



Title: Increasing Colorectal Cancer Screening among Tongans and Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles County

Project Purpose: To assess the effectiveness of a culturally tailored education workshop to increase knowledge and beliefs on colorectal cancer screening among Tongan and Pacific Islander women age 50+ years in Los Angeles County, California.

Rationale: Colorectal cancer (CRC) is highly preventable and treatable when detected early; yet Pacific Islanders have one of the lowest CRC screening rates compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Targeting knowledge and attitudes shown to be related to screening behavior can improve screening rates. Moreover, the scarcity of data on Pacific Islanders makes this an important contribution for future interventions.



Implementation: Over a 1-year period community health advocates (CHAs) outreached and educated the community in order to promote screening and navigation. CHAs recruited participants from faith-based organizations and Tongan community events. Educational workshops were held at churches and lasted approximately two hours. It included a PowerPoint presentation, video and use of colon model for demonstration purposes. There were three key messages emphasized during the workshop: 1) there are things you can do to prevent CRC, 2) talk to your doctor about CRC screening, and 3) get screened for the health of yourself and your family. Demographic, enabling and predisposing characteristic data was collected using pre-test and post-test surveys. These surveys were distributed and collected by the CHAs during the workshop. All data collection instruments and procedures were approved by the California State University, Fullerton Institutional Review Board.

Results: A total of 91 participants received education services from community health educators. The participants were primarily aged 50 years and older (68.3%). Of these participants, all were born in Polynesia¹, and a majority was either Tongan (62.2%) or Samoan (32.4%). In addition, 72.2% reported that they had not received a referral for cancer screening and 62.2% had not heard of a Sigmoidoscopy, Colonoscopy or FOBT. Prior to the educational sessions, 75.7% indicated they were interested in CRC screening and 56.8% were interested because someone close to them had or has cancer. Additionally, a majority of those aged 50 years and older planned to: 1) talk to a doctor about CRC screening in next three months (91.4%), 2) participate in CRC screening in next three months (88.5%), and 3) talk to their family about CRC screening (97.1%).



Lesson Learned: An important aspect of the intervention is the cultivation of trusting connections with the Pacific Islander men and women, communities, and their leaders; maintaining these connections is critical to the success of an education and navigation project. Moreover, the intervention underscored the importance of addressing education and beliefs to increase screening, and highlighted the effectiveness of tailored education in addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of the community.

Funding: This project was supported by the Weaving an Islander Network for Cancer Awareness, Research, and Training (WINCART) Center funded by Grant Number U01CA114591-05S3 and 5U54CA153458 from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD). The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the NCI CRCHD

Contact Information: Roger Sur, MPH, California State University Fullerton, Department of Health Science, 800 N. State College Blvd. KHS-115, Fullerton, CA 92831. Tel: (657) 278-3197. Fax: (657) 278-5317. Visit WINCART online at <http://wincart.fullerton.edu/>.

¹Polynesia consists of a group of Islands in the central and southern Pacific Ocean