A Health and Wellbeing Barometer for Hong Kong: Translational Impact Attained over a Decade and Counting

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FAMILY Cohort: A Unique Health and Wellbeing Barometer for HK since 2009

- The first HKU-led research programme in HK to comprehensively assess physical, mental, and social wellbeing
- Population-based: 1% of the HK households (n=20,000; 46,000 participants) covering 99.8% of all neighbourhoods in HK
Why does HK need a Health and Wellbeing Barometer?

- Policymakers, NGOs, philanthropic foundations, health and social services and professionals need to know the magnitude of needs and the high-risk groups.
- Population-representative cohorts with baseline data (allowing comparisons of population health and wellbeing before and after) are critical for precision policy planning and evaluation.
ENGAGEMENT

From Science to Impact

Barometer (Afferent)

Impact (Efferent)
UNDERPINNING RESEARCH – CASE STUDY (1)

Mental Health during Major Population Shocks

THE LANCET

Depression and post-traumatic stress during major social unrest in Hong Kong: a 10-year prospective cohort study

Michael N Lai, Xiaoxin Yao, Kathy M Leung, Cynthia Yau, Candy M C Leung, Philip T Lam, Francis P Fures, Wing Chung Chong, Benjamin J Cowling, Gabriel M Leung

Summary
Background Hong Kong has been embroiled in increasingly violent social unrest since June, 2019. We examined the associated population mental health burden, risk factors, and health-care needs.

- The largest and longest prospective cohort study worldwide on collective actions and mental health
- Real-time monitoring of population mental health and psychobehavioural responses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
**IMPACTS ACHIEVED**

Evidence for Mental Health Services Planning

Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Mental Health cited our work in the Legislative Council as the “basis for the Government's long-term manpower and service planning.”

Wong YL. 黃仁龍主席Live同你講. 2020.
"We must consider the mental (ill) health of the Hong Kong people" 

"Merely the tip of the iceberg, below which lies a much larger set of subclinical mental health issues requiring urgent attention"

- Government pandemic advisors citing our findings to guide anti-pandemic policies
Our data also provided sentinel alert for declining COVID-19 vaccine confidence in January 2021 (prior to vaccine rollout) and that vaccine confidence in Hong Kong was lower than other jurisdictions.
CASE STUDY (IV)

How Did Hong Kong Become the Longest Living Population in the World?

“There could not be a more important puzzle to solve for the rest of the world”

Chung RY and Marmot M. People in Hong Kong have the longest life expectancy in the world: Some possible explanations. NAM Perspectives 2020
UNDERPINNING RESEARCH

Hong Kong’s Journey to Become the World’s Longest Living Population

THE LANCET Public Health

Understanding longevity in Hong Kong: a comparative study with long-living, high-income countries

Michael Y Ni,* Vladimir Canudas-Romo*, Jian Shi, Frances P Flores, Matthew S C Cheung, Xiaowen I Yoo, Sai Yan Ho, Tai Hing Lam, C Mary Schoelling, Alan D Lopez, Magdi Elzatt, Gabriel M Leung

Summary
Background Since 2013, Hong Kong has sustained the world’s highest life expectancy at birth—a key indicator of population health. The reasons behind this achievement remain poorly understood but are of great relevance to both rapidly developing and high-income regions. Here, we aim to compare factors behind Hong Kong’s survival advantage over long-living, high-income countries.

- Showed that Hong Kong’s longevity was underpinned by its successful tobacco control
- Contributed to 50.5% and 34.8% of Hong Kong’s survival advantage over males and females in high-income countries, respectively
CASE STUDY

Identified Potential ‘Best Buys’ to Comprehensively Improve Population Health

- A fundamental disconnect in HK’s population wellbeing: attained the world’s highest life expectancy yet also ranked among the worst globally for mental wellbeing
- First to identify determinants that could simultaneously improve physical, mental and social wellbeing
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Knowledge Exchange with Stakeholders

Reports for 18 Districts

Open-access Geographic Information System (GIS)
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Public Engagement and Press Conferences
ENGAGEMENT

Selected Media Coverage

City suffering an ‘epidemic’ of mental health problems

SMOKING BAN ‘KEY’ TO LONGEVITY IN THE CITY

Dr Michael Wi
Clinical Associate Professor
Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong

South China Morning Post

health

Low吸煙率為港人長壽關鍵

學者促進加熱

研究發現，相比香港人因心血管疾病而死亡的人數，香港吸菸率較低。
**IMPACTS ACHIEVED**

Detecting the Rule of Halves in the HK Population

- Detected that a third of the HK population had hypertension, of which the majority were undiagnosed
- The findings was cited by Department of Health and Centre for Health Protection in their ‘Letters to Doctors’
IMPACTS ACHIEVED

Policymaking for a New Mode of Primary Care

• Invited by the then Secretary of Food and Health to identify health needs in each of the 18 districts and to help inform primary care reform

• Legislative Council Briefing Paper: cited as the “most relevant” data source

• Only non-governmental info source for decision-making

HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR KWAI TSING

7. In determining the scope of services to be provided by the DHC, the Steering Committee examined the findings of four large-scale surveys/data sources to better understand the health profile of the Kwai Tsing population, namely:

(a) Chronic Disease Virtual Registry of HA²;
(b) Population Health Survey (“PHS”) conducted by DH³;
(c) Thematic Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department (“THS”)⁴; and
(d) The collaborative project entitled "FAMILY: A Jockey Club Initiative for a Harmonious Society" ("FAMILY Project") conducted by the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong and funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club⁵.

Since item (d) above contains district-based health data most relevant to the DHC, we have consulted the Steering Committee and have agreed to adopt the data of the FAMILY Project as the baseline.
The 2018 Policy Address has directly drawn on findings from the FAMILY Cohort for formulating the first District Health Centre (DHC) in Hong Kong.
IMPACTS ACHIEVED

Extended to All 18 Districts in HK

DHCs / DHC Expresses have now been launched in all 18 districts
IMPACTS ACHIEVED

Passage of the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2021

THE LANCET
Public Health

Understanding longevity in Hong Kong: a comparative study with long-living, high-income countries

Michael Y Ni*, Vladimir Canudas-Romo*, Jian Shi, Francis P Flores, Matthew S C Chew, Xiaowei Yao, Sai Yin Ho, Tai Hing Lam, C Mary Schoenling, Alan D Lopez, Magid El Zein, Gabriel M Lennig

Summary
Background Since 2013, Hong Kong has sustained the world’s highest life expectancy at birth—a key indicator of population health. The reasons behind this achievement remain poorly understood but are of great relevance to both rapidly developing and high-income regions. Here, we aim to compare factors behind Hong Kong’s survival advantage over long-living, high-income countries.

• Our study showing that tobacco control was the most important reason for HK’s attaining world-leading

• Our findings helped influence the final session of the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill committee proceedings
Impact Summary of the FAMILY Cohort

Research

Tracking physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the HK population since 2009

Engagement

Engaging stakeholders and the public through publications, press conferences, among others

Impact

I. Policymaking
II. Legislation
III. Resource mobilisation