

## Study Seeks to Improve Asthma Therapy for African Americans

---

FEBRUARY 25, 2014

DENVER, CO — Researchers, led by [Michael E. Wechsler, MD](#), at National Jewish Health, are launching a multi-center study, funded by the [National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute](#), to determine the best add-on therapy for uncontrolled asthma in African Americans. The Best African American Response to Asthma Drugs (BARD) study will evaluate several different therapies, and examine whether genetic analysis can help guide therapy.

“African Americans suffer a disproportionate burden of asthma, with more asthma-related urgent care visits, higher rates of hospitalizations and higher death rates due to asthma,” said Dr. Wechsler, principal investigator and professor of medicine at National Jewish Health. “This study will help us understand if we can narrow that disparity by customizing medical treatment for the African American population.”

National asthma guidelines call for patients whose asthma is uncontrolled on low doses of inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) to increase the steroid dose or add a long-acting beta agonist (LABA). However, the guidelines were based on studies that included relatively few African Americans. Evidence suggests that African Americans may not respond well to guidelines-based escalation of medications.

The BARD study will enroll about 500 African-Americans whose asthma is inadequately controlled on low doses of inhaled corticosteroids. At 30 sites in 14 states researchers will compare multiple combinations of medications and dosing regimens to assess participants’ response to therapy. BARD also will track whether children and adults respond similarly to the same treatment, and evaluate how genes may affect treatment response. [Learn more.](#)

“BARD reinforces the institute’s commitment to understand, reduce, and ultimately even eliminate the disparities in asthma outcomes observed in the African-American population compared to other Americans with asthma,” added James Kiley, MD, director of the NHLBI Division of Lung Diseases.

**National Jewish Health** is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 122 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

### Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

**Jessica Berry**  
303.398.1082  
[berrj@njhealth.org](mailto:berrj@njhealth.org)

**Sean Andersen-Vie**  
303.398.1002  
[andersenvies@njhealth.org](mailto:andersenvies@njhealth.org)