Racial and Ethnic Differences in Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors: A Systematic Review

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BACKGROUND

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in the United States and a growing public health concern. While the death rates from CVD declined 22.1% from 1993 to 2003, the actual number of deaths declined 4.6%, in the same 10-year period. Much of the burden of CVD morbidity and mortality is linked to the modifiable CVD risk factors and the differences in the incidence and prevalence of these risk factors by race/ethnicity are substantial. Therefore, we must examine various CVD risk profiles and CVD burden by race/ethnicity to understand and to explore opportunities to narrow health-related racial and ethnic disparities.

METHODS

A series of trial searches was performed initially by using a wide array of relevant search terms. Foremost, an Ovid search of MEDLINE and PubMed were undertaken to identify relevant studies. An effective combination of search terms was used to search the electronic databases. Table 1 summarizes the databases that were searched and the search terms that were used.

Electronic bibliographic databases, reference lists from relevant publications, conference proceedings (the Con-