Asian Smoker Study

The Helpline's NCI-funded study of telephone counseling for speakers of Asian languages is well underway. We hope to increase the numbers of Vietnamese and Chinese participants. If you work with these populations and would like to help us enroll smokers from your community, contact Kirsten Hansen, Outreach Coordinator, at (858) 300-1012 or k3hansen@ucsd.edu . We are excited about this ground-breaking study. Thank you for your assistance!

Don't Miss the Next Edition

Send Us Your Email Address

In an effort to save trees and money, the Helpline Wire is transitioning to an electronic version. To continue or start receiving the Helpline Wire, simply send your email address to **cshoutreach@ucsd.edu.**
THANK YOU!

Helpline Wire
The Newsletter of the California Smokers' Helpline
Spring 2006

Helpline Wire is published by:
The California Smokers' Helpline
University of California, San Diego
UCSD Cancer Center
9500 Gilman Drive, #0905
La Jolla, CA 92093-0905
www.nobutts.org

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Continued from After-Hours on page 1

the most popular of the six subject areas, with 36% of callers choosing to hear more specific information on the planning process, strategies for quitting, and setting a quit date. The runner-up is *The Benefits of Quitting*, selected by 24% of callers. In 2005, more than 3,600 people accessed the line and listened to one or more messages.

Although the main purpose of the FAQs line was to provide immediate help to after-hours callers, we wanted to make sure it didn't provide callers with an "excuse" not to use other Helpline services that have greater evidence of efficacy. A 2-month study conducted early last year confirmed not only that after-hours callers were using the FAQs line, but that it significantly reduced the number of hang-ups. Moreover, callers continue to leave messages and enroll in Helpline services at the same rate as before. So we view it as a very positive addition to our line-up of services.

What's next for the FAQs line? We are weighing the feasibility of adding similar features to our other language lines—Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese. Another possibility is to offer it during business hours, as a backup when call volume is especially heavy.

We welcome you to try the FAQs line for yourself—just call any time after hours. And please leave us a message letting us know what you think!

Victoria Wightman is the Helpline's Service Delivery Manager.

Research Updates

A surprising number of nonsmokers call the Helpline each year asking how to help family or friends quit. This phenomenon may represent a promising, untapped cessation resource. In an April, 2006 article in *Tobacco Control*, Helpline researchers present information about this help-seeking behavior, examine conditions likely to foster it, and suggest implications. ("Nonsmokers Seeking Help for Smokers: A Preliminary Study." S-H. Zhu et al.)

In a randomized study of over 800 smokers, the cessation rate more than tripled when 2 months of telephone counseling were added to the standard brief, face-to-face interventions given during a year of routine medical care. Helpline P.I. Shu-Hong Zhu collaborated on a paper reporting this study: "Benefits of Telephone Care over Primary Care for Smoking Cessation." (L. An et al., *Archives of Internal Medicine*, March 13, 2006.)

An inside view of the history and future of quitlines appears in *VA in the Vanguard: Building on Success in Smoking Cessation*, ed. Stephen Isaacs. (Washington DC: Dep't of Veterans Affairs, 2005). Zhu and Anderson's chapter, "Telephone Quitlines: Where They've Been and Where They're Going," discusses current and future roles of quitlines as central components in tobacco control programs worldwide.

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Spring 2006

Helpline Wire

The Newsletter of the California Smokers' Helpline

1-800-NO-BUTTS

What's New at the Helpline

Changing of the Guard

After seven years as the Helpline's Outreach Coordinator, Judi Mills is now coordinating the development of a new tobacco cessation product for Blue Cross of California. At the Helpline, Judi dramatically expanded our outreach efforts, primarily through collaborations with other organizations throughout the state that greatly increased word-of-mouth referrals. We're very sorry to see her move on but happy that she's still working to reduce the toll of tobacco use in California's communities.

In December, Kirsten Hansen, MPP, took over as Outreach Coordinator for the Helpline. Kirsten previously served as Executive Director of the California Tobacco Control Alliance, which advocates for increased access to tobacco cessation treatments. She is working to ensure continuity in our partnership activities while planning for the years ahead. Kirsten recently relocated to San Diego from Sacramento for this position, and she and her beagle, Baxter, are enjoying walks along the soon-to-be-smoke-free Del Mar beach!

Gold Rush Partnership a Winner

In 2005, California dental hygienists used Helpline Gold Cards to give thousands of patients the gift of better health. The New California Gold Rush campaign, created through a partnership of the California Dental Hygienists' Association (CDHA), the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center and the California Smokers' Helpline, challenged every dental hygienist to **ask** patients about tobacco use, **advise** users to quit, and **refer** them to the Helpline by giving them a Gold Card. More than 24,000 tobacco users received Gold Cards from their dental hygienists in 2005. Congratulations to Annette Stelter, the Registered Dental Hygienist who handed out the most Gold Cards within a year. For her outstanding work, she received a trip to the 2006 world tobacco conference in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center. An impressive 82% of CDHA members referred patients to the Helpline, with 55% referring seven or more. This huge success has led the American Dental Hygienists' Association to implement the campaign nationwide with cards promoting 1-800-QUIT-NOW, a national portal linking callers back to their state quitline.

Central Coast Alliance for Health

The Helpline recently partnered with the Central Coast Alliance for Health (CCAH) to send order forms to nearly 1,000 physicians in central California. This was an excellent opportunity to provide CCAH physicians with Helpline promotional materials. Physicians simply filled in the quantities of materials they needed and faxed the order form back to the Helpline, which filled each order the day it was received. The order forms, mailed out to healthcare providers using a mailing list provided by CCAH, included a joint letter providing information about Helpline services.

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

After-Hours FAQs Line

By Victoria Wightman

You may already know that the California Smokers' Helpline is open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. But do you know what happens if you call 1-800-NO-BUTTS outside of those hours? With funding from First 5 California, the Helpline created a menu of recorded messages designed for callers who need a little extra support in the middle of the night or on a Sunday afternoon. In operation for nearly two years, the FAQs line allows callers to hear answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the quitting process, as well as to leave a message for Helpline staff.

The FAQs line was designed as a low cost, engaging alternative to our after-hours voice mail service. The messages were developed under the supervision of our clinical director, Gary Tedeschi, PhD, and recorded by Helpline counselors. Van Tran, our phone specialist, handled the technological aspects. The FAQs line includes over 120 one-minute messages in six general subject areas:

- *The Benefits of Quitting*
- *Health Risks of Smoking*
- *How to Quit*
- *Information on Medi-Cal and Quitting Aids*
- *Common Problems Associated With Quitting*
- *Information for Pregnant Callers and Parents/Guardians of Young Children*

Each of the six subject areas includes a number of topics through which callers can freely navigate, returning to the main menu or voice mail at any time. *How to Quit* is

Continued on page 4

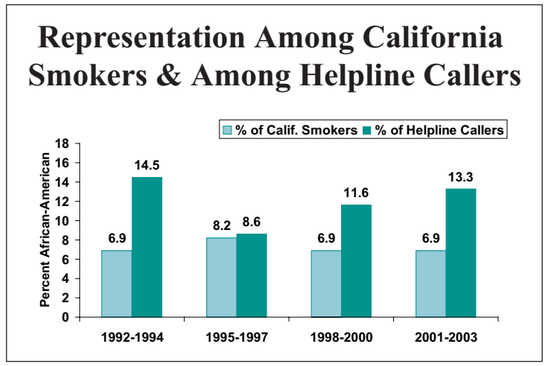
Helpline Callers

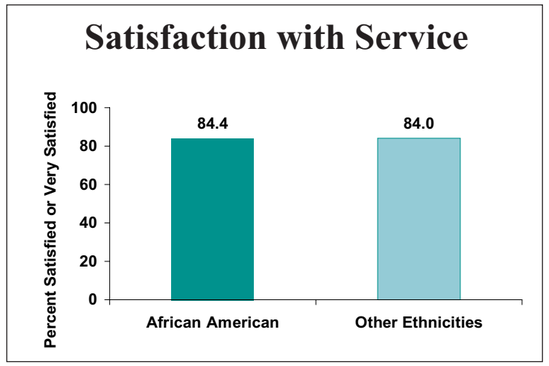
The California Smokers' Helpline has been a well-utilized resource for African Americans since its inception in 1992. The graph at upper right shows usage data. For example, between 2001 and 2003, 6.9% of smokers in California were African Americans, but calls from African Americans represented 13.3% of the Helpline's total volume. In other words, African Americans used the Helpline at rates higher than would be predicted based on their representation in the general population of smokers in the state.

All callers to the Helpline are offered free telephone counseling. Studies confirm that telephone counseling doubles a smoker's chances of quitting for good. Helpline records show that the great majority—75%—of African American callers request this counseling, a fact that testifies to their strong commitment to quitting. Randomized, controlled trials show that African Americans who receive Helpline counseling achieve success rates comparable to those of other ethnic groups. And, as shown in the lower graph, African American callers express high levels of satisfaction with Helpline counseling. Their satisfaction level (84.4%) is equal to that of members of other ethnic groups (84.0%).

These data can help to guide future program decisions impacting smoking prevalence in the African American community. For more details about these or other Helpline data, please contact Walter Silverman in Outreach, wsilverman@ucsd.edu or (858) 300-1017.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CALLERS





Curious Queries

Q. *Our group is looking for quit-smoking posters that are culturally appropriate for African Americans. Can you help?*
A. You can order the new poster shown on page 2, (11" x 17", full color) from AATEP, at (916) 448-7900, or from TECC, the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California,at (831) 438-4822, x230 or www.tecc.org/public.

Q. *I saw a ruler with pictures of lungs and the Helpline phone number on it, but I couldn't find it on your materials order form. How may I order the ruler?*
A. Many materials carry the Helpline phone number(s), but not all are distributed directly from the Helpline. For materials not on the Helpline order form, check the TECC catalog or web site, www.tecc.org/public .

Q. *Is the Gold Card available in languages other than English?*
A. A Spanish-language version, produced in collaboration with the Hispanic/Latino Tobacco Education Partnership, will be available this summer. We have also updated the English version, with help from RESPECT (California's low-SES partnership), to improve readability.

Q. *Do you have any information on the dangers of cigar smoking that I could give my husband?*
A. The Helpline has free fact sheets on cigar smoking and numerous other topics, including helping family or friends quit smoking. Many are available in Spanish, Chinese (Traditional and Simplified), Vietnamese, and Korean as well as English. You can call 1-800-NO-BUTTS to have fact sheets mailed to you, or you can visit www.nobutts.org and download English-language fact sheets. Both options are free.

African Americans and Tobacco in California

by Kimberly Bankston-Lee

AATEP, the African American Tobacco Education Partnership, is a powerful force in California's struggle against tobacco. Formerly known as the African American Tobacco Education Network, AATEP works with California's Black communities to reduce tobacco use. This dynamic project of the California Black Health Network advocates to decrease tobacco industry influence, offers technical assistance and training for tobacco control projects, and helps to develop state-sponsored educational materials and media campaigns.

The need for AATEP services is great. Smoking rates for California's African Americans are over 20.5%, compared to 18.5% for Whites, 14.8% for Latinos, and 14.1% for Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders. Only American Indians, at 31.3%, have a higher rate. For the economically challenged, smoking rates are higher still. African Americans continue to be one of the most economically challenged groups in the state, with 22.4% living at or below poverty level. These African Americans' smoking prevalence rate is an alarming 25.6%. Black men have the highest lung cancer incidence and mortality rates, with tobacco smoke causing 60% of deaths among Black men in the western United States. Moreover, Black men, women and children are more likely than any other group to encounter secondhand smoke at home.

Over 70% of current African American smokers want to quit. They are more likely than Whites to be light smokers, to consider smoking socially unacceptable, and to have quit for at least one day in the previous year. Nevertheless, among all who try to quit, fewer Black than White smokers succeed. This may be due to a preference for menthol cigarettes, heavily marketed to Black communities. Studies suggest that menthol may trigger deep inhalation and breath-holding, increasing nicotine absorption and leading to stronger dependence.

To counter tobacco's toll, AATEP launched the 2005 Great African American Smokeout and Project Nia. For the Smokeout, AATEP partnered with the American Cancer Society and the California Smokers' Helpline. AATEP posters, handbills, newspaper ads and movie theater slides distributed in four key counties (Alameda, San Bernardino, Kings, and Los Angeles) showed Black families with members lost due to tobacco-related diseases. The message, "Make sure everyone stays in the picture," encouraged smokers and their families and friends to call the Helpline. Each African American smoker who responded received a Helpline quit kit with additional, culturally tailored materials. These included the Pathways to Freedom quit-smoking guide and a flyer inviting the caller to contact AATEP to receive coupons for nicotine patches or gum; discounts on local products and services; a cost-of-smoking calculator; breath mints; and supportive e-mails or cell phone text messages.

Through Project Nia ("purpose" in Swahili, and one of the 7 principles of Kwanzaa), AATEP works with African American organizations to counter tobacco industry sponsorship. AATEP offers presentations, workshops on grant seeking/writing, and technical assistance to develop organizational policies.

Through these and other projects and partnerships, AATEP continues to make strides for health in California's African American communities.

AATEP, administered through the California Black Health Network, has a 3-year grant from the California Department of Health Services. For more information call Immauri Patterson or Twlia Laster at (916) 448-7900.