

# Too Few To Count: Utah African Americans' Perceptions of Heart Health

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**Key Findings:** Participants had various definitions and perceptions about heart health. Participants expressed a need for education about their heart and about overall health from their health care provider. The participants wanted to know how the heart affects disease and prevention of diseases, i.e. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and stroke.

## Background

- African Americans have higher morbidity and mortality from diseases that can affect the heart compared to White Americans
- Other studies have shown lack of general knowledge of the definition and perception of heart health
- This study examines perceptions of heart health among African Americans over age 40 living in Utah
- African Americans living in less diverse areas where they are “super minorities” (<5% of the population) are overlooked in health research
- African American population in Utah is less than 2% of the overall state population

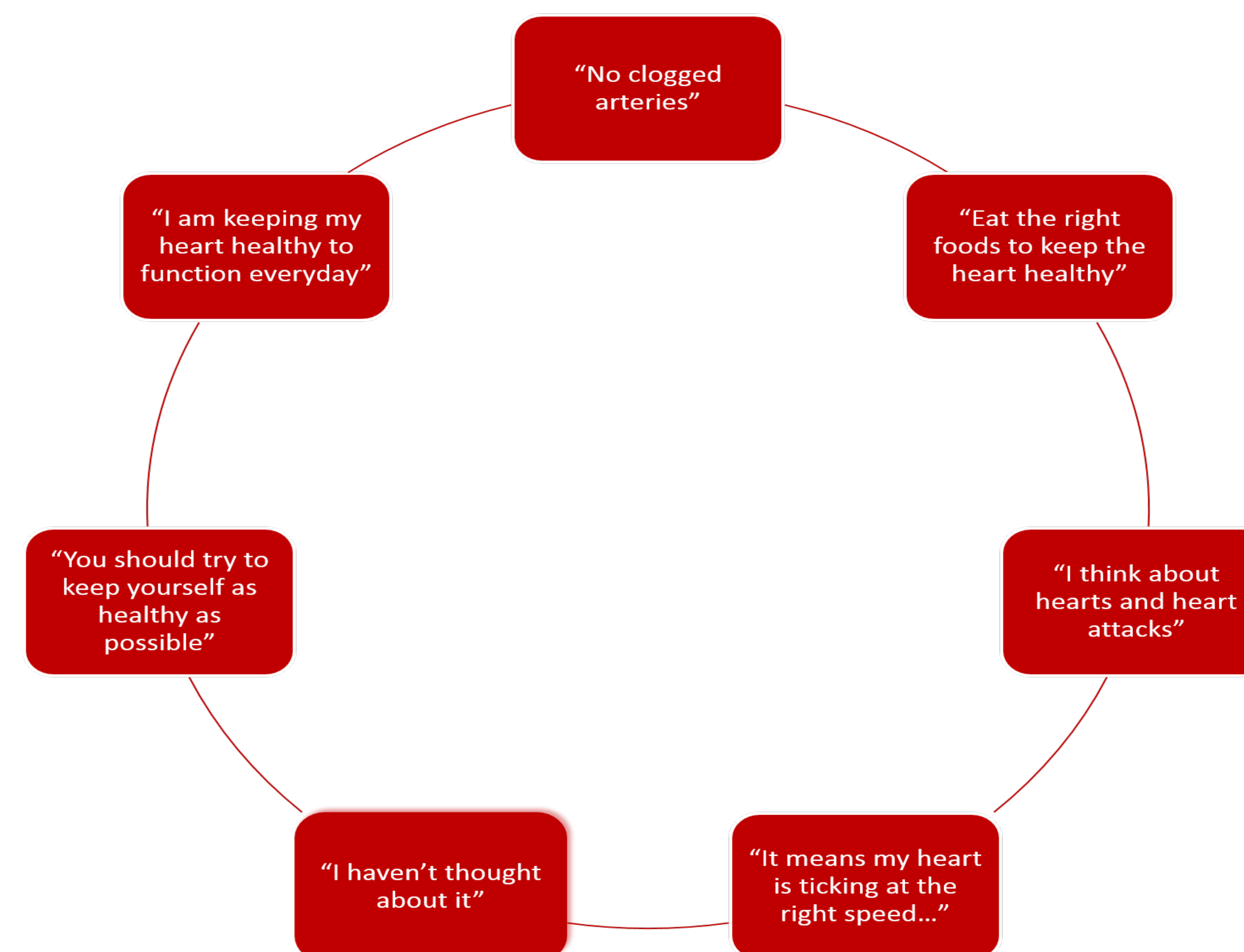
## Participants

- N=20 (12 women, 8 men)
- Inclusion criteria: US born, age 40 or older, reside in Salt Lake and Davis Counties
- Demographics: age range 40 -79;
  - 3 people had no health problems
  - 13 had 2 or more health problems

## Methods

- Qualitative descriptive study
- Semi-structured interviews were transcribed and coded
- Field notes and observations were documented and analyzed
- NVivo11 software used to inductively and iteratively code data
- Categories and themes were developed and analyzed

## How is Heart Health Defined by Study Participants?



## Results

- Analysis of coding yielded the following categories:
  - Heart health
  - Living in Salt Lake City
  - Health information
- Themes were developed after further review and analysis of the categories:
  - Heart health definition
  - Running in the family
  - Making sure I...
  - Thinking a lot about the heart
- Analysis to refine themes is ongoing

## Conclusions

### Participants perceptions of heart health in their words:

- The definition of heart health was related to concrete concepts like diet, exercise, and deaths of family members.
- Definitions of heart health included:
  - “You don’t have any clogged arteries, you are not fatigued, when you walk you don’t get tired.”
  - “Heart health is like eating right, taking the right vitamins, I take my vitamins and I try to eat the right foods.”
- The need for education about heart health by their healthcare provider
- Sparse messaging about heart health for African Americans in Utah, especially related to hypertension or diabetes.