

Final report
Project #24 - Australian Vietnamese Women's Generations Study

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Australia has a growing population of women and families of Vietnamese descent and, given global trends, their incidence of breast cancer is likely to increase rapidly in the next few generations.

Our Objective is to establish a cohort study of women and families of Vietnamese descent who have been living in Australia for different amounts of time. Our goal is to study the impact of migration and acculturation on risk of developing breast cancer.

Study aims:

The Specific Aim of this pilot study is to determine the recruitment and other strategies necessary to conduct this study.

1. Conduct workshops: We engaged with stakeholders, in particular, the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA), to explore approaches to recruitment within the Vietnamese community. A number of novel approaches were identified.
2. Trial different strategies for recruitment: We recruited Vietnamese women by a mailed approach through BreastScreen Victoria and by using the Lifepool study.
3. Develop questionnaires and translated into Vietnamese: A dual language questionnaire was developed and approved by the Melbourne University HREC.
4. Recruit study members: We recruited 143 Vietnamese women through BreastScreen Victoria and lifepool. Both groups were mailed an invitation to participate, a consent form and plain language statement and a questionnaire translated into both English and Vietnamese. BreastScreen approached 1100 women through BreastScreen and we recruited 108 (10%). For lifepool, 101 identified Vietnamese women were approached and of these 35 were recruited (35%) using one reminder letter.
5. Obtain Mammographic images - we have approved access to all mammographic images.
6. Mammographic density measurements are being carried out on these images.

Outcomes and future research plans:

We had originally aimed to recruit 200 women for this pilot study, but the number collected is enough for us to assess the likely success of these two modes of recruitment.

Our future plans are to use this information to pursue developing a national cohort study of Vietnamese women.

For example, there are another 7,000 Vietnamese women who have been through BreastScreen Victoria so there is the potential to collect a further 700 in Victoria for the main study. Similar recruitment is likely from the other states, especially New South Wales. We have already had discussions with Prof Sally Redman of the Sax Institute in Sydney about this idea.

The recruitment we have achieved is comparable to, but perhaps slightly less than, what would be expected for approaches to Australian born women based on recent experiences. The higher participation for Vietnamese women already in a study suggests that it might be a worthwhile strategy to recruit for the main study using other large-scale Australian population-based samples of women.

There have been no publications resulting from this work to date.

We are utilizing our experiences in a new application to the NIH (USA) to expand the Breast Cancer Family Registry to include more younger women with a particular emphasis on ethnic diversity.