

## Letters to the Editor

### Obesity and Insulin-Like Growth Factor-I in African Americans and Whites

**To the Editors:** We were surprised by the results reported by Henderson et al. (1) showing a different relationship between body mass index (BMI) and insulin-like growth factor-I (IGF-I) for African Americans and Whites. They found essentially no relationship between BMI and IGF-I for African Americans but a clear decline in IGF-I levels with BMI for Whites. We measured IGF-I in plasma collected from 981 premenopausal women ages 35 to 49 years who had been randomly selected from the membership of a large urban health plan in Washington, District of Columbia (576 African Americans and 405 Whites). Measurement of IGF-I was by extraction using RIA kits from Nichols Institute Diagnostics. On average, African Americans have lower IGF-I than Whites [162 ng/mL (SE, 2.5) compared with 171 ng/mL (SE, 2.9)], but means for

each BMI category are nearly identical for the two ethnic groups (Table 1). Regression analyses show that age-adjusted BMI (modeled continuously) is strongly and inversely related to IGF-I in both ethnic groups, and the  $\beta$  coefficients for BMI are nearly identical [African Americans:  $-2.4$  (SE, 0.29); Whites:  $-2.5$  (SE, 0.42)].

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**Table 1. Unadjusted mean IGF-I level with SE for each category of BMI by ethnic group**

BMI	African American		White	
	<i>n</i>	Mean IGF-I, ng/mL (SE)	<i>n</i>	Mean IGF-I, ng/mL (SE)
<25.0	144	181 (5.3)	238	179 (3.7)
25.0-29.9	176	174 (4.0)	95	175 (5.9)
30.0-34.9	114	160 (5.3)	36	157 (7.7)
>35.0	142	129 (4.5)	36	125 (8.0)

### Reference

- Henderson KD, Goran MI, Kolonel LN, Henderson BE, Le Marchand L. Ethnic disparity in the relationship between obesity and plasma insulin-like growth factors: the multiethnic cohort. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev* 2006;15:2298-302.

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