

After conducting my research, my understanding of the narrative completely changed. I had always known that society had crass expectations for women, but I didn't know how the history of women's healthcare shaped the way women are treated presently. While I was aware that many products in the 20th century contained dangerous chemicals that are banned today, I was completely unaware of the encouraged use of disinfectants as vaginal cleaning products. I genuinely felt sick to my stomach when I saw the kind of pressure women were under on a daily basis. Informing a woman that her family will fall apart and her husband will leave her if she doesn't put these chemicals in her body is unbelievable. Women have been conditioned to believe that getting married and having children is something that should be definite in their lifetime. I know that not finding a partner has always been a fear of mine, despite so many other goals and aspirations I have for myself. Once I saw men on social media saying that they didn't want women with body hair or women who didn't smell like artificial scents all the time, I thought that I wasn't good enough. I started to think that I would never find a partner because my hygiene was probably awful. I didn't smell like roses, I wasn't hairless, and I didn't believe myself to be conventionally attractive.

My research gave me a new perspective on a lot of things. For starters, I've stopped caring about what people thought of me a long time ago. Why would I let a few uneducated individuals online tell me what's wrong or right with my body? In reading medical sources, I now know that my hygiene is perfect the way it is. Secondly, with the possibility of having children in the future, I would never use the supine position to give birth. Research shows that positions such as squatting and kneeling are safer and easier, so I refuse to conform to society's norms and let such an important moment in my life be ruined by putting myself through more pain so a doctor has an easier time delivering my child. One thing we've learned in Narrative

Medicine is that we need to listen to our patients as doctors. We need to believe their stories and try to grasp their pain. We don't tell them to make things convenient for us as doctors, we try to make things as best as possible for our patients. If anything, this is one of the most valuable lessons I've learned in this class. Lastly, my research taught me why it is so important for people like me to enter the medical field. I've been cycling obstetrics and anesthesiology for a multitude of reasons. I studied that Black women have a higher risk of dying during childbirth, and Black patients receive less pain medication for the ailments compared to any other race. As a future Black physician, I would want my patients to know that their pain is valid. Their pain is seen. Their pain is heard. That's why my research is so important. That's why people like me are going to help change the world, one hopeful Black girl at a time.