



STANFORD
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Mental Health Aspects of Diabetes in Elders from Diverse Ethnic Backgrounds

Chinese American Elders

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Background

- ❑ Largest subgroup of Asian American elders and number over 236,000
- ❑ Elders are varied in their acculturation level to the mainstream U.S. culture
 - ❑ Income
 - ❑ Education
 - ❑ Religion
 - ❑ Living arrangements

Background (cont.)

- ❑ Common historical influences
 - ❑ Discrimination in late 1800s and early 1900s
 - ❑ Chinese Exclusion Act
 - ❑ Divided families
 - ❑ Post World War II “Two Chinas”
 - ❑ 1960’s decrease in discrimination
 - ❑ Immigration

Background (cont.)

- ❑ Current cohort still heavily foreign born
- ❑ Mixed levels of living conditions
- ❑ Considerable religious heterogeneity
 - ❑ Protestants or Catholics
 - ❑ Buddhists
 - ❑ Traditional Confucian and Taoists
- ❑ Healthcare providers need to recognize importance of family members in decision of care

Diabetes - Risk

- Diabetes is becoming a health challenge in Asian and Pacific Islander communities in the U.S. but there is limited data available on the prevalence
- Multi-Ethnic Study of Arteriosclerosis (MESA) (Saad, Sampson et al., 2003)
 - Impaired glucose was found to be twice as high in Chinese Americans as Caucasians but lower than in African Americans and Hispanics

Diabetes – Risk (cont.)

- Non-institutionalized Chinese Americans aged 60-96 (Choi, McGancy et al., 1990)
 - Chinese American men and women reported a history of diabetes, higher than the 8.8% for older women in the U.S. but similar to that of older men

Diabetes – Nutrition

Education for Treatment



- ❑ Traditional Foods
 - ❑ Mandarin, Szechwan, Hunan, Shanghai, Canton
- ❑ Core foods include:
 - ❑ Fruits (oranges, melons, mango, litchi)
 - ❑ Vegetables (bamboo shoots, bean sprouts, bok choy, Chinese broccoli, Chinese long beans, garlic, ginger, mushrooms)
 - ❑ Grains (long grain rice, wheat -noodles, dumplings and flour wrappers)
 - ❑ Dairy products - not traditional Chinese diet
 - ❑ Protein sources - meats (bite size pieces of pork, beef, chicken, and duck), fish, eggs, legumes
 - ❑ Tea

Diabetes – Nutrition

Education for Treatment (cont.)



- ❑ Typical meal includes soup, rice, and two or three mixed vegetables
- ❑ Food selection criteria based on yin and yang
 - ❑ Not temperature but energy food possesses
- ❑ Yang food examples
 - ❑ Ginger, garlic, meats, eggs, etc.
- ❑ Ying food example
 - ❑ Vegetables, melons, fish

Nutrition – Acculturation Issues

- ❑ Influential factors to American diets
 - ❑ Length of residence in U.S.
 - ❑ Education level
 - ❑ Ability to speak English
- ❑ Other factors
 - ❑ Food availability
 - ❑ Quality
 - ❑ Cost
- ❑ Breakfast choices are the most evident of dietary acculturation
 - ❑ Risk factors include diseases like type 2 diabetes

Nutrition – Strategies

- ❑ Make healthy food choices
- ❑ Control food portions
- ❑ Modify recipes
- ❑ Resources
 - ❑ Kittler, P. G., & Sucher, K.P. 2004. *Food and culture* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning

Nutrition – Strategies (cont.)

- Resources, implementation strategies
 - Georgia State University. *Nutrition education for new Americans project (Chinese language version: Available at <http://monarch.gsu.edu/nutrition/Chinese.htm>*
- Registered Dietitians or Certified Diabetes Educators
 - www.eatright.org
 - www.diabeteseducator.org

Depression - Risk

- ❑ Older Chinese immigrants in U.S. East Coast Cities (Mui, Kang et al., 2003)
 - ❑ Prevalence rates of depression ranging from 26% to 51% based on different versions of the Geriatric Depression Scale
- ❑ Chinese American Psychiatric Epidemiology Study (Takeuchi, Chung et al., 1998)
 - ❑ Major depressive episodes and dysthymia in a sample of 1,747 Chinese American households indicated the lifetime rate of major depression was 6.9% and 5.2% dysthymia

Depression – Risk (cont.)

- National Comorbidity Survey (Kessler, McGonagle et al., 1994)
 - Lower rates of depression in Chinese Americans
 - Lower rates due to social stigma, lack of Western diagnostic criteria for depression, coping mechanisms that protect against depression

Depression – Risk (cont.)

- Older Chinese American women (Liu & Yu, 1985)
 - Chinese American women age 65-74 suicide rates 3 times higher than Caucasian women in the U.S.
 - Chinese American women age 75-80 suicide rates 7 times higher than Caucasian women in the U.S

Depression – Risk (cont.)

- Los Angeles Study (Diego, Yamamoto et al., 1994)
 - Most women who committed suicide lived with their children
 - Some suicide notes indicated that they did not want to burden their children

Cognitive Loss and Dementia - Risk



- Hong Kong Study (Chiu, Lam et al., 1998)
 - Prevalence rates of dementia in a sample of 1,034 Chinese age 70+
 - Alzheimer's disease accounted for 64.6%
 - Vascular dementia accounted for 29.3%
 - Rate of Alzheimer's disease lower than in studies with Caucasians