

Optimism, Race, and Blood Pressure

November 10, 2011

In case you missed it, the cameras were rolling at the APS 23rd Annual Convention in Washington, DC. Watch Bryan Jensen from Brigham Young University present his poster session research entitled “Race/Ethnic Differences in Ambulatory Blood Pressure Might Not Be Optimal.”

To conduct this APSSC Award–winning research, Jensen and his coauthors Julianne Holt-Lunstad and Patrick R. Steffen recruited 582 adults to participate in a 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure (ABP) study. Foreign-born Mexican American participants generally had higher overall systolic ABP than Caucasians; however, adding BMI as a covariate reduced the relationship between ethnicity and overall systolic ABP to non-significant.

The researchers did find that among foreign-born Mexican Americans acculturation moderated the relationship between optimism and ABP. Being less acculturated and more optimistic predicted higher diastolic ABP, which might suggest that a less optimistic (and more realistic) outlook is cardioprotective for Mexican Americans new to the United States.