

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) is More Prevalent Among African American Populations



African Americans More Likely to Develop PAD

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)—atherosclerosis of the abdominal aorta and arteries of the lower extremities—affects 18 million Americans. African Americans are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to suffer from PAD.ⁱ

- PAD is more common in African Americans than any other racial or ethnic group because the greatest risk factors, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, are more common among African Americans.ⁱⁱ
 - An estimated one in every four African Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 has diabetes.
 - High blood pressure affects more than 40 percent of African Americans. It also develops earlier in life in blacks than in whites and is usually more severe.ⁱⁱⁱ
- African Americans have a higher prevalence of asymptomatic PAD (i.e., evidence of disease without leg symptoms), putting African American patients at increased risk for delays in care.

PAD-related amputation rates higher among African Americans

If not properly diagnosed and treated, PAD can result in non-traumatic, lower limb amputation. Data show that due to the disproportionate prevalence of PAD among African Americans, and limited access to appropriate intervention, amputation rates are higher in the African American population.

- Studies have reported minority patients are much less likely to receive preventive vascular screenings and procedures.^{v,vi}
- African Americans are up to four times more likely to have an amputation than white Americans.^{vii}
- African Americans are far more likely than whites to receive an amputation rather than revascularization for lower extremity arterial vascular disease, even after accounting for differences in comorbid conditions, including diabetes.^{viii}
- African Americans living with critical limb ischemia – an advanced form of PAD – face significantly higher risk of major amputation, even when treated by providers with highest likelihoods of revascularization.^{ix}

ⁱ [African Americans and Peripheral Arterial Disease: A Review Article](#)

ⁱⁱ [National Heart Lung and Blood Institute](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [American Heart Association](#)

^{iv} Ibid.

^v [Disparities in level of amputation among minorities: implications for improved preventative care. July 2009.](#)

^{vi} Do Differences in Hospital and Surgeon Quality Explain Racial Disparities in Lower-Extremity Vascular Amputations?. September 2009.

^{vii} [Variation in the Care of Surgical Conditions: Diabetes and Peripheral Arterial Disease. A Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care Series.](#)

^{viii} Ibid.

^x Ibid.