

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

IMPACT CASE HISTORY

Title of case study: Promoting Ageing-in-Place for Elderly Tenants in Rental Housing Estates of Hong Kong Housing Society**1. Summary**

Professor Terry Lum, Professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration and Director of the Sau Po Centre on Ageing, and his team (Dr Vivian Lou and Dr Ernest Chui) developed a project that aimed at giving more elderly people the chance to stay in their own homes longer, rather than go into institutional care. "Ageing in place" is a concept that has been embraced around the world to enable the elderly to live in their own homes for as long as possible regardless of their abilities. Based on the team's recommendation from the Ageing-in-Place study, the Hong Kong Housing Society adopted this approach in a pilot project at Cho Yiu Chuen, a housing estate in Kwai Chung, in 2012, and the results have been highly positive. It now plans to extend the model to 11 estates. This project helps thousands of low income elderly people stay in their communities as they age.

2. Underpinning research

In September 2011, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) invited the Sau Po Centre on Ageing (COA) to conduct a consultancy study to develop a new ageing-in-place model for low income elderly people living in HKHS's twenty rental housing estates. The principal investigator of the project was Professor Terry Lum (Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration [SWSA] and Director of COA), and co-investigators included Dr Vivian Lou (Associate Professor, SWSA & Associate Director, COA) and Dr Ernest Chui (Associate Professor, SWSA). About 32% of all tenants of these rental housing estates are older people and the property management staff of the HKHA is not trained to help these older tenants. Furthermore, senior staff of the HKHS understood that they needed to change the scope of services they offer to meet the needs of their rapidly ageing tenant population. However, there was no working model of Ageing-in-place for low income elderly in Hong Kong. Internationally, the recent development of environmental gerontology has pinpointed the importance of environmental and social factors, other than medical factors, on the long term care decision of frail older people. However, most overseas research findings came from middle class and educated elderly samples.

Between November 2011 and February 2012, the COA research team surveyed 400 elderly residents living in four HKHS rental estates, and conducted numerous focus groups with elderly tenants, NGOs' staff members who were providing services to the elderly in the four estates, HKHS property management staff, and HKHS senior staff. They also carried out an environment scan of all four estates. Their report, submitted in February 2012, recommended three specific ageing-in-place models that could be implemented in these rental housing estates.

The team's study identified the significant roles of neighbourhood physical environment, neighbour support, and availability of social care and medical care centers in the immediate environment to the ageing-in-place decision of low income elderly. These findings enriched theoretical understanding of the interaction between long term care decision and neighbourhood characteristics, which is a rapidly developing research area in environmental gerontology. They were invited to present their findings in local and international conferences (e.g. 20th IAGG Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Seoul, 2013).

3. References to the research**Key peer-reviewed publications:**

Chen YY, Wong GH, Lum TY, Lou VW, Ho AH, Luo H, Tong TL. Neighborhood support network, perceived proximity to community facilities and depressive symptoms among low socioeconomic status

Chinese elders. Ageing Ment Health. 2015 Mar 16:1-9.

Terry Y. S. Lum, Vivian W. Q. Lou, Yanyan Chen, Gloria H. Y. Wong, Hao Luo and Tracy L. W. Tong. Neighborhood Support and Ageing-in-Place Preference Among Low-Income Elderly Chinese City-Dwellers. The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 2015.

Selected external grant funding:

Promoting Ageing-in-Place for Elderly Tenants in Rental Estates of Hong Kong Housing Society

Funding Source: Hong Kong Housing Society

Principal Investigator: Dr Terry Lum

Period: 2011 – 2012

Amount Awarded: HK\$500,000

A Comprehensive Study on Housing in an Ageing Community

Funding Source: Hong Kong Housing Society

Principal Investigator: Professor Rebecca Chiu

Co-Investigator: Dr Terry Lum

Period: 2013 – 2014

Amount Awarded: HK\$1,930,000

Family Caregiving and Long-term Care Decision of People with Dementia in Hong Kong

Funding Scheme: Central Policy Unit's Public Policy Research

Principal Investigator: Lum TYS

Period: 2014 – 2015

Amount Awarded: HK\$332,426.70

4. Details of the impact or benefit

The team presented their research findings and recommendations to the senior management of the HKHS in February 2012, and their recommendations were supported by the senior management. In March 2012, they presented the findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors of the HKHS, and the Board also endorsed the recommendations. To gain further support from the local community, they presented the findings in the Yan Oi Tong Cross-Strait Conference on Elderly Services in February 2012. More than 200 people from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, and Macau participated in this meeting.

In the summer of 2012, the HKHS selected Cho Yiu Chuen, a low income public housing estate, to implement a pilot project based on the team's recommendations. The initial budget for the pilot project was HK\$6 million. In the summer of 2013, the HKHS completed an internal evaluation of the effects of the project on the well-being of older residents in Cho Yiu Chuen and found very positive impact. The HKHS is expanding the project to 11 public housing estates in 2014. The COA research team is currently working with the HKHS to study the long term impacts of this ageing-in-place model on older people's well-being.

5. References to the corroboration of impact or benefit

- Statement of support from HKHS is available for corroboration purpose:
The team's efforts have been recognized by the HKHS as having "strengthened the role of the HKHS in serving the needs of the rapidly ageing tenant populations of the Hong Kong community in housing and related services".
- HKHS' press release on April 15, 2013:
http://www.hkhs.com/eng/wnew/pdf/pr_20130415_AIP.pdf
房協協助長者居民「居家安老」(Chinese version only)
(translated as: Housing Society Enables Elderly Residents to Age in Place)