

The Prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in a Wisconsin Hmong Patient Population

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Context:

The Wisconsin Hmong population may be at high risk for type 2 diabetes, however there are few population-based studies investigating the prevalence of diabetes in this population.

Objective:

To compare the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the Hmong subpopulation of the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine ambulatory care population to non-Hispanic white patients.

Setting:

This study investigated data from the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine/Public Health Information Network data Exchange pilot study (PHINEX), a data extraction project that merged electronic medical record data with public health databases.

Design:

Hmong clinic patients were identified when they self-reported Hmong as their primary language. The proportion of Hmong patients diagnosed with diabetes was compared with the prevalence of diabetes in non-Hispanic white patients. Stepwise multivariate logistic regression was used to control for the differences in age, sex, BMI, and health insurance between the two populations.

Results:

The total prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the Hmong population was 6.7% compared to 4.8% in the white population ($P=0.03$). The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the Hmong adult population was 11.6% compared to 6.0% in the white adult population ($P<0.01$). Compared with non-Hispanic whites, the odds ratio (95% CI's) for type 2 diabetes, adjusted for age, sex, BMI, and insurance was 1.7 (1.2-2.5) for Hmong patients.

Conclusion:

Despite being one of Wisconsin's newest immigrant populations, who came from an area of the world with low rates of diabetes, the adjusted risk of type 2 diabetes in this clinic sample of Hmong patients is 72% higher than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. The results of this clinic-based study support previous findings that Hmong Americans may be at significantly increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes.