

# Researchers explore health-promoting behaviors of African American and Black immigrant men

March 27 2024

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

African American and Black immigrant men prioritize their health and possess the necessary skills for proactive gastrointestinal (GI) health

management, according to a Rutgers Health study.

Published in the *American Journal of Men's Health* and led by Daina Potter, a data analyst in the Department of Urban-Global Public Health at the Rutgers School of Public Health, the [study](#) highlights that a strength-based research approach can offer significant insights into how African American and Black immigrant males navigate GI conditions.

Potter emphasized the novelty of the research approach, highlighting its focus on the resilience and strengths of this population in dealing with GI conditions.

"Much of the research on African American/Black immigrant men focuses on deficiencies and limitations to health-seeking," Potter said. "This study was a shift to demonstrate that this population wants to be healthy and has found ways to do so. Such shift represents an opportunity to study digestive conditions in African American/Black immigrant males, especially since digestive conditions have become a source of burden in the United States."

Researchers indicated a significant gap in understanding the health of African American men and Black male immigrants in the United States, particularly concerning GI health.

"Black immigrants are often grouped with African Americans in research, which does not account for the differences between the populations," Potter said. "This is a major barrier to understanding and documenting their unique needs, which is why this study is critical, especially for African American/Black immigrant males."

The study enrolled 15 African American men and Black male immigrants between ages 30 and 45 through purposive sampling and recruitment via social media and health care settings. Participants

engaged in focus group meetings where they shared their backgrounds, health challenges, and recommendations for managing GI conditions.

Key findings revealed a progression of strength stages through which participants navigate in dealing with their GI issues. These stages include a lack of understanding of GI symptoms, denial of diagnosis, [self-discipline](#) in taking control of health, positive interactions with [health care providers](#), and sharing solutions and advice with others facing similar challenges.

Potter said positive provider relationships were important in shifting attitudes toward health conditions among African American and Black immigrant men.

"Strength models can be used to understand the facilitators that encourage African American/Black immigrant men to prioritize their health," she added.

Looking ahead, Potter said future research and public health practice should focus on leveraging the strengths of African American and Black immigrant men and their behaviors and attitudes toward GI conditions. Addressing early barriers, such as lack of GI knowledge and denial of diagnosis, is essential, underscoring the need for tailored health education strategies for this population.

Potter, who is an alumna of Rutgers School of Public Health, reflected on her [personal experiences](#) and the importance of the study's findings. "My passion for GI conditions in African American/Black [immigrant men](#) stemmed from a close family friend's struggle with [irritable bowel syndrome](#) and severe stomach pain," she said. "I wanted to shed light on GI conditions in this population to inspire other men and finally give them the recognition they deserve in research."

**More information:** Health Is Power, and Health Is Wealth: Understanding the Motivators and Barriers of African American/Black Male Immigrants With Gastrointestinal Conditions, *American Journal of Men s Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1177/1557988324122733](https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988324122733)

Provided by Rutgers University

Citation: Researchers explore health-promoting behaviors of African American and Black immigrant men (2024, March 27) retrieved 24 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-03-explore-health-behaviors-african-american.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.