

Link found between sociocultural institutions in ethnic enclaves and resident health

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The number of sociocultural institutions within ethnic enclaves may play a significant role in positively influencing the health of immigrant Asian American and Hispanic populations, according to recent research led by

the University of California, Irvine.

For the study, [published](#) in the journal *Social Science and Medicine*, researchers created and validated two novel measures—Asian- and Hispanic-serving sociocultural institutions—to identify the different mechanisms that link majority minority neighborhoods to [health outcomes](#).

"Our new measures capture aspects of local economies that may support residents through in-language and culturally appropriate services, employment and social groups that help us estimate how they impact [community health](#)," said corresponding author Brittany Morey, associate professor of health, society and behavior in the Joe C. Wen School of Population & Public Health. "Rather than [census data](#), we used business listings to identify organizations that promote cultural and [social identity](#), including arts, civic, historical, religious, social service and membership."

An online audit of 1,627 businesses within 12 cities was conducted using keyword searches to determine potential Asian- or Hispanic-serving sociocultural institutions and assess their density within census tracts. Exploratory regression analyses showed that a high presence of SCIs may be associated with neighborhood-level health indicators. Researchers discovered a larger percentage of residents in a majority Asian tract who had received an annual checkup and fewer current smokers in both majority Asian and majority Hispanic tracts when there were more SCIs.

"Our approach advances methodology in measurement of neighborhood SCIs by capturing data that has been previously overlooked," Morey said. "Further studies will be conducted to examine the impact that [economic resources](#), social capital and the built environment have on positively influencing community-level well-being. Their potential

suggests that support for neighborhood SCIs may lessen health inequities by race and ethnicity," said Morey.

Other team members included faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students from UC Irvine, UC San Francisco, the University of Southern California, Columbia University, Kaiser Permanente Northern California and New York's Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

More information: Brittany N. Morey et al, A validation study for measuring Asian- and Hispanic-serving sociocultural institutions in neighborhoods using business listing data and potential implications for health, *Social Science & Medicine* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117143](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117143)

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