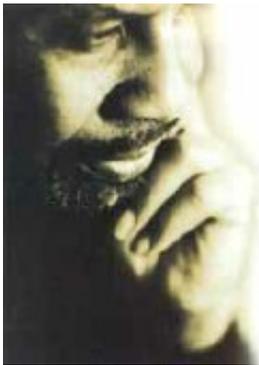


Risk of sudden cardiac death up for black patients with HTN

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Black patients with hypertension face a significantly increased risk of sudden cardiac death compared with nonblack patients, even after adjusting for multiple confounding variables, according to a study published in the April issue of *Heart Rhythm*.

(HealthDay) -- Black patients with hypertension face a significantly increased risk of sudden cardiac death (SCD) compared with nonblack patients, even after adjusting for multiple confounding variables, according to a study published in the April issue of *Heart Rhythm*.

Peter M. Okin, M.D., from Cornell University in New York City, and colleagues examined the incidence of SCD in 533 black and 8,660 nonblack hypertensive patients with electrocardiographic left ventricular hypertrophy. Patients were randomly assigned to losartan- or atenolol-based treatment and were followed for a mean of 4.8 years.

The researchers found that SCD occurred in 1.9 percent of patients. Compared with nonblack patients, the five-year SCD incidence was significantly higher in black patients (3.9 versus 1.9 percent; $P = 0.007$). In univariate analyses, black patients had a significantly increased risk of SCD (hazard ratio, 1.97; $P = 0.015$). After adjustment for other sociodemographic and medical variables, black race remained similarly associated with an increased risk of SCD (hazard ratio, 1.98; $P = 0.02$).

"The higher risk of SCD in black patients persists after adjusting for the higher prevalence of risk factors in black patients, in-treatment blood pressure, and the established predictive value of in-treatment electrocardiographic left ventricular hypertrophy and heart rate for SCD in this population," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed [financial ties](#) to pharmaceutical companies, including Merck & Co., which partially supported this research.

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