BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES: HEALTH PROMOTION WITH THE HMONG COMMUNITY
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PURPOSE: The largest concentration of Hmong in the United States currently reside in the Twin Cities metro area.1 Traditionally, in Laos the Hmong culture has many aspects of a healthy lifestyle. However, Hmong children in the US have higher rates of obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.2-4 Several studies have indicated a need for physical health and nutritional interventions to address these risk factors in Hmong youth.2-3 The purpose of this project was to educate children of Hmong descent about health and wellness in a culturally competent manner. We partnered with the Southeast Asian Teacher Program and taught health science classes during the Hmong Cultural & Language Program’s summer camp.

DESCRIPTION: The Hmong culture believes in the concept of being in balance with health (hauv nruab nrab) and restoring balance through healthy food and exercise (caiv).5 Our classes focused on the Hmong tradition of balancing health by creating nutritious meals, educating on serving size, and staying active. A total of 27 students completed a ten-question test on the first and last day of class that tested their knowledge regarding physical fitness, nutrition, and health.

OBSERVATIONS: Interacting with multiple cultures and children of all ages is part of the profession. Being involved with Hmong children helped us learn more about their culture and promote health and wellness.

CONCLUSIONS: There is a statistically significant difference (p < 0.0001) between pretest and posttest score with a mean difference of -1.85 and 95% confidence interval of -2.59 to -1.11. Future work should focus on longitudinal implications of educating in culturally competent manner.

IMPLICATIONS: Delivering education in a culturally competent manner was an effective way to promote health to a different culture. Physical therapists can use concepts from this project to promote health and wellness while taking into consideration the culture of their patients.