



COMMUNITY HEALTH DATA BASE

An Information Service of Public Health Management Corporation

Data findings

HYPERTENSION AMONG ADULTS IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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Hypertension, or abnormally high blood pressure, affects approximately one in three adults in the United States and more than 1 billion adults worldwide [1]. The relationship between blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease is well established: the higher the blood pressure, the greater the chance of heart attack, heart failure, stroke, and kidney disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention label high blood pressure as the “silent killer” due to the lack of warning signs or symptoms associated with the disease [1]. Many people do not realize they have hypertension until it is too late. Also, as the population ages, the prevalence of hypertension will steadily rise unless adults take action in following the recommended prevention measures. For these reasons, it is important for adults aged 18 and older to check their blood pressure checked every year.

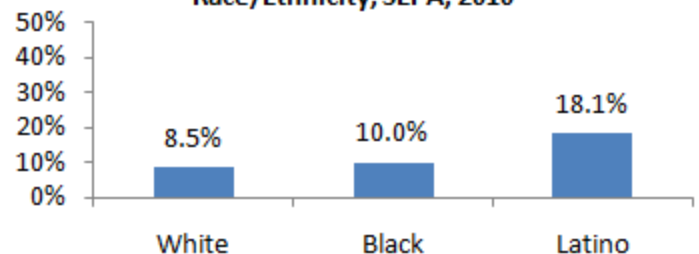
Using data from PHMC’s Community Health Data Base 2010 Household Health Survey, CHDB staff examined adults 18 or older living in the region who have not been screened for high blood pressure in the last year as well as adults who have been told they have high blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Screening among Adults

In Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA), nearly one in ten adults (9.4%) have not had a blood pressure screening in the past year, representing nearly 283,000 adults in the region. Furthermore, almost one in three adults (31.4%) has high blood pressure, representing about 945,000 adults in the region.

- About one in ten adults living in Philadelphia (11.7%) has not had a blood pressure screening in the past year, followed by Bucks (8.4%), Delaware (8.2%), Montgomery (8.1%), and Chester (8.0%) Counties.
- Men (11.3%) are slightly more likely to have not had a blood pressure screening in the past year compared with women (8.0%).
- Almost one in five Latino adults (18.1%) has not had a blood pressure screening in the past year compared with Black (10.0%) and White (8.5%) adults (Figure 1).

Fig 1. No Blood Pressure Screening Within The Past Year Among Adults (18+ years) by Race/Ethnicity, SEPA, 2010

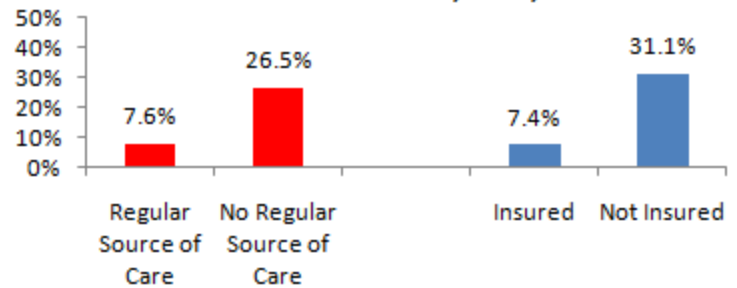


Source: PHMC’s Community Health Data Base 2010 Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey



- As age increases, the percentage of adults who have not had a blood pressure screening in the past year decreases – 15.5% of adults ages 18 to 39, 11.8% of adults ages 40 to 49, 7.3% of adults ages 50 to 59, 2.8% of adults ages 60 to 74, and 2.6% of adults ages 75 or older have not had a blood pressure screening in the past year.

Fig 2. No Blood Pressure Screening Within The Past Year Among Adults (18+ years) by Source of Care and Insurance Status, SEPA, 2010



Source: PHMC's Community Health Data Base
2010 Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey

- One in four adults without a regular source of care (26.5%) has not had a blood pressure screening in the past year compared with adults who have a regular source of care (7.6%) (Figure 2).
- Almost one in three adults who are uninsured (31.1%) have not had a blood pressure screening in the past year compared with insured adults (7.4%) (Figure 2).
- One in eight adults living below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (12.6%) has not had a blood pressure screening in the past year compared with 8.8% of adults living at or above that poverty level.*

Characteristics of Adults with High Blood Pressure

The following points address demographic differences between adult residents in the region that have been told by a healthcare provider that they have high blood pressure.

- Over one-third of Philadelphia adults (35.9%) have high blood pressure, followed by Delaware (31.2%), Bucks (30.0%), Montgomery (27.8%), and Chester (26.7%) County adults.
- Although it is believed that men are oftentimes at higher risk for high blood pressure, men and women are affected about the same amount. Almost one-third of men (32.7%) and women (30.5%) have high blood pressure.
- Two in five Black adults (40.5%) have high blood pressure, compared with 30.0% White and 24.3% Latino adults.
- Two in five adults (41.5%) living below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level have high blood pressure compared with 29.3% of adults living at or above that poverty level.*
- Adults that have used public recreation facilities within the past year (41.6%) are less likely to have high blood pressure than adults who have never used public recreation facilities in their neighborhood in the past year (58.4%).
- Adults who live alone (44.9%) are more likely to have high blood pressure than those who live with at least one other person (29.5%).



As heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death globally, claiming over 17 million lives per year [2], World Heart Day is celebrated each year to support heart healthy lifestyles and to share heart health messages. However, prevention does not stop with regular blood pressure screenings, and many steps can be taken to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease or stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), along with the National Institutes of Health, make the following lifestyle recommendations [1, 3]:

- Eat a healthy diet – eat foods that are low in sodium, saturated fat, and/or cholesterol;
- Be physically active – engage in at least 30 minutes of activity most days per week;
- Don't smoke – smoking injures blood vessels and speeds up hardening of the arteries; and
- Limit alcohol use – no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 drinks per day for men.

For more information on what you can do to prevent or control high blood pressure, please visit the National Institute of Health's [website](#).

For more information about the findings presented in this article, please contact Nayan Ramirez at nramirez@phmc.org.

*Poverty level is calculated based on family size and income. For example, a family of four with an annual income of less than \$33,075 in 2009 was considered living below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Citations:

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vital signs: prevalence, treatment, and control of hypertension—United States, 1999-2002 and 2005-2008. *MMWR*. 2011;60(4):103-8.

[2] World Heart Federation. About World Heart Day, 2012. Available at: <http://www.world-heart-federation.org/what-we-do/awareness/world-heart-day/about-world-heart-day/>

[3] National Institute of Health (NIH). The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure, 2003. Available at: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/hypertension/express.pdf>

