



## What's in this newsletter?

In the HELIUS study we investigated 25,000 Amsterdammers. Because of this we have learned a lot about the health of different populations and we can improve care for all Amsterdammers. In this folder we describe some of the main results. Do you want to know more about the findings of HELIUS? Please check the website [www.heliusstudy.nl/en/home/resultaten](http://www.heliusstudy.nl/en/home/resultaten).



### Diabetes

Diabetes is also known as "sugar disease". This disease is common in the Netherlands, especially in older people. The HELIUS study shows that people of non-Dutch ethnic origin are more likely to develop diabetes, even at a younger age. GPs should take this into account when someone with a non-Dutch origin comes to their clinic.

### Healthy food

In the HELIUS study we asked participants what they eat and drink. Each ethnic group has its own eating habits. And the research shows that people mostly keep their own eating habits, even if they have been living in the Netherlands for a long time. The Netherlands Nutrition Centre (Voedingscentrum) recognizes that it is important to take this into account. The findings from the HELIUS study have been used to adapt some of the advice on healthy eating. Now the advice better reflects the eating habits of different population groups.



### Little sleep

Researchers have found that there is a link between sleep and health. In the HELIUS study, we asked how many hours people sleep and whether they have health problems. And guess what? People who don't have enough sleep are more likely to have:

- diabetes;
- high blood pressure;
- overweight;
- too much cholesterol in the blood.

Because of this, people who don't sleep enough are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke.

What is "too little sleep"? Studies show that less than seven hours a night is too little.

## High blood pressure

Many people have high blood pressure. This is not good for the heart and blood vessels. Therefore, people with high blood pressure are given medication to lower it. Our study shows that medication may not always work to lower blood pressure. This problem is more common in people with non-Dutch descent, but we don't know why. We want to investigate this problem further. And we recommend to doctors that they need to check if the medicines they give to patients are working like they should be.



## Cervical cancer

Cancer of the cervix is caused by the human papilloma virus, HPV. We know that women of non-Dutch origin have cervical cancer more often. So we thought that they would be more likely to have an HPV infection. But this is not the case. We need to investigate this problem more, to understand why women of non-Dutch origin are more likely to have cervical cancer.

## Doctor in home country

People of non-Dutch origin may go to a doctor in their home country. For example, because they are not satisfied with the care in the Netherlands. Or because they want a second opinion. We'd like to find out why some people are less satisfied with health care in the Netherlands so that we can work towards making it better.



## New research

In the future, we want to invite all HELIUS participants to come back again. We want to know how their health has developed over the years. And whether participants may have changed their lifestyle habits. By studying the same people we can learn more about the causes of disease. We will send you a new invitation once the follow-up survey starts.

**We really hope that you will be able to take part. And we look forward to seeing you again.**

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'Do you join us again?'

Veronica van de Kamp  
HELIUS Ambassador