

CDC Releases First National Estimates on Diabetes within Hispanic and Asian Populations in the US

Demographic breakdown identifies specific groups at higher risk of diabetes

December 30, 2019 By Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

In a study published today in [JAMA](#), CDC researchers examined the percentage of people living with diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes in Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian subpopulations. The data fill a national surveillance gap in Hispanic and Asian populations in the United States.

“This landmark diabetes survey provides essential data that will better inform public health efforts to reach more Americans with tailored, effective prevention and treatment strategies,” said CDC Director Robert R. Redfield, M.D. “This defined data on the prevalence of diabetes among Hispanic and Asian demographic groups can help healthcare providers and patients reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes.”

CDC researchers examined the percentage of adults living with diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes in Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian subgroups. To develop this national representative survey, they used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey covering the years 2011 to 2016.

The percentage of adults living with diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes varied significantly by race/ethnicity and among Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian subgroups. Broadly, the age-sex-adjusted percentage of adults living with diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes was 22% in Hispanics, 20% in non-Hispanic blacks, 19% for non-Hispanic Asians and 12% for non-Hispanic whites.

The United States is an increasingly diverse nation, as Hispanics and non-Hispanic Asians collectively now account for 23% of the US population and are expected to account for 38% by 2060, according to [Census dataexternal icon](#). According to researchers, these groups may be at higher risk for type 2 diabetes due to genetic, lifestyle and environmental factors.

Key study findings reveal differences in diabetes prevalence among subgroups:

Among some Hispanics, the age-sex-adjusted percentage of adults living with both diagnosed and

undiagnosed diabetes were:

- 25% for Mexicans
- 22% for Puerto Ricans
- 21% for Cuban/Dominicans
- 19% for Central Americans
- 12% for South Americans

Among some non-Hispanic Asians, the age-sex-adjusted percentage of adults living with both diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes were:

- 23% for South Asians
- 22% for Southeast Asians
- 14% for East Asians

Consistent with [previous research](#), Asians have lower body mass index (BMI) levels compared to other racial/ethnic groups. In this study, after adjusting for age, sex, and BMI, Southeast Asians had the highest percentages of adults living with diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes among Asian subgroups.

“These important findings establish a baseline for future national diabetes estimates for Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian subgroups and highlight differences in the diabetes burden in these groups,” said Ann Albright, Ph.D., director of CDC’s Division of Diabetes Translation. “These data also provide insights that allow us to reach groups at higher risk and provide opportunities to strengthen diabetes detection and type 2 diabetes prevention and care in these groups.”

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed, but only if people know they are at risk and can take action

Most health professionals rely on [BMI](#) to assess whether their patients are overweight or have obesity (BMI of 25 or greater). However, since Asian Americans may be at risk for type 2 diabetes even at normal weight ranges, researchers are now suggesting that people of Asian heritage get tested if their BMI is 23 or greater.

Research shows that adults with prediabetes who take part in a structured lifestyle change program, including weight management and physical activity, can cut their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58% (71% for people over 60 years old). Participation in the CDC-led [National Diabetes Prevention Program](#) lifestyle change program can help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes in those at high risk. The program is taught by trained lifestyle coaches, and encourages healthy, whole-life changes to help participants address barriers to improved nutrition, increased physical activity and coping mechanisms for stress reduction.

To learn more about diabetes or the National Diabetes Prevention Program, visit www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

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