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## **BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSES DIFFERS AMONG ASIAN GROUPS, DEMONSTRATES NEED FOR SPECIFIC DESIGNATION**

### **Study shows breast cancer rates decreasing among established groups**

**FREMONT, CA** – *February 26, 2007* – The rates of breast cancer are increasing in more recently immigrated Asian groups, such as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and South Asian, but are decreasing in more established groups, such as Japanese and Filipino. These findings demonstrate the need for more specific designation of Asian or Pacific Islander groups in U.S. health statistics to determine the causes of the disproportionate rates.

A study by researchers at the Northern California Cancer Center looked at recent trends in breast cancer incidence among six Asian groups (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, South Asian and Vietnamese) in the Greater Bay Area of California. Their study revealed that combining statistics for Asian groups into one category results in misleading geographical comparisons and comparisons made over time, and the practice masks discrepancies in disease occurrence in Asian groups.

“Very few government agencies produce population estimates that are broken down by specific Asian groups, especially in years without a census. This leads to a lack of knowledge about health and disease patterns in these populations,” notes NCCC scientist Dr. Theresa Keegan, the lead author of the study.

In tracking cancer, the ability to look at trends in diagnoses among specific groups can provide clues to environmental or biological influences on the causes of the disease, estimate

changes in risk factors over time, assess how different communities respond to cancer screening, and help inform the planning of future interventions for cancer prevention and education.

“The ability to look at specific Asian groups can also help us pursue other avenues of research, such as genetic differences, that can help explain the differences in the rates of breast cancer diagnosis,” adds Keegan.

The Greater Bay Area has one of the largest populations of Asians outside of Asia. The unique immigration history of each Asian group to this region has led to vastly different lifestyles and levels of acculturation across the groups and consequently, variations in risk factors for cancer. Studying cancer in U.S. Asians has led to many discoveries in the understanding of causes of the disease.

Results from the study show a decrease in breast cancer diagnoses for Filipino and Japanese women over the years 1990-2000, with a decrease in Japanese occurring after 2000. During this same time period, rates increased for Chinese, South Asian, Vietnamese and Korean women. Across the six Asian groups studied, researchers found more than a two-fold difference in the rate of breast cancer diagnoses.

The study will be published in the March 15, 2007 issue of the *International Journal of Cancer*. The abstract of this study is available online at:

<https://secure.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/abstract/113511977/ABSTRACT>

#### About Northern California Cancer Center

The Northern California Cancer Center ([www.nccc.org](http://www.nccc.org)) is an established, nationally recognized leader dedicated to understanding the causes and prevention of cancer and to improve the quality of life for individuals living with cancer. NCCC has been working with scientists, educators, patients, clinicians, and community leaders successfully since 1974, and is an active partner with Stanford University's Comprehensive Cancer Center. NCCC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit with over 170 employees and a \$15 million operating budget.