



## HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET 2006

### HYPERTENSION

**OVERVIEW:** Blood pressure refers to the force exerted by the blood against the walls of the arteries when the heart beats (systolic pressure) and when it is at rest (diastolic pressure). Hypertension or high blood pressure is diagnosed when the systolic pressure is consistently greater than or equal to 140 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) or the diastolic pressure is consistently greater than or equal to 90 mm Hg. A person is considered to have borderline hypertension or "prehypertension" when systolic pressure is between 120 and 139 mm Hg or diastolic blood pressure is between 80 and 89 mm Hg.

Hypertension can significantly increase the risk of heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. Hypertension

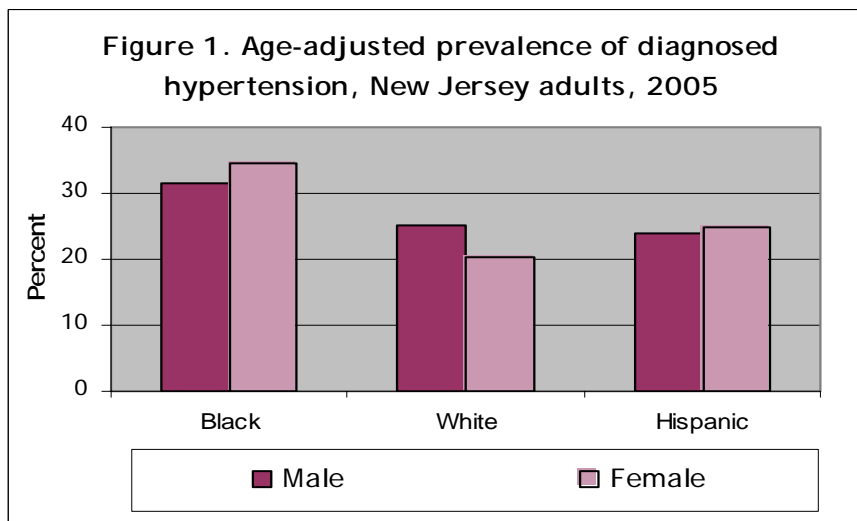
was listed as a primary or contributing cause of death for 277,000 Americans in 2002.

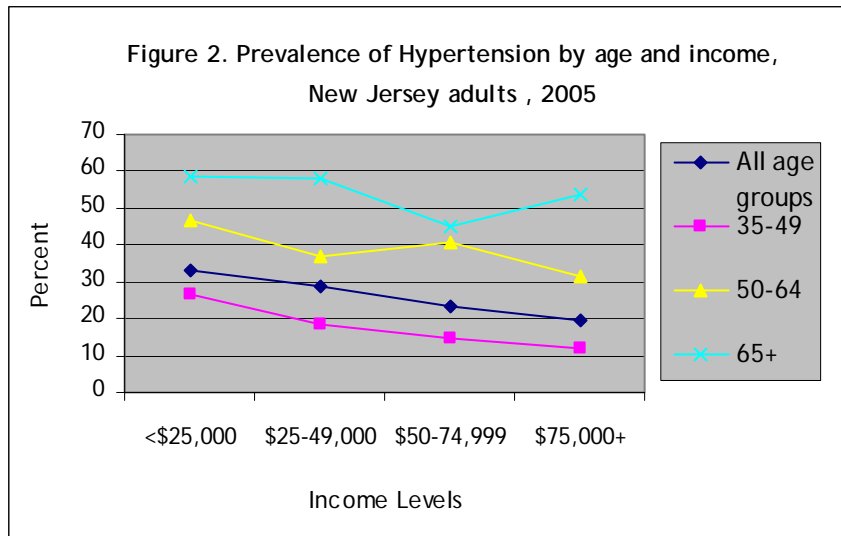
It is particularly prevalent among African Americans, the middle-aged and elderly, the obese and heavy drinkers. People with lower educational and income levels are more likely to have hypertension. Also, people with diabetes mellitus, gout, or kidney disease are more likely to have hypertension.

About 1 in 3 American adults have hypertension. Hypertension affects about 2 in 5 African Americans, 1 in 5 Hispanics and Native Americans, and 1 in 6 Asians.

#### NEW JERSEY FACTS:

- In New Jersey, age-adjusted hypertension mortality rates have increased by about 18% in the last few years from 4.5 per 100,000 in 1999 to 5.3 per 100,000 in 2005.
- In 2005, an estimated 24% of New Jersey adults were diagnosed with hypertension. Non-Hispanic Black males and females both continued to have the highest prevalence of hypertension (Figure 1).





- The prevalence of hypertension increases greatly with age. More than half of NJ adults age 65 years and over report having hypertension (Figure 2). The prevalence of hypertension also varies by income, the overall age-adjusted prevalence of hypertension among New Jersey adults in 2005 was about 30% among those with a household income of less than \$25,000 per year, compared with about 20% among adults with a household income of \$75,000 or greater.

#### TREATMENT AND PREVENTION:

In about 90 to 95 percent of cases of hypertension the cause is unknown, and the condition is referred to as essential or primary hypertension. Many factors can lead to hypertension in the remaining 5 to 10 percent of cases, including kidney abnormalities, a structural abnormality of the aorta, and narrowing of certain arteries.

Treatment of high blood pressure includes behavior modification and drug therapy. For example, physical activity, weight loss and a low-salt diet can be very effective in controlling blood pressure.

Almost one third of the people with hypertension don't know they have it. There usually are no symptoms of hypertension; however it can be detected through regular blood pressure check ups.

#### SOURCES:

American Heart Association: [High Blood Pressure](#)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [Facts on High Blood Pressure](#); [Hypertension](#)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: [The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on High Blood Pressure](#)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics: [New Jersey Health Statistics, 2003](#); [New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey](#)

#### LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/chs/index.html>

For more information about High Blood Pressure: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbp/HBP\\_WhatIs.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbp/HBP_WhatIs.html)



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