

FILIPINO AMERICANS

HISTORY

Filipinos can trace their history in the United States back to 1587, when Filipino crewmembers accompanied Spanish explorers to establish a settlement on the California coast. The first major Filipino settlement in the US was formed in the Louisiana bayous in the late 19th century by galleon trade workers who jumped ship. Filipinos did not immigrate in large numbers until the early 20th century, when the Philippines' status as a U.S. colony allowed thousands of men to be recruited to work in the fishing, agricultural, and service industries. Filipino immigration again swelled after 1965, with the majority of these immigrants being educated professionals.ⁱ

Filipinos were the first Asians to arrive in the United States

DEMOGRAPHICS

Filipino Americans comprise the second largest Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic group in the United States, after Chinese Americans. The 2000 Census reported 1,850,314 Filipino Americansⁱⁱ. A majority of Filipino Americans reside in either Hawaii or California, although there are also significant Filipino communities in Washington, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Virginia as well.

HEALTH STATUS

According to data collected from a community-based sample in Northern California, 18.8% of Filipinos reported their overall general health as being excellent, 70.6% as good, and 10.6% as poor.ⁱⁱⁱ However, a California-based study of insurance rates among APIs during 1996-1997 indicated that Filipinos were more likely to be uninsured (20%) than non-Latino whites (15%) because few of them had privately purchased insurance and or public coverage.^{iv}

Twenty percent of Filipino Americans lack health insurance

CANCER

Cancer is the second leading cause of death among Filipino Americans^v. The prevalence of certain types of cancer among Filipinos appears to vary according to place of birth. For example, Filipino immigrants were 2.6 times more likely than American-born white men to develop thyroid cancer; American-born Filipino men were 1.5 times more likely than American-born white men^{vi}. Ethnic and racial disparities in the prevalence of cancer have also been discovered. One study found that

Filipino women with breast cancer are more likely to die within 5 years of diagnosis than women of other ethnic groups.^{vii} Filipino American women are also less likely than women of other ethnic groups to have received early cancer screenings tests such as mammograms and Pap smears.

DIABETES

Filipino Americans are at an elevated risk for developing diabetes compared to both other API groups, and to Filipinos in the Philippines. Previous research in the Philippines places the prevalence rate of diabetes among Filipinos between 8 and 10%. Based on a study conducted in the Houston area, the overall prevalence of diabetes among Filipino Americans was estimated to be about 16.1%^{viii} Another study estimated the prevalence rate among Filipino American women to be significantly higher than that of Caucasian women, at 36.4% versus 8.7%^{ix}.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among Filipino Americans, with stroke being the third leading cause of death. Compared to Caucasians and to other ethnic groups, Filipino Americans report relatively higher rates of hypertension.^x

DEPRESSION

Studies suggest that Filipino Americans report higher levels of depression than Caucasians.^{xi} Compared to other ethnic groups, the incidence of suicide among Filipino Americans is relatively low, most likely due to the influence of Catholicism, the dominant religion of the Philippines^{xii}. Studies of the children of Filipino immigrants suggest that Filipino American youth experience a great deal of psychological turmoil, even more so than children from other immigrant groups.^{xiii} Filipino adolescent girls especially are more likely to report either considering suicide or attempt suicide than their peers from all other ethnic groups.^{xiv}

HIV

Filipinos have the highest rate of HIV among all APIs

Filipinos Americans comprise the largest number of reported HIV/AIDS cases among all Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups. In San Francisco, it was estimated in 2001 that 34% of APIs with HIV were Filipino^{xv}.

RESOURCES:

Filipino American Health Services, Inc.

- <http://www.fahsi.org>

Filipino American Service Group, Inc.

- <http://www.fasqi.org>

Filipino Task Force on AIDS

- <http://www.fil aids.org>

Kalusugan International

- <http://www.kalusugan.org>

^{xiii} Wolf, D. (1997). Family secrets: Transnational struggles among children of Filipino immigrants. *Sociological Perspectives*, 40(3), 457-482.

^{xiv} Lau, A. (1995). For Filipino girls that have considered suicide. *Filipinas*, 4, 38-40.

^{xv} San Francisco Department of Public Health (2005). *Quarterly AIDS Surveillance Report AIDS Cases Reported through March 2005*. San Francisco, CA: Author.

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ⁱⁱ US Census Bureau (2001). *Census 2000 Demographic Profile*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.

ⁱⁱⁱ Berg, J. A., Rodriguez, D. M., de Guzman, C. P., Kading, V. M. (2001) Health status, health and risk behaviors of Asian Americans. *Journal of Multicultural Nursing & Health*, 7(2), 29-36.

^{iv} R. Levan, R., M. Kagawa-Singer, M., and R. Wyn, R. (1999). *Declining Medi-Cal Coverage Leads to Increasing Uninsured Rate among California's Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

^v D. L. Hoyert, D. L., H. C. Kung, H. C. (1997). *Asian or Pacific Islander Mortality, Selected States, 1992*. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 46(1). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics

^{vi} Rossing, M.A., Schwartz, S. M., & Weiss, N. S. (1996). Thyroid cancer incidence in Asian migrants to the United States and their descendants. *Cancer Causes and Control*, 6(5), 439-444.

^{vii} Meng, L., Maskarinec, G., & Wilkens, L. (1997). Ethnic difference and factors related to breast cancer survival in Hawaii. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 26(6), 1151-1158.

^{viii} Cuasay, L.C., Lee, E. S., Orlander, P.P., Steffen-Batey, L., & Hanis, C. L. (2001). Prevalence and determinants of Type 2 diabetes among Filipino-Americans in the Houston, Texas metropolitan statistical area. *Diabetes Care*, 24(12), 2054-2058.

^{ix} Rosario, M., Wingard, D., & Barrett-Connor, E. (2002). Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome in Filipina--American Women. *Diabetes Care*; 25, 494-499).

^x Ryan, C., Shaw, R., Pliam, M., Zapolanski A.J., Murphy M., Valle H.V., & Myler R. (2000). Coronary heart disease in Filipino and Filipino-American patients: prevalence of risk factors and outcomes of treatment. *Journal of Invasive Cardiology*, 12(3), 134-139.

^{xi} Tompar-Tiu, A., & Sustento-Senriches, J. (1995). *Depression and other mental health issues: the Filipino American experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

^{xii} Ibid.