

Men of Asia Testing for HIV (MATH)

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Project Description: The Men of Asia Testing for HIV (MATH) study is a national collaboration between several community based organizations, health centers, academic institutions, laboratories and health agencies. Funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, this project will study the HIV prevalence, incidence, and behavioral correlates of infection among 2,400 Asian and Pacific Islander men who have sex with men. MATH uses community-based recruitment and respondent-driven sampling to study participants from six U.S. cities (New York, Boston, Washington DC, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Los Angeles).

Measurements include behavioral and sociocultural survey data, referral tracing, and biological testing (rapid HIV testing, HIV viral load, CD4 count, clade, and Hepatitis serologies). Major research questions include the study of risk and resiliency factors associated with HIV infection among API MSM, the contribution of international travel and immigration on HIV risk and the impact of sociocultural factors in HIV testing patterns (including lack of awareness of HIV status and late stage HIV testing). Various analyses are planned, including multilevel multivariate modeling techniques, social network analysis and latent variable models.

This collaborative research infrastructure will be used as the basis for future scientific research. There is a large component devoted to the study of the impact of the international HIV/AIDS epidemic on this population, through the molecular epidemiological study of HIV subtypes (clade) and through the use of a multilevel impact domains model of risk that includes the sociocultural context of the countries of origin, immigration experience, acculturation, and travel histories.

Significance: This is the first national study of this scope in the API MSM population that will include multiple Asian languages and will also have sufficient power to disaggregate by ethnicity and country of origin. The research team has convened a scientific, community-based research consortium and will also evaluate the effectiveness of this model in building the research capacity and HIV testing capacity of nine community partners.

Interesting Findings: The use of community participatory methods to include API MSM community members and community-based agencies in the scientific research design and implementation has been successful to date. The MATH consortium has met to refine the research protocol, research questions, and study design. Process evaluations from the consortium building stage show a high level of trust, enthusiasm, and expectation that the research study will succeed—from both scientific and community partners.

Project Recruitment Dates: June 2005 to March 2009

Project End Date: September 2009