

Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy Increase Risk for Stroke in Black Mothers

A Boston University study found that Black women have a 66% increased long-term risk of stroke.

July 11, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Black women in the United States have a significantly higher risk for preeclamptic [pregnancy](#) and [stroke](#) compared with white women. Despite this, most studies on the association between the two conditions have focused primarily on white women, according to a [Boston University \(BU\) news release](#).

To combat this lack of diversity, researchers at BU conducted a study utilizing data from the Black Women's Health Study (BWHS), which gathered data over 25 years from 59,000 Black women.

Published in [The New England Journal of Medicine Evidence](#), the study found that Black women with a history of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDOP), such as [chronic hypertension](#) or preeclampsia, have about a 66% increased long-term risk for stroke compared with white women.

"Our results may explain, in part, the disproportionately high incidence of stroke in Black women relative to other populations," said corresponding author Shanshan Sheehy, MD, ScD, an assistant professor of medicine at BU and an investigator at the Slone Epidemiology Center, in the [news release](#).

The women in the study answered biennial questions about preeclampsia, gestational hypertension, stroke and other conditions. Of the participants, 42,924 had given birth and did not have [cardiovascular disease](#) prior to the study.

From 1995 to 2019, there were 1,555 strokes, including 310 among 4,938 women with a history of HDOP, according to the news release. Those who reported a history of HDOP experienced 1.66 times the risk of stroke compared with those who had no pregnancy complications. Women who had a history of [preeclampsia](#) had a risk estimated to be 1.53 times higher. This association was seen in both younger and older women and women who did not have overweight in young adulthood and women who had overweight or obesity at the time.

Preeclampsia affects about 2% to 8% of pregnancies worldwide and is the second leading cause of

maternal mortality. In the United States, the rate of preeclampsia/eclampsia is 60% higher among Black women than among white women, and that number continues to increase.

“Our study provides evidence that pregnancy history may be an important factor for risk assessment and prevention of long-term stroke,” said Sheehy. “Cardiovascular screening recommendations for Black women in particular should take the history of HODP into account.”

To read more, click [#Pregnancy](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Black, Rural Southern Women at Gravest Risk From Pregnancy Miss Out on Maternal Health Aid](#)” and “[Examining Maternal Deaths in Black Mothers](#).”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/hypertensive-disorders-pregnancy-increase-risk-stroke-black-mothers>