

Women Attend A Modern Tea at Unprecedented Rates

It wasn't really a tea. There were no big hats and white gloves, no little sandwiches on tiny plates. But there were plenty of red jackets and dresses and suits on women supporting the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women Day."

More than 200 women representing all walks of life and nearly every ethnic and racial group took time out on a cold Saturday in February to attend the fifth annual A Modern Tea—a Community Health Network of Connecticut Foundation, Inc. initiative. Since 2006, women from throughout New England attend an entire day of activities related to heart healthy lifestyles that can include:

- Cardiovascular health screening, health risk assessments and workshops
- Healthy foods and a sampling of international teas that are high in antioxidants and contributing to a healthy heart
- A Red Dress fashion show
- Reiki, back, neck and hand massage as methods to prevent the stress associated with heart disease.
- Clothing and cosmetic booths to stimulate the importance of self-esteem.
- Heart health specialists as keynote speakers.

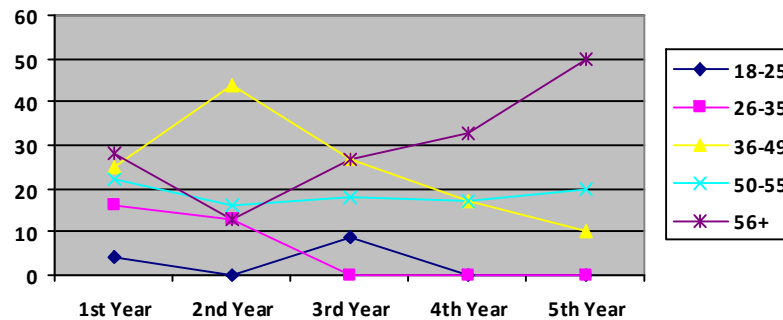
In the past five years, more than 1,000 women have attended A Modern Tea and more than a hundred corporations have sponsored its activities. In 2010, the Foundation conducted an evaluation to find out why women are drawn to A Modern Tea. The survey explored the following questions: (1) What motivates women to take a Saturday to attend an all day event such as A Modern Tea? (2) Were women more drawn to the activities not directly affiliated to health education or to activities directly related to health? (3) Why do more than 20 percent of women return to the program year after year?

To answer these questions, a small five-item opinion survey of all attendees was administered and site-based interviews of speakers and those staffing booths were conducted. The evaluation revealed that A Modern Tea attracts 200 participants—a number that has been almost consistently held since 2007. More than 165 participants completed surveys and 155 were eligible for data entry and analysis. The response rate for the survey was 78 percent. The high rate of response creates a high level of validity in the responses. In addition to the consistently high attendance rate and the high response rate on the survey, we found that 21 percent of first year participants returned for a second year of the program. More importantly, nearly 10 percent continued to come back in the third, fourth and fifth years of the program.

The evaluation also revealed that women who attended A Modern Tea were between the ages of 36 to 49, and 56 years of age and older. Although the majority was from the Greater New Haven area, women from New York, Boston, other parts of Massachusetts and Rhode Island also participated.

Modern Tea women are racially and ethnically diverse with a strongly representative group of African American, Latina, Asian, and Caucasian. In addition, the age group most interested in Modern Tea was 56 and older.

**FIGURE 1:
AGE DISTRIBUTION FROM YEAR ONE TO YEAR FIVE
(PERCENTAGE OF N = 155)**



When women were asked “why do you come to A Modern Tea?” Seventy-two percent responded that they were here to “to support heart health for women.” Women also reported that they came to the conference to participate in hearing lectures (53 percent), attending beauty and fashion exhibits (59 percent), and participating in stay-well activities (59 percent).

**CHART 1: WHY DO YOU COME TO A MODERN TEA?
2010**

Item	First Time n = 96	Two Years n = 32	Three Years n = 11	Four Years n = 6	Five Years n = 10	Total for 2010 n = 155 participants
Support heart health	53/55%	32/100%	11/100%	5/83%	10/100%	111/72%
Wear red	29/30%	13/41%	4/36%	2/33%	5/50%	53/34%
Hear Lectures	43/45%	17/53%	9/82%	5/83%	8/80%	82/53%
Beauty and Fashion	44/46%	21/66%	7/64%	3/50%	6/60%	92/59%
Stay-well Activities	55/57%	19/59%	7/64%	4/67%	7/70%	92/59%
To be with other women	40/42%	19/59%	8/73%	2/33%	6/60%	75/48%

While the first year participants enjoyed all the activities evenly with a slight preference for the stay-well activities (57 percent); it appears that in following years, the support of heart health was the dominate reason to return to the conference. More importantly, as women kept returning to the conference, their interest in lectures on health care increased.

When women were asked “What do you like best about A Modern Tea?” a strong majority indicated that they enjoyed the lunch lectures (63 percent) and the stay-well activities (71 percent). However, by the time women returned for the fourth or fifth time, they preferred more stay well activities and linking with other women who shared the same cause.

**CHART 3: WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT A MODERN TEA?
2010**

Item	First Time n = 96	Two Years n = 32	Three Years n = 11	Four Years n = 6	Five Years n = 10	Total for 2010 n = 155 participants
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The lunch lecture	59/61%	24/75%	9/82%	2/33%	4/40%	98/63%
The beauty activities	46/48%	16/50%	6/55%	3/50%	4/40%	75/48%
The stay-well activities	65/68%	23/72%	11/100%	3/50%	8/80%	110/71%
Being with other women with the same cause	54/56%	16/50%	8/73%	4/67%	5/50%	87/56%

Women provided feedback on ways to improve and sustain A Modern Tea. Overwhelmingly, respondents asked for more health education workshops (45 percent). Of the 155 participants at the conference, 25 percent suggested “ask[ing] for donations” rather than “increase[ing] ticket prices” (14 percent). Chart 4 reveals the findings.

In sum, this evaluation revealed interesting answers to the following questions:

- (1) What motivates women to take a Saturday to attend an all day event such as A Modern Tea?
- (2) Were women more drawn to the activities not directly affiliated to health education or to activities directly related to health?
- (3) Why do more than 20 percent of women return to the program year and year?

Interviews revealed that over the five years, women across New England and New York talked to other women about the program resulting in the high attendance rates. The high return rate among first time participants in the second year also indicates that the conference was enjoyed at a number of levels indicated in the written survey—lunch lectures, stay-well activities, and support women’s health especially.

This evaluation also reveals that women do not just come for the fashion show and fun women’s activities. A significant percentage of women reported they came to the conference because they understand the importance of women’s health, the value of the lunch lectures, the health activities, and the workshops. The 20 percent of women who returned clearly defined their interest in health issues and suggested more workshops on health issues related to women.

We conclude that this evaluation demonstrates that women are interested in women’s health issues—especially older women 55 years of age and older. There are very few community-based health education programs designed to address the needs of older women. Given the trend in demographic data that point to women living longer and with a greater interest in prevention-oriented health care A Modern Tea is a highly effective outreach program. A future evaluation should examine whether women who attend A Modern Tea follow-up their participation with increased involvement in clinical health care services.

Finally, because A Modern Tea is funded by more than 100 corporations, this evaluation should provide former and new corporate sponsors an understanding how effectively their support can enhance the increase in access to prevention-oriented health care for women of all ages, especially older women.

FOR A FULL EVALUATION REPORT CONTACT TRESSA SPEARS JACKSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT 203.949.4101.