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# Asian American Diabetes Fund



Joslin Diabetes Center

## NEWSLETTER

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SPRING 2002 VOLUME 1

### *Welcoming Message*

*The staff of the Asian American Diabetes Fund would like to welcome all our donors and supporters to an exciting New Year of 2002, the Chinese Year of the Horse. We are embarking on an important journey of new ideas and projects to improve diabetes prevention and care among the Asian American community. This year is particularly exciting because we will be conducting important new research in the Asian American youth population, creating innovative educational materials to provide high quality, culturally appropriate education and care for all Asian Americans living with and at-risk for developing diabetes. We thank you for your gracious support because our dreams of increasing diabetes awareness among the Asian American community would not become a reality without your support. The Asian American Diabetes Fund was created in 2000 by friends of Joslin in hopes of supporting research, outreach, education, and treatment of diabetes among the Asian-American population in the United States to improve their health outcomes and quality of life.*

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### Scope of the Problem

Over 16 million Americans have diabetes. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that the prevalence of diagnosed cases of diabetes increased three-fold between 1990 and 1998, noting that the incidence of diabetes is rising much faster among the Asian American community (10% to 15%) than among the American Caucasian population (about 5%). Young people of Far Eastern heritage living in a Western culture appear to be unusually prone to the development of diabetes, but the reasons are yet unknown. The alarming increased incidence of diabetes among Asian Americans 25 years and younger is paralleled in the Hong Kong, Korean and Japanese populations. Unfortunately, focused research for this population has not been undertaken to date; and the Asian American community in general has not been aware the scope of this particular problem.

### Founder of the Asian American Diabetes Fund: George King, M.D.

The Asian-American Diabetes Fund was founded in 2000 by George L. King, M.D., Joslin's Acting Research Director. Dr. King's vision is to improve the longevity and quality of life of Asian Americans living with diabetes and to enable more research to be done among the Asian American population. The creation of the Asian American Diabetes Fund was born out of personal interest by Dr. King as he has been personally touched by many friends and relatives who are affected by diabetes. Dr. King believes that we need to conduct more epidemiological studies to find out the diabetes rates among the Asian population and to perform more genetic and physiological studies so we can develop ways to reduce the behavioral risk factors and improve the treatment of diabetes among the Asian American population in the United States. Furthermore, we need to develop more culturally appropriate education materials and web technology to educate young Asian Americans about how to prevent diabetes and to raise more funds so that research, educational and outreach efforts can be continued in the future.

# *Current Projects and Activities*

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## **Research**

We are currently recruiting 18-40 year old Chinese Americans with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes to participate in a clinical research study led by Dr. George King and his colleagues. The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between insulin resistance and the function of blood vessels so we can better understand how diabetes relates to vascular disease in Asian Americans. Our plan is to complete the study within a year and use the results of the study to apply for a grant from the federal government to conduct more extensive long-term diabetes studies in the Asian American population. We also hope that the research findings, educational materials and programs that grow out of this work can be disseminated to medical professionals and the Asian American community at large.

## **Developing Educational Materials and Technology**

We are currently working with a professional design company to produce a bilingual and culturally appropriate diabetes brochure that contains diabetes information, exercise instructions and Chinese diet information in order to increase awareness about diabetes prevention among Asian Americans. The brochure will be disseminated to the public, healthcare providers who see diabetes patients, Kaiser Permanente in Southern California, South Cove Community Health Center in Boston's Chinatown district, Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston, and its 13 affiliated healthcare centers nationwide. We are projecting the completion of this educational brochure in 4-6 months.

In the near future, we are planning to work with Joslin's Nutrition Department to develop a Chinese cookbook containing easy-to-follow, healthy, and tasty Chinese recipes with bilingual text. We are also planning to develop a pocket-size dietary resource guide that highlights the calories, fat, carbohydrates and other nutritional facts of common Chinese dishes and foods that can come in handy when people go out to dine.

In addition, we are also working to develop and improve our Asian American diabetes web site to cater to Asian Americans' needs. Please take a look at our web site at <http://www.joslin.org/api>. Your comments and ideas are welcomed.

## **Community Outreach**

Dr. William Hsu, a Joslin staff physician, is working on both the research effort and the outreach programs for the Asian American Diabetes Fund and has had an opportunity to give a presentation on diabetes and its affect on the Asian American community at the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP) meeting in Boston on December 15, 2001. NAAAP is a premier leadership professional organization founded in New York City in 1982 that has over 2,500 members and representatives from 25 cities across the U.S. Dr. Hsu has also recently given a diabetes seminar for health professionals at the South Cove Community Center on March 8, 2002 to share with them information about diabetes care among the Asian population.

For future community educational efforts, we plan to contact the various community health centers, community centers, local Chinese schools, and community-based Asian organizations to provide diabetes information sessions to parents and youth. We also plan to provide up-to-date information on diabetes care to healthcare providers in the Asian community in Boston.

## **Growth of the Asian American Fund Staff**

We would like to welcome on board our new staff member Kathy Wong this month. Kathy started work as a Project Coordinator for the Asian American Diabetes Fund in February 2002 and will be helping coordinate the research effort and community outreach efforts for the Fund. Kathy is currently a first year Master's student at the Harvard School of Public Health, in the Department of Health and Social Behavior. She graduated from UCLA in 2000 with a B.S. in Psychobiology. She grew up in Chinatown in Los Angeles, CA.

Kathy has spent the last year working with the Asian American youth in Chinatown on HIV/AIDS, STD, pregnancy prevention and has outreached to the adult Chinese immigrant population about family planning services at the Chinatown Service Center in Los Angeles. She hopes that she can further contribute to and strengthen the Asian American communities while working at the Joslin Diabetes Center.

# How to Give

*Currently, the Asian American Diabetes Fund has an immediate funding need of \$100,000. This funding will be used to support four important areas:*

*The Asian American Diabetes Fund was created in 2000 by friends of Joslin to support research, outreach, education, and treatment of diabetes among the Asian American population in the United States to improve its health outcomes and quality of life. We depend on the continued support of friends like you to enable us to conduct clinical and epidemiological diabetes research, develop and disseminate innovative and culturally appropriate educational materials, clinical intervention programs, and outreach to the Asian American population about diabetes prevention and care. To become a sponsor of the Asian American Fund at Joslin, please call Meredith Bryan at (888) JOSLIN1. Thank you.*

## 1. RESEARCH

- A study to determine how blood vessel function and insulin resistance differ in Asian Americans with Type 1 compared to Type 2 diabetes

## 2. OPERATIONS

- Personnel
- Lab Testing
- Recruitment

## 3. EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- Printing of Booklet on dietary information written in both English and Chinese
- Website

## 4. OUTREACH

### Community Programs

- National Association of Asian American Professionals
- Unity Dinner
- South Cove Community Health Center

### Dietary Booklet disbursement to various other health care facilities

- Kaiser Permanente (Northern California)
- South Cove Community Health Center (Chinatown, Boston, MA)
- Joslin Diabetes Center (Boston, MA)
- Joslin Diabetes Center's 13 nation-wide affiliates and 2 Massachusetts satellite locations

## Upcoming Community Presentation

Dr. William Hsu has been invited to speak about the epidemic of diabetes in the Asian American community at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Asian American Unity Dinner Gala in Downtown Boston on Saturday, May 11, 2002. This event is held during the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May. This is an event where the Asian American community gathers together to recognize the achievements, to celebrate its diverse heritage and culture, and to talk about APA-related issues.





# Joslin Diabetes Center

## Asian American Diabetes Fund

staff members



(L-R) **Ronald Ma**, Research Fellow; **William C. Hsu, M.D.**, Joslin Staff Physician, Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School; **Kathy Wong**, Project Coordinator; **Meredith Bryan**, Senior Development Officer; **George L. King, M.D.**, Acting Director of Research, Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School.

This newsletter is published for friends and supporters of the Asian American Fund. For more information regarding the Asian American Diabetes Fund, visit our new Asian American Diabetes website at [www.joslin.org/api](http://www.joslin.org/api) or contact Dr. William Hsu at (617) 713-3473 or email at [william.hsu@joslin.harvard.edu](mailto:william.hsu@joslin.harvard.edu)

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