

Prevalence of health seeking behaviors and health outcomes among South Asian Sikh Immigrants in New York City

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Mission/Guiding Principles

The mission of the NYU Health Promotion and Prevention Research Center (NYU PRC) is to build and enhance community capacity and leadership to reduce cardiovascular disease across diverse populations using community-based participatory research (CBPR) and community health worker (CHW) model approaches. Project RICE, a community-health worker led diabetes prevention intervention in the South Asian and Korean communities, is the core research project of the NYU PRC.

Background/Significance

Research has demonstrated that the United States immigrant population has higher rates of chronic diseases as compared to the rest of the population. Health-seeking behaviors and their relation to acculturation has rarely been examined in understudied populations such as South Asian Sikh immigrants.

Methods

In 2010, surveys were completed with 171 New York City South Asian Sikhs in order to inform the development of Project RICE, a community health worker program to prevent diabetes and promote healthy living. Questions were included on socio-demographics, acculturation, and health-seeking behaviors, and clinical measures included blood pressure, weight and BMI. Hypertension was determined by a systolic reading of ≥ 140 mm Hg or a diastolic reading of ≥ 90 mm Hg. BMI was measured using WHO Asian guidelines, with an obesity cutoff point of 27.5 kg/m².



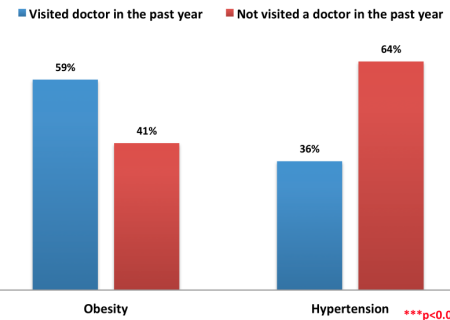
Results

Approximately 50% of respondents had seen a doctor in the past year and 30% had some form of medical insurance (Table 1). Thirty-eight percent of individuals had hypertension, and 44% were obese. Stratified by gender, 60% of females were obese compared to 38% of males.

Characteristic	Percentage
Gender	
Male	27.8%
Female	72.2%
Age	
18-24	1.2%
25-44	29.4%
45-64	58.8%
65+	10.6%
Born in U.S.	
Yes	98.8%
No	1.2%
Education	
Less than high school	31.3%
High school	36.8%
More than high school	31.9%
Employment	
Employed	62.0%
Unemployed	33.1%
Other	4.9%
Home Language	
English	3.0%
Punjabi	91.0%
Other dialect	6.0%
Health Care Coverage	
Yes	29.6%
No	70.4%
Self-Rated Health	
Excellent/Very good	9.6%
Good	44.9%
Fair	34.1%
Poor	9.6%
Don't know/not sure	1.8%
Last Check-up	
Within the past year	50.0%
>1 year/ Never/ Don't know	50.0%

Among those who have hypertension, 36% have seen a doctor in the past year while 64% have not seen a doctor in the past year. Conversely, obese individuals reported more doctor visits. Among the obese individuals, 59% have seen a doctor in the past year whereas 41% have not seen a doctor in the past year ($p < 0.05$) (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Prevalence of Obesity and Hypertension in relation to visits to the doctor



Additionally, individuals living in the US for less than 10 years were more likely to have not seen a doctor in the past year and be uninsured compared to individuals living in the US for 10 or more years ($p < 0.01$) (Chart 2,3).

Chart 2: Acculturation and visits to the doctor

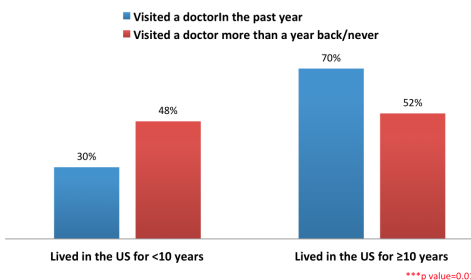
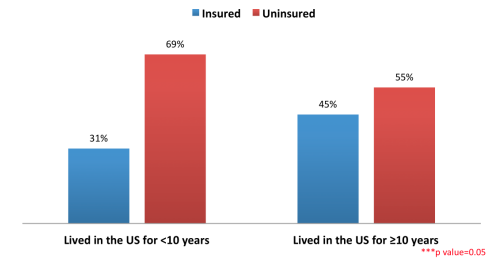


Chart 3: Acculturation and insurance status



Discussion/Conclusion

Results show this population to have low rates of insurance coverage and access to care. Additionally, a high proportion of hypertensive individuals are not visiting the doctor. Higher number of obese individuals visiting the doctor could be due to the fact that obesity is a more visible disease as compared to hypertension. Our findings indicate that there is a possible association between acculturation and health-seeking behaviors leading to health inequalities in the Sikh immigrant population.

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