

Half a Million Dollar Grant Aims to Increase Physical Activity in Local Filipino Community

UH Manoa Nursing received half a million dollars for three years of funding from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, an institute within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant is an R15-Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) designed to stimulate research in health professional schools/colleges that confer baccalaureate or advanced degrees.

The grant aims to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary time in 250 Filipino lay leaders who represent their church within the Oahu Council of Filipino Catholic Clubs (OCFCCs). OCFCCs maintain Filipinos' Catholic traditions and their cultural heritage. The project will test the effectiveness of a culturally tailored intervention to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary time for under-active/sedentary Filipino seniors, ages 55-75 years old, some of whom may have multiple chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The investigators will engage and discuss with lay leaders via meetings where key cultural and familial issues that hinder or facilitate physical activity and sedentary time.

This study builds on previous research done by Dr. Ceria-Ulep that found Filipino seniors to be under-active and spending more than 8 hours a day in sedentary time. About 90% of Filipinos in Hawaii are Catholic and previous physical activity interventions involving faith-based organizations have shown to be culturally relevant for ethnic minorities and can effectively increase physical activity over 6-9 months.

Asian-Americans are under-represented in chronic disease research, including lifestyle interventions. Asian Americans are 42% of population in Hawaii and across the U.S. It is projected that the Asian American population will more than double to 34.4 million by 2060, with a much higher proportion of older Asian Americans compared to other ethnicities. Within Asian Americans, Filipino-Americans have high rates of hypertension, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease, especially as they age. This is largely due to unhealthy diets, obesity, sedentary behaviors, and low levels of physical activity.

The researcher team includes four UH Manoa Nursing faculty Drs. Clementina Ceria-Ulep, Cheryl Albright, Alice Tse and Rhea Faye Felicilda-Reynaldo; Dr. Eunjun Lim from the John A. Burns School of Medicine; Sarah Cain, a first-year UH Manoa Direct Entry in Nursing (DEN) student who will serve as the Research Assistant; Tracy Tran Canonizado, a Graduate Research Assistant who is a first year Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) student; and Kara Saiki, who is the Project Director. In addition, there will be 9-12 graduate/undergraduate nursing students who will be involved in the study as volunteers.

For more information about the grant, contact principal co-investigator Clementina Ceria-Ulep at clem@hawaii.edu or (808) 956-5233.