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INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG ASIAN CALIFORNIANS: FINDINGS FROM CALVEX 2023 SURVEY

SUMMARY

Asians are 16% of the population of California [>6.3 million Californians]. In 2023, we conducted a statewide survey on violence and discrimination with Asian Californian adults and found a notable prevalence of intimate partner violence [IPV; i.e., physical, sexual, or emotional violence from a current or former romantic or sexual partner]. One in three (37%) Asian Californians has experienced IPV in their lifetime, 40% of women and 33% of men. More than 1 in 12 Asian Californians ($>500,000$ people) experienced IPV in the past year, with ethnic variation. For example, 1 in 20 Chinese Californians report past year IPV compared with 1 in 7 Asian Indian Californians. Financial stressors, social vulnerabilities, and exposure to violence in childhood exacerbate risk for IPV, and IPV is associated with higher prevalence of mental health concerns. Findings highlight the need for IPV prevention including economic support programs tailored to Asian communities and IPV assessments in mental health programs focused on Asian communities.

Key takeaways:

- 1 in 3 Asian Californians has experienced intimate partner violence (IPV)
- $>500,000$ Asian Californians experienced IPV in the past year
- Experiences of IPV in the past year double risk for depression/anxiety and suicidality.

METHODS

We partnered with the survey research firm NORC at the University of Chicago to implement a 15-minute online survey on violence and discrimination from March to May 2023. This study, conducted with a statewide sample of California adults, included an oversample of 711 Asian Californians for the current analyses. The survey was offered in English and Spanish, but no Asian languages. We present IPV prevalence rates for Asian Californians as well as Asian Californian subpopulations and assess associations between IPV and demographic vulnerabilities as well as health concerns.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were aged 18 to 87 years old, with a median age of 41 years. The largest ethnic groups were: Chinese (29%), Filipino (18%), Indian (10%), and Japanese (10%) (see Fig 1.). One-third (35%) of our participants were born outside the US. Participants were 42% women, 54% men, and 3% non-binary or other self-described gender identity. We cannot report on rates for the non-binary or other self-described category due to small absolute number of respondents ($n=10$).

One in seven (14%) did not complete high school; 28% had a high school diploma or GED; 29% had a 4-year college degree, and 30% held a graduate degree. Half (53%) had an annual household income of \$100,000+ and 15% had a household income $< \$30,000$. Most participants (87%) identified as heterosexual, 13% as lesbian/gay/bisexual, or other (LGB+). One in four (23%) reported having a disability.

Some demographic differences existed across groups. Japanese respondents were the oldest (mean age 48 years), and Indian respondents were the youngest (mean age 37 years); these groups were also the most and least likely to be US born (58% and 11%, respectively). Chinese, other East Asian, and Indian respondents were most likely to hold a graduate degree (42%, 45%, and 38%, respectively); Filipino and multiple Asian heritages respondents were most likely to lack a high school education (24% and 24%, respectively). Respondents with multiple Asian heritages, Indian, and Filipino respondents were more likely to be low-income ($<30k/year$) (30%, 24%, and 23%, respectively). Individuals with multiple Asian heritages and Filipino respondents were most likely to identify as LGB+ (35% and 20%, respectively). Those with multiple Asian heritages and Filipino respondents were most likely to report a disability (36% for both).

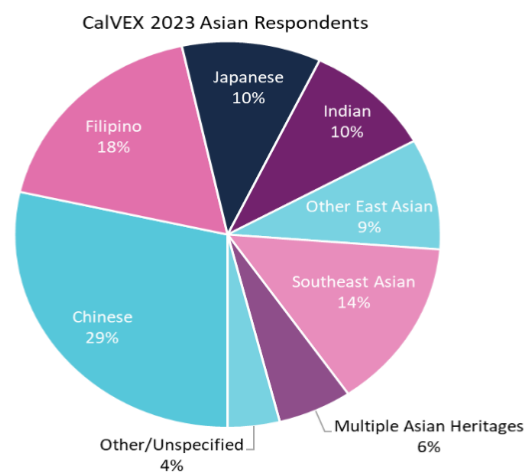


Figure 1. Participants by Asian ethnicity

FINDINGS

Prevalence of IPV.

IPV Ever. More than one in three Asian Californians (37%) report a history of IPV, 40% of women and 33% of men (see Fig. 2). While the prevalence of IPV among Asian Californians is lower than that seen for non-Asian Californians, this is not true for all Asian subpopulations. Filipinos in particular show higher prevalence of ever having experienced IPV (55%).

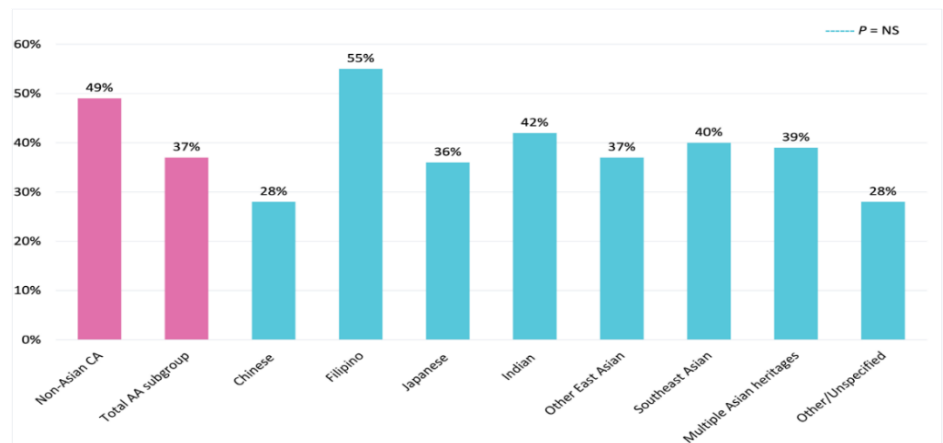


Figure 2. Prevalence of IPV Ever

Past Year IPV. Prevalence of IPV in the past year was 8% (4% of women and 9% of men), slightly but not significantly higher than that seen for non-Asian Californians. We again find variation in rates of past year IPV by ethnicity, from 0% and 5% for other Asian and Chinese subgroups, respectively, to 14-15% for the Southeast Asian and Indian subgroups (see Fig. 3).

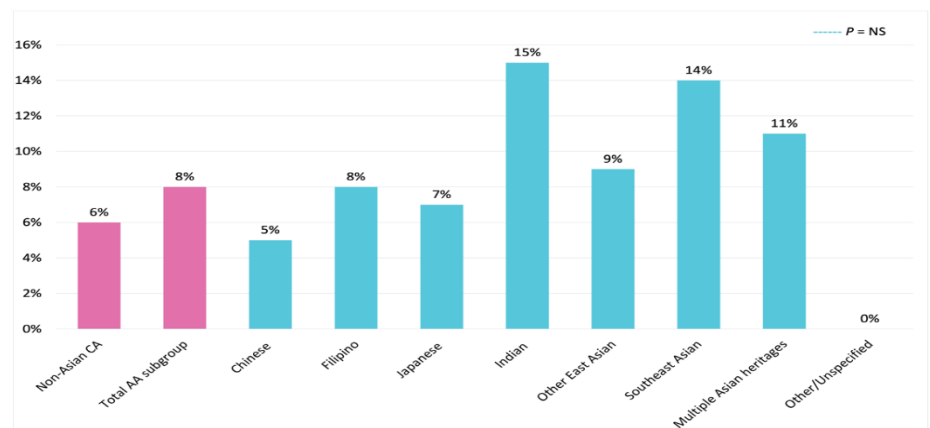


Figure 3. Prevalence of IPV in the Past Year

Risk Factors for Past Year IPV

Financial and social stressors were significantly associated with past year IPV:

- **Recent Eviction or Current Financial Distress:** Those evicted in the past year were 7x more likely than those not evicted to report past year IPV (53% vs 7%). Those who lacked money for basic needs were 4x more likely than those who did not report deprivation to report past year IPV (23% vs 5%).
- **History of Homelessness or Incarceration:** Asian Californians with a history of homelessness were 10x more likely as those without this history to report past year IPV (40% vs 4%). Those with a history of incarceration were more than 10x as likely as those without this history to report past year IPV (52% vs 5%).
- **History of Witnessing IPV as a Child:** Almost one in five Asian Californians (18%) saw or heard their mother or caregiver experience violence at the hands of a partner when they were a child under age 18, and those who witnessed IPV against their mother/caregiver were 5x more likely to report past year IPV (24% vs 5%).

Demographic vulnerabilities associated with past year IPV:

- **Younger Age:** Young adult Asian Californians (aged 18-24 years) were most likely to report past year IPV (21%); rates declined with age, with 0% of those 65 years and older reporting IPV.
- **LGB+:** 13% of Asian Californians identify as LGB+; they are more than 3x as likely as heterosexual respondents to report past year IPV (20% vs 6%).
- **Disability:** 23% of Asian Californians have a disability, and they were 5x as likely as those without a disability to report past year IPV (22% vs 4%).
- **Lacking a High School Degree:** 14% of Asian Californians in our sample have less than a high school education; this group was 5x as likely to report IPV compared to those with a high school or higher education (26% vs 5%).
- **US-born:** Most Asian Californian participants (65%) were born in the US. US-born Asians were more likely than foreign-born Asians to report past year IPV (11% vs 4%).

Past Year IPV Significantly Increases Risk for Poor Mental Health Outcomes and Substance Use

- Almost one in 5 Asian Californians (19%) report moderate to severe depression and anxiety symptoms within the past 2 weeks. Those reporting past year IPV are 2x as likely to report these symptoms compared to those not reporting past year IPV (34% vs 17%).
- One in 16 Asian Californians (7%) report past year suicidality. Those reporting past year IPV are more than 2x as likely to report past year suicidality compared with those not reporting past year IPV (18% vs 7%).
- More than 1 in 4 Asian Californians (28%) report past 30-day substance misuse/abuse behaviors (binge drinking or illicit drug use). Those reporting past year IPV are almost 4x more likely to report substance misuse/abuse compared with those not reporting past year IPV (82% vs 23%).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- IPV is a concern for Asian communities broadly, with some of the highest rates of exposure seen in Indian, Filipino, and Southeast Asian communities. Community-specific IPV support programs and prevention interventions are needed, including culturally tailored, trauma-informed mental health services.
- Given that childhood exposures to violence are associated with IPV in adulthood, family interventions and supports will likely hold value for Asian communities, to help stop the cycle of family violence.
- Risk for IPV appears to be exacerbated for more socially vulnerable individuals (e.g., disabled people, LGBTQ+ people) and those contending with financial distress; structural interventions and social protections are needed.

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