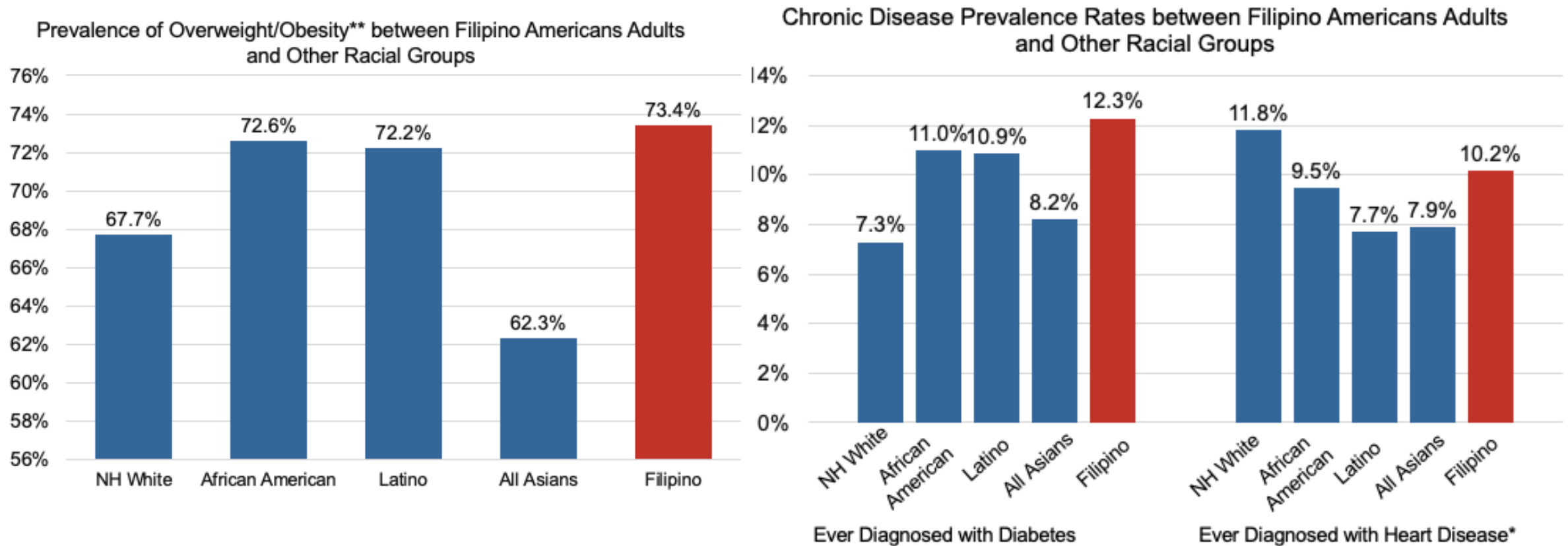


Ulam, Malunggay, and MyPlate:
Creating a Culturally Tailored Health
Educator Guide for Filipino Americans

Jamie Michelle L. Prudencio, Danielle Co, and Edith Chen

Introduction

Filipino Americans have one of the highest prevalence rates for diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease.



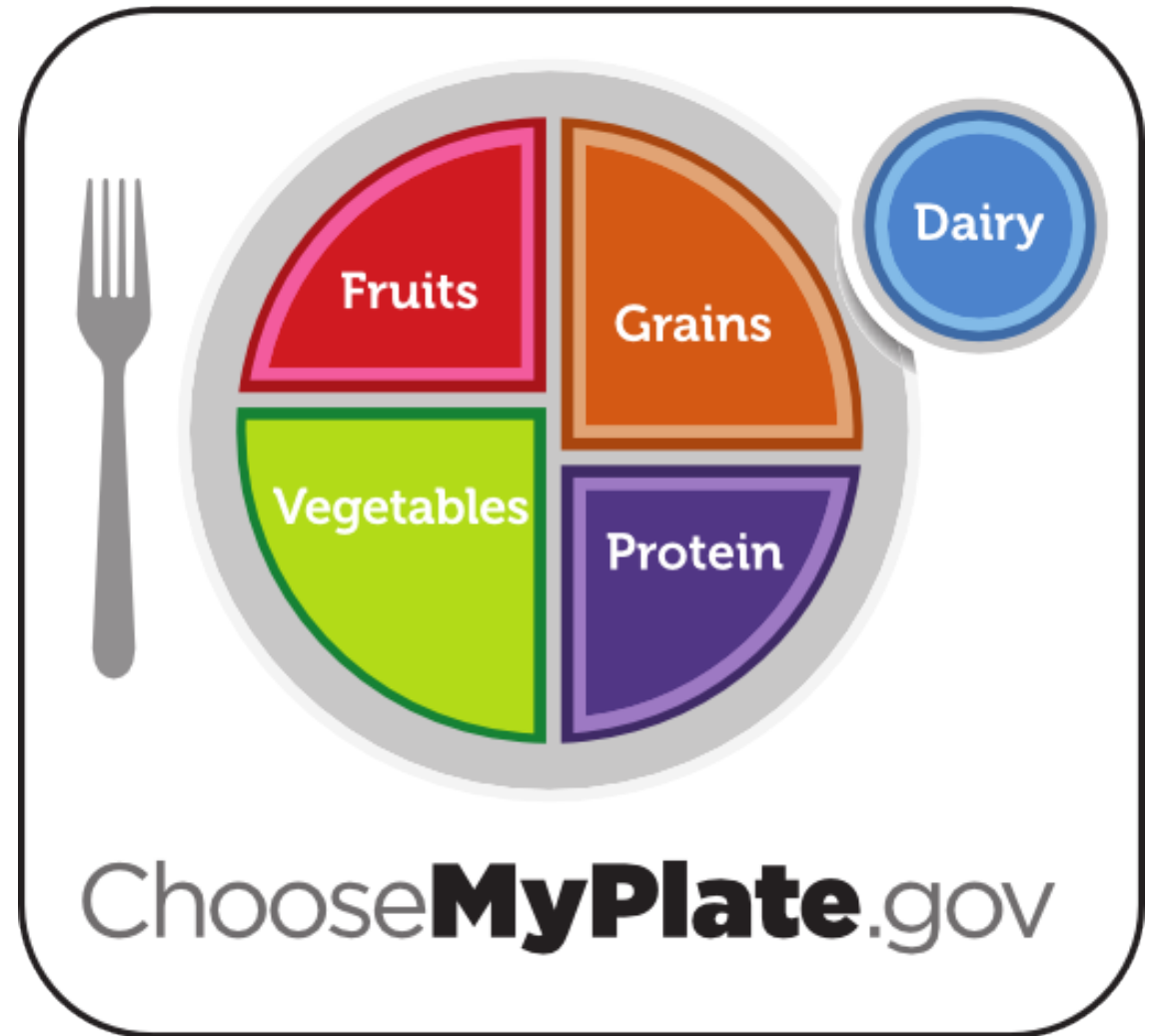
Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2011-2016

*Chronic disease prevalence rates were all calculated for all adults, except for heart disease which were calculated for age groups 45-85.

**Overweight/Obesity for Asians were defined according to the World Health Organization recommended BMI cut off points for Asians.






Food and Health

- Research has suggested that these chronic disease rates are often linked to diet (Kim et. al, 2013).
- The United States Department of Agriculture (or USDA) has a set of eating guidelines called MyPlate in order to facilitate and promote healthy eating behaviors for Americans.



MyPlate

- MyPlate facilitates nutrition by dividing one's meals into five major food groups which follow these recommendations:

Food Group Amounts for 2,400 Calories a Day				
				
2 cups	3 cups	8 ounces	6 1/2 ounces	3 cups
Focus on whole fruits	Vary your veggies	Make half your grains whole grains	Vary your protein routine	Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt

Source: USDA, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, January 2016

Research Questions:

- Can the MyPlate healthy eating guidelines be applied to the Filipino American population?
- To what extent are the eating habits and dietary behaviors of Filipino Americans captured in MyPlate?





ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER
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MOVEMENT**



Objectives

- To work with Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to understand the eating behaviors of 6 Asian American sub groups in Los Angeles County
- To culturally tailor the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)- Education Implementation Guide and curriculum for Asian American populations

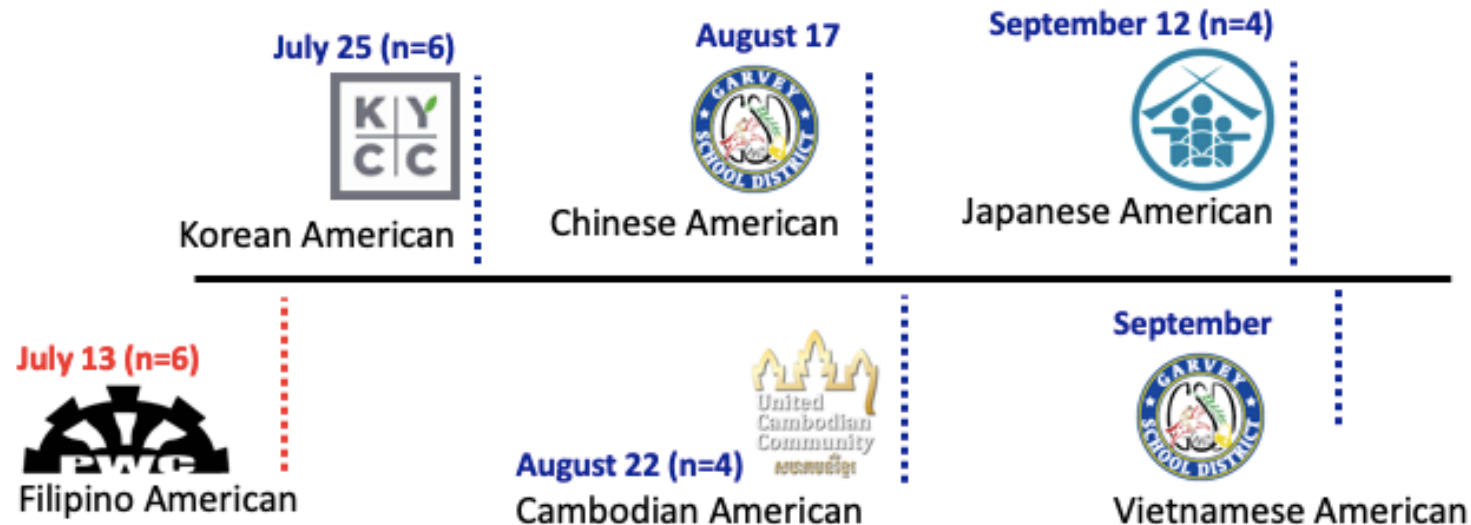
Methodology

- **About Focus Group:** The Filipino American focus group was taken place on July 13, 2018 at the Pilipino Workers Center in Los Angeles, CA.
- **Eligibility criteria:** Participants must be 18+, have or be eligible for CalFresh, and identify as Filipino decent.
 - CalFresh: program for low income families/individuals to provide healthy and nutritious food

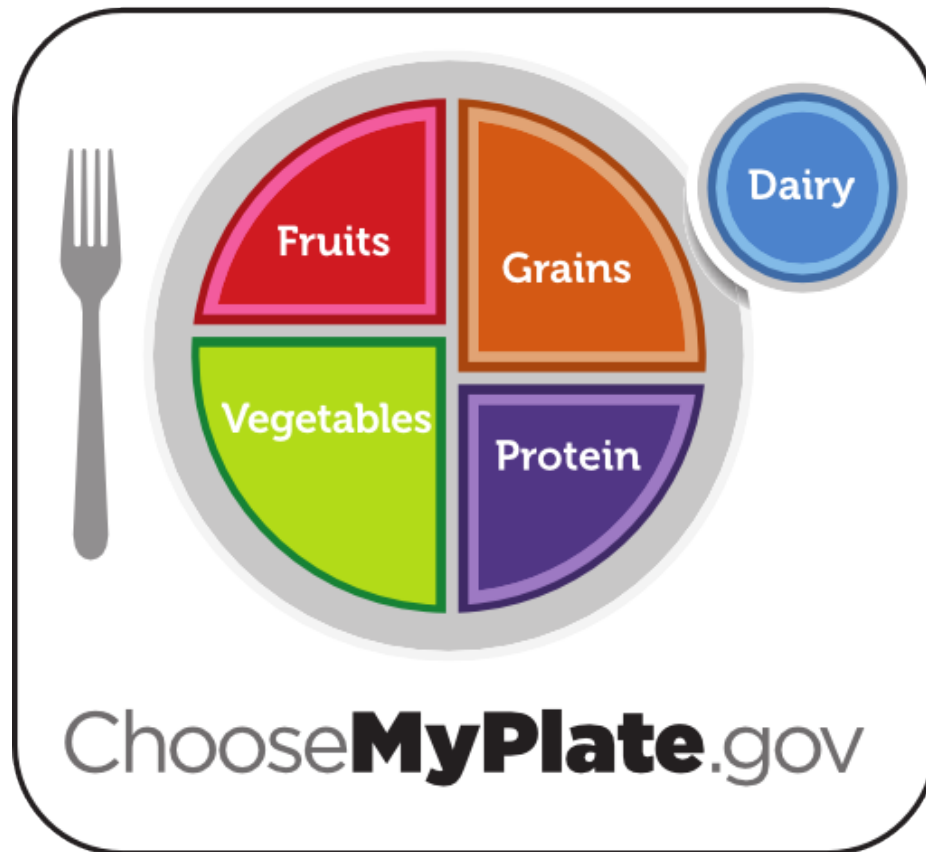


Methodology

- **Description of the sample:** consisted of 6 participants: 5 middle aged, older females and 1 young adult male.
- **Analysis:** Filipino American focus group transcriptions were both analyzed independently and together as a research team. Analysis included members of the Filipino American community (insiders) as well as non-members (outsiders).



MyPlate



Typical Filipino table setting



Ulam: ü- ləm (n.) one pot meal, main dish

- Explains that there is a lack of premeasured portions in Filipino American eating
- Rather than eating on what is only on the plate, habits are to eat until full



Sources: Folksy Foxy, PanlasangPinoy

“... sometimes we have more grains than vegetables, or sometimes we do have protein but the amount of grains that we do take, like rice, is just too much...”

--Filipino immigrant focus group participant

Kanin: *kuh* n-in (n.) rice

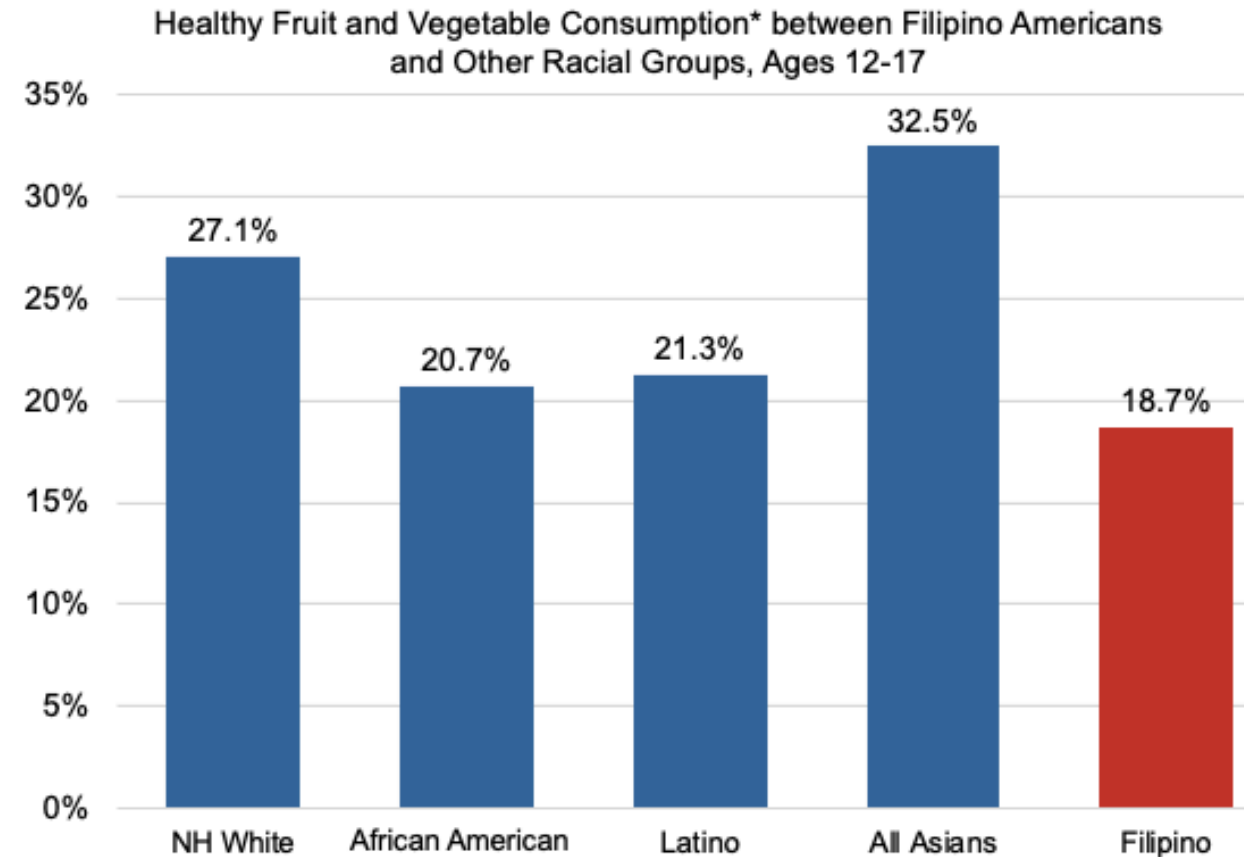
- Essential part of Filipino American diet, and traditionally part of breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Customary to have more rice available than needed, as ulam and side dishes are often eaten together with rice
- Is not pre-measured as suggested in MyPlate, where one serving of rice should be $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup

“Because sometimes, when we are getting rice, we sort of get too much. Then, when we get our main dish, when there's not enough rice, we still add more rice because we still have some of the main dish left.”

--Filipino immigrant participant

Are Filipino Americans getting enough vegetables, as recommended by MyPlate?

- Filipino Americans have the lowest fruit and vegetable consumption (18.7%) compared to all racial/ethnic groups.
- “I think every Filipino knows the importance of fruits and vegetables but sometimes it gets really unproportionate that it affects their health.”
- Many do not know if they are eating enough vegetables due to the communal eating and style of *ulam*.



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2011-2016

*Healthy fruit and vegetable consumption was defined as eating 5 servings or more of fruits and vegetables daily.

Mulunggay: mal ün-gahy (n.) moringa



- There are many fruits and vegetables in the United States, but there are more culturally relevant fruits and vegetables for Filipino Americans to achieve recommended daily intake:



- E.g.: calamansi, mango, mulunggay, okra, eggplant, sitaw, calabasa and bitter melon.

Limitations

- Sample bias
- Small and may not be generalizable to a larger population
- Many lived in Historic Filipinotown, a food desert
- Participants may be more health conscious as many had participated in the Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Workshops
- Self reported health eating behaviors
 - Underestimating their consumptions
 - Exaggerating healthiness due to focus group dynamics

Summary and Further Considerations

- MyPlate may not be helpful in guiding Filipino Americans toward healthy eating due to their communal way of eating and one pot meals.
- Understanding the unique dietary behaviors of Filipino Americans is important in creating a culturally tailored eating guide.
- A culturally tailored eating guide could help adapt healthier eating habits and prevent the growing rates of chronic diseases (i.e., diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease) in the Filipino American population.
- In designing a healthy eating guide for Filipino American populations, it should include familiar cultural foods, Filipino ways of eating and cooking, while highlighting their beneficial health properties to reinforce healthy eating habits.

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