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Improving fertility care for Black patients

Recent research spotlights that Black women have higher infertility rates than white women but use fertility services at only half the rate.¹

Reproductive medicine is not immune to race-based health disparities and unconscious bias. It is important to recognize the disparities that exist so patients can receive adequate counseling on their reproductive health and gain better access to the fertility care they need.

At Shady Grove Fertility (SGF), we are dedicated to helping all patients create families. Learn more about understanding racial disparities and how to take steps to improve fertility care for Black patients. →

Understanding and confronting racial disparities in reproductive medicine

Black women have higher infertility rates than white women but use fertility services at only half the rate, according to recent research.¹ Socioeconomic factors play a large role in this disparity. Even when patients have access to fertility care, Black women discontinue fertility treatments at higher rates than other patients. Additionally, even after undergoing fertility treatments such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), Black women have lower clinical pregnancy and live birth rates compared with white women even after controlling for various factors.¹

In an award-winning study, SGF researchers found that Black patients respond just as well to medications that stimulate egg production, produce as many eggs, and produce more good-quality embryos than white patients. However, Black women had lower pregnancy rates, higher clinical pregnancy loss, and lower live birth rates, suggesting uterine factors may be a cause of decreased success.² Given this insight, patients should not wait to seek help when experiencing infertility or recurrent miscarriage. Early referrals provide patients with the best chance of success.

3 ways to improve fertility care for Black patients

1 Encourage patients to seek help sooner

Age is the number one indicator of female fertility. Stigmas surrounding infertility or hyperfertility in the Black community, lack of trust in medical professionals, or other factors could play a role in why Black women delay seeking fertility treatment. By encouraging patients to seek fertility care sooner, providers can help patients maximize their chances of successful fertility treatment.

2 Educate patients about affording care

Approximately 70% of SGF patients have some coverage for infertility treatment and 90% have coverage for their initial consultation. For those without insurance coverage, SGF offers these 5 financial programs and discounts: →

3 Empower patients with fertility resources



SGF's Online Resource Library

Search, filter, and view approximately 2,000 resources, including articles, videos, and SGF patient stories.

ShadyGroveFertility.com/resources



SGF's Events Calendar

Find free, educational fertility events for those interested in learning about their reproductive health.

ShadyGroveFertility.com/events

4 causes of infertility that disproportionately affect Black women:



1. Uterine fibroids



2. Blocked Fallopian tubes



3. Obesity



4. Advanced age

1 Jackson-Bey, T., Morris, J., Jasper, E., Velez Edwards, DR., Thornton, K., Richard-Davis, G., Plowden, T. (2012) "Systematic Review of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility: Where Do We Stand Today?" Fertility and Sterility Reviews. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xfnr.2021.05.001>.

2 Bishop, L. A., Devine, K., Sasson, I. E., Plowden, T., Hill, M. J., DeCherney, A. H., Richter, K. (2018). African American patients experience reduced pregnancy, higher pregnancy loss, and lower live birth from IVF embryo transfers despite producing more oocytes and more transfer quality embryos than Caucasian patients. Fertility and Sterility, Volume 110, Issue 4, e6.

5 financial programs and discounts to help patients afford fertility care at Shady Grove Fertility:

- ✓ Shared Risk 100% Refund Program
- ✓ Multi-Cycle Discount for IVF
- ✓ Shared Help Discount Program (income-based program)
- ✓ Military Discounts
- ✓ Medication Discount Program

For details: ShadyGroveFertility.com.



I became a doctor to help and advocate for underserved populations. Providing resources and information to patients is one of the ways **we can better serve the Black community and help overcome stigmas surrounding infertility.**"

— **Jerrine Morris, M.D., M.P.H.**

Reproductive Endocrinologist at SGF in Baltimore, MD



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