

# FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: IN THIS SECTION GENERAL REPORTS

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Keith C. Norris, MD

**Retention Factors for Participants of an Inner-City Community-Based Asthma Intervention Study**—Seymour G. Williams, MD; Anisha R. Wharton, BS; Kenneth H. Falter, PhD; Erin French, BS; Stephen Redd, MD

From results of this study, clinical researchers will be well-advised to “do their homework” when designing methods for improved retention rates of participants in clinical studies. After evaluating factors that influenced participant retention in an inner-city, pediatric, asthma trial, Williams et al found that retention rates for the second year of the study were higher for those who were enrolled for year 2 during a face-to-face followup home visit, rather than enrolled at an emergency department, or for those who lived longer at the same residence. The authors recommend that future studies be designed with a comprehensive pilot study

and the consideration of a home residency period as participant enrollment criteria.

**Data Quality and Adjusted Hispanic Mortality in the United States, 1989–1991**—Karen Swallen, MPH, PhD; Abdelhani Guend, MS

Although Hispanics appear to live longer than the general population in the United States, Swallen and Guend provide insight into a possible data bias that may affect mortality statistics. In this review of data from the National Mortality Follow-Back Survey of 1993, the authors found that the Hispanic paradox cannot be wholly explained by data bias; however, the Hispanic advantage in life expectancy was found to be erased by adjusting for misclassification of ethnicity, at least for men. The authors suggest that causal mechanisms related to life expectancy should be investigated, in addition to data quality issues raised in their study.