

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Nurses play an important role in assessing their patients' health literacy levels and supporting the patient groups with low health literacy to enhance their ability to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information to make decisions⁺.

Dr Patrick Kor has extended nurses' concern about patients' health literacy to family caregivers (FCGs) of older people. His research team is developing a health literacy scale for supporting nurses to estimate the health literacy levels of FCGs and identify those FCGs with low health literacy for early nursing intervention. Once validated, the scale will be the FIRST health literacy scale for family caregivers of older people in a Chinese population.

We believe that the scale will address the issue of hidden low health literacy among FCGs of older people that has been giving stress and difficulties for FCGs when they navigate healthcare services for older adults. We expect that the scale will enable nurses to respond to the needs of FCGs earlier by providing them with tailor-made information or educational materials for enhancing their health literacy and eventually improving their physical and mental wellbeing.

Digital health literacy (DHL) is a frequently discussed topic during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when we have been overwhelmed with lots of conflicting and confusing information about COVID-19. Older adults can find it more challenging as they may not know what to do or believe. To identify the role of DHL in supporting older adults' mental wellbeing during the pandemic, **Prof. Angela Leung** led our PhD student member, **Mr Laurence Lloyd Pariala**, and her research team to explore the relationships between sense of coherence with anxiety about the future, DHL, and other variables. The research findings provide more understanding on DHL and will help nurses' develop effective interventions for enhancing the DHL of older adults.

⁺ Sørensen K, Broucke SV, Fullam J, et al. Health literacy and public health: A systematic review and integration of definitions and models. *BMC Public Health*, 2012;12(1):80.

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RESEARCH and EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Development and validation of a holistic health literacy scale for family caregivers of older people



Family caregivers (FCGs) are vital in caring for older people. Low health literacy of FCGs can affect the quality of caregiving and the health outcomes of their care recipients. Nurses have an important role in supporting better health literacy of FCGs, particularly those giving care to older people. Timely assessment of the health literacy levels of family caregivers (FCGs) of older people is of prime importance as this could help identify those who need nursing interventions. However, currently, there is a lack of validated measurement tool for assessing the health literacy of FCGs. **Dr Patrick Kor[#]**, Assistant Professor, and a member of the CGN, is trying to break this barrier.

Funded by the Nethersole Institute of Continuing Holistic Health Education (NICHE) research grant, Dr Kor's research team aims to develop a conceptual model describing the elements of health literacy in family caregiving. Based on the conceptual model, a holistic health literacy scale for FCGs of older people will be developed and validated.

Fifty family caregivers were recruited in the research study and 6 rounds of focus group interviews were conducted last year, in which the FCGs were asked about their experiences in taking care of their own health and their care-recipients, as well as about how they obtained and used health information to make decisions. Statements were generated and 22 themes were preliminarily identified. The team is analysing the themes and statements for developing the conceptual model and the scale.

Once validated, the scale will be the **FIRST** health literacy scale for family caregivers of older people in a Chinese population. It will provide a convenient tool for nurses to assess FCGs' capacity to 'understand, appraise, and apply health information'^{*} for making health-related judgments in providing holistic care and appropriate healthcare related decisions. The research team hopes that with the new validated tool, early nursing intervention can be delivered to enhance the health literacy level of those identified FCGs, who found reading medicine labels, communicating with healthcare professionals and making health care decisions difficult, and with the nursing support, ultimately, they will be able to navigate the health care service better.

[#] Dr Patrick Kor, Assistant Professor & Principal Investigator; Co-Investigators: Prof. Angela Leung, Professor & Associate Head (Research); Dr Justina Leung, Associate Professor; Ms Louisa Lee, the Hospital Authority; Dr Paul Lee, University of Leicester; Dr Simon Lam, Tung Wah College.

^{*} Sørensen K, Broucke SV, Fullam J, et al. Health literacy and public health: A systematic review and integration of definitions and models. *BMC Public Health*, 2012;12(1):80.

RESEARCH and EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Identifying the relationships among sense of coherence, digital health literacy and anxiety about the future in aging population during the COVID-19 pandemic



Digital health literacy (DHL) is an important attribute and a protective factor that enables appropriate health decisions. Understanding the relationships between Sense of coherence (SOC) with anxiety about the future, DHL, information satisfaction (IS), and financial satisfaction (FS) among older adults during the COVID-19 outbreak could help identify the role of DHL in supporting older adults' mental well-being during the pandemic and provide insights into developing effective strategies and nursing interventions for enhancing the DHL of older adults.

Led by **Prof. Angela Leung**, Professor & Associate Head (Research), the research team^{##} extracted data from a large-scale DHL study with a cross-sectional survey across 41 countries. The data extracted focus on Mainland China, the Philippines, and Singapore, and included people aged ≥ 60 . Structural equation modeling with path analysis was utilised to examine the relationships of SOC with anxiety about the future and other variables mentioned above.

SOC reflects an individual's perception of the environment as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful*. The results show that DHL and SOC were negatively associated with anxiety about the future, while financial satisfaction and information satisfaction had no significant association with anxiety. Older adults with high DHL were likely to have high SOC. Having higher SOC could enable older adults to perceive the current health situation as not too bad and manageable by utilising available resources, hence, their fear of the unknown during the pandemic were reduced.

One insightful finding of this study is that information satisfaction among older adults did not lead to their better SOC and lower anxiety. Nurses should be aware of the implication of this result and understand that older adults need more than satisfaction with the information provided, rather, they need information to guide them to understand, evaluate, apply health information and make relevant health decisions to better navigate the current pandemic situation.

Click [here](#) to access the complete paper.

^{##} Laurence Lloyd Pariala, PhD Student, PolyU's School of Nursing; Dr Timothy Sim, Associate Professor, PolyU's Department of Applied Social Sciences (2012 – 2021); Dr Phoenix Mo, Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care; Centre for Health Behaviours Research, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Ma. Carmen Tolabing, the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, College of Public Health, University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines; Orkan Okang, Bielefeld University, Faculty of Educational Science, Interdisciplinary Centre for Health Literacy Research, Bielefeld, Germany; and Kevin Dadaczynski, Public Health Centre Fulda, Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Fulda, Germany; Center for Applied Health Science, Leuphana University Lueneburg, Lueneburg, Germany.

* Schnyder, U., Buchi, S., Sensky, T., & Klaghofer, R. (2000). Antonovsky 's sense of coherence: Trait or state? *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 69(6), 296–302. <http://doi.org/10.1159/000012411>

RESEARCH and EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Projects receiving external funding support

Project Title	PI	Funding Scheme	Total Grant (HK\$)
Supporting family caregivers of people with dementia and identifying an effective adaptive intervention to reduce their depressive symptoms: a sequential multiple assignment randomized trial	Dr Patrick Kor	Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)	1,462,200
Pilot evaluation of technology-enhanced horticultural activities among the people with dementia and their family caregivers		Bright Future Charitable Foundation	130,550

OUR PEOPLE



- **Prof. Angela Leung** was invited to be a member of the organising committee for the International HomeCare Nursing Free Webinar “Embracing the Challenge for Excellence in Home Care Nursing for the Future” hosted by the International Home Care Nurses Organization. The event aimed to raise awareness to the importance of Guidelines for Homecare Nursing Practice and to advocate for quality care to the aged at home in Hong Kong and the neighbouring cities.

- **Dr Justina Liu**, Associate Professor, was an invited speaker for the 7th Golden Age Expo & Summit 2022 themed “Smart Ageing: Innovation, Sustainability and Inclusion”. She presented at the online session titled “Is Asia Ready for the 100-year life?” and spoke on the topic “How are you doing” on the healthy ageing of the HK oldest-old in the shadow of the COVID-19” on 7 August. The event was held by the Golden Age Foundation, which aimed to showcase the latest technology, innovative products and services in the ageing industry, and gather local and international leaders from various sectors to share innovative ideas and experiences on ageing.



▲ Lower row, left: Dr Justina Liu

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