

Race/Ethnic and Sex Differentials in Pulse Pressure Among Us Adults

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The prevalence of high blood pressure in the United States is a public health concern. This study uses the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (1988–1994) and linear regression to document variations in pulse pressure by race/ethnicity and sex in the United States. We find higher pulse pressures among racial and ethnic minorities than among non-Hispanic Whites and among males than females. The results indicate that the effect of race on pulse pressure decreases with the inclusion of various controls; nevertheless, African Americans maintain higher pulse pressures than non-Hispanic White Americans, even net of controls. Compared to females, males exhibit higher pulse pressures. Moreover, this sex gap progressively increases with controls for socioeconomic status and physical activity. Given the known health consequences associated with high pulse pressure, these results highlight the importance of better understanding and addressing the risk of high pulse pressure among demographic subpopulations in the United States. (*Ethn Dis.* 2005;15:601–606)

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