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Emory School of Nursing Assistant Professor, Dr. Telisa Spikes, Receives Grant for the Contribution of Chronic Stress and Psychosocial Resources on Aging in Young and Early Midlife Black Women

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) has awarded its grant titled “**The Contribution of Chronic Stress and Psychosocial Resources on Aging in Young and Early Midlife Black Women**” to Telisa Spikes, PhD, RN, an assistant professor with Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. The K23 Research Project grant provides funding to address the critical issue of cardiovascular-related health disparities faced by young and early midlife Black women. These women are disproportionately affected by hypertension (HTN) and its associated complications, which lead to a higher burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD) morbidity and mortality.

Early midlife Black women, 35-44 years old, have more than double the prevalence of hypertension (HTN) compared to aged-matched White women, 48.3% versus 21.3%, respectively. Early onset HTN among early midlife Black women is linked to a higher burden of HTN-mediated organ damage and cardiovascular disease (CVD) morbidity and mortality; however, causes of these disparate outcomes remain unknown but may be due to the unequal burden of distinct stressors experienced by Black women. Repeated exposure to these distinct stressors are suggested to cause stress proliferation and modify the effects of health protective resources such as resilience that may lead to undesirable effects on physical health.

The K23 Research Project grant gives Dr. Spikes and her team the opportunity to quantify the impact of chronic stress burden and resilience on biologic and vascular aging using Klemmera-Doubal estimation method, whether a person is biologically older or younger given their chronological age, and arterial stiffness, a proxy of CVD risk, in early midlife Black women. Dr. Spikes’ long-term goal is to apply the knowledge and skills obtained under this K23 grant to establish a longitudinal cohort examining the role of socioeconomic position, chronic stress, and health protective resources that may enhance or mitigate physiologic dysregulation and CVD risk over time.

Dr. Telisa Spikes is an Assistant Professor, tenure track, in the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. Dr. Spikes overall research interests focuses on the relationships among adverse social stressors, inflammation, and cardiovascular disease risk, specifically subclinical disease and hypertension, in young adult African American women, a group that has seen a dramatic increase in cardiovascular disease morbidity and mortality. Additionally, she is interested in the stress buffering role of resilience on mitigating cardiovascular risk.

For more information on Dr. Telisa Spikes, visit her [faculty profile](#). To learn more about the K23 Research Project grant, visit the National Institute of Nursing Research [website](#).