

Blacks, Latinos Less Likely to Receive Allergy Shots

Black and Latino patients are more likely to experience severe allergies compared with white patients.

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As allergy season shifts into full gear, a Penn State College of Medicine study found that Black and Latino patients with [severe allergies](#) are less likely than white individuals to receive a common allergen [immunotherapy](#) shot to alleviate allergy symptoms. The study was published in the [Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology](#).

Researchers suggest this disparity could be due to the fact that Black and Latino patients are less likely to be referred to an allergist and more likely to experience difficulty accessing treatment, according to a [Penn State article](#).

Lead study researcher Sunjay Modi, MD, a fellow in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, said this is the first study to identify a [health disparity](#) in subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy (SCIT) prescription practices.

Common allergies, also called allergic rhinitis, impact one in six Americans but are more common in Black and Latino populations. While over-the-counter medications are available for people with allergies, those with severe allergies are often prescribed SCIT.

“We already know that these underrepresented populations are more likely to suffer from allergic rhinitis,” Modi [told Penn](#). “The fact that those with severe symptoms are also less likely to receive a therapy that might help with symptom management is troublesome and highlights the need for increased access to this treatment.”

The study analyzed data from more than 900,000 patients diagnosed with allergic rhinitis and evaluated how likely patients were to receive SCIT based on their race and ethnicity. The study found that Black patients with allergic rhinitis were 60% less likely to be prescribed SCIT and Latino patients were 20% less likely compared with non-Hispanic white patients.

Modi noted that future research is needed to observe which other barriers—such as difficulty taking time off work—may impeded access to SCIT treatment.

“Medical professionals have a responsibility to help our patients receive optimal care for their ailments so they can have a high quality of life,” Modi said. “Understanding the root causes and developing solutions for this health disparity is essential for helping underserved populations get the allergy treatment they need.”

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