

A Closer Look at African American Men and High Blood Pressure Control

The following is a synopsis of *A Closer Look at African American Men and High Blood Pressure Control: A Review of Psychosocial Factors and Systems-Level Interventions*, a resource tool published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in May 2010.



What is already known on this topic?

Evidence shows that African American men are disproportionately affected by heart disease and stroke. High blood pressure or hypertension, known as “the silent killer,” is more likely to occur in African American men than in white or Hispanic men. African American men have experienced the largest increase in death rates from hypertensive disease across all populations. However, little information exists related to effective interventions for African American men affected by high blood pressure.

What is added by this resource?

The CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention considers eliminating health disparities to be one of its overall strategic goals. Funded state grantees and other public health agencies can use this resource tool to learn more about the burden of heart disease and stroke in this priority population.

In addition, stakeholders can learn about the psychosocial aspects that contribute to blood pressure control in African American men, such as racial discrimination, quality of care, health insurance, and others. Lastly, readers can learn about promising interventions as well as national, state, and local resources for collaboration and partnership in addressing high blood pressure control for African American men.

What are the implications for public health practice?

Because African American men experience premature death and disability from uncontrolled high blood pressure, novel approaches are needed to address this issue. This resource tool summarizes lessons learned, considerations, and recommendations to assist public health professionals and agencies as they develop and implement targeted interventions. These interventions can lead to a reduction in health care costs and more equity in health care delivery.

What are some considerations for systems-level interventions?

To encourage the development, implementation, and evaluation of systems-level interventions to address high blood pressure control in African American men, the authors offer the following considerations:

1. Review and become familiar with the national prevalence data on hypertension in African American men as well as factors related to awareness, treatment, and control. Gather and analyze state and local data on this population and determine priority groups or localities if appropriate.
2. Become familiar with the psychosocial factors (e.g., effects of racism, social support, access to care) related to high blood pressure control among African American men.
3. Identify stakeholders with whom public health programs might partner when developing interventions related to high blood pressure control in African American men. Share data with these groups.
4. Before implementing an intervention, examine the history and politics of the community. Include members of the community during the initial planning stages of an intervention or activity. Not only does this build trust, but it also can increase the chances that the intervention or activity will be successful.

5. Identify settings or mechanisms for possible intervention, which may include conducting community needs assessments or environmental scans of potential sites and how the priority group could best be reached.

What are the recommendations to public health programs as they develop targeted interventions?

- ▶ Develop an evaluation plan during the initial stages of designing a systems-level intervention.
- ▶ Encourage partners that conduct research to focus more efforts on the priority population.
- ▶ Collaborate with nontraditional partners to develop and implement systems-level interventions.
- ▶ Create opportunities to educate providers on the psychosocial and cultural nuances associated with this priority population.
- ▶ Formulate partnerships with programs focused on control and treatment of other diseases and conditions.

Resource

CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention
A Closer Look at African American Men and High Blood Pressure Control
http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/aa_sourcebook.htm

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The findings and conclusions in these reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention



For more information please contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-6348
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov Web: www.cdc.gov