

South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI)
Department of Pediatrics
UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF SATHI

Community Education and Media Outreach

- 1) **South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI) website:** Development of a website with the latest and most relevant literature on health topics as they relate to the South Asian population. In addition, the website will attempt to consolidate and develop a database of health educational materials in different South Asian languages (ongoing).
- 2) **South Asian Disabilities Resource Center:** Development of a centralized resource center for South Asian parents dealing with autistic children. This program is being developed in collaboration with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and several prominent neurodevelopmental pediatricians: Dr. Vidya Bhushan Gupta, Dr. Uday Mehta, and Dr. Kapila Seshadri (ongoing).
- 3) **Cancer education program:** An educational research oriented outreach program developed in collaboration with Middlesex County Health Department (MCHD) and Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS Swaminarayan Temple) to raise cancer awareness on various types of cancers (breast, cervical, colorectal, skin, prostate, and oral). The first event on prostate cancer (June, 2009) successfully screened about 75 men with Digital Rectal Exams and blood Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test with the help of UMDNJ-Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) physicians. This program is currently being developed further with CINJ office of community outreach, MCHD, and the Indian Health Camp of New Jersey (ongoing).
- 4) **Disabilities in the South Asian population:** An educational media outreach to the South Asian community on disability related topics. Supported by "A Quality of Life Grant" received from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. The project is a radio campaign focused on raising awareness around disabilities issues in the South Asian population. An ongoing biweekly program which was aired on EBC 1170 AM radio, a local South Asian radio station completed in June, 2009.
- 5) **Ongoing attendance and organization of various health fairs in New Jersey:** SATHI has been attending various health fairs throughout New Jersey in collaboration with Edison Township Municipal Alliance, the Indian Health Camp of New Jersey, The Indian Nurses Association, BAPS, and others to provide community education on cardiovascular problems, diabetes, childhood disorders, asthma, mental illness, cancer, and other illnesses.
- 6) **Cancer awareness day** held on September 13, 2008 in collaboration with the Middlesex County Health Department (MCHD): a one day conference symposium held to raise health and cancer awareness in the local community. Guest speakers Jigna Rao and Dr. Sunanda Gaur provided a panel discussion on Tuberculosis.
- 7) **Childhood obesity in the South Asian community:** A media outreach program aired on November 29, 2007 on EBC 1170 AM Radio. Discussion focused on the nutritional aspects and prevention of obesity.
- 8) **Childhood obesity:** A community outreach program organized on Thursday, November 29, 2007 in collaboration with Edison Township at the Edison Council Chambers, Edison, NJ. The featured guest speaker was Fred M. Jacobs, MD, JD, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, in addition to several other nutrition and obesity experts.
- 9) Participant in the **South Asian Community and Disabilities Conference: Raising Awareness, Facing Challenges, Accessing Resources** on June 15, 2007 at the Hyatt, New Brunswick. The conference was organized by the UMDNJ-Elizabeth M. Boggs Center, to help organizations and agencies that provide services and support to people with

disabilities and their families to develop a deeper and better understanding of South Asian cultural considerations and to inform members of South Asian disability communities in NJ about the resources available to them.

- 10) **A Celebration of Abilities:** A Pre-Conference Reception and Celebration at The Zimmerli Art Gallery, Rutgers University held on June 14, 2007 featuring Natvar Bhavsar, South Asian artist, Sujeet Desai, a musician with Downs syndrome, and Pramila Balasundaram, founder of SAMHADHAN, speaking on the artistic creativity and empowerment activities of her organization, based in New Delhi, India.
- 11) Domestic Violence in the South Asian Population: A **radio outreach program** which featured discussions with SAKHI, a South Asian organization that addresses issues of domestic violence (2009).
- 12) **Prenatal Care and Healthy Pregnancy:** A radio outreach program featuring Health Commissioner Heather Howard on issues surrounding pregnancy and prenatal care. The importance of proper prenatal care to ensure healthy pregnancy outcomes was discussed (2009).
- 13) In collaboration with NYMAC (New York Mid-Atlantic Consortium for genetic and newborn screening) **developed a Thalassemia outreach and education project** for South Asians (2010-2011).
- 14) In collaboration with the Elizabeth M. Bogg's Center provided technical assistance in development and administration of the **Traumatic Brain Injury Needs and Resources Assessment Survey** for South Asians (2010-2011).
- 15) SATHI members, Naveen Mehrotra and Jigna Rao invited by **New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services** to roundtable discussion of report release entitled "The Health of the Newest New Jerseyans: A Resource Guide" (March 1, 2011).
- 16) SATHI member, Jigna Rao, invited by Results, a non-profit organization, to present at **World TB Day Advocacy Tour**. This Tour was funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (March 23-24, 2011).
- 17) SATHI member, Jigna Rao participated in the **TB Intensive Workshop** at The Global TB Institute of New Jersey (April 14, 2011).

Research Projects

- 1) **General health assessment survey of South Asians:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra, co-director, SATHI. This survey is currently being implemented in the community to assess the general health practices of the South Asian community and their access to care. The survey is approved through the Institutional Review Board (IRB), UMDNJ. Data collection is completed and data analysis is in progress.
- 2) **Perception of mental illness research study:** lead investigator, Dr. Aparna Kalbag, post-doctoral fellow in the Office of Global Health, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, in collaboration with Dr. Sunanda Gaur, co-director of SATHI & Aruna Rao, Associate Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, New Jersey chapter and founder of the South Asian Mental Health Awareness in Jersey (SAMHAJ) program are conducting an ongoing, IRB-approved study of cultural differences in attitude towards and understanding of mental illness symptoms in South Asians.
- 3) **Breast cancer awareness and practices survey module:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra in collaboration with Dr. Sharad Goyal, radiation oncologist, CINJ.
- 4) **Oral Cancer and oral health practices survey module:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra in collaboration with Dr. Satish Mullick, Department of Dentistry, UMDNJ- Dental School, Newark.
- 5) **Prostate cancer perception and practices survey module:** lead investigator, Dr. Naveen Mehrotra in collaboration with Dr. Biren Saraiya, Oncologist, CINJ. This survey currently being developed with the help of UMDNJ- Internal medicine residents will assess the understanding of prostate cancer and screening practices in the South Asian men.

Medical Education Training

- 1) **SAMADHAN exchange program:** Developed a UMDNJ-RWJMS medical student elective program rotation at SAMADHAN (a Non-Government Organization in New Delhi, India which provides early intervention services to disabled children). Two students have participated in this elective. An NYU student went to SAMADHAN in July, 2009 and implemented a Parenting Stress Index questionnaire- a survey tool to assess the parental stress level due to a disabled child in the family. The data for this survey is currently being analyzed. A second student went to SAMADHAN in 2011 and conducted a survey of physicians' attitudes toward patients with disabilities.
- 2) **Provider Training on South Asian Health:** Training of health care providers to educate them to be able to better deal with health problems in South Asians. Training sessions led by Dr. Naveen Mehrotra, were conducted for the NJ Public Health Association (December, 2009), Statewide Consortium of Cultural Competence (February, 2010), Central NJ Maternal and Child Health Consortium (March, 2010), Amerigroup Community Care (May, 2010), and Monmouth County Cancer Coalition (June, 2010).
- 3) **Elective Rotations arranged at Sitapur Eye Hospital (Uttar Pradesh, India), SN Medical College (Jodhpur, Rajasthan); King George Medical College (Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India):** Students at UMDNJ-RWJMS and other universities are eligible to take a two-to-four week rotation to get an exposure of the practice of medicine in the South Asian countries. One student took this elective in spring, 2011 and another student will be going to Jodhpur in the fall, 2011.
- 4) **Addressing Health Disparities and Health Literacy in the South Asian Community-** a one-day conference that took place at the **New Jersey Hospital Association** on October 9, 2010 (in collaboration with the RWJMS Center for Healthy Families and Cultural Diversity) to share information and address health disparities and health literacy challenges in the South Asian community.

Awards/Recognition

- 1) **NJ BIZ Health Care Heroes Finalist, 2009.**
- 2) Received proclamation from **NJ State Assembly** for conducting the "Addressing Health Disparities and Health Literacy in the South Asian Community" Conference in October, 2010.
- 3) **2010 Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Health Council award** recipient for making a difference in the South Asian community through charity care/social service.