

Diversity, Inclusion, and Aging in the Midwest: Opportunities for New Directions with Wisconsin's Hmong Community (DIAMOND-Hmong)

NIMLAS Pilot Project Final Report
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1. What major activities have been accomplished, under each of your specific aims, with your pilot project funding?

The goals of this project (funded from November 2022 through March 2024) was to increase the representation of Wisconsin's Hmong refugee community in health and aging research (NIMLAS Theme 1) and develop knowledge about and for the Hmong community. The pilot grant pursued the following specific aims:

- (1) Conduct life history interviews with approximately 40 older Hmong adults in Wisconsin.
- (2) Analyze the interviews and produce qualitative research papers
- (3) Inform the design of culturally and linguistically appropriate research tools.

Progress on Aim 1: To date, we have completed semi-structured life history interviews with 55 older Hmong adults throughout Wisconsin (including Appleton, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Stevens Point, and Wausau). Each participant was interviewed 1-3 times, for a total of 112 completed interviews. The total number of interviews was increased in order to bolster the inclusion of men (who were somewhat harder to recruit initially), individuals from multiple Hmong clans, persons of varied ages and migration waves, and Shamans – traditional healers with special insight into spiritual dimensions of health in the community. The final sample was approximately 58% female, ranging in age from 50-80, and including members of 13 out of the 18 Hmong clans. Approximately half of the participants immigrated in the late 1970s and 1980s, and approximately a quarter each immigrated in the 1990s and in the 2000s.

Progress on Aim 2: Interviews were conducted in two dialects of Hmong (white and green), recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. Coding in Nvivo to support multiple qualitative analyses is in progress. We have presented findings from this research at the 2023 Gerontological Society of America conference, and have another presentation pending at the 2024 GSA. In addition, we have four manuscripts-in-progress drawing on the data. One is a life course perspective on health and aging in the Hmong refugee community; another explores methodological challenges and strategies for engaging this community in research; the third examines Hmong elders' communal spirituality and collective health; and a fourth considers the implications of "aging out of place" for these multiply-displaced older adults.

Progress on Aim 3: We have conducted outreach to Hmong community organizations throughout Wisconsin (see list below), and are in the process of setting up cognitive interviews/focus groups to validate and pre-test survey questions in Hmong. Our plan is to complete these cognitive interviews in summer/fall 2024 and field the finalized survey instrument during the 2024-25 academic year, supported by funding from UW-Madison's [Research Forward](#) Initiative.

Event/Organization/Person/Etc.	Date of Meeting/Event
Bee Lor and Nasiah Herr, Hmong American Center, Inc.	10/9/2023
Wa Yia Thao, Hmong Center of Green Bay, Inc.	10/9/2023, 11/21/2023, and 12/7/2023
Wausau Hmong Festival 2023	7/19/2023

Madison Hmong New Year 2023	9/15/2023
Wausau Hmong New Year 2023	9/29/2023
Pa Der Lor, BayView Community Center	8/25/2023 and 10/20/2023
In The Act Radio Program: Podcast Episode Houa Yang	9/26/2023 - 9/28/2023
Project Resiliency Huddle Meeting	1/11/2024
Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual Assistance Association, Inc. (WUCMAA) Meetings	monthly since 7/19/2023

2. How have lessons learned / research findings / analysis results from each of your specific aims been disseminated to the broader community of longitudinal researchers that might benefit from what you have learned?

We note that given the intensive nature of primary qualitative data collection in Hmong, our analysis and dissemination efforts are in progress, but not yet complete.

Thus far, we have given one presentation at GSA 2023, and have another pending at GSA 2024. We have also given progress report presentations at NIMLAS network meetings in 2023 and 2024, as well as a brief update to the members of the Network on Longitudinal Studies of Aging.

One of our manuscripts-in-progress is a methods piece that will detail our approach to community-based recruitment and interviewing practices. The planned cognitive interviews and pilot survey will likewise provide additional insights that will be disseminated once findings are available.

3. Please provide formal citations for all conference presentations, technical reports, journal articles, or data sets arising from your work. Submitted abstracts, papers, or reports that are under review should also be included.

Engelman, Lor, et al. "When we arrived in this country, we were already very old: Health and aging in Wisconsin's Hmong refugee community." Gerontological Society of America, Tampa, FL, November 2023.

Lor, Engelman, et al. "Live as a Group, as a Circle": Hmong Elders' Communal Spirituality and Collective Health. Gerontological Society of America, Seattle, WA, November 2024 (pending).