Understanding Caregivers’ Stress and Service Needs Along Patient Journey in HKWC

Rachel Yuen-Ha LAM  
Sharon S L MO  
Medical Social Service, Queen Mary Hospital  
Hong Kong  
Isadora L C WONG  
Community & Voluntary Services Department, The Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital  
Vibro C H LEE  
Medical Social Service Department, The Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital  
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Fung Yiu King Hospital & MacLehose Medical Rehabilitation Centre  
Hope Y H LAU  
Medical Social Services of Grantham Hospital  
Elaine Y L HUI  
Medical Social Service of Tung Wah Hospital  
Felix H W CHAN  
Primary & Community Health Care, Hong Kong West Cluster, Hospital Authority

Caregivers play an important role along the patient care journey. According to the research result on Policy Bulletin of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service in March 2018, the number of caregivers is significantly increased by 39% from 2006 to 2013. The ratio of family caregiver per household in Hong Kong Island is the lowest when compared to other districts. Early identification of caregivers’ needs and building a caregiver supportive network through medical social collaboration are crucial elements to help.

Objectives:  
(1) Understand the service needs of caregivers in Hong Kong West Cluster (HKWC);  
(2) Identify strategies to build a Caregiver Support Network in HKWC.

Methods:  
(1) Conduct a survey to identify the stress and needs of caregivers. Cluster sampling was adopted to collect the questionnaires from hospitals in HKWC.
(2) Conduct a focus group to explore strategies in supporting caregivers.

Results:
112 questionnaires were collected during September to October 2018. 48.2% of respondents spent over 25 hours on caring per week. 79% of the caregivers indicated that they were having caring stress. They expected to learn more about disease management, caring skills and community resources.

Representatives from various clinical teams, patient groups, caregivers and hospital volunteers joined a focus group in January 2019 to explore effective strategies in delivering the expected knowledge and services to caregivers along patient care journey. Participants agreed the need to early identify needy caregivers in hospitals through collaborative effort, render multi-dimensional services to caregivers upon discharge and network them to community based services for long term support.

Conclusion:
Caregiving support had better start from patients’ hospitalization period so as to let caregivers better manage their caregiving duties. Patient resource centre can play a role in bridging the needy caregivers to community services through medical social collaboration.
Working on Male Carers’ “Qing” in a Therapeutic Group with an Innovative Approach – “Emoto”

So-Chi SO  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong Ma On Shan District Elderly Community Centre  
Hong Kong

Helena Ka-Wai HO  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong Ma On Shan District Elderly Community Centre

Felix Man-Yuk SO  
Felix So Photography Alumni Association

Johnston Chun-Sing CHEUNG  
Department of Social Work, Chinese University of Hong Kong

“Qing” (primary emotion) has always been a crucial but uneasy topic for male clients, especially for those who regularly need to take care of aged parents or spouse. The feelings can be complicated along the caring journey. Indeed, there has been growing public concern about their extreme hardship in light of at least three suicidal or homicidal cases in Hong Kong in 2017. It is of utmost importance that social workers in elderly service setting have to address this imperative issue with high delicacy and exceptional carefulness. Our team believes that the expression of suppressed emotions could help releasing the burden of male carers. So we suggest the use of a new intervention approach “Emoto” (i.e. Emotion + Photo) to facilitate male carers, who have already been heavily loaded with the burden in caregiving, to get in touch with their innermost emotions.

A one-year “Emoto” project for male carers was designed and implemented by the joint effort of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong Ma On Shan District Elderly Community Centre (DECC), Felix So Photography Alumni Association and Department of Social Work of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In this project, photography is an intervention tool to work with male carers. The photos taken by photographer volunteers according to various “Qing” themes were used as the prominent means of communication. The photos encouraged the male carers using non-verbal media to assist the expression of untold thoughts and unrecognized feelings. Besides taking response to the growing psychological hardship of male carers in the community, the project is aimed at informing practitioners and the general public about male carers’ need.

In this presentation, we will further share the project idea in detail and demonstrate the use of Emoto with real case stories.
The Middle Path to Ageing Actively: Reconciling Disengagement and Activity Theories through Buddha’s Majjhimapaṭipada

Anoop CHOOLAYIL  
Central University of Kerala  
India  

Dr Laxmi PUTRAN  
Central University of Kerala  
India

The idea of ageing has been dealt in various traditions across the globe from multiple vantage points and the process of ageing as a science has been developed to a systematic branch of knowledge in the western world than in the oriental traditions. However, the theme of ageing and old age has systematically been evaluated in most of the oriental systems of knowledge and Indian Philosophy champions this cause. Ranging from ashrama dharma to the Buddhist philosophy of life, Indian thoughts of philosophy have either been fascinated, founded upon or taken up by the process of ageing. Two of the most prominent Western theories of ageing that has attempted to explain what constitutes the idea of ageing successfully are the theory of disengagement and the theory of activity. This study attempts to reappraise the two theories in relevant terms against the background of the Buddhist ideology of Majjhimapatipada - The Middle Path - to conceptualise how the ideology could serve as an integrating point of the activity theory and the disengagement theory. The study is a conceptual one employing an epistemological approach. The study draws from the activity and disengagement theories from the West and attempts to establish how relevant concepts from both theories could find a golden mean in the Oriental Buddhist theory of Majjhimapaṭipada or the Middle Path. The aim is to establish an epistemological foundation that transcends mere eclecticism but original in nature with an oriental foundation. The study suggests that gerontological philosophy and geriatric social work practice could be revamped in terms of the oriental approach to ageing which is holistic; avoiding the pitfalls of the extremes. Thus the Oriental East has significant underpinnings which the world had not paid attention to, that could transform the idea of active ageing as whole.
Gender difference in Social Isolation, Loneliness and Depression among Chinese Older Adults in Shanghai

Dr Hong-Mei TONG  
MacEwan University  
Canada
Karen KOBAYASHI  
University of Victoria

Depression is a crucial mental concern in the Chinese elderly and a strong relationship between social isolation, loneliness and depression has been reported. However, there is a paucity of studies that have differentiated social isolation and loneliness, and examined whether their associations with depression are varied by gender.

This study aims to answer two questions:  
1) Are there gender differences in social isolation, loneliness, and depression among Chinese older adults in Shanghai?  
2) Are social isolation and loneliness associated with depression differently in men and women?

The data used were obtained between March and May 2012 through face-to-face interviews, using a structured survey questionnaire, from a stratified proportional random sample of 419 Chinese aged 60 and older from three communities in Shanghai. Depressive symptoms were measured by a 15-item Chinese version Geriatric Depression Scale. Social Isolation was measured by the questions asking numbers of social contacts and frequencies of social interactions. A Chinese version of the 6-item De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale was used to measure loneliness.

Over 36% of participants reported symptoms of a mild or above mild level of depression. 15% of the respondents reported medium or high isolation. Almost 2 out 5 respondents reported mildly or intensely lonely. T-test shows women and men are significantly different in reporting loneliness. When controlled for the demographics and health variables in hierarchical binary logistic regression, loneliness was significantly associated with depression for both genders. Social isolation is more important than loneliness in predicting depression for women.

The findings indicate that gender differences should be considered when programs are designed to address depression among older Chinese. Programs to reduce loneliness are essential for both genders, but programs that are designed to reduce social isolation by increasing social network and social interactions are more important for women.
Development of a Dementia Friendly Community – A Case Study of a Public Estate at Wah Fu

Siu-Yin Anny HUI
Kam-Wing Kevin CHEUNG
Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre
Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the number of people with cognitive impairment at age 60 and above is expected to increase from about 100,000 in 2009 to about 330,000 in 2039. It is expected that the demand for cognitive impairment services will increase. Dementia Friendly Community has been developed around the world to meet the care needs of people with cognitive impairment and family caregivers by mobilizing different stakeholders in the community.

Aberdeen’s Kai-Fong Welfare Association initiated “Support for the Elderly and Carers Scheme” in a public estate at Wah Fu, Southern District of Hong Kong, aiming at improving the quality of life of elderly with cognitive impairment and caregivers, and building up a Dementia Friendly Community for them.

This project adopted the theoretical framework of Strength Based Care Planning and Relationship Centred Care Approach to provide training for the elderly with mild cognitive impairment, also for community stakeholders and mobilizing their social resources to strengthen the community network and mutual help spirit in order to build a Dementia Friendly Community of elderly with cognitive impairment.

The results showed that after participating in the activity, elderly with mild cognitive impairment (N=86) improved in quality of life (proportion increasing from 39.5% to 53.5%), general cognitive ability (proportion increasing from 5.9% to 23.5%) and reduced the level of depression (proportion increasing from 77.6% to 83.7%); their ability to perform daily life activities remained stable. In addition, caregivers and community stakeholders have expressed an increase in knowledge about dementia. In summary, participants revealed that residents of the estate became more friendly to the elderly with cognitive impairment. This project is a first Dementia Friendly Community program launching in a public estate in Hong Kong. It is expected that this program can be a model which can be applied in other housing estates and communities.