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Health literacy and health behaviors among Southeast Asian immigrant women in Taiwan

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The purposes of this study were to investigate the association between health literacy and health behaviors among Southeast Asian immigrant women, and analyze the effects of sociodemographic characteristics and health literacy on health behaviors. This study since March 2013 to April 2014, it was a cross-sectional research design. We used purposive and snowball sampling methods to recruit 223 Southeast Asian immigrant women living in Northern Taiwan. The survey included the measurements of functional, interactive, and critical health literacy, health promotion behaviors (exercise, eating, Pap smear), and sociodemographic characteristics. Among 223 Southeast Asian immigrant women, 182 were Vietnamese and 42 were Indonesian. 19.3% reported engaging regular exercise, and 64.6% undergoing a Pap smear within the past 2 years. The findings show that healthy eating behavior was significantly associated with interactive and critical health literacy ($p=0.010$, $p<0.001$ respectively). No significant association was found between health literacy and regular exercise and Pap smear. Residential location, age, and years of residence were significant predictors of regular exercise. Critical health literacy, age, and employment were significant predictors of healthy eating behavior. Ethnicity, age, and years of residence were significant predictors of Pap smear screening. Health literacy was an important factor influencing Southeast Asian immigrant women's healthy eating behavior. Developing health literacy interventions are recommended to promote their healthy eating behaviors. More studies should be conducted to understand factors that influence Southeast Asian immigrant women's exercise and Pap smear screening behaviors in addition to health literacy.

Biography

Chin-chi Tsai has completed her Master's degree at National Yang-Ming University in Taiwan. She is majoring in Women health

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