



基督教聯合那打素社康服務 UNITED CHRISTIAN NETHERSOLE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE

South Asian Health Support Programme Annual Report - 2023/2024



HEALTH among South Asian Community in Hong Kong - through population based interventions



Funded by the Community Chest

Introduction:

South Asian Health Support Programme was established in 2007, it has evolved over the years, moreover still remains unique and in need in Hong Kong. The programme aims to improve the health profile of the South Asian community through comprehensive health promotion and strategic and healthy lifestyle interventions.

The need: Investing to save lives

Hong Kong's health indices rank among the best in the world. Despite it, 8.4% of the population –mainly the South Asian ethnic minorities, still struggle with basic services such as health care. There is increasing evidence that South Asians are vulnerable to chronic diseases such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and some cancers. These diseases are the leading cause of death and can also impose huge financial burdens on health costs. The paucity of health information in Hong Kong South Asians keeps this community prone to ill health. All too often minority groups are treated as homogeneous populations, leading to inappropriate generalization, unmet needs and unsuitable health management. To understand and manage an individual's health, it is necessary to appreciate the effects of their culture, experience, and environment.

The UCN's South Asian health support programme mainly focuses on prevention of chronic diseases through promoting healthy lifestyles and detection of early diseases by screening. Investing in preventing non-communicable chronic diseases not only improves health and saves lives but can also improve a country's economic productivity and workforce participation. In addition, the project has paid more attention to the emerging needs for mental health awareness among the general population in particular to the more vulnerable section of society and high-risk families, to enhance the help seeking attitude, reduce stigma, introducing mental health resources and hence creating a mental health friendly society for all.

Thus, this programme fills in the gap to meet the needs of the vulnerable group and reduce the risk of preventable diseases.

Objectives:

1. Improve lifestyle and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, particularly obesity, hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and cardiovascular disease among South Asians in Hong Kong.
2. Detect chronic diseases and pre-cancerous conditions in their early stage.
3. Improve family and child health through maternal education, and reduce injury among South Asian children.
4. Empower the South Asian community with health knowledge and raise their awareness of community health resources. Enhance awareness of mental health and strengthen social support networks.

Service Category

1. Community-based health campaign and screening for chronic diseases (measuring blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body fat) and screening for anemia during community events.
2. Cancer screening for women (Pap smear test)
3. Health talks on a community level, schools, religious centers, and community organizations.
4. Health advocate training for women
5. Monthly women's health day where women can walk in for health workshops, screening, and socialize.
6. Men's health
7. Workshops, health talks, and health advocate training for school children
8. Wellness programme such as healthy cooking classes, and exercise classes
9. Volunteer development
10. Medical interpretation service
11. Home visit for those who did not attend mass/outdoor events
12. Mental health promotion
13. Elderly health workshop
14. Diabetes management through the formation and empowerment of diabetes groups
15. Health publicity

Service provision methods:

The service is provided through extensive collaboration with various agencies by focusing on health promotion, evaluation of health interventions, and dissemination of information on good health initiatives or practices. The programme also provides training to people engaged in health promotion activities and mobilizes the community to involve in all aspects of health promotion through various channels of promotions and campaigns.

Table 1: Output measures and variance (2023/2024*)

Serial No.	Health Activities	Pledged	Actual	Variance (+/- %)
1	Health screening for (Hypertension, Diabetes , Obesity and cholesterol)	• 8,500 times	• 14,100 times	• +5600(65.9%)
2	Pap smear for women	• 350 times	• 350 times	• +0(0%)

3	Heart health checkups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 101 times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +1 (1%)
4	No. of screening for anemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +0(0%)
5	Community-based health events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of events • Total no. of participants reached by the exhibitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 • 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 • 3417 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +7(28%) • 1417(70.85%)
6	Home visit (raising awareness on healthy lifestyle and safety of children at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 homes to visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited 150 homes, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +0(0%)
7	Healthy lifestyle intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise classes • Healthy cooking classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 classes with 550 attendance • 14 classes with 170 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 classes with 569 attendance • 14 classes with 191 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +2 classes(5%) and +19(3.5%) attendance • +0(0%) cooking classes and +21(12.4%) in participants
8	Volunteer development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of new volunteers recruitment • No of training sessions for volunteers • Volunteer service hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 new volunteers • 10 sessions • 800 service hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 new volunteers • 10 sessions • 850 service hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +40(66.7%) • 0 • +50(6.25%)

9	Health publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of leaflets No. of newsletters No. of copies of newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 4 6000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 4 6000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 0 6000
10	Health service for women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health advocate training Health talk Knowledge improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 training with 70 attendance 35 talks with 800 attendance 60% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 training and 76 attendance 42 health talks with 845 attendance 78% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +6 (8.6%) in participants +7 (20%) in talks and +45(5.6%) attendance +18% improvement
11	Health service for school children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train the trainer workshop Health talks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 workshops with 500 attendance 20 talks with 1,000 attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 workshop with 530 attendance 28 talks with 1,615 attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +9 (60%) workshops and +30(6%) attendance +8 (40%)+ 615(61.5%) in attendance
12	Services for men <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health workshop No of Face to face health counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 workshops with 250 attendance 60% Improvement on knowledge 400 participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 workshops with 351 attendance 80.5% Improvement on knowledge 708 participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +2 (13.3%) in talks and +101(40.4%) attendance +20.5% knowledge improvement +308(77%)
13	Medical interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400 times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 475 times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +75(18.8%)

14	Workshops on management of chronic diseases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of workshops No of participants No of individual peer counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 200 50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 280 54 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 +80(40%) +4(8%)
15	Mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of workshop (attendance) % of participants showing increase in knowledge of mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 workshop with 350 attendance 80% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 workshops with 367 attendance 80% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +0 (0%) in workshop and +17(4.9%) attendance +0(0%) in knowledge
16	Healthy aging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of workshop (attendance) % increase in knowledge of elderly disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 workshops with 180 attendance 50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 workshops with 410attendance 82.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +0(0%) in workshop and +230(127.7%) in attendance +32.5% in knowledge
17	Youth health volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of workshops No of attendances No of service hours by youths volunteers No of health beneficiaries served by the youth volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 100 800 service hours 1000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 147 1,221.5 service hours 3197 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +5(50%) +47(47%) +421.5(52.7%) +2197(219.7%)

***Year from April – March**

2023/2024 South Asian Health Support Programme executive summary:

- From 1st April 2023- 31st March 2024, health screening for prevention of chronic diseases was provided 14,100 times, which included measuring blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body fat. There were 350 cervical cancer screenings, 100 heart health screenings and 350 anemia screenings done.
- 127 health workshops and talks for women (42), men (17), elderly (12), and school children (28) with 3221 attendances were provided at the community level, schools, and religious organizations.
- 100 volunteers registered for the programme and our dedicated volunteers provided 850 service hours, in addition, youth volunteers provided 1221.5 service hours.
- 150 home visits were conducted to promote healthy lifestyles and the safety of children at home.
- 4 versions of quarterly multilingual (English, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, and Urdu) newsletters with 6,000 copies were produced and distributed in the community.
- We collaborated with 45 partners, which included 19 organizations, 25 schools and 1 religious organization to provide health services (Appendix 1- List of collaborating organizations).

SAHP provided service territory-wide within Hong Kong, with the majority of the services concentrated in Kowloon, New Territories, and some in Hong Kong Island.

Our team continued to collaborate with health professionals of, the Hospital Authority, and the Department of Health with regard to South Asian health needs.

Our website was updated regularly and is made more user-friendly www.ucn-emhealth.org is linked with the Hong Kong Department of Health.

Internship opportunities were provided to local and overseas secondary and tertiary students, including The City University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and The University of Hong Kong.

South Asian Health Support Programme descriptive report for 2023/2024

I. Health campaign with Screening for Chronic disease management:

Health screening is the major element of this programme. Its aim is early detection and prevention of chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and cervical cancer. In total 124 health campaigns were conducted where 14,100 times screening was done for hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol level, and obesity (measuring blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body fat %), which was 3333 more than in 2022-2023. Of which 4925(35%) were screened positive i.e. they had either blood pressure , blood sugar, cholesterol or body fat higher than normal.

Of those who had high blood pressure and blood sugar, 101 (men and women) received heart health screening for early detection of cardiovascular diseases.

350 women received Pap smear screening of which 32.9% had abnormal results and 8.9% had cellular abnormality indicating a higher risk for cervical cancer.

Moreover, 352 men and women were screened for anemia, 45 (12.8%) had low levels of hemoglobin and they were followed up.

All the cases that were screened positive were advised to seek medical attention. (Table 2)

Table 2: Health screening and finding (2023/2024*)

S.N	Activity	No. times of screening test done	No. of times Screened positive	Intervention
1.	Screening for Hypertension (measuring Blood Pressure)	3726	967(26%) (Blood pressure >140/90 mmHg)	Referral and telephone follow-up within a week
2.	Screening for Diabetes (measuring Blood Glucose)	3711	204(5.5%) (Blood Glucose Random 11mmol /L)	Referral and telephone follow-up within a week
3.	Screening for Obesity (Measuring body fat %)	3378	2908 (86.1%) (Body fat % >27% among female and >23% among man adults)	Health advice, referral to exercise class, healthy cooking class, and follow-up
4	Screening for total cholesterol level	3285	846(25.8%) (Total cholesterol level >5.2 mmol)	Health advice and referral for heart health checkup
5	Screening for anemia	352	45(12.8%) Adult Male: 13.0-17.0 g/dl, Adult Female: 11.0-16.0g/dl	Health advice was give on site and referral to seek further medical attention
6	Pap smear screening	350	115 (32.9% all case abnormal) 31(8.9% Cellular changes **)	100% of the ASCUS cases were followed up in UCN health Centre within 2 weeks

ASCUS** Atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance

*Year from April – March

II. **Wellness classes:**

As there is significant number of people from the South Asian community continues to be at risk of chronic disease, our wellness classes had played a vital role as preventive interventions. Our wellness classes focus on healthy diet and.

Total of 14 healthy cooking classes were conducted with 191 participants. All the classes were conducted by dietitians.

Similarly, 42 exercise classes were conducted for women with an attendance of 569. Monthly women's health day and wellness classes were conducted in different venues, in collaboration with many organizations.

III. **Volunteer development:**

100 new volunteers registered for this health promotion service and they provided 850 service hours much more than we anticipated. And 1221.5 hours of service were provided by youth volunteers. Most of the volunteers provided service during large-scale outdoor health campaigns and women's health events.

IV. **Health publication:**

4 series of health newsletters was produced on a quarterly basis. The newsletter contained topics on: What food helps with Long Covid, Sleep well-Live well, Pneumococcal disease & Vaccination, and Bed Bugs.

All the content was produced in 5 languages including 4 South Asian languages namely Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, and Urdu. (Attached -Appendices 3 a, b, c, d).

1,000 copies of health booklets and 2,000 pieces of health souvenirs (ego bag) were produced and disseminated during health events as a cue to remind.

V. **Health activities for women:**

In 2023/2024 as in the previous year significant amount of health promotion was done amongst women as we have identified that the majority of them are the core caretakers of the family. Hence, it is paramount to empower them in order to achieve the goal of a healthy family. In addition, the service was extended to new partners to reach out to those who had not received the service.

76 women had completed our Health Advocate training. The intensive health training included health talks and workshops on women's health, child health, chronic diseases, lifestyle, and measures to prevent diseases. Furthermore, 42 health talks were given to women during Women's Health Day with an attendance of 845. Pre and Post-talk knowledge enhancement test was compared with an average increase in basic health knowledge level to 78 % compared to baseline. The health events were held on a territory-wide basis and in collaboration with many organizations.

VI. **Health activities for School Children:**

18 schools participated in SAHP school health programme. 24 Health ambassadors training were provided in various schools with a total of 530 attendances. The health topics included the prevention of infectious disease, healthy diet, injury prevention, and first aid skills. In addition to the health ambassador training, an exercise session was

included. During the injury prevention training, basic first aid skills were taught to the children.

28 health talks with a total attendance of 1615 were provided at schools. Teachers and parents also joined the talk, particularly during the parent's day.

VII. Health activities for men

17 health workshops with an overall attendance of 351 were conducted for men. The workshops emphasized the prevention of chronic diseases such as Hypertension, Diabetes, and Cardiovascular diseases among the male population. In addition to workshop-based interventions, outdoor health events were organized during weekends and holidays, which had a very high response rate, addressed the needs of working males who were less likely to receive health information and services. Those identified as higher risk i.e. high blood pressure, blood sugar, and body fat were given on-site health counselling, in total 708 face-to-face counseling on healthy lifestyles were provided to male participants.

VIII. Diabetes support group:

Diabetes is a chronic disease, which is increasing among all populations. Thus to encourage prevention, raise awareness, and strengthen prevention and control, the diabetes support group was ongoing. In total 20 workshops were conducted with 280 attendances. In addition, to commemorate the "World Diabetes Day 2023". One large event were organized in November in collaboration with Khalsa Dewan Sikh Temple, 5 health talks were given, and 228 people received screening for diabetes.

IX. Mental health awareness

As the result of social and financial stress due to COVID19 restrictions mental health problems grow significantly. This caused major health, social, and economic consequences in all countries of the world. With reports of suicides and self-harm amongst high-risk groups like school students and elderlies, there is an urgent need to put more focus on meeting the needs of mental health issues of the vulnerable groups and at-risk families (RTHK, 2022) (Save the Children, 2023). Thus many health promotion interventions and strategies are being initiated to improve the mental well-being of individuals, however many of those interventions may not reach the ethnic minority community, due to language and social barriers.

Thus 25 workshops (with 367 attendances) on mental health awareness were conducted, which included general information about mental health, early signs of depression, coping mechanisms, and where to seek help.

X. Healthy Aging :

South Asian elderly is one of the vulnerable group, thus we filled in the gap by promoting healthy aging service. 12 workshops related to common elderly diseases and healthy aging were conducted with 410 attendances, 82.5% improvement in knowledge regarding elderly disease and self-care was observed.

XI. Ongoing need identified:

- Many from the 8 % of the population - the ethnic minorities, still struggle to gain access to basic services such as health care because of language, culture and often simply due to lack of awareness.
- There are increasing evidence that South Asians are vulnerable to diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and some cancers.
- There is a paucity of such information in Hong Kong, which keeps this community prone to ill health.
- Often the population-wide awareness campaign doesn't reach this community in a timely manner. This was evident in the promotion of COVID-19 vaccination, seasonal flu vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and colorectal cancer screening programmes.
- Thus in the past years, the programme had evolved according to needs.

XII. Key lessons during the 2023/2024 health promotion

- Health promotion is a much-needed service for the South Asian community in Hong Kong especially disease preventive measures as well as information on available resources for early testing, and treatment.
- Emphasis should be given to life style change, chronic disease, and cancer screening.
- Health promotion activities in a culturally sensitive manner, are important while approaching this community.
- The face-to-face approach works well for the intervention of the health promotion for this community with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions more onsite health talks, workshops, and screenings were done.
- Collaboration and support from other organizations, community groups, religious affiliations, health care professionals, and the community themselves is vital in conducting any health promotion activities.
- The SAHP programme is acting as a bridge between the community and the formal health system, therefore there is a need to scale up support for such health promotion and other community health programmes.
- Professional input is vital in evaluating and gaining trust from the community.

SAHP is evaluating its strategies in reference to the Glasgow RE-AIM model (R- reaching, E- efficacy, A- adoption, I –implementation, M-maintenance).

There is a need for continuity of this programme as there are still many ethnic minority community members who still need to be reached, and the Ethnic Minorities groups are the fast-growing section of Hong Kong community.

Acknowledgement:

Special thanks are given to:

All the dedicated staffs of United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service

All the volunteers of SAHP without whom we could not have achieved more than we expected.
All the collaborating organization (Appendix 1)

Appendix 1: List of Collaboration organization 2023/2024

Appendix 2: Photo report

Appendix 3: Newsletters (Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d)

Our contact:

United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service

South Asian Health Support Programme

5/F, Block J, United Christian Hospital

130 Hip Wo Street

Kwun Tong, Kowloon

Tel: 2344 3019, Fax: 2357 5332

Website: www.ucn.org.hk. <https://www.ucn-emhealth.org/>

Bibliography

RTHK. (2022, August 26). Retrieved from RTHK:

<https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1664297-20220826.htm>

Szeto, C. (2023, 12 07). *Save the Children*. Retrieved from Save the Children:

<https://savethechildren.org.hk/en/press-releases/addressing-the-alarming-rise-in-student-suicide-rates-in-hong-kong/>