

National Survey Results Fact Sheet

African Americans with High Blood Pressure and Their Doctors

High blood pressure (also called hypertension) affects about 73 million adults in the United States.¹ While anyone can have high blood pressure, African Americans are more likely to develop the condition than any other racial or ethnic group and often, it's more severe.² Scientists have yet to determine the exact reason why this is true, but the fact remains that high blood pressure continues to be an important health problem for African Americans.³

In order to better assess the attitudes and behaviors of African Americans about this condition, Daiichi Sankyo, Inc. in collaboration with the **Association of Black Cardiologists**, commissioned a national online survey conducted in 2009 of over 500 African Americans with high blood pressure (age 18 and older) and 150 treating physicians.⁴ The survey provides insight into what might be holding people back from addressing hypertension, often called a "silent killer" because there are typically no outward symptoms of this condition.⁵

The survey findings reaffirm the critical need for this high risk population to focus their attention on their health and ignite the conversation about high blood pressure within their community to promote education and awareness.

An online survey of 506 African Americans with high blood pressure conducted in 2009 reveals:

Juggling Life's Pressure Points

For patients with high blood pressure, health often takes a back seat to other life pressures. Everyone juggles many *external pressures* in everyday life like jobs, finances and family care, and frequently allow them to take precedence over one of the most important internal pressures of all – *blood pressure*.

Finances high on the list of external stressors:

- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) report feeling financial stress, while more than half (53 percent) state they are stressed about their personal health.
- Sixty-three percent acknowledge they worry more about their finances than their personal health.
- Almost half (48 percent) are nervous about their work and careers.
- More than half (55 percent) report that they are more stressed about their financial situation now than they were a year ago, compared to just 28 percent who are feeling more anxiety about their health now than a year ago.
- Twenty-nine percent don't consider their condition to be a big problem.

Health takes a back seat:

- Over half (52 percent) of those surveyed admit they aren't giving their health and well-being as much attention as they would like.
- Seventy-three percent are worried about other health problems associated with hypertension, yet aren't taking proactive steps.
- Of the 75 percent surveyed who were aware of a family history of hypertension, more than half (59 percent) did not take steps to keep their blood pressure down before they were diagnosed with high blood pressure themselves.



- Forty percent of those surveyed admit they are more focused on their family's health than their own.
- Two thirds (66 percent) admit they could do a better job of controlling their high blood pressure.

Long-term Consequences: When asked about associated risk of high blood pressure:

- There was general awareness that stroke and heart attack can result from hypertension:
 - The majority--68 percent--know stroke is a danger of hypertension and more than half--53 percent--are aware that heart attacks can result from high blood pressure.
- However, there is low awareness of other health consequences of high blood pressure:
 - Fewer than one in five (18 percent) knew kidney disease or kidney failure can occur.
 - Eighty-six percent surveyed did not know that they can die from a complication from high blood pressure.
 - The vast majority -- 94 percent surveyed -- did not know that high blood pressure can lead to a complication that may cause diminished sight and even blindness.

Addressing High Blood Pressure

- Many of the African Americans with high blood pressure surveyed are taking some steps to control their hypertension. These efforts reportedly lead them to feel optimistic (49 percent) and determined (43 percent) about their hypertension, rather than the worry they felt when they were first diagnosed with the condition.



An online survey of 150 Physicians with a patient base of at least 20 percent African Americans conducted in 2009 reveals:



The Patient/Physician Relationship

Many of the doctors surveyed report some of the biggest barriers to blood pressure control are issues of obesity, high fat and sodium consumption and low adherence to treatment plans.

- While nearly half (44 percent) of patients surveyed would pay more attention to their high blood pressure if their healthcare professional urged them to take action, 39 percent admit they visit their doctor less than they think they should when life gets stressful and hectic. (Note, the majority of survey participants had health insurance).
- Only one percent of doctors surveyed think their African American patients manage their high blood pressure and keep it under control extremely well. Nearly four in ten (38 percent) think that their patients don't manage their condition very well.
- Nearly nine out of 10 doctors (88 percent) admit that patients follow the doctor's guidelines only sometimes, at best.
- For 40 percent of the doctors surveyed, the key to treating their African American patients with high blood pressure effectively is providing more education, and effective ways to treat their condition. Another 23 percent say that adherence to treatment plans and frequent follow-ups is most important, while the same percentage (23 percent) think it's a lifestyle change that involves diet and exercise.

For tips about how to better manage high blood pressure, please visit www.MyPressurePoints.com

Note: Kelton Research conducted the online survey within the U.S. between January 29 and March 6, 2009. The survey sample included 506 African Americans, aged 18 and over, who have been diagnosed with hypertension and 150 physicians with at least 20 percent African American patients. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4.4. percentage points (African American portion) or 8.1 percentage points (physician portion) from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

References

¹ American Heart Association: High Blood Pressure Statistics Available at

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4621>. Accessed May 4, 2009.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: What Every African American Should Know.

http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/mission/partner/african_american.pdf. Accessed May 4, 2009.

³ISHIB "Health Facts/Hypertension", Available at: http://ishib.org/supportfiles/fact_hypertension.pdf. Accessed May 4, 2009.

⁴ Kelton Research. My Pressure Points Survey. 2009.

⁵ American Heart Association: High Blood Pressure. Available at:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2114>. Accessed May 4, 2009.

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African Americans with High Blood Pressure – The Differences between Genders, Ages*

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An online survey of 506 African Americans with high blood pressure conducted in 2009 reveals:



Health Priorities: Men vs. Women

Though the women tend to worry more than their male counterparts about their health and that of their families, women took fewer steps than males to counteract their high blood pressure, putting them at a dangerous risk.

- More women than men (57 percent vs. 48 percent) are constantly worrying about their health. Women are also more likely than men (77 percent vs. 67 percent) to stress about their finances.
- **Women More Concerned, Yet Take Fewer Steps to Control**

Condition Than Men: Despite concerns, women are less proactive than men (56 percent vs. 47 percent) and admit their overall health doesn't receive the attention they would like to give it.

- **Less Proactive:** Additionally, women who knew of a family history of the condition were also less proactive than their male counterparts (38 percent vs. 46 percent) in their attempts to prevent it before being diagnosed.

The Age Factor:

Though all age groups surveyed expressed some level of concern about high blood pressure and its potential consequences, younger respondents (aged 18-49) tend to be more worried about their family's health, and external pressure points, rather than one of the most important internal pressure points of all – *high blood pressure*. In fact:

- **Younger Respondents Less Worried About Health:** 67 percent of younger respondents are more worried about their finances than their health, compared to 60 percent of those aged 50 and older.
- **Stressed and Anxious:** Younger respondents are also more likely than their 50+ counterparts (61 percent vs. 37 percent) to stress about their job situation, increasing their anxiety.



* The survey was comprised of 207 African American women and 299 African American men. 224 were ages 18-49 and 282 were ages 50+.

- **Busy Lives:** Younger respondents are more likely than their older counterparts (48 percent vs. 33 percent) to let their busy lives get in the way of making the time to see their doctors. (Note: the majority of survey participants had health insurance).
 - Similarly, the younger age group reported being more stressed than older adults about their healthcare coverage (46 percent vs. 33 percent).
- **Blood Pressure Control:** About 71 percent of younger respondents feel they don't do a very good job controlling their hypertension, compared to 63 percent of the 50 and older group who feel the same.
 - Similarly, nearly three in five (58 percent) of younger respondents report they don't give their health and well-being as much consideration as they'd like to (vs. 47 percent of 50+).
- **Worried More About Family:** Nearly half (48 percent) of the younger age group surveyed admit they tend to worry more about their family's health than their own, compared to 33 percent of the 50 and older group who do the same.



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