

Healthy People 2010 Goals: How Are Asian Texans Doing?

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Introduction

The Asian American population in Texas is the fourth largest in the US, yet relatively little is known about their health status and risk for cancer and other diseases.

The Texas Asian population experienced an 80% increase in growth from 1990 to 2000 and includes at least sixteen distinct Asian subgroups. For many of the health indicators included in the Healthy People 2010 Goals, Asian data is non-existent or not collected, making it difficult to assess progress towards achieving these goals. This health data disparity masks the true health profile of Asian Americans in Texas and may prevent them from documenting needs in their communities. Furthermore, it prevents them from accessing funding which could address those needs.

In July 2004, the Center for Research on Minority Health(CRMH) at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center initiated a health risks assessment telephone survey, based on the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS) of the Vietnamese and Chinese communities residing in Houston and three surrounding counties. Over 800 randomly selected households, 405 Chinese and 409 Vietnamese, participated in the survey, providing data to assess progress towards some goals of Healthy People 2010.

Objectives of Research

The specific aims of the Asian American Health Needs Assessment (AsANA) project were to:

- Identify unmet health needs in the Asian community in Houston
- Understand the ethnic and cultural variables that affect the behaviors and attitudes in this population in regards to cancer and other health concerns
- Compile demographic data about the Asian Community
- Review exposure to occupational, genetic, and behavioral risk factors in this population

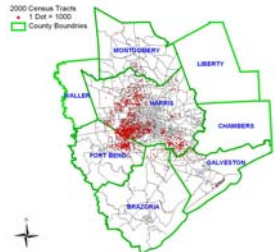
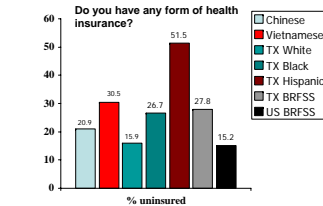
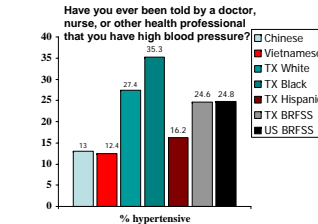


Fig 1 The largest concentration of Asian Americans in Texas is in the Houston-Galveston area. This population density map indicates that large numbers of Asian Americans reside in Fort Bend County and Southwest Houston.

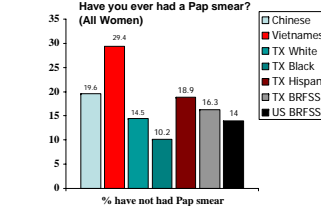
Asian population in Texas, the US, and the four counties			
	Chinese	Vietnamese	Total
Brazoria	711	1409	2120
Fort Bend	11,491	5093	16,584
Galveston	985	1517	2502
Harris	34,673	55,489	90,162
Texas	105,829	134,961	240,790
US	2,432,585	1,122,528	3,555,113



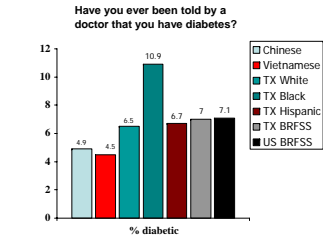
HP 2010 Goal: 100% health insurance coverage
AsANA: Approximately 20% of the Chinese and 30% of the Vietnamese lacked health insurance.



HP 2010 Goal: reduce the proportion of adults with high blood pressure from 28% to 16%.
AsANA: Chinese and Vietnamese had lower percentages of individuals with hypertension, but there may be fewer who have been screened.

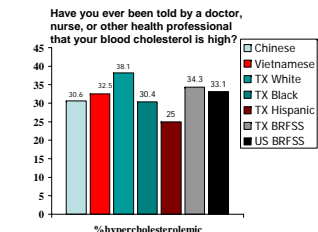


HP 2010 Goal: Increase the proportion of women that receive a Pap smear by 5% (from 92% to 97%).
AsANA: Only 70% of women in the Vietnamese group and 80% of women in the Chinese group had had a Pap smear.



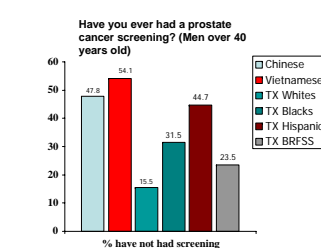
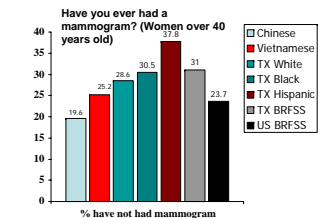
HP 2010 Goal: reduce the overall rate of diabetes that is clinically diagnosed from 40 cases per 1000 patients a year to 25 cases per 1000 patients (2.5%).

AsANA: Chinese and Vietnamese in the study had lower percentages of individuals who had been diagnosed with diabetes than other Texas populations. However, there might be fewer individuals who have been screened.



HP 2010 Goal: reduce the proportion of adults with high blood cholesterol from 21% to 17% (high blood cholesterol is defined by HP to be 240mg/dL).

AsANA: Chinese and Vietnamese failed to meet the goal for hypercholesterolemia.



HP2010 does not have a target set for prostate cancer screening. The BRFSS found that 75% of men over the age of 50 have been screened for prostate cancer. **AsANA:** Chinese and Vietnamese men have the highest percentage of not being screened as compared to other populations in Texas.

HP 2010 Goal: Increase the proportion of women over 40 years of age receiving mammograms from 67% to 70%.

AsANA: Chinese and Vietnamese women over 40 yrs met the goal.

Conclusions

The lack of health data on Asian Americans has made it difficult to assess their progress towards achieving the Healthy People 2010 Goals. The AsANA study provided preliminary baseline data to estimate their status on some health indicators. Disparities exist in the areas of lack of health insurance, lack of Pap and prostate cancer screening. Chinese and Vietnamese respondents in the AsANA study were found to have hypercholesterolemia at rates similar to other Texans. They were found to have lower percentages of individuals with diabetes and hypertension. However, because of language and cultural barriers and lack of health insurance, there may be a lack of health screenings in these populations, so these percentages may be underestimated.

Recommendations

- Continued support for culturally and linguistically appropriate health education and health services
- Recruitment of health care professionals who speak Asian languages to reach out to limited English proficient populations, like Chinese and Vietnamese
- Further research to identify health disparities in specific Asian subgroups (disaggregated data) and to develop effective strategies to address them.

References

- US Census Bureau, Census 2000
- Texas Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System, Texas State Department of Health Services, 2002
- Texas Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System, Texas State Department of Health Services, 2003

