

Exposing the High Burden of Lung Cancer Among Asian American Females Who Have Never Smoked

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SUMMARY

We calculated and disseminated the first data on lung cancer incidence rates in disaggregated ethnic groups of Asian American women who have never smoked, showing a previously hidden disparity. This is the only racial/ethnic and sex group to experience increasing rates of lung cancer. These data have been shared with the public through local, state, and national community and media outreach efforts.

CHALLENGES

- Because cancer registry data and population estimate data by smoking status are not readily available, the true burden of lung cancer among people who have never smoked has not been calculated.
- For years, clinicians have anecdotally observed potentially higher rates of diagnoses among Asian American females who have never smoked but had no empirical data to support these observations.

SOLUTION

To fill this gap, we conducted a study to link electronic health records data to cancer registry data and calculate lung cancer incidence rates by smoking status¹.

RESULTS

- The Greater Bay Area Cancer Registry, which is part of the CCR, determined for the first time that lung cancer incidence rates among distinct ethnic groups of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander females who have never smoked were more than 1.5 times higher than among non-Hispanic White females who have never smoked².
- The Greater Bay Area Cancer Registry found that more than 5 in 10 Asian American females diagnosed with lung cancer have never smoked, and their cancers would not have been found through routine lung cancer screening. This proportion is as high as 8 in 10 Chinese and Asian Indian American women².
- These observations have led to further research to identify the underlying risk factors, and extensive community outreach efforts at the local, state, and national levels to raise awareness among Asian American communities.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Ongoing collaboration with community and media partners will continue to create awareness and help increase lung cancer screening among Asian women who may be at increased risk.

REFERENCES

1. DeRouen MC, Thompson CA, Canchola AJ, et al. Integrating electronic health record, cancer registry, and geospatial data to study lung cancer in Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander ethnic groups. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev.* 2021;30(8):1506-1516.
2. DeRouen MC, Canchola AJ, Thompson CA, et al. Incidence of lung cancer among never-smoking Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander females. *J Natl Cancer Inst.* 2022;114(1):78-86.