



Professor Alfred C.M. Chan, SBS, JP

Chairperson, Equal Opportunities Commission

Abstract:

From age discrimination to positive regards in employment for the aged in Hong Kong

Population ageing strikes Asia at a speed and a scale unprecedented in history. Not only the size of the older population (i.e. 65+) is going to be the largest, older people in Japan and Hong Kong are the longest living (with an average life expectancy at birth exceeding 86 years of age at present). As society sees more ageing people, issues relating to older persons are surfacing and gaining public attention. Contrary to popular belief that Chinese elders are well respected within their communities, elder abuses are on the increase and age discrimination is becoming a great concern for Hong Kong especially in the employment sector. A study commissioned by Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in 2015 (N=401, ages 15+, with in-depth interviews with small and medium enterprises (SMEs)) has revealed that workers in general perceived most of the young and mature workers as more vulnerable to age discrimination, being 33% for 15-19, 78% for 60+ and 67% for aged 50-59. The most complained types of discrimination are “receiving lower salary than other workers” (18%), “being denied a job promotion”(14%) and “being targeted for redundancy in organizational restructuring”(14%). Surprisingly when asked about if they support legislating against age discrimination in the work place, the young adult group (i.e.aged 20-29) was overwhelmingly supportive (81%). The present paper will discuss, along with findings of the study, issues relating to work place discrimination on the ground of age and to explore ways forward including nurturing positive regards in our society for the aged.

About the Speaker:

Professor Chan has been both a practitioner in welfare services for older persons and an academic in social gerontology. Prof Chan has extensive skills and knowledge in health and social care services and policy making. Prof Chan sat on many Government advisory bodies, including the Chair of Elderly Commission (2012-2016). He was also an Advisor to Tsao’s Foundation of Singapore and National University of Singapore (NUS)’s International Longevity Centre (ILC) from June 2012-2016. Professor Chan is currently the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission.



Dr. David L.K. Dai, JP

Chairman, Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association

Honorary Research Fellow, Sau Po Centre on Ageing, The University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

Early detection of elders with dementia and prevention across cultures

Hong Kong is a rapidly ageing society which is home to the Chinese, and persons of diverse ethnic origins. While health promotion and medical and social services are offered to the Chinese population, such may not reach persons and families who may not be familiar with the Chinese language. Cultural differences may also affect the acceptance of concepts and practices of health habits and care. As the early symptoms of dementia are often noticed by close family members, the latter should be taught in early detection, and prompt medical attention sought for a diagnosis before medical and social interventions can follow. Access to health facilities and social support may remain an obstacle for some minor ethnic groups. Mid-life intervention is now advocated in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease which include cardiovascular risk reduction, sleep hygiene, mood harmonizing, cognitively stimulating leisure activities, exercise and social engagement. Practices and practicability which vary across cultures may be shared. Above all, narrowing the social economic differences between ethnic sectors will be the ultimate goal of policy makers.

About the Speaker:

Dr. David Dai is currently Chairman of the Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association. During his 30-year career in geriatric medicine, Dr. Dai has been closely collaborating with the social sector, and served in steering committees and working groups on community and residential care services for older adults of the Labour and Welfare Bureau. Dr. Dai chairs the Independent Committee for Handling Complaints of the Social Welfare Department since 2015.