

# UC ANR Nutrition Policy Institute

## **Brown Bag Seminar Series**

Recruitment and Retention Strategies - Lessons  
Learned from the MASALA Study

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**University of California**

Agriculture and Natural Resources

 Nutrition Policy Institute





# Recruitment and Retention Strategies: Lessons learnt from the MASALA Study



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# Background: Who are South Asians?

- South Asians (SA)
  - Over 4.3 million in U.S.\*
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing immigrant group in the U.S. (ACS 2015)
- Increased risk of diseases
  - Genetic predisposition
  - Shifts in eating patterns
  - Sedentary lifestyle
- SA have highest death rate from heart disease in the U.S.



\*South Asian Americans Leading Together ([www.saalt.org](http://www.saalt.org))



# The MASALA Study

- MASALA- The Mediators of Atherosclerosis in South Asians Living in America
- Longitudinal, community-based cohort of SA men and women
- Established in 2010
- Participants (n=1163) between 40-84 years old
- Two clinical centers
  - University of California, San Francisco [UCSF]
  - Northwestern University [NWU]
- MASALA similar in methods and measures to the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA)
- NIH funded



Alka Kanaya, M.D.  
UCSF

# Recruitment

- Two main methods of recruitments:
  - Referrals
  - Community events
- Participants screened for study eligibility by telephone
- Eligible Participants invited to the clinical site
- ~4 hour baseline clinical examination
- Incentives
  - \$25 dollar gift card or cash incentive
  - Results of blood tests, CT Scan, glucose tolerance test





# Eligibility Criteria



- Eligibility Criteria for new participants:
  - South Asian ancestry
  - age between 50 and 84 years
  - ability to speak and/or read English, Hindi, or Urdu
  - No prior CVD
  - No blood relatives already participating in MASALA
- Study recruiters/staff members were bilingual in English and Hindi or Urdu



# Measurements

- Clinical Measurements
  - Blood Tests
  - CT Scan/CAC score
  - BMI
  - Seated BP
  - Waist and hip circumference
  - Urine collection



# Measurements (continued)

- FFQ
  - Study of Health Assessment and Risk in Ethnic Groups (SHARE) food frequency questionnaire
  - Created and validated among South Asians in Canada
- Physical Activity
- Smoking and Alcohol Use
- Medication/Supplements/Vitamin Use
- Family History
- Social Network and Acculturation
- Religiosity/Spirituality
- Psychological health





# Follow-up with Participants

- Annual telephone follow-up calls/interview
- Mailed or emailed brief questionnaire (10 min)
  - Any hospitalizations
  - Any new diagnoses
  - Any new procedures
- Follow-up visit
  - After 4-5 years from the first visit
  - Comparison with baseline

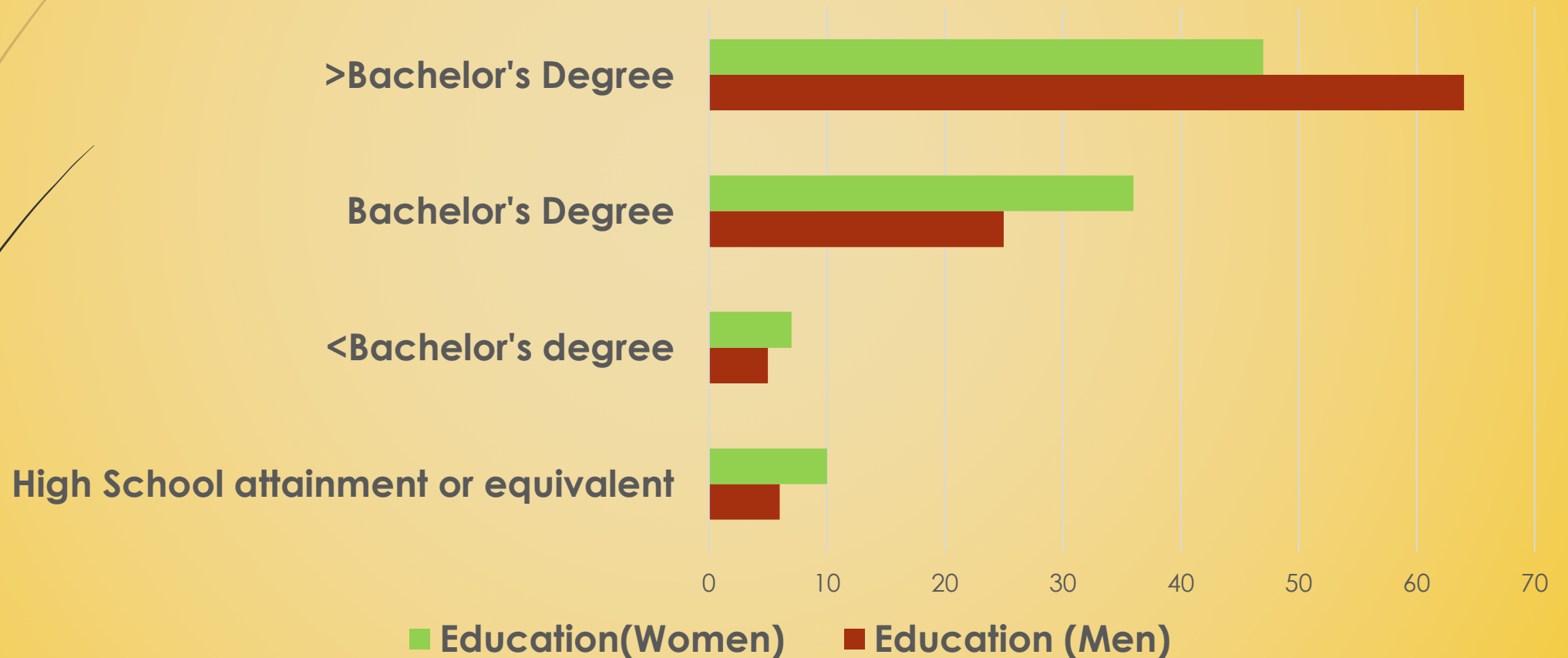


# Characteristics of MASALA Participants

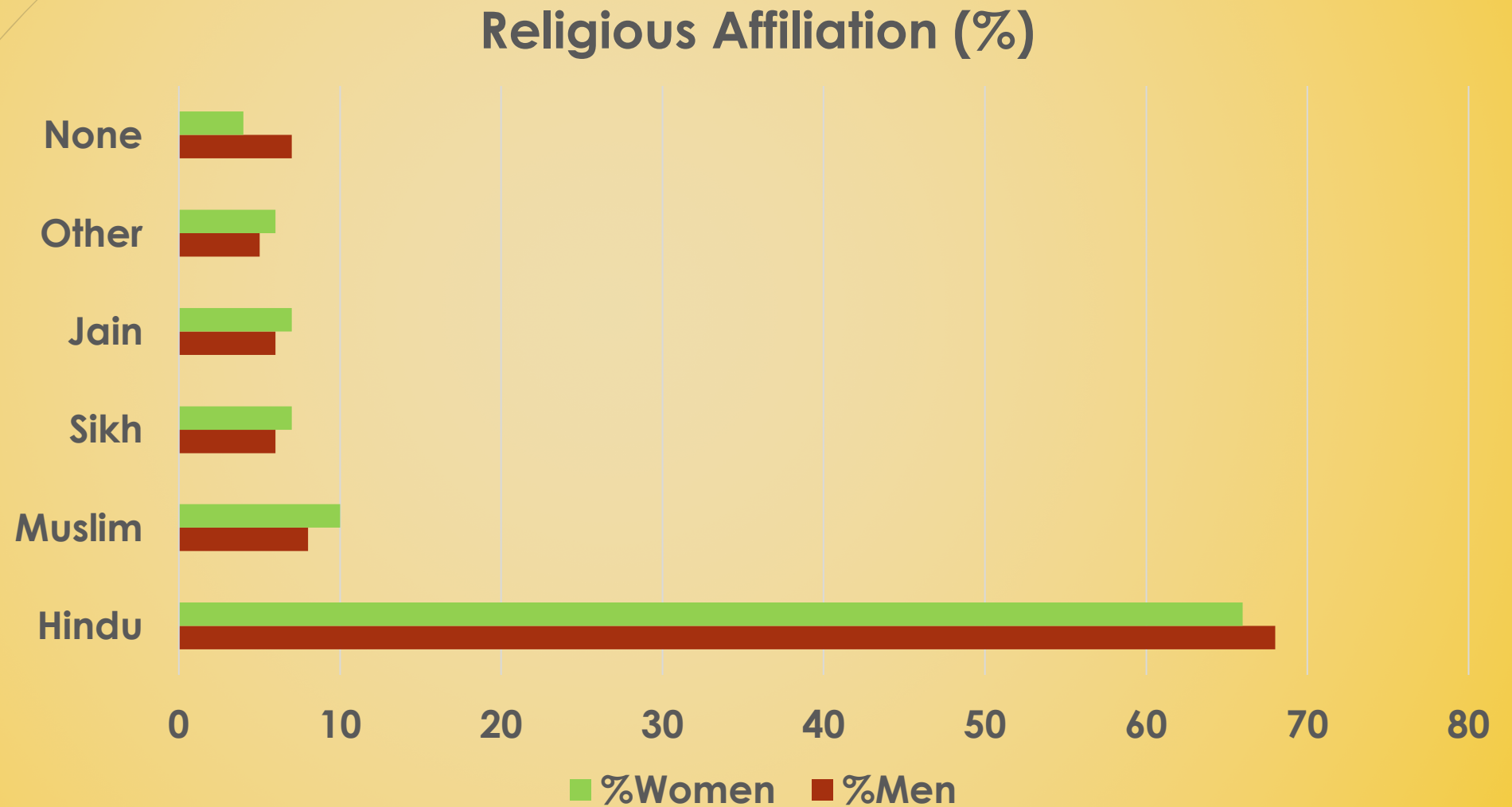
Characteristics	Men (N=607)	Women (N=556)
Location		
SF Bay Area	50%	55%
Chicago	50%	45%
Mean Age (years)	57 years	56 years
Mean Years lived in the U.S.	28	27

# Education Level of MASALA Participants

## Highest Educational Attainment %



# Religious Affiliation of MASALA Participants





# Observed Barriers for Participation and Solutions

- Transportation to SF
- Distance and time
- Some reluctance in travelling alone

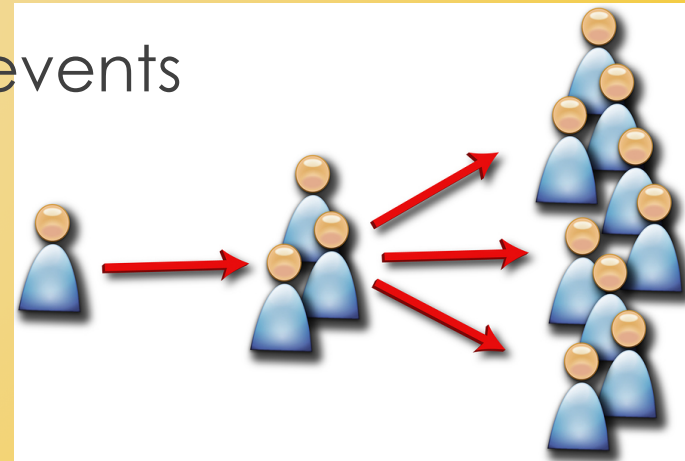
## **Strategies to overcome these barriers**

- Travel reimbursements (for follow-up visits)
  - Cab/Uber/Lyft ride covered within the Bay Area
- Travel/flight incentive up to \$250 for participants who moved away (for follow up visits)
- Home visits
- Accompanied by a coordinator/intern
  - New and follow-up clinic visits



# Recruitment

- Total participants at UCSF site: 554 participants
- 116 new participants in the new cycle (~11 months)
  - Recruitment started last week of March 2017
  - Participants seen until last week of February 2018
- Recruitment:
  - Referrals from previous participants
  - Talks and/or Booth set up at Community events
    - Local SA organizations and groups
    - Religious organizations





# Community events





# Materials for Recruitment

- Flyers
- Brochure
- Wall street journal article
- Trifold informational poster
- MASALA banner

## How will I benefit from participating in MASALA?

You will be contributing to medical knowledge on how to prevent heart disease, stroke, and other serious diseases of the blood vessels. Medical knowledge can only advance if people like you are willing to participate in medical research. Results from the blood tests, physical exams and CT scan will be provided to you in order to have a better understanding of your health.

## Is the information I give you confidential?

Yes, all the information you provided is held in strict confidence and will be used for statistical research purposes only. The information you give us will never be associated with your name, as provided by law.

## Who is MASALA funded by?

MASALA is funded by the U.S. government through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and is conducted through the University of California, San Francisco in partnership with Northwestern University.

To learn more about the MASALA Study, please visit our website:

[www.masalastudy.org](http://www.masalastudy.org)

Study Sites:



Study Funded by:



# MASALA

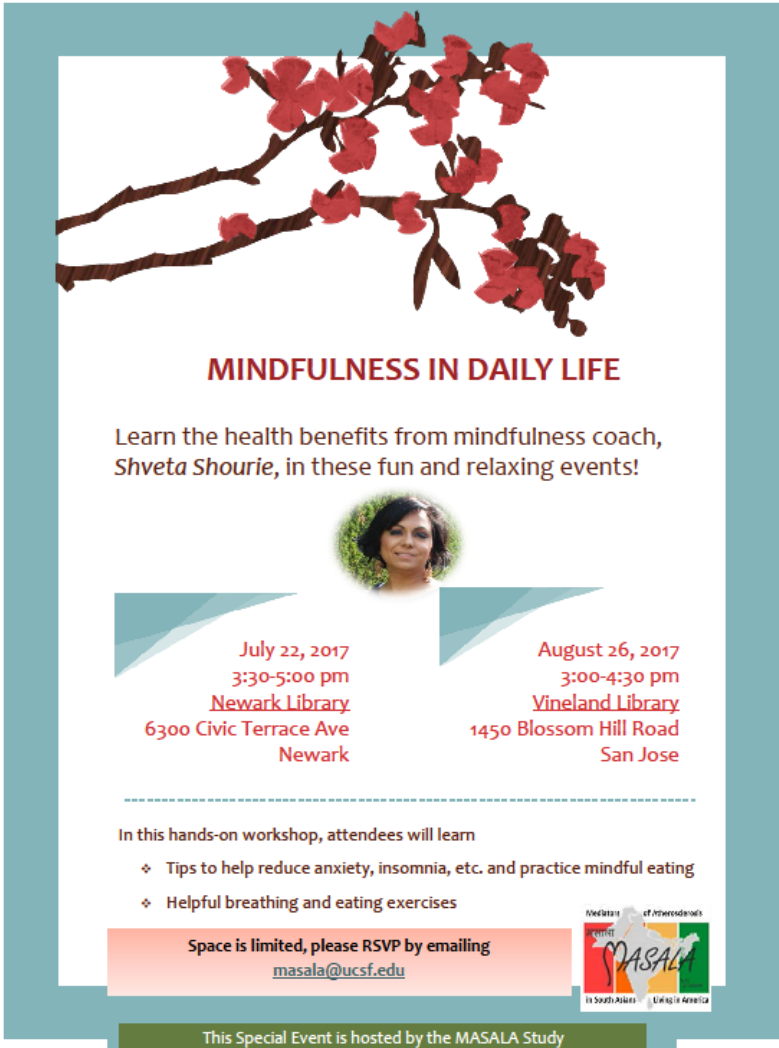
Mediators of  
Atherosclerosis in  
South Asians  
Living in America



UCSF  
University of California  
San Francisco


# Strategies/Materials for Retention

- Birthday cards
- Holiday cards (Eid, Diwali, Christmas)
- Newsletters
- Calls/Emails
  - By coordinators
  - By the PI
- Community outreach/health events and related flyers
  - Self-Care/Yoga for South Asian Women
  - Mindfulness in Daily Life



**MINDFULNESS IN DAILY LIFE**

Learn the health benefits from mindfulness coach, *Shveta Shourie*, in these fun and relaxing events!




<b>July 22, 2017</b> 3:30-5:00 pm <b>Newark Library</b> 6300 Civic Terrace Ave Newark	<b>August 26, 2017</b> 3:00-4:30 pm <b>Vineland Library</b> 1450 Blossom Hill Road San Jose
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In this hands-on workshop, attendees will learn

- ❖ Tips to help reduce anxiety, insomnia, etc. and practice mindful eating
- ❖ Helpful breathing and eating exercises

Space is limited, please RSVP by emailing [masala@ucsf.edu](mailto:masala@ucsf.edu)



This Special Event is hosted by the MASALA Study





## Retention strategies (88% Retention)

**UCSF**  
**Exam 2 visits**  
**N=438**

Home visits

18

Taxi/shared ride payments

29

Travel reimbursement (long-distance travel)

4

Telephone/skype visits

1

Community event-based visits

0 (Only done at NWU)

Accompanied by coordinator/intern

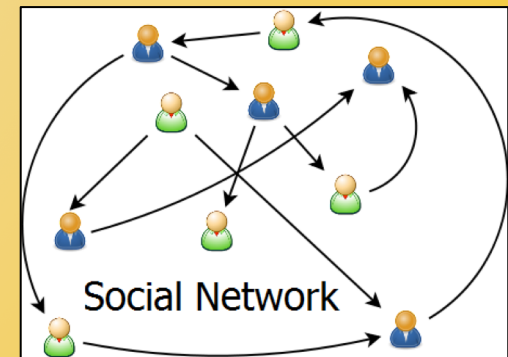
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# Results from The MASALA Study

- MASALA- The Mediators of Atherosclerosis in South Asians Living in America (Kanaya et al., 2013)
  - higher burden of cardiovascular risk factors at younger ages
  - Much higher diabetes prevalence than all MESA groups
- Less favorable body composition in comparison to all ethnic groups in MESA (Whites, Chinese Americans, African Americans and Latinos) (Shah et al., 2016)
  - Low lean mass
  - Higher liver fat
  - Greater intermuscular fat
  - Lower adiponectin levels and higher resistin levels

# Results (continued)

- Social Network Affiliation (Kandula et al., 2018)
- Affiliation with religious and spiritual organizations perceived beneficial to health
- Emotional closeness with network members significantly and positively associated with participants' self-rated health
- Networks with higher density and more kin were significantly associated with health-related discussions





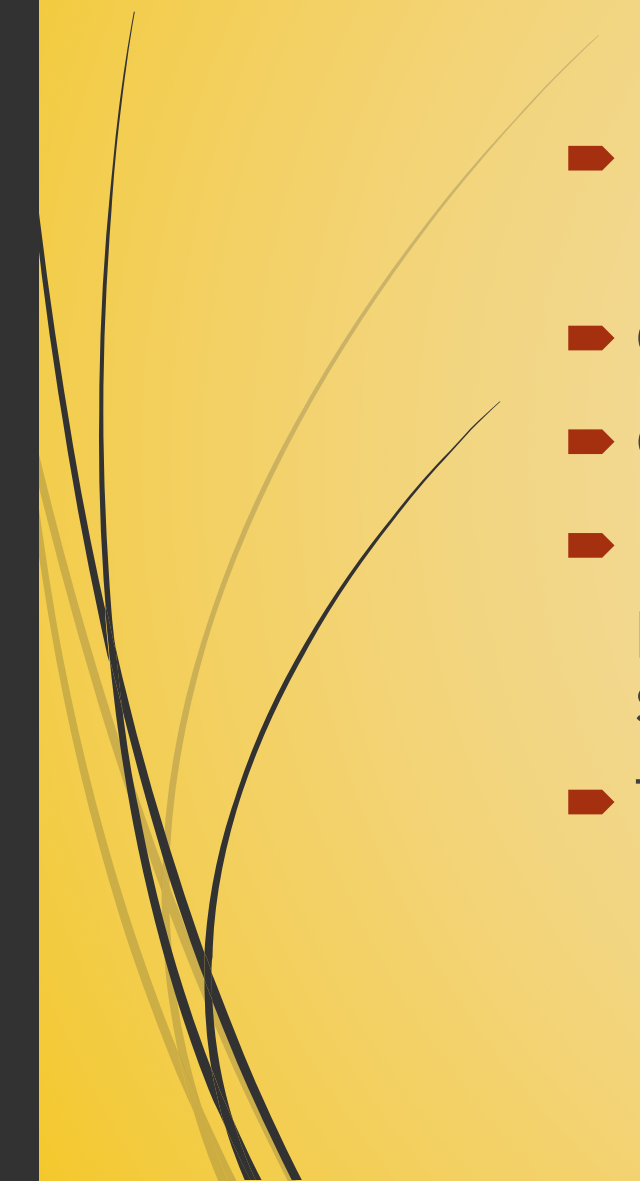
# Results (continued)

- Three major dietary patterns (Gadgil et al., 2015)
  - A vegetarian diet with fried snacks, sweets and high-fat dairy foods
    - low HDL cholesterol and high insulin resistance
  - “Animal protein” diet
    - higher weight, waist size and cholesterol levels
  - Prudent diet
- Increased consumption of sweets as a coping strategy with discrimination (Nadimpalli et al., 2017)





# Future Work

- Data analysis and comparison of characteristics between baseline and Exam 2: progression of risk factors
  - CVD risk calculator among South Asians
  - Genetic and epigenetic analyses
  - Recommendations for physicians and public health professionals for better CVD treatment and prevention strategies respectively in SA
  - Third Exam
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MASALA Study-UCSF Team



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