



# Asian American Research Center on Health

## Abstract

**Title:** [Combating Health Disparities in Cambodian American Communities: A CBPR Approach to Building Community Capacity.](#)

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### Abstract:

#### BACKGROUND:

Cambodian Americans have higher rates of health problems compared with the general U.S.

#### POPULATION:

A relatively modest community capacity for collecting data contributes to these disparities.

#### OBJECTIVES:

To (1) further develop the Cambodian American community's capacity to design and conduct health research meaningful to their community via a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach, (2) train and deploy bilingual community health workers (CHWs) to gather health-related data from their communities using mobile technology, and (3) measure the feasibility and effectiveness of our efforts.

#### METHODS:

A CBPR approach was used to engage leaders of Cambodian American communities in six states to identify their research needs, develop a short community health survey administered by CHWs, and conduct the survey using iPads programmed in Khmer spoken-language format. Administrative logs and surveys of CHWs and leaders measured feasibility and effectiveness of the project.

#### RESULTS:

CHWs, leaders, and community members reported largely positive experiences with the community health survey, despite poor/inconsistent Internet connectivity. The institutional capacity of Cambodian American community-based organizations to collect health-related data in their own communities was strengthened. Our efforts proved to be both feasible and effective.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

The use of mobile technology with spoken format can be a valuable tool in accessing input from vulnerable community members, including persons who may not be literate in any language. Trained CHWs, backed by dedicated and experienced community leaders, are an asset to their communities. Together, they are uniquely placed to make important contributions to the well-being of their community.