



Southern Community Cohort Study

annual publication for study participants

Welcome to the 20th anniversary celebration of the SCCS! As we look back over these past 20 years, we are most grateful for your participation in the SCCS. As a direct result of your support, we have published more than 350 research papers to answer significant questions related to cancer and other diseases. For example, research from SCCS participants helped to make more people eligible for lung cancer screening to catch lung cancer early.

In this issue, you will find a timeline of some of the key events in the history of the SCCS, some recent research findings, as well as information about a new research study. Did you know that the first participant joined the study in March 2002 in Atlanta, Georgia and the final participant joined the study in September 2009? And while 94% of SCCS participants still live in the South, many have moved to all 50 states. Thank you for keeping in touch!

You will also read about a new sister study called the Southern Environmental Health Study. If you or people you know are between the ages of 40 and 70 and live in the southeastern states, you are eligible to join this new study too! Please see page 3 to learn more.

Can you think back to what you were doing 20 years ago? We've all seen a lot of changes in these past 20 years. What hasn't changed is our commitment to ensure that the information you have shared about your lives and health is used to help improve the health for all people. Look for the next short survey in your mailbox or inbox in the coming months.

With gratitude,

Wei Zheng, MD, PhD Martha Shrubsole, PhD



SPOTLIGHT ON SCCS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



Over 70 community health centers joined the SCCS to recruit members from their communities (see the map on page 4). One of these centers was the East Arkansas Family Health Center (EAFHC) in West Memphis, Arkansas. The EAFHC provides primary and preventive health care services to West Memphis and surrounding communities. They joined the SCCS in 2004. Over 1,800 people joined the SCCS through their participation at EAFHC. The team at East Arkansas has now become a partner for the new Southern Environmental Health Study. When asked why they are excited about the new study, Dr. Susan Ward-Jones, CEO, of EAFHC said, "It's important that people throughout the South have the opportunity to join research studies such as the SEHS. When our communities are represented in research, it moves us all closer to a cleaner and healthier environment."

Thank you EAFHC and all of the other community health centers for the work you do to make healthier communities around the South and for your long partnership with the SCCS.

We will not contact you about any individual test results found from conducting our laboratory research as part of this study. Please remember to get your yearly check-up and recommended health screenings.

HOW SCCS RESEARCH BENEFITS OUR COMMUNITIES



Over the past 20 years, SCCS research has improved both how scientists understand and how doctors treat diseases like cancer or heart disease. Here are some highlights:

In 2022, SCCS researchers found that intakes of

polyphenols, a dietary antioxidant found mainly in food from plants, were associated with a reduced risk of colorectal cancer. Increasing intake of fruits, vegetables, and tea may help to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. This is especially true for Black SCCS participants who had lower intakes of polyphenols.

Fike LT, Munro H, Yu D, Dai Q, Shrubsole MJ. Dietary polyphenols and the risk of colorectal cancer in the prospective Southern Community Cohort Study. Am J Clin Nutr. 115(4):1155-1165, 2022. PMC8970992

In 2019, SCCS researchers published a paper describing how lung cancer screening guidelines were not equitable for Black smokers at high risk for cancer. As a result, the guidelines have been changed to be more equitable.

Aldrich MC, Mercaldo SF, Sandler KL, Blot WJ, Grogan EL, Blume JD. Evaluation of USPSTF Lung Cancer Screening Guidelines Among African American Adult Smokers. JAMA Oncol. 5(9):1318-1324, 2019. PMC6604090

In 2016, SCCS researchers began to study the prevention of heart disease with a new tool – a single “Polypill” containing 4 common heart medicines combined into one pill. This approach resulted in lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol when compared to the group receiving their usual medical care.

Muñoz D, Uzoije P, Reynolds C, Miller R, Walkley D, Pappalardo S, Tousey P, Munro H, Gonzales H, Song W, White C, Blot WJ, Wang TJ. Polypill for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in an Underserved Population. N Engl J Med. 381(12):1114-1123, 2019. PMC6938029

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCCS

2001

INITIAL STUDY FUNDING RECEIVED

SCCS funded by National Cancer Institute

2002

ENROLLMENT BEGINS

The first SCCS participant was enrolled in March 2002 in Atlanta, Georgia

2005

50,000th PARTICIPANT ENROLLED

The SCCS enrolled its 50,000th participant on October 5, 2005 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama

2009

ENROLLMENT COMPLETED

The last SCCS participant was enrolled in September 2009 in Flora, Mississippi

2014

FOLLOW-UP MILESTONE

Over 100,000 follow-up surveys received from participants

2020

THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID

Participants unite in the fight against COVID-19 by joining the first online survey conducted by the SCCS

2020

STUDY FUNDING RENEWED

SCCS funding was renewed by the National Cancer Institute

2023

FIFTH FOLLOW-UP

Beginning soon, participants will be contacted for a fifth follow-up



HOW DOES SCCS KEEP YOUR INFORMATION UPDATED?

YOU are the most important part of the SCCS! The information that you provided to SCCS such as who you are and your answers to survey questions are helpful for testing and answering many questions about how to improve health for all Americans. But how does SCCS keep your information up to date?

Information about who you are (such as your name, birthdate, and social security number) helps the SCCS to update the information about you in SCCS. Other health organizations such as state health departments and disease registries routinely collect and maintain health and related information, including your name, birthdate, and social security number that is reported under state and other requirements. If you have a record in these health organizations, we should be able to identify them by matching your name, birthdate, and social security number to their own records about you that they already have. Then your information from the state health department or disease registry is sent to SCCS to update your files. This updated information includes learning about who has been diagnosed with cancer or other health conditions from records like state cancer registries, Medicare databases, and the National Death Index. Your information is always kept with the highest standards of privacy in mind. Only those individuals who need it to contact you or to do the matching will see your information.

How is information about you and other participants used? By learning who has cancer and who does not have cancer or who eats a lot of vegetables and who does not, SCCS researchers can look for patterns that may help to explain how to have a healthy life. See some examples of these findings on page 2.

Thank you for sharing your information with the SCCS. We could not do this important work without YOU!

Please help us stay in touch with you!

It's important the Southern Community Cohort Study has your most current contact information.

If your email, address or telephone number have changed, or you changed your mind about participating, call us toll free at **1-800-734-5057**



SOUTHERN
ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH STUDY

Scientists at Vanderbilt University Medical Center are starting an exciting new research study to better understand how the environment we live in and the experiences in our lives may affect our health.

If you are between the ages of 40 and 70, and live in the southeast U.S., you may be eligible to join.

Find out more at SEHStudy.org/info-sccs or scan the QR code.

Compensation provided.



SCAN ME

REFLECTIONS ON 20 YEARS OF SCCS

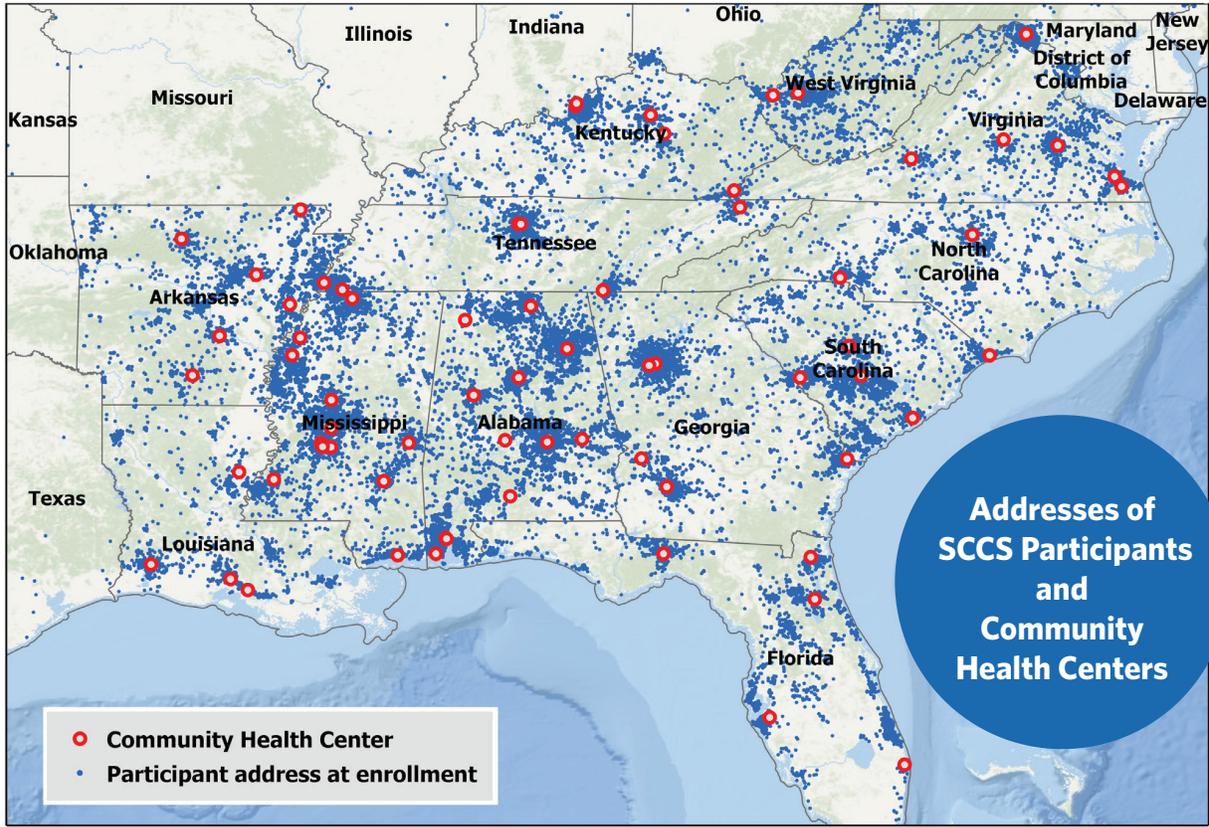
From the start of the SCCS, it was clear that there was an unmet need for research into high rates of cancer and other chronic diseases in the South. Racial and economic disparities contributed to these poor health outcomes. We were fortunate that government, academia, and local communities all recognized the importance of the SCCS.

Our team at Vanderbilt University, Meharry Medical College, and International Epidemiology Institute approached over 70 community health centers as research partners, and their response was overwhelmingly positive. Our first participants enrolled in 2002 in health centers in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee. From there we expanded to all 12 states in the southeast U.S., eventually enrolling over 85,000 participants who joined us to advance this important research.

After 20 years, I continue to be humbled by the altruism of SCCS participants for choosing to join the study and for their continuing support. It is inspiring to see so many people offering their time and effort in the hope of helping others.



William Blot, Ph.D.
Founding Principal Investigator
of the SCCS



Vanderbilt University Medical Center
 1300 Riverplace Blvd., Suite #601
 Jacksonville, FL 32207
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

