

# **Asian Health & Wellbeing: Issues & Challenges**

## **TANI Network Meeting 8 September 2010**

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# Overview

- Background of Asian health and wellbeing in New Zealand
- Summary of key themes emerging from conference presentations
- Interventions, considerations and implications
- Food for thought

## Background – Asian wellbeing

- Growing Asian Population – almost 10%
- Healthy migrant effect
- Model minority
- Averaging – conceals health issues
- Asians – more highly educated, lower income, more likely to live in economically deprived areas – limits options for making healthy lifestyle choices (Scragg, 2010)

# Impacts of migration

- Settlement issues – employment, social inclusion
- Migration impacts negatively on health – mental and physical
- Acculturation – health deteriorates
  - Longer period of residence associated with increased likelihood of alcohol consumption, obesity and smoking (Scragg, 2010)
- Growing health concerns

# Physical Health disparities

- Physical health concerns - esp. diabetes, obesity and CVD, stroke
  - Larger proportions
  - Earlier onset
  - Later presentation
- South Asians - 4 times at risk for Diabetes than other New Zealanders
- South Asians - at risk for the prevalence of Cardiovascular diseases
- Nutrition
- Physical activity

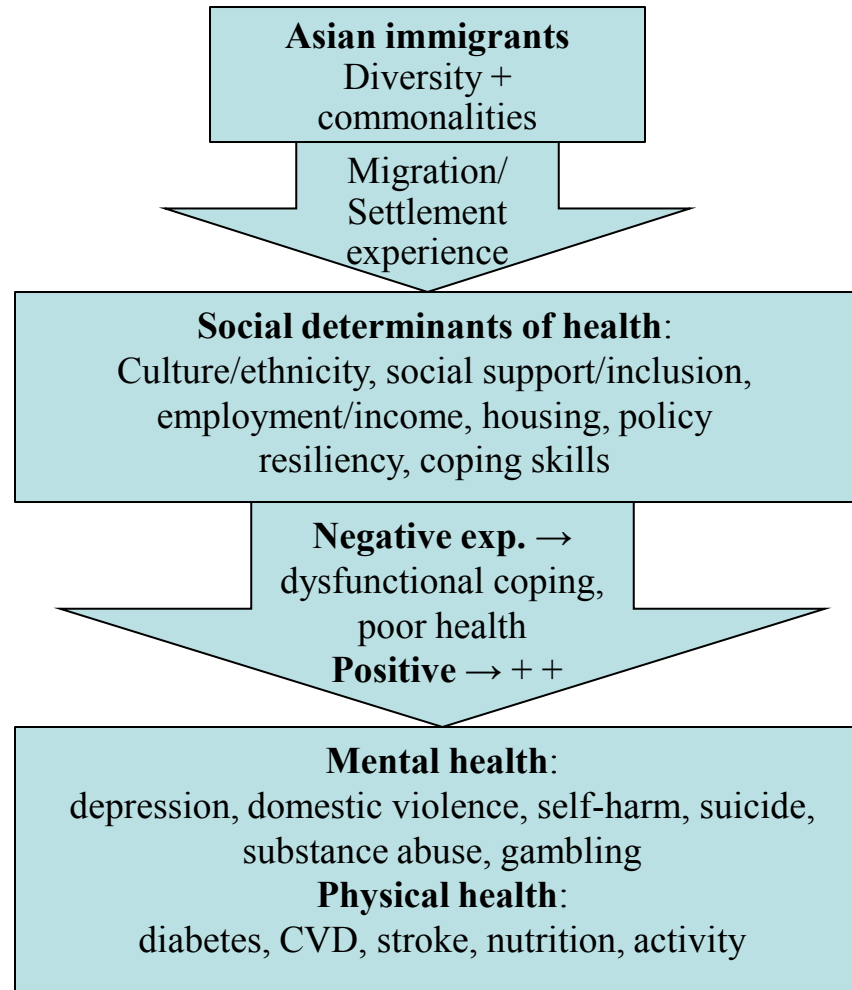
# Mental health concerns

- Mental health concerns:
  - depression
  - domestic violence
  - suicide
- Stigma – under-reporting
- Connection between depression and
  - Diabetes
  - Alcohol consumption
  - Smoking
  - gambling

# Social and community health

- Social determinants of health
  - Culture/ethnicity
  - Employment
  - Social inclusion/Support (Discrimination associated with low health)
  - Resources
  - Life skills/coping skills
- Lack of knowledge about health:
  - Status
  - Symptoms
  - Treatment
  - Health systems
  - Traditional treatments?

# Migration and health



# Interventions

- Acknowledgment of problems
- Focus on interventions:
  - Community level
  - NGOs
  - DHBs
- Assistance, resources

# Considerations

- Inter- and intra-group needs :
  - European, Maori, Polynesian, Asian
  - Asian subgroups (ethnicity, age, gender)
- Impact on resources?
- Access to health care
- Political barriers to closing gaps in healthcare
- Barriers: cost; “not knowing how” – information

# Implications

- Cultural competency/appropriateness
  - Communication
  - Respect
  - Value
- Social support
- Resiliency
- Power dynamics
- Migrant engagement (cultural identity maintenance)
- Policy
- Holistic approach to health

## Food for thought

- Is it time for a paradigm shift? Individual versus systemic?
- Is there a need for a National Asian Health strategy?
- How do we take this to the next step – finding solutions?