HYPERTENSION CONTROL AND INSURANCE STATUS IN AN UNDERSERVED HISPANIC POPULATION

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Background: Although Hispanics form the largest US ethnic minority, Mexican-Americans are the only segment of this population whose CV profile has been well studied. In Miami-Dade, FL, 69.5% of the population is Hispanic but only 3.8% Mexican. Unlike in the Mexican American population, The Florida Heart Research Institute (FHRI) studies have found hypertension to be more prevalent amongst the Miami Hispanic population than amongst a comparable population of non-Hispanic whites. However, the causes and impact of this difference remain to be explored.

Methods: Between 1997 and 2006, 2,804 Hispanics, (1,799 women, 1,005 men) underwent free CV screenings. JNC7 definitions of hypertension and prehypertension were used and risk factors for hypertension were analyzed by multivariable logistic regression. Pearson χ-square tests were used to determine the association of medical insurance and control of hypertension. P value of <0.05 was significant.

Results: Of the 2,804 Hispanics in our sample, 830 (29.6%) were hypertensive, 787 (28.1%) were prehypertensive, and 1187 (42.3%) were normotensive. Significant correlates of hypertension were age, male gender, overweight/obesity, diabetes and serum triglyceride levels. Inclusion of prehypertensives with hypertensives in the model did not affect the significant risk factor correlate. Among the 830 hypertensives, 492 (59.3%) took antihypertensive medication (AHM), and 212 (43.1% of those on AHM, 25.5% of total hypertensives) had their BP lowered below the hypertensive range.

Among participants, only 226 (8.1%) had medical insurance. Although the prevalence of hypertension was similar between insured and noninsured (29.4% vs. 31.4%), the adequacy of control was dramatically different between groups. A greater percentage of hypertensives with insurance took AHM (67.6% vs. 58.5%). Likewise a greater proportion of insured vs. non-insured hypertensives were under adequate blood pressure control (39.4% vs. 24.2%, p<0.001).

Conclusions: Hypertension is prevalent in the Miami Hispanic population. Blood pressure control in this population is far from adequate. Lack of health insurance appears to greatly exacerbate the problem. Any health initiatives in this population must take into account both the prevalence of disease and the social milieu in which it occurs.