

Study finds black women most likely to have high blood pressure

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Treatment focus must shift from middle-aged male smokers, researcher says.

(HealthDay)—Black women in the United States are much more likely to have high blood pressure than black men or white women and men, according to a new study.

The researchers also found that blacks are twice as likely as whites to have undiagnosed and untreated high blood pressure.

"For many years, the focus for high blood pressure was on middle-aged men who smoked. Now we know better," said study author Dr. Uchechukwu Sampson, an assistant professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn.

For the study, which was published in the journal *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*, researchers examined data from 70,000 people in 12 southeastern states known as the "stroke belt." This region has higher rates of stroke than anywhere else in the United States. High blood pressure is a risk factor for stroke, the researchers said.

The overall rate of high blood pressure among the people in the study was 57 percent, but was higher

in blacks (59 percent) than whites (52 percent). The rate among [black women](#) was 64 percent, compared with 52 percent in [white women](#) and 51 percent in both black and white men.

Among the study participants with high blood pressure, 31 percent of [black men](#) were undiagnosed, along with 28 percent of black women, 27 percent of white men and 17 percent of white women. Blacks were twice as likely as whites to have uncontrolled high blood pressure, and men were more likely than women to have uncontrolled high blood pressure.

Among people who had diagnosed high blood pressure, 82 percent were being treated with medications, 44 percent were taking at least two types of medications and only 29 percent were taking a diuretic, a recommended first-line treatment to [lower blood pressure](#), the researchers said.

"We should look for [high blood pressure] in everyone and it should be treated aggressively—especially in women, who have traditionally gotten less attention in this regard," Sampson said in a journal news release.

More than 77 million American adults have [high blood pressure](#), according to the researchers.

More information: The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has more about [high blood pressure](#).

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