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## An intervention to increase knowledge level of signs and symptoms of heart attack among African American women

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Cardiovascular disease (includes heart attack and chest pain) is the number one killer of American women and more than half of the deaths are directly attributable to heart attack, resulting in many deaths within one hour of onset of symptoms and generally before reaching a hospital. Heart attack is a health disparity which has received attention nationally over the last decade. However, the death rate for African American women who have heart attacks continues to be twice than that of white women. Literature addresses three specific problems facing African American women who have heart attacks: They are not aware of risk factors, they do not know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and they delay treatment. It is documented in the literature that African American women tend to present symptoms of a heart attack that are atypical, thus not responding in a timely matter, resulting in delay treatment and death. Receiving treatment as early as possible can delay morbidity and mortality. Consequently, if African American women do not recognize these atypical signs, then they will continue to delay initiating emergency treatment resulting in a continued increase in deaths related to heart attack. This qualitative research study employs focus groups as the research methodology to verify if African American women ages 25-65 in two counties exemplify the atypical symptoms addressed in the literature. In addition, the study explored the participants' knowledge level and recognition of signs and symptoms of heart attack.

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