

Who are South Asians?

South Asians are any persons with origins in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives Island, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. As of the 2000 census, the Asian American community grew at a rate of 48.6% from 1990-2000. Indian Americans, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans grew by 105.87%, 151% and 124 % nationally, and by 127%, 165% and 154%, in New Jersey.



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives Is.



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

The South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI) is a comprehensive multifaceted initiative to:

- Improve the delivery of culturally competent care, address disparities in health and health care of South Asians.
- Develop an accurate and updated research-based data resource regarding South Asian health.
- Educate, engage and empower the South Asian community to promote wellness and improve health outcomes.

South Asian Total Health Initiative

UMDNJ-RWJMS Department of Pediatrics
Division of Allergy, Immunology and
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ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

Research.

Education.

Outreach.



South Asian
Total Health Initiative
UMDNJ - RWJMS



“A comprehensive, multifaceted initiative to improve the delivery of culturally competent healthcare, and the education, engagement and empowerment of the South Asian community to improve their health outcomes.”

visit us online: www.rwjms.umdj.edu/sathi

Co-Directors:

Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH

Sunanda Gaur, MD

Founding Members:

Poonam Alaigh, MD

Hon. Upendra Chivukula

Sunanda Gaur, MD

Geetha Ghai, PhD

Aparna Kalbag, PhD

Robert Like, MD, MS

Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH

Jigna Rao

Mission

SATHI's mission is to establish a centralized location for research on South Asian health, for enhancement and preparation of healthcare providers, organizations and institutions in delivering culturally competent healthcare services to the South Asian Community, and for empowerment of the South Asian consumer through health fairs, radio shows, media partnerships, and other community outreach activities to increase medical knowledge and preventive healthcare which would lead to overall health gains for this population.

The Need

In general,

- Evidence shows that South Asians have a poor understanding of disease prevention.
- Suggestive evidence of heavy chronic disease burden like coronary artery disease, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and cancer.
- Disparities in access to care, service utilization, quality, and health outcomes are increasingly being documented.
- Data suggesting a lack of awareness about preventable dental disease.
- Impact of stigma, mental illness and other physical, behavioral, and cognitive disabilities.



India



Pakistan



Sri Lanka



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Nepal



Maldives

The Comprehensive SATHI Resource Center will provide:

- A web-based information system providing practical cross-cultural solutions for culturally competent health care of the South Asian patients consistent with the 14 National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)
- **Social Information** - family dynamics, patients' health beliefs model and social factors in health.
- **Research** - journal articles, Medical Literature, research surveys, etc.
- **Networking** - links to different health care professionals and organizations
- **Community Resource Center** - outreach programs and a legislative support center.
- **Education** - training resources and conferences for development of cultural competence.
- Community Outreach via health fairs, radio shows and other media partnerships.

SATHI FOUNDING MEMBERS

Sunanda Gaur, MD, Director, is a Pediatric Infectious Disease specialist and a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. She has been the director of the Robert Wood Johnson AIDS Program since 1995 and the Director of the Pediatric Clinical Research Center at the Child Health Institute of New Jersey since 2007. Since November 2008, Dr. Gaur has also been serving as Co-Director, leading the South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI) based at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH, graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He completed a three year residency in general pediatrics and a one year fellowship in Neonatology at the University of Chicago, Wyler Children's Hospital. He is a board certified pediatrician currently in private practice in Central New Jersey and a Clinical Assistant Professor at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School's Department of Pediatrics. He has recently been appointed to the Governor's Asian American Study Foundation.

Poonam Alaigh, MD is an internist with a multifaceted professional and healthcare career including clinical practice, hospital practice, hospital administration, managed care, pharmaceutical medicine, health care policy and community leadership. She is currently serving as the Commissioner of Health for the State of New Jersey.

Upendra J. Chivukula is an Assemblyman who has served in the New Jersey General Assembly since 2002 as a representative of the 17th legislative district. He is the first Asian Indian American elected to the New Jersey General Assembly and the fourth Indian American in the United States to be elected to state office. Mr. Chivukula has been the Assembly's Deputy Speaker since 2007 and serves as Chair of the Telecommunications and Utilities Committee and the Commerce and Economic Development Committee.

Geetha Ghai, PhD is a consultant, actively participating in the community by volunteering her time in various community organizations and helping build small bio-nutraceutical companies and works part time as a Program Director at the Center for Management Development, Rutgers University. She has been a scientific lecturer for the Institute of Food Technology Scientific Lectureship Program on the "Future of Nutraceuticals" and a pioneer in the field of nutraceuticals with one of the first evidence demonstrating gene-phytonutrients interaction and obtaining a use patent for disease indications. She has been recently appointed to the New Jersey Office on Minority and Multicultural Health Advisory Commission.

Robert C. Like, MD, MS, is Professor and Director of the Center for Healthy Families and Cultural Diversity, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, at the UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He is a board-certified Family Physician with a background in medical anthropology and is actively involved in developing cultural competency/health disparities continuing education programs. Dr. Like provides training and technical assistance related to the delivery of patient- and family-centered, culturally responsive care to diverse populations by clinicians, health care organizations, and academic medical centers.

Jigna Rao is the former director of Drumthwacket, New Jersey's Official Governor's Residence. She was appointed by Governor Jon S. Corzine in 2007, making her the first South Asian to hold this position in New Jersey. She has been a long time advocate of health issues for women and children and worked with Child Relief and You (CRY) and the National Association for the Blind. She is also an active member of various organizations including SKN Foundation, Womanspace, Inc. and RESOLVE. She currently serves as a member of the Governor's Asian American Study Foundation.

Aparna S. Kalbag, PhD is a post-doctoral fellow at the Office of Global Health at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. The primary focus of her current projects is on factors that impede mental health treatment in ethnic minority and immigrant communities. In the past, Dr. Kalbag served as a Research Scientist within the Division of Substance Abuse at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, Columbia University Medical Center. She is also the recipient of an NIMH post-doctoral fellowship in health services research at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research, Rutgers University. She currently serves as a member of the South Asian Mental Health Awareness in Jersey (SAMHAJ) program advisory committee.

South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI)
Department of Pediatrics
UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF SATHI

Community Education and Media Outreach

- 1) **South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI) website:** Development of a website with the latest and most relevant literature on health topics as they relate to the South Asian population. In addition, the website will attempt to consolidate and develop a database of health educational materials in different South Asian languages (ongoing).
- 2) **South Asian Disabilities Resource Center:** Development of a centralized resource center for South Asian parents dealing with autistic children. This program is being developed in collaboration with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and several prominent neurodevelopmental pediatricians: Dr. Vidya Bhushan Gupta, Dr. Uday Mehta, and Dr. Kapila Seshadri (ongoing).
- 3) **Cancer education program:** An educational research oriented outreach program developed in collaboration with Middlesex County Health Department (MCHD) and Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS Swaminarayan Temple) to raise cancer awareness on various types of cancers (breast, cervical, colorectal, skin, prostate, and oral). The first event on prostate cancer (June, 2009) successfully screened about 75 men with Digital Rectal Exams and blood Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test with the help of UMDNJ-Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) physicians. This program is currently being developed further with CINJ office of community outreach, MCHD, and the Indian Health Camp of New Jersey (ongoing).
- 4) **Disabilities in the South Asian population:** An educational media outreach to the South Asian community on disability related topics. Supported by "A Quality of Life Grant" received from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. The project is a radio campaign focused on raising awareness around disabilities issues in the South Asian population. An ongoing biweekly program which was aired on EBC 1170 AM radio, a local South Asian radio station completed in June, 2009.
- 5) **Ongoing attendance and organization of various health fairs in New Jersey:** SATHI has been attending various health fairs throughout New Jersey in collaboration with Edison Township Municipal Alliance, the Indian Health Camp of New Jersey, The Indian Nurses Association, BAPS, and others to provide community education on cardiovascular problems, diabetes, childhood disorders, asthma, mental illness, cancer, and other illnesses.
- 6) **Cancer awareness day** held on September 13, 2008 in collaboration with the Middlesex County Health Department (MCHD): a one day conference symposium held to raise health and cancer awareness in the local community. Guest speakers Jigna Rao and Dr. Sunanda Gaur provided a panel discussion on Tuberculosis.
- 7) **Childhood obesity in the South Asian community:** A media outreach program aired on November 29, 2007 on EBC 1170 AM Radio. Discussion focused on the nutritional aspects and prevention of obesity.
- 8) **Childhood obesity:** A community outreach program organized on Thursday, November 29, 2007 in collaboration with Edison Township at the Edison Council Chambers, Edison, NJ. The featured guest speaker was Fred M. Jacobs, MD, JD, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, in addition to several other nutrition and obesity experts.
- 9) Participant in the **South Asian Community and Disabilities Conference: Raising Awareness, Facing Challenges, Accessing Resources** on June 15, 2007 at the Hyatt, New Brunswick. The conference was organized by the UMDNJ-Elizabeth M. Boggs Center, to help organizations and agencies that provide services and support to people with

disabilities and their families to develop a deeper and better understanding of South Asian cultural considerations and to inform members of South Asian disability communities in NJ about the resources available to them.

- 10) **A Celebration of Abilities:** A Pre-Conference Reception and Celebration at The Zimmerli Art Gallery, Rutgers University held on June 14, 2007 featuring Natvar Bhavsar, South Asian artist, Sujeet Desai, a musician with Downs syndrome, and Pramila Balasundaram, founder of SAMHADHAN, speaking on the artistic creativity and empowerment activities of her organization, based in New Delhi, India.
- 11) Domestic Violence in the South Asian Population: A **radio outreach program** which featured discussions with SAKHI, a South Asian organization that addresses issues of domestic violence (2009).
- 12) **Prenatal Care and Healthy Pregnancy:** A radio outreach program featuring Health Commissioner Heather Howard on issues surrounding pregnancy and prenatal care. The importance of proper prenatal care to ensure healthy pregnancy outcomes was discussed (2009).
- 13) In collaboration with NYMAC (New York Mid-Atlantic Consortium for genetic and newborn screening) **developed a Thalassemia outreach and education project** for South Asians (2010-2011).
- 14) In collaboration with the Elizabeth M. Bogg's Center provided technical assistance in development and administration of the **Traumatic Brain Injury Needs and Resources Assessment Survey** for South Asians (2010-2011).
- 15) SATHI members, Naveen Mehrotra and Jigna Rao invited by **New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services** to roundtable discussion of report release entitled "The Health of the Newest New Jerseyans: A Resource Guide" (March 1, 2011).
- 16) SATHI member, Jigna Rao, invited by Results, a non-profit organization, to present at **World TB Day Advocacy Tour**. This Tour was funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (March 23-24, 2011).
- 17) SATHI member, Jigna Rao participated in the **TB Intensive Workshop** at The Global TB Institute of New Jersey (April 14, 2011).

Research Projects

- 1) **General health assessment survey of South Asians:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra, co-director, SATHI. This survey is currently being implemented in the community to assess the general health practices of the South Asian community and their access to care. The survey is approved through the Institutional Review Board (IRB), UMDNJ. Data collection is completed and data analysis is in progress.
- 2) **Perception of mental illness research study:** lead investigator, Dr. Aparna Kalbag, post-doctoral fellow in the Office of Global Health, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, in collaboration with Dr. Sunanda Gaur, co-director of SATHI & Aruna Rao, Associate Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, New Jersey chapter and founder of the South Asian Mental Health Awareness in Jersey (SAMHAJ) program are conducting an ongoing, IRB-approved study of cultural differences in attitude towards and understanding of mental illness symptoms in South Asians.
- 3) **Breast cancer awareness and practices survey module:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra in collaboration with Dr. Sharad Goyal, radiation oncologist, CINJ.
- 4) **Oral Cancer and oral health practices survey module:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra in collaboration with Dr. Satish Mullick, Department of Dentistry, UMDNJ- Dental School, Newark.
- 5) **Prostate cancer perception and practices survey module:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra in collaboration with Dr. Biren Saraiya, Oncologist, CINJ. This survey currently being developed with the help of UMDNJ- Internal medicine residents will assess the understanding of prostate cancer and screening practices in the South Asian men.

Medical Education Training

- 1) **SAMADHAN exchange program:** Developed a UMDNJ-RWJMS medical student elective program rotation at SAMADHAN (a Non-Government Organization in New Delhi, India which provides early intervention services to disabled children). Two students have participated in this elective. An NYU student went to SAMADHAN in July, 2009 and implemented a Parenting Stress Index questionnaire- a survey tool to assess the parental stress level due to a disabled child in the family. The data for this survey is currently being analyzed. A second student went to SAMADHAN in 2011 and conducted a survey of physicians' attitudes toward patients with disabilities.
- 2) **Provider Training on South Asian Health:** Training of health care providers to educate them to be able to better deal with health problems in South Asians. Training sessions led by Dr. Naveen Mehrotra, were conducted for the NJ Public Health Association (December, 2009), Statewide Consortium of Cultural Competence (February, 2010), Central NJ Maternal and Child Health Consortium (March, 2010), Amerigroup Community Care (May, 2010), and Monmouth County Cancer Coalition (June, 2010).
- 3) **Elective Rotations arranged at Sitapur Eye Hospital (Uttar Pradesh, India), SN Medical College (Jodhpur, Rajasthan); King George Medical College (Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India):** Students at UMDNJ-RWJMS and other universities are eligible to take a two-to-four week rotation to get an exposure of the practice of medicine in the South Asian countries. One student took this elective in spring, 2011 and another student will be going to Jodhpur in the fall, 2011.
- 4) **Addressing Health Disparities and Health Literacy in the South Asian Community-** a one-day conference that took place at the **New Jersey Hospital Association** on October 9, 2010 (in collaboration with the RWJMS Center for Healthy Families and Cultural Diversity) to share information and address health disparities and health literacy challenges in the South Asian community.

Awards/Recognition

- 1) **NJ BIZ Health Care Heroes Finalist, 2009.**
- 2) Received proclamation from **NJ State Assembly** for conducting the "Addressing Health Disparities and Health Literacy in the South Asian Community" Conference in October, 2010.
- 3) **2010 Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Health Council award** recipient for making a difference in the South Asian community through charity care/social service.

SATHI RESEARCH PROJECTS

Illness Representations of Mental Illness in Asian Indian Immigrants

PI: Aparna S. Kalbag, PhD

Little is known about how South Asian individuals a) understand the symptoms of mental illness; b) to what extent they access mental health treatment; and c) whether their beliefs about mental illness (including stigma) impact their decision to seek treatment.

The goal of this study is to understand Asian Indians' attributions (cognition and affective reaction) towards mental illness and how these attributions affect the likelihood of seeking mental health treatment. This study was presented at the annual American Public Health Association Meeting 2009 in Philadelphia, PA. This project was designed and conducted during Dr. Kalbag's NIMH-supported fellowship in health services research (T32MH016242, PI: Mechanic, David).

South Asian Population Health Assessment and Perception Survey

PI: Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH, Co-Director, SATHI

South Asians are burdened with an increased risk of heavy chronic diseases such as coronary artery disease, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and cancer compared to other ethnic groups. These disparities are present even in the absence of traditional risk factors.

The goal of this project is to explore whether dissatisfaction in the patient-physician relationship may explain some of these health disparities. Data on key indicators of general health, prevalence of risk factors, perceptions' of general health and frequency of health service visits by this population has been collected and is being analyzed.

South Asian Population Breast Cancer and Perception Survey

PI: Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH; Sharad Goyal, MD (Radiation Oncology, Cancer Institute of New Jersey); and Bijal Balasubramanian, MBBS, MPH (Department of Family Medicine, UMDNJ- RWJMS)

Research in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) groups show that cancer has been the number one killer in women of AAPI origin in the last quarter of the century.

The goal of this survey is to assess the knowledge of South Asian women on the issues surrounding breast cancer. Questions revolve around the preventive guidelines in the screenings for breast cancer.

South Asian Population Oral Cancer and Practices Perception Survey

PI: Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH and Satish Mullick, DMD (UMDNJ-School of Dentistry)

Oral preventive care is known to be poor in the South Asian population. South Asians tend to chew a mouth freshener consisting of betel nut and paan. The condiment spread on paan can lead to an incidence of oral cancer eight to ten times higher than normal.

The goal of this project is to assess South Asian patterns of oral care.

Prostate cancer Perception and Practices Survey Module

PI: Naveen Mehrotra, MD, MPH and Biren Saraiya, MD, Oncologist, Cancer Institute of New Jersey

This survey is currently being developed with the goal of assessing South Asian males understanding of prostate cancer and screening practices.