South Texas Latinos Have Nation’s Highest Rate of Liver Cancer

SAN ANTONIO (July 11, 2014) — Latinos in South Texas have the highest rate of liver cancer in the nation—a rate that continues to rise higher, according to a study from the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

For the study, published in the scientific journal *PLoS ONE*, researchers compared the newest state and federal data to pinpoint current liver cancer rates and trends.

They found that Texas Latino male and female incidence rates were 3.1 and 4 times higher than their non-Latino White counterparts, and South Texas Latinos had even higher rates.

In addition, liver cancer incidence rates are rising across all groups.

“This clearly shows that liver cancer is not only already higher among Latinos in South Texas, but it’s rising, too. We need solutions,” said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, the study’s lead author, director of the IHPR, and associate director for cancer prevention and health disparities at the Cancer Therapy and Research Center at the Health Science Center.

The cause of elevated, rising liver cancer rates among Latinos is largely unknown.

Risk factors may include: hepatitis; diabetes; obesity; genetic predisposition; and environmental contamination and hazards along the Texas-Mexico border.

Dr. Ramirez’ team will continue examining the causes and potential solutions.

“Understanding the causes of increasing liver cancer in South Texas is critical not only for developing interventions and identifying high-risk individuals so that they may be screened and treated with the best available care,” Ramirez said.

Others from IHPR faculty and staff involved in the study were: Alan E.C. Holden, Edgar Munoz, and Rebecca Adeigbe.

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For news from the IHPR at the UT Health Science Center, visit our [blog](#).

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The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, one of the country’s leading health sciences universities, ranks in the top 3 percent of all institutions worldwide receiving federal funding. Research and other sponsored program activity totaled $231 million in fiscal year 2011. The university’s schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, health professions and graduate biomedical sciences have produced approximately 28,000 graduates. The $736 million operating budget supports eight campuses in San Antonio, Laredo, Harlingen and Edinburg. For more information on the many ways “We make lives better,” visit www.uthscsa.edu.

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio investigates the causes and solutions to the unequal impact of cancer and chronic disease among certain populations, including Latinos, in South Texas and the nation. The IHPR, founded in 2006, uses evidence-guided research, training and community outreach to improve the health of those at a disadvantage due to race/ethnicity or social determinants. Visit the IHPR at http://ihpr.uthscsa.edu or its blog (http://www.saludtoday.com/blog) or social media (@SaludToday).