

Being born in another country may protect against stroke for US Hispanics

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New research finds foreign-born Hispanics now living in the United States appear to be less likely to have a stroke compared to non-Hispanic white people. The research was released today and will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 64th Annual Meeting in New Orleans April 21 to April 28, 2012. The research is also being simultaneously published in *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

"Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S. and more research is needed to understand why they might have lower [stroke risk](#) than non-Hispanic whites," said study author J. Robin Moon, DPH, at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston. "This protective effect does not extend to Hispanics born in the U.S., who have stroke risk similar to non-Hispanic whites with similar education and financial resources. Future research should address what could explain this pattern. We are interested in differences in childhood conditions that might shape adult risk factors, for example diet, social or family connections, physical activity and [health behaviors](#)."

The study involved 15,784 people over the age of 50 with an average age of 66. Of the participants, 1,424 were Hispanics and 14,360 non-Hispanic whites who were free of stroke in 1998. They were followed through 2008. During that time, 1,388 people had a first stroke. A foreign-born Hispanic was considered anyone who immigrated to the U.S. after age six.

The study found that after accounting for [socioeconomic factors](#), foreign-born Hispanics were 42 percent less likely than non-Hispanic whites to have a first stroke. There was no difference in risk between non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics born in the U.S.

"Very little is known about patterns of [stroke incidence](#) among Hispanics in the U.S. We would like to understand why foreign-born Hispanics may be protected. We hope this will help us find ways to reduce stroke risk for everyone," said Moon.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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