

Mission) Guyana, South America. The village is home to approximately 200 people of mainly Arawak descent, where there is no health care.^[1] The approximately 740,000 people living in the country is made up out of Amerindians (5.3%), Blacks (30.5%), East Indians (51.4%), Chinese (0.2%), White (2.1%), and Mixed (10%).^[1] Population mix of the country lends itself to anthropological, social, lifestyle, and genetic studies which may yield important information.^[2]

We previously reported our pilot data in which we screened 619 people in Guyana.^[3] This work was part of the SEVAK Project in Guyana and India.^[4]

There were several similarities in the characteristics of the Amerindian indigenous people and the nonindigenous people. There was no difference in the age, marital status, access to clean drinking water, incidence of smoking, alcohol use, or drug abuse. None of the homes had indoor toilets while 83.6% had indoor toilets in the nonindigenous people. The prevalence of diabetes mellitus was 13.9%, and that of hypertension was 29.4% in the nonindigenous group versus 5.4% and 12.5%, respectively, in the indigenous group [Table 1].

Table 1: Baseline characteristics of sample population of Santa Mission (n=56)

Characteristics	Sample population
Age (years±SEM)	42.6±2.5
Sex (%)	
Male	44.6
Female	55.4
Marital status (%)	
Divorced	1.8
Married	33.9
Never been married	48.2
Single	5.4
Widowed	10.7
BMI >24-99 (%)	33.9
BMI >29-99 (%)	12.5
Smoking (%)	
Everyday	12.5
Someday	7.1
Not at all	80.4
Tobacco (%)	7.1
Alcohol use (%)	41.1
Recreational drugs (%)	0.0
Diet (%)	
Vegetarian	1.8
Nonvegetarian	98.2
Socioeconomic conditions	
Education status (%)	
Grades 1 through 8	37.5
Grades 9 through 11	60.7
Grades 12	1.8
College 1-3 years	0.0
College 4 years or more	0.0
Postgraduate	0.0
Number of formal education	0.0
Income level (%)	
Employed for wages	32.1
Homemaker	0.0

Contd...

Incidence of diabetes and hypertension in indigenous Amerindian village in Guyana, South America

Sir,

We carried out a detailed survey of the adult population in the remote Amerindian indigenous village (Santa

Table 1: Continued

Characteristics	Sample population
Out of work	30.4
Retired	0.0
Self-employed	37.5
Student	0.0
Unable to work	0.0
Toilet (%)	100
In-house	0.0
Out of house	100
Cooking (%)	100
Firewood	5.4
Gas	58.9
Kerosene	30.4
Stove	5.4
Type of drinking water	
Reverse osmosis water	100
Tube well	0.0
Village tank	0.0
Well	0.0
Diabetes	5.4
Hypertension	12.5
Breast examination knowledge	25.8
Pap smear	22.6

BMI: Body mass index, SEM: Standard error of mean

We were intrigued by the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension in the two groups. The low incidence of these conditions could be attributed to a variety of reasons such as nomadic lifestyle, genetic, or unknown factors. The incidence of obesity between the two groups was similar. This is in contrast to the high incidence of diabetes and hypertension in the native American-Indians in the US.^[5]

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

R. M. Jindal, R. Soni¹, K. Mehta², T. G. Patel³

Department of Surgery and Preventative Medicine and Biostatistics, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and Walter Reed NNM, ³Department of Medicine, Uniformed Service University, Bethesda, MD, ¹Department of Medicine, Central Michigan University College of Medicine, Saginaw, MI, ²Department of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Address for correspondence:

Dr. R. M. Jindal,
Department of Surgery, Uniformed Services University of
Health Sciences and Walter Reed NNM, 8901 Wisconsin Av,
Bethesda, MD 20889, USA.
E-mail: jindalr@msn.com

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