

1-21-2015

Evaluating Services for Bhutanese Elders at the Champlain Senior Center

Elizabeth Cochrane

Nazey Gulec

Dylan Hershkowitz

Mary Ledoux

Dale Lee

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/comphp_gallery

 Part of the [Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons](#), and the [Health Services Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cochrane, Elizabeth; Gulec, Nazey; Hershkowitz, Dylan; Ledoux, Mary; Lee, Dale; Mertaban, Mohammad; Nunziato, Carl; Siani, Elena; Campono, Bonnie; and Hutchins, Jeanne, "Evaluating Services for Bhutanese Elders at the Champlain Senior Center" (2015). *Public Health Projects, 2008-present*. 210.

https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/comphp_gallery/210

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Public Health Projects, University of Vermont College of Medicine at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in Public Health Projects, 2008-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact donna.omalley@uvm.edu.

Authors

Elizabeth Cochrane, Nazey Gulec, Dylan Hershkowitz, Mary Ledoux, Dale Lee, Mohammad Mertaban, Carl Nunziato, Elena Siani, Bonnie Campono, and Jeanne Hutchins



Evaluating Services for Bhutanese Elders at the Champlain Senior Center

Cochrane E¹, Gulec N¹, Hershkowitz D¹, Ledoux M¹, Lee D¹, Mertaban M¹, Nunziato C¹, Siani E¹, Campono B², Hutchins J²

WHERE?

Bhutan



INTRODUCTION

- Bhutanese refugees have been living in Vermont since 2008. They constitute a vulnerable population due to lack of language skills, increased health care requirements and lack of access to transportation.
- The Champlain Senior Center (CSC) provides services and a community space for Bhutanese refugee elders (older than 55 years).
- We aimed to determine the necessity for the CSC in the elders' wellbeing and to demonstrate that services are crucial to ensure this New American elderly population's needs are being met.

BACKGROUND

- Ethnic conflict between Northern and Southern Bhutanese led to the mass deportation of over 100,000 Nepali speaking Bhutanese in the early 1990s. In 2012 there were about 93 Bhutanese refugees over the age of 60 years in Vermont.

METHODS

POPULATION IDENTIFICATION & QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

- Identified Bhutanese seniors attending CSC with the aid of the director and a refugee caseworker.
- Created questions to determine met and unmet needs focusing on:
 - Life before and after coming to the CSC
 - Impressions of CSC services and activities
 - Concerns and desires for the CSC

CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

- Separated men and women into two different focus groups. Focus groups were conducted by medical students and anonymous responses were interpreted (via Nepalese interpreted) and transcribed.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

- Compared transcript to audio recording to ensure accuracy of transcription.
- Identified primary positive contentment and chief desires based on frequency of mention.
- There were eight women and ten men. The average time of attendance at the CSC was 1.87 years (range = 4 months to 3 years).

We want to talk or interact with the Americans. We want to dance, sing and share the Nepalese culture with them. We want to learn their culture. Our language for them and their language for us. We need two hands to clap.

-Bhutanese Elder at CSC

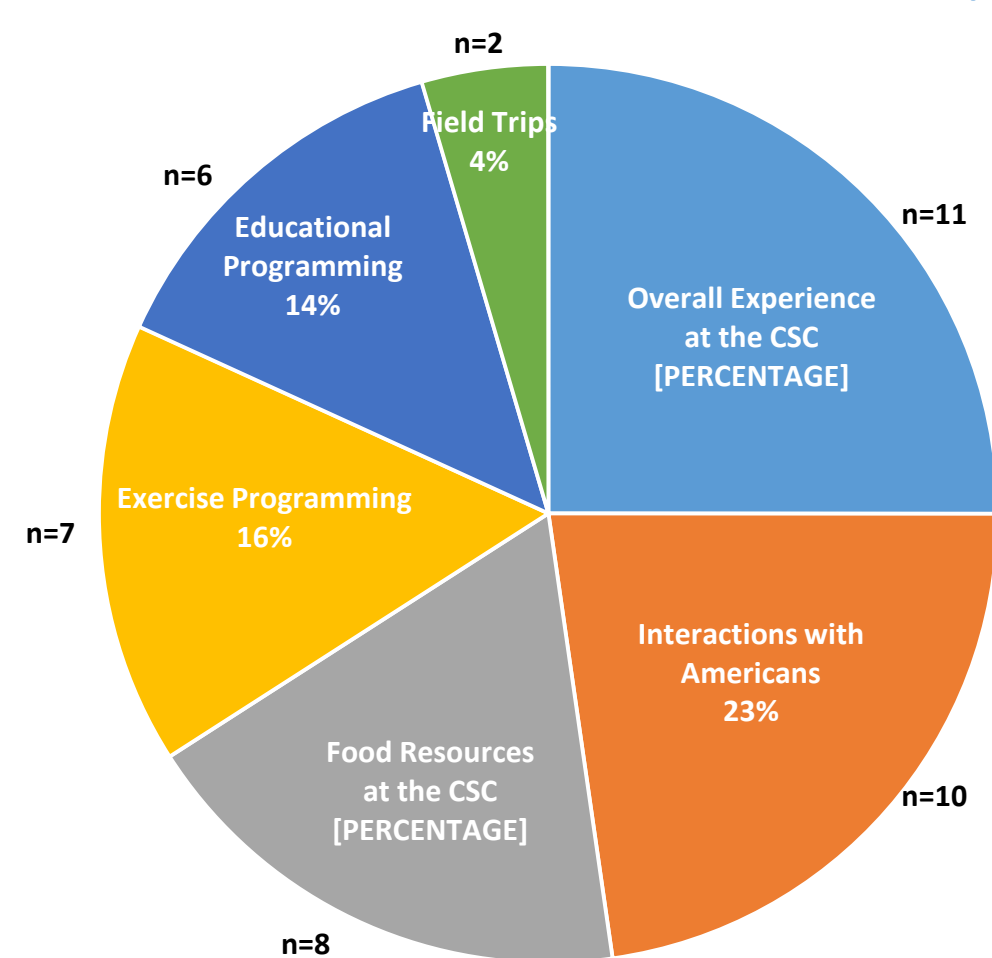
DISCUSSION

- Focus group participants overwhelmingly reported satisfaction with the CSC programming and considered the center important for maintaining social and cultural ties.
- Language is a major barrier to integration with local communities. Participants repeatedly cited desire for more formal English training from the CSC.
- Anxiety regarding citizenship status is a key stressor. The State Department Refugee Reception and Placement Program requires refugees to obtain citizenship or risk losing government assistance.
- Lack of transportation limits Bhutanese CSC participation, especially during winter months.

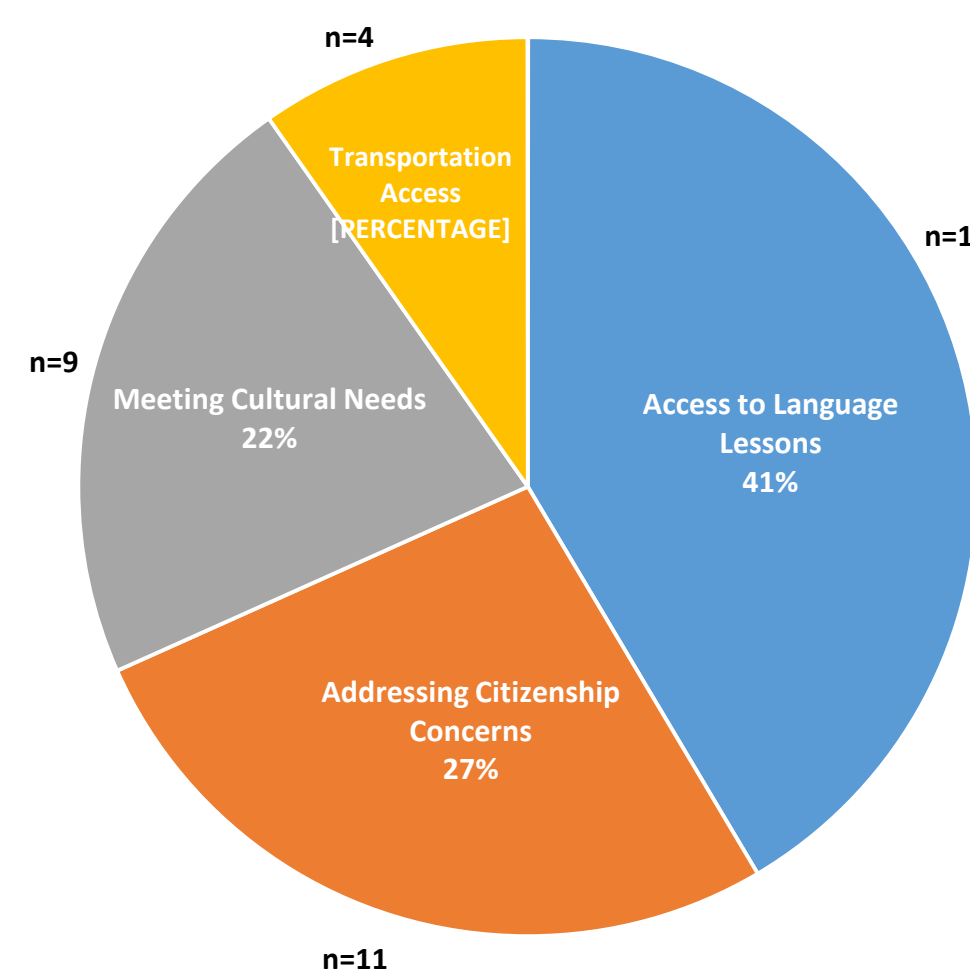


Photo Credit: M. Mertaban

RESULTS



POSITIVE QUALITIES OF THE CSC



DESIRED SERVICES FROM THE CSC

n = number of comments during focus group

CONCLUSION

- Results:** The CSC enhances quality of life and provides access to nutritional, health, social, and cultural needs for the Bhutanese senior community of Burlington, VT.
- Identified areas of development:**
 - Language and communication programs
 - Informational sessions regarding obtaining U.S. citizenship, with the goal of relieving anxiety
 - Workshops on daily activities in Vermont
- We urge the CSC to assess improving transportation services (especially in the winter) and to explore a means to meet the Bhutanese religious needs.

LIMITATIONS

- Interpretation** leaves potential for information to be lost in translation.
- Focus Group selection** depended on the seniors attending the CSC on the day of the Focus Group.
- Transcription** of the interpreter was performed by different medical students for each group.

REFERENCES

Wallace, J. I., D. M. Buchner, L. Grothaus, S. Leveille, L. Tyll, A. Z. Lacroix, and E. H. Wagner. "Implementation and Effectiveness of a Community-Based Health Promotion Program for Older Adults." *The Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences* 53A.4 (1998): M301-306. Web.

Goodkind, Jessica R., Julia M. Hess, Brian Isakson, Marianna Lanoue, Ann Githinji, Natalie Roche, Kathryn Vadnais, and Danielle P. Parker. "Reducing Refugee Mental Health Disparities: A Community-Based Intervention to Address Postmigration Stressors With African Adults." *Psychological Services* (2013): n. pag. Web.

Korfmacher, Katrina Smith, and Valerie George. "Educating Refugees to Improve Their Home Environmental Health." *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* 18.5 (2012): 469-73. Web.