

California Asian and Pacific Islander Americans and Aging

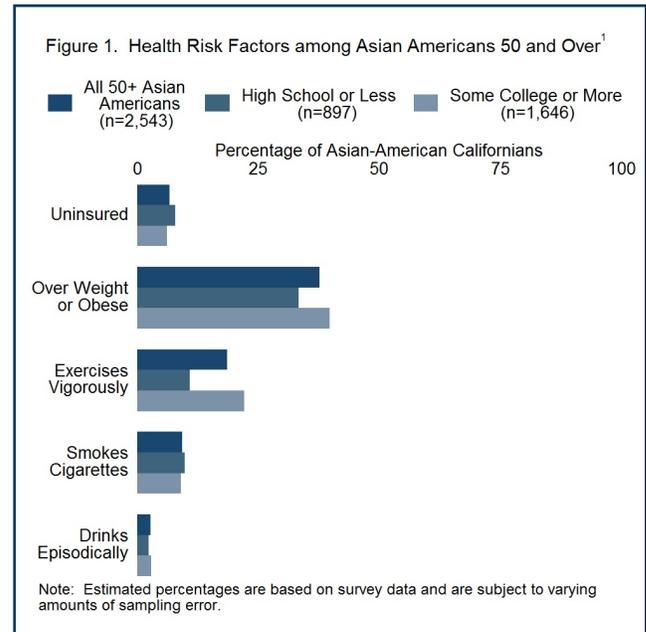
Approximately 600,000 non-Latino Asian and Pacific Islander American (hereafter, API) women and men in California are of retirement age (65 and over). Another 900,000 are of pre-retirement age (between 50 and 64). These groups represent 14 percent each of California's 50-64 and 65 and older populations. Combined, they represent 4 percent of California's total population. This Short Subject presents information from the most recent California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)¹ about the health risk factors, economic security, and health-related caregiving of older California APIs and considers differences across levels of educational attainment.

HEALTH RISK FACTORS

Figure 1 presents information about some health-related risk factors, ranging from insurance coverage to exercise, that may impact healthy aging.

Approximately 7 percent of California's APIs over the age of 50 are uninsured. Because most California residents are eligible for Medicare when they turn 65, the majority of the uninsured are between the ages of 50 and 64. Coverage rates vary little with educational attainment.

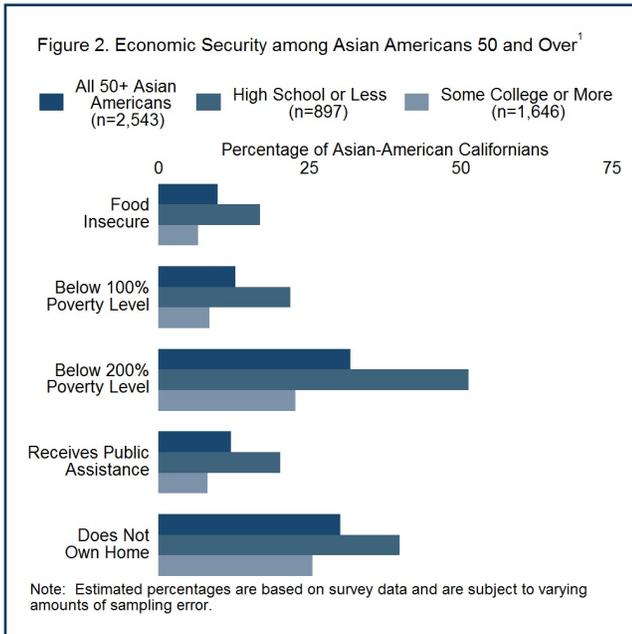
While California's older APIs are about 40 percent less likely to be overweight or obese than are older Californians from different race/ethnic categories, estimates suggest that a little more than 35 percent of those 50 years old and over are overweight or obese and that fewer than 20 percent report exercising vigorously. While the education-based difference in obesity is small and statistically insignificant, there is a sizable difference in who exercises. Those who went to college are twice as likely to exercise. Smoking and drinking (consumption of at least four alcoholic drinks for women and five for men in a day at least once per month) are far less prevalent than obesity and there are no significant differences related to education.



ECONOMIC SECURITY

Figure 2 provides data about the economic security of California's APIs over the age of 50. Based on estimates from the CHIS data, roughly 10 percent of this group are food insecure (e.g., cannot afford to purchase sufficient food and eat balanced meals) and/or are in poverty. Nearly one-third live below 200 percent of the poverty level, a threshold that is roughly comparable to the California Elder Economic Security Standard Index average. Just over 10 percent receive governmental assistance through TANF, CalWORKS, SSI, and/or food stamps.

Economic security is also related to educational attainment. Older California APIs who did not go to college are more than twice as likely to have food insecurity, lower incomes, and receive public assistance than are those with at least some college. While approximately 25 percent of those with high school or less own their homes, approximately 40 percent with some college or more do.



There is no association between education level and who provides care. However, those ages 50 and over with at least some education beyond high school are twice as likely to provide care for a parent than those with less education. There is no clear difference in education level and taking care of a spouse. While it appears that the burden of care as measured by time spent caregiving and/or not employing respite services falls heaviest on those with higher education levels, differences are not statistically significant.

From the CHIS data we can infer that at least 130,000 California APIs over the age of 50 receive informal care because 9 percent of respondents indicated that they provide care to a parent. Notably, this inference assumes that the parents receiving care are also API.

Similarly, the most recent American Community Survey estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that more than 160,000 California APIs over the age of 50 have disabilities that limit their ability to live independently.² It is likely that many of these people receive some support from friends and family.

INFORMAL CAREGIVING

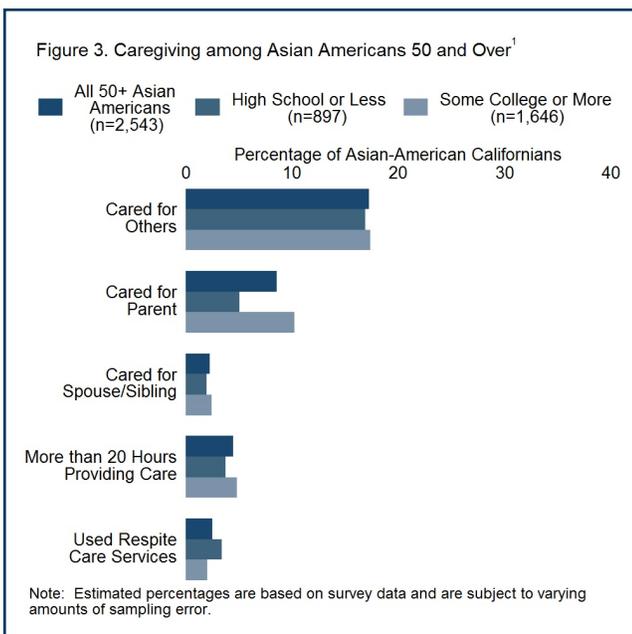
Informal caregiving is an important dimension of healthy aging as many individuals age 50 and over provide or receive care for long-term illnesses or disabilities. Among the API CHIS participants age 50 and over, just under 20 percent provide care to friends or family members at some time during the year (Figure 3). As a group, they are about 35 percent less likely to report providing care than are other older Californians from different race/ethnic categories. Under 5 percent report spending more than 20 hours a week providing care and fewer than 3 percent use respite care services.

FURTHER READING

Susan C. Reinhard, Carol Levine, and Sarah Samis, *Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care*, AARP and United Hospital Fund, 2012.

REFERENCES

- 1 California Health Interview Survey. CHIS 2009 Adult Public Use File, (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, November 2012).
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2011 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).



This Short Subject was requested by Assembly Member Mariko Yamada, Chair of the Committee on Aging and Long-term Care.

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