NYU PRC Fostering International Learning Exchanges with Korean Public Health Officials and Academic Researchers

On March 27th, Dr. Simona Kwon, CSAAH Director and NYU PRC co-investigator, was invited to lecture at Ewha and Kyung Hee Universities in Seoul, Korea. Dr. Kwon presented on diabetes in Koreans and the NYU PRC’s diabetes prevention research, Project RICE, which is being conducted in the New York City Korean immigrant community. Healthcare professionals and researchers in Korea are becoming increasingly interested in diabetes and diabetes prevention given the rapidly growing diabetes rates in Korea. According to Dr. Kwon: “Within the past 30 years the rate of diabetes has increased 5-fold among Koreans in Korea. These rapidly increasing rates highlight the need for the implementation of diabetes prevention programs and strategies. It’s gratifying that there is interest and opportunities for the lessons learned and outcomes from Project RICE to inform prevention and health outcomes in Korea.”

On April 24th, the NYU PRC hosted a site visit of 17 local city health department officials representing 27 cities from Gyeonggi Province in South Korea [pictured above]. The health officials were accompanied by Dr. Jae Hyun Park, a researcher from Sungkyunkwan University School of Medicine in Seoul, Korea, to learn about health promotion and prevention strategies including city-wide activities to address risk factors related to chronic diseases, oral health, obesity, nutrition, and physical activity. We were excited by this opportunity to share our successes with the NYU PRC and Project RICE, as well as build international collaborations around diabetes prevention.

NYU PRC Hosts Forum on Integrating CHWs within Affordable Care Act Implementation

On May 9, 2013, the NYU PRC cohosted a forum on “Redesigning the Health Care Team: Integrating Community Health Workers (CHW) within Affordable Care Act Implementation”. The main goal of the forum was to raise awareness among policymakers and key stakeholders of the need for CHW involvement within the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and to share information on opportunities, resources, and financing and infrastructure models for CHW integration within ACA implementation efforts. The event was well-attended by over 120 individuals representing state and local departments of health, community-based organizations, academic institutions, and health facilities.

Slide presentations from each of the speakers are available for viewing and download on the PRC website: [http://bit.ly/YHgBsN](http://bit.ly/YHgBsN)

The forum was co-sponsored by the CHW Network of NYC, NYU-NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation Clinical and Translational Science Institute Community Engagement and Population Health Research Core, NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health, and Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity).
NYU PRC and Project RICE Partners Featured on *Asian America*

On March 25th, NYU PRC partners were interviewed by Sue Robinson, TV host and writer, on “Asian America” on WNYE TV, a weekly television program syndicated by PBS. In recognition of the American Diabetes Association’s Diabetes Alert Day, Dr. Rucha Kavathe, Health Projects Manager at UNITED SIKHS and Sunhi Shin, RN, a certified diabetes educator at NYU Langone Medical Center, spoke about nutrition strategies for diabetes prevention in the Asian American community, and shared their experiences being involved with Project RICE interventions in the Sikh South Asian and Korean communities. The program aired on PBS on April 28th and May 2nd.

NYU PRC Expertise Shared on *WFUV Radio* and *CMS and You* TV Programs

During the week of January 7th, NYU PRC staff and community partners were featured daily on a National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate WFUV (90.7 FM) broadcast series highlighting health issues in NYC immigrant communities. NYU PRC Director Dr. Nadia Islam and Associate Investigator Dr. Simona Kwon were also interviewed for an extended 30-minute feature focusing on health disparities among Asian American communities. Links to the media clips are available on the PRC website: [http://bit.ly/13rdYPQ](http://bit.ly/13rdYPQ).

In addition, NYU PRC Project Coordinator, Smiti Kapadia and Heesoo Yeo, Community Health Educator with PRC community partner organization Korean Community Services, were interviewed together regarding health disparities among Asian American communities on the “CMS and You” television program by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The program was aired on public access television in May.

UNITED SIKHS, NYU PRC, and NYU College of Dentistry Promote Oral Health in Sikh Communities

**Spring 2013** NYU PRC community partner UNITED SIKHS held 3 dental health fairs at gurdwaras in Port Reading, New Jersey and Richmond Hill, Queens, in partnership with the NYU PRC and the NYU College of Dentistry.

Over 200 Sikh South Asian community members received oral health exams from the NYU College of Dentistry assessing tooth loss and dental caries, presence of soft tissue lesions, the quality of oral hygiene, and the presence of periodontal inflammation.

Participants also received screenings for diabetes risk, including measurements of glucose, blood pressure, BMI, and hip-to-waist ratio. Surveys were administered to assess access to medical and dental care, barriers to receipt of care, and risk factors for poor oral health.

The project team is carrying out focus groups with community members to understand barriers and facilitators to oral health care, as well as to identify family-level barriers to maintaining and improving oral health and potential strategies for family-based oral health promotion interventions. These activities are part of a project to address oral health prevention in Sikh South Asian communities in New York City and New Jersey, funded by the DentaQuest Foundation’s National Community Committee (NCC) Oral Health Initiative.

Dr. Rucha Kavathe who manages the oral health project at UNITED SIKHS as well as works with Project RICE to implement the diabetes prevention program in the Sikh community, lauded the effort:

“This is an example of community-academic collaboration where we are building upon projects we have previously undertaken in the community. More than half (53%) of all Sikh South Asians surveyed in the Project RICE needs assessment in 2010 had never received a check-up or screening from a dentist. We recognized the crucial need for improved access to oral health services and oral health education in the community and brought resources and partners together to address these needs.”
NYU PRC Awarded Grant to Study Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening in NYC Muslim Women

Muslims are one of the fastest growing religious groups in the US. However, little is known about their health disparities, and how their unique cultural, religious, and social beliefs and practices affect health behaviors and outcomes. In addition, a small but growing number of studies demonstrate Muslim women may have lower rates of breast and cervical cancer screening compared to the overall population. A confluence of poor healthcare access, language barriers, and cultural and religious beliefs may play a role.

To help address this health disparity, the NYU PRC was awarded a two-year grant from the CDC in 2012 to conduct a qualitative study to understand the barriers and facilitators of breast and cervical cancer screening among a diverse group of Muslim women in New York City, including women from the African American, African, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Southeast Asian Muslim communities. The Muslim Americans Reaching for Health and Building Alliances (MARHABA) study uses a community-based participatory research framework to collaborate with mosques, community-based organizations and social service agencies in New York City. For the study, in-depth interviews with over 100 Muslim women will be conducted by MARHABA team members, including our Community Health Workers Gulnahar Alam and Ramatu Ahmed. Study findings will inform the development of a large-scale campaign to promote cancer awareness and screening among Muslim women.

To learn more about the MARHABA Project, contact Project Coordinator Shilpa Patel at shilpa.patel@nyumc.org.

Project RICE Welcomes Two New CHWs!

Chris Kim and Myoungmi Kim have joined the Project RICE team to help NYC Koreans learn how to lead healthier lives. They will lead the next round of culturally-tailored group education workshops in the Korean community on topics such as nutrition, physical activity, stress management, diabetes and chronic disease prevention, and health care access, as well as provide follow-up and support to program participants.

To learn more about Project RICE on the web visit: http://bit.ly/Ng5Qci

Congratulations To All 2012 and 2013 Graduates!

We congratulate 49 participants who completed the Project RICE diabetes prevention and healthy living program over the last year. Their achievements were celebrated at graduation ceremonies in December 2012 and June 2013 in Flushing, where they were congratulated by NYS Assemblymember Ron Kim and NYC Councilmember Peter Koo.

Graduates were invited to share their experiences with the program, including the following:

• “I got a blood test and was told that my blood sugar and cholesterol was higher than normal and I also had a fatty liver. So, I was determined to change my life habits and I joined Project RICE. The CHWs gave me a food diary. By writing down what I ate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, I realized my health had deteriorated because I paid no attention to what I was eating. Therefore, I started to control what I was eating from that time on.” (female participant)

• “The CHWs would give me a follow-up call once a week. I raised three children, but do you think they call me that often? Of course not, however, the CHWs call me to ask about my health, if I am going through any difficult times, and how I have been doing. After a while, I started looking forward to these calls, so that if they didn’t call me, I called them and asked for their advice.” (female participant)

• “My wife, who is a lot younger than me, is diagnosed with diabetes. So I began to think, ‘If someone who’s younger than me has it, should I do something?’ so I ended up coming here. I really enjoyed the program; I listened and participated. I wasn’t able to do this on my own, but through this program, I was able to do many things...which help maintain a healthy body. So we have to encourage the people we know to learn important things about health through these programs and enhance our lives to be diabetes free.” (male participant)

Project RICE is offering another round of workshops, to begin this summer. To learn more about receiving a free diabetes screening or participating in this health program, please contact Chris Kim at 212-463-9685.
**Center Student Investigator and Health Disparity Research Training Programs**

The NYU CSAAH-PRC Center Student Investigator (CSI) Program completed another successful semester with a highly motivated group of interns. The interns presented their impressive work to faculty and staff on May 3rd. Several interns also presented their work at the 8th Annual Student Conference of the Public Health Association of New York City (PHANYC) and the Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health Student Research Diversity Day.

Summer interns are also participating in the Health Disparity and Research Training Program (HDRTP) and CSI Program's annual Summer Student Seminar Series, which will provide students with lectures and trainings aimed toward increasing awareness about health issues affecting Asian American populations, gaps in health status indicators, and barriers to both care delivery and research for these populations. The seminars also aim to provide an understanding of culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to research, outreach, community partnerships, and care delivery in Asian American populations.

The CSI Program provides training, outreach, and research opportunities for students to gain knowledge and skills to address Asian American health disparities. The intensive HDRTP offers research training to highly qualified students and health professions over the course of two semesters, along with the unique opportunity to develop and implement a community-based research project.

To learn more about both programs, and for application instructions and materials, please visit: [http://asian-health.med.nyu.edu/education-training](http://asian-health.med.nyu.edu/education-training)

**NOPREN Evaluates Intervention to Address Access to Healthy Foods at Bodegas Near Schools**

Dr. Brian Elbel, Principal Investigator of the NYU PRC’s Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN), and a team of NYU School of Medicine researchers evaluated the impact on purchases made at two bodegas participating in a 2012 after-school “Adopt a Bodega” program, implemented by Bronx Health REACH (BHR) to improve the availability of healthy snack options at bodegas nearby to two schools in the South Bronx.

"Adopt a Bodega" was modeled after the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene program of the same name, and provided parents and caretakers of students at the two schools with nutrition education and advocacy training workshops. Each school was partnered with a nearby bodega, and BHR staff and parents made several visits to the partner bodega between May and June 2012 to ask store owners to sell healthier food items. As a result of the visits, the stores began carrying healthier snack foods and offered a special healthy sandwich. The stores also displayed signage, made by participants in the program, promoting the new offerings.

A total of 779 surveys were administered to bodega shoppers in the month before the program was implemented and in October, and questions focused on participants’ shopping patterns and perceptions of the availability of healthy food in their local stores. Before taking the survey, each participant went through a “bag check,” during which each food and beverage item purchased at the bodega was noted on a check list. Results from these surveys were compared to those collected in two stores near other schools that did not participate in the program (control schools). Participating parents were surveyed and store owners were interviewed.

The top most common purchases by customers at the two intervention bodegas were sweets (cookies, cakes, candy, and ice cream), regular soda and other sugar sweetened beverages, regular chips (not baked), and sandwiches which were not the healthier version offered. The same items were most frequently purchased at the control schools. The most notable foods that were impacted by the program were water and fruit juice, the sale of which decreased post intervention, and regular sandwiches, which increased in sales. No differences were found in how the program impacted purchases made by frequent bodega shoppers (those who reported visiting the store at least once per day), versus individuals who reported visiting bodegas less often.

Store owners were receptive to the program but faced some challenges, primarily identifying healthy foods, sourcing them, selling them at competitive prices, changing infrastructure, and overriding their distributors. Other challenges included lack of proper refrigeration to keep perishable foods fresh and well displayed, as well as low demand for the new food items. Parent groups were reluctant to push for changes and faced challenges engaging the larger community. Despite these challenges, the program led to a formation of key partnerships interested in making improvements to bodegas, and encouraged the school wellness councils to offer the program in the following school year.

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**Address Access to Healthy Foods at Bodegas Near Schools**

*Above: CSAAH/PRC staff and interns register speakers and guests at the NYU PRC “Redesigning the Health Care Team: Integrating Community Health Workers within Affordable Care Act Implementation” Forum (See article on Page 1 to learn more about the forum!)*
NYU PRC Assists with Outreach to NYC Asian Communities for 2013 American Diabetes Association EXPO

On March 9th, the American Diabetes Association held its 2013 Diabetes EXPO at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan. NYU PRC staff members Smiti Kapadia, Lindsey Riley, and Jennifer Zanowiak served on the EXPO Planning Committee and provided expertise and assistance in outreach to New York City Asian communities.

The event was open to the public and provided no-cost health screenings, cooking demonstrations, guest speaker presentations, product and vendor presentations/exhibits, fitness demonstrations, and culturally relevant diabetes education materials.

Project RICE Advisory Board Member, Sunhi Shin, certified diabetes educator at New York University Langone Medical Center, provided individual diabetes counseling services in Korean and English at the event.

Planning is already underway for next year’s EXPO, which will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2014.

Recent Publications:


...be on the look-out for publications in press!

NYU PRC Brings Attention to the Needs of Asian American Communities

The community based coalition partners of NYU CSAAH/PRC once again participated in Asian Pacific American State Advocacy Day on March 5th in Albany. Partners met with Assembly Member Michael DenDekker [pictured above], and the offices of Assembly Members Richard Gottfried, Michelle Schimel, and Karim Camara to discuss landmark legislation A1186/S2348, which will require New York State to collect, analyze, and disseminate disaggregated data on the diverse Asian Pacific American community.

The NYU PRC also participated on the planning committee for “Growing Numbers, Growing Impact: Mayoral Candidates Forum on Asian Pacific Americans”, which was held on May 20th at LaGuardia Community College. Mayoral candidates Sal Albanese, Bill de Blasio, John Liu, and Erick Salgado participated in the event and responded to audience questions regarding key issues affecting Asian Pacific American communities in NYC. Over 600 community members were in attendance, along with 60 sponsoring and supporting organizations.

Both the State Advocacy Day and Mayoral Forum events were organized by the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.

Farewell and Thank You!

The NYU PRC bids farewell to Christina Choi and Hyunjae Yim, who served as Project RICE Community Health Workers for 2 years and 1 year, respectively. We thank them for their fantastic commitment and invaluable contributions to the Korean community and Project RICE. Both plan to continue their education in public health, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Hyunjae Yim (3rd from left) and Christina Choi (2nd from right) lead a cooking demonstration at the KCS Senior Center in Corona in February 2013.
The NYU PRC hosted its second CDC site visit in September 2012. CDC representatives Diane Greene and Michele Hoover (front row, first and second from right, respectively) spent two days with the NYU PRC, learning about our accomplishments and successes over the past 3 years, as well as meeting Project RICE and DREAM CHWs and participants.

Will you be one in a Million Hearts™?

Million Hearts™ is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over the next five years. Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading causes of death in the United States. The impact of heart disease on the communities we serve is high. For Asians or Pacific Islanders, heart disease is second only to cancer as a cause of death.

Join the NYU Prevention Research Center and be one in a Million Hearts™ by taking the pledge to:

- Prevent heart disease and stroke in your family by understanding the risks
- Get up and get active by exercising for 30 minutes on most days of the week
- Know your ABCS: Appropriate Aspirin Therapy, Blood Pressure Control, Cholesterol Management, and Smoking Cessation. Stay strong by eating a heart-healthy diet that is high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol
- Take control of your heart health by following your doctor’s instructions for medications and treatment

Visit http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/individuals.html to take the pledge to save a heart today. A Million Hearts™ begins with you!

* Launched in September 2011 by the Department of Health and Human Services and co-led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Million Hearts™ initiative brings together public and private partners to prevent heart disease and stroke.

For more information about the NYU PRC, please visit us on the web! http://prevention-research.med.nyu.edu

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