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Hypertension and Hispanics: Lower Incidence or Missing Data?

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Poster Presentation P17

HYPERTENSION AND HISPANICS: LOWER INCIDENCE OR MISSING DATA?

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Many studies which sought to find the different rates of hypertension among ethnic groups came to the conclusion that Hispanics have an incidence of hypertension lower than that of non-Hispanic whites. The researchers in many of these studies collected their data by interviewing people and asking, among other demographic questions, "Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have hypertension, also called high blood pressure?" Although this is a good method for finding out the proportions of people who are aware of their hypertension, this is not sufficient for learning how many people actually have hypertension. Since Hispanics are more likely to be uninsured and therefore more likely to go without medical care, they are also more likely to be unaware of their hypertension. This paper seeks to straighten out the conclusions that Hispanics have a lower incidence of hypertension than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, despite a higher incidence of obesity and diabetes, and to find a better method for collecting data on hypertension. To improve the health of Hispanics, future studies should focus on minorities and why the health disparity between them and whites exists. This presentation will be in both English and Spanish.