

# **Breast Cancer Risks in California Nail Salon Workers: A Community-Research Collaboration**



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**AAPCHO Conference  
Washington, DC  
March 11, 2008**

# Presentation Outline

- Background on each organization
- Past experience with research involvement?
- Why the interest in this workforce?
- Impetus for Research Idea
- Entering into the Partnership
- Grant-writing: Things to Keep in Mind
- Lessons Learned





# Asian Health Services (AHS)



To serve and advocate for the Asian community regarding its health rights, and to assure access to health care services regardless of income, insurance status, language, or culture.



# Past Experience With Research

## Asian Health Services

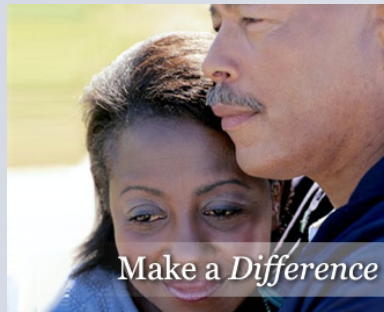
- Limited but varied organizational experience as a researcher
- Organizational support and staff interest
- AHS Research Committee
  - Created Collaboration/Assistance Request Form
  - Reviews requests





# Northern California Cancer Center (NCCC)

Dedicated to preventing cancer through  
population-based research and  
community education





# Past Experience With Research

## Peggy Reynolds, PhD and Thu Quach, PhD candidate

- Focus on environmental and occupational links to cancer
  - Epidemiologists—environment & cancer
  - Environmental health scientists
  - Geographical Information System (GIS) experts
  
- Breast cancer and childhood cancer
  - Dr. Reynolds—co-investigator for the California Teachers Cohort Study and Northern California Childhood Leukemia Study
  - Formerly at the California Department of Health Service, Environmental Health Investigations Branch





# Why the Interest?

- ▣ Rapid growth due to tripling of nail salons
- ▣ California—largest number of establishments (N=35,000) and licensees (N>400,000) in the U.S.
- ▣ Immigrant groups: Vietnamese workers comprise 60-80% of nail salon workforce in California
- ▣ 95% female workers
- ▣ Workers experience acute health symptoms (e.g., headaches, breathing problems, skin irritations)
  - Symptoms disappear when workers are away from work for a few days
  - Many nail salon shops have poor ventilation, where volatile solvents are trapped within
  - Workers also eat their meals within the nail salon shops



# Selected Compounds in Nail Products

Compounds	Nail care use <sup>1</sup>	Cancer Classification	Route(s) of Exposure <sup>3</sup>
<b>Benzene</b>	Contaminant in toluene	Known carcinogen	Inhalation, dermal
<b>Formaldehyde</b>	Nail hardener, tool disinfectant <sup>1</sup>	Known carcinogen	Inhalation, dermal
<b>Silica (quartz or cristobalite)</b>	Acrylic nail powder	Known carcinogen	Inhalation
<b>Methylene Chloride</b>	Artificial nail solvent	Possible carcinogen	Inhalation, dermal
<b>Titanium Dioxide</b>	Acrylic nail powder <sup>1</sup>	Possible carcinogen	Inhalation
<b>Acetone</b>	Nail polish remover <sup>1</sup>		Inhalation, dermal
<b>Benzoyl Peroxide</b>	Acrylic nail powder	Tumor Promoter	Inhalation, dermal
<b>Toluene</b>	Nail polish, nail adhesives <sup>1</sup>		Inhalation, dermal

<sup>1</sup>US EPA Pollution Prevention Practices for Nail Salons: A Guide to Protect the Health of Nail Salon Workers and their Work Environment, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>IARC. Agents Reviewed by the IARC Monographs. Volume 1-98. Jan 2006.

<sup>3</sup>Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR). Toxicological Profile Information Sheet [web page] 2006.



# Impetus for Research Idea

- AHS has over 15 years of outreach and education to nail salon workers
  - Health outreach staff have long recognized the acute health symptoms of nail salon workers
  - AHS wanted a way of documenting the stories
- NCCC staff had concerns about chronic exposures to occupational compounds for nail salon workers
  - Carcinogens in nail products
  - Poorly ventilated shops
  - Chronic exposures with multiple routes
  - Large vulnerable population
- Common interest in understanding workforce members
  - Former AHS staff (from NCCC) and AHS current staff—although minor, pre-existing level of trust



# Funding Opportunity for Community-Research Collaboration

- California Breast Cancer Research Program funding for pilot study
  - Partnership between research and community organizations
  - Encourages new partners to work together in pilot study and then expand to larger research study
- AHS and NCCC realized importance of systematically documenting worker experience
  - Informing ongoing policy debates regarding potentially hazardous compounds in cosmetics
  - Drawing attention to workers' health problems rather than penalizing their work conduct

# Entering into the Partnership

- Meeting multiple times to discuss common interest
- Emphasizing mutual respect
  - Both organizations will contribute equally to the research project
  - Equal resources for work
  - Balanced decision-making
  - Flexibility, open-mindedness and willingness to compromise
- Pilot study
  - Emphasizing establishing partnership and process-driven approach as central
  - Start small: descriptive study to understand workforce
  - Data collected as valuable as the partners made it
- Meaningful community participation?
  - Community Advisory Committee: Vietnamese community members and workers
  - Surveys conducted by nail salon workers: engaging community member and effective for participation rate



# Pilot Study—Groundwork

- Trust built between partners in Pilot Study
  - Flexibility on timeline
  - Mutual respect for differing expertise
  - Recognition and respect for social-cultural-economic enabling factors and barriers for community participation
  
- Interest in continuing balanced partnership
  - Expand the research project to examine relationship between occupational exposures and breast cancer risks (Apply for Full Award)
  - Main focus on workforce members and their health



# Grant-writing: Things to Keep in Mind

- How to formulate research questions and specific aims?
  - What is the overarching research question versus what is the project's research question
  - Do not think of project as the end-all project
  - Write as if the reader is both a scientist and a community advocate (don't overdo the research jargon)
  
- Creating a feasible timeline
  - Find out what data already exists and can easily be analyzed as part of the specific aims and what data needs to be collected
  - Do not overpromise (feasibility)—leave some flexibility for building the relationship





# Grant-writing: Things to Keep in Mind

- Meaningful community participation
  - Hiring of nail salon worker: effective recruitment and organizing
  - Community Advisory Committee
  - Staff participation in collaborative work (CA Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative)
  - Results Communication: how to report findings to participant
- Budgeting
  - Financial recognition of community contribution of time and expertise
  - CBO staff time
  - Travel and lodging cost for joint participation in conferences and meetings



# Grant-writing: Our Approach

- Who does what?
  - The Lead: One person to communicate, gather ideas and assemble the grant
  - Easier to have others respond to written drafts
  - Sufficient time to write and have others review (START EARLY!)
- Appropriate recognition of past research experience
  - Highlight past research experience of both partners (e.g., biosketch contains peer-reviewed articles and health education/ translation materials)
  - Preliminary studies: Credit community partner with research experience in data collection (e.g., focus groups, surveys, key informant interviews, expert panels)



# Grant-writing: Our Approach

## ■ Spin

- Work research gaps to your advantage: the ongoing need for disaggregated data on API
- Relate small population results to broader population—connect the dots for funders

## ■ Thinking ahead

- Conflict resolution: Identify a trusted CBPR researcher as mediator
- Need to publish first may present problems: How to handle?



# Lessons Learned

- Conflict should be viewed as learning opportunities
- Each partner has different priorities that need to be factored into the timeline
- Media talking points and making sure partners on the same page
- Publication rules and potential barrier in releasing information to community



# Lessons Learned

- Trust is bedrock for partnership:
  - Transparency
  - Communication
  - Flexibility
  - Community-driven
  - Resource and data sharing
  - Mutual respect for differing expertise





# Cám ơn!

