New Information on Diabetes Among Hispanics/Latinos

Diabetes is a serious chronic disease caused by the inability of the body to move sugar (glucose) into the cells to be stored as energy which causes elevated blood sugar. In individuals with diabetes, insulin, the hormone that allows the body to use glucose as a source of energy is either produced in low amounts or the cells of the body, have a poor response to it or both. There are 2 types of Diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2, the most common form.

Thanks to your participation in the Hispanic Community Health Study HCHS/SOL, we have found out important new data on Diabetes among Hispanics. These results have been recently published in an important medical journal. The overall frequency of Diabetes among Hispanics is 17% which is higher than previously known. In addition, there are important differences in the occurrence of Diabetes Type 2 among Hispanics of different backgrounds. It ranges from 10% in South Americans, 13.4% in Cubans, to 18% in Central Americans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. About 60% of individuals with Diabetes were aware of their diabetes at the time of the baseline exam. Other important findings of the study are that the older group of individuals had better control of their diabetes and that close to half of the individuals with Diabetes did not have health insurance.

Diabetes is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and increases at least twice the risk of having coronary heart disease and stroke causing death and disabilities. Hispanics are more likely to develop Type 2 Diabetes and complications of the disease than non Hispanic whites. As we continue the study we expect to learn more about the development of Diabetes that may occur during the six year period between your first visit to the SOL clinic and the current Visit 2.

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