Between 2013 and 2015, the Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH) and Mekong NYC collected 103 surveys in the Vietnamese community in New York City. The Vietnamese community in NYC is focused in Brooklyn (31%), Queens (26%), and the Bronx (22%). The 2010 Census counted 16,378 Vietnamese in the New York Metro Area and the population has grown 23% from 2000 to 2010. CHRNA survey findings indicate that the majority (86%) of Vietnamese respondents were foreign-born, 97% of whom were born in Vietnam. Among the immigrants, over half have lived in the U.S. for longer than 20 years.

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

A majority of foreign-born Vietnamese CHRNA respondents have lived in U.S. for more than two decades. Conflict or persecution in Vietnam and family reasons were the top reasons for coming to the U.S.

**Years Living in the U.S.**

- 5 years or less: 6%
- 6 - 10 years: 9%
- 11 - 15 years: 9%
- 16 - 20 years: 10%
- Greater than 20 years: 66%

**LOW ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

- An overwhelming majority (80%) speak English less than “very well”
- 57% speak English “not well” or “not at all”

**EDUCATION**

- 45% have less than a high school education
- 21% have some college education
- 13% are college graduates

**VIETNAMESE CHRNA RESPONDENTS were…**

- 51% female
- 49% male

**LOW INCOME**

- 44% of survey respondents reported less than $25,000 in annual household income
- 24% reported an annual household income between $25,000 and $55,000
- About 14% have an annual household income greater than $55,000
- 17% did not know or declined to answer the question

**EMPLOYMENT**

43% of participants were working-age adults between 18 to 64 years old.

- Full time: 47%
- Part time: 29%
- Do not work: 24%

Of the respondents who do not work, 24% are retired and 15% are a homemaker.

**WORKING HOURS**

Among Vietnamese respondents who work:

- 36% work < 34 hours per week
- 24% work 35-40 hours per week
- 33% work ≥ 40 hours per week

**PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS**

Vietnamese CHRNA respondents were asked to rate their health status:

- 59% describe their health status as GOOD, VERY GOOD, or EXCELLENT
- 41% rated their health as FAIR or POOR

**GENERAL HEALTH**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The top health concerns among Vietnamese CHRNA respondents were:

- Cardiovascular disease (51%)
- Cancer (32%)
- Respiratory problems (28%)
HEALTH PROFILE

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 31% of Vietnamese respondents are overweight, with 3% registering as obese. In comparison, 33% of New Yorkers are overweight and 23% are obese. When using Asian BMI standards, the proportions of overweight and obese Vietnamese respondents shift to 41% and 16%, respectively.

OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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

• 38% of Vietnamese respondents DO NOT engage in any weekly physical activity, compared to 26% of New Yorkers overall.
• About 52% 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 CARE ACCESS

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

- 15% do not have health insurance
- 21% have private or employer coverage

63% are enrolled in public or government insurance coverage (Medicaid, Medicare, other)

HEALTH INFORMATION

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

- Newspapers: 21%
- Health care provider: 31%
- Friends: 36%
- Family: 56%

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

• 1 out of 10 do not have a regular health care provider.
Among those with a regular provider:

• 7% to some extent feel that their doctor looks down on them and the way they live their life
• 41% did not understand everything their doctor discussed with them during their last visit

BARRIERS TO HEALTH CARE

21% of Vietnamese CHRNA respondents reporting difficulty obtaining necessary medical care, tests, or treatments in the last year. Reasons given were because of cost (25%), problems with insurance (38%), or problems getting to the doctor’s office (13%).

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

- About 13% of Vietnamese CHRNA respondents “always” or “usually” worry about having enough money to buy nutritious meals
- 35% reported that their homes are a 10-minute-walk or more away from a place to buy fresh fruits and vegetables
ORAL HEALTH IS A MAJOR HEALTH CONCERN
Over half (54%) of Vietnamese respondents rate their oral health as “POOR” or “FAIR”
• Only 41% 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:
17% of respondents may potentially benefit from mental health services, and 15% did not answer the depression risk questions
• From this at-risk group, about 18% are considered to have “moderately severe” depression
• 65% are considered to have “moderate” depression
• 18% are considered to have “mild” depression
• However, over 38% of respondents said they had never been screened for depression
  • 6% 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.

• Over 75% received a checkup or screening for cholesterol, 57% in the last year
• 30% were told they have high cholesterol. Similarly, 30% of New Yorkers were told the same thing by their physicians:
  • 68% of respondents with high cholesterol are currently taking medications for high cholesterol
• 92% of Vietnamese surveyed received a checkup or screening for blood pressure. 62% had their blood pressure checked in the last year
• 34% were told they have high blood pressure, while 29% of New Yorkers were told the same thing by their physicians:
  • 72% 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
• Only 47% have previously received a check-up or screening for blood glucose in the past year
• About 12% were told by a health care provider that they have diabetes, on par with the 11% of New Yorkers told the same thing:
• About 64% 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.
• 27% of female Vietnamese CHRNA respondents 65+ years have never received a checkup or screening for bone mineral density

COMPARISON OF CANCER SCREENING RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening</th>
<th>Vietnamese CHRNA</th>
<th>New Yorkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammogram</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pap smear</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Only 51% of Vietnamese CHRNA respondents 50+ years old have received a colonoscopy, while 69% of New Yorkers 50+ years old received a colonoscopy in the past 10 years:
• Approximately 76% of female Vietnamese CHRNA respondents 21+ years have had a clinical breast exam
• 58% of female respondents 40+ years have had a mammogram in the past 2 years, as compared to 75% of New York women:
• 54% of female Vietnamese CHRNA respondents have had a pap smear in the past 3 years, as compared to 78% of New York women:
• Only 47% — less than half — of male Vietnamese CHRNA respondents 50+ years have ever received a prostate exam
SMOKING

- 19% of Vietnamese CHRNA respondents are current smokers, compared to 16% of New Yorkers*
- 31% of men are current smokers; this is more than the 20% of current male smokers in New York*
- 8% of the women surveyed are current smokers; in comparison, 13% of New York women are current smokers*

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

SEASONAL FLU VACCINE

- About 61% of Vietnamese CHRNA respondents received the flu vaccine in the past year, which is greater than the 56% of all New Yorkers*

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Vietnamese CHRNA respondents reported using various types of complementary and alternative medicine to maintain health or treat a health condition
- 39% have used herbal medicine
- 12% have gone to a traditional healer
- 9% have used acupuncture
- 28% have used other CAMs, such as yoga, massage therapy, and cupping

ALCOHOL

- More than a third of all respondents are current drinkers
  - Among them, nearly 66% have 1 or 2 drinks on the days they drink
  - About 52% of current drinkers have consumed 5 or more drinks at least once in the past 30 days, which is considered binge drinking
  - In comparison, 18% of New Yorkers have had 5 or more drinks at least once in the past 30 days*

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. Only 39% of Vietnamese respondents reported getting the recommended number of hours of sleep.

- 7-9 hours is the recommended amount for healthy adults
- < 7 hours
- Fall asleep during the day
- 0% 50% 100%

- 58% of respondents self reported that they did not get enough rest or sleep at least once in the past 30 days
- 23% reported taking sleeping pills, other drugs, or alcohol to help them sleep

TUBERCULOSIS

Approximately three quarters of respondents have previously had a tuberculosis (TB) test.
- 1% 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 ³
- 71% of respondents have previously been screened for hepatitis B
- About 1% of all participants have been diagnosed

NEIGHBORHOOD

- 63% of Vietnamese CHRNA Respondents believe people in their neighborhood are trustful
- 70% believe people in their neighborhood get along well together
- 57% believe their neighbors look out for each other
- 54% believe that their neighbors would offer assistance in the event of an emergency
- 25% have been verbally or physically abused, or have had property damaged specifically because of race or ethnicity

RELIGIOSITY

- Among religious Vietnamese respondents, about a half worship at least once a week
- 55% pray at least once a day

40%
55%
39%
0% 50% 100%
CONCLUSION
The Vietnamese CHRNA results are aligned with the public health literature which indicates that significant health disparities exist in Asian American subgroups. CHRNA respondents reported low levels of English language proficiency. Rates of certain types of health screenings for colon cancer and oral/dental health were relatively low in the Vietnamese population surveyed compared to New Yorkers in general. The results also suggest 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 Vietnamese-serving community-based organizations is essential to improving the health and well-being of the Vietnamese 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/1Cf1RAf
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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Mekong aims to improve the quality of life of the Southeast Asian community by achieving equity through community organizing and healing, promoting arts, culture, and language, and creating a safety net by improving access to essential social services.

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.

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