

Poorly managed diabetes raises odds for more severe COVID

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(HealthDay)—Hospitalized patients with diabetes who hadn't been

taking their medication had more severe cases of COVID-19, a new study shows.

"Our results highlight the importance of assessing, monitoring and controlling [blood glucose](#) [sugar] in hospitalized COVID-19 patients from the start," said study author Sudip Bajpeyi, associate professor of kinesiology at the University of Texas at El Paso. He spoke in a news release from the American Diabetes Association, which held its virtual annual meeting on Friday, when the study was presented.

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans with diabetes reported that due to the [financial pressures](#) of the pandemic, they had to choose between buying food or buying medications and [medical supplies](#) to manage their diabetes, according to the study.

The researchers investigated the impact of having uncontrolled diabetes—or a lack of medication—had on COVID-19 severity, focusing on a population that was 89% Hispanic. They noted the Latin community has been 2.4 times more likely to die of COVID-19 and 50% more likely to have diabetes, compared to white individuals.

Forty percent of Americans who have died of COVID-19 have had diabetes, and 1 in 10 people with diabetes hospitalized for COVID-19 die within one week, the researchers said.

The study used [medical records](#) from 369 patients with COVID-19 admitted to University Medical Center of El Paso. They were categorized based on blood A1C levels (a measure of blood sugar control) into one of three groups: normal blood sugar levels, prediabetes and diabetes. The diabetes group reported on their diabetes management with medication at the time of the admission.

Bajpeyi's team found that patients with unmanaged diabetes had

significantly greater severity of COVID-19—based on quick sepsis-related organ failure assessment and length of hospitalization—compared to patients who managed [diabetes](#) with medication.

Patients with lower blood sugar levels had less severe complications and shorter hospital stays, according to the study.

Research presented at meetings is considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The International Diabetes Federation has more on [diabetes and COVID-19](#).

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