

TEXAS: Study: Undocumented Latinos Get Into HIV Treatment Dangerously Late

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A study at a free clinic in Houston indicated that undocumented Latinos with HIV begin treatment with more advanced disease than other patients. According to HIV doctors and researchers, successful treatment is more difficult to achieve if the patient begins treatment after the virus has advanced in the body. Late diagnosis has been identified as a major reason for higher death rates among black Americans. Dr. Thomas Giordano, associate professor of medicine-infectious diseases at Baylor College of Medicine, reviewed data from patients at Houston's Thomas Street Health Center throughout the course of five-and-one-half years. He studied 1,620 patients with HIV infection, including 186 undocumented Latino patients, 278 documented Latino patients, 986 black patients, and 170 white patients. Findings show that undocumented Latino patients presented at the clinic with the most advanced HIV disease compared to the documented Latinos and black and white patients. The undocumented Latinos began treatment with the most weakened immune systems. This means that the undocumented Latinos were delaying care or had met with delays in getting diagnosed. After one year of treatment, undocumented Latino patients had similar rates of retention in care and similar success in reversing HIV's advance as documented Latino and white patients. Black patients were significantly less likely to succeed in care even more than undocumented Latinos.

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