

Asians reluctant to seek help for domestic violence

July 16 2012

Asian-American victims of domestic violence rarely seek help from police or health care providers – "an alarming trend" among the fastest-growing racial group in the United States, says a Michigan State University researcher.

While cultural barriers can discourage victims from seeking help, there also is a lack of culturally sensitive services available to them, said Hyunkag Cho, assistant professor of social work.

That can be as simple as a local domestic violence hotline that cannot facilitate calls from Chinese- or Korean-speaking victims due to language barriers. And failing to get help the first time, Cho said, may prevent a victim from trying again.

"Authorities and [health care providers](#) need to be equipped with information and resources for adequately addressing the needs of victims of domestic violence among Asians and other racial minorities," Cho said.

According to a recent Pew Research Center report, Asian-Americans are now the fastest growing racial group in the United States, making up 36 percent of all immigrants who arrived in 2010. Latinos were second, at 31 percent.

In his latest research, Cho looked at use of mental [health services](#) by Asian-American victims of domestic violence.

In one study, which appears in the research journal *Violence Against Women*, Cho found that Asian victims used [mental health](#) services only 5.3 percent of the time, while Latino victims used them 14.6 percent of the time. Cho used survey data from about 350 victims culled from the National Latino and Asian-American Study.

A second study, based on several national surveys and featured in the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, found that Asian victims of domestic violence were at least four times less likely to use mental health services than whites, blacks or Latinos. Cho's sample size was 755 victims.

In his native Korea, Cho said he had friends who refused to seek help for domestic violence. In many Asian cultures, seeking help can be seen as shameful to the victim and the victim's family.

But Cho said there has been too much focus on the [victims'](#) individual and cultural barriers to seeking help. Instead, he said the focus should be on how to make affordable, culturally sensitive help more available to them.

"We need to look at the bigger picture," Cho said. "We need more outreach efforts to increase access to [domestic violence](#) services."

Provided by Michigan State University

Citation: Asians reluctant to seek help for domestic violence (2012, July 16) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-07-asians-reluctant-domestic-violence.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.