

Study Cites Sickle Cell Breakthrough

New therapy may help patients live longer, healthier

(AP)—A rare, deadly lung condition is so common among people with sickle cell anemia that testing for and treating it could help many patients live longer, healthier lives, a study found.

Experts called the study a major advance in the fight against sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder that affects 70,000 to 100,000 Americans.

"The paper will change the standard of care for sickle cell patients across the country," said Dr. Clint Joiner, director of the sickle cell center at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

Doctors must now find the best ways to treat sickle cell patients who also have pulmonary hypertension,

or high blood pressure in the lungs. It is a condition in which narrowed, thickened blood vessels in the lungs keep the body from getting enough oxygen.

Researchers do not know if pulmonary hypertension caused the increase in deaths among the 195 patients they studied, or was a sign of severe sickle cell disease. But it was present in 63 patients, or 32 percent.

All 195 were in stable condition at the start. Within 18 months, nearly 20 percent of those with both conditions were dead, compared to fewer than 2 percent of those without pulmonary hypertension.

The numbers indicate that patients with sickle cell disease should be tested for pulmonary hypertension, said Dr. Mark T. Gladwin of the National Institutes of Health, lead researcher for the study.

"If they have high blood pressure in the lungs, they should intensify their therapy. And consider treatment with drugs to lower blood pressure in the lungs," he said.

Sickle cell disease, which mostly affects blacks, used to be a childhood death sentence. Now, half of all patients make it past the age of 50, and doctors are learning what the disease does to the older body.



Children's Emergency Unit Opens

Alex Jackson, assistant administrator at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, holds his son, Owen, while chatting with Dr. Dan Hull, medical director of the newly opened 13-bed children's unit in the Emergency Department of the hospital.

Kidney Disease is 'Silent Killer'

(AP)—Health officials may have an uphill battle in educating African Americans about a disease that's being called a "silent killer," a survey shows.

Kidney disease is an illness that's become more prevalent, especially in the nation's black population, but a survey conducted in Jackson, Atlanta, Baltimore and Cleveland shows only 15 percent of those surveyed thought they were at risk for getting the disease.

Dr. John Bower, former chief of nephrology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, said the survey shows most people

have no clue about how to prevent kidney disease.

"Kidney disease is a silent

Kidney disease is a silent killer. People find themselves in the emergency room, on dialysis, before they even know they have a problem.

—Dr. John Bower

killer," Bower said. "People find themselves in the emergency room, on dialysis, before they even know

they have a problem. That's why it's so important to control diabetes and high blood pressure and have your blood and urine regularly tested ... once you know you are at risk."

The major risk factors for kidney disease include diabetes, high blood pressure or a blood relative with the disease.

"The beautiful thing is that if we can control blood pressure and diabetes, it's a good possibility that we can do something (about kidney disease)," Bower said.

New Front in Health Care Disparities Battle

Center to conduct culturally competent research

The Northwest Center for Health Disparities Research is a new front in providing health care for racial, ethnic and underserved communities.

The Portland center has joined community-based agencies, foundations, academic institutions, local and state public health agencies and health care systems with the mission of developing culturally competent research.

Corliss McKeever, president of the African American Health Coalition, is the program's co-director.

Numerous studies have shown key health disparities by race, ethnicity, sexually orientation and disability. The most striking health disparities involve shorter life expectancy among racial minorities and the poor, and higher rates of cancer, birth defects, infant mortality, asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV and violence.



Corliss McKeever of the African American Health Coalition

Nancy Glass, co-director of the center.

"We have experts in cardiovascular health, violence against women, infant mortality and diabetes. We're trying to bring those together in a targeted strategy," said Glass. "We think we can reduce health disparities and eventually eliminate them if we focus on the strength of the community."

The center's staff is planning to teach strategies to reduce violence against women.

Some other goals for the next year include establishing monthly community and academic research seminars about health disparities, establishing statewide research initiatives with racial and ethnic minorities and the underserved community, and agencies that serve them and a submission of at least two community and academic health disparities research grant applications.

The center, still in its planning stages, doesn't have a particular focus under the umbrella of addressing health disparities, according to

**All classes are free of charge!

AAHC African American Health Coalition, Inc.

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Wellness Within REACH Activity Calendar

Aerobics Mallory Ave. Christian Church Mon, Wed, Fri, 6-7am, Pierce • 5:30-6:20pm, Granville • 6:30-7:30pm, Nickerson	Pilates Matt Dishman Mon, 12:15-1:15pm, Jenkins
Humboldt Elementary Tue, Thu, 6-7pm, Keller	Stretching/Body Sculpting (Class courtesy of Matt Dishman) Matt Dishman Tue, Thu, 7-8am, Lois
Low Impact Aerobics Daniel's Memorial Church Tue, 7:15-8:15pm, Granville	Walking Group Peninsula Park Sat, 12:30pm, Woods
Water Aerobics (Contact AAHC) Salvation Army Matt Dishman	Weight Mgmt./Conditioning U. of Portland Indoor Track Tue, Thu, 9-10am, Hasan
African Dance Matt Dishman Sat, 10-11am, Addo	Yoga Wild Oats Market Tue, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm, O'Rourke
Body Conditioning Wild Oats Market Sat, 9:30-10:30am, Nickerson	

Daniel's Memorial Church, 1234 NE Killingsworth (12th & Killingsworth)
Humboldt Elementary, 4915 N Gantenbein
Mallory Avenue Christian Church (Gym), 126 NE Alberta

Matt Dishman, 77 NE Knott
Peninsula Park, 700 N Portland
Salvation Army, 5325 N Williams
U. of Portland Indoor Track, 500 N Willamette
Wild Oats Market, 3535 NE 15th

REACH Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health
A Program of the African American Health Coalition, Inc.
Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

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