

---

---

Kaiser Family Foundation/National Association of Black  
Journalists

# **Critical Coverage: A National Survey on Blacks, Media, and Health**

## **Toplines**

**Prepared for Presentation at  
1998 Annual Meeting of NABJ**

**July 31, 1998**

**THE KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION  
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS  
NATIONAL SURVEY ON BLACKS, MEDIA, & HEALTH**

African American Topline

Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation/National Association of Black Journalists 1998 National Survey on Blacks, Media, & Health is based on 804 random-sample telephone interviews with African American adults, ages 18 or older. The survey was designed by researchers at the Foundation, NABJ, and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and conducted by PSRA between June 9 and July 2, 1998. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points but may be higher for certain subsets of the total sample.

**INTRODUCTION:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling for Princeton Survey Research. I'd like to ask a few questions of the YOUNGEST MALE age 18 or older, who is now at home. **(IF NO MALE AT HOME NOW:** Then, may I speak with the OLDEST FEMALE age 18 or older who is now at home) **(REPEAT INTRODUCTION IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER THE TELEPHONE).** We're calling people across the country to get their opinions about important issues in the news that might affect them personally. . .

**SCREENING INTERVIEW:**

- S1. To make sure our survey includes many different kinds of people, I'm going to start with a few questions about you... How would you describe the place where you live? Do you live in a large city, a suburb, a small city or town, or a rural area? **(READ)**
- S2. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?
- S3. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian, or some other race?

**MAIN INTERVIEW:****D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX:**

45    Male  
55    Female  
 100

1. Now I'd like your views on how some different HEALTH CARE problems are affecting BLACK PEOPLE OR AFRICAN AMERICANS in this country today . As I read each one, tell me if you think it is now a MAJOR problem, a MINOR problem, or is NOT a problem for blacks. (First,) what about... **(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)?**

**READ FOR FIRST ITEM, THEN REPEAT AS NECESSARY:** Is this a major problem, a minor problem, or is this not a problem for blacks?

		<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Not a problem</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a.	Being able to afford the cost of health insurance and necessary medical care	78	12	8	2	=100
b.	The poor and elderly not getting enough help from government programs like Medicare and Medicaid to pay medical bills	75	15	6	4	=100
c.	Having enough good doctors and other health care providers near where they live	45	28	25	2	=100
d.	Having difficulty getting necessary medical care because of racial discrimination	45	27	23	5	=100

2. We'd also like your views on how some different medical conditions and other health problems are now affecting black people in this country. (First,) do you think... **(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)** is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for blacks? How much of a problem is... **(INSERT NEXT ITEM)**

**REPEAT CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY:** Is this a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for blacks?

		<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Not a problem</u>	<u>Never heard of</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a.	Alcoholism and drug addiction	90	6	2	0	2	=100
b.	Heart disease, including high blood pressure	86	10	2	0	2	=100
c.	Cancer	78	17	2	0	3	=100
d.	Asthma	57	31	7	* <sup>1</sup>	5	=100
e.	Sickle cell anemia	53	31	6	2	8	=100
f.	Lupus	33	33	11	9	14	=100
<i>Items g-i always asked last, in order</i>							
g.	AIDS or H-I-V, the virus that causes AIDS	81	11	4	*	4	=100
h.	Sexually transmitted diseases other than AIDS	71	18	3	*	8	=100
i.	Unplanned teenage pregnancies	89	8	1	0	2	=100

---

<sup>1</sup> An asterisk indicates a value of less than 1%.

3. We're interested in what sources you've been using for information about health and health care. Please tell me how much health information you got from each of the following sources **IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS** -- a lot of information, some information, only a little, or none. (First,) in the past 12 months, how much health information did you get from ... **(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)**?

**READ CATEGORIES FOR FIRST ITEM, THEN REPEAT AS NECESSARY:**

Would you say a lot, some, only a little, or none?

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a.	Television	57	21	14	7	1	=100
b.	Radio	24	23	26	27	*	=100
c.	Newspapers	40	24	20	16	0	=100
d.	Magazines	33	24	21	21	1	=100
e.	Street signs, flyers or billboards, including advertisements on public transportation	16	21	33	29	1	=100
f.	Your employer, that is, through your job	21	13	16	49	1	=100
g.	Your church or place of worship	27	19	22	31	1	=100
h.	Your doctor or another health care provider	46	21	19	14	*	=100
i.	The Internet, or computer online services	13	10	12	63	2	=100
j.	Family members and friends	36	25	25	14	*	=100

4. From what ONE source did you get the MOST information about health and health care?  
Was it... (**READ A SHORT VERSION@ OF ITEMS USED A LOT@ IN Q.3a-j**)

25	Television
2	Radio
8	Newspapers
8	Magazines
1	Street signs, flyers, or billboards
9	Your employer
3	Your church or place of worship
20	Your doctor or another health care provider
2	The Internet, or computer online services
10	Family members and friends
1	Other source
11	Did not get a lot of information from any source
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

5. What kind of TV programming did you get the MOST health information from...

35	National TV news
22	Local TV news, OR
8	Entertainment TV programs?
13	TV in general
*	Other type of TV programming
1	Don't know
<u>21</u>	Did not get a lot/some health information from TV
100	

6. Which kind of MAGAZINE did you get the MOST health information from...

13	News magazines like <i>Time</i> and <i>Newsweek</i> , OR
36	Other magazines?
6	Both equally/Magazines in general
3	Don't know/Refused
<u>42</u>	Did not get a lot/some health information from magazines
100	

- 7a. Now I'd like your views on how the media, in general, cover health and health care. In answering, please think about all kinds of media, including TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. Overall, do you think the media are doing a good job or a bad job of ...Telling **BLACKS IN THIS COUNTRY** what they need to know about health and health care?

*Based on form 1 respondents.*

31 Good job  
 48 Bad job  
 18 (VOL.) Mixed/Some good, some bad  
3 Don't know/Refused  
 100

- 7b. Now I'd like your views on how the media, in general, cover health and health care. In answering, please think about all kinds of media, including TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. Overall, do you think the media are doing a good job or a bad job of ...Telling **YOU AND YOUR FAMILY** what you need to know about health and health care?

*Based on form 2 respondents.*

54 Good job  
 27 Bad job  
 18 (VOL.) Mixed/Some good, some bad  
1 Don't know/Refused  
 100

8. Thinking about all the media health coverage you see, hear or read.... **(INSERT ITEMS, IN ORDER)**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a. Is there enough coverage of the health and health care issues you deal with in your day-to-day life?	40	57	3	=100
b. Is there enough practical information about what you can do to deal with specific health and health problems?	42	55	3	=100
c. Is there enough coverage of how black people, in particular, are affected by specific health and health care problems?	27	69	4	=100

9. Please tell me if you think each of the following is a MAJOR reason, a MINOR reason, or is NOT a reason why there isn't enough media coverage of how blacks are affected by specific health problems. (First,) what about this possible reason... **(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)** is this a major reason, a minor reason, or is this not a reason (why there is not enough coverage of how blacks are affected)?

*Based on those who think there isn't enough coverage of how blacks are affected by specific health and health care problems.*

	<u>Major reason</u>	<u>Minor reason</u>	<u>Not a reason</u>	<u>DK/ Ref. (n)</u>	
a. Most news organizations are not aware of -- or interested in -- the health problems of blacks	73	20	6	1 =100	(549)
b. There isn't enough data and research about the health problems of blacks available for the media to report	59	23	16	2 =100	(549)
c. There aren't enough black journalists reporting on health and health care	59	25	14	2 =100	(549)
10. Of the reasons you just said were major, which do you think is the MOST important reason why there isn't enough coverage? Is it because...					

*Based on those who think there isn't enough coverage of how blacks are affected by specific health and health care problems (n=549).*

39	Most news organizations aren't interested
19	There isn't enough data and research to report
29	There aren't enough black journalists
3	Other reason
9	None identified as major reasons
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	



11. When the media, in general, cover health and health care do you think they feature enough black people and black families in their stories, or not?

19 Yes  
 78 No  
3 Don't know/Refused  
 100

12. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some different health-related topics. As I read each one, please tell me whether or not you think the media, in general, are doing enough stories about this topic. (First,) do you think the media are doing enough stories about... **(INSERT ITEMS--READ AND ROTATE)?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a. Changes in government policies and the health care industry that might affect your health care or health insurance	24	71	5	=100
b. Medicare and Medicaid, government programs that help people pay health care bills	23	73	4	=100
c. How to find a health care plan, doctor, hospital or other health provider to suit your needs	30	66	4	=100
d. Steps that pregnant women can take to protect the health of their babies	43	51	6	=100
e. Illnesses and medical conditions that are more likely to affect blacks	22	74	4	=100
f. Steps that families can take to prevent illnesses, such as screening for medical conditions and changing their diet	37	60	3	=100
g. How to talk with children about topics such as sexuality, AIDS, violence or drugs	35	63	2	=100
h. Testing, treatment, and prevention of H-I-V and other sexually transmitted diseases	47	50	3	=100

- 13a. Now I'd like your views on how the BLACK MEDIA cover health and health care. The black media includes B-E-T, the national cable TV network, national magazines like *Essence*, *Ebony*, and *Jet*, as well as local radio stations, local newspapers and other media directed specifically to black people. Overall, do you think the black media are doing a good job or a bad job of... Telling BLACKS IN THIS COUNTRY what they need to know about health and health care?

***Based on form 1 respondents.***

56	Good job
24	Bad job
16	(VOL.) Mixed/Some good, some bad
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

- 13b. Now I'd like your views on how the BLACK MEDIA cover health and health care. The black media includes B-E-T, the national cable TV network, national magazines like *Essence*, *Ebony*, and *Jet*, as well as local radio stations, local newspapers and other media directed specifically to black people. Overall, do you think the black media are doing a good job or a bad job of... Telling YOU AND YOUR FAMILY what you need to know about health and health care?

***Based on form 2 respondents.***

58	Good job
20	Bad job
15	(VOL.) Mixed/Some good, some bad
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

14. Thinking about all of the BLACK MEDIA's health coverage you see, hear or read....  
(INSERT ITEMS, IN ORDER)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a. Is there enough coverage of the health and health care issues you deal with in your day-to-day life?	41	56	3	=100
b. Is there enough practical information about what you can do to deal with specific health and health problems?	46	49	5	=100
c. Is there enough coverage of how black people, in particular, are affected by specific health and health care problems?	38	57	5	=100

15. Next, please tell me how much information about health and health care you got from each of the following black media IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS -- a lot of information, some information, only a little, or none. (First,) in the past 12 months, how much health information did you get from ... (INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)?

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a</u> <u>little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a. TV news or talk shows directed specifically to black viewers, like those on B-E-T, the cable network	35	24	20	19	2	=100
b. Radio news or news talk shows directed to black listeners	27	26	29	17	1	=100
c. Newspapers directed to black readers	18	26	25	29	2	=100
d. Magazines directed to black readers, such as <i>Essence</i> , <i>Ebony</i> or <i>Jet</i>	39	28	15	17	1	=100

16. Over the past 12 months, did you get MORE information about health and health care...(READ)

26 From the black media, OR  
 56 From general media NOT directed specifically to black people?  
 13 About the same amount from each media type  
 4 Didn't get any health information from media  
1 Don't know/Refused  
 100

17. When you have to rely on the media for information about important health and health care issues, do you usually PREFER to use...(READ)

28 The black media, OR  
 48 The general media?  
 16 It depends  
 6 Wouldn't use the media for health information  
2 Don't know/Refused  
 100

18. When you have to rely on the media for such information, do you usually prefer to use...(READ)

55 Television  
 6 Radio  
 10 Newspapers, OR  
 15 Magazines?  
 9 (VOL.) It depends  
 4 Wouldn't use the media for health information  
1 Don't know/Refused  
 100

19. Do you MOST prefer to get this health information from... **(READ)**

25	National TV news
14	Local TV news, OR
5	Entertainment TV programs?
10	TV in general
1	Other type of TV programming
45	Do not prefer TV as source
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

20. Do you MOST prefer to get this health information from... **(READ)**

1	News magazines like <i>Time</i> and <i>Newsweek</i>
7	Women's magazines like <i>Essence</i> , <i>Family Circle</i> , and <i>Glamour</i> OR
5	Health and fitness magazines like <i>Heart and Soul</i> , <i>Self</i> , and <i>Men's Health</i> ?
2	Magazines in general
*	Other type of magazine
85	Do not prefer magazine as source
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

## 21. We'd like to know whether you have done certain things over the past 12 months in response to media reporting about health or health care... (First,) in the past 12 months, did you...(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a. Talk with a friend or family member about something reported in the media?	71	28	1	=100
b. Talk with a doctor or another health care provider about something reported in the media?	43	56	1	=100
c. Talk with a sexual partner about a sexual health issue reported in the media, like birth control or sexually transmitted diseases?	49	50	1	=100
d. Change your own behavior, such as your eating habits or how much you exercise, because of something reported in the media?	55	44	1	=100

22. I'm going to read you some different sources of information about health and health care. As I read each one, tell me how often you think you can TRUST the health information they provide -- always, most of the time, only sometimes, hardly ever, or never. (First,) how often do you think you can trust health information from... **(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)**?

**ALWAYS READ CATEGORIES FIRST TIME; THEN REPEAT ONLY AS NECESSARY:** always, most of the time, only sometimes, hardly ever, or never?

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Only some- times</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
<i>Items a &amp; b always asked as a pair, in order</i>							
a. The black media	17	33	41	3	3	3	=100
b. General media NOT directed specifically to black people	8	26	49	7	7	3	=100
c. Churches and religious organizations	19	27	35	7	9	3	=100
d. Doctors and other health care providers	25	38	32	2	2	1	=100
e. Friends and family members	19	25	43	5	7	1	=100
f. Government agencies	5	17	42	13	21	2	=100
g. Holistic healers and others who promote alternative medicine, like acupuncture	3	6	29	16	39	7	=100

23. Now I have a question about WHERE YOU GET YOUR NEWS -- ALL KINDS OF NEWS, not just news about health or health care. Do you get your news MAINLY from... **(READ)**

11 The black media  
OR mainly from...  
72 General media NOT directed specifically to black people?  
16 **(VOL.)** It depends  
1 Don't know/Refused  
100

24. Next I'm going to read you some statements about the media. After I read each one, tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree, mostly DISagree, or completely disagree with it. Here's the (first/next) statement... **(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)** Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly DISagree, or completely disagree?

		Com- pletely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>agree</u>	Mostly <u>disagree</u>	Com- pletely <u>disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>	
a.	Most media direct their health coverage to a primarily white audience	31	40	18	8	3	=100
b.	Black journalists are more sensitive to the health needs and concerns of black people than journalists of a different race	27	45	16	7	5	=100
c.	The general media understand and meet the needs of black audiences	8	31	35	22	4	=100

25. I'd like your views on how the GENERAL MEDIA cover some different stories. Please tell me if you think blacks get too much attention, not enough attention, or about the right amount of attention when the general media cover each of the following stories. (First,) when the general media cover...**(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE)** do you think blacks get too much attention, not enough attention, or about the right amount?

*Based on form 1 respondents.*

		Too <u>Much</u>	Not <u>enough</u>	About <u>right</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>	
a.	Lifestyle stories on topics such as fashion, cooking or parenting	10	68	17	5	=100
b.	Crime stories	76	12	10	2	=100
c.	Stories about medical conditions and other health problems	6	76	16	2	=100
d.	Stories about the health care system and health care policy	5	79	13	3	=100
e.	Business stories	4	75	17	4	=100

26. I'd like your views on how the GENERAL MEDIA cover some different problems. Please tell me if you think the GENERAL MEDIA'S coverage of each of the following problems is generally fair, OR if their coverage unfairly portrays it as a Ablack@ problem. (First,) do you think the general media's coverage of...(INSERT--READ AND ROTATE) is generally fair, or unfairly portrays it as a Ablack@ problem?

*Based on form 2 respondents.*

		Generally <u>fair</u>	Unfairly portrays it as a <u>Ablack@ problem</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
a.	Unplanned teenage pregnancies	41	55	4 =100
b.	Smoking and tobacco use	56	40	4 =100
c.	Cancer	65	30	5 =100
d.	HIV or AIDS	48	48	4 =100
e.	Obesity and unhealthy lifestyles	48	47	5 =100
f.	Welfare dependency	26	70	4 =100
g.	Births to single mothers	36	61	3 =100

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

- D2. Now I have just a few questions so we can describe the kinds of people who participate in this survey... Are you, yourself, now covered by ANY form of health insurance or health plan -- including a government program like Medicare or Medicaid?

71 Yes  
 28 No  
1 Don't know/Refused  
 100



D3. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school? **(DO NOT READ)**

5	None, or grade 1-8
19	High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
35	High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
3	Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school
24	Some college, no 4-year degree
10	College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other 4-year degree)
3	Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college
*	Don't know
<u>1</u>	Refused
100	

D4. What is your age?

28	18 - 29
43	30 - 49
16	50 - 64
11	65 or older
<u>2</u>	Refused
100	

D5. Last year, that is in 1997, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. **(READ)**

15	Less than \$10,000
13	\$10,000 to under \$20,000
18	\$20,000 to under \$30,000
21	\$30,000 to under \$50,000
9	\$50,000 to under \$75,000
3	\$75,000 to under \$100,000
1	\$100,000 and over
9	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know
<u>11</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Refused
100	

D6. So we can more accurately describe the people who took part in our survey, I have just a few questions about your nationality and ethnic background. Were you born in the United States, or were you born in another country?

D7. In what country were you born?

92	Born in the United States
7	Born in another country
5	West Indies
1	Latin America
1	Africa
*	Other
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

D8. Were either of your PARENTS born in another country, or were they both born in the United States?

D9. Which country is that?

9	Respondent is an immigrant or first generation U.S. American
6	West Indies
1	Latin America
1	Africa
1	Other
90	Both parents born in U.S.
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

D10. I have one last question... If you could send a message to the media about how well they're meeting the health information needs of the black community, what's the MAIN thing you'd want to tell them? (**See attached list of verbatim responses**)

That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Have a nice day/evening.