

Finding Answers

Disparities Research for Change

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Interventions to Improve Outcomes for Minority Adults with Asthma: A Systematic Review

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Background:

Currently, almost 20 million Americans have asthma, and by 2020, asthma is expected to affect one in 14 Americans. More than \$30 billion is spent annually in the United States on care for people with asthma, with more than 14 million days of missed work annually.

Minority patients assume a greater proportion of the burden. African Americans with asthma suffer greater morbidity and mortality than whites, with higher rates of emergency department visits (350 percent), hospitalizations (240 percent) and mortality (200 percent) compared with whites. Within ethnic populations, the Puerto Rican community has a higher prevalence of asthma than any other racial or ethnic group. Researchers have attributed these disparities to a multitude of factors, including individual, environmental, provider and health system components that may play an interrelated role.

Highlights of Findings:

Authors conducted a systematic review of the literature to characterize interventions with potential to improve outcomes for minority patients with asthma.

A review of 24 relevant articles that were published between 1950 and 2010 showed that:

- Most studies reported on use of health care resources, followed by symptom control and self-management skills.
- The most common intervention type studied was patient education.
- Although fewer than half of the studies were culturally tailored, language-appropriate education appeared particularly successful.

Conclusions:

- Overall, education delivered by health care professionals appeared effective in improving outcomes for minority patients with asthma.
- System redesign showed great promise, particularly the use of team-based specialty clinics and long-term follow-up after acute care visits.

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