

# Low Education Linked to High Blood Pressure Among African Americans

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Educational disparities—and not West African ancestry—are significantly associated with African Americans' higher rates of hypertension (high blood pressure), compared with their white counterparts, according to a study to be published in the American Journal of Public Health and reported by [HealthDay News](#).

For the study, researchers at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at Harvard University examined data from more than 3,500 American adults. Scientists found that four years of additional education was linked to a lower systolic blood pressure (the top number), and that this could reduce a large number of hypertension-related deaths in the United States.

In addition, scientists found an even greater decrease in blood pressure for each year of education.

“While genetics undoubtedly plays a role in hypertension, our findings suggest that education level plays an even larger role in health disparities in hypertension,” said Amy Non, PhD, MPH, the study's lead researcher. “This means that improved access to education among African Americans may reduce racial disparities in blood pressure.”

High blood pressure is a precursor to a group of cardiovascular diseases and can lead to stroke, heart failure, kidney disease, blindness and dementia. Currently, African Americans develop high blood pressure at younger ages than other ethnic groups and are more likely to develop the complications associated with hypertension than any other ethnic group.

Non explained that higher levels of general education can lead to improved health knowledge and behaviors, better job opportunities and a more positive attitude.

Did you know that early heart disease is found in 9 out of 10 African Americans with hypertension? [Click here](#) to read more.

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