

MENTAL WELL-BEING AND OLDER ADULTS

26 AUGUST 2023
9.00AM – 4.30PM

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
LECTURE THEATRE LEVEL 2



GUEST-OF-HONOUR
MS RAHAYU MAHZAM
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MOH

13TH Henry Lim Lecture: Ageing and Mental Health - The CHI Study
Associate Professor & Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Department of Psychological Medicine, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS

SYMPOSIUM ONE: Community Health and Intergenerational (CHI) study



CHAIR
Dr Kua Ee Heok
Emeritus Professor,
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS,
and Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist, NUH.

SPEAKERS



Prof Wang De Yun
Director of Research, Dept. of Otolaryngology, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore



Dr Kim Jung Eun
Assistant Professor, Department of Food Science & Technology, National University of Singapore



Assoc. Prof Wilson Tam
Associate Professor and Director of Research, Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, National University of Singapore



Assoc. Prof Shefaly Shorey
Associate Professor, Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore

SYMPOSIUM 2: Biopsychosocial-spiritual frontiers in well-being among older adults

SPEAKERS



CHAIR
Dr Wayne Freeman Chong
Founding Non-Executive Director, GeroPsych Consultants Pte Ltd
Research Fellow, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine
Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, NTU Singapore



Dr Rahul Maholtra
Assistant Professor, Health Services and Systems Research, Deputy Director and Head of Research, Centre for Ageing Research and Education, Assistant Professor, SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute (SDGHI) Duke-NUS Medical School



Dr Yow Wei Quin
Acting Head of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences, SUTD Associate Professor (Psychology), Director, Language and Social Cognition Lab, Visiting Senior Academician, Changi General Hospital



Assoc. Prof Eugene Shum
Director, Community Partnership, SingHealth Office of Regional Health
Chief Community Development Officer, Changi General Hospital



Dr Kalyani Mehta
Former Professor for Gerontology and Social Work, Gerontology Graduate Programme, S R Nathan School of Human Development, Singapore University of Social Sciences.

ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON AGEING (ASCA)

MENTAL WELL-BEING AND OLDER ADULTS

8.45am	Registration	
9.15am	Welcome Address by GS President	Dr Thang Leng Leng President, Gerontological Society of Singapore
9.20am	Address by GOH	Ms Rahayu Mahzam Senior Parliamentary Secretary, MOH
9.30am	13 th Henry Lim Lecture	Assoc. Prof Rathi Mahendran Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, NUS
10.00am	Tea break	
10.45am	Symposium 1 Community Health and Intergenerational (CHI) study	Emeritus Prof. Kua Ee Heok
	S1-1: Smell Impairment and Cognitive Decline	Prof. Wang De Yun
	S1-2: Impact of comprehensive dietary counselling on dietary quality, mental health and cardiometabolic health in Singapore older adults	Dr Kim Jung Eun
	S1-3: Narrative Reminiscence Intervention for intergenerational Family Bonding	Assoc. Prof Wilson Tan
	S1-4: "Where-there-is-no-psychiatrist Integrated Personal Therapy" Among Community-Dwelling Older Adults: A Feasibility Randomized Controlled Trial	Assoc. Prof Shefaly Shorey
12.00pm	Lunch	
1.15pm	Symposium 2 Biopsychosocial-spiritual frontiers in well-being among older adults	Dr Wayne Freeman Chong
	S2-1: Generativity among older Singaporeans: Motivations and Challenges	Dr Rahul Maholtra
	S2-2: DISC - dual-language immersive intervention tool to mitigate cognitive decline in older adults	Dr Yow Wei Quin
	S2-3: Social Isolation in older adults – a healthcare perspective	Assoc. Prof Eugene Shum
	S2-4: Exploring the link between spirituality and mental well-being of seniors	Dr Kalyani Mehta
2.45pm	Tea break	
3.15pm	AGM	GS Members only
5.00pm	End	

Jointly organised by



SYNOPSIS



ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON AGEING (ASCA) 2023 **MENTAL WELL-BEING AND OLDER ADULTS** 13th HENRY LIM LECTURE

Keynote Speaker

Assoc. Prof Rathie Mahendran,

Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Dept of Psychological Medicine, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore

13th Henry Lim Lecture: Ageing and Mental Health - The CHI Study

This talk on the Community Health and Intergenerational Study presents some of the bio-psycho-social findings of a cohort study of community living older adults 60 years and above, in the central-western part of Singapore. The study involved twelve co-investigators from different NUS faculties and departments. It began in February 2018 with a delay in completion till October 2021 because of the COVID pandemic. Data from 996 individuals were collected and some of the findings will be shared in this talk. The aim was to identify areas in which interventions could be introduced to benefit older community-living adults. Phase 2 interventional studies have been introduced.

SYMPOSIUM 1

Community Health and Intergenerational (CHI) study

CHAIR

Dr Kua Ee Heok

Emeritus Professor, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore, and Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist, National University Hospital.



Prof Wang De Yun

Research Professor (Tenure) & Director of Research,
Dept. of Otolaryngology,
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine,
National University of Singapore

Smell Impairment and Cognitive Decline

Olfactory identification impairment is a comorbidity in older adults with amnesic mild cognitive impairment (aMCI) and is a potential marker associated with an early stage of a neurocognitive disorder. The smell test could act as a screening tool to help in the early detection of smell impairment for heterogeneous syndromes of MCI among community-dwelling older adults. Clinicians and researchers could benefit from utilizing the locally developed smell test to screen their patients or research participants before the initiation of an appropriate health intervention or in a clinical trial.

Dr Kim Jung Eun

Assistant Professor,
Department of Food Science & Technology,
National University of Singapore



Impact of comprehensive dietary counselling on dietary quality, mental health and cardiometabolic health in Singapore older adults

Age plays a critical role in the development of cardiometabolic disease (CMD) and mental health disorder. This could be due to several age-related factors such as increased oxidative stress, inflammation, and myocardial deterioration. Some of the other age-related behaviours changes such as poor nutritional choices, adopting a

sedentary lifestyle and poor sleeping cycle are also factors linked to the development of CMD and mental health disorder. In particular, previous studies suggested that poor nutrition status can play a pivotal role in the development of CMD and mental illnesses. Hence, an improvement in dietary quality is a viable way to improve CMD and mental health risk. In the recent years, certain dietary strategies have been explored in the attempt to improve dietary quality, amongst which, dietary counselling is one of the most widely explored multi-component interventions.

Since there is very limited intervention which investigated the effectiveness of comprehensive dietary counselling on CMD risk and mental health within the older Asian population, our group has recently conducted a randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of dietary counselling on dietary quality, mental health as well as cardiometabolic health in Singapore older adults. Thirty-nine older women aged above 60 years old in Singapore were randomized to a control (n = 19) or intervention (n = 20) groups and only subjects in the intervention group received a high intensity dietary counselling for 12 weeks. After the 12-week intervention, although no changes in cardiometabolic health-related parameters were observed, subjects in the intervention group improved their dietary quality particularly by increasing their whole grain intake. In addition, a significant decline in anxiety status was observed only in the intervention group as evidenced by a reduction of geriatric depression scale-shortened (GDS-S) score over time. Collectively, the provision of comprehensive dietary counselling may be a viable nutritional strategy to improve dietary quality and mental health outcomes in Singapore older women.



Assoc. Prof Wilson Tam

Associate Professor and Director of Research,
Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies,
National University of Singapore

Narrative Reminiscence Intervention for intergenerational Family Bonding

Reminiscence-based intervention, through sharing retrospective accounts of one's past, aims to enhance mental well-being in older adults. A pilot randomized controlled trial was conducted to examine the feasibility of a narrative and reminiscence intervention (NRi) to improve their mental well-being.

8 and 7 older adults were assigned to the intervention and control group respectively. Intergenerational Relationship, Quality of Life, Loneliness, and Subjective Well-being showed improvement for those subjects in the NRi group who also felt (i) enjoyment of NRi, (ii) delightful in chatting with young people, (iii) worth to recommend NRi to others, and (iv) positive impact of NRi. Larger randomized controlled trial is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and translate the evidence into practice.

Assoc. Prof Shefaly Shorey, Ph.D. RN, RM

Associate Professor
Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies,
National University of Singapore



"Where-there-is-no-psychiatrist Integrated Personal Therapy" Among Community-Dwelling Older Adults: A Feasibility Randomized Controlled Trial

This study aims to examine the preliminary efficacy, perceptions, and acceptability of a trained volunteer-led community-based intervention to support community-dwelling older adults. A total of 21 participants completed the feasibility randomized controlled trial. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data and blood samples were drawn to measure stress and anxiety. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' perceptions and acceptability of the intervention. The intervention was found to be feasible as it was delivered as planned and the attendance rates across the intervention sessions were high. No significant differences in outcomes were found between the intervention group and the control group. Three themes emerged from the in-depth interviews: (1) impact of the intervention on older adults' well-being, (2) attitudes toward intervention, and (3) a way forward. The study's relevance to the community: The community-dwelling older adults often go unnoticed and outreach is limited in the local context. It is essential to provide timely support to prevent the decline of their overall well-being. This feasibility study documented areas for improvement and refinement of the lay-led community-based intervention. Overall, the qualitative findings from this study demonstrate the feasibility

and acceptability of the intervention by community-dwelling older adults. Planning forward, looking at the acceptability of the intervention, we hope to continue to provide this intervention via online platforms to community-dwelling older adults.

SYMPOSIUM 2: Biopsychosocial-spiritual frontiers in well-being among older adults

CHAIR

Dr Wayne Freeman Chong

Research Fellow, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine
Lecturer, Division of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University
Non-executive Director, GeroPsych Consultants Pte Ltd



Dr Rahul Maholtra

Assistant Professor, Health Services and Systems Research (HSSR)
Deputy Director and Head of Research, Centre for Ageing Research and Education (CARE)
Assistant Professor, SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute (SDGHI) Duke-NUS
Medical School

Generativity among older Singaporeans: Motivations and Challenges

Generativity (i.e., guiding and developing younger generations) is considered as an important achievement in old age. Better understanding of the conditions influencing older persons' generative behaviour may inform policies aimed at improving intergenerational cohesion and successful ageing. Using a qualitative approach, we identified (i) the motivations of older persons to guide and develop younger generations, (ii) their perceptions of their capacity to perform generative acts, and (iii) the types and sites of their generative acts. Twelve focus group discussions were conducted among older persons (n=103) in Singapore. Thematic analysis was used to list and describe their generative motivations and challenges they faced in enacting their motivations. Older Singaporeans' generative concern, and consequently, predisposition toward parental and cultural generativity, is derived from a 'natural impulse' to fulfil their roles as experienced elders. Yet participants' inclination toward 'small acts' of generativity highlights a paradox. Their generative behaviours were confined to the family despite expressing a generative concern that extends to larger society. A perceived lack of authority, resources, and intergenerational opportunities due to age-segregation and ageism hinders their capacities to do so. Older persons' engagement in small acts of generativity contribute to their self-worth, social virtue, and perceived investment in future generations. It reflects their negotiations of cultural norms expected of elders and practices of self-preservation against personal and environmental constraints. Understanding the reasons that drive older persons' generative inclinations contributes to developing healthy ageing policies aimed at fostering intergenerational cohesion and social inclusion.

Dr Yow Wei Quin

Associate Professor
Acting Head of Humanities Arts & Social Science
Singapore University of Technology and Design
Visiting Senior Academician, Changi General Hospital



DISC - dual-language immersive intervention tool to mitigate cognitive decline in older adults

Although cognitive training in healthy older adults has been controversial, specific and isolated cognitive skills such as memory can be improved with appropriate designs. Semantic and episodic memory has been considered as a clinical marker for cognitive decline in dementia. The current study, as part of a larger touch-screen dual-language intervention program with cognitive training tools, aims to slow down the rate of cognitive decline in older adults. Forty-eight Singaporean older adults with dementia (CI) and 54 cognitively healthy (CH) older adults were recruited from the daycare centres. A set of neuropsychological tests was conducted before and after the training program. After 24 training sessions over 8-12 weeks, older adults showed a significant improvement in their verbal memory (as measured by RAVLT), global reaction time, as well as their attitudes toward technology

use. Our findings suggest that we can leverage such dual-language touch-screen technology to help older adults slow down their cognitive decline. The strengths and limitations of our game design and intervention will be discussed.



Adjunct Associate Professor Eugene Shum
Director, Community Partnership, SingHealth Office of Regional Health
Chief Community Development Officer, Changi General Hospital

Social Isolation in older adults – a healthcare perspective

Social isolation is a growing issue with a significant impact on health outcomes. It is associated with increased risk of medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease and dementia. Identifying, engaging, and supporting persons who are socially isolated can be challenging. A multi sectoral approach involving the healthcare sector, social care sector, national agencies, community organisations and informal networks is required.

The healthcare clusters have implemented initiatives to support the health and social care needs of vulnerable seniors and increase their social connectedness.

The Neighbours for Active Living Programme has a unique care model which emphasizes a holistic person-centered approach. The Community Care Team from Changi General Hospital together with community organization supports patients with high health and social care needs after discharge from hospital for as long as they require it.

CareLine is a 24/7 urgent assistant tele-care service. Vulnerable seniors including those who are living alone or are lonely can sign-up with CareLine. This allows for the development of a care relationship so that the needs of clients can be best met when they require help.

More recently, Changi General Hospital co-developed the Pelatok ArtFarm at Changi Simei. By leveraging underutilize urban spaces and incorporating place-based design, placemaking and place keeping, this community garden promotes physical activity, social connectedness and inclusivity among residents in the estate.

Dr Kalyani Mehta

Former Professor for Gerontology and Social Work, Gerontology Graduate Programme,
S R Nathan School of Human Development, Singapore University of Social Sciences
Chairman of the Silver Caregivers Co-operative Limited.



EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF SENIORS

The search for meaning and purpose in life has been documented as a strong existential and emotional need for older people in gerontological literature. Spiritual pursuits have been prioritised by older adults especially in the later years such as 75 and above. The word spirituality is linked to “spirit” or self. Inner self experiences have permeated all religions, hence the universality of ‘spiritual longings.’ Projects have been conducted in countries such as USA, Hong Kong and Canada wherein patients suffering from cancer have recovered after undergoing treatment related to their inner mental self, such as mental yoga, meditation and chanting. Spiritual reminiscence is now being introduced to dementia patients in nursing homes, and the results have been positive. Therefore, we ask ourselves “What is the connection between spirituality and mental health?”. The mind, body and spirit may be viewed as having a surreal interconnectivity, which needs to be kept in balance for the individual to maintain positive mental health. The balance is required across time and space.
