



Society for Prevention Research Statement on Anti-Asian Violence

Over the past several years, there has been an alarming rise in violent attacks against communities made vulnerable by racist rhetoric and policies, including African American, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and Asian American people.

Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have been increasingly targeted since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by disparaging rhetoric peddled by the prior administration. Since March 20, 2020 there have been nearly 4,000 documented racist incidents against AAPI – a 150% increase from prior years.^{1,2}

While these numbers and the recent tragic murder of six Asian women in Atlanta are alarming and upsetting, everyday racism and systematic discrimination are nothing new to the Asian American and Pacific Islanders communities. The Chinese Exclusion Act, the internment during WW II of US citizens of Japanese descent, KKK assaults on Vietnamese fishing communities along the US Gulf Coast, the attacks on South Asian Americans in the aftermath of 9/11, and the fact that many AAPI individuals no longer feel safe walking our city streets are just a few examples.

It would be negligent to discuss the Atlanta murders without noting the intersection of racism with misogyny, gender-based violence, and gun violence. Local and national leaders, as well as the scientific community, must understand the link between these factors to prevent racist and violent incidents. If not, we will continue *reacting* to these incidents with our response limited to well-meaning, but ultimately meaningless words. To accomplish this goal:

- We support the widescale implementation of programs and policies generated by the field of prevention science that have been shown to ameliorate, challenge, and change the structural, institutional, and individual level policies and practices that perpetuate and sustain racism and sexism.
- We are collectively committed to working with governing bodies and communities to co-develop interventions and policies that are aligned with community strengths and needs, and to promote the use of community-led and evidence-informed solutions to ensure that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities live in a society that is fair, just, equitable, and free of racism, xenophobia, harassment, mass shootings, and violent extremism.

To prevent systemic bias, oppression, and discrimination, we need continued investments and actions aimed at preventing horrific racist, misogynistic, and xenophobic events. Specifically, we believe we need to increase:

- 1) The number of BIPOC individuals on local, state, and federal administrative and governing bodies;
- 2) Education of the public on historical injustices against AAPI communities, recognizing that knowledge regarding determinants of inequity, violence, and structural racism is a first step in evidence-based interventions that target the end to cycles of violence or the exacerbation of inequities;
- 3) Funding for mental health services, including parity in insurance coverage;
- 4) Funding to prevent the continued spread of white nationalism, which is the common denominator of mass violence and hate crime incidents;
- 5) Funding for prevention science, focused on research to reduce systemic- and individual-level racism, sexism, and other forms of bias and discrimination;
- 6) Funding to prevent gun violence; and
- 7) Research on Asian American health inequities.

These latter four points are woefully underfunded and understudied relative to other health sectors and deserve specific attention by policymakers.

In solidarity,

The Society for Prevention Research

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