Between 2013 and 2014, the Center for the Study of Asian American Health collected 203 surveys in the Chinese community in New York City in partnership with community groups including Chinese-American Planning Council, Chinatown YMCA, Grace Gratitude Buddhist Temple, and Chinese Christian Herald Crusades. The NYC Chinese community is the largest Asian group in NYC with more than half a million residents, growing by 34% from 2000 to 2010. The community is focused in Queens (40%), Brooklyn (36%), and Manhattan (20%).

CHRNA survey findings indicate that the majority (90%) of Chinese respondents were foreign-born, 87% of whom were born in China.

**languages spoken**

Over 95% of participants speak a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken language is Cantonese.

**demographic information**

- **Low English Language Proficiency**
  - An overwhelming majority (83%) speak English less than “very well”
  - 58% speak English “not well” or “not at all”

- **Education**
  - 51% have less than a high school education
  - 13% have some college education
  - 21% are college graduates

CHINA CHRNA RESPONDENTS were...

65% 35%

**employment**

Over 73% of participants were working-age adults between 18 to 64 years old.

- 33% work < 34 hours per week
- 49% work 35-40 hours per week
- 10% work ≥ 40 hours per week

Of the respondents who do not work, 23% are retired.

**work hours**

- Full time: 48%
- Part time: 30%
- Do not work: 22%

**low income**

- < $25,000: 33%
- $25,000 - $55,000: 17%
- > $55,000: 12%

**languages spoken**

- English only: 4%
- Cantonese only: 4%
- Mandarin only: 9%
- Cantonese + Mandarin: 25%
- Cantonese + other: 9%
- Mandarin + other: 7%
- Chinese + Mandarin + other: 1%
- Chinese (general): 1%
- Fuzhou dialect: 0%
- Other dialect: 32%

**perceived health status**

Chinese CHRNA respondents were asked to rate their health status:

- 55% describe their health status as GOOD, VERY GOOD, or EXCELLENT
- 45% rated their health as FAIR or POOR

**general health**

DID YOU KNOW?

The top health concerns among Chinese respondents were:

- Cardiovascular disease (31%)
- Oral or dental health (22%)
- Respiratory problems; Cancer (21%)
HEALTH PROFILE

OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to adult men and women.

- According to standard BMI measurements, about 20% of Chinese respondents are overweight, with 6% registering as obese. In comparison, 33% of New Yorkers are overweight and 23% are obese.²
- When using Asian BMI standards, the proportions of overweight and obese Chinese respondents shift to 41% and 12%, respectively.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

- About 27% of CHNRA Chinese respondents at least “sometimes” worry about having enough money to buy nutritious meals.
- 42% reported that their homes are a 10-minute-walk or more away from a place to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sedentary lifestyle is related to many chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart diseases, and depression.

- 38% of Chinese CHRNA respondents do not engage in any weekly physical activity in the past month, compared to 26% of New Yorkers overall.²
- About 45% engage in sufficient weekly physical activity, compared to 67% of New Yorkers. Sufficient physical activity means spending >150 minutes per week engaging in moderate physical activity, > 75 minutes a week engaging in vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

- 13% do not have health insurance
- 29% have private or employer coverage
- 54% are enrolled in public or government insurance coverage (Medicaid, Medicare, or other)

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

- 29% have private or employer coverage
- 54% are enrolled in public or government insurance coverage (Medicaid, Medicare, or other)

HEALTH INFORMATION

The Chinese CHRNA respondents get their health information and hear about services primarily from:

- 47% Newspapers
- 38% Health provider
- 37% Family/Friends

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Nearly 5% do not have a regular health care provider. Among those with a regular provider:

- 23% to some extent feel that their doctor looks down on them and the way they live their life
- 28% did not understand everything their doctor discussed with them during their last visit

BARRIERS TO HEALTH CARE

Did You Know?

Of the 11% of Chinese CHRNA respondents reporting difficulty obtaining necessary medical care, tests, or treatments in the last year, reasons were because of costs (35%); problems with insurance (18%); and/or language barriers (18%).
ORAL HEALTH IS 2ND TOP HEALTH CONCERN
A majority (68%) of Chinese respondents rate their oral health as “POOR” or “FAIR”
• Only 53% have received an oral/dental health check-up in the past year

MENTAL HEALTH STATUS: UNMET NEED
A depression screening was used to determine how respondents would describe their feelings in the past 2 weeks:
14% of respondents may potentially benefit from mental health services
• From this at-risk group, about 14% are considered to have “severe” depression
• 18% are considered to have “moderately severe” depression
• 37% are considered to have “moderate” depression
• However, over 58% of respondents said they had never been screened for depression
  • 3% have been diagnosed with depression

RISK FOR CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES
High cholesterol levels and high blood pressure are risk factors of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), which can lead to heart disease and stroke.

• 64% have received a checkup or screening for cholesterol in the last year
• 25% were told they have high cholesterol. In comparison, 30% of New Yorkers were told the same thing by their physicians2
  • 67% of respondents with high cholesterol are currently taking medications for high cholesterol
• 74% have received a checkup or screening for blood pressure in the last year
• 27% were told they have high blood pressure, while 29% of New Yorkers were told the same thing by their physicians2
  • 79% of respondents with high blood pressure are currently taking medications for high blood pressure

INCREASED RISK OF DIABETES
Frequent blood sugar level screenings are important to preventing and controlling diabetes
• 65% of Chinese CHRNA respondents have received a check-up or screening for blood glucose in the past year
• 16% were told by a health care provider that they have diabetes, more than the 11% of New Yorkers told the same thing2
  • 77% of respondents with diabetes are currently taking medications prescribed by a health care provider

OSTEOPOROSIS
Two risk factors that increase risk of osteoporosis in later life are:
1. Being of Asian descent
2. Being female

Early screenings and intervention help to prevent negative health outcomes such as arthritis and joint injuries.
• 24% of female Chinese participants 65+ years have never received a checkup or screening for bone mineral density.

COMPARISON OF CANCER SCREENING RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CHinese CHRNA</th>
<th>New Yorkers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>60% (69%)</td>
<td>75% (78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammogram</td>
<td>87% (75%)</td>
<td>71% (78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pap smear</td>
<td>60% (53%)</td>
<td>71% (78%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 60% of Chinese CHRNA respondents 50+ years old have received a colonoscopy, while 69% of New Yorkers 50+ years old received a colonoscopy in the past 10 years6
• 79% of female Chinese CHRNA respondents 21+ years have had a clinical breast exam
• 87% of female respondents 40+ years have had a mammogram in the past 2 years, as compared to 77% of New York women6
• 71% of female respondents 21+ years old have had a pap smear in the past 3 years as compared to 78% of New York women5
SMOKING
- 16% of male CHRNA respondents are current smokers; less than that of current male smokers in New York at 20%2
- None of the women surveyed are current smokers; in comparison, 13% of New York women are current smokers2
- 23% of respondents have experienced secondhand smoke in restaurants or bars

SEASONAL FLU VACCINE
- About 62% of Chinese CHRNA respondents received the flu vaccine in the past year, which is greater than the 56% of all New Yorkers2

ALCOHOL
- About a quarter of all respondents are current drinkers
  - Among drinkers, 74% have 1 or 2 drinks on the days they drink
- About 24% of current drinkers have consumed 5 or more drinks at least once in the past 30 days, which is considered binge drinking2
  - In comparison, 18% of New Yorkers have had 5 or more drinks at least once in the past 30 days

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE
Chinese CHRNA respondents reported using various types of complementary and alternative medicine to maintain health or treat a health condition
- 44% have used herbal medicine
- 25% have gone to a traditional healer
- 25% have used acupuncture
- 25% have used other methods, including yoga, massage therapy, cupping, and qigong (a type of martial art)

SMOKING
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TUBERCULOSIS
Approximately 67% of respondents have previously had a tuberculosis (TB) test.
- 2% were told by a health care provider that they have the TB infection.

HEPATITIS B
Asian Americans are at higher risk for Hepatitis B, but many who are infected do not know it
- 66% of respondents have previously been screened for hepatitis B
- About 5% of all participants have been diagnosed.

NOT MEETING SLEEP RECOMMENDATIONS
Sleep supports healthy brain function to ensure good mental and physical health. A lack of adequate sleep can impact how well a person thinks, works, learns, or gets along with others.4 Only 49% of Chinese respondents reported getting the recommended number of hours of sleep.
- 7-9 hours is the recommended amount for healthy adults
- 41% less than 7 hours
- 49% 7-9 hours
- 6% > 9 hours

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD
- 78% of Chinese CHRNA respondents believe people in their neighborhood are trustful
- 80% believe people in their neighborhood get along well together
- 75% believe their neighbors look out for each other
- 76% believe that their neighbors would offer assistance in the event of an emergency

RELIGIOSITY
- Among religious Chinese CHRNA respondents, 31% go to their house of worship at least once a week
- 36% pray at least once a day

- Buddhism 40%
- Christianity 9%
- Agnostic/Atheist 9%
- Catholicism 2%
- Baha’ism 1%
- No Religion 38%
CONCLUSION

The Chinese CHRNA results are aligned with the public health literature which indicates that significant health disparities exist in Asian American subgroups. Low levels of English language were noted in the Chinese community. Rates of certain types of health screenings, such as Hepatitis B, colon cancer, and oral/dental health were relatively low in the Chinese population surveyed compared to New Yorkers in general. The results also showed a need for better resources concerning mental health, including screening and treatment of depression.

Health Promotion

Developing community-based health promotion and preventive healthcare (such as screening activities) in partnerships with Chinese-serving community-based organizations is essential to improving the health and well-being of the Chinese community.

Citations:
1. Asian American Federation, “Asian Americans in NYC, April 2013
2. New York City comparison data derived from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s EpiQuery: NYC Interactive Health, 2013 NYC Community Health Survey data at http://on.nyc.gov/1Cf1RAit.
5 New York City comparison data derived from New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s EpiQuery: NYC Interactive Health, 2010 Survey Trends data at http://on.nyc.gov/1AnvDsL
6. New York City comparison data derived from New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s EpiQuery: NYC Interactive Health, 2012 Survey Trends data at http://on.nyc.gov/1AnvDsL

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The mission of the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH) is to identify health priorities and reduce health disparities in the Asian American community through research, training and partnership.