

Hypertension going untreated in US Hispanic community

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There is a significant deficit in recognition and control of hypertension in the Hispanic population of the United States, according to a new study published in *American Journal of Hypertension (AJH)*.

The study, "Prevalence of hypertension, awareness, treatment and control in the Hispanic Community," led by Dr. Paul D. Sorlie of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), sampled 16,400 individuals, making it one of the largest and most rigorous [health](#) studies of the Hispanic community. Hispanics are currently the largest minority group within the US population. The results show that while the prevalence of hypertension in the Hispanic community is nearly equal to that of non-Hispanic whites, diagnosis of the disease is much lower, as is general awareness of its symptoms and treatment options.

"This is a landmark study," says Dr. Michael Alderman, Editor-in-Chief of *AJH*. "This is the first comprehensive data on the prevalence and awareness of hypertension within the US Hispanic community that also includes all of its diverse subgroups." Prevention and control of hypertension are essential components for reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease. As such, the study offers important insights into new avenues for improving the health care of the United States' rapidly growing Hispanic population. Sorlie, et al. contend that the availability of health insurance plays a critical factor in the outcomes measured in their study, as the Hispanic community is the least insured minority group in the US.

"Though the presence of hypertension in the Hispanic community is nearly equal that of non-Hispanic whites, awareness and diagnosis lag significantly behind, particularly in those individuals without [health insurance](#)," says Dr. Sorlie. "Given the relative ease of identifying hypertension and the availability of low cost medications, enabling better access to diagnostic and treatment services should be prioritized to reduce the burden of [cardiovascular disease](#) on Hispanic populations. This study gives us the information needed to support the development of policies that can improve this access and, subsequently, the overall health of countless US citizens."

The study also found that the prevalence of [hypertension](#) within the Hispanic community increased with increasing age, and was highest among those with Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican backgrounds.

Provided by Oxford University Press

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