



230022 Cooking Up Occupational Injustice: Poor Wages and Working Conditions among San Francisco's Chinatown Restaurant Workers

Tuesday, November 9, 2010 : 2:50 PM - 3:10 PM

Alicia L. Salvatore, DrPH, Stanford Prevention Research Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Pamela Tau Lee, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Shaw San Liu, Chinese Progressive Association, San Francisco, CA
Charlotte Chang, DrPH, MPH, Labor Occupational Health Program, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Megan E. Gaydos, MPH, Environmental Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco, CA
Meredith Minkler, DrPH, Department of Health and Social Behavior, UC Berkeley School of Public Health, Berkeley, CA
Robin Baker, MPH, Labor Occupational Health Program, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Rajiv Bhatia, MD, MPH, Occupational and Environmental Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco, CA
Niklas Krause, MD, PhD, School of Medicine, University of California San Francisco, Richmond, CA

The restaurant industry is a major employer of immigrant workers in the United States. In many areas, such as the Chinatown District of San Francisco, food establishments are the largest single employer of Chinese immigrants. Little is known, however, about the working conditions facing ethnic Chinese restaurant workers. In this presentation we will share results from an ecological, Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study of restaurant working conditions and worker health in San Francisco's Chinatown. We will describe the study's community-university-health department partnership and restaurant workers' involvement in the study development and interpretation of results and present findings from the study's survey of Chinatown restaurant workers (n=433). Survey results indicate that Chinatown restaurant workers routinely experience multiple issues of occupational injustice including low wages, "slow pay, no pay", tip theft, and lack of breaks, paid sick time, training, and other benefits mandated by federal and city policy. Furthermore, findings indicate that many Chinatown restaurant workers conduct their work in potentially harmful physical and psychosocial environments. Work place hazards such as intense heat and slippery floors and related occupational injuries were commonly reported by study participants. Stressful working conditions, unfair treatment by employers, and incidents of workplace violence were also frequently reported. The partnership is currently developing strategies to address the occupational injustices documented by this research. Advocacy, policy change, and other actions carried out or being discussed by the partnership, including restaurant workers, to promote greater justice for restaurant workers in Chinatown will be described.

Learning Areas:

Advocacy for health and health education
Occupational health and safety
Other professions or practice related to public health
Public health or related laws, regulations, standards, or guidelines

Learning Objectives:

1) Describe at least three issues of occupational injustice facing Chinatown restaurant workers in San Francisco. 2) Identify at least one environmental and one psychosocial hazard facing restaurant workers. 3) Describe at least one strategy (e.g., advocacy, policy, etc.) for promoting occupational justice among San Francisco's Chinatown restaurant workers.

Keywords: Workplace Safety, Community-Based Partnership

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

Qualified on the content I am responsible for because: I am an investigator on this project and participated in study development, implementation, and analysis.

Any relevant financial relationships? No

I agree to comply with the American Public Health Association Conflict of Interest and Commercial Support Guidelines, and to disclose to the participants any off-label or experimental uses of a commercial product or service discussed in my presentation.