

Press Release

Note to Editors
For Immediate Release

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CADENZA Project Suggests Urgent Creation of Strategy to Deal with Increasing Dementia Cases

Dementia is a chronic disease that contributes significantly to disability. There is a prevalent view that dementia is an inevitable normal accompaniment of ageing, instead of a chronic disease which patients ultimately die from. With rapidly ageing population, dementia will increase burdens to patients, carers and society as a whole. To help prepare society for meeting this challenge, CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors, a project initiated by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong, is conducting a series of studies entitled *Challenges of Population Ageing on Disease Trends and Burden* with the Department of Community Medicine, School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong. The studies focus on common diseases among the elderly.

Dementia is the third topic in the series, and the findings are announced today (13 April). Dementia involves both direct and indirect burdens including high medical and long term care costs, disability, premature mortality and carer burden. The increasing number of cases requires urgent creation of a comprehensive strategy for prevention and care to complement existing services and prepare for the future.

The CADENZA multi-disciplinary research team has been conducting research on the impact of common diseases among the older population in society. The first of the series covered current well-being while the second the burden consequent to diabetes, Mr Douglas So, Executive Director, Charities, Legal & Corporate Secretariat of The Hong Kong Jockey Club explained. "By examining the dementia trends and burdens in Hong Kong and the implication for health and social services, we may recommend ways to minimise the burden to society. It is also hoped that the study will raise public awareness in the understanding of dementia so that prevention and care may be improved."

In 2005-2006, about one in three community-dwelling people aged 85 or above in Hong Kong had dementia. Assuming the prevalence of dementia remains unchanged, the CADENZA study projects that the number of people aged 60 and above with dementia will more than double from 0.11 million in 2010 to 0.28 million in 2036. Since prevalence rates seem to increase, the number of people with dementia is likely to increase even faster.

Although people with dementia have a higher risk of dying compared to those without, they are expected to live for another 16 years for male and 22 years for female at the age of 60. At the same time, dementia is a main contributor to disability. This results in a huge impact on the need for care for these patients. The CADENZA study estimates that the annual cost as a consequence of the disease among those aged 60 or above for residential care units in Hong Kong is HK\$2 billion in 2010 and that for informal caregivers is HK\$9.9 billion. Such costs are projected to increase to about HK\$5.2 billion and HK\$25.9 billion in 2036 respectively.

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Regarding the financing of care for people with dementia, co-payment in addition to government provided resources may be considered to complement existing services. The Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing specialising in dementia care is a successful example of dementia services run on a self-sustaining basis. The Jockey Club CADENZA Hub is a newly launched integrated social-medical day care model in a community setting, also providing dementia care.

To minimise the burden of the disease, CADENZA recommends (i) increasing awareness and understanding of the disease for the public as well as health and social care professionals by education and training, (ii) providing comprehensive assessment and management of multiple morbidities of people with dementia, and (iii) considering new services partially paid for by patients. Individuals can actively prevent or postpone dementia by leading a healthy lifestyle (especially in terms of reducing cardiovascular risk factors), such as doing regular exercise and not smoking.

Details of the study results will be published in the coming report.

CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors

CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors is a five-year project launched by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust with a donation of HK\$380 million in 2006. The project aims at nurturing academic leadership in social gerontology and changing the mindset and attitude of the general public through a range of training and public education programmes. Cross-sectional collaboration between organisations and the implementation of innovative elderly services and programmes are also encouraged in order to bring about a new mode of elderly care services to prepare for a rapidly ageing society. Details of CADENZA are available at www.cadenza.hk.

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