



Deportation Fears Linked to High Blood Pressure in Immigrant Women

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An increased risk of high blood pressure was linked to fear of deportation in immigrant women, according to a study published on Nov. 27, 2019 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*.

The study tracked 572 immigrant women living in California, 99% of whom were born in Mexico. They were 39 years old on average. The women's immigration statuses were not reported. Initial consults were conducted between Mar. 2012 and Aug. 2014 and follow-up consults were between Dec. 2016 and Nov. 2018. The study is planned to continue, with a six-year consult scheduled.

At the initial consults, 48% reported "a lot of worry" about deportation, 24% reported "moderate worry," and 28% reported "not too much worry."

The University of California researchers found that, of the 507 women who reported fear of deportation at the initial consult, about 18.3% women reported increased worry at the follow-up consults four years later. 27.2% reported lower worry and 54.4% reported the same amount of worry.

Researchers linked worry to larger increases in high blood pressure. 408 women did not have high blood pressure at the beginning of the study. Of those women, those with moderate or high levels of fear of deportation were twice as likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure at the second consult. The researchers tested for but did not find a link between deportation worry and higher BMI (body mass index), waist circumference, or pulse pressure.

Jacqueline M. Torres, PhD, MPH, lead author of the study and Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco, stated, "Our findings suggest that the concerns around immigration policies and enforcement may have potentially negative impacts on the long-term cardiovascular health of immigrants and their families and community." She added, "We need more research. These are our neighbors, people working in our communities ... we should be concerned about how politics affects communities."

Study senior author, Brenda Eskenazi, PhD, Director of the Center for Environmental Research and Children's Health at the University of California, Berkeley, noted, "The women in this study

are living in a welcoming, largely Latino community, and they're also in California, where they may have less fear of being deported because it's a sanctuary state. These results may be magnified in other regions in the United States."

Alex Nowrasteh, MS, Director of Immigration Studies at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, studied the number of deportations under each president since Benjamin Harrison and found, as of Sep. 16, 2019, "George Bush removed an average of 0.91 percent of the estimated illegal immigrant population each year, Bill Clinton removed an average of 1.86 percent per year, George W. Bush removed an average of 2.42 percent per year, Barack Obama removed an average of 3.33 percent per year, and Donald Trump has removed an average of 2.59 percent per year through 2018. President Trump can still increase the pace of deportations, but he won't overcome President Obama's record."

While President Trump has increased efforts and rhetoric to deport undocumented immigrants with actions such as border policies including family separation, ICE raids, and ending Obama's immigration programs, much of his effort has been tied up in courts.