



# Hong Kong Psychogeriatric Association Newsletter

香港老年精神科學會會訊

OCT 2011

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## MESSAGE FROM THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

The October 2011 issue of the HKPGA Newsletter brings you the highlights of different HKPGA activities, including the association's involvement in the initiative to seek a proper and user-friendly Chinese term for dementia and related condition, news from the 2011 International Psychogeriatric Association (IPA) Congress in September that took place in the Hague, The Netherlands, and from the Mid-Year Scientific Meeting that was held in Queen Mary Hospital in June 2011. We are also happy to include the abstracts from the works of the two winners of the HKPGA Young Scientist Award 2011, Drs Jess Leung and Mimi Wong, in this issue of the newsletter. Furthermore, a number of important HKPGA events have been arranged for the remaining months of 2011; please visit [www.hkpga.org](http://www.hkpga.org) for more details and mark your diary accordingly.

## RENAMING DEMENTIA IN CHINESE: AN UPDATE

The HKPGA took the lead to form an expert alliance earlier this year with professional organizations across different disciplines that were related to the care of persons with dementia and with the common goal to find a suitable Chinese translation of the term "dementia" that was non-stigmatizing, scientifically accurate and user-friendly. After five conjoined meetings the campaign has taken significant strides. At this interim, the term "認知障礙症" was favoured by most professional bodies, as it broadly fitted the abovementioned criteria and paralleled the tentative new terms to replace "dementia" in the upcoming Fifth version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), i.e. "Major Cognitive Disorder" or "Major Neurocognitive Disorder". The professional organizations held a press conference titled "「痴呆症」的重新正名及認識" and a seminar themed "重識認識「痴呆症」的診斷、防止及治療" on June 26, 2011 with wide press coverage afterwards.

The campaign did not stop here, as the alliance has still been building consensus upon a proper Chinese term that accurately describes the condition of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) while maintaining clear distinction from its counterpart for dementia. Furthermore, HKPGA has also been working in close liaison with experts from the China mainland and from Taiwan to explore the possibility of unified Chinese terms to describe the conditions of dementia and MCI, as it would likely add synergy to the programs to raise awareness and reduce confusions concerning these important mental conditions across different Chinese communities.

This Newsletter would keep you posted about future developments on these initiatives.

# PROF HELEN CHIU RECEIVED THE HIGHEST HONOUR FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOGERIATRIC ASSOCIATION (IPA) DURING THE 2011 IPA CONGRESS IN THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

The Editorial Board of the HKPGA Newsletter takes great pleasure to share with our members the breaking news that Prof Helen Chiu, the founding president of the HKPGA and one of the past presidents of the IPA, was selected by the IPA Board of Directors to receive the 2011 IPA Award for Distinguished Service for her many years of exceptional dedication and leadership to the IPA. The Award was presented from Prof Masatoshi Takeda (President of the IPA, 2009-2011) to Prof Helen Chiu during the opening ceremony of the IPA Congress in The Hague on Sep 6, 2011, and upon when HRH Princess Margriet of The Netherlands was the guest-of-honour.

The IPA regards this Award as the highest form of recognition by the association. Awardees were chosen for their extraordinarily great contributions to geriatric mental health, and in particular their devotion, leadership and exceptional services for the IPA. According to the IPA, recipients of this award must have been, or are currently, extremely important to the growth and development of the IPA organization, and are leaders whose contributions go above and beyond in their creative energy to guide the path of the organization through their visions and inspirations..

With this award, Prof Helen Chiu joined Prof Sanford Finkel (United States), Prof Barry Reisberg (United States), Prof Edmond Chiu (Australia), Prof Alistair Burns (United Kingdom), Prof Jacobo Mintzer (United States), Prof David Ames (Australia) and Prof Joel Sadavoy (Canada) as the few prestigious Psychogeriatricians worldwide who had ever been chosen by the IPA to receive this highest form of accolade and acknowledgement.



(This is the first article of the series concerning the events in the 2011 IPA Congress. In the next issue we would give a coverage of an exciting debate during the Congress on how Prof Chiu and her team earned victory over the opposing team (as voted by the audience members) with her arguments that supported the motion “Very early diagnosis of Alzheimer’s diseases using the revised criteria [that involved several putative biomarkers] is currently not beneficial to our patients”. Together with the other highlights about the study tour to this IPA Congress in the upcoming Newsletter, please stay tuned.)



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# ABSTRACTS FROM THE WINNERS OF THE HKPGA YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARD 2011

## SCREENING FOR COGNITIVE DISORDERS IN ACUTE GERIATRIC ADMISSIONS

\*J.L.M. Leung<sup>1</sup>; Y.H. Lam<sup>2</sup>; G.T.H. Lee<sup>1</sup>; C.C. Chan<sup>2</sup>; J.Y.M. Wu<sup>3</sup>

*The use of the Digit Span Test in screening for cognitive impairment in acute medical inpatients.  
International Psychogeriatrics, doi:10.1017/S1041610211000792  
Published online by Cambridge University Press 17 May 2011.*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychiatry, and <sup>2</sup>Department of Medicine & Geriatrics of United Christian Hospital;  
<sup>3</sup>Department of Geriatrics & Rehabilitation of Haven of Hope Hospital, Hong Kong SAR, China

### BACKGROUND:

There is no valid instrument currently in use for acute geriatric admissions in Hong Kong to aid the detection of cognitive disorders. The objectives of this study were to (1) validate the Digit Span Test (DST) in the identification of and differentiation between dementia and delirium; and (2) determine the prevalence of cognitive disorders in elderly people in acute medical unit.

### METHODS:

During the study period from January to February 2010, 144 patients aged 75 or above who had had unplanned medical admissions were assessed by nurses, using the Digit Span Forwards (DSF) and the Digit Span Backwards (DSB) tests. The DST scores were compared with the psychiatrists' DSM-IV based diagnoses. Receiver Operating Characteristics curve (ROC) was used in conjunction with sensitivity and specificity measures to assess the performance of DST. Correlation between scores of DST and Cantonese version of Mini-Mental State Examination (CMMSE) was computed.

### RESULTS:

The prevalence rates of dementia alone, delirium alone and delirium superimposed on dementia were 31%, 13% and 13% respectively. The prior case-note documentation rate was 13.2% for dementia and 2.8% for delirium. Regarding the detection of major cognitive disorders, DSB had a sensitivity of 0.73 and specificity of 0.77 at the optimal cutoff of <3. A significant association between scores on the DST and CMMSE was found in this study (Spearman's correlations,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### CONCLUSION:

Dementia and delirium were prevalent, yet under-detected, in acute geriatric inpatients. The DSB is an effective tool in identifying patients with these two cognitive disorders.

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# A QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE REVIEW OF THE ELDERLY SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMME OF A MENTAL HOSPITAL IN HONG KONG

*Dr. Mimi Wong*

*Department of Old Age Psychiatry, Castle Peak Hospital*

## **OBJECTIVES:**

This study aims to analyze the service provided by the Elderly Suicide Prevention Programme of the Castle Peak Hospital in Hong Kong from 2002 to 2010 both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative part examines the profile of all the patients who have received treatment within the nine-year-period and some of the risk factors for elderly suicide in Hong Kong Chinese. The qualitative part of the study looks at how patients think of the programme and finds out their attitude towards medical treatment for their depressive illness in order to facilitate further improvement of service and to improve medication adherence of the patients.

## **PARTICIPANTS AND METHODS:**

The case notes of all the patients who were treated by the Elderly Suicide Prevention Programme of the Castle Peak Hospital between 1st October 2002 and 31st March 2010 were reviewed. For those who had committed suicide under the active care of the programme, their mortality reports were perused. Patients were invited to participate in focus groups to comment on the service.

## **RESULTS:**

Elderly attended the fast track clinic from October 2002 to March 2010. 89% of them were diagnosed to have depressive illness. 84 (7.7%) of them have attempted suicide upon presentation and over half of them employed a lethal, physical method. Among these 1097 elderly, seven (0.6%) eventually completed suicide cases after they were known to the programme. All suicides were committed within the first six weeks of treatment and all were diagnosed to have a depressive illness. There was an unexpected finding on the relationship between the day of suicide and festival. Three of the suicide took place around traditional Chinese festivals while one took place during the period around Christmas. For the qualitative review, 27 patients attended the focus groups and all of them found the programme effective in the treatment of their illness and they were satisfied with the service. Among all the factors, the short waiting time, helpful attitude of staff, regular home visits and medication treatment were most highly appreciated. Most of the patients were aware of the importance of maintaining good adherence to the medications prescribed being educated by our staff.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The first two months of treatment are associated with the highest risk of suicide. Intensive care and support with proper education about effects of antidepressants and building up of trusted therapeutic alliance are particularly important in this vulnerable period. Proper education about the effects of antidepressants helps to improve medication adherence of the patients. Overall, the programme can be regarded as effective as it was highly valued by the patients.



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## HKPGA MID-YEAR SCIENTIFIC MEETING ON 10 JULY 2011

This year the mid-year scientific meeting was held in conjunction with the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Hong Kong. Audience members thoroughly enjoyed the interactive talks delivered by Prof Andrew Law, Dr Mike Wong and Mr YK Ho on a broad range of topics that included a review of the conceptual paradigm of Alzheimer's disease, memory profile of persons with mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and the results of a piloted mobile Psychogeriatric nurse station in the Hong Kong East Cluster respectively.



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# HKPGA MID-YEAR SCIENTIFIC MEETING ON 10 JULY 2011



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## EVENTS CALENDAR

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Venue and contact</i>
11 Nov 2011	Workshop on Testamentary and Other Types of Mental Capacities	YMCA, Tsimshatsui <a href="http://www.hkpga.org">http://www.hkpga.org</a>
12 Nov 2011	The HKPGA 13th Annual Scientific Symposium cum 2nd Chinese Psychogeriatric Tripartite Scientific Conference cum HKPGA AGM 2011	Marcopolo Hongkong Hotel <a href="http://www.hkpga.org">http://www.hkpga.org</a>
24 to 26 Nov 2011	Eighth World Congress on Long Term Care in Chinese Communities and Asian Ageing Development Conference	Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon, Hong Kong <a href="http://www.hkpga.org">http://www.hkpga.org</a>





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Current members of the HKPGA please renew your membership through the following link:

[www.hkpga.org/main.php?id=30](http://www.hkpga.org/main.php?id=30)

New friends who would like to join the association are welcome;  
please apply for membership through the same link.

**Newsletter Committee :**

Dr. Paulina Chow (Castle Peak Hospital)

Dr. Joshua Tsoh (Shatin Hospital)

Ms. Ernie Ma (Kowloon Hospital)