

Race, hormones and diabetes risk

April 9 2020, by Heather Caslin



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Natriuretic peptides (NP) are hormones released from the heart that reduce blood pressure, insulin resistance and body fat accumulation. Low NP levels may be associated with increased risk for type 2 diabetes, a condition more common in African-Americans and Hispanics than in white individuals.

In a recent *PLOS ONE* publication, Deepak Gupta, MD, MSCI, and colleagues examined serum NP levels from 3,220 multiethnic participants in the Diabetes Prevention Program, a randomized trial that investigated approaches to type 2 diabetes prevention.

They reported lower NP levels in African-Americans and Hispanics compared with white individuals. Over a two-year follow-up, NP levels remained lower in African-Americans compared with white individuals regardless of trial intervention.

These findings suggest variation in NP levels may contribute to racial/[ethnic differences](#) in susceptibility to diabetes mellitus and other cardio-metabolic conditions. Future studies should examine whether pharmacologically augmenting the NP system reduces the risk of diabetes, particularly in high-risk groups such as African-American and Hispanic individuals.

More information: Deepak K. Gupta et al. Racial/ethnic differences in circulating natriuretic peptide levels: The Diabetes Prevention Program, *PLOS ONE* (2020). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0229280](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229280)

Provided by Vanderbilt University

Citation: Race, hormones and diabetes risk (2020, April 9) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-hormones-diabetes.html>

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