

Development of a Culturally Sensitive Health Risk Factors Questionnaire for Chinese and Vietnamese in Houston, TX

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Abstract

Cancer is the leading cause of mortality for Asian Americans. Asian Americans in Texas are one of the fastest growing population groups in the US. However, there is little data on their health status and health behaviors. The Asian American Health Needs Assessment project will begin the process of collecting health and cancer information on Asians in Houston, TX by using a culturally and linguistically appropriate survey instrument based on the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS) instrument and methodology. This poster describes the process used to make the survey instrument culturally sensitive to the targeted population. The data collected through this project will identify health needs in the Houston Asian community and provide the documentation to justify funding for health promotion as well as give direction to future research in this population.

Background

The Community Health Survey (CHS) was chosen as the basic survey instrument to be used to collect health data. The CHS correlates strongly with the BRFSS, yet takes less time to administer than the BRFSS, thus decreasing participant burden. The instrument had been used to collect health information on Hispanics in the Rio Grande Valley, another large immigrant group in Texas. Using the CHS with the Asian American population allows for comparison of data with several other populations in Texas. To make the instrument more culturally appropriate for the Asian community, a method known as relevancy testing was used. An Asian review panel assisted with suggesting rewording of questions, concepts to include, and issues to consider.



Asian Review Panel assigns relevancy scores to questions on the health survey

Methodology

- A relevancy score sheet listing each of the 65 survey questions was prepared.
- An Asian review panel of 11 individuals was assembled to evaluate the survey questions.
- The panel scored each of the questions on a scale of 1-4 with
 - 1 = not relevant
 - 2 = somewhat relevant
 - 3 = relevant but needs modification
 - 4 = relevant
- The panel was encouraged to write comments for each of the questions.
- In general, questions receiving a mean relevancy score less than 3.5 were scrutinized for modification or omitted.

Original Questions

Now, thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?

Last week, how many days did you do moderate activities in your leisure time, such as bicycling, tennis, dancing, vacuuming, gardening, other yard work, or anything else that caused some increase in breathing or heart rate?

How many servings of fruits or vegetables did you eat yesterday?

A mammogram is an x-ray of each breast to look for breast cancer. Have you ever had a mammogram?

In the past 30 days, have you been concerned about having enough food for you or your family?

In the past 12 months, did you participate regularly in organized social groups such as clubs, church, synagogue, or civic activities?

Do any vitamin pills or supplements you take contain folic acid?

Evaluation Process

Relevancy Score: 2.89
Comments: make this question more upbeat, "happy," define stress, consider omitting question

Relevancy Score: 3.60
Comments: change/add "brisk walking, running," add more Asian relevant activities like tai chi; Asians may not consider gardening as exercise

Relevancy Score: 3.10
Comments: need to define serving size. Asian servings of vegetables are usually larger

Relevancy Score: 3.90
Comments: need an explanation of a mammogram, use a female interviewer

Relevancy Score: 2.70
Comments: sensitive question, seems inappropriate

Relevancy Score: 3.25
Comments: not very socially relevant, might be better to add family and relatives

Relevancy Score: 2.50
Comments: who will know about folic acid? Hard to answer, delete question

Changes made

English wording retained, however, Vietnamese version acknowledges that there are only two states for mental health: "normal" and "crazy."

Original wording retained. Probe added
PROBE IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE:
"Moderate activities like brisk walking, jogging, and running."

How many servings of fruits or vegetables did you eat yesterday?
ENTER NUMBER OF SERVINGS.
PROBE IF NECESSARY: "A serving of fruit is about half a banana or a small orange. A serving of cooked vegetable is the size of a light bulb."

Have you ever had a mammogram?
"A mammogram is an x-ray of each breast to check for breast cancer and involves pressing the breasts between two plastic plates. "

Question was deleted

How many close friends or relatives would help you with your emotional problems or feelings if you needed it?

Question was deleted

Discussion

As racial and ethnic minorities increase in the US, the development of culturally sensitive survey instruments and measurement methodologies will become a greater priority. This project demonstrated one of the ways that researchers can make well established questionnaires and instruments more relevant to new target populations. Other recommendations given by the Asian review panel included the following:

- Translate the survey by concept, not literally
- Use matched gender telephone interviewers
- Ask about the use of herbal therapies in the treatment of diseases/chronic conditions
- Include questions about cancers that are more prevalent in the Asian community, i.e., liver, nasopharyngeal cancer
- Include questions about hepatitis B
- Instead of saying "health professional," just say, "doctor or nurse."

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