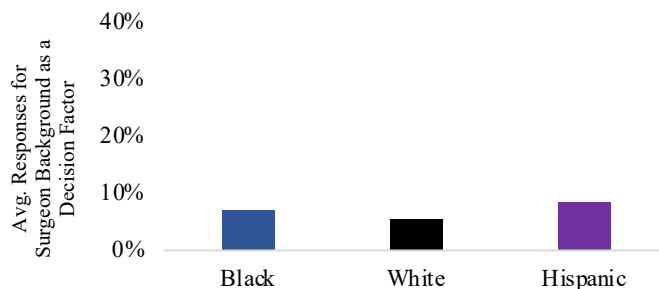


Figure 3. Patient-Surgeon Race Concordance: Defining Factor for BR



Surgeon racial/ethnic background was found to not be a significant factor in deciding whether to undergo BR ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## Results

A total of 413 responses were collected. When prompted what factors contributed to their decision to undergo breast cancer surgery, Black and Hispanic respondents answered social media significantly more than White respondents ( $p < 0.001$  and  $p = 0.003$  respectively). Concerning what information sources were consulted, Black respondents answered social media significantly more compared to White respondents with  $p = 0.011$ . However, regarding the surgeon-patient racial/ethnic background concordance as a contributing decision factor, there was no significant difference across the race groups ( $p = 0.681$ ).

## Limitations

**Generalizability:** sample diversity may not represent the broader population of breast cancer patients due to the limited sample size

**Questionnaire Limitations:** several survey questions were dependent on a single best answer rather than select all option which may have inadvertently excluded a subpopulation of respondents who consulted social media

## Conclusions

- Analysis revealed that Black and Hispanic patients were 3x more likely to consult social media when deciding whether to undergo BR surgery compared to their White counterparts. Further, Black patients were 2x more likely to use social media for information about breast reconstruction compared to White patients.
- Patient-surgeon race concordance as a factor in BR decision-making across the race groups was not significant.
- As social media use among patients rises, it is imperative that the reasons for its use is understood to ensure equal access to creditable patient aligning information and potentially provide an opportunity of utilization for increased outreach and dissemination of knowledge within minority communities.

## References

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2. Hassan AM, Chappell AG, Ketheeswaran S, Joshi C, Boyd RM, Wan R, Carabaño M, Koko D, Perez LC, Ellis MF, Galiano RD. Representation of African American Patients in Social Media for Breast Reconstruction. Plast Reconstr Surg. 2021 Dec 1;148(6):1214-1220. doi: 10.1097/PRS.00000000000008584. PMID: 34847110.