

# Study looks at ethnic menopausal symptoms

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A U.S. scientist is conducting a \$1.2 million study of differences in menopausal symptoms reported by four of the most common U.S. ethnic groups.

Senior investigator Eun-Ok Im of the University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing said the National Institutes of Health-funded, Internet-based study will collect data from 500 middle-aged Caucasian, Hispanic, African-American and Asian women nationwide.

"Increasing ethnic diversity of our population requires health professionals to practice with greater cultural competence in areas such as the management of menopausal symptoms, where cultural beliefs mediate the biology of reproduction and aging," said Im.

A growing number of studies have challenged the universality of menopausal symptoms by indicating ethnic differences in how women experience them. For example, it has been reported Hispanic women experience more urinary problems and African-American women have more weight gain.

"All of this has been reported, but findings are inconsistent," Im said, adding she believes her study will present a more valid comparison because she is getting equal numbers of participants from each ethnic group.

The study is expected to be completed during 2009.

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