

# Native Hawaiians are more at risk for gout, study reveals

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Gout in X-ray of left foot. Credit: Hellerhoff/Wikipedia.

An analysis of nearly two decades of data has revealed that Native Hawaiian study participants had more than twice the risk of developing gout as older adults, relative to white participants. Black and Japanese participants had the second and third highest risk, respectively.

Gout, a common and painful form of [arthritis](#), is becoming more prevalent in the U.S., but the differences in risk between populations remains largely understudied, especially for Native Hawaiians. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa researchers shed more light on the disease in a new study and one of the largest multiethnic [gout](#) studies to date published in *The Journal of Rheumatology*.

"Gout is known to affect Pacific Island peoples more than other ethnic groups, but this is one of very few studies that look at Native Hawaiians," said Mika Thompson, lead author and Ph.D. candidate in the Office of Public Health Studies. Thompson worked with Office of Public Health Studies colleagues and researchers at the UH Cancer Center and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

The study used data collected from the UH Cancer Center's Multiethnic Cohort Study, which included men and women from Hawai'i and Los Angeles who identified as white, Japanese American, Native Hawaiian, Black and Latino.

Among the 92,000 participants researchers analyzed, those who smoked and consumed alcohol developed a higher risk for gout later in life. Those who consumed more than three alcoholic drinks per day had a 38% increased risk of gout compared to those who did not drink at all.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, participants who used vitamin C supplements or those who adhered to a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods were associated with lower risk of gout.

The gout risk associated with certain behaviors like [smoking](#) or [alcohol](#) was also found to vary depending on the population. For example, the risk of developing gout among those who consumed one to two drinks per day was significantly greater among Japanese participants compared to White participants, and lower among Latino participants.

These [ethnic differences](#) in gout risk for [older adults](#) and the varied effect of certain behaviors depending on ethnicity are notable, Thompson said. The data provide new insight about correlated risks for different populations.

"Knowing that the effects of certain lifestyle factors

differ by ethnicity can really help bring us closer to precision in prevention, identifying gout, and clinical treatment for older adults," Thompson said. "Gout is a debilitating disease and it's often unrecognized for a long period of time, so being able to see these disparities in populations that already are underserved and understudied really helps bring light to the issue."

**More information:** Mika D. Thompson et al, Modifiable Factors and Incident Gout Across Ethnicity Within a Large Multiethnic Cohort of Older Adults, *The Journal of Rheumatology* (2022). [DOI: 10.3899/jrheum.210394](https://doi.org/10.3899/jrheum.210394)

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