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CDC Features

Arthritis Pain Worse Among Minorities

Physical activity such as walking, cycling or taking an arthritis exercise class can reduce arthritis joint pain.

Severe Joint Pain Among Adults with Arthritis

Racial and Ethnic Groups	Proportion Among Adults with Arthritis
Non-Hispanic White	23.1 %
Non-Hispanic Black	38.3 %
Hispanic	36.4 %
American Indian/ Alaska Native	28.7 %
Asian/Pacific Islander	18.5 %
Multiracial/Other	36.6 %

May is National Arthritis Month and in observance, CDC released new national data on the prevalence and impact of arthritis by race/ethnicity. This study, reported in the May 2010 issue of *Preventing Chronic Disease*, reports first ever estimates of arthritis prevalence for Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders (8%) and American Indians/Alaska Natives (25%) and documents disparities in arthritis impact including severe pain.

Adults with arthritis reporting 7 or higher on a 10 point scale (0 = no pain and 10 = pain as bad as it can be) were classified as having severe pain. More than one-third of Non-Hispanic Blacks (38.3%), Hispanics (36.6%) and multiracial/other (36.4%) adults with arthritis reported severe pain. Asian/Pacific Islanders (18.5%) and non-Hispanic Whites (23.1%) had the lowest proportion with severe pain.

This study analyzed three years of data from the National Health Interview Survey, which interviews a sample of the adult, civilian, non-institutionalized U.S. population. The extra years of data allowed CDC to estimate prevalence of arthritis for smaller race/ethnic groups which are usually grouped together in a "Non-Hispanic Other" category when reporting health statistics.

Other findings from this study include:

- Despite having similar or lower prevalence of arthritis, Blacks and Hispanics have almost twice the proportion of activity limitation and severe pain due to arthritis compared with Whites.
- Among adults with arthritis, 37.7% report activity limitation, 31.2% work limitation and 25.6% report severe pain (7 or higher on a 0-10 point scale).

Physical activity and self-management education have been proven to reduce pain among adults with arthritis. A variety of CDC approved programs is available in communities throughout the U.S.

"It is imperative that we address these stark differences in arthritis impact by using what we know – increasing physical activity and self-management education programs, which have been proven to reduce pain and improve physical function", said Dr. Jennifer Hootman, co-author and epidemiologist with CDC's Arthritis Program. CDC recommends [3 self-management](#) and [5 physical activity](#) programs for people with arthritis including a Spanish language self-management education program [Tomando Control de su Salud](#). In addition, Spanish language health communication materials, *Buenos Dias, Artritis*, are available [here](#).

Source:

Bolen J, Schieb L, Hootman JM, Helmick CG, Theis K, Murphy LB, Langmaid G. Differences in the prevalence and impact of arthritis among racial/ethnic groups in the United States, National Health Interview Survey, 2002, 2003, and 2006. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2010;7(3).

http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2010/may/10_0035.htm.