

# Which asthma drugs, dosages work best for African Americans?

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The University of Illinois at Chicago has received funding from the National Institutes of Health to determine what combination and dosages of asthma medications works best to manage asthma in African Americans, who suffer much higher rates of serious asthma attacks, hospitalizations and asthma-related deaths than do white patients.

"We know that African Americans tend to have more difficulty with asthma compared to other groups," says Dr. Jerry Krishnan, associate vice president for [health affairs](#) and population health sciences at the University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System and principal investigator at the UIC study site. "Part of the reason is that we don't know which medications and in what combinations work best in African Americans to treat and prevent asthma symptoms. This study will help give us that information."

UIC is one of the 30 sites in 14 states taking part in the clinical trial Best African American Response to Asthma Drugs, or BARD. The trial will examine the effectiveness of different doses of inhaled corticosteroids used with or without the addition of a long-acting beta agonist in 500 African Americans age 5 and older.

Inhaled corticosteroids reduce inflammation and help control asthma in the long term, while long-acting beta agonists relax tight airway muscles. This study will compare multiple combinations of these medications and different dosing regimens to determine which works best for African American patients. The trial will also evaluate how genes may affect treatment response.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, African Americans are 20 percent more likely to have asthma than non-Hispanic whites. Chicago has a high incidence of asthma because of its large African American population.

"We're excited to be a part of this study because it aligns so well with the mission of our health system to reduce health disparities," said Krishnan, who is professor of medicine in the UIC College of Medicine. "Studies like BARD provide health data that will help us improve the lives of understudied populations that carry a disproportionate burden of disease."

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

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