

Family History: Value-Added Information in Assessing Cardiac Health
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe family health history profiles and objective indices of cardiac health among ethnically diverse working adults. Family history of disease is an important predictor of individual health, yet is underused by clinicians. Participants were staff in an elder-care facility and completed a web-enabled program capturing family history, objective cardiovascular measures (blood lipids, blood pressure, height, weight, and waist-to-hip ratio), and subjective measures (anxiety, spirituality, and health status appraisal). Of the 44 participants, 89% were unable to provide complete information about their family health and mortality for the three-generation genogram; 25% had one or more first-degree relatives with cardiac disease; and more than two thirds had first-degree relatives with diabetes. More than 80% of the sample exhibited objective indices of risk including body mass indexes in the overweight or obese categories. Family history information was incorporated into health screening and enabled more appropriate health counseling for these employees.

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