TuSalud

Study Challenges Belief That Latinos Have Better Health Outcomes

Latinos have a higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease compared with non-Hispanic white people.

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The Latino Epidemiological Paradox, which refers to the finding that Latinos have better health outcomes compared with non-Latino white people, is being challenged by a study from the University of Miami.

Despite having less access to health care and education and being poorer, on average, Latinos have a higher life expectancy than non-Hispanic white people—hence the paradox. Between 2009 and 2013, Latinos also had lower death rates for the most common causes of death and lower self-reported incidences of cancer, diabetes and heart disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, the study used a national dataset from the National Institutes of Health's All of Us Research Program and found that Latinos are in fact more susceptible to cardiovascular disease than white people.

"We decided to look at this data to show the Latino paradox.... We picked heart disease because it's a major killer, and that's one of the areas where the Latino paradox has been talked about a lot," Olveen Carrasquillo, dean of clinical and translational science at the University of Miami Health System, said in a news release. "And it turns out, we found the opposite. Latinos have higher rates of heart disease than whites. For men, it's even slightly higher than for Blacks."

All of Us is one of the largest sources of biomedical data in the United States and includes over 40,000 Latinos. Carrasquillo is currently the principal investigator for the All of Us Research Program at the University of Miami.

"I've been teaching about the Latino paradox for 30 years. But outside mortality, there aren't that many studies showing the Latino paradox is true," said Carrasquillo. "I think many of us got very excited about the theory that, we Latinos, are healthier. But turns out there was never that much data supporting the paradox."

The All of Us Research Program aims to investigate other diseases, such as cancer and diabetes,

among Latinos and to determine whether there are health differences between Latino subgroups.

To learn more about Latinos and heart disease, read “Healthy Diets Could Lower Heart Disease Risk in Latinos.”

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