

U.S. Hispanics at greater risk for diabetes

■ A new study shows a larger number of Mexican-Americans with the disease than Mexicans due to differences in lifestyles.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEXICO CITY — Mexican-Americans in San Antonio are almost twice as likely to develop diabetes than Mexicans living in Mexico City, apparently because of American lifestyles, authors of a study released Sunday said.

Eating and exercise habits were pegged as reasons for the difference in type-2 diabetes rates among low-income groups in the two cities. The San Antonio group was also more likely to have high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

"This really does support the notion that U.S. lifestyles are trending in an unfavorable direction," said Dr. Michael P. Stern, one of the authors and head of the clinical epidemiology department at the University of Texas Health Center.

"Mexicans were found to be leaner, to eat less fat and more carbohydrates and to exercise more than their San Antonio counterparts," Stern said, thus lowering risk factors such as obesity.

The differences may have to do with San Antonians eating higher-fat flour tortillas rather than traditional corn-based ones, or eating more fast foods.

The Texas group got slightly more leisure-time exercise, but that was far outweighed by the increased physical work Mexico City residents do on their jobs.

The study adds an environmental factor to research into why Mexican-Americans are about 2 1/2 times as likely as non-Hispanic Americans to develop diabetes, by comparing two groups of similar genetic backgrounds but different environments.

About 10 percent of Mexican-Americans age 20 and older are diabetic, compared to 4 percent for non-Hispanic U.S. whites.

Findings published earlier this year indicate one gene may play a role among Mexican-Americans, but genetics isn't the only explanation, according to Stern. "Genes need an environment to be expressed," he said.

The study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, shows the gap between the two groups is widest among older people and more narrow among younger ones.

Experts suspect that Mexican lifestyles are becoming more like American ones: unhealthy. In the United States, Stern said, "we need public health programs to convince people to eat less fat and keep their weight under control." As for Mexico, he said there is "a chance to intervene and stop this trend before it becomes full blown."

The study, presented at the 17th International Diabetes Federation congress in Mexico City, followed groups in the two cities over periods ranging from six to eight years to see if they developed diabetes.

It took into account pre-existing risk factors, some of which were worse in Mexico City, while others were worse in San Antonio.

Mexico City had lower levels of good cholesterol and higher insulin levels, for example.

Better health care in San Antonio, which may keep diabetics alive longer and thus in study groups, may play a "minor role" in the findings, Stern said.

Almost 16 million people in the United States have diabetes, the sixth-leading cause of death in the country.

The most common and serious form is type 2; type 1 diabetes is less common, but easier to diagnose and generally affects children.

If untreated, diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, stroke and amputations.

"I'm asking you not only for your vote but for your enthusiasm."
- Al Gore, at a black church in Pennsylvania

"We need to get rid of the politics of anger ... we need a fresh start, folks, after a season of cynicism."
- George W. Bush, in Miami

A battle for swing states

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In the final dramatic days of a marathon campaign, Al Gore cast his duel with George W. Bush as a choice between "two different pathways," with the Supreme Court and economic progress in the balance. Bidding to regain the White House for the Republicans, Bush brandished tax cuts and Social Security reform while accusing Gore of practicing the "politics of scaring people."

The candidates rallied across a handful of battleground states Sunday and intensified their appeals to core supporters and undecided voters. Florida and

the Midwest were in the political epicenter.

Pre-election surveys suggested the battle could be the closest in generations, and the Senate and the House were up for grabs too, with Republicans seeking to retain control. National polls gave a narrow edge to Bush in the presidential race, but Gore's support in large battleground states makes for an unpredictable race to 270 electoral votes and victory.

"I'm asking you not only for your vote but for your enthusiasm," Gore said during one of two stops at black churches in Pennsylvania. "I want you to go the extra mile."

Bush's exhortations —

"The voters are there, let's turn them out!" — took on special significance in Florida, where his brother, Jeb, runs a state that Bush had expected to put away weeks ago. In a nod to Cuban-Americans, Bush sprinkled a Miami speech with Spanish phrases, including one that translated to, "We're going to take Washington, D.C.!" and another that represented his middle initial and his winning hopes for Tuesday: "W!"

Gore started the day in hotly contested Pennsylvania, where he said that a woman's right to abortion was on the line.

"The Supreme Court is at stake because the next

president, the one you pick Tuesday, will pick a majority on the court that will interpret our Constitution for the next 30 to 40 years," he said, noting that Bush has praised conservative justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia.

Gore mocked Bush's promise to be a get-along president, aiming his words at the large population of seniors citizens in both Pennsylvania and Florida.

"The question is, will he get along with HMOs? You'll get along with them fine if you kill the patients' bill of rights. The drug companies? You'll get along with them if you kill the prescription drug benefits for seniors," Gore said.

Absentee votes may delay results

■ As the number of late ballots increases, election officials will need more time to calculate the outcome.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO — A record 3.2 million Californians have requested absentee ballots for Tuesday's election, which could leave the results of close races throughout the state in doubt for days or even weeks.

More than 1 million of those absentee ballots, or nearly 10 percent of the 12 million votes expected in California, will not be counted on election night, according to county election officials surveyed by The Associated Press.

Alfie Charles, spokesman for Secretary of State Bill Jones, said the estimate sounds about right because of the growth in absentee applica-

tions. In 1980, absentee voting counted for 6.3 percent of the vote in California; in 1990, it was 18.4 percent; and in 1998, it was 24.7 percent, or about 2.1 million ballots.

"The balance of power in Congress may hinge on races in California, and those California races may be determined by the late absentee ballots which will be counted in the days after Nov. 7," Charles said.

For the closest races, he said, it could be one to two weeks after the election before the results may be known.

Absentee ballots that voters mail in or drop off at their polling places must be processed separately because voter signatures must be verified in county records, election officials said.

In 1994, when 22 percent of the voters cast absentee ballots, Sen. Dianne Feinstein's narrow victory over Republican Michael Huffington wasn't

confirmed until 2½ weeks after the election.

The counties have until Dec. 5 to report final results. This year, only 10 small counties expect to have 100 percent of their votes counted on election night.

Los Angeles County, which has 4.07 million of California's 15.7 million registered voters, has sent out the most absentee ballots this year: 617,231.

In recent elections, the same county has had the highest percentage of absentee ballots left uncounted on election night: 183,000, or 46 percent, in the 1996 presidential election.

Los Angeles County election officials this year said they also expect a slow start on their precinct vote count. The registrar's office advised news organizations that its tabulation equipment is 32 years old, so "do not expect very many ballots to be counted before 11 p.m." on Tuesday night.

Iraqi plane tests U.S. no-fly zone

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraq sent domestic passenger flights carrying 154 people into skies patrolled by U.S. and British warplanes on Sunday, the first challenge of its kind to the no-fly zones that Iraq considers infringements on its sovereignty.

Two planes left Baghdad at 1 p.m. bound for Basra in the southern no-fly zone and Mosul in the northern zone, the official Iraqi News Agency reported. They returned safely to Baghdad about four hours later, the agency reported.

Iraq, which says the flights mark the resumption of regular passenger service to the cities, used Russian-made military cargo planes for the flights — an Antonov with 42 passengers to Mosul and an Ilyushin with 14 passengers to Basra.

The resumption of the flights, which Iraq announced on Oct. 30, came nearly a

decade after Iraq's fleet of 15 Boeing airliners was moved to Jordan, Iran and Tunisia to escape bombing during the 1991 Gulf War. They remain abroad.

Passengers aboard the inaugural flights included officials and journalists who returned with the planes to Baghdad. Thousands of people had gathered to welcome the planes on arrival in Basra and Mosul, according to INA.

The United States says Iraqi military planes have violated the zones often with quick in-and-out forays since December 1998, when Iraq began challenging the patrols. The new challenges — though in military aircraft — marked the first civilian flights into the zone.

The U.S.-British patrols bar fixed-wing Iraqi aircraft or helicopters from entering the zones, but there was no word Sunday on whether Iraq had given Britain and the United States advance notice of the domestic flights.

"We will continue to monitor closely any Iraqi aviation to determine whether it poses a threat to our forces, Iraq's neighbors or the Iraqi people," a U.S. State Department official said speaking on condition of anonymity.

Confrontations persist on brink of negotiations

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Scattered clashes across the Gaza Strip and West Bank Sunday left two Palestinians dead, 17 injured and tensions high despite an agreement of truce and plans for upcoming meetings in Washington.

President Clinton, who has been trying to restore peace to the region, will play host to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Thursday, and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak three days later, on Nov. 12, the White House said Sunday.

Both Palestinians killed Sunday were shot dead in the Gaza Strip. One was Maher Mouhmad Alsaïdi, a 16-year-old boy hit in the head during a confrontation, according to Shifa hospital director Mouawia Hassanian.

At least 10 Palestinians were wounded in Gaza, and seven were hurt in the West Bank in a clash outside Bethlehem, to the south of Jerusalem, according to Palestinian security forces.

In the West Bank, two Jewish settlers, a man and a woman, were wounded when Palestinian assailants ambushed their car and opened fire, settler spokesmen said. The military command confirmed the shooting incident.

In a plea for peace, tens of thousands of Israelis filled a Tel Aviv square Saturday night to pay tribute to former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated at the site five years ago by an ultranationalist Israeli opposed to trading land for peace with the Palestinians.

The current violence has hardened attitudes on both sides and put seven years of peace negotiations on hold. Many dovish Israelis, including some of those at the rally, said their faith in the peace process has been shaken. Many Palestinians, meanwhile, said they have little to show for the lengthy negotiations.

Barak on Sunday told his Cabinet that the large turnout was "an impressive and emotional demonstration" of the Israeli commitment to peace.

At the Saturday rally, Barak warned Arafat that Israel "will not surrender to violence and we will defend our civilians and Israeli soldiers everywhere."

Arafat and his aides did not appear ready to tone down the rhetoric. The Palestinian leader met with families of the dead Sunday and his top aid told the families: "The uprising will continue until we have an independent Palestinian state."

World/Nation

The Associated Press

Washington, D.C.

Nader refuses to give up, aims for future elections

Ralph Nader defended his presidential candidacy Sunday and said its potential cost to Democrat Al Gore won't stop him from urging people to support him.

Polls show Nader, the Green Party nominee, drawing support in some states from people who say they otherwise would vote for Gore over Republican George W. Bush.

But Nader, both defiant and unapologetic, rejected criticism from Democrats who fear his campaign will help Bush win the election Tuesday.

He also maintained that there are no major differences between Bush and Gore.

"I would be disappointed if either Al Gore or George Bush are elected," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press," a few hours before his final campaign rally at the MCI Center here.

Nader's goal next week is to get at least 5 percent of the vote to qualify the Green Party for federal campaign funds in the 2004 election.

Egypt

Runoff elections marred by violence, leaving four dead

CAIRO — President Hosni Mubarak's ruling party won a majority of seats in the second round of Egyptian parliamentary elections. Results released Sunday also showed Islamic candidates making gains despite police harassment and deadly election-day clashes.

The violence, which included shootouts and fist fights among supporters of rival candidates as well as clashes between police and voters, occurred during second-round runoffs to determine winners for the 116 out of 134 seats that were not won outright in the Oct. 29 voting.

At least four people died and more than 60 were injured.

During Saturday's runoff elections, villagers, many of them supporters of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood Islamic group, said police barred them from entering polling stations and threatened to arrest and beat them.

Policemen in the Nile Delta village of Dakahlia chased residents in the streets, ordering them to go home.

Malaysia

Protesters demand release of former deputy prime minister

KUALA LUMPUR — Police fired tear gas, swung batons and sprayed chemical-laced water from trucks Sunday to break up Malaysia's biggest anti-government protest in recent months.

Led by the country's top opposition leaders, thousands of people blocked a major expressway linking Kuala Lumpur, the capital, to a neighboring state and shouted slogans against Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who has ruled Malaysia for 19 years.

Missouri

Carnahan appears for first time, avoids interaction

JEFFERSON CITY — In a Senate race that has remained tight since Democrat Mel Carnahan's death, the Republican incumbent and Carnahan's widow appeared for the first time since they became rivals on the same political stage — a national Sunday talk show.

But there was no interaction between Sen. John Ashcroft and Jean Carnahan, who announced she would accept appointment to the Senate if her husband wins.

Carnahan's remarks, taped Friday, focused on the Oct. 16 plane crash and her desire to keep her late husband's vision alive.

Ashcroft, appearing live on the show — ABC's "This Week with Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts" — repeated his assertion that suspending his campaign after his rival's death hurt him politically.

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Weather

TODAY
Showers
high 49, low 33
TOMORROW
Mostly cloudy
high 39, low 27