

Study Tests Exercise Regimen for Latinos With Type 2 Diabetes

Researchers will test whether a structured exercise program can improve health and reduce risk of cardiovascular disease.

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University of New Mexico (UNM) researchers are testing whether a structured exercise program for Latinos with [type 2 diabetes](#) could improve their blood sugar control and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, according to a [university news release](#).

To [treat diabetes](#) and decrease the risk for [diabetes](#)-associated stroke and heart attack, experts recommend lifestyle changes such as increasing [physical activity](#), following a [healthy diet](#) and, for those with overweight or obesity, losing weight.

Roberto Mota Alvidrez, MD, MS, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the UNM College of Pharmacy, is leading a study involving 50 sedentary Latinos with type 2 diabetes. Participants committed to completing a six-month course of hourlong workouts twice a week at UNM.

“It’s a big commitment, but they’re incredibly happy, and they actually don’t want to leave the study when it’s concluded,” Mota Alvidrez said in the release.

Diabetes occurs when the body doesn’t produce enough insulin or cells are unable to use it. The two main kinds of diabetes are type 1 and type 2. In type 1 diabetes, the body’s [immune system](#) destroys the cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. It typically arises during childhood.

Type 2 diabetes is the more common form of the disease and usually develops later in life. Although the body still produces some insulin, cells are unable to use it for energy, a condition known as insulin resistance.

Latinos have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared with other racial groups.

Latinos are also more likely to develop [prediabetes](#), or higher than average blood sugar levels, at a younger age. Indeed, more than 22% of Latino youth and 28.7% of Latino young adults have prediabetes, compared with 15.8% and 21% of non-Latino white youth and young adults, according to the [Keck School of Medicine](#).

For the study, a group of Latinos between 30 and 78 years old were randomly assigned to participate in the exercise regimen or continue their usual sedentary lifestyle. Researchers will compare blood samples and other physiological data from both groups at the beginning and end of the study.

“The first [study endpoint] we’re looking at is glucose control, because we’re trying to find a linear correlation between a marker that identifies inflammation and also glucose control,” Moto Alvidrez. “If a patient has uncontrolled diabetes and has inflammation, this marker goes up, and vice versa.”

For the study, researchers aim to recruit more Latino men between 30 and 50 years old because they tend to have a higher risk for diabetes complications compared with premenopausal women. What’s more, that group is “very underrepresented, especially for [clinical trials](#),” according to Mota Alvidrez.

To learn more, click [#Diabetes](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Avocados Linked to Lower Diabetes Risk in Mexican Women](#),” “[Diabetes Rate Has Increased From 9.7% to 15.8% Since 2000](#)” and “[NIH Launches Large Study to Tackle Type 2 Diabetes in Young People](#).”