

HAWAII JOURNAL WATCH

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Highlights of recent research from the University of Hawai'i and the Hawai'i State Department of Health

MENTAL HEALTH IN KOREAN OLDER ADULTS

The prevalence of mental distress among Korean older adults in America is high, yet this population tends to have low use of mental health services. Researchers including Seunghye Hong PhD, of the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, examined data from the Study of Older Korean Americans, a survey of Korean immigrants ages 60 and older in five states including Hawai'i. Results showed 30% of participants reported mental distress, and only 5.7% reported using professional mental health services. The participants with more physical health constraints were more likely to have high levels of mental distress and to utilize mental health services. Importantly, participants' with higher objectively measured mental distress but higher self-rated mental health were less likely to use mental health services than those with lower self-rated mental health. The researchers concluded that intervention efforts with this population should focus on promoting self-awareness and recognition of mental distress.

- Jang Y, Chiriboga DA, Park NS, et al. The role of self-rated mental health in seeking professional mental health services among older Korean immigrants [published online ahead of print, 2020 Apr 30]. *Aging Ment Health*. 2020;1-6. doi:10.1080/13607863.2020.1758908

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the in-hospital experiences of families of children with medical complexity. Isolation procedures, visitation policies, and rounding practices increase family stress. A team of authors made up of parents, nurses, physicians, educators, and researchers, including Shilpa Patel MD, of the John A. Burns School of Medicine, asked family advisors and health care providers for suggestions on maintaining excellent communication in this setting. Family advisors said providing clear, timely communication reduces patient and family anxiety. Engaging family members with responsibilities to complete, such as recording patient symptoms, can help increase a sense of control, as can reinforcing the message that patients and families are experts about themselves. Programs such as Zoom and Skype can facilitate frequent communication. In summary, the authors wrote, changes in workflows to ensure patient- and family-centered care remain a priority can reduce stress of hospitalization.

- Rosenbluth G, Good BP, Litterer KP, et al. Communicating effectively with hospitalized patients and families during the COVID-19 pandemic [published online ahead of print, 2020 Jun 17]. *J Hosp Med*. 2020;10.12788/jhm.3466. doi:10.12788/jhm.3466

FIRE SAFETY BEHAVIORS AMONG THE OCCUPANTS OF HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

The behaviors of high-rise building occupants during emergencies is an important issue in disaster preparedness. In a scoping review aimed at describing literature on high-rise occupant fire safety behaviors, Gary Glauber PhD, of the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, examined 14 peer-reviewed articles. Results showed the occupants of commercial high-rise buildings reported high levels of participation in fire drills, but did not always then move to other floors, nor exit the building during drills. Commercial high-rise

occupants had insufficient knowledge of evacuation procedures and were not able to identify proper procedures. Occupants of residential high rises were less knowledgeable about buildings' fire safety features compared with commercial high-rise occupants. Most studies focused on commercial high-rise occupants; more research is needed on residential high-rise occupants' fire safety knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Public health nurses can engage high-rise residents in emergency preparedness planning.

- Glauber G. Scoping review of fire safety behaviors among high-rise occupants: Implications for public health nursing. *Public Health Nurs*. 2020;37(3):371-379. doi:10.1111/phn.12728

CARCINOGENIC CHEMICALS IN WEEDS NEED FURTHER RESEARCH

Chemicals called 1,2-dehydroPAs are produced by weeds in agricultural systems throughout the world. In an opinion article, researchers including Russell Molyneux PhD, of the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy, outline the research avenues that could be used to investigate the possible role of 1,2-dehydroPAs in human cancers. In the body, these chemicals are metabolized to form compounds called 6,7-DHP-esters and other products, which damage liver cells. It is possible that these metabolic products cause mutations that lead to human health issues. Plausible examples include include a liver disease called hepatic veno-occlusive disease, a lung disease called pulmonary veno-occlusive disease, and cancers such as rhabdomyosarcoma, a cancer of the muscles. The researchers concluded that more research is needed to know definitively whether these compounds are linked to these health conditions.

- Edgar JA, Molyneux RJ, Colegate SM. Linking dietary exposure to 1,2-dehydropyrrolizidine alkaloids with cancers and chemotherapy-induced pulmonary and hepatic veno-occlusive diseases. *J Agric Food Chem*. 2020;68(22):5995-5997. doi:10.1021/acs.jafc.0c02582

FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING SELF-MEASURED BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING PROGRAMS IN HAWAII

When 5 community health centers in Hawai'i started programs in 2016 to teach patients to track their blood pressure at home with monitors, there was no standard, CDC-approved curriculum for such programs. Researchers led by David Stupplebeen, PhD, previously with the Office of Public Health Studies, conducted a process evaluation with program providers at these health centers. Researchers found the program inputs included grant funds for hiring support staff and monitors and educational materials donated by the American Heart Association. The programs succeeded in recruiting and enrolling participants, and providing patients with not only monitors, but also diet-related education, food preparation demonstrations, and referrals to nutritionists. Barriers to self-monitored blood pressure programs included inadequate material supports, data management difficulties, and staff turnover. The evaluation concluded that policy makers should consider developing protocols for self-measured blood pressure monitoring programs that can be used off the shelf and providing further supports to implementation sites.

- Stupplebeen DA, Pirkle CM, Sentell TL, et al. Self-measured blood pressure monitoring: Program planning, implementation, and lessons learned from 5 federally qualified health centers in Hawai'i. *Prev Chronic Dis*. 2020;17:E47. Published 2020 Jun 25. doi:10.5888/pcd17.190348