A COMPARISON OF LIFESTYLE AND BEHAVIORAL CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE RISK FACTORS BETWEEN ASIAN INDIAN AND WHITE NON-HISPANIC MEN

Objective: We compared lifestyle CVD risk factors between Asian Indian and White non-Hispanic men within categories of BMI.

Design/Setting/Participants: Participants included 51,901 White non-Hispanic men and 602 Asian Indian men enrolled in the California Men’s Health Study cohort. Men were aged 45–69 years and members of Kaiser Permanente Southern or Northern California at baseline (2001–2002).

Main Outcome Measures: Lifestyle characteristics including diet, physical activity, alcohol intake and smoking were collected from a survey. Multivariable logistic regression, adjusting for demographics, was performed.

Results: Asian Indians more often reported a healthy BMI (18.5–24.9), and consumed <30% calories from fat within each BMI category (healthy weight and overweight/obese). Among healthy weight men, Asian Indians were less likely to eat ≥5 fruit and vegetables a day. Overall, Asian Indians were more likely to have never smoked and to abstain from alcohol. Asian Indians were less likely to report moderate/vigorous physical activity ≥3.5 hours/week. No differences were found in sedentary activity.

Conclusions: We identified health behaviors that were protective (lower fat intake, lower levels of smoking and alcohol) and harmful (lower levels of physical activity and fruit and vegetable intake) for cardiovascular health among the Asian Indians in comparison to White non-Hispanics. Results stratified by BMI were similar to those overall. However, the likelihood of consuming a low fat diet was lower among healthy weight men, while fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity and alcohol intake was greater. These results suggest risk factors other than lifestyle behaviors may be important contributors to CVD in the Asian Indian population. (Ethn Dis. 2012;22(2):168–174)

Key Words: Cardiovascular Disease, Health Behaviors, Asian Indian, White Non-Hispanic, Health Disparities

INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the number one cause of death among all major racial/ethnic groups in the United States.1,2 Although CVD mortality is decreasing nationally, it is decreasing at a much slower rate among the South Asian population compared to other groups.3 According to the 2010 US Census, Asian Indians, a subset of the South Asian population, became the second fastest growing Asian population in California, with an estimated 550,000 people.4,5 A recent study found that the leading cause of death among Asian Indians in California is CVD.5 There have been few population-based studies conducted in the United States evaluating clinical and lifestyle CVD risk factors in the Asian Indian population.7–15 Researchers have reported disproportionately higher rates of CVD and CVD clinical risk factors including diabetes mellitus (DM), hypertension, and dyslipidemia in Asian Indians.10–12,15,16 Explanations for these increased rates have not been well elucidated and the Asian Indian population may have a different set of susceptibility factors.

Examining modifiable lifestyle risk factors and health behaviors is important because increasing physical activity, decreasing red meat and increasing fruit, vegetable, fish, and whole grain consumption can help prevent, control or delay CVD, DM, hypertension, and dyslipidemia onset.17 Although many Asian Indians may have a healthy lifestyle, they disproportionately suffer from peripheral vascular disease, coronary heart disease and stroke.18 Furthermore, migrant studies of Asian Indians into Western countries demonstrate that prolonged exposure to known CVD risk factors such as Western diets and sedentary lifestyles result in increased blood pressure, body weight, blood sugars and blood lipids.19 By contrast, little is known about lifestyle/behavioral CVD risk factors among Asian Indians living in the United States compared to White non-Hispanics.

The purpose of our study was to evaluate lifestyle/behavioral CVD risk factors in Asian Indian men compared to White non-Hispanic men…

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