

# Health Care Challenges of Asian Americans

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**Who are Asian Americans?**

# Asian American Community

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- **13.5 MILLION** U.S. residents are of Asian descent.
- **8.7 MILLION** Asian Americans are foreign-born.
- **26 percent** of people identifying themselves as either Asian or Asian in combination with one or more other races are under 18; 8 percent are 65 or over.
- **DIVERSE COMMUNITY** comprising over 32 countries of origin, cultures, religions, time in the U.S., age, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status.

Source: U.S. Census, 2000; AANCART, 2000; APIAHF, 2000; SAPHA, 2002

# Asians

Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of East Asia, Southeast Asia, or South Asia

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East Asia	Southeast Asia		Indian Subcontinent
Chinese Japanese Korean Mongolian Taiwanese Tibetan	Burmese Bornean Cambodian Hmong Indonesian Laotian	Malayan/Malaysian Mien Mongolian Pilipino/Filipino Singaporean Thai Vietnamese	Afghanistani Bangladeshi Bhutanese Indian Maldives Nepali/Nepalese Pakistani Sri Lankan

Source: US Census, 2000; AANCART, 2000; Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, 2000; South Asian Public Health Association (SAPHA), 2000.

# Among fastest growing racial/ethnic populations in U.S.

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- The Asian American population had doubled each decade from **1.5 million** in 1970, to **13.5 million** in 2005<sup>1</sup>.
- **213%** - The projected percentage increase between 2000 and 2050 in the population of people whose only race is Asian. This compares with a 49 percent increase in the population as a whole over the same period.

# U.S. States with Largest Asian American Populations

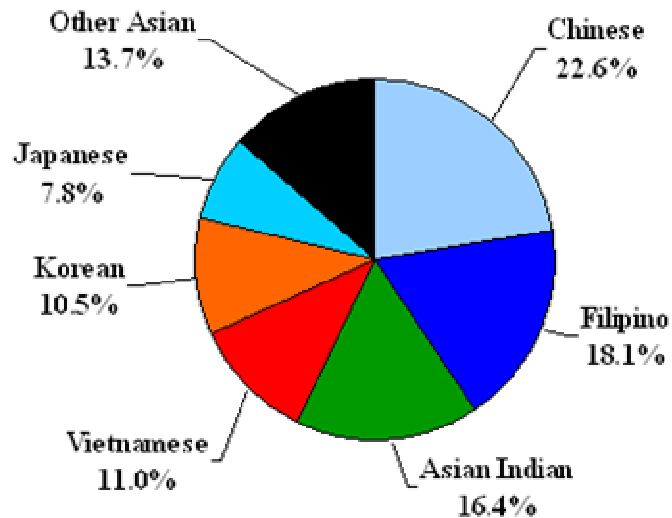
<b>Alone</b> (Actual Census & % of total State Population in Rank Order)		<b>Alone or in Combination</b> (Actual Census & % of total State Population in Rank Order)	
California	3,697,513 (10.9)	California	4,155,685 (12.3)
New York	1,044,976 (5.5)	New York	1,169,200 (6.2)
Texas	562,868 (2.7)	Hawai'i	703,232 (58.0)
Hawai'i	503,868 (41.6)	Texas	644,193 (3.1)
New Jersey	480,276 (5.7)	New Jersey	524,356 (6.2)
Illinois	423,276 (3.4)	Illinois	473,649 (3.8)
Washington	322,335 (5.5)	Washington	395,741 (6.7)
Florida	266,245 (1.7)	Florida	333,013 (2.1)
Virginia	261,025 (3.7)	Virginia	304,559 (4.3)
Massachusetts	238,124 (3.8)	Massachusetts	264,814 (4.2)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (February 2002). The Asian Population: 2000.

# Asian American Subgroups by Size: U.S. vs. NYC

## United States - Asian Groups (2000)

TOTAL ASIAN POPULATION: 10,242,998

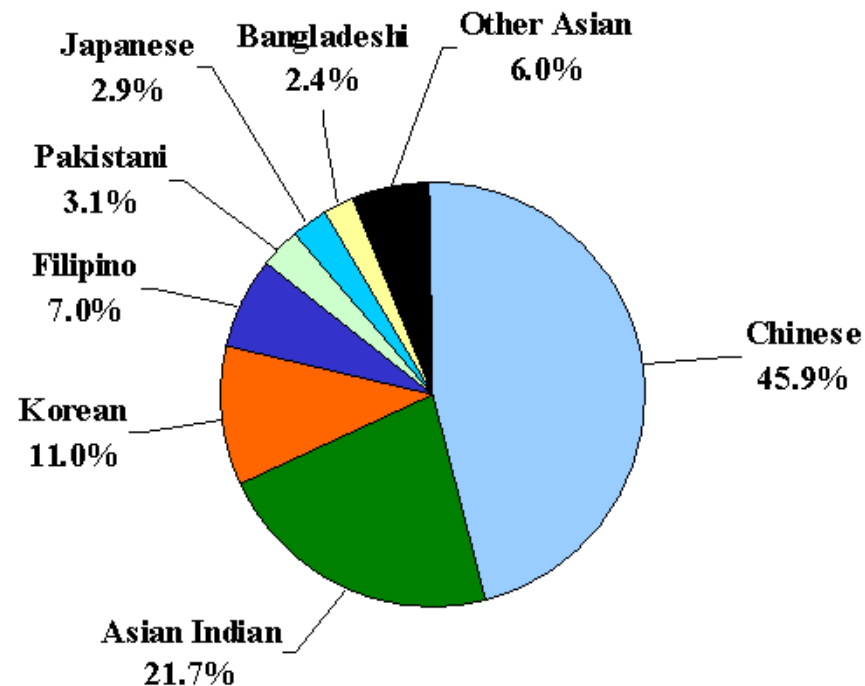


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000  
\*Does not include Asian in Combination with any other race.

Asian American Federation  
Census Information Center

## New York City - Asian Subgroups (2000)

TOTAL ASIAN POPULATION: 787,047



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000  
\* Does not include Asian in Combination with any other race

Asian American Federation  
Census Information Center

# Growth of Asian American Groups in New York City, 1990 – 2000

Asian Group	1990	2000 Asian Alone	% Growth from 1990	2000 Asian Alone or In Combination	% Growth from 2000
<b>TOTAL Asian</b>	<b>509,995</b>	<b>787,047</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>872,777</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Asian Indian</b>	94,590	170,899	81%	206,228	<b>118%</b>
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	4,955	19,148	286%	28,269	<b>471%</b>
Cambodian	2,565	1,771	-31%	2,296	-11%
Chinese (w/o Taiwanese)	232,908	357,243	53%	374,321	61%
Filipino	43,229	54,993	27%	62,058	44%
Hmong	6	8	33%	26	333%
<b>Indonesian</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>2,263</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>3,017</b>	<b>109%</b>
Japanese	16,828	22,636	35%	26,419	57%
Korean	69,718	86,473	24%	90,208	30%

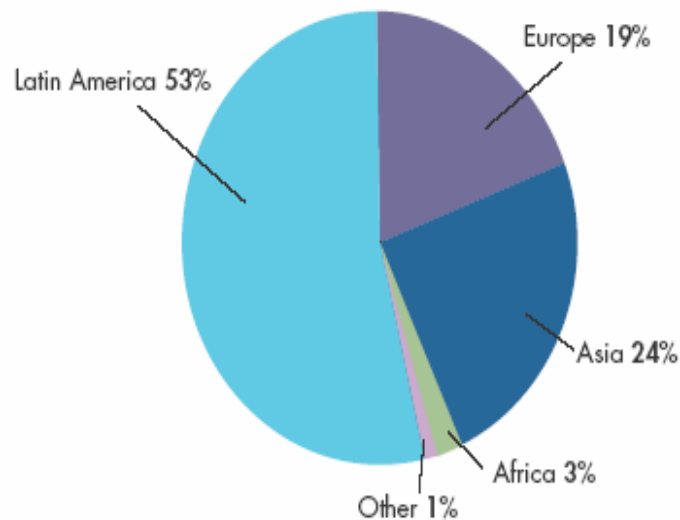
# Growth of Asian American Groups in NYC, 1990 – 2000 (cont.)

Asian Group	1990	2000 Asian Alone	% Growth from 1990	2000 Asian Alone or In Combination	% Growth from 1990
<b>TOTAL Asian</b>	<b>509,995</b>	<b>787,047</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>872,777</b>	<b>71%</b>
Laotian	366	234	-36%	316	-14%
<b>Malaysian</b>	845	1,368	62%	2,287	<b>171%</b>
<b>Pakistani</b>	13,501	24,099	79%	34,310	<b>154%</b>
<b>Sri Lankan</b>	811	2,033	151%	2,640	<b>226%</b>
Taiwanese	6,011	4,288	-29%	5,488	-9%
Thai	3,944	4,169	6%	5,002	27%
Vietnamese	8,400	11,334	35%	13,010	55%
Total Other Asian	9,835	24,088	145%		

# Foreign-born population

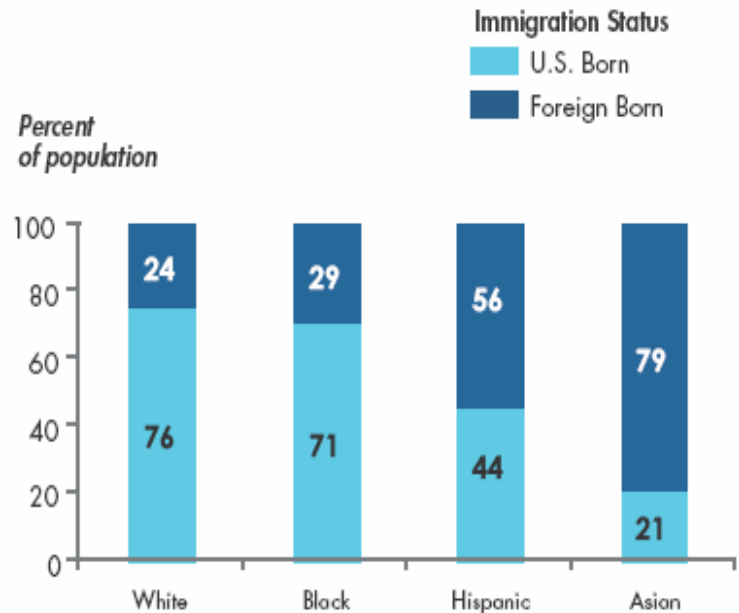
## Most foreign-born New Yorkers are from Latin America

Percent of NYC foreign-born population



Source: U.S. Census 2000 / NYC Department of City Planning

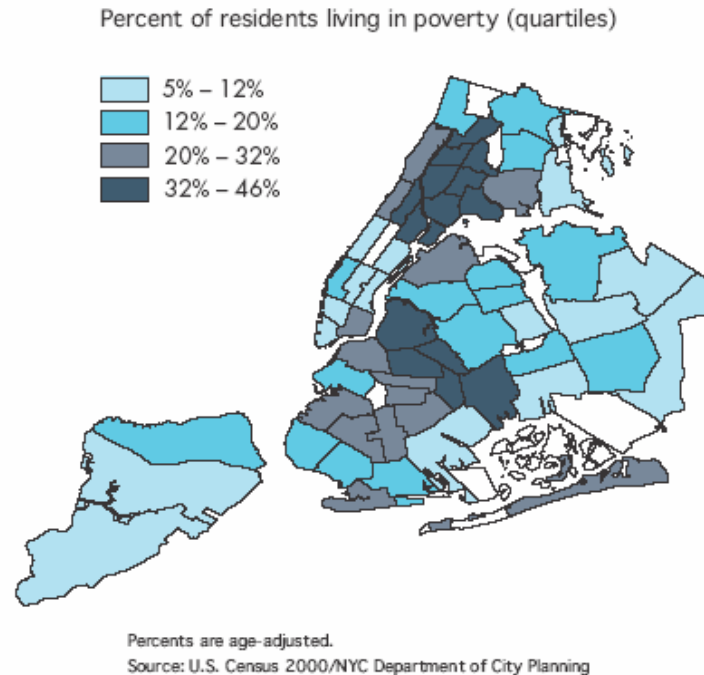
## Almost 4 out of 5 Asian New Yorkers were born outside the U.S.



Source: U.S. Census 2000, PUMS File/ NYC Department of City Planning

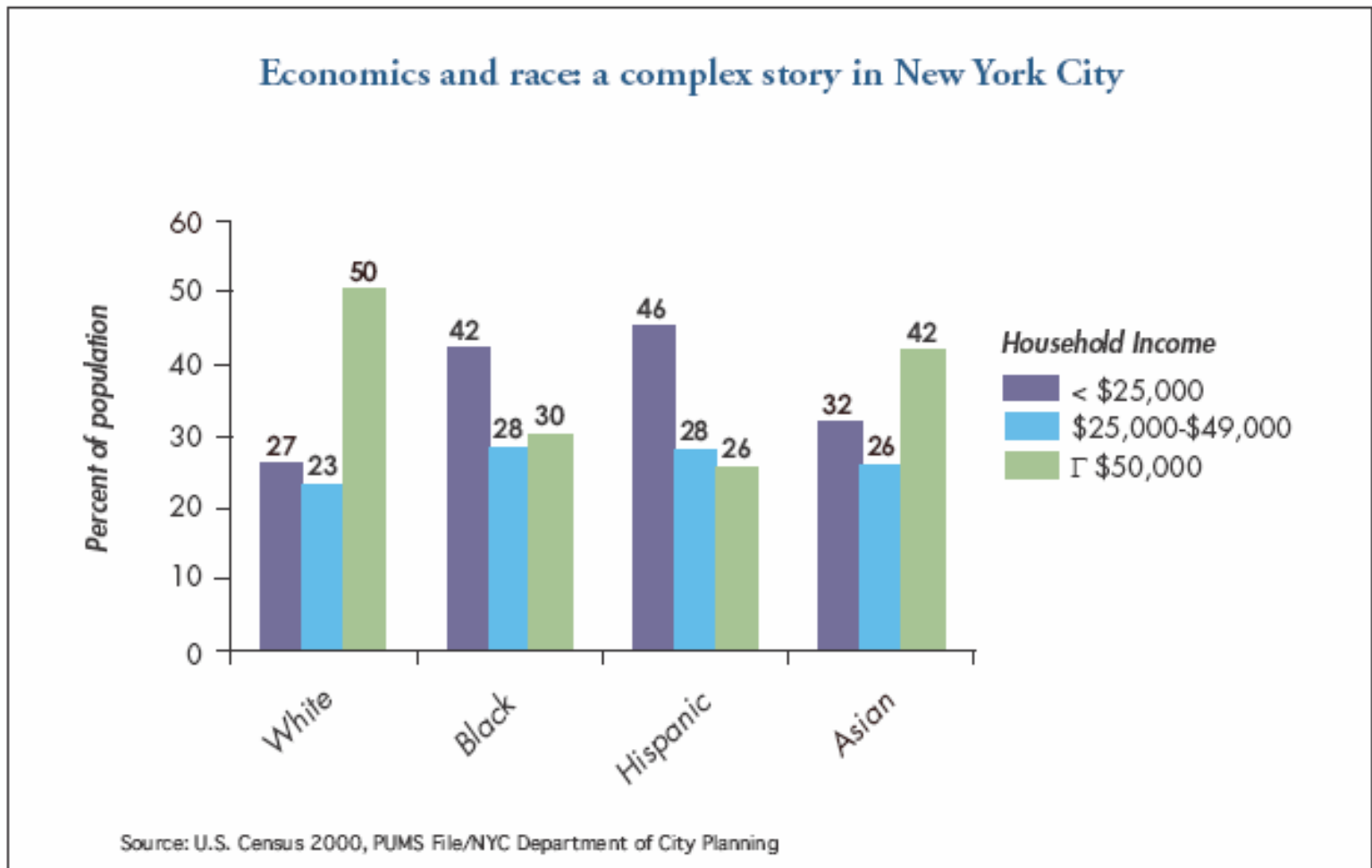
# Poverty

## Poverty in New York City neighborhoods



Asian Poverty rates similar to NYC population (20% vs. 21%). However, Asian elderly rates are higher (18% for NYC vs. 24% for Asians) and Asian children living in poverty are more likely to live in two parent homes

# Average Household Income



# Challenges



# “Model Minority” Myth

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- Asian Americans have overcome all barriers and succeeded professionally and economically
  - Passive, compliant, overachieving, without problems or needs
  
- Myth: “Asian Americans are much healthier, in general, than any other ethnic group, **therefore, money and resources should go elsewhere when it comes to improvements in health.**”

# Truth

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- ❑ Asian American health problems are very similar to those of other racial and ethnic groups
- ❑ While some subgroups of Asian Americans seem healthier than the general population (i.e., foreign-born Asians), others are distinctly unhealthier.
- ❑ As foreign-born Asians adopt Western lifestyles, their risk of chronic disease increases and/or exceeds that of the general population

# Leading Causes of Death, Asian Americans, NYC

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	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Heart disease	1	1	1	2
Cancer	2	2	2	1
Stroke	3	3	3	3
COPD	4	9	7	7
Pneumonia/flu	5	6	6	5
Accidents	6	5	5	4
Diabetes	7	4	4	6
AIDS	0	7	9	0
<b>Suicide</b>	0	0	0	<b>8</b>
<b>Homicide</b>	0	10	0	10

Source: NYC Health Dept, 2000

# Health Concerns

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- ❑ Excess disparities in **liver cancer** among the Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean populations (Between 5-11 fold increase compared to other racial/ethnic groups)
  - ❑ **More than 80% of liver cancer in API communities is associated with hepatitis.**
- ❑ Between 1995 and 1997, compared to US-born NYC residents, China-born residents were significantly more likely to die from:
  - ❑ **All cancers**
  - ❑ **Cancers related to the lip, oral, and pharynx [OR=2.73 (1.65, 4.45)].**
  - ❑ **-Cancers related to digestive organs and peritoneum [OR=1.91 (1.61, 2.26)].**

# Health Concerns

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- ❑ Asian American children in NYC have disproportionately high levels of **lead poisoning** (Although Asian children represent 9 % of all children in NYC, they comprise 18% of all childhood cases of elevated lead.) *(Source: Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, NYC DOHMH, 2001)*
- ❑ Asian American children have high rates of **obesity** in NYC elementary schools — nearly 1 in 7 *(Source: Survey of Elementary School Children, NYC DOHMH and DOE 2003 Obesity was defined by body-mass index, calculated from respondents' height and weight)*
- ❑ Asian American public high school adolescent boys reported that 35% of them did not **use a condom** the last time they had sex, compared 11% & 19% of their Black and White counterparts *(Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, CDC 2003 - Survey respondents were asked: The last time you had sexual intercourse, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?)*

# Health Concerns

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- ❑ Asian American women are less likely than Black women to obtain **Pap** tests. (Source: NYC Community Health Survey, 2002.)
- ❑ Asian American women, almost all foreign-born, accounted for 7% of the women **killed by an intimate partner**, but only 4% of women who were killed by someone who was not close to them (Source: Femicide in New York City: 1995-2002", NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)
- ❑ Asian Americans (only 1%) utilize the New York Public **Mental Health System** (Source: Carpinello, S. (2004). Providing Quality Services in Culturally Diverse Settings. Mental Health News, fall 2004, 9.)
- ❑ About a third of Filipino men between the ages of 18 and 49 suffer from **uncontrolled hypertension**. The rate increases to 51% for those over the age of 50. The corresponding rate is 61% for Filipino women of the same age range, a figure that is 1.7 times higher than whites and 1.4 times the rate for black women. (Source: Stavig et al. 1988. Hypertension and other health issues among Asian and Pacific Islanders in California. Public Health Reports, 103 (1), 28-37).

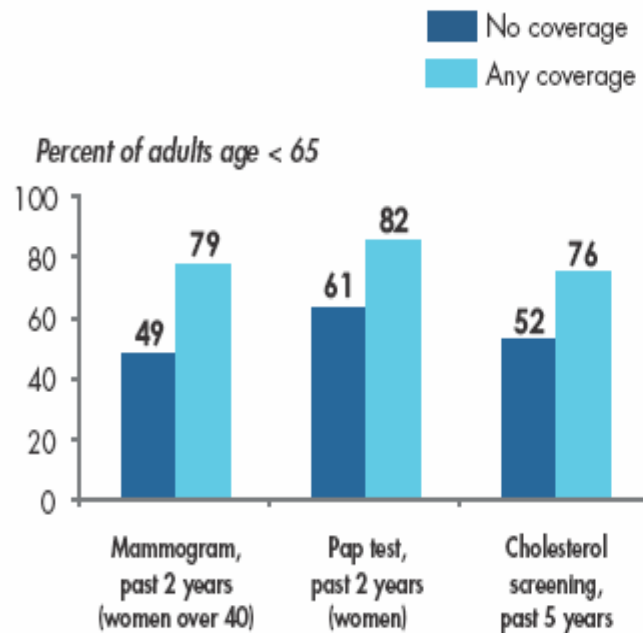
# Other Health Issues

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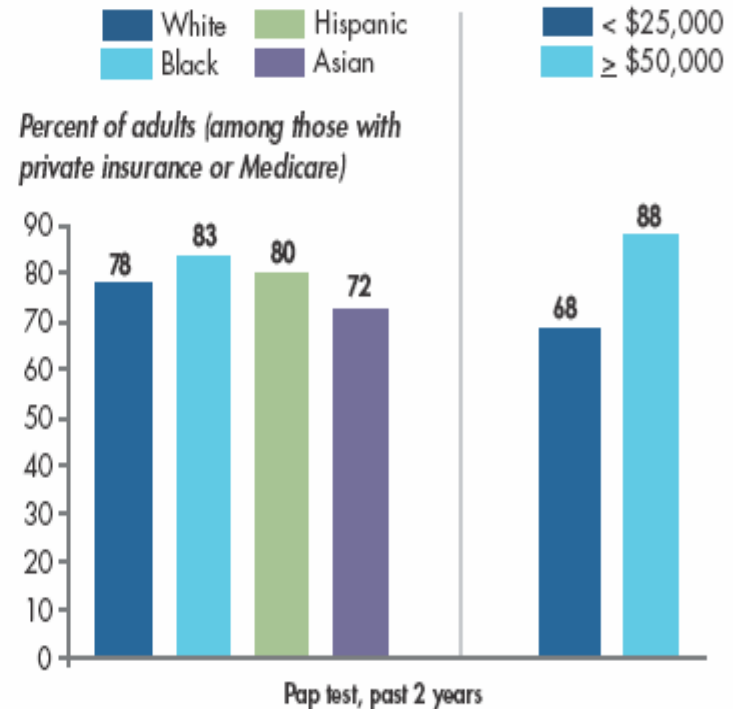
- ❑ HIV/AIDS
- ❑ Hepatitis
- ❑ Mental Health
  - Suicide
  - Depression
  - Domestic violence
- ❑ Occupational health issues
- ❑ Osteoporosis
- ❑ Diabetes
- ❑ Stroke
- ❑ Tuberculosis

# Health Coverage

## Health coverage improves but does not guarantee preventive services

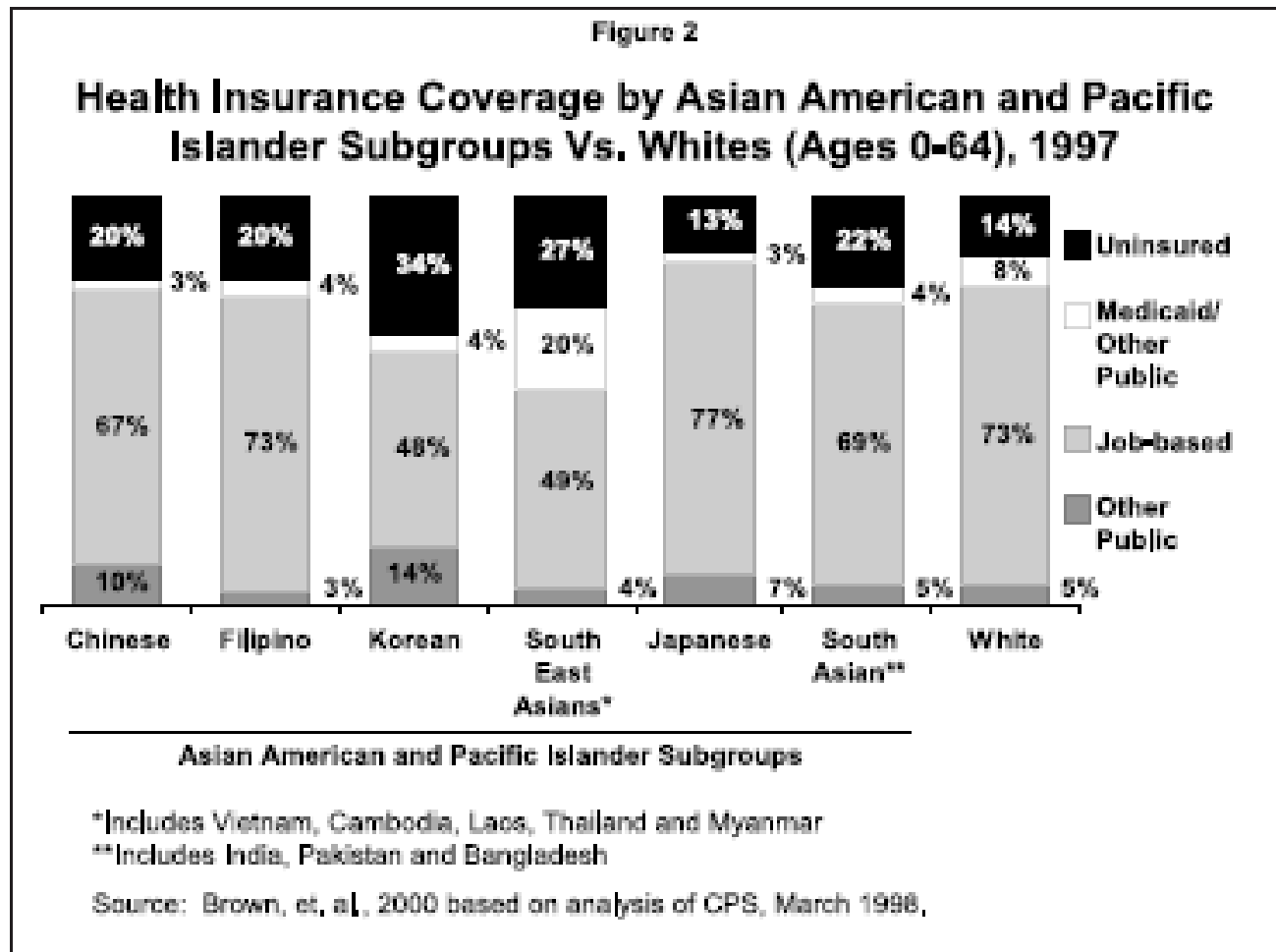


Percents are age-adjusted. Source: NYC Community Health Survey, 2002  
Please see technical notes for descriptions of the questions that led to these results.

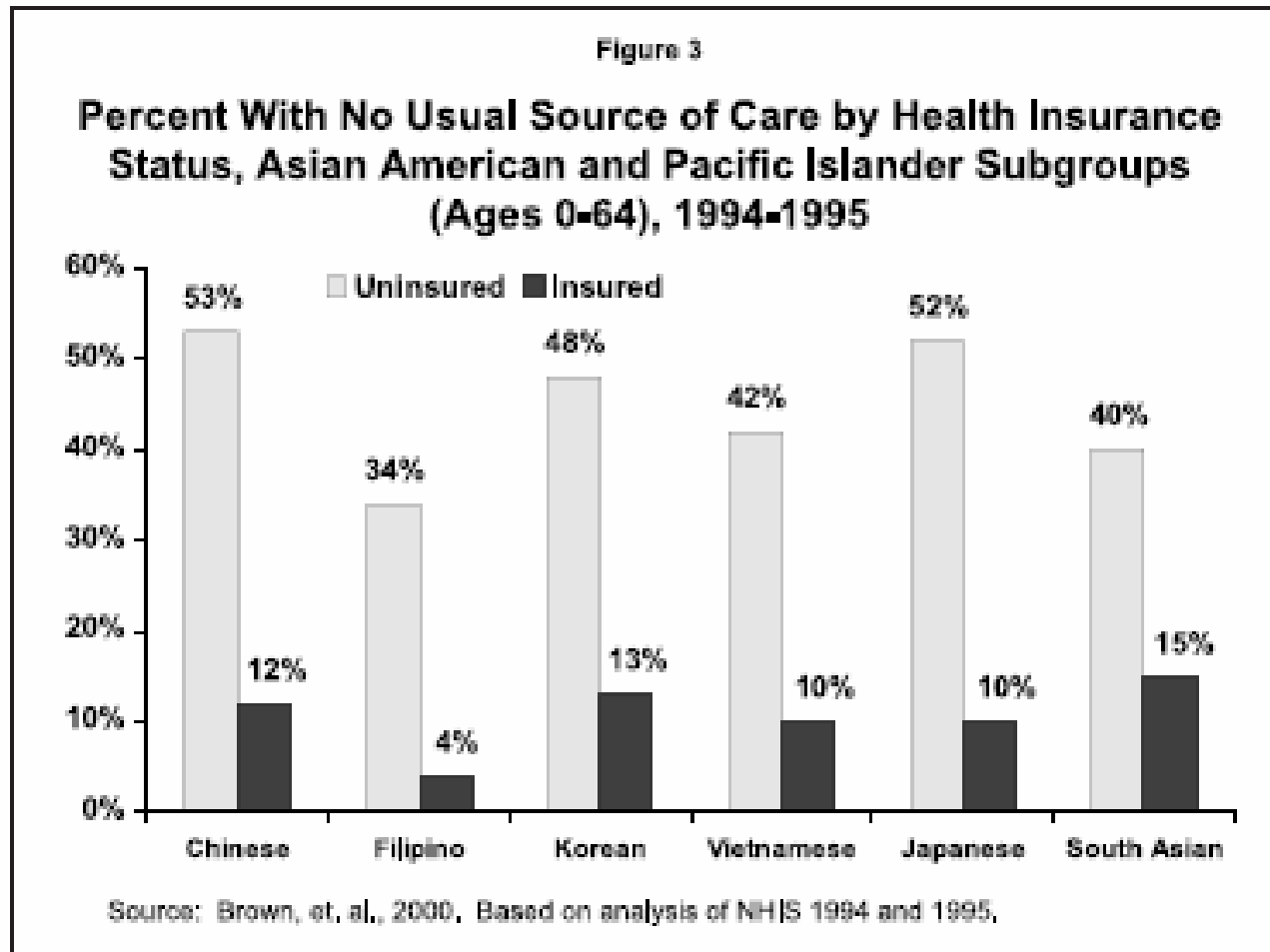


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# Health Coverage



# Health Coverage

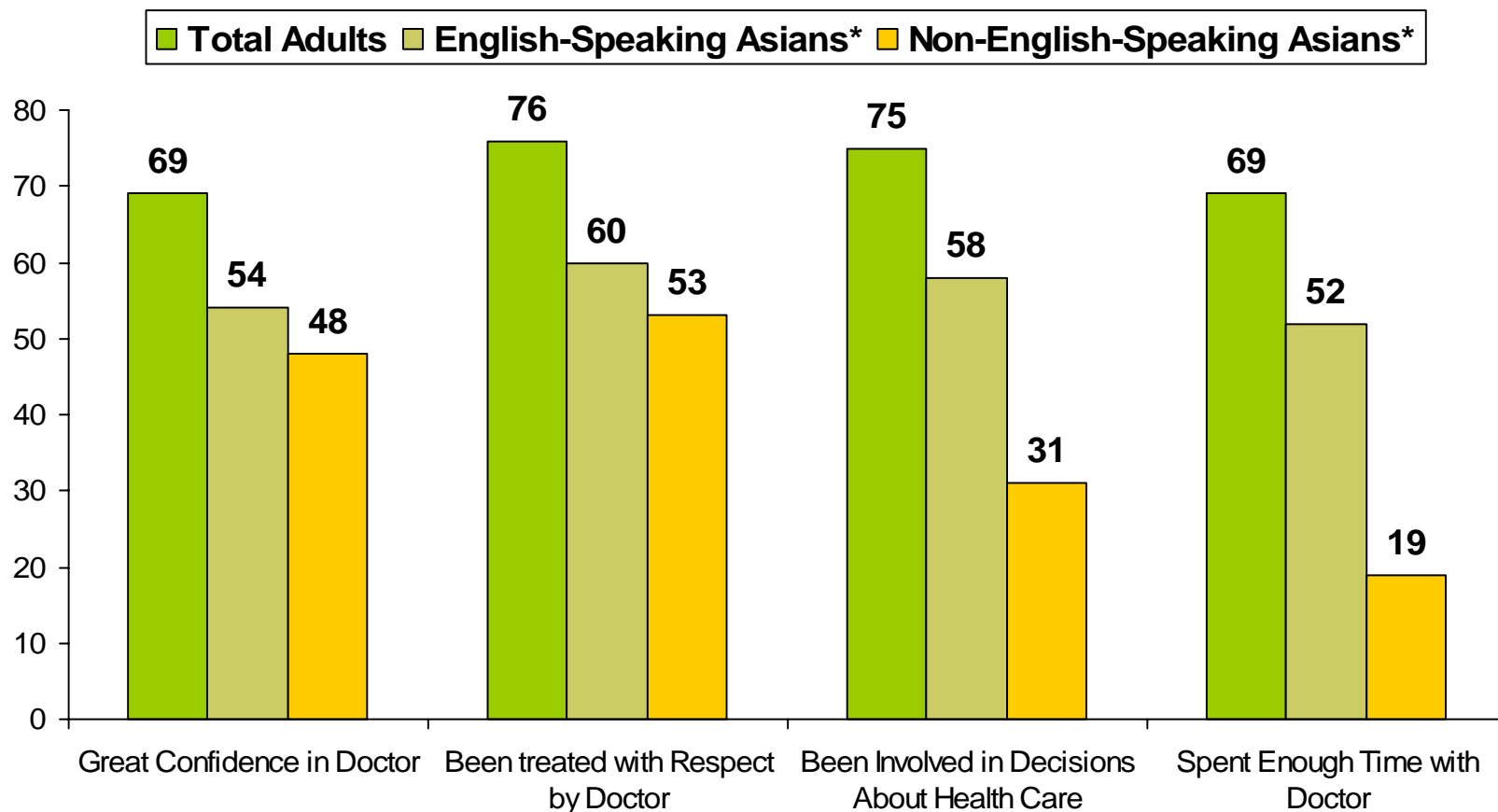


**25 percent of** Asian Americans live in linguistically isolated households.

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- “Linguistically isolated: ”
  - no person over age 14 in the family can speak English at least “very well”
  - any person who lives in a linguistically isolated household, even if members under age 14 may speak English “well”
  
- Impacts on accessing health care

# Asian American less likely to report positive patient-physician interactions



Base: Adults with a health care visit in the past two years.

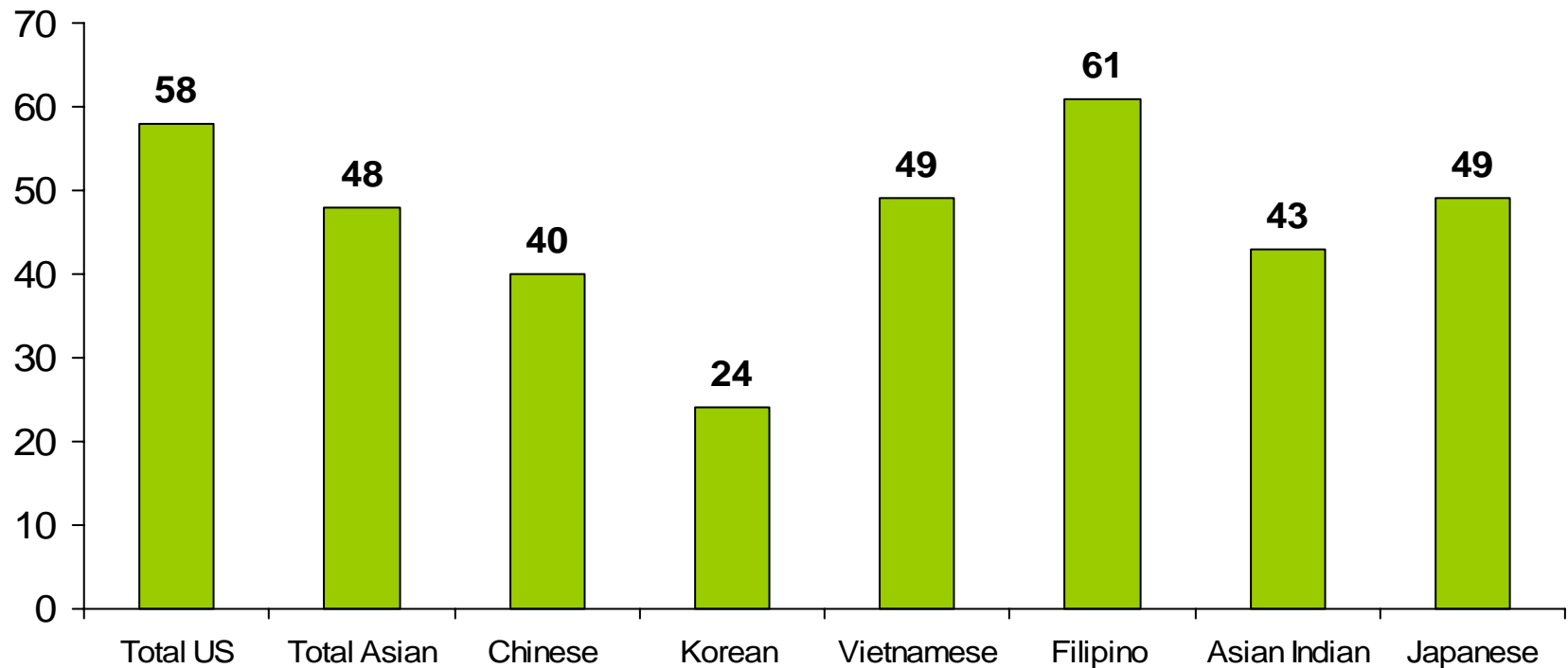
\* As defined by language spoken at home

The Commonwealth Fund. (2001). Health Care Quality Survey

# Many Asian American believe their doctor does not understand their background or values

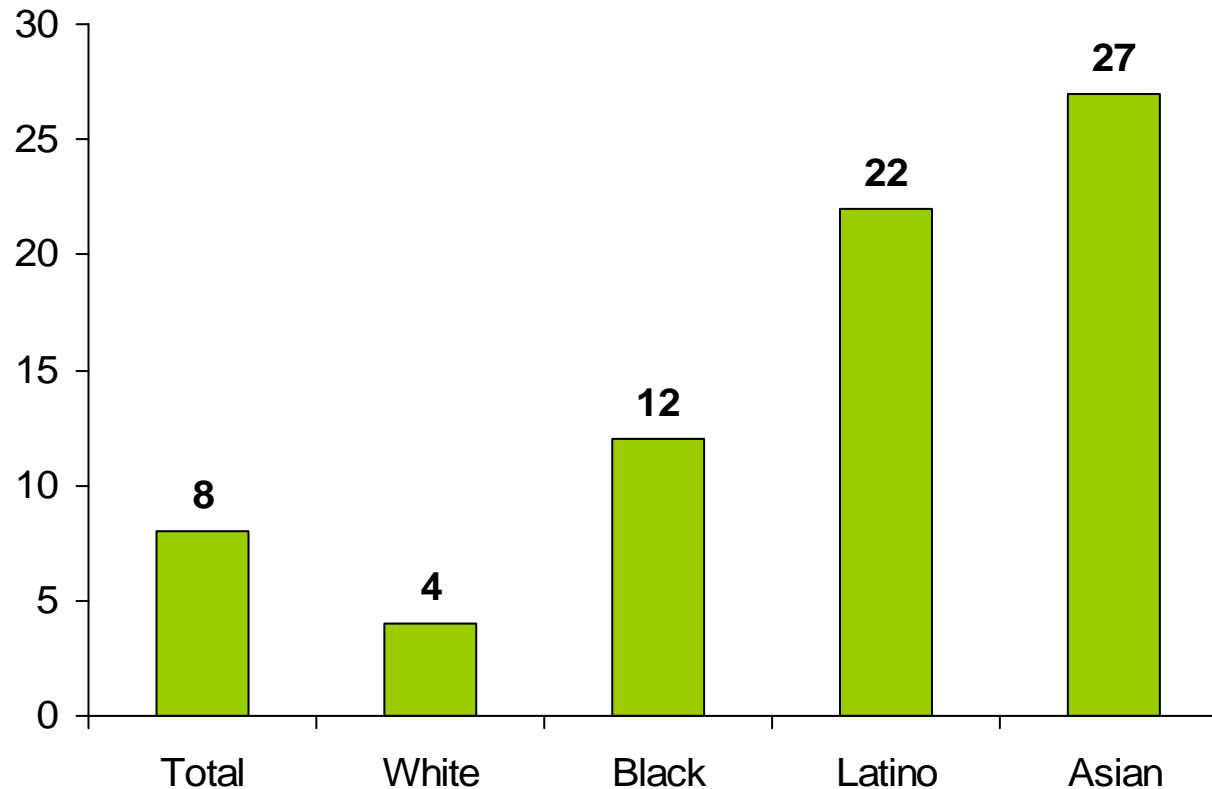
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**Percent of adults who "strongly agree" that their doctor understand their background and values**



# Percent Who Say Cultural/Religious Beliefs Are a Reason for Use of Alternative Care

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Base: Those using any alternative care in past two years. Used herbal medicine, acupuncture, chiropractor, and/or traditional healer.

The Commonwealth Fund. (2001). Health Care Quality Survey

# Challenges in Reducing Asian American Health Disparities

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- ❑ Literature is sparse on AA health issues; particularly in places outside of West Coast
- ❑ Mortality data is difficult to truly assess due to race misclassifications (may lead to underestimation)
- ❑ Lack of community-based research (as opposed to bench research)
- ❑ Though well-represented in health field, many Asian American do not work in the community; Few bicultural, bilingual health professionals

# Recommendations

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- ❑ Need to acknowledge diversity among Asian Americans
- ❑ Support for networks and partnerships across disciplines; Build links with non-health sectors
- ❑ Seek out expertise from the community
- ❑ Increase public education & awareness about important health issues
- ❑ Increase funding for community-based initiatives, programs, and research

# Recommendations

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- ❑ Support public policy and legislation that reduces barriers to care
- ❑ Accountability and enforcement
- ❑ Development of conscious and competent health professionals; improve training programs at graduate level
- ❑ Need more researchers at community level; need to improve training programs on graduate level

# Conclusion

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- ❑ The delivery of high quality health care that is accessible, effective and cost effective requires health providers to have an understanding of the socio-cultural background of patients, their families and the environments that they live in.

# For more information

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