A Case Study on Prospective Telehealth Attitudes Amongst the Asian and Pacific Islander American Immigrant Population in Los Angeles

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Introduction:
Following the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth – remote access to health services – has increased greatly in the United States. Previous studies found telehealth to be effective in improving health outcomes for patients with chronic conditions (Beltran et al., 2017), but as an emerging practice, little is known about prospective attitudes towards using telehealth. The Asian Pacific-Islander (API) American community in particular faces complex considerations due to both logistical and sociocultural factors. Here, we characterize the unique obstacles present in the API community that influence their telehealth utilization to better inform telehealth advancement.

Objective:
This case study aims to characterize attitudes towards telehealth within the API community and examine potential factors shaping their receptiveness to using telemedicine.

Methods:
Participants are members of the API community in greater Los Angeles who attended health fairs held by APA Health CARE (UCLA student-led organization providing tailored information through health screenings, health education seminars, and follow-up services) in 2018. Follow-up calls were conducted using RingCentral. Callers described telemedicine and asked participants about past utilization and prospective attitudes towards telehealth.

Results:
Amongst 21 respondents to-date, 21% reported previous experience using telehealth, and 81% preferred in-person consultations. 62% reported openness to telehealth in the future. Participants who responded negatively towards telehealth cited concerns including: unfamiliarity with internet technology (3 participants) and preference for in-person visits (4 participants). 89% (8/9) adults (age < 65) expressed openness to using telehealth in the future while 28% (2/7) seniors (age > 65) were willing to consider future usage. One older participant explained how "elders tend to have many health problems, so [he] would not trust the accuracy of telehealth over an in-person visit."

Additional calls will be conducted into 2021 to supplement our preliminary findings. The insights from this case study have the potential to inform directions for virtual healthcare delivery and optimization for elderly and API populations.