

## **MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS**

### **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: HEART DISEASE OUTCOMES: DOES RACE PLAY A PART?  
REPORT: **MB #4941**

**BACKGROUND:** Cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle, and it isn't a single condition, but a group of conditions called the cardiomyopathies. It affects the muscle of the heart, and can impact its shape, or the size and thickness of the muscle walls. This reduces the heart's ability to pump blood around the body. This means that the heart structure and how it works are affected. This type of disease can affect people of all ages, and can be genetic, or run in families.

(Source: <https://www.cardiomyopathy.org/campaigns/background-information-on-cardiomyopathy>)

**DIAGNOSING:** Doctors will perform a physical examination and ask questions about your personal and family medical history. You'll also be asked when your symptoms occur, for example, whether exercise brings on your symptoms. If your doctor thinks you have cardiomyopathy, several tests may be done to confirm the diagnosis, including an X-ray test to see if your heart will show whether it's enlarged, Several blood tests might be done, including those to check your kidney, thyroid and liver function and to measure your iron levels and a treadmill test to see your heart rhythm, blood pressure and breathing while you walk on a treadmill. Your doctor might recommend this test to evaluate symptoms, determine your exercise capacity and determine if exercise triggers abnormal heart rhythm.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cardiomyopathy/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20370714>)

**NEW RESEARCH:** Currently, we know that when Black patients are optimized on heart failure therapy and continue to have symptoms, they may receive additional benefit by taking hydralazine and isosorbide dinitrate, known by the brand name BiDil. Patients are advised to focus on eating more fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins, such as chicken or fish. Finally, focus on maintaining a healthy body weight by balancing calorie intake with physical activity to reduce the risk of developing heart disease. Previous research suggested Black patients had a much higher prevalence of chronic medical conditions, including chronic kidney disease, higher blood pressure, and higher rates of diabetes. In fact, they were actually dying more than the white patients with cardiomyopathy.

(Source: <https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/heart-and-vascular-articles/heart-disease-and-racial-disparities>)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT:**

SHEILA DAVIS  
412-313-6070  
[DAVISSN2@UPMC.EDU](mailto:DAVISSN2@UPMC.EDU)

**If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at [mthomas@ivanhoe.com](mailto:mthomas@ivanhoe.com)**