

Optimistic outlook may boost hispanics' heart health

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(HealthDay)—For U.S. Hispanics, an upbeat attitude may go a long way

toward keeping a healthy heart, a new study finds.

A research team led by Rosalba Hernandez, of Northwestern University in Chicago, tracked outcomes for almost 5,000 adult Hispanics ranging in age from 18 to 75.

All study participants were checked for levels of how optimistic they were, and for measures of heart health, such as diet, body fat, exercise, cholesterol and blood pressure.

Few had ideal heart health—only a little more than 9 percent of the study group, the investigators found.

However, compared to those who were least optimistic, people who were moderately optimistic were 61 percent more likely to have ideal heart health and 37 percent more likely to have medium [heart health](#), the findings showed.

The study finding can't prove that optimism causes better cardiovascular well-being, but it does suggest a possible link between the two, the researchers said.

One other expert said prior research has pointed to similar effects.

"Studies have shown the crucial impact of optimism on cardiovascular health," said Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, a preventive cardiologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

"This study demonstrates the importance of perception and perspective on how we are able to care for ourselves," she said. "Those who are able to look at the world with a positive attitude are more driven and able to take better care of themselves," Steinbaum added.

Sticking to a heart-healthy lifestyle—for example, eating right, exercising and not smoking—is "challenging," Steinbaum said. So it makes sense that having an upbeat attitude would help.

"Health care providers need to help patients make healthy choices, not only through education, but through empowering them to see their lives from an optimistic place," she suggested.

The study was to be presented Friday at an American Heart Association meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. Experts note that findings presented at medical meetings are typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health explains how to [reduce heart risks](#).

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