



“Do We Even Have Cancer?” Cultural Beliefs about Health and Cancer Among Asian Indians



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Background

Three in five global deaths are attributed to four major non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

- Cardiovascular disease,
- Cancer
- Chronic lung diseases
- Diabetes

Asian Indians (AI) have been underrepresented in studies investigating knowledge and understanding of health and cancer.

Cancer is the second leading cause of mortality among this population. There is a paucity of data regarding the cultural perceptions of health and cancer in this population

Objectives

Objective 1:

To gain an understanding of the awareness of prevalence and implications related to cancer as it impacts the AI community.

Objective 2:

To gain an insight into cultural perceptions of health and cancer among AI adults in an urban setting.

This project received support from Office of Research, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, the Ohio State University.

Methods

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with AI adults (n=20), 25 years and older.

Participants had no prior diagnosis of cancer. Individual interviews were conducted on Zoom® by a trained interviewer.

Verbatim transcripts were cross-checked for consistency prior to analysis.

Transcript analysis was performed by two independent coders after training for qualitative analysis.

Content analysis was used to identify themes using a grounded theory approach.



Results

Health Definition

“Physically active, socially active, positive attitude!”

Cancer Definition

“My parents didn’t have cancer, my grandparents didn’t have cancer or anything.”

Cancer Causes

“I’m clueless. A lot of times, hereditary”

“Mostly, I think it’s unhealthy processed food.”

Cancer Prevention

“I think because I vegetables has its own nutrients or anti--Cancer like turmeric.”

Health Information

“Through get together, like, you know, similar to our, our group fit and fab. We have a group where we talk about health and good eating habits.”

Cancer Concern

“I also feel like when they say cancer, that’s the end of your life, you just have a matter of time left.”

Healthy Eating

“A healthy diet has a balance of the macro-nutrients. In terms of protein, fat and carbs.”

Barriers to Healthy Eating

“In the US, especially, you do not have help”

Traditional Diet

“I think that’s the best thing to do. Tell me, I would convert the whole world ..”

Accultu- raion

“I don’t know how to exactly put it, you know, people undermining their own culture or their own eating habits.”

Mental Health

“Just close your eyes and relax. It might create some chemicals or hormones.”

Conclusions

There is gap in awareness of cancer risk among the AI community. More research is needed at a nation-wide level. Because of the general lack of knowledge and understanding of cancer, disseminating information about cancer risk and prevention among the Asian Indian community is important to address disparity in health and disease.