



## FEATURE ARTICLE

### Impact of Perceived Stress on Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Risky Sexual Behavior among Black Women 18 to 24 years of Age in an Urban Neighborhood

By: Charlean Walls, MPH, Tabia Henry Akintobi, Ph.D., MPH, Robina Josiah Willock, Ph.D., MPH, Assia Miller, M.D., MPH, Jennie Trotter, MEd & Shelia Lenoir, MCJ

Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center &  
The Wholistic Stress Control Institute, Incorporated

## ABSTRACT

Black college-age women disproportionately experience health disparities including exposure to stress, which may be further exacerbated by educational attainment. The association between stress and risk-taking behaviors such as substance abuse and risky sexual behavior has not been thoroughly investigated among young black women.

**Goals/Objectives and Target Population:** The goal of this study was to determine the associations between stress and maladaptive coping mechanisms, including substance abuse and risky sexual behavior among black college age women.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study design was employed utilizing secondary data from the pretest surveys collected through the Color it Real Program.

**Results and Significance** Results revealed that stress was a predictor for drug abuse ( $p=0.0339$ ) (OR=1.045, CI 1.003, 1.086) and risky sexual behavior ( $p=0.0278$ ) (OR= 1.045 CI= 1.005, 1.056) but was not a predictor for alcohol abuse ( $p=0.1363$ ) (OR=1.024, 95% CI 0.992, 1.057). Education did not moderate the association between variables ( $p>0.05$ ). This study advances the current body of knowledge in the areas of gender, race and age specific associations between perceived stress and maladaptive behaviors among college-aged black women. Focusing on a more homogenous population helps delineate specific factors and determinants affecting the college-age demographic towards more targeted intervention strategies that advance health equity.

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