

# Community-Engaged Research to Address Dementia Disparities in Vietnamese Americans

Oanh Meyer, Ph.D., M.A.S.

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025

1

1

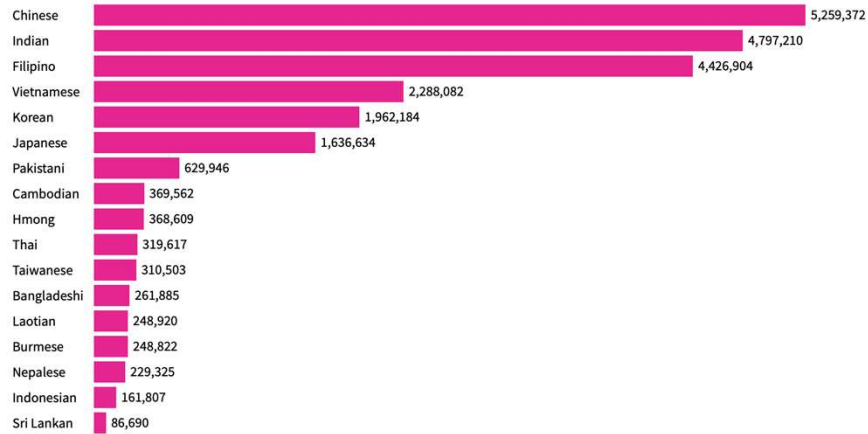
## Asian American Population

- Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the U.S.
  - More than 24 million as of 2022
  - Account for about 7% of the nation's population
- 30 Asian American and 21 Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander groups
- Heterogeneous in terms of country of origin, language, immigration history, and SES



2

## Numbers by Asian ethnicity (2021)



Figures include those that identify as one ethnicity in combination with another. Due to mixed identities, these figures do not sum exactly to the total number of Asian Americans in the US.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3

3

## Research Disparities for Asian Americans

- Between 1992-2018, how much research funding from NIH was focused on AANHPI participants?
- 0.17% of the total budget (Doan et al., 2019)!
- What about percent of Asian Americans represented in the Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers?
- Only 2.9% identified as Asian American (of the 50,000+ participants)

4

# Model Minority Myth

- Coined in 1966 by sociologist William Petersen in an article that he wrote for The New York Times Magazine entitled, "Success story: Japanese American style."
- Stereotyped as hard-working, problem-free
- Myth perpetuates the notion that Asian American individuals are doing just as well, if not better, than non-Hispanic Whites



5

## Per Capita Income for Asian Americans as a Group

Race/Ethnicity	Per Capita Income
White	\$38,899
Black/African American	\$24,509
Latino/Hispanic	\$22,002
Asian American	\$43,884

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

6

6

# Per Capita Income by Subgroup

Race/Ethnicity	Per Capita Income
White	\$38,899
Black/African American	\$24,509
Latino/Hispanic	\$22,002
Asian American	\$43,884
Indian	\$57,982
Japanese	\$51,999
Chinese	\$46,707
Korean	\$43,735
Filipino	\$38,493
Vietnamese	\$32,018
Hmong	\$22,530

7

7



8

## Vietnamese Americans

Experiences of war trauma, PTSD, loss of social status, and resettlement challenges contribute to high rates of depression

J Immigrant Minority Health  
DOI 10.1007/s10903-017-0634-0



ORIGINAL PAPER

### Psychological Distress of Ethnically Diverse Adult Caregivers in the California Health Interview Survey

Oanh L. Meyer<sup>1</sup> · Xiaoyan Liu<sup>2</sup> · Thuc-Nhi Nguyen<sup>3</sup> · Ladson Hinton<sup>3</sup> · Daniel Tancredi<sup>4</sup>

	White	Mexican	Chinese	Vietnamese
Education	95.6	69.5	92.9	90.4
Income	38.8	16.8	27.5	18.6
Distress	4.4	5.2	3.4	5.6
Health	3.7	3.1	3.4	2.9

© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2017

**Abstract** This study examined factors associated with psychological distress for culturally diverse family caregiv-

9

## Immigration Context



- Recent immigrant group
- 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fall of Saigon on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1975
- Almost 125,000 refugees fled to the U.S.; several waves over the next couple of decades
- Pre- and post-migration trauma for many
  - Combat/war, imprisonment/torture, death and loss of family members, sudden evacuation, resettlement stressors

10

## Vietnamese Dementia Caregiver Study

- Examined the beliefs and experiences of Vietnamese American dementia caregivers
- Conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 family caregivers
- Ages ranged from 37-86
  
- Salient themes
  - Family could be a source of support as well as stress
  - Lack of understanding about AD and dementia
  - Loss and trauma

11

11

## EXPERIENCES OF LOSS AND TRAUMA

### The Sociocultural Context of Caregiving Experiences for Vietnamese Dementia Family Caregivers

Quah L. Meyer  
University of California, Davis School of Medicine

Kim Hahn Nguyen  
University of California, San Francisco

To Nhai Dao  
University of California, Berkeley

Phuoc Vu  
Tram University

Patricia Arora  
University of California, San Francisco

Ladson Hinton  
University of California, Davis School of Medicine

The goal of the qualitative study was to describe the beliefs and experiences of Vietnamese caregivers caring for a family member with dementia and to explore their ideas about preventing, recognizing, the possibility of caregiver stress, support groups, the likelihood of dementia, and local community mental resources in Northern California. We conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 caregivers, as well as a focus group to check data about supportive strategies. Several themes emerged from the data, and that group was influential in suggesting the 5 areas of insight or themes we generated, and to caregivers had their own set of stress and coping strategies. An emerging theme was that caregivers' and family members' cultural beliefs, values, and experiences shaped the caregiving experience. Implications for dementia interventions include education, language resources, and validation of caregivers' and family members' cultural beliefs. The study suggests the importance of understanding the sociocultural context of the experience. It also may be useful to include an understanding of cultural values and practices of patients and relatives in key components. Future research hopes for dementia caregiver interventions to reduce burden and distress in an underserved population.

> Clin Gerontol. 2022 Apr 29;1-10. doi: 10.1080/07317115.2022.2071681. Online ahead of print.

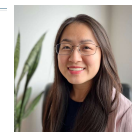
### Impact of War and Resettlement on Vietnamese Families Facing Dementia: A Qualitative Study

Mengxue Sun <sup>1,2</sup>, Duyen Tran <sup>1,2</sup>, Anna Bach <sup>1,2</sup>, Uyen Ngo <sup>1</sup>, Tiffany Tran <sup>1</sup>, Thuy Do <sup>1</sup>, Quah L. Meyer <sup>2</sup>

Affiliations + expand  
PMID: 35485807 DOI: 10.1080/07317115.2022.2071681

#### Abstract

**Objectives:** Most Vietnamese immigrants in the U.S. today arrived as political refugees due to the Vietnam War in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Refugees are disproportionately affected by health and mental health disparities as a result of experiencing distress and potentially traumatic experiences before, during, and after their migration processes. This study involved Vietnamese families facing dementia and used a qualitative approach to investigate participants' experiences before, during, and right after their resettlement in the U.S.



Mengxue (Fiona) Sun,  
DePaul University

*“When I was imprisoned, it was better to die than to live. I used to bring with me a rope so when I couldn’t handle it anymore, I would hang myself. I lived with that mentality for almost 11 years. After I got out, I saw that my family’s life was even more difficult...because Communists had stripped everything from you.”*

*“I do remember some of it myself, like being at sea and how our boat ran out of gas, and that we were stranded, paying pirates and hiring pirates to take us closer to the shore. But they just left us in the middle of the ocean.”*

12



13



14



## Community Outreach



15

## Vietnamese Caregiver Study

- Goal: Adapt and pilot-test a culturally-relevant, multicomponent intervention to reduce stress and enhance quality of life for caregiver and care recipient

16



## Caregiver Intervention

- Six weeks, 2 hours/week at a community-based agency
- Family-based, so each caregiver is asked to bring a secondary caregiver
- Psychoeducation and support
  - Education (AD knowledge)
  - Skills training (self-efficacy)
  - Facilitation of support seeking (formal and informal support)
  - Cultural understanding of family member perspectives
- Stress Management – breathing techniques



17

## Methods

### Phase 1: Interviewed 20 key stakeholders

Revised the intervention based on feedback from key stakeholders and community advisory board meetings

### Phase 2: Piloted the intervention with caregivers



18

**UC DAVIS HEALTH** | Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

**UCSF**  
University of California San Francisco

**VIP**  
Vietnamese Insights into Aging Program

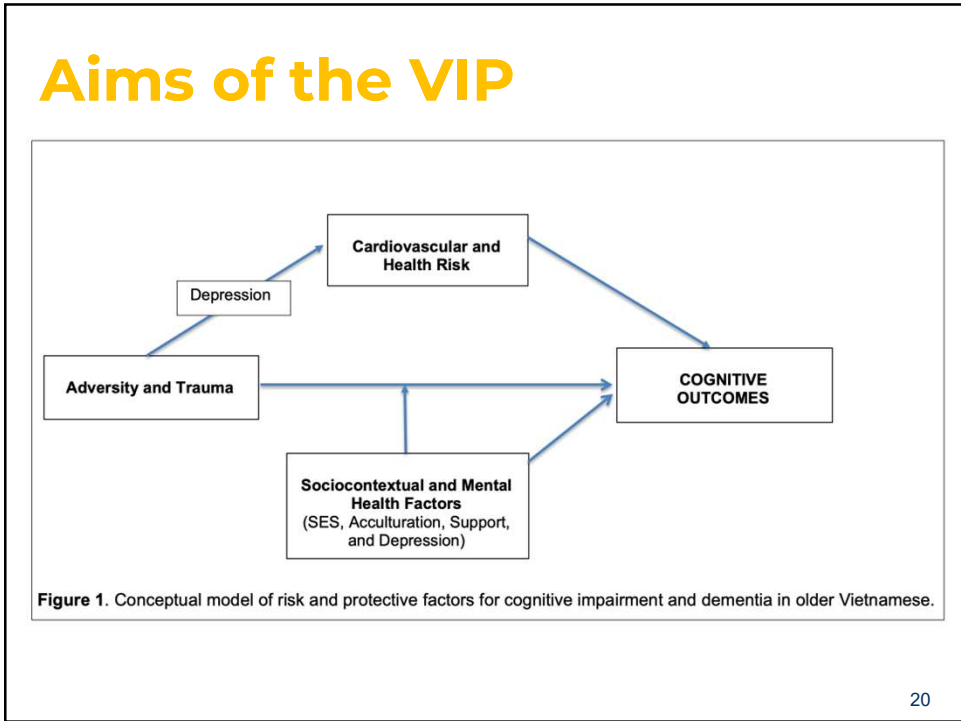
**ARI** Community Services

**ICAN**

NIH/NIA R01AG067541

19

19



20

## Methods

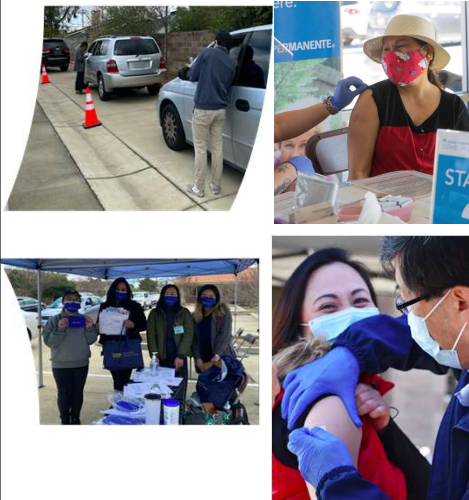
- Community-based recruitment of 540 older Vietnamese (65+) into the VIP
- 270 in Sacramento and 270 in Santa Clara
- Assess every year for a total of 3 visits

21

21

## ARI Partnership

### Flu and Covid-19 Vaccine Clinics



### Food Distribution Events



22



Official VIP  
Launch  
October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021

23

## Vietnamese Mini-Medical School (May 2022)

Clinical and Translational  
Science Center

Alzheimer's Disease  
Research Center

---

**21 tháng 5, 2022**  
9:15 sáng đến trưa

ARI  
6270 Elder Creek Rd.,  
Sacramento, CA 95824

Đăng ký tại:  
[tinyurl.com/vmms2022](https://tinyurl.com/vmms2022)

Nam Tran, Ph.D.

Brent Liu, Ph.D.,  
B.C.P.S., B.C.A.C.P.

### Hội Thảo Sức Khỏe Người Việt

Khi tuổi tác càng cao, điều quan trọng là tìm hiểu những gì chúng ta có thể làm để duy trì sức khỏe. Hội Thảo Sức Khỏe Người Việt là sự kiện đầu tiên thuộc hình này ở UC Davis Health, tập trung vào các chủ đề sức khỏe quan trọng cho người Việt. Các phần thuyết trình sẽ được thực hiện bằng tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh, theo sau đó là phần câu hỏi và trả lời.

**XÉT NGHIỆM COVID-19**

Chúng ta đang ở đâu, chúng ta đã biết được gì, và chúng ta sẽ tiếp tục như thế nào? Xét nghiệm COVID-19 đã thay đổi kết quả của nhiệm vụ đồng đầu tiên vào năm 2020. Tìm hiểu về sự phát triển của xét nghiệm COVID-19 và hiểu rõ hơn về các giải pháp tốt nhất khi chúng ta chuyển tiếp sang trạng thái bình thường mới. Năm Tiến, Nhà Học Lâm Sàng được chứng nhận, sẽ trình bày tổng quát về cách UC Davis đối phó với COVID-19 và những việc đã làm để giải quyết nhu cầu xét nghiệm của cộng đồng. Tiến sĩ Trần là giáo sư và giám đốc bệnh lý lâm sàng tại UC Davis Health. Ông là chuyên gia về hóa học lâm sàng, chẩn đoán bệnh truyền nhiễm phân tử, và xét nghiệm tại địa điểm chăm sóc. Tiến sĩ Trần cũng là thành viên của đội ngũ đặc nhiệm xét nghiệm COVID-19 của California.

**CÁC LOẠI THUỐC THƯỜNG DÙNG CHO NGƯỜI CAO NIÊN**

Phó Giáo sư Lâm Sàng Brent Liu sẽ trình bày một cái nhìn tổng quát về các loại thuốc thường dùng cho người cao niên với bệnh tiểu đường và cao huyết áp. Được sĩ Lưu là phó giáo sư lâm sàng tại trường Y tại UC Davis Betty Irene Moore. Với hơn 20 năm kinh nghiệm quản lý và hành nghề được, được sĩ Lưu là chuyên gia trong các cơ sở hành nghề được khác nhau, bao gồm chăm sóc cấp tính, chăm sóc cứu thương, kiểm soát cơn đau và truyền dịch thuốc tại nhà.

**LÊN KẾ HOẠCH CHĂM SÓC SỨC KHỎE**

Làm thế nào bạn có thể chăm sóc tốt hơn cho những người thân cao niên? Tìm hiểu về giấy ủy quyền lâu dài và các chỉ thị chăm sóc nâng cao, tầm quan trọng của sự hợp tác với bác sĩ gia đình của bạn và khám phá các nguồn hỗ trợ (từ bảo hiểm và cộng đồng) trong việc chăm sóc thân nhân cao niên. Chuyên gia Y Tế Trường Y Hà đã tốt nghiệp trường Y khoa tại Arizona và là bác sĩ gia đình được chứng nhận.

**Câu hỏi?** Xin liên lạc Tiến sĩ Oanh Meyer tại [omeyer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:omeyer@ucdavis.edu) hoặc ARI tại **916-454-1892**


24





**May 13, 2023**  
9:15 am – 12:00 pm

**ARI**  
6270 Elder Creek Rd.,  
Sacramento, CA 95824  
Please register at:  
[tinyurl.com/vmms2023](http://tinyurl.com/vmms2023)



  
 Lien Le, M.D.

  
 Christopher Minh Nguyen,  
Ph.D.

  
 Huong T. Sandhu,  
Pharm.D., M.S., BC-ADM

### Vietnamese Mini-Medical School

As we age, it is important to learn about what we can do to maintain our health. The Vietnamese Mini-Medical School is the first event of its kind with a focus on covering important health topics for the Vietnamese population. The presentations will be conducted in **Vietnamese** and followed by a question-and-answer session.

**COLON AND STOMACH CANCER SCREENING**

Dr. Le will discuss current recommendations on colon cancer screening and stomach cancer screening for high-risk groups. She will also discuss gastrointestinal symptoms that should prompt further evaluation with your doctor. Dr. Le completed medical school training and internal medicine residency at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) School of Medicine and then completed her gastroenterology fellowship at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine. She joined the University of California Davis (UCD) Gastroenterology and Hepatology Division in 2020 and sees patients with numerous gastrointestinal conditions.

**NORMAL AND ABNORMAL AGING**

Dr. Nguyen is an assistant professor and geriatric neuropsychologist at The Ohio State University College of Medicine, where he also serves as the Director of the Office of Geriatrics and Gerontology. Dr. Nguyen conducts neuropsychological evaluations, provides psychotherapy services to various patient populations, and is particularly interested in dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases. Dr. Nguyen is an appointed member of the American Psychological Association Committee on Aging and President of the Asian Neuropsychological Association.

**DIABETES TYPE 2 – THE BASICS**


More than 1 in 5 people in the United States have diabetes, but for Asian Americans, that number is higher – around 1 in 3. Dr. Sandhu is a pharmacist educator with Health Management and Education at UC Davis Health. Her experience includes expertise in long term care, managed care, and clinical health education. She will list key components of blood glucose regulation in normal physiology and management in hyper- and hypo-glycemia settings. She will explain the role of 5M's - Motion, Meal Planning, Medications, Monitoring, and Mental health in a diabetes self-management plan.

Questions? Contact Dr. Canh Meyer at [cmeyer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cmeyer@ucdavis.edu) or ARI at [916.454.1892](tel:9164541892).



Vietnamese Insights into Aging Program

This program is in partnership with ARI and funded by the UC Davis Clinical and Translational Science Center, the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, and the Vietnamese Insights into Aging Program (VIP).



25

## VIETNAMESE MINI-MEDICAL SCHOOL 2024






26

## Conclusions & Future Directions

- Community engagement and outreach should happen, and BEFORE research
- Consider the sociocultural and historical context of research participants and their families
- Inclusion of Asian American groups in dementia and caregiving research is a social justice and scientific imperative
  - Alzheimer's disease treatments
  - Opportunities to study risk AND resilience

*“Compared to our lives before, the living conditions in the refugee camp were precious. We had food and water. We felt like our lives had changed already. We no longer were afraid”*  
(Male, 72-years-old)

27

27

*thank you!*

[olmeyer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:olmeyer@ucdavis.edu)

**UC DAVIS**  
**HEALTH**

Alzheimer's  
Disease Center



### Acknowledgments

National Institute on Aging  
Alzheimer's Association  
VIP Community Advisory Board  
VIP Co-Investigators, Consultants, and Staff  
Research Participants and Families  
Diversity and Disparities Lab

28