



University of California, San Francisco
Northwestern University

MASALA PULSE

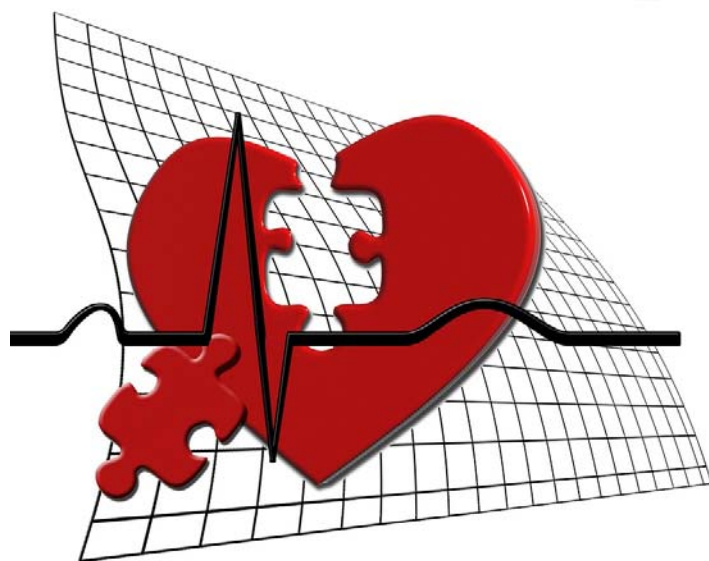
The Official Newsletter of the MASALA Study
<http://www.masalastudy.org>

Why Do South Asians Have So Much Heart Disease and Stroke?

Dear MASALA participants:

The fundamental reason for doing this study was to understand why people from the South Asian sub-continent have so much heart disease and stroke. There are only a handful of studies around the world that are investing the time, resources, and effort into answering this particular question, and we are all starting to work together to answer this big question. From large studies done in Whites and Blacks for 20 to 30 years, we have learned that smoking, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure are risk factors for heart disease---but these do not explain the high rates of heart disease in South Asians! MASALA is the only study in the U.S. that is attempting to do this in a systematic and coordinated way with repeated measurements over time in a large group of people. If we learn what factors help to predict who develops a heart attack or has a stroke, we can target those who are at highest risk and use most helpful therapies to prevent these life-threatening events.

We can only learn what is important for South Asians if we know who has had a heart disease or stroke. We need you to call or email us right away if you have had a heart attack, stroke, or had any procedures on your heart. With your permission, we will obtain the test results from your doctor to check your diagnosis. This data is kept securely in our locked cabinets and on our secure servers on our computer and is never shared with anyone outside of our immediate study team. Our study coordinators email and call you every year to check to see if you have had any changes in your health status. **Don't wait for this call. Please notify us immediately** once you have had an event so that we can begin the process of obtaining your records and identifying the causes for why you had this event. You can click on the



Contact Us button on our website (masalastudy.org).

Thank you for your continued participation! We hope what we learn from this study will lead to healthier lives for our community and future generations.

Warm wishes,
Alka Kanaya and Namratha Kandula



Healthy Eating!

Desi Style Thanksgiving: Butternut Squash with Chickpeas

(Adopted/modified from Food and Wine)

Ingredients:

- 2 large butternut squash (5 lbs)—peeled, seeded and diced into 1-inch cubes
- One 19-ounce can of chickpeas—drained, rinsed and dried
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3 cups lowfat plain yogurt or Greek yogurt
- 3/4 cup of finely chopped cilantro (or mint)
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

How to make it:

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 375°. In a large bowl, toss the butternut squash with the chickpeas, olive oil, spices and season with salt and pepper. Spread the squash cubes and chickpeas on a



large rimmed baking sheet and roast for 1 hour, or until tender.

Step 2: Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, stir the yogurt with the cilantro and lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.

Step 3: Spoon the roasted butternut squash and chickpeas onto a platter and drizzle with 1/2 cup of the yogurt sauce. Serve the remaining yogurt sauce on the side



- **Please call us if you have a major change in your health status, a new address, or a new phone number,** if you were recently in the hospital, or if you underwent a serious outpatient medical test, or have any new diagnoses.

- **Please take part in our phone interviews.**

If we don't reach you and we leave a message, please call us back. We need to update your information each year

- We sometimes send you forms asking you to give MASALA permission to collect your medical records from hospitals and doctors' offices. **Please return these forms quickly,** so we will be able to get records MASALA needs for its research.

To contact the UCSF clinic, call 415-236-2725

To contact the Northwestern clinic, call 312-841-1967

**For study news, events,
and publications:**



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Check out our study website:
www.masalastudy.org

Support Us:

We gratefully accept donations to support our work. To donate, visit our study website at www.masalastudy.org and click on the "Support Us" link at the bottom of the

How Do Our Social Networks Influence our Health?

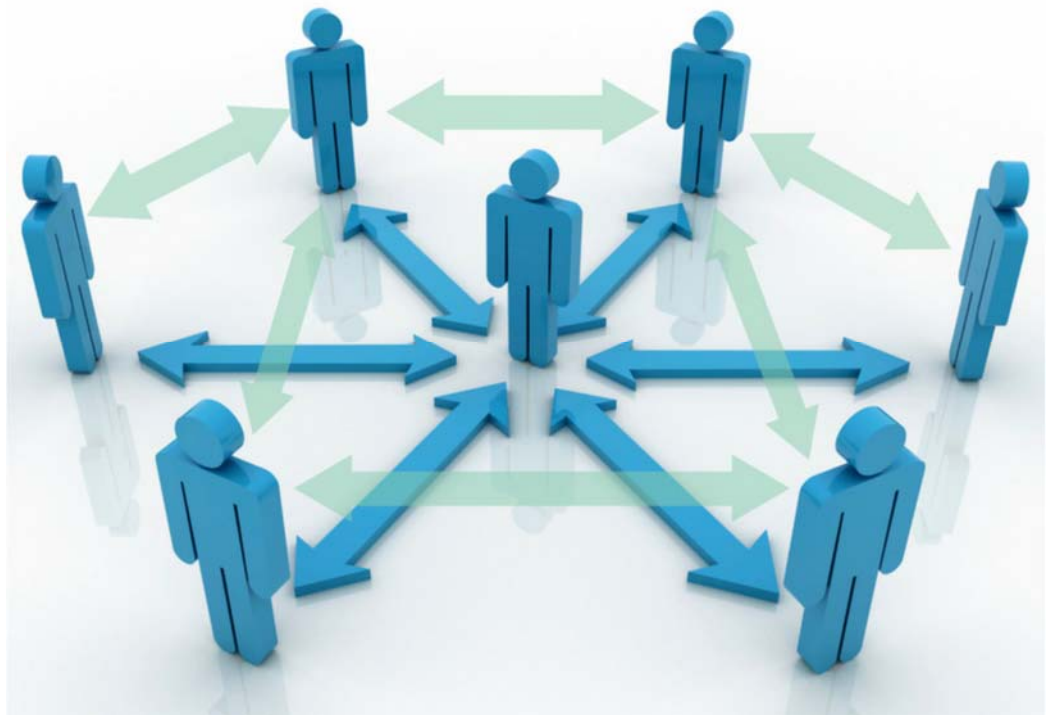
Many of us recognize that family, friends, peers, and coworkers play an important role in our lives. For a long time, health care has focused mostly on individuals, without considering how the people around us may influence our health and health behaviors. Now, there is growing interest in the power of social connectedness, the importance of social support, and the influences individuals have on one another's behavior.

Social network analysis is a useful tool to study relationships and the flow of information between individuals, groups, and organizations. This may be especially important for South Asians, who place great importance on their family and community. In the MASALA study, we are studying the connections between social networks and the MASALA study participants' diet, physical activity, weight, physical and mental health. MASALA is the first study to investigate how social networks influence health in the South Asian community. Understanding the social lives and relationships of South Asians and how they are linked to health can help inform more effective health behavior programs for our community.

We recently published two papers on social networks in MASALA. We found that South Asians have a relatively large social networks, consisting mostly of family members and individuals who are also South Asian. Social networks that were more dense (when network members know each other), emotionally closer, and were comprised mostly of family were more likely to talk about health with each other. These networks exhibited variation based on the individual's characteristics suggesting potentially important subgroup differences in the social environment, which affects the sources of influ-

ence and support, and the types of information and resources available to South Asian immigrants.

In a second paper, we looked at whether the body size of network members was associated with the MASALA participants' perception of a "healthy" body size. We found that if the network members had larger body sizes, then the MASALA participant thought of larger body sizes as "healthy." As a next step, we will look at whether these perceptions



about healthy body size and the network members' body size are associated with weight gain in MASALA participants. It has been observed that body size norms can influence perception of need for behavior change or selection of partners to engage in weight loss behaviors (i.e. exercise). This may be particularly relevant for South Asians because we have already shown that they develop cardiovascular risk factors at much lower body weight and BMI compared with other racial/ethnic groups.

Learn more about how social networks influence South Asians' health by reading two papers that were recently published in peer reviewed scientific journals.

UCSF and Northwestern University
Mediators of Atherosclerosis in South Asians Living in America (MASALA) Study
550 16th Street, 6th Floor
UCSF Box 1793
San Francisco, CA 94143
<http://www.masalastudy.org>



JOIN US FOR CHAT AND CHAI!

The MASALA study team invites you and your family to discuss and learn.



- ◆ Celebrate the successful completion of phase 2 and learn about the latest study results.
- ◆ Meet other participants and the study team.



**We are holding this event at four different Bay Area locations.
Please attend one that is convenient for you.**

Locations:

- Milpitas Library, 160 N Main street, Milpitas :Sunday, Oct 7th, 3—4:30 pm
- San Mateo Library, 55 W 3rd Ave, San Mateo: Sunday, Oct 14th, 2—3:30 pm
- Pleasanton Library, 400 Bernal Ave, Pleasanton– Sat, Oct 20th, 10:30 am—12 pm
- Martin Luther King Library, 150 E San Fernando St, San Jose–Sat, Oct 27th, 3 to 4:30pm