

Faith Communities 'Keep on Track' to Prevent and Manage High Blood Pressure

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At A Glance

Between 2015 and 2016, more than 700 Asian Americans in New York and New Jersey were screened for high blood pressure at local churches, mosques, and gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship). The NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH) partnered with the NYC Department of Health to offer "Keep on Track," a blood pressure monitoring program. At least 90 volunteers from 12 faith-based organizations were trained to provide blood pressure screenings and health education that meets the cultural and language needs of their communities.



Public Health Challenge

About 1 in 5 Asian American adults have high blood pressure, a dangerous condition that can cause problems with the heart and blood vessels, and can lead to heart disease, which is a leading cause of death among Asian Americans. You can have high blood pressure and not know it. That is why it is called the "silent killer" and why it is so important to have your blood pressure checked regularly. However, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute,

Asian Americans are less likely to be aware of high blood pressure or have their cholesterol checked than most Americans. This may be due in part to mainstream blood pressure education campaigns not reaching Asian American communities. The NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health partnered with their local DOH and Asian American faith-based organizations to address this challenge.

Find Out More

According to CDC, more than 19,000 deaths among Asian Americans in 2013 were due to major heart disease, of which high blood pressure is a leading risk-factor. Faith-based organizations can help combat this "silent killer" by connecting members to blood pressure monitoring and education programs. To learn more, check out our webpage at <http://www.med.nyu.edu/asian-health/research/reachfar>.

The Keep on Track program in our church has helped many of our members discover that they had high blood pressure and didn't know it. We were able to educate them on what the numbers mean and link them to a doctor to get further care.

- Mrs. Chu

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Approach

The partners formed a coalition to help prevent heart disease among Asian Americans in the New York City metropolitan area. Goals included increasing access to a culturally-tailored blood pressure monitoring program in faith-based organizations. According to the Pew Research Center, nearly 70% of Asian Americans report attending religious services. Over 90 volunteers from 12 Asian American faith-based organizations - including Korean and Filipino churches, Sikh gurdwaras, and Bangladeshi mosques - were trained to provide blood pressure screening and education to help congregants prevent and manage high blood pressure. The trained volunteers also helped link congregants to medical care.

Results

As of March 2016, over 700 people have been screened for high blood pressure because of the coalition's efforts at these 12 faith-based organizations. Over 50 blood pressure screening events have been successfully held because of the help of over 90 trained volunteers. "Keep on Track" educational booklets have been culturally adapted and translated for the Korean, Filipino, Bangladeshi, and Asian Indian communities. These booklets include information on healthy eating and active living and have been disseminated to over 700 community members.

What's Next

The coalition plans to hold at least 90 more blood pressure screening events by March 2018 at faith-based organizations in the New York metropolitan area. By using a train-the-trainer model and relying on volunteers, the program will be able to continue and expand. Refresher courses and training for new volunteers will be offered as needed. Current and future participating faith-based and community organizations can also access all culturally and linguistically adapted Keep on Track education materials on the CSAAH website at <http://www.med.nyu.edu/asian-health/research/reachfar>.