

A+ CALIFORNIA TEACHERS STUDY Report Card

VOLUME IV, SPRING 2000

THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS STUDY ENTERS THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Ok, ok, we know that technically the new millennium starts next year, but we're excited to think about what this year holds for the California Teachers Study. We are always seeking innovative ways that this study can contribute to new understanding of the causes and prevention of breast cancer and other cancers.

2000 Survey

As you can see, a brand new survey is enclosed. We invite you to browse through it. Although it may look similar to surveys you completed for this study, you will see that some of the subject matter is very different.

Participants in the study often suggest areas of research that they would like us to investigate. Probably the single most commonly suggested topic is stress. Many participants

consider themselves to experience high levels of stress, and ask whether this could increase one's chance of developing cancer or affect the ability to recover. A significant challenge in trying to answer that question is that stress is highly individual: what causes one person to feel stressed may not bother the next person at all. Over the past year we have been developing ways to address these questions in this survey while not increasing your stress level! We hope you find this to be interesting and worth your time to help us learn more.

Child's Play?

A glance at pages 7 and 8 will reveal even more unusual content. Have we crossed the Teachers Study with *Highlights* magazine? Well, no, even though it may look like it. A study like the Teachers Study can be valuable in helping to understand women's health issues far beyond cancer. Fortunately, most women will not develop cancer. However, American women are living longer than ever and the design of the Teachers Study is the best way to identify factors associated with

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2000 SURVEY ENCLOSED

ACCOMPANYING THIS Report Card is the 2000 California Teachers Study survey. About every two years, we ask for new information on your health and lifestyle. We hope that you will take a few minutes now to complete this survey.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL INFORMATION you provide will be grouped as statistical results, without allowing individuals to be identified. As always, your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any questions. Also, your participation today does not obligate you to participate in the future.

PLEASE USE THE POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE TO RETURN the survey. Our toll-free telephone number is printed both on the front of the survey and the last page of this newsletter for any questions you may have.



CALIFORNIA TEACHERS STUDY

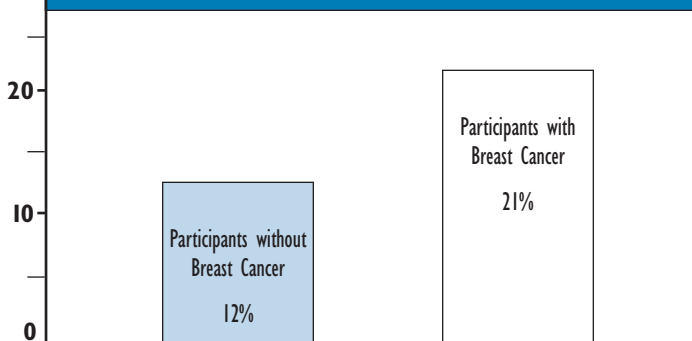
The following report shows the family history data collected from the California Teachers Study.

- Because cancer is fairly common, it is not unusual for several people in a family to have had cancer.
- Cancer can occur in multiple family members for several reasons, not all of them genetic. Families share not only their genes, but also aspects of lifestyle that may influence their risk for cancer. Such risks might include occupational exposures,

diet, smoking, infections, or other environmental hazards.

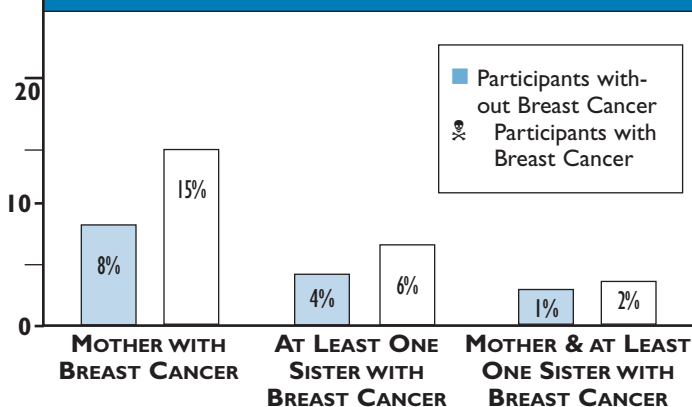
- When a number of family members have had the same or related cancers, when people in two or more generations have had cancer, or when cancer in the family has occurred at an early age, there is a greater likelihood that the risk for cancer is hereditary.

Reported History of Breast Cancer in First-Degree Relatives by Breast Cancer Status of the Study Participant



Approximately 21% of study participants who have been diagnosed with breast cancer reported having at least one first-degree relative with breast cancer. Only 12% of the participants who do not have breast cancer reported having at least one first-degree relative with breast cancer.

Any First-Degree Relatives with Breast Cancer

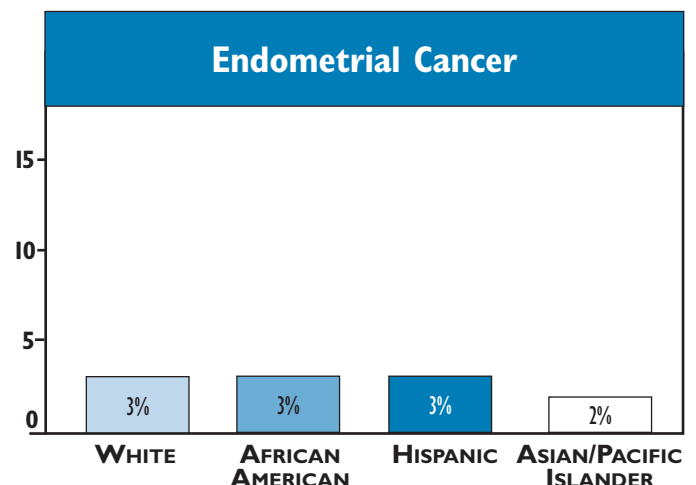
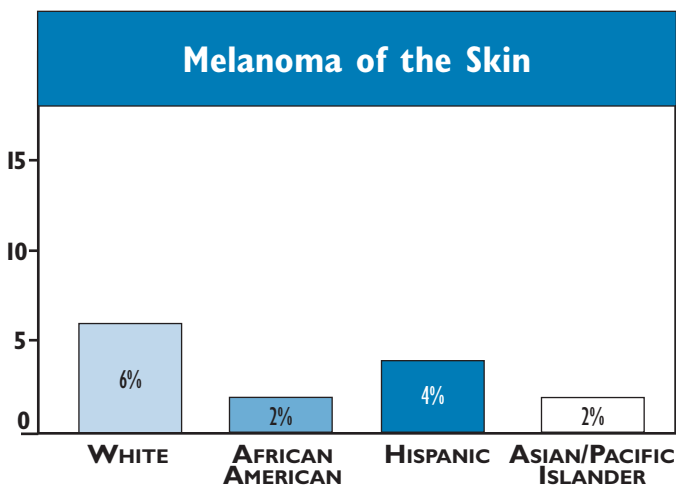
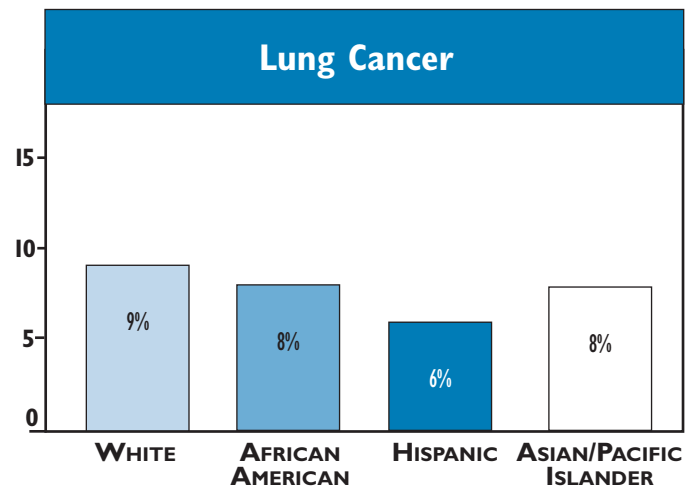
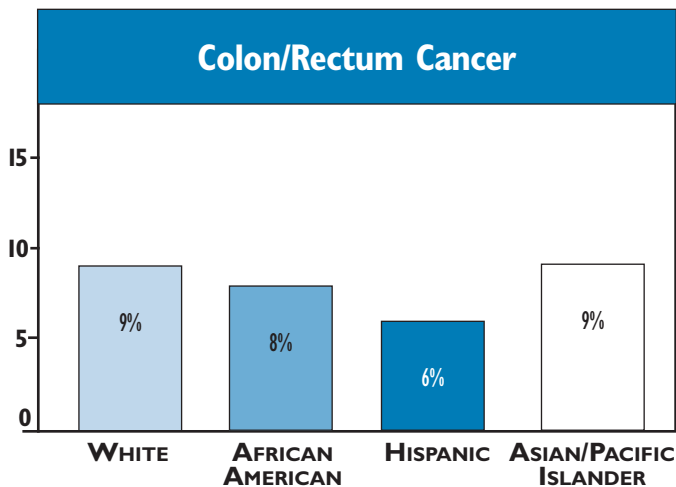
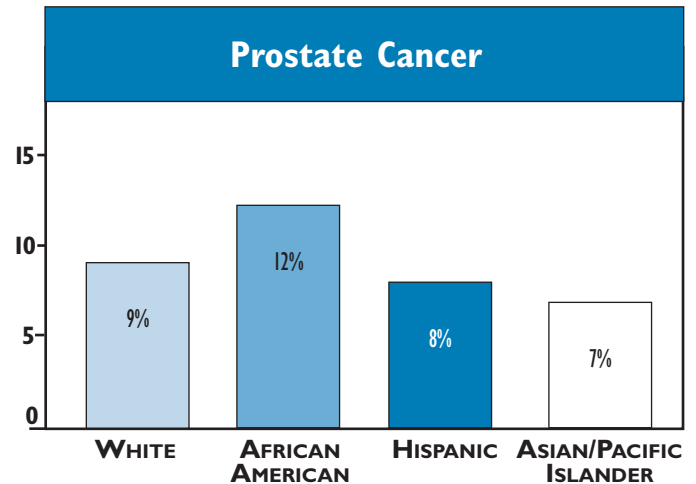
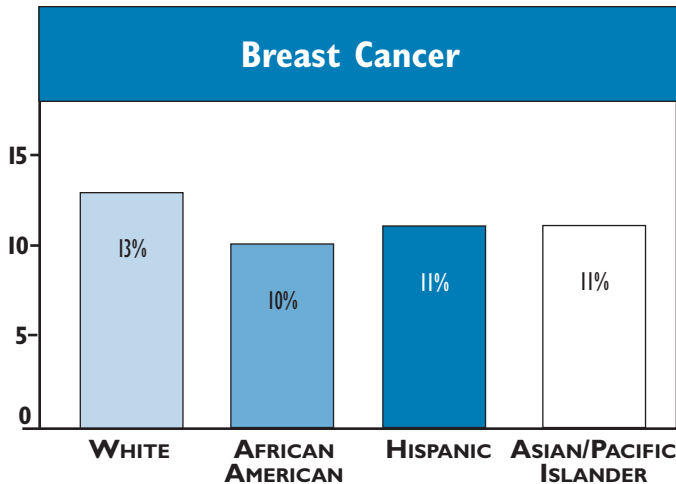


Among study participants with breast cancer, about 15% reported that their mothers also had breast cancer, and 6% reported that at least one sister had breast cancer. These rates were nearly twice those reported for the study participants without breast cancer (about 8% and 4%, respectively). Furthermore, among study participants with breast cancer, about 2% reported that they had both a mother and at least one sister with breast cancer as compared to 1% of study participants without breast cancer.

FAMILY HISTORY REPORT

The first-degree relatives in this report consist of fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

Percent of Participants Reporting Family History of the Six Most Common Cancers



California Teachers Study Enters the New Millennium

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successful aging. Can we identify what allows many women today to live vibrant, productive lives at ages that not long ago were seen as rarities? And what about Alzheimer's disease? Women experience a higher risk than do men, yet very little is known about the causes and no effective cures are available.

These last two pages of the survey are devoted to begin to address these issues. While they may appear to be simple, even childish, these are the very tools that experts around the country use in studies of aging. Obviously, it is necessary to obtain this information from women of all ages, so we can better understand the changes that may occur over time.

Future Directions

This brings us to a very important point. When we first introduced the Teachers Study to you, we stated that the primary goal was to discover factors related to the cause of breast cancer. However, the information is also very useful in identifying the causes of other cancers that occur in women. And, as we have just described, it is an ideal way to study the effects of stress on health or factors associated with aging and even other important health conditions. We hope that you are interested in learning more about some of these other health issues as well as breast cancer. However, if you wish to have the information that you have provided or will provide used only to study breast cancer, please take a moment to let us know. We can be reached by phone at (800) 568-9471 or email at: calteach@usc.edu. Please provide your name, address, telephone number and your id code from the cover of the survey so we can be sure to honor your request. ❖



Suzette Marie Wright

IN MEMORY OF SUZETTE MARIE WRIGHT

We are deeply saddened by the death of Suzette Marie Wright, dedicated breast cancer activist, who lost her long personal battle with breast cancer, April 4, 1999. Her strong commitment as a member of the California Teachers Study's Advisory Task Force was just one of the ways in which she attempted every day to make a difference. Her personal accomplishments are countless, and she was a devoted local, state, and national advocate for breast cancer causes. Most notably, Ms. Wright served women in a direct and meaningful way as President of Save Ourselves / Y-ME Breast Cancer Organization of Sacramento, an education, support and advocacy group. She was instrumental in expanding the services and scope of the organization within Sacramento and North Central California. Many lives have been touched because of her involvement and very warm personable manner. Her dream was to ensure that breast cancer would no longer be a life-threatening concern for the next generation. Our hearts go out to her family, her husband Patrick Talbott and daughter, Emily Gustaffson-Wright, who both now continue the fight in her name. She is greatly missed. ❖



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