G4.2: Health Needs of Vietnamese American Elders

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Abstract:
Introduction: Most research focuses on Vietnamese in large urban areas; little has been reported regarding Vietnamese elders in smaller communities. Understanding cultural variations in access issues and health seeking behaviors is important for development of cultural competent services and community-based research in the Vietnamese community in the future. The purpose of this descriptive ethnography was to identify barriers and facilitators to health care access and utilization for Vietnamese American elders residing in a medium size urban area.

Method(s): The sample (N=57) was a purposive sampling of 27 Vietnamese elders ages 60 years and over, 11 middle aged adults and 19 community leaders and providers. Data collection included ethnographic interview, field notes and participant observation. The face-to-face interview was conducted in the respondent’s home or a place of choice by the respondent and lasts for about an hour. A semi-structured interview guide was used. Each interview was conducted in the language preferred by the respondent (English, Chinese or Vietnamese). Informed consent was obtained before the interview. The interview was audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Data was analyzed using NVivo 8 software for categories, themes and domains.

Results: The data revealed Vietnamese elders residing in smaller urban enclaves in the US have particular difficulty accessing Western health care and understanding health information than younger Vietnamese or Anglo populations. Reasons for this include their lower English proficiency and access to bi-lingual services, greater transportation barriers, fewer bilingual
providers, and fewer social networks. The data revealed elders’ low rates of health literacy and lack of health concern about mental health issues. The interviews also elicited data on elders’ preferences in receiving health information.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** This data will be important in designing future programs to meet the challenges of implementing innovative health literacy interventions in this community and other diverse vulnerable populations.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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