

## Willingness of Minorities to Participate in Health Research

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Researchers at the National Institutes of Health conducted a study which shows that minorities participate in health research studies at the same rate as non-Hispanic whites when they are informed about the study and meet the medical requirements. The findings also report that minorities are more likely to participate when there is more access. The study was led by researchers in the Department of Clinical Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center, the hospital at NIH. The work was published online December 6, 2005 in the medical journal "PLoS Medicine," published by the Public Library of Science. The research team did a comprehensive search of the medical literature to identify published trials that reported consent rates by race and/or ethnicity. The team identified and reviewed 20 studies that involved more than 70,000 patients. Most of studies were conducted in the United States and most of participants from minority groups were African Americans or Hispanics. Given that research was based on the enrollment decisions of more than 70,000 people over two decades in a variety of different types of research studies, from epidemiology to drug to surgical studies, the authors say they believe their findings are robust.

"In order to improve the health of our population, we must make health research accessible to all groups," says Raynard Kington, NIH Deputy Director. "This NIH-supported study is a good example of research on how we do our research that can help us in making sure we have the best scientific knowledge base possible for eliminating health disparities." As one of the authors of the report, Kington focused on the relationship between social factors, such as race and economic status, and health.

According to the study, it is widely claimed that racial and ethnic minorities are less willing to participate in health research because of past research abuses. The Tuskegee Experiment, which took place in 1932 and lasted forty years, was a syphilis study conducted by the Public Health Service. Hundreds of poor African American men in Alabama were followed for decades without being told they had syphilis and were prevented from getting penicillin to treat it.

But the data from this new study finds that when minorities are given the opportunity to participate in health research, they do so at the same rate as non-Hispanic whites.

"The big take home message here is that the main barrier probably is not the attitudes of African Americans and other minorities," Emanuel says. "The main barrier is access, knowledge that these studies exist, eligibility criteria that ensure minorities can participate, and overcoming logistical barriers that exist," such as the location of the study or the need for child care.

For more information, visit <http://clinicalcenter.nih.gov/>