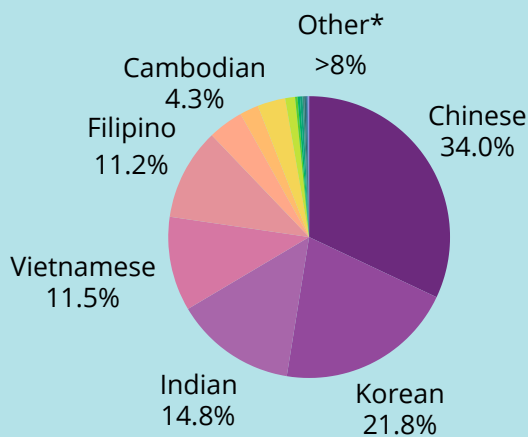




Study Updates

1075

ASPIRE participants completed their first survey



352

ASPIRE participants completed their second survey

ASPIRE Study Participants
(as of 4/17/2026)

Spring is here!

As spring arrives, many in our Asian American communities welcome cherry blossoms and a sense of renewal. In that same spirit, the ASPIRE research study is blossoming too. We're excited to share that we've reached an incredible milestone—over 1,000 participants have joined us!



Scarlett Lin Gomez,
PhD, MPH



Iona Cheng,
PhD, MPH



Salma Shariff-Marco,
PhD, MPH

This reflects the strength and commitment of our community, and we're deeply grateful. We're also growing in how we connect. Our platform now offers Vietnamese language options in addition to English, Chinese, and Korean. We are working to incorporate Thai, Hindi, Filipino, Khmer, Hmong in the coming months. Participants can also now engage in our study via text message for added convenience.

Thank you for being part of ASPIRE's community. Wishing you a spring filled with good health and new growth.

*Other groups include Japanese, Bangladeshi, Burmese, Indonesian, Pakistani, Hmong, Sri Lankan, Laotian, and Thai

Colorectal Cancer in our Asian American Community

When Son Kim thinks about her husband Dave, she remembers a man full of life. “My husband was diagnosed in July 2023 and passed away last August. He was 49 when he was diagnosed. He was very healthy,” she shared. “He worked out three times a week at 6 a.m., and we spent weekends together as a family.”

Today, doctors are seeing something troubling: more younger adults like Dave are getting colorectal cancer.

A Surprising Trend

Overall, rates of colorectal cancer have been going down. But at the same time, rates are going up in younger adults under age 50.[1] This trend is happening not just in the United States—but all over the world including in Asia, where colorectal cancer rates have been rising in many countries.[2]

Colorectal cancer also affects Asian Americans, but it does not affect all groups the same way. Some groups, like Asian Indian Americans, have lower colorectal cancer mortality. Others, like Japanese Americans, have higher rates. Korean and Vietnamese Americans have seen increasing colorectal cancer mortality rates over time.[3] This is a reminder that Asian Americans are not one single group—they are diverse, with different risks and experiences. As Son Kim shared, “In America, we’re all considered Asian, but we’re actually all different.”



Why Is This Happening?

The truth is: we don’t fully know why. Scientists have some ideas. Changes in diet, less physical activity, and more obesity may play a role. But most younger adults with this cancer do not have a clear genetic cause.[1]

A Family’s Message

Dave’s story is a powerful reminder. Colorectal cancer is no longer just a disease of older adults. It is affecting younger people, families, and communities.

Son Kim hopes that sharing her husband’s story will raise awareness. “I think this research is important,” she said. “We have to keep remembering how families are impacted.”

References

- 1.Spaander MCW, et al. Young-onset colorectal cancer. *Nat Rev Dis Primers*. 2023 Apr 27;9(1):21.
- 2.Sung JY, et al. Increasing Trend in Young-Onset Colorectal Cancer in Asia: More Cancers in Men and More Rectal Cancers. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2019 Feb;114(2):322-329.
- 3.Thakkar Z, et al. Disaggregated Colorectal Cancer Mortality among Asian American Subgroups between 2005 and 2020. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*. 2025 Jul 1;34(7):1134-1140.



Learn more about the
ASPIRE Cohort Study



<https://aspirecohort.ucsf.edu/>

Have any questions about the study?
Reach out!



aspirecohort@ucsf.edu



833-501-0598