ecancer

Supporting oncology professionals through education

Conference Abstract

London Global Cancer Week 2024

11 - 15 Nov 2024

Royal Society of Medicine, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Assessment of knowledge and attitudes towards cancer among ethnic Chinese immigrants – A community-based collaborative survey in Glasgow

19 Mar 2025

Abstract title:

Primary author

Lin Cheng, PhD student, School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom.

Tel: 07593817323.

Email: 2391690C@student.gla.ac.uk

Co-authors:

Deborah Cairns 1, Shun Ying Benny Cheng 2, Grigorios Kotronoulas 3

Co-author affiliations:

1 Professor, School of Health and Wellbeing, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom

2 Health Improvement Coordinator Waverley Care, Glasgow, United Kingdom.

3 Reader, School of Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Abstract:

Background: Ethnic Chinese immigrants are at risk of poorer cancer outcomes, possibly due to late presentation and diagnosis. To alleviate potential health disparities in this ethnic minority group, culture-sensitive approaches are needed to enhance their understanding of cancer and enable them to take action to prevent it or seek help when needed. We implemented community collaborative “Cancer Talks” about cancer prevention and detection in Glasgow. As part of the sessions, we explored knowledge and attitudes towards cancer among ethnic Chinese immigrant participants.

Methods: As part of a larger mixed-methods PhD project, we developed and piloted a bespoke, literature-informed survey questionnaire in Chinese. The community coordinator helped liaise with the leaders of four communities to organise the ‘Cancer Talks’. Considering the diversity of Chinese dialects, the sessions were offered in both Mandarin and Cantonese to increase inclusivity. We administered a paper-based survey in stages before formal ‘Cancer Talk’ sessions to prevent bias in responses. Survey data were analysed via descriptive statistics.

Results: We conducted all sessions in four Chinese communities between June and July 2024 and received 121 valid responses. Typically, participants were female (85%), lived in Glasgow for >20 years (74%), and had education below a bachelor’s degree (85%). From the data analysis, 32% of participants reported they knew nothing about cancer; 56% held fatalistic beliefs about cancer, considering it as a ‘death sentence’; 26% held negative attitudes toward cancer screening; 24% had never attended any cancer screening programme; 60% felt language is the biggest restriction to engage in screening or reporting of early signs and symptoms of cancer; and 74% had never heard of cancer support programmes in Glasgow.

Conclusions: Our sample held widely dysfunctional beliefs and lacked basic knowledge about cancer. Education, language and culture are key determinants of action in this patient group, thus effective cancer screening/prevention initiatives should adapt to their needs. This research provides an essential first step to tackle persistent cancer disparities among ethnic Chinese immigrants in the UK. Further work is needed to build ongoing partnership between ethnic minority communities and health researchers to raise awareness, educate people, and empower them to take action as needed to reduce the burden of cancer.