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Title:

Does Where You Live and Move Matter? Ethnic Enclaves and Gestational Diabetes Risk in Asian American Subgroups

Abstract:

Asian American populations experience the highest rates of gestational diabetes (GDM) in the U.S., and rates vary widely across subgroups. While ethnic enclaves, neighborhoods predominantly populated by individuals of the same ethnic group, are often thought to provide social and cultural support, their role in shaping GDM remains unclear.

We examined how dynamic pre-pregnancy residence in ethnic enclaves and enclave mobility are associated with GDM risk among over 80,000 Asian American individuals in Northern California and the Central Valley. We also assessed differences between Asian American subgroups (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese), which are often studied as a homogeneous group.

We found that living in the most ethnically distinct enclaves, compared to the least, was associated with higher GDM risk. Individuals who consistently lived in enclaves throughout pregnancy had higher GDM risk than those who consistently lived in non-enclaves, while moving into or out of enclaves was not associated with GDM risk. Associations varied by subgroup; Filipino residents of highly distinct enclaves experienced higher GDM risk, whereas no associations were observed in other subgroups.

Findings suggest that the relationship between ethnic enclaves and GDM varies by context and subgroup. This work moves beyond individual-level risk factors to assess how place may contribute to inequities in maternal health, informing how we conceptualize ethnic enclaves in research, target scarce resources, and design tailored interventions.