



# Trust of Health Care Providers among Rural African Americans

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## Abstract

There is little research on the mistrust of health care providers especially in the area of minority and rural mistrust. The purpose of this study is to examine whether there is a generational gap in feelings of mistrust of health care providers in rural African-American communities. For the purpose of this study, a generational gap will be defined as a difference in feelings toward the topic at hand from one generation of subjects to the next. This study, through use of a written survey, seeks to pinpoint which generations experience the strongest feelings of mistrust and what factors contribute to higher physician - patient trust. Through convenience sampling, a pilot study sample of 18 African-Americans over the age of 18, who reside in Orangeburg and Sumter counties (rural and city) in South Carolina were surveyed. Three age groups were compared; 18-35 years of age, 36-54 years of age, and 55 years of age and older. All information was kept confidential and the research participants remained anonymous. Information was kept in envelopes. It was hypothesized that older African-Americans will experience the strongest feelings of mistrust. The survey was coded to determine if there were any correlations. A trust scale ranging from (8-40) was made to score the level of trust of each individual participant as well. A moderate correlation (-.564) between heightened compliance and the race of healthcare providers was evident. A strong correlation (.683) among the race of Health Care Provider and the town the participant lived in was observed. Overall, participants showed a moderate level of trust on the trust score scale. There was not a correlation between age and level of trust of health care providers in the current pilot study. To better serve rural communities that are majority African-American, health care providers and government officials can use this study as a guide for developing a health care system that rural African- Americans trust and to conduct sensitivity training for health care providers.

## Introduction

- 42% of African Americans feel that the health care system needs to be rebuilt (Kennedy, B. R. et al, 2007)
- There is a lack of studies on non-elderly African Americans and rural communities (West, S. K., & Hollis, M. 2012)
- African Americans have shown a reluctance to depend on health care providers. (Murray, T. M. 2015)
- Prior negative history with healthcare providers affects a patient's expectations for future care (Murray, T. M. 2015)
- Middle-aged and older adults in the African American community have exhibited "Historical Trauma" from Segregation, Unethical Experimentation, Denial of Treatment, etc. (West, S. K., & Hollis, M. 2012)
- There is a lack of minority representation in healthcare and many patients feel as though majority physicians can not communicate or relate to them properly. (Kennedy, B. R. et al, 2007)
- Younger adults acknowledge that there is general discomfort among African Americans towards the health care system (West, S. K., & Hollis, M. 2012)
- Health care providers may have fears or problems relating to African American patients. (Kennedy, B. R. et al, 2007)

## Materials and Methods

- Through convenience sampling, a pilot study sample of 18 African-Americans over the age of 18, who reside in Orangeburg and Sumter counties (rural and city) in South Carolina were surveyed.
- 11 females; 7 males
- 3 groups were compared; 18-35 years of age, 36-54 years of age, and 55 years of age and older.
- All information was kept confidential and the research participants remained anonymous. Information was kept in envelopes.
- The survey assesses the frequency of medical visits, the comprehension of their treatment, health care coverage, general feelings toward health care and health care professionals, demographics, and their access to health care.

## Results



Figure 1 (a) Sumter County, South Carolina (b) Orangeburg County, South Carolina

		Trust	Mislead	Conside	Follow	Judgem	Respe	Decision	Seeking
Age	Pearson	.352	.072	.121	.112	.061	.079	.076	.253
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.313	.778	.633	.659	.810	.756	.764	.310
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
RaceHealth Provider	Pearson	-.305	-.257	-.422	-.564*	-.410	-.523*	-.534*	-.406
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.218	.304	.081	.015	.091	.026	.022	.095
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Follow Advice	Pearson	-.690*	-.632**	-.651**	1	-.622**	-.919**	-.948**	-.847**
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.005	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18

Figure 2. SPSS Correlation results.

7. What town do you live in within Orangeburg or Sumter County?

8. My primary health care provider is:

African American  
Hispanic  
Non-Hispanic White  
Asian  
Other

9. My mother visits a health care provider at least once a year:

Yes No I do not know

10. My father visits a health care provider at least once a year:

Yes No I do not know

11. How many times have you visited a health care provider (defined as a doctor, physician's assistant, or licensed nurse practitioner) in the past year? \_\_\_\_\_

12. My past experiences with health care providers have been:

Negative  
Somewhat Negative  
Neutral  
Somewhat Positive  
Positive

Figure 3. Survey administered to participants.

Trust that health care providers will tell me if a mistake has been made about my treatment.

Sometimes I feel like I have been deceived or misled by a health care provider.

My health care provider is usually considerate of my needs and puts them first.

Trust my health care provider so much that I always try to follow his/her advice.

Trust my health care provider's judgments about my medical care.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Figure 4. Trust Scale Survey Administered to participants

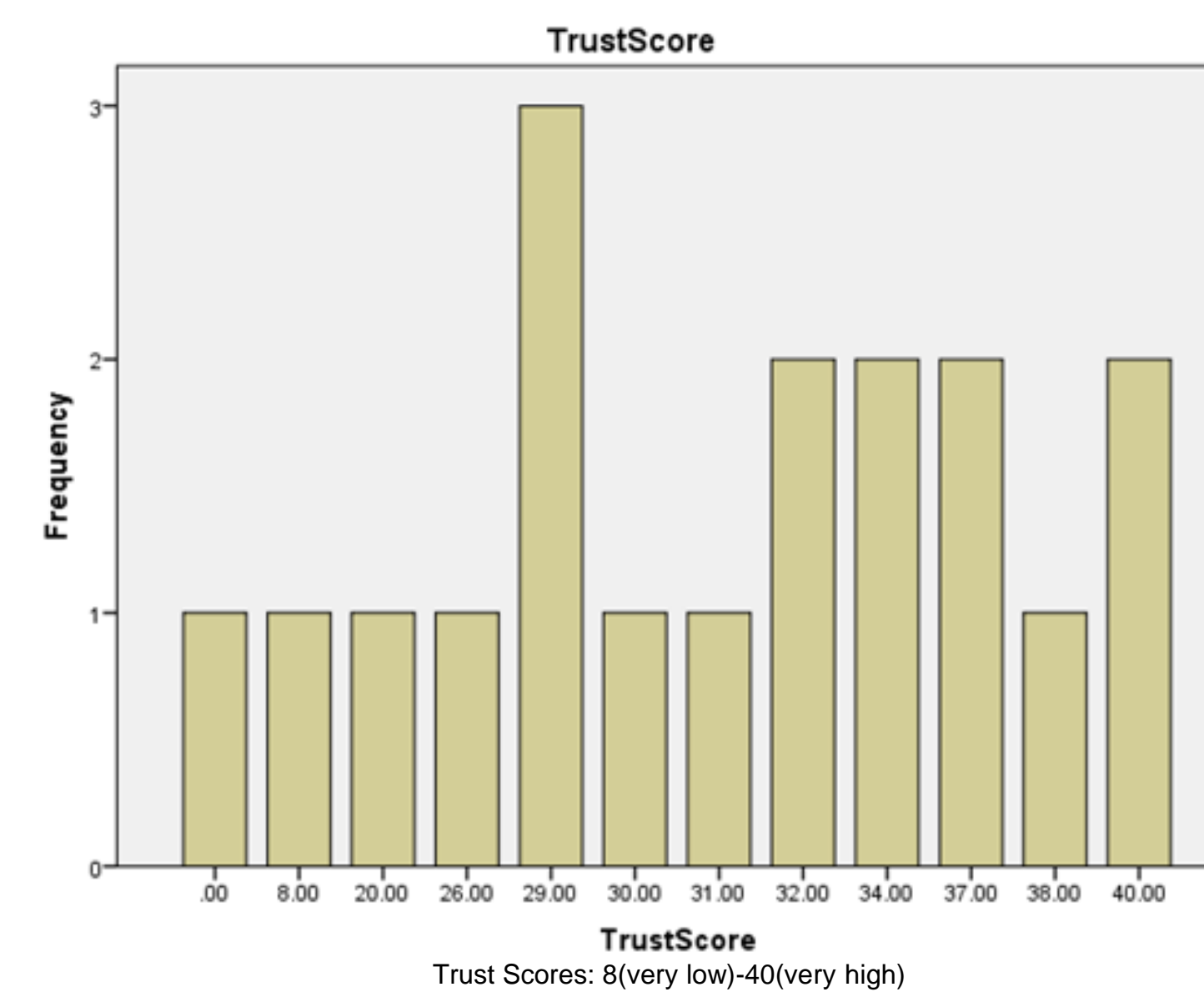


Figure 5. Trust scale results indicating a moderate level of trust.

## Conclusion

- Results, although not concrete, did not support the original hypothesis that older rural African-Americans would experience more mistrust.
- Previous studies have shown that elderly AAs did not consider mistrust as a barrier to healthcare. (West, S. K., & Hollis, M. 2012)
- The sample was overly homogenous.

## Future Plans

Further research goals will look to address the limitations presented by small sample sizes through a large study in Orangeburg and Sumter counties. Community centers, coffee shops, health clinics, and churches will be used to collect written surveys.

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