

Prevention of HIV Infection Among Asian MSM

Frank Y. Wong, Ph.D.
Georgetown University

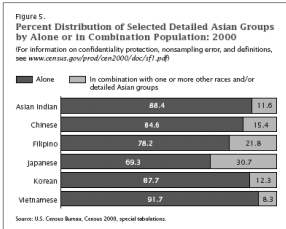
14th Annual Summer Public Health Research
Videoconference on Minority Health
June 3, 2008
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC

Outline

- APIs and HIV in the United States
- API MSM: The impact of HIV and the trajectory of the disease
- Risk behaviors
- Intervention strategies
- Research gaps/needs in this population

APIs in the United States

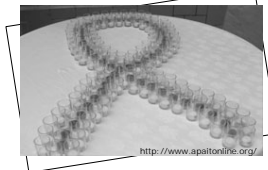
- Foreign born: 73.5% of APIs in the US in 2000
- Over 70% of immigrants from India, the Philippines, China, and Vietnam in 2003
- 4.1% of the US population in 2004



*2000 Census Data <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/cpl-146.html>
 †2004 Census Data <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/cpl-184.html>

HIV/AIDS Among the United States API Population

- 81% of API population diagnosed in 2005 were men.
- 61.4% of API population diagnosed from 1985 to 2002 were foreign-born



CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/API.htm>

Increasing Risks for API: Low HIV Testing Rates

- CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
 - APIs are as prone to HIV-related risk behaviors as other racial/ethnic groups
 - Significantly less likely than others to report having been tested for HIV
- HIV testing survey in Seattle
 - 90% of API perceived themselves at risk
 - 47% had been tested

*Zaidi, Crepez, Song, et al. 2005.
 †Kahle, Freedman, & Buskin. 2005.

Increasing Risks for AP: Low HIV Testing Rates

- Percentage of individuals in 2004 who received an AIDS diagnosis within one year after HIV diagnosis
 - APIs = 44%
 - Whites = 37%
 - Blacks = 40%
 - American Indians/Alaska Natives = 41%
 - Hispanics = 43%
- Increasing testing prevalence allows for earlier treatment and reduced rates of transmission

©CDC: HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2005.

Increasing Risks for API:Low HIV Testing Rates

- In an HIV testing and awareness study, Wong et al. found that APIs tended to receive their first HIV test when they got sick (infection has already advanced beyond the latent stage)
- This late/delayed testing is related to the fast progression of the disease in these individuals

²⁹Wong, et al. 2004.

API American Men Who Have Sex with Men

- 61.3% of all API with HIV are MSM
- Cumulative AIDS Cases among US MSM with HIV:
 - API = 72% (highest among all other racial/ ethnic minority groups other than white)



¹CDC: HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2005.
²Chng, Wong, et al. 2003.

Emerging HIV Epidemic Among API MSM in San Francisco

- Overall HIV prevalence = nearly 3%
- Prevalence as high as 10% for Thai MSM
- 47% reported having had unprotected anal intercourse in the past 6 months
- 63% used illicit drugs in past 6 months
- 34% had sex under the influence of illicit drugs in the past 6 months

⁷Choi, Wong, & Sy. 2005.

Risk Behaviors Among API MSM

During 1999 to 2002:

- Unprotected anal intercourse with two or more sex partners of unknown HIV serostatus in the past six months increased from 6% to 16%
- Incidence of rectal gonorrhea for API men increased from 200 to 800 per 100,000

DC MAPS

- DC Men of Asia Prevention Study
- Sociocultural forces, stigma and sexuality, HIV-risk attitudes and behaviors
- Statistics from the study indicate that of the 63% of participants who self-reported being tested in the U.S. for HIV, 4.26% had tested positive



Challenges

- Sex and drugs are both serious taboos in Asian culture
- Being gay is strongly stigmatized by most Asian societies
- Effect of the migration experience on sexual health and behaviors of APIs



¹⁸Chng, Wong, et al. 2003.

Interventions: I

- 3-hr group counseling session in culturally appropriate setting with 329 homosexual API²⁵
- Single, 3-hr skills training group or wait-list control
- Four components:
 - (1) develop positive self-identity & social support
 - (2) education for safer sex
 - (3) eroticizing safer sex
 - (4) negotiating safer sex
- Results:
 - Number of partners decreased by 46% at 3 mo.
 - Chinese and Filipino men reduced unprotected anal intercourse by more than half

Interventions: II

- Single-session small group workshop²³
 - Provide social support increase ethnicity identity esteem, enhance safer sex education, improve attitude and efficacy in engaging in safer sex
 - Trying to enhance dual identity, promote safe sex norms, and provide support networks

Interventions: III

- Bridges Project (New York)²⁴
 - Developed at the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, INC (APICHA)
 - Assists HIV-seropositive APIs in overcoming barriers to utilization of HIV-related medical and supportive services
 - Undocumented and Asian-primary-language participants experienced improvement in service utilization experiences after enrollment

Interventions: IV

- Aimed to implement interventions that utilized culturally appropriate protective factors:
- Targeted two groups of API MSM: HIV-positives, and HIV-negative youth (between 18 and 24)
- After focus group intervention, follow-up found significant reductions in number of men who:
 - didn't discuss condom use, safe sex, monogamy, and partner's HIV status
 - had unprotected receptive anal sex

Research Needs

- There is still a significant lack of knowledge about API MSM, especially due to the fact that a majority are foreign born
- Much more research needs to be done on this population in order to effectively implement interventions

Men of Asia & the Pacific Testing for HIV



- Goals:
 - Estimate the prevalence and incidence of HIV infection among API MSM
 - Describe the socio-cultural and individual-level correlates of HIV testing and knowledge of HIV infection status among API MSM
 - Examine the socio-cultural and individual-level of correlates of HIV risk among API MSM
 - Evaluate a consortium model framework for conducting scientific, community-based HIV research

MATH Research Team

- Research Team from
 - Georgetown University
 - Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum, San Francisco, CA
 - Seven community partners in five cities (Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York City, San Francisco)

What Are We Doing?

- Target Population
 - Self-identified MSM ages 18 and above (**N = 2,400**)
- Ethnicity
 - Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, South Asian (Indian), Vietnamese
 - Self-identified as one of the API groups

What Are We Doing?

- Testing Technology
 - OraSure, Western Blot
- Behavioral Survey
- Recruitment
 - Venue-based
 - Respondent-driven sampling

US Security Issues of the Disease

- United States-Asia air bridge
 - 23% increase in number of Asian travelers to the US from 2003-2006 ²⁰
 - 75.3% of APIs in the US are foreign born²¹
 - 16.9% increase in prevalence of HIV in Asia from 2003-2005 ²²
- Passive surveillance system
 - API under-utilize the health care system (due to cultural barriers and lack of access)

20. <http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/>
21. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/pp1-184.html>
22. http://www.unaids.org/epi/2005/doc/EPIupdate2005.html_en/epi05_06_en.htm

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Prevention
 - Early testing is essential
2. Intervention
 - More models must be implemented and evaluated
3. Methodology
 - To estimate the magnitude of the HIV situation among API MSM, appropriate methodologies for a small yet diverse population must be employed



References

- "The Asian Population: 2000." *Census 2000 Brief*. US Census Bureau, 2002.
- CDC. HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 2005. Vol. 17. Rev ed. 2007. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC: 1-46.
- Choi, Wong, and Sy. 2005. *HIV/AIDS Among Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States*. *AIDS Education and Prevention* 17(5): iii-v.
- Choi, et al. 2005. "Substance Use, Substance Choice, and Unprotected Anal Intercourse Among Young Asian American and Pacific Islander Men Who Have Sex With Men." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 17(5): 418-429.
- Choi, et al. 2003. "Age and race mixing patterns of sexual partnerships among Asian men who have sex with men: implications for HIV transmission and prevention." *AIDS Education and Prevention*. 15 (1A): 53-65.
- Choi, et al. 1996. "The efficacy of brief group counseling in HIV risk reduction among homosexual Asian and Pacific Islander men." *AIDS*. 10 (1): 81-7.
- Chin, et al. 2006. "Serving Asians and Pacific Islanders with HIV/AIDS: Challenges and Lessons Learned." *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*. 17: 910-927.
- Chng, Wong, et al. 2003. "A model for understanding sexual health among Asian American/Pacific Islander men who have sex with men (MSM) in the United States." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 15(1): 21.
- Do TD, Hudes ES, Proctor K, Han C-S, & Choi K-H. 2006. HIV testing trends and correlates among young Asian and Pacific Islander men who have sex with men in two U.S. cities. *AIDS Education and Prevention* 18: 44-55.
- Hariri, S. & McKenna, M. 2007. "Epidemiology of Human Immunodeficiency Virus in the United States." *Clinical Microbiology Reviews*. July: 478-488.

References

- Kahle EM, Freedman MS, & Buskin SE. 2005. HIV risks and testing behavior among Asians and Pacific Islanders: results of the HIV Testing Survey, 2002–2003. *Journal of the National Medical Association* 97: 13S–18S.
- Nemoto, Bao, and Sheth. 2006. "Asian and Pacific Islander MSM HIV Prevention Evaluation Study." California Collaborations in HIV Prevention Research Dissemination Project, Universitywide AIDS Research Program, University of California.
- Operario, et al. 2005. "Conducting HIV interventions for Asian Pacific Islander men who have sex with men: challenges and compromises in community collaborative research." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 17(4): 334-46.
- McFarland W, Chen S, Weide D, Kohn R, & Klausner J. 2004. "Gay Asian men in San Francisco follow the international trend; increases in rates of unprotected anal intercourse and sexually transmitted diseases, 1999–2002." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 16: 13–18.
- UNAIDS/WHO. 2005. "AIDS Epidemic Update: Asia." December 2005.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2004. "The Asian Alone Population in the United States." March 2004.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. "The Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States." March 2000.
- Wong, et al. 2004. "HIV Testing and Awareness of Care-Related Services among a Group of HIV-Positive Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States: Findings from a Supplemental HIV/AIDS Surveillance Project." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 16 (5): 440-448.
- Zaidi IF, Crepaz N, Song R, et al. 2005. Epidemiology of HIV/ AIDS among Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. *AIDS Education and Prevention* 17: 405–417.