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BLACK AND HISPANIC WOMEN TAKE LONGER TO ENTER FERTILITY TREATMENT THAN WHITE WOMEN, BUT ONCE IN TREATMENT, SHOW SIMILAR TIME TO PREGNANCY

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OBJECTIVE: Prior research about racial and ethnic disparities and infertility treatment has focused on barriers in accessing care. However, the literature lacks insight about how disparities persist after the initiation of assisted reproductive technology (ART) treatment. This study aims to examine whether disparities persist after new patient consultation by evaluating racial and ethnic differences in time to infertility treatment and time to pregnancy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The study was conducted in a large urban setting from November 2015 to March 2020. Patients who sought ART treatment and underwent an initial consultation were included. A one-year censoring interval was applied to account for heterogeneity in time to treatment. Patients were grouped by self-reported race/ethnicity (Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Multi-racial, Other, and White). Days from initial consult to initiation of treatment and to pregnancy were measured. Logistic and linear regression predicted likelihood of treatment and time to pregnancy by demographic factors.

RESULTS: Of the 12,788 eligible patients, 7301 identified as White (57%), 1826 Asian (14%), 1205 Black (9%), 1366 Hispanic/Latino (11%), 683 Multi-racial (5%), and 407 Other (3%). Black and Hispanic patients were less likely to begin treatment after initial consultation (89.2 ± 84.7 days and 83.6 ± 80.1 days respectively) when compared to White patients (71.8 ± 72.5 days, p < 0.001) [Table 1]. All ethnic groups had longer time to pregnancy when compared to patients who identified as being White, albeit this duration was only statistically significant in Asian patients.

	All Patients (n=12,788)	Asian (n=1,826)	Black (n=1,205)	Hispanic/Latino (n=1,366)	Multi-Racial (n=683)	Other (n=40)	White (n=7,301)	p-Value
Age (years)	35.9 ± 5.0	36.4 ± 4.5	37.6 ± 5.6	36.0 ± 5.4	36.0 ± 5.1	35.8 ± 5.5	35.5 ± 4.8	<0.001
Time To Treatment (days)	75.1 ± 74.5	74.1 ± 71.8	89.2 ± 84.7	83.6 ± 80.1	80.0 ± 75.9	82.3 ± 77.9	71.8 ± 72.5	<0.001
Time to Pregnancy (days)	223.6 ± 194.7	243.0 ± 198.3	228.7 ± 189.3	235.5 ± 211.3	248.6 ± 209.0	234.3 ± 245.5	214.6 ± 187.7	0.003



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CONCLUSIONS: Patients with self-reported Black, Hispanic, Multi-racial, and Other ethnicity/race were less likely to continue to infertility treatment and took longer to progress to treatment following initial consultation when compared to White patients. Despite assumed equal access in a large, urban, diverse practice setting, disparities remain in navigating fertility care.

IMPACT STATEMENT: Almost two decades¹ after revealing racial and ethnic disparities in length of infertility prior to seeking treatment, disparities remain in progression to treatment once care is initiated. Finding timely solutions to close the gap in infertility disparities is paramount.