Latino Life Expectancy Increasing

Foreign-born Latinos appear to live longer than those born in the United States.

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A University of Washington study found that, over a 20-year period, the life expectancy of Latinos in the United States increased 2.7 years (from 79.5 years in 2000 to 82.2 years in 2019), making it the highest life expectancy nationally and across most counties.

Published in The Lancet, the study determined that while Latino life expectancy in the United States increased on average, it decreased in 42% of counties in the last 10 years.

The study authors stated that the increase in Latino life expectancy could be owing to the growing number of foreign-born Latinos living in the United States, who may be healthier than their U.S.-born counterparts.

“Lower mortality rates among Latinos compared with non-Latino populations are largely restricted to foreign-born Latino individuals,” the study authors wrote.

Latinos and other racial and ethnic groups have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in terms of both infection and death rates. The study’s authors wrote that 2020 saw “substantial declines” in overall life expectancy in Latinos (3 years) and Blacks (2.9 years) compared with whites (1.2 years). What’s more, during the last 10 years of the study, life expectancy growth was stagnant across all populations, the authors wrote.

“The pandemic exposed stressors and weaknesses in local and national systems that continuously put our most vulnerable populations at risk,” study author Laura Dwyer-Lindgren, PhD, of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, said in a news release. “These findings offer county, state and federal leaders a unique look at the pervasiveness of health disparities in their respective communities.”

To learn more, read “Eating Healthy Can Extend Life by a Decade—and Also Lower Cancer Risk.”

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