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## **GlaxoSmithKline Study Shows Need for More Hepatitis B Education in Asian-American Communities**

Research Triangle Park, NC: October 31, 2005— One in three Asian Americans surveyed in a recent poll reported they had lost a family member due to complications of chronic hepatitis B. However, about one in five respondents indicated they were not aware of the risks associated with the hepatitis B virus. These survey findings, released today from a study conducted among 805 Asian-American adults, underscore the critical need for greater hepatitis B education in communities most vulnerable to the disease.

The survey, conducted by TNS Market Development, a national research firm, randomly selected and interviewed more than 800 Chinese, Vietnamese and Koreans living in Los Angeles, San Francisco/Oakland, New York City, and Houston. Almost all of these respondents were foreign born. These cities were chosen based on their large Asian-American populations. GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) sponsored the survey to evaluate disease knowledge, incidence of infection, and understanding of preventative measures employed by Asian-Americans concerning hepatitis B.

“Simply being an Asian American is not a risk factor in and of itself; however hepatitis B continues to be an important and ongoing health problem in Asian-American communities where a lot of immigrants are not screened and do not vaccinate their children, nor are they aware of the significant risks of hepatitis B,” said Eddie Cheung, M.D., president of the Chinese American Physicians Society, Oakland, CA, and clinical professor of internal medicine and gastroenterology/hepatology at the University of California-Davis School of Medicine. Dr. Cheung also serves as the chair of the National Asian Leadership Advisory Council of the American Liver Foundation, as well as director of hepatology at the VA Northern California Health Care System.

Hepatitis B is a virus that is acquired from an infected mother at the time of birth or is spread through direct contact with blood and other bodily fluids, in ways such as: IV drug use with contaminated needles, sharing toothbrushes or razors, getting tattoos, and having sexual relations with infected persons. Chronic infection with the virus can eventually lead to liver scarring, liver cancer and death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in ten people of Asian/Pacific Islander descent in the US is infected with hepatitis B, one in four of whom, if left untreated, will die from the disease.<sup>1</sup>

### **Survey Results**

There were some slight variations in answers among sub-groups of the Asian-American population and communities surveyed; indicating further investigation may be warranted.

### **Hepatitis B Awareness**

Results of the survey indicate that:

- About one in five Asian Americans stated they were not aware of the risks of hepatitis B.
- While almost all Asian-American adults were aware of *some* of the ways to spread hepatitis B, only about one in three were aware of *all* of the ways the virus is spread.
- Many still incorrectly believed that simply eating together and sharing work space and/or casual contact with infected persons are ways that hepatitis B is spread.

### **Incidence and Treatment of Infection**

Respondents were asked if they were infected with the virus, or knew a family member infected with the hepatitis B virus:

- One in four answered yes to that question. However, the vast majority of those incorrectly mentioned at least one way that hepatitis B is spread.
- More than one in three of all respondents have had a family member die of causes related to hepatitis B.
- About six in ten respondents indicated they or their family members treated their chronic hepatitis B with prescription medications but approximately one in ten indicated they are treating their hepatitis B with a traditional Asian treatment regimen

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and *Asian Am Pac Isl. J Health*, 2001; 9:141-152.

## **Testing and Preventative Measures**

While almost all Asian Americans surveyed agreed there are ways to prevent becoming infected with the hepatitis B virus, survey results show preventative measures are not being taken:

- About three out of four have been tested yet only half reported that they had been vaccinated against the virus
- Of the 128 adults who stated they had not been or would not be tested or vaccinated, nearly half felt they were not at risk of being infected with virus.
- Of those who had not been or would not be tested or vaccinated, alarmingly, one in four responded that they did not want to know if they were infected with the virus.
- When asked about vaccinations for their children, about one in three of each group surveyed did not have all of their children vaccinated against hepatitis B.

## **The Need For More Hepatitis B Education**

“These survey results show we need to help to educate these communities and their health care providers, using in-language materials and peer-to-peer interaction, about the dangers of untreated and unscreened chronic hepatitis B and the vaccination and treatment options available,” said Dr. Cheung.

For more information about hepatitis B, please contact your local health department, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or GSK’s Hepatitis B Web site, [www.hepatitisbhelp.com](http://www.hepatitisbhelp.com).

### ***Methodology:***

TNS Market Development, a national survey research firm, administered the national telephone survey as commissioned by GlaxoSmithKline. This survey was conducted with the purpose of uncovering knowledge, incidence and awareness of hepatitis B. Approximately 200 interviews were conducted in Korean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and English in each target city. Respondents for this study were male and female adults ages 18+ of Chinese (444), Korean (145) or Vietnamese (216) ancestry. Industry studies by design involve small samples of participants for exploratory research purposes. This telephone survey was conducted with 805 people with a margin of error of +/- five percentage points.

### **About GlaxoSmithKline**

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