

Predictors of Hypertension Awareness, Treatment, and Control Among Mexican American Women and Men

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BACKGROUND: The burden of hypertension and related health care needs among Mexican Americans will likely increase substantially in the near future.

OBJECTIVES: In a nationally representative sample of U.S. Mexican American adults we examined: 1) the full range of blood pressure categories, from normal to severe; 2) predictors of hypertension awareness, treatment and control and; 3) prevalence of comorbidities among those with hypertension.

DESIGN: Cross-sectional analysis of pooled data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES), 1999–2004.

PARTICIPANTS: The group of participants encompassed 1,359 Mexican American women and 1,421 Mexican American men, aged 25–84 years, who underwent a standardized physical examination.

MEASUREMENTS: Physiologic measures of blood pressure, body mass index, and diabetes. Questionnaire assessment of blood pressure awareness and treatment.

RESULTS: Prevalence of Stage 1 hypertension was low and similar between women and men (~10%). Among hypertensives, awareness and treatment were suboptimal, particularly among younger adults (65% unaware, 71% untreated) and those without health insurance (51% unaware, 62% untreated). Among treated hypertensives, control was suboptimal for 56%; of these, 23% had stage ≥ 2 hypertension. Clustering of CVD risk factors was common; among hypertensive adults, 51% of women and 55% of men were also overweight or obese; 24% of women and 23% of men had all three chronic conditions—hypertension, overweight/obesity and diabetes.

CONCLUSION: Management of hypertension in Mexican American adults fails at multiple critical points along an optimal treatment pathway. Tailored strategies to improve hypertension awareness, treatment and control rates must be a public health priority.

KEY WORDS: Mexican American; hypertension; health care; practice patterns; secondary prevention.
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