

## Promoting Healthy Fish Consumption Messaging among Hmong Women: Focus Group & Digital Media Promotion Summary & Key Takeaways

Accompanying manuscript: JaKa MM, Dinh JM, McCann P, Katz AS, Kottke TE, Ziegenfuss JY. [Promoting Fish Consumption Messages: Perspectives of Hmong Women of Childbearing Age](#). *Am J Health Behav.* 2021 Sep 30;45(5):867-878. doi: 10.5993/AJHB.45.5.7. PMID: 34702434.

In a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative through MDH, HealthPartners created the ChooseYourFish initiative, focused on women who are or could become pregnant, to promote safe fish consumption and ultimately improve fetal developmental outcomes. HealthPartners held a series of focus groups in April 2019 to understand how Hmong women who are or could become pregnant prefer to receive fish consumption messages. These focus groups were designed to gather useful information for two key stakeholders: the HealthPartners digital promotions team and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Ultimately, 13 women participated across three focus groups. High-level results and takeaways related to each of our three aims follow.

Additionally, we shared our findings with a number of Hmong healthcare leaders and health plan employees (called "key informants" here) to get their thoughts about these results. Four people replied and their comments are included below.

Aim 1: What are some ways to engage the Hmong community with the safe fish consumption message?

- Most participants identified the Internet as the primary source of health information, with the search engine Google most commonly used. Other websites included YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, and Netflix. An online presence is important to reach this demographic.
- Friends and family, especially those employed in healthcare were noted as sources of health information. This was also echoed by the Hmong key informants. Additionally, because online information is often shared amongst families, and because the women of childbearing age may not be the ones preparing meals, making the information more general (i.e. not specific to pregnancy) may increase likelihood that it is shared.
- Online healthcare websites were mentioned as common, credible, and often-used. Healthcare providers were mentioned as well. Branding with a credible source could be helpful in reaching this group of women.
- Key informants added that Hmong radio, non-profits, and churches would be another way to reach this group. Also mentioned was the potential to message to men, as they may be the ones catching the fish and bringing them home to be prepared.

Aim 2: What type of fish consumption messaging will resonate best with women in the Hmong community?

- Women gave feedback on Facebook ads with four different photos, as well as a Hmong-specific fish information card and the ChooseYourFish brochure. Feedback on the ads was mixed, though most women noted the importance of alignment between images and messages.
- It was important that images and messages directly targeted the intended audience (Hmong women) and not just Asian women generally.
- Simple messaging was preferred, both generally and for ease of translation.
- Key informants mentioned that many younger Hmong are not literate in the Hmong language, so simple English, visuals, and oral communication may be best.
- One key informant also suggested adding message context specific to Hmong culture, such as fish being softer and easier on elderly Hmong people's teeth, or that fishing can save money on purchasing meat, or that fish may be cooked more frequently during special occasions.

- It was noted that individual characteristics can impact how well a message reaches someone or resonates, so characteristics like birth country, level of acculturation, primary language, and education may need to be taken into account when designing message modes and text.

Aim 3: What knowledge, behaviors, and beliefs about fish consumption exist among the Hmong population?

- Generally, women stated that their knowledge about specific fish consumption guidelines was low. However, in one focus group women relayed knowledge that raw fish and sushi should not be eaten while pregnant and in another Mercury was mentioned as harmful. This points to the need to continue promoting the safe fish consumption message to this population. One key informant suggested that there may be knowledge in the community about some *lakes* having high-mercury fish, but not as much knowledge about *specific fish species* having different levels of mercury.
- Women commented about the lack of differentiation between fish species, and one key informant mentioned that the fish in the US do not look like the fish in Laos or Southeast Asia. This idea may require additional clarification that the differences between species are important for health.
- Some women in the focus groups disliked fish, in part because of the smell, the bones, and/or the “gaminess”. The message for these women should continue to promote the benefits of low-mercury fish.

## Hmong Facebook Campaign

As part of the materials dissemination phase to improve awareness of ChooseYourFish resources, we partnered with the HealthPartners web and new media team, which has experience in marketing and communications to HealthPartners patients and members. Through their expertise, we implemented advertising for the ChooseYourFish initiative using new digital marketing channels to reach women who are pregnant or could become pregnant. We were able to measure our efforts through audience engagement (i.e. clicks) as well as audience awareness (i.e. impressions) which allowed us to develop and refine campaigns for effectiveness based on the data. One campaign specifically targeted Asian American women in MN. While full details of the campaign are included in our [ChooseYourFish Online Marketing Strategies and Learnings report \(PDF\)](#), some key takeaways follow.

The performance of 3 well-performing themes related to fish consumption that were used in campaign 1 of Facebook testing were used for this campaign, focused on reaching Asian American women in MN.

- Theme 1: Health Benefits of fish low in contaminants
- Theme 2: Health Risks of fish high in contaminants
- Theme 3: Types of fish

### Key takeaways

- Asian American women interested in pregnancy were most engaged with the theme 3 ad that talked about guidelines (0.62% CTR compared to all other ads with 0.34% CTR or less)
- Ads from Theme 3 (Types of fish) had the highest CTR for both audiences
- Asian American women not interested in pregnancy were more engaged than women interested in pregnancy.
- Ads with photos of pregnant women had the highest CTR for the pregnant audience for 2 of 3 themes.
- Cost of targeting Asian American women is higher than campaign 1 due to the targeting and less efficient CTR’s.

As a whole, this qualitative exploration into Hmong women’s preferences in receiving fish consumption messages, alongside the digital marketing testing has resulted in rich findings that will help ChooseYourFish and the Minnesota Department of Health tailor messages to better support the Hmong community in MN as it relates to healthy fish consumption and fetal development.