

Built and Social Environmental Factors Influencing Healthy Behaviours in Older Chinese Immigrants to Australia: A Qualitative Study

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BACKGROUND

The neighbourhood environment is an important source of influences on older adults' health and health enhancing behaviours (i.e. participation in physical activity, eating a healthy diet and socialising) because they experience more limited mobility and are, therefore, more reliant on facilities near to where they live.

Older immigrants are particularly susceptible to being impacted by their neighbourhood environment due to cultural differences and poor language proficiency after migration, which limit their mobility.

Studies of neighbourhood effects on health-enhancing behaviours have focused on the general population of older adults, while there is a lack of information on these issues in relation to older immigrants.

AIMS & SIGNIFICANCE

- Identify built and social environmental facilitators of and barriers to
 - regular engagement in physical activity
 - eating a healthy diet
 - regular contact with other people
 ... for older Chinese immigrants in urban Australia

Information can be used to

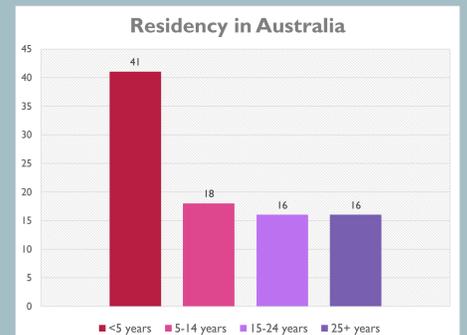
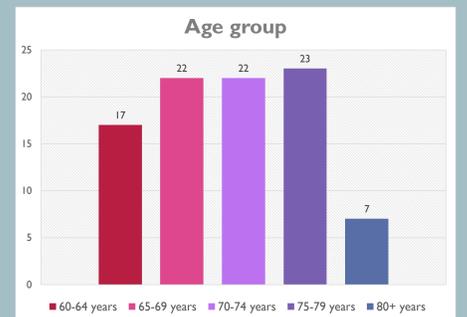
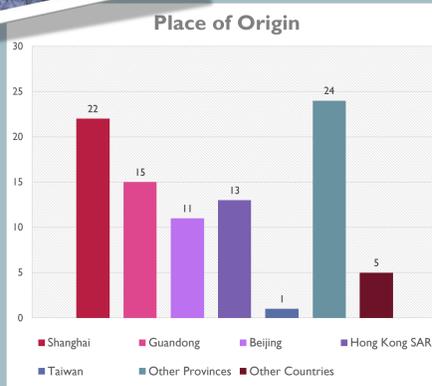
- help identify groups of immigrants that are particularly vulnerable to various health-related problems arising from dramatic environmental shifts (e.g., change in available foods, opportunities for physical activity and social contacts)
- identify intervention that may mitigate these negative effects

METHODS

- Older Chinese immigrants recruited from Melbourne communities varying in walkability and % of Chinese residents (91 participants)
- Completed demographic and health questionnaire
- Each participant took part in 1 of 12 structured 'brainstorming' sessions
- 12 sessions = 4 sessions for each healthy behaviour
 - physical activity
 - healthy diet
 - social contacts
- Participants were asked to generate and rank a list of environmental facilitators and barriers to engagement in each healthy behaviour

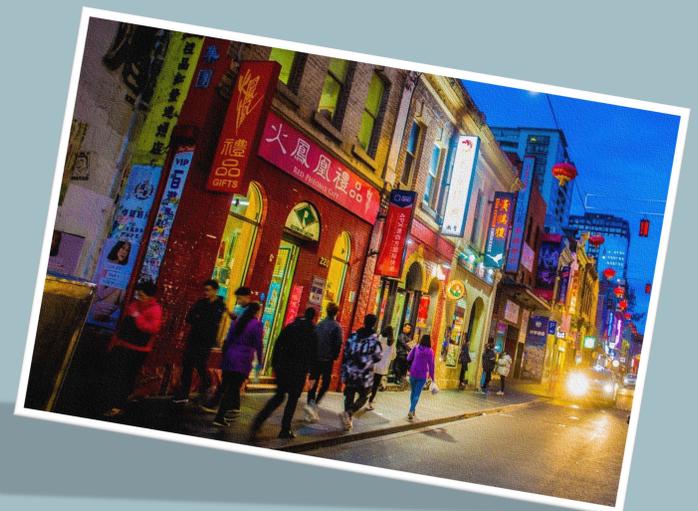


PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE



FACILITATORS TO PARTICIPATION IN ...

Rank #	Physical activity	Healthy diet	Social contacts
1	Proximity to destinations (living close to parks, recreational facilities and shopping centres)	High food safety standards/regulations	Proximity to activities and destinations (shops library, recreational facilities, GPs, restaurants and community centres)
2	Easy access to destinations for physical activity (regardless of distance)	Providing educational information on healthy eating in the community	Availability of community services and media in Chinese
3	Access to social group/ activities	Family/household members social support for a healthy diet	Access to destinations and activities / Opportunity to learn English
4	Information available on health and community events, initiatives or services in Chinese	Availability of healthy foods in grocery stores	Good public transport



BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN ...

Rank #	Physical activity	Healthy diet	Social contacts
1	Poor / inadequate public transport	Lack of family/household members social support for a healthy diet	Poor public transport (inconvenience and infrequency)
2	Language barriers	Financial barriers to purchase healthy foods	Language barriers
3	Lack of destinations / facilities supporting physical activity	High availability or prevalence of unhealthy food options available in food outlets	Limited or poor access to destinations and social group/ activities for Chinese people (or residents)
4	Limited social groups/activities for Chinese people	Cultural preference for an unhealthy diet and unhealthy cooking practices	Living separately from other Chinese people (public housing arrangements)

CONCLUSIONS

Independent living arrangements and the accessibility of destinations of daily living, recreational facilities, affordable public transport and community centres and activities for Chinese people are key elements for promoting a healthy lifestyle and well-being in Older Chinese immigrants.

As immigration to developed countries is likely to continue in the future, governments should plan for the provision of this basic infrastructure of community facilities for older immigrants.