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Title: [HIV/AIDS in Houston/Harris County, Texas: Charting Latino Progress over Healthcare Barriers](#)

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Objective: This study examines differences in prescription for anti-retrovirals among the racial/ethnic groups in Houston/Harris County in the context of ongoing national discussion among policy makers that would possibly expand HIV treatment guidelines to all patients.

Methods: Data for this study was obtained through a cross-sectional representative survey of adult HIV+ patients (≥ 18 years old) in Houston/Harris County who received medical care in 2009. A total of 368 medical record abstractions were examined. Descriptive and logistic regression analyses were used to determine the relationships between the independent variables and outcome variable while controlling for gender and age. STATA version 11 was used for data management and statistical analysis.

Results: Patient prescriptions for anti-retroviral therapy for African Americans, Latino and Caucasians were above 80% in 2009. However, a comparison of African Americans and Caucasians to Latinos revealed that a significantly higher proportion of Latinos were prescribed anti-retroviral therapy: AOR (95%CI) = 3.9 (3.3 - 4.6) and AOR = 3.0 (2.5 - 3.7), respectively. Latinos were also more likely to have higher rates of viral load suppression than African Americans [AOR = 1.8 (1.6 - 2.0)] and Caucasians [AOR = 2.0 (1.8 - 2.2)]. Further analysis showed that Latinos were less likely to progress to HIV Stage 3 (CD4 < 200) than African Americans [RR = 0.5 (0.4 - 0.5)] and Caucasians [RR = 0.8 (0.6 - 0.9)].

Conclusion: The impact of prescription and adherence to anti-retroviral medication is reflected in HIV viral suppression, making it less likely for patients to progress to stage 3. In advocating for anti-retroviral therapy prevention programs should consider identifying barriers within race/ethnicity that may prevent patients from receiving and adhering to their medications.

Keywords: Latinos, African-Americans, Caucasians, Medical Monitoring Project, HIV/AIDS, Houston, Texas