

# Initiating a Genetics Study with African American Participants

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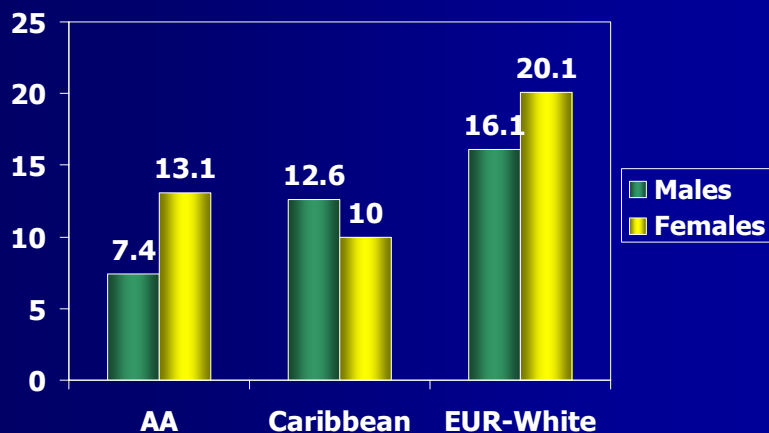
## Rationale

- AA may have different susceptibility to Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)
  - Lower lifetime prevalence
  - May have slightly greater resilience (e.g., the 5-HTTLPR long allele)
  - Similar familial aggregation
- No formal family studies of MDD in AA

## Reduced Lifetime Prevalence of MDD

- Odds ratio 0.63  
National Comorbidity Survey  
Kessler, et al. (1994)
- Odds ratio 0.6  
NCS Replication Study  
Kessler, et al. (2003)

## Lifetime Prevalence of MDD by Race & Gender



National Survey of American Life, Jackson et al. 2001

## Rates of MDD & MDD with positive family history

Ethnicity	N	Current or past MDD	+MDD with +FH
Hispanic	891	46.7 %	36.1 %
African-American	135	34.0 % *	32.6 % **
EUR-White	52	50.0 %	38.5 %

\*  $\chi^2 = 8.02, p = .018$       \*\*  $\chi^2 = 0.3, n.s.$   
Weissman, et al. (unpublished data)

## GenRED-I (1999-2003)

- Collected one of the largest pedigree samples in genetics research
  - 680 pedigrees (927 independent ASPs)
    - But < 3% of sample is AA
- Only publicly-funded large-scale genetic study of MDD with +FH
- Genetic & clinical data will be available through NIMH repository

## **GenRED-II Aims**

- Expand a repository-based clinical sample
- Correct the under-representation of African-Americans in genetic studies
- Identify genes that confer susceptibility to recurrent early-onset major depression (MDD-RE)

## **Goals (2005 – 2009)**

- Collect DNA samples from probands with MDD-RE & +FH diagnosed by clinical interview & psychiatric records
  - 530 African American
  - 1,026 EUR-White
- Identify one or more MDD susceptibility genes

## Potential obstacles

- Stigma of mental health diagnoses
- Clinical presentation with somatization
- Limited access to research information
- Mistrust of medical institutions
- Problems in physician-patient relationship
- Personal circumstances
  - e.g., child care demands, job flexibility, geographic proximity to research sites

## Eligibility criteria

- Are 21 years or older
- Have had 2 or more MDEs
- Have had 1 MDE by age 30
- Have a brother, sister or parent who has had MDD-RE
- Do not have Bipolar Disorder

[www.depressiongenetics.org](http://www.depressiongenetics.org)