

Colorectal Cancer Screening in Japanese American Elders in Chicagoland.

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Project Summary

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends colorectal cancer (CRC) screening for all adults age 50 and over. However, Asian Americans have the lowest utilization of any racial/ethnic group for up-to-date CRC screening. Among Asian Americans, Japanese men and women have the highest prevalence and mortality rate of CRC. Evidence also suggests that nationally elders living with adult offspring are less likely to obtain CRC screening than elders living alone or with their spouse. Furthermore, in 2007, the Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Northwestern's Buehler Center on Aging, Health & Society (BCoAHS) jointly conducted a needs assessment of elders of Japanese ancestry (Nikkei elders) in Chicagoland. The assessment found that many Nikkei elders lived with or close to their adult offspring but intergenerational communication about health issues was lacking. Many adult offspring were themselves aging but ignoring their own well-being because of competing life priorities and caregiving stress. JASC has observed anecdotally a rise in cases of CRC in Chicagoland's Nikkei elders and is interested in launching a new prevention program in this area.

These factors motivated JASC and BCoAHS to propose a collaborative research project to: (1) describe intergenerational communication about health issues in Nikkei families, (2) explore target recipient(s) of educational materials in Nikkei families to increase CRC screening among Nikkei elders, and (3) assess potential attitude change of adult-offspring caregivers toward CRC screening.

This study will provide preliminary data on how to better serve and improve the health of Chicagoland's Nikkei community; continue building JASC's and BCoAHS's research capacity; and generate experience and resources for fundable future grant applications oriented toward designing more effective, evidence-based, educational programs to address disparities in CRC screening among Asian Americans and other populations. We believe that this project aligns with the goals of ARCC's Community-Based Participatory Research Implementation Grants.