**Abstract**

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**For Research on Ageing**

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OLDER ASIAN MIGRANTS’ CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTH THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, WRIGHT-ST CLAIR VA, AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**Introduction**: Chinese, Indian and Korean peoples comprise the largest Asian immigrant groups in New Zealand. Unlike some countries such as Canada which has closed the door on family reunification immigration policies, New Zealand enables up to 4000 immigrants annually to join non-dependent, adult children who have resided in NZ for at least three years. International research has demonstrated a relationship between older immigrants’ civic engagement and health yet little is known about older Asian immigrants’ community contributions and subjective health in New Zealand.

**Methods**: Using grounded theory methodology, 74 community-dwelling older migrants, Chinese (24), Indian (25) and Korean (25), in Auckland were recruited using purposive and theoretical sampling in partnership with relevant ethnic community leaders and native-speaking research assistants. The participants, 37 men and 37 women, were aged 60 to 83 years, and had been resident in New Zealand between one and 19 years. Data were gathered through 9 culturally-specific focus groups; and 15 individual interviews which were conducted in Mandarin, English/Hindi and Korean, respectively, audiotaped and transcribed. Data were then translated into English for analysis. Schatzman’s dimensional analysis method was used to interpret the culturally-specific social processes prior to establishing one cross-cultural, substantive theory.

**Results**: The core process identified was one of strengthening community. These older Asian immigrants wanted to give service to others and felt a duty to contribute to society. They overcame barriers to community participation in order to contribute to their ethnic and wider communities. They experienced their own and other seniors’ healthfulness as being optimised through their civic engagement.

**Conclusion**: The informal strategies used by older Asian immigrants to strengthen community are seemingly poorly understood or represented at a policy level. Public policies aimed at enabling older immigrants’ civic engagement could have benefits for individual health and the health of wider society.